

'A good day to dance'

Members of the local Native American community shared their culture at the annual spring pow wow

By Kara Cogswell
Oregon Daily Emerald

Even from outside McArthur Court the sound of drums could be heard as dancers in the Native American Student Union's 33rd annual spring pow wow prepared for their entrance on Saturday night.

Inside, pow wow emcee David West began the introductions for the 7 p.m. grand entry, one of three times during the weekend-long event when dancing took place.

"It's a good day to live, a good day to dance," he said. "Let's pow wow."

Pow wow, a term that is thought to have originated with the Algonquin tribe, once indicated a gathering of people who came together to celebrate a victory or another important event. Today, NASU member Misty Mocekis said pow wows are still "a kind of gathering," but rather than serving to celebrate a particular event, they are a time to socialize and re-kindle old friendships.

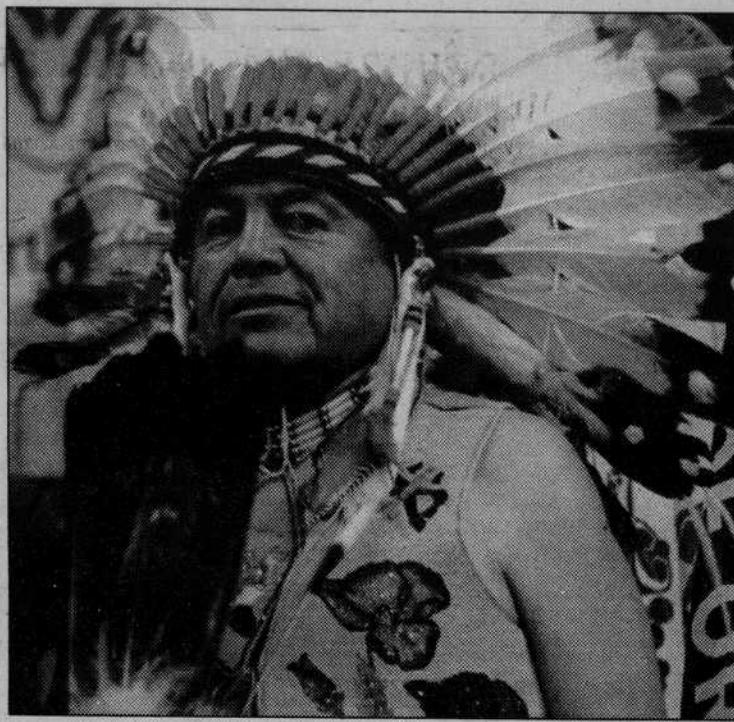
"It's an opportunity to see people you haven't seen in a while," she said.

NASU puts on a pow wow in the fall and in the spring every year. The group is also active in fundraising, and this year, the students held a protest in the EMU Amphitheater as part of "Anti-Columbus Day" event.

A steady stream of people came and went during the pow wow, with as many as 200 people in the audience during grand entry times, held twice on Saturday, and once on Sunday.

Many in the audience, which included students and community members, came from all over the Northwest to attend, Mocekis said.

Pow wows are put on throughout the year by various Native American groups, and often the same people attend these pow wows, especially those held in their local area, NASU member Jana Schmieding said. Because of this, those who attend regularly have formed a close



Ho-Uma Pi-Ma of the Cayuse Tribe attends the 33rd annual NASU powwow.

knit community, she said.

"You end up building these huge, extended families," she said.

Dancers of all ages competed in a variety of categories based on age, gender and style of dance. Fancy, traditional, jingle and grass dances were performed, each representing a different style and time period, Schmieding said. Winners received NASU T-shirts, jackets or cash awards depending on the category they competed in.

The traditional dance is the oldest style, and the men's traditional dance is the most respected in the dance circle, she said. Grass dancing originated in the plains, Schmieding said, when dancers would stomp down the grass so that ceremonies could be held.

Fancy and jingle dancing are more fast-paced, contemporary styles of dance, she said. In jingle dancing, women wear dresses with 365 rolled up, silver tobacco can lids attached. Each one of those lids is meant to symbolize a day of sobriety, Schmieding said, either for the

dancer or for someone else.

Pow wows are typically a family-oriented event, she added, and children who grow up attending them learn to dance early.

Amber Letuli, of Eugene, said her whole family enjoys attending pow wows.

"We've been doing this since she was eight," she said, referring to her 13-year-old daughter Brittany Sturdevant-Evarts, who was preparing nearby for Sunday's dance finals. Sturdevant-Evarts, who wore a lavender dress covered with hundreds of silver tin can lids for the jingle dance, said although she was a little nervous, she always has fun at the pow wows.

"I go to as many as I can," she said.

Junior Kevin Stolle said he attended this year's pow wow to hear the music, and to experience an aspect of Native American culture. He added that this was the first pow wow he had attended.

"I don't know much about it," he said. "I wanted to see what it was like."

Evaluations

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University Assembly approved legislation May 1, 1985 that would require the results to be placed in three separate locations. The evaluations, called course reaction inventories, were to be made available in the reserve reading room of the Knight Library, in the Office of Academic Affairs, and in each individual academic department.

But in the 1993 handbook, the writing was changed to require only the academic departments to handle the figures of the evaluation and make the results available to interested students.

Lorraine Davis, vice provost for academic affairs at the University, said the results were taken out of Knight Library because of a change in budgeting and technology at the University.

"We're anticipating trying to return to the mechanism of making them available," she said.

Davis said University academic departments should make the figures readily available to students. But an Emerald survey of several departments around campus shows that this is not necessarily the case presently.

Of the nine departments visited, seven released figures, though the formats for the figures were varied. Two departments — sociology and political science — did not release figures.

Staff members in the sociology department declined to release figures, saying they were grouped in a confusing manner.

Staff in the political science department office said they did not keep results for the four questions, and could not release the results from the rest of the evaluations, citing confidentiality concerns.

Department workers said they believed the figures were available in Knight Library, but library personnel said they have not stored the evaluation results there for several years.

Diane Bricker, an associate dean for the College of Education, said she is aware that the evaluation results for the department are not available at Knight Library, and would probably allow students to come and look at the results.

"If a student came and asked, I'm pretty sure we'd give [the results] to them," she said.

Bricker said she believes there is not enough interest from students to look at the evaluations, and to place them in one central area may be too time-consuming. She said she believes the current system of keeping the figures in the individual departments is adequate.

Keith Richard, a University archivist and the University Senate secretary in 1993, said the figures were part of a system which included a more in-depth questioning system.

But, he said, "[the figures] were supposed to be much more systematically effective."

Evaluations affect faculty promotions

Despite the lack of availability to students, the evaluations are important for faculty promotions.

"The strongest component [in promotion] is what the students have to say about the instructors," said Van Kolpin, professor of economics and head of that department.

He said instructors that receive low marks on their evaluations can go through a process to help improve their teaching abilities. This can include a "face-to-face" discussion to talk about the problems an instructor may be having. But sometimes, he said, he doesn't need the evaluations results to let him know of problems in a class.

Usually, "you catch wind of things before the class has been completed," he said.

Davis said she believes the current process of evaluating instructors is enough.

"The mechanisms and procedures in place can provide us with sufficient information," she said.

Raymond King, associate dean of the Charles H. Lundquist College of Business, said professors employed on a year-to-year contract may not have their contracts renewed if they receive low marks by students. Tenured professors are protected by due process, but King said tenure is not possible without high results on the evaluations.

"The student evaluations are not the only piece of evidence, but an important one," he said.

According to the current faculty handbook, statistical data comprised from the student evaluations are placed in the permanent personnel file of the instructor being evaluated. They are then reviewed as supplementary materials in the promotion and tenure file.

Bricker said figures obtained in the evaluations may not be accurate because students may not always take the evaluations seriously. Also, she said, students have a tendency to give higher marks to professors who teach classes with less work. Therefore, a professor who assigns a heavier work load for their course may receive more negative evaluations.

"Instructors sometimes suffer because of the content of their course," she said.

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