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since 1983

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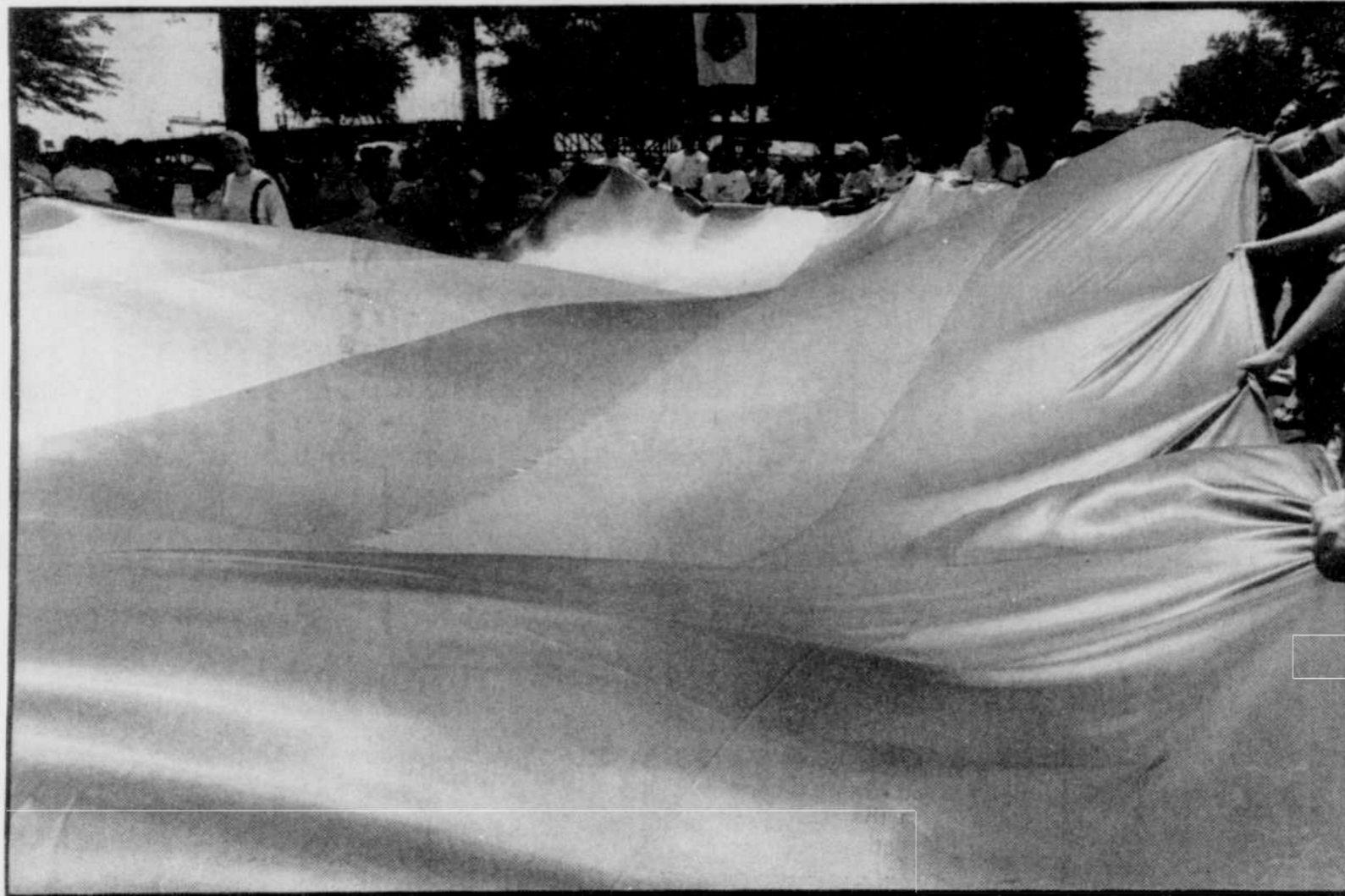


PHOTO BY LINDA KLEWER

editorial

Survival of the planet

The Honor the Earth tour, featuring the Indigo Girls, has traveled to 22 cities and Native communities reaching over 50,000 people with an important message

by Renée LaChance

The world's dominant cultures are killing the earth by exploiting its resources for profit. We know it, we live with it. To change it is an overwhelming proposition. Yet, the world's poorest and most endangered cultures are fighting every day to heal the earth.

Native people are at the forefront of environmental protection. Their work is often voluntary and done with limited funding. Native people are working to build sustainable communities based on traditional practices.

The Honor the Earth tour, which features the Indigo Girls, is raising money, awareness and support for these Native American activists who are on the front lines fighting environmental battles to protect their land and sacred sites. These battles affect all of us, since we are all living on this earth.

The proceeds from each of these concerts benefit the Indigenous Women's Network, a coalition of more than 400 indigenous women and organizations, and the Seventh Generation Fund, a Native American private foundation.

Amy Ray and Emily Saliers, the Indigo Girls, are donating a month of their time to do these performances and raise the consciousness of tens of thousands of people about the life-and-death issues Native people face today. This commitment is historic and unprecedented.

The fact that pivotal environmental battles center on Native land is no surprise. Native Americans retain approximately 4 percent of their original land base, which makes tribal nations the second largest land-owner after the U.S. government.

Uranium deposits, oil, natural gas and over 15 million acres of forest sit on Native land in the United States alone. These resources are highly desired by corporations that exploit the earth for profit, which pits some of the poorest communities in this country—Native American—against rich corporations.

I saw the Honor the Earth Tour in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in May. Beside the fact that it was a fabulous concert, I was totally impressed by the Indigo Girls and their level of commitment to Native politics and the environment. I was proud that two well-known, highly marketable lesbians were donating a month of their time and hundreds of hours of performing to raise much-needed dollars for grass-roots Native groups working to heal the earth.

The predominant message of the Honor the Earth Tour is summed up by Winona LaDuke, chair of the Indigenous Women's Network, who says, "If we build a society based on honoring the earth, we build a society which is sustainable and has the capacity to support all life forms. If we honor the earth, we guarantee our collective survival."

The survival of the planet depends on each of us honoring the earth.

The Honor the Earth Tour concludes in Portland on Saturday, June 3, at 2 pm at Portland Meadows. The concert features the Indigo Girls, Sarah McLachlan, and John Trudell with Bad Dog. Tickets are \$18 and are available from Fred Meyer's Fastix 224-8499 and GI Joe's TicketMaster 224-4400.

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