

Life experiences drive Native American woman to find identity

by Jocelyn Gauthier
Feature Editor

"Where there is no struggle, there is no strength" is the motto for Katherine Quartz, second-year student and member of the Walker River Paiute tribe in Walker River, Nevada.

Quartz was born in Portland and grew up in Milwaukie when she was adopted at the age of three into a German/Swede family. She started having identity problems and so began a search for her roots in 1978, when she was 16 years of age.

At first Quartz thought she "was of Mexican descent," so she "traveled all the way down to south of the border" and lived a primitive lifestyle in Mexico for six months. She eventually learned that she was not Hispanic and made her way back to America as a Spanish-speaking Indian, but found a lot of opposition along the way.

A lot of things in her life cannot be written down because of the "mystique of the oral tradition," she said.

"Though many times were met with opposition, perseverance was the only way to accomplish my personal quest," Quartz said.

Ten years later and with two sons, aged ten and 12, Quartz found the tip she needed. She learned that her home was among the Walker River Paiute tribe in Nevada.

"Finding my family of origin (Walker River Paiutes) was the key to my personal and professional success, for going home to the rez (reservation) and meeting my blood relatives was instrumental in myself becoming who I am today. It was my home, although I'd never been there," she said.

When she found her home,

she learned that she was in a family line of medicine people and that they had history of longevity. For example, one lived to be 114!

"Living in three cultures, being raised with German ethics of hard work and consistency, then delving into the Hispanic culture, opening a world of language and Mexican cuisine, then finally coming home to a place I'd never been before has enabled me to really SEE from the many perspectives of the paradigm of life," she said.

One of her observations has been the role of women in the different cultures she has lived in. In America, they are semi-equal; in Mexico, they work hard but have no status; and in her tribe and affiliates, they are regarded as the backbone of society and hold high leadership roles.

"Upon arriving at the rez and being nominated to be chairperson of the Western Nevada North America Group, being catapulted in my success in leadership roles, I have been fortunate to be on state and national committees, allowing another voice to be heard. As indigenous people, we need to empower ourselves and create our own destiny. Education and experience are the keys to knowledge and power," Quartz said.



Photo by Christi Snavely

Katherine Quartz, student at CCC and a Native American, will be having a book published which describes her struggles and triumphs.

Quartz really believes that, had she not gone home, she would never have become the person she is today. "I believe in chosen plans...because of the chosen plan, I have become this sort of person," she said.

Quartz is working toward her degree in International Studies/Linguistic Anthropology and plans to transfer to Portland State University. She is already bilingual and can speak a little Paiute, but hopes to learn Shoshone, Lakota, Din'e (Navajo), French and Italian in the next five years. She would learn her native language, but said "my language is dying...my aunties would get slapped for speaking the Paiute language (in their schools). What good is Paiute in this area?"

Quartz, a single mother, has supported her family for nine years with her floral design business, "Designs by Katherine." She is also in the process of hav-

ing her autobiography published, which is untitled at this time. The book will deal with socio-politics, her time in Mexico and some deep-roots things in her life. As a person who grew up in an urban lifestyle, and then going to the reservation, she would like to, if she pursues her master's, write her thesis on the transition from rural reservation life to urban life.

She also plans to do a professional recording playing the North American Red Cedar Flute. "I just happened to pick that up because someone told me 'music is the healing force of the universe.' It's kind of fun, too," she said. "It is through healing that we can properly nurture and care for our future generations. Being a positive role model for today's youth is a priority," she said.

"Perhaps through life's trials and triumphs, it was revealed that the only real mistakes we make are the ones we don't learn from...being of mixed blood, my responsibility is to perhaps bridge together cultures and to promote cultural diversity.

"Walking above the ground, not knowing where your roots are, can be devastating. Today I know where my roots are," she said. Quartz has been back in Oregon for a year and five months and

said that "when the time comes, I'll go back (to the reservation)."

Growing up, Quartz saw the world through her adopted family's eyes. Now she sees through many perspectives, but especially feels closest to that of a poem called "Noble Redman, Redman Dying," written by her friend, Tomm Eagle.

The poem represents an urban Indian perspective when "all the ritual and ceremonial mechanisms for achieving spiritual direction are taken away...the following poem, while primarily reflecting the urban Indian's position of alienation, is not unlike the rupture and estrangement found in the larger mainstream society." Noble Redman, Redman Dying, with tentative hands and downcast eyes,

your shuffling feet and stained clothes entreat the purposeful passerby.
Noble Redman, Redman dying,
the sameness of your defeated dialogue makes you invisible and collective conscience oblivious to your derelict disguise.
Noble Redman, Redman dying,
you are the contradiction of a continent as you assemble in doorways, on park benches, in cast-off shoes and secondhand clothes;
you have become the unwanted.
Noble Redman, Redman dying,
now destined to a heritage of humiliation, outside the fringe of dignity, you exist in monotony on the margins of humanity...
you are a question without an answer.

College Conversations to discuss campus issues

by Anjanette Booth
News Editor

"College Conversations," an informal luncheon for CCC students, will be held with President John Keyser, administrators, faculty and staff on Friday, Feb. 10 in the Forum building.

A special invitation is given to all students involved in Phi Theta Kappa, honors and leadership classes, student government, print staff, scholarship nominees, and internships to join in the conversation; however, it is open to all students.

The main topic for this term's conversation will be ways to strengthen academic and leadership opportunities at CCC. If

other issues about the college come up, they will also be discussed.

"One of the school's visions was to increase dialogue between students, administration and staff," said Becky Carnahan, college conversation coordinator.

Carnahan was faced with the challenge of helping to meet this goal two years ago. A representative from ASG and Carnahan came up with the idea of an informal lunch and conversation joining together the college president, faculty, staff and students.

The first "College Conversation" was held in the fall of 1993, with John Keyser speaking on the state of the college. Other topics

that could be discussed are the wait list, the book store, the registration process, graduation, advising and educational planning.

"I think we have a lot to offer in all these areas but a lot of students don't even know that they are there," Carnahan said.



Photo by Christi Snavely

Multi-talented student shares his art through posters around campus

by Jocelyn Gauthier
Feature Editor

You've probably seen a few "artsy" flyers and brochures around campus advertising for the Entre Amigos (the Spanish Club), drawn by Brad Zinn, second-year student.

This is Zinn's first year in Spanish, and he plans to make it his minor when he transfers to the University of Oregon,

where he will major in psychology.

He is "very involved in the Spanish Club," he said.

Zinn started doing artwork "by accident. I was just goofing around one day and showed [the drawing] to my Spanish teacher, and she just absolutely loved it," he said.

"It's a fun thing for me. It's more of a hobby," he said.

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