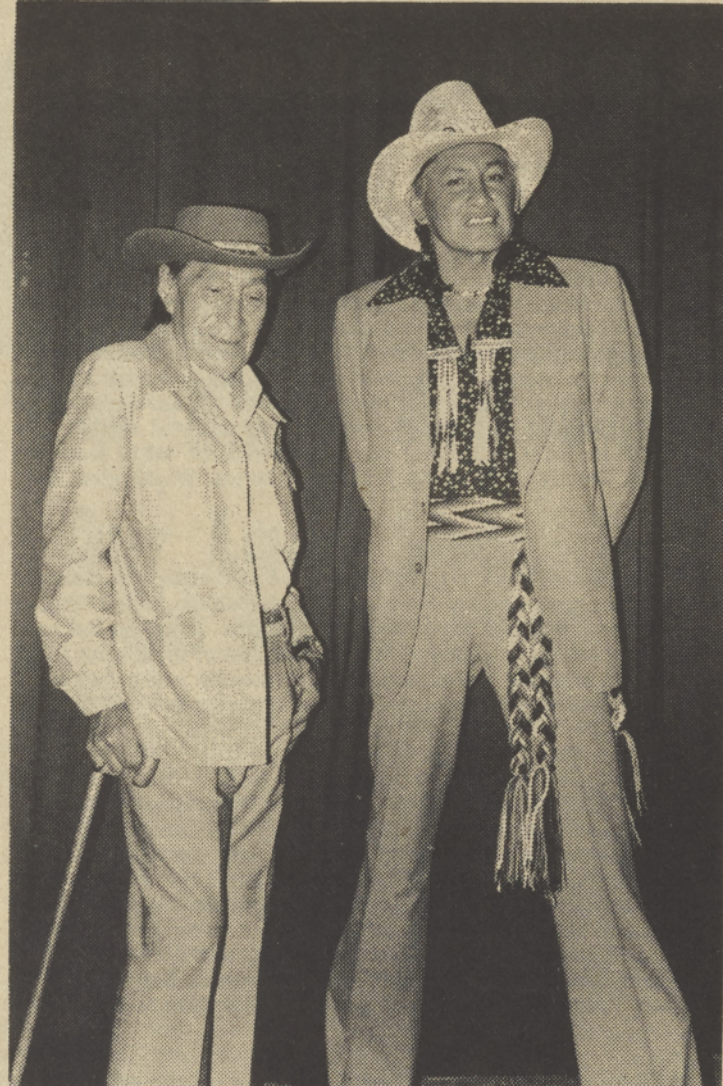


At The '78 American Indian Film Festival



Dapper gents at the film festival May 13 included Charles White Eagle (Best Supporting Actor) and a lanky Will Sampson (Best Actor).
Sandy Rangila Photo



The Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco was the setting for the third annual American Indian Film Festival May 11 through 13. The festival is becoming more successful each year, drawing more attention and interest from within the film community and from both the Indian and non-Indian press.
Sandy Rangila Photo

By Sandy Rangila

"Three Warriors" sweeps festival



Backstage, happily preparing to accept their awards for their respective roles in "Three Warriors" are (left to right), Kiko Red Wing, Lois Red Elk, Charles White Eagle, and Director Kieth Merrill.
Sandy Rangila Photo

There was an air of general excitement in the lobby of the Palace of Fine Arts Theater Saturday, May 13, following the San Francisco premier of "Three Warriors" on the final eve of the American Indian Film Festival.

"It's the best movie about Indians I've ever seen," commented one young woman. "I wish all of our young people had the opportunity to experience that kind of learning from an older person."

The showing of "Three Warriors" and the awards presentation capped the three-day 1978 American Indian Film Festival, now in its third year.

"Three Warriors" ran away with the honors, receiving the award for Best Film. Also, McKee "Kiko" Red Wing who played Michael won Most Promising Actor. Lois Red Elk (the mother) was awarded Best Sup-

porting Actress, and Charles White Eagle (the grandfather) won recognition as Best Supporting Actor.

In addition, Fantasy Films won the Producers Award for honest portrayal of American Indians in their films.

Present for Saturday night's screening and awards ceremony were some now familiar faces to folks here. Charles White Eagle is zipping about much more spryly now following hip surgery, and Director Kieth Merrill was happy that Spilyay noticed his more trim physique.

Lois Red Elk said to say hello to everyone and remarked that she would be up this way to visit because she likes the beauty of the Warm Springs Reservation and the people.

For most, it would take several glances to recognize Kiko who is about a foot-and-a-half taller than he was when

he was here in 1976. The striking young star now has girls clamoring for his autograph, but somehow he has managed to maintain the warmth and quiet manner which endeared him to so many here. He seems even nicer, now.

The cast members of "Three Warriors" and people from Fantasy Films must have been gratified with the audience response in the full-house. It is not unlike the reaction it received in Bend. Applause broke out when Michael plucked the eagle feather, and cheers and laughter punctuated much of the movie.

In respect to this year's film festival, Director Michael Smith remarked that he had gotten a lot of positive feedback. He felt that the event was more successful than it was last year, and that it is gaining more interest from within the film community and from both the Indian and non-Indian press.

Art Award?

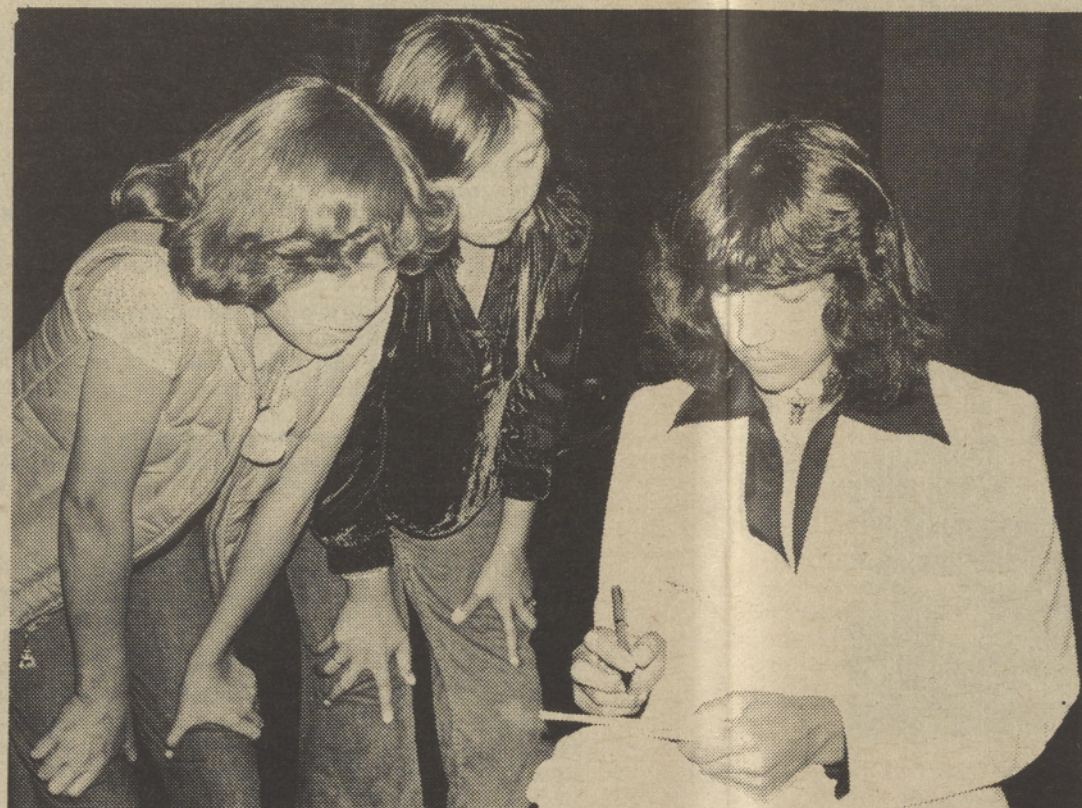
One suggestion for next year might be the inclusion of an award for artistic merit, or an art film award. There were two films in particular that merited attention in this respect.

Dawn Riders explores the fascinating world of Indian painting today, showing how it is rooted in the oldest cultural tradition on the continent, and is possessed with great vitality as an ongoing creative stream.

Amiotte is about a Sioux artist on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. The need to seek out the traditional values, to find his "center", is the driving force behind all that Arthur Amiotte does. It permeates his art, and is clarified, mixed and distilled in the reservation classrooms where he teaches the children.



"Painting Ceremony", by Woodrow Crumbo. Traditional style, gouache (opaque watercolor).



Already drawing the interest and admiration of the girls is McKee "Kiko" Red Wing who received the award for Most Promising Actor for his role in "Three Warriors". Kiko, who is growing up quickly, will be studying acting at the same school Robert Redford attended, according to his father.
Sandy Rangila Photo

Indian Rights-Indian Law (Best Documentary)

Indian Rights — Indian Law is a thoughtfully done, well photographed and current documentary that is well deserving of this award. It may not have been narrated by Robert Redford, but the fact that the Indian attorneys themselves did the speaking lent authenticity and power to the film.

Indian Rights, Indian Law provides a rare glimpse of the litigation process and insight into why the land, resources, and tribal sovereignty are so important in preserving Indian identity.

From Maine to the State of Washington, American Indians are reasserting their rights in the courts, basing their claims on "Indian law" — what Justice Felix Frankfurter called "the vast hodgepodge of treaties, statutes, judicial and administrative rulings, and unrecorded practices in which the intricacies and perplexities, confusions and injustices of the law governing Indians lay concealed."

The Native American Rights

Fund (NARF) is the only national nonprofit Indian law firm devoted to the protection of Indian rights. Since it was founded in 1971, NARF's major emphasis has been upon the preservation of tribal existence and resources and the fulfillment of the nation's long-standing obligations to Indian people.

The documentary, Indian Rights, Indian Law, focuses on the work of NARF's lawyers, most of whom are Indians. Some of the cases in which they have been involved include the fight between fourteen tribes and Washington State officials over treaty fishing rights along the Puyallup River, the struggle of the Paiute Tribe against the diversion of water from Pyramid Lake in Nevada, the religious rights of Indian prisoners, more equitable treatment for Indian school children, and the land-claims suits of the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot Tribes in Maine. NARF also played a major role in helping to restore the Menominee Tribe in Wisconsin to federal trust status.



"Mother of Many Children" is a documentary about the importance of women in Indian society and was filmed on the Cree Reservation. The woman here is gathering wild rice. She knocks it into the boat but doesn't harvest it all. Some of the seeds fly back into the water ensuring future crops.
Photo courtesy San Francisco American Indian Center

Mother of Many Children (Best Semi-Documentary)

A sensitive semi-documentary, *Mother of Many Children* portrays the importance of women in Indian society in both the traditional and contemporary sense.

The film captured the mood of Cree women in Canada and their varied tribal roles which ranged from political to cultural-traditional.

Interviews centered around

an elderly Cree woman and the women in her extended family.

Interwoven throughout the production was the theme of women as the replentishers and guardians of the earth, culturally, physically, and symbolically.

Not lost on the audience was the significance of the symbolism in the scene with the wild rice gatherer. The woman knocked the rice into the boat, but she did not harvest all of it.

Some of the seeds flew back into the water to be reseeded again, thus ensuring a continued supply for the future.

"It wasn't so easy to make," Alanis Obomsawin said of the film when she accepted the award. She wrote, produced, directed, and narrated *Mother of Many Children*. It was her third film. It was co-produced by The National Film Board of Canada, 1977.

"Nanook Taxi" stays in your mind

Not technically perfect but utterly delightful was *Nanook Taxi*. It did not win an award, but received a fair amount of praise from the audience. It's one of those movies that tends to stick in your mind, causing smiles from remembered scenes later on.

With the opening scene, however, the initial reaction might be, "Oh no, a home movie." It was a bit slow getting off the ground and even the actors seemed somewhat self-conscious in the beginning. But the audience quickly warmed to the characters and became part of the situations portrayed on the screen.

Nanook Taxi was shot entirely on location in Canada's Northwest Territories with a cast of Eskimos (Inuit) who live in Cape Dorset and Frobisher Bay.

The film is more than a drama about a man who goes off to taste the attractions of the "city". It is also an intimate and revealing look at a people whose way of life is in the midst of upheaval and profound change.

The movie starts out with Ninguksiak on an unsuccessful seal hunt. Upon returning to his camp, he discovers that his wife, Mukittug, has shot a seal — her first — thus ensuring that the family will have fresh meat.

But as they return to their home in the tiny village of Cape Dorset, their snowmobile breaks down. Since he does not have the money to fix it — and since he is tempted anyway to try life in the

"city" — against his wife's wishes he flies to Frobisher Bay to make some money.

His cousin in Frobisher Bay, who is a somewhat urbanized Inuit, helps Ninguksiak find a job driving a taxi. But he has difficulties adapting to the strange ways of the "city", and one evening with his cousin, causes raised eyebrows when he orders and eats a raw, frozen fish at a fancy restaurant. (A neatly done scene).

He becomes friendly with a modern Inuit woman — modern in contrast to his wife — who works as a disc jockey at the local radio station. At first she is intrigued with his old-world habits and ways of thinking, but after he arrives at her apartment in a drunken stupor, she pushes him out of her life.

Increasingly unhappy and bewildered, Ninguksiak takes to spending his money on liquor and his time in seedy nightclubs. In the final bar scene, Marvin Gaye's "I Heard It Through The Grapevine" (the perfect song for the occasion) comes on the juke box and his wife strolls in. She had come to take him home to Cape Dorset, and once there, he seemed vastly relieved.

Edward Folger, who wrote, directed and edited the film, traveled to Frobisher Bay to research his subject first hand. "Prince Charles was touring the Arctic with his entourage when I arrived so there were no rooms in the hotel where I could stay," he said. "I wound up being taken in by people I met, on the street

or wherever, who brought me into their homes."

"I stayed in Frobisher for three months, living just as the Inuit did, eating their food — and learning about their lives. I count myself very lucky that the

hotel was full and that I was taken in by the Inuit."

When Folger went back later to the Northwest Territories, he found that his Inuit friends were helpful in rounding up a cast.



An Eskimo hunter, Ninguksiak leaves his village to make money in Frobisher Bay in Edward Folger's filmed drama, "Nanook Taxi".
Photo courtesy San Francisco American Indian Center