

Warm Springs Speaker Series

Barsh stresses the time is now. . .

by Pat Leno

American Indian nations have a choice of exactly what role they may play in world affairs today, according to attorney Russel L. Barsh. Barsh explored three roles in a presentation he gave at the Warm Springs Agency Longhouse on April 14. He presented to local people what directions are available to them as an Indian Nation during his talk on "The Role of Native America in the World Today."

Barsh is an associate professor of Business, Government and Society at the University of Washington in Seattle, and the co-author of a book, *The Road. Indian Tribes and Political Liberty*. He also works with the Mikmaq Indian Tribe as a legal spokesman in the United Nations.

According to Barsh there are three definite roles available to Indian nations, (1) to become a sovereign state within the world; (2) to become a state within the United States or; (3) to continue on they present course and to be eventually assimilated into the mainstream of America.

Each of the roles will cost Indians and Barsh feels that all Indians need to be aware of these choices and what the cost will be.

"Way to true Sovereignty"

The only way that Indian nations can retain a true sovereignty would be to give up all U.S. federal monies and assistance. Barsh stressed this could be a reality. The Indian nation would seek recognition as a nation from other world countries. It would mean that the Indian nation would have

to be able to sustain itself and would probably result in the Indian nation being a poor but independent country.

Barsh said this would be the only way to attain true sovereignty, but it would put the Indian in true control of his own destiny. There are several Indian Nations which are looking to this choice and they are preparing to sign the Human Rights Covenants (HRC), a statement of the United Nations. This step means no longer accepting the United States as having the final say on the self-determination of an Indian nation. The United States takes the stand that they have "plenary (complete and final) powers over Indian tribes as a result of treaties and executive orders."

"Limited sovereignty through Statehood"

The second alternative of seeking statehood within the United States would be the Indian nation on a co-equal governmental plateau with the rest of the states in the United States. With this choice, the Indian nation would remain in the present framework but would increase the power of the Indian. It would not take away any of the monies or assistance from the federal government. Barsh feels if a tribe doesn't want to seek the status of a world nation that this would be the best step to take and would give a tribe a limited sovereign state.

"Continue on the present course"

The final choice for a tribe as described by Barsh is for the Indian to continue on the

present road which he feels will eventually lead to the tribe losing its identity and its culture for it is this road that will lead to assimilation. Barsh expressed concern over tribes just continuing as they are because the present policy of the government appears to be headed in a direction of less and less assistance to Indian people. The present course of relying on the federal government for monies each year is financially dangerous.

Barsh stated that Indians may not be aware that the problems they face today are faced by many tribal peoples in the world and it is this common bond which gives the Indian nation the opportunity to seek recognition as a world state. The United Nations addressed this in its document of Human Rights Covenants act stating that people have the right to determine their own destiny. So many people in the world have an understanding of the problems that Indians face. The rest of the world has become aware of Indians and how their problems are being dealt with by the federal government. The rest of the world continues to view the treaties of American Indians and the U.S. government as a prime example of just how the United States lives up to its word. So many foreign nations take the Indian and his word, thus Indians have a great deal of credibility in world affairs.

Barsh said if Indians choose to enter the politics in the world they need to remember they hold a credibility and their word carries weight.

Barsh reviewed why the Indian nations have gained such a foothold in world affairs. He stated that in as late as the 1970s many countries in the world were not aware that

there were American Indians living on reservations in the United States. The issue of decolonization of all colonies in the world became a major goal of the United Nations. Indian resevations are viewed by many world nations as colonies of the United States and Canada. The United States held the position that the Indians of their country are not colonies but a minority within their society. The United States apparently resents any interference by other countries and the United States has not signed the HRC act, said Barsh. Since there are countries that will recognize an Indian tribe as a nation which meets certain qualifications, such as having a land base and a culture, the possibility of declaring its independence is there for Indian nations.

"World views the treaties as examples of U.S. Integrity"

The world nations are looking at the United States to see just how they are treating the Indian and the treaties they made with Indians. The treaties made by the U.S. and Indian tribes are recognized as documents made by international law, they are termed as agreements between two nations. It is this very issue of treaties and their treatment by which the other nations are judging the U.S., according to Barsh, the very fact that so many Indian nations feel their treaties have been violated and not lived up to becomes an issue with the world nations. Who can trust a nation that does not live up to its agreements.

Indians are ruled by Indian Federal Law, which is law

decided by the U.S. Congress and this law is not always in accordance with international law. So the rest of the world is watching and learning about a major power in the United Nations and its integrity.

"a high stakes game"

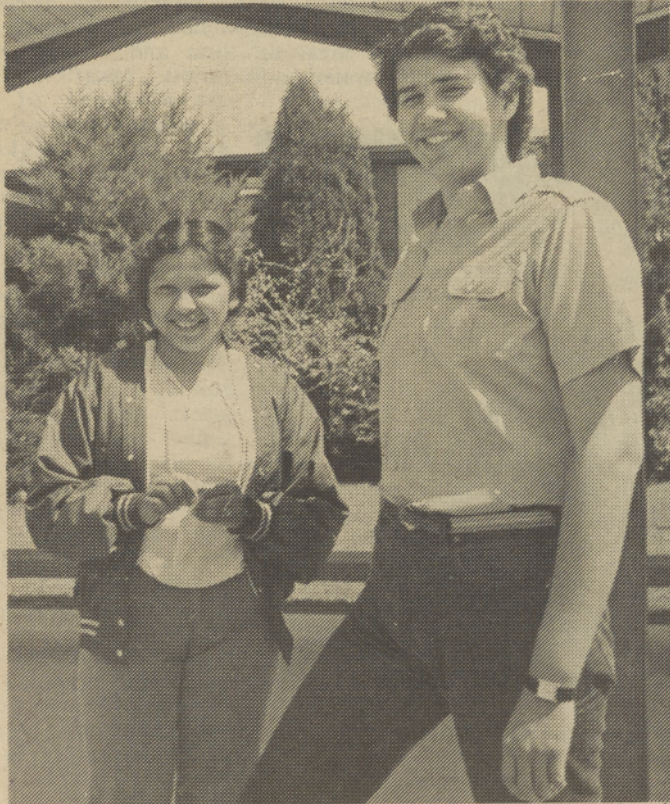
Declaring independence is a high-stakes game if a tribe chooses to go the road of becoming a world nation. It would cost the tribe monies which they presently receive from the United States. The Indian nation would have to be able to feed itself. They could not be dependent on a mother nation or they would soon lose their independence.

"free to make a choice"

"They would end up selling the future to pay for the present," stated Barsh. But if Indians want to be free to say what they want and be truly independent, the choice is theirs. The real enemy is fear and it is this fear of not being able to make it without the United States that will not stop most tribes from entering the arena of world politics. It remains for the Indian tribes and their people to make a choice, according to Barsh.

Barsh was the third speaker in the Warm Springs Speaker Series which is sponsored by Central Oregon Community College and the Lewis Pitt Sr. Memorial Funds. Cassettes tapes of the presentations can be purchased from Lewis Pitt Jr. for \$3.00 for the two-tape set. Barsh expressed his approval of the speaker series and its goals as being of great service to the Warm Springs people. It is a good program, according to Barsh.

Warm Springs students attend Indian youth conference



Raydine Spino and Merrit Youngdeer, Jr. earned \$50 each in an essay contest at the Eighth Annual Northwest Indian Youth Conference held in Seattle, Washington. Raydine won in the traditional category while Merritt took first place in the academic category.

by Ron Pinkham

Last week fourteen students left for Seattle, Washington to attend the Eighth Annual Northwest Indian Youth Conference. About 1,000 students from Alaska, Canada, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Nevada attended the conference. The 9th Annual conference will be held in Pendleton, Oregon. The evaluation by students stated the conference was a great

success, but there were too few evening activities for the youth.

There was an Incentive Essay award contest held by the conference committee, judged by outstanding Indian writers of Seattle. Community involvement, athletics, academics, and traditional were the four categories of the essay contest. Raydine Spino won first in the traditional category and Merrit Youngdeer, Jr. won first place in the

academic category. Each received a cash award of \$50.

The Alternative Education students received sixth place in the banner contest. All clubs and groups were asked to make a banner to identify themselves. Alternative Education's sixth place won them a \$5.00 check. Congratulations to all our students for their efforts.

Pink slips will be mailed this week. If you have any questions, please call me for an appointment with the teachers.

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