

Story telling an oral art Indian News Notes



"...and you know the story is true because if you look at the coyote today his flanks are light brown where they were singed when he stole fire from the fire gods."

by Marsha Shewczyk

Recently a storyteller visited Madras Jr. High school. The young people entered the auditorium thinking this was a good way to get out of last period, but listening to a story was not really too "cool".

And as storyteller Cynthia Orr began the tale of Mary Calhany and the dead man on her back, the young people began paying attention. Orr cackled at the appropriate time and laughed at the most effective time, just as the characters in the story should. The involvement of the audience became apparent as

shivers ran up and down each listener's spine.

Orr incorporated tales from Asia, Ireland and Native American stories in her presentation. Each story took the reader to a different place and time. Each seemed to have a message, a moral, a proverb to tell.

Orr is one of the 160 registered professional storytellers in the United States. She speaks to large audiences of any age. She tells stories of all kinds.

These registered storytellers aren't, of course, the only people who tell stories. A grandmother telling her children a Spilyay tale is a storyteller. A mother relating to her child the story of what happens to naughty children is also a storyteller.

What sets these registered storytellers apart is that they

tell stories professionally, to large audiences. But the enjoyment grandmother or professional storyteller gets from telling a tale is the same.

Storytelling is an ancient art, an oral art. It is the sharing of an event.

As different people tell the same story the details change. Individual ideas, emotional reactions and background color change to appeal to the various listeners. The same tale told to a group of children would not be the same as one told to a group of hunters.

In primitive societies the tales of physical achievements followed the nomadic tribes. The stories often stayed after they had gone.

As storytellers died others would take their places adding their own personal touches to the narrative. The details of the original story become blurred in the retelling but the essential part of the story remained. The moral or proverb remained the same.

People share common fears, griefs, joys and aspirations. So, through the years the same stories can be told and retold with the same value to the listeners.

Stories can link the known to the unknown. People away from home can be close to home with a story. Listeners can be in strange and unusual places in a story.

A story allows the imagination to run wild. Each mind will form its own pictures.

Through storytelling a child as well as an adult can have his imagination stimulated and enriched as new places and people come before him.

Through storytelling children learn the flow of language, imagery of words, rhythm of speech and patterns of reading.

Through storytelling a child learns to appreciate humor, bravery and the beauty of people.

A well-told story is ageless.

FARM BUREAU WANTS TO END TRIBAL-FEDERAL RELATIONS:

The American Farm Bureau Federation is drafting proposed legislation to end the special relations of Indian tribes with the federal government. The Farm Bureau proposal, according to a Gannett News Service report, is 'sparked by its members' frustrations with Indian land claims in the East, water claims in the West. The farmers also are irritated that tribes can sell liquor and operate businesses like bingo parlors without state approval."

A Farm Bureau official, Donald Rawlins, said: "All we want to do is get the federal government out" of Indian affairs. Rawlins said the proposed legislation, to be submitted to Congress, has the backing of the organization's three million members. He said the organization wants the abolition of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and termination of special treaty rights by purchase or negotiation for fair compensation.

SMALL RESERVATION IS ESTABLISHED FOR THE GRAND TRAVERSE TRIBE:

Interior Assistant Secretary Ken Smith announced recently that 12.5 acres of land in Lelanau County, Michigan has been established as a reservation for the Grand Traverse Band of Chippewa and Ottawa Indians. The land, comprised of five lots fronting on state highway M-22 along the northern Michigan shoreline, was purchased by the Band in 1981 and placed in trust status in November, 1982.

The Grand Traverse Band is an organized tribe federally acknowledged on March 25, 1980. In order for the Band to officially adopt its own Constitution and By-Laws under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, it is necessary that they have an established reservation. The tribal lands are currently being utilized for tribal headquarters and may support in the future a tribal housing or economic development project.

By proclaiming these lands an reservation, certain federal assistance programs will be made available to the tribe.

Notice of the establishment of the reservation is being published in the **Federal Register**.

BIA FUNDS ALLOCATED FOR RESERVATION JOBS PROJECTS:

More than 6400 man-years of employment will be created on Indian reservations in 27 states by projects to be funded through the BIA with \$114.5 million received under the 1983 emergency jobs act, Interior Assistant Secretary Ken Smith announced recently.

The act provided \$20 million for natural resources development on reservations; \$30 million for the Bureau's housing improvement program; \$24.5 million for the construction of a high school on the Hopi Indian reservation; \$30 million for the rehabilitation of Indian irrigation systems; and \$10 million for the repair and renovation of BIA jails on reservations.

Interior Assistant Secretary Ken Smith said, "these funds are helping to meet critical needs on the reservation, they are providing badly needed jobs now and strengthening the reservation infrastructures for future developments." Smith noted that the Indian reservations would be receiving additional assistance under the jobs act through the Indian Health Service, HUD and other Federal agencies.

The \$20 million for natural resource projects includes \$12.5 million for agriculture and range development.

Another \$5 million will be used for forestry projects, including the maintenance of forest roads. The balance of \$2.5 million is for tribal fisheries and stream clearance projects.

The \$30 million for housing improvements will benefit 87 tribes and six Alaska villages. Rehabilitation work on 36 Indian irrigation system will be carried out with the \$30 allotted for that propose.

The \$10 million for repairing jails will be used to bring 15 BIA jails on reservations up to health and safety standards and in compliance with the provisions of the juvenile delinquency control act.

The allocation totals by state is as follows: Alaska, \$5,183 (all figures are in thousands of dollars); Arizona, 49,347; California, 6,430; Colorado, 469; Florida, 290; Idaho, 880; Iowa, 192; Kansas, 315; Louisiana, 216; Maine, 572; Michigan, 568; Minnesota, 2,019; Mississippi, 330; Montana, 7,861; Nebraska, 143; Nevada, 6,142. New Mexico, \$9,027; New, 193; North Carolina, 77; North Dakota, 2,993; Oklahoma, 3,111; Oregon, 1,202; South Dakota, 4,517; Utah, 932; Washington, 6,682; Wisconsin, 1,457 and Wyoming, 1,585.

A note from education

Fall term scholarship applications are due in the tribal education office by Monday, May 30. Students should have their college financial aid packages and admission papers completed May 30. This early deadline allows the necessary time to the education department and the college financial aid offices to have the paper work completed by July. Any applications received after the May 30 deadline will be processed for

winter term.

All students will be required to come in for a personal interview to be scheduled in July and August. Those students returning to school will be required to provide a copy of their last grade report to determine funding eligibility. Tribal and institution funding applications are available in the education office.

Graduation is right around the corner. This year, the

graduation banquet will be held on May 31. Each year, the education department and committee searches for tribal member graduates who are living out of the area. Whether they be in boarding school, high school, completing their GEDs, college or vocational training programs, we would like to recognize them. If you know of anyone of whom we are not aware, please contact the education office or Josie Wolfe in the Council office.

Toe Ness

There is this fellow who attributes his great business success solely to his wife. "All these years," he said one day in his office, "I've kept my wife's pictures right here on my desk. And each time I look at it, rather than go home, I work overtime. YIKES

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There was this country preacher who always dragged out his sermons and bored everybody. One day his congregation decided to play a trick on him. When he preached he always drank plenty of water so they filled his pitcher half with water and half with vodka. He started preaching slowly and drinking his water; then he started speaking faster and drinking more water and preached a powerful sermon, everyone congratulated him on his wonderful sermon. "One thing bothers me though," said one of the members, "I always thought Cain slew Abel, I didn't know he kicked the hell out of him too!" YIKES

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