

# Tribal leaders "listen" with high-ranking government representatives

by Donna Behrend

Some people talk. Some people do. Sel-dom, it seems, do people talk and do. The first-ever American Indian National Listening Conference was held in Albuquerque May 5 and 6 to break the seemingly endless cycle of talk and talk and little do.

At the beginning of the conference, one delegate expressed thanks for the opportunity to speak, but hoped the government representatives would actually hear the many messages presented throughout the two-day conference.

Throughout the two days, the message was clear: Tribal sovereignty, basic religious rights and trust responsibility must be protected and enhanced. Wilbur Wilkinson of the Three Affiliated Tribes in the Aberdeen Area, stated, "The President expressed deep, profound commitment to Indian people. He recognizes the unique relationship between the federal government and tribal governments...We are not beggars coming to a rich man's table. We are only asking for what is owed to us. Without full implementation and commitment, these are vacant promises." He urged Attorney General Janet Reno and Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt to "use the power" of their offices "to assure Indian people are treated fairly."

He also asked the government's help in protecting the "weak from the ever present more powerful...Protect our rights and resources. We commend the President and you for addressing the crime issues facing all of

ated to "implement the Tribal Court Improvement Act...True, the deficit does need to be reduced, but the money saved is ours, and is used for services...savings should be put back to use at the tribal level."

"This is rhetoric—what we're talking about is past," said Mary Thomas of the Gila River community. "We must deal with the past and never forget it." She added that "many people are just now realizing what a powerful people we are."

Martha Renville of the Wahpeton Sioux

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tribe stated that "courts need additional money and...establish courts for small tribes. The government agencies need to treat all tribes the same." She added, "move the BIA from the Department of the Interior to the Department of State...the Department of the Interior deals with wildlife and flowers; the State Department deals with governments."

On Indian religious freedom, one attendee said, "The survival of Indian people is astonishing. The things that keep us going are our religion and faith. The whiteman has taken many things away from us—except our belief. We are trying to protect our religious rights."

We have been constantly under attack—we won some battles, but lost the war.

"Sacred sites" need protecting, he said. "The Persian Gulf War took place in every American home in the United States. A general ordered an officer to fight, but to be careful not to destroy their sacred sites. Wouldn't it be nice to have that general as the

**Catholics use wine in their religious practice. Why are Indians persecuted for using peyote?**

head of the BIA?"

Use of peyote in religious ceremonies is common among many tribes in the United States. Use is questioned by law enforcement authorities, state governments and even

the federal government. Senate Bill 10-21 has been revised and reissued "but we're running out of time. We already have religious protection through the US Constitution—but we don't live in a perfect world. We need extra protection."

In agreement, another attendee from the Albuquerque area added that sacred sites and secrecy of religion is important to "Pueblos. Protection of cemeteries, religious freedom and use of peyote must be included in legislation." He added that Catholics use wine in ceremonies and are not persecuted or punished. Why are Indian people questioned about their use of peyote, he asked.

"Indian tribes have their own ways. Why do we have to have special laws for our religion when others' rights are already guaranteed by the Constitution? But, that's the way it has been for Indian tribes all along. When there's no federal law, sometimes it's every tribe for themselves."

One delegate summed religious freedom up for attendees. "Our religion is very peaceful. We don't have war among Indian people about religion like in Ireland and other countries."

"The United States has taken away much

**The U.S. has taken away much from Indian people. They have gone too far when they start telling us how to pray.**

from Indian people," said a Navajo delegate. "Our land, water, sacred sites. Government has gone too far when they start telling us how to pray. The only one who can tell us how to pray is our Creator."

Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Henry Cisneros was present during the second day of the Conference. During his presentation, Cisneros spoke of his concerns for housing in Indian Country. Cisneros commented that the design and architectural style of HUD homes built on reservations should be relevant to the heritage of tribes. "HUD is too controlling and inflexible" concerning housing units, he said.

Cisneros also listed numerous other faults of HUD, such as poor and substandard quality, lack of oversight by contractors, poor maintenance, lack of running water and sewer, particularly in Alaska, even in new homes. "Rental rates are closely tied to income—thirty percent. This is a disincentive to work."

To address the growing housing needs in

Indian Country, Cisneros said full service Indian housing offices will be opening in Albuquerque and in San Francisco. "I have also been authorized by the President to

**Tribal courts and law enforcement agencies are badly underfunded. More money is needed for these services.**

establish a working group on Native American Finance Authority to finance housing for Indians, Alaskan Natives and Native Hawaiians. I have a 40-day deadline to develop the strategies to put this in place." Cisneros expects to tap a "larger capital for new housing units, either rentals or for purchase."

Many participants asked that budgets for tribal courts and law enforcement be beefed up. "We do need more money for improvement of services," said Robert Salgado, Chairman of the Soboda tribe in California. "We can get all the money we need, but until we change, nothing (violence, drugs and alcohol) will get better. Our young people lack positive role models. We need to wake up in Indian Country. Seventeen years ago, I woke up. It doesn't make me better it only makes me one thing—sober. Children learn at two or three what violence is about. We have learned we don't need that."

"We have all lost someone to alcohol. But until we wake up and clean up our act, nothing will change, even with all the money in the world."

Richard LaFramboise, chairman of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, agreed with Salgado. He cited several statistics related to drugs and alcohol. "Eighty percent of the suicides are related to alcohol and drugs, 87 percent of family violence is related to alcohol and drugs, 71 percent of child abuse is drug and alcohol-related and 98 percent of spousal abuse is related to alcohol and drugs. We need to be sober when we're making our decisions. Tomorrow is for our youth, not parties."

Many tribes across the United States have turned to gaming as a means of economic

**Gaming is a means by which tribes are strengthening their economies.**

stability. Tribes have begun to provide additional schools, improved health care for children and senior citizens, employment, homes and elder care facilities. But tribes, as is often the case, are faced with opposition from their states. "The state is standing in the way of gaming progress," said one leader from Alabama. His tribe, he said, is at an impasse after 17 months of negotiations. Their case "belongs in federal court, not the state. I ask you to remove the impediments of progress."

Another representative recommended a national data base for background checks on gaming operators. "We need to know that organizations are clean so we don't allow the wrong element into our operations. The Justice Department should spend the money to put all this together." He concluded, saying,

**Indian gaming is one of the fastest growing industries in the U.S. and some areas are over-saturated with gaming.**

"I hope this is truly a listening conference and that you put some action into what has been said."

"Indian gaming is one of the fastest growing industries in the United States," said another conferee. "Some areas are over-saturated with gaming. Class III gaming (video) is the most profitable to tribes and the states object to it. Any gaming considered by Indians should be Class III."

The Winnebago tribal chairman stated "Tribal governments have the right to decide how land will be used—for schools, housing, commercial ventures. The ability to make decisions goes directly to the core of managing tribal resources on our own land base. Once tribe has decided where to locate a casino, the state can then negotiate with a tribe. Tribes are required to negotiate a compact with the state. If the state doesn't like the location of a casino, they can simply refuse to sign a compact."

Even with all the pluses of gaming, Cisneros warned tribes about building their entire economies around gaming. "Gaming is a cyclical industry. Be careful. Invest in other growth industries. Not everyone can work in gaming. Remember, when improving services, you must add people to provide those services."

**We are not beggars coming to a rich man's table...We only ask for what is owed us...**

America. But legislative drafts of the anti-crime bill lack mention of Indian tribes. We suffer more than the rest of the nation...Make Indians the true benefactors of this initiative."

Siting financial problems, one delegate noted that 1,300 positions were cut from the Interior budget. He asked that money from those positions be used to take care of underbudgeted programs. Another conference attendee recommended that BIA and IHS programs "be transferred to tribal control with tribal council being directly responsible" for the operations. He also stated that "federal bureaus have been reluctant to support self-determination and the Bureau continues to make policy."

A spokesman from the Billings Area recommended that money should be appropri-

**END OF SCHOOL YEAR  
MINI-POWWOW  
Thursday, June 2nd  
Grand Entry for Grades 1 & 2 at 1:15 p.m.  
Grant Entry for Grades 3, 4, & 5 at 2:15 p.m.**

## Drinking for what?

To the editor,  
Drinking for What?  
We drank for happiness and became unhappy  
We drank for joy and became miserable.  
We drank for sophistication and became obnoxious.  
We drank medicinally and acquired health problems.  
We drank for relaxation and got the shakes.  
We drank for confidence and became doubtful.  
We drank to make confidence easier and slurred our speech.  
We drank to forget and were

forever haunted.  
We drank to erase problems and saw them multiplied.  
We drank to cope with life and invited death.  
I dedicate this poem to my Mom and Stepdad. They have been sober for the last four years this coming June and July. It took a lot of courage to do what they did together and are doing now. And I would like them to know that I am very proud of them. Happy 4th birthday to the both of you and hope that there will be many more to come.

With lots of love from  
Lou-el and Jaime Rae



Happy Birthday, Birthday Baby  
Who is Sweet 16 I Love you son,  
Mom & Renee

## Thanks for supporting Jake

To the editor,  
The families, relatives and friends of Jake Suppah do wish to thank everyone for being supportive during our fundraising endeavors.  
The Suppah Family for the donation of the 2 year old colt and the many beaded and other items; Spilyay for advertisements, KWSO for announcements and to each and everyone who donated time, items, efforts and having the never ending strengths and energy to keep on with sales, all the communities who gave support of buying raffle tickets and especially those who enjoyed the Sunday May 8, Mother's Day Breakfast. We do hope everyone enjoyed themselves. Following are the results of the raffle: Grand Prize Tony VanPelt; L. quilt Scott Moses; L. quilt Joseph Anderson; Baby quilt

Bill Christenson; Baby quilt Jazzy Wewa; Doll board Sandra Brunoe; Halter/lead rope Marilyn Wagner; Halter/lead rope Joe Warner; Quilt Richard Tohet; Afghan Margaret Suppah; Afghan Delphine Scott; Embroidered Pillowcase Kevin Ball; Sentry Gift Certificates Wolfman Suppah, Oscar Queahpama, Adeline Miller, & Chasen Walker; Yarn Bags Jill Suppah, Sabrena Boyd, Steven Sutterlee and Jeanine Kalama; Beaded purse Bullneck Heath; Beaded hair barrel Marilyn Wagner; Beaded Earrings Harrison Davis, Jr., Karrienne Luijon, Blanche Simmons, Lorraine Suppah, M. Minthorn, and Sue Funkhouse; Beaded Pins Bill Moses, Gene Rednose and M. Minthorn; Side purse Delvis Heath; Beaded key chains Sean McConville, Gideon Farrow, and Rosa Bill; Beaded bolo Rafeal Queahpama; Baby moccasins Merle Kirk and Lorraine Suppah; Pillows Marceline LeClaire, George Clements and Enos Herkshian; Blanket Miah Farrow; Small yarn bag Charlotte Herkshian; Blanket Manny Jim Basketballs Patches and Marie Tom; Deep Fryer Captain Moody; Rope Florene Scott; Shawls Ellen Johnson and Reuben Kinney; Pin Sidney Richards and Home made Jelly Waymom Harry.

The Suppah Family

## Portland powwow set

Second Annual Memorial Day Pow Wow to be held at the Portland International Speedway on May 27, 28, 29, 1994. Friday Pow Wow will start at 5 p.m. until 10 p.m. Saturday and Sunday will be from noon until 10 p.m. For more information call (503) 286-3459.

## Iron Bears place second in Nebraska tourney

To the editor,

The Warm Springs Columbia Iron Bears placed second after 7 games at the Winnebago, Nebraska We B.A.A.D. Girl's & Boy's Basketball Tourney 15 years & Under.

The Warm Springs Columbia River Iron Bears, girls 4-H Basketball Club was cordially invited by director Terry Medina, a long time friend and brother, to the first annual Invitational Boys & Girls Basketball tourney, up in Winnebago, Nebraska. Our girls had represented Warm Springs Confederated Tribes very well. Many compliments came from the people of Winnebago. Some were very impressed over our girls after four games in a row to the championship on Sunday. The girls had beat the All Stars of Winnebago in their third game. But being a true double, they had to play the Winnebago All Stars again. To their advantage, being only their second game and our girls' fourth. Even if our girls were tired, they never gave up. They were still giving it all they had. Still on the floor going for the ball and running

hard. The two oldest girls we had was 14 years old, which was hard playing girls a year or two older but was a great experience. And a great incentive, our girls earned a lot of honors from the people from Winnebago.

We were treated very well. The room and board and meals were taken care of for three days and nights by their Tribal Court, Parole & Probation and Gaming Commission. The girls were presented Winnebago T-shirts and got to go to the Winnebago Casino in Iowa to eat in the buffet. Also sent into Sioux City, Iowa to do a little shopping. The Bears also go to make a lot of new friends while attending the dance and tourney. It was a great honor to be able to get up and make a presentation and also named off all our girls. Farrell Lucei and Marissa Kalama had made their presentation. Both spoke very well. The Bears were also short in height compared to the girls from Sioux City, Winnebago and Santee but because of their speed and experience, they came through the back door for second. They were presented with second place T-shirts. Marissa Kalama and TaraLee Suppah received All Star T-shirts, along with participant T-shirts.

The Bears third game played against the Winnebago All Stars was a very exciting one. These are the girls that participated: Shasta Smith, Marissa Kalama, Darlene Frank, Marie Kalama, Farrell Lucei, Roberta Thomas, Taralee Suppah, Myrna McConville and Katie Stone. Chaperones were Nellie McConville and Emy Lucei. The people of Winnebago would like to see our

girls come back to their community again. And also would like to come down to Warm Springs. This trip was a great learning experience, stopping off at historical sites and at a Museum in Sterling, Colorado. The Bears got to go to their gaming commission of the Winneveg Casino, their Tribal Court, Parole & Probation and the I.H.S. Terry Medina became well known by our girls along with their new friends. All the way home I heard our girls talk of their new friends.

There was a great loss of a loved one while we were there. Terry's wife had lost her sister. Our girls and chaperones attended a meal and went around and shook everyone's hand like we do here at home. And before we left, Terry had gotten permission from the elders to go on with the Tournament because of our team traveling so far to be there. It was a great honor to be honored by the elders and family. My prayers go out to the family. May the Lord bless you Terry and the family of the loss of a loved one. Thank you people of Winnebago, Nebraska.

And also many thanks to my wife whom I could never thank enough along with my sister-in-law for their great fund raising on the auction and feed. Thank you J'Dean and Sarah. You've done a lot, along with great respect from myself and The Bears, also thank you to the sponsors. Could not have made it without your good hearts, Arlene Boileau of 4-H and WSPFI, Erickson's Sentry, and Terry Squiempfen for keeping up the 4-H van. Thanks Terry.

From Coach Foster Kalama & WSCR Iron Bears

## Hello, from Pastor Rick

to the editor,  
Hello from Pastor Rick.  
One day, I was speechless. I got into a talk with someone who's point of view was: "When your time is up God takes you." I know from many years of funerals and talking with people that this is a dominant point of view in the world. It is a view held by many cultures and peoples. I was speechless because I heard this view again I heard a small voice that spoke one word in my mind. Hopelessness. Hopelessness, a word that is filled with emotions of why bother? Why try? What is the point of longhouses, bells, or sermons when all efforts of a walk with the Lord can be thrown out at the whim of God...Why such a belief that the Creator signs-off on a death list each morning of People, animals, insects and plants. Then

maybe he looks at a birth list and decides which of his creation of people, animals, insects and plants will be deformed. Or die early. Or make a note for a long life. When did our God get into bookkeeping.  
For me, the truth is that life and death is known by God. But that the elements of life and death were put into the hands of the food chain, old age, probability, disease, growth etc. These and other areas are a part of the cycles of life and death. All put into motion long ago when a man named Adam and a woman named Eve were sent outside of the garden. This gives me hope. I am full of hope to know that my God is above the cycles of life and death. That in the middle of living life; the good and bad. There is my God...This is Pastor Rick. Warm Springs Presbyterian Church.

by Dancing Light