

# Miss Warm Springs title goes to 21-year-old Arlissa Rhoan

Three young women vie for title during January 9 ceremonies at Agency Longhouse.



Mandy Switzler, Direlle Calica and Arlissa Rhoan, left to right, participate in honor dance for outgoing Miss Warm Springs Sunmiet Minnick.



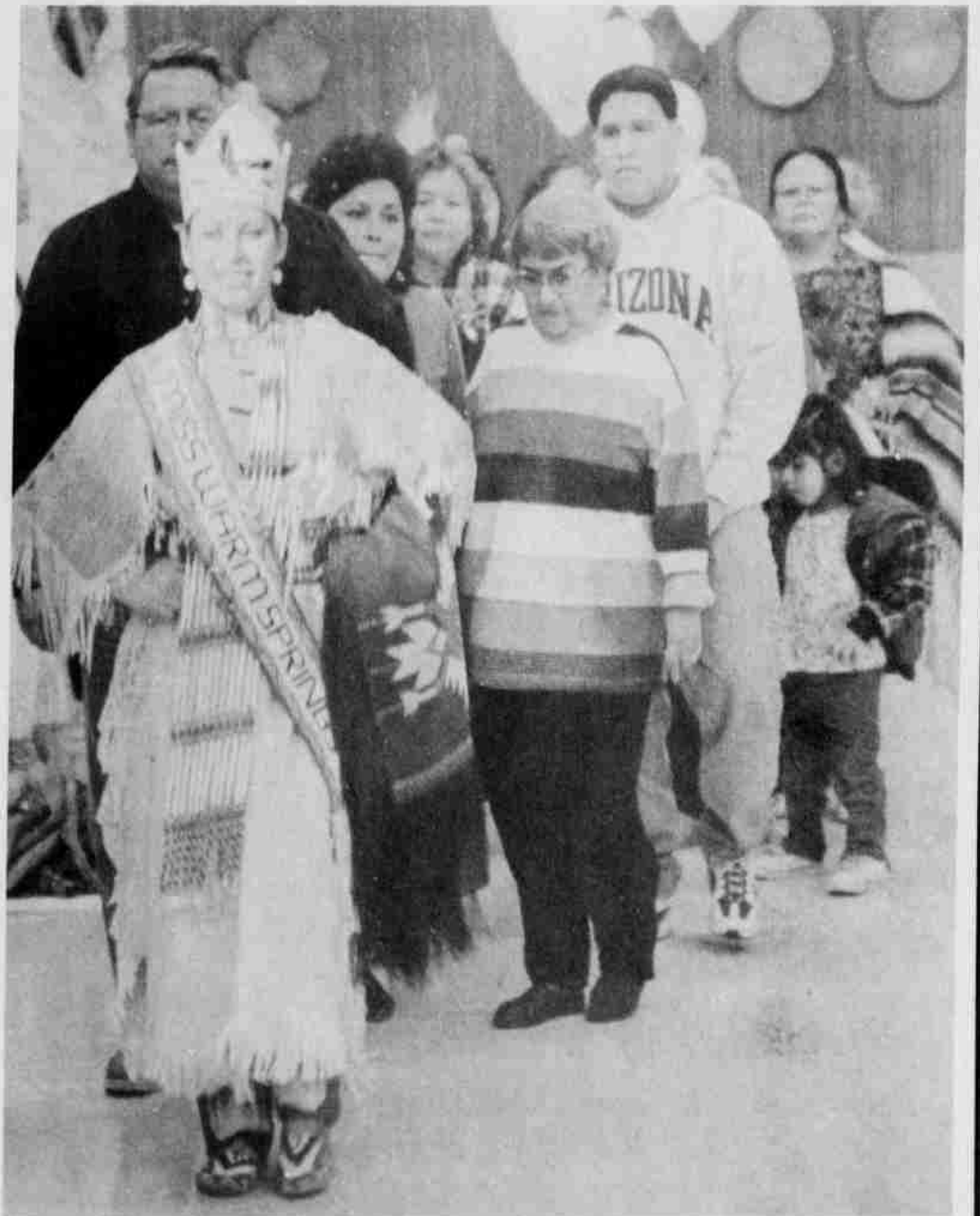
Arlissa will act as ambassador for the Confederated Tribes throughout the next year.



Direlle Calica performs Butterfly Dance.



Mandy presented a speech.



Sunmiet, her family and friends during farewell dance.

**by Mandy Switzler**  
 In the Indian nation, it is understood by all that we each hold our own place in the tribe. Native Americans believe in the Circle of Life. We are all important and we each must exist. (The young ones, the elders, the men as well as the women) The young ones are held valued, for they are our future and we must protect them. Without the children we would surely perish. The elders are respected and they are held precious. The elders are honored because they are wise and have seen the past, so they have the knowledge to teach the future generations. (We seek them for advice) they will teach us through their many stories. Without teaching and guidance from the elders we would surely perish. The men are needed to hunt and provide meat. The women are needed to take care of the children. Without the men and the women to provide for children we would surely perish. No matter what age you are, there is a dance in your heart. If you have fire and flame in your heart, you will have the drive to be a Fancy Dancer. If your days of being wild and untamed are over and now wish only to be calm and graceful, you have the dance of Tradition in your heart.

A Fancy Dancer can be described as the wife of a warrior, or a warrior herself. It is hypnotizing to watch her dance. You think to yourself, she is beautiful and her outfit suits her well. The outfit is appealing; the colors are bright and magnificent; yellows and oranges seem to dominate the dress while the shawl is black with long black fringes. Those are the colors of the flame. She is young and passionate woman. She has an animalistic passion. It is the same passion inside an eagle-to be free and to fly higher than any other bird; it is the drive to be fierce like a bear, it is the passion born deep within her. You can see passion in her movement and in her face; it gives her the energy to keep on dancing while the others have stopped to rest; it is the force that guides her feet to dance. Her dance is enigmatic; she twirls and twists her body and feet in unison; They move in rhythm of the drum, which is the heartbeat of the land. She never stops dancing until the song is over, for the song seems to surround her and control every step. As you look further on the dance floor, you notice a different style of dancer dancing to the same drum.

A Traditional Dancer can be described as the wife of a chief. She is an old and wise elder and a well-respected woman. Elders have the right to be unhurried because they have seen an unpleasant past. She no longer has it in her heart to prove herself. The passion inside this woman's heart is not that of fire and flame, but that of peace. This elder is your grandmother. As you watch her dance you get the feeling she is not dancing for herself but for the whole tribe, perhaps she is dancing for all your ancestors. It is a dance of honor.

Photos by Daniel Lawrence