

# Tribal member, Marcus Mosely, speaks on "Indian Alienation" . . .



"Spider Moccasin," Marcus Mosely, Warm Springs tribal member.

Marcus Mosely found his identity in stages. As a Wasco/Warm Springs tribal member transplanted to Beaverton High School, he bristled at first when jocks called him "Mr. Moccasin" but gradually accepted it and adopted it as a joking nickname. Then during a period of personal crisis and re-evaluation in his early 20s, he remembered "a supernatural incident" from his childhood, a religious healing ceremony in which a spider made a mysterious and shocking appearance.

"All of a sudden that spider came to embody all the issues in my life," he says. "The person who was the focus of the ceremony had been struggling with future shock. I came to think of that spider as representing the modern world, the white world. And I decided that that spider wasn't an angel or a demon, it was just the issue, a reconciliation between Native American people and all the other folks that are here now. Just thinking about that spider in a spiritual way, it became clear to me that Spider Moccasin was my identity."

The 33-year-old Pacific Northwest College of Art graduate has been making his mark for the

past decade not as "timid Marcus" but as Spider Moccasin, a cheerful firebrand who spreads his creative energies widely. He's a musician who's played at such clubs as Satyricon and the late, great X-Ray Cafe; a muralist whose paintings have graced the walls at the Mercury Room, Montana's, Movie Madness and elsewhere; an underground cartoonist; and an activist who plays political benefit shows and organized a canned food drive last fall for NARA Indian Health Clinic.

He's also part of a group called 20 Foot Man that's recently received a Regional Arts & Culture Council grant to mount an elaborate multimedia show this summer from a barge cruising up the Willamette River. And it's as a singer-songwriter, in particular, that he addresses the painful challenges of cross-cultural reconciliation.

The Oregonian caught up with the usually skittering Spider at LaCruda in Southeast Portland to talk about waking between worlds.

**Q: First off, do you prefer being referred to as Indian, Native American, Wasco or something else?**

**A:** People have asked me a lot

through the years. I've always wondered how people from India feel about us being called Indians. You'll meet traditional, very orthodox Indian folks who are "walking the red road," and they're very strident about identifying themselves as Native Americans or by their specific tribe. I answer to a lot of titles. But it's very complex. For example, I'll refer to myself as a "tribal member" because there are so many Native Americans that are cut off from their villages, or tribes, or homes, or that come from tribes that aren't federally recognized.

**Q: Does that reduce the importance of identification by tribe?**

**A:** There has been this homogenization of American Indians. For example, I'll be asked if I speak Indian, as if there's a common language for this staggeringly varied culture. As if a Greek person would have anything in common with a Norwegian person. It's curious that so many folks can live here without really knowing that there are at least three languages that are indigenous to this region or that there are 10 federally recognized tribes in the state of Oregon. Any many a gig, between songs I'll ask the audience if they can name them all. They usually rattle off the names of the casinos they know.

The way the history books are written, one would think there were only dinosaurs and then Lewis & Clark. There's even a new book that was just published last year, a history of Deschutes County, and it's staggeringly thorough, except for a voice from the natives. Finally, on something like the next-to-the-last page of this fat book, you find something to the effect of, "And so the Wascos were moved to the Warm Springs region." It's this glib little non-threatening sentence that actually refers to a forced march where they'd lived by fishing from a river, and walk through the snow to live in a desert.

**Q: As a kid in Madras, were you aware how much slanted history you were being fed?**

**A:** I was lucky. I grew up with parents who were serving on committees and councils and were just immersed in the language of American Indian politics in the '70s and '80s: education, community reform, planning. My mom was on

the American Indian Policy Review Commission in 1976. I have uncles who were the chairmen of the tribal councils. So as a little boy, I grew up with books like "Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee" and "Custer Died for Your Sins" on the coffee table. So I was aware of the illusion in the history books.

**Q: Why did you move to Portland?**

**A:** We moved when I was just starting high school and my mother was concerned with my lack of challenge in Central Oregon. It seemed as if high school in Madras wouldn't prepare me for anything beyond working in the mill in Warm Springs, if that. What happens on many reservations is that Indian children are bused several miles to white schools. And that 17 miles between Warm Springs and Madras is profound. There a feeling of escaping from a concentration camp. But then the animosity by the local community has a real striking effect on the success or failure of the kids attempting to get through at these white schools. Most of us don't make it through our senior year. Most are kind of driven away.

**Q: You've often had to live simultaneously in the dominant culture and the native culture. In your music, are you trying to serve as an intermediary between the two?**

**A:** I see myself as a kind of steam valve for my culture. And I don't want people to mistake me for the steam. I'm just the valve. I'm aware of a certain grief that Native Americans have—they're horrified by the environmental damage, they're disturbed by nerve gas stockpiles being put in their back yard or the bones of their ancestors being dug up from sacred grave sites and put into museums and galleries. They feel very put off by this society. It's really bizarre how Oregon Indians are treated like outsiders. I have this card in my wallet, my tribal identification card from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, a federal document that the Bureau of Indian Affairs gives me. But I can't get banks or post offices to recognize this damn thing as identification. Or use it to get a hotel room, or rent an amp from Showcase.

**Q: Do you think the dominant culture is ready to hear what you have to say?**

**A:** I'm saying things that make

Oregonians distinctly uncomfortable. Even if I dress up a song about the Umatilla Nerve Gas Depot in swing or alt-country attire, many an audience has figured out that they're horrified by what I have to say. I played AIMFEST a few years ago, sandwiched between the Dandy Warhols and 30.06. I sang a song that has the chorus "red genocide, black slavery" over and over. And when I finished the song there was silence. Then one guy yelled "Get over it, chief." And he was shouted down by all the people around him, but that guy really hurt my feelings; I felt terrified by that. But a friend of mine told me, "No, Spider. You got to that guy. In fact, he's the one guy in that audience you know for sure you nailed." And now he's my favorite audience member from that show.

**Q: You've said that reconciliation with American popular culture won't come without acknowledgment of the genocide. How might that acknowledgment take place or be represented?**

**A:** Let's see. What if American Indian chiefs were invited to the United Nations? What if the White House had all the chiefs, or the major chiefs, or even just Ron Allen, the president of the National Congress of American Indians, for a state dinner? A simple gesture like that would have a profound impact on the nation.

**Q: What about in the realm of pop culture?**

**A:** Like in film, American Indians weren't always the bad guys. If we had more heroes other than Lou Diamond Phillips. On "Northern Exposure" the young filmmaker boy and the nurse, who were supposed to be the Indian characters, were major heroes to every Indian kid I know. Because they weren't bad guys, and they weren't stupid. The Indian boy was a pen pal with Martin Scorsese or something, as a plot device. That's the kind of mass media message I want an Indian kid on a reservation to get.

**Q: In one of your songs, you sing about casinos — "red skin, silver and gold." Do you support them as an economic engine?**

**A:** There's a misconception that all the American Indians have suddenly become rich from the casinos. Au contraire, I'm here to tell you, with food stamps in pocket, that

a small fraction have had great success. Many an Indian casino is not doing well. For example, the one on my reservation.

I think it's ironic that you see letters in The Oregonian from "old time Oregonians," and they say "we've never had anything like this around here." My people have been around here for thousands of years, and believe me, we've been gambling. Gambling is built into Native American culture in sport. We don't have the intensity, the criminalization that comes from gambling addicts.

**Q: How do your friends and relatives in Warm Springs view the city?**

**A:** People on the res. see Portland as a place to escape and got shopping. But we feel like an invisible people. Or a commodified people — a Totem Pole restaurant serving Buffalo Burgers, living rooms decorated with tribal motifs, that sort of thing. But some of the same people who have that stuff aren't even courteous with the Indians they come across. To a lot of Native American folks, Portland is an incredibly hostile place. I was student body president of my college, but the decade since I graduated it seems like the career choices I have are Burgerville, Burger King or McDonald's. This city seems very closed and is very frightened of someone who looks like me because I think they're worried that I could be an alcoholic or a belligerent Indian male stereotype. And I'm not.

There's this illusion that the Willamette Valley and the Portland area are incredibly liberal. But Portland is full of something that feels like apartheid for me and for the people that I'm singing to and singing about.

Spider Moccasin is the son of Frank E. Moseley of Hanford, California and Rosella (Leonard) Moseley (Tribal Member). He can be reached at KBOO radio station, 503-231-8032 for booking and will be heading up KBOO's Native American music.

This article was reprinted from the Oregonian at the request of Spider Moccasin and his family.

## Tribal member shares concerns about article written

To the editor,

It was very disturbing to read the article in our public Spilyay Tymoo, it was of very poor quality.

I would like to respond to this article regarding political business issues within our Tribal organization, the attitude and behavior displayed publicly.

I am Tribal Member and it concerns me about how our representatives are reacting to each other in the important position that we entrust in you as a decision making individual. Each person that was elected in as a Tribal Council Representatives or chief have a responsibility delegated to them by the people, to represent your district. It is difficult to understand that only one person is to blame for any wrong doing in the arena of business, is this to say—only one person is solely responsible and doing his job?

The most beneficial manner of doing business is to work as a team and achieve success. It is difficult to keep focus on important business when there is conflicts on-going. I certainly believe when you are in an important position within the Tribal structure there are some qualities you are expected to demonstrate to

your people, you are viewed from many angles.

It concerns me greatly, the very critical manner of opinions and remarks regarding our business issues publicly distributed to impact the Tribal Membership.

What I read in the Spilyay Tymoo is a direct violation of ethical conduct, are some of us exempt from disciplinary action within our Tribal organization? Acceptable standards? Over to backside for comment, let us call attention an expectation to professional conduct of our representatives and NOT allow our standards of performance to deteriorate. There needs to be a high quality performance with position. This article was a very open message the standard of operation. There are professional approaches to correct situations immediately.

Leadership qualities are valued by how you dispense and disclose yourself to the public, your actions are a direct reflection to the people about your capabilities to handle difficult situations.

Keep in mind the implications and confusion that is imposed upon our younger generations who are witnessing the standards in which

we operate our Tribal organization business. Awareness is our greatest asset and quality. Let us not distort the perception of others.

If and when you need to address Tribal business in a public manner, it may be wise to use discretion and be tactful.

It is almost dangerous to use such blunt, harmful and disrespectful terminology to your audience, against another person.

It could be identified as dishonorable in reflection to your own position and then it becomes questionable?

Let us uphold our Tribal organization with honorable respect for each other, over and above differences, it will carry our Tribal members and our community a lot further with promise of our future. Many people read the Spilyay Tymoo from far and abroad, and you can bet opinions are being formulated about our Tribal organization.

It seems a nuisance to publish such information publicly, this reflects the quality of publication of our local paper. (We don't want to read material such as Enquirer or Star gossip columns.)

It is not too late to up grade to

quality services within our Tribal business to exercise productive assets which will enhance and advance our people and community. It is important to keep a strong focus on what is our purpose and intent for what direct and meaningful approach in a professional manner.

We the Tribal Members entrust responsible conduct from representation in Tribal Council chambers.

I am not a public person or political, but I was very disturbed by comments in the last issue to Spilyay Tymoo. (Very distasteful & negligent) I have a great respect for all our Tribal Council representatives, because I have personally experienced what the life consists of when you carry alot of responsibility for the people within your personal household and family lives.

Pardon me, if I have expressed anything to offend anyone, that was not my intent. When articles are placed in the newspaper, I feel it is open to response from the public. Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

Respectfully submitted,  
Priscilla Frank

## Star Stickgame tourney a success

Dear Tribal Members:

Pi-ume-sha has come and gone for 1999. The members from the stickgame committee would like to thank each and everyone who was able to assist us in every capacity from the purchase of raffle tickets to the nailing of the boards on our shed.

We celebrated another successful year with our function. There were 21 teams entered which consisted of teams from Penticton, B.C., Canada to Reno, Nevada. Some visitors were from Ft. Hall, Idaho and California, and always, our friends from the Yakama Indian Reservation.

We enjoyed a lunch every day from the memorial on Friday to the farewell on Sunday. Our hosts were the club members themselves. Everyone enjoyed the weekend tremendously.

Our sponsors were: The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Indian Head Casino, Kahneeta Resort, and Warm Springs Forest Products Industries. Our club always feel very fortunate to have the confidence of our sponsors. They deserve as much credit as we can possibly give them.

We enjoyed selling our raffle tickets again this year. As we always say, we'd love to sell a winner to everyone, but that's hardly possible. These donations help toward the next year for our prize bracket, the meals,

raffle items and whatever might help our little group continue our existence. Anyone who won and doesn't claim their prize item by a week after the publication of Spilyay Tymoo will have their prize mailed to them.

The results of the tournament were as follows: \$3000 1st place to Ellie Bent from Penticton, B.C. \$1500 2nd place to Mike Bill from Wapato, WA. \$1000 3rd place to Charles Andy from White Swan, WA, representing Hidaway Lounge. And \$500 4th place to Eddie Two-Teeth from Helena, Montana.

To our club members: Barbara Starr, Paula Halliday, Nicole Clemens, Ramona Starr, Lenora and Orlando Doney, Vince and Romagene Joe, Travis and Vanessa Andy, Janice Gunshows, Richard Tohet, Lizzie Rhoan, and Nettie Dickson (who's still undefeated in quantity of tickets sold), I can't really express my appreciation enough for all of your assistance. There are others who assisted in ticket sales, but I'm at a loss to be able to name every person. Thank you to everyone.

There are still some things to be worked on, but, all in all, we had a great time with everybody. I only have the hope that we can improve even more with every year.

Thank you all,  
Sincerely,  
Sam Starr

## Thankful for help of community members

To the Community of Warm Springs:

I would like to thank everyone who assisted this past week during our rash of lightning fires throughout our community: Fire Management, Forestry, Fire and Safety, WSPD and numerous other folks across the reservation. There were many people who contributed to the success of the battle, and without your support it could not have been done. A lot of rain was helpful(!).

It has been quite a few years since

Warm Springs has experienced so many fires in such a short amount of time (90 plus fires in a few hours) and it was nice to see the overwhelming response from all departments and the community.

Once again, thank you for your assistance. It is nice to know that we have such a responsive and helpful community in crisis situations such as this.

Did I mention the rain yet?  
Bodie Shaw  
Forest Manager

## Items stolen, seeking information

On the night of July 13, 1999 while I was attending a funeral I arrived home at 12:30 a.m. to find that my home had been broken into. My 27" inch TV, VCR, and a Boombox had been stolen. Most of all I felt hurt that the peace and comfort of my home was stolen too. If anybody has information regarding this break-in or has had a person trying to sell Electronics to you I would appreciate to hear from you. Please call me at 553-9030.

Happy Birthday  
to Sid  
Wishing you many  
more!  
From the  
Spilyay Staff

Good luck TJ  
in your education!  
We're going to  
miss you.

## Think before you drink

To all my Natives on the Rez:

How is it going for you I hope it is good as for me ok. So this is for all my NATIVES the young Natives. You think it is fun drinking? Well no it can mess up your life because it messed up my life and some young natives lives like my life and my best native. So please think before you drink if not for your safety for your family.

Francis Spino Jr.

## Title IX to present youth workshop at Kah-Nee-Ta Resort

Title IX Committee presents the Warm Springs Youth Leadership Workshop for Middle School and High School students August 17, 18, 1999 at Kah-Nee-Ta Resort. The conference is titled "Meeting the New School Millennium through Positive Communication."

Workshops will begin at 8:30 a.m. each morning. A bus will transport students needing a ride. It will leave from the front of the Education building at 8:00 a.m. each day.

Title IX offers the workshop free of charge. If you are looking for some fun activities contact Charlotte Herkshun at the Community Counseling Center, 553-3205 or Tedi Tanewasha at the Higher Education office, 553-3311.

## Member says keep on keeping on

To the editor,

Hello, I know it's been a long time since I've written anything to the Warm Springs Spilyay Tymoo. Now, I'm sorry, but here are a few pretty cool phrases, I think, when we might be having a crisis in our life: 1. Who me? No, I'm a lady 2. What can I say 3. You don't say 4. Oh well 5. Oh yeah 6. Just gotta keep on keeping on! I hope you all who seen these phrases will help you in your life. We should all be positive! The year 2000 is only 4 months from now. Don't use your past as a blame or crutch. Just "keep on keeping on". "One day at a time", "Live Now"! Muchoe gracias very much.

P.S. Oh yeah, I would also love to wish my youngest son Avery Frank a very happy 14th birthday on August 25. I love you Avery Frank be good on your 14th birthday. Love your mom.

Everette Patt  
869 W 13th Ave. Apt. 2  
Eugene, OR 97401

Happy Birthday on  
August 20, to Thomas  
Medina from your dad,  
mom, brother, sisters,  
and the rest of the family  
who love you and care  
for you very much