

## Fife(Cont.)

second. Sometimes that's hard. But this is a news service, not an advocacy program. Every day we put our reporting on the line. I am not going to sacrifice that for anyone's private agenda.

"If someone calls with something concrete to deal with I'll find out about it and get all sides so that story is fair, accurate and balanced. But if someone calls and says, 'Hey, Bro, let's go get this guy,' I don't have time for that. I ain't going to go get the white man for them.

"I don't preach to the converted. I don't try to make the rednecks mad at us, or if we do, it's at least from an informed stance. I just want to make Natives and non-Natives think."

One common misconception the country still holds and should think about, Fife said, is that all Native Americans are the same.

"Indian peoples are as different from each other as Swedes are from Russians, and that's what I'm trying to put across to our listeners," he said. "At the same time, folks like being drawn into a national community. I want to help pull us together into one nation."

National Native News also seems to make a difference in how Indian issues get covered in many places.

Jay Baltezare, 40, has freelanced for Fife since the beginning of the news service. Correspondents get \$20 for news, \$200 for features. He first worked from Alaska, then from Idaho after moving there.

"After I moved to Idaho, (National Native News) spurred my interest in local tribes," Baltezare said. "It forced me to acquaint myself with those issues as a reporter. It puts a different dimension on the reporter's education of issues."

The United States has some 1.6 million Native Americans living in all 50 states, according to the latest census figures. National Native News is the first regular, daily communication ever between all those groups.

"National Native News gives us an idea of what other Indian people are doing across the country," said Roy Stone, 36, general manager of KILI public station on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

Though Native American tribes differ vastly, most congressional legislation an U.S. Supreme Court decisions affect all Native groups equally, Stone said.

"Some tribes make decisions based on local concerns," he said. "But if an issue goes through Congress or the Supreme Court, it will ultimately affect all tribes. National Native News tells us about such developments first."

Some stations in the contiguous 48 states repeat National Native News several times a day. Public station KWSO, on the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs in Central Oregon, broadcasts National Native News four times daily each weekday, and Friday's report also airs three times on Saturday. The station serves a listening area with about 70,000 people, 2,500 of whom are American Indians.

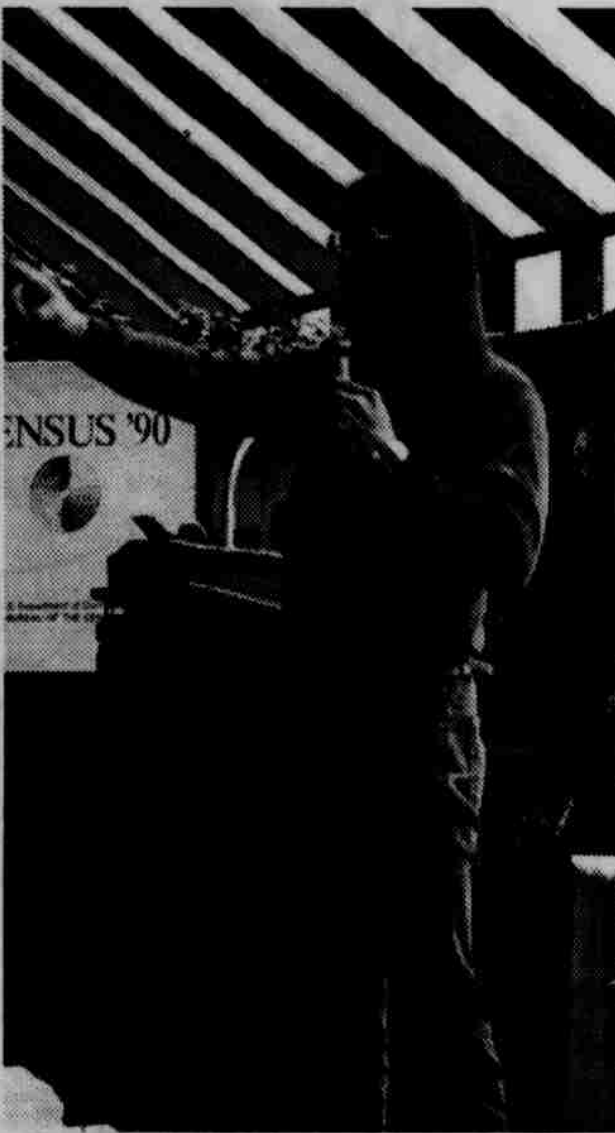
National Native News is "creating an awareness, like, 'Hey, I never knew that,'" said Gerald Smith, 40, KWSO's manager. "And the local BIA people, I know they tune in."

Fife has often had to fight to ensure his news airs during prime time, especially on the big city stations.

"I refuse to let someone ghetto-ize our service to 6:45 a.m. on Sunday morning," he said. "One station manager told me he would save up the segments all week and air them all at once on Saturday afternoon. I said 'Over my dead body. You're doing to us what you do to all minorities. The guy thought about it and called back and said, 'You know, you're right,' and began airing the service at a good time."

These days National Native News is distributed nationally by National Public Radio, giving it the "stamp

of approval" that means quality programming, said Cate Cowan, 38, an NPR spokesperson in the nation's capital. Apparently, mainstream public radio listeners are



Fife at the '90 Native American Journalists Conference.

enjoying the service.

"Our listeners like it, and that's why we air it, because people like it," said Jyl Hoyt, 43, managing editor of KBSU on the campus of Boise State University in Idaho, where the vast majority of public radio listeners are non-Native.

"It's good to hear news of Native Americans," Hoyt said. "Listener surveys also show a positive response to National Native News."

Fife's program has become so popular in parts of the Lower 48 that on one Indian reservation in North Dakota, Fife is considered the "Dan Rather" of Native American news Kaplan said.

"I was told that if Gary ever went there, he'd probably be swamped," she said.

Fife might go there to visit sometime, but he calls Alaska home now.

"I love it here," he said. "It's just the most fascinating place. And if you have any feeling for the Creator or for a higher power, you can feel that here. You also get a feeling for what this continent was like before the white man came."

"Fife's voice carries across that same continent every day from Alaska, informing Natives and non-Natives alike on issues affecting his people in every corner of America.

"What I do is just a natural extension of our oral tradition - storytelling" he said. "Really, that's all I do. 'The fun part is that I get to tell the whole country.'"

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- Courtesy of The Tundra Times



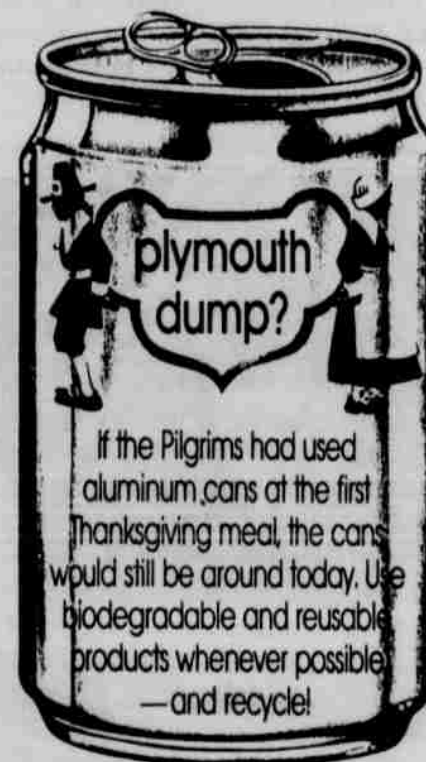
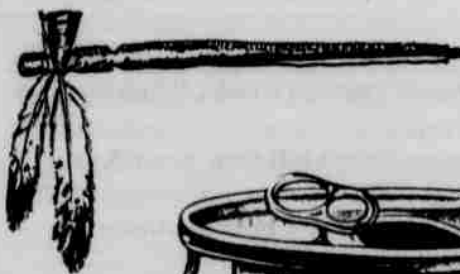
## 5 Tribes Gain Direct Control of Money

WASHINGTON - Five Indian tribes have signed agreements by which the Bureau of Indian Affairs will give the tribes direct control of millions of dollars in federal money.

"Through self-governance, we can better determine the services needed by tribal members and fulfill those needs without the bureaucratic delays of the past," Wilma Mankiller, the chief of the Cherokee Nation of Tahlequah, Okla., said in a statement.

Three-year agreements announced Tuesday also cover four smaller Indian tribes. They are the Quinalt Indian Nation of Taholah, Wash.; the Lummi Indian Nation of Bellingham, Wash.; the Jamestown Klallam Indian Tribe of Sequim, Wash.; and the Hoopa Valley Indian Tribe of Hoopa, Calif.

"This is a major step toward giving tribal governments full authority and responsibility for governing their reservations," Eddie F. Brown, an assistant Interior secretary, said.



If the Pilgrims had used aluminum cans at the first Thanksgiving meal, the cans would still be around today. Use biodegradable and reusable products whenever possible — and recycle!