

The Native Voice Takes On The Nation

■ Created an opening for a "positive voice" and a vehicle for teaching at the Tribal level.

By Ron Karten

In December, 2001, when *Indian Country Today (ICT)* picked up and moved from Rapid City, South Dakota, to Oneida, New York, *ICT* columnist Frank J. King III had a big idea. Three months later, the first issue of *The Native Voice*, a bi-weekly national newspaper going head to head with *ICT*, *News from Indian Country* and others, rolled off the presses.

King and wife, Lise, whose background is in MTV and South Dakota public television, sought to create "a newspaper around the culture rather than adapt our culture to the newspaper."

"We threw everything out," said King. "We asked ourselves, 'What is the commonality with every Tribe?'"

As a result, sections take the names, Warriors' VOICE, Women's VOICE, Elders' VOICE, and VOICE of the Youth. And, said King, "We just started an 'Amnesty' section."

To understand King's take on the publication, a look back at his columns for *ICT* is instructive. He used to bring back the old stories, the old lessons, and relate them to today's issues. Even today in *The Native Voice*, King continues mixing lessons and culture in the newspaper.

"Right now," said King, "if you ask a young person, 'What is culture?' they don't know. What we will do is reprint old, traditional stories, trickster stories, stories about behavior. And we won't just run them once. We'll reprint them. We're providing (readers) something they can learn from."

And King is out to change one more aspect of news today: "There needs to be something that projects positive stuff, an image of Native people, of culture, history, identity...Where you see a negative story, we see a lesson for the Tribe. We're not thinking on a national level. We're



thinking on a Tribal level."

Response has been exciting for the founders. "When we started out, we were distributing almost 8,000 papers," in the Dakotas, Iowa, Wyoming, Nebraska, Colorado, Arizona and part of Kansas. "We thought that was great," said King. "Then we grew."

Today, *The Native Voice* distributes 12,000 papers on its bi-weekly rounds, and includes locations from Washington state, north Texas, south California, western Pennsylvania with Nevada and parts of Utah still to come.

The paper makes this happen with seven in-house employees and a dozen or more stringers from around the country. The paper also invites Native students from the University of Montana, the home of www.reznetnews.org, to contribute to the paper.

Initial investment for the project was "very minimal," said King, who with Lise and a silent partner, have funded and kept the project going.

According to King, the most important tool that he brought to this project was "a business mind." King comes from a background in social services, in a treatment home. He learned over the years how to manage employees and accounts.

King moved from there to writing columns for *ICT*. Lise's work in media focused on promoting environmentalism and filmmaking. "I saw the

issues and wanted to figure out, 'how can I change these issues?'" said King.

The Kings have been involved for years in community business enterprises with rental homes, but now, with the newspaper as a base, they have supported many other social and cultural events. Among projects, they provide support for the Lakota Nation Invitational (LNI), a 16-team high school basketball tournament featuring teams from South and North Dakota Tribes. The newspaper provides free advertisements for struggling small businesses that support the Invitational. And 10-percent of ad sales go to a scholarship fund for the LNI.

Also among the paper's projects is the 27th Annual American Indian Film Festival and a 'Politically Incorrect'-style talk show for the Native American community called, "Out of the Box." Chris Eyre, director of the movie, *Smoke Signals*, will host the January 9, 2003 South Dakota Public Television broadcast.

"We try to re-educate people in the image of the Native American," said King. "We don't want people to look at us wearing buckskin and beads. We want people to look at us as human beings. The image of the Native has been dehumanized. Some non-Indian politicians believe that we still can't take care of ourselves."

A look at the latest issue of *The Native Voice* ought to dispel that myth. ■

Casino To Be Communications Hub In Case Of Disaster

■ Amateur radio buffs get together, get organized to help if needed.

Photo and Story By Ron Karten

When you are involved in the world of amateur radio, you have your own language, your own communications system and plenty of compatriots. Across Oregon, 5,000 are registered as amateur radio operators. Across Yamhill County, 300 are.

Now, the Spirit Mountain Casino has gotten involved, and with a \$3,000 grant, purchased components that will make the casino the hub of communications in the event of disaster that either cuts down or ties up traditional communications systems.

"One of the good things about the casino," said Don Smith, Assistant Director of Security for the casino, "is that we can come up with ideas and we can do them." He was referring to the idea suggested by Fred Rodley, a phone tech with the casino and the Emergency Coordinator for Yamhill County, to set up the casino as the area's emergency response center.

Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) is only one small part of the amateur radio world, but at the casino now, it is the most important part. Rodley, who has been an amateur radio operator for more than 40 years, said that in



Just In Case — Amateur radio enthusiasts Fred Rodley (from left to right), Johnny Jacobs, Jim Bates, Don Smith and Dave Geotz have formed a group of Spirit Mountain Casino employees who are interested in establishing and maintaining an Amateur Radio Emergency Services group here in the area. The group believes they could be helpful in the event of a disaster.

general, "it's next to impossible" to find companies to donate equipment for emergency response centers, but the casino stepped right up.

"Our main concern is the safety of our guests, the casino and the community," said Smith. "If we can do anything to secure that better, we'll

do it."

By mid-December, the casino was expected to be appropriately wired for the equipment, which is housed on a small roll-away table upstairs in the casino's Conference Room C — "the command center in the event of an emergency," said Smith.

Amateur radio enthusiasts like Rodley (N7LQD), Johnny Jacobs (KD7LYI), Jim Bates (KD7RGB), and Dave Geotz (KT7H) will be available on a voluntary basis to man the center. "We cannot, by federal law, be compensated for anything we do," said Rodley.

The group is always seeking interested parties, whether newcomers to amateur radio or old hams. Group members will shepherd a novice through the study required for a license, and the test, and note that equipment needed to get communicating can be as little as \$100.

"The hobby is so diverse," Rodley said. "(Some of) our members are blind or without limbs. Nothing stops them. (Whatever the problem) amateur radio operators will find ways around it."

And likewise for the many needs they fill in emergencies. Whether it is getting information out of disaster areas, or getting it in, there is usually an amateur radio operator around to get the job done. With the development at the casino in recent weeks, they are now just one step closer to home. ■