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The Native right to vote in New Mexico

by JES ABETA
Dawn of Nations Today

In 1948 Isleta Pueblo tribal member Miguel Trujillo went into the Valencia County Clerk’s office to register to vote. Valencia County Clerks refused to allow him to register. Why? Because he was a Native American.

Trujillo had fought for his country on the battlefields of World War II. After he returned from the war he began a new battle, for the right to vote.

"I’m sure that my dad had this in mind," said Trujillo’s daughter, Josephine Washonda. She said that even before her father joined the military, he was aware of the many inequalities throughout the country.

"He was determined to get things turned around if they weren’t right," Washonda said.

The New Mexico state constitution prohibited Native American people – referring to them as “Indians not taxed” – the right to vote in non-tribal elections.

Trujillo went to court to change that. In 1948, he became the plaintiff in Trujillo v. Garley and took his case to the state Supreme Court.

Washonda said her father’s quest for suffrage was confronted with opposition, from both Natives and non-Natives. Some Natives were worried that “we would become subject to taxes, that we would lose our land, our sovereignty," she said.

She said the opposition made her father’s success bittersweet. Still, "he felt it was the right thing to do," Washonda said.

By August of that year the case, Trujillo v. Garley, was decided by the New Mexico District Court. New Mexico Natives could no longer be held back in exercising their right to vote in state, county and federal elections. Or could they?

By the 1960s many groups of voters throughout the country were being disenfranchised by “Jim Crow” laws. The laws made it possible for elections officials to disqualify voters through various tests or for not paying poll taxes.

Poll taxes were funds that election officials sometimes required voters to pay before they could vote.

In 1965 President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, which guaranteed the 15th Amendment’s promise of voting rights for every citizen, according to the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division Web site, the act was meant to guarantee the 15th Amendment’s promise of voting rights for every citizen.

Specifically, section four of the act forbids states to use of poll taxes and literacy tests, which were commonly used to keep people of color from voting, to screen potential voters.

In 1970 and 1975 the act was amended to include stronger protections for non-English speaking voters. The amendments led to language assistance at the polls for those citizens.

Even with the protections afforded by the Voting Rights Act and its subsequent amendments, Native people could still see their political voices stifled.

Some problems for New Mexico’s Native voters surfaced in the international media during the aftermath of the 2004 Presidential Election.

The BBC’s Greg Palast highlighted voting irregularities in Taos and McKinley counties in his book “Armed Madhouse.” TheSee NATIVE, Page A4

HPV vaccine creates controversy

By APRIL HALE
Dawn of Nations Today

Education, longevity and side effects of the Human Papillomavirus vaccine are just some of the concerns raised by Native American parents, health care providers and even the New Mexico Governor.

The vaccine called Gardasil, approved by the Food and Drug Administration, is recommended for girls and women ages 9–26. It is given in three doses over six months.

Mother of a 16-year-old daughter, Cari Washburn, Diné, said she is ambivalent about the vaccine because she does not know enough about its effectiveness.

"I don’t know if it’s worth the risk," Washburn said. "On the other hand, if she doesn’t get the vaccine and ends up having it, the consequences will be much worse."
Student editor shares her experiences

By APRIL HALE
Dawn of Nations Today

Working with student journalists with no prior journalism experience is quite the daunting task, but I am proud of them all, like a beaming parent. It certainly is not easy to interview strangers, write a lead, self-edit and make deadline. Yet with some help and praise, each of the student reporters pulled through. Each student had their own pace and writing technique, which didn’t make editing less painful, but it gave each story its own voice. There were days I wanted to pull out my hair and days I was genuinely excited for the final product. Bottom line is these student reporters worked their butts off.

Under the tutelage of Mary, Patrick and I, the students truly turned out some quality stories. It’s difficult to teach story structure and organization, but some how we did it. For all of you thanking through the paper, seek out these student reporters, give them some feedback, they deserve it. I’m sure after being bombarded with the deadline monster, none of the student reporters will venture into a career in journalism, but at least they had the experience. And, I hope it was a good experience, well, I hope they learned something, if it’s not the 5 W’s then may be it’s the professionalism. Whatever the students take from this experience, I hope they remember that Native journalists are few and far between, and those that have actually broken into the business must work extra hard to stay there. Our small staff tackled some entertaining stories and pressing issues. Again, I am very proud of the student reporters. They worked hard. I am grateful that a couple of students from last year's newspaper class returned. Their membership was invaluable. I was excited to find non-Native students in the class and those with varied majors. The staff was eclectic with different interests and perspectives, but with the same goal: to turn out a quality publication.

I must admit there were times of frustration and doubt but the reporters surprised me with their writing and ethics. I learned that writing may be difficult for some and easy for others, but both sets require patience and guidance. As editor, my experience was interesting, a good interesting. I recognized both my weaknesses and strengths as an editor and leader. I am grateful to the Native American Studies department and Mary Bowannie for acknowledging the importance of Native media. I thank all the student reporters, contributors, the Navajo Times and readers for your interest.

Dawn of Nations Today Today | Student Staff


Production Manager
Patrick Willink, Diné

Senior Reporter & Cartoonist
Tobias Major, Métis Cree

Reporter & Production Assistant
Ryan Makkonen

Reporters
Micha Bitsinnie, Diné

Marcus Cleveland, Diné
Maria Gutmann
David Nationabah, Diné
Jonathan Pino, Zia Pueblo
Ty Roméro
Loren Toddly, Diné
Towana Yepa, Jemez Pueblo/Antishabe

Contributors
Andrea Hanks, Diné/White Earth

Band of Ojibwe
Kellen Shelendewa, Zuni Pueblo

Instructor & Managing Editor
Mary K. Bowannie, Zuni Pueblo/Cohcilti Pueblo
Native American Studies, University of New Mexico

Professional Mentors

Education | Language

The Native American Community Academy thrives

by MICHA BITSINNIE
Dawn of Nations Today

Teaching from the Native American perspective is a rare opportunity and privilege. The Native American Community Academy charter school is diverse because its students are taught from a Native perspective at the middle school and a Navajo language program in Albuquerque’s Public Schools (APS) system.

Kara Bobroff, NACA principal from the Navajo and Lakota tribes, said APS was looking at the "performance of Native American students in the school district," and started focusing on "issues" such as "how do you provide language, culture, or preserving identity" in education.

Bobroff and other advisors put their heads together and each brought in their "expertise, their passion" when creating the school’s curriculum. Bobroff said Language was an important factor because it connects to culture and identity. Today, the Navajo language is an important component of their school curriculum.

Clarence Hogue is Navajo and new to the NACA. He has been the Navajo language teacher for three months. He initially heard of the position in August 2006. He said he thought about applying but decided to stick with his current job. Then December rolled around and he recalls picking up the local newspaper and reading an article about the diminishing language of his tribe.

"I read only 5 percent of Navajo children speak fluent Navajo." The position re-opened at NACA and he felt it was an opportunity to do his part to raise the number of Navajo language speakers.

Hogue has the article thumb-tacked on the wall near his desk. "I keep it...to remind me, why I am here," Hogue said. It is April 10 at 12:15 p.m., Hogue’s fourth hour after class was about to begin. He teaches in one of the colorful trailers on campus. Inside, decorating the walls are posters of the alphabet, months, colors, numbers, shapes and all are in the Navajo language. The desks are arranged in a circle so that students face each other.

Hogue begins his class instruction for the day, which includes writing down their name and clans and answering in Navajo. All students who participate in the Navajo language program are from various tribes, including Blackfeet and Pueblo tribes.

Hogue said the class does not separate into beginning, intermediate or advanced levels. This approach makes teaching a bit difficult. Some of his students might have parents who speak Navajo in the home while others do not.

Hogue said he has a challenge finding a "balance" between "cultural teachings versus basic knowledge." He said having only so much time in the day to teach is hard. In the time he does have, he would like to teach the meaning of the cradle board or the significance of the four sacred mountains and Navajo language they can every day.

Hogue’s students were very comfortable in the classroom environment, teasing each other and using the Navajo language to joke around. The students were asked why their assignment for the day was important, one student answered, “So we know where we come from.”

Wallace Ashley, a parent of a sixth grade NACA student, watched his son struggle in public school. He decided to enroll him in a private school but the school did not fit his learning style. He heard about NACA and researched its mission statement and then decided to give it a try.

He found the “teachers are...
**Opinion Survey | Man In The Street**

**What do UNM students think about campus safety?**

On April 16, 33 students and faculty were shot and killed on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, Va. Dawn of Nations TODAY staff, Tobias Major and Ryan Makkonen asked students what their concerns were about campus safety at UNM?

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**Students speak out on campus police presence**

On April 16, 33 students and faculty were fatally shot and killed on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, Va. Dawn of Nations TODAY staff, Maria Guttmann and David Nationabah asked students how they feel about having a police department on the UNM campus.

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**Campus safety tips and information**

*Dawn of Nations Today*

In the event of an emergency UNM students, staff and faculty will be informed through email, radio and TV.

In an emergency the campus safety report advises people to dial 911. The call will be automatically traced by the operator, and if the call is being placed on the UNM campus, the campus police will respond. If the call is made off campus, the Albuquerque Police Department will respond.

There are also special telephones located around campus designed specifically for the deaf. There are also special emergency phones located on campus that are a direct link to the emergency line. The campus safety report has these Safety Tips.

If you go out for a late night snack or study break, go with a friend hot alone. Walk purposefully. Look confident. Watch where you are going. Be aware of your surroundings. Use well-lit, well traveled routes. Avoid short-cuts through isolated areas.

Lock all doors and close all windows when leaving your car, whether it is for a few minutes or for several hours.

Have keys ready when you approach your car. Check the car for intruders before entering and lock your door immediately after getting into your car.

Always lock your bike or motorcycle when leaving it unattended, even if it is only for a few minutes. Use the U-shaped high security lock whenever possible.

If you witness a crime, call UNM Police immediately.

List only first initials and last name in telephone directories. Hang up immediately on obscene telephone calls.

Don't keep large sums of money in your office, dorm room, study area or apartment.

Lock doors and windows, even if you are just going out for a minute.

If you are a victim of a crime or become aware of any suspicious circumstances call UNM Police immediately.

As of April 25th UNM has implemented a new system called “e2Campus.” This new system is a selective mass notification system. UNM plans to initially use the system for emergency notification. Staff, students, and faculty can sign up from the UNM homepage at [www.unm.edu](http://www.unm.edu).

The system will send out notifications to cell phones, e-mails, pagers and web pages. There is no software to download or hardware to buy.

Here are some important numbers to remember:

- Campus Safety Committee: 277-3361
- UNM Campus Police: 277-2241
- TDD Line: 277-0888
- For Non Emergencies: 277-2241
- Snow Hotline: 277-SNOW
- UNM Crime Stoppers: 277-STOP (7867)
- Victim/Witness Assistance Program: 841-7274
The Native right to vote in New Mexico

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book made the New York Time's bestsellers list and drew attention to the unequal distribution of voting machine types throughout the state. Palast contended that older inferior push-button machines had been distributed to districts with high Native and Hispanic populations. The machines, known as DRE's or direct-recording electronic machines, store the votes electronically. Some of the machines recorded no votes for president in the 2004 election. When that happens, the result is called an undervote. He said the implication was that there was an organized, state-wide attempt to dilute the votes coming from those districts.

Director of Elections for the state, Daniel A. Ivey-Soto, said that he could not comment directly on the allegations made by Palast. He did however, offer an explanation for the different types of machines in the different voting precincts.

"Prior to the 2006 elections, New Mexico used a variety of different machines," Ivey-Soto said. He said that since the machines where supplied by the counties in which they were used, the state had no control over which machines were used at any particular site.

Ellen Theisen, founder and co-director of VotersUnite.org, a national organization that compiles election data for public distribution, compiled voting data from the 2004 national and state election cycle. She said that voters who used push-button type machines had a much higher risk of their vote not being counted. In some places nearly eight percent of votes were "undercounted" by DRE machines.

Theisen also said that once all of the old machines where replaced, the undervote rates dropped across the board. The changes were most apparent in areas where the older, push-button machines had been used in the previous election.

"The machines lend themselves to disenfranchisement," Theisen said. There were many theories surrounding the lost votes, but the age and quality of the machines could be the sole culprit "the machines are crap," she said.

"In the 2006 elections New Mexico went to a state wide optical scan system, all counties used the same machines," said Soto, the state elections director. Voters now mark a paper ballot that is then fed into a tabulator. He said that the machines were purchased for the counties by the state using funds provided by the Help America Vote Act.

"The Department of Justice characterized the act as a way to "improve the administration of elections in the United States."

The act established the Election Assistance Commission, which set up a standards board for the commission and provided funds to states like New Mexico to replace outdated voting machines and provide for other improvements.

One of those improvements is the AutoMARK Voter Assist Terminal. The terminal can be programmed to help non-English speaking voters. The terminal also provides assistance to visually impaired voters.

Coordinator for the Native American Election Information Program (NAEIP), Martin Aguilar, said that the AutoMARK terminals were used in the 2006 election to assist voters who spoke Navajo. Aguilar said Keres, Tiwa and possibly Tewa would be included in the AutoMARKs repertoire for future elections.

Keres is spoken by people at Laguna, Santa Ana, Cochiti, Zia, Santo Domingo and San Felipe Pueblos. Tiwa is the language of Taos, Picuris, Sandia and Isleta. Pueblos, while Tewa is spoken at Ohkay Owingeh, San Ildefonso, Santa Clara, Tesuque, Nambe and Pojoaque Pueblos.

Zane James is the supervisor for the Navajo Nation Board of Elections and a former coordinator for the NAEIP. He was also the voice in the AutoMARK assisting Navajo speakers voting in McKinley County's 2006 election.

James said that it was sometimes difficult to translate the ballots accurately. Kimmeth Yazzie, program project specialist with the Navajo Election Administration, said that the Navajo Nation works with election officials in New Mexico, Arizona and Utah to develop and update Navajo words and phrases used in the balloting process.

James said that Yazzie's assistance was vital to getting the translations correct. "If I wasn't sure about a translation I drove down the street [to Yazzie's office]," James said. "It was an all Navajo staff that did the work."

From the voting and translation, to the production at KTNN, a commercial radio station owned by the Navajo nation, it was all done by and for the Navajo people. James said that due to some technical and translation difficulties, only McKinley County offered voting assistance in Navajo through the AutoMARK terminals.

"Planning ahead would really help this time," James said of future efforts. The 2006 election was the first time such an effort had been undertaken by a western state. James said the success in deploying the AutoMARK terminals in McKinley County proved that it is possible to do it for other counties with large Navajo populations. San Juan and Sandoval Counties are two counties that likely be included in the 2008 election cycle efforts.

Waconda said that she believes her father, Miguel Trujillo, would find many of the changes -- especially language assistance -- considerate on the state's part. "I'm sure he would consider it a great advancement," she said.

The Native American Community Academy thrives

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highly motivated...they love the kids!" Ashley said his son has learned a lot and is involved in numerous school activities: "They have community gatherings, they involve families... You'll never find a program where they can provide diverse teaching," he said. Ashley said he is pleased with the schools curriculum and the environment which embraces diversity and individual needs.

"A cornerstone of the NACA Web site it aims to preserve all that encompasses its tribal identity while "embracing the future."

Currently, the school serves 6th and 7th graders. This fall the school will recruit incoming 6th, 7th and 8th graders. The current 7th grade class will be NACA's first 2011 graduating class.

Lara Galinsky, vice-president of Echoing Green, an organization dedicated to social change, awarded Bobroff a fellowship in 2005 to begin the NACA.

Galinsky said Bobroff was awarded because "number one the idea and number two the person behind the idea..."

She said a number of Native American students are not getting their needs met and not doing well in public schools. A new curriculum is needed and Bobroff provides a new model that focuses on those needs, "it's compelling for us...it's a great idea!"

April Hale contributed to the reporting of this story.
UNM considers policy after hate crime incident

by MARCUS CLEVELAND
Dawn of Nations Today

A campus as culturally and ethnically diverse as the University of New Mexico still has its share of crises motivated by hate and ignorance.

In this country we enjoy the protection of the First Amendment, which limits our government, “Congress shall make no law... prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press...”

But, is speech really free? Concerns of public safety and cultural sensitivity are always brought to the forefront in answering this question.

In New Mexico, on April 1, a Native American concert series at University New Mexico, sponsored by Native American Studies (NAS), the Arts of the America’s Institute and University Studies was rudely interrupted by a pedestrian, who tried to silence the performance of Tribe 2, a Navajo rap group, by unplugging their electronic equipment.

The pedestrian walked “backstage” of the concert, which consisted of two long tables set up on the west lawn of Zimmerman Library. He began pulling at electrical cords and equipment. The pedestrian merely shut off the background music but the microphones remained on. Walking away from the concert and the crowd, the pedestrian yelled, “Fu@!!& monkeys...this is why we put you on reservations... all you speak is gibberish!” The audience, predominantly made up of Native American students, faculty and staff, reacted by shouting at the pedestrian telling him to leave.

According to the police report, it described the pedestrian as a man in his early 20s with blonde “shaggy hair” wearing a forest green shirt carrying a black backpack.

Steven Loza, director of the Arts of the America’s Institute, and Maria Williams, a professor of music and NAS, followed the pedestrian back to his classroom in Mitchell Hall. The UNM Police Department was notified and Williams, Loza and several other students provided information to the officers.

The following day Williams and several other witnesses were asked to identify the individual by photo line up at the UNM Police Department. The student was identified and a formal complaint of assault was filed against the individual. The UNM police report obtained on April 8, 2004 did not identify the student.

With such an overwhelming show of response and support from the Native American faculty and staff, University College Dean Peter White and NAS put together a two-hour forum to address concerns Native American students and faculty had about hate crimes on campus.

The forum was standing room only, in attendance were representatives from the Office of the President and the Office of the Provost.

After the incident, then UNM President Louis Caldera publicly addressed the University Regents in a letter on April 15, two weeks after the incident. President Caldera released a statement regarding the incident, which stated “On behalf of the University of New Mexico, I want to state clearly that we deplore the use of language intended to cause injury, and that we particularly deplore language intended to cause injury directed at individuals or groups on account of their actual or perceived race, ancestry, nationality, gender, sexual orientation or disability. There is no room for such injurious and divisive language on this campus.”

Although the student involved was expelled from the University in the fall of 2004, the response to the incident was slow and unremarkable given the racially charged nature of the event. The first campus attention given to the incident was an editorial in the April 9 issue of the Daily Lobo. The only immediate recognition was by ABC affiliate KAUT Channel 7 news, which opened its evening news as its top story. In the news broadcast, NAS student Rebekah Horse Chief and Loza were interviewed.

Subsequently letters and editorials appeared in the Daily Lobo for the 2004 issues of April 12, 13, 15 and 16. The April 20 issue of the Daily Lobo featured a news article on Ojibwe activist Dennis Banks and his reaction to the incident.

According to the Daily Lobo April 20 article, Banks said the student was not unplugging the band, but he was “... unplugging a nation.” Banks said the late response by the university was insensitive.

Hate crimes are prevalent on most college campus, which forces college administrators to address the problem accordingly.

UNM Regents’ Policy Manual 2.4 – Diversity and Campus Climate states, “The University of New Mexico is committed to increasing participation in the University by populations historically underrepresented to UNM (Hispanics, Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, students from rural areas and first-generation college students); recruiting and supporting a diverse faculty and staff, and fostering diverse intellectual approaches to teaching, research and creative activity.”

Currently, Robert Burford, judicial affairs officer for the University said a Hate Crimes Task Force had been recommended, and funding for a “Campus Climate Office” is being considered. When asked about a hate crime or hate speech policy at the University, Burford said “recommendations and considerations looked at when hate crimes or hate speech are involved, and are considered aggravating circumstance and enhance punishment to those involved.”

April Hale contributed to the reporting of this story.

Making Indigenous Day a reality

By MARCUS CLEVELAND
Dawn of Nations Today

Columbus Day is a holiday heavily debated among Native Americans, but for Suzanne Martinez it is more than a debate, it is a personal battle to replace the Columbus Day is a holiday.

Martinez was introduced to Columbus Day when she was a young girl, she said she took on this cause when she was 17.

Martinez used South Dakota’s success of the name change as a model for drafting the legal language and statute for the bill. In South Dakota, Columbus Day is now officially known as Native American Day.

South Dakota declared Native American Day in 1990. The statute states, “The second Monday in October, to be known as Native American Day, shall be observed in this state as a legal holiday. Native American Day is dedicated to the remembrance of the great Native American leaders who contributed so much to the history of our state.”

Martinez said she did not want to draft the bill as “Native American Day,” because the label “Native American” is a colonial term.

Martinez distributed her “8 Reasons to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Day” in New Mexico in hopes of support from Native communities and legislators.

Martinez said with a majority of the populous in New Mexico originating from Hispanics and Native American decent, the state seems like a prime candidate for a day of celebration.

April Hale and Jes Areta contributed to the reporting of this story.

8 reasons to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Day

by SUZANNE MARTINEZ
Islands Friendship Day” because of the atrocities committed in the Caribbean by Christopher Columbus and his crew.

1. There are 196,695 Indigenous people living in New Mexico and over 20 Tribes call our state home. (U.S. Census Bureau)

2. As an Indigenous person, there is no holiday paying tribute to your ancestors, the very ones Columbus encountered. Are you not as important?

3. Many Indigenous people view Columbus Day as a celebration of conquest and genocide.

4. South Dakota changed Columbus Day to Native American Day 18 years ago in an effort to pay tribute to the Indigenous people who thrive there still today.

5. Almost 20 states do not recognize Columbus Day and the U.S. Virgin Islands instead celebrates “Puerto Rico-Virgin Islands Friendship Day” because of the atrocities committed in the Caribbean by Christopher Columbus and his crew.

6. Indigenous Day would help educate the general public about the many contributions Indigenous people have made to our collective society.

7. The youth of our state would be more likely to self-identify as being Indigenous since this day would deem them with a sense of cultural appreciation.

8. It is the responsibility of our contemporary government to stop legitimizing the actions of Christopher Columbus. Let us demand they end the perpetuation of this historical fiction.
Native American programs raise HIV/AIDS awareness

by JONATHAN PINO
Dawn of Nations Today

Education among Native Americans about HIV and AIDS can be the best weapon in the fight against the epidemic. Kory Montoya, 41, of the Jicarilla Apache Nation, is HIV positive. He is the Native American representative on the steering committee for the New Mexico POZ Coalition a grassroots HIV/AIDS advocacy group.

He has been through a lot in his work to educate people, especially Native Americans, on the issue of HIV/AIDS prevention. Montoya said, “It is difficult to see our people not included on data pertaining to HIV...we are always referred to as other.”

Montoya has made a lot of sacrifices in his quest to educate, “I had to start all over again” he said. He has dealt with much including the loss of his family due to a combination of his HIV positive status and the small community that he comes from.

He said we have dealt with discrimination in the Indian health care system. One such instance of discrimination was when a registered nurse refused to help him when she found out about his status. Montoya has been HIV positive since 1991 and was diagnosed with AIDS in 2001. He is currently on a combination of medication, taking up to 8 pills a day.

HIV and AIDS is still a taboo subject in most Native American communities, but on the Cibola free Native Americans across the country held the first “Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.” The day was designed to spread the word of awareness among Native Americans.

Montoya’s therapy has been to go out and educate people. “It really makes you think about life,” Montoya said, living with AIDS, “this has been a lonely journey for me.”

However lonely a journey it has been for Kory Montoya, there are support groups and ways to educate oneself and ways to get involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS. One of the ways that Montoya became involved was by asking questions. He advises everyone to ask questions and to start being vocal about the issue.

One program addressing the issue of HIV/AIDS in Albuquerque is First Nations Community Healthsource through its HIV/AIDS Prevention and Case Management program. First Nations offers education on prevention as well as free anonymous HIV testing. It also offers counseling and syringe exchange. The program at First Nations also features support groups on both the prevention and the support areas of HIV education.

Duane Kaufman, HIV Prevention/Case Manager at First Nations works in the field due to the passion he has for the cause of education and prevention. Kaufman is also HIV positive.

Kaufman, mentioned many of the program’s attributes. Several of the aspects include free anonymous testing, outreach to groups, specifically the Native American population. One important thing to remember with the First Nations program is that if one is not Native American, but is HIV positive, they are not turned away from the resources that First Nations offers.

The resources regarding the HIV/AIDS program include resources such as support groups, education (on HIV/AIDS) and housing assistance. One of the unique aspects to the HIV/AIDS program at First Nations is the set up of the program which has an added focus of culture and spirituality.

There are several ways to get involved, one of them is to educate yourself on HIV/AIDS. There are also programs focused on HIV/AIDS prevention, which tend to be more than just abstinence only lectures, most often called harm reduction classes.

A prevention based program will be starting at First Nations shortly, the date and time have yet to be determined the program will focus on healthy relationships, teaching participants how to talk about HIV/AIDS and condom usage with their partner.

The staff at First Nations stressed the importance of knowing your own HIV status. The Orasure test if offered at First Nations, free of charge, Monday 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and Wednesday 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. by appointment. The Orasure test is a test that checks your HIV status. It is done by taking a sample of saliva, there is no blood taken in this test.

The test done at First Nations is anonymous using an assigned number instead of a name. Another important thing to remember is not to get tested but also to get the results.

For More Information Contact:
First Nations Community Health Source
5608 Zuni SE
Albuquerque, N.M. 87108
(505) 262-6554

New Mexico AIDS Services
625 Truman NM
Albuquerque, N.M. 87110
(505) 938-7100

On the web: www.worldaidscampaign.org

HPV vaccine creates controversy

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In her experience, McGough said, Native American women do not heal as quickly as others.

“Native women are different in sexual behavior,” McGough said. “Native American women have more partners than white people.”

Shandlin Harvey, a Dine senior in Exercise Science at UNM and a member of the Native American Christian Fellowship, said she does understand that the vaccine is necessary for some girls, but everyone has should pay the consequences for their actions.

“Girls need to know that having more than one [sexual] partner can cause physical and mental ruin,” Shandlin said.

McGough added that Native American women are not as likely to use condoms.

McGough said those patients that have never received a Pap smear usually end up in the colposcopy clinic.

“There aren’t any great answers in prevention,” McGough said. "Harvey believes in abstinence,

She believes in a pure marriage. She is married with one son, but if she had an 11-year-old daughter she said she would not subject her to the HPV vaccine.

“I will teach my kids to be abstinent until marriage,” Shandlin said.

The HPV vaccine is a hot topic nowadays with Gardasil commercials, community education and even legislative action.

During the past legislative session, Sen. Steve Komadina (R-Corrales) introduced SB1147, which would mandate the HPV vaccine in school-based clinics.

Favored to become law, the bill was suddenly vetoed by Governor Bill Richardson.

“Thank God,” Wheeler said when commenting on the governor’s recent veto. “We need education, infrastructure and a lot of ground work before it becomes law.”

Harvey and her husband do not agree with mandating the vaccine for young girls but also do not disregard the importance for the vaccine.

Harvey likened the vaccine to handing out condoms in schools. “It’s like telling girls that it’s not a good idea to have sex so young, but here’s a condom,” Harvey said.

Richardson has been quoted in the Albuquerque Journal as saying there just was not enough time to inform parents and school educators about the vaccine.

Harvey said parents need to be educated about the virus, the vaccine, and how it affects their daughters.

Washburn agrees that education about the vaccine is the key. “There simply isn’t enough education for parents. All I’ve read or seen on T.V. is more scare tactics.”

Waxman said a lot of industrial money is going into educating health care providers about the vaccine but not so much with parents.

“Nonetheless, the vaccine is an important message,” Waxman said. It is not clear the duration of the immunization. No data has been compiled after five years of the dosages.

Scientists also do not know the affects of the vaccine in men or women older than 26. Wheeler said that women who are sexual active will not benefit from the vaccine, only virginal girls.

It is not recommended that medical practitioners give the HPV screening test to determine if the patient is eligible for the vaccine because it doesn’t give the woman’s past or current exposure to the virus, Wheeler said.

“The vaccine is 100 percent effective in sexually active women,” Wheeler said. “It goes down exponentially in sexually active women.”

In the fall, Albuquerque IHS will optionally offer the vaccine to 11-year-old girls. The vaccine cost $120 per dose.

“I am not in favor of mandating the vaccine at this point because we don’t know the long term effects,” Washburn said. “I am more in favor of each parent deciding what is in the best interest of the child.”
New Mexico scores Indigenous Soccer Cup

by MARIA GUTTMAN
Dawn of Natons Today

With their gear packed in bags, soccer players will make their way to the first-ever Indigenous Soccer Cup this summer.

Co-host Southwest Youth Services, Inc.'s Executive Director Alec Rekow said the idea came from the high soccer involvement at the 2006 Indigenous Games.

"We want to create a soccer camp that is a venue to prepare for college and develop leadership skills," Rekow said.

Southwest Youth Services, Inc., will collaborate with the University of New Mexico's American Indian Student Services and the UNM Men's Soccer Team to host the camp and bring soccer into Native American communities.

As the soccer community expands, Jack Simons, program coordinator of Southwest Youth Services, Inc., said the soccer cup goes beyond playing soccer.

"The greater goal is establishing soccer in Native American communities, (including) everything that is good: leadership, health, sports, academics, (and) get them interested in college, all of that," Simons said.

The soccer cup will be held in Albuquerque, N.M., at UNM's Johnson Field July 28-August 4.

The players will be staying in dorms at the university to get the true experience.

The cup will include players of various ages ranging from under 14 to under 19, girls and boys. The skill levels of the players will vary.

"(This tourney) is not based on elite teams or anything like that it's based on interest," Simons said. Altogether there will be 24 teams participating. There are 12 teams from the New Mexico and Arizona region and 12 teams from the Northwest Territory of Canada.

"(We) put players into pools, we handle free floating players and hook them up with players and coaches when they register for the tournament," Simons said.

The UNM Men's Soccer team will host a workshop on soccer skills. There will be two other workshops that focus on college preparation and leadership skills.

Fourteen-year-old Jerome Reano, who will play in the boys under 16 division, said he is looking forward to meeting the UNM men's soccer team.

"(It'll be nice) getting advice from them," he said, "(to see) what it's like being on a team for UNM."

Reano from Santo Domingo Pueblo, N.M., had a similar experience last season when he played soccer at the 2006 Indigenous Games in Denver, Colo.

With hundreds of coaches, players and spectators expected Christine Nelson, senior student program advisor with the UNM's American Indian Student Services said many volunteers are needed.

Reano said another aspect of the cup he's looking forward to is obtaining new friends.

Like some youth athletes Reano hopes to play in college and maybe even professionally.

"I hope I can play in college, I think I probably will," he said. "If not, it's something fun to do."

Games gives N.M. athletes "life-changing experience"

by DAVID NATONABAH
Dawn of Nations Today

Native Americans have many talents that other people around the country may not know about. Native Nations have athletic programs that help students obtain healthy lifestyles and discipline. The 2006 Indigenous Games held in Denver, Colo., is a place that brings those things together.

With 6,000 athletes, 2,000 volunteers and more than 50,000 spectators it's easy to see why the Indigenous Games attract a large number of Native athletes between the ages of 13-19 years old.

Team New Mexico had various Native Americans from across the state that competed in sports such as basketball, cross country and baseball. Area athletes that attended the event were left with a life-changing experience and possibly a college scholarship.

Eighteen-year-old Rachelle Billie attended the Indigenous Games and ran in cross country. Billie is a Shiprock High School graduate and cross country and track and field athlete and now a freshman at the University of New Mexico studying exercise science.

Billie said she started running when she was 10 years old by chasing after her sister. When she was in 6th grade, she decided to take running to a whole other level.

"I would say that running after my older sister inspired me to run, I continue to run for my grandma," she said.

She chose the University of New Mexico because it was close to home. "My family could watch at least some of my races and my older two sisters are out here so it would just make it feel more like home than going somewhere far."

"The experience I left with after the games was just the whole thing in general," she said. "I mean being able to run against different Native Americans and learning about other cultures." She was changed by the friends she made while competing. "I mean they ran for different schools and just getting to know them more than just running with them was more interesting."

Nolan Hoskie, 18, was a baseball player for Team New Mexico. Hoskie plays on Gallup High School's baseball team and is now a freshman at UNM studying radiology.

Hoskie began his baseball career when he was seven years old. He chose UNM because it was close to home and he was given more scholarship opportunities than other places he applied for. He said his experience was unforgettable and he looks forward to attending the event again. "It was a once in a lifetime experience, if I had the chance to go and change what I did, I wouldn't," Hoskie said.

Athletes from Team New Mexico prepare to enter Invesco Field in Denver, Colorado during the opening ceremony of the 2008 Indigenous Games.

Assistant Coach de Mission for Team New Mexico was Pamela Agoyo. The word "Chef de Mission" is French for team leader. Agoyo first attended the Indigenous Games in 2002 as an assistant coach for Team New Mexico's golf team. "It was a really good experience. Team New Mexico performed really well for a small team at the time."

Team New Mexico won the John Fletcher Spirit Award in 2006 for the second time. Their other award came in 2002. "The award recognizes sportsmanship, teamwork, team spirit and team leadership," Agoyo said. Team New Mexico is the first team to receive the award more than once. "It is good to expose young people to experience the event through competition, sports and health," Agoyo said.

Participation in the games isn't something to be taken lightly. In order to attend, each athlete must go through a rigorous selection process. Each athlete must submit an application. Then coaches make contact with applicants, hold interviews and conduct tryouts. If chosen to compete, each athlete must pay their own way to attend the event. The 2008 games will be held in Cowichan, British Columbia so a smaller number of athletes from New Mexico are expected to attend. Nevertheless, Team New Mexico's leader remains optimistic.

"I am really looking forward to the next Indigenous Games in 2008," Agoyo said. "There'a lot of talent out there and the games would really help them maintain that talent."
by JONATHAN PINO
Dawn of Nations Today

College survival skills are essential to any college student's life, but it's more than just figuring out the basics, such as how to study efficiently. Many college survival skills require knowledge about the college environment and how to locate and use the resources provided.

The first year of college can be overwhelming for any student. Native American students have particular challenges to succeeding in higher education. Some factors include difficulty adjusting to the college environment, being away from family and financial constraints.

Shawn Secatero is Tsohiiile Dine and the coordinator of student services at the American Indian Graduate Center (AIGC). AIGC focuses on building self-sufficiency and self-determination for Native American communities by providing services and raising standards for Native American students.

AIGC offers scholarships and programs on college preparation at both the high school and college level and it will soon launch a male leadership initiative. Thirty percent of Native Americans attending college are male. Another AIGC program is the American Indian Graduate Initiative, which prepares Native undergraduates for graduate school by providing informational workshops.

Margarita Paz-Pedro is a current graduate student in art education at the University of New Mexico (UNM). She did her undergraduate work out of state, at the University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder). Paz-Pedro said she often felt homesick while at CU Boulder, but finding a community to connect to helped. She said her student involvement at CU Boulder allowed her "to meet more people and to have more friends." She said she advises students to occasionally take a break and know what resources the school provides for students.

Paz-Pedro also recommends eating well and getting enough sleep. For students from New Mexico attending college out of state, she recommends importing chili and other traditional foods.

Secatero advises students to "believe in themselves and that they can accomplish their goals and endeavors." Secatero said it is important to have a strong support system both at home and at college, have a study plan, organize a good schedule and to communicate.

Christa Moya is Dine and director of student services and financial aid at AIGC. She recommends developing a familiarity with the campus support services, such as financial aid, and how to purchase or charge books against your student financial aid account. Moya recommends finding a mentor and attending student orientations.

Many programs and organizations at UNM offer support specifically for Native American students. American Indian Student Services (AISS) offers the American Indian Summer Bridge Program. It provides incoming freshman the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the UNM campus while earning nine hours of credit. One of the newest programs that AISS offers is the Sidekicks program, which is a mentorship program for all Native American students.

Student organizations are another reliable resource for Native college students. Many of the organizations are social, the oldest being KIVA Club. It has been on the UNM campus for over 50 years. Some student organizations are focused on specifics, such as the Native American Health Sciences Society or the American Indian Council of Architects and Engineers. UNM also hosts a Native American sorority Alpha Pi Omega and fraternity Beta Sigma Epsilon.

Essentially the most important thing to college survival is to know your goals and where you can find help when you need it, and be an active participant in your own college experience.

For more information contact the following organizations:

American Indian Student Services
MSC06 3800 1119 Mesa Vista Hall
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001
Phone (505) 277-6343
Fax (505) 277-033
E-mail aiss@unm.edu

American Indian Graduate Center:
4520 Montgomery Blvd Suite IB
Albuquerque NM 87109
Phone (505) 881-4584
Toll Free 1-800-628-1920
Fax (505) 884-0427

Native American fraternities and sororities promote involvement

By Ty Romero
Dawn of Nations Today

The Native American fraternity and sorority at the University of New Mexico have established themselves as a place for personal growth and community involvement.

Beta Sigma Epsilon fraternity and their sister organization Alpha Pi Omega Sorority Inc., are reaching out to the UNM to promote the Native American community and prospective Native American students.

Neil Dodge, Navajo, president of Beta Sigma Epsilon, has been in the fraternity for almost two years. "We want to promote scholarships and community service among the Native American community," Dodge said. "Anyone is open to join our fraternity, but currently we only have Native Americans."

According to the Beta Sigma Epsilon Alpha chapter Web site, the fraternity started in 2005 when Nathan Pryor, a Navajo student from University of Arizona noticed a trend of a general lack of involvement among Native American males on campus and in student organizations.

Jolonzo Goldtooth, Navajo, vice president of Beta Sigma Epsilon said the fraternity helps support Native American identity and is involved in community service.

"Having a fraternity like this helps men coming from rural reservations have an easier transition to the urban college lifestyle," Goldtooth said. "It also raises the involvement on campus from the Native Americans."

He said the fraternity has not seen any negativity from the University.

"I believe others see this as strengthening the Native American community," Goldtooth said. "There should be more Native organizations that fit all Native students needs."

Like most fraternities, Dodge said there is a one-time fee of $150 followed by a payment of $200 per semester.

Pamela Agoyo, director of American Indian Student Services said AISS sponsors the fraternity and sorority.

"The emphasis on academic success while simultaneously providing opportunities to develop life-long friendships, along with the leadership and service components, was an opportunity to expand the possibilities for Native students attending UNM."

Agoyo said Native American Greek organizations provide opportunities to engage students in a specialized and focused effort to establish a "sense of community" among peers who have similar interests.

Gwen Palmer, Navajo, president of the Alpha Pi Omega Sorority Inc., said the sorority currently consists of only Native American women but wants to diversify.

"We are open to all races to join our sorority," Palmer said. "The only requirement is that the person must be a female."

According to the Alpha Pi Omega Inc. Web site, Alpha Pi Omega Inc., is the oldest Native American sorority founded at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill in 1994. Since then, it has and continues to spread across the country with over 250 sisters.

Palmer said the sorority's main mission is to give back to the community.

"Each semester we are responsible for four hours of community service a month. We also host a community service project each semester," she said. "We like to get involved."
A Zuni's trek to merry olde England and back

by KELLEN SHLENDOWA

Hello Bloaks and Darlings,

Over spring break I had the opportunity to travel to England, with a delegation from the A:shii A:wan Museum and Heritage Center from the Pueblo of Zuni. The trip was to look at a collection taken from an ancestral Zuni site called Kechi:bawa and to begin to develop relationships with tribal and non-traditional museums.

Boy, was it an adventure trying to obtain a passport. Of course, it had to wait till the last second to get one, but I got one. It arrived the day before my departure. It took around four to five days for it to reach me here in New Mexico. During that time I was praying to every god, deity, ancestor, I said my Zuni prayers, then Catholic prayers, a passage from the Koran, basically every religion with a text on this earth. And it came!!

The flight to England was long but I watched the Happy Feet and Man of the Year, which made it bearable. The flight to England was over night so I got to see the different cities with their lights glowing on the ground. It was a beautiful sight to see.

Waiting in line for customs at the Heathrow International Airport, getting from the gate to customs took hours. We all felt like rats trying to get through the Grand Canal. We got through customs and got our bags and headed out. We met a short little English guy holding a paperboard sign with Zuni written on it and it turned out he was our driver for the car and we were off to Cambridge. It took us almost two hours to get there with the morning traffic. By then we were all sleepy and groggy.

Rather than sleep, we decided that it was better to stay up and become exploring before an impromptu meeting later in the day. I almost fell asleep at the meeting. I was tired from all the traveling and the room was so hot. Somehow we all got through it and our first day in Cambridge.

The rest of the week was filled with the examination and discussion of the different objects in the collection. From 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., we worked at the evaluation of the collection and afterwards saw the Town of Cambridge and the 31 different colleges that made up Cambridge University. King’s College is where I stayed and boy was it beautiful: green grass, stained glass windows and Gothic and Roman architecture. Each college had a central courtyard, and only certain people were allowed on that grass: the masters and fellows of the college. Since I was neither, I got yelled at to get off the grass!

The experiences in the town of Cambridge were great! We ate at different restaurants each night. I had fish and chips the first day, it’s the only common English food. L’effe, a Turkish restaurant, was awesome. They had lamb on stick and chicken on a stick, which keep us quiet for about forty-five minutes. The other food places did not measure up to L’effe. Then one night we found this kebab place which served burgers, by that time, we were craving a burger and fries. But one important thing to remember is there are good and bad kebab places in England. The bad you never want to experience. Since we were tourists we did not have the luxury of knowing one from the other, so we experienced both. The food was interesting and kept us guessing.

We walk to London in the middle of the week and on Wednesday we all went to an exhibit opening at the British Museum called the “New World.” I told my fellow Shii’s we were the special guests as Sietson hats and curtains skirt the air, ha ha ya right. There were a lot of people there and I got a chance to explore the museum and the different exhibits from all over the world. The “New World” exhibit was what I expected, stereotypical and romanticized by English accounts, so it was nothing special.

We went to London one last time to see see. We rode a double decker bus all around town and saw the Big Ben, the Tower of London and London Bridge. We even took a river tour on the Thames River. It was fun seeing the architecture and the atmosphere in London.

At the end of the week I left London around 11 a.m. back to the states with an English accent and a smile.

Kellen Shlendowa, Zuni Pueblo, is a senior majoring in Native American studies at the University of New Mexico.

Journeys and sunsets

By ANDREA HANKS

A year ago, I was a University of New Mexico student, waiting to become a graduate of the Native American Studies department. I can recall my mixed emotions and my excitement to start my new journey and the fear that comes when reality sets in. My reality was when I made a commitment to move on from being a student to a professional. In April 2006, I accepted a position with the White Earth Land Recovery Project, a non-profit organization located on the White Earth reservation in Northern Minnesota, founded by Winona LaDuke. In August, I moved to Minnesota, the place where my father grew up, the place where my Ojibwe identity was tied to. I became the Wild Rice Campaign Coordinator and then the lead for the Keep it Wild campaign.

Over the course of eight months, I have learned to adapt to the freezing cold, look out for deer while driving, multi-task at a level I never thought myself capable of handling. All this and learning to ration my pack of chili from New Mexico.

My first project upon my arrival to White Earth was to visit the numerous rice lakes on the White Earth Band of Ojibwe and to begin to learn about the distinct culture and history of the people I was about to work with. We met with tribal elders who taught me how to say one two three and how to ask questions.

In the months that followed, I learned a great deal about the history and culture of the Ojibwe people through many conversations with elders, interviews with tribal members, and observing traditional practices at tribal events. I was able to witness firsthand the dedication and passion of the people of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe for preserving their traditional values and cultural heritage.

I am grateful for the opportunities I have had through my education at the University of New Mexico, my mentors, professors, and colleagues who have supported me through this journey. I am thankful for the opportunities I have had through my education at the University of New Mexico, my mentors, professors, and colleagues who have supported me through this journey. I am thankful for the opportunities I have had through my education at the University of New Mexico, my mentors, professors, and colleagues who have supported me through this journey. I am thankful for the opportunities I have had through my education at the University of New Mexico, my mentors, professors, and colleagues who have supported me through this journey. I am thankful for the opportunities I have had through my education at the University of New Mexico, my mentors, professors, and colleagues who have supported me through this journey. I am thankful for the opportunities I have had through my education at the University of New Mexico, my mentors, professors, and colleagues who have supported me through this journey. I am thankful for the opportunities I have had through my education at the University of New Mexico, my mentors, professors, and colleagues who have supported me through this journey. I am thankful for the opportunities I have had through my education at the University of New Mexico, my mentors, professors, and colleagues who have supported me through this journey.
Profiles | People

Chris Chavez
sows the seeds of sovereignty
by TOWANA YEPA
Dawn of Nations Today

Spring is Chris Chavez’s favorite time of year. “The anticipation when the snow starts melting and it starts getting warmer is the best,” Chavez said.

A farmer and student at the University of New Mexico he finds time to tend to his crops and apply for law school.

To him both are equally important in exercising his sovereignty as a Native person. Chavez, Santo Domingo, has five agricultural fields of different sizes on his reservation home at Santo Domingo Pueblo.

“I was practically born in the fields,” Chavez said.

He said it is crucial for Native American people to grow their own food.

“It is a way to keep our culture going...it’s the most important thing Native Americans should stay with,” he said, “we stay with the cycle of the sun; everything is based on the growing of these crops. The dances, songs, prayers it’s all connected.”

Chavez learned to farm from his grandfather and uncles when he was a child.

“Back then it was a horse and plow, all manual labor, with shovels and hoes,” he remembers.

Now, Chavez has two tractors to help him with his field work.

When the end of winter approaches Chavez plants onions, garlic and peas on the first warm day so, when it gets cold again they will not freeze.

In mid-April he plants white corn. When it gets warmer, he plants blue corn and chilies. When the chance for another cold day is gone, he plants his melons.

“They don’t like the cold,” he said smiling.

Chavez is a wealth of knowledge, especially when it comes to Native American issues.

He followed in the footsteps of the American Indian Movement when he was younger and has a progressive political perspective, especially when it comes to farming.

“We know that this form of Ameriaca, our progress or culture is not going to last, and the only people who are going to survive are the people who subsist from farming. Everything is becoming artificial,” he said.

Chavez is against genetically engineered foods.

“They are not justified for doing that, it’s totally against Mother Nature. The plants can do it themselves; it’s not up to us,” he said. “I tell my daughters to shop at organic stores.”

Chavez said his love for farming led him to applying for law school.

“Water is the most essential thing for our culture. It is connected to irrigation which is connected to planting. Without water, we wouldn’t know what our culture is,” he said, “(the) idea of getting men of each pueblo involved in returning back to planting or farming, small acreage or large.”

Chavez said he likes being able to share what he produces.

Photo credit: Mary R. Bowmans

Chris Chavez takes time to rest between visiting with students and attending classes at the University of New Mexico. Chavez completed his Bachelor of University Studies at UNM in December 2006.

The power to change public perception of Native Americans in the media

By DINA GILIO

Recently Indian country was all abuzz about a popular Houston, Texas radio talk show host named Michael Berry who made some comments KPRC-AM that were insulting to Native Americans.

“We need to stop wasting this time and energy apologizing to the American Indian...We give them casinos, we give them special licenses, we give them special scholarships, and why I don’t understand...We conquered them, that’s history...You got to be doing giving welfare to the American Indians because of the fact that 200 years ago they were whipped in a war. Let’s just call it what it is, they lost a war.”

We are Native American students know how wrong this guy is on so many levels. Berry represents the emergence in the past couple of decades or so of a generation of talk radio hosts (thank you Rush Limbaugh) whose in-your-face style abandon all traditional sense of respect for those people or subjects with them whom they disagree or simply don’t like. Forget about political correctness, whether they know what they’re talking about or not. It’s about being right and spreading their ideology (usually extremely right wing and often fundamentalist Christian) far and wide. For credibility they rely on their popularity or in some cases like Berry, their education, too. Berry, Mayor Pro Tem of Houston and former Councilman, holds a master’s degree in law as well as a doctor of jurisprudence. Someone with his credentials and a radio mic is in the position of being able to influence a lot of people about a lot of things.

Naturally, Berry’s comments on March 27 ignited a firestorm of negative responses from Native people. To his credit, he actually listened. On the station’s Web site on April 5, he addressed the subject at length. Initially, he explained that his intentions are to "provoke", in an effort to push listeners to challenge ideas that may be held more by habit than reason. Yet Berry’s comments about Indians reflect very mainstream sentiments of Americans who typically have no real knowledge about the actual history of America’s relationship to Native Nations, thanks to the way history is usually taught.

In the end, Berry admitted he was wrong, and said, "I’ve decided to make the occasion a learning experience for me and hopefully others as well...I’m making this statement because my method of framing the discussion seemed to attack people rather than policies, and my facts regarding those policies were wrong."

Refreshingly, the lesson for us is that there are people out there in the mainstream media who care enough to admit when they’re wrong about Native American issues, rather than stay married to their own flawed perceptions. It speaks to the power we have as the listening public and how we can effect change when we refuse to remain silent about those things that affect us. Let us never forget that.

Dina Gilio, Coyilville, is a University Studies student concentrating in Native American studies and political science at the University of New Mexico.

"We can effect change when we refuse to remain silent"

-Dina Gilio
Qua tsina, qua tsi, Hopi Hano.
I have been a student off and on for decades, but it was March of 1973 which had an enormous impact on my life. KIVA Club members were concerned about threats to sacred sites and our environment. Back in those days, Black Mesa was our primary focus. Today, the mining activity has ceased and the Mohave Generating Station is shut down. Other victories have come to be since then and the protection of the San Francisco Peaks near Flagstaff, Arizona is the latest and greatest.

In the 1970s KIVA Club began to address major issues impacting Natives Americans in Gallup, New Mexico. In 1973 Larry Casuse was president of the KIVA Club and he led a crusade to improve how Native Americans were treated in Gallup. The appointment of then Gallup Mayor Emmett Garcia to the University of New Mexico’s Board of Regents by then Gov. Bruce King caused an immediate reaction. Garcia owned a number of bars which were frequented by Native Americans in the Gallup area. KIVA Club and others marched to protest Garcia’s appointment, but more importantly to raise the issue of local bars profiting off the alcoholic additions of our people. Unfortunately, the cost was high and Casuse sacrificed his life at Steam’s Sporting Goods on Gallup’s main drag. March 3 commemorates our fellow KIVA Club member and his valiant efforts to right the wrongs afflicting our Native people.

The “People’s March for Humanity” brought together a force who marched from the ceremonial ground to the downtown courthouse in Gallup. Hundreds of people joined together en masse to celebrate our collective humanity and Casuse’s message. Security forces were on hand in case of possible violence, but we are and were peaceful.

Those early days of KIVA can’t be replaced. Initially, we had our own house on Las Lomas where Dane Smith Hall is now located. No value can be placed on having our own home away from home. Granted, I may have spent too much time shooting pool in the basement, but I and my fellow students did have a solid foundation academically. The decolonization process had less formal ideals then. Today, Native American Studies has grown into the field of study for our youth and the department serves students in many ways. The degree program is symbolic of where we stand on this diverse campus and it was not accomplished without a lot of sincere dedication by professors and support staff over time.

Today the KIVA Club is active and open for your participation and gatherings are held on a weekly basis. One way to get involved is to take part in Nizhoni Days and don’t forget to tune into “Singing Wire” on KUNM 89.9 FM on Sundays from noon to 4:00 p.m. You’ll hear about area events, music and maybe join in the conversation. You might even catch the Boy Wonder from San Felipe Who Made Good aka “FM” who is otherwise known as Francis Montoya. Thanks for hearing me out, Peace.

Francis Montoya, Isleta Pueblo/ San Felipe Pueblo, is a senior majoring in Native American Studies at the University of New Mexico.

Since time immemorial the Navajo people have learned to live with the resources they were given by the land. Today they must learn to live with the resources the government recognizes they have the authority to use. The Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project is a reflection of this change and a reflection of colonization.

The project is a long-term initiative to create a major infrastructure to deliver water to the city of Gallup, New Mexico. The Navajo Nation annually. The result will be the creation of a 250 mile pipeline transferring water from the San Juan River to Gallup from a number of Navajo chapter houses. The project is expected to be completed in 2040 and the cost in the millions of dollars.

It is curious that the federal and state governments should propose a project benefiting the Navajo Nation with the promise of providing $60 million in annual funding for the next 34 years, but it is not without vested interest that they do so. Their interests include, but are not limited to: employment, taxes, eco-structures and population outgrowth. The strongest result, however, will be assimilation.

The interest of the state and federal governments is to create a self-sustaining environment at a profit. The historic and sacred four corners area, however, has always been a source of identity for the Navajo people. The project is set to produce an “eco-structure” that creates and attracts new business and builds new homes. It will invite all people to come and profit off this sacred region. Sound familiar? During colonization of the New World, it was seen as an opportunity for the colonists to benefit from the land’s resources. Supporters of the project suggest it will create opportunities for Navajo’s to stay on their traditional homeland.

However, it is more likely to draw them to the city of Gallup.

This will result in the relocation of Navajo’s off their traditional homelands and into the city, producing a higher state taxable population.

The state and federal government seek a profitable benefit of the pipeline, which is the industrialization of the reservation and the surrounding region. One example is the project will expand the petroleum and gas industry that has become a prominent business in Navajo country. It’s no small wonder the Navajo Nation recently hosted the “Indigenous World Uranium Summit.” It seems the state’s current interest in the existing petroleum and energy plants is for profit, without regard for the environmental protection of the land or purity of the water.

The project is a tool to manipulate the weakness of a sovereign. The weakness of the Navajo Nation is a lack of adequate access to their water. Unfortunately, the federal and state governments have manipulated the situation to directly benefit themselves. These manipulated benefits have taken the forms of taxes and lowered government assistance to those unemployed.

The plans for a new mini-mall or a potential Silicon Valley suburbia will invade traditional Navajo homeland. This land is not the federally recognized land reserved to them, but a region where Navajo once thrived. This land is sacred, regardless of whether the federal government recognizes it as belonging to the Navajos. The invasion of the commercial industry is yet another form of colonization traditional Navajos must endure because they have nowhere left to escape, not even to their homeland.

Nellisa Kennedy, Navajo, is a second year law student at the University of New Mexico School of Law.
Native upbringing reflects filmmakers success

by RYAN MAKKONEN
Dawn of Nations Today

Getting ready for the interview, Melissa Henry of the Diné Nation joked about her busy day. Once she had everything in order, she sat down and was ready to share her filmmaking career with the world.

Henry grew up living in the rural area of the Zuni Mountains located on the outskirts of Gallup, New Mexico. She said that growing up in this rural area contributed heavily to her creativity and her abilities “came from suffering and playtime.”

Having to be at school at four in the morning every day, she would sit in the bumpy cab of her father’s truck as it drove through the mud reading “elf books” losing herself into her own little world. Growing up, Henry had a hard time adapting to reality outside of her secluded hideaway in the mountains. She said making friends was difficult because she did not know how to communicate with people outside of her own environment. Being around friends for her was strange. She had to create her own world in her mind to escape and the combination of all these elements toughened her while growing up. It all contributed to her boldness to pursue her goals in filmmaking.

If I could have a clique like that in the city,” Henry said that growing up in New York City and commuting from Washington, D.C. to school at the University of Maryland, Henry took an internship in New York City and commuted from Washington, D.C.

In 2003, Henry began working at the Smithsonian Museum in the film archives as a media cultural specialist. Henry said she would assist in screening films and picking certain ones that were in good taste versus pieces that could be considered stereotypical into the archives. During her time in D.C. she noticed that the city needed to build a film community.

In 2003 Henry decided to start Red Ants Production, a Web casting and video production company. She could not handle working in an office any longer; she declared that, “A filmmaker cannot do the office.” In 2005 Henry moved back to Gallup, N.M. and continued to run Red Ants Production. She said the change of community pays more and the hours are more flexible and allow her to work on her script “Mosi Lichiri,” which is now three years in the making. She said her script is an artistic piece based off of Navajo stories which revolves around a black cat set to save the stars.

Henry was nominated for a Sundance Fellowship by her friend and Sundance fellow, Nanabah Becker, when Henry was still in graduate school at the University of Maryland. Henry submitted her documentary “Sparky’s Ashes,” a documentary about a man who is preparing to die. She then received a documentary fellowship in November of 2006 which began January of 2007.

She said because she is a Sundance Film Fellow she feels more locked into this film. She said she feels more relaxed with writing the script. She said at first it was tough being in Gallup, she felt lost, she could not figure out where to go next in her script, but being able to call these mentors have helped tremendously. Once her script is complete, Sundance will assist her with funding her film as well as help with casting calls so she is not alone in her creative journey.

After a year and a half of living in the outskirts of Gallup, Henry decided to move into the town where she surprisingly found an art community creating abstract art. She said the community is very open minded. “They are a tight knit community and helpful for my work. I don’t know if I could have found them like that in the city.” She said that cities already have their own cliques. It is not easy to get into a group such as the one she has found.

She said once a month in downtown Gallup the community puts on an event called “Arts Crawl” where artists can display their work in every gallery. Henry said the work does cause controversy, which she enjoys because when art creates controversy, it makes one think.

Being surrounded in this environment, she said she feels things are going smooth. It is “really important to me that I complete this film. It’s a life goal.” The atmosphere of a Navajo community helps her in making sure she does not do things incorrectly while writing her script. She can speak with the community for help if she feels unclear of certain information. She writes the script in English then translates it into Navajo.

Currently, she does not know if she wants to make this film a cartoon or live action. However her film ends up she said, “I am in a good place right now until I finish my piece.”

In spring of 2007, Henry decided to share her knowledge and began substituting for the Gallup School system teaching preschool through fifth grade. She said in teaching once or twice a week is a way to interact with children. This interaction helps her write her script. She said seeing the way children interact takes her to a whole new place in her mind where she can let her imagination flourish.

She said that an individual just needs to pursue their passion. “It’s hard to work with your passion while spending the majority of your time worry about stereotypes. I am OK with being a Native American filmmaker.”
The film by German Director Marcus Nispel opened nationwide in theaters April 13. The story takes place in the "primordial America," 500 years before Columbus set foot on the shores of the Americas.

The movie makers claim to be inspired by "historical findings" and a "legend-like" story of a Viking child who becomes the lone survivor of a shipwreck while the Norsemen clans raid the coastal Wampanoag villages for slaves.

The young boy is found and then adopted by the Wampanoag people who raise him into adulthood. He comes to be known as the Ghost within the tribe perhaps due to his skin color and his lineage to the Vikings. The Ghost is played by New Zealand actor Karl Urban ("Doom," "Bourne Supremacy," and "Lord of the Ring" trilogy). In time the Vikings return. They are led by Gunnar played by Clancy Brown ("Highlander," "Starship Troopers") who leads his fellow Vikings against the Wampanoag people.

The Pathfinder, a shaman, played by Russell Means ("Disney's Pocahontas," "Wagon's East"), tells the tribe that the Ghost's destiny is to fight a one man battle against the Vikings, to become the Wampanoag peoples savior. Sounds pretty intriguing don't it?

First, you should note that this film is a remake of a Norwegian film, "Ojefal" or "Pathfinder" in English. It was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1985. The film is a loose remake of the original right down to the outline of the story, which is where the similarities end. Nispel, was responsible for the 2003 remake of "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre." That would be enough for some to decide either to avoid this film or not, but sit tight, I have more to share.

This film starts out right away with good ol' action movie violence, complete with gratuitous beheadings. The film photography gives the movie a dark and foggy, fantasy atmosphere. The feel and mood that is set at the beginning of the film remains almost for the entire length of the movie, with a brief respite toward the end though it is confounding and out of place. Perhaps it would have been better if it stayed gloomy and alien throughout.

The director creates a cold environment with very little evidence of the sun, but for some reason the Ghost (Karl Urban) has little use for clothing despite it being late winter. Unlike his Viking counterparts who come across as hairy beasts or animals - right down to animal sounds and growls - the Ghost curiously doesn't sport a beard nor body hair throughout the film. The Ghost seems to have also mastered the shield and sword as well - quite a convenient plot element - maybe even a Norwegian stereotype.

Curiously enough the Pathfinder, also the title character but not the central character, seems to speak in broken English denoting that it's not his first language. Though what's more curious, is the fact that the Wampanoag people in his tribe speak more fluent and clear English in the film albeit still quite stereotypical. No sign of their own language at all. Interestingly enough was the fact that the Vikings spoke in a Norwegian language consistently throughout the film. For all I know of the Norwegian language and how it's supposed to sound, it could have been like Adam Beach speaking Navajo in "Windtalker."

During the course of the film there are constant story elements that arise that seem to be lifted from or very reminiscent of other films, such as "Willow," "King Arthur," "The 13th Warrior" and "Whale Rider." Yeah I said it, "Whale Rider", Why "Whale Rider" you ask?

Starfire played by Moon Bloodgood ("Win a Date with Tad Hamilton," "Eight Below"), who by the way, is of Dutch, Irish and South Korean descent, has the "Whale Rider" moment. She also seems to channel Mike Tyson as well; you'll see both instances of inaneness if you decide to watch this train wreck. For you comic book nerds, Starfire is not the DC comic book superhero in this movie but it might have helped the movie if that were so.

Somewhere mid-movie I half expected to see Willow or Frodo jump out and join the action. It was there that I completely stopped entertaining the notion that this film could at all be considered somewhat factual or historical. It all went out the window - along with my hopes that at least it would be mildly entertaining.

I wasn't at all surprised the Wampanoag warriors were portrayed as incept especially when it comes to common sense, reasoning and warfare. Fear not though, the Ghost is there to save the people, kind of, most of them that is. I think all around this film is quite offensive to Native Americans, the Wampanoag tribe, and the Norwegians even, but it's mostly awkward and bland.

After watching this movie I kept thinking that it was like "Conan the Barbarian" meets "Windwalker" but more lame and absent of a well developed storyline. If only it turned out as cool as it potentially sounded.

Being offensive quickly takes a back seat to how bad this movie is first. It's like being upset by a Tony Hillerman book without first considering the source.

This film could have been more entertaining and even passable as a movie, maybe even good enough to show up on the Sci-Fi Channel. Sad too, I really liked Karl Urban in his previous roles before "Pathfinder." Much like how I loved John Woo's previous films ("Hard Boiled," "Face Off") before he made "Windtalker."

If you are a film auteur, watch the original film and see the genesis of a good film being remade into a bad film. I guess the same could be said about his remake of "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre." If you are indeed a comic book nerd or graphic novel aficionado, take a look at Dark Horse Comic's adaptation of the script. The artwork alone in it alone is worth the $20. That's less than a ticket, popcorn and soda at the concession stand.

Sadly the story in the book is mostly the same as the movie but like most adaptations of movies it offers more of a storyline and is less absent of plot holes. The book for example offers an intriguing prologue that could have made the movie more interesting. Save your money or see something more fulfilling, intriguing, entertaining or funny like "Grindhouse" or "Hot Fuzz." Keep your dignity intact and miss this one.

Rated R.

This film receives a rating of half a reel out of five possible.
Drunk driving message effective?

by LOREN J. TODDY
Dawn of Nations Today

The commercial was a part of a state campaign by the New Mexico Department of Transportation. Lonnie Anderson, Jicarilla Apache, the creative director at Vaughn Wedeen Creative received the commission to develop a script and shoot the commercial for the state campaign.

Anderson said he was very conscious about his decision to seek out film director Chris Eyre. Cheyenne, Arapahoe, and actor Gary Farmer. He wanted what he felt were the best choices for this project, an all-star Native American lineup of sorts, and according to Anderson, Eyre and Farmer both did not hesitate to jump on board.

Having previously worked on the American Indian College Fund campaign, Anderson said he had a strong and clear idea about how he wanted the project to develop and look. He said there is no information targeting the Native American community on the consequences of drinking and driving.

Anderson said, "This project was the first drunk driving spot for the Native American people made by Native Americans."

"I don't care if 500 Native Americans hate this commercial, what matters is that the commercial impacts someone who saw it," Anderson said. "This is a community message about an issue that should be addressed and confronted," he said.

Anderson mentioned that right up until the shooting of the commercial that the project was deemed controversial. It was even cancelled the night before the actual shoot, though it was ultimately shot as scheduled. So even in inception, the creators of this commercial had to be careful in how they approached this project. The last thing that Anderson wanted to do with this commercial was alienate the audience by creating a shaming spot.

He is not oblivious to the negative reaction of the commercial, but open to them. Positive reaction to the commercial is not lacking though. Vaughn Wedeen Creative is inundated by requests for the commercial to be shown in other states such as Montana and Hawaii, as it is presently only broadcast in New Mexico.

Eyre, best known for his films such as "Smoke Signals" and "Skins," credits Anderson for successfully putting this project together. Though, when you see the commercial you can see Eyre's influence through his cinematic vision and composition.

Eyre was aware of the touches he wanted to put into the script that could have been problematic or stereotypical. The Native American man originally had an old beat up pick up, and Eyre decided to make the vehicle new and modern to show that Native Americans are contemporary. In the original script the children are waiting outside the bar while their father drank inside.

This is a notoriously common, sad and painful scene for some. Farmer's character was shown as a "marginal drinker and not a staggering drunk," Eyre said.

According to Eyre, the roadside memorials had Native American touches on them, such as tobacco ties which aren't necessarily native to the southwest.

One interesting element of Eyre's involvement is that he feels the commercial would be most effective if it's broadcast at the hours of 1 and 2 a.m. "For those people out there, at that moment, making that decision to potentially drink and drive - it's to remind them not to.

In asking Eyre about how this commercial could be seen negatively, he said, "Native America is an enigma" and it is interesting how people make so much of native work in media. "This work shouldn't be unique," he said.

"Short and effective is what Eyre said about the commercial. Eyre is not shy about confronting issues and problems like the one in the commercial, see his film "Skins" if you haven't already.

Matthew Martinez, Ohiyay Owingeeth, a visiting faculty member in the American Studies department at the University of New Mexico, was gravely affected by drunken driving. His response to the commercial was deeply personal. "The message is a good thing and the message should get out. The commercial wasn't hokey, wasn't cheesy, and it was real. One fatality from drunk driving is one too many. We can't hear this message enough," he said. That is something that we all seem to agree on.

The elements of the commercial that initially bothered me seem a bit trivial now in hindsight. This commercial could have easily been picked up by non-Native production crew and we would have had an altogether different commercial. Possibly offensive to a great degree and evoking strong stereotypical depictions, that would have been hard to recover from.

Ultimately, everyone that views the commercial is going to interpret it how they want and either love it or loathe it. I've heard discussions about this commercial as being powerful and even majestic. I also heard opposing views, in how offensive and bad it is.

I even heard a faux campaign idea involving a series of commercials on the dangers of senior citizen drivers and how deadly they are on the road.

Perhaps the message should be the principle element that ought to be focused on. As for the creative elements surrounding the commercial, it should be taken for what it is - a creative director's own perspective or a unique artists own vision of the material.

Concerned community members surround the drunk Native American man, played by Gary Farmer. Farmer appeared in the "You Drink, You Drive, You Lose" anti-drinking and driving commercial campaign produced by the State of New Mexico.

On set during the evening shoot of the Drunk Driving Public Service Announcement on location in southern New Mexico.
Native identity flourishes through art

By ANDREA HANKS

Today as visitors walk the halls of the White Earth Land Recovery Project in Callaway, Minnesota they will see Ojibwe identity blooming throughout the office hallways.

Star Wallowing Bull, Arapaho and White Earth Band of Ojibwe, designed and painted the Ojibwe floral design in the offices.

Wallowing Bull said, “I identify with my own traditional designs, for six years, I have been looking for my identity as an Ojibwe artist.”

“Between Two Cultures,” was the title of Wallowing Bull’s first solo exhibition in 2005, at the Plains Art Museum in Fargo, North Dakota Wallowing Bull’s exhibition referenced his identity.

“It has led me to learn more about both of my identities as an Ojibwe and an Arapaho,” Wallowing Bull said.

Because of Wallowing Bull’s talent and connection to White Earth, Winona LaDuke, founding director of the White Earth Land Recovery Project, immediately thought to commission him for the painting project:

LaDuke said, “I wanted someone local from our reservation for the project, I wanted a positive role model for our children, I wanted Star to be a part of this,” and “Star is beyond that, the children can identify with him because he is from White Earth and he has been able to express his Ojibwe identity, his Native identity, and that is a positive example for our kids.”

Wallowing Bull’s prisma-colored pencil drawing titled, “Gasoline Cap,” will be the new identity for the Wind Energy and Bio-diesel program of White Earth Land Recovery Project. With Wallowing Bull’s permission, it’s becoming the new logo for the program and will read Ojibwe Bio-diesel.

Also in 2005, Wallowing Bull was selected to participate in Migrations: New Directions in Native American Art, he became one of six emerging Native American artists selected for a residency with the Tamarkin Institute, a division of the College of Fine Arts at the University of New Mexico.

Residents had to complete, two lithograph residents prints were created by each artist and displayed at UNM’s Art Museum, which is now touring the country.

Wallowing Bull said he found his New Mexico experience challenging and rewarding, it was his first experience in print making.

“Using only four colors threw me off,” said, Wallowing Bull, referring to his print, “but the reward was learning the technique of printmaking and meeting new people.”

While in New Mexico he found a friend and mentor in renowned artist Juanita Quick-To-See-Smith.

“She was drawn to the color of my work,” Wallowing Bull said. He describes his work as detailed, colorful and autobiographical. Anyone who has seen his works, such as “Black Elk’s Little Sandman,” can attest to his detail and use of exuberant color.

Wallowing Bull said he is learning a lot from Quick-To-See Smith.

“I am inspired by her work, I am learning to be more free with my brush strokes, I want to break the habit of being a perfectionist.”

Wallowing Bull said he is inspired by one artist in particular.

“Some of my own work is similar to artist James Rosenquist, his work and ideas are influencing me now, but I see the Native version,” and “I am at the beginning so it’s hard to know what the out come of my work will be,” said Wallowing Bull. He continues painting large pieces for artist James Rosenquist, with plans of a future exhibition.

Cultural identity continues to fuel the work of Wallowing Bull. He said, “My experience, just growing up Native, past and present, anything I look at influences me, it is an everyday thing for me. I am very easily influenced.”

Between the London exhibition and the White Earth project commitments, Wallowing Bull continues to inspire and influence those younger than him.

Realizing what some artists like himself have faced, trying to juggle paying the rent and the cost of art supplies, “It’s a struggle,” Wallowing Bull said.

Through all the fellow artists who have befriended him, he has asked in return how he might help them.

Wallowing Bull said, “They told me, when you’re at the age to do the same, help other young artists.”

Wallowing Bull is currently creating five to seven, prisma color pencil drawings for an exhibition at the October Gallery of London, scheduled for Sept. 2007.

Wallowing Bull said, “Images of today’s mainstream culture influences my work,” the pieces being created for the exhibition are combining Native images of the past into robotic images.

The exhibition will also feature pieces from Frank Big Bear, Wallowing Bull’s father.

Wallowing Bull’s work featured in the Bockley Gallery in Minneapolis.

This past month he has had the opportunity to visit schools throughout the White Earth reservation, mentoring children in hopes that they too, will find a way to express their own identities.

Video games gone bad!

by TOBIAS MAJOR

Dawn of Nations Today

As the prairie grass blows in the wind, a warrior walks out of his teepee and glances upon his village of long houses and teepees decorated with dream catchers. He is Zorran and his taste for adventures knows no end with his giant troll friend Booboo and his elf girlfriend 2cute4you. Did we mention that Zorran is a giant buffalo, who plays on one of the biggest online video games in the world? A game that fits on some of the oldest Native American stereotypes to date?

In recent years video games on PC and MAC-based computer systems have created games with Native American imagery and/or content. Are these large computer game companies such as Blizzard Entertainment and Microsoft being culturally sensitive towards Natives? Are these million dollar game companies leaving gamers with a false or negative view of Native people? I will take a look at a couple of popular game titles to see how society perceives Natives and how stereotypes are pushed along our society within the realm of gaming. First, here is a little history.

As a ten year old, I started playing computer games when PC’s started coming into the homes of America and I remember when the original “DOOM” came out. It is a game based upon some crazy Marine who runs around with guns shooting and killing demons from hell. Who would come up with an idea like that? I will never know, yet I thank them for all of the great hours of fun and the list goes on kids. The last thing I messed
Video games gone bad!

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around with was Play Station 2 and that was it for consoles.

When I was younger, I noticed there were few video games featured around Native Americans. There was the "Oregon Trail" game that we used to play in school on old Apple Macintosh computers. In the game you play a settler during the 1700s who is trying to stay alive. Every once in a while you would run into some "Indians" and that was it. There was another pornographic game entitled "Custer's Revenge" which came out for the Atari system. It was created by a company called Mystique. You were Custer of course and the point of the game was to rape as many Native women as possible. Real cute huh? Where were the censors on this one?

Aside these archaic games are the famous fighting games. You might remember "Street Fighter's Thunder Hawk" or "Mortal Kombat's Nightwolf." Once again we have silent stoic Native warriors dishing it out with fictional karate fighting characters.

Natives always get placed in these "mythical" stereotypes as if they are a non-existent people. I don't think the design teams of these games ever visited a reservation do you? You can find many other characters of this nature in games like "Tekken," "Killer Instinct" and other weird random games like "Real Bout Fatal Fury!" I interviewed Beverly Singer, Santa Clara Pueblo, associate professor of anthropology and Native American Studies at the University of New Mexico. Singer wrote a book entitled "Wiping the War Paint Off of the Lens."

The book looks at Native American stereotypes in films and highlights films created by Natives. Singer helped me to deconstruct some of the more recent games to get a grasp on where these silly stereotypes come from. Each game was pretty different from the other yet, all screamed out with complete ignorance!

We could not forget about the infamous Turok the Dinosaur hunter as well. You get to play a Native with all kinds of weaponry that would put Rambo to shame.

You get to shoot down aliens, people and all kinds of creatures. Turok is not brand new by any means. I felt it would be great to ask Singer how she felt about it.

She directed me to a chapter from "Red Earth White Lies" written by the late great writer Vine Deloria, Jr. Deloria argues about a ridiculous theory entitled "The Overkill Theory," which states the Native people of North America killed off all of the animals of the Pleistocene era. It is such a bizarre concept that many scientists accept it as a fact.

Singer said she felt that the Turok series was a continuation of this ridiculous theory. I agree.

One of the games we took a look at was "World of Warcraft."

Recently, Blizzard Entertainment turned the Warcraft series into an online role-playing game that most gamers find horribly addicting. In the game a character is created to fight monsters and evil wizards as part of the missions.

Players can spend their time on missions doing various things like fishing and different trades, such as blacksmithing. The graphics are very spellbinding and it makes playing this game very fun.

One thing I found interesting about the game is that you can choose to be a certain race. The Tauren are giant buffalo-looking people who live a mythical native lifestyle with teepees, totem poles, vision quests and dream catchers.

Singer said this was a great example of "the conglomerate Indian" meaning putting all of the Native imagery you can together and classifying all Native people as nomadic. She also said Natives are "denuded of a human identity" in the sense that they are being presented as buffalo. She said these characters definitely are "the real buffalo soldiers."

I agree.

Then we looked at Microsoft's "Age of Empires III" which centers around land feuding between the Natives and Europeans. At first you could only choose to be a European army soldier and if you wanted you could ally with the Natives. I guess Microsoft felt we were all waiting around to help out the Europeans take our land away. Microsoft created this add-on which allowed you to be the Sioux, Aztecs or Iroquois. Microsoft spent a lot more time to make sure the game was historically accurate for all of the cultures included in the game.

Singer gave the game a good look over and on the ever-present stereotypes. She said it was a "romantic image of Natives with a little bit of context." Microsoft did do its homework on historical information yet presents Natives as "still misbehaving," she said. We watched a clip of a group of Sioux burning down a little town and there seemed to be no underlying reason why everyone was attacking each other. It's like "F-Troop" all over again!

I think we can all agree there's still a long way to go when it comes to living in a world without ignorance. I feel the media is so far away from truly understanding Native Americans.

The problem with games mentioned above is they reinforce the portrayal of Native people as backwards, mythical people. Maybe Bill Gates can create some games about Natives trying to get to a pow wow in a busted up car or Crazy Horse knocking foreigners off his land? Those games would be exciting and create a whole new genre of video games, don't you think?