



MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH

Volume 1 Number 6

Fairfax, VA

September 1993

REFLECTION

Ki-nut (September).

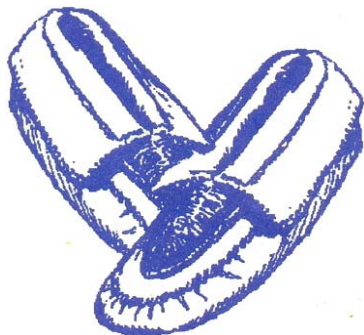
The seasons change and we grow older! For me, the Autumn season is important, because it is the time for reflection on how well we have planted our crop as we begin the task of measuring the harvest.

Just think, a year ago **Wordcraft Circle** did not exist in this reality. It was part of the Dream Way. It was a possibility. A potential. A hope. The Grandmothers rained their blessings and the harvest is indeed bountiful

You are **Wordcraft Circle**. You--each and every Apprentice and Mentor -- are the hope ... so that the *People of the Sovereign Nations and Tribes may continue to grow and prosper...* Each of you has responded with your Mind-Heart to the call of the Grandmothers and brought the vision into this reality.

Now it is time to expand the Circle. It is time to invite another to be with us... to make the vision stronger... to grow and prosper. It is the Way of the People. It is the Life Way. We go on... together. And as is the way, we give thanks for all the blessings.

Lee



OREGON WORDCRAFT CIRCLE INTENSIVE WRITING WORKSHOP OCTOBER 21st - 23rd, 1993

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF SILETZ AND OREGON COAST COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS ARE CO-SPONSORS

The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Tribal Council in Siletz, Oregon, voted unanimously on August 21, 1993 to provide co-sponsorship for the NW **Wordcraft Circle** Intensive Writers Workshop scheduled for October in Newport, Oregon. They joined the initial co-sponsor, The Oregon Coast Council for the Arts, in supporting the efforts for bringing Native writers to the Newport Performing Arts Center for the first time since the Center's opening.

In late spring, after teaming that **Wordcraft Circle** was planning to hold an Intensive Writing Workshop for Natives writers in the area, Bonnie Peterson, Education Director for Siletz, contacted **E. K. Caldwell** (Tsalagi/Creek/Shawnee), **Wordcraft Circle's** Regional Coordinator, and offered to be co-sponsor for the three day event. In mid-summer, the Culture Department of the Siletz joined with the Education Department in requesting official support from the Siletz Tribal Council.

Selene Rialtos, Culture Coordinator and Tribal Librarian, presented the request and spoke strongly for co-sponsorship by the Confederated Tribes of Siletz both as co-sponsors and as participants. JOM Coordinator, Rena Philbrook, is working to have young people interested in writing to participate in the workshops. Selene and Rena have given valuable support in helping with mailings, personnel for the workshops, copying/printing assistance, and contacting the Indian Education, Johnson-O'Malley, and JTPA programs throughout Oregon about the **Wordcraft Circle** Intensive Writing Workshop. Both women expressed excitement that such a gathering of Native writers is being held on the Oregon coast. "*We need more events like this coming into our area and we are glad to be able to support **Wordcraft Circle** in the work they are doing,*" stated Selene Rialtos.

The Confederated Tribes of Siletz has been working hard since their restoration in 1979 to provide a better education and culture delivery system to their tribal members. Currently they are also developing their library and would appreciate any bibliographies and/or recommendations from Native writers on books to include on their shelves. (**NOTE: Native writers who have an extra copy of their published writing might want to donate one to the Siletz library.** [ed.] **Wordcraft Circle** is fortunate to have the tribe's support for the gathering and their participation is welcomed.

E.K.C.

MARKET REPORT

by **Don L. Birchfield** (Choctaw)

[This new column will be devoted to presenting a wide range of publications so that Native writers at different stages of their careers and with different interests might find a market for their writing. **Wordcraft Circle** Mentor Don Birchfield -- our new **Contributing Editor** -- has graciously accepted the task of writing the **MARKET REPORT** for Moccasin Telegraph. ed.]

PUBLICATION PRIZE COMPETITIONS

The **NILON AWARD** for excellence in minority fiction annually accepts book length fiction manuscripts only during the month of November, and the winner is announced usually in March. Each year the winning manuscript is selected by a *nationally recognized minority writer*. The winner receives a \$1,000 prize (which is not an advance against royalties) and must be willing and able to enter into a standard publication contract (publication is in October of the following year). No simultaneous submissions are allowed. Submissions may be novels, novellas, or short story collections, with a minimum of approximately 200 double-spaced, typed pages, of which up to half of the material may have been previously published. Eligible entrants must be citizens of the United States who "belong" to one or more of the following ethnic groups: African American, Hispanic, Native American/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander. The three winners who have been published thus far are: Melvin Dixon, *Trouble The Water* (1989), which is about an African-American coming to terms with a father he barely knew. Dixon was the first editor of **CAL-LALOO** and has since published a novel with a major New York publishing house; Diane Glancy (Cherokee), **Trigger Dance** (1990), a collection of short stories by the first Native American to

win the award so far; Yvonne V. Sapie, **Valentino's Hair** (1991), about a New York Puerto Rican barber who cuts Rudolph Valentino's hair and finds that the trimmings have great power as an aphrodisiac; Ricardo Cortez Cruz, **Straight Outta Compton** (1992), a book currently in press and due to be released in October; Omar S. Castaneda, **Remembering To Say 'Mouth' or 'Face'** (1993), another book which is in press and scheduled for release in October 1994. The award is administered by the English Department Publications Center of the University of Colorado at Boulder and publication is by Fiction Collective Two in Illinois which produces excellent hardbound editions of the winning manuscripts. Enclose SASE (Self-Addressed, Stamped Envelope) and request a copy of the submission guidelines from: Nilon Award, Beth Partin - Production Coordinator, English Department Publications Center, Campus Box 494, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309-0494, or call (303) 492-8947.

JURIED LITERARY QUARTERLIES

Before submitting a manuscript to the quarterly **WESTVIEW: A JOURNAL OF WESTERN OKLAHOMA**, send a query letter first - with SASE - requesting a copy of its detailed and explicit **STYLESHEET** and a list of themes for future issues. Poetry up to 25 lines, prose up to 10 double-spaced pages, photographs, artwork, literary essays, literary criticism, history, nostalgia, all have a chance here -- if it's about Western Oklahoma and fits the theme of a future issue. The themes are available for years in advance. For a sample copy, send \$4.00 and a 9 x 12 SAE (Self-Addressed Envelope) to: Dr. Leroy Thomas Editor, **WESTVIEW**, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, 100

Campus Drive, Weatherford, OK 73096-3098.

The jury for the semi-annual **GRASSLANDS REVIEW** is composed of students enrolled in the mini-course workshop in Creative Writing at the University of North Texas. Submit your work **only during the month of October or the month of March**. Submit no more than one short story (3,500 words maximum) OR five poems at a time. Essays are also acceptable. Include a brief, one-page cover letter telling a little bit about yourself. Manuscripts are not judged blind, so be sure to follow standard manuscript format, including your name and the title of the writing on each page of the manuscript, with sufficient SASE for its return should your writing not be selected. A sample copy is \$4.00 postpaid. For additional information, write Laura B. Kennelly - Editor, **GRASSLANDS REVIEW**, University of North Texas, Post Office Box 13706, Denton, TX 76203.

WOMEN TAKE NOTE

Thanks to *Raven Chronicles* for the following CALL FOR SUBMISSION notices.

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES: Writings By Mixed-Blood and Multi-racial Women of Color. DEADLINE: December 30, 1993. Accepting poetry, short stories, essays and theory. Send 2 copies of writing with SASE to: Jamie Lee Evans and Kate Berne Miller, 224 Minor Avenue, N.#A, Seattle, WA 98109.

WOMEN'S WORK - A Journal of Who We Are, is celebrating its second anniversary. Submissions of non-fiction, fiction, and poetry are welcome. Send manuscript with SASE to 602 Avenue A, Snohomish, WA 98290.

MULTICULTURAL URBAN MONTHLY NEWSPAPERS

URBAN SPECTRUM is looking for Native writers (also Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander) to objectively write about the news of "minorities." Lively prose in short paragraphs in short articles to inform its 10,000 multicultural readers about Native issues that transcend specific locations would be an excellent choice for publication of your writing. This publication has been a stepping stone to other things for many people. For example, Native writer Susie Aikmam now owns her own media business and has her own Native American program on KUVU radio. Send resume and query letter to Robert Stewart - General Manager or Caryl Buckstein or Lynda Gambalvo Interim Co-Editors, **URBAN SPECTRUM**, Post Office Box 31001, Aurora, CO 80041. Send 9 x 12 SAE with \$1.00 postage for sample copy.

NATIVE AMERICAN NEWSLETTERS

THE VOICE, a monthly newsletter of the Denver Indian Center, accepts material of interest to the approximately 14,00 Native people in their six-county area (mostly western and southern plains Sovereign American Nations and Tribes). Full-page essays focus on the nature of powwows or the difference between Tewa and Hopi Kachina doll carving. Original poetry appears in a section called the "Writer's Corner." A sample copy is \$1.00. Write to: **THE VOICE**, Denver Indian Center, 4407 Morrison Road, Denver, CO 80219 or phone (303) 936-2688.

MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH offers a unique opportunity to communicate directly with other Native writers who are at various stages in their writing careers. Share your knowledge 'in articles of instruction or personal experience; entertain your colleagues with short fiction or poetry. Manuscripts of 1,000 words will get you a full page in the **MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH**, 500 words will get you a half-page column. Are you moving, or have you moved since the *Returning The Gift* conference? Let everyone know in one easy step by send-

ing a change of address. Are you editing a journal or an anthology? Send a Call for Submissions. Have you scheduled a reading, or are you teaching a workshop? Send a notice. Got something to say? Write a letter to the editor. Did you publish something -- a poem, story, article, essay, review, book play, etc." Send a bibliographic citation (MLA style). Did you win an award, discover a new publication that others might like to know about? Hear some news? Send it in to: **MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH**, 2951 Ellenwood Drive, Fairfax, VA 22031-2038.

EXPERIMENTAL SHORT FICTION

BLACK ICE is a tri-annual that does NOT want to see "anything that is not ground breaking." Getting a sample copy before submission is highly recommended. **BLACK ICE** is published by the same people who administer the Nilon Award and has published Nilon Award winners Diane Glancy and Ricardo Cruz. Send \$7.00 for a sample copy. Send SASE for fiction guidelines to: Mark Amerika Editor, **BLACK ICE**, Campus Box 494, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80306.

SHOWCASE FOR NATIVE SHORT FICTION

INDIAN YOUTH OF AMERICA Newsletter is requesting short samples of your best writing - primarily fiction (no more than six double-spaced, typewritten pages). Native authors who have appeared in this publication include **Mentor Beth Brant** (Bay of Quinte Mohawk), **Mentor Joseph Bruchac** (Abenaki), Mary Tall Mountain (Koyukon Athabascan), Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve (Rosebud Sioux), Carter Revard (Osage). Your manuscript should include a cover letter giving your Sovereign American Indian Nation/Tribe affiliation, biographical information, and a photograph. For a free sample copy and submission guidelines write: Paige Gordon - Newsletter Editor, **INDIAN YOUTH OF AMERICA**, Post Office Box 2786, Sioux City, IA 51106 or call (712) 252-3230.

BOOK PUBLISHERS

NORTHLAND PUBLISHING of Flagstaff, AZ, is particularly receptive to manuscripts by Native writers -- especially on southwestern topics. **Neon Powwow New Native American Voices of the Southwest**, edited by **Wordcraft Circle** Mentor and National Advisory Caucus member **Anna Lee Walters** and **Monster Birds** by Mentor **Vee Browne** -- a companion volume to her 1991 winner of the Western Heritage Award **Monster Slayer** are a few of the writings Northland has published. For a free catalog and copy of *Guidelines for Authors, Illustrators and Photographers* write to Erin Murphy - Editor, **NORTHLAND PUBLISHING**, 2900 North Fort Valley Road, Flagstaff, AZ 86001 or call (602) 774-5251. Erin attended the 1993 *Returning The Gift* conference at the University of Oklahoma.

CHARLESBRIDGE PUBLISHING is interested in publishing Native children's literature and possibly other Native writings according to Mentor and National Advisory Caucus member **C. Blue Clark** (Muscogee). For information, contact: Katherine Keller - Editor, **CHARLESBRIDGE PUBLISHING**, 85 Main Street, Watertown, MA 02172 or call (617) 926-0329.

NORTHWEST WRITERS TAKE NOTE

WRITER'S NORTHWEST HANDBOOK - 5th edition - by Blue Heron Publishing is now available and lists all kinds of information for and about writers. Our thanks to *Raven Chronicles* for passing on the notice. Call 1-800-858-9055 for information or to order your copy.

COMMERCIAL OUTDOOR MAGAZINES

FUR-FISH-GAME is one of the few national outdoor magazines (now in its 7th year of publication) that pays on acceptance for 150 manuscripts a year on small and big game hunting, trapping, freshwater fishing, predator calling, camping, boating, woodcrafting, conservation, and other outdoor topics. Emphasis is on "How To" with very little

"Where To." It does not accept fiction. All submissions must be typed, double-spaced with page numbers and name on every page. Written queries preferred, but unsolicited manuscripts may be reviewed at editor's discretion. Photos (Black & White or color) enhances chances of acceptance. Features run 2,500 words or more, and pays \$100-\$150. How-to and personality profiles can be shorter...and pay less. To request sample copy (highly recommended) send \$1.00 and 9 x 12 SAE. For writer's guidelines, send SASE to: Mitch Cox - Editor, **FUR-FISH-GAME**, 2878 East Main Street, Columbus, OH 43209.

MULTICULTURAL LITERARY JOURNALS

CATALYST: A Magazine of Heart and Mind, a semi-annual that publishes fiction, drama, short stories, poetry and criticism (limit 3,000 words). A large volume of submissions and a small staff make it slow to report its final decision, but receipt of submission is acknowledged immediately. Payments range from \$15.00 to \$200.00 and are made within 3 months of publication. For a sample copy (highly recommended) send \$2.50 and 9 x 12 SAE. For Contributor's guidelines send SASE to: Pearl Cleage - Editor, **CATALYST**, 236 Forsyth Street - Suite 400, Atlanta, GA 30303. Manuscript submissions should be sent to **CATALYST**, Atlanta/ Fulton Public Library, I Margaret Mitchell Square, N.W., Atlanta, GA 30303 or call (404) 730-5785.

RAVEN CHRONICLES of Seattle, Washington is a tri-annual (Winter, Spring, and Summer double issue), which publishes fiction, poetry, literary essays, literary criticism and reviews. One of the publishers, **Philip H. Red Eagle** (Sisseton-Wahpeton/Klallam), is a member of the Interim Board of the **Native Writers' Circle of the Americas** and was the recipient of the 1993 Louis Littlecoon Oliver Memorial Prose Award for **RED EARTH: Native American Experiences in Vietnam**, a collection of short stories, at the 1993 *Southwest Regional Returning The Gift* conference (July 9-10, 1993), and who will be one of the coordinators for the upcoming 1994 *Regional Returning The Gift* conference tentatively scheduled next summer (July

1994) in the Pacific Northwest. Payment is modest, but contributors *are* compensated for their work. A sample copy is highly recommended. Enclose a 9 x 12 SAE and \$3.00 for Winter or Spring issue, \$4.50 for the Summer double issue. Sets of back issues can be ordered for \$10.00 per set (Vol 1, '91-'92; Vol II, 92-93). For information, contact Phoebe Bosche - Co-publisher and Editor, **RAVEN CHRONICLES**, Post Office Box 95918, University Station, Seattle, WA 98145 or call (206) 543-0249.

SHARE YOUR MARKETING INFORMATION

Please send notices, comments, complaints, calls for submission, sample copies of a wide range of publications (or photocopy of cover, masthead, table of contents -- so I can contact the publisher), and other information for this column to:

Moccasin Telegraph
Market Report
 c/o D. L. Birchfield
 5024 South Drexel
 Oklahoma City, OK 731194454
 or call (405) 6814886.

Native Writers Circle of the Americas

Interim Board

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To become a member of NWCA,
 please contact:

Joseph Bruchac III, Acting Chair
2 Middle Grove Road
Greenfield Review Press
Greenfield Center, NY 12833

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

AUGUST

16

Maurice Kenny (Mohawk)

SEPTEMBER

4

Vee F. Browne (*Navajo*)

9

Anna L. Walters (*Pawnee/Otoe-Missouria*)

10

Annette Jaimes (*Juaneno/Yaqui*)

23

Larrisa Tacheene (*Dine*)

29

Karl E. Gilmont (*Coharie*)

OCTOBER

4

Alma Luz Villanueva (*Yaqui*)

5

Laura Tohe (*Navajo*)

7

Sherman J. Alexie, Jr. (*Spokane/Coeur d'Alene*)

7

Billy Keys Jr. (*Cherokee*)

11

Anpetu Winyan (*Lakota/Brule*)

13

Lymanita Brave (*Oglala Sioux*)

16

Joseph Bruchac III (*Abenaki*)

18

Donna John (*Stevens Village Athabaskan*)

19

Gordon D. Henry Jr. (*White Earth Chippewa*)

23

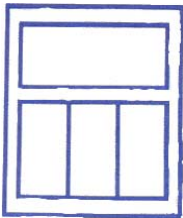
Judith Mt. Leaf Volborth (*Blackfoot/Comanche*)

25

Allen C. Ross (*Santee Dakota*)

30

Diane Willie (*Navajo*)



Indian Women In Prison



by Mentor **Charlotte DeClue-Pelley** (*Osage*)

*And I try, oh my god do I try
I try all the time
in this institution.
And I pray, oh my god do I pray
I pray every single day
for a revolution.*

.....WHAT'S UP
4 Non Blondes

Remember when we weren't afraid to talk about "genocide ... oppression ... race ... gender"? I do. But I don't remember very much about a group of people who embody these experiences. I'm talking about Native women in prisons and jails in this country.

the administration was afraid that "sleevelessness" would be too enticing and might cause homosexuality. Uh-huh.

It was a good reading. I met Indian women from a lot of different Nations and made some good friends. Most of these women are doing time for things that you, or I, have done, or thought about doing.

When I got ready to leave, I was escorted to the gate by a member of the Indian Club. I had been looking around and noticed there weren't any "yard dogs" or "yard cats" like I was used to seeing when I visited the men's prison. Even at The Walls (Oklahoma State Prison for Men), there's a story about "Canteen Tom" who fights skunks.

So I asked the woman "where are your dogs and cats?"

She said "oh, the guards shoot 'em. They're afraid of bestiality."

For whatever reasons the prison administration has for doing such things, they don't compute for most women prisoners. Women in prison are treated very differently than men in prison. It is a very confrontational place. I have a friend who is an ex-offender. She says that the guards at the prison where she did time were always in a woman's face with insults and comments; most of which were designed to tear her down, degrade her, whittle away at her self-esteem.

In your face
and in your place
and in your race.....
you have to be strong to endure such treatment. You have to know who you are all the time. Some of our greatest strength is being locked up, separated from their families and friends.

Even prison movements have disregarded Native women. In the past few years while being active in the Native prisoner rights struggle, I have heard few discussions that center around the needs of Native women in prison. Yet women are just as likely to talk about spiritual values and the need to express them as are men.

Most Native women participate at some level in the socialization and education of our people. We participate in religious ceremonies and cultural events. Yet reform movements seldom address the conditions that exist in women's prisons....

(continued on page 11)

...reform movements seldom address the conditions that exist in women's prisons...

Maybe it's because not enough of us has done time to be able to talk about it. This fact may change considering the rate of incarceration of people across race, class, and gender lines. It is estimated that in the next fifty years states like Oregon and Washington will house at least half of their population in prisons and institutions. The other half will be working in one. Considering how few of us understand the concept of "freedom" it is not hard to imagine such a thing happening.

Oklahoma has the highest rate of incarceration of women in the United States according to the League of Women Voters survey. Given the fact that Native people are disproportionately represented in prison, one can only surmise there are a lot of Native women doing time.

A few years back I did a reading at a women's prison here in The Territory (identified by our non-Native relations as Oklahoma [ed.]). The first thing I was told upon arriving at the prison was that I was not dressed properly, I had on a sleeveless top. They weren't going to let me in. I complained about the miles I had drives (clear across the state) and the fact that I was a professional and deserved to be treated like one.

They let me in, and the first thing I asked one of the women prisoners was "why the rule about the sleeves." I was told that

WRITER'S SHOWCASE

Wampanoag Indian Museum of Mashpee, Massachusetts

Can I tell you there was no lightening,
no wind to talk the trees into whispers.

It was more like over the hills and through the woods
to a salt box house I came,
the music playing everywhere except the background . . .
one little . . . two little . . . three little . . .

And the three women telling the story
of we can't remember,
looking like the sisters of Jimmy Hendrix,

The whole time catching my eye
long enough to throw it back
out the door.

I ran with smoke
back to upstate, NY
shredding the "Algonquin Umbrella,"
an umbrella one old Hendrix sister told a Quebegeois,
"kept our little Iroquois brothers safe at night."

Can I tell you there were cracks
all over the 1-90, just below the Adirondacks,
where Mohawk blood beneath my feet
sucked in hard whispers from pine trees.

Did I tell you
we were never a people to forget.

Chris Fleet
Akwesasne Mohawk

Apprentice of Sherman J. Alexie, Jr.

WRITER'S SHOWCASE

I love the Cherokee

Trees and lady bugs stand outside
Witches and lies manifest inside
The chairs are full
Of taxpayers and social thoughts

Breeze is swirling around palm trees
Barrooms are full of green beer
And warped celebration

The arbor is waiting
In Oklahoma; i cry to be there
Awaiting healing and a pipe ceremony

I remember the fire, the circle
The steps of generations, and
Rattles shaking in nearby trees

I love the Cherokee
And hot coffee and beans, and
Dried fruit.

eddie webb
Cherokee

Apprentice of Duane Big Eagle (Osage)

WRITER'S SHOWCASE

Henry and Star

A faded picture held lightly on the fingertips
That is my Grandfather
He sits up on a horse
Wearing a black Stetson hat
His eyes hidden in shadow
But the prominent cheekbones
Reveal that he is Cherokee
He stares straight ahead
Secure in the saddle
Behind him lie the dusty fields of Oklahoma
The photo is inscribed on the back; "Henry and Star"

I imagine the rough and ready life on a ranch
Living as men have lived through the ages
Sadly, his story follows a different path
The flames of American greed
Spread over the Cherokee Nation
And the land was divided against the will of the people
And soon the land was lost to the lawyers
His family straggled West
To live the life of migrants
Fruit pickers in the California valleys
Until the World War brought steady work
A welder in an Oakland Navy yard

Later he returned to his birthplace
Spent his last days dying young
My father has told me a little about him
"He was born in the Indian Territory"
My grandmother deflects my questions
"Those were hard days... and better forgotten"
"We did what we could to put food on the table"
My thoughts return back to the tattered image
The horse and rider cast a wide shadow

Bill Keys
Cherokee

Apprentice of Ken Jackson/Grey Eagle (Anishinabe/Ojibwe)

WRITER'S SHOWCASE

Untitled

Today I will be a
flower,

All I see and hear
will be my
sunlight.

All that I touch
or that touches
me will be my
rain.

But my roots will
never take to
the permanence
of the soil,

So that I may
experience all
that the world
and life has to
offer.

Jonathan Corn, Sr.
Menominee

Apprentice of Bill Penn (Nez Perce/Osage)

april 7 1993 prayer over breakfast

corn flakes
with sugar
one teaspoon full.
one yellow banana.
a child wearing
a bright red
jump suit.

the now defunct
chiniki lake drummers
forever sound good
on tape.

i spoon your flakes
to the drum beat.
next comes a
fancy dancing
dishrag.
to wipe away the milk on your chin.

the tape ends
my time with you ends.
your day is starting.
i sit you by the window
you slowly beat the glass
with the beat of the wind.

Tom Jenks
Northern Ute

Apprentice of Nita Pahdopony (Comanche)

Indian Women in Prison (continued from page 6)

over-crowding, lack of educational resources, inadequate drug and alcohol treatment program, little or no legal services. Not to mention the need for contact with family members and friends on the outside.

On the other side, few "free world" people are aware of what goes on in prison. They generally believe that the state is protecting them by locking up members of our community. Yet crime has not decreased. Drug and alcohol addiction has not decreased. Putting people in prison in large numbers has not caused a decrease in war, poverty, unemployment, homelessness, or hunger.

*We are a Circle.
That Circle includes all of us.*

With the money it takes to house our people in prison, we could be spending it on education, jobs, services, a clean environment. Not to mention the number of Native women who could be home providing support for themselves and their children.

Native women in prison are more than "victims." They are survivors. Before we call ourselves a "people" we must stop ignoring those of us who have fallen through the "whiteman's safty net." None of us are immune to such an experience, none of us. Let's find out who our people are behind the walls before we create another generation of people who have been removed from their land and communities.

We are a Circle. That Circle includes all of us.



Mentor **D. L. (Don) Birchfield** (*Choctaw/Chickasaw*) has been named Contributing Editor of **RAVEN CHRONICLES** for Oklahoma. His essay *The Laughing Boy* was published in the Summer 1993 issue (vol. 3 no, 1) of **Raven Chronicles**.

Mentor **Joseph Bruchac** (*Abenaki*) gave a workshop on storytelling and the sacred at the Chicago Parliament of World Religions in August where he also assisted Albert Yazzie (a Dine chanter from Fort Defiance) and Burton Pretty on Top (Crow) with a morning prayer service. His novel, **Dawn Land**, is selling extremely well and is about to go into a second printing.

Mentor **Robert J. Conley** (UKB Cherokee) gave an excellent paper on Cherokee outlaws at the Cherokee Nation History symposium held at Tahlequah September 1st, 2nd, and 3rd and attended by **Wordcraft Circle** Men-

tors and National Advisory Caucus members **Rayna Green** (Cherokee) and **Blue Clark** (Muscogee).

Mentor **Charlotte DeClue-Pelley** (*Osage*) will be giving a promotional reading of her work **TEN GOOD HORSES** (Stiletto 2 -- The Disinherited, Howling Dog Press), at the Denver Performing Arts Center in conjunction with the Rocky Mountain Book Festival - October 2, 1993.

Mentor **Anita Endrezze** (*Yaqui*) had her book, **At The Helm of Twilight** (Broken Moon Press, 1992) selected for the Washington State's *Governor's Award*. Her book was one of nine chosen for the award from 300 entries.

Apprentice **Chris Fleet** (*Akwesasne Mohawk*) gave his first "professional" reading at Barnes and Noble Book-sellers on September 24th. He will read from *Love and Rattlesnakes* and from a

new chapbook titled **The Geese Will Believe This Autumn**.

Mentor **Annette Jaimes** (*Juaneno/Yaqui*) participated as Assistant to the Tribunal Rapporteur of *The Peoples' International Tribunal Hawai'i 1993* held August 12th through 23rd on the Hawai'ian islands.

Apprentice Suzanne Rancourt (*Abenaki*) has recently been accepted into the Ph.D program at Summit University in New Orleans. She plans to incorporate the **Wordcraft Circle** experience into her Ph.D requirements.

**NATIVE WRITERS
CIRCLE
OF THE AMERICAS**

NWCA member **Gloria Bird** (*Spokane*) -- winner of the North American Native Authors First Book Award (The Diane Decorah Award -- for Poetry) for her book **Full Moon on the Reservation** will be available from The Greenfield Review Press October 1st.

NWCA member **Ronald Burns Query** (*Choctaw*) is a panelist on "Writing in the New West" at the Rocky Mountain Book Festival, Denver, Colorado on October 1st. He will also lecture and give a reading at Yavapai College, Prescott, Arizona on October 12. Ron has been named a contributing editor of **RAVEN CHRONICLES** for Arizona.

NWCA member **Carter Revard** (*Osage*) will speak September 30th at the University of Tulsa in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He maybe contacted at (314) 729-9358.

NWCA member Clifford E. Trafzer (*Wyandot*) has completed his latest work **Death Stalks the Yakima: A Social and Cultural History of Death on the Yakima Indian Reservation, 1888-1964**.

Wordcraft Circle participants and members of *Native Writers Circle of the Americas* are asked to please send a post-card about their activities for publication in *Moccasin Telegraph*.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON RETURNING THE GIFT

- Southwest Native American Voices:

A Regional Conference of North American Native Writers

by **Ron Querry** (*Choctaw*)

[This article was first published by Raven Chronicles. Our thanks to Ron Querry and **Raven Chronicles** for allow-ing Moccasin Telegraph to reprint the. article for members of *Native Writers' Circle of the Americas* and **Wordcraft Circle** participants. ed.]

THURSDAY

A dry 112-degrees as I leave Tucson. A wet 90-something as the plane lands in Oklahoma City. I miss the desert. The desk clerk at the University of Oklahoma Hotel says I'm booked to share a room with Philip Red Eagle. I reply that while I certainly admire his writing, am proud as can be that he's being honored with the Louis Littlecoon Oliver Memorial Award, and appreciate the fact that the good people at *Returning The Gift* are springing for the room, I still don't reckon I want to share with Mr. Red Eagle -- or anyone else, for that matter.

Turns out the cottage is a finely appointed two-bedroom apartment with full kitchen and all the amenities -- far more comfortable than most places I've lived. Red Eagle apparently hasn't arrived yet -- on the kitchen table are our conference schedules, fancy name-badges, cookies and soft drinks. Cookies? Well-meaning folks eager to stuff diabetes-prone people with as much sugar as possible. Still, these *are* fancy accommodations for Indian doin's, I'd say.

At the evening reception I graze a colorful spread of tiny sandwiches, potato chips, raw vegetables, iced tea. Geary and Barbara Hobson -- who've directed and coordinated this event -- play host to what I estimate to be 30-40 people.

Later, some of us gather at a just-off-campus spot, The same spot where last year RTG participants reportedly terrorized the regulars with loud, off-key renditions of "Running Bear Loved Lit-

tle White Dove" and "Cherokee People." Rearranging tables to suit us, we notice a pudgy white guy with unruly hair setting up all manner of electronic amplifying equipment -- apparently the entertainment is about to begin. We decide to move out from under the speakers so that we might hear one another when the noise cranks up. Just as well -- as it turns out, this guys idea of entertainment is to imitate noises generally associated with private bodily functions with his electric instrument while he talks dirty into the public address system.

I am *not* making this up.

I remember being struck by the fact that a dozen or so well-groomed fraternity boys -- as well-groomed, that is, as people who wear baseball caps backwards can be said to be -- and their poofy-haired dates appeared actually to be amused by this guy's litany of four-letter words set to the screeches of a discordant stringed instrument. Now, it may be that we were just a bunch of grouchy Indian poets and novelists who wouldn't know Rap from Reggae and possibly none of us had ever owned a Walkman but we were not so easily amused as were the Delta Pies, who we noticed were lustily singing along to Rasta-Man's opening number, "The ABCs of Pornography" -- the lyrics to which I'll not quote, this being a family publication.

We briefly considered exercising our treaty rights with the state of Oklahoma by setting up a bingo game to distract the audience but abandoned the idea in favor of a more typical "good injun" response: we picked up our belongings and removed, on foot, to where we'd been assigned by the government

We removed, that is to the cottage where we ate cookies and sipped sugary fruit drinks and spoke great truths until 3 am.

FRIDAY

The Continental Breakfast offered up in the lobby turned out to be a glucose tolerance test what with the frosted flakes, sugar donuts, various jams and jellies, and coffee.

Following welcoming remarks by Geary Hobson, Jon Aunko, and Jerry Bread, a panel considered novels by Native authors published since 1900. I can tell you that there have been more than 25 as of this writing -- a remarkable number considering that prior to 1968 there had been fewer than 10 novels published by Indian authors.

Some of what I heard: Indian novels are not always easy to read -- that is, they are not always so accessible to the larger reading public as those of us more versed in Native traditions and lifeways might imagine.

The most surprising thing I heard: The most prolific novelist on the panel announced that he hadn't read any of the novels published since 1990. (I assume this did not include those novels he had written; surely he has read -- albeit in that odd way one may be said to read what one is writing while writing -- his *own* work.)

What I'm left thinking: As writers -- and just as surely as readers -- we need to avoid the inclination toward intellectual laziness. That is, avoid the inclination to rewrite and, yes, reread the same books again and again in an exercise that inevitably leads to a limited, self-repetitious literature.

Afternoon, and Barbara Hobson appears with a sack full of truck farm peaches and fresh strawberries in what I take to be a valiant attempt to offset the rapidly rising blood-sugar levels among the festival participants. I see Mohawk poet Maurice Kenny standing over a trash can, peach juice fairly dripping

from his elbows, a look of sheer delight on his fine, chiseled face.

At Friday evening's Awards Banquet, Simon Ortiz is honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award. He is gracious and fine as he tells how important we are to him and to one another and reads beautifully, selections from his work collected in *Woven Stone*. Kimberly Blaeser, clearly destined to be among the most important of our Native critics and surely one of the most prolific and versatile of our authors, is awarded the Diane Decorah Memorial Award for Poetry. Philip Red Eagle, inspired by last year's Returning the Gift Festival, receives the award for short fiction for his story "Red Earth" -- conceived and written in a flash of brilliance that the rest of us can only envy. Crystal Joses accepts the Teresa Palmer Memorial Award.

During these two fine days, panels consider the use of Folk Material in Native Children's Literature, History in Native American Poetry, and Native American

Screenplay Writing,

And there are, too, those lively and animated discussions in the hallways and on porch steps. LeAnne Howe and Don Birchfield astonish me -- and I imagine all within earshot -- with their precise and detailed discussions of Choctaw history. And always there are those late-night, informal gatherings in the cottage.

And there are readings from works-in-progress and works in print. On Friday night Simon Ortiz reads -- reads not from his own work mind you, but rather generously shares works that he wants us to know: a new story from Sherman Alexie's *The Lone Ranger And Tonto Fistfight In Heaven* and a passage of Janet Campbell Hale's *The Jailing of Cecilia Capture*. Philip Red Eagle reads from "Red Earth." LeAnn Howe shares a portion of her novel-in-progress. Robert Conley and D. L. Birchfield read from their work. And I from my novel, *The Death of Bernadette Lefthand*.

SATURDAY

...night at the Jacobson House -- where fine works by Native artists Pahdopony, Poolaw, and others hand -- were served dinner outside on the lawn, The fireflies from last year come out to greet the writers. Not so many this year -- not so many writers and not so many fireflies.

And then the poets: Kimberly Blaeser, Maurice Kenny, Gearsy Hobson, Cheryl Savageau, Carter Revard among them. And Pin reminded that the poets don't really read -- rather they sing. And I'm reminded that their voices are beautiful.

And then, too soon, it's Saturday morning at Will Rogers World Airport (Rogers was Cherokee, you know). Too soon the good-byes to friends old and new.

And next year we'll meet again. Or maybeso.

Oklahoma Regional Wordcraft Circle Workshop

Singing, alternately in Osage and Latin, Osage then latin, Osage again and then Latin again, **Charlotte DeClue's** voice took the audience by surprise every time she abruptly shifted from one song to the other; no matter how many times she made the change, the contrast was almost more than the ear could comprehend: two very different forms of beauty, following so closely upon one another, so different in tone, in rhythm, in volume, so different in the impressions of the little girl, who we were being invited to imagine, who had lived in the world of one song and who had been thrown into the world of the other . . .

Her face beaming with delight as she recalled one special Native child, **Nita Pahdopony's** countenance had changed to such a furious sadness by the time she finished telling about how, as a substitute teacher, she had only had the child in class for a short time, until the regular teacher returned, a teacher who considered the child's bursting talents to be attributes of a "problem" student, and who lost no opportunity to discourage and dismiss the child, that the changes in Nita's face told the ordinary, daily plight of that child in a way that made words almost unnecessary . . .

Hearing a writer's voice and seeing a writer's face are two good reasons to participate in a **Wordcraft Circle** Intensive Writing Workshop. Though it is unlikely that you would be unaware of the rhythms in the work of **Charlotte DeClue** or whether **Nita Pahdopony** is smiling or frowning as you read her work, there is something reassuring about learning the emotions one encounters on a printed page are genuine. And when writers, such as these two, are able to convey those emotions with printed words alone, you don't have to struggle to find reasons for wanting to go to a workshop to hear what they have to say about their craft.

Such was the case at Oklahoma City University, August 26 and 27, 1993, as Oklahoma **Wordcraft Circle** participants and their guests from the Oklahoma Indian community spent two busy days learning from one another.

Ideal generous facilities were provided by Oklahoma City University, making it possible to offer the workshop free to the public. Special thanks must go to **Dr. Jerald C. Walker** (Cherokee), President of Oklahoma City University, to **Wordcraft Circle** Mentor and National Advisory Caucus member **Dr. C. Blue Clark** (Muscogee), Executive Vice President of OCU, **Dr. Joseph Sahmaunt** (Kiowa), also of OCU, and to **Reverend John Low** (Muscogee), who gave the Opening Blessing.

Special thanks also to the **Daily Oklahoman**, the Oklahoma City Community College's newspaper, **The Pioneer** and the OCU campus newspaper for publicizing the event.

Wordcraft Circle Oklahoma Regional Coordinator **C. Blue Clark** (Muscogee) shouldered the burden for making the workshop a reality. His tireless effort to put together a program that ran smoothly from start to finish was appreciated by all. He even managed to provide coffee, pastries, and orange juice each morning for the participants.

During the planning session which was held several weeks before the event and attended by **Wordcraft Circle** Mentors and an Apprentice from throughout Oklahoma, Blue gave a tour of the OCU campus. Included in the tour was the elegant and spacious Hodges Hall in the Meinders School of Business where the Intensive Writing Workshop was held.

In this large room that included not only conference tables, video equipment, and overhead projectors but also areas of comfortable couches and overstuffed chairs ideal for casual conversations that are an important part of any gathering.

Participants attending the two-day event were overwhelmed by the variety of experience of the Mentors and Native writers who all gave outstanding presentations. Participants watched the video of the Emmy Award-winning episode of Star Trek, animated from a script written by poet and science fiction writer **Russell Bates** (Kiowa) and listened to him explain, step-by-step, how he wrote the episode.

Mentor **Kathryn Bell** (*Southern Cheyenne*) took time from her work as a legislative specialist to the tribal council of the Muscogee Nation -- in the midst of preparing final legislative drafts of the annual budgetary appropriations -- and drove to Oklahoma City to tell how she had learned to deal with the potential terrors of writer's block. The former editor of the **Muscogee Nation News** who is now publishing poetry and writing scripts for documentaries, shared her extensive knowledge and personal insights with consummate skill.

The participants also had the opportunity to listen to and ask questions of Mentor and National Advisory Caucus Member **Robert J. Conley** (*UKB Cherokee*). He responded to questions about how he was able to write and have twenty-two books published since 1986 -- two of which have won Spur Awards from the Western Writers of America.

They also listened with intense interest to Mentor and National Advisory Caucus member **Don Birchfield** (*Choctaw/Chickasaw*) talk about manuscript preparation and markets for the writings by the participants. (NOTE: As a result of his excellent presentation, Don was asked to write the MARKET REPORT for *Moccasin Telegraph*. [ed.]

The presentation by Apprentice **Glenn J. Twist** (*Cherokee/Creek*) titled *Decisions An Author Must Make Before Embarking on Any Writing Endeavor* was well received by all the participants.

Also attending the two-day event was **Wordcraft Circle** National Director **Lee Francis** (*Laguna*). In addition to sharing the story of the **Wordcraft Circle** vision, he invited a number of those attending to become participants in **Wordcraft Circle** and they accepted the invitation.

One participant, after working a double-shift, drove half-way across the state to learn how to find a publisher for her work. Others, such as Mentor **Roxy Gordon** (*Choctaw*) came from as far away as the Dallas-Ft. Worth metropolitan area.

Whatever the event of the moment, whether formal presentation or casual conversation or joking and laughing at

meals, there was an intensity of concentration, an awareness of being part of a rare opportunity, a tangible energy that prolonged conversations far into the night. "I've learned so much" said one participant at the end of the two-day event. "I'm really excited about my writing and rarin' to go."

So are we all.

Wordcraft Circle National Advisory Caucus

- D. L. Birchfield (Choctaw/Chickasaw)
- Beth Brant (Bay of Quinte Mohawk)
- Joseph Bruchac III (Abenaki)
- C. B. Clark (Muscogee)
- Robert J. Conley (UKB Cherokee)
- Lee Francis (Laguna)
- Karl E. Gilmont (Coharie)
- Janice Could (Maidu)
- Rayna Green (Cherokee)
- Clara Sue Kidwell (Choctaw/Chippewa)
- Paulette Molin (White Earth Chippewa)
- Pahdopony (Comanche)
- Bill Penn (Nez Perce/Osage)
- A. C. Ross (Santee Dakota)
- Laura Tohe (Navajo)
- Anna Walters (Pawnee-Otoe/Missouria)

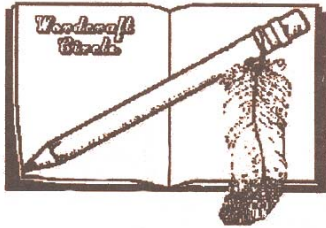
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New York Regional Council

C. Blue Clark
(*Muscogee*)
Oklahoma Regional Council

E. K (Kim) Caldwell
(*Tsalagi/Creek/Shawnee*)
Northwest Regional Council

Bill Penn
(*Nez Perce/Osage*)
Michigan Regional Council



The BOOK SHELF

Gloria Bird

Full Moon on the Reservation:

Poems By Gloria Bird

The Greenfield Review Press

Greenfield Center, NY

\$9.95

Vine Deloria, Jr.

God Is Red: A Native View of Religion

North American Press

Golden, CO

\$22.95 (revised edition)

Anita Endrezze

at the helm of twilight

Broken Moon Press

1992

Chris Fleet

The Geese Will Believe This Autumn

Chapbook

1993

Rayna Green

Women in American Indian Society

Chelsea House

New York, NY

\$12.00 (paper)

Karen Harvey and Lisa Harjo

**Indian Country: A History of Native
People in America**

North American Press

Golden, CO

\$27.95

Ron Querry

The Death of Bernadette Lefthand

Red Crane Books

Santa Fe, NM

\$22.95 (cloth) \$11.95 (paper)

A. C. (Chuck) Ross

Mitakuye Oyasin

"We Are All Related"

Bear Publishing

Kyle, SD

\$12.00 (paper)

Ray A. Young Bear

**Black Eagle Child: The Facepaint
Narratives**

University of Iowa Press

Iowa City, IA

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*Wampanoag Indian Museum of Mashpee,
Mass.*

Chris Fleet

I love the Cherokee

eddie webb

april 7 1993 prayer over breakfast

Tom Jenks

Henry and Star

Bill Keys

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2951 Ellenwood Drive
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