



# MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH

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Fairfax, VA

October/November 1993

## REFLECTION

### The Stick Across The Door Of The Lodge

by **Joseph Bruchac** (*Abenaki*)

Carroll Arnett once gave me a list he'd made up for a Native American literature course. On it he contrasted norms of Native American culture with norms of European American culture. I still find myself referring to it every now and then, perhaps to remind myself which world I'm operating in at the moment. It's a list that I suspect every Native person would find familiar. On the European American side we find, for example, the glorification of youth. On the Native side we find old age as a time of wise counsel and respect. I'm sure that as you're reading this you are mentally making up your own such list.

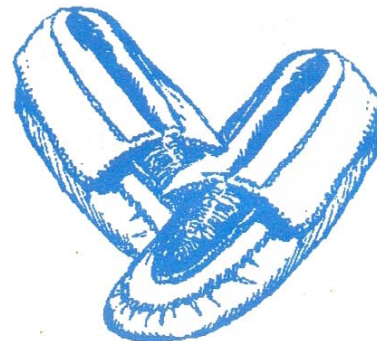
Lately, though, when I come to one particular contrast I find myself struck by the irony of it. It is the one which contrasts the European emphasis on individualism with the Native emphasis on community. Why do I find that ironic? Because, despite their community-oriented natures, it seems as if all the many Native cultures on this continent also showed respect for the privacy and the personal life of the individual. Among the *Abenaki* people, I've been told by various elders, one only needed to lean a stick across the door of your wigwam to indicate that no one should enter it. And, whether the lodge was empty or tenanted at the time, that leaning stick would be as effective as a deadbolt lock in preventing anyone else from coming in. (However, when that stick was not across the door of the lodge, anyone could come in at any time -- and probably did!) That ties in with what I call the "involved non-interference attitude" that also characterizes Native life today. Even though people may be very curious about what their neighbors are doing, actually telling someone else directly how to live their life is generally not done. People, including children, are allowed to make mistakes and, thus, learn from them. Whatever you do, though, you can count on your community observing it.

But on the European American side, with its emphasis on individualism, we find so much scrutiny by strangers, bureaucratic interference and outright surveillance that it seems these days as if no one can call their private live's private any longer. Especially if they achieve any kind of fame or notoriety. and going along with it seems to be an expectation

that you will disclose your deepest inner self. The media and marketplace thrive on negative exposure and sensational exaggeration. Sometimes to the point of destroying the person under attack. If you are a Native person coming from a background which values your personal and spiritual integrity, if you find yourself operating in that European American world you seem to be expected to play that game.

So where is this reflection going? My point is really a simple one. As a Native writer, you have the opportunity (and responsibility) to both open the door of the lodge and put the stick across it. Today, the writings of Native people and Native points of view are finally being more widely published. There are more opportunities -- not just for established writers, but for new ones -- than ever before. Sherman Alexie's well-deserved national success is a good example. (His book of short stories from Atlantic Monthly Press, **The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven**, was featured in Barnes & Noble's "New Writer's Showcase" in September.) As my friend Rick Hill said when I saw him at the Labor Day Iroquois Museum Festival, "who would have imagined ten years ago that we'd be so popular we'd actually be turning work down?"

And that is my point. We can turn it down. Writing is a chancy profession. Most writers don't earn a living from it solely. When a publisher actually calls you up and says they want to do something, your first impulse may be to say yes. But there is still so much education that needs to be done, so many misconceptions about what Indians are, so many long-standing stereotypes, that even well-meaning publishers may be expecting things from you that you do not really want to give them. We do not have to sacrifice the sanctity of our communities to achieve individual success. Remember that when you remove the stick from the door of your lodge, the world is invited in. But remember, too, that we have the right to keep our dreams our own. We can always put the stick back across the door.



# Happy Birthday!

## OCTOBER

- 4 Alma Luz Villanueva (*Yaqui*)
- 5 Laura Tohe (*Navajo*)
- 7 Billy G. Keys (*Cherokee*)
- 7 Sherman J. Alexie (*Spokane/Coeur d' Alene*)
- 11 Muriel Antoine (*Lakota/Brule*)
- 13 Lymanita M. Brave (*Oglala Lakota*)
- 16 Joseph Bruchac (*Abenaki*)
- 16 Thomas A. Biron (*Garden River Ojibway*)
- 18 Donna John (*Stevens Village Athabaskan*)
- 18 Terri C. Hansen (*Nebraska Winnebago*)
- 19 Gordon D. Henry, Jr. (*White Earth Chippewa*)
- 23 Judith Mt. Leaf Volborth (*Blackfoot/Comanche*)
- 25 Allen "Chuck" Ross (*Santee Dakota*)
- 30 Diane Willie (*Navajo*)

## NOVEMBER

- 2 Kathy Denezbah Peltier (*Navajo/Chippewa/Sioux*)
- 7 Candace Farmer (*Choctaw*)
- 10 Jonathan J. Corn, Sr. (*Menominee*)
- 12 Ray A. Young Bear (*Mesquakie*)
- 16 Paulette Fairbanks Molin (*White Earth Chippewa*)
- 20 Lela Northcross-Wakely (*Potowatomi/Kickapoo*)
- 21 Louise Ann Barton (*Cherokee/Mohawk*)
- 23 Eddie Webb (*Tsalagi*)
- 23 Tara C. Picotte (*Winnebago/Yankton Sioux*)
- 24 Jose L. Garza (*Coahuilteca/Apache*)
- 27 Richard A. Rose (*Cherokee*)
- 27 Charles Whalen (*Oglala Lakota*)
- 28 Michelle Boursaw (*Ojibwa/Saginaw Chippewa*)

## DECEMBER

- 2 John Cauthorn (*Lower Umpqua*)
- 4 Chris Eyre (*Arapaho/Cheyenne*)
- 6 Christopher Fleet (*Akwesasne Mohawk*)
- 6 Ruth Hall (*Hidatsa*)
- 11 Charles Brashear (*Cherokee*)
- 25 Sonciray Bonnell (*Sandia/Isleta/Salinan*)
- 29 Robert J. Conley (*UKB Cherokee*)
- 30 Pamela D. Rentz (*Karuk*)

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**SUBSCRIPTION**  
**\$24.00 - 1 year**

Native writers participating in **Wordcraft Circle** as a Mentor or an Apprentice do not pay a subscription fee for *Moccasin Telegraph*.



# Market Report

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

The annual deadline for submission of book length non-fiction prose manuscripts for the **North American Indian Prose Award** is July 1st. The award of \$1000. -- which is an advance against royalties -- and publication by the University of Nebraska Press is sponsored by the University of California Berkeley, the University of California Santa Cruz, and the University of Nebraska Press. The editors screen the manuscripts, solicit the opinions of outside readers when necessary, then choose two to four finalists by November. The writings of the finalists are then juried. Composition of the jury has changed from time to time. For 1993 it is Gerald Vizenor, Louis Owens, Diane Glancy, and LaVonne Ruoff. The winner is announced in January and honored at a public ceremony in the spring on the campus of the University of California Santa Cruz. All entries in the competition are also considered for publication by the University of Nebraska Press, regardless of whether or not they win the award. Manuscripts may be any form of non-fiction (poetry, fiction, and drama will not be considered.) For contest rules, enclose SASE and request a copy of the University of Nebraska Press brochure "*Preparing Your Manuscript*" which contains detailed information and specific requirements -- especially if you are writing your manuscript on computer disk. Contact: **North American Indian Prose Award**, c/o University of Nebraska Press, 327 Nebraska Hall, Lincoln, NE 68588-0520.

**Akwe:kon: A Journal of Indigenous Issues** (formerly *Northeast Indian Quarterly*), a publication of the American Indian Program at Cornell University, publishes poetry, fiction, reviews, literary criticism, photography, artwork, essays and articles covering a wide range of Native issues. A sample copy is \$4.50 postpaid. Contact: Jose Barreiro, Editor, **Akwe:kon Journal**, 300 Caldwell Hall, Cornell University, Ithica, NY 14853 (607) 2,55-4308.

*Great Promise Magazine* seeks culturally relevant material for American Indian children, grades 5 - 8. Contact: David Pego, Editor, *Great Promise Magazine*, 1103 Hatteras Drive, Austin, TX 78753 (512) 480-9922.

Mentor **Clifford Trafzer** (*Wyandot*), editor of **Earth Song/Sky Spirit** (Doubleday/Anchor, 1993) is nearly finished editing a second anthology of contemporary Native American short stories titled *Storytellers*. He is looking for one or two more fully developed stories in the 5,000 word range. Contact: Clifford Trafzer, 10173 Palermo Court, Yucaipa, CA 92399 (909) 797-9266.

*Inkfish*, a general-interest Oregon coast monthly publication, will debut this winter with **Talking Circle**, a special section of Native writing edited by **Wordcraft Circle Apprentice E. K. (Kim) Caldwell** (*Tsalagi/Creek/Shawnee*). **Talking Circle** will start out at two pages (450 words per page) and short fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and articles on contemporary Native issues will be considered. Contact: E. K. (Kim) Caldwell, **Talking Circle** Editor, *Inkfish*, Post Office Box 806, Depoe Bay, OR 97341 (503) 765-2107).

*ELF: Eclectic Literary Forum*, a general interest independent literary quarterly seeks traditional Native American stories for a special section titled **Cultural Treasures**. Guidelines for SASE. Sample copy \$4.50 postpaid. Contact: Cynthia K. Erbes, Editor, *ELF*, Post Office Box 392, Tonawanda, NY 14150.

*Turtle Quarterly*, published by the Native American Center for the Living Arts, features one short story per issue, along with lots of articles examining contemporary Native American issues. A sample copy is \$4.50 postpaid. Contact: Millie Knapp, Editor, *Turtle Quarterly*, 25 Rainbow Mail, Niagara Falls, NY 14303.

**Book Review Editor** for *Turtle Quarterly* is **Wordcraft Circle** Mentor and National Advisory Caucus member **Karl Gilmont** (*Coharie*). To review books for *Turtle Quarterly*, send a letter detailing your areas of interest. Contact: Karl Gilmont, Book Review Editor, *Turtle Quarterly*, Post Office Box 329, Anthony, NM 88021 (505) 522-5403.

The **American Indian literature and Critical Studies Series** (Gerald Vizenor, General Editor) of the University of Oklahoma Press will consider your novel, collection of short stories, or volume of critical studies for publication. You must first request a copy of the American Indian Catalog and Guidelines for University of Oklahoma Press Authors. Then you may submit a synopsis, outline, and sample chapters. Contact: Kimberly Wiar, Acquisitions Editor, University of Oklahoma Press, 1005 Asp Avenue, Norman, OK 73019-0445 (405) 325-5111.

Gary Lawless, co-editor of poetry for *Wild Earth* magazine is editing an anthology of **poems for the wild earth**. Both old and new writings will be considered. Include information on reprint rights if the poem has been previously published. Contact: Gary Lawless, RR1, Box 228, Nobleboro, ME 04555.

*SAIL: Studies in American Indian Literatures*, a quarterly journal of the Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures (ASAIL), publishes reviews, interviews, bibliographies, creative work, scholarly and *theoretical articles*. Manuscripts should follow MLA format and should not be

under consideration for publication elsewhere. Submit three samples with SASE. Contact: Rodney Simard, Editor, *SAIL*, Department of English, California State University, 5500 University Parkway, San Bernadino, CA 92407-2397. **Wordcraft Circle** Mentor and National Advisory Caucus member **Joseph Bruchac** (*Abenaki*) is the *SAIL* Poetry/Fiction Editor. For Creative Work, contact: Joseph Bruchac, *SAIL* Poetry/Fiction Editor, The Greenfield Review Literary Center, 2 Middle Grove Avenue, Greenfield Center, NY 12833. To subscribe to *SAIL*, write to: Robert M. Nelson, Box 112, University of Richmond, Richmond, VA 23173.

Choctaw attorney Scott Morrison, National Director of the Native American office of Jobs in the Environment (formerly the National Toxics Campaign Fund) is editing an **anthology of Native writing** to help fund the work of her office. (Scott writes model environmental codes for tribal governments and travels across Turtle Island (United States) fighting to keep tribal land from becoming a dumping ground for toxic waste.) Submissions (donated work) do not have to have an environmental theme and can be on any topic in any genre (from creative to academic -- including poetry, stories, essays, and articles). Limit on submission is 20 double-spaced pages. **Deadline for submission: December 31, 1993.** Contact: Scott Morrison, Post Office Box 553, Ada, OK 74821-0553 (405) 436-2749.

*The Evergreen Chronicles - A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Literature* publishes poetry and fiction. **Semiannual deadlines are January 1st and July 1st.** Guidelines for #10 SASE. Sample copy \$7.95 plus \$1.00 postage. Contact: Editor, Post Office Box 8939, Minneapolis, MN 55408.

Judith Minty is editing an anthology of writings that focus on breast cancer. Donated work may include essays, edited journal entries, fiction, and poetry. The anthology will raise funds for research to cure breast cancer. **Deadline for submission: December 1, 1993.** Contact: Judith Minty, Anthology, The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, 380 Camino de Estrella - Suite 137, San Clemente, CA 92672 (714) 496-5624.

**Writers and Publishers Guide to Texas Markets: 1993-1995** lists 600 book, magazine, playwrighting, and newspaper markets in Texas. 200 pages. \$12.95 plus shipping and handling. Call: 1 (800) 826-8911.

The 5th edition of the **Writer's Northwest Handbook** lists hundreds of book, magazine, and newspaper markets in the Pacific northwest. Of special note is an article by *Native Writer's Circle of the Americas* member **Gloria Bird**. 226 pages. \$18.95 plus shipping and handling. Call 1(800)858-9055.

The **1994 Poet's Market** and the **1994 Writer's Market** which list thousands of places to publish your work are now available. Check your local library. The **1994 Novel and Short Story Writer's Market** will be available in February or March, 1994. The least expensive way to buy is to join the Writer's Digest Book Club. For information on the club, see *Writer's Digest Magazine*.

The Oklahoma Center for the Book is accepting nominations from authors for the **5th Annual Oklahoma Book Awards** in five categories for books published in 1993 by authors who reside or have resided in Oklahoma or for books with an Oklahoma-based theme. Contact: 1 (800) 522-8116.

Writers who live west of the Mississippi River may nominate their books, scripts, or long feature article, or series of articles which were published or produced in 1993 for the **PEN Center West 1994 Literary Awards** for prizes of \$500 in nine categories. Contact: (213) 365-8500 for entry forms.

The **13th Annual Syndicated Fiction Project** is accepting short story manuscripts only during January for broadcast on the National Public Radio's *The Sound of Writing* and possible newspaper syndication and publication in **American Short Fiction** (University of Texas Press). Pays \$500 plus \$100 per syndication. Forty stories out of 3,000 were accepted in 1992. Contact: (202) 543-6322.

For information on the **1994 Allen Ginsberg Poetry Awards, The Paterson Poetry Prize**, or guidelines for *Footwork: The Paterson Literary Review* (poetry, short stories, art, photos) send a #10 SASE. Contact: Maria Mazziotti Gillan, *Footwork*, Passaic County Community College, 1 College Boulevard, Paterson, NJ 07505-1179.

**Native Visual Artists** are invited to send their name and address for information about 20 major permanent works of public art to be purchased by the Massachusetts Highway Department. Contact: Artery Art Program, Central Artery/Tunnel Project, I South Station, Boston, MA 02110.

The **4th Biennial Invitational Exhibition** hosted by the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indian and Western Arts will be held July through September 1994. Applications from Native visual artists are now being accepted. **Deadline: December 1, 1994.** Contact: Miles Leslie, Eiteljorg Museum, 500 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2707 (317) 636-9378.

## SHARE YOUR MARKETING INFORMATION

Send notices to:

*Moccasin Telegraph* - Market Report  
c/o D. L. (Don) Birchfield  
5024 South Drexel  
Oklahoma City, OK 73119-4454

# Intensive Writing Workshops A Success!

## **NORTHWEST REGION**

*Newport, Oregon - October 21, 22, & 23, 1993*

The **Wordcraft Circle** Intensive Writing Workshop held at the Performing Arts Center in Newport Oregon was a grand success. There were 71 participants who came from northern California, Oregon, and Washington state. The event, which was coordinated by Apprentice **E. K. (Kim) Caldwell** (*Tsalagi/Creek/Shawnee*) -- who did a superb job -- was co-sponsored by the Confederated Tribes of Siletz and the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts.

Late Wednesday evening, Apprentice **Eddie Webb** (*Cherokee*) arrived at Kim's home which is literally located on the beach overlooking the Pacific ocean. Kim and Eddie were joined by National Director **Lee Francis** (*Laguna*), who had arrived on Tuesday and was also Kim's house-guest, to discuss final preparations for the three-day event.

Thursday morning began with registration along with coffee, generously donated by **Patty Roberts** of the Coffee People, and bagels. Selene Rilatos, Director of the Siletz Culture Department and Bonnie Peterson, Director of the Siletz Education Department -- with their respective staff -- organized and managed the registration table for those attending the workshop and provided logistical assistance. A heart-felt thank you from **Wordcraft Circle** for all their hard work -- and kudos especially to **Nina John and Darin Rilatos** for making the registration process as hassle-free as possible!

**Cathie Stimic and Laura Jones** of Portland Access Cable are to be honored for their deep sensitivity to filming only those portions of the 3-day event that did not involve any of the ceremonies among the People or discussions among the participants. (**NOTE**- Videotapes will be available for purchase in January 1994.)

The day's activities began with a welcoming prayer blessing and song by Selene Rilatos in the language of the Siletz. Accompanied by the beat from her hand-drum, Selene's prayer song was powerful and moving and set the tone for the three-day gathering.

Writing Indian Style was the first panel of the day which was led by **Wordcraft Circle** Mentors **Debbie LaCroix** (*Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux*), and **Lee Francis** (*Laguna*).

Debbie, who teaches at Chemawa -- the BIA Indian school in Salem Oregon -- managed to bring 15 students to the workshop -- despite **INCREDIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE OBSTACLES!** Blessings to Debbie for all she endured **AND** for her stubborn determination to get the students to Newport and back to Salem (a 2 hour trip each way) **EACH DAY** of the conference. It is appalling to think that BIA Indian school administrators would deny Indian students the opportunity to participate in an educational event.

### **NOTE:**

All **Wordcraft Circle** **MENTORS AND APPRENTICES** and *Native Writers Circle of the Americas* members are **urged** to write to:

**Ada Deer, Assistant Secretary  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Department of the Interior  
400 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240**

to express their views concerning the actions and attitudes of BIA school administrators who would impose incredible obstacles that deny Indian students an educational opportunity to learn writing skills outside the BIA Indian school compound. The actions of the Chemawa school administrators were nothing less than shameful.

Indian students **SHOULD NOT BE PAWNS** in administrative politics!

Please send a copy of your letter to **Wordcraft Circle**, 2951 Ellenwood Drive, Fairfax, VA 22031-2038.

After the first panel, high school workshop participants were invited to work with Eddie Webb -- who recently received his B.A. degree from California State University at Chico -- at a nearby "pavillion" (really it **DOES** look like a fancy hogan with windows!) and non-high school participants were given the option of "writing" or attending a second workshop on

ways of getting published with **Wordcraft Circle** Mentors Debbie LaCroix, **Annie Hansen** (Lenape), and Lee Francis.

After the second workshop, participants had lunch which was provided by the Confederated Tribes of Siletz. Even in the midst of the community's grief over the passing of a community member, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz, honoring the tradition of feeding those who visit their lands, provided lunch in the Visual Arts Center each of the three days to everyone attending the workshops. The generous amount of food enabled Wordcraft Circle to share what was left with Samaritan House in Newport to feed those in the community without homes. Again our blessings and thanks for the generosity of the Siletz!

After lunch, participants gathered for a discussion on publishing facilitated by panel members Jean Starr, Annie Hansen, and Lee Francis. The workshop on Playwriting was cancelled because *Native Writers Circle of the Americas* member Ed Edam had been hospitalized and was unable to give his presentation. Our good thoughts and prayers are sent to Ed for a swift recovery. In place of the Playwriting workshop, participants were given time to write and to read from their work.

That evening, established Native writers participating in the 3-day conference read from their work. Those reading included Eddie Webb, Annie Hansen, Jean Starr, **Robert Owens** (Lakota), **Joyce Mandrake** (White Earth Chippewa), **Winn Starr** (Tsalagi), Lee Francis, and E. K. Caldwell.

Following intermission, *Native Writers Circle of the Americas* member Elizabeth Woody Warm Springs/Wasco/Navajo), the evening's featured poet, delighted the audience with her performance. National Director Lee Francis presented Certificates of Recognition to Apprentices E. K. Caldwell and Eddie Webb which acknowledged their participation as Apprentices in **Wordcraft Circle**. Certificates of Appreciation were then presented to E. K. Caldwell, Eddie Webb, Selene Rilatos, Elizabeth Woody, and **James Caldwell**.

The 1993 Director's Award was then presented to Apprentice E. K. (Kim) Caldwell in recognition for her outstanding work as an emerging Native writer and for her commitment to the ideals of Wordcraft Circle. From the time since Kim began as an Apprentice, she has written *When The Animals Danced* which was performed in Japan, selected as the Feature Writer of *The Talking Stick* for *Perpetua - The Magazine*, and as Editor of Talking Circle for Inkfish Magazine. She has had her writings accepted for publication in **Raven Chronicles**, **ARIEL**, and **Callaloo**, as well as for publication in *Storytellers* an anthology edited by Mentor Cliff Trafzer (Wyandot). In addition to her writing, Kim took on the difficult task of serving as Regional Coordinator of **Wordcraft Circle**. Her brilliant idea to "*hold a writing workshop for Native writers in our area* (i.e., Oregon)" resulted in what are now the Intensive Writing Workshops --four of which were held in 1993 with 16 planned for 1994. Kim also wrote and submitted a grant request for \$2000 which was funded to pay the costs of holding the Intensive Writing Workshop in Newport. Through Kims efforts, **Laura at DL Rose Design** donated her time and

effort to design the posters and flyers and Laura in turn managed to get half of the printing costs donated. Much to the delight of the high school students, Kim was able to arrange for **John Trudell** (Santee Sioux) to give a benefit performance to raise funds for **Wordcraft Circle**.

Friday morning's panel and workshops included "Manuscript Preparation" and a continuation of the discussion on writing styles --with plenty of time for participants to write. Eddie Webb again worked with high school participants and, after lunch, a number of participants read their writings. Everyone was especially delighted when **Reitha Amen** (Pitt River), one of several elders attending the conference, told a Pitt River story.

The 300 seat performance theatre was completely filled for Friday evening's readings by student participants and the benefit performance by **John Trudell** (Santee Sioux) to raise funds for **Wordcraft Circle**. The first segment began with Eddie Webb who introduced the 14 student participants who volunteered to read their work - many for the first time - to a "packed house." To see and hear the young students who ranged in age from 12 to 18 was intensely moving. "*This is what Wordcraft Circle is all about*" National Director Lee Francis said.

John Trudell with **Quiltman** and **Tewahnee** of **Tribal Voice** were the featured performers for the second part of evening. John's commentary and performance of his writings overwhelmed the audience which stood and applauded several times during his performance. In appreciation to John and Tribal Voice for giving the benefit performance without receiving any payment, National Director Lee Francis presented John, Quiltman and Tewahnee with Certificates of Appreciation and Regional Coordinator Kim Caldwell presented each with a gift. Closing a wonderful evening was a prayer blessing by Dino of the Siletz.

After the performance, over 30 participants ended up at one of Newport's all-night restaurants for conversation, coffee, and a late-night meal. The service was mind-boggling poor and as we left, the manager said "*you should have had reservations.*" We told him we all had reservations Aie-eee!

Sadly, Saturday's workshops were missing most of the students from Chemawa -- the school administrators won that round to their shame. The morning panel focused on manuscript preparation and quickly evolved into a question and answer session. After lunch, Mentor Annie Hansen led the discussion on how and why having your writing critiqued can be very useful to the beginning and emerging Native writer.

When the afternoon workshop was over, Kim gifted Eddie Webb, Jean Starr, Annie Hansen, Debbie LaCroix and Lee Francis for helping her during the 3-day event. Following a closing prayer blessing given by Lee Francis, the 3-day Intensive Writing Workshop ended.

# *Native Writer's Showcase*

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## **What was the name of that fight?**

*did you ever hear  
or do you remember a song  
oh, it had words in it like this. . .*

*He touched me or He kissed me?*

*I think of it  
when we're facing each other  
teeth jammed together, rocky lead faces  
with hating, squinty eyes*

*the words walk right into me  
but now it's*

*He hit me    He touched me.*

*I concentrate on the tune  
it's more interesting than the fight.*

Judy Jones (*Cherokee*)

Apprentice of Jean Starr (*Cherokee*)

# *Native Writer's Showcase*

---

It's hard to squeeze water from a rock  
So for now, keep doing what you're doing.  
Pounding those hallowed, hollow halls,  
Placing your feet where the beat takes them.

It's hard to squeeze water from a rock  
But if you listen you'll hear a song.  
It may be like a rain so gentle  
You can't tell where it comes from  
But it's as strong as a river.

It's hard to squeeze water from a rock  
So when you hear that song  
Chant to its beat.  
Chant so loud it can never escape your soul.

It's hard to squeeze water from a rock  
So let your chanting be the nourishment  
that will crack the hard tile with sprouts.  
Soon, the halls will deteriorate  
And be replaced with a lush green meadow.

It's hard to squeeze water from a rock  
So when you find yourself in that meadow  
Stomp the soft earth so hard  
That your voice is thrust to the heavens.

It's hard to squeeze water from a rock  
So let your voice flutter and dip  
Among the treetops like a flicker

It's hard to squeeze water from a rock  
So let the wind carry your voice  
Until it glides and sails like an eagle

Send your voice to the Earth  
like a gentle rain  
And the People will chant your song.

Josh Norris (*Yurok*)

Apprentice of Duane BigEagle (*Osage*)

# *Native Writer's Showcase*

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## SCENES FROM THE CLASSROOM JANUARY 29,1992

White male preaching from the front of the room.  
Tells me of my ancestors from the "Old Country."

Tho some of us here do not have  
while European ancestors.  
But it doesn't matter to him.

This is the white man's class  
In the white man's university.  
Here I spend (waste) my hours  
Listening to words  
that have no meaning to me.

Who are these men he speaks of?  
Shelley?  
Byron?  
Keats?  
What do they tell me of Mother Earth?

Yawning,  
Even the other white men are dozing.  
Glazed stares.  
I am not the only one who is bored.  
Even those who say they have  
a tie to the Europeans  
Just do not care any more.

They say, Don't tell me about  
these dead English guys,  
Tell me of the Americans.  
I am American, they say.

Hey, what about me?  
Oh ya, they say  
You are a Native American.  
What did you write  
Some pictures inside your teepee?

I say no, I am a woman of the people  
I am Annishinabe.

Shirley Brozzo (*Chippewa*)

Apprentice of Beth Brant (*Bay of Quinte Mohawk*)

# Native Writer's Showcase

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## INDIAN ENOUGH

On the winter March of Death  
my Great Grandmother was born  
and lived  
to see her people die  
her future determined  
by somethin called the BIA

She told my mother of the  
last buffalo hunt by her people  
before comin to Indian Territory  
of racin wild ponies and being free  
of boarding schools and being caged.  
Made to wear different clothes  
and speak a different tongue.

My mother was born in the winter of '21  
the last of thirteen children.  
She told me of walking with her family  
Living as they wanted  
Using what mother Earth provided  
and skills passed down for the last time.

She told me of her last family walk  
before forced into schools  
and made to conform  
and forget what she learned.

"You're too much like your parents --  
you're just a wild Indian"

I was born in the winter of '56  
last of ten children.  
I remember walking with my mother  
learning some old ways and lots of new.  
I remember healing plants and polio shots  
I remember living with nature  
and my first indoor toilet.

I went to school and wasn't told anything  
like we never existed before  
Til something called the BIA  
said we weren't indian enough.

Not satisfied with taking our land  
our lives  
our memories  
They want to bleet it out  
degree by degree  
3/4 3/8 3/16 3/32  
They tell me I'm not Indian enough?

I've had enough!  
I throw down my bundle at the counsel fire  
I call on my blood to testify  
My spirit breathes the sacred smoke  
In dreams my elders teach me  
I can no longer be silent  
I will not forget  
My blood will not forget

I am Ehole Hokte  
I am Potawatomi and Kickapoo  
I am Indian enough.

Lela Northcross-Wakely (*Potawatomi/Kickapoo*)

Apprentice of Charlotte DeClue Pelley (*Osage*)

# A View From The Middle

---

by Richard A. Rose (Cherokee)  
Wordcraft Circle Apprentice

After reading the article (*Guardians of Blood Quantum Arise!*) by Lee Francis in the August issue of *Moccasin Telegraph*, I felt the need to review my feelings and ideas on the issues of blood quantum, identifying "Indians" and what constitutes a "real" Indian, both within the Indian community and externally. I hope that I am not alone in this need to review personal perceptions, because I believe it is important for each of us to reassess our long-standing beliefs and reconsider rationales which influenced our earlier thinking.

As most of us know, the general "non-Indian" public has a perception of what constitutes an Indian in their minds. Mostly this perception is stereotypical developed by the input from western movies, cartoons news stories, hearsay, myth, and maybe some small level of actual experience, learning or education. Also equally confusing is the Indian perception of what constitutes an Indian, or what a traditional, progressive, urban or reservation is really like.

Likewise, as with the non-Indian public, the Indian's self perception, their own and other Indian communities are often built more on belief than knowledge, and on what we would like to see than what we actually see. Being a mix-blood Indian, I can testify to the looks of skepticism, the demands for "proof" and the constant statement of "Well, you don't look really Indian to me." These criticisms from both inside and outside the "recognized" Indian community set up conflicting feelings about what it means to be Indian, who defines Indian, and also what the future of Indian people can be if we are constantly fighting about who is who.

My general feeling is that the process of exclusion practiced by the U. S. Government both historically and currently in its definition of Indian individuals and tribes, coupled with our own acceptance of ideas like blood quantum and reservation residence as all-defining criteria spells doom for the survival and development of American Indian people, families, clans, and Nations/Tribes. This process of exclusion, as long as we accept it, succeeds in dividing our already decimated population and once again having us fight each other for the entertainment of the non-Indian, who merely picks up the pieces after we have destroyed each other.

While we do not need to perpetuate this form of division, there is some validity to the idea that being "Indian" is something not open to everyone because it is fashionable. Where we as Indian people decide to draw the line for the benefit of Indians and how the Indian community holds to the line are critical issues ripe for discussion. The title of this response, *A View from the Middle*, is appropriate because I believe that

I represent a middle position -- or at least a position constantly being pulled by both sides.

In the "debate" over the definition of Indian, there are two polarized sides, and quite a bit of mush in the middle. One side seeks to allow a loose definition of American Indian based as much on the U.S. Census self-identification as on any factual information. Under this definition, federal bureaucratic guidelines are not the final authority, and tribal membership is not necessary to be deemed Indian. This side of the debate might have American Indian people more of a minority group than as sovereign governments existing in the international arena.

Clearly the self-identification definition may have significant political ramifications for tribal sovereignty, and it open to fraud and abuse, by allowing anyone to claim to be American Indian as it suits them. Fraud, abuse, and cultural theft are only a few of the criticisms of this system, which does not require the slightest bit of knowledge about one's tribal heritage or even an identification of tribal heritage. In my view, the self-identification process is not functional if Indian communities want to continue to maintain their status as sovereign governments and wish to hold the governments of the United States and Canada accountable for past, present, and future injustices committed on Indian people and lands.

The other polarized side in the debate seeks to require strict legalistic criteria, such as a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB), a tribal membership card, or a BIA form 44-32 which verifies Indian descent for Indian preference for employment in the U. S. Department of the Interior - Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Service, or U. S. Department of Education - Office of Indian Education and identification as Indian for artwork exhibited in the National Museum of the American Indian. Typically this sets a blood quantum at 1/4 and sets up other regulatory and legal tests which the individual must pass to be "verified" as Indian. This side of the debate sees the dilution of Indian blood as a sure sign of the loss of "real" Indians in the cultural sense, seeming to also mathematically relate blood quantum to cultural knowledge and commitment to cultural traditions.

The over utilization of federal paperwork and the strict use of these criteria for federal treaty benefits and tribal programs only increases the acceptance of such "reasonable" criteria. Verification of one's identity by the federal government is not only incredible micro-management, but has proven to be unrealistic and fraught with problems of incorrect information, the unwillingness or inability to correct mistakes or omissions, and the inability to adequately administer circumstances of multi-tribal heritage, inter-marriage with members of Canadian First Nation bands and tribes, and the unwillingness to count members of non-federal or state-recognized

tribes/nations. Hence whole segments of our Indian population are excluded generation after generation.

Given the historical adversarial relationship with the U. S. government, how in good conscience can we, as Indian people active in the preservation of our cultures and communities, support a tribal government's use of these federally derived processes, blood quantum numbers, and the exclusion mentality in enrollment and governance decisions? Regardless of the shortcomings of the federal documentation system, many people, including most federally-recognized tribal governments, and any non-federal tribes and state-recognized tribes seeking federal recognition, use this as the only true means of Indian identification and verification.

Thus, I find myself in the middle on the issues of Indian identification, seeing some merit in both sides and finding myself unwilling to actively support either. Others may also be wallowing in the muck and mire of the middle. In my view, the issue of who is "Indian" and what constitutes an "Indian" should be a more inclusive, yet verifiable process. The process should be instituted to actively expand the family of Indian people in the Americas and Canada rather than to restrict into extinction the numbers of Indians. Which is why I have been actively involved for the past two and a half years in the development of an urban Indian organization, Keepers of the Circle, The Native American Community Center of the Capital District, for people like myself who live in the Capital Region of New York state. For those not familiar with the east coast, that means the Albany-Schenectady-Troy-Saratoga Springs area.

One of the goals of the organization is to rebuild a sense of Indian identity. To do this we have instituted an inclusive, yet verifiable criteria to provide people with the ability to document and learn about their identity. The membership committee provides genealogical assistance to members desiring to become Native members as well as to those individuals researching their tribal traditions and to reconnect with the tribal communities from which they are descended. And while the membership committee provides guidance and technical assistance, the research, letter writing and information gathering is the task of the individual.

It should be pointed out that while there are many Native members who are enrolled in federally-recognized, state-recognized, and/or Canadian First Nations, the organization has seen its share of those with the "Cherokee-grandmother" syndrome. Being Cherokee, I particularly find that annoying, but have made it a practice to help those people to either document an ancestor or discontinue their claim. Often times their ancestor was not Cherokee but of another tribe and the person is able to obtain a firm link to their American Indian ancestry.

The point is, there is, in my view, a middle place between the two polarized positions. The Keepers of the Circle membership system is a way to eliminate the glaring problems with self-identification while avoiding the exclusion practices of the federal government and many tribal governments. The organization demonstrates that the concepts and processes used

in the tribal membership decisions must be redesigned in order to be "Indian" rather than BIA processes. By redesigning the processes around Indian ideals, goals and needs, it is more likely that the system will benefit Indian people now and in the future. Unless we control our own definition, then someone who is historically our enemy will simply administratively declare us extinct. This is not an unrealistic statement since we have seen terminations before and only a slight change in current federal policy could bring them back.

**Gordon Henry Jr.** (*White Earth Chippewa*) is Mentor to **Richard Rose** (*Cherokee*)

### **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 Gould (*Maidu*)
- Rayna Green (*Cherokee*)
- Clara Sue Kidwell (*Choctaw/Chippewa*)
- Paulette F. Molin (*White Earth Chippewa*)
- Pahdopony (*Comanche*)
- Bill Penn (*Nez Perce/Osage*)
- A. C. Ross (*Santee Dakota*)

### **Wordcraft Circle Regional Coordinators**

**Patricia Penn Hilden**  
(*Nez Perce/Osage*)  
Eastern Region

**E. K. Kim Caldwell**  
(*Tsalagi/Creek/Shawnee*)  
Western Region

**C. B. Clark**  
(*Muscogee*)  
Southern Region

**Bill Penn**  
(*Nez Perce/Osage*)  
Northern Region

### **Wordcraft Circle Area Coordinators**

Cheryl Savageau (*Abenaki*)  
Massachusetts

Duane BigEagle (*Osage*)  
Northern California

**WORDCRAFT CIRCLE PARTICIPANTS  
INTERESTED IN BECOMING AN AREA  
COORDINATOR OR CHAPTER MODERATOR ARE  
ASKED TO CONTACT THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR  
FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

# Done Good !

Apprentice **Louise Barton** (*Cherokee/Mohawk*) who has had two plot scripts accepted by a New York film production company for a prime-time tv show!

Mentor **Duane Big Eagle** (*Osage*) who received the **Gerbode Foundation Poetry Award**. A master poet teacher in the California Poets In The Schools program for the last 17 years, Duane has agreed to be the northern California Area Coor-dinator for **Wordcraft Circle**.

Mentor **Joseph Bruchac III** (*Abenaki*) with his son **Jesse**, a musician/songwriter, who were the featured storyteller and performer at the 27th Annual Conference of the New York State Reading Association on November 3, 1993. Their topic was "*Keeping the Circle Strong: The Native American Oral Tradition and Literacy in the 21st Century.*"

Apprentice **E. K. Caldwell** (*Cherokee/Creek/ Shawnee*) on acceptance of her poem, "My Friend Lizzy," (for her friend Elizabeth Woody) by the University of Calgary's literary jour-nal, **ARIEL** for publication in the January 1994 issue and also for her story "Cooking Woman" which has been accepted for publication in *Storytellers* - an anthology edited by *Native Writers Circle of the Americas* member **Cliff Trafzer** (*Wyandot*).

Apprentice **Liz Campbell** (*Metis/Chinook*) on the publication of her latest **Powwow Calendar 1994** by The Book Com-pany.

NWCA member **Kateri Damm** (*Nawash Band Chippewa*) on the publication of my heart is a stray bullet - her first collec-tion of poetry by Kegedonce Press of Cape Croker, Ontario.

NWCA member **Raven Hail** who read poetry and sang folk music to her own guitar accompaniment at the *Arizona State Poetry Society's* annual conference on November 6th in Mesa, Arizona.

Mentor **Annie Hansen** (*Lenape*) who has been selected as Fiction Editor for **Raven Chronicles** beginning in the Fall of 1993.

Mentor **Patricia Penn Hilden** (*Nez Perce/Osage*) on the publication of her book **Women, Work and Politics: Belgium, 1830-1914** by Oxford University Press, London.

Mentor **Annette Jaimes** (*Juaneno/Yaqui*) who was a panel presenter at the historical 1843-1993 International Indian Council held in September at Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Her topic was on "*Indigenous Identity and Environmental Ethics for Economic Development.*"

Apprentice **Valorie Johnson** (*Seneca-Cayuga/Cherokee*) who has been chosen by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation as Program Associate to the Vice President of Programming. Valorie is currently in the Ph.D program at Michigan State University of East Lansing where she is pursuing a degree in administration.

Mentor **Nita Pahdopony** (*Comanche*) who was chosen Head Lady Dancer for the JOM Powwow at Cache schools in November. Nita also gave a reading of her work at the Unitarian Church in Norman Oklahoma.

Mentor **Bill Penn** (*Nez Perce/Osage*) who received the **1993-1994 Teacher-Scholar Award** at Michigan State University!!

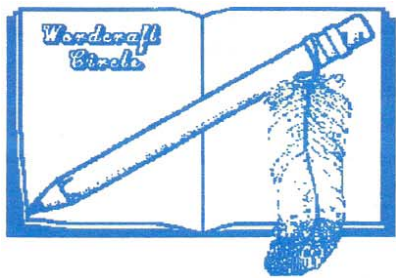
## A SPECIAL THANK YOU

*Like most of the People of the sovereign Nations and Tribes, I have never been comfortable in "authority" roles. As I read historical accounts, too often the authority becomes a dictator which is why it is important to me that there be a "safety-net" of peers to keep the "dictator-potential" within all of us in check so that the People of the sovereign Nations and Tribes, their interests, and their needs will be served Because of my strong belief in listening to the voices of elders, a National Advisory Caucus was appointed to help bring the vision of Wordcraft Circle into practical reality.*

*For the past year, the members of the National Advisory Caucus have generously provided advice, ideas, and financial resources to help Wordcraft Circle move forward. The members were asked if they would be willing to volunteer their time, effort, and good thoughts for one year and all graciously accepted. Now the year has almost ended and the time has come to appoint anew National Caucus for a two (2) year term beginning January 1994.*

*To the current members of the National Advisory Caucus, I extend my most heart-felt gratitude and thanks for all the assistance --including all the telephone calls, proposal reading fundraising ideas, planning and hosting of the workshops...*

*May Thought Woman/Creator rain down blessings on each and every one of you.*



# The BOOK SHELF

Don Bowman

**Go Seek the Powwow**

The Greenfield Review Press

Greenfield Center, NY

Paper: \$12.95

Annie Hansen

"*The Burial Mound*" in **Kenyon Review**

Kenyon College

Gambier, OH

Summer 1993 \$6.00

Liz Campbell

**Powwow Calendar 1994**

The Book Publishing Company

Summertown, TN

Paper: \$6.95 + \$1.50 shipping

Patricia Penn Hilden

**Women, Work, and Politics:**

**Belgium, 1830-1914**

Oxford University Press

London, England

Cloth: \$60.00

Ward Churchill

**Indians 'R' Us: Culture and Genocide**

**In Native America**

Common Courage Press

Monroe, ME

Paper: \$14.95 350 pp

Alma Luz Villanueva

**The Ultraviolet Sky**

Doubleday

New York

Paper: \$9.00

Kateri Damm

**my heart is a stray bullet**

Kegedonce Press

Cape Croker, Ontario

Paper: \$15.00 64 pp

Alma Luz Villanueva

Naked Ladies

Bilingual Press

Arizona State University

Tempe, AZ

Paper: \$14.00 Cloth: \$21.00

In order to apply for and be eligible to receive grants from foundations, **Wordcraft Circle** has incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia as a not-for-profit corporation (501 (c)-3). Our new name is:

### **Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers.**

Briefly, the Charter provides for a National Caucus (Board of Directors) composed of 16 members -- 1/2 or 8 of whom must be of one gender and 3/4 or 12 of the members who must be Native. The members of the National Caucus, who are appointed by the National Director from a list of those nominated, serve for one term of two (2) years. The National Director, who is also a voting member of the National Caucus, serves without a term limitation unless otherwise decided by the vote of all Wordcraft Circle participants.

**Wordcraft Circle** participants who want a copy of the Charter of Incorporation and Initial By-Laws are asked to request a copy by writing to:

**Wordcraft Circle**  
2951 Ellenwood Drive  
Fairfax, VA 22031-2038

### National Caucus Nominations

All **Wordcraft Circle** participants and *Native Writers Circle* of the Americas members are asked to nominate a maximum of fifteen (15) individuals for possible appointment by the National Director to serve on the National Caucus. Those nominated MUST be **Wordcraft Circle** Mentors OR Apprentices OR members of *Native Writers Circle of the Americas*. Send nominations to:

*NOMINATIONS*  
Wordcraft Circle  
2951 Ellenwood Drive  
Fairfax, VA 22031-2038

**Nominations must be received  
BEFORE December 15, 1993.**

### **NATIVE PLAYWRIGHTS' NEWSLETTER**

Native Writers Circle of the Americas member and NPN Editor Paul Rathbun has once again produced an excellent issue (Fall 1993 - #3). A one year subscription to the **Native Playwrights' Newsletter** is \$10.00 for 3 issues (*November - March - July*). To subscribe, write: **Native Playwrights' Newsletter** Post Office Box 136, Madison, WI 53701-1364

### **AMERICAN INDIAN AMBASSADORS NOW BEING SELECTED**

**Americans for Indian Opportunity (AIO)** Founder and President LaDonna Harris (Comanche) announced that an extensive national recruitment for the 1994 class of the American Indian Ambassadors Program: *Medicine Pathways for the Future*, a dynamic Indian leadership initiative is now underway. Deadline for application submission is **December 15, 1995**. Contact: Laura Harris, Program Coordinator, Americans for Indian Opportunity, 681 Juniper Hill Road, Bernalillo, NM 87004.

### **THE OLDER - ELDER'S - SENIOR MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH**

**Virginia Card** (Creek) who graciously sent a copy of the oldest - elder's - senior newsletter called *Moccasin Telegraph*, a publication of the Sacramento (California) Area American Indian Senior's Club which has been in existence for four years! It is Wordcraft Circle's honor to have the same name as that chosen first by our west coast relations and we hope to maintain the quality established by our elders!

### **WICAZO SA REVIEW**

*Native Writers Circle of the Americas* member **Elizabeth Cook-Lynn**, editor of **Wicazo Sa Review: The Journal of Native American Studies** has sent a notice inviting individuals and institutions to subscribe to the Journal for \$20.00 per year. To subscribe, write: **Wicazo Sa Review**, 3755 Blake Court N., Rapid City, SD 57702.

### **INDIANA REVIEW**

Poetry, reviews and essays that explore or reveal the way creative work mediates anger are being accepted for a special issue in May 1994. **Deadline for submissions is: December 1, 1993**. Contact: Gretchen Knapp (poetry) or Cara Diaconoss (prose), **Indiana Review/Anger Issue**, Indiana University, 316 North Jordan Avenue, Bloomington, IN 47405.

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**Intensive Writing Workshop A Success:**  
**Northwest Region - Oregon**  
**Response: A View From The Middle**  
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**Done Good**  
**A Special Thank You**  
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**F-Y-I**

## Native Writer's Showcase

*What was the name of that fight?*  
- Judy Jones

*Untitled*  
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*Scenes from the Classroom*  
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- Shirley Brozzo

*Indian Enough*  
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**MOCCASIN**  
**TELEGRAPH**

2951 Ellenwood Drive  
Fairfax, VA 22031-2038



*...that the People may  
grow and prosper...*

**F I R S T C L A S S**