



The Best of Both Worlds

Three students from the reservation wrestle individually with what it means to be Navajo in an Anglo-dominated culture.

By Jane Koerner

Growing up in the Southwest on the Navajo reservation, Sonlatsa "Sunshine" Jim-James realized her skin wasn't the same color as the rest of her mother's family. Her father was Modoc, a Pacific Northwest tribe, and a lot of Navajos would make fun of her, calling her white girl, even though she was fluent in Navajo and was from a more traditional family than theirs.

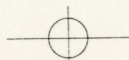
Sunshine would go to her grandmother, who would tell her not to cry. "You've got a special gift they don't have. In the future you will be a hero for our people." If that didn't comfort her, her grandmother would remind her of coyote trickster, who disguised himself so he could trick other animals into giving him something he wanted. "Sometimes he got something good. In your own way you're a trickster too. With your complexion you can go out into the world of white people and they will want to talk to you. You will be able to communicate with them and get more information for our people and in the end help them understand us better and help us understand them."

Jim-James is now a sophomore at Colorado College. With a grade point average of 3.38, she expects to be a member of the first generation of Navajos from the reservation high school, Tohatchi, to graduate from college. Of the 29 Native Americans enrolled at Colorado College, 17 are

Navajo from Tohatchi near Gallup, New Mexico. Both numbers are records, which give current Native American students a support system their predecessors lacked and a better chance of not only graduating, but having a positive experience.

Coming from a reservation where sagebrush and domestic sheep herds outnumber people, Navajo is the mother tongue, and ceremonies are held in sweat lodges to purify the sick and the unhappy of evil spirits, the Tohatchi students stick together and help each other cope with an alien culture. Like all Colorado College students, they had to overcome the scholastic shock of the Block Plan, endure homesickness when they first arrived here. But those were only minor adjustments. Felix Sanchez, now a junior English major, couldn't forget how whites had treated him in Gallup, New Mexico, the biggest town near his home in Mexican Springs. "At first I had to force myself to associate with the white students. I saw it as a necessity for my survival until I could learn to become more independent. I couldn't relate to them. All we had in common were automobiles and television."

Jim-James remembers her first class. "The professor introduced himself. 'We'll talk about this and that.' One after the other the whites would talk, arguing, discussing pros and cons. In our high school we never did that. In my traditional family



and an econ major who can go on to graduate school. So I try to forget about what other people are expecting of me, but it's hard to do."

Even harder is the challenge of moving back and forth between two very different worlds. Sanchez says, "Some people back home think that by being here, I'm becoming white. It's difficult to explain to them that CC has only strengthened who I am. Frequently I'm asked, 'Why can't you do that here?' I tell them that Colorado College is a whole lot better than any school around the reservation. I'm grate-

"Some students here and some of my family don't think I can make it. 'You're from the reservation and you won't be able to handle school and all these other activities.'"

Sunshine Jim-James

ful for the opportunity given me. I'm one of the few people in my family in college right now. But here I don't want to see myself as a sellout, whitewashed, and that's a question of maintaining an emotional core, a process of thinking, of not forgetting who you are." When he went on an archeological dig with Marianne Stoller's Ethnohistory of the Southwest class, he said prayers and took medicine as a protection. Navajos believe that evil spirits linger around the dead, and if you accidentally touch their property or remains, you will be considered a skin-walker or witch. "The Anglos saw it as an interesting superstition. I think of it as our cultural attitude toward death."

Peters notices the conflicts between the two worlds when she is with her family. "At CC there's a lot of stress on critical thinking, to look beyond face value. When I go home and do that, my parents go, 'What?' At home things are just accepted for what they are. This is your family and this is who you are. Here you're asked why, why, why—why did that reading affect you?"

Jim-James, whose traditional family lives without running water and electricity, television and a telephone, admits to confusion about where she really belongs. "When I'm here I have luxuries, all these things people take for granted, and I get so much joy out of flipping on a light switch. But sitting with my grandmom in the dark with a kerosene lamp while she fries tortillas and boils some tea, I do my homework and she talks about the old days, when we herded sheep and the Bureau of Indian Affairs tried to put her in one of their schools—that's the good part." At times Jim-James misses her Navajo way of life so much, she contemplates quitting CC, but then her grandmother tells her not to worry, she is getting the best of both worlds, and the combination will make her a better person.

Couple the cultural adjustments with the financial hardships for families who are economically disad-

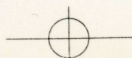
vantaged, and some Native American students decide to leave. Suzi Strawn is not discouraged. "We've managed to keep the retention rate at about 75%, the best percentage of any school where the Navajo reservation sends students." That is a particularly impressive achievement considering the dropout rate for Native Americans is the highest of any ethnic group.

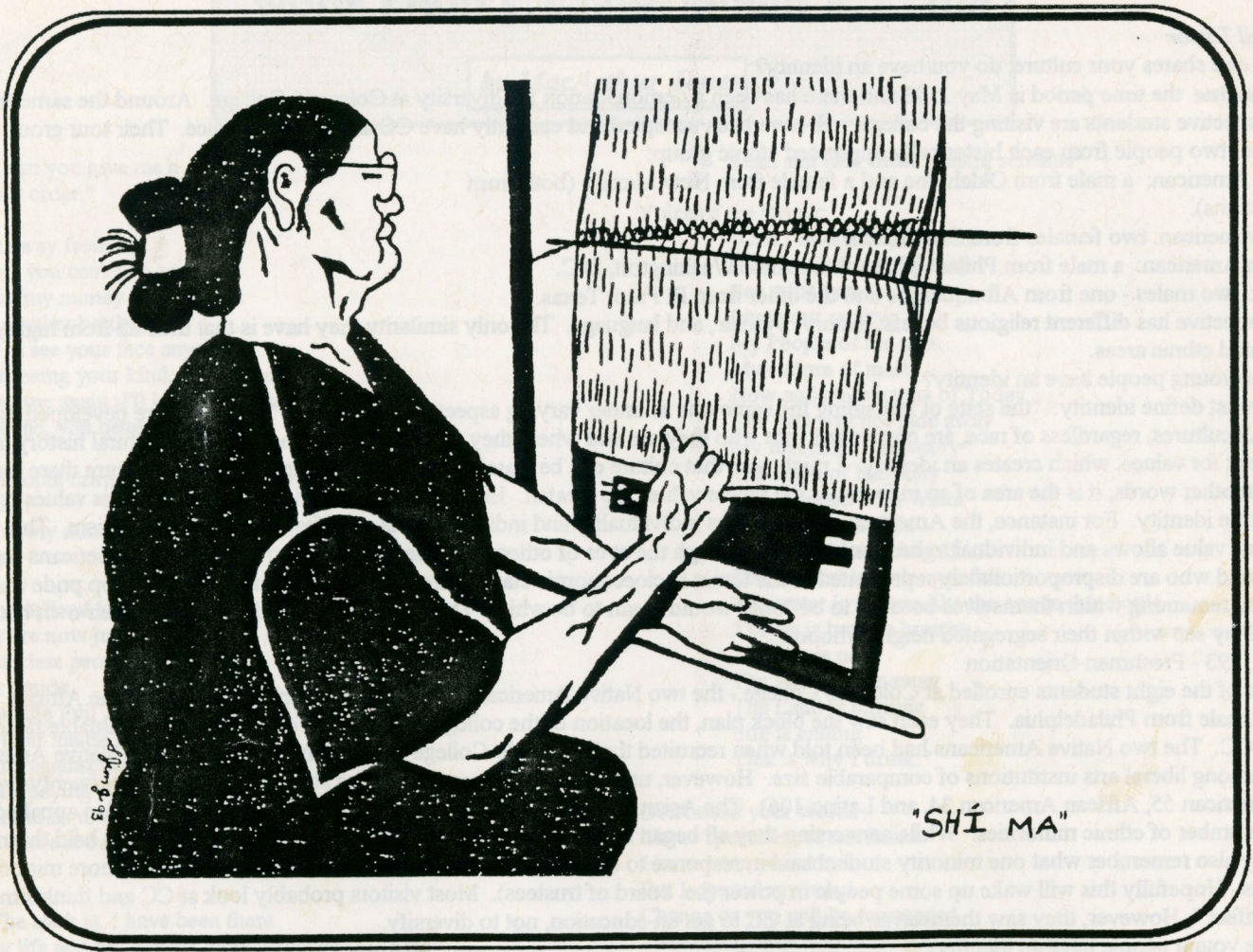
The idea is that Anglos and Native Americans will both benefit. Says Peters, "Some of us run from our heritage, we don't want to be known as Native American. We want to get away from the reservation, from poverty. And some of us want to share our knowledge and heritage and avoid the ignorance between the two worlds." Last spring, with the latter objective in mind, NASA members organized the first powwow ever held at Colorado College. Pueblo Indians traveled from New Mexico, Kiowas from Oklahoma to join in the dancing, singing, and feasting. White townspeople and students were invited as full participants too. Peters says, "A powwow is a gathering of *all* nations, even though it originated with the Indian nations. We have this concept of giving that is very important to us. The whole idea of a powwow is that we're giving, in this instance it was our gift to Colorado College and Colorado Springs." As the Navajo saying goes, the happiness you get from giving is greater than you get from receiving. "The Navajo who never thought twice about volunteering for a cultural activity like this at Tohatchi, is eagerly volunteering now," says Sanchez.

In the end, just as Jim-James' grandmother predicts, a Colorado College education is supposed to make it possible to choose the best of both worlds. For Jill Peters that means taking full advantage of educational opportunities, going to graduate school in environmental studies and returning to the reservation to work in natural resources management. Among many other environmental pressures faced by the reservation, Eastern states are offering millions of dollars for the right to locate landfills on Navajo land, and knowledge of the consequences is a pressing need for the tribe.

Felix Sanchez says that with the skills he acquired at Colorado College he can help "bring my people up to scale," but at the same time "I will be affirming our cultural values." After graduation he wants to earn a Ph.D. in Native American studies and teach at a reservation community college. "I will help revitalize my culture any way I can. I would worry about world peace or integration after that."

To Sunshine Jim-James, the best of both worlds means, "We'll be the first ones of our group to graduate from college, and that will bring a lot of hope to other Native Americans." As for herself, she still dreams of becoming a lawyer and specializing in civil law, whatever will help the tribe the most." She uses the word "dream" because, "Navajos—we don't look to the future. We're not supposed to say this will happen, that won't happen. You can have goals and dreams, but you can't make definite plans because they could backfire. You never close anything." Like the doorway to the ceremonial hogan beside her grandmother's house, "you always leave a little opening in everything you do."





"SHÍ MA"



FIGHT THE POWER

"farewell" cont.

rich-upper middle class, uppity "hispanics", "orientals", "indians" and "blacks". They will come to this college no matter what happens. But, that young African American Woman, from Widefield High School (Colorado Springs), non-traditionally qualified, raised in a single parent home, will most likely not find her way to this school. Why? I don't know. I don't work at the admissions office.

Let me just suggest, that we must find those students whose backgrounds offer diversity at the point where geography, culture, and socioeconomics intersect. These are the true minorities on this campus.

I have to wonder if their isn't some causal relationship between the fact that of the seven students of color who gave speeches at the diversity protest, five can say without uncertainty, that they were not recruited by our beloved admissions office. Five of seven!

Why? I don't know. I don't work at the Admissions Office.

To my critics who have blasted me for "not knowing my facts." Well, what can I say. I've taken no less than twelve courses in American Ethnic Studies. I've attended no less than six conferences that deal with the issue of race. I've been active in both campus and community organizing. I helped to found this newsletter! I know what I'm talking about. I don't have to justify shit to you. You may still be the master, but the whip just doesn't hurt like it used to.

So, I bid you farewell, with these last few comments and questions to turn your stomach or even anger your spirit. In either case I have won. I am no longer silenced by the "forces that be." I have found my voice, and I will continue to offer advocacy to those few who desperately need it.

Finally, let me leave you with a quote that I often read at the end of classroom presentations and conference presentations that I do. For me, it guides my understanding of academia. It is a quote from Joy Kogawa's book *Obasan*. I think it speaks to those of you still looking for a reason to advocate change, or stalling the implementation of fresh ideals. It reads

"Some people...are so busy seeing all sides of every issue that they neutralize concern and prevent necessary action. There's no strength in seeing all sides unless you can act where real measurable injustice exists. A lot of academic talk just immobilizes the oppressed and maintains oppressors in their positions of power."

So, until next time, I hope you will always **FIGHT THE POWER!**

Remember

by Felix A. Sanchez-Edsitty

I must remember and listen to stories
I was born not knowing anymore.

I must learn words of thunder
rolling across mountain roads
from lightning bringing brilliant gifts from above
from rain soaking memory of a forgotten family.

I must not forget Mother
who round-danced with the Sun
on hot afternoon mesas

She swam with the River
and became lost in quick-moving currents

They would gossip, but a goddess is never
ashamed.

I must remember and tell everyone her story.

I remember brothers who went to war
for the sake of a people
for the sake of a peaceful
place

killing mythological giants
sparing the lives of death
disease
destitution

Triumph is an old song and Twin Heroes
are not here to help me fight
giants in a new age of
fear

Stories are battles waged on Dine tongues.

I must remember to tell my story
a story of survival.





FIGHT THE POWER

December 1992

Volume 1, Number 1

FIGHT THE POWER

January 1992

Volume 1, Number 2

FIGHT THE POWER



February 1992

Volume 1, Number 3

FIGHT THE POWER



March 1992

Volume 1, Number 4

FIGHT THE POWER



April 1992

Volume 1, Number 5

After a successful first year, we are back again to offer you the best in underground writings. We encountered a number of different obstacles in getting to this point. From campus outrage to campus support, we battled all adversity to bring you the voices of the unheard.

Now, in an effort to reintroduce Fight The Power to those of you who are new to The Colorado College campus, we have compiled what we feel are the best articles of the 1991-1992 school year. Likewise, other pieces that helped to shape and form today's Fight The Power are also included.

So, take a look at this powerful piece, and keep your eyes open for new issues. Also, make sure to take advantage of opportunities to write for Fight The Power coming up during second block! Please, enjoy our first issue!



FIGHT THE POWER

October 1992

Volume 2, Number 2

CC Students Protest Columbus Day Parade

by FSE

On the morning of October 10, 1992, approximately 30 - 35 Colorado College students, and Colorado Springs community members, left the Loomis parking lot to participate in the Columbus Day protest in Denver. The protest, lead by the American Indian Movement, intended to halt the Columbus Day parade; however, the parade was cancelled ten minutes before it was to start.

The American Indian Movement claimed a victory in this political battle, supported by over 1000 protesters of all backgrounds. The leaders, as well as the crowd, were elated that the cancellation of the parade avoided an inevitable violent confrontation. Russell Means, AIM leader and activist/warrior for American Indian rights, thanked the Federation of Italian Americans, organizers of the Columbus Day parade, for "taking the moral high ground." He added that people power will always work and went on to lead a mass victory march around Civic Center Park, where landmarks honoring indigenous peoples are erected.

see "Protest" p. 6

The Fight

by Sonlatsa Jim-James

Respect your elders.
Remember your ancestors.
Give to all people.
Walk in beauty and harmony...
before you
behind you
above you
below you
around you.
Be proud of your people.
Don't let our ways die.

Die...
Die?
The elders are sad and tired,
"the fight" is killing their spirit
The ancestors do not rest,
they cry for the land, water and
justice.

I have shared my culture.
I have been patient.
I have turned the other cheek.
I have avoided "the fight."
I must walk in beauty.

Beauty...
Beauty?
There is no beauty in death.
There is no beauty in sorrow.
I cannot tolerate it any longer.
It has gone too far and sickens my
spirit.

see "Fight" p. 6

HATE IS NOT A FAMILY VALUE! NO ON 2!

Minority newsletter *Fight the Power* raises controversy

Editors refuse to comment; minority students express mixed opinions

By C.M. STUTZ
Staff

unable to reach Felix Sanchez, who did not return several phone messages. *The Catalyst* also failed to reach two other editors. The first two issues of *Fight the Power* were published in December 1991 and January 1992. The first issue of *Fight the Power* came out in December 1991, and nearly all copies disappeared quickly from the Worner publication bins. A second issue came out in January. Completely student-funded, the newsletter is to be published once a block under the direction of the director of campus minority work more closely with *The Catalyst* to end the isolation of minority students on campus. The first two issues of *Fight the Power* were published in December 1991 and January 1992. The first issue of *Fight the Power* came out in December 1991, and nearly all copies disappeared quickly from the Worner publication bins. A second issue came out in January. Completely student-funded, the newsletter is to be published once a block under the direction of the director of campus minority work more closely with *The Catalyst* to end the isolation of minority students on campus.



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"But if it gets radical or cynical," said Martinez, "it will become just another novelty and people won't care what is said."

"Instead of complaining, 'they don't understand,' [minorities] need to help and educate others so that we are understood."

She said *The Catalyst* could be an adequate forum for the expression of minority concerns, but added that she didn't think the editors had made such issues.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1992

PAGE 6 THE CATALYST

"Fight the Power" editorial draws harsh attacks

Coverage of *Fight the Power* gets reader pissed off

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Nicole Plotkin, whose poem "It's About Time" appeared on page one of the first issue, said she preferred not to comment until *The Catalyst* had published the poem.

Although she never submitted anything to the publication, she had heard of minority students having bad experiences with Cutler.

"They're not able to get published," said Plotkin, "or they're not able to get published."

She felt that minority concerns were not represented in *The Catalyst* except when racial incidents occurred.

Weber Lin, a former chair of ASIA, said he hadn't had direct experience with Cutler either. He did comment, however, that from the reports of other minority students "it sounds like [campus publications] have a glass ceiling." He heard of minority students getting published in *The Catalyst* if they were not involved.

She also cited several examples by her *Catalyst* to increase minority coverage. "I bent over backwards to make sure we got those MEChA symposiums covered," she claimed. Gette also mentioned her effort to publish a series, late last semester, on ethnic identity at CC. After running the first lengthy installment on the front page, she says she never received the remaining parts of the series from the author.

Not all minority campus expressed the publication. Orlando Martinez, disagreed with the separatism that he felt behind the publication, and he did think the publication could be effective as long as it was taken seriously.

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Creation of *Fight the Power* a positive action, not a reaction

comment, he responded by saying he was right up front with you. You work for *The Catalyst*, don't want to talk to you." *The Catalyst* was unable to get back in touch with Esquibel. *The Catalyst* was similarly

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Fight the Power refuses to enter the ring with *The Catalyst*

Racism is a hot issue on this campus, and the formation and publication of

organizations requesting their opinions and informing them that they will be contacted if letters were written about

public forum. Others involved showed even more cowardice than Eastman by refusing to return phone calls.

them you are right to discuss it openly with them and have a better argument. The only reason not to discuss an issue is if your argument is poor ...

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1992

OPINIONS/EDITORIALS

THE CATALYST PAGE 7

Greg Berry criticized for his article on *Fight the Power*

fears of being misprinted in *The Catalyst*. None of the people quoted in the article had ever experienced any actual problems with *The Catalyst*, but had heard it from friends or other minority students. None of these interpretations accurate. We, the Op/Ed, sent out a letter to the editors of many campus

editors. This is something the whole campus should be worried about!

Michael Eastman said he wouldn't talk to a *Catalyst* editor. This makes his stance that much weaker, because it seems to many people that he lacks the confidence to

groups on campus refuse to talk to anyone but themselves: first, they seem separatist and reinforce the boundaries they are trying to break down; secondly, they

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Debate

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1992

OPINIONS/EDITORIALS

THE CATALYST PAGE 7

Campus groups refuse to talk to *Catalyst*

Misquote of Pena prompts him to blast *Catalyst*

Multiculturalism

Catalyst misses the point of *Fight the Power*



CC students in Chicago write to support *Fight the Power*
FTP SAYS THANKS!
THE POWER

**NATIVE AMERICAN
STUDENT ASSOCIATION
of
COLORADO COLLEGE
INVITE ALL TO JOIN THEM
DURING THEIR**

**FIRST ANNUAL
NATIVE AMERICAN
HERITAGE
WEEKEND
& POW-WOW**



APRIL 26-27-28, 1991

The Native American Student Association-NASA is primarily a student support group where students of traditional & familiar backgrounds can meet and be comfortable on this campus. We, the members of NASA, would like this Heritage Weekend to not only provide exposure for ourselves on campus & in Colorado Springs, but to also provide the community an opportunity for cultural understanding & awareness. We invite & encourage everyone to join us this weekend, and welcome all to join & become members of NASA.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, April 26

SUNRISE (6:00am)

Blessing Ceremony - John Emhoola
Worner Quadrangle
(Alternate - Armstrong Great Hall)

3:00pm Film Series: "Pow-Wow Highway"
Armstrong 300

7:00pm Speaker: Cahulla Red Elk
Cahulla Nation
"Politics & Gender Of Wounded Knee 1973"
Gaylord Hall, Worner Center

Saturday, April 27

10:00am-6:00pm

~~POW-WOW~~ & Food Booths
Armstrong Quadrangle
(alternate - Pomar Gym)

Arts & Crafts Booths
Armstrong Great Hall
(Alternate - Perkins Lounge)

10:00am Gourd Dancing

1:00pm Grand Entry

Master of Ceremonies: Bennie Hanley, Sr.,
Navajo

Arena Director: Ted Cleveland,
Kiowa

Head Man: Ben "Sonny" Hanley, Jr.,
Navajo

Head Women: Debbie Howell-Williams,
Pawnee/Santee Sioux

Head Boy: Steve Howell,
Pawnee/Crow Creek Sioux

Head Girl: Melissa Howard,
Navajo

Drums

Host - Denver All Nations

Invited:

Denver Dakota
Eagle Plume
Southern Plains

Sunday, April 28

12:30pm Film Series: "Windwalker"
Armstrong 300

3:00pm Film Series & Discussion
"Broken Rainbow"
Armstrong 300

Discussion moderators:

Colorado College History professor, Doug Monroy, Gary & Berta Christianson, Big Mountain Support Group.

7:00pm N.A.S.A Banquet**
Dance & Musical Performances,
Poetry Reading,

Blessing Ceremony - John Emhoola
Gaylord Hall, Worner Center

**Dining is reserved for special guest only;
interested individuals may attend speech &
performances

John Emhoola, a Kiowa nation member, is a religious, social and political Native American leader in Denver. Mr. Emhoola graciously conducts blessing ceremonies for both Native American & non-Native American groups and functions

"Pow-Wow Highway" 1988 comedy, directed by Jonathan Weckles, starring A Martinez. Two Cheyenne Indians journey from the Lama Deer reservation, Montana to Santa Fe, NM. Along the way, they reunite themselves with their cultural roots, rescue friends & relatives, and deal with issues in the modern white world. Adopted from the 1987 cult novel by Lakota author David Seals

Cahulla Red Elk is a member of the Colorado Springs Native American community, and current director of the American Indians Life Center. Ms. Red Elk is a founding member of Women Of All Red Nations and has lectured to various groups, both as a California Representative & as a U.S. representative at the UN Decade of Women Conference, at University of Nairobi, Kenya. Cahulla will give an enlightening lecture on the politics behind the Lakota resistance at Wounded Knee during the winter of 1973, especially emphasizing the roles of women.

A Pow-Wow is a traditional and spiritual gathering of many different Native American tribes with traditional singing & dancing. The concept is Native American, but all people are invited to attend. Food, arts & crafts will be an integral part of the day's festivities, offering wonderful visual & tasty creations of Native America.

"Windwalker" The entertaining 1980 drama directed by Keith Merrill, starring Trevor Howard, depicting the real life struggles of a Cheyenne family in historic times. In Cheyenne with English subtitles

"Broken Rainbow" The emotionally charged 1988 documentary, presenting the problems on the Navajo reservation during contemporary times. Issues include Navajo/Hopi relocations, and environmental dangers resulting from natural resource development. This Academy award winner of Best Long Documentary is narrated by Martin Sheen.

NATIVE AMERICAN SURVIVAL

**2nd Annual
Native American
Heritage Week
and Pow-Wow
at**

**The Colorado
College**



March 30 through
April 4, 1992

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JOHN EMHOO LAH (KIOWA) is a visible spiritual leader from Denver, Colorado. He engages in many events, from educational activities to Pow-Wows. This is his second appearance at NASA's Heritage Week.

REX LEE JIM (NAVAJO) is a poet and educator at the unique Rock Point Demonstration School in Arizona. He travels nationally, reciting his poetry in the traditional Diné language. He will give translations.

BEATRICE MEDICINE (STANDING ROCK LAKOTA) is an anthropologist and sociologist. She is visiting professor during 7th block and is retired from California State University. Dr. Medicine continues to be involved with her native community and her lecture is titled "Native Oral Traditions: Strategies for Survival."

SIMON ORTIZ (ACOMA PUEBLO) is one of the most renowned writers in the Native American community. Mr. Ortiz has taught at several colleges across the country, including Colorado College. He still makes the Acoma Pueblo his home and his lecture will be "Debunking Discovery: Affirming Our Land, Culture, and Community."

PEARL SUNRISE (NAVAJO) is a curator at the Museum of Indian Arts and Cultures in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Ms. Sunrise has extensive academic and traditional knowledge on the art of Navajo

weaving. She will give a lecture and demonstration on the surviving techniques, process, and patterns of Navajo weaving.

PETERSON ZAH (NAVAJO) is the current President of the Navajo Nation. He now sits on the Board of Trustees at Colorado College. President Zah has been a long time activist for Native American rights, fighting for issues from educational quality to land repatriation. He will give the Heritage Week Keynote Speech on Native American Survival.

IN THE SPIRIT OF CRAZY HORSE is a telling PBS documentary, shedding some light on the American Indian Movement, their confrontation with the FBI, Wounded Knee 1973, and the grim aftermath. Using the voices of the Lakota, this film exposes how these people survive in their struggling communities.

DANCES WITH WOLVES is the highly-acclaimed, Academy Award-winning movie starring Kevin Costner. This is a proud, authentic movie depicting the struggle of a band of Lakota who confront nearby warring tribes and the infringement of the white man. There will be discussion following this epic drama.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

MONDAY, MARCH 30

- 6:00 am Blessing Ceremony, Worner Quad
John Emhoolah, Kiowa
- 8:00 pm Poetry Reading, Gaylord Hall
Rex Lee Jim, Navajo

TUESDAY, MARCH 31

- 2:00 pm Movie: *Spirit of Crazy Horse*,
Armstrong 300
- 8:00 pm Guest Speaker, Packard Hall
Beatrice Medicine, Lakota

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1

- 12:00 pm CC Student Intertribal Presentation,
Perkins Lounge
- 8:00 pm Guest Speaker Gaylord Hall
Simon Ortiz, Acoma Pueblo

THURSDAY, APRIL 2

- 1:00 pm Movie: *Dances With Wolves*,
Armstrong 300
- 8:00 pm Navajo Weaving
Lecture/Demonstration,
Gates Common Room
Pearl Sunrise, Navajo

FRIDAY, APRIL 3

- 12:00 pm Arts and Crafts Sales and
Demonstrations, Perkins
- 7:30 pm Keynote Speaker, Armstrong Theater
Peterson Zah, Navajo

SATURDAY, APRIL 4

- 9:00 am Arts & Crafts open, Perkins Lounge
Food Booth opens,
Student Cultural Center
- 10:00 am Gourd Dancing, El Pomar Gym
- 1:00 pm Pow-Wow Grand Entry,
El Pomar Gym
- 3:00 pm "Celebration of Drums" contest -
Sponsored by the American Indian
Life Center (Cahuilla Red Elk,
Director)



Blessing Ceremony, Pow-Wow events, and lectures open to the public with no admission charge.