

Indian Affairs

Members!

It's time once again for our annual meeting of members. See inside for details of the meeting. If you can, please come. If you cannot come to the meeting, we ask if you would please fill out the proxy form below and mail it to us.

PROXY

That I, _____, do hereby constitute and appoint Brad Keeler, President and Owanah Anderson, Secretary, agent for me in my name and stead with power of substitution, to vote as my proxy at the election of Directors of the Association on American Indian Affairs, Inc., and on such matters as may lawfully come up for consideration at its Annual Business Meeting on November 21, 2002 or any adjournment thereof according to the number of votes I should be entitled to cast if personally present.

Witness my hand and seal:

Signature

This _____ day of _____, 2002

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Guest: Senator Inouye

Guest: Representative Rahall

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Indian Affairs



Sacred Lands ... Sacred Sites

**Protecting Sacred
Lands is an
American
Responsibility**

**An Editorial
by
U.S. Representative
Nick Rahall**

**Statement of Senator
Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on
Indian Affairs
Before the July 17,
2002
Hearing on the
Protection of Native
American Sacred
Places**

**SACRED LANDS—
SACRED SITES**

**FIRST TELEPHONE
IN INDIAN
COUNTRY**

**AAIA/ALFONSO
ORTIZ AWARD**

**AAIA STARTS
LANGUAGE
PROGRAM**

**DIABETES
PREVENTION
UPDATE**

**CROW NATION
GIRLS BUILD
STUDY HALL OUT
OF STRAW**

**ANNUAL
MEETING OF
MEMBERS**

Whether or not you are a religious person, when you walk into the Sistine Chapel there is a feeling that comes over you that is hard to explain. Visiting this historic and religious site certainly evokes reverence and respect. The centuries old, detailed artwork by Michelangelo, the knowledge that the next Pope would be selected there, the history of an entire religion enveloped in one space.

Now imagine the Sistine Chapel with an oil rig plopped right under the famous "Creation of Adam"

The Committee on Indian Affairs meets today for the second in a series of hearings on Native American Sacred Places.

Long before Europeans landed on the shores of America, the native people of this nation revered and protected the lands and natural resources that they knew as their homeland.

The cathedrals had the skies as their ceilings and the mountains and the trees as their walls.

The sun and the moon and all of the natural elements were

The Director's Corner



As reported in our lead articles, Congress has once again started to recognize the importance of protecting Native American Indian

sacred places. Rep. Rahall has vocally supported the need to protect sacred sites and introduced legislation in the House of Representatives. The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, chaired by Senator Inouye and co-chaired by Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, has begun oversight hearings to determine what federal agencies have and have not done with respect to protecting sacred places. The first hearing was held on June 4 and focused on the Defense Department, the second on July 17 focused on the Interior Department. The Committee heard testimony not only from agencies, but also from tribal people whose sites have been directly affected by the activities of the federal government. A series of 5 hearings are expected to be held.

As has been the case for decades, AAIA has been very involved in this effort to protect sacred places. As members of AAIA know, the Association took part in the early 1990s in a five-year effort to obtain American Indian religious freedom legislation, part of which was enacted in 1994. Unfortunately, the sacred sites part of this legislation did not become law. In addition to its work nationally, AAIA has also provided assistance in a number of specific sacred sites disputes, beginning in the 1960s and the effort to return the sacred Blue Lake to the Taos Pueblo. More recent sites for which AAIA has provided assistance include Mt. Graham in Arizona and Devils Tower and Medicine Wheel/Medicine Mountain in Wyoming.

Because of the continuing lack of comprehensive protection for sacred sites, AAIA recently joined with some other national organizations and Indian

tribes to establish an informal coalition to protect Native American sacred places. The coalition's goals are to work on a national basis to

- Strengthen administrative procedures and regulations relevant to sacred sites protection,
- Encourage government decisions that will protect sacred sites and ensure adequate tribal consultation, and
- Enhance legal protection for native sacred places.

At the same time, the coalition will be seeking to support local efforts to protect specific sacred places. The efforts of this coalition directly led to the oversight hearings currently being held by the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

AAIA is committed to continued active involvement with and support for the coalition's efforts. I recently took part in coalition planning meetings and staff and press briefings in Washington, D.C. In addition, former director Jerry Flute provided testimony at an Advisory Council on Historic Preservation hearing held to address the devastating impacts of Army Corps of Engineers' activities upon sacred places and gravesites along the Missouri River. To a significant extent, it is because of the support of our members that we are able to continue this important work.

Cultural Tidbits

The First Telephone in Indian Territory

The Cherokee telephone company which placed in operation the first line in Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, came into existence in 1886. A franchise authorizing the erection of the line was granted by the Cherokee National Council at Tahlequah in the autumn of 1885. Work

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Representative Rahall, continued



ceiling fresco. Inconceivable, ridiculous, sacrilegious.

Yet, right here in America, oil rigs and mining pits are invading some very sacred places.

Until April 23, the Valley of Chiefs in Montana was one such threatened place, an area under siege by Big Oil interests. This valley of peace was once part of the Crow Reservation and it holds significance to many other tribes in Montana, Wyoming, North and South Dakota and Oklahoma. In fact, in 1999 it was designated by the federal government as an area of critical environmental concern largely because of its spiritual and cultural significance.

After almost a year of negotiations, the oil company has agreed to transfer its oil leases to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In this case, I deeply appreciate the efforts of all involved, including the oil company, to come to a proper resolution of this dispute. Last year I introduced H.R. 2085, the Valley of the Chiefs Native American Sacred Site Preservation Act, which would prohibit the Secretary of the Interior from issuing oil and gas leases and drilling permits in this very sacred area. I believe it was this legislation, along with the media attention, which served as a catalyst for reaching an agreement to protect Valley of the Chiefs.

But make no mistake about it, there are other Valleys of Chiefs out there crying out for a comprehensive approach to this issue rather than causing us to fight on a case-by-case basis. Valley of Chiefs provides a glimmer of hope for this uphill battle facing Indian Country. It is also a wake-up call for action, for the pressing need to protect bona fide Native American sacred sites wherever they may lie on the public domain.

The proposed site for a 1,600 acre, open-pit gold

“Long before my ancestors arrived on these shores, American Indians were the first stewards of this land. They respected the earth, water and air. They understood you take only what you need and leave the rest. They demonstrated that you do not desecrate that which is sacred.”

mine in Indian Pass, Calif., is a place where “dream trails” were woven. The Bush Administration revoked a Clinton-era ruling that said mining operations would cause irreparable harm to these ancestral lands, an extremely sacred place to the Quechan Indian tribe. Now the tribe is left fighting for its religious and cultural history.

In New Mexico, 60 miles south of the Zuni Pueblo, lies the Salt Lake. When water evaporates in the summer, layers of salt are exposed on the lake bottom. Zuni and other tribal medicine men harvest the salts. Yet a public utility wants to build a massive coal strip mine just 11 miles

north of the lake. To operate such a mine the company will have to pump water from the same aquifer that feeds the Zuni Salt Lake, increasing potential harm to the lake and the salt which many tribes use for healing.

Sadly, these examples are just two verses in the Bible of threatened Native American Sacred Lands.

Long before my ancestors arrived on these shores, American Indians were the first stewards of this land. They respected the earth, water and air. They understood you take only what you need and leave the rest. They demonstrated you do not desecrate that which is sacred.

Most Americans understand a reverence for the great Sistine Chapel, or even for a white-washed church building with a steeple and a bell. But often non-Indians have difficulty giving that same reverence to a mountain, valley, stream or rock formation.

Yet those of us whose forefathers came from Europe, Asia and Africa to form this nation have chosen many of those same natural features to protect and preserve. Look around at our national parks, forests and monuments. We have put the full legal

weight and strength of the federal government behind protecting these areas.

Last month the Sacred Lands Protection Coalition was formed through the National Congress of American Indians, Association on American Indian Affairs, Seventh Generation Fund and the Native American Rights Fund. The coalition may prove to be the seminal action that finally brings the federal government once and for all to put its muscle behind protecting Native American sacred lands in our country.

I had the honor to speak at the February meeting of the National Congress of American Indians where I discussed several issues facing Native Americans, including protecting sacred lands. Like Indian country, my beloved West Virginia Appalachian home also has deep cultural roots, is rich with natural resources and beautiful landscapes. We are true to our belief in our traditions, our distinct culture, our food, our music, our medicine and our spirituality.

And like Indian country, Appalachia has a bloody history of battling powerful forces coming in promising jobs and a better life, only to strip us of our most profitable minerals and leave behind even more poverty and broken promises. Coal may be a blessing — we need this energy source and it provides jobs — but it has left a cruel legacy on our Appalachian landscape. In many places, a tortured landscape.

Prior to the enactment of the Surface Mining Act of 1977, many places West Virginians hold sacred were demolished by strip mining — including graveyards. The resulting public indignation gave rise to the enactment of the Surface Mining Act to place stringent federal controls on surface coal mining and reclamation.

Yet we balk at providing legal controls over Indian sacred sites. While acts such as the National Historic Preservation Act, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act have been helpful to a degree, I believe the time has come for us to put a process in statute that stops damaging activity and preserves these areas forever.

Throughout Appalachia and throughout Indian country we have the right to receive respect from those outside our community, including the Federal government. In fact, we have earned that respect.

We can not stand idle as corporate America picks

off Native American sacred sites, tribe by tribe. In this regard, I have developed a legislative proposal that will put “teeth” into federal law and halt any further desecration of sacred lands.

At a time when the Bush Administration is promoting increased energy development, we must have a government-wide, effective, comprehensive process that prohibits the loss of further Native American sacred lands. Now, before more of these unique sites are wiped off the face of the earth.

U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall, D-W.Va., serves as the senior Democrat on the House Committee on Resources, which oversees Native American issues. First elected to Congress in 1976 and serving his 13th term, Rahall specializes his expertise in national policies relating to energy, environment and transportation. Rahall is the second senior Democrat on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.



AAIA/ALFONSO ORTIZ AWARD GIVEN TO JAMES HENA TESUQUE PUEBLO

The Board of Directors of the Association on American Indian Affairs gave the AAIA/Alfonso Ortiz Award to its long-time member and former president of the Association, James Hena (shown above/left).

The Board met in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and hosted the event at the Institute of American Indian Arts cultural center known as the Hogan.

The award is named in honor of Alfonso Ortiz who served as President of the Association on American Indian Affairs from 1973—1988. Ortiz, a member of the San Juan Pueblo, was a Professor at the University of New Mexico, an author of some note, and had a bachelor's degree in sociology and a master's and doctorate in anthropology. In addition to other public service activities, he also served as a member of the board of trustees of the National Museum of the American Indians. The

current AAIA Board President, Bradford Keeler, has said that “Alfonso Ortiz was a man in whose footsteps all of us should strive to follow.”

James Hena was given the Ortiz Award for a lifetime of service to his pueblo and the larger Indian community. A former AAIA President, Mr. Hena also served as Governor of Tesuque Pueblo on 6 different occasions, Chairman of the All Indian Pueblo Council from 1990—1994 and Chairman of the National Indian Council on Aging in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s. His service dates back for more than 3 decades, including a position as Executive Assistant to the Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs from 1970—1973.

The award ceremony was open to the public and was held on Friday, May 31st and included a traditional pueblo dinner. The following day, the Board of Directors of the Association was honored to attend the Corn Dance at the Tesuque Pueblo. This dance, held annually, was an

four years old. It was in these schools that children were punished for speaking their language. These children, are now the grandmas and the grandpas who would have passed the language on.

Apparently, the idea at the time was to “assimilate” the American Indian into mainstream society. This attitude can be summed up by a “sample” of non-Indian attitudes towards Native American People and their Customs from the Blue Cloud Abbey’s Culture Page of their website. This is a letter from the Office of Indian Affairs in Washington dated January 13, 1902 to the Superintendent of an Indian school addressing the “problem” of long hair and the painting of faces.

“... With your Indian employes (sic) and those Indians who draw rations and supplies it should be an easy matter as a non-compliance with this order may be made a reason for discharge or for withholding rations and supplies. Many may be induced to comply with the order voluntarily, especially the returned student. The returned students who do not comply voluntarily should be dealt with summarily. Employment, supplies, etc. should be withdrawn until they do comply and if they become obstreperous about the matter a short confinement in the guard-house at hard labor, with shorn locks, should furnish a cure.”

Many children returned to their reservations not speaking their languages. And it is these children who did not — or could not — pass the language on.

AAIA has long recognized that language is essential to a culture and in an effort to assist tribes in retaining their language, we have started a program on the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation, our home base. We hope to develop a model which can be used by other tribes.

AAIA starts language program

“When a language is no longer spoken, many of its cultural elements specific to a group are lost: it’s greetings, its praises, its laws, its literature, its songs, its riddles, its proverbs, its cures, its wisdom and its prayers. A culture cannot be expressed or handed on it any other way. The language represents the culture in the minds of the speakers. Its stands for and sums up the entire economy, religion, health care system and philosophy.”

These words, from the website lakotalanguage.org reflects what’s happening to many tribes. Many of the tribal languages are in endangered.

The reasons for the loss of languages are many. One of the most talked-about reasons is the government boarding school era. Children were taken from their homes — most of the time forcibly — and taken away to schools, some of these children were as young as

Scholarships

We received the following e-mail from our first AAIA/Florence Young Memorial Fellow:

“Dear friends:

I want to thank you for helping our Indian People help ourselves. I know it is hard work, but you will be blessed by the Creator for your efforts. My relations, please know that I say a prayer for you and your efforts.

Thank you,

Ce-tah
Leo Carpenter, Jr. (Hupa, Yurok, Karok)”

It is always a pleasure to receive these types of words from our students.

All summer we have been steadily receiving applications from American Indian students who are going to school in all areas of the country.

Each year, we seem to get more and more applications in and it is wonderful to know that so many of our people are pursuing their educations.

DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM UPDATES

- Dr. DeeAnn DeRoin, member of the Board of Directors and the Association’s Field Manager, Tammy DeCoteau, have been meeting periodically with members and representatives of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community in planning the annual Northern Plains Regional Conference for American Indian Diabetics to be held in July. [Dr. DeRoin is a physician and a member of the Ioway Tribe]
- In addition, Dr. DeRoin is currently working on a presentation to be made at the Office of Minority Health’s National Indian Health Summit Forum to be held in September. Dr. DeRoin, will present the model for the Diabetes Conference the Association has been co-hosting with the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community in hopes that tribes in other regions of the nation could pattern a conference after this one.
- Thanks to the Millie Hesemeyer Estate, AAIA is able to fund additional diabetes focused American Indian summer camps. These camps give children needed information on the prevention of diabetes and on the prevention of complications for those already diabetic.

Cultural Tidbits— The First Telephone in Indian Territory (continued from page 4)

was begun the following year and before its close the first telephone line was a reality, connecting Tahlequah with Fort Gibson in the Cherokee Nation, and with Muskogee in the Creek Nation.

Before the completion of the line much delay was experienced in communicating from Tahlequah with the Union Agency at Muskogee, and also with business men by other business men at the Cherokee capital. E.D. Hicks, a young businessman of Tahlequah began thinking of the great convenience and value of more direct communication and suggested to a number of the leading men the convenience and feasibility of a telephone line. Much interest was aroused among those to whom he talked, with the result that a franchise was requested of the Cherokee National legislative bodies.

The route selected for the telephone line lay through some rugged and densely wooded sections. There was no surveyor. Contrary to the belief of many the route did not follow that of the old and long-used road lying between Tahlequah and Fort Gibson, but led over heights and ridges, through flat woods and down steep-sloped valleys. In order to get the proper direction it was often necessary to ascend a hill and carefully observe the sylvan scene. There were times, too, when the weather conditions were bad, heavy rainfalls, resultant mud, snow and sleet and gloomy days when the wind blew coldly from the North. But steady progress was made. No one sought to impede the workers, and eventually completion of the preparation of the route was realized. All that was necessary was to make connections.

Not one of the workers had ever seen connections made, for this was the first telephone being completed in all the vast Indian territory. The workers were nonplussed, but in their time of difficulty a blue-coated soldier from the fort upon the hill arrived. He had learned back in Ohio how the connections were made and offered his services, which were gladly welcomed. Within a rather brief period the telephone was in working order so far as the office at Fort Gibson was concerned, but the same connection must be made over at Tahlequah, twenty-three miles eastward over the telephone route. No one at the old capital knew anything about telephones, so a good-sized picture or diagram of the parts which were to be assembled and connected with the wire were placed in the hands of Manuel Spencer, and, mounted on a horse, Manuel set out for Tahlequah. He was several hours on the road but finally arrived at the store of J.W. Stapler and Sons and handed the diagram to James S. Stapler. The latter carefully studied the diagram, then set out to work, and soon had the proper connections made. Talking was in order between Tahlequah and Fort Gibson.

In the beginning of the efforts to secure permission from the Council to operate the telephone line there were some who had misgivings, for there were some very conservative members of the Council. Several of the leading native members were consulted and they decided that the franchise should be granted. A short "sample line" was utilized by two notables in testing the powers of the telephone. George Sanders, usually called Soggy Sanders, a large man, weighing probably 300 pounds stood at one end of the line, and another leading Indian of the name of Smith stood at the other. These men held an animated conversation in the native tongue. At the conclusion of their talk, Sanders laughed and remarked that the telephone was all-right. "It talks in Cherokee," he said.

The Cherokee telephone company was in operation until 1896, when E.D. Hicks and W.P. Thomson established an exchange in Tahlequah and the name Tahlequah Telephone Company superceded the original name. Reprinted with permission from the Cherokee Link Newsletter which can be found at www.CherokeeLink@cherokee.org



NATIVE AMERICAN GIRLS BUILDING A STUDY HALL OUT OF STRAW RECEIVE \$25,000 GRANT FROM OPRAH'S ANGEL NETWORK

Rez Protectors' Were 2001 Winners of Columbus Foundation Community Grant as Part of the Bayer/NSF Award

CROW AGENCY, MT — A severe housing shortage on their reservation and the chance to win a national competition prompted a group of middle-school girls from the Crow Nation Reservation in Montana to develop a way to build houses out of straw. Lucretia Birdinground, Kimberly Deputee, Omney See the Ground and Brenett Stewart got the attention of the judges at the Bayer/NSF Award held annually at the Walt Disney World Resort, and won the coveted \$25,000 Columbus Foundation Community Grant. Now they've also gotten the attention of Oprah Winfrey and recently received a \$25,000 grant from Oprah's Angel Network to help turn their idea into a reality.

In July of this year, the girls idea will come to life in a two-week "barnraising" effort led by Crow Nation tribal elders. Red Feather Development Group of Bellevue, WA, and volunteers from all over the country. The group will blitz build a straw-bale study hall and community center on the Crow Nation Reservation, in part with funds from the Columbus Foundation Community Grant and the grant from Oprah's Angel Network. The two-week effort will culminate with an Indian blessing and feast.

A Solution to Crowded Housing on the Reservation The Crow Nation housing shortage forces two or three families to live under one roof. Some members of the Crow Nation have been waiting more than 10 years for a house. The girls and their coach, science teacher Jack Joyce at Pretty Eagle Catholic School, identified this problem as part of their entry into the Bayer/NSF Award program, which challenges middle-school students to identify a community issue and use the scientific process to solve it. The



girls saw a solution for the housing shortage in the abundant straw on the Crow Reservation. The problem: most tribal members perceived straw-bale construction as ineffective and unsafe. The perception was that it could rot or catch fire easily.

To demonstrate that straw-bale construction is economical and safe, the team built a model of a straw house, stacking straw-bales and covering them with stucco concrete. They also conducted experiments with blow torches and thermometers to prove the structure was fireproof, water-proof and energy efficient.

Community Support Since its inception in September 1997, Oprah's Angel Network has granted scholarships to 150 students, built over 200 homes with Habitat for Humanity, and presented the "Use Your Life Award" to 44 individuals who, through their charitable organizations, are making a difference in the lives of others. For more information about Oprah's Angel Network visit www.harpo.com.

The Bayer/NSF Award and Columbus Foundation Community Grant The Bayer/NSF Award is designed to attract all kids to science, including those from groups traditionally less likely to participate. Typically 60 percent of Bayer/NSF Award entrants are girls and 30 percent are minorities.

Nearly 2,400 students entered the Bayer/NSF Award in the 2001-2002 school year. Of those, 10 teams of three or four students will be selected as regional finalists and win a trip to compete in the National Championship at the Walt Disney World Resort.

The students will also participate in the Christopher Columbus Academy, a unique educational experience in which students learn about science and technology by working side-by-side with engineers, scientists and other innovators at Walt Disney World and NASA.

Says Linda Topoleski on behalf of the Bayer/NSF Award, "This is an outstanding example of American youth working against all odds to make their community a better place to live. The four young women are breaking down barriers and making a real difference. I hope you will come to find their story to be as inspiring as the community partners and the residents of the Crow Nation have."

Statement by Senator Inouye on Sacred Lands and Sacred Sites — Continued from Page 3

respected as the manifestations of a creator who watched over all the beings of the world.

With the advent of European settlement and westward expansion, the places that Native Americans held as sacred became vulnerable to desecration and destruction.

In contemporary times, the government of the United States has slowly but surely begun to understand that these sacred places must be protected and preserved.

Through these hearings we hope to identify where the best protection practices are taking place and where we need to focus our attention if we are to see improvements.

2002 Annual Meeting of Members of the Association Being Planned

The Annual Meeting of the Members of the Association will be held in the birthplace of the Association, New York City.

The meeting of members will be at the National Museum of the American Indian, One Bowling Green, New York, New York, starting at 6:00 p.m. on the 21st of November, 2002.

A public forum on the issue of sacred sites is being planned to coincide with the meeting of the members.

Watch for the next issue of Indian Affairs for details of the program.



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Sacred Lands ... Sacred Sites



“Long before my ancestors arrived on these shores, American Indians were the first stewards of this land. They respected the earth, water and air. They understood you take only what you need and leave the rest. They demonstrated that you do not desecrate that which is sacred.”

*Nick Rahall
U.S. Representative*

See inside for the complete messages of Senator Inouye and Representative Rahall on this important issue of sacred sites.



“... before Europeans landed on the shores of America, the native people of this nation revered and protected the lands and natural resources that they knew as their homeland. Their cathedrals had the skies as their ceilings and the mountains and the trees as their walls...”

*Daniel K. Inouye
U.S. Senator*