

Building and FEAT neHouse

A PUBLICATION OF RED FEATHER DEVELOPMENT GROUP

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winter



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"Flight With Purpose" by Elmer Yazzie © 2004
Acrylic on Canvas.
30" x 40"

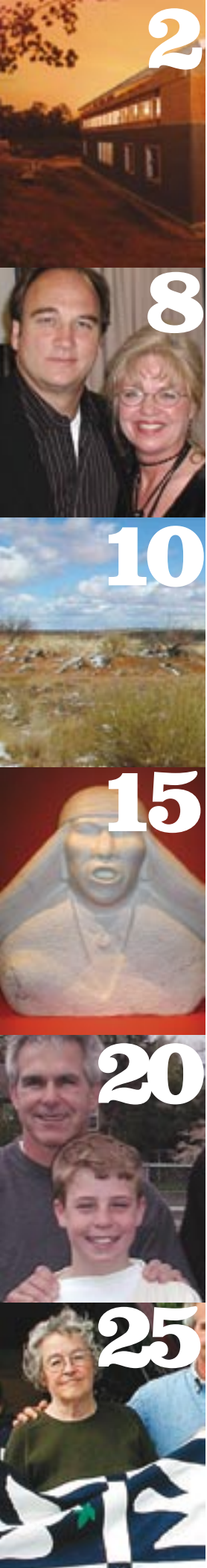


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media corrections

A large part of Red Feather's mission is to inform individuals of the housing and community development concerns facing many American Indian nations. We are blessed with a tremendous amount of media coverage on our organization and our building projects. Unfortunately, there have been times where inaccuracies have been reported. We do everything possible to avoid this kind of error, but sometimes it is inescapable. When these instances occur, Red Feather staff contacts the media involved regarding corrections, but we can never guarantee that the media will rectify the error. What we can guarantee is that when we learn of these incidents, we will publish the corrections ourselves in our *Building One House* publication.

A recent article distributed by the Associated Press mistakenly gave credit to Red Feather for the construction of the *Chief Dull Knife College Literacy Center*. Red Feather provided a portion of the funds needed for this facility, but the project planning, design and construction was performed by the Dull Knife College staff, Penn State University and the University of Washington. We have contacted the Associated Press regarding this issue and requested an appropriate correction. Red Feather staff works hard to avoid this kind of inaccuracy, and we apologize for any confusion this may have caused. We applaud all those involved in the Literacy Center project and for assisting the Northern Cheyenne community.

Message from the Director

One of the greatest aspects of my ten-year experience with Red Feather has been the opportunity to meet and work with the many dedicated volunteers that have graciously donated their time to improve the standard of living for native people. They have been willing to cross all the lines that have traditionally kept people apart in order to improve the lives of others. It has truly been a humbling experience.



Keeping it in the family.
Rob, Anita and Skylar Young
at the TMCC project.

Over the last several years, Red Feather staff and volunteers have worked hard to introduce straw bale construction methods to numerous reservations throughout the western United States. We have engaged hundreds of tribal members in the process, but our efforts have made us keenly aware that infrequent, random acts of intervention will not achieve the results we seek and what is so desperately needed on the reservations. Today, these words sum up much of what drives Red Feather's **American Indian Sustainable Housing Initiative**.

Our work has generated a tremendous amount of interest and hope, but we realize that in order to achieve real systemic change, we must limit the scope of our program and employ a sustained, focused effort within designated reservation communities. Once our areas of concentration have been established and successful building programs are in place, we can then begin the lengthy process of replication to other reservation communities requesting our assistance.

The process of selecting our areas of focus will be difficult. We understand that the housing crisis facing thousands of native families is epidemic and destructive. We also understand the importance of staying focused on our mission and not losing sight of the benefits a safe, new home brings each family we are able to assist.

Working to create positive, lasting solutions is rarely easy or rapid. There will always be obstacles to overcome, but no matter how difficult the process may be, we must always remember that each day will bring more good than bad and that our hard work and stanch determination does make a difference. All of us at Red Feather are eternally grateful for your support and involvement, and as always, I personally look forward to what we can accomplish with your continued commitment and generosity.

Sincerely,

Robert Young
Founder and Executive Director



Turtle Mountain Environmental Research Center

Anatomy of a Build

By Nathaniel Corum
Photos by Skip Baumhower | www.baumhower.com

The volunteer group that raised the trusses at Turtle Mountain.

A Red Feather “build” technically refers to the construction of a replicable house or a community facility, but a Red Feather build is far more than just a building. A new community comes together—a community of caring, hardworking and spirited individuals who reach outside themselves to provide shelter where it is desperately needed and create positive cross-cultural interaction. A Red Feather build is about getting a structure built while educating community members and volunteers. Yet there are also many opportunities for sharing divergent cultures, songs and stories; the appreciation of a community’s people, their history, customs, and environment; and the making of good food

and new friends. The Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC) Environmental Research Center (ERC) build of summer 2004 is an excellent example of a Red Feather build where friendships, awareness, knowledge and understanding were built alongside an important straw bale tribal college facility.

The Builders:

By working with a tribal college like TMCC, some community involvement was assured, but the larger Turtle Mountain community also came to build and visit, extending their hospitality and hands-on assistance. In addition to tribal college

President Gerald Monette and many staff and students from TMCC, the build was visited by three tribal council members, United States Senator Dorgan, tribal member and novelist Louise Erdrich, a local drum group, local craftspeople, artisans, teachers and many other interested community members. Several hundred tribal members visited the build to share knowledge, food, skills and the construction experience. Some tribal members brought their hard work to the build process while others welcomed the work party with home-cooked food—delicious soups, vegetarian dishes, bannock and bangs (fry bread) and bison (buffalo) meat. Each day was rich

in opportunities for tribal members and volunteers to get to know one another, share in the construction process, and enjoy community together.

The TMCC build featured a new and important opportunity for community involvement through a grant that sponsored the full-time participation of a group of four students from the TMCC construction trades department. These four students—Jeff Grant, Jacob Laducer, David LeDoux, and Mike Martin—along with their instructor Luke Baker, brought considerable building knowledge to the build and also served as ambassadors between the build community and the people of Turtle Mountain. The students were involved with the construction process during all phases, facilitated the involvement of other students and tribal members while adding straw bale construction and other sustainable building knowledge to their repertoire.

Local press coverage helped to draw in further-flung North Dakotans from places like Grand Forks and Minot several hours distant. News teams from two television stations—KXMC-13 and KMOT-10 both from Minot—came to the build this summer to document the work and share it with folks in the region. In addition, several local newspapers covered the build including the Grand Forks Herald (Grand Forks, ND), Minot Daily News (Minot, ND), Turtle Mountain Times (Belcourt, ND), and Turtle Mountain Star (Rolla, ND). As a result, Sundays on the build featured many visitors coming by to see the project, ask questions, and explore

the straw bale building. Red Feather staff and volunteers were able to answer many questions and provide tours to the many curious site visitors.

Just as community involvement was diverse and impressive, so was that of the Red Feather volunteers. About 70 volunteers worked on the Environmental Research Center (ERC) in July 2004. Red Feather hosted volunteers from far and wide in addition to inviting tribal members from across the Northern Plains. There were volunteers from 4 countries, 16 states and at least 6 tribal nations including Spirit Lake (North Dakota), Standing Rock (North & South Dakota), Pine Ridge (South Dakota), the Cree (Canada & North Dakota), the Crow (Montana), Assiniboine/Gros Ventre (Montana), and of course Turtle Mountain (North Dakota).

The Build:

These diverse build participants live, work and eat with one another for periods ranging from one to three weeks. Camp life means sleeping in tents, washing within open-to-the-sky solar showers, and taking turns cooking under the main tent. There is much work to be done, but volunteers and community members also find time at meals and at each day’s end to get to know one another, to play music around the campfire, and to pursue various recreational, cultural and educational activities. The Turtle Mountain build had the advantages of the tribal college campus, a large lake (with canoes), hiking trails, beautiful terrain, diverse flora and fauna, two bison herds,

and a newly built low-ropes confidence course—all of which added to the build experience.

The build atmosphere allows for educational offerings of many kinds. The construction process—the heart of the build—is an ongoing and open ‘classroom’ for the development of construction-related confidence, skills and understanding. Straw bale construction is a particular focus on Red Feather builds, but this summer’s participants also had a chance to learn about foundations, radiant heating systems, and sustainable building materials, in addition to conventional carpentry.

Additional educational programs are organized as build time permits. One Turtle Mountain evening was graced with the music and storytelling of Ed ‘King’ Johnson –a Métis fiddler. On several occasions those at the build had the opportunity to walk through the North Dakota woods with tribal elder Marvin Bald Eagle Youngman and to share in his knowledge of native plants and their traditional medicinal uses. Straw bale educators Matts Myhrman and Judy Knox joined forces with Red Feather’s Mike Kelly and Nathaniel Corum to introduce a broad range of issues concerning straw bale construction.

Scott Frasier and Teresa Cohn of the Bozeman-based nonprofit Native Waters also gave lakeside presentations touching on local ecology/hydrology and the importance of water quality. Next spring we look forward to continuing

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All photos by Skip Baumhower | www.baumhower.com



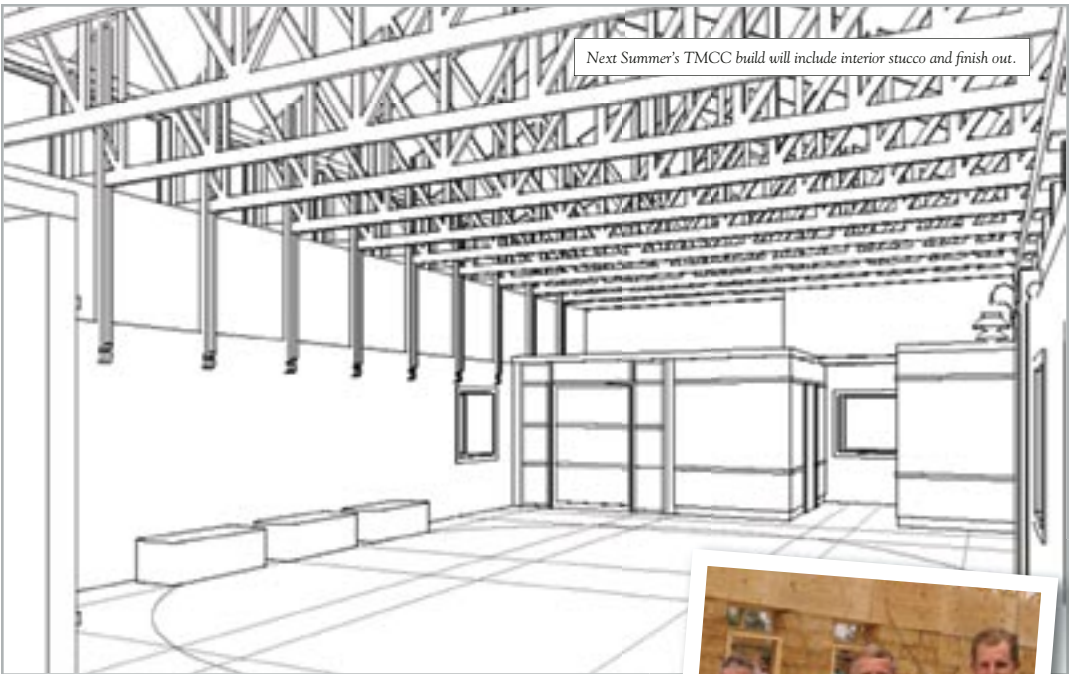
Teaching by example: Construction Program Director Mike Kelly and construction trades student Dave LeDoux applying stucco to the ERC walls.

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the educational offerings both in the building and in camp. Tribal Council Member Les La Fontaine is planning to talk about Chippewa History, and TMCC Native American Language Instructor Cecilia Myrion will address the traditional language(s) and cultures of the Turtle Mountains.

The Building:

Red Feather staff, together with these volunteers and community members, erected the foundation, walls, trusses and roof of the ERC building in a three-week period despite some major material and weather delays. This project was the first



Next Summer's TMCC build will include interior stucco and finish out.

Senator Byron L. Dorgan (second from right) was one of the many North Dakotans who toured the TMCC build site to learn about Red Feather and straw bale construction.

where Red Feather staff and volunteers worked directly on the formwork and placement of the foundation and the associated radiant heating system. Next Red Feather staff with the help of Matts Myhrman and Judy Knox assembled teams to raise the bale wall. Each team was led by wall co-captains—a volunteer with previous build experience together with a construction trades student from the tribal college—and three or more additional volunteers/community members. The walls went up quickly, but had to be protected each night from the threat of the North Dakota wind and rain. The true sprit of teamwork was evident as the heavy box-beams and trusses were put into place by large groups of volunteers and the help of straw bale scaffolding. Finally, hardworking crews worked to complete the roof structure and stucco the exterior

walls before the end of the third week. With farewells and departures, the build camp was closed for the season.

More recently Construction Program Director Mike Kelly, Member/Volunteer Coordinator Stacie Laducer and Community Design Director Nathaniel Corum returned to coordinate the metal roofing on the structure with professional roofer Rock Bastian of Colorado who has lent his skill and time to several Red

Feather projects. With a team including volunteers Jim Waters and Vaughn Woodruff, TMCC instructor Luke Baker and his current class of construction trades students, the building was roofed and prepared for the onset of winter.

Red Feather will return to Turtle Mountain during the summer of 2005 to complete the project. Work on the 2005 Turtle Mountain build will involve the interior finish as well as the application of the third coat of exterior stucco. Red Feather looks forward to continuing collaboration and relationship building with the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa and the Turtle Mountain Community College. Next summer promises to be another wonderful experience in cooperation between Red Feather staff, volunteers, and tribal members and will bear fruit in the form of a completed Environmental Research Center. The Center will provide an important research/classroom space for the college as they grow to make use of the newly acquired 100-acre Anishanaube Wellness Center land and will also live on in the Turtle Mountain community as a visit-able example of straw bale construction.

The very purpose of the facility lends itself to Red Feather's educational objectives in terms of community building, sustainable construction and straw bale construction in particular. Over 200 Indian homes have been recently condemned on the Turtle Mountain Reservation due to black mold infestation. The straw bale center will serve as a model for replacing some of these homes while providing hands-on,



The ERC building takes shape toward the end of week three.

straw bale building experience to Turtle Mountain tribal members and Red Feather volunteers alike.

The TMCC project, just as all of Red Feather's builds, is the result of the hard work and dedication of many people and organizations. Red Feather would like to thank the following outstanding groups and individuals who made working in the Turtle Mountains possible:

Turtle Mountain Community College; Turtle Mountain Tribal Council (bison donation); Larry the crane operator, Allard Equipment Sales; Keith Azure, Anishinaube facility maintenance; Luke Baker, vocational instructor TMCC; Jeff Grant, Jacob Laducer, Dave LeDoux & Mike Martin, TMCC vocational students;

Tom Beaudette, Beaudette Consulting Engineers; Kim Christianson, North Dakota Chamber of Commerce; Dr. Angela Erdrich; Art Fust, Energy A.D.; Carl Hanson and Bob Martell, Sun Electric, Inc.; Brad Huempfnr, President, Big Sky Insulation; Rodney Kitsch, Northern Plains Electric Cooperative; Mike and Sandy Koness, Centennial Timber Frames; The Laducer Family: Jeanette, Bob, Jason, Justin, and Stacie; Don McLaughlin and Beth Johns, PLACE Architecture; Art Toumala, Toumala Plumbing and Heating; Johnny Weiss, Solar Energy International; and the USDA Rural Development, National Office.



Photo by Skip Baumhower | www.baumhower.com

Welcome Aboard Mike Kelly

Construction Program Director

Tireless, innovative, adroit, and helpful: four words that describe Michael Kelly but only begin to express the invaluable skill and effort he has long brought to Red Feather. A Red Feather member since 1999 and a skilled Red Feather volunteer leader since 2002, Michael joined the staff at Red Feather full-time in the spring of 2004 as Red Feather’s construction program director.

A graduate of Clemson University in 1995 where he studied business administration, Michael moved to Montana immediately following graduation. He worked in various capacities first as a lead marine mechanic, an apprentice shipwright, a plumber’s laborer, and then as a laborer for a green builder in Missoula. Michael quickly became the lead carpenter there in projects that ranged from historic restoration on homes and ranches to custom woodwork using salvaged and re-milled lumber. Michael became adept at woodworking, cabinet making, millwork, and historic restoration.

A competent carpenter skilled in all aspects of building combined with progressive expertise in sustainable construction methods and products, Michael started his own business, WoodWright Renovation, in Bozeman. Two years later Michael incorporated his custom remodeling company, renamed Rocky Mountain WoodWright. In every project, Michael worked closely with each client to create high quality products while adhering to ethical building practices. Through alternative resources, techniques and materials, Michael quickly developed a base of repeat clientele happy with his work.

Meanwhile, he and his wife Myla had their first child, daughter Madeline. The whole family can be spotted on Red Feather builds along with their Weimaraner, Yebo.

Having facilitated Red Feather’s move from Seattle to Bozeman and assisted with building desks and shelves for the new office, Michael dug into the groundwork for the Turtle Mountain Community College Environmental Research Center (ERC) this spring. The largest Red Feather project to date, the ERC was Michael’s third Red Feather project. The ERC incorporates compressed straw blocks, sunflower seed hull pressboard, and, of course, straw bales. Upon completion, the building systems will include a concrete-saving insulated foundation, an evaporative cooling system, thermal mass reservoirs, a rainwater collection system, energy efficient and passive solar lighting, and photo-voltaic solar panels. Michael’s work involves researching sustainable products, purchasing, scheduling, collaboration, project management, and maintaining affordability at every level. Michael directed this summer’s crew of volunteers through the complexities of the Turtle Mountain project and continually exceeds the challenges presented by such a large-scale endeavor.

Red Feather wishes to welcome and commend Michael for contributing his diligence, sense of humor and essential experience to the American Indian Sustainable Housing Initiative. Our adulations to you, Michael. **RF**

Red Feather at Meeting in the Mountains: Architecture and Humanity

Montana has actively welcomed Red Feather Development Group in many ways. One recent flourish of Big Sky hospitality came this spring when Community Design Director Nathaniel Corum was invited by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Billings Architectural Association to be a speaker at the AIA’s annual Meeting in the Mountains retreat. This event—now in its 21st year—is attended by many of the state’s architecture professionals and construction supply representatives who attend lectures, discuss new products and technologies, and generally enjoy a weekend in historic Red Lodge, Montana.

This year Meeting in the Mountains took *Architecture and Humanity* as its theme. Featured speakers—along with Nathaniel—were Deborah Snoonian, senior editor for *Architectural Record* magazine, and Cameron Sinclair, founder of the nonprofit Architecture for Humanity. Past retreats have enjoyed a string of celebrated speakers including Gary Ferguson, Montana author; Paul Shepheard, author and architect; Pliny Fisk III, founder and director of Center of Maximum Potential Building Systems; Sim Van der Ryn, Van der Ryn Architects; James Cutler, James Cutler Architects; Ted Flato, Lake/Flato Architects; Will Bruder, architect; and Sam Mockbee, Mockbee/Coker Architects and the Rural Studio—distinguished company to say the least. Red Feather welcomed the opportunity to meet and learn from many of Montana’s design/build professionals.

Current issues in humanitarian architecture were the retreat’s focus. The Billings AIA summed up the theme of the speaker series as:

“to explore the roles and responsibilities of architects for the human condition and the need for community-focused design initiatives of all kinds. Architecture as an art form is a social art. Those that design and build must do it with an awareness of a more socially and physically responsive approach...This year we have gathered individuals who saw a need and chose to do something about it.”

Deborah Snoonian from *Architectural Record* led off with a talk entitled “Physical Responsibility – What Happens with the Mess We Left Behind?” Deborah spoke of her experience working on superfund sites and about the toxic industrial processes associated with certain construction materials—specifically vinyl (PVC). As senior editor for *Architectural Record*, the magazine of the AIA, Ms. Snoonian writes regularly about sustainability, building technology, and design. She produced a special issue of the magazine focusing on sustainability in February 2003 and has lectured widely on the topic to architects, engineers and lay audiences.

Red Feather took the podium next. Founder Robert Young introduced the nonprofit and the *American Indian Sustainable Housing Initiative* and spoke of the history and mission of Red Feather over the past decade. Nathaniel gave a slide show

presentation entitled “Cultural Sensitivity – and Where Will the People Live?” clarifying the community-design movement now being defined in the profession. Nathaniel discussed Red Feather’s progress in that direction, the build process, project history, and background on the communities Red Feather serves. The discussion examined the construction and design of both straw bale construction in general and Red Feather’s straw bale home prototypes.

Cameron Sinclair gave the final presentation: “Design Like You Give a Damn – Designing for the Dispossessed.” Cameron founded Architecture for Humanity (AFH) in 1999 to support and develop architectural solutions to humanitarian problems. The nonprofit organization is best known for hosting competitions to find designs for areas threatened by health crises and war. AFH has supported design and prototype construction of temporary

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Cameron Sinclair, Kim Olsen, Deborah Snoonian and Nathaniel Corum at Meeting in the Mountains 2004



Robert Young and Nathaniel Corum present Red Feather at Meeting in the Mountains 2004

2004 Volvo for Life Awards



2004 Volvo S40



Grand opening of Roger Beasley Volvo in Austin.



John Belushi with RF board member Janet Smith.



Los Lobos at the Volvo Retailer Conference in Orlando.



Bao Xiong, Volvo for Life Award Winner, and her family with Robert and Anita Young



2004 marked another exciting year for the **second annual Volvo for life Awards**. The awards honor everyday heroes that go above and beyond the call of duty to help others. The first annual recipient of the Volvo for life Award in 2003, Red Feather Executive Director Robert Young received a \$50,000 donation to the charity of his choice. His choice was simple: Red Feather Development Group. Indicative of the award's title, Robert also receives a new Volvo every three years for the rest of his life.

Volvo continued its commitment to Red Feather this year as Robert joined a prestigious panel of judges in New York City's Time Square for the second annual gala to honor the 2004 award winners. Joining Robert on the panel of judges were Hank Aaron, Senator Bill Bradley, Caroline Kennedy, Maya Lin, Paul Newman, Dr. Sally Ride, and Eunice Kennedy Shriver. Jim Belushi hosted the event and Joss Stone and Toots and the Maytals were musical guests. For his assistance as a judge, Robert received another generous \$50,000 donation from Volvo to the charity of his choice. Once again, Robert's choice was easy; the donation went to Red Feather.

Volvo's values of conscience, care and character are evident in the awards that honor real people

who make extraordinary contributions in safety, quality of life and environment. This year's grand award winner, **Earnestine Russell**, founded **Baychester Youth Council** to address youth violence, drugs and crime in a poverty-stricken area of the northeast Bronx. Ms. Russell is the hero behind this organization that has improved the lives of thousands of high-risk children. Her work offers positive alternatives to what those children might have otherwise found on the streets. She offers referrals for health services, education services, and human services, and offers creative arts programs and a number of youth-oriented program events.

Volvo is also a proud sponsor of **Best Buddies**, a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities for one-to-one friendships and integrated employment. Members of Best Buddies are eligible for the Volvo for life Friendship Award.

Grand Opening of Roger Beasley Volvo

Volvo for life Award winners were invited to the Grand Opening of Roger Beasley Volvo in Austin, Texas. Owner David Stein has devoted his showroom to highlighting individuals and organizations that have been honored by the Volvo for life Award program. With over 500 guests and musical entertainment provide by Shawn Colvin, the opening allowed Robert Young the opportunity to engage attendees in Red Feather's endeavors on American Indian reservations.

Volvo Retailer Conference

Additionally, Robert was able to attend the Volvo Retailer Conference in Orlando, Florida. More than 1000 attendees from Volvo dealerships throughout the United States gathered to discuss the Volvo for life program. Jim Belushi provided the laughs as the evening's host, with musical entertainment by world renowned Los Lobos. Robert had the chance to address native housing concerns to a captivated audience and drew support for the *American Indian Sustainable Housing Initiative* from a number of individual dealers. **RF**

Special thanks to the following Volvo dealers for their support of the *American Indian Sustainable Housing Initiative*:

- **Borton Motors**
Delray Beach, Florida, Owner, Loren Sheffer
- **McDonald Automotive**
Littleton, Colorado, Owner, Douglas McDonald
- **Roger Beasley Volvo**
Austin, Texas, Owner, David Stein
- **Shepard Motors**
Oak Park, Illinois, Owner, Tony Scalzo
- **Underriner Motors**
Billings, Montana, Owner, Bill Underriner



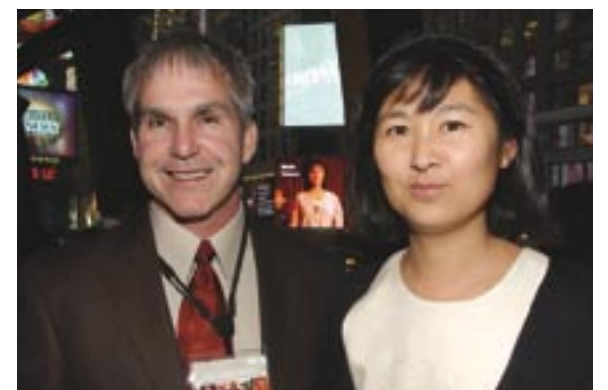
Eunice Shriver and Robert Young introduce one of the Volvo for Life nominees.



Robert Young and Shawn Colvin.



Caroline Kennedy and Robert Young.



Robert Young and Maya Lin.



The view west from the Hopi Third Mesa

Several years ago Mary, a Hopi tribal elder, and her grandchildren lost all of their possessions in a terrible house fire. Unfortunately, like many others on the reservation, Mary's home was not covered by insurance, and she was left without adequate housing. Mary lives in Hotevilla, which is in the Three Mesas area on the Hopi Reservation in north central Arizona. She has been a respected, hardworking member of her community for many years, and she fully understands the effects homelessness has had on many of her fellow tribal members. Mary and her grandchildren have never given up on the dream of replacing their home as well as bringing the possibility of homeownership to the hundreds of other Hopi tribal members who have no home of their own. Last year Mary contacted Red Feather with regard to her situation; she also stressed the fact that she was not the only one on the reservation in need of housing.

The Three Mesas villages are among the oldest, continuously inhabited communities in North America. Because of their remote location, the Hopi have been able to maintain their language and many of their cultural traditions, but homelessness and poverty are taking a toll on the community.

As a result of Mary's call to Red Feather, Robert Young and Community Design Director Nathaniel Corum met Mary in her village in March 2004 to discuss her situation and to visit her potential home site. Red Feather then determined a project date—August 28 through September 18, 2004—to build Mary a straw bale two-bedroom, one-bath home on the site.

In August, Robert and Nathaniel—along with Construction Program Director Michael Kelly—returned to Hotevilla to begin addressing the many preliminary build issues: land base clarification, project site determination, project utilities, and volunteer camp arrangements. The Three Mesas area poses distinct challenges to construction. Mary's site is literally on the bedrock of the mesa top and is far from utilities. In addition, the village wastewater system is not expected to be extended to Mary's land. For this reason, **Mary's home project has been postponed**, and work is now underway to locate a viable site for her home in proximity to the utility grid of Hotevilla village. To continue this process, Robert visited Hotevilla again this September to meet with tribal officers in advancing Mary's home build.

Red Feather continues to work with Mary, Hopi community officials, the USDA, and the larger Hopi community toward the identification of a build-able site and the provision of utilities to that site—specifically water, wastewater, and electricity. We will keep you up to date as this process continues. In the meantime we will work with community officers in Hotevilla until the crucial land base and utilities issues are resolved.

Typically, when Red Feather assists a family with the construction of a new home, the future homeowner purchases all of the needed materials for the structure. For tribal elders like Mary, however, this is typically too large an investment. With this project Red Feather has instituted a new funding strategy geared specifically towards providing elders with significantly lower mortgage amounts. Gordon Holiday of the Flagstaff USDA office has been very helpful in assisting in crafting such an elder-mortgage product making Mary's home mortgage a manageable and dependable reality.

To make up the difference between the elder-mortgage and the cost of construction, your help is needed. Together we have already raised the lion's share of the \$55,000 required to build Mary's home. Your continued support is appreciated. Hopefully, with a suitable site and the balance of the project funding in place, Red Feather will be in a position to build Mary's home as a part of the 2005 build season. When built, this home will serve as a shining example of straw bale construction for the Hopi Nation and will open the possibility of further home construction. We will notify all Red Feather members when the project date is determined for this build.

Please send your tax-deductible donation to the address below. We thank you in advance for your kindness and generosity. **RF**

Red Feather Development Group
Mary's Dream
P. O. Box 907
Bozeman, MT 59771-0907

A Message from the Hopi Elders

We are the ones we've been waiting for...

We have been telling the people that this is the eleventh hour

Now you must go back and tell the people that this is the hour

And there are things to be considered.

Where are you living?

What are you doing?

What are your relations?

Are you in the right relation?

Where is your water?

Know your garden.

It is time to speak your truth.

Create your community.

Be good to each other.

And do not look outside yourself for the leader.

This could be a good time!

There is a river flowing now very fast.

It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid.

They will try to hold onto the shore.

*They will feel they are being torn apart and they will
suffer greatly.*

Know the river has its destination.

*The elders say we must let go of the shore, and push off
and into the river,*

Keep our eyes open, and our head above the water.

See who is in there with you and celebrate.

At this time in history, we are to take nothing personally.

Least of all ourselves.

For the moment that we do,

Our spiritual growth and journey comes to a halt.

The time of the lone wolf is over,

Gather yourselves!

*Banish the word struggle from your attitude
and your vocabulary.*

All that you do now must be done in a sacred manner

And in celebration.

"We are the ones we've been waiting for . . ."

The Elders, Oraibi, Hopi Nation, Arizona

50 Questions, 500 Nations

Who is an American Indian?

There are millions of people with Indian ancestry, but that does not make them American Indians in the eyes of tribes or the federal government. The federal government considers someone American Indian if he or she belongs to a federally recognized tribe. Individual tribes have the exclusive right to determine their own membership. Tribal governments formally list their members who must meet specific criteria for enrollment. Some require a person to trace half of his or her lineage to the tribe, while others require only proof of descent.

Why are native peoples referred to as Indians?

Indigenous people in the U.S. were first referred to as Indians because Columbus believed he had reached the East Indies when he touched the shores of North America. Today, many Native people prefer to call themselves American Indian to avoid stereotypes associated with Indian.

Which is correct: American Indian or Native American?

Either term is generally acceptable, although individuals may have a preference. Native American was first used in the 1960s for American Indians and Alaska natives. Over time, Native American has been expanded to include all native peoples of the United States and its territories, including Hawaiian natives, Chamorros and American Samoans.

How many American Indians and Alaska natives are there?

There are 2.3 million, according to U.S. Census estimates for 1997. They represent roughly 1 percent of the overall population. Before Europeans arrived in North America, Native Americans may have numbered as many as 10 million. By the time the columnists began keeping records, the population was substantially less, ravaged by war, famine, forced labor, and disease.

Who are Native American families?

Nearly two-thirds are married couples, and 27 percent are families headed by a single woman. Birth rates are higher among American Indian families than the rest of the U.S., and there are more American Indian families living in poverty than other Americans. American Indian families' median income was \$22,000 in 1990, compared to \$35,000 for all U.S. families.

Are the numbers of American Indians declining today?

The population is young and growing steadily. Since July 1990, the American Indian and Alaska native

population increased 12 percent, while the non-native population grew 3 percent. The U.S. Census projects that the American Indian and Alaska population will reach 4.4 million by 2050.

What is a Tribe, what powers do the tribes, as nations, hold?

Tribes have a nationhood status, enjoying the powers of government, except for those expressly taken away by Congress or overruled by the Supreme Court. The U.S. recognizes the tribes' rights to form their own governments, determine membership, administer justice, raise taxes, establish businesses and exclude people from reservations. Tribal nations regulate Indian land, resources and the conduct of tribal members on Indian land.

What kind of governments do the tribes run?

Most tribal governments are organized democratically with elected leaders in highly developed political systems that often predate the arrival of European settlers. While similar in structure to American governments, the tribal governments are smaller, with far fewer resources.

What is the Tribal Council?

The tribe's governing body is usually referred to as the tribal council and is elected by adult members of the tribe. Heading the council is one elected chairperson, president, chief or governor who is the recognized leader. The council performs the legislative aspects of tribal government.

What is a reservation?

Indian reservations are areas of land reserved by the federal government as permanent tribal homelands. The U.S. established its reservation policy for American Indians in 1787. Today there are two kinds of reserved land that are well known: military and Indian.

Has the government tried to take away tribal land?

From the 1880s to the 1930s, Congress opened tribal lands for sale, with reservations losing two-thirds of their land base. In the 1950s, the Eisenhower administration adopted a "termination policy," closing many reservations while trying to assimilate Indians into white society.

What are the living conditions in Indian Country?

While health, education and economic conditions have improved in the last several years, native communities still lag behind the rest of the country in almost every category. Income levels are substantially lower in Indian country than the rest of the nation. Indians on reservations also are much more likely than the general population

to die from accidents, alcoholism, diabetes, pneumonia, suicide, homicide and tuberculosis.

What is tribal sovereignty?

Just like states, tribes have attributes of sovereignty—to govern their own territory and internal affairs. The status of tribes as self-governing nations is affirmed and upheld by treaties, case law and the Constitution. Legal scholars explain that tribes are inherently sovereign, meaning they do not trace their existence to the U.S.

Is sovereignty largely symbolic today?

There is nothing more important to Indian governments and people than sovereignty, tribal leaders say. It is a fundamental principle of the U.S. Constitution with increasing legal significance. Recently, tribes have worked to regain control of their economies and resources by asserting their rights as sovereign powers, sometimes in conflict with neighboring states.

Do Native Americans pay state or federal taxes?

They pay the same taxes as everyone else with the following exceptions: Native Americans employed on reservations do not pay state income taxes. American Indians living on trust land are free from local and state property taxes. Generally, state sales taxes are not levied on Indian transactions made on reservations. Indians do not pay federal income taxes on money earned from trust lands, such as fees received for grazing rights and oil drilling.

What are treaties?

From 1777 to 1871, U.S. relations with Indian nations were negotiated through legally binding agreements called treaties. These treaties, or agreements, between tribal governments and the U.S. transferred and created property rights as well as service obligations. There were 371 treaties signed with American Indian tribes, usually to gain rights to their land.

Why did the tribes agree to the treaties?

Faced with giving up their lands or losing their people to war, disease and a rising tide of settlers, the Indians entered into the agreements. The tribes view treaties as solemn moral obligations.

What is trust responsibility?

The federal Indian trust responsibility is considered one of the more important principles in federal Indian law. It is a legally enforceable fiduciary obligation by the U.S. to protect tribal lands, assets, resources and treaty rights. Supreme Court rulings suggest that

treaty responsibility entails legal as well as moral duties.

Are treaties still valid?

Although the government stopped entering into treaties with Indian tribes in 1871, the Constitution holds treaties as "the supreme law of the land." Once a treaty is signed, it stays in effect unless superseded by acts of Congress or other treaties.

Do treaties grant Native Americans special rights today?

In the Pacific Northwest, tribes are able to hunt, fish, and gather food as their ancestors did. On all reservations, tribes have access to free education and medical care provided by the federal government. These are examples of Indian rights based on treaties signed years ago.

Are treaties being challenged?

There are many efforts in modern times to dilute and challenge treaty rights. Most recently, bills have been introduced in Congress that seeks to limit the ability of tribes to govern themselves and to give authority to states over the tribes. No major changes have been enacted, however.

What does the Bureau of Indian Affairs do?

The bureau is the principal federal agency working with tribes. Its job is to provide services and/or funds for services to benefit tribal members. Unlike the 1800s when the bureau was in the War Department, the bureau's stated goal is to help tribes with self-determination. Almost 100 percent of its employees are tribal members.

What other federal offices work with tribes?

Just about all federal agencies work with Indian tribes. The Health and Human Services Department, for example, runs Indian Health Services, which provides medical care on or near reservations. The Justice Department has Office of Tribal Justice, which coordinates law enforcement in Indian country.

Do American Indians have the right to hold elective office?

Indians have the same rights as all citizens and have held most levels of elective office. Charles Curtis, a member of the Kaw tribe, was vice president under Herbert Hoover. U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell is a member of the Northern Cheyenne tribe. Campbell also served three terms in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Do Native Americans serve in the U.S. armed forces?

Native Americans have fought in all American wars since the Revolution, and one out of four Indian

men is a U.S. military veteran. Their patriotism in World War I led Congress to pass the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. In World War II, Navajo Marines used their language as a code to transmit messages; it was the only code to transmit messages; it was the only code the enemy failed to break.

Who regulates Indian casinos?

The National Gaming Commission, established by Congress, oversees bingo operations, casinos and certain other types of gambling on tribal land. It sets rules for licensing, reviews early audits, and approves ordinances that tribes develop to run gaming operations. The U.S. Departments of Treasury, Justice and Interior have authority over aspects of Indian gaming. Indian nations, as well, have their own gaming commissions, tribal police forces and court systems.

Are individual tribes getting rich from casinos?

While gaming has helped tribes such as the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa in Michigan stem poverty, Indians are the nation's poorest population. They rank at the bottom of most every social and economic measure.

What is a tribal school?

Since the early 1800s, the Bureau of Indian Affairs assumed responsibility for the education of children on reservations through Indian schools. In 1978, the federal government began turning over school control to the tribes, while still providing oversight and funding. Today the bureau funds or operates 187 schools with 50,000 students.

How many American Indians are high school graduates?

In 1990, 66 percent of American Indians who were at least 25 years old were high school graduates, according to the U.S. Census. The national figure is 75%.

What is a tribal college?

Thirty tribal colleges were developed over the past 25 years to meet the unusual educational needs of students on reservations, often located in remote areas under-served by other post-secondary schools. Most of the colleges are two-year schools that focus on local economic development and work-force training.

How do graduation rates for American Indians compare with the general population?

College graduation rates are lower for American Indians than any other minority group, according to the American Indian Higher Education Consortium. Only 30 percent of American Indian students completed

a bachelor's degree within six years of enrolling, compared with 54 percent of all students.

Do Native Americans get free college education?

While some tribes offer stipends of scholarships to members, Native Americans as a group do not receive a free college education. But many students qualify for federal help and other needs-based aid, because they meet poverty guidelines for all students. Eighty-five percent of students at tribal colleges live in poverty.

Do American Indians speak their own language?

The vast majority of Indians speak English as their main language, though some know their native language as well. When Europeans first arrived here, about 350 Indian languages were spoken.

How many American Indian languages are still spoken?

The precise number is unknown. It is estimated that about 200 languages are spoken. Native American languages are classified geographically rather than linguistically, since they do not belong to a single linguistic family, as the Indo-European languages do.

Were there written Indian languages?

Before European settlement in North America, Indian writing was in pictographs, such as the birch bark scrolls inscribed by the Ojibwa. Exposure to written European languages, including their direct study, resulted in several groups developing their own forms of writing.

Are American Indian languages continuing to disappear?

Yes. More than a third are spoken only by elders and may not survive to the next generation, according to "The Handbook of North American Indians: Language." Some spoken languages are known to just two or three speakers.

What is being done to preserve American Indian languages?

Tribes have written language books and have created teaching tools for Indian schools. Some languages are taught in universities. In cases where the number of speakers has dwindled, language may ultimately die out.

Is there an American Indian Religion?

Many Native Americans believe in a Great Spirit that reveals itself through nature and influences all life. Also, indigenous religions are filled with lesser spirits that inhabit the everyday world. In the 19th century, Native Americans lost many of their

religious customs as colonists forced them to convert to Christianity, sent their children to mission schools, and banned some of their ceremonies.

Are Native Americans free to practice their religion?

Until the 1930s, the U.S. tried to ban Native American religious rituals, including the Ghost Dance, Sun Dance, and peyote cult. In 1978, Congress passed the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, an official expression of spirituality. Many religious practices once considered on the verge of disappearing were revived. These include pipe ceremonials, sweat lodges, vision quests and Sun Dances.

What is a sweat lodge?

Much like a sauna, sweat lodges are heated by fire or by pouring water over hot stones. Sweat lodges are used by some Native Americans to induce sweating for medicinal and spiritual purposes.

What is a vision quest?

In some traditional native religions, Indian boys performed certain rituals, including meditation and fasting, in order to receive a vision to guide them into manhood and for the rest of their lives. Sometimes they separated from the tribe and entered into the wilderness to seek a guardian spirit.

Why is the eagle feather significant to American Indians?

Certain symbols, including the eagle feather, seem to be universal in their importance to the various tribes. The eagle is revered for its strength, size and intelligence. Its feathers are used in religious ceremonies.

How do Native Americans obtain the feathers of a protected bird like the eagle?

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administers a program that makes the feathers available to Indian religious practitioners. The feathers are from eagles that die naturally or by accident.

What is a medicine bundle?

It is a collection of objects believed to heal disease and ward off enemies. Traditionally, individuals, households and villages kept medicine bundles for self-protection. The bundles might contain herbs, stone, pollen, horns, bone, teeth, and feathers.

Why do Native Americans object to the use of Indian symbols, like feathers and face paint, in U.S. sports?

Native Americans believe the use of Indian symbols by sports teams and fans trivializes their way of life. For example, some Native Americans take offense when fans paint their faces at football games. In traditional native cultures, face-painting is reserved for sacred ceremonies that include weddings and funerals.

What is a powwow?

Powwow is derived from the Narragansett word for shaman. It is a celebration and social gathering, honoring sacred Indian traditions through dancing, drumming, singing, and gathering of people. Powwows may be held to honor an individual or for a special occasion. Most commonly, the powwow is a social event.

Are non-Natives welcome at powwows?

There are ceremonial powwows that are closed to non-tribal members, but everyone is welcome at a publicized powwow.

What are teepees?

The teepee, or tipi, was a dwelling used by nomadic Plains tribes. Made from buffalo hides, it was stretched over a cone formed by poles, which made it strong and easy to move. Similar to the teepee, the wickiup was used by tribes in the south. It was made from brush secured over arched poles. The wigwam of the eastern woodlands was a domed or conical frame covered with bark or mats. The traditional dwellings are no longer used as shelters.

Why do American Indians object to the commercial use of the Crazy Horse name?

Many Indians believe that using Crazy Horse to sell malt liquor exploits Indians and distorts the image of a revered leader. Crazy Horse was the Sioux leader who militarily resisted the encroachment of whites in the Black Hills of South Dakota and joined Sitting Bull in the defeat of Gen. George A. Custer at Little Bighorn in 1876. Crazy Horse was unarmed when he was stabbed to death, while being held at a federal prison camp.

How can a person trace his/her Indian history?

The first step to basic genealogical research is to obtain specific information on ancestors' names, birth dates, marriages and deaths, and places where they lived. The next step is to find out if ancestors are on official tribal rolls. For information, write to the national Archives and Records Administration, Natural Resources Branch, Civil Archives Division, 8th and Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20408. After determining tribal heritage, individuals should contact individual tribes to learn about membership. Tribes have the final determination on who qualifies.

The above questions and answers originate from **100 Questions, 500 Nations** (third edition), a joint publication of Knight Ridder, the Native American Journalist Association and The Wichita Eagle.



Drum circle at Turtle Mountain

In the Oneida tradition, ho ya na is ‘to be noble’—and the definition of ‘being noble’ is to give to those who have less.

—Dr. Norbert Hill, Oneida

Dr. Norbert Hill’s words ring true; the essence of nobility is to give to those less fortunate. At every Red Feather project, our volunteers do just that through sweat invested in each straw bale stacked and with every swipe of the hawk and trowel. We at Red Feather recognize our volunteers as far more than capital in building affordable straw bale homes on American Indian reservations. We see strength, honor, balance and nobility. We see the *American Indian Sustainable Housing Initiative* changing lives. To those of you who have offered your resources, your labor, your conversation, or your laughter to any Red Feather project, we thank you.

Volunteer Stacie Laducer of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa on the Red Feather volunteer experience:

Volunteering for Red Feather Development Group is a subtle way of making a difference in another person’s life not limited to the family whose home you are working on, but including volunteers and other tribal members who interact at the build site. To see people on the reservation from Canada, Australia, Great Britain and from all over the United States overwhelms you with, to say it simply, hope.

To walk onto a Red Feather straw bale build and to see so many volunteers spending their time and

Photo by Skip Baumhower | www.baumhower.com

Calling the Herd: ho ya na

effort working to make a difference is amazing. You begin to feel as though people do care about issues on Native American reservations. Relationships develop while working hand-in-hand with others; you meet a Montana

contractor who believes that everyone should be treated equally—that environmental consciousness applies to construction too; you hold the ladder for a guy from New Jersey who fills your heart with warmth because his conversations and goals for the future are truly sincere. You develop friendships and maybe even a new outlook on life.

Our work has just begun

Thousands of American Indians remain homeless and thousands more live in inadequate, substandard housing—similar circumstances to those that prompted Executive Director Robert Young to change the course of his life ten years ago. In that time, Red Feather Development Group has grown from a one-man operation to an organization with over 2000 member volunteers, two trailers full of tools and equipment, and five full-time employees. Nearly 45 reservation projects and countless community meetings and construction seminars later, we still have our work cut out for us. Because our work doesn’t stop when the building season does, we need your continued support. Only then can we reach all the tribes and individuals that are actively seeking Red Feather’s assistance.

Membership and what it means

Beginning last spring, we decided to engage volunteers in the American Indian Sustainable Housing Initiative through membership. One of the best ways that you can help out is to become a Red Feather member. Your membership contributions make the difference—more than 75 cents of every dollar you donate goes directly towards the Initiative through

education, training and construction on the reservation. Through membership you are eligible to volunteer at a straw bale home project. You will also receive our bi-annual newsletter *Building One House*. The newsletter enables us to spread the word about what is happening both with Red Feather and Indian country. When you, in turn, tell your neighbor, co-worker, or friend about Red Feather or about conditions on the reservation, you spread the word even further.

Only with vital member support can Red Feather accomplish its mission: to educate and empower American Indians to strengthen their communities. As our members increase, so too do the numbers of American Indian communities Red Feather can reach. When the building season ends, the staff at Red Feather continues its work with tribal nations, housing authorities, individuals and non-profit groups. Collaborative meetings, community development seminars, and straw bale clinics take place during the winter. Materials purchases, fundraising, coalition building, project evaluation, planning and design all occur when the weather turns cold.

Ho ya na is to be noble; to be noble is to give. Please take this moment to remember those in need. Together we can begin to balance the scales of history and to initiate systemic change with American Indian communities. Together we can begin a new cycle that starts at home: people helping people.

*Please take the time today to support American Indian community development education and the construction of much needed homes on the reservation, as well as the year-round operations that make those projects possible. Please renew your membership by filling out the enclosed envelope, but don’t stop there. Tell a friend about Red Feather; bring Red Feather up in conversation over lunch; round up a couple of new members in an effort that goes beyond our own circles and spirals out in new responsibility for all us, especially those who need our help the most. **RF***



The Smithsonian’s NMAI.



A Tribute to Perserverance The Opening of the National Museum of the American Indian

Climbing the 120-foot-high entrance of the National Museum was like walking to the top of a sacred kiva. A round skylight at the top of what they call the Potomac gave a glimpse to the sky offering light to the symbol of the four directions located on the floor of the museum’s entrance. In true native fashion, the building faces east to catch the rising sun and is a stark contrast to the westward facing capitol, which has often handed down destructive legislation aimed at destroying native resistance to colonization.

It is truly a native space. No sharp edges or angles, only soft flowing walls, which lead you to the over 8,000 objects on display for the museum’s opening. The entire museum was designed and built in consultation with native people from over 300 communities in the United States, Canada and Latin America. The surrounding landscape, which occupies almost 75 percent of the total site, consists of four distinct habitats indigenous to the Washington, DC area. More than 16 years in the making, the museum is the first of its kind and is dedicated to exhibit and present native people from their point of view.

Displays of gold figurines dating back to 1490 covered the walls and led to the display of weapons that native people found they had few defenses against. This tragic and often brutal past did not overwhelm the museum. If anything, the museum makes the statement that native people are still here and in greater numbers than ever. Three different areas confirm this statement in beautiful fashion – “Our Universes,” “Our Lives” and

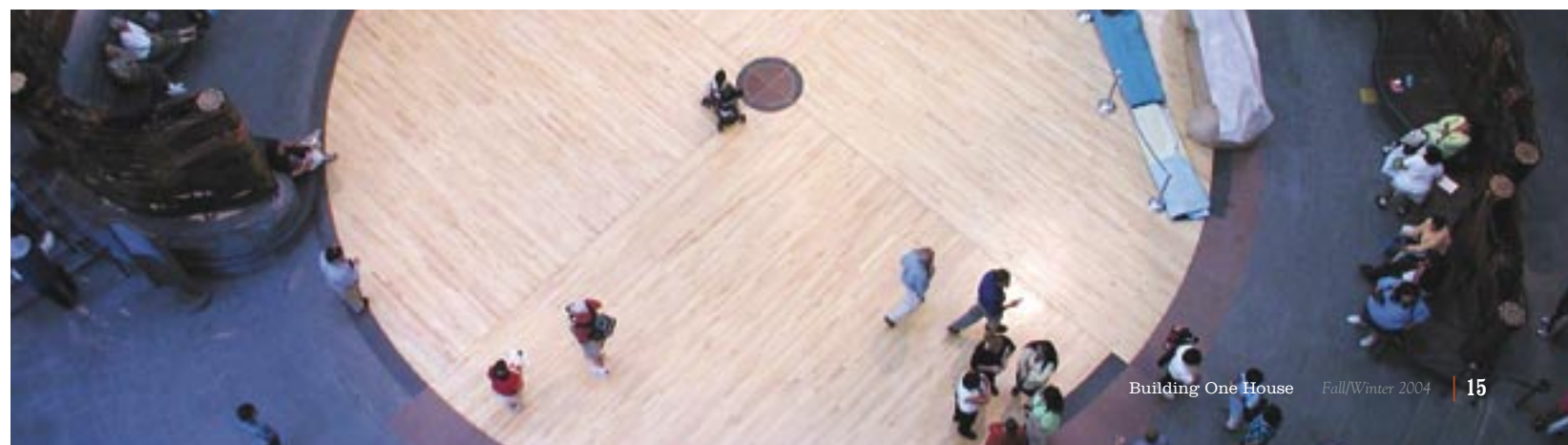
“Our Peoples” are complimented by a large exhibit of contemporary art and design. The museum also confronts the tumultuous 1960s and 1970s, which gave birth to the American Indian Movement (AIM).

Outside, thousands of tribal members representing more than 400 tribes gathered in full regalia to join the procession that started at the Smithsonian Castle. The march for national recognition lasted more than two hours before ending at the site of the opening ceremony near the steps of the capitol. You could see the pride in all their faces as Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell declared, “The sacred hoop has been restored. The circle is complete...The reemergence of the native people has come true.”

Native Hawaiians were also a large part of the six-day free festival with a traditional canoe-building exhibit inside the museum’s entrance and traditional Hawaiian dancers and story tellers entertaining the enormous crowd, which had gathered on the mall to celebrate this historic event.

Founder and director of the National Museum of the American Indian, Rick West, and all his staff should take great pride in their monumental effort to make this magnificent dream a reality and for all the pride and delight they have brought to millions of native people. The opening affirms our belief at Red Feather that we all have much to gain by including native voices in our understanding of this country, its people, and its past, present and future. **RF**

Photo of the “Potomac’s” symbol of the four directions from the top floor.





Priceless Support

from Bosch Power Tools

Photos by Skip Baumhower | www.baumhower.com

Every contractor working in extreme conditions has dreamt of augmenting their equipment inventory with new, high quality and reliable tools. Few could ever imagine a donation of the sort Red Feather received from Bosch Power Tools in May. Picture, if you will, pallets full of tools rolling off the back of a truck and landing in your warehouse. We were all surprised, elated, and grateful. A child-like giddiness ran through the office the day the Bosch Power Tool donation arrived at our warehouse.

We had seen it on paper, but nothing could have prepared us for a delivery of this magnitude. We spent the next four hours delicately tearing through packages and inventorying a veritable cornucopia of brand new power tools and accessories worth almost \$20,000! Routers, cordless drills, table saws, miter saws, sanders...all of the essential tools were well represented, accompanied by a vast array of specialty power tools and accessories. To this day, backordered items continue to arrive at our office and are accepted with humble gratitude.

To simply say "Thank You, Bosch" is likened to digging a foundation with a spoon: woefully inadequate. Our mission now, as always, is to use these tools along with thoughtful and determined labor to create the best homes that we can for native families and communities who are in great need. The "Thank You" follows on the faces of happy, healthy and secure tribal families and elders, enjoying the countless benefits provided by a well built home.

Bosch has made a significant contribution to our program in years past and continues to shine as one of our most valuable sponsors. To learn more about Bosch, please visit their web site at www.boschtools.com and be sure to look for Bosch products when shopping for tools. **RF**

Special thanks go to . . .

Red Feather's corporate sponsors

including Bosch, the Leaf and Bean, ExOfficio, Patagonia, PepsiCo, Red Feather Snowshoes, Savage Color, and Stanley Tools. Their generosity supports Red Feather's *American Indian Sustainable Housing Initiative* and allows staff and volunteers to experience some of the finest products available. Together with our members they make Red Feather's work possible. **RF**

Photo by Skip Baumhower | www.baumhower.com



Red Feather Volunteers at the TMCC ERC, July 2004



This newsletter would not be possible without the generous support and help of **Mark Jensen** and Savage Color (888) 889-0889, and **Matt Spangler** at Alespa Design (206) 937-2776, or matt@alespadesign.com.



BOSCH





Welcome Aboard Holly Zadra

Development Director

In early 2004, Holly Zadra came to Red Feather already interested in sustainable housing through her work at Montana State University. She volunteered her grant writing skills to Red Feather in order to get involved and to learn more about us. Initiating an issue of Bozeman’s Tributary Magazine devoted to sustainable building, Holly wrote a feature story about Red Feather and Sage Mountain Center and stimulated the editor’s interest in highlighting Red Feather Community Design Director Nathaniel Corum in that issue.

Holly’s experience in Indian country began with the Yellowstone National Art Trust as the program director for the Cradleboards, Dolls, and Stories artists’ residencies. The Cradleboards program celebrates traditional and contemporary Crow cradleboards, doll making and story telling with elementary school children. For Holly, assisting tribal members in their effort to preserve and pass on traditions and culture to the next generation is critical to understanding Montana, its people and its precious environment. She also sees great importance in diverse cultures learning from one another through positive interaction like that afforded by the Cradleboards program.

Holly graduated magna cum laude from the University of Montana and then further developed her writing and communication skills as a graduate student at the Bread Loaf School of English. She assists Montana State University’s civil engineering students with their technical writing and research on green construction, and evaluates senior capstone construction management presentations. In her spare time, Holly is a free-lance writer, which includes grant work for the Bozeman school district and writing for community newspapers and magazines.

After a long day of critical thinking, creative writing, and fielding questions, Holly goes home to her husband, Eric, and sons, River and Ari. The single most important part of her life, Holly’s family reminds her of what every person deserves: love, support and a healthy and safe home. And with all of this going on, Holly also makes time to share a laugh, nurture friendships, paint every door in her house a different color and occasionally, eat some chocolate.

We are truly grateful for what Holly has already brought to Red Feather’s housing initiative, and we are honored to have her on our staff. **RF**

Welcome Aboard Stacie Laducer

Volunteer/Member Coordinator

Stacie Laducer joined the Red Feather staff this August as Volunteer/Member Coordinator. Stacie was instrumental in procuring grants and bringing Red Feather to her home—the Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota—to hold community meetings that would eventually lead to this summer’s construction of the Environmental Research Center with the Turtle Mountain Community College.

Stacie, a member of Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, received a Bachelor of Science in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology from the University of North Dakota (UND)-Grand Forks. She then went on to work for Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC) in Belcourt, North Dakota, as Director of the USDA Education Equity Grant where she worked to develop courses in the fields of agriculture and environmental science. While at TMCC she applied for and received a USDA Community Facilities Grant for \$200,000 towards the construction of a straw bale building to be used as a classroom and home model for the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa—see Summer 2004 Project Update.

Stacie was born on the Turtle Mountain Reservation and lived there until she graduated from Belcourt High School in 1996. She then enrolled at the University of North Dakota where her work included a biomass/coal energy project with the UND Energy and Environmental Research Center. Working on such projects Laducer explains that she, “began to see the opportunities for the reservation.”

Upon commencement, Stacie returned to the Turtle Mountains to take a job at Turtle Mountain Community College as an Administrative Assistant—a post which involved coordination of an EPA Brownfields grant. Her work at TMCC expanded from there: Stacie became the primary contact for TMCC’s wind energy project—an \$800,000.00 Department of Energy endeavor to construct a 660kW turbine on a 65-meter mast to power TMCC facilities. She also helped to coordinate youth summer programs with groups including Native Waters (of Bozeman), North Dakota Game & Fish, and the USDA.

During her time at TMCC, Stacie began her involvement with Red Feather Development Group. She first learned of the American Indian Sustainable Housing Initiative while doing internet-based research on straw bale construction. Stacie then emailed Robert Young who, in turn, invited her to the Crow Nation Straw Bale Study Hall build. Stacie—along with two other volunteers from the Turtle Mountain community—joined Red Feather staff and volunteers in Crow Agency, Montana, to help construct the Study Hall and learn more about straw bale construction. Stacie remembers that she was, “struck by the hardworking attitudes of the non-native Red Feather volunteers” and thought that the build process was, “something Turtle Mountain needs to see—that people



Photos by Skip Baumhower | www.baumhower.com



Part of Stacie’s work on the ERC project involved securing funding to enable four TMCC Construction Technology students and their supervisor to be involved in the project on a daily basis. The students participated in all phases of the ERC’s construction and came away with a hands-on understanding of many green-building technologies including straw bale construction. Pictured are: (starting with back row, left to right) Jeff Grant (student), Nathaniel Corum (Red Feather’s Community Design Director), David LeDoux (student), Jacob Laducer (student), Mike Martin (student), <front row> Luke Baker (TMCC construction instructor, in red shirt), Stacie Laducer (in wheelbarrow), and Robert Young (Founder & Executive Director of Red Feather Development Group).

want to work with reservation communities to build homes and a better environment.”

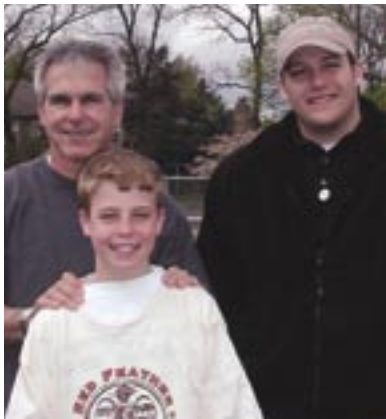
If Red Feather members and volunteers have questions about membership, volunteer applications, participation agreements, or other general build-related information, they now have a well-informed source at the Red Feather office in Bozeman. Stacie looks forward to sharing the wonderful Red Feather build experience with members and volunteers on many future projects. **RF**



Walk for Red Feather participants.

Boy Spearheads Walk for Red Feather

Reprinted with permission from Jessica Young, Daily Herald



Connor Byrne will spend the next few days catching turtles in a neighborhood pond. Not an unusual thing for a 12-year-old Naperville boy to be doing with his spare time, right?

Under normal circumstances it wouldn't be, but Connor's no normal boy. The turtle collecting is just another one of his brainstorms as part of an extensive community service project he has organized for the second time.

Thanks to Connor, the five-lap Walk for Red Feather Development Group, complete with a turtle race, will be held from 10 a.m. to noon Sunday at the Benet Academy track, 2200 Maple Ave., Lisle.

The walk will benefit Red Feather, a not-for-profit organization that helps build houses and develop communities among Native American reservations primarily in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming.

"We just wanted to help Indians because a lot of them don't live so well," Connor said. "Plus, they were here first and got their land taken away and now a lot of them don't even have houses to live in."

His mother, Laurie Byrne, said Connor decided to raise money for Red Feather after seeing the executive director, Robert Young, honored on "Oprah" two years ago for the organization's work. As part of Ss. Peter and Paul School requirements, every student must complete 10 hours of community service a year, so Connor made a call to Young and pitched his idea for a walkathon.

"It was pretty remarkable because he was 10 at the time," Young said. "His idea embodied everything the organization tries to promote."

"Things are so often out of sight, out of mind, so having a walk for kids in a more affluent, suburban community takes issues that are critical in remote areas and brings attention to them," he said. "We didn't even hold his hand with anything, which is unbelievable."

Connor planned and promoted the walk that was held two years ago and raised \$7,800 for Red Feather from sponsors. Around 200 people participated.

Laurie said he planned to make the walk an annual event, but he wasn't successful in finding a track last year, so he decided to think about alternatives for this year. He has recruited his 11-year-old brother, Riley, to help with the fund-raiser.

"It's nice to have his help," Connor said. "He's not annoying when we're doing the walk, even though he's annoying in other times."

He said they have worked hard to get the word out this year. Connor and his brother have gotten Belagio to cater the walk, passed out fliers in downtown Chicago, made five presentations about Native Americans and Red Feather to local schools, and are working on securing business sponsors.

"They've gone to town," she said. "Organizations plan these things a year in advance, and they're like, 'We'll get everything done if we work really hard for three weeks.' It's cute."

Laurie said the family plans on continuing to raise funds for Red Feather until her kids graduate from grammar school. The goal is to collect \$40,000 by that time, enough to build an entire home on a reservation.

"I'm an optimist: I think they'll get there," Young said. "They have the right mindset because it's one house at a time. They don't think they can house every homeless person on the reservation and neither does Red Feather. But the point is that they can make a difference." Young met Connor when he was invited to help with a building project in Montana two summers ago.



Carmen Scalzo of Shepherd Motors, Janet Smith and Robert Young showcase a new 2004 Volvo XC90 during the walk.

"I poured cement over some straw stuff, did some chores, washed some stuff up, saw some horses and got to meet real Indians," Connor said. "It's sad cause they live in shacks."

He also got to meet Pearl Jam guitarist Stone Gossard, who is on the board of directors for Red Feather.

"He's such a nice guy," Connor said. "He gave me free tickets to a show and I got to see the band's tour bus. We tried to get him to come to the walk Sunday, but he's got a busy schedule."

Young, however, will be making the trek from Montana to Naperville to attend the walk.

"There's lots of pressure for Connor and Riley because Robert will be there and they want things to run smoothly," Laurie said.

Young said he is the person who should be feeling nervous: "I'm the one who has to come stand next to these young Naperville stars who are saving the world at the same age I was wasting time fishing."

Then again, Connor and his brother aren't opposed to playing in the pond every once in a while.

"We're gonna get the turtles and we've got this hand wash stuff so we don't get all dirty and they have to stay overnight at my sister's friend's house 'cause they know how to take care of turtles," he said. "We're going to name all of them and people at the race can bet on which one will go around the track first. We'll put them back into the wild after that, of course." **RF**

Connor Byrne and his mom, Laurie, prepare for the walk.



Above and Beyond Volunteer Highlights

Photos by Skip Baumhower | www.baumhower.com



Luke Baker

Luke is a native of Belcourt, North Dakota, the site of our most recent build, and proved to be an invaluable member of the volunteer team. Luke teaches Construction Studies at the Turtle Mountain Community College, where he works with as many as 28 eager students wanting to learn everything from surveying to cabinetmaking. He also owns and operates a seamless gutter company, on top of traveling across the West with his family in support of his son's rodeo competitions. Luke was generous to take most of the summer, a time he usually has off as a teacher, to volunteer his time, tools, and knowledge toward the Environmental Research Center. Even with an extensive building background, straw bale was new to Luke, who managed to work hand-in-hand with his students and volunteers while bringing patience and balance to a sometimes hectic jobsite. During the entire project, Luke was always there to provide help, advice, and equipment on the job and invited many volunteers to sample his people's traditional ways when the day's work was through. We feel lucky to have met Luke and thank him for his friendship and selfless contribution to the American Indian Sustainable Housing Initiative.



Brad Amelino

Brad, a new member of the herd and first-time volunteer, hails from Southern California and has become a valuable member bringing a diverse collection of practical skills to the build. In the past, Brad has worked all phases of construction, and his most recent job took him around the world installing satellite stations. After years of construction-related work, Brad learned about Red Feather through a mutual friendship and decided to apply his skills for a cause that is close to his heart. As reliable as June snow in Montana, Brad was there to help Red Feather no matter what the call to duty. He helped out Red Feather months before our summer build by organizing the tool and kitchen trailers, and hung in for days at the end of the build with his dogged assistance. Even though many forms of wildlife have been mending broken hearts since Brad's snoring swan song left North Dakota, rest assured, he will be back.



Photo by Vaughan Woodruff

Liz Swallow

Liz, was a volunteer in 1999 on the construction of her aunt's straw bale home and has been a welcomed face ever since. Liz was born and raised in Red Shirt Table, not far from her first build site on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, where she now works as a teaching assistant for the special education program at Red Shirt School. Liz and her sister also produce handmade soaps under the name Bad Land Lilies. A tireless volunteer capable of carrying over-filled coffee mugs, Liz can be found on most any task—from wall-raisings to stucco-application—with an air of confident determination coolly mixed with an infectious laid back attitude. Because Liz experiences conditions on the reservation everyday, she offers a unique and powerful insight into the Red Feather approach with tribal communities. We feel very lucky to have Liz as a friend, a respected advisor, and a hard-working volunteer. We look forward to working with her for years to come. To find out more about Bad Land Lilies and the products they make, please email Liz at wojapi00@aol.com.



Suzanne Wanamueler

Suzanne, known affectionately as Zan, learned about Red Feather from a story in Biography magazine and decided the opportunity was right to put her vast skill base and remarkable energy to work for an issue that is close to her heart. Zan travels to the builds from Champaign, Illinois, and has been a volunteer since 2000. With experience in the trades and an excellent aptitude for new techniques, Zan puts all she has into every task to get things done around the site. Upon returning to Champaign, Zan continues to work hard for Red Feather by spreading the word and engaging donors in Red Feather's American Indian Sustainable Housing Initiative. Whether it's facilitating as a wall captain on a rainy day or wheeling barrels full of stucco mix in 100-degree heat, Zan is always first in line. We thank her for all her amazing work, both on the build and at home, and we aspire to keep up with her next year!



Marilynn Cochran

Marilynn first volunteered in 2002 on the Crow Agency straw bale study hall project where it became clear she would be an invaluable volunteer asset for years to come. A veteran carpenter with previous straw bale building experience, Marilynn comes to us from Missoula, Montana, where she was born and currently lives and works furthering her skills in the art of carpentry. As a former business owner and building mentor, Marilynn shines when it comes to working side-by-side with community members and volunteers eager to learn the trades. She is an excellent teacher who demonstrates with patience and an infectious smile, capable of teaching interior trim techniques and the nuances of bale construction to anyone interested. We feel very lucky to have Marilynn's expertise and positive energy on every build, and we hope to see her smiling face and rustic Saab well into the future.



Skip Baumhower

Skip has been a presence on so many builds, nobody seems to know when he came along. Operating a thriving photography business in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Skip travels a long way to Red Feather project sites to document amazing transformations of both buildings and people over a three-week period. What we are left with are unique donations of talent, a series of powerful images numbering in the thousands. Skips images have been critical in demonstrating the work of the American Indian Sustainable Housing Initiative. Thanks to Skip, the history of Red Feather is easily seen in the vast collection of incredible images he has produced for our organization over the years, making publications like *Building One House: A Handbook for Straw Bale Construction* and our bi-annual newsletters glow with relevant images. Skip's work for Red Feather has also been seen in numerous Associated Press articles, *Stanford Magazine*, *Dwell* magazine and others. Our thanks go out to Skip for all those years of fabulous photography and awkward moments striking a pose. For more information on Skip's work and the services he offers, check out his website at www.baumhower.com.

Quilts^{to take} long journey to Montana



Franklin Borough Elementary School Collects 2000 Books for American Indian Children

A very special thanks goes to the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) students of Franklin Borough Elementary School in Franklin, New Jersey, for their book drive for Red Feather. More than 2000 children's books have been generously donated through the conscientious efforts of 10 eighth grade students. One thousand books went to a school on Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota and

the remaining thousand books will go to a reservation school in Montana. Initiated when Red Feather Executive Director Robert Young appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show, the Franklin Honor Society students collected the books to be shipped out West. The hitch came when they remembered the costs of shipping. So the students collected "Pennies for Postage" and within six months had collected nearly

\$700 in pennies that covered shipping expenses to South Dakota and Montana. The efforts of these students, the staff at Franklin Elementary, School Counselor and NJHS Advisor Suzanne Crisman and every individual that donated the thoughtful gift of books to American Indian schools will be warmly remembered. Thanks kids! **RF**



Johnnie Harris (fourth from left) with family and Robert Young.



Photos by Red Feather staff

Matts Myhrman & Judy Knox Straw Bale Pioneers & Red Feather Supporters



Pictured top – left to right: Nathaniel Conam, Matts Myhrman, Robert Young and Mike Kelly. Pictured at bottom is Judy Knox.

Years before Matts Myhrman co-authored *Build it With Bales* with Steve MacDonald, long before he founded and began publishing *The Last Straw Journal* with Judy Knox, and well before anything like a straw bale construction renaissance was sweeping across the nation and around the world, he and Knox were working together in Tucson developing micro-enterprise loan programs in Latin America.

After the couple uncovered the century-old, straw bale technology developed by Nebraska settlers and improved and modernized the straw bale construction process, the New York Times and the network news arrived on their doorstep and they found themselves at the vanguard of a strawbale movement that began some 15 years ago and continues growing.

Today Matts and Judy are still very much involved with social justice work in a number of countries as well as within tribal nations. These days the two number among the foremost experts in

straw bale construction and continue to share their deep knowledge of straw bale building as they operate Out on Bale (un)Ltd, an international straw bale education and resource service in Tucson, Arizona.

As a part of their ongoing education and outreach work, Matts and Judy have helped Red Feather on several builds—where they helped in myriad ways on site and led straw bale education seminars. In the off-season Judy and Matts have also been incredibly helpful and supportive of the Red Feather endeavor by sharing their wealth of ideas relating to community building and straw bale construction. We are honored and grateful to enjoy such a close collaboration with these notable straw bale pioneers and look forward to their continued involvement with Red Feather as we work together with tribal communities in the American West. **RF**

Portions of the preceding article are reprinted here with permission from DESIGNER/builder magazine—www.designerbuildermagazine.

Johnnie Harris enjoys quilting. “Oh I love it, I love it, I do love it,” she says with a laugh that always seems ready to break out. “I’ve done piece quilts all my life,” she says. “I’m like quilting the way I am about fishing. When I’m fishing I don’t have a worry in the world. And when I’m sitting in there at that sewing machine, I don’t have a worry.” She laughs again.

It’s a good thing she likes quilting. Over the last few months she has been making quilts night and day, at a pace that surprises even her. I’ve got 151 made, she says. She thought she was about done, and someone showed up with some more material. Her laugh erupts again. “I’m going to make about five or six more, and then I have four baby quilts I’ve still got to make. Then I’m going to take a little break.” When asked why she’s making all those quilts, she points to her inspiration. That man right there, she says, calling attention to an open Guideposts Magazine on the table. Pictured is a man named Robert Young, who quit his profession to build homes on Indian reservations, operating out of Bozeman, Montana.

He tells his story in an article entitled, “A House For Katherine Red Feather”. Harris was touched. “I read that story about what he was doing, and I called him,” she says. “I told him how I admired what he

was doing. I also told him I was a quilter, and I’m retired from Wal-Mart. And he said something they desperately need is quilts.” That did it as far as Harris was concerned. “I said, well, you’ll get them. I had all kinds of fabrics here (given by friends and relatives). And I tell you, I’ve worn out two sewing machines on these quilts. I put in six days a week. I’d get up at about 4:30 or 5 o’clock and start sewing. Frank (her husband) would get up and fix breakfast and I’d get up from the sewing machine and eat breakfast. He’d clean up the kitchen and I’d go back to the sewing machine until late at night.”

The sewing machine she is currently using is her daughter’s, Harris explains, laughing yet again. “I went to my daughter’s and got her machine, and she said, Mama, are you going to wear mine out, too? And I said, Honey, I hope not. I’ve only got about eight or 10 more to make.” The laughter stops when she talks about the need. “To say that places like Montana and South Dakota get cold in the winter may sound obvious, but it takes on a different meaning when that cold is linked to people living there in grinding poverty. He says it can get 60 below (zero F),” says Harris. “In some places whole families live in old cars.”

Harris has made quilts of all size, from baby and lap quilts up to queen size. And

she’s received some help, and not just from people bringing her material. She works with The Caring Touch, a group of ladies at First Baptist Church in Forrest City, who get together and make quilts for shut-ins and disaster victims. She had made several quilts for the group, and they returned them, telling her, to give them to the Indians. At least one member of the group has offered to help pay for gasoline. “That’s no small consideration, given what gas costs nowadays. I hope it comes down before we start up there,” she says.

That’s right, she and Frank, and a daughter, are going to take the quilts to Montana, themselves. “We’re not going to mail them, there are just too many to mail,” says Harris. “We’re going to haul them up there.” Walking through the house, Harris shows quilts stacked everywhere. “I’ve got this table full and this love seat full, and that couch over yonder is full, and another table is full,” she says. Frank, she says, finally got enough. “He said I’m tired of it; I can’t get through the house. He just boxed in that back porch, and I’m going to have my sewing room in there,” she says, while admitting that it’s nice to have a handy man around. And when it comes to quilts, she’s pretty handy, herself. “Along about August, some Native Americans will find that out for themselves. That’s in August. Before it gets cold.”

A Quiet Crisis

By Randi Hicks Rowe

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights report, “A Quiet Crisis: Federal Funding and Unmet Needs in Indian Country,” chronicles disparities in the obligation of the federal government to provide programs and services to American Indians and the reality. The results, which indicate that the lack of federal funding has been a key factor in perpetuating the high poverty rates, low school graduation rates, shorter life expectancy and higher rates of disease in Indian Country, came as no surprise to American Indians, according to many Indian leaders. Nor did the results surprise an official at Indian Health Services, who says the program’s own statistics match those of the report. Some government agencies, however, disagree with the report, saying it provides an incomplete look at programs and services for American Indians.

The report, the most comprehensive analysis of unmet needs in Indian Country in a decade, documents the failure of six federal departments to meet their responsibilities to Indians: Department of the Interior, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Justice, Department of Education and Department of Agriculture.

“Native Americans have suffered too long from inattention and half-hearted efforts, and the crisis in Indian Country must be addressed with the urgency it demands,” the report says. “The conditions in Indian Country could be greatly relieved if the federal government honored its commitment to funding, paid greater attention to building basic infrastructure in Indian County, and promoted self-determination among tribes.”

The report recommends an 11-step program to resolve the problems. Among the steps is the creation of a task force to study the problems and recommend solutions in time for next year’s budget process. The report also suggests federal agencies, which provide services to American Indians, do annual assessments of unmet needs for their respective programs.

Indian leaders have praised the report and called for the federal government to implement the recommendations and relieve the funding disparities.

“Without adequate funding for vital programs, empowerment of tribal institutions, and a genuine commitment on the part of the federal government to the policy of self-determination, tribal governments are ill-equipped to provide for their citizens, and their citizens, in turn, are denied equal access to the resources most other citizens enjoy,” said Jacqueline Johnson, Executive Director of the National Congress of American Indians. “It is a critical link between levels of funding for tribal governments and Indian programs, enhancement of

tribal self-government and self-determination, and Indian civil rights.”

Elsie Meeks, a resident of the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota and a member of the Civil Rights Commission, says the report is “one more voice” supporting fair federal funding for education, health care and law enforcement programs. The report puts solid numbers to the disparities well known in Indian Country, she said. “Every voice that speaks out is one more voice to add to the opposing voice that says we can’t fund these programs,” Meeks said.

While programs in all departments show unmet needs, Meeks is most troubled by the disparities in funding for health care and education programs, particularly because the federal government seems to heavily emphasize these programs for the United States as a whole.

“If these are important all across America, then these figures [in the report] should state loudly that Indians are not treated equally,” said Meeks, the first Indian ever appointed to the Civil Rights Commission.

The report’s findings, and program or agency comments on the report, follow.

Health Care

The report looks at health care funding through the Department of Health and Human Services. It cites several barriers to health care, including lack of access. Only 28 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives have private health insurance through an employer, and 55 percent rely on Indian Health Services within HHS to meet their needs. The report noted that several HHS programs provide funding for and administer programs for American Indians, but focused on IHS because it is the primary health care provider. The report provides a table illustrating that while the IHS budget has increased slightly over the past seven years in constant 2003 dollars, its share of the HHS discretionary budget has decreased. And because the population of American Indians is rising, the real spending per American Indian or Alaskan Native has actually fallen over time so that IHS operates with an estimated 59 percent of what it needs to provide adequate health care. The estimated national per capita health expenditure for the average American is \$5,775, the report said. IHS, however, spends roughly \$1,600 per person per year for services in its hospitals or about \$1,900 per person for all medical care. In contrast, the federal government spends about \$6,000 for each Medicare recipient; more than \$5,200 on each veteran using services of the Veterans Administration; \$3,324 for each military member using Department of Defense services and \$3,803 for each federal prisoner.

Cliff Wiggins, senior operations research analyst for IHS, says the civil rights commission report uses data from one of its own studies, which chose the Blue Cross/Blue Shield option in the Federal Employees Health Plan as a benchmark. While the

plan might be different from various employee health plans in America, it is known to be very efficient. Appropriations per person for that benchmark are \$3,725 – almost twice as much as the per capita spending of IHS.

Wiggins sees a hidden issue that isn’t clearly addressed in the report. Indian programs are not authorized by the same people who authorize other HHS programs. Much of the growth in discretionary funding in HHS has come as a result of a Congressional decision to heavily fund research through the National Institutes of Health. Programs other than NIH research that receive HHS discretionary funding have not grown as much, Wiggins said. Wiggins also mentioned that the majority of HHS’ budget is entitlements, such as Social Security. For entitlements, the budget grows as does the number of people who need the services, as opposed to discretionary expenses such as IHS that must be paid out of the remaining budget.

“You can’t expect [discretionary budgets] to increase—especially when entitlements are taking up more of the money—unless there is a political reason to do so.” He noted that the current political climate probably offered little hope that IHS would become an entitlement program or that discretionary funding to IHS would increase substantially.

“There is not a track record that major new initiatives [in health care] have occurred over the last five or six years,” Wiggins said.

He also noted that IHS, while agreeing with the overall findings of the report as it applied to that program, wasn’t sure the lack of funding was a civil rights issue, but rather an authorization issue. He thinks the target audience for the report is at the Congressional level.

Education

“American Indians face deteriorating schools, underpaid teachers, outdated learning tools, discriminatory treatment and cultural isolation. As a result, American Indian/Alaska Native students score lower than any other racial group in basic levels of reading, math and history. They also tend to dropout more often – accounting for 3 percent of all primary and secondary dropouts nationwide while being only 1 percent of the students,” the report says. In looking at federal funding for education, the commission looked at money provided through BIA, as well as grant money provided through the Office of Indian Education in the Department of Education.

The report cites several examples of funding disparities in the BIA budget for education. The first example is that funding for tribal colleges was cut by \$2 million in 2003. Another example is the amount of BIA funds directed to public schools for the education of American Indian students via the Johnson O’Malley scholarship program. The program limits funding to \$85 per student based on criteria established by the tribal priority allocations

and a 1995 count of American Indian students per state. The report says, however, that the number of Indians in some states, such as California, grew dramatically, but the funding continued to be based on 1995 numbers. The report also notes that during the 1970s average funding per student averaged \$246. The third example is the disparity between the amounts spent per student at BIA schools, which lags about 20 years behind compared with that in public schools.

No official from the BIA was available for response to questions about this disparity. After several messages had been left, a public affairs specialist telephoned and promised to find a statement from the agency on the report. More than a week later, no statement has been delivered.

The report indicates that the Office of Indian Education, which provides grants, has undergone several reductions over the last few decades and, in many years, its budget has failed to keep up with inflation. It also says that funding has remained a relatively small portion of the total discretionary budget between 1998 and 2003.

Vicki Vasquez, director of OIE, said that she applauds the report and the efforts made toward looking all federal resources. She said the report was well-done and well documented. Vasquez, who is a member of the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians, said her office could always use more money but that her focus since taking the position has been to ensure the office does the best job of appropriately spending the money it has and collects and shares best practices. Her figures say that funding has been level over the past 30 years that OIE has existed. She noted that accountability has been added to some processes and programs to ensure that the tribes receive all the money that they should and that those who receive the grants provide the services. Vasquez also said several new initiatives have begun in her department, perhaps too late to have been considered in the report, which she said probably had a long cycle from preparation to printing. These initiatives include that:

- The office has been getting discretionary and formula grant money out to recipients faster.
- Secretary of Education Rod Paige went to rural Alaska to see first-hand the issues encountered by Alaska Native children.
- Paige elevated the standing of OIE within DOE. “That’s a big deal in Indian Country,” Vasquez said. “Indian folks have asked about that for years.
- Paige “sat down with Indians and made promises to tackle their priorities.” In meeting those promises, he recognized 110 tribal education departments and gave them seed money. The departments have organized into the National Assembly of Tribal Education and, pending budget approval, will receive money through 2004. “This hopefully will get the resources behind tribal education departments.”

- Toward achieving other tribe priorities of early childhood education, college preparation and teacher education programs for American Indians, 850 new teachers and 200 new administrators have completed programs and are ready to go to areas with high Indian populations.

“Entities that aren’t funded aren’t the priorities of Indian people based on our discussions with them,” she said.

Vasquez noted that she has noticed in her travels that many Indians aren’t aware of all the programs available to them, particularly those programs that “don’t have the word Indian in them.

“We are trying to do a better job in outreach and education,” she said.

As an example, she noted that many states returned Title I funds as unused. She wasn’t sure why the funds were returned or if state regulations that interfere with tribe’s rights to govern themselves had made access to these monies difficult or impossible for tribes. She said she was working to resolve any issues that might be a barrier to access.

Housing

About 40 percent of on-reservation housing is considered inadequate and one in five reservation homes lacks complete plumbing, the report says. Funding for American Indian/Alaska Native programs increased only 9.9 percent over the years in the study while funding for the agency as a whole increased 62 percent. American Indians also have less access to homeownership resources. The report includes tables that show that, when adjusted for inflation, funding actually decreased or stayed the same in most of the years studied. The tables also showed that the percentage of discretionary funding devoted to Native programs decreased.

“As the Report points out, there are many challenges in developing housing in the remote rural areas that constitute many Indian reservations,” a statement from HUD says. “Some of the more difficult issues are related to land tenure and the trust status, such as fractioned heirship and the resulting multiple ownership of trust or restricted lands, the reluctance of the banking community to become an active partner in development of housing due to the perceived inability to foreclose or recoup investments, and the basic capacity of many smaller tribes to run an efficient and effective housing program. The Department is actively involved in offering technical assistance and training to assist NAHASDA [Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act] grantees to meet those challenges.”

The HUD statement also points out the discretionary nature of funding for American Indian programs. It notes that through programs such as the Housing Choice Vouchers Program, HUD is responsible for proper housing for all low-income Americans and that increased funding for American

Indian programs would result in less funding for low-income non-Indians.

“If the Report is inferring that funding should be reduced for other low-income housing programs, and redistributed to Native American programs, then it should state this,” the statement says.

The HUD statement says that tribes can take advantage of other programs intended for all Americans and notes that “As of Dec. 31, 2003, there is more than \$589 million in credit authority available in the Section 184 program and more than \$372 million available in the Title VI program, which tribes and TDHEs have not take advantage of.

“The Report completely ignores the participation of other HUD offices and programs, such as the Federal Housing Administration’s Section 248 program and the Rural Housing and Economic Development Program, and the involvement of Federal state, local and other agencies and entities that support low-income housing in Indian Country. Nor does it take into account the significant efforts, at HUD’s urging, of local and national banks and the secondary markets to make mortgage lending in Indian Country a reality,” the statement says.

Agriculture and Nutrition

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has several programs to help American Indians, and between 1999 to 2003, USDA funding for American Indian and Alaska Natives increased after adjusting for inflation, the report said. The report, however, criticized that the increase seemed primarily directed at a few programs, such as the Rural Development Native American set-aside and the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service. Other programs declined; for example, the Farm Service Agency’s Commodity Credit Corporation set aside declined for 2003 and is nonexistent for 2004. The report also says that the funding level for Native American budgets relative to the total USDA budget during the years 1999 to 2004 is only 0.001 percent. The report also said that American Indians face disparate treatment in dealing with the department. As examples, it said that USDA regulations made reservation farmers the least likely of any group to receive USDA payments or loans.

The report spends several pages on the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations. It says that, while more than twice as many American Indian households as the general population lack enough food to meet basic needs, funding for FDIR is a small proportion of the Food and Nutrition Service budget and fluctuates. It also said that lack of transportation or telephones and too much paperwork limit access.

Susan Acker, a spokeswoman for FNS, says FNS program wasn’t told about the report or given an opportunity to comment on it before its release and that, as a result, the report contains some inaccurate numbers. Her figures show an additional \$3 million

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allocated for 2001 to 2003 for a bison purchase program, about an additional \$3 million more for the general FDIPIR and an additional \$3 million in 2003 for equipment and vehicles to distribute the food. She also cited a study that said FDIPIR's certification process was simpler than other needs-based programs. The study, conducted by Research Triangle Institute (RTI) (Evaluation of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, June 1990), looked at 30 FDIPIR programs across the country.

One access issue that sometimes comes up is the requirement that tribes who want to participate be able to provide 25% of matching funds; however, provisions have been made for tribes that couldn't meet this requirement, she said.

She also listed several improvements under way for FDIPIR.

- FNS has approved and is implementing several improvements to the FDIPIR food package that were recommended by the FDIPIR Food Package Review Work Group.

- FNS is also working with NAFDIPIR [National Association of Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations] to expand the Fresh Produce Program, whereby households can choose from 19 fresh produce items in lieu of canned fruit and vegetables.

- FNS is developing a proposed rulemaking that would improve program service by allowing eligible households to retain additional resources, allowing elderly and disabled households to be assigned extended certification periods (up to 24 months), and allowing local program administrators the option of providing transitional FDIPIR benefits for up to 5 months to households that leave TANF.

- FNS is also testing new distribution systems designed to streamline the process of delivering commodities to the local FDIPIR programs and improve customer service.

Law Enforcement

American Indians/Alaska Natives are twice as likely as any other racial group to be crime victims, yet per capita, spending in Native American communities is roughly 60 percent of the national average. A downward trend in funding will severely compromise safety in Indian communities if it continues, the report said. Department of Justice officials were unavailable to comment.

Trust Management

The report criticized the Bureau of Indian Affairs for mismanaging of Individual Indian Money trust accounts, saying this has "denied Native Americans financial resources that could be applied toward basic needs that BIA programs fail to provide." The report also says that between 1975 and 2000, funding

for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Office of Special Trustee declined by \$6 million yearly when adjusted for inflation and that insufficient funding overall resulted in \$7.4 billion in unmet needs in 2000. No one in the Department of Interior was available to speak to this. In the past, the department has refused to make comments on the Cobell case since it is still pending.

The report has received different reactions in the U.S. Congress. Some Congressmen, such as Sen. Tom Daschle, have used it to try to improve conditions in Indian Country, according to Meeks. A spokesman for the House Appropriations Committee where all budget bills start, John Scofield, had not seen the report almost seven months after its release. He said, however, that appropriations for "all the core Indian programs have increased over the past several years. The BIA has done quite well. IHS also has done quite well." He said, when asked about the findings of the report, that "it's not unusual for groups to say they are not getting enough funding." When asked specific questions such as why, for example, IHS programs were funded in such a way as to provide less per person than health programs for federal prisoners, he responded "what group is this civil rights group anyway?" When it was suggested several times during the interview that he read the report and phoned again with comments, he responded, "it sounds as if your story is already written anyway."

Tex Hall, president of the National Congress of American Indians, is "shocked" that any federal agency or group believes the funding picture is different from what is portrayed in the Quiet Crisis report. "Tribes are very sophisticated and we know what we're getting," he said. "We know how to look at a needs-based budget and an unmet-needs based budget." About programs that have made small improvements since the report, he said that while improvements are welcome, "how much is better?" when the disparity and need are so great. He pointed out still-existing situations such as housing inadequacies on the Pine Ridge Reservation and some schools being close to bankruptcy.

Meeks, who was instrumental in the commission undertaking the study, is pleased with the report especially its thoroughness. Still, she doesn't expect large increases in funding for Indian programs to happen overnight.

"The report is not a magic bullet. It's just part of the arsenal."

Reprinted with permission from Randi Hicks Rowe, Rowe Communications and the American Indian Report

refugee shelters in war zones such as Kosovo, as well as for mobile health clinics in AIDS-stricken, sub-Saharan Africa. AFH tours widely and hosts workshops for young architects and partners with firms on diverse humanitarian projects.

Since Red Lodge, both Cameron Sinclair and Deborah Snoonian have come to visit the Red Feather office in Bozeman. Deborah wrote an account of the retreat and, more recently, a profile piece on Robert Young for *Architectural Record* magazine (September 2004). Cameron has already helped Red Feather with his keen networking skills. He will return to Bozeman to be a member of the final jury for Prof. Lori Ryker's and Nathaniel Corum's Straw Bale Studio, which is underway this fall at the Montana State University School of Architecture.

It was truly a pleasure for Red Feather to be involved in *Architecture and Humanity* this year and to have had the opportunity to meet Cameron, Deborah and many prominent Montana architects. Thanks for the warm welcome Billings AIA—and a special thanks to architect Kim Olsen who organized Meeting in the Mountains 2004.

Red Feather staff will continue to be active in education and outreach. This September, Robert and his wife Anita are attending the grand opening of the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. In October, Nathaniel is presenting Red Feather's work at the Sustainable Resources Conference in Boulder, Colorado, and at the Enterprise Foundation's Network Conference in New York City. Also in October, Michael Kelly and Stacie Laducer will lead a straw bale workshop at the Northern Rockies Bioneers Conference in Montana. **RF**

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Actual size: 6" x 8.25"

\$24.95 plus S+H



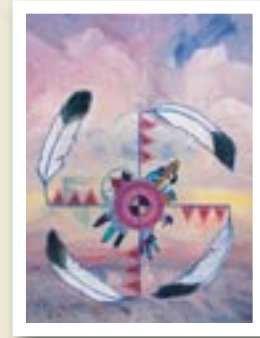
Yellow Crow Lodge

By R. Tom Gilleon

A signed
limited edition
giclee print

Actual size: 18" x 18"

\$250 plus S+H



Flight With Purpose

By Elmer C. Yazzie

A signed
limited edition
giclee print

Actual size: 20" x 24"

\$150 plus S+H

For all other Red Feather merchandise, visit www.redfeather.org

Cover Art: Red Feather Development Group in Bozeman, Montana, inspired this painting. The eagle feathers each take on one of the four clockwise directions of east, south, west and north. For me as Navajo, they represent the infancy, childhood, adulthood and elderly hood stages of life. That life is physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual. There is a gradual maturing in each stage of life. I think of the eagle, a bird respected and honored in all parts of the world. Here in this piece the feathers carry us like the holy wind into the phases of working on straw bale buildings, teaching, united with a spirit of availability on one foundation and together in the sweat lodge engaged in spirituality. The triangles in each phase of life show a direct purpose, a confident activity done with a strong heart. The three circles represent that these activities of life happen according to a spiritual time frame, not the time frame of man. In the background there is sky and land. That sky and land is united by a white spattering of paint, which shows that all creation is one. May we each continue to bless all life by the way we live. >> Elmer C. Yazzie, Manhattan, Montana

You can learn more about Tom Gilleon at www.timberlinestudios.com.

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