Native American Heritage Day

by: Staff Reports / Indian Country Today

WASHINGTON - The House of Representatives unanimously passed legislation Nov. 13, introduced by Rep. Joe Baca, D-Calif., that encourages the designation of the Friday after Thanksgiving as Native American Heritage Day. The Native American Heritage Day bill, H.J. Res. 62, encourages the establishment of a day to pay tribute to American Indians for their many contributions to the United States.

“Native Americans have enriched American culture throughout their proud history,” Baca said. “It is important that we recognize these contributions and ensure all Americans are properly educated on the heritage and achievements of Native Americans. For years, I have fought to ensure Native Americans receive the recognition they deserve, and today, I am proud the House has passed this vital bill.” The Native American Heritage Day bill encourages Americans of all backgrounds to observe the Friday after Thanksgiving as Native American Heritage Day, through appropriate ceremonies and activities. It also encourages public elementary and secondary schools to enhance student understanding of American Indians by providing classroom instruction focusing on their history, achievements and contributions.

“This bill will help to preserve the history and legacy of Native Americans,” Baca added. “Native Americans and their ancestors have played a critical role in the formation of our nation. They have fought with valor and died in every American war dating back to the Revolutionary War. We must encourage greater awareness of the significant role they have played in America’s history.”

The Native American Heritage Day bill is currently supported by 184 federally recognized Indian tribes throughout the nation. The bill has also gained wide support in the House of Representatives, including co-sponsorship from the chairman of the Native American Caucus, Rep. Dale Kildee.

Baca has been an active member of the Native American Caucus in the House of Representatives since first coming to Congress in 1999.

Above: (from left to right) Cinthya Gonzales, Joshua Gonzales, Billy Mills, Jose Chavez, Beyaja Notah, William Madrigal, and Jesus Cardenas. Members of NASA pose with Billy Mills after a lecture he gave on “Global unity through diversity.”

What Is Thanksgiving?

by Thomas A. Ferguson

http://www.indigenouspeople.net/thanksgi.htm

What do you think of, when asked about Thanksgiving? We learned from the wisdom of our elders to thank the Creator for; Mother Earth... Father Sky... Grandfather Moon... our Uncles the Four Winds... our Cousins the Stars, and... our Brothers and Sisters the animals. The Algonquians believed that humans were not distinct from or superior to nature, but rather part of nature. We also believe that animals could take human form. Moreover, we believed that a long time ago, humans and animals spoke the same language. Then there was a cataclysm that upset the universe and only a few shamans retained the ability to speak with the animals. We thank the Creator for all our relatives, for what is good in the world, and for all our harvest, not just one crop, but all.

We give thanks for the strawberry, it is the first berry of the new spring, we give thanks to the tree spirit, for the warmth it provides in our fires and the saps that flow in the fall, we honor the animal spirit, who laid down its life in order for the people to go on. Subsequently we give thanks for each harvest year round. It is said, when the Creator created the Universe, “He placed his hand on the Whole thing... so everything is spiritual.” He never told us to separate anything... but to look upon everything that he has made us as holy and sacred and act accordingly with respect.

The Thanksgiving the greater society celebrates, occurs during a beautiful time of the year; thus, Thanksgiving time means, as Joyce Sequichie Hifler so eloquently writes, “the first hard freeze, the first spitting ice to rattle the dry autumn leaves. Early morning frost crystallizes grasses in rods of light. The last bit of bright color is gone from the woods... thus; a time of great solitude and for giving thanks for all the gifts provided for us by the Creator, especially for our families health and well being. Thanksgiving traditionally denotes a harmonious time in the cycle of seasons; further examination of the times suggest otherwise. For Algonquians, the beheading of King Philip, son of Chief Massasoit, and the sale of the Wampanoags into slavery has a different connotation then being harmonious. During the time of the Puritans; every Church, every Synagogue, and every Quaker Meeting House was built on money generated from Indian slavery. (Professor Robert Venables) Not many of our young understand the true history behind this most sacred day.”

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To All My Relations:

I would like to welcome you, although a little late to the Fall Quarter 2007 and hope the quarter had been, so far, a successful one.

Great things are happening this year and the future looks even brighter.

The Native American Student Programs (NASP) started this year with a new office. We are now located in 229 Costo Hall two doors down from our previous location. The new location is four feet square bigger than our last office and even has a sink. We are so grateful!

The 2007 Summer Residential Program: Gathering of the Tribes was again a great success and students went away with some idea about what college was like and entails and what it means to obtain a degree. They were given the opportunity to acquire skills necessary to succeed in college. They were also encouraged to help other Natives in a professional capacity. The students were also provided with fun activities, such as Beach Day and they attended the Southern California Indian Pow Wow. Sports activities were included in the program as well. The program staff did an excellent job of tending to participants. I extend congratulations to all the Native students for their help the program would not be possible without. The program would not be possible without the help of the Native students.

Peace,

Earl Dean Sisto, Director

Are you an American Indian UCR Alumni?

Membership is available to any American Indian and Alaskan Native person who has graduated from the University of Riverside, California, or is a former student that has completed at least 12 quarter units before leaving the University of Riverside, California.

Associate Membership is available to any person who supports the purposes and goals of the organization.

Contact us

American Indian Alumni Association

Email: aiiaaucr@yahoo.com

(AIAA General mailing)

Email: admin@ai-aa.org (AIAA Board members)

Website: www.ai-aa.org

fallen victim to meth problems. It is the responsibility of all of us to protect our future leaders.

This 5K Run/Walk was a success as well. Joshua Gonzales, NASP Program Assistant did a fantastic job in planning, organizing, and implementing the event. A run/walk is a good way to bring the UCR and larger community together to do fun things. It brings people together for a common cause. Two individuals came all the way from Santa Barbara, CA to participate and we established a good relationship. Hopefully we will work together in the future.

Indian Time’s radio program is running on its own thanks to Paul Miranda, John Smith, Robert Perez, Chris Ynostroza, and others who maintain the program. I encourage you to listen to the incredible and fabulous program, which is also very humorous.

I encourage all students to participate in NASA. The group is planning some great activities for the winter and Spring quarters. Becoming especially involved in the Medicine ways conference and pow wow, which will take place on May 23-24, 2008. The members have their meetings every Wednesday at 3:00 p.m. in 229 Costo Hall. In addition I would like to meet with each Native student at UCR at least once a month to see how you are doing.

Peace,

Earl Dean Sisto, Director
A Big Thank You !!! Goes To All Our Supporters of the 2007 Summer Residential Program: “Gathering of the Tribes”

San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Pechanga Band of Luiseno Mission Indians,

The Gathering of the Tribes Summer Residential Program was very successful this past summer!!! Many of the participants enjoyed a week full of various recreational and educational activities. Throughout the program, the participants realized how important it is to continue their education and strive toward a good career to provide for their families, become a good citizen, and give back to their community. Many of the participants were very shy in the beginning of the program, but as the week came to an end, these participants opened up and became self-confident. Each tribe is credited for contributing to this wonderful summer program. The contributions support the future of our American Indian youth.
Billy Mills after winning the gold in the 10,000 meter run. Many went on to call it “the greatest upset in Olympic history.” To this day he is still the 10,000 meter record holder.

 Winners of the childrens 1/2K showing off their medals and trophies.

 Mountain Hawk drummers open up for the “Unity in R Community” Festival.

 Billy Mills speaking to UCR students about his life and the importance of unity through diversity.

 5K runners and walkers search for their names and rankings.

 NASA members Beyaja and Cinthya pose with the winner of the womens overall runner in the 5K.

 Billy Mills after winning the gold in the 10,000 meter run. Many went on to call it “the greatest upset in Olympic history.” To this day he is still the 10,000 meter record holder.

 Left: Sadie sits with her Grandpa Earl as he sings at the UCR Unity in R Community Festival.

 Right: Chris Ynostroza is a UCR Alumnus and often visits to drum and have a good laugh.
One member of the winning team, “Dream Team” gets ready to cross the finish line. “All the Way!”

Members of the UC Riverside Cross country team pose with Billy Mills. They were very excited to meet an idol of theirs.

Future Olympic Runner!!!!

One of the youngest runners of the 2nd Annual Spirit of the Tribes 5K Run/Walk who inspired many people.

Members of the Women’s UC Riverside Cross Country Team pose with Billy Mills. It was an honor for them to finally meet Billy in person.

1st Place Team: Dream Team
(Left-Right) Rene Garcia, Victor Delgado, Javier Sanchez, Gary Stroup, Jessie Garcia

1st Place Overall Female Walker, Yolanda Leon-Polequaptewa and her partner (her baby girl), Nahui pose after receiving her medals.

2nd Place Team: Corre Caminos
(Left-Right) Ed Barker, Paloma Hernandez, Sussan Ortega, Eddie Barker, Al Gonzales

Alfonso Gonzales participates in the weekly drum sessions at the NASP office and is an experienced drummer. He has drummed with many well known drum groups in the pow wow circuit.

Matt Moreno is a UCR Alumnus of ’94 and is the head singer for the Mountain Hawk drum group. He formed Mountain Hawk during his years as an undergraduate of UCR. He was also the first Homecoming King in ’94 for UC Riverside. Today he is a successful teacher teaching Biology at Bell High School.
Thank You
To All Our Sponsors of the
Spirit of the Tribes 5K Run/Walk
November 17, 2007

Viejas Band of Kumyaay Indians
Pauma Band of Mission Indians
Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians
Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians
California Center for Native Nations
by himself entered boldly into their camp saying “hello Englishman,” and biding them welcome. They also noted “he was a man of free speech, as far as he could express his mind.” Samoset spent that first night with the Pilgrims describing to them the whole Country side, and of every Province, and of every Sagamore, and their number of men, and strengths. Samoset stayed the night, leaving the Pilgrims the next morning.

Samoset returned, March 22, 1621, with Squanto, who is most popularized by American school. He was the only surviving native of the Pawtuxet, known to the Pilgrims as New Plymouth. Squanto had just returned from London (he was one of the first twenty captives sold by Hunt, a Master of a ship, who then sold them to Master Slanie who took them to Cornwall, England) and found, upon his return, that his people who had inhabited Pawtuxet had succumbed to an extraordinary plague. To the same village the Pilgrims are calling New Plymouth.

It was Squanto who taught the Pilgrims how to plant corn, and to fertilize earthen mounds with fish, i.e., herring or shad. The following fall, after hunting fowl, the Pilgrims harvested 20 acres of corn, six acres of barley and peas all according to the manner of the Algonquin agriculturist, they invited the Sachem Wocosamaukin otherwise known as Chief Massasoit, (the Wampanoags chief who first welcomed the English Pilgrims to the land) to celebrate their harvest. Accepting Chief Massasoit brought five deer, and ninety of his men with him to the feast.

So now we can sort of figure what was feasted on at the “First Thanksgiving,” a bird, corn, peas, roasted venison, and beer. This feast lasted five days and was celebrated as a treaty, which was supposed to benefit both Algonquins and Pilgrims. Whether Massasoit would have welcomed, let alone enter into an agreement with these Pilgrims had he known that the past August when the Mayflower crew were lost, hungry, and cold, they had blasphemously raided Indian graves in search for corn - to eat, and the personal artifacts of the dead - to reduce their enormous debt, no one will ever know.

But within a generation of that treaty, the children of the Pilgrims who were at the first Thanksgiving, children not even born at the time of the feast, beheaded King Philip, son of Chief Massasoit. They placed his head on a pole and left it in the fort for 25 years, as a in celebration. These children of the “First Thanksgiving,” then sold the Wampanoags and other Algonquin bands of people, without whom their parents would have almost certainly starved to death, into slavery in the Mediterranean and the West Indies. The events over the years leading up to this betrayal paint a clearer picture of how this turn of events could of happened. Chief Massasoit had fathered two girls and three boys, and before his death he asked the General Court in Plymouth to give English names to his two sons. The Pilgrims subsequently named the former “Alexander” and the latter “Philip.” After Alexander died, probably of poisoning, Philip became chief, and became known as “King Philip.” According to Josephy, (The Patriot Chiefs, 1976)

King Philip was as racially proud as an Indian ever was. He saw clearly what the colonists were doing to his people, and from the beginning recognized them as enemies who would have to be stopped. Despite the friendship between Massasoit and the colonial authorities, and although, he was not numbered to two in, King Philip went to war.

The interacational friction that resulted in this conflict had actually begun to spread years before his father’s death. This was mostly because of trespassing issues, in which the natives had no such laws or understanding of such laws. Anger, mixed with anxiety, lead to an explosive situation. Anxiety with the comming and regularly numbers of Englishmen who were arriving more and more often and who were providing material attractions that lure natives to them. Anger that Christianity was undermining the authority of the chiefs, and dividing the people. Time and again the Indians patriotic attempts to maintain life and freedom were undermined and defeated by ancient animosities between the various tribes who were forced to deal with new European influence. The whites readily recognized the hostilities that existed among the various tribes they met, and from the beginning were quick to use these native rivalries, jealousies, enmities, and ambitions to their own advantage.

They followed the “divide and conquer” policy and played ancient foes against one another for the benefit of themselves. This attitude, stemmed in part from the American tradition that some persons were by nature meant to be masters and others slaves, it combined with the divide and conquer tactics that worked so well for Columbus in the Caribbean and in Mexico for Cortes. Both of these pitting native against native.

It is no wonder these divide and conquer tactics worked so well, with King Philip’s War, in the treachery committed by the traitor Alderman. To the God-fearing Puritans of New England, Philip was a satanic agent, “a hellhound, fiend, serpent, catiff, and dog.” Somehow, in their panic and wrath, they conceived of him as a rebel, leading a conspiracy and an uprising against established authority. It was as if invading Indians had landed on the coast of England and had then considered rebels and Englishmen who might have risen to throw them out. On August 12, 1676, thousands of persons surrounded King Philip and Annawon, Philip’s war chief, while they slept. In the morning Philip was shot by Alderman, a traitor against his people.

We also learn from reading Josephy that when it was discovered that it was indeed Philip who was assassinated, the Englishmen were exultantly decapitated and quartered the sachem’s body and carried his head back to Plymouth, where in celebration, it was stuck on a pole and remained on public display for twenty-five years. These are the actions of the people who considered themselves to be “civilized,” and the Native American to be “Savages.” In the end, my question: (what comes to your mind, when I ask about Thanksgiving?) turns out not to be so simple especially when one takes a closer look at the true history of this holiday which we are celebrating.

What we should consider is that the Thanksgiving Celebration can actually be divided into three distinct celebrations; (1) traditional celebrations of thanksgiving to the Creator by the indigenous population, (2) the thanksgiving celebrated between Massasoit, the Algonquin Chief of the Wampanoags, and the thankful pilgrims for the knowledge received by the natives; and, (3) the beheading of King Philip and the selling into slavery the offsprings of the natives of the first thanksgiving.

While we celebrate the “First Thanksgiving,” let us remember the Indian people, and the struggles they continue to face. Let us not forget the sacrifice of all those who have come before us and the incoming generations to come. Let us remember the traditions and the history of these people, not in a way that is harmful to them, but in a way that is respectful and understanding.

What is Thanksgiving? Continued from Front Page
Youth summit addresses climate change

by: Julie Stricker

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COLLEGE PARK, Md. - More than 5,000 students attended Power Shift 2007 Nov. 2 - 5, the largest youth summit on climate change. A number of indigenous youth attended the conference as keynote speakers, panelists, student activist leaders and participants. Young people spoke in a congressional hearing before the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, and met with senators and representatives from their respective states.

The summit was organized by the Energy Action Coalition, a group of more than 40 organizations that work together toward a "clean energy" future.

Evon Peter, a former chief of the Neetsaii Gwich’in, was a keynote speaker. Peter has advocated for the United Nations and indigenous and environmental rights to the Arctic Council forum and is currently the executive director of Native Movement (www.native movement.org), which focuses on "grass-roots awareness, advocacy, action and values" in both Alaska and Southwest Native communities.

"As indigenous people, we are not environmentalists, not in the Western sense," Peter began. "For our people, we have an understanding of human beings within creation. As Western environmentalists, they look at ecosystems as sustainable because of the biodiversity within them, void of human presence. As indigenous peoples, we know that we are a part of the ecosystem."

"Unfortunately, many of our people have adopted a Western thinking [that is] unsustainable and unhealthy. We need a great healing with an understanding and practicing of our spirituality. ... The way we’ve related to the Earth and disrespected those spirits has consequences. ... We have brought this time upon ourselves," he said.

"This crisis extends beyond fossil fuels, climate change and over-fishing. Our generation will have to face this - it is inescapable. There are already clear signs of traditional people suffering - suicides in youth, abuse and neglect."

According to Peter, youth have already faced the impacts of colonization. "We’ve felt it on an emotional and spiritual level. We carry and push it onto each other. ... Now is the time to take action and leave something healthy for the seventh generation."

"If we don’t spend this time with elders, in ceremony, prayer and with our language, we won’t have those things to carry on. ... We have a lot of work, praying, listening and actions to do. A healing within each one of us needs to take place," he said.

The summit ended with a day of lobbying members of Congress on Capitol Hill, addressing global warming, climate change and related local community concerns.

"Power Shift 2007 was an uplifting experience that reigned my desire to get involved in the struggle for environmental stability," said Kelly Hubbell, Navajo participant from Window Rock, in a press release. "It was inspiring to see thousands of people gathered for a common cause. It was especially uplifting to hear from amazing leaders who have been advocating for years, yet have not backed down from their beliefs. Overall, Power Shift was an educational and motivating experience that I feel honored to have been involved in."

Calendar of Events

December 1st & 2nd, 2007
Celebration of Basketry and Native Foods Festival
Tohono O’odham Nation Cultural Center and Museum
Topawa, Arizona

December 7th-9th, 2007
11th Annual Winter Gathering Pow Wow
(360) 303-8804
www.spotlight29.net

Saturday December 15, 2007
28th Annual Community Christmas Pow Wow
Eagle Rock Recreation Center
1100 Eagle Vista Dr.
Eagle Rock, Ca

December 28th-January 6th 2008
Thunder in the Desert
(520) 622-4900
www.usindianinfo.org

Friday, January 4th, 2008
The Lela Arenas-Madrigal Memorial Lecture
"First Voices, Musical Traditions of Southern California Indians"
(951)827-1973

Friday, February 1, 2008
American Indian Counselors Conference
University of California, Riverside
(951) 827-4143

March 8th & 9th, 2008
Cal State Long Beach 38th Annual Pow Wow
(562)985-8528
powwow@csulb.edu

May 23 & 24, 2008
27th Annual Medicine Ways Conference & Pow Wow
(951) 827-4143
www.nasa.ucr.edu
E-mail: ucrnasa@yahoo.com

May 3rd-4th, 2008
23rd Annual California Indian Market, Peace Powow & World Cultures Festival
(831) 623-2379
www.nasp.ucr.edu

May 31, 2008
Honor the Elders Gathering
(408) 287-8366