

Native American and Indigenous Studies Newsletter

Indiana University Bloomington



By Standing Bear (kuuNUx teeRIIt) Kroupa

Comments demeaning to Native Americans that are based on ignorance—an ignorance that has not disappeared but rather continues to grow—is appalling and frustrating. A large majority of America has, still, never learned to appreciate or understand Native people or the ways that Native Nations have contributed so much to the success of the United States.

In reality, no mainstream person really understands real Indians because they live in a world that does not remotely acknowledge or comprehend what Indians truly think and how they feel. I believe, that, in today's society, most Americans seem to learn and think about Indian people in the past tense—modern ghosts who hunted buffalo and lived in tipis. From elementary school to higher education, Americans have learned American history through a biased lens fraught with misconceptions that are divorced from cultural truths. Indian people are still here, yet, as a marginalized, devalued, and silent minority.

A few weeks ago, this ignorance was demonstrated by Noah Kelly, editor for the *Union Weekly*, a campus newsletter for California State University, Long Beach. On March 14th, 2011, the *Union Weekly* published an article titled *Pow Wow Wow Yippee Yo Yippy Yay* written by Kelly. In his article, Kelly illustrates his experience at the annual campus powwow. He describes the cultural gathering as a “Native American themed flea market.” His idiocy and racist comments continue as he proceeds to describe the fry-bread being sold as “an overpriced fried dough platter with bargain brand food products splattered on top, like a Mexican pizza from Taco Bell, but shittier.” Kelly narrow-mindedly concludes:

The pinnacle of this underwhelming affair was watching authentic cultural dancers in the middle of the event and random audience members ambling awkwardly up to the line of dancers and dropping wadded up dollar bills in front of them as some form of donation...the entire scene felt disingenuous and cheap. Donations are great, and necessary, tossing them unceremoniously on the ground is crass and borderline obscene. Even the homeless have hats and cups” (*Union Weekly*: March 14, 2011).

The “disingenuous and cheap” practice that so offended Kelly is actually a deeply significant gift-giving and friendship ritual central to the Gourd Dance ceremony he was witnessing.

Continued on page 2

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Special points of interest:

- *Welcome to the Spring 2011 NAIS Newsletter*
- *A response to Noah Kelly's article "Pow Wow Wow Yippee Yo Yippy Yay" published in a campus newsletter at California State University, Long Beach*
- *Guest Feature: Christopher B. Duro (San Manuel) "Creating Educational Opportunities in Indian Country"*

Response to "Pow Wow Wow Yippee Yo Yippy Yay", Continued from page 1

The rich, privileged, and ignorant archetype of America is well demonstrated in Noah Kelly's article *Pow Wow Wow Yippee Yo Yippy Yay*. The humanity of the Indigenous people of this continent needs to be acknowledged without the esoteric views of the artsy-bohemian spiritualists or the outright ignorance and lies of the caricature that many people, such as Noah Kelly, see when they think of what an Indian is. The hardship of the collective lives of Indian people must be spoken to with their own voices. America needs to understand that Indian people exist and our lives have meaning.

Even non-Indians felt sickened by Noah Kelly's gross article. Indiana University alumnus Adrea Lawrence, Assistant Professor in the School of Education, Teaching, and Health at American University, shares her thoughts:

Kelly's editorial lucidly demonstrates how profoundly the colonial legacy of North America pervades today's social climate and historical narrative of the United States without many people ever realizing it. Kelly's editorial can, in fact, be read as an object lesson, warning us of the dehumanizing possibilities colonization and its historically long and subtle forms evoke.

Colonization is not just about acquisition of land, resources, souls, and so on; it is fundamentally about power and its disparities among different groups of people. And colonization's reach through time is long and blinding, particularly for those who landed on the side of the colonizer. When one is part of the dominant group, one does not have to learn about Others. Others, however, have to learn how to navigate at least two groups—their own and that of the dominant group. Members of the dominant group, in other words, have a vision problem. This can be remedied through learning, but one has to be receptive.

Kelly admits this. His admitted lack of experience with Indigenous peoples and their cultural forms is unfortunate but not uncommon in the United States. Given the current curricula in states across the country, it doesn't look as if many children are exposed to Native cultures as they have developed and changed over in the Americas to the present day in schools. It is, therefore, through informal learning opportunities, like the pow wow held on CSU-Long Beach's campus, that non-Natives can learn about Indigenous peoples. But, one has to be open to the opportunity before one makes judgments about it and cultural forms that are unfamiliar.

Most of us have not been aware of our ignorance about Native Americans because we have not noticed that Indian people were missing from our discussions. The admission of our ignorance about Native Americans and their lives, both historically and in our modern society, is a prerequisite for progress towards any worthwhile discussion. Yet, instead of admission, the ignorance persists through the minds and voices of individuals such as Kelly's. His culturally insensitive article incites racism and reflects ignorance. It reflects not only the themes raised above, but the degradation more generally of what passes as educated discourse. This is the editor of a College level publication, after all.

This response is an attempt to raise awareness of this important issue of perpetuating stereotypes against Native Americans that still continues today. It is 2011. We need to rectify what has and what will affect the minds of the next generation of scholars, educators and leaders.

Guest Feature: Christopher B. Duro (San Manuel) Creating Educational Opportunities in Indian Country

Being born in the early 1970's and growing up on the San Manuel Indian Reservation in southern California seems like another lifetime as compared to my life presently. San Manuel in the 1970's and 80's was much like it was when my father had grown up on the reservation, except for the fact that we had the luxuries of electricity and indoor plumbing and a lot less people living on the reservation. Now, looking back at our living conditions, it was pretty challenging, although, while growing up at that time it did not seem so bad. Opportunities at San Manuel were limited to a few Riverside/San Bernardino County Indian Health Service positions, one of which my mother worked at on the reservation. Other than that, jobs on the reservation were almost non-existent. Before gaming, my father, who was our Tribal Chairman, worked off the reservation at a plastics manufacturing plant during the day. After work, and on his days off, he would try to run our Tribal government. This was how things worked on our reservation and Tribal government at that time. For those that were lucky enough to have jobs near the reservation, they could participate on weekends and on their days off. Things significantly changed in the mid 1980's when our Tribal Council decided to investigate the possibilities of opening a bingo hall as a Tribal economic development venture. On July 21st, 1986, we opened the San Manuel Indian Bingo Hall, and life, as we knew it on the San Manuel Indian Reservation was about to change.

“As Indigenous peoples we have the responsibility to look towards the future while remembering the past. We respect the many sacrifices that have been made for our survival and the advancement of our communities. One of our greatest responsibilities is educating ourselves and securing a promising future for generations yet to come.”

While for some Tribes gaming may not have been as successful as it has been at San Manuel; our economic success has allowed our Tribal government to pursue new and exciting opportunities that would have not been possible prior to gaming. Tribal Gaming, as an economic development venture, has allowed our Tribal government the ability to aid in securing a future for present Tribal members and for future generations. As a result of the new opportunities made possible through gaming, one of the Tribe's first areas of diversification was to encourage our Tribal members to seek a college education by providing economic incentives and resources for student success. As for myself, I took immediate advantage of this opportunity by returning to school by way of our local community college, San Bernardino Valley College (SBVC). Since my grades in high school were less than stellar, community college was the only way for me to re-enter and continue my education. Given that I was lacking in many of the basic skills necessary to survive at the community college, my first years were very frustrating and difficult for me. Despite my frustration, I was determined to persevere and I kept trying to acquire new skills and things began to change slowly. The work was difficult, but I started to learn the nuances of being a college student. I began to receive exceptional grades and make progress towards achieving an Associates of Arts degree. Since I was the first in my family and one of only three San Manuel Tribal Members to attend college; I was definitely in uncharted territory.

Continued on page 4

“Creating Educational Opportunities in Indian Country,” Continued from page 3

As a new community college graduate, I was still not prepared to dive back into Tribal politics, which I had left a few years before, so I decided to continue my educational career as transfer student. Being unsure of myself, I reluctantly, but with hope and a positive attitude, applied to all of the schools of the University of California system. I was accepted to all but one of the UC schools, so I decided on attending UCLA as a transfer student. After my first quarter at UCLA, I met a lot of Native students, which was different because I really had not met any while I was attending SBVC. One of the most interesting things about meeting the Natives at UCLA was the fact that most of them were raised in Los Angeles and displaced from their communities. In addition to that, most had never been to a reservation. While attending classes at UCLA, I could envision how these courses and different programs could be used to benefit my community back home on the reservation at San Manuel. It was around this time that I had met Professor Duane Champagne while enrolled in his class. The purpose of the course was to attempt to build community partnerships with Native communities and the university. Being a transfer student and having worked in my own community prior to my re-entering college, I felt the best way of helping both communities would come in the form of an educational exchange program. This program would be different from a simple internship program, although internships would definitely be an integral component of this partnership. The Tribal Learning Educational Exchange Program (TLCEE) was created by \$4.05 million endowment and a partnership between San Manuel and UCLA School of Law. The TLCEE initiative would benefit my Tribe and other Tribal communities by using the vast resources of a top research institution (like UCLA), to lend solutions to many of the arduous challenges facing Indian Country. My Tribe, as well as other Tribal communities, could then inform UCLA and its American Indian Studies (AIS) program about Indigenous epistemologies, cultural forms of knowledge and contemporary issues taking place in our communities. This partnership would then be a catalyst in developing UCLA-level courses to address an Indigenous research agenda, to combat contemporary issues in Tribal communities and create opportunities for students that may want to work in Tribal/Indigenous communities.

Problems faced by San Manuel are similar to problems faced by other Indian communities, regardless of the economic resources available at San Manuel. And much like other communities, we also have a lack of educated Tribal members. As such, I felt it necessary for me to continue on my educational journey beyond my undergraduate degree from UCLA. At San Manuel, like many other California Tribes, our language is near extinction due to a number of factors involving: the mission system, colonization, and genocide. I believe the future and well being of our Tribal nation is dependent upon the distinction of what makes us inextricably Serrano. In continuing with my previous endeavors in the creation of my Tribal Education Department, and the Serrano Language Revitalization Project, I applied and got accepted into Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Indigenous Language Initiative (MITILI) Master’s of Science Linguistics program. With no fluent speakers left and no use of the language on our reservation, I felt that the dire state of the Serrano language needed a resolution.

It is through education and self-determination that I believe many of the problems persisting in Indigenous communities can be solved, and it is only the members of those communities that can solve those problems. To further my goals in helping Indigenous communities help themselves, I established the Southern California Tribal Education Institute (SCTEI) in 2010, which is a non-profit solely dedicated to helping Indigenous communities through research, education, and advocacy. In addition to creating and establishing SCTEI, I created the Christopher B. Duro Graduate Fellowship. This fellowship is designed for Native graduate students pursuing research that will help advance their communities. It is my deepest hope that by creating this fellowship, others who have the resources will invest in the education of Native students that are dedicated to working within the community.

Christopher B. Duro, a member of the San Manuel Band of Serrano Indians, graduated as a first-generation college student from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) with a Bachelor of Arts degree in American Indian Studies. Currently, Duro is pursuing a master’s degree in linguistics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).



Christopher B. Duro Graduate Fellowship

2011 – 2012

The Christopher B. Duro Graduate Fellowship is a merit and need based fellowship for Native students pursuing graduate study to help the advancement of Native communities. Students who are chosen to be Duro Fellows will be eligible for up to \$25,000 per year, based on need and will be required to perform community service hours with the **Southern California Tribal Education Institute** and publish a scholarly article. Preference will be given to first-generation Native graduate students. For more information, please visit our website at www.sctei.org.

"As Native peoples we have the responsibility to look towards the future while remembering the past. We respect the many sacrifices that have been made for our survival and the advancement of our communities. One of our greatest responsibilities is educating ourselves and securing a promising future for generations yet to come. As a Native graduate student I have been blessed with the opportunity to make these fellowships possible. It is my belief that we (as Native students) have an obligation to give back to our communities and these fellowships are my attempt to help those that are willing to help themselves. And it is through education that we can make our communities stronger."

-Christopher B. Duro

Deadline:
June 30th, 2011

Contact Information:
Christopher B. Duro Graduate Fellowship Coordinator,
sctei@yahoo.com

Notification of Awards:
August 2011





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Red Ink is a Native American Publication established in 1989 by students in the American Indian Studies program at the University of Arizona. Red Ink remains the only student-run publication in the nation dedicated to publishing works of various well-known and budding American Indian writers and artists. Focusing on American Indian issues, communities, and artistic endeavors across the United States, Red Ink attempts to promote an ongoing discourse with all persons and organizations interested in utilizing our unique platform and providing another dynamic voice for Indian Country.

Keeping up with NAIS at IUB

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Core announcements, such as for lectures and talks that we organize, will be publicized via our email list. To get on this list, or to confirm that you are on it, send an email to nais@indiana.edu.

When news from the wider world of Native American and Indigenous Studies comes our way, we'll pass it on via the NAIS News weblog. You can consult this website at:

<http://iunais.wordpress.com/>

One easy way to get this information is to "subscribe" to it via email. Visiting the website, look for the "Email Subscription" tool on the right hand side of the page. This will allow you to set up an account to get these announcements by email.

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You can also get this information by following "IUB_NAIS" on Twitter.

Finally, you can alternatively get this information by "liking" "Native American and Indigenous Studies at Indiana University" in Facebook.

Fall 2011 NAIS Course Offerings

AMST 275	Indigenous Worldviews in Americas 8:00 AM — 9:15 AM	TR	Professor Jackson
ANTH 323	Indians of Indiana 11:15AM—12:30PM	TR	Professor Lesourd
ANTH 310	Elementary Lakota 4:00PM—5:15PM	MWF	Professor Parks

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