Hi there,

I'm writing to express my gratitude to you. Your support and encouragement have been invaluable to me.

Sincerely,

Leonard Peltier, March 6, 2006

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**Fine Suits & Moccasins: A Brief Overview of the Metís Experience**

By Aimée Cree Dunn

Moccasins and a scarlet-hued sash.
Buffalo hunts blending with the plow.
All-nighters filled with rhythmic jigging to exuberant fiddles.
All of these epitomize the historical Metís culture, an ethnic group born of two worlds. Although many may not have heard of these people, the Metís have a heavy presence on the American continent, particularly in the Great Lakes area and on the Red River Plains. So, just who are the Metís?

Some interpret the name broadly, as in “metis,” the French word for “mixed,” but the term most appropriately applies to people who are of Cree or Ojibwe and French descent. For the Metís (pro-nounced “may-tee”), the “mixing” goes further than blood – being Metís means one is as much a cultural blend as a genetic mix of European and Indigenous peoples. To be Metís means to take pride in a one-of-a-kind history and a distinctive culture that uniquely merged the elements of two worlds, creating an entirely new society.

This blending found various expressions. The Metís tended to settle as farmers while also retaining a hunting and gathering lifestyle that drew on their Native roots. Many took the spiritual elements of the French and Cree or Ojibwe societies to create a distinct spirituality that kept the Cree/Ojibwe respect for the earth. One legendary Metís hero, Louis Riel, would wear moccasins with his three-piece suit.

It was during the mid-1800s that Riel petitioned the Canadian government to recognize a Metís homeland. He called for treaties with his people to reclaim their land and honor Mother Earth. Viewers experience John’s spiritual journey of struggle, sorrow and survival. The film is a chronicle of what was and still is for indigenous peoples. I highly recommend it to people in all walks of life.

See Fine Suits & Moccasins page 6

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**Trudell**

By Maryanne Brown

The FBI said, “He is extremely eloquent therefore dangerous.” John Trudell can hold a stadium full of people captive with his words alone. His words and information about him comprise a 17,000 page FBI dossier.

*Trudell*, the documentary follows John Trudell’s life, music and poetry along with his ideas and the history of the American Indian Movement. He is a native patriot, a rebel, and an American Indian activist at the center of every major native event over the last 30 years, from Alcatraz to the present. Along with the power conveyed by Trudell’s speeches, his music and poetry, the film includes historic footage that follows the rise of the American Indian Movement (AIM). Filmmaker Heather Rae interviewed many of Trudell’s AIM colleagues and close friends in the music and music industries, along with Trudell’s band, Bad Dog, and his family.

John has inspired his people to continue the tradition of their ancestors and strengthen their native spirit. He continues to inspire them to fight to reclaim treaty rights and teach all people how to honor Mother Earth. Viewers experience John’s spiritual journey of struggle, sorrow and survival. The film is a chronicle of what was and still is for indigenous peoples. I highly recommend it to people in all walks of life.

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**Hazen Selected for Summer Internship**

Yolanda Hazen, a sophomore double majoring in English and political science/pre-law, has recently been selected for an internship in Washington D.C. Hazen will be helping the Department of Agriculture set up their field audits for 2007. This task requires contacting all 3300 counties in the country. She will be staying on campus at American University for the two-month affair. Hazen will receive both college credit and a stipend for this experience. She is a member of the Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians.

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**Miigwech!**

To all my friends who contributed their Time and Money to the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee. A special thanks to Aimee Cree Dunn and Sarah Holh for watching the booth for me at the Pow Wow and thanks to April Lindala for the idea and Native American Student Association thanks for their contributions.

Also thanks for all those who participated in the Incident at Oglala movie day back in February and to my dear friend and teacher Grace, thank you so much for waking my spirit, you helped me on my new journey and I am forever indebted to you. Maryanne B.

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**Thanks**

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**Anishnaabe News**

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**About the Author**

Leonard Peltier, March 6, 2006

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**Address Service Requested**

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The Canadian government ignored his petitions and instead sent surveyors to mark off Metis land for settlement by Euro-Canadians. This confrontation brought about the Metis revolutions, led by Riel. Riel was eventually condemned by the state as a megalomaniac and an inciter of insurrection and was hanged. The Metis still feel his presence and are certain he continues to help his people from the spirit world.

The Metis revolutions ended in a widespread diaspora as the Canadian government relentlessly tracked the Metis down in an effort to forestall future rebellions. Lacking a recognized land-base, denied status as an Indigenous people by both the American and Canadian governments, and forced into hiding after the revolutions, the Metis fell between the cracks of society in Canada and, even more so, in the U.S. Until recently. While the Metis continue to be a virtually unknown culture in the U.S., Canada has finally recognized the Metis as Indigenous peoples and, within the last few years, has also recognized aboriginal hunting, gathering and fishing rights, at least for those who can prove they come from an “officially” historical Metis community.

With the international revival of Indigenous pride in the 1970s, a Metis cultural revitalization movement also began. Cultural resource centers have sprung up in various regions in Canada. Many strive to maintain the Michif language, a blending of French and Cree, or to keep alive the Metis tradition of music and dance, particularly fiddle music and jigs. Others work to retell the stories of Metis heroes such as Riel, Poundmaker, Big Bear and Gabriel Dumont.

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The Code Talkers

Secret coding has been used for many centuries, often during times of war. Military masterminds have recruited many talented individuals to code secret messages that only certain people understand. During World War II secret coding was common. The United States tried numerous methods of coding secret messages, but the Japanese always deciphered our codes, until the introduction of the Navajo language as a coding technique. In 1942, the vision of one man, Philip Johnston, became a reality when he met with Major General Clayton B. Vogel to convince him of the speed and accuracy of this new coding process. The talented Navajo could decipher a code in 20 seconds, a task of the same caliber would take a machine nearly 30 minutes to accomplish. The Navajo coders, dubbed the Code Talkers proved to be an invaluable asset to the Marines and to victory in World War II.

The original concept of using the Navajo language came from Philip Johnston, the son of a missionary to the Navajos. Johnston was one of a few non-Navajos who could speak the language fluently. After serving in World War I, Johnston realized how valuable coding was to the military and he also knew that the Choptaw language was used during the war. Johnston believed that the Navajo language was a perfect vehicle for coding messages because the language is complex.

The Navajo language is an unwritten language. The language is based on tonal qualities, syntax and dialects, making it a very difficult language to understand without extensive knowledge. After Johnston staged tests to prove the speed and accuracy of the code talkers, Vogel recommended that 200 Navajos be recruited to the Marines. In the spring of 1942, 29 Navajo recruits attended boot camp. Those 29 Navajos created the dictionary, words for military terms and manuals to decipher the code. During the training all the code words and the newly created dictionary must be memorized.

One Marine officer stated that without the Navajo code talkers they would have never taken Iwo Jima. In the first two days of the battle, the six code talkers who served under him worked around the clock to send and receive over 800 messages, all without error. The Japanese were successful at breaking previous U.S. codes because an elite group of soldiers were well trained in the English language. This elite group intercepted U.S. messages and either sabotaged them or relayed false commands to ambush American troops. The Chief of Intelligence for Japan was quoted as saying that they were able to break all the codes used by the U.S. Army and Air Corps, but they were never able to break the Navajo code used by the Marines. Up to 1945 about 540 Navajos served as Marines and of those about 400 trained as code talkers. The code remained quite valuable even after the war, resulting in a delay of celebration and praise for the code talkers. The code was finally declassified 23 years after the war ended. In 1968 the secret was finally released. Do to the high confidentiality of the code, all of the code talkers took an oath of secrecy. The high level of secrecy meant that all of the soldiers that committed themselves to serving as code talkers were not able to be recognized.

For them, there were no parades when they came home, nothing written in books, no news stories, no congratulations of any sort. Finally after the secret was declassified, the Navajo code talkers received the recognition they so rightfully deserved.

**Technique**

When the code came through it would sound like a barrage of unrelated Navajo words to the untrained ear. What the translator had to do was take each Navajo word and convert it into its English meaning. With the English word now revealed, the code talkers take the first letter from each newly translated word and spelled out the message. An example follows:

“The Navajo words “wol-la-chee” (ant), “be-la-sana” (apple) and “be-nil” (axe) all stood for the letter “a.” One way to say the word “Navy” in Navajo code would be “tsah (needle) wol-la-chee an d” (yucca).”

When the original developers of the secret code were constructing it, they commonly used military terms and assigned Navajo words to them, about 450 in total. Some examples are: “besh- lo” (iron fish) meant “submarine,” “dah-heh-tih-li” (hummingbird) meant “fighter plane” and “debeh-lizine” (black street) meant “squad.”

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