

Indians dance to different drummer

by Nancy Stohs

No one said: "You smokem peace pipe," like in the TV westerns; electric amplifiers, not natural canyons, echoed the drum beat; and moccasined feet danced on the floor of a basketball court, not the dirt ground.

But the colorful feathered costumes, the chanting music, and the tribal dances were all there—part of the Indian pow wow sponsored Saturday and Sunday by the UNL Council of American Indian Students.

Primarily a social gathering, the pow wow ended UNL Indian Culture Week, which featured speakers and a rock concert.

"C'mon, everybody dance," said the announcer at the microphone.

The beat, ever-constant (one-two, one-two)—slower, faster—brought people to the Coliseum floor, members of some 50 American Indian tribes from as far away as New Mexico.



Photos by Gail Folda

The ceremony was a "round" dance, an all-tribal social dance where rows of four or five danced together around a circle like spokes of a wheel.

In the center were the singers—groups of five men seated around a huge, rawhide drum, chanting high-pitched native songs.

Some dancers wore elaborate feathers—on their backs, in their headdresses, around their necks—and paint on their faces. Women were dressed in long skirts, bright shawls and dangling beads.

But the majority there were spectators, seated in a huge semicircle of chairs, in modern dress and with children nearby.

Some played continually; persons milled around. But the dances remained the center of attraction.

In competition, there were war dances of vigorous and complicated steps, performed by men to an ever-faster drum beat. Often going for 10 minutes

was played, next a war dance and then an audience request, like a "two-step."

Two-step? (Indian version, of course).

But there were other, more subtle signs of 500 years of the white man's influence and intertribalism, including:

—loudspeakers, blue jeans and plastic coke cups mixed with eagle feathers, drums and long black braids.

—names like Comanche, Sioux, Pawnee and Blackbear mingled with Smith and Jose.

—Indians in Northern-style dress performing Southern-style dances.

And in the dance competition, the stakes weren't winning a young squaw's favor or creating a rainshower, but a share of \$1,800 in prize money.

The Indians came to "enjoy ourselves" or "to be with my people," some participants said.

And they did, by dancing, talking to friends or sitting back to watch a special culture.

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without stopping, they produced a muscle strain requiring the stamina of a gymnast, participants said.

But women got in their steps, too; from girls as young as five hoping to make the finals on Sunday to women with gray hair rhythmically performing traditional "shawl" dances.

Asking the Indians, one gets the impression these dancers are well-known and taken for granted, something like singing the same hymns in church every Sunday.

But as an Indian student said: "It's the need for solidarity (behind pow wows). Everybody's got the spirit here. They don't really shout and clap, but you can feel it."

Traditionally, "pow wows" (an English word) were huge celebrations called by individual families, lasting several days from sunrise to about 4:00 a.m.

But there was no established schedule or set of rules this weekend.

The pow wow announcer wanted to "let the pow wow carry itself," he said. First a Sioux drum song



Photos by Gail Folda

CLOSE UP

Students vs. poor teachers

by Dave Madsen

Your professor of Big Redonomy, Dr. Nonsense, really gets on your nerves, doesn't he? He doesn't seem to know his class material and he only attends class once every two weeks. That's really a problem, but you know there's nothing you can do about it, right? Wrong!

According to James Suter, UNL ombudsman, students can lodge complaints against professors who are believed to be incompetent. He emphasized that grievances only can be effective if made by a group of students.

Suter said channels exist for lodging complaints, but they often aren't used. According to some University officials, professors have been dismissed because of student initiated complaints but the number is small.

Suter said it is important to note the difference between a tenured and a nontenured teacher.

The instructor seeking tenure is evaluated by other faculty members, and if acceptable, he is granted tenure by the Board of Regents. That means he is given a more or less permanent contract to teach at the University.

A nontenured instructor is subject to reappointment each year until he is granted tenure.

According to Suter, it is much easier not to reappoint a nontenured professor than it is to fire a tenured professor.

The bylaws of the Board of Regents state that the only grounds for termination of a tenured professor's contract, besides retirement or discontinuance of a program or department, is "adequate cause."

According to Bernice Slotte, chairman of the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee of the Faculty Senate, adequate cause traditionally has been defined as ineffective teaching or immorality.

If a group of students wishes to complain about a professor, they should follow certain channels. First, they should talk to the instructor. Sometimes the problem can be resolved there, Suter said.

If the students aren't satisfied with the results, their next step would be to talk to the department chairman. He will discuss the problem with the instructor and take necessary actions to alleviate the problem.

The students may not accept the action taken

by the department chairman. If so they then may talk to the ombudsman. Suter said he is reluctant to enter the situation before this point. He said that if no satisfactory action had been taken so far, he would do what he can to prevent the complaint going any further up the line.

If the ombudsman can't resolve the problem at this level, the students should then talk to the dean of the college.

The college dean will take actions he deems appropriate. If the students don't think the actions are sufficient, they may then present their complaint to Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Virginia Trotter.

Suter said complaints against professors aren't usually carried as far as the vice chancellor. In fact, he said, they usually are resolved by the department chairman.

If student complaints are found to be valid, the University may bring charges of incompetency against the professor. When charges are made against a professor, he has several avenues of recourse, Trotter said.

First, the professor would talk to his department chairman and the dean of his college. If this does no good, he may ask for the help of the Conciliation Committee. This committee is made up of elected faculty members. Its job is to draw together the interested parties and act as an arbitrator in the matter.

Trotter said if the professor is not satisfied with the actions of the UNL Conciliation Committee, he may appeal to the UNL Grievance Committee. This committee serves as a mini-court, she said, gathering as much evidence as possible to decide if the faculty member has a valid grievance.

When the UNL Grievance Committee makes its decision, if the professor still doesn't think he has been given ample opportunity to state his case, he may report to the chancellor's office, where the final decision will be made.

Although Suter wouldn't encourage or discourage filing complaints, he said that "students owe it to themselves to give feedback to their professors."

The main points concerning a complaint against a professor, he said, are that no action can be taken until a charge is made, and that the greater the number of students involved in the complaint, the more likely that action will be taken.

