

Culture hampers Indian women

By Mary Louise Knapp

Cultural differences between American Indians and whites are a major obstacle to the advancement of Indian women, a UNL faculty member said Thursday night.

Dr. Teresa LaFramboise spoke on "Native American Women" at a session of Feminist Feast and Forum, a series of programs sponsored by the Women's Resource Center. LaFramboise is an assistant professor of educational psychology and measurements.

Many stereotypes of American Indians are taken from movies and romanticized novels of the "wild west," she said. The stereotypes fall into four basic categories: those of the brutal savage, the noble savage, the stupid savage, and the deceitful savage.

Women are shown either as princesses married to white men or as nameless squaws whose only purpose is to bear

children and burdens, she said.

"While some Indian men are historically regarded as brave heroes, the only Indian women most people remember are Sacajawea and Pocahontas, who are not really considered heroines by their own people," she said.

LaFramboise, who is of Indian descent, said that in recent years many Indians have been forced to move to cities, where women are unable to get good jobs. Women who come from matriarchal tribes face additional stress in urban areas, where they suddenly may be powerless.

Indian students may take three or four years longer to get through school than their non-Indian counterparts because of their strong commitment to their families and tribes, she said.

"When there is a death or special event in the family, the Indian student drops everything and goes," even at the risk of losing his job or a semester of school, she said.

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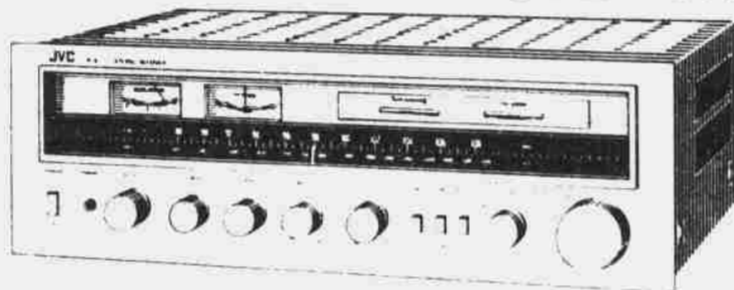
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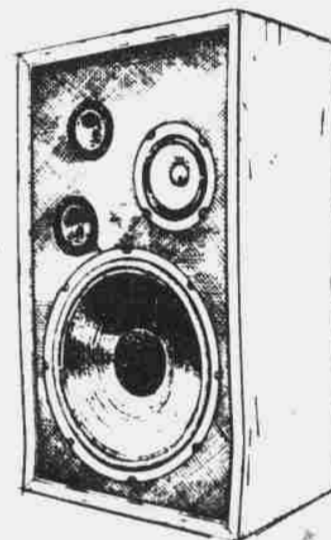
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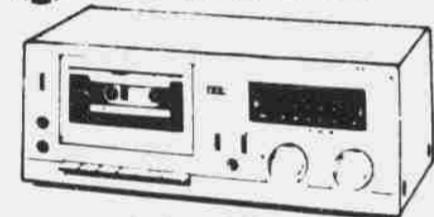
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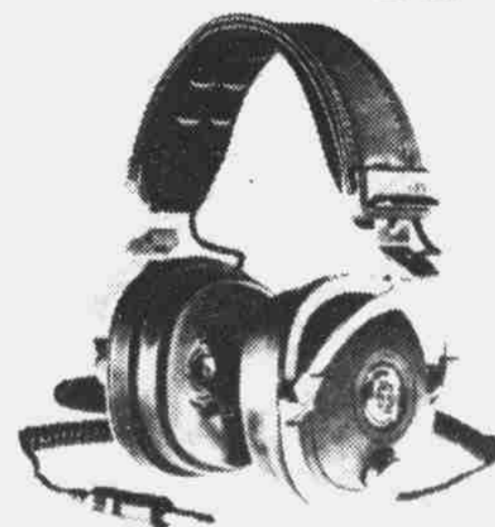
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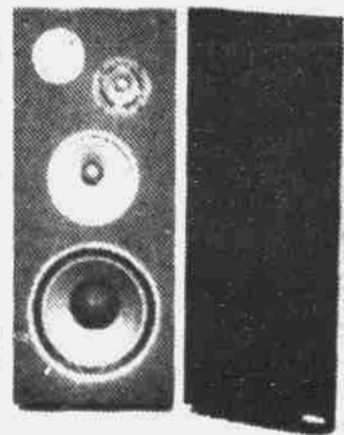


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