

# The Gila River Indian News

A Gila River Indian Community Publication  
Sacaton, Az.

MARCH 8, 1989 PAGE 1

VOL.5 NO.3

## Mul-Chu-Tha is April 14, 15 & 16



Preparations are under way for the 27th Annual Mul-Chu-Tha tribal fair scheduled April 14, 15 and 16 in Sacaton.

The event features three days of rodeo, dances, pow wows, arts and crafts and a fun run and parade.

Most activities will take place at the fair grounds in Sacaton. On April 1 Miss Mul-Chu-Tha Rodeo will be selected during a pageant held at the rodeo grounds.

Then, on April 14, the fair will begin with the Miss Gila River Pageant at a location yet to be announced.

While the Mul-Chu-Tha schedule is still being finalized, the following tentative schedule has been released by organizers. A complete schedule will appear in the April 5 issue of the

Gila River Indian News.

APRIL 14

•Carnival - Friday evening, fair grounds.

•Miss Gila River Pageant - Location/ time to be announced.

APRIL 15

•10K Run/ Fun Run - 7 a.m. (tentative), Gila River Career Center.

•Parade - 10 a.m. downtown Sacaton.

•All-Indian Rodeo - 1 p.m. (tentative), rodeo arena.

•Pow Wow - Location/ time to be announced.

•Carnival - All day Saturday, fair grounds.

•Arts and Crafts Exhibits - All day Saturday, fair grounds.

•Ceremonial Dances - Time/ location

See Planning for Mul-Chu-Tha...Page 2

## Tribal phone company sets March 11 meeting to discuss rate issues

With its first two customers already signed on in District Six, Gila River Telecommunications, Inc. has scheduled a March 11 meeting where it is likely that district officials will closely question the company about its proposed phone rates.

The meeting, set for 10 a.m. at the Gila Crossing Day School Gym, is intended to be an opportunity for all districts and residents to discuss the company's proposed telecommunications system, Cecil Antone, chairman of Gila River Telecommunications, said.

Created last year, the tribally owned company plans to take over operation and maintenance of the reservation's current telephone system.

In addition, GRTI plans to provide cellular mobile telephone service, cable TV, and a two-way interactive video service that will provide a means for tribal members to participate in council meetings, committee meetings, and instructional courses without leaving their districts.

The phone system is first being started in District Six, and a portable telephone switching station is already in place there, Antone said.

Two district residents have signed on with the company, and phone lines have been run to their homes.

But since GRTI is still negotiating with U.S. West for the purchase of equipment, these customers can now only communicate with themselves and the police department, Antone said.

The plan is to tie into the U.S. West system as soon as possible, he said.

GRTI estimates that approximately 60 percent of District Six residents currently have no phone service, Antone added.

While a few district residents have committed themselves to GRTI service, the District Six Council is withholding its approval of the system until it has more rate information, District Six Chairperson Marian Miles said.

In January, the district voted to oppose the proposed phone service until a guarantee was made that phone users would have a choice of remaining with their present provider, or accepting the new system.

The district council motion also stated that "present users do not want to be penalized by fees for selecting to remain with the present provider."

As to why district residents may want to stay with U.S. West, quality of the new tribal phone service isn't the issue, Miles said.

In fact, Miles said GRTI is likely to bring better communications to the

See Tribal telephone...Page 2

## Gila River Indian Community okays \$2 million right-of-way agreement

The Gila River Indian Community and reservation allottees recently approved a \$2 million right-of-way agreement with the Arizona Public Service Corporation and two other agreements are in the works—one for approximately \$1.4 million.

The contract with Arizona Public Service involves the use of 187 acres for power lines entering the northern

reservation boundary and continuing to Maricopa, William Talbow, director of the Gila River Physical Resources Department said.

Of the total acreage, 146 acres is tribally owned and 41 acres is allotted land.

The agreement extends an existing right-of-way contract for another 25

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Gila River Indian News  
P.O. Box 459  
Sacaton, Arizona 85247

## Plans for Mul-Chu-Tha are underway

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to be announced.

- Country and Western Dancing - 8 p.m. - 1 a.m., exhibit building/ fair grounds.
- Chicken Scratch Dance - 8 p.m. - 1 a.m., exhibit building.
- KZZP (DJ hosted) Dance - 8 p.m. (tentative), Amphitheater.
- APRIL 16
- Carnival - All day Sunday, fair grounds.
- Pow Wow - Location/ time to be announced.
- Arts and Crafts Exhibits - All day Sunday, fair grounds.
- All-Indian Rodeo - 1 p.m. (tentative), rodeo arena.
- Ceremonial Dances - Location/ time to be announced.

Preparations are also being made for numerous food concessions, Jay Pedro, vice chairman of the Gila River

Fair Commission, said.

Those interested in selling food at the fair should contact Joanne Emerson at 562-3311. There is a \$175 fee for food booths.

Space is also available in the exhibit building for those wishing to sell other items. There is a \$150 fee for these booths. Interested exhibitors should contact Jackie Boni at 562-3361.

According to Pedro there is also still time to register to participate in the fair parade. For more parade information contact Karen Enos at 562-3838 or at 562-3311, ext. 265.

Finally, the committee is still looking for volunteers to assist with the fair. For general Mul-Chu-Tha information or to volunteer, contact Pedro at 562-3361, or Fair Commission Chairman Ted Lewis at 562-9238.

## Tribal telephone service company sets District 6 community meeting

Continued from page 1

reservation, especially to the elderly, who very often have no phone service under the current system.

But there is one potential catch, she said.

"Cost is the main thing. That to me is the only thing," she said.

Community residents don't have full information on how GRTI's rates will compare to U.S. West's charges, she said.

More specifically, they fear that calls to Sacaton and Phoenix will be considered long-distance toll calls under the tribal system, Miles said. Currently residents can make these phone calls toll free.

The district wants more rate information before it approves the new telecommunications system, she said.

But Antone said calls within the reservation, from one reservation point to another, will not be toll calls.

As for calls outside the reservation, GRTI is negotiating with U.S. West so that calls made to Phoenix and other exchanges bounding the reservation will also be toll free, he said.

Rates for other GRTI service will be considerably lower than U.S. West, Antone said.

The company has applied for a Rural Electrification Administration loan and under REA regulations, GRTI will not be able to charge for running new phone lines to homes, Antone said.

Currently, under U.S. West, the charge to set up new service runs from \$100 to \$7,000, depending on distance from existing U.S. West lines, according to reservation

residents who have inquired about new phone service.

Once GRTI runs a phone line to an individual's home, he or she will be responsible for wiring inside the home as well as for purchasing a phone, Antone said.

Kits for wiring inside the home can be purchased for as little as \$20, he said.

GRTI's monthly service charges will be set after more district meetings are held. But they too should be lower than U.S. West, he said.

There is also a chance that the GRTI may obtain funding to assist the elderly in paying up to half their phone bill, he added.

The company has applied to REA for a \$300,000 initial or interim loan.

Cost for the entire system, including purchasing equipment from U.S. West has been projected at \$9 million. GRTI hopes to obtain funding for the entire system from REA, Antone said.

Currently, negotiations are continuing with U.S. West to purchase their existing reservation equipment.

GRTI wants to purchase only equipment that meets REA specifications, however, U.S. West is pushing for the purchase of the entire Gila River system, Antone said.

"It's going to be give and take," but, he added, the talks are friendly and GRTI is shooting for an agreement to be completed in June.

Based on a survey of reservation residents done by the tribe, the tribal phone company could eventually provide service to 2,400 telephones on the reservation.

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### GARY CROPPER CHEVROLET

## Community Calendar

- MARCH 11 — Gila River Telecommunications meeting at Gila Crossing Day School Gym, 10 a.m., to the company's proposed telecommunications system.**
- MARCH 11 — Akimel O'odham/Pee Posh Youth Council meeting, 9 a.m., Sacaton tribal council chamber.**
- MARCH 11 — Gila River Arts and Crafts, dancers and craft demonstrations, sale.**
- MARCH 12 — Gila River Arts and Crafts, dancers and craft demonstrations, sale.**
- MARCH 15 — Gila River Indian Community Tribal Council meeting, 9 a.m., Sacaton tribal council chamber.**
- MARCH 20 — Spring Break for Sacaton School District No. 18. No classes.**
- MARCH 27 — Classes resume for Sacaton School District No. 18.**
- APRIL 8 — Akimel O'odham/Pee Posh Youth Council meeting, 9 a.m., Sacaton tribal council chamber.**
- APRIL 14 thru APRIL 16 — Gila River Mul-Chu-Tha, Sacaton Fair Grounds.**

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## Evacuation plan drawn for Coolidge Dam emergency

The Gila River Department of Health Services is developing a plan to evacuate reservation residents in the event of flooding caused by the failure of Coolidge Dam.

Signs of physical stress prompted a federal report to label the dam, located about 80 miles east of the Gila River Indian Community near Globe, one of the five most hazardous in the U.S.

The report classified the facility as one that poses "imminent danger," one that is below an acceptable level of safety and susceptible to failure on a clear day, William Talbow, director of the Gila River Physical Resources Department, said.

Costs to bring the entire Bureau of Indian Affairs owned complex up to a reasonable degree of safety could be up to \$80 million, he said.

Failure of the dam, whose flood plain cuts across the Gila River Indian Community, could release a million acre feet of water.

That, in turn, could cause the Gila River at Sacaton to rise 27 feet, Talbow said.

Officials have estimated that the tribe would have six hours to respond before water reached the reservation, he said.

Gila River Department of Health Services worker Maria Jessum, who is in charge of developing a tribal evacuation plan in case of a dam disaster, says a temporary plan is already in place.

Once the tribe is notified of a dam failure, police will be dispatched to the north and south of the river and then go door to door to notify families, she said.

Jessum is researching funding sources for an early warning system of horns or sirens.

Also being developed is a list of housing resources, but for now evacuees would most likely rely on family, friends and the Red Cross for emergency shelter, Jessum said.

Maps of the flood plain area are also being secured so all families in the area can be identified.

In the future, Jessum hopes to include the services of not only the police department, but also paramedics and firefighters in the evacuation plan.

In addition to tribal officials, Jessum is working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Corps of Engineers.

While focusing on the dam emergency plan, Jessum's main job is developing a reservation-wide disaster plan that covers 15 disaster situations—everything from hazardous materials spills to fires to natural disasters.

She began work on that plan just six weeks ago and says it will take a year to complete.

By that time, items in the dam evacuation plan that are now only in the development stages should also be complete, she said.

## Sacaton residents named to CAC dean's list

Sacaton residents Neil Banketewa and Agnes M. Sigerfoos, students at the Signal Peak Campus of Central Arizona College, have been named to the dean's list, honoring their academic achievements for the fall 1988 semester.

# INDIAN DANCERS! CRAFT DEMOS!

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### RELATIVE NEED STUDY PUBLIC HEARING MARCH 23, 1989

The bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) - Division of Transportation is in the process of completing its work on a Relative Need Study pertaining to the allocation of road construction funds for Indian Reservations. The purpose of this study is to develop a uniform process for the equitable distribution of Highway Trust Funds for road construction on Indian Reservations based on "Relative Need" as stipulated in the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982.

A public hearing to present the findings and solicit public comments on the "Draft" Final Report for this study will be held on Thursday, March 23, 1989 from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. at the Sheraton Hotel in Downtown Phoenix, Arizona, located at the corner of Central Avenue and Adams Street. Copies of this report will be available for review at the hearing. Additional information regarding this study may be obtained from the BIA Phoenix Area Office - Branch of Roads, One North First Street, 6th Floor, Phoenix, Arizona, telephone number (602) 241-2278.

# "Indian Pride On The Move" Conference scheduled March 22-23

Believe in yourself. It's a phrase heard often. But for young people, and many times for adults too, it's much easier said than done.

If your self-esteem needs a little boost or you'd like to learn how to motivate yourself and others, take a look at the "Indian Pride On The Move" Conference.

Scheduled March 22 and 23, and sponsored by the Gila River Youth Council Program, the conference promises to show you how to motivate, encourage and build positive self-development.

"The primary focus is to encourage young people to believe in themselves and have faith—from there they can't lose," Greg Mendoza, coordinator of the youth council program, says.

While the focus may be on youth, parents, tribal employees, educators, tribal leaders, and other community members are also urged to attend for their own benefit and so that they can encourage a strong sense of pride and tribal identity in the reservation's young people, Mendoza said.

The conference will be held at the Sacaton Middle School Gymnasium.

Scheduled March 22 from 9 a.m. to noon is a workshop for junior high school students (grades 6-8).

A workshop for senior high school students is set for March 23 also from

9 to noon.

Workshops will be conducted by Howard Rainer, a Taos Pueblo-Creek who has been a national trainer and motivator of Indian youth for more than 20 years.

A successful photographer and poet, Rainer is also assistant director of American Indian Services at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

Mendoza, who has spent two summers in Utah attending Rainer workshops, says he is a "very dynamic trainer...it's an honor for the community to have him as a speaker."

Rainer has the ability to motivate youth to feel good about themselves, he said.

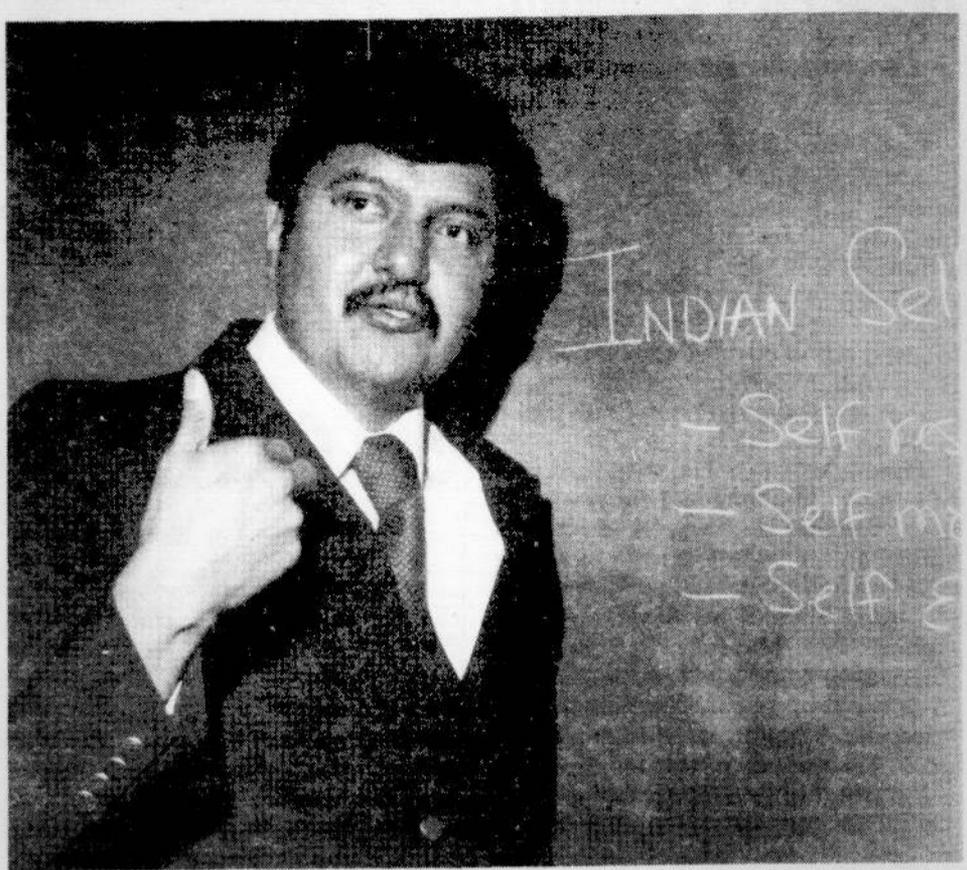
And believing in yourself is a basic demand if you're to prosper and succeed, Mendoza says.

Without a belief in yourself and your capabilities, it's not very likely that you'll set goals and plan for the future, he said.

Low self-esteem may lead youth to drop out of school and to abuse drugs and alcohol, he added.

Beyond individual survival, a strong sense of identity and pride is important to the future of the tribe, Mendoza says.

"A strong self identity, a strong tribal identity is very powerful. You can draw strength from it," and that, notes Mendoza, will be an important



Howard Rainer

resource as outside pressures encroach on the tribe's way of life.

With that in mind, whether your concerns are personal growth or community growth, you're likely to find the "Indian Pride On The Move

Conference" an event worth attending.

For more information contact Mendoza at 562-3334, or Jackie Boni at Gila River Student Services, 562-3316.

## Tribe needs allottee approval for \$1.4 million right-of-way agreement

Continued from page 1

years, beginning this year, Talbow said.

The tribe is still waiting for allottee approval before it can finalize a renewal agreement with El Paso Natural Gas.

Cost negotiations have already been completed and the company has submitted a check for approximately \$1.4 million to the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

That money will be distributed to allottees and the tribe once the agreement is okayed, Talbow said.

The right of way is for a gas pipeline, running parallel to Interstate-10, bringing gas from Texas to the Phoenix metropolitan area.

It involves 359 acres, 278 tribally owned and 81 acres owned by allottees.

A majority of allottees must approve the agreement, which extends El Paso's right of way until 1994, he said.

The third renewal involves Southern Pacific Pipeline, Inc. The company is negotiating a 10-year extension for two petroleum pipelines.

Southern Pacific runs a 17-mile pipeline through land that is 40 percent tribally owned, and another 18-mile line through land that is entirely owned by the tribe, Talbow said.

So far the tribe has rejected the company's payment offers because they are too low, he said.

He added that another negotiation meeting is likely before the end of the month.

Allottee approval isn't needed to complete the agreement, since the renewal covers the line on tribal land, he said.

However, if the tribe negotiates a higher rate, allottees will have to approve that rate change so they too can receive a corresponding rate of payment for the second pipeline, he said.

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## New Gila River Tribal Employees

The following new employees were hired by the Gila River Indian Community in February.

Rita Kasapis, aftercare specialist, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program; Clarilee Rovie, realty secretary, BIA Realty Office; Jana Narcia, vocational and career counselor, Student Services.

Errol Blackwater, water resources specialist, Office of Planning and Evaluation; Byron Sanderson,

caseworker, Behavioral Health Clinic; Roberta Martinez, cashier, Accounting Department.

John Giff, court clerk, West-End Tribal Court; Arlene Antone, program accountant, Accounting Department; Stephanie Jackson, data coordinator/administrative assistant, Behavioral Health Clinic, and Patricia Ward, special education resource room teacher, Blackwater Community School.

## Six tribal job openings announced

The Gila River Indian Community Personnel Services Office has announced the following job openings.

•Special Education Teacher, Blackwater School, salary negotiable, open until filled.

•Special Education Teacher, Special Services, salary negotiable, open until filled.

•Secretary I, Student Services, \$11,331 - \$14,461 per year, closing date March 20, 1989.

•Speech/ Language Aide, Special Services, \$8,000 - \$9,000 per year, closing date March 21, 1989.

•EMT-IEMT- Paramedic, Medical Transportation, \$14,636 - \$15,481 per year, closing date March 17, 1989.

•Assistant General Counsel, Law Office, \$26,000 - \$30,651 per year, closing date March 31, 1989.

Employment application forms are available at district services centers and at the tribal Personnel Services Office.

## Registration open for cashier training course at career center

A short course in cashier training is scheduled March 13 at the Gila River Career Center in Sacaton.

The 40-hour, three-week course is designed for those seeking employment as a cashier. The course will include operation of cash registers, selling skills, end-of-day balancing, inventory maintenance, and credit card and check cashing procedures.

Instructor Marjorie Fain will teach morning and afternoon classes in room 210 of the Skill Center, which is

operated by Central Arizona College.

Students can choose between an 8 a.m. to noon class, or a 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. class, both set for Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week.

Job placement assistance is provided to those who complete the program. Tuition is \$50 and is necessary to complete the registration process before attending classes.

Phone registration is available by calling 562-3349, or 723-5522.

## Veteran's Memorial groundbreaking ceremony scheduled for April 15

A groundbreaking ceremony has been scheduled April 15 for a veteran's memorial in Sacaton's Veteran's Park.

Donations are being accepted by the project's sponsor, the Ira Hayes Post No. 84 of the American Legion.

In addition to the memorial, the post is also trying to raise funds for a clubhouse. Both projects will require about \$50,000 and lots of work, so the

post is asking for help from the community, either in the form of donations, or in the form of volunteer work.

It is anticipated that the memorial will be completed by October and then work will begin on the clubhouse.

For information, or to make a contribution, write Ira Hayes Post No. 84, P.O. Box 186, Sacaton, AZ 85247.

## Five-year service awards go to Sacaton youth home houseparents

Five-year service plaques were awarded March 8 to Robin Warwick, and Blanche and Melvin Lewis, houseparents at the Gila River Youth Home in Sacaton.

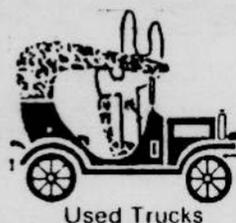
A banquet was held to honor the three workers for their dedication to youth services and for the excellent

care they give to youth home residents.

"The one talent that they all have is that they give love and that is what those children are missing," said youth home supervisor Estela Alvarez-Mudd.

## SUPER DEALS!

77 Chevy Monza, auto/air	\$875
77 Pinto wagon	\$780
73 Dodge PU, extra cab	\$975
70 Buick LeSabre, V8/air	\$775
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## LETTERS & COMMENTS

### Deepest appreciation

Dear Editor:

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the people of the Gila River Indian Reservation for the thoughtful Silver Congressional Award reception held for myself and Sean Soatikee on February 15, 1989.

I regret that I was unable to attend the reception due to my class

scheduling at Arizona State University.

Special thanks to Greg Mendoza, Jackie Boni, Councilman Dan Tree (District 5) and the Akimel O'odham/Pee-Posh Youth Council for their award.

Sincerely,  
Jeff Martin  
District 5

### An overwhelming response

Dear Editor:

I want to express my thanks for the overwhelming response to the reception that was held in honor of Jeff Martin and myself on February 15.

I had anticipated a small group of individuals, perhaps a handshake and a few words from the dignitaries, but not Miss Indian America, the elaborate decorations and refreshments, and most of all the warmth of everyone who attended.

I feel lucky to have received an award recognizing the things I enjoy doing. I did not feel any different from other kids who enjoy being with people and having fun. I did not feel

that I had a chance or that any of my activities were that significant. But, it too was overwhelming to have this opportunity and to learn how similar we all are.

This thank you is meant for everyone who has provided support, encouragement, and for those who have, either directly or indirectly, been involved in helping others to experience activities never dreamed of.

Special thanks to Governor Thomas White, Lt. Governor William R. Rhodes, Jacqueline Boni, and the Gila River Education Department.

Thank you for being there.

Sincerely,  
Sean Erich Soatikee

## Robinette's FOOD STORES



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GILA RIVER INDIAN NEWS  
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Urban L. Giff, Editor

Colleen Moyah, Managing Editor

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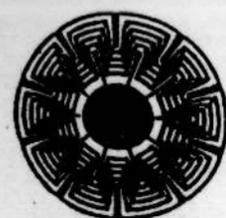
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**UNDERGOING TRAINING**—Marcella Davis of Sacaton is undergoing five months of training as a museum curator. When her training is completed, she will be responsible for arts and crafts preservation at the Gila River Arts and Crafts Center.

## Gila River Department of Health Services honors workers who excel

The Gila River Department of Health Services honored its outstanding employees during an awards ceremony Feb. 10.

Caralita Lomahquahu, a secretary for the department, was named employee of the year. She received a plaque and a \$250 savings bond.

According to her boss, department director Vi Johnson, Lomahquahu is an excellent worker who cares about quality and who is very skilled, productive and dependable. "She has all the good qualities of an outstanding employee," Johnson said.

Lomahquahu was selected from a group of employees named employee of the quarter in 1988.

Karmen Booth, director of health education, was named employee of the quarter for the first quarter of fiscal-year 1989. She received a certificate and a \$100 savings bond. Booth was honored for her hard work in organizing nutrition, fitness and weight loss classes.

Special commendation certificates were given to the staff of the Gila River Elderly Nutrition Program for their dedication and help with fundraisers and other special events.

Staff members honored were: Rita Pancott, director; Muriel Cronkhite, nutritionist; Eunice Phillips, secretary; Carol Stewart, supply

clerk; Clement Harrison, cook; Leota Marrietta, cook; Calvin Jackson, driver; and Douglas Torres, driver.

A five-year service pin was given to Virgil Armstrong, a licensed practical nurse with the health services department.

Special recognition plaques were given to: Dr. Todd Anderson, a staff member of Hu Hu Kam Hospital, for his assistance in training emergency medical technicians and for his assistance to dialysis patients;

To Dr. Dan Thomas, also of Hu Hu Kam Hospital, for his support of the health services department.

And to Marjorie Lewis, a data coordinator with the health services department, for her help with the awards ceremony.

Also honored were several community leaders who received recognition from the National Indian Health Board in 1988. Recognized was the late Iva Gazula, who received an award plaque (the group's highest honor) from NIHB for 20 years of volunteer work and lobbying.

David Ewing, a pharmacist with Hu Hu Kam Hospital, who received a medallion for 20 years of community service; and Martha Cruz, Sally Pablo, Leona Thomas, and Colleen Peters who received NIHB certificates.



**RECEIVING NOTICE**—Sean Soatikee, top photo, and Jeff Martin, above photo, receive 1989 Silver Congressional Awards from Arizona Congressman Jim Kolbe during a ceremony February 11 at Tucson's Ventana Canyon Resort. The two Gila River residents were later honored at a reception in Sacaton.

# TO YOUR HEALTH

## Burning calories through exercise key to permanent weight loss

Ever decide that you needed to lose weight, then gone on whatever diet was the fad at the time?

If you had a lot of willpower, you probably lost some pounds.

Unfortunately it's likely that you gained the weight back later. Don't be too discouraged, that's what happens to most people who try drastic or fad diets.

You struggle down to a new weight, then you bounce right back up again as soon as your resolve weakens and you start eating again.

If you've done this a lot, you've probably noticed that it gets harder and harder to lose the weight in the first place, and easier and easier to gain it back later. Eventually most people give up trying.

The problem isn't that you can't lose weight, just that you're going about it the wrong way.

Your body weight is based on a balance between how many food calories you eat and how many calories you burn up.

Dieting—cutting down on the food calories you eat, doesn't work well because the natural wisdom of your body tells it to conserve energy when you are eating less to protect your energy stores (fat).

When you do lose weight you burn up some fat, but also some muscle.

Muscle is metabolically active (it burns up food calories for energy), so

when you lose it, your metabolic rate (the amount of energy you use all the time) goes down.

This makes it easier to gain weight. So as soon as you give in to the overwhelming desire to eat more, you gain the weight right back.

Unfortunately, the weight you gain is usually all fat. You only add muscle when you exercise consistently.

By constantly going up and down in weight through dieting, your body gets better at storing energy as fat, so you get heavier.

The opposite approach is to increase the number of calories you burn up.

The trick here is exercise. Sustained exercise like brisk walking, jogging, bicycling, hiking or aerobics for extended periods (15 minutes or more) daily makes your body an energy burner, not an energy storer.

As you are able to exercise more and more, and gradually lose weight, your body gets better at burning calories instead of storing them.

Unfortunately, weight loss through exercise is slow—one to two pounds per week is reasonable, and exercise doesn't give you the license to eat anything and everything.

If you eat more because you're more active, you still won't lose weight.

The good news is that the weight you lose will stay off if you keep up

the good habits.

Plus the exercise will make you feel

and look better.

by George Dallam

## New Elderly Nutrition Program center set for completion this spring

Construction of a new home for the Gila River Elderly Nutrition Program is nearing completion with a grand opening date set for sometime this spring.

The new multi-purpose building will house a kitchen to prepare meals for the reservation's elderly, as well as offer a place for elders to dine and meet.

Other community members will also be welcome to use the center for meetings and classes.

Costs for the building, located in Sacaton next to the Valley National Bank building, have so far totaled \$257,000, according to Dorothy Hallock, the project's contract administrator and Gila River comprehensive planner.

Equipping the kitchen and dining areas is all that remains to finish the 3,600-square-foot building. Bids for that final project closed March 3.

An approximate budget of \$75,000 has been set for kitchen and dining room equipment.

Funding for the entire project came from a HUD Community Development Block Grant and from a \$25,000 tribal government grant, Hallock said.

The rose-colored, contemporary

Southwest building is constructed of concrete block and stucco with a tile roof.

Its floor plan includes a large dining room that seats up to 50. Through the use of an adjoining meeting room, seating can be expanded to 100 for banquets.

The complex also contains a large kitchen with a walk-in freezer, a separate dishwasher room, three storage areas, a large patio, facing Valley National, and an office area and rest rooms.

The new building will be welcomed by the program's three cooks who prepare approximately 400 meals daily, starting at 5 or 6 a.m so lunch can be delivered before noon.

Currently, food is prepared at the old Sandwich House restaurant, a less than ideal location.

It's a fast food restaurant that was never designed to prepare such a large quantity of food all at once, program director Rita Pancott said.

To make matters worse, the all-electric kitchen there has been plagued by equipment breakdowns and contains no walk-in refrigerator, so food must be stored at a separate location.

Workers there have also never had the luxury of a dishwasher.

The new multi-purpose building will bring the program's food preparation, storage and office facilities together under one roof for the first time, Pancott said.

Beyond space and equipment, the new kitchen will also allow cooks to prepare healthier homemade treats.

The program will be able to do all of its own baking, allowing greater control over ingredients.

Diners can expect to see items such as homemade low-sodium bread and low-fat ice cream (from a new ice cream machine), Hallock said.

And rumor has it that a favorite item may soon be back on the menu too. Sources say that roast chicken was a favorite main dish that had to be forsaken because it took up too much oven space. Once cooks are at work in the new facility, this specialty may return.

After surviving for four years in makeshift kitchens, and moving several times, staff members should be congratulated, Hallock said.

"Rita and Muriel (Cronkhite, the program's nutritionist) deserve four gold stars," she said.

The elderly have waited many years for this, Pancott said. "We thought we'd never see it," she added.

After so much anticipation, elders have followed the progress of construction closely, beginning with a blessing of the site before construction began.

As for the elderly who've already visited their new center, "They're simply overwhelmed at what a lovely building it is," Hallock says.

Architect for the Elderly Nutrition Multi-Purpose Building was Western States Consulting Group of Phoenix and the general contractor was Achen-Gardner of Casa Grande.

## Health diet can prevent diabetes, study shows

Recent research at the National Institute of Health in Phoenix has shown that a change in diet from the type of food the Pimas ate 100 years ago to modern day food, edges the body's metabolism closer to diabetes.

For Pimas and Papagos, this could be particularly serious since they are already predisposed to diabetes.

The number one risk factor of diabetes (apart from family history) is obesity—it is very unusual for thin people to get diabetes.

But overweight people, especially those with diabetes in the family, are sitting on a time bomb. This means that anyone with diabetes in the family, which includes the majority of Gila River Reservation residents, needs to be careful about diet.

The dietary guidelines for the prevention of diabetes, obesity, and heart disease are all very similar, and are relatively easy to remember, even if following them is difficult. What then are the two simple dietary rules to prevent obesity and diabetes?

The first rule is to eat the right amount of total calories for your ideal weight. This means avoiding overeating. If you eat more energy than you use, you'll become fat. If you're fat already, you'll need to reduce the amount of calories you eat to get back to normal.

You can cut calories by either eating less food, or by eating foods that have less calories. Therefore an important skill needed to prevent overeating is the recognition and avoidance of foods packed with a lot of calories.

These foods almost always have a high fat content, such as fry bread, french fries, refried beans, and bacon and eggs. Many candies and cookies are filled with fat, as are processed meats like salami and bologna. The high fat content does add flavor and texture to food, but it also rapidly adds inches to the waist.

It's easy to overeat these foods because they are not only tasty, but they are also densely packed with calories and are, therefore, relatively small in volume and less filling. Alcohol and high-sugar food are also high in calories and can be a source of those extra calories that lead to weight gain.

The second rule is to eat the right type of food. As already mentioned, this may help to reduce the total amount of calories eaten, but there are additional benefits too. As shown using the traditional Pima diet, the pancreas is better able to produce insulin, and the insulin is also better able to keep the blood sugar normal.

The right type of diet is high in

complex carbohydrates, basically cereals (wheat, rice, oats, etc.), fruit and vegetables. If these are prepared using little or no fat, then they can be eaten in larger quantities without harm. But watch the butter on the bread, the lard in the beans, and the mayonnaise on the salad.

The original Pima staple foods—corn, beans and tortillas—fit into this category, as do the desert plants that were harvested from time to time. Some of these plants, especially the fruits from the prickly pear and cholla cacti, may contain substances that can even lower the blood sugar.

The importance of diet to the Pima community must be seen in light of what we know from research to date. First, the Pimas have very high rates of obesity and diabetes, both of which are increasing. Secondly, even though the high-fat diet eaten by Pimas on the reservation these days is similar to the U.S. diet in general, it's much more threatening to Pimas because genetically they are at higher risk for diabetes and obesity than whites.

Finally, in the absence of an exact understanding of their underlying causes, the only current way known to prevent diabetes and obesity is through diet and exercise.

From these basic points, the inescapable conclusion is that the best way, and possibly the only way, for the Pimas and Papagos to turn around the enormous amount of diabetes and obesity on the reservation is through a major change in diet—perhaps back toward the traditional diet of the days when there was no diabetes.

by Dr. Boyd Swinburn,  
for the Gila River Indian News

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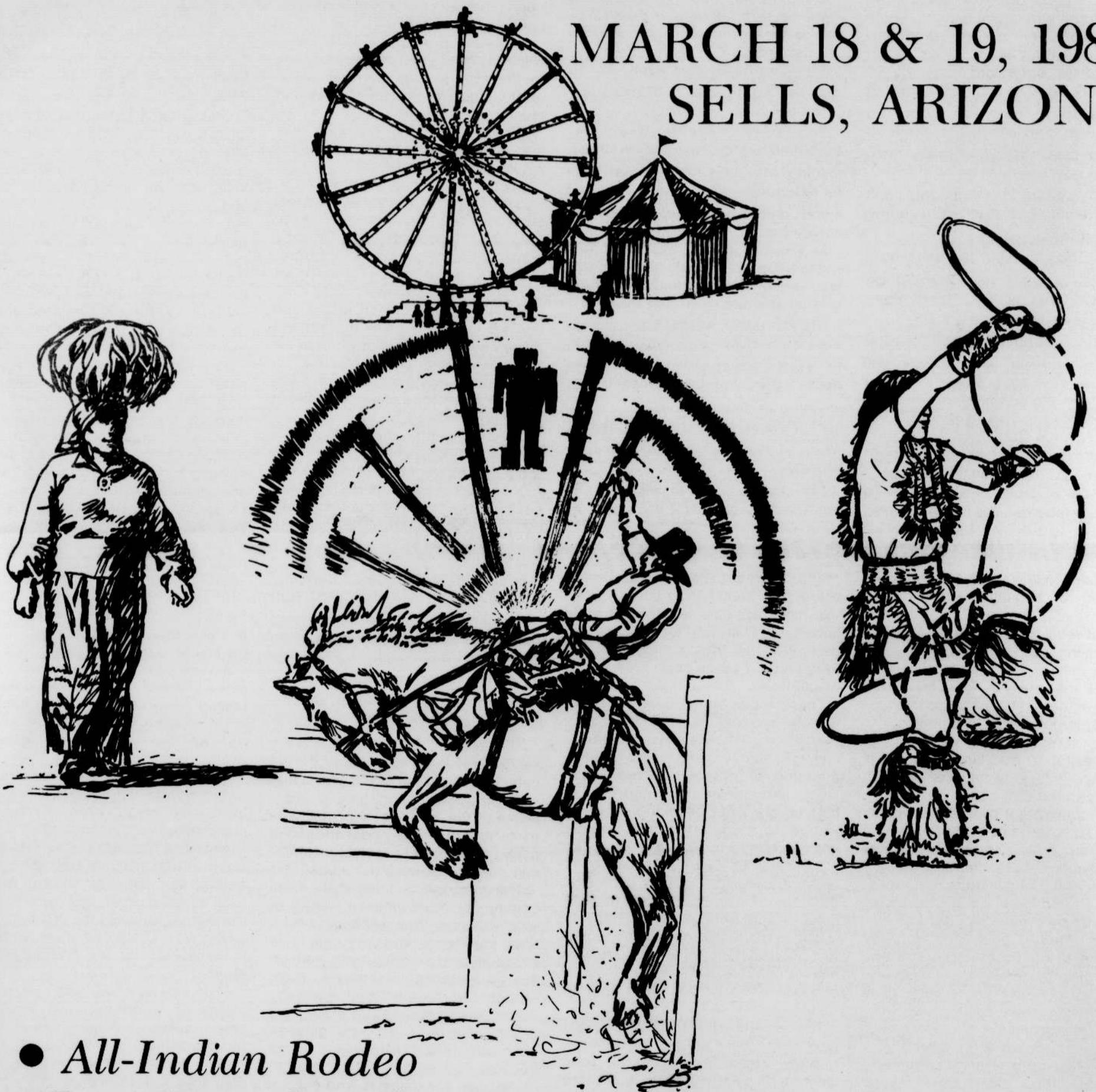
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