

file: NWNAB

The Evergreen State College

January 31, 1978

TO: Bill Winden
President Evans
✓ Other Academic Deans *Rob*

FROM: Mary F. Nelson

RE: Exploring Native American Art: S.W. and Other Areas of Information

Speakers Bureau: I have talked at two different schools to date; one on Jan. 11 at the Timberline High School with Sharon Thomas' class where I spent a good deal of my time explaining Evergreen -- as coordinated studies, group programs, individual contracts, the faculty, etc. The second was at the Mt. View Elementary School (Sat. Jan. 21) in Lacey to speak and put on a demonstration for a group of retarded people, from kindergarten age to adults. In both cases I showed slides of Indian art, and spoke on the mythology and cultures behind it. The only difficult thing that I found was that the retardees were "touchers and feelers" and that upset me slightly, as I regard touching a personal, perhaps culturally learned, thing. They almost broke a very old beaded necklace that I was foolish enough to wear. However, I assume this is the way in which they feel they can communicate with others best. It was indeed a learning experience for me, and I therefore developed a deep and abiding respect for the people that work with them, such as Cheri Dill, who coordinates their weekend programs. I would find working with these people difficult emotionally, and would undoubtedly turn into a "bleeding heart," which is something they do not need under any circumstances.

I will do an assessment of needs for the Mexican American community, with the aid of the Mexican American desk in downtown Olympia, with a Mr. Torres and a Mr. Morales. I will send this assessment out to various people and departments on campus upon its completion. I have a tentative date of Feb. 3 to begin this with them.

Exploring Native American Art: S.W.: Anna Rowe, noted basket maker of the Northwest, commenced classes for this group contract on Jan. 24. (There will be 5 classes overall, due to budget watching.) The students are enthusiastic and are working energetically at it. Ben George, a member of the Puyallup Tribe, Tacoma, came and spoke to the class about his tribe, his work, etc., on the 26th of Jan. Monday, Jan. 30 the group will car-pool it to the Chehalis Reservation, Oakville, to learn various aspects of their tribal concerns, and share some Evergreen veivs with them. It shall be two-fold; we can do comparative studies during the spring quarter when we visit the Pueblos in the Southwest, and we can also learn more of our own Native people in our own vicinity, plus to PR work. The Chehalis' were very receptive to my call, and are willing to share with us their life, and their culture. I will also set up such visits to the Quinaults, the Skokomish, and

last, but not least, with the Makahs in Neah Bay. This has already been tentatively set for the 28th of Feb. through Mar. 3rd. At the same time we shall visit the Ozette dig, the tribal center, and the temporary museum which houses the artifacts from the dig.

P.S. (Jan. 31, 1978): The Chehalis Tribal visit was a huge success, and we feel we learned much from these people. We had two "guides" who spent about 5 hours with us, showing us the various parts of the tribal center itself; head start, nursery, pre-school, meeting rooms, class-rooms where secretarial work and math are taught to the older or college age people; a movie that was exceedingly well done on the Chehalis tribe that dated back to the first white contact; the new housing on the reservation by HUD (very impressive, and the girls who acted as guides were rightfully proud of it -- and of all their other tribal activities). It was a full learning day for my class. We also visited a couple of basket/ beadwork shops and workshops, and found that the Chehalis are excellent beaders and basket makers. The tribe also asked for student aides from Evergreen for their head start and pre-school periods. I have passed this information to Barbara Cooley in Co-op Education.

'Till next time!

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