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by: **D. A. Leader / International Traditional Games Society (article supported by former comments from Jack McNeel)**

Native Games Go International

East Glacier Park, Montana – Tribal agencies, State Parks, and schools across Montana have been attending “The Culture for Survival” certification academies to learn how to integrate traditional Indian games into their programs.

A rewrite of the Montana Constitution in 1972 included wording requiring Montanans to know about Indian culture and the heritage of the tribes in the state. “Indian Education for All” was legislation that passed the Montana Legislature in 1999, putting policy and money into the program. The original research on Montana’s Native games began in 1990 at a Browning Middle School program where the kids and teachers found 20 old time Blackfeet games that were sanctioned by the elders.

The model of that research was taken to the Arlee Schools with the Salish and Kootenai adding to the collection of Indian games, and then eventually taken to all Montana’s tribes, neighboring Canadian tribes, and across western U.S.

Arleen Adams, Salish from Arlee, Montana, has been an instructor at the training clinics. She commented “It’s been my 20-year commitment to work with Native Games for the implementation of instruction into the public school systems as well as the Indian school systems in other states. It has been great to see the people that attend. All cultures and all ages seem to identify with the old time values of honoring one’s opponents and playing hard. The games strengthen everyone.”

Richard Horn, Blackfeet, has not only taught traditional games clinics, but has shared his knowledge at the national Math and Science Youth Leadership Conference, Tribal colleges, and for tribal agencies from Washington, Idaho, Oklahoma, Arizona, the Dakotas, and Montana. He said, “Everyone, students, families, teachers, and tribes are interested in how we recovered our ancient games. Youth and families are especially excited to have time together in play.”

Many elders from Montana tribes have worked with the International Traditional Games Society, helping people see how the games were part of daily life in the old culture. Videll and Ruby Stump, from Rocky Boy, Henry Anderson, from Little Shell, Leroy Comes Last, from Fort Peck, have been important to the training of younger Native teachers.

Adult and youth leaders came from various tribes throughout Montana, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. Each is very dedicated to researching oral history and traditions as well as ethnology to ensure that everything is done correctly and with traditional materials. Some games are common to wide regions of the country, whereas others were played

only within a particular tribe. No game is taught until it has been sanctioned by elders of their tribes and permission has been given to allow everyone to play. Some games may be restricted to only members of that tribe, and only to boys or only to girls within the tribe. Those games are not taught in the workshops, but retained within the tribe.

Some outstanding and dedicated instructors have been: Helen and Richard Horn (Blackfeet), Don Racine III (White Clay), Ken “Tuffy” Helgeson (Assiniboine), Georgianne Fish (Assiniboine/Sioux), Ken Bruno (Chippewa), Bryan Brazil (Salish), Shawn Orr (Salish descent), Jeremy Red Eagle (Sioux), Marion Stone (Cree), Karyn Gagnon (Metis).

Youth have taught with the adults since the instructional clinics began in 2006. A few of those have been: Seth and Rachel Fish, Jeffery, Keith, Sannell, and Larissa Horn, Jacob Stalnaker, Quincy Bjornberg, and hundreds of others from Montana’s talented Natives. The youth always add their own enthusiasm for play to the teachings.

The present Board of Directors for the Traditional Games Society are Benita Plain Feather, (Assiniboine/Sioux), Ti Stalnaker (Blackfeet), Arleen Adams (Salish), Craig Falcon (Blackfeet), and Jeremy Red Eagle (Sioux). They have recently sanctioned new clinics which teach about the Plains Indian Horse Culture. The first of those was presented at the Tsu’ Tina’ Nation (Sarcee) near Calgary in January. Dutch Lunak, (Blackfeet and Hollywood stunt rider), Benita Plain Feather (Assiniboine and owner of Indian relay team), and Craig Falcon, (Blackfeet and historical horse culture expert) were the presenters. They have been invited back to Calgary for a Level II clinic in April.

The “Horse Medicine: Good for All” clinics include historical perspectives on the transition from “Dog Day” culture, through the coming of the horse, and into modern Indian horse culture and events. Participants also meet the horse in a first hand way by trying some of the mid-horse culture events (1700 – 1850 a.d.)

“The knowledge that has been coming back is powerful when you see it in action,” said DeeAnna Leader, Executive Director of ITGS. “These games appeal to all ages and they transcend many cultures.

Information can be found on the ITGS web site: <http://www.traditionalnativegames.org>

New article:

Salish Kootenai College to Host “First North American Native Games Conference in Pablo, Montana, September 7 -9, 2011

WE, modern people, are the last hominids standing because of biochemical adaptations and because our ancestors had kinship/community systems that helped individuals survive through cooperation and its rewards. Those systems of indigenous people

supported physical, mental/emotional, social, and spiritual survival in bands clans, and villages.

Mankind's future survival depends on the ability to look back at what sustained health and well being, to check current problems (physical and social/spiritual), and to change and adapt to the future.

Dr. Gregory Cajete, University of New Mexico, will be the main speaker. His book, "Spirit of the Games" has given the world a clean, clear look at the reasons ancient games were played and how they were infused into the whole way of life as ceremony, settlement of disputes, and for amusement. He will be providing the old values and purposes of traditional Indian games.

Other presenters at the conference will be scientists working in the field of social intelligence and brain research as related to modern education practices. ITGS instructors will be hosting "Dog Day" games as well as "Horse Culture" sessions. Also, The Office of Indian Education will have sessions regarding the use of games in curriculums across Montana.

The conference is limited to 500 registered participants. Information about the conference can be found at <http://www.traditionalnativegames.org>