

PRESS RELEASE

Of interest to editors and journalists covering:
California News, Ski/Snow, Native American, Local News

Snowdance Phenomena Sweeps Western Ski Areas

'Skiers Can Thank Tribes for Snow at LA Ski Dazzle Show!'

LOS ANGELES, Calif - December 2, 2004 /Send2Press Newswire/ -- "I'd like to thank the tribes if they are responsible for this early fluke snow storm that dumped two to four feet in the San Bernadino Mountains, and put them on our staff," announced Fritz Coleman, KNBC LA's weatherman. "I made a few calls and found the tribes were at the bottom of it. And on Saturday, Dec. 4, at the LA Ski Dazzle Show at the Convention Center (1201 South Figueroa St), skiers have a chance to thank the Southern California tribes for the ceremony that brought economic lifting snow to the mountain communities," reported Olympic skier, Suzy Chaffee, the tribal event host.

*(Photo: <http://www.Send2Press.com/photoSP/Ute-Dancer.jpg>)

Rene Doctor, a Tahitian married to Louis Doctor (Navajo/Dine), who was a part of the ceremony, told Chaffee that, "At dawn on November 15, members of Chumash on Mt. Wilson and other tribes, like the Cabizon, praying independently, and as well as an Abenaki and Lakota, united with the other brilliant colors of humanity - Whites, Blacks, and Yellow - totaling 200, and performed a Big Bear Medicine Wheel Ceremony, singing sacred prayer songs in the eight cardinal points encircling the San Bernadinos, with Big Bear at the center."

"Following the devastating fires last year, the purpose," said ceremonial leader, Bennie LeBeau (Shoshone), "was to help the drought-ridden region, especially the trees and springs. Lakota Kim Langbecker, who brought the Bushmen of the Kalahari, LeBeau and the Big Bear Community together at a September "Journey of the Heart Gathering" in there. "I honor the White People of the Big Bear Community for doing most the work to inspire these snow blessings," said LeBeau.

The LA show is the finale of a national "Salute To America's First Caretakers" at Ski and Snowboard Shows/Expos in Denver, Seattle, and Sacramento. In appreciation for the ski areas sharing the skiing with tribal youth, their spiritual leaders have led snowdances in each of those regions, which resulted in some of the best early snow in America ever! This year, California's snow, ("thanks to Creator," say tribes), both in the San Bernadinos and Mammoth, (first to have a Native ski program in schools), has been the most abundant and early.

At Saturday's ski show presentations at 12:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m., a united group of some of Southern California's most magnificent dancers, singers, drummers (many skiers), representing the San Manuel and Pala Tribes, as well as Shoshone and Doctor's Rock Pine Drum, led by Akima Castenada (Coastal Band Chumash), along with LaBeau, will share their earth-honoring dances and sustainable wisdom. This dream of partnering ski areas with California's First Caretakers, came out of Chaffee's honoring Akima (and Santa Barbara) last April, for being a father of Earth Day as a junior high school student. A star on "Dr Quinn Medicine Woman" and California Ventures' "Golden Dreams" story of the First Californians with Whoopie Goldberg, Castenada became NVF's West coast leader, hoping to inspire the same gracious opportunities for tribal youth here. Ski areas have been call "models of the President's Healthier US Initiative on behalf of the Indian Country," by Indian press, which Native Voices Foundation (NVF) was chosen to spearheaded.

Leading LA's Salute to "California's First Caretakers" will be a team of "Environmental Champions," led by Gary Petersen of BioConverter, who is exploring a collaboration between Governor Arnold's Hydrogen Highway and the California Tribes, including discussions with fellow saluter William F. Cody

(Blackfeet), a descendent of Buffalo Bill. Penny McCoy, (Chaffee's Olympic teammate), now a Mammoth Mountain owner and author, will also be speaking from the heart, and signing her eye opening book, "Winning is Everything, But..." Plus there may be surprise salutes by other eco activist stars as well as Olympians, who want to coach Native kids in skiing and all sports, including at the San Diego Olympic Training Center, announced Pasadena-based Olympic Alumni Association President John Naber at the Utah Games.

This Ski Show Tour happened thanks to Olympic skier Billy Kidd (Abenaki) who suggested that Chaffee, NVF co-founder, organize a Ute snow ceremony at last year's Denver Expo in appreciation to ten Colorado ski communities for sharing skiing/boarding with their tribes. Many "snow farmers," like Aspen, were blessed with up to 15 feet of economic-lifting snow, which made believers out of over 100 U.S. ski areas who want to Salute their first Americans this season.

This translated into NVF's heart-warming Thanksgiving world announcement that U.S. Ski Areas are welcoming their tribes back to over a quarter million acres of their beloved, exquisite ancestral mountains to ski and snowboard. "This partnership with the tribes is strengthening the future of skiing and helping keep 'winters cool,'" said Michael Berry, President of the National Ski Areas Association, who authored their "Sustainable Slopes" ski program.

Another bulletin: "I just came from the Laguna and Acoma Pueblos, where they were expressing gratitude for the snowblessings that are lifting their drought-challenged lands and ski areas in Arizona and New Mexico, " said Coleen Lloyd (Cherokee), designer of the hot Native American "Homeland Security" t-shirt.

"The tribes, especially youth, are thrilled with Ski Dazzle producers Judy Gray and Jim Foster are making this an "awesome" celebration by offering complimentary ski show tickets to tribal members at "will call" on Salute Saturday," said Chaffee. NVF's Salute is made possible by the Paiute Tribe (near Mammoth), "Mercury in Retrograde" documentary producers (free mercury testing at NVF booth near climbing wall), NUTIVA (nutritional hemp alternative to fish), Crystal Springs Golf Resort and Spa (near NYC), TPTs/Westwindworld.com T-shirts, and SweetLeaf Stevia (discovered by Brazilian tribes, keeping much of world lean and diabetes free).

*(Photo caption:

Tribal (N. Ute Torrance Tapoof) youth joyfully snowdancing and skiing/snowboarding at Aspen and 100 ski areas across America this season. credit: Carol Miller photography)

For more information: <http://www.nativevoices.org>

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