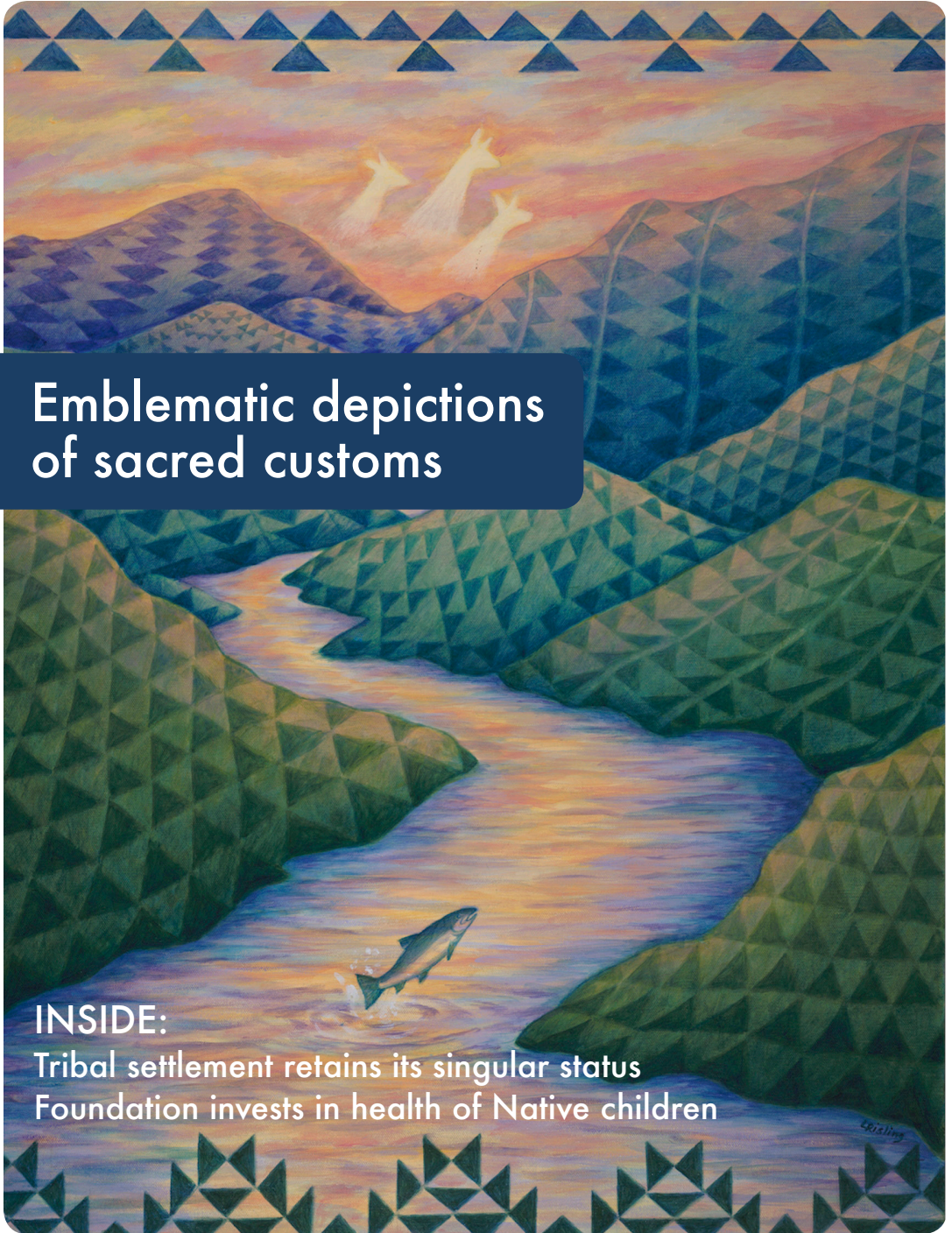




Celebrating Food, Art & Culture



Emblematic depictions of sacred customs

INSIDE:

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Skaters accelerate sport's popularity



Skateboarding has outstripped the traditional sport of baseball in popularity on some reservations, as more kids participate in board competitions than in Little League.

The sport is an outgrowth of Hawaiian wave surfing. Since the early 1950s, when fans first attached roller skate wheels to boards for "surfing" when waves were low, skateboarding has experienced periods of popularity.

The sport's physical demands have especially drawn young Native American men to form teams for competition. Young women, too, are attending skating schools and forming competitive teams.

These competitors are encouraged by Native American communities and companies that support attendance at skateboard schools, host skateboard competitions and build skate parks. Over the years, events such as the annual All Nations Skate Jam (allnationsskatejam.com) draw competitors ranging from Bryant Chapo (Navajo), a semiprofessional, to young Armando Lerma, a member of the Agua Caliente band of Cahuilla Indians.

In addition to the skaters themselves, Native artists and entrepreneurs have become vital contributors to the rising skate culture.

Graphic artists, many of whom are also skaters, decorate skate decks and ramps with bold, modern renditions of ancient tribal icons.

These artists have been joined by musicians and filmmakers whose work is inspired by the sport and skating culture.

Other Native American skaters have become entrepreneurs. They include Todd Harder (Creek), who founded Native Skate to produce skateboards that foster knowledge of Native heritage by graphically displaying words in tribal languages on the decks. Jim Murphy (Lenni Lenape) founded Wounded Knee Skateboards and partnered with Harder in founding Nibwaakaawin (Wisdom), a Native American nonprofit whose mission is to "foster creativity, build courage, enable cultural identity and pride, and promote nonviolent and healthy physical activity through skateboarding."

The result of all this combined energy is a sport and culture growing in popularity and size.



Foundation invests in health of Native children



Children participate in one of the 2016 NB3Fit Day activities. Photo courtesy of the NB3 Foundation

Founded by Notah Begay III – a four-time PGA Tour winner and the only full-blooded Native American to play on the tour – the Notah Begay III Foundation has morphed from a youth program about golf into one addressing childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes.

Since its inception, the NB3 Foundation has invested:

- \$2.3 million in more than 59 Native communities in 14 states to implement strategies for combating childhood obesity
- \$7 million in nutrition education programming, food access pilot projects, community garden and traditional foods projects, evidence-based sport programming, physical activity/sports camps and clinics, technical assistance to tribal communities and nonprofits, and research and evaluation work with the Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health

One of NB3's signature events is the now-annual NB3FIT Week. In 2017, the event will take place Nov. 5-11. More than 12,000 young people are expected to participate. A year earlier, 10,000 youths from 115 tribes and Native communities in 26 states participated in a full day of runs, walks, stick games, basketball, skateboarding, kickboxing, volleyball, lacrosse, field days, obstacle courses, kickball, dance-offs, hiking, biking, swimming, boot camps, Zumba, obstacle courses and health fairs.

To learn more about NB3FIT Week and to register your community youth activity, visit www.nb3foundation.org/nb3fit-week.

Childhood diabetes



One in three American children born in the year 2000 will develop diabetes sometime in their lifetime.

American Indian and Alaska Native youth are nine times more likely to be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes than their white peers.



NB3 Foundation highlights

- Served 24,000 Native children and families in 14 states since 2005
- Received the 2012 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Patterson Award for Excellence in Sports Philanthropy
- Raised more than \$4.5 million from The Challenge, NB3F's signature golf fundraiser, since 2008
- Launched "Native Strong: Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures," a national initiative to reduce Native American childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes, in 2013
- Selected in 2015 as a national partner to help implement Seeds of Native Health (see related article on page 6), a \$5 million campaign to improve Native American nutrition
- In 2015, launched NB3 Native Youth Programs, a youth sports-centered program promoting healthy, active living among Native youth through obesity-prevention activities and youth leadership development opportunities
- Awarded the Navajo Nation, one organization in Arizona and seven tribes or organizations in New Mexico up to \$100,000 for 2 1/2 years to help eliminate the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages

CULTURAL FINE ART

Emblematic depictions of sacred customs

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The works of the three artists featured in this edition of *Unity* possess common-themed images of ancestral traditions and symbolisms true to their cultural heritage.



"1492" by IceBear

ICEBEAR

IceBear's birth home was Cape Croker Reserve on Lake Huron (a part of the Ojibway Nation). He is now a resident of Vancouver Island, off the west coast of Canada. As a teenager, he attended the Toronto Artist's Workshop, and later Sheridan College and the Ontario College of Art. This led to a successful commercial art career, but eventually IceBear's desire to create fine art became his passion and primary way of artistic expression.

IceBear says his art is primarily acrylic because of the vibrancy of colors and textural qualities he achieves, but on occasion he paints in oil or watercolor. "1492," he says, represents an homage to the year when the "First People" of this continent lost their cultures and customs to strangers. The dramatic spray of color across the canvas represents the indigenous people being forced to find a new way of life. An abstract figure resembling a warrior in flight metaphorically makes the statement, "From out of deep despair, I found I could fly."



"Fancy Dancer" by IceBear

"Fancy Dancer," says IceBear, "is not just a painting, but an experience." Anyone who has attended a powwow will relate to the flash of color, the swirl of motion and the moving cadence of the drums. IceBear has also created sculptures of various materials. His sculpture, "Nautilus ~ 432" consists of

assorted high-tech composite materials. IceBear says the spiral shape represents an important element of aboriginal art and design.

IceBear's art has evolved from referencing his Native American heritage to abstract expression with elements of nature. His work has been displayed internationally, including in the U.S., and is owned by collectors across four continents.



"Nautilus ~ 432" by IceBear

LYN RISLING

Lyn Risling's native heritage is the Karuk people on her father's side. She grew up in central California and spent part of her summers with relatives at the Hoopa Reservation. Risling's mother was an illustrator and painter and other relatives were basket weavers, potters and regalia makers. She says these influences fueled her interest in drawing at an early age.



"Out of Chaos Comes Renewal, Balance and Harmony" by Lyn Risling



"Earth Treasures" by Lyn Risling

After college, Risling moved back to Northern California and became more involved with her cultural traditions through ceremony, basket weaving and language. The more she painted, the more her art reflected her experiences and involvement in cultural ceremonies. Many of her paintings incorporate traditional basket

designs and those designs become part of her landscapes of mountains, rivers, oceans and skies.

Risling says "Earth Treasures" depicts the beauty of traditional baskets with the deep and warm colors of autumn.

"Out of Chaos Comes Renewal, Balance and Harmony" illustrates how the world gets out of balance and how power and spirit restore it. The cool hues of the outer swirls lead to the calming effect of the warm center.

"Hurry Up Spring Salmon" (on the cover of *Unity*) represents a Karuk prayer that is recited during wintertime. This piece portrays the prayers for the blessings associated with springtime, including the salmon and the hope of new life.



"Creation" by Lyn Risling

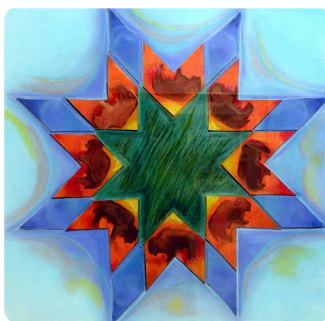
Authentic photos of the universe and celestial skies inspired "Creation," says Risling. "It made me think about creation and the power and life that comes out of it.

"Through my art, I try to express the vibrant beauty of our culture

as old and new expressions of life," says Risling. Her work has been used throughout Native American communities in language revival materials, and in cultural and educational materials.

NADEMA AGARD

Nadema Agard was born and raised in New York City, the daughter of Lakota-Powhatan and Cherokee parents. She obtained a Bachelor of Science in art education from New York University and a Master of Arts in art and education from Teacher's College, Columbia University. Eventually, Agard returned to her maternal and paternal ancestral homelands in the Carolinas, Virginia and the Dakotas.



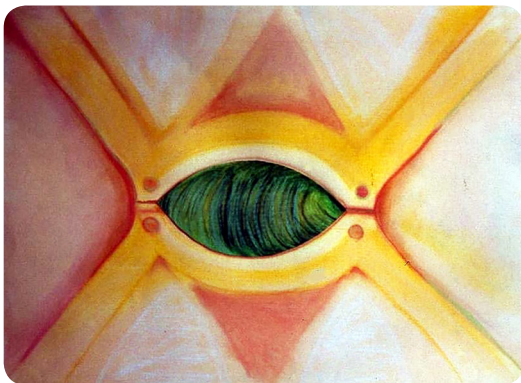
"Starblanket Heaven" by Nadema Agard

Agard says the three works featured here were inspired by the traditional images on rawhide containers called parfleches (Native American rawhide containers used for storage) and star blankets made by relatives.

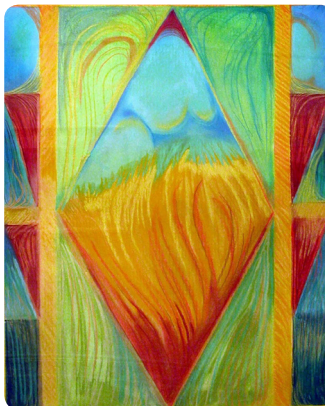
"Starblanket Heaven" is the result of a dawn encounter with several buffalo walking along a snow bluff in North Dakota. The placement of the buffalo in a star blanket format is an expression of her tribal culture.

In the Catholic church, the Virgin Mary is often depicted inside a mandorla (a pointed oval). Swirling grass within the mandorla-shaped opening of a parfleche is portrayed in "Prairie Horizon Parfleche."

Within the geometric shape of "Prairie Parfleche," Agard says she incorporated the prairie grasslands of the Dakotas. "It combines two different cultural perspectives: one of traditional geometric abstractions of the Native American culture, and the other, a Western European rendering of the natural world."



"Prairie Horizon Parfleche" by Nadema Agard



"Prairie Parfleche" by Nadema Agard

Agard says her work, which incorporates contemporary and traditional aspects of the culture, is a gesture of love and respect for Native American communities. Her work has been exhibited across the country.

Planting the seeds of good nutrition



“When Indian Country lost its ability to feed itself, through whatever means, we lost that part of ourselves that supports our ability to thrive. It is only by regaining our foods will we be able to restore our health, our resilience as peoples and secure the stability and diversification within our own communities and local economies.” – Janie Hipp, director, Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative, University of Arkansas School of Law

Native Americans suffer from type 2 diabetes at a rate more than double the percentage of whites. More than 30 percent of Native Americans are obese; overall, Natives are 1 1/2 times more likely to become obese than whites.

To make matters worse, poverty is pervasive among many Native communities. In 2014, according to the Pew Research Center, one in four Native Americans and Alaska Natives were living in poverty.

Although sobering, statistics such as these have spurred action among the Native American community. Over the years, grassroots efforts to combat dietary and health issues, and create access to healthy food, have surfaced. So, too, has a national campaign called the Seeds of Native Health, which focuses on strategizing and implementing a multitude of activities. The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community – a federally recognized Native American tribe in Minnesota – has committed \$10 million to improve the nutrition of Native Americans through its Seeds of Native Health campaign.

Seeds of Native Health has partnered with the First Nations Development Institute and the Notah Begay III Foundation (see related article on page 3) to administer \$2.5 million in grants to 51 organizations such as the Akwesasne Boys & Girls Club in New York. The \$39,000 grant helps to support that club's Together Raising Awareness for Indian Life program, which teaches children ages 8 to 12 about food sustainability and growth.

In 2017, SMSC hosted its second Conference on Native American Nutrition in Prior Lake, Minnesota. Much like the inaugural conference, the 2017 four-day event in mid-September consisted of breakout sessions led by indigenous experts and academics, tribal leaders, Native practitioners and public health workers across the U.S. and abroad.

Seeds of Native Health's grants to organization's and nutrition conference are just two of its many initiatives. Visit seedsofnativehealth.org and <https://shakopeedakota.org> to learn more.

Major support

Aside from SMSC, First Nations Development Institute and the Notah Begay III Foundation, Seeds of Native Health's other partners are:

- American Diabetes Association
- American Heart Association
- AmeriCorps VISTA
- Better Way Foundation
- Center for Indian Country Development at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis
- MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
- Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
- University of Arkansas School of Law's Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative
- University of Minnesota

Hardy symbol of Native nourishment



In early Hawaii, taro was a prized food staple and medicinal aid. The cultivation of the plant was central to Hawaiian culture and identity.

The taro plant is a perennial herb with long heart- or arrowhead-shaped leaves. Before it can be eaten, every part of the plant must be cooked; this breaks down the needle-like crystals in the leaves and corm (stems where starch is stored). If eaten raw, taro will cause burning and stinging in the mouth and throat.

Hawaiians cook the immature leaves of the plant in water or steam them. Those leaves are served as greens, sometimes cooked with coconut milk or in a leaf packet.

The corms are eaten baked, boiled or steamed, or cooked and mashed with water to make poi – the dish most often associated with taro. People raise taro to obtain this valuable starchy root.

Though no longer Hawaii's main staple food, taro is regaining popularity because of its much-touted health benefits (high levels of fiber, vitamin E, potassium and magnesium, among others). These days, demand is outpacing supply in part due to development that has eliminated many of Hawaii's taro patches. Efforts are under way, in some areas, to reclaim the land needed to grow taro.

Tender Taro Root Cooked in Coconut Milk

Recipe courtesy of allrecipes.com

- 2 1/2 cups coconut milk
- 1 pound raw taro root, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 3/4 cup white sugar
- 1/4 cup palm sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup unsweetened coconut cream

Bring the coconut milk to a boil in a saucepan; reduce the heat to medium-low to maintain a simmer. Cook the taro root in the simmering coconut milk until tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Add the white sugar, palm sugar and salt to the mixture; stir until the sugars are entirely dissolved into the mixture. Stir the coconut cream into the mixture; continue cooking just until hot. Ladle into individual bowls to serve.

Yield: 4 servings

Tribal settlement retains its singular status



Acoma Pueblo sits on a mesa 365 feet above the desert floor, with no running water or electricity available.

When the Spaniards came upon Acoma Pueblo in the 1500s, they marveled at its fortress-like seclusion — the Pueblo of Acoma (now a federally recognized Native American tribe) had positioned themselves in a towering community virtually inaccessible to raiders.

What makes the pueblo perhaps more notable than the resolve required to build such a citadel, or even its stark beauty, is its status as North America's longest continuously inhabited settlement. Acoma Pueblo, also known as Acoma Sky City, is still the sacred center of this ancient people.

Built atop a sheer-walled, sandstone bluff in a valley studded with sacred, towering monoliths, Acoma Pueblo now covers 431,664 acres and is home to 4,800 tribal members with more than 250 dwellings, none of which have electricity, sewer or water.

Although most tribal members don't live here full time, many return for special cultural gatherings. Eight annual festivals – including the San Esteban Feast-Harvest Dance in September – draw tribal pilgrims and visitors who enjoy Native dishes such as green-chili stew with lamb, fresh corn and wheat pudding, and Acoma horno bread pulled fresh and fragrant from outdoor adobe ovens.

Also in September, tribal members and visitors participate in the Annual Tour de Acoma Bike Race,

a 100-, 50- and 25-mile bike challenge covering the Acoma and Laguna Pueblo reservations.

Twenty-five years ago, the Pueblo of Acoma established the Acoma Business Enterprises 25.

Its companies include:

- Sky City Casino/Hotel
- Sky City RV Park
- Huwak'a Restaurant
- Sky City Travel Center
- Sky City Cultural Center
- Acoma Big Game Trophy Hunt
- Sky City Communications
- Acoma Concrete Restoration

Acoma Pueblo is a national treasure as Macchu Picchu is to Peru and the Mayan ruins are to Guatemala, but this treasure is alive. The significance of this fact is evident everywhere atop the mesa. It is also in the highly prized Acoma pottery that tribal women still create by coiling, as their matriarchs have for centuries. These artists still hand-grind the shards of the pots before adding them to the clay. In essence, the pots are vessels for not only water and grains but for history and place as well.

To learn more about Acoma Pueblo, (which is the National Trust for Historic Preservation's only Native American site), visit www.acomaskycity.org/home.html.

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