

C-FAR NEWSLETTER

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Dance Of Death

Despite encyclopaedic rules outlining properly respectful comportment for attendees, Indian powwows did not exist 100 years ago. The wet blankets at the **Association of American Geographers** describe the events as, "are neither ancient nor traditional. ... The powwow is a pan-Indian gathering that promotes 'Indian' identity and culture (derived in large part from Plains cultures) at the expense of local, tribal cultures. With some fairly minor regional variations, powwows have become established in a standardized form throughout the U.S. and parts of Canada. [In addition to ersatz plains culture, the homogenized contrivances are an admixture of highland games and Wild West Show with a bit of the military parade thrown in for good measure: The powwow assumed its present form with returning native soldiers after WWII] ... The **Grand Entry** is led by a colour guard, followed by others in a prescribed order. The colour guard usually consists of one or more veterans or active service members, often in uniform and with medals and honours displayed; usually a feathered staff and one or more flags are carried. Veterans are accorded great honour, and a veterans' dance, during which the spectators are expected to stand and remain silent, leads off the dancing." Others are openly contemptuous: "**Russell Means**, whose efforts with the **American Indian Movement** 30 years ago sparked a widespread interest among Indians in cultural traditions, says contemporary powwows actually pervert those traditions. 'What is called powwow has totally raped the plains Indian culture,' he says. 'Indians, led by urban Indians who were relocated by the federal government, grabbed a hold of the Plains Indian culture and totally raped it. There isn't any semblance of the way it used to be, other than the feathers and bells. Even the songs have changed. It's a sideshow now. The dancers are painting themselves up to look like **KISS**, and they're dressing up like clowns. To me, it's embarrassing.'" Plains Indian culture, an eagle feather was earned by "counting coup." In the perpetual inter-tribal wars of pre-Columbian America, a daring man would sneak up behind his enemy and, rather than kill him, simply touch him. This "coup" humiliated the recipient as much as it advanced the status of the one now eligible to wear the feather of the noble, heroic bird. There is no modern equivalent to earning the meritorious eagle feather, but that is not to say they are not in circulation: **Terry Antoine**, a member of the **Cowichan Band of the Coastal Salish** tribe, openly sold his beadwork on the powwow circuit -- his lucrative sideline in eagle parts was more covert. On October 26, 2001, he was convicted on four counts of contravening the U.S. **Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act** and one count of illegal importation. A search of his Duncan, B.C. home turned up parts from 124 eagles, including 90 pairs of talons. Parts of 29 bald eagles and a golden eagle were recovered from his storage locker near Seattle. For this traffic, Mr. Antoine was sentenced to 24 months. Again, on February 2 this year, a woman walking her dog on land belonging to the **Burrard Band** in North Vancouver stumbled across the mutilated remains of 26 eagles. Indian spokesmen reacted with instant outrage, suggesting that someone was trying to frame them. The band's director of economic development said: "It's a horrifying event that's out of sync with any of our traditions. The way that the eagle and any animal fits into our society is very, very sacred." The argument would be more persuasive if Indians themselves opposed an institution resting firmly on the slaughter of eagles. The powwow circuit operates from Vancouver to Florida, Newfoundland to California, and all points between. Although Canadian and American wildlife officials save recovered eagle carcasses for distribution to tribes, according to **Audubon Magazine** (March 2001), "the 1,500 dead eagles

distributed to Native Americans by the **Eagle Repository** are snapped up so fast, there's a three-and-a-half-year waiting period for whole birds. The waiting period for a pair of wings is a year; for 10 loose feathers, six months. By law, the stuff must be used only for 'the religious purposes of Indian tribes.' But the Indians sell some of it illegally. Much of it is used in costumes worn on the 'powwow circuit.' Indians frequently argue that commercial powwows are part of their religion, but they're no more religious than rodeos. Some dancers make their livings going from powwow to powwow, competing for cash prizes. The **Mohegan Wigwam Powwow** at Uncasville, Connecticut, is typical, offering 'over \$50,000 in prizes for Dance Competition.' Powwow contestants are judged, in part, by the feathers they wear. During the 'grand entry' dance at the annual Albuquerque powwow, you can see the remains of at least 20,000 eagles bouncing around the floor at one time." (**Audubon Magazine**, March 2001)

Meet The Club

Trial by ordeal is normally so remote to the European mind as to survive only as a novelty footnote in histories of the witch trials, but progress ain't what it used to be. Just lately, trial by ordeal is making a comeback with scattershot press reports of such horrors as the mutilated body of a small African boy recovered from the river Thames, the first clear evidence that the African practice of *muti* (ritual harvest of human body parts for tribal shamanism), has taken root nicely in the U.K. Nearer home, there have been exorcism deaths among a Montreal Hispanic "spiritual community," and, when an unspecified number of complaints were lodged by adolescent native females, a Manitoba native "healer" was eventually arrested for subjecting their external reproductive parts to rather a too close scrutiny over rather too many years. Once celebrated for its rationality, the contemporary European mind is once again susceptible to the rankest humbug -- particularly when framed in the facile hokum of jolly **Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Noble Savage**. We shouldn't confuse logic with hard heartedness, but it is a misconception much encouraged by the deep thinkers in the anti-racist trade. Whether it's swilling a **Pepsi** atop a whale you've just aced with a small nuclear device or muscling the neighbours to conform to your novel interpretation of long-forgotten rites, the ambitious "spiritual leader," will discover nothing expands the compass of potential harm like folding your activities in an ethnocultural blind. "An 18-year-old man has died during a **Coast Salish** initiation ceremony in a British Columbia longhouse. ... The [**Penelakut**] band has been co-operative but are tight-lipped about their sacred activities. ... This is not the first time **Coast Salish** initiation rites have been in the news. In 1992, in what was believed to be the first case of its kind, a **B.C. Supreme Court** judge awarded a 35-year-old Duncan man \$12,000 in damages for being initiated against his will into the **Coast Salish** traditions of spirit-dancing ... **David Thomas** alleged he was kidnapped in 1988 and taken to a longhouse, where he was held for five days. [Note that Mr. Thomas is not specifically identified as a native.] Also in 1988, the coroner's service concluded that spirit-dancing initiation rituals at the **Cowichan** band's **Clem-Clem** longhouse in Duncan resulted in the death of a 35-year-old native Indian man. The coroner stated that **Gordon Leon Goldsmith** died from acute tracheobronchitis caused by malnutrition and dehydration after four days of initiation ceremonies. ... Mr. Goldsmith was also found to have sustained extensive bruising in the area of the back, abdomen and chest. The coroner's report stated that 'deep tissue bruising ... is associated with flagellation with a ceremonial type of club to which deer-hoof rattles are attached.'" (**National Post**, January 5, 2005) At the same time, the **BC Coroners Service** is probing two other initiation deaths:

Marianne Edwards, 36, and Clifford Anthony George Sam, 18, died while being initiated as spirit dancers at different native communities on southern Vancouver Island. " (Globe and Mail, January 14, 2005) Elsewhere, the same issue of the newspaper reports that fully 40% of the country's foster children are natives. **Assembly of First Nations** chief, **Phil Fontaine** naturally blames this outcome on the federal cap on **Indian Affairs** spending.

Lloyd Bucher: Hero of the Cold War

One of the most dramatic events of the **Cold War** happened in January 1968. Code name "Click Beetle" was nowhere as successful as one of those **James Bond** novels. It involved a broken-down army cargo transport from the **Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet** refitted for a super secret espionage mission. Unlike the **Tom Clancey** novels, it was a spy ship that did not fool anyone. The listening devices and electronic antennas made it stick out like a sore thumb. To make matters worse, it was unarmed except for a few .50-calibre machine guns. It would be like putting an old man in a soldier's uniform and telling the enemy that he is non-combatant because of his age. One would think that intelligence agencies have common sense? The human factor is the last concern of the bureaucrat or so it seems. The **U.S.S. Pueblo** was to become a victim of communist aggression, thanks to the ineptness and indifference of the **Robert McNamara** team. The **U.S.S. Pueblo** was a 550-ton, 176-foot long vessel. It had two 500 hp **General Electric** diesel engines. Commander Bucher did everything in his power to make the ship seaworthy and survivable in combat. He requested heavier armament but could only requisition four .50-calibre machine guns. He did not have a professional crew from naval intelligence so that McNamara could save money. The 83 crewmen who signed aboard in 1967 could hardly believe their eyes. It was like the **Jack Lemon** movie, **The Wackiest Ship in the Army**. Before he set sail, Commander Bucher tried once again to requisition two 20-mm automatic cannons, but was told instead to point his .50-calibre machine guns down in a non-aggressive attitude.

Pete Bucher was born in 1927 and was one of the real boys from **Boys' Town**. He had lost his parents and his adoptive parents. After this traumatic event, he remembered seeing the **Spencer Tracy** movie, **Boys' Town**, and decided to write a letter to the real Father Flanagan. Father Flanagan sent him a one-way ticket to **Boys' Town**. He never forgot the kindness of Father Flanagan or the **Roman Catholic Church**. He remained a good Catholic all of his life. **Pete Bucher** joined the **United States Navy** in 1945 as a seaman recruit and graduated from the **San Diego Training Centre**. He had his heart set on submarines. He became an officer on diesel submarines. From 1961 to 1964, he was executive officer of the **U.S.S. Ronquil**. When Admiral Rickover phased in nuclear submarines, **Pete Bucher** was passed over for nuclear submarine duty in preference for officers with skills in nuclear technology. **Pete Bucher** decided to transfer to another branch of the Navy. After seeing the **U.S.S. Pueblo**, he overcame his disappointment. Having a sense of adventure, he saw the upgrading of the ship as a challenge, but never dreamed that he would become a victim of the McNamara team's unprofessional management. In January 1968, the **U.S.S. Pueblo** left Sasebo, Japan. Its destination was the North Korean coastline. The mission was electronic surveillance. Twelve days later, four Russian-made **P4** North Korean torpedo boats went to intercept the **Pueblo**. They were joined by two **SO-1** gunboats. Commander Bucher took evasive action and reminded the North Koreans that he was 15 miles off the North Korean coast and inside international waters. The communist forces began harassing and threatening the out-classed and out-numbered ship. Commander Bucher sent an urgent message to his superiors for help but, for some reason, the **United States** did not consider one of their spy ships to be a priority for any kind of naval or

air protection. In short, they left a very conspicuous spy ship vulnerable to capture and expected the commanding officer of an unarmed cargo-type ship to win a naval battle against superior forces. Commander Bucher put up a useless fight while his crew was attempting to destroy intelligence equipment and documents. Inevitably, after one crewman was killed and many wounded, he surrendered. The **Pueblo** remains a captured prize near Pyongyang, North Korea. The **U.S.S. Pueblo** is moored next to a monument dedicated to "Brave Koreans" of the Hermit Kingdom who boarded and murdered American merchantmen on the **S.S. General Sherman** in 1866. Unlike the McNamara apologists, many years later, the U.S. sent a Naval-Marine expedition to destroy a number of forts in Korea in retribution. Two hundred and forty-three Koreans were killed, for the loss of only three Marines. Six Marines were awarded the medal of honour during this campaign. This battle was sometimes called the first Korean War.

After 11 months of torture and disappointment that their country had not come to their aid, a letter of apology was written by Commander Bucher in order to save his men's lives. Some intelligence information was, of course, collected from the **Pueblo** and shared with the Soviet Union. Commander Bucher and his men were finally released. Commander Bucher's ordeal was not over, however. After a board of inquiry, it was recommended that Commander Bucher be court martialed for surrendering his ship. Commander Bucher put up a heroic moral defence of his and his men's actions during the inquiry. It should have been the high command and McNamara on trial, not Commander Bucher. In the end, **Secretary of the Navy, John Chafee**, nullified the recommendation for court martial. Commander Bucher was awarded a Purple Heart for his battle against the North Koreans and retired with the rank of full Commander. Commander Bucher died this year. We will always honour his memory. He was a patriot, a good Catholic, a hero and a freedom fighter. --**Urmias A. Toming**

Go Away, Little Girl

Ever since its 1971 inception, politicians have accused Canadians of wilfully misconstruing multiculturalism: "You idiots, it's not about singing, folk dancing, cutie-pie ethnicity." Indeed it is not and full multicultural immersion is for the lower orders. The country club by the Rideau set creep out of their monochromatic Gatineau enclaves to attend those singing, folk dancing, ethno-photo-ops and haggle over the vote/grant fund ratio. In equity parlance, Majority culture is compelled to embrace minority culture while minority culture submits regular critiques. Sometimes, as when the Khadrs, Canada's leading **al-Qaeda** family, were investigated by **Child Services**, the tides reverse. Last month, a writ was filed in the **B.C. Supreme Court** against **Mansur Azar** and **Farideh Golzar Azari** on behalf of the infant plaintiff, **Kailey Dawn Hayes**. The case turns on injuries the six-year-old sustained while trick-or-treating with her guardian on Hallowe'en night. As the two approached the Azar/Azari household, "an occupier of the premises answered the door and turned on the porch light, advising they were not receiving trick-or-treaters," the writ states. "The occupier then turned off the porch light, leaving the walkway in darkness. As the infant plaintiff walked back toward the street level, she fell off the walkway on to the driveway." ... The accident was caused solely by the negligence of the defendants, the writ says, by failing to provide adequate lighting and an adequate handrail, failing to indicate the drop-off and failing to take reasonable care to ensure the infant plaintiff would be reasonably safe exiting the premises. The girl suffered a broken arm, an injured hip, headaches, multiple abrasions, shock and anxiety. ... The writ has yet to be served on the defendants, who are out of town." (National Post, February 3, 2005)