

TO: All ICA Member Station Managers
FROM: Joseph R. Orozco, KIDE-FM
SUBJECT: A Great Big Native Celebration, For Your Consideration
DATE: October 28, 1991

With the Quincentennial of you-know-who imminently upon us, many Tribes and Native organizations are making plans to use this time to express their dismay, anger, frustration and mixed emotions. Many people have given great thought on how best to demonstrate these feelings with pride and dignity. There are many good ideas that dovetail into the national theme. This, I feel, is good. I see it as both a healing process and an opportunity to set the national stage for a celebration far greater than any "pure blooded American" ever dreamed of.

While the American people ceremonially flog themselves into a frenzy, we Native People can plan a positive celebration that the world will have no choice but to endorse. Let our People prepare and promote, with our collective energies, a Ten Thousand Year Celebration. This could be held during 1993 or 1994, or both years, or a decade of Novembers, whatever it takes. (The reason for a 10,000 Year Celebration, rather than a 100,000 Year or a Forever Celebration, is that most non-Natives can't comprehend 100,000 years of anything. Ten Thousand Years is a number they more likely could swallow. What the heck?!

Anyway, our celebration, I feel, should be positive in nature. I don't feel we should use our energy toward efforts that put down non-Natives, or in any way make them feel any more guilty than they may already feel (if they even do). Rather, I feel, we should let them feel like they really missed out on a special way of life.

Let everyone know who we still are and how we still care for life in a good way.

Let everyone know we want to fix things on the right road in a good way.

Let everyone feel that they are invited to celebrate with us in a good way.

Let everyone know that yes, we see, we feel and we are concerned about all the bad and dangerous things that are hurting and threatening human beings and all our relations.

Let everyone realize how well we remember our past and how our memory links us to a continuum of belief that has given us the strength to take on the responsibility of caring for our people and the land that sustains us.

Let everyone know that this is something we'd be doing with or without Columbus or any other group of people from anywhere else--our world was and is complete.

This celebration could be so dynamic it would almost be sacred. In some ways it may be sacred, as we remember things that only we can. However, because this celebration is a part of our world, and non-Natives are now a part of our world, we can't leave them out. By welcoming non-Natives to celebrate with us, we are confronting a wound of long duration in a way that shows a strong sense of self-esteem.

If all of us agree to seriously pursue this idea it will be grand. If only some do and some don't, that will be alright, too. In either case, all out efforts have to come from all levels of each Tribe, Band, Group, Village, Rancheria, Organization and Family. If this idea is promoted in the right way, Willard Scott of the Today Show will be doing his weather report from a different reservation or tribal building each day for several months. If this idea is promoted right, several Tribal spokespersons will be invited to do interviews about their 10,000 Year Celebration from local, regional and national TV shows, radio shows, newspapers and magazines.

How each Tribe or Group chooses to organize a 10,000 Year Celebration is up to them. As for when and where to promote the theme, I feel, it should be promoted by everyone at all times. Councilmembers most surely should promote their plans at all meetings, conferences, on Capitol Hill or whenever they are in groups of off-reservation people. Likewise, all Tribal department managers should do the same. All crafts people should display their Tribal Celebration posters at powwows and trade shows. The ideas of how to promote this idea are endless. Everyone needs to send the message. We, Native Radio Stations, will of course be making daily announcements on the air.

Native writers, singers, poets, dancers, artists, sculptors, carvers, weavers, thinkers, philosophers, educators, beadworkers, silversmiths, potters, doodlers and business owners need to add the 10,000 Year Celebration theme to their work. Everywhere we, and Americans, turn or tune in, there'll be the 10,000 Year Celebration promotion.

In the Hupa Language "minfang" means the number ten. In the Greek Language, "millenium" means a thousand years. If we Hupas made a cross-cultural alliterative term to promote the 10,000 Year theme, it would be called the "Minfang Millenium." How other Tribes say "ten" could be connected to the "millenium." This would maintain a theme with a common sound. We could hear the difference between the

Memo to ICA Station Managers

Page 3

many Native languages and still have the common action, the common bond.

Last year, I brought the idea of the Min̄ang Millenium to the Hoopa tribal Council. I suggested we could make it a big campaign for our Sovereign Day Celebration. The Tribe was looking for ideas to help promote our area. "So," I said, "let's do something real BIG." Well, they liked the idea, but they couldn't see how big this could be. They wanted to add it to the All Indian Rodeo theme. So I didn't put any more energy into it and the Council sort of forgot about it in the process of everyday stuff like budget restraints.

I kept this idea in mind. As 1991 rolled in, I began to feel that this (1992) is not the year to do a 10,000 Year Celebration. To do it right, we'll need at least 18 months work. So now I say, what the heck, let America do its 500 year thing. They're a flake of time in our collective history. While they're doing their best to celebrate .5 millenium, we can add our opinions to the contrary during '92. All the while, we can be planning for '93, '94 or '95.

During an interview with a KPFA producer back at the Boston conference, it dawned on me that the reason the Min̄ang Millenium did not go over in Hoopa was because we were thinking only about promoting ourselves. This idea belongs to all Native People. I further believe that the collective Native media should be the leading body or the steering committee or the coordinating group of this grand event.

There you have it. I would like to hear or read your comments on this idea. Please respond soon, hopefully by January 1st. Talk it up with friends and family. Have fun in '92. Let's change the World's consciousness after this, for good, forever.

What to you think?