

To acquaint the Ambassadors with other issues facing Indians of the Northwest, Bernie Whitebear, Executive Director of the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation (UIATF), talked the group about the history and work of the Urban Indians of Seattle. He described how the Urban Indians of Seattle took over and occupied an abandoned U.S. Army Fort. Because of the tenacity of the community and the initial risk they took, the old fort is now the site of the Seattle Urban Indian Center and the UIATF.

As we learned last year, a very important aspect of the Program is the interaction between the Ambassadors and the Program Advisors. Joining us in Neah Bay were: Ed Bowen (Coos), retired educator; community activist; and Mary Jo Butterfield (Makah), Community Service Director for the Makah Tribe. Each Advisor made a presentation to the group about their personal views of leadership and how they specifically weave their cultural values into their work and leadership roles.

In preparation for the First Gathering, the Ambassadors were required to read a set of articles and papers on the subject of governance and sovereignty. During the Gathering, the group discussed these readings and the issues surrounding them. This session sparked a good deal of exchange about the similarities among tribes in how they deal with self-governance. The Ambassadors felt they needed more time to talk about the issues of sovereignty especially as they deal with tribal and state government relations. They wanted more explanations on plenary power and clarification on sovereignty. We plan to have more discussion on these issues at future Gatherings.

The AIO staff and Advisors are eagerly preparing for the Second Gathering to be held in Washington, D.C., May 16 to 21. Like last year, Members of Congress and representatives of the President's Cabinet will address the group at the Capitol Building and at the White House. We will hear from important high-profile reporters, Clinton Administration officials, minority leaders and key lobbyists. Throughout the week, the group will meet with national Indian organizations and Indians in key governmental positions who work in Washington on behalf of tribal peoples. In preparation for the Gathering, the Ambassadors will read a set of papers on both Euro-American and Native leadership. We plan to discuss the differences and similarities of these two styles.

In addition, the International Advisors of the Ambassadors Program will meet in Washington on Sunday, May 22 to discuss our plans for the Ambassadors' trip to Bolivia in October. The Advisors will also help AIO with our fundraising strategy for the matching funds that the W.K. Kellogg Foundation requires AIO to generate this year. On Saturday night, the Ambassadors will have the opportunity to meet the International Advisors at a special dinner.

The experiences at Neah Bay and our interactions with the Makah people will be a hallmark for the Ambassadors Program. It will long remain a memory in the hearts and minds of all who participated.