Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Chairman Peter H. Masten, Jr., Hoopa Valley Tribe of Northwestern, California, today announced that his American Indian group will introduce Congressmen, government officials, leaders of national Indian groups and the press of Washington, D. C. to Hoopa tribal cultural and contemporary life Wednesday, March 13 at the National Press Club ballroom from 6-8 p.m.

“We believe it is time that the nation be made aware that the Hoopa Valley Tribe is a distinct cultural, geographic, and political entity,” Masten explained. “My tribe will demonstrate that it is with Hoopa traditional dances in full regalia - some of which is a century old - displays of distinctive Hoopa basket weaving, wood carving, fish net weaving, and a stick athletic game, and a buffet of traditional foods."

Displays, including a colored slide presentation, will also indicate something of modern community life of the northwest California Indian tribe. Photographs will show the progressiveness of the Hoopa health clinic, utility system, and housing complexes.

The Hoopa Valley Tribe has lived in the same location since before the memory of man, Masten said. Scientific tests prove that fire burned in the pits of Hoopa aboriginal homes over 5,000 years ago.

“This gives our group a rich heritage, but one of which the mainstream of America has been unaware. We hope to change that Wednesday evening.”

The name “Hoopa” means, literally, “Where all the trails meet,” said Masten. The valley was created by the Trinity River, the focus of reservation life. It will soon be dotted with dogwood blooms. Some of the other features that will be brought to the attention of non-Hoopas March 13 will be Xonta Nikya (Big Church) and Taikow Nikyao (Big Sweat House) – each a part of traditional Hoopa life.

A number of young Hoopa women at the occasion will wear traditional attire – which includes colorful skirts and ropes of shells around the neck, reminiscent of Polynesia. Men will dance in traditional costumes that will include headdresses that have bright red feather adornment made from countless woodpecker heads.

A buffet of Native foods will include fresh and smoked salmon, acorn soup, and venison. Other food and refreshments will also be served.