

THURSDAY MARCH 15

# A 'Rally for Respect'



Native women stand with their signs in front of the State Capitol in Boise on Friday. (Evelyn Small photos)

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**Dondie Gould (left) and Audrey Gould Bearing sing a victory song after the speakers finish.**

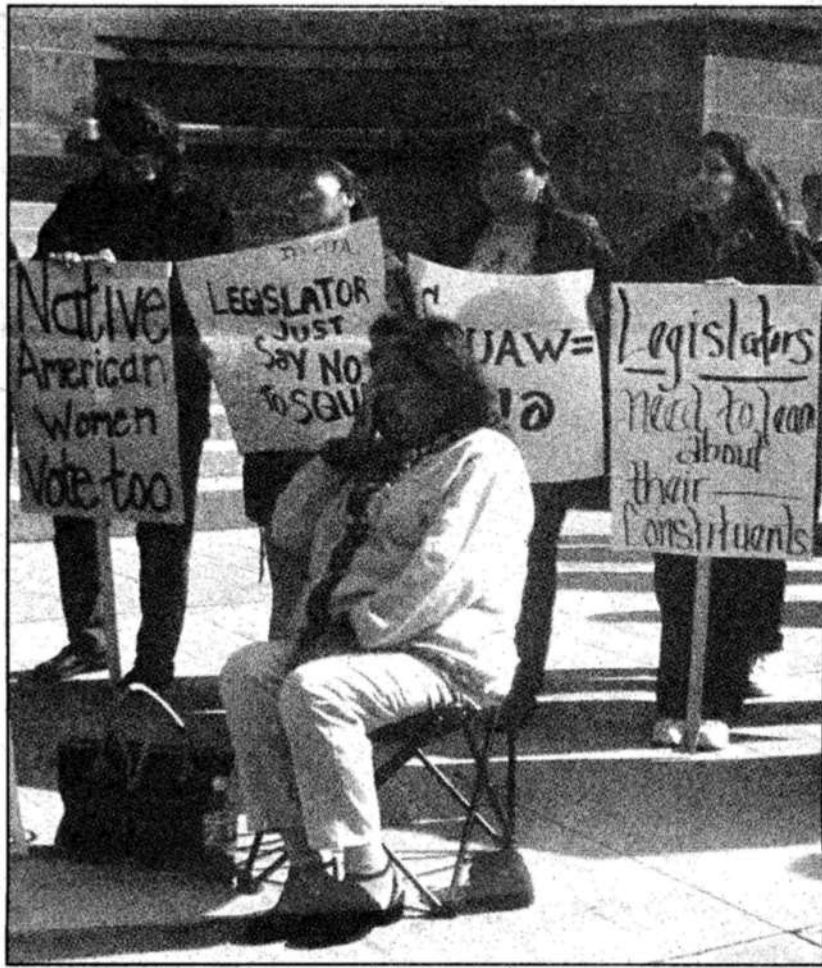
**RALLY, continued**

She said the state of Idaho should be ashamed to perpetuate a negative image. She added the Nez Perce Tribe cares, the other Idaho tribes care and she hoped the Idaho Legislature cares as well.

Leah Slaney, a Nez Perce and a member of the Women of Color Alliance Board, said it's up to this generation to continue the struggle. "On February 26, the Idaho Legislature had an opportunity to address the 's' word. It would have helped bring healing," she said. But she added that Idaho showed that it's still a state of hate and just because Idaho got rid of a sick old man in north Idaho, there's still a lot of problems that need to be addressed.

Slaney said she was deeply offended that Rep. Twila Hornbeck continued to use the word.

Ruby LeClair Bernal, a Boise National Forest employee, was overcome with emotion when she spoke because she's been fighting to remove the word from place names in national forests for a number of years. "I'm over-



**Ruby LeClair Bernal wipes a tear from her eye after she addresses the media during the rally. (Evelyn Small photos)**

whelmed with the support of the tribal people," she said. "Our goal is to get rid of the 's' word and it's sad that our boys still go to public schools and get called 'chief.'"

Lee Flinn of the Idaho Women's Network said the word is racist and also sexist. "It has to go and removing the word is respectful and the compassionate thing to do." She called on the legislators to reconsider their actions and do the right thing.

Cherie Buckner Webb, founder of the Black Heritage Museum, said she's grieving that the legislature hasn't stepped up to do what's right. "You shouldn't mess with

women coming together for change," Webb said.

Laura Schrag, a Hewlett Packard employee, said it's time to build respect and to demonstrate that Idaho is a welcoming state that includes all.

Rev. Elizabeth "Betty" Beck said she calls for justice by "removing the offensive and disrespectful 's' word from the place names of this great state of Idaho." If God made a good world and even humans in his own image, how could anyone use a disrespectful word to describe them and even then claim that is to honor those persons? Anyone who speaks fouls



**Shoshone-Paiute council member Reynalda Taylor addresses the crowd while other speakers await their turn.**

words only disrespects themselves," she said.

Rev. Beck urged the legislators to pass the bill out of committee, send it on its way with a positive step forward by urging those who change the place names in Idaho to do so by replacing the 's' word with the name of one of the many great Native American women of Idaho who are a part of our history.

Former migrant farm worker Gloria Muñoz said the first women on this continent are Native women, "What offends Native women, offends us. There's no other solution, it must go." "The only people saying the word in the dictionary are not Native," she said. "It's time to undo the wrong to Native women — together we stand, divided we fall," Muñoz said.

Eleanor Little, Shoshone-Paiute, said she's an Idaho resident and a legal voter. She's disappointed in the legislators but said, "we're not going to give up because the word is very derogatory."

Little said when she attended Haskell Institute in the 1950's, some people in Lawrence, Kansas called her a squaw, "Please listen to Indian people because when we're called that, it hurts."

RoseAnn Abrahamson, a

Lemhi Shoshone, said there is a great history in Idaho, "Yet here we are 200 years later clinging to an archaic term that is disparaging and hurtful to Native women." She said she brought her little girl Lela to the rally because of her mother who is a traditional Indian woman.

Abrahamson said her mother told her in the Shoshoni language that she was called the 's' word when younger and she didn't like it. She told her gagu (granddaughter) to "go get 'em," when they left for the rally.

Louise E. Dixey, a rally organizer and Shoshone-Bannock, called on legislators to get diversity training and for the governor to appoint Native women to commissions.

She said ancestors of the Boise Valley Shoshone, Paiutes and many descendants still come to Eagle Rock (Castle Rock) in Boise to pray.

Bearing and Dondie Gould then offered a victory song. "We will continue to fight for our daughters and granddaughters," Dixey said.

Sonya Rosario was also a rally organizer. The participants ate lunch at the United Vision for Idaho office in Boise.