

Taino speaker will discuss 'tragedy of 1492'

By MICHELLE MORRISSEY
Staff Reporter

Bobby Gonzalez believes the discovery of America is a tragedy.

He said The Battle of Wounded Knee should be called the Massacre of Wounded Knee.

Gonzalez will tell you that Christopher Columbus committed such horrendous crimes as rape, murder and theft.

Gonzalez, a writer and storyteller, will speak Tuesday, Oct. 15, in the Stratford Room of the MUB on what he deems "the tragic consequences of 1492."

A Taino Native American, Gonzalez said it is his job to disseminate the "misinformation concerning the so-called 'discovery' of America... which began a series of catastrophes which are still being felt today."

One of the worst of those myths, according to Gonzalez, is the stereotype of the appearance of Native Americans. A slide show will precede the lecture, which is co-sponsored by Association of Latino-American Students and the Native American Culture Association.

"Hopefully the slides will show people that not all Native Americans have Coppertone tans and long, straight, black

hair," Gonzalez said. "In fact, a lot of Native Americans look a lot more like Danny Glover than Sitting Bull."

Bobby Gonzalez is a founding member of Taino Del Norte, an organization dedicated to the study and promotion of Taino culture. He has also co-edited *La Concha*, a quarterly publication featuring articles on Taino history, art, social life and customs. He served as a member of the Native American Heritage Committee in New York City, which sponsors various educational programs on Native culture.

Apart from a the lecture circuit, Gonzalez also writes a monthly column for the *Latino Village Press*, New York City-based publication.

Gonzalez describes himself not as a speaker or a lecturer, but as a storyteller. "I talk about the Native American, past, present and future," he said.

Gonzalez's own Taino heritage has led him to seek answers for himself, other Tainos and other Americans of any race or culture.

"My people, the Taino, were the first to encounter Columbus," he said. "We know firsthand the biological consequences of 1492."

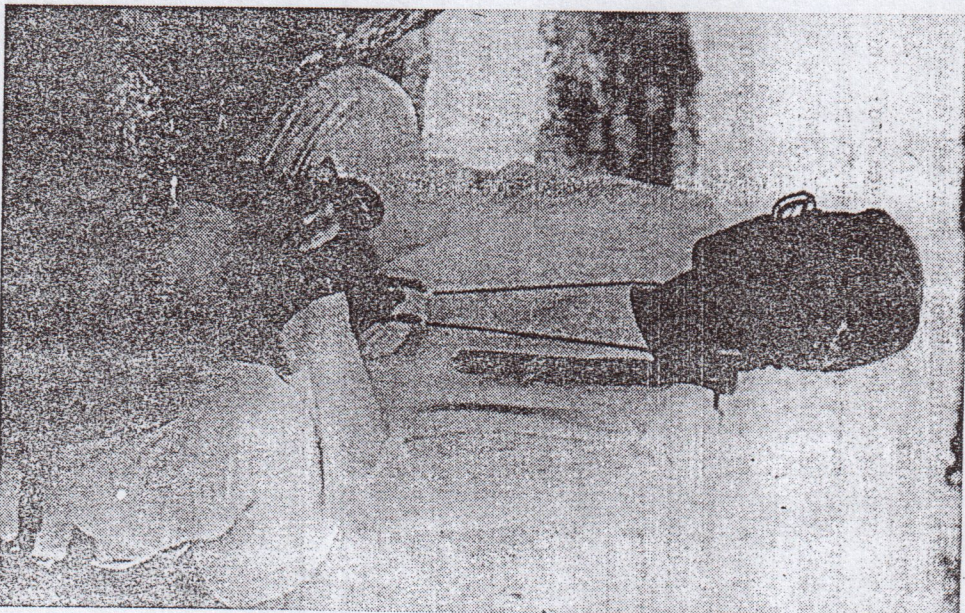
Gonzalez won't use the term 'America,' but instead chooses to call this area

"Mesoamerica," or "Turtle Island," derived from the Native American belief that the continent is resting on the back of a turtle, much like the Greek myth of Atlas carrying the world on his shoulders.

Despite what some may consider radical ideas, Gonzalez said he revels in the opposition he faces, particularly when speaking at college campuses. He said his secret to a successful speech is a careful blend of protection and patience.

"I tend to do well at lectures, because I carry a shield — when people shoot arrows, they tend to bounce right off," he said.

His lecture, "Columbus Day: Reflection on the Tragic Consequences of 1492" is \$2 for nonstudents and free for students with a UNH ID.



Bobby Gonzalez

Courtesy Photo