

# INDIAN NEWS NOTES

## **Assistant Secretary Opposes Proposed Settlement for Massachusetts Indians:**

Interior Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Ross Swimmer June 26 told a congressional hearing the Administration opposed a bill that would give the Wampanoag Indians of Gay Head, Massachusetts more than \$3 million to settle a claim to approximately 240 acres of land presently held by the town of Gay Head. Swimmer told the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee that he opposed the bill because preliminary findings indicated that the Gay Head Wampanoag community did not meet two out of the seven criteria of the law to be recognized as an Indian tribe with a government-to-government relationship with the United States. He said research done by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) indicated that the group did not meet (1) criterion "b" of 25 CFR 83.7 which requires evidence that a substantial portion of the petitioning group inhabited a specific area or lived in a *community* (emphasis added) viewed as American Indian and distinct from other populations in the area; and (2) criterion "c" which requires proof that the group has maintained tribal political influence or other authority over its members as an autonomous entity throughout history until the present. Swimmer told the Committee the BIA established that the group was of American Indian descent and they had produced a membership role and a governing document, "but without meeting the other criteria, our proposed finding is that there is no tribe, and, therefore, there can be no claim." The claim is based on a law that can be invoked only by an Indian tribe. He said the tribal governing body developed into a governing body for the town of Gay Head "the same as all other cities and towns have in Massachusetts." Swimmer emphasized

ed that the BIA findings were preliminary and that the Wampanoag group would have 120 days to challenge them. "If they have additional information that will meet those two criteria, we will be glad to consider it," he said. Swimmer has 60 days following the 120-day challenge period to consider any new information that is submitted before making a final decision.

## **BIA Employee Selected for Interior's Manager Development Program**

Nettie E. Peratrovich has been selected by the Department of the Interior for participation in the 1986-87 Departmental Manager Development Program beginning September 3, 1986 and ending June 13, 1987. Peratrovich, a member of the Haida tribe in Alaska, has a BA degree in education from the University of Alaska. She has been with the BIA since 1976 as an education specialist, an Indian rights specialist, an Indian rights officer and as acting superintendent of the Nome agency.

## **Indian Blanket Presented to Park Service in Honor of Miss Liberty**

A traditional Navajo blanket was presented to the National Park Service in Washington, D.C. at a ceremony June 26 in honor of the anniversary of the Statue of Liberty. The blanket is titled "Fourth Days Liberty," and has the words "Liberty 1986" and the flags from all 50 states woven into its design. The blanket was woven by the Ramah Weavers Association on the Navajo Reservation in New Mexico. Posters depicting the Statue of Liberty draped in the blanket are being sold to pay for the cost of weaving. Call or write: Liberty Blanket, 1427 Central NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107 (505)242-9490.