There are also traditional Indian events where people gather. **Powwows** are immensely popular across all of America. Traditionally, powwows were held beginning in early spring and wrapped up in fall. They were held outdoors underneath arbors to protect dancers from the hot sun. Typically, powwows span a weekend allowing time for people to travel from their homes and camp alongside each other in tents or tipis. Nowadays, powwows may also be held inside or in conjunction with a conference or meeting.

**Rodeos**, a western tradition often associated with “cowboys,” are now a common activity among many Indian people. Of course, owning and riding horses is more popular among tribes found in eastern Washington than those in the Puget Sound area. Oftentimes, powwows and rodeos are combined into one event.

In the Pacific Northwest, **potlatching** has been a long-standing tradition. In older times, a person demonstrated how wealthy he or she was by how much was given to guests. The potlatch also included a feast and could last several days. When Indian religions were banned, potlatch equipment was confiscated with many of the beautiful bowls, spoons and ceremonial objects ending up in museums. Many tribes have since sought the repatriation of these cultural patrimony items. Today, the tradition of the potlatch continues often in conjunction with naming ceremonies, weddings or other special events.

Family will also gather for ceremonies, sometimes returning from the urban homes back to the reservation. Different tribes celebrate events differently, depending upon their location and traditions. These ceremonies may include marking the catch of the First Salmon, hunting the First Elk and gathering of roots and huckleberries. The Canoe Paddle is celebrated by many Puget Sound tribes. Some tribes like to host treaty days to commemorate the signing of their treaty.

Participation in traditional events offers Indian people a vital method for staying connected to their tribe. It is a reminder of who they are now and the people that came before them and it ensures that future generations will also be able to enjoy its benefits and continue on in the Indian way of life.

**ACTIVITIES**

1. How do you define “family?” Using the contents from today’s Seattle Times, create a piece of art that illustrates your own definition of family and its relevance in your own life.

2. This issue of CELEBRATING WASHINGTON’S **FIRST PEOPLES** references the stereotype of Native Americans as “stoic and even frightening.” What is a stereotype and how might they impact a culture? What are some stereotypes of the group to which you identify? Discuss your answers with your classmates. Then, look through today’s Seattle Times for images and phrases that play into the stereotypes your class discussed. How can you challenge these stereotypes individually and as a community?