

Sharing the Spirit of Sacajawea



THE INSPIRATION OF
BEVERLY PENNINGER
AND ALYSON YOUNG

"She Made History Simply by Being Herself."



With these words, gifted filmmakers Beverly Penninger and Alyson Young reveal the exhilarating lesson of Sacajawea's voyage with the Lewis and Clark Expedition:

*E*very woman can achieve the extraordinary by bringing her power, her wisdom and her voice to her individual journey.

The women of Wachovia are delighted to present to you "The Spirit of Sacajawea," a rich documentary that encourages us to seek challenges, take risks and step fearlessly into the unknown.

We hope that today's events – and this gift – will inspire you as you continue forward along your path.



*"...We Engage Him to Go on with Us and
Take One of His Wives to Interpreter..."*

- Journal Entry by Meriwether Lewis,
November 4, 1804

*A*nd so, Sacajawea stepped into the unknown.

Her husband, a French Canadian fur trader, volunteered her services as an interpreter when he agreed to accompany the expedition of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.

The all-male Corps of Discovery – with Sacajawea as the only woman and the lone Native American – made their way across the harsh and vast West from 1804 through 1806.

During that journey, Sacajawea exemplified the tenacity and the resilience of women. She faced blistering heat and biting cold, endured hailstorms and flash floods, and struggled against starvation – all while caring for her infant son.

When a pirogue carrying the journals of Lewis and Clark nearly capsized, only Sacajawea displayed the quick reflexes – and forethought – to grab the valuable documents from the swirling water.

“You do what’s right in front of you; that’s the wisdom of women,” says Alyson Young.

Alyson and Beverly Penninger first discovered Sacajawea after reading “Undaunted Courage” by Stephen Ambrose. “Something about her is compelling,” says Beverly.

The couple researched, wrote and produced “The Spirit of Sacajawea,” looking beyond the documented traces of the Native American icon to envision Sacajawea as a young mother alone in a male culture.

Through a mixture of interviews, footage shot along the trail, Lewis and Clark journals and an original music score by Native American artists, Beverly and Alyson share Sacajawea’s story in a way that both adheres to fact and reveals the larger truths of westward expansion and its impact on Native Americans, past and present.

“I was committed to producing this documentary,” says Alyson, “because I felt it would give us an opportunity to meet people who may be very different from us and to face challenges we couldn’t prepare for. I wanted to take the adventure.”

The adventure took six years. “Trust and respect were vital to getting the story,” says Alyson. “We’ve learned to wait and trust. There are always signs along the way that tell us we’re on the right path.”

“The story will reveal itself.”



Experience the Unknown with Vigor



Costa Rica



Alaska



Utah



S. Dakota



Russia



Oregon



Sweden



Africa



"We

e never really know what journeys we'll take on our way to the destination," says Alyson. "We believe in side trips, and we build in fun."

Like Sacajawea, Beverly and Alyson don't hesitate to step into the unknown.

Whether beginning a documentary, climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, hiking an active volcano, horseback riding in a rain forest or making connections with new people, these women take risks.

"We don't allow fear to stop us from accepting new challenges," says Beverly. "We step into fear."

"Joy Is a Beautiful Part of Our Existence."

Together for more than a dozen years, Alyson and Beverly laugh often, listen closely and frame a good deal of their conversation around the word "us."

"The documentaries are definitely us," says Alyson.

The art and adventure of filmmaking – chasing down contacts; hitting the road hauling Hazel, their beloved 1972 Argosy travel trailer; and bringing the right creative partners to the project – is their joy.



"As filmmakers, we capture a moment in time and create a visual piece of history," says Alyson. "In the process, we push ourselves and challenge ourselves to have a greater impact. We want to build bridges and celebrate differences."



Alyson and Beverly have written, directed and produced many award-winning videos – enabling them to work with broadcast legends Walter Cronkite and Charles Kuralt, among others – and they continue to carefully choose their projects. "We don't derive our income from drivel," says Beverly. "Our passion and mission is to produce work that is inspiring and meaningful."

Moreover, they have discovered their strength as women. "It's important to understand, embrace and utilize your personal power," says Alyson.

"There's no magic formula and there's no secret," agrees Beverly. "It's just embracing who you are, taking chances and being brave. Everything that you put out comes back to you tenfold."

Beverly and Alyson believe in the power of joy, love, energy and spirit. "We surround ourselves with positive affirmations and positive people," says Beverly.

Their lakeside home reflects their positive energy; it's a virtual art gallery of vibrant paintings, fun sculptures, inspirational objects – one sign slyly warns “Be Nice or Leave” – with layers of well-loved books.

“We try to experience life through love and compassion, trust and hope, thoughtfulness and kindness, and generosity and giving,” says Alyson.



Alyson



Beverly

In addition to making documentaries together, each woman excels in her own career. Alyson is the President/Co-Director of the Carolina School of Broadcasting, and Beverly is the President of Naka Productions, Inc., an award-winning video production company she founded in 1993.

A life as full and rewarding as theirs is not without its challenges – and its lessons. While hauling 5,000-pound Hazel across remote northern Montana for the Sacajawea project, the trailer began spitting sparks as its underside peeled off. Alyson, Beverly and cameraman Chuck Lampe pulled over, surveyed the damage and repaired beloved Hazel – with duct tape and bungee cords.

Lesson learned? “It’s not what happens to you,” says Beverly, “it’s how you handle it. No whining!”

“We get bolder and bolder as we get older,” says Beverly.

Additional Projects

BY BEVERLY PENNINGER AND ALYSON YOUNG

“The S.A.V.E. Story” (Students Against Violence Everywhere)

“Wild in Corolla”

“Moving America’s Lighthouse”

“Pathway To Healing: A Trauma Recovery Program”

In Production

“Fifty Years of Folk: The History of the Newport Folk Festival”

“ICInola: Building Green In New Orleans”

“The Evolution of College Sports”



Newport



Cape Hatteras

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by Wachovia in honor of its

commitment to women

whose individual achievements

and collective accomplishments

inspire us.

