

INDIAN LEAP NEWSLETTER

The Native American Mohegans Intertribal Powwow

The annual Powwow was blessed with great weather on Saturday and Sunday, even after a frightful Friday night of torrential rain. All the events went off as scheduled, thanks to David "Thin Elk" Lamore, who did an outstanding job as Master of Ceremonies. After "Cleansing the Sacred Circle" and "Lighting the Sacred Fire" on Saturday morning the grounds were prepared for "Grand Entry" and two days of dancing and ceremonies.

The Powwow officially begins with the "Grand Entry", with the dancers dressed in their regalia making their formal entry into the circle. The procession was led into the circle by the flag bearers bearing our Native American Mohegan Tribal Flag and the American Flag, followed by the Flag of Canada, the Veteran POW flag, and other Native American Flags. An honoring song was performed to pay respect to all war veterans. This ceremony is never intended to glorify war, but to honor our warriors and soldiers.

The children from the Gung Skeedumbork Culture Club participated in the opening ceremonies and danced in their regalia throughout the weekend. At precisely 2:00PM, Robert "Wind Talker" Lafleche introduced the Gung Skeedumbork young men and women for a demonstration of their dancing abilities. They have been practicing traditional native dances since the last Powwow and now had an opportunity to exhibit their dance skills before the Tribe. In addition they wore regalia that they had also made for the occasion. They were terrific! All the small children got involved and participated in the Candy Dance where they gathered candy to the starting and stopping of the beat of the drum as they danced around the circle. The enthusiasm of the children and all who observed was obvious. The Elders were impressed and proud as they watched the young men and women and the children of their Tribe dance. All of the young people were excited about participating, especially in being able to dance in the Sacred Circle before an appreciative audience.

At the conclusion of these opening ceremonies the intertribal dancing commenced. There was plenty of singing and dancing all weekend thanks to the Turtle Drum Singers, our Host Drum.

The presence of the Powwow's Head Dancer, Paul "Roaring Wind" Lassard honored the festivities. Our usual female Head Dancer, Darlene "Ghost Dancer" Spears, was unfortunately unable to attend. We all hope that Darlene's situation improves and that she will once again honor us with her presence as Head Dancer at next year's event.



Tribal Leader, Darlene Eyes of the Wolf Currier, leads the dancing. (Photo Courtesy of Marion Moore)

During one of the Drum breaks, Grandmother Dawn told a wonderful collection of Native American stories that captivated young and old alike. Grandmother Dawn has a wonderful way with children and it showed as she told a few of the many stories she has learned over the years.

Michael Addison again showed his dancing skill performing a Grass Dance before a very appreciative crowd. On Sunday, Michael was joined by Darius "White Hawk" Foster, who at 6 years old, is bound to be one of the Tribe's next Grass Dancers.

The dancing continued all afternoon until it was time to "Retire the Colors" and end a great day.

On Saturday night, we had our annual Powwow feast for all Tribal Members and Powwow participants. Every one enjoyed the feast immensely.

The rest of the night was spent drumming and singing and talking about everything under the moon. Eventually only the Firekeeper, Roger "Standing Eagle" Corey, Jr., was awake to make certain that the Sacred Fire would stay burning through the night.

Sunday festivities again started with the "Grand Entry". The music, the flags, the men and women dressed in their traditional regalia, the smoke from the Sacred Fire, and the meaning of the moment have an emotional effect on all who watch and listen.

At 2:00PM, a ceremony for those Native Americans who had "passed over" since the last Powwow. Frank "Grey Owl" Cook read the names of those Tribal Members and other Native Americans who "passed over" since the last Powwow. A moment of silence was observed after all the names were read and then all paid respect by entering the circle and dancing while the Turtle Drum Singers drummed and sang an "Honoring Dance".



Robert "Wind Talker" Lafleche introduces the children of the Gung Skeedumbork Culture Class as they danced for the Tribe for the very first time. (Photo Courtesy of Mario Moore)



Grandmother Dawn told a wonderful collection of Native American stories that captivated young and old alike. (Photo Courtesy of Mario Moore)

The festivities continued all afternoon until it was once again time to "Retire the Colors" announcing the end of the day and the end to a wonderful and fulfilling weekend.

Once again the Powwow was a great success due to the contributions of a select few but highly dedicated volunteers. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the volunteers who helped make this event so special; John Sweet who spent both Saturday and Sunday collecting admissions, Pat "Laughing Spirit" Knapp for running our crafts table, Betty "Gathering Squirrel" and Paul Allard for the successful Saturday night feast, Elizabeth "One Who Walks

With Shadows” Corey for running the raffle, Harry “Silver Fox” Baker, Darlene “Eyes of the Wolf” Currier, Roger “Eagle Spirit” Corey Sr., Roger “Standing Eagle” Corey Jr., David “Walking Fox” Lewis, Peter “Grey Wolf” Corey, Nelson “Snow Eagle” Carey, Reginald “Wolf Strong Heart” Corey, Toni Cook, and Kevin and Tammy McIntyre, for their help in getting the grounds prepared with the Sacred Circle and Fire, tents, benches, picnic tables, trash barrels, and for assembling the beautiful cedar arbor, as well as many of the other tasks that need to be done for a successful Powwow.

We would like to especially thank the young men of our Tribe who helped make the Powwow a success. Thanks to Alvin Paris Corey, , Dwight “Moon Turtle” Storms, and Robert “Wind Talker” Lafleche, for all their hard work throughout the weekend.

We know we have forgotten someone. If we failed to mention anyone who volunteered his or her time and effort, please accept our apologies.

Dave Lewis/Frank Cook, Powwow Coordinators

2007 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE

Tribal Council would first like to thank all Tribal Members for their financial support through 2006. As a result of your support, we were able to maintain our Tribal Office, publish and mail the quarterly newsletter, pay for the function halls we use for meetings and gatherings, get a “jump start” on preparations for our 2007 Powwow, and support the culture club for our children.

If you do not know where you stand with respect to your dues obligation, call Toni Cook at (781) 944-3580. Send your dues (\$36) to Toni at the address below.

Tribal Council continues to offer “Active” Tribal Members an opportunity to purchase a “Lifetime” membership. No more worrying about whether your dues are paid up, no more worrying about future increase in dues.

In order to qualify today, your dues must be paid-up through the end of 2006. Then for a one-time fee of \$150, you can become a “lifetime” member of the Tribe. Just send a simple note requesting a “Lifetime” membership along with a check made out to the Native American Mohegans to:

Mrs. Toni Cook
94 Salem Street
Reading, MA 01867

HARVEST GATHERING

VFW Hall, Uncasville, November 12, 2006

Our annual Harvest Gathering will be held at the VFW Hall on November 12, 2006, from 12:00-4:00pm. The VFW Hall is located on Raymond Hill Road in Uncasville, CT.

Anyone making a dish to share is asked to call Mrs. Betty Allard at (860) 848-0894. This will make it much easier to plan our menu so we do not have too much of something and not enough of something else.

Please come and enjoy the Harvest Gathering. It's great to get together with all of our Native American families and friends. Hope to see you there.

Directions: I-395 to exit 79A, CT-2A; take CT-2A East for 0.5 miles to exit 1, CT-32 (Norwich New London Tpk); turn right onto CT-32 and go South for 2 miles to Raymond Hill Rd; turn hard right onto Raymond Hill Rd and go Northwest for 0.2 miles to 97 Raymond Hill.

NATIVE AMERICAN MOHEGAN COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

As a result of the Native American Mohegans Needs Assessment Survey and in an attempt to address some of the issues raised in the survey, we are continuing a regular column in the newsletter of health related programs for those who live in the greater Norwich, CT, area. This column is written and provided by our health services partner, United Community and Family Services. As we have said in the past, if you are interested in finding out more about similar programs in your area contact the office.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE- A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

It has almost been a hundred years since Alois Alzheimer's first described the disease that bears his name. Alzheimer's disease affects nearly 5 million Americans and the number is expected to rise to 15 million by 2050. This disease not only affects the patient themselves but also significantly affects families and care givers of the patients.

Alzheimer's disease is a type of dementia. Dementia is a brain disorder that seriously affects a person's ability to carry out activities of daily living. The most common form of dementia among older people is Alzheimer's disease. The incidence of Alzheimer's disease goes up with advancing age. Five percent of individuals can have this disease at age 60 but fifty percent have this disease at age 85. This disease is not part of the normal aging.

This disease was characterized by the presence of neurofibrillary tangles and abnormal plaques of proteins called amyloid which deposit in the brain. These proteins are present normally as well but in Alzheimer's disease they are present in a much higher quantity. Another pathology that has been noted is the fact that nerve cells die in areas of the brain e.g. Hippocampus that are vital to memory and other mental abilities, and connections between nerve cells are disrupted. There also are lower levels of some of the chemicals in the brain that carry messages back and forth between nerve cells. Alzheimer's disease may impair thinking and memory by disrupting these messages.

Early identification of the disease is important. The public should be aware of some of the warning signs that are associated with this disease. In the beginning people may have trouble remembering recent events, activities, or the names of familiar people or things. They may not be able to solve simple math problems. Such difficulties may be a bother, but usually they are not serious enough to cause alarm. People with this disease have difficulty performing simple tasks, forget familiar words and places and have poor judgment. The Alzheimer's Association has listed the ten warning signs on their web site, which can be helpful in identifying this disease. (www.alz.org/AboutAD/Warning.asp)

This is a slow disease, starting with mild memory problems and ending with severe brain damage. The course the disease takes and how fast changes occur vary from person to person. On average patients may live for 8 to 10 years after they are diagnosed.

Early identification of this disease can help patients in two ways. Firstly, it helps patients make plans for the future and participate in preparing for their own care. Secondly, it allows for initiation of treatment, which might help in slowing down the progression of this disease. Some of the medicines that are approved by the FDA for this purpose include Donepezil, rivastigmine (Exelon), galantamine (Razadyne) and memantine (Namenda). If the family or the patient notes any of the warning signs they must contact their doctor who can help in making the "probable" diagnosis. Alzheimer's disease is always a diagnosis of exclusion because the definitive diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease can only be made by looking at brain tissue, which can only be done at autopsy.

At specialized centers, doctors can diagnose AD correctly up to 90 percent of the time. Doctors use several tools to diagnose "probable" AD, including questions about the person's general health, past medical problems, and ability to carry out daily activities, tests of memory, problem solving, attention, counting, and language, and tests of blood, urine, or brain scans including MRI or PET scans of brain.

Once the disease has been established it can affect the primary care giver of the patient significantly. Most often, spouses and other family members provide the day-to-day care for people with AD. As the disease gets worse, people often need more and more care. This can be hard for caregivers and can affect their physical and mental health, family life, job, and finances. It is important to know that there is help out there for them. The Alzheimer's

Association has chapters nationwide that provide educational programs and support groups for caregivers and family members of people with Alzheimer's disease.

In Norwich, CT, United Community and Family Services has a program called the Geriatric Assessment & Management Program (GAMP). The GAMP program assists families who are struggling to deal with changes due to their aging family member and for people who are often seeking advice in dealing with Alzheimer's disease. For more information about the GAMP program please contact: Pamela Allen Kinder at 892.7042 X217.

Written by: Muhammed Qureshi, MD
United Community & Family Services

PHOTO SHOOT

Mr. Jay Stock, a professional photographer from Ohio, will be in the Norwich area to photograph Native Americans in regalia. Mr. Stock is compiling a collection of Native American photographs that he will be using as a teaching aid in his presentations and seminars on photography, which he gives across the country. You are cordially invited to participate in this photo shoot scheduled for November 15 –17. Copies of the photographs will be made available. To sign up or for additional information, contact Carol Kovacs at (860) 228-3955. Time is of the essence, so if you are interested then you must act soon.

POWWOW BRINGS TRIBE TO LEBANON

By Julie Varughese

Norwich Bulletin, September 17, 2006

LEBANON -- As he swiftly danced around the flames of the ring of fire, Michael Addison's blue and white regalia bounced up and down, appearing to take on a life of its own.

Addison performed a grass dance Saturday at an intertribal powwow at the Lebanon Fairgrounds.

A grass dance is a sacred ritual originally part of a ceremony performed for different reasons by Indians of the Midwestern Plains.

"I just love dancing," said Addison, a 20-year-old Narragansett from Danielson.

The intertribal powwow is held every year at the fairgrounds and is sponsored by the Native American Mohegans, who are a different tribe from the Mohegans who own Mohegan Sun, said tribal leader Darlene "Eyes of the Wolf" Currier.

The Native American Mohegans are not a federally recognized tribe, she said.

About 100 people, including tribal members from as far away as Canada and South Dakota, attended the powwow, where 30 people performed a variety of dances, including one honoring veterans.

"We're all one big family," said Currier, a Canterbury resident.

Currier expected about 700 people to attend the event, which continues today. There will be a special ceremony at 2 p.m. today dedicated to honoring the dead.

"This is my culture, my heritage," Currier said. "These dances are all done for our ancestors."

Carol Walkup of Columbia said this was the first powwow she attended.

"It's very enlightening," she said.

Her friend, Sandy Tasker of Columbia, said she came because her friend, Ruth Sweet of Lebanon, was performing with her grandchild.

Tasker said she has attended powwows before, including one most recently in Arizona.

"It's a different way of life, living with the earth," she said.

ARTIFACTS SPUR QUESTIONS, LITTLE CONCERN FOR UTOPIA

By Brian Wallheimer

Norwich Bulletin, September 7, 2006

PRESTON -- Archaeological findings at the former Norwich Hospital show what could be a historically significant American Indian village right in the middle of Utopia's planned \$1.6 billion development.

As first reported on NorwichBulletin.com, some officials say the findings aren't big enough to affect Utopia Studios' plans for the site, but the report, done by Archaeological and Historical Services Inc., suggests the site is unique and urges it be preserved.

Preston First Selectman Robert Congdon said the state archaeologist has informed him there are no plans for further work at the site.

"I've seen the report," Congdon said. "It's not a surprise to me that they found Indian artifacts. They found artifacts, but they did not find any burial grounds or grave sites."

The area of most interest is 45 acres near the center of the hospital property. Digs recovered more than 8,800 artifacts, including pottery, remnants of hearths, shell pits and stone tools made from 16 different types of stone, many of which aren't found in Eastern Connecticut.

The report states the site likely is from the Archaic period, 4,000 to 5,000 years old, with other items much older and some from the time settlers moved into the area. It suggests the site was inhabited by people from several different historical periods.

State Archaeologist Nicholas Bellantoni said the significance of the site can't be completely determined unless there is a more intensive study done.

"It could be an important site. It's kind of tantalizing. It looks like there could be more there," Bellantoni said.

Joseph Gentile, chief financial officer for Utopia Studios, said he was given assurance by Bellantoni the findings on the property wouldn't delay construction or the transfer of the property from the state to the town of Preston. Gentile said he has not received a copy of the report.

The report calls the site "important and irreplaceable" and goes on to say "due to the size,

complexity and rarity, AHS strongly recommends preservation of all or part of the site."

It also says if there is no way to totally preserve the site, measures should be taken to prevent disturbance.

Brian Jones, senior archaeologist for the Public Archaeologic Survey Team, who worked at the excavation and co-wrote the report, said the findings are still a puzzle.

He said more excavation could show whether the village uncovered is actually a series of smaller villages or one large occupation of the land.

A large occupation of hundreds of indigenous people would be a major find, changing the way archaeologists think about how people lived thousands of years ago.

"We get a lot of sites from this time period, but we don't get a lot of big sites from this time period," Jones said. "We may be actually looking at something more socially complex."

Bellantoni said if the site isn't left alone, it could be excavated before construction or buried for study at a later date.

The one thing that would definitely stop construction is finding human remains, though that hasn't happened yet. But Jones said that isn't unlikely.

"With so much activity and people out there, there's a good chance there are some burials out there," Jones said.

State Historian Walter Woodward said the Mohegan and Mashantucket Pequot tribes have been notified of the findings and there is talk of planning archaeological field schools on the site next year.

"I feel as others do that this is a really important site and needs to be attended to," Woodward said.

Woodward said state agencies, the town of Preston and the tribes are working together to ensure the finding doesn't disrupt Utopia's development plan.

"Keeping this from development is a last resort. I don't think that's an issue," Woodward said.

Mohegan spokesman Chuck Bunnell said the tribe has been approached about the issue and is willing to work with anyone to decide the best course of action for the site.

BOOK REVIEW

NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN

By Diana Steer

In 1788 a Seneca-Cauga orator said to Governor George Clinton of New York, "Our ancestors considered it a great offense to reject the counsels of their women...They were esteemed the mistresses of the soil. Who, said they, brings us into being? Who cultivates our land, kindles our fires, but out women?"

Awareness of the woman's central place in Native American society is crucial to understanding Native culture. This book celebrates the role of women – life bearers and nurturers of the nation – and their influence as members of a culture centered in nature. To this day, their contributions are vital to tribal survival and, although different from male roles and responsibilities, recognized as equally important.

By honoring the strength, creativity and unique perspective of Native American women, this book reflects the unity in Native American life: the intertwined realms of spirit world, daily life and art, past and present.

TRADITION !

The Sacred Circle

Circles have great symbolic meaning in traditions around the world. One of the finest expressions of the meaning of the sacred circle or sacred hoop of Indian people is found in these words of Lakota holy man Black Elk:

"You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round. In the old days when we were a strong and happy people, all our power came to us from the sacred hoop of the nation and so long as the hoop was unbroken the people flourished. The flowering tree was the living center of the hoop, and the circle of the four quarters nourished it. The east gave peace and light, the south gave warmth, the west gave rain,

and the north with its cold and mighty wind gave strength and endurance. This knowledge came to us from the outer world with our religion. Everything the Power of the World does is done in a circle. The Sky is round and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball and so are all the stars. The Wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same, and both are round."

Different tribal traditions ascribe slightly different colors and meanings to the four quarters. The colors and meanings of the quarters of Tapestry's circle and of its center are largely pan-tribal, influenced by a tribe's Native spiritual traditions. It is important to understand that there is no such thing as "the definitive" Native American circle. There are limits to its variation, however, somewhere between "only one right way" and "anything goes."

As Mohegan we begin our journey around a sacred circle in the east and move clockwise, as the sun travels. The basic symbols of this circle are:

East -- Red -- Rejuvenation
South -- Yellow -- Sustenance
West -- Black -- Tranquility
North -- Blue/White -- Endurance

ANNOUNCEMENTS

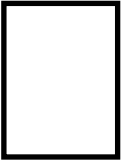
Congratulations to Lawrence Sr. and Ethel Fowler who recently celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary at River Ridge in Griswold with a small gathering of their immediate family. They were married August 17, 1946 at the First Baptist Church in Leominster, MA. Lawrence and Ethel have four children, eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Congratulations to Sonja and Ken on their 10th wedding anniversary. Love, Mom, Pat, Sam, and Kim.

(If you have any announcements you would like printed in the next newsletter, send them to the office at 77 East Town Street, Norwich, CT, 06360, or call (860) 892-1039 or email to:

info@nativeamericanmohegans.com.

Native American Mohegans, Inc.
77 East Town Street
Norwich, CT, 06360



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Native American Mohegans'
Annual Harvest Gathering
November 12, 2006

Our Annual Harvest Gathering will be held at the VFW Hall on November 12, 2006, from 12:00-4:00pm. The VFW Hall is located on Raymond Hill Road in Uncasville, CT. See details inside.
