

Six Nations Band Council donates \$7,000 to Great Law of Peace recital

By Donna Duric
Writer

The Great Law of Peace recital is fast approaching and as committee members have reached the halfway mark of their fundraising goal, they're appealing for more help and volunteers. Gloria Thomas, chair of the Great Law of Peace Recital 2016, said they've raised about half of their \$93,000 target needed to host the week-long recital at the Soursprings Longhouse Aug. 7 to Aug. 12 on Six Nations of the Grand River territory.

The Great Law of Peace is the foundation for Haudenosaunee culture and government. "It's all done orally because

we are an oral people," said Thomas, an Oondodaga Beaver clan mother. So far, she said, the "community support is great. We've had some really good donations." Six Nations Elected Council has donated \$7,000 to the recital.

"We had a long discussion about it how and when if that was going to happen," said Thomas.

Others have donated numerous in-kind donations; one person even donated a large refrigerated truck for food.

"That's going to be a real load off our mind because we only have the little fridges inside the cook-house," said Thomas.

"Food will be the biggest expense," said Thomas. "That's our biggest cost. Our budget item for that is \$30,000."

The 20-person planning committee could use more donations, however, especially food, she said - milk, sugar, eggs, flour and baking powder among the items that are needed. The first day of the six-day recital will be done in English, said Thomas.

"It's a decolonization workshop. Our people need to hear what happened and how does colonization work. It's a really good workshop. It's on for the whole day."

On Aug. 8th and Aug. 9th, speakers are going to tell

the story part of the Great Law or "the Peacemaker's journey, as he travels to different places and meets all these characters that we can learn from about our values and how to strengthen your mind, how to embrace the Great Law and what it's all about," said Thomas.

"They'll also talk about how the Confederacy Council was set up. How does that work, how does council work, what are our responsibilities as chiefs and clanmothers and faithkeepers. They're going to go over that in detail."

The next two days, on Aug. 10 and Aug. 11, "That part is more the technical end of things. This is the first time

the speakers will be handling it in this much detail."

And it will be done in all five Haudenosaunee languages and then translated to English so non-speakers can get as much out of the recital as possible.

And the real original wampum belts will be there, said Thomas.

"They'll be talking about those and how that fits into the Great Law. It's going to be great."

This is the first time an official Great Law recital has been held on Six Nations since 1990, she said.

She has attended a few before, conducted by her cousin, the late Jake Thomas.

"The Great Law of Peace is one of our major sources of our knowledge," she said. "I know that indigenous people talk about our traditional knowledge and that's one of our greatest pieces. We all know that it sets our government in place and it's still here. I think we're very fortunate."

They currently have about 40 volunteers working in all areas, including food prep, speaking, communications, and security, but they need more volunteers.

Anyone wishing to help out can send an e-mail to greatlawvolunteer@gmail.com.

Further information can be found on the Web site at www.greatlawofpeace.com.