

Jewelry designer an award

OHSWEKEN — I'm talking lapis lazuli, tourmaline and charoite . . . know what I mean? How about red coral, black onyx, opal and turquoise? These are some of the semi-precious stones that jewelry designer Steven Longboat, 34, cuts in the basement of his home near Chiefswood Park.

His unique, award-winning creations can perhaps best be described as traditional-modern. His highly-polished works can incorporate ancient Iroquois, Zuni, Hopi and Navajo symbols as well as trendy, urbanized designs. Besides his work with sterling silver, he also crafts diamonds and gold.

Though he can do custom work, he prefers to perceive his own innovative designs and techniques. "My best work is when it's an idea that I have," he says quietly.

In the 1700s, silver medals or ornaments were given to chiefs by Europeans to secure friendly relations. Canadian smiths, working in New France, produced articles that were bartered for furs, bead work or food. It didn't take long before Hotinonshonni craftsman melted and rolled these trade silver articles into thin sheets to make necklaces, arm bands, leg bands, brooches and earrings.

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Our Town

*Richard G.
Green*



By the early 1900s, however, few silver-smiths remained. Credit powwows for fostering a revival of this almost lost art. Today, Six Nations is fortunate to have several prominent and emerging artisans whose works rival the best in all of Indian Country.

After studying Art Fundamentals at Sheridan College in Oakville, Mr. Longboat learned to work silver at the Native Canadian Centre in Toronto. He immediately felt at home with the metal and developed many techniques on his own.

Now able to work full-time at his in-home studio, Mr. Longboat's exquisite creations have earned him a spot among Canada's elite

artists and jewelers. He plans on expanding his creativity to experiment in sculpture, pottery and painting.

He also intends to travel in order to acquire different influences. He'll attend Powwow In Paradise, a cultural exchange show in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands in November.

His work has won several current awards and was featured in Hands Over Time: Native Crafts which aired in March on TV Ontario. He has had many exhibitions and gallery showings for his irresistible bracelets, earrings, pendants, necklaces, rings and belt buckles.

"I enjoy the finished product and the satisfaction somebody gets out of owning the piece," he says shyly.

You can see Mr. Longboat's latest creations at the 10th Annual Champion of Champion's Powwow this Saturday, July 22 and Sunday, July 23 at Chiefswood. Prices for his work range from \$50 to \$1,000 and are a bargain.