

Homecoming Powwow

OHSWEKEN — Mississaugas of the Credit will host Three Fires Homecoming Powwow and Traditional Gathering in the woods behind the New Credit ball park this weekend. This is the third annual Maanjidowin (gathering) of the three nations.

Three Fires Confederacy consists of Ojibway, Potawatomi and Odawa nations. According to records at New Credit, its last Grand Council was held in 1883. The powwow is named Homecoming because the community has been away from its traditions for more than 100 years.

"The community is reviving its traditions and is in an awareness stage," said Carolyn King, a powwow co-ordinator. "When they say Mississaugas or New Credit, they don't realize they're part of a whole group."

A few years ago, several concerned women formed the cultural committee which planted the seed to go back and learn about their heritage. Kim Sault, president, heads community volunteers who organize and coordinate the powwow. People from the community pitch in and donate what's needed for their visiting guests.

Our Town

Richard G.
Green



This year, an attempt is being made to have a sacred, spiritual fire from Shawanaga Reserve present during the powwow. Lit in support of fasting students in Ottawa, the fire burned for 37 days and has spread throughout Ontario to many reserves. Its purpose is to bring the people together and give them strength. Each community tends the flame for four days.

An educational discussion about the Three Fires society and the Potawatomi role of the fire keepers will be given by Cynthia Johnson, secretary of the Potawatomi nation. Ian Johnson will discuss the Mississauga Nation Council.

Because this is a traditional gathering, there is no competitive dancing for prize money. Registered dancers share an honorarium which makes it a good powwow for audience participation. Everybody can learn and/or perfect their dance steps to the beat of the big drum.

Grand Entry will be at 1 p.m. both Saturday and Sundays and sunrise ceremonies are also scheduled. Speaking to the theme When The Spirit Came First, elders will give an evening discussion to natives about "when you didn't live for your material things." Elders include Fred Wheatly and Eddie Benton Benai. Dave White from Walpole Island will be master-of-ceremonies for the dancers.

A song honoring the late elected chief Fred King, an original supporter of the powwow, will be dedicated to his spirit. Native arts and crafts will be on sale and a feast and giveaway will close festivities.