

Flags carry black ribbons at Three Fires Homecoming

By Liz Montelro
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NEW CREDIT — Jarrod Skye of Six Nations — has been dancing for 15 years because it brings him closer to his Indian culture.

"When I dance I dance for myself and for others, too, especially for the Mohawks in Oka," he said.

"I'm one with the spirit, and so the Mohawks are with me."

He was among 90 dancers during the weekend's fourth annual Three Fires

Homecoming Powwow and Traditional Gathering hosted by Mississaugas of the Credit.

About 1,500 attended the "maanjidowin" at the New Credit ballpark.

Dancers were there from London, the Georgian Bay area, Peterborough, Six Nations and Wisconsin.

This year's theme, Communication Through Our Tradition, centred around the new library.

Carolyn King, vice-chairman of the New Credit Cultural Committee, said "the powwow is a social gathering that brings cultural awareness to the reserve.

"We are promoting Ojibway history. This is new for New Credit."

Mayor guest

Mayor Hazel McCallion of Mississauga was a guest at the powwow. She addressed the Oka standoff, and said "the distinct society is the Indian, not the French."

The comment brought applause from the audience.

Mayor McCallion said it was unfortunate that a peaceful solution had not been

reached. She pledged her support for the negotiating of Indian land claims.

Flags carried black ribbons and were not flown, symbolizing the struggle in Indian territories throughout Canada.

For Andrew Eckert of Hamilton it was his first time at a powwow. "It's impressive, he said. "The costumes immediately attract attention."

Don Campbell and Kathy Spillar of Los Angeles, Calif., visited the powwow while touring Ontario.

"I love their (the Indians') respect for the earth, the connection with Mother Earth," said Mr. Campbell. "The dancers and the drummers are one in the same."

Eighteen-year-old Bruce Stonefish of Moravian Town reserve near Chatham decided to return to powwow dancing after 10 years.

"I started dancing when I was two and quit at the age of eight," he said. "I started again, and this is my first powwow."

He said he wants to learn more about his culture. "By dancing, I'm learning."

About 30 arts and craft traders sold moccasins, bead jewelry, soapstone carvings