

# Two Row Wampum timeless

First, the bad news:

As part of the annual Riverfest celebration at Six Nations, the Brantford Dufferin Players were going to present their play, called The Two Row Wampum. Unfortunately, the last weekend of June was very damp, so the performance got rained out.

It was to be held outdoors at Wahdakeh, the Forest Theatre. This is where the Six Nations Native Pageant is held each August.

The good news is that the play has been rescheduled for Tuesday, July 26 at 7 p.m. The Forest Theatre, also referred to as the Pageant Grounds, is on Second Line (Sour Springs Road).

The Two Row Wampum is about a central concept of Iroquoian people. The wampum belt itself is large but simple. The dark and light beads form two parallel lines. It is the meaning of what is depicted that is important.



George  
Beaver

July 23  
our town

The lines represent the white Europeans and the Native people. The lines run parallel but do not cross.

This meant that each side promised not to interfere with each others' basic values such as religion, political beliefs and other customs.

The play itself got a good review from The Tekawennake (Day-gaw-woan-a-gay), the Six Nations and New Credit Weekly. Tekawennake means "two voices" in Mohawk because it presents the news and views of

the two local Native communities.

The play represents the collective effort of Native and non-Native writers and actors. The director, Dennis Maracle, is a Mohawk from Six Nations who now lives in Vancouver.

Native actors in the play include William (Wonk) Miller, Timothy L. Hill and Cher Obediah. This is not the first play for any of them. Other members of the cast include Sean Doyle, Susan DeBaie and Evan Buliung. They, too, have plenty of experience and talent.

If you think this play is going to be a boring historical drama, you are wrong. It is lively, interesting and a thoroughly modern theatre production. At the same time it will give you something to think about.

In our modern arrogance we sometimes discount too much of the past. When we say, "That's history," we often mean that episode is now unimportant.

Some ideas remain important and are timeless. The Two Row Wampum is one of these because it concerns relationships between Native and non-Native people.

If you've never been out to the Forest Theatre, this would be an excellent introduction to this natural, rustic setting. There's plenty of parking and perhaps you'll decide to come back and see the Native Pageant, which begins on the evening of Friday, Aug. 6.

The Two Row Wampum is presently being performed at the Winnipeg Fringe Festival in Manitoba until July 24.

The July 26 performance is the only local one, so don't miss it.

*Our Town is an Expositor feature which provides a forum for news and views from some of the smaller centres in the region. George Beaver is a freelance writer who lives on the Six Nations reserve.*