



Photo by Christopher Smith

Tuck Johnson works on a drawing at the Pine Tree Native Centre where he is employed as an artist.

# Local artist

By Claudelle Duguay

For as long as he can remember, Tuck Johnson has had dreams of becoming a professional artist.

Now, at 23 years of age, the quiet, unassuming man is starting to realize his dream.

"I've been drawing for as long as I can remember, and I've been selling my work professionally for about the past four or five years," he said in an interview at the Pine Tree Native Centre, where he works part-time.

Born on the Six Nations Reserve, Mr. Johnson now lives in Brantford where he is taking courses at the Brant Alternative Learning Centre to obtain his Grade 12 diploma.

He has been working as an artist at the Pine Tree Native Centre for the past several months through a Futures job placement.

"We're very pleased with the work Tuck has done for us.

He's designed numerous logos for our newsletter and letterheads, and does designs and pictures for our many programs," says Trudy Jones, the centre's executive director.

"I'm just glad we have been able to provide an outlet where he can put his talents to work," she adds.

A self-taught artist, Mr. Johnson remembers the first time he discovered he had artistic ability.

"I was about six years old and I asked my uncle to draw a picture for me - he told me to do it myself," Mr. Johnson laughs.

It was due in part to that encouragement, says Mr. Johnson, that he discovered the talent he had within.

His subject matters vary from animals and portraits to drawings that reflect traditional Native themes -



The Bear, drawn by artist Tuck Johnson earlier this year, is one of the nine clan animals recognized by Six Nations Natives. It is respected for its qualities of power and intelligence. While much of his work reflects traditional Native themes, Mr. Johnson also enjoys sketching people and is inspired by a number of subject matters.



Many of the pictures drawn by local artist, Tuck Johnson represent the relationship that Native people have with mother earth. The wolf is one of the nine clan animals which is said to represent strength and intelligence.

Other clan animals specific to the Six Nations people include: the bear, hawk, deer, turtle, eel, heron, snipe and beaver.

Mr. Johnson has recently been commissioned to do several drawings for the Pine Tree Native Centre, which is located in Brantford.

