



A parade of Men's Fancy Dancers were one of many to compete for top honours at this years "Champion of Champions" Pow Wow held at Chiefswood Park on the weekend.

More photos inside.

19th Annual Pow Wow

by Mark McEachern

CHIEFSWOOD PARK - Under the best weather conditions that organizers could ask for, the 19th annual Grand River Champion of Champions PowWow held Saturday and Sunday at Chiefswood Park in Ohsweken attracted more than 15,000 people.

"This is a getting together time", said organizer Evelyn Bomberry at the opening of this year's powwow. "It's a time for seeing old friends and meeting new ones."

The main attraction of the powwow is the dancers who come to perform, more than 330 of them attending this two day event, many of whom travelled from as far away as British Columbia, Arizona and New Mexico. A total of \$36,000 worth of prize money was available for the winners.

Some of the dancers, like Sandy Benson of Guelph, are not really interested in winning anything when they come to the Pow Wow.

"When I dance, I am not a competitor", he said. "I'm doing it for healing. It's for yourself and for Mother Earth."

Over 100 vendors were at this year's Pow Wow, selling jewelry, crafts, clothing and foods to their visitors, some of who came from all parts of the world.

"This is very nice, very big", said Leonard Hoogenboom, who lives in Holland and is visiting this area for two weeks. "It was a very nice opening ceremony with all of the colours."

"The people here are big, friendly, we wish we could stay for a month and not just two weeks", said Henni Hoogenboom. "This is a marvelous place, we like it here."

John Bach, a farmer from Port Dover, says he's been to several Grand River Pow Wows before. He and his wife were accompanied this

year by their daughter and son-in-law from Germany.

"I'm always impressed with the tradition," said Bach. "There's a a lot of work involved. It takes them a whole year to get ready for this, to get their costumes finished."

Bach says he thinks it's important that people are proud of the things that make them different from everybody else -- and that this diversity is important in making Canada what it is.

"We can't all be Americans or English -- or should we want to be."

Living quite close to Six Nations, and because of his farming business, Bach says he knows his way around the area quite well. Still, he says, if he were to offer a suggestion for improving the Pow Wow in the future he

... Continued on page 2