

Great Law Recital weaves treaties, commerce and life into event

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Writers

The "Great Law" has come of age.

With Facebook and Twitter, video and cellphones the liv-

a recital. At a Confederacy meeting organizer Chris Sandy (Jagwedeth) learned that chiefs and clanmothers could not sanction the event, saying he did not follow "proper protocol."

sacred recital. "The people brought it forward," he said. "It was recognized as being brought forward." The controversy, he said, was a result of "just the whole division between the

could never be inside it because she attends church. But she says even though

Wampum and its important lessons in dispute resolution. "It's a way to make sure we stick together," he said.

He expounded on the meaning of the word "skannah", saying it means much more than peace – it denotes a calm, relaxed and tranquil state of being that everyone should strive for. Paul Delaronde, a speaker from Kahnawake, said it was important that people live the Great Peace every day. "With everything in life we must practice this." Loran Thompson, of Akwesasne, said the Great Law was meant to unify. "This Great Law that was given was meant to unify one people into one family. That's why the oppressors have not been able to take



Paul Delaronde

to resemble the seating of a longhouse with front-row chairs reserved for chiefs and clanmothers. Signs are posted throughout the arena firmly instructing patrons that no videotaping is



Speakers and attendees listen

ing constitution of the Haudenosaunee is being discussed and debated all this week at Six Nations.

Hundreds gathered for the opening day of the Great Law Recital taking place at the Gaylord Powless Arena and community hall this week.

The event is being organ-

However Confederacy council agreed chiefs could attend, but as individuals.

Although seats set aside for Chiefs and clanmothers sat noticeably empty on Friday, organizers were unfazed.

They continued the event's planned ceremonies, including a tobacco burning

chiefs and the people. It's been going on for years. It seems like nobody wants to make that connection so we can work together."

Ruby Montour attended the event and said she enjoyed the discussion.

She said "he spoke about how families are to behave and clans and how hus-



Loran Thompson

she attends church she considers herself a Confederacy person.

"It's hard to feel comfortable in that area when you know what they are thinking." But she said she is attending for herself. "I'm going to learn." Speakers from Haudenosaunee nations shared their knowledge of the Great Law; an oral recounting of the journey of the Peacemaker who brought the Haudenosaunee their constitution and banded them together as Five Nations during a time when war and strife dominated Turtle Island.

"What you are about to listen to is something that came to our people a very long time ago," said Frank Miller, the emcee.

"We had forgotten our ways. These messages are as relevant in today's society as they were back then. We are surrounded by a society that doesn't think the way that we think. It's important to understand the value systems of our ancestors."

Kanenhari:io, whose English name is Seth LaForte, is a speaker from Tyendinaga. He spoke of the Two-Row



Police arrest man secretly filming

everything we have. Our whole structure is based on family."

He said it was important the youth learned the Great Law and practice it their whole lives.

Delaronde encouraged elders to continue teaching the young people and to continue holding the recital every year for their benefit.

He offered a few parting words of advice before the day wrapped up.

"Do not be selfish. You must always keep in mind the well-being of all. Always take everything that happens as a learning experience. We don't have to wish for world peace; we can make it happen."

The arena has been set up

allowed at the event.

On Friday morning, a Toronto man known as "Sonic Dave" was arrested by Six Nations Police when he was found videotaping people from inside a blacked out van.

His van was towed away by police.

Elected Chief Bill Montour and Councillor Carl Hill made an appearance at the recital.

Councillor Hill said he was interested in learning more about the Great Law.

"I've never heard the Great Law so this would be new to me. I'm mostly interested in protocols and how things move along and work." The recital continues to Sunday.



Chiefs and clanmother seats were noticeably empty.

ized by the Six Nations Men's Fire and sponsored by the Six Nations Band Council who gave \$70,000 of the community's gaming funds for the event.

But it is being held without official sanctioning by the Confederacy Council after organizers mistakenly failed to follow traditional protocol for the holding of

and feather dance and social at the old council house on Fourth Line.

One of the organizers, Lester Green, said the day provided "a lot" of information on the roles and responsibilities of men and women."

He said the Men's Fire d were under the impression they had followed proper protocols for holding the

bands are supposed to treat their wives."

"There was stuff I didn't really know," she said. And surprisingly she said she "realized sitting there that I would never be accepted in the traditional community because I go to church," she said.

She said she was told at the Oneida Reserve she was outside the circle and