

## First New Moon of Spring 2010

By Lee Spotted Pony



When I usually travel to the tribal grounds from my native Michigan, I find Georgia much warmer & looking like spring, with all the leaves & blossoms coming out. Not so this time, I went from mild, sunny & dry weather in my home state to find the tribal grounds drenched in cold water. Apparently they had quite the long spell of rain there, & it all left the grounds swampy & muddy, wetter than I have ever seen. There was a cool breeze & a light rain which made you want to take cover. 'You should have seen it when it was flooded' they said, 'we had water up to the fire mound.'

The mud was something we needed to plan to work around. First we found where we could walk between the muddy places, then we built a fire. We decided to stay put, not walk around unless necessary, & to find things to do inside. How would this affect the ceremonies later?

The next day, Thursday, began with that same cold rain after a very cool night. I spent the morning in the elder's trailer talking with Jack & Phyllis, wonderful people. In the afternoon it kind of quit raining & maybe that was a ray of sun, but it still wasn't Spring yet down here. It got light enough to see the blossoms on the pear trees & maybe that green stuff on the trees are the leaves getting ready to come out.

Friday also began wet & cool after a cool night. I was up first & made the coffee & the fire in the information center. The IF became our hangout place, everywhere else was swamp. The crane in the pond didn't mind the muddy conditions at all. Thru the day the water kind of went down in the low spots, then in the afternoon we finally saw some sun & we got much warmer. Everything was still muddy though, especially for James who had to crawl under the bathrooms to fix the water line.

But it didn't dry enough to keep Jim & Cosette's RV from getting stuck – twice. This was our excitement for the day, watching that huge wrecker set up block & tackle on the tree to haul the RV out. Once it was free, the RV became stuck again trying to maneuver into another parking spot. So when the wrecker pulled it straight back into the driveway the RV stayed put – no way this vehicle was moving any more.

Friday afternoon is when we cleansed the grounds, about 12 of us doing this, a good crowd led by Tar. By now the swamp has turned to merely wet ground so we could go anywhere on the grounds now & not get soaked. First New Moon of Spring starts with cleansing the grounds like this, getting rid of the old stuff, waking up the place after a long winter. We cleanse ourselves as well as we do this.

All our activities were mixed in with feasting on traditional good homemade food in the Cherokee way – as much as anyone would want. It was all there at the cook-shack, cereals & rolls for breakfast, sandwich makin's for lunch, & potluck chicken, tacos or hot dogs were brought in every evening. Bbq beans, salads, desserts abounded. Mmmm!

Another cool night led into another cool morning Saturday but it warmed quickly. At our council meeting many things were discussed.

Finances are in the red, SeCCI needs to cut expenses wherever possible.

Results of officer elections will be needed by end of September.

Projects needed for the grounds are adding a room onto the information center, rebuilding a golf cart for use on the grounds, repairing the covered bridge & building a new bridge over the dam which is washing away quickly.

We discussed working on a new website & finding a new webmaster.

The phone number for SeCCI is the same as Pam's. Call the SeCCI number & Pam's phone will ring so she does not have 2 phones to answer.

First New Moon of Spring ceremonies were held at the Council House at 4 pm, led by Tar & Joyce. Their message was that it is important to renew yourself as the grounds are renewed every Spring, get rid of what you don't need, take on what keeps you balanced. It seems we need to renew ourselves often since there is much to take us out of balance. We were given some bean seeds to plant to remind us of renewal & growth.

Afterward, Lee led a rematriation ceremony in honor of Kristen's father.

As I left the grounds late Saturday I was reminded how Creator works, we get more rain sometimes & other times we get less, but it all balances after awhile. This weekend it was the tribal grounds' turn to get rain.

I also left feeling very Cherokee, & very much a part of a Cherokee family. We hung out together, ate together, did ceremonies together, huddled at the fire together. This is a feeling you cannot get except on the grounds.

Lee Spotted Pony

