

# A Thank You

By Mike Chandler

Dear Talking Leaves Readers, it is my intention to recognize that all peoples can get along with one another if they make that choice. I am going to explain in my article how gracious Chief Howling Wolf has been to my wife and I over this past year by accepting us as visitors to the Chota Ceremonial Grounds. My name is Michael Kevin Chandler and I want to explain how, when, and why I have become interested in the Original American "path through the woods" so to speak.

When I was young, oh, about the age of nine or ten, I checked out a book at the library. It was the story of a young brave who sought to keep his family together through some really tough times. The setting was during the early years of colonization by European settlers. No food, no fire wood, in fact this family was the poorest of the poor. If I recall correctly, someone in the family becomes very ill, sick, or dies. The young brave struggles heroically to keep food, water, and heat for the home when the winter winds begin to blow.

I cried at the end of the story, and my brothers and sisters asked, "Mom, why is Mike crying?" She told them that the story had touched my heart. They all looked rather puzzled. And that is my point. Can anyone see, hear or feel the pain or struggle others experience with some kind of empathy, maybe personified just a little? It is a choice to give others a break and stop anger's vicious cycle. To choose to love rather than to hate, to have faith in one another. When Grandfather returns will there be any faith left on the planet?

On my journey to find spiritual peace, respect, and be part of nature itself, I have found serenity by participation in the original American's way. Non of the beliefs contradict or oppose anything of the faith I was baptized into as an infant.

Thank you Howling Wolf and Running Bear for all you have taught me. You are very gracious hosts.

Your Friend,

Mike



Above: artistry of Mike Chandler



## New Band In Formation

July 14, 2011, at Bear Spirit Grounds located in Claiborne county, Tennessee, the first organizational meeting of the "Bear Spirit Band" was conducted. Five people participated in this event in which the 4 principal officers were established. These officers are as follows:

**Band Chief:** Mike Stone Carvr Utz

**Vice Chief:** Bruce HuntingWolf McDowell

**Secretary:** Rick Runningbear Dunifer

**Treasurer:** Terri McDowell

In addition to selecting officers, the new band also chose a name for the new band. It will be known as the "Bear Spirit Band". One of the goals of the band is to promote "Bear Medicine" and to do all things in a traditional way.

Part of this tradition was seen in the first meeting. The meeting was conducted in the form of a "talking circle" where a sacred feather was passed from person to person, as each had their turn to speak. Also, all decisions were reached by "consensus" rather than by "vote".

During this gathering, a ceremony was conducted on the grounds at the site of the Medicine Wheel in which two ceremonial pipes were awakened and blessed. Conducting this ceremony, with full participation of all, was Mike Stone Carvr Utz. Good luck to this new band of the Southeastern Cherokee Council!

