

Medicine Keepers Band

Ayanvlideha Rick, Chief of the Medicine Keepers Band in Sedona, Arizona, reports that her band will be doing the Fruit and Tree recognition ceremony during the month of July. This is the time of year in that geographical area when all the apples, apricots, nuts, and so forth, come into ripeness and ready for harvesting. Like most of the Cherokee ceremonies, it is based on thankfulness for the bounties and blessings of Nature.

Chief Rick is the principal ceremonial leader for these ceremonies of the band, but assisting her are Alan Fire Keeper Hicks and Joseph Gray Wolf Rick. They help with the administration of medicines such as sage and Cedar.

Participating in ceremonies of the Medicine Keepers Band are new members Evan and Stefanie Baker from the Phoenix area.

Another event planned is a traditional Cherokee wedding. The adopted son of Chief Ayanvlideha has proposed to a woman of Cherokee descent and they wish to be married in the traditional Cherokee way. The groom to be is a fire fighter and has been on the front lines of the huge 6 mile fire in the Yuma National Forest. That fire has now been extinguished.

Chief Ayanvlideha, with help from clan members, has completed a Cherokee blanket for one of her grandsons. The stitching on this blanket is skillful and portrays rain, star trails, and mountain. Each blanket she makes for her grandchildren is slightly different to match the character of each individual.



photos from Medicine Keepers Band:



Teaching the young ones



Getting ready for ceremony



Proper regalia is important

Young Blood Needed

By Rick Runningbear

There is need of a "grass roots" movement within our tribe. This needs to be done in the individual bands and clans, as well as in individual households. We need to capture the attention of our youth to see the value of the old ways, the spirituality, the culture, the history, the language, and the traditions of our Native ancestors.

A close look at our leadership, both on the national level and on the local level, reveals a wealth of elders that lead out in administrative matters and ceremonial functions, but a poverty of youth that devote themselves to learning the values of their Native ancestors.

This situation is not unique to our tribe but can be seen among larger federally recognized tribes as well. The youth tend to want to "fit in" with their peers and many of them have only fleeting interest in learning the traditions, let alone, any of the Native language of their fore-bearers. Modern society catches their attention with marvels of electronic communications and entertainment. Somehow, if we are to survive and continue to promote Native traditions, we must find a way to compete with modern day inventions and distractions.

How many of our youth know the techniques of preparing for ceremony, or how to go out into Nature and meditate or pray or survive for a period using survival skills? There may be a few of these youth, but it seems they are few and far between.

The elders will not be here with us forever. Those of us who have knowledge and insights to pass on to the youth must not delay imparting these to young people who show interest in their Native heritage.

Programs to involve the youth in physical activities that pertain to Native values and history should be planned and implemented in the homes, the clans and bands, and at the National Grounds. By all means, we must avoid that "silent killer" known as "APATHY" # # #.