

# Editorial



By Rick Runningbear

## What Is It About The Moon?

*We are all familiar with the moon. It is up in the sky and can be viewed most any clear night. It can sometimes be seen during the day time.*

*To many Native peoples, the moon is the lesser light compared to the stronger light of the sun. Thus to many, it is "feminine" in gender, whereas often the sun takes on a masculine gender. In Cherokee stories the sun also takes on a feminine gender in some legends.*

*But the moon is often referred to as "Grandmother Moon" and her gentle light is pleasant to gaze upon and there are many uses of the moon, as we study it.*

*The moon goes through 4 phases every 28 days. As we first see the first sliver of light appearing on the right side of the moon, we are beholding the beginning of the "First Quarter". When it has advanced to the point where we see the entire right half illuminated, Grandmother Moon has achieved her "First*

*Quarter". When one sees the "full moon", she has attained her "Second Quarter".*

*A few days later, when one sees the left side of the moon lighted and the right side darkened, the moon has finished the "Third Quarter". Finally when the moon is totally dark (often referred to as the "new moon") the "Fourth Quarter" has been completed.*



*It is near to 28 days for the moon to go through its 4 phases. This number of 28 is significant, as it correlates to woman's "period" and also, in a ceremonial sense, some of the ancient medicine wheels have 28 spokes and Lakota sun dance lodges have 28 rafters in the roof. Also significant is the fact that during each year there are almost exactly 13 "moons" (now called "months" according to the Gregorian calendar). The number "13" is sacred in many Indian cultures and is reflected in the 13 scales or segment plates on a turtle's back shell.*

*It seems to me that Creator set up the moon with its various cycles and phases to tell us earthlings how to keep track of time, and when to have ceremonies and new beginnings.*

*For centuries, all around the world, Native peoples have had ceremonies on the day and night of the New Moon. The New Moon always signifies "New Beginnings".*

*It is apparent to me that it was meant that we should do our ceremonies each new moon. It is a timely way to put aside negativity, anger, jealousy, envy, pride and all the negativity that invariably accumulates in our lives just through natural living in the stress each day puts on us.*

*Ceremony sets us free. It gives us all a "new beginning". It is a time to wipe the slate clean and start out anew, refreshed and enthusiastically optimistic of the opportunities that each day offers us.*

*The methodical and rhythmic phases and cycles of the moon teach us that we need to do ceremony in a timely manner but not to "bunch them" up by having them too often or close together, neither to neglect them over time and thus let too much negativity build up in our lives. When we go too long without ceremony, we are in danger of getting a bad attitude about life. We tend to fall off "the Red Road" that we of Native descent try to walk daily.*

*If we look closely at the major ceremonies of the traditional Cherokees, we find that many of them fell upon the New moon and also upon the annual Solstices and Equinoxes. Four times a year we have special ceremonial times that fall on the Equinoxes and Solstices. Thus, in March we celebrate the "First New Moon Of Spring", near the time of the Vernal Equinox. The Green Corn Ceremony falls near the time of the Summer Solstice. The Great New Moon falls near the time of the Autumnal Solstice. And the Winter Solstice is a ceremony*

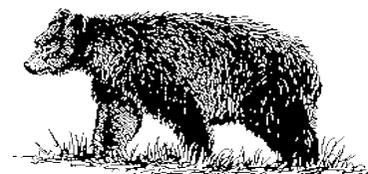
*practiced world-wide to welcome the returning of the sun to longer days of light. This occurs around December 21.*

*It would behoove us to pay more attention to the phases of the moon when we plan our ceremonies. Ceremonies can be done by one individual, by small groups or by large groups. To do ceremonies on the New moons is a beautiful thing. It means "New Beginnings". We all need to make a fresh start in life on a regular basis and cast off the burdens of anger, envy, jealousy or resentment.*



*What is it about the moon? Creator put it there for a purpose. The lesser light to rule the night. A clock and calendar in the sky to help us keep track of time and when to do our ceremonies. I invite all to pay more attention to the moon on a clear night. It is a beautiful thing.*

*Rick Runningbear*



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