

October Gathering Promotes Learning At National Grounds:

In early October of 2011 the tribal National Grounds was bustling with activities. It was time for ceremonies, social activities, and learning circles. The Autumn gathering is one of the big ones for the Southeastern Cherokee Council. The weather is agreeable this time of year in southern Georgia, and attention is paid to two traditional ceremonies of the Cherokees, namely, the Great New Moon and the Atahuna (Friends Made). Below is the account of Lee Uwoyeni of some his impressions of the event:

The weather was great throughout the weekend, clear and warm, with a few showers at times that did not disrupt any of our activities on the grounds. A nearly full moon lit the nights, which were damp and cool.

Anne and I had a smooth trip down, stopping to camp over night at Red Top Mountain. We arrived early Wednesday, giving us an extra full day on the grounds. Thursday more people arrived such that at one time we had 30 - 35 people on the grounds.

We prepared for classes and ceremony which we think people have missed on the National Tribal Grounds. We had not had classes in awhile, and it was time to bring them back. They seemed popular. Everyone seemed to learn and to enjoy doing it. There were classes on crafts, such as beading, history of SeCCI, stick weaving, language, drum, dance, and genealogy. Class began early Friday afternoon and continued into late evening and then into Saturday before and after ceremonies. It was a full weekend.

After being advised to be alert for new roaming panthers in the area, and the usual snakes and fire ants, we got down to work, copying and preparing material for class, feasting and greeting old friends all over again.

There was not the usual fire lit in the information center nor in the fire pit by

the cook shack because it had been so dry in the area, and well, no one it seems, really felt like hanging around at a fire since they were busy with classes. "A good sign", I told myself.

Lee Uwoyeni (new name) gave a message for Great New Moon of how loving, gifting, respect, learning and growing are all connected. Anne Night Wind gave a message of forgiveness and repairing relationships, important for the People at Atahuna time. Rick Runningbear acted as Fire Keeper and gave us a splendid fire from the heart. Two names were given in ceremony between Great New Moon and Atahuna, and James Blackk Wolf conducted us in a tribal pipe ceremony Friday evening.

The meetings were short and showed a dismal financial picture unfortunately, with donations down and expenses, especially for grounds upkeep, going higher. There were, however, some much needed new tables and benches on the grounds at the information center.

Our feasting did not seem affected though, since we ate as well as ever, and we were busy it seemed, from early cook shack coffee time until the last classes ended after dark. We did not hear from panthers, snakes or fire ants! They all seemed to understand we had things to do.

Watch for the Ceremonial Schedule for 2012 in the next Talking Leaves Tribal Newspaper, and plan to come to the National Tribal Grounds for ceremonies, learning, fellowshiping and feasting. Anne conducted a brainstorm session asking for ideas for classes. A resounding vote was given for cooking, especially fry bread! So add having the best fry bread ever to your reasons for coming to the National Tribal Grounds!

Lee Uwoyeni (The Hand)



Chance Pearce (below) was an enthusiastic participant at the activities at the Fall Gathering at Ochlocknee.



Mary Lynn Kindred (below)



Howling Wolf in deep thought

