

BEAR SPIRIT BAND CELEBRATES THE BOUNDING BUSH CEREMONY

Last November members of the Bear Spirit Band of Eastern Tennessee met together to celebrate the Bounding Bush Ceremony. This last ceremony before the beginning of the "Cold Moons" was true to form as the outside temperature was near 32 degrees. However, even though the Ceremonial Fire burned strongly in the Sacred Circle, the actual ceremony was conducted inside the nearby "council house" which is a circular yurt surrounded by a deck. The wood burning stove inside had the inside temperature a very comfortable 80 degrees.

The ceremonial leader for this event was Caitlin Dancing Eagle Bear. Prior to the beginning of the ceremony the premises were smudged with the smoke of smoldering sage, as well as the participants of the ceremony. Small skewer sticks were presented to the participants and each was asked to break one. They broke easily. She then made a bundle of these sticks, each stick representing a member of the band. These were "bound" by sinew by the participants. Now it was impossible to break the sticks. They had become strong by coming together and supporting each other. Then the bundle was given to the keeper of the grounds to present to band chief Mike Stone Carvr. Also, corn meal was used in the ceremony as a ceremonial "medicine" to illustrate the importance of giving back to Earth Mother...in recognition of the bounties given to us in the way of food and material blessings.



Above, Rick Runningbear receiving corn meal and the "bounded bundle" of sticks representing the strength and unity of the Bear Spirit Band, from ceremonial leader Caitlin Dancing Eagle-Bear Turner.

The Bounding Bush ceremony, as all Native ceremonies is important that it be conducted at the right time of year and in harmony with the movements of the earth and moon. These ceremonies keep us in touch with our Native culture and revive our spiritual energies to keep us balanced in this modern materialistic society in which we live. # # #

BELOYED FORMER TRIBAL SECRETARY PASSES THROUGH WESTERN GATE:

Jan Hicks, long time member of the Southeastern Cherokee Council and former Council Member and Secretary for the National tribe, passed away on December 6 of last year after a long illness. Principal Chief Vivian Panther Lawson wrote the following tribute to her:

JAN TWO MOONS HICKS

SHE CAME TO US LIKE A SOFT AND GENTLE WIND

A KIND AND CARING LADY. A TINY WOMAN WITH LONG

JET BLACK HAIR. HER MEDICINE WAS STRONG AND I

APPOINTED HER HEAD OF THE GADUGA SOCIETY.

SHE WAS A PSHYCIATRIC NURSE ALL HER ADULT LIFE,

ALWAYS CARING FOR OTHERS. HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO

THE SECCI ARE TOO MANY TO LIST

SHE AND HER SON WERE LONG STANDING MEMBERS AND

SHE SERVED ON THE COUNCIL AS SECRETARY FOR EIGHT

YEARS UNTIL HER HEALTH WORSENEED. SHE WAS MY BEST

FRIEND AND CONFIDANT. SHE SAT WITH ME THROUGH THE

BAD DAYS OF GRAY WOLF'S ILLNESS AND WAS THERE TO

HELP ME THROUGH HIS DEATH. I AM SO GRATEFUL THE

CREATOR PLACED HER IN MY LIFE AND I SHALL MISS HER.

SHE CROSSED OVER DECEMBER THE 6TH. BUT SHE IS NOW

AT PEACE AND PAIN FREE AND RESTS WITH THE CREATOR

AHO!

PANTHER

