



The Appalachian Indian Voice

January 2012

Next Tribal Council Meeting Saturday January 21st, 2012 at 10 am followed by General Gathering at noon. Held at New River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 911 S. Kanawha St, Beckley WV

AAIWV Web Page:
<http://www.aaiwv-ani.org>

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AAIWV UPCOMING EVENTS:

****2012 Events****

Keep in mind Winter meetings/gatherings are WEATHER dependant...it depends on the Weather...whether or not we have a meeting! Also, meeting dates may change due to weather, we will do our best to keep you INFORMED!

January 21st - HAPPY NEW YEAR! Ceremonial Event - Feast of the Ancestors! Bring a favored dish of someone who has passed over and that you wish to honor. Council Meeting at 10am, Feast at noon.

February 18th...well it's the February meeting & gathering...weather permitting! Hopefully it won't snow and we can get together!

March 17th ...same as February!

April TBA - SPRING RETREAT and **Spring Planting Ceremony** usually at the Appalachian South Folk Life Center near Pipestem WV! The Spring Retreat is not a Spiritual Retreat but a general retreat filled with learning lodges and plans for the future of AAIWV. BE THERE! Council meeting Sunday morning.

May 12, 13 - HOMECOMING POW WOW in Fairlea WV. Council meeting on Sunday morning before Grand Entry. General info contact Wayne at pcappleton@aaiwv-ani.org ; Head staff & drums - Mel at miska1967@aol.com.

Look for future **Events Updates** in our Winter Editions of the Voice and at www.aaiwv-ani.org

PASSED ON BEFORE US:

December 16, 2011 - Mrs. Charless Falk, Many Tears, a former AAIWV Council member, passed away. Charless was full of caring for her family, her people and her tribe. She is fondly remembered and will be greatly missed.

APOLOGIES FOR DECEMBER

Everyone, I would like to offer an apology for the lack of a newsletter in December. Many of you may know that my youngest son spent 17 days in Ruby Memorial's Children's Hospital at the end of November and beginning of December and a second 2 day stint in the same hospital just before Christmas. It has been a very difficult time for me and I wasn't able to focus on anything else but Wes.

~Mel Smith, Editor.

FEAST OF THE ANCESTORS – January 2012

The Feast of the Ancestors is typically held the first month after the New Year. The New Year is generally signified by the change from winter to spring, or the spring solstice. Appalachian American Indians of West Virginia holds the Feast of the Ancestors on or near the first New Moon of January, during the monthly Council meeting.

The Feast of the Ancestors is held to honor the memory of our Ancestors and those who have passed over the previous year. We remember them, celebrate their lives, appreciate their lessons and release them. The time of the Feast of the Ancestors signifies the end of mourning.

For the feast, everyone comes together, bringing a favorite dish of their loved ones that have passed over. Traditional foods, that would have been stored to see the tribe through the winter, are also brought to supplement the feast. As all partake in the feast, those who have passed should be remembered favorably. Stories of their lives should be shared. This is a happy time as we leave the winter and ready for spring.

As the feast begins, plates should be prepared for the spirits of those who passed. The plates, filled with favored foods and traditional foods, should be offered to the spirits by placing them outside in a nearby, secluded place, usually near trees. By offering the spirits a plate, we are inviting them to feast with us one final time.

With the Feast of the Ancestors, we honor the lessons, lives and memories of those who have passed.

~AAIWV Ceremonial Guide

SPIRIT PLATE OR FEASTING THE SPIRITS

A spirit plate is to be done to ask spirits for help, or to thank the spirits for the help that has been given, to honor the spirits, or to "feast" a dream, or new regalia, or to provide the recently departed a meal to take with him or her to the spirit world. The feast plate is used for many reasons.

Prepare a meal as you usually would for yourself and/or your family. Then, as you are serving take another plate (yes it may be a paper plate or even a piece of fine china), and put a small portion of each food item and place them on the plate, don't forget something sweet. Only a very small portion is needed. In addition to the foods, add a small bit of your beverage (maybe in a bottle lid), a pinch of loose tobacco and some shiny metal objects or coins. Take the spirit plate outside to an out of the way place, under a tree, or behind a bush, someplace not likely to be disturbed or seen by other people. As you place the plate, talk or whisper to the spirits, thank them for the help that they give, tell them you offering them a feast, and let them know what help you need or why you are offering a feast. Leave the plate there until your request is answered, positively or negatively. If you have no answer immediately, it may take some time, so continue to leave the plate. There are some times when a plate might stay untouched for a full moon cycle (or one month) simply because no answer has come. Don't be surprised what you find on the plate when you finally retrieve it, it may be completely untouched, it may be completely empty, or something in between. Only as much as is needed will be taken.

~AAIWV Ceremonial Guide

FROM COUNCIL

For our Council meeting on Dec. 16, 2011, we had a very productive time. Tony Simms agreed to serve as our Tribal Officer and Charlie Pyle graciously became our Tribal Liaison. We are extremely grateful to both for their willingness to serve Council and ANI. This is the first time in several years that all of the officer positions have been filled. We also worked toward filling committees. In April, AAIWV and Mother Earth Beat will be presenting at the Social Work Convention in Charleston. Spence Carver is the contact person for this. It was a great meeting and we hope to see a lot of members at our meeting in Beckley on January 21, 2012.

Happy New Year, everyone!

~LaVerna Vickers, AAIWV Secretary

CALL FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Now is the time to contribute and help AAIWV. We appreciate all you have done for the tribe and all future contributions that you make. The membership of AAIWV is the back bone of AAIWV!

In order to renew, invigorate, and strengthen AAIWV we need strong, working committees FULL of AAIWV members! Currently only Council members are on the committees and we are being run a bit thin and need good workers. So, if you are interested in serving AAIWV, please review the list of committee's below.

Committee business can be handled via email or phone or by physical meetings. After committee's are formed, the Chair of each committee will contact you about meetings.

Notify me (Mel Smith) of your interest in a committee and I will forward your name and contact info to the chairperson. When you contact me, please include your enrolled name, email address, a phone number and mailing address for correspondence with your committee. Please also include your tribal roll number so your membership can be verified as only AAIWV members can serve on these committees.

Please note: the Pow Wow committee *appears* to be well populated; **HOWEVER**, we need more good workers and contributors to successfully organize and manage Pow Wows. We especially need local people in or near Lewisburg/Fairlee area! Also, if you know someone who is a member of AAIWV but doesn't receive a newsletter, share this information with them.

AAIWV COMMITTEES

SOCIAL SERVICES

– Comprises the following prior committees: Emergency Committee, Food Bank, Children services etc. Chair - Gail Murano

CEREMONIES & RETREATS – Comprises the former Ceremonial Committee and Retreat Committee. Chair – Mel Smith.

COMMUNICATIONS - created for Public Relations, advertising, education, newsletter, internet etc. Chair – LaVerna Vickers

ECONOMIC GROWTH – Fund raising, Grant writing etc. Chair – Tracey Brownhawk

POW WOWS – Organization of AAIWV Pow Wows. Chair – Mel Smith.

VETERANS – Native American Veterans of AAIWV, Veterans Issues, Veterans supporters. Chair – Charlie Pyle

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

A story Too Good Not To Share

A ship wrecked during a storm, and only 2 men were able to swim to a desert-like island. They agreed to divide the territory, and pray to see which one has the most powerful prayer to God. Obviously, they both prayed for food the first day. The first man found a fruit tree. Nothing was found for the second man. After a week, the first man prayed for a wife. The next day, a woman swam to his side of the island. Then, the first man prayed for a house, clothes, and more food. The next day, like magic, all of these were given to him. However, the second man still had nothing. Finally, the first man prayed for a ship, so that he and his wife could leave the island. In the morning, he found a ship docked at his side of the island. The first man and his wife boarded the ship, and decided to leave the second man on the island. He considered the other man unworthy to receive God's blessings, since none of his prayers had been answered. As the ship was about to

leave, the first man heard a voice from heaven booming, "Why are you leaving your companion on the island?" The man replied, "My blessings are mine alone, since I was the one who prayed for them. and they were all answered, unlike the other man." "You are mistaken!" the voice rebuked him. "He had only one prayer, which I answered. If not for that, you would not have received any of your blessings." The first man asked the voice, "what did he ask for that I should owe him anything?" The voice answered, "He prayed that all your prayers be answered." For all we know, our blessings are not the fruits of our prayers alone, but those of another praying for us. What you do for others is more important than what you do for yourself.

~**Charlie 4 Feathers**

PUMPKIN BUTTER



I tell you what....I have had the great pleasure of eating this pumpkin butter! One of our council members brought some to the October council meeting and boy did we fall on it like a bunch of starved...well....Indians! (Go figure). Anyway, it's some GOOD STUFF so I highly recommend you try it!

4 1/2 Cups Sugar
3 1/2 Cups Pumpkin (canned or fresh prepared)
1 box Sure Jell
1 Tablespoon Pumpkin Pie Spice

Measure & set sugar aside. In large pot (deep sides to prevent splattering) mix Pumpkin, Sure Jell & Pumpkin Pie Spice. Place on high heat & stir till boiling. Add sugar all at once & continue to stir. Bring to a rapid boil (one that can't be stirred down). Boil for a full minute & then turn off the heat. Ladle or pour mixture into warm jelly jars, apply lids tightly and let cool at room temperature. Yields Six 8 oz or Twelve 4 oz jars. Note: use of sugar substitutes will yield less.

Prepping a fresh Pumpkin

Cut in half. Scoop out seeds/innards. Place cut side down in a baking pan. Add about 1/4 inch of water & roast at 350* until tender. Average pumpkin will take about an hour or so. Cool & scoop out the flesh. Puree in a food processor or blender. Stay clear of really small pumpkins as they can have a bitter flavor.

TALE OF THE INDIGO BUNTING

The following tale is a work of fiction based on a “dream” that was shared with me by someone very special to my heart. While it may have many interpretations, the message that resonated most with me, and with the dreamer, was something that was meant to be heard and shared. So with the dreamer’s permission, I offer the Tale of Indigo Bunting.

Indigo Bunting was a young maiden with a very “old soul”. She had long since been separated from her people. She knew little of her history and had lived a hard life among strangers. Indigo Bunting longed to be herself and release her true nature but because such was so foreign to the strangers she lived among, it was simply not practical. So as time passed, Indigo Bunting became very adept at concealing her nature. She became an “elusive wallflower”, who ‘really lived’ only her dreams. Indigo Bunting’s dream time grew and grew. It became hard to leave her dream state. It became hard to tell the dream was a dream and not real. It became hard to be among the strangers at all. So Indigo Bunting decided to leave the only place she had ever known and she began to walk deeper and deeper into the lush green forest of spring. Indigo Bunting had never been this far from the strangers’ village before. She walked for what felt like an eternity. A hunger was causing her to question her decision to leave. But Indigo Bunting would not bend and just entered her dreams to dine there. After many days and miles, Indigo Bunting tried eating things she saw other creatures eating. She even noticed that it was if they were intentionally showing her not only what to eat and drink but what route she should follow. Indigo Bunting spent less time dreaming and more time trying to understand her new friends. Their sounds and movements were like music and she no longer had to hide her true nature. But Indigo Bunting was lonesome and longed for some human friends. So Indigo Bunting again turned to her dreams for companionship. Spring had passed and summer was slipping away. Creatures were busy with winter preparations and starting to migrate away. And again Indigo Bunting turned more and more to her dreams. Early one morning as she continued walking along her chosen path, she heard faint drumming in the distance. It was such a soothing rhythm that she continued heading in the sounds direction. Indigo Bunting soon heard other sounds of people. Oh she could not bear to go among and strangers again, but the sound of the drum drew her so. Indigo Bunting decided that she would just sneak up to have a look and enjoy the apparent celebration from the cover of the woods. As she walked her chosen path Indigo Bunting heard drumming and people in the distance. So Indigo Bunting hid behind several large pines and foliage. She saw many people in strange dress. They talked in a strange language she could not understand. They sang beautiful songs with strange words. They danced in large circle and Indigo Bunting seemed to grasp that the celebration was in thanks of summer’s bounty. These people were very very different from the strangers she had left behind and she so wanted to go out among them and have fun too. But Indigo Bunting could not bear the thought of hiding her true nature again. The drum slowed and all but the drummers stood around the circle.

One man stepped out among them. He was very old and greatly adorned. He held strange things up in the air and spoke strange words to the people. The items were or were made out of things she had seen in the woods, feathers, bark, branches, etc. Suddenly the drum stopped and everyone turned to stare at Indigo Bunting. How could this be! She was well hidden, how could they see her?...”maybe they stare at something else?” The old man motions with his hands for her to come closer. Indigo Bunting is frozen with fear. Again he motions for her to come to the circle. When she does not move, he signals the drum to beat again and again he motions her to come to the circle. Indigo Bunting cannot control her feet. She walks in place to the beat of the drum and then without even realizing it she moving closer and closer to the circle. Indigo Bunting’s panic turns to calm as she comes to the conclusion that “this must be a dream” gone awry and not reality. She tells herself to relax and go with it because the dreams are not real and there is no need to hide her true nature. The old man laughs, seemingly at Indigo Bunting’s thoughts. Indigo Bunting gets the impression through pictures in her mind that this man is gifted and revered by his people. He speaks to her in his language and she understands him. More proof of a dream, and Indigo Bunting giggles to herself. He is called Wind Bear because his powers and medicine were gifts from the great north winds and the Black Bear of the hills. Lost in her own thoughts regarding this new dream, Indigo Bunting fails to respond to Wind Bear’s initial request. Wind Bear repeats his request a second time. “Give me something of the earth.” This time Indigo Bunting replies. “I have nothing”. Wind Bear states “Yes you do. Give me something of the earth”. Indigo Bunting replies “no really I have nothing”. Wind Bear reaches down and into Indigo Bunting’s leg and pulls out a porcupine quill. He examines it closely, holds it up in the air for all to see and says “It is Good.” Wind Bear then places the quill in a small bag. His eyes return to Indigo Bunting’s; “Give me something of the earth.” Indigo Bunting states “I have nothing.” as she opens her palms to shows she carries nothing and has no pockets or bags. Again Wind Bear reaches Indigo Bunting’s leg and pulls out a second quill. He examines it and again holds it high and declares “It is good.” Again he places the quill in the bag. His eyes return to hers and again he asks for something of the earth. Indigo Bunting looks down at her person and pleads “but I have nothing.” This time Wind Bear reaches to her other leg and pulls out an eagle feather. He strokes it and examines it closely. He holds it high and declares “It ...Is...GOOD!” The people observing respond in a single word that they are pleased. Wind Bear places the feather in his bag and then performs an intricate ceremony that Indigo Bunting does not fully grasp. When he as finished his singing, dancing, waving of sacred items and such, he stands before the motionless Indigo Bunting. He looks her in the eye and repeats “It is GOOD.” Wind Bear then pulls from his small bag a large blanket. He holds out the blanket to Indigo Bunting and states “Grand-daughter, this is of the generations”.

~Anonymous