

# Feathers In The Wind

## In This Issue:

- ❖ The Quilt of Belonging – Oneida (Tiionen'lote)
- ❖ Land of the People
- ❖ Aboriginal Travels – Paraguay
- ❖ Recipe for Pemmican
- ❖ Thirteen Moons
- ❖ Traditional Medicine
- ❖ Micmac Quillwork
- ❖ Congratulations Rebecca!
- ❖ Iroquois Wooden Mask
- ❖ Blackfoot Art
- ❖ Algonquin Art

## Quilt of Belonging – Oneida (Tiionen'lote)

The photo and text are from: <http://www.invitationproject.ca/region.php>



Marilyn Cornelius created the Oneida block with the help of her two nieces: artist Rosalind Antone, who designed the piece, and Tonya Lyn Antone, who helped with the beadwork. For the centrepiece, Rosalind chose a turtle appliquéd on leather to represent North America, known as Turtle Island among Native peoples. The white pine on the turtle's back is the great Tree of Peace, which plays an important role in Oneida teachings. The calico border is typical of the colourful fabrics used to make dress shirts for men and dresses for women. The lower border is symbolic of the plant life that is so important to the people.

The Oneida call themselves *Onyota'a:ka*, which means "People of the Standing Stone." The name refers to a large rock, placed in each Oneida village, that is used as a gathering place for ceremonial activities. Their traditional territory was in what is now New York State, but today there are Oneida communities located in Central New York, Wisconsin, and Ontario. The Oneida of the Thames live near London, Ontario on the Oneida Settlement. This tract of land (5,400 acres) was purchased in 1840 by a group of Oneida who pooled their resources, after receiving assurances from the British Crown that they would be protected and treated with respect. Today, the Oneida Settlement has a thriving agricultural and business community.

The Oneida are one of the original Five Nations to join the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (also known as the Iroquois Confederacy). The Confederacy, which was established in the 15th century, provided mutual protection for all members. Within it, the Oneida are known as the Younger Brothers. They are organized into three clans: Turtle, Bear, and Wolf.

Women were highly valued and respected in Oneida culture. Traditionally, clan lineage is traced through the mother's line, and the politics of the nation have, for a long time, been strongly influenced by female opinion. Female leaders from each clan are the faith-keepers and spiritual advisors.

The American Revolutionary War caused significant devastation and tremendous change to the Oneida lifestyle. The continuous influx of European immigrants negatively affected traditional hunting grounds--making it difficult for the Oneida to find food--and also influenced their horticultural practices and customs. Traditional culture has remained a part of Oneida identity, passed on by the elders through their oral histories. A contemporary revival of the Oneida language and Longhouse seasonal celebrations is in full swing.

**Sponsors:** Elena Cincik-Mirga & Voitech Mirga



## Land of the People



Haida Gwaii has always been a popular tourist destination with visitors coming from around the world, by air, ferry from the mainland, or on cruise ships. Many non-Haidas have been adopted by the Haida nation including such notables as Gordon Lightfoot and Dr. David Suzuki, whose daughter is married to a Haida. Dr. Suzuki has done quite a bit to increase the appeal of Haida Gwaii to tourists.

Haida Gwaii is a seven-hour ferry ride from Prince Rupert. The Haida used to travel in canoes up and down the coast and they have settled as far north as Alaska, which is visible on a clear day. The Haida have a long history as seamen, having also travelled as far as Hawaii and Japan. The sea is an integral part of Haida legend and the traditional stories say the first men emerged from a clam shell.

Haida Gwaii is nick-named The Misty Isles and has a mild, coastal rainforest climate with a lot of rain but little snow. The vegetation is lush and many of the Haida survive almost exclusively on the food and herbs they hunt, fish or gather: halibut, salmon, trout, herring, seaweed, a variety of berries, clams, crab, Labrador tea, yarrow, devil's club, deer, and more.

Recently, the Queen Charlotte Islands reverted to their pre-contact name, Haida Gwaii, which means Land of the People.



The Haida comprise about half of the current population of the

islands as well as having about an equal number living in various parts of the rest of the world, predominantly Vancouver and Prince Rupert. There are several communities on the two largest islands, two of which are on reserve lands, in Old Massett to the north and Skidegate to the south.

In common with many others of Canada's aboriginal peoples, first contact brought disease, including measles, typhoid, and smallpox which nearly wiped out the Haida, reducing their population from at least fifteen thousand inhabitants to just six hundred survivors. Today, the Haida take a very active role in health care, hosting numerous Health Hub gatherings and other workshops designed to promote both physical and mental health in their communities.

I moved here expecting there to be one chief per community and was surprised to discover that both Old Massett and Skidegate each have several chieftains. Because the Haida used to have many more communities, pre-contact, and moved to escape disease, the survivors combined communities, which resulted in more chiefs. Chiefs are not elected but instead are hereditary, with the descent passing from the eldest nephew, matrilineally.

There are two main moieties or clans of the Haida, Ravens or Eagles, and members are expected to marry from the opposite clan. Clan membership is inherited through the mother. Although there have been almost seventy crests used by the Haida, only a few are generally used today, including the raven, eagle, killer whale, hummingbird, wolf, frog, skate, dogfish, and grizzly. Some crests, such as the frog, wolf and grizzly, are crests originating with the Tsimshian.

There is a Haida language school in Skidegate, numerous language CDs are sold at the Ka'ay Heritage Centre and you can access an on-line Haida-English dictionary, but the three dialects (from Masset, Skidegate, and Hydaburg, Alaska) are considered language isolates and are endangered, with less than two hundred living speakers.

Haida art is quite distinct from other First Nations' art. The Haida hold a monopoly on the carving of black argillite, a kind of black slate quarried near to Skidegate, and which the Haida



began carving and selling to sailors around the year 1800. It has been determined that the Haida have been traders for over two thousand years and they are world-renowned for their craftsmanship of painted paddles, bentwood boxes, and jewellery, especially earrings, pendants and bracelets made from copper, silver or argillite. The Haida weavers' goods are in demand as well, from woven woolen blankets to cedar hats and robes. Copper shields are also a popular and quite distinctive item.





Every Haida is a member of the Haida Nation which collectively holds both Hereditary and Aboriginal Title and Rights to Haida Territories. The Haida have fought hard to reclaim their independence. They are fiercely protective of their cultural and intellectual property rights and have a partnership with logging companies and other businesses who wish to make use on the many natural resources of Haida Gwaii.

One final note of interest. Old Massett is the oldest Haida settlement. The nearby community of Masset has altered the spelling. Due to a significant problem with black mould in homes, from the damp climate, a second area of reserve land has begun to be developed south of Masset, known as New Town.

Sincerely yours,

Carrie Elaine Chapple, a resident of Masset.

***Continued in next month's issue.***



## Aboriginal Travels - Paraguay

Copied from

<http://www.invitationproject.ca/listing.php?Listing=9040>



Slightly smaller than Newfoundland and Labrador, Paraguay (which means 'the place of the great river') is a subtropical, landlocked country located in central South America. The *Río Paraguay* (the third largest river in the western hemisphere) divides the nation into two distinct regions: the fertile fields and lush forests of the east, and the dry scrub forest and swamps of the plains of the Chaco. Paraguay is the site of the world's largest hydroelectric dam (*Itaipú*). It is one of three such dams along the Paraná River making Paraguay one of the leading exporters of electricity in the world. It is also home to the *palo borracho*, the unique 'bottle tree,' which has a bulbous trunk that conserves water during dry weather.

The original inhabitants of Paraguay were several indigenous groups of Indians, the largest of which was the semi-nomadic *Guaraní*. Colonies of Spaniards developed over the years and today the population is comprised mainly of *mestizo* (mixed Spanish and Amerindian). The two official languages are Spanish and Guaraní. For most Paraguayans, family and kin are the main focus of their loyalty and identity. Godparents, in particular, are an important part of this ideal.

Paraguayan culture is a blend of Guaranian and Spanish elements, which is reflected in the folklore, the arts and literature. Themes are often inspired by historical events and social issues, as well as by daily life and the local landscape. In addition to *ñandutí* lace, other time-honoured crafts include *ahó-poí*, (exquisitely hand-embroidered, homespun cotton

cloth used for blouses, shirts, and tablecloths), leather- and silver-work, weaving, ceramics, knitted *hamacas* (hammocks), and iron and woodwork (used to create decorative balconies, doorknobs, chandeliers, and religious ornaments). Music and dance are important parts of Paraguayan life and, like other artistic tradition, the craft of producing harps and guitars (the country's most popular instruments) from fine native woods is passed down from one generation to the next. The most famous folk dance of Paraguay is the 'bottle dance,' in which a female dancer performs while balancing one or more water-filled bottles on her head.

### Recipe for Pemmican



- Cut two pounds of beef into small strips
- Cook the beef very well and let it dry until it is hard
- Crush the beef in a meat grinder
- Add a cup of raisins (you can substitute chokecherries, raspberries, currants, etc.)
- Put the mixture into a pie plate and pour hot beef fat over it until it is covered (don't get burned!)
- Stir it all together until the fat begins to get hard
- Let the mixture cool, then cut it into squares

The pemmican won't spoil for two or three years if you keep it cool and dry





## Thirteen Moons

Adapted from Algonquin Nation, Kijich-Manito, Volume 1



### *January*

**Spirit Moon** - This is the first moon of Creation and it is manifested through the Northern Lights. It is a time to honour the silence and realize our place within all of Great Mystery's creatures.

### *February*

**Bear Moon** - This is the second moon of Creation when we honour the vision quest that it began in the Fall. During this time we discover how to see beyond reality and to communicate through energy rather than sound.

### *March*

**Sugar Moon** - This is the third moon of Creation. As the maple sap begins to run we learn of one of the main medicines given to the Anishnabe which balances our blood and heals us. During this time we are encouraged to balance our lives as we would our blood sugar levels, by using Divine Law.

### *April*

**Sucker Moon** - April is the fourth moon of Creation when sucker goes to the Spirit World in order to receive cleansing teachings for the world. When it returns to this realm it purifies a path for the Spirits and cleanses all our water beings. During this time we can learn to become healed healers.

### *May*

**Flower Moon** - May is the fifth moon of Creation when all plants display their Spirit sides for all to see. This life giving energy is one of the most powerful healing medicines on Mother Earth. During this moon we are encouraged to explore our own Spiritual essences.

### *June*

**Strawberry Moon** - Strawberry Moon is the sixth moon of Creation. The medicine of the strawberry is reconciliation. It was during this moon cycle that communities usually held their annual feasts, welcoming everyone home regardless of their differences over the past year, and letting go of judgment and/or self-righteousness.

### *July*

**Raspberry Moon** - The seventh month of Creation is when great changes begin. By learning gentleness and kindness, we may pass through the thorns of its bush and harvest its fruit and knowledge that will help in raising our families.

### *August*

**Thimbleberry Moon** - The eighth month of Creation is the Thimbleberry, when we honour the Thimbleberry which produces an abundance of fruit once every three years. It was one of the first plants put on Mother Earth, and its purpose is to protect the Sacred Circle of Life by allowing us to recognize and understand the teachings that come from the Spirit World.

### *September*

**Corn Moon** - The ninth month of creation is the Corn Moon, during which time we learn about the cycle of life. Each cob of corn has thirteen rows of multi-coloured seeds which represent all the spirits waiting to begin their Earth Walk. These will be the future generations for whom we must prepare.

### *October*

**Falling Leaves Moon** - This is the tenth month of Creation, when Mother Earth is honoured with the grandest of colours. As all of Creation makes their offerings to her, we become aware of all the miracles of Creation before us and our spiritual energies are once again awakened.

### *November*

**Freezing Moon** - The Freezing Moon is a time when the Star Nation is closest to us. As every creature being prepares for the coming fasting grounds, we are reminded to prepare ourselves for our spiritual path by learning the sacred teachings and songs that will sustain us.

### *December*

**Little Spirit Moon** - This is a time of healing. By receiving both vision of the spirits and good health, we may walk the Red road with the purest intentions, and we can share this most positive energy with our families and friends for the good of all.

### *Blue Moon*

**Big Spirit Moon** - The thirteenth month of Creation is Big Spirit Moon. Its purpose is to purify us, and to heal all of Creation, a process which may take a three month long spiritual journey. During this time, we receive instructions on the healing powers of the universe and transform into our own vision of the truth.

# Traditional Medicine



Each First Nations people use medicine plants that grow within their traditional territory. Some are also used for food. There are certain times of the year for gathering various plants. How you prepare the medicine depends on which part of the plant you will be using. If it is the root you will be using, you must

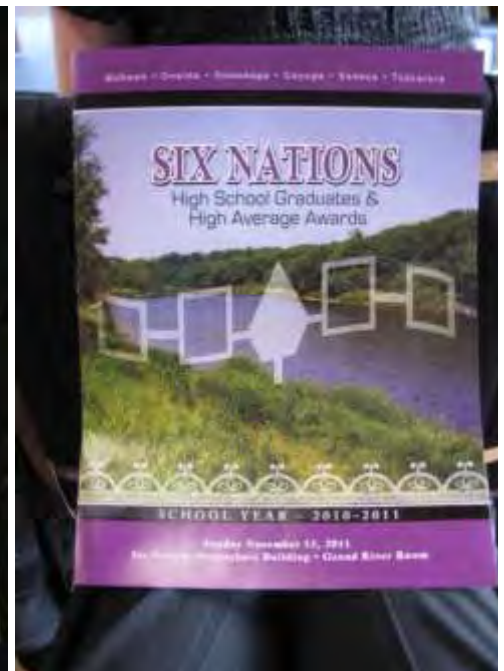
clean as much soil as possible from it. If it is the leaves, you must lay them out to dry before storing. Jars with tight lids, plastic containers or paper bags are ideal. If you are using the whole plant you cut them off at the base and hang them upside down to dry before storing. You must dry bark well before storage. Animal fat was used to mix with herbal medicines for ointments.

This website lists the uses of many plants:

<http://www.anniesremedy.com/chart.php?gc=101c&gclid=CKSktpOr1awCFYt-5QodrkkusA>

# Micmac Quillwork

The Micmac are often referred to as the "porcupine people" because of their intricate and elaborate quill work. This artistic embellishment was unusual and much sought after. Quill work on bark is an ancient art.



Congratulations to Rebecca Allison who earned the highest combined mark for a grade 9 student 2010-2011 in Math and Science ,in Brant County . This S.E.E.D.(Science Education Employment and Development award) for science and technology for youth in partnership with Six Nations and Imperial Oil. Awards were given Sunday Nov 13 at the Six Nations Polytechnic Building.



**OMFRC**  
**1314 Hybla Road RR 5**  
**Bancroft, ON**  
**K0L 1C0**

Phone: 1-613-332-4789  
or toll free 1-877-737-0770

E-MAIL:  
[info@omfrc.org](mailto:info@omfrc.org)



We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.omfrc.org](http://www.omfrc.org)  
[www.aboriginalstatus.org](http://www.aboriginalstatus.org)

## New Submissions!

We are always looking for new interesting submissions to add to upcoming issues of the OMFRC Newsletter. If you have something you would like to add to the newsletter please call or email us! We'd be happy to consider it for an upcoming issue.

## Is Your Membership Coming Up for Renewal?



*If it is, call 1-613-332-4789 and you can do it right over the phone in just a couple of minutes.*



Iroquois wooden mask



Blackfoot art



Algonquin art