

Information Release from the Hammondsport Chamber of Commerce



17th Annual Genundowa Native American Festival of Lights

September 4 – 5, 2010 Hammondsport, NY 14840

Village Square: Saturday & Sunday 10am – 5pm

Depot Park Fire Lighting & Social Dance: Saturday 8pm

<http://www.genundowa.com>

<http://genundowa.blogspot.com>

Contact: Bob Magee (607) 569 2667 Email: bob@keukalake.com

Ellen Shaw Maceko (607) 569 2700 Email: shawagencyinc@yahoo.com

Joe Carroll (607) 569 3300 Email: redwillow@frontier.net

Supplemental Information:

The name, (pronounced: Ga NUN doe ah), is derived from the Seneca Village ‘Genundowa’, which was located on Bare Hill on the East side of Canandaigua Lake. The literal translation of the word Genundowa is “a house was burned here.”

The Seneca Elders would light a large fire on top of Bare Hill as part of the Seneca Autumn Ceremony of Thanksgiving for a successful harvest and peaceful times. This fire was answered by smaller fires from encampments along the lakeshore, resulting in a ring of light as a gesture of unity.

A trail leading to an encampment on the western shore of Keuka Lake resulted in spreading the celebration to the neighboring lake. This encampment was the summer home of Otetiani, the famous Indian Philosopher, better known as Red Jacket

People who have grown up along Keuka Lake have always referred to the Festival of Lights by its Seneca name, “Genundowa.” Steuben County Historian, the late Richard Sherer could recall personally participating in this event "as far back as 1935," and documented that the Genundowa Celebration was observed, by non-Indians, on Keuka Lake continuously since the late 19th century.

This present day festival had its origins in 1993 when members of the Hammondsport Chamber of Commerce, Bob Magee and Ellen Maceko, noticed posters referring to Genundowa as “Flare Night”. They felt that this event had lost most of its original meaning, becoming a night to celebrate the end of summer and the closing of seasonal cottages with a few flares and refreshments. In October 1993 the Genundowa Committee was formed to organize a more traditional celebration that would feature Iroquois artisans, dance and drum exhibitions, and Native American foods. The two day event is highlighted by the lighting of the Celebration Fire at the Village lakefront, which is answered by flares and campfires along the Keuka Lake shoreline. Native American music and an Iroquois Social Dance accompanies the lighting of the annual fire. The festival is held annually each Labor Day weekend in the Hammondsport village square and Depot Park.

The festival showcases Iroquois culture as well as several other Native American nations through arts, song, dance and drums.

Each year the festival features the work of approximately 35 artisans. Many return annually and new applicants are juried by festival coordinators and advisors from the Six Nations in an attempt to display the largest possible cross section of Haudenosaunne and Native American culture. Several of our participants are nationally known and include both Emmy and Grammy award winners, as well as artists whose works are shown in the Smithsonian and other notable museums:

Joe Firecrow: 43rd Annual Grammy winner for Best Native American Artist, 44th Annual Grammy Presenter, Grammy Winner - 2001 Best Song Writer, 2003 & 2005 Album of the Year, Currently recording a collaborative album with Natalie Merchant.

Dan Hill: Emmy award for his film portrayal of Ely Parker in *Warrior in Two Camps*. Soundtrack for *The Ice Storm (1997)* Soundtrack for award winning Native American film *Looks into the Night*, Films: *Dancing Outside, Powwow Highway, War that made America*, Performed in Belgium at request of the US Embassy, Nation Tribal Environmental Committee Regional Chairperson.

Haudenosaunne Singers and Dancers: Sheri Hopper served on Hillary Clinton's Woman's Leadership Council, Invited by the Croatian government to tour and perform in 2009.

Tom Huff: Permanent Collections: Smithsonian, Iroquois and NYS Museum of History.

Peter Jones: Permanent Collections: White House, Heard Museum, Iroquois Museum

Midge Dean Stock: Permanent Collections: Smithsonian, Iroquois and NYS Museum of History. Soundtracks: 500 Nations, How the West was Lost.

Carson Waterman Permanent Collections: Smithsonian, Museum of the American Indian, Designed the Route 17 / I86 sign logo for NYSDOT

Marty Jennings Smithsonian Collection, Recreationist for NYS Museum of History.

Chester Mahooty (Zuni Nation, deceased) Cofounder of the Native American Dance Theater

Additional visual arts include oil and watercolor paintings, bone and antler carving, flute and drum making, pottery, beadwork, leatherwork, silverwork, rattles, cradleboards, traditional headdresses (Gustoweh) and clothing. Many artists demonstrate on site throughout the festival. Traditional foods made with corn, bean and squash (the Three Sisters), venison, frybread, wild rice, and strawberries are also available.

A complete schedule of events will be available June 15th, 2010.