



# Wellbriety!

White Bison's Online Magazine

Volume 4, Number 18

## Don't Be Silent!

Hoop Journey IV Wraps Up in Oneida, Wisconsin  
May 23, 2003

"If you're in Recovery, you need to have a strong voice. It is said that in order for evil to flourish, humans must stand silent. This is not the time to stand silent. If you need to have strength to have a strong voice, then get together with someone else who will help you with that. In this way, we can support this healing to take place in our Nations."

From the Circle  
Oneida Wisconsin, 2003



**Wellbriety Day in Oneida. (L to R), Marilyn King, Glenn Funmaker, Pat Twocrow, and Don Coyhis with the small Gift Hoop, and the Hoop of 100 Feathers.**



Published by White Bison, Inc.  
Colorado Springs, CO



## White Bison Speaks

# A Fond Farewell In Oneida

**A** Sacred Fire had been burning since before the Sun rose in the East this day. This Fire would be kept for all of the days of the Oneida Sobriety Conference—May 23-25 2003. We were here today for the Wellbriety Day event, which would be the "kick-off" for the main Conference. There were 45 people gathered on the lawn outside the Oneida Parish Hall awaiting arrival of the Sacred Hoop of 100 Eagle Feathers. There were several people already there long before any of the rest of us arrived—probably long before most of us had awakened this beautiful morning. They had been tending to the Sacred Fire for many hours. The Fire had four painted rocks placed around it. As you moved around the Sacred Fire in a counter-clockwise direction you passed each rock, beginning with the Yellow in the East, Red in the South, Black in the West, and finally a White rock in the Northern direction. We were told that the four colors of rock represented the Four Directions and the Four Races of Man. It was a good way to begin our day. Thank you to those who rose early to have this Sacred Fire for us.

### The Day Begins

After an opening prayer, the Sacred Hoop Carriers were offered the cleansing smoke from the sage plant. Don Coyhis explained the smudging ritual that he would perform on each of the men who would carry the Hoop from Oneida Parish Hall to the Norbert Hill Center for today's celebration of the Wellbriety Movement and the last visit of the Fourth Journey of the Sacred Hoop—Healing Native Men and Children. Don said:

*"We ask that when you carry that Hoop that you try to keep a Good Mind. And we ask that you think about our communities and about healing. We ask that you think about our traditions and our culture and whatever methods we are using in our communities for healing. I'll start here in the North and I'll explain this ritual to the first man here."*

Don lights the medicine plant—the sage—with fire from his lighter. It begins to smoke and he fans it with

his Eagle Feathers to encourage the sage to produce more smoke. As he approaches the man standing in the Northern Direction he continues.



*Don Coyhis (left) with the Sacred Hoop Carriers for the Oneida Wellbriety Day. Darren Jenerson, Lyle Prouse, Ron Radloff, and Lahnetah • wi. This is the Sacred Fire that would burn in Oneida for the entire sobriety conference. Notice the Four Direction stones on the ground.*

*"We put this Medicine (smoke) on the feather, and we put it on the hand by brushing the feather against the hand. What this means is that when you carry this Hoop today, be open. And when we put this Medicine on your ears, (Don runs the feathers thru the smoke once again and then taps the feathers against the man's ears) that means that you are to just hear the truth. And on your eyes so that you see the truth. And on your lips so that you speak the truth. Then we tap the heart area four times. For the red, the yellow, the black, and the white. Twice on each side of your chest. One side of you represents the man's side, the other represents the woman's side. We pat the Medicine on both sides so that you are in balance between your woman's side and the man's side. Then we tap the feather with the Medicine on it on the top of your head. This means that you are to be open to your Higher Power—Creator, Jesus, whatever you call it in your way is good. And lastly, we make this protection or cocoon. (Don fans the eagle feathers around all sides of the body) Then on the tip of the Feather we touch the head and continue with*

## White Bison Speaks

# A Fond Farewell In Oneida

*the tip down to the heart area. This is to remind us that to have wellness, we need both. We need the head and we need the heart.”* After completing the smudging ceremony and explaining it to the first man, Don continues around the directions to the West, South, and East, blessing each man in the same way.

The Sacred Hoop Carriers for today’s Wellbriety event were Ron Radloff • Darren Jenerson • Lyle Prouse • and Lahnetah\_wi. Following the smudging ceremony, the Hoop Carriers walked across the lawn of the Parish Hall, and with the protection of the local Police Department they were "on the road" toward the Norbert Hill Center with twenty Community Members following closely behind.



*Members of the local community walk with the Sacred Hoop from the Oneida Parish Hall to the Norbert Hill Center:*

The last section of the walk to the Norbert Hill Center was completed on a hiking trail that leads through the woods and up the hill to a large tent covering, under which would be held the Wellbriety Day event. You could hear trilling and feel the excitement as the Sacred Hoop Carriers and the community members who walked with them came into view. The youngest member of the community to walk with the Sacred Hoop was asleep in a stroller by the time he arrived at the big tent. It was wonderful to see all aspects of the community come together for

this event. From the baby, the youth, and the women of the community, to the Post 54 AMVETS, it was a day of coming together for the community. There were around 100 people awaiting the Hoop’s arrival. So, by the time we were all joined together again as one group, there were 145 people in attendance.

The Drum—**Duck Creek Crossing**—sang two beautiful honor songs for us as the Sacred Hoop was carried to the center of the awning in the middle of the field behind the Norbert Hill Center. One of the songs was in Honor of the Hoop and the Veterans who carried it and walked with it today. The other song was in Honor and Memory of U.S. Army Pfc. Lori Piestewa, Hopi, who was killed in Iraq in late March of this year. The Keeper of the Duck Creek Crossing Drum is Patrick L. Madrid Sr. The Singers were Paul Gutierrez • Anthony Gutierrez • Bill King • Cory Wesaw • Jason Johnson • Jacob Johnson • Jaydee Johnson • and Curtis Summers. Thank you for taking the time to come out today and help us out with these Honor Songs!



*The Duck Creek Crossing Drum sings an Honor Song for the Sacred Hoop and for U.S. Army Pfc. Lori Piestewa, Hopi, killed in action in Iraq. Please see Volume 4, No. 14 of Wellbriety! Magazine (Dayton, Ohio visit) for more information on Pfc. Lori Piestewa.*

## The Eagle and the Condor Meet

Glenn Funmaker, one of the coordinators for today’s event, served as MC for the Wellbriety Day

## White Bison Speaks

# A Fond Farewell In Oneida

Gathering. Glenn first introduced Randy Cornelius to give the opening words and prayer. Randy had given the opening prayer before we began the walk today and speaks eloquently both in his own language and in the English language. Thank you for your good words today. After the opening prayer, Glenn Funmaker then introduced Don Coyhis of White Bison, who shared about the Wellbriety Movement and how the Sacred Hoop was "put together" in Janesville, Wisconsin in 1995, not far from where we stood today. This is also not far from the place where Don was born and grew up, the Stockbridge-Munsee Reservation. After sharing about the Vision of the Sacred Hoop and how White Bison had received the 100 Eagle Feathers to build the Hoop, Don went on to tell us about the Condor Feather in the center of the Sacred Hoop:

*"The weekend we were building the Hoop in Janesville, we got a message from this Tribe in Peru. In their prophecies it is said that when the Condor and the Eagle meet, the healing would start. So the weekend we were doing the ceremony in Janesville with the White Buffalo Calf, they came down from their mountain for the first time in 500 years to talk to the "younger brother." They said, 'It's really foolish what he's doing with the earth.' So we sent a Shoshone Elder to Peru and they took him up to the mountains for 30 days. Ceremonies were exchanged and the Eagle Feather and the Condor Feather were exchanged. Then the Elder brought the Condor Feather back and we had a ceremony and put that Condor Feather on there. So I want to thank you all for carrying this Hoop today for all of our People—the Red, the Yellow, the Black and the White."*

We were honored throughout the day's events to hear from many individuals and learn about their personal recovery and their hopes for wellness in their families and communities. We also were honored to have so many people share with us after the showing of the documentary video from the Third Journey—Healing Native Women and Children. There was a traditional feast served at the Parish Hall and it was won-

derful! In the afternoon we heard many good words and inspiration from Leland 'Putski' Danforth and Lahnetah • wi . Thank you for sharing.

### The Yarn Exercise in Oneida

Toward the end of today's gathering, we formed a circle of men for the yarn exercise. There were approximately twenty-five men taking part in the demonstration at today's gathering. As they tossed the red ball of yarn back and forth between them, a web slowly formed. As they continued to 'weave this web,' Don Coyhis talked to them about the 'teaching' that was being demonstrated by this exercise.

*"As this web of yarn represents, we live in our families and communities in an inter-connected and inter-dependent system. We've been living by 'org chart thinking' for so long that we've forgotten about this inter-connectedness. Now we are at a place of thinking where if something happens in our communities we say, 'It's not my job... it's over there... not my responsibility.' But when we stand in this Circle and we are able to experience this, there is a message. Can you imagine who would do something to our family or our community if they knew that this circle of men would form? Or if you did something that wasn't right to the community? Can you imagine facing a circle of men like this?"*



*Members of the Community took time to share after the demonstration of inter-connectedness and the traditional roles of men during the yarn exercise.*

## White Bison Speaks

# A Fond Farewell In Oneida

As the men continued to toss the yarn from one man to another, Don continued:

*“Child rearing was very significant in our communities. Everyone was involved in it. We had ceremonies for a reason. And a lot of our culture and Ways are still there. They told us that this is how men need to be. Some of the men need to be looking out, and some of the men need to be looking in. The men have to be watching. We have to watch what’s going on in our communities now, because everything is moving fast. If something goes wrong in the camp, we form this Circle. And what they said is that we form these Circles around the things we respect and the things that we love. In the old days our women were treated with respect. In our old languages even some of the words for women mean ‘life givers’ and ‘sacred beings.’ Our children and our women were looked upon as being sacred.”*

The yarn had been tossed to every man in the circle by this time and the web was complete. Don pointed out across the web and said:

*“This is your community. It’s inter-connected. What one does has an effect on the other. Tension... balance... harmony... it’s the Circle. We are standing in exact harmony with how an atom is built. There is an energy or something spiritual in the center and everything cycles around it. This is the way our villages were designed—in a circle. Our teepees were in a circle. The Earth goes around the Sun in a circle. We are at harmony with Natural Law right now in this Circle. What is really powerful about this circle is what it does to the enemy. When this Circle forms it’s really scary to someone when they see the circle of the men form like this.”*

Then the next part of the teaching of the yarn-circle-exercise took place.

*“What I would like to do is to ask all of you to raise the yarn up over your heads. (The men hold the yarn*

*web up high). Then I would like to ask the women and children, if they wouldn’t mind, to come and stand in the center of this circle.”*

The women walk underneath the raised yarn and move toward the center of the circle near the Sacred Hoop. One has even pushed a baby stroller that holds her sleeping infant inside the circle. Then Don asks the men to slowly lower the yarn. And as the yarn is slowly lowered, the women are inside the web, completely surrounded by the men in their families and community.

Don continues: *“This is how our communities were formed. With everything that was sacred to us men inside our protective circle. When we look around here in this circle today we can realize our responsibilities. NEVER should we allow a woman to be hit. There should be NO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE EVER in this community. NONE! These women are chosen by Creator to be our Life Givers. So if a woman is ever hit in this community, it should be a crisis and the men should immediately form this circle. Or a child—we should never have a child hurt in this community.”*

The men and the women are nodding their heads in agreement to this strong statement. The people of the community look around at the web, at their family members, and at their neighbors. Some heads are bowed now and some tears run down a few cheeks.

*“It is a strong message when this Circle is formed,”* Don Coyhis continues. *“Without it, there is no message. There is no protection. Anytime anything, anyone that we consider to be a sacred being is hurt, it should be a crisis and this Circle should be immediately formed. As we get into our Recovery and become That Warrior, we have got to be responsible. If domestic violence, for example, goes on and you say nothing, sometimes that says that you agree! We think, ‘Well, I don’t want to cause any trouble...’ So we make excuses. But what we are saying with our silence is: It’s OK. We have to say out loud where we stand on these kinds of issues by forming this Circle in our communities.”*

## A Fond Farewell In Oneida

### Healing Our Nations: Don't Be Silent! A Message From the Circle

"Even those of us men who have been in Recovery for many years, because of the fears we still have, might not want to say something about our cousin, might not want to say something about our relative, or Father maybe, who is a batterer. We have got to find the courage to say something to them. And to say it in a good way so that the heart comes out and you're speaking from the heart. So that you're putting tobacco or whatever you use to show respect in their hands and asking them to stop what they're doing and try to heal themselves.

"Many times those who are doing these things were themselves abused and there needs to be a reconciling of all that 'bad learning' that they have had in life and a releasing of that. And until that is addressed and healed within themselves, they are not going to be able to do that. They will continue to stay in that fog and stay in that confusion of using alcohol and drugs, that poison we ingest into our bodies. They choose not to walk on that spiritual path.

"We need to turn and look toward those who are going to lead our Nations back to where we need to go. We are living in that time of the prophecies. We need to listen to these messages from the Elders that say, 'It's time to tell your people to go back to their old ways, to open their spiritual ears, to go to those ceremonies, because it is coming to that time when Creator is going to shake the Earth.' That's when you're going to need to go over there and find out where we need to go. Some of us are going to go and some of us are not going to listen. Some of us are going to stay in those places that will fall into the sea, or whatever. Some of us are going to have the 'message,' but are going to choose to perish with our loved ones because we do not want to survive without them. But we need to begin someplace.

"If you're in Recovery, you need to have a strong voice. It is said that in order for evil to flourish, humans must stand silent. This is not the time to stand silent. If you need to have strength to have a strong voice, then get together with someone else who will help you with that. In this way, we can support this healing to take place in our Nations."

*Oneida, Wisconsin.  
May 23, 2003*

## White Bison Speaks

# A Fond Farewell In Oneida

### Closing the Journey

After those Good Words about it being time to speak out because we've been silent for too long, Don spoke personally at the closing of this Fourth and last Hoop Journey in the Cycle that began in 1999.

*"We are honored to be on your sacred land today. We started this Fourth Journey in April, back in Cherokee N.C. We've been to 18 communities since then. From Tribe to Tribe, throughout the Six Nations communities in New York, down to Ohio, to many of the urban Indian Centers, we now con-*



**Collapsing the Circle** for the last time on Hoop Journey IV in Oneida, Wisconsin. The people who attended today's Wellbriety Event form a Circle during the Closing Ceremony. There were many handshakes, hugs and well wishes.

Come to the White Bison Circles of Recovery Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico from September 18-21, 2003 to continue the Spirit of Hoop Journey IV. It's Free. Call White Bison toll free at 1-877-871-1495, or visit the website [www.whitebison.org](http://www.whitebison.org) for complete information.

## White Bison Speaks

# A Fond Farewell In Oneida

clude in Wisconsin. I remember asking the Elders how would we know when we are in healing. One of the things they said is, 'When the young people start singing the old songs...' We have seen that today, and we have seen that on these Journeys. We have seen fathers and children on the Drums during these Journeys.

*"When I left our reservation in Stockbridge-Munsee here in Wisconsin years ago, I never thought that I would end up back here doing something like this. Recovery has been good to me and I'm really honored to be here. To be here in Oneida, with an AA group in Indian Country that is 50 years old! That's unheard of. I'm really proud to be here. We have videotaped all of the Journeys, and among the ways we use that video is we make a documentary of each Journey. We will be making a video of this Journey—Healing Native Men and Children. That video will be premiered at the September 18-21 Healing Our Nations Wellbriety Conference in Albuquerque, NM. We distribute as many copies of the Journey videos as we can to communities—especially to our remote or rural communities. A lot of them,*

*like in Alaska, can't always get to conferences or locations where we are holding Wellbriety Gatherings. But when we are able to send them a video like this they are able to join in the spirit of the Wellbriety Movement. They are inspired to heal their own communities when they get to see some of the things that are going on in other communities by watching these videos. So we thank each of you who have given us permission and your blessing to share your words, families, and communities in this way."*

We closed today's gathering by having an opportunity for people to offer their prayers for healing of individuals, family, community, and nations. Then we closed our Circle with handshakes and hugs all around. Thank you to the people and the planners of the Oneida Sobriety Conference, Celebrating 50 years of Native Sobriety with the first Native American AA group, for making this Wellbriety Day a part of your celebration! ✚

*Vette Middleton  
Richard Simonelli  
Thank you all!*