

Powwow proves spirited affair

Native Americans, curious gather in Watertown

By Jim Bodor
Republican-American

WATERTOWN — Never take a picture during the Grand Entry traditional dance.

A weekend long powwow sponsored by the Native American Awareness Program started Saturday and will continue today from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. About 1,500 people attended the first day of the event, which featured Native American arts and crafts, and intertribal dancing. And while many of those in attendance brought cameras, they had to remember one thing — no pictures of the Grand Entry.

"As the dancers enter the circle, they dance with the spirits of our ancestors, and the spirits can be scared away by cameras," powwow Co-director Tim Red Loon said.

But after the Grand Entry dance at the beginning of the powwow, visitors are free to take photographs of dancers in original Native American regalia, listen to Native American music and watch a demonstration of birds of prey.

The powwow also offers Native American storytelling and Native American crafts ranging from deers-

If you go

The Powwow continues today from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on French Mountain Road in Watertown. The road is about five miles from the gazebo, off of Litchfield Road in Watertown. There are signs along Litchfield Road to direct visitors. Admission is \$3.

kin war shirts to white rawhide parfleche purses.

Scott Fisher of Shelton attended Saturday's powwow to learn more about a culture that interests him even though he is not Native American.

"Several years ago I did a little reading about Native American culture, and something about it grabbed me," he said.

Others went because they agree with many of the basic teachings of Native Americans.

"We have an affinity for them, we share a lot of their ideas about the earth. It's good to see a lot more of these in the area." Joe Wueke of

Plainville said. He attended the powwow with his wife, MaryAnn.

For Roland Passariello of Wolcott, it took a push from his wife Bobbi to get him away from the golf course to attend the powwow.

But he still enjoyed himself.

"This is a first-time event for me. I think it's interesting, more interesting than I expected," he said.

And for Eileen and Frank Bombardier, the event gave them the chance to introduce their three-month-old daughter, Samantha, to their Native American heritage.

"It's for the children. That's what this is all about," he said. Proceeds from the powwow will help fund NAAP programs to encourage youngsters with Native American heritage to learn about their culture and history.

Jim Bodor *Republican-American*

Native Americans sing original Native American songs Saturday around ceremonial drums at a powwow off Litchfield Road in Watertown.

