

## DECEMBER 2009 - MONTHLY SUMMARY

The highlight of December 2009 was our reconnection with the staffs of St. Bonaventure University, the Friars of Mt. Irenaeus and, Native American Community Services (NACS). Our meetings with Sister Margaret Carney, St. Bona President; Paul Brawdy, St. Bona Athletic Director; and, Brother Kevin Kriso, Mt. Irenaeus; Dr. Lloyd Elm; and, Michael Martin, produced great results with our future projects and possible second Iroquoian Spiritual Conference. Our intent in working with these groups is to provide an avenue for dialogue between our Seneca youth and these fine educators and spiritualist. We have identified five areas of involvement that hopefully will encourage our younger generations to seek cultural knowledge and pride. Brother Joe stated: "it's simple; ask the kids if it's cool to be Seneca." If their response is positive then provide them with the knowledge and opportunity for participation. The number of young people that we see at our longhouse ceremonials demonstrates their desire to learn about themselves and their cultural identity. As educators, it is our responsibility to provide the ways and means to teach and instruct this information. It may seem hopeless to some but that is because we've emptied our bodies of the 'Seneca' and poured in a non-Indian culture. We need to remember and honor the years of cultural survival that our ancestors endured just to bring us to this moment in time. We would *not* be a sovereign Nation today if our ancestors did not maintain our Seneca language, culture and traditions.

At this time of year, I wish everyone a safe and productive new year. Make a list of ten things that you enjoy doing and do them more this year. Today will be 'Day One.'

We will be beginning our Mid-Winter Ceremonials on January 19, 2010 and I am inviting everyone to attend. This is our time to renew our dreams and to fulfill our spiritual obligations to our great and loving Creator. Let this be the year that we begin to turn things around and see the true value of preserving our precious Seneca language, culture and traditions.

Lehman 'Dar' Dowdy

January 4, 2010