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Grandmother Spider Steals the Fire

A creation story of the
Choctaw People of Tennessee
and Mississippi

WOLF CALL

is the newsletter of the Wolf Project, and is published in December, March, and June. Correspondence about and submissions to *Wolf Call* should be e-mailed to Jan Buley at jan.buley@gmail.com, or mailed to 250 Maki Avenue, Sudbury, Ontario, P3E 2P2.

... *And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon* is the epilogue to the *Patria* cycle, produced each August in the Haliburton Forest and Wildlife Reserve. For information, write to R. Murray Schafer, Indian River, Ontario, K0L 2B0, Canada.

The Choctaw People say that when the People first came up out of the ground, People were encased in cocoons, their eyes closed, their limbs folded tightly to their bodies. And this was true of all People, the Bird People, the Animal People, the Insect People, and the Human People. The Great Spirit took pity on them and sent someone down to unfold their limbs, dry them off, and open their eyes. But the opened eyes saw nothing, because the world was dark—no sun, no moon, not even any stars. All the People moved around by touch, and if they found something that didn't eat them first, they ate it raw, for they had no fire to cook it.

All the People met in a great Pow-wow, with the Animal and Bird People taking the lead, and the Human People hanging back. The Animal and Bird People decided that dark was not good, but cold and miserable. A solution must

be found!

Someone spoke from the dark, "I have heard that the people in the East have fire." This caused a stir of wonder, "What could fire be?!" There was a general discussion, and it was decided that if, as rumour had it, fire was warm and gave light, they should have it too.

Another voice said, "But the people of the East are too greedy to share with us." So it was decided that the Bird and Animal People should steal what they needed: the fire!



But, who should have the honor? Grandmother Spider volunteered, "I can do it!!! Let me try." But at the same time, Opossum began to speak. "I, Opossum, am a great Chief of the animals. I will go to the East and since I am a great hunter, I will take the fire and hide it in the bushy hair on my tail."

It was well known that Opossum had the furriest tail of all the animals, so he was selected.

When Opossum arrived in the East, he soon found the beautiful red fire jealously guarded by the people of the East. Opossum drew closer and closer, until he picked up a small piece of burning wood, and stuck it in the hair of his tail,

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which promptly began to smoke, then flame. The people of the East said, "Look, that Opossum has stolen our fire!!!" They took it and put it back where it came from and drove Opossum away.

Poor Opossum! Every bit of hair had burned from his tail, and to this day, Opossums have no hair at all on their tails.

Once again, the Pow-wow had to find a volunteer Chief. Grandmother Spider again said, "Let me go! I can do it." But this time a bird was elected, Buzzard. Buzzard was very proud. "I can succeed where Opossum has failed. I will fly to the East on my great wings, then hide the stolen fire in the beautiful long feathers on my head". The birds and animals still did not understand the nature of fire.

So Buzzard flew to the East on his powerful wings, swooped past those defending the fire, picked up a small piece of burning ember, and hid it in his head feathers. Buzzard's head began to smoke and flame even faster than Opossum's tail had burned. The people of the East said, "Look!!! Buzzard has stolen the fire!" And they took it and put it back where it came from.

Poor Buzzard! His head was now bare of feathers, red and blistered looking. And to this day, buzzards have naked heads that are bright-red and blistered.

The Pow-wow now sent Crow to look the situation over, for Crow was very clever. Crow at that time was pure white, and had the sweetest singing voice of all the birds. But he took so long standing over the fire, trying to find the perfect piece to steal that his white feathers were smoked black. And he inhaled so much smoke that when he tried to sing, out came a harsh, "Caw! Caw!"

The Council said, "Opossum has failed. Buzzard and Crow have failed. Who shall we send?"

Tiny Grandmother Spider shouted with all her might, "LET ME TRY IT PLEASE!!!"

Though the council members thought Grandmother Spider had little chance of success, it was agreed that she should have her turn. Grandmother Spider looked then like she looks now. She had a small torso suspended by two sets of legs that turned the other way. She walked on all of her wonderful legs toward a stream where she had found clay. With those legs, she made a tiny clay container and a lid that fit perfectly with a tiny notch for air in the corner of the lid. Then she put the container on her back, spun a web all the way to the East, and walked tip-toe until she came to the fire. She was so small, the people from the East took no notice. She took a tiny piece of fire, put it in the container, and covered it with the lid. Then she walked back on tip-toe along the web until she came to the People. Since they couldn't see any fire, they said, "Grandmother Spider has failed."

"Oh No," she said, "I have the fire!" She lifted the pot from her back, and the lid from the pot, and the fire flamed up into its friend, the air.

All the Birds and Animal People hurried forward to decide who would get this wonderful warmth. Bear said, "I'll take it!" But then he burned his paws on it and decided fire was not for animals ... for look what happened to Opossum!

The Birds wanted no part of it, as Buzzard and Crow were still nursing their wounds. The insects thought it was pretty, but they too, stayed far away from the fire.

Then a small voice said, "We will take it, if Grandmother Spider will help." The timid humans, whom none of the animals or birds thought much of, were volunteering!

So Grandmother Spider taught the Human People how to feed the fire with sticks and wood to keep it from dying, how to keep the fire safe in a circle of stone so it couldn't escape and hurt them or their homes. While she was at it, she taught the humans about pottery made of clay and fire, and about weaving and spinning—at which Grandmother Spider was an expert. ✨



The Story of *The Princess of the Stars*



PATRIA MUSIC-THEATRE PROJECTS presents *The Princess of the Stars* by R. Murray Schafer—at Dawn: August 28 to September 3. Haliburton Forest and Wildlife Reserve. For ticket information see www.patriamusic.ca or call 1-705-754-4167.

Bring a friend or two!

This is the story of the Princess of the Stars, daughter of the Sun-God and herself a Goddess. Her name is in the stars—you have seen it there. Each night she looked down on earth, Blessing it with kisses of light.

One night she heard a mournful cry coming up from the forest. It was Wolf, howling at the moon, his double. The Princess leaned over the forest to see who was singing, but in leaning down so far she fell from heaven. Suddenly she appeared before Wolf in a flash of light. But Wolf, frightened to see the stars so close, lashed out at the Princess, wounding her.

She ran, bleeding, into the forest, leaving dew wherever she went. By morning she found herself at the edge of a lake and slipped into the water to bathe her wounds.

But there, something caught hold of her, dragging her down. In vain she struggled; in the end the waters closed over her. You may see the stars of her crown at the tip of your paddle, but the Princess you will not see.

The Three-Horned Enemy holds her captive at the bottom of the lake, and the dawn mist is the sign of her struggling. ✨

Recipe: Garlicky Fettucine with Pine Nuts

by Jan Beaver

Guaranteed to keep wolves away from the campfire!

Serving Size: 4

1/4 pint olive oil

3 dried chilies—sliced (optional, but they provide a good kick)

4 garlic cloves—skinned and crushed

12 oz fettucine—cooked 'al dente'

2 oz pine nuts—browned in butter over a fire

3 tbsp chopped fresh basil

Heat the oil in a pan, add the chilies and gently infuse for 5 minutes. Set aside to cool, then remove the chilies. Return the pan to a low heat, add the garlic and cook for 1-2 minutes to soften. Pour the flavored oil over the hot, drained fettucine. Toss with the pine nuts and chopped basil until well done. Serve immediately.

NOTES: The amount of garlic infused in the oil is large, but necessary for the simply delicious taste and aroma of this dish. A hint of chili and the creamy crunch of pine nuts also flavors this incredible dish! Enjoy! ✨

Wolf's needs ...

If you're clearing out your garage or cottage and you discover that you've got any of the following, we'd greatly appreciate these donations to the project:

- Canoes in good condition (we'll even consider a cash deal here!)
- Paddles in good condition
- Tarps in good condition
- Coleman stoves in good condition
- Cargo trailers in good condition

(Well, we'd even accept trailers in poor condition! We can replace flat tires and repair them for our purposes!)



Deer Sighting in Malaysia

by Fran Slingerland

Fran alumna deer reports sighting of three Wolf Project deer, half morphed back into human beings, on the island of Langkawi off the coast of northern Malaysia. Don Quarrie, Bea Quarrie and Fran Slingerland, all long-lost deer of the Haliburton Forest, found each other and started grazing the local banyan tree buds, lying about in the shade, bathing in local waterfalls and telling stories in something other than the local language.

A man who called himself “John” came along and loaded the deer onto a contraption that took them out over the sea at an astonishing pace. The man fed them foreign food and they all jumped into the sea to cool off in the equatorial heat. The man brought the deer back later that night, and were all seen galloping off down the beach. Fisherman from the area claim they heard wolf-like howling on a neighbouring uninhabited island, late that afternoon. ✨

The Waiting Chant

Voice 5 & 6: You are the One we've been wait-in' for.
 Voice 3 & 4: we are the ones we are the ones we've been wait-in'
 Voice 2 & 3: we are the ones we are the ones we've been wait-in'
 Voice 1: we are the ones we are the ones we've been wait-in'

Originally taught by Ysaye Barnwell of Sweet Honey and the Rock, this chant may be used anytime clanfolk are waiting for someone—a frequent Wolf Week experience. Although it was collected by the Beavers, who were once waiting a long time for a really good trumpet-playing beer supplier, it can be used on many other sorts of occasions. Start with the lowest (bass) part—and build upwards, using simple I and V chords. When the person, animal, or creature actually arrives, voices 5 and 6 can then be (finally!) added. The addition of drumming or other percussive sounds can be good too.

Poetry

As The Wind Writes Lyrics

as the wind writes lyrics in fields of wheat
my hands make poems with the strands of your hair
syllables of sunlight and shadow
lace cascades of surprise

an arbour for lovers lost in their limbs
rain weavings hung in a cathedral sky
curls that twist into seashell spirals
release like the fronds of ferns in spring

then with a head toss the constellations scatter
new moods to sift from a tangle of motion
little dramas to unravel

and I discover you've had another lover
the fingers of the wind, my mentor,
have already combed a love sonnet through your hair

by Rae Crossman

Villiers, Saturday 16 June, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Come to Villiers on Saturday, 16 June, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. for the final meeting before the 2007 Wolf Project. Please bring your own bagged lunch, something for a supper potluck, and cup, cutlery, and plate.

Schedule: At 10 a.m. all meet, sing chants, and schedule the Wolf week encounters. From 11:15 to noon clans appoint new members. Noon to 1:30 is a bring-your-own lunch and then campsite meetings. From 1:30 to 3:00 we will visit the barn and sort gear. From 3:30 to 5:00 we gather again at Villiers for singing, storytelling, and play before a potluck dinner at 5.

Directions: Take Hwy. 7 from Peterborough (as if going to Ottawa). You'll pass Jermyn Line, Settler's Line and then, when you get to Indian River Line, turn right off Hwy. 7 onto Villiers Line. Villiers Community Hall will be on your right, about 4 km down the road. If you get to the Keene/Hastings Road, you've missed it! (Don't sneeze!)

Please R.S.V.P. to the listserv: WolfProject@yahoogroups.

Tapio

There's a dream
in my pocket –
rub it and the sky clears
the buildings fall away
noise ceases
clear water springs,
waking the breath...

A lake, a canoe
A paddle
silence.

a face in the leaves –
I offer a stone, a song
soon, voices, stories, laughter
and we are through –
the spirit-tree's faces are ours
we are theirs
Fox flashes white,
leading us onward
the rapid moves beneath me
my paddle follows its lead.

all transformed in
the whisper of wind on the bluff
the crackle of burning wood
over stone
the sun rising
in a breath of hope

by Fran Slingerland

Dates to remember, 2007

1 June
Wolf Project fees due
(Total amount: \$250 per adult
and \$85 per child)

16 June
Villiers weekend: Wolf prepara-
tion, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
(See page 5 for directions.)

8-10 August
Seed camp

10-18 August
Wolf week

31 August to 3 September
Princess of the Stars
Haliburton Forest & Wildlife
Reserve, West Guildford, ON
www.haliburtonforest.com

Council of Elders

Rae Crossman

Tilly Kooyman

Don Quarrie

Judith Parker

Gayle Broughton

Neal Evans

Murray Schafer

Fran Morgan Bloss

Doug Brown

Janice Lewis

Jan Buley

Annette Urbschat
(Elder-at-large, U.S.A.)

Wolf Call & Listserv

Jan & David Buley
Production and editing

Michael Begg & Jennifer Butler
Layout and editing

Jane Carnwath
Proofreader and new members

Andrew Stewart
Yahoo group & listserv manager

Wolf needs you! Princess needs you!

All are welcome to donate to the Wolf Project, with cash or gifts in kind. The Project is always in need of camping equipment. Some wolves have made extra cash donations each year. For example, monetary contributions to WolfAir will help faraway wolves reach the Project. (Each active member already contributes \$25 to WolfAir, as part of their fees.

Please send any donations (made out to "Ariadne") to David Buley, and write to Murray Schafer with any gifts in kind you can make (*addresses on page 1, sidebar*). Finally, one fine way to donate: your enthusiasm and labour, at seed camp. Get in touch if you are interested!

As always, a big wolf call of thanks to the elders, editors, and listservers, and to Peter Schleifenbaum, for his longstanding support of the Project and *Patria*.

Musings Of A Twelve-Year-Old

by *Maya Urbschat*

One of my earliest memories is running full tilt from the campsite to the kitchen at Wildcat. My favorite part was launching myself off the part of the path that drops two feet. You get to fly for about half a second, which I still enjoy.

From my perspective, it's the small things that are the most fun, like the fact that on the day of the Squeever encounter, it almost always

rains, or the plague of "Oh Ya"s that struck in '05. I mean, sure, the rituals are fun too, but after twelve years, the community means more to me. Everyone has their different patterns. Some you can share jokes with, some are good to hike with when your legs start to hurt, and some can be companionable by just being there. I am greatly looking forward to this coming year. See you all then! ✨

Wolf Meeting, 19 April 2007

From minutes by Karen Ages

Membership News

Jane Carnwath is the new membership coordinator. Five new members were announced on 19 April: Andrea (a friend of Brooke's), Jesse Stewart, Naomi Grant and son Damien (friends of the Buleys), and Rob Burnfield. Also among the new members: Sarah and Ian Cumberland.

Returning members include Giorgos Tzane-takis, with two new members: his wife Tiffany and their son Panos; Monica Jardim and her nephew; Leila Rosa Vertamatti (the crow who lost her shoe in the goo); and Fran Slingerland.

Reminder: Please fill out & bring the waiver included with this issue of *Wolf Call* and bring it to the Wolf Project, to speed entry to the site.

Great Wheel Day Proposal

Some asked whether former members who cannot attend the whole project might attend Great Wheel Day only. Neal Evans agreed to discuss further with Sherry Wells.

Patria Plans

Murray is developing a new work, *Death of Shalana*, for 2008. It will feature four choirs, a libretto drawing on the Wolf Project, and new material. The audience will break into eight groups who walk through the forest to different encounters before returning to the lakeside amphitheatre for the Shalana ceremony. Attend Villiers to learn more.

News from Vermont

The Urbschats have almost finished compiling the new book of Wolf chants. At the meeting they asked for help with the words of the Turtle chant, Crow lullaby, and Deer chant.

Speaking of the U.S. wolves, the first Vermont Wolf meeting took place this spring. Several wolves from Montreale attended; all sang.

Villiers

This year's gathering at Villiers is on Saturday, 16 June, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. ✨

