**Amik The Meaning of Powwows**

We have many powwows throughout the year here in Mille Lacs, we have different kinds of powwows also.

The most important ones are the Big Drum ceremonial powwows that are used to pray for life and goodness for all Anishinabe people.  They are held in the fall and spring, 26 weekends in all.

This is where people bring their asaymah (tobacco) to offer prayers to the Creator for the goodness of their selves, their children, and grandchildren.

These Big Drum ceremonies are not closed ceremonies but are open for people who need prayers and to just have a good social time.  The only thing they ask is for people to have respect for the people who are speaking or praying and not to talk or laugh during this time.  Also the children are to remain quiet and sitting at all times.

Our annual powwow held in August is a different kind of powwow.  This is also referred to as a “traditional powwow.”  This is a powwow where all people are invited to come sing, dance and visit.  The majority of the songs and dances are called inter-tribal and not restricted to a special dance category or age group.  This is a good social inter-tribal dance celebration, with plenty of leisurely dancing for everyone to enjoy.

Our Hinckley Grand Celebration held yearly is a huge competition powwow that attracts dancers and singers from all over the U.S. and Canada.  These dancers dance in certain categories such as jingle, fancy, traditional, grass, etc.  Also they dance in different age groups such as juniors, teens, adults, and senior divisions.  Male and female for all.

There are three major bodies that run competition powwows and traditional powwows.  They are the powwow committee, the arena directors, and the masters of ceremonies.  The powwow committee selects the type of powwow (traditional or contest) to be held and sets the agenda, the masters of ceremonies announce to the audience the agenda, and the arena directors make sure the right categories, age groups, and drums in line sing the appropriate songs. Competition powwows need singing judges for the singing groups and dance judges (male and female) to judge the dancers.  These judges are picked from the head judge from different areas such as different reservations and different states to make sure everyone gets an equal chance at the prize money.

The Mille Lacs Band is fortunate to have all three types of powwows.  We have something for everyone to enjoy at these powwows.

See you on the powwow trail.