HIGHLIGHTS:

- Elders discuss the philosophy and practice of traditional medicine. Stress role of elders in passing on this tradition.

***NOTE: Due to audio problems, the first speech could not be transcribed.
Max Assinewia: Things that we hear that our elders say, many times... I've sat and I listened to the same things over and over again. Sometimes I wondered if it's through my weakness, I asked myself how come he's always repeating them. He was always saying the same thing. But every time they do, maybe after a while I think about what they have said. And it's always added on, a new thing that comes into my mind.

This morning when we were having the pipe ceremony, the people that sit at the western doorway, the ones that were given the right to look after the doorway, came and seen what we were doing. Came and checked to see if things were going right. And the way I heard it explained was that these keepers of the western doorway must have liked what they seen here because they only spoke once and they went on again; checked at least. Somewhere in my travels I heard another duty that these thunderbeings carry: why they sound their voice, why all that power they carry. And somewhere down south in Southern Ontario that I heard a teaching from the Iroquois people. Maybe when I introduce Ernie Benedict, and he's joined us this morning, a Fast Moccasins(?) and maybe in his talks he can tell about why thunders sound and what they look for in their teachings, the Iroquois teachings. So with that I would like to not take too much time now and let Ernie Benedict do a lot of talking.

(Laughter)

Ernest Benedict: I hope you are not expecting that I will know everything but again I am one of those who are just learning. But I would like to point out some of the things that I have learned in talking and in listening to the people who are part of the traditional way. The greatest thing that I have found in relation to the medicines, medicine people and just generally the whole way of life is, certainly the greatest single attitude I would think, is gratitude. You are happy and you are thankful for all of the good things in general that you enjoy.

And this is very much in the Iroquois tradition, even at the beginning of a council or of a ceremony. Even when you are beginning a time of happiness, like a social dance, and you are going to have a very good time dancing, the first thing that happens is that somebody is appointed to give thanks for the entire group. And in this time of thanks all of the forces of nature are given greetings and thanks. The greetings and thanks are in the same word in the Iroquois language, (Iroquois). The word means that our mind goes out and reaches
around and encloses the other person's, or maybe the object
that we are thanking. Our mind, our spirit, goes over and
surrounds it. And this is probably the only way we can
translate it into English is greetings and thanks. All of the
forces of nature from the earth, all of the living creatures
that have roots in the earth, all of the waters on the earth,
all of the moving creatures and all of the things that we see
of nature - and it depends very much on the one that is taking
on this responsibility to be giving thanks as to how many
things he names and describes, the good that they have done.
And with each one, greetings and thanks are given to them. And
then even to the unseen forces. And of course, you would only
begin with the four winds, the four directions. The four
winds. You cannot see them but you know they are there because
you know what they have done. You can feel them. Then there
are the four directions of which you know they are there and
you know they are constant. And if you did not have the four
directions, people would be lost and have no way out, so you
know that they are doing their duties. So you can thank them,
greetings to them. So then you can move then from them into
the various spirits and creatures that are on the earth. You
do not see them; sometimes they are so bashful that you don't
know quite what they are doing, what they are up to. But after
a time you will know because of the mistakes, perhaps, that you
have made; that you could have been in real deep trouble in a
big calamity or... if it had not been for some kind of unseen
force that was there, to help you along. Perhaps the suffering
and the tragedy would have been very great. And so that's how
you know from that, that there are spirit helpers somewhere
beyond the reach of your....

(break in Tape)

...and so these are. So because of all of this, the Creator
himself has given the best thoughts and the best word,
greetings and thanksgiving. Then the ceremony, or the council,
or the cultural dance will begin. And at the end then, because
all of these things have entered and have been invited into the
council, the ceremony, or the social dances, then they are each
one named again at the end and you give them greetings and
thanks once more before everybody leaves. So this will be the
general form of an Iroquois coming together. And I think the
reason that this is so is that in all the traditions there is
always this command from the Spirit people and from the Creator
that the only thing, or the greatest thing, that is required
from each one of us is gratitude and recognition. And so this
is given at any one of these Iroquois ceremonies. That is,
when people get together.

Then there are times when people are alone and they must call
upon the creatures of the spirit world. And at those times
then, those creatures are named and then the person talks
directly to them. But always with a kind of a happiness,
appreciation and thanksgiving.

And so it is that in the medicine, among the medicine people,
they will have this tradition that you have been grateful for
the good things that the medicines have done for you. Each one
of the rooted plants have a duty and a spirit that carries on that duty. And in my readings I have quite often found this statement there about Indian discoveries of medicines. The scientists have said that we have not yet discovered a single plight in North America and discovered a medicine for it that the Indians didn't use or didn't know about. So Indians have had quite a long tradition in knowing what the uses of the various plants are. A lot of it has been forgotten but I've been thinking quite a lot about it. Indians did not use the scientific method; they didn't write down what they discovered in big, long reports; they didn't break down a plant into the separate cells or into the various chemicals that make up that plant or the various chemicals that that plant makes. They didn't do that. But they know what that plant could do. And so I've been wondering how it happened that Indians could have such a complete knowledge of what the plant life could do. And so that leads me to think that the spirits that have been appointed to help out the human beings have been at work in the past and are still at work as we have had lots of personal testimony about that. But it didn't happen just with the people that are living today. It has happened before and for many generations before. So each one, each person who has taken on a responsibility of the knowledge about medicine and using medicines, they have had in vision and they have had communication with spirit people. And the spirit people have been probably passed on the... or have introduced them to the various spirits of the plant life. And so this is the way that has happened in the past and the way that people are just now rediscovering. So we hope that in this gathering, from now on, we will be finding ways to encourage and help each other in getting into touch with the spirit people, the spirit helpers.

It has been said in the past that not all of the spirits are good. That may be true. But I think that one of the things that the Creator has done for people is to give them a sense and a knowledge of right and wrong. So each one of us knows what is right and what is wrong. And using that knowledge, you would be able to tell which is the good spirits and the bad spirits. And we would probably be very likely, if we ourselves lead good lives, that the good spirits would be willing to come to each of these good people. I don't think that the bad spirits would hang around bad people very much. And so it is a matter of choice of each individual and that's the way, as far as I know, all of the traditions have been. That person who has tried and has worked hard to discover the right way for himself would very likely be given help by the good help of spirits that the Creator has appointed to that job. And with those, it puts the responsibility right back on each one of our own children to lead good lives, to be grateful for the good things and to acknowledge. I'm sure that we know, ourselves, that we don't know very much and can't do very much by ourselves and we must have the help. And then that special knowledge is given to some of us.

And for those people who are able to contact the spirit world and the spirit helpers think they should get the support from
all of us who may not have that gift. And by that, they would
give a lot more encouragement and much more help to the person
who is actually a medicine person. So by the appreciation we
give, we can increase that power that the person has. Each one
of us that may not have the powers to be a medicine person
still has a responsibility to help those people who have the
power. And by that means we will increase the amount of power
that there is in our medicine people because, even great as
they are today, the medicine people have looked to the past and
they have seen even greater ones among their own numbers. In
the past there have been actual miracle workers among our
people and that is because of faith, because of the belief that
the whole body of people, everybody, shared and helped that
medicine person who, put himself in the position of being a
go-between in the spirit world and the day to day world that we
seek. So instead of being doubtful and suspicious, I am asking
people, I think we should take as much encouragement and much
recognition and, as in the tradition of the Iroquois, which we
should always give them greetings and thanks. And that is my
message for now.

Did you want me to ask questions or...? Now, do I have anybody
who objects to what I'm saying? Did I say something that was a
little bit off or was there something I didn't say?

Moses David: (in Mohawk)

Speaker: My cousin, Moses David, there has wanted to comment a
little bit on the first topic in regards to the white feathers
that are to be hung in the southwest corner of the house. He
thinks that it is a symbol of the clean, of one's own life and
one's own spirit. Each one of us has a responsibility of
making sure that we ourselves are purified in our own life and
that when we have done that, then we will symbolize that by
hanging the white feathers in the southwest corner of the
house. It is interpreted that the feathers themselves may not
have the power to cleanse, but when we are cleansed ourselves
then we can take note of it by hanging the white feathers in
the southwest corner. He thinks it is very important that
people who have cleansed themselves or be cleansed first. Any
further comment on that?

They're all mystified. I think you got them all mystified.

(laughter)

(Inaudible)

Ernest: My own opinion is that we are just now awakening after
a long sleep and maybe a long night of carousing, too. During
my lifetime I have seen my people go off in many different
directions and pretty much victimized by the white man and his
vices and his sins. And so now the Indians have pretty much
been killing themselves, not only in body but their own spirit.
Until perhaps about - well, in some places just now beginning,
other places that have for about a generation now and in some
cases a little bit more than that, maybe two generations - since people have made a change and have turned away from following the white man's vices and they have turned back to their own people for explanation and for guidance. Some places they have turned around pretty well and some places they are just now beginning to understand that their own culture and their own traditions might have the kind of answer that they're looking for. Some places, of course, that I've seen in my travels, they were able to hold on to enough of their traditions so that the change has been happening, turned completely around, and they find they are back again. But there are some places where they are pretty far gone and will have to make a complete turn around. And then go back and retrace our steps, back to where we lost. And now I've noticed a change. I think a big change has happened in our own reserve where if it had not been for the people finding their own traditions, this was about getting their generation to grow - and Cousin Moses was with that movement when it really began - and of course, it's gained a lot of ground in spite of all kinds of trouble and oh, fights and everything - they are still holding on to their, and learning more about their traditions. And using them right today. Using them in a modern way. And there is more of that happening everywhere. The pipe has had a big comeback in the last few years. At our reserve in the last year and a half or so, tobacco burning ceremonies have been held every morning without fail. It's more than a year now. And some of these customs are coming back even more and used more. That's good because that's the important thing. Not just doing them but actually using them and relying on them. I think that's the area where we can show that you actually believe in something and that you actually rely on it.

I'll tell you one thing. I think many of you have been reading in the newspaper and hearing on the radio and television that we have had trouble inside of our own reserve. The traditional people and some people who are following the white man's ways have come head to head there and have been waving guns around at each other. During that time, the traditional have been having tobacco-burning ceremonies constantly....

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Ernest Benedict: I saw two of the traditional chiefs who went off by themselves and I just sort of walked by and they were praying. They were praying for the safety of their people that were inside of this small camp. We're only just a few people watching, you know, and I was standing on guard at night. And just within about twenty minutes after this tobacco-burning ceremony come a pouring rain and this rain came in and it rained for the rest of the night. Those people that were over in the other camp, they were drinking and they had their guns out ready, but when it started raining, they stayed inside there. They didn't want to get... they didn't want their beer to get that wet. Anyway, they wouldn't go out in the rain.
There were threats that they were willing to shoot the traditionals but they wouldn't go out in the rain to do it. Just that little thing happened. And during the height of this confrontation when the hate was the greatest, it rained every night. Some more of the things that happened, I think pretty strong. During the time when the threats were again the greatest and the opposition was really strong, they were digging up lots and lots of things, ammunition and all kinds of accusations to throw at the traditionals. Some of it was true, most of it was not true. All kinds of excuses why the traditionals were no good at all. So just about that time, the opposition themselves got divided. They were attacking, then they began to attack one another. There was a great confusion there so they couldn't do anything. There was only a few groups of angry people that were able to come out of that and they were trying to follow through for a while, but they couldn't stand the rain so everything was okay then. Well, I think that's an example of where the belief and the traditions, the belief in the old ways and the (inaudible) that it's made out of, (inaudible). It is a useful power. Any other questions? Does somebody else want to take over?

Speaker: I think I have something that comes in my way and I need someone to talk to about it, to see a person. When we talk lots of times, I noticed in this house, the wall, there is two feathers hanging there. I don't know how they came to be there, hanging at the right place or how he seen that big feather and that small one beside it. They were talking about that. I got to thinking on my experience of going through hard times, going through hardships, and I reflect on the numerous things that happened in the past. Ernie has mentioned what happened long ago when we were free, free to use what the Creator gave us to honor him, and since today the young people are reaching that stage where they are turning back and coming and picking up things from elders, and for young people we were shown as you see what our elder, George, has done. He showed us how many diversions there are, how many little roads, how many little paths lead astray. And it's sad to see. Sometimes I sit and I wonder about our little ones. Are they going to survive? Are they going to walk? But we got to make sure that we clean that little path for them so they don't have to fall where we fell. And they can walk in their own good way.

To the young people, I hope that you will take the opportunity to listen and listen good to these people because they are not going to be here a long time. It is only a short span that they are here, a very small time. So if you open yourselves up and hear inside here.... Don't hear with these because they deceive you. Your ears deceive you. You listen inside and you'll know what they mean. They say the Creator works in many ways and I believe that. He works for every one of us; every one of us has got something. And that's why in my own experiences that I do hope and I pray that the young people can use these elders that sit among us, use them in a good way, use that gift that they give you. They are just sharing what they heard. You can share that, too. You stand up, as Ernie was
saying, we know what's right and we know what's wrong.

(break in tape)

Jim Dumont: I was thinking about not coming today. Now I wonder if I stayed home. I didn't know I'd be asked to speak. I would have said yes. The other day, the first evening that I was here, I wanted to have the opportunity also to come and listen and I know that there are a number of people here now who have a lot to say about medicines, about healing. And I for one am in need of knowledge of those things. As I said before, I don't claim to be a medicine person in that sense. I don't claim to be a healer, although I did make the mistake of saying that one time. And somebody said, "Well, there is different ways of being a healer because he can be a healer through words and stories that you tell, just as well as you can be being able to administer certain medicines that you are knowledgable about."

And I guess if I am anything at all, I am gifted at all, then it's through being able to hear teachings that are given and for some reason being able to remember them and in that way pass them on. And in the tradition which I have followed, I guess every day of my life for the last seven years, I was told right from the beginning that for what you receive, because of the way in which it is given to you - that is, freely - neither are you to hold on to those teachings and keep them to yourself. As much as they belong to you, they belong to everyone. And so you must pass them on. And that's the only way that these things will not only be kept alive but be brought to life again. And that, I believe and I have come to believe very strongly, that unless we know our teachings, unless we know the stories behind why we behave the way that we do, why we are different as native people, why we do things the way that we do, why we have the kind of knowledge that we have - and sometimes why we have such difficult time trying to fit into this other society that maybe the last few generations have tried so hard to become a part of and have never quite made it in the sense of what this society calls making it.... We always seem to have been 'poor Indians.' That meant that we couldn't hold a job in the same way and we couldn't fashion our communities in the same way as everybody else. As much as we could understand community development when community development officers came along, we found it pretty hard to develop our communities in that way and be successful, I guess, in the same way that other communities are supposed to be successful.

I think it's simply because we behave differently. We act differently and think differently. And there are stories and teachings behind why we are that way. The more we understand those, then the more that we will understand why we are the way that we are. And not only why we act that way, but why for us it's the best way to act. It's the best way to live. It's a good thing to be an Indian and it's a good thing to be
different in that way. It's nothing to be ashamed of. It's not being at the bottom of the ladder as we have been conditioned to believe over these years. It was wrong to act like an Indian; it was wrong to live by your culture; it was wrong to follow your teachings and follow your spiritual ways; and all these things had to be given up if you wanted to get ahead in this world. And unfortunately we have been so conditioned to believe that, that now when the young people, young native people, become convinced that they want to follow the Indian way, they find it difficult to talk to their parents. And even some of the old people say, "Go back and ask your elders," or "Go back and ask your old people if you want to learn about the culture and the traditions." And when you go back to the old people and you go back to your parents, they don't know what to tell you. They have also been conditioned to, led to believe their culture, their language and religion and so on, are not the things that are good for us anymore. When they were young and when they were growing up, they had to drop those things in order to try and get ahead. And it's hard for them to understand why now young native people want to go back. In the prophecies those things were talked about. They said there will come a time when the young people will turn their backs on their grandfathers and grandmothers and they will try to follow a different road. A road that will be brought here. And as a result of that, they said, there will be a different kind of sickness that will come on this island. And that sickness would be a sickness that will cause the old ones to fall asleep. They would have no reason to live for, because they would have no one to pass on their knowledge to and they would have no one then to believe them anymore. And that kind of sickness, they say, would cause the people and their ways to almost disappear. And then over a period of time, when everything would be almost totally lost, it seemed then something would happen. Somebody would turn around, and it would be the younger generation. They would stop right in their tracks and they would go and they would look around and look ahead of them as far as they could see and they could see nothing. But they look behind them in their life that they had lived so far - 17, 16, 17 years, however old they are - and they would see nothing. They have lived nothing up to that point. Wherever they looked, there was nothing. That's where they would stop. When they saw that, then they would start to retrace their steps. This time that we're in now is called the time of the retracing of steps. The time where we would go back looking. We, who have nothing and were given nothing - who didn't have language, the culture, the stories, the teachings, the spiritual ways - we who have nothing would go back looking for what was left along the trail. They say there was a bundle that was originally brought. It was brought by, I guess, our Christ, in our tradition, who was selected and chosen and prepared. He brought a huge bundle that he carried on his back; he brought that to his people. And they said, somewhere along the way when these new people came, they were convinced that they should drop that bundle. And so all along the trail they scattered the contents of that bundle. That's our language, our culture, our medicines, our knowledge of the
spiritual ways and the knowledge of how to live properly on this earth and follow the path.

And we who have nothing are going back looking for the bundle that is scattered along the trail, that no one asked us whether it was all right to leave behind. That's who we are, our generation. The young people. I still call myself one of the young people even though I'm 35. But this generation, maybe through the twenties, and those who came through the sixties as young people and the seventies, they are the ones who are going back. Maybe they have just literally nothing, just going back looking for something to live by. Something more than what they have been using in their life. And they go back looking for those old ones who haven't fallen asleep too long. They say there are those who fell asleep and have been sleeping too long. And then when the young people wake up, they go to the old ones and they realize that they don't have anything to give that the young people are looking for. And we know that there are some among the older generations who are like that, too. They say there are some who have held it inside them all their lives because it wasn't right and it wasn't possible to give it out at that time. They would be condemned for it. They had to go underground. They had to do healing ceremonies, Midewiwin ceremonies in secret, underground where nobody would see them. And so they've waited all that time for someone to come along. And they say of them, for some it would be too late. By the time the young people would begin to retrace their steps and come back to it, they will already have gone....

(break in tape)

...the old ones who have that knowledge, they are starting to disappear. There was mention made of a man from here who knew so much, and there are some in this room who have gone to him and have learned a little bit from him, and who have gone to him for healing but, as far as being physically here anyway, he has gone on now. You can't ask him to come here and share that with us. Maybe in his lifetime he never really had the opportunity, the opportunity that people have right now, today, to come here, to stand here and talk about what he knows or to take groups of people who are interested and show them medicines that are all around. Like the opportunity that is here with this gathering of people.

But this is, in terms of what has happened in the past, this is like a rare opportunity. It's the beginning of the fulfilling of the prophecies. It's time to retrace our steps back to those things that we need to live in the good way. And it's time to gather those together who have not fallen asleep, and to gather those together who have not already gone on, in the hope that there will be a chance to recover more and more, the contents of that bundle that was left along the trails, that was left there not of our own choosing, not of our own doing.

I'd like to tell, as my part of this afternoon and what I can contribute to a gathering like this on medicines, a story that is a very old story of how, through the Ojibway people,
knowledge of medicines and the knowledge of a good and sacred way of life came to our people. And I want to tell this story because this story talks a lot about where we are today. The people that are talked about in this story, it just sounds like us they are talking about. That's why I want to tell it. And I would like to, because it's the story that is told in the lodge, because it's regarded as a sacred story, and because of the way in which it was told to me, I would like to ask that it not be recorded or televised or anything.

(break in tape)

Ron Wakegijig: The methods of curing sickness or helping a person accept their illness, whatever it might be. I mentioned over the past couple of days we had our elder come up here and read quotations out of the Bible. We've had elders talk about spiritualism and I maintain that the practice of natural medicine and spiritualism have to go hand in hand. You can't leave one out and try and use the other. They have to be used in parallel, together. Because medicine is a knowledge that was given to our people by the Creator himself through his various representatives. Various medicine men in the past used to go up on a sacred place such as the Dreamers Rock here. They fasted; they put themselves through a type of physical torture, self-inflicted torture. The reason they did that is, when you ask something from the Creator, you have to give something back in return. You make payments for that. So that's what they did. They put themselves through a physical discomfort over a period of time and they were blessed with a vision. Sometimes regarding spirits who would come in the form of Indian animal that they could recognize. And this animal or spirit passed on it's knowledge to the medicine man. Could have been a cure for maybe an illness that was killing off members of the tribe or it could have been anything. So the practice of medicine is not a new art whatsoever. It has been with us since the beginning of time. Even the Bible makes mention of the use of herbs for the purpose of healing. See, the Creator is a pretty busy person. There are all kinds of people always asking something from him every day of the week, every minute of the day, every second. But the Creator gave us the ability, the knowledge, to help ourselves as much as we can. And that's why he put all these plants, all the animals on this planet, to work hand in hand with man, each one helping each other.

The past few years we have gotten away from that. All you have to do is go to Sudbury around that big factory area. Trees are dying off and there is nothing but bare rock. Even the rock is starting to die. That is what you call disrespect. That disrespect stems from one thing and one thing only. That's personal gain, power, physical power or prestige on this planet.

I worked with a lot of medicine men right across Canada, all the good ones that are trying to help people live the good way. And they are teaching the respected use of herbs or animals.
Spiritualism plays a very important part, the most important part. So, I'm not an expert on spiritualism because I have yet a lot to learn. The same with the practice of herbal medicine. I'm still learning. I'll probably always learn to the rest of my days. But now I would like to share some of that knowledge, a little bit of that knowledge that I'm allowed at this point in time. I can't tell you everything because that would be against the wishes of my teachers, my elders, my benefactors. Also against the laws of nature.

There is always a danger when you are dealing with natural medicines, with any kind of medicines. There is the white man's word for that danger, it's called abuse. Throughout our history, ever since the coming of the western Europeans, the Indian medicine men have been accused of being everything but a healer. He's been called a Bear Walker, he's been called an advocate of the devil. There is all kinds of words directed towards the medicine man. Even I, everyone that is sitting in this room knows that's not necessarily true. I also can't deny the fact that there are some bad medicine men. Fortunately there is not that many. There is more good medicine men than there is bad ones. They have been given free will that was given to us, causes that parallel. Some people choose to use that gift in the wrong way. Others use it the way it was meant. That's the big difference.

So our purpose in organizing seminars like this is bringing to you, people that are practising good medicine, people that can help you when you are sick or in your mind or your inner spirits or your physical body. Now that kind of knowledge takes a long time to acquire. You don't learn these things overnight. You don't learn them in a day or a month or a year. Sometimes people spend a lifetime perfecting this knowledge and putting it to use, the use that it was intended for. Bad medicine is the easiest thing to learn. You can guarantee that. Anybody that's in this room is capable of learning bad medicine; that knowledge comes easy. Everything that's bad comes easy. And you try and follow that path of life, that Red Road, that's hard. A lot of medicine people I know spend long hours out there among the plants and the animals gathering up those roots that are going to make somebody else well.

George Daniels said yesterday there is no medicine man that is capable of healing himself. Impossible. He'll try and it doesn't work. I've gone through that process. Sometimes I know medicine that would probably be good for whatever is ailing me. But if I administer it to myself, it doesn't work. And there is a purpose for that. As I mentioned, it's very easy to get into evil things. And if a man had the power to heal himself, he probably would forget about the rest of the people around him. He wouldn't respect nature like he is supposed to. He wouldn't have that dependence in the Good Spirit guarding him and all the spirits that it takes to bring us good knowledge. He would probably use that and make himself powerful and control other people's lives, their emotions. He could do a lot of damage.
There are a lot of young people that are interested in this medicine that have actually started practising. I advise these young people to take their time; take their time to learn properly. The people they learn from is the elders. That's what they are here for, there is a purpose for having elders. Otherwise everybody would be taken away when they were forty years old. Elders symbolize knowledge, whether it be of a cultural nature, but most important, a spiritual nature. They can teach you the lessons in life of how they have walked that road already. And yet you have to keep some of those sections which are going to give you a lot of problems. You went down the path and eventually you are going to come to one that leads this way and another one that leads that way. There is no signs anywhere. That's how it is when you are growing up. These elders that followed that right path and they are waiting for you at where they are right now, making sure you follow in their footsteps so you won't get lost on the way. That's what elders are for. They are teachers, very intelligent teachers. What they have to tell you, they didn't read out of a book or somebody else's words. They have lived that life. When they talk about medicines, you got to listen. And when they tell you, "Okay, go ahead and use this to help keep you." That is the time you start making that medicine. If you start pretending you're more, a lot more than you actually do, and start using this medicine, I can guarantee you are going to do a heck of a lot of damage to somebody. Even worse to yourself. You got to know what you're doing.

Well, I'll leave that part now. I want to show you some common plants that are used for various ailments. Like I say, this is standard equipment for an Indian medicine man. (Inaudible) This is a very common plant that grows in a lot of places, has a very pleasant smell. It is called camomile and that's, uses that are too numerous to mention in the few minutes that I'm going to take. But people, sometimes they are overcome by nerves and nervous tension, anxiety, and that type of discomfort causes all kinds of physical symptoms. Sometimes you have a stomach that is nauseated and you want to throw up. You get headaches, muscle pains, it could be anything. What do you do in this modern age when you go and see a doctor? He writes out on a little piece of paper and you go to the drug store and pick up a drug, Valium, Librium, or any host of what are called tranquilizers. Mood-altering drugs. There is no need for that if a person knows what nature has to offer in that line. Here is one of the best tranquilizers that I know of and I think (inaudible) will verify that. It's called camomile. Pass it around and see that it has a pleasant kind of an herb. That's all you need to take if you're feeling nervous, down and out, sick, nauseated, instead of going to a drug store and becoming addicted to Valium or Librium. Those are dangerous materials. They are man-made; they are artificial. This is a natural product that was made by the Creator himself. It's always the best kind of medicine. There are several other uses for that. Sometimes small children suffer from gas pains and get all bloated up; even adults get
that. This camomile along with peppermint leaves, wild peppermint leaves mixed in equal parts will remove that gas out of you, instead of taking Milk of Magnesia or some of those other chemical-based medicines.

Every time you take a natural medicine, you are taking the Creator's medicine. Anytime you take drugs, you are taking man-made medicine and it never works. That is guaranteed. Because chemicals build up in a person's body over a long period of time. When you are about fifty, sixty, you are a habitual user of artificial tranquilizers. When you are about sixty years old, your mind is going to go to pieces. You will be senile even before your time. And blood clots will form in your blood system, in your veins. You have a stroke and you're knocked down just like that. That's the danger of chemicals. Natural medicine doesn't produce those side effects. This paper bag I've got just grows all over the place; it's available to anybody free of charge. All you have to do is make the effort to go out there and get it yourself and know how to use it. It doesn't cost anything. All you have to buy is a little bit of tobacco and put it in the ground to show your appreciation for the natural products that are available.

That's red clover blossom. Red clover has been scientifically proved that it's a cancer preventative. If a person drank red clover tea at least once a day for every day of their lives, when it's time for them to go and meet the Creator, it won't be through cancer. They'll probably just be taken away in their sleep or something. Those kinds of things we have no control over. We can't control the will of our maker. When our time comes, we have to go no matter which way it is. Red clover, it's good for a lot of things. It's also a tonic to keep your system in harmony. It's natural.

(Inaudible conversation)

Ron: With Red Clover, the whole plant is beneficial, like most plants are. You can use the roots along with it, but sometimes you try and use the part that's more readily available because if you take out the roots and the plant has a harder time regenerating. A lot of medicines have been lost to us because people got greedy, let's put it that way. See, if after a while (inaudible) isn't picked, they want to pick the whole works and not leave anything for regrowth or somebody else that might need some. That's another lesson in medicine a person has to learn very early. And start learning this healing art from the elders. And the elders tell you these things.

In here we have wild ginger. Wild ginger is a very, very powerful medicine. It's one of the main ingredients that goes into Obosechak, they call it. Some people refer to it as Indian African. I don't like that word African. There is a better name for it. Most of the medicines that I am able to make through the knowledge I was taught from my elders, I always use the Indian name for them. Wild ginger was Obosechak. Good for anything that ails.
Ron: There are only three samples of material I thought appropriate to bring to this seminar. There are medicines that are used in a spiritual way for healing ceremonies and most of the spiritual medicines throughout the world are very easily used by bad medicine people. That's why I didn't bring any. Too sensitive. There are all kinds of medicine you can buy from people that are not using the natural way properly. Some people use these medicines as good luck charms. They make up a mixture and you carry that around with you. You're always supposed to win money at a bingo game or a horse race. Don't ever get into that bad medicine. If you win something at a bingo game then it's the will of the Creator himself, not somebody else. Every (inaudible) of bad medicine you carry in your pocket. That guy down there, he's smiling. You may have even heard about what they call a love potion. I don't know anything about them. If I did I'd be skeptical of whether they work or not. People keep on buying these types of things. That's what makes it hard for a person who is trying to follow the right path. It seems the only thing that is publicized in this world is something that is bad, you don't hear about the good works. (Inaudible), very few...

(End of Side B)

Side A, Tape OM.12/1)

Ron Wakegijig: (Inaudible) This is what we call a seasonal plant, it's here all summer. And the blossoms just come on it until late fall, until frost. It's one of the (inaudible) medicines I (inaudible). Wild ginger and some of the other roots, you have to pick them at certain times. Certain times of the day and certain times of the month. So all of the medicine, we have to know a little bit about astrology, too. So it's a hard job. Probably you have to wait until after the first frost. You should never dry roots in the sun either. Not all roots are late and some you have to dry in the sun for about half a day. Put them in the shade for the other half of the day. Some of them you can dry them in the house. Drying sort of brings out the mystic properties of it. You know, these three samples that you have an opportunity to look at, they are some of the more prominent medicines that we use. Can be anything from stomach aches to headaches to muscle pains. Fortunately we don't have any medicines that will increase your intelligence. It's one of the things you have to do on your own.

If a person is selected to study medicine, they are usually chosen by the elders. Well, I wouldn't say exactly chosen by the elders, but the elders are able to recognize in a person whether he has the ability or not to carry on this work. And if they find a person like that, usually they pass on what they know. Without charge. It doesn't cost anything. You don't have to spend several thousand dollars a year on medical school.
or university to learn this profession.

I was talking to this one doctor that has been our guest for the past three days. In his working with drugs, he only uses about fifteen he said. That's all he needs. And Indian medicine has to be fifteen hundred. Fifteen hundred different mixtures of medicine. And none of them have been known to kill anybody if they are used properly. See, an overdose of drugs, you're gone, or almost gone or there's permanent damage to your physical self. You take an overdose of natural medicine, you get pretty sick and you won't do it the second time. Won't kill you; won't make you go into a coma. When the medicine man makes his mixture, he makes darn sure, absolutely sure, that what's in there is not going to harm you or take your life. That's the big difference between synthetic drugs and natural medicine. Unless you decide to drink water hemlock, well that's bad business.

I imagine some of the younger people have questions about medicine that they would like to ask and haven't had the opportunity to do so. Well, if I'm able to I'll answer any questions that you might have.

What I always try to do every year at various times of the season is, I go out and try and get my own wherever possible. I'm fortunate that the old people have shown me what the plants look like, and what they are called by their Indian name. Very rarely, I resort to one health supply centre and I only do that in cases of emergency, until I am able to get the wild product itself. You see, a lot of that stuff you buy in health food stores is home grown; it's home gardens. Even that camomile was grown in the house gardens. So I'll give you an example why I don't use domesticated plants if I can get away from it. All of you are familiar with strawberries. I don't think that anybody in here hasn't tasted strawberries at some point in their lives. They have the homegrown strawberries that are about that big, and wild ones that are about that small, little wee berry ones. And if you've tasted both, you know what I mean exactly. Homegrown strawberries, there is hardly any taste to them. You make preserves out of it and you need a whole bottle by yourself. You take the wild strawberries, couple of spoons full of that, you know, it's pretty strong. That taste stays with you for a long time. It prevents abuse of wild strawberries. So that's the same difference there is in wild medicine and homegrown medicines. I'm going to use a domesticated root like parsnip, for instance. I have to add four times the normal amount to get the same effect as maybe one part of wild parsnip. There is a big difference. And wild parsnip is pretty common around here. We are fortunate. We are blessed with a lot of species of plants on the Manitoulin area.

And diabetes is a very, very common disease among our native people nowadays. It's been known to take the lives of some of our elderly people. Developing the complications that come out of diabetes. So whoever is interested, I'm going to give you a formula and I'm not going to repeat it because I'm only allowed
to tell it once. All you have to... go out up on these rocks and get yourself a bag full of blueberry leaves. Take them home and dry them. When you wander around here, there are all kinds of raspberry plants. You get an equal amount of raspberry leaves and dry them like the blueberry leaves. And you got to get your shovel and your pick or whatever and go out there and get dandelions. The same amount in bags. That's an awful lot of dandelion root. Hard work. That water is going to be pouring off you by the time you're finished. And the next one is sumac. There is all kinds of sumac around here. Stag horn sumac they call it. You get an equal amount in a paper bag. And you mix this. You mix all these four ingredients together, equal amounts. You drink two cups of that a day to all the diabetic people. It will bring your blood sugar level right down to normal. I'll tell you right now there is no cure for diabetes. It's something that you have to live with, like your looks. (You can always get plastic surgery I suppose.) But this medicine will keep you on the right track, will keep your system going good. It will replace the work of your damaged pancreas. Instead of them working, this medicine does what the pancreas is supposed to do. Pancreas are glands that secrete insulin. They inject it automatically into the blood stream and it eats up the sugar. Allows a normal blood sugar level to be present in your system. They go, and everything goes out of whack. This medicine will set it back to normal again. Or as normal as can be expected with that disease. Like I say, there is no cure for it.

There is a plant that grows fairly common around here which will (inaudible) me into mentioning a plant that contains a lot of iron. If your blood is deficient in iron, this plant you can use safely. Especially in the spring when the poor thing is brown. It's only growing up here. Looks like coffee, you know. If you take it in your hand, it looks like coffee grounds. It's called curly dock or yellow dock. Well, Rachel uses it as an iron supplement. See, that's something else that I knew in the past three days, or just found out in the past couple of days I should say. And I use curly dock for a different purpose. So Rachel is here and she's coming back. I'm going to tell her what I use it for. So it will expand her knowledge of that same plant. The root, it looks like a carrot about that long. And right through that root there is a core, just like wood. You can't use that, it's too hard. You have to use a stone grinder to grate that into powder but without very much benefit. If you have an infection on your leg or someplace on your body that just won't heal, you have a case of diabetes. Diabetics have a hard time healing; sometimes it turns into a major infection. And if you notice that blood poisoning is setting in some place, your veins start to turn red. Get yourself some of the curly dock, chop off the root and get boiling water until you are able to pull the outer skin right off of it. And you cut that into strips and you make a poultice out of it. Within two days, all that infection will be drawn right out, like a vacuum cleaner on your wound or your sore. You got to wash it in salt water and wrap it again, use
some more of that curly dock until you see the new skin starting to form. That's the time you take it out. It is so powerful that after the infection leaves it might interfere with new skin formation. You got to really watch that. That's one of the uses for curly dock. Like I said, go look. It's free of charge, you don't have to get a prescription written out for it and pay the taxi fare or driving to the drug store to pick it up. All you have to do is bend over and do it yourself. There is no financial cost involved.

Now, this knowledge that I'm passing on to you, you pass it on to somebody else like me. I'm not charging you anything for it and I don't want you charging anybody else for anything for it either. That's a rule we're going to make right now. Any of this knowledge that you may have been able to pick up, you share that. The spiritual medicines, that's something else. I'm not allowed to talk about them because my teachers have told me the time is not right. There are some things that are better for us not to know about. As the saying goes, what we don't know doesn't hurt us. There is always that danger of temptation as they call it. See, that's why the old people have hung on to this medicine. They were afraid of us. Some of us might go out and sell that medicine commercially and make a whole pile of that green stuff that soon will be controlling our lives every day of the week. That's not the intention of the path of medicine or the person that put it there. It's for all of us to use. Some of us have the ability to work hand in hand with nature. It's a blessing that was given to certain individuals, just like being a good hockey player or a good musician or a good piano player. Those are blessings that not everybody has. I wouldn't be able to go out there and play a bagpipe because I just don't have the ability. I may have the basic knowledge of music but when it comes to natural talent, I don't have it. Some people are good drivers and some people are getting into accidents at least once a year. Maybe not necessarily their fault but they are prone to that type of thing. That's one thing you have to remember about medicine; it has to be one hundred percent dedication. First of all, to be a physician, you got to be an herbalist or an M.D. First and foremost, you have to be a listener, a learner. Then the Creator will grant you the ability to help other people. And until that time comes, don't fool around with it. This goes for the young people.

Every one of these elders is here for a purpose. I am here for a purpose. You want to learn about the ways of your ancestors. Well, the little bit that I know, I will gladly share with you. Or the amount that I'm allowed to share at this point in time. Jim Dumont is the same way. You share your spiritual knowledge with anybody that cares to listen. Be like David Whitebear involved in this kind of reviving the ways of our ancestors.

We all have to work together regardless of who our teachers are. We have to bring all this knowledge into one so you younger people can use it. And ever since the creation of this world, there has been sickness. Ever since that creation, the medicine has been provided. There are certain people that are
working that area. You, yourselves, know in your own heart if
your interested in medicine, then now is the time to look for
knowledge. Knowledge doesn't come to a person; you got to go
after it. You got to hunt for it. Just like you hunt for deer
to feed yourself. Just like you have to go out to make a
living. You got to go to work; the work doesn't come to you.
The same way with knowledge. You got to seek out the elders.
You got to look for them.

Because of the way society is built, where the ideals are based
on, the elders have been put aside. Supposedly they are not of
use to anybody anymore. Once you can't move around like an
eighteen year old, you are considered useless. I think that
philosophy is terrible. The work of the devil himself, that
type of thinking. The old age, when I was growing up - and
that's not very long ago, maybe sixteen years ago, no, a little
bit longer than that - our elders were highly respected people
in the community. It was unimaginable for a son or a daughter
to even mention the fact that, "I want to send my dad or my
mother to a nursing home to be taken care of because I haven't
the time to do it myself." Oh boy, that was just outright
blasphemy. It was unimaginable; it wasn't heard of. Nowadays,
it's common practice. Your old mother or your grandparents,
once they are unable to look after themselves, then you ship
them off to nursing homes. Like Lawrence Mahdabee says, it's
some generation we got problems that are responsible for that.
I hope this young fellow, and others like him that are here,
will grow up with a totally different attitude, will go back to
making good use of our elders. As I said before, they are a
blessing, a great blessing. If the Creator didn't mean for
elders to be around, then he would have taken them a long time
ago. It's up to us to seek that knowledge that they have.
Listen, listen to them.

That's another blessing, is to be able to listen. I've been
out west quite a lot for one of my teachers, where my spiritual
advisors happens to live. The man knows no other language but
Cree. I can't understand Cree. It's awfully hard when you're
sitting there, when you can't understand what a person is
saying. Awfully hard to hear. But yet, I have to learn to sit
there for three, four, five hours at a time. Then after he was
done, I had to listen to an interpreter for an equal length of
time. Taught me one thing, and that's to be patient. Good
things don't come instantaneously. That can be applied to
medicine also. There is no such thing as an instant cure, let
me guarantee that, if you're using natural medicine. Sure,
there is a white doctor in the next town that can give you
something that will deaden your pain right away, a few seconds.
But that's not necessarily healing. Twenty-four hours later
that same pain is going to come back to you. The natural
medicine, what we try to do is eliminate the source that is
causing that pain. Bring it to an end. If we don't, then we
are not doing our jobs.

When you listen to me standing up here, I don't want to get the
impression that I'm a medicine man because I'm not. I can't
even call myself that in another fifty years from now. In fifty years is a long time. And just like you yourselves, you're learning. Maybe I will be blessed with some of that ability I was talking about, to be able to work with nature. The knowledge that's been passed on to me by elders like (inaudible) and our Mohawk elders here and Joe Yellowhead. And some of that comes a little bit easier for me than maybe it would for some other person. That's one of my gifts. I'm fortunate in having teachers like these speakers. Now, in order for this part of our culture to survive, the spiritualism and the respect for nature itself, I can't teach you that because I don't know all about it. You have to go to the elders, that's my advice. It's the same as I have to go back to them every so often. I've been given the opportunity to carry a pipe, a sacred pipe. Even there, I'm not an expert at spiritualism. I'd rather have somebody else talk about that area because I haven't learned everything yet. The stories of creation, why certain things were made or why certain things are what they are, I wouldn't be able to answer that. All I know is the sacred pipe was given to our people as a means of worshipping the one and the only Creator. We have different names for him. Call him God, call him Jimnu, call him Jehovah, call him something else in a different language. French have their own name for this Creator. But we're answerable, all of us. So our way is with the sacred pipe, that's our way of showing the kind of respect for....

(break in tape)

Ron: ...spiritual strength, inner strength. To be able to cope with a lot of things that I don't like about this world. I've learned to accept a lot of things. I've learned to walk away from arguments. Try to stay out of trouble. I used to go around looking for a fight in my younger days. We'd go to dances and hoping something will start up. That's not the way to live. And there is one more teaching that I'd like to pass on to you, that was passed on to me by an elder that is teaching me how to handle that fight. And this is directed mainly towards the younger people. You heard our elder Ted Wheatley admit in his own language that he did some pretty, what other word can I use, some pretty rotten things. That's about the only way I can summarize what he said. But one of the big lessons that I was taught by one of our elders, this body that you have, this is something that you have to learn how to respect. Now, let's apply the whole range of things. Some people that get on the alcohol at a very early age. There is no medicinal cure for alcohol abuse. Your cure is up here in your own minds. That's where the medicine is. It's called will power, is what it's called. And it was a gift from the Creator himself to be able to use that will power in times of great difficulty. These people that use marijuana as they call it, derivatives of that marijuana plant. Hashish, whatever it is. Sniff cocaine. Cocaine is a medicine; it's not something that you're supposed to get high on. Cocaine will save you a lot of pain when you get one of your teeth pulled out; that's what it's meant for. You get an operation, that's what they
use to deaden the pain. Not to sniff and blow your brains out. That's not the use for cocaine. And yet there are a lot of young people doing that in this world today.

Look at the shape of the world, the things today. Young people have absolutely no respect for their elders. And that not only happens in the white community, it happens in the Indian community. I have seen it personally and it really saddens me, on my own reserve. An elder will try and remind a small child not to do something that's wrong. The four letter words that come out of that child, man, it will amaze you. If we ever did that in our childhood, we wouldn't be here today. Even if we were, we wouldn't be able to walk. That's how hard we would get (inaudible). It was unheard of back in my day when I was five, six years old. It's a crying shame when you see small children three and four years old, the first words they know are four letter words. That's terrible. So where does that fault lie? Well, partly the fault lies with the parents of those children. And partly it's the fault of the teenagers that are growing up that are going to become parents in a very few years. They haven't listened to the elders. According to them the elders don't know what the heck they're talking about. They are way behind the times. They are living in the past, from the people who were living in tipis. Let me guarantee you, the words of these elders are going to be used for the next thousand years. If the world lasts that long. Those words will be used yet. But in a different way. I'm one of these, what they call an optimist. I hear Jim Dumont mention about some of the children that they are raising in their camp up there in St. Charles. Little kids are learning about nature right from the ground up. They are growing up good. Being the optimist that I am, I am personally hoping that this next generation of small people are the ones that are going to save Indian community. And after, maybe the world community. We have to listen to the old people. To some people the word old is sort of derogatory. They are not given proper respect. There is another word for it in our language, in our dialect.

We call it (Ojibway). It means elders, old people. There is nothing derogatory about that; that's a badge of honor. That means you've learned most of the lessons of life. When you talk to these elders, you talk to them like you were talking to the Creator himself, with respect. And what they have to say, keep it up here. Because there is a lot of years ahead of you. If you are going to be able to go through the years that are ahead of you, you are going to have to go by that advice. And the learning of medicine is only a small part of it. There is all kinds of other medicines that have to be learned. See, I could teach you all kinds of medicines today but there is no point to it. That's not my purpose of being here or of these old people. It's how to look on the gifts that are provided by our Creator. I think that's the most important lesson that we have to learn here which is our responsibility to try and get across to you. And once you are able to accept that philosophy, then the learning will come a lot easier. You'll be able to talk to Rachel Shock (?) and she can teach you most of what, everything that needs to be known about natural medicine. And
talk to Joe Yellowhead. He could probably write a book on Indian medicine himself. Take Ira (inaudible), 94 years old, that man has a lot of knowledge. My knowledge doesn't even make a dint in his. Like Jim was saying, this is a little wee brain. Even if it's not a brain, it's like one sixteenth of a brain. But I'm optimistic again. I hope to learn a little bit more every day, every year. Maybe next year I'll be standing in front of you being able to give you a cancer medicine. I don't know. I can't predict that. I can only do things as they come. Our old people know a cure for cancer. Don't kid yourselves, they know. But most people aren't ready to accept the use of that medicine or the philosophy behind it yet. The time is not here to reveal it publicly. Eventually, it probably will.

If you have something wrong with you, you come to medicine men like George Daniels (who had to leave for a short while). It is even better than going to see a white doctor who will cut you open and remove part of that body that was given to you. A part of that creation. Medicine people don't believe in surgery. Because every time you remove something from your body, you weaken that body. Even if it's a pair of tonsils even or an adenoid or your appendix. All of those things are there for a purpose. You start cutting them out, that whole metabolism becomes weak. The whole body becomes weak. What you have to do is learn to recognize your illness and you go and see a medicine person, an Indian doctor, who will give you something to fix you up. He'll tell you how to eat.

A lot of disease that occurs today in this world is caused by abuse of that body. Young children, I don't say children but teenagers nowadays, I think I've noticed about this last month, are kind of cold after a while. Running around in thirty below zero in sneakers. And I'll tell you one thing and you better listen carefully. When you are thirty-five years old, you are going to need some kind of kidney treatment. Your kidneys are going to be shot by the time you're thirty if you keep that up. These old people, they dressed warm and trying to keep that body warm so it won't have to overwork itself. They've lived for a long time, like Ira (inaudible), 94 years old. Sam Dog. I don't know how old he is but he is a pretty healthy person for his age. I've never heard of him being in the hospital. Ever since I can remember. These people have taken the time to look after those bodies because these bodies aren't ours. They belong to the Creator so we have to look after them. Stop fooling around and get that body (inaudible). That's one of the sins against creation, abuse of that physical being. Same with the laws of nature. A lot of young people wash their hair and they blowdry it and out they go, out the door to a dance or hockey game. And you are going to have a severe headache by the time you are fifty. You'll probably call them migraine headaches. There is no cure for a migraine of that sort because it becomes part of your whole system. You know, it becomes part of your whole system and then it becomes incurable. Remember that. The next time you go out in forty below zero and you are wearing a pair of sneakers and you're in
for a lot of problems. Your kidneys will just shrivel up eventually. It's not going to happen right away because the body can take a heck of a lot of abuse but for a limited time. And people are different. The same practice of dressing like you do in the middle of summer and going out in forty below zero weather. You will damage your eyesight; you'll damage your lungs. I suppose if you got all these things all at once, you wouldn't live past twenty-nine. But the body, as I said, is not a piece of machinery. You got to respect that; don't abuse it. Every time you just, some kind of drugs, you shorten your life by several days. Granted none of us is going to live forever but at least we should try and make life as pleasant as possible for ourselves. To keep around. It is pretty hard to look after a crippled person. If you are a crippled person, there is the business of looking after him so he won't suffer. So some of these diseases are crippling. All of you are familiar with this one case found in Boston. A young girl took an overdose of a drug and mind just went completely. Her condition deteriorated so bad that she went back to the fetal form, they call it. That means she was just like an unborn baby in the mother's womb. Her body just ceased to function as a body should at that age. I don't know whether that girl is still alive or not. They eventually took the life support machines off her. So maybe the Creator is keeping her alive to make an example of her. Remember that, every time you are contemplating taking drugs.

I'm not saying for one minute that you people are using that. It's a system introduced in today's society. If you are not, I'm saying you don't. Don't ever start. Alcohol, you heard a man talk about his own personal life this morning. I've gone through that system; I've gone through that stage. I fought with alcohol. I know what I'm talking about because I lived it, I know the effects of it personally. See, that's one of the most accepted forms of socialization nowadays is indulging in alcoholic beverages. You go along to bars in a group. They have little group meetings and pour down the beer, the whiskey or the wine. They think they are pretty smart people that are sitting at that table. So they think. See, the brain plays funny tricks on you when you are under the influence of that drug. Alcohol is a drug. One of the effects that is possible is a person can't get up and walk properly. Some people you can't even notice even after they have finished the drink, they are gone. They are walking around in a normal way. Some people that hardly ever talk will start singing in public. I've seen people go up on stage in the bar and start ranting and raving. To them, they sound pretty good, to themselves. But to these people that are halfway decently sober, it sounds terrible. I already know about that. People do things they normally wouldn't do when they are under the influence of that drug. Either alcohol or marijuana or cocaine or whatever, there is no difference. They are all the same; they are all categorized the same. Mind you, even alcohol, if you drink too much of it at one time, can kill you in an instant. They call that acute alcoholic poisoning. That happens, no number of doctors will be able to save your life. There is only one way to prevent that, that's not to drink at all. There is all
kinds. That's what you call preventive medicine. When you deliberately do something that's going to harm you, preventive medicine. And the next stage is, your body has the ability to tell when something is wrong someplace. That's the time to seek out medical assistance, from one of your own medicine people. It could be a grandmother that knows all about medicine. And the next stage is, that's almost a little bit too late.

The Indian medicine man today has a lot of things going against him. First of all, there is that attitude I was talking about. The second disadvantage he has is by the time people go to the Indian medicine man, everybody else has written them off. There is no more hope. But sometimes through the work of the Creator, the medicine man is able to help that person. More often than not, like I said, it's just too late. In that case, all you can treat is the spiritual illness that's in the person. Make him accept the inevitable. Those are the disadvantages that our elders are faced with. Most of the medicine people I know of are old people with a lot of knowledge. Even when I'm seventy-five years old, eighty years old, if I reach that age, I'll be able to help a lot more people than I am now. But I would hate to walk away from here, walk away from this seminar after it's all over, thinking that I wasn't able to reach at least one person. I think we've been able to do that through the past few days. I'd rather see one or two or three rather than just the one. So with that I'm going to leave the floor for somebody else to talk about what's concerning them most. I'll ask Brian Loucks to coordinate the activities for today.

Brian: I've asked Ted Wheatley to say a few words to us about picking plants.

Ted Wheatley: It has always been a ritual, I want to say in Anishnabe, that when you take medicine out of the ground, you must put tobacco in. If you don't, the next time you go there, that plant will not be there. It's a way of thanking mother earth for what she produces. Sure she produces tobacco too, but still this is the ritual. I know of several instances in my life that you know, maybe this happened. I used to hear my grandparents talk about this (inaudible). You must put tobacco back in and the next time you'll go, you'll find that medicine there. (Ojibway)

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Ted Wheatley: ...(Inaudible) put the stuff in the boat and shove the boat out and it stormed there. They couldn't see across the water. And yet they just went across. He said there was hardly a movement in the boat, the waves were so bad. Because they put tobacco there with that, in it. (Inaudible) with that turtle, rock turtle. (Inaudible) people worship because that turtle is there to look after that channel. And
if you don't put tobacco there.... Many people have been lost in that channel because they didn't put tobacco to appease the turtle that's supposed to look after that channel. I've been through that many times, like you go through a storm. This man told me. He said, "I would never, under any circumstances, attempt to cross there in a canoe, as strong as it was. Yet," he said, "you could hardly feel that boat rocking in the water. We were looked after. When I look back," he says, "I don't know how we made it. The waves was so rough." (Ojibway) to appease the spirits and control the weather. And if it's thundering, you put it in the smoke or under fire. (Inaudible) because if you didn't, you heard of people getting hit by thunder and lightning. That's just because they hadn't appeased the spirits. You see these thunder people are very fair to us. So if we put tobacco in the fire, they can smell it there and then (inaudible). I thank you very much.

Speaker: I would like to say a few words now. (Break in Tape)
It's about the same way, Anishnabe. Or am I crazy.

(laughter)

Well, I know I'm crazy but I mean, maybe John, you could talk about it a little bit or something because just, anybody else notice those kinds of things?

Speaker: Well, I wouldn't disprove what you're saying because there are some medicines that when you breath the vapour, they have the same affect on you as when you take them in. Some people react in different ways to different things. So, I've heard that before. If you breath deeply, it has a tranquilizing effect on you. Maybe you are crazy.

(laughter)

Speaker: (Inaudible) Sam is here with us this afternoon and I was just wondering if he would mind sharing a few words.

Sam Osawamick: First of all, I want to thank God for bringing me here again today listening to the other people here about medicine. (Inaudible - could be in Ojibway).

Ron Wakegijig: (Ojibway)

Speaker: I'd like to keep the floor open and also ask that, say for particularly some of the younger people that are here. Those of us under, I don't know what age, if they have any questions that they might have that they thought might be answered, or could be answered either this evening, or maybe that elders could think about and maybe come up with some sort of an idea or an answer for us, that maybe this is the time to ask those kind of questions, whether they be about medicine or personal life or some kind of ideas that you might have that you would like to check out. So I'd like to ask if there are any things that you have heard over the last couple of days or it's something that you've been thinking about for a while that you thought somebody here might be able to hear you and maybe
find an answer. I'd like to ask you for, to offer those to people here. I think we do have a lot of wise people here. As they say in the school, good resource people. You know, if there is any of you that might have some sort of question on your mind.

(break in tape)

Ron Wakegijig: ...don't know about Indian culture. They accuse the native people of worshipping animals and rocks and trees. We don't do that. We don't worship these things. We respect them. There is none of us that is intelligent enough or pure enough to be able to see an angel or spirit. We're not pure enough to be able to see these people. But in order to make their presence known, in order that we can recognize the fact that they are around, sometimes they come in the form, a form that we can understand. Something we can associate with. This could be a bear, could be a beaver, could be any kind of.... It could even be a tree, one of the sacred trees of life. It all depends on the individual, how this gift is going to come to him. It doesn't depend on the individual, it depends on the Creator, how he's going to send that sign.

Last night, regarding spirits, those around in his terrestrial form, the way it was shown me. People are doing that thing to be heard, walking around. Before he left, he gave a signal. He was supposed to come back into the bush where he belongs. He left a message that took me all the following day to interpret. For some reason, and some of you medicine people, some of you elders will understand, there is some force of evil that is trying to disrupt this seminar. Perhaps looking at the first few days, we weren't as successful as we are today. I'm saying, perhaps, because I don't know for sure. But that's the signal, that's the message I got. But there is a lot of people that place their entire trust in the Creator that are in here right now. People that believe that this higher power exists. And we got to keep that and worship the Creator. This good force overcame that evil force and that's why all these people are gathered here all of a sudden. There is something going on someplace not too far from here and all those bad feelings are being channeled towards here. That's the message I got. But we have enough people here with strong feelings of spirituality to have overcome this evil force. The whole situation has turned around. All the good that's coming out of this seminar is just like sparks coming out to that place where evil was being churned up. It's going to neutralize that. Even before the seminar is over, those people that had that gathering will show up over here. I'm not a prophet; I can't predict anything. I can only interpret those messages that I seen.

But anyway, in answer to this young man's question, what do people do to remind them? I told you my way, Angus has told you his way. Probably somebody else here has their way of doing it. That's what I always do, I leave something out of my medicine bundle to the place where I'm leaving from. And every (inaudible) I've come back safely. That's how much trust I
have in that. The work of God, the Creator.

Speaker: About your medicine bundles. Your medicine bundle or is it a medicine bag? Is there a certain time in a person's life that he starts one?

Ron Wakegijig: Yes, especially if you are a pipe carrier. You have to gather up certain things over a period of time. Usually they come to you in a vision or a dream where an elder will give you something. That becomes part of your medicine bag or your medicine bundle. It all depends what you want to call it yourself, as an individual. Bundle is usually a kind of thing that you use in ceremonies or when you take part in ceremonies. So they are both the same, actually. I have a medicine bundle at home which I have not used yet because there is one more medicine that has to go in that bundle which I don't know of yet. It hasn't been shown to me yet. When that day comes, then I'll be able to carry everything inside that bundle, a full bundle. Does that answer your question? Any more questions? Now I'm going to stay sitting, I've been talking too much. (chuckles)

Angus Ponitac: (Ojibway)

Speaker: Some people outside are trying to maybe disrupt this meeting. You hear stories about good medicine and bad medicine and people using the good medicine in the wrong way. (Inaudible) for that purpose. Just like for myself, starting out, you know, I guess sometimes I wonder in my own mind questioning how to figure out at times whether somebody is on the good side or on the bad side. Or how do you protect yourself from those kinds of influence? Because, well even for a gathering of so many good people here. You'd think, "Oh, geez, nobody could touch us." And well, maybe you guys (laughter). But at the same time, how do we protect ourselves from getting tied up or maybe off the track, like off the feather (inaudible). That's a general question I guess I'm throwing up if anybody, specifically.

Ron Wakegijig: I have mentioned on several occasions, here in this universe, you see, there is two things that run parallel in the human race. There is good and there is evil. These two go hand in hand. They are almost, you can't separate them. They come together. But you asked about protections and such things, evil things. I think that's a fairly simple, there is a fairly simple answer to that complex question. The biggest protection you have is the good that's inside of you, plus the Creator himself who put that good inside you. It's up to you as an individual to overcome the evil. If that's your wish, taking part in these ceremonies, pipe ceremonies. Praying inside yourself; and you don't have to talk out loud to talk to the Creator. He reads your thoughts. It's the advantage we have when we do good things. The evil will try and penetrate. Maybe some times it will, very briefly, but you are able to throw it back away. That's the protection you have. There is
a lot of good people here who have already overcome this thing I was talking about. That dark force has been frustrated. The evidence right here. We have good people here. And like I said earlier, I wouldn't be surprised if there was more coming in, on their way right now, some of the people that are dissatisfied with what's going on over there and they will be here. You see, this force of evil, that's been recognized as being a very powerful force. It's the work of the person we call the devil. Some people have been, I don't know what to call it, blessed or given the opportunity to see the person, an evil person, the same way as I saw my guardian spirit. It comes in the form of something, maybe a man, an animal, one of the bad animals if there is such a thing. But they always overcome these things. (Inaudible) was placed right inside of us by the Creator of all things. He's the one that makes sure everything balances out. (Inaudible) It's very easy to go on that side. It's pretty hard to stay on this side. And I've been to several meetings, seminars, conferences, conventions, whatever you want to call them, where supposedly they are talking about seeing the spirits. This even happened out in Morley the first few years. The grounds, the shaker flags, the elders. You could hear all this, (inaudible) all right people staggering in there the next day drunk out of their minds. But the conference went on. People that were there for a good purpose were able to overcome this negative force and finished with the conference. The conference ran its course and everybody that went there for a purpose (inaudible). And I know for a fact; I seen it happen here. Some of the people who have travelled a long way have either gotten something out of this seminar already or will surely get it in the next three days. They have to break up temporarily till the next. They are not worried about this evil force as far as I'm concerned. It's gone, finished, repelled. The only evil we have to contend now, is the one within ourselves. A person recognizes that weakness, is able to cope with it. Overcoming it. And there is people here that is going to help. George Daniels, a very spiritual person. (Inaudible) I can safely say we were in combat. One native force was against it. I don't know if I answered your question satisfactorily. It can be beat, very easily.

Speaker: (Inaudible)

Ron: The same plants that I brought out earlier, yesterday. Any one of those could be used for an evil purpose. But basically, all plants are good. It's how a person uses them that's the knowledge. It could be negative knowledge, it could be positive knowledge.

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