

Gam'wing Ceremony of Na Tsi Hi Lodge

Written 1968 (R. Mayberry), revised 1969 (R. Mayberry), updated 1994 (D. Wolverton)

Introduction

The Gam'wing is the installation ceremony for the new Lodge Chief at the Fall Pow Wow. The Lenape word *gam'wing* was chosen because this was their annual ceremony and it is hoped that each year this ceremony will be used by our lodge to install the new Chief.

Overview of the Ceremony

The ceremony is presented immediately following the Ordeal ceremony at the Fall Pow Wow.

1. The new Chief is escorted to a blanket in front of the membership of the Lodge.
2. A pipe ceremony and prayer is given.
3. The Chief's Bonnet (headdress) is presented to the new Chief.
4. Twelve Vigil members promise to the new Chief to lead the lodge by the Scout Law.
5. The Sacred Bundle is presented to the new Chief.
6. The Song of the Order is sung and the ceremony is formally concluded.

Cast of Characters

twelve Vigil members — to read Scout Law

two torch carriers

new Chief

Pipe Man — to give opening prayer

Pipe Carrier — to bring the pipe

old Chief — to present the Bonnet (could be former Chief if outgoing Chief is not present)

Ceremonial Team — to assist in the presentation of the Bonnet

Chosen One — represents the Vigil in presenting the Sacred Bundle

Notes:

1. Youth members should perform all parts instead of adults whenever possible.
2. If the old Chief is not present, select a member of the Ceremonial team to carry the Chief's Bonnet and to place it on the new Chief's head. If this person is not a former Chief, he must carry, *not* wear, the Bonnet into the council ring.
3. If twelve Vigil members are not available, the other Lodge Officers and the Committee Chairmen should read the parts of the Scout Law.
4. The Vigil Chairman is the preferred person to play the part of the Chosen One. He may also be one of the twelve who read the Scout Law.

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5. All participants should be in Indian regalia, with the exception of the new Chief, the old Chief, and the twelve Vigil, who may wear *full* Scout uniforms including the OA sash. The new Chief should also wear the Chief's beaded Badge of Office.

Props

pipe, in a pipe bag

Chief's Bonnet (headdress)

Sacred Bundle

Badge of Office

blanket, preferably a Hudson Bay or Pendleton-style blanket

council fire, plus extra wood, matches, and extinguishing materials

torches, at least 2

Detail of the Gam'wing Ceremony

1. Two Indian guides with torches escort the twelve Vigil members and the Chosen One into the campfire area.
2. Two Vigil members escort the new Chief into the council ring and seat him on a blanket in the center of the council ring. Both guides then take seats with the rest of the Vigil in front of the council fire.
3. The Pipe Man steps forward.

Pipeman's ceremony and prayer to open the Gam'wing:

(Pipe Man) "Who is the keeper of the Sacred Pipe?"

(Pipe Carrier) "I, (Indian Name), am carrier of the Vigil."

(Pipe Man) "Bring it to me so that I may properly open this Gam'wing ceremony."

The Pipe Carrier brings the pipe bag out and helps remove the pipe. The Pipe Carrier returns to his place with the pipe bag, leaving the Sacred Pipe in the hands of Pipe Man. The Pipe Man can then light the pipe from the fire if preferred or not.

He faces and holds the stem of the pipe to the Earth, West, North, East, and South, in that order, clockwise (sun-wise, as the Indians would say). He may just turn and point with the stem of the pipe or he may have words as he offers the pipe to the five directions. He may walk a short way to the four points and offer the pipe. He finally lifts the pipe to the Great Spirit and offers a prayer for the lodge and the new Chief, which should be short and inspirational.

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These words are intentionally left to the person who takes this part, so the prayer is honest and different each time — but its content should always be a prayer for our lodge and our new Chief. This is up to the individual taking the part of the Pipe Man.

The Pipe Carrier comes back out after the close of the pipe ceremony and takes the pipe, then both the Pipe Man and the Pipe Carrier seat themselves.

4. The seating of the Pipe Man and the Pipe Carrier is the cue for the members of the Ceremonial Team to bring out the Chief's Bonnet with proper and solemn ceremony. The Ceremonial Team should come to the council fire single file and surround the new chief. The last in line carries the Chief's Bonnet (if a former Chief performs this part, he may wear it). The new Chief should be brought to his feet by one of the team.

If the former lodge Chief is present, he should be the one to place the Bonnet on the new Chief. Otherwise the one carrying the Bonnet places it on the head of the new Chief.

5. Leading the new Chief into the Scout Law by twelve Vigil members.

It is suggested that the parts be memorized ahead and not read, and that the twelve chosen should seat themselves in order of their parts to avoid any confusion. As soon as the Chief stands with Bonnet on, the Ceremonial Team moves behind the Chief and faces the front. The first Vigil member to give the first point of the Scout Law will get up and walk to the standing Chief and say his point of the Scout Law. After he does this, he will return to his place to be followed by the next point of the Scout Law, until all twelve have participated in the same manner.

#1 "I, (Indian name), lead you into being **TRUSTWORTHY** in your office as Chief of our Lodge."

#2 "I, (Indian name), lead you in being **LOYAL** to Na Tsi Hi Lodge."

#3 "I, (Indian name), lead you, O Chief, in being **HELPFUL** to your Brothers in the Order."

#4 "I, (Indian name), do now lead you in being **FRIENDLY** to all lodge members, especially the new young ones for they will someday take your place."

#5 "I, (Indian name), lead you in being **COURTEOUS** to your fellow man."

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#6 “I, (Indian name), lead you in KINDNESS to all living things, for the Great Spirit made them all.”

#7 “I, (Indian name), do lead you in OBEDIENCE to God, to those above you, and to your conscience;

but especially to the laws of our land, for without law, we would have fear, hatred, destruction, and anarchy.”

#8 “I, (Indian name), hereby lead you in being CHEERFUL in your duties of service, for this is the backbone of our lodge.”

#9 “I, (Indian name), lead you Great Chief, in being THRIFTY, to waste nothing, for this is a curse in a nation of plenty.”

#10 “I, (Indian name), hereby lead you, Mighty Chief, in being BRAVE, especially in standing up for what is right.”

#11 “I, (Indian name), lead you in being CLEAN in thought, in word, and in deed.”

#12 “I, (Indian name), lead you, Chief of Na Tsi Hi Lodge, in being REVERENT to God; but also reverent toward your fellow man, the four legged animals, the winged birds among the trees, which the Indians called The Standing People, for your God made them all.”

6. Presentation of the Sacred Bundle

The Sacred Bundle consists of a leather Scroll, wrapped around an Arrow, and held in a Quiver. The Sacred Bundle is one of the three symbols of office of the Chief of Na Tsi Hi, along with the Chief's Bonnet and the Chief's beaded Badge of Office.

After the twelfth point of the Scout Law has been made and the speaker has taken his place, the Pipe Man will call out from his place and be answered by a voice from the gathering of Vigil members:

(Pipe Man) “Who has the arrow?”

(Chosen One) “It is only right that we are the Guardians of the Sacred Arrow.”

(Pipe Man) “But who is the keeper of this spiritual Arrow?”

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(Chosen One) “It is only right that I, (Indian name), chosen keeper of the lodge Sacred Bundle,
has the Arrow.”

(Pipe Man) “Bring the Arrow here, so that it may be presented to our new Chief who will be its
guardian for the next year of his office.”

The Chosen One takes the Arrow from the Bundle, proceeds to a point in front of and facing the Chief. He waits as an Indian brings a torch and stands by his side for more light.

(Chosen One) “As I read this scroll, fastened to the Arrow, let the words be burned into your mind
and conscience as they are burned into this leather.”

The Chosen One silently reads the scroll on the Arrow.

(Chosen One) “These words are for your eyes alone, no one else may open this scroll.

Safeguard it.”

(Chosen One) “This spiritual Arrow and its Sacred Bundle will be returned to me, or the next

keeper of this Arrow, at the election of the new Chief in the Spring. Thus, it may
be presented to the next incoming Chief. It is hoped that this Arrow will help you
in the performance of your solemn duties and weighty responsibilities and let you
catch the higher vision of our Lodge.”

The Chosen One replaces the Arrow in the Quiver and hands the Bundle to the new Chief. The Chosen One then turns to face the members and says:

(Chosen One) “Let us close this our Gam'wing with the closing of the Ordeal Ceremony.”

The Ceremonies Team then closes the ceremony and then closes all proceedings with the Song of the Order. After the song the Chosen One turns to one of the guides with a torch and says:

(Chosen One) “Guide, return our Chief to his Lodge, the Gam'wing is finished.”

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The guide with the lighted torch takes the Chief out of the area. The Vigil members follow.