Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all Seneca Nation of Indians non-essential services, including all Seneca Language department in house services are suspended until further notice. Once it becomes feasible to reopen, we will do so in a manner that is both safe and following all current health guidelines.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free contact 716-532-4900.

RezTalk: I Wear My Heart On My T-shirt

by: Aëdza’niyo Seneca

I think I may have a t-shirt for every occasion. Last year, I caught some flack about a t-shirt I purchased that read “FREE MOM HUGS” in support of Pride Month. I had to explain to my friend that it was part of a movement to support the LGBTQ community. I said that I would hug and love anyone who’s family/mom is not accepting of their lifestyle. Everyone needs a “mom” hug. I bought it to wear during the schools “Day of Silence,” a day that brings awareness to the effects of bullying and harassment of LGBTQ students. I have been participating in the “Day” at school, but it didn’t happen this year as Covid-19 took us out of school.

Not only that, but the Black Lives Matter movement shone in the spotlight. The death of George Floyd was painful to watch. It brought to light my own battles and barriers of racial/systematic injustice. My news feed was flooded with BLM & white privilege memes. Then it became ALL LIVES MATTER. The best way to explain why I don’t really care for that phrase is this. Let’s say you go to the doctor for a possible broken arm. You want the doctor to treat your arm. He/she says “No, I’m not going to treat your arm today. It’s broken, but all bones matter.” BLM is the broken arm in this case. Most white people can’t or won’t see white privilege because it makes them uncomfortable. The movement needs to keep on keeping on until everyone become so uncomfortable, that they want to make change.

But this article is about my t-shirt collection, and the only t-shirt I have that relates to BLM is one that reads “My Love For My People Is Stronger Than Anyone’s Hate.” And that’s the truth. Although I support the Black Lives Matter movement, it is not my/our battle. My people, our people, have our own battles. We battle the effects of the historical trauma of boarding schools. We have Missing &...
(continued from page Sgd: Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. We have lateral oppression. We fight to keep our language, culture and identity alive. And you know I have t-shirts to express all of these.

But what we seem to have lost in these battles is our world view as Œgwë’öweh people, our relationship with all living things. We lost the guiding principals that were laid out by our brilliant ancestors. We forgot how to think “We” before “Me”. When we were strong at the beginning of this Pandemic. We were helping each other out. We were living in our old communal ways. Although we suffered great losses, the threat of Covid-19 seemed to start calming down. Then the togetherness seemed to disappear and things began to get a little dark. What we have to remember in these times is our Ganë:nyöö, showing our appreciation. Our ancestors governed themselves with the idea that everyone is equal. (and you didn’t think these topics were going to tie together did you) Nobody is above everyone else. We work for the benefit of the people. Whatever your gift is, you share it with your people. Show kindness. If you want to be powerful, be kind. Kindness is extremely powerful. And the end, it comes down to Love. We have to Love one another. No matter what you believe or what you practice, unconditional (acceptance) love and compassion is our way as Œgwë’öweh people.

RezTalk: I Wear My Heart On My T-shirt (cont.)

Gaga:’ time: A man chased by the Ancient of lizards

This story continues from last months Gaga:’ time.

It sprang toward the man; the man leaped to another tree and then from tree to tree, the Lizard following.

At the edge of a hill was a great rock. The man ran to the rock and from the rock leaped into the air and came down on a mountain far away. He ran directly south along the ridge of the mountain, then went down on the opposite side to a wide valley. He ran across the valley and had begun to climb a second mountain when he heard the Lizard coming down the mountain he had just descended on the other side of the valley. It was dark now but the man continued to run. He ran all night.

In the morning he saw an opening on the other side of which was a low hill and smoke of some kind. He reached the foot of the hill and turning saw the Lizard had just come to the opening. It raised its paw and struck the man’s footprint on the trail. That instant the man fell to the ground. As he fell his friend was there and said, "Get up! You will die if you fall in this way."

He lifted him and pushed him into a run, urging him to hurry. The man felt stronger and again ran fast from valley to valley, the Lizard always about the same distance behind.

All at once the man fell again. Right away his friend was there. He lifted him to his feet saying, "Keep up courage," and pushed him into a run. Again he felt stronger and ran faster.

It was a very dark night. He ran against a great maple tree. As he hit the tree he went straight through. This happened many times in the night. Whenever the man hit a tree he went through it.

For eight days and nights the Lizard chased the man. When it found out that he went through trees it threw its power ahead and made the trees so hard that the man could no longer go through them.

The ninth night the Lizard commanded a terrible rain storm to come and the night to be so dark that the man couldn’t see where he was going. The man ran till midnight without once hitting a tree. Just at midnight he hit one and was thrown far back.

That moment his friend was there, and said, "Do all you can," and taking hold of his hand he led him and they went faster than the man had gone alone.

The two ran together till daylight, then the friend left and the man went on alone. He began to be very weak. The Lizard was coming nearer and its strokes on the tracks were more frequent; the man fell more often. (continued on page Sëh)
Night came and the Lizard made it terribly dark. The man ran against a tree and bounced far back. The Lizard struck the tree and was thrown back also. The man was up and running forward again. The Lizard was just upon him and was reaching out to seize him when the man fell, as it seemed to him, into a hole in the ground. He thought, "Well, I am near my end; when I strike I shall be dashed to pieces." He kept falling and as he fell he got sleepy. Looking up he saw the Lizard coming down on the side of the hole, winding around and around. The man fell asleep. After a time he woke up. He was still falling and the Lizard was still pursuing him.

At last the man landed on his feet. He seemed to have come out of the hole. He looked around and saw a beautiful country. "My friend told me to go toward the South," thought he, and he ran on in that direction. As the man ran, he knew the Lizard behind him was coming very fast. "Now I shall die," thought he. He closed his eyes and kept on, thinking, "I will not see when it reaches me." He ran a long time, then opened his eyes and looked around. He didn't see the Lizard but he kept running. Soon he came to a house and going in found an old man.

The old man looked up and said, "My grandson, I am glad you have come. I have been waiting for you. You are bringing with you what I have wanted to eat. Stand back there, Lizard and I will fight alone. We will see if he is as powerful as he thinks he is."

The Lizard came to the house and asked, "Where is the man I have been chasing?"

"Here I am," answered the old man.

"You are not the man."

"I am, but if you think there is another man here, you will not hunt for him till you overpower me."

"Come outside," said the Lizard, "there isn't room in here."

"Very well," said the old man and getting up he went outside. They began to fight. The Lizard tore the old man's flesh. It came together again and healed. The old man tore off Lizard's forelegs, but Lizard didn't give up; the two fought till Lizard was torn to pieces.

When the old man convinced himself that the pieces were not alive, he hung them up in the house and called to his grandson, "Come out! I have killed the Lizard that you were afraid of. I have been wishing for this kind of meat for a long time."

The old man boiled some of the meat in a large kettle. In a small kettle he cooked bear meat for his grandson.

While the meat was cooking, he put corn in a pounder and with a few strokes it was flour. Then he made bread and began eating.

When he had eaten every bit of the great Lizard, he said, "I thank you, my grandson, this meat will last me for many years. You must stay here till you are rested and cured, for you have been poisoned by the power of the Lizard."

The old man was the oldest of the Flying Meteors. One day he said to the man, "I want you to see what I have planted."

They went a short distance from the cabin to a field where something was growing. "This is ones (corn)," said the old man.

There were tall stalks with ears on them as long as the man was tall and the kernels were as large as a man's head.

The old man said, "Let us go to the other side of the field."

There the man saw a field where different kinds of corn were growing. They went to a third field where something was growing and the old man said, "These are squashes." They were very large. They passed the squash field and went back to the cabin.

The next day the man said good-bye to his grandfather and started for home. He traveled till he came to a village. He went to the chief's house and a woman who was there looked at him, then asked, "Have you ever heard of a man who sent his wife away in the form of vapor?"

He thought a little while, then remembered, and answered, "I have. I did that myself."

"I am your wife," said the woman.

The man had had so much trouble that he had forgotten about his wife, but he was glad to find her. They went home together and lived happily.
Ingredients:
5 grams cedar leaves
Cinnamon
Star anise
Cardamom
Cloves
Black pepper.
Small handful each of: blueberries, strawberries, blackberries & raspberries.

Directions:
1. Fill pot with cold water and put on high to boil.
2. This is the fun part, mix your cinnamon, star anise, cardamom, clove and black pepper in equal or unequal parts to suit your taste. Try few different ratios. 
3. Add your cedar and roughly 10-15g of your spice mix and berries to the pot. 
4. Once boil starts reduce to a simmer. 
5. Once cedar goes dark green and just starts to dull is best to remove from heat and remove from the pot. 
6. Ladle to your cup and enjoy, I prefer to sweeten mine just a little with Smokey maple syrup.

Note: The total spice amount is about 15 grams, or 3 1/4 teaspoons. There is no provided amounts so that everyone can put in as much or as little as they want of the spices for a total of 15 grams. That being said, one suggested amount used by Lisa Latocha, is as follows:
14g between cardamom, cinnamon & star anise, then 1 tsp of pepper, an about 9 cloves, to make total of 15 grams.

Anyway you make it, will be an experiment in taste and strength. Some like really strong tea while others enjoy weaker varieties. Either way, enjoy!

Recipe & photo from:
https://summersolsticefestivals.ca/recipes/cedar-wildberry-chai/