

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS:

We have strict rules against alcohol and drug use in the entire area of the pow wow.

PETS

We request that you keep your dogs leashed and out of the dance arena.

ASKING QUESTIONS

If you have questions about the dance, regalia, customs, etc., go to the “Learning Center” Tent located near the arena circle. Here you will find Native resource persons eager to answer your questions.

WELCOME

We are always glad to see people attend pow wows, and learn more about our cultures and ways, but sometimes not everyone acts appropriately. Here are some general guidelines to follow:

Pow Wow, or Wacipi (Wa-chee-pee in Dakota means “they dance”), time is the Native American people’s way of meeting together, to join in dancing, singing, visiting, renewing old friendships and making new ones. This is a time to renew thoughts of the old ways and to preserve a rich heritage. It is a celebration of the community.

THE ARENA

Blessed before dancing, the arena is considered a sacred ground and should be treated with respect. Profanity and unruly behavior should not be used. Never cut across it to get to the opposite side. Treat the arena as you would treat a church. Go in the “door” and out the same way. The MC will specify who is to dance and when, and when spectators may participate. This is usually called Intertribal Dancing, but pay attention to the MC and other dancers before you enter the circle.

GRAND ENTRY

The Wacipi begins with the Grand Entry of all the dancers entering the arena. Leading the Grand Entry are the flag bearers. These flags may include the eagle staffs of various

tribes and families in attendance, the United States and Canadian flags, tribal flags, service flags and P.O.W. flag. Flags are usually carried by veterans. Native Americans hold the United States flag in an honored position. For us, the US flag has two meanings. First, it is a way to remember all of the ancestors that fought against this country. Second, it also reminds people of those people who have fought for this country.

An eagle staff consisting of 38 eagle feathers was made by Glynn Crooks (Dakota) in 1979. Each feather commemorates one of the 38 Dakota executed in Mankato on December 26, 1862. It also commemorates those veterans who have served in times of conflict.

Following the flagbearers are other important guests of the Wacipi including tribal chiefs, elders, and royalty. Next in line, are the men dancers followed by the women dancers, then the children. Once everyone is in the arena, the entrance song ends. The entrance song is immediately followed by a song to honor the flag and a song to honor the veterans. This is followed by an invocation.

During Grand Entry, the flag song, veterans song, and the invocation, spectators are asked to stand and men are asked to remove their hats.

RECORDING

Photos of individual dancers should only be taken with their permission, and no commercial photography without first checking with the MC and pow wow staff. Tape recording of the drums should be done only for personal use, unless by previous arrangement with the staff. Absolutely NO recording of any kind on Honor Songs, prayers, or any other time the MC specifies.

“SPECIALS”

EAGLE FEATHER/FALLEN WARRIOR

No photographs. We have the highest respect for the Eagle, the Wambdi. Possession of Eagle feathers is an honor; they are usually received as a gift from a relative, spiritual teacher or from the Eagle himself. The Eagle carries prayers to the Creator. When an Eagle feather falls to the ground, there is a special ceremony for veterans to retrieve the Fallen Warrior.

GIVEAWAY

Families accumulate items for a Giveaway for an entire year. Items include simple everyday items (like laundry baskets, towels, socks, etc.), blankets, and star quilts. Special items are given to individuals who have helped the family. Visitors are sometimes given gifts. Often special gifts distributed to the children.

HONOR SONGS

Sung for an individual who has passed into the Spirit world, graduated from school, received an accolade or perhaps received an Indian name. Everyone is invited to come and pay their respects by shaking the hands of the family and then joining the line behind them to finish the dance.

NAMING CEREMONY

No photographs. Families give a spiritual or “Indian” name to individuals. A spiritual leader or respected elder performs this ceremony. Usually a Giveaway and Honor Song follows.