

‘When I’m out there dancing, I pray for all m



From left, Aviana Murrell, 6, Victoria Ream, 9, and Sanaa Hewitt, 8, cross their fingers as the wait for the judges to choose winners of the junior girls team dance special during the 2024 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds on Saturday, July 13.



Kova Speer, 4, dances in an InterTribal dance during the 2024 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds on Saturday, July 13.

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Queen Sophia Grout.

The outgoing 2023-24 Veterans Royalty court consisted of Tiny Tot Warrior William Craig, Little Miss Veterans Princess Grace Macon, Little Miss Veterans Queen Ulali Quenelle, Junior Miss Veterans Queen Leloo Quenelle and Senior Veterans Queen Memory Leno.

The Veterans Summit and Resource Fair was held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday at the powwow grounds and included lunch, information and a keynote speaker from the reality

T.V. show American Ninja Warrior. Abram Benally (Navajo) is a Navy veteran and was a 2018 competitor on the show. There was also an opportunity to try out an American Ninja Warrior obstacle course.

Ramona Quenelle organized the event, which was co-sponsored by the Office of Tribal Government Relations, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Native Wellness Institute.

Saturday featured a special opportunity to meet with 1964 Tokyo Olympic gold medalist Billy Mills (Oglala Lakota), also known as Tamokoce TeHila. Mills, a former

U.S. Marine, is the co-founder of Running Strong for American Indian Youth. He remains the only Western Hemisphere winner of the 10,000-meter run, a record that has held for 60 years. His story is featured in the 1983 film, “Running Brave.”

Powwow dancing

Dancing is the best part of the powwow for Tribal member Levi Liebelt (Klamath, Modoc and Grand Ronde). Liebelt said he has been dancing the men’s traditional since he was a youth, with a break in his teen years. He resumed dancing 12 years ago.

“(I) go out into the arena and

dance for me and my family, but also (take) the chance to be able to pray,” he said. “When I’m out there dancing, I pray for all my friends and family, and for everyone else.”

Frank Scott John (Sioux) said he also dances the men’s traditional and has been dancing since he was 17. He was taught by his uncle Crazy Bull, and his father is a dancer as well.

“My mom helped me with my regalia,” he said. “It’s fun and I love to dance a lot.”

A variety of vendors

Vendors set up booths throughout the powwow grounds. In the booth for Red Bear Flutes, vendor Shane Oglesbee played an Indian flute for prospective customers.

Oglesbee makes all his own flutes which consist of a variety of wooden and PVC flutes. The latter, he said, are “a great learning tool.”



Little Miss Veterans Queen Ulali Quenelle dances in an InterTribal dance during the 2024 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds on Friday, July 12.

