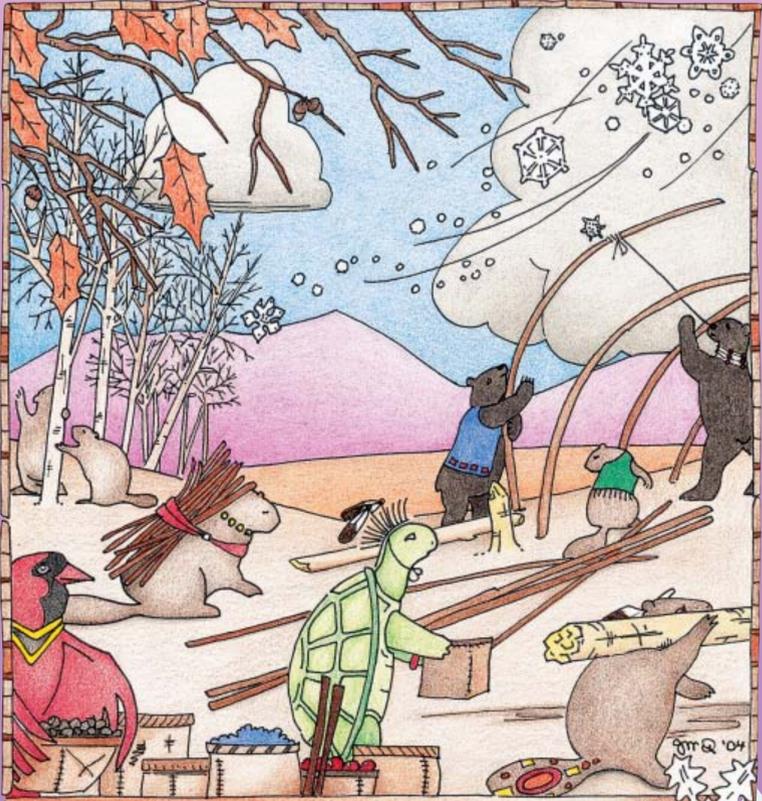


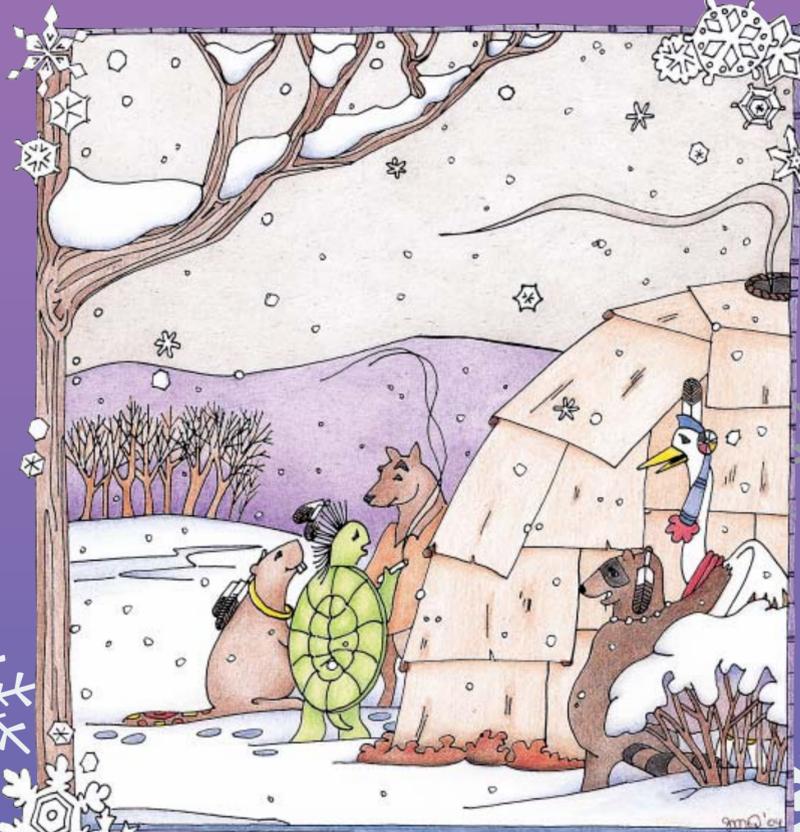
Tricked On The Trail

“Lessons from our Elders”

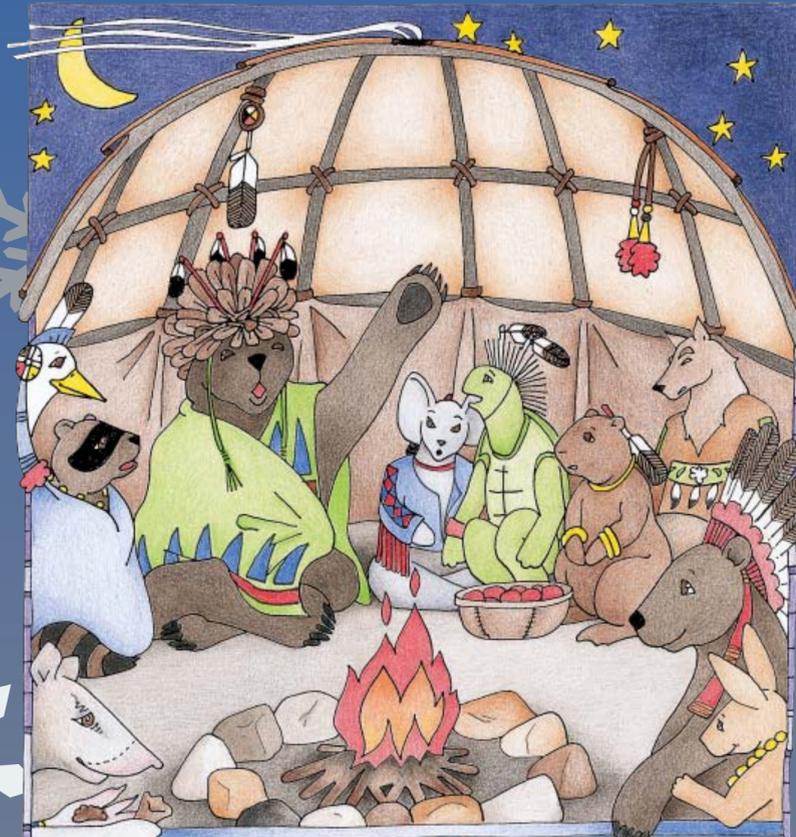
Teach me... I will listen... I will learn... I will walk the good path!



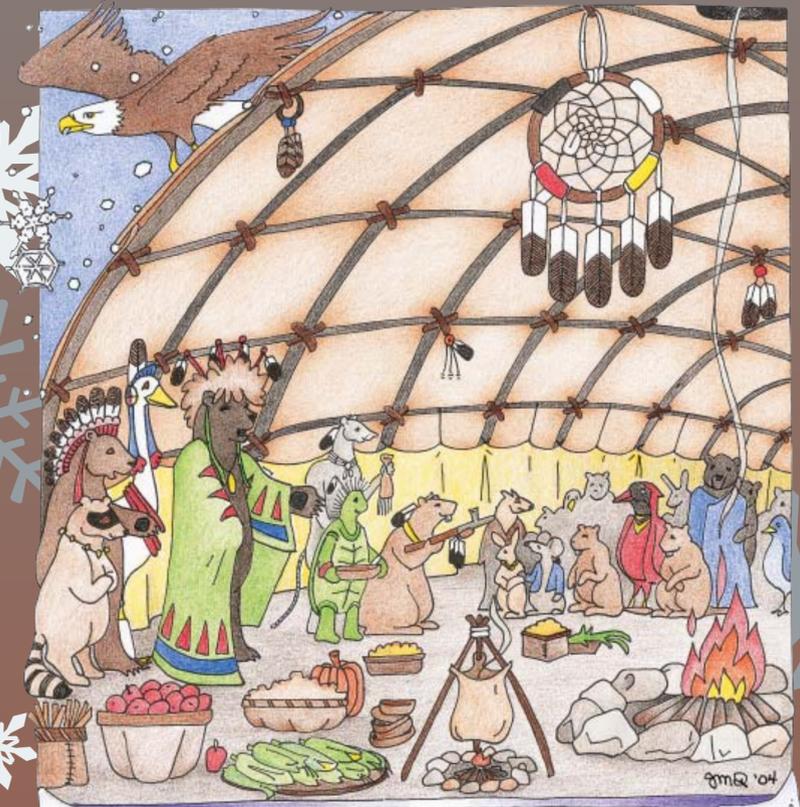
A gust of north wind signifies the beginning of winter as snowflakes began to dance in the air. The coldness urges the entire community to hurry in their preparations for winter. Our friends are helping to gather food for storage, cutting lodge poles, stacking firewood, and assisting with the many jobs needed to be done before the snow covers the ground. Some of the friends are helping to build a new Winter Lodge for the Community gatherings during the freezing weather to come.



In his haste, Beaver cuts a tree without first offering semaa (tobacco) and the tree falls near Fox's lodge. Fox admonishes the youth, which prompts Beaver to complain to Turtle about all the work they have to do on the Winter Lodge and that the others are not helping. Naanabush, passing by, stops to listen. "I hear you are upset." He says, "Come join me while I test the newly harvested semaa to be sure it's good enough for Possum." Beaver, Turtle, and Naanabush go behind a nearby lodge to smoke. Crane and Raccoon are greatly surprised as they come upon the three of them smoking.



Crane and Raccoon are disturbed after seeing Beaver and Turtle smoking and start a search for Possum. They find Possum visiting with Elder Bear and describe to him what they have seen. After hearing of Beaver and Turtle's disrespect, Possum decides it is time for a lesson and he invites Elder Bear to give the teaching. Possum directs Crane and Raccoon to gather the youths, including Naanabush, at dusk. As darkness settles, the youth eagerly gather at the teaching lodge and Possum introduces Elder Bear as the storyteller for the evening. Elder Bear relates a story from his youth on how the Ancestors used semaa. He explains the importance of semaa in showing honor, respect, kindness, honesty, and sharing. "Semaa should not be misused," Elder Bear states. "It should always be used for good and to honor the good qualities in people." The youth all agree.



Possum announces, "There will be a feast tonight at the newly completed Winter Lodge to honor all those who have helped the Community get ready for winter. All are invited including you, Naanabush," as Naanabush is sneaking out of the lodge. As the feast begins, Elder Bear announces that a wiser Beaver and Turtle will be giving the blessing. Everyone now looks at Beaver and Turtle with new respect and honor. Snug in the new Winter Lodge, the community begins to celebrate long into the night with food and dancing.

KEEP SEMAA SACRED

This media material was made possible by the Behavioral Health Department and the Nimkee Memorial Wellness Center Public Health Department. For more information contact the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe at 7070 E. Broadway, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858. Phone 989-775-4918 or 989-775-4639.