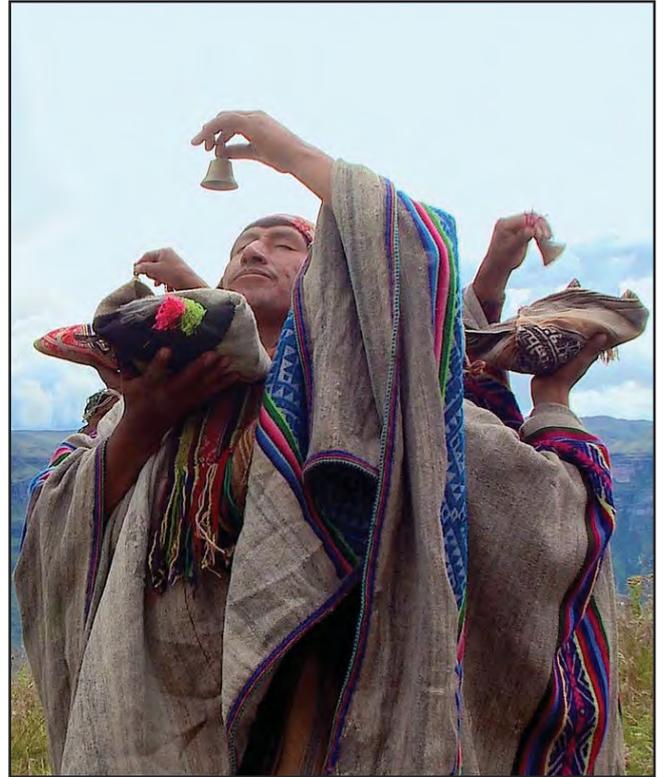




**Ancient Polish Traditions of the Whisperers : pages 30-37**



**Invoking the Apu Spirits of the Andes : pages 25-29**

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**PUBLISHING POLICY:**

SACRED HOOP seeks to network those wanting to learn the spiritual teachings of indigenous peoples as a living path of knowledge. Our contents cover the integration of both old and new ways, and insights that contribute to a balanced and sustainable lifestyle in today's world.

We honour all paths and peoples and do not include material from, or give support to, any individual or group which seeks to oppress or discriminate on grounds of race, lineage, age, gender, class or belief. Nor do we knowingly publish any material that is inaccurate.

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Winds blow the world over, and our ancestors saw them as spirits, able to help or hinder us. **Renee Baribeau** shares some reflections on these ancient spirits of change.

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## From the Editor



Welcome to our 99th issue. This is the first issue in a year of celebration in Hoopland, as we gear up to our centenary issue. There will be four extra issues this year, for all direct subscribers to Hoop, the first of which will be available very soon.

In this issue we start with a small selection of articles about ayahuasca and the healing traditions of the Amazon. Ayahuasca has grown vastly in popularity over the past twenty years or so, and part of what I have observed regarding this is the abuse of the traditions by Westerners, seeking 'enlightenment,' or an exotic thrill, ingesting the medicine outside of its sacred context, with little or no ceremony or respect to tradition. So our first article is a look at this insidious business, and then, to give balance, we have two articles about this medicine's healing power.

But not all South American traditions are all about ayahuasca of course, and our next article is an account of a Q'ero ceremony in Peru, where the Apus - the spirits of the mountains - are invited physically into a room to give advice; a powerful experience for those who were there.

Ancient traditions continue all over the place, even in this increasingly sterile, mechanistic and technological world, and so for our next article we go to Poland in Eastern Europe, to look at the work of the Szeptun, the Whisperers, who combine Orthodox Christianity with pre-Christian pagan traditions from the Carpathian Mountains.

Shamanism is an animistic tradition, and animism works with the spirits of nature in all their aspects. One of the most powerful spirits, and certainly amongst the first our ancestors took heed of, are the winds. Our next article looks at some of these ancient wind spirits and about ways we can work with them for personal change in our lives.

Personally I'm not a fan of cities, and there is growing evidence to show the devastation urban living has on human well-being - Nature Deficit Disorder. Our next article suggests the importance of ritual in the wilds (or at least the countryside) as essential for our health.

And we end with a short look at the life and legacy of Michael Harner, the originator of Core Shamanism, who passed into Spirit a few weeks ago.

I hope you enjoy the read - and subscribers, watch out for an email coming soon about our first 25th Anniversary Special Issue.

Blessings to all Beings  
Nicholas Breeze Wood

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THE FOUNDING INSPIRATION FOR SACRED HOOP MAGAZINE IN 1993  
*"Then I was standing on the highest mountain of them all, and around and about me was the whole hoop of the world... I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all things in the spirit and the shapes of all shapes as they must live together like one being. And I saw that the Sacred Hoop of my people was one of many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight and in the centre grew one almighty flowering tree to shelter all the children of one Mother and one Father, and I saw that it was holy."*  
 (From the vision of Nicholas Black Elk Lakota Holy Man: 1863 - 1950)