

# weekend!

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## PEACE AND HISTORY

THE FIRST

HAUDENOSAUNEE

WOODEN STICK

LACROSSE EXPO

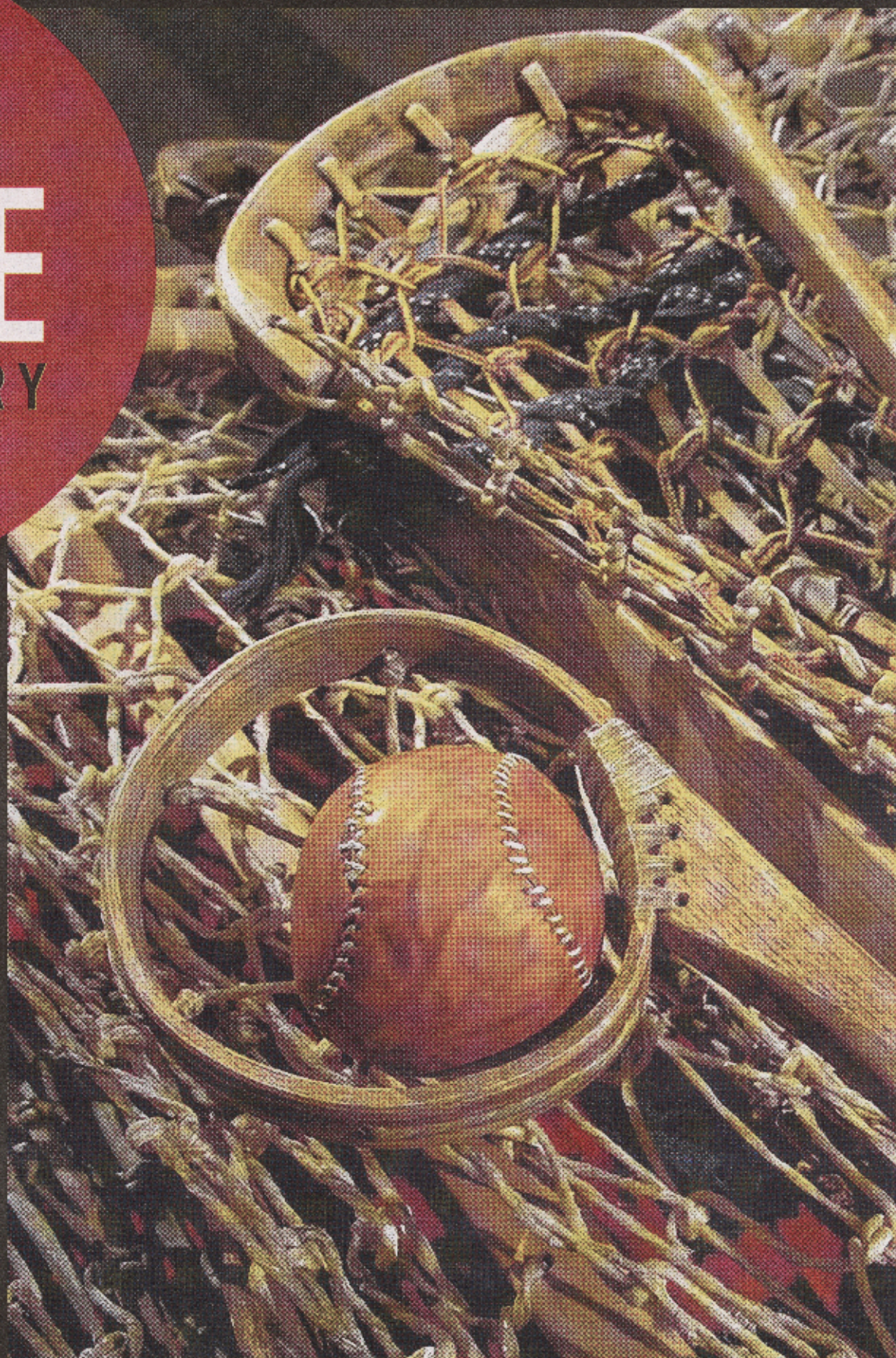
COMES TO

ONONDAGA LAKE

PARK SATURDAY

AND SUNDAY.

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Wooden lacrosse stick maker Alf Jacques of the Onondaga Nation Turtle Clan is shown sitting on his carving bench in his workshop.

(Mike Greenlar/mgreenlar@syracuse.com)

John Parsons holds a traditional lacrosse stick at the Onondaga Nation. (Heather Ainsworth/AP, 2010)





# Peace and history

The first Haudenosaunee Wooden Stick Lacrosse Expo comes to Onondaga Lake Park Saturday and Sunday.

By Sarah Moses  
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Lacrosse is a fast-paced, hard-hitting sport that is growing in popularity across the country, but for Native Americans in Central New York the game is about peace and tradition.

"The influence of the Haudenosaunee on our American way of life is extensive and profound, but is often unrecognized," said Onondaga Historical Association Executive Director Gregg Tripoli. "Lacrosse is one of the fastest-growing sports in our country, yet many people do not realize that it originated here."

Lacrosse, which is known as a the Creator's game, is a tradition of the Haudenosaunee, which includes the Mohawk, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Seneca and Tuscarora nations. The Haudenosaunee Wooden Stick Lacrosse Expo seeks to honor the history of the game, promote the sport and educate the public, said Phil Arnold, director of the Skä•noñh -- Great Law of Peace Center.

**"This is a celebration of North America's oldest, most exciting team sport. The expo honors not only the people who originated the game, but also the culture from which it came."**

— PHIL ARNOLD, DIRECTOR OF THE SKÄ•NOÑH

The center, in association with the Onondaga Historical Association, Syracuse University and the Onondaga Nation, will host the expo Saturday and Sunday at Onondaga Lake Park in Liverpool. This will be the first major event for the center, which is still in its planning phase.

Skä•noñh is an Onondaga welcoming greeting meaning "peace" and "wellness." The center will be housed at the former "Sainte Marie among the Iroquois" facility, which is located on the eastern shore of Onondaga Lake.

Lacrosse is much more than just a sport for the Haudenosaunee and it has been played at Onondaga Lake for more than a thousand

years, Arnold said.

Arnold said the event will be a chance for current lacrosse players to learn the origins of the game and for the community to learn more about an important part of the history of the Haudenosaunee.

"People don't know about the ancient roots of lacrosse and kids don't know about wooden sticks," Arnold said. "This is an opportunity to tell people the importance of that story."

Organizers expect thousands of people to attend the expo, which will feature exhibition games played by Haudenosaunee men, 35 years old and over. All the players will play with wooden lacrosse sticks and traditional leather balls.

An opening ceremony will be held at 8:30 a.m. Saturday. The event, which is free and open to the public, also includes food and Native American craft vendors.

There will also be youth lacrosse clinics hosted by professional lacrosse players from the Onondaga Nation from 9 to 10 a.m., each day. Also, a stick-making demonstration will be hosted by lacrosse stick carver Alf Jacques, a member of the Onondaga Nation Turtle Clan.

Exhibition games will take place from 10 a.m. to noon and 1 to 3 p.m.

Social dancing, demonstrations and talks will be held from noon to 1 p.m. A men's open game will be played from 3:30 to 5 p.m. The expo ends with a closing ceremony at 5 p.m. on Sunday.

"This is a celebration of North America's oldest, most exciting team sport," Arnold said. "The expo honors not only the people who originated the game, but also the culture from which it came. We want to educate and inspire people of all ages and backgrounds about lacrosse and the Haudenosaunee."

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Alf Jacques carves the head of a wooden lacrosse stick. (Stephanie Welsh, 1994)

## IF YOU GO:

**What:** Haudenosaunee Wooden Stick Lacrosse Expo.

**When:** 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday — 8:30 a.m. Saturday opening ceremony and 5 p.m. Sunday closing ceremony.

**Where:** Onondaga Lake Park in Liverpool.

**Cost:** Free.