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The powwow showcases various traditional styles of native dance. At top, Nikki Bass, Trinity Bass and Cheyenne Martin represent the women of the tribes. Above left, Marilena Badamo represents the future during a Woman's shawl dance. Above right, Gabriel Chavis demonstrates a men's traditional style of dance.

Powwow celebrates unity and life

BY JAMES W. ROBINSON
STAFF WRITER

Saturday and Sunday focused on celebrating peace, nature, and life as the Nansemond nation celebrated its 35th annual Powwow in

Suffolk.
Held both Saturday, Aug. 19 and Sunday, Aug. 20, at Mattanock Town off Pembroke Lane, the bright sunny days united residents from Suffolk and beyond with Nansemond Indian tribe members to

honor Native American culture through traditional dance, along with vendors, shopping and food.
Chief Emeritus Sam Bass thanked the Creator for the wonderful weather at the event while acknowledging the turnout.

“A day with all these people, all these citizens coming from all over the state, to attend this powwow. We have people from all walks of life. A motorcycle club is here, a hiking club

See POWWOW, 5



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Clockwise from top left, Anton of the Yaqui Tribe provides a quick serenade. a young dancer, attendees browse the vendors, Evynn Richardson, head woman and Keenan Stewart, head man lead the dancing, a woman demonstrates traditional dance, Kalen Anderson participates in the men's traditional dance.

Powwow: Nansemond Nation celebrates its heritage during annual event

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is here. There's just all kinds of groups here," Bass said. "Tribes from all over the state of Virginia and North Carolina are attending. It's great."

Bass explained that a powwow is a celebration of Native Americans coming together in unity.

"We're thanking the Creator for all his blessings – the sunrise, the sunset, the sun, the moon, the stars – all of creation," Bass said. "And we're [celebrating] that we are still here and we're not

from the past, and you can speak in present terms as an Indian Tribe, and that's me being an Native American. I am still here. I am a Native American. That's my story, and I'll stick to it."

Spectators attending the event shared their reasons for turning out for the powwow.

Kimberly Gardener discussed the importance of supporting the Nansemond Indian Tribe.

"I support the tribe at every chance," Gardener

said. "I love to come out and wander. It's beautiful."

Daniel Brooks said he wants to learn about indigenous people, explaining he wants to come away from the day with a reconnection with nature.

"Hopefully, we can find some semblance of balance," Brooks said.

Nansemond Indian Nation Council Secretary Barbara Orf said the day also is about "family" along with forgetting

about all the bad in the world while enjoying the day.

"Seeing the kids from a year that have grown up and have gotten bigger and improving their dance skills and enjoying seeing the community" are what's important for Orf. "To come in and support us, and enjoy attending the powwow, whether they've been here 20 times or it's their first time. It's just an awesome event."

David Blackfeather

Darling, the Nansemond Indian Tribal Counselor, said the powwow serves as both a "powerful experience" for him and as a return home.

"A lot of our people over the years have been dispersed around the country," Darling said. "I grew up very knowledgeable about my heritage and about my culture, but far away. So for me, even though I never really lived here this really feels like a homecoming to me."

He hopes residents experience the culture and the community that surrounds it.

"It's something that is not as pervasive anymore in today's culture," Darling said. "So for me, it's exciting for people to be able to [have] a chance to see it and experience it and hear it and smell it, you know the sage in the air, I think it's an exciting time for everyone to kind of get an escape and learn something about their community."