2002 treaty signers gather for the future of the Rising Nation and the environment

BY ROBIN HOUSE

On Feb. 23, I drove through the fog, rain and snow to the Churchville Nature Center in Churchville, Pa., where organizational representatives who signed the 1902 Treaty of Renewed Brotherhood gathered to discuss their progress made thus far.

The attendees (approximately 20) gathered in the cozy library of the Nature Center, replete with a wood stove. Jim Beer (who was a guest at Villanova's Fall 1902 Native American Festival), welcomed everyone and introduced Robert Rhoads, chief of the Lenape Nation of Indians, Norristown, Pa.

The attendees included representatives of the Lenape Nation of Indians, Lenape Historical Society, Lenape Cultural Center, Lenape River Cleanup, Lenape Nation University Alliance, and various Watershed Associations. They met to reaffirm their commitment to "support the Lenape people in one or more of the following ways:"

- Hosting cultural programs
- Creating support for Lenape cultural center
- Assisting in Lenape language revival projects
- Exhibits of Lenape culture
- Helping Lenape people obtain and protect sacred land sites
- Encouraging updated Lenape history books
- Attending Lenape functions
- Volunteer service and support
- Distributing information
- Financial assistance

Of the many exciting endeavors that are in the works or on the drawing board are:

- A new 4th grade history book
to come off the press this summer
- The 6th Annual Project River Bright - 2003 Delaware River Cleanup
- Re-enactment of the Walking Purchase of 1732
- Rising Nation River Journey
- Lenape Nation University Alliance
- Fundraising "kick-off" for a Rising Nation Lenape Cultural Center

Everyone had an opportunity to introduce themselves and explain their interest and involvement, how they were moving forward and where additional assistance was needed. A short break was held for lunch and networking then the official session reconvened at 1:30 p.m. when we adjourned for a tour around the Nature Center. I was honored and thrilled to be included in this outstanding group of individuals and I look forward to working towards some of the treaty goals especially the Lenape Nation University Alliance.

The next meeting is scheduled to be held in the Lenape Village at the Nature Center, Saturday, Oct. 28.