

*A Manitou Stone*  
Elder Betty McKenna

The old ones said that when a Manitou Stone had work to do, He/She would find a wascapio (helper). That helper would carry the Manitou Stone for our people, and carry out its bidding. The helper's task was to feed the Stone, take on its travels, and make its offerings. The Stone, in turn, would direct the helper by dreams as to which ceremonies it wanted to attend and who it wanted to meet. The old ones cautioned: Never go looking for a Manitou Stone—*they* will find *you* when your spirit is ready.

This is the way I was found by the Manitou Stone that lives with me.

He was dug up from the prairie when a farmer was plowing his field—the young farmer thought he had found a dinosaur egg. Upon taking it home, he showed his wife. She was scrubbing clothes in a washtub at the time. Taking the stone from her husband, she began to scrub off the crusted-on mud. As she scrubbed, she saw that the Stone had a face. She begged her husband to take it back to the field and rebury it. He wrapped it in a gunny sack and started to return the stone to its resting place. It was then that the stone spoke to him. When the farmer excitedly returned to the house, his wife was very upset by her husband's fanciful notion of talking stones. She said he could keep it if he never told anyone what he had told her, or he could end up in the Weyburn mental hospital. When the couple grew old, sold the farm, and moved, they took the stone with them. They kept it wrapped in the basement, tucked away, and never did they mention that day, not even to their children.

Over the years, the couple retired and drew straws as to where they would live out their retirement years. By chance they chose the city I lived in, and that is where the farmer eventually passed away. After deciding to sell her house and move into a retirement home, his wife held a garage sale. Her daughter encouraged her to put that strange rock out so someone might buy it. The mother complied, yet no one came for the stone. Remembering me and my stones, the mother said, "Oh, how I wished that woman had come for that stone! Dad kept it for her for so many years." The next-door neighbour heard my name and said, "I will call her for you and she will gladly take it home."

After my friend called, I drove the six blocks up to get the stone. When I entered the house, he was sitting on the table rocking back and forth. I touched his cheek and said, "Grandfather." I wrapped him in a red cloth and carried him to my car, and as I set him in the wind, the cloth blew off of his face. The women had followed me out to the car and they gasped: he was smiling. 🌍