



The **Seminole**
Voice of the Unconquered



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Leading the way



Eileen Soler

From left, Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr., Gaming Compliance Director Ed Jenkins, Gaming Commission Secretary Betty King, NIGC Acting Chairman Jonodev Osceola Chaudhuri and Chairman James E. Billie celebrate the Tribe's self-regulation certification Oct. 16.

Seminole Tribe becomes first in Indian Country to achieve gaming self-regulation certification

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Becoming the first Tribe in Indian Country to achieve self-regulation certification from the National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC) is less about luck and more about how the Seminole Tribe of Florida plays a professional hand.

"Today is truly an important, historic day for the commission and all of Indian Country — and it is not to be taken lightly," said NIGC Acting Chairman Jonodev Osceola Chaudhuri Oct. 16 during a presentation to mark the occasion at Seminole Headquarters.

NIGC is an independent regulatory agency authorized by Congress through the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) of 1988. IGRA aims to standardize the gaming industry on Native lands with the intention to strengthen Tribal economic development and Native American

self-determination. Currently, nearly 500 Indian gaming establishments are operated through 242 Tribes across 28 states.

Under IGRA and subsequently drawn NIGC regulations, self-regulation is only granted when a Tribe demonstrates that it satisfies all applicable requirements, including a three-year review to ensure that gaming activity is compliant with IGRA, NIGC regulations and the Tribe's laws and regulations.

A Tribe also must show that it effectively accounts for all gaming revenue; has a reputation for a safe, fair and honest operation; and is free of criminal or dishonest activities. It must also prove that the gaming operation runs on a fiscally sound basis and that it has adequate systems in place for accounting, investigations, licensing and enforcement.

A member of the Muscogee Creek Tribe and born in north Florida, Chaudhuri was flanked at the certification

delivery by Seminole Chairman James E. Billie and NIGC Associate Commissioner Daniel Little. Also in attendance were Tribal Councilmen and Seminole Gaming Commissioners.

"Clearly, the Seminole as a Tribe has always been a pioneer — a groundbreaking people," said Chaudhuri, who credited the Tribe for securing NIGC's ability to grant the first self-regulation status. "None of this would have been capable without the Seminole people."

Little called the paper certificate that was provided in a cardboard frame "a small token in our hands but a major expansion of Indian sovereignty."

Chairman Billie passed the honor to the Tribe's Gaming Commissioners and to Gaming Compliance Director Ed Jenkins, whom he thanked for ushering the Tribe through the last 14 years of gaming growth.

♦ See GAMING on page 2A

Decision favors Tribe in Hendry County suit

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

The latest chapter of a three-year legal battle that held Seminole history, culture and tradition at risk ended Sept. 25 with a judgment in favor of the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

The news spread quickly via emails, texts and Facebook through the next day when the judgment went public — appropriately on Indian Day while Tribal members, employees and friends gathered throughout reservations for various holiday celebrations.

"It was the best Indian Day I ever had," said Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger during a recent community meeting.

The case against Hendry County, McDaniel Reserve Realty Holdings LLC and Florida Power & Light (FPL) stemmed from a 2011 Hendry County ordinance that effectively allowed the construction of a solar and gas-powered electrical generation plant on 3,127 acres next door to Big Cypress Reservation. The property, owned by FPL, was rezoned by the ordinance from agricultural to planned unit development (PUD).

Judge Donald Mason, of the 20th Judicial Circuit, ruled in the 32-page decision that Hendry County could not enforce the changes. In fact, Mason decreed the zoning change "inconsistent with the Hendry County Comprehensive (Plan) and, therefore, null and void."

In a written statement, the Tribe's legal team, led by Andrew Baumann of Lewis, Longman & Walker, called the decision a "victory."

"The court's order prevents FPL from

moving forward with the power plant. This victory is critically important to preserving the Seminole Tribe's way of life," the statement read.

However, lawyers for Hendry County, McDaniel Reserve and FPL filed a notice of appeal to Mason's decision Oct. 21. Further, at a recent Hendry County Board of County Commissioners meeting, county leaders decided to revisit amending the comprehensive plan in order to address deficiencies that they claim led to Mason's order.

Tara Duhy, co-counsel for the Tribe's legal team, said the appeal process and the amendment process will be both long and public.

"The Seminole Tribe will have the opportunity to challenge proposed changes. We have to be vigilant and watch. We will monitor the appeal, but so far so good. Time is on our side," Duhy said.

Here's a brief recap of the case so far: The Tribe filed suit against the defendants in June 2011 charging that the zoning change did not abide by the county's long-term land use plan which, by law, trumps zoning changes.

Testimony at the trial, under orders by Mason, was limited to arguments concerning whether the zoning change was in harmony with the county's comprehensive plan; matters regarding wildlife, wetlands or water were not to be entered.

For Tribal members, the case was less about the interpretation of laws and more about the land, water and wildlife on property contiguous with Tribal land.

♦ See DECISION on page 2A

New community center fits in heart of Chupco's Landing

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

FORT PIERCE — Plenty of time is ahead for memories to be made inside the new Chupco's Landing Community Center where future gatherings and meetings, basketball and volleyball games and pool parties will yield an abundance of stories for the tightly knit Seminole reservation in southwestern St. Lucie County.

But on Sept. 25, recollections prevailed as Tribal leaders — including Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, Hollywood Board Rep. Steve Osceola and President Tony Sanchez Jr. — joined local officials to dedicate the center where speeches and a ribbon cutting ceremony accompanied lunch.

Councilman Osceola recalled the vital role the old Hollywood Reservation gymnasium played in his life as a kid.

"Without that place, I don't know what would have happened to a lot of us kids when we were growing up because we had nothing else, much like this reservation before this building was here," Councilman Osceola said.

Instead of playing basketball with portable goals in the street or driveway, residents from Chupco's Landing and other local Seminoles now have a full-size,

indoor basketball court with six retractable hoops.

The purpose of the facility reaches beyond athletics. The space includes offices, conference room, full-service kitchen, fitness room, two outdoor swimming pools and lounge with two pool tables.

It will also house other Tribal departments, including Culture, Education and Housing.

"This isn't just a gym; it's a community center," Councilman Osceola said. "We're going to have all the support that they need over here in the offices. We'll have somebody from just about every department here during the course of the week to address the needs of the community members in Fort Pierce."

Hollywood Council special assistant Alexander Tommie delivered brief remarks outside the entrance before welcoming everyone inside the 18,000-square-foot building. Tommie remembered how nervous he was when the project's funding came up for a vote before the Tribal Council last year.

"We got a 5-0 vote," he said. "That was a joyous day. That had my heart jumping. I said, 'I can't wait to get back to the community and tell them what happened.'"

♦ See CHUPCO on page 5A

Jara Ann Courson crowned Miss Florida Teen USA

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

FORT LAUDERDALE — Jara Ann Courson entered the Miss Florida Teen USA pageant so she could communicate her message of self-empowerment to youth. Like many young girls, Jara was bullied at school.

"I was a target for mean girls because I was an insecure introvert for a while," she said. "I was teased and made fun of; it got to me. My parents were my biggest help. They always told me I was beautiful and nothing was wrong with me."

The judges agreed. They named Jara the 2015 Miss Florida Teen USA winner. In just the second pageant she ever entered, Jara, a Seminole descendant and enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation, became the first Native American to win the title, said pageant officials.

"I'm absolutely thrilled and I can't wait to see what this year has in store for me," said Jara, 17, a senior at Columbia High School in Lake City. "It was the most exciting thing ever."

Fifty-seven girls competed in the

pageant held Oct. 17-19 at the Parker Playhouse in Fort Lauderdale. Jara will represent Florida in the Miss Teen USA pageant in the Bahamas in July.

The bullying experience taught Jara self-awareness, gave her inner strength and made her want to spread the message of self-empowerment, self-respect and self-love. Jara didn't have a way to share the message and thought a title would give her a platform.

"Who am I to tell anyone what is right or wrong?" she said. "But with this title, my voice can finally be heard and I can talk to kids and convey that message."

Jara decided to enter a preliminary contest for the Miss Florida Teen pageant just a couple weeks before it was held in April. Her parents, Jerry Wayne and Tara Osceola Courson,

helped Jara prepare by asking a slew of questions that judges might ask. They also coached her about stage presence and critiqued her as she practiced the one-minute speech she wrote about self-confidence.

"People aren't always nice and the world isn't always a kind place," Tara said. "Having the strength and confidence to face it is an important message to her. I hope she lives this year to the fullest and shares that with everyone."

♦ See MISS FLORIDA TEEN on page 5A

Jara Ann Courson, the newly crowned Miss Florida Teen USA, smiles after winning the title Oct. 19.

Photo courtesy of Miss Florida USA



Kevin Johnson

Community members gather outside Chupco's Landing Community Center before the Sept. 25 dedication ceremony on Fort Pierce Reservation.

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Seminole Tribe celebrates Indian Day. See Section D for full coverage.

Editorial

Changing of times

• James E. Billie

Hard Rock executives Jim Allen and Hamish Dodds invited me to go along with them on their Asian tour to check on our Hard Rock brand. We left Fort Lauderdale on the morning of Sept. 17 and flew straight to Honolulu in our new Gulfstream G550 corporate jet. It was my first flight to visit our Hard Rock name brands in Asia.

We stopped at Honolulu so the pilots could rest and take a break; then the next morning we took off again. But I did visit the Hard Rock Cafe and, as always, the Hard Rock brand looked excellent and right to the taste of what I would think Hawaii is. I have met the manager before, so he came out when he realized I was there. He was cordial and true to form. In fact, the Hard Rock employees were all cordial everywhere we went.

We took off the next morning and, 13 hours later, we landed in Singapore, where Jim and Hamish met us.

From Singapore, we went to Cambodia where a new Cafe had been built. This country was not primitive, but it had the ancient ruins and buildings from thousands of years ago still intact.

From Cambodia we went to Hanoi, Vietnam. I was impressed with what was going on there. Evidently the Vietnamese government had asked Jim and Hamish to visit with them; we, as Hard Rock people, were being asked to help write the rules and regulations of gaming in that country. I was very honored with the feeling that the two gentlemen who operate our Hard Rocks around the world were the people asked to take on this important task.

The last time I was in Vietnam was in 1968. I was there late 1965 through 1968 and what dawned on me was, wow, I was 21 years old and it was 49 years ago when I was in that country with several other Tribal members. And now, as you know, I am just a mere 70 years old. LOL!

From Hanoi we flew down to Ho Chi Minh City, which I remembered as Saigon. Ho Chi Minh City did not look anything like I remember 49 years ago. That was the first time I had been in Hanoi, but both areas – Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City – really blew my mind when we were landing at the airport. I thought we were landing in New York, Miami, Chicago or Minneapolis with all the high-rise buildings. It was really impressive.

There were literally thousands of people riding motorcycles or scooters in that country, and the thought ran through my head that most of these people I am looking at are younger than 30 years old. They were all young people. I, at no time, felt threatened by or intimidated by the people of Vietnam. Everyone I met there was very nice and cordial.

What I recalled from the old days was the type of food they serve and, true to form, it was still the same great Vietnamese food I remembered from so long ago.

After two days in Vietnam, we went to Manila in the Philippines. Again, I was impressed with the modern-day Philippines. Their city was thriving big and I sure don't recall that 49 years ago when our jet landed there to refuel in 1965 before taking us to Vietnam.

We stayed in Manila two days, and then went on to Macau. From Macau we went over to Hong Kong and visited with people there regarding a possible Hard Rock branding. We left this area about five days before the rioting that took place that you may have seen on the news.

Of all the places I have mentioned, Macau was probably the most elaborate, the most high-fashioned of all. It was fabulous. People here greeted me as if I was King of the Earth. They treated us very nice. What amazed me the most was the very high-end quality of merchandise being sold in the Galleria areas of the Hard Rock in Macau.

As most of you have seen, I am always wearing penny loafers ... they are about the only shoes that can cover my big wide feet. I wear size 10-4E, LOL. But, as I was walking through the Galleria area, I saw a pair of snakeskin loafers, I thought to myself, "They can't be no more than \$100 to \$200." To my surprise, those shoes were over \$1,000.

I did a quick turnabout and went back out the store. But what amazed me were the many people inside buying high-end pricey merchandise, looking like they didn't think anything of it. I walked out of there embarrassed.

The modernization and industrialization of both Macau and Hong Kong were beyond my comprehension. I wish somehow that our young children today will pick up whatever that habit is, so our youth on our reservations can start a modernization movement that would both change the Seminole Tribe forever,

and yet maintain our language and culture and traditions.

Because this is exactly what is happening in those places like Macau. They have traditional homeopathic medicines they still use. They speak their own language and they write their own language. They have traditional dances that go back thousands of years.

From our brief stay in Macau, we flew all the way down to Bali. If I was a lot younger man than I am now, I think I would have had myself a ball there. It was like South Beach and Duval Street all wrapped into one, surfing, all kinds of stores with woodcarvings and woodwork and high-end merchandise.

From Bali we flew to Honolulu so the pilots could rest up and the next day we took off into the sun setting over Hawaii. You could see a visible line in the sky – darkness overcoming daylight – and we flew all through the darkness and returned to Florida at the beginning of daylight. Daylight overcoming darkness. That is probably the most interesting experience I have ever had. We went right through darkness to daylight.

I was gone for 15 days and it went by very fast. We got home Oct. 1. It was nice, as always, to get back home to sunny Florida. It felt good to see my chickee hut and my little village in Brighton. As most of you may know, I do live in a chickee hut.

But, it was the trip of my lifetime. I am being told that the Vietnamese dignitaries may be coming here soon to visit our Hard Rock brand in Hollywood. Hopefully their visit will serve to consummate our deal with Vietnam.

We, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, do own one of the most sought-after brands on Earth. I appreciate the experience of a lifetime visiting our Hard Rocks in Asia. I want to say *Sho-naa-bish* to Jim Allen and Hamish Dodds. Great job!

Sho-naa-bish.

James E. Billie is Chairman of the Seminole Tribe of Florida.



Beyond climate change to survival on Mother Earth

The following statement was made by Chief Arvol Looking Horse, of the Sioux Nation, and Bobby C. Billie, of the Original Miccosukee Simanolee Nation Aboriginal Peoples, during the United Nations Climate Summit in September.

There is no more time for discussion on preventing "Climate Change." That opportunity has passed. "Climate Change" is here. The Air is not the same anymore. The Water is not the same anymore. The Earth is not the same anymore. The Clouds are not the same anymore. The Rain is not the same anymore. The Trees, the Plants, the Animals, Birds, Fish, Insects and all the others are not the same anymore. All that is Sacred in Life is vanishing because of our actions.

The truth is we have moved beyond climate change to survival on Sacred Mother Earth.

We've entered the state of survival because of the magnitude of the desecration, damage and destruction to the Creator's Sacred Creation. Modern living and all that it encompasses does not respect the Sacredness of Life and has ruptured the sacred seal around the Earth. This has contributed to extreme weather patterns and the melting of the Ice – the sacred cooling system of Mother Earth. Manmade creations of vehicles, trains, railroads, airplanes, bullets, guns, weapons, spaceships, building of high rise towers, shopping malls, roads, slaughtering of animals for recreation, the genetic alteration and pollution of our food and water sources, introduction of invasive species, drilling and digging deep into Mother Earth, and into the mountains for oil, gas, gold, silver, minerals, precious stones, coal and uranium, and all the others. Changing whole ecosystems forever by draining wetlands, changing the course of rivers, clear cutting of forests, damming rivers and flooding lands to cool nuclear reactors and natural gas plants, damming rivers for hydroelectric power, using rivers and lakes for dumping toxic chemicals and sewage, polluting the Earth and Oceans with toxic chemicals and waste and piling up and burying garbage has contaminated and polluted our Earth. All these and more created Climate Change.

Aboriginal Indigenous Peoples have seen firsthand the impacts of these destructive actions and have sent out messages to the people of this world warning that "this dark time" or "this day" would come if the people did not immediately stop their destructive activities and realign themselves in harmony and balance with the natural world. Our messages of prophecy fell on deaf ears and remained unseen by eyes blinded by money, greed and power.

Today, we lack leadership. We have misplaced our trust in governmental leaders and the leaders of industry. They failed us by trying to maintain their profits, economies and their power over the people. Their lack of action to adequately and seriously work to prevent "climate change" has brought us to the state of survival, threatening the collective future of All Life. As Indigenous Peoples we have seen that Indigenous governmental leaders have also abandoned the Sacredness of the Natural Law and are now pursuing money and power at the expense of our Way of Life. We strongly urge all leaders to work and consult with us, the spiritual people of the Earth, to solve the world's problems, without war. We extend to you an open invitation and extend our hand to you, so that together we can begin to shift from the path of self-destruction to the path of peace, harmony and balance with All Creation.

Our message today is this: We cannot live on the Moon or Mars so people must change their behavior. We must sacrifice and move beyond our own comforts and pleasures. We must stop the damaging activities and begin working on restoring the natural environment for the future of All Life. To date, the Sacred has been excluded from all discussions and decisions. To survive climate change and see the future we must restore the sacred in ourselves and include the sacredness of all life in our discussions, decisions and actions.

We must restore the Sacredness within ourselves, within our families, within our communities and within our Nations. We must respect, follow and uphold the Creator's Natural Law as a foundation for all decision-making, from this point

forward. This begins with a deep respect and understanding of the human life cycle. To bring sacredness back into this cycle, human beings must bring forth life in a conscious way, honoring our sacred obligation to care for that life. With the creation of life comes a responsibility to ensure the care and survival of that life throughout the lifespan of the child we are bringing forth. When we bring forth life haphazardly and without sacredness, with no concern for how that life will be sustained, we violate our sacred responsibility and bring imbalance to Mother Earth. We must restore our balance with Creation and respect the sacredness of our sexuality, and our ability to bring new life into this world.

We come into Life as sacred beings. When we abuse the sacredness of Life we affect All Creation.

The people of the world cannot continue to ignore Aboriginal Indigenous Peoples, the Natural System of Life, the Natural Law and our connection with All Life. We must open our hearts to Love, Care and have Respect for one another and All Creation. We must unite globally and walk in balance and harmony together to create peace. No one can survive without clean Air, clean Water and a clean Earth. We cannot breathe money; we cannot eat or drink money. The people of the world must recognize that man-made laws have failed us and will continue to fail us because those laws promote profit and power over our sacred obligation to All Life and our shared future.

Aboriginal Indigenous Elders and Medicine Peoples are not scientists, but we do have a connection to the source of Truth and Life, we have our "Prophecies" and the "Signs" of disharmony. All of these sources of knowledge tell us clearly what will happen if we do not change our behavior. All of the things that are happening today are the very same things that were spoken of in the earlier days, the very things that the Creator warned would happen, if we failed to respect and follow His Natural Law. There are scientists and experts that know the scientific reality of what is going on. They know that life will vanish if we continue in the direction we are going.

These scientist and experts must speak the truth to the people and not be controlled by those that provide their paychecks.

The people of the World must take immediate action to shift from money and power-orientated decisions to decisions that are based on balance and harmony with all life and in peace with one another.

We are all responsible and we are all capable of creating a new path forward with new sources of energy that do not harm the people or the Earth. We are obligated to all take action now to protect what is left of the Sacredness of Life. We can no longer wait for solutions from governmental and corporate leaders. We must all take action and responsibility to restore a healthy relationship with each other and Mother Earth. Each of us is put here in this time and this place to personally decide the future of humankind. Did you think the Creator would create unnecessary people in a time of such terrible danger? Know that you yourself are essential to this World. Believe that! Understand both the blessing and the burden of that. You yourself are desperately needed to save the soul of this World. Do you think you were put here for something less?

We are the People of the Earth united under the Creator's Law, with a sacred covenant to follow and uphold and a sacred responsibility to extend Life for all future generations. We are expressing deep concern for our shared future and urge everyone to awaken spiritually and take action.

It is critical that we come together with good minds and prayer as a global community of all faiths, to honor the Creator and the Creator's Gift by restoring the Sacredness in Ourselves. We must work in unity to help Mother Earth heal so that she can bring back balance and harmony for all her children.

Chief Arvol Looking Horse
19th Generation Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe
Spiritual Leader
The Great Sioux Nation

Bobby C. Billie
Clan Leader and Spiritual Leader
Council of the Original Miccosukee Simanolee Nation Aboriginal Peoples

GAMING

From page 1A

"Jenkins came to teach us how to do things the right way; we learned a few lessons along the way, but here we are now and we are proud for it," Chairman Billie said.

Future Seminole Tribe business with NIGC will likely be within the realm of "ceremonial visits to check in," Chaudhuri said. Little, Chaudhuri and General Counsel Jim Shore each informed the Tribe Commissioners and Councilmen to expect a flood of telephone calls from other Tribes seeking self-regulation advice.

Seminole Gaming Commission Chairman Allen Huff, of Brighton, said inquiries have already begun. He received a telephone call earlier in the day from a member of the Southern Band of the Cherokee.

"Word is already out," Huff said. "This is when we can say, 'Look what we've done.' Let them call; let them come to our doors. Let's do more for Indian Country."



Chairman James E. Billie listens intently during the Oct. 16 self-regulation certification announcement at Tribal Headquarters in Hollywood.

DECISION

From page 1A

The FPL land is less than a mile from the future Ahfachkee High School and is home to several endangered species, including the Florida panther. The land is largely (all but 6 acres) part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Panther Focus Area.

Archaeologists have also documented nearly 30 potentially sensitive sites on the property that include a military trail used during the Seminole Wars that could be entered into the National Register of Historic Places.

Several of FPL's 10-year plans,

submitted in succession to the Florida Public Service Commission, exponentially increased the size and scope of a power production plant in Hendry County. For example, the 2010 plan called for a solar plant on 1,500 acres of land yet to be determined. By 2013, the plan called for a natural gas-fired combustion operation on 3,127 acres – a virtual twin of the largest electrical power plant in the United States – with a potential solar component.

Demonstrations by environmental activists groups and concerned Tribal members preceded the July 14-17 trial.

The Tribe is currently awaiting a decision on a second lawsuit against Hendry County to overturn significant amendments passed in February 2014 to

the county comprehensive plan that would rewrite economic development and future land use components. The trial in that case, heard before Judge Suzanne Van Wyk of the state's Division of Administrative Hearings, was held May 29.

Van Wyk had not made a decision as of press time.

"As long as the Seminole Tribe wants, we will remain vigilant, on our toes and fighting the fight," Duhny said.

Councilman Tiger said he has confidence that the Tribe and its legal team will win.

"Sure, we might have another fight on our hands, but we're smart small-town homeboys who pulled in the smart city boys," Councilman Tiger said.

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Community



George Billie, the forshee of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Educational lessons tend to accompany George Billie's actions.

From his days as an alligator wrestler to his years as an Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum cultural ambassador, Billie has shared and spread his vast wealth of wisdom generated during his 87 years.

"He lived a lifetime of teaching his language and culture," said his daughter Diane Buster. "He's old school; he looks at himself as a poor person with a lot of knowledge, but that knowledge makes him who he is."

Billie has been an important part of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki since it opened in 1997. He maintained the village and interacted with tourists every day. In fact, he spent a great deal of his life entertaining and educating visitors while tangling with alligators in Miami and Fort Lauderdale, until he gave it up about three decades ago.

"I put on shows for 300 people at a time," said Billie, of the Panther Clan. "I showed tourists alligator smiles."

Billie also worked in the fields of Immokalee and the field of show business, having appeared in movies including "Wind Across the Everglades" in 1958, and television shows such as "Gator Boys" in 2013. He said some people call him a movie star.

Since he retired from Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki at the end of May, Billie has welcomed visitors into his Big Cypress home to reminisce about a life that began in 1927

when he was born in a chickee off U.S. Highway 41 in Collier County.

Billie recalled stories his grandparents told him about Seminole history. A tale from his grandfather came from the Seminole Wars when Seminoles hid in the Everglades "like the birds" and used flamingo calls to signal each other during battle.

"Some white people hated Seminole people, but I figured they just didn't understand each other," Billie said. "My grandma told me they just wanted the land."

As a young boy, Billie wanted to attend school but said the teachers didn't want Seminoles in their classrooms. So he learned English through comic books by looking at the pictures and figuring out the meaning of the words. He reluctantly accepts that Tribal kids learn English now.

"They don't speak my language in Hollywood so much anymore," he said. "They see me, we have the same color skin, but we can't talk. I'm sorry that happened. They go to school and learn English; that's why they don't talk my language."

Billie lived in Miami and Hollywood beginning in 1942 but had never walked through the front door of an establishment until 1963. He went into a bar in Hollywood.

"(President) Kennedy made that happen," he recalled. "They said, 'Sit down by me, chief.' Kennedy was a good man. He said we can do anything we want, so that's what I did. He opened the door for me."

A Big Cypress resident since 1975, Billie signed on to work for the Museum before it was even built. Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki means "a place to learn" and Billie always shared his knowledge with visitors during his 17 years on the job. Paul Backhouse, director of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, said Billie looked after the village every day, rain or shine, weekday or weekend.

"He was an incredibly important part of what the Museum is and what the Seminoles are," Backhouse said. "He made sure every visitor met a Seminole and made it the most authentic experience for them."

"He delighted in teaching the language," added Ellen Batchelor, head of Museum security. "He taught me a lot about patience, tolerance, pride and respect."

Museum staff call Billie *forshee*, or grandfather.

"Even Tribal people see him as an uncle or grandfather. There are few people in the world that can transcend cultures; he's very good at relating to people," Backhouse said. "We owe it to his legacy to preserve the village going forward so visitors will always be able to see its authenticity."



Beverly Bidney

George Billie relaxes at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki during the Museum's anniversary celebration in August 2012.

◆ See FORSHEE on page 6A



Eileen Soler

Miss Florida Seminole Brianna Nunez crowns the new Miss Brighton Seminole Harley Johns at the Sept. 26 Brighton Seminole Princess Pageant.

Brighton boasts new royalty

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Thirty-four Brighton Miss Seminole princesses since 1979 and 27 Brighton Jr. Miss princesses since 1986 have won coveted beaded crowns bestowed to girls who best represent Brighton Reservation.

"I have been in those shoes. It means so much and it is nerve-racking, but it is an honor," said Brianna Nunez, Miss Brighton Seminole 2010 and the current Miss Florida Seminole.

After a two-year hiatus, the Brighton Seminole Princess Pageant was reborn Sept. 26 amid its entire past splendor. This time, again led by Miss 1981 Salina Dorgan, a committee hosted the special occasion complete with cheering sections and a panel of three distinguished judges at the Brighton Veteran's Building.

The pageant featured six contestants, three for each crown, who passed a rigorous muster to compete in the final event's clothing, talent, essay and impromptu question categories.

Contestants must be Tribal members, students in good standing and able to represent Brighton in Tribal events and outside happenings, such as the annual Chalo Nitka Festival in Moore Haven and the Swamp Cabbage Festival in LaBelle.

Harley Johns, 17, daughter of Anthony and Crystal Johns, is the newest Brighton Miss.

A photographer who plays the violin and loves spending time with her family, Harley wore a patchwork contemporary dress emblazoned with fire signs depicted in brilliant oranges and reds.

Harley displayed a black-and-white portrait she captured of her grandfather Archie Johns during the talent competition.

"He has history written deep down in his heart. The photograph brings back cherished memories," Harley said. "With photography, you can tell emotions, history and news. You can tell a story."

Alliana Brady, 10, daughter of Dana and Alice Brady, was crowned the newest Brighton Jr. Miss. A fifth-grader at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School, Alliana wowed the crowd with a contemporary Jingle Dance.

Alice Brady said her daughter was given the right to dance in the "circle" in front of elders, community members and non-Tribal members by her grandfather Charles Yellow Fox Jr., of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. Alliana choreographed the dance to "Prayer Loop Song" by Native American hip-hop artist Supaman.

Both Harley and Alliana were also winners of the pageant essay contest.

"Respect" was the theme of Alliana's essay.

"To serve as the Brighton Jr. Miss Princess means to carry yourself in a good way. To respect myself by being the best young lady I can. To respect my elders by listening to what they have to say and to respect my community by keeping it clean and safe. I will respect my language by speaking it as much as possible and to honor the teachings of my grandpa and grandma," Alliana wrote in the essay.

Other Jr. Miss contestants included Krysta Burton, 13, who used photographs to illustrate how to make sofkee; and Janessa Nunez, 12, who demonstrated how to fashion a Seminole doll.

The Brighton Miss division featured



Eileen Soler

Princess contestant Alliana Brady performs a contemporary Jingle Dance in the talent portion of the pageant. Alliana was later crowned Brighton Jr. Miss.

Aiyana Tommie, 15, who told the audience how to skin and tan a deer hide; and Brydgett Koontz, 17, who showcased several of her

◆ See ROYALTY on page 6A

First Baptist gains youthful first youth director

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Practically just out of her teens, a 20-something newcomer to Big Cypress is like gold as the first full-time

youth program director at Big Cypress First Baptist Church.

Tracy Hernandez, 22, a recent graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, kicked off her first job out of college Sept. 17 by helping Pastor Salaw Hummingbird launch

a new hands-on and fully loaded church youth program.

"We've added Tracy to strengthen the church. The goal is to have community members and kids even from off the rez come here not only for church but for activities that bring them to a better way of living," Hummingbird said.

Hernandez, of the Cherokee Nation, arrived in Big Cypress in early September with a bachelor's degree in exercise and sports science. She minored in child ministry and was a member of Fairfield Baptist Church in tiny Stilwell, Oklahoma where the population of about 4,000 is 47 percent Native American.

The town, known as the Strawberry Capital of the World, is 23 miles east of Tahlequah.

Hummingbird said Hernandez's full-time, paid position fills a role historically held by devoted church members who gave their own time. Josh and Andrea Jumper and Alfonso and Shelli Tigertail were the most recent volunteer youth program leaders.

Hernandez's mission includes daily availability to adults and children. She hopes to become involved in the community beyond the church walls, at school and recreation events, wherever she is needed and welcomed.

"That's the dream," she said. For now, Hernandez leads the new 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday happening that is

fashioned like a 12-week vacation Bible school (VBS) program. Kids get plenty of prayer and praise sprinkled with hearty helpings of fellowship and dinner.

"Everyone likes VBS so why not do it that way," Hummingbird said.

About 50 children and adults turned out on a recent Wednesday for the second week of activities that focused on 2 Timothy 4:2 — "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke and exhort, with complete patience and teaching."

The Jumpers, Tigertails and Brenda Hummingbird led individual children's groups, while Jonah Cypress led a class of adults and seniors.

A different biblical verse is featured weekly. Children are divided into four groups that revolve around stations where the verse is reinforced through arts and crafts, sports activities, Bible study and charitable giving. Cypress leads the adults in Bible study in Mikasuki. Hummingbird sounds the church bell to keep everyone on schedule.

Joey Puente, a sixth-grader at Ahfachkee School, said he likes arts and crafts best.

"It's like going to church and learning about God, but not like I ever did before," Joey said. "I like it better this way."

Alfonso Tigertail called the Wednesday night youth program a "good time to hear God's word." He hopes more children will

"I've experienced programs firsthand and can relate to being young, Christian and Native American. That helps kids open up to me."

— Tracy Hernandez, youth program director at Big Cypress First Baptist Church

join in the fun and learning.

Hernandez, who had served on three mission trips and taught Sunday school for college students before moving to Big Cypress, said her young age coupled with being Native American is a benefit to the church.

"It's not long ago that I was a member of a youth group. I've experienced programs firsthand and can relate to being young, Christian and Native American. That helps kids open up to me," she said.

For now, she is simply walking where her faith leads. "I am taking God's plan day by day," Hernandez said.



Eileen Soler

Children and Tracy Hernandez, the new full-time youth program director at Big Cypress First Baptist Church, perform a lively religious song during a youth group gathering.

Lorene Gopher: a lifetime spent preserving the culture, language of the Seminole Tribe of Florida

BRIGHTON — Beloved Brighton Tribal Cultural Director Lorene Bowers Gopher, who passed away Aug. 4 at age 69, spent her life preserving Seminole culture, particularly the dying Florida Creek language which she assembled into a dictionary shortly before her passing.

Preceded in death by her husband, Willie, Lorene is survived by her children: Norman "Skeeter" Bowers, Charlotte Gopher Burgess and Lewis Gopher; 11 grandchildren: D'Anna Osceola, Steven Jones, Tamara Bowers, Lewis Gopher Jr., Ruben Burgess Jr., Ashlee Gopher, Karey Gopher, Winnie Gopher, T.L. Gopher, Willo James and Gregory James II; four great-grandchildren: Spencer Jones, Shane Jones, Tommy Jackson III and Autumn Jones; three sisters: Elsie Bowers, Martha Jones and Gladys Bratcher; brother Andrew J. Bowers Jr.; and a host of nieces and nephews.

Graveside services were held Aug. 7 at the Brighton Seminole Reservation Cemetery.

In honor of her dedication to Seminole cultural preservation and her protection of Seminole history and traditions, Lorene has been nominated posthumously for a prestigious Florida Folk Heritage Award. Five letters of support for Lorene were submitted with the application that was sent in Oct. 1.

Here are a few excerpts:

Chairman's administrator Danny Tommie: "Cultural preservation was truly Lorene Gopher's life. She lived and breathed it and remembered everything her parents and uncles taught her as a child. A natural-born teacher, she understood there were 'new ways' but she had the skill to merge them with the 'old ways.' Lorene took particular interest in our Seminole girls, teaching them how to be Seminole women in modern times, what to remember, how to stand, how to carry and conduct themselves with Seminole pride ... My life, all of our lives, will never be the same, now that she is gone, but our lives are supremely enriched by the things Lorene taught us, and preserved for us, while she was here. She was a hero to us."

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum director Paul Backhouse: "I strongly believe that Ms. Lorene Gopher embodied deeply rooted cultural convictions that never wavered throughout her lifetime. She was many things to many people and always a true matriarch of her clan and community ... I truly believe she is a heroine of her people and a symbol for indigenous people and women throughout Florida."

Florida Park Service director Donald Forgiore: "(Lorene) was a familiar sight during the (Florida Folk) Festival, stirring frybread beneath the 'cook chickee,' teaching children to string Indian beads or weave sweetgrass baskets, demonstrating the way to prepare and cook swamp cabbage, explaining the parts of a traditional Seminole doll and teaching the Creek word for deer ... We had no idea that last year would be the last time we would see Lorene in White Springs. But our sadness is tempered by the knowledge that the trails she blazed in the pursuit of her life's work — the preservation of Seminole culture — are being traveled by hundreds of her Tribal members, young and old."

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School administrative assistant Michele Thomas: "Mrs. Gopher is a legend in the Seminole Tribe of Florida and should be in the State of Florida for her contribution to the improvement of cultural education in our state as well as the example set for all the Indian Tribes of the United States ... Along the way, Mrs. Gopher was on the front line of the educational journey for Seminole children. Her passion and desire to educate Tribal youth in the areas of their native language and heritage became her lifelong mission. She worked endless hours in the classroom and the community."

Florida Wildlife Corridor photographers and environmentalists Carlton Ward Jr. and Elam Stolfus also provided a letter and special video that showed Lorene preparing traditional food and speaking about her culture. Other supporting video and photos were assembled by Seminole Media Productions and Seminole Tribune staff.

The nomination letter, written by Seminole Tribune special projects reporter Peter B. Gallagher and reprinted at the request of Lorene's family, reads as follows:

On behalf of her family and the Seminole Tribe of Florida, I wish to nominate Lorene Bowers Gopher to receive the Florida Folk Heritage Award. A native cultural preservationist who single-handedly saved the Florida Creek language and worked more than half a century teaching hundreds of Tribal children the old ways of the Seminole, Lorene died last Aug. 4, just as her life's work — the first Florida Creek dictionary — was accepted for publication.

A descendent of 1800s Seminole heroine Polly Parker, Lorene was born Feb. 13, 1945 in a traditional Seminole camp in the Brighton woods near Lake Okeechobee to Andrew Jackson Bowers and Annie Pearce. As a child, she absorbed the Creek language from her grandmother Lucy Pearce, her aunt Ada Pearce and great uncle Billy Bowlegs III, who raised her in Brighton after her mother, Annie, died in 1948. Lorene grew up immersed in the Seminole Woman's culture of hard labor, cooking and caring for children.

"She lived that way her entire life," says her son Norman "Skeeter" Bowers. "She never taught ME to cook. She only taught the girls. All I was allowed to do was watch. She taught the ladies how to butcher and clean the gopher turtle, bust it open, clean it out, pull the intestines out and flip them inside out. She made the world's best gopher stew. I'll probably never have that again. None of her meals I'll ever have again."

"She knew how to do everything Seminole. She knew how to make a chickee and how to cut the palm buds. She could make the baskets, anything you wanted. She taught us the right things to do and wouldn't stand for the bad." Skeeter remembers when his drinking problem got out of hand, "She walked up to me and ordered me off the Reservation. She said I couldn't live out there anymore. I roared off in my truck I was so mad."

"Then a huge hurt came over me that my mother would talk to me like that. I turned right around and went back and told her, 'Okay, let's call that rehab phone number. I haven't had a drink since.'"

Lorene exhibited an astounding natural proclivity for language by quickly learning a second language — English — before she was eight years old, and was able to interpret for her grandma when they went to town. Eventually, Lorene would witness the near extinction of her native tongue when only 20 fluent Creek speakers could be found, Tribalwide.

With a few exceptions, Lorene spent most of her life on Brighton's Indian lands, including her complete youth in a backwoods Seminole camp. She attended the historic Brighton Indian Day School through the fourth grade, then, when the school supervised by William and Edith Boehmer closed, completed her scholastic years at public schools in Okeechobee, graduating in 1963 as one of the first Seminoles to earn a high school diploma. She spent two years earning an undergraduate degree from the Haskell Institute (Indian School) in Lawrence, Kansas returning to Brighton to marry Willie Gopher in 1967.

She took a job as a clerical secretary with the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in Hollywood, then returned home in the mid-70s never to leave again. Lorene worked many different jobs, all for the Seminole Tribe, from bookkeeper and Meals on Wheels Driver (where she brought food to elder Creek speakers living in remote areas) to Secretary for the Seminole Cattle program (eventually becoming a cattle owner, herself, with a herd of over 100 cows). She was Cultural Consultant and Tradition Advisor to two of the major cultural accomplishments of the Seminole Tribe in the 20th century — the Tribe's Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum (1992) and the Brighton Pemayetv Emahakv (Teaching Our Way) Charter School (2007). Lorene Gopher was a driving force for both projects. History records her counsel as significant to



Photo courtesy of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Lorene Gopher poses with students at Okeechobee's Seminole Elementary School where she taught Seminole culture and history.

the precious cultural framework and success of both entities.

Her experience as a teacher for the Brighton Culture Center convinced her of the growing need to keep Florida Creek alive and she developed lesson plans to share with others. Starting with preschoolers, then expanding to older kids, she made language preservation her business and squeezed in lessons to children whenever they were available. She got their attention with her colorful Seminole stories, many of them set back in the days "when animals could talk like a man."

A quiet, soft-spoken person who preferred staying in the background, Lorene was a veritable font of imagination and innovation. As a way of spending more time with Seminole students, she designed and proposed two novel programs to the School Board of Okeechobee County. The idea was for her to teach Tribal students on site at Seminole Elementary School in Okeechobee twice a week. After five years, she talked school officials into accepting her famous "Pull Out" program, which allowed her to take Seminole students, K-12, out of all schools they attended in Okeechobee County and bring them to the reservation each Friday for culture and language training.

Lorene was closest in age to her younger brother Andrew Bowers Jr., now the elected Brighton Councilman. He marvels at her "obsession with carrying on the Seminole traditions. When she started teaching at the Charter School, she told me she was going to teach these children whether she got paid or not. It was her calling."

Over the years, Lorene balanced numerous cultural pursuits — including her regular pilgrimages to the Florida Folk Festival, where she organized groups of Seminole culturists demonstrating arts and crafts, foodways and other Tribal traditions at an authentic Seminole chickee village built by Tribal Chairman James Billie on the grounds of the Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park. A few years ago, she invited the renowned Florida Wildlife Corridor expedition to her private camp, where she treated photographer Carlton Ward and videographer Elam Stolfus to a Lorene Gopher-cooked traditional Seminole meal and offered support for their noble cause.

In the last decades of her busy life, however, she always gave the highest priority to her dream of a Florida Creek dictionary, constantly afraid that the language would disappear before she could



William Boehmer Collection, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Lorene Gopher stands on the running board of a 1906 Autocar during a late 1950s field trip of the Brighton Indian Day School pupils to the Horns' Cars of Yesterday Museum in Sarasota.

get it published. She became the driving force again, hosting regular gatherings of other Creek speakers and painstakingly crafting together an astounding lexicon that mixes the historic words of the past with new words — such as television or airplane — that had no traditional Creek word or phrase.

Under Lorene's genius/guidance, the dictionary listed *czto sponakov* (metal to talk with) for television; and *estzketz* (something to fly with) for airplane.

The dictionary was finished as she was on her deathbed, struck down suddenly with leukemia. Her son Lewis realized the sacrifice she made: "She knew many in her culture did not want to pass on the language, but she did it anyway, knowing how important it was, and also knowing it would cause her to die before her time."

Lorene's dictionary quickly found a publisher: University Press of Florida says it will publish "Este Semvnoylke Enponakv, The Language of the Seminole People: An Outline Grammar and Basic Dictionary of the Florida Seminole Creek" at the first of next year.

"Lorene was the end of an era," said Councilman Bowers, reflecting on the great loss of his lifetime close companion. "She had a job to do and she did it. If someone

wanted to know something, though, she would stop what she was doing and tell them what they wanted to know. And more. "She told me, 'You should be glad if someone asks you, glad that you can pass it on.' That's the way she lived her entire life."

Lorene made it her life's business to preserve the culture, the language, the old ways and the very essence of the Seminole Indians. For this reason, among many others, on behalf of the Seminole Tribe of Florida and her many family members and friends, I hope you pass favorable judgment on this application nominating Lorene Bowers Gopher for the Florida Folk Heritage Award.

The 2015 Florida Folk Heritage Awards will be announced next spring and be presented at the Florida Folk Festival in White Springs, where Lorene demonstrated Seminole crafts and cooking for more than 30 years. Previous Florida Seminole award winners were Susie Billie (medicine woman), Betty Mae Jumper (storyteller) Henry John Billie (canoe-maker) and Bobby Henry (canoe-maker). Florida native residents Bobby Thomas Johns (Creek, wood-carver) and Don Grooms (Cherokee, folk musician) were also honored with Florida's top folklore designation.



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Big Cypress clinic to get new home

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — A roomy, two-story clinic is on the drawing board for Big Cypress Reservation.

“For all the good news we’ve had lately, every time I look at the plans for our new clinic, I feel like it’s the best news of all,” Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger said.

The news was delivered at a recent community meeting at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium by Construction Management director William White, who displayed art renderings of the building’s planned design.

Most at the meeting were pleased with White’s description of the clinic, but the loudest applause came following the announcement that plans call for a kidney dialysis room.

“No more driving to Hollywood for treatment,” Councilman Tiger said.

The bottom floor of the 20,000-square-

foot structure will feature a welcoming lobby, eight physician offices with examination rooms, a pharmacy and pharmacy drive through window, a full kitchen, an exercise room and a physical therapy room.

A pediatric suite and dental offices will take up much of the second floor. The top level will also feature a nurses station and other offices.

“There will be room for every one of the Health Department services in the building,” White said.

The new facility will replace the cluster of portable health service buildings on Josie Billie Highway across from the Frank Billie Field Office.

Councilman Tiger hopes to break ground on the project by early 2015.

Pediatricians and doctors will be scheduled as needed at first, but Councilman Tiger envisions eventually providing medical services around the clock.

“We are so isolated out here that we need to get help when needed,” he said.

“Accidents don’t happen at certain times.”

MISS FLORIDA TEEN

From page 1A

As captain of the Columbia girls volleyball team, Jara keeps in shape, but she worked harder than usual and even gave up eating carbs to get into pageant condition. The biggest challenge was learning to style her hair and apply makeup, something she had never done before. YouTube videos and tutorials were all she needed to master it.

The work was worth the effort. Jara’s peers in the preliminary pageant voted her Miss Congeniality, the judges deemed her Miss Photogenic and she won the Miss North Central Florida Teen USA title. She had six months to prepare for the next pageant, Miss Florida Teen USA.

The award package for winning Miss Florida Teen USA includes a four-year scholarship to Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton. Jara plans to pursue multiple degrees at the school.

She will earn her associate’s degree before getting her high school diploma thanks to dual-enrollment at Columbia and Florida Gateway College in Lake City. Jara plans to get her bachelor’s degree, a master’s degree in business administration (MBA) and a law degree. Ultimately, she would like to work as a corporate lawyer for the Tribe.

Jara has always been passionate about her culture. She wants to help Tribes stricken by poverty, specifically those living on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

Going through the pageant process was a positive experience for Jara, who made new friends and opened more opportunities for her future. In addition to being Miss Florida Teen USA and attending school, she plans to start blogging about self-confidence and self-empowerment.

“I met other girls who are ambitious, smart and kind. That’s been amazing,” she said. “I’m really excited knowing I have a platform to make my voice louder throughout our state.”

Jara said the highlight of the pageant was looking out at the audience and seeing her family and knowing they were proud.

“They’ve been there from day one, of course,” Jara said.

As for those bullies who had such an impact on her life, they are still around.

“I’ve seen those girls since,” Jara said. “Some grew up, some stayed the same and a lot have apologized.”

The lesson she learned is simple.

“In everything – pageants or in life – be yourself, know your strengths, be confident and give your all to everything you do,” Jara said. “My dad always told me not to put in half the effort unless you’re OK with half the results.”

“In everything – pageants or in life – be yourself, know your strengths, be confident and give your all to everything you do.”

– Jara Ann Courson, Miss Florida Teen USA



Photo courtesy of Miss Florida USA

Jara Ann Courson and other contestants await the judges’ decision onstage Oct. 19 during the Miss Florida Teen USA pageant in Fort Lauderdale.

Hahn earns 40 Under 40 award

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

MILWAUKEE — Treasurer Pete Hahn was honored by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development for his outstanding leadership to the Seminole Tribe. The organization named him one of the 2014 “Native American 40 Under 40” award recipients.

Hahn received the award at the 39th annual Indian Progress in Business Awards Gala (INPRO) held Oct. 8 during the Reservation Economic Summit at the Potawatomi Hotel and Casino in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The Seminole Board of Directors nominated Hahn. Criteria include demonstrating initiative and dedication and providing significant contributions to the community.

“It’s great to be recognized for contributions I’ve made in the past, and it will push me to continue to contribute in the future,” said Hahn, 33. “It’s nice to know the Board and the selection committee feel I am worthy of this award.”

Hahn, who was appointed Treasurer in August after serving as deputy treasurer since 2007, began his career with the

Tribe as an intern before graduating with a bachelor’s degree from Haskell Indian Nations University in 2005. He is a member of Leadership Broward Class XXV and is an ambassador for Americans for Indian Opportunity.

“With his recent promotion, I knew he’d be a shoo-in,” Hollywood Board Rep. Steve Osceola said. “He got the education to be prepared to step into this job. He is a success story for the Tribe and our youth by stepping into the role of leadership. He has the full support of the Board and we are very proud of him.”

Because of the opportunities he was given while growing up – including education, sports and recreation – Hahn said he can now give back to the Tribe through his leadership position. He wants to help show Tribal youth how the Tribe operates.

“I want young people to know education, work and dedication are important and that the Tribe provides opportunities to be a part of the business

itself,” he said. “So take advantage of what’s offered because no one will take better care of the Tribe than Tribal members.”

Hahn looks forward to staying connected to the economic development divisions of other Tribes throughout Indian Country, many of which he met at INPRO.

“The Seminole Tribe is perceived as one of the leaders for gaming, business and overall economic development in Indian Country,” Hahn said. “Our first thought is how our decisions will affect the Tribe and whether something is in our best interest. But then you think about the ripple effect; all Tribes are interconnected and decisions can have an effect on other Tribes.”

Treasurer Pete Hahn, 33, is named one of the 2014 “Native American 40 Under 40” award recipients by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development for his leadership to the Seminole Tribe.



Beverly Bidney



Kevin Johnson

Hollywood Council special assistant Alexander Tommie, right, acknowledges Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, left, and members of the design committee Sept. 25 during the dedication of Chupco’s Landing Community Center in Fort Pierce.

CHUPCO

From page 1A

Tommie delivered the good news, and less than a year after breaking ground, the Tribe and Seminole/Stiles Construction delivered the centerpiece of the mostly residential community nearly three months ahead of schedule.

“The design committee was great,” said Peter Picard, Seminole/Stiles project manager who worked with the Tribe’s project manager Cedric Jenkins. “Alexander Tommie was at every owner’s meeting. He did a really good job in making selections and participating. We actually had until the middle of December to finish this project, so we’re pretty proud. We wouldn’t have done it without everyone’s help.”

About 50 attendees of the dedication ceremony were treated to stories, including one from Sally Tommie. The former Council Liaison for Fort Pierce spoke about how her grandmother, Sallie Chupco Tommie, paved the way for future generations in the community.

“She stood very tall; she was very bold,” Sally Tommie said. “She carried a shotgun and a bull whip and a stick. Anytime she needed to use it, she used it. She had no fear.”

That fearless attitude helped the Tommie family survive.

“She did what she had to do along with Jack Tommie, my grandfather, to go out into the woods, to find food to bring back and feed the family, to build chickee huts so that we could have shelter, to do the things that needed to be done so that we would survive,” Sally Tommie continued. “They are here with us in spirit. Physically, they have gone on, but we remain here with the responsibility ... to lead by the example they have set forth for us.”

Another story came from Max Osceola Jr. The former Hollywood Councilman took some good-natured ribbing for accidentally wearing two different boots at a previous groundbreaking ceremony. Properly attired this time, he recalled darker days that have given way to brighter ones.

“Growing up in the ‘50s, segregation was the law of the land back then,” he said. “I can remember as a boy we’d drive by Fort Lauderdale and see these nice baseball fields and football fields. I asked my dad, ‘How come we can’t play there?’ He said, ‘We’re the wrong color.’”

Times have changed more than a half-century later.

“We always had to leave the reservation to go to find facilities,” Max Osceola said. “Today, people are going to come on the reservations to play in the best facilities.”

For most local officials in attendance from Fort Pierce, Port St. Lucie and St. Lucie County, the invitation into the gated

community marked their first visit.

“I’ve driven by this place so many times,” said Larry Lee Jr., state representative from District 84. “When I was elected to the Florida House of Representatives, I said maybe if I go tell them that I’m a state representative, they’ll let me in. I’ve waited for this opportunity for so long to come behind those gates.”

Fort Pierce Mayor Linda Hudson grew up on nearby Jenkins Road, where one of her neighbors was Lonnie Buck. As a youngster, Hudson had Seminole friends in school.

“I’m of a certain age that I went to school with the first Seminole children who went to public school in St. Lucie County,” Hudson said. “They were my classmates. One was Bert Jones, one was Louise Jones [Gopher] and Addie Smith. They would come to my house after school. My father would come home after work and put us all in the back of his pickup truck and we would take them home to the chickee village off Orange Avenue. We did that once or twice a week.”

High marks were also doled out for Chupco’s Landing Community Center.

“I’m so impressed with what they have done,” Hudson said.

“We’re proud to say that we’re able to do things for our community as well as anybody else can think about doing for their community,” Alexander Tommie said.

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Beverly Bidney

Bruce Duncan and Jessie Jimmie prepare 80 pounds of fish Oct. 11 during the sixth annual Seminoles in Recovery Fish Fry at Trail.

Register to vote before Jan. 31

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

For the first time, Tribal members must register to vote in the May 11, 2015 General Election. The deadline is Jan. 31, 2015.

Naomi Wilson, supervisor of elections, said the change is due to a voting ordinance that was rewritten in 2012 for the first time since 1964. Council passed the ordinance and the BIA approved it in 2013.

According to the Seminole Tribe of Florida Election Ordinance (C-06-13), "in order to vote in any Regular of General Tribal Election, all Tribal Members must register to vote any time within the five (5) months from Sept. 1 through Jan. 31 preceding the date of a Regular of General Tribal Election."

To register, Tribal members must be 18 years old by April 11, 2015 and must show proof of residency, such as a valid driver's

license, valid state ID card or valid voter registration card. Members who cannot produce any of those items may submit a Tribal ID, along with a statement from an Election Board member from the same reservation verifying residence.

Wilson mailed letters to every Tribal member to explain the process and provided each with a voter registration form. She has also been to Big Cypress, Brighton, Hollywood, Naples and all senior centers to register people. More opportunities will be available on all reservations before the deadline.

Wilson said 2,146 Tribal members are eligible to vote.

Tribal members may also register in the Secretary's Office at Tribal Headquarters in Hollywood. For more information, contact Naomi Wilson at GeneralTribalElection2015@semtribe.com or call 954-966-6300 ext. 11461.

November registration schedule:

- Nov. 3: Big Cypress Field Office, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Nov. 7: Immokalee Field Office, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Nov. 10: Hollywood Tribal Auditorium, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Nov. 14: Hollywood Tribal Auditorium, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Nov. 17: Brighton Field Office, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Annual Fish Fry feeds bellies, souls

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

TRAIL — Jessie Jimmie had her first drink at age 12. Now suffering from cirrhosis of the liver at 30, she joined Seminoles in Recovery for help.

"I drank for six years straight," said Jimmie, who has been sober since March. "I have only one choice; drink and die or don't drink and stay alive. It's kind of simple."

More than 125 people attended the sixth annual Seminoles in Recovery Fish Fry Oct. 11 in Trail. Open to the entire Tribal and non-Tribal sober community, the event attracted people from Miami, Broward County, Big Cypress and Naples.

"Living in sobriety is the message," said Helene Buster, director of Family Services who coordinates Seminoles in Recovery events.

The day centered around recovery, but it also offered fellowship and fish. Eighty pounds of tilapia, grouper, bass, salmon and alligator tail were served up along with hush puppies, ribs, burgers and hot dogs. A horseshoe tournament and raffles for Miami Dolphins tickets, airboat rides and fishing equipment kept people hoping for a winner.

Attendees, many who had a story to tell and perhaps a demon or two to conquer, found support in the group. Some shared their experiences on the road to recovery

during the Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings held during the event.

"I get a connection. I go home and feel alright; it's like medicine," one man said about his reason for attending meetings.

"Everything you do when you aren't using is a stepping stone on the road to recovery," said another.

Others took their turn sharing. "I used to feel like I was alone, but now I don't."

"I come here to hear the language of the heart."

"I keep fighting my drug and alcohol problem. I thought it would be easy; it's not. But I fight the demons."

"Either we wake up now or we keep making the same mistakes over and over again."

Ariana Cypress, 23, joined Seminoles in Recovery when she hit bottom in June. She struggles with drug addiction.

"I got tired of the way I was living and my insanity," she said.

Cypress hallucinated when not on drugs, attempted suicide and felt emotionless. Once she decided to get clean, she made new sober friends. To maintain her sobriety, she calls her sponsor for support and attends meetings every day.

"I'm so emotional now," Cypress said. "I have to feel the feelings. It's a challenge, but it's good to feel something whether it's good or bad."

ROYALTY From page 3A

handmade patchwork dresses and described the different symbols used in each.

Don T. Hall, a 12th Judicial Circuit judge who sat for the night as a pageant judge, said the job was a "difficult" one.

"When you have to make a decision like this you figure that one or more of the contestants would rise well above the rest, but tonight I couldn't score but a half-point difference. All of them successfully drew us into their talent. Any one of them could represent Brighton," Hall said.

Jo Randolph, who is a longtime Lakeport community activist and recent founder of the Lakeport 4-H Club, and Jerald D. Bryant, a 19th Judicial Circuit judge, rounded out the judging dais.

A moment of silence was observed in memory of Tribal elder Lorene Gopher who headed the Culture Department in Brighton and served as Miss Florida Seminole Princess 1963. Gopher's sons cultural events specialist Lewis Gopher served on the pageant committee and Norman "Skeeter" Bowers officiated.

Miss Florida Seminole Brianna Nunez and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Cheyenne Nunez crowned and sashed the winners.

Both are Brighton residents.

For Dorgan, the Brighton Seminole Princess Pageant plays an important role in preparing Brighton girls to compete for Miss Florida Seminole.

"We want the girls to get the exposure, be on stage, represent the reservation in front of an audience and have that experience of being title holders for the Tribe," Dorgan said.

Harley said she is thankful and anxious to start her Brighton reign.

"I've always dreamed of this and really worked hard to achieve the honor. I'm thankful and ready to start the journey — a dream come true," Harley said.

FORSHEE From page 3A

Cancer has slowed Billie in the twilight of his life. Instead of tending to the village he loved at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki, he spends time on the wide porch at his home listening to the radio and talking with friends.

"He's proud of the things he's done," Buster said. "He gave a lot to the village but he knew his limits. He stopped when it became too much for him."

A religious man, Billie takes comfort in God's existence.

"God made Seminoles a long time ago," he said. "God looks down at us all the time, every day. God is on my side. White people tried to kill us but didn't get us all. God is still watching today and wants people to know God is on their side."

Billie had eight children, three of whom are still living. Nephews, nieces, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are too numerous to count.

"My father represents a period we will

never see again," Buster said. "He's seen a lot of changes and always provided for his family."

Backhouse believes some of the greatest men in history are the ones who are understated and believe in their culture.

"He's a gentleman and has represented his culture steadfastly," Backhouse said. "He's been an amazing ambassador for the Seminole Tribe of Florida; you can't get a higher accolade than that. George Billie is one of those old-school gentlemen that the world doesn't make anymore."

"George Billie is one of those old-school gentlemen that the world doesn't make anymore ... He's been an amazing ambassador for the Seminole Tribe."

— Paul Backhouse, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum director

Voter Registration

What: All eligible members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida must register to vote by January 31, 2015 for the General Tribal Election on May 11, 2015

Why: As accorded by Tribal Ordinance C-06-13

How: Complete the Voter Registration form received in the mail

If you did not receive a form in the mail, please contact the Supervisor of Elections office at 954/966-6300, ext. 11461 or at GeneralTribalElection2015@semtribe.com.

You may also come by the Secretary's Office to complete your Voter Registration form.



In order for Tribal Members to show residency, AT LEAST A COPY OF ONE OF THE FOLLOWING MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH YOUR REGISTRATION FORM: valid State Drivers' License, valid State ID card, valid Voter Registration card, or for those who cannot produce any of the aforementioned items, a Tribal ID along with a statement from an Election Board member from the same reservation verifying residence. Please ensure all information is current and valid as they will be used in determining the Tribal Member's voting location/residence.

Supervisor of Elections office
Seminole Tribe of Florida



RICHARD CASTILLO
FLORIDA CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEY
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The hiring of an attorney is an important decision that should not be based solely upon advertisement. Castillo worked as a Public Defender in Broward County from 1990-1996 and has been in private practice since 1996. In 1995, he was voted the Trial Attorney of the year. He graduated from Capital University in 1989 and was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1990, Federal Bar in 1992, and the Federal Trial Bar in 1994.



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Love yourself. Be drug free

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Every year, Red Ribbon Week raises awareness about the negative effect drugs have on communities. The campaign and the tradition of displaying red ribbons as a symbol of intolerance of drug use began in 1985 after the murder of a DEA agent in Mexico City. Since then, the week has been commemorated in schools and communities nationwide.

With that in mind, Tribal members on every reservation came out for fellowship, food and fun served up with a serious message on the side.

The Fort Pierce community gathered Oct. 10 at the Chupco Youth Ranch for a Red Ribbon celebration. Guest speaker Lewis Gopher, of Brighton, spoke about life choices and their consequences. He admitted to taking some wrong turns in his life but said he didn't realize it at the time. "It came on real slow," he said. "I tried to take everything on by myself and couldn't handle it. I drank, did drugs and got in trouble with the authorities and my family. It turned me into a person I didn't want to be. It made me lose my family and my children; I traded them for drugs and alcohol."

After "hitting a brick wall," Gopher turned his life around. He finally listened to his family, but hearing what they had to say wasn't easy for him. He stopped his bad behavior and, with the help of God, began to take care of himself, he said.

"If you ain't living right, you become the enemy of yourself," he said. "My kids came back and I am able to be the father I wanted to be and the person I want to be."

Gopher talked about the importance of community and how it keeps Seminoles unified and strong.

"This community can make a big difference in these kids' lives," he said. "We all want to have good lives and be the person our mother and grandmother would like us to be. But we need to help each other out. That's how we're still here today because of the unity we've always had."

After listening to Gopher's strong message, children enjoyed a poster contest, games, pumpkin decorating and bounce house and slide.

"Red Ribbon is a way for our communities to help keep drugs out and everyone healthy, safe and happy," said Valerie Marone, Family Services Department prevention specialist. "It isn't just for a week, but for a life."

The Big Cypress community embraced the Red Ribbon spirit by participating in a week of fun-filled activities Oct. 13-16. Festivities culminated with the ever-popular parade and 5K color run.

About 25 floats, trucks, ATVs, convertibles and horses paraded from the parking lot at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum down Josie Billie Highway to the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena grounds Oct. 16. Tribal members, employees and Ahfachkee School students lined the parade route and gladly gathered treats tossed their way.

Winners of the best decorated float and door were announced and congratulated at a community luncheon after the parade. The winners for the best float were the Housing Department in first, Recreation in second and Rodeo in third. Door contest first, second and third place winners were Culture, Elders and Ahfachkee, respectively.

Ahfachkee essay winners were Michaela Cypress, first place; Alex Garcia, second; and Troy Cantu, third. Poster winners were Sarah Robbins, first place; Janah Cypress, second place; and Tommi Stockton, third place.

In Brighton, a downpour didn't dampen the spirits of nearly 300 people who showed up for the Red Ribbon march Oct. 21. The event, which has been held for more than 10 years, is popular with all segments of the community.

"We march rain or shine," Marone said.

The entire Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School student body - 266 students strong - and faculty joined the preschool and community members on the annual trek through the reservation. Road construction and newly laid asphalt was an obstacle along the route but was overcome easily. Construction was halted for a few minutes while the group walked by the momentarily idled workers.

"This is to raise awareness of substances in our community," said Helene Buster, director of Family Services. "We provide the education for children about prevention."

Other events during Brighton's Red Ribbon Week Oct. 20-23 included a family poster contest, door decorating competition, 5K color run and S.W.A.M.P. community campaign at PECS.

The cleared grounds of Seminole Estates provided an ideal course for Hollywood's Red Ribbon prevention color run Oct. 21. Kids and adults participated in the event, which featured stations manned by volunteers eager to douse walkers and runners with vibrantly colored flour in shades of pink, red, yellow, green and turquoise.

The splashes of color were a reward for making it through the course. Participants proudly showed their colors at the end of the event sponsored by the Health Department. The community also participated in



Beverly Bidney

Ahfachkee students spread the drug-free message during the Big Cypress Red Ribbon parade Oct. 16.

other Red Ribbon events from Oct. 20-24, including a poster contest, plant a promise at the Senior Center, march on the Ball Field, youth basketball tournament and talent show at the airnasium.

walls to climb over. The community enjoyed a spirit night, prayer walk and community dinner Oct. 22 hosted by the First Seminole Baptist Church.

Red Ribbon Week in Immokalee began with community members taking a drug-free pledge Oct. 20 and ended with the Seminoles in Recovery Red Ribbon Golf Classic in Clewiston Oct. 25.

The Tampa Reservation took to the bowling lanes to celebrate Red Ribbon Week. Community members gathered at Oakfield Lanes in Brandon Oct. 18 for good-hearted competition. The day also featured speakers and a family poster contest, which was won by McKenna Smith, 9, and Mason Foret, 15.

In between, kids and adults had a blast getting beamed with color at the color run and cookout. Immokalee youth also teamed up and competed in the wipeout challenge obstacle course. Challenges included a mud obstacle course, tires, bounce house climb and slide, hay stacks, balance beam and

Tribalwide, reservations took a visible stand against substance abuse and paid homage to this year's Red Ribbon theme, "Love Yourself. Be Drug Free."



Beverly Bidney

A happy group of runners passes through the pink flour station at Seminole Estates during the Hollywood Red Ribbon color run Oct. 21.



Beverly Bidney

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students walk to the starting line of the Red Ribbon parade Oct. 21.



Beverly Bidney

Anani Griffin, 3, receives help decorating her poster from Seminole Police Department Officer Helen Brown at the Fort Pierce Red Ribbon celebration Oct. 10.



Peter B. Gallagher

McKenna Smith creates a Red Ribbon poster during Tampa Reservation's celebration Oct. 18. She went on to win first place for her design.



Peter B. Gallagher

Tampa Elder Services project coordinator Lola Juarez supports two causes: Red Ribbon Week's drug-free message and Hard Rock's Pinktober Rock The Pink breast cancer awareness campaign.



Beverly Bidney

A group of Brighton friends brave the wet weather as they walk to show their support for Red Ribbon Week during the Brighton Red Ribbon parade.



Beverly Bidney

Jack Carmichael, 10, shows off the result of a fun time at the Hollywood Red Ribbon color run.



Beverly Bidney

Timothy Smith takes aim before taking a shot at a candy-filled piñata at the Fort Pierce Red Ribbon celebration at Chupco Youth Ranch.



Beverly Bidney

Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger throws treats to community members on the parade route during the Big Cypress Red Ribbon parade.

SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA

AH-TAH-THI-KI
MUSEUM
A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

Identifying the Past



It's all in the details: The stories are as important as the objects

SUBMITTED BY REBECCA FELL
Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Patchwork pieces contain layers of stories and details. On the surface, there is the construction, color and design that so many people, both Seminole and non-Seminole, admire. For those who study and create patchwork, there are patterns, like fire, rain and lightning, which are used over and over again. Then there are unique patterns created only by certain Seminoles.

Sometimes, a skirt or sampler can tell a story or hold personal meaning to either the creator or the owner.

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum holds a variety of patchwork pieces – from skirts and dolls to headbands and aprons – in its collection. Some pieces were created solely for commercial purposes, while others were donated to the Museum for safekeeping because they held a special place in the owner's heart.

The Museum continues to maintain

a well-rounded collection. This not only includes obtaining important cultural artifacts, art and objects but also expanding the information and records on those objects.

As the Exhibits Department prepares for an upcoming exhibition on modern Seminole patchwork, the Museum took a close look at many pieces in the collection. Fortunately, many document the owner, the creator and sometimes even the event for which the item was created. Other pieces note that they were made for sale or purchased by non-Seminoles.

Also, Museum staff recognizes not all patchwork pieces are wearable. This is certainly true of one of our mystery pieces. The sampler pictured to the left belonged to Tampa Reservation's Coo-Taun Cho-Bee Museum and Bobby Henry's Seminole Village, which served as the Seminole Tribe's main museum before the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum opened in 1997. The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki inherited much of the collection when Coo-Taun Cho-Bee closed in the early 2000s.

Museum records do not indicate the reason this sampler piece was created. Samplers are often created to show the patchwork creator's skills and are occasionally given as an ornamental gift. It may have been made for the Museum to exhibit, but sometimes these samplers tell a deeper story.

If you have further information about this sampler, please stop by the Museum or contact the Collections Department at 893-902-1113 ext. 12246. As with all the Museum's items, the information you share can be restricted to certain people, Clans, Tribes or Seminole Tribal members only.

Look for the Museum's upcoming exhibition in the West Gallery, "It's Not a Costume – Modern Seminole Patchwork," on display Dec. 12, 2014 through Nov. 30, 2015.



Photo courtesy of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

This sampler belonged to Tampa Reservation's Coo-Taun Cho-Bee Museum, which served as the Seminole Tribe's main museum before the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum opened in 1997.

Textbooks and administration: The Big Cypress BIA Complex

THPO survey reveals notable artifacts in the area

SUBMITTED BY MATTHEW FENNO
Tribal Historic Preservation Office

In 1937 the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) constructed a multibuilding complex on the Big Cypress Reservation to distribute BIA commodities, offer medicine from the clinic and provide a school for the children.

The BIA Complex was recently investigated during a Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) survey for the future courthouse on Big Cypress.

The complex included a dwelling for the caretaker, small office building, warehouse/garage, driveway and school building. The main driveway was 100 feet long and was lined by ornamental shade trees that included bamboo and Cajuput trees.

Virginia Tommie, who attended the school as a child, explained that one building was also a clinic at one point.

Another part of the complex was

Building 314, which was used by the Forestry Department in the 1960s. The building consisted of a wood foundation with plywood exterior and a concrete slab for a foundation. To the north of the complex was Josie Jumper's Camp, which can be seen on historic aerials.

The area was selected for its location on tree island hammocks, which have higher elevations that are not regularly flooded. The hammock that contained the complex was approximately 8 acres that was cleared and fenced in prior to the construction of the various buildings.

While the complex has changed considerably since 1937, the area is still used as the headquarters of Big Cypress.

The original caretaker of the BIA Complex was William Stanley Hanson, a well-known friend of the Seminoles. Hanson's friendship with the Seminoles of Big Cypress started as a young boy in Fort Myers and continued into adulthood. In

addition to working for the BIA, Hanson was a member of the Seminole Indian Association and was a guide for excursions into the Everglades for Thomas Edison and Henry Ford.

In 1942, Hanson stepped down as caretaker and George Osceola took over the position.

During the survey, THPO archaeologists found many artifacts that are likely related to the use of the area as the BIA Complex or Josie Jumper's Camp. Notable finds include a Macmillan English textbook cover from the 1960s, a penny that dates to 1948 and a light blue, plastic bead that also dates to this period.

Each site found by the THPO is recorded so information is available for future generations. If you have any information about this site or any other historic places on the reservations, contact the Tribal Historic Preservation Office at 863-983-6549.



Photo courtesy of THPO

Seminoles visit the BIA Headquarters on Big Cypress Reservation.

Betty Mae Jumper

Wisdom from the past

Oh-gu-ba-che

The following column was written by Betty Mae Jumper and printed in the October 20, 2000 issue of The Seminole Tribune.

The recent rains (*oh-gu-ba-che*) that flooded Big Cypress caught everyone by surprise. I was staying with (my son) Big Shot and (his wife) Laquita and the water flooded their yard.

Big Shot was out of town, and Laquita had her hands full dealing with the water. They lost several chickens and a pig that drowned in its cage during the night. And, their horses had wet feet from standing in water.

Two men came one day while I was sitting on the front porch of Big Shot's house. They asked me what I thought of the water.

I said, "I think if Big Cypress people had better drainage, the water wouldn't lie this long. It would go in the canal or into a river the same day as it hit the ground. Don't you think?"

They said, "You're right, you're right." I told them to speak to their Councilmen and Board Representative and tell them what you all think about the rain and how much it put a flood in your yards. If the drainage were fixed better, it wouldn't lay around for weeks.

But, all the rain got me to thinking about how things used to be in the old days when we lived on the Dania (today known as Hollywood) Reservation. Back then, living with water was a common thing. We made the best of it.

When I was young, and it rained, the water would be knee high where the Tribe's office building is located now. At the 7-Eleven, the water would be up to your knees. People used to travel by boats.

I remember when it would rain and the water would be up and over Stirling Road. We used to wait for the water to go back and then go out and find fish on the road. Bream and catfish. We'd pick them up and take them home to eat.

Us kids would play around and hunt custard apples in the canals. We would borrow some of the Tommie men's boats – Brownie and Frank and a couple of

others I can't remember. We would take the canoes and paddle in the canals to find the custard apples.

When it rained hard, the canoes were fun to play in. The rain was always nice when you were sleeping under a chickee. Even though the huts were open, the

chickees had a raised platform where we would sleep. They were very warm. It was always nice to be snuggled in your blankets while the rain was falling. It was very pleasant.

And, another thing about the rain, we would use the water for washing. The rain would come off the corner of the chickee. We would shampoo and use soap and take a shower

under the rainwater. We also would put out big pails to catch the rainwater for washing clothes.

But, there was also danger. Lightning killed my grandfather, Tom Tiger, my mother's father. He was outside building a canoe when he was struck. He's the only Indian I ever knew who got killed by lightning.

My mother was the first Indian to purchase a car. It was a Model T, which was open on the sides. Whenever it would rain, she wouldn't drive. If she were out, she'd find a place at a filling station to get under until it would stop raining. If she couldn't wait, she had a couple of pieces of canvas to put over the openings.

But, generally, we wouldn't go out in the rain. The fire would be going in the cooking chickee, and sometimes you would have to run quickly from the sleeping chickee to the cooking chickee.

When it was raining hard, we would eat under the cooking chickee.

If it rained for a long time, us kids would all be put under a big chickee. We would play games, and tell stories. And, we would make dolls out of scraps of cloth and buttons. The boys would be chasing bugs and things.

Overall, I guess we're much better off today than we were in the old days. But, seeing that water at Big Shot's made me realize, you can't argue with Mother Nature. Even today, when it rains, you're going to get wet!



Chicago executive honors Brighton's Alice Micco Snow

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

NAPLES — The late Seminole medicine carrier Alice Micco Snow touched a lot of people in over a half century as a Florida traditional herbalist.

She traveled the state assisting Seminole medicine men and women and spent much of her time investigating, growing and teaching people of all ages about Florida plants.

Duane L. Burnham came up with a thoughtful idea to commemorate the special times he spent with his friend Alice at classes she taught on native Florida flora at Naples Botanical Garden. The retired chairman and chief executive officer of Abbott, a Chicago-based global health care company, and his wife, Susan, stunned Garden officials earlier this year by offering a \$1 million donation to the Garden if an unnamed lake on the preserve could be named for Alice Snow.

"My wife, Susan, and I have focused our giving on medicine, education and supporting women. All three of those commitments came together in Alice Snow," Burnham said. "She was an extraordinary person; a teacher, a healer, an environmentalist and a remarkable spirit. It's a great honor to keep her legacy alive through the creation of Lake Tupke."

On Nov. 15, the Burnhams will join Seminole Chairman James E. Billie, other Tribal leaders, medicine man Bobby Henry, Seminoles from across the state and local dignitaries to honor Snow by dedicating Lake Tupke at the Garden. *Tupke* is a Creek word (pronounced *Th/doop-key*) that is short for *Tefolothokv* (pronounced *t/dee-foe-lothoe-k/gah*), which was Snow's Indian name. Snow's daughter Salina Dorgan said the phrase translates to "she goes around everyone."

"She knew everybody and they knew her. She had a lot of friends we knew nothing about," said Dorgan, who fondly remembers her mother constantly stopping to pluck a leaf or a flower from a roadside plant while driving on country roads.

Born in Excelsior, Minnesota in 1942, Duane Burnham received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Minnesota. He joined Abbott in 1982 and rose steadily through the company's senior ranks. He was named chief executive officer in 1989 and was elected chairman of the board in 1990. He retired from Abbott in 1999.

"Alice Snow loved this land and



Photo courtesy of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Alice Micco Snow, pictured above in the 1950s, will have a lake named after her at the Naples Botanical Garden, where she taught classes about native plants.

her knowledge of local flora and her extraordinary connectedness with the local environment helped make it the beautiful place it is today," said the philanthropist. "Susan and I want to help keep alive her legacy of understanding and respect for nature and her thoughtful and committed teaching of others. The Garden does that, and we hope Lake Tupke will help people enjoy this special place for generations to come."

The 10 a.m. ceremony will feature a Seminole dance demonstration by Henry and his family and a tour of the extensive Garden, a veritable 170-acre paradise of cultivated gardens and preservation land. Admission is free to Seminole Tribal members and their families. More than 200 Tribal members have indicated they would attend. Bus transportation will be available at various reservations.

For more information about attending the Lake Tupke dedication Nov. 15 contact Salina Dorgan at 863-634-6380 or SalinaDorgan@semtribe.com.

Health



Food safety tailgating tips

SUBMITTED BY CHERYL MCDONNELL-CANAN
Environmental Health Department

With football season in full swing, pregame tailgating rituals have also commenced. These parking lot picnics are synonymous with good food, good friends and good times.

But despite the fun, tailgate parties can cause serious foodborne illnesses. Disease-causing bacteria found in many traditional tailgating foods are the usual culprits. Most often these bacteria spread with improper hand-washing techniques, cross-contamination between uncooked and prepared foods, incorrect end-point temperatures (when hot foods are not kept hot and cold foods are not kept cold) and inadequate sanitation methods.

These issues can be tricky when setting up parking lot parties. Follow these tips from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to ensure food stays safe to eat.

Handwashing

- Washing hands is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of disease-causing bacteria. Wash hands with soap and water before handling food or before handling a different food. Keep in mind that hand sanitizers kill the bacteria, but they do not remove dirt and dead bacteria. Set up a hand-washing site

at any tailgate party by placing water in an unplugged coffee urn or large insulated drink container with a spigot. Be sure to include soap, paper towels and a container to catch the waste water.

Packing and traveling

- Carry cold perishable food like raw hamburger patties, sausages and chicken in an insulated cooler packed with several inches of ice, frozen gel packs or containers of ice. Place an appliance thermometer in the cooler to ensure the food stays at 41 degrees or below.

- When packing the cooler, wrap raw meat and poultry securely to prevent juices from cross-contaminating ready-to-eat food.

- Keep perishable cooked food, such as luncheon meat, cooked meat, chicken, and potato or pasta salads refrigerator cold.

- If bringing hot take-out food, eat it within two hours of purchase (one hour if the temperature is above 90 degrees). If hot food cannot stay hot during the drive to a tailgate party, plan ahead and chill the food in the refrigerator before packing it in a cooler. Reheat the food to 165 degrees as measured with a food thermometer.

- To keep foods like soup, chili and stew hot, use an insulated container. Fill the container with boiling water, let it stand for a few minutes, empty, and then put in

the piping hot food. Keeping the insulated container closed will keep the food hot (135 degrees or above) for several hours. If electricity is available, slow cookers are also an option for keeping foods hot.

Cooking and serving

- Always marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter. If some of the marinade is to be used for basting during smoking or as a sauce on the cooked food, reserve a portion of the marinade. Don't put raw meat and poultry in it. Don't reuse the marinade from raw meat or poultry on cooked food unless it's boiled first to destroy any harmful bacteria. Transport marinated meat and any reserved marinade in a cooler, and keep it cold until grilling it.

- In addition to a grill and fuel for cooking food, be sure to pack a food thermometer. Meat and poultry cooked on a grill often brown very fast on the outside but do not thoroughly cook on the inside. With a thermometer, check to make sure meat reaches a minimum of 155 degrees and poultry at least 165 degrees to destroy harmful bacteria. Clean the thermometer after each use to avoid cross-contamination.

- Do not partially cook meat or poultry ahead of time at home. Partial cooking allows harmful bacteria to survive and multiply. Once meat or poultry starts cooking, continue cooking until it reaches a safe temperature as determined with a food thermometer.

- Include lots of clean utensils for preparing and serving food. Bring water for cleaning if none will be available at the site. Wash cutting boards, utensils and other surfaces with hot, soapy water and rinse before preparing other foods with them.

- When taking food off the grill, use a clean platter. Don't put cooked food on the same platter that held raw meat or poultry. Any harmful bacteria present in the raw meat juices could contaminate safely cooked food. In hot weather (above 90 degrees), food should never sit out for more than one hour.

- Protect food from insects and other contaminants by using lids or covers. Make sure that garbage cans with plastic liners and lids are available. When it's time to turn up the tailgate, discard any perishable foods that have been left out for more than two hours.



Health officials: Nasal spray flu vaccinations work better

SUBMITTED BY BOB LAMENDOLA
Florida Department of Health in Broward

Health officials now recommend that healthy kids ages 2 to 8 years old receive the nasal spray flu vaccine instead of flu shots because it works better.

Recent studies show that among those children, nasal spray vaccines prevented 50 percent more illnesses from influenza virus than the injections, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"In addition to hand-washing and staying home when you are sick, the best way to prevent the flu is by getting vaccinated," said Dr. Paula Thaqi, director of the Florida Department of Health in Broward County. "Consult your doctor about which vaccine is right for you."

Using the spray instead of the needle may result in more vaccinations among kids.

"A lot of children are fearful of the injections, so it's easier to get them to be vaccinated with the spray," said Marie McMillan, executive community health nursing director at DOH-Broward.

Last flu season, 48 percent of Native Americans (and 65.5 percent of children) were vaccinated – the second highest behind Asian Americans, the CDC said.

The new policy on nasal spray for children is the highlight of the 2014-15 flu season, which kicked off in August when retail stores began vaccinating. The CDC said influenza annually causes hundreds of thousands of illnesses – sometimes severe – and leads to 3,000 to 49,000 deaths a year.

Flu cases typically peak in December through February but can show up unpredictably earlier or later. The vaccine generally takes two weeks to spark an immune response. The CDC urges flu vaccines for everyone older than 6 months.

Along with vaccines, the flu can be prevented with simple precautions. Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds, avoid close contact with sick people, stay home when sick and cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow.

The nasal spray was originally approved for healthy people 5 to 49 years old, and many children were already getting

it instead of shots. The new recommendation expands those able to receive it.

Side effects of the spray vaccine are generally mild and can include runny nose, headache, wheezing, vomiting, muscle aches and fever.

It is not recommended for children who are on aspirin therapy, have asthma or had recent episodes of wheezing. It is also not recommended for individuals who are pregnant, have weakened immune systems, have egg allergies or have long-term health problems.

Unlike flu shots, the nasal spray vaccine is made with live virus – but it is greatly weakened and cannot cause illness. One of the biggest myths about the flu vaccine is that it can cause the flu.

Vaccine advocates hope the nasal spray will help boost flu vaccinations, which they say are far too low.

Last year, 59 percent of U.S. children and 43 percent of adults 18 years of age and older received a vaccination. The CDC said that even among seniors over age 65, who are at higher risk from flu, only 65 percent were vaccinated. Vaccination rates were lowest among healthy adult men, black adults and Hispanic adults.

Some children ages 6 months to 8 years may require two doses this season, at least four weeks apart. If they did not receive two or more doses of flu vaccine in total since July 1, 2010, they may need a second dose this year. Ask your doctor for guidance.

Another new wrinkle this flu season is that most versions of flu vaccine protect against four strains of flu, two strains each of A-type and B-type viruses that may be circulating. The four-strain vaccine may be harder to find. The CDC recommends against waiting for it if you can't find it.

If you cannot get vaccine from your doctor or regular health source, other sources are available at <http://vaccine.healthmap.org>. Vaccine should be plentiful. The CDC expects more than 150 million doses to be available.

For more information, call the Health Department at 954-962-2009 or visit www.SemTribe.com/Services/Health.aspx. Also DOH-Broward at www.BrowardCHD.org or 954-467-4705.



Sporting pink for awareness



Photo courtesy of Barbara Boling

Brighton employees show their support for the fight against breast cancer by wearing pink Oct. 17. In 2014, it is estimated that about 232,670 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women and about 2,360 new cases in men.



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students, both girls and boys, wear pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October.

Tips for ensuring payment of medical and dental bills

SUBMITTED BY CONNIE WHIDDEN
Health Department

- Show your STOF Member Health Plan card to medical, dental and pharmacy providers prior to receiving services.

- If you are also covered under another primary health insurance plan, such as Medicare, show that card as well. The STOF Member Health Plan is always the payer of last resort.

- If you do not have a new Health Plan card that looks like this, contact a STOF Health clinic to request your new card.

- Check your Health Plan book or call the Health Plan office to ensure your health care is covered by the Health Plan. Some services are limited or excluded from coverage.

- If you receive an incident report from the STOF Health Plan, please complete the form and return it to the STOF Health Plan office to ensure timely processing of your bills. Make sure to indicate whether care received was due to an accident on the form.

- If you receive a bill or a statement for health care services in the mail, call the service provider and have them mail a copy of the itemized bill to STOF Health Plan Administration, P.O. Box 173129, Tampa, FL 33672 to process your bill. This address is also on the back of your Health Plan card. In addition, bring the bill to a STOF Health

clinics.

- If you receive a notice from a collection agency for an unpaid health care bill, call the collection agency and ask that they submit an itemized bill to STOF Health Plan Administration to process your bill.

- In addition, please bring the bill to a STOF Health clinic. We may ask you to sign a release form to allow the collection agency to speak with us about your bill and to obtain a copy of the itemized bill if necessary.

- Review the biannual explanation of benefits statement which provides detailed information about each medical and dental bill processed on your behalf. Please note that you are responsible to pay the service provider the amounts listed under the patient responsibility column.

- If you currently have unpaid health care bills on your credit report, the STOF Health Plan office will attempt to resolve these debts for you. Contact the STOF Health Plan office at 866-505-6789 for assistance. The office will need a copy of your credit report listing the unpaid health care bills and a signed release form allowing them to contact the collection agency on your behalf to discuss your account and obtain an itemized bill, if necessary, for processing.

- For all other question, call the Health Plan office.

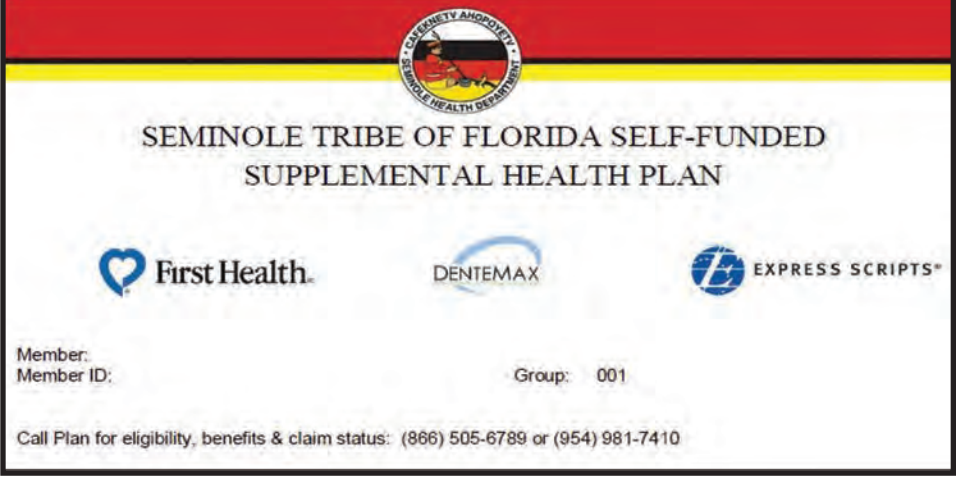
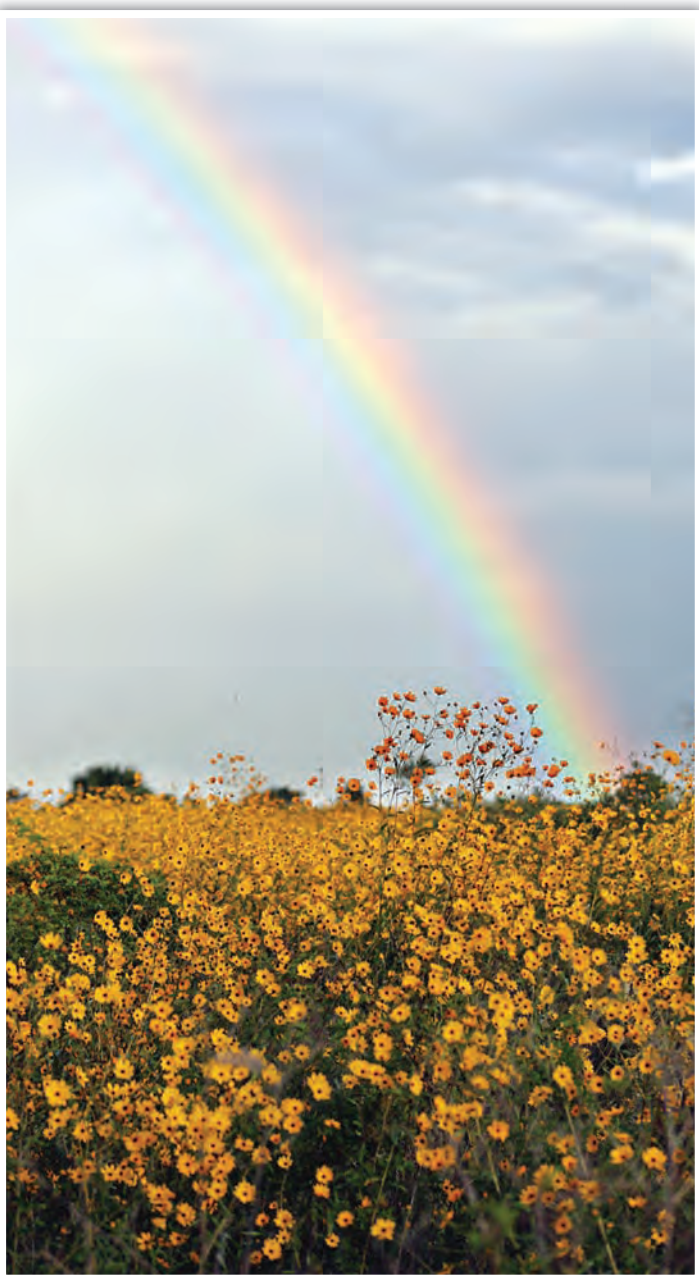


Photo courtesy of Connie Whidden

Pictured is the STOF Member Health Plan card.

SEMINOLE SCENES



Beverly Bidney

FLOWER POWER: A spectacular show of black-eyed Susan wildflowers lines Florida Highway 78 near Brighton Reservation. The seasonal bloom, which occurs from summer to mid-autumn, resembles a carpet of color in the fields. Black-eyed Susans can be found in every state except Hawaii.



Beverly Bidney

EYE ON THE CONE: Lawanna Osceola-Niles focuses on the cones under the airnasium in Hollywood during a practice for the Senior Trike Fest in Big Cypress.



Eileen Soler

RELAY FOR CHRIST: Biblical learning is mixed with fun and games every Wednesday night at First Baptist Church youth group night on Big Cypress Reservation.



Eileen Soler

CRACKER ON THE RUN: Seminole Police and cowboys chase down a runaway horse along Josie Billie Highway on the Big Cypress Reservation.



Beverly Bidney

ROW, ROW, ROW YOUR ABS: Hollywood workout enthusiasts take the rowing machines out of the fitness room for some fresh air Sept. 26. From left are Resha Doctor, Demetria Tigertail, Angel Young and Clint Holt.



Photo courtesy of Demi Garza

PEDAL TO THE METAL: Immokalee Council project manager Raymond Garza Sr. moves earth and water to prepare for upcoming activities on the Immokalee Reservation lake during Indian Day festivities.



Eileen Soler

CHOPPER POPPER: A Seminole chopper equipped with a dumping device makes training rounds over pastures on the Big Cypress Reservation.



Photo courtesy of Mark Jock

STEPS IN TIME: Immokalee elders enjoy sightseeing at Fort Matanzas during a senior trip to St. Augustine. The fort was built in 1742.



Beverly Bidney

NO PAIN, NO GAIN: Jason Don Billie voluntarily struggles through 200 meters of walking lunges while holding a 75-pound weight Oct. 20 on the Hollywood Ball Field. The exercise is part of the CrossFit program, which includes a mix of weight lifting, gymnastics and aerobic exercise.



Photo courtesy of Kathreen Martinez

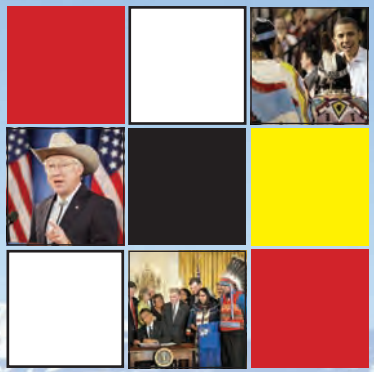
EIGHT-SECOND RIDE: Shamy Tommie takes a ride on a mechanical bull during the third annual Chupco Youth Ranch Fun Day Sept. 20 in Fort Pierce. The event also featured archery, skillet toss and ax throwing competitions, water games, and popcorn and snow cones.



Photo courtesy of Tom Craig

ROCK OUT: A longtime fan of Jimi Hendrix, Cameron Osceola, right, joined the Experience Hendrix 2014 Tour onstage Sept. 19 at the Hard Rock Live. The show pays homage to the legendary guitarist and features an all-star compilation of talented musicians, including blues guitarist Eric Gales, left.

NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS



Tribal sovereignty strengthened by recent rulings

WASHINGTON — In late September, the U.S. government agreed to pay the Navajo Nation \$554 million for the mismanagement of Tribal funds and resources from 14 million acres of trust lands — the largest settlement ever to a Native American Tribe.

In October, Congress passed the Tribal General Welfare Exclusion Act, mandating that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) stop taxing Tribal citizens who receive Tribal government services such as education, health care, elder care, child care and housing.

Coming on the heels of several other multimillion-dollar settlements with other Tribes, the agreement is a landmark for government accountability and Tribal sovereignty. The recent congressional action provides another sign that the federal government is moving in the right direction in building better relations with Indian nations. Under the new act, IRS field agents must undergo training in federal Indian law and the government's legal treaty and trust responsibilities, a provision intended to help IRS officials understand the unique nature of the U.S. government's relationship with Indian Tribes.

At the signing of the Navajo agreement, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell cited President Barack Obama's support for Tribal sovereignty and the nation-to-nation relationship. Congress affirmed this position with the passage of the Tribal Welfare Exclusion Act. Both events signal that Obama's words will be backed by actions that support Tribal self-determination and promote Native American well-being.

—Source: Aljazeera America

Pojoaque Pueblo can't get compact

POJOAQUE, N.M. — U. S. District Judge James Parker has ruled against the Pueblo of Pojoaque's effort to bypass state negotiations and obtain a new gambling compact directly from the Interior Department's Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Pojoaque's current compact runs out in June 2015. Judge Parker ruled that the federal government does not have legal standing to intervene in the current dispute between the Pueblo of Pojoaque and Gov. Susana Martinez's administration.

—Source: Kob.com

Ho-Chunk Nation shuts down poker after losing lawsuit

MADISON, Wisc. — The Ho-Chunk Nation, formerly the Wisconsin Winnebago Tribe, will shut down its electronic poker room in November after losing a lawsuit with the state of Wisconsin. The Tribe installed PokerPro at the Ho-Chunk Gaming Madison. Seventh Circuit Federal Judge Barbara Crabb ruled that the machines fall into the Class III category, which the Tribe's compact does not allow at the Madison location (Ho-Chunk Gaming operates six casinos in Wisconsin). Ho-Chunk is appealing the decision.

—Source: IndianZ.com

Oglala Sioux seek expanded gaming at Pine Ridge

PINE RIDGE, S.D. — The South Dakota Gaming Commission held a public hearing Oct. 16 on a proposed agreement between the Oglala Sioux Tribe and the state. The Tribe wants to expand gaming on its Pine Ridge Reservation, where it has two casinos.

The commission's decision is expected in about two months. Under the proposed compact, the Tribe could increase the number of gambling machines to 750. The current compact allows the Tribe to operate only 250 machines.

"This would open up the door for us to expand gaming," Tribal President Bryan Brewer said. "Right now, we could use a few more machines here, but this would give us the opportunity to look at opening up another casino."

—Source: KEVN-TV

Decayed buildings hold back Native education initiative

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Interior Department's Bureau of Indian Education owns and operates 183 Indian Schools spread across the nation in 23 states. Many schools are located in remote places, such as the Havasupai school at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, reachable only by donkey or helicopter. Most have fewer than 150 students; 48,000 Native students attend a federal school — around 7 percent of all Native American students nationwide.

"These are schools," Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell told the Santa Fe New Mexican, "that you or I would not feel good sending our kids to, and I don't feel good sending Indian kids there, either."

National and state assessments are clear: Native Americans perform better in schools that are not overseen by the

federal bureau. President Barack Obama visited Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota in June when he announced his school improvement plan, which allows Tribes to manage the schools, while Washington shifts to more of a support role. The plan calls for more board-certified teachers, better Internet access and less red tape, making it easier to buy books and hire teachers. Accelerating the use of Native American languages and culture were also key points.

But the rundown physical state of many schools is holding back the whole initiative. More than 60 are listed in poor condition. Less than one-third have the Internet and the computer capability to administer new student assessments that are rolling out in much of the country. An estimated \$1.3 billion is needed to replace or refurbish these schools, or at least hundreds of millions to fix parts of them. But since the 2009 release of about \$280 million in stimulus money, little has gone to major school construction or renovation.

Jewell recently visited Depression-era-built Crystal Boarding School on the Navajo Reservation in Crystal, New Mexico. The school is now primarily a day school, but about 30 kids stay in dorms in part because they live too far to catch buses that begin running at 5:30 a.m. There's a waiting list for dorm space, but a second dorm was condemned.

Jewell was met by hugs from the kids, who performed songs in the Navajo language. She thanked the students for "making do with this school the way it is." Later, she told school leaders she couldn't promise the money will be there to build a new school.

"For schools throughout Indian country, this is a chronic problem," she said. "I don't want to stand here and make promises I can't keep. What I want to say is, I get it."

—Source: Santa Fe New Mexican

Maori soon to be on Google Earth

WHAKATANE, New Zealand — Researchers associated with the Maori, the indigenous Polynesian people of New Zealand, are meeting with the Google Earth team to learn how to include their own world of story sites and sacred places onto digital maps.

The once highly secretive Maori left eastern Polynesia in waves of canoes sometime between A.D. 1250 and 1300 and lived several centuries in complete isolation, developing their own language, rich mythology, distinctive crafts and performing arts.

A workshop in November will teach Maori groups how they can include important Tribal information on maps by using free online tools.

Lilliana Clarke-Hahipene, an environmental science lecturer at Awanuiarangi, said the workshop will help researchers add Maori things such as "wahi tapu" (sacred places) to Google Earth Outreach. She said Maori iwi ("peoples" or "nations," most often translated as "Tribe" or "confederation of Tribes") would now have the possibility to use the new technology themselves.

—Source: Radio New Zealand

Oglala Sioux take first-ever Tribal National Park to voters

PINE RIDGE, S.D. — The Oglala Sioux Tribal Council has reversed itself and has voted to send a decision to build a first-of-its-kind Tribal National Park to a referendum vote.

A series of negative news articles forced Tribal leaders to defer their vote and, as Oglala Sioux Tribal President Bryan Brewer stated, send the issue "to the people to decide."

According to IndianZ.com, the articles erroneously insinuated that the Tribe intended to evoke its right of eminent domain on privately held lands. That stopped development of the project and left in limbo the estimated millions of dollars that were expected to be generated.

Part of the controversy surrounding the park had to do with Ordinance 13-21 that included language highlighting the Tribe's sovereign right to use eminent domain. Longtime leasers and ranchers on the property met the proposal with disdain and protests despite a warning being sent out to lease holders five years in advance that their lease would be terminated.

Oglala Sioux Tribal President Bryan Brewer, who had been an ardent supporter of the project, told Native Sun News that this was a decision that "would go to the people to decide."

—Source: IndianZ.com

After R-word ban, student paper in First Amendment fight

LANGHORNE, Pa. — A year after being suspended for banning the word "redskin" in the Neshaminy High School Redskins student newspaper, editor-in-chief Gillian McGoldrick is returning to her position.

In October 2013, the staff of the Playwickian became one of the first in the country to ban the word in response

to a Native American parent who began attending school board meetings and expressing concern over the mascot Neshaminy High shares with the NFL's Washington team.

McGoldrick told Indian Country Today Media Network (ICTMN), "At this same time, (President) Obama had publicly spoken against the mascot name. We decided that maybe we should have some conversation about what the true meaning of the mascot was and if it were, indeed, a racial slur."

In June 2014, the Playwickian received a letter to the editor arguing against the new policy and repeatedly using the term. Despite an order from the school principal to publish the letter verbatim, the staff withheld publication and instead printed their reasoning.

The school board jumped into the fray, claiming that the board's intentions in permitting the mascot were not racist, and therefore the newspaper was violating the First Amendment rights of other students by banning the use of the word.

"To be clear," said Frank LoMonte, executive director of the Student Press Law Center, "the school district — operating under the guise of protecting the free-speech rights of students to say 'redskins' in the newspaper — has entirely stripped away all free-speech rights from student journalists by way of a retaliatory 'publications policy' so that the word 'redskins' is literally the only word that any student can confidently say without fear of punishment."

The principal, who refused to speak with ICTMN, restricted staff access to the Playwickian website and social media accounts and finally suspended McGoldrick and the paper's adviser Tara Huber.

"This will have to be settled in the courts," LoMonte said. "[It is] literally the most extreme anti-student policy we have ever seen in any school district in America."

A letter signed by 18 organizations, including the Native American Journalists Association and the Society of Professional Journalists, stated: "Journalism education is an irreplaceable part of a well-rounded public education and a civically healthy school. The teaching of journalistic skills, ethics and values is more essential than it has ever been, now that essentially every student has access to the power of digital publishing and is bombarded with online information of varying reliability."

—Source: Indian Country Today Media Network

Oklahoma Tribal nations embroiled in sales tax battle

SHAWNEE, Okla. — The city of Shawnee and area Tribes such as the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Sac and Fox Nation, the Absentee Shawnee Tribe and the Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma are locked into bitter disputes over Shawnee's efforts to impose sales taxes on their Tribal trust lands. Oklahoma's relationship with Tribal nations has warmed in recent decades with economic success, but tensions are rising over education funding and sales taxes.

Originally the forced homeland to more than 200 Indian Tribes, Oklahoma is now home to 39 of the country's 567 federally recognized Tribes and has the second largest Indian population. And while denied citizenship until 1924, now more than 10 percent of Oklahoma citizens are Indian.

The current situation involving the Citizen Potawatomi Nation is a microcosm of the larger situation. The acrimony between the Tribe and the city of Shawnee has grown intense enough that the Potawatomis seek to de-annex themselves from the city limits. News sources reported that Shawnee City Commission members have proposed excluding other City Commission members from voting on Commission business involving Tribal issues based solely on Tribal membership.

The Potawatomis operate supermarkets, casinos, fuel stop and convenience stores, a museum, putt-putt and softball facilities on 1,150 acres of trust land in Shawnee. The United States maintains that Tribes exercise jurisdiction over trust lands and are generally exempt from local and state jurisdiction. The city maintains that the Tribes should collect city sales tax on purchases made by non-members on trust lands.

—Source: NewsOK.com

Billy Mills offers new grants for Native youth

BISMARCK, S.D. — On the 50th anniversary of his Olympic win, famed Oglala Lakota runner Billy Mills — the first American to win the 10,000-meter race — announced a new grant program for American Indian youth.

Running Strong for American Indian Youth, co-founded in 1986 by Mills, will award 50 grants of \$10,000 each to youth-oriented community groups and nonprofit organizations over the next five years.

Applicants need only outline a proposal for a project, its funding needs and its impact on youth. At the end of the five-year grant period, Running Strong will choose five projects to be eligible for

an additional \$50,000 grant. Youth team members of successful applicants have a chance to receive an extra \$500 reward.

Applicants can apply starting Nov. 1. "We wanted to celebrate the 50 years of giving back, and what better way helping young people," Mills said.

Running Strong focuses the majority of its resources on providing American Indian youth with their basic needs and inspiration.

—Source: Bismarck Tribune

Pope says Mass for two Canadian saints

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis held a Mass of thanksgiving for the canonization of two 17th-century missionaries who spread Roman Catholicism through what is today Canada.

Francis said in his homily Oct. 12 that Saint Francis de Laval and Saint Marie of the Incarnation spread their faith "to the smallest and most remote." The two missionaries were elevated to sainthood in April.

The pope also welcomed Canadian pilgrims who had traveled to Rome during his traditional Sunday blessing in St. Peter's Square.

Saint Francis de Laval was the first bishop of New France and known for his work to defend Native Americans from exploitation.

Saint Marie of the Incarnation was an Ursuline nun who founded a convent and school that provided equal education to the daughters of French settlers and Native Americans.

—Source: Associated Press

Mi'kmags hold fishing derby to stop gas project

NEWFOUNDLAND, Nova Scotia — Waving signs that read "Save Our Bass, No More Gas," a group of Mi'kmaq fishers and their families held a fishing derby recently in an effort to stop a natural gas project that threatens the Shubenacadie River, the province's major waterway.

Alton Gas has already begun digging out underground salt caverns to store natural gas and releasing the brine at high tide. The Mi'kmaq are trying to stop it. At least one band, the Sipekne'katiks is considering legal action. The Maritime Aboriginal People's Council is also keeping close watch on the project.

Alton has met with the assembly of chiefs and other groups but Mi'kmaq leaders say that consultation hasn't been meaningful. Some Tribal citizens are pointing their fingers at the Mi'kmaq leaders who sit at the negotiation table.

The Mi'kmaq are a First Nations people, indigenous to Canada's maritime provinces and the Gaspé Peninsula of Quebec.

—Source: MaoriTelevision.com

Former Choctaw Chief wins AARP award

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. — Former Choctaw Nation Chief Gregory E. Pyle was named the inaugural recipient of the Dr. John Edwards Memorial Leadership Award in recognition of more than 30 years of service to his people. The award is named after longtime AARP Oklahoma Executive Council member John Edwards, who passed away earlier this year. Edwards, a former governor of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe, was instrumental in AARP's work with Native Americans in Oklahoma.

This year's class of Indian Elder Honorees marks 300 elders representing all 39 federally recognized Tribes and nations in Oklahoma who have received the recognition since AARP began the program in 2009.

"Since its inception, we have been so blessed to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of elders from all walks of life," said AARP Oklahoma State President Marjory Lyons. "Some have led high profile lives and others have quietly passed on their gentle wisdom and culture. Collectively, this year's AARP Oklahoma Indian Elder Honorees represent what is best about Native American people in Oklahoma: love of family, dedication to culture and respect for all people."

—Source: DurantDemocrat.com

Kitsap waters ready for salmon arrival

CHICO, Wash. — The annual migration of chum salmon into the streams of Puget Sound has started earlier than usual.

"Chum are spawning throughout the system," Jon Oleyar, a biologist with the Squamish Tribe who keeps track of the local salmon migration, told the Kitsap Sun. "This is the earliest they have been in Chico Creek for the past eight years."

Oleyar said he can't explain why chum salmon have arrived in Chico Creek at least two weeks earlier than normal, but it could be a combination of rainfall at the beginning of October along with groundwater flowing into the stream from rains during the summer. Adequate streamflows encourage salmon to move, he said.

The total number of chum coming back to central and south Puget Sound is expected to be about 650,000 fish this year, said Jeremy Jording, of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. That's less than the record run of 1 million fish in 2007, but more than the 338,000 that came back last year.

—Source: Kitsap Sun

Landowners on Crow Reservation get buyback offers

HELENA, Mont. — The U.S. government has made offers worth a total of \$298 million to nearly 4,000 landowners on the Crow Indian Reservation to buy their fractionated parcels and turn them over to the Tribe.

The nationwide buyback program is voluntary and the second phase of the \$3.4 billion Cobell class-action lawsuit settlement over mismanaged royalties that were held in trust for Indian landowners by the government.

The Crow landowners have until Nov. 21 to accept or reject the offers, the U.S. Department of Interior said in a statement.

The \$1.9 billion program aims to buy land parcels owned by multiple individuals — sometimes hundreds or thousands of people — and turn them over to Tribal governments.

The problem started when the 1887 Dawes Act split Tribal lands into individual allotments that were inherited by multiple heirs with each passing generation. Often, that land sits without being developed or leased because approval is required from all the owners.

There are nearly 3 million fractional land interests owned by 250,000 people spread over 150 reservations that are eligible for the program. The government also has offers pending with landowners on Montana's Northern Cheyenne and Flathead Reservations, along with Oregon's Umatilla Reservation and Arizona's Gila River Reservation.

Interior officials said last month the program has turned over nearly 270,000 acres to Tribal governments.

The lawsuit by Elouise Cobell of Browning claimed Interior Department officials mismanaged trust money held by the government for hundreds of thousands of Indian landowners.

—Source: Associated Press

Standing Rock Sioux grant nets \$1.4 million for museum

MOBRIDGE, S.D. — The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's paleontology department has been awarded a \$1.4 million grant from the Administration of Native Americans Sustainable Economic and Employment Development program to help establish the SRST Institute of Natural History. During the four-year grant period, the Tribe plans to showcase its unique fossil collection and relate the story of the relationship of the Dakota, Lakota and paleontology.

The grant will also fund a four-year paleo field crew. A significant fossil resource is on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation and the chance of a major fossil discovery increases with additional field crew looking for fossils.

"The community was surveyed before submitting the grant," Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II said in a statement published in the Bismarck Tribune, "and the majority of people said they not only wanted to see fossils and learn more about paleontology but also wanted to see Dakota and Lakota cultural exhibits. The combination of fossils and Dakota/Lakota culture will make this museum one-of-a-kind."

—Source: Bismarck Tribune

Pequot museum to close for the winter

MASHANTUCKET, Conn. — The Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center announced Oct. 16 that it will close during the upcoming winter months and begin recruiting a "formal" board of directors. The museum will be closed from Dec. 1 until the end of April.

Rodney Butler, Chairman of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council, said in a statement the closing will take place during the museum's "slow season."

The council oversees management of the Mashantucket's Foxwoods Resort Casino.

Ongoing studies, which will be continued while the museum is closed, include work on the "Battlefields of the Pequot War" project, for which the museum has received federal grants totaling more than \$360,000. Research into Indian mariners and other work also will continue, the museum said.

The museum's library catalog will continue to be available online at www.MPMRC.com, and its research library and archival collections will be accessible by appointment. The museum also will continue to be available for private and corporate functions during the seasonal closure.

—Source: TheDay.com

Compiled by Special Projects Reporter Peter B. Gallagher.

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Education



Age is no barrier for Tampa's latest high school graduate

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

TAMPA — Anita Osceola admittedly spent too many of her 56 years living on the edge.

"I wanted to party and that's what I did," she said.

Fast forward to August 2014 when the Tampa resident received an envelope in the mail that held the long-awaited proof that the "party" was over but a richer, more celebratory life was surely in the works.

Anita Osceola, the devoted daughter of Jane Jim Osceola, mother of three adult children and grandmother of 11, finally and officially, held in her hands a very real and justifiably earned high school diploma.

Lola Juarez, Elder Services project coordinator in Tampa, said Osceola had prepared for several years to achieve a GED certificate, but after some stops and stalls, decided instead to earn an accredited diploma from the online Stepping Stones High School.

"Four years ago Anita began coming to senior programs as a chaperone for her mother. Then last year, when she became a senior herself, I saw she was more determined and wanted this and wanted that. Whatever we could do to help, we did," Juarez said.

Juarez and Osceola sent requests and forms after forms to department heads in Recreation and Education that paved the road. She needed permission to work out in the gym — granted. Needed books for study — granted. Needed computer access and a tutor — granted.

Osceola studied with tutor Dee Anna Hanscom using a semiprivate computer cubicle at the Tampa Field Office. Hanscom described her student as persistent — but only after eliminating her basic fear of math.

"Each month passed with Anita practicing more and more, honing her educational skills, becoming more confident," Hanscom wrote in a letter to Juarez. "Math finally needed to be conquered and slowly but surely Anita persevered through each topic. She used each building block to solidify her techniques solving multiple problems with no help from me."

Osceola said she was driven from the inside out. In fact, the woman accustomed to calling a taxi for transport to the senior office, also studied for her driver's license, passed the test and then bought a new car.



Photo courtesy of Lola Juarez

Anita Osceola, center, of Tampa, is surrounded by love from Peggy Cubis, Nancy Frank, Susie Doctor Osceola and Linda O. Henry during a celebration dinner in honor of her recent high school graduation at age 56.

"I had to prove I could do this thing for me and for my dad," she said.

Born in Miami at Jackson Memorial Hospital, Osceola grew up in the Everglades in a Seminole camp close to where her grandfather raised her mother. Osceola was sheltered though age 6 when she was forced by her parents to attend Flagami Elementary School. She never liked school, so as a senior at Coral Park High School she defied her mother and father, Albert Osceola Sr., and simply quit.

Without a diploma, Osceola worked for the Miccosukee Tribe nearly 20 years as a secretary but never earned more than \$13 an hour.

In 1990, after her beloved father was tragically struck by a car and killed and then buried on her birthday, Osceola began drinking heavily in what she called "a very long pity party."

She went into rehab to detox in 2010, but the stress to her body was too much and she landed in the hospital with a heart attack. Months later while staying in a halfway house, she caught an infection that sent her back to the hospital for three more months.

"After all those years when I thought I was too cool for school, I decided I had seen all the cool I was going to see," she said.

Osceola took her life back by restoring

her health first.

Sobriety, healthy diet and exercise led to a clear head for learning and a 20-pound weight loss. She thinks frequently about eventually taking an office job with the Tribe.

College maybe?

"My life is still about taking baby steps — one step at a time," she said.

But Osceola has a vivid dream of how she will spend vacations for the rest of her life — in peace and at rest on a wide, sandy beach.

"I am in the Caribbean looking at the whitest sand and swimming in the clear, blue ocean," Osceola said.

Native language bills could mean more school dollars for Indian Country

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

WASHINGTON — Two bills pending in Congress could deliver millions into education budgets to ensure the survival of Native American languages via Native schools nationwide.

The Native American Languages Reauthorization Act of 2014, sponsored by Sen. Tim Johnson, D-S.D., would bring \$17 million in grants to eligible Tribal language programs. The Native Language Immersion Student Achievement Act, sponsored by the Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Sen. John Tester, D-Mont., could provide \$20 million in \$5 million increments through 2019 for Native schools that drive curriculum through indigenous language.

The funding, however, is for full-year, full-time immersion programs. Ahfachkee School in Big Cypress and Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School in Brighton are not currently eligible because neither includes Native language enough throughout the curriculum to be considered immersion schools.

But that could change in time.

During a joint meeting in early September, Chairman James E. Billie directed Tribal department heads to brainstorm ways to incorporate Native language across reservations and support language use throughout the Tribe's schools and youth programs.

"This bill will not only revitalize Native languages, it will also keep kids in school and lead to greater pride, academic achievement and economic growth in Indian Country."

— Sen. John Tester,
U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Chairman

At Ahfachkee, Mikasuki is already laced in throughout the day, especially during culture classes, but the language is not offered as a formal class.

PECS purposefully immerses children 30 minutes daily in Creek language classes. Separate 35-minute culture classes also engage children to deliberately speak the language. Further, the language is peppered into the school day from the morning announcements and Seminole Pledge to "phrases of the week" and school sports competitions, where fans cheer and athletes and coaches call plays in Creek.

PECS principal Brian Greseth and culture language instructor Jade Braswell Osceola said the groundwork is being laid regardless of congressional money for a future where the entire student body will speak fluent Creek.

"In a perfect world we would love to arrive at school, park our car, walk through the doors and be totally immersed," Braswell Osceola said.

But the language, in addition to being considered an endangered language, is still evolving in translation and has only in recent decades been recorded in written words. The first Creek dictionary, in fact, is in the publication process.

Still, PECS officials this year have formally requested that the Florida Department of Education recognize Creek academically as a foreign language so that PECS seventh- and eighth-graders can claim two high school foreign language credits by the time they leave PECS. Convincing colleges to accept Creek language credits will also be tackled.

Brighton, Big Cypress students pray at the pole

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

Decades have passed since 1990 when a handful of Texas teens gathered under the cover of night to pray at school flagpoles in spite of laws that prohibited organized prayer in the classroom.

This year, more than 3 million students worldwide met Sept. 24 for the national See You at the Pole, outside schools and before classes began, under flags that waved freedom, courage and strength. Included were dozens of students from Ahfachkee

School in Big Cypress and Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School in Brighton.

"Every one of us knows there is a God, a Creator, a Son who loves us and sacrificed for us and that we are free to honor Him," said Pastor Salaw Hummingbird, of Big Cypress First Baptist Church, during the Ahfachkee student assembly held at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium flagpole memorial.

At PECS, about 60 students and staff mustered in a breezeway where the school's Fellowship of Christian Athletes club sponsors Chris Goodwin and Diana Harrison led prayer and songs with Luke Enfinger, a music leader from More 2 Life Church in Okeechobee.

There, sixth-grader Caylie Huff read a poem she wrote for the

occasion that included the line, "The Lord is first in my life, my family second and some things in my life are going to be hectic but it will all be OK because Jesus Christ will lead the way."

The United States Supreme Court banned prayer in public schools through two rulings, one in 1962 and another in 1963. However, according to the United States Department of Education website, "students may organize prayer groups, religious clubs and 'see you at the pole' gatherings before school to the same extent that students are permitted to organize other non-curricular student activities groups."

Ahfachkee and PECS students chose to observe See You at the Pole, though the schools are on Tribal land and sovereign by most standards.

"It is for that freedom that we are here. That is what we stand for," Hummingbird said.

Hummingbird, Big Cypress New Testament Baptist Church Pastor Arlen



Eileen Soler

More than 100 members from the Big Cypress Reservation gather for prayer at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium flagpole.



Photo courtesy of Brian Greseth

Students from Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School gather for prayer and song Sept. 24 during See You at the Pole, a national day of student prayer.

Students celebrate culture on Indian Day



Beverly Bidney

Children take turns grinding corn for sofkee at the Hollywood Preschool Indian Day celebration Sept. 19.



Photo courtesy of Jill Carner

Jimi Lu's second-grade Creek class at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School show off the *mvntelv*, the Creek word for Seminole flag, that they made in preparation of Indian Day.



Beverly Bidney

Hollywood preschoolers show they know their numbers as they search for the numeral to match the word given to them in Mikasuki.



Beverly Bidney

Redfeather Robbins, 4, proudly wears her finest traditional clothing at the Hollywood Preschool Indian Day.



Photo courtesy of Jill Carner

Jennie Shore helps Ferron Sampson make his Tribal key chain in Creek class at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School.



Photo courtesy of Jill Carner

Naleah Billie holds up the *mvntelv* she colored at PECS.



Photo courtesy of Jill Carner

PECS third-grader Jahdee Arnold proudly displays the Tribal key chain and his *este cate hopuetakes*, Creek for Indian children, that he made for Indian Day.



Beverly Bidney

Hollywood preschoolers line up for the clothing contest during their Indian Day festivities.



Beverly Bidney

Toddlers arrive in style for the Hollywood Preschool's Indian Day celebration in the airnasium.



Beverly Bidney

Hollywood preschooler Eli Odem, 4, participates in the frybread throw during the school's Indian Day celebration.



Photo courtesy of Jill Carner

Creek culture staff at PECS roll out dough for frybread. The staff cooked a traditional lunch for the students.

Fire Prevention Week sends firefighters back to school

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

No one can doubt the fun that comes when firefighters let kids aim real fire hoses at orange hazard cones with powerful jet streams of water.

For Seminole Tribe Fire Rescue crews, it happened in the line of duty during National Fire Prevention Month educational activities for scores of children at six Seminole reservations.

“Our job today is fire safety and injury prevention education. Everything we’re doing is for the kids,” said Deputy Fire Marshal Bruce Britton wrapping up a presentation at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School in Brighton.

From Naples to Hollywood to Fort Pierce, hundreds of Tribal youth were treated to hours of serious education cloaked in exciting activities that represented the national theme, “Working Smoke Alarms Save Lives: Test Yours Every Month.”

Children played while learning at a felt, wall-size house diagram where they posted Velcro smoke alarms in strategic locations: on ceilings or high on walls at least 4 inches from corners; outside every sleeping room; on every level of the home; and inside every bedroom.

At a fire ladder truck, kids were fascinated by an array of rescue tools that included super sharp axes to break through wood, heavy-duty metal cutters and spreaders for extricating people from cars, and yards of yellow hoses that carry gallons of water to snuff out fire.

Firefighter Brian Lenhart said the truck demonstrations gave children a chance to become familiar with firefighters and the tools they use. Firefighter Keith Rohan agreed.

“It gives the kids some experience with us so that if we have to be called out to help them in an emergency they will be more comforted and less afraid,” Rohan said. “They will know what’s inside the truck and how we use it.”

Wildland firefighters Keith Yeates and Chris Kemp had a blast letting kids blow off fears of the fire hose by shooting off streams of water at cones. But Yeates said it also gave the crew a chance to teach that wildfire prevention is as important as home fire prevention.

“You know that you should never play with matches at home, but don’t play with matches in the woods either because the woods is home for animals,” Yeates said.

On some reservations, wildland is also home to endangered plants and creatures, Tribal ceremonial grounds and significant markers in Seminole history.

For laughs, the kids shrouded a Seminole Tribe rescue ambulance in child-friendly Crayola paint. Handprints, flowers, hearts, rainbows and geometric shapes covered the human transport wagon from roof to wheels – and also covered a few



Eileen Soler

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School kids wait their turns for a try at handling a real fire hose with help from wildland firefighter Keith Yeates.



Eileen Soler

Children have a blast using a Seminole Tribe rescue ambulance as an art canvas Oct. 15 during a Seminole Tribe Fire Department presentation for National Fire Prevention Month.



Eileen Soler

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students and teachers pack jackets for donation to underprivileged children from schools in towns surrounding Brighton Reservation.

PECS Jacket Drive to send warm message to poor families: We care

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — When temperatures dip to chilly this winter, underprivileged children from towns surrounding Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School won’t be left out in the cold.

“We have to be grateful for all we have and share,” said seventh-grader Silas Madrigal.

Silas is among dozens who responded generously to the school’s latest Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO) charity effort – the PECS Jacket Drive. Led by reading teacher Sarah Williams and classroom assistant Brandi Johns, the effort has so far amassed about 125 hoodies, fleece, sport and sweater jackets.

Williams said she was prompted to launch the charity after hearing stories from teachers of less fortunate schools who revealed that they often spent their own money to provide jackets and coats to underprivileged students. Most of the children come from families of migrant workers.

“When we talked to our students about it, it dawned on them that poor children don’t only need the jackets during the day, but at night, too, even when they sleep,” Williams said. “Families that don’t have

money for jackets probably don’t have money for heat.”

All the jackets, from tiny toddler sizes to extra-large adult sizes, will be laundered, folded and placed neatly in boxes before being delivered in November to teachers at needy schools for distribution as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, November at PECS will be dedicated to collecting food for poor families in Okeechobee and Glades counties.

Last year the PTSO donated 2,000 canned goods that went to food pantries and other organizations that feed the hungry.

PECS guidance counselor Jeanine Gran said students and parents continue showing generosity through Christmas when they donate gifts to Real Life Children’s Ranch, a residential group home for about 40 children in Okeechobee.

“Our families always make us proud,” Gran said.

Silas said helping with the jacket drive was easy. He cleaned out closets and drawers to gather 15 jackets that formerly belonged to him and to his sister Alyssa Madrigal.

“I’m just hoping the other children stay warm. I didn’t have to think hard about it; I still have plenty of jackets at home and it makes me happy to help,” Silas said.

PECS September students of the month



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas

Elementary students of the month: Kiera Snell, Jaliyah Kroepflin, Rylee Bowers, Lason Baker, Ayana Fonseca, Chaka Smith, Bryson Smith, Kobe Micco, Saniya Rodrigues, Lexi Thomas, Jesseca Jimmie, Winnie Gopher, Cheyenne Lara, Mariana Mora-Lara, Dakoya Nunez, Kyandra ‘Ta-fv’ Harris, Alliana Brady, Lupe Mora-Lara and Serenity Micco.



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas

Middle school students of the month: Morgan Yates, Jathan Tommie and Aidan Tommie.

Science, engineering conference coming to Orlando Nov. 13-15

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

ORLANDO — Tribal member Danny Tommie, Chairman’s administrator, will welcome participants and Tampa elder Bobby Henry will offer a blessing to open the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) National Conference that will be held in Orlando Nov. 13-15.

AISES aims to increase Native American representation in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) studies and careers. The organization helps students secure internships and assists graduates with job placement by working with partners including NASA, Boeing,

Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Chevron, ExxonMobil, IBM, Intel, Army Corps of Engineers and others.

More than 1,600 people from around the country are expected to attend the conference, which has been held annually since 1978. Attendees will include high school juniors and seniors, college and graduate students, teachers, working professionals and AISES corporate partners.

Native Americans Notah Begay III and John Herrington will be keynote speakers at the conference. Begay, a four-time winner on the PGA Tour and current analyst for The Golf Channel, founded the Notah Begay III Foundation, which fights childhood obesity and Type 2 diabetes. Herrington, the only

Native American astronaut to fly in space, was aboard the space shuttle Endeavour in 2002.

In their first off-reservation appearance, the Miccosukee Tribe’s Stomp Dancers will perform during the traditional cultural event on the final day as part of the conference’s conclusion.

Members of the Miccosukee Indian School’s student government will attend as high school participants and introduce the dancers before the performance. Miccosukee Tribal member Lee Tiger will present the history of the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes in Florida.

For more information about AISES, visit www.aises.org.

Congratulations, graduates



Photo courtesy of Amanda Lowman

Through hard work and dedication, Randy Marc Shore earned his high school diploma from Okeechobee High School in July 2014. Randy is the son of Elton Shore and Farrah Branthoover, and the grandson of Eddie and Jennie Shore and Parker and Rose Jones.

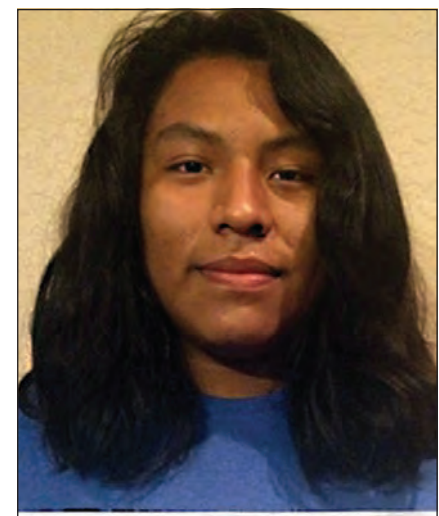


Photo courtesy of Amanda Lowman

Imillakiyo Osceola earned his GED on Sept. 25. Imillakiyo is the son of Richard and Dana Osceola, and the grandson of Roger (deceased) and Diane Smith and Johnny and Faith (deceased) Osceola.

Students dress to the nines at annual clothing contest



Peter B. Gallagher

With the help of his mother, Stephanie Johns, young Carissa Johns puts on his Seminole traditional outfit.



Peter B. Gallagher

Seminole clothing contests are fun. Ask Brighton residents, from left, Jrayko Billie, Carissa Johns and Bryce Baker who show off their finest attire Sept. 25 during the annual Pemayetv Emahavk Charter School clothing contest.



Peter B. Gallagher

Joleyne Nunez stands silent and stoic as the judges make their decision.



Peter B. Gallagher

From left, Cyndl Purvis, Odessie Sheets, Rylee Bowers, Bailey Bowers, Charisma Micco and Joleyne Nunez line up for the judges in their best Seminole clothing during the annual contest at the Brighton Veteran's Building.



Peter B. Gallagher

Kaleb Doctor shows off his first-place ribbon.



Peter B. Gallagher

Alyke Baker steps out Seminole style.

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New Student Council installed at Pemayetv Emahakv

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

BRIGHTON — Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School hosted its annual Student Council inauguration Sept. 25 at the Brighton Veteran's Building.

With their right hands raised and their left hands on the Bible, the 10 Student Council members repeated the oath of office as administered by Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr. The students were elected by their peers after they successfully entered signed petitions and made campaign speeches.

The new Student Council members each received a sash from the outgoing representatives and shook hands with Tribal officials, including Councilman Bowers and Brighton Board Rep. Larry Howard.

A colorful Seminole clothing contest followed the inauguration.



Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr. gives the oath of office to third-grade Rep. Sydney Matthews during Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's Student Council inauguration Sept. 25 at the Brighton Veteran's Building.

Members of the 2014-15 PECS Student Council

- Chairwoman Aleina Micco
- Eighth-grade Rep. Alyke Baker
- Seventh-grade Rep. Kaleb Doctor
- Sixth-grade Rep. Caylie Huff
- Fifth-grade Rep. LaShae King
- Fourth-grade Rep. SirMarcus Osceola
- Third-grade Rep. Sydney Matthews
- Second-grade Rep. Carlee Osceola
- First-grade Rep. Lason Baker
- Kindergarten Rep. Charisma Micco



Peter B. Gallagher



Peter B. Gallagher

First-grade Student Council Rep. Lason Baker listens intently as Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr. recites the official words of oath during Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's Student Council inauguration.



Peter B. Gallagher

Brighton Board Rep. Larry Howard shakes hands with Joleyne Nunez as students and guests lined up to greet Tribal leaders during Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's Student Council inauguration.

New Pemayetv Emahakv Student Council Chairwoman Aleina Micco addresses the audience.



Simone Berger

Ahfachkee School Student Council members, in red shirts, pay close attention and take notes at the Oct. 10 Tribal Council meeting in Big Cypress.

Ahfachkee Student Council geared for school, service

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Members of Ahfachkee School Student Council got a leg up on leadership by paying close attention Oct. 10 during a Tribal Council meeting.

"It was a great experience," said Jazmine Billie, eighth-grade representative.

At the Big Cypress Public Safety Complex, the group's seven-member Student Council led by President Kaitlin Osceola was privy to formal Tribal meeting decorum that included roll call, issues read according to a set agenda, discussion, colorful debate and important decision making by Council vote.

Councilmen Mondo Tiger, Andrew J. Bowers Jr., Chris Osceola, Chairman James E. Billie and President Tony Sanchez Jr. all aware of the student attendees, explained the process as it unfolded.

Student Council adviser and Ahfachkee teacher Jarrid Smith escorted students to the meeting.

"Watching the decisions be made was very exciting but a little embarrassing because sometimes the attention was on us," Kaitlin said.

Still, Kaitlin and Jazmine said the students became more comfortable as the meeting took course and some envisioned themselves as being the leaders of the future.

That's the point, Kaitlin said. They

already meet high academic standards, outstanding attendance and excellent behavior expectations. And all have been elected to positions by their peers.

Other members of the Ahfachkee Student Council are Eden Jumper, 11th grade; Nashoba Gonzalez, 10th grade; Elisah Billie, ninth grade; and Leilani Gopher, seventh grade.

This year, the Student Council's plan for community participation and fundraising for school events is still evolving, Kaitlin said, but some events have already happened.

The group took leading roles in the school's Red Ribbon and Bullying Awareness campaigns and is starting to spread the word about a potential grades race that will cap the year with an expensive dinner at a fancy restaurant for the student who achieves the highest GPA. The dinner will likely be financed through candy gram sales.

And then there is prom. Kaitlin said the Student Council will soon put ideas together for the gala night's theme.

"We're really looking forward to this year," said Kaitlin, who is among eight seniors in the class of 2015. At Ahfachkee, all high school students are invited to prom.

Jazmine is already hoping classmates will re-elect her next year.

"Being a leader makes me feel good. Yes, it can make a person nervous because of decisions to be made, but that's why classmates voted for me," Jazmine said.

LANGUAGE

From page 1B

Braswell Osceola said PECS could become an immersion school but only after a generation of students becomes certified teachers and Creek speakers, such as herself.

"It's a circle of knowledge. We always push the students to become college graduates then come back to the Tribe," said Braswell Osceola, who has a teaching degree from Indian River State College in special education.

Meanwhile, according to the office of the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, the Native Language Immersion Student Achievement Act may be heard by the end of the current legislative session. If not, it will be resubmitted to the next Congress.

"This bill will not only revitalize Native languages, it will also keep kids in school and lead to greater pride, academic achievement and economic growth in Indian Country," Tester said in a statement provided to The Seminole Tribune.

Identical bills were also referred respectively to the House by Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla., who is a member of the Chickasaw Nation and staunch supporter of Native issues and Tribal government, and Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, D-N.M., whose district contains 15 Pueblo Tribes and the Tribal lands of the Jicarilla Apache Nation and the Navajo Nation. The bills will see the Senate floor first, but because the bills exist in both congressional chambers, the chances for passage are high.

Both bills have garnered support from major Native organizations throughout Indian Country.

In a joint letter from the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) and 32 Native groups — including the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) to which the Seminole Tribe of Florida belongs — NIEA President Pamela Agoyo implored Congress to pass the Native Language

Immersion Student Achievement Act.

"Every Native child should have the right to be educated in his or her own language. Today, we have the opportunity to make that a reality," Agoyo said in a Sept. 16 statement on Native languages.

Data compiled by NIEA reveals that Native student achievement rates are higher when they are taught through immersion programs. The Rough Rock English-Navajo Language Arts Program, for example, reported that after four years in the program, student scores in English comprehension jumped from 58 percent to 91 percent. The program serves 200 students per year.

Agoyo also called for Congress to modernize the Indian Education Act of 1972 — designed to meet the unique needs of Tribal children then to now — to "include the growing body of educational research that established Native language immersion schools as an emerging 'best practice' in the field of Indian education."

Proof that teaching Native language classes in Tribal schools helps children grow academically and culturally comes with everyday experiences, Braswell Osceola said. During a recent school pep rally when students cheered for classmates in Creek, she was

filled with joy.

"I was so proud. The children were speaking and not even thinking about it — it just came," she said. "We tell them they are the only ones, the only Tribe in the whole world who has this one language — use it."

"We tell them they are the only ones, the only Tribe in the whole world who has this one language — use it."

— Jade Braswell Osceola, culture language instructor



Eileen Soler

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School language teacher Jimi Huff reviews the Creek alphabet during a recent language class.



Eileen Soler

Ahfachkee School first-graders recite the Seminole Pledge in Mikasuki before starting a cultural gardening class.



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Sports



Future bright for Ahfachkee golfers

Youth, new range will help benefit Warriors golf team

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor



Eileen Soler

Troy Cantu takes a shot Oct. 6 in a match against LaBelle High School at Glades Golf Resort in Moore Haven.

BIG CYPRESS — Birdies and bogeys weren't the most vital parts of the season for Ahfachkee School's golf program. With fairways full of inexperience, Ahfachkee used this fall to absorb and to have fun.

"They're learning and enjoying it; that's the important thing," Ahfachkee coach Amos Mazzant said before the seniorless Warriors played their final rounds in mid-October. "We're inexperienced. We're doing a lot of work learning fundamentals. They've been practicing hard. The hardest thing for us on the course is experience."

A few rookies new to golf donned the teams' red shirts and began playing a sport that can last a lifetime. Experience generated from this season's matches — including being represented by four players in district tournaments — should pay off in the future because all the players could be back next year, including the program's No. 1 player Troy Cantu.

Even though he's just a freshman, Troy brought the most experience to the team. As an eighth-grader last year, he competed in his first district tournament. This season he served as the captain. Mazzant said Troy usually shot in the low 50s for nine-hole matches, which bodes well considering he has three more years of high school golf and ample time to lower his scores.

"He's really played well. He's swinging good. I expect him to be real dominant," Mazzant said.

The Alvarado brothers — Jonah and Isaiah — comprised the remainder of the boys team.

Jonah, a sophomore, was with the team all season. Isaiah, a seventh-grader, joined during the final weeks. But they weren't the only Alvarados to tee it up.

Their sister, Chelsey, played on the girls team along with sophomore Nashoba Gonzalez and eighth-grader Thomlynn Billie.

Ahfachkee was represented by two golfers each in the boys and girls Class 1A-District 18 tournaments in Naples. Troy and Jonah played at Golf Club of the Everglades Oct. 14.

Troy shot a 119 for 18 holes and finished 37th in the 41-player field. Jonah

shot a 129 and finished three spots behind Troy.

The girls played their district match at Vasari Country Club Oct. 13. Chelsey, a junior, led Ahfachkee with a 136. Nashoba shot a 144.

Although no Ahfachkee golfer advanced to regionals, the players not only can build from the experience on the courses, but they can also benefit from a new driving range on Big Cypress Reservation.

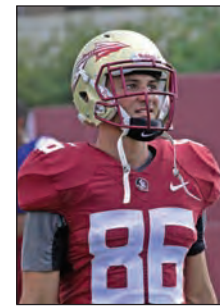
The range features a hitting area to smack drivers and irons. It also contains two practice putting greens and a sand trap that allows players to hone their short-game skills.

Mazzant said the range will help his players and could attract other students to the sport.

"Hopefully this might encourage other kids to see other phases of the golf game," he said.

Life as a Seminole on the defending championship team

SUBMITTED BY JUSTIN MOTLOW
Florida State University



My routine for the FSU football team is pretty much set right now. At practice, I'm on the scout team lining up against the best defense in college football and running the routes of the opposing team receivers all week. I'll be doing that the rest of the season.

I feel like I am doing really well. I've had some favorable comments from the defensive guys covering me, things like "good route" or "great catch," and just recently, I've had the guy who runs the scout team tell me I had a good week. But, I can't emphasize how much different it is when you are going from high school, where you can make an impact on the team and every game, to your first year in college, where you can still make an impact, but as a member of the scout team. I feel good realizing that what we are doing at practice all week contributes to our success in the actual games.

It's hard, personally, to accept that role because you constantly imagine yourself out there in the actual game, but I have had to accept it. That's the way it has to be for me right now. I try to concentrate on the great experience I am earning by competing against the top players in football.

I know the polls have us at No. 2 right now, but that doesn't make sense to me. I believe we deserve to be No. 1. Looking at our team's overall performance, one thing I do not understand is how we can be undefeated, with the longest winning streak in the country and still be ranked No. 2. Sure, I don't think this team has played up to its potential, but we have won all of our games, including a solid win over Notre Dame, which was ranked No. 5 at the time. I was shocked when I got up the next day and found out we were still No. 2 behind Mississippi State.

We don't really dwell on it. What can you do? Coach Fisher tells us that when you are on the top, everyone is automatically against you; everyone wants to knock you off. He said no one is rooting for FSU because we've been on top so long. Keep doing your job, he tells us, and don't worry about the polls. The polls seem to favor the SEC. With the new playoff system in place, it doesn't really matter that much anyway.

I feel like I am doing pretty well in school. I am holding B's in all my classes and we're not even halfway through the semester. I'm taking business statistics, principles of macroeconomics, world religions and introduction to archaeology. I enjoyed some time off when the team went to Syracuse recently. I only dress up for the home games, so I went back to Tampa for a couple days and spent some time with my family and some old friends. And stayed out of trouble.

I've never had any problems in that area. But, it's out there everywhere you go. Believe me, everybody on the FSU football team knows we have to keep away from trouble.

Justin Motlow is a freshman at Florida State University and the first Seminole Tribal member to play football for the FSU Seminoles.

From start to finish, PECS produces perfection

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

BRIGHTON — Unstoppable. Undefeated. Unconquered.

Take your pick. They all sum up a perfect season for the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School girls volleyball team.

The Lady Seminoles finished a memorable season with a 10-0 record that included nine shutouts. Only one team — Yearling Middle — managed to win a set; the other 20 sets belonged to the girls from Brighton.

Coached by Kim Jackson and assisted by Pam Matthews, PECS started its season Sept. 3 with a win against Moore Haven that was highlighted by 10 aces from Alaina Sweat. The Lady Seminoles were just starting to get revved up.

Three kills from Raeley Matthews and five aces from Julia Smith paved the way to victory against Everglades City Sept. 11.

The closest match of the season came Sept. 17 when Yearling — the only team

that beat PECS in the 2013 season — won a marathon second set to force a third set, which PECS won 15-8. Aleina Micco's 12 aces and six kills, and Raeley's nine kills proved to be pivotal. Other strong performances came from Julia with four aces and two kills, Krysta Burton with three aces, Cady Osceola with three kills and Aubrey Pearce with one ace.

PECS blanked opponents for the remainder of the season. The team sizzled in the serving department with more than 20 aces against Clewiston Sept. 25. Alaina led the way with 10 aces followed by seven from Aleina and three from Janessa Nunez.

Raeley drilled 12 kills, Julia had four aces and Madisyn Osceola had four kills and one ace Sept. 30 in a tough win against Osceola as the Lady Seminoles headed into October with a 6-0 record.

Two days later, Raeley delivered a season-high 13 kills against Everglades City. Aleina notched seven of the team's 15 aces.

A rematch against Yearling Oct. 8 wasn't as close as the first meeting. This

time PECS won in two sets behind six aces and two kills from Aleina, three aces and three kills from Raeley, and one ace and three kills each from Julia and Cady.

PECS won its final home match of the season against Osceola Oct. 13. While wearing pink shirts and using a pink ball in recognition of breast cancer awareness, PECS made its eighth-grade parent night a success thanks to its four eighth-graders. Raeley led the squad with seven aces and six kills, Aleina contributed four aces and three kills, Krysta notched two aces and Cady had one kill and one ace.

The Lady Seminoles put the finishing touches on their undefeated season with a win at Westglades in Parkland Oct. 14. In their final match as Lady Seminoles, Aleina had seven kills and one ace, Raeley contributed four kills, three aces and one block, Krysta notched one ace and one kill and Cady had one ace.

Alaina, Julia, Jacee Jumper and Jenna Brown — among the core that will try to keep the winning ways alive next season — combined for seven aces.

The path to perfection

- 9/3 PECS 2, Moore Haven 0
- 9/11 PECS 2, Everglades City 0
- 9/17 PECS 2, Yearling 1
- 9/24 PECS 2, Moore Haven 0
- 9/25 PECS 2, Clewiston 0
- 9/30 PECS 2, Osceola 0
- 10/2 PECS 2, Everglades City 0
- 10/8 PECS 2, Yearling 0
- 10/13 PECS 2, Osceola 0
- 10/14 PECS 2, Westglades 0

2014-15 PECS girls volleyball team

- Aubrey Billie
- Jenna Brown
- Krysta Burton
- Jacee Jumper
- Raeley Matthews
- Aleina Micco
- Janessa Nunez
- Cady Osceola
- Madisyn Osceola
- Aubrey Pearce
- Julia Smith
- Alaina Sweat
- Head coach: Kim Jackson
- Asst. coach: Pam Matthews



Beverly Bidney

Alaina Sweat sets the ball Oct. 14 during PECS volleyball team's last home game of the season against Osceola Middle School.

Sanchez brothers help Fort Gibson to fast start

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

FORT GIBSON, Okla. — One of the top-ranked high school football teams in Oklahoma includes Jesse Sanchez and Samuel Micco Sanchez. The Seminole brothers, who used to live in Hollywood, play for Fort Gibson, which was 7-0 and ranked No. 2 in Class 4A as of Oct. 23.

Jesse, a sophomore running back, has rushed for three touchdowns. Two of his touchdowns came in a 42-12 win against Broken Bow Oct. 3 when he rushed for 55 yards on 10 carries. He also scored the following week in a 42-6 win against Tulsa-Central.

Samuel, a linebacker, is one of a few freshmen on a team loaded with seniors and sophomores. In August, Samuel won a gold medal in wrestling for Team Florida at the North American Indigenous Games in Canada and Jesse captured silver.

Fort Gibson, which already surpassed its win total of six from last year, is scheduled to conclude its regular season Nov. 7 at Stilwell.

Hollywood Christian's Tyler, Pierce tackle the gridiron

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

HOLLYWOOD — Maurice Tyler II wasn't certain if football would suit him. He has the size coaches love in a lineman, but whether Maurice would love playing the game was another story.

Todd Pierce, on the other hand, didn't need any arm-twisting to put on pads. He's used to revving up his adrenaline in sports, namely the one he's most familiar with: bull riding.

"It gets your momentum pumping," said Todd, a sixth-grader who qualified for the Indian National Finals Rodeo (INFR) that will be held in November.

Before Todd set his sights on the

national competition in Las Vegas, he tackled his first football season. Todd and Maurice are in middle school, but both Seminoles tasted high school football on the junior varsity team at Hollywood Christian School this fall.

The school didn't field a varsity squad this season — it's expected to be back next year — but a junior varsity team sprinkled with middle schoolers played in an eight-on-eight league.

"We call it JV. It's sixth through ninth grade. Technically, it should be middle school," said Hollywood Christian football coach and athletic director Joel Dunn.

Thanks to Dunn's encouragement, Maurice came out for the team last season. He returned this year with a boost in confidence.

"I invited him to come out (last year). I didn't know what to expect because he's quiet, he's shy," Dunn said. "Now I'm seeing a whole new side of him. In his own ways, he's come out of his shell. He's attending basketball and volleyball games and mingles with the guys."

The eighth-grader said he's glad he joined the team.

"Everybody kept asking me to play," said Maurice, who worked double-duty this season protecting the quarterback and opening holes for running backs as an offensive lineman, and seeking out opponents to sack and tackle as a defensive lineman.

At 5-foot-10, 291 pounds, Maurice and his purple No. 70 jersey bring a significant presence to both sides of the ball, but size is only one aspect that makes him appealing.

"He's very athletic," Dunn said. "I have him for (physical education class). He tests out in jumps better than any of my linemen. He's got better vitals and stats as far as physical assessment — better than any other of the linemen."

Dunn expects Maurice to continue to improve on the field as off-the-field regimens — such as conditioning and weight lifting — begin to play a bigger role.

"When he finally gets to where he's got enough wind to go the entire game, he's going to be outstanding," Dunn said. "The goal for him is to keep him busy in the offseason, lifting weights and that kind of stuff."

Days after he punched his ticket to INFR in a rodeo arena, Todd was back on the football field at Hollywood Christian chasing down running backs during a game against Fort Pierce's Golden Rule Academy. He made four tackles and helped pave the way for a touchdown by the defense.

Todd spent most of the season in the joker position on defense. The hybrid role is a cross between a defensive back and linebacker.

"He's only in sixth grade and he's

playing against ninth-graders," Dunn said. "He'll be one of our key players moving forward. He knows the plays real well. He helps line people up on defense."

Todd's duties extend beyond defense. On offense, he earned a spot as a starting fullback. He scored in a preseason scrimmage.

His versatility was evident on special teams, as well.

He was the punter this season and played on the kickoff squad.

Whatever role was required of him, he filled it.

"Todd has one of the best attitudes I've got. He's gung ho," Dunn said. "He has learned so much over the last few weeks. He came out a little late, but he picked it up right away and moved into the starting lineup at fullback."

Now that Hollywood Christian's football season has ended, Todd will shift his focus back to rodeo. He is scheduled to compete Nov. 6-7 in the Jr. Bulls division at INFR.

"This is the first bull rider I've ever coached," Dunn said.



Photo courtesy of Maurice Tyler II

Eighth-grader Maurice Tyler II (No. 70) is an offensive and defensive lineman for the Hollywood Christian School JV football team.

Success on the road for Jumper, American Heritage

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

PLANTATION — Andre Jumper and the American Heritage School varsity football team made the most out of two lengthy road trips in October.

American Heritage notched a win against The Bolles School in Jacksonville Oct. 10. Seven days later the Patriots traveled north of Orlando and defeated Apopka High.

Jumper, a senior defensive end/linebacker from Big Cypress, notched 10 tackles in the victories. He had three solo tackles, one assisted tackle and forced a fumble in a 35-20 win against Bolles.

Jumper recorded a season-high six tackles in a 30-20 win against Apopka that upped American Heritage's record to 5-2.

Through seven games, Jumper had 28 tackles, including four and a half for losses.

American Heritage will host Cardinal Gibbons Oct. 31 at 7:30 p.m. in Plantation. The final regular season home game for Jumper and his senior teammates will be Nov. 7 against Kathleen at 7:30 p.m.



Kevin Johnson

Hollywood Christian School sixth-grader Todd Pierce (No. 33) prepares to make a tackle against Golden Rule Academy Sept. 30 in Hollywood.

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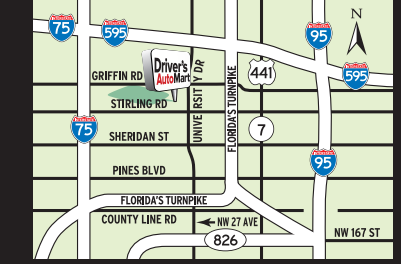
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Pierce sisters steer Hollywood Christian in right direction

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

HOLLYWOOD — Even though his team made substantial progress a year ago, Hollywood Christian School girls volleyball coach Joseph Hernandez knew he needed something else to continue the march forward.

Shae Pierce arrived just in time to become, as Hernandez noted, the “missing piece of the puzzle.” Shae, who learned to play volleyball on the Brighton Reservation while playing for teams coached by her aunt Holly Johns, didn’t waste any time to positively impact her new team. She debuted with 19 kills, seven aces, six assists and five digs in the season-opener Aug. 26.

Throughout the season, Shae has been the team’s leader in several categories, including kills, digs, aces and serving percentage. She belted a season-high 20 kills in a district semifinal victory against Edison Private Oct. 21 as Hollywood Christian clinched a spot in the Florida High School Athletic Association’s regional playoffs for the first time since 1998.

Hollywood Christian’s ascension in the win column — from two victories two years ago to nine last year — has continued this season with 14 victories heading into regionals as the Class 2A-District 14 runner-up. Shae, a sophomore middle hitter and outside hitter who cranked out double-digit kills in 13 of 22 matches, has been a welcomed addition since she transferred from American Heritage School

in Plantation this summer. As of Oct. 22, Shae had 221 kills, 116 digs and 81 aces.

“Last year we made some strides,” Hernandez said, “but we still needed that go-to player, and she’s been that ever since she’s been here.”

Shae was named co-captain with junior Celeste Grimmert and sophomore Amber Smith on a young team that started fast with seven wins in its first eight matches.

Shae is not the only Pierce who has made significant contributions. Her sister Burgundy earned a spot on the varsity squad this season as a seventh-grader. Burgundy, who could wind up playing six years of varsity volleyball, has fit right in as a starting right-side hitter and defensive specialist despite facing opponents four or five years older.

“The best thing about Burgundy is that most people think she’s a freshman or sophomore in high school,” Hernandez said. “Sometimes she forgets she’s in seventh grade. Even though she’s a seventh-grader, she’s starting at the varsity level and contributing to the team.”

Those contributions include being in the top five on the team in most categories. She had 57 assists, second most on the team, after the district semifinals.

“I told her to be confident but stay humble about it because at the end of the day you’re still a seventh-grader. How many seventh-graders can say they’re starting at the varsity level in the county. There’s maybe a handful, if that,” Hernandez said.

Until this season, the Pierce sisters had never played competitive volleyball on the same team. As for whacking a ball at their house, they’ve done that for years and it’s paid off.

“We have a lot of chemistry because we’re always bumping at the house with our volleyball and going to the gym and playing,” Shae said.

Strength in chemistry equals impressive math. In a match against rival Sheridan Hills Christian School on Oct. 3, Shae notched 13 kills and 12 digs, while Burgundy contributed 10 digs and 10 assists.

A mid-season injury relegated Burgundy to the sidelines during a match Sept. 18 against Somerset Academy. Hernandez said Burgundy’s absence hurt the team, which lost the match, but not before a gallant comeback effort was led by Shae.

With her mother, Claudia Gore, and younger brother Todd Pierce watching from the stands, Shae’s poise in the serving department was tested because Somerset was only one point away from winning the match. Any miscue by Shae would have ended the match, but she promptly reeled off six consecutive service points — including a few aces — to put Hollywood Christian in front.



Hollywood Christian School sophomore Shae Pierce (No. 6) celebrates a point against Somerset Academy Sept. 23.

Kevin Johnson

Although Somerset went on to win, Shae’s sizzling serves at a critical juncture served as examples of her intense desire to win.

“The biggest thing with Shae is that she’s been kind of like the heart and soul of our team,” Hernandez said.

“Sometimes the girls get down and you’ve just got to talk to them and they pick up. Once we get it together, we’re unstoppable,” Shae said.

As a multisport student-athlete, Shae said her first passion is basketball — she was a standout at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School — but she also enjoys volleyball.

“It’s my second sport,” Shae said. “It’s not as challenging as basketball, but there are things more particular that you have to focus on in volleyball like your approach or your setting or bumping and serving.”

Hernandez said Shae gets the most out of her 5-foot-7 frame.

“She definitely plays bigger than her height,” Hernandez said. “If she can’t outjump them or outplay them, she’ll outsmart them. The IQ she has on the court, you can’t teach that.”

Burgundy has benefited from being teammates with her older sister while making a smooth transition in the large leap from middle school volleyball to high school varsity.



Hollywood Christian School sophomore Shae Pierce drills the ball during a high school varsity volleyball match against Somerset Academy.

Kevin Johnson

“She has a great attitude about it,” Hernandez said. “Having her sister here has been a great turnaround for her. She’s been much more focused and determined.”

She was kind of young last year (on the middle school team), but now she’s much more serious about the sport. That’s the accountability level from her big sister.”



Kevin Johnson

Sisters Burgundy and Shae Pierce have both made valuable contributions to the varsity volleyball team at Hollywood Christian School.

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Seminole connections flourish for Okeechobee High football

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

OKEECHOBEE — Seminoles have played prominent roles on the Okeechobee High football team in the past, and this year is no different.

On the same field that used to be home to Garrett Madrigal and Jarrid Smith — two of the program's all-time greats — other Seminoles including Daniel Nunez Jr. and Drayton Billie have continued a pipeline that Okeechobee head coach Chris Branham appreciates.

"Throughout my history of being here, any of our kids who are Tribal kids I loved coaching them," Branham said. "There's a lot of different things you have to juggle with the fact of the distance and time and things that we require of them to be here during the summer, but we've never really had any issues with that. I've always been proud of them for their dedication and their hard work and the contributions they've given to us in this football program."

Branham was head coach during Madrigal's career and an assistant coach when Smith played. Madrigal's name is still atop the school record book as the team's career leader in passing yards and touchdown passes. Smith played for Okeechobee before he embarked on an outstanding career as an offensive lineman at Florida Atlantic University.

This season Daniel and Drayton and fellow Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School alum Zeke Matthews have been key players for Okeechobee, whose 2-4 record through six games could easily have been reversed considering three of the losses were by a touchdown or less.

"We're growing and improving. We're a little young," said Branham, whose squad reached mid-October with only 26 healthy players.

Daniel, whose sister Cheyenne is a multisport standout at the school and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole, earned a spot on the varsity squad his freshman year in 2011 and has been a fixture at linebacker and part-time running back ever since.

"On the field, you never have to worry about him giving his best effort," Branham said. "As far as his attitude and work ethic at practice, he's a joy to be around. You hate to lose somebody like that who has been around for so long, but it's been a pleasure to have him with us."

Daniel is one of eight seniors on the team.

"It's been a lot of fun. It's a good time. I'll probably miss it," said Daniel, who is eyeing a potential career in the military. "I want to go to the Navy."

Similar to Daniel, Drayton also made varsity as a freshman.

"Drayton proved that he could handle it, and he got to come up and play running

back," Branham said.

Now in his sophomore season, Daniel, who also wrestles, has seen his work load increase in the team's deep backfield. He rushed for a season-high 50 yards on eight carries in a 20-14 win against Port St. Lucie Oct. 10.

On a team that doesn't have much size — excluding 6-foot-3, 410-pound center Edrick Neal — both Daniel and Drayton play bigger than their 5-foot-5 frames.

"Drayton, for as small as he is, runs with a lot of power," Branham said. "Daniel doesn't play like he's a 5-5 kid. He'll hit anybody. We've got about 15 kids 5-5 to 5-7. We're a short team."

While Drayton plays mostly on offense and Daniel plays mostly on defense, Zeke plays both as a wide receiver and safety. Filling more than one role isn't anything new to Zeke, who is also a pitcher and shortstop on the baseball team.

"Zeke is a good all-around athlete," Branham said. "He plays baseball. He could probably play basketball if he wanted."

Although he doesn't see the ball too much as a receiver on a run-oriented offense, the 5-10, 180-pound junior has the tools to haul in whatever comes his way.

"Zeke has probably got the best overall hands, the most reliable hands on the team," Branham said.

On defense, those hands can be used in the secondary or elsewhere.

"He's tough enough he can even roll up as a linebacker at times for us," Branham said.

With Drayton and Zeke among a solid core coming back, next season looks promising for Okeechobee.

"We're excited about the future," Branham said. "We only lose eight kids; we'll return everyone else."

Part of that excitement about the future includes a trio of Pemayetv Emahakv graduates who could be battling for varsity spots. Sophomores Demetrius Clark and Trevor Thomas and freshman Richard Harris have spent the season on the junior varsity team.

Trevor handled quarterback duties until a broken finger sidelined him.

"They've got three quarterbacks. They're very young and very talented, and Trevor is one of them," Branham said. "Richard has had a very good season as a defensive end. Demetrius has had a great season as a receiver and a safety. We're hoping they maintain their grades and get to move up with us and help to impact players over the next couple years."



Kevin Johnson

This year's Okeechobee High varsity football team includes, from left, sophomore Drayton Billie, senior Daniel Nunez Jr. and junior Zeke Matthews. All three graduated from Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School.



Eileen Soler

From left, Leroy Mason, Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger and Immokalee Fire Chief Paul Anderson meet Oct. 21 to discuss plans for the first Seminole Tribe PRCA Pro Rodeo Series to be held in January 2015 on the Immokalee Reservation.

Seminoles help launch rodeo series in Florida

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Mason Pro Rodeo, Immokalee Seminole Casino and Immokalee Volunteer Firefighters Association are corraling efforts for a professional rodeo series that could draw competitors and audiences nationwide.

Sanctioned by the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) and the Women's Professional Rodeo Association (WPRA) the three-event series will award individual event prize money and points toward the \$10 million 2015 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas.

The first Seminole Tribe PRCA Pro Rodeo Series will feature three weekends of rodeo competitions: the Lakeland Pro Rodeo Classic in Lakeland (Jan. 16-17); the Peace River Pro Rodeo Classic in Wauchula (Jan. 23-24); and Immokalee Firefighters Pro Rodeo Classic — the series finale — at the Seminole Youth Ranch Arena in Immokalee (Jan. 30-31).

Leroy Mason, owner of Mason Pro Rodeo and a 50-year veteran of the rodeo business, said the first pro series with the Tribe is a pilot effort that could lead to an expanded series in 2016.

"What we do is go in and help organization committees add entertainment into the amateur or professional rodeo sport," Mason said. "In this case, we'll have

everyone from barrel racing on up coming out to compete from all the way out West and people in the East, who might not even understand rodeo, come out for the experience."

Mason and Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger, who also represents Immokalee, met Oct. 21 at the Frank Billie Field Office to further discuss plans.

Councilman Tiger said he hopes the rodeos will bring publicity to the new Immokalee hotel and casino still under construction but expected to open in late December.

"It's a great way to get the word out about what Immokalee has to offer and hopefully start up something that could become an annual event," he said.

Mason said entertainment will include veteran rodeo announcer and former competitor Jerry Todd; horse trainer Tommie Turvey and his extreme equine show; Tim "Wild Thing" Leopard and his horse riding monkeys; and PCRA rodeo clown Mark Swingler.

Talks are in the works with iHeartMedia, formerly Clear Channel Communications, to include musical entertainment featuring a nationally recognized country music artist.

"For those who follow rodeo it will be a great series; for those who don't follow rodeo as a sport but like being at the rodeo it's the best family entertainment around," Mason said.

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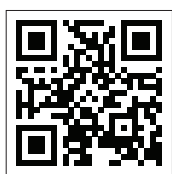
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Positivity helps Cheyenne Nunez excel on and off the volleyball court

Brighton junior shines at Okeechobee High School

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

OKEECHOBEE — This summer Cheyenne Nunez arrived in Italy with a volleyball team full of strangers.

Two weeks later she departed with lifetime friendships.

"I was the only girl from Florida," said Cheyenne, who was selected to play for a team comprised of high school players from around the U.S. "I had to meet them and become best friends with them because they were about to become my teammates the next day. That's a fast learning process."

Adaptability and affability are ingredients that the new Jr. Miss Florida Seminole brings with her on the volleyball court at Okeechobee High School and in the court of royalty representing the Tribe.



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee junior Cheyenne Nunez serves the ball during a match against Sebastian River Oct. 16 at Okeechobee High School.

"I think it shows that she is very versatile and she can relate to different groups of girls and people," said Okeechobee volleyball coach Taylor Pritchard. "I think that's what's so cool about her and that's why so many people love her because she can get along with so many different people."

Cheyenne is a junior outside hitter for Okeechobee, which won 16 games in the regular season, finished as 6A-District 13 runner-up and qualified for the regional playoffs for the seventh straight year, all amid a season of cohesiveness.

"We're literally the definition of a team," Cheyenne said. "We're best friends on and off the court. The bond is just amazing. I've never had a team that has bonded so well together. It's amazing. I love it."

It's tough to find a weakness in Cheyenne's game. She played the entire match against Sebastian River Oct. 16, displaying the versatility that Pritchard admires by delving into just about every facet, from blocking at the net to receiving in the backcourt to hitting from the outside. On a few occasions, Cheyenne even hurled her body to the court while diving to keep points alive.

"She's got a great attitude, and she's constant. Her attitude never falters," Pritchard said. "She's not someone who gets down. Even when she's having an off game, her attitude stays positive. She's a kid I can scream at and she's not going to cry about it."

But ask Cheyenne about saying goodbye at the end of the season to the team's two seniors — Lexi Ward and Sarah Hurst — and a tear or two is likely to appear.

"I hate talking about it because I've been playing with those two seniors since I was like 7 years old," Cheyenne said. "It's heartbreaking."

Lexi and Sarah won't be back next season, but Cheyenne and her Tribal teammate Odessa King, a sophomore, still have time left on the squad. Similar to Cheyenne, Odessa is an outside hitter and can fill other roles while coming off the bench.

"She also keeps a positive attitude,"

Pritchard said. "She's super respectful. She never gets upset about being on the bench. (Against Sebastian River) we used her as a middle. She's not usually a middle; she's usually a left side, but she never complains. She's always at practice working. She wants to get better. She's got a great attitude."

As for Cheyenne's new role among Tribal royalty alongside her cousin — Miss Florida Seminole Brianna Nunez — Cheyenne admitted that the balancing act with academics, volleyball, basketball, softball, searching for colleges, Tribal functions and everything else that comes with being a high school junior can be overwhelming at times.

"That has been a struggle with me," she said. "I understand how important it is to hold a title, especially representing my Tribe, and I know I have to hold higher responsibilities for myself, but it's a struggle because of the sports and my grades and then I have all this going on here and with homecoming."

The list goes on, but so does Cheyenne. "It's tough, but I can handle it. I'm enjoying it a lot," she said.

Daniel and Peggy Nunez's daughter keeps things in perspective by keeping up her grades.

"My grades are amazing," Cheyenne said. "My mom and my dad stay on my butt 24/7. If they didn't, I don't know where I'd be without them."

Cheyenne's affection for volleyball was evident this summer thanks to a busy itinerary. She attended volleyball camps at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Florida Gulf Coast University in Fort Myers and Florida State, which is where she and Brianna are scheduled to participate in a ceremony at the Seminoles' homecoming football game in November.

And there was the trip to Italy. The team gathered in a hotel room its first night and became acquainted the old-fashioned way — by talking.

"We became instant sisters," Cheyenne said. "I still talk to the girls, almost on a daily basis. I never thought in a million years I would become so close to somebody within two weeks."



Beverly Bidney

Aleina Micco, center, beams with her parents, Reina and Joey Micco, as she is honored during eighth-grade parent night before the PECS volleyball home game Oct. 13.

PECS eighth-graders honored during last home game of season

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Pemaaytv Emahaky Charter School's eighth-grade volleyball players and their parents were honored for their commitments to the sport and the school Oct. 13 at the team's last home game in Brighton.

"We want to recognize the players and their parents and thank them for all the hard work and dedication to the team," said principal Brian Greseth.

The volleyball team, which has four eighth-grade players, went on to win the match 2-0 against Osceola Middle School and finished the season undefeated with a victory the following night. It's been a big year for the girls who will move on to high school next year.

"We're the oldest and we have to lead and show the younger girls what needs to be done," said Aleina Micco, 14. "They look up to me."

"It feels better than being in sixth grade," added Raelley Matthews, 13. "Now we're the big dogs."

Coach Kim Jackson presented each eighth-grader with a bouquet of roses as their parents accompanied them. The parents have relentlessly cheered for their children and the team.

"She is doing what she likes and we are happy just to support her," said Reina Micco, Aleina's mother. "She's one of the leaders of the team and chairman of the Student Council. She's coming out of her shell."

"She's a lot more confident and is feeling good," added Joey Micco, Aleina's



Beverly Bidney

Volleyball coach Kim Jackson hugs Cady Osceola after presenting her with a bouquet of roses during the PECS volleyball game.



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee junior Cheyenne Nunez goes airborne for a kill attempt during a match against Sebastian River at Okeechobee High School.




Beverly Bidney

PECS volleyball coach Kim Jackson presents Krysta Burton, center, with a bouquet before the team's volleyball game in Brighton. Her parents, Chris and Micki Burton, accompany her.

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Indian Day

D



Tradition triumphs at tribalwide Indian Day events

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

Revelry, culture and the Unconquered spirit prevailed in September as Seminole communities tribalwide gathered to celebrate Indian Day. Festivities included canoe races, log peeling, clothing contests, archery, skillet tossing and frybread competitions.

Arthur Caswell Parker, an anthropologist of Seneca descent, proposed the first American Indian Day in the early 1900s. The Boy Scouts of America had already started setting aside a day to honor the "First Americans" when Parker suggested that they do so annually.

In 1914, the Rev. Red Fox James, another Native rights advocate, traveled 4,000 miles on horseback across the U.S. to Washington, D.C. to petition President Woodrow Wilson for Indian Day. In 1915, James went state to state on horseback again garnering support from 24 governors to extend citizenship to Native Americans.

According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs website, the first American Indian Day likely occurred in New York in 1916 when the governor decreed that every second Saturday in May be designated as such, though several other states began commemorating the day on the last Friday in September. Indiana followed in 1919. Massachusetts made it law in 1935.

In 1968 California Gov. Ronald Reagan signed a resolution for American Indian Day and in 1998 the California State Assembly legislated that it be an official state holiday. In South Dakota, American Indian Day was ordered to replace Columbus Day.

Fort Pierce

On Sept. 25 in Fort Pierce, Indian Day extended beyond the grand opening of Chupco's Landing Community Center. After the new facility debuted amid speeches, tours and lunch, attention shifted a few hundred yards away to outdoor activities, including horseshoes and archery at Chupco Youth Ranch.

The games for adults provided a chance for participants such as Derrick Timothy and Neko Osceola to pick up a horseshoe for the first time. Timothy finished in third place in the men's division followed by Osceola in fourth. Still, they were no match for the top two players: champion Leon Wilcox Sr. and runner-up George Micco.

Next to the horseshoe competition, archers set their sights on decoy targets, including an alligator, snake and deer. Celeste Stockton proved that the instruction she received from Joe Collins, of the Hollywood Recreation Department, was right on target. After Collins showed her how to properly hold a bow and load an arrow, Stockton promptly hit a bull's-eye on one of her early attempts, much to the amazement of fellow competitors.

Indian Day also included bingo for adults and a handful of portable amusement activities for kids on the lawn next to the community center. In the evening, the community center's gymnasium hosted its first dinner.

Hollywood

Hollywood's new construction – the Howard Tiger Recreation Center, airnasium, and cooking and dining chickees – took center stage as Tribal members gathered Sept. 26 to celebrate Indian Day with friendly competitions, activities and traditional fare.

The sexes each had plenty of opportunities to compete. Men took their turn at the fire in the frybread cooking contest, while women served up their best pumpkin bread.

An athletic challenge, replicating the effort it takes to gather materials in the Everglades for chickees, was a popular new event. On the field, men ran through an obstacle course carrying heavy cypress logs as women hauled piles of palm fronds through their own course.

Language, clothing and arts and crafts contests, horseshoe tournaments, skillet and hatchet throwing matches and plenty of youth activities (including a chicken chase) made for a well-rounded, traditional day. The Howard Tiger Recreation Center opened for a portion of the day to give community members a look at the ground floor, which will house the Recreation and Culture Departments.

"All of this is for you and our kids for many years to come," said Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola.

Music in the airnasium was provided by Paul Buster and RC North Jr. during lunch and dinner.

Immokalee

From the first paddle boat race to the last skillet toss, Indian Day in Immokalee was surely a family affair.

Almost everyone from the community turned out at the gym, lake and ball field chickee for two days of entertaining contests Sept. 25-26 that tested Seminole might and humor. For instance: Allen Vendor and Josh Garza thrashed opponents Jonathan Rodriguez and Ray Yzaguirre III in the paddle boat contest, but Vendor drew major laughs at the finish line when he voluntarily rolled himself out of the boat and into the drink.

"We're all competitive but we're really here to celebrate Indian Day, visit with each other and enjoy our family and friends. It's OK to just have fun," said Council project manager Raymond Garza Sr.

Games that included chickee palm tacking, log peeling, archery and turtle races, gave plenty of opportunity for cheers and camaraderie. A barbecue lunch from Cracker Cookin' & Caterin' was served up with traditional homemade frybread and spam in tomatoes.

Manuel Garza said he most enjoyed seeing entire families come out to celebrate the day.

"We show the Indian way and we always share like a big family. That's the way it's always been," he said.

He said the younger generation had a blast competing in the games but at the same time, they were practicing how ancestors survived.

"I love to see the kids involved in learning how to thatch a chickee, gig for fish and hunt ... we cannot lose our culture," Manuel Garza said. "If the world as we know it should end, we'd still be here. We would survive but we have to teach our children the same."

Big Cypress

Storm-threatening clouds couldn't cast a shadow on Indian Day festivities at Big Cypress – at least not for long.

Dozens gathered Sept. 25 at the chickees at Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena for an afternoon of fun that included giggling and skillet tossing contests and plenty of Seminole flavored fare such as frybread and corn on the cob smothered in mayo and



Beverly Bidney

From left, Tracy Smith, Anthony Young, Everett Osceola and Brian Billie make frybread for the men's competition during Hollywood Indian Day Sept. 26.

Everglades seasoning.

Cooking contests provided wafts of firewood smoke that breezed through the arena grounds dotted with department displays. The Health Department offered blood sugar screenings and fruit. Boys & Girls Club furnished ceramic art for painting. Vendors sold patchwork clothing and beaded jewelry.

Wovoka Tommie, emcee for the event, reminded the crowd that the Seminole Tribe is "Unconquered not just because we didn't sign a treaty" after the Seminole Wars but because of all the successes – economic and social – that came and continue decades since.

Children and adults crowded around a large animal pen where Sarah Hall, of Billie Swamp Safari, wrestled a huge alligator. Almost everyone wore T-shirts emblazoned with artwork created by children from Ahfachkee School.

"Native Pride" read the front of the shirt. The Seminole flag, Clans, patchwork clothing, sweetgrass basket, Seminole doll, chickee and stickball were all represented.

"It doesn't matter what you call today, Indian Day or Native American Day, it's our day," Wovoka Tommie told the crowd.

Tampa

Storms also threatened to dampen the Tampa Reservation's Indian Day celebration, but good times triumphed.

"It's been a wet day," young Sarafina Billie said, resplendent in a pink top and Seminole skirt. "But we had fun anyway."

Tampa Seminoles gathered at the Seminole Tribe's Lakeland property for a day filled with games and activities as part of the tribalwide celebration of the national event. Community members competed in log peeling, skillet tossing, archery and horseshoes. Everyone gathered beneath a large tent, where arts and crafts, basket making, woodcarving, beading, musical chairs, clothing contests and storytelling by



Eileen Soler

Spencer Jock is determined to take home first place in spear throwing during Indian Day festivities at Immokalee Sept. 26.

special cultural guest Pedro Zepeda helped pass the time.

"You put together a couple days of the hard rain we've had recently, and this is what you get," said Tampa maintenance manager Paul Simmons, pointing to several new small "lakes" that prevented any stickball, football tossing, kickball or racing across the wide grassy pastures. "But, you know, I don't hear anybody complaining."

The highlight of the afternoon was the Seminole language demonstration conducted by cultural language coordinator Herbert Jim. Seminole kids lined up to pronounce words in Seminole Creek and Mikasuki, as well as identify pictures of animals and objects in native language.

As always, food was plentiful, both catered for lunch and dinner, and the native foods from the traditional cooking demonstrations topped off the meals.

Reservation administrator Richard Henry spent most of the day driving folks around on a four-wheeler: "It's not too bad if you keep moving," he laughed. "Stop too long and you're in trouble, man."

Brighton

The Brighton Reservation celebrated Indian Day with an entire week of fun-filled activities. Festivities kicked off Sept. 20 with a fishing tournament near the Brighton 4-H Barn and a co-ed canoe race at Tucker Ridge.

Sept. 25, however, was the all-day, main-day Indian Day centerpiece, featuring games and activities for all ages at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena grounds, where the large shelter protected Tribal members from stormy conditions that lasted from the morning's 5K walk/run until the evening's turtle races.

"You wouldn't believe a turtle race could be exciting, but here in Brighton, it is huge," laughed Chairman's special assistant Norman "Skeeter" Bowers.

Bowers was right. After a day of horseshoes, cornhole, archery, log peeling, skillet throwing, basketball shootouts, and frybread and pumpkin bread making, the energy was sky high when contestants of all ages brought their tortises into the official chalk ring. The tortises were all colors and designs. One, which appeared to be a young alligator snapping turtle, was disqualified by race conductor Bowers for being "too mean."

"Everybody had a great time and that's what counted," said Bowers, who admitted he felt a wave of sadness when he looked over at the cooking area and, for the first time in his life, did not see his mother bending over and ladling her frybread cooking over the fire. Tribal cultural leader Lorene Gopher, 69, died in August.

"Mom would have been here today. She sure would've. And she would have wanted us all to have a good time," he added. "So that's what we did."

The Brighton Seminole Princess Pageant at the Veteran's Building auditorium Sept. 26 capped off the weeklong celebration with Harley Johns winning the Brighton Miss crown and Alliana Brady taking Brighton Jr. Miss.

Trail

The Trail Seminole Indian Day celebration featured activities under chickees, tents and trees on a sun-drenched Sept. 26. The event, which spanned breakfast and home-cooked lunch and dinner, kicked off with opening comments from Trail Liaison Norman Huggins.

An enclosed white tent with a stage and long tables served as a hub for many contests. From kids to seniors, participants competed in clothing contests that consisted of Seminole or Miccosukee-made long dresses, short skirts, jackets and shirts. A trio of young siblings – Jamere, Nicki and Rickkel Osceola – caught the attention of the judges as each earned first-place prizes.

Kids also had opportunities to bounce basketballs on an outdoor court or just bounce around in a giant inflatable bounce house. A watery inflatable slide also proved to be a popular destination to cool off.

Displays included arts and crafts, whose contests were open to all Native Americans. Other contests included pumpkin bread making under a chickee and log peeling.

Amos Billie led a fish-skinning demonstration by carving open large bass on a picnic table. A deer was also skinned. The Andy Buster Band, featuring guitarists Andy Buster, Raiford Starke and Bill Striker, and drummer Miguel Cantu, provided rustic music throughout the day in the middle of the camp.

Beverly Bidney, Kevin Johnson and Peter B. Gallagher contributed to this article.



Beverly Bidney

Jessica Osceola doesn't let the rain slow her down as she runs through the obstacle course loaded down with palm fronds during the athletic challenge at the Hollywood Indian Day celebration Sept. 26.

2014

FORT PIERCE INDIAN DAY



Kevin Johnson

Latravion Dorvilien, 14, scales the wall of a rock-climbing obstacle Sept. 25 during Indian Day activities at Chupco's Landing in Fort Pierce.



Kevin Johnson

Neko Osceola eyes an archery target during Indian Day activities in Fort Pierce.



Kevin Johnson

Derrick Timothy competes in a horseshoe competition.



Kevin Johnson

Leon Wilcox Sr. lines up his target during an Indian Day archery competition at Chupco's Landing in Fort Pierce.



Kevin Johnson

Timmy Smith, 9, enjoys the altitude from a bungee device during Indian Day activities at Chupco's Landing in Fort Pierce.



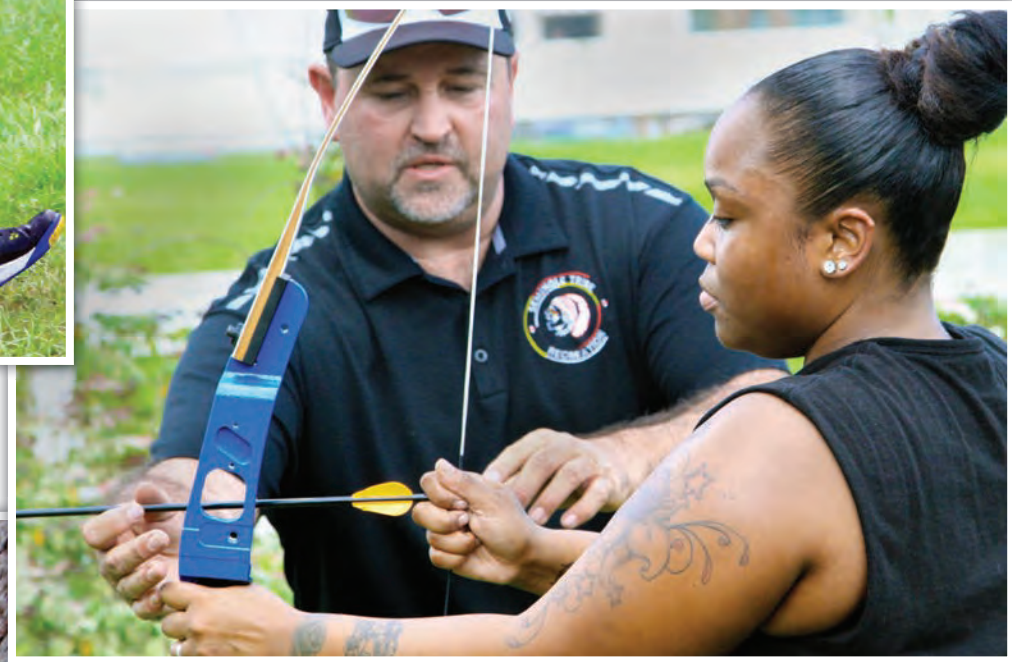
Kevin Johnson

George Micco winds up for a delivery in the Indian Day horseshoe competition.



Kevin Johnson

K'Myla Timothy, 8, soars above the ground during Indian Day activities at Chupco's Landing.



Kevin Johnson

Celeste Stockton receives an archery lesson from Joe Collins, of the Hollywood Recreation Department, during Indian Day activities in Fort Pierce.



Kevin Johnson

As Valerie Snow looks on, Margaret Wilcox tosses a horseshoe during Indian Day activities at Chupco's Landing in Fort Pierce.



Kevin Johnson

Youngsters get in line on a rain-soaked field for water games.

2014

HOLLYWOOD INDIAN DAY



Beverly Bidney

Hali Garcia starts the obstacle course with an armload of palm fronds during the athletic challenge at the Hollywood Indian Day celebration Sept. 26.



Beverly Bidney

The skillet throw is a good time for competitors and observers alike at the Hollywood Indian Day celebration.



Beverly Bidney

Angelina Yzaguirre, 6, holds Delilah Hall, 1, during lunch at Hollywood Indian Day.



Beverly Bidney

Anthony Young checks his frybread during the men's frybread competition.



Beverly Bidney

Leon Wilcox Jr. swerves through the obstacle course carrying a cypress log during the athletic challenge.



Beverly Bidney

Kids make their own fun between organized events at the Hollywood Indian Day celebration.



Beverly Bidney

Official games are not necessary for these two who race for fun during the Hollywood Indian Day celebration at the Ball Field.



Beverly Bidney

Martha Tommie, of Brighton, throws a horseshoe as Kevin Osceola watches during Hollywood Indian Day.



Beverly Bidney

Kids attempt to catch a chicken during the chicken chase at Hollywood Indian Day.



Beverly Bidney

Cisco Rodriguez gets tips from Maydell Osceola as he makes pumpkin bread at the Hollywood Indian Day celebration.



Beverly Bidney

Logan Wilcox proudly carries the chicken he caught during the chicken chase.



IMMOKALEE INDIAN DAY



Eileen Soler

Kenny Joe Davis puts his entire body into a cypress log peeling contest Sept. 26 during an Immokalee Indian Day contest.



Eileen Soler

Juanita Martinez, left, and Cecilia Pequino laugh and paddle in a paddle boat race across the Immokalee Reservation lake in the first of many contests Sept. 26 to mark Indian Day.



Photo courtesy of Demi Garza

Council project manager Raymond Garza Sr. hugs his daughter Raylin Sept. 25 during Immokalee's Indian Day clothing contest.



Eileen Soler

Jordan Rodriguez shows near perfect form for the spear throw competition Sept. 26 at the Immokalee Indian Day celebration.



Eileen Soler

Manny Garza eyes the bull's-eye in a Sept. 26 Indian Day archery contest at the Immokalee Reservation.



Eileen Soler

Willie Callins Jr. pays close attention to his mother, Bonnie Davis, while she competes in the chickee fan tacking contest Sept. 26.



Photo courtesy of Mark Jock

Immokalee residents line up Sept. 25 for the men's clothing contest.



Eileen Soler

Ray Yzaguirre III leans into the wood during a log peeling contest Sept. 26 at the Immokalee Indian Day celebration.



Eileen Soler

Becky Martinez keeps a crowd in suspense as she winds up to toss a skillet during Indian Day games played Sept. 26 at Immokalee Reservation.



Eileen Soler

Jazmine Garcia, left, and MaryJane Martinez can barely wait to sink their teeth into Indian Day cake Sept. 25.

BIG CYPRESS INDIAN DAY



Photo courtesy of Mary L. Billie

Kalina Cavazos is sweet and proud at the same time while competing in the Big Cypress Indian Day clothing contest.



Eileen Soler

From left, Jennifer Billie, C.J. Hall and Marlin Miller prepare traditional foods on an open fire for a cooking contest Sept. 25 during the Big Cypress Indian Day celebration.



Eileen Soler

Mary Tigertail keeps skillet throw competitors on their toes with tip-top tossing form.



Eileen Soler

Issaiah Billie puts his muscle to work at log peeling during a contest at Big Cypress Indian Day festivities.



Eileen Soler

Big Cypress boys dodge wind and rain for a bit of skateboarding fun at the Big Cypress Indian Day celebration.



Photo courtesy of Mary L. Billie

Little girls line up in their finest traditional contemporary patchwork dresses for an Indian Day clothing contest on the Big Cypress Reservation.



Eileen Soler

Alligator wrestler Sarah Hall drags a massive reptile before a crowd during Indian Day on Big Cypress Reservation.



Eileen Soler

Lance Howard has his eyes on the bull's-eye during an archery competition.



Eileen Soler

Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger, left, and Jonah Cypress put their feet to the pedals in an Indian Day trike race sponsored by the Health Department.



Eileen Soler

Big Cypress Preschool students stroll hand in hand past Indian Day vendor and activity chickees at the Big Cypress celebration.



Eileen Soler

Boys lined up for a gigging contest get an impromptu tutorial from Hank Osceola during Indian Day festivities.

2014

TAMPA INDIAN DAY



Peter B. Gallagher

Seminole Fire Rescue employees keep their distance while Linda Lee Henry throws a pan during the skillet toss competition at the Tampa Indian Day celebration Sept. 27.



Peter B. Gallagher

Barbara Cypress enjoys a day in the shade making beads during the Tampa Indian Day celebration on the Lakeland property.



Peter B. Gallagher

Susie Doctor walks her granddaughter before the judges during the clothing contest at Tampa Indian Day.



Peter B. Gallagher

William Cypress takes aim during the archery tournament.



Peter B. Gallagher

Alana Henry prepares to make traditional Seminole food during the Tampa Indian Day celebration at the Lakeland property.



Peter B. Gallagher

Maggie Garcia demonstrates how she starts a Seminole basket.



Peter B. Gallagher

Mason Foret holds up a tired Nolan Little during Indian Day festivities on the Lakeland property.



Peter B. Gallagher

Carissa Colon keeps close watch on her nephew Jayden Henderson and niece Ja'Niya Hubbard.



Peter B. Gallagher

Stacy Smith demonstrates that she can skin a log with the best of them during the log peeling competition at the Tampa Indian Day event.



Peter B. Gallagher

Paparazzi swarm around, from left, Sierra Simmons, Stacy Smith and Tina Smith during the clothing contest at Tampa Indian Day.



Peter B. Gallagher

Language coordinator Herbert Jim tests Sarafina Billie's Mikasuki and Creek during a word game.

2014

BRIGHTON INDIAN DAY



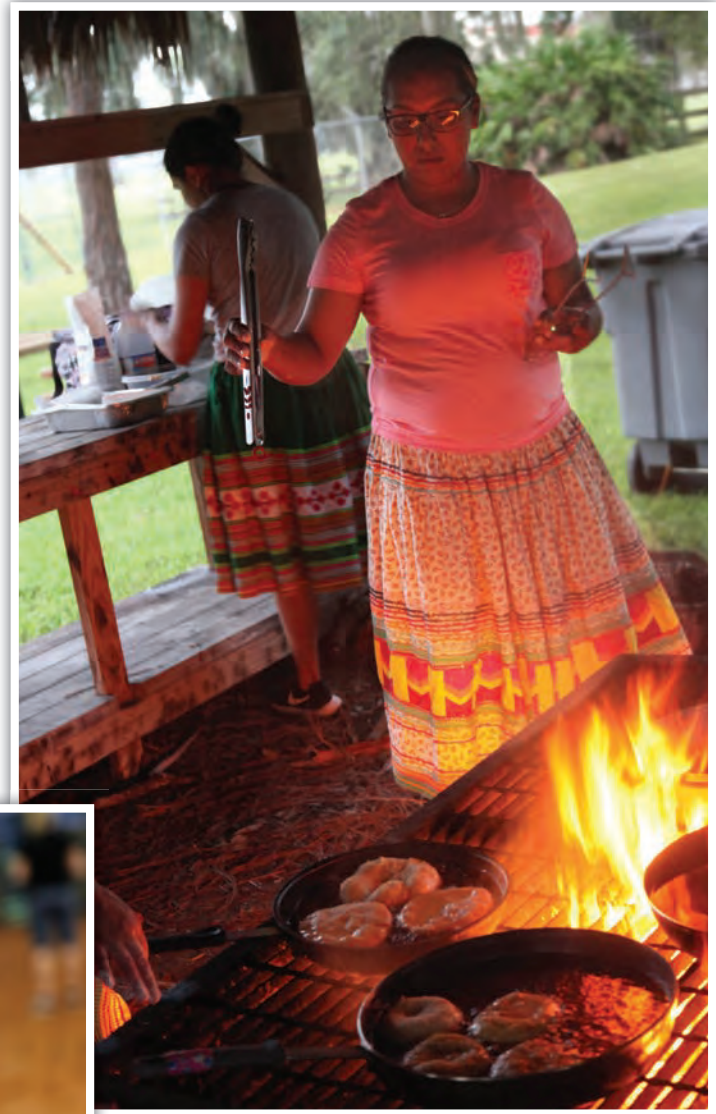
Peter B. Gallagher

Tawnee Baker has got her mama's back as she celebrates Indian Day in Brighton Sept. 25. The reservation kicked off the celebration earlier in the week with a fishing tournament and concluded festivities with the Brighton Princess Pageant.



Peter B. Gallagher

Sandy Billie Jr. is the picture of concentration as he scrapes skin off his pole in the log peeling competition at the Brighton Reservation Indian Day celebration.



Peter B. Gallagher

In the warm glow of the Seminole cook chickee, Jaryaca Baker Rosario tends to her frybread.



Peter B. Gallagher

With a strong grip on the horseshoe, Crystal Weimann aims for the pole.



Peter B. Gallagher

Lewis Gopher Jr. takes aim during the archery contest during Brighton Indian Day festivities.



Peter B. Gallagher

Clayson Osceola chooses his pan and waits patiently for his turn during the kids' skillet toss competition.



Peter B. Gallagher

Adults, children and turtles watch a winner cross the line during the Brighton turtle races.



Peter B. Gallagher

Salina Dorgan kneads her famous frybread dough into perfect shape during the Brighton Indian Day event.



Peter B. Gallagher

Bryce Baker scorches the ground in the Indian Day 100-yard dash at the Brighton Reservation's Indian Day celebration.



Peter B. Gallagher

Robbie Jimmie hides beneath the event schedule sandwich board during Brighton Indian Day festivities at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena.

2014

TRAIL INDIAN DAY



Omar Billie, 6, splashes his way down a waterslide at the Trail Indian Day celebration.

Kevin Johnson

Women compete in a pumpkin bread contest at the Trail Indian Day celebration Sept. 26 at the Huggins Camp.

Kevin Johnson



Annie Tim prepares lapale at the Trail celebration.

Kevin Johnson



Frances Osceola competes in a clothing competition at the Trail Indian Day celebration.

Kevin Johnson



Youngsters take a break from activities to rest on a bench during the Trail Indian Day celebration. From left are Shawna Frank, Annora Osceola, Kashmir Hughes and Waylon Osceola.

Kevin Johnson



Kingston Billie, 6, center, and Paris Huggins, 8, left, enjoy a friendly basketball game with Kelvin Huggins Jr., 8.

Kevin Johnson



Jamere Osceola stands before judges while competing in the clothing contest's jacket category.

Kevin Johnson



Zaiden Frank, 6, enjoys the bounce house at the Trail Indian Day celebration.

Kevin Johnson



Andy Buster, from the Andy Buster Band, sings and plays guitar at the Trail Indian Day celebration.

Kevin Johnson



Amos Billie teaches his son, also named Amos, how to skin a fish at the Trail Indian Day celebration.

Kevin Johnson