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Voice of the Unconquered

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Court in session



Chairman James E. Billie swears in Willie Johns as Chief Justice of Tribal Court during the judicial inauguration Feb. 19 in Hollywood as his granddaughter Bobbie Dale Osceola holds the Bible.

Beverly Bidney

First Seminole Tribal Court takes civil cases into own hands

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Furthering sovereign rights of self-government and self-determination, the Seminole Tribe of Florida celebrated the creation of its Tribal

Court system Feb. 19 at the inauguration of its first panel of six Tribal justices and judges.

Just yards from the landmark Council Oak where the Seminole Constitution was signed in 1957, Chairman James E. Billie presided over a solemn ceremony that

cemented a new historic milestone via judicial oaths of office.

Emcee Sally Tommie, a former Fort Pierce community liaison, called the event “tremendous.”

“It allows us to stay in tune and in touch with who we are. It’s a way for our people to move forward in sovereignty,” Tommie said.

Pledging to defend the Seminole and United States constitutions, the justices and judges also promised to “administer justice without respect to persons, and do equal right to the poor and to the rich ... and to faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all the duties” required.

Installed were: Chief Justice Willie Johns; Chief Judge Moses B. Osceola; Associate Justice Amy Johns; Associate Justice Moses Jumper Jr.; Associate Judge Tina Marie Osceola; and Associate Judge Mary Tigertail.

The judges and justices are charged with resolving civil disputes through the Tribal Court’s two branches – a trial court where judges try new cases and an appellate court where the justices hear appeals on prior rulings.

Helene Buster, director of the Tribe’s Family Services Department, was among more than 300 Tribal members and local and state officials who turned out to mark the occasion.



Beverly Bidney

The newly established Tribal Court officials pose under the boughs of the historic Council Oak tree after the Feb. 19 inauguration ceremony. From left are Associate Judge Tina Marie Osceola, Associate Judge Mary Tigertail, Chief Judge Moses B. Osceola, Chief Justice Willie Johns, Associate Justice Amy Johns and Associate Justice Moses Jumper Jr.

♦ See TRIBAL COURT on page 5A

USET meeting aims for change

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

ARLINGTON, Va. — Just minutes from Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., representatives from 26 sovereign Native Tribes gathered Feb. 9-12 in Arlington, Virginia to become one voice at the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) Impact Week Meeting 2015.

Under the motto “Strength in Unity,” USET convened the 52-member Board of Directors made up of tribal top brass and USET’s 12 committee chairs to address multi-tribal concerns from culture and heritage to social services, tribal justice and veteran affairs.

Looming, however, were several U.S. congressional issues that affect Indian Country. Among the focus items:

the Carcieri Fix, which aims to correct a 2009 amendment to the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act that muddles land into trust opportunities; trust modernization to compel Tribes toward comprehensive and integrated land use planning and self-determination; and congressional approval for a \$460 million Indian Health Service increase.

Joel M. Frank Sr., Seminole Tribe director of Government Relations and Initiatives, sat in for Chairman James E. Billie who was unable to attend. Frank voiced an additional concern: the Keystone XL pipeline, which will skirt about 17 reservations and impact sacred lands and natural resources in the Central Plains.

Congressman Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.), who asked to appear before USET, called the Feb. 11 congressional approval of

the pipeline “sad” and noted that the vote occurred “under the cover of night.”

“For eight years we were able to hold it off. It is such a struggle but not a fait accompli. Assessments have to happen to determine the dire effects on water, religious and sacred sites,” Grijalva said.

USET President Brian Patterson (Oneida Indian Nation) responded, “We know our place in the universal view. But will we stand to the side and scream our opposition? Or can we do something?”

As political strategists predicted, President Barack Obama vetoed the bill Feb. 24.

Several resolutions submitted by USET committees were passed by the board during the organization’s closing

♦ See IMPACT WEEK on page 9A

Pow Wow power strong at Seminole country return

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — After nearly a decade of hibernation, the spirited all-Tribe dance competitions of the Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow roared back to life with a bigger and better turnout than bygone years.

With 205 competitive dancers, seven drum groups, flag bearers from four Tribes and Tribal leaders from regions throughout Indian Country, the floor of Hard Rock Live was filled Feb. 6-8 for the duration of the 44th annual event.

“I know how hard it is for everyone to get here. Everyone has budgets they have to be aware of. Just coming out is a testament to what everyone does and what they all believe in,” said Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, who served as Tribal Fair director.

For drummer Mervel LaRose, a member of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Tribe, just being there was a blessing. His Native American Music Award-winning drum group, The Boyz, based in Minnesota, placed first in the northern drum competition.

“We get to see different people from different Tribes. And, basically, the weather is nicer here than in the minus 15-degree temperatures we left in the Twin Cities,” LaRose said.

The Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood campus, including Hard Rock Live and the Seminole Paradise parking lot, was flooded with Indian Country visitors from Georgia to California to Canada.

Nearly 8,000 people per day attended the event, shopped at more than two dozen Native jewelry and clothing vendor booths, dined at eateries including several that offered

sofkee and Indian burgers, and jammed out during concerts by Indian Country favorites Derek Miller, Jonny Lang and Guthrie Brown.

Homegrown entertainment was provided by the Cowbone Band and the Osceola Brothers Band.

Gloria Wilson, the top coordinator for the event with assistance from Wanda Bowers, said her phone began ringing almost immediately after the event was posted on Powwows.com and continued ringing practically around the clock because of global time zones.

“I had responses from all over Indian Country, Canada and everywhere. We really made the effort to get the word out – even to South America and Africa,” Wilson said.

One phone call came from a shortwave radio station that hosts public interest segments worldwide. When the station called, Wilson had 10 minutes to prepare for a five-minute, on-air interview that went global. Local television and radio spots were also worked into Wilson’s hectic schedule.

The crowning of Little Mr. and Little Miss Seminole at Hard Rock Live plus the Bill Osceola Memorial Rodeo on the Big Cypress Reservation rounded out the weekend events. More than 50 novice cowboys and cowgirls competed in the youth rodeo division.

♦ See TRIBAL FAIR on page 6A



Eileen Soler

The executive director of the Seminole Tribe’s Native Learning Center, Georgette Palmer Smith, a member of the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma, competes Feb. 7 in the jingle dance at the 44th annual Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow.

BC’s Josie Billie Highway revamped for safer travel

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — The first portion completed in the multimillion dollar Snake Road improvement project in Big Cypress was celebrated with a ribbon cutting and speeches Jan. 30 at Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena.

“Today we mark an important milestone,” said Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank.

Actually, the occasion heralded 2.25 miles of a wider and safer Josie Billie Highway, the stretch of the road that cuts through the heart of Big Cypress Reservation to the community’s northern border.

“(Improvements) have been sorely needed, but to paraphrase Robert Frost, we have miles to go before we sleep,” Rep. Frank said.

Approximately 16 more miles of road is still left to address, Rep. Frank said, on one the most dangerous roads in Florida. The three-part project begins just north of Interstate 75 where Snake Road gets its name. For miles, the serpentine road flanked by a canal and drainage ditches squiggles through 33 of 34 curves that are deemed unsafe for the 45 mph speed zone.

So far, the roadway from about 1,000 feet north of the Big Cypress rodeo to just a few yards south of the Big Cypress RV Park has been finished. The completed section,

funded largely by a \$3.7 million TIGER III grant from the United States Department of Transportation (DOT), includes two 14-foot travel lanes in each direction, a paved 16-foot median, a 5-foot sidewalk on the east side and a 12-foot multiuse path on the west side.

TIGER is an acronym for Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery. Since 2009, Congress has dedicated \$4.1 billion to help finance transportation projects that are exceptionally challenging, multi-jurisdictional and not eligible for ordinary DOT funding.

According to the Tribe’s 2011 grant application, Snake Road from I-75 through Big Cypress is deadly “based on crash data and tremendous concern by both the Miccosukee Tribe and Seminole Tribe.”

Along the Big Cypress Reservation stretch alone, from January 1997 to July 2001, 74 vehicle accidents were reported that left 46 injured and six dead. From February 2004 through November 2010, 129 crashes with 46 injuries and two fatalities were reported.

“We’ve been going 30 to 40 years here with so many deaths to Tribal members and others,” said Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger. “If we only had guardrails lives would have been saved.”

♦ See SNAKE ROAD on page 6A

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Newly crowned Little Mr. and Miss step into big roles.
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Editorial

Grandkids inherit grandmother's talent

• James E. Billie

What I've been seeing lately is it seems like every generation picks up the habits of the first generation. I finally got to hear the Osceola brothers – Cameron, 18, Tyson, 16, and Sheldon, 13 – play their music at the 77th annual Brighton Field Day. I knew they played music, but I did not really know how well they played. And I think I did hear them a few years back and they were just getting to the point that they were good, and what was interesting to note is I kept wondering, who did these boys pick up their musical ability from?

I figured out it was their grandmother, Jimmy Hank Osceola's wife, Marie Willie (her maiden name). Marie Willie, back when she and I were teenagers, 13-14 years

old, we all went to the same church, First Baptist Church in Hollywood. And Marie would play the piano and I would lead the songs. Every Sunday we did the same things.

We weren't really that good – she was better than I was. I was trying to remember the songs, but she played the piano very well and I would try to follow, and every Sunday we would try to lead the songs at Church. Sunday morning and Sunday night.

This went on for several years, maybe four or five years, until we all reached the high school age. I finally left Hollywood and went to Haskell Indian school and I believe Marie stayed here and went to McArthur High School and graduated. Eventually she married Jimmy Hank Osceola. I eventually graduated from high school at Haskell Institute and after that I joined the Army and came back to Florida in 1968. By that time Jimmy Hank and Marie had children and life went on.

I played guitar and attempted my best at folk singing. And I would see children trying to learn my songs and I often wondered who was going to take over

and go way beyond what I was doing or what any of the other people were doing and lo and behold, here came the Osceola brothers. I believe, in my opinion, here in modern times, they are some of the best musicians around. And they are probably going to get better.

So whatever the Osceola brothers are doing now, there is probably somebody else out there watching and listening and wishing they could do the same thing. And several years from now, here comes the next generation doing their best to play great music, to carry on.

So what am I trying to say? Parents, no matter what you are doing, there are some young ones out there watching you. Remember to set a good example, for that next generation is probably going to out-do us by a long shot.

I really enjoyed the Osceola Brothers Band and I thank their grandmother, Marie Willie Osceola, for setting the pace, setting the example for them.

Sho-naa-bish.

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



Peter B. Gallagher

One of the greatest alligator wrestlers in Seminole history, Thomas McGown Storm Sr.'s specialty was deepwater wrestling; he would dive into a deep pool of water and capture a full-grown alligator with his bare hands.

R.I.P. Thomas McGown Storm Sr., alligator wrestler, artist, culturist

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Thomas McGown Storm Sr., a Seminole known for his exploits in the deepwater alligator pit and behind the painter's easel, crossed over Feb. 6, two weeks after his 54th birthday. His spectacular gator shows and virile warrior paintings were filled with traditional Seminole culture, which he freely dispensed to anyone who wanted to know.

Articulate with a keen sense of humor, Storm was once described in a news article as a cross between Hulk Hogan and Bob Hope. He was a consummate entertainer who stretched the limits of danger in his gator wrestling shows, diving into tanks of water and using his bare hands to pull the likes of 10-foot gators and giant alligator snapping turtles to the surface. In his later years, Storm dedicated much of his time to art. His pencil, pen, ink and pastel masterpieces can be seen at many museums, including Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki.

His themes demonstrated his Seminole

ancestors' historic bravery, which ran in his blood, he loved to say.

Born on Jan. 24, 1961 to George Storm and Mary Jane Storm, Thomas was a member of the Otter Clan. He had three brothers: Jacob Storm, Simon Storm and Isaac Storm. He also had two adopted siblings: Angela Storm and Thomas Jeffrey Storm.



Photo by Peter B. Gallagher

He is survived by his five children: Trishanna Storm, Thomas Storm Jr., Chelsea Storm, Trystyn Storm, Taryn Storm and adopted son Jeffrey Dean; and four grandchildren: Tyler, Trevor, Kaylee and Kaden, with another grandchild on the way.

He has many cousins, aunts, uncles and clan family members he leaves behind who love him dearly.

From Singapore to Hollywood, Storm thrilled crowds as one of the world's greatest alligator wrestlers, a true connection to the bold and brave Seminole warriors of yore. He could sing the songs and dance the stomp and grab a rattlesnake in the blink of an eye. Rest in peace, Thomas Storm, you will be missed. And long remembered.

Father Serra no saint to Indian Country

• Steven Newcomb

On Jan. 15, 2015, during a flight from Sri Lanka to Manila, Pope Francis declared to reporters: "In September, God willing, I will canonize Junipero Serra in the United States." In other words, the pope intends to make Serra a Roman Catholic saint. Speaking of Serra, the pope said: "He was the evangelizer of the West in the United States." The same institution that brought us the Crusades, a Borgia Pope and the Inquisition is now going to sanctify Serra's legacy.

How are we to understand the context of Serra's founding of the "evangelizing" Spanish Catholic mission system in 1769, in what Spain then called "Alta California"? In his comprehensive book "A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas" (1992), theologian Luis Rivera-Pagán wrote: "Truly the Spanish conquerors of the Americas were driven by their quest for God, gold and glory. But it was the language related to God – theology – that served to rationalize avarice and ambition, not vice versa." He continued: "It was religion that attempted to sacralize [make sacred] political domination and economic exploitation."

The word "evangelization," used by Pope Francis, traces to "bringing the good news of a military victory." That a war analogy and a bid for "conquest" is apt for Serra's era of evangelism is documented by a joint statement made in California in 1773 by the Dominican and Franciscan Orders of the Catholic Church. In his book "The Missions and Missionaries of California," Vol. I, (Mission Santa Barbara, 1928), Father Zephyrin Englehardt quoted the joint Dominican-Franciscan statement. It opens by invoking the names of the founders of their religious orders, whom they called "our holy Patriarchs, Dominic de Guzman and Francis of Assisi." Assisi, of course, is the Catholic religious figure and saint, whose name Pope Francis chose for his papacy.

As the document continues, the religious orders talk of "finding ourselves in this corner of the world of Old and New California, occupied with the spiritual conquest and the conversion of the infidels..." The word "conquest" is accurately re-expressed as "domination." A genocidal system of violent evangelism and domination was the means of achieving what the Mexican scholar Manuel Serrano

y Sanz called "Spanish domination in America." ("Orígenes de la dominación española en América," Madrid, 1918). This historical reality informed the title of the 1987 book "The Missions of California: A Legacy of Genocide," by Rupert Costo and Jeanette Costo. It was published as part of the fierce debate that took place over the proposed beatification of Father Serra in the 1980s.

The Catholic Church worked to achieve the spiritual conquest of infidels by means of temporal political domination of Church and State, the Cross and the Sword, over "the infidels." Such domination is what Pope Francis' predecessor Pope Alexander VI laid the path for with his papal bull documents from 1493. Those documents called for "the propagation of the Christian empire" and for non-Christian "barbarous nations" to be "reduced" to the Catholic faith and Christian religion. A papal bull from May 3, 1493 declared that the Spanish monarchs were authorized to take over any lands, discovered and to be discovered, that were not under the domination of any Christian dominator.

Junipero Serra's efforts at evangelization were undertaken in furtherance of the objectives set forth in papal documents of the Holy See. Evangelization was one means of extending the religio-political Spanish Catholic system of domination into the lands and territories of the original and independent Native nations of the continent and the hemisphere throughout "the Americas."

Pope Francis is a member of the Jesuit Order. A biography about Father Juan Salvatierra, who was also a member of the Jesuit Order, sheds light on the nature and legacy of the Spanish Catholic system that Pope Francis is celebrating by declaring Father Serra to be a Catholic saint. The book's title is "Juan Maria de Salvatierra of the Company of Jesus, Missionary of the Province of New Spain, and Apostolic Conqueror of the Californias," by Miguel Venegas.

The book was originally published in Spanish in 1754. Marguerite Eyer Wilbur provided the 1929 English translation. As expressed in English, the original title page of the book reads in part: "Written learnedly and in detail by Father Miguel Venegas, Professed of the four Vows, of this same Company [of Jesus] and condensed into a brief compendium by Father Juan Antonio De Oviedo, Rector of the College of San Andres in Mexico, and Censor for the Holy Inquisition."

The original title page in Spanish reads: "Quien La Dedicó A Maria Santissima Madre de Dios, Reyna de todo los Santos, Senora de los Exercitos, y Conquistadora de nuevos Reynos en su Sagrada Imagen De Loreto." This translates in English as follows: "By whom it [the book] is dedicated to the Most Holy Mary Mother of God, Queen of all the Saints Lady of Armies and Conqueress of new Kingdoms in her Holy Image of Loreto" (pp. 48-49).

Pope Francis' decision to grant sainthood to Father Serra by canonizing him celebrates the genocidal legacy of the Spanish Catholic mission system of domination. Pope Alexander VI unleashed that devastating system on our Original Nations shortly after Cristobal Colón made a successful voyage from Spain to the Caribbean and back. The pope's decision to canonize Serra constitutes a celebration by the Holy See of the empire of Christendom, and its efforts to achieve the "spiritual conquest" (domination) of our "infidel" ancestors, in the name of "the Prince of Peace."

Robert Jackson, in "The Dynamic of Indians Demographic Collapse in the Mission Communities in Northwestern New Spain (1990)," gave a grim sense of the devastation of the Spanish Catholic Mission system: "Finally, more than 90 percent of the children born in the missions died before reaching age 10." In his sampling of the Baja and Alta California missions, Jackson stated: "In other words, the population of the seven Baja California [mission] establishments experienced a mean rate of 83 percent [population] decline, and 90 percent in the Alta California missions." The life expectancy at birth, he said, was 7.4 years for the seven Baja California mission[s], and 4.5 years for ... 20 Alta California establishments."

Given the unsaintly and deadly toll that Father Serra's Catholic mission system had on Native Nations and families in Alta California, it is a cruel irony that Pope Francis will finalize his canonization of Father Serra during the World Meeting of Families, in "the city of Brotherly love," in the territory of our Lenape Nation.

Steven Newcomb (Shawnee, Lenape) is co-founder and co-director of the Indigenous Law Institute and author of "Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery" (Fulcrum, 2008). He has been studying federal Indian law and international law since the early 1980s.

Native veterans steadfast on war memorial mission



Eileen Soler

During USET Impact Week Meeting 2015 in Arlington, Virginia, Army veteran Stephen Bowers, chairman of USET Veterans Affairs Committee, left, and committee members honor Air Force program analyst Juanita J. Mullin, a member of the Seneca Nation.

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

ARLINGTON, Va. — It is documented, said Seminole veteran Stephen Bowers, chairman of the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) Veteran Affairs Committee, that Native American men and women have fought valiantly for the homeland since colonization – but no U.S. war memorial exists in Washington, D.C. to honor the only true first Americans.

"Now we have an opportunity to have our own exhibit of Indians from all wars from 1812 to Afghanistan and we are asking for support," Bowers said as he entered a

resolution Feb. 11 to the USET Board of Directors during the organization's Impact Week Meeting 2015 in Arlington, Virginia. "Every Tribe has a military legacy, and we aim to let the world know it."

Bowers requested USET support seeking financial help from among the organization's 26-Tribe membership for the First Americans Veteran Campaign. The project could break ground in 2017 and be completed by 2019.

"You don't have to say anymore to the board on the matter," said USET Vice President Randy Noka (Narragansett Indian Tribe).

The resolution passed unanimously.

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Community



77th annual Brighton Field Day relays past traditions to present

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter



Justin Gopher, Ethan Gopher, Kerwin Miller and Adam Osceola compete in horse races Feb. 14 during the Brighton Field Day and PRCA Rodeo.

Beverly Bidney

BRIGHTON — Cowboys and crowds converged to celebrate Seminole heritage during the 77th annual Brighton Field Day Festival and PRCA Rodeo Feb. 13-15.

More than 6,300 people attended the action-packed event that featured long-standing traditions, like clothing contests and rodeo competitions, and new additions, including Indian relay horse racing.

Field Day began in 1938 as an athletic competition between reservations, said Amos Tiger, Fred Smith Rodeo Arena director and a Field Day lead coordinator. Once the rodeo, food, and arts and crafts were added to the lineup, the event became a big festival.

Chairman James E. Billie said he remembers attending Field Day as a boy and is as impressed by it now as he was then.

“The competitions that took place were amazing to me as a 6 year old,” he said. “I remember Billy Bowlegs, he was in his 70s or 80s, yet he competed with young men in the broad jump. Today, the competition is in the rodeo.”

Members of the Florida State University marching band, joined by Osceola riding Renegade, once again made an appearance at Field Day, which is the only event where they appear outside FSU’s annual schedule.

“Whether you are an FSU fan or not their presence is moving, especially during the preshow of the rodeo,” said Lucy Bowers, a Field Day lead coordinator. “The band performs the national anthem and then the band brings in Renegade and Osceola with their war chant; your chest just fills with pride.”

The grand entry parade Feb. 14 featured Tribal officials and royalty, exhibition pow-wow dancers, floats and decorated ATVs and golf carts. For the first time, the Lakota Women Warriors Color Guard participated in the parade and paid homage to their Lakota culture and military service.

The group of veterans formed in 2014 to bring recognition to Native American women in the military. They dress in traditional Native American clothing with

military jackets.

“We are three lady veterans who came together to lead our people not in active duty but by giving back to our community,” said Brenda White Bull, U.S. Marine Corps 1989-2009. “Giving back to our people is our calling and we hope to give that back to you. We are all related.”

Appearances by Jimmy Riffle, from Animal Planet’s “Gator Boys;” Britney, Kasey and Chelsea Brooks from Great American Country’s “Growing Up Gator;” and concerts by DJ Elizabeth Cook, the Shannon Reed Band, and George Molton and 90 Proof kept attendees entertained throughout the three-day event.

Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, Hollywood Board Rep. Steve Osceola, Brighton Board Rep. Larry Howard and Tribal member Richard Osceola presented Cook, host of “Apron Strings” on SiriusXM radio, with two patchwork aprons.

“This is a beautiful day with good music and good food,” Richard Osceola said.

“And good people,” added Rep. Howard.

◆ See FIELD DAY on page 8A

“It’s always good to come out and visit. It enables me to kick back and enjoy the day.”

— Joe Frank,
Big Cypress Board Rep.

Cattle drive to thunder through Big Cypress March 21

STAFF REPORT

BIG CYPRESS — Cattle will be on the move in Big Cypress during the 19th annual Junior Cypress Cattle Drive & Rodeo on March 21. The event will be led by Lydia Cypress, daughter of this year’s Honorary Trail Boss Johnny Cypress, one of the original Big Cypress cattlemen.

Registration and breakfast begin at 7 a.m. at Billie Swamp Safari; the cattle drive starts at 10 a.m. The Eastern Indian Rodeo Association-sanctioned Junior Cypress Memorial Rodeo and a barbecue dinner will commence following the drive.

Cowboys and cowgirls will coerce the Immokalee and Big Cypress livestock 9 miles from the West Boundary Road spillway to the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena. The event is a symbolic reenactment of Florida cattle drives dating as far back as the 1600s when Native Americans often traded cattle with the Spaniards.

The cattle drive began in 1997 in memory of Junior Cypress, a cattleman and head of the Big Cypress cattle program for more than 30 years. His nephew, former Chairman Mitchell Cypress, remembers Junior used to drive around the reservation with a pickup truck filled with kids heading for the cow pens or the swimming hole.

For more information, visit www.SeminoleCattleDrive.com.



Archive photo

Johnny Cypress is the honorary trail boss for the 19th annual Cattle Drive to be held March 21 in Big Cypress.

Big Cypress Shootout to reenact Seminole War March 13-15

STAFF REPORT

BIG CYPRESS — The Big Cypress Shootout, a reenactment of the Second Seminole War featuring Seminole warriors on horseback and the earth-shaking blasts of gunfire and cannons, will take place March 13-15 at Billie Swamp Safari.

The reenactment will transport attendees to the 1830s as the Florida Seminole Indians fought the United States government from removal. The seven-year war for their freedom and their homeland pitted less than 2,000 Seminole warriors against 52,000 U.S. soldiers.

The Shootout honors the Seminoles’ struggle and sacrifice and celebrates their victory to remain the Unconquered Seminole Tribe of Florida.

The three-day event will also include music, Seminole food, Seminole and pioneer artisans, tomahawk throws, authentic Seminole and soldier camps, venomous snake shows and alligator wrestling. Period settlers from around the country will hew wood, iron and silver crafts and depict trading techniques from the Seminole War era.

March 13 is for students only. Battle reenactments for the public will take place at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. on March 14 and at 2 p.m. on March 15. Gates open at 10 a.m. and close at 5 p.m.

Billie Swamp Safari is located on Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation just north of Interstate 75 (Alligator Alley) off exit 49.

Tickets cost \$10 for adults and \$6 for children. For more information, call 1-800-GO-SAFARI or email shootout@semtribe.com.



Beverly Bidney

Miss Brighton Harley Johns, left, and Jr. Miss Brighton Alliana Brady, second from left, lead Seminole royalty in the parade around the amphitheater during the grand entry of the 77th annual Brighton Field Day and PRCA Rodeo.

Little Mr. and Miss Seminole step into big roles

Victoria Benard crowned Little Miss; Gregory James III captures Little Mr.

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The 36 tiny tots vying for the 2015-16 Little Mr. and Miss

Seminole titles Feb. 6 may have been small in stature, but they stood tall in their best patchwork outfits while commanding the crowd’s attention at Hard Rock Live.

After circling the arena floor twice,

standing still for judges to rate their regalia and answering challenging questions about their favorite foods and their pets’ names, contestants waited patiently with poise for the results.

Victoria Benard, of Davie, captured the Little Miss Seminole crown and Gregory James III, of Brighton Reservation, took Little Mr. Seminole.

Judges came from far and wide to rate the pageant. Miss Indian World Taylor Thomas, of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe in Idaho; Montana State Sen. Jonathan Windy Boy, of the Chippewa Cree Tribe; Miss Florida Teen USA Jara Ann Courson, a Seminole Tribe descendant; and Miss Florida USA Ashleigh Lollie judged contestants on traditional outfits, personality and speaking skills.

“Those are the basic things you need to be a representative,” Thomas said. “Personality has a lot to do with it, but it takes a lot of strength to stand in front of people.”

Although there was no talent component in the pageant, Princess

Committee chairwoman Wanda Bowers expected the 5- to 7-year-old contenders to communicate clearly. Miss Florida Seminole Brianna Nunez interviewed each girl, while Jr. Miss Thomlynn Billie questioned the boys.

“At this age, they just have to be patient and able to sit during an event,” Bowers said. “They are judged on their demeanor; their parents have prepared them. They just need to be nice little people.”

The event, part of the 44th annual Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow, follows a tradition begun in 1957 when the first Tribal Council elected the first Seminole princess. The first official pageant was held in 1960.

“I felt so proud of myself,” said Victoria, 6. “I practiced all year.”

Her mother, Madeline Benard, knows what the one-year reign will entail; her son Roberto is the outgoing Little Mr. Seminole.

“I like showing them off,” Benard said. “Even though it gets crazy taking them to all the events, it makes me proud as a mom.”

Roberto said he will tell his sister to speak properly and say hello.

“She’s my sister; she’ll do a good job,” he said.

Gregory, 6, took his win in stride. “I like it,” he said. “I waved and walked. Now I want to be a judge.”

Gregory’s mother, Charlotte Burgess, sits on the Princess Committee and is proud of her son for taking the title.

“He’ll make a good Little Mr. Seminole,” she said.

◆ See more photos on page 6A



Beverly Bidney

Newly crowned Little Miss Seminole Victoria Benard and Little Mr. Seminole Gregory James III pose for the crowd of well-wishers during the pageant Feb. 6 at Hard Rock Live in Hollywood.



Beverly Bidney

From left, Marty Johns, Larry Frank, TravelHost publisher Ina Lee, President Tony Sanchez Jr., Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa President John Fontana and Daniel Tommie celebrate the Tribe's induction into the TravelHost Tourism Hall of Fame Feb. 5 in Fort Lauderdale.

Tribe inducted into Tourism Hall of Fame

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

FORT LAUDERDALE — The Seminole Tribe of Florida, along with 13 other members of the Broward County hospitality industry, was inducted into TravelHost of Greater Fort Lauderdale's Tourism Hall of Fame Feb. 5 during a reception celebrating the magazine's 35th anniversary.

TravelHost publisher Ina Lee chose honorees based on longevity and impact on area tourism.

"The Seminoles were here in the beginning," Lee said. "We stand on their shoulders. As they have grown and developed, they have transformed the destination. They are our heritage."

President Tony Sanchez Jr. accepted the honor on behalf of the Tribe.

"Who would have thought that when we started high stakes bingo in 1979, Seminole Gaming would evolve into what it is today," he said. "And the ride isn't over yet."

Tribal members Daniel Tommie, Marty Johns and Larry Frank joined President Sanchez; Jim Allen, CEO of Seminole Gaming and Chairman of Hard Rock International; and John Fontana, president of Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino

Tampa, for the event at the Fort Lauderdale Antique Car Museum.

"This is a good day for the Tribe," Allen said. "Seminole Gaming is also having its 35-year anniversary."

Tommie recognized the impact gaming has had on the Tribe.

"As a Tribal member, it's a high privilege and honor to be recognized in this capacity," he said. "[Chairman James E. Billie] is the first one who started this lucrative business; we are fortunate to have him. It's been good for us and for our infrastructure; it's been very positive."

Lee said 312 million visitors spent \$203 billion in Broward County over the last 100 years.

The other inductees in the hall of fame included the Wells family (Las Olas Boulevard and Riverside Hotel), the Gill family (The Escape Hotel, Jolly Roger, Yankee Clipper), the Banks family (Lago Mar Resort & Club), the Ireland and Mitchell family (hoteliers), Nicki E. Grossman (president, Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau), Ramola and Bob Motwani (hoteliers), 15th Street Fisheries restaurant, Bonnet House Museum & Gardens, Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, The Galleria mall, Jungle Queen Riverboat, Mai-Kai restaurant and Stranahan House.

◆ SNAKE ROAD

From page 1A

Navigating the 10-foot narrow and nearly shoulderless lanes with no guard rails and little grading was considered dangerous enough in 1991 that on the insistence of the Seminole Tribe, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) conducted a study to detail conditions, propose changes and find funding, according to the Department of the Interior's (DOI) website.

In 2002, the first formal meeting of local, state and federal officials included representatives of the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes, Federal Highway Administration, BIA, Florida Department of Transportation and Hendry and Broward counties, for what the DOI called "an effective partnership."

From the meeting and subsequent funding applications, came \$1.1 million to get the project started.

Additional funding came from other grant applications, including several DOT Public Land Highways grants that amounted to nearly \$1.5 million. Additionally, an Indian Reservation Road (IRR) program allocation of \$304,000 and an IRR Bridge High Priority Project grant for \$3.35 million helped.

Former Chairman Mitchell Cypress, who lost two daughters in separate accidents on Josie Billie Highway, applauded the road project.

He said he was startled, however, when he drove into Big Cypress on the night of Jan. 29 to find Josie Billie Highway lit with streetlights for the first time.

"I had to blink because I didn't believe I was in Big Cypress. We don't want it too bright, but we do want to be able to keep our eyes on kids riding ATVs. The lights help a lot," Cypress said.

Johnna Blackhair, acting eastern regional director of the BIA, said the Tribe is the first in Indian Country to apply for and win a TIGER grant. Like Rep. Frank, Blackhair called the project "a milestone."

"The TIGER grant is very competitive; it's a huge deal and a unique statement that the Seminole Tribe met all of the qualifications. It's huge to be able to engage all of the resources and be successful," Blackhair said.

Councilman Tiger, who studied building and road construction at the University of Oklahoma, pushed the project through problems he predicted because he knows the trade, the land and the community. The job took 18 months to complete.

For Councilman Tiger, who recalls stories told by elders about the old days when the road was a "mud hole from here



Eileen Soler

Orange barrels mark the new median along Josie Billie Highway where the road cuts through the center of the Big Cypress Reservation. The thoroughfare underwent a 2.25-mile widening project that was celebrated during a ribbon cutting Jan. 30.

to [State Road] 80," getting the entire stretch of Snake Road reworked cannot happen fast enough.

"I'll be glad when the whole road is

widened with turning lanes and guard rails. We're not asking a whole lot. We've been taxpayers for a long time. We just want to be safe," he said.

Lee Tiger to drop latest album at Hard Rock Cafe

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Lee Tiger and the Tiger Tiger Band will debut its latest album, "Chapter One, The Adventure Called Life," March 27 at the Hard Rock Cafe in Hollywood. The album is dedicated to Tiger's late father, former Miccosukee Chairman Buffalo Tiger, who passed away in January.

Lee Tiger wrote all the songs, played every instrument and produced the eight-song album in about six months.

The album explores the purpose of life and is Tiger's second without the collaboration of his late brother Stephen, who passed away in 2006.

"The album is emotional," he said.

"I relied on my brother, but we wrote everything together."

The CD is the ninth of Tiger's career, which began in 1969. Tiger Tiger played at the first Miami Pop Festival in 1968 and the jacket Tiger wore is on display near the Council Oak restaurant at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.

Tiger cites musician Steve Winwood, Beatles producer George Martin and Rolling Stones producer Andrew Oldham as the inspiration for his music and production style.

"This album is more pop rock but has influences from funk, soul and rhythm and blues," Tiger said. "Writing songs comes in spurts. It's like water; sometimes it turns on slowly and sometimes it flows really fast."

The launch party will begin at 10 p.m.



Photo courtesy of Lee Tiger

Lee Tiger.



Eileen Soler

Tribal members, employees, department heads and government officials gather at a ribbon cutting for the newly widened Josie Billie Highway at Big Cypress Reservation.

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Profiles in justice

Tribe's first court justices, judges take the bench

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

their rights honored and their voices heard.”

Chief Justice Willie Johns, of Brighton. Member of the Wild Cat Clan.

Associate Justice Moses Jumper Jr., of Big Cypress. Member of the Snake Clan.



Photos by Robert Kippenberger

Service to the Seminole Tribe of Florida and Indian Country:

Commissioner of the National Indian Finals Rodeo for 22 years; president of Eastern Indian Rodeo Association for four years; served eight years as the Seminole Tribe's Education Department director; was employed 14 years as a livestock inspector for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; worked six years as an outreach specialist at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum; is the southeastern regional liaison for the Tribal Historic Preservation Office; and currently sits on the Museum's repatriation committee. Johns has assisted in the repatriation of 21 Seminole ancestors from scattered locations throughout the United States.

Education: Holds a two-year degree in animal husbandry from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College; a bachelor's degree in history from Palm Beach Atlantic University; and a master's degree in history from the University of Miami. Johns is just a few credits short of a master's in jurisprudence, or the study and theory of law. "It's not to become a lawyer; it's to be a smarter judge."

Inspiration: "When I was a little kid, I used to be good friends with the first Chairman, Billy Osceola, who lived down the road. He encouraged me to get as much education as I could. He told me that someday our Tribe would be able to take care of ourselves and we would need our own people, educated enough to take the ball and run with it. Almost every day I think of what he said." Johns also credits his uncle Toby Johns who instilled in his sister, Johns' mother, that education is the way out of poverty. "From the day I started kindergarten all the way to college, my mother stayed on my (buttocks) to make sure I went to school."

Personal significance of Tribal Court: For Johns, Tribal Court is a "leg of our sovereignty. Now we can show the world that we have a judicial system, we can try cases, we can be fair, hold people to the laws and we can make rulings for the good of the Tribe."

Chief Judge Moses B. Osceola, of Hollywood. Member of the Bird Clan.



Service to the Seminole Tribe of Florida and Indian Country:

After a late 1960s stateside stint in the U.S. Marine Corps, Osceola worked several jobs for the Tribe. He was an accounts payable clerk for the secretary and treasurer; an accounting clerk for the Accounting Department; a tour guide at Okalee Indian Village; and head of the Tribe's food stamp program and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) supplemental food program. He owned a tobacco shop in Hollywood for about 10 years and clerked for several others until he sold his business to the Board of Directors. He was elected president of the Board for the 2003-2007 term and thus served simultaneously as vice chairman of Tribal Council.

Education: Osceola holds a bachelor's degree in business administration management from Florida International University. While earning the degree, he focused heavily on business management.

Inspiration: "Many of us want to see things become better legally, spiritually and economically for the Tribe, but we can't make an impact without being involved. I thought I could contribute better by being involved and when I left the office (of president) I left businesses up and running and money in the bank. It was during that tenure that we made the Hard Rock deal. For me, my inspiration has always been a matter of being able to contribute in a major way."

Personal significance of Tribal Court: For Osceola, Tribal Court is a "great adjunct, division, branch" of tribal government. "We don't refer to the Chairman's Office as the executive branch, but I'd like to see that someday ... the court gives voice to the people to resolve issues in a legitimate forum where they are accorded due process. The court has a duty to listen to both sides and ensure that everyone has

Service to the Seminole Tribe of Florida and Indian Country:

Founder and director of the Tribe's Recreation Department for 37 years; inductee and founder of the Tribe's Sports Hall of Fame; published author of two Seminole history inspired poetry books; past president and founder of both the Native American Youth Organization (NAYO) and Native American Sports Association (NASA) serving Tribes in the southeast region; past editor of the Tribe's first newspaper, The Alligator Times; president of the Big Cypress Cattle Committee; member of the Court and Constitution committees; member of the Haskell Indian Nations Foundation; founder and coordinator of the Howard Tiger Teacher Award at Haskell Indian Nations University.

Education: Attended the University of Tampa; Bacone College in Muskogee, Oklahoma; Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas; and Oklahoma Panhandle State University in Goodwell. Jumper's preferred fields of study were animal science and physical education, and although his grades were fine and his courses were eclectic, he was devoted to playing baseball and football.

"Sports were always the biggest part of my life. If I could play at a school, I went there."

Inspiration: His mother, the late Betty Mae Tiger Jumper, whose historic successes included being the only female to serve as Tribal Chairperson. "She is an icon. I saw her devotion to the Tribe and our family and her work ethic all come together. She was a huge political figure but she was also athletic and loved kids. I went into the sports realm to serve our Tribal children because of my mother. She was a major motivator."

Personal significance of Tribal Court: "When I was approached for Tribal Court, I thought and prayed hard about it. It's something great to be on the ground floor of something so important and while I might not be perfect, I know the laws, the Constitution and I have common sense." Jumper looks forward to the future when the Tribal Court grows to take on domestic, land and criminal cases. "The law should return to us and let us make decisions for our people whether we use traditional ways or local and state laws or both."

Associate Justice Amy Johns, of Brighton. Member of the Wild Cat Clan.

Service to the Seminole Tribe of Florida and Indian Country: Chief executive administration officer 2007-2012; vice treasurer 2004-2007; executive administrative assistant 2002-2004; background investigation clerk 1997; administrative assistant 1995; social worker aide 1993-1994. Johns interned with the Arizona Senate in 2001; a residential youth program for the Gila River Indian Community in 1999; and the Salt River Pima/Maricopa Tribal Court in the Defense Advocate Program in 1998. In 1998 she volunteered at the Child Welfare Center of the La Mesita Homeless Shelter in Mesa, Arizona.

Education: Johns holds a Master of Public Administration degree from Arizona State University; a Bachelor of Social Work from Arizona State University; and a Certificate of Accounting Operations from Sheridan Vocational-Technical School in Hollywood, Florida.

Personal significance of Tribal Court: "As an Unconquered Tribe, our tribal culture and customs are critically important in maintaining peace and equilibrium within our communities. The establishment of a Tribal Court system is a crucial step towards embracing the uniqueness of our ways, while further promoting our self-reliance and sovereignty. Only when we can fully address our grievances/issues within a Tribal Court system, presided over by Tribal people, can we begin to fully embrace and appreciate the Tribe we have evolved into today. Too often, the state,



county and even federal court systems are ill-equipped to deal with the various cultural/traditional nuances that accompany Tribal members and their families as they enter those systems. Through the establishment of a Tribal Court system, we are creating an environment that will provide justice, fairness and most importantly, it will be sensitive to the needs of the people it serves, from a Seminole standpoint."

Associate Judge Tina Marie Osceola, of Naples. Descendant of the Panther Clan.

Service to the Seminole Tribe of Florida and Indian Country: Junior Miss Seminole 1983; Miss Seminole 1986; worked nine years as the public affairs specialist for Collier County Sheriff's Office; was hired in 2004 as the Tribe's chief historic resources officer, where she worked through 2011; co-owned Unconquered Strategies LLC.

Education: Master of Public Administration from Nova Southeastern University; Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida.

Inspiration: "I believe I was born with the drive to not just do but see justice, the right thing, be done. It's what has driven me all my life. My first introduction to political activism was when I was a little girl and I read about Native American rights. At the same time, I was lucky enough to live through the '80s, comprehend apartheid and what Nelson Mandela fought for. It drove me as an individual to fight for right at all costs. Now at age 47, I understand what justice is." Osceola credits her need to do the right things in life to having been raised in a loving, intact family with both parents and both sets of grandparents as role models. "I know what it is like to have a legacy to live up to. I will not leave a mess behind. For the grandchildren I may never meet, I will not do anything they could be ashamed of."

Personal significance of Tribal Court: "The very idea of justice is administering the law. For the Tribe, it finally completes the justice system. It further reinforces the cornerstone of tribal government for a true sovereign nation."

Associate Judge Mary Tigertail, of Big Cypress. Member of the Otter Clan.

Service to the Seminole Tribe of Florida and Indian Country: Tribal drug abuse counselor for two years; Big Cypress Recreation Department director for seven years; Hendry County bus driver servicing Big Cypress residents for 12 years; assistant manager at Billie Swamp Safari for 10 years; cattle owner for 22 years; Recreation volunteer for decades; former boys basketball coach and bus driver for the first Seminole team to win a NAYO championship (for which she earned the nickname Mary Bird); raised five children and now is the proud matriarch of 29 grandchildren.

Education: Tigertail started her college career as a criminology student at Palm Beach State College. She switched majors along the way, eventually earning an Associate of Science degree in business administration and management.

Inspiration: Her 29 grandchildren. "I want them to have a better life than I had growing up. I want them to have a better education and better things in life. I want to encourage all of our (Tribal) children to stay in school because if they don't have education they can't do much." Tigertail is also compelled by the unhappy, empty lives of today's youth that often results from negative family conditions and parents who provide little example for sober, productive lives.

Personal significance of Tribal Court: "I see Tribal Court as a way to help our children. We can give them better homes, help them make better choices and teach them that money isn't everything. I see when the public court system takes a child from their family and sends them outside the Tribe. Things can go very bad. If we can help them in the community, within the Tribe, we would be doing good. Tribal Court is not just to dole out justice; it is to help our people along the way."



Eileen Soler

Hollywood children lead the audience, Tribal leaders and soon-to-be sworn in justices and judges in the Pledge of Allegiance and the Seminole Pledge.

TRIBAL COURT

From page 1A

"Wow, it's finally here and we are all very, very happy," said Buster, who with Deloris (Lois) Alvarez, of Immokalee, and many other Tribal members, created the Tribal Court Committee in 2005.

"We've been on this since day one. For 10 years. That is forever ago," Buster said.

"It means we are on our own, and it gives teeth and bones to our sovereignty," Alvarez said.

Members of Florida's 17th Judicial Circuit Court – Judges Kenneth Gillespie, of the Juvenile Division, and Renee Goldenberg, of Family Court – also attended. Other noted guests included Johnna Blackhair, acting eastern regional director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA); Jonodev Osceola Chaudhuri, acting Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission; and 94-year-old Maggie Osceola, who Chairman Billie said is likely the Tribe's oldest elder.

Maggie Osceola, her long hair traditionally rolled in a hairnet and secured with pretty hairpins, held the Bible on which her son, Chief Judge Moses B. Osceola, swore the judicial oath.

Stan Wolfe, the director of the Tribe's Tribal Court, will oversee court operations. Wolfe, who studied law at Washburn University in Kansas, is a past project manager for the Justice Research and Statistics Association, former prosecutor for the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians and former magistrate for the Eastern Band of Cherokee.

Wolfe said Chief Justice Johns and Chief Judge Osceola were to begin working full-time schedules immediately after taking the judicial oath. Court offices are staffed and furnished in Hollywood and Big Cypress, but hearings can be held anywhere as needed.

"The other judges and justices will work on a case-by-case basis. If they are needed more, they will work more," Wolfe said.

The courts will deal primarily with civil cases, such as child welfare issues and Tribal member disputes.

Chief Justice Johns said the justices and judges started training in December 2013 after they were chosen by the Tribal Court Committee and then approved by a panel of elected officials and elders. Individually, they immersed themselves in a variety of independent law courses, but they also attended law conferences and symposiums as a group across the nation.

According to the Tribal Court Clearinghouse, a project of the Native American-owned and operated Tribal Law and Policy Institute, the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 restored power to Tribes for establishing justice codes and court systems.

More recently, President Barack Obama's 2013 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act gave Native American courts the right to prosecute non-Natives who do not live on tribal land for charges of domestic or sexual violence on reservations.

In February 2014, the Tulalip Tribes of Washington state became the first in the nation to take criminal jurisdiction over non-Natives who commit domestic violence on a reservation.

Prosecution of such cases is allowed to begin in May 2015.

"When any guy can come on a reservation and abuse a woman, it's one of the worst things to happen on our land," Justice Jumper said.

Generally, according to the BIA, tribal courts have civil and also criminal jurisdiction (if so structured) over Native and non-Native people who break tribal laws while residing in, participating in functions at, or doing business on reservations.

Tribal courts are also responsible for deciding a gamut of family welfare issues, such as child guardianship or custody, paternity and sanctioning adoptions, marriages and divorces. Tribal courts can also award child support and settle death claims.

Justice Jumper said the Tribe's court system was "long overdue." It joins a list of 277 already established Tribal courts among Indian Country's 566 federally recognized Tribes.

He predicts that the court program will expand in time for the Tribe and Indian Country.

"There are many injustices that Native courts could take on – all the way up to honoring treaties that were made when America was formed out of our land," he said.



Eileen Soler

Maggie Osceola holds a Bible on which her son, Chief Judge Moses B. Osceola, takes the judicial oath Feb. 19 at the Tribal Court inauguration ceremony.



Eileen Soler

Chairman James E. Billie congratulates the three justices and three judges sworn in during the Tribal Court inauguration ceremony.

TRIBAL FAIR

From page 1A

But Wilson credited most of the daily crowds to the return of the pow-wow dance competitions and a lineup of national professional pow-wow hosts. With advertisements that named Ronnie Goodeagle as arena director, Delaine Alley as head judge, Colin Stonechild as head singing judge and Joaquin Hamilton as emcee, the pow-wow regulars followed.

At the start of the first grand entry, in which nearly 300 filled the arena floor, Hamilton enlightened an audience that included students from Miami-Dade, Broward and Seminole schools to the importance of Native drums.

"Hollowed-out trees were covered with animal skins and used in ceremonial prayer to bring good thoughts. We look to the drumbeat as the heartbeat of our spirit. It is in that spirit, in the music, that makes you feel good and dance," Hamilton said. "No matter what Tribe you are from, we are all Native Americans."

Hollywood Board Rep. Steve Osceola said the entire three-day happening was a family affair. His home was made available to two or three families that needed a place to sleep during the fair and pow-wow.

"It's all good. It's about getting Native folks to come to South Florida. The more people who come here, the more we get to teach that we do not live in teepees. We will throw in a few alligators, though," Rep. Osceola said.

At least one Hollywood, California family made a return home to Hollywood, Florida.

Film and television actor Adam Beach, of the Saulteaux First Nations in Canada, was the event's celebrity guest who walked in all the grand entries and sat for autographs during meet and greets. Beach and Summer Tiger, who is Seminole, have a daughter, Phoenix Tiger Beach.

"The best part of being at any pow-wow is meeting more nations, more family and sharing our stories," Beach said.

And age is no limit to gathering with like minds across thousands of miles.

At age 84, Bert Waters, of the Wampanoag Tribe in Massachusetts, said attending at least one pow-wow per month keeps him young. A veteran Marine who served in the Korean War, Waters often raises weapons in war dress to compete in the men's golden age dance competitions.

Eighteen categories included men's fancy, men's grass, women's northern/southern cloth, women's buckskin, women's jingle and several junior categories. Drum contests included southern, northern and hand drums.

"It's our life and it's our particular, general and interchanging of the cultures. We have so many Tribes but a commonality of culture. It brings tears to my eyes when I see our flags wave," Waters said.

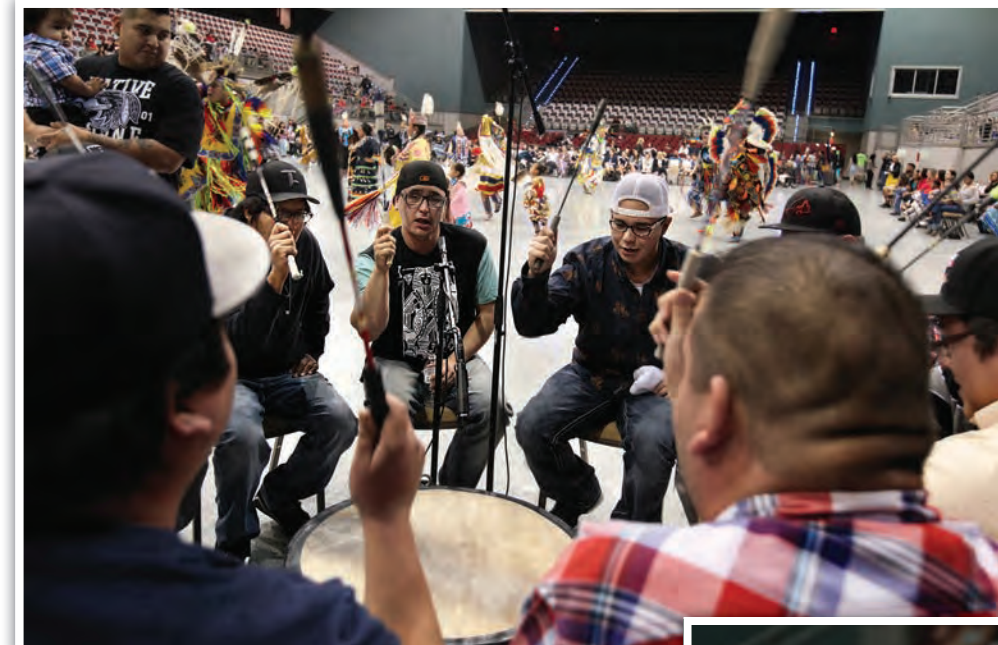
Seminole Tribe member and photographer Marty Bowers said he had never experienced a better Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow. It had been more than 15 years since he last attended.

"I missed it, but it wasn't the same for a long time. Now, I see the competition, the colors, the music, the movement and I want to capture it all. It might be time for me to jump on the pow-wow trail," Bowers said.



Eileen Soler

A color guard leads the first grand entry of the three-day 44th annual Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow. From left are Curtis Motlow (U.S. Navy), Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr., Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger, David Mead (U.S. Marines), Hollywood Board Rep. Steve Osceola, Brighton Board Rep. Larry Howard and Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola.



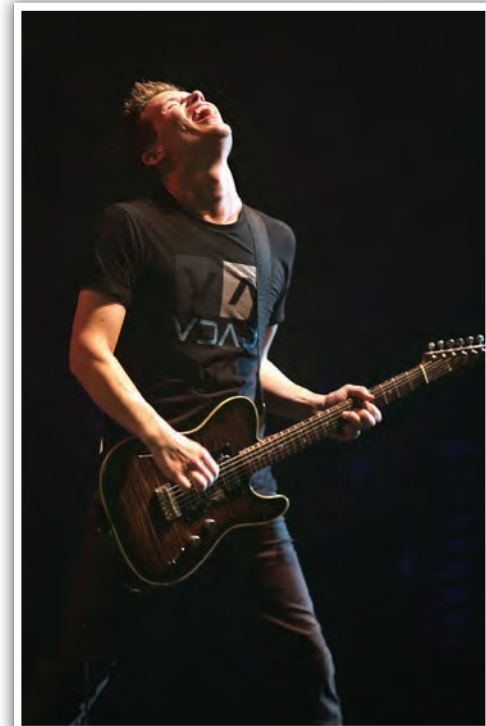
Eileen Soler

The Yung Bux drum group from Lawton, Oklahoma welcomes participants Feb. 6 during the first grand entry of the Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow.



Beverly Bidney

Miss Florida Seminole Brianna Nunez interviews each contestant for Little Miss Seminole Feb. 6 during the pageant held at Hard Rock Live.



Eileen Soler

Blues and gospel rocker Jonny Lang performs at Hard Rock Live Feb. 8 during the last day of the Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow.



Beverly Bidney

Jobe Johns ropes a calf Feb. 7 during the Bill Osceola Memorial Rodeo, as part of Tribal Fair, at the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena in Big Cypress.



Eileen Soler

Dancers from Tribes nationwide compete at the Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow.



Beverly Bidney

Boys show off their best patchwork outfits as they walk around the Hard Rock Live arena during the Little Mr. and Miss Seminole Pageant.



Eileen Soler

Fancy and grass dancers from Tribes nationwide compete to near exhaustion during the 44th annual Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow at the Hard Rock Live arena.



Eileen Soler

The Newman family, of Plantation, gets help shopping for Native American carved toys from Isabel Frank, of the Miccosukee Tribe.

Native friends of Bonnet House connect ocean to Everglades

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

FORT LAUDERDALE — A Bonnet House meeting Jan. 19 at a restaurant on the bank of the Intracoastal Waterway in Fort Lauderdale became a lesson in history, current events and ecologic responsibility when a Seminole set the scene and a Miccosukee spoke the truth.

Larry Mike Osceola II, a Bonnet House Alliance member and the first Seminole to serve on the Broward County Historical Commission, decorated the dining area at 15th Street Fisheries restaurant with Seminole artworks that included dolls, vintage postcards, photographs, patchwork and carvings.

Miccosukee artist and Everglades activist Houston Cypress delivered the keynote presentation.

“The Everglades is in peril,” Cypress told nearly 50 members in attendance. “And the water is sacred. It unites us whether we use it for industry, agriculture or in our daily lives ... but there is a tension between people and water and now both are suffering.”

Though the historic Bonnet House rests on a barrier island that kisses the ocean more than an hour east of the Everglades in Broward County, all water connects globally, Cypress said. He noted oil drilling and illegal fracking that threaten the Florida aquifer, the continued loss of habitat for wildlife including the endangered Florida

panther, the fungus infestation of the cherished swamp bay plant and other factors that deplete Everglades resources.

For Bonnet House CEO Karen Beard and members who mostly hail from the East Coast, Cypress’ message was simple: What affects the Everglades, affects everyone.

The Bonnet House estate encompasses five different ecologic systems, Beard said: the Atlantic Ocean beach and the area’s primary dune, a fresh water slough, a secondary dune where the house sits, mangrove wetlands and a woody maritime forest.

“When you get on the barrier island you can see for yourself how global change is affecting the microcosm. I’ve been here 13 years and can see it,” Beard said. “Our water is all related from the ocean to the Intracoastal to the New River to the Everglades.”

Cypress, born in west Miami and raised in the Everglades, echoed the common theme throughout his lecture. He credited Marjory Stoneman Douglas for her revelations about the River of Grass, and he shared how he grew up to respect the living water for refuge, sustenance, spiritual healing and community.

He connected the dots from Gov. Napoleon Bonaparte Broward’s idea in 1905 to drain the Everglades for agriculture and development to the most recent Florida west coast drilling controversy that revealed the illegal use of fracking – a practice that could cause ruptures in the Florida aquifer.

“We have to keep it in the minds of the decision makers and remind the decision makers to be wise with their actions,” Cypress said.

On Jan. 5, state Rep. Evan Jenne (D-Fort Lauderdale) introduced a bill to prohibit “oil well stimulation treatments for exploration or production of oil or natural gas,” including hydraulic and acid fracturing.

“Science is the key to analyzing all of the problems that we see now with oil drilling, mining and runoff. We are not opposed to business but we just want to do it wisely,” Cypress

said. On Feb. 2, President Barack Obama proposed asking the Department of the Interior and the Army Corps of Engineers for \$195 million to be used for Everglades restoration. Meanwhile, Gov. Rick Scott is supporting a plan to spend \$150 million in state money.

Cypress posed the question: Who will spend the money and how will they spend it? And, he invited Bonnet House members to visit the Everglades, take an airboat ride or just meditate in the serenity of the vast vista. The membership agreed to organize a future field trip to experience the Everglades as a group, firsthand.

“You cannot care unless you know what we are talking about in our hearts, one to one, in science, in industry and even in spirituality,” Cypress said.



Larry Mike Osceola II, a Bonnet House Alliance member and the first Seminole to serve on the Broward County Historical Commission, shows Bonnet House member Sally Lindskoog Seminole artworks during a Jan. 19 meeting at 15th Street Fisheries restaurant.

“The Everglades is in peril. And the water is sacred. It unites us whether we use it for industry, agriculture or in our daily lives.”

– Houston Cypress, Miccosukee Tribe



Miccosukee artist and Everglades activist Houston Cypress gives an educational and persuasive presentation about the fragile Everglades during a Bonnet House Alliance meeting on the Intracoastal Waterway in Fort Lauderdale.



Eileen Soler

From left, Debbie Allen, Lee Tiger, Sheena Spirit, Robin Haines Merrill, Pedro Zepeda and Gordon 'Ollie' Wareham are one with the Cypress log that Zepeda will carve into a Seminole canoe.

Canoe project paddles closer toward Himmarshee Canal

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

FORT LAUDERDALE — The unveiling Jan. 30 of an 18-inch-thick, 10-foot-long Cypress log at an art studio in downtown Fort Lauderdale launched an art project that will span from the drawing board to reality.

In months to come, in view of passersby of the Upper Room Art Gallery near the New River, Seminole cultural artist Pedro Zepeda will carve, hatchet and sometimes chain saw the hefty tree trunk into an authentic Native American dugout canoe.

The demonstration and creation will be exhibited live at least twice per month until its completion. The project is part of a \$30,000 Knight Arts Challenge grant that also funds an upcoming event called Paddle Up, which will feature a Seminole and Miccosukee canoe journey along the nearby Himmarshee Canal, a tributary of the New River.

Both happenings, dubbed the Tribal Arts Project, are tied to a larger neighborhood revitalization effort called Las Olas Village, which aims to bring a stronger indigenous presence to the area while building business opportunities.

“It’s a total collaboration, a mash-up of cultures and a symbol of reuniting Fort Lauderdale,” said Robin Haines

Merrill, founder and executive director of the art gallery, the Mission Gifts Fair Trade art store and the Christian Cultural Development Foundation (CCDF).

Nearly 50 local business owners and artists attended the Jan. 30 event where pumpkin frybread was served with wine, cheese and other typical art opening fare.

Noted Miccosukee and Seminole Tribe members, including film producer and environmental activist Houston Cypress, musician Lee Tiger and Broward County Historic Commission member Larry Mike Osceola II, attended to celebrate the unveiling.

Merrill said the Tribal Arts Project was born out of a chance meeting with Zepeda and Everett Osceola, who were then both employees at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, during a public demonstration to stop the demolition of the area’s first post office structure near the historic Stranahan House.

Stranahan House, in addition to Riverwalk and Las Olas Riverfront, are located on historic land for Seminole and Miccosukee Tribe members. There, several Seminole War battles were fought before the turn of the 20th century brought peaceful trade between Natives and European settlers.

“We (the CCDF) always deal with environmental, social justice or poverty-related issues. When we met Pedro, Houston and Everett, we saw spiritual elements that bind us all. The sacredness of the water is one of those things,” Merrill said.

Zepeda said the Cypress log used for the canoe carving was recovered from the Big Cypress Reservation in 2011. The estimated 200-year-old tree was felled in 2005 by Hurricane Wilma.

Zepeda, of Naples, said he learned how to carve canoes from a “hodgepodge of learning.”

A graduate of Stetson University, Zepeda learned from stories his grandmother told him about canoe carving; from practical tips from his brother Brian Zepeda, who is a cultural carver and served many roles in Seminole culture teaching and leadership; and from studying canoes at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum where he worked for several years as a traditional cultural outreach coordinator.

“I enjoy doing culture and history presentations. For me, carving the canoe while people watch is a living history event. It’s great to carve toys, but I love it when I make traditional sofkee spoons, bows and other functional tools,” Zepeda said.

For dates and times for Tribal Arts Project events, call 954-592-6021 or visit www.UpperRoomArtGallery.com.



Eileen Soler

From left, Pedro Zepeda, Robin Haines Merrill, Vernal Sibble and Carl Hildebrand chat about how the canoe will be carved at the Upper Room Art Gallery in Fort Lauderdale.

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FIELD DAY
From page 3A

Artist Bradley Cooley Jr. worked on a clay sculpture of Miss Florida Seminole Brianna Nunez for all to witness. Nunez sat patiently as Cooley worked out details on the piece, which will be molded and cast in bronze. The process takes about nine months.

Dozens of vendors from throughout Indian Country sold Native American arts and crafts, and carnival rides entertained younger generations.

"It's always good to come out and visit," said Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank. "It enables me to kick back and enjoy the day."

A horse race between Tribal members was held on the new race track east of the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena. Riders in western saddles rode like jockeys in silks as they strived to make it to the finish line first.

Categories included 17U boys, 17U girls, adult men, adult women and seniors. The winners of each race competed in a final match of the champions; Justin Gopher came in first, Nauthkee Henry took second and Jaylen Baker nabbed third.

A new crowd favorite, the Indian relay race, pitted three teams against each other. One bareback rider on each team jumped off a galloping horse and onto another to continue racing. Bowers said the relay drew attendance far past expectations.

Former NFL quarterback Tim Tebow also drew a crowd during a Feb. 15 church service. The Heisman Trophy winner met with festival goers for several hours afterward.

"There is a lot that goes on all day every day," Bowers said. "That has always been our goal, to keep you busy during your stay. When you walk out of the gates we hope that you can say you had the ultimate entertainment experience and will want to come back for more."



Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr., left, and Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola greet the crowd in the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena before rodeo competitions commenced Feb. 14 at the Brighton Field Day Festival and PRCA Rodeo.



Lily Everett, 10, left, and Chaló Nitka princess Jayla Ramos, 12, peruse the patchwork for sale at Brighton Field Day.



A WISDOM dancer adds a dash of color to the grand entry parade at the Brighton Field Day Festival and PRCA Rodeo.



The Florida State University marching band enters the Brighton amphitheater during the grand entry parade.



From left, Curtis Motlow, Stephen Bowers, Billy Micco, Moses 'Moke' Osceola and Jack Smith ride on the Florida Seminole Veterans float during the parade.



The Lakota Women Warriors Color Guard participates in the Brighton Field Day grand entry.



A PRCA bronc rider holds on for a long ride at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena during the rodeo competition.



From left, Brighton Board Rep. Larry Howard, Tribal member Richard Osceola, singer and DJ Elizabeth Cook, Hollywood Board Rep. Steve Osceola and Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola pose after presenting Cook, who has a SiriusXM radio show called 'Apron Strings,' with two patchwork aprons.



Loren Marchand, rider for the Omak Express team from Washington, jumps off his horse during the Indian relay race at Brighton Field Day. Marchand, a world champion Indian relay rider, led his team to the win in Brighton.



FSU's Osceola rides Renegade as he prepares to plant the flaming spear in the red dirt of the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena.



From left, Claudia Doctor, Victoria Osceola and Judy Baker enjoy the day in Brighton.

Play raises awareness for resting grounds, repatriation

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

PHILADELPHIA — A play staged at Penn Museum at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia Feb. 12 hit at the heart of an ongoing struggle throughout Indian Country to repatriate ancestral remains.

"Everyone but us had a right to be buried with family. Everyone but us," said John Echohawk, executive director of the Native American Rights Fund, during a panel discussion after the play "My Father's Bones."

Other panelists included renowned Native American activist Suzan Shown Harjo; Principal Chief of the Sac and Fox Nation George Thurman; Sac and Fox Historic Preservation Officer Sandra Kaye Massey and Penn Museum associate curator Lucy Fowler Williams.

Written by Native American writer Mary Kathryn Nagle (Cherokee) and Harjo (Cheyenne and Hodulgee Muscogee), the play chronicles the plight of the sons of Olympic legend Jim Thorpe to bury their father's remains in his homeland cemetery.

Thorpe, a member of the Sac and Fox Nation in Oklahoma who grew up on the reservation and later became known as the greatest athlete of the 20th century, passed away March 23, 1953 without a will. His then non-Indian third wife, Patsy Thorpe, interrupted Thorpe's burial ceremony with a police escort and removed his body for delivery to a Pennsylvania town which, through a business contract and payment of "a few thousand dollars," said Harjo, the town was renamed the Borough of Jim Thorpe.

Echohawk said Thorpe's case brings a famous name to a 500-year-old problem. Native American and Alaska Natives remains and sacred objects have been robbed from graves, or battlefields, and then displayed for centuries as mere curiosities. Many human remains were sent to universities or repositories for scientific anthropologic study. Harjo called the practices "outrageous."

"It's ghastly that anyone or sacred thing would be a roadside attraction," Harjo said. "In the 1960s, returning Vietnam vets called our dead relatives 'prisoners of war' in museums, schools and as attractions. This became a pretty massive rescue mission. For centuries, there were more dead Natives in repositories than living Native Americans."

Thorpe's sons, Jack, Bill and Richard, fought unsuccessfully for years for the return of their father. In early 2014, the sons won their case based on the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), only to lose the case on appeal in October 2014.



Olympic legend Jim Thorpe, of the Sac and Fox Nation, is at the heart of a controversial legal battle.

Courtesy photo

"We were not looked at as people. This and many cases show the effect on families and on all the people," Massey said. "What does it take for a son to bring his father home?"

Closer to home

Meanwhile, the Seminole Tribe and Penn Museum are at the final stages through NAGPRA of bringing home Native warriors who were taken from a battlefield near Okeechobee in the immediate aftermath of a Seminole War clash with the U.S. Army that left many dead. The effort, led by the Tribe's Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) Officer Paul Backhouse, is just the "tip of the iceberg."

NAGPRA requires that federal agencies and museums, including university depositories, must consult with Tribes to attempt repatriation of remains. Forms of repatriation can include return for burial on sacred ground or longtime and specialized care at the depository. Secondly, the act provides for protection of burial sites and consultations with Tribes when and wherever archeological findings are, or could be, present.

To date, the University of Pennsylvania has disbursed 3,000 notifications to Tribes throughout Indian Country and has received 47 repatriation claims – the remains of 232 ancestors have been returned to families and Tribes. Additionally, the museum is

exhibiting "Native American Voices: The People – Here and Now," featuring hundreds of items from Tribes nationwide. Eighty Native American consultants contributed to the exhibit with Harjo in the lead of a four-person Native American advisory team.

Prior to the play from Feb. 9-12 at the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) Impact Week Meeting 2015 in Washington, D.C., Backhouse and others from the Tribe's THPO attended several sessions and meetings concerning the careful treatment – or no treatment at all – of culturally sensitive sites.

A Western Carolina University presentation on the use of cadaver dogs at suspected burial grounds on lands designated for development prompted heated response from several attendees.

"If you know our burials are there, then you should not be there, period," said Edith Andrews, a repatriation officer of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head in Massachusetts.

Andrews blasted the speaker for softening the truth – developers find bones, turn them over to universities or museums and then Tribes are forced to recover their ancestors through an act of Congress.

"Our people would not have to be reburied if they were just left alone," Andrews said. "I can understand progress but what you call 'rehabilitation land' is destroying sacred burial ground."

During a meeting Feb. 11 with Seminole THPO and administrators of NAGPRA at the Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C., NAGPRA's David Tarler, head of training, civil enforcement and regulations, suggested that scientific anthropologists should learn that "the days of the vanishing original American is over."

Thorpe case update

In late 2014, the Sac and Fox Nation, Thorpe's remaining sons Bill and Richard, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and former Colorado Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell (Cheyenne) filed a petition to reopen the case, but on Feb. 4, 2015 the 3rd District Court of Appeals refused to reconsider the return of Jim Thorpe to his homeland.

"We are still in shock," said Principal Chief Thurman.

The next step will likely be to petition the U.S. Supreme Court, but Thurman and Echohawk agree that education must continue so that non-Native lawmakers can understand the problem. Echohawk said Native American cases lose 90 percent of the time, largely because of cultural differences.

"There are no Tribes within the 3rd District Court so judges are not used to dealing with us or the laws put in place for us. We just can't give up," Echohawk said.



Eileen Soler

Joel M. Frank Sr., Seminole Tribe director of Government Relations and Initiatives, sits in during a USET Board of Directors meeting in place of Chairman James E. Billie who was unable to attend.

◆ IMPACT WEEK

From page 1A

business session Feb. 12.

Moving forward in 2015 is support for: Tribal citizen rights to gather plants and medicine at national parks; a formal inquiry into the 1965 murder of Passamaquoddy Tribe member Peter Francis, in Maine, and a task force to examine the unsolved killings of Wabanaki people; authorization of applications for federal funding for natural resource management programs; and ecosystem recovery, specifically to return the productivity of fisheries for tribal survival and sustenance.

During previous days, USET committees met in smaller sessions to receive issue updates from government agencies and to provide feedback.

During one afternoon alone, the Culture & Heritage Committee met in 45-minute increments with the Office of Native American Affairs, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Forest Service, and a preservationist for ceremonial landscapes with the National Tribal Historical Preservation Office.

Several Seminole Tribe department heads attended the USET conference, including Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Paul Backhouse, Family Services Director Helene Buster and Veterans Affairs Chairman Stephen Bowers.

"This is an opportunity for us to meet face to face for updates on what is going on and to share ideas and plans

for what needs to happen next," Bowers said.

The Seminole Tribe was highlighted several times during the conference.

Patterson singled out the Tribe for seizing historic opportunities in 2015, such as becoming the first Tribe to earn gaming self-regulation through the National Indian Gaming Commission and the second USET member Tribe to attain autonomy in land leasing through the Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Home Ownership Act (HEARTH Act).

Patterson also honored the late Miccosukee Chairman and a founder of USET William Buffalo Tiger who passed Jan. 6.

"He leaves a legacy of leadership, love, passion and political activism for his homeland, and he leaves a vision for the future that we still embrace today," Patterson said.

Good news discussed among all attendees was Obama's newly proposed national budget for 2016 that increases funds for Indian Country by \$1.9 billion.

According to the National Congress of American Indians analysis, highlights of the 2016 budget include: \$34 million to extend broadband Internet and computer access at all Bureau of Indian Education schools; \$53 million for Native Youth Community Projects; \$4 million to establish a one-stop tribal support center for access to service throughout U.S. agencies; and \$30 million for the Human Health Services Tribal Behavioral Health Grant, including \$15 million for mental health and \$15 million for substance abuse prevention.

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Beverly Bidney

Ranch hand Jennifer Fish has a tender moment with several sows Feb. 3 at the Seminole Hog Farm in Brighton.

Seminole Hog Farm squeals success

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — High-pitched squeals enveloped ranch hands Jennifer Fish and Kenny Vickers recently as they inoculated each of the roughly 75 hogs at the Seminole Hog Farm in Brighton with a deworming shot.

The older, more experienced hogs, the ones used for breeding, took their shots in stride with nary an oink of protest. It was just another February morning on the farm. In existence since 1973, the Seminole Hog Farm supplies hogs to 4-H'ers for their project animals, the Culture Department for teaching Pemaquid Charter School students how to slaughter and butcher, and Tribal members for traditional uses when necessary. The rest are either sent to market or used for breeding.

Polly Hayes, 4-H coordinator, said they hope to produce higher quality hogs at the farm.

"We are learning as we go," Hayes said. "We know what to look for in a good breeding sow and how to evaluate the structure of the pigs."

John Wayne Huff Sr. started the farm with only 10 hogs to serve as a food bank for elders and to provide traditional uses for Tribe members. 4-H took over operations in 2010 with about 30 hogs, most of which were old sows. Hayes said she evaluated the farm and brought in 52 better-quality animals from a breeder in Okeechobee. Last August, they brought in registered animals from Illinois to further increase the quality.

The young pigs currently at the farm are the first offspring of the Illinois hogs, which arrived on the reservation already bred. About 100 piglets were sold to the 4-H'ers in the fall.

"They have better genetics than the

old ones from Okeechobee," Fish said. "These are much easier to breed and turn out better babies. The babies will have good litters, too."

The Illinois progeny have better structure as well. The pigs are judged at the farm the same way as they are in a hog show and sale. The best are kept for breeding; Fish looks for flat backs, plump hind ends and good stances.

Pigs can breed twice a year; the gestation period is three months, three weeks and three days, Vickers said. Babies are weaned at six weeks and sent to market when they reach about 145 pounds around 4 or 5 months old.

On inoculation day, the hogs were also weighed.

A pregnant Yorkshire weighed in at 579 pounds, and although Fish doesn't know how many will be in the litter, she will raise the piglets.

"When they are babies you can teach them," Fish said. "I teach them to go back to their pens. They are smart, just like dogs. You get attached to them."

Daily tasks on the farm include maintaining pens and shelters, ensuring health through routine veterinary exams, and providing clean water and food.

"They always squeal when it's feeding time," Vickers said.

Hayes aims to sell hogs at market and provide animals for outside buyers to eventually become a self-sustaining farm. After a hog from the farm placed in the top five at the South Florida Fair last year, Hayes said she has sold more Seminole hogs to non-Tribal 4-H'ers.

"We are expanding and plan on growing even bigger," Fish said. "We are doing the best we can to make the hog farm the best it has ever been. I love this job; it's a lot of work, but I wouldn't have it any other way."

Porky projects displayed at South Florida Fair show

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

WEST PALM BEACH — Seminole 4-H'ers from Brighton, Big Cypress and Immokalee showed brute determination Jan. 23 at the South Florida Fair hog show. The West Palm Beach event, open to all youth in the region, allowed kids to compete with peers outside the Tribe.

"It's good for them to see what the competition is like, mingle, get to know the other kids and compete with the outside world," said Polly Hayes, 4-H coordinator.

The sound of hogs oinking, snorting and squealing filled the Agriplex at the South Florida Fairgrounds as kids prepared for the show ring by washing, brushing and clipping their animals.

Harmony Cypress, 10, was showing a hog for the third time.

"She's a really good pig," Harmony said. "When I lead her, she will just follow. But she can be a little feisty at times. Sometimes when I'm walking her, she stops at other pigs' pens to eat. I'm looking forward to what her reaction will be in the ring."

Before the show, just for fun, Harmony and Jaylee Wilcox, both of Big Cypress Reservation, quizzed each other on hog anatomy and recited each part like experts.

"I hope to do better this year," said Jaylee, who showed a hog for the second time. "It's hard to teach him not to go where he wants to go but to go where I want him to."

The 4-H'ers received 3-month-old pigs in September and October and spent the next 100 days feeding, exercising and caring for them. They tracked expenses for supplies and veterinarian visits in a record book, and some children said it helped their math grades improve in school.

The pigs quickly grew from 70 pounds to about 260 to 290. Bettye Thompson, South Florida Fair agriculture operations manager, said market standards require the 6- to 7-month-old hogs to weigh less than 300 pounds and contain minimal fat.

The day after the show, the animals were sold for what the kids hoped would be a profit. Tribal Council and Board members purchased the hogs, and Hayes said the Tribe always supports the youth. Most of the Seminole 4-H'ers, however, said the sale was the hardest part.

"It's sad to sell it," said Ezekiel Roberts, 13, who has raised a hog for three consecutive years. "4-H teaches you that it's a business. It gets easier each year, but it's still hard."

Despite the outcome of the project, the kids sometimes grow attached to their animals.

"I'm going to miss her," Harmony said. "All she has to look forward to in life is getting chopped up and eaten. But I gave



Beverly Bidney

Caniah Billie, of Immokalee, left, and Harmony Cypress, of Big Cypress, show their 262-pound hogs Jan. 23 at the South Florida Fair.

her a good life; I always go over and hug her."

Vanessa Aguilar, of Immokalee, has three children in 4-H — Ezekiel, Caniah Billie and Cartaya Billie. She said taking care of the animals was a family activity they did every day after school.

"We spend a lot of time and money, but it teaches them responsibility, gives them something to stay motivated and keeps them busy," Aguilar said. "Everybody does their part; their father [Pete Aguilar] does the feed runs."

During the show, the hogs were divided into weight groups of about 10 per group. Rosalinda Lopez, who has spent the last six years in 4-H, placed third in her group. It was the last time she would show at the South Florida Fair.

"I liked the experience and getting to know everybody," said Rosalinda, 18, of Immokalee. "It taught me organizational skills, but the hardest thing was getting attached to every single animal. It gets sad at the auction, but being paid for the effort is good."

It takes a lot of effort to complete the project and kids spend a lot of time with the animals.

"I loved spending time with my pig every day," Caniah Billie, 11, said. "I learned that as much time as you spend is as much as they will listen to you. But he's stubborn and sometimes doesn't listen."

Rosalinda, who has juggled 4-H, school and sports for six years, has advice for kids who are thinking about joining 4-H.

"Do it, follow through and don't give up," she said. "Sometimes you want to quit



Beverly Bidney

Rosalinda Lopez, of Immokalee, shows her 271-pound hog in the show ring at the South Florida Fair.

because of how many responsibilities you have, but you get a reward at the end."

The Seminole Indian 4-H Livestock Show and Sale will be held in Brighton March 27-28; the weigh-in is March 26.



Seminole Indian 4-H Livestock Show and Sale



Heifer / Steer Show: Friday,
March 27, 2015 @ 1 p.m.

Swine Show: Friday,
March 27, 2015 @ 5 p.m.

Buyer's Dinner: Saturday, March 28, 2015 @ 5 p.m.

Sale: Saturday, March 28, 2015 @ 7 p.m.
All Market Animals

Field Office, Museum team up to identify historic photographs



Photo courtesy of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

This photograph from the Frank Billie Field Office shows, from left, Willie Gopher, Johnny Josh and Barfield Johns. Can you verify these individuals? If so, contact the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.

SUBMITTED BY JAMES H. POWELL
 Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Not long ago, the Museum received a phone call from Big Cypress' Frank Billie Field Office asking if Museum staff could help identify photographs that decorate the field office. The large, framed photographs hang in hallways and offices.

They explained that they are working on a project to identify the photographs, especially to identify the people in the photographs. They are also interested in identifying the date, location and photographer. They will use some of this information to create labels that will accompany the photographs in the field office.

The Museum happily agreed to help. Staff started by searching for the photographs in the Museum's archives. Unfortunately, no matches were found for most of the photographs. From there, staff members searched the Museum's library and online.

Although a few matches were found, the majority remained unidentified.

Then, Quenton Cypress, Museum trainee and Work Experience Program (WEP) participant, took charge. After the call from the field office, the Museum took photographs of the photographs, printed copies and made a binder.

The binder contains nearly 90 copy photos.

The original photographs show Seminole Tribal members at various locations and times. The bulk of the photographs were taken between the early to mid-1900s.

Cypress suggested taking the binder to the Big Cypress Senior Center to ask for elders' help identifying the photographs. Museum staff visited the senior center at the end of January. Following lunch, a large birthday celebration and introductions, the photographs from the binder were passed around among the seniors.

The Museum received great



Photo courtesy of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Pictured is a photograph from the Frank Billie Field Office. Sitting from left are unidentified children. Standing from left are George Osceola, Cory Osceola, unidentified and Mary Osceola Moore.

information from the seniors about many of the photographs, and staff plans to return soon to gather more information, as well as visit the senior centers on the other reservations. The staff wants to make sure to thank the seniors for helping with the project.

The Museum is searching for additional people who can help identify the photographs and additional suggestions on where to take the binder to ask for assistance.

If anyone would like to help, contact the Museum online at www.AhTahThiKi.com or by phone at 863-902-1113 to make an appointment. Or, just stop by the Museum when you have a chance. The binder is at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum and everyone is welcome to search through it and to add information about the photographs.

Museum trainee Quenton Cypress contributed to this article.

Discovering hidden landscapes: Lucy Tiger Camp

SUBMITTED BY KAREN BRUNSO
 Tribal Historic Preservation Office

The Lucy Tiger Camp was recorded by the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) during an archaeological survey for a homesite.

Upon learning the location of the Lucy Tiger Camp, the THPO conducted further research to understand its role within the Big Cypress Reservation. Interviews with Tribal member Virginia Tommie helped add a firsthand account.

Lucy Tiger lived at the camp with her daughters Alice Doctor Osceola and Joyce Doctor Osceola. Alice's son Little Charlie Osceola and Joyce's children Roy Nash Osceola and Virginia Tommie also lived at the camp.

Eventually, Alice Doctor Osceola and Little Charlie Osceola moved out to form a camp within the reservation.

Lucy Tiger was the matriarch of the camp and a member of the Panther Clan. Virginia described her as a strict woman who maintained the campfire and doctored the camp members when they got sick. Virginia also recalled that the Brighton Reservation medicine man, Frank Shore, learned his healing songs from Lucy Tiger. Lucy Tiger would sleep in her clothes

but would take her beads off. Virginia later learned from her grandmother she did this so if the soldiers came she could grab her beads and run away. Lucy Tiger died May 29, 1965.

Roy Nash Osceola was the man of the camp and hunted deer. The deer meat was preserved using salt blocks to cure the meat. The sun would then dry it. The meat was put into containers and lasted a month.

Roy Nash went to boarding school in Cherokee, North Carolina and graduated high school there. After high school, he joined the Marines and returned home in 1958 or 1959. In 1955, Roy Nash

was in the movie "Yellow Neck," portions of which were filmed on the Big Cypress Reservation at Alice Doctor Osceola's camp.

Virginia Tommie was born at the Lucy Tiger Camp. She remembered attending school at the BIA compound one day a week. After attending high school in Clewiston, she went to Chilocco Indian School in Oklahoma where she graduated. William Boehmer, a teacher employed by the BIA, helped arrange Virginia's schooling in Oklahoma.

The camp had four chickees. The eating and dining chickee was in the front of the camp; behind them were two sleeping chickees. The hog pen was



Photo courtesy of Florida Memory Project

Lucy Tiger.

Betty Mae Jumper Wisdom from the past

Fair memories

The following column was written by Betty Mae Jumper and printed in the February 9, 2001 issue of The Seminole Tribune.

this pow-wow. My mother, Ada Tiger, and her sister Missy sold dolls. This is how I learned to run a booth at events.

The Seminole Tribe will host its 30th annual Tribal Fair on Feb. 8-11 at the Hollywood Reservation. People who come will get to enjoy many things, such as booths, arts and crafts, food, fashion shows and more. The fair has come a long way from the beginning, and even further from the inspiration for this event. It's fair to say the Tribal Fair can trace its roots back long ago to the Dania Tomato Festival.

Back in those days, the Dania Tomato Festival was a big event. All the local people would plant tomato plants so they would have them ready for the festival. The biggest event at the Tomato Festival was the tomato fight. Young boys would choose sides and they would throw tomatoes at each other until one side won. I don't know how they decided a winner, but they did.

Us Indians used to watch and be amazed. My mother and many other Indian women would usually manage to pick up a box of tomatoes to bring home to eat. We couldn't afford to throw food around.

When my son Moses Jumper Jr. was 1 year old, I entered him into the Prettiest Baby Contest at the Tomato Festival, and he won first place. I got \$5 for that. That was a lot of money back then.

I guess it was a few years later when I was talking to Joe Dan Osceola, and we thought about putting on a pow-wow that had been dropped for a long time. We got Linda Osceola as secretary to put down what we talked about.

The BIA people also helped. They helped us arrange the event, and put ads in the newspaper for us. They also gave us big bags of grits and flour so we could make sofkee and frybread for the event. We gave everyone who came a free taste of the food.

We held the festival on the reservation, but not where it is now. We had it by a little canal that came through the reservation. We had arts and crafts at

We also had a little village set up along a canal. At night, we had lights to light up the village. We showed the people what the Indian life was like. A couple came off a dugout canoe and walked to a chickee. There was a big fire burning. We even had dogs lying around the fire.

The woman went to the edge of the canal and washed clothes. She pounded the clothing on a rock, and then rinsed it in the canal water. She hung the clothes in the bushes to dry. That's the way we did laundry back then. No one had wash machines back then.

The government people also suggested that we should have an Indian clothing contest. They said it would be good for people to see the Indian clothing. We had a contest, but the funny thing is that Indian people in the audience just came up to help us. Back then, all the Indians wore Indian clothing. So, some of the old people just stood up and entered the contest. The dress they wore was the dress they wore that day!

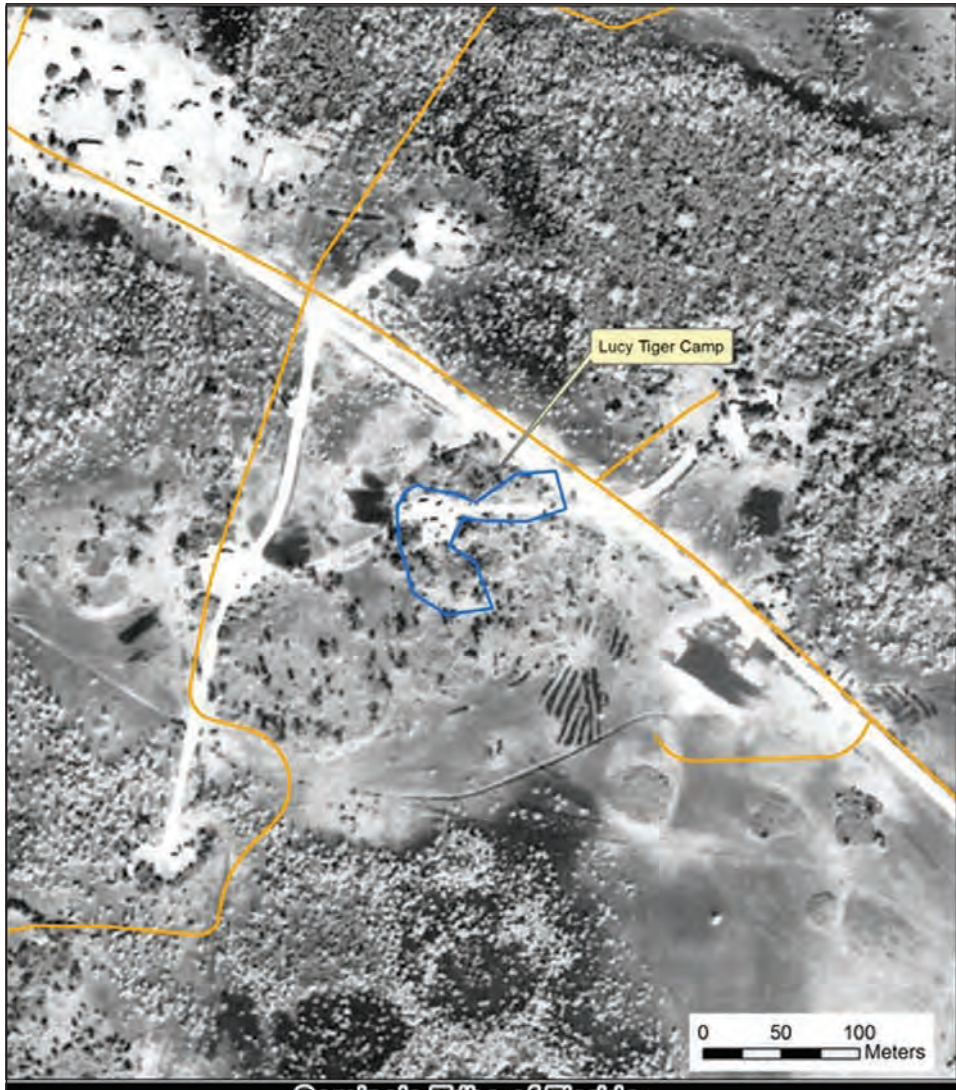
Joe Dan and I were talking on the microphone. We told people what was going on throughout the pow-wow. I was surprised that the pow-wow went so good, as we only had a few people to work and some had to go in the show two or three times.

This was the beginning of our Tribal pow-wow. I know Joe Dan remembers how hard we worked. We were up late every night. A lot of people came out and enjoyed the festival.

We had other fairs, but it wasn't a regular event. Not until 30 years ago did the Tribe finally decide to make it an annual festival. I'm glad they did.

Now, the Tribal Fair is much bigger. It's a great event. I'm sure everyone who comes will enjoy all the different booths and the food and the clothing competitions. It will be a good event. It will have everything but a lady pounding clothes on a rock.

Today, we have washers and dryers, too!



Seminole Tribe of Florida
 Virginia Pearl Tommie (THPO Project Number 2014-117)
 Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation, Hendry County, Florida

0 50 100 Meters

Legend: Lucy Tiger Camp Roads & Streets

Created by: Tribal Historic Preservation Office, Tribal Archaeology Section, August 2014

A 1953 historic aerial photograph shows the location of the Lucy Tiger Camp on the Big Cypress Reservation.

located to the side of the camp. The entire camp was encircled by guava trees.

The water source for the camp was a hole dug into the ground that was covered by a board. In order to bathe, a bucket of water was retrieved from the water hole. The camp was connected to the main road (later named Josie Billie Highway) by a driveway. Virginia remembered that the road would flood during the wet season, and she would play in the water until she was yelled at to get out because of the leeches. The driveway disappeared around the same time that the canals were being dug on Big Cypress.

There was no garden located within the Lucy Tiger Camp. Instead, her family went to Abraham Clay's garden. To get to the garden, Virginia's family drove to Coblin

and parked at Betty Clay Billie's camp and then walked to the garden located in the woods nearby. Abraham Clay grew sweet potatoes, corn, pumpkins and sugarcane from which he made syrup with a sugarcane press.

Lucy Tiger's daughter Joyce Doctor Osceola used to be in the cattle industry until she became ill and was asked to sell out. With the leftover money from the cattle sale, Joyce purchased a two-bedroom trailer that was placed within the camp. With the purchase of the trailer, the rest of the camp members began to move out of the chickees and into modern houses.

If you are interested in learning more about the Lucy Tiger Camp or would like the THPO to document another camp, call 863-983-6549.

Photo courtesy of THPO

Health



Beverly Bidney

Nutritionist Lance Vaz stands nearby as health educator Terri Anquoe presents Tribal member Onnie Osceola a food processor Feb. 3 as her reward for losing nine pounds, the most weight in the seniors' category, during the Seminole Pathways weight-loss challenge in Brighton. The participants commemorated their success during a luncheon at the Brighton Senior Center.

Seminoles shrink 150 pounds during weight-loss challenge

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Thirty Tribal members celebrated a collective weight loss of 150 pounds during a community luncheon held Feb. 3 at the Brighton Senior Center.

Participants of the Seminole Pathways VII 21 Day Weight Loss Challenge planned to continue their newfound healthy eating habits right after the luncheon, which included treats they hadn't eaten in three weeks: steak, potatoes and strawberry shortcake.

Chairman James E. Billie, who had the idea for Pathways after he lost weight at a health retreat, congratulated the dieters for their success.

"Years ago I went to a fat farm and lost 22 pounds," he said. "I thought we could bring something like that here. We need to maintain our weight; one of our problems is obesity."

The program provided participants with three nutritious meals a day plus snacks that were served at the senior center or were available to take home. Portion sizes were based on caloric need determined by age, gender and activity level. Nutritionist Lance Vaz said each participant lost weight during the program, with an average weight loss of 5.6 pounds.

"I learned to eat the right food," said Onnie Osceola, who was recognized for losing nine pounds, more than any other senior. "Even my blood pressure and blood sugar went down. I feel better; it's easier to get up, walk around and do things."

Osceola and Duane Jones, who lost 19.2 pounds, were rewarded with new food processors for losing the most weight.

"It was hard in the beginning, but it got easier," Jones said. "I learned some good eating habits and will try to stick with it."

Alice Sweat said she joined the program to learn to eat healthier.

"At first I didn't care for it, but once I realized it was for my betterment, I started to like it. Now when I go out to eat, I'll make wiser choices," she said.

To help continue their weight-loss journey, participants received cookbooks containing recipes for the meals served during the program.

The low-sodium diet was based on fresh, minimally processed foods, and although the program had no fitness component, Health Department staff promoted exercise.

"I would like to take this farther," said Connie Whidden, Health Department director. "We need to encourage family members to come out and walk with us. I started walking with my sister and didn't realize I walked so slowly. But she slowed down and stayed with me, she didn't leave me behind. If she wouldn't have done that, I wouldn't have kept walking. Let's stay with those that are slower and not leave them behind."

The next Pathways program is the pedometer challenge, which is underway and runs through March 31. The goal is for seniors to reach 24,000 steps per week and adults to record 40,000 steps. The Health Department leads organized walks every Tuesday at 11 a.m. at the Fred Smith



Beverly Bidney

Duane Jones celebrates losing the most weight, 19.2 pounds, in the adult category of the Seminole Pathways challenge.

Rodeo Arena horseshoe, about a 1-mile loop. Pedometers are checked to tally steps walked during the previous week.

"The benefits of walking include a better mental state because endorphins are released," Vaz said. "It is also good for bone density, heart health, blood sugar levels and weight loss."

Broward County taking action as teen suicide rates increase

SUBMITTED BY BOB LAMENDOLA
Florida Department of Health in Broward

Officials involved in student health are taking action to address a small but troubling increase in teen suicides and attempted suicides in Florida.

Native Americans have higher than average rates of suicide nationally and in Florida among teens and adults, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Also, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students have high rates of suicide because of stigma toward them.

In response to the trend, child advocates in Broward County launched a campaign to support kids at risk of suicide. They provided every middle school and high school with posters and wallet-cards designed by a local Parkland student who attempted suicide. More steps are planned in coming months.

"We're trying to do something about a real problem in our community and to raise awareness about it," said Dr. Paula Thaqi, director of the Florida Department of Health in Broward County (DOH-Broward).

The problem came to light in the 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey given to middle and high school students. About 13 percent of students said they thought about

suicide, up from 11 percent in 2007. Also, 4 percent said they were hurt in suicide attempts, up from 2 percent in 2007.

The number of American Indian students surveyed was too small to give accurate results, but 2012 Department of Health figures show Tribal members were 40 percent more likely than average to commit suicide.

Nationally, 11.7 percent of suicide victims were Native Americans, the second-largest group.

Reasons for the increase among Florida students are not clear, said Charlene Gresek, coordinator of the Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities at Broward County Public Schools.

Some school counseling officials believe that the economic downturn and increased pressure to succeed in school have increased the anxiety on students — even as early as middle school.

Because of the trend, the Broward County Comprehensive School Health Advisory Committee, led by DOH-Broward, made teen suicide prevention a priority.



A new subcommittee enlisted help from the Parkland suicide survivor, who now attends college, because she is young enough to speak credibly to teens.

The woman's poster urges students to "Keep Holding On" and to seek help from the Teen Hotline at 2-1-1 Broward. The Broward Regional Health Planning Council donated 1,000 posters and thousands of cards.

The School Board of Broward County commended the initiative and agreed to discuss other proposed actions in the future.

Board member Robin Bartleman, who is on the subcommittee, plans to propose that public school staff receive mandatory training on warning signs of suicide and best ways to help.

Other agencies involved in the suicide campaign include the Florida Initiative for Suicide Prevention, Children's Services Council of Broward County and Broward Health.

For more information, call 954-467-4700, ext. 3014 or email Maureen.OKeeffe@flhealth.gov.

Swimming pool chemicals: Safety, storage guidelines

SUBMITTED BY JAY PETALIO
Environmental Resource Management Dept.

Backyard swimming pools offer a lot of fun and enjoyment for families. A well-maintained swimming pool depends on the right amount of chemicals, specifically chlorinating agents and acids. However, these substances can pose health and safety risks to life and property.

Homeowners and pool owners usually store the chemicals in and around pool areas, backyards and sometimes inside homes and garages. When not handled properly and stored correctly, the chemicals pose risks to personal health and could cause damage to the environment.

There are safe and proper ways of handling and storing these materials and it is important that this information be made available to homeowners, pool owners, families and the Seminole community.

Tips for safe storage of pool chemicals

- Store in a cool, dry place away from sunlight.
- Keep out of reach of children and pets.
- Store chemicals in the original containers.
- Store pool chemicals in a well-ventilated area.
- Never store oxidizers (pool "shock") and acid (muriatic acid) near each other. Oxidizers release chlorine gas if they come in contact with acids.
- Do not store liquids above powders or solids. Do not stack containers.
- Do not store materials or chemicals above head level.
- Keep all chemicals out of the reach of children and pets.
- Keep containers closed when not in use.
- Do not store pool chemicals near gasoline, fertilizers, herbicides, grease, paints, tile cleaners, turpentine or flammable materials. This is especially important when pool chemicals are stored in sheds or small storage rooms.
- Do not reuse containers. Wash out the container when empty and then dispose of it.

- Do not smoke when handling chemicals.

- Do not expose to heat or flame. If a fire breaks out, do not use a "dry chemical" fire extinguisher. Only use large amounts of water. If the flame cannot be extinguished immediately, leave the area and call the fire department.

Cleaning up small spills

Before cleaning up a small spill make sure that the material is dry and has not mixed with other chemicals.

What to do

- Wear protective gloves, boots and aprons made of butyl rubber or neoprene (or other material specified in the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) provided for the chemical).
- Wear safety glasses or goggles. Goggles offer better protection against liquid splashes and airborne dust than glasses.
- Ventilate the area if indoors.
- Carefully place the spilled material in a clean, dry plastic bag or container. Place this filled plastic bag inside another bag when finished.
- Keep an eye on the material once it has been picked up. A reaction may be delayed.
- Dispose of the material according to manufacturer instructions and according to local regulations.

What not to do

- Do not place spilled material back in the original container.
- Do not generate dust when cleaning up a powder or solid. The dust may react with the moisture on skin and cause injury.
- If using a container to hold the spill, do not seal.

Backyard pools are easy to maintain and a lot of fun. Keeping a few of these pool chemical storage safety tips in mind will ensure pool safety and enjoyment for years to come.

If you have questions regarding pool chemical storage or the storage of any other chemicals, contact the Environmental Resource Management Department for more information at 954-965-4380.

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TOGETHER WE WILL FIND A WAY

Renovated Tampa gym a good fit for health

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

TAMPA — A newly refurbished Tampa gym opened Jan. 8 after four months of renovations that have made it an inviting place to work out. Located in a warehouse bay adjacent to the Tampa Field Office, the gym was transformed from a dark, dingy space to a bright, cheerful place complete with a Seminole-inspired mural.

A joint effort between the Recreation, Health, and Community Planning and Development departments, the project includes new lighting, rubber flooring, equipment, paint and better layout.

"More people are coming now," said Marsha Roberts, Tampa Recreation site supervisor. "They are happy that it's nice, clean and usable."

Before the reboot, the 75-by-25-foot gym contained hand-me-down equipment from gyms on other reservations. Some of the original machines are still there, but new equipment was also added.

"We didn't have a complete workout system," trainer Nancy Hailey said. "They took it from being a warehouse with a lot of stuff in it and made it a real gym."

Gym equipment includes pec fly, leg press and leg extension machines, as well as ellipticals, a treadmill, three standing bikes, one reclining bike and a low-impact NuStep recumbent trainer.

The NuStep offers easy accessibility for elders and those with disabilities but also can be used for a vigorous workout.

Hailey said it's the most popular piece of equipment in the gym.

Old-school jump ropes, medicine balls, Pilates balls, free weights, plyometrics training items and mats round out the equipment inventory. Regular classes include Pilates and stretching.

Hailey, a trainer for Tribal members from ages 20 to over 65 for about eight years, said her classes are now filled to capacity.

"We have people using the gym even when they aren't training with me," she said. "They come on their own, which we never saw before."

The state-of-the-art facility also features wireless and Bluetooth connections, large flat-screen TVs and a stereo with surround sound.

"Seniors are using it more," said Michele McCoy, site supervisor and a licensed practical nurse. "They can move around more and there are more options for them."

Tampa may be miles from the heart of the Everglades, but Tribal members can view its beauty while they exercise thanks to a huge mural painted by artist Ruth Osceola. Painted in hues of blues, greens and light browns, it colors most of one wall.

"I wanted the mural to reflect the Seminole people and have it feel like they were still in the Everglades," said Osceola, who is married to Tribal member Charlie Osceola. "People have said it feels like home; they love that it seems real. I'm glad Tribal members love it."



Tribal and construction officials turn the dirt Jan. 28 on the site of the future Big Cypress Medical Center.

Beverly Bidney

'Long overdue' medical center to rise on Big Cypress Reservation

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — With an enormous earthmoving excavator marking the spot, Tribal officials broke ground Jan. 28 on the Big Cypress Medical Center. The nearly 30,000-square-foot facility is scheduled for completion in February 2016.

"For me, this is the brightest day ever," Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger said. "This will allow seniors to stay on the reservation for dialysis. We're so isolated out here. This is long overdue."

In addition to on-site dialysis, Big Cypress residents can look forward to a spacious medical center that will include dental, optometry, pediatric and medical offices, a gym for physical therapy, a pharmacy with a drive-thru window, a teaching kitchen and the Children's Center for Diagnostics and Therapy.

"The goal is to have more people come in," said Connie Whidden, Health Department director. "I hope people will come who usually don't."

Located on a 2.6-acre site across from the Frank Billie Field Office on Josie Billie Highway, the two-story center will incorporate energy-efficient systems and recycled materials. It was designed by the architecture firm Saltz Michelson, which specializes in medical, educational and governmental facilities. Seminole/Stiles will build it.

"As the Tribe continues to grow, it outgrows its facilities," Executive Administrative Officer O'Hara Tommie said. "Of all the services, health is the most essential. It used to be the only service we offered."

Former Chairman Mitchell Cypress remembers going to a tiny building, where the Ahfachkee School is now located, to see a doctor or nurse who would come to



Corrina Frank-Sanchez and her husband, Chris Sanchez, view a model of the Big Cypress Medical Center during the groundbreaking ceremony.

Beverly Bidney

the reservation once or twice a month.

"I always say Big Cypress seemed like the Third World at one time," he said. "I'm glad I'm here to see this groundbreaking and see how far we've come."

In the mid-1970s, Charlotte Tommie worked with the planning committee that chose the site for the portable medical buildings that have served the Big Cypress community for the last 40 years.

She said she has big hopes for the new facility.

Rugby Jumper said he remembers helping construct the medical center in the '70s.

"Three or four of us Seminole boys laid the first stakes for the foundation of the clinic," he said. "This will be a great improvement for everybody. It's time to move on; the future is here."

About 60 people turned out to mark the occasion, which also featured speeches from dignitaries and a model of the medical center on display.

"I believe it's going to be a great relief having it here," said Corrina Frank-Sanchez, who added she was impressed with the model. "It will be comforting for people to know they don't have to take that long drive to see a doctor."



Photos courtesy of Sunny Ploch

Before and after shots show the transformation of the Tampa fitness area from a dingy space to a bright place complete with new equipment and Seminole-inspired mural.

Proper oral care can lead to better management of diabetes

BY DEB UTACIA KROL
Native Health News Alliance

Jeanne Eder Rhodes didn't realize how the simple acts of regularly brushing and flossing her teeth could lead to better health for diabetics. Rhodes, 66, who recently retired as head of the University of Alaska's history department, was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in 1998.

"I didn't learn about the importance of oral care until 2004," said Rhodes, a Dakota Sioux from the Fort Peck Reservation in Montana. "My dentist said that he could tell how my diabetes was doing just by examining my teeth. That's when I started paying attention to my gums and teeth."

Oral health and diabetes experts agree

that proper oral care is an essential tool in managing diabetes. In its online journal, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) reported that "periodontal treatment leads to an improvement of glycemic [blood sugar] control in type 2 diabetic patients for at least three months."

In a population where one-third of all Native diabetics and 25 percent of all American Indians and Alaska Natives ages 65 and over have lost all their teeth, maintaining good oral health is vital to the health of all Native people.

However, too many Natives are not seeing a dentist regularly.

"Just as you have to get an annual physical examination, you also need to get a dental examination," said Dr. Anh Thu Becker, a dentist at Native Health, a Phoenix community health facility that serves local Natives. "Most people think, 'If it doesn't hurt, I don't have a problem.'"

Dr. Alex Cota, a dentist with Sun Life Family Health Centers in Sun City, Arizona, said that he can tell a new patient has diabetes with just a simple diagnostic instrument — his nose.

"A basic sign of diabetes is breath that smells like a rotten apple," Cota said.

Reduced resources in communities served primarily by Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities may also contribute to less oral care. IHS is aware of the connection, though, and it offers information for both patients and providers on including oral care education and evaluation in diabetes management programs.

However, "by the time people have symptoms [like inflamed and bleeding gums]," Becker said, "it's too late to prevent periodontal disease" and the possibility of bone and tooth loss that can result from delaying treatment. Cota added that bone loss is especially worrisome for diabetics, as dentures are harder to fit. Also, he warns diabetic patients that gum care is still a priority even after losing healthy teeth to periodontal disease, as a fungal infection

known as candidosis can occur.

Failing to maintain good oral health has other pitfalls for diabetics.

"Because diabetes lowers a patient's resistance to infection, periodontal disease is harder to treat in diabetics," Becker said. "Uncontrolled blood glucose is very worrisome."

In fact, chronic inflammation, such as uncontrolled gum diseases coupled with diabetes, also contributes to a host of other diseases linked to diabetes, such as thrush, canker sores and eventually, life-threatening conditions like coronary heart disease and kidney disease, Cota said.

Becker noted that periodontal disease, which starts as gingivitis or inflamed, bleeding gums, is caused by bacterial growth in the mouth.

"We all have these bacteria in our mouth," she said. "Controlling the bacteria levels in your mouth will control gum disease. There is a balance between healthy teeth and a healthy body."

Home care is the basis of good oral care for all. Becker said patients have to be the ones to care for their teeth. She recommends that people brush their teeth at least twice a day, floss daily and visit a dentist for twice-yearly cleanings and exams.

"Simple treatments like cleanings don't cost nearly as much as treating advanced oral diseases," Cota said. "It's like paying \$100 for a filling or \$1,000 for a root canal from not getting the filling."

People with periodontal disease, which like diabetes is a chronic, incurable condition, will need to have deeper cleanings three to four times a year. Antibiotics can also be prescribed in some cases, Becker said.

Also, Becker stressed, "Don't smoke — smoking causing basal constriction of blood vessels, and smokers are 20 times more prone to get periodontal disease."

Just as diabetics are urged to keep their blood sugar under control, Becker said that keeping oral bacteria in check prevents

a host of health threats. "It's all about control," she said.

Indeed, maintaining good oral health contributes to good overall health; the ADA notes that a 1 percent change in A1C levels contributes to an average 35mg/dl drop in blood glucose.

Dentists now routinely take medical histories of new and regular patients and regularly check for signs that may indicate undiagnosed diabetes or other diseases.

A 2014 American Dental Association study encouraged dentists and other medical providers to collaborate as part of a chronic care model. A collaborative model might include dental office screenings for diabetes and pre-diabetes, which in the study were found to provide important health benefits.

When Cota sees signs of diabetes, he refers his patients to a Sun Health Center physician; Becker refers to a Native Health provider. They will also refer a patient with other warning signs, such as changes in the tongue, to a physician for evaluation.

However, patients should also notify their dentists of any health concerns, Cota said.

"Even if diabetes is in a patient's medical records, they should still tell their dentist before having work done," he said. "We can be ready to properly treat our diabetic patients if we know."

Rhodes, who has private insurance but was treated at an innovative diabetic management program for Native people while in Alaska, said that after her dentist educated her about how maintaining her dental health enhances her diabetic management, she "got on the program." She purchased an electronic vibrating toothbrush and WaterPik water flosser and added oral care to her health regimen, which includes diet, exercise and checking her blood sugar four times a day. She sees her dentist regularly for exams and cleanings, and while living in Alaska, her A1C level, which provides a person's average level of blood glucose, dropped from 10 percent to

The primary test used to determine longer-term control of blood sugar levels is the A1C test. This test measures hemoglobin A1C, a blood cell that attaches itself to glucose for the cell's lifetime of about 120 days. Thus, the A1C test, unlike the blood sugar test that many diabetics self-administer daily, reveals the patient's average levels of blood glucose over the past three months. A1C testing has become the primary test used for diabetes management and research by physicians and researchers. Healthy people have an A1C level of 4 to 6 percent, and the ADA recommends that diabetics aim for an A1C level of 7 percent or less.

7 percent.

I could actually feel the difference that proper dental care makes in general health, said Rhodes, who is also exploring pre-contact dental care means like willow toothpicks and sage teas.

© Native Health News Alliance

This is the latest in a series of oral health stories produced by the Native Health News Alliance (NHNA), a partnership of the Native American Journalists Association (NAJA).



Courtesy photo

A patient is seen at Native Health's dental clinic in Phoenix, Arizona.

SEMINOLE SCENES



Beverly Bidney

RIDE ALONG: Ahnie Jumper, 15, gives Caden Jumper, 2, a ride on her horse, Cash, before the Bill Osceola Memorial Rodeo Feb. 7 in Big Cypress. Ahnie competed in junior breakaway roping and barrel racing.



Eileen Soler

THATCH AWAY: Workers hustle to finish thatching the roof at the new home of the Okalee Village tourist attraction on Hollywood Reservation.



Eileen Soler

COWGIRL REFLECTIONS: Savannahj Hanks, 4, of Hollywood, contemplates ripples in the lake Jan. 31 near Hard Rock Paradise.



Ralph Notaro - Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa

PIRATES AHOY: Television show host Mario Lopez poses with Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa President John Fontana Jan. 31 during the 2015 Seminole Hard Rock Gasparilla Pirate Fest and the Gasparilla Parade of the Pirates. Lopez served as grand marshal of the event with U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Chris Faris. Hard Rock Tampa completed the second year of a three-year run as title sponsor of the Gasparilla Pirate Fest.



Beverly Bidney

CHOMP, CHOMP: An excavator demolishes an old pawn shop near the new Okalee Village on U.S. 441 Feb. 9 in Hollywood.



Eileen Soler

HEAD OVER HEELS: Hollywood Reservation boys take a break from grown-up competitions to hang on monkey bars just for fun during the Tribal Member Day precursor Jan. 31 to the 44th annual Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow.



Eileen Soler

MONKEYING AROUND: Dehlila Pulido and her grandfather Sam Osceola enjoy a loving and fun break from festivities at the Hollywood ball field playground Jan. 31 during Tribal Member Day of the 44th annual Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow.



Beverly Bidney

MAMA?: A 640-pound black Hampshire sow sniffs young pigs, some of which may be hers, before receiving a deworming shot Feb. 3 at the Seminole Hog Farm in Brighton.



Eileen Soler

READ ALL ABOUT IT: The Seminole Tribune is everywhere, it seems, when the paper turns up Jan. 19 during a Bonnet House Alliance meeting at the 15th Street Fisheries restaurant.



Kevin Johnson

GOOFY GANG: Friends take a break from bouncing in the bounce house Jan. 24 during the Fort Pierce Members Appreciation Day at Chupco's Landing. From left are Jemar Paul, Willard Paul, Tristin Timothy and Tyone Scott. While kids jumped around in the new gym, adults competed in a horseshoe contest at the youth ranch before joining the youngsters for lunch.



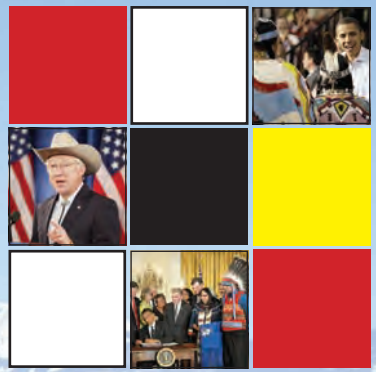
Kevin Johnson

HAVING A BALL: Trenton Timothy, 1, has a ball with a basketball at the Fort Pierce Members Appreciation Day at Chupco's Landing Community Center.



Beverly Bidney

MUSIC MAN: Paul Buster records songs in the sound booth of the Seminole Media Productions studio Feb. 11. He is producing an album of about a dozen songs, which will contain original compositions and covers of popular tunes.



NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

Judge backs Seminole Tribe in dispute with Hendry County

TALLAHASSEE — Administrative Law Judge Suzanne Van Wyk has backed the Seminole Tribe of Florida in a legal battle to stop Hendry County from changing its comprehensive growth-management plan.

Van Wyk found numerous flaws in a plan, which would make about 580,000 acres of land eligible for large-scale commercial and industrial “economic engine” developments.

Judge Van Wyk’s 68-page recommendation said the comprehensive plan changes should be found out of compliance with state law, even though she understood the county’s motives to free more land for development.

“It is undisputed that the economic condition of (Hendry) county is dire,” Judge Van Wyk wrote. “The county ranks high in many negative economic indicators, including a 30 percent poverty rate (compared to 17 percent statewide), the highest unemployment rate in the state for 34 of the most recent 36 months and an annual wage \$10,000 lower than the state average. Roughly 80 percent of county school children qualify for a free or reduced-price lunch and a high percentage of the county population are Medicaid recipients.”

The Tribe said the changes in the comprehensive plan could lead to industrial and commercial development on nearby property that would affect wetlands, wildlife and water resources, negatively impacting the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation.

“Such uses are dramatically more intense than agriculture in terms of visual impact, noise and impacts to water supply, floodplains, natural resources and public facilities,” attorneys for the Seminole Tribe wrote in a challenge filed last year. “Industrial land uses, as defined in the plan, include electric generation plants.”

—Source: NBC-2.com

Youth suicides prompt emergency declaration

PINE RIDGE, S.D. — Tribal officials in Pine Ridge have declared a state of emergency after five suicides since December among young members of the Oglala Sioux.

Tribal Councilman Michael Herl Many Horses, noting the death of a seventh-grader, said counselors are going into schools to try to prevent suicides.

Teachers and parents are getting instructions as to what signs to look for in a child who may be contemplating suicide, he said.

Her Many Horses said there have been many suicide attempts.

“This is not the first time this has happened,” he said.

—Source: Rapid City Journal

Virginia leaders introduce bill to recognize local Tribes

WASHINGTON — Virginia’s congressional delegation reintroduced legislation to grant federal recognition to the Chickahominy, the Eastern Chickahominy, the Upper Mattaponi, the Rappahannock, the Monacan and the Nansemond Tribes. The Tribes are recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia but have been unable to receive federal recognition.

Virginia’s Tribes lack formal treaties with the U.S. government because they made peace with England well before the establishment of the United States. The Racial Integrity Act of 1924 also led to a “paper genocide,” which destroyed birth records, marriage certificates and land titles of Virginia’s Tribes.

“The Virginia Indian Tribes have played an integral role in our Commonwealth’s and our country’s history, and it is a grave injustice that the federal government has failed to grant them federal recognition because of unique circumstances out of the Tribes’ control,” said Sen. Tim Kaine in the Augusta Free Press. “I’m proud to reintroduce this bipartisan bill to grant the Virginia Tribes the long overdue recognition they have earned, and I will continue working tirelessly with my colleagues until the federal government rights this wrong.”

Federal recognition will grant Virginia’s Tribes legal standing and status in relationships with the U.S. government. This status would enable the Tribes to pursue repatriation of historical and cultural artifacts, comment on federal agency actions that could affect their future and gain access to a number of federal programs that serve the other 566 federally recognized Tribes.

“I have been supportive of federal recognition of these Native American Tribes since I had the honor of serving as governor,” Sen. Mark Warner said. “Their contribution to Virginia and America’s history is clear, and I look forward to continuing to work for Senate passage of this federal recognition.”

“Despite their critical role in our nation’s history, Virginia’s Tribes are still waiting for federal recognition,” Rep. Bobby Scott said. “I commend my colleagues in the Virginia congressional delegation for introducing this legislation and I look forward to working with them to ensure the rightful status of Virginia’s Tribes.”

“We are asking Congress to help us make history for the Indian people of Virginia, a history that honors our ancestors who were there at the beginning of this great country,” said Chief Steve Adkins, of the Chickahominy Tribe.

—Source: Augusta Free Press

Interior: \$8 million for tribal climate change projects

WASHINGTON — U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell says the U.S. Interior Department will make available \$8 million to fund projects that promote tribal climate change adaptation and ocean and coastal management planning through its Tribal Climate Resilience Program — part of the Obama administration’s effort to prepare communities nationwide for the impacts of a changing climate.

“Sea level rise, coastal erosion, drought and more frequent and severe weather events are impacting Alaska Native villages and American Indian tribal communities across the nation,” said Jewell in the Native American Times. “As governments at all levels work on these challenges, we are committed to partnering with American Indians and Alaska Natives to build more resilient and sustainable communities and economies. This funding can help Tribes prepare and plan for climate-related events and build capacity to address these evolving challenges.”

“No one is impacted by climate change more than Native communities in Alaska, but we have also seen serious problems developing for tribal communities across the West and on both coasts. We must act to help protect these communities,” said Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Kevin Washburn. “The cultural and economic needs of Tribes are tied to the land and protecting that land is a critical component of advancing tribal sovereignty and self-determination.”

Half the budgeted funding will be available for Climate Adaptation Planning and half for Ocean/Coastal Management Planning. Funding will support tribal climate adaptation planning, training and participation in technical workshops and forums. In addition, funding will support coastal Tribes in addressing the challenges of coastal erosion and development, rising sea levels, ocean acidification and emergency management.

The funds will build on the nearly \$2.3 million awarded last December to more than 40 federally recognized Tribes and tribally chartered organizations to support tribal climate preparedness and

resilience activities. The awards included more than \$100,000 to benefit 22 Alaska Native villages, Tribes and cooperative associations.

—Source: Native American Times

Natives gather to protest slaughter of Yellowstone bison

HELENA, Mont. — A decision to kill hundreds of Yellowstone National Park bison this year — a move aimed at placating Montana ranchers worried about a cattle disease carried by many park buffalo — has stirred protests by Native American activists.

In January, opponents protested the federal-state management practice of culling the Yellowstone bison herd each winter when some animals cross from the park proper into neighboring Montana in search of food.

“This is a new beginning to protect the bison and other wildlife in Indian Country,” Jimmy St. Goddard, a self-described spiritual leader of the Blackfeet Tribe in Montana, told AGWeek.com.

St. Goddard was among dozens who gathered to call for an end to the slaughter of Yellowstone buffalo — a major attraction for the park’s 3 million annual visitors and the largest purebred herd of wild buffalo in the U.S.

Hunting campaigns reduced the numbers of the iconic hump-backed animals from tens of millions west of the Mississippi to the fewer than 50 that found safe harbor at Yellowstone in the early 20th century. Under an agreement between the park and the states surrounding Yellowstone — Montana, Wyoming and Idaho — hundreds of straying bison can be killed each year through slaughter and regulated hunting, a practice that inflames bison advocates and Native Americans.

Bison managers want to cull 900 of the animals from a herd estimated at 4,900, according to Rick Wallen, the park’s lead wildlife biologist.

Montana ranchers fear bison exposed to brucellosis, a disease that can cause animals to abort their young, will infect cattle that graze near the park.

—Source: AGWeek.com

Western Tribes oppose massive land swap

SAN CARLOS, Ariz. — San Carlos Apache Tribe Chairman Terry Rambler described his Tribe’s opposition to the federal land swap that will allow development of the Resolution Copper Mine (RCM) as religious, calling the property “holy ground.”

“We all want jobs,” he told the Eastern Arizona Courier, “but we want jobs that won’t harm our children or the Earth.”

Last December, President Barack Obama signed the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act, which included a provision allowing a swap of 2,422 acres of Tonto National Forest land sacred to the Apache in Arizona to RCM, a joint venture owned by Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton, in exchange for deeding to the federal government 5,344 acres of private land.

The move allows RCM to dig a mine more than five Empire State Buildings deep, destroying an area set aside by President Dwight D. Eisenhower that contains more than 2,400 acres of the Oak Flat Campground and is dotted with petroglyphs and historic and prehistoric sites.

Eighteen Native American nations from Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Colorado have signed a proclamation calling for the land trade to be repealed. Letters of support have come from U.S. Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz., and the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET), as well as the National Audubon Society in Tucson, the Grand Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club and the National Congress of American Indians.

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell said she was “profoundly disappointed with the Resolution Copper provision, which has no regard for lands considered sacred by nearby Indian Tribes.”

—Source: Eastern Arizona Courier

Native Americans move into pot business

UKIAH, Calif. — A state-of-the-art marijuana greenhouse is scheduled to be constructed on land in Mendocino County owned by the 250-member Pinoleville Pomo Nation north of Sacramento.

The 10,000-square-foot greenhouse will occupy 2.5 acres and employ up to 100 workers.

The joint venture endeavor, launched after a U.S. Department of Justice memo largely cleared the way for such

enterprises, is expected to trigger similar ventures to bring cannabis cash to Native Americans, adding to income from tribal casinos and tax-free cigarette sales.

But the new opportunity has sparked controversy as Tribes struggle with concerns about historically high rates of substance abuse.

“It’s going to be up to each Indian nation to decide whether this is a tremendous economic opportunity or something to be feared,” lawyer Robert Odawi Porter told The Japan Times. Porter is an expert on tribal law and former president of the Seneca Nation of New York. “But one thing is certain. Everyone is talking about it.”

“Alcohol has ravaged Indian communities. It stares us in the face every day,” added Porter. “Now we’ve got to carefully examine the impact of marijuana.”

Cautiously optimistic about their venture with FoxBarry Farms, of Kansas, and the United Cannabis Corp. (UCANN), of Colorado, Pomo leaders want to avoid any clashes with law enforcement or neighbors while at the same time expressing eagerness for this new source of income.

“We have a history of using plants for medicine,” Pomo Tribal Council Vice Chairwoman Angela James said. “The Tribe is seeking economic development, and we’re comfortable with these partners and this product.”

Pomo’s marijuana plants are slated to be used in UCANN-branded medicinal pot products from pills to sublingual tinctures applied under the tongue to address problems from insomnia to chronic pain.

Planting at the greenhouse is expected in early spring.

FoxBarry and United Cannabis plan to launch two other tribal operations in California but have declined to identify the Tribes.

The Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, representing nearly 50 Tribes but not the Pomo, passed a resolution last year opposing legalization of marijuana, citing its “threat to the health and safety of all Tribes, especially our youth.”

—Source: JapanTimes.com

Vandals deface sacred site

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — One of North America’s largest petroglyph sites was recently disgraced by vandals who sprayed graffiti, dumped trash and set illegal campfires next to ancient American Indian rock art.

Armed with gold spray paint, the vandals scribbled words like “taz,” “Love Jesus” and “Crazy Bone” over the lava rock.

The superintendent of Petroglyph National Monument, near Albuquerque, New Mexico, found graffiti, debris, evidence of campfires and motorcycle tracks while exploring a section of the park. He also found shotgun shells and semi-trailer tires in the canyon of the monument jointly managed by the National Park Service and the city of Albuquerque.

It was unclear if any of the thousands of centuries-old Pueblo Indian markings of symbols and animals were damaged. In September, authorities said pathways at the Petroglyph National Monument were damaged after someone took a joyride in hot-wired farm equipment.

—Source: The Washington Post

Ho-Chunk helps Wisconsin reach top 5 ranking

LINCOLN, Neb. — Ho-Chunk Tribal citizen Bronson Koenig, a 6-foot-4 sophomore guard for the University of Wisconsin Badgers, has become a notable Native American in men’s college basketball.

“I look up in the stands and I see all kinds of Natives everywhere I go. It really means a lot to me,” said Koenig, who scored 13 points in the fifth-ranked Badgers’ 66-55 win against Nebraska on Feb. 10.

Koenig said his Ho-Chunk is all from his mother.

“My mom is 100 percent Ho-Chunk and my dad is German, so I’m 50 percent Ho-Chunk,” he said.

As of mid-February, Koenig was fifth on the team in scoring with an average of 7.2 points per game.

—Source: NativeNewsOnline.net

Suspects identified in racial slur and beer incident

RAPID CITY, S.D. — Rapid City Police Chief Karl Jegeris has identified the people suspected of spraying beer on a group of American Horse School students and screaming racial epithets at them from a VIP suite at Rushmore Civic Center Plaza during a Rapid City Rush hockey

game.

The 57 students were told to “go back to the reservation,” according to school chaperone Justin Poor Bear, who wrote about the incident on his Facebook wall. The suspects’ names were not immediately released.

The American Horse school board filed formal complaints with Rapid City Police and the Pennington County State’s Attorney hoping the incident will be filed as a hate crime with federal authorities. Fox News affiliate KEVN reported.

Rapid City officials met with citizens of the Oglala Sioux Nation in a two-and-a-half hour, closed-door meeting.

Angie Sam, a parent, attended the meeting and said that her daughter “is not safe in Rapid City.”

“They were targets of a hate crime because of their skin color because they were from the rez and they were told to go back to the rez,” Sam said. “Why do we have to explain that they’re hated just because of their skin color? We, as parents, we struggle with that; what do we tell them? You know, it’s hard.”

Rapid City Mayor Sam Kooiker told Indian Country Today Media Network the incident is “gut-wrenching” and said “apologizing simply isn’t enough.”

A similar incident reportedly happened again a few weeks later when Lakota cowgirl Kristen Hunter, and two friends, law student Danielle Hudspeth and jingle dress dancer D. Young Man II, were suddenly soaked with beer while watching the Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo at the same civic center. The incident was caught on a video that has gone viral but has also brought scorn on the young women amid allegations that they faked the incident.

—Sources:

IndianCountryTodayMediaNetwork.com, KEVN radio, IndianZ.com

Grand Traverse Band doles out cash to local agencies

PESHAWBESTOWN, Mich. — The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians has distributed \$882,523.22 of gaming revenue allocation to 55 local units of government applicants as part of the Tribe’s biannual 2 percent allocation.

Awards included \$29,000 to Bay Area Transportation Authority and Michigan Land Use Institute for development of an outreach campaign focusing on gaining new bus riders; \$15,360 for the Benzie Area Christian Neighbors Food Pantry; \$11,000 to the city of Frankfort for the construction of a skateboard park; and \$9,857 to Reining Liberty Ranch’s Horses 4 Heroes program.

Since 1994, when the 2 percent allocation began, the Grand Traverse Band has allocated more than \$33 million to hundreds of local organizations.

—Source: UpNorthLive.com

Facebook boots Natives for using their real names

CARNEGIE, Okla. — Shane Creepingbear says that is his real name. But Facebook does not believe him.

The 32-year-old Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma citizen was removed from Facebook several years ago and went through myriad steps to convince the company that Creepingbear is actually his last name. Then he got booted out again — on last Columbus Day.

In fact, Creepingbear’s situation is not rare at all. Many Native Americans say they have been forced to use fake names on Facebook because of a “real name” policy.

The social media behemoth stands by a rule that requires users identify themselves by the actual names they use in their everyday lives. Like Creepingbear, several Native Americans attest to multiple re-verifications of their traditional names at the whim of Facebook.

“The policy is arbitrary and irrelevant,” Creepingbear said in an interview with Yahoo News. “I want Facebook to do some self-reflection or acknowledge how they’ve marginalized people.”

Aggravated by the language of the dismissal and refusing to “jump through the hoops” to prove he is a real person, Creepingbear took to Twitter to air his grievances and included the hashtag, #Facebook, to make sure it got their attention.

“As unintentional as this whole name policy may be, it really fits into this larger narrative of the erasure of Native Americans from North and Central America,” he told Yahoo. “It mirrors what society as a whole deems as a ‘normal name.’ I don’t want that part of the story to get lost.”

—Source: Yahoo News

Compiled by Special Projects Reporter Peter B. Gallagher.

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Education



B

Close Up students engage democracy

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

WASHINGTON — Bundled under layers of sweaters, hats and gloves, teenagers from Tribes throughout the eastern and southern United States braved teeth-chattering temperatures in Washington, D.C. for intense study in the cradle of American democracy.

“I really enjoy learning about history, government and how it affects us as Native Americans. We learn from the past and we plan what we want to do for the future and how we can help,” said Dakota Daigle, a high school senior from the Coushatta Tribe in Louisiana.

Sixty-seven Native students participated in an education-packed adventure Feb. 7-12 via Close Up’s Washington High School United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) Program. Full days of exploring the sites and inner workings of the nation’s capital were strategically scheduled to correspond with the annual gathering of top Tribal officials and department heads from 26 Tribes at the USET Impact Week Meeting.

Seminole students who attended were Marsha Osceola, of Hollywood; Eden Jumper, of Big Cypress; and Immokalee’s Cartaya Billie, Aldricia Cypress-Cummings and Leatrice Cypress-Cummings.

Marsha participated for the sixth consecutive year; twice when the program referred to simply as Close Up allowed younger students. She said her knowledge of Native American and federal government relations becomes deeper every year.

“And every year shows me that USET helps pave the way to better things for our Tribes,” Marsha said.

Held at a hotel in Alexandria, Virginia across the Potomac River from D.C., Close Up sessions focused on a range of topics that included rights and responsibilities of dual citizenship as Tribal members and Americans, federal government structure, Indian policy history and current Indian issues.

Workshops included enacting a mock congressional debate and preparing Tribal youth initiatives to present to USET members.

Initiatives were illustrated on poster boards during a special Feb. 9 ballroom reception. Seminole students suggested the establishment of an anti-drug youth program that would inspire kids starting in grade six to volunteer within the Tribe that could lead to work-study opportunities and then to careers.

Marsha said students-in-the-know realize that non-motivated youth abuse drugs for fun, which leads to a plethora of social problems.

Eden, who currently interns at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum under Museum educator Joy Murphy, said he could be a good example of how a work-motivated youth program could help.

“First, it will give kids a look inside many jobs where they will be able to help out and learn that they are important. By the time kids are out of high school, they



Eileen Soler

From left, Marsha Osceola, of Hollywood Reservation; Cole Wildcat, of Cherokee, North Carolina; Eden Jumper, of Big Cypress Reservation; and Madison Hye Long, of Cherokee, North Carolina, participants in Close Up’s Washington High School USET Program, present a resolution Feb. 12 to the USET Board of Directors. The resolution, which was passed by the board, compels USET to combat exceptionally low high school graduation rates throughout Indian Country.

might be able to be scooped up to work in the departments they like best,” Eden said.

On The Mall in D.C., students toured monuments and museums where stops often included relevant connections to the nation’s indigenous people.

Inside the Capitol Visitor Center’s Emancipation Hall, five statues of Native Americans are among the 14 statues on the first floor that depict historic people from 14 states. At the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, activism and social change were discussed. Later, at the Hart Senate Office Building, students sat with Native staffers from the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

On the last day of the USET meeting, Marsha, Eden and Cherokee Tribe members Cole Wildcat and Madison Hye Long presented a resolution to the USET board of directors to support education.

The resolution, unanimously passed, calls for USET to poll young Tribal members from seventh grade and up to gauge higher education interests; advocate for more reservation-based college counselors; establish more scholarship programs; build higher education coalitions with other leading Native American organizations,



Photo courtesy of Close Up Washington

Participants in Close Up’s Washington High School USET Program pose with Native American staffers from the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in committee chambers. The staffers are, from left, Jacqueline Bisille, legislative assistant; Natasha John, research assistant; and Sequoyah Simermeyer, counsel.

♦ See CLOSE UP on page 3B

Brighton Youth Council takes on community responsibility

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — For the first time in more than two years, Brighton high school students have created a youth council to help positively influence their community.

Since the first meeting Jan. 13, members have organized projects to raise money and deliver goods to local organizations, and the council’s initial venture brightened the day of Brighton senior citizens with the delivery of heartfelt Valentine’s Day cards written in Creek.

“We are the next generation and we need each other,” said Brighton Youth Council president Lewis Gopher Jr., 17. “I want us to get involved with the community and be there with the elders.”

Affiliated with United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY), youth councils lay the foundation for a lifetime of service by enabling students to play meaningful roles in helping solve problems in their communities.

In December, Brighton education adviser Vickie Stuart met with students at Okeechobee, Moore Haven and Lake Placid high schools to gauge their interest in participating in a youth council, which allows students to earn community service hours. Florida students need 100 hours to qualify for Bright Futures academic scholarships.

Gopher responded and reached out to friends via Facebook to get things rolling. A dozen students attended the first meeting and the Brighton Youth Council was established.

“He wanted to put one together last year, but too many kids were involved in athletics,” Stuart said. “This group can dedicate their time to it. Lewis wanted it to happen and motivated everyone to take the step to form the youth council.”

In addition to performing good deeds, youth councils teach leadership skills and discipline.

“It prepares them to be better grounded and gives them a sense that they can make a difference in the community,” said Amanda Lowman, education adviser assistant. “When they see they can help others, it will be their ‘aha’ moment.”

At a Feb. 3 meeting, the group hashed out details for the Valentine’s Day delivery, an upcoming basketball tournament and clothing drive.

The double-elimination basketball tournament for ages 8 to 18 will be held March 21. Proceeds from snack bar sales will benefit an Okeechobee charity.

♦ See YOUTH COUNCIL on page 5B

Literacy Week serves chapters of reading inspiration

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Huddled in twos and threes on bean bag chairs and tucked under

desks in teacher Jenny Ward’s reading classroom, Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School third-graders were immersed in the pages of books that ranged from “Stink and the Midnight Zombie Walk” to “Let’s

Explore Sharks.” “They are reading for the pleasure of it, within their range of reading ability,” Ward said Jan. 28. “And we’re supporting the skills set by Florida Common Core

standards.” It was only day three of Literacy Week at PECS, but the weeklong learning extravaganza that focused on books and reading was measuring up to clear success, said the school’s reading specialist Vicki Paige.

Endorsed by the Florida Department of Education, Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida was held Jan. 26-30 under the theme “Reading Accelerates Success.” The annual event encourages Florida’s 2.6 million students to connect literacy with careers in science, technology, engineering and math.

Educators refer to the collection of targeted disciplines as STEM courses.

At PECS, students and teachers tied literacy across the curriculum and to interests in the community.

The Books-A-Million store in Fort Myers sent representatives who included storybook characters to talk about how a bookstore works. Librarians from Billy Osceola Memorial Library visited classrooms to share news about future, fun reading programs.

Every classroom decorated doors in ways that inspired reading and writing from poetry to fantasy fiction. In culture class, teacher Jade Braswell Osceola read aloud from a book written in Creek.

Even the math teachers were on board the reading train. They taught “text marking” in word problems, Paige said.

“They went over key mathematics words that help students interpret the questions better,” Paige said, referring to vocabulary that include add, simplify, divide and sum.

Reading groups bookended the week.

Student Council members visited the Brighton Preschool on Jan. 26 and read to little ones, and the Safety Patrol popped into the Brighton Senior Center on Jan. 30 to read to seniors.

“We read the little kids the poem ‘Hickory Dickory Dock’ and it was fun. But we also underlined repeating and rhyming words and we identified made up (pseudo) words — which are allowed in creative writing,” said fifth-grader Joss Youngblood.

On Jan. 28, Paige said the crowded cafeteria became hushed during a presentation by writer and underwater photographer Michael Patrick O’Neil, whose words and pictures have been published in National Geographic, The New York Times and his own children’s books. “You could hear a pin drop. That’s how interested everyone was,” Paige said.

♦ See LITERACY WEEK on page 5B

“They are reading for the pleasure of it, within their range of reading ability. And we’re supporting the skills set by Florida Common Core standards.”

– Jenny Ward, PECS third-grade teacher



Eileen Soler

Nena Youngblood, left, and Talena Holata read for the sheer joy of reading Jan. 28 during one of many events staged at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School for Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida.

Top Ahfachkee School students lauded



BIG CYPRESS — Ahfachkee School teachers and administrators took the entire morning Feb. 5 to herald the first semester's "above and beyond" achievements of students from all grades.

Certificates were presented in 10 categories that included Good Friend Award, Rising Star Award, Physical Education Sportsmanship Award, Physical Education Top Student Award, Academic Award, Attendance Award, Star Student Award, Handy Helper Award and Accelerated Reader Award.



Eileen Soler
Brysen Billie struts proudly across the stage Feb. 5 after receiving a Good Friend Award during Ahfachkee School's first semester awards ceremony.



Eileen Soler

Solomon Cypress is the star of his mother's heart after earning a Super Star Student certificate during Ahfachkee School's first semester awards ceremony.

Eileen Soler
Lucee Cypress shows off her Academic Achievement Award for having earned a GPA of 3.5 or higher during the first semester at Ahfachkee School.



Eileen Soler

From left, Logan Covarrubias, Curtis Motlow, Felicia Buck and Elijah Jovan Hall stand center stage after receiving Star Students in Art Awards at Ahfachkee School's first semester awards ceremony.



Eileen Soler

Prekindergarten students with teacher Kristin Stoots make an impressive lineup of Academic Achievement Award winners at the Ahfachkee School's first semester awards ceremony.

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Sixth-grader Valholly Frank stars at Sagemont school science fair

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

WESTON — Valholly Frank won first place among sixth-graders recently at Weston's Sagemont Upper School for her science fair project that explored light pollution.

"I chose it because it's an important subject that most people don't know about," Valholly, 12, said. "My classmates and my teachers were very surprised how it affects us. I found out nobody in the city knows what it is. They really liked my project and learned something from it; I was very happy about that."

For the project, Valholly monitored the night sky and measured light pollution at 15 locations between Markham Park in Broward County and Billie Swamp Safari in Big Cypress. She borrowed a Sky Quality Meter from an amateur astronomer to measure the light.

Valholly was already familiar with light pollution and light domes, where light bounces off particles in the air and creates a bright area far from the light source. She gave as an example the one she sees when

she travels east toward the city from her Big Cypress home.

The two darkest locations she measured were in Big Cypress; one is a mile past Billie Swamp Safari and the other is located at the cow pens off Snake Road. The brightest place Valholly measured was Markham Park.

"One negative effect of light pollution is on wildlife. For example, hundreds of birds are killed each year from hitting buildings in cities when migrating. Birds rely on stars to guide them when migrating, but migratory patterns are affected when street lights shine upwards making the stars invisible to the eye. They then hit glass and get hurt or die. Some birds get confused when flying

"I love science. I'm always experimenting and doing little tests, sometimes on people."

—Valholly Frank

and if they do survive, most will lose track and head in the wrong direction," she wrote.

According to the International Dark-Sky Association, human-produced light pollution threatens astronomy, disrupts ecosystems, affects human circadian rhythms and wastes energy. Valholly stated in her project that "three-quarters of people in cities have never experienced a clear, dark night sky and all its wonders."

"Kids are unaware of the sky; they don't see it," said Rhonda Roff, Valholly's mother. "When they do see it, it's a wow moment. Kids don't know what they are missing. I think she brought the subject to the city."

Valholly qualified for and showed her project at the Broward County Regional Science and Engineering Fair from Feb. 5-8 at Westfield Broward mall. She didn't win, but she said she enjoyed seeing the other projects on display.

"I love science," she said. "I'm always experimenting and doing little tests, sometimes on people. I test their limits and how they react to something, like the outside temperature and how it affects people depending on where they live and their age."

Valholly said she would like to pursue science as a herpetologist, a biologist who studies amphibians and reptiles.

"I've always loved frogs and have been intrigued with how many different kinds there are and how they use different strategies to protect themselves," she said.



Eileen Soler

USET President Brian Patterson awards Marsha Osceola, a Seminole high school student and participant in Close Up's Washington High School USET Program, with an iPad for correctly answering a question about the origins of Close Up. Marsha was the only student who answered the four-part question correctly.

◆ CLOSE UP
From page 1B

such as the National Congress of American Indians; and extend an invitation to Close Up students to attend the USET 2016 meeting.

USET President Brian Patterson called the students' participation "a true partnership ... creating a spirit that together is stronger and transcending ... and one that will be stronger next year."
Joel M. Frank Sr., who represented the

Seminole Tribe on the USET board in the absence of Chairman James E. Billie, said he was impressed with the resolution and advised the students to suggest immediate passage while they are in the presence of USET. Otherwise, the resolution could sit dormant until next year's meeting.

"Impact Week is so-called because it brings everyone together face to face and one on one. That's why Tribal chiefs and government officials are in town. We prefer to hear from the leaders rather than read a report. Everyone gets to hear about issues firsthand," Frank said.

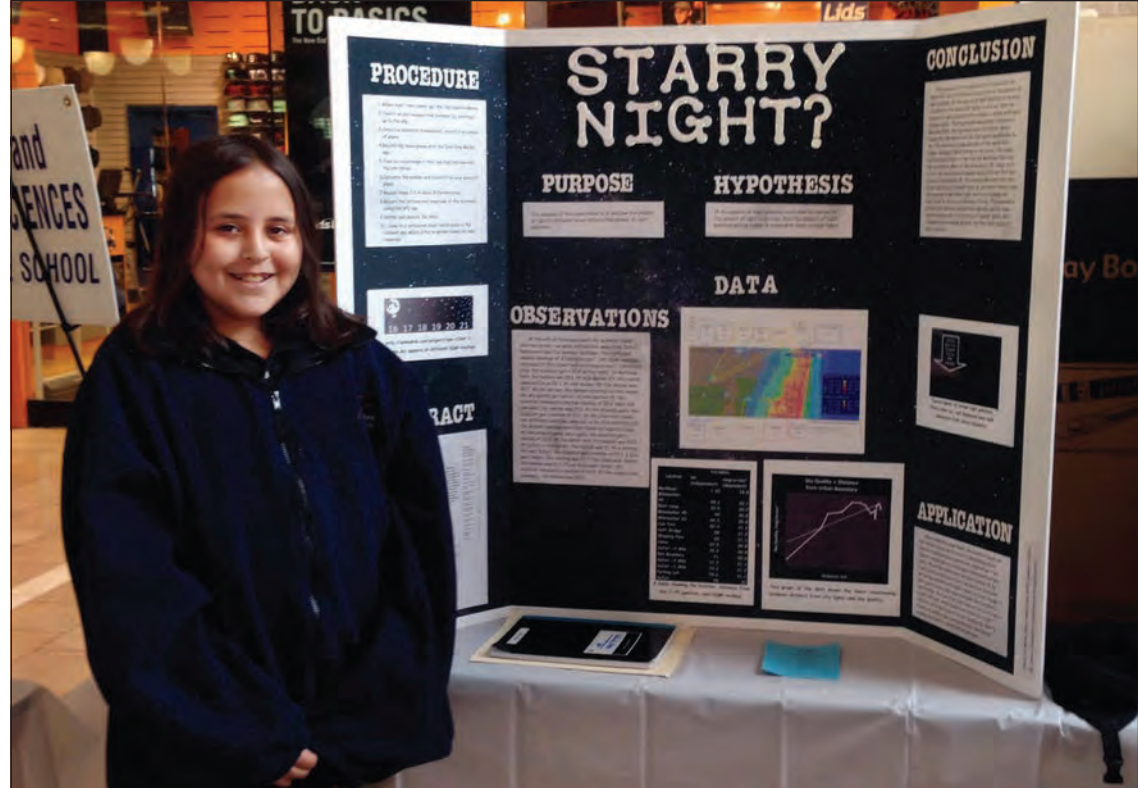


Photo courtesy of Rhonda Roff

Valholly Frank shows her award-winning science fair project at the Broward County Regional Science Fair.

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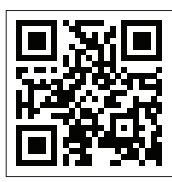
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HUGS, KISSES FOR VALENTINE'S DAY



Beverly Bidney

Valentine's Day just isn't complete without some sweet treats and these kids get their fill of cupcakes Feb. 12 at the Hollywood Valentine's Day party.



Beverly Bidney

From left, Tacara Baker, Amaya Baker, Stephanie Casserly and Desirae Stewart enjoy the Hollywood Valentine's Day party in the airnasium.



Beverly Bidney

A rousing game of musical chairs keeps kids alert and moving at the Hollywood Valentine's Day party.

BY RACHEL BUXTON
Freelance Writer

Youth across the Tribe celebrated the most romantic holiday of the year with dances, games and plenty of sweets.

After a half day of school, Pemaayev Emahakv Charter School students quickly made their way to the Brighton Gym Feb. 6 to participate in the 8th annual S.W.A.M.P. Valentine's Day dance.

The Family Services and Recreation departments hosted the drug-free, Boots and Pearls-themed event.

"It is just kind of a thing we came up with," said Valerie Marone, Family Services prevention specialist. "Boot drugs out of Brighton, and pearls because it is a Valentine's Day dance."

The gym was decked out with red hearts, drug-free posters and a huge paper chain handmade by children with their promises to be drug free.

A chocolate fountain, candy bar, lunch buffet, disc jockey and photo booth completed the ambience.

David Carrillo and Cady Osceola were crowned the Valentine's Day king and queen, respectively. David King was named prince and Kateri Smith was selected princess.

In addition, Laviticus Berry and Chyler Villarreal were chosen by the Recreation Department as the winners of the drug-free poster contest.

Students also enjoyed hula hoop and limbo contests and a dance-off.

"We had a super turnout," Marone said. "We usually have a great one, but this one is probably even better than the others."

Family Services and S.W.A.M.P., which stands for Seminoles Without Addiction Make Progress, work throughout the year to promote drug awareness and hold several activities that provide Seminole children with drug-free alternatives.

S.W.A.M.P. will hold its annual Red Ribbon Week in October with a new campaign, "I choose to be drug free because..."

"We will continue it throughout the year with all the departments and all the children," Marone said. "And the idea is to have them write why they choose to be drug free, not to just say 'I'm drug free.'"

Over on the Hollywood Reservation, the airnasium was decked out in pink and red hearts for a festive Valentine's Day party. A buoyant and bouncy obstacle course and a challenging Lagoon of Doom, in which kids balanced across rolling logs, ensured a good time for Tribal youth.

The kids played the night away Feb. 12 as a disc jockey played popular tunes. A few rousing games of musical chairs tested the kids' reflexes and cleverness as they competed for fewer and fewer chairs when the music stopped.

Staff reporter Beverly Bidney contributed to this article.



Beverly Bidney

Kids challenge themselves on the rolling log of the Lagoon of Doom at the Hollywood Valentine's Day party.



Beverly Bidney

Alex Rodriguez bounces all the way down the slide at the Hollywood Valentine's Day party in the airnasium.



Rachel Buxton

Maricella Garcia, left, and Truley Osceola are all smiles with bags full of candy Feb. 6 during the Brighton S.W.A.M.P. Valentine's Day dance party.



Rachel Buxton

Talena Holata, left, and Sydney Matthews play dress up in the photo booth during the Brighton S.W.A.M.P. Valentine's Day party at the Brighton Gym.



Rachel Buxton

Laci Prescott, left, and Lillian Garcia have fun in the instant photo booth during the Brighton party.



Rachel Buxton

Elle Thomas hula hoops with a steady beat during the Brighton S.W.A.M.P. Valentine's Day party.



Rachel Buxton

The S.W.A.M.P. 2015 Valentine's Day royal court poses for a picture; from left are princess Kateri Smith, queen Cady Osceola, king David Carrillo and prince David King.

Charter School January students of the month



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School elementary students of the month: Harmony Urbina, Waniya Fortner, Ila Trueblood, Bryce Trammell, Etanis Torres, Aniya Fonseca, Carlee Osceola, Preslynn Baker, Elias Jimmie, Kendra Thomas, CeCe Thomas, Landon Lachman, Deagan Osceola, Jarrett Beecham, Giselle Micco, Mariah Billie, Jaytron Baker, Aliana Brady and Jayton Baker.



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas

Middle school students of the month: Haylie Huff, Katie Beck and Billy Yates.

Trick horseback rider amazes Brighton Boys & Girls Club

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — The Brighton Boys & Girls Club enjoyed a performance by trick horseback rider Gena Cox on Feb. 4 at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena. A veteran trick rider with more than 10 years of experience, Cox also performed at Brighton Field Days.

The one-hour presentation for the 11 members of the Boys & Girls Club, who are also 4-H'ers, featured a multitude of tricks, including Roman riding — standing with one foot on each horse while riding. In another trick, Cox hung on underneath a horse as it went through its paces in the arena. After the show, Cox discussed proper safety techniques around horses and answered questions.

Cox, of Ohio, was a 4-H'er as a child when a trick rider gave a demonstration. She knew immediately she wanted to pursue it. Cox became a professional while still attending Wilmington College in Ohio. She graduated in 2006.

"I'm somewhat of an adrenaline junkie," she said. "I used to ride bulls; I've always pushed the envelope a bit."

A former substitute teacher, Cox is comfortable in the classroom and has performed trick riding at schools nationwide.

She said she always encourages students to strive for good grades and follow their dreams.

"There are plenty of role models who aren't necessarily child friendly," she said.



Photo courtesy of Melissa Hines

Members of the Brighton Boys & Girls Club pose with trick horseback rider Gena Cox on Feb. 4 at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena. Cox performed her gravity-defying moves in a special performance for the youth while in town for Brighton Field Day.

"If I'm going to be in the spotlight at all I feel obligated to be a good role model and convey good moral messages. I tell them to make good decisions and not settle for mediocrity."

Cox, who also owns a boarding barn

and training facility in Ohio, enjoys visiting Brighton and plans to stay until spring.

"This is one of my favorite places to come," she said. "I was a total stranger two years ago and now they treat me like family."

◆ YOUTH COUNCIL

From page 1B

The group discussed where to place fliers around the reservation to promote the event and which organization would receive the donation. Faith Farm Ministries, Real Life Children's Ranch and the Pregnancy Center in Okeechobee were considered.

The next item on the council's agenda was a clothing drive. The group decided to distribute collection boxes around Brighton Reservation and donate the items to Real Life Children's Ranch.

"These are all good ideas," Gopher told the group. "This is what this group is for. I'm glad we're doing this."

Youth council members at the meeting included Gopher; Royce Osceola, vice president; Jayce Smith, treasurer; Allison Gopher, secretary; Crysten Smith; and Jermaine Bennett.

Royce said he believes the Brighton Youth Council will continue to make an impact in the future.

"My mom comes back from every [Tribal] Council meeting all fired up about issues," he said. "I feel this is the next group to go to those meetings and get fired up."



Photo courtesy of Vickie Stuart

The newly formed Brighton Youth Council holds a meeting in the Brighton Education Department. From left are Crysten Smith, Jermaine Bennett, Lewis Gopher Jr., Allison Gopher, Jayce Smith, Royce Osceola and Erik Garcia.

◆ LITERACY WEEK

From page 1B

O'Neil, whose books include "Fishy Friends," "Ocean Magic" and "Shark Encounters," shared with the children that he was just a little boy when he told his grandmother that he wanted to someday have a job studying and writing about sharks.

"My main message is read, write, read more, write more and get involved in conservation,"

O'Neil said. Angelle Melton said her favorite part of Literacy Week was wearing wacky, no matching socks during Crazy Sock Day "so we could read our socks off."



Eileen Soler

Reading teacher Jenny Ward helps student Sydney Matthews identify action words in the text that relate with illustrative photographs from the book 'Let's Explore Sharks.'



Eileen Soler

Writer and underwater photographer Michael Patrick O'Neil takes questions from an attentive audience of students at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School Jan. 28 during Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida.

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Sports



Immokalee rodeo corrals crowds

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

IMMOKALEE — Cowboys and cowgirls from Big Cypress to Montana flocked to the Seminole Youth Ranch Arena Jan. 30-31 for the Immokalee Firefighters Pro Rodeo Classic.

Sanctioned by the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) and the Women's Professional Rodeo Association (WPROA), the fundraising event was sponsored by Immokalee Seminole Casino, Mason Pro Rodeo Productions and Immokalee Volunteer Firefighters Association.

About 2,650 people attended the event. "We had a great turnout, the biggest I've seen on this reservation in years," Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger said. "The cowboys were very respectful and appreciative ... It was a win for the Tribe and the community."

The rodeo helped raise funds for the Immokalee Volunteer Firefighters Association. The city of Immokalee fire department staff's full-time paid firefighters but relies on volunteers to augment shifts. The Seminole Tribe depends on the city to provide emergency services on the Immokalee Reservation.

"We have to buy equipment for every volunteer," Fire Chief Paul Anderson Jr. said. "We have 10 volunteers now, but the goal is to get 30. We need \$40,000 for the equipment and hope to raise about \$10,000 at the rodeo."

Rodeo contestants vied for a purse of about \$35,000 and world championship points toward \$10 million in prize money at the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas. Events included bull riding, bareback bronc riding, saddle bronc riding, women's professional barrel racing, tie-down roping, steer wrestling and team roping.

Tribal members Jo "Boogie" Jumper, Naha Jumper, Josh Jumper, Carrera Gopher, Justin Gopher, Leanna Billie and Ivan Bruised Head competed in steer wrestling, team roping, tie-down roping and barrel racing.

"There are more heavy hitters in the PRCA events," said Billie, of Brighton Reservation. "The tougher the competition,



Beverly Bidney

Josh Jumper, right, holds onto the steer's head while his partner, Ben Moore, tries to rope the feet Jan. 30 during the team roping event at the Immokalee Firefighters Pro Rodeo Classic.

the better."

Anderson wants to double the turnout next year and hopes the rodeo will be a continuing relationship between the fire department and the Tribe.

He said he heard positive comments from contestants and attendees during the event.

"Some Tribal members commented that there were more people in the stands than they've ever seen at that arena," he said. "It wasn't just good for the fire department; it

was a positive thing for the Tribe and the arena."

Entertainment at intermission included a rodeo clown and crowd-pleasing capuchin monkeys, who rode dogs while herding sheep into a pen. Country music stars Phil Vassar and Love and Theft rounded out the entertainment performing their chart-topping singles during a concert after the rodeo.

The three-event Seminole Tribe PRCA Rodeo Pro Series also included rodeos in

Lakeland on Jan. 16-17 and in Wauchula on Jan. 23-24. The series was produced by Mason Pro Rodeo Productions. Owner Leroy Mason said the Immokalee rodeo was a hit.

"We got very positive feedback, but there were people who didn't realize it was going to be a professional rodeo," Mason said. "It was a great success as an investment in future rodeos in Immokalee."

♦ See more RODEO photos on page 3C

FGCU golf, volleyball clinics to be held in BC

STAFF REPORT

BIG CYPRESS — Five months after its men's basketball team provided pointers to Big Cypress youngsters, Florida Gulf Coast University will send representatives from two other sports to the reservation March 7 for clinics.

The reservation's new golf practice range on West Boundary Road will host a clinic by the FGCU golf program from 9 a.m. to about 11:30 a.m. After lunch, coaches from the Eagles volleyball program will be at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium for a clinic from 12:30 to about 3 p.m.

"We hope to have some of the same kids do both (clinics), and we're asking other reservations to come with their kids," said Dessie Thomas, Big Cypress Recreation coordinator.

In September, about 60 kids attended the FGCU men's basketball clinic in Big Cypress. As of Feb. 24, the Eagles had a 21-7 record while in pursuit of its second straight Atlantic Sun Conference regular season title.

The FGCU men's and women's golf teams are in the midst of their regular seasons. The volleyball team posted a 19-11 record last fall. FGCU also has a sand volleyball team, whose season starts March 20 in Estero.

NAYO headed for Hollywood

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — The Hollywood Reservation will host the Native American Youth Organization (NAYO) basketball tournament April 3-4. The annual tournament rotates between NAYO member Tribes, including the Seminole, Cherokee in North Carolina, Mississippi Choctaw, Alabama Poarch Creek and Seneca in New York.

Local 14U and 17U teams on every reservation are forming and practicing now; the deadline to enter the tournament is March 20. Recreation officials expect between 55 and 60 teams of middle and high school students to compete. The players and their families could represent more than 1,500 attendees at the event.

To accommodate the large-scale event, both courts at the Howard Tiger Recreation Center, the court at the Hollywood classic gym and possibly an off-reservation location nearby will be utilized.

NAYO strives to foster relationships with youth of other Tribes through friendly competition. It also holds annual fast-pitch and baseball tournaments.

Established in the 1980s, NAYO's founding Tribes — Seminole, Cherokee, Choctaw, Seneca and Poarch Creek — are the core of the organization but non-member Tribes are welcome to participate in tournaments.

PECS wraps up basketball season

STAFF REPORT

BRIGHTON — The Pemayetv Emahaky Charter School boys basketball team mounted a big comeback in its season finale Jan. 22, but fell to Everglades City, 55-43.

PECS trailed by seven points at halftime but responded with an 18-point third quarter and took a two-point lead heading into the fourth. PECS coach Kevin Jackson described the rally as "one of our best third quarters" this season.

Everglades City regained the lead in the fourth to notch the victory.

PECS' balanced scoring attack came from Lucas Osceola (nine points), Donovan Harris (seven), Andrew Fish (six), Alyke Baker (six), Jaylen Baker (four) and Silas Madrigal (four).

PECS finished with a 3-8 record.

Banner year for Jim sisters at Florida Christian School

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

MIAMI — Blue and red banners hang from the rafters at Florida Christian School's gymnasium recognizing the school's athletic accomplishments since the 1960s. Baseball and boys basketball, with 12 and 10 district titles, respectively, fill up most of the allocated space on their district banners.

With four district titles entering this season, girls basketball still has plenty of wiggle room before its banner is fully occupied, but thanks in part to the Jim sisters, another year needs to be added.

Katherine Jim, a starting senior power forward, and Lauren Jim, a junior guard, helped Florida Christian capture district title No. 5 this season. The Patriots won the Class 4A-District 16 crown Jan. 31 with a 38-33 win against Gulliver Prep.

As a freshman three years ago, Katherine was part of a district championship squad, but Lauren wasn't on the team. Because this is Katherine's final year, capturing a district title as teammates was high on the agenda for the Seminole sisters who are the daughters of Angela Lopez and the late William Jim Jr.

"We really wanted to win districts," said Katherine, a 5-foot-8 starter who produced one of her top games of the season against Gulliver. She scored 17 points, which represented nearly half her team's total output. She also had six rebounds and one steal. Meanwhile, Lauren, who is a smidge shorter than her sister and fills the sixth player role on a squad loaded with starting seniors, grabbed two rebounds and dished out one assist.

"It was our first district championship together and it's her senior year, so I'm glad we got to experience that together," Lauren said.

Five days later, Florida Christian kept the good times rolling with a convincing 61-36 win at home in Miami against Booker T. Washington in a Class 4A

regional quarterfinal. After the game, Florida Christian coach Amanda Guilfoyle praised the leadership Katherine has shown throughout the season.

"She really loves the game; she respects the game," Guilfoyle said. "When you have a girl that strong — skill-wise and character-wise off the court — you have a great leader, and she's a great leader."

That leadership was tested when two early fouls forced Katherine to the bench in the first quarter against Washington. Without Katherine on the court, the Patriots struggled at times, watching their eight-point lead dwindle to three.

The lead was back to seven by the time Katherine returned midway through the second quarter. In the final four minutes before halftime, Katherine shifted into a higher gear as the lead grew from seven to 15. During the span, Katherine made three foul shots, seized two rebounds and finished a fast break with a layup.

As for that early foul trouble, Katherine didn't commit another infraction the rest of the night. She finished with 12 points, eight rebounds and one steal.

With aspirations to play basketball in college while studying criminal science and psychology, Katherine has put in extra hours on the court.

The hard work paid off. Her 9.6 points per game average was third on the squad. For the second straight season, she led the team in rebounds, this time with an average of seven per game. She had six games with 10 or more rebounds and recorded four double-doubles in points and rebounds.

"Katherine is a powerhouse. She's fearless," Guilfoyle said. "She works on and off the court constantly on her game. She'll be here at 8 o'clock on a Sunday night training with her personal trainer."

The team's senior night Jan. 20 featured nine points and eight rebounds from Katherine in a win against LaSalle. Katherine was honored alongside fellow seniors Sabrina Donato, Nicole Jimenez,

"Katherine is a powerhouse. She's fearless."

—Amanda Guilfoyle, Florida Christian coach

♦ See JIM SISTERS on page 3C



Kevin Johnson

Florida Christian School senior Katherine Jim (No. 24) vies for the opening tip in a Class 4A girls basketball regional quarterfinal Feb. 5 in Miami. Katherine scored 12 points as Florida Christian notched a 61-36 victory at home against Booker T. Washington High School.



Kevin Johnson

Moore Haven senior Josh Boromei (No. 3) guards an Evangelical Christian School player Feb. 3 during a Class 3A-District 11 boys semifinal at Moore Haven High School.

Josh Boromei makes his mark at Moore Haven High School

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

MOORE HAVEN — Josh Boromei hoped his first and only basketball season at Moore Haven High School would have lasted longer, but even a season-ending loss didn't dampen the spirits of the sharp-shooting guard from Brighton.

Boromei, a senior who led Moore Haven in scoring this season with an average of about 16 points per game, finished his high school career with a game-high 18 points in a 49-34 loss to Evangelical Christian in a Class 3A-District 11 boys semifinal Feb. 3.

"It was a great time," Boromei said about the season with his new team. "I played basketball my freshman year at Okeechobee, and I didn't bond nowhere near as much as I did with the people, the fans and the team here."

Boromei drained three 3-pointers in his finale, including the opening points of the game. Inside the arc, the 5-foot-7, 125-pounder demonstrated how he plays bigger than his frame. He displayed bold willingness with frequent ventures into the paint against an Evangelical Christian School squad that featured two 6-foot-6 players.

"I prefer to go into the traffic. I like

feeling contact," Boromei said.

"That's what we tell him from day one; we want our guards — no matter how tall you are and no matter how tall they are — we want to drive to the basket, and we did a pretty good job at that," said Moore Haven coach Chad Pio.

Boromei's final points in a Moore Haven's white, yellow and black uniform came late in the game when he drove toward the hoop, faked a defender to the right and put in a layup.

Evangelical Christian enjoyed an advantage in experience with a roster that included seven seniors; Moore Haven's lone member from the class of 2015 was Boromei. Moore Haven had four seniors for part of the season, but by senior night Jan. 23 Boromei was the only one left.

"I got a lot of attention that night," said Boromei, who was honored alongside his mother, Theresa Nunez, and his stepfather, Steve Frost. Boromei made senior night more memorable with a remarkable first half performance against Everglades City. By halftime, Boromei had already drained 27 points.

"As soon as I got the ball, I wanted to take off and speed up and fast break, try to take off on the scoreboard," Boromei said. "It was just one of those nights where everything was going in for me. I didn't even know I had that much at the half until they told me after the game."

Foul trouble limited Boromei's playing time and point production in the second half, but he matched his season high with 29 points in an 85-75 win.

Other highlights in Boromei's season included a 29-point effort against Seacrest Country Day, 28 points against Dade Christian — which included seven 3-pointers — and 24 points against Canterbury. Moore Haven finished 10-16.

"It's the first double digit (victories) season at Moore Haven in 12 years I was told, so that was an accomplishment for us," Pio said.

Boromei said he plans to attend college — Florida Gulf Coast University and Florida State are among his potential destinations — and study psychology or biology. This summer he'd like to help defend the Native American Basketball Invitational championship that he was part of last year with the Rez Runners.

"He's a good kid. I wish we had him for a couple more years," Pio said.



Kevin Johnson

Moore Haven senior Josh Boromei launches a 3-pointer against Evangelical Christian School in a Class 3A-District 11 boys semifinal at Moore Haven High School.

Seminole ignite Moore Haven

Darlah Cypress, Sydnee Cypress, Chynna Villarreal, Sunni Bearden dominate girls varsity basketball starting lineup

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

MOORE HAVEN — Before shifting outdoors for the start of softball season, the Cypress sisters made the most of their final season indoors as basketball teammates at Moore Haven High School.

Senior Darlah Cypress and sophomore Sydnee Cypress were the top two scorers for the Terriers, whose season ended Feb. 5 in a Class 3A regional quarterfinal loss at Community School of Naples.

Both girls averaged about 13 points per game and were part of a Seminole-dominated starting lineup that also included freshman Sunni Bearden and eighth-grader Chynna Villarreal.

Darlah and Sydnee have played together at Moore Haven for the past few basketball seasons, but this one carried additional significance, Darlah said.

"It's just more sentimental. It means a lot more because we won't get it back," said Darlah, who scored a season-high 26 points in a win against Hialeah Educational Academy on Nov. 24.

Darlah's last home game — a 57-37 loss to Fort Myers' Evangelical Christian in the Class 3A-District 11 championship Jan. 29 — served as proof that Moore Haven will have a tough job replacing its captain. At times, Darlah was a force at both ends as she seized command with determined rushes down the court on her way to scoring a team-high 20 points while snagging seven rebounds. It was the third time this season she reached the 20-point plateau.

Sydnee, who hit double digits in scoring nine times during the season, finished the night with five points, six rebounds and three steals, an all-around balanced game from a versatile sophomore whose ability to play every position proved valuable.

"She played them all and did a fantastic job for us," said Moore Haven coach Vincent Lewis, whose team finished 8-13.

Sunni, the hero in a district semifinal win two days earlier against Canterbury with 13 points, contributed nine points against Evangelical Christian. For the season, Sunni produced solid freshman numbers with an average of about eight points and five rebounds per game.

Chynna, the team's youngest player, earned a promotion to varsity after starting

the season with Moore Haven's middle school team.

"Sunni has helped us out with our 3-point shooting and on the defensive side of the court. Chynna helps us with rebounds and defensively, too," Darlah said.

The Cypress sisters owned the first quarter against Evangelical Christian. Darlah scored six points on three layups and made one steal; Sydnee also had a steal and a layup. Moore Haven led 10-8, but Evangelical Christian took the lead for good before the end of the quarter.

Although Moore Haven didn't dent Evangelical Christian's double-digit lead in the fourth quarter, Darlah still produced a memorable final eight minutes as she scored eight of her team's 10 points with three layups and a short jumper.

As district runner-up, the Terriers qualified for regionals for the second straight year following a 14-year absence. The Cypress girls from the Brighton Reservation played pivotal roles both seasons, which is

one reason their coach delivered glowing adjectives.

Lewis described Darlah as "tremendous" both on the court and off, and "awesome" was the response when asked about Sydnee.

Lewis knows softball is the primary sport for the sisters, but he said both players have excelled on the court, which in Moore Haven just happens to be part of a new gymnasium that opened during the season.

"My ultimate goal is to get (Darlah) to an opportunity to when she graduates she will have a choice: basketball or softball," Lewis said. "I want her to get a scholarship to further her education; it doesn't matter what it's in."

Of course, the sisters still have one final sports season as teammates at Moore Haven. The softball team is expected to have another strong campaign after reaching the Class 3A state championship game last year.

"We're really excited about the season," said Sydnee, an outfielder and infielder.



Kevin Johnson

Moore Haven freshman guard Sunni Bearden controls the ball Jan. 29 during the Class 3A-District 11 girls championship game against Evangelical Christian School.



Kevin Johnson

Moore Haven sophomore Sydnee Cypress drives toward the basket Jan. 29 during the Class 3A-District 11 girls championship game at Moore Haven High School.



Kevin Johnson

Moore Haven senior Darlah Cypress finds an opening during the Class 3A-District 11 girls championship game against Evangelical Christian School.

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Fledgling PECS softball squad eyes victories

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

BRIGHTON — For the second year in a row, the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School softball team hit the field with a young squad.

Only two eighth-graders — the same number as last season — are in the lineup.



Kevin Johnson

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School eighth-grader Aleina Micco delivers a pitch against Okeechobee High's junior varsity Feb. 19 at Okeechobee High School.

Sixth- and seventh-graders occupy the rest of the roster. The small contingent of eighth-graders is comprised of pitcher Aleina Micco and third baseman Krysta Burton, both key contributors for second-year coach Nancy Jimmie's squad, which split its first two games.

After a 5-3 record last year, PECS started this season with a 10-9 victory at home against Glades Day School's junior varsity Feb. 11. The Seminoles suffered their first loss Feb. 19 with a 7-0 setback against Okeechobee High's junior varsity.

"We have the potential to go far and win every game; it's just getting the girls motivated," Jimmie said. "I'm confident in my older girls who want to be out here and play; I have about five or six that really want to play."

Offensive power against Glades Day came from leadoff batter Janessa Nunez and cleanup batter Alaina Sweat. Both players tripled as PECS eked out a victory.

"We had first-game jitters," Jimmie said.

With Alaina behind the plate, Aleina produced a sharp outing in the circle against Okeechobee, but PECS' bats were quiet. After Okeechobee built a 2-0 first-inning lead, Aleina responded with four straight scoreless innings. When Okeechobee threatened in the second inning, Aleina promptly snagged a line drive and threw to first baseman Jacee Jumper for a double play. Aleina fanned the next batter to end the inning. Later, she recorded another strikeout with an enticing change-up.

"She's got a big arm. She's a great pitcher," Jimmie said.

In addition to Aleina's strong pitching, PECS' defense helped keep the score close through six innings. Krysta, Jacee, second baseman Janessa and shortstop Julia Smith all made tough plays for outs.



Kevin Johnson

Julia Smith takes a cut during an at-bat against Okeechobee High's junior varsity Feb. 19 at Okeechobee High School.

Alyssa Gonzalez, Jenna Brown, Laila Bennett and Aleah Turtle handled outfield duties. Haylie Huff was injured and did not play.

In the fifth, Jenna earned a walk as she battled back after being down in the count. The inning didn't materialize into runs, but Jenna's hard-earned walk was a small

example of the type of determination that Jimmie is looking for from her team this season.



Kevin Johnson

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's Janessa Nunez gets ready to swing the bat against Okeechobee High's junior varsity.

◆ More **RODEO** photos from page 1C



Beverly Bidney

Ivan Bruised Head competes Jan. 30 in the team roping event at the Immokalee Firefighter Pro Rodeo.

◆ JIM SISTERS From page 1C

Rebecca Moura and Esther Prinz. "It was very emotional," Katherine said. "It didn't hit me until a few hours later because my mind was so focused on the game."

The Jim sisters' final season together almost didn't happen. Lauren wasn't certain she wanted to play this season but opted to return.

"I'm glad I did," Lauren said. "Considering how far we've gotten, I wouldn't want it any other way."

Lauren, whose top games came in victories against St. Brendan (10 rebounds) and Keys Gate (10 points), answered a challenge from her coach.

"I want you to play at such a high level that when you're on the bench, you're saying in your head, 'Wow, coach is taking a risk by not having me on the court.' That challenge has allowed her to blossom as well, and now she loves the game," Guilfoyle said.

When the five seniors depart after this season, Lauren's role will increase.

"She will be — without a doubt — a starter next year as a senior," Guilfoyle said. "She'll be the only senior. We'll be a very young team. She's ready to lead."

Florida Christian finished with a 21-7 record, its second straight 21-win campaign. The Patriots' season ended Feb. 10 with a 50-41 loss to Pace in a regional semifinal.

"[Lauren] will be — without a doubt — a starter next year as a senior...She's ready to lead."

—Amanda Guilfoyle, Florida Christian coach



Kevin Johnson

Florida Christian School junior Lauren Jim (No. 15) protects the lane against Booker T. Washington High School in a Class 4A girls basketball regional quarterfinal.



Beverly Bidney

A cowboy tries to rope the steer's feet during the team roping event.



Beverly Bidney

A saddle bronc rider tries to stay on his horse at the Tribe-sponsored Immokalee Firefighters Pro Rodeo Classic.

Improvements multiplied for Fort Lauderdale's Trewston Pierce

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

FORT LAUDERDALE — The impressive numbers Trewston Pierce generated this season on the basketball court at Fort Lauderdale High — such as the 34 points he scored in his final game — didn't tell the entire story as to how much the Flying L ascended as a senior.

Fort Lauderdale coach Rich Belton said big components in Pierce's growth extended beyond box scores.

"Trewston has grown to be a phenomenal kid," Belton said. "His biggest growth was in little things, like body language and how to communicate with his teammates. Talent has never been an issue."

That talent was on display Feb. 6 in Fort Lauderdale's 68-56 season-ending loss to Boyd Anderson in a Class 7A-District 14 semifinal. Pierce's night featured a bevy of running jumpers, fingertip layups and baseline victories that kept his team close in front of its home crowd. He beat opponents with tenacious efforts amid traffic under the hoop and eluded them with athletic moves farther out.

With 16 seconds left in the game, a substitute replaced Pierce, who had played every minute. Pierce spent the final ticks on the sideline in a group hug with Belton and teammates James Gardner and Martell Robinson.

Pierce's first and only season at Fort Lauderdale proved memorable.

"It was wonderful. I can't ask for more," he said.

Switching schools and playing with new teammates for only one season can be challenging, but Belton said Pierce earned respect from the team.

"Trewston is so competitive that he expects everyone to play at his level of intensity, and it's hard because people aren't as blessed as him," said Belton, whose team finished 10-10. "So, him getting



Kevin Johnson

Fort Lauderdale senior Trewston Pierce eyes the basket Feb. 6 during a Class 7A-District 14 semifinal against Boyd Anderson at Fort Lauderdale High School. Pierce scored 34 points during the 68-56 loss.

comfortable with his teammates and having them understand that it's coming from a good place meant the most."

Having grown up in the college basketball hotbed of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Belton knows what it takes to reach the Division I level, which is where he believes Pierce can play.

"The kid has a bright future," Belton said. "I played with a number of kids who were blessed enough to go on and play Division I college basketball. I think he has everything it takes."

Pierce, who would likely be a point guard or shooting guard in college, is keeping his options open. If he doesn't play college ball next season, he said he could spend a year at prep school as a postgraduate before starting his college career.

Regardless of his next stop, Pierce has plenty of gratitude for Belton.

"I can't thank him enough," said Pierce, who added his game improved while working with Belton. "Coach Rich did a lot of close moves with me and worked on my

fadeaway and a lot of stuff that will help in college."

Examples of how Pierce can quickly change the course of a game came in the first quarter of the district semifinal. Boyd Anderson led 7-0, but it took only a couple minutes for Pierce to put Fort Lauderdale ahead. He scored eight straight points to give the Flying L's an 8-7 lead. He finished with 10 points in the quarter.

In the second quarter, Pierce showcased his array of skills at both ends. He caused opponents to foul him twice in one trip and won a 1-on-1 baseline battle for a hard-earned layup on another. He also drained a 3-pointer and notched the first of his three blocks on the night.

Pierce scored 18 of his team's 24 first-half points.

Early in the third quarter, Pierce shrugged off three consecutive missed shots and came back with a layup. He kept attacking, so much so that he took eight foul shots in less than three minutes.

Pierce's game-high 34 points were four

shy of his season-high 38 in an overtime win against Monarch in mid-December.

The growth Belton witnessed in Pierce came not only as a person but also as a player. Pierce, the team's leader in points, scored in double figures nearly every game. Belton said Pierce averaged about 21.6 points per game.

"I think he became a better ball handler than people expected," Belton said. "I think he's been used to kind of playing off the ball and being an athlete that can jump. He proved that he can take you off the bounce and he can post you up and things of that nature."

Fort Lauderdale's final game wasn't the last high school game for Pierce. He is among top players from South Florida selected to play in the Tournament of Champions Dade vs. Broward All-Star Game at the Coral Springs Sportsplex in March.

"I'm excited for him to be able to showcase his talent and do it at a high level," Belton said.

Collier County teams oust Ahfachkee from district tournaments

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

BIG CYPRESS — The basketball seasons at Ahfachkee School concluded in Class 2A-District 10 tournaments.

With just five players in uniform — including only one high schooler — the fourth-seed Ahfachkee girls faced a difficult semifinal Jan. 27 in Everglades City against No. 1 Seacrest Country Day, which sported far more experience at the high school varsity level. Seacrest, of Naples, prevailed 64-14.

Eighth-grader Jazmine Billie — in her first game of the season — led Ahfachkee with six points. Seacrest went on to win the district championship game against Marco Island Academy.

"They're varsity; we're primarily middle school," said Dessie Thomas, who served as assistant coach before being named to replace Shaquille Hall as head coach late in the season. Tracy Hernandez handled assistant duties for the final few games.

"We saw good improvement by the end of the season and the kids kept good spirits," Thomas said. "I'm glad the kids had an uplifting attitude. We had a young team compared to the varsity teams we played."

The girls played three middle school games in addition to their high school slate.

Ahfachkee's boys team also changed head coaches during the season. O'Bryan White, who started as an assistant under Brandon Jones, finished the season at the helm. Ahfachkee, with just three high school players, fell to Marco Island Academy, 81-25, in the boys district semifinal Feb. 3 at Marco Island Charter Middle School. All of Marco's players were seniors, juniors or sophomores.

Marco topped Seacrest 71-57 in the district finals Feb. 4.

Although Ahfachkee's teams didn't visit the win column this season, the players will have opportunities to hone their skills in the coming months at tournaments organized by the Recreation Department, including NAYO, which will be held April 3-4 in Hollywood.

"The kid has a bright future... I think he has everything it takes."

— Rich Belton,
Fort Lauderdale High coach

Pierce sisters spark Hollywood Christian to district title

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

HOLLYWOOD — Shae Pierce didn't waste any time this season getting acclimated to her new team.

When she drained 27 points in her first game with the Hollywood Christian School

girls basketball team in mid-November, it was just the start to a remarkable season for the sophomore point guard who helped turn the squad around. Shae led the team several categories, including points, assists and steals. One year after winning three games, Hollywood Christian went 19-8 this season.

"She's the reason we are where we

are right now," Hollywood Christian coach Joseph Hernandez said.

On her way to averaging 24.4 points, Shae scored in double digits in all but one of her 23 games. Five times she scored at least 30 points.

"All year, when we've needed that bucket, when we've needed that play, she's provided that leadership for us and made the play," said Hernandez, whose team won the Class 2A-District 14 championship and a regional quarterfinal before being eliminated at home by defending state champion Grandview Prep in a regional semifinal Feb. 10.

Shae's most productive outing came Dec. 6 when she scored 42 points in a 66-56 win against Highlands Christian, a quality 3A team that won 17 games this year and reached the regional playoffs.

"They're a physical team and they always try to discourage you," Shae said. "I like when people get inside my head because it makes me play better."

Shae's impressive year extended beyond the regular season. She scored 28 points in a district semifinal win against David Posnack Jewish Day School and registered 18 points in the district championship win against Sheridan Hills Christian. She opened regionals Feb. 5 with a 24-point effort in a 53-49 win against Zion Lutheran and ended her season with 22 points in a regional semifinal loss against Grandview Prep on Feb. 10.

As potent as Shae was on offense, she also was a threat on defense where she averaged more than seven steals per game.

Shae, whose older brother Trewston is a basketball standout at Fort Lauderdale High, wasn't the only Pierce who excelled this season on the court for Hollywood Christian. Her younger sister Burgundy didn't play like a typical seventh-grader on the varsity level. She led the squad in rebounds (8.5 per game) and blocks, was second in assists and steals, and third in scoring (10.6).

"If you compare her stats to most girls in seventh grade around Broward County, she's got to be one of the top two or three players in the county for her age," Hernandez said.

Burgundy reached the 20-point plateau in two games. She notched nine double-doubles in points and rebounds. With five years of varsity eligibility left, time is on Burgundy's side.

"There's plenty of room for her to grow; plenty of room for her to become even better," Hernandez said. "Her older sister is the leader of the team, but she is the future of the team as well."

With a roster void of seniors and juniors this season, the team won't be hurt by graduation. The experience gained this season could launch the team forward next year.

"Overall we did good," Shae said. "We have a lot of potential on the bench. Everybody can get better. I think we have a strong future."



Kevin Johnson

Hollywood Christian School seventh-grader Burgundy Pierce controls the ball amid traffic in a Class 2A-District 14 girls basketball semifinal against David Posnack Jewish Day School in Davie.



Kevin Johnson

Hollywood Christian School sophomore point guard Shae Pierce drives toward the hoop Jan. 27 during a Class 2A-District 14 girls basketball semifinal against David Posnack Jewish Day School in Davie. Hollywood Christian won 59-25.

Seminoles batter up on opposing teams

Cheyenne Nunez helps lead Okeechobee past Moore Haven

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

OKEECHOBEE — Even a brisk Friday evening — chilly enough that spectators at Okeechobee High School's softball field bundled up with jackets and blankets — couldn't cool off Cheyenne Nunez's bat.

The reigning Jr. Miss Florida Seminole delivered two hits and three RBIs to lead Okeechobee past Moore Haven, 16-6, in an early season clash Feb. 13 between teams whose rosters both feature Seminoles.

A year ago, Nunez batted in the No. 2 spot. This season, as a junior, her role at the plate has changed. As the No. 3 batter she's expected to drive in runners, just like she did in the second inning when her opposite field single brought home two runs.

"We moved her down because she has

a little bit more pop...and we can use that instead of having her bunt all the time in the 2 hole," said Okeechobee coach and Tribal member Mary Huff. "We like her in the three spot; she definitely produces there."

Nunez also had a double and an RBI sacrifice fly.

In addition to her sparkling night with the bat, Nunez flashed some impressive leather at third base, fielding all five balls hit her way with no errors.

"She's super intense. She's going to go after anything," Huff said.

Even though Okeechobee lost seven players from last year's 15-9 squad, Huff expects another strong season in a tough Class 6A-District 13. As of Feb. 19, the Brahms were on the right track with a 4-0 record, which included a 16-5 win against Fort Pierce Central. During the game, Rumor Juarez notched a couple



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee's Cheyenne Nunez belts a high pitch Feb. 13 during the Brahms' 16-6 win against Moore Haven at Okeechobee High School. As of Feb. 19, the Brahms were 4-0.



Kevin Johnson

After fielding a grounder, Moore Haven second baseman Delaney Osceola throws to first base for an out against Okeechobee. Moore Haven opened the season with wins against Clewiston, Southwest Florida Christian and LaBelle before falling to Okeechobee.



Kevin Johnson

Moore Haven shortstop Darlah Cypress fires the ball to first base for an out against Okeechobee.

hits. Although she isn't a starter, her contributions come whether it's on the field or on the bench.

"She does a great job for us in the dugout," Huff said. "She cheers her teammates on every single play and lets them know what the plays are."

Okeechobee's victory against Moore Haven marked the first loss for Darryl Allen as the Terriers head coach. Moore Haven opened with wins against Clewiston, Southwest Florida Christian and LaBelle. The Terriers are trying to build on last season's success that included district

and regional titles and an appearance in the Class 3A state championship game, the furthest the team has gone in its history.

"To me the sky is the limit for us," said Allen, a former Okeechobee assistant softball coach who previously coached at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School and still serves as its athletic director. "Tonight is not indicative of who we are as a softball team or the way we played. We have to look at it that way. We know what we're capable of."

Returners from last year's team include senior shortstop Darlah Cypress, sophomore left fielder Sydnee Cypress and junior right fielder Kalgary Johns. The tribal trio was nearly unstoppable in last year's state semifinal as they combined for six hits, seven RBIs and eight runs against Carrollwood.

Sydnee Cypress, who batted .375 as a freshman, ripped a clean single to center in the sixth inning against Okeechobee.

Moore Haven's varsity also features Okeechobee-transfer Delaney Osceola and freshman Sunni Bearden, who played for Pemayetv Emahakv last season.

Osceola, who hit the ball hard just about every trip, belted a two-run single into the left field corner in the fourth inning that sliced Okeechobee's lead to 5-4 before the Brahms pulled away.

After the game, Allen stressed to his team the importance of its next game, a district tilt against Evangelical Christian. His players responded in a big way with a 20-0 win.

"They put it all together and did exactly what they're supposed to do," Allen said.

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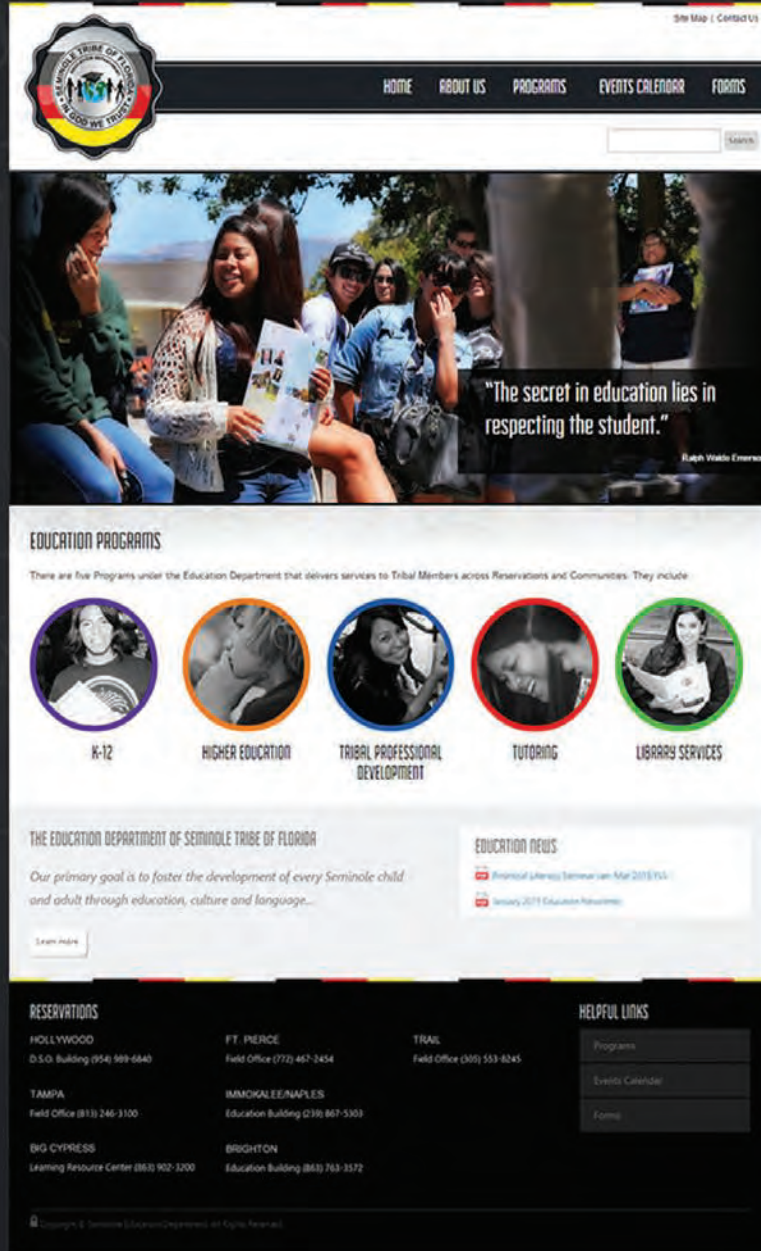
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