

# The Seminole Tribune

Voice of the Unconquered

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## 'Hugely significant' canoe found at Egmont Key

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

**EGMONT KEY** — A canoe used by Seminole ancestors has been discovered on the shores of Egmont Key, a secluded island located at the mouth of Tampa Bay just off the coasts of St. Petersburg and Bradenton.

Paul Backhouse, senior director of the Seminole Tribe's Heritage and Environment Resources Office which oversees the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO), said the find is a compelling one.

"The canoe is hugely significant in telling the story of the Tribe," Backhouse said. "Specifically it appears to indicate the use of sails to travel between the mainland waterways and swamps of Florida and outlying islands."

The canoe will undergo radiocarbon dating, but Backhouse and his staff said they think it was used as early as the 1520s to sometime in the 1600s, just after the early contact period with the Europeans.

Backhouse said the discovery is important because standard histories of ancestral Seminole populations rarely discuss the long range patterns of social mobility, trade and exchange that were occurring prior to the massive disruptions of those early systems by European colonization.

The fact that the canoe was found at Egmont Key could be described as somewhat serendipitous, although the island's history is not a happy one for the Tribe.

### Dark period

While it is now a scenic destination for visitors who snorkel, picnic or bird watch —



The piece of a Seminole canoe recently found in Egmont Key is thought to be about half of its original size and perhaps dates back to the 1500s or 1600s.

♦ See CANOE on page 4A



Michal Fidler

Valholly Frank, 16, of the Big Cypress Reservation, talks to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, during a United Nations climate change conference in Madrid, Spain, in November. Frank is a junior at the Sagmont School in Weston.

## Valholly Frank speaks at UN climate change summit in Madrid

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

Although hers is just one voice of many, climate activist and high school junior Valholly Frank isn't shy about using it to help change the world.

In late November and early December, Frank went to Madrid, Spain, to voice her concerns about

climate change at the United Nations 25th annual Conference of Parties (COP25) and the 15th annual Conference of Youth (COY15).

"Although we can't vote and we don't have that big of a say in society right now, we are still going to make an impact and stand up for what's right," said Frank, of Big Cypress. "If our lawmakers aren't going to take action, we are. I know we are

reaching the young generation, but we want to reach adults because they are the ones with the most influence nowadays."

This wasn't Frank's first time speaking out on behalf of the planet. She spoke at climate rallies in Fort Lauderdale and Miami in September and is one of eight youth who are suing the state of Florida on the

♦ See CLIMATE on page 5A

# Seminole Classic Casino turns 40

## Bingo hall paved way for Tribe's gaming success and Indian gaming

BY SALLIE JAMES  
Special to the Tribune

**HOLLYWOOD** — The paper bingo card wasn't much to look at, but the Lucite-framed \$500 winning ticket from the Seminole Classic Casino's second day in operation was a tribute to Seminole Gaming's humble beginnings.

The casino celebrated its 40th birthday on Dec. 15.

"This is very historic because this was the first Native American high-stakes bingo establishment in the country 40 years ago," said Tara Backhouse, after she accepted the artifact on behalf of the Tribe's Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum during a special ceremony at the bingo hall. "They really pioneered Indian gaming in the country. The Tribe paved the way for Indian gaming across the country."

The card was donated by player Rae Jean Salik.



Brett Lyons/Seminole Classic Casino

The Seminole Classic Casino in Hollywood celebrated its 40th anniversary on Dec. 13. From left are Jim Allen, Seminole Gaming CEO and Hard Rock International president; Sharon Carrero, a Seminole Classic employee since day one in 1979; Edward Aguilar, Seminole Classic Casino general manager; and David Carrol, Seminole Gaming senior vice president of human resources.



Kevin Johnson

The Seminole Classic Casino in Hollywood turned 40 in December.

"What we are celebrating today is really about everything that's changed over the years," Classic Casino general manager and Seminole Tribal member Edward Aguilar said as hundreds of devoted bingo players clapped and smiled. "Not just for Native gaming but in regard to the Seminole Tribe and what it's offering to its people today. For me to be a part of this, to be part of the history of the Tribe today, it's an honor."

The casino also honored Sharon Carrero, who has been a Classic team member since day one when the venue opened on Dec. 14, 1979.

Forty years ago, the Tribe took a big risk when it opened the popular bingo hall at 4150 State Road 7 in Hollywood. Then-Chairman James E. Billie opened the bingo hall in December 1979, not knowing if the initiative would succeed or fail. One plan was to convert the building into a skating rink if the bingo experiment tanked.

Today's noisy crowds are proof of its enduring success.

Inside, bingo players wait for the words

that mean money: "Ladies and gentlemen, are you ready for bingo?" a voice booms across a loudspeaker.

The crowd roars and the fun begins. But it all began as a big gamble.

When Chairman Billie took office in 1979, he saw a huge opportunity in bingo, even though Florida law only allowed nonprofit bingo halls to open two days a week and have a maximum jackpot of \$100. The Seminoles opened the bingo hall anyway and became the first federally recognized Tribe to operate one on a reservation. When it opened, then-Broward County Sheriff Bob Butterworth immediately tried to shut it down. The Tribe sued the state, claiming sovereignty rights protected them from state interference by the U.S. government. The legal war began to rage.

After years of court battles, the existing state laws regulating bingo were ruled irrelevant because of Tribal sovereignty.

In 1981, the U.S. Court of Appeals Fifth Circuit sided with the Tribe, ruling it had the right to operate the high-stakes bingo hall, which ultimately opened the door to Indian gaming throughout the United States. In 1987, the Supreme Court ruled in another case — California v. Cabazon Band of Mission Indians — that federally recognized Tribes could operate casinos outside state jurisdiction because of their sovereign status and that states could not prohibit them from doing so.

Today, the Tribe's foray into gaming and its astounding success has been life-changing for Tribal members, who are able to now enjoy a much higher standard of living than generations before, Aguilar said.

"It's been an endless journey and with the evolution of Seminole Gaming where it is today being a global enterprise it's just an amazing thing to be celebrating," Aguilar said.

It's important to remember that bingo was the catalyst that allowed the economic engine of Indian gaming to grow, Aguilar said.

"(Gaming) funds cultural programs and social service programs so the younger generations of today don't have to grow up in the poverty that their parents did," Aguilar said. "It's easy to forget the place in history that this place has. It really changed everything."

Sallie James is a freelance writer who has covered South Florida news for several years for a variety of media publications.



Brett Lyons/Seminole Classic Casino

Edward Aguilar, general manager of Seminole Classic Casino, presents a framed winning bingo card from the bingo hall's second day of operations in December 1979 to Tara Backhouse, collections manager at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.

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# Editorial



## ‘There should be no medals for massacres’

• Jourdan Bennett-Begaye

Presidential hopeful Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Massachusetts, and Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Oregon, released the Senate companion to the Remove the Stain Act.

Rep. Deb Haaland, Laguna Pueblo and D-New Mexico, and Rep. Denny Heck, D-Washington, introduced the House with the Remove the Stain Act in June.

Both bills strip for the Congressional Medals of Honor that was awarded to the 20 men in the U.S. 7th Cavalry. The soldiers murdered defenseless and unarmed Lakota men, women and children on December 29, 1890. Also known as the Wounded Knee Massacre.

“The horrifying acts of violence against hundreds of Lakota men, women, and children at Wounded Knee should be condemned, not celebrated with Medals of Honor,” Warren said. “The Remove the Stain Act acknowledges a profoundly shameful event in U.S. history, and that’s why I’m joining my House colleagues in this effort to advance justice and take a step toward righting wrongs against Native peoples.”

Sen. Merkley said they “have a responsibility to tell the true story of the horrific Wounded Knee Massacre.”

“We cannot whitewash or minimize the dark chapters of our history, but instead must remember, reflect on, and work to rectify them,” Merkley said. “The massacre of innocents could not be farther from heroism, and I hope this bill helps set the record straight.”

The U.S. award the soldiers the Congressional Medals of Honor, the country’s highest military decoration and only given to a soldier who “must be so outstanding that it clearly distinguishes his gallantry beyond the call of duty from lesser forms of bravery.”

The bill states that the medal “has been

awarded only 3,522 times, including only 145 times for the Korean War, 126 times in World War I, 23 times during the Global War on Terror, and 20 times for the massacre at Wounded Knee.”

These two bills will be in both chambers of Congress which allows for talk on both sides, Haaland said.

“The Remove the Stain Act is about more than just rescinding Medals of Honor from soldiers who served in the U.S. 7th Cavalry and massacred unarmed Lakota women and children – it’s also about making people aware of this country’s history of genocide of American Indians, Haaland said. “Senator Elizabeth Warren understands this, and I’m pleased we’ll be able to have these conversations and move bills forward in both chambers.”

Supporters of the bill, including Chairman Charles R. Vig of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, urge the passage of this bill since it will exist in both the House and Senate.

“We urge prompt enactment of [the Remove the Stain Act] by the House and Senate as an important step in beginning to correct our Country’s past wrong doings and in charting a new path forward based on mutual understanding and respect,” the chairman wrote. “It is shameful to honor soldiers for massacring defenseless men, women and children. Moreover, it disrespects the entire Native American community who send more men and women to serve in the military at higher rates than any other ethnic group.”

More tribes, organizations and individuals support the Remove the Stain Act, such as the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, the Oglala Sioux Tribe, the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, the Great Plains Tribal Chairman’s Association, the Coalition of Large Tribes, United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund, Heartbeat At Wounded Knee 1890, the

1890 Wounded Knee Massacre Descendants Society, Four Directions, the Native Organizers Alliance, VoteVets, Veterans for Peace, Common Defense, Veterans for American Ideals, and the Friends Committee on National Legislation.

Mandan Hidastsa Arikara Chairman Mark Fox, representing the Coalition of Large Tribes, and veteran of the Marine Corps urged Congress to revoke the 20 medals.

“The Coalition of Large Tribes recognizes the importance of Senator Warren and Merkley’s introduction of the Remove the Stain Act in the Senate and supports their efforts in being a voice for justice that has been denied for 130 years,” Fox said.

At least two veterans organizations support the bills.

Garett Reppenhagen, executive director of Veterans for Peace told Congress they “should act to remove the stain.”

“Congress should recognize this massacre for what it was, a mistake, and not glorify it with the 20 Medals of Honor that were subsequently awarded,” Reppenhagen wrote. “We strongly condemn the violence used against the Sioux people, and believe these medals from Wounded Knee tarnish the Medal of Honor.”

Political Director of Common Defense Alexander McCoy agrees. He calls it straight and said, “...there should be no medals for massacres.”

“Recipients of this award are among the greatest heroes of our history, and so it is tragic that past recipients have included U.S. soldiers who slaughtered hundreds of Lakota men, women, and children at the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890. It is critical that Congress act to rescind these specific awards, because there should be no medals for massacres,” McCoy wrote. “For us, this bill is not only about correcting the historical record, it is about recognizing the service of countless veterans alive today, taking an important step towards healing

for the Lakota descendants, and protecting the integrity of every subsequently awarded Medal of Honor.” Perhaps the only obstacle in the way of both bills and Congress is the commander-in-chief, Donald J. Trump. Of course, he can veto a bill.

And with the commander-in-chief’s recent actions of dubbing Navy SEAL Edward Gallagher as a hero, it causes concern for the military. Gallagher was accused of multiple charges, including fatally stabbing an Islamic State militant captive and attempted murder of civilians in 2017. He was acquitted of all charges by the military jury but one, taking a photo with a dead captive.

The Navy Times reported that one of the SEALs overheard him saying he was “OK with shooting women.”

The jury wanted to reduce his rank and cut his pension and benefits, according to the Associated Press. Trump intervened and told the Navy to reinforce his rank among other orders.

Philip J. Deloria, professor of Native American and Indigenous Studies at Harvard University, finds Gallagher’s case “completely relevant” to the Wounded Knee Massacre and Sand Creek Massacre in Colorado even if both massacres happened more than 100 years ago.

“I can imagine in that argument the Gallagher case in some parts of the military, the Gallagher case might ask military officials do the revisioning and take a critical look at its history and question why all of those medals?” he said.

In these three war crimes — Gallagher, Wounded Knee, and Sand Creek — discipline has been ensued in different ways.

The military took action on Gallagher but Trump overrides the system, Congress investigated the Sand Creek Massacre in 1865, and the Remove the Stain Act is introduced for Wounded Knee.

There is “no accountability” for Wounded Knee, he said. “Back in the

day they didn’t follow those rules” but now Congress is stepping in and wants an “accurate lens” and says “let’s draw some lines on what our soldiers are able and not able to do.”

The tricky part of the two bills in the chambers is it being “a radical function,” Deloria said. “How often do you take 20 medals from people? It’s also legitimate.”

In all three examples, especially Wounded Knee being a “historical wrong”, Deloria said, “This a moment where military rises as a voice of reason.”

“Revisiting that in the present moment would be a powerful way for the military to reinforce its own argument of military order,” Deloria said. “Admitting on two levels, yes, a massacre occurred and we inappropriately stepped outside of our own bounds of order by awarding these 20 medals of honor, and we’re big enough to revisit these days and speak to the present moment.”

On Nov. 26, Trump tweeted: “I will always protect our great warfighters. I’ve got your backs!”

Officers told Slate in that they are worried Trump undermining the military will affect the military justice system and some officers see the president’s actions as a betrayal.

A Pentagon official said: “You can wreck a military this way.”

“If a soldier or SEAL doesn’t like an order or thinks he’s being unfairly punished, he now has the idea that he can go over the heads of his superiors and appeal to the president, maybe by writing a letter to Fox,” the official told Slate.

However, with the president’s veto, Congress can still pass a bill with two-thirds of the vote, and then it becomes law.

*Jourdan Bennett-Begaye, Diné, is the Washington editor for Indian Country Today based in Washington, D.C. Follow her on Twitter: @jourdambb. Email: jbennettbegaye@indiancountrytoday.com.*

## Our future can be found within our traditions

• Sam Schimmel

There are fifteen Alaska Native youth who did not survive Carlisle Indian School and still have not made it back to Alaska. Our elders have been and continue to work to return them home.

In elementary school, I was told to go back to my village. I was told I would never go to college. It didn’t stop there. I heard the same message in middle school and in high school. Teachers and school administrators didn’t just try to instill in me that I could not succeed but they expected me to fail. I am very well aware that I am not isolated in this story. This is a theme that runs through the lives of Alaska Native and American Indian youth nationwide. It is a theme that started at the inception of education for indigenous youth in the United States, dating back to boarding schools such as Carlisle Indian School. There are barriers that plagued generations before us still that exist. Low expectations are a damaging tool still used by individuals and institutions to suppress the success of Native youth among others. It is within each of us to level this barrier and to set our own expectations. I am also aware that despite being expected to fail, indigenous youth continue to persevere in systems of education and beyond. As a student at Stanford University, I am living proof of this perseverance. We all have resilience born into us.

That is what we do, we persevere and are resilient in all facets of our lives. That is what our ancestors have taught us. We rely on organizations such as the Center for Native American Youth, Generation Indigenous, and other Native youth programs that work to connect youth with heritage and celebrate our indigenous cultures and remind us that we matter, that we count.

Just like our ancestors fought, we are still fighting today. Today, our battles are much different; we all know someone who has been raped, murdered, abused,

committed suicide or is incarcerated. We don’t just know them; we are related to them and they are us. We don’t need to hide or be ashamed of these memories and realities. We carry them with us for the rest of our lives, but we also carry culture and tradition that has been passed down to us. This is the same inalienable inheritance that survived our ancestors through wars, famines, epidemics, boarding schools, government forced cession of lands, and more. The strength of knowing where you come from and who you are breaks any barrier that may lie ahead.

Upon our traditions, we rely in times of hardship. It is the stories that my Apa told me while sipping tea, and sitting on the wood floor cutting our foods on old cardboard into the early morning from the night before. It is the songs that I learned from the cassette tape that my grandma gave me from old times, so I could hear our drums when I was away, that have always pushed me to succeed.

We have to work together to breach intergenerational trauma and make room for intergenerational healing and learning. We recognize that when one of us succeeds, we all do. Our collective story is one of hope, opportunity, success and belonging. 2019 celebrated many firsts for Alaska Natives and American Indians. It is important to recognize and thank all of you for the continued hard work and perseverance and reminding us that Native Youth Count. It is time to put our minds to the liberation of silent knowledge and the building of transgenerational coalitions. Never forget that it is within our traditions that our future lies.

Lookout 2020!

*Sam Schimmel (Siberian Yupik/Kenaitze Indian) is a Center for Native American Youth advisory board member. This item appeared in CNAY’s 2019 State of Native Youth Report: Native Youth Count.*

## Encourage youth to ascend

• Deb Haaland

For too long, our history has been told to us. Native American experiences were written down by those who did not know our culture, our traditions, or way of life. Those outside Native communities created these fictions — fictions that stole our voice and told us who we were and continued to define centuries of corrosive federal policies that continue to impact our Tribes and Pueblos today. But now — as we look forward — we can ensure that Native voices and leadership shape our own narratives and that Native people are in positions to make critical decisions to improve conditions for the next generations of indigenous youth.

Sitting idly by and hoping for empathy will not bring us the justice we desire. We must ensure that we all do our part to encourage the diversity that will lead us into the future. All levels of governance would benefit from indigenous representation where we — especially Native women — have historically lacked a voice. In order for America and tribal governments to be representative of the people, our leadership must first and foremost truly represent the people.

We must do better — if not for ourselves, for future generations and future leaders. The 2019 federal and state elections have only begun to show our communities that Native voices are valued in America and this message will continue to empower the next generation of indigenous leadership. For all of the youth that have continuously felt disempowered and disenfranchised, I would like you to know and remember: we hear your voice and it is valued.

After I was first elected to represent New Mexico’s 1st Congressional District, as one of the first Native American women in Congress, I attended the Indigenous Peoples March in Washington, D.C. During that event, I had the privilege of speaking about missing and murdered indigenous women. It was a beautiful moment of unification that proved that we will no longer be silenced. While standing on the white marble steps of the Lincoln Memorial overlooking the National Mall with the great symbols of democracy, I felt the wind blowing my

sister’s red ribbon skirt against my legs knowing that this was the location where Martin Luther King, Jr. had given his “I Have a Dream” speech during the March on Washington in 1963.

Fifty-six years later, I found myself at the same location where one of our most important civil rights leaders encouraged his community to take agency in their collective voice to end racism in the United States. That day, I had hoped to instill a willingness in all of us to stand up for our stolen sisters — an achievable dream that we must all have.

Indigenous people in this country were not at first factored into the American dream, but we have found our voices, and we now refuse to stand by while the injustice and oppression of failed federal policies have tried to erase us from our own country and its history. We are showing up and standing up!

My dream is to wield the spotlight and show, in numbers, that we are loud and strong. We must march to the polls for the 2020 Presidential election. We must march to ensure full participation in the 2020 Census. Every vote counts. Every person counts. By participating in these critical national measures, we can let those who have attempted to silence and erase us see that we will no longer be underrepresented, underfunded, or underserved.

Our history is also one of broken promises and betrayed trust. That is why this year I, along with my colleague Senator Elizabeth Warren, introduced our legislative proposal entitled “Honoring Promises to Native Nations Act” to address chronic underfunding and barriers to self-determination in Indian Country. While we bear the history, plight, and trauma of colonialism, we will take long-overdue congressional action to end its tyranny on tribal communities.

Similarly, I had the help of my colleagues to introduce the “Not Invisible Act of 2019,” to bridge the jurisdictional gaps in public safety that continues to lead to the unnecessary loss of Native American lives. The Not Invisible Act is the first bill in history to be introduced by four members of federally recognized Tribes — the only four Native American members of Congress in the U.S. House of Representatives: Sharice Davids (Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin), Tom Cole (Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma),

and Markwayne Mullin (Cherokee Nation).

This is why Native American representation at the state and federal levels matter — we know the critical issues that impact our communities because we have lived them and have the collective voice to make a real change. We must encourage Native people to run for elected positions so we can continue to have and expand this voice. However, the work that is accomplished in Washington D.C. is nothing without the support of our Native Nations and our young people. Paying homage to Martin Luther King, Jr., President Obama once said: “The premise that we’re all created equal is the opening line in the American story. While we don’t promise equal outcomes, we have strived to deliver equal opportunity — the idea that success doesn’t depend on being born into wealth or privilege, it depends on effort and merit. And with every chapter we’ve added to that story, we’ve worked hard to put those words into practice.”

I hope that on that cold January day while I stood on the white marble steps of the Lincoln Memorial in my red ribbon skirt, that my voice contributed to the authentic opening line in the lesser known Native American story. I will continue to strive to ensure that all Native Americans receive equal outcomes when our people go missing and the stories of all indigenous people are heard in the halls of congress.

In reviewing this report, I am more confident than ever that our future is bright. Let us continue to encourage those around us — especially our youth — to ascend higher and higher on the wooden rungs of the ladders that past generations built for us that brought us here today. Our voices will be carried by our youth on their journey into the unyielding sky to be heard by generations to come.

We must make sure that they never stop dreaming.

*Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) is a U.S. congresswoman who represents New Mexico’s 1st congressional district. This item appeared in the Center for Native American Youth’s 2019 State of Native Youth Report: Native Youth Count.*

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### CORRECTIONS

*These are corrections from the Nov. 29, 2019 print edition of The Seminole Tribune:*

- On page A1, “Joe Dan Osceola’s life, influence celebrated by USET,” incorrectly implied that Joe Dan Osceola is a member of the Bird Clan. He is a member of the Panther Clan.
- On page A7, a profile of Seminole veteran Paul Bowers Sr. incorrectly referenced his rank in the Marines. His rank was corporal, not colonel.

*The corrections have been made in the stories on the Tribune website and in the PDF version.*

# Community



## Tribe's Veterans Service Organization improves lives of Native and non-Native veterans

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**BRIGHTON** — U.S. Army veteran Raymond Jolly served in Vietnam from 1965-67 in areas where the herbicide Agent Orange was sprayed.

When Jolly returned from service at age 23, he got married. Two years later, after feeling weak and passing out numerous times, he was diagnosed with diabetes. More symptoms followed, including peripheral neuropathy — damage to nerves near brain and spinal cord causing weakness, numbness and pain in hands, feet and other parts of the body. He also lost some hearing, vision and suffers from heart disease.

According to its website, the Veterans Administration recognizes these as symptoms of exposure to Agent Orange.

Although Jolly is not Native American, the Seminole Tribe was able to help him in his quest for VA benefits with the help of its Veterans Service Organization.

Jolly and his wife Judy had two healthy babies, but the third was born deformed; his spinal cord was outside of his body. The baby lived less than two hours, but the obstetrician recognized the deformity as possibly being related to Agent Orange. The doctor asked the Jollys if she could take photos and send them to the VA. Six weeks later, Jolly called the VA and they denied receiving any photos.

"Our mistake was not having copies of what we sent to the VA," said Jolly, 74, of Okeechobee. "There was nothing we could do but drop it."

Over the ensuing years, Jolly sought help with his illnesses and was under the care of private doctors. He couldn't work because of the severity of his disabilities.

In 2011, Judy Jolly was in a serious automobile accident. She spent six months in the hospital and was in a wheelchair. She couldn't work and they lost their health insurance. The family was in dire straits financially and could barely afford their monthly expenses. The electricity was about to be cut off.

Jolly knew the VA had certain benefits for veterans, but he didn't pay attention to it until one day in church he met Dan Hunt, president of the Okeechobee chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America. They tried for 18 months to get benefits, but were denied repeatedly. That's when Hunt brought Jolly to the Brighton Reservation to meet with Marc McCabe, who runs the Tribe's Veterans Service Organization.

Since 2011, McCabe, bureau chief and chief service officer of Vietnam Veterans of America's St. Petersburg office, and Elaine Westermeyer, outreach coordinator for the VA, have been meeting with veterans monthly in Brighton and Hollywood to help them navigate the system to receive benefits. The organization serves Tribal veterans, Tribal employee veterans and other veterans living in the area near the Brighton Reservation.

"People don't realize these benefits exist," McCabe said. "We have been able to recover more than \$350 million for more than 3,000 veterans. The money stays in the areas where they live and has an economic impact on the community."

Once the VA determines eligibility of benefits, a one-time check covering back benefits is paid to the veteran. The VSO has won one-time retroactive checks for Tribal members and employees in amounts ranging from \$25,000 to \$900,000. These veterans then receive monthly benefits for life.

The percentage of disability granted by the VA determines the amount vets will receive. In cases of full disability, spouses and family members get ChampVA health insurance, commissary privileges, children get a free college education and property taxes are waived.

"Now suddenly a veteran is able to buy a house," McCabe said. "If it wasn't for Tribal Council, this would never have happened. These vets would have been lost in the system and kicked to the curb."

McCabe works closely with Westermeyer to assist the vets. Being outside of the VA bureaucracy there are things McCabe can do that Westermeyer cannot, and vice versa. They are an effective team; the VSO has a 94 percent success rate. They see between 40 and 70 new veterans every month.

"It's a unique program. I don't know another organization that has a partnership with a tribal nation," McCabe said. "This was something that came up in a Seminole veterans meeting in Brighton. It turned out to



Courtesy photo  
Raymond Jolly, circa 1965

be a success because of the partnership and the trust. If it wasn't for Tribal leadership, we wouldn't have this."

McCabe was able to get Jolly a non-service connected pension and a retroactive payment of \$12,000, which helped the family get back on its feet. In 2015, VSO was able to get Jolly a service connected pension, which doubled his monthly allocation. In early December Jolly was declared 100 percent permanently disabled and his monthly check doubled again.

The extra income allowed the Jollys to get out of debt, buy a vehicle and not be dependent on others to take them where they needed to go, pay their bills and improve their credit rating. They even purchased a double wide trailer.

"Our life is 100 percent better," Jolly said. "The biggest change is not having to worry about where we will get money to pay our bills and buy groceries. It's just incredible what the VA has been able to do for us and it's all because of Marc, Elaine and especially the Indian reservation."

Jolly carries McCabe's and Westermeyer's business cards with him and gives them out when he meets a veteran in need. Unfortunately, not everyone is open to pursuing help.

"You'd be surprised how many people turn you down," Jolly said. "They think no one can help them. Most of the time, Marc can help. I know one or two guys who died from diseases they got from Agent Orange."

The Jollys have been married for 51 years, have two sons and three grandchildren. Raymond Jolly enjoys hunting and fishing as often as he can. He says the secret to a long marriage is simple.

"Pray to the lord and say I'm sorry when I wake up and I'm sorry when I go to bed," Jolly said. "Share everything, don't have any secrets."

Judy Jolly is very appreciative of the work McCabe and Westermeyer did for them.

"Marc and Elaine have been a godsend," she said. "They are really caring people and they put their hearts into it. We are so thankful for what they have done for us. I can't praise God enough for them."

McCabe says he does this for the veterans and remains hands-on for every case. He even helps widows get their pensions.

"The only time I will stop doing it is when I pass or decide to quit," said McCabe, a Vietnam veteran who served in the Marines. "I don't see that happening any time soon."

## Initiative seeks to prevent problem gambling issues at Tribe's properties

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — As the Tribe's gaming properties continue to expand across the globe, it has launched a new program to educate players and lessen issues associated with problem gambling.

PlayersEdge is an initiative focused on player engagement — whether they are new, casual or experienced.

The subject is important, Paul Pellizzari said, because if someone has a gambling problem it can have a wide range of negative impacts — psychological, physical, in family relationships, with work and in finances.

Pellizzari is the vice president of global social responsibility for Hard Rock International. He's been working on PlayersEdge with Angie Martinez, manager of social responsibility and Tribal business relations at Seminole Hard Rock Support Services. The two have also consulted with the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling on the initiative.

The program uses several methods to provide information and education on the gaming floor. For those who need it, PlayersEdge offers information, assistance and support services, including referrals for those who decide to voluntarily self-exclude from gaming.

More than 15,000 "guest-facing employees" (those who interact with guests) will receive a "frontline fundamentals" online training course that explains different aspects of player behavior.

The employees learn how to interpret behavior and take the correct action, whether it's simply providing a guest information, or for more serious situations, how to escalate a response.

There is also an expanded training for supervisors and managers. They will receive a "supervisor support" classroom session where role playing is done and real-life scenarios are explored.

These more senior personnel are taught how to interact with and support distressed gamblers, with help from trained clinicians and problem gambling experts from the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling.

In addition, visitors to gaming properties will soon notice a PlayersEdge outreach campaign on the gaming floor.

"There will be a regular stream of messages to help all types of players on an ongoing basis," Pellizzari said. "We are educating people in the environment where they are gambling and normalizing messages in the gambling environment. Historically the messages are hard to communicate and we want to be effective at it."

Formats to get the message out, Pellizzari said, include a mix of print, digital, web and social.

Pellizzari said visitors can expect to see posters, cards, brochures and messages on screens that will be located at the end of slot machines, for example.

The overarching goal, Pellizzari said, is to keep gaming fun and make sure players are able to enjoy it for the long term. He said HRI and Seminole Gaming are committed to building a healthy base of customers who gamble safely and return to properties year after year.

Pellizzari has worked for the Tribe for one and a half years. In that time, he's been working to evolve the responsible gaming program.

"We built PlayersEdge by listening to gamblers. We want to communicate the right information by appealing to how they actually think and behave in casinos," Pellizzari said. "By understanding the risk profiles and experience levels of different player types, we can segment and target information more precisely, bringing a new focus on preventing problems before they start."

Now in Hollywood, but originally from Canada, Pellizzari has been working in corporate responsibility initiatives for 25 years.

While PlayersEdge trainings have already been underway, it is expected to be fully rolled out sometime in January 2020. More information is at [playersedge.org](http://playersedge.org).



HRI  
Paul Pellizzari is the vice president of global social responsibility for Hard Rock International.

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# Couple establish marker near home to honor Seminole history

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

**DADE CITY** — Karen and Eric Hannel moved into their dream home in the country a few years ago about 40 miles northeast of Tampa Bay in Dade City. It is surrounded by lush vegetation and land that has been used for farming and ranching for decades by the area's early pioneer families.

Even though they knew there was a history of the area that existed well before that time — a Seminole one — they would soon discover more.

After the Saint Leo University professors moved into their home in the fall of 2016, they were chatting with a neighbor who mentioned she'd heard there was once an Indian village located nearby.

That piqued the interest of Karen Hannel, who'd seen a street sign — Chipco Ranch Road — near her property's back entrance. She'd also seen a Chipco Road street sign.

"At the time I thought it must have once stood for Chip Company — like for a mulch business or something," she said.

The Hannels were now intrigued, and why wouldn't they be? The two are historians with a longtime interest in Native American history and issues.

They're familiar with Florida history, too — Karen Hannel has spent her whole life in the state, including generations of her family. Eric Hannel is a transplant who came to Florida via Pensacola and the Marine Corps.

"I thought: 'OK, we've got to look into this now,'" Karen Hannel said.

Research began in earnest and the Hannels soon discovered their home was located in the former town of Chipco — named after Chief Chipco, a Seminole who took refuge in the area, it's thought, prior to 1850. He likely traded in the area until about 1866.

Seminole living on the Fort Pierce Reservation, called Chupco's Landing, consider themselves decedents of Chief Chipco.

(The Hannels said the variance in spelling is likely due to Anglicization of Indigenous names over time.)

Chief Tallahassee succeeded Chief Chipco as the leader of the Creek Seminoles. Tallahassee was Chipco's nephew, who he

adopted as his son. Chipco is thought to have succumbed to old age in 1881.

With more knowledge of Chief Chipco and the former town, the Hannels would discover more clues pointing to the validity of their neighbor's claim, including pottery shards and arrowheads that have been found in the area.

The artifacts have not yet been verified as Seminole, but Eric Hannel is in the process of identification.

## From bustling to bust

The town of Chipco rose to prominence as an economic center sometime after the Civil War.

Eric Hannel said he discovered through his research that the town was known by its name even before it had an official Post Office — which was designated in 1883.

"We surmise that the town was known as Chipco at least by the late 1870s," he said.

The town thrived when Tampa Bay was little more than a trading post. Chipco boasted a school that doubled as a church on Sundays. It also had a thriving general store, planing mill, train depot and a grist mill that was said to be the first in the county.

The town likely declined due to multiple factors. The Great Freeze of 1895 killed many citrus groves, and there was an exhaustion of virgin pine forests that negatively impacted the area's lumber and turpentine industry.

While the town's school continued to operate until 1901, by 1909 Chipco had disappeared from most maps.

## Shared interest

While the Hannels are not affiliated with any tribe, they are scholars of Native American history — Karen Hannel is also an expert in World War I.

"My focus has always been on art and conflict," she said. "I would study protest art, anything that has to do with how artists respond to any kind of cultural conflict."

Karen Hannel is particularly proud of a style of protest art that hangs in her home.

"Still Dancing" was created for International Women's Day in 2016 by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers to raise awareness of the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The poster uses small versions of women and girls' faces to form a larger one of a Native woman.

Eric Hannel has taught Native American history at Saint Leo.

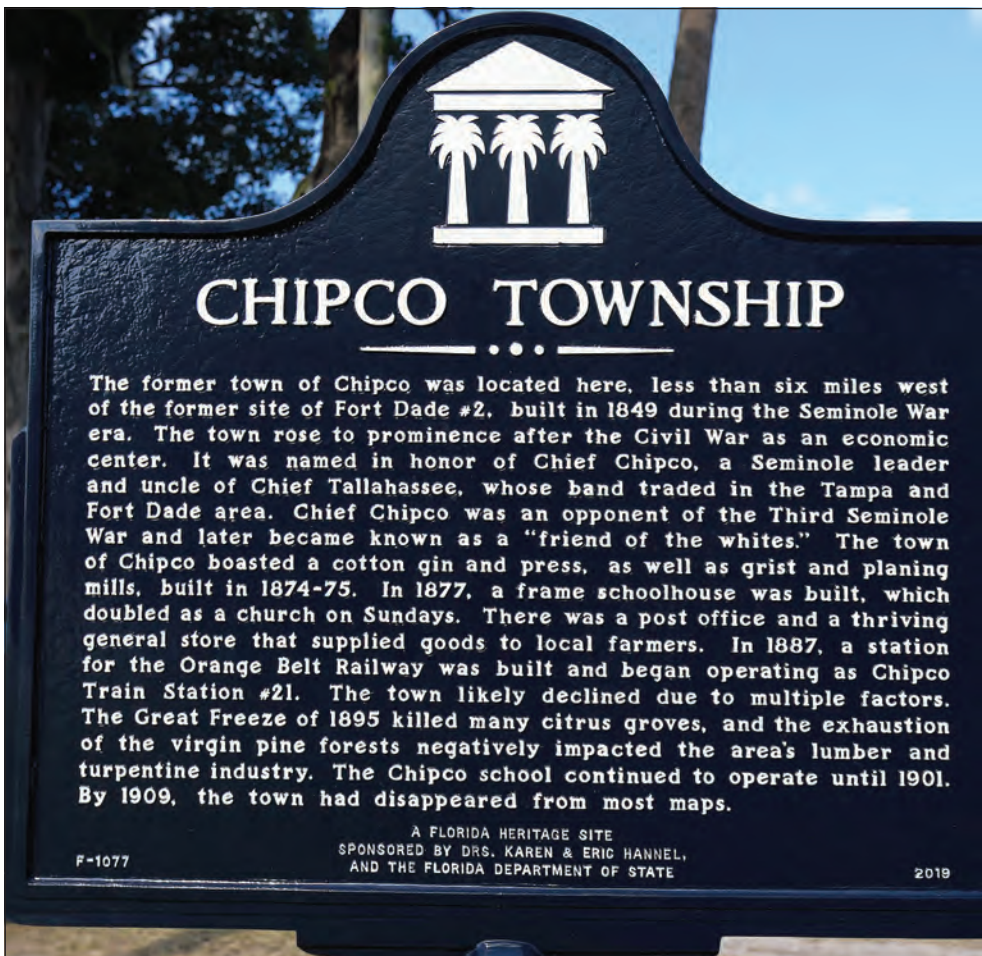
"From a more holistic perspective. It's pretty interesting to see the light bulb come on with the students. Because we talk about the national myth of Thanksgiving versus the destruction that took place," he said.

Eric Hannel, who earned a master's degree in Indigenous People's Law from



Damon Scott

Karen and Eric Hannel stand next to the Florida Heritage Site marker that they worked to make a reality. The couple lives about a half mile away from the marker site. The marker describes the former town of Chipco, named after a Seminole chief.



Damon Scott

The marker describes the former town of Chipco and its connection to the Seminoles.

## ◆ CANOE From page 1A

Egmont Key has a sinister history.

The island was used as an internment camp for Seminoles before they were transported to New Orleans and other locations in the Western U.S. as part of the Indian Removal Act of 1830.

Thousands of Seminoles are thought to have been shipped or forcibly walked west during the period. Many perished on Egmont Key or on the ensuing Trail of Tears.

Nevertheless, many in the Tribe say the story of Egmont Key is an important one to tell about the Seminoles' fight for survival.

The Tribe has recently created an Egmont Key high school curriculum and a special publication for Tribal members and the public in an effort to keep its history alive.

All of the activity involving Egmont Key has a backdrop of urgency, too.

The island is slowly disappearing — a phenomenon that has accelerated in recent years due to erosion from storm surges, sea level rise, and ever more powerful and frequent hurricanes and other environmental factors due to climate change.

Experts think Egmont Key could completely disappear in 100 years. Records show its area was about 580 acres in 1877 and is about 250 acres today.

## 'An amazing thing'

It is perhaps ironic, then, that those studying the canoe think Hurricane Dorian might have been the reason its broken (16-foot, 2-inch) section was discovered in the first place on Oct. 30.

While Dorian did not make landfall on Florida's west coast, it was one of the most powerful hurricanes ever recorded in the Atlantic Ocean, and it affected weather systems and ocean currents on both sides of the state.

Dorian was a hurricane from Aug. 24 to Sept. 10.

"Most likely what happened is that [the canoe] was [originally] on the island and as the island shrank, it settled in the sand, on the beach or in the middle and was buried in the sand and eventually pulled underwater," Bernard J. Howard, Heritage and Environmental Resources Office (HERO) project manager with the Tribe said.

"Then Dorian came through and stirred up Tampa Bay," he said, speculating that the canoe had been lodged offshore underneath the water.

The canoe was discovered by Tom Watson, an Egmont Key park ranger.

Egmont Key became a wildlife refuge and was put on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. The island was designated as a Florida State Park in 1989.

When Watson made the discovery, he contacted the state of Florida's Bureau

of Archeological Resources, who then contacted Tribal officials.

Howard, who earned a degree in maritime archeology, said only a few such canoes have been found in the past 50 years.

"It's not common. I [know of] three or four references of canoes like this," he said.

Howard said it's too early to say what the canoe's full dimensions would have been. He said it's most likely made of cypress wood.

Howard echoes Backhouse's sentiment that the discovery is particularly impactful due to evidence the canoe had a mast for a sail.

"You don't use a sail in [Everglades] canoes," Howard said. "A canoe with sails is specifically for ocean going, back and forth around the islands in the Gulf [of Mexico] or trading with Cuba. There are oral histories of Indigenous People trading with Cuba."

Howard added that the canoe has tool markings that are very similar to traditional Seminole Tribe canoe tool markings.

Tribal member Pedro Zepeda, who went to Egmont Key after the canoe was discovered, concurs that it is a much older style that would have been used for going into the open waters of the Gulf of Mexico, and is structurally different from the wetlands canoes crafted later.

Zepeda is an Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum village crafter and canoe maker. He was one of the stakeholders who made trips to Egmont Key — on Nov. 11 and Dec. 5 — after the canoe was discovered.

They helped move the canoe to a safe area of the island, wrapped it in towels and built a temporary box so it could be placed in saltwater.

The group met with state of Florida officials and partners from the University of South Florida to transport the canoe in a 26-foot truck to a conservation lab in Tallahassee.

"The whole move process went really well to make sure we were on the same page," Howard said. "It's a significant find, especially washing up on Egmont Key. With the Tribe being involved and the history with the Seminoles — it was very important that we were there to make sure things were being done in a proper manner."

"It's an amazing thing," Backhouse added. "It tells a completely different story about what we know about the Tribe and their seafaring techniques."

## Next steps

The end goal of all parties involved, including the Tribe, is to have a studied and preserved canoe relocated back to Egmont Key. Howard said the process could take three to five years.

It is not yet known what kind of structure might need to be constructed to house it properly.

Meanwhile, Egmont Key is undergoing a mapping process using 3D scanning technology.

The Tribe has partnered with the

University of South Florida's digital imaging lab to create a digital record.

Backhouse said it will help to show the effect climate change has had on the island and will provide a complete rendering of topography, vegetation and structures, down to very fine detail.



Photo courtesy Dave Scheidecker, THPO research coordinator

Members of the Tribe and employees from THPO made the trip to Egmont Key to help preserve the canoe and have it transported to a lab in Tallahassee.



Photo courtesy Dave Scheidecker, THPO research coordinator

The bow of the canoe has a hole for rope so it could be pulled onto the shore.

◆ See CHIPCO on page 5A

# Fort King reenactment gives visitors taste of Seminole War

BY MARIAN RIZZO  
Special to the Tribune

OCALA — The fourth annual “A Fight For Freedom: Attack on Fort King” event drew 1,000 visitors to the Fort King National Historic Landmark on the weekend of Dec. 7-8. Hosted by the city of Ocala and the Fort King Heritage Association, the activities set the stage for a reenactment of the 1835 conflict that set off the Second Seminole War.

Seminole Indians in traditional Native attire faced off against U.S. soldiers wearing light blue uniforms. Tepees and lean-tos, also known as “chickees,” housed blacksmiths, woodworkers, potters, spinners and other demonstrators. Canon blasts erupted amidst the staccato of rifle shots. The aroma of fried bread offered a taste of a classic Indian staple, and a steady thump-thump rose from a corner of the property where folks tried their hand at tomahawk throwing.

The reenactment focused on a series of events that led to the Second Seminole War, which began when the Indians rebelled against President Andrew Jackson’s Indian Removal Act, which required them to leave Florida. Led by Osceola, a popular warrior, the Seminoles ambushed a detachment of soldiers under the command of Major Francis Dade near Tampa. Osceola killed General Wiley Thompson, the U.S. agent to the Indians. Then the Seminoles proceeded to Ocala, waged another attack, and burned down the fort.

Quenton Cypress, community engagement manager for the Seminole Tribe’s Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO), stood proudly before the reconstruction, which was completed in 2017.

“We won’t burn it down again,” Cypress said. “The fact that the fort was rebuilt creates a more accurate reenactment that allows us to tell the full story. We’re keeping a legacy going by coming up here and doing our demonstrations. We can spread our message and let people know about us.”

This is an educational effort, said Keifer Calkins, outdoor historic resource program supervisor for the city of Ocala and organizer of the event.

“These days, a lot of families are coming because they want their kids to know what life was like before cell phones,” Calkins said. “They can see how dramatically different our lives were 200 years ago. I hope in the end they will leave knowing how Florida was created and it was not an easy thing. It’s not a happy story, but it’s important for us to tell. Though I tend to side with the Seminoles, we like to have representation from all the groups who participated in this history. I think it can be a healing thing at this point, rather than a wound.”

Daniel Tommie came from the Big Cypress Reservation where he is a traditional interpretive coordinator at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum. Tommie played the part of Osceola in the reenactments. He said he wanted to be as authentic as possible.

“I have to take off my Fitbit watch and get rid of the water bottle,” he said with a chuckle. “But I can keep my contacts in. Otherwise I’ll be shootin’ some of our own.”

Matt Griffin, a descendant of the Black Seminole contingent, spoke to visitors about



Fort King/Facebook (above), Bear Heister/Facebook (below)

Above and below, participants sport attire of the times as a reenactment of the Second Seminole War is played out during the fourth annual “Fight for Freedom: Attack on Fort King” program Dec. 7-8 at the Fort King National Historic Landmark in Ocala.



the integration of the escaped African-American slaves.

“As my uncle would always say, ‘Here we have two distinct groups that formed a bond that helped them face a common enemy,’” Griffin said. “They helped each other out in many ways.”

U.S. soldier reenactor Eric Tindle, 30, participated in the Ocala event with his brother, William.

“My parents were with the artillery in Dade for as long as I’ve been alive,” Tindle said. “We’ve been going to Dade a bunch of times since I was a little kid. This was my first time in Ocala.”

Andrew Wallin, 29, “died” in the reenactments and also in hand-to-hand combat demonstrations, losing several bouts to Seminole reenactor Jason Melton and, at the conclusion, getting decked by two female Seminoles, Charlie Osceola, 15, and her sister, Alyssa, 18.

“Those soldiers were at a big disadvantage because of the clothing and tools they were given,” Wallin said. “Their

rifles were 15 years old, while the Seminoles had way more modern weapons. Plus, the Seminoles knew the land really well and were good at ambush, so they were able to outnumber the soldiers—usually three against one.”

Among the visitors, Geraldine Holly came with her daughter and grandchildren.

“I wanted them to learn a little history,” she said. “I’m into a lot of history, and I always wanted to stop here. I read a flyer that came with my electric bill, and I said, ‘I’ve gotta get over there.’”

Also touring the grounds were Summerfield residents Ray and Bonnie Peterson. The Petersons said they have lived in the area for 25 years but have never been to the fort.

“We didn’t even know the fort was here and we drive by it two or three times a week,” Ray Peterson said.

Marian Rizzo is a freelance writer from Ocala.

## CLIMATE From page 1A

grounds that the state has endangered youth by failing to protect the environment and their future.

Youth from around the world attended COY15, which met the week before the COP25, and held discussions about climate change with activists, students and academics. The group developed policy positions and shared ideas for climate action at home. Frank spoke at a session with law students from around the world.

“It was great to have people listen and understand what I was talking about,” she said. “These are the people who will be leading the discussions in their communities.”

As part of a workshop about empowering people, the COY15 group brainstormed ideas about how to bring awareness of the crisis to their hometowns. Specific plans were made and discussed.

“I think without the huge youth movement, especially the one Greta [Thunberg] started, it wouldn’t have been as empowering,” Frank said.

While at COP25, Frank met U.S. Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi and Representative Kathy Castor, of Tampa, who serves as the chairwoman of the U.S. House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis.

In November, Pelosi wouldn’t meet with members of the global environmental activist group the Extinction Rebellion when they held a demonstration in her office and Frank wanted to know why. Pelosi said she treated the group with a lot of respect, but Frank said it was a disappointing moment.

Frank also spoke with Castor, who was very supportive of her lawsuit against the state and was in awe of where she came from. Frank came to the conference with some traditional Seminole dolls to give to people she met and respected. She gave one to Castor.

“I wanted her to have a piece of my culture,” Frank said. “She gave me one of her Congressional pins. Even though it is hard to be proud of politics today, she is still patriotic and loves our country. It was great to see that.”

Climate activist Greta Thunberg, 16, founded the #FridaysForFuture climate strike movement in August 2018. On Dec. 6, about half a million protesters marched in the streets of Madrid led by Thunberg and a group of Indigenous people from South America.

“Seeing tribes from Chile and the Amazon was so inspiring,” Frank said. “It was beautiful to learn about their culture, what they stand for and to see them taking action by going to U.N. conference. It was awesome to go onstage with them and be part of the Indigenous community. I want to see my Tribe out there. We are the unconquered and I want us to fight for social justice.”

Although they tried to stand on the COP25 stage to support other speakers, the indigenous group was removed from

the stage. Instead, they talked to the press outside of the room, sang, danced, played flutes and drummed. Frank was pleased to be part of the demonstration.

Frank attended the conference with her mother Rhonda Roff, who is also an activist.

“It’s great when kids get a chance to have camaraderie in the scenario of climate talks,” Roff said. “She saw how the process works; the boring meetings and gory details. Kids don’t want to hear any more excuses. They don’t know the answers and that technical solutions are complicated and take time.”

The climate conference ended Dec. 12 without a consensus of how to deal with reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Major polluting countries, including the U.S., blocked measures that would have encouraged countries to work harder to reduce greenhouse gasses.

The outcome may not have been encouraging, but Frank was emboldened to continue her activism at home in her community and at school. Before she left, she asked The Sagemont School principal to give students an excused absence to attend the #FridaysForFuture climate strike at Fort Lauderdale City Hall.

“My friends are still talking about how amazing it was to go,” Frank said. “I’m glad they are starting to understand what I do. It’s not a lot of yelling and screaming, but just being a human who is trying to save fellow humans. It’s great to know that everywhere in the world there is action happening.”

Although Frank and Roff never got to meet Thunberg, they witnessed what Roff called the “Greta effect” where people clamored for access to her. During COP25 there were a lot of events, speakers and sessions to attend and the duo missed more than they were able to attend. But they saw a lot of exhibits from countries that showed their efforts to combat climate change.

“We are staring down the barrel of a gun right now and we should be in major crisis emergency mode,” Roff said. “People need to be mad; there is nothing more serious. People are already dying from the effects of climate change.”

There already are climate change refugees who have lost their homes throughout the world.

“It’s hard to think of an entire functional community, like the [Seminole] Tribe losing their home,” Roff said. “To be displaced is hard for a person, but for a whole community it is even harder. This is [Valhally’s] major focus, that this could be lost. There’s a lot of how dare you, how could you.”

Frank learned how powerful being together with a community of like-minded people can be.

“All these forces came together,” she said. “At first I felt out of place since there weren’t that many people from the U.S. But I met Native youth and elders from other countries who are on the frontline of climate change. So many people don’t understand the necessity to do something about it. I want to talk to our Tribal leaders about being more involved. We need to touch on the fact that climate change is going to affect everyone.”



Michal Fidler

Valhally Frank speaks to law students about her part in legal action against the state of Florida during the U.N. Conference of Youth in Madrid, Spain, on Nov. 30.

## CHIPCO From page 4A

“We wanted people to know”

The Hannels new research and discovery of where their home was located motivated them to figure out a permanent way to recognize the area’s history.

They petitioned the state for permission to erect a historical marker about the town of Chipco and its Seminole connection.

The Hannels convinced their neighbors — many of whom are decedents of those pioneer families who were around when Chipco was a town — to sign a release for

the marker.

The marker is now located about a half mile from their home on donated land. It is near mailboxes and has an area where cars can pull over and park.

“We wanted people to know that the Seminole were here,” Eric Hannel said. “It’s a way to remember that history doesn’t stop with the pioneer families. The history goes far beyond that.”

“In Florida you come across all of these names and it’s ‘Oh, those weird Florida names,’” Karen Hannel said. “It’s this inconvenient reminder that there was something else and someone else here.”

The marker is designated as a Florida Heritage Site and the Hannels are the

sponsors with the Florida Department of State.

A formal dedication of the Chipco Township marker was held on Dec. 16.

The Hannels are working with the Tribal Historic Preservation Office on a future version of the marker that would include a Mikasuki translation on one side.

### If you go

The marker is located midway along Jessamine Road between Saint Joe Road and Blanton Road in Dade City.

Contact Karen Hannel at 941-685-0372 or karen.hannel@saintleo.edu for more information.

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# In her own words: Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie visits Japan

BY DURANTE BLAIS-BILLIE  
Miss Florida Seminole

In the last weeks of November, I traveled to Japan as Miss Florida Seminole alongside my sister and chaperone Tia Blais-Billie, Miss Florida Seminole 2013-2014, to further our Tribe's relationship with the AINU people of Hokkaido.

The AINU are one of two remaining Indigenous populations of Japan, and while their culture shares many similarities with Seminoles their modern history is much different, not receiving national recognition as Indigenous until early this year.

My trip was inspired by an AINU group who visited our Tribe through Florida International University in 2016, where they travelled halfway around the world with a dedication to learning Seminole traditions and stories from our own voices.

In my title, I felt inspired to do the same; to use my platform to bring awareness to and amplify the voice of not just my Tribe but all Indigenous communities around the world so that we may gain sovereignty over our peoples' stories and lives.

We were accompanied by Chuk Beshar, executive producer of 3Minute Inc. who had worked on a previous AINU-Seminole cultural exchange project and acted as our guide and translator.

My visit to the AINU people of Japan



Former Miss Florida Seminole Tia Blais-Billie and current Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie, both in the center, are joined by Akanko AINU Theater performers and Mr. Akira Toko and Mr. Masao Nishida during the sisters' visit to Japan in November.



Durate Blais-Billie and Tia Blais-Billie with Professor Yuko Honda (first row, second from right) and students and faculty of the Urespa Club. Students are wearing medicine color beads made and gifted by Durante and Professor Honda and Tia is wearing a medallion made and gifted by Tia.

began in Sapporo, the capital of the prefecture Hokkaido which is a northern island of Japan where the AINU historically live.

In Sapporo I started my AINU immersion by meeting with the Hokkaido government's AINU Policy and Affairs dignitaries. We sat down in the government's headquarters with Satoshi Nagahashi, director general for AINU Policy, and Mr. Masashi Nagaura, AINU policy promotion bureau chief.

The intention of the meeting was to demonstrate the goodwill of the Seminole Tribe of Florida by sharing the Tribe's history and culture with the officials, and to show our support of Indigenous peoples through our interest in AINU wellbeing. In return, Mr. Nahahashi and Mr. Nagaura discussed the government's development in their relationship with the AINU as well as the extent of direct collaboration with AINU communities.

Central to our discussion was the Upopoy National AINU Museum and Park to be opened in April 2020.

Beyond learning about the government's direct interest in promoting AINU history and culture, I learned about the historical context of AINU involvement in the Hokkaido government tourism strategies.

In my reflection, this aspect of the governmental relationship was most dissimilar to our history as Seminoles. The Hokkaido government had explicit interest in the AINU and had committed the resources of their tourism strategy to the exposure and sharing of AINU culture, whereas the Florida state government has a much smaller investment with our Tribe in its tourism development.

Even on a national level, the National AINU Museum will be the eighth national Japanese museum which demonstrates more promotion in cultural awareness than the United States federal government commits to the Seminole Tribe.

This reflection represented my larger takeaway from my time with the AINU, which was the prevalence of cultural interest in the AINU by the wider Japanese public.

The Hokkaido government's AINU policy officials plan to draw in over a million visitors per year to the National AINU Museum, compared to the Seminole Tribe of Florida's Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's 15,991 visitors in 2017 as marked in the annual

report. As well the Hokkaido government's 2017 guide "Aiming at an Understand of the AINU People" lists 16 major facilities with permanent AINU exhibitions throughout Hokkaido.

As I saw through our trip, the Irankarapte tourism campaign, named after an AINU greeting meaning "allow me to softly touch



Tia Blais-Billie, left, and Durante Blais-Billie in the Kushiro National Park.

your heart," aimed to raise interest in AINU culture was employed throughout Hokkaido with supporters as big as Sapporo Breweries Ltd. and local airports.

We then visited the Hokkaido AINU Association and the AINU Center the association runs by commission of the Hokkaido government.

Mr. Kazuki Kaizawa, secretary general of the AINU Association of Hokkaido, acted as our host, introducing us to the present staff, showing us the exhibit at the AINU center, and sitting down with us for a cultural exchange.

Though AINU communities don't have formal internal governmental structures or acknowledged political sovereignty by the Japanese government, the AINU Association acts as the spokesperson and organizational structure for AINU communities across

Hokkaido. The association answers to the interests of the four main AINU communities in the prefecture, and closely communicates AINU affairs with the Hokkaido government.

While the AINU don't have sovereignty over their ancestral land, Mr. Kaizawa and I bonded over the importance of nature preservation and its connection to the survival of our cultures.

I explained the history of the Seminole Tribe and the central role of the Everglades in our existence and learned how the AINU too were protected by the harshness of the nature in their environment as well as their own ingenuity in living amongst it.

As with the rest of our exchanges with the AINU, the structure and survival of our clan system was a point of fascination. The Seminole's ability to maintain our traditional governing and family systems with preserved values and practices to follow was praised by many I spoke to for the unity it also preserved within our Tribe.

Still in Sapporo, we attended an AINU Forum discussion titled "AINU of Today" where Professor Yūko Honda acted as keynote speaker.

She explained the historic context as well as its resulting obstacles that limit and oppress present day AINU people. She then explained her initiative of cultural revitalization through her scholarship program and club, both called Urespa, at Sapporo University.

The Urespa Scholarship was awarded to AINU students and maintained through their ongoing commitment to learn, uphold, and perform traditional AINU practices such as wood carving, language, dancing, and music. The students would then be in the Urespa club, where they practiced AINU traditions and participated in Indigenous cultural exchange.

Professor Honda stressed the importance of language revitalization, recounting success models and her ambitions to bring the same consistent achievements to AINU communities.

Students of the Urespa club then performed AINU songs and dance, showing the success of club participation.

After the forum, we shared dinner with Professor Honda and a handful of Urespa club students.

I shared the story of the Seminoles and learned not just about AINU culture, but each

student's aspirations for themselves and their communities.

It was exciting to have the students ask me questions about Seminole culture and see their interest in other Indigenous practices.

My sister and chaperone Tia Blais-Billie is a Seminole artist who bonded with the students over our respective culture's traditional crafts.

We then left the capital, on our way to visit Lake Akan, a region in the east of Hokkaido where the AINU group that visited Florida is based.

On our way as a gesture of goodwill, we visited the Tomakomai local government, the city where the Hard Rock's proposed international resort in Japan would be built.

We were greeted by Isao Fukuhara, deputy mayor; Atsushi Kimura, executive director of general policy; Masahito Machida, executive director of International Resort Strategy; and Akira Narita, the director of international resort strategy.

I told them the story of our Tribe, how we came together during our wars, survived alongside our culture, and made history in the world of Native American gaming. The local government was welcoming, showing great interest in Seminole history and customs. I also expressed our Tribe's interest in fellow Indigenous groups and the trip's intention to foster a relationship with the AINU.

I was glad to show them the people behind the Hard Rock brand and our Tribe's role as a responsible global citizen not just in business expansion but in sharing our story of survival and supporting others.

We then stopped at Nibutani, an AINU community hosting two museums, to visit the hometown of my friend Rie Kayano.

My trip to visit the AINU in Japan was prefaced by a visit from a renown AINU song and oral history performer, Rie Kayano.

Rie was born into the prominent Yamamoto family of the Lake Akan AINU community, who helped lead the community in music and mythology preservation.

She then married the grandson of Shigeru Kayano, one of the most well respected modern AINU figures for his scholarship and political leadership.

Rie visited our Tribe in early November on a journey of self-empowerment, to learn about our Tribe's agency in business as well as our drive for cultural sustainability. During her visit I acted as host, introducing her to various tribal members, staff, and most importantly the Everglades.

Her visit was sponsored by Hard Rock Japan, to produce a documentary by 3Minute Inc. showcasing Hard Rock's dedication to female empowerment and community investment.

After showing her my homeland I was able to visit her in Nibutani, meeting her mother and older sister.

She then showed us her grandfather-in-law's AINU and Indigenous people's artifact collection at the Kayano Shigeru Nibutani AINU Museum.

Rie showed us traditional crafts, housing, and taught us the history of her grandfather's legacy.

She then brought us to the Nibutani AINU Culture Museum. Kenji Sekine, the museum's AINU language instructor,



Isao Fukuhara, deputy mayor of Tomakomai, Japan, receives a sweetgrass basket from Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie.

After, I explained the intention of my trip to foster the Seminole relationship with the AINU and my gratitude for the warm reception from the AINU communities I had met on my visit.

I stressed that the AINU were commendable for their consistent outreach to Indigenous communities around the world as it is an inspiration for many Natives and my hopes for a lasting friendship between our people.

Both Mr. Nishida and Mr. Toko visited the Seminole Tribe in Florida back in 2016, and shared their reflections for their time in Florida.

We were able to spend the dinner comparing our peoples' customs, values, histories, and struggles.

Dinner was followed by an AINU dance and song performance at the Akanko AINU Theater "Ikor" which enacted traditional ceremonies and festivities.

During the ending songs of each performance, the audience was invited to participate, so Tia and I were able to join in the fun around dancing around the fire alongside Mr. Nishida.

Even here the public interest in AINU culture impressed me, with many people attending this routinely performed show so late on a weekday out in the seemingly isolated region of Akan.

In my time in Japan, I found that there were many tourists and members of the public all around, participating in museums, shows, and even the AINU Forum.

The public interest in the AINU and more specifically their culture was inspiring.

While the AINU still strive towards gaining full agency over their story and cultural promotion, they capture the public's attention in a way I hope our Tribe will be able to develop.



From left, Masashi Nagaura, AINU Policy Promotion bureau chief; Tia Blais-Billie, former Miss Florida Seminole; Durante Blais-Billie, current Miss Florida Seminole; Satoshi Nagahashi, Hokkaido government director general for AINU Policy Department of Environment and Lifestyle; pose at Hokkaido government headquarters with a sweetgrass basket made and gifted by Durante.

explained AINU customs and traditional resources, as well as the historical interest in the AINU from external scholars.

Afterwards we made it to the Lake Akan region, where we toured nature and learned about traditional natural resources.

We visited the Lake Akan AINU Kotan (Village), where we met with local artists and families, learning about the modernity of AINU motifs and crafts through their transformation by young artists.

We closed our visit with a dinner hosted by Mr. Masayuki Onishi, representative director, Akan Tourism Association & Community Development Organization, with two respected elder community leaders in the Lake Akan region, Mr. Masao Nishida, Akan AINU Crafts Association chairman, and Mr. Akira Toko.

The dinner began with Mr. Nishida offering a traditional AINU greeting and thanks, which was returned by my greeting and thanks in Elaponce.

Visiting the AINU reminded me that our Tribe can never take for granted the control we have over presenting our history to the world, and that we must always strive to create awareness for our traditions, values, and stories so that the public holds equal interest in them as they do with our successes in gaming.

What I believe is most important to our Tribe's survival in today's global context is sharing our story and making sure it is done in our own voice.

As Indigenous People, we must also remember to support our relatives around the world in doing the same.

All Native Peoples face similar struggles; we should promote each other's liberties in reclaiming our identities for the benefit of all of our visibility.

# Hollywood Reservation buzzes with construction projects

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

*Editor's note: Throughout 2020, the Seminole Tribune will highlight different projects that are underway throughout the Tribe. We start here with the Hollywood Reservation.*

**HOLLYWOOD** — While the glitz and glamour of the new Guitart Hotel and massive casino expansion attracted most of the attention in recent months, it didn't mean other projects weren't in progress on the Hollywood Reservation.

The Seminole Tribune checked in with Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola and Derek Koger, the executive director of Tribal Community Development, for an update on projects on the horizon and nearing completion.

## Betty Mae Jumper Medical Center

In January, the Tribe broke ground on the Betty Mae Jumper Medical Center on a plot of land near the Seminole Estates clubhouse.

The existing medical center was built in 1984 on the reservation and has largely been outgrown. Councilman Osceola said it will eventually be demolished to make room for more housing.

At the groundbreaking, Councilman Osceola said that it was always his intention to house as many medical services as possible for Tribal members in one facility.

The new center is two-stories high and



Courtesy rendering

The "Ayla" model home features three to four bedrooms, three bathrooms and a two-car garage. The Lennar home is 2,251-square-feet.

Councilman Osceola is planning an April 2020 ribbon cutting event at the new facility — which marks an on schedule completion date.

## New housing options

As the Tribe grows, so does the need for new housing. New home inventory and options will soon expand on the Hollywood Reservation at Old Seminole Park, where a trailer park used to be.

Through a partnership with Miami-based homebuilder Lennar, 179 new units

Koger said there will be several options for Tribal members, including rentals, rent-to-own and purchasing.

There are six single family home options that range from 1,936 to 3,433-square-feet. Tribal members can choose from bedroom/bathroom options, including garages and even an in-law suite.

Koger noted that the style of homes offered by Lennar on the Hollywood Reservation will also be available throughout the Tribe.

## There's more

**New preschool:** Councilman Osceola said the design for a new preschool that would serve the Hollywood community for the "next 50 years" is underway now. It would be located next to the new medical center.

**Hollywood 'splash pad':** Water playground manufacturer — Water Splash — is building a "splash pad" in Seminole Estates near the pool area. The project is expected to be completed by April 2020.

**Traffic tunnel:** In conjunction with the opening of the new medical center, the Hollywood tunnel is being transformed to accommodate two lanes of traffic. The reconstruction is expected to be completed in time for the medical center's ribbon cutting in April 2020.

**Wastewater treatment plant, water tower:** Koger said a new wastewater treatment plant is about 85 percent complete and is currently undergoing testing. In addition, a new water tower is being erected — both projects are designed to accommodate the Tribe and the Hard Rock development.

**Okalee Village/outdoor event area:** In October, the Okalee Village — which will feature different aspects of Seminole culture and history — held a soft opening. Located just south of Seminole Media Productions, Okalee Village also includes an outdoor park area that will eventually accommodate Tribal events.

will soon be constructed.

The future residential units include 105 townhomes and 74 single-family homes.

Site development and infrastructure work is being completed now. The early stages of building are expected to begin in the first quarter of 2020.



Courtesy rendering

The "Bellamy" model home features four bedrooms and two and a half bathrooms. The 2,544-square-foot home also has a two-car garage.

about 40,000 square feet.

It will essentially provide the services that fall under the Tribe's Health & Human Services Department, including a pharmacy, according to Dr. Paul Isaacs, who heads the department.



Courtesy rendering

The new Betty Mae Jumper Medical Center is expected to have a ribbon cutting event in April 2020.



Courtesy rendering

A new "splash pad" with various water features, will be located in the Seminole Estates near the pool area.

# US Poet Laureate Joy Harjo visits Big Cypress

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**BIG CYPRESS** — As the nation's official poet, the U.S. poet laureate aims to promote and raise the national consciousness of reading and writing poetry.

As the first Native American U.S. Poet Laureate, Joy Harjo takes it a step further. The most important aspect of her duties as Poet Laureate is clear to her.

"It's sharing the power of poetry and all the great Tribal traditions of poetry," Harjo said during a visit to the Big Cypress Reservation. "I wouldn't be alive if I didn't have poetry and music."

Harjo, of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, was named Poet Laureate in June for a renewable one year term. She spoke as part of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's lecture series at the To-Pee-Kee-Ke Yak-Ne Community Center on Nov. 22. About 40 attendees came from around the state to listen to Harjo read her poems and give some backstory to them.

"I'm always happy when I come to this part of the world," Harjo said. "My grandfather loved the Seminole people and that's continued through me. This place holds such incredible beauty and a storied history."

Harjo read from a few poems including "Once the World Was Perfect" which begins with these lines:

*"Once the world was perfect, and we were happy in that world.*

*Then we took it for granted.*

*Discontent began a small rumble in the earthly mind.*

*Then Doubt pushed through with its spiked head.*

*And once Doubt ruptured the web,*

*All manner of demon thoughts*

*Jumped through—*

*We destroyed the world we had been given*

*For inspiration, for life—*

*Each stone of jealousy, each stone*

*Of fear, greed, envy, and hatred, put out the light."*

"The earth is a living being," Harjo said. "Science is coming to that, but it is our Indigenous basis. We are at a tipping point. Right now we are in danger and a lot of world leaders aren't acting out of concern for their constituencies, but for who can get the most money."

Harjo's poem "Don't Look Back" is a nod to her ancestors' forced removal to Oklahoma. The poem refers to the love of the trees, waters and creatures left behind. They were the companions of relatives forced into exile.

"Some people say don't look back, some of those lands in Georgia and Alabama are too big to think about," she said. "We have to acknowledge it and we have to remember who we are."

Other poems she read included "The Fight," "This Morning I Pray for My Enemies" and "Redbird Love."

"I cook with a lot of bird clan women so I have a lot of bird poems," Harjo said.

She told about living in Knoxville, Tennessee, and watching a family of robins who watched her playing the flute every morning. She observed a few generations of the birds and wrote "Redbird Love."

"One female was so beautiful, every bird noticed her," Harjo recalled. "It's always about the same thing."

In 2012 Harjo wrote "Crazy Brave," a memoir of poems and stories in which she explored her childhood and other aspects of her life.

"You always learn things from projects," she said. "From this I learned about childhood and that we carry it with us."

One story described an early childhood memory of hearing jazz trumpet for the first time while in the back seat of her father's car. It was the start of her journey into jazz and music. In addition to flute, Harjo plays saxophone.

Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Harjo attended the Institute of American Indian



Beverly Bidney

Miss Indian World Cheyenne Kippenberger and U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo and pose for a photo after Harjo spoke in the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki-Museum's lecture series Nov. 22 in Big Cypress.

Arts, where she began to write poetry. She lived in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, as a young mother and drew inspiration from the beautiful environment, lush with trees and rivers.

"I could hear things there," she said.

Harjo finds inspiration in a host of places, including her husband Owen Sapulpa. She read from "My Man's Feet:"

*"They are heroic roots  
You cannot mistake them  
For any other six-foot walker  
I could find them in a sea of feet  
A planet or universe of feet."*

The event ended with a question and answer period. Some fans told Harjo how much her work means to them.

"Joy's stories and poems have gotten a lot of us through tough times," said Cherrah Giles, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki development associate. "Her words stayed with me. To some of us it means everything that she is elevating our voices and the things we've been dealing with for centuries. It is very important to us."

An attendee asked how she decides what is appropriate to share in her poems.

"There's a lot I don't share and there are things that aren't meant to be in writing," Harjo said. "Some things you write to keep inside, some things you write for yourself and use it to works things out."

One attendee told Harjo that her poems introduced her to poetry and considers her poems a gift.

"What I like about poetry is you can put anything into a poem," Harjo said. "Poetry is metaphor; it grounds you in the possibility of dreams, the possibility of connections."

After the event, attendees lined up to greet Harjo, shake her hand and pose for photos.

Harjo keeps a busy schedule. She spoke at the Miami Book Fair the following day and has events scheduled around the country through April.

*Joy Harjo is the author of nine books of poetry, several plays and children's books and a memoir. Some of her honors include the Ruth Lily Prize for Lifetime Achievement from the Poetry Foundation, the Academy of American Poets Wallace Stevens Award, a PEN USA Literary Award, Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund Writers' Award, a Rasmuson US Artist Fellowship, two NEA fellowships, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. Harjo is a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets and is a founding board member of the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation. She lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where she is a Tulsa Artist Fellow.*



Beverly Bidney

Carla Cypress, right, presents Joy Harjo with a traditional blanket as Justin Giles observes, after Harjo spoke at the To-Pee-Kee-Ke Yak-Ne Community Center in Big Cypress.

## Grammy winner Brandi Carlile comes to Hard Rock Live

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**HOLLYWOOD** — Three-time Grammy Award winner Brandi Carlile will perform Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on March 6 at 8:30 p.m.

Over the course of their acclaimed

career, Carlile and her band have released six albums, including 2017's "Cover Stories: Brandi Carlile Celebrates 10 Years of the Story."

Tickets cost \$126.50, \$91.50, \$71.50, \$51.50 and \$31.50. Tickets are available at [www.myhrl.com](http://www.myhrl.com). Doors open one hour prior to show time. Additional fees may apply.

# SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA AH-TAH-THI-KI M U S E U M

A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

## The photographs remember

BY TARA BACKHOUSE  
Collections Manager,  
Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Happy holidays to you and your families, from the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum. Christmas and the New Year are times for celebration, but also for recollection and thought. We remember times gone by and we wonder what is to come. These days we all have our own interests and activities, but it's rewarding to come together and find a common ground at family gatherings. While you enjoy the company of your family and

all of the entertainment that the modern holidays offer, take a moment to think about the Seminole Tribe's journey for the last 100 years. This selection of the Museum's historic photographs was chosen to show how amazing that journey has been. The pictures show scenes from the early, middle and late 20th century. These decades saw the journey from humble camp lives in rustic settings to hard work and economic success in the modern world. When we see how much things have changed during this time, we can only imagine what changes the future will bring. It is our mission at the Museum to chronicle the Tribe's journey and to make sure everyone knows this tremendous story. Come and help us if that is your mission too!



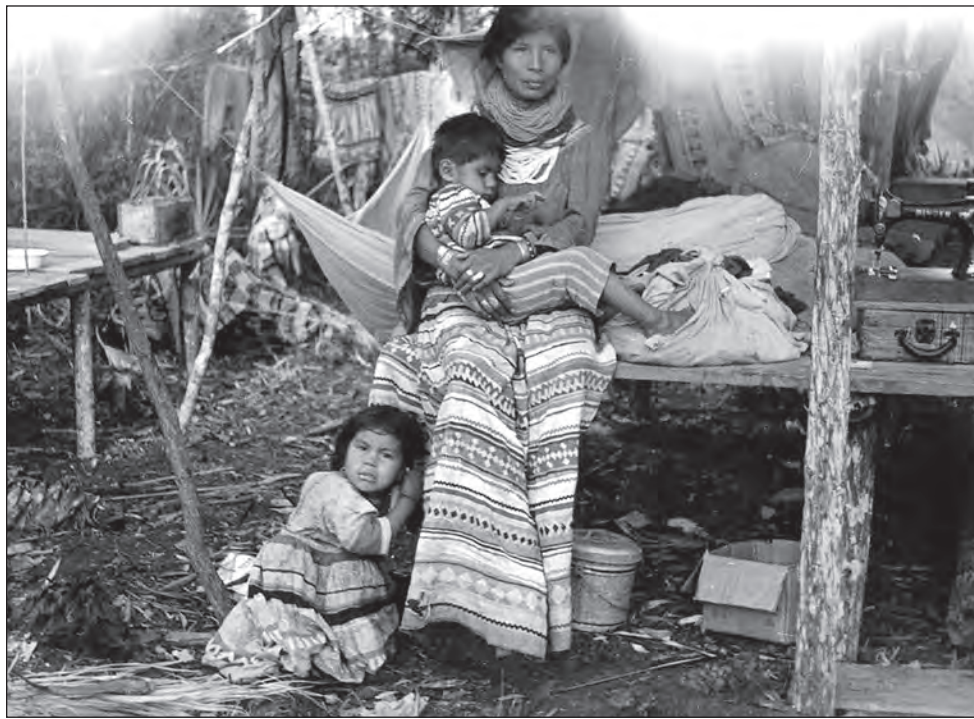
Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki

At a scenic camp in the Everglades in the 1930s or 40s, two men are taking a canoe out on a journey. Others watch them leave. Notice this camp has several canoes of different sizes. Canoes were shared by the residents, and different sizes were needed for different kinds of trips.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki

Today the vibrant colors of the Tribe can be seen at public events like this Hollywood Tribal Fair in 2001. Seminole royalty advances during the grand procession. Pictured are Joe Dan Osceola, Ambassador; Desiree Jumper, Miss Seminole; and Jo Jo Osceola, Junior Miss Seminole. This is a great place to see Seminole artists shine as you watch the clothing contests. Tribal Fair has been held for many decades, and is sure to keep traditions alive in years to come.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki (2)

Left, Mrs. Corey Osceola poses for a picture with her two children at a chickee in 1942. See how many things are in and around the chickee? Mrs. Osceola had to have everything she needed for her family in that one place. Not only that, but they probably stored many things in the rafters so that they could have a clear floor to sleep on at night. Imagine if we had to do that today, and how many possessions we'd have to move. Right, Henry Nelson wrestles an alligator at Okalee Indian Village in 1960. Talented wrestlers learned this skill to show it off to visiting tourists. The mid-20th century tourism enterprises of the Tribe showed that the Tribe had the diverse ingenuity needed to succeed financially. Ventures like Okalee led to the acquisition of Hard Rock International.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki

In the 1950s education was a big priority. The world was changing and government schools helped people learn new things. Annie Tiger, Joyce Osceola, Sadie Fewell, Addie Tommie, Betty Mae Osceola and Johnson Billie study hard in this adult education night class on the Big Cypress Reservation in 1957. Education helped people start businesses and form a government.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki

In 1957 members of the brand new Tribal Council and Board posed proudly for this picture. Included are: Billy Osceola, Chairman of Council, Bill Osceola, President of the Board of Directors, Willie Frank, Toby Johns, Robert Osceola and Dan Osceola. This was a proud moment born of hard work and a warrior spirit. People like this didn't let the U.S. government terminate the Tribe's sovereign status. They persevered and started a brand new type of government, which is now over 60 years old.

## Achievements of Native women artists showcased at Smithsonian American Art Museum

FROM PRESS RELEASE

WASHINGTON — Women have been a predominant creative force behind Native American art, yet their individual contributions, for centuries, have largely remained unrecognized and anonymous. In the first major thematic exhibition to explore the artistic contributions of Native women, "Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists" celebrates the achievements of these Native women and establishes their rightful place in the art world.

The critically acclaimed exhibition "Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists" was organized by Jill Ahlberg Yohe, associate curator of Native American Art at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, and Teri Greeves, an independent curator and member of the Kiowa Nation. At the core of the exhibition is a firm belief in the power of the collaborative process. The Minneapolis Institute of Art formed an all-female Exhibition Advisory Board, which included Native artists, curators and Native art historians, to generate new interpretations and scholarship relating to the art and its makers, offering multiple perspectives that explore traditional and contemporary voices

and techniques foundational to the art of Native women.

The presentation at the Renwick Gallery includes 82 artworks dating from ancient times to the present, made in a variety of media, from textiles and ceramics to sculpture, time-based media and photography. This exhibition is multi-lingual with wall text and labels presented in the artist's Native American or First Nations languages, as well as English, aiming to present the works in the context of each artist's own culture and voice. "Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists" is on view at the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum from Feb. 21 through May 17, 2020. Robyn Kennedy, Renwick Gallery manager, is coordinating the presentation in Washington, D.C.

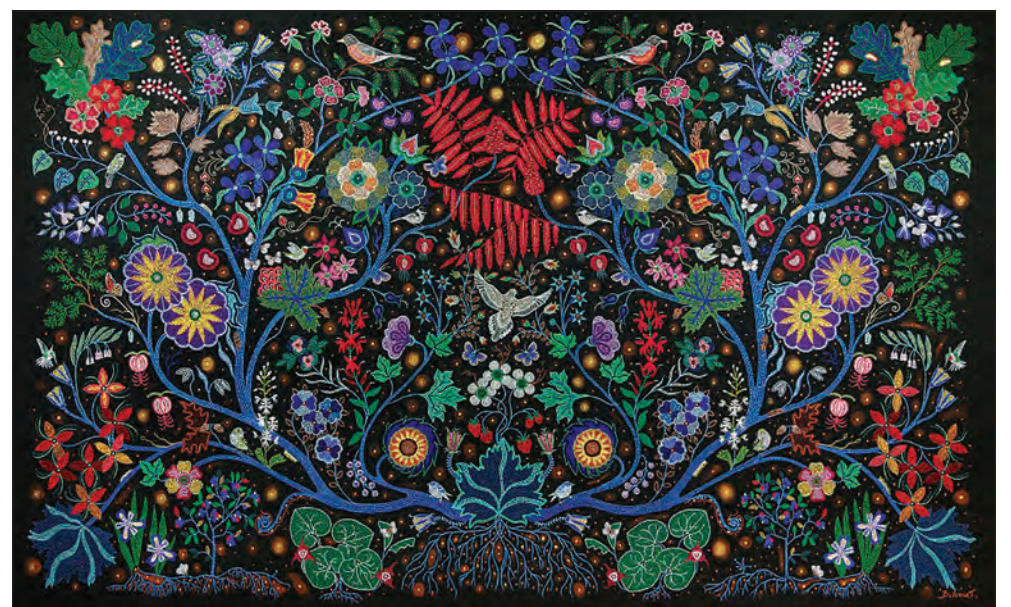
"We are honored to present this groundbreaking and bold exhibition, designed by and for Native women artists, that showcases their powerful voices and artistic traditions," said Stephanie Stebich, the Margaret and Terry Stent Director at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

"Hearts of Our People" highlights the traditional and integral role of Native women artists in serving the cultural, economic, diplomatic and domestic needs

of their communities, reaching beyond longstanding conventions of treating these artworks as unattributed representations of an entire culture. The exhibition is organized according to three overarching themes: "Legacy," "Relationships" and "Power." These themes are a testament to the underlying purpose with which Native women have historically made art and enable visitors to note variations in the works of art created for similar purposes across time and Native cultures.

"Legacy" examines the way in which Native women artists acknowledge their lineage by creating works that simultaneously embody the experience of previous generations, address the present moment and speak to the future. Fiber work by D.Y. Begay (Navajo) and sculptural works by Cherish Parrish (Ottawa/Pottawatomie) are featured in this section of the exhibition.

"Relationships" explores the concept of connectivity and reciprocity that exists beyond the human world to include animals, plants, places and living and nonliving elements. Christi Belcourt's (Michif) painting "The Wisdom of the Universe" and the intricate bead work of Nellie Two Bear Gates (Gathering of Clouds Woman, Ihankthunwanja Dakhóta, Standing Rock



Smithsonian

Christi Belcourt (Michif), *The Wisdom of the Universe*, 2014, acrylic on canvas.

Reservation) highlight this link.

"Power" encompasses works created for diplomacy and influence to empower others and for the empowerment of oneself. Photography by Rebecca Belmore (Anishinaabe) and Rosalie Favell (Métis [Cree/English]), adornments by Keri Ataumbi (Kiowa/Comanche) and Jamie Okuma (Luiseño/Shoshone-Bannock), and shoes embellished by Jamie Okuma (Luiseño/Shoshone-Bannock) represent the

spiritual, social and political power Native women hold.

The accompanying catalog, *Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists*, includes essays, personal reflections and poems by 20 members of the Exhibition Advisory Board and other leading scholars and artists. It is available for purchase (\$39.95) in the museum store.



# Health

## Healthy cooking class teaches how to combat diabetes

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**IMMOKALEE** — The statistics about diabetes are chilling.

More than 30 million Americans have diabetes and about 25 percent (7.2 million) don't know it.

Native Americans have a greater chance of getting diabetes than any other racial group in the U.S.

They are more than twice as likely to get the disease as non-Hispanic whites. More than 17 percent of Native Americans over age 18 are diagnosed with diabetes compared to 7.3 percent non-Hispanic whites.

Kidney failure from diabetes is highest in Native Americans than any other ethnic group.

Adults with diabetes are nearly twice as likely to die from heart disease or stroke as people without it. Over time, high blood glucose from diabetes can damage blood vessels and nerves that control the heart.

Risk factors for Type 2 diabetes include obesity, diet and physical inactivity.

But there is also good news about Type 2 diabetes; in many cases it can be prevented or kept under control.

In observance of Diabetes Awareness Month in November, the Integrative Health department held a hands-on lesson about how to create delicious diabetes-friendly meals and treats.

The Dec. 6 class was led by chefs Ruth Fehr and Ahmed El, of the Immokalee Culinary Accelerator, and included Integrated Health department health educators and nutrition counselors.

"I have had diabetes for 20 years and I can still eat my favorite foods," said Karen Two Shoes, Hollywood health clinic nutrition coordinator. "If you eat healthy 80 percent of the time, you can have your favorite foods. If I want that brownie on the weekend, I plan for it."

The key to managing diabetes is monitoring intake of



During a healthy eating class Dec. 6 in honor of Diabetes Awareness Month, chef Ruth Fehr shows Karen Two Shoes, center, Hollywood health clinic nutrition coordinator, and Lenora Roberts a piece of cilantro and explains that the entire herb, including the stem, may be used in recipes. They were making a yogurt, cilantro and jalapeno sauce to use with roasted chicken.

Beverly Bidney

carbohydrates, eating lean protein, plenty of vegetables and complex carbohydrates instead of processed carbohydrates.

The day's menu included roasted chicken breasts with a cilantro, jalapeno and yogurt sauce, Bison chili made with squash, sweet potatoes and other aromatic vegetables, salad with blue cheese dressing and cornmeal sugar cookies with orange zest for dessert.

"Exercise is great way to keep the blood sugar level down," said Two Shoes, who runs to keep fit. "I learned to count carbs and not overdo them. I can indulge, but I have to fit it into my diet."

Two Shoes said she

her profession in nutrition because of her diabetes.

"I didn't want my children to get it," she said. "I brought them out of the womb eating healthy and they are both very healthy."

Fehr, a chef and educator, considers herself a culinary translator who teaches people to use food to support health and healing.

"People think healthy food isn't tasty," Fehr told the class as they consumed the fruits, and vegetables, of their labor. "But if you start with fresh food, you just have to enhance it. Use local and in season food and the flavor is right there. You just need to give it a kick and bring it to a higher level."

Throughout the morning, participants followed recipes with some help from Fehr and El. Tips were shared at each stage of the preparation.

Bone in chicken has more flavor than boneless. Use a meat thermometer; chicken is done at 165 degrees. Bison is leaner, but has a similar flavor to beef.

Unlike most herbs, cilantro stems can be chopped up with the leaves and used in a recipe. Caramelizing, or browning, vegetables first adds a lot of flavor to a dish.

When baking, use room temperature eggs. All professional kitchens use gas because it cooks quicker and more evenly than electric stoves.

When the food was done, the participants enjoyed it like any other chef-prepared lunch. The flavors of the meal were big, but the food served as a small step in a lifetime of preventing or managing diabetes.



Beverly Bidney

Health nutrition counselor Andrea Kuzbyt makes a salad with healthy ingredients and homemade blue cheese dressing during a healthy cooking class at the Immokalee Culinary Accelerator.

## Champion for Children nominations sought

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Do you know of an incredible leader, social worker, case manager, or foster parent in your community who is doing significant work for Native children in the foster care system?

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Award. This annual award honors an individual or organization that has made outstanding contributions to the well-being of Indigenous children, families, and communities in the United States or Canada.

Since the award's inaugural year of 2012, nominees have been selected from various backgrounds including Indian child welfare advocates, adult adoptees, nonprofit executive directors, cultural consultants, youth

services directors, and educators.

The awardee will be honored at NICWA's 38th annual Protecting Our Children National American Indian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect in Denver, Colorado, from March 29-April 1, 2020.

Nominate by Jan. 7, 2020. For more information email NICWA Director of Programs and Policy, Cori Matthew, at cmatthew@nicwa.org.

## Partnership With Native Americans names Joshua Arce president, CEO

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**ADDISON, TEXAS** — Partnership With Native Americans (PWNA), a nonprofit serving immediate needs and supporting long-term solutions for Native Americans living in reservation communities, announced Dec. 10 the appointment of Joshua Arce as its president and chief executive officer effective Jan. 6, 2020.

PWNA's current president and CEO Robbi Rice Dietrich announced her retirement after seven years with the charity. Arce, a citizen of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, previously served on PWNA's board of directors and will now oversee operations for the Native-led and Native-serving nonprofit.

"I am both honored and thrilled by the opportunity to work for Partnership With Native Americans," Arce said. "The current board and staff have charted a path for success and positioned PWNA with the credibility and relationships to positively impact Native communities. I deeply appreciate



Joshua Arce

their work and look forward to leading PWNA in this next chapter."

Arce brings more than 20 years' experience in education management, social work and business development to PWNA. Originally from Kansas, Arce earned his B.A. in social work

from the University of Kansas and then his J.D., specializing in tribal law, applied indigenous leadership, federal Indian law and Indian gaming law.

He most recently served as the first chief information officer of Haskell Indian Nations University. Earlier, he worked at the University of Kansas Tribal Law and Governance Center and the Prairie Band Potawatomi Tribal Court and served the tribe's Entertainment Corporation Board.

Arce actively supports the advancement of Native communities, most recently as a volunteer of the court-based Citizen Review Board, a member of Lawrence Memorial Hospital Board's Inclusion, Diversity and Equity committee, and a board member of the Citizen Review Panel of Kansas for child welfare. Arce joins PWNA in their 30th year of serving Indian country.

PWNA is committed to championing hope for a brighter future for Native Americans living on remote and impoverished reservations.

## Tribal Career Development graduates recognized in ceremony

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — A program designed to educate and train Tribal members with the goal of placement in management and executive positions with Seminole Gaming recently honored its latest class of graduates.

Officials with Tribal Career Development (TCD) recognized three graduates this year with a Dec. 13 ceremony and holiday party at Hard Rock Hollywood.

The graduates are Jamie Walkingstick, JaMenia Thomas and Jo-Lin Osceola. Osceola had previously completed the TCD program, but had never gone through a graduation ceremony and holiday party.

The graduates brought their family and friends to the event and leaders and staff from Tribal Council, Seminole Gaming and the Tribe's Gaming Commission were in the large ballroom to show their support.

Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola and Hollywood Board Representative Gordon Wareham both attended the event and spoke briefly to the graduates and those in attendance.

Before receiving their certificates and awards, Sally Tommie spoke in support of the program and of the graduate's ongoing career journey. The ceremony was also personal for Tommie, as graduate JaMenia Thomas is her daughter.

Ervina Capricien, the director of TCD, organized the event and gave the graduates their awards and certificates. Capricien is a former TCD graduate who was head of human resources at the Seminole Classic Casino before transitioning back to lead TCD.

One of TCD's first-ever graduates, Edward Aguilar, was at the event. He is now the general manager of the Seminole Classic Casino.

Aguilar was joined by former TCD graduate Jim Osceola, director of hospitality for the Seminole Gaming Administration; Karissa Tommie, assistant manager of finance at the Hard Rock Tampa; and Ashley Santiago, a pit manager at Hard Rock Tampa.

### Evolving program

TCD began about 16 years ago and has had more than 100 Tribal members enroll in the program since its inception.

Program managers say TCD is evolving and they are consistently analyzing ways to make it more attractive and compelling to prospective Tribal members.

The program has five phases. The



Damon Scott

JaMenia Thomas receives her TCD graduation certificate from Ervina Capricien on Dec. 12 at the Hard Rock Hollywood.

first phase, which takes about three years to complete, involves learning the various departments of casino and hotel operations.

For example, a participant might be a cashier for a week and then shadow supervisors, managers and directors another week.

Trainees learn from a blend of on-the-job-technical training, specialized classroom training, seminars and workshops, best practices, mentoring and work experience.

Phases two through five of the paid program may take a year or more to complete (per phase) depending on a trainee's background, experience or how quickly they progress.

The TCD graduation ceremony marks completion of phase one.

### For more

To be eligible for TCD, you must be at least 18 years old, an enrolled member of the Tribe and have a high school diploma or GED.

Trainees can be placed at any of the Tribe's six Florida casino locations: Seminole Brighton Casino, Seminole Casino Coconut Creek, Seminole Classic Casino, Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee, Hard Rock Hollywood and Hard Rock Tampa.

For more information and to apply, contact Capricien at Ervina.capricien@stogaming.com or 954 364-2076. More information can also be found online at gotoworkhappy.com.



Damon Scott

TCD graduate Jamie Walkingstick receives a certificate and plaque from Ervina Capricien.

2020

# SEMINOLE TRIBAL FAIR AND POW WOW

49th Annual Celebration of Native Arts and Culture

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 Arena Director: Wendall Powless  
 Drum Judge: Calvin "Beaver" Campbell

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 Friday Night: 7:00pm - 11:00pm  
 Saturday Afternoon: 12:00pm - 5:00pm  
 Saturday Night: 7:00pm - 11:00pm  
 Sunday: TBA

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For further information visit:  
**SEMTRIBFAIR.COM**  
 Performers are allowed to bring folding chairs into the venue.

Tribal Fair & Pow Wow (TFPW) reserves the right to use any photograph/video taken at any event sponsored by TFPW, without the expressed written permission of those included within the photograph/video. TFPW may use the photograph/video in publications or other media material produced, used or contracted by TFPW including but not limited to: brochures, posters, social media, websites, magazines, television, etc.

# SEMINOLE SCENES



Winterfest/Facebook/Grapek Photography

**WINTERFEST WELCOME:** Poison lead singer Bret Michaels and Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola get the crowd revved up Dec. 13 at the Seminole Hard Rock Winterfest grand marshal reception hosted by Daer Nightclub at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood. Michaels served as grand marshal of the Winterfest boat parade that was held Dec. 14 in Fort Lauderdale.



Kevin Johnson

**HOLIDAY HEADQUARTERS:** The lobby at Tribal Headquarters in Hollywood is decorated in a wintry scene for the holiday season.



Courtesy photo

**VEGAS CONFERENCE:** Aaron Stam, Florida Cooperative Extension agent, and Kimberly Clement, Cooperative Extension 4-H special projects coordinator, attend the Intertribal Agriculture Council annual conference that was held in Las Vegas from Dec. 9-12. Stam gave a presentation about the Tribe's cattle and 4-H programs.



Hard Rock Atlantic City/Facebook

**TEAM EFFORT:** Hard Rock Atlantic City team members participated in the Covenant House of New Jersey's annual Sleep Out fundraiser and reached their goal of raising \$12,500. Covenant House is an international organization that serves homeless, runaway, and trafficked youth.



Kevin Johnson

**WINNER, WINNER:** Sandy Billie Jr. tips his hat to the crowd after he won first place in the men's ugly Christmas sweater contest Dec. 12 at the Brighton Christmas party. Billie's outfit included a furry toy friend attached on his left shoulder.



Hard Rock Hotel Daytona Beach/Facebook

**HARD ROCK HOT ROD:** The Hard Rock Hotel Daytona Beach has an eye-catching vehicle that participated in the Daytona Beach Shores Christmas Parade on Dec. 7.



Kevin Johnson

**SEMINOLE SHOWCASE:** A display recognizing the accomplishments of Seminole brothers Spencer and Doc Battiest along with fellow Native performer Taboo of the Black Eyed Peas is prominently showcased in a recently opened area of the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood expansion. The display honors the trio's participation in the 2016 protest anthem "Stand Up/Stand N Rock" in opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline near the Standing Rock Reservation. The song won an MTV Video Music Award in the Fight Against the System category. These are the outfits Spencer, Doc and Taboo wore to the awards ceremony.



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# Education



## FGCU 'Native American Festival' celebrates patchwork

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**FORT MYERS** — Florida Gulf Coast University commemorated Native American culture in November by highlighting the art and culture of the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes. The last event of the school's second annual "Native American Festival" on Nov. 21 focused on patchwork.

Seminole Tribal member Jessica Osceola, Miccosukee Tribal member Khadijah Cypress and University of Miami art historian Dorothy Downs gave presentations about traditional and modern patchwork. The program in Fort Myers was introduced by the Rev. Houston R. Cypress of the Miccosukee Tribe.

"Tonight we are talking about the textile artwork known as patchwork," Rev. Cypress said. "It is a symbol of survival. Patchwork mirrors the resilient strategies of our people's beautiful struggle."

Some early patchwork designs refer to the natural world such as rain and fire, the familiar man on horse design was a response to President Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act and today's modern patchwork features many pop culture references.

"Patchwork is a precious gift that artists are giving to the world," Rev. Cypress said. "Some

talented men have created it, but women are the primary creators of patchwork. These women maintain strong ties to the community and the culture, which sustains them both."

Khadijah Cypress, who lives on the Miccosukee reservation, started making patchwork about four years ago.

"I'm the tallest girl on my reservation, so for selfish reasons I started making dresses for myself," said Cypress, who is 5 feet 9 inches tall. "It takes about four hours to make a row of patchwork."

Cypress was so enthused about sewing that, with help from her grandmother, she started a community center on the reservation to help others learn patchwork, beadwork, baskets and other crafts. Her cousins and sister help her run the center.

"My goal is to show the younger generation how to do the traditional arts," Cypress said. "We start with rain patchwork since it is the easiest to make."

She displayed a few pieces she made, including a traditional men's long shirt and a skirt with a cape, and described them to the audience.

Jessica Osceola grew up hearing the whirr of the sewing machines at her grandmother's camp before the family moved closer to Naples for school. In time, she stopped sewing and lived a more mainstream lifestyle.

"I didn't realize I was leaving behind

something that was part of me," she said. "I started sewing again after college and now I dress my son in patchwork. If I don't, then he won't grow up with that as part of his identity."

Patchwork is a social activity and Osceola spends time sewing in the Juanita Osceola Center. She, her sisters and cousins compete for the flashiest outfits.

"A lot of math goes into it and we sit and work it out together," Osceola said. "My sister is a really good seamstress and we push each other. It's fun."

Osceola is careful not to give away too much about the process of making patchwork because she is cautious of cultural appropriation. An FGCU art professor and sculptor, Osceola created a ceramic piece in protest of fashion designer Donna Karan's 2012 patchwork collection. She showed the piece, titled "Not Yours, Not Ours, Not For Sale" at Art Basel Miami Beach in 2013.

Karan's artist statement for the collection, which included a patchwork skirt, claimed the concept and design was her idea alone. Osceola disputed that and created a large ceramic sculpture of a pair of red patchwork embossed legs sticking out of a Donna Karan shopping bag.

Other stores, including Anthropologie, also copied Seminole patchwork. But when Osceola wrote to the company in protest, it gave credit for the design as being "inspired by" the Tribe. Karan has yet to respond.



Beverly Bidney

Khadijah Cypress explains how she made the traditional men's longshirt with patchwork during the Florida Gulf Coast University "Native American Festival" on Nov. 21 in Fort Myers.

Osceola created a group, Seminoles for Authenticity, which has contacted other retailers and designers. She has also received letters from people who have found patchwork in thrift stores and don't know what to do with it. She sometimes suggests they give it to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki museum.

"Patchwork is an art form that travels but it is our identity," Osceola said. "It is almost like identity theft and it is important to claim it back."

Dorothy Downs showed "Patterns of Power," a documentary film she made in 1990 about patchwork, which features members of the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes. Patchwork often carries with it the unique style of its creator, whether it is the stitching or use of ric rac or bias tape.

"I'm like a sponge now," Osceola said. "I look up to those ladies [in the film]. I use a lot of ric rac because my grandma did. I'm like a ric rac queen."

It is more modern to use bias tape instead of ric rac, which is what Cypress prefers.

"If ric rac isn't perfectly straight, I don't like it," added Cypress.

Cypress teaches young kids to sew more traditional patchwork, but once they get comfortable they learn the more contemporary look. She said it keeps the continuity of patchwork intact.

Fabric choice is an essential part of creating patchwork; it is common to see licensed fabrics featuring favorite teams, cartoon characters and other nods to the modern world. Osceola looks to the seasons when she chooses fabrics. She also doesn't let scraps of patchwork go to waste; she uses them on pillows, blankets and handbags.

No matter where patchwork is used and what the style, it is valued and ingrained in culture and identity.



Beverly Bidney

Jessica Osceola displays and describes patchwork clothing she wore as a child living in the Naples community.



Beverly Bidney

From left, Houston Cypress, Khadijah Cypress, Dorothy Downs, Jessica Osceola, Noemi McDonald and Tatiana Schuss pose with examples of patchwork on display at the Florida Gulf Coast University "Native American Festival."

## PECS Students of the Month - November

**BRIGHTON** — The following Pemaquett Emahakv Charter School students earned Student of the Month honors for November 2019:

**Elementary**  
Mellanie Alvarez  
Jamarcus Davis  
Brayden Osceola  
Elakiah Collins  
Madeline Solis  
Amilya Rodrigues

Mesa Gopher  
Macayden Sardina  
Makai Newkirk  
Chance Madrigal  
Joshua Torres  
Jon Jones  
Peyton Thornton

Caysie Platt  
Mikayle Summeralls  
Bobbi Johns-Osceola  
Zoey Bowers  
Melaine Bonilla  
Ila Trueblood  
Kajay Anderson

Serene King  
Etanis Torres

**Middle School**  
Miley Jimmie  
Kalissa Huff  
Josiah Johns



Pemaquett Emahakv Charter School's students of the month for November (elementary on left, middle on right).



PECS (2)

## University of Minnesota names first senior director of American Indian Tribal Nations

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL** — Tadd M. Johnson, an enrolled member of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, has been named the University of Minnesota's first senior director of American Indian Tribal Nations Relations, the school announced Nov. 21.

In this inaugural role, Johnson will serve as the liaison between the University of Minnesota and regional Tribal Nations, creating pathways for strong collaborations.

"I am honored and humbled to be selected for this new position," Johnson said. "It is my hope that this great university will form new and lasting partnerships with the Native Nations of the region."

As senior director of American Indian Tribal Nations Relations, Johnson will continue to be housed at U of M Duluth, where he will also continue his work as the director of the Tribal Sovereignty Institute and director of Graduate Studies in the American Indian Studies Department.

In addition to his academic work, Johnson is a resource to tribal governments and Native

American people with more than three decades of leadership and service in the field of Federal-Indian law and policy. Johnson served as a tribal attorney for more than 20 years, and has also served as a tribal court judge and administrator. Johnson is a frequent lecturer on American Indian history and Federal Indian Law. He spent five years with the U.S. House of Representatives, ultimately becoming staff director and counsel to

the Subcommittee on Native American Affairs. In 1997, President Clinton appointed Johnson to chair the National Indian Gaming Commission.

Johnson received a B.A. at the University of St. Thomas, a J.D. at the U of M Law School, and serves on the Boards of the Udall Foundation and the Native Governance Center.

# President's Toy Drive brings holiday joy throughout state

**BY ANALICIA AUSTIN**  
 Digital Content Coordinator  
 and  
**BEVERLY BIDNEY**  
 Staff Reporter

The Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc.'s annual President's Toy Drive brought holiday generosity – and plenty of toys – to children in multiple counties stretching from Hollywood to South Bay to Immokalee.

The toy drive arrived at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in Hollywood on Dec. 10. Accompanied by Santa Claus, Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie was among the Seminole dignitaries who delivered gifts, much to the delight of the young patients who ranged in age from newborn to 17.

"It's amazing. I'm so honored to be here," Blais-Billie said. "The kids are so welcoming to us. I was nervous that we might be annoying to them or something, but they're all really excited to see us. It's really heartwarming and really getting me into the Christmas spirit."

Zoey Hunt, 7, was all smiles as she was presented a traditional Seminole blanket along with a beaded necklace that Blais-

Billie explained were medicinal beads that bring health and healing qualities.

Zoey's mother was surprised by the visit.

"I think it's awesome. It's sweet, and not expected," she said.

The Seminole gift-giving entourage included Hollywood Board Rep. Gordon Wareham.

"It's actually giving back to the people that need it, especially during this holiday season," he said.

The toy drive also extended to Rosenwald Elementary School in South Bay on Dec. 17.

"[The students] don't know that they're coming today, we didn't tell them, and they're going to be super excited," said assistant principal Myra Matthew.

The school has about 340 kids from kindergarten to the fifth grade. This was the second year they were recipients of the Seminole toy drive.

Tribal members arranged the boxes full of toys for each age group and made sure they didn't run out of goodies.

Matthew called the whole experience a blessing as some of the children "usually never anticipate getting gifts, some of the kids families struggle, and this is really like

a blessing for them."

## Toys delivered to kids at Guadalupe Center in Immokalee

Helped by some "elves" from the We Do Recover program, President Mitchell Cypress delivered 12 extra-large boxes filled with new toys Dec. 19 to the Guadalupe Center in Immokalee.

"We've been helping out for a couple of years," said Charlie Tiger, We Do Recover program supervisor. "We like doing service work. Making children smile makes us feel good."

The group came by a truck, no reindeer required, from Hollywood with a trailer filled with toys. Without a murmur of a ho, ho, ho they unloaded the boxes from the trailer and then took a tour of the Guadalupe campus.

"This means close to 400 families will have gifts for their children that they otherwise wouldn't be getting," said Bob Spano, vice president of programs, Guadalupe Center.

The Guadalupe Center's mission is to break the cycle of poverty through education for the children of Immokalee. The center provides educational programs for more than 1,300 children in Immokalee from infancy

through high school.

The President's Toy Drive began in 2007 and has been bringing toys to children ever since.

"I grew up in a rural area and didn't have any toys," President Cypress said. "Our church gave us oranges and apples. Today's world is different than it was back then, but in low income areas they can't afford toys. I don't want a kid to be without a Christmas present. I want them to have something that puts a smile on their faces."

Guadalupe Center prides itself on its strong academic program in which 95 percent of its preschool students meet or exceed kindergarten readiness measures, 100 percent of the high school students who use the center's Tutor Corps graduate and are accepted into college. Of those students, more than 92 percent graduate with a post-secondary degree.

The preschool tuition is based on a sliding scale. The Immokalee community consists largely of low-wage farm workers, so most families pay little. When some women find out they are pregnant, they put their unborn child on a waiting list for admission. There are about 500 on the waiting list already. The school takes babies at 6 weeks old.

The preschool requires parents to work or go to school full-time and they must attend eight parent meetings per year, which often have guest speakers.

"This is a good program for people who want to help themselves and their families," said We Do Recover member Kenneth Tommie.

The program began in 1984 when a sister at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Immokalee saw a need for migrant worker's children. She had influential friends, raised some money and started a preschool. The school, however, is not affiliated with the church but kept the name anyway.

Keeping with its emphasis on education, the center is about to begin a new program called Smart Start, for mothers and their babies.

"I get offended when people call us a day care," said Renate Engels, director of early childhood development. "We have 17 teachers with bachelor degrees, are accredited by all the major organizations and teachers write curriculums every week."

In addition to the preschool on its spacious campus, which was built in 2006 and 2008, Guadalupe has an after school program which serves 840 students in Immokalee schools.



Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie and Hollywood Board Rep. Gordon Wareham present a Seminole beaded necklace to a young patient Dec. 10 at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in Hollywood.



Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie and Santa bring holiday cheer to a young patient at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital.



Stanley Cypress and Kenneth Tommie unload boxes filled with Christmas presents for the children at the Guadalupe Center in Immokalee.



Members of We Do Recover and President Mitchell Cypress pose with staff of the Guadalupe Center in Immokalee as they deliver gifts for the children Dec. 19. From left are Stanley Cypress, Jay Holata, Kenneth Tommie, Ellie Ramirez, President Cypress, Renate Engels, Charlie Tiger and Bob Spano.



Students at Rosenwald Elementary School in South Bay have plenty of toys to choose from Dec. 17 thanks to the Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc.'s annual President's Toy Drive.



Seminole Fire Rescue Lt. Todd Graham helps deliver toys at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital.



Third-grade girls at Rosenwald Elementary School pick out toys collected from the President's Toy Drive.

# Ahfachkee students win Intertribal Agricultural Council essay contest

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**BIG CYPRESS** — The idea of farming fish in cattle ponds was a winner for Makayla Torres in the Intertribal Agricultural Council's youth essay contest. She celebrated the win at the IAC annual conference Dec. 9 to 12 in Las Vegas.

The theme of the student essay contest was "Agriculture: Investing in Sovereignty" and the bar for the essays was set high. Students had to answer the question of how to invest \$100,000 to improve the community's food and agriculture systems.

"I thought fish farming was an interesting topic," said Torres, 16, a 10th-grader at the Ahfachkee School. "We don't have much agriculture here other than cattle. I heard there was a cattle pond near Billie Swamp Safari and thought why not give it a dual purpose and use it for farming fish?"

It was that outside of the box thinking that put her essay in the winner's circle with two others at the IAC conference. For her efforts, Torres won a full travel scholarship to attend the conference, an iPad, \$1,000 and she was presented with a traditional Native American blanket.

About 250 students from around Indian Country entered the competition and the top 90 were also honored, including Ahfachkee senior Leilani Gopher, whose essay outlined creating a community garden on the site of Big Cypress's old bingo hall.

"It's a big piece of land and hasn't been used in so long," said Gopher, 18. "It would help students get community service, a job, exercise and give them something to do to take their minds off of doing bad things. And it would help the community come together."

High school English teacher Dr. Rona Olukolu helped the students choose their topics, craft their essays, guided them through research and edited their final

drafts. All of her students created essays for the contest.

Rules for the contest were very specific: essays had to be at least three pages long and double spaced using 12 point Arial font with one inch margins. They were judged on the organization of information, spelling and punctuation. The top three were keynote speakers at the conference.

The IAC annual conference focuses on Native agriculture production, sustainability and conservation. It is the largest gathering of Native American agriculture producers, Tribal natural resource professionals and USDA service providers. A trade show highlighted Native agriculture businesses and enterprises.

Each day of the conference Torres and Gopher attended classes and seminars featuring Native American speakers. The sessions lasted from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Torres said it was a long time to sit still and listen.

But about 1,000 people sat and listened at the keynote session, at which Torres read her essay.

"At first I was nervous," she said. "Then I just started reading and it got easier. Everyone applauded. It made me feel good about my essay and I knew my work paid off."

At the trade show, the girls tasted beef jerky, bison and chocolate covered pecans. But perhaps the highlight was meeting students from other tribes.

"It felt great to be around all Native People," Gopher said. "It felt normal, like at Tribal Fair or someplace where I'm not the only one."

"We learned what other people eat and how they make their fry bread," added Torres.

There were other diversions in Las Vegas, such as shopping, a zip line and seeing the strip. Both girls had a great time exploring the new environment.



## Ahfachkee School shows plenty of character

Analia Austin (3)

The Ahfachkee School book fair Nov. 20 included a fun way to promote reading as staff and students dressed up as characters from their favorite books. Above, Michelle Walker, Barbara Olivia, Yvonne Thomas and Linda Allen dress up in character. At right, Michelle Horelle and Kathy Dickson dress up as "Thing 1" and "Thing 2" from Dr. Seuss's "The Cat in the Hat." Below, a group dresses up from "The Hungry Caterpillar."



# Christmastime at Hollywood Preschool



Kevin Johnson (2)

Hollywood Preschool's Christmas party Dec. 19 includes a visit from Santa Claus at the Seminole Estates clubhouse. At left, Santa joins mom Susannah Severe with Ace Severe (grey outfit) and Aiyah Severe. At right, Victor Baker (red shirt) and Aleshane Osceola enjoy the party.

# HRI, Coca-Cola announce partnership

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**ATLANTA** — Hard Rock International and Coca-Cola Company have announced a partnership that will introduce Coca-Cola's brand portfolio to Hard Rock Cafe locations worldwide beginning in 2020.

The announcement was officially made to a group of Hard Rock and Coca-Cola executives and partners Dec. 18 at the newly remodeled Hard Rock Cafe Atlanta.

"Hard Rock's partnership with The Coca-Cola Company will provide a significant opportunity to enhance our beverage platform and accelerate growth for both brands in our Cafe locations around the world," Judge said.

Hard Rock Cafe Atlanta/Facebook

From left, Stephen K. Judge, president of cafe operations for Hard Rock International, Kathleen Ciaramello, president foodservice and on-premise for Coca-Cola North America, and Wes Brand, general manager of Hard Rock Cafe Atlanta, participate in Hard Rock's traditional guitar smash to announce HRI's partnership with Coca-Cola on Dec. 18 in Atlanta.



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



Kevin Johnson

Cali Osceola, 6, meets Santa at the Big Cypress Christmas celebration on the grounds of the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena.



Kevin Johnson

Osceola Billie, left, and Brysen Billie show the gifts they picked out at the Big Cypress Christmas celebration on Dec. 12.



Kevin Johnson

Kids have a blast on one of several giant amusement rides set up for the Big Cypress Christmas celebration on Dec. 12.



Kevin Johnson

From left, Brighton Board Rep. Helene Buster, Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola and Brighton Councilman Larry Howard welcome the community at the start of the Brighton Christmas party on Dec. 12.



Analicia Austin

Agnes Billie-Motlow and Darlene Primeaux at the Christmas luncheon at the Hollywood Senior Center on Dec. 12.



Analicia Austin

Mingo Jones gives two thumbs up at the Christmas luncheon on Dec. 12.



Beverly Bidney

Dylan Garza and Milani Garza decorate their gingerbread house at the Immokalee Christmas celebration on Dec. 20.





# Christmas



Kevin Johnson

Students from Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School entertain the audience with singing at the Brighton Reservation's Christmas party on Dec. 12 at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena.



Beverly Bidney

Mary Micco, Wanda Bowers and Dora Tiger take a moment to pose together at the seniors Christmas party.



Courtesy Photo

A group of Immokalee kids rides on the Tribe's entry in the Immokalee Christmas parade on Dec. 14. The float was festooned with lights, reindeer, Santa, Seminole flags and loads of candy for the crowd. It impressed the judges, which awarded it the first place trophy.



Analia Austin

Photo booth fun with Kevin Osceola, Jessica Osceola, Max Alaava, Jackson LaRocca, Chance Bishop, Teyah Osceola, Aleshonee Osceola at the Great Gatsby Holiday party in Hollywood on Dec. 21.



Beverly Bidney

Amos Tiger and Dorothy Tommie celebrate Christmas with seniors from every reservation Dec. 4 in the Immokalee casino.



Courtesy Photo

Decked out in her finest holiday jogging attire, Mary Lou Alvarado shows the Christmas spirit at the Immokalee Jingle Jog on Dec. 5.



Analia Austin

Children decorate gingerbread houses in the kids' room at the Hollywood holiday party on Dec. 21.



Courtesy Photo

Mother and daughter Krystal and Aubree Rodriguez make their way through the Immokalee Reservation during the Jingle Jog.



Analia Austin

Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola dressed as The Great Gatsby for The Great Gatsby holiday party in Hollywood on Dec. 21.



Analia Austin

Vernesha and Leon Wilcox at The Great Gatsby-theme party in Hollywood on Dec. 21.

# Art Basel presents 'Patchwork Mosaic: An Indigenous Gathering of Seminole Masterworks'

BY ANALICIA AUSTIN  
Digital Content Coordinator

**FORT LAUDERDALE** — Every year during the first week of December, South Florida is home to one of the biggest art shows in the world, Art Basel. As part of an Art Basel VIP tour, History Fort Lauderdale hosted "Patchwork Mosaic: An Indigenous Gathering of Seminole Masterworks" on Dec. 7 at the New River Inn. The exhibition, which is on view through Jan. 12, features artists Tia Blais-Billie, Erica Deitz, Stephanie Hall, Elgin Jumper, Jacqueline Osceola, Jessica Osceola, Jimmy Osceola, Samuel Tommie, Hollywood Board Rep. Gordon Oliver Wareham, Brian Zepeda and Pedro Zepeda.

Along with the artists the show was curated by Tara Chadwick, Jimmy Osceola and Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie.

"I'm delighted to be here, and I'm thankful for the staff of Fort Lauderdale Historical Museum, and Art Basel, I am thankful to them, and special thanks to Tara Chadwick, and very glad to be here, and this helps to promote our voice as Seminole to share with the outside world and people from Basel as well," said Tommie, one of the featured artists.

The show features Seminole paintings, patchwork and carvings, all of which was shown to members of the Art Basel community on the VIP tour.

"A lot of hard work and passion went into bringing this exhibit together, and I'm very honored to be part of it. I had seen it last year and that was the first year I was exposed to it, and I immediately knew I wanted to be involved and represent different mediums and younger generations of Seminole artists," Tia Blais-Billie said.

As for next year's Art Basel, the artists are ready to give it another shot.

"I'm definitely looking forward to participating as long as I can," Blais-Billie said.

"I'm so looking forward to it," Tommie said. "I'm very motivated."

The show concluded with a reception at Center Bar at Hard Rock Hollywood.



Seminole art is displayed at History Fort Lauderdale's New River Inn in Fort Lauderdale during an Art Basel VIP tour on Dec. 7.

Analicia Austin



Seminole artists Jimmy Osceola, left, and Samuel Tommie pose at the New River Inn in Fort Lauderdale during the Art Basel VIP tour.

Analicia Austin



Naomi Wilson and Seminole artist Jacqueline Osceola at the Art Basel VIP tour.

Analicia Austin



Hollywood Board Rep. Gordon Oliver Wareham plays the flute as part of the Art Basel gathering at the New River Inn in Fort Lauderdale.

Analicia Austin

# Elgin Jumper hones new element in storytelling mix

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

**CLEWISTON** — Elgin Jumper is known for a lot of things — his artwork, short stories and poetry. He knows things too — Seminole history, art history, theater and literature.

Jumper is also a prolific storyteller, and he's been refining a new touch to that aspect of his craft — soundscapes.

So instead of appearing at events behind a podium with a book or journal in his hands — he's added an amplifier, electric guitar and violin reed. Sometimes he brings a Native American flute.

Adding soundscapes to his storytelling performances isn't a totally new idea. Jumper has been experimenting with it off and on for several years. He describes it as a "mixed-media storytelling performance."

In 2013 and 2014 Jumper first collaborated on such performances with Florida Gulf Coast University as part of a

Seminole art exhibition.

The performances included painting, drawing and music, among other elements.

At the time, he also worked with actors, playwrights and directors from the Ghostbird Theatre Co. of Fort Myers.

"We worked for six months prior to the performance," Jumper said. "One thing we did was to experiment with guitar and violin bow for soundscapes."

More recently, he continued to work on soundscape performances with musician Stephanie Gabrielle-Sneed, his art instructor's daughter.

Jumper said Gabrielle-Sneed had to end their collaboration due to health reasons.

"So, with no one to provide soundscapes for the performances, I have taken up the violin bow and guitar myself," Jumper said. "I just felt I had to do something dynamic to move forward."

Jumper had a chance to test out his soundscapes recently as part of "National Native American Heritage Month" in November. He was hosted by the Clewiston

Public Library for a "storytelling circle" on Nov. 25.

"What's new for me this time, performance-wise, is the fact that I'll be performing soundscapes with an electric guitar and violin bow," Jumper told the audience before the event.

He then began by giving a historical timeline of the Seminole Wars and read from his book of poetry "Nightfall," which was published in 2006. Jumper also read excerpts of stories that had been previously published in The Seminole Tribune.

When Jumper started to add his soundscapes, the audience seemed entranced by the ethereal and unique sounds that were created.

"I'm so glad how things were received and it definitely encourages me to continue on," Jumper said after the event. "Of course, I'm at the beginning of a wonderful journey, I feel, and yet I am very happy with how things have been going thus far."



Damon Scott

Seminole artist, storyteller, author, poet and musician Elgin Jumper performs some of his new soundscapes at an event at the Clewiston Public Library on Nov. 25.

# Alligator wrestling history comes to Stranahan House

BY ANALICIA AUSTIN  
Digital Content Coordinator

**FORT LAUDERDALE** — On Nov. 19, Everett Osceola, cultural ambassador for the Seminole Tribe and alligator wrestler, was the guest speaker at the Stranahan House in Fort Lauderdale for the organization's monthly "History Happy Hour." He gave a presentation on the history of alligator wrestling.

Though alligator wrestling is a staple in the tourism sector of the Tribe, it did not start out that way. Osceola explained that during the Seminole Wars, Seminoles were pushed down into the Everglades, and they still needed their encampment, medicine and their way of life.

"The only thing that was available for us to eat was alligators," Osceola said. "We also use alligators for weapons and armory."

Seminoles used the rugged backs of alligators — known as scutes — on their arms and legs and even their chest as a way of

armor and protection. They used the jaw line as a war glove and as a weapon. The other parts of the alligator were used for meat and medicine.

To use the alligator for purpose of food, medicine and weapon the Seminoles hunted and captured the alligators, but never killed them on site because by the time they would get to the campsite the meat would have spoiled. As roadways started being built in the area of the Everglades, passerby would see the Seminoles "wrestling" with the alligators they captured, and mistook it for a show.

"When they saw it as entertainment, they actually started throwing money at the Seminoles," Osceola said.

The Seminoles started taking visitors to the encampment for shows and used the money as a source of revenue to purchase supplies, food, materials and anything else they needed.

As time went on, alligator wrestling in the Tribe became more organized and better promoted to attract tourists.



Everett Osceola gives a presentation on the history of alligator wrestling at the "History Happy Hour" at the Stranahan House in Fort Lauderdale on Nov. 19.

Analicia Austin

# Seminole Casino Hotel presents Guadalupe Center with \$7,500 check

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**IMMOKALEE** — Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee presented Guadalupe Center with a check for \$7,500, funds raised from the Nov. 2 Gin Blossoms concert at Seminole Casino Hotel. All proceeds from the concert went to Guadalupe Center, which provides educational programs for more than 1,300 children in Immokalee from infancy through high school and has a 100 percent college acceptance rate.

Guadalupe Center received the donation during a special check presentation event held at Seminole Casino Hotel on Dec. 17.

"The Gin Blossoms concert was a wonderful, fun event and we are grateful to

have been the recipient of its proceeds. Our staff and volunteers met many wonderful people, who in addition to enjoying the great music, were also interested in helping the children of Immokalee," said Dawn Montecavo, Guadalupe Center president. "Seminole Casino Hotel is an important community partner, and we can't thank them enough for everything they do for the Guadalupe Center."

"Seminole Casino Hotel is proud to support Guadalupe Center and the important, life-changing services the center provides," said Tony Alves, general manager of Seminole Casino Hotel. "The Guadalupe Center staff and volunteers are making a real difference in the lives of students and their families in Immokalee."



Tony Alves, general manager of Seminole Casino Hotel, presents a check for \$7,500 to Dawn Montecavo, Guadalupe Center president.

Courtesy photo



Guadalupe Center volunteers meet the Gin Blossoms as part of the band's fundraising concert at Seminole Casino Hotel on Nov. 2.

Courtesy photo

# Sports



## Okeechobee girls off to strong start

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**OKEECHOBEE** — The team's record tells a lot about the drastic improvement in Okeechobee High School's girls basketball this season, but there's more to the Brahman's success than just numbers.

Before the season was even nine games old, the Brahman's had already won seven games, eclipsing their victory total from a year ago (6). They reached the end of December with an 11-4 record.

So how has a squad chock full of freshmen and sophomores made such a big turnaround?

"We're doing better than last year, so we're making progress," said guard Adryauna Baker, one of three Seminoles on the varsity squad. "Last year we didn't have as much chemistry as we do now. Everyone has really matured enough to show that they can work together without having issues."

The team's good play might be a shocker to many, but not to Okeechobee coach Jovanny Torres. He said the team's hard work in the offseason is paying off.

"I'm not surprised. We've been working our butts off the whole summer and the fall. We played travel ball in the spring and then over the summer we went to a bunch of camps. We went UCF, Florida

SouthWestern," he said.

Baker, a versatile 5-foot-8 guard who contributes in just about every facet including being the team's leading rebounder, has played a significant role in the fast start. Despite being a sophomore, she was selected as a captain, a role that she takes seriously.

"It's kind of a lot of pressure because you have to set a good example for everybody and be a role model and you can't just let everything slide. Sometimes they're not going to like you because you're setting them straight, but it's what you have to face by being a captain," she said.

Baker has excelled in leading by example on and off the court.

"Adryauna is great," Torres said. "She does all the little things. She rebounds, she pushes the tempo. She's not leading the team in scoring only because she gets the rebound and she pushes the tempo and getting people wide open by causing so much attention. That's helping other players get open. When she drives the lane, everyone collapses, so she's kicking it out and making an extra pass."

Torres said Baker is a far more mature player than a year ago.

"She's getting everyone to play together," he said. "When things go wrong, she takes them to the side and talks to them. She's like a coach on the court. She's come such a long way from last year. She used to

pout and complain about stuff, but this year she's stepped into that leadership spot. I'm so proud of her."

During the summer, Baker received a boost of confidence thanks to her strong showing at a Tony Perkins basketball showcase. She was among the select standouts out of hundreds of players.

"We got great feedback on her," Torres said. "Tony Perkins had nothing but great things to say about her. He only blogs about certain girls. They'll be about 400 girls there and he'll blog about 20 and she was at the top of the list. He called me. He said, 'I have girl here' — he couldn't pronounce her first name — 'last name Baker.'"

The camp helped Baker get her name out beyond the Brighton Reservation and Okeechobee, but it also opened her eyes to the importance of doing a good job representing Indian Country.

"It showed me how rare a Native American basketball player is. I think I was the only Native American there out of a lot of girls. It showed me how us Native Americans, if we have an opportunity we have to take it," she said.

Baker leads the team in rebounds (6.6), assists (3.3) and blocks (1.3) and is second in scoring (8.3) behind Alkeecia Clayton. Baker has scored in double digits six times, including a season-high 15 points in a win against Port St. Lucie. On Dec. 12, she

recorded a double-double with 12 points and 11 rebounds in a win against Sebring. Four days later she scored 14 points in a win against Moore Haven and her uncle Preston Baker, who coaches the Terriers.

In addition to Baker, Tribal members Julia Smith, a senior, and Caylie Huff, a sophomore, also play on the team. Smith is one of only two seniors on the team. She's returned to the team after a couple years off.

"Julia is doing great," Torres said. "She took two years off, so she's kind of rusty, but she's stepped in. At beginning of the season she was struggling, trying to get back into shape, but last two games she's started. She's playing great defense."

Huff has been up and down between the varsity and JV. Although she hasn't received a lot of playing time on varsity, it seems to be just a matter of time before she starts to make an impact.

"Caylie has definitely come a long way. She's not getting a lot of playing time on varsity, so she plays on JV sometimes to get playing time. She's definitely the best player on JV," Torres said.

Okeechobee has its sights set on keeping the momentum going for the rest of the regular season and into the postseason.

"One of our goals is to win district and to work on our defense because defense wins games and offense just attracts the crowd," Baker said.



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee sophomore guard Adryauna Baker, shown here in a game last season, is leading the Brahman's girls team in several categories, including assists, rebounds and blocks.

## Defending district champions pick up where they left off

### Seminoles meet as OHS cruises past Moore Haven

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**OKEECHOBEE** — At one point early in the Moore Haven versus Okeechobee high school boys basketball game, the score was close. Okeechobee led 12-10 and all indications pointed to a tight battle between the rivals.

But in a flash, a close game turned into a blowout.

Okeechobee, which won a district championship last year and shows no signs of slowing down, went on a blistering 27-2 run on its way to a 67-30 win on Dec. 13 in Okeechobee.

Silas Madrigal, the only Seminole on this year's Okeechobee squad, played a big role in the scoring surge. His layup gave the

Brahmans a 19-10 lead and forced Moore Haven to call timeout, but the offensive onslaught continued. In the waning minutes of the first half, Madrigal assisted on a 3-pointer and made a pair of layups.

With his team comfortably ahead, Madrigal played sparingly in the second half, but he made the most of his few minutes as he scored on a pair of layups in the third quarter and finished the night with 11 points.

Okeechobee loves to run, and the Brahman's sprinted to a 9-1 record at the holiday break.

"We're a bunch of gunners. We're a fast team," Madrigal said.

Okeechobee lost a big chunk from the core of last year's squad, but this year depth and versatility have helped overcome any holes, and, of course, speed helps, too.

"Everybody can play. We've got two different lineups. We can go big; we can go small and quick," said Okeechobee coach Demetre Riles. "Last year was last year. This is almost a whole different team. We've got a different style of play. That's what happens from year to year, you've got to adjust to what you have."

Madrigal, a senior guard, has stepped up



Kevin Johnson

Two Seminoles battle in the paint as Moore Haven's Ramone Baker and Okeechobee's Silas Madrigal eye a rebound during a high school boys basketball game Dec. 13 at Okeechobee High School. OHS won 67-30.



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee's Silas Madrigal takes a shot over Moore Haven's Jaytron Baker as the Brahman's and Terriers met Dec. 13 at Okeechobee High School.



Kevin Johnson

Moore Haven's Jaytron Baker makes a strong move toward the basket against Okeechobee.

his game as his role and playing time have increased from a year ago. He drained 25 points in a win against Clewiston on Dec. 17.

"Silas has been doing great," Riles said. "He starts. He adds to the quickness we have. With our starting lineup, it's hard to cover the court because our guys are flying everywhere. He does his job. He goes out there and plays hard. He can knock down a shot, he can pass, he can shoot. He plays

good team basketball."

While Okeechobee entered the break on a high note, Moore Haven reached the holidays searching for consistency. The Terriers were impressive on opening night, a 67-48 win against Clewiston, but then dropped four in a row before battling back to get close to .500 at the break.

Moore Haven struggled to get decent shots and second chances against Okeechobee. The Tribe's Ramone Baker

and Jaytron Baker brought plenty of energy coming off the bench. They each scored two points on a night when nobody from Moore Haven did much offensively. Seminole Nation of Oklahoma's Donovan Harris, Moore Haven's second leading scorer this season, ran into foul trouble early and sat for long stretches. He finished with five points.

Ramone Baker scored a season-high 15 points in a two-point loss to Hardee in early December.



Kevin Johnson

Donovan Harris, Moore Haven's leading scorer this season, tries to get past Okeechobee defenders, including Silas Madrigal.

# Fast and furious: PECS offense tough to contain

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**MOORE HAVEN** — The Pema yetv Emahakv Charter School boys basketball team operates at two speeds: fast and faster. The Seminoles' quickness at both ends of the court was evident in the team's 53-14 win against Moore Haven Middle School on Dec. 19 in Moore Haven.

The teams played a tight first quarter but that was before PECS' speedsters Aundre Baker, Bryce Baker, Santana Alvarez and Jayko Billie entered the game early in the second quarter. They came off the bench and immediately changed the tone of the game and the scoreboard. When they entered, PECS led 7-2. Billie sank a 3-pointer within seconds of stepping on the court and the Seminoles quickly pulled away. They led



Kevin Johnson

Pema yetv Emahakv Charter School's Jaycko Billie lines up a layup in the Seminoles' win against Moore Haven Middle on Dec. 19 in Moore Haven.



Kevin Johnson (2)

Above, Pema yetv Emahakv Charter School's Kayden Warrior takes a jump shot. Below, new PECS coach Jaryaca Baker is assisted by her son, Jherricko, on the bench as the Seminoles defeated Moore Haven Middle.



Kevin Johnson

Aundre Baker soars through the lane as Pema yetv Emahakv Charter School sprinted past Moore Haven Middle.

20-4 at halftime thanks in part to often forcing turnovers with a tenacious full court press that Moore Haven couldn't solve. In the third, the sharp-shooting Billie led off with another 3-pointer that was followed

by eight straight points from point guard Aundre Baker, including a 3-pointer. Kayden Warrior, Jaydence Urbina and Jovanny Torres were among the standouts defensively and on the boards.

The boys team, which is always among the top two or three squads in the Lake area,

has continued its winning tradition this season while playing for a new coach.

Before the start of the season, Jaryaca Baker, a 2013 graduate of Okeechobee

High School where she starred on the softball field, replaced her dad Preston Baker who moved up to coach Moore Haven High School's girls varsity team.

Jaryaca Baker, who has coached Tribal basketball teams, said she received encouragement from her dad to seek the PECS job.

"He said you should apply for it. I wasn't sure if I wanted to coach boys because I know how my brothers are. I applied for it and I got it. It's been good," she said.

Her team has been good, hitting the holiday break with a 6-1 record. Wins have come against Yearling (twice), LaBelle, Clewiston, West Glades and Moore Haven. The only loss came against Osceola Middle on Nov. 21 when PECS played without Baker, the point guard.

Jaryaca Baker, whose young son Jherricko is by her side every game, said she inherited a good situation because most of

the players have advanced skills and plenty of experience.

"They already know how to play. They're all really talented, so it's just a matter of getting them to come out here and work together and listen," she said.

The team has just two sixth-graders; the rest are from grades seven and eight.

"The returners are really good, so that helps out a lot," Baker said. "Sometimes they don't want to run plays; I think that's because I'm a female and they're boys and they try not to listen, but they do well for the most part."

PECS will wrap up its regular season with five games in January, including a rematch against Osceola on Jan. 21 at home and eighth-grade parent night on Jan. 23 against West Glades.

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# PECS girls soar above the competition

*Seminoles reach holiday break with just one loss*

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**MOORE HAVEN** — Good defense can go a long way toward being the foundation of a successful season.

As the Pema yetv Emahakv Charter School carved out another win, it was the team's defense that shined brightest in the 30-20 win against host Moore Haven Middle School on Dec. 19.

PECS's stingy defense held Moore Haven to just three points in the first quarter and two points in the fourth quarter. Those nearly perfect bookends helped PECS up its record to 6-1 heading into the holiday break.

Offensively, PECS was led by Lason Baker, who produced two strong halves, scoring seven in the first half and six in the second for a game-high 13 points. Carlee Osceola poured in eight points while other scoring came from Truley Osceola (4), Preslynn Baker (3) and Willo James (2).

PECS has won five straight after suffering its only loss to Osceola Middle in the second game of the season. PECS will return to action Jan. 9 at LaBelle.

While the defense was the big story against Moore Haven, consistent and balanced scoring have also fueled the Seminoles' success. Preslynn Baker and Carlee Osceola each had eight points against Yearling; Lason Baker racked up 22 points and Preslynn had 14 against West Glades; Candice Melton scored a team-high 10 points and Lason had 8 against LaBelle; and Lason scored 12 points against Clewiston while Candice (6), Truley (5), Preslynn (3), Anyiah Baker (2), Yani Smith (2) and Willo (2) also contributed.

Kevin Johnson  
Pema yetv Emahakv Charter School's Lason Baker dribbles past a Moore Haven defender.



Pema yetv Emahakv Charter School's Carlee Osceola soars through the lane as she scores in the Seminoles victory against Moore Haven Middle School on Dec. 19 at Moore Haven Middle/High School.



Pema yetv Emahakv Charter School's Miley Jimmie lines up a jump shot against Moore Haven.



Kevin Johnson

Pema yetv Emahakv Charter School's Truley Osceola wrestles the ball away from a Moore Haven player.



Kevin Johnson

Pema yetv Emahakv Charter School's Jana Johnson tries to control the ball before it goes out of bounds.

## Holyfield's son to fight at Hard Rock Hotel Daytona Beach

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**DAYTONA BEACH** — Evan "Yung Holy" Holyfield's next fight will take place at Hard Rock Hotel Daytona on Feb. 8, 2020.

Holyfield will fight once again at junior middleweight.

Holyfield announced himself to the professional boxing world on the Canelo-Kovalev Nov. 2 fight card at MGM Grand with a seventeen second stoppage (TKO 1).

His second fight took place in Houston on Nov. 23 when he stopped his opponent with a vicious body shot (KO 4).

Holyfield, (2-0, 2 KOs) raised in Atlanta and now living and training in Houston, is the son of four-time world heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield.

"I'm so grateful that I'm able to spend the holidays with my family reflecting on the incredible year I've had. I'm truly blessed. And I can't wait to get back in the ring on February 8. The boxing world better



Evan Holyfield

Courtesy photo

get ready because 2020 is the start of my decade," Evan Holyfield said.

"Christy Martin Promotions and The Hard Rock Hotel Daytona Beach are very excited for the opportunity to work with Main Events to introduce Evan Holyfield to boxing fans in Central Florida," said Christy Martin of Christy Martin Promotions.

The event will be live streamed via Facebook and YouTube on Payne Boxing Television channels.

With fight ticket, free admission to after fight party "on the beach." Eventbrite.com for tickets, only a few ringside \$65 remain. General admission is \$40 and VIP is \$100.

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OKC University Athletics

The Seminole Tribe's Curtis Osceola (#4) and the rest of the Oklahoma City University men's basketball team gather for a team photo at the start of the 2019-20 season.

## Curtis Osceola steps up for OKC basketball

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

The Oklahoma City University men's basketball team, which includes Seminole Tribe of Florida member Curtis Osceola, reached the holiday break with a 7-3 record. Osceola, a 6-foot junior guard from Anadarko, Oklahoma, has seen increased

playing time compared to previous seasons. He has appeared in seven games and is averaging 3.6 points and 10 minutes of playing time. He scored a season high six points in his first game of the season, an 87-61 win against Manhattan Christian on Nov. 2 when he saw 18 minutes of action and made a pair of 3-pointers. He also had three rebounds, one block and one assist. Twice this season Osceola has scored

five points in a game. He had two steals Nov. 26 in a 79-69 win against Randall when he played 17 minutes. Osceola is a perfect 4-for-4 from the foul line. Last season Osceola appeared in 11 games and averaged 1.3 points. OCU returns to action Jan. 2 against Langston in Langston, Oklahoma.



Jeff Romance

Florida State celebrates after defeating South Florida, 66-60, on Dec. 21 in the Orange Bowl Classic in Sunrise. The Seminoles wore special uniforms in recognition of Native American heritage.

## Florida State thrives in special Native American heritage uniforms

BY TRIBUNE STAFF

**SUNRISE** — The Florida State men's basketball team, ranked 19th in the nation, topped South Florida, 66-60, on Dec. 21 to improve its record to 12-2 while wearing turquoise Nike N7 uniforms to raise awareness for bringing sport to Native American and Aboriginal youth.

The game was played at the BB&T Center in Sunrise as part of the Orange Bowl Classic.

The Seminoles (10-2) also wore the special uniforms in their 80-65 win over Saint Francis in Tallahassee on Nov. 23. This season marks the seventh consecutive season the Seminoles have worn the turquoise uniforms.

Florida State makes a distinct departure from its traditional school colors to don turquoise Nike N7 uniforms to stand for the importance of bringing sport and physical activity to Native American and Aboriginal youth.

"The Seminole Tribe of Florida approached us about this program, and we are honored and excited to wear these unique uniforms," said head coach Leonard Hamilton.

The Seminoles first wore the turquoise uniforms in their 89-61 win over UT-Martin in Tallahassee on Nov. 17, 2013.

Through Nike's N7 Fund, Nike supports organizations that provide sport and physical activity programming to youth in Native American and Aboriginal communities.

Jeff Romance  
Anthony Polite dunks for two of his 11 points in FSU's win against South Florida.



## EIRA's new season set to start in February

BY TRIBUNE STAFF

The 2020 Eastern Indian Rodeo Association season is slated to start Feb. 1 with the annual Betty Mae Jumper Memorial Rodeo at the Hollywood Reservation Rodeo Arena.

Rodeo action will continue in Hollywood on Feb. 8 for the annual Bill Osceola Memorial INFR Tour Rodeo.

Other rodeos on the tentative schedule include the Brighton Field Day Rodeo on Feb. 11 at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena on the Brighton Reservation, the Junior Cypress Memorial Rodeo on March 14 at the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena on the Big Cypress Reservation and, in July, the Josiah Johns Rodeo and the Regional Finals Rodeo, both in Brighton.

The Indian National Finals Rodeo will be held Oct. 20-24, 2020, at the South Point Equestrian Center in Las Vegas.

## NAIG unveils brand identity for 2020 Games

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**HALIFAX, N.S., Canada** — The 2020 North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) has announced the official brand identity for the games, featuring the work of Mi'kmaw artist Melissa Sue Labrador. From July 12-18, NAIG 2020 will be held in Kijipuktuk (Halifax, Canada) and Millbrook First Nation and is slated to be the largest multi-sport and cultural event ever in Atlantic Canada, attracting more than 5,000 participants and representing 756 nations from across Turtle Island.

"I think it's a very exciting event," Labrador said. "And to represent Mi'kma'ki and our people in a really authentic way with the canoe I think it's wonderful."

The image of three figures paddling a canoe in the logo represents First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples and is based on petroglyphs found in Kejimikujik National Park. "For me, the Mi'kmaq canoe symbolizes our journey through space and time as Mi'kmaq people as we evolve with

the world around us," Labrador explained. "Having them all together in the canoe, with the forward motion is important."

"I thought the Mi'kmaq canoe was only fitting," Labrador said. "That's an ocean canoe, versus a lake canoe. We're surrounded by ocean and the ocean is very important to our people."

"We thank Melissa Labrador for her beautiful work that both symbolizes the spirit of the games and honours Mi'kmaq culture and history," said Fiona Kirkpatrick Parsons, chair of NAIG 2020. "Melissa's work inspired this logo and we're thrilled that we could work with her to finalize it — a symbol of friendship, unity, and pride. We are looking forward to working with Melissa to highlight Mi'kmaq art and artists, along with Mi'kmaq history and culture during our event."

NAIG is a multi-sport event and cultural celebration involving Indigenous athletes from across North America staged intermittently since 1990.



NAIG/Facebook

From left, Fiona Kirkpatrick Parsons, chair, NAIG 2020; Melissa Labrador, Mi'kmaw artist; Serene Porter, executive director, partnerships & marketing, NAIG 2020.

## Bulgaria's Milen Stefanov wins \$545,070 in Seminole Hard Rock poker open

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**HOLLYWOOD** — As part of the Seminole Hard Rock "Rock 'N' Roll Poker Open (RRPO)," Milen Stefanov, of Varna, Bulgaria, earned \$545,070 for winning first place in the \$3,500 World Poker Tour Championship. Stefanov bested 988 total entries in the series finale and took home the trophy and a \$15,000 WPT Tournament of Champions entry in what marked the largest championship tournament in RRPO history. The players generated a prize pool worth \$3,161,600, eclipsing the guarantee by more than \$1 million.

Championship Final Table Results:  
1st: Milen Stefanov (Varna, Bulgaria) \$545,070  
2nd: Fabian Gumz (Germany) \$353,380  
3rd: David Novosel (Cincinnati, Ohio) \$260,845  
4th: Roman Korenev (Krasnoyarsk, Russia) \$194,605  
5th: Cesar Fuentes (Deerfield Beach, Fla.) \$146,760  
6th: Francis Anderson (Arlington, Ky.) \$111,895  
The 27-event RRPO kicked off Nov. 20

with a \$400 buy-in Deep Stack NLH (Re-Entry). The series opener drew 4,699 entries easily surpassing the \$1 million guaranteed prize pool.

In addition to Stefanov, other signature event winners include:

- Benjamin Boston (Mansfield, Tex.), winning the \$400 buy-in Deep Stack NLH for \$133,918
- Schahin Ghiai (Marietta, Ga.), winning the \$1,700 Purple Chip Bounty NLH for \$34,105
- Michael Tureniec (Stockholm, Sweden), winning the \$600 Deep Stack NLH for \$100,700
- Manig Loeser (Bad Homburg, Germany), winning the \$5,000 Eight-Handed NLH for \$86,581
- Juan Endara (Miami, Fla.), winning the \$150 NLH for \$37,828
- Bryn Kenney (Henderson, Nev.), winning the \$25,500 High Roller NLH for \$354,565

Poker action will return to Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood with the Seminole Hard Rock Poker Lucky Hearts Poker Open from Jan. 7-22, 2020.

Future tournament information and poker hotel rates are available at SHRPO.com.



Eric Harkins/IMPDI

World Poker Tournament winner Milen Stefanov

## NABI to launch own uniform brand

PRESS RELEASE

**PHOENIX** — The Native American Basketball Invitational (NABI), whose major sponsors include the Seminole Tribe of Florida, will launch its own brand of sports apparel in 2020. During the last few years the brand has become a source of funding for the 501(c)(3) non-profit with an annual increase of 25%. NABI Nation has only been

available during the week of the basketball invitational and will change in 2020 when the brand is made available all year through the foundation's website immediately upon the conclusion of the 2020 tournament.

In addition, all 2020 basketball teams will be sporting new NABI Nation basketball uniforms. The uniforms, designed by Ruben Alvarez/RufNek, will feature designs celebrating Native American youth, communities and culture. The NABI Nation

uniforms will also feature the tribal seals/logos of the 2020 event sponsors.

"Our sponsors and their generous funding are the reason the NABI Foundation has been able to continue providing quality educational and sports programs to our youth. Being able to proudly display them on our new uniform is our small way of saying 'thank you' for their support" said GinaMarie Scarpa, NABI president and CEO.



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Thousands of Phish fans descend on the Big Cypress Reservation for the band's New Year's concert 20 years ago.

Tribune file photo

# 20 years ago: Phish invasion on the Big Cypress Reservation

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

It was described as the largest concert on Earth to usher in the new millennium. An estimated 80,000 people with traffic jams that stretched miles and lasted hours. "Psychedelic gridlock" is how Tribune reporter Peter Gallagher described the congestion in a story. And it all happened on the Big Cypress Reservation. This New Year's marks the 20th anniversary of the massive outdoor Phish concert, a Woodstock-like gathering that had never been seen in the Everglades and on a

Seminole reservation before nor since. On Dec. 31, 1999, the Vermont-based band, with its legendary and loyal cultish followers filling a field on Jack Motlow's pasture, began playing shortly before midnight and continued all the way until after the first sunrise of 2000, an experience the band still talks about today. "We played all night. We actually played two days, but the last set was from 11:15, or something, on New Year's Eve, until 7 or 8 in the morning. It was incredible, and, for me, it was the greatest, the pinnacle," Phish lead singer and founding member Trey Anastasio said on the 2019 "After Midnight: Phish's Big Cypress Festival" podcast hosted by Jesse Jarnow.

President Mitchell Cypress didn't attend the concert, but he had a good view of the gathering. "I flew over the area and it was like a city," he said. "They had a post office, a Ferris wheel, they had everything out there. Nothing serious happened, it turned out all right. A lot of vendors made a lot of money. It must have been a good concert, but I didn't pay any attention to it. The people were younger, like upgraded hippies." Big Cypress Councilman David Cypress didn't go to the concert either. He remembers that it didn't disrupt life on the reservation. "There were too many people. They didn't let them into the community; they weren't allowed to cross the bridge [by

Sadie's]," he said. "We just stayed home and it was like a regular day." Phish disbanded eight months after the Big Cypress concert, but the hiatus lasted only two years and the band has since gone through on again, off again periods. This New Year's Eve the band played at Madison Square Garden in New York City. From a pasture to a garden, Phish rocks on. *Tribune staff reporter Beverly Bidney contributed to this story.*

## POEM

### "To Never Say Good-by"

I tried to forget, but the forget won't let go, a heart that once knew love now grows very cold.  
From a distance I watched you grow, ambitious, loving and daring.  
My little girl you'll always be, my love for you I hope you see.  
These tears that I write they haunt my soul, this pain feel so deadly bold.  
It's got its hold and driving me insane, I cry this hurt with so many names.  
Your angel wings we'll one day fly, I'll hold you again to never say good-by.

From the Heart,  
Always,  
Your dad,  
Mr. Billie

## Rod Stewart returns to Hard Rock Live in February

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**HOLLYWOOD** — Rod Stewart returns to Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on Feb. 23, at 7 p.m. Tickets cost \$380, \$230, \$155, \$105 and \$85. All seats are reserved and available at all Ticketmaster outlets online at [www.myhrl.com](http://www.myhrl.com) and [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).

In 2020, Stewart will celebrate more than 50 years as a solo artist. The singer-songwriter is one of the best-selling music artists of all time, with more than 250 million records sold worldwide during a career that includes nine No. 1 albums and 26 Top-10 singles in the U.K. Plus, 17 Top-10 albums and 16 Top-10 singles in the U.S.

Warner Bros. Records will honor the singer-songwriter with a new album to be released Nov. 22, featuring full orchestral arrangements by The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Stewart has two inductions into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Grammy Living Legend, and in 2016 he officially became "Sir Rod Stewart" after being knighted at Buckingham Palace for his services to music and charity.

## STOF, Hard Rock team up with Big Kenny to help charity

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**HOLLYWOOD** — Multi-platinum selling artist Big Kenny of Big & Rich joined the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood for a fundraising event celebration to benefit Operation HeartF.E.L.T. feeding children in Florida. Through the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood and Hard Rock Heals Foundation, \$40,000 was raised for the charity. "What an unexpected blessing," said Pattie Lovette Stepbach from Operation HeartF.E.L.T. "Operation HeartF.E.L.T. is humbled and beyond grateful for your generous donation of \$40,000. Because of your support, we will be able to continue to feed all of our HeartF.E.L.T. children. Your donation will also make it possible to

expand our program and reach more children in need. Operation HeartF.E.L.T. would not be where it is today without the support of friends, community, family, and a very special young man, Kenneth Alphin. Big Kenny, as you all know him, was a student in my fifth-grade classroom in 1974. He was an unforgettable child; one who was kind, intelligent, creative but most importantly compassionate. Kenny's empathy stood out and I've never forgotten what this meant to his fellow classmates. He truly stood out then and still does today. His compassion did not end in the 5th grade but has extended throughout his lifetime. Over the years, Kenny has helped so many who need a hand-up. His ongoing efforts have opened a lot of doors for us and continue to be a special blessing to the children of Operation HeartF.E.L.T. Thank you to both Big Kenny and the Hard Rock for partnering up to support our Foundation. With HeartF.E.L.T."



Courtesy photo

From left, Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, country music singer Big Kenny and Pattie Lovette Stepbach, of Operation HeartF.E.L.T., hold a check for \$40,000 for the charity.

### FOR SALE

LAST SIX OF VIN#	YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILEAGE/ HRS	CONDITION	STARTING BID PRICE
111410	N/A	STAINLESS STEEL SHELF	4'	N/A	Fair	\$27.00
111409	N/A	STAINLESS STEEL FOOD PREP TABLE	5' TABLE WITH RACK	N/A	Fair	\$263.00
041886	N/A	VULCAN STEAMER	VPX5	N/A	Fair	\$600.00
A37808	2005	FORD PANEL VAN	ECONOLINE E250 SUPER (RWD)	131,725	Poor	\$967.00
568251	N/A	TRUE COMMERCIAL FREEZER	T-49F DOUBLE DOOR	N/A	Fair	\$1,015.00
390987	N/A	HOBART ELECTRIC OVEN	HEC5	N/A	Fair	\$1,050.00
198579	2010	CHEVROLET PICKUP TRUCK	SILVERADO 1500 REGULAR CAB (4WD)	195,678	Fair	\$3,177.00
A82198	2007	FORD PICKUP TRUCK	F150 XLT SUPERCREW 4WD	145,954	Poor	\$3,897.00
A69894	2008	FORD PICKUP TRUCK	F350 XLT CREW CAB 4WD (DIESEL)	175,333	Poor	\$5,631.00

Note - Previously advertised items are not reflected on this advertisement, only new listings. For more information contact Fixed Assets Dept. 954-966-6300 ext. 20034.

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