

The Seminole Tribune

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Haaland to tackle weighty tasks at Interior

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

The committee hearings are done, Senate confirmation is in the books and a swearing-in has taken place. On March 16, Deb Haaland was confirmed by a vote of 51-to-40 to lead the Department of Interior. She was sworn in March 18 – her first day on the job as secretary.

Naturally, Indian Country celebrated the historic significance of the moment. Haaland is the first Native American to lead the agency and the first to hold a cabinet position. In 2018 she also made history as one of the first two Native American women elected to the House.

“The impact of Native American representation at the top of a federal agency that so directly affects our daily lives cannot be overstated,” National Congress of American Indians president Fawn Sharp said in a statement soon after the Senate vote. “The relationship between Tribal Nations and the federal government has been fractured for far too long. Having an ally like Secretary Haaland who is not only deeply qualified but is from our communities has the potential to transform the government-to-government relationship and will be vital in advancing Native American issues for generations.”

Haaland now has the huge task of



Deb Haaland, a member of the Laguna Pueblo, is sworn in as U.S. Secretary of Interior on March 18 in Washington. She is the first Native American cabinet secretary in U.S. history.

leading a 60,000-employee agency that is charged with overseeing 500 million acres of federal lands, federal waters off the U.S. coastline, dams and reservoirs across the west and the protection of thousands of endangered species.

The job also entails upholding trust and treaty responsibilities for the country’s 574 federally recognized tribes and millions of Native Americans. The Interior Department

oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Indian Education – two agencies that position Haaland to address the needs of Native Americans – a group that has faced a variety of injustices over generations and that has been impacted disproportionately by the pandemic.

Priorities in focus

Some of the first steps Haaland is expected to take include a halt on new oil drilling, reinstating wildlife conservation rules that were rolled back by the Trump administration and a fast moving expansion of wind and solar power on public lands and waters.

♦ See HAALAND on page 4A

Tribe’s vaccination numbers increase

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The rate of positive Covid-19 cases and deaths from the virus have both decreased in Florida and across much of the country in recent weeks. However, health officials warn that while there are reasons for optimism, the pandemic isn’t over and the threat is still real.

The positive developments have taken place in the midst of increased vaccinations across the country and internationally, including among Tribal Nations.

For the Seminole Tribe, the number of tribal members and tribal employees receiving the Covid-19 vaccination has risen since the effort was launched in late December.

The tribe’s Health and Human Services (HHS) department said that as of March 24, tribal members and those who live in the tribal community had received 831 first dose shots and 682 second dose shots.

The tribe has been administering the two-shot Moderna vaccine.

Employees working for the tribe had received 631 first dose shots and 504 second dose shots.

The tribe also recently expanded eligibility to employees at all Seminole Gaming venues in Florida, which include Seminole Hard Rock properties in Hollywood and Tampa.

♦ See VACCINE on page 9A

Jack Smith Jr. earns praise for service to STOF, Water Commission

Helped tribe secure water rights

BY BEVERY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — After a lifetime of service to his tribe, Jack Smith Jr. retired from the Seminole Water Commission in November 2020.

Smith, 73, served as Brighton Councilman in 1987 when the Water Rights Compact between the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the State of Florida and the South Florida Water Management District (the District) was created. Smith signed the compact in his capacity as councilman.

In 1988, Tribal Council created the Water Management Office with Smith as its Brighton representative. About a year later, the council created the Seminole Water Commission to oversee the water office, which later evolved into the Environmental Resources Management Office (ERMD).

Smith continued his tenure on the Tribal Council until 2001 and was appointed to the Water Commission in 2008. The Water Commission consists of seven members: two each from Hollywood, Big Cypress and Brighton and one from Immokalee.

“We didn’t have any control of the flow before the compact,” Smith said. “We have since improved the flow through the reservations.”

“The idea of the compact started in my time,” said Jim Shore, Tribal Council general counsel. “When there was flooding, we would be flooded in Brighton because property owners north of us opened their culverts to drain excess water and flood us. During droughts, they would close those culverts and we would be without water.”

When Shore began working with the tribe in 1981, the tribe had already filed a lawsuit against the state. After a change in leadership in Tallahassee, the state offered to settle with the tribe. Instead of dealing with drought and flooding, the tribe wanted to handle the water flowing through the reservations, if landowners would agree not to flood or keep water from them. Shore said it took a few years before the compact was signed.

“They figured we weren’t going anywhere so they decided we should work



The signing of the water compact May 15, 1987. From left are SFWMD Governing Board Vice Chair Y.D. York, Max Osceola, Fred Smith, Nancy Motlow, Jack Smith Jr., Gov. Bob Martinez, Jim Shore, Priscilla Sayan, Wanda Billie, Counsel for the Tribe Jerry Strauss, and Governor’s office representative Timer Powers.

it out,” Shore said. “The District, Florida’s attorney general, and Timer Powers, a representative from the governor’s office, were all involved. The Water Commission is like our own District with rules and regulations that control water on the reservations. Council was supportive of the effort that we would have more stable availability of water. In the long run, that’s what the compact did. Now we have a working relationship with the District and the state.”

Smith had a lasting impact on the Water Commission, even before he joined it as a commissioner.

“Jack is one of the pioneers who knows the flow of the water on the land,” said Brighton Councilman Larry Howard. “I am sure he educated others who served alongside him for all those years. He is an active person to this day. I appreciate him for the time he dedicated to the tribe.”

When the water compact was written, ERMD senior scientist Stacy D. Myers worked for the District as a liaison between the District and the tribe. He said the compact is a unique legal document and is the only one that exists east of the Mississippi River.

Water compacts are more common in western tribes. They are based on The

Winters Doctrine, a Supreme Court decision in 1908 which gives tribes the rights to all waters that arise on, border, traverse or are encompassed within their reservations.

“The compact reflects the special status of the Seminole Tribe and entitles them to original water rights,” Myers said. “What is unique is it establishes these rights which differ substantially from rights of other Florida citizens.”

As a result, the compact allowed the tribe to develop ERMD, the Water Commission and empower Tribal Council to administer its own water code.

“Jack is a wealth of knowledge. He has tremendous memory for things that occurred in the past,” Myers said. “He has a very good understanding of the water resources on the reservations and is a talented guy.”

All tribal development and infrastructure improvements that have to do with water go through the Water Commission, which submits a detailed annual work plan to the District to notify it of the tribe’s projects.

Kevin Cunniff, ERMD director, said the tribe has a unique relationship with the land and has been intimately tied to water for its survival.

“It is the lifeblood of the culture,” Cunniff said. “Its cultural aspect should

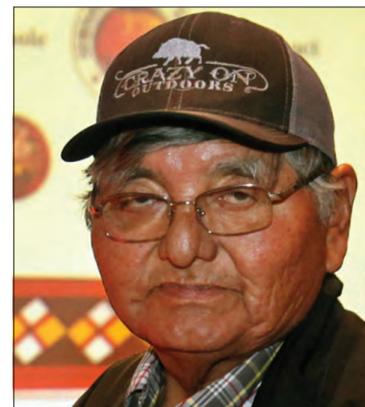
supersede any government agency. There is an inherent right of the tribe for water use.”

Since the 1980s, the tribe’s standard of living and degree of development have changed significantly. All of the development on the reservations since then was accomplished because of the water compact.

“Jack was a key ally and was extremely supportive in what it would assert for the tribe regarding sovereignty and self-determination,” Cunniff said. “He helped usher in a lot of development and served as a tribal watchdog. The commission assures the tribe is protecting its water resources for seven generations.”

During his approximately eight years on the Water Commission, Amos Tiger has seen big changes, including more tribal government projects and Everglades restoration. He said anything the state does that involves water traveling through the reservation goes through the Water Commission.

Tiger said the commission’s work used to be just about housing, but now it also addresses algae blooms and other things that come out of Lake Okeechobee. The bottom line is the tribe has to make sure water running through the reservation leaves as



Jack Smith Jr.

clean as it can be.

“We have good people in the ERMD offices that work with us and keep us informed,” he said.

Smith has dealt with governmental issues for his entire career, starting with Tribal Council.

“He has been an integral part of the tribe,” Tiger said. “Jack’s been an essential part of the commission and has come up with a lot of ideas over the years. He’s been instrumental in all this stuff.”

Smith’s contribution to the tribe is apparent to those who worked with him over the years.

“Jack will really be missed,” Myers said. “The uniqueness of Jack is that he is well balanced at everything; agriculture, wildlife and water resources. He has a good breadth of knowledge and understanding for all those disciplines and is leaving a great legacy.”

“Jack is a man of many trades. He is a cattle owner, served in the military and is on the board of the Florida Seminole Veterans Foundation,” Councilman Howard said. “He comes from a pedigree of leadership. He’s someone I looked up to growing up and I still look up to him today.”

Smith’s plans for the future include tending to his cattle and spending time with the family.

What was the best part of serving on the Water Commission?

“Getting more access to water for cattle and people,” he said.

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Visit the Tribune’s website for news throughout the month at seminoletribune.org

Editorial



On Deb Haaland, Native American history and renewed hope

• Laura Tohe

Most Americans are probably familiar with Crazy Horse, Geronimo and Disney's distorted version of Pocahontas. They may have heard of gold medalists Jim Thorpe and Billy Mills for their athletic footprints and the Navajo Code Talkers, who devised a military code based on the Navajo language to help defeat the Japanese during World War II. Beyond that, the remaining slate of nationally known Native Americans remains sparse, stereotyped and invisible. And almost entirely male.

That's changing with Deb Haaland, having made history as one of the first Native American women elected to the House of Representatives in 2018. President Joe Biden's appointment of her as United States secretary of the interior heralds a tremendous opportunity — a new page for Native Americans, Alaska Natives and Native island communities. It represents hope for undoing destructive policies of the previous presidential administrations. But most of all, it represents renewed hope for the land and for the Indigenous nations of this country.

Since the Department of Interior was established in 1849, none of the secretaries have been members of a tribal nation. This in a country where Native Americans have not only been systematically ignored,

misunderstood and mistreated since the beginning, but where tribal nations were placed under the responsibility of the department that oversees the management of a wide range of natural resources on public lands, including honoring treaty responsibilities to Native peoples.

It may have been considered an improvement when tribal affairs transferred from the Department of War to the then-new Department of Interior 170 years ago. The reality is the decimation of the Native populations continued. Treaties were broken or not honored, treaties that stipulated for medical and educational support. That education came through the process of assimilation in the boarding schools and the erasure of Native identity and culture — to the point that as late as the 1950s and 1960s, when I was growing up, I wasn't allowed to speak the Navajo language, lest I get punished for it.

During the summer when I lived with my paternal grandmother, we walked 3 miles to the windmill to wash our hair and clothes. Water, wood and coal were hauled from a distance to her home. Electric power lines ran not even a mile from her house, yet she used kerosene lamps for light, wood to cook with and coal to warm her home in the winter. My grandparents and relatives then and now still live with many of the conditions that enabled the coronavirus to spread rapidly and widely this past year, infecting and taking many lives — poverty, lack of clean water, food deserts, poor

infrastructure, inadequate medical services and resources — conditions that lead to the impoverishment of the mind and spirit.

I and many of my fellow Native Americans believe Biden's appointment of Haaland is monumental. Now that she has been confirmed, she holds a major seat at the table of American government. Her confirmation has the potential to transform past injustices, to build a more equitable government in which Native Americans, who hold a large voting bloc, gain a voice. It's an opportunity to bring Indigenous thinking to the stewardship of the land, water, air and the ecosystem, and address the negative impact of the destruction of cultural and sacred sites on and near Native homelands. It's a chance to consider more carefully interests in public lands that impact Native land and resources.

Deb Haaland's confirmation also brings to the forefront the image of the resilient and intrepid Native American woman elected as lawmaker in one of the most powerful countries and democracies. Her unique background has the potential to benefit all Americans in the kind of leadership derived from having a sense of community in policy and decision-making.

I first met Deb Haaland in Norman, Oklahoma, at the 1992 inaugural Returning the Gift Native Writers' Festival when we were beginning writers. Haaland's bright personality and easy demeanor made for friendly conversation. We connected over how our lives overlapped — our shared Laguna Pueblo heritage, our strong mothers

and that we'd graduated from the same high school in Albuquerque, New Mexico. By the end of the gathering, we exchanged addresses. I thought our friendship was a passing moment, so I was surprised when I received her letter. She was excited that her application to study at Swansea in the U.K. was approved. We corresponded, but eventually our lives took separate directions.

My path led me to write against the invisibility of Native people through poetry, stories and essays. Deb's path led her to use her gifts in the legislative process. In the early 2000s, I co-edited, "Sister Nations," an anthology of Native American women writing. Haaland submitted a poignant short story about a daughter witnessing the end of her mother's life journey as a moment of grace. I remembered our earlier conversations about our mothers, their resilience and even their severity, our shared cultures and the matriarchal societies we'd grown up in where women held leadership roles in the family and didn't have to fight for their place.

From these societies come the voices of women who strive to make a difference in government, literature, law, science, medicine and education. The Laguna stories of time immemorial tell of sisters who create the world through the power of their thoughts and a courageous woman who helps her community during times of great distress. The Diné stories tell of a sacred woman who was a lawgiver and brought one of the principal blessing ceremonies to create

a stable society. From these stories, women are portrayed as intelligent, self-determined, and possessing strength. They demonstrate that women are in charge of their lives and bodies.

My single mother raised six children and once drove us home safely through a blinding blizzard. My aunt saddled her horse and took charge of our livestock at branding time. And my grandmother, without a college degree, became one of the first Navajo teachers. I credit their influences and high expectations for my love of language and stories, and for my success as a poet and librettist.

Haaland brings her Laguna background as one raised with community values, a sense of responsibility for the earth and the resilient spirit of Native communities. The traditional Laguna clothing and jewelry she wears at government occasions is her power suit. It makes her visible to the First Nations of this country; it enables Native Americans to see themselves in her; it symbolizes diversity that makes a nation strong, where Native Americans see a place for themselves and are reminded that they have a voice. And Haaland's moccasin wraps show that she stands on sturdy legs, ready to accomplish the important work for all Americans.

Laura Tohe is the poet laureate of the Navajo Nation. This article is from deseret.com and will be in the April issue of Deseret Magazine.

What difference will this \$31B in resources make for Native communities?

• From WBUR (Boston)

President Biden's American Rescue Plan contains massive spending measures for Native American communities. What will it take to turn the dollars into actual transformation?

Here is a portion of a discussion on the WBUR (Boston) program "On Point" with host Meghna Chakrabarti. Guests include Dante Desiderio, executive director of the non-profit NAFOA; Stephen Roe Lewis, governor of the Gila River Indian Community near Phoenix, and Dr. Mary Owen, practicing family physician and president of the Association of American Indian Physicians and director of the Center of American Indian and Minority Health at the University of Minnesota.

What difference will this \$31 billion in resources make for Native communities?

Stephen Roe Lewis: "This funding is a historic level of funding for tribal governments, not just because of the amount of funding, but because of the equitable treatment of tribal governments. And ... the acknowledgment of tribal sovereignty and self-determination that have played just a tremendous amount of critical support in our response to this pandemic.

"You know, in the early days of the pandemic, what was missing for tribal governments was our federal partner. Our relationship is with the federal government, as sovereign tribal nations. It's a government to government relationship. And until this year, the pandemic response was delegated to the states. So there were a lot of gaps and inconsistencies of how tribes were treated.

"And we realized early on that we

needed to be innovative and entrepreneurial to make sure our community did not become a hotspot. You know, despite the state of Arizona becoming one of the world's hot spots during the pandemic, two separate times during this public health emergency. So this funding is timely because the community, as you know, we utilize all of our funding from the Cares Act. And this American Rescue Plan Act funding will not only see the community and other tribes through the pandemic, but will help us to put the tribal infrastructure in place, should we be faced with a similar situation in the future. But also address the disparities that have been persistent for decades and longer."

On the Covid pandemic's impact on Native communities

Dante Desiderio: "The chronic underfunding by the federal government has been going on for generations. And that chronic underfunding had consequences during this pandemic. So Indian country had higher infection rates and higher death rates than any other population in the nation, especially early on in the pandemic. So the amount of funding allocated to tribal governments in the American Relief Plan, it won't solve everything, but it goes a long way in being able to address some of these social and economic disparities that have been laid bare during this crisis. And I'll give you a couple of examples.

"One is the inadequate funding for housing. We have the highest occupancy rates in housing in the country. And when a pandemic hits, and you have multigenerational housing and you have a community or Indian communities in general that have higher social interactions, it can be devastating during a pandemic. And the other part, and I know we'll get to this a little bit later, is the Indian Health Service has been chronically underfunded. So any

surge at all means that we're at capacity pretty quickly. So we had to really scramble and get really creative. So some of the funds that have already been out, and trying to give us some support for the impacts, were good.

"I think for this conversation, more specifically the American Relief Plan, what it does is help us not just deal with the impacts like we have been in trying to organize these crisis centers to take care of our people and protect our people. But it's going to help us recover and hopefully come out of this crazy time, more prepared, more structured. And, you know, the hope would be that we also have more diverse economies.

"And just on that last point, we rely on economic development to fund our government programs and services because of this chronic underfunding by the federal government. So it goes beyond just an economic downturn. It's an economic and a government downturn. It's a funding crisis. And our industries are a huge part of our economy in general. And Indian country is in the hospitality space.

"So tourism, hotels, gaming and all of that. Completely shut down. Completely shut down. So you had in Indian country ... multiple crises that were hitting, the economic and the health care. So going forward in the American Relief Plan, there's this idea that. One, it's going to be a longer time period, which is very hopeful. There's a bit of infrastructure in there. So the idea is that we're going to build out, be able to be in a position to protect our people, have more diverse economies."

On historic underfunding for Native American communities

Dante Desiderio: "I don't think we have to look that far back, because there hasn't really been too many historic spending packages for Indian country. It's a reason that tribes during the Self-determination Act

during the 1970s under President Nixon, of all people, went toward self-determination for tribes. The federal government was realizing they weren't going to meet these obligations and tribes were going to try to grow their economies to be able to take care of this.

"The only reference we can go to is during the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, you know, just over a decade ago. And during that time, President Obama had provided significant resources, which we thought were, you know, it was about \$2.7 billion, maybe \$3 billion in resources, which effectively doubled the budget of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and got some help out in a programmatic way. I think what's different about this package, and its impact will be significantly better, because this is discretionary money. This is money. This is the federal government recognizing that tribes have the ability to know what's best for their own communities.

"... Every tribe is different. Every tribe has different historic consequences that they're working through. Every tribe has a different approach to developing their communities and different cultures. So this discretionary money is historic. The only thing we can turn to is significant funding before this was the Recovery Act and that went out through programs."

On how 'spiritual infrastructure' will help strengthen Native communities into the future

Dante Desiderio: "I see this in a much bigger picture. And the significance of this can't be lost here. So tribal leaders are different from every other elected leader in this country. They also have the responsibility of carrying on culture and carrying out ceremonial practices. So that makes these tribal leaders have the additional responsibility as well as the responsiveness

to their community needs.

"The idea that we have the federal government stepping in to be able to say we're going to fund the preservation of languages and other cultural components of your communities, it's recognizing the tribal way of governing, and it's also a complete federal policy shift. And only in the last couple of years has this happened. The federal government was in the business before taking Native kids and sending them way to boarding schools to be taking away their languages.

"And they were also in the business of being able to tamp down on cultural activities. And the resurgence of the federal government, recognizing, one, the role of tribal leaders, but also recognizing how important culture is. It's not just for the tribal leaders. This is America's oldest languages. The tribal governments are the oldest governments. And we have the oldest cultures in this country. And I think it's so important as a national treasure to be able to go in this direction for the federal government.

"And when you look at what happened in the pandemic, the reason this is in there, or one of the reasons, is that the people who are most vulnerable were older language speakers and the people who tell the stories in our community. When we lose an elder to Covid, we often lose a bit of that culture. You know, I know in my community, the elders tell stories during our culture camp and pass along what life was like from when they were growing up and everything. It's a valuable resource for passing that on. So the significance of this, I think, is really important to note."

This program aired March 23 on WBUR in Boston. To listen to the 50-minute program in its entirety, visit wbur.org.

The time to return land to Native Americans is long overdue

• Michael Albertus

President Joe Biden's pick for interior secretary, Rep. Deb Haaland (D-N.M.) will be responsible for upholding the country's treaties with Native Americans. Haaland should use her unique position to rectify one of the most damaging early Indian policies of the United States, which sought to break down tribes and assimilate natives: the systematic dispossession of native land.

Along with the enslavement of Black Americans, this forced land dispossession

is one of the country's most significant transgressions. Many of the biggest challenges facing native communities today, from rampant poverty to lower social and economic mobility to health issues cast in high relief by the pandemic, can be traced to the attempted extermination and then assimilation of Native Americans through American land policy.

Land dispossession is at the root of contemporary property rights and landholding across the Americas. European colonizers and migrants displaced indigenous populations across the hemisphere and created exclusionary private property rights systems for themselves that ignored prior

land occupants.

My research shows that many governments across the hemisphere exacerbated the problems that resulted from this initial displacement in the mid 19th to mid 20th centuries. They resettled native groups on reserves or returned selected private lands in an authoritarian fashion and structured property rights in restrictive and paternalistic ways such as withholding land titles, forcing diverse indigenous groups together into homogeneous communes and dictating how they could use their land. These policies divided communities and kept them weak and subservient to governments, facilitating enduring exploitation and

manipulation.

Several recent high-profile legal cases in the United States have grappled with parts of this legacy. For instance, the Supreme Court ruled in 2020 in *McGirt v. Oklahoma* that roughly half of Oklahoma's land lies within the jurisdictional boundary of a Native American reservation. The case was a victory for tribal sovereignty with major consequences for criminal and civil law within the territory. But it stopped short of implicating land issues.

The United States lags behind many other countries in the Americas in its treatment of indigenous land claims and indigenous legal and political autonomy.

Canada has offered official apologies to First Nations and founded a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate the legacy of its Indian Residential Schools and provide recommendations to further reconciliation with its indigenous groups. Colombia and Bolivia have granted native communities enormous reserves of lands, and Mexico has given indigenous communities living in ejidos greater self-governance and property rights.

♦ See LAND on page 2B

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Community



Seminole brothers' first new song together in a decade touches inner struggles, dreams

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Spencer Battiast and Doc Native's first new song together in 10 years premiered with a music video on YouTube. The debut of "Dream" on March 15 quickly attracted thousands of views in just a few hours.

"Doc and I haven't done a song together since 'The Storm' in 2011," Battiast said. "We wanted to say where we are in our lives now, being older and more experienced. It's one of the most personal songs being that it's our story."

The Seminole brothers purposely released the new song on the 10th anniversary of "The Storm," the story of the Seminole people that was released in March 2011.

"Dream" is about who Battiast and Native, formerly known as Zach "Doc" Battiast, are today. The song is about overcoming life's struggles. Native wrote and rapped the verses; Battiast wrote and sang the chorus and the bridge.

"The idea was to have a fight song, an anthem and a call to action," Native said. "I've had battles with depression and anxiety. We wanted to write a love letter to those going through inner battles and let them know they aren't alone. A lot of us artists struggle with mental health issues,

but we have to clean ourselves up, slap on a smile and look the part. I hope this song touches people and helps them. If it uplifts one spirit, I have done my job."

The first verse is about feeling lost as Native tries to fight his way out of the struggle. The second verse is about finding the strength to keep going while acknowledging the struggle. The chorus reflects the importance of having dreams. The bridge cements the lesson of picking himself up off the ground and vowing never to let things hold him down again.

"Our dreams and what we want to accomplish in life can be a fantasy, but we are still wide awake to what is happening in the world," said Battiast, 30. "Like the injustices Indigenous people go through every day; repression and not being heard. The final lyric is how it is a fight to get people to take you seriously or listen to the experience of a Native person. It has so much meaning, not just because I did it with my brother, but we show more of our hearts and what we go through every day. It's not always rainbows and sunshine."

"Everybody's having trouble with mental health," said Native, 31. "We don't always feel 100 percent and we don't talk about that. It's very detrimental to peoples' mental health to say you're OK when you

aren't. Our storytelling is always about honesty, so we wanted to be open about what we are feeling. Even though it is a song of troubles, it's also a song about perseverance."

The song was written and recorded in Native's home studio before the pandemic; the video was conceived and filmed in the midst of it.

In the video, two Native children watch TV and change the channel until they see other Native people. They see a video of the Miss Indian World contest and other dancers. By the end of the video, the kids are inspired to put on regalia and dance alone in their living room. The Miss Indian World committee gave Battiast permission to use its video of the pageant.

"Everyone has to dance from their homes and living rooms now," Battiast said. "That wasn't a thought in our minds when we wrote the song. Everyone is taking the resources they have and still getting the job done, showing their culture and representing their tribes."

The video also shows some Native Americans the brothers admire, including Bryson Jones, a child from Oklahoma who struggles with Tourette syndrome; Cheyenne Kippenberger, the Seminole Tribe's first Miss Indian World who has spoken throughout her reign about mental health issues; Oscar-winning actor Wes Studi; Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland; the two-spirit couple Adrian Stevens and Sean Snyder; and Paula Bowers-Sanchez, a Seminole who started her career in the entertainment industry as an actress and singer as the brothers were growing up.

"They energize us to keep striving for our dreams," Battiast said. "A public service announcement Paula Bowers-Sanchez made inspired me as a kid. She was fearless going after her dream; she just got on the stage and showed her talent. That was the moment for me when I was a young teenager."

Battiast and Native have performed together for years, most recently with the Mag 7 group headed by Taboo of the Black Eyed Peas.

"We are like yin and yang," Native said. "He's all the smooth best parts and I'm the fire to his ice, or vice versa. Any time we perform, we invite each other. We saw it had been 10 years since 'The Storm' and thought it would be great to write another one."



"Dream" music video

A scene from the music video "Dream," which drew more than 15,000 views on YouTube in its first 10 days.



Matt Gagnon/Time Honored Media

Seminole brothers Spencer Battiast, left, and Doc Native on the set of their music video "Dream." The video was filmed in Utah and directed by Adam Conte (Oneida and Mohawk).

PROBLEM?

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Hard Rock properties to be featured in Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue and digital media

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

HOLLYWOOD — The Guitar Hotel and Sports Illustrated's annual swimsuit issue — both known for attracting a lot of eyes — are teaming up.

Through a partnership announced in early March, Hard Rock's resort properties in the U.S. will serve as backdrops in SI's swimsuit issue and digital media content. The swimsuit issue is scheduled to be released July 20.

"I'm super excited about the partnership that we have with SI Swimsuit and the Hard Rock because it's two iconic brands that have been around for so long, finally meeting together and making something incredible, and I can't wait to see how this issue turns out," SI Swimsuit model Haley Kalil said during an interview segment with Hard Rock International chairman and Seminole Gaming CEO Jim Allen on Hard Rock's social media.

The two-year-old Guitar Hotel that towers above the reservation of its owners — the Seminole Tribe of Florida in Hollywood — is featured with model and registered nurse Maggie Rawlins of Charleston, South Carolina.

Additional Hard Rock destinations mentioned in the announcement include Tampa, Atlantic City and Sacramento. The resorts' offerings captured by SI photographers range from blackjack tournaments to spa experiences to cooking lessons.

"We are thrilled to be teaming up with Sports Illustrated Swimsuit, which continues to offer one of the most anticipated and celebrated annually released media publications in the world," Keith Sheldon, president of entertainment for Seminole Gaming and Hard Rock International, said in a statement. "This exceptional partnership will enable us to showcase the Hard Rock



James Macari/Sports Illustrated
The Guitar Hotel and Maggie Rawlins, a model and registered nurse from Charleston, S.C., appear in this year's Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue scheduled to be released July 20.

brand to a global audience in new and unique ways while highlighting our ongoing

commitment to entertainment via the integration of musical elements throughout."

The partnership also includes musical components, retail collaborations and social initiatives, such as the Instagram launch of #StrongLikeAWoman, a viral social challenge that asks women to show their followers what makes them strong and powerful. The post coincides with International Women's Month in March.

Additionally, SI Swimsuit and Hard Rock plan to host panel discussions, fireside chats and musical performances to discuss key topics facing women globally. The series will serve as a fundraiser for female-focused charitable causes via the Hard Rock Heals Foundation.

The swimsuit issue launch event, which is scheduled to take place at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood later this year, will feature musical performances at Hard Rock Live.

On the retail end, a co-branded merchandise series will feature Hard Rock T-shirts and sweatshirts customized for sun-seekers. The items will be available for purchase at select Hard Rock shop locations and shop.hardrock.com.

"There's a synchronicity between Sports Illustrated Swimsuit and Hard Rock International that generates a really powerful partnership," Hillary Drezner, head of partnerships at Sports Illustrated Swimsuit, said in a statement. "This exciting opportunity brings together two legendary brands that share a commitment to innovation and excellence, and allows us to create unique content and experiences. Hard Rock has been an incredible partner and we are excited to be joining forces with them."

The partnership comes as Hard Rock approaches its 50th anniversary date. In June 1971, the first Hard Rock Café, with owners Peter Morton and Isaac Tigrett, debuted in London. The Seminole Tribe purchased Hard Rock in 2006.

Stimulus bill directs \$31 billion to tribal nations

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

The American Rescue Plan that was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Joe Biden set a benchmark for Native Americans that has never been set before.

The \$1.9 trillion stimulus bill directs \$31 billion for Tribal Nations. It's a record amount of funding that is significant because tribal programs — like the Indian Health Service — have historically been underfunded and it provides an opportunity to shore up what have been perpetual deficits. It's also significant because the money gives Native American communities a chance to start to recover from the pandemic — one that has hit many tribes harder than the general population.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said last summer that Native Americans in almost half of the states were more affected by the virus than their white counterparts.

With the new funding also came a promise that distribution would be easier and more equitable. The first stimulus package in March 2020 directed \$8 billion to tribes, but much of it was held up due to distribution snafus and then challenges in federal court.

The support for tribes fulfills a promise by a Biden administration that pledged greater outreach and consideration for Indian Country before and after the election. It's an attempt to loosen the grip of many decades of strained relationships with the federal government and its neglect of the treaty obligations it is required to uphold for the country's 574 federally recognized tribes.

"The National Indian Health Board is thrilled that Tribal Nations will receive support for vaccinations, relief from terrible losses in their health systems, and that after a year of educating lawmakers about how funding works most effectively and efficiently for Tribal Nations, that knowledge is reflected in this law," NIHCB CEO Stacy A. Bohlen said in a statement.

The Department of the Interior, now headed by Secretary Deb Haaland, and officials from the Bureau of Indian Affairs have begun a series of consultations with tribal leaders to discuss the most effective

ways to implement the funds.

Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the Democratic majority leader, said during a speech on the Senate floor that the legislation "takes us a giant step closer to fulfilling our trust responsibilities to all Native Americans, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians."

In addition to funding for a wide range of Covid-19 related issues, the bill includes \$20 billion for tribal governments and \$6 billion for the Indian Health Service and other Native American health systems, including \$20 million for Native Hawaiians.

The Bureau of Indian Education will receive \$850 million for the schools that it supports, which includes the Ahfachkee School on the Big Cypress Reservation and the Miccosukee Indian School west of Miami.

The bill also included \$20 million to establish an emergency Native language preservation and maintenance grant program. Many tribes are moving urgently to ensure their languages are not lost as elders die. It's an initiative the Seminole Tribe knows well and has put into practice at its Pemaayev Emahakv Charter School on the Brighton Reservation and through its work in the Tribal Historic Preservation Office.

Other funding includes \$1.2 billion for housing and \$1.1 billion for primary, secondary and higher education programs.

Many in Indian Country say the new administration has been a more responsive one so far.

Lynn Malerba, the chief of the Mohegan Tribe in Connecticut, told the New York Times that President Biden and the new Congress seem to better understand the challenges in Indian Country.

She praised the new funding as the federal government recognizing "for the first time that Tribal Nations participate in the national economy and have the same responsibilities to the health and well-being of their citizens as state and local governments."

"If you consider the Native population, depending on what estimate you are using, is 3 to 5 percent of the population and we received 1.5 percent of funding, that's significant," Malerba said in the interview. "It's a much greater number than the previous administration had provided to us."

New housing funds latest in tribe's HUD connection

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The Seminole Tribe's relationship with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) remained strong in late February with the announcement of more funding for housing-related projects.

HUD awarded the tribe a \$1 million Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) to support development and operation of affordable housing.

The award was part of more than \$652 million in all for hundreds of eligible Native American tribes and Tribally Designated Housing Entities, or TDHEs.

The Miccosukee Tribe received more than \$74,000 in the award as well.

"The U.S. government has a responsibility to carry out trust obligations to Indian tribes, and with this funding, HUD is acting to meet these obligations," HUD's acting secretary Matthew E. Ammon said in a statement.

The new funds can be used for a range of affordable housing activities on reservations and related areas. In addition to affordable housing development and operation, the funds are available for the modernization of existing housing, housing services, crime prevention and safety and "activities that provide creative approaches to solving affordable housing problems."

Last summer, the Seminole Tribe received \$900,000 from a HUD Indian Community Development Block Grant for threats posed by the Covid-19. It was part of \$100 million in funds distributed to Native American tribes to mitigate the effects of the pandemic.

Those funds were made available

for construction of rental housing, water infrastructure, renovations to health clinics for Covid-19 testing and treatment, and emergency food supplies.

The HUD relationship also extends to the tribe's Native Learning Center in Hollywood. The NLC is supported by an IHBG — awarded by HUD's Office of Native American Programs (ONAP). The funding allows NLC's programs and services to be offered for free or at a reduced cost for Native Americans and those working within Indian Country.

ONAP administers housing and community development programs that benefit Native Americans.

Providing more housing opportunities for tribal members is something the tribe has been working on in earnest across several reservations in recent years. One of the latest is on the Hollywood Reservation, where Lennar Homes is building 103 rental townhomes and 74 single-family homes at Seminole Park. It includes three- four- and five-bedroom single-family homes — half one-story and half two-story. Most of the townhomes will be three bedrooms, but 28 will be four bedrooms. The project is expected to be completed this year.

The development is located in an area of the reservation that was previously a mobile home site that offered residences to the public. Those homes have since been demolished and Seminole Park is now set aside for tribal members only.

The development is spread across a 44-acre stretch on the east side of State Road 7. It is close to the Trading Post, Seminole Police Department, Seminole Fire Rescue, Seminole Gaming warehouses, Seminole Wholesale Distributors and Okalee Village.

said.

She was quoting an Interior Department report from 1851, under then-Secretary Alexander H.H. Stuart.

"I'm a living testament to the failure of that horrific ideology," Haaland said.

Haaland has promised to help repair the legacy of broken treaties and abuses committed by the federal government toward tribes.

Many tribes have their land held in trust by the federal government, but leaders in Indian Country have said the U.S. has abdicated its responsibility to protect the land, wildlife and other culturally important tribal assets.

With Haaland at the helm comes a hope that many issues will be corrected.

Tribal consultations have begun across the country — an Obama administration rule that was reinstated by President Biden. The consultations concern lands development and right of way issues for projects like pipelines, including other topics.

Tribal leaders say the previous administration often did not seek consultation on issues like opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling, the Keystone Pipeline and an 85% reduction of the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah.



The Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana is scheduled to open May 14.

Rendering courtesy Hard Rock

Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana eyes spring opening

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

It's been more than a year since members of the Jackson 5 helped celebrate a groundbreaking for the Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana. After some delay, Hard Rock officials announced a May 14 opening date.

The \$300 million development is located in Gary — the Jackson's hometown. It's where brothers Jackie, Tito and Jermaine founded the group in 1965. Younger brothers Marlon and Michael would later join up.

There were concerns by the Indiana Gaming Commission that caused a pause in the casino moving forward regarding one of the casino's owners whose gaming license had been previously suspended — former Spectacle Entertainment CEO Rod Ratcliff.

However, the situation was recently resolved after Ratcliff agreed to sell his ownership interests and permanently relinquish his gaming license.

The 200,000-square-foot casino, with 1,650 slot machines and 80 table games, and its many amenities — sports book, restaurants, retail and 2,000 capacity Hard Rock Live

— are located near the south shore of Lake Michigan, about 25 miles from downtown Chicago at 5400 West 29th Ave.

Hard Rock officials have been in the process of hiring hundreds of new employees to staff the venue.

"It's hard to put into words how magnificent it's going to be," Matt Schuffert, president of the facility, recently told the Northwest Indiana Times. "When you see the facility and the quality of the finishes and the quality of work that is being done, arguably there's not much competition from that perspective in this market."

Schuffert is a Gary native who graduated from Indiana University Northwest. He's also a longtime casino executive in the region.

Hard Rock fans will recognize many of the food offerings — a signature Hard Rock Cafe, Council Oak steakhouse, YOUYOU Noodle Bar, Fresh Harvest Buffet and Constant Grind coffee shop. There also will be a Center Bar at the nexus of the gaming floor and a VIP lounge.

Hard Rock's signature music memorabilia will be incorporated throughout the casino — plenty of it focused

on the Jackson family — whose house at 2300 Jackson Street is about four miles east of the casino.

"I believe the energy that surrounds [the casino] is going to be catalytic to other folks outside of the community, and inside the community, wanting to step up and make ... significant investments ...," Gary's mayor, Jerome Prince, recently told the Northwest Indiana Times.

Schuffert added that Hard Rock would consider in the coming years the addition of a hotel and parking garage that would be connected to the casino.

Meanwhile, about 120 miles northwest of Gary, Hard Rock officials are preparing to open a casino development in Rockford, Illinois.

If approved, the \$310 million development would include restaurants and bars, a 1,600-seat entertainment venue, 1,500 slots, 55 tables and a sports book, along with other amenities.

The Seminole Tribe is the parent entity of Hard Rock International. More information is at hardrock.com.

NIGC appoints Jeannie Hovland as associate commissioner

STAFF REPORT

Jeannie Hovland, a former tribal affairs advisor to U.S. Senator John Thune, was appointed Jan. 17 to a three-year term as associate commissioner on the National Indian Gaming Commission.

Hovland (Flandreau Santee Sioux) joins the three-member commission that includes Chairman E. Sequoyia Simermeyer (Coharie) and Vice-Chair Kathryn Isom-Clause (Taos Pueblo).

"I look forward to collaborating with Chairman Simermeyer and Vice-Chair Isom-Clause as the commission continues its important role to serve and protect the integrity of Indian gaming," Hovland said in

a statement. "I will continue my commitment of respecting tribal sovereignty and I look forward to visiting with tribal leaders to learn how I can best serve them in this role."

Hovland's background includes a 13-year stint serving Native American communities in South Dakota as an advisor to Thune. She counseled Thune on legislation such as the Tribal Law and Order Act and the Code Talkers Recognition Act of 2008.

Hovland also served in the Department of the Interior as a senior advisor to the assistant secretary for Indian Affairs.

Most recently, she served as commissioner of the Administration for Native Americans (ANA), which is an office of the Administration for Children and

Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ANA promotes self-sufficiency for Native Americans through discretionary grant funding for community projects, and training and technical assistance. She also served as deputy assistant secretary for Native American affairs at the Administration for Children and Families.

"Commissioner Hovland's career path shows a commitment to Indian Country. I look forward to working with her in our shared mission to promote tribal economic development, self-sufficiency, and strong tribal governments," Isom-Clause said in a statement.

Q&A with Cheyenne Kippenberger

Special farewell to be held as reign ends for Seminole Tribe's first Miss Indian World

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

As Cheyenne Kippenberger prepares for the end of her extended reign as Miss Indian World, she shared some highlights from her two years of wearing the crown.

Crowned MIW for a one-year term in April 2019 at the Gathering of Nations Powwow, Kippenberger's position was extended for a second year when the pandemic caused the cancellation of the 2020 pageant. The MIW pageant has been canceled again for 2021, but will be held in 2022. Gathering of Nations will be a livestreamed event from April 23-24 and will include a "Special Farewell to Miss Indian World Cheyenne Kippenberger."

Kippenberger, the first Seminole to serve as MIW, recently spoke with the Tribune.

As Miss Indian World, how did you meet with people during the pandemic?

This year I've connected with more people, groups and communities than I would have been able to do in my first year just by getting on Zoom or WebEx. In the beginning I was trying to find my footing, my style and figure out how I could bring that same energy I would have if we were in the same room together. It was difficult, I had to come up with different ways to be engaging and capture the audience. My [Miss Indian World] committee helped a lot. Eventually I found my style of presenting.

I used to have to get on a plane for six or eight hours to get anywhere. This brought the opportunity to go to a lot of different places I wouldn't have been able to go previously. I put all my energy into every presentation, they deserve that from Miss Indian World.

In the beginning it was weird. I am used to walking around a room and engaging with everyone. I had to be creative and come up with another way to get people's attention. This is where the beauty of technology comes in. I had to maintain a consistent and large presence online on Facebook and Instagram. Indian Country was my audience and social media was the most effective way to reach them.

I had pop quizzes and surveys on Instagram and let people ask me about me and my reign. At Christmas time, we couldn't be with our families and I wanted to give something back to the community for anyone at any age. I came up with the Miss Indian

World cake contest. I made a Facebook page and organized a contest throughout Indian Country, including Canada, for three age categories. We had about 90 people enter. I did a second one on Valentine's Day.

Initially I didn't know what to expect, I didn't think anyone would be thinking about Miss Indian World. Once I started doing virtual events and conferences, event invitations started coming in. Being able to connect has been good medicine for myself and it helped us all get through this pandemic.

What were some of the highlights of your time as Miss Indian World?

Being able to connect with our people the way I've been able to, I'm so blessed to think I've come out of Miss Indian World with more family. I've had the honor of being adopted into a Cheyenne family in Oklahoma, went to New Zealand with the crown and was honored with a holiday "Miss Indian World Cheyenne Kippenberger Day" on August 2 in El Reno, Oklahoma, and got a key to the city, too.

How did virtual appearances differ from in person events?

Native people are very communal. We have an understanding that wherever we are, we connect. It's like being with family. Our communities haven't been able to get together in about a year. It's been hard not to come together and hug each other. Indian Day, pow wows, conferences, pageants; these are things we look forward to all year long. Our annual schedules have been abruptly stopped. It's just hard for community-oriented people, it really hurts. I haven't seen friends in over a year; it's been hard on my heart and my emotions. Trying to bring a little sense of normalcy and a glimmer of hope to people goes a long way.

What were some challenges of serving as MIW?

Being away from our people, friends and relatives. I'm a huge people person and it's been hard not to be able to connect in person. We are always going to go through tough things, but we are tough people. I have a new found gratitude for our community. It's important to take care of each other and really appreciate that we are who we are, which is Seminole. Let's be a stronger community for each other.

Another challenge over the two years has been believing that I can do this and be the best Miss Indian World I can be. I am going to leave my own legacy. I am someone who has been so supported, I need to remember to be kind to myself and believe in myself.

What was the best experience during your reign?

I'd like to pinpoint one event, but the entire experience is absolutely incredible. Whether meeting with elders or youth, it's

special to carry the title of Miss Indian World and use this platform in the best way I can. I used it to talk about mental health and representation. It was important to be authentic, be real with the audience and talk about things we all experience. Just be the best person you can be for the well-being of the world.

Going from being Miss Florida Seminole to Miss Indian World made me look at the bigger picture. Our communities all experience similar things around the country and the world. There is so much power in our people uniting, empowering each other, connecting and uplifting voices. I let my platform be utilized for all good things.

What did you learn about Indian Country that you didn't know before?

One thing that never ceased to surprise me is no matter what community I go to, at the core of our people, teachings and morals we share the same values. Community, respect, love and kindness. I've seen it everywhere, I felt it in the hospitality I've received and the family I was adopted into. It's the beauty of being Indigenous, no matter where you are from. Indian Country is small but you don't realize it until you travel around. You feel the love and it makes you appreciate who you are and how you are raised. I've always reminded myself I represent my family, my ancestors and my tribe. I can feel that everywhere I go, even on virtual visits.

What are you going to do next?

MIW has given me such an insight into who I am and who I want to be. Before Miss Florida Seminole, I was studying accounting but never felt fulfilled. Now I am sure of who I am and what I want to be. I want to study public health and help people. I want to represent; I am going to show the non-Indian world who we are.

A lot of what I was doing [as MIW] was talking about commonalities in our communities, health, social and economic issues. All of these things fall under public health. There is a lack of data about Native Americans so who better to go after those things than a Native woman. We see that raising our kids with culture, elders and around our people and our ways is a positive thing. I want to give them peer-reviewed information that isn't out there. For the first time in my life I have direction. I never knew what my purpose was. I want to take my own and our peoples' experience and put it forward.

MIW has given me the confidence and belief in myself that I can do these things. There is a fierceness and a feistiness to me and I'm going to use that. I want to share our stories. I want to be that platform.



Miss Indian World Cheyenne Kippenberger poses in Salt Lake City.

Jarrette Werk

More 'Employer of Choice' honors for Seminole Hard Rock

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — For the fifth time in six years, Seminole Hard Rock has earned top "Employer of Choice" honors from casino gaming industry executives, the company announced March 23.

The latest Casino Gaming Executive Satisfaction Survey from Bristol Associates and Spectrum Gaming Group rated 34 casino companies or standalone casinos. Nearly one-third of 1,064 unique casino gaming industry executives picked Seminole Hard Rock as their top choice among brick and mortar casino companies.

Hard Rock Online Casino was voted "Employer of Choice" among 29 iGaming and mobile sports betting organizations.

"These latest results are proof of the exceptional working environment we have created for team members at our Seminole Hard Rock and Hard Rock-branded casinos, as well as our Hard Rock Online Casino," Jim Allen, CEO of Seminole Gaming, Chairman of Hard Rock International and

Chairman of Hard Rock Digital, said in a statement. "The recognition means a great deal, given the many outstanding gaming industry companies included in the survey."

The survey was conducted online for a six-week period in fall 2020. Thirty-three percent of all respondents ranked Seminole Hard Rock as their employer of choice. The second choice was picked by slightly more than 20%.

Survey respondents were asked to list their top two employers of interest. In previous years, respondents were asked to name their top three employers of interest. Other honors for the Seminole Tribe's entities in recent years include: Land Based Operator of the Year at the Global Gaming Awards in late 2020, first Place J.D. Power Award for guest satisfaction among upper upscale hotel chains, as well as a trio of employment related awards from Forbes, which ranked Hard Rock among America's best large employers, best employers for women and best employers for diversity.

NICWA gives shoutout to STOF

STAFF REPORT

The National Indian Child Welfare Association acknowledged the Seminole Tribe in its events bulletin. NICWA gave a shoutout to the tribe as the host sponsor of NICWA's virtual Protecting Our Children conference April 11-14.

The message reads: "This year, we welcome back Seminole Tribe of Florida as our Host Sponsor. Their generosity to NICWA over the past decade has enabled thousands of Native children and their families to stay together and thrive. Learn more about their tribe's successes at the opening conference plenary session. Thank you, Seminole Tribe of Florida!"

Here's a look at upcoming NICWA events:

*April 11-14: 39th annual Virtual Protecting Our Children Conference

*April 19-22: April training institute session on positive Indian parenting

*April 29-30: April training institute session on understanding Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978.

For more information visit nicwa.org.

This message appears in NICWA's events bulletin.

NICWA

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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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Tribe's 4-H kids show results of hard work

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Since the pandemic began, 99 kids in the Seminole Indian 4-H program have demonstrated they can weather just about any storm while raising their livestock for the annual show and sale.

"It's been an interesting year," said Kimberly Clement, Florida cooperative extension 4-H special projects coordinator. "We were working in uncharted grounds, but we had more animals this year."

The 4-H year concluded March 26 with a very different kind of show, or shows. There was not one location and one time for all the 4-H'ers to compete; instead, virtual shows were held in Big Cypress, Brighton, Hollywood and Immokalee from March 22



Beverly Bidney

Kulipa Julian wrangles her heifer into the ring during the Brighton show.

to March 26.

The 4-H'ers showed 44 swine, 29 steer and 15 heifers. The participants each occupied the ring alone while an SMP video crew documented it. Kids walked their animals as if they were showing for a judge in the ring, but this time the cameras served as eyes for the judges.

Each 4-H'er led a hog, steer, heifer or cow-calf pair through a very specific course in the ring so the videographers could display the animal from every possible angle. Kids were directed to move the animal in a variety of ways until the front, back and each side were successfully filmed.

A three-minute video of each 4-H'er with his or her animal will be sent to the University of Florida/IFAS Department of Animal Sciences judges, who will make a final determination of the winners in each class and select the grand champion, reserve champion and junior, intermediate and senior showmanship winners for swine, steer and heifer categories. The judges are Todd Thrift for cattle and Kyle Mendez for swine.

The kids seemed to take the changes in stride. Veteran 4-H'er Karlyne Urbina, 17, of Brighton, has been in the program since she was 4-years-old.

"This year not showing with other kids feels a little weird," she said. "It was different and a little harder."

When she got in the ring with her 1,204-pound steer, she demonstrated confidence and control of the animal.

Before going into the ring, animals were weighed and an ultrasound scan was taken to measure the carcass content. Rebecca Weeks, of RW Livestock Ultrasound, showed the kids what she was doing and why as she moved the ultrasound scanner on the animal's skin to see what was underneath.

For steer, Weeks measured the rib-eye area, back fat and quality grade. For hogs, she measured the loin area and back fat. During the process, 4-H'ers learned about the grades of meat measured by the intermuscular fat, or marbling, as seen through the ultrasound.

"She made sure to take the time and explain the scientific knowledge of what the meat of their animal broke down to," Clement said. "This was the best educational experience the kids have experienced this year."



Beverly Bidney

Harmany Urbina shows her 1,156-pound steer in Brighton during the virtual Seminole 4-H show March 25. She got her steer from Beulah Gopher's herd.

Seven hogs were shown March 22 at the 4-H barn in Immokalee. Kids and parents kept socially distanced from other competitors and left the grounds when they finished showing.

This was Ariel Concepcion's first time raising a 278-pound hog, which she named Pumba. She enjoyed the process, but didn't like it when she had to use the whip to make him move.

"I was afraid to hurt him," said Ariel, 9, of Immokalee. "It took a lot of practice. I don't like when I have to whack him, but my whip worked [in the ring]. I used it on the back of his neck to steer him."

Homer Beltran has been in 4-H for three years, but this was the first year his hog made weight and he showed it in the ring. His mom, Anna Motlow, was pleased with how he did.

"He's been taking care of his hog," said Motlow, of Immokalee. "And he's been learning responsibility and having accountability."

The Brighton 4-H grounds were busy with shows for two days; steer and heifers were shown March 25, hogs March 26. Lindi Carter was the first in the ring to show her steer. It was her first time raising such a large animal. Bubba was a 992-pound Brahma-



Beverly Bidney

Augustice Jumper leads his 1,319-pound steer through the Brighton show ring.



Beverly Bidney

Homer Beltran shows his 259-pound hog in Immokalee March 24. An SMP camera crew, his mother Anna Motlow, Immokalee Council liaison Raymond Garza and 4-H helper in the ring Marvin Hines watch his progress through the ring.



Beverly Bidney

Brace Miller guides his 1,058-pound steer through a turn in the show ring.

cross steer.

"He's different than the other ones," said Lindi, 10. "He was the only who was being calm. He was nervous so I sat down with him. I knew he was the one I needed because he just fit with me."

Although Bubba didn't make weight, Lindi exhibited him and he will go into the family pasture for the time being.

Brace Miller, 9, and Khoal Cochran, 11, demonstrated confidence in their abilities with steers and heifers. Brace raised a steer, while Khoal raised a steer and three heifers, including a cow-calf pair. He also showed his steer in the Moore Haven youth livestock show March 3.

"Nothing was too hard about it," Brace said. "I even ride mine."

Unlike previous years, there was no crowd to cheer the kids, but parents kept a close watch as their children made their way around the ring.

"As a parent, watching your kid participate with animals shows a form of love, care and respect," said Justin Gopher, Creek Gopher's father. "He's been in 4-H for five years. He has a lot of care for all animals, dogs, horses, cows. He has a tender hand when it comes to his animals."

4-H's online auction featuring the kids' livestock was scheduled to be held March 30-31. Bidders would be able to view all the livestock on video before placing a bid in the click-to-bid auction.



Beverly Bidney

Lindi Carter shows determination to move her steer through the Brighton show ring.

ERMD uses BIA grants to monitor endangered, invasive species

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

For several years, the Seminole Tribe has received grants from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to fund the Environmental Resource Management Department's endangered species and invasive species programs. The funding allows ERMD to monitor and manage wildlife, plants and vegetation on the reservations.

"We have a robust wildlife program," said Karli Eckel, ERMD environmental science manager. "It helps protect the tribe's interests and sovereignty by keeping and maintaining awareness of surrounding projects that have the ability to affect tribal resources, animals, plants, vegetation and cultural areas. It's all one ecosystem. The BIA is happy with the work the tribe does."

ERMD's wildlife program conducts visual surveys and analysis for various endangered species, including the northern crested caracara, a bird that is native to Florida. The bird looks like a large black and white hawk with an orange face, but is in the falcon family. They rely on pastures, so the common concern is development activities will change the distribution of the species. ERMD has been monitoring the species for 21 years.

Other endangered species tracked by ERMD include the Everglades snail kite and game animals such as hogs, white tailed deer and turkeys. Surveys are done using remote wildlife cameras, which are almost entirely funded by the BIA grants. By monitoring wildlife under the auspices of the federal grant, the tribe gains the ability provide input into how its resources may be affected. "The BIA recognizes how successful the tribe has been in managing their own resources through the wildlife program," Eckel said.

The most endangered species on and near the reservations is the Florida panther. Since it is adapted to a very specific area in South Florida, the species is vulnerable to habitat loss. Male panthers require more land than any other species in the state at 200 square miles per animal. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



A juvenile Cuban tree frog on the Big Cypress Reservation.

ERMD website

estimates there are only 120 to 230 adult panthers in the state.

Another species endangered due to habitat loss is the Florida bonneted bat, the largest in the state which can reach about 6.5 inches with a 20 inch wingspan. ERMD erected acoustic detectors and can listen for their calls to pinpoint their location. The bats are another important contributor to the ecosystem; they are pollinators and eat two or three times their body weight in insects every night.

"The community has expressed interest in bat conservation," Eckel said. "Tribal members know and appreciate them."

ERMD also conducts surveys of bears, gopher tortoises and indigo snakes. Indigo snakes, which often live in gopher tortoise burrows, are native to Florida and eat other snakes. The burrows are monitored with cameras to look for invasive species, of which none have been found to date.

Invasive species are also monitored by ERMD, which has conducted annual reptile and amphibian surveys since 2014.

Those surveys give the scientists a baseline of visual and auditory information. Native frogs have been hard to find in some areas.

"In 2016 some invasive species such as the Cuban tree frog have increased," Eckel said. "They eat native frog species in circumstances where the Cuban tree frog is the larger frog."

Other invasive species causing concern are the Burmese python, Argentine black and white tegu, green and spiny tailed iguanas and cane toads.

"Pythons are here, but based on our surveys of small mammals and wading birds, we haven't seen significant drops in those populations," Eckel said. "We think I-75 has been a good barrier for preventing a full invasion of the snakes. Not to say they aren't here, but based on our current level of data, it isn't to the extent of our neighbors in South Florida."

ERMD is a participant in the Florida Python Control Plan Working Group – currently under development – which is an interagency plan involving representatives from state, local, federal agencies and the tribe. When completed, the plan will include methodology and techniques for understanding pythons and recommendations for detection and implementation of programs.

"We make sure the tribe is part of it to have a voice in its development," Eckel said. "It's good to have input in the plan to make sure it is aligned with tribal interests."

The most problematic species is potentially the python, which could threaten tribal resources, but the most problematic species consistently observed are Cuban tree frogs and iguanas.

"Iguanas are in a stage that they can be eradicated," Eckel said. "We are working with animal control to educate tribal members as to what to do if you find one and how to discourage iguana. Our website has all the information."

The website is semtribe.com/stof/services/ermd-wildlife.



Black Spiny Tailed Iguana – Brighton Reservation

ERMD

A black spiny tailed iguana spotted on the Brighton Reservation.

Nez Perce's Jaime Pinkham tapped for Army Corps position

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter



Courtesy University of Arizona
Jaime Pinkham

Indian Country reacted positively to the Biden administration's recent decision to appoint a member of the Pacific Northwest's Nez Perce Tribe to a top position at the Army Corps of Engineers.

Jaime Pinkham would serve as principal deputy assistant secretary of the Corps for civil works, a post that doesn't require Senate confirmation. Like President Biden's nomination of Deb Haaland to lead the Department of Interior, choosing Pinkham is seen as another significant move to increase the presence of Native Americans in federal decision-making roles.

Pinkham's position would represent the highest-positioned political appointee overseeing the Corps until Biden nominates an assistant secretary, which would require Senate confirmation.

Naming Pinkham is also important because the Corps, like the Interior, is involved in a number of projects that affect Native American communities, although priorities often differ.

In Florida, the Corps is the top federal agency responsible for Everglades restoration. It has worked on the multibillion-dollar Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) since 2000. The Seminole and Miccosukee tribes are two stakeholders as well.

Tribal leaders are concerned lately about a variety of water-related construction projects along Lake Okeechobee, including water storage near the Brighton Reservation.

Leaders believe the storage projects have the potential to cause life threatening flooding, property damage, negative environmental impacts to water supply and agriculture – and that it encroaches on tribal lands.

There's hope that Pinkham's presence will improve communication between the Corps and tribal communities and allow greater transparency in project development.

"I would say that the appointment of Mr. Pinkham represents an opportunity for the Seminole Tribe of Florida and other sovereign tribes to have an ally in Washington, D.C.," Paul Backhouse, the senior director of the tribe's Heritage and Environment Resources Office (HERO) said. "We hope he will be interested in coming to Florida to visit the projects associated with Everglades restoration."

'Unique perspective'

Pinkham has a diverse and extensive professional background.

He earned forestry degrees from Oregon State University and Peninsula College in Washington State. He was elected twice to the Nez Perce Tribe's governing body, including as treasurer when the tribe took its first steps into gaming.

He led the tribe's natural resource programs and was involved in salmon restoration, water rights negotiations, wolf recovery and land acquisition.

Pinkham previously served on the governing council of the Wilderness Society – a group that seeks to protect 109 million acres of wilderness in 44 states.

Water issues in the Pacific Northwest have been on Pinkham's radar for many years.

As executive director of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, he led efforts to restore the region's salmon population and worked to protect tribal fishing rights.

Pinkham is connected to the long fight over four Corps dams on the Lower Snake

River in eastern Washington which has caused a decline in the salmon runs that his tribe historically fished.

The Corps itself has previously invited Pinkham to train incoming district commanders on how to best work with tribal governments.

Pinkham supported President Obama's halt of the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline – a 1,172-mile-long stretch from North Dakota to Illinois that the Corps is involved in.

"I do bring that unique perspective based on being a former member of tribal council, running natural resource programs for the tribes working on a lot of intergovernmental and collaborative relationships," Pinkham said in a recent interview with the Seattle Times.

'Excites us'

When asked when he would start his new position, Pinkham told the Seminole Tribune via email March 24 that he had not yet been briefed by the Biden administration on those details, and thus was "not in a position to make any official statements about priorities at this time."

However, in a 2016 Chicago Tribune op-ed that he co-authored, Pinkham called on the federal government to uphold its tribal treaty obligations and share decision-making duties, writing that Native Americans are not "merely consultants," but "legitimate, sovereign governments with capable natural resource managers."

"The federal government strings together the words 'government to government' and 'trust responsibility' to describe its relations with Native American nations," the authors wrote. "But it is action, not words, that matter. When tribes enter into treaties and agreements with the federal government, a sacred deal is made."

Tribal leaders say Pinkham's appointment provides a chance for institutional change at the Corps.

"Mr. Pinkham has grown up in the sacred place of the salmon," Faith Spotted Eagle, an elder of the Yankton Sioux Nation and activist who fought the Dakota Access and Keystone XL pipelines, said in a recent interview with Environment & Energy News. "[He] excites us, gives us hope."

Janie Williams, the president of the Wilderness Society, was one of the co-authors of the op-ed with Pinkham. He issued a statement after Pinkham's appointment.

"I can't think of anyone more qualified to lead the Army Corps and begin to undo the Corps' historic injustices at this key moment than Jaime Pinkham," he said. "Jaime's expertise on tribal sovereignty and passion for conservation will bring balance to decision-making at the Army Corps of Engineers."

Trail cameras taken from Big Cypress National Preserve

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Seven trail cameras used to study the elusive Florida panther in the Ochopee area of Big Cypress National Preserve were apparently stolen between Jan. 21 and Feb. 2.

Law enforcement rangers are asking for assistance with the investigation of the cameras, valued at around \$2,300. Theft of government property is a federal offense.

The cameras are a tool in determining the presence of a neurological disorder found in Florida panthers and bobcats. The Florida panther is a federally endangered animal whose remaining population is confined to South Florida. The Big Cypress National Preserve is the largest area of natural habitat

that supports the big cat population.

"The Florida panther is one of the most endangered mammals in the United States and, unless this neurological disorder is identified and controlled, the panther population may not continue to exist in South Florida. Damage or theft of government property is a serious incident and we are asking the public to assist us in identifying the responsible parties," Big Cypress National Preserve Superintendent Thomas Forsyth said in a statement.

Anyone within information is asked to contact the park immediately. Additionally, you may call or text the investigative services branch tip line at (888) 653-0009 or submit a tip online at nps.gov/ISB, click "Submit a Tip." You can remain anonymous.



Trail camera photo of Florida panthers.

NPS

Chickasaw Nation's Janie Hipp nominated for general counsel at USDA

STAFF REPORT

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden announced March 15 his intent to nominate Janie Hipp (Chickasaw Nation) as general counsel of the Department of Agriculture. Hipp, who grew up in southeast Oklahoma, earned law degrees from Oklahoma City University and the University of Arkansas. She began her legal career in the 1980s.

Her background includes serving as CEO of the Native American Agriculture Fund, which expressed its endorsement of her.

"Janie Hipp has done an astounding job building NAAF from the ground up since 2018, from a court order into a private charitable trust that has distributed over \$28 million in grants to benefit Native American farmers and ranchers," Jim Laducer (Turtle Mountain Chippewa), chair of the NAAF

board of trustees said in a statement. "We are thrilled that she will bring this experience to USDA as General Counsel and NAAF fully supports her in this role."

Hipp is also the founding director of the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative at the University of Arkansas. Prior to launching the initiative, she served as national program leader for several programs at the United States Department of Agriculture National Institute for Food and Agriculture.

Hipp also served within the Oklahoma Attorney General's office and was advisor for tribal affairs and director of the Office of Tribal Relations in the Obama Administration.

"For more than 35 years prior to her federal service, Janie built an outstanding career as an agriculture and food lawyer and policy expert. Her work has focused on the complex intersection of Indian law and



Janie Hipp

Courtesy NAAF

agriculture and food law," U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack said in a statement.

Rep. Sharice Davids appointed to economic committee

FROM PRESS RELEASE

WASHINGTON — Two-term U.S. Congresswoman Sharice Davids (D-KS) the Joint Economic Committee, a bicameral Congressional committee that reviews economic conditions and recommends improvements in economic policy.

"We are in the middle the worst economic crisis in a generation, and it will take Republicans and Democrats working together to help our economy not just recover, but come back stronger," Davids (Ho-Chunk) said in a statement. "I'm honored to serve on the Joint Economic Committee as we work to address this crisis and rebuild in our economy in a way that

works for Kansans and people across the country."

The committee is comprised of 10 members from both chambers of Congress. There are 10 Democrats and 10 Republicans who perform a variety of tasks, including holding hearings, performing research, and advising other members of Congress.

Open air market at History Fort Lauderdale resumes April 11

FROM PRESS RELEASE

FORT LAUDERDALE — History Fort Lauderdale's New River Open Air Market will return April 11 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and each consecutive Sunday thereafter. Farm-fresh food and handmade crafts and other items from more than 50 vendors will be available in a socially distanced atmosphere in front of the New River Inn (231 SW

Second Ave.) and along the Riverwalk.

Admission to the New River Open Air Market is free. General admission for History Fort Lauderdale's tours and museum is \$15 for adults, \$12 for seniors and \$7 for students (through age 22 with a valid student ID). Admission is free for members, military and children ages six and under. For more information call (954) 463-4431 or visit historyfortlauderdale.org.

FCA to meet in Marco Island

The Florida Cattlemen Association's annual convention and allied trade show is scheduled to be held June 14-17 at the JW Marriott Marco Island Beach Resort in Marco Island. For more information visit floridacattlemen.org/.

SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA AH-TAH-THI-KI MUSEUM

A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

The museum's oral history collection: content and security

BY ALEX BANKS

Oral History Assistant, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

BIG CYPRESS — Long before European colonizers came to this continent and wrote down their versions of history, Native peoples expertly practiced the oral transmission of history, passing down culture and personal knowledge from one generation to the next. Oral history was the primary method of knowledge sharing used by Native peoples to preserve shared and past experiences within their clans, families, and larger cultural groups. Over the last century or so, oral history has also evolved into a specific academic discipline by which a historian and narrator can interact with one another to come to a greater understanding of the history being discussed. This personal relationship within the research process acknowledges the agency of willing participants to more actively and accurately record personal and cultural history, and stories that have for far too long been only written and interpreted by outsiders and oppressors, i.e. the "white man's" version of history.

The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's oral history collections exist primarily as a resource for tribal members to explore and further their knowledge of their community's history and culture. The collection includes videotapes, cassette tapes, CDs, DVDs and



Bobby Henry, of the Tampa community, has sat down with us many times over the years to preserve his story for future generations.

hard drives, all of which are securely stored and locked away in safes within a vault. The security and privacy of these oral histories is no small matter. Several recordings are

restricted to tribal access only, and further still there are several recordings for which the intentions of the narrator are unknown. Therefore, we make sure they have a full



Technology changes quickly and the oral histories on all these older media have been migrated to modern safe digital storage. This process will continue as technology does not stop changing.

set of restrictions placed upon them. Any community member seeking to share their story with the museum should rest assured that their story will be kept safe. The privacy of the individual's personal story and of the tribe's history is taken very seriously.

So while this overview of the collection and its importance to the tribe cannot be too specific in referencing individuals and their testimonies, it can describe the wide variety of oral histories collected. The collection includes recordings from 1960 up to as recently as 2021. The stories told can vary in the type of storyteller as well as topic. There are several interviews in which the narrator describes their life in its entirety, yet there are also several shorter interviews that detail the art and talent of things like alligator wrestling. If one were looking for stories of beadwork, tourism, politics, legends, songs, traditional foods, camp life, the Seminole Wars, the Vietnam War, cattle, federal recognition, etc., they would find what they were looking for within the museum's oral history collection.

As of right now during the Covid-19 pandemic, the oral history collection continues to grow. We continue to add even more unique and diverse stories via web-based video and audio conferencing platforms. Even though this method of recording oral histories is not ideal from a quality or experience standpoint, the quality remains acceptable while the safety and health of narrators and interviewers is appropriately maintained as the highest priority.

We are dedicated to hearing your stories and preserving the more personal histories the tribe would like to share, so that future generations can not only listen and watch what has already been shared and recorded, but then continue to add on their generation's chapter to that ever-expanding story. If you would like to add your story to the museum's oral history collection, please contact me, Alex Banks, the oral history assistant. I'd be happy to discuss the process and opportunities with you at your convenience.

Here are ways to celebrate Earth Day in April

BY HERO STAFF

Since 1970, citizens across the globe have celebrated April 22 as Earth Day, an annual event to show support for our planet and catalyze advocacy on environmental protection. Today, over one billion people worldwide join in solidarity for the Earth. This day of activism and education has become so popular that many celebrate it for the entire month of April.

CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Are you looking for ways you can celebrate Earth Day? Whether you are young or old, want to be a spectator or take center stage, there is something for everyone. Here are just a few of the virtual Earth Day events Seminole Tribe of Florida staff are participating in this year:

Join

Solve Climate 2030 Global Power Dialogs April 7



Yellow flowers provide a picturesque setting in Brighton.

Jill Horwitz, STOF climate resilience officer, and Marty Bowers, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki education coordinator, will be distinguished speakers at the Florida session, hosted by University of South Florida Patell College of Global Sustainability and The CLEO Institute. This is one of 100 events happening simultaneously around the world to discuss regional climate solutions, energy justice, and a path to a green recovery.

<https://www.solveclimateby2030.org/>

Post Florida Food Waste Prevention Week, April 5-9

South Florida public and private partners are hosting a week of online events and social media challenges to raise awareness about how reducing food waste reduces hunger, protects the environment and saves money.

www.savethefoodfl.com

Watch

Young Voices for the Planet film series

Kids, check out these short movies to see what other young people are doing and get inspired to take action. Through uplifting and inspiring success stories, this series empowers youth to claim an essential role in their communities and catalyze positive change.

<https://www.youngvoicesfortheplanet.com/youth-climate-videos/>

Perform

Climate Change Theatre Action 2021

More than 50 plays and short readings are available for you to perform. This year's theme is "Envisioning a Global Green New Deal", and works center on what an equitable, sustainable, decarbonized, and just society look like. <http://www.climatechangetheatreaction.com/>

Participate

Florida Climate Week April 19-22

Take part in a week's worth of events with guest speakers to help you understand the impacts our changing climate is having on the Sunshine State.

<https://floridaclimateweek.org/>

CONNECT WITH THE EARTH

Celebrate Earth Day everyday by enjoying the beauty of the Earth that surrounds you. Taking a hike, planting a native garden, or bird watching are just a few examples of activities that promote appreciation for natural resources. A nature hike is an activity that you can do with your family, friends, or alone to celebrate near or far from home. It does not matter if you live in the city or in the woods, taking a walk outside is something you can do every day to appreciate nature no matter what else is happening in the world. Go outside and enjoy the sights and sounds of the natural world, and experience the Earth in all its beauty. The tips below will allow you to celebrate the Earth as it is around you no matter where you are:



Blue-winged teal ducks enjoy their day in Big Cypress.

- Find a location where you can sit comfortably. Find a tree, a field, garden or lake to sit near where you can spend some time to reflect and observe all that surrounds you. When you find a nice location, spend 10 minutes in one spot and make observations of the environment surrounding you.

- Can you see the sky? Is it clear or does it look like rain? Make a note of the weather and conditions. The fresh winds of spring bring in the smells of orange blossoms in bloom or freshly cut grass.

- Close your eyes and listen for a minute. What do you hear? Listen to the birds chirping in the bushes, hawks calling from the tops of tall trees. Do you hear multiple birds? Can you hear them calling other birds? Try to whistle. Can you mimic the call of the birds? Think about how birds and other wildlife communicate with each other.

- Now look at the plants around you.

Are there many varieties? Are there birds in the bushes? Do you see nests? How many different types of lichens and bromeliads are growing on the trees? Are the flowers blooming? Are the leaves starting to grow for the springtime?

- Now take a deep breath. Find the fresh air and enjoy the nature surrounding you as you travel on to your next destination.

Want to see a list of these events, activities, and resources all in one place? Check out the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's website www.ahtahthiki.com and social media pages. We will be posting these opportunities and more as the day approaches. The HERO team looks forward to hosting a live Earth Day event of our own in 2022.

This article was compiled by staff from the Seminole Tribe's Heritage and Environment Resources Office (HERO).

Upcoming programs offered by National Museum of the American Indian

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The National Museum of the American Indian is offering the following virtual events in April and May. For more information visit AmericanIndian.si.edu.

APRIL

In Dialogue: Smithsonian Objects and Social Justice

Thursday, April 8; 5 p.m. EST
Free, registration required
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/in-dialogue-smithsonian-objects-and-social-justice-tickets-137997613577?aff=>

What is the connection between a desire for recognition of one's culture and activism for equity? Join educators from the National Portrait Gallery and the National Museum of the American Indian in a conversation about identity and assimilation in relation to a portrait of activist Zitk'ala-Sá/ Gertrude Simmons Bonnin (Yankton Sioux), an outspoken critic of Indian boarding schools, and a 19th century Carlisle Indian Industrial

School student uniform.

Indigenous Poetry: Resilience

April 9-30; on demand.
Via YouTube @SmithsonianNMAI

Reflecting on a difficult year, Indigenous poets offer inspiration as they recite poems about resilience. The National Museum of the American Indian celebrates National Poetry Month with poetry reading from National Poet Laureate Joy Harjo (Mvskoke/Creek), Kealoha Wong (Native Hawaiian), Natalia Diaz (Akimel O'otham) and Jamaica Osorio (Native Hawaiian).

Living Earth Virtual Festival: The Business of Agriculture in Indian Country

April 22-25; on demand
americanindian.si.edu/online-programs

In celebration of Earth Day, the National Museum of the American Indian's annual Living Earth Festival will be available on demand over four days. The festival will open with a message from Notah Begay III (Navajo/Isleta Pueblo), four-time PGA Tour champion, sportscaster and founder of the

Notah Begay III Foundation, which provides health and wellness education to Native youth.

Living Earth brings together Native innovators and practitioners dedicated to using Indigenous knowledge to protect and sustain the environment. Through cooking demonstrations, conversations and film screenings, this year's festival explores agriculture trends, innovations and sustainability in Indigenous communities and Native-owned businesses.

The festival is made possible through the support of the Native American Agriculture Fund.

Youth in Action: Sustainable Agriculture

April 22-25; on demand
<https://nmai.brand.live/c/youthinactionapril>

This panel discussion brings together young Indigenous leaders to address the role that traditional ecological knowledge plays in their work as farmers and entrepreneurs. With the onset of COVID-19 and ongoing issues of climate change, investing in

sustainable agriculture and food production more important than ever. Moderated by Michaela Pavlat (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians). Panelists include Kelsey Ducheneaux-Scott (Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe), Jack Poshano (Hopi) and Marco Ovando (Shoshone-Paiute Tribe).

Cooking Demonstration

April 22-25; on demand

Mariah Gladstone (Blackfeet/Cherokee Nation), founder of IndigiKitchen, an online cooking platform, will explore traditional Indigenous foods and show how to incorporate them into our everyday lives.

Building the Business of Agriculture in Indian Country

April 22-25; on demand

Experts address a crucial issue—creating innovative, robust and ecologically sound food systems and agricultural businesses in Indigenous communities. Speakers include Dawn Sherman (Lakota/Delaware/Shawnee), CEO of Native American Natural Foods; Mark N. Fox, Chairman, Mandan

Hidatsa and Arikara Nation; and Leonard Forsman, Chairman, Suquamish Tribe. Moderated by Carmen Davis (Makah/Chippewa-Cree/Yakama), editor of Native Business magazine.

Film Screenings

April 22-25; on demand

Gather

Director: Sanjay Rawal
Producer: Sterlin Harjo (Seminole/Creek)

Gather is an intimate portrait of the growing movement amongst Native Americans to reclaim their spiritual, political and cultural identities through food sovereignty, while battling the trauma of centuries of genocide.

Voices from the Barrens: Native People, Blueberries and Sovereignty
Director: Nancy Gherntner
Canadian Director: Brian J. Francis (Mi'kmaq)

♦ See NMAI on page 4B

Health

VACCINE

From page 1A

The Seminole Tribe is the parent entity of Hard Rock International.

Seminole Fire Rescue personnel have been administering the shots to those who are eligible and prescreened at the fire station in Hollywood in a drive-thru format.

Dr. Vandhana Kiswani-Barley, the executive director of HHS, said the tribe was in the process of acquiring doses of the Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccines as well.

"We are continuing to vaccinate with the help of Public Safety. The numbers [of positive Covid-19 tests] are going down within the tribe," she said.

HHS and Public Safety staff have been carrying out the tribe's vaccine strategy for more than three months through a phased eligibility process. Eligibility requirements have opened up over that time to include employees of the tribe who are not tribal members and now Seminole Gaming employees.

Those that are eligible and wish to receive the vaccine are placed on a waiting list. Staff from HHS and Public Safety then makes contact to schedule an appointment

for the first shot and send a notification when the second shot is due. Two weeks after the second shot is administered, the vaccine becomes 94.5% effective against the virus.

While the virus has disproportionately affected Native Americans, in many cases tribal vaccination rates have outpaced those of the general population.

The Indian Health Service recently reported it surpassed its goal to administer 400,000 vaccines across Indian Country. The Seminole Tribe has thus far received its vaccines from IHS and has avoided many of the snags and issues that state-run vaccine distribution has experienced.

For example, as many tribes have opened up vaccine eligibility to anyone over 18 years of age, the state of Florida has only recently made those who are 50 years and older eligible to get in line for an appointment.

Those under 18 years of age are currently not eligible to receive any Covid-19 vaccine, although trials are underway.

Tribal members and employees can call the HHS hotline at (833) 786-3458 for more information about the vaccine.

Worth the climb at Hard Rock Stadium as event raises money for American Lung Association

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

The "Fight for Air Climb" usually takes place indoors in a downtown Miami skyscraper. This year, however, due to safety concerns with the Covid-19 pandemic, the annual event that raises money for the American Lung Association shifted outdoors.

More than 400 participants, including several firefighters in gear, ascended and descended the long aisles of stairs inside Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens on March 6. The result was more than \$140,000 raised as of late March.

"For the safety of our constituents and staff, we pivoted to an outdoor venue this year and saw a tremendous outpouring of support and participation from the local community," Chrissy Cohen, the American Lung Association's executive director, said in a statement. "Thank you to all of our participants, volunteers and sponsors who came together to make a difference in the lives of people facing lung disease, lung cancer and Covid-19."

In addition to helping the association's battle against lung cancer and lung disease, the funds will support the organization's Covid-19 action initiative to address the virus and protect against future respiratory virus pandemics.

Metro-Dade Firefighters Local 1403 was the presenting sponsor of the event.



Metro-Dade Firefighters Local 1403/Facebook

More than 400 participants, including several area firefighters, tackled the stairs at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens on March 6 for the "Fight for Air Climb" that benefits the American Lung Association.

Victoria O'Keefe named to leadership chair in Native American health at Johns Hopkins

FROM PRESS RELEASE

BALTIMORE — The Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health in Maryland has selected Victoria O'Keefe, a member of Cherokee and Seminole Nations of Oklahoma, to a five-year faculty leadership chair in Native American health at the Bloomberg School of Public Health.

O'Keefe, a psychologist who develops, implements, and evaluates culturally-driven behavioral health interventions in partnership with Native American communities, has been named the first holder of the Santosham Chair in Native American Health, named for the Center's founding director Mathuram Santosham.

O'Keefe was appointed an assistant professor in the Department of International Health at the Bloomberg School in 2016, becoming Johns Hopkins University's first-ever tenure track faculty member of Native American heritage. The chair provides permanent support for Native American research leadership at the Center, giving faculty the flexibility to create culturally competent innovations that leverage tribal sovereignty and build upon community strengths.

O'Keefe obtained her undergraduate degree in psychology, then completed a clinical psychology doctoral program at Oklahoma State University, where she worked in a laboratory for the study of suicide risk and resilience and was awarded the Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship. Indigenous suicide prevention has been a focus throughout her studies.

O'Keefe's leadership has contributed mental health resources to the Center's COVID-19 response, including a children's



Johns Hopkins University

Victoria O'Keefe

book called *Our Smallest Warriors, Our Strongest Medicine: Overcoming COVID-19*. The book, which has reached tens of thousands of Indigenous families, promotes communal efficacy, strength, and hope in the face of the pandemic. In addition, O'Keefe is working with colleagues to develop an Indigenous version of Psychological First Aid for frontline workers addressing COVID-19 in tribal communities. In the past year, she also led the production of a new strengths-based guide for tribal leaders to prevent youth suicide, called "Culture Forward," which will be disseminated nationwide. Her newest work is focused on advancing an Elders' Resiliency curriculum to promote youth wellness and prevent suicide that was designed by the White Mountain Apache community.

Head of N.D. Indian Affairs Commission resigns to join Sanford Health

FROM GRAND FORKS (N.D.) HERALD

North Dakota's top liaison between the state and tribal nations announced March 22 that he plans to resign at the end of April.

Scott Davis, an enrolled member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and a descendent of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, resigned as executive director of the North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission — a position in Gov. Doug Burgum's cabinet — to join Sanford Health to lead the company's Native American outreach.

Davis held the position for almost 12 years, and in his resignation letter he noted that he has served three governors and 23 tribal nation chairmen, according to a news release from the governor's office.

"For more than a decade, Scott has been a dedicated leader in advancing state-tribal relations, continuously and passionately advocating on behalf of each of our state's five tribal nations at the state and federal level for solutions and partnerships to address the many complex and generational challenges in Indian Country," Burgum said in a statement Monday.

In an interview with Forum News Service, Davis said he will assume a newly created role within Sanford Health where he will work with tribal clinics and health departments to ensure all tribal citizens have access to proper health care.

He said with his role he hopes to give tribes the opportunity to improve health care systems. Davis will assume his role as Native American outreach coordinator in early May, and said he will work with the tribal nations in North Dakota first and then hopefully eventually tribes in other states where Sanford Health works, including South Dakota and Minnesota.

In October, Davis was placed on paid leave after allegations of misconduct. An internal investigation found he engaged in a "personal relationship" with another state employee, but he did not abuse "his position of authority." He was reinstated about one month later.

Davis declined to comment on whether his resignation is related to the misconduct investigation, saying he wanted to protect his family's privacy.

Davis' resignation is effective on April 30.

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Health System selects Everbridge for vaccine efforts

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Everbridge, Inc. announced March 15 that the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Health System of Oklahoma selected the company's vaccine distribution solution to coordinate and administer the Covid-19 vaccine to its tribal members. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the fourth largest Native American tribe in the country, chose Everbridge to automate the registration, scheduling, administration, tracking, and reporting of

vaccinations among its more than 90,000 citizens located in the Tulsa area.

Everbridge serves dozens of Native American and First Nations tribes across North America, including Wyandotte, Choctaw, Seneca, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Osage, Navajo and Mi'kmaq.

Recent deployments of Everbridge to power vaccine distribution also include Indian River County and Sarasota County in Florida, St. Clair County in Michigan and the entire state of West Virginia.

Indigenous women chefs program continues in April

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The annual Conference on Native American Nutrition, which highlights the culinary expertise of Indigenous women, will present the next installment in its "Celebrating Indigenous Women Chefs" live webinar series April 13 from 1 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. (ET).

The featured chef will be Hillel Echo-

Hawk (Pawnee and Athabaskan), who was born and raised in the interior of Alaska, around the Athabaskan village of Mentastahome to the matriarchal chief and subsistence rights activist, Katie John. Watching John and other Indigenous peoples fight for food sovereignty, as well as seeing her mother strive to make healthy, home-cooked meals for her and her six siblings has given Hillel a unique and important perspective on diet and wellness.

After receiving her bachelor's degree in Culinary Arts from Seattle Central College, Echo-Hawk has been working as a cook in some of Seattle's most innovative and popular restaurants for several years. She has also worked as a private chef, catering various events from the local Native non-profits and Native community events with pre-colonial, Indigenous meals.

For more information and to register go to www.hfhl.umn.edu/indigenouschefs.

Firefighters ascend the long stairways at Hard Rock Stadium in support of the American Lung Association's Fight for Air Climb.



American Lung Association

New online tool allows Indigenous patients to anonymously report racism

FROM CBC NEWS

Indigenous patients in British Columbia, Canada, are now able to anonymously report experiences of racism in B.C.'s health-care system, thanks to a new online tool.

Safespace allows people to share their own or their loved ones' experiences in a health-care facility and rate the facility.

The B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAFC), whose website hosts the app, aims to use the information to figure out patterns of racist incidents in the healthcare sector, and present solutions on how to address these issues with policymakers.

Safespace was created by Canadian Medical Association president-elect Dr. Alike Lafontaine, an Alberta-based anesthesiologist of Anishinaabe, Cree, Metis and Pacific Islander descent.

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SEMINOLE SCENES



Photos via Facebook (3)

GRITTY PERFORMANCE: Above, Seminoles Tucamah Robbins (left) and Quenton Cypress (right) compete in the GRIT Strength Challenge with teammate Andrew Wallin (center). The event was held at Fort King, near Ocala, on Feb. 27. Sponsored by CrossFit Iron Legion, the event served as a fundraiser for the Fort King National Historic Landmark. The challenge events mimicked daily activities during the Seminole Wars in the 1800s using only those primitive objects. The three are also members of the Osceola Warrior Legacy which participates in historical reenactments, including at Fort King.

At upper right, Wallin (left) rolls a barrel as Cypress and Robbins assist with a rope.

At lower right, Robbins watches as Cypress sees how long he can hold up two large logs attached to chains.



Amber Loveland/The King's Academy

THE SHOW MUST GO ON: The King's Academy senior Aubee Billie performs in "Little Women," a musical produced by TKA Theatre Company and the Smith Family Conservatory of the Arts at the prep school in West Palm Beach. The show was broadcast in February as a free streaming performance with no tickets sold for seating. Billie, who is the current Jr. Miss Florida Seminole, has appeared in several productions during her high school career, including leading roles in "Miss Saigon" and "The Hunchback of Notre Dame."



Hard Rock Atlantic City

HONORS FOR HARD ROCK AC: The Atlantic County (N.J.) Board of Commissioners honored Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City at its Feb. 16 meeting with a resolution praising Hard Rock's commitment to team members during the global pandemic. Hard Rock Atlantic City President Joe Lupo, left, accepts the framed resolution from Commissioner John Risley.



Beverly Bidney (2)

4-H FUN: At right, 4-H Pee Wee member Paisley Arteaga, 6, shows off her rabbit named Plumz, which she cared for since December, at the Immokalee 4-H show March 24.

At left, Ryker Miller and Kade Johns, both 7, watch the steer competitors at the Brighton 4-H show March 25.



Kevin Johnson

BOXING LEGEND PASSES: Leon Spinks, shown here attending a boxing function at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood in 2015, died Feb. 5 at age 67. Spinks won an Olympic gold medal in 1976 and captured the heavyweight championship by defeating Muhammad Ali in 1978. When he entered the ballroom for the 2015 event using a walker, several boxing stars in the room gave him a hearty applause.

NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

Montana tribal voting bill clears committee after substantial revisions

A heavily amended bill to expand Native American voting access in Montana advanced from a House committee March 19, although at least one tribe involved in the legislation expressed disappointment with the changes.

House Bill 613 was brought by Rep. Sharon Stewart Perego, D-Crow Agency, as an attempt to resolve some of the barriers to voting access on the state's Indian reservations. After it was introduced late in the session, members of the House State Administration Committee held morning work sessions over the past week, aiming for a middle ground between budget-conscious counties and tribes demanding improved access to the polls on reservations.

Rep. Tyson Running Wolf, D-Browning, worked closely with other committee members on the legislation. He acknowledged the bill was substantially different than what had been initially proposed by Native groups and tribes.

"This was a work in progress and like I've told people, it's kept me up a lot of nights," Running Wolf told the committee. But despite his lingering concerns, he called it "a big start."

The committee passed the measure unanimously — one of the only Democrat-sponsored voting bills to find bipartisan momentum during a session dominated by Republican initiatives. The GOP holds sizable majorities in both chambers, as well as the governor's office.

But changes to the bill cost the support of at least one of the state's tribes. Andy Werk, Jr., president of the Fort Belknap Assiniboine and Gros Ventre tribes, joined the March 18 work session over Zoom to voice his frustration with the amendments.

"Fort Belknap faces resistance every year from county election officials that do not want to provide services on the reservation," Werk told the committee members gathered for the work session. "... As edited, this law does not actually provide any relief to our community."

Native Americans living on rural reservations often face prohibitively long distances to county polling places, such as the more than 50 miles that a Blackfeet reservation resident in Heart Butte would have to travel one-way to the Pondera County election office in Conrad. During his comments, Werk said some Fort Belknap residents must undertake 90-mile round trips to register to vote or cast ballots.

And mail ballots aren't always an easy option, either, with many reservations lacking residential mail delivery services. Obstacles to voting in 2012 fueled a lawsuit filed by several tribes against the state and some counties, which resulted in a settlement that governs their current voting access.

The original bill would have required that each county with reservation lands within its boundaries provide two satellite election offices on the reservation, along with a ballot deposit location in each reservation town more than 10 miles away from those satellite offices. The amendment, also passed on Friday, removed the ballot deposit sites while cutting alternative or satellite offices to one per reservation.

Those changes reflected concerns that election administrators had voiced with the costs of implementing the bill in its original form. The state is not appropriating any money to the counties to carry out the new law, essentially making it an unfunded mandate.

Dulcie Bear Don't Walk, the elections administrator for Big Horn County, said she is the only employee of the county's elections office, although she normally has one part-time staffer. Under a current settlement agreement, she is required during the month leading up to the election to operate alternate elections offices on both the Crow and Northern Cheyenne reservations, both of which include land in Big Horn County.

As the only employee in a county election office running on a less than \$200,000 annual budget, she said the existing requirements force her to close the main county elections office in Hardin for all but two days each week before the election. Two days each week she operates an office in Crow Agency, and once a week she relocates to Busby, on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation.

As the bill was originally written, she would have had to operate a total of four satellite offices each day of the week, from the time when mail ballots go out through Election Day.

"The cost of funding this would be extreme for our county," Bear Don't Walk said March 16. "I don't disagree with the idea of the bill. I am just finding difficulty with implementing it."

The amended bill leaves most of the specifics on election office locations, as well as days and hours of operation, up to the counties and tribes to hammer out. And because the state has no authority to require the tribes to pay for services, the bill simply notes that counties and tribes may also come up with a cost-sharing agreement to pay for expanded services on the reservation.

Stewart Perego's bill also no longer includes a provision to allow voters to register and vote with "nontraditional addresses," intended to cover tribal members who may have a narrative description of where they live. But it was removed, as existing law already allows voters to register without a specific address as long as their precinct can be identified.

"While we would have hoped to see the original bill passed, we think this is a great first step toward getting equity in the electoral process in Indian Country in Montana," Keaton Sunchild, the political director for Western Native Voice, said after the bill cleared the committee.

If passed, implementation of the bill's requirements would be overseen by the Legislature's State-Tribal Relations Interim Committee.

- Helena (Montana) Independent Record

Native American tribe wants Yolo County officials to move cannabis farms

A Native American tribe that calls the Capay Valley in Yolo County, California, home is looking to move cannabis growers to another part of the county and away from the valley.

In Capay Valley, cannabis farms are seen by some as a burden.

"I have never locked my doors in 30 years until recently," said Charles Opper from Rumsey.

For Opper, who supports the legalization of marijuana, cannabis farms are causing him headaches.

"Gasoline generators run 24/7. Refrigeration on these containers run 24/7," he said.

He said the traffic has picked up on the north end of the Capay Valley along with crime, specifically theft.

"These are not minor incidents. These are thefts involving hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars," Opper told FOX40.

Neighbors who didn't want to go on camera echoed the same sentiment: That the cannabis farms in the valley have to go.

"It hasn't really hit home until the tribe stood up," Opper said.

That's the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, owners of Cache Creek Casino Resort.

The tribe says around half of Yolo County's cannabis operations take place in the valley, which is why they're asking the county to relocate those farms away from the Capay Valley.

The tribe is also looking to protect Native American artifacts in the area.

Tribe Chairman Anthony Roberts released this statement: The current situation in the Capay Valley is unworkable. So, a cannabis ordinance that perpetuates the current situation is unworkable. This would be obvious to all if there was an environmental impact report that showed how the Valley has changed with cannabis. But so far, Yolo County has produced no such report.

The county is in the middle of passing that ordinance that states where marijuana operations can and can't be.

"We have to be careful, we can't just open it up and let everybody do what they want," said Yolo County Supervisor Oscar Villegas.

Villegas says it's important they take care of all the issues before the ordinance is final. Some cannabis farms agree as well.

"We do want to hear the tribe's concerns. We are in favor, in support of finding a way where we can make this all work," Villegas said.

The Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation told FOX40 they are willing to put their money where their mouth is.

They think the price tag could be around \$10 million to move the entire operation and buy the land.

"We all kind of want it to be a kind gentler place," Opper said.

- KTXL Fox40 (Sacramento, Calif.)

Conn. governor, tribes reach agreement

MONTVILLE, Conn. — Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont, Mashantucket Pequot Tribe Chairman Rodney Butler, and Mohegan Tribe Chairman James Gessner Jr. announced an agreement has been reached between the administration and both tribes that will allow the state to modernize gaming options available to state residents.

Key components of the agreement include:

- An 18 percent tax rate for the first five years on new online commercial casino gaming (or "iGaming") offerings, followed by a 20 percent tax rate for at least the next five years
- A 13.75 percent tax rate on sports wagering
- Connecticut Lottery shall have the right to operate 15 retail sports betting locations, as well as operate an online sports betting skin
- Connecticut Lottery shall have the right to sublicense locations to the state-licensed parimutuel operator
- Connecticut Lottery will undertake new retail sports betting venues in Hartford and Bridgeport
- License agreement to be for ten years with a five-year extension option
- Expansion of iLottery and Keno through the Connecticut Lottery Corporation, including the sale of draw tickets online
- Both tribes agree to halt the development of an East Windsor casino through the duration of this agreement

"Connecticut is on cusp of providing a modern, technologically advanced gaming experience for our residents, which will be competitive with our neighboring states," Lamont said.

"The Mohegan Tribe is very thankful to our partners in government, both the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation and the State of Connecticut, for reaching collective agreement on a path forward for modernizing our state's gaming entertainment industry," Mohegan Tribal Council Chairman James Gessner Jr. said. "This will allow Connecticut to generate tax revenues from sports and online gaming that are competitive with other states, to the benefit of both state and local municipal budgets, as well as our tribe's members."

- Fox 61 (Hartford, Conn.)

Ducheneaux becomes first Native American appointed Administrator of the USDA's Farm Service Agency

SIoux FALLS, S.D. — A member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe is the first Native American to serve as the USDA's Administrator of the Farm Service Agency. Zach Ducheneaux began his new position Feb. 22.

"I think it speaks volumes for the vision of the Biden administration and Secretary Vilsack's leadership to come in just a decade from settling a lawsuit with Native Americans to having a Native American lead the organization that was actually being sued...it's really a monumental honor that I get to hold," Ducheneaux said.

Ducheneaux lives on a cattle and horse ranch location on the Cheyenne River Reservation. He has been running his operation, The DX Ranch, since 1993 and he is preparing for the next generation to take over, which will be the fourth generation.

Before becoming Administrator, Ducheneaux held a variety of leadership roles including executive director of the Intertribal Agriculture Council, vice chair of the board of the Northwest Area Foundation and serving on the Tribal Council for the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe from 2000-2004.

As head of the Farm Service Agency, Ducheneaux is charged with carrying forward the initiatives of the administration and Secretary Vilsack.

Ducheneaux said he hopes to take the agency in a direction where they start to look at investing in agriculture and get away from lending and borrowing. He wants people to realize that agriculture is a valuable investment opportunity if they can find a way to get the capital out there that our producers need to be empowered to take control of things like climate-smart agriculture, local food system development and more equitable treatment across the spectrum.

- KELOLAND-TV (Sioux Falls, S.D.)

Sheryl Lightfoot appointed UN representative for the rights of Indigenous Peoples

University of British Columbia professor Dr. Sheryl Lightfoot has been appointed as a member of the United Nations committee to promote and protect the rights of Indigenous people.

It's the first time an Indigenous woman from Canada will hold the position of North American representative on the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

"I am incredibly grateful and humbled by this opportunity to help advance the rights of Indigenous Peoples around the world through this work for the UN Expert Mechanism," said Lightfoot in a written statement from the university.

The committee is made up of seven independent experts who are tasked with advising states on implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

The 46 articles of UNDRIP affirm the rights of Indigenous people to live in dignity, maintain their culture and participate in government decision-making, among other things.

Lightfoot says one of her main concerns in her new role will be the preservation and revitalization of Indigenous languages, some of which have been pushed "to the brink of extinction" by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Not only was there a tragic physical loss of elders and knowledge-keepers during the pandemic, which in many cases is the strength of language left in Nations, but then in addition to that, there was the loss of regular and ongoing contact between elders and younger people within Nations," her statement reads.

Lightfoot says her first step will be to consult Indigenous leaders across Canada and the United States.

- CBC News

Kentucky legislature adopts Indigenous Peoples' Day resolutions

The Kentucky Senate and House of Representatives have adopted permanent resolutions declaring the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples' Day to honor and recognize "the unique contributions made by indigenous peoples to the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the United States of America."

Stanford resident Angelia Arnett Garner was instrumental in getting both Sen. Rick Girdler (R) and Rep. David Meade (R) to sponsor the simple resolutions in the Senate and House.

"It is really a privilege to sponsor this resolution and bring attention to the history of Kentucky's Indigenous People and their contributions to our state and nation," Meade stated. "Many Kentuckians, including me, have Native American ancestors. My own great-grandmother was 100% Cherokee, so I personally appreciate the work that Angela Garnett Garner is doing to bring attention to our Native American heritage."

Girdler said, "Kentucky's history is rich, and indigenous people are a part of our story." Girdler added that he has a "great appreciation" for that rich history and through the simple resolution, and wanted to express his appreciation and "commemorate Native American peoples' histories and culture."

Garner said it was her "honor and pleasure" to work with Girdler and Meade

to get the General Assembly to pass the resolutions. "I'm really proud to work with them. They really made history," she said.

In 2017, Stanford became the first city in Kentucky to sign an Indigenous Peoples' Day proclamation thanks to Garner. And last year she pushed for and received a statewide proclamation signed by the governor.

-The Advocate-Messenger (Danville, Ky.)

Peabody Museum apologizes for practices around Native American cultural objects, announces policy changes

Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University administrators apologized for the "pain" the museum caused by its refusal to voluntarily return certain funerary objects to Native American tribes and pledged to reverse the policy in response to a letter from the Association on American Indian Affairs last month criticizing the museum.

In February, the association sent a letter to University President Lawrence S. Bacow accusing Harvard of legal and moral violations in the museum's practices regarding its collections of Native American human remains and cultural objects. In the letter, the nonprofit said Harvard's practices are in violation of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

Bacow initially responded to the association's chief executive, Shannon O'Loughlin, in early March, writing that he had asked Peabody Museum Director Jane Pickering to respond in detail to the Association's letter.

In a five-page response March 25, Pickering and Peabody Museum NAGPRA Advisory Committee Chair Philip J. Deloria denied that the museum was in violation of the law, but apologized for past practices and announced changes to the museum's research and repatriation policies that match some of the association's demands.

In the response, Pickering and Deloria assured O'Loughlin of their "concrete commitment to the return of individuals to fulfill the ethical and moral imperative of NAGPRA."

"We intend that the Native American individuals in the Peabody Museum will be transferred through repatriation or disposition," they wrote.

"The museum has no interest in subverting or delaying NAGPRA's implementation. Our museum is not the proper place for these remains, and we are committed to their return."

Passed by Congress in 1990, NAGPRA required any institutions that receive federal funding to compile inventories of Native American human remains and cultural objects they held in their collections in consultation with Native American tribes, and to repatriate them when they could determine a tribal affiliation. When institutions classify remains or objects as "culturally unidentifiable," tribes can claim those items through a different process that sometimes requires them to submit evidence of affiliation. Under that process, the institution can also sometimes choose to repatriate only human remains, but not associated funerary objects.

The association claimed in its initial letter that Harvard had "caused continuing physical, emotional and spiritual trauma to Native Nations and their citizens" by placing an undue burden on Native American tribes to provide evidence when requesting repatriation, and by refusing to voluntarily return some funeral objects in addition to remains.

Pickering and Deloria acknowledged that in the past, the museum had refused to voluntarily repatriate some cultural objects along with human remains, as the AAIA's letter had alleged, and announced that they had begun the process of repatriating those objects.

"The Peabody Museum apologizes for those refusals and the pain they caused," they wrote. "The moral context of the return of a human being to a tribal nation means that those things placed in a burial — personal, spiritual, and ceremonial items — should be transferred along with the person or persons with whom they were buried."

"We have changed our policy and are in the process of reaching out to tribes affected by the past policy and informing our present and future tribal partners of this change," they added.

Responding to the AAIA's claim that the museum used did not take advantage of relevant geographic information that could have been used to determine the tribal affiliation of many of the remains the Peabody had labeled as "culturally unidentifiable," Deloria and Pickering wrote that geography alone is often not enough to determine a tribal affiliation.

The AAIA's letter had also protested that the Peabody had not publicized its policies for NAGPRA compliance. The museum is currently designing a website, which it anticipates launching in the early summer, that will provide more public information on these policies, Deloria and Pickering wrote.

The museum will also announce "formal policy changes in research protocols and permissions regarding human remains and associated funerary objects" in the upcoming months, they added. The AAIA had demanded that the museum impose a moratorium on all research on its collections of Native American human remains and cultural objects, and that it remove a search tool from its website that displayed photos of Native American funerary objects.

Pickering and Deloria took a more defensive stance in responding to the association's claim that the Peabody violated NAGPRA by sometimes failing

to properly consult with Native American tribal nations when completing inventories of their collections, leading it to misclassify some remains as "culturally unidentifiable." The Museum administrators wrote that the Department of the Interior constrained the Museum's inventory process through "shortened consultation timelines and regular quotas," forcing it to classify some remains as culturally unidentifiable.

"The museum did not then and does not now intend that those preliminary determinations be final," they added. "Since 2001 the museum has actively continued consultations."

In an interview with The Crimson on March 27, O'Loughlin said she was pleased at the policy change around voluntary repatriation that Pickering and Deloria announced in their letter.

"The fact that they have now expressly changed their policy regarding the repatriation of funerary objects, and that they put that on the website, is extremely good news," O'Loughlin said.

- The Harvard Crimson

Crow Nation policing case heard before U.S. Supreme Court

In 2016, a Bureau of Indian Affairs officer is patrolling the highway near Crow Agency. He finds a car pulled over on the side of the road. He approaches the vehicle and finds a man displaying signs of intoxication with drug paraphernalia nearby and a gun.

When the man, Joshua James Cooley, is charged with drug-related crimes, his lawyer successfully argues that the evidence from that night should be suppressed because the tribal police officer shouldn't have had authority over Cooley, a non-Indian.

On March 23, the Supreme Court heard the case to determine what authority tribal police have when detaining and searching, particularly when dealing with non-Natives.

The question at the center of U.S. v. Cooley is: When can tribal officers detain and search non-Native suspects when patrolling Indian Country?

Missoula-based Attorney Eric Henkel, the counsel of record for Joshua James Cooley, told the high court Tuesday: "The issue here is about inherent tribal authority over non-Indians. Through decades of consistent opinions, this court has delineated the scope of that authority to exclude police power over non-Indians. Especially on non-tribal lands such as the public right of way here where Officer Saylor seized and searched Mr. Cooley."

The U.S. Government's attorney, Eric Feigin, argued that if the justices wrote a ruling siding with Cooley's argument, Indian Country police in Montana and the nation will be extremely restricted.

"[It] substantially chills tribes' ability, even to enforce their own laws against their own members and endangers everyone on Indian reservations."

During arguments, Justices tried to understand the practical implications of limiting tribal authority over non-Natives. Here's Justice Samuel Alito questioning Attorney Henkel about what a tribal officer could do if they had reasonable suspicion that a non-Native, like in Cooley's case, is under the influence.

"He could certainly ask the individual to stay there while he contacts law enforcement. But can he offically detain? No, I do not think so," Henkel responded.

"It's voluntary. All right," Alito continued. "So, does it depend on the severity of the offense? What if it is a situation where he has reasonable suspicion that this person is a murderer?"

"If he's got reasonable suspicion that this person's a murderer?" Henkel asked.

"Yeah, mhhmm," Alito said. "No, I don't think that's enough because reasonable suspicion is such a low threshold," Henkel said.

Attorney Mary Kathryn Nagle says until this point, it's been common practice for tribal officers to stop and detain non-Indian suspects within the reservation and then transfer them to relevant authorities to be prosecuted and jailed.

"No one here is asking the Supreme Court to give tribes anything. We're asking them to maintain the status quo," Nagle said.

Nagle, who filed an amicus brief for the U.S. Government in the case, represents the Indigenous Women's Resource Center and says the earlier rulings on Cooley's case remove tribal authority, despite tribal officers receiving the same training as their federal and state counterparts.

Monte Mills, director of the Marjorie Hunter Brown Indian Law Clinic at the University of Montana, is not involved in the case. Mills says while Cooley's side is arguing that tribal police should have very limited authority, the U.S. government is saying Congress has given more authority to tribes already.

"Part of what the United States is arguing in this case is, 'Look, this isn't an issue because tribal police under the Indian Civil Rights Act, basically have to guarantee the same protections that anybody would get under the Constitution,'" Mills says.

Mills says there's been something of a theme during the last decade of the Supreme Court limiting tribal sovereignty while Congress is moving in the opposite direction. "If a decision from the Supreme Court sort of confirmed tribal authority here, then you know, it would sort of support those congressional efforts to continue to recognize broader tribal jurisdiction to protect tribal members within the reservation."

The Supreme Court's decision on U.S. v. Cooley will be written sometime in the coming weeks or months.

- Yellowstone Public Radio (Montana, Wyoming)

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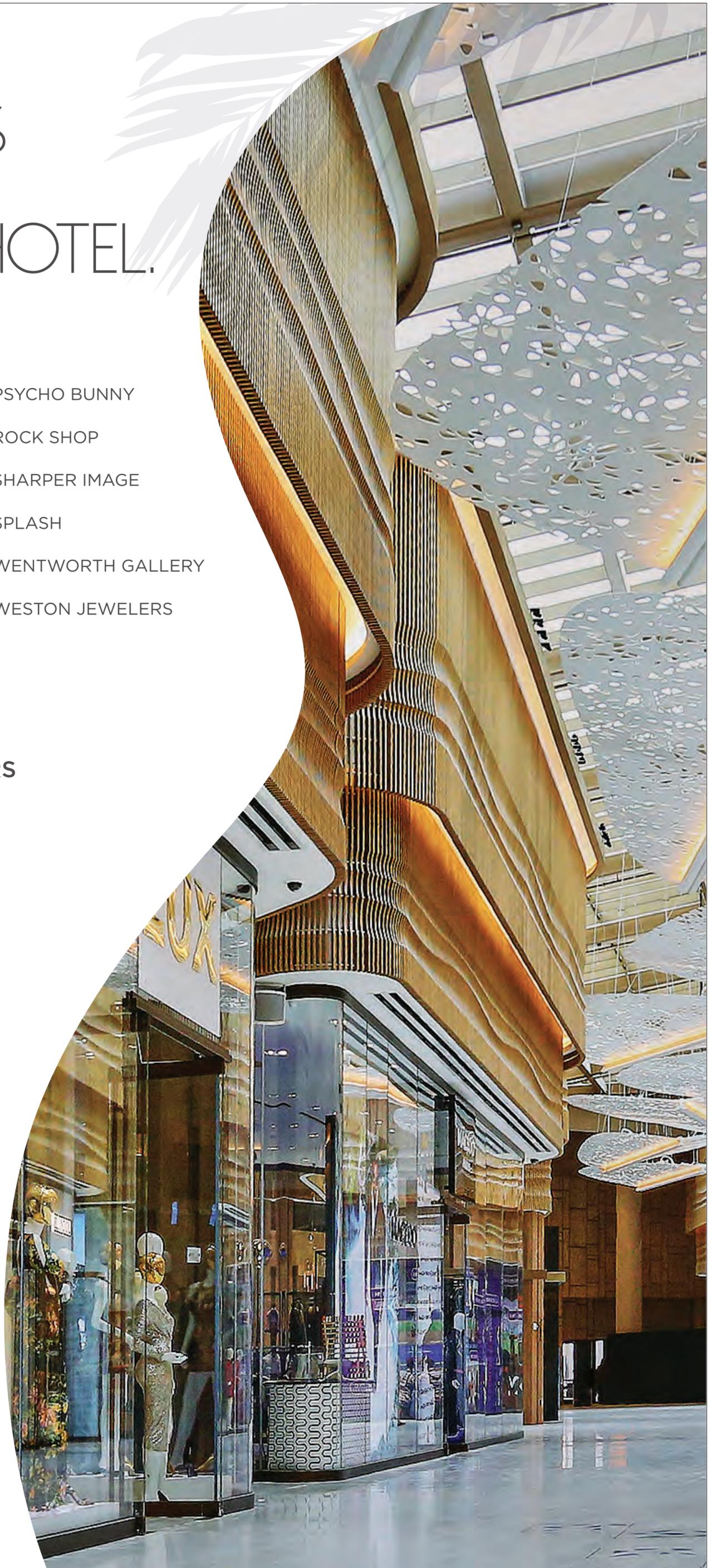
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Education



CSSS offers tribal students Florida Virtual School option

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

As the 2020-21 school year enters its final quarter, the Center for Student Success & Services (CSSS) is focused on enrollment for the 2021-22 year and recently hosted an online informational session about Florida Virtual School (FLVS).

"At the beginning of the pandemic, we found many schools were not versed in the virtual modality," said Michael Giacchino, CSSS director. "The transition to online teaching impacted the students. FLVS has been doing it successfully for a long time."

Founded in 1997 as the country's first statewide internet-based public school, FLVS provides K-12 education to students in Florida and around the world. There is no cost for Florida students. Students earn a standard high school diploma, all teachers are certified and follow state educational standards.

"A lot of students have struggled with e-learning," said Shavonna Daniels, CSSS K-12 program manager. "We wanted to provide a resource to our families. All the [FLVS] teachers are well versed in e-learning and have been doing it for years."

During the WebEx session March 9, Dr. Yamilca Gomez, district relations manager for FLVS, explained how the online school works. There are two programs, Flex and Full Time.

The Flex program is open year round for elementary, middle and high school students. The elementary program offers core classes including language arts, math, science and social studies as well as electives and specials such as art, computer science, Spanish and physical education. Homeschool students usually use the Flex program.

The middle and high school students may choose from more than 190 core and elective courses. Electives include keyboarding, computer programming and coding essentials, photography and career research.

Students are expected to turn in the work on a weekly basis and teachers provide feedback through email. Although there are no one-on-one daily lessons, students may set up an appointment with the teacher for individual help.

Students work at their own pace but if they don't complete work for three weeks, FLVS will withdraw the student.

The Flex program may also be utilized to make up classes and fulfill graduation requirements for students in traditional schools. All credits are transferable to a student's school of record. Since the Flex program is not a school of record, attendance is not taken.

"There was a gap that needed to be filled in regards to summer learning," Daniels said. "Students typically lose information over the summer. The Flex program offers students an opportunity to bridge that gap and then go back to their home schools."

The Full Time program is all about structured flexibility. Students attend a fixed, 180-day school year schedule from August to June. Students take six courses per semester and participate in state testing. Courses are available 24/7 online, so students can study any time and any place.

About 11,000 students are enrolled in FLVS and class size is not an issue.

"We have plenty of teachers," Gomez said. "Very few courses have a wait list, but those students are usually placed within 48 hours. Parents like the structure; students just log in."

Students receive a chart that shows what assignments are due each week. Attendance is taken every day during homeroom and FLVS monitors truancy.

"The full time program is more for families who need a school that specializes in e-learning," Daniels said. "The credits are transferable as long as it is a school under the umbrella of FLVS. Flex credits are transferable regardless of whether the school is in the FLVS system."

Communication with teachers in FLVS can be more convenient than other schools because FLVS teachers are available until 8 p.m., which is helpful for some families.

CSSS will host another meeting with FLVS for families June 8 from 1:30-2:30 p.m. Registration and other information will be discussed. CSSS shares information about the session via email flyers and the CSSS website, and advisors will contact families directly.

"We don't promote schools, we generally pass along the availability to speak to the community," Giacchino said. "We offer them FLVS because virtual school is what they do. I've known people who have gone through FLVS since 2005; they know what they are doing."

PECS students learn about civil rights, the Holocaust

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

World War II is generations away from today's fifth graders, but teacher Michelle Pritchard brought the era to life for her 10- and 11 year-old students at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School during its annual civil rights project.

The project included a unit on the Holocaust, specifically how citizens of Denmark saved about 7,200 Jews from the Nazis in 1943.

Pritchard and her students spent about three weeks on the civil rights project, which also included slavery and Black history.

"I try to do something different with the kids," Pritchard said. "The WWII unit fits nicely with civil rights and human rights. What astonishes the kids is they don't really have an understanding of slavery, so I try to share that we didn't just have Black slaves. There is still modern day slavery."

To commemorate International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, the class learned there are 70 million women and children still enslaved around the world. Some are sent as children to be indentured servants in wealthy homes.

To learn about the Holocaust during WWII, the students read the book "Number the Stars" which tells the story of a Jewish family's escape in 1943 from Copenhagen, Denmark. Students also watched the movie "Miracle at Midnight," in which a Danish

surgeon and his family hide a rabbi and his family in their home and use the doctor's hospital to hide other Jews before finding them safe passage to Sweden.

"They are both historical fiction," Pritchard said. "Danish people hid Jews in ambulances and morgues and tracked them after the war to bring them back. It's remarkable how that little country worked together to save the Jews."

One reason why Denmark was successful in hiding and saving its Jewish citizens is because King Christian X would not allow Jews to wear the Stars of David on their clothing. Without it, German soldiers were unable to distinguish who were Jews.

Typically, fifth graders study explorers and the American Revolution and don't learn about world history until middle school.

"I love seeing the light bulb go off in students' heads," Pritchard said. "There are some subjects you want to see their faces when you teach."

To end the unit, students answered questions about how people should be treated, what are some examples in history of people being treated unfairly, what they learned from the unit and how has it impacted their thinking.

While watching "Miracle at Midnight," Melanie Bonilla learned that Jews were being treated unfairly by German soldiers in Denmark and hid in the woods to evade capture.

She wrote, "The Star of David was a

special necklace that all Jews had to wear if they were a Jew. Also I learned that the Jews were good people. But something that is unfair in the movie is ... that people thought that the Jews were bad and wanted to take them away. I think these are a lot of unfair things and they need to be more respectful to people."

Case Prescott wrote, "There is a right way and a wrong way to treat people. I think that black people were treated unfairly. We can stop this by putting posters that say black lives matter. ... I kind of feel bad for black people because they get bullied."

Students also wrote reflective poems, together as a class and individually. This is the class poem:

"I read a book about the Jewish people in Denmark who were in trouble.

I watched a movie that was very close to the book I read and it showed me history.

I learned that a necklace with the Star of David was something special to the Jewish people.

I found out there was a war and there was shooting with the Resistance.

I thought it was similar to Star Wars.

I learned that the Germans were trying to kill the Jewish people and there were spies that helped them.

Now I know that discrimination is wrong."

Braylen Thomas's reflective poem:

"I read a story about discrimination, and one about

People saving people. Jews saved from death.

I watched how people got together, and risked Their lives to save Jews from the Nazis.

I learned that there were secret codes, and drugs On handkerchiefs to keep the German's dogs from Being able to smell where the Jews were hiding.

I found out that when people get together for Good, they can do anything.

I thought that the Germans were going to kill Annemarie or her family for helping the Jews Escape.

I learned about history, and how horrible that time Must have been to be singled out for who you are, Just because you are Jewish.

Now I know that it could happen again if we let it.

Next time it might be me that needs help to Escape."

PECS celebrates Dr. Seuss's birthday



Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School celebrates Dr. Seuss's birthday March 2 with a week filled with art activities. Students and staff proudly displayed their art in their virtual classrooms.

FGCU community hopes for healing of grief through COVID memorial

BY DREW STERWALD
FGCU 360

FORT MYERS — Alfred Diaz, proud Marine, family patriarch and grandfather to Florida Gulf Coast University sophomore Alessio L. Luna, died of Covid-19 in October.

Naomi Hooker, loving grandmother and trusted confidante to senior Brittany Hall, died of Covid-19 in September.

Yolanda Clugh, matriarch of a Jamaican immigrant family and grandmother to junior Aaron Lowe, died of Covid-19 in April.

These names represent just a few of the countless people on the minds and in the hearts of students as they reflect on the thousands of ceramic votives dotting FGCU's Great Lawn. Humble handmade symbols of individuals lost, the tributes collectively

create a sweeping visual representation of the magnitude of the global pandemic's toll.

The art installation, "Field of Remembrance, Cathedral of Sky," which remains in place through April 5, was dedicated March 23 as part of "FGCU Remembers: The Covid Memorial Project." A related interactive exhibit called "What We Lost, What We Learned, What We Hope For" is on display in the ArtLab Gallery.

Seeing the 10,000 handmade tributes shaped like calla lilies spread out in the grass "really puts things into perspective," said Aaron Lowe, an environmental science major from Miami who had a special relationship with his late grandmother. She helped him stay in school by paying some of his tuition.

♦ See FGCU on page 4B



James Greco/FGCU

FGCU alumna David Webb represented the Haudenosaunee, a confederation of six Native American nations, at the memorial dedication March 23. Representatives of diverse faiths spoke at the ceremony.

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students of the month - February 2021



PIC-COLLAGE

AWARE program introduces Mental Health First Aid

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

There are tools to help if someone is having a heart attack (CPR) or is choking (the Heimlich maneuver). But tools for helping individuals going through a difficult mental health issue aren't as widely known.

That is about to change with the addition of Mental Health First Aid to the arsenal of the Health and Human Services' Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency Through Education) team.

Mental Health First Aid is a course that teaches how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness. The training teaches the skills to provide initial help and support to someone developing or experiencing a mental health crisis.

"We can now teach the course to tribal members and families," said Dr. Brittany Henry, AWARE mental wellness manager. "It's a nice addition to the program. We are a small team, so it's a good way to give people more skills and tools to recognize what is going on with their own kids. It's also a good way to bring mental health awareness to the community."

Because of the pandemic, AWARE hasn't been able to offer the Mental Health First Aid training for families and the community yet, but Henry hopes to have the program in place by the end of the summer. The training is a full eight-hour day filled with useful information.

The goal of the program is youth mental health, which targets ages 12 to 18 and up to 25, which is about the age mental health concerns may begin.

"The purpose is to improve mental health knowledge and skills so people can respond to someone who is in a crisis or having difficulties and help them avoid a full-blown crisis," Henry said. "It can also reduce the stigma of mental health. This is an opportunity to normalize it and help families understand it."

The process of helping in any situation depends on the needs of the child. Mental Health First Aid isn't meant to be a substitute for medical care or counseling.

"It is the first step," Henry said. "A teacher would try to connect so the child feels safe and comfortable. Kids may need more additional support, but this is to make them feel safe and know it will be okay. These things happen; we want the stigma to be reduced."

Parents and anyone who is working around or involved with youth will all get the same training where they learn to identify concerns and connect with the child. One example of the training is ALGEE, which means Approach and Assist, Look for signs of trauma and anxiety, Listen non-judgmentally, Give reassurance and support, Encourage appropriate professional help and a self-help strategy.

During the pandemic, the AWARE program has held virtual sessions in Ahfachkee, Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School and preschool classes tribalwide. The program gives students activities to help them feel calm, do art projects, talk about emotions and healthy expression. Prior to going virtual, the AWARE team was trained on how to do telehealth sessions.

"Mental health is so necessary," Henry said. "We promote resilience in the kids. We don't want to leave them with emotions they cannot process."

Henry plans to roll out the AWARE program with activities for the Boys & Girls Clubs and families to do at home.

"Kids desire connections," Henry said. "They are hearing about scary Covid, it's hard for a kid to process. They wish Covid would go away, they miss their friends and teachers. Kids thrive with connections. It's hard to just look at a screen all day; sometimes that causes them to feel anxious. Our job is to give them coping strategies."

Kylee Russell, Hud Oberly to be featured speakers at UNITY conference

STAFF REPORT

MESA, Ariz. — United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY) will hold its annual midyear leadership conference virtually on April 23-24. The event will engage Native youth from across the country through workshops, breakout sessions, music and cultural sharing.

Participants will hear from guest speakers Kylee Russell (Lenape), an accomplished young actress who stars on several Disney projects and is also a singer, songwriter, and dancer, and Hud Oberly (Osage/Caddo/Comanche), creative director for Urban Native Era.

Russell is a native Californian. She is of Cape Verdean, Native American and African American descent. Her acting career started at age four when she landed her first national commercial. She has more than 40 national commercials under her belt, and is perhaps most known for her role on Disney Channel's "Jump In!" She has also been featured in the award-winning film "Mississippi Damned," and has had several guest-starring roles on television series. She starred in "Hank Zipzer's Christmas Catastrophe" and sang all of the original songs on the movie's soundtrack. In early 2021, she released her latest single, "Stitches." Her music is on Spotify, iTunes, and YouTube.

Oberly is the creative director for Urban Native Era (UNE), a brand that specializes in clothing design and content to increase the visibility of Indigenous peoples. Based in Los Angeles, Oberly's focus with UNE is marketing and clothing design. Through all of his work experience he strives to increase the representation of modern Indigenous

people. In addition to his current work, woven throughout his life he has served Indian Country by working for UNITY, participating in programs with National Indian Education Association, College Horizons, and Graduate Horizons and, most recently, working for the Sundance Institute Indigenous Program to assist in identifying and developing emerging Indigenous filmmakers and their stories.

Registration for the conference is free and includes complimentary registration for two additional UNITY webinars on March 27 and April 9, and a virtual youth event with the National Museum of the American Indian on April 22 when UNITY's 2021 Class of Earth Ambassadors will be announced.

The theme for this year's conference is celebrating 45 years of empowering Native youth.

"This is a milestone year for us in many ways. Not only are we honoring our 45-year anniversary, but we're also celebrating the resiliency of our youth community in what has been a challenging year," Mary Kim Titla, executive director of UNITY, said in a statement. "We are looking forward to coming together to share our experiences and traditions once again."

The conference will also include UNITY all-star trainers Chance Rush, Robert Johnson, Pearl Yellowman, Juanita Toledo, and Marcus Guinn. In addition, there will be opportunities for youth-to-youth live virtual connections via Zoom during the second half of the program each day.

For more information, to view the draft agenda and to register visit www.unityinc.org or call (480) 718-9793.



Courtesy UNITY (2)

Above, actress, dancer, singer and songwriter Kylee Russell (Lenape) and, below, Urban Native Era creative director Hud Oberly (Osage/Caddo/Comanche) will be guest speakers during UNITY's leadership conference April 23-24.



Adjusted FSU homecoming to take place April 6-11

STAFF REPORT

TALLAHASSEE — After being postponed for months due to the pandemic, Florida State University's homecoming celebration will finally take place April 6-11 with several changes.

The festivities will include alumni events, a reverse-style parade and the inaugural spring alumni awards. The week will wrap up with a four-mile run through campus that will end on the 50-yard line in Doak Campbell Stadium, which is exactly where the Seminole Tribe's princesses traditionally stroll across during normal homecomings to crown the school's chief and princess at halftime of the homecoming football game.

The princesses will not attend this year's activities, but FSU's royalty will still be crowned at an evening pep rally in the stadium April 9. The following day the football team will hold its spring game. Spectators will be required to wear masks.

The annual parade April 9 will have a far different route this year. The participants won't be going anywhere. Instead, spectators will drive through the parade area in their vehicles to view the participants. The event will be livestreamed.

Here's a look at the schedule:

April 6 FSU Then and Now, 12 p.m.

Join Sandra Varry, University and Heritage Archivist, for a webinar on the history of Florida State's campus and its current trajectory. Varry also will discuss the history of FSU's libraries. Registrants will have the opportunity to submit a question in advance of the event to be answered live. Registration is available at <http://gonol.es/FSUThenAndNow>.

April 7 TEDxFSU conference, 2 p.m.

Using the theme "Unmuted," the event will feature speakers on the TEDxFSU stage in the FSU Alumni Center ballroom as well as remotely, performances from local artists, and opportunities to engage around ideas. TEDxFSU is committed to providing a safe conference for a limited in-person audience and a quality experience for those who join virtually. More information on speakers, tickets and access is available at <https://www.tedxfsu.com>.

April 8 FSU Ring Ceremony

Senior students will be honored with a hybrid version of the traditional ceremony this year starting with a socially distanced pickup event from 2-5 p.m. at Westcott Plaza, where students will have an opportunity to celebrate while picking up their rings, including a photo opportunity, snacks and souvenir items. That evening, a ceremony will be streamed live for ring recipients to enjoy remotely.

April 9 Homecoming Parade, 2-3 p.m.

The annual Homecoming Parade organized by the Student Alumni Association will take place in the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center Staging Lot. This year's parade will be a reverse parade, in which floats, parade entries and performers will remain stationary while spectators drive through the parade area in their vehicles to view the participants. This parade format will follow current COVID-19 guidelines and encourage social distancing. The parade will feature floats, entries and appearances from numerous campus and community organizations. The event will be livestreamed at <https://www.facebook.com/fsualumniassociation>.

Spring Alumni Awards, 5:30 p.m.

The FSU Alumni Association will present the inaugural Spring Alumni Awards, honoring the recipients of the Grad Made Good award, Alumni Ambassador Award Scholars, and the Garnet & Gold Key's Ross Oglesby honoree. This virtual event will recognize the accomplishments of notable alumni, faculty, and students who have secured their place in the history of Florida State University by pushing boundaries and redefining standards within their respective fields. To register for the event, visit <https://gonol.es/spring-awards-2021>.

Homecoming Live, 7 p.m.

The Annual Homecoming Live pep rally will be held in Doak Campbell Stadium and feature appearances by special FSU performers and a well-known comedian. The evening will culminate with the crowning of Florida State's Homecoming Chief and Princess. Social distancing, mask requirements and other safety practices will be in effect. For additional information, visit <https://homecoming.fsu.edu/events/hc-live>.

April 10 FSU Football Spring Game, 5 p.m.

The FSU Football Spring Game will take place at Doak Campbell Stadium and will include two 12-minute periods. Stadium gates will open at 4 p.m. All seating in the stands will be general admission. All attendees must practice social distancing when seated, and masks are required at all times unless eating or drinking. For more information, visit <http://gonol.es/SpringGame>.

April 11 Garnet & Gold 4 Miler, 8 a.m.

The Inaugural Garnet & Gold 4 Miler race to "Finish on the 50" offers runners and walkers of all skill levels a four-mile course through FSU's campus and finishes on the 50-yard line inside Doak Campbell Stadium. For participants unable to participate in person, the FSU Alumni Association is presenting a virtual option, which may be completed April 9-11. COVID-19 safety protocols will be in place to ensure a safe event for all in-person participants. The event is limited to the first 1,500 in-person runners and walkers and the first 1,500 virtual participants. Register at <https://www.garnetandgoldfourmiler.com>.

PECS announces in-person testing schedule

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School principal Tracy Downing notified parents, guardians, families and members of the Brighton community that third through eighth grade students will attend school in person for standardized state testing starting April 6.

In an email sent March 30, Downing wrote, "A person's character is defined, in part, by their ability to face adversity and challenges and overcome them. This school year, as we maneuvered through a global pandemic, we certainly faced many challenges. However, we overcame them with grit, determination, and a spirit unique to our community."

In the reopening, known as Phase II, students will take the Florida Standards

Assessment (FSA), Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Science and End of Course (EOC) testing by appointment beginning April 6.

Parents and guardians will receive each student's testing schedule from their homeroom teachers. Students typically test from four to seven days, but this year when a student is not at school for testing, he or she will attend PECS' distance learning instruction.

Students will be required to wear masks at school. PECS will supply one for those who don't bring a mask. Students will be seated at desks equipped with Plexiglas barriers and will be socially distanced from one another during testing.

PECS will provide transportation to and from school for testing, but drop off and pick up of students will also be allowed during specific times.

Parents or guardians must conduct a screening of the child for Covid-19-like symptoms or a fever exceeding 100.4. If either of these are present, the student may not attend school. Downing suggests parents or guardians should contact their health care provider for further advice.

Downing is not sure how long Phase II will last, but she will announce additional phased reopening plans as they are scheduled.

"As family members, students, faculty and staff, and as a community, we have shown how adaptable and resilient we are during this unprecedented time in our lives and in our history. As we move through the phases of our 'Phased Reopening Plan,' we will be sure to keep you up to date and fully informed," Downing wrote.

Canada's first Indigenous language degree to be offered at British Columbia university

BY TWILA AMATO
Coast Mountain News
(British Columbia, Canada)

The first bachelor's degree program in Indigenous language fluency, for all of Canada, will be offered right in the Okanagan.

The program will be offered at the University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO), in partnership with the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) and the En'owkin Centre in Pentiction.

The goal of the program is to increase the number of fluent Nsyilxcn speakers, as Indigenous languages in the province are endangered.

According to UBCO, the Bachelor of Nsyilxcn Language Fluency (BNLF) is designed to work closely with the

community "to provide a comprehensive and high-quality education in Nsyilxcn."

"The idea that there's only knowledge in English or French is absolutely not true," UBCO associate professor of Indigenous Studies Dr. Jeannette Armstrong said.

"Language is identity. Indigenous knowledge systems and an Indigenous paradigm — how we view the world and how we interact — is deeply rooted in language."

Language learners in the program will be provided with a deep understanding of not just the language, but the culture and customs as well, the university said.

Armstrong also said they hope the program will foster the revitalization of Nsyilxcn.

"This is an important step in acting on Indigenous people's rights to develop and transmit their languages, knowledge, and oral traditions."

The BNLF program is the first degree to come out of a newly designed framework for Indigenous language learning put forward by the First Nations Education Steering Committee and Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association.

Graduates of the program can continue to work in education, social services, culture, tourism, and resource-management positions.

The partnership between NVIT and the En'owkin Centre means students will be able to transfer the credits they earn at the two schools to the new degree program. The BNLF is also designed to meet prerequisites for other post-secondary programs, which means students can pursue further studies to complete their degrees.

◆ LAND From page 2A

Dozens of tribes across the United States are now pushing for land restoration. And Haaland has voiced support for land returns.

Take for example the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation in Missouri. After being forced onto a small reservation of their ancestral lands at Fort Berthold in 1870, the government flooded more than a quarter of it when the Garrison Dam was built in 1953, forcing most of the nation's members to relocate. And in spite of several Department of Interior directives, North Dakota has deprived the group of its ownership of the Missouri riverbed.

The Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara nation now faces an all-too-common reality: it is bogged down in legal battles just to get the federal government to uphold its former promises. The nation's chairman, Marx Fox points out that "We have been marginalized and pushed off our territory and for more than a century the federal government has attempted to steal what their own experts agree is rightfully ours." Biden, he says, has the opportunity to right this historical wrong.

Land settlement reached a fevered pitch in the 1800s with southern and westward expansion. President Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act of 1830 was one of the

most brutal policies, sparking the infamous Trail of Tears that removed Indians from the southeast to designated "Indian Territory" west of the Mississippi River. The reservation system unfolded in subsequent decades, cordoning off Indians into designated and often undesirable areas away from white settlements.

But no single policy was more damaging than the Dawes Act of 1887. The Dawes Act accelerated and systematized dispossession at a grand scale by focusing within reservations themselves.

Land was often tribally owned in a communal fashion within Indian reservations in the late 1800s. The Dawes Act sought to break up these tribal holdings by subdividing them into individually-owned plots through a process known as land allotment. Allotment sought to break down tribal cohesion and assimilate Indians into American cultural norms and capitalist economic practices.

When the government opened a reservation for allotment, families on the reservation were given plots of land that were held in trust by the Department of Interior. "Excess lands" not allotted could be sold off to private citizens from outside the reservation. This policy ultimately stripped nearly 100 million acres from reservation land.

The claims of many Native Americans who are fighting for their land hinge on an arcane bureaucratic process housed within

the Department of Interior's Office of Federal Acknowledgment: the federal recognition of tribes. Consider the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe of Massachusetts. Despite being rooted in coastal Massachusetts and eastern Rhode Island for thousands of years and sharing in the first Thanksgiving with the Pilgrims, they were only federally recognized as a tribe in 2007.

A decades-long fight for land resulted in a trust of 300 acres granted to the tribe in 2015. But because the tribe was not under federal jurisdiction in 1934, when President Roosevelt repealed the Dawes Act, the Department of Interior stripped the tribe of its land in 2018 following a lawsuit by residents in the area. As one citizen of the tribe put it, the fact that the tribe doesn't meet the federal guidelines is "a perfect illustration of how... anti-Native federal Indian policy has been throughout our history."

Haaland should use her unique position to push forward the country's reconciliation with Native Americans through land restitution. After all, land is at the core of her vow in her confirmation hearings to "honor the sovereignty of tribal nations."

Michael Albertus is an associate professor of political science at the University of Chicago. His most recent book is "Property without Rights. This op-ed appears on thehill.com.



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Native artists Jessica Osceola, Velma Kee Craig share spotlight in St. Pete MFA talk

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Artists Jessica Osceola (Seminole) and Velma Kee Craig (Diné) held a virtual conversation about their artwork Feb. 25. Hosted by the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, the artists discussed the commonalities and differences of their work.

Both artists draw inspiration from their Native American traditions while incorporating contemporary materials and trends in their pieces. Osceola is a ceramist, sculptor and multimedia artist; Craig is a weaver and textile artist.

Osceola said she became an artist by watching members of her family create things in her great-grandmother's camp in Naples.

"I was at my great-grandmother's knee as she made things all day," she said. "I learned from her. Everyone was always making something around me. Men made poles; my sisters and grandmother sewed."

During college, Osceola stepped away from her culture but returned to it in graduate school by reintroducing herself to all the things she grew up with. Seminole culture remains an important component of her work.

Osceola showed images of the self-portraits she sculpted in clay highlighting facial expressions, muscle and bone structure. One shows her looking directly at the viewer.

"I wanted to touch on some taboos in my culture, like making eye contact," she said. "I use bead necklaces to show my identity as a Seminole."

A bronze piece "Mother?" was the result of Osceola's five-day walk with her aunt Betty Osceola and others in 2015 to protest a potential project slated to be built across the Everglades. The project was never approved.

"That piece was part of a show "Return From Exile: Contemporary Southeastern Indian Art" and traveled around the country," Osceola said. "It commemorated the 70-mile walk through the Everglades. It was a long, quiet walk where everyone reflected on what was going on around us. A lot of good came from the walk."

Craig wrote poetry and short screenplays before she began weaving 10 years ago, but she continues to be a storyteller through her textile designs.

One of Craig's pieces was featured in the Museum of Fine Arts' recent exhibition "Color Riot! How Color Changed Navajo Textiles," organized by the Heard Museum in Phoenix. Craig's textile in the show is "Bar Code/QR Code," which depicts an American flag whose stripes are represented by a bar code and stars by a QR code. The inspiration for the piece came from QR codes on signs for foreclosed homes.

"People were losing their homes," Craig said. "I kept seeing them as I walked through my neighborhood. I decided to use it as the star portion of the flag textile."



Velma Kee Craig's textile "Bar Code/QR Code" as viewed during the virtual artists conversation Feb. 25 with artist Jessica Osceola, event host Stephanie Chill, development coordinator, Museum of Fine Arts St. Petersburg and artist Velma Kee Craig.

She sketched it out and worked out the math. It took a year to make the piece.

"I wanted viewers to understand experimentation and innovation in the designs is still going on," Craig said. "I am a living Navajo and people are surprised to see Native people are still living. I understand that because we are written about in textbooks and we don't have a presence in pop culture or media, people come away with the misunderstanding that we don't exist anymore or aren't thriving, which is not the case. We wanted to make sure people know Navajo weaving is still going on, but there is a wide spectrum of weavers. Not all are utilitarian textiles, people are making art."

Another of Craig's pieces was a collaboration between the Navajo Nation and Disney films, which translated "Finding Nemo" into the Navajo language. The piece shows a few tropical fish swimming around a sea anemone. "Sound and Creation" uses vibrant and muted colors in the shape of a DNA double helix and included audio tape as a textile in the weaving.

Craig believes the diversification in weaving styles will continue to grow.

"I see myself sticking with Navajo weaving," she said. "I want to pass it along to my children and hope to be around to teach my grandchildren to weave. I have a lot of ideas for series and groupings of textiles. I want to make sure I get those ideas I have in my sketchbook done."

Osceola started sewing shortly after giving birth because her son needed traditional clothing. She spends a lot of time

in the Naples Community Center.

"The community center is a great place to walk in, have a cup of coffee and for hours on end sit around a circle of sewing machines," Osceola said. "We bounce ideas around. But there is also a competitive aspect to it. I always want to be better than my sister but she's a really great sewer."

Osceola believes cultural appropriation is an issue of identity theft. When she saw a skirt by designer Donna Karan that looked like Seminole patchwork, she wrote to the company. Karan insisted the design was her own idea. Designer Ulla Johnson created a line of resort wear based on a book about Seminole patchwork.

"She admitted it and just took it line for line," she said. "Our sewing is our identity and designs are handed down from generation to generation. Those things are very personal, it's who we are. We have to push back against that, so I keep sewing more and more. I work with younger kids at the community center to teach others."

Osceola said non-Seminole often want to know what the patchwork designs mean.

"Fire, rain, man on horse, telephone poles are older style. New ones are chickpeas and corn on the cob, with tiny squares that look like pixels. They're really fun," she said.

One patchwork design Osceola created is known as "Biracial Man on Horse."

"I'm from two different backgrounds: white and Native American," she said. "I always like to use that in my work. The pattern is a play on those two things. But what remains the same is my identity,

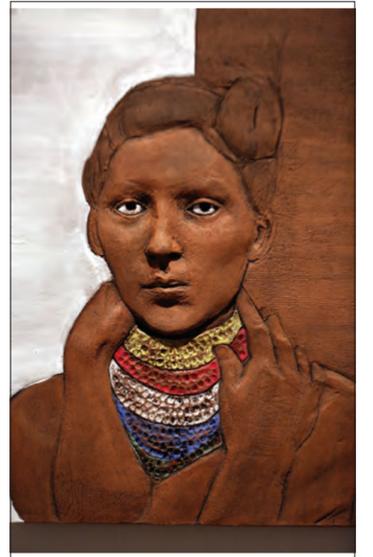


Courtesy image



Courtesy photo

Jessica Osceola's 11.5 inch by 8.5 inch by 1 inch bronze relief sculpture titled "Mother?" was included in the exhibition "Return From Exile: Contemporary Southeastern Indian Art" which traveled to museums around the country from 2015 to 2017.



Courtesy photo

Jessica Osceola created this self-portrait, a ceramic relief sculpture, as part of her Master of Fine Arts show in 2016.

femininity and role as a Seminole and a mother in all of my work."

Book about dispossession of Native Americans wins Columbia award

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Columbia University Libraries announced in March that Claudio Saunt's "Unworthy Republic, The Dispossession of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory" is one of two winners of its 2021 Bancroft Prizes in American History and

Diplomacy award.

According to the award's jury, "Saunt's Unworthy Republic is a brilliant, searing account of 'Indian removal' in the 1830s United States: the state-sponsored expulsion of an estimated 80,000 native peoples from their homes east of the Mississippi River and brutal deportation to an ill-defined 'Indian

Territory' in the West. Far from being 'natural' or 'inevitable,' as contemporaries (and even some historians) have portrayed, Saunt documents the vast amount of ideological, political, and logistical work that undergirded this federal policy. Combining brilliant synthesis, deep archival research, and powerful prose, Unworthy Republic

retells the story of this epic moment as a tragic conjecture of the histories of indigenous people, antebellum slavery, and global capitalism. Saunt has written a bold, haunting account of 'Indian removal' that, in its polished scholarship, beautiful prose, and original argument, is a worthy recipient of the Bancroft Prize."

"Katrina: A History, 1915-2015," by Andy Horowitz, was the other winner.

The winners are judged in terms of scope, significance, depth of research, and richness of interpretation that they present in the areas of American history and diplomacy. In all, 213 books were submitted for consideration for the 2021 prize.

◆ NMAI From page 8A

This film documents the wild blueberry harvest of the Wabanaki, who live in both the United States and Canada.

Crow Country: The Right to Food Sovereignty

Director: Tsanavi Spoonhunter (Northern Arapaho/Northern Paiute)

Crow Country follows several tribal members who are fighting for better food and a better future for their community.

One Word Sawalmen

Director: Natasha Deganello Giraudie
Co-director: Michael "Pom" Preston (Winnemem Wintu)

A rare look into the life of Native wisdom keepers, men and women respected within Indigenous communities for their intimate knowledge about living in balance with the natural world.

MAY

The Story of the Lū'au: Dance and Cooking Demonstration

May 1 - 31; on demand
americanindian.si.edu/online-programs

Explore the story of the Native Hawaiian tradition of lū'au and learn why it plays such an important role in Hawaiian culture featuring Vicky Holt Takamine, renowned kumu hula (master teacher of Hawaiian dance), and 'ūniki (graduated) as a kumu hula from hula master Maiki Aiu Lake.

As part of her graduation, Lake held a lū'au to celebrate the occasion. This is a tradition Takamine continues as she presents lū'au for her graduating students. Kumu Vicky will present the story of lū'au which will be followed by a dance presentation that would be enjoyed at celebrations and significant events, such as births, graduations, weddings and many more 'ohana (family) gatherings.

Chef and Hawaiian cultural practitioner Kealoha Domingo elevates the art of cooking to a new level by honoring the connection to the 'āina (land), kanaka (humankind), and mea 'ai (food). Kealoha learned the

traditions from his father and is sharing that knowledge with his son, Kahikinaokala. Domingo's culinary inspiration comes from his kupuna (ancestors), 'ohana (family), life mentors and a network of dedicated friends who wholeheartedly support his endeavors. He will be demonstrating some of the recipes associated with the lū'au. He will also share the healthful and sustainable character of these traditional food sources.

◆ FGCU From page 1B

"It's a wakeup call," he said of the memorial. "To stay clean, but also not to live in fear but be aware. Don't take things for granted."

A similar theme echoed in the remarks of ministers from diverse faiths invited to speak at the dedication about what their communities have lost and learned during the pandemic. Professors Maria Roca and Patricia Fay proposed and organized "FGCU Remembers" as a public expression of collective grief and an opportunity to honor those lost to Covid-19.

"Family matters more than we realized," William Glover, pastor of Mount Hermon Ministries in Fort Myers, said in his address. "When the community works together, we can do amazing things. If we take care of ourselves, we take care of each other. We are all vulnerable. We are all connected and interdependent. We are all one race, the human race."

Rickey Anderson, pastor of Followers of Christ Fellowship Ministries in Fort Myers, also called for people to stand by each other in these uncertain times. He then spontaneously broke into a soaring interpretation of the gospel song "I Know Who Holds Tomorrow":

"I don't worry o'er the future
For I know what Jesus said
And today I'll walk beside him
For he knows what lies ahead."
FGCU alumnus David Webb ('04, Environmental Studies) represented the Haudenosaunee, a confederation of six Native American nations he is part of. Speaking the Tuscarora language and

explaining in English, he recited the Gano:nyok, a traditional address of thanks given before important gatherings.

He noted that America's indigenous peoples suffered through waves of infectious disease throughout their history, long before the coronavirus began to take a disproportionate toll on them.

"Looking out across at all these sculptures that represent human beings, it is so incredibly impactful to have this visual representation of the people just in Florida who have been victims of this pandemic," he said. "Looking at all the lives represented here makes me think of our ancestors who also succumbed in really large numbers to pandemics. Losing 90% of your population, you would lose your wisdom keepers, your faith keepers, those who understand the arts, those who understand tool making, those who understand agriculture. Our culture was decimated by waves of pandemics."

The coronavirus has taken an especially harsh toll on the 574 recognized tribes.

Indigenous Americans are dying of Covid-19 at twice the rate of white Americans. It has been widely reported nationwide one in every 475 Native Americans has died from Covid since the start of the pandemic, compared with one in every 825 white Americans and one in every 645 Black Americans.

Brittany Hall, a senior majoring in integrated studies, attended the dedication to honor all those lost but especially her 83-year-old grandmother Naomi Hooker, who perished from Covid-19 in September. Hall's grandfather died shortly afterward from non-virus related causes. They were like another set of parents to her — "we talked about everything," she said.

"This is a beautiful way to represent everything that has happened," Hall said. "My grandmother was a fighter. In the hospital, she said 'I'm going to make it.' She was determined to pull through. What I've learned is that it's important to tell those you love that you love them. And that we're not alone. Everyone who is grieving right now, the whole world is grieving with them."

Like many who lost loved ones, Alessio Luna, an Honors student in criminal justice and political science, was unable to be with his grandfather, Alfred Diaz, when he died in October because of hospital restrictions. When Luna had a chance to say goodbye by phone, all he could hear in response was the beeping of the machines keeping Diaz alive.

"I was able to relay the message to him that I loved him," said Luna, who fondly recalled time spent with his grandfather watching "Law & Order" reruns and Mets games. A Marine Corps veteran, 75-year-old Diaz was living in good health in a VA nursing home when he and others on his floor contracted the virus apparently from an infected staff member, according to Luna.

"His death was unexpected, tragic and traumatic on our family as well as myself," Luna said. "His death could have been preventable."

Luna said he hoped to achieve a sense of healing from visiting the campus memorial and felt that his grandfather would be there with him in spirit.

His hope for healing is shared by FGCU junior Kelly Maguire, an Honors psychology major who helped install 1,000 of the ceramic votives on the lawn. She has lost five friends to various causes during the pandemic. None succumbed to infection. They were victims of suicide, overdose and domestic violence,

she said. The ripple effects of isolation and lost human connections on mental health are compounding the pandemic's impact on physical health.

"There's a lot of grief I didn't get to process properly, or even just to be able to appreciate them for each loss," said Maguire.

"I'm hoping this memorial will be a chance for me to be able to really grieve their loss and honor them in the process. I think this will bring a lot of healing to students, faculty and the community."

Maguire, who planned to speak at a Palm Sunday ceremony at the memorial, hoped the "FGCU Remembers" project would draw attention to the pandemic's widespread psychological impact and the

need for more resources for communities to cope with it. An advocate for mental health and for therapy, she's involved in Active Minds, a nationwide organization that helps college students struggling with mental illness.

"For the first time ever, the entire world has experienced some degree of anxiety all at once," she said. "If you live in that state of mind of grief all the time it can be hard to function all day. There has been more talk about mental health, and it's become less stigmatized. But there's definitely more work to do in the future."



James Greco/FGCU

Representing Southwest Florida lives lost, thousands of votives were treated with a copper glaze that turned shades of green and blue when fired. "Because they're shaped by hand, they are not uniform," said Professor Maria Roca, who proposed and organized the memorial along with Professor Patricia Fay. "Each person lost to COVID-19 was unique, too."

Sports



Ahnie Jumper nears final stretch of FGCU softball career

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

Entering the final couple months of her softball career at Florida Gulf Coast University, Ahnie Jumper admits that she “can see the finish line.”

Four years ago, the starting point in NCAA Division I softball looked a lot different for Jumper, whose role on the Eagles has ascended from pinch runner her freshman year to starting catcher as a junior and senior.

The blend of athletics and academics, which this year includes helping homeless people in Lee County through an internship, has served her well.

“The family and memories I created with traveling and being at the school and having so many resources open to me to succeed,” has meant a lot to her, she said.

Jumper, who is from the Big Cypress Reservation, hopes more memories are still to come. With most of their non-conference schedule finished, the Eagles (17-11 entering April) have shifted their focus to conference games which started in mid-March. An impressive 9-1 start in Atlantic Sun Conference action shows the Eagles are a strong contender for the conference title.

“I think we’re better than in past years. We’re athletic, but I think we just need a little more chemistry together,” Jumper said prior to the start of the ASUN slate when the team had a 9-10 overall record.

Jumper picked an ideal time to have a career-best game at the plate. In the team’s second conference game, she went 3-for-3 and scored a run in a 4-2 win against Stetson on March 13.

This season FGCU was picked to finish third in the ASUN preseason coaches poll and received two of the nine first-place votes. It’s been nine years since FGCU last won the ASUN tournament and made its first and only appearance in the NCAA Division I tournament.

Being below .500, which is where the team was before reeling off seven wins in eight conference games, is a rare occurrence in the Dave Deiros era, which is to say the entire existence of the program. Deiros has been the head coach since day one in 2003. The Eagles have been a model of consistent success with only two sub-.500 seasons in nearly 20 years.



Florida Gulf Coast University senior catcher Ahnie Jumper is behind the plate as the Eagles face Florida State University on Feb. 27 in Tallahassee.

The 2021 edition started slowly with four losses in its first five games, including three to No. 21 University of Central Florida. FGCU’s victory column includes one-run wins against UCF and North Dakota and a two-game sweep against the University of Connecticut.

A few weeks ago FGCU dropped a pair of games to No. 15 Florida State in the “Unconquered Invitational” in Tallahassee. As a Seminole facing a team named Seminoles, Jumper said there wasn’t any added significance for her in those games.

“They’re a solid softball team, but they’re just another team,” said Jumper, who caught both games and went 0-for-3 at the plate.

After the FSU games, Jumper notched one hit and one RBI each in consecutive wins against Florida A&M and South Dakota.

As of March 30, she is batting .316 with six hits in 19 at-bats.

FGCU has a few non-conference games remaining, including at home April 21 against No. 6 Florida. Senior Day will be April 25 against Jacksonville.

Off the field, Jumper changed her major to social work after being an early childhood education major. She’s getting first-hand experience in her field by working in an internship for Community Cooperative, a Fort Myers-based organization that helps homeless people and others in need. She’s involved in case management, meals on wheels and homeless services, all of which she said has been a positive experience.

“I like being a service to them. They’re a different population. I love working with them,” she said.

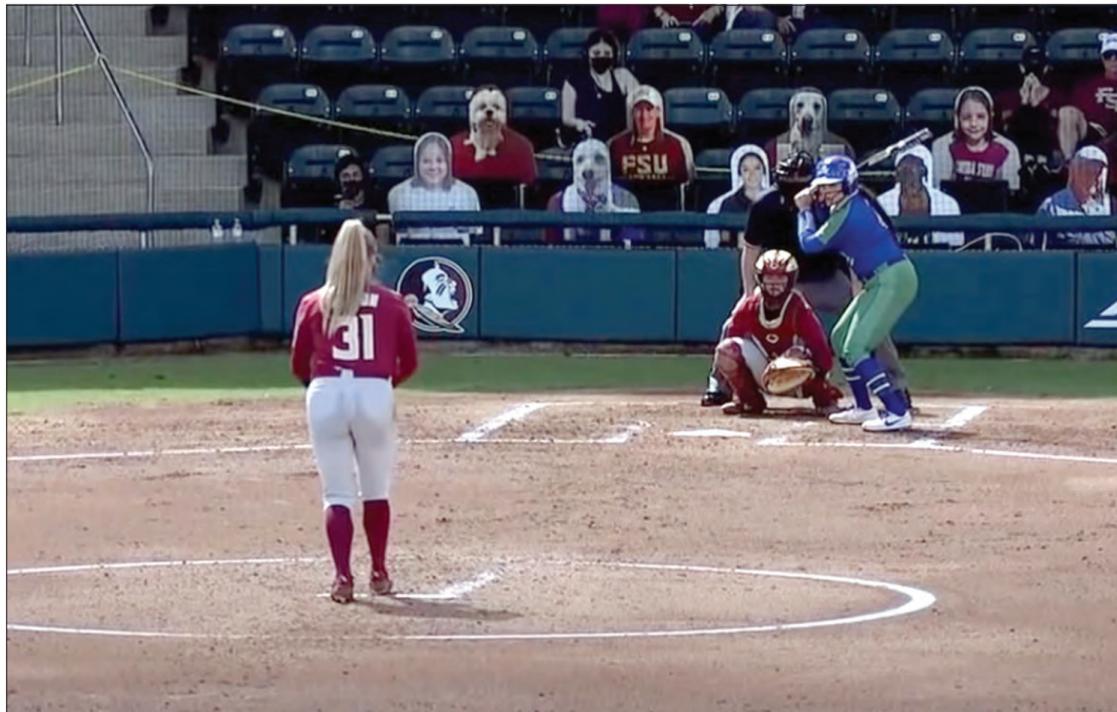
Although Jumper has an additional year remaining of playing eligibility due to last season being cut short, she said this season is her last. She is scheduled to graduate this spring. This summer and fall she plans to hit the road for tour rodeos as she tries to qualify for the Indian National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas, Indian Country’s biggest rodeo where she has competed in the past.

For now, she’s concentrating on completing her degree and helping the team in its pursuit of an ASUN championship.



ACC Network (2)

Above, Florida Gulf Coast University catcher Ahnie Jumper tags out a Florida State runner Feb. 27 in Tallahassee. Below, with some creative cardboard spectators in the stands, Jumper takes an at-bat.



Courtesy photo

The Neshoba Central High School girls bowling team celebrates after winning its fifth consecutive Mississippi state championship in February 2021. Seminole tribal member Allie Williams, center holding trophy, has been a part of all five.

Allie Williams leads Mississippi team to fifth straight state bowling championship

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

The girls bowling dynasty at Neshoba Central High School shows no signs of slowing down.

For the fifth consecutive year, Neshoba won a Mississippi state championship in early February.

Allie Williams (Seminole Tribe of Florida/Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians) has been a part of all five championships. She led the way with the top individual score in this year’s Class II state final at Fannin Lanes in Brandon. Her 555 pins helped her earn all-state honors along with teammates Ashton Luke and Sarah Lewis.

Neshoba rolled a 2415 as a team and won the Baker series 3-0 against Long Beach.

Neshoba has won state championships every year since Williams, the daughter of Seminole tribal member Brandi Williams, first joined the team as a seventh grader in 2017. Being able to rotate a steady mix of younger bowlers with more experienced ones each season has proven to be a winning formula for a program that has won state titles in six of the past seven years.

In a sport where steps are crucial, Neshoba has not missed one.

“Although almost every year we have lost a few starting members, we’ve always been able to adapt with the new and returning people,” Williams said. “The team has become my family – girls and boys (teams) – so being comfortable with each other allows us to stay calm and do what we know to do.”

“One of our goals is to keep a few bowlers from each grade so the younger ones will have a couple of years to learn the game before they are put into the matches,” Neshoba coach Joey Blount said.

This season Williams, a junior, led the team with a 198 overall average.

“It was a big boost from the previous year, however, there’s always room for improvement,” she said.

She was the high scorer in eight of the team’s 10 matches. In addition to scoring improvement this season, Blount said Williams also showed tremendous advancement in her approach.

“I could tell much improvement in Allie’s mental game this year,” he said. “Her focus has always been great and her desire to win or bowl well was there, but in the past she has let her emotions get the best of her. At times her emotions made it difficult to give her advice. This year she did not get visibly upset when things did not go her way. She kept her composure and kept bowling.”

Williams’ individual accomplishments this season included earning top medalist in Class II at regionals and states. Her best scores in three-game series were a 721 series/240.3 average and a 708 series/236 average.

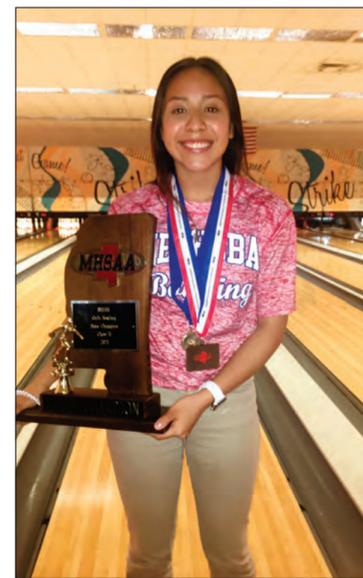
Williams is also excelling outside of high school. She and a few of her bowling friends have qualified to compete in the United States Bowling Congress’s Junior Gold Championships this summer in Indianapolis. She competed in the 2019 tournament in Detroit.

After she graduates next year, she would like to bowl for a college team.

“I’m keeping my hopes up to do so,” she said.

Remarkably, this year’s championship squad had no seniors, which speaks to the depth of the program, and means an experienced crew will be back trying to make it six in a row next year.

“So I believe we are expected to be one, if not the top team in our class again next year. I am expecting even greater things from Allie next year,” Blount said.



Courtesy photo

Allie Williams holds the Class II Mississippi state bowling championship trophy that her Neshoba Central High School team won in February 2021. Williams, a junior, rolled the high score in the class and earned all-state honors.

INFR moves forward with plans for 2021 season

STAFF REPORT

Indian National Finals Rodeo is moving forward with plans to hold a 2021 championship.

The organization announced Feb. 19 that it intends to hold a rodeo season and finals.

“The INFR is excited to rodeo again. I think our members, contestants and fans are ready to rodeo as well. We plan on moving forward in a safe manner that coincides with

tribal, local and state guidelines as it pertains to health issues and our events,” Bo Vocu, INFR president, said in a statement.

For the 2021 season, INFR plans to shift from its usual region-based format and instead will sanction a greater number of tour rodeos and qualifiers for the finals, which is scheduled to be held Oct. 19-23 at South Point Equestrian Center in Las Vegas. More details are scheduled to be forthcoming.

For more information visit infr.org.

All-Native youth golf tournament to be held in New Mexico

STAFF REPORT

Notah Begay’s NB3 Foundation will host its second annual All-Native National Youth Golf Tournament Aug. 8-10 at Santa Ana Golf Club in Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico.

Winners will qualify for the Notah Begay III Junior Golf National Championship in December. Qualifying for the national championship is taking place throughout the year.

For more information visit www.jgnc.org/.

NSU basketball player aspires to become Indian Country medical doctor

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

So what is psychiatry? That's a question Kyarah Grant hears just about every time she tells someone her career ambition.

The easy part for Grant (Navajo/Choctaw) is telling people she wants to be a medical doctor; the tough part is explaining the title and what it encompasses.



Kyarah Grant

Physiatry is the field of physical medicine and rehabilitation. Grant wants to specialize in the sports medicine aspect of physiatry. Physiatrists are medical doctors who make diagnoses and prescribe the therapies that physical therapists will subsequently perform.

Often, physiatrists lead a team of medical professionals which could include physical therapists, occupational therapists and physician extenders.

Grant is a pre-med student at Nova Southeastern University in Davie. She's a biology major. She's a psychology minor. And she's a guard on the NSU women's basketball team. In other words, she's very busy.

If everything goes according to plan, she will also be a Native American doctor, a profession that is sorely underrepresented from within Indian Country. In fact, a 2018 American Medical Association report showed Native Americans account for just 0.4% of the physician workforce. The numbers aren't getting better. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, out of 20,387 medical school graduates in 2019-20, only 35 were American Indian or Alaska Native.

"Especially with the lack of opportunities, it's hard for Native Americans to have any opportunity to become a doctor," Grant said. "I know there are a lot of smart Native Americans out there, but they don't have that opportunity to get where they want to be. I'm very blessed to have that opportunity to become the doctor that I aim to be."

Initially, Grant wanted to be a physical therapist, figuring that would be a good way to stay involved in sports after her college playing days end. But when a nurse told her about a lack of physiatrists, her curiosity piqued and career goals shifted, and so did her academic address.

How did someone who spent the first 10 years of her life living in a rural area of Arizona and the next 10 in a small Mississippi town wind up in bustling South Florida?

Academics certainly played a role. "NSU has a really good medical school," she said.

Athletics also figured heavily in her decision to switch to NSU in 2020 after spending two years at the University of Tennessee at Martin.

"I talked to (NSU head coach LeAnn Freeland-Curry) and I really liked her. When she offered me a scholarship, I took it without a second thought," Grant said. "I like the coaches. They're really easy to talk to and they're very willing to help you in any part of your game."

An added caveat to Grant's decision to come to NSU was her friendship with Seminole basketball standout Skylla Osceola. They played together a few years ago on a team coached by Osceola's father Marl that won a NAYO championship in New York.

"It was a lot fun playing with Skylla because she works really hard and she's really smart, too," Grant said.

When Grant decided to transfer, her eyes turned toward Florida.

"I was talking with Skylla, and her parents were talking with my parents about how it would be pretty awesome if we went to the same school. She was already here at NSU," Grant said.

Indeed, Osceola had been on the team since 2017 when she had an outstanding freshman season as the Sharks leader in assists and defensive rebounds and she led the Sunshine State Conference in assist-to-turnover ratio.

But the Osceola-Grant reunion at NSU only took place in practices. Due to the pandemic, the university opted to cancel all games this season. The Sharks were left with plenty of practices and intra-squad scrimmages, but no games. Grant, who won two state championships at Choctaw Central High School in Mississippi, retains this year's eligibility, meaning the redshirt sophomore has three seasons left.

Even though Osceola is no longer with the team, she and Grant won't have trouble finding each other to shoot hoops. That's because Grant is living with the Osceola family on the Hollywood Reservation while attending NSU.

As for becoming acclimated to South Florida, Grant said she's amazed by the large population and the vast number of restaurants compared to where she's come from. She's eager to get a taste of life here, but has been hesitant due to the pandemic.

"There are so many things to do here that I want to do," she said.

Lexi Foreman concludes high school career with 16-point night in state semifinals

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

The Anadarko High School girls basketball team's season didn't end the way the Lady Warriors wanted, but senior guard Lexi Foreman still departed on a high note thanks to an impressive performance in the state semifinals.

In her final game for Anadarko, Foreman, a Seminole Tribe of Florida tribal member, scored a team-high 16 points to go along with five rebounds, three steals and one assist in a 40-37 loss to Tuttle in the Oklahoma Class 4A semifinals March 11 in Oklahoma City.

Anadarko, which had won 20 games in a row, was shaky early and fell behind 7-0 in the first quarter, but Foreman kept her team from getting blown out. She provided the spark the Lady Warriors desperately needed with a layup followed by a rebound and a 3-pointer that sliced the deficit to 7-5. Foreman was a force on the boards with four rebounds in the opening quarter, which ended with Tuttle ahead 9-7.

Foreman scored four points in the second quarter and finished up with a nifty assist on a hoop that sent the teams to halftime knotted at 18-18.

The score was tied 29-29 late in the third quarter when Anadarko surged to a five-point lead and briefly grasped control of the game. Once again, Foreman was pivotal as she forced a turnover that led to

her sinking one of her two 3-pointers on the night.

But Anadarko's 34-29 lead with a minute left in the third eventually melted away as Tuttle outscored the Lady Warriors 11-3 the rest of the way to advance to the championship. A layup by Foreman gave Anadarko a 36-35 lead in the fourth quarter, but it proved to be the team's final lead of the season.

Tuttle went ahead 40-37 on a 3-point play with :14 seconds left. Anadarko didn't get off a quality shot as time expired.

Anadarko was the reigning state champs, having captured the previous title game in 2019 and then saw its title hopes last season dashed when the postseason was canceled due to the pandemic. The Lady Warriors finished this season with a 23-3 record.

For Foreman, the road to the state semifinal included a game-high seven assists in a 47-28 win against Fort Gibson in the 4A Area III championship; nine points in a 62-32 win against Byng in the regional championship and 14 points, nine rebounds and five steals in a 57-35 win against Grove in the state quarterfinals.

Foreman, the daughter of Matt and Alicia Foreman and granddaughter of the late Coleman Josh, will be headed to Edmond to play for the University of Central Oklahoma. She signed with UCO late last year.

The Foreman name will continue on at Anadarko with Lexi's younger brother Eli being on the football and powerlifting teams.



Lexi Foreman (31) plays in her final game for Anadarko High School on March 11 in the Oklahoma Class 4A state semifinals.



Anadarko High School freshman powerlifter Eli Foreman.

Eli Foreman competes in Oklahoma high school state powerlifting meets

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

Anadarko High School's Eli Foreman wrapped up an outstanding freshman season in powerlifting.

Foreman qualified for the Oklahoma junior high and high school state powerlifting meets.

Foreman, a Seminole Tribe of Florida tribal member, placed third at the junior high regional meet in the heavyweight class. He squatted 425 pounds, benched 230 and deadlifted 460.

In the high school regional meet, Foreman placed fourth in the 242-weight class with a 420 squat, 240 bench and 450 deadweight.

At states, Foreman finished fifth in his weight class out of 14 lifters in the junior high championship.

In the state large high school meet, Foreman finished 18th out of 27. His lifts were 440 squat, 240 bench and 455 deadweight.

Foreman is the son of Matt and Alicia Foreman and grandson of the late Coleman Josh. He is the younger brother of Anadarko standout basketball player Lexi Foreman.

Kaleb Thomas starts college baseball career

STAFF REPORT

Kaleb Thomas's first collegiate baseball season is in full swing.

Thomas, from the Brighton Reservation, is a freshman outfielder and pitcher at Clarks Summit University in northeast Pennsylvania. The campus of the Christian college is close to Scranton and about a two-hour drive from both New York City and Philadelphia.

As of late March, Thomas had appeared in five games with one start. He had no hits through his first five at-bats.

Thomas scored his first college run March 9 in a 13-4 loss to Cairn University. He also made his pitching debut that day, tossing four innings of five-hit ball with three strikeouts and eight runs allowed.

His only other appearance on the hill came March 23 when he pitched one scoreless inning against Wells. He allowed one hit and fanned one batter.

Clarks Summit entered April with a 2-6 record.

Thomas isn't the only college baseball player in his family. His older brother,



Kaleb Thomas is in his freshman season on the Clarks Summit University baseball team.

Trevor, plays for Warner University in Lake Wales. Their parents are Gene and Michele Thomas.

Trevor Thomas leads Warner past Judson

STAFF REPORT

A run-scoring double from Trevor Thomas lifted Warner University past Judson College, 6-2, on March 11 in Lake Wales.

Thomas, a junior outfielder from the Brighton Reservation, delivered the clutch go-ahead RBI as a pinch hitter that snapped a

2-2 tie in the sixth inning of the seven-inning game. It was Thomas's first extra-base hit of the season.

Two games later he had a single and a walk in a loss to Ave Maria.

As of March 30, Warner had a 20-15 record. Thomas has started 10 games. In 28 at-bats, he has five hits, two RBIs and five walks.



Warner University outfielder Trevor Thomas.

Iroquois Nationals lacrosse team aims to make Olympic competition under its own flag

FROM CANADIAN PRESS

Iroquois Nationals lacrosse star Randy Staats was angry at first, but he now says an international snub of his team only fueled his desire to play on the world stage.

Three years ago, the International Olympic Committee granted the sport of lacrosse provisional status for the 2028 Games, scheduled to take place in Los Angeles.

But to make the Olympics, the Iroquois Nationals, strong competitors in other international venues, will have to prove to the International Olympic Committee that they represent a sovereign nation distinct from Canada or the United States.

Lacrosse players from the six First Nations that make up the Haudenosaunee Confederacy compete not for Canada or the U.S. — the settler states where their nations are nested — but for their confederacy.

As a provisional Olympic sport, lacrosse is now eligible for the World Games — an international competition considered an audition for sports with provisional Olympic

status.

Even though the Iroquois Nationals finished in third place at the 2018 World Lacrosse Championships, they were not initially included in the top eight teams selected to compete at the 2022 World Games.

"I thought it was a mistake at first," Staats recalls. "I was frustrated, I was upset. It actually kind of helped me, in a way, personally, because it allowed me to have confidence to voice my opinion."

A tweet from Staats about the World Games sparked attention, leading to an outcry, said teammate Brendan Bomberry, also a Mohawk from Six Nations.

"We really saw the power of social media and the power of our voices that, if we speak up, we can make a difference and that was really awesome to see," he said.

The resulting uproar and the voluntary withdrawal by Ireland Lacrosse's Senior National Team from the international competition caused World Lacrosse and the International World Games Association to reverse their decision and include the

Iroquois Nationals in the coming 2022 World Games.

The decision on the Iroquois' National Olympic Committee application for the 2028 Games is scheduled to be made in 2024.

"We basically have to sell the IOC

on our international experience, our international standing, our sovereignty, and the good things that'll happen if we're there playing lacrosse, the game we originated," said Leo Nolan, executive director of the Iroquois Nationals.

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