

# The Seminole Tribune

Voice of the Unconquered

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## Florida Legislature overwhelmingly ratifies gaming compact

*'All the people of Florida are winners'*

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

Sports betting just gained a foothold in Florida and, pending federal approval, the Seminole Tribe will be its exclusive operator.

The Florida Legislature overwhelmingly approved the gaming compact between the Seminole Tribe and the state. It passed the Senate on a 38 to 1 vote May 18. The House of Representatives passed it on a 97 to 17 vote May 19 – the last day of a special session convened to consider the 30-year compact. Gov. Ron DeSantis signed the bill May 25.

Before it went to the Legislature, the compact agreement was signed April 23 by DeSantis and Seminole Tribe Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr.

The compact guarantees the tribe will send the state a revenue share of at least \$2.5 billion over the first five years or \$500 million per year, and about \$20 billion over the 30-year duration.

The deal must be approved by the U.S. Department of the Interior, which is led by Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo), the first Native American cabinet secretary in U.S. history. Interior has jurisdiction over



Jim Allen, CEO of Seminole Gaming and Chairman of Hard Rock International, addresses a House committee May 17 in Tallahassee.

Indian gaming through the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA). The Secretary of the Interior has 45 days from receipt of the compact to approve or disapprove it. If Interior takes no action within that time, the compact is considered to be approved to the extent it complies with IGRA.

If final approvals are met, sports betting

would begin no earlier than Oct. 15 at the tribe's casinos. The tribe would license sports betting to pari-mutuels statewide and receive 40% of its revenue. Additionally, craps and roulette will be allowed at the tribe's casinos.

"Today, all the people of Florida are winners, thanks to legislative approval of the Gaming Compact between the State of

Florida and the Seminole Tribe of Florida," Chairman Osceola said in a statement. "It is a historic and mutually-beneficial partnership between the State and Seminole Tribe that will positively impact all Floridians for decades to come."

♦ See COMPACT on page 4A

## Employees adjust to Tribe's partial reopening

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

When the Seminole Tribe declared an emergency March 16, 2020, and closed all tribal offices, no one knew what the ensuing 12 months would entail.

The tribe tightened its belt as businesses, restaurants and casinos closed nationwide due to the spread of Covid-19. To keep employees safe, many departments went into virtual mode; others stayed open to continue to provide in-person services.

But with the accessibility and effectiveness of vaccines, on April 5 the tribe enacted a limited reopening of tribal offices. Safety measures are still in place. Building occupancy must be 50% or less, in-person service is by appointment only, Covid-19 safeguards are still followed and no indoor large gatherings are permitted.

After being closed for a few months early in the pandemic, tribal casinos began reopening about a year ago under safety guidelines and reduced capacity. The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum and Billie Swamp Safari have remained closed until further notice.

Employees recently returning to the workplace are adjusting to wearing masks in the office, getting their temperature checked and remaining socially distanced.

♦ See WORKPLACE on page 5A

## Ground broken for long-awaited trading post on Immokalee Reservation

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

IMMOKALEE — The wait is over for the Immokalee Reservation.

Decades after first being floated as an idea, a trading post will finally be built on the reservation. Ground was broken April 29 during a small ceremony that featured elected officials and residents.

"It took us a long time to get it rolling," said Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank. "The original idea was made in the early 2000s. We started pursuing it about 10 years ago and got it on the books a couple of years ago. We had to hit the reset button a couple of times, but the community is happy to see it."

The trading post will join the Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc.'s other trading posts in Hollywood and Brighton, which have been operating for several years.

The Immokalee Trading Post will feature 10 gas pumps, five electric vehicle (EV) charging stations and a 7,200-square-foot convenience store. The dispensers will offer regular, mid-grade, premium, diesel and

Rec90 fuel. The plans include two canopies; one in the front for regular vehicles and small trucks, and one in the back for semi-trucks and recreational vehicles. The trading post will work with the nearby Seminole Casino Hotel and accept players' points for gas and items inside the store.

"Everyone needs a gas station," said President Mitchell Cypress. "Whatever stumbling blocks they threw in front of us, the shovels are ready today."

Immokalee Council Liaison Ray Garza remembered when tribal kids on their four-wheelers were stopped by police on their way to get gas at a nearby station. The reservation's residents will no longer have to go onto the main road to fuel up because the trading post will be accessible without leaving the reservation.

"Council gave us the seed money to start this," Garza said. "The county gave us a lot of hurdles to jump, but the money was still there."

"This is a big day for Immokalee," added Immokalee Board Liaison Rafael Sanchez. "The shovels go in the ground today and by the end of the year it will be done."

Construction is expected to be

completed in seven months, or by the end of November, according to Mauro Laguzzi, project manager.

"We believe it will provide a valuable asset to the community and the tribe," said Golden Johansson, executive director of operations for the STOF board. "We were able to work through the pandemic and finalize the plans."

Those plans include a dedicated tobacco counter in the store, as well as a beer cave, 15 coolers for beverages and dairy items and three more for frozen seasonal foods. A coffee and food service counter rounds out the store.

The site will feature 27 parking spaces, four handicapped spots and two for trailer parking. The trading post will be accessible by two main entrances and exits on Immokalee Road and two secondary ones for direct community access.

"Joe (Frank) and Ralph (Sanchez) put their hearts into this project, even during Covid," said Hollywood Board Rep. Gordon "Ollie" Wareham. "By putting those shovels in the ground, the Board kept every promise."

♦ See TRADING POST on page 4A



Immokalee Council Liaison Ray Garza, left, and Immokalee Board Liaison Rafael Sanchez move some dirt during the Immokalee Trading Post groundbreaking April 29. The dirt in the two boxes was brought from the construction site nearby.

## Miss Universe winner crowned at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

HOLLYWOOD — Hard Rock and the Miss Universe competition – each with vast international recognition – proved to be a natural partnership.

Hard Rock has venues in nearly 70 countries; the Miss Universe contestants, who spent a week at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood, represented 74 countries.

After days of photo shoots, charity work and rehearsals, the 69th Miss Universe competition culminated with the crowning of Andrea Meza, Miss Mexico, as the winner, on May 16 in front of a television audience that officials said reached more than 190 countries and territories.

Entertainer Mario Lopez and model Olivia Culpo hosted the event from the stage of Hard Rock Live.

Meza, 26, plans to use her reign as Miss Universe as an advocate for women's rights and against gender-based violence.

"I am so honored to have been selected among the 73 other amazing women I stood with tonight," Meza said in a statement. "It is a dream come true to wear the Miss Universe

crown, and I hope to serve the world through my advocacy for equality in the year to come and beyond."

Meza is from Chihuahua City. She has a degree in software engineering. As an activist, she works closely with the Municipal Institute for Women, which aims to end gender-based violence. She is also a certified make-up artist and model, whose lifestyle includes being vegan and participating in extreme sports.

Pitbull was scheduled to perform at the competition, but he was replaced by Luis Fonsi. Reigning Miss Universe Zozibini Tunzi, from South Africa, crowned the new champion. Julia Gama, Miss Brazil, was runner-up.

During the week of preparation, many contestants shared photos and videos on social media of scenes from Seminole Hard Rock, including with the Guitar Hotel as a backdrop. The Seminole Tribe's Cheyenne Kippenberger, who recently concluded a two-year reign as Miss Indian World, met with Tunzi and some of the contestants. A few contestants participated in Hard Rock's traditional guitar-smash at the Guitar Hotel.

♦ See UNIVERSE on page 4A



Andrea Meza, from Mexico, is crowned Miss Universe on May 16 at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino's Hard Rock Live in Hollywood.

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# Editorial

## Washington State tribal coalition passes unprecedented climate change bill

•Fawn Sharp and Matthew Randazzo V

It was never a matter of if, but when. That's what we said, year after year, defeat after defeat, as Tribal Nations in Washington State tried again and again to pass the comprehensive, aggressive climate change legislation.

No matter how each legislative or electoral battle went, we all knew this was not a war we could lose. Surrender would never be an option. Science told us clearly the policies that were absolutely necessary to enact to ensure the survival of our state's ecosystems and the communities they sustain.

For years we worked on behalf of the Quinault Nation, as the ancestral coastal rainforest villages of Taholah and Queets on the Pacific Coast faced increasing flooding from sea level rise – and Quinault was only one of a half-dozen tribes facing urgent crises from sea level rise across the state.

We had to keep trying until we developed the strategy that succeeded in confronting the existential crisis of our generation, and generations to come, and provided the enormous resources needed for those Tribal Nations to safely and urgently relocate their villages further upland.

That's not a matter of if, but when. That's also what we said when every elected official in the state said that tribes would never get guaranteed funding parity worth billions of dollars into law. While the entire country suffers a "Quiet Crisis" of systematic underfunding of tribes at every level, we were dreamers to ever imagine that we could hardwire funding equity into law in Washington State, finally guaranteeing a level playing field after generations of systematic resource deprivation.

It's not a matter of if, but when. That's definitely what we said when we were told it would be generations before the box-checking lip service of "Tribal consultation" was replaced with obtaining "Tribal consent." American governments would never recognize a sovereign Tribal Nation's right to say "No!" to a project they support, even though it was the basis of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

This week was the "when" in the phrase "It's not a matter of if, but when history will be made by Washington tribes."

After 15 years of relentless effort, this year Washington State Tribal Nations finally succeeded in passing America's most aggressive and revolutionary climate change policy, the Climate Commitment Act, and securing unprecedented human rights protections and over a billion dollars in state funding for tribes over the first fifteen years of the policy.

We finally have a proven blueprint for successfully passing Indigenous-led climate change policy in America – as well as the blueprint for replacing Tribal consultation with "Tribal consent" in American law for the second time (more on the first later).

In other words, the first step in truly reconciling America with both its mismanagement of the environment and its disrespect for Tribal sovereignty has been taken in Washington State . . . over the objections of Governor Jay Inslee.

Despite supporting the consent provisions in the Climate Commitment Act [SB5126] when he needed Tribal support to pass the bill in the Legislature, despite supporting it both in his presidential campaign and in the I-1631 initiative campaign in 2018, Jay Inslee betrayed tribes on May 16, 2021, by breaking his word and vetoing all of the tribal consultation and consent language out of the CCA. This was the same language his office, and his party, negotiated and never objected to only weeks before.

That's exactly why the only thing Fawn Sharp and Donald Trump will ever agree on is that Jay Inslee is a snake.

With this cowardly ambush, Inslee

thought he had defeated tribes and shown them who was boss. Consent was not going into Washington law his veto trumpeted, because it would re-define the relationship between tribes and the State. . . which was exactly the point when it came to desecrating sacred sites and burial grounds.

Unfortunately, Governor Inslee had actually lost the battle an entire month earlier on April 16, 2021.

We just hadn't bothered to tell him.

Earlier in the legislative session, negotiators representing the Quinault Indian Nation and partners at the Snoqualmie Tribe quietly negotiated amendments of HB 1382, a salmon recovery bill, that contained narrow and unobtrusive consent protections for sacred and archeological sites. Because we didn't trust Governor Inslee, we never drew attention to the contents of the bill, which is why it remarkably passed 95-2 in the State House and a unanimous 49-0 in the State Senate.

That's why on April 16, 2021 — an entire month before his veto of consent in the CCA — Governor Jay Inslee signed the exact policy he hates into law without realizing it. The requirement of an American government to obtain tribal consent is in American law for the first time in history, and Jay Inslee signed the historic legislation obliviously and against his own beliefs.

### History Being Made

To get back to the CCA, it's impossible to exaggerate the importance of the pathway Washington tribes have now cleared.

It is a trail to the Promised Land that many other states and Tribal Nations, and eventually Congress, will have no choice but to follow as the impacts of climate change become ever more dire, and the desperate need for Tribal expertise and resources in co-managing the response is better appreciated.

When the "Climate Commitment Act" was passed by the Washington State Legislature in April of 2021, the historic victory was the product of tens of thousands of hours of grassroots organizing, advocacy, strategic planning, policy development, and political gamesmanship by Washington's tribes and incalculable millions of dollars of investments.

The proof is in the legislation: you can definitively tell by the precedent-shattering policies contained within the "cap and invest program" created by the Climate Commitment Act that it was the rare American legislation sincerely co-written by sovereign tribes.

In short, there is a reason this legislation attracted the formal support of nineteen sovereign Tribal Nations, as well as the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI): it contained policies that tribes clearly were invested in supporting and enacting.

The outcome — a career-defining victory for Governor Jay Inslee and Washington Democrats, and a place in history for legislative hero Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon — demonstrates that political benefit of American states partnering with Tribal Nations is almost as great as the policy results.

Besides the vetoed consent provisions that are temporarily absent from the law, the CCA contains two precedent setting policies first introduced in the tribally co-authored I-1631 initiative: a mandate in law that 10% of all carbon revenue go to Washington tribes because of the 10% of state lands directly governed by tribes, and mandated public funding for the relocation projects for tribes whose ancestral villages are being flooded and rendered uninhabitable by sea level rise.

As co-authors of both the policies that originated I-1631 initiative and the strategy that created them in negotiations, our goal from the beginning was explicit: win or lose at the ballots in 2018, the previously "radical" and "far-fetched" tribal policies negotiated into I-1631 would have to be supported by almost every institutional environmental nonprofit and Democratic Party politician in Washington State once it was on the ballot.

The "radical" tribal policy requests would thus be mainstreamed in all future climate policy debates — and would be supported by our community of color allies who would stand in solidarity with Indigenous peoples like we have and always will with them.

When tribes demanded that the CCA include the most pivotal elements of I-1631 — a 10% guarantee of all revenue to Tribal projects to match the 10% of Washington State under direct tribal governance; "consent" instead of "consultation" on cultural resources impacts; and relocation funding for flooding tribes — we were not alone.

Washington's communities of color not only showed up in force to demand urgent action on climate change, but they offered their fully coordinated support and solidarity behind the Tribal Nations that have stewarded this state since time immemorial.

Tribes received decisive support from incredible allies like Latino nonprofit giant El Centro de la Raza and its legendary leader Estela Ortega; the Washington Build Black Alliance led by masterful legislative general Paula Sardinias; and the Washington State Black Lives Matter Alliance and its fiery and inspiring leader Sakara Remmu.

Just as importantly, the environmental powerhouse Washington Conservation Voters were full and unequivocal allies of tribes like never before. It's not surprising when you realize who their new CEO is — the brilliant Alyssa Macy, citizen and former COO of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. She was joined in this alliance by I-1631 veteran Mike Stevens, Washington Director of the Nature Conservancy, who applied the lessons of that campaign to achieve a victory equal to any other in the proud history of the Nature Conservancy and to build trust and respect with Tribal leaders like never before.

Faced by withering criticism from Seattle nonprofits claiming to speak for "BIPOC" groups that somehow never consulted with Washington's actual tribes and ignored them when they did take positions, House Democrats were openminded and ready to partner with this unprecedented multiracial coalition.

### The Hand of the Creator

Once the I-1631 provisions were included by Representative Joe Fitzgibbon, the result was miraculous. The most important bill in Washington State history's most controversial and technically complex sections were somehow negotiated, drafted, and passed in only two weeks in partnership with nineteen Tribal Nations, all of them diverse and unique in their outlook and needs, who reached consensus with each other and a majority of legislators in both chambers. Somehow, we kept the entire coalition together until the very end.

It's hard not to see the hand of the Creator in such an unlikely underdog come-from-behind victory.

Thanks to the brilliance, power, and moral leadership of Washington's Tribal Nations, the far-fetched dreams of I-1631 is now state law — as well as a call to action to Tribes nationwide to seize the moment, fill the leadership vacuum, and help lead this country to urgently and aggressively fight the challenge of climate change.

We know it's not a matter of if, but when, tribes nationwide will accomplish the impossible . . . again.

*Fawn Sharp is a human rights attorney who serves as the president of the National Congress of American Indians and the vice president of the Quinault Nation. She served as the five-term president of the Quinault Nation from 2006-2021. Matthew Randazzo V is a published author and former senior state environmental executive who is President Sharp's senior adviser and represents and advises Tribal Nations. This article appears on indianz.com.*

## Three newcomers, three incumbents win seats in tribal election

### STAFF REPORT

**HOLLYWOOD** — The Seminole Tribe of Florida's Tribal Council and Board of Directors will have some new representation for the 2021-2023 term.

Three newcomers — all women — won seats in the Regular Election on May 10. Mariann Billie, Nadine Bowers and Christine McCall will be inaugurated with victorious incumbents in June.

Billie won the Council race in Big Cypress. Incumbent David Cypress finished second in the five-person field.

Brighton Councilman Larry L. Howard and Hollywood Councilman Christopher

S. Osceola both retained their seats in the Council's other two races.

In Board races for Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc., Bowers won the Big Cypress seat. Incumbent Joe Frank finished second. McCall won the Hollywood race which featured nine candidates. Incumbent Gordon "Ollie" Wareham did not run. Brighton Board Rep. Helene Buster was the Board's lone incumbent that won.

The Council and Board representatives, who serve two-year terms, will join Council Chairman/Board Vice-President Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. and Board President/Council Vice-Chairman Mitchell Cypress, who are currently serving four-year terms.

## Biden revives key Native American council

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

President Joe Biden's promise that his administration would work with Native Americans on a host of issues continued through his first 100 days in office and includes the reinstatement of a significant council.

Biden recently brought back to life the White House Council on Native American Affairs. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) was named the council's chair and the group held its first meeting April 23.

The council's goals are to coordinate with tribes on issues such as the continuing Covid-19 response, climate change, tribal homelands and treaties, economic development, energy and infrastructure, health care, education and reopening schools, public safety and justice, and international Indigenous issues.

At the first meeting, 10 cabinet secretaries and other top government officials discussed strengthening nation-to-nation relationships, improving tribal consultation, and formalizing committees within the council.

"The White House Council on Native American Affairs represents an important commitment to strengthen tribal sovereignty, uphold our commitment to tribal nations, and honor the United States' nation-to-nation relationships," Haaland said in a statement. "Addressing the systemic inequities that impact Indigenous peoples is the responsibility of every federal agency that will require an all-of-government approach across the administration."

The reestablishment of the council was praised in Indian Country.

"[We] applaud the Biden administration



Deb Haaland, U.S. Secretary of Interior

for prioritizing the needs of tribal communities during their first months in office through the reestablishment of the [council] and their renewed focus on tribal consultation," the Native American Finance Officers Association said in a statement.

President Barack Obama had established the council through an executive order in 2013 in response to requests from tribal leaders. However it was dormant under the Trump administration and had not met regularly since 2016.

The White House also recently announced that it would host a White House Tribal Leaders Summit in late 2021. The purpose of the summit is to provide a venue for leaders of the 574 federally recognized U.S. tribes to interact directly with Biden and representatives from the highest levels of his administration.

More information is at [whitehouse.gov](https://whitehouse.gov).

## Native veterans procession is back, but for 2022

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Native American veterans and their families waited a long time for a national memorial, but it finally happened in 2020. But because of the pandemic, an in-person ceremony and veterans procession was postponed in 2020 and 2021. Events are now scheduled to take place on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2022.

Officials at the National Museum of the American Indian made the announcement May 21.

"We look forward to welcoming you in 2022 to the museum grounds to honor American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native veterans," a statement read.

Officials had previously marked the memorial's opening with a video dedication on Veterans Day last year.

The National Native American Veterans Memorial is the first memorial in Washington, D.C., to honor Native American veterans. It is located on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian — part of the Smithsonian Institution. It is currently open to the public 24 hours a day.

## Biden nominates Native American for District Court judge

### STAFF REPORT

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — President Biden announced May 12 a group of judicial nominations, including Lauren King, a citizen of the Muscogee Nation in Oklahoma. King was nominated for the U.S. District Court for the Western District of

Washington. She would be the first Native American federal judge in Washington State history.

King is a principal at Foster Garvey, P.C. based in Seattle, Washington, where she has practiced since 2012. She chairs the firm's Native American law practice group and has served as a pro tem appellate judge for the Northwest Intertribal Court System

since 2013. King is also an appointed commissioner on the Washington State Gambling Commission. She previously taught Federal Indian Law at the Seattle University School of Law. Prior to joining Foster Garvey, King was an associate at Byrnes Keller Cromwell LLP from 2010 to 2012 and at K&L Gates from 2008 to 2009. King graduated from the University

of Virginia School of Law in 2008, and from the University of Washington, with distinction, in 2004.

She has been a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Bar Association since 2015. She was recognized as a Native American 40 Under 40 by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development in 2018.



Lauren King

The Seminole Tribune is a member of the Native American Journalists Association.

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## Correction

In the April 30, 2021, print edition of the Seminole Tribune the article "Artist teams up with Micosukee Tribe for Miami exhibit" stated that Felipe Mujica and Khadijah Cypress founded the Micosukee Creativity Center. Cypress, however, is the sole founder of the center. The Tribune regrets the error.

# Community



## Daniel Tommie presents Seminole culture to Audubon Society

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

"If you live within the laws of nature, you will have all you need," Daniel Tommie told the Hendry-Glades chapter of the National Audubon Society.

Nature and Tommie's passion for Seminole culture were the underlying themes of an online presentation May 10, during which he shared his knowledge of the role of stories, birds and dugout canoes in traditional Seminole culture.

Tommie grew up in his Miccosukee grandparents' camp in what is now the Everglades National Park. His grandfather carried the medicine bundle, so people always came into their camp. His grandmother made sure everyone had something to eat, including turtle, ibis and deer.

"I long for that love, unity and family," Tommie said. "That keeps me going. We are all struggling through the pandemic. The breath maker has been so good to me and my ancestors. During times of struggle and sacrifice and survival, we want learn and do what's best for our people. We are on earth for a fraction of a second and are just one little speck in the vastness of the universe. It makes me humble."

Tommie told about a painting by Guy LaBree titled "Sacrifice," which shows a scene during the Seminole Wars of a young mother making the ultimate sacrifice to save her family. She smothered her baby so the nearby soldiers wouldn't find them as they hid in the Everglades. Seeing the painting left an indelible mark on him.

"That image is forever placed in my heart and my mind," Tommie said. "That baby had to be sacrificed so the whole family could survive. If it wasn't for that baby, I might not be here. That keeps me going in the direction I believe I am supposed to be going."

Tommie worked at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum before the pandemic as a traditional interpretive coordinator and built an authentic hunting camp, complete with pelts. While he was there, he began carving dugout canoes to keep that tradition alive. He has been carving for about four years.

Canoes are made from cypress trees and vary in size, depending on its function. Larger ones were for transporting the family



Courtesy photo

Daniel Tommie gives a presentation May 10 to the Hendry-Glades chapter of the Audubon Society.

or for commerce. Smaller ones were for hunting and giggering. During the Seminole Wars, Abiaka and his warriors used small canoes to escape after leading U.S. soldiers into a trap during the battle of Okeechobee.

"I don't consider myself an artist," he said. "I just do what's been done for thousands of years. I'm a canoe builder now, nothing can stop me."

Surrounded by canoes, Tommie showed some early tools the Calusa used to carve their canoes. One had a piece of a conch shell attached to part of a tree branch, another was a complete conch shell tied to a larger branch. Both were adzes, which are ancient tools with the blade perpendicular to the handle instead of parallel to it. The blade of a modern adze is made from metal.

"The one with the piece of shell will help you clear a canoe," Tommie said. "It's not sharp, but it can do the job. The one with the large conch shell will cut down a tree."

Tommie showed some of the canoes he has carved over the last few years, one is about 27 feet long. He likes to give the canoes away and gave one to the senior center in Big Cypress, where he lives.

"If you have a passion for it, it isn't work," he said.

Tommie told a few traditional stories about the birds he has seen while outside

carving. One was about a woodpecker who tricked termites to leave the safety inside the tree by telling them he wouldn't eat them. Of course, the bird feasted when the termites believed him.

"There are a lot of hawks around here," Tommie said. "You can use them if you are hunting because they are usually looking for something to eat. Eagles fly the highest and take our prayers since he gets closest to the creator. Anhingas are called "butt washers" since they fly so close to the water."

The stories are Seminole legends he has heard all his life, many told by his grandfather, who he often thinks of while he is carving.

"We need to hold those memories and cherish them," Tommie said. "My grandfather told me the only time you should be looking down on somebody is when you are helping him up. I'm so blessed I had that from him."

Tommie explained the matrilineal society of the Seminoles and that the mother gives the clan to her children.

◆ See CULTURE on page 4A



Courtesy photo

Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, is a popular tourist town in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains.

## Three tribes, including STOF, partner in Pigeon Forge hotel

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

From Hollywood to Dollywood.

The Seminole Tribe has entered into an investment partnership with two other tribes in the development of a hotel in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. The well-known tourist town is located in the foothills of the scenic Great Smoky Mountains and is home to the Dollywood Theme Park.

The Seminole Tribe, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians have joined with hotel developer DreamCatcher Hotels. DreamCatcher, which made the announcement May 17, describes the hotel as "high-end, AAA-rated Four Diamond."

"We are thrilled about our partnership with the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians," Zeke Cooper, president of DreamCatcher franchise development, said in a statement. "The Pigeon Forge property launches a new milestone in our company, opening as the first hotel under our brand name. Our tribal partners share our bold vision of developing and investing in unique and innovative hospitality properties, located in areas we know people want to visit. We are excited and humbled by their investment and trust. Our goal is to create significant returns for each tribe's members."

Pigeon Forge has less than 6,000 residents, but it attracts millions of visitors

each year. The town is 10 miles from the entrance to Smoky Mountains National Park, which drew more than 12 million visitors in 2020.

Dollywood, the sprawling amusement park co-owned by Dolly Parton, also attracts millions of visitors annually.

"On behalf of the Tribal Council of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, I'm excited to be part of this historic development, which I am confident will continue to secure the economic future of our Tribal Members and drive economic prosperity for many years to come," Seminole Tribe Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. said in a statement. "The Seminole Tribe has deep experience in owning and operating hotels, and we are very familiar with Pigeon Forge, a market that attracts millions of vacationers, conventions, weddings and athletic tournaments each year."

"The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians are proud to partner with our sister tribes, the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians on this inaugural project," Principal Chief Richard Sneed of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians said in a statement. "It is our hope that this will be but one of many economic development projects our tribes can partner on, helping to secure the financial future of our tribes. We are grateful for the opportunity as well as the partnership with DreamCatcher as the project developer."

◆ See PIGEON FORGE on page 4A

**PROBLEM?**

**SOLUTION:**

**GUY SELIGMAN, P.A.**  
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◆ **TRADING POST**  
From page 1A

About a dozen community members

turned out for the groundbreaking, but stayed in their cars and listened to the ceremony on a dedicated FM radio site.

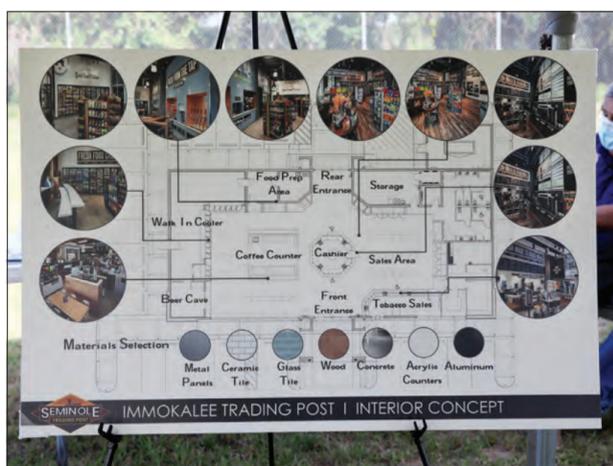
"This is a source of community and tribal pride," Rep. Frank said. "And it will

offer casino patrons a good, clean store to go to."



Beverly Bidney

From left, Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee general manager Tony Alves, Big Cypress Councilman David Cypress, Immokalee Council Liaison Ray Garza, President Mitchell Cypress, Immokalee resident Jeanie Nelson, Big Cypress Board Rep Joe Frank, Immokalee resident Linda Beletso, Immokalee Board Liaison Rafael Sanchez and Hollywood Board Rep. Gordon "Ollie" Wareham officially break the ground for the Immokalee Trading Post on April 29.



Beverly Bidney (2)

At left, Immokalee Council Liaison Ray Garza speaks at the groundbreaking ceremony. At right, the floor plan of the interior of the trading post.

◆ **COMPACT**  
From page 1A

"The breakdown of the 2010 compact has denied the state of Florida any revenue derived from the Seminole Tribe's ongoing gaming operations - including what is the most profitable casino in the United States, located in Hillsborough County. This changes today," DeSantis said in a statement. "With this new compact, the state will now see a large stream of reoccurring revenue to the tune of billions of dollars over the next few years."

During the three-day special session, debate on the merits of the bill to ratify the compact went through various committees in the House and Senate. After a logjam on the first day, the compact was amended to remove a clause which would have allowed the tribe, after three years, to negotiate for

additional online and mobile games.

In closing the bill prior to the vote, Rep. Sam Garrison, R-Clay, said, "I've rarely found an agreement where both sides get what they want. Traditionally, if nobody loves it but everybody can live with it, that's an agreement worth moving forward with. Thanks to the amendment brought by the speaker and the governor and the tribe working together, I'm comfortable to encourage all my colleagues that this is an agreement we can live with and we should ratify it."

Jim Allen, CEO of Seminole Gaming and Chairman of Hard Rock International, and attorney Joe Webster, outside counsel for the tribe, represented the tribe before committees in both chambers.

"We are here because the tribe sincerely wants to rekindle, restart the relationship that it commenced with the state of Florida in a compact environment back in 2007 and the most recent compact in 2010," Allen told

a House committee.

Sports betting will be implemented through a "hub and spoke" model in which the tribe is the hub and the pari-mutuels are the spokes. The pari-mutuels must go through the hub to offer sports betting at their facilities.

Allen told the House Select Committee on Gaming that the tribe is prepared to enter into agreements for sports betting with pari-mutuals, per compact requirements.

"When the tribe gives a \$2.5 billion guarantee to the state that these funds will be paid in the first five years, no matter what, that is something the state can truly take to the bank," Allen said. "Ten years ago we offered a billion dollar guarantee. We not only met that guarantee, we exceeded it."

The tribe's relationship with the state earned praise from Rep. Ralph Massulo, R-Citrus and Hernando. "We look at the parties involved and I believe if we look at the past and how the tribe has treated the state, they have been extremely generous; they have been extremely generous to the state," Massulo said on the floor.

Massulo said the compact will bring more than 2,000 jobs to the state.

Prior to the vote in the House, Rep. Randy Fine, R-Brevard, chairman of the House Select Committee on Gaming, complimented the tribe.

"The Seminole Tribe worked hard on this. They had nine more years they could have paid us nothing; I thank them for that," Fine said to his colleagues. "This could be the most consequential vote you will make. This is a good deal for our state. In the casino business, the house always wins. I think if we pass this today, not only will the house win, but the people of Florida will win as well."



Image via Florida Channel

Attorney Joe Webster, outside counsel for the tribe, speaks to the Senate Committee on Appropriations on May 17 in Tallahassee.

◆ **CULTURE**  
From page 3A

"When the time was right for the clans to emerge out of the ground, the panther was first in line, wind was second and bird was third," Tommie said. "But panther couldn't get his head through the crack in the ground, so wind made it bigger and bird made it wider. These three clans are as close as they can be."

Language is important in Seminole culture because it isn't just about sharing information.

"Language is vital to the experience of an oral story," Tommie explained. "The

clouds, the moods, the expressions are all described in detail. You can only get that through the native tongue. I was blessed to get that from my grandparents."

During a question and answer period after the presentation, a participant asked if young people are interested in learning Seminole traditions and crafts.

"I think so," Tommie said. "Be the change you want to see. That's what I'm doing, it's my job to plant a seed with them. Before the pandemic, I had a couple of kids at the museum who wanted to learn to use the adze. I hope that will be resparked after the pandemic and they give it a shot."

◆ **PIGEON FORGE**  
From page 3A

The property will feature 12,000 square feet of meeting and convention space, a rooftop restaurant and lounge, and 200 guest rooms. The hotel site is located near dining, shopping and excursion options. It is adjacent to the LeConte Center meeting and event facility. Also nearby is the Ripken Experience, a baseball/softball complex that is home to camps and tournaments. Its founders are the Ripken family, including Baseball Hall of Famer Cal Ripken Jr.

The three tribes involved in the development have long been part of the NAYO and NASA youth and adult baseball, basketball and softball tournaments that are held annually.

◆ **MISS UNIVERSE**  
From page 1A

The women also spent time May 10 working together to support Smile Train, an international children's charity that provides training, funding and resources in developing countries for free cleft repair surgery and care.

The United States was represented by Aysa Branch, 23. She won the Miss USA competition last fall. She is from Booneville,

Mississippi, and has her own cosmetic business named Branch Beauty.

The Miss Universe Selection Committee was comprised of Miss Universe 1997 Brook Lee; Miss Universe 2006 Zuleyka Rivera; President of Carnival Cruise Line Christine Duffy; chief marketing officer of Mary Kay Cosmetics Sheryl Adkins-Green; actor and activist Arden Cho; the CEO of Live Tinted Deepica Mutyala; television host Keltie Knight; and the CEO of Arena del Rio Tatyana Orozco.



Photo via Instagram

Andrea Meza, the new Miss Universe, jams with a guitar at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.



Photo via Instagram

Miss Universe contestants representing countries from around the world gather at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood in preparation for the competition.



Photo via Instagram

Nadia Sayers, Miss Ireland, shows off a flashy outfit in front of the Guitar Hotel.



Photo via Instagram

Amanda Odbam, Miss Thailand, strikes a pose with the Guitar Hotel in the background.

**WORKFORCE**  
From page 1A

Amy Yzaguirre, Chairman's special assistant, never really left the Immokalee office.

"The building was so quiet," Yzaguirre said. "It's definitely good to see faces again. I'm glad to be back and have other people in the building. It's a breath of fresh air. Over the last few weeks, more and more people have been popping in and out. It's nice to catch up. I'm ready for the new normal."

Aaron Tommie, CSSS advanced career development participant, worked from home exclusively since the tribe shut down last year and was a little nervous about going back to the office.

"I got comfortable with the routine at home," Tommie said. "Now I feel rejuvenated. I'm a lot more active now that I'm back. I'm back into the routine, but it took a little adjustment."

Tommie works in the office three days a week and from home the other two days. How little he spent on gas during the pandemic was a revelation to him when he started commuting again. Before the pandemic, he filled his tank every week; during the pandemic he'd use just half a tank in three weeks.

"It made me realize how much we don't need in life," he said. "There is no need to always eat out. I cancelled our cable and spend more time reading and being more active."

Working from home also gave Tommie a lot more time to spend with his family; he hadn't realized how much time he spent away from them between work and graduate school. He plans to continue making the time for them even though he is back in the office.

"I'm really glad to be back, physically I feel like I have more energy," Tommie said. "There's something about putting on work clothes and going to work; it makes me feel good. I wasn't going to the barber shop very often, but now I go often to stay looking professional."

Michelle Ford, Immokalee Preschool Center manager, worked remotely through the pandemic, but came in periodically as needed to give teachers supplies for their online classes. Since April 5, they have thoroughly cleaned and rearranged the classrooms for the opening of summer school June 7.

"We downsized how many toys we will put out, since they all need to be cleaned throughout the day and sterilized at the end of the day," Ford said. "We will downsize enrollment during the summer for ages 2 to 5 only and the classrooms are limited to 10 kids."

The preschool will only be available for students whose parents and caretakers

work or attend school, who receive services from the Children's Center for Diagnostics & Therapy or are in foster care. Students and teachers will be required to wear masks.

"We are looking forward to seeing the kids and having them in the classroom," Ford said. "I know the kids aren't used to wearing masks at home, but eventually they will get used to it since they will see teachers wearing them."

The biggest difference between working at home and being back at school for Ford is mostly physical. When she goes home after a day at work, she is more exhausted and goes to sleep a lot earlier than when she worked remotely. But she is glad to be back.

"It's good to see everybody face to face again," she said. "We had to get used to virtual. Nobody knew it was something we would ever have to do. Who thought when we had our spring break that we would be told we couldn't come back for over a year? There is no crystal ball to see what the future is going to look like. The virus is unpredictable and it threw us a curveball. I miss my kids and am looking forward to them coming back. I'm sure once they get here they will be happy to be back."

Magdalie Dumorne, CSSS K-12 adviser, is back in her Immokalee office two or three days a week and works from home the rest of the time. She can only see students in her office by appointment and continues to have virtual meetings with schools about the upcoming school year. All schools will be fully open in the fall.

"Over the year, we kept in touch with students through email," Dumorne said. "Some kids couldn't adjust to online school, but it worked out well for the more timid students since they didn't have to go on campus. Some students made beautiful gains with online school."

Some schools may continue online classes, but Dumorne said others may not offer it unless a medical condition makes it necessary.

"For most students, online school wasn't good," she said. "Some will have to do credit recovery. Some students lost traction, but the state has to promote them because it wasn't their fault. Those decisions are not made by the districts, but by the state."

There will be challenges ahead for the new school year, but Dumorne is ready for it. She said the students are looking for a more normal environment and she is too.

"I love coming back to the office, I needed to get out of the house," Dumorne said. "For me it's a treat. I put on some makeup, do my hair. That's a plus for me."

She also can't wait to see the students in person. Dumorne recently saw a third grader in the Immokalee library, but couldn't give her a hug. Instead they talked about the challenges of third grade. Someday soon, maybe that conversation can begin with a long, lost hug.

# After job well done, 4-H kids treated to a day at the track



Kevin Johnson

Now that their season caring for animals has finished, the kids from the 4-H program on the Hollywood Reservation were treated to a day of indoor karting May 23 at F1 Speed in Hollywood. The event was organized by the Hollywood Council Office and included lunch. Nearly all of the kids raised swine to be sold. Above, Daryn Tommie-James is focused as he prepares to go around a corner.



Kevin Johnson

Jaiden Turtle (red shirt) and Sue Osceola race around the indoor track in Hollywood.



Kevin Johnson

Levi Tommie, the reserve champion in swine, picks up speed on a straightaway at F1 Speed.

## CNN severs ties with Santorum following comments about Native Americans

BY LEVI RICKERT  
Native News Online

CNN has fired Rick Santorum, its conservative senior political correspondent, almost a month after the former Pennsylvania U.S. senator and twice-failed presidential candidate made disparaging comments about Native Americans during an event on April 23 at a Young America's Foundation event.

At the event, Santorum said the country was set up based on Judeo-Christian principles, and that White settlers "birthed a nation from nothing. I mean, there was nothing here," he said, adding, "I mean, yes, we have Native Americans, but candidly, there isn't much Native American culture in American culture." A video emerged days later that was shared thousands of times on social media platforms.

His comments drew the ire of Native Americans across Indian Country. Many Native Americans called for his immediate firing; including in an op-ed on Native News Online.

"Rick Santorum is an unhinged and embarrassing racist who disgraces CNN and any other media company that provides him a platform," National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) President Fawn Sharp wrote in a statement published by Native News

Online late last month.

After hearing about the push back from Native Americans and even some CNN anchors who would not allow him on their programs, Santorum said his words were taken out of context. He never apologized for his remarks.

On May 22, NCAI released a statement on Santorum's firing from CNN. The statement said NCAI President Sharp applauds CNN's termination of its contract with Santorum. Sharp says CNN's decision upholds the network's profound responsibility to cover racial discourse equitably and responsibly.

"I am thrilled that CNN is ensuring that justice is served," President Sharp said. "This was never a matter of if a decision would be made; it was only a matter of when. I look forward to continuing to be a resource for CNN as the network works to combat racist and inaccurate narratives."

President Sharp emphasized the importance of partnerships with American Indian tribes, journalists, and media to develop creative solutions that address inaccurate portrayals of Indigenous peoples and Native erasure in the media.

*Editor's note: For additional coverage visit [nativenewsonline.net](http://nativenewsonline.net).*

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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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# Hollywood Reservation celebrates Mother's Day

*Drive-thru event held at Estates*



Damon Scott

With the Guitar Hotel in the background, vehicles line up for the Hollywood Mother's Day drive-thru event May 4.



Damon Scott

Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola helps distribute flowers to mothers at the Mother's Day event.



Damon Scott

Bouquets of colorful flowers are ready to be handed out.



Damon Scott

Paul Buster provides musical entertainment for the Mother's Day event.



Damon Scott

Malori Baker (seated) and Michelle Osceola helped hand out items to the mothers

# Legacy of code talkers still endures decades later

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Native Americans from at least 37 tribes were represented in the U.S. military during World War I and World War II – numbering in the tens of thousands. Each service member has a story, but it's the legacy of the code talkers that continues to fascinate.

It makes sense, as the code talkers program is one of the most creative and uniquely Native American military contributions. Code talkers numbered in the hundreds, from about 420 Navajo, to tribes that had as few as two members in the program.

The code talkers assisted U.S. Armed Forces through the wars by transmitting secret communications during military battles and campaigns using tribal languages. It was a code system that was never broken and helped save the lives of countless Americans and allies.

The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) took note of their influence and the public's ongoing interest during an online event May 19. Author, anthropologist and historian William C. Meadows of Missouri State University, and Alexandra Harris, NMAI senior editor and coauthor of "Why We Serve: Native Americans in the United States Armed Forces" hosted the event.

Harris said one of the great ironies of the success of the code talkers is that at the time the program began in World War I, the U.S. military was intensely targeting Indian boarding schools for recruitment. But many of the superintendents of the schools were actively trying to erase Native languages, often with harsh punishments if students were caught speaking in their tongue. And yet it is precisely those Native languages that made the code talkers program possible at all, she said. About one-third of recruits at the time were not considered U.S. citizens either.

## Problem solvers

While many tribes and Native languages were

represented among the code talkers – it's the Navajo who are the most famous with the largest representation. The Navajo are also credited for helping the U.S. and its allies win the Pacific campaign.

"There was a need for secure and immediate communications," Meadows said. "It was needed to solve a pressing issue at the time."

The Germans were compromising U.S. military communications. Phone lines could be tapped. One in four runners carrying messages were captured or killed. Other methods of communication were too slow or too hard to decode, Meadows explained.



Images via NMAI collection

Native American code talkers still capture the public's imagination and the focus of researchers to this day.

The code talkers used specialized words or expressions for military items, usually based on animals or everyday life. For example, in Choctaw, "tushka chipota," means "warrior soldier," and was code for "soldier." In Navajo, "atsa" means "eagle" and was code for "transport plane." In Hopi, "paaki" mean "houses on water," which was code for "ship." And in Comanche "wakaree'e" means "turtle," which was code for "tank."

"It worked because to the Germans it was an obscure language, largely unwritten and not based on mathematical code principals, not based on European languages or syntax, and harder to compare for similarities," Meadows said.

Meadows has written five books about Native American veterans – his latest is "The First Code Talkers: Native American Communicators in World War I." He's studied code talkers since 1989 and has also been an advocate for their federal recognition, helping to pass the Code Talkers Recognition Act of 2008.

Some of the earliest documented code talkers were Ho-Chunk, Eastern Band of Cherokee, Choctaw, Cherokee Nation, Osage Nation and Sioux and Comanche Nation. In World War II, the Oneida-Chippewa, Comanche, Meskwaki, Hopi and Navajo emerged in the program. There were many others.

Chester Nez was the last of an original 29 Navajo code talkers. He died in 2014.

Sustaining Tribal Legacies

STOPHERO.COM

## CLIMATE RESILIENCE STRENGTH, COMMUNITY, & SURVIVAL

### WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?

All around the world, people are noticing that the earth's sensitive balance has been thrown off. The planet is heating up, and we stand witness to glaciers melting, oceans expanding, stronger storms and changing rainfall.

Most of the global warming we are seeing today is caused by pollution from burning fossil fuels, which thickens the greenhouse gas layer and traps heat within our atmosphere.

While some natural variation does exist, we have over 2,000 years of data that shows a direct relationship between the increase in carbon dioxide and the increase in global temperature. Just in the last 20 years, we have had the 10 hottest years on record. Looking long-term, this is a very real and dangerous trend.

### HOW DOES CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT ME?

"Some areas around where I grew up are dry when they were normally holding water."  
– Pete Osceola III

"I believe we are already experiencing stronger storms, extreme temperature changes during the seasons. The summer's just keep getting hotter and hotter, and with Texas freezing over I believe the storms are only going to get worse."  
– Kathryn Jo Anderson

"Flooding is really bad in parts of Broward and Miami-Dade Counties."  
– Aaron Tommie



Warmer oceans and atmosphere creates stronger storms.



Extreme heat is a public health issue, increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease, respiratory illness and heat stroke.



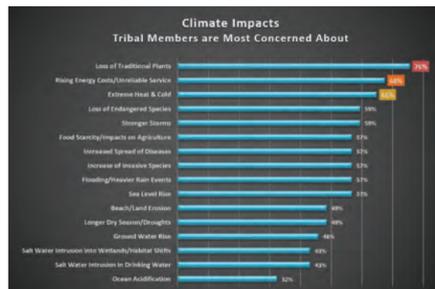
Rising temperatures dry out soils and vegetation, increasing the risk of wildfire.



Changing rainfall patterns are giving us less rainfall overall, meaning a longer dry season for farmers and ranchers.

Flooding and storm surge may be a significant climate concern for Hollywood, Tampa, and Fort Pierce. Sea Level is predicted to rise 2.5 feet in the next 50 years in South Florida. This can cause salt-water intrusion and raise groundwater levels, which threatens drink water supply and reduces the soil's capacity to absorb rainfall. As we know, when we finally get rain it is a downpour, which is hard for our drainage systems to handle.

Extreme heat may be a significant climate concern for Big Cypress, Brighton, and Immokalee. These inland reservations have about 40-50 days each year of temperatures over 95 degrees, which is considered extreme heat. That number will double by midcentury, and by the end of the century, residents will have to deal with extreme heat for half the year!



Tribal Members are most concerned about: Loss of Traditional Plants, Rising Energy Costs/Unreliable Service, and Extreme Heat & Cold.



### WHAT DO WE KNOW?

We cannot continue to ignore climate change. Just last year, the US had 22 weather and climate disasters that each cost more than \$1 billion dollars in damage. People out west suffered a major drought and heatwave, and California had the most active wildfire year on record. In the mid-west, tornadoes and derechos downed power lines, damaged houses and flattened crops. Here in the southeast, a record 12 tropical storms made landfall, and forecasters had to turn to the Greek alphabet because they ran out of names on the list. In total, these 22 events cost \$95 Billion in damages.

We must look to the future. As we see 1 in a 100 year and 1 in a 1,000 year storms happening in our communities every few years, we know we cannot continue to set standards that use historic trends to build our homes and buildings. These assumptions are no longer realistic, and new criteria is needed to plan our communities into the future. Raising design standards will protect assets, revenue, and most importantly, lives.



Climate change is a force multiplier. Because it exacerbates weather, inequality, and all other environmental and social issues, climate change is not just one problem – it is a thousand problems. The global changes we are seeing have deeply personal and local impacts, and we must all work together to identify solutions and build climate resilience into not only our infrastructure, but also our social fabric and daily lives.

### WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT?

In 2020, the Seminole Tribe of Florida launched a Climate Resiliency Program to understand and address the multiple risks climate change poses to the Tribe's land, property, and people. The program's goals are to:

- Coordinate research on the immediate and long-term impacts of climate change,
- Engage with Tribal members to inform program development, and
- Provide recommendations to leadership on how to protect the assets of the Seminole Tribe and build greater resilience for the entire community.

### Our first step is to collectively develop a Climate Action Plan.

Tribal members will be at the heart of goal setting and prioritization of actions. This is a vital process of relationship building and visioning that will guide subsequent action and investment, and all are welcome to join in the conversation!

The Seminole Tribe of Florida can become a leader in climate change planning for Tribal nations around the world, by promoting climate resiliency strategies that utilize both western-based science and traditional ecological knowledge. Together, we can protect future generations, repair a broken system of relationships, and heal the land and ecosystems we depend on.

**H.E.R.O.**  
HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENT RESOURCES OFFICE



For more information, and to get involved, reach out to:

Jill Horwitz - STOF Climate Resiliency Officer: [jillhorwitz@semtribe.com](mailto:jillhorwitz@semtribe.com)  
Cody Motlow - STOF Sustainability Coordinator: [codymotlow@semtribe.com](mailto:codymotlow@semtribe.com)

UNITY SELF-DETERMINATION SERVICE INTEGRITY SUSTAINABILITY TRANSFORMATIONAL

# Guitar smash marks birth of Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana

*Property pays homage to hometown Jackson 5*

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Seminole Tribe Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr., Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, Hard Rock and local officials, and a slew of famous musicians gathered in Gary, Indiana, May 14 and May 15 to open a new casino.

The Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana, located 30 miles from Chicago, celebrated its grand opening with a weekend's worth of events. The traditional guitar smash featured 20 participants, including Chairman Osceola, Councilman Osceola, casino president Matt Schuffert and brothers Tito and Marlon Jackson of the Jackson 5.

"We love the opportunity to change lives," Chairman Osceola told the crowd. "We created another 700 jobs here with this facility. When the second phase comes up, we'll create even more jobs for more people and their families, and the countless secondary jobs that are created..."

The first comments from Gary Mayor Jerome Prince at the ceremony were directed to Chairman Osceola and Councilman Osceola.

"Thank you to you and your tribe for everything that you've done for the city and everything that you'll do in the future," he said.

The \$300 million casino includes a huge gaming space, five restaurants, an onsite sports book, retail shop and a 1,954-seat Hard Rock Live performance venue. The 150,000-square-foot casino floor has blackjack, roulette, craps, slot machines and video poker. There is also a special baccarat area and a high limit room.

Jackson 5 memorabilia – the group also includes brothers Jackie, Jermaine and Michael – are featured throughout the property. The memorabilia features outfits worn on stage by family members, including Janet Jackson's suit from her Velvet Rope tour, Michael's iconic glove and the red leather jacket from the "Beat It" music video – one of the most recognizable pieces of fashion in music history. The Jackson collection totals more than 30 pieces. The Jackson's childhood home is located just miles from the casino.

In all, there are more than 170 pieces of music memorabilia on display representing a wide range of musical genres.

The casino also features a 37-foot-tall guitar marquee outside the entrance, which



The iconic red jacket from Michael Jackson's "Beat It" video is on display on the gaming floor at Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana in Gary, Indiana. Beside it are his famous Swarovski crystal glove and his Florsheim Imperial shoes.



Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. is interviewed by Chicago TV station ABC7 during the grand opening of the Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana on May 14 in Gary, Indiana.

is modeled after one of (father) Joseph Jackson's guitars, as well as a unique guitar chandelier that guests see upon entering the casino.

Phase two is expected to include a hotel and parking garage.

The Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana is located at 5400 West 29th Ave. The Seminole Tribe is the parent entity of Hard Rock International.



The traditional Hard Rock guitar smash takes place for the opening of the Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana on May 14 in Gary, Indiana. In the front row at far left are Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. and Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola. In the back row at the far right are Jackson 5 brothers Tito and Marlon Jackson

# Hard Rock Atlantic City plans to spend \$20M in upgrades

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

The Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City is poised to see a \$20 million upgrade at its sprawling oceanfront property.

Officials said May 3 that the company would "reinvest a minimum of \$20 million" in capital improvements at the New Jersey site.

Improvements include hotel suite renovations, a new Starbucks, more slots and table games, a new restaurant and a "refresh of beachfront amenities."

The Starbucks is expected to open in late May, located adjacent to the Hard Rock Café with boardwalk access. The new restaurant is expected to be unveiled and open this summer.

The timeline on other projects was not immediately disclosed.

"The commitment of these capital dollars from our ownership proves their devotion to enhancing our guest experience, along with the revitalization of Atlantic City and our property which opened after a \$500 million renovation less than three years ago," Joe Lupo, president of Hard Rock Atlantic

City, said in a statement.

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

The former Trump Taj Mahal property opened in 2018. It features 2,000 rooms, 20 restaurants, a 120,000-square-foot gaming floor, 2,200 slot machines and 125 table games. It includes a 400-seat Hard Rock Café and 150,000 square-feet of event space.

Officials said the bulk of the \$20 million would go toward renovating 91 hotel suites – 66 "Celebrity suites" and 25 "Roxie suites." The suite renovations are being designed by Klai Juba Wald Architecture + Interiors. All standard hotel rooms have also been upgraded with new flat screen television monitors and LED lighting, officials said.

The additional slots and table games will be located in the "Asian" and "High Limit" areas of the casino, as well as the main casino floor and cage areas.

The upgrades to beachfront amenities include new restrooms and 1,000 beach chairs at the Hard Rock Beach Bar.

Additionally, "sound enhancements" are being done to both the Hard Rock Live at Etes Arena as well as the Sound Waves venue.



Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City.

# Hard Rock Casino Cincinnati to be unveiled this summer

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Hard Rock officials in Cincinnati have been busy hiring employees as they prepare to unveil the complete rebrand of an Ohio casino.

A deal was struck in 2019 between Hard Rock International and VICI Properties for the \$745 million purchase of the JACK Cincinnati Casino. Part of the deal includes that the casino is leased to the Hard Rock.

The intention was to transform the property into the Hard Rock Casino Cincinnati.

The JACK Cincinnati Casino first opened in 2013 and featured 100,000 square feet of gaming space with about 1,800 gaming machines and 100 table games. Additionally, the property had 33,000 square feet of meeting space, six restaurants and two bars.

Phase one of a rebranding effort began after the deal was made but was significantly slowed by the pandemic, which hit all U.S. casino operations hard.

In Ohio, casinos were mandated to close from March 13, 2020, through June 19, 2020. When allowed to reopen, there were restrictions on alcohol sales and mandatory curfews.

In November 2020, for example, there was a statewide curfew which required the casino to close at 10 p.m. Hard Rock Casino Cincinnati's president George Goldhoff told the Cincinnati Business Courier recently that at the time, the casino had to start the process of closing even earlier to make sure customers were gone by 10 p.m.

"That affected us in a big way," he said. "We do a lot of our business in the evening time."

Goldhoff said several projects at the property were paused, including work on a Hard Rock Hotel.

"We still have plans to do a Hard Rock



Courtesy image

The new Hard Rock Casino Cincinnati will include a Hard Rock Café.

Hotel, but we wanted to get through phase one [of the rebranding] first," he told the Courier. "In parallel, we're doing our research on what type of hotel, size, amenities."

Covid-19 curfew restrictions were lifted in February and the rebranding efforts began in earnest once again. A Rock Shop opened in April and a Hard Rock Café – with a stage and dance floor for live music events – is nearing completion, too. The rebrand includes a Council Oak restaurant and Hard Rock memorabilia will be featured throughout the property.

"One of the most important symbolic things we did was in January when we pulled up the old carpet ... that was installed in 2013 and made way for this beautiful new carpet that's the Hard Rock standard that you'd find everywhere from Atlantic City to Hollywood," Goldhoff told the Courier.

Goldhoff said he expects to host a grand opening event to officially unveil the rebranding and new amenities sometime in July.

The Hard Rock Casino Cincinnati is located on 22 acres in the Broadway Commons area of the city's downtown district. The Seminole Tribe of Florida is the parent entity of Hard Rock International.



Hard Rock via Facebook

A ceremony welcomes the opening of the Rock Shop in Cincinnati on April 12.

# Q1 revenue raises hope for U.S. casinos

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

First-quarter revenue for commercial casinos in the U.S. has owners and operators optimistic that the industry has begun to wake up from the knockout punch it took from the pandemic.

Commercial gaming revenue surpassed \$11 billion in the first quarter of 2021, matching a previous all-time high that was achieved in the third quarter of 2019 – just months before the pandemic forced casinos to close in March of 2020.

The American Gaming Association (AGA), the casino industry's national trade group, released the figures May 11.

Casinos regulated by state gaming compacts and/or the National Indian Gaming Commission are excluded from the report. However, commercial casinos that are owned or operated by tribal gaming companies are included. Seminole Gaming is a member of the AGA.

The first-quarter 2021 revenue total represents a 4.1% increase over the industry's pre-pandemic performance in the first quarter 2019 and is a 17.7% increase over the first quarter of 2020. In addition, revenue from the first quarter of 2021 is up 21.1% over the fourth quarter of 2020.

The AGA said gains in gaming revenue were largely driven by the industry's performance in March, the highest-grossing revenue month in history for U.S. commercial gaming. More than half of states with commercial casinos saw quarterly gaming revenue increases over the first quarter of 2019, with several states reporting record quarters.

"Today's report shows gaming's comeback is ahead of schedule," AGA president and CEO Bill Miller said in a statement. "Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, our industry has faced numerous challenges head-on while still reopening responsibly and providing a safe, exciting environment for customers."

Thirty states (including Florida) and the District of Columbia had operational commercial gaming markets in the first quarter of 2021, including casino gaming, sports betting and iGaming.

By the end of the first quarter, 454, or 97.8%, of 464 commercial casinos in the U.S. were open. While some states had returned to full capacity, most U.S. casinos were still operating with capacity restrictions ranging from 25% to 75%, according to the AGA.

More is at [americangaming.org](http://americangaming.org).

# Fabian, Avalon, Rydell to perform in Immokalee

FROM PRESS RELEASE

IMMOKALEE — Frankie Avalon, Fabian and Bobby Rydell will perform their timeless hits live in concert at Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee on March 4, 2022, at 8 p.m. with doors opening at 7 p.m. Advance tickets are on sale now for \$129 and are available by phone at 1-800-514-ETIX or online at [www.moreinparadise.com](http://www.moreinparadise.com). Attendees must be 21 years of age.

Fabian, Frankie Avalon and Bobby Rydell were united by producer Dick Fox.

These "Golden Boys" were three of the most popular teen idols of the 1950s and 1960s.

The Golden Boys concert spotlights each of the performers and their all-time greatest hits: "Turn Me Loose," "Tiger" and "I'm A Man" (Fabian); "Venus," "De De Dinah" and "Bobby Sox to Stockings" (Avalon); and "Volare," "Wild One" and "Kissin' Time" (Rydell). The three stars combine their talents on several songs and perform a tribute to the material of Elvis Presley, Bobby Darin, Rick Nelson and Bill Haley.

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

A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

## Seminole art in Disney World

BY AH-TAH-THI-KI MUSEUM STAFF

**BIG CYPRESS** — The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum continues to share the Seminole story at Disney's Epcot theme park by loaning objects for the exhibit "Creating Tradition: Innovation and Change in American Indian Art" located in the American Heritage Gallery at the front of the American Adventure pavilion. The exhibit that opened in 2018 represents 40 American Indian tribes and focuses on how ancestral craftsmanship inspires contemporary art. Seminole handiworks such as bandolier

bags, sashes, and dolls have been on display for the park's millions of annual visitors to learn about.

Twice a year, the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum works with Epcot's staff to swap out the objects, allowing us to share more of the collection and, therefore, more of the Seminole story. Rotating objects also ensures their safety by limiting the amount of time they are exposed to potentially damaging conditions such as dust and light.

In April, the museum's conservator Robin Croskery Howard and registrar Chelsea Nielsen served as couriers, transporting six objects to rotate with the

eight on display. They worked with Walt Disney Imagineering's curator Deb Van Horn, who oversees "Creating Tradition" and other exhibits at Epcot. She helped install the four dolls, a dress, and a bigshirt that will be on display for the next six months.

The six objects are a mix from the past and present. The oldest object is an early 20th century female doll carved out of wood, which signals its age since dolls are no longer made of wood. Also now on display is a male doll from the 1930s that, unlike the female doll, is made of palmetto fiber. They are both wearing traditional clothing; the female a cape and skirt and the male a turban and



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's conservator Robin Croskery Howard preparing the boy's bigshirt for display.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

A map that uses lights and audio to highlight the seven regions across the United States that are represented in the exhibit by Indigenous art.

bigshirt, which remains a common feature among Seminole dolls. What distinguishes these two from contemporary dolls are their noses, which dolls today tend to lack.

Next to the older dolls is one made by Minnie Doctor and another by Mabel Osceola dating to the late 1990s. Doctor's palmetto fiber doll is a mother with a baby on her back, while Osceola's palmetto fiber doll is a woman holding a pestle next to a mortar. She's posed as if ready to grind corn to make the traditional food sofkee. Both dolls are dressed in traditional capes, skirts, and beaded necklaces, so though the dolls are contemporary they celebrate longstanding practices.

Accompanying the dolls in the display case is a boy's bigshirt and a girl's dress. The bigshirt dating to the 1950s has many rows of applique, a decorative detail that grew in popularity during the 20th century. Its vibrant blue fabric stands out next to the red fabric of the dress Annie Jim made

in 1990. Part of the dress is cotton like the bigshirt, but it is also made of synthetic metallic fiber. This metal-coated plastic is a modern material that distinguishes the dress from earlier clothing. A continuity between the bigshirt and dress is patchwork. Colorful bands of patchwork remain popular features on clothing though new designs have arisen.

The objects now displayed in the Creating Traditions exhibit demonstrate how ancestral craftsmanship inspires contemporary art. They also show how styles have expanded and changed, making it clear to visitors that the vibrant Seminole culture thrives today. In six months, we will rotate the objects with ones that similarly celebrate past and present artisanship. We hope that the park's millions of visitors will enjoy the beautiful pieces and be inspired to learn more about Seminole culture.

## Miami artist influenced by diverse heritage

### 'The Carter Project' now at NSU Art Museum

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

**FORT LAUDERDALE** — A new exhibition at the NSU Art Museum in Fort Lauderdale features a Miami-based artist.

"The Carter Project" opened May 15 and runs through Jan. 9, 2022.

Christopher Carter began the project in 2016 when he developed a unique plan for a home, studio and exhibition space. Carter wanted an ecologically sensitive environment — one that would "serve as a living laboratory" for his design and artistic projects. He completed it in 2020. It's located in Miami's north Wynwood district.

Carter said that during the design and construction, he followed a common process that he would use when creating his sculptures. He describes it as "the largest,



Carter Project

Christopher Carter's heritage includes African American, Native American and European.

most comprehensive functional structure I ever dreamed to make."

Carter uses recycled woods, metals, glass, resins and other discarded objects in his work.

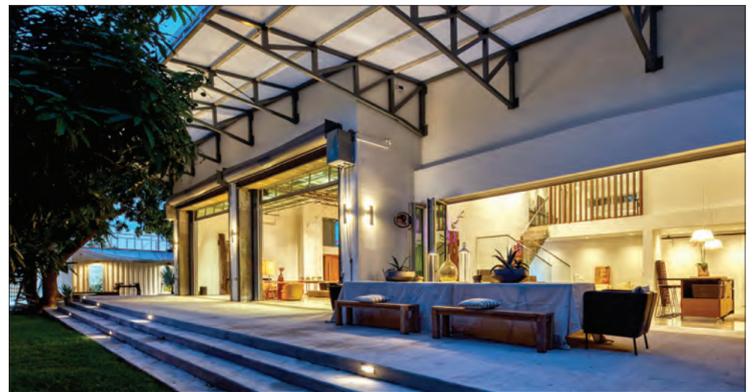
"The space reflects Carter's connections to Afrofuturism and the Japanese wabi-sabi aesthetic, which embraces imperfections," a statement from the NSU Art Museum said. "Its design evokes a Northern California loft ideal whose carbon footprint-reducing structures were constructed with industrial and reclaimed materials, including six used shipping containers that house some living areas and art production studios."

Visitors to the exhibition can expect to see the multiuse structures through videos, photography, drawings and "augmented reality features."

"We hope that 'The Carter Project' will inspire others to question conventions and imagine new solutions to living in today's environment," NSU Art Museum director and chief curator Bonnie Clearwater said.

Carter was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and was raised in Boston, Massachusetts. His online biography says his work is infused by a blend of ethnic and urban influences. "Carter's bold and organic sculptures strongly reflect his African American, Native American and European heritage," his biography states.

Carter's work has been featured in many museum exhibitions, galleries and art



Carter Project

Carter's unique spaces are located in Miami.

fairs, and is included in private and public collections including the National Museum of African American History and the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture — both located in Washington, D.C.

More information is at thecarterproject.miami and christophercarter.art. The NSU Art Museum is located at One East Las Olas Blvd. in Fort Lauderdale. More is at nsuartmuseum.org.

## NMAI showcases work of photojournalist Donovan Quintero

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian released the third installment of its online exhibition series "Developing Stories: Native Photographers in the Field" on May 18.

"The Covid-19 Outbreak in the Navajo Nation" is a series of 44 images created by

photojournalist Donovan Quintero (Navajo). The photo essay explores how the pandemic affected the everyday lives of the Diné over the course of a year. The images highlight the resilience of the Diné and the critical roles played by tribal council members, police, health-care workers and other unsung heroes of the pandemic. The essay concludes with the rollout of the vaccines and Diné prayers for the future.

The photo essay also features an audio interview between Quintero and Cécile Ganteaume, the exhibition's curator.

Quintero was born and raised on the Navajo Nation reservation. Since 2005, he has worked for the Navajo Times covering news, sports and feature stories. He served in the U.S. Navy and traveled widely before returning to his roots. Quintero got his start in journalism at the Gallup Independent and

the Farmington Daily Times, both in New Mexico. He has covered the pandemic since it first struck the reservation in March 2020.

In addition to Quintero's work, "Developing Stories: Native Photographers in the Field" includes the photo essays "The Genízaro Pueblo of Abiquí" by Russel Albert Daniels (Diné descent and Ho-Chunk descent) and "Reservation Mathematics: Navigating Love in Native America" by

Tailyr Irvine (Salish and Kootenai). "Developing Stories: Native Photographers in the Field" is a series of photo essays created by Native photojournalists in collaboration with the National Museum of the American Indian. For more information visit americanindian.si.edu.

## Trail of Tears mural unveiled in Arkansas



Museum of Native American History via Facebook

Artist Johnnie Diacon created a three-panel mural installation for the Museum of Native American History in Bentonville, Arkansas, that depicts the Trail of Tears. The work was unveiled on the south exterior wall of the museum May 8. Diacon is an enrolled member of the Mvskoke (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma, the Raprakko Etlvwa (Thlopthlocco Tribal Town) and he is Ecovlke (Deer Clan). He studied the flat style of Indian painting under master artist Ruthe Blalock Jones (Delaware/Shawnee/Peoria) at Bacone College in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

# Health

## Tribe to host Covid-19 vaccine drive

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — In an effort to increase the Covid-19 vaccination rate among members of the Seminole Tribe, the Health and Human Services department (HHS) is set to host a vaccine drive.

Dr. Vandhana Kiswani-Barley, the executive director of HHS, said the drive would take place at all of the tribe's reservations from June 1 to June 4.

She said hosting a drive is important because as of late May less than 25% of the tribal community had been fully vaccinated. For comparison, the state of Florida has fully vaccinated about 38% of its population. The number of people requesting the vaccine from HHS had begun to decline in April.

"We have a little over 1,000 individuals, tribal and members of the community tribalwide, who have received at least one dose of the vaccine," Kiswani-Barley said.

Seminole Tribe of Florida employees have received 774 vaccines and Seminole Gaming employees in Florida have received

1,980.

On May 13, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said that fully vaccinated people no longer had to wear masks indoors, except in hospitals, on public transit and in other specified places. The CDC had already lifted its requirement for wearing masks outdoors. However, Kiswani-Barley said the tribe would, at least for the time being, require masks in all tribal buildings "to ensure the safety of our vulnerable population."

The staff from the tribe's Public Safety department will help administer the shots during the vaccine drive.

"We're encouraging all individuals to call [their respective health] clinics to get screened to receive the vaccine," she said.

Kiswani-Barley said anyone 12 years and older is eligible to receive the vaccine. Eligibility had previously been for those 16 and older. The tribe has three vaccines available — Moderna, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson.

Those who want to receive the vaccine can call the HHS hotline at (833) 786-3458 for more information.

## CBH mental health event emphasizes: 'You are not alone'

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**BIG CYPRESS** — Since 1949, May has been observed as Mental Health Awareness Month. The 2021 theme for the month was "You are not alone."

The Center for Behavioral Health's Native Connections program sponsored a drive-thru event May 24 in Big Cypress, Brighton, Hollywood and Immokalee and distributed 200 wellness kits. The department sent out daily mental health tips every day in May to promote good mental health.

"You aren't alone if you are experiencing mental health challenges," said Erin Kashem, Native Connections program manager. "It's a lot more common than you think. One in five will experience it in their lifetime. We don't talk about it, so the biggest support is to have those around you know about it. We want to reduce the stigma often attached to it."

In addition to promoting mental health initiatives, the program focuses on suicide and substance abuse for tribal youth up to age 24. The Big Cypress-based program has been operational since 2019.

Wellness kits were distributed at the drive thru event, which included a journal and everything necessary to create a "calm down jar," including a jar, glue and glitter. Food coloring could also be added. Participants added water to create the sparkly jar, which has a calming effect as the glitter floats and moves through the glue and water mixture.

The wellness kit also had a list of simple exercises to help achieve calmness. One was to take 10 slow, deep breaths, notice the lungs filling and then emptying while letting the mind wander. After the breathing exercises, it suggested to look around the room and notice what you saw, heard, smelled and felt.

An information sheet included in the wellness kit stated that journaling, or writing down thoughts and feelings to understand them more clearly, can help manage emotions and improve mental health. Writing something every day can help to identify what causes stress and provide an outlet for expression.

A pamphlet that was distributed offered tips on how to start a conversation about mental health. First, a person should identify someone he or she is comfortable opening up to and who they know will listen. Tips for a successful conversation include finding information online that might help to explain things easier, expect questions, and understand that the conversation might feel awkward at first.

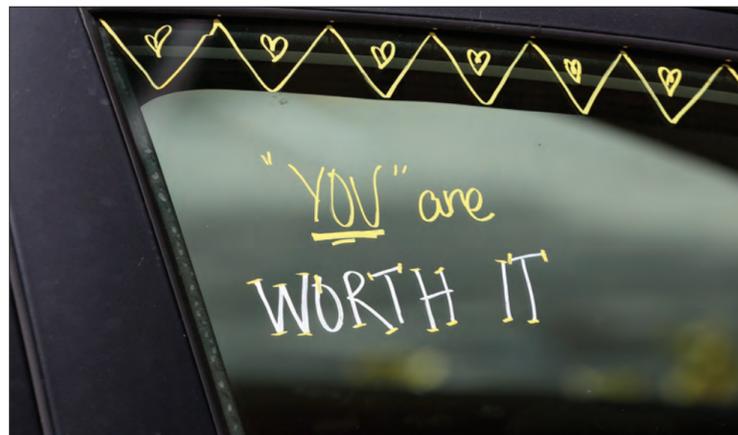
The pamphlet explained that by opening up and sharing something so personal, it can feel like a weight has been lifted. The other person in the conversation may have some personal experience with those feelings as well, which will make both parties feel less alone.

Conversely, the person may not understand and may not react in a positive way. According to information in the pamphlet, sometimes people just need time to process information.

Regardless of the outcome, the conversation is the first step in a process of healing. Mental health challenges are common and treatable, but it may take trying a few different methods before finding the one that will work.

Every year millions of people struggle with mental health issues. One of the goals of the program is to fight the stigma, provide support, educate the public and help individuals learn to manage their mental health challenges.

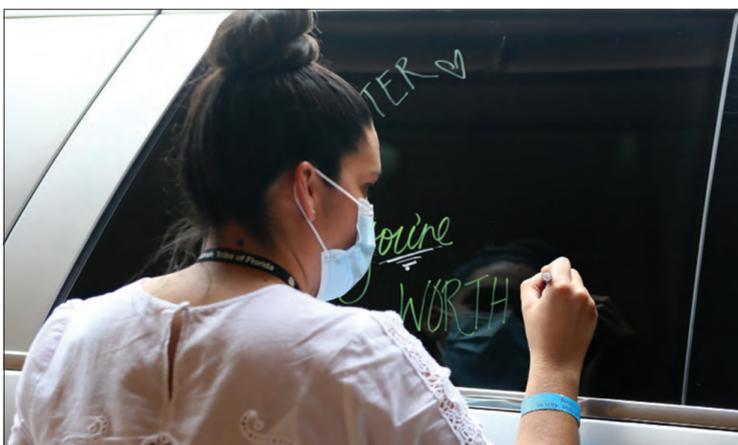
"We would welcome participation of tribal members who are passionate about



A message drawn onto a car window with a chalk marker emphasizes self-worth regardless of mental health challenges.



Erin Kashem, CBH Native Connections program manager, gives a wellness kit to a participant in its Big Cypress drive-thru event May 25.



Adis Padron, CBH clinical therapist, writes uplifting messages on the window of a vehicle at the Big Cypress CBH drive thru to promote Mental Health Awareness Month.

and interested in promoting healing in the community," Kashem said. "Historical trauma has contributed to various challenges and we want to address that. The strength is in the community and the knowledge is there. This program is about connecting

those pieces together that are in place and building on that resiliency."

To get involved, contact Erin Kashem at erinkashem@seminoletribe.com or (863) 902-3200 x13262.

## IHS starts 'Nurse of the Month' program

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The division of nursing services at Indian Health Service has started a "Nurse of the Month" recognition program for all nurses across the IHS, tribal and urban Indian organization health system. The program, which was announced in May, will highlight nurses, including registered nurses, advanced practice nurses, LPNs, and others who are committed to providing quality healthcare through nursing.

The program will feature an individual each month who has been nominated and will be celebrated as the "Nurse of the Month" through various IHS digital platforms. Nominations are due by the 15th of each month for that month.

The nomination criteria is:

- Nurses employed within the Indian Health Service, tribal sites and urban clinics
- Nurses must be actively involved in any nursing specialty or nursing role
- Time frame covers the past calendar year

Nomination narrative must include one of the following:

- Major achievement(s) in the nominee's primary clinical or administrative nursing specialty or role

- Contributions to the enhancement of the nursing profession through innovation, facilitation of change, and/or the use of evidence-based practice.

For more information about the nomination process visit [ihs.gov/nursing/nurseofthemonth/](https://ihs.gov/nursing/nurseofthemonth/).

## Research shows kidney cancer risks higher for Hispanics, Native Americans in Arizona

BY UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA HEALTH SCIENCES

Recently published research from the University of Arizona Health Sciences shows that advanced-stage kidney cancer is more common in Hispanic Americans and Native Americans than in non-Hispanic whites, and that both Hispanic Americans and Native Americans in Arizona have an increased risk of mortality from the disease.

"We knew from our past research that Hispanic Americans and Native Americans have a heavier burden of kidney cancer than non-Hispanic whites," said Ken Batai, Ph.D., a Cancer Prevention and Control Program research member at the UArizona Cancer Center and research assistant professor of urology in the College of Medicine—Tucson. "But we also know that around 90% of the Hispanic population in Arizona is Mexican American—either U.S.-born or Mexican-born—and we do not think this subgroup is well-represented in the national data."

With funding from the National Cancer Institute, Dr. Batai led a team of UArizona Cancer Center researchers that examined data from the National Cancer Database and the Arizona Cancer Registry to look for disparities in surgical treatment of kidney cancer. They also investigated the possibility that delayed treatments may result in advanced-stage kidney cancer, which has been associated with high mortality rates in Hispanic Americans and Native Americans.

The paper, "Renal Cell Carcinoma Health Disparities in Stage and Mortality among American Indians/Alaska Natives and Hispanic Americans: Comparison of National Cancer Database and Arizona Cancer Registry Data," was published in the journal *Cancers*.

The study found that Arizona's Hispanic Americans are about two times more likely than non-Hispanic white people to have advanced-stage kidney cancer and have nearly a two-times-higher risk of mortality from early-stage kidney cancer. Similarly, Native Americans are about 30% more likely to have advanced-stage kidney cancer and face a 30% increased risk of mortality from early-stage kidney cancer.

These findings suggest that observed

disparities in kidney cancer mortality risk cannot be explained by delays in treatment.

The researchers utilized state data to organize Hispanic Americans into various subgroups, including U.S.-born Mexican Americans. They determined this group to have a three-times-higher risk of mortality compared with non-Hispanic white Americans. National cancer statistics do not break down subgroups within the general Hispanic population; thus risks to U.S.-born Mexican Americans living in Arizona may be understated in national reporting.

Dr. Batai attributes the discrepancy in national versus state data to the data-collection process. The National Cancer Database relies on hospital-based reporting, whereas the state registry is population-based. Many small hospitals and clinics in rural settings may not report to the National Cancer Database, which could explain the misrepresentation of Hispanic Americans in Arizona.

"To this point, there has been no research documenting this disparity in Hispanic Americans," Dr. Batai said. "This can be very useful information to share with primary care providers and urologists who may not yet be aware."

"Carefully documenting these disparities is something that distinguishes us as a comprehensive cancer center," said Joann Sweazy, Ph.D., Cancer Center director and inaugural holder of the Nancy C. and Craig M. Berge Endowed Chair. "Dr. Batai is embedded in our center not only in prevention, but he is also a part of our genitourinary clinical research team. This research benefits both perspectives, which are critical for us to meet the needs of our patients."

The research could drive further investigation into why Arizona's Hispanic and Native American populations face increased risks from kidney cancer.

"We know these populations also have higher prevalence of diabetes and blood pressure, both of which are risk factors for kidney cancer," Dr. Batai said. "While we continue to explore differences in kidney cancer surgical treatment across these groups, we are investigating if there are biologic bases in kidney cancer disparities."

### National Indian Council on Aging to hold conference

The National Indian Council on Aging will hold its American Indian Elders Conference from Aug. 1 to Aug. 6 at the Nugget Casino Resort in Reno, Nevada. The conference's theme is "Resilience for Tomorrow... Together."

The conference is the only national aging conference in the country focusing exclusively on the needs of American Indian and Alaska Native elders. It will offer the opportunity to elevate issues in American Indian politics and legislation, and focus on issues such as health, safety, financial management, elder abuse, caregiving, employment, retirement and the Older Americans Act.

For more information visit [nicoa.org](https://nicoa.org) or call (505) 292-2001.

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# SEMINOLE SCENES



**MISS INDIAN WORLD MEETS MISS UNIVERSE:** Some Miss Universe contestants learned about the Seminole Tribe during their stay at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood in mid-May for the Miss Universe competition. Former Miss Indian World and former Miss Florida Seminole Cheyenne Kippenberger met with a group of contestants as well as 2019 Miss Universe winner Zozibini Tunzi. "[Kippenberger] explained to us about the rich culture and history of her tribe and the work she has been doing for her community. The land of @hardrockholly is owned by the Seminole Tribe. Thank you for letting us experience this magical stay," Anshika Sharma, Miss Nepal, wrote on Instagram. Sharma's Instagram post and photo with Kippenberger received more than 12,000 likes. Above, from left to right, Miss Malaysia, Francisca Luhong James; Miss Nepal, Anshika Sharma; 2019-21 Miss Indian World, Cheyenne Kippenberger; and Miss Australia, Maria Thattil. At left, Kippenberger with 2019 Miss Universe winner Zozibini Tunzi, from South Africa.



Beverly Bidney

**LUNCHTIME:** An osprey clutches a fish in April near Harney Pond canal in Brighton.



Kevin Johnson

**LOOKING UP TO BIG COUSIN:** Cassie Pearce enjoys being able to see her cousin, Trevor Thomas, before the start of a Sun Conference tournament baseball game May 7 at Ballpark of the Palm Beaches in West Palm Beach. Thomas is an outfielder for Warner University, which defeated Keiser University that evening. (See page B5 for story).

## Hard Rock born 50 years ago



Image via Issac-Tigrett.com

Hard Rock started in June 1971 when Americans Issac Tigrett, left, and Peter Morton opened the first Hard Rock Cafe in London. The brand, which is now owned by the Seminole Tribe, has blossomed into hotels, casinos, live performance venues and cafes in 68 countries. Also, Hard Rock owns the world's largest and most valuable collection of authentic music memorabilia at more than 86,000 pieces



Hard Rock

The iconic Hard Rock logo is one of the most recognizable designs in the world.



Hard Rock

Seminole Tribe leaders smash guitars to open the new Hard Rock Cafe at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood in November 2019. The Tribe purchased Hard Rock International from the Rank Group of Britain in December 2006.



Hard Rock

Hard Rock pins, including Belgium's, are a big hit with collectors.



Via Facebook

Rita Gilligan, a Hard Rock Cafe waitress from day one in London, serves as an ambassador for the brand.



Hard Rock via Facebook

Hard Rock Cafe is in the heart of it all in New York City's Times Square.

# NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

## Tribes, Native organizations push back at institutions reluctant to help with repatriation efforts

In early 2021, the Harvard Peabody Museum issued a statement apologizing for its reluctance working with tribes to return some remains and funerary objects. The social unrest of 2020 had reignited the conversation of returning ancestral remains and sacred objects to their people.

Since contact, Indigenous people and settlers have had a contentious relationship, particularly as settlers appropriated items from traditional Native homelands. These items included totem poles, funerary and cultural objects — even remains of Indigenous ancestors.

Examples include the Edward Harriman Expedition removing a Teikweidi memorial pole from Southeast Alaska in 1899. Or when anthropologist Aleš Hrdlička, an early 1900s Czech-born anthropologist known for unorthodox collection methods such as stripping decomposing flesh from bones, discarded the remains of an infant found in a cradleboard and sent it to the American Museum of Natural History.

“They didn’t have any shame, you know, taking even from graves,” said Rosita Worl, president of Sealaska Heritage Institute, a private non-profit cultural organization based in Juneau, Alaska.

Worl earned her master’s and doctorate in anthropology from Harvard University.

“They just came and took things off of graves,” said Worl, who carries the Tlingit names Yeidiklasókw and Kaaháni, and is Tlingit, Ch’áak’ (Eagle) moiety of the Shangukeidí (Thunderbird) Clan from the Kawdiyaayi Hít (Horse Lowered From the Sun) in Klukwan. “You think about Southeast, it was amazing that we even had anything left.”

Often remains would be removed from tribes without consent or consultation and stored in university or museum collections — and even in international institutions.

“I mean, museums themselves are institutions of colonialism,” Worl said. “They came in, they expropriated cultural objects, human remains and more, often without the permission of Native American tribes and others. What they saw as art, we saw as cultural objects.”

And the Indigenous peoples in the United States did not have much recourse until the early 1990s.

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act — NAGPRA for short — gave tribes a legal avenue to pursue the return of remains and some funerary objects.

NAGPRA requires publicly funded universities and museums to document and report the remains and funerary objects within their collection. The summaries are searchable by institutions, states where the remains are held and states and general regions of origin.

After a year that saw growth of the Black Lives Matter movement and toppling of colonial monuments and statues, the Peabody Museum announced in January it had about 15 remains of African Americans or those of African descent who likely lived before 1865 and may have been enslaved.

According to museum director Jane Pickering, the museum pledged to try to return those remains to the appropriate communities.

“We felt that this was the moment that the university really needed to engage with this issue,” Pickering said during an interview via virtual teleconference. “There are other institutions that have been thinking along these lines as well, but that it was time for us to really face up to that history as a university, as an institution.”

The release stated that a steering committee would help direct a “multi-year, cross-departmental initiative” to assess its procedures.

The Harvard Peabody collection includes several Alaska Native cultural objects and at least one report of remains from the Aleutians West region.

In a statement, Harvard Peabody said it was working toward consultations with tribes to return remains and funerary objects in compliance with NAGPRA. And it pledged to develop better policies to address its previous reluctance of turning over some objects.

But tribes and Native-based organizations like the Association of American Indian Affairs pushed back, questioning the museum’s process.

Shannon O’Loughlin is a citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the chief executive and attorney for the association, which formed in 1922 to serve Indian Country by protecting sovereignty and preserving culture.

“Harvard tends to cause delay, refuses to make decisions. And often causes extensive burden on tribes by forcing them to produce evidence of cultural affiliation so they have a long history,” she said.

O’Loughlin says she’s concerned Harvard-educated students would go on to other institutions and perpetuate the same harmful repatriation practices and procedures.

“They have developed their inventories out of alignment with what NAGPRA requires,” she said. “They’ve done so by failing to consult with tribes before they completed their inventory process.”

O’Loughlin says that Harvard Peabody categorized some remains and items as culturally unidentifiable — which means tribes must provide even more evidence to make a claim.

“That a people can have control and dominion over other peoples to the extent of outlawing their religions and cultures and taking away those things that support that culture’s identity and health is its thinking about that, you know, today that institutions still carry on that that racism,” O’Loughlin

said. “Much of their collections may be obtained from the theft and violence of other peoples. We wouldn’t allow that [today].”

Phil Deloria (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe) is a history professor at Harvard University, where he teaches subjects like environmental history and the American West. Deloria says a 2010 amendment to NAGPRA was supposed to lay out other pathways to repatriate culturally unaffiliated — or unidentified — remains.

“In that early moment, museums, institutions were required to prepare inventories to consult with tribes on these inventories with the goal of identifying as many kinds of remains and cultural objects that could be culturally affiliated with tribes,” said Deloria, who also currently chairs the Peabody’s NAGPRA faculty committee.

“And there’s a certain kind of set of standards of evidence that suggests and many, many things end up in this kind of bucket of the culturally unidentified,” he said.

The Association of American Indian Affairs sent a letter urging Harvard Peabody to change its practices — and O’Loughlin hopes that tribes have greater opportunity to go through the disposition process.

More than 600 people and organizations signed on in support of the association’s efforts.

Deloria says he recognizes the amount of work a Tribe must go through to make a claim, but it’s an important part of the process.

“I have come to the perhaps odd view that the bureaucratic process, the administrative apparatus, the research, the collaborative things, is a really important part of doing a kind of form of justice and honor to the to the objects and to the human remains,” Deloria said. “It’s also the case that an institution needs to make sure that they repatriating to the right people.”

Harvard Peabody claims it has repatriated about 30% of its collection. The Association of American Indian Affairs says that number is closer to 15%, and the museum may be counting remains it’s coordinating with other museums.

But for Sealaska Heritage President Rosita Worl, who worked in the Harvard Peabody Museum, the overall impact is clear.

“To see that they had 5,000 human remains after 30 some years, you know, I was horrified when I saw that,” she said. NAGPRA was intended to give tribes a pathway to return and repatriate cultural objects and remains. But it isn’t without its problems — and tribes still have a lot of work to continue fighting for repatriation.

*This article is part of a series and an extended audio podcast at knba.org.*

— KNBA (Achorage, Alaska)

## Ponca Tribe wants Chief Standing Bear’s tomahawk back

Forced off their homeland to live on a reservation in Oklahoma, Standing Bear and some Poncas walked for four months to Nebraska so they could fulfill the chief’s eldest son’s dying wish: to be buried in his homeland. Before they could reach Omaha, Standing Bear was arrested.

Chairman of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska Larry Wright Jr. said the chief gave attorney John Lee Webster his tomahawk after winning the 1879 Nebraska federal court case to thank him, but it was symbolic too.

“Tomahawks were a weapon for fighting and that lifestyle,” Wright Jr. said. “Obviously, the trial took place in a very different environment, essentially still defending itself, then defending his right to go home and live in peace.”

Brett Chapman, an Oklahoma lawyer and descendant of Standing Bear, said the tomahawk belongs in a museum run by the Ponca Tribe in Nebraska. So far, 20 Nebraska lawmakers have signed a resolution in support of the effort.

Wright said the tomahawk’s rightful place is with them. Many of the chief’s possessions, like his ceremonial headdress and necklaces, are in the Ponca Tribe Museum in Niobrara, Nebraska.

“The fact that that item was at the trial itself with him. And the reason that the Ponca Tribe is back in Nebraska is because of the efforts that he and those followers that came back with them,” he said. “They were willing to come back to Nebraska to be in their homeland or die trying.”

The Nebraska Legislature will likely discuss the resolution next month. There will be a public hearing about it beforehand.

— Nebraska Public Radio

## Vancouver Island First Nation partners with Coast Guard to launch Indigenous-led response vessel

**VICTORIA, British Columbia, Canada** — The Ahousaht First Nation on the west coast of Vancouver Island and the Canadian Coast Guard have launched a new response vessel, which will be staffed entirely by First Nation members.

The \$214,000 response vessel was funded through the Canadian Coast Guard’s Indigenous Community Boat Volunteer Pilot Program, which was created to enhance marine safety in B.C., particularly in First Nation territories.

The 29-foot vessel is one of the first dedicated response vessels to be created through the program. It has a cruising speed of 32 knots, an estimated range of 400 nautical miles and will be staffed by more than 50 Indigenous people from the Ahousaht, Heiltsuk, Gitxaala, Nisgaa, Kitasoo, and Quatsino First Nations,

according to the Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard notes that the Ahousaht First Nation has long been a steward of the area and has historically been the first on scene for many marine emergencies.

In 2016, a whale-watching vessel sunk off the coast of Tofino, and members of the Ahousaht First Nation were among the first to respond.

Six people died in the accident, but 21 people were saved by Ahousaht First Nation members, as well as Tofino residents and other nearby whale-watching vessels.

“Our Government recognizes the critical role that First Nation communities have played for generations, protecting mariners, marine life and coastal ecosystems,” said Bernadette Jordan, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard in a release Wednesday.

“We’ll continue to work with Ahousaht First Nation and other coastal communities to protect Canada’s oceans from coast to coast to coast,” she said.

Through the Coastal Nations Coast Guard Auxiliary (CN-CGA), volunteers are trained in search techniques, cold water rescue, marine first aid, inter-agency communications and more.

The response vessels are on-call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

— CBC News

## Archaeologists, Native American tribes studying pieces of 4,000-year-old canoe found in Cooper River

**NORTH CHALESTON, S.C.** —

Thousands of years of history is unfolding after the discovery of a canoe in the Cooper River and experts are showcasing it to Native American tribes across South Carolina.

“To be able to see something that my ancestors created thousands of years ago is amazing,” said Lamar Nelson, Chief of Eastern Cherokee and Southern Iroquois tribes.

Members of tribes here in the Lowcountry got a chance to see and touch the canoe.

“It’s mind blowing because I have always been told that my ancestors are indigenous,” said Lisa McQueen-Starling, Chief CEO of Wassamasaw Indian Nation.

Archaeologists at the Clemson University Warren Lasch Conservation Center are studying a piece of the canoe along with Native American tribes.

“We want to look to the communities and allow them to both inform us of the history, but also claim authority over their heritage,” said Gyllian Porteous an Archeological Conservator at Warren Lasch Conservation Center.

Conserving the canoe has taken more than a year and archaeologists are now looking to find more pieces in the Cooper River.

“It can be associated with a cultural site that hasn’t been found yet so ideally we would go into that, but at this point we are at a dead end,” said Porteous.

Members of the Wassamasaw tribe in Berkeley County say they hope these pieces help show the impact of Native Americans on the Holy City.

“I hope that this will open up the discussion to really educate about the people that were here before,” said Sterling.

Archaeologists with Clemson University say it could take from 2 to 4 years until the canoe is displayed.

— WCBD-TV (Mount Pleasant, S.C.)

## Passamaquoddy Tribe reacquires island stolen more than 150 years ago

On The Passamaquoddy Tribe has reacquired almost the entirety of a 150-acre island in Big Lake that was illegally taken from them in the mid-19th century in violation of a 1794 treaty and the Maine Constitution.

The acquisition of most of the island — known as White’s Island by Euro-American settlers since the 1850s but as Kuwesuwí Monihq, or Pine Island, by the Passamaquoddy — was facilitated by a burgeoning partnership between Maine’s tribes and the conservation community that aims to help restore key territories to Wabanaki control.

“It’s a sign of the growing relationship between the tribal community and the conservation community,” said tribal attorney Michael-Corey Francis Hinton. “This land was so important that after the Passamaquoddy fought in the American Revolution they were told that they could have hunting and fishing rights in perpetuity. This is one of the pieces of land the chief designated for that.”

The wooded island, which mostly lies within two unorganized townships near the Passamaquoddy’s Indian Township reservation in eastern Washington County, has been advertised on and off in glossy magazines and “exclusive island” real estate sites for a decade. It was most recently listed for \$449,000.

The Passamaquoddy had long sought a return of the island but previously did not have either a willing seller or the means to purchase it. Last fall the chief of their Indian Township reservation, William Nicholas, saw it listed and reached out to First Light, an informal umbrella group of 65 land trusts, timber companies, philanthropies and conservation groups that have sought to partner with the Maine tribes to assist them in reacquiring lost territory.

At the time, First Light was concluding another transaction under which one of its member landholders, Roxanne Quimby’s foundation Elliottsville Plantation, gave 735 acres of forest northeast of Dover-Foxcroft back to the Penobscot Nation. Another

member, the Maine chapter of The Nature Conservancy, in effect gave the tribe the funds to purchase the island from the seller, Naton Coutinho.

“This is just the beginning,” said First Light’s facilitator, Peter Forbes. “There are several other examples in the works right now, and our commitment is to stay at this for a long time.”

The Nature Conservancy, a global land trust, has been increasing its cooperation with indigenous people around the world, including in Maine.

“We have a recognized strategy of elevating the voice and choice and actions of indigenous people out of a recognition that they actually have a great track record for sustaining a healthy environment and biodiversity, and also out of an understanding of social considerations as we continue to learn about the ongoing impacts that indigenous people have experienced,” said Mark Berry, forest program director at The Nature Conservancy’s Maine chapter.

— Portland (Maine) Press Herald

## Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe elects new tribal council leader

**MASHPEE, Mass.** — The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe has a new chairman who aims to unite tribal members, promote economic development and preserve the tribe’s culture.

In its May 16 election, members of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe elected 28-year-old Brian Weeden as chairman of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Council.

“I feel ready to get to work,” Weeden said. “There’s a lot of things that need to be done for the tribe and the community.”

Weeden won by 20 votes, garnering a total of 241 votes to 221 for Nelson Andrews Jr., Aaron Tobey Jr. received 167 votes, and Robert “Kyle” Bassett had 20. Carlton Hendricks Jr. was elected vice-chairman, Marie Stone elected treasurer and Cassie Jackson elected secretary.

“I hope the tribe’s future is bright with the newly elected leadership,” Bassett said. “I know everybody that got elected, and I hope that they’re up for the challenge.”

Weeden is the youngest person to serve as Tribal Council chairman, the head of the tribe’s executive and legislative government branch.

Weeden graduated from Mashpee High School in 2011 and attended Cape Cod Community College. He works for the Mashpee Department of Public Works as a custodian at the K.C. Coombs School.

For years, Weeden has been involved in both tribal and town organizations, such as the Mashpee Conservation Commission and the Mashpee Historical Commission. He was most recently elected to the Mashpee School Committee. He is also on Mashpee’s Town Seal Design Committee, and is representing the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe on the state seal commission.

— Cape Cod (Massachusetts) Times

## Indiana University, tribal nations complete Angel Mounds repatriation

**BLOOMINGTON, Ind.** — Indiana University and several federally recognized tribal nations have completed the repatriation of the Angel Mounds collection in compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

Passed in 1990, NAGPRA mandates the return of Native American human remains and cultural items to tribal nations. This repatriation includes the remains of over 700 individuals unearthed from the Angel Mounds National Historic Landmark and State Historic Site in Evansville, Indiana, starting in the 1930s.

“After so many years, they are returning home,” said Mike Linderman, western regional director for state historic sites at the Indiana State Museum and manager for Angel Mounds State Historic Site.

“I deeply appreciate the work by my IU and museum colleagues who took part in the sacred repatriation and reburial of the ancestral remains from our campus to Angel Mounds,” IU Bloomington Provost and Executive Vice President Lauren Robel said. “This somber, necessary and important experience will remain in our hearts forever. I am grateful for the integrity, sensitivity and care with which these human beings were restored to their proper homes.”

Tribal nations indicated their desire for IU to focus specifically on Angel Mounds at a November 2016 15-tribe consultation in Oklahoma, an event sponsored by a National NAGPRA Consultation grant. IU NAGPRA Director Jayne-Leigh Thomas said they immediately got to work after returning to Bloomington.

“There was a lot to figure out,” Thomas said. “A project this large requires a lot of coordination, organization, planning and teamwork.”

In addition to working with the Quapaw Nation, the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma and the Shawnee Tribe, IU worked closely with representatives from the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites, which includes Angel Mounds.

“In working with collaboration and consultation with Indiana University and the other tribes, we arrived at the date near the spring equinox for the reburial,” said Quapaw Nation NAGPRA coordinator Carrie Wilson.

Many Quapaw Nation Business Committee members traveled to Evansville for the reburial, and Solomon Jones was the traditional cultural practitioner who led the ceremonies for the tribe.

“Reburying during the spring equinox was meaningful on many different fronts and represented a spiritual healing of going

forward,” Wilson said. “It was done humbly, with respect and in a good way. We hope the community will continue to be supportive of the fact that this site is sacred to American Indians and be respectful.”

“NAGPRA is about human rights, respecting tribal sovereignty and federal law,” Thomas said. “We still have a long way to go, but we are so incredibly honored and committed to seeing this work completed.”

— Indiana University News

## San Manuel Band of Mission Indians plans to acquire the Palms in Las Vegas for \$650 million

The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians has announced plans to purchase the Palms Casino Resort in Las Vegas, making it the first tribe to own and operate a casino in the city’s resort corridor.

The tribe, which already owns and operates San Manuel Casino in Highland, and the San Manuel Gaming and Hospitality Authority, a newly created entity that will run the Las Vegas resort, will acquire the casino property for \$650 million, according to a news release from current Palms owner Red Rock Resorts. The transaction is expected to close in 2021, but is subject to regulatory approvals and other closing conditions, according to a news release from San Manuel.

Jacob Coin, executive adviser to San Manuel Tribal Chairman Ken Ramirez, said in a phone interview Tuesday afternoon that the acquisition of the Palms is part of the tribe’s mission of “securing a future for its people” and that the purchase of the resort in Las Vegas gives the tribe another financial avenue to accomplish that goal.

“The tribe has been talking about this kind of growth and diversification that will secure a future for at least two decades and probably longer,” Coin said.

That echoes a national trend among tribes, said Katherine Spilde, a professor at San Diego State University’s L. Robert Payne School of Hospitality and Tourism Management and an expert on casinos. She said diversification has taken different forms such as real estate, logistics centers and agritourism.

The move by the San Manuel Band to purchase the Palms adds a commercial gaming arm and allows the tribe to use the expertise it already has from its operation in Highland, Spilde said.

San Manuel would be the second tribe operating in Las Vegas’ resort corridor. Mohegan Gaming & Entertainment, operated by Connecticut’s Mohegan Tribal Gaming Authority, runs the recently opened casino at Virgin Hotels Las Vegas (formerly the Hard Rock Hotel).

However, San Manuel would be the first tribe to wholly own and operate a property in Las Vegas, said David G. Schwartz, a gaming historian at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

“Las Vegas is a market that a lot of gaming operators want to get into and tribal casinos are some of the biggest casinos in the country so I think it’s definitely feasible that many of them would be looking into getting into Vegas,” he said.

As Southern California’s casinos continue to grow and add new amenities, they’ve increasingly tried to capture a segment of audience that would normally vacation in Las Vegas.

Having a casino in Southern California and another four hours away in Las Vegas might actually drive traffic from Nevada into California, Schwartz said.

He said he could see a casino doing something like incentivizing guests to visit between the two casinos through their loyalty program.

— The San Bernadino (Calif.) Sun

## Navajo Nation becomes largest tribe in US after pandemic saw climb in enrollment

The Navajo Nation has become the largest tribe in the U.S., as its enrollment climbed during the coronavirus pandemic.

The tribe’s enrollment jumped from 306,268 to 399,494 in 2020, according to the Navajo Office of Vital Records and Identification, The New York Times reported.

The Navajo Nation, whose reservation is in Arizona, Utah and New Mexico, has surpassed the Cherokee Nation to become the biggest tribe in the U.S. The Cherokee Nation has an enrollment of around 392,000.

The Navajo Nation has some of the strictest requirements among tribes for joining, with official documentation showing a person is one-quarter Diné, the term many from the Navajo Nation prefer to call themselves, needed, NYT noted.

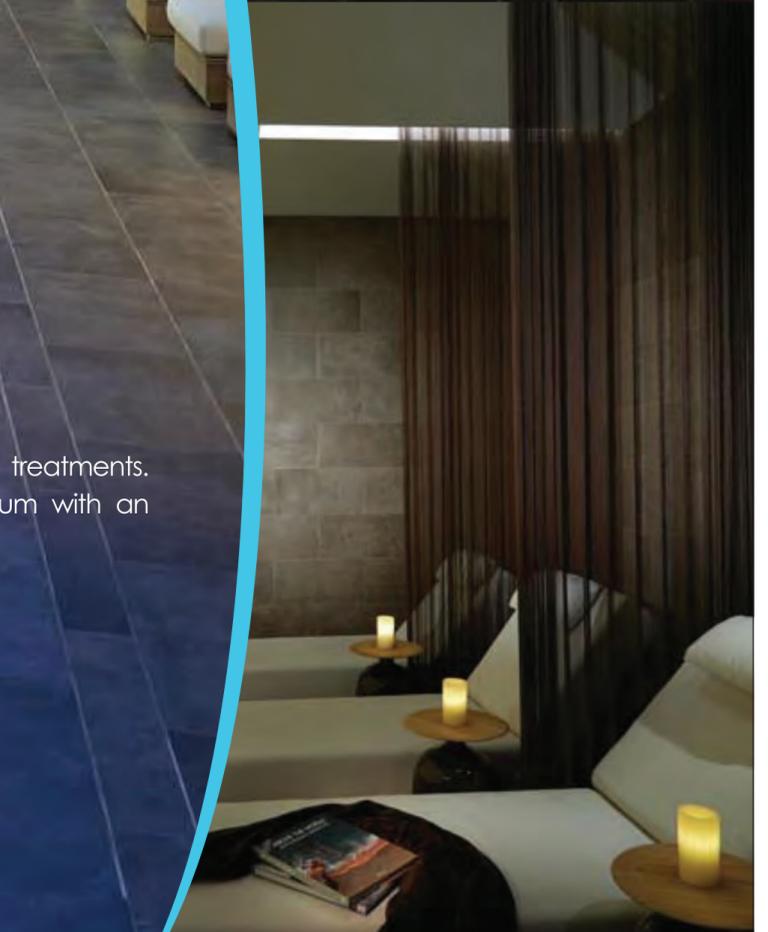
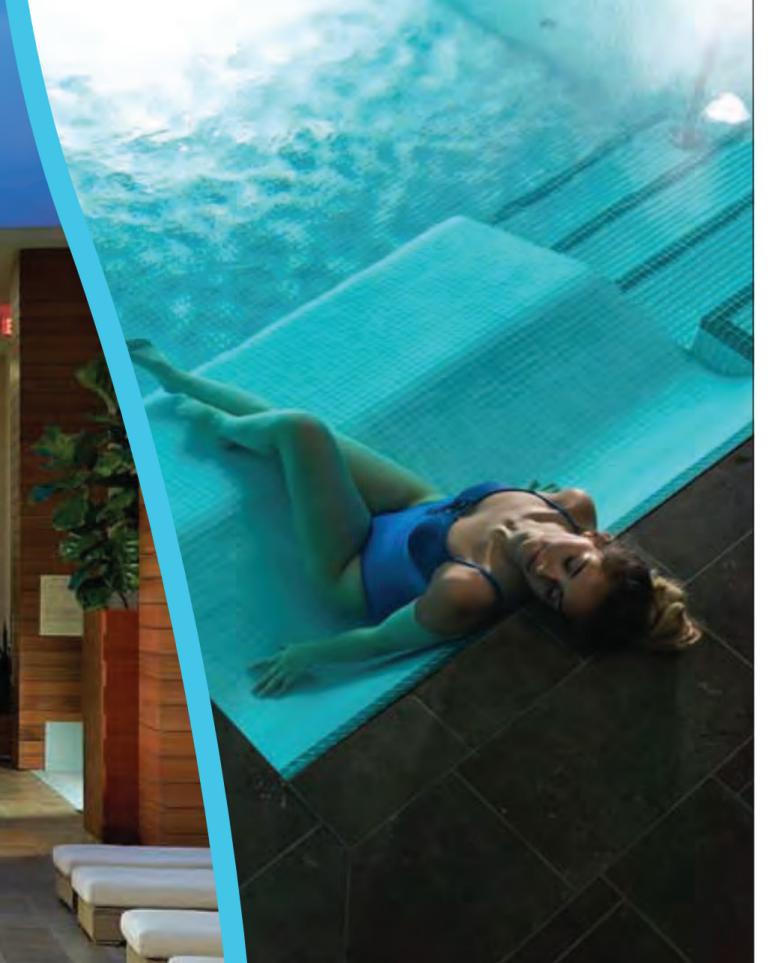
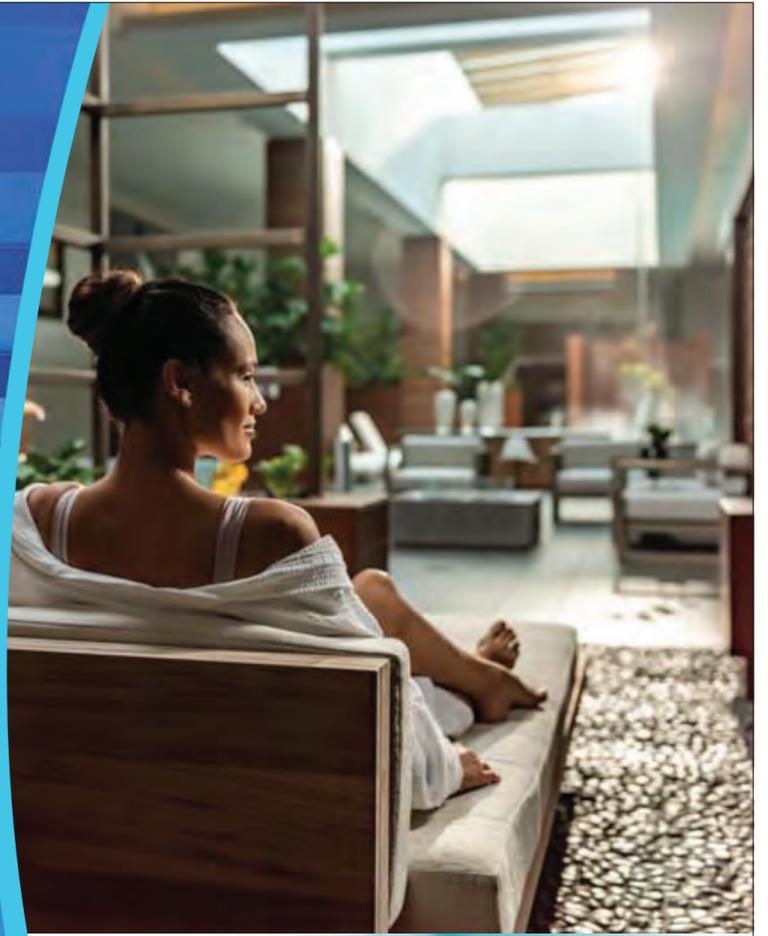
One reason enrollment has increased so much could be the tribe’s COVID-19 relief payments; those who wished to reenroll or enroll for the first time would get a \$1,350 payment from the funds given to the tribe by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act if accepted, the Times reported.

The population of the Navajo Nation could be greater, as the Census Bureau has not released the 2020 population numbers for the tribe.

The Navajo Nation president in recent weeks has come out against Arizona’s new voting laws, saying they’re an “assault” on the tribe’s voting rights.

— The Hill

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# Education



## Harvard vice provost to be next FSU president

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

The school with longtime ties to the Seminole Tribe has chosen a new president. Richard McCullough was unanimously picked to replace retiring Florida State University president John Thrasher by the FSU Board of Trustees.

The school announced the decision May 24. Thrasher has been president of the Tallahassee school since 2014.



Richard McCullough

McCullough, a Harvard University vice provost for research since 2012, was among three finalists vying for the position. He is also a professor of materials science and engineering at Harvard. McCullough previously earned a Ph.D. in engineering from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and served as vice president for research at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. He also is cofounder and chairman of Liquid X, a company that produces particle-free ink formulas.

The other two finalists were Robert Blouin, executive vice chancellor and provost at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and Giovanni Piedimonte, vice president for research at Tulane University.

McCullough's appointment still needs to be approved by the state university system's Board of Governors, which is scheduled to meet June 23.

"Public universities are amazing engines of social change and mobility, and FSU is leading the way in that effort," McCullough said in a statement.

McCullough is from Mesquite, Texas. He'll be joined in Florida by his wife, Jai Vartikar, and two children, Jason and Dylan.

## Brighton well represented at Moore Haven graduation



Courtesy photo

Moore Haven High School graduates, including tribal members and/or former Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students, pose proudly at graduation May 21 at the school's Joe Brown Stadium. From left are Donovan Harris, Ko'Oshee Henry, Hyatt Pearce, Aleah Turtle, Mariah Billie, Ramone Baker and Heith Lawrence.

## FSU homecoming pep rally no longer called 'Pow Wow'

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

Florida State University officially changed the name of its annual homecoming pep rally from "Pow Wow" to "Homecoming Live."

Usually a fall event, homecoming was held this year April 5-10 due to the pandemic. Activities included a reverse-style parade in which floats, parade entries and performers remained stationary while spectators drove

through the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center parking area to view them.

The FSU Spring 2021 Homecoming Council said it changed the pep rally's name to "Homecoming Live" to demonstrate its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. The announcement stated the name is "more in line with what the Homecoming Council wants to accomplish with this event: a student-focused, live event spotlighting the accomplishments of our students, alumni and community."

After examining the historical context of

the word pow wow, the council determined it not justify its use and stated the term should apply solely to the celebration of cultures of Indigenous people by Indigenous people.

"By comparing the pep rally led by FSU Homecoming to a pow wow, we, intentionally or not, disregard the history of why pow wows exist," read the council's statement. "The cultural significance of the term and the years of improper use by FSU Homecoming led to the decision by the FSU Homecoming Council to change the name from 'Pow Wow' to 'Homecoming Live.'"

The council is comprised of students. "We take accountability for our actions and will continue to work to make FSU Homecoming more inclusive for all students," the council stated.

Homecoming also included the Garnet and Gold spring football game at Doak Campbell Stadium, which consisted of two 12-minute periods in front of 14,329 socially distanced and masked fans. FSU's season begins at home Sept. 5 against Notre Dame.

## Haskell president removed amid free speech controversy

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

Jared Nally became a student journalist to be more involved in campus life instead of taking a job at a fast food restaurant.

"I thought if I worked at the paper I'd be at all the events and involved in campus culture," said Nally (Miami Tribe of Oklahoma), editor of Haskell Indian Nations University's student newspaper the Indian Leader in Lawrence, Kansas. "I wasn't passionate at the time, but free speech made me realize how important journalism is and how important it is to hold officials accountable."

Nally's determination and passion for free speech played a major role toward the firing of HINU President Ronald Graham in May.

Nally, a senior, was working on a story about the passing of a university employee and reached out to university officials and the police department for confirmation. That simple act of routine journalistic research earned Nally the ire of Graham, who issued a directive in October 2020 that would have forbidden journalistic practices and restricted free speech.

Graham's administration called the Indian Leader a student organization instead of a newspaper and cut its budget by over \$10,000. The directive effectively silenced Nally for 90 days.

In early March, Nally filed a federal lawsuit against Graham and the university. After the lawsuit was filed, Graham issued two other directives on March 11 and March 21.

The first directive forbade employees from expressing opinions about the administration and the second one forbade faculty from mentioning their Haskell employment when speaking with the media.

An internal investigation revealed Graham stifled the free speech rights of students and faculty, which led to a unanimous vote of no confidence in the president from the faculty senate on April 1. The directives were rescinded April 7. Graham was fired by the school's board of regents on May 7 and replaced by Dr. Tamarah Pfeiffer, a member of the Bureau of Indian Education's senior leadership team.

"The acting president hasn't released anything to students that she is in the position," Nally said. "The BIE hasn't



Gary Rohman/FIRE

Jared Nally is editor of the Indian Leader, Haskell Indian Nations University student newspaper.

released a memo to students."

But instead of being intimidated by the administration as he tried to do his job, Nally was invigorated and plans to attend graduate school to study journalism.

"Most people don't appreciate the value of free speech," he said. "We need to be able to keep and exercise that freedom."

Haskell's history dates back to the mid-1800s when it first opened as an elementary school with 22 Native American students.

The university's figures from 2019

showed an enrollment of nearly 800 students who represented 145 sovereign nations from 35 states.

Today, academic programs include natural and social sciences, Indigenous and American Indian studies, environmental science, mathematics, communications, English, art, theater, music and media communications. Professional schools include health, sport and exercise science, business and education.

## Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students of the month May 2021



## NIEA to hold convention in October

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The National Indian Education Association will hold its 52nd annual Convention and Trade Show from October 13-16 at the CHI Health Center, Omaha's Convention Center & Arena in

Omaha, Nebraska. The theme is "Native Control of Native Education: A Time to Lead."

For more information visit [niea.org](http://niea.org).

## Q&A with Rollie Gilliam III

### After ACD, a new role at CSSS

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — Rollie Gilliam III has set the pace at the Seminole Tribe in its Advanced Career Development (ACD) program — part of the Tribal Professional Development (TPD) department.

As the Fort Pierce-raised 33-year-old graduates from the program he entered in 2019, he has started a new chapter in his professional career. Gilliam now works in quality assurance at the Center for Student Services and Success — a first for the department.

“As the department begins to expand its role in the collection and monitoring of data, Rollie will play an important role,” CSSS director Michael Giacchino said in an email. “This is because data is what tells the tribe’s story. From it, history is recorded, patterns revealed, and plans for future action can be made to both enhance the tribal member experience and CSSS programs.”

Gilliam has a master’s degree in criminology and criminal justice from Florida Atlantic University. Last year, he added a professional certification from Florida State University in “trauma and resilience: level one” to his resume. He also recently earned a certified green belt from the Lean Six Sigma Institute at Broward College — a group that offers courses and certifications for individuals who want to help organizations implement projects and goals and standardize their work.

“Rollie has worked closely with each of the programs in the CSSS to learn about their operations, processes and procedures,” Giacchino said. “His participation in management meetings has led to streamlining and the elimination of professional waste.”

Gilliam has long said it’s important for tribal members to participate in government and community organizations. He said his “stakeholder first mentality” is what drives him to give those who access CSSS the best experience possible. He describes himself as the CSSS “franchise player” because of his intense dedication to the department.

“It is clear that since Rollie began to contribute to the CSSS that he has played a key role [in] redefining the direction of the CSSS for the betterment of the tribal community,” Giacchino said.

The Tribune asked Gilliam to share a little bit with readers about his life, education, and career.

#### What stands out for you when you look back at your ACD experience?

It’s the triumphs that supersede the trials. It has been quite a journey, but the lessons, not losses, have been most rewarding. We have an inside joke in ACD that pertains to the acronym. Sarcasmically speaking, it stands for “Anything Can Develop.” It holds true in this case.

#### Do you have any advice for tribal members who may not know about the program or are considering it?

Two words: proactive measures. From resumes to job descriptions to marketing, we should have these items readily available to counter any probable ‘no’s’ to the entry in our workforce. This is an us, not me, thing. Member-to-member allyship is imperative to knocking those doors down.



Rollie Gilliam III graduated from the ACD program and has begun a new position at CSSS.

#### You grew up in Fort Pierce. What would you like to share about your family there and now here in Hollywood?

At one point in time, we were the last community to have a reservation associated with our city. This was well overdue yet rewarding because of our grit and grind. Since then, I’ve seen a high level of professional elevation from my Afro-Indigenous, mixed blood family members that have changed the game. I see you, Fort Pierce.

#### In terms of your new position at CSSS — why is it important?

Demand. Literally, not one tribal member has approached me and verbally inquired about quality assurance. However, the non-verbal cues have always been present. I identified the need and it took off from there. I have a motivation to enhance the relationship between the CSSS and the tribal community so that it’s more authentic. I viewed this as an opportunity to elevate the tribal reverence.

#### What’s one thing tribal members would be surprised to learn about you?

I prefer administrative work over fieldwork. Some of my colleagues and tribal community members push me toward the latter. I had to fully understand that this isn’t up to me, but those who see greater.

*Editor’s note: Gilliam can be reached via email at rollie.gilliam@seminole.com and by phone at (954) 989-6840 ext. 10588. The tribal members now enrolled in Advanced Career Development (ACD) are Tomasina Chupco-Gilliam, Aaron Tommie, Derrick Tiger and Taylor Holata. The Tribal Professional Development (TPD) staff consists of Kerlande Patterson, supervisor; Kajir Harriott, student and professional development success coach; and Hurvens Monestime, senior specialist.*

## Speaker line up announced for National UNITY Conference

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**MESA, Ariz.** — An actor, clothing designer, singer and Tik Tok star, and a fashion designer have been confirmed as part of the speaker line up at the 2021 National UNITY Conference in Dallas, Texas, to be held from July 2-6 at the downtown Sheraton Hotel and Convention Center. The conference theme will be ‘45 Years of Building Resilient Leaders and Lifelong Connections.’ The event will feature:

- Chance Rush, Hidatsa, actor in Martin Scorsese’s “Killers of the Flower Moon” and motivational speaker, trainer, comedian
  - Tia Wood, Cree/Salish, dancer/singer and Tik Tok star
  - Hud Oberly, Comanche/Osage/Caddo, creative director for Urban Native Era
  - Norma Baker Flying Horse, Hidatsa/Dakota Sioux/Assiniboine, Red Berry woman fashion designer
- For more information visit [unityinc.org](http://unityinc.org).



Chance Rush

## Guess Who is coming to Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**IMMOKALEE** — The Guess Who, will perform their classic hits live in concert at Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee on March 19, 2022, at 8 p.m. Advance tickets are on sale for \$79 and are available by phone at 1-800-514-ETIX or online at [moreinparadise.com](http://moreinparadise.com). Attendees must be 21

years of age.

Tickets previously purchased for The Guess Who’s March 31, 2021, performance may be used for this concert.

With 14 Top 40 hit singles, The Guess Who is known as Canada’s first international rock superstars. “These Eyes” reached No. 1 in Canada and No. 7 in the United States in the spring of 1969.

## Native American Languages Act, 30 years and counting

### PECS immersion program embodiment of legislation

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

Congress passed the Native American Languages Act in 1990 to support and protect the rights of Native Americans to use their languages. The passage of the bill allowed tribes throughout the country, including the Seminole Tribe, to work to ensure their languages survive.

Brighton’s Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School created its immersion program in 2015 with the goal of creating Creek speakers from infancy. At the time, there were only 30 or 40 Creek speakers in the tribe.

The program staff includes three elders — Jennie Shore, Alice Sweat and Emma Fish — and five second language learners — Jade Osceola, Rita Gopher, Jewel Lavatta, Rita Youngman and Janae Braswell.

Today the program is comprised of the same babies and toddlers who started with the program, but now six are in first grade, two are in kindergarten and three are preschool age. The impact of the program has had a profound effect on the children and their families.

“A lot more language has been brought into the home,” said Osceola, who runs the program. “We have created our own family unit; they do everything together, even outside of school. The speak Creek outside of school and go to birthday parties and sports events together. It’s impacted them in a major way.”

Like everything else in the tribe, the immersion program shut down when the pandemic hit. The students went from eight hours of language a day to none. The dynamic of kids not seeing the elders every day affected the program. Osceola fought to open the program’s doors even though the rest of PECS was closed during the pandemic.

“The rest of the school isn’t working to save a struggling language,” she said. “The elders aren’t getting any younger and we



Courtesy photo

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School immersion students have returned to in-person classroom learning.

needed to get the kids back together with them.”

The immersion program is back at school in person, more than a year after it closed. Osceola has seen some backsliding, but is confident they will catch up soon.

“The kids are picking it back up, it’s almost like we never left,” Osceola said. “We’ve had our struggles, but as a whole they were excited to see each other and speak their language again.”

The plan for the program is to keep the children together throughout their school years at PECS, but Osceola said they take it one year at a time.

“It’s never been done before,” she said. “We are putting language first.”

That isn’t to say the students don’t learn academic subjects, including math, science, social studies and English. Every subject is taught in Creek, except English which is taught by an English teacher.

“Our job is to do all the work from diapers to food to day to day operations,” Osceola said of herself and the other adults. “The elders’ job is to talk, talk, talk. They correct grammar and guide them in the direction the language should be used. It’s a natural thing and they take on a grandma role.”

The kids embrace the culturally driven program. Osceola hopes that as they get older, they will take ownership of the language and continue to use it. For now, the group of immersion students are isolated from the rest of PECS students.

“Once they leave the class, it’s all English,” Osceola said. “They have the rest of their lives to learn it, English isn’t going anywhere. They are learning Creek now. No one and nothing will keep us from saving our language.”



Courtesy photo

Teacher Rita Gopher, far left, in the PECS immersion classroom on a typical day since returning to campus.

## Language Act name change would honor Cherokee linguist, Vietnam veteran

STAFF REPORT

On April 29, the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, chaired by Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) and co-chaired by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), introduced the Durbin Feeling Native American Languages Act of 2021.

“Congress made a commitment to promote and protect the rights of Native Americans to use their languages over three decades ago when it enacted the Native

American Languages Act of 1990,” said Chairman Schatz. “The Durbin Feeling Native American Languages Act will ensure we are living up to that commitment. Our bill will make the federal government more accountable by setting clear goals and asking for direct input from Native communities about how federal resources can be more effectively used to support and revitalize Native languages.”

The bi-partisan legislation marks the 30th anniversary of the Act, but will change the name to honor Feeling, a renowned

Cherokee linguist and Vietnam veteran who passed away on Aug. 19, 2020. The bill will review and make recommendations to improve federal agencies’ coordination in support of Native American languages and authorize a federal survey of Native language use and programmatic needs every five years. These surveys will serve as “health checks” to allow Native communities and Congress to target federal resources for Native American languages more effectively.

## New board members named to CNAY

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — The Center for Native American Youth at the Aspen Institute announced new leadership in its board of advisors. Allison Binney (Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians) and Sam McCracken (Fort Peck Sioux and Assiniboine) were voted unanimously by the board of advisors April 18. In these roles, Binney and McCracken will lead the board and support the executive director.

“I am humbled to take on this new position and hope that I can live up to the task. As someone who grew up in my own tribal community, I understand firsthand the obstacles that many Native Youth face, but also know the capacity youth have to become incredibly successful and leaders for the next generation.” Binney said in a statement.

Binney has served on the board of advisors as an executive committee member since its founding in 2011. She is a partner at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, LLP, where she advises clients

regarding American Indian law and policy. She returned to Akin Gump in 2011 after serving as staff director and chief counsel to the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs from late 2007 to early 2011. She served as general counsel to the committee from 2005 to late 2007.

Before originally joining Akin Gump, Allison served as an associate at a boutique law firm specializing in American Indian law, as the program coordinator for the Indian Legal Program at Arizona State University College of Law and as a law clerk for the Native American Rights Fund in Washington, D.C., where she assisted with trial 1.0 in the Cobell class-action lawsuit. She received her J.D. and Indian Law certificate in 2000 from the Arizona State University College of Law and her B.A. in political science with a minor in Native American studies from the California State University, Chico. She is a past president of the Native American Bar Association of Washington, D.C.

McCracken is general manager of Nike N7. He became the manager of Nike’s Native American Business in 2000 and has

led the development of the Nike Air Native N7 shoe, the N7 retail collection, and the N7 Fund, which helps to create access to sport for Native American and Indigenous youth in the United States and Canada. McCracken has pursued a strategy of increasing health and wellness through physical activity in Native American communities.

McCracken has been recognized with several prestigious awards for his passion and work. He was honored in 2004 with Nike’s Bowerman Award and with the George Washington Honor Medal by the Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge, for his commitment to Native communities on health promotion programs. More recently, he received the 2010 President’s “Leadership Award” from the National Indian Gaming Association.

In June 2010, McCracken was appointed by President Barack Obama to the US Department of Education’s National Advisory Council on Indian Education. More recently, McCracken and N7 received the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development’s 2019 Corporate Business of the Year Award.

# Best in show: Seminole Tribe 4-H winners

## STAFF REPORT

The recently-completed 4-H year was anything but typical. The show and sale were held online. It took five days to complete the show and bidders for animals didn't get the aroma of the 4-H barn while bidding.

Additionally, winners of the 4-H show held March 22-26 didn't find out they won until a few days later, when they opened their front doors. Staff members surprised the winners by going to their homes and planting a sign in the front yard to announce the honor.

Each participant in the show was given a blue ribbon. All champion winners received a belt buckle, champion rosette and the yard sign.

The winners were:

Grand champion commercial heifer  
**Rebekah Tigertail**

Reserve champion commercial heifer  
**Paizlee Miller**

Grand champion cow calf  
**Khoal Cochran**

Grand champion registered  
Salacoa Valley Farms heifer  
**Timothy Urbina**

Reserve champion registered  
Salacoa Valley Farms heifer  
**Khoal Chochran**

Grand champion heifer  
showmanship junior  
**Khoal Cochran**

Grand champion heifer  
showmanship intermediate  
**Rebekah Tigertail**

Grand champion heifer  
showmanship senior  
**Karlyne Urbina**

Grand champion steer  
**Logan Covarrubias**

Reserve champion steer  
**Nicholus Andrews**

Grand champion steer  
showmanship junior  
**Augustice Jumper**

Grand champion steer  
showmanship intermediate  
**Summer Gopher**

Grand champion steer  
showmanship senior  
**Talia Billie**

Steer carcass winners  
Grand champion steer carcass  
**Rylee Bowers**

Reserve champion steer carcass  
**Karlyne Urbina**

Grand champion swine  
**Anna Tigertail**

Reserve champion swine  
**Levi Tommie**

Grand champion swine  
showmanship junior  
**Terrence Osceola**

Grand champion swine  
showmanship intermediate  
**Anna Tigertail**

Grand champion swine  
showmanship senior  
**Shyanna Escobar**

Swine carcass winners  
Grand champion swine carcass  
**Karma Koenes**

Reserve champion swine carcass  
**Taryn Osceola**



Clockwise from left are 4-H winners Logan Covarrubias, Nicholus Andrews, Talia Billie and Summer Gopher.



4-H show winners pose with their yard signs. Clockwise from top left are Anna Tigertail, Levi Tommie, Shyanna Escobar and Terrence Osceola.

## Tampa's Seminole Hard Rock to feature comedian Ron White

### FROM PRESS RELEASE

**TAMPA** — Live entertainment has returned to Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa. Comedian Ron White will perform at the Hard Rock Event Center on July 25 with two socially distanced show times at 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. Doors will open at 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. of the shows.

Tickets start at \$75 and are available via Ticketmaster or online at seminolehardrocktampa.com.

White first rose to fame as the cigar-smoking, scotch-drinking funnyman from the Blue Collar Comedy Tour phenomenon, but now as a chart-topping Grammy-nominated comedian and a feature film actor, White has always been a classic storyteller. His stories relay tales from his real life, ranging from growing up in a small town in Texas to sharing stories of his daily life to becoming one of the most successful comedians in America. All four of his comedy albums charted #1 on the Billboard Comedy Charts.

As an actor, White had supporting roles in "Horrible Bosses" and "Sex and the City 2." He also had a principal role in Jayne Mansfield's "Car," written and directed by Billy Bob Thornton. He is a co-executive producer of "Bridegroom," a Linda Bloodworth-Thomason documentary, which debuted at the 2013 NYC Tribeca Film Festival and won the Audience Award.

In 2016, White's acting talents were showcased alongside Luke Wilson, Carla Gugino, and Imogen Poots, in music-industry veteran Cameron Crowe's Showtime series, "Roadies."

## Herman's Hermits singer to play Immokalee

### FROM PRESS RELEASE

**IMMOKALEE** — Herman's Hermits star Peter Noone will perform "An Old English Christmas" live in concert at Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee on Dec. 12 at 8 p.m. Advance tickets are on sale for \$79 and are available at 1-800-514-ETIX or www.moreinparadise.com. Concert attendees must be 21 years of age or older.

Accompanied by his band, Noone currently performs over 200 concerts a year. Noone and the band's classic hits include "I'm Into Something Good." Herman's Hermits sold over 52 million recordings. In all, 14 singles and seven albums went gold.

# Native comedy 'Rutherford Falls' gathers buzz

### BY DAMON SCOTT Staff Reporter

The new television comedy "Rutherford Falls" is in its first episodes on the streaming service Peacock and has quickly won over critics and increasingly picked up fans.

Season one has 10 episodes in all; the first episode aired April 22.

The series is a unique one — it's not only a sitcom based on Native Americans but was co-created by Sierra Teller Ornelas, who also oversees the show. She is a Mexican American and a member of the Navajo Nation.

Many of the show's themes will be familiar to Native Americans. In the fourth episode, for example, character Terry Thomas, played by Michael Greyeyes (Muskege Lake Cree Nation), responds to a reporter after he's asked if he's "selling out his culture" by "chasing the almighty dollar" as a casino owner.

"I will not rest until my nation gets every single thing that was taken from them," his character says in response.

In a recent interview with TheWrap, Ornelas said that particular scene represented something she wanted to get across in the

show — that Native American people are "not a monolith."

"There are over 500 Native tribes and we all have our own nations, separate governments, cultures, languages, just like everybody," Ornelas said. "With the five Native writers [on the show], including myself and Jana [Schmieding], we all had many similar experiences but know Native people with different opinions on topics like tribal capitalism."

Ornelas is the first Native person to oversee (known as show running) a television comedy. The show was also co-created by Mike Schur and TV and film star Ed Helms.

The storylines and characters are made specifically with Native communities in mind — and it's written and portrayed by Native people. Critics have said a show like "Rutherford Falls" with multilayered Native characters and its take on the modern Indigenous experience, could only be created Native people.

The first episode begins by introducing Nathan Rutherford (Helms), the last descendant of the fictional Northeastern town's namesake to still live within its boundaries. His days are spent at the local museum where he educates school groups

about his patriarchal ancestor, Big Larry, who is memorialized by a statue in the town's square.

Rutherford explains that Big Larry inked a "fair and honest deal" with the fictional Minishonka Nation in 1638, to which a young Native kid with a "Land Back" T-shirt raises their hand to ask, "Did they make a statue of any Minishonka?"

The answer is, not surprisingly, no. It's a way the show approaches issues of Native American invisibility as well as the misconception that Indigenous people only exist in areas like New Mexico and Oklahoma. (New York City has one of the highest urban Native populations in the U.S., for example.)

As one character explains it, "Indigenous history is the greatest story never told." "Rutherford Falls" is one in a recent lineup of others with Native American actors, creators and show runners. FX's "Reservation Dogs" airs this summer — a show that also features a Native American leading producer — and Netflix's animated series "Spirit Rangers" features an industry-first of all Native writers.



Michael Greyeyes is one of the Native actors in "Rutherford Falls."

## Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians member chosen for UM Student Government judicial branch

### BY ASHLEY A. WILLIAMS News@TheU

**CORAL GABLES** — The University of Miami Student Government recently selected Dallas Bennett, a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI), as a Student Government Supreme Court associate justice. He is the first member of his tribe to serve in this capacity at the university.

In this role, Bennett authors court opinions following a trial, shares advisory opinions for the executive and legislative branches of Student Government, and serves as the judicial representative for the Senate Policy and Finance committee during the academic year.

"I want to go to law school, so I thought supreme court would be a good way to get started," said Bennett, who has been involved with local and student governments since high school.

Since his youth, he has held governance positions on the reservation including as attorney general of the Junaluska Leadership Council. He was the only Native youth from the EBCI in the group. In this role, he passed resolutions that would go on to the tribal council.

Bennett said he has been fascinated with his community and the policies that affect it since he was a child. Though life on his

reservation is very different from a city like Miami, he enjoys getting to live in the best of both worlds.

"Coming from this little, small town and being around people I have known since I was born, is very different from being in a city like Miami," Bennett said. "My reservation is very community-oriented, and everybody knows everybody. It's a very laid-back way of life and everyone moves at their own pace."

He said that for those same reasons, he loves being a student at the university. When Bennett enrolled, he only knew of one other Native American student. Forming connections has not been difficult however, because Bennett is proud of where he comes from and open to learning and meeting new people.

During Bennett's first year at the university, he formed an unlikely bond with a popular administrator — Patricia A. Whitely, the senior vice president for student affairs. He remembers meeting her at a "Pancakes with Pat" campus community event during the fall 2020 semester.

"It was my second day on campus, and as I was walking by the Rat, Dr. Whitely yelled over at me to come introduce myself," said Bennett, who is now a sophomore majoring in history with a minor in political science. "From there, our bond just grew — she's like a second mom to me."

Since that day, Bennett said Whitely has been a mentor and has taken him under her wing and has helped him immensely. When he faced difficulty with virtual learning, Whitely was there to remind him of the resources available on campus.

"He is an extraordinary young man, and I was thrilled to meet him and learn about his journey to UM as a Native American student from the Cherokee Indian tribe in western North Carolina," said Whitely. She and John Haller, vice president for enrollment management, have reached out to the chief of Bennett's tribe and hope to host him on campus when it is safe to do so.

Bennett hopes to continue making his tribe proud through his academic accomplishments. He plans to continue working closely with the university to recruit more Native American students.

As he prepares to enter his second



University of Miami student Dallas Bennett (EBCI)

academic year, Bennett also looks forward to working closely with The UPROAR ticket that now leads the Student Government administration, and he hopes to further bring all three branches together.

"I'm so excited to continue my education. All the things that I'm doing is helping me, but it is also allowing me to be a mentor and a role model," said Bennett. "These kids see western North Carolina and think that they can't get out of there," he added. But Bennett said that he and others his age, are "working hard to show them that anything is possible."

# Q & A with the bestselling author of 'Firekeeper's Daughter'

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Angeline Bouley (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians) is a writer who often tells stories about the Ojibwe community where she lives in Michigan's upper peninsula.

One of her stories is now a commercial success: the New York Times bestselling debut novel – "Firekeeper's Daughter" – about an Ojibwe teen who goes undercover to root out corruption in her community.

The novel is written for young adults and has been celebrated in recent weeks by Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) and Rep. Sharice Davids (Ho-Chunk) of Kansas, among other Indian Country dignitaries, authors and critics.

Bouley credits a network of strong Native American women – relatives and friends – who have shaped her life and work. The title is a nod to her father, a traditional firekeeper and one of her greatest teachers, she said, who lights ceremonial fires during spiritual activities in her tribal community.

The book is set to be adapted for television by Netflix.

The Seminole Tribune asked Bouley via email about the book and its themes. Responses have been edited for length and clarity.

**What has the reaction been from Indian Country about the novel?**

It has been incredibly supportive. The most surprising and wonderful thing was when an Ojibwe woman I met tried to tell me how much the story meant to her. We shared a look that conveyed everything she couldn't put into words. That moment was everything.

**Have you gotten feedback from young adults?**

Yes. I've done a few in-person book signings in my tribal community and received great feedback from teen readers. I absolutely love fan art, which is something that young adult readers draw of the characters and favorite scenes.

**You write about enrolled versus unenrolled tribal members. How much tension is there?**

How much? I couldn't say. The really interesting thing is how many tribes have stories about the role of the [Bureau of Indian Affairs] in developing their tribal constitutions. Some tribes had enrollment criteria imposed upon them as a condition of getting a constitution approved. Also, when the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 was

enacted, the funding was not adequate to recognize all tribes.

My family comes from the Sugar Island Band of Ojibwe and had been seeking recognition for decades. When we finally received recognition in the 1970s, it was as the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and included a number of historic bands lumped together. In my view, the heavy hand of the BIA fostered deep discord within my tribe that continues to impact our citizens today. And my tribe isn't an isolated example.

**You write about drug use, racism, murder and sexual assault in the book – what can you say about those issues in Indian Country?**

These are issues that disproportionately impact Indian Country because of jurisdictional quagmires, inadequate federal resources to address crimes, deficient crime data collection, and the lack of communication and cooperation between agencies. Recent federal actions are a promising start to address these issues.

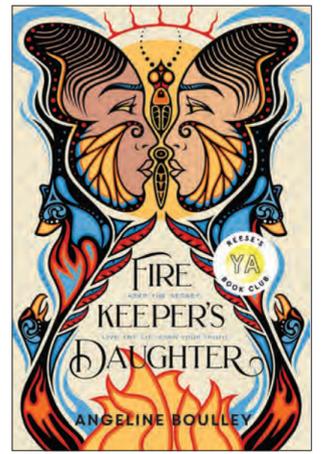
**What's next for you?**

I'm working on my second book. If Firekeeper's Daughter was "Indigenous Nancy Drew," then book two is "Indigenous



Amber Bouley

Author Angeline Bouley



Courtesy image

"Firekeeper's Daughter" gained quick notoriety after its release.

Editor's note: Firekeeper's Daughter is available for purchase through several booksellers.

Lara Croft." Except instead of raiding tombs, the main character will be reclaiming ancestral remains and sacred items from museums and private collectors to return home – until one of her heists goes very badly.

# Elgin Jumper's 'Nightfall, the Novel'

BY ELGIN JUMPER

Editor's note: This is the first part of an excerpt from chapter five of "Nightfall, The Novel," by Elgin Jumper. The second part will be in the June 30 edition of the Tribune.

Well, one thing was clear, it was time for another story:

"Let's do this!" Uncle Wilbur said, rubbing his palms together.

"Okay, let's go, I'm thinking of a modern-day Everglades adventure story," I began, "Seminole characters and all. It all starts on the Hollywood rez. The main dude, his name is Trace Wildhorse, a young man in his late-20s. He recently broke up with his girlfriend. He has long hair, which he keeps tied back in a ponytail.

"He cuts grass for a lawn service company which maintains properties from North Miami to Margate. But he's on a day off today. In truth, he was to have met up with his girlfriend later that night, but she called, claiming an emergency at work. Evidently, she had to take the shift or find employment elsewhere. And so, Trace is at home now, looking to salvage the rest of the shattered weekend with an action-adventure movie marathon!"

"Yes, sir," Uncle Wilbur said, while negotiating traffic.

I gazed up and beyond the windshield, to the white clouds and blue sky. "He was to have had his thermostat repaired, it wasn't working the way it should've been, but the repairman had contacted him, saying the visit couldn't be made till the following week. So no AC, nor company.

"Geez," Uncle Wilbur muttered.

"And yet, he's determined to salvage the situation," I explained. "It's Memorial Day weekend, for heaven's sake, 3 days of movie-watching bliss, and oh yes, relaxation – so yes, he was looking forward to it!"

"His cellphone never rings, so he's predicting a nice peaceful time ahead, and perhaps, just perhaps, his girlfriend will show. It could happen, he thought to himself. He's got his popcorn, his soda, and his stacks of DVDs and Blu-rays. How many movies can he watch in a 3 day weekend? Only Time will tell. Shall he begin with Stallone? Or Schwarzenegger? Norris? So many titles. So many stars."

"Alrighty, then," Uncle Wilbur nodded.

I cleared my throat right quick.

"So Ol' Trace is at home a-chillin like Bob Dylan," I said. "For no other lawn service worker, throughout the ages, had ever come up with such an awesome idea as this one. Ever since Time Immemorial! Heh-heh. A Non-stop Action-Adventure Movie Marathon! Okay, so check this out, Uncle, Trace walks from his kitchen into his living-room, right ...

Trace walked into his living-room, from the kitchen, like a Rez Monarch, prepared for a long holiday weekend of action-adventure movie-watching.

He was on the verge of shutting off his cellphone, when it started going off! Caller ID said Stan Jensen, also known as "Comanche" a fellow co-worker in lawn service.

"Hello," Trace said into his phone.

"Trace, man!" Comanche exclaimed.

"I-I need your help, bro! I messed up."

"Messed up? What is it?" Trace asked.

"I'm stranded out here near BC."

"Big Cypress?"

"I was out with some folks last night," Comanche revealed. "Just lost track. I didn't realize."

"Dang, Comanche," Trace said, "Where are you? And please, be more specific."

"I'm just north of BC rez, headin out towards Clewiston, well, least that's what I've been able to gather. Uh, I'm at these people's house, they're letting me use their phone. Please, Trace, you're my only hope."

"Comanche! You can't keep doing this, buddy."

"I know, I know," Comanche lamented. "And I'm broke, too. Please do this for me, bro, I'll so owe bigtime, I promise."

"You'll be ruining my weekend plans."

"Trace, I'm scared, you've got help me."

"If I go, I'm not going alone. I'll have

to find someone to ride with me. We'll need to fuel up, we'll need to-Dang, Comanche."

"Oh my god-Come get me, Trace, there's no other way!"

"Okay, okay, it's gonna take at least like, 2, 3 hours to get out there. Try an be out by the road. I don't even know the name of that road. Stay calm. I'll be out there. And call again, if they'll let you."

"Okay . . ." All Trace could hear after that was dial tone.

When it came down to it, Trace really wasn't that bent out of shape about going out to the middle of nowhere and picking up his good buddy. Long as he left now and got it over with the quickness.

Trace flipped through his phone, found his other friend, Lobo Martin's number. He abruptly got Lobo on the line.

"Yello" Lobo answered.

"Hey, Lo," he said. "Trace here. Uh, I gotta drive out and pick up Comanche, out passed BC, headin out towards Clewiston way. I mean, if you ain't too busy, I sure could use some company for the ride out. Whaddayousay?"

Lobo took a moment to respond.

"Whoa, Trace," Lobo answered. "Slow your roll. Everglades? Comanche partyin again?"

"Yeah, buddy. Come on, Lo', I feel sorry for the guy. Let's go get 'im."

More silence. Trace shrugged.

"Okay," Lobo said, "I'll ride."

And so, within an hour, Trace, and Lobo, with a ridiculously spiked haircut, were fueled up, caffeinated down, and heading west on 595 in Trace's silver Dodge Neon, dubbed, "The Silver Bullet" by fellow reservationers.

"Wow, so your girlfriend stood you up, huh?" Lobo asked. "Just like that? No rhyme, nor reason?"

Trace said, "Lo', it's beyond me."

"Uh, ladies and gentlemen, Elvis has left the building."

"Tell me about it. What would Gandalf do?"

"Wait. Does Gandalf have a lady?" Lobo asked.

Trace was obsessed with the Wizard, Gandalf from The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings fame.

"No, no, he's just Gandalf, the Grey," Trace said, "or Gandalf, the White." He gestured with his hands, as if he was a Seminole Wizard.

"Ah, touche'. But still. And you still have your health."

"Hold on, now, in terms of Gandalf, there is, Galadriel, sorta. You know, The Lady of Light."

Lobo glanced over to make a point.

"Hey," Lobo said, leaning back. "we talkin about Gandalf or we talkin bout you, heh-heh."

By now, they were approaching the toll-gate at 27, where the modern-day Everglades began. Trace glanced over at the expanse of sawgrass and murky water on both sides of 595. He imagined a running battle between phantom warriors and phantom soldiers. He scratched his head and thought no more of it. He had a toll-gate and "Alligator Alley" to get through.

"Uh, three bucks, Lo'." Trace said, referring to the cost of the toll. He nodded towards the center console.

"Gotcha," Lobo said, rummaging the console, picking through quarters and dimes and crumpled dollar bills. He located the appropriate amount in no time flat and handed it on over. At the toll-gates, they slowed up, paid the charge, and continued on into the vastness of the modern-day Everglades.

Trace smiled. "So I had this Grand Memorial Day Weekend planned, right? You know how I roll: Movies. Munchies.

You know, Lo', the Works. And then, here come Comanche. Up to his ol' tricks again. It's intrigue and machinations, I'm almost certain of it."

"Aww, come on now," Lobo said.

"But I'm sorta thinking we'll have this over inside of four, five hours."

"Well, let's hope so. Hey maybe ol' Comanche just needs an intervention."

"Do me a favor, okay," he said. "Don't say that around him. He's so self-conscious."

"Don't worry, I won't," Lobo reassured. "So it's 8PM now, right? We should be back in Hollywood say by 12PM, somewhere around there."

"Sounds good. I might can even rescue a lil something of my weekend, after all. I hope so."

They were approaching the first rest area



Beverly Bidney

Seminole artist and writer Elgin Jumper

on Alligator Alley, also known as I-75. They went over an overpass, where on both sides of the four-lane Interstate stood restrooms and observation decks and travelers milling about. They passed the area, making short of it and after four or five more bridges and rest areas, they made a right at a gas station and convenience store.

It was quite crowded, but they stayed on course down the winding two-lane roadway, for this was "Snake Road," a sinuous rural road zig-zagging through the Everglades, and leading on to the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation.

The watery region alternated between rain and heat and canals and small ponds with cattails and hyacinth intermingled with cow pastures and swamp marshes. And sometimes you could see deer, raccoons, possums, turtles, alligators, and of course, snakes. And at night, bears and panthers came out from the woods, onto the road.

"So Gandalf goes against this ancient demon in Rings, right," Trace said, in conversation, "but of course, Gandalf gets the better of 'im."

"Oh yeah?" Lobo said. "I don't believe I've seen that one. Go on."

"They have to pass this flimsy bridge inside a mountain," Trace explained. "only this ancient demon guy, a tad displeased at being woke up from a nap, mind you, goes to runnin amok, bigtime. He brandishes a fiery whip and stuff. Oh, Pure Cinema, I tell you, heh-heh."

"Oh okay."

"So the ancient demon dude is closing in, flames all around, but Gandalf, whose got this powerful staff, right, you know, one of those long sticks, and his has a glow on the tip, I think, way cool. Sorta like Moses from the Bible had but I don't know if his glowed, too, anyways, Gandalf brings it up and slams the bottom of it down harder than a glare from an enemy."

Trace actually held his hands up and went through the motions in the air. "Then Gandalf shouts: 'You shall not pass!'"

Just then - BANG! - "the Silver Bullet" emitted a resounding bang! And thus began a slow, excruciating crawl and with only 10 minutes on Snake Road. The vehicle jumped and lunged and imitated a raging, bucking bull in a rodeo. "Yee-haw!" Lobo cried, as tires shrieked and the engine hurled out a monstrous noise, as if it was a mythical beast

coming to blows with a wizard. Trace set his hazard lights to blinkin.

"Oh my god," Trace managed, "let me pull it over, if I can."

On the right, there was a short gravel road, leading to the rickety gate of a fenced-in cow pasture. Trace barely steered the Dodge Neon to a stop there, while three cows, interrupted in their dinner by the new development, glanced over, momentarily, and then, went back to chompin grass in the night. Mosquitos hovered and struck from time to time.

Lobo giggled. "Dude, your car's like havin a major malfunction," he said. "So what's our next move?"

Trace checked his cellphone. "I knew it!" He thought for a moment, and then, in due time, he continued, "No service on my phone. Acts up out here. Always does. And I don't even know what happened to the car. I guess we'll just try and get someone to stop. Maybe they'll be able to help us. And I only brought a couple hundred bucks. We'll just wait for someone, okay?"

Trace could see headlights drawing near from the direction they'd come, it was an ominous dark green monster of a truck. Trace and Lobo, both, shuddered. The big truck roared up and pulled in right behind them.

"Stay calm," Trace urged. "Stay close together." He closed the

distance between him and Lobo.

A large woman, in worn blue jeans, short sleeves and tattoos, and holding a strong, sizeable chain, got out of the big truck and walked up to them.

Trace had tracked her with his eyes. It was just like one of them horror movies he sometimes threw in with the action-adventure flicks.

The broad-shouldered woman said, "Appears y'all havin car troubles. Anything I can do to help? What's the matter?"

Trace said, "We think it's the catalytic converter, but we're not for sure."

"Well, if you want," the big woman said, "my cousin is a mechanic, a decent one, too, and he lives on the other side of the rez. Here, I've got a chain to pull you on over, if you like. I'm Ashley, by the way. What do you say? Beats standing out here with the cows and the critters. The skeeters. Dangerous."

"We-We'd sure appreciate it," Trace said. "I'm Trace and he's, Lobo. We were on our way to pick up a friend, when we heard a loud bang from under the hood. Car went to lurkin forward, jumpin around, and then, everything just up and quit."

There were hand-shakes all around, as an occasional car passed by. Trace, ponytail in full array, directed Lobo to the driver's seat of the Silver Bullet, while Ashley secured the chain to both vehicles and got back into her truck.

To Lobo, Trace said, "So get the car back onto the road and I think she'll hook it up again from the front. I'll ride with her and you just keep it on the road, hear. I'm sure she'll take it slow."

And so, the Silver Bullet, with Lobo behind the wheel, was secured from the front, after it was pulled back onto Snake Road. Trace and Ashley got into Ashley's dark ride.

Ashley pointed to the north. "Follow me!" she roared. She chuckled, but her joke was lost on the two men. However, they did give more thank yous. Trace looked in both directions, making sure no cars were approaching. Fortunately none were.

The big truck lurched forward, wresting Lobo and the Dodge Neon behind it. Trace glanced back every now and then, and at one stage, he thought, I hope she's not in some gang or something. He thought more on it

and concluded lotsa women had tattoos these days. Trace, he thought to himself, you've got some imagination.

Trace was looking out the back window, when Ashley's cellphone began to go off. She took the call with some loudness and urgency. She hung up after a short, heated conversation.

She peered at Trace. "Just received some urgent news," she said, "and we're gonna make a quick detour just to check on something. It's just a little ways up on the left by the bridges. It can't be help." She adjusted the Disco Ball rear-view mirror ornament.

"What is it?" Trace asked, fear in his voice. "We've a right to know. At least unchain us!" He took another look back at Lobo.

"Not enough time, Trace," Ashley said. "There's been a break-in at my place. And my people say the perpetrators are still on the scene. I'm gonna catch these fiends in the act if it's the last thing I do!"

No doubt this was traffic school #101, but on the more extreme side. The vehicles were moving, with horsepower and peril, with the big truck roaring out like a mythical beast of the swamps. The two men hypothetically could've leaped from the truck and car, earlier, but they were stunned and undergoing brief inaction. By the time they overcame it, it was too late. They passed a sign indicating the boundaries of the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation.

Trace was desperately trying to get a handle on the kinetic forces at work here. There was a terrible speed to the thing, and a tightening and slackening of the heavy chain, wild turns, crazy bumps, and the truck's sudden encounters with potholes. He checked behind them again. Lobo was, without a doubt, in dire straits. Trace fretted and agonized over the entire state of affairs. Large tires howled. Trace tried to deal with the accelerations and decelerations, smoke and dust and the horrible engine thundering noise down Snake Road!

"Oh my god!" Trace yelled. "This is crazy! You might be certifiable!"

He rolled the window down and tried to shout words of encouragement back to Lobo. "Just hold on, Lo'. We're gonna get through this!" He sighed and thought, I so hope Lo' heard me.

It began to storm, with flashing lightning and rolling thunder. Ashley said, "Blessed be, bringth down thy Rain and Thunder." Just then, Ashley turned down a dusty, dirt road paralleling a long canal and two bridges. They were now near the residential area of the Big Cypress reservation.

Ashley gunned her engine, Lobo and the Silver Bullet trailing behind, causing grave distress and turmoil. She was totally oblivious to the two men. She shook a massive fist out the window. Soon she turned a long driveway leading up to huge house. Lights were on and there were pine trees and shrubbery in the yard, several menacing-looking cars out front.

Trace braced for trouble as Ashley tore in to a frightening stop in front of the house!

Ashley took a large pistol from the glove-compartment and stormed off into the house, shouting and wailing to the heavens!

"Let me check on Lobo," Trace said. As he ran back to his car, he could hear a frightful commotion taking place inside. And then, here came the gunplay. Someone was screaming. Someone was shouting. Trace and Lobo, having made it through the dreadful towing, ducked for cover in the Silver Bullet. And that was when two darkly-clad figures charged out from the house, guns all ablaze.

"Let's get out of here, Lo'!" Trace cried. "Never mind the car!"

"Thank you!" Lobo exclaimed.

They vaulted out of the car and moved and took cover from various points, away from the awful shootout. They dodged dangers aplenty and came up to one of the vehicles up front, a black pick-up truck that had sustained round upon round in the firefight. Quickly they jumped into the back of the pick-up. They covered themselves in an old blue tarp.

"Careful now," Trace warned in a low voice.

# Sports



## Brighton's Trevor Thomas finishes senior season with one more to go

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

WEST PALM BEACH — Trevor Thomas will keep playing baseball for as long as he can.

Back when Thomas graduated from Okeechobee High School in 2017 after playing four years for the Brahms, he wasn't sure if he had played his final game.

The 6-foot-1, 170-pound outfielder from the Brighton Reservation still had a strong desire to continue playing, but didn't know if or where he could play collegiately. His decision to play in a junior college showcase — hoping a school would notice him — proved to be a smart move. Thomas was noticed by a coach from Warner University, and, soon after, had a place that he's called his academic and baseball home for the past four years.

It turns out Thomas's baseball career at Warner will be four years, plus one.

Because the pandemic forced spring sports to cease early last year, players were



Kevin Johnson

Warner University outfielder Trevor Thomas, right, recently earned a degree and completed his senior season. He'll return next season as a postgraduate.

given another year of eligibility. Thomas didn't hesitate in making his decision.

"I wanted to play another year," said Thomas, who will return next season in Lake Wales as a graduate student.

As for this season, Warner made some noise in the Sun Conference tournament in May. Seeded No. 5 in the six-team tournament, Warner surprised some people by winning its first two games. The Royals were within two outs of advancing to the championship, but failed to hold a three-run lead and fell to the University of South Carolina-Beaufort, 6-5, in 10 innings May 8 at the Ballpark of the Palm Beaches in West Palm Beach. Warner was ousted from the tournament with a loss the next day.

Thomas came off the bench late in the tournament opener against St. Thomas and notched a single in his only at-bat. Warner

won 18-16 as the teams combined for staggering numbers, including 38 hits, five home runs, 15 walks and 25 runners left on base.

After the tournament, Warner received a bid to the NAIA regionals in Tennessee, but went 0-2 with a 10-9 loss to Indiana University Southeast and a 7-3 loss to University of Northwestern Ohio. Despite the setback, Thomas looked at the bright side.

"It was a great experience. Good tournament, good teams, and it was a nice scenery change," said Thomas, who played in a defensive role late in the Indiana game and did not play in the season finale.

For the season, Thomas's roles fluctuated between being a starter and a sub. He batted .220 with 11 hits and six RBIs in 50 trips.

"I was pretty happy with the way the season went," Thomas said. "I played good defense. I didn't hit as well as I wanted."

Thomas certainly was firing on all cylinders April 10 in Miami Gardens. He went 3-for-4 with three RBIs, two doubles, one walk and two runs scored in a 14-13 win against Florida Memorial. His RBI double knotted the game at 13-13.

Thomas said he hadn't been hitting well leading up to the game and was surprised when he saw his name in the starting lineup.

Off the field, Thomas, son of Gene and Michele Thomas, graduated this spring with a degree in agribusiness. He plans to pursue a master's degree in business administration. When his academic days are done, he hopes to get a job on a ranch and work his way up through the business, preferably working for the tribe.



Kevin Johnson

Trevor Thomas warms up before Warner's game against Keiser in the Sun Conference tournament in West Palm Beach.

## Changeup benefits Immokalee pitcher Ava Nunez

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

Ava Nunez expanded her pitching options this season as the Immokalee High School junior worked a changeup into her repertoire.

"She grew a lot," said Immokalee softball coach Ruben Lucio. "She's always been a power pitcher."

During the season, Nunez, the only Seminole on this year's team, started throwing off-speed pitches in addition to her usual heat.

"She's got a great changeup. It changes the way [she] can attack certain lineups," Lucio said.

Nunez averaged one strikeout per inning as she finished with 87 Ks in as many innings. She fanned a season-high 13 against Clewiston and 11 in a regular season game against Barron Collier.

It was in a critical postseason game against Barron Collier that Nunez shined the brightest. She allowed just three hits, no earned runs and struck out six in six innings as Immokalee edged Barron Collier 1-0 in a district semifinal April 27. The victory sealed a spot in the regional tournament for Immokalee and ended Barron Collier's season.

Nunez finished with a 2.27 ERA and 10-8 record. She faced some of the toughest teams in the Miami/Fort Lauderdale area, including Class 6A state champion Doral Academy, and Westminster, which reached the Class 3A state semifinals.

Nunez played third base when she wasn't pitching.

Offensively, she batted .266 with five doubles, two triples and 12 RBIs. Lucio said Nunez battled a couple injuries that impacted her batting.

Immokalee, which finished with a 17-12 record, should be back in the hunt for a district title next season. The team loses only two seniors from this year's squad and will return 12 players with varsity experience.



Beverly Bidney

Immokalee High School starting pitcher Ava Nunez delivers a pitch against Fort Myers in a regional quarterfinal game May 6 at Fort Myers High School.



Beverly Bidney

Ava Nunez, third from left, and her Immokalee teammates get ready to face Fort Myers in a playoff game.

## Ahnie Jumper's FGCU career ends

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

After sweeping Stetson in the Atlantic Sun quarterfinals, the Florida Gulf Coast University softball team appeared ready to make a strong run for the conference championship.

The Eagles' bats, however, fell quiet in the double-elimination portion of the championship in Kennesaw, Georgia.

FGCU lost to host Kennesaw State, 8-1, May 13. The following day the Eagles' season ended with a 3-1 loss in eight innings to Jacksonville University.

The loss marked the final game for eight FGCU seniors, including the Seminole Tribe's Ahnie Jumper.

"I want to thank our eight seniors for what they have given to this program over the past four years. It was a unique season to say the least and one we'll remember for a long time," said FGCU coach Dave Deiros.

Jumper, who played in 28 games this season, did not play in the final three regular season games and four postseason games. The last game she appeared in was the team's senior day game April 25.

Jumper, a catcher, was in the starting lineup 24 times this season. She finished with a .214 batting average with six hits, including two doubles, two RBIs and six runs scored. Three of her hits came in a 3-for-3 performance March 13 against Stetson.

In her four-year career, Jumper, one of the few Seminoles to ever play for an NCAA Division I team, appeared in 120 games. She had a .205 batting average with 17 hits, five doubles, eight RBIs and four stolen bases.

FGCU finished this season with a 28-19 overall record and a 15-3 mark in the ASun.



Kevin Johnson

Florida Gulf Coast University catcher Ahnie Jumper

## Two straight top-20 finishes for Gabby Lemieux on Symetra Tour

STAFF REPORT

Gabby Lemieux is trending in the right direction on the Symetra Tour.

Lemieux (Shoshone-Paiute Tribes) posted two consecutive top-20 finishes on the LPGA's minor league circuit in recent weeks.

She produced her best finish as a pro with a tie for eighth at the Garden City Charity Classic at Buffalo Dunes from April 22-24 in Hurricane, Utah. She shot 71-73-73 to finish at 1-over par and nine strokes behind winner Lilia Vu.

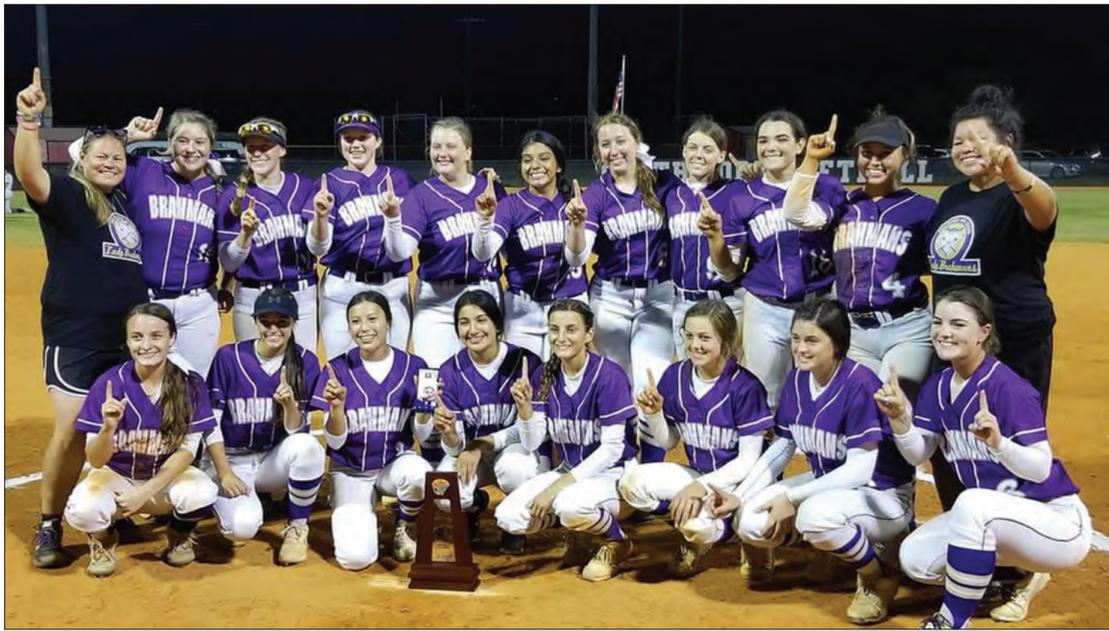
The previous week Lemieux finished 17th at the Copper Rock Championship in Garden City, Kansas. Her scores were 74-74-71.

The Symetra Tour made its first of two straight Florida stops May 21-23 in the IOA Golf Classic in Longwood. Lemieux shot 79-74 and missed the cut.



Symetra Tour

Gabby Lemieux



The Okeechobee High School softball team, which includes the Seminole Tribe's Mary Huff (head coach), Elle Thomas and Lexi Thomas, celebrate April 29 after defeating South Fork, 5-4, in the Class 5A-District 12 championship game.

Courtesy photo

# Hard work culminates with district title for Okeechobee

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

When the Okeechobee High School softball team took the field for the first time this season there was no indication this would end up being a championship squad.

A 10-0 loss to South Fork on opening day showed that the Brahmins had plenty of room for improvement.

And improve they did. By the time the district championship game arrived more than two months later against that same South Fork team, Okeechobee was much stronger. The Brahmins notched close wins against Jensen Beach, Vero Beach and Fort Pierce Central along the way.

"Throughout the season, we improved tremendously in all aspects of the game," said head coach and Seminole tribal member Mary Huff. "Defense was almost flawless in the end. We had better at bats and became more disciplined at the plate. And our mindsets became stronger."

South Fork learned first-hand all about Okeechobee's improvements. The Brahmins stunned South Fork, 5-4, on April 29 to capture the Class 5A-District 12 championship.

"Everyone counted us out, especially South Fork, and I think that helped fuel our fire," Huff said. "It was so big for us to beat South Fork for the district title. I always say it's not where you start, it's where you finish and the girls bought in and put in the work and they got the outcome they wanted."

Elle Thomas helped spark the victory. The junior shortstop went 1-for-2 with an RBI, a walk and run scored. Lexi Thomas also scored a run and drew a walk.



Kevin Johnson

Elle Thomas, shown here on second base in a game against Moore Haven, had a hit and RBI in the district championship game.

The Thomas sisters – the only players from the tribe on this year's team – were among the most productive players at the plate throughout the season. They finished in the top four in hits. Standout games from Elle Thomas included a 5-RBI night against Moore Haven and three hits against Jensen Beach.

Lexi Thomas had three two-hit games. The freshman outfielder scored the team's lone run in the season finale, a 2-1 loss to

Bayside in the 5A regional quarterfinals. After the game, Huff, whose team finished with a 9-5 record, emphasized the importance of continuing to work hard in the off-season.

"I told the team that it's back to the drawing board from here. They have to be sure to keep putting in the work in the off-season if they want to be back and have a deep run in postseason play," she said.

# Support pours in for Oilers' Indigenous player after he becomes target of racist comments

BY SAM LASKARIS  
Windspeaker.com

The Edmonton Oilers' season ended May 25, but the National Hockey League squad and, in particular, its Indigenous defenceman Ethan Bear, continue to fight an off-ice battle.

The Oilers were swept 4-0 by the Winnipeg Jets in their best-of-seven, first-round playoff series.

Winnipeg clinched the series with a 4-3 triple overtime victory in Game 4. That game began May 24 but because of its lengthy OT sessions was not completed until the following morning.

Afterwards, Bear, who is Cree from Ochapowace Nation in Saskatchewan, had racist comments directed at him via social media. Some felt he was to blame for the club's Game 4 loss because of an untimely line change that led to the winning goal.

Bear's girlfriend Lenasia Ned posted on her social media May 25 about the racist behaviour and comments Bear was receiving online.

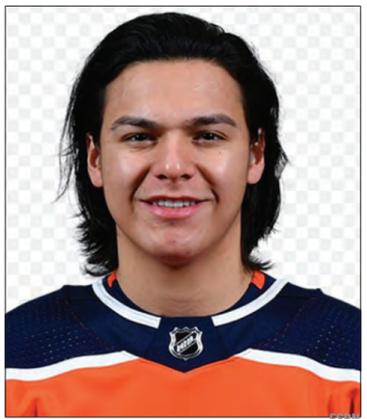
"To hide behind a screen is cowardly," she wrote. "But to use stereotypes against him as an Indigenous person is dehumanizing and awful."

Ned also had praise for Bear, a 23-year-old who completed his second full season with the Oilers.

"Ethan has broken countless barriers as an Indigenous man to make it to the NHL," she said. "He is human. We understand there is criticism but there is no room for racism."

The Oilers' organization issued a statement May 26 to show their support for Bear. But many wondered why it took so long to do.

"The Edmonton Oilers Hockey Club is disappointed in these disgusting, cowardly and racist remarks," the statement began. "While we have witnessed progress in the area of equality and inclusion, this reprehensible behaviour demonstrates we still have significant work to do. Ethan Bear is an incredibly skilled hockey player and a beloved teammate. His community-minded efforts both here in Edmonton and



Edmonton Oilers defenceman Ethan Bear (Cree/Ochapowace Nation)

in Saskatchewan represent the qualities any organization could possibly ask of its members.

"These comments also fly in the face of the work the organization has done to embrace reconciliation and build a strong and positive relationship with our Indigenous community. We call upon everyone in Oil Country to stand up to racism, call out hatred and do their part in making our community one of acceptance, inclusion and respect."

Earlier on May 26, Oilers' general manager and president of hockey operations Ken Holland, also addressed the issue at a news conference.

He said he had only heard about the online abuse Bear was receiving shortly prior to his press conference.

"It's totally uncalled for, totally unacceptable. It's disgusting," Holland said. "There's no place in our world for racism."

Holland also raved about Bear as a hockey player and as a person.

"Ethan is an unbelievable young man," he said. "He's a tremendous role model for all young athletes and especially the Indigenous

community." Bear himself issued a two-minute video on May 24.

"As you know, I've been subject to racist behaviour on social media," he said. "I know this doesn't represent all Oilers' fans or hockey fans and I greatly appreciate all your support and love during this time."

Bear added he will do his part to create change.

"I'm here to stand up to this behaviour, to these comments," he said. "I'm proud of where I come from. I'm proud to be from Ochapowace First Nation. And I'm not just doing this for myself. I'm doing this for all people of colour. I'm doing this for the next generation, to help make change, to love one another, to support one another, to be kind to each other," Bear said.

"There's no place for racism in our communities, in sports or in our workplace. So, I call on all of us to help make change and to end racism. We all deserve to be treated fairly. And, at the end of the day, I think we'll get there," his video statement continued.

On the morning of May 26 the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations Chiefs issued a news release not only condemning the racist and discriminatory comments made towards Bear. The release also expressed concern the Oilers' organization had yet to respond.

"Our First Nations people are avid fans of hockey and the Edmonton Oilers and we are most proud of the athletic achievements of our people," said Grand Chief Vernon Watchmaker. "Ethan has been a gracious ambassador to our youth, and he is very much a part of our communities."

The website Hockey Indigenous, which promotes Indigenous players at all levels, also made a statement.

"We stand against the comments that are roaming around the spectrum in Ethan Bear's name and are far more disappointed in the fans of the hockey world," read part of the statement. "Shame on the people personally attacking him and taking this to an unnecessary extreme level, that is not humane and doesn't belong in hockey."

# WNBA team's new uniforms honor Mohegan Tribe

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

The Connecticut Sun will wear uniforms that pay tribute to the culture and history of the WNBA team's owner.

The Sun are owned by the Mohegan Tribe and play home games at the tribe's casino resort in Uncasville, Connecticut. The three editions of uniforms, unveiled April 8, were made by Nike.

"We were very pleased with the entire uniform design process," Kathy Regan-Pyne, recording secretary of the Mohegan Tribal Council, said in a statement. "Nike demonstrated their commitment to getting it right, they consulted and worked with us as a team. Members of the Tribal Council and Council of Elders, our Chief and our Medicine Woman were all involved in some fashion. It was a collaborative effort we all absolutely love the end result."

The uniforms incorporate "tradition, symbolism and the ideology of being one with nature; all important components of the Mohegan Tribal culture," according to a release. The team's new primary logo, which debuted in January, was derived from an old Mohegan symbol.

One of the new uniforms, known as the "rebel edition," honors Gladys Tantaquidgeon, Mohegan's medicine woman who was also an anthropologist, author, tribal council member and Elder. She lived in three different centuries and earned admiration from within the tribe and outside of it for her dedication to several causes. She attended the University of Pennsylvania and received honorary doctorates from the University of Connecticut and Yale University. Born in 1899, she died in 2005 at age 106.

"An advocate for social justice, Gladys fought for her Mohegan people by supporting traditional Mohegan religion, preserving our homelands and mother earth, saving traditional ceremonies and passing on our stories," said Beth Regan "Morning Deer," vice chairwoman of the Mohegan Tribal Council of Elders. "She promoted social justice for all people of color, fighting for Civil Rights in addition to advocating for and working with imprisoned women, offering hope and courage to those with little. She is an inspiration to me to always walk the life trails with Mohegan good medicine in my heart and spirit."

According to the team, specific details of the royal blue uniform include:

- The neckline represents the canoes the tribe used to travel along the Massapequaug River.

- The trim showcases the ups and downs of life, as life is not linear. It also represents the rolling hills of the tribe's homeland.

- The dots on the trim of the shorts represent the people and those met along the life trail.

- The front of the jersey has the word "Keesusk," which means sun in the Mohegan language.

Aspects of the other uniform designs include a spiritual life force symbol and 13 dots on the "heroine edition" that represent the Mohegan creation and the sections of Grandfather Turtle's back where earth was created. The "explorer edition" also features 13 dots, which represent 13 moons of the lunar year and that the Mohegan people are 13 generations removed from their first chief, Uncas.

The uniforms are available for purchase at connecticutsun.com.



Connecticut Sun

This new Connecticut Sun uniform has "Keesusk" on the front, which is the Mohegan word for sun.

# Canaan Jumper shines in brief time with Heritage varsity

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

PLANTATION — Canaan Jumper, of the Big Cypress Reservation, made the most of her brief time with the American Heritage varsity softball squad this season.

Jumper, a junior first baseman, saw action for the Patriots late in the season.

She went 2-for-2 with a double and run scored in a 15-0 win against Westland Hialeah in a district playoff semifinal April 27.

Two days later she went 1-for-2 with an RBI as Heritage cruised to a district championship win, 16-1, against Mater Lakes Academy.

Thanks to victories against St. Brendan (10-0), Key West (5-0) and Pompano Beach (2-1), Heritage reached the state semifinals May 20. The Patriots appeared to be headed to the state championship game after they built an 8-2 lead against Hernando through four innings in the semifinals, but they watched their chance to capture a ninth state championship slip away as Hernando rallied for a 9-8 win. Jumper did not play in the game.

The loss culminated a unique season for the Patriots, a traditional state powerhouse that uncharacteristically lost seven of their first eight games. Heritage rebounded to finish with a 15-9 record.

Jumper is the younger sister of former



Kevin Johnson

American Heritage's Canaan Jumper fields groundballs during warm-ups prior to a regional quarterfinal against St. Brendan on May 5.

Heritage standout Ahnie Jumper, who went on to play for Florida Gulf Coast University after being a part of a few state titles.

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