



New homes in Brighton  
COMMUNITY ♦ 3A



Preschools hold Christmas events  
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Seminole presence in HS football classic  
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# The Seminole Tribune

Voice of the Unconquered

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## Brothers nab first NAMA together for 'The Storm'

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Seminole Tribe brothers Spencer Battiest and Doc Native have been recognized with nominations and awards for their music over the years, but they achieved a first in 2022. The pair won a Native American Music Award (NAMA) as a duo for the first time for the song "The Storm," at an awards ceremony Nov. 21 in Buffalo, New York.

The brothers planned to attend the ceremony – the first in-person version in two years because of the Covid-19 pandemic – but it was postponed due to a severe snowstorm in the Buffalo area.

"We were in New York City trying to get to Buffalo but couldn't," Battiest said. "A lot of artists didn't end up going."

Nevertheless, the brothers were excited about the award for "Best Live Performance Video." It was Native's first win and Battiest's second. Battiest won "best pop recording" in 2016 for his album "Stupid in Love."

"It's really cool because the first time we were ever nominated for a NAMA was for 'The Storm,'" Battiest said. "It's our most popular song that we've done together as brothers. To win this one is special."

"The Storm" was nominated for two NAMA's when it was released in 2011. Battiest said it still connects with people today, especially through during the pandemic.

♦ See NAMA on page 5A

## Governor honors Seminole students during Native American Heritage Month

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

TALLAHASSEE — Students from Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School and the Ahfachkee School marked the culmination of Native American Heritage Month in Tallahassee with Gov. Ron DeSantis on Nov. 30.

Forty-two students along with teachers and school principals attended a reception at the governor's mansion, where DeSantis announced the winners of the first statewide art and essay contests for Native American Heritage Month. The theme of the inaugural contests was "Celebrating the Achievements of Native American Floridians."

In the spring of 2022, a group of PECS students realized that Native American Heritage Month was commemorated with no special activities in school, unlike Hispanic Heritage and Black History months which had art and writing contests. With the help of the tribe's Heritage and Environment Resources Office (HERO), the students created a resolution to spread awareness "and increase the recognition of Indigenous people as well as the knowledge and acceptance of Indigenous people statewide." The students submitted it to Tribal Council, which passed it unanimously April 14.

The students then sent the resolution to the governor, lieutenant governor and the Florida Department of Education. First Lady Casey DeSantis made the announcement in August that art and essay contests would take place during Native American Heritage Month in November, in partnership with the Seminole Tribe.

"Native Americans have lived on these lands for centuries and we have traditions



Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, Brighton Councilman Larry Howard and Ahfachkee School and Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students join Gov. Ron DeSantis for a reception at the governor's mansion on Nov. 30 during Native American Heritage Month.

that are rich in culture and values," said Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie. "As Native peoples, we work tirelessly to establish nation to nation relationships that promote respect and dignity of Indigenous peoples. A special thanks to the eighth grade of Pemayetv; you know this day wouldn't have happened without you all."

Brighton Councilman Larry Howard told the students in the crowd that they would

remember this day for the rest of their lives.

"Today I look at this as a monumental and historical day for Native Americans," Councilman Howard said. "We didn't have one individual, we had students and teachers that worked numerous hours putting this together. Thank you for not giving up and making sure you could get to the finish line."

Councilman Howard read the names of teacher Amy Carr's students whose idea

it was to push for statewide recognition. The students, who attended the reception, are Brody Riley, Harmany Urbina, Joleyne Nunez, Ilya Trueblood, Hannah Platt, Timothy Urbina, Kiera Snell and Sally Osceola.

♦ See GOVERNOR on page 2B



Hard Rock's plans in Las Vegas, as seen in this rendering, include construction of a massive guitar hotel.

## Done deal: Hard Rock takes over Mirage

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Hard Rock International (HRI) announced its intention about a year ago to buy the Mirage Hotel & Casino on the Las Vegas Strip from MGM Resorts International in an almost \$1.1 billion all-cash deal. HRI has now taken over Mirage operations after the deal was finalized by Nevada gaming regulators Dec. 19.

It's another historic moment in gaming for the Seminole Tribe of Florida – the parent entity of HRI – as it becomes the first tribe to operate a casino on the Strip.

HRI chairman and Seminole Gaming CEO Jim Allen, who appeared before regulators at two meetings in December, said there are no definitive plans to close the Mirage.

"But for full transparency, that could be

an option a year and a half down the road," Allen said in a statement.

Allen said the property would begin a massive 26- to 30-month transformation into the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Las Vegas sometime in 2023. Plans call for the iconic volcano structure in front of the Mirage to be replaced by Hard Rock's own iconic guitar-shaped hotel – at 600-to-700 feet tall. Hard Rock's first guitar hotel, located in Hollywood, Florida, is 450-feet tall.

Allen said he expects final design and construction plans to be completed by summer 2023. In the statement, he said the plans were to retain the Mirage's 3,500 employees as part of the "Hard Rock family." Allen said Hard Rock also signed a deal with Cirque du Soleil to keep its "Beatles Love" show running through 2023.

The Mirage, which opened in 1989, will be stripped down to its concrete shell and

its 3,000 rooms will be gutted, Allen said. Much of 77-acre site's surrounding spaces – pool areas and outdoor grounds – will be demolished and reconfigured.

Initial plans call for the Hard Rock Las Vegas to have 3,700 rooms and suites, a 174,000-square-foot casino, an additional 50,000 to 85,000 square feet of convention space, 21 restaurants and a new Hard Rock Live entertainment venue.

Allen told regulators that Hard Rock had been looking at its options on the Strip for several years. "It has been part of the business plan for quite some time," he said.

Former Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City president Joe Lupo was tapped last summer to be the president of Hard Rock Las Vegas. Real estate investment trust firm VICI Properties owns the Mirage property. Officials said Hard Rock would assume a 25-year lease on the site.

## Cheyenne Kippenberger's schedule packed with D.C. events

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

The Seminole Tribe's Cheyenne Kippenberger attended a slew of Indian Country related events in Washington, D.C., in November and December 2022.

First up was a weekend's worth of events for the procession and dedication of the National Native American Veterans Memorial Nov. 11-13 on the National Mall. Kippenberger worked with Seminole Media Productions to conduct video interviews with several of the veterans in attendance.

Then, just a day later on Nov. 14, Kippenberger was involved in the 2022 White House Tribal Youth Forum at the headquarters of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Kippenberger was there in her role as communications coordinator for the Center for Native American Youth (CNAY) at the Aspen Institute – one of the hosts of the event along with United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY).

Kippenberger helped recruit 20 of the more than 100 14-to-24 year old Native youth from tribes across the U.S. who

participated in the forum – including the Seminole Tribe's Aubee Billie.

"[Native youth] have great insight into the solutions that we can implement into our communities to address a lot of these prevalent issues," Kippenberger said. "It was really important for me to represent, to be present, wear my dress proudly, and be able to have conversations."

Issues discussed in panel sessions focused on mental health, climate change adaptation and resilience, Native food sovereignty and security, and Native languages and education.

The forum featured high-level Biden administration officials, like Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra. Becerra opened the session on mental health by stressing the need for Native youth leaders to take a lead on the subject, something that resonated with Kippenberger. During her two-year reign as Miss Indian World, she often spoke out about the need to destigmatize mental health issues in Indian Country.

♦ See KIPPENBERGER on page 5A



Cheyenne Kippenberger, left, with Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland.

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Visit the Tribune's website for news throughout the month at [seminoletribune.org](http://seminoletribune.org)

# Editorial

## After Trail of Tears and broken promises, give Cherokee Nation a delegate

• San Antonio (Texas)  
Express-News Editorial Board

Before the Trail of Tears, there was the trail of broken promises. Starting on the East Coast, the federal government displaced Native Americans, pushing them westward. They went from Florida to Georgia to Alabama. This went on until the land that was theirs, the land white men would call America, was not theirs anymore.

They were given \$5 million in the deal, but the land they called home would shrink as the federal government executed its ruthless run on real estate. The Cherokee, along with the Choctaw, Creek and Seminole, would lose millions of acres before the dealing was over.

Steve Inskeep, the NPR host, called it “the great American land grab” in his brilliant book “Jacksonland,” which explores the strategy engineered by President Andrew Jackson.

The Trail of Tears led to reservations throughout the Southwest and beyond — Arizona, Oklahoma, Montana, New Mexico. Fodder for the powerful colonialists, the Native Americans were shunted from state to state. The indignity, for people who inhabited a land that seemed as broad as the sky, was tragic.

What once seemed like an informal but ruthless act of genocide and displacement became codified with the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Native Americans became immigrants in their own land.

Little, except for the wanton killing, has changed since then.

There is nothing almost 200 years later that can undo the immense injustice perpetrated on the Native American, just as there is nothing that can erase the stain of slavery — no amount of reparations or apologies.

But there are acts, some more meaningful than others, that can help restore the pride and dignity of the “first” Americans. The government is exploring one of these options.

The U.S. House is considering fulfilling a promise made with the Treaty of New Echota in 1835, which included a provision allowing the Cherokee Nation to send a delegate to Washington, D.C. It was a promise affirmed by another treaty in 1866, but it would prove no more ironclad than the previous commitment.

So long after the first tear fell, the trail continued. Long, winding and tragic, the trail will grow if the House does not do the right thing now. One delegate for centuries of abuse and disrespect. Logic and compassion dictate the Cherokee deserve the delegate, who would be able to introduce legislation and sit on committees, although the House has not determined if the representative could vote on the floor.

“Article 7 of the Treaty of New Echota is crystal clear — Cherokee Nation ‘shall be entitled to a delegate in the House of Representatives of the United States whenever Congress shall make provision for the same,’” the Cherokee Nation website states.

Cherokee Nation Chief Chuck Hoskin

Jr. was heartened by a recent hearing of the U.S. House Rules Committee.

“We made history today, but we must keep advocating for America to keep its treaty promise to @CherokeeNation to a delegate to Congress,” he tweeted. “Today’s hearing was powerful and a basis for real action.”

Historical accounts indicate the Cherokee were gracious toward the first European settlers. The goodwill was not always returned. Historians estimate 125,000 Native Americans were displaced, while about 4,000 died amid the brutal conditions at the detention camps where they were forced to live.

“The United States, acting through Congress ... recognizes that there have been years of official deprivations, ill-conceived policies, and the breaking of covenants by the Federal Government regarding Indian tribes,” stated a bill signed by President Barack Obama in 2009.

The bill offered nothing more substantial than an apology. It is time — past time — to redress that wrong. A transgression centuries in the making cannot be erased by a single act, but providing the Cherokee with the voice they were promised is a start.

Toward the end of his book, Inskeep asks a member of the Cherokee Nation if the Trail of Tears is more a story of persistence than removal.

The man responds with a simple but eloquent statement. His people, he says, are still here.

## Jersey girl born into Salt Clan says Navajo identity taken away

• Hilary C. Tompkins

My adoption papers said my mother was “very attractive” and that my “grandmother has some education and is considered to be an intelligent woman.” My father, who was listed as “Plains,” was described as having “hair with a slight tendency to wave.”

These small nuggets of information from my adoption papers were my only connection to my birth family. Only much later in life, as a young adult taking Native American studies at Dartmouth College, did I learn that I also had a legal connection with the Navajo Nation as a citizen of the Tribe.

I’m like many Native Americans who were placed in White families under the Department of the Interior’s Indian Adoption Project in the 1960s and 1970s.

As with the placements of Indian children in boarding schools, this program removed Native children from their Tribes without justification and assimilated them into mainstream America. When I met my birth family as a young adult, one of my aunts held me and cried, saying the last time she held me I was a baby and she had told the hospital officials that she and my extended family would take care of me, but to no avail. I was taken away and put up for adoption anyway.

Recognizing that the continued existence of Tribal Nations was at stake because of the loss of up to 35% of their children, Congress outlawed this practice in 1978 with the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). At the time, placement with White families was estimated to be at 90%.

Earlier this month, the US Supreme Court held oral arguments in a closely watched case, *Haaland v. Brackeen*, to decide whether the Indian Child Welfare Act is unconstitutional because it favors the adoption of Native children by Native families.

The states of Texas, Louisiana and Indiana, along with non-Native parents seeking to adopt Native children, say that ICWA amounts to racial discrimination because it has nothing to do with the “ability of Indians to govern themselves.” They argue that the states and non-Native parents should be able to decide the placement of Native children free of consideration of their tribal status because there is no political interest of the Tribes at stake.

And opponents of the Indian Child Welfare Act even go a step further, saying that the law goes against the best interests of Native children by imposing standards that make it harder for them to be adopted into stable, loving homes.

As a Native person who was adopted into a White family before the implementation of ICWA, that’s not the way I see it. I can attest firsthand, as a citizen of both the United States and the Navajo Nation, that ICWA is not about race.

I grew up in southern New Jersey, but I always knew I was Navajo. Born in Zuni Pueblo, New Mexico, I was separated from my family with only a few papers as evidence of my Tribal status.

By all outward appearances, my life today gives the impression that the Indian Adoption Project was a success. I was placed in a family that loved me. I received an exemplary education. I live a comfortable, middle class life. I have enjoyed professional success, having served as Solicitor of the Department of the Interior, the third ranking position in the department — the very federal agency that set my course in life. Yet despite these blessings, the Indian Adoption Project left me adrift, a foreigner in my own country.

Upon my return to the Navajo Nation almost 30 years ago, my sense of loss was overwhelming. The Navajo Nation is a different world: Navajo is frequently spoken there and the laws and way of living are based on Navajo traditions. There is no separation of Navajo spirituality from Navajo sovereignty. One foundational principle is ke’ — kinship — which is rooted in a vast clan system. I didn’t know my clan and couldn’t speak the language. Nor did I understand the complex and traditional laws of Navajo society. The loss of my culture was not just personal, but political.

I tried to make up for my losses, learning some of the language, attending our traditional ceremonies and working for the Navajo Nation Department of Justice. But despite my best efforts, I couldn’t catch up. I can vote in our elections but I don’t understand the stump speeches. I can’t run for office as I am not a fluent Navajo speaker. I reconnected with my birth family, but I have never felt fully integrated into Navajo society.

ICWA recognized that in order to have functioning tribal governments, you need the next generation of tribal citizens to be part of tribal political society. Taking away Native children threatens tribes’ future because the loss of their kids jeopardizes Tribes’ ability

to be political sovereign entities. The law gives a preference for placing a Native child with extended family members, members of its Tribe or members of another Tribe — a priority that can make it harder for a White family to adopt. It requires state courts to notify the Tribe about the child, and to have them indicate the preferred placement — or to say placement with a particular non-Native family is okay.

During oral arguments earlier this month, two of the justices indicated that they understood how high the stakes are for Tribal Nations. Justice Neil Gorsuch observed during oral arguments that in passing the law, Congress understood that ICWA is “essential to [the] self-preservation of Indian tribes.” And Justice Kagan recognized that “the political entity is itself being threatened because of the way decisions on the placement of children are being made.”

If ICWA had been in place when I was adopted, my Tribe would have been involved in my adoption. Navajo tribal authorities would have had a say in my adoption had I been adopted under the provisions of the law. I could have maintained a connection with my relatives — even if I had ended up with White parents. I still could have been adopted by a non-Native family, but my adoptive family might have been able to connect with my extended family or others, fostering a connection with my Tribe. But because I was placed for adoption prior to the existence of ICWA, I had to reclaim my connection with my Tribe all on my own.

My family and I eventually found each other by serendipity when I was living on the Navajo reservation. In middle age, I have come to accept who I am — a Jersey girl born into the Salt Clan. I have overcome the pain and loss. But I wouldn’t wish my experience on the children of Tribal citizens today. We cannot fail Native children again as we have failed them in the past.

Native children deserve the opportunity to be citizens of both the United States and Tribal Nations. I pray that they will not be the subject of another social experiment based on the decisions of government officials who haven’t walked in the shoes of the First Americans.

*Hilary C. Tompkins, a member of the Navajo Nation, served as the Solicitor of the US Department of the Interior during the Obama administration. She currently practices law in Washington, DC. The views expressed in this piece are her own. This opinion piece was published on cnn.com.*

## Interior hosts second Tribal Nations Summit

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

The Biden administration held its second White House Tribal Nations Summit at the Department of Interior (DOI) in Washington, D.C., Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 — the first to be held in-person. Last year’s event was held virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The summit served as a setting for tribal leaders across Indian Country to engage with senior administration officials. Biden and members of his cabinet used the event to tout a list of accomplishments, as well as announce new initiatives it expects to undertake.

President Biden said he has prioritized relationships with tribal nations that are “built on respect for tribal sovereignty and self-governance, honoring federal trust and treaty responsibilities, protecting tribal homelands, and conducting regular, meaningful, and robust consultation.”

Indian Country has been included in the administration’s economic packages at historic funding levels. It includes \$32 billion in the American Rescue Plan, \$13 billion in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and \$700 million in the Inflation Reduction Act.

“I made a commitment that my administration would prioritize and respect nation-to-nation relationships, and I’m going to make sure that happens,” Biden said in his remarks at the summit. “I hope our work in the past two years has demonstrated that we’re meeting that commitment. On

my watch, we’re ushering in a new era for the federal government to work with tribal nations.”

Biden said that beginning with his nomination of Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) to lead the DOI, he now has more than 60 Native American appointees in his administration and in federal court positions.

The two-day summit covered a wide range of topics, including initiatives in broadband, public safety, education and Native languages, health, housing, international and border issues, public-private partnerships, climate change, and economic development, energy and infrastructure.

Summit announcements included a presidential memorandum on uniform standards for tribal consultation, new best practices for tribal treaty and reserved rights, implementation of tribal co-management and co-stewardship of federal lands and waters, new Indigenous knowledge guidance for federal agencies, access to capital, a 10-year national plan on Native language revitalization, new regulations and processes for fee-to-trust land acquisitions and gaming compacts, a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) to improve law enforcement coordination, and a national, comprehensive study of Native American education.

For more information and to watch the summit via YouTube, go to doi.gov and search for “2022 White House Tribal Nations Summit.”



President Biden delivers his remarks at the 2022 summit.

## DOI: more derogatory Native names to be changed

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

The Department of the Interior (DOI) continues to advance its project to identify federal land names and geographic feature names that may be considered derogatory to Native Americans, and create recommendations for potential replacement names.

In September the DOI’s derogatory geographic names task force completed a renaming project that removed the word “squaw” from 650 landmarks and sites located on federal lands and waterways across the U.S. The term is considered an offensive ethnic, racial and sexist slur, particularly toward Native American women.

A lake in Florida’s Marion County — Squaw Pond — was one of the sites renamed. The remote eight-acre lake located in the Ocala National Forest in the north-central area of the state has been renamed Bumblebee Pond. It was the only Florida site identified on the list.

The renaming efforts continue with the DOI’s advisory committee on reconciliation in place names, which held its first public meetings Dec. 7-8. DOI Secretary Deb

Haaland’s (Laguna Pueblo) office announced the members of the committee in August.

“Our nation’s lands and waters should be places to celebrate the outdoors and our shared cultural heritage — not to perpetuate the legacies of oppression,” Haaland said in a Nov. 21 news release. “The [committee] will accelerate an important process to reconcile derogatory place names. I look forward to listening and learning from this esteemed group.”

According to the DOI, the committee consists of 17 members, representing tribes, tribal organizations and members of the public who have expertise in the fields of civil rights, history, geography and anthropology.

The National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers recently published a report that said the renaming efforts were not about “canceling history.”

“Rather it is an opportunity to provide a more honest accounting of America’s past and a gesture toward healing historic wounds,” the report said.

More information can be found on the National Park Service website at nps.gov by searching “advisory committee on reconciliation in place names.”

## NCAI Executive Council winter session, youth leadership summit to be held in DC

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Executive Council’s annual winter session conference will be held Feb. 20-23, 2023, at Capital Hilton in Washington, D.C.

The meeting presents an opportunity for tribal delegates to hear from members of Congress and the Biden Administration and to discuss and learn about the government-to-government relationship between Tribal Nations and the federal government

NCAI’s State of Indian Nations from the organization’s president is scheduled to be presented Feb. 21.

Also, the Native Youth Leadership Summit will be held concurrently as the winter session. The summit is designed for youth leaders to meet and develop strategies for improving local and tribal communities through policy development and the resolution process. It will be held at the Hilton.

For more information visit ncai.org.

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# Community



## New homes open on Brighton Reservation

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

The appetite for rental homes on the Brighton Reservation appears to be quite healthy. The Seminole Tribe held a ribbon cutting Nov. 22 to usher in nine new rental homes on Rainbow Lane, about a quarter mile south of the water tower and near the Knots Landing homes.

"All have been rented and there is a waitlist [for future rentals]," Bryan Arledge, senior property manager for the Brighton and Fort Pierce reservations, said.

Of the nine homes, five are three-bedroom, two-bathroom, at 1,626 square feet; three are four-bedroom, two-bathroom, at 2,114 square feet; and one is a five-bedroom, three-bathroom, at 2,332 square feet.

While the Rainbow Lane home project is now complete, Arledge said a playground for the residents is in the works and should be completed by the summer.

"Each home will also have its own 12-by-12 foot chickee before spring," he said.

Rainbow Lane is the latest in home options for tribal members who want to live on the reservation or move back to it.

In September, the tribe held a ribbon cutting for the Flowing Well home development, located just northwest of the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School (PECS).

Flowing Well consists of 40 rental homes that Arledge said have all been rented. On the homeowner side, Flowing Well has 30 1-acre home lots available for purchase. About half of those had already been purchased as of press time. Construction has not yet begun on the lots, although there are model homes on site for tribal members to tour.

The Flowing Well development will also have a playground with a bathroom in its rental community as well as two pavilions, Arledge said.

In the past several years, new homes have been built on the Brighton, Hollywood, Big Cypress, Immokalee and Lakeland reservations and Tribal Community Development officials say there are more to come.

The Brighton Reservation has other construction projects in the pipeline as well.



Brighton Board Rep. Helene Buster holds the ribbon as Brighton Councilman Larry Howard prepares for the cutting during a Nov. 22 ceremony for new homes on the Brighton Reservation. Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, President Mitchell Cypress and TCD's Bryan Arledge also attended the ceremony.

A new hotel and casino is in the works, as well as a new Brighton Trading Post. In addition, ground was broken in May on new buildings that will house the PECS Immersion program, including a separate complex that will host a new Boys & Girls Club, library and community cultural center.

Tribal members interested in learning more about housing options can go to [semtribe.com](http://semtribe.com) and click "Services" and "Housing Department."



Tribal members check out one of the Rainbow Lane homes Nov. 22.

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**UNITY**  
BY HARD ROCK

# Five generations enjoy Bowers family reunion

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**BRIGHTON** — Five generations of the Bowers family, from babies to folks in their 80s, gathered for a reunion Dec. 3 at the Seminole Bible Baptist Church in Brighton.

The reunion was hosted by the family of Tom Bowers, who was a church deacon and the first official police officer and game warden for the Seminole Tribe. He was also a farmer, cattle rancher and one of the original eight siblings that form the nucleus of the extended family.

The eight Bowers siblings were Andrew Sr., Casey, Dick, Hattie, Joe, Lottie, Mildred and Tom. Their generation is gone, but some of their children include Paul Bowers, Andrew Bowers Jr., Edna Bowers, Elsie Bowers, Martha Jones, Richard Bowers, Bobbie Lou Bowers, Wanda Bowers, Nancy Willie, Mollie Bowers, Geneva Shore and Eddie Shore.

“Tom and Ada [nee Smith] loved this church,” said Wendy Riley, Tom Bowers’ granddaughter and one of the organizers of the reunion. “The family used to get together every Easter and Christmas right here and do what we are doing today.”

Branches of the Bowers family live in Big Cypress, Brighton, Hollywood and off reservation. They take turns hosting reunions, which began in 2014.

“This church is special, every generation has memories from here,” said Danette Bowers, Dick Bowers’ granddaughter. “This is still the original building. Everyone remembers the services and the singing.”

This was the first reunion since the pandemic began in 2020 and people were eager to talk and share family stories.

“If it wasn’t for Polly Parker, none of us would be here today,” said Gabriel Bowers, son of Mildred Bowers. “We are her direct descendants, a lot former and current leaders are her descendants.”



The Bowers family gathers in front of the Seminole Bible Baptist Church in Brighton on Dec. 3 for a group photo commemorating the reunion. All are descendants of the original eight Bowers siblings.

Beverly Bidney



Beverly Bidney

The cooking chickee was busy during the Bowers family reunion in Brighton as Charlotte Burgess, left, and Brighton Councilwoman Mariann Billie, right, made frybread and other traditional Seminole dishes.



Courtesy photo

An undated photo includes original Bowers siblings.

After leaving the Egmont Key internment camp on a ship headed for the Florida panhandle during the Seminole Wars, Polly Parker escaped captivity when the ship docked. Instead of being sent to Oklahoma, she made her way back to Seminole land near the present Brighton Reservation where many of her descendants live, including members of the Bowers family.

The Bowers family has grown so much that not every member knows each other.

“This is the only time the whole family gets together, from great grandmas to little kids,” said Wanda Bowers, Casey Bowers’ daughter. “You miss that connection to family after two years. We are all stoic and poker faced, until you start talking. It’s a strong connection.”

Kenny Tommie, Mildred Bowers’ grandson, was glad to be there to remember the ancestors and meet new family members.

“There’s a new generation coming up,” Tommie said. “We are honoring those we lost and keeping our family traditions going. The younger generation is stepping up.”

“Being around the Elders makes me humble,” said Martha Tommie, Tom Bowers’ niece. “The memories go way back. If it wasn’t for the ancestors, we wouldn’t be here today. I’m so glad I can be here and see

my cousins.”

Lewis Gopher, Andrew Sr.’s great-grandson, attended the reunion with his granddaughter and Andrew Sr.’s great-great-granddaughter Amaya Houze, 2.

“This is a time to get together with the family you don’t really see that often, but you know they are your family,” Gopher said. “There’s no pressure, we’re just here to have a good time.”

“We all share the same kind of blood,” said Derek Smith, Andrew Sr.’s great-grandson. “These family events have been around for a long time and it’s good to see everyone together again.”

Esther Gopher, Joe Bowers’ granddaughter, reminisced about going to her Aunt Lottie Bowers’ camp by the red barn for Thanksgiving with the extended family every year.

“Everyone came by and we always stayed with family,” Gopher said. “It’s good for everyone to get to know who they are related to. We don’t see each other as much as we did as kids, but now as adults we want to get together more like we did years ago.”

“It’s good to see the family and all these young ones I don’t really know,” said Geneva Shore, Lottie Bowers’ daughter. “It makes me feel good.”



Beverly Bidney

T.L. Gopher watches as her sister Kahniyah Billie carefully removes a block from the giant game of Jenga.



Beverly Bidney

Wearing the T-shirt made for the Bowers family reunion, Wendy Riley talks to family members in a tent set up on the grounds of the Seminole Bible Baptist Church in Brighton.



Beverly Bidney

Wendy Riley and Martha Tommie share a moment at the Bowers family reunion. A member of the Deer Clan, Tommie is holding a stuffed deer.



Beverly Bidney

Young members of the Bowers family enjoy a meal as a slide show of family members through the years plays in the background.

# Q&A: Climate resiliency team talks leadership summit

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

The Seminole Tribe's three-person climate resiliency team attended the annual Southeast Florida Regional Climate Leadership Summit Dec. 8-9 at the Broward County Convention Center in Fort Lauderdale. The team staffed an information booth and the tribe was one of the event sponsors. About 800 people attended.

The climate resiliency team includes Jill Horwitz, climate resiliency officer; Krystle Bowers, climate resiliency policy coordinator; and Cody Motlow, climate resiliency coordinator. The trio work under the tribe's Heritage and Environment Resources Office umbrella.

The summit features several speakers and panels and serves as a meet-up for the partners of the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact – a collaboration between Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach counties. Through the compact, the partners work to reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions and implement climate adaptation strategies across the region. The compact has been in existence since 2009.

The next summit is scheduled to take place in Miami Beach Nov. 17, 2023.

The Tribune caught up with Bowers and Horwitz and asked about their experience at the summit. Answers have been edited for length and clarity.

## What is the most pressing climate change issue for the tribe?

**Bowers:** Flooding and fresh drinking water. With the ever-increasing population of South Florida, the canals cannot handle the amount of development, and our aquifer drains much quicker. These



Courtesy photo

About 800 people attended the summit at the Broward County Convention Center Dec. 8-9.

two issues compound with climate change as seawater encroaches into our aquifer and further into our streets when high tides or hurricanes appear.

**Horwitz:** Sea level rise and saltwater intrusion into the drinking water supply and natural areas. Also very important are extreme heat, food sovereignty and the advances in Indigenous science.

## Was there a panel you sought out?

**Bowers:** There was a panel called "Acting as a Region: How County Administrators Make It Work" that piqued my interest as the county administrators from the tri-county area were speaking. Everyone gave praise to Monroe County for how many steps ahead they are compared to other counties in regards to climate change action.

**Horwitz:** I've attended or helped organize almost all the summits over the last 14 years, so I most enjoyed connecting with folks I've worked with in the past and introducing them to our amazing resilience team.

## What did you learn that you didn't know?

**Bowers:** Many citizens want more aggressive policy changes to address climate change, but the politicians don't want to implement those things just yet.

**Horwitz:** The agenda this year covered all the basics in climate resilience planning. It was likely useful to someone starting out and learning about the science, politics, and advocacy. There was nothing very edgy on the agenda this year. Our team brought new perspectives to anyone who came to visit our booth. In the future, we hope to be on the agenda with equal access and respect as the other federal agencies.

## Will you incorporate anything from the summit into your work?

**Bowers:** A high school student asked how to talk to her parents about climate change and the advice she got was to keep talking about it as much as possible, and that each conversation will get them closer to fully understanding. That's what we

all need to do, talk to people as much as possible without trying to totally convince with one conversation, because that's unrealistic. It will take many conversations to change someone's mind.

**Horwitz:** I learned about a new regional collaborative that is tribal-led. This has the potential to blend the strength of the municipal-level sustainability efforts with those in Indian Country and is something I plan to learn more about and possibly bring to the southeast.

## What can tribal members look forward to from the team in 2023?

**Bowers:** We plan on having these conversations about climate change with tribal members to create policy changes.

**Horwitz:** We plan to have more specific conversations about climate change and resilience this year, leading to policy changes and project designs. We hope to move from virtual learning to in-person and experiential learning with the community that leads to advocacy and community-led change.

# Search for actor to portray Jim Thorpe underway

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

The producers of a new feature film about Jim Thorpe's life have launched an online casting call to find a Native American actor to portray him when he was in his 20s.

Picture works Entertainment is developing the movie – "Thorpe" – which was previously called "Bright Path Strong." The film's director is Tracey Deer (Mohawk). William Collage ("Emancipation") wrote the script based on the book "Jim Thorpe: World's Greatest Athlete" by Robert Wheeler.

The filmmakers said in a Nov. 30 news release that it would be the first time Thorpe (Sac and Fox Tribe) will be portrayed by a Native American actor in a major motion picture.

Thorpe, who died in 1953 at age 64, is a legendary athlete – the first Native American to win a gold medal in an Olympics. He won two – in the decathlon and pentathlon – in the 1912 Summer Olympics in Stockholm, Sweden. On July 15, 2022, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) reinstated Thorpe as the sole champion in his events – after first being stripped of his medals and later being named a co-champion. It was vindication for Thorpe's family and scores of supporters across Indian Country who advocated for the reinstatement for decades.

The filmmakers said the movie would focus on Thorpe's athletic feats, but also his time at the Carlisle Industrial Indian

School, which became a model for government and church-run Native American boarding schools in the U.S. and Canada in the 19th and 20th centuries. The school's motto "Kill the Indian, Save the Man," caused the isolation of Native children from their families and tribal communities, and systematically stripped them of their languages, customs, medicines, religious beliefs, regalia, and even their own names – to assimilate them into mainstream society.

Collage's script tells the story of Thorpe's resilience through those experiences as he ascends to college football dominance and ultimately Olympic glory.

"The challenge with this project has always been deciding which part of Jim's story to focus the movie on," producer Chris Taylor (Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana), said in the release. "Previous versions of the script portrayed an older Jim, but what's so exciting about Collage's script is how youthful it is. We are very much looking forward to finding the right young Native man to step into Jim's giant shoes. We invite every tribe in the U.S. and Canada to encourage their young people to audition."

Native American men from 22 to 25 years old are invited to sign up online for an audition at [thorpemovie.com](http://thorpemovie.com). A release date for the film has not been announced.

## ◆ NAMA From page 1A

The live at home performance on video of "The Storm" came about early in the pandemic in 2020, when many areas of the country were in lockdown protocols and live performances were halted. Battiest said NAMA president Ellen Bello began to encourage Native artists to do performances online and through social media platforms.

"Artists were doing performances from their homes and backyards," Battiest said. "She asked if Doc and I would participate."

Battiest said it made sense to record "The Storm" – a song that is lyrically about the Seminole Tribe, but carries general themes about overcoming obstacles and moving through uncertainty. The challenge with recording a live version, Battiest said, was that his band members were in Ohio and California, while he and Native were in Florida. They decided to perform and record it in their respective locations.

"The Storm: Live From Home" was soon released on YouTube, where it can be viewed today.

"Out of everything, to win this one is special. The song has finally come full circle," Native, who has been involved in other NAMA-winning projects as a featured artist or producer, said. "It's pretty interesting to see that it's still very much relevant."

## Up next

The brothers said they have a lot of



Courtesy Spencer Battiest

Spencer Battiest, left, and Doc Native won their first NAMA as a duo for a live at home performance of "The Storm."

projects planned in 2023.

Battiest said he's working to bring the all-Indigenous musical "Distant Thunder" to a New York City theater for a run. He performed in a seven show-run in Oklahoma City in early 2022.

"I'm also planning more live [music] performances and hopefully more new music," he said.

Native, a busy producer, songwriter and performer, has lately been trying his hand at acting, which he hopes to continue.

"I started to get serious about getting into films and movies and thankfully it's been a successful first year," he said. "I've got the acting bug like my brother."

Native is in the Everett Osceola-produced horror movie "Don't Let It In," with other Seminoles and Indigenous actors. He said it's now in the later stages of production. Native also appears in an episode of "Echo," a Marvel Comics' series that's set to stream on Disney+ in the summer.

In addition, Native said he's in the recently completed short film "Mary Margaret Road-Grader" that was shot in Santa Fe, New Mexico, under the helm of Steven Paul Judd (Kiowa-Choctaw) and producer George R.R. Martin of "Game of Thrones" fame. Martin describes the film as a "Native American Mad Max story about tractor pulls and feminism." Native said it's due to be released sometime in 2023.

For more about NAMA, go to [nativeamericanmusicawards.com](http://nativeamericanmusicawards.com).

## ◆ KIPPENBERGER From page 1A

Kippenberger said the combination of gathering youth leaders and administration officials into one space was "really powerful."

"We talked about ... all of these things [that] are important to not only tribal members that are here today, but also for future generations," she said. "Spaces like these are important to empower and uplift our young people. Giving Native youth a place to be centered and share their voices, perspectives, and solutions to community issues that affect us all builds a stronger future for our people. They aren't just our leaders of tomorrow; they are our leaders right now."

Finally, Kippenberger wrapped up her D.C. run at the 2022 White House Tribal Nations Summit, held Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 at the headquarters of the Department of the Interior. The two-day summit was the setting for the Biden administration to tout a long list of accomplishments and initiatives for Indian Country.

Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) held a private meeting with the attendees, including Kippenberger.

"As a young person, that is somebody that I admire greatly," Kippenberger said. "She has made so many strides for Native women in politics. Being able to be in her presence felt like an honor."

More about CNAY is at [cnay.org](http://cnay.org).

Editor's note: Senior editor Kevin Johnson contributed to this story.



Maitaling Du for NMAI

Aubee Billie, left, and Cheyenne Kippenberger take a break at the 2022 White House Tribal Youth Forum.



Photos courtesy Cheyenne Kippenberger

Cheyenne Kippenberger attends the 2022 White House Tribal Nations Summit.



Beverly Bidney

The Immokalee Trading Post features fuel pump stations and a 7,200 square foot store.

# Immokalee Trading Post opens for business

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**IMMOKALEE** — The long-awaited Immokalee Trading Post opened for business Oct. 28.

The idea for the Trading Post had been percolating at the Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. (STOFI) for about 10 years before ground was finally broken in May 2021.

“It’s awesome,” said tribal member Mary Lou Alvarado, of Immokalee. “We don’t have to go to town anymore. It’s a great asset to the community and to the tribe.”

Historic photos depicting daily life of the tribe are located on the walls flanking one of the entrances, thanks to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum. The images were taken by William and Edith Boehmer in the late 1930s and early 1940s on the Brighton Reservation.

Located on Immokalee Road between the main entrance to the reservation and the Seminole Immokalee Casino Hotel, the Trading Post has two canopies with gas tanks; one in the front for cars, vans and small trucks and one in the back for recreational vehicles and semi-trucks.

There are six dual-sided pumps in the front which allows 12 vehicles to be fueled at any given time. In the back, there are four dual-sided pumps that feature high flow diesel, Rec90 and DEF.

The 7,200 square foot store has all the

conveniences customers would expect such as beverages, snacks, coffee and freshly made food to go. There is an octagonal point of sale counter in the center of the store, a beer cave and a designated tobacco and lottery counter.

The Trading Post works with the casino and accepts players points for gas and items.

A unique feature of the store that is not visible to guests is how products are delivered inside. To avoid the disruption of pallets and dollies being moved throughout the store, it has a loading zone adjacent to the storage room and cooler with doors that lead directly to the floor.

“This creates a better overall guest experience even when the store is being replenished, and our vendors seem to love it,” said Golden Johansson, STOFI executive director of operations. “We’ll be looking to implement this feature in future builds as well since it’s proven to be successful.”

In addition to the Immokalee property, STOFI also operates the Trading Posts on the Brighton and Hollywood reservations, all under the Seminole Trading Post umbrella.



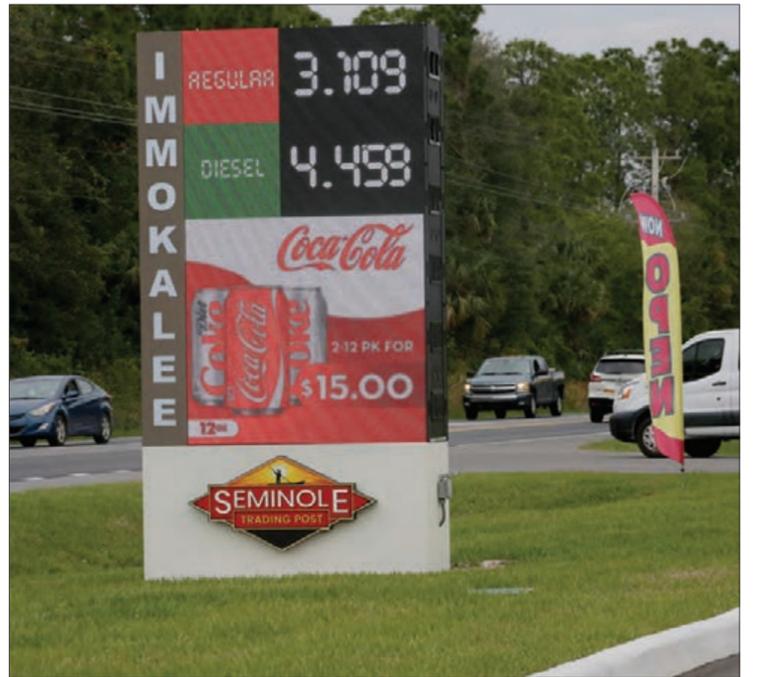
Beverly Bidney

An employee of the Immokalee Trading Post replenishes the fresh food area.



Beverly Bidney

Mary Lou Alvarado checks out at the register as Juliza Martinez rings up the order.



Beverly Bidney

The Immokalee Trading Post is located on Immokalee Road, one of the main roads in town.



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# New space dedicated to Aristocrat games at Immokalee casino

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee debuted a new space – known as the Lightning Link Lounge – on Dec. 14. The space is dedicated exclusively to Aristocrat Gaming’s Dragon Link and Lightning Link games. The area features 50 games.

“We are always exploring ways to enhance the player experience at Seminole Casino Hotel. This new Link Lounge concentrates 50 of the most popular games in the industry in one place, allowing players to more easily access these two top favorites,” Tony Alves, general manager of Seminole Casino Hotel, said in a statement.

“This lounge is a testament to our deep relationship with Seminole Gaming, and we look forward to continuing to bring the best games possible to their customers,” Tom O’Brien, Aristocrat Gaming president of Americas, said in a statement.



The Lightning Link Lounge at Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee.

# Casinos honor veterans



Photos via Facebook

Hard Rock Casino Cincinnati (above) and Seminole Coconut Creek Casino (below) honored veterans Nov. 11, Veterans Day. The ceremony at the Cincinnati property included the Hamilton County (Ohio) Sheriff’s Office Color Guard and a check presentation in the amount of \$10,000 to the Disabled Veterans of America. The Coconut Creek property welcomed veterans from Pompano Beach’s American Legion Post 132, which held a benefit T-shirt sale for disabled veterans.



# Immokalee to hold January events

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**IMMOKALEE** — Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee will host “Celebration in the Sky” on Jan. 14, 2023, at 9 p.m. The fireworks display will be choreographed to lights and a custom soundtrack. Electro-pop violin band NuClassica, who were featured

on the 11th season of “America’s Got Talent,” will perform. Attendees are encouraged to arrive early. All ages are welcome and admission is free. Guests should bring their own chairs to the viewing area for the show.

On Jan. 21, Rockabillaque Florida, a free festival, will feature multiple concerts and a car and bike show. The festival will start at 11 a.m.

# Hard Rock sets Pinktober fundraising record

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**HOLLYWOOD** — Hard Rock International, supporting the Hard Rock Heals Foundation, the charitable arm of Hard Rock, announced that its 23rd annual Pinktober campaign raised over \$1 million for breast cancer research. Throughout October, Hard Rock Cafes, Hotels, Casinos and Rock Shops hosted fundraising efforts, including limited-edition menu items, specially designed merchandise, a song writing contest and more, with proceeds benefiting national and local breast cancer charities.

This is the second year in a row Hard Rock surpassed its own record, making this the largest single amount Hard Rock has raised since Pinktober’s inception in 2000, and adding to the millions of dollars donated throughout the history of the campaign.

“This year, we were thrilled to amplify our team’s deep passion through partnerships with Chef Dominique Crenn and musician David Correy, who both share our Pinktober mission and have been personally impacted by breast cancer. We’re appreciative of their support to help raise awareness and donations for the American Cancer Society and related charities within our local communities,” Jon Lucas, Chief Operating Officer of Hard Rock International, said in a statement.

# Roger Daltrey to play at Hard Rock Live

STAFF REPORT

**HOLLYWOOD** — Roger Daltrey, cofounder of The Who, is scheduled to perform at Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on Feb. 20, 2023, at 8 p.m. For tickets go to myhrl.com.

Daltrey, 78, is an inductee of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland and the UK Music Hall of Fame.

The Hard Rock performance is one of three Daltrey has scheduled in Florida in February. He is slated to play at Ruth Eckerd Hall in Clearwater on Feb. 11 and aboard the Liberty of the Seas in Fort Lauderdale on Feb. 13.

# Interior updates land into trust, gaming compact processes

STAFF REPORT

The Department of Interior (DOI) announced Dec. 5 a draft publication that it said provides more transparent and efficient processes for tribes to place lands into trust or to enter into gaming compacts.

“Taking land into trust on behalf of tribes is critical for tribal sovereignty, self-determination, preservation of history and culture, economic development, the well-being of tribal citizens, and to help right the wrongs of past policy,” Bryan Newland (Ojibwe), assistant secretary for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) at DOI, said in a news release.

Newland said the federal government also had a responsibility to provide clarity on Class III gaming compact negotiations. Class III games that are commonly played at casinos include slots, blackjack, craps, and roulette, among others.

The DOI is now seeking feedback from tribes as it finalizes the updates – which began as a result of talks conducted earlier this year with tribal officials.

DOI Secretary Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) proposed changes to improve the land into trust process early in her tenure. In April 2021, she issued a memorandum that redirected the authority of the process to BIA

regional directors instead of staff members at BIA headquarters.

Land into trust acquisitions transfer a land title to the federal government to be held in trust for the benefit of a tribe. Acquisition of land in trust affects a tribe’s eligibility for federal services and programs, among other advantages.

The gaming updates would provide more clarity on the criteria the DOI considers when deciding whether to approve compacts by “clarifying boundaries as to allowable topics of negotiation, better defining key terms, and clearly outlining when the DOI must review a gaming compact.”

The DOI is scheduled to conduct two virtual tribal consultation sessions Jan. 19 and Jan. 30, 2023, and two in-person sessions in Phoenix, Arizona, on Jan. 13, 2023, for further tribal input. The sessions will be open to tribal leadership and representatives. The DOI will also accept written comments via email at consultation@bia.gov no later than March 1, 2023.

For more information on the sessions, go to bia.gov and search “upcoming tribal consultations.” To read the publication updates, go to federalregister.gov and search “land acquisitions” and “Class III tribal state gaming compacts.”

# Hard Rock helps with Thanksgiving meals



Photos via Facebook

Hard Rock venues were busy helping their communities during the Thanksgiving holiday. Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Bristol in Virginia donated nearly 200 turkeys for meals to the nonprofit organization Feeding Southwest Virginia (above). “Thank you for caring about hunger in our region,” the organization posted on social media. Meanwhile, Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana helped the Salvation Army (below). The Hard Rock culinary team prepared more than 300 Thanksgiving meals for community members. Employees also distributed 200 other meals complete with a frozen turkey, produce and non-perishable food items.



# Janet Jackson set to play Hard Rock Live

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**HOLLYWOOD** — Janet Jackson is bringing her “Together Again” tour to Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on April 14 and April 16, 2023. Both concerts start at 8 p.m. Ludacris will support.

Ticket information is myhrl.com.

The Hollywood performances are the start of the 39-show tour.

Janet has won five Grammy Awards, two Emmy Awards, a Golden Globe Award and an NAACP Best Supporting Actress in a Motion Picture award.

With more than 180 million

records sold worldwide, Jackson stands as one of the best-selling artists of all time. She also stands as one of only four artists to have a No. 1 album for four successive decades alongside Barbra Streisand, Bruce Springsteen and U2.

In 2019, she was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame alongside her brothers.

# Patti LaBelle coming to Coconut Creek

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**COCONUT CREEK** — Award-winning entertainer, Patti LaBelle is scheduled to perform at The Stage at Coco, Seminole Casino Coconut Creek’s open-air venue, on Feb. 2 at 8 p.m. Ticket information is at Ticketmaster.com.

The award-winning entertainer, author and entrepreneur is also a humanitarian. She is an advocate for adoption, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS and other causes and non-profit initiatives. While she has reached the heights of success throughout her 60-plus year career, LaBelle has also endured and

survived personal strife. Within a 10-year period, she lost her mother, three sisters and best friend to diabetes and cancer. In 1994, she was diagnosed with diabetes and shortly thereafter became a spokesperson for the American Diabetes Association.

“Each year I grow, and that’s a blessing from God. I do what I can do. I do what I feel God has given me the energy to do, so I just go out there and I do it...it’s not about making money because I don’t need money, but I need to sing. With a voice or without, I’ve got to get on that stage,” LaBelle, 78, said in a statement.



Photo via Facebook

Patti LaBelle

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# Oral history as narrative and cultural reflexivity

BY ALEXANDER BANKS  
 Oral History Coordinator

**BIG CYPRESS** — A few months ago I attended a symposium hosted by the Oral History Association (OHA). The topic at hand was how to empower the voices of minority and underrepresented communities in historical narratives, particularly in the field of oral history. Much of our conversation centered around the theme of how any narrator in an oral history interview should have ultimate authority over their own telling of their people's and their culture's history. I found that this idea really resonated with the work we're doing at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki. The museum tries to make sure all oral history participants and narrators understand that they have full control and authority over how their story is told and represented in the museum's collection. All that said, I figured I would elaborate on the theory behind the museum's particular approach.

Oral history is an important way that members of any culture or community can directly educate the future generations. For tribal communities, this is the most important thing about oral histories. This way, future generations can learn history from the point of view of tribal elders and community members firsthand. For tribal museums, oral histories are a vital part of the historic collection that helps the museum share the story of the community they serve.

When you hear the word "narration" you might imagine things like works of fiction, or a story as opposed to a more straightforward list of the facts. If someone is narrating their own history or the history of their people,

are they turning it into more of a story and less of a history? I think not. In fact, I would go so far as to argue that all historians funnel their findings through a storytelling, narration process to get a final product that looks less like a list of facts, and more like a novel. So why do some academics consider the story told by the historian to be more valid or historical than the narrative of the interviewee? This should be the other way around.

In other words, if someone is being interviewed about the history of their culture and their personal life story, shouldn't they have the final say in what that story looks like? In all of their best efforts to make sense of the past, historians are really just outsiders looking in, turning a list of data into a story. On the other hand, the storytellers from within any given culture are going to always be able to more effectively communicate the history of their own people. The interviewee should always be given the most control and power over how to narrate their story and the story of their people. And through the two-way conversation that is any good oral history interview, the narrator can always seize that opportunity to correct the misunderstandings about their culture, to explain the often ignored aspects of their history, and to ultimately be the better teller of their history than any historian ever could be.

If you'd like to be a narrator with the power to tell your own story for future Seminole generations, our oral history program can help. Contact me at alexanderbanks@semtribe.com or at (863) 902-1113, ext. 12214 to ask questions or make an appointment.

# THPO's Domonique DeBeaubien named to NAGPRA committee

BY DAMON SCOTT  
 Staff Reporter

The Seminole Tribe's efforts to repatriate its ancestors got a boost Nov. 22 when Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) collections manager Domonique deBeaubien was named to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act's (NAGPRA) federal advisory review committee for a four-year term.

The committee is charged with monitoring and reviewing the implementation of NAGPRA — a 1990 federal law that passed after tribes and their supporters discovered that museums, universities and collectors held hundreds of thousands of remains and objects from Native American burial sites. The law requires federally funded institutions to document remains and return them to tribes.

deBeaubien was nominated for the committee by the tribe and then appointed by Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo). deBeaubien has been working on NAGPRA issues for 11 years, often alongside THPO director Tina Osceola.

"One of the first things we'll do is work on the revisions of the (NAGPRA) regulations," deBeaubien said. "It's been in a rewrite and consultation process for a number of years. Now there will be some formal recommendations on rules changes and how to proceed moving forward."

deBeaubien said the revisions are meant to make the NAGPRA process more streamlined and effective for tribes, and also to hold institutions more accountable.

"We're trying to get the older holding institutions back into the process," she said. "The enforcement piece has been lacking for

a long time."

There have been positive developments for the tribe in recent years. The Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), which has a vast collection of about 1,500 Seminole ancestors and tens of thousands of archaeological artifacts, revised its NAGPRA policy in late 2020 after pressure from the tribe. NMNH updated its provision to repatriate that which was previously identified as "culturally unidentifiable." It was considered a significant breakthrough, as NAGPRA technically does not apply to NMNH, but is covered by a separate repatriation law.

In addition to the NMNH, deBeaubien said there are several academic institutions in Florida that are also holders of collections, including Florida State University, the University of Florida, Florida Atlantic University and the University of South Florida. Outside the state, she's also worked with the University of Alabama and the University of West Georgia.

"The southeast (U.S.) is probably one of the largest areas that has the most work to do," deBeaubien said. "One of the problems is that we don't even have accurate numbers."

She said the tribe is in the process of developing a "repatriation portal" to track cohesive numbers using geographic information system (GIS) technology to help piece it together.

"That's something we've been developing so we can understand the scope," deBeaubien said.

She said cases come to the tribe in several ways, including through inadvertent discoveries across Florida — remains or objects that arise from work done by archaeological companies and commercial



Domonique deBeaubien

developers, or that are uncovered after severe storms.

When remains or funerary objects are released to the tribe, a strict process is followed. Legal paperwork is completed and there are approvals that come from senior tribal leadership. Secure and private travel arrangements are made and the tribe's repatriation committee consults with cultural advisers on a location for reburial as close to an original site as possible. If an area has been bulldozed or it has a development on it, often a state or federal park is used. Nothing is ever collected or put on display, and funerary objects are buried together with the respective ancestor.

deBeaubien said NAGPRA has received more attention lately, in part because Haaland is at the helm at the Department of Interior.

"The door is open instead of us constantly banging on it," she said. "Hopefully we'll have more cases to close out and more ancestors to put to rest over the next couple of years."

More information is at [stfthpo.com](http://stfthpo.com).

# Artists chosen for fellowship

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**INDIANAPOLIS, Ind.** — Five Native American or First Nations artists have been selected for the 2023 Eiteljorg Contemporary Art Fellowship. Trailblazing mixed media, sculpture, beadwork and photography by the artists will be on exhibit at the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western

Art in Indianapolis, Indiana, beginning in November 2023. Each Fellowship artist will receive a \$50,000 unrestricted grant, and the museum expects to purchase more than \$100,000 of their artworks to add to its collection of contemporary Native American art.

The artists are: Ruth Cuthand (Plains

Cree) of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Natalie Ball (Klamath Tribes [Klamath / Modoc] of Chiloquin, Oregon; Sean Chandler (Aaniiih [Gros Venture] of Harlem, Montana; Mercedes Dorame (Gabrielino Tongva) of Burbank, California; and Raven Halfmoon (Caddo Nation/Choctaw/Delaware) of Norman, Oklahoma.

# Seminole artists show work in 'The Art of Seminole Craft' exhibit

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
 Staff Reporter

**BIG CYPRESS** — Seminole arts and crafts were originally made to sell to tourists, but "The Art of Seminole Craft" exhibit at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum in Big Cypress shows the craft has evolved into an additional viable art form.

"The crafts were also done for each other and the skills passed down through the generations," said James Patrick, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum head of exhibitions. "That really counts toward keeping the culture going."

Artists whose work is on display include Judy Baker, Linda Beletso, Kiana Bell,

Chandler Demayo, Ricky Doctor, Donna Frank, Judy Jim, Tina Osceola, Lorraine Posada and Brian Zepeda.

Some of the 65 items on display include beadwork, baskets, bandolier bags, carvings, dolls and a painting.

Doctor carved a walking stick embellished with intricately beaded depictions of the Seminole clans. He said it took six months to complete. Zepeda has a beaded bandolier bag on display and said it usually takes about six months to make one since he works on three or four bags at a time.

This was Bell's first exhibition of her baskets; she learned how to make them from Frank in 2017 and hasn't stopped making



Beverly Bidney

At right, Brian Zepeda talks to Carol Cypress about his bandolier bag on display at "The Art of Seminole Craft" exhibition opening Dec. 16.

them since. She also helps teach basket making at the Hollywood Community Culture Center. In the exhibit, a very large basket is surrounded by others of varying

sizes. "It took me about seven or eight months to complete," Bell said about the large one. "I love making them. I let the work take me

on what shape it will be. It usually goes the way I want it to."

The exhibit is on display at the museum through March 2023.



Beverly Bidney

Basket maker Kiana Bell stands with her work on display at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum. She has been making baskets for just five years and has a lot to show for her time well spent.



Beverly Bidney

Artist Ricky Doctor smiles after being given a patchwork flower as a thank you for participating in the museum show. In the background are museum retail manager Rebecca Petrie, left, and Carol Cypress.



Beverly Bidney

Basket makers Linda Beletso, left, and her daughter Lorraine Posada at the opening of "The Art of Seminole Craft" show.

# Health



## Big Cypress challenge promotes health, culture



Taylor Tigertail

Aimee Osceola-Jones, left, and Jessica Osceola won first place in their age category at the strength challenge.

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

**BIG CYPRESS** — The Big Cypress Reservation was the setting Dec. 10 for an inaugural strength challenge. Quenton Cypress, the Seminole Tribe's community engagement manager at the Heritage and Environment Resources Office (HERO), organized the event.

Several tribal members and their friends competed in front of supporters on a course staged adjacent to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's parking lot. Assisting Cypress was Tylor Tigertail, HERO's community engagement coordinator, and members of the Big Cypress Recreation Department.

Cypress said he'd been thinking about putting on the event for a few years.

"I wanted to promote physical health and awareness," Cypress said. "But also promote Seminole culture."

He said the challenge was created in the "Strongman-style," which has origins in Scotland. Strongman challenges are typically unconventional in nature. For example, instead of lifting a heavy barbell, a competitor is tasked with lifting a stone or log.

Cypress does physical training with the Big Cypress Recreation Department and has previously competed in Strongman and Ironman competitions.

Cypress' challenges were intended to mimic activities in traditional Seminole



Taylor Tigertail

From left to right in the back row are Quenton Cypress, Clinton Billie, Dalton Koenes, Tauni Cypress, Cyiah Avila, Michael DiCarlo, RickyJoe Alumbaugh, Keithana Osceola, Aimee Osceola-Jones, Brandon Jones and Alvin Buster. Lying on the ground are Vanessa Osceola, left, and Jessica Osceola.

culture. The competition included the gator pull — large ropes attached to a metal sled; and the chickee build, where competitors used a hammer to hit an oversized tire. Other events included the deer run and water bucket carry.

Cypress wants to make the event an



Damon Scott

Tauni Cypress competes in the gator pull during the strength challenge Dec. 10 in Big Cypress. She and her teammate Cyiah Avila won first place in their age category.

## HHS roundup: 'Rez Rally,' new booster, health annex progress

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — The Seminole Tribe's Health and Human Services (HHS) Department is gearing up for its first in-person "Rez Rally" since January 2020. The last rally took place on the Big Cypress Reservation just before the Covid-19 virus was declared a pandemic.

The event — "Rez Rally Rising" — is scheduled to take place on the Hollywood Reservation on Jan. 7. It is organized by Integrative Health (a branch of HHS) and is done to promote physical activity and good health among tribal members and tribal employees. Participants can run or walk a 3-mile or 1-mile course at their own pace.

"It's to bring back physical activity to help reduce things like diabetes, hypertension and other health complications among tribal members," HHS executive director Dr. Vandhana Kiswani-Barley said. "This is the big comeback."

Traditionally the event draws participation from scores of individuals and teams from each reservation. There were 650 participants at the last event.

For more information and to register, go to [semtribe.com/rezrally](http://semtribe.com/rezrally).

### New Covid-19 booster

Kiswani-Barley said HHS has received the updated bivalent Covid-19 vaccine booster shot for tribal members. She said the booster provides a broad protection from Covid-19 and the omicron variant. The booster has been approved for those over six months old.

Kiswani-Barley said the tribe's pediatricians are administering the booster to those 13 and younger. Those older than 13 can receive the booster from pharmacy staff.

Questions can be directed to the HHS hotline at (833) 786-3458.

### New health annex

The tribe recently approved a design contract for a 20,000 square foot, two-story annex to be built on the north end of the Betty Mae Jumper Medical Center on the Hollywood Reservation.

Kiswani-Barley said it would house HHS services on the first floor and offices on the second floor, allowing the main facility to be used for its range of services with medical providers, the pharmacy and space for other HHS-related departments.

The annex would also allow HHS staff that are currently located in the Taft Street office complex to be located on-site. In addition, the tribe's Center for Behavioral Health would be provided space for a "crisis center" at the facility. The tribe would also use the space to transition away from using contracted home health care workers from an outside agency into staffing its own such department with tribal employees.

There are also plans to house an imaging center in the annex for services like basic X-rays and ultrasounds.

Kiswani-Barley said it is likely that work would be completed sometime in 2025 or 2026.

The design contract was awarded to Fort Lauderdale-based Saltz Michelson Architects.



Taylor Tigertail

Clinton Billie, left, and Alvin Buster won second place in their age category.



Taylor Tigertail

Michael DiCarlo, left, and Brandon Jones won first place in their age category.

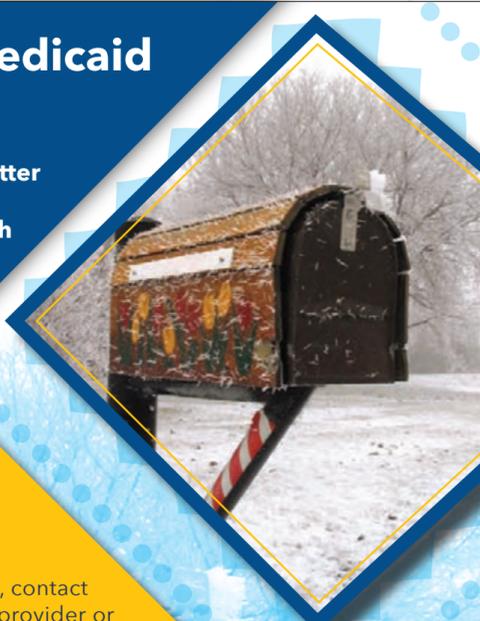


Damon Scott

Cyiah Avila competes in a strength challenge event that involved running with pails of water.

## Don't miss your Medicaid renewal letter.

Make sure you get this renewal letter so you're not left out in the cold! Check that your local Indian health care provider or state Medicaid office has your current mailing address.



For more information, contact your Indian health care provider or visit [Medicaid.gov/unwinding](http://Medicaid.gov/unwinding).



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# SEMINOLE SCENES



**ALL ABOARD:** Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, left, and Capt. Lee Rosbach, from the "Below Deck" TV series, are all smiles at the Seminole Hard Rock Winterfest Boat Parade grand marshal reception Dec. 9 at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood. This year's grand marshals were Taylor Dayne, Joey Fatone and Chris Kirkpatrick.



**HELPING HANDS:** Seminole Fire Rescue personnel help an injured Moore Haven Middle School girls basketball player off the court during a game Dec. 15 at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School in Brighton.



**BAKING FOR A CAUSE:** Alphonso Alvarado, left, and Ashton Garza held a benefit bake sale at the new Immokalee Trading Post on Dec. 1, 2022. They said sales were excellent and most of the baked goods were sold within the first few hours. The funds raised will go toward a field trip for the Immokalee Preschool at the end of the school year. Marsha Osceola also helped with the baking and the sale.



**FOOD TRUCKS AND FUN:** Employees in Big Cypress enjoyed raffles and a tasty variety of food trucks Nov. 3 as part of an employee appreciation lunch in the parking lot of the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium. Volunteers and organizers of the event from the Human Resources Department included, from left to right, Valrie West, Jennifer Sandrell, Taisha Lubin, Vince Gillen and Laurell Battiste.



**ONE, TWO, TREE:** A stark contrast in weather is evident in December with the warm, sunny skies above the Christmas tree at Seminole Estates on the Hollywood Reservation, left, and the snow-covered Christmas tree at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Lake Tahoe in Nevada.



The lobby at the Frank Billie Field Office on the Big Cypress Reservation was colorfully decorated with a winter scene for the holiday season.

## 15 Years Ago: Jarrid Smith plays in New Orleans Bowl

On Dec. 21, 2007, the Seminole Tribe's Jarrid Smith (center in below photo, No. 78 at right) concluded his college football career with Florida Atlantic University in the team's 44-27 win against the University of Memphis in the R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl.

It was FAU's first bowl game. Led by legendary coach Howard Schnellenberger, FAU finished with an 8-5 record, which included a victory against the Big Ten's University of Minnesota.

Smith, an offensive lineman, was a co-captain as a senior. He played in every game in his final three years with the team.



# NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

## 3 tribes dealing with the toll of climate change get \$75 million to relocate

Three Tribal communities in Alaska and Washington that have been severely impacted by the effects of climate change on their homes are getting \$75 million from the Biden administration to help relocate to higher ground.

The Quinault Indian Nation, located on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington; the Newtok Village, located on the Ninglick River in Alaska; and the Native Village of Napakiak, located on Alaska's Kuskokwim River will each receive \$25 million, the Interior Department announced on Wednesday.

In addition to those funds, FEMA is also awarding approximately \$17.7 million to help these three communities buy, demolish and build new infrastructure.

These three tribes are just part of a growing number of communities in the U.S. that are facing a ticking clock as the effects of climate change pose serious risk to their homes. These tribes are already well into the expensive process of moving elsewhere, often leaving areas their families have called home for centuries. Funding has been a major obstacle in getting this done.

The full cost of moving the Quinault Indian Nation's two villages about a mile uphill from its spot at the junction of the Quinault River and the Pacific Ocean is around \$100 million, said Guy Capoeaman, president of The Quinault Indian Nation.

The tribe has more than 3,000 members, "and over half of them live in these villages," Capoeaman told NPR. "Getting them up on the hill is critical for us."

The new funds will go towards moving the community's most critical buildings. Down the line, Quinault's plan is to develop new homes and a school.

Every bit of funding helps in this massive endeavor, Capoeaman said.

The community started their process more than 12 years ago, even before Capoeaman became the nation's president, he said.

"I just picked it up as I came on board and worked with our council, our lobbyist and other people and getting the message out that this is a need. We're here at ground zero of the very climate change everybody's talking about," he said.

The tribe is extremely vulnerable to rising sea levels, flooding, potential tsunamis and other storm surges. Capoeaman noted the community is also at particular risk of a potentially big earthquake as the village sits right along the Cascadia subduction zone. That fault line runs for hundreds of miles off the coast of the Pacific Northwest and has been building up pressure for years.

- NPR

## How one First Nation aims to break the cycle of trauma with new child 'well-being' law

Taykwa Tagamou Nation Chief Bruce Archibald still remembers how it felt to be taken away from his home as a toddler and sent to live with another family that didn't practice his Cree traditions.

"Things like that shouldn't happen," he said.

Archibald was two years old when he was placed with a French-speaking family.

Today, Archibald is using that experience as motivation to keep Indigenous kids rooted in their culture.

Taykwa Tagamou Nation, located roughly 126 km northeast of Timmins, Ontario, passed a child "well-being" law back in the fall to take control of a child welfare system that has had a disproportionate impact on its children for decades.

"It was an opportunity for us to try and fix those wrongs that were done and that were forced upon us," Archibald said.

The community is affirming its jurisdiction through Bill C-92, federal legislation that acknowledges Indigenous communities have the right to create their own child and family policies and laws.

Under C-92, five Indigenous governing bodies have so far asserted their control over their child and family services, according to Indigenous Services Canada.

They include Wabaseemoong Independent Nations in Ontario, Cowessess First Nation in Saskatchewan, Peguis First Nation in Manitoba, the Louis Bull Tribe in Alberta and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation in the Northwest Territories.

A sixth community, Atikamekw Opitciwan in Quebec, also introduced its own child and family services law but hasn't been able to implement it yet because it's caught in the constitutional battle between the province and Canada over Bill C-92, currently before Canada's highest court.

Quebec argues the law infringes on its constitutional jurisdiction over social services.

For communities like Taykwa Tagamou Nation, Bill-C-92 has cleared a path to finally end the historical overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the foster care system.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis children account for 53.8 per cent of all children in foster care, according to Statistics Canada's 2021 census.

Taykwa Tagamou Nation's new child welfare law will stop the practice of sending children to foster care in the south and cutting them off from their families, said Archibald.

Over the past few years, he said, the nation worked hard to change this by creating a "safe home" — a short-term preventative accommodation to support the community's children and caregivers who require emergency shelter and urgent essentials.

"We made that transition ... to make sure that they feel like they're at home," Archibald said.

"That's why we're doing what we're doing today, to make sure that our kids don't feel abandoned."

Taykwa Tagamou Nation wants to build more safe homes under the new law, which states the community has the inherent right and authority to care for and protect its children, youth and families.

- CBC

## James Cameron's old comments prompt Native American boycott of new 'Avatar' sequel

If you haven't seen "Avatar: The Way of Water" yet, a social media campaign led by Native Americans hopes it'll stay that way.

After the premiere of the long-delayed "Avatar" sequel, a renewed campaign is calling on would-be viewers to boycott the sci-fi film, which has already grossed more than \$300 million internationally.

"Join Natives & other Indigenous groups around the world in boycotting this horrible & racist film," Yue Begay, a Navajo artist and co-chair of Indigenous Pride Los Angeles who is behind the campaign's resurgence, wrote in a tweet that has been liked by more than 40,000 users. "Our cultures were appropriated in a harmful manner to satisfy some [white flag emoji] man's savior complex."

The Native American movement to boycott "Avatar" sprang up after the first film's release in 2009. But calls to skip the franchise found new life in recent weeks with resurfaced comments made by the film's director, James Cameron, in 2010 about the Sioux nation, including the Lakota people, which the campaign calls "anti-indigenous rhetoric."

In 2010, the Guardian wrote about Cameron's efforts to oppose the Belo Monte hydroelectric dam, which eventually led to the displacement of Indigenous people living in the Amazon. In the article, the Oscar-winning director said his time spent with the Amazon tribes led him to reflect on the history of Indigenous people in North America. Cameron credited Native American history as the "driving force" behind writing the script for the 2009 "Avatar" film.

"I felt like I was 130 years back in time watching what the Lakota Sioux might have been saying at a point when they were being pushed and they were being killed and they were being asked to displace and they were being given some form of compensation," Cameron told the Guardian.

"This was a driving force for me in the writing of 'Avatar' — I couldn't help but think that if they [the Lakota Sioux] had had a time-window and they could see the future ... and they could see their kids committing suicide at the highest suicide rates in the nation ... because they were hopeless and they were a dead-end society — which is what is happening now — they would have fought a lot harder."

Representatives for Cameron were not immediately available for comment.

The original "Avatar" film focuses on a human soldier, Jake Sully (Sam Worthington), who is sent by resource-hungry colonists from Earth to infiltrate the Na'vi people, but he eventually sympathizes with them and becomes a Na'vi himself. He fights off the colonizing forces from Earth, but the Na'vi are still displaced from their home.

"The Way of Water" takes place more than a decade after the events of the first film and follows Sully family members after they have fled their land-bound home for a new oceanic one, where their conflict with the invading earthlings continues.

Cameron has long been clear that "Avatar" is a fictional retelling of the history of North and South America in the early Colonial period, "with all its conflict and bloodshed between the military aggressors from Europe and the indigenous peoples," according to a Business Insider report. The report cited court filings from 2012. Cameron has faced lawsuits from many who allege he stole their film ideas.

"Europe equals Earth," he wrote. "The Native Americans are the Na'vi. It's not meant to be subtle."

Cameron's offending comments were resurfaced [in December] by Johnnie Jae, an Ojibwe-Missouria and Choctaw artist living in Los Angeles. The remarks, which were largely overlooked a decade ago, drew intense backlash on social media from some Native Americans who specifically took issue with the implication that Native people could have "fought a lot harder" to avoid displacement and genocide.

"James Cameron apparently made Avatar to inspire all my dead ancestors to 'fight harder,'" wrote Johanna Brewer, a computer science professor at Smith College. "Eff right off with that savior complex, bud."

"Eww, way to victim blame & not reflect on your own positionally/privilege," wrote Lydia Jennings, of the Wixárika and Yoeme people. "Saw original avatar; was annoyed people celebrated the story while not reflecting on how many Indigenous Nations in the present are fighting to do so."

Brett Chapman, a Native American civil rights attorney, called "Avatar" a "White savior story at its core" in a tweet decrying Cameron's comments.

"I won't be seeing the new one," Chapman wrote. "It does nothing for Native Americans but suck oxygen for itself at our expense."

Native American TV writer Kelly Lynne D'Angelo, who has written episodes of Netflix's "Spirit Rangers," suggested people could "donate the avatar money to Native communities," instead of watching the film. "You took our land, then our children, then

our skin," she wrote. "Can't you see this is \*still\* manifest destiny in action?"

Autumn Asher BlackDeer, a social work professor at the University of Denver who is of the Southern Cheyenne Nation, responded to the comments by compiling a list of movies by Indigenous filmmakers for those who "don't wanna watch the colonial glorifying blue people movie."

The boycott campaign also zoomed in on Cameron's decision to cast white actors as leads to play the Na'vi, an indigenous people in the film's fictional Pandora, which Cameron previously said were based on Indigenous cultures across the globe.

The campaign called such creative decisions "blueface," in the tradition of the racist performance practices of "redface, blackface, yellowface." Blueface refers to when a creator appropriates nonwhite cultures to create a fictional world with characters who are mostly played by white actors, the campaign said. These creative decisions, the campaign said, invalidate the experiences of actual Black, Indigenous or other marginalized people of color.

"We should've been the ones whose faces and voices appeared onto the screen," Begay wrote in an open letter to Cameron. "We are the experts in portraying our hurt, suffering, and more importantly, our resilience."

"White people being aliens based on actual indigenous people," the letter continued, is "actual colonialism."

Chapman, who is a citizen of the Pawnee nation and also of Ponca and Kiowa heritage, has been a part of tribal sovereignty cases in Oklahoma and has long protested stereotypical portrayals of Native Americans.

He told The Times that renewed criticism of the film franchise showed the progress made in the fight for racial justice since Cameron's 2010 comments. Yet he recognized the continued negative impact films such as "Avatar" could have on people's understanding of Native American history.

He called Cameron's "Avatar" films a "whitewashing of history to let everybody feel good about themselves."

"At the end of the day, he's not exploring anti-imperialist, anti-colonial themes," Chapman said, "he's making movies to make money."

He pointed at the film's use of tribal tattoos, characters with dreadlocks and warrior-culture elements used in the film's portrayal of the Na'vi.

"They're taking all these tropes with the white gaze, putting it in outer space, making them blue and not human," Chapman said. "But Native people are real-life people here on Earth."

- The Los Angeles Times

## Kiowa Tribe creating a tribal court, completing new government

The Kiowa Tribe in Oklahoma is expanding its sovereignty by setting up its own court system, completing the new government established by a new constitution established in 2017.

"As a government, and a complete sovereign government, we are going to have all components in place to take care of our civil issues, our business issues, and our criminal issues," Kiowa Tribe chairman Lawrence Spottingbird said.

Vice chairman Jacob Tsoitigh said establishing this court is the last step needed to complete their new government.

"This new system established four branches of government, the Kiowa Indian Council, the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial branch. We are just now poised to implement the judicial branch fully as the last remaining leg of our four-leg stool of government."

This addition is one that Spottingbird said is needed to seek justice for the tribe and its citizens.

"We feel like we're more fair and objective. Historically, in Oklahoma and other states, that's not really been the case. Oklahoma has not really been the most friendly to tribes."

Previously, the federal government prosecuted any crime committed in the Kiowa jurisdictional areas scattered throughout southwest Oklahoma.

"We are a sovereign nation as the Kiowa tribe and we need to be able to determine our own decisions based on customs, traditions, and laws. So, once we have this up and running, we will have fully attained our role as a sovereign nation," Tsoitigh said.

Spottingbird said taking that power back completes their sovereignty.

"Now, we are a complete tribal government."

- KSWO-TV (Oklahoma)

## Alaska tribes join with Lower 48 allies to seek protections from impacts of Canadian mines

Alaska Native tribes seeking better protection from the environmental impacts of Canadian mines have enlisted some allies in their fight: Lower 48 tribal governments with concerns of their own about transboundary mining impacts.

A delegation of tribal representatives from Alaska, Washington state, Montana and Idaho traveled to Washington, D.C., this week for meetings on Wednesday that pushed for action to regulate downstream effects of mines in British Columbia.

The meetings Tuesday and Wednesday were with Biden administration officials and officials at the Canadian embassy, said a statement from the National Wildlife Federation.

Chalyee Éesh Richard Peterson, president of the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, has a representative attending the meetings.

"Canada's mining in our shared rivers is one of the biggest threats to our wild salmon and our Indigenous way of life," Peterson said in a written statement. "In the face of a rapidly changing climate, British Columbia continues to permit massive open-pit gold mines in the headwaters of our largest salmon producing rivers — without the consent of downstream Tribes."

"Our way of life depends upon the health of our transboundary waters and we will not stop until we can ensure the environmental security and stability of our shared rivers. We have been calling on the United States and Canada to honor their legal and ethical obligations and to act immediately to protect our traditional territories from legacy, on-going, and proposed mining in British Columbia. We must get ahead of this before it's too late."

The tribes are seeking protective action under the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909, the framework for resolving disputes over shared waters. The organization that investigates cross-border problems and recommends solutions is the International Joint Commission.

Alaska tribes, communities, fishermen and various other organizations have for years expressed concerns about cross-border impacts from mines in British Columbia.

Teaming up with the Lower 48 tribes is a somewhat new approach, said Mary Catharine Martin of the Juneau-based group Salmon Beyond Borders. The tribes from different regions have different specific issues of concern, but they are similar in that they are about the "poorly regulated British Columbia mining that does not take into account the concerns of the people who live downstream," Martin said.

The unified tribal campaign comes amid a British Columbia mining boom, with industry expenditures hitting a near-record level in 2021.

For Southeast Alaska, the main rivers affected by British Columbia mining are the Taku, Stikine and Unuk, Martin said. There are dozens of operating or formerly operating mines along those rivers, most of them gold producers with large quantities of waste material, she said.

Communities and organizations in Southeast Alaska have two specific goals they are trying to accomplish, Martin said. They are seeking a ban on mine waste dams on transboundary rivers shared by British Columbia and Alaska, and they want a pause on new mining in the key transboundary rivers "until all of us connected to the rivers are consulted and have a seat at the table," she said.

- Alaska Beacon

## Northern Arizona University gifts full tuition to Arizona tribal members

Northern Arizona University will begin offering full tuition to first-time undergraduate students who are members of 22 of Arizona's Native American tribes, including the Hualapai Tribe.

Starting in the fall of 2023, the Access2Excellence program will expand to Indigenous students regardless of income. Access2Excellence will also become available for undergraduate students with a family income of \$65,000 or less.

According to NAU data, around 5% of the student body is Native American. The program will apply to new students, transfer students and those who live in a different state but are a member of an Arizona tribe.

Vice President for Enrollment Management Anika Olsen said the college has a long-standing commitment to Indigenous peoples and the program is the first step in their efforts to Arizona's Indigenous peoples looking to further continue their education.

"We conducted the requisite consultation process with our Native American stakeholders, evaluated the legal issues that would need to be addressed in the design of the financial aid program, and modeled the financial impacts to the institution," Olsen said.

- The Miner (Kingman, Arizona)

## 8 tribal bills pass Senate, set to become law

U.S. Senator Brian Schatz (D-Hawai'i), chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, and U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), vice chairman of the Committee, released statements following Senate passage of eight pieces of legislation involving Indian Country.

The legislation includes:

H.R. 441, the Don Young Alaska Native Health Care Land Transfers Act of 2022;

H.R. 478, the Blackwater Trading Post Land Transfer Act;

H.R. 4881, the Old Pascua Community Land Acquisition Act;

S. 989, the Native American Language Resource Center Act of 2021;

S. 1402, the Durbin Feeling Native American Languages Act of 2021;

S. 3168, a bill to amend the White Mountain Apache Tribe Water Rights Quantification Act of 2010 to modify the enforceability date for certain provisions, and for other purposes;

S. 3308, the Colorado River Indian Tribes Water Resiliency Act of 2021; and

S. 4104, the Hualapai Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act of 2022.

"The bills headed to the President's desk restore Tribal homelands, support Native health care and economic development, and

help fulfill the federal trust responsibility to Tribal nations," Schatz said. "Still more legislation that passed the Senate last night — which now head to the House — strengthen the U.S.'s support for Native American language revitalization efforts and provide life-saving water delivery systems while boosting conservation efforts by communities. I look forward to getting all these bills across the finish line."

"Yesterday, the Senate unanimously approved eight Indian Affairs bills. Three of the bills will head to the President's desk to be signed into law, including the Don Young Alaska Native Health Care Transfers Act. These bills advance priorities important to Native communities, such as promoting Native American languages, development of water and sanitation systems, and returning lands of significance and cultural value to Tribes. I thank my friend and colleague, Chairman Schatz, for his partnership in advancing these important bills, as well as other Senate colleagues for their help in moving these important measures unanimously," Murkowski said.

- NativeNewsOnline

## Alabama tribe could get federal recognition, casino gambling under final legislative push by retiring senator

It's been four decades since the MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians began the long journey to gain federal sovereignty designation that would allow them to access millions of dollars in health care, education, and economic development benefits — and the ability to host casino gambling.

U.S. Senator Richard Shelby was a Democratic lawmaker in the U.S. House when those efforts first began in the early 1980s.

But with Shelby's retirement a few weeks away, hundreds of federally recognized Native American tribes are now worried the master appropriator has one final political trick up his sleeve. They fear that Shelby has the political clout to upend the long traditions of tribes gaining federal recognition through an expert-led process overseen by the U.S. Department of Interior.

Shelby's role could, they say, be a key factor allowing the MOWA tribe to become the second in Alabama — aside from the Poarch Band of Creek Indians — to gain federal recognition.

The recognition could also kickstart the prospects of Indian gaming in Mobile or Washington counties similar to what exists on federal trust land for the Poarch Creeks in Atmore, Wetumpka and Montgomery.

Shelby, during an interview with AL.com on Nov. 15, called the MOWA's efforts a "long shot" but one that could happen during the waning days of the current lame-duck session that will end sometime before Christmas.

"I think they ought to be a tribe," Shelby said. "I think the proved they are. But now politics are involved. The people who have (federal recognition) don't want to share with others. That's human nature. They are blocking others from getting it, including their cousins."

He added, "That's possible (at getting approved). Don't give up yet."

Shelby, who has long supported the MOWA's efforts, is sponsoring legislation to grant federal designation to the tribe that is largely based on 300 acres of land west of Mount Vernon. About 5,000 people who claim to be MOWA live in Alabama, according to tribal chief Lebaron Byrd. Total membership is between 6,000 to 7,000, he said.

But to the 141 tribes opposed to the legislation, the fear is that federal lawmakers will circumvent the traditional recognition process through the Interior Department's Bureau of Indian Affairs by sliding it into a federal spending package. Shelby is a ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, considered among the most powerful committees with enormous power to authorize federal spending priorities.

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians, who did not respond to a request for comment, are among the tribes in opposition.

"Our primary concern is the must-pass bills that Congress is considering in the lame-duck session," said Richard French, chairman of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Tribal Council and among the tribal leaders who participated in a video released by the United Indian Nations of Oklahoma (UINO) sounding alarms over what they say is a process that will establish "dangerous precedence" leading to a rash of congressional approvals of federal sovereignty applications.

Aside from the MOWA tribe, UINO is worried about the inclusion of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina by retiring Republican U.S. Senator Richard Burr of North Carolina.

"As they have done in the past, we expect proponents to try to insert Lumbee and MOWA bills into either the National Defense Authorization Act or the end-of-the-year spending bill that Senator Shelby will partly author," French said. "The senators know these bills wouldn't pass in regular order, so they hope to overcome robust opposition by attaching these measures to critical bills that fund our military and keep government operations funded."

Federal recognition through congressional approval is viewed as a last-ditch effort and it is likely the only tool remaining for the MOWA tribe that has come up short in its applications before the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

- AL.com (Alabama)

# SOUTH FLORIDA'S ENTERTAINMENT DESTINATION



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**FLORIDA BY NIGHT**



**JAN 14 & 15**  
**MIAMI COMEDY FESTIVAL**



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# Education



## Christmas fun at Pemayetv Emahakv

### STAFF REPORT

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School celebrated the “12 days of Christmas” with a different activity each day from Dec. 8-23.

The fun seasonal activities included wearing red and green outfits, Christmas pajamas and wearing white to signify a white Christmas. Two turtle doves were represented by kids dressed as twins. Wearing flannel plaid and candy cane lane got everyone decked out in red and white to get into the holiday spirit. Halfway through, the kids wore their favorite Christmas hats followed by wearing all red and then all green. The next day students sparkled in their favorite holiday accessories and jewelry. Finally, the home stretch included the ugly sweater day and mistletoes, which refers to toes, hence socks.

Additionally, the students enjoyed the annual winter festival, photos with Santa and even the Grinch made an appearance to round out the holiday fun.



From left to right, Ezile Juarez and Jasiel Juarez, left photo, and Serenity Bishop and Aliyana Torres, right photo, participate in “Twinning Day,” one of Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School’s “12 Days of Christmas” activities.



PECS (2)  
The Grinch and Santa Claus were among guests during PECS’ 12 “Days of Christmas” activities. At left are students, from left to right, Kulipa Julian, Jalene Smith and Serenity Billie; and at right are students, from left to right, Chance Madrigal and Milaleah Madrigal.



Ahfachkee  
The Ahfachkee School in Big Cypress held a Christmas concert Dec. 7. Every class from kindergarten through sixth grade sang for an audience filled with family and friends. First graders are shown above.

## Smooth sounds of Ahfachkee singers



Ahfachkee  
Fourth graders perform at the Ahfachkee Christmas concert.

## Preschoolers show their Christmas talents



Calvin Tiger  
Students from the Hollywood Preschool take the stage for their Christmas performance.



Calvin Tiger  
The Hollywood Preschool Christmas show was held Dec. 9 in the Howard Tiger Recreation Center gymnasium. The youngsters sang holiday songs as part of the show.



Calvin Tiger  
The Big Cypress Preschool held its Christmas show Dec. 21 with plenty of songs and colorful attire. The students also did arts and crafts with their families.



Calvin Tiger  
Hollywood preschoolers dress as Christmas trees for their performance.



Calvin Tiger  
Students from the Big Cypress Preschool entertain the audience with a song.



Calvin Tiger  
Students at the Big Cypress Preschool get ready for their performance on stage.

# Toy drive benefits Southwest Florida kids

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**FORT MYERS** — The Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. and Seminole Veterans Toy Drive wrapped up a three-day event with more than 1,300 toys.

The toy drive was held in a large tent at the corner of Stirling Road and U.S. 441 in Hollywood from Dec. 8-10. Most of the toys were destined for kids in Southwest Florida, an area that was ravaged by Hurricane Ian on Sept. 28.

Team members from the Seminole Classic Casino and the Seminole Coconut Creek Casino were among those from the Seminole Tribe's gaming properties that brought carts full of toys to the toy drive's kickoff.

"This year for me I think it's special, the children that are going to receive these gifts are from my home, the southwest side of Florida," said Edward Aguilar, general manager of the Seminole Classic Casino.

President Mitchell Cypress, who is

also a veteran, said that it is important for the Seminole Tribe to be a part of the effort to bring joy and happiness to the youth impacted by Hurricane Ian.

During a kickoff celebration in Hollywood, President Cypress was joined by Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, former Miss Florida Seminole and Miss Indian World Cheyenne Kippenberger and U.S. Navy veteran Curtis Motlow.

"This is my first time attending but I am glad that we are gathering toys for the children that don't get have the things that our children get to have," Councilwoman Billie said.

The drive culminated with the delivery of the toys to kids in Southwest Florida, some of whom couldn't be home for Christmas due to health issues.

Santa Claus doesn't always arrive in a reindeer-driven sleigh; on Dec. 14 a large truckload of toys was delivered to the Ronald McDonald House and Golisano Children's Hospital, both in Fort Myers, and the Guadalupe Center in Immokalee.

Inspired by his childhood memories of Christmas, President Cypress started the toy drive when he served as chairman in 2007 and relaunched it in 2015 as president. His Christmas memories include looking forward to the fruit that the missionaries brought to his church.

"We want every kid to smile," President Cypress said.

President Cypress was accompanied to Fort Myers and Immokalee by Big Cypress Board Rep. Nadine Bowers, executive assistant Sue Jane Cypress, President's special adviser Holly Tiger and Okalee Village administrative assistant Kyla Billie.

Because of the triple threat of Covid-19, the respiratory virus known as RSV and the flu, the group wasn't allowed to deliver the toys to the hospitalized children. Instead, the gifts were left with staff, who delivered them to the young patients later.

The Ronald McDonald House serves as a home for families — and provides all of their needs — while their child is in the nearby Golisano Children's Hospital.

Hurricane Ian disrupted the day-to-day routine of the hospital, which had to evacuate many patients including the neonatal intensive care unit. Hospital administrators were concerned donors wouldn't be as generous with gifts this year.

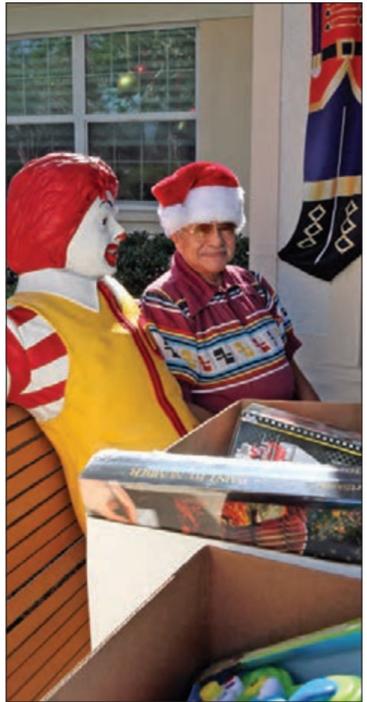
"This was the largest donation we've had since Covid started," said Stacie Kmetz, Golisano Children's Hospital childlife specialist. "We are extremely appreciative."

The Guadalupe Center aims to break the cycle of poverty through education and provides programs for the children of Immokalee from infancy through high school.

Reporter/intern Calvin Tiger contributed to this story.



Kyla Billie, Holly Tiger, Sue Jane Cypress, Big Cypress Board Rep. Nadine Bowers and President Mitchell Cypress join Golisano Children's Hospital staff in the Fort Myers hospital lobby on Dec. 14. The toys were collected during the toy drive.



President Mitchell Cypress sits with Ronald McDonald and some of the toys from the toy drive to be delivered to the children at the Ronald McDonald House in Fort Myers.



Cheyenne Kippenberger, far left, Curtis Motlow, third from left in front, and President Mitchell Cypress, center, join Seminole Classic Casino employees, including general manager Edward Aguilar, at the site of the toy drive outside of the casino.

## GOVERNOR From page 1A

"We celebrate the contributions of Florida's Native American tribes to our state's unique culture," DeSantis said. "The legacy of Native American tribes can be seen in every corner of the state."

DeSantis presented awards for best essays to PECS fourthgrader Dylanie Peak and fifth grader Hayden Nunez. He also

presented PECS teachers Amy Carr and Jade Osceola with Excellence in Education awards for their excellence in teaching Native American history.

"Amy and Jade inspired their students to reach new heights," DeSantis said. "When the Seminole Tribe reached out to us about this, we jumped at the opportunity. Part of it is to show appreciation for Native American culture and how it enriches the state, but also in appreciation for the great relationship we have been able to develop. We will continue to make this an annual event."



PECS students and essay winners Hayden Nunez, left, and Dylanie Peak hold their winning certificates with Gov. Ron DeSantis.



PECS students wait to enter the governor's mansion in Tallahassee on Nov. 30 for a reception honoring the winners of the first Native American Heritage Month art and essay contests, which students from the school initiated with the governor's office.



PECS teachers Jade Osceola, left, and Amy Carr are presented with Excellence in Education award checks by Gov. Ron DeSantis.



Brighton Councilman Larry Howard addresses the audience at the governor's mansion as First Lady Casey DeSantis, Gov. Ron DeSantis and Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie listen.



Board members of the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation and staff joined Seminole Tribe members and employees during a visit to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum in December.

## Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum receives praise from Florida Trust board

### STAFF REPORT

In its newsletter, the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation featured its board's tour of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on Dec. 12. The nonprofit organization, which is dedicated to preserving Florida's heritage and history, was invited by the Seminole Tribe's Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) and Heritage and Environment Resources Office (HERO).

Here's what Florida Trust said about the tour in the newsletter.

"Our hosts guided us through the museum's exhibits, taught us about the tribe's history and culture and gave us a special peek

of the archives. We were generously treated with a traditional meal - we especially loved the pumpkin fry bread.

"In our effort to tell the full story of all Floridians and those who live here, we were incredibly appreciative to listen to and learn from the Seminole Tribe. We would like to thank our board member (and HERO senior director) Dr. Paul Backhouse for leading us in this experience.

"Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum is fully accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and the first tribally-governed museum to be so recognized. It is absolutely worth a visit and a must-see for any lover of Florida history."

Courtesy photo

# 'Shirt Tale'

BY ELGIN JUMPER

*Author's note: About 7, 8 years ago, I researched and set forth a presentation of Shirt-Tail Charley, at the Fort Lauderdale History Center (History Fort Lauderdale, to be precise) which received a wonderful response. Thanks again to the History Center for assistance with that project. "Shirt Tale" the story, is loosely-based on the exploits of Shirt-Tail Charley, Charley Tommie, that is, a Seminole man who was never without his Seminole Longshirt.*

*In the 1920s he spent most of his time in and around the Fort Lauderdale Beach areas. He was well-known to the countless tourists and numerous myths and legends sprang up surrounding him and his traditional choice of apparel. I wanted to write about a Seminole man as if he was a mythical character, a hero. Shirt Tale is the end result. And yet, the story is not only Myth, it is also Magical Realism, and Tall Tale, all genres I am most definitely interested in as a Seminole storyteller.*

When Shirt Tail was born, it rained for four weeks in and around the Florida Everglades, set-in rain, stormy rains, hail, drizzles, on and off red rains, magnificent sun-showers! - sun-showers were the most celebrated! - so much so that flooding became a big problem, and yet, it scarcely flooded the reservations. In fact, it even caused the famed "River of Grass" to flow northwards for a time, rather than its usual southwards trek. Only those fortunate enough to possess canoes, airboats or helicopters and suchlike could make their ways to the surrounding cities for food, fuel, and any other vital needs. Ice and fresh drinking water was of great importance.

One family, much-perterbed by the sudden disruption of routines, turned a beige, jalopy F-150 pick-up truck, into an improvised rescue boat with which to lend a hand - the unruly contraption had been outfitted with a number of empty oil barrels fastened underneath, and no fancy bells or whistles, to write home about - but, in their

excessive enthusiasm, they became lost in vastnesses of the Everglades.

Authorities and volunteers searched for them for days, until they finally located the disoriented bunch near a haunted primordial swamp, where giant prehistoric alligators, wicked, fearsome, were said to dwell. Some said these menacing monstrosities were the spirits of ghastly warriors from ancient times.

When he came into the world poets from all over journeyed to the margins of the Everglades. They gathered and poetized for days on end with regards to the newborn Seminole boy. The Poetry Lovers held grand festivals, elaborate workshops, and memorable readings galore! The Guinness Book of World Records declared it, "The Greatest Time for Poetry Ever!"

When Shirt Tail was brought into this world, one could well say, it rained poetry. And there certainly was a multiplicity of smiles all around! His parents were elated!

Later, at twenty-four, Shirt-Tail led a quest into the darkest, most foreboding areas of the Florida Everglades. At a younger age, sadly, he had lost his parents to a brigand of vicious alligators, and so, with no one left to care for him, he had been apprenticed to, Grey Sash, an indigenous holy man, with a crop of silver-white hair. And in this way, he had become a leading hunter, tracker and guide, among other extraordinary pursuits. He was constantly being sought out by professional hunters for his services.

That's why when some worked up hunters in airboats set out from a fishcamp near the eastside of the peninsula, near 27, and hadn't been heard from, family and friends of the hunters approached Shirt Tail for help. After all, that very day, a giant prehistoric alligator, hideously-marred in one eye by an unbelievable lightning strike, had appeared at a tourist attraction on Highway 41, wreaking havoc - claiming credit for the abduction the hunters in question - threatening to unleash destruction and fiery chaos upon the world in five days, during an eclipse, if vast treasures of gold and silver was not handed over to him.



Elgin Jumper

'Shirt Tale Saves The Day! (Via Laptop),' by Elgin Jumper, oil, 2022

Not satisfied with the efforts of the authorities, families were demanding more action in finding and returning their loved ones. Several search parties had already been sent out, but had returned empty-handed. At first Shirt Tail had been reluctant, because he was in the midst of key spiritual studies with his teacher, Grey Sash. "There cannot be light without shadow, my son," Grey Sash declared. And even though a hefty reward had been announced, it was not for that that he relented. It was because it was the right thing to do that Shirt Tail took action.

"Okay, my team and I will do it," he stated to the throngs of people and news crews gathered out near 27. "For the families."

"It's your destiny," Grey Sash affirmed. In a private dressing room at the fishcamp, he changed from a white and black longshirt to a camouflage-patterned longshirt. These were his magic garments, the sources of his power. He folded his denim pant-legs up just a tad. Now he was ready, Mister Action himself.

♦ See SHIRT TALE on page 6C

## Marketplace at the museum



Beverly Bidney

Shopper Lenora Roberts, right, admires some beads while Carol Cypress organizes her booth as the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's holiday marketplace began Dec. 16.



Beverly Bidney

Paul "Cowbone" Buster and his guitar provided holiday ambiance for shoppers as he serenaded them with a stream of Christmas songs.



Beverly Bidney

Artist Alyssa Osceola displays some of her prints for sale at the holiday marketplace.

## ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

January 2023

Dining tables that used to feature extravagant sets of plates, bowls, cups, and saucers like this month's featured artifact have become reduced to Styrofoam, paper or plastic in the modern home. The only time we see tableware such as this saucer (below), is at high-end restaurants, or hotels which is exactly why this piece was made. This saucer has an interesting history. Even with two "maker's marks" present on the bottom it was not easy to figure out just how old this piece of tableware is, but the Collections team has pieced together some clues to provide a date range.

This double green banded or striped saucer manufactured by the D.E. McNicol China or Pottery company, was created for a classic streamlined look often used in restaurants. The D.E. McNicol company, founded in 1874 was originally manufacturing ceramic tableware in East Liverpool, Ohio (East Liverpool Historical Society). After finding success with patterned yellow ware in the mid-west, the company expanded by building seven kilns, for white ware development, in Clarksburg, West Virginia in 1914. Finally in 1927 the company fully moved its operations to the city of around 28,000 and focused on restaurant, hotel, and railroad tableware (1951 McNicol Pottery Catalog).



THPO



THPO

The Albert Pick Co., established in 1857, quickly became one of the most popular hotel chains and merchandising groups in the hotel industry. The company offered supplies such as chinaware, bedding, kitchen equipment, table linens, furniture, etc. Expansion of the company after World War I led to a merger in 1926 with New York's L. Barth Company, and came with a new logo (Albert Pick & Co., est. 1857). Instead of the logo stating Albert Pick Co. Inc. and Chicago Illinois (as it does above), the logo changed to say Albert Pick-Barth, and Illinois was changed to New York to represent both giant companies.

Due to this visible logo change, and knowing when D.E. McNicol began creating china and pottery in Clarksburg, WV, we can reasonably narrow down the creation of the saucer to somewhere between 1914 and 1926. McNicol is the manufacturer, Albert Pick is the distributor. In 1934, the D.E. McNicol company supplied its sales teams with a booklet to assist them in selling china to different restaurants. According to booklet, the company's goal was to "assist the enterprising restaurant manager to interpret the attitude of the present-day public toward restaurants" (The McNicol Decoration Pattern Series).

The McNicol manufacturing building can still be found in Clarksburg, West Virginia. The company, which became the McNicol-Martin China company in 1966, shut its doors by 1969 (Poshchicago.com). Similarly, the Albert-Barth company started to fail in the 1960s with a string of outdated hotels and was sold to a Texas oil company in 1976 (Albert Pick & Co., est 1857). There are still avid collectors of the original McNicol China and Albert Pick/ Pick-Barth pieces with many pieces for sale online. It is suggested however, to make sure not to use china/pottery that is cracked or chipped and made before 1971 due to the potential lead content.



SEMINOLE HISTORY STORIES  
JANUARY 2023

## COACOOCHIEE AND THE ESCAPE FROM FORT MARION

On the last day of November in 1837, soldiers stationed at Fort Marion went to check on the twenty two Seminole held prisoner there. They had been betrayed and captured under the flag of truce the previous month, and included the war leaders Coacoochee (Wild Cat), Asi-Yahola (Osceola), and John Covoallo.<sup>1</sup> Only one, Osceola who was too sick to stand unaided, remained in the locked cell. The rest had, seemingly impossibly, escaped a locked prison where the only way out was a barred window five feet wide but only eight inches tall, fifteen feet above the cell floor. Coacoochee led the escape after a week of planning, and hoping Osceola would recover. Osceola convinced his childhood friend to go without him.

The captain in charge of Fort Marion convened a review board to determine how the escape could have happened. Their official response was that the room had been secured and deemed inescapable. They determined that no soldier could be blamed. They had no idea how the Seminole had gotten through the window, removed the bar, or where they got a line to climb down with.<sup>2</sup>

To this day it's not known how Coacoochee engineered the escape. Some credit a group fast so everyone could slim down to fit through the eight inch gap, others credit medicine<sup>3</sup> that Coacoochee used. The escape would lead to Osceola being taken from Florida to Fort Moultrie in South Carolina, where he soon died. Those who escaped returned to the Tribe, and Coacoochee would go on to be a leader and key strategist in the battles of Okeechobee and Loxahatchee.

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2. Capt. Gould to Capt. Brown. Fort Marion, St. Augustine, Florida. November 30, 1837
3. Seminole Oral Histories
4. Engraving of Coacoochee from *The Exiles of Florida* by Joshua R. Giddings (Follet, Foster & Co., 1858) Public Domain

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

## Lakeland



Jessica Burns

The Lakeland Reservation held its Christmas tree lighting ceremony Dec. 5. From left to right are Linda O. Henry, Jane Jim Osceola, Peggy Cubis, Nancy Frank and Colleen Henry.



Jessica Burns

Kacey Avelos checks out the presents under the tree in Lakeland.



Jessica Burns

Kids gather around the Lakeland Reservation's Christmas tree.



Jessica Burns

Tampa Reservation administrator Richard Henry and Brighton Board Rep. Helene Buster.

## Hollywood



Damon Scott

Raymond Stewart, center, and his family were in good spirits as they arrived at the Hollywood Reservation's Christmas party Dec. 9. The party was held in a large holiday-themed ballroom at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood



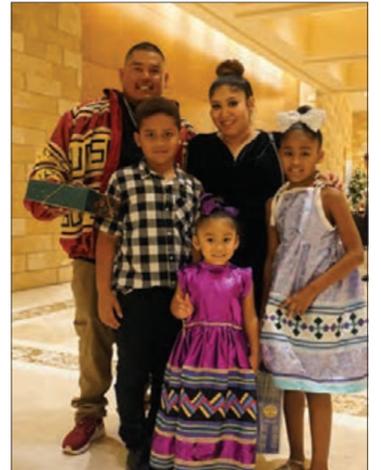
Damon Scott

Brothers Brent Frank, left, and Justin Frank attend the Christmas party.



Damon Scott

Members of the First Seminole Baptist Church, Chickee Baptist Church and Trail Indian Independent Baptist Church sang hymns as people entered the ballroom for dinner.



Damon Scott

Robert Osceola, back left, and his family enjoy the Christmas party together.

## Brighton



SMP

Contestants in the ugly sweater contest await the judges' picks at the Brighton Reservation's Christmas celebration Dec. 15 at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena. The evening featured several activities, including amusement rides and a country music concert.



SMP

Santa and Mrs. Claus are visited by two youngsters.



SMP

Fast-moving rides were a popular attraction for the younger crowd at the Brighton Christmas party.



SMP

Youngsters compete in a contest at the party.

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

## Tampa



Beverly Bidney

The Henry family enjoys Tampa/Lakeland's Christmas luncheon Dec. 17 at the Tampa Marriott Water Street. Seated from left to right are James Henry, Moses Thomas, Lilla Henry and Sire Willis. Standing in back from left to right are Joanie Henry and Seminole Medicine Man Bobby Henry. The event featured an afternoon buffet, Santa Claus, gifts for children and raffles.



Beverly Bidney

Luna Bittar, 1 month old, sleeps soundly in Santa Claus's lap with parents Melissa Bittar and Chris Garcia looking on.



Beverly Bidney

Blaze Osceola, right, holds her daughter Ember Frank, 1, at the Tampa/Lakeland Christmas party.



Beverly Bidney

Santa Claus seems unfazed by Alijah Jordan's tears as his mother Amanda Sisneroz complies with a photographer's request for a photo.



Beverly Bidney

Talia Frank, 2, is comfortable in her mother Jae Frank's arms at the party.



Beverly Bidney

From left to right, Susie Doctor, Kini Sherwood and Kini's mother Naomi Sherwood enjoy the Tampa/Lakeland Christmas party.

## Naples



Beverly Bidney

From left to right, brothers Doug, Lee, Brian and Pedro Zepeda stand by the Christmas tree at the Juanita Osceola Center in Naples during the Naples Community's Christmas dinner Dec. 6.



Beverly Bidney

From left to right, Maggie Porter and Connie Slavik at the Naples Community Christmas dinner



Beverly Bidney

From left to right, Michael Onco, Karie Osceola and Holly Tiger spend time together at the Naples Christmas dinner.

## Big Cypress



Kevin Johnson

From left to right, Regina Cypress, Aldricia Cypress and 1-month-old Leona Roberts represent three generations of their family at the Big Cypress Christmas celebration.



Kevin Johnson

The open fields at the Junior Cypress Rodeo Complex were filled with about a dozen large amusement rides and games for kids to enjoy at the Big Cypress Christmas celebration Dec. 9. Guests ate dinner inside the arena, which was decked out in Christmas decor, including dozens of pine trees.



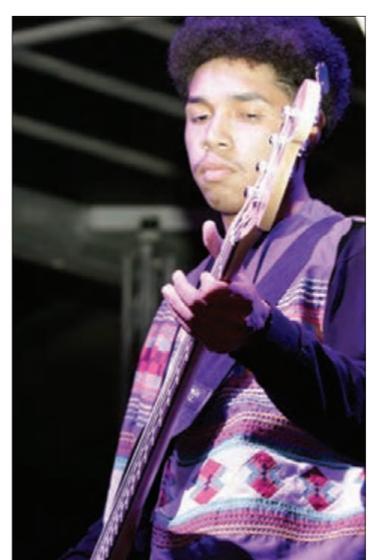
Kevin Johnson

Churches in Big Cypress joined together to perform a few holiday songs for the audience at the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena.



Kevin Johnson (2)

The recently formed Ahfachkee School band performs for Christmas guests. The band played "Pride and Joy," "The Chain," and "Maple Syrup." Members include, from left to right, Sautva Billie, Cyiah Avila, Curmya Smith and Akira Cabral (above) and Zechariah Stockton (right).



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# Sports



Kevin Johnson

American Heritage's Gregory Xavier Thomas (23) sprints down the field during a punt in the first quarter of the Class 2M state championship football game Dec. 16 at DRV PNK Stadium in Fort Lauderdale. Miami Central edged Heritage, 38-31.

## Seminole presence in classic state championship game

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**FORT LAUDERDALE** — A South Florida powerhouse match-up between two of the top 10 high school football teams in the country didn't disappoint the nearly 10,000 fans who watched a classic battle for the Class 2M state championship.

Miami Central edged American Heritage-Plantation, which includes Seminole Gregory Xavier Thomas and Avery Bowers, 38-31, on Dec. 16 at DRV PNK Stadium in Fort Lauderdale.

Central entered the game ranked No. 3 in the nation by MaxPreps; Heritage was No. 10.

Central scored quickly and often in the first half, notching a field goal and four touchdowns on its first five possessions to take a seemingly comfortable 31-13 lead at halftime.

Heritage responded with a strong, determined effort in the second half and pulled to within a touchdown late in the game. The Patriots were marching toward a potential tying score but coughed up the ball on the Central 24-yard line with 1:17 left in the game. Central ran out the clock to cap its undefeated season (14-0). Heritage finished with a 13-2 record.

Thomas, a versatile back-up sophomore cornerback, played in nearly all special teams downs. It was a fairly quiet night on special teams for both sides with no long returns.

Thomas has two more years of being able to make runs at state championships, but that's not the case for a large chunk of the squad who played their final high school game.

"All the returning players will use this as motivation and come back," Thomas said. "Central is always going to be in our bracket. We want to get back and win for the 27 seniors who lost today."

Aside from the final score, Thomas said he enjoyed being part of the state championship environment. Unlike recent state championship games that often lacked an overall intense atmosphere being played in front of so many empty seats in a large stadium — the 65,000-seat Camping World Stadium in Orlando — this year's switch to the 18,000-seat Fort Lauderdale stadium built for pro soccer provided a far more intimate and vibrant surrounding.

"It was fun. It was my first state championship game. It was a good experience," said Thomas, who said he plans to train hard in the offseason and play 7-on-7 football in preparation for his junior season.

Bowers, a senior back-up lineman, did not see game action in his final game for the Patriots. He remained on the field after the game with plenty of other seniors as they soaked up their final moments in a Heritage uniform.

Bowers, who hadn't played for a couple years, said he was glad he returned to football this season and had fun doing so.

"I missed it because I had stopped playing awhile back," he said.

Similar to his teammate Thomas, Bowers said the state championship game experience was memorable.

"It was fun," he said. "I was glad to be here."



Kevin Johnson

American Heritage's Gregory Xavier Thomas, third from right, talks to teammates during the Class 2M state championship game.



Kevin Johnson

American Heritage's Avery Bowers (67) and teammate Christien Moreau watch from the bench.



Kevin Johnson

American Heritage's Gregory Xavier Thomas (23) battles Miami Central's Karon Maycock on special teams coverage.



Kevin Johnson

Gregory Xavier Thomas (23) provides blocking on an American Heritage punt.



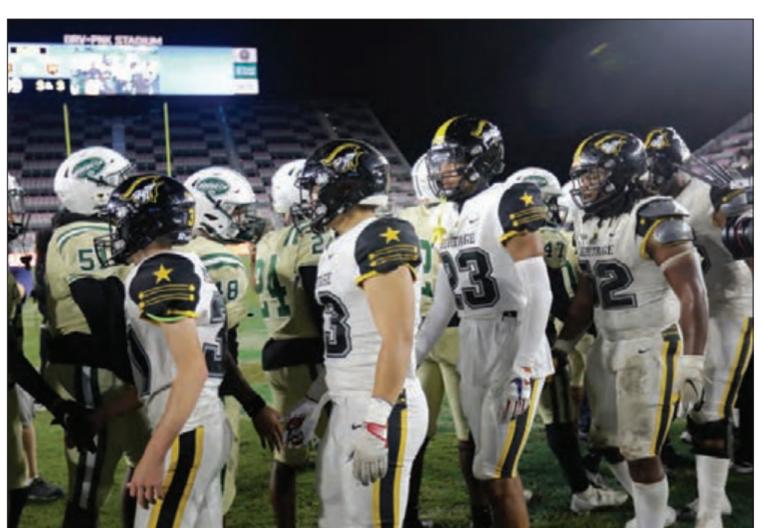
Kevin Johnson

Avery Bowers (67) goes through pre-game warmups at the Class 2M state championship.



Kevin Johnson

Gregory Xavier Thomas (23), Avery Bowers (67) and the rest of the American Heritage football team heads off the field at the end of the Class 2M state championship game that drew 9,704 spectators to DRV PNK Stadium in Fort Lauderdale.



Kevin Johnson

Gregory Xavier Thomas (23) goes through the handshake line after American Heritage's loss to Miami Central.

# PECS basketball returns to action after two years off

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**BRIGHTON** — Basketballs are once again bouncing on the court at Pemaquetv Emahakv Charter School's gymnasium.

After two years with no sports at the school due to the pandemic, the girls and basketball teams resumed playing in November.

The girls, coached by former Okeechobee High girls varsity coach Jovanny Torres, have continued their winning ways. Traditionally one of the strongest teams in the area, PECS only had one loss in their first eight games. Their victories included a 37-32 home win on 8th grade parent night against Moore Haven Middle School on Dec. 15.

PECS' girls jumped out to a 15-2 lead after one quarter and held off a late charge by the Terriers.

Charisma Micco scored a team-high 11 points for PECS. Azariah Washington had eight points while Kulipa Julian (six points), Ila Trueblood (four points) and Cherrish Micco (four points) rounded out the balanced scoring attack.

"We have a solid group here," Torres said.

It's a large group, too. The team carries 19 players. PECS has enough players for a JV team, but there wasn't enough schools in the area this season that could say the same. So a few JV players get inserted into varsity games on a rotating basis.

Opponents often have their hands full defending PECS because scoring can come from just about anywhere. In a win against Glades Day on Dec. 14, PECS received points from nine different players. Melaine Bonilla was the top scorer with seven points followed by Trueblood (6), Julian (5), Eriyana McQueen (5), Washington (4) and Dyani Kayda (4).

On the boys side, PECS fell behind 7-1 against Moore Haven in the first quarter, but rallied to keep the game close the rest of the way. Moore Haven led 20-19 entering the fourth quarter and pulled away for a 31-27 win.

Walt Fortner led PECS with 14 points. Gregory James had 10 points.

"We always start slow, but once they get into a rhythm and things start flowing there's nothing these kids can't do. I'm proud of the group of guys we have," said Remy Fahad, who is in his first year coaching and serves as an assistant coach to head coach Preston



PECS' Ila Trueblood makes a layup in the girls game against Moore Haven on Dec. 15.



PECS' Gregory James (23) takes a jump shot in the boys game against Moore Haven on Dec. 15.

Baker.

Despite the setback as PECS' record slipped to 3-5, the coaches saw plenty of positive things from their team.

"It was a good game. Our boys fought hard. They definitely brought the energy tonight. It was a good test for them," Fahad said.

He said the team has improved in several basic areas since the start of the season. He pointed to basketball knowledge, movement on the floor, rebounding and boxing out as some areas that the team has done better compared to the start of the season.

It's a young group that includes some students who have never played before.

In a home game the previous night, Fortner (13 points) and James (eight points) led PECS in a win against Glades Day.

PECS boys and girls will host its conference tournament Jan. 14. The single-loss elimination format will be played at PECS' gym and the Brighton Recreation Department gym.



Walt Fortner (10) breaks away on his way to scoring.



Melaine Bonilla (23) controls the ball despite being bumped by a Moore Haven player.

## Banner says it all for undefeated PECS volleyball



Kevin Johnson

The Pemaquetv Emahakv Charter School volleyball team's undefeated season this fall is recognized with a banner in the school's gym. The 2021-22 team is only the second volleyball squad in school history to record an undefeated season; the 2014-15 team is the other one.



PECS' Charisma Micco (3) and Kulipa Julian (2) battle Moore Haven for a rebound.



PECS' Jeremy Urbina (12) drives toward the basket against Moore Haven.

Kevin Johnson

Kevin Johnson

Kevin Johnson

Kevin Johnson



Kevin Johnson

The Dec. 18 women's basketball game between Nova Southeastern University and Saginaw Valley State University featured four Native Americans. From left to right, NSU's twin sister tandem of Kyannah Grant and Kyarah Grant (both Navajo/Choctaw) and Skyla Osceola (Seminole Tribe) and Saginaw Valley State's Tori DePerry (Ojibwe/Stockbridge).

## NSU honors Native Americans with heritage day game

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

DAVIE — The victory on the scoreboard for the Nova Southeastern University women's basketball team told only part of the story about its game Dec. 18 against Saginaw Valley State University.

Sure, the hard-fought 75-71 win by the Sharks against their opponent from Michigan kept red-hot NSU sizzling this season with nine wins in its first 10 games. But the Sunday matinee at Rick Case Arena also featured plenty of Native American presence on and off the court.

NSU's Native American Heritage Day at the arena brought together Seminole Tribe of Florida's culture, Native dancers and two all-time great Native female basketball players. The game itself featured four Native American players: NSU's identical twin guards Kyannah Grant and Kyarah Grant (both Navajo/Choctaw), from Mississippi, and Skyla Osceola (Seminole Tribe) from the nearby Hollywood Reservation. The other side featured Saginaw Valley's second leading scorer Tori DePerry (Ojibwe/Stockbridge).

After battling for four quarters in a playoff-type, physical game, the four Native players met at midcourt in a friendly, brief encounter to introduce each other.

DePerry didn't know about NSU's Native day until she saw the Iron Horse dancers before the game.

"I thought it was so cool [NSU] had Native American Day. I came and saw them in their regalia and I thought that's awesome," said DePerry, who was a force all game and led her team with 21 points and 10 rebounds.

Several Seminoles were in attendance, including representatives from the tribe's Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum and Seminole Okalee Indian Village, which had a display set up for spectators to learn more about the tribe.

"It's always a blast when they can come out and support. It's always nice seeing everyone," Osceola said. "We always want to win, but when you have people here who come and support, it gives you that extra drive."

Osceola's extra effort at both ends of the court helped NSU shake off a shaky start. Trailing 7-4, Osceola came off the bench and helped NSU find its rhythm for the next five minutes.

"She definitely makes us calm," said Kyannah Grant. "When everyone is getting sporadic...Sky is so unselfish and she communicates a lot. She brings the whole team together. We're like, 'Sky is here. Let's calm down and run our stuff.' She's really a team player and we love having her."

Osceola finished with three points and two assists in 17 minutes. Kyarah Grant had five points, three steals, three rebounds and two assists. Kyannah Grant played far bigger than her 5-foot-6 frame; she grabbed a team-high 10 rebounds – a remarkable seven more than any of her teammates – and chipped in with four points and an assist.

♦ See NSU on page 5C

Kevin Johnson

Little Big Mountain performs at halftime.



Kevin Johnson

NSU's Skyla Osceola, left, and Kyarah Grant, center, battle Saginaw Valley State's Tori DePerry (22).



Kevin Johnson

Dakota Oliver performs a jingle dance at halftime of the NSU women's basketball game.



Kevin Johnson

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum and Seminole Okalee Indian Village were represented at the game by, from left to right, Gordon "Ollie" Wareham, Michael Gentry, Everett Osceola, James Holt and Van Samuels.

## Strong start for three Seminoles on Hollywood Hills junior varsity

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

HOLLYWOOD — The Seminole Tribe's David Nelson, Draycen Osceola and Christian Shaffer are teammates on the Hollywood Hills High School junior varsity basketball team. They've made a big impact in a short period of time.

It took less than a handful of games for Hollywood Hills coach Carmen Delacruz to realize the positive affect the trio can have on the court.

"They have good chemistry together. They have very good basketball IQ. They can go far because they know how to play," Delacruz said after her team evened its record at 2-2 with a 51-44 win against Coconut Creek on Dec. 5 in Hollywood.

Nelson, described by Delacruz as the team's big man and main rebounder who played well in the team's first three games, did not play against Coconut Creek due to an injury, but the other two Seminoles made their presence felt both offensively and defensively.

Osceola, a guard, scored eight points and Shaffer, a forward, had seven points. Perhaps more impressive than their scoring touch was their ability to force turnovers, which they did often at crucial times. Their success

with the Unconquered youth team coached by Gary McInturff which won national Native American tournaments in Arizona and Oklahoma this summer is paying off on the high school level.

"They do play well on trapping. They trap well together," Delacruz said.

Relentless pressure by Osceola and Shaffer forced five consecutive backcourt turnovers in the third quarter and turned a two-point deficit into a five-point lead for Hollywood Hills, which never trailed again.

They continued to shine in the fourth quarter. Osceola drained a 3-pointer with 5:30 left to give Hollywood Hills a 44-38 lead. Both Osceola and Shaffer made steals in the final minute to preserve the victory.

In the first half, Shaffer had to be helped from the court after he suffered an injury while vying for a loose ball. After sitting on the bench for a while, Shaffer returned and made a huge impact just within the first 60 seconds by grabbing a defensive rebound, forcing a turnover on an inbounds and making two layups.

Osceola and Shaffer are freshmen; Nelson is a sophomore. Their ascension to varsity isn't a matter of if, but rather when.

"They're really good players," Delacruz said.

♦ See HILLS PHOTOS on page 5C



Kevin Johnson

Hollywood Hills' Christian Shaffer (13) and Draycen Osceola (5) double team a Coconut Creek player during a junior varsity game Dec. 5.

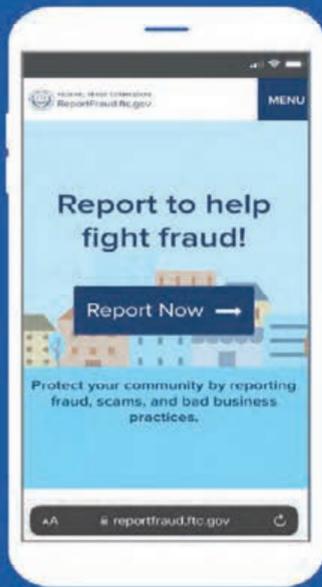
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◆ **NSU**  
From page 3C

At halftime, the dancers performed for the crowd. They included Little Big Mountain (Comanche and Mohawk), Creed Big Mountain (Comanche and Mohawk Kahnawake Quebec), Otter Oliver (White Bear First Nations) and Dakota Oliver (Rose Bud Lakota).

Dances included an Ojibwe jingle dance to honor the women of Turtle Island and a Northern traditional old style war dance to honor the men of Turtle Island.

"It was really nice and really cool that everyone can see our culture and our culture being expressed," Kyarah Grant said.

The Seminole Tribe's Everett Osceola spoke to the crowd about the tribe and its culture as well as its venues— such as the museum and village – where the public can learn more about the tribe.

Also at halftime, Gwynn Grant and RaeAnn West were interviewed courtside during NSU's broadcast. Gwynn Grant (Navajo) is the mother of the NSU twins and is a former basketball standout at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, where she is an inductee in its hall of fame. West (Navajo) was a star at Northern Arizona University and played professionally.

For Seminoles who want to see NSU play, the Sharks have eight regular season home games remaining in Davie. They also have away games close to other Seminole reservations, including Jan. 28 at Florida Southern College in Lakeland, Feb. 11 at St. Leo University, Feb. 18 at the University of Tampa and Feb. 22 at Eckerd in St. Petersburg.



The Nova Southeastern University women's basketball team poses with Little Big Mountain before its game Dec. 18.

Courtesy photo

## Lexi Foreman notches season highs in December

**STAFF REPORT**

As of Dec. 30, the Seminole Tribe's Lexi Foreman was averaging nearly three points per game for the University of Central Oklahoma women's basketball team.

Foreman, a sophomore guard from Anadarko, Oklahoma, scored a season-high seven points Dec. 8 in a 72-61 loss against Missouri Southern State University. She hit one 3-pointer and went 2-for-2 from the free throw line.

On Dec. 1, Foreman played a season-high 22 minutes in an 83-65 loss against the University of Central Missouri. She finished with one point and four rebounds.

After a 4-2 start, UCO cooled off and dropped its next four games entering a Dec. 31 game against Washburn University from Kansas.



Lexi Foreman

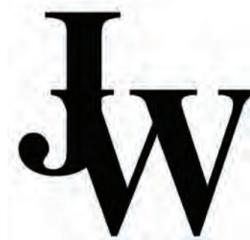
Central Oklahoma

◆ **HILLS PHOTOS**  
From page 3C



Kevin Johnson (2)

Christian Shaffer, left, and Draycen Osceola, right, are among the top players on the Hollywood Hills JV boys basketball team.



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# Tribalwide seniors gather for Christmas party



Paul "Cowbone" Buster says a prayer before people ate at the tribalwide seniors Christmas party Dec. 12. Seniors filled dozens of tables in a ballroom at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino. Raffles, emceed by preschool director Thommy Doud, were held throughout the event. Bingo was also played and photos with Santa were available.



Seminole medicine man Bobby Henry attends the tribalwide seniors Christmas party.



Hollywood Board Rep. Christine McCall speaks to the audience at the seniors party.

## SHIRT TALE

From page 3B

Outside, little Seminoles on tiny white windsails drifted, wafted in harmony throughout the crowds, as if some tenderhearted plants person had bestowed a flurry of dandelions on the scene. His teacher, Grey Sash, was present. And Bliss, a priestess, and helper of the holy man, was there, too, to see him off on his mission.

Bliss sang a beautiful song which seemed to emanate from the waters, it played on the breezes with the mesmerizing windsailers, and then, just then, a strange mist emerged and convolved immaculate and the holy man and his helper were gone, vanished.

Shirt Tail's adventures were numerous, his daring feats were enthralling, miraculous, and his deeds were quite stunning, far out of the ordinary. Good Times. And yet, one mission that truly stands out is the time he took on the rescue of the lost hunters.

It took him four days and four nights to paddle his canoe out to the Hidden Swamps of the Everglades, heretofore unknown. Shirt Tail was accompanied now and then by Bliss, who helped him through the haunted marshes and perilous hardwood hammocks, where vile spirit warriors lurked in the sawgrass, palmetto, and pine. At last they arrived at the horrendous site. There were nine enormous alligators, all fierce and from another age. They greeted him upon his arrival to the mysterious swamp, the waters therein black and murky, alarming and foreboding.

The shifting vegetation that clutched upon the surface was dark green, with tinges of seinna and ochre, giving off a poisonous smell, alive, and rather resembling sinister battle armor. It was difficult for Shirt Tail to gain his bearings at first.

"We have your precious hunters, boy," Saber, the leader of the death-dealing alligators proclaimed. "Are you prepared to

battle for them?" "You see the resolve in our eyes!" Shirt Tail roared. "Let's have it at, shall we!"

"Arm yourselves!" Bliss shouted. "Battle positions!" "Fight!" Grey Sash commanded.

Just then a surreal whirlpool of swampwater opened up between the combatants. Annihilation would soon rear its ominous head from there. Shirt Tail could see the hunters in their damaged airboats, swirling and spiraling within the rotating maelstrom. "Certain destruction awaits the world!" Saber cried. The hunters were screaming out for immediate salvation.

In this place the swamps were far deeper, far ranker, then any of the wetlands he had known in recent times. He recalled the region, though, from earlier days with Grey Sash and Bliss, earlier adventures, earlier sorrows. Now the trees were dark-brown, much thicker and had eerie as well as villainous aspects to them, as if they were a fiendish army preserved in the same spot for all time, the highlights of which were hair-raising moss green. Nightmarish-looking blue herons screeched and shrieked out. Shirt Tail adjusted his longshirt, just so, and pressed on. Grey Sash and Bliss were in the thick of the fray and both rendered vigorous service!

It was high adventure in the swamps! The giant alligators came at him from all sides, some from under swampwaters, some in frontal assaults, one or two even took to the air. Shirt Tail fought with splendid tenacity utilizing a spear, a brace of daggers, and bows and arrows, which Grey Sash had fashioned for him from parts of a sacred Everglades tree. Indeed his teacher, along with the priestess, had trained him exceptionally well and the story went that magical elements had been charmed deep into the accoutrements! Extraordinary!

Now, Saber, the leader of the prehistoric alligators, in the

very midst of battle, announced, "Your precious hunters shall soon be swallowed up! What do you propose we do, in the face of impending desolation?"

Then, as if on cue, the large, formidable alligators intensified their gut-wrenching furious attacks.

Yet Shirt Tail countered every move they made! Incredible struggles! When they encircled him and closed in for the end game, he surprised them all. Shirt Tail could hear the cries of the endangered hunters. He would not let them down. He shouted assurances of rescue to the men. Then, like lightning blazing across the sky, he spun round and round and brought his weaponry to bear on the monstrous encirclers, who, in time, fell as if they were mere dominoes in a puddle of water.

In an instant, the treacherous whirlpool calmed, subsided and was no more. Victory! Triumph! Then there was a refreshing gentleness in the air, if only for a moment, and the now-cheerful hunters yelled for joy! They had been saved! Shirt Tail and Bliss embraced, rejoiced! Grey Sash pointed to a marvelous eclipse in a patch of open sky.

"Behold, the miracle!" he cried. "O, Sacred Longshirt!" Shirt Tail called out. "The people are safe!"

Bliss smiled, her brown eyes illuminating the swamp, her light-brown complexion taking on a vibrant, hopeful glow, the whole watery scene coming to light.

Indeed Seminole Poets performed tale after tale regarding Shirt Tail's adventures and exploits. He traveled by canoe and paddle throughout the Everglades and attained countless deeds. A hero of constant battle - So goes the portrait of Shirt Tail.

Sho-na-bi-sha.

Seminole artist and writer Elgin Jumper is a contributor to the Seminole Tribune.



# Immokalee



Beverly Bidney

From left, Anna, Ozzy and Roy Garza enjoy the Immokalee Christmas party Dec. 23.



Beverly Bidney

The cold weather didn't deter Becky Martinez, right, and her granddaughter Ariel Ortega, 3, from enjoying the Immokalee Christmas party.



Beverly Bidney

From left to right, Naomi, Jessie, Shyanna and Gage Escobar pose in the new Immokalee pole barn, which opened just in time for the Christmas party.

# Willy Chirino headlines Immokalee show

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**IMMOKALEE** — Willy Chirino with special guest Tito Puente, Jr. will perform live in concert at Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee on March 25, 2023, at 9 p.m. For tickets go to ticketmaster.com or moreinparadise.com.

Chirino is celebrating 50 years in the music business and is recognized as the creator of the Miami Sound, a fusion of Cuban music, rock, jazz, Brazilian and Caribbean rhythms. Born in Consolación del Sur in Cuba,

Chirino left Cuba and came to the United States through Operation Pedro Pan, along with thousands of Cuban children. He has written several songs that are emblematic for the Cuban people, but none more so than "Nuestro Día (Ya Viene Llegando)" which has become a second national anthem for his compatriots inside and out of the captive island.

Tito Puente, Jr. carries his father with him, imprinted on his physical being and locked in his soul. It's in his looks, his joy, and his music. Crowds lured to a venue by the father are

returning to see the son and to once again participate in the high voltage celebration that takes place on stage. Puente, Jr. has become an audience favorite in casinos, performing arts centers, symphony halls and jazz festivals worldwide. His CD, "In My Father's Shoes" features the classic Puente titles and was spun into a BET Jazz television special of the same name.

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