



The Seminole Tribune

Voice of the Unconquered

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Department of Interior clears Tribe for streamlined economic development

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — During a signing ceremony Jan. 8 at Tribal Headquarters in Hollywood, the Seminole Tribe of Florida became the 15th of 566 federally recognized Tribes to be approved by the U.S. Department of the Interior for autonomy over tribal leasing agreements on trust lands.

Before Chairman James E. Billie, other Tribal leaders and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Director Mike Black, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell formally accepted the Tribe's own regulations that govern land leasing agreements and promote economic growth.

The ceremony fulfilled the purpose of the Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Home Ownership Act (HEARTH Act) signed into law by President Barack Obama in July 2012. The HEARTH Act aims to promote tribal self-determination and enables Tribes to exercise sovereignty over tribal lands.

"We have for years controlled a tremendous amount of what happens on tribal land," Jewell said. "They now control that part of their future, we don't — which is great."

In effect, the move bolsters the Tribe's sovereignty and releases the U.S. government's involvement in Seminole Tribe of Florida commercial, residential and land investment development. It also enables the Tribe to streamline leasing to non-tribal businesses on reservations and utilize trust land for renewable energy projects.

"You're on your own," said Jewell as she handed over the signed documents to Chairman Billie.

Autonomy is granted to Tribes that submit land leasing regulations approved through their own government structure for businesses, residences, agriculture, education, recreation and religion. An



Eileen Soler

Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell signs documents before Chairman James E. Billie that turn power from the U.S. Department of the Interior to the Tribe for land leasing agreements according to the Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Home Ownership Act of 2012.

environmental impact review is included.

Following review by the BIA, the Tribe's regulations are then turned over to the assistant secretary of Indian Affairs for further inspection. Finally, after Secretary of the Interior approval, land leases executed by the Tribe are excused from BIA

or Department of the Interior approval.

Potential businesses within the tribal community can include shopping malls, restaurants, office space, light industrial uses and resort development — most already present throughout the Seminole Tribe's six reservations.

But Jewell said turning over responsibility does not absolve the Interior Department of all oversight.

"The Tribe still has to do what is right by their people," Jewell said.

♦ See HEARTH ACT on page 6A

Seminole Tribe joins American Gaming Association

BY BRETT DALY
Senior Editor

HOLLYWOOD — With unanimous Tribal Council approval Jan. 16, the Seminoles became the first Native American Tribe to join the American Gaming Association (AGA).

Membership to AGA — a national trade organization and lobbying group — includes a seat on the Board of Directors, said John Eder, senior vice president of finance for Seminole Gaming, at the Council meeting.

"As part of this, we will have a voice in determining what's the best road or path that we can take for gaming — not just Seminole Gaming but gaming in general — that will allow us to do business and be the most beneficial for us," he said.

Networking, updates on federal legislative and regulatory issues, and opportunities to protect industry-wide legislative issues in Washington are additional perks.

Eder cited Seminole Gaming's reputation, financial performance, and operational and technological leadership in the industry for the Tribe's invitation to join AGA.

"It's a big honor," he said.

♦ See GAMING on page 6A

State to honor Lorene Gopher March 11

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

TALLAHASSEE — A Florida Folk Heritage Awards ceremony honoring the late Seminole culture teacher and language preservationist Lorene Bowers Gopher will take place 4:30 p.m. March 11 at the Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee.

Gopher will be honored posthumously as a folklife advocate for her lifelong commitment to preserve and share Seminole culture and language.

Also being honored with Florida's top folk arts award are traditional North Florida foodways culturist Ruby Shaw, of White Springs, and Florida cracker whip maker Calvin "Buddy" Mills, of Okeechobee.

Established in 1985 and granted through Florida's Secretary of State, the award honors Floridians whose lifelong accomplishments in folklife affirm the cultural legacy of Florida.

♦ See LORENE GOPHER on page 4A

Hard Rock corporate conference rocks Mexico

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

QUINTANA ROO, Mexico — The Hard Rock Hotel Riviera Maya, a resort in the Puerto Aventuras district of Mexico south of Cancun, pulsed under the hard rock beats that accompanied a fashion show of the latest T-shirts from the Seminole Tribe's Hard Rock brand empire.

Models from age 4 to 40ish rocked the stage at the hotel ballroom Jan. 21 in the massive resort that hugs the Yucatan Peninsula. Though T-shirts make up 60

percent of Hard Rock retail store sales, the show was just a fraction of what pooled nearly 500 general managers, franchise owners and vendors worldwide to the 2015 Hard Rock International Global Conference.

"Once a year we bring the leadership in and talk about the previous year, how we did and where we want to go," said Hard Rock International Chairman James Allen. "We're trying to show the power of the brand, the marketing ideas we have and the different philanthropic ways to help more people and raise more business."

Hard Rock retail includes 130 global

vendors. More than \$301 million in merchandise was sold in retail stores alone in 2014.

The most successful store locations last year included Venice, Buenos Aires, Phoenix and Miami. Among hotels, Panama, Punta Cana, and Bali topped the charts.

Allen said more than 34,000 employees work under the combined businesses of the Hard Rock brand and Seminole Gaming, all under the umbrella of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. But, Allen said, he works for the 4,000 Tribal members.

"They are the people I report to while we (Hard Rock International) figure out how to secure the future," Allen told a packed ballroom during the general session.

Seminole Tribe Chairman James E. Billie and an entourage of Tribe employees attended the session at the hotel, the third in Mexico to contract as a Hard Rock licensee. Two other Hard Rock hotels in Mexico are slated to premier by 2017.

After presentations by Allen and Chairman Billie, the Seminole delegation distributed sheer linen bags filled with miniature Seminole dolls, beaded bracelets and Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood pins.

"It's our humble version of saying thank you," Chairman Billie said.

Allen's update included numbers to show that the Tribe is at the top of business worldwide.

Seminole Gaming's seven gaming outlets ranked ninth, while Hard Rock International ranked 23 of 96 last year among gaming, leisure and lodging companies in the United States, according to the Standard & Poor's Financial Services (S&P) stock market index.

The Seminole Tribe is also the only company in the history of gaming to maintain an investment grade rating from the S&P, Moody's and Fitch Ratings all at once, Allen said.

In rankings of major gaming companies on debt, leverage and coverage, Seminole Gaming ranked first, topping longtime industry giants historical best MGM Resorts International and Caesars Entertainment Corp. In fact, Caesars' operating unit filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Jan. 15, according to industry and media reports.

"Caesars did not declare bankruptcy because it is a bad brand ... it happened because of debt," Allen said. "The Seminoles have the lowest debt in the industry."

But success is not only measured in money, he said.

In 2014, the Tribe received the National Council on Problem Gambling award for Corporate Social Responsibility and became the first Tribe in the U.S. to achieve self-regulation by the National Indian Gaming Commission.

♦ See HARD ROCK on page 6A

Former Miccosukee Chairman Buffalo Tiger passes at 94

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

MIAMI — William Buffalo Tiger, the first Chairman of the Miccosukee Tribe who helped his people gain federal recognition in the 1960s, passed away Jan. 6 surrounded by family at his Miami home. He was 94.

The Miccosukee trailblazer served for 24 years as Tribal Chairman, helped create United South and Eastern Tribes (USET), fought for the Tribe's right to use resources in the Everglades and challenged the federal government for recognition by meeting with Fidel Castro.

About 150 mourners paid their last respects at his funeral Jan. 8 at Woodlawn Park Cemetery South in Miami.

Buffalo Tiger was born in the Everglades in 1920 when the water was so clear "he could see fish dancing in the streams," said his son Lee Tiger, who spoke at length during the funeral and recounted how his father became leader of the Tribe.

"My father's first accomplishment was putting an end to what I call 'living on

♦ See BUFFALO TIGER on page 4A



Eileen Soler

Hard Rock T-shirt models rock the runway Jan. 21 during the 2015 Hard Rock International Global Conference at the Hard Rock Hotel Riviera Maya in Mexico south of Cancun.

Editorial

Please register to vote by Jan. 31

• James E. Billie

Tribal members, you only have a few days to register to vote in the upcoming May 11 General Election. The deadline to register to vote in that election is Saturday, Jan. 31. I am very concerned with the low numbers of voters who have registered so far. I am urging all Tribal members (18 years old by April 11, 2015) to register to vote. Now!

This is the first time Seminoles have been required to register to vote. I am afraid many of you don't realize this is now a requirement. According to the Seminole Tribe of Florida Election Ordinance (C-06-13), "in order

to vote in any Regular or General Tribal Election, all Tribal members must register to vote any time within the five (5) months from Sept. 1 through Jan. 31 preceding the date of a Regular or General Tribal Election."

There are 2,146 Tribal members eligible to vote if properly registered. I would hate for anyone to show up on Election Day and be turned away for failure to register. Please take the time to register for your right to vote. Now!

To register, Tribal members must present proof of residency, such as a valid driver's license, valid state ID card or valid voter registration card. Members who cannot produce any of those items may submit a Tribal ID, along with a statement from an Election Board member from the same reservation verifying residence.

Tribal Supervisor of Elections Naomi Wilson has mailed letters to every Tribal member to explain the process and provided each with a voter registration form. She

has also been to Big Cypress, Brighton, Hollywood, Naples and all senior centers to register people.

More opportunities will be available on all reservations in the final days before the deadline. Look for registration booths at Tribal field offices and elsewhere. You can register at the Secretary's Office at Tribal Headquarters in Hollywood. Contact your reservation Field Office to find out where to pick up or bring your completed form.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to e-mail Naomi at GeneralTribalElection2015@semtribe.com or call her at 954-966-6300 ext. 11461.

Registering to vote is now required for all eligible members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Please make sure you don't miss your chance to participate in your tribal government. Please register to vote. Now!

Sho-naa-bish.

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

From the Supervisor of Elections for the Seminole Tribe of Florida

• Naomi Wilson

The first Voter Registration drive for the Seminole Tribe of Florida ends Jan. 31, 2015. The next phase of the process is the posting of the preliminary voting list(s) as stated in Section 3 of the Seminole Tribe of Florida Election Ordinance.

Section 3 (b), "after the 31st day of January preceding the date of a Tribal Election, the voting list shall be publicly posted at all Tribal Field Offices. Any eligible voter will have ten (10) days from the date of such publication to object to any information contained in the voting list. After the conclusion of the ten (10)

day objection period, the Supervisor of Elections, employed pursuant to Section 5 (a), shall, within ten (10) days, consider any objections and issue a decision which shall be brought to the attention of the Tribal Council."

Therefore, please be advised that any challenges brought forth as a result of the preliminary voting list(s) must be in writing with support indicating your objection. Any verbal or unsupported challenges will not be accepted or heard.

At the time the preliminary voting list(s) are posted, the dates of the challenge period and submission information will be provided.

Circumventing Native American sovereignty

• Mitchell Johnson

Paul Gosar, a Republican congressman from Arizona, recently got into trouble for calling Native American Tribes "wards of the federal government." He made the remarks during a town hall meeting concerning a provision of the 2015 Defense Authorization Act that would allow a foreign mining company to acquire large portions of Apache territory.

A member of the White Mountain Apache Tribe, whose ancestral land is threatened under the act, argued that the legislation would enable the government to violate tribal sovereignty. Gosar reportedly responded to this by commenting, "You're still wards of the federal government." To many Native Americans, this statement sounded like the U.S. government finally admitting their true attitude toward tribal nations. This feeling comes after a year in which, despite promises of unity and support, the federal government still largely disregards the sovereignty of Native American lands in favor of large energy companies.

On Dec. 20, President Barack Obama signed the Defense Authorization Act, which contained a provision giving 2,400 acres of Apache ancestral land in Arizona to the multinational mining company Rio Tinto, which would construct a copper mine in the area.

The provision was attached to the bill through the efforts of Senators John McCain and Jeff Flake, of Arizona, who argue that the mine will create 3,700 jobs. Rio Tinto is set to take control of the area in December 2015, one year after the bill was signed.

The disappointing decisions of the federal government in the face of lucrative energy prospects are nothing new for Native Americans. In October, Navajo residents of Black Mesa, Arizona were shocked to see federal SWAT teams, wearing military-style uniforms and holding assault rifles, detaining elderly Navajo sheep ranchers. Apparently, the offense was that the ranchers owned too many sheep.

This dispute dates back to the 1974 Navajo and Hopi Settlement Act, which gave the Hopi Tribe exclusive control of over 1 million acres of formerly shared territory. The plan relocated over 14,000 Navajo and 100 Hopi. The act, while publicized as the resolution of an ongoing dispute between the two Tribes, was actually the result of efforts to gain control of the area's vast mineral reserves.

The discovery of coal in the area years before had created political division, exacerbated by the influx of corporate interests in backing the tribal governments.

The relocation allowed for the creation of two massive coal strip mines: the 103 square-mile Black Mesa mine, which shut down in 2005, and the Kayenta mine, which continues to produce nearly 8 million tons of coal annually.

Both are owned by the Peabody Western Coal Company, a subsidiary of the world's largest private coal company, Peabody Energy.

After many Navajo resisted the forced relocation, the government began a livestock reduction program that limited the number of sheep a rancher could own to 28, a number lower than what is necessary to support a family, according to Navajo ranchers displaced by the policy. To many residents, the current intimidation by federal

SWAT teams is eerily similar to government actions in the '70s, which displaced Navajo ranchers and paved the way for mining to begin in Black Mesa.

Peabody Coal now seeks a lifetime permit to mine in the region, against the wishes of both the Navajo and Hopi Tribes. The Tribes are suing the U.S. government, arguing that archaeological relics found at the mines have been mistreated for decades. The relics, including the remains of over 200 people, have been improperly curated and even sent to universities to be studied without the Tribes' permission.

These incidents are not isolated, but point to a widespread federal attitude that supports Native American sovereignty only when politically convenient, and continually disregards it when unprofitable. This trend was repeated for countless Tribes across the United States in 2014.

The Colorado Indian Tribes recently filed a lawsuit against the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which authorized the construction of a 4,000-acre solar plant by the Florida company NextEra Energy Resources. The Tribes argue that the agreement violated their sovereignty. The Colorado Indian Tribes land is home to over 4,000 members of four Tribes: the Mohave, Navajo, Hopi and Chemehuevi. Construction on the plant is expected to begin next year.

This is part of a larger plan in which the BLM has approved, or is actively considering, 10 power plants on the Colorado River Indian Tribes' (CRIT) land, covering over 350,000 acres. In 2012, the CRIT asked the Obama administration to delay the federal government's pursuit of huge solar energy projects in the area, after numerous artifacts – including human remains – were discovered at the construction site of another solar energy plant nearby, reportedly dug up with a backhoe. The Obama administration did not respond to the request.

Even one of the most high-profile energy controversies in recent years could affect Native Americans, yet these potential effects are ignored by the federal government. After the House of Representatives voted in November to approve TransCanada's application to build the Keystone XL Pipeline, the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in South Dakota vowed to take legal action against the pipeline, which cuts through their land. Cyril Scott, president of the Rosebud Sioux, called the vote an "act of war" that disrespected the Tribe's sovereignty. President Obama has indicated he will veto Keystone XL if it passes through the Senate, putting Sioux tribal sovereignty entirely in his hands.

In June 2014, President Obama became only the fourth sitting president to visit a Native American reservation. The president hoped the visit would mark the beginning of a renewed commitment to "upholding our strong and crucial nation-to-nation relationship." In a speech given to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, he focused on education, health care and job creation as ways to uplift and strengthen the Native American community.

But until the federal government's commitment to Native American Tribes becomes stronger than its commitment to energy companies, tribal sovereignty will remain precarious.

Mitchell Johnson is a staff writer for the Brown Political Review.

Guest Editorial: Don't give up on the Florida panther

• Jaclyn Lopez

In the days since the news broke that a record 30 Florida panthers were killed in 2014, much of the response has centered around the idea that in a state now home to nearly 20 million humans, maintaining a panther population of only 100 to 180 might be the best we can do. And that's simply not true.

It's true more people are moving to Florida – about 800 every day, by latest census estimates – giving us the dubious distinction of displacing New York as the nation's third most-populated state.

And it's true unchecked sprawl has already destroyed 95 percent of the Florida panther's original habitat – that's critical to preserving our diverse collection of wildlife.

But even amid those challenges, leading panther experts have long known what needs to be done to save Florida panthers and the habitats we share with them. And in 2014 important steps were initiated toward achieving those goals, which include protecting remaining habitat, creating new panther populations and building corridors to allow freer panther movement and genetic exchange.

First, in 2014 many Floridians worked aggressively for smarter growth and better management of our remaining wild preserves.

For example, last September

conservation groups representing thousands of Floridians reached a settlement with the National Park Service to significantly reduce the mushrooming use of off-road vehicles in Florida's Big Cypress National Preserve, home to endangered panthers and many other rare plants and animals.

Similarly, after the Army Corps of Engineers erroneously approved development of a 967-acre quarry in Collier County known to be prime Florida panther habitat, several conservation groups with broad support in the state filed a lawsuit pointing out that the Corps and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service not only failed to adequately weigh the project's long-term impacts on species like panthers, but failed to fully investigate its cumulative effect on panthers and other wildlife.

That lawsuit is now in litigation, with the goal of ensuring the Corps and Wildlife Service conduct much more thorough environmental reviews, both on this project and others moving forward.

Second, suitable areas north of the Caloosahatchee River are being identified to introduce the additional panther populations necessary to sustain a healthy gene pool.

That's what motivated the unprecedented gathering of experts last year in Gainesville to explore reintroducing the panther to places like the Osceola National Forest, Pinhook Swamp and the 700-square-mile Okefenokee National

Wildlife Refuge, a moss-draped preserve once patrolled by Florida panthers.

The panther's 2008 recovery plan (which wasn't finalized until 41 years after the panther gained federal protection in 1967) identified reintroduction to the Okefenokee as critical to recovery.

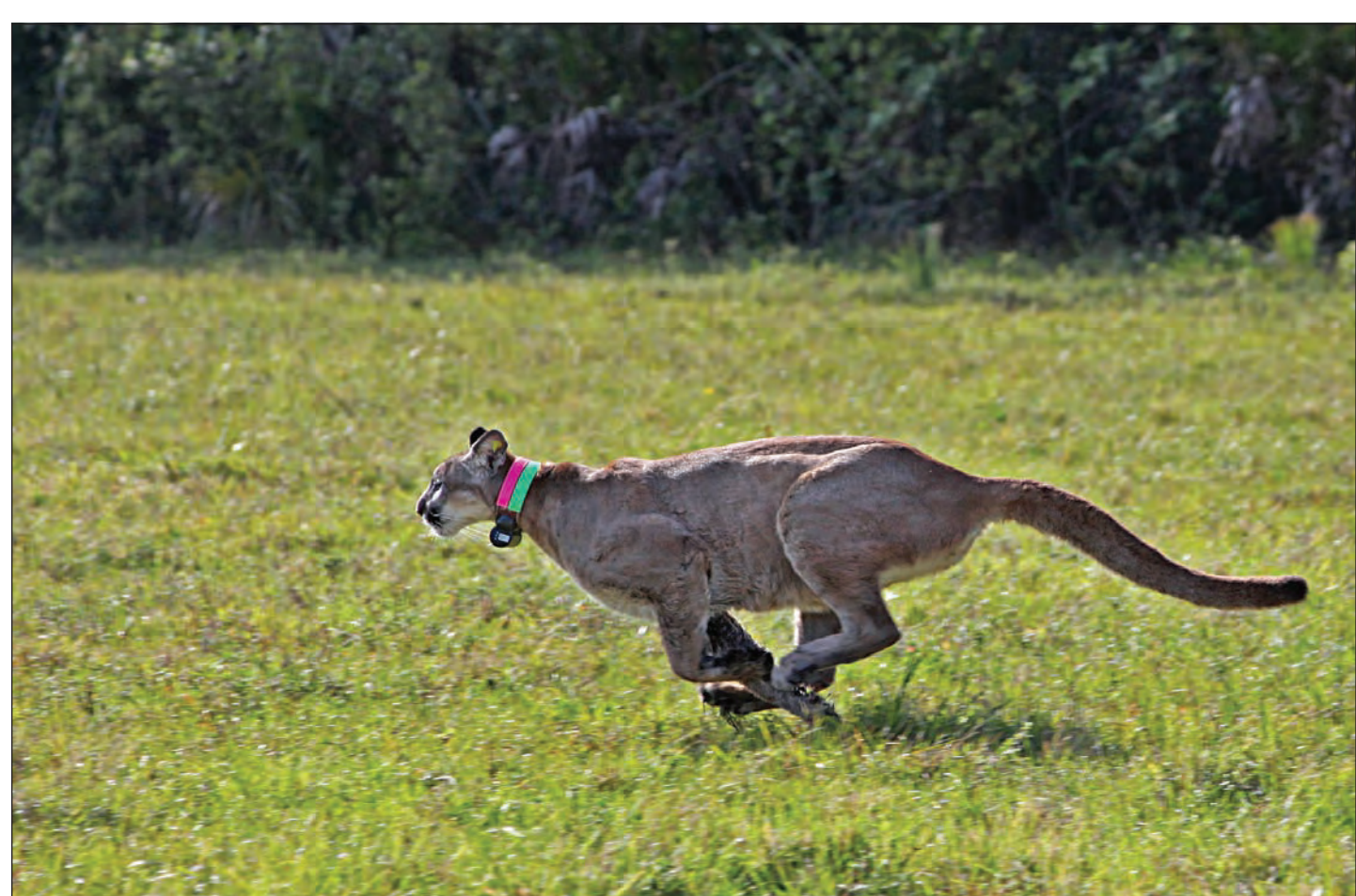
The experts who make up a group called the Florida Panther Recovery Implementation Team are now working to develop detailed plans to push forward on those recovery goals. Florida wildlife managers are also reviewing ways to work with private landowners interested in managing their land as corridors for panther movement.

And finally, in an effort to slow the number of fatal traffic collisions that killed 20 panthers last year, the state is looking at ways to upgrade to panther highway crossings with tunnels and fences.

These efforts provide a roadmap for moving forward and remind us that with smart planning we can make sure these beautiful animals are part of the Florida landscape for generations to come.

But it all starts with simply refusing to give up on the big cat that 30 years ago was designated as the state animal, and acknowledging that it, too, has a right to be here.

Jaclyn Lopez is a Florida native and director of the Florida office of the Center for Biological Diversity.



Beverly Bidney

A rehabilitated panther is released near the Big Cypress Reservation March 10, 2014. The panther was struck by a car and nursed back to health at the White Oak Conservation Center in Yulee, Florida.

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Community

A

Revelers celebrate Big Cypress Reservation's 119th anniversary

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Hundreds of cars and trucks packed a pasture-turned-parking lot Jan. 10 in Big Cypress where more than a century ago Seminole ancestors braved wilderness, swampland and bloody battles for Native American freedom.

"The Seminole people were so tough to survive those times and then to come so far. We have to give the people a lot of credit," said Fred Douglas, a self-described "cowboy from LaBelle," at the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena.

About 1,600 people attended the Big Cypress 119th Anniversary Celebration, hosted by Councilman Mondo Tiger, that commemorated the Tribe's victory against the U.S. Army, subsequent settlement in Big Cypress and ultimate formation of Big Cypress Reservation.

According to public records, the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1889 purchased 160 acres in Big Cypress in reserve for the Seminoles. In 1896, more land was added. Big Cypress Reservation was formally dedicated in 1936 and now consists of 82 square miles.

Seminole and Miccosukee artists displayed and sold handmade clothing, jewelry, baskets and wood carvings in chickees amid the festival atmosphere. American barbecue was served under tents side by side with Native American frybread and sofkee booths.

The Tribal Historic Preservation Office exhibited a timeline of the Second Seminole War that spanned 1835 to the mid-1840s. The Third Seminole War began officially in 1855 in Southwest Florida and ended in 1858 with only a few hundred Seminoles in Big Cypress and other isolated areas of Florida.

"Now the Tribe is 4,000 strong and growing," Councilman Tiger said. "For me, today means so much about what my ancestors did for us to have our freedom, and this gives us a chance to thank them for never giving up."

Tribal members and outsiders filled bleachers in the heart of the festival area to watch the Central Plains Dancers showcase Native American jingle, grass, shawl and eagle dances. Drummer Al Santos, a Taino/Arawak, kept the beat.

Marty Thurman, a grass dancer from Shawnee, Oklahoma, told the audience that Native drumbeats are never the hard one-three beat heard in movies or at football games.

"What you hear from real Native drums is the heartbeat of the Indian people — it is not written down; it is passed from generation to generation. If your heartbeat ever sounds like the Hollywood movie beat, please see a doctor right away," Thurman said.

Before the dancer's finale, eagle dancer Tony Wahweotten, of the Prairie



Eileen Soler

Courtney Reeder, of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, dances the fancy shawl dance Jan. 10 at the Big Cypress 119th Anniversary Celebration.

Band Potawatomi Nation, led guests in the Indian two-step, a friendship dance in which non-Natives and Natives stomped first in couples and then holding hands in a circle.

Wahweotten called performing at the anniversary celebration "an honor."

"I'm happy to be a part of it all and to show people, and other indigenous people, how we can come together and put aside differences," he said.

Cowboy boots and hats blended with patchwork at the cultural event that capped off with a country concert. Western duo Montgomery Gentry took the stage first. Country rocker Gary Allan later brought down the house.

Country fans Tim and Marianne Hamilton traveled from Homestead to celebrate the Seminole anniversary and attend the concert.

The couple said they admire Native history and culture. Once, on a motorcycle ride to Sturgis, South Dakota, they made a side trip to see the Crazy Horse Memorial.

"We are both people who respect Native American people. It's always nice to see culture that is so naturally spiritual," Marianne Hamilton said.



Eileen Soler

Miss Indian OU T'ata Roberts, of Taos Pueblo, dances the Indian two-step with Mitchell Cypress Jan. 10 during Big Cypress 119th Anniversary Celebration festivities. Roberts is a member of the Central Plains Dancers who attended the event to showcase different Native American dance styles.

Tribal Fair to be held Feb. 6-8 in Hollywood

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The 44th annual Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow is sure to wow spectators with traditional drum and dance competitions Feb. 6-8 at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.

The celebration of Native culture and arts will be held at Hard Rock Live and the Hard Rock Hooters' parking lot on the east side of Seminole Paradise.

Plenty of Native arts, crafts, food and music will be on display, as well as a competitive pow-wow featuring three days of competition. The fair is expected to draw more than 100 competitors and about 5,000 visitors.

Events will include a drum competition of northern and southern drums; competitive dancing in northern traditional, southern straight, fancy, grass and chicken for men; and competitions in northern traditional, southern buckskin, fancy, jingle and northern/southern cloth combined for women.

Additional categories include teen/junior (ages 8-17) in northern/southern combined and fancy/grass combined for boys and for girls, northern/southern combined and fancy/jingle combined; Golden Age (50 and older) for the men in northern/southern combined and fancy/grass combined and for the women, northern/southern combined and fancy/jingle combined.

Renowned blues artist Jonny Lang will perform in concert Feb. 8 at 1:30 p.m. at Hard Rock Live. Other musical acts include Paul Buster and the Cowbone Band, Guthrie Brown, the Derek Miller Band, Ted Nelson Band and the Osceola Brothers Band.

The daily grand entry, alligator wrestling and wildlife shows round out the weekend's entertainment.

For some hometown excitement, the Little Mr. and Miss Seminole contest will be held Feb. 6 at 6 p.m. at Hard Rock Live, and Tribal member day begins at 10 a.m. Jan. 31 at the Howard Tiger Recreation Center in Hollywood. It will include clothing contests, arts and crafts and fine arts competitions, music and food.

Brighton to host 77th annual Field Day event

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — With a schedule filled with fun, excitement and special guest appearances, organizers of the 77th annual Brighton Field Day Festival and Rodeo expect big crowds during the Feb. 13-15 event.

Special guests at the three-day festival will include members of the Florida State marching band, Osceola riding Renegade and Animal Planet's "Gator Boys" star Jimmy Riffle. Elizabeth Cook — a DJ on SiriusXM's Outlaw Country, musician and regular on the Grand Ole Opry — will perform Feb. 14 and Feb. 15 at 1 p.m.

Britney, Kasey and Chelsea Brooks from "Growing Up Gator" on Great American Country network will bring their unique perspective on rescuing alligators to the event.

Highlights of the festival at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena will also include a PRCA rodeo and Xtreme Bulls competition, as well as an Indian relay exhibition horse race. PRCA Xtreme Bulls feature 40 of the country's top bull riders who will attempt an eight-second ride on some of the toughest bulls around. The PRCA rodeo will take place Feb. 13 at 8 p.m. and Feb. 14 at 3 p.m. Xtreme Bulls will occur at 3 p.m. Feb. 15.

Indian relay is an extreme sport that requires expert horsemanship and teamwork. Teams are comprised of four people and three horses. One bareback rider races once around a track, jumps off a galloping horse and leaps onto another to race around the track one more time. Repeat the thrilling process and the first horse, with a rider still on its back, to cross the finish line wins.

"It's a pretty wild event," said Amos Tiger, director of the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena. The Indian relay will take place Feb. 14 at 3 p.m.

Rounding out the entertainment will be alligator wrestling, snake shows, Native American dancers, Native American arts and crafts, and carnival rides.

Gates open daily at 8 a.m.; events begin at 10 a.m.

Brighton Laundromat is labor of suds

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Margie Billie never loved laundry a day in her life — before now.

"It's really very relaxing, actually. It feels even better getting paid to do it," said Billie, one of two Tribe employees who juggle shifts at the new Brighton Laundromat.

For reasonable prices, according to

volume and weight, Billie and Jodi King, the Brighton campground laundromat supervisor, will wash, dry and fold laundry from socks to jeans, sheets and comforters.

They uphold the slogan: "No time for laundry? Let us do your dirty work!"

The laundromat, open around the clock, features four washers and dryers plus one each for super-sized, heavy-duty loads. A waiting area offers bucket seats and plenty of magazines. A sink with running hot and

cold water and a vending machine for soap, bleach and fabric softener straddle a door that leads to the office where Billie and King serve up business with smiles.

Norman "Skeeter" Bowers happened by on a recent Thursday to pick up a basket brimming with neatly folded, fresh-smelling clothing. Bowers said he brings two or three loads a week to the laundromat for the convenient service. He pays an average of \$25.

"I'm lazy. I have a washer and dryer, but it's much easier for me to take advantage," Bowers said.

King said customers range from employees with limited time for housework to guests at the 25-acre Brighton RV Resort where the business is located, just across a parking lot from the Brighton Trading Post.

It's a little mini community, Billie said, where folks can fish at the lakeside dock, munch on snacks from the grocery store, have lunch at Subway or take in the rural, bucolic view.

The resort boasts four family-sized cabins newly furnished and decorated in peaceful rustic themes; 56 campsites with water, electric and sewer; a salon and day spa; swimming pool; recreation room; and wheelchair accessible bath house.

Eileen Soler



Norman 'Skeeter' Bowers carries laundry that was washed, dried and folded for the price of convenience at the Brighton Laundromat.

"We have everything. All you have to do is show up," King said.

Employees and Tribal member discounts are available. Cabins start at \$115 a night.

The laundromat is not the first pay-to-wash at Brighton, King said. She remembers a humbler room of washers and dryers formerly attached to the Trading Post. It was removed about five years ago when the Tribe expanded and upgraded the convenience store. The new laundromat opened last May along with the new swimming pool, day spa and renovated RV park.

Laundry can be dropped off 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Detergent, bleach and fabric softener are included.

King and Billie predict very busy days ahead. They believe the adage, "if you build it, they will come."

"We get 15 to 20 calls a day. They are coming," King said.

**"No time for laundry?
Let us do your dirty work!"**

— Brighton Laundromat slogan

Florida artist Guy LaBree dies at 73

Celebration of his life and work to be held Feb. 21 in Arcadia

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

ARCADIA — Guy LaBree finished his last painting only a few days before he drew his last breath. Several deer in a lush green Florida prairie are suddenly alert beneath an ominous sky in waves of purple and yellow. A Seminole warrior, depicted by LaBree as a barely visible ghostly spirit in a long shirt holding a pole, stands in their midst, unseen but sensed by the nervous deer.

The painting hangs on a living room wall in the double-wide trailer where LaBree passed away on New Year's Day. Every direction inside features his deep, colorful paintings of his favorite subjects: wildlife, landscapes and Seminole Indians of Florida. In the tiny, cluttered room where he painted hundreds of masterpieces, his old wooden easel is empty and his cowboy hat hangs from a corner.

On a shelf lies LaBree's legendary palette, thick with more than 60 pounds of oil drippings, like a miniature mountain range filled with all the hues, tints, shades and blushes of the rainbow. It is still wet, waiting for the master to dip his brush and swirl his colors to life.

His wife of 53 years scurries about, keeping it together, cleaning and trying to follow her husband's directives: no funeral, no celebration, no guitars playing, no gathering of friends and fans. He was to be cremated and his ashes strewn about their 10-acre wooded homesite in Pine Level near the Peace River.

"We thought he was gone 12 years ago when he had his heart attack," Pat LaBree said. "He said he never wanted to go through that kind of pain again; he didn't want anything special to bring him back the next time. I thought he would just slowly wind down, but we had another 12 years. I consider that a wonderful gift."

During those last years, third generation Floridian Guy LaBree was honored by the Stetson Kennedy Foundation with its Fellow Man and Mother Earth Award, as well as the state's Florida Folk Heritage Award. In his letter nominating LaBree for the Heritage Award, Seminole Chairman James E. Billie wrote: "I have seen many famous artists and their paintings of Seminoles and Seminole life. Guy LaBree, however, tops them all with his accurate depictions of the way of life of the Seminole."

After heart-to-heart discussions with Guy LaBree's close friends Florida folk music patriarch Frank Thomas and Seminole Rita Youngman, of Lake Placid who owns the largest collection of Guy LaBree original paintings, Pat LaBree said she realized her husband "means a great deal to a lot of people."

She agreed to participate in a Celebration of Florida Master Artist Guy LaBree (1941-2015) event Feb. 21 at their friend Mac Martin's gallery in Arcadia. The gallery, which will feature an exclusive art show of Guy LaBree's work, opens at 10 a.m. Later, a welcome and remarks session is scheduled for 4 p.m., followed by a pot luck dinner at 6 p.m. and a song and story circle at sunset. (Guy LaBree was also a



THE LAST LABREE: Deer grazing in a field become suddenly alert as a ghostly Seminole man in a long shirt walks in their midst. Guy LaBree finished this painting only a few days before his death, Jan. 1, 2015.

guitar player and songwriter who regularly met with friends to play music.)

"I want to invite all the Seminole and Miccosukee Indians who knew Guy to attend. We will be celebrating the life of a very talented and important Florida artist," said Martin, a folk music songwriter and Desoto County realtor. "There will be Guy LaBree original paintings and prints on display — and for sale — that day."

Paul Backhouse, director of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, and Annette Snapp, the Museum's operations manager, visited Pat LaBree.

Backhouse and Snapp said the Museum will feature a large-scale exhibit of Guy LaBree's paintings this June, including a re-creation of his famous work studio with the original easel, chair, palette and brushes to be loaned to the Tribal Museum by Pat LaBree.

"When we walked into that studio, a chill immediately came over me. It was like he was still there somewhere," Backhouse said. "It was like seeing Hemingway's typewriter. The very place and tools he used to create all those wonderful paintings."

Backhouse said Guy LaBree's work hangs in the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. and throughout many Seminole government buildings.

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki owns the complete collection of the Seminole legend's paintings



Peter B. Gallagher

Pictured is the tiny, cluttered studio of Guy LaBree, where the prolific master Florida artist created his Seminole Indian masterpieces.

from Betty Mae Jumper's book "Legends of the Seminoles" that he illustrated.

In addition to his wife, Pat, Guy LaBree is survived by three children, four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

The family suggests contributions be made in Guy LaBree's name to the Make-a-Wish Foundation.

For additional information, visit www.GuyLaBree.com.

'The Man with No Shoes'

For Guy LaBree

Gifted by the Breathgiver, his visions are portrayed in
Scenes of a different realm
His hand transcends the life of those he depicts with
Brush and pen

He becomes a part of those as on canvas
He reveals a culture and their life within
Simplicity runs rampant as the colors reveal
A different place and time

Barefoot and humble his soul studies the
Inhabitants as they help mystify the glade

Soon the panoramic vision unfolds the splendor
And beauty of a land and people the Creator made

The barefoot man understands and respects
The stories as he paints and brings them all
To reality
The clans, the legends, the people forever
Etched into history

Respect of values was given to the man who
Wore no shoes
Perhaps not in blood, but in spirit he
Understands the four legged and two legged
Stewards of the land

With this we understand he stereotypes no people
But paints from the spirit that touches his hand

Perhaps my brother we will walk barefoot
Together into the spirit land

-- Moses Jumper Jr.

◆ BUFFALO TIGER

From page 1A

display' at Musa Isle Indian Village on the Miami River," Lee said. "The Miccosukee went back to the Everglades and the Seminoles went back to Hollywood, Big Cypress and Brighton. He knew living that way wasn't dignified."

In the early 1950s, Buffalo Tiger was appointed the Tribe's spokesman and served as liaison between the Miccosukee Tribe and the state and federal governments. In 1955, Everglades game wardens regularly harassed Tribal members for fishing without

licenses and cutting down palmetto fronds used to build chickees.

Buffalo Tiger met with then Gov. LeRoy Collins to resolve the issue.

In 1959, when the Tribe sought federal recognition status, the U.S. government said they missed the deadline by a year. Without federal recognition, the Tribe would not have their lands held in trust or receive federal aid. Buffalo Tiger responded by accepting an invitation from Fidel Castro to visit Cuba, where Castro offered the Tribe sanctuary in his country.

When Buffalo Tiger returned from Cuba, the government agreed to recognize the Tribe if they never went back to Cuba

until relations with the U.S. normalized. The Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida received federal recognition on Jan. 11, 1962.

Buffalo Tiger became its first Chairman. "We knew him as 'Pop,'" said his son William Buffalo Tiger Jr. "He taught through example. The trip to Cuba was so far out of normal, I don't know if I'd be brave enough to do that."

Once the Tribe opened its own school, Buffalo Tiger fought for the right to teach students Miccosukee traditions. He also shared his culture and love of the Everglades with non-Natives through his business, Buffalo Tiger's Airboat Tours, which he ran

into his 90s.

"He fought for the generations to come, so they would have a strong foundation," William said.

Other speakers at the funeral described their admiration for Buffalo Tiger.

"A great man is gone and will be missed by many people across Indian Country," Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola said. "He set the bar for Tribal leaders. I'd like to follow any way I can in this man's footsteps."

Joe Dan Osceola, a former Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc. president, recalled working with Buffalo Tiger to help create USET in 1969.

Buffalo Tiger served on the USET Board of Directors for 17 years and was named President Emeritus in 2010.

"Chairman Tiger leaves a legacy of leadership, political, social and civic activism that will be greatly missed," Miccosukee Chairman Colley Billie wrote in a statement. "Throughout his life, Chairman Tiger epitomized the ideals that you should fight for what you believe, speak when others are afraid, lead when many others only follow, love your family, embrace your culture and respect nature."

Lee respected and loved his father.

"My father lived a full life and I'm proud to say I'm his son," he said. "I was lucky to have been chosen to be his son."

Buffalo Tiger is survived by his wife,



Peter B. Gallagher

In this circa 2008 photo, Buffalo Tiger stands at the loading bay where he spent the last decades of his life interacting with visitors at his Tamiami Trail airboat tours in the Everglades.

Yolima Tiger; son Lee Tiger; son William Buffalo Tiger Jr.; daughter Sally Tiger; son David Tiger; daughters Jennifer and Jessica; and 21 grandchildren.



Photo courtesy of Bryan Cohen

Buffalo Tiger is part of the Miccosukee delegation to Cuba in 1959. Though the Miccosukee Tribe had been pursuing recognition since 1954 citing historical treaties between the Tribe and the British, Spanish and French, the publicity surrounding this 1959 trip is credited to helping the Miccosukee Tribe gain federal recognition as the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, a group separate from the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

◆ LORENE GOPHER

From page 1A

The Florida Folklife Council defines "Florida folklife" as "the traditional expressive culture shared within the various groups in Florida: familial, ethnic, occupational, religious and regional. Expressive culture includes a wide range of creative and symbolic forms such as custom, belief, technical skill, language, literature, art, architecture, music, play, dance, drama, ritual, pageantry and handicraft, which forms are generally

learned orally, by imitation or in performance and are maintained or perpetuated without formal instruction or institutional direction."

All three awardees were regulars at the annual Florida Folk Festival, with Gopher heading up a contingent of demonstrators to present Seminole culture and foodways at the Ee-to-lit-ke Village; Shaw serving her famous peanut brittle at the food court; and Mills snapping his whips for cowboys.

Video presentations depicting the lives of each award winner will be shown at the event.

A reception will follow.

Seminole Youth Home to comfort kids in crisis

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Just inside the front doors of the newest Family Services facility in Big Cypress, kids ages 10 to 17 will find video games, a big screen TV, comfy leather sofas and a refrigerator packed with food.

But a deeper look into the 5,381-square-foot, eight-bedroom youth home reveals the heart and soul of the building.

"We need to bring troubled kids back home," said Family Services Director Helene Buster. "If they can't be reunited with their biological families, then they will have extended family right here."

The Tribal community viewed the new facility Jan. 20 during an open house event. Informally called the Seminole Youth Home, the building will be dedicated with a permanent name later.

Buster said she began developing the idea about 10 years ago when she was made Tribal guardian for the affairs of two Seminole boys then housed in "therapeutic schools" in Texas.

Since then, she worked to acquire full support and complete funding from Tribal Council for an on-reservation transitional home where children in distress could attend school, participate in sports, go to church and live daily within the circle of their own people.

Two boys and one girl are already scheduled to move in within weeks.

The staff, led by youth home administrator Edgar Smith, is currently at four full-time employees but will grow as needs increase. Employees will rotate night and day schedules.

"There will be no sleeping during shifts here; we are awake staff," said Mark McBride, the lead residential family teacher.

Designed with an open-floor kitchen, living room and dining space, the house encourages family living. A fully equipped open-door management office is coupled with a larger and private employee work space complete with full bath and bedroom furniture just in case circumstance requires extra staff to stay overnight.

All resident rooms — four for boys and four for girls — are furnished with a twin bed, night stand, student study desk, chest of drawers and dressing sinks with counters. In all the girls' rooms, a pretty lace-lined rosegold vase, handmade by Family Services' Hollywood administrative

assistant Jacqueline Ventura, decorates each desk.

A laundry room features two washers and dryers plus space for clean towels and linens.

The staff aims to promote independent living skills. Simply, they will teach teens how to cook, clean the house and do their own laundry. Youth will also learn how to balance a budget, manage bills and eventually, if they stay up to age 18, set up their own homes.

"We want them to be able to take care of themselves when they leave here, whether they 'age out' at 18 years old or they leave way before then," McBride said.

Besides, having the residents lend a hand in the kitchen, pick up after themselves and help out with household chores will create and then reinforce a nurturing family lifestyle.

"We want normalcy — not an institutional environment," McBride said. The father of three is a graduate of Aurora University where he focused on sociology and psychology.

The residence sits on about a half-acre surrounded by natural vegetation and scattered landscape plants. A large screened-in porch will soon feature patio furniture and a pingpong table. A portable

basketball hoop will be erected in the driveway "just like any home with any family," Smith said.

At the kitchen table, seating for 10 invites more family togetherness.

Smith, with 22 years of experience in youth group facilities and a master's in education from Florida State University, said the staff will not try to replace parents, but they will equip youth who have been removed from their parents with guidance toward the future.

"Our main values are mentoring, nurturing, guiding and being empathetic to them," Smith said. "If a teen is able to leave this home as a better person and a contributing member of the community and the reservation, then I've served my purpose."

Sticking to house rules will play a large part in the transition, Buster said. The youth will not be babied, but they will be cared for and loved because they will live within the community and be exposed daily to the Tribe's culture.

"It's the Tribe helping Tribal members," Buster said. "I am not just the director here; I am a Tribal elder and I know the kids. They know me. I am already grandmom in so many ways and that, too, is what will make a difference."



Eileen Soler

Big Cypress residents and employees tour the new Big Cypress townhome rental cluster Jan. 14 at the corner of Eloise Osceola Street and Cypress Lane.

New housing brings Tribal members home

Grand opening celebration held for long-awaited Big Cypress townhomes

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Julius Ivan Billie signed up for reservation housing when he was 18 years old.

A dozen years later, on Jan. 14, Billie was one of several Tribal members joyfully (and finally) checking out new digs at the grand opening celebration for the long-awaited Big Cypress townhomes.

Each of the eight rental townhomes feature three spacious bedrooms, two bathrooms, tile floors throughout and granite countertop kitchens with stainless-steel appliances.

Dozens of people toured the homes, oohing and aahing over walk-in closets, sun-drenched living rooms, pretty powder rooms and cherry wood cabinetry. On the outside, homes are landscaped with native flowers, shrubs and trees.

"I can move in today. I am so happy and so ready," said Billie, who had been living in Clewiston and paying twice the rent for half the amenities.

Within the white-fenced enclave at the corner of Eloise Osceola Street and Cypress Lane, two buildings house six two-story, identical townhomes. Another one-story building accommodates two apartments that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): wheelchair accessible with helpful additions for the disabled, such as bathroom grab bars, lowered kitchen countertops and level-entry showers.

The project was built by Straticon construction company with oversight by the Tribal Community Development (TCD) Department. TCD Director Adam Nelson said eight Tribal divisions contributed to the project.

"It took a lot of people going through a lot of red tape and then sitting down to make it happen. We all hope to see a lot more. Maybe in five years we'll have three times as much to show," Nelson said.

Cicero Osceola, the Tribe's housing regional manager, credited Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger as the "man behind the plan."

Councilman Tiger said the project took five years of planning, requesting and funding to finally be cleared for building. The official groundbreaking was held Nov. 20, 2013.

"Today is just the start. Hopefully everyone will eventually be able to come home to the reservation," Councilman Tiger said.

He said the next townhome cluster in Big Cypress will likely consist of four homes along Horseshoe Road.

Meanwhile, similar rental complexes are under construction on other reservations.

Nelson said designs of the same three residential buildings — two two-stories with three units each and a one-story, two-unit ADA building — are in various stages of completion at Hollywood, Brighton and Immokalee. Additionally, eight rent-to-own homes are being constructed in Hollywood across from the new Howard Tiger Recreation Center for families displaced by the new gym.

Nelson said the Hollywood and Brighton projects will be completed by late spring 2015. The Immokalee cluster will be finished by early summer 2015.

"There's a high demand in the whole Tribe for housing. A majority of our members live off the reservation. There are a lot of advantages (to living on the reservation)," Nelson said in a news report in April when close to 120 Tribal members made up the housing waiting list. Nelson cited access to clinics, police and fire rescue, and after-school programs like 4-H and Boys & Girls Club among the perks to living in Tribal communities.

Proximity is exactly what Big Cypress new resident Clinton Billie looks forward to most. On a waiting list for 10 years, Billie had lived off reservation with his wife, Jennifer, and two children in Pompano Beach and Lehigh Acres. He popped over to Big Cypress about twice a month to visit extended family and attend big events, but the timing was never convenient and never enough.

"Now, we will be on top of everything. We'll get the fliers, we'll hear the word, we'll go to everything," Clinton Billie said. His children are already enrolled in Ahfachkee School, and he looks forward to signing them up for the mixed martial arts program at the Big Cypress Boys & Girls Club.

Finding housing off the reservation is frustrating for many young Tribal families. Tribal members can afford to rent or buy homes, but without credit and full-time jobs, they are often turned away by banks and landlords.

Clinton Billie said he had to search through Craigslist to find individual homeowners willing to learn about the Tribe and trust his income source.

Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank said the Tribe's new ability to regulate and administer land leasing agreements, presented to Chairman James E. Billie by the Secretary of the Interior on Jan. 8, should clear the slow bureaucratic course that created hurdles for providing homes as needed.

"What used to take eight or nine months (to get BIA approval) — then a few more months to get going — should take less time now. It will help speed the process," Rep. Frank said.



Eileen Soler

A spacious bedroom, one of eight for residents of the Seminole Youth Home, features a large picture window with a view of native Big Cypress vegetation.



Eileen Soler

The one-story, Seminole Youth Home rests on nearly a half-acre on the Big Cypress Reservation.

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PROJECT: American Indian Veterans Memorial Exhibit in Washington, D.C.

SUBMITTED BY DAVID STEPHEN BOWERS AND ELIZABETH BATES AIVMI

Background

In June 2010, with the support of the Seminole Tribe of Florida Tribal Council, we launched an effort, the American Indian Veterans Memorial Initiative (AIVMI), to obtain recognition for the contributions and sacrifices of American Indian/Alaska Native and Pacific Islander veterans on the National Mall in Washington. We focused on having a memorial located near the Vietnam Wall close by the Three Servicemen Statue because the American Indian fought the most per capita in the Vietnam War than any other distinguished group.

For the next few years, we traveled throughout Indian Country attending national conferences and pow-wows to gain support for the project. To have any statue built on the National Mall requires Congressional approval, so we also met with many Congressional leaders and their staff members.

In December 2013, Congress approved and President Barack Obama signed into law the Native American Veterans' Memorial Amendments Act of 2013, which provides for a veteran memorial to be placed on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). The fundraising for the memorial will be the responsibility of NMAI.

While this location was not our preferred site on the National Mall, we were excited that Congress and Obama had acknowledged that it was important to have something built on the National Mall that recognized the involvement of American Indian/Alaska Native and Pacific Islander veterans in Vietnam War and other military conflicts.

Education Center at the Wall

During our travels, we met several times with Jan Scruggs, president and founder of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF), the organization that raised the funds to build the Vietnam Wall, which was dedicated in 1982. VVMF also had the Three Servicemen Statue bronze memorial built near the Wall two years later.

During our initial visit with Scruggs and the VVMF staff members, they told us about a new building that VVMF was working to build, the Education Center at the Wall, to be located on land across the street from the Vietnam Wall and under the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial. This new facility would pay tribute to the men and women who fought and those who died in the Vietnam War, and as well as provide a history and timeline of the war. Congress had passed a law earlier that stated no more structures would be allowed on the National Mall; however, Scruggs convinced Congress to modify it to allow the Education Center to be built.

American Indian Veterans Memorial exhibit

In June 2014, we (AIVMI) established a working relationship with VVMF to help them raise funds to build the Education Center. The success of this project will ensure that an American Indian/Alaska Native and Pacific Islander exhibit will be part of the Education Center. We believe that this exhibit offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to put our Indian footprint in a prominent place on the National Mall and to become an integral part of the stories that will be told to its many visitors of the Education Center.

The exhibit, which will involve some form of digital format, can be used to tell a Tribe's history as far back as they want and as far forward in time as desired. While the building has a main focus on Vietnam, the American Indian/Alaska Native and Pacific Islander veterans exhibit is not limited to that period. It is anticipated that more than 3 million visitors will pass through the Education Center each year. We see this as our unique chance as Indian people to write and tell our own history and to make it available for our nation and others from around the world to see and read. In addition, multimedia programs will be available online to help students, educators and all visitors deepen their understanding of American Indian/Alaska Native and Pacific Islander veteran contributions and sacrifices.

AIVMI has committed to help VVMF raise more than \$10 million dollars to go toward the building of the Education Center. Since signing our agreement with VVMF, we have been back on the road traveling throughout Indian Country to inform Tribes and other organizations about this new opportunity at the Education Center. We have now launched our efforts to secure resolutions of support and financial commitment from Tribes, organizations, foundations and corporations.

We aim to have every



Tribe participate to show the American people that we care about our veterans and the rich history we have in helping protect the country's freedoms – it was our land first and continues to be our land. Fighting for it is fighting to preserve our Mother Earth.

Financial commitment and donor recognition

Money raised for the Education Center can be made as a one-time donation or it can come in the form of a pledge, whereby payments can be spread out over three to four years. The total cost of the project has been set at \$119 million. In order to get approval for the new building, Scruggs offered to Congress that the building be built underground, so as to not add any obstruction above ground on the Mall. Putting the structure underground, however, did add additional costs to construction because many parts of the Mall are swampland and require extra foundations to accommodate its unique environmental challenges. All architecture plans are completed and received the necessary final approvals from the National Park Service, which oversees buildings and monuments on the Mall.

Construction of the Education Center project will start as soon as the money needed to build the structure has been raised and/or pledged, which is anticipated to be between 2019 and 2020. In recognition for high-end donors, Scruggs got Congress to pass a special donor recognition bill in 2013 that will allow VVMF to give name recognition to individuals, Tribes and other corporations and organizations in a prominent place inside the Education Center building.

Resolutions of support and financial commitments

We have been traveling throughout Indian Country since June 2014 to inform Tribes about the opportunity at the Education Center for them to showcase their military involvement. In 2015, we will work to get resolutions of support and financial commitments from Tribes and other organizations for the American Indian Veterans Memorial exhibit at the Education Center.

Thus far, we have raised some small monies through friends and colleagues and receive financial support for our travels and expenses from the Seminole Tribal Council. We personally made a \$10,000 donation to VVMF in November 2014. We wanted Scruggs and other VVMF staff to know that we are serious about our commitment to this project.

The Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood has committed to become an integral part of our fundraising efforts. We are working with them now on a master plan that will include T-shirts, guitar pins, etc., which may be purchased by visitors to all the Hard Rock Cafes around the world to raise money for this project. We are also working to have a concert in November 2015 in which the proceeds will go toward the American Indian Veterans Memorial exhibit project.

We will now start to actively campaign to raise money from other Tribes, organizations, foundations and corporations throughout Indian Country. It is our hope that once Tribes learn about this project that they will embrace it and recognize its significance. The exhibit inside the Education Center will offer an exciting opportunity for honoring that nation's "First American Veterans." It can also become a rally point for younger generations of American Indians to learn more about their warrior heritage.

Stephen Bowers is a combat Vietnam Veteran (1969-70) who served with the 173rd Airborne Brigade. He serves as the Liaison of the Florida Governor's Council on Indian Affairs and as President of the Seminole Veterans Foundation, which aims to help veterans in the local communities in South Florida.

Elizabeth Bates is married to Stephen and travels with him to all conferences and pow-wows where they spread the word among Indian Tribes about the project.

For more information, contact Stephen Bowers, office: 954-966-6300 ext. 11480, cell: 954-609-0536, email: sbowers@semtribe.com.

SUPPORT AIVMI
www.aivmi.org

Environmental Protection Agency administrator visits Seminole Tribe

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Chairman James E. Billie welcomed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4 Administrator Heather McTeer Toney to Tribal Headquarters Jan. 14 for a meeting to discuss issues important to the Tribe.

It was the first visit for Toney, who was appointed regional administrator in January 2014 by President Barack Obama. She is responsible for protecting human health and the environment in the Southeastern U.S., which includes six Tribes. Region 4 is the most populated and diverse of the 10 regions, according to the EPA.

"We were excited to meet her," Chairman Billie said. "We like to meet people we work with face-to-face."

Issues facing the Tribe include water quality, climate change, environmental justice, water treaty rights and air quality.

"The biggest issue is how the EPA can help us with water quality challenges in Big Cypress and Brighton and how they can help us uphold our rights under the water compact [with the state] and maintain federally recognized water quality standards," said Cherise Maples, director of the Environmental Resource Management Department.

Since 1987, the Tribe has maintained a water rights compact with the state and an agreement with the South Florida Water Management District. In 1996, the EPA



Beverly Bidney

From left, Dan Scheidt and R. Javoyné Hicks White, of the Environmental Protection Agency; Danny Tommie, Chairman's administrator; Chairman James E. Billie; Cherise Maples, director of the Environmental Resource Management Department; and Heather McTeer Toney and Lisa Berrios, of the EPA, meet at Tribal Headquarters Jan. 14.

gave the Tribe the right to set its own water standards on Tribal land.

"We plan to be a bigger presence than we have been," Toney said. "We want to give as much assistance as we can. The meeting

gave me a lot of insight; it was good to hear the EPA is one of the agencies the Tribe has a very good relationship with. We will continue to develop that relationship even stronger."

HEARTH ACT

From page 1A

Chairman Billie said the BIA, under the direction of the Interior Department, has

"overshadowed" the interests of the Tribe since the 1800s. In the mid-1950s, when the Tribe was set to be "terminated" by the U.S. government, the Fort Lauderdale-based Friends of the Seminoles helped support the Tribe's incorporation while the

Tribe anchored itself in cattle, tourism and gaming businesses.

"In the modern-day scheme of moneymaking, we had a lot to learn," Chairman Billie said.

Housing, traditionally in chickee camps, became a formality when the U.S. government wanted families to live in homes with addresses, especially for census data.

But, Chairman Billie said, after the tribal government would provide homesites for home ownership, it took the BIA months or even years to approve steps toward building.

"(THE HEARTH Act) gives us the responsibility to make decisions and move quickly," Chairman Billie said. "No more stumbling blocks."

Jewell said the Act reinforces the federal government's obligation to treaties made nationwide with Tribes throughout Indian Country and proves the government's commitment to tribal sovereignty.

"This is a clear charge to all agencies to step up to treaty agreements and turn over responsibility to Tribes. They know their lands, their people and their needs better than anyone," Jewell said.

When pressed on just how the Seminole Tribe plans to exercise the renewed land leasing rights, the Chairman declined to explain.

"I don't want to tell secrets," Chairman Billie said.



Eileen Soler

In front of media cameras and Tribal leaders, Chairman James E. Billie honors Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell with a Seminole basket after Jewell's signing of documents that turn power from the Department of the Interior to the Tribe for land leasing agreements.

GAMING

From page 1A

The Tribe joins five new board members and three new general members recently announced by the association.

According to its website, AGA seeks to unify the gaming industry through a policy of inclusivity and transparency. The new organizational structure and board member additions are the latest in a

series of changes under the leadership of the AGA Board of Directors and President and CEO Geoff Freeman.

"Our goal is to elevate the AGA's ability to advocate for the entire gaming industry – in Washington, in the media and in communities across America," Freeman said in a news release. "In 2014, we established key building blocks in this effort, including strengthening our staff, increasing our advocacy on the value of the casino gaming industry and

modernizing our membership structure."

Members are major gaming companies and gaming manufacturers, including Las Vegas Sands Corp., MGM Resorts International and Wynn Resorts, Eder said.

"All these companies basically bond together to allow for us to provide the solutions that we feel will provide the best financial benefit for the gaming companies," Eder said.

HARD ROCK

From page 1A

In early January 2015, the Tribe became the first Native gaming operator to be welcomed into the American Gaming Association and offered a seat on the board.

Further, the corporation is world renown for philanthropy. In October 2014, Yoko Ono presented Hamish Dodds, Hard Rock president and CEO, with The Spirit of Excellence Award from the T.J. Martell Foundation for Leukemia, Cancer and AIDS Research.

Ono annually collaborates with Hard Rock in the Imagine There's No Hunger campaign, which in seven years had provided 9.7 million meals to children in 20 countries. Locally, the Hard Rock last year provided financial support and gift baskets to countless charities, including the American Cancer Society, Ann Storck Center, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Broward County, Make-A-Wish Southern Florida and Habitat for Humanity of Broward.

From the podium, Chairman Billie quoted no numbers or accolades but gave the audience a bit of himself by teaching them "hello," "I am well" and "thank you" in Mikasuki.

Everyone responded: "Che-hun-taumo," "Ah-hen-tou-shah" and "Sho-naa-bish."

He gave them a peek into his past and thanked friends he made along the way.

"In 1971 I was just back from Vietnam, 25 or 26 years old, full of vinegar, just wanting to ride a motorcycle and rock 'n' roll," said the Army veteran. "When I saw my first Hard Rock I told myself I would get a T-shirt from every one. I didn't realize then that I'd own all

the T-shirts someday."

The Chairman recognized Andrew Lee, Hard Rock's regional director of Hotels and Casinos in Asia Pacific, for his kindness during a late 2014 tour of Asian interests. He told the crew of the Istanbul Hard Rock to be safe because he recently saw the restaurant in the background of a news video about the ongoing war with ISIS militants.

And he called Rita Gilligan, the longest-serving Hard Rock employee, to the stage to collect hugs and gifts for her 44 years of service.

Gilligan, who was a 29-year-old waitress "on day one" in 1971 when the very first Hard Rock opened "in the shadow

of Buckingham Palace," was honored with a Seminole basket, doll, Seminole Hard Rock pin and a patchwork apron stitched by Mary Jane Storm.

Now a spry 73 and the corporation's official goodwill ambassador, Gilligan has helped open 160 Hard Rock locations. Fittingly, she was a cornerstone of the corporation's philanthropic slogan "Love All – Serve All," having broken restaurant rules with Peter Morgan in 1971 by giving a free hamburger to a hungry elderly woman she caught peering through the window.

"I remember when the Hard Rock started with only 46 employees. We were a little stone and now we are the rock of the planet. Just look at us now," Gilligan said.



Eileen Soler

Chairman James E. Billie, Hard Rock Goodwill Ambassador Rita Gilligan, of London, and Hard Rock President and CEO Hamish Dodds share a rocking moment during the 2015 Hard Rock International Global Conference at the Hard Rock Hotel Riviera Maya in Mexico.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Quarterly tries to identify the past



Photo courtesy of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

An early 20th century family in a long canoe sits outside an unidentified boathouse (possibly the Smallwood Store in Chokoloskee, Florida) while three men have a discussion (ATTK Catalog no. 2007.46.58).

SUBMITTED BY MARY BETH ROSEBROUGH
 Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Each quarter the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum publishes a magazine appropriately called the AQ (Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Quarterly). It is a long, involved process that begins months ahead of the distribution date, and Annette Snapp, editor and operations manager, is no stranger to long nights editing articles and arranging images and graphics. A lot of work goes into publishing even a small magazine.

One of the most gratifying parts of the job is researching and submitting images that accompany articles, but it can also be frustrating. In the past, the AQ has featured articles on Sam Jones (Abiaki), Ada Tiger (mother of Betty Mae Jumper), the Seminole Tribe of Florida's cattle industry, dolls, patchwork, the opening of the Museum itself (built on Chairman James E. Billie's old camp grounds) and Polly Parker, among others. Many times what seems to be the perfect image will have Tribal members and circumstances obvious to others but unknown to us. And that is where the Museum needs help in identifying the past to ensure it advances correct knowledge to those who read the AQ.

The Summer 2013 issue of the AQ featured Ada Tiger on the cover and an article by Austin Bell, who mentioned that not much is written about Ada in her later life but that the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville has five images of her at Okalee Indian Village from the early to mid-1960s. The images' caption in the published article tells the real truth of the Museum's dilemma. It states, "Ada Tiger, possibly at Okalee Indian Village, sometime around 1960." It would not be hard for someone "in the know" to identify where this image was taken because of very discernable objects in the background. Invaluable knowledge, placing Betty Mae Jumper's mother, Ada Tiger, in time and place, could be added to the records and life history of this important Tribal member. If the Museum had it.

In the Winter 2012 issue collections manager Tara Backhouse published an article about Seminole canoes in a Museum collection. An evocative picture of a mother

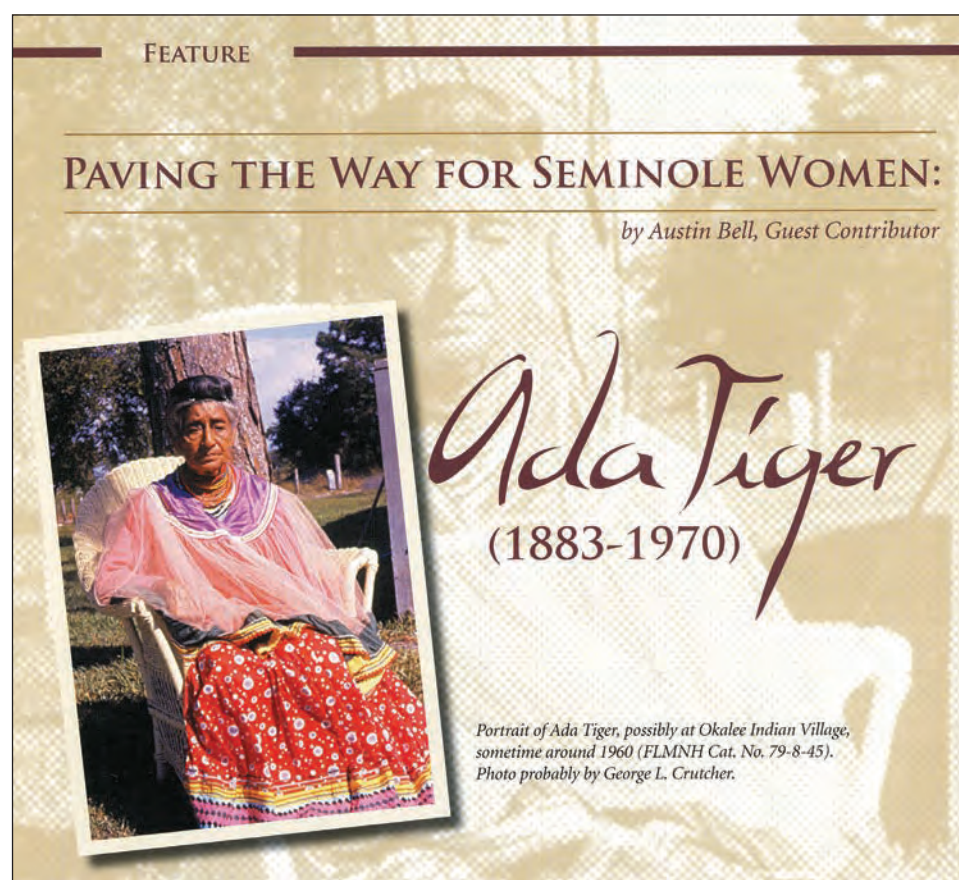


Photo courtesy of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Ada Tiger, possibly at Okalee Indian Village, sometime around 1960.

clothed in patchwork with four children, while sitting in a canoe at an unidentified boathouse accompanied the article. Two men in fedoras and shirtsleeves stand by the canoe, facing the camera. Another man faces away. Who are they? What are they doing? Was the family there to trade, buy needed items from the men or just pass through? Where were they going? Could this image better help Museum staff understand the history and lives of the Seminole Tribe of Florida in the mid-20th century or find its way back to family members? Staff members think this unidentified boathouse is the Smallwood Store in Chokoloskee, but if readers have other ideas, let the Museum know.

Identifying the past brings the past

closer to us in time. Staff members have seen the faces of family members as they identify photos of relatives and friends. Time stands still, if for just a moment, and they remember where they came from and for what they are thankful. Looking into the face of days past brings people closer to knowing who they really are. Can you help identify the place or the people in the image below? The Museum would be most grateful. Call Tara Backhouse with any information at 863-902-1113 ext. 12246.

The AQ magazine is a benefit of Museum membership, extended to all Tribal members free of charge. Please contact the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum with your mailing information to receive the AQ.

Betty Mae Jumper

Wisdom from the past

Chitto Tustenuggee Island

The following column was written by Betty Mae Jumper and printed in the March 11, 1992 issue of The Seminole Tribune.

Chitto Tustenuggee Island, which was written about in The Seminole Tribune in a special issue on February 6, 1992, was my grandmother's clan's camp.

My grandmother's name is Mary Tustenuggee before she married Tom Tiger, who was later killed by lightning. Chitto Tustenuggee was a brother to my grandmother. They were of the Miccosukee speaking clan.

I used to hear my grandmother talk about the camp on the island where she once grew up as a little girl. After the war they settled at the camp but in the later years my grandmother married a Cow Creek Indian from the Wild Cat Clan from around the big lake. After she married the Creek man she moved to the east side of Okeechobee Lake. All her family later followed her, for the hunting was good; there were lots of fish in the lakes and rivers.

Since the Indians were the first people that made homes there the town became known as Indian Town in the later years. After a while my grandmother said the non-Indians started coming and made their homes nearby them. They were friendly people so they all got along well.

From the island she left from the Everglades, she used to say it was good land; they grew lots of things to eat. Many Indians stopped there between hunting seasons. Also many gathered to hold the Green Corn Dance. It was believed to thank the Great Spirit for a good season. This dance comes when the corn is ripe.

I was young then so I didn't know the land she was talking about but she used to point it out west from where we lived on the Dania Reservation. Also she talked about her kinfolks that died out there and were buried somewhere near another island.

She talked about the Hunting Dance and Snake Dance, which was held out there. She talked about her grandpa, who was a medicine man and pouch carrier, a leader of the dances. He made her and her sisters dance with their brother through the night at times. The Snake

Dance was held early in the fall when it began to get cool.

She used to say you were taught by your uncles to do things and if you refused you were punished by getting whipped with a tree switch or there is a needle to scratch your arms or legs. You never spoke back to your elders. You are supposed to respect and listen to them when they speak. You should never be

around when older people sat and talked.

I never saw the Snake or Hunting dances, but, it seemed that was the biggest dance of the year. This dance seemed to teach the young people how to hunt and the girls how to cook.

A young man had to go out and kill the animals and bring it back to be cooked. My grandmother said as a girl you have to pound the corn and make bread and sofkee all by

yourself. It seemed in the fall they taught the teenagers of the Tribe who became young people to face the grown-up life.

My grandmother, Mary Tiger lived to be 104 years old and passed away in 1947. The people thought she was around 104 because she knew things that happened in that year. She talked about the white people that lived in Indian Town who were that age at the time she was.

My grandmother, Mary Tiger has never been to a doctor or a hospital in her life and she lived to be that age. She talked about the food they ate, what kind of meat and vegetables they grew. I asked her one time, "You never was sick?" She said, "Yes, I caught a bad cold, measles and had a few cuts now and then."

She was a strong lady. She worked in tomato, bean and potato fields for people. At times she worked in orange groves; she worked until her eye sight gave out and also because of her age.

At times people asked me, "Why don't you retire?" I guess, I took after my grandmother, as she taught me how to work when I was about 8 years old. If you don't work you don't eat, my grandmother used to tell me and my brother. My grandmother was a great lady. I learned a lot from her of the Seminole life on what to do and what not to do. The Seminole ladies back in those days were strong people. All the kids listened and had respect. I wonder what they would do if they could see the kids of today in the Tribe?

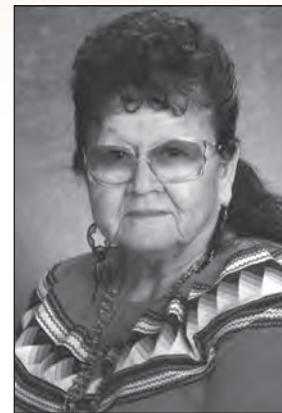


Photo courtesy of the William D. Boehmer Collection

Betty Mae Jumper poses with her grandmother Mary Tustenuggee Tiger on the Dania Reservation circa 1945.

Push continues to rename road after Sam Jones

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
 Special Projects Reporter

LABELLE — Packages of information regarding Chairman James E. Billie's proposal to rename Hendry County Road 833 after medicine man and Seminole Wars leader Sam Jones (Abiaki) have been sent to state Rep. Matt Hudson, of Naples, whose District 80 includes Hendry County, and Hendry County Board of Commissioners Chairman Karson Turner.

The packages included letters signed by Chairman Billie stating his case for the distinction, as well as maps and research provided by David Brownell, of the

Tribal Historic Preservation Office in Big Cypress. Previously, packages were sent to the office of the Florida Department of Transportation secretary and to FDOT statewide scale operations manager Jerry Lawrence Bullard.

"As you will see from map overlays, present day CR 833 follows almost exactly a key segment of the historic Sam Jones Trail system. Significant Seminole camps and other historical sites have been documented nearby, both east and west of CR 833," Chairman Billie wrote in the letter. "So dense were the interior Florida jungles of that era, the United States military was unable to penetrate far enough to apprehend

Abiaki and his followers. The soldiers gave up and Abiaki's small band of Indians remained in Florida — their descendants, today, are the unconquered Seminole and Miccosukee Indians of Florida."

Chairman Billie hopes that Rep. Hudson will initiate legislative support, which is required for renaming CR 833 to Sam Jones Trail from SR 80 outside Clewiston to the northern border of the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation. The trail passes through an area known as Devil's Garden, named after Sam Jones, who soldiers referred to as "The Devil." Sam Jones was the only major Seminole leader to escape death or deportation.



Seminole Tribe rings in the holiday season with joyful noise



Rachel Buxton

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students perform holiday songs in their native Creek language Dec. 18 during the Brighton community Christmas party.



Beverly Bidney

Mallory Hernandez holds her 4-month-old daughter Stormy Hernandez, who is wrapped like a gift in a festive Christmas bow, at the Immokalee Christmas party Dec. 19.



Beverly Bidney

From left, Judybill Osceola, Judy Baker and Jonah Cypress sing carols Dec. 16 at the tribalwide senior Christmas party in Big Cypress.



Beverly Bidney

Jayveon Wyatt tells Santa what he wants for Christmas at the Fort Pierce Christmas party Dec. 17 at Chupco's Landing Community Center.



Eileen Soler

Children brave the warm outdoors to 'ice' skate on a slick plastic rink Dec. 19 during the Big Cypress Christmas celebration.



Eileen Soler

Kyle Baker and Cassidy Baker share a funny moment during the Trail Christmas party Dec. 12 at the Miccosukee Resort & Gaming.



Beverly Bidney

An aerialist suspended from the ceiling on silk ropes pours sparkling apple cider for guests Dec. 20 as they arrive at the Hollywood Christmas party at Hard Rock Live.



Eileen Soler

From left, Cynthia Mendoza, Kassiah Robbins and Sahara Robbins can barely choose from dozens of yummy desserts at the Trail Christmas party.



Beverly Bidney

Frebrina Johnson is delighted to have her 6-month-old baby Amir Johnson with her for Christmas in Fort Pierce.



Rachel Buxton

Mariah Garner roasts a marshmallow at the s'mores station at the Brighton Christmas party.



Beverly Bidney

A group of young friends enjoys the Christmas party in Immokalee. The party featured bounce houses, slides and other activities.



Peter B. Gallagher

Barbara Cypress takes a photo with Santa Claus during the Tampa Christmas party Dec. 18 at Sheraton Tampa East Hotel.



Peter B. Gallagher

Jeremiah Gallagher opens his Christmas present at the Tampa party to find a Nerf Bash Ball.



From left, Ashley Wilcox; Goldie Hanks, 19 months; Savannah Huggins; Le'Niyah Wilcox, 16 months; and Leon Wilcox have a great time together at the Hollywood Christmas party at Hard Rock Live.



Carol Cypress shows her Christmas spirit at the tribalwide seniors Christmas party in Big Cypress.



Zyla Ardley, left, and Keilah Marcelino play chase under the Christmas tree at the Trail Christmas party.



A.J. Yzaguirre, 1, finds a bike amid the presents at the Immokalee Christmas party.



Stanlo Johns enjoys some time with granddaughter Arrow Johns during the Brighton Christmas celebration.



Rebecca Billie poses with Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr. after her raffle ticket won her a new car at the Tampa Christmas party.



Magnum Osceola, left, and Amadaus Osceola are totally engrossed in playing with new toys delivered by Santa Claus at the Trail Christmas party.



Joel Frank Jr. poses with his family and Santa during the Tampa Christmas party. From left are daughter Joelli, son Brandon, Joel and wife, Barbara.



Jordan Osceola decorates a gingerbread house at the Immokalee Christmas celebration.



Charlotte Tommie exudes glee when her raffle number is called to win a Harley Davidson motorcycle at the Big Cypress Christmas celebration.



Bobby Frank shares the joy of Christmas with his nephew Indigo Jumper at the Hollywood Christmas party.



This group of revelers has a great time while waiting to visit Santa at the Fort Pierce Christmas party at the Chupco's Landing Community Center.



Dalyse Baker visits Mrs. Claus during the Brighton Christmas party.



Santa Claus and Camille Billie bask joyfully in the brilliant lights of a looming Christmas tree at the Big Cypress Christmas celebration.

Health



Beverly Bidney

The Osceola brothers, Cameron, Sheldon and Tyson, play in a band together and stay fit together. As part of the Get It Back Challenge, they work out Jan. 15 on the treadmills at the Howard Tiger Recreation Center.

New Year's resolve: health, fitness

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

After indulging during the holiday season, community members tribalwide have resolved to lose weight and shape up for the new year. Allied Health helps with an array of programs to suit multiple needs. Hollywood trainer Jay Garland, who gained 23 pounds during the holidays, asked individuals to help motivate him, and themselves, to get fit again with a 30-day Get It Back Challenge. Fifty-five people accepted the task and signed up for the program.

Fitness specialists conducted complete evaluations of participants' body composition, upper and lower body strength, endurance, flexibility and aerobic fitness. After 30 days, another evaluation was done to track progress. The challenge was to outscore Garland's results and gauge improvement.

"Everyone gains weight during the holidays," said Garland, Hollywood Health Department assistant site supervisor. "It happens to the best of us. I want to show people that if you can change something in 30 days, imagine what you can do in a lifetime."

Fitness operations manager Jeffrey Dolgan believes fitness isn't just for the fit. With a background working with at-risk populations, he has seen people regain fitness and good health through exercise.

"Exercise is medicine," he said. "It's a proven fact that strength and aerobic fitness reduces disease."

In 2008, the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, developed a list of physical activity guidelines based on studies proving physical activity lowers the risk of early death, heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, adverse blood lipid profile, metabolic syndrome, and colon and breast cancers.

Exercise also prevents weight gain,

promotes weight loss when combined with proper diet, improves cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness, reduces depression and improves cognitive function, according to the ODPHP.

It only takes two hours and 30 minutes of moderately intense aerobic activity per week plus muscle strengthening activities, on all major muscle groups, twice a week to improve health, according to the ODPHP.

"Exercise is the best medication for this population," Dolgan said. "Pre-diabetic people should get in here as soon as possible; it's a reversible disease. Nutrition is a big part of it, too."

In Brighton, the Seminole Pathways VII 21 Day Weight Loss Challenge is focused on nutrition. Participants received an evaluation by Health Department staff and three nutritious meals a day plus snacks. Breakfast and lunch are served at the senior center; dinner is picked up to eat at home.

"The program takes a little bit of dedication and sacrifice," said Lance Vaz, health nutritionist. "It's not an extreme diet, but we don't permit sugary beverages, sweets or junk food. Last year, everyone lost weight."

Portion sizes are based on caloric needs determined by age, gender and activity level to ensure weight loss. For weekends, participants are given snacks, recipes and local restaurant menu suggestions.

"I did it last year and lost 30 pounds," said Norman "Skeeter" Bowers, who wants to lose another 10 pounds. "The hard part is trying to maintain the eating and workout routine; sometimes life gets in the way. I'm trying to find that balance."

Chairman James E. Billie came up with the original idea for the challenge. After attending a weight loss retreat, he wanted to offer the same type of program to the community. The program is in its seventh year and has evolved to include educational components, such as cooking classes, weekly diet summaries and tips on how to plan for the weekend.

Bowers believes when Tribal members are healthier, the Tribe's health care costs will come down.

"From the Chairman's point of view, the costs are related to obesity and diabetes," Bowers said. "He's a big supporter of the program."

"People have a lot of questions and are really interested in learning," Vaz said. "Even seniors who don't participate ask questions."

The low-sodium diet is based on fresh, minimally processed foods. There is no fitness component, but Vaz and others on the staff encourage exercise and make sure everyone has the fitness class calendar.

"It exposes us to new foods that I didn't grow up with, like quinoa," Michele Thomas said. "And it's fun. I like the camaraderie of the community."

When the 21-day program concludes Feb. 3, members will receive a cookbook with all the recipes for the meals they ate and more.

Follow-up sessions throughout the year are part of the Pathways Challenge to ensure participants stay on track. Last year, after about seven months, Vaz said a majority of participants had kept off the weight and felt better.

"Their behavior changed for the better and they were eating smaller portion sizes," he said. "Some also increased their amount of exercise."

The Pathways program will continue throughout the spring.

The next challenge is the H2Only Challenge, which will lead to the Pathways Pedometer Challenge.

For more information contact Vaz at the Brighton Health Department.

A healthy diet plus fitness equals good health, and Dolgan wants to see community members use the fitness facilities.

"We can get you where you need to be," he said. "We want folks who aren't confident enough to come here. Everyone can lose and regain their fitness. I want to do this tribalwide."

CCDT spotlights help with autism

Monthly meetings offered tribalwide

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Karen Two Shoes has learned a lesson in patience since her 5-year-old son Sam was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) a year ago.

Staff at the Hollywood Preschool first noticed something a little different with Sam. After five months of testing, he was diagnosed with ASD and Two Shoes went looking for treatment.

The Tribe's Children's Center for Diagnostics and Therapy (CCDT), which sees individuals from infancy to age 21, offers help with ASD and other issues through a variety of services, including speech, occupational, physical and behavioral therapy. It also offers mental health counseling and psychological evaluations.

Children with ASD look like any other child but behave differently. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the developmental disorder causes social, communication and behavioral challenges.

"It's been a crazy and interesting year," said Two Shoes, a Hollywood resident. "I'm less judgmental and my prioritizing changes daily."

ASD affects about 1 in 68 children, but families, communities and schools are touched by the disorder as well. Five times more boys are affected than girls, according to the CDC.

Although no proven cause for ASD exists, scientists believe genes and the environment play important roles. Diagnoses of ASD have increased in recent years.

Occurrences of ASD among Tribal members compare with the general population. CCDT offers help through Autism in the Community, a support group led by clinical psychologist Dr. Kristen Bolomey.

"I'm here to provide information," Bolomey said. "The goal is awareness and understanding so other members of the community can better understand and accept it."

The group meets monthly in Big Cypress, Brighton and Hollywood to answer questions, address specific concerns and allow families a place to interact. At a recent meeting, Bolomey described the

basics of the disorder.

Three characteristics are common in ASD: speech and language deficits, difficulty interacting with others, and repetitive play or the need for a strict routine. The ASD spectrum ranges from debilitating to barely detectable.

Cultural differences can also make a difference.

"Seminole kids are harder to diagnose if they are brought up in a traditional home where they are taught not to look someone in the eye or to speak," Bolomey said.

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), such as extreme sensitivity to light or sound, is common. The sensory problems can occur in certain senses but usually not all of them. Almost all children with ASD have some degree of SPD. Bolomey offered examples.

"When you don't know how to turn off the filter in your brain and can hear the hum of the fluorescent lights and everything else, you can't pay attention to what you need and what you don't," she said. "It's overwhelming and the child can't always tell you what is going on. Parents have to be the detective so they can help their kids."

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, ASD can be recognized before age 2. Bolomey said early detection is important.

"It's key in helping them function more effectively," she said. "One year of therapy at age 2 is worth more than years of therapy at older ages."

ASD can lead to behavior problems, frustration and strained relationships, Bolomey said.

"Parents need to learn it doesn't make you a bad person," she said. "You didn't do this to your children. You have to be kind to yourself and make time for yourself."

Sam is in kindergarten at Boulevard Heights Elementary school in Hollywood, where they have an autism cluster. He receives help from a CCDT behavior analyst weekly.

"CCDT has been wonderful, but it's also about being proactive," Two Shoes said. "It's about training us to work with him. You have to put aside your feelings and just take care of your child."

Bolomey believes parents need to be their children's advocates.

"You have to be proactive," Two Shoes said. "It's not going to fix itself."

New law raises age for booster seats

SUBMITTED BY BOB LAMENDOLA
Florida Department of Health in Broward

Parents must secure children in car safety seats for two years longer – through age 5 – under a new Florida law in effect Jan. 1.

The old law required parents to restrain their kids in car seats until they turned 4. The new law keeps that same rule but also says children must ride in car seats or in booster seats secured by standard seat belts until they turn 6 to reduce injuries in auto accidents. Seminole Police Department, like all departments in the state, are now enforcing the new law.

Advocates pushed for the age increase because young children are too small to be properly held in place when only buckled into seat belts, said Jennifer Belyeu, coordinator of the Safe Kids Coalition in Broward County and community relations manager at Memorial Healthcare System based in Hollywood.

"This is a step in the right direction. However, Florida still has more work to do in this arena," Belyeu said. "Many other states have stronger and stricter car seat laws than Florida. Some of these states require children to be in safety seats until they are 8 years old."

Child safety seats save lives. When used correctly, the seats reduce the risk of injury or death by more than 70 percent, according to the AAA. Traffic accidents in which children are improperly restrained are the leading cause of death from ages 5 to 14, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Despite the new law, Florida falls short of guidelines from the American

Academy of Pediatrics. The physicians group recommends keeping children in car seats – which attach at five points – until they reach 40 pounds, and then switching to booster seats until children reach 4 feet 9 inches tall. Advocates urge that children ride in the back seat through age 2 to avoid air bags.

The Safe Kids Coalition goes further, recommending car seats until children reach the manufacturer's maximum weight, which can be far higher than 40 pounds.

The new law makes parents, not vehicle operators, responsible for securing children in restraint seats, even in cabs and limousines. Parents found in violation can be penalized by three points against their driver's license and a fine.

But the law excuses parents in a few cases, such as children being driven by unpaid, non-family drivers, and children with medical conditions. Belyeu said family pocketbooks need not suffer too much. Federally approved booster seats cost as little as \$15.

Some families who stopped using car seats when their children turned 4 will now have to put the kids back into safety seats. Belyeu suggests letting the child help pick out a booster seat – some come in kid-friendly bright colors with cup holders – to help them embrace the idea.

The coalition offers training to parents on the correct use of safety seats because eight of out 10 are installed improperly.

More information, visit www.SafeKids.org/coalition/safe-kids-florida and click on your county; or call Broward, 954-265-2350; Palm Beach, 561-727-1048; or Miami-Dade, 305-666-6511.



Beverly Bidney

Carla Gopher, left, and Laverne Thomas, who are participating in the Pathways Challenge, enjoy a healthy lunch of stir-fry pork and a salad Jan. 15 at the Brighton Senior Center. In the background are Norman 'Skeeter' Bowers and Lewis Gopher.

Immokalee sweeps 15th annual Rez Rally

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

IMMOKALEE — They came to Immokalee from every reservation — more than 400 people dressed in team colors, pumped up and ready to win the battle for good health during the 15th annual Rez Rally.

Runners, walkers, strollers and wheelchairs navigated the 5K course Jan. 17, and at the end of the day, Immokalee came out on top. The reservation claimed two trophies for most Tribal member participants and for overall team participation.

“Linda Beletso said she’s glad to see her basket finally come home,” said Raymond Garza Sr., Immokalee Council project manager. Beletso made the sweetgrass basket trophy 15 years ago.

Sponsored by the Health Department, the family friendly Rez Rally promotes community health awareness. Increasing physical activity combats diabetes, cardiovascular disease and other ailments, said Suzanne Davis, Allied Health program manager.

“As always, our theme has been ‘Together we can manage diabetes,’” said Connie Whidden, director of the Health Department. “This teaches our children the benefits of walking.”

Before a gun signaled the start of the race, a DJ woke up the crowd with high-energy tunes. Chairman James E. Billie got the competitive juices flowing and the crowd cheering with a roll call of clans. Tribal leaders then took turns motivating the reservations.

“It’s always good to see the turnout,” Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank said. “It’s not just about Team BC; when we all are here, it’s Team Seminole.”

But that didn’t stop each reservation’s representatives from rallying their own teams.

“All these yellow shirts from Brighton means it’s a bright day,” Brighton Board Rep. Larry Howard said. “This cause is good for the Tribe and very important; let’s stay healthy. Let’s go Brighton and Tampa!”

“Let’s go Hollywood!” Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola said. “It’s good to promote good



Immokalee team captain Amy Yzaguirre claims the Rez Rally trophy for her team. The reservation won two trophies for most Tribal member participants and for overall team participation.

Beverly Bidney

health in the Tribe. It means we’ll be around longer for our kids. Let’s use this day as a launching pad for the rest of the year.”

“This is for our health and for bragging rights,” Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger said. “Let’s go BC!”

Hollywood fitness trainer Jay Garland led the group in a series of stretches and then participants trekked to the starting line.

“It’s always fun rallying everyone to come out,” said Cecilia Pequeno, an Immokalee team captain. “We’ve had a couple of pep rallies and we have the mindset to get through it.”

Immokalee boasted the most participants with

135, Brighton and Tampa sent 113, Big Cypress had 83 and Hollywood was represented by 74. Brighton competitors earned 32 medals, followed by Hollywood with 25, Immokalee with 24 and Big Cypress with 16. Each winner received a trophy and a handshake from Council and Board members.

“We do our best to create both a competitive environment to challenge those that are very fit and a fun-filled event to encourage those who are new to fitness to take their first steps on their path to wellness,” Davis said. “This event has been shown to ignite behavior change in participants. Incorporating healthy habits on more than race day is what the Rez Rally is really all about.”



Brett Daly

Participants in the 15th annual Rez Rally race to the finish line Jan. 17 after running 3.1 miles on the Immokalee Reservation course.



Beverly Bidney

Youngsters get some encouragement during the 15th annual Rez Rally.



Beverly Bidney

Walking stick in hand, Dan Bowers, of Brighton Reservation, gets off to a good start. He was one of the oldest walkers at Rez Rally in Immokalee.



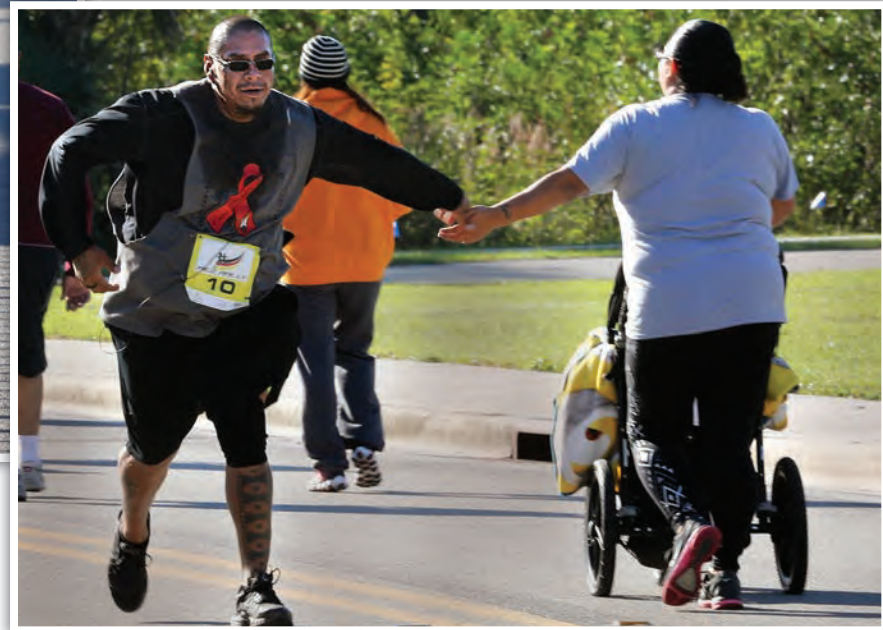
Beverly Bidney

Big Cypress brothers Kadin and Xzavion Tommie proudly complete the 5K Rez Rally in Immokalee. The boys both dashed across the finish line but walked and ran during the race.



Beverly Bidney

Paul Buster motivates runners and walkers with his music on the 3.1-mile course.



Beverly Bidney

Alvin Buster, of the Big Cypress team, greets a friend on the course. The track split about one-third of the way through where runners met up with walkers on the last 2 miles of the route.



Beverly Bidney

And they’re off! Rez Rally gets off to a fast start, at least for these youngsters who couldn’t wait to complete the 5K through the Immokalee Reservation.



Beverly Bidney

Team Immokalee members cheer as one of their own crosses the finish line at the 15th annual Rez Rally.

SEMINOLE SCENES



Beverly Bidney

SISTERLY LOVE: Love is on display as big sister Anani Griffin, 4, hugs her little sis Naomi Griffin, 2, at the tribalwide youth basketball tournament Dec. 22 in Fort Pierce.



Beverly Bidney

GANGNAM STYLE: Pemaetv Emahakv Charter School kindergarten through fifth-graders groove to popular songs Jan. 20 during a basketball game halftime routine. It was the third year volleyball coach Kim Jackson choreographed the performance and led students in songs that have been on the charts in the years they have been alive, 2006-2015.



Eileen Soler

SUNNY 'N FUNNY: Thelma Tigertail climbs without a care on the playground at Ahfachkee School.



Beverly Bidney

MODERN MEETS TRADITIONAL: Norman 'Skeeter' Bowers, center, owner of Skeeter's Seminole Huts, supervises construction of six chickees Jan. 9 at the Brighton Public Safety Administration Building. The company built four 10-by-15 foot and two 14-foot round chickees in the area.



Eileen Soler

WORM'S VIEW: The exterior design of the new Public Safety Administration Building in Brighton blends the great outdoors with organic architecture. The complex will house 23 departments, including Police and Fire Rescue.



Peter B. Gallagher

NEW YEAR'S HOG ROAST: Echo Billie, left, and Aubee Billie roast a hog in a homemade oven beneath the cook chickee at Chairman James E. Billie's Brighton camp. Aubee was in charge of turning the wooden crank to make sure the meat cooked evenly for a New Year's meal.



Beverly Bidney

HOLLYWOOD HAWK: Who says there is no wildlife in the city? This urban chicken hawk is right at home on the Hollywood Reservation, where a chain link fence near the old gym provides a vantage point for hunting on a January afternoon.



Eileen Soler

TALES FROM THE PAST: Connie Whidden finds old pals in a photograph during an impromptu tour of the new Public Safety Administration Building at Brighton Reservation.



Eileen Soler

SUPERSTAR SIGNATURE: Gary Allan presents his autograph on a new electric guitar to Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger just before concert time Jan. 10 at the Big Cypress 119th Anniversary Celebration.



Eileen Soler

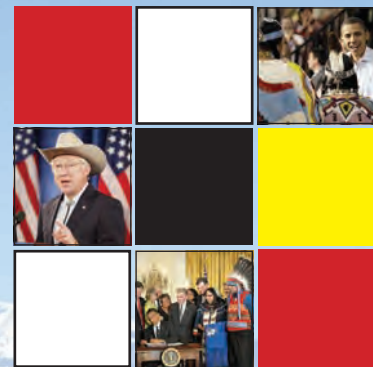
DYNAMIC DUO: Country music duo Montgomery Gentry perform Jan. 10 at the Big Cypress 119th Anniversary Celebration.



Beverly Bidney

SAY CHEESE: From left, Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger, Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr., Health Department Director Connie Whidden, Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola and Chairman James E. Billie share a goofy moment Jan. 17 during the 15th annual Rez Rally in Immokalee.

NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS



Wisconsin governor nixes Menominee's Hard Rock plans

MADISON, Wis. — Gov. Scott Walker on Jan. 23 denied the Menominee Nation's request for permission to build an off-reservation Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Kenosha, saying approving the project could leave the state owing a rival tribe hundreds of millions of dollars.

The decision is devastating for the Menominee, who have been pushing to build an \$800 million casino at Kenosha's Dairyland Greyhound Park dog track for years in hopes the facility would lift the tribe out of poverty. But the governor said that the state's compact with the Forest County Potawatomi requires Wisconsin to refund payments that tribe has made to the state if a Kenosha casino became a reality.

"After a comprehensive review of the potential economic impact of the proposed Kenosha casino project, the risk to the state's taxpayers is too great," Walker said in a news release.

The Menominee said the Kenosha casino would have created more than 3,300 jobs and indirectly support another 1,800 local jobs.

"It is our belief that this project would have improved the lives of the nearly 9,000 members of the tribe," Menominee Chairwoman Laurie Boivin said in a statement.

The Potawatomi have been fiercely opposed to the new casino, fearing it would siphon profits from their Milwaukee facility about 30 miles away. The Potawatomi's gambling compact with Wisconsin mandates the state reimburse the tribe for any losses linked to a Kenosha casino, as well as refund payments the tribe has made to the state in exchange for the exclusive right to offer gambling in Southeastern Wisconsin. Walker's administration has estimated those payments could run into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

—Source: Green Bay Press Gazette

NIGA Tradeshow and Convention to be held in San Diego

SAN DIEGO — The 30th annual National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) Tradeshow and Convention will run March 30 to April 2 at the San Diego Convention Center.

The event combines a showplace for new products, Indian gaming's top suppliers and the latest service innovations and industry trends with workshops and networking events.

The highlight of the four-day show will be the Wendell Chino Humanitarian Award Banquet & Concert, including a concert by Foreigner on the evening of April 1.

Visit www.IndianGamingTradeShow.com/Content/778.htm or call 800-218-2238 for more information.

—Source: NIGA

Sacred site activist appeals convictions

WETUMPKA, Alaska — Activist Wayland Gray has appealed his disorderly conduct and misdemeanor criminal trespassing convictions. The appeal was scheduled to be heard in mid-January.

Gray maintains the charges stem from his attempt to pray for his ancestors at the Muscogee Creek Nation's sacred Hickory Ground ceremonial site two years ago.

The original charges were filed by the Poarch Band of Creek Indians against Gray, two other Muscogee Nation citizens and a Cherokee Nation American Indian Movement (AIM) member, all arrested in February 2013 by Poarch police as they tried to access Hickory Ground to conduct a ceremony.

The men had previously notified Poarch officials of their plan. Gray was also accused by Poarch police with making a "terrorist threat" — a charge that carried a 10-year prison sentence but was later dropped when a grand jury found no evidence on a video of the arrest. The trespassing charges against the other three men were dropped. Gray declined an offer to plea bargain.

Gray said he's been offered four plea bargains.

"They asked me to plead guilty to disorderly conduct and they'd drop the trespassing charge and there'd be no jail time, or plead guilty to trespassing and they'd drop the jail time and disorderly conduct, variations like that," Gray said. "But I'm not going to plead guilty to anything, because if I do, it means I was wrong and I wasn't wrong. Anybody has the right to go pay respect to their ancestors — it's a natural law. The ancestors are the reason we exist. If we protect the sacred, the sacred will protect us. I didn't do anything wrong. I'm not guilty and I don't feel guilty."

"It is regrettable that Poarch Tribal law enforcement officials were not invited to show the grand jury video of the individual threatening to burn down our casino. That video, and other evidence, clearly shows that this individual has made threats to our property, our Tribal members, our employees and our customers," said the

Tribe in a statement released to Indian Country Today Media Network.

Hickory Ground, known as *Oce Wpofa* in the Muscogee language, was the last capital of the National Council of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The sacred place includes a ceremonial ground, a tribal burial ground and individual graves. The current day Muscogee ancestors lived and were buried at Hickory Ground before the tribe was forced from its Alabama homeland on the Trail of Tears to Oklahoma.

The Poarch Creeks collaborated with the federal government and President Andrew Jackson's policies of removal, according to the Poarch Band's website. "These Friendly Creeks signed contracts with the new federal government to serve as guides, interpreters, ferrymen and river pilots for those traveling through the Creek Territory. They also operated inns and raised free-range cattle," the website states. "As a result, they were allowed to remain in Alabama."

The Poarch Creeks were federally recognized in 1984 and acquired Hickory Ground with a grant from the federal government, which has held the land in trust for the tribe since then. Although Poarch promised in its grant application that Hickory Ground would be preserved "without excavation," in 2012 the tribe dug up dozens of sets of Muscogee ancestors during the ground preparation for its \$246 million casino expansion project. That action prompted the Muscogee Nation, headquartered in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, to file a federal lawsuit against the Poarch for desecration of the Muscogee sacred site.

Ignoring the suit, the Poarch Creek Band re-interred the remains and funerary objects according to specific Indian traditions. That lawsuit is still pending in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama.

In August 2013, a district court judge in Wetumpka sentenced Gray to 120 days combined for both the trespassing and disorderly conduct charges, reduced the sentence to three months, then suspended it. Gray was also fined \$350, put on two years' probation and barred from visiting the Hickory Ground site until the resolution of the pending lawsuit. Under state law, Gray invoked his right to appeal the convictions to a jury trial.

Suzan Harjo, Cheyenne and Hodulgee Muscogee, who received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in November for her lifelong work in support of American Indian rights, said Gray and the other men should never have been prevented from going to Hickory Ground, let alone arrested. Harjo was instrumental in the development and passage of the 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act and the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, which allows tribes to reclaim their human remains and ceremonial items from publicly funded institutions.

"This is exactly the reason why we worked hard to get the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, which says it's the United States position to preserve and protect American Indians' practice of traditional religion," Harjo said. "It's so clear: It guarantees access to sacred sites. It couldn't be clearer. And it's being ripped to shreds by other Native people. That's just disgusting, I think."

—Source: ICTMN

Ancient Acoma Pueblo gets new Class III compact

ACOMA, N.M. — According to the Santa Fe New Mexican, the Acoma Pueblo has reached a new 22-year Class III gaming compact with the state of New Mexico, increasing its revenue sharing with the state from the former cap at 8 percent to the new deal rates ranging from 8.5 percent to 9.5 percent.

"The agreement will provide the economic development we desire," Pueblo Gov. Fred Vallo said in a press release quoted by the paper. "We will be able to fund tribal operations at all levels."

The agreement requires approval by the Legislature before it can be sent to the BIA for review. Currently, the Acoma Sky City Hotel and Casino consists of 10 game tables, featuring blackjack, blackjack switch, craps, roulette, three-card poker and progressive bingo, three restaurants, a live entertainment club and a hotel with 134 guest rooms and suites.

Nearby is the Sky City RV Park and the 40,000-square-foot Tribal Cultural Center and Haak'u Museum on the floor of the Acoma Valley at the foot of the mesa.

—Source: Santa Fe New Mexican, IndianZ.com

Pinoleville Pomo Nation confirms deal for legal marijuana farm

UKIAH, Calif. — The Pinoleville Pomo Nation will be the home of the first tribe-sanctioned, large-scale indoor medical marijuana cultivation and distribution operation.

According to the Santa Rosa Press Democrat, the tribe will host a 110,000-square-foot marijuana processing facility that will cost \$10 million to build and employ 50 to 100 persons on 2.5

acres of its 99-acre Pinoleville Rancheria in Mendocino County, home to 70 of the Pomo's 250 Tribal members. The Rancheria was terminated by the federal government in 1966, but the Pinoleville Pomo were able to regain federal recognition and restore their original reservation to trust status in the 1980s.

The farm is part of a deal with United Cannabis of Colorado and FoxBarry Companies, a firm with experience in Indian Country. The products will be sold to medical marijuana dispensaries and to medical marijuana card-holding members, in keeping with state law.

"Our business model involves doing everything legally and by the book," FoxBarry's President Barry Brautman told the paper.

The partnership with the tribe follows a U.S. Department of Justice announcement in December that tribes, which are sovereign nations, have the authority to legalize marijuana on lands that are held for them in federal trust.

Brautman could not estimate how many plants will be grown at the new cannabis facility but expects there to be "thousands" growing year-round.

"We're harvesting every day. Everything's on a big rotation," he said.

—Source: Santa Rosa Press Democrat, IndianZ.com

Wampanoag Tribe makes first land purchase in 10 years

AQUINNAH, Mass. — The Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head has added 17 acres to its approximately 480 acres of land holdings. The \$1.14 million purchase — the tribe's first real estate buy in more than a decade — abuts the Wampanoag tribal building on Black Brook Road in Aquinnah, Massachusetts.

In an interview with the Vineyard Gazette, Tribal Chairman Tobias Vanderhoop said the tribe had no immediate plans.

"It's such a large piece of property that it could have several uses. Any of the uses will certainly be for the greatest benefit of our Tribal citizens," Chairman Vanderhoop said. "This property is contiguous to a large parcel of our land and it made sense when it became available for purchase that it was an appropriate piece to acquire."

A federal trust fund, set up for land acquisition when the tribe was first recognized in 1987, paid for the tract.

"I think the most exciting part of it is that we are increasing our homeland," Vanderhoop said. "And that gives us an opportunity to create benefits for our Tribal members to be able to come home and enjoy more of the spaces they belong to."

—Source: VineyardGazette.com

Grand Ronde Tribe terminates tribal citizenship for 86

GRAND RONDE, Ore. — Disputes about who belongs in American Indian Tribes have gained much attention recently, but many of the disputes have been going on for years, even decades. They often trace their roots to incomplete and inconsistent records kept by tribes and the federal government or mistakes such as incorrect blood status calculations.

According to David Wilkins, a Lumbee Indian and professor of American Indian studies at the University of Minnesota Law School, data on tribal disenrollment is hard to come by because no one — especially the Bureau of Indian Affairs — wants to touch such a contentious topic.

However, according to Alice Langton-Sloan, of the American Indian Rights and Resources Organization, 11,000 individual American Indians' civil rights were violated by their tribe from 1997 to 2009. She has seen an increase in tribal disenrollments since 2009, affecting hundreds more. At least 39 tribes in California and several tribes from 15 other states have disenrolled some segment of their population.

The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon Enrollment Committee stripped 86 Grand Ronde Indians of their tribal citizenship last summer. The termination impacts the employment of many, who are now stripped of economic and education assistance, as well as housing and health care benefits. Elders, in particular, were hurt the worst.

Sweeping "emergency amendments" passed narrowly without the normal public comment and waiting periods, as a sharply divided Tribal Council accelerated the disenrollment process and crafted measures to ensure the disenrollment of the 86 Indians, notwithstanding mounting political opposition to disenrollment on the western Oregon reservation.

As The New York Times reported, "In recent years, experts say, [tribes have] begun routinely disenrolling Indians deemed inauthentic members of a group. And California, with dozens of tiny tribes that were decimated, scattered and then reconstituted, often out of ethnically mixed Indians, is the national hotbed of the trend."

In an essay that appeared on Fusion.com, writer Amy Stretten, a member of the

Chickahominy Tribe of Virginia, sees it this way: "Imagine having your citizenship taken away from you. That's what happens when a member of a tribe is disenrolled, or kicked out, of their tribe by their tribal government even if no criminal accusation was ever made. In the past, this happened when members of a tribe committed an offense of some sort, but it was rarely permanent. These days, it's happening more and more — often by wealthy casino tribes. Less people in the tribe, more money for remaining members. And, unlike in the past, these decisions aren't being reversed."

In Grande Ronde, the Enrollment Committee's timing appeared calculated to deprive the 86 members of their right to vote. The day members were notified of their termination was the date that the Grand Ronde government was legally required to mail absentee ballots for the upcoming elections. Disenrolling the Grand Ronde members in advance of the election allowed the pro-disenrollment Tribal leaders to disenfranchise these 86 Grand Ronde members at the ballot box.

—Source: Fusion, NativeNewsOnline.net

Illustrator draws attention to missing, murdered Native women

TORONTO, Canada — Illustrator Evan Munday is posting one drawing a day — depicting missing or murdered indigenous women — on Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper's timeline to draw attention to the disproportionate violence inflicted on indigenous women.

In the past 30 years, more than 1,200 Native women have disappeared or been killed in Canada. Munday seeks to put daily pressure on the prime minister to enact measures to find those who are missing.

In an interview with BuzzFeed.com, Munday considered "how many indigenous women's organizations and activist groups and families of the missing women have called for a public inquiry into this epidemic, and how those calls have fallen on mostly deaf ears."

The illustration campaign was also the result of comments Harper made during an interview with the Canadian Broadcast Corporation. Journalist Peter Mansbridge asked Harper whether he planned to initiate a formal inquiry into the whereabouts of missing indigenous women, noting he had rejected similar measures in the past.

The prime minister responded, "It isn't really high on our radar, to be honest," and that "ministers will continue to dialogue with those who are concerned about it."

"It was just so dismissive — and I'm sure it's an attitude many Canadians share — that I felt impelled to do some small, symbolic thing to try to put it higher on the federal government's radar," Munday said. "He needs to discuss this with the Native Women's Association of Canada. He needs to meet with the Assembly of First Nations. He needs to meet with the many provincial Native Women's groups. He needs to talk to the families of the thousands of missing women (or at least some of them)."

Munday promised to draw up and tweet portraits for as many women as he can obtain photo references for, even if it takes years.

—Source: BuzzFeed.com

Tribal head: State must do more to protect from oil impacts

BISMARCK, N.D. — Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault told a joint session of the House and Senate at the state Capitol that North Dakota lawmakers must do more to protect public safety and the environment during the state's unprecedented oil boom, which has brought people and prosperity to the state along with problems to North Dakota's five American Indian reservations.

"There is now a very large market for illegal drugs such as heroin and methamphetamine," Chairman Archambault said. "And our communities are experiencing dramatic increases in violent crimes, including murders, rapes, robberies and human trafficking."

The Chairman asked lawmakers to provide more funding for mental health services, drug treatment facilities and drug courts "to benefit all citizens of the state who struggle with addiction."

By tradition, North Dakota lawmakers hear speeches during the first week of each session by one leader from each of the state's tribes.

Standing Rock Reservation straddles the North Dakota and South Dakota border and is home to about 9,000 people. The 2.3 million-acre reservation is far from western North Dakota's oil patch, though Chairman Archambault said there are concerns among Tribal leaders about "the increasing number of environmental incidents."

An incident occurred in July on the Fort Berthold Reservation. In one of the largest oil-field spills in state history, an estimated 1 million gallons of saltwater spilled from an underground pipeline

near Mandaree before it was discovered. The saltwater — an unwanted byproduct of oil production that's considered an environmental hazard — traveled nearly 2 miles into a ravine, killing grass, bushes and trees along the way.

"The environmental impact of overflowing waste, radioactive waste, leaking pipelines and flaring gas cannot be ignored," said Chairman Archambault, who hosted President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama during a June visit to the reservation, and several students from the reservation also met with Obama in Washington, D.C. last year. "We hope North Dakota will work independently with each tribe, respecting its uniqueness, to develop an agreement that works best for that particular tribal government and its members."

—Source: The Charlotte Observer

Man charged with passing counterfeit cash at Seminole Classic

HOLLYWOOD — Bernardo Lecaros, 34, was charged with allegedly using \$5,400 in counterfeit bills at the Seminole Classic Casino in December. Three years ago, Lecaros was caught for passing \$6,300 at the same facility and at another tribal casino, for which he served a seven-month sentence.

Lecaros had another \$37,800 in fake bills in a car parked in the casino lot, according to authorities.

—Source: IndianZ.com

Broken promises on display at Native American treaties exhibit

WASHINGTON — For centuries, treaties have defined the relationship between Native American nations and the United States. More than 370 ratified treaties have helped the U.S. expand its territory and led to many broken promises made to American Indians.

A rare exhibit of such treaties at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., looks back at this history. It features one of the first compacts between the U.S. and Native American nations — the Treaty of Canandaigua. Also known as the Pickering Treaty, the agreement was signed in 1794 between the federal government and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, or the Six Nations, based in New York. The deal secured an ally for the young U.S. government after the Revolutionary War and returned more than a million acres to the Haudenosaunee. But their territory has been cut down over the years. More than two centuries later, the U.S. has kept one promise: "Article 6 says that they will provide goods in the amount of \$4,500, which shall be expended yearly forever," said museum director Kevin Gover, a citizen of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma.

Every year, those goods from the U.S. government include bolts of cloth to distribute to Tribal citizens. Haudenosaunee leaders have said that cloth is more important than money because it's a way to remind the U.S. of the treaty terms, large and small.

"The physical treaty, like all things, will eventually fade," Gover said. "But that doesn't mean the commitments that were entered into are completed or are undone."

At least seven other original paper treaties will be featured in rotation at the museum before the exhibit "Nation to Nation" ends in the fall of 2018. For now, the documents not on display are kept at the National Archives, where one almost-forgotten treaty is stored underground.

The light-blue pages of Treaty K are signed without ratifying seals or ribbons — like 17 other unratified treaties signed by representatives of the U.S. government and Native American nations in California during the Gold Rush.

California lawmakers pressured the U.S. Senate not to ratify the treaties, which promised reservation land to the Native American nations. There was one reason the lawmakers didn't want the treaties, according to the exhibit's curator Suzan Shown Harjo, of the Cheyenne and Hodulgee Muscogee Indian nations.

"The answer is always gold," she said. "And if it's not gold, it's silver. And if it's not silver, it's copper. And if it's not, go right through the metal chart."

While many treaties resulted in tragedies, Harjo said she hopes museum visitors will take away the full span of this diplomatic history.

"People always think of broken treaties and the bad paper and the bad acts, and that is our reality. But it didn't begin there. It began on an honorable footing," she said.

Anyone who wants a strong grounding in American history, Harjo added, needs to understand the history of these treaties.

"The people who are citizens of the U.S., these are your treaties. They aren't just the Indians' treaties," she said. "No one gave us anything. No one was dragging any land behind them when they came here. This was our land."

—Pechanga.net

Compiled by Special Projects Reporter Peter B. Gallagher.

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Education



Music education plays different tune at Boys & Girls Clubs tribalwide

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

Keanu Bert cradled an electric guitar and strummed its strings on a recent Thursday night at Brighton Boys & Girls Club. On drums, Jason Haydon boomed a steady four-beat while music teacher James Payne, on lead, plucked an iconic melody that crosses generations.

"It's AC/DC – Highway," said Jason, 9, who was nary a glint when the hard rock band dropped "Highway to Hell" in 1979.

For five years, Tribal kids have pounded out rhythms on drums, guitars and keyboards at music lessons disguised as fun at the club's four locations. Most children have no idea that they are key players in an ever-growing music and media production and performance program buoyed by Tribal Council and operated by professional musicians.

Robert North, director of the Boys & Girls Clubs (BGC) tribalwide, said the blossoming program for kids ages 7 and older is rooted in the club leadership's own knowledge about music instruction.

Originally, private music teachers were contracted from the outside to teach kids – a move that proved unsuccessful largely because of the culture gap, North said. When Payne was hired five years ago to be a counselor, his experience as a professional musician, private music teacher and church music director was a bonus.

"James started out as a counselor and also provided music lessons. He now works full time on instructing and coordinating music, media and performing arts," North said.

Bryan Granie, North's assistant director of BGC, is also a musician. Together, Granie and Payne oversee the purchase and installation of all BGC sound and media equipment. So far, the Hollywood club features a recording and production studio. With recent Council financial support, Big Cypress will also get recording and production capability. Additionally, both sites are in line to receive performance theaters, North said. Immokalee and Brighton clubs are next for enhancements.

"It has taken years to put together a viable music program that is available at all of our four club locations," North said. "The bigger picture is (about) encouraging, allowing and providing formats and venues for our Tribal youth to express themselves."

Typically, the music team produces a BGC youth performance every few months. The last show in 2014 starred about 15 budding musicians during Hollywood's Indian Day celebration.

Payne makes weekly rounds to provide music classes at all of the clubs, but he plays his lessons "by ear."

"I never know what I will walk into," he said. "With kids this young, if I drive a hard curriculum they will retreat. I keep it



Eileen Soler

Leviticus 'Lee' Berry enjoys a hard rock rhythm pounded by Jason Haydon on drums during a music lesson at the Brighton Boys & Girls Club.

fun so when they see they can play a song, I can help make it real."

Peripherally, the children learn how to handle the instruments, keep time, recognize verses and choruses, and appreciate song structure. Basic music theory, such as music as a language, is also taught but in smaller groups or individually depending on the interest of the child. Lessons are loose and informal but can be amped up at any time.

Leviticus "Lee" Berry, a natural on the drums, likes playing the piano. He is purposefully memorizing the notes of the treble and base clefs at the Brighton club.

"I can play 'Mary Had a Little Lamb' because I can read the music – like the scales," he said.

Jason, though he most enjoys "freestyle" playing on a whim, is also open to formal training.

At the Hollywood BGC on a recent Friday, Isabella Josh, 9, was all about formal instruction using both hands to play the chords on the bass clef and the melody on treble clef to "Ode to Joy." She read and played all notes while counting time

◆ See MUSIC on page 4B



Eileen Soler

Boys & Girls Club counselor and music teacher James Payne gives one-on-one keyboard instruction to serious student Isabella Josh at the Hollywood Boys & Girls Club.

Top honors for PECS personnel

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Pemayetv Emahaky Charter School recently named its 2014-15 teachers and non-instructional employees of the year. Every year, teachers and staff nominate and vote on those individuals they believe exemplify the high standards of the school.

"We have fantastic teachers this year; I'd select either one for district teacher of the year," said PECS principal Brian Greseth.

The teachers were finalists for Glades County District Teacher of the Year, and during the Jan. 21 ceremony, PECS Middle School Teacher of the year Tom Finney won the honor.

"We are very proud," Greseth said. "Five observers went into the classroom and saw great hands-on lessons conducted by Mr. Finney. He uses a lot of real-world applications, so algebra students can hook into why they are doing these kinds of problems. We are very excited for him."

Finney joins two other PECS teachers to have earned the distinction in the past five years.

Tom Finney, Middle School Teacher of the Year

A veteran math teacher with 25 years of experience teaching middle school students, Tom Finney thinks outside the box to keep students interested in the subject.

Every year Finney's students use math to build a scale model of a real place. In years past, students made models of the Golden Gate Bridge, Washington, D.C. and a football stadium. This year, they will create an NBA basketball arena by using math to accurately scale it to fit inside the classroom.

"The biggest reward is to see that moment when kids finally understand a concept or a problem," Finney said, "and seeing when it clicks for them, and they get that look of relief on their faces."

After graduating from the University of Minnesota, Finney began his teaching career at Yearling Middle School in Okeechobee before joining PECS five years ago.

Born and raised in a small town, Finney prefers the small school environment of PECS. Working at the Charter School gives Finney a chance to interact with elementary teachers and review their lesson plans, which isn't typical for middle school teachers.

◆ See TEACHERS on page 5B

Future NY teachers learn the BC way

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Only at Ahfachkee School could four New York college students and winter break in Florida equal three credits toward a college degree.

"Learning doesn't always happen on the Internet or in a classroom," said Teresa Hoercher, tutorial coordinator for the Cayuga Community College (CCC) Center for Academic Success.

Hoercher led the off-campus travel component to the three-credit course, called

Interdisciplinary Study in Native American Culture and Education, from Jan. 10-16. For the fourth time since the elective was created in 2010, Ahfachkee served as a learning laboratory.

At night, Hoercher and CCC students Lyndsay Corey, Vanessa Regis, Brandy

Collard and Michele Walters were at home in a cabin at the Big Cypress RV Resort. During the day, the students busily assisted teachers from recess games of duck, duck, goose with Jill Grismore's first-graders to helping Alicia Murray's fifth-graders understand the civil rights movement.

Acting Ahfachkee principal Jillian Wilson said the visiting CCC students, though different every year, have become an annual bonus to the school calendar. They provide helping hands for the teachers and are a novelty, as special guests, to students.

"The kids grow attached to them almost instantly, especially in the primary grades. We already look forward to having them back next year," Wilson said.

Hoercher said she and CCC's education coordinator Patricia Gridley created the program to provide future teachers a unique chance to explore education outside ordinary American schools and inside the realm of Indian Country.

Tribal communities like the Onondaga Reservation exist in central New York, but at the time of the program's inception, Ahfachkee high school students were learning core courses via the Internet, which piqued Gridley's interest. This year, Gridley and Hoercher chose Ahfachkee for its cross-curricular culture classes.

"It is huge that the school incorporates culture into the curriculum. It is a power statement that the school puts Seminole heritage into education because it is also the future," Hoercher said.

Still, the two admitted that spending a week in Florida in January can't be beat. Part of the cultural experience included a Sunday afternoon tour of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum and Billie Swamp Safari.

Corey said she and her peers felt welcomed at Ahfachkee from the time they were introduced. Each had opportunities to lead classroom lessons; assist children one-on-one with mathematics, writing and reading; and observe various teaching styles while all teachers followed the school's CHAMPs classroom management strategy. CHAMPs is an acronym for Conversation Help Activity Movement Participation, which leads to success.

Wilson said all future teachers go through similar clinical classroom experiences. A Florida International University graduate, Wilson visited several schools before becoming a full-fledged student teacher.

"Teachers always want to give the next generation of teachers the best real experience of what the classroom is really like. It's giving back to future teachers," Wilson said.

Eventually, the Cayuga students treated Ahfachkee students to a PowerPoint presentation about what life is like in central New York.

They included the dreaded winter weather.

"It was 9 degrees below zero with the chill factor on the morning we left. We wanted to bring a snowball, but couldn't. Next time," Hoercher said.

"Teachers always want to give the next generation of teachers the best real experience of what the classroom is really like."

—Jillian Wilson, acting Ahfachkee principal



Eileen Soler

Brandy Collard, who is scheduled to graduate in May with an associate degree in early childhood education from Cayuga Community College, helps Ahfachkee School student Thelma Billie during culture class.

MERRY CHRISTMAS



Beverly Bidney

Carter Wilcox, 4, speaks with Santa Dec. 18 during the Hollywood Preschool Christmas program.



Beverly Bidney



Beverly Bidney

Redfeather Robbins, 4, opens her arms to catch the falling 'snow' during the 'Winter Wonderland' performance at the Hollywood Preschool Christmas program.



Beverly Bidney

Three-year-old preschoolers perform 'Five Little Bells' for a crowd of family and friends at Hollywood Headquarters.

Four-year-old classmates Jessell Young, Jahcelin Calisce and Riley Yzaguirre play perfect little angels in the Nativity scene during the Hollywood Preschool Christmas program.



Eileen Soler

Ahfachkee School Preschool students John Hall, Drake Green, Curtis Motlow and Bernard Robbins sing a sleepy holiday tune in Big Cypress.



Eileen Soler

Aaliyah Billie displays holiday spirit Dec. 12 at Ahfachkee School's An Old-Fashioned Christmas Concert.



Beverly Bidney

Jarvis Odem, 1, isn't sure how he feels about sitting on Santa's lap during the Hollywood Preschool Christmas program.



Beverly Bidney

Jenesys Stewart, 4, has her arms full as she tries to balance presents from Santa after the Hollywood Preschool Christmas program.



Eileen Soler

Preschool students at Ahfachkee School shake jingle bells and sing a carol at the school's Christmas concert.



Eileen Soler

Ahfachkee School kindergartner Thelma Tigertail leaps for joy during a joyful Christmas song during the show.



Eileen Soler

Damian Fish rings in the holidays by playing his part in the Ahfachkee School bell choir during the Christmas concert.



Eileen Soler

Ahfachkee School music teacher John Lott directs fifth-graders for a rendition of 'Deck the Halls' at the school's An Old-Fashioned Christmas Concert.

PECS December students of the month



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School elementary students of the month: Timothy Urbina, Bailey Bowers, Serene King, Brandon Gabbard, Jovanny Torres, Jessie Martinez, Madison Ayuso, Waylon Yates, Jordan Johnson, Alton Crowell, Lily Duncan, Keiyana Osceola, Deagen Osceola, Austin Thomas, Gabe Williams, Diego Gopher, Kalyan Hammil, Kayven Emley and Virginia Garcia.



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas

Middle school students of the month: Alyssa Gonzalez, Aleina Micco and Kaleb Doctor.

Students share holiday spirit

BY RACHEL BUXTON
Freelance Writer

BRIGHTON — Pemayetv Emahakv students learned the real meaning of Christmas Dec. 8 when kids from the Real Life Children's Ranch in Okeechobee visited the Charter School for a night of fellowship and holiday cheer.

"It is just a small way we can give back," said Lewis Gopher, Parent Teacher Student Organization president. "We want to build a relationship that can grow so in the future we can be productive."

Over the past several holiday seasons, PECS alternated between giving back to the Real Life Children's Ranch — an organization that provides a loving, Christian environment for abused or abandoned children — and Toys for Tots — a program started by the U.S. Marine Corps that delivers a message of hope through a new present at Christmas to less-fortunate children.

Michele Thomas, administrative assistant at PECS, said they invited the Real Life Children's Ranch to the school last year to host a culture exchange and to allow students to meet the children they were helping.

With the success of the event, PECS asked them back to the reservation, starting a new tradition and another way to teach the meaning of giving to Tribal youth.

"When we were growing up we were always on the receiving side and now we are able to be on the giving side," Thomas

said. "And the students really enjoy it."

PECS students anxiously lined the school's breezeway and waved as the vans shuttling children arrived. The two groups of children took off to the playground and decorated culture camp.

Tribal students helped the younger children from the Ranch up and down the slides, played tetherball and climbed to the top of the rock wall together.

"Some of them [Tribal students] would say, 'I played football with that kid. I had no clue they didn't have a mom or a dad or that they lived in a group home,'" Thomas said. "So it really hit home and with the message that we wanted to send, that we were helping children that didn't fit the mold of some of the families that our kids had or the things that they had."

While on the playground, Fire Rescue arrived with a special visitor.

"So we're having this great time and they hear the sirens," said Mark Mayers, of the Real Life Children's Ranch. "They were a little apprehensive at first obviously because you know what that [sirens] means, but when they saw that it was Santa



Rachel Buxton

Students in kindergarten through second grade sing 'All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth' Dec. 8.



Rachel Buxton

Asael from the Real Life Children's Ranch spends a special moment with Santa. Students from Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School hosted a holiday event for the children at Real Life.

and that he would come and just spend time with them and greet them, it just really helps brighten their hearts and you can see it in their smiles and their eyes."

Tribal grades then took turns singing Christmas carols in Creek.

They entertained the children with classics, such as "All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth" and "Jingle Bells," and they included the ever-popular song "Let It Go" from the Disney movie "Frozen."

Students and guests shared a traditional Seminole meal of Indian tacos before Santa handed out presents.

PECS students also made their guests goodie bags complete with trinkets and beaded Seminole necklaces.

The children from the Real Life Children's Ranch left filled with joy but not before doling out hugs and appreciation.

"They have been put down most of their life, told what they can't do, why they can't do it, how bad they are, minimizing their strengths," Mayers said. "So the idea that somebody would do this just for them is almost memorizing. We are just so thankful."

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Ahfachkee homecoming brings past to present



Eileen Soler

Ahfachkee School students dance the limbo Jan. 16 during a sock-hop themed homecoming dance at the Big Cypress Community Center.



Eileen Soler

Dressed to the nines, from left, Janessa Jones, Mikiyela Cypress, Edie Robbins and Jazmine Billie pose for a friendship photo at the Ahfachkee School homecoming dance.



Eileen Soler

Homecoming king Arnold Billie and homecoming queen Jazmine Billie are crowned at the Ahfachkee School homecoming dance.

MUSIC

From page 1B

for each note according to whole, half and quarter notes.

For nearly every child, there is a different expression and desire, Payne said. For Dwayne Billie, it's country music. For Jason, it's pop. Lee likes rock. Isabella likes it all.

"It's fun," Isabella said. Taylor Maudlin, site manager at the Brighton club, said children look forward to lessons with Payne. "At first they were timid and didn't want to be put on the spot. But now, they ask for him," Maudlin said.

The students are also making marked improvements – an opinion based on what her ears tell her.

"For the first few weeks? All noise. Now, I hear rhythm and music," she said.

North said several club members who also took music classes and participated in music program performances have gone on to become serious musicians.

North's son RC North is now a member of the alternative progressive rock band Hybiskus, which performed last year at the 31st annual Gathering of Nations in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Cameron Osceola, the eldest of The Osceola Brothers Band, which performed Jan. 9 at the Hard Rock Cafe, was also a BGC member, North said.

"After-school and summer

programs allow participating youth to express themselves in a positive manner and gain vital social interactive skills," North said. "I think we have pretty close to the perfect formula for providing the performing arts opportunities to all participating club youth."



Eileen Soler

Big Cypress Boys & Girls Club members Lane Andrews, Nicholus Andrews and Dyami Koenes jam on drums and keyboard, while counselor James Payne mentors children in constructive music making.



Eileen Soler

Ahfachkee School instructional aide Jodi-Ann Puranda-Emanuel makes her entrance onto the red carpet at the school's homecoming dance at the Big Cypress Community Center.



Eileen Soler

Reggie Ling, left, and Ricky Garza make the best of a souped-up cardboard '57 Chevy at the Ahfachkee School homecoming.

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Awards bestowed to top PECS performers

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Students at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School earned accolades Jan. 15 for their efforts during the recently completed nine week school session. Students collected their awards from principal Brian Greseth while parents proudly watched.

As he distributed medals for reading, Greseth emphasized the importance of the activity at home. Students earn points, or steps, for every 15 minutes of reading; medals are given for 100, 200, 300 and 400 steps – 100 steps are equal to 25 hours of reading.

“The most important thing you can do for your children at home is to read with them,” Greseth said. “Show them reading is important to you.”

Although the reading program is designed to be completed at home, students can also earn credit in school.

A former high school basketball coach, Greseth knows the value of practice.

“In athletics, practicing gets you ready and strong,” Greseth said. “As kids practice reading, they get stronger and stronger.”



Beverly Bidney

Second-grader Kalissa Huff checks out her classmates Jan. 15 as they display their certificates touting their improvements during the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School nine week awards ceremony.



Beverly Bidney

Joey Micco and his son, Koby Micco, 7, review the awards he earned during the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School nine week awards ceremony.



Beverly Bidney

Jayleigh Braswell, left, is so proud of her 100 steps award, she holds it up for all to see, while Raylen Smith quietly accepts his honor.



Beverly Bidney

Second-grader Madison Ayuso happily holds up her award for reading during the nine week awards ceremony.



Beverly Bidney

Pictured are the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School teachers and non-instructional employees of the year. From left are Tim Thomas, Lydia Pell, Jimi Huff and Tom Finney on the PECS campus Jan. 9.

TEACHERS

From page 1B

He teaches seventh- and eighth-grade math classes and enjoys teaching students for two consecutive years.

Finney's students have consistently showed some of the highest eighth-grade growth percentages on the FCAT Math Assessments in the Heartland Consortium. Over the last three years, Finney has been the only Algebra 1 teacher in the Heartland Consortium to have all his students pass the end-of-course Algebra 1 exams, Greseth said.

“The school provides opportunities to go to teaching conferences to get new, fresh ideas,” Finney said. “The staff is friendly and they bend over backwards to make sure we have what we need in the classrooms.”

Lydia Pell, Elementary Teacher of the Year

Lydia Pell loves watching her students grow and progress through the school year. As an exceptional student education (ESE) teacher, she knows not every student learns the same way, so she employs various programs and strategies to help her students achieve success.

“I love teaching and finding ways to help them learn,” she said. “I guide them along their path. When they learn to read, they are proud and I'm proud of them.”

Pell said she understands her students well and structures the classroom to accommodate them, allowing students to stand up during certain lessons and walk around when needed. To ensure even reluctant readers gain familiarity with their grade level curriculum, Pell exposes students to it as much as possible and implements corrective reading strategies to help them improve.

PECS provides ESE students a host of therapies, and scheduling those sessions and classroom time is an ongoing challenge for Pell.

“The therapists that come here are the best of the best,” she said.

Pell began her career in 1985 as an ESE paraprofessional in Lee County. While working as a paraprofessional at Moore Haven Elementary School, she earned a bachelor's degree from Florida Gulf Coast University in 2006 and became a full-time teacher. She is a certified ESE specialist and has been teaching at PECS for three years.

“PECS is a wonderful place to teach,” she said. “Teachers are appreciated and respected by the administration, staff and parents. It's the best place I've ever worked.”

Jimi Huff, Culture Employee of the Year

Language teacher Jimi Huff realizes teaching an old culture to a new generation

poses a challenge. But every time she hears students using Creek words in the hallways, she knows she has done her job.

“We teach everyday words students can use wherever they are,” Huff said. “We need to keep up with technology and be rooted in the old culture. I'm in both worlds and they will be, too.”

She said students respond best to hands-on learning, so she incorporates crafts into her curriculum. Huff also embraces technology to help pass the Tribe's history to youth. The PECS Culture Department created a website, www.CreekCulturalEducation.com, for students as a tool to help with words, phrases, stories and lessons.

“Students can log on and make the connection that the old is new and is moving into the 21st century,” Huff said. “We have to remember the old times and learn about them, but times change.”

Teaching Creek improves Huff's language skills, too. Although she almost speaks Creek fluently, she sees room for improvement. She said younger kids are more eager to learn than older ones, who seem more set in their ways, but she forges ahead regardless.

Before joining PECS three years ago, Huff taught at the Brighton Preschool for 10 years. She is working toward a bachelor's degree at Indian River State College and plans to remain at PECS after earning it.

“PECS is different than the preschool; it's more fast-paced,” she said. “I love it here.”

Tim Thomas, Non-instructional Employee of the Year

Tim Thomas is a jack-of-all-trades for PECS; he drives a school bus, maintains the school grounds and buildings, coaches the girls basketball team and helps teachers with supplies and services.

Thomas is proud of the girls basketball team and how well its players have performed at other schools after playing for PECS. When he sends them off to conquer the next level of the sport, he follows the careers of students like Shae Pierce, Sydnee and Darlah Cypress, and Sunny Beardon with joy.

“I love working here,” Thomas said. “I stay busy. Teachers always need something, so I'm glad to be here to assist them in any way I can.”

His biggest challenge isn't with students or staff; it's with unwanted animals, such as snakes and raccoons, that sometimes make their way onto the PECS campus. He ensures they avoid human contact.

Thomas has been an employee of the Tribe since 2003 and is in his third year at PECS.

“The atmosphere here is like a big family,” he said. “You can't ask for anything more.”



Photo courtesy of Brian Greseth

Tom Finney, left, is congratulated by district superintendent Scott Bass Jan. 21 during the Glades County District Teacher of the Year ceremony.

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Sports



Whitney Osceola rebounds in life thanks to basketball, daughter

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor



Kevin Johnson

Broward College freshman guard Whitney Osceola controls the ball against Miami Dade College Jan. 7 in Davie. Osceola, 22, earned a scholarship after making the team as a walk-on.

DAVIE — When Whitney Osceola arrived at tryouts for the Broward College women's basketball team, head coach Melissa Baker wasn't expecting much from the player she knew little about.

The 5-foot-1, single mother who had battled addiction problems and had been away from basketball for four years seemed an unlikely candidate to take a spot on any college basketball team.

Determined to use education and athletics to carve out a better life for herself and her 3-year-old daughter, Janiya, Osceola enrolled at Broward and made the team despite seemingly insurmountable odds. Not only did the freshman guard win a spot on the roster this season, but she also earned a scholarship and quickly became a meaningful part of the program.

Baker said Osceola's love for the game and life "ignited everyone."

"She was a walk-on, but she worked really hard at the beginning of the season and gave us this passion, this light, and I gave her a scholarship for it," Baker said. "She's a great story."

Not all the chapters in that story have been cheerful, but the current one is filled with inspiration and perspiration as Osceola pursues her goals, which include earning a degree from Broward and then moving on to a Division II college.

"She's trying to get her education, follow her passion of basketball, plus be a mom. She's doing some great things," Baker said. "It's really hard. She's got a lot on her plate."

After she tackles her academic goals, Osceola has her hopes pinned on a potential

"She worked really hard at the beginning of the season and gave us this passion, this light."

—Melissa Baker, Broward College women's basketball head coach

career with the Tribe.

"I want to do business administration, but I'm kind of leaning toward political science because I really want to get involved with my Tribe," said Osceola, who grew up on the Hollywood Reservation. "I think to have a background in politics and know how government works and the economy, maybe I can give a little back to my Tribe positively."

Osceola faces challenges before the sun rises. Just getting to school for predawn practices before classes poses obstacles for Osceola, who lives in a Pembroke Pines apartment with a relative. Osceola doesn't own a car, so she often uses a bicycle for the 7-mile trek to Davie. The pedals start moving at about 4:45 a.m.

"We have 6 a.m. practices," Osceola said. "I have late nights because I have to study. I'll get like three hours of sleep and then come to school and be here by 5:30.

I'm always the first one on the court in the morning. I go to class, then I sleep in the locker room (between classes) because I'm so tired."

While juggling books and basketballs, Osceola registered a 2.3 grade point average in the fall semester.

"It's not where I want it to be, but getting back into the groove and everything, I was real proud of myself. This semester I plan to get A's and B's," she said.

On the court, Osceola has received passing grades, too. Baker described her as "our energy." Although Osceola is not a starter, her impact — be it her relentless defense against players often several inches taller or her high-powered intensity that brings her out of her chair as often as the team's coaches — is felt if she's in the game or on the bench.

"She shows great leadership, even if she doesn't play a lot of minutes," Baker

said. "She's getting some minutes now because she's worked hard for it, but at the beginning of the season she didn't play a lot of minutes, and she still was everyone's support system."

Osceola, who said her parents live in other states, pointed to her own support system locally that provides a vital foundation in her life.

Her aunt, Geraldine Osceola, frequently cares for Janiya.

"She's basically raising her while I get my life together," she said.

Kendra Osceola Frank — a cousin who often attends games — also plays a big role.

"It's my work ethic, but it's her keeping my mind straight," Whitney Osceola said. "She doesn't sugarcoat anything. She tells me how it is. When I'm slacking, she lets me know that I've got to pick it up. She's at every game."

♦ See WHITNEY OSCEOLA on page 2C

Kids b-ball tourney a slam dunk at new Chupco's Landing gym

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

FORT PIERCE — Sixty-three basketball-loving kids converged Dec. 22 in

Fort Pierce for a tribalwide youth tournament at Chupco's Landing Community Center.

The event was a hit with kids from Big Cypress, Brighton, Fort Pierce and Hollywood. And while competition was

fierce among the teams comprised of 5-6, 7-8 and 9-12-year-olds, friendship was the real winner.

"Our goal was to let them get to know children from other reservations and

learn good sportsmanship in an organized setting," said Remus Griffin, Fort Pierce Recreation aide. "But the main thing is the fellowship with relatives and other Tribal members."

The gym, which features a full-size basketball court and six retractable hoops, showed its flexibility throughout the day. To accommodate the different age groups, the space was converted during the tournament from one full-size court to two smaller courts — a half-court and a smaller full-court.

Griffin plans to host more tribalwide activities at the site.

"We've been waiting in Fort Pierce for a long time to have a sports facility," he said. "It's something to share."

Brighton captured all age categories during the competition and had fun in the process. Javaris Johnson, 9, of Brighton, said scoring points was the best part of the day.

"We're here to have fun," added Jaytron Baker, 11. "I've seen cousins I haven't seen in a while."

Adults enjoyed the camaraderie as well, but never forgot their roles as mentors and coaches.

"The kids are excited to leave the reservation and they love basketball," said Big Cypress coach and Recreation coordinator Dessie Thomas.

She said youth love basketball and were excited to meet in Fort Pierce, where she encouraged them to play as a team and never give up. Dallas Nunez, Brighton Recreation site manager, said the event was also a great way to support Chupco and their new facility.

"It's a fun day," said Hollywood coach and Recreation aide Ashley Wilcox. "They are here just to play and meet their family and friends. It's bonding, not competition for them."



Beverly Bidney

Hollywood and Brighton 5-6-year-old teams compete Dec. 22 on the pee-wee sized full-court at the tribalwide youth basketball tournament at Chupco's Landing in Fort Pierce.

FSU Seminoles wrap up 13-1 football season

SUBMITTED BY JUSTIN MOTLOW
Florida State University

TALLAHASSEE — Man, it was great to finally take that first trip to an away game with the Florida State University football team. Everyone flew out to Los Angeles on a chartered plane and we dressed out for the game. As a redshirt freshman, I knew I would not actually play, but it was fantastic to stand, all dressed in pads and everything, on the sidelines for the first college football playoff game.

It was really fun out at the Rose Bowl. We had free time to get out and see Los Angeles, where there is so much to do. We worked hard all week in practice, but we were also able to do a little sightseeing. And, obviously, the final score (a 59-20 loss), was extremely disappointing. I don't want to take anything away from Oregon, but anyone who saw that game knows we beat ourselves. You can't turn the ball over that many times and expect to win.

Very frustrating. We racked up more than 500 yards in total offense and they scored 30 points off our mistakes. I really don't know what happened. I felt we had good practices. We were ready. There was no nervousness that I could feel. Other than the fact we were out in L.A., it was like any game we played all season long. It was quite a surprise to lose that game, especially because we had won 29 in a row. Not many teams in the history of football can beat that.

Oregon played a good game. I can't take anything away from them. But, you know, it seems like every team we played all season brought their "A" game to us. The longer we kept winning the worse it got. Everybody wants to beat the defending national champions and end the winning streak. For us, it was the next game on the schedule; for everybody else it was their biggest game of the year.

We were behind at halftime in a lot of our games. Some of them way behind, yet we always came back to win. That gave us confidence. It never got to cockiness. It was never a situation where we felt like we got this one, we don't have to worry. You can't blame this loss on overconfidence. We knew Oregon was a good team, but we never expected to get beat like that. Then look what happened to them in the championship game, crushed by Ohio State (42-20) — the team a lot of people were saying did not deserve to be in the final four. I mean how incredible were they? Beating Alabama and then Oregon? Nobody would have ever expected that.

That's one good thing about the playoff system. You get to prove your rank right out on the field, not by someone's vote. I know it seemed unfair to people that we were defending national champs and unbeaten and they kept dropping us to No. 2 or 3 in the rankings, based on the strength of schedule, I guess. But, when each team you play is showing up for their biggest game, as I said, it really doesn't matter what their record is, not on that day.

I know a lot of the fans were debating this all year, but really, we never paid much attention to it. As long as we were up there among the playoff teams, we didn't care if we were No. 1 or No. 4. Now, if we had gone through the year undefeated and we didn't make the playoffs, then you would have a problem.

Now we are all looking forward to workouts, which start soon, and spring practice, which begins in March. I really have no earthly idea how things are going to work out now. With Jameis Winston gone to the pros, I won't know anything about the quarterback situation until spring. Same with myself.

♦ See CONCLUSION on page 3C



Two Seminole teams take women's championships at NASA tournament

BY SCOTT MCKIE BRINGS PLENTY
Cherokee One Feather

CHEROKEE, N.C. — Two teams representing the Seminole Tribe of Florida won championships at the NASA basketball tournament held in Cherokee, North Carolina from Jan. 16-17. YDWI captured the Women's division and Lady Legends took the Women's Legends division.

Thirty-two teams participated in this year's double-elimination tournament representing several Tribes including the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI), Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Seminole Tribe and Iroquois from New York.

"It's been a success," said tournament organizer Tim Smith, of the Cherokee Life Recreation program. "But I couldn't do it without our staff here at Cherokee Life. They've put in close to 30 hours in two days."

Smith praised the level of play at this year's tournament: "We love the sportsmanship. We love the camaraderie. There are some athletes out there," he said.

He said tournaments encourage younger players at the high school level to work hard to eventually play at the college level.

"There's college players playing this. It's very successful, and NAYO and NASA are the longest-running Indian sports organizations in the country," Smith said.

The EBCI Boyz won the Men's division and became the first team from the EBCI to win the division since 1999. To qualify for the championship round, they defeated four teams, including Has Beens (Mississippi), South Florida Select (Florida), Udohiyu (North Carolina) and the Ballerz, representing the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, who they met in the finals.

The first game of the finals started out with the Ballerz taking a 33-19 lead at the half over the EBCI Boyz. They kept it up in the second half to take the game at 67-50 and force a final game.

The final game was close with the EBCI Boyz leading by eight (32-24) at the half. The EBCI Boyz pulled away some in the second half to take a 71-58 victory and the title.

The Men's Legends division saw two EBCI teams pitted against one another. It was a close game and Crazy Nation led 27-24 at the half over MoTown's Finest. Crazy Nation kept the pressure up in the second half and led by as many as 13 at one point, but MoTown wouldn't quit. They came back point by point and tied the game at



YDWI, representing the Seminole Tribe of Florida, celebrate winning the Women's division for the second consecutive year during the NASA basketball tournament held in Cherokee, North Carolina from Jan. 16-17.

43-43 with just over one minute left. The game would be tied at 45-45 at the end of regulation and force an overtime.

MoTown's Finest converted on several key free throws in the overtime period to give them a 52-46 victory.

The Women's division matched YDWI, representing the Seminole Tribe of Florida, against Faded Glory. YDWI took an early lead and led by 28 (52-24) at the half. They extended that lead in the second half and took a 92-53 victory and won their second NASA championship in a row.

The Women's Legends division final was between the Lady Legends, representing the Seminole Tribe of Florida, and the Chahta Ohoyos, representing the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. The Lady Legends led 23-12 at the half and kept up the pressure in the second half to take the title with a 43-25 win.

This article originally appeared in the Cherokee One Feather and was reprinted with permission from the publication.



Lady Legends, representing the Seminole Tribe, pose after winning the Women's Legends division.

★ WHITNEY OSCEOLA From page 1C

Osceola spent Jan. 7 — her 22nd birthday — playing in front of a handful of her supporters, including her sister Chauncey, Geraldine, Kendra and a tiny bundle of joy who sprinted onto the court to hug her mother during halftime of Broward's 83-68 home loss against Miami Dade College at the George E. Meyer Gymnasium.

Osceola carried Janiya into the locker room at the break. Midway through the second half, with her daughter watching from the bleachers, Osceola scored her only points of the game on a 3-point shot that trimmed Miami Dade's lead to 11, but Broward's rally fizzled as the Seahawks' record fell to 3-11.

Broward's third victory of the season came Dec. 29 as Osceola had three points, two steals and one assist in a 94-51 win against the University of Wisconsin-Waukesha.

After being away from basketball since 2011, Osceola encountered nerves and conditioning issues upon her return.

"I was nervous, but I came in and made a 3 my first game," she said. "I'm still kind of overweight, so I still can't really move like I want to, but being a part of a team again is just amazing."

The team provides an international education in itself with players from Estonia, Spain and the Netherlands on the roster. Osceola said she's learned about their cultures while telling them about her own.

"The one from the Netherlands cooks three times a day. She doesn't eat any fast food," Osceola said. "My Estonia friend, Jane, comes from a country where you don't talk on the basketball court, you just play. The one from Spain barely speaks English, but she's very outgoing."

Before the season, Osceola hadn't been on a team since high school when she played for two years at American Heritage School in Plantation. During her senior year, she stopped attending classes when she became pregnant with Janiya.

Eventually, Osceola's life became rocky.

"I've been through a lot in my life — rehab, addiction..." said Osceola, who tearfully admitted that her addiction "took a toll and I hit rock bottom."

But Osceola is proof that a 5-foot-1 guard can be a big rebounder. She bounced back, earned her GED and said she has lived a clean life since last spring.

"March will make it one year," she said.

Osceola said her determination to play basketball, earn degrees and make a better life for her family keeps her motivated.

"I want to keep broadening my education," she said. "I want to keep learning."

"She's very resilient and it's all because of her love for life," Baker said. "She's a great, great inspiration. She motivates a lot of people around here."

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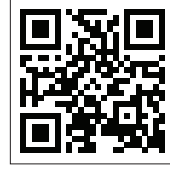
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Trey Boone gets a taste of the NBA in Orlando

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

ORLANDO — Forty-five minutes after the Orlando Magic and Memphis Grizzlies finished their NBA game Jan. 16, Trey Boone walked onto the court at Amway Center with his teammates from the Vanguard School boys basketball team.

Nearly all the glamour and noise that surrounded the game — the 18,141 fans, the Magic cheerleaders and dancers, the raucous thunder sticks, the free T-shirts that are blasted into the stands — were gone, but the aura of playing a game in an NBA arena remained intact for the high schoolers as Vanguard faced Lakeland's George Jenkins in a late-night tilt. Each season only a few high school teams get a chance to play at Amway before or after a Magic game.

"It was amazing to have that experience. A lot of Tribal members don't have that experience. I'm blessed to have that," said Boone, a senior captain who has started every game for Vanguard at guard since he arrived at the Lake Wales school from Immokalee two years ago.

Before the high school game tipped off at about 10:15 p.m., Boone already had a memorable evening thanks to being selected with four of his teammates to participate in the Magic's pregame festivities. Boone was on the court at the front of a high-five line that greeted Magic starters as they were introduced. He exchanged high-fives with Channing Frye, Devyn Mable, Victor Oladipo, Elfrid Payton and Nikola Vucevic.

"That was crazy, just to be with the NBA players and the energy you feel," Boone said.

From section 111, the Vanguard team watched the Magic fall to the Grizzlies, 106-96. It was the second NBA game Boone has attended; the first was earlier this season. He has plenty of admiration for the pros.

"I know how hard they worked to get to this level," he said.



Kevin Johnson

The Vanguard School senior guard Trey Boone controls the ball Jan. 16 during a game against George Jenkins High School at the Amway Center in Orlando. Boone is a captain for Vanguard.

With a longer court to run and a deeper 3-point line to grasp, the high school game — not surprisingly — featured some early sloppiness as players adjusted. Jenkins led 10-3 after the first quarter and 19-15 at halftime.

Boone, a 3-point specialist, came up

short on a few attempts from beyond the arc in the first half but found his stride in the second half with back-to-back 3-pointers; the first tied the game at 28-28, the latter sliced Jenkins' lead to 32-31.

Vanguard, a Class 2A school with an enrollment of about 120 kids, led by two

with five minutes left in the game, but Jenkins, a 7A school, nudged ahead and pulled out a 43-40 win. Boone finished with six points and three rebounds.

"We're here to have fun," Vanguard coach Dan Sheppard said before the game. "It's an experience they'll never forget."



Kevin Johnson

Trey Boone fires a pass over two George Jenkins players during a high school basketball game that followed the Memphis Grizzlies and Orlando Magic game at the Amway Center in Orlando.



Kevin Johnson

The Vanguard School senior guard Trey Boone greets Orlando Magic guard Victor Oladipo during pregame player introductions Jan. 16 at the Amway Center in Orlando. The Magic lost to Memphis, 106-96.



Kevin Johnson

As a George Jenkins player takes a shot, Vanguard's Trey Boone attempts to make a block during a high school game at the Amway Center.

A small entourage from the Immokalee Reservation — including Boone's parents, Johnny and Gale — made the three-and-a-half hour drive to watch the game.

The game didn't count in the record books for Vanguard, which won 13 of its first 16 games thanks in part to strong shooting from Boone.

"He's played well. He's shot really well. I think he's averaging about 16 points. He's had a good season," Sheppard said. "He works hard; he plays hard. We're proud of him as a leader. He's really stepped up."

The game marked the second time in six months that Boone has played in an NBA arena. Last summer he helped the Tribe's Rez Runners win the Native American Basketball Invitational at US Airways Center, the home of the Phoenix Suns.

Basketball isn't the only sport Boone has excelled at this academic year. In the fall, he advanced to the Class 1A state regionals in golf. During the regular season, his best scores for 9-hole matches were in the mid-30s. He shot a 78 in the 18-hole Class 1A-District 16 tournament that earned him the trip to regionals.

"He hits the ball a long way," said Sheppard, who also coaches Vanguard's golf team.

Boone hopes to continue to play double duty in college. He said he's looking at Division II schools where he might be able to play golf and basketball. Golf, which he started playing at age 6, is his primary sport.

Similar to his duties on the basketball team, Boone served as a captain on the golf squad.

"I like the leadership," Boone said.

"He leads by example. He does well in the classroom. I'm proud of him," Sheppard said.

◆ CONCLUSION From page 1C

I don't know how I'm going to fit in; each year they bring in more and more good guys. Strong competition. But standing on that sideline in the Rose Bowl, I could see myself out there on the field, making plays. I know I can do it. I just have to go out there and prove myself. Got to be able to compete.

I learned a lot from Jameis. On the field, he is one of the greatest football players I have ever seen. Off the field, he had his problems, but this year, after the last incident, I think he finally knew it and had to grow up. But on the field, there were never any problems. He is a natural leader who really knows how to bring the best out of his teammates. And he has a very smart football IQ. I would not hesitate to pick him first in the draft. Marcus Mariota (Oregon QB) was very impressive. I was right there on the sidelines watching him. But if I was Tampa Bay, I would pick Winston in the draft. Because I'm from Tampa, that would be incredible. Wherever he goes, I wish him all the luck in the world.

My parents came to all the home games and I know other Tribal members were there, a lot of them I didn't really know, but I knew they were there. I only got home twice during the season. Moving to Tallahassee, playing football for the defending national champs and attending school full time was difficult. I've always been a good student, but my grades suffered a little bit. I am working hard on bringing them back up now.

I'm not complaining. It's been a great year. Obviously, we were all very disappointed and sad after the Oregon game. But once that wore off, we all realized what a great year we had. We beat some great teams in some very exciting games. We hold our heads up high.

Justin Motlow, son of Clarence and Lisa Motlow, is a Seminole Tribal member enrolled at Florida State University where he plays for the FSU Seminoles football team.

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Ahfachkee kids receive tips about golf, life from PGA Tour winner

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

BIG CYPRESS — Notah Begay III didn't need a full set of golf clubs to impress 17 students from the Ahfachkee School.

The four-time winner on the PGA Tour used just two clubs — a 7-iron and a 3-wood that he borrowed from Big Cypress First Baptist Church Pastor Salaw Hummingbird — to teach basic fundamentals of a golf swing Jan. 22 at the Tribe's new practice range on West Boundry Road.

Gathered near a grassy hitting area, the kids watched and listened to a player who won more than \$3 million during his peak years on the Tour in 1999 and 2000.

"That went into the clouds," exclaimed third-grader Peggy Sue Cypress after Begay launched a shot with a 3-wood.

Begay, a Native American (Navajo/San Felipe/Isleta Pueblos) who learned to play golf while growing up in New Mexico, spent part of the 35-minute session explaining proper techniques for gripping, alignment and stance before he began hitting balls into the vast open field dotted with yardage signs.

"You've got a great facility here. If you're interested in golf, it's right here," Begay, 42, told the students.

The session carried more significance than just golf tips.

"Find out what drives you, and want to be a positive part of your community," Begay said.

Begay's path to becoming a positive part of his community began when he was a youngster. Determined to learn the game, Begay said he collected recyclable cans and bottles on the streets of Albuquerque to scrape up the \$2.50 for buckets of balls at a practice range.

"By age 9, there weren't enough empty cans on the side of streets to recycle," he said.

Eventually, Begay worked at a golf course and earned free practice time as compensation rather than money. Through relentless practice, he blossomed into one of the nation's elite junior players and earned a scholarship to play at Stanford University, where he became a teammate and friend of Tiger Woods.

"Does anyone know a golfer other than Tiger Woods?" Begay asked the students, who responded, "no."

Begay rarely plays in PGA Tour events these days, but he's still a widely recognized figure in the sport as an analyst with the Golf Channel and NBC. He's also involved in the Notah Begay III Foundation, an organization he created to promote health and wellness in Native American children while reducing childhood obesity and diabetes.

"Anything that you can do to keep their interest level — get them exercising, get them outside, get them committed to something — is beneficial in

all other aspects of life," Begay said after the session ended. "That's why I'm a big advocate in these types of golf facilities and the sport of golf because it gets you outside...and it gets you away from screen time — the phone, the tablet or the computer."

In addition to his foundation, Begay is also helping Tribes by designing their golf courses. He's been involved in the construction of new courses for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe in Arizona, the Prairie Band Potawatomi in Kansas and the Eastern Band of Cherokee in North Carolina.

"I've done three properties," Begay said, "and I'm very proud of them."

All the new courses use culture references in their names. For example, the Sewailo club in Tucson means "flower world" in the Pascua Yaqui language.

As for Big Cypress, Begay said he could envision a course on the reservation.

"I see the opportunity to build a beautiful, world-class 18-hole facility that would service primarily the community and the development of a first-rate golf program for the kids," he said.

Begay serves as proof of a Native American who discovered a love for golf at a young age and turned that affection into a prosperous career.

"Florida is big into youth golf, and our kids have just as much talent as anybody else," Begay said. "We have the opportunity here to really give them a leg up in terms of getting into a sport that is individually based. You don't have the challenges of fielding a 40-man football team."

Under the tutelage of Ahfachkee golf coach Amos Mazzant, youngsters

learn all aspects of golf, including the sportsmanship core that tends to separate golf from other sports.

"We don't grade them on how well they perform; we grade them on their ability to be kind to one another, how they treat one another, if they try at all. Those are all points," said Mazzant, who gave Begay a tour of the range before introducing him to the students.



After providing golf tips, pro golfer Notah Begay III poses with Ahfachkee School students Sarah Robbins, left, and Caidence Guzman Billie Jan. 22 at the Big Cypress golf practice range.



Native American and four-time PGA Tour winner Notah Begay III demonstrates a golf stance — not his — in front of Ahfachkee School students Jan. 22 at the Tribe's practice range on the Big Cypress Reservation.



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas

Players and coaches from Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's boys and girls basketball teams join Embry-Riddle standout basketball player DeForest Carter on Jan. 17 in Daytona Beach before Embry-Riddle's game against Webber International.

Kids learn from Embry-Riddle's record-setting DeForest Carter

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

DAYTONA BEACH — Students from Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's basketball teams arrived in Daytona Beach on Jan. 17 to watch Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's all-time leader in assists and steals, but they wanted to see something else from DeForest Carter.

"One of the kids said you've got to dunk," Carter said.

Just before time expired in the first half, Carter fulfilled the youngster's request with a steal and a dunk as part of another all-around solid performance from the senior point guard from the Big Cypress Reservation. Carter finished with 11 points, five steals and four assists as Embry-Riddle improved to 17-0 with a 96-71 win against Webber International.

Communication on the court by Embry-Riddle, the second-ranked team in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), left a lasting impression on the PECS players.

"If we keep on pushing, we'll be there one day," Vivianna Gore, 14, said. "We're going to try to communicate more."

Before the game, Carter met with the PECS players and coaches, including girls coach Tim Thomas.

"When I played on the rez, he was a big help," Carter said.

Thomas was among Carter's coaches in youth and travel basketball. Carter recalled a game when he forgot to bring his sneakers and ended up finding success while wearing Thomas' sneakers.

"I had a good game," Carter said.

Carter has produced plenty of good games during his four years at Embry-Riddle. This season he entered late January as the team's leader in assists, blocks and steals while averaging 12.3 points and 4.5 rebounds per game.

Carter, 21, said he talked to the kids about life in college as a student-athlete. As a youngster, Carter said he looked up to certain people and, at that time, knew he wanted someday to be a positive influence for others.

"I always wanted to be that person

who inspires someone," he said. "They came and supported me. I gave them high fives on the way out of the tunnel."

Accolades for Carter came before the game when Embry-Riddle honored him for breaking the career marks in assists and steals. Both feats were achieved in the same game, a 65-51 win against Ashford (Iowa) in the championship game of the Bahama House & Best Western Aku Tiki Shootout Jan. 3 at home. Carter didn't plan on achieving two milestones in one night, but he was glad it worked out that way.

"It was awesome that I could do both in the same game," he said.

Carter's record-breaking 661st career assist came in the first half as he snapped the previous mark that had been held by Ryan Rothrock since 2002.

Carter met Rothrock awhile back and still adheres to the advice he received from the guard who played on the school's national championship team in 2000.

"He told me to keep working and not take anything for granted," Carter said.

In the second half, Carter notched his 287th career steal, which moved him past Tom Fagley as the team's all-time leader. Fagley's record stood for 20 years.

Carter finished the game with 12 points, six assists, four steals and four rebounds and was named to the Shootout's all-tournament team.

Although both records mean a lot to him, Carter said the assists mark carries greater significance because of the teamwork involved in attaining it.

"I want the assist record to go the whole team. It takes more than one person for an assist," he said.

In December, Carter knew his numbers were approaching the top of the categories, but his mother, Myra Jumper, made sure he didn't focus on the record books.

"I told my mom a few games before (the Ashford game) that I was close," he said. "She set me straight and said just play your game."

Tribune staff reporter Beverly Bidney contributed to this article.

Center court honors go to PECS basketball parents

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Eighth-grade players on Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's girls and boys basketball teams showed their appreciation for the support of their parents Jan. 20 during the last home games of the season. The players' biggest fans were each given a rose at center court.

"Parents play a huge role in the success of their kids," PECS principal Brian Greseth said. "They make sure they are at every practice and come to all the games. They talk to them about things they may be able to do better and pump them up about the great things they have done."

The teams took on Osceola Middle School with the girls winning 33-21 and the boys losing 39-32. Regardless of the outcome, the eighth-graders were glad to play for their school.

The girls and boys teams each have three eighth-graders who will leave for high school in the fall. Vivianna Gore, Cady Osceola and Aleina Micco will miss playing for the Lady Seminoles.

"The team is like a family," said Vivianna, 14, who will attend boarding school in Tampa in the fall. "I grew up with these girls. Next year I'll have to learn to adjust to different people."

Aleina Micco, 14, who has yet to decide whether to attend Moore Haven or Okeechobee High School, has played on the team since sixth grade.

"I learned it's not just about you," she said. "You can't always think you are going to win; they say there is no 'I' in team."

Cady Osceola, 14, will attend Okeechobee High in the fall.

"I'll miss that the coaches here cut us some slack," she said. "At Okeechobee, I hear the coaches are real strict."

For their high scoring ability and versatility, girls coach Tim Thomas will miss his most experienced players. Boys coach Kevin Jackson knows there will be work to accomplish with next year's team.

"Physically there is a big difference between seventh- and eighth-graders," he said. "Those are hard shoes to fill. The majority of points and rebounds came from those eighth-graders."

Andrew Fish, 14, and Lucas Osceola, 13, plan to attend and play for Okeechobee High next year.

"I learned sportsmanship on the team," Lucas said. "The best thing was scoring 31 points in a game."

Alyke Baker, 13, will attend Lake Placid High in the fall.

"Getting ready for games and practicing with the team was the best experience," he said. "I'm going to miss my teammates next year."



Beverly Bidney

Aleina Micco takes the ball across the court during the last PECS home game of the season against Osceola Middle School.



Beverly Bidney

Alyke Baker, center, is with his parents, Mona and Preston Baker, and his sister, Presslyn, during eighth-grade parents' night.



Beverly Bidney

Cady Osceola recognizes the hard work of her parents, Crystal Marr and Cody Osceola, Jan. 20 at the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School eighth-grade parents' night at the Brighton Gym.



Beverly Bidney

Andrew Fish stands with his mother, Michelle Grindler, before the last Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School basketball home game in Brighton.

Announcements

Happy birthday to Kenny Tommie on Jan. 25

Just want to say happy birthday to you and wish you all the best. We are so proud of you and how far you have come. Keep up the good work and just know we got your back. We love you, Dad.
Love always,
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Happy birthday to Devin Mindy Cypress-Kimble


Devin, here I sit another year without your smile and loving heart. Wishing we were never apart. Time has not healed my wound but I will continue on loving you. This life has not been the same; I still find myself looking for someone to blame. Your smile was ease to my pain and your laughter was my medicine to keep me from going insane. Dev, I miss you so much words will never be able to express just how much. I wish you were here to make everything right. That's all I can say. I love you. We are forever family.
Love your Cuz,
Carolee J. Watkins

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Chairman James E. Billie will administer the Judicial Oath of Office

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National **Wear Red** Day 2015 

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the U.S. 1 out of 4 deaths are due to heart disease.

Show love for YOUR HEART this month by wearing red on Friday, February 6th!

The Health Team & Fire Rescue will be in the Tribal Office Lobby from 1:00-4:00pm checking blood pressures for everyone wearing red.

Come by to get a reading and pick up information on heart disease prevention.
Early detection saves lives.



For more info: Lauren @ 954-962-2009 x 10313

LOOKING BACK on 2014



Eileen Soler

Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Chairman James E. Billie pose after a Jan. 9 meeting at the Frank Billie Field Office on the Big Cypress Reservation. Jewell, an Obama administration Cabinet member in charge of conservation, proper land and water use promotion, fish and wildlife protection, and environmental values preservation, learned about the FPL plan to build a monster power plant next door to the reservation.



Beverly Bidney

Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola and Norman 'Skeeter' Bowers get off to a good start Jan. 18 at the 14th annual Rez Rally in Brighton. Nearly 700 people ran, walked or wheeled through the 5K course during the event, which promotes diabetes awareness.



Eileen Soler

Lee Mitchell, manager of the Immokalee Pioneer Museum at Roberts Ranch, helps keep bovines in line March 22 during the 18th annual Junior Cypress Cattle Drive. The 9-mile reenactment included cowboys and cowgirls, work dogs and the family of Honorary Trail Boss 'Big' Charlie Osceola.



Beverly Bidney

WISDOM dancers enter Hard Rock Live Feb. 7 during the Grand Entry of the 43rd annual Tribal Fair. Dubbed a celebration of Native arts and culture, the event brought thousands to the Hard Rock Live and Okalee Village in Hollywood.



Eileen Soler

For the first time in Ahfachkee School history, a Student Council was elected by peers in January to inspire and guide the next generation of alumni. From left are Leilani Gopher, Mya Cypress, Nashoba Gonzalez, Quenton Cypress and Michelle Jimmie.



Staff photo

Toddlers line up for the clothing contest Feb. 15 during the 76th annual Brighton Field Day. For the first time at the event, the Tribe welcomed members of the Florida State University Marching Chiefs band.



Photo courtesy of Kyle Doney

Kyle Doney, who serves on the FSU Alumni Association National Board of Directors, poses with the college's BCS National Championship trophy Feb. 1 during the FSU national championship celebration at Doak Campbell Stadium. About 30,000 fans, including several Seminole Tribe members, attended the event.



Staff photo

The new Little Miss Seminole Madasyn Osceola is crowned and sashed by Miss Seminole 2013-14 Tia Blais-Billie and former Little Miss Seminole Sarafina Billie Feb. 7 at Hard Rock Live.



Beverly Bidney

From left, Hollywood Board Rep. Steve Osceola, President Tony Sanchez Jr. and Brighton Board Rep. Larry Howard tour the 4,500-acre Salacoa Valley Farms in Fairmount, Georgia. After purchasing the farm in December 2013, the Board generated nearly \$500,000 for the Tribe during its first spring cattle sale March 22.



Eileen Soler

Artist Nilda Comas begins a model of 'Florida - A Seminole Girl,' which will be recreated in bronze and placed at Stranahan Landing along the New River in Fort Lauderdale.



Eileen Soler

Nearly 2,100 country music fans attend an Alan Jackson concert Jan. 25 at the Big Cypress 118th Anniversary Celebration. The three-day event also gave attendees a rare, intimate glimpse of Seminole history, daily life and enduring culture.



Peter B. Gallagher

Bobby Henry leads a stomp dance March 11 during the 10th anniversary celebration of the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa. The event commemorated the growth of the location into both the sixth-largest casino in the world and the most profitable Class III casino in Indian Country.



Peter B. Gallagher

American Heritage point guard Hunter Osceola defends a Lakewood player March 1 during the 2014 Class 5A state basketball championship in Lakeland. Heritage won 98-70.



Eileen Soler

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School officials, administrators and Seminole royalty pose with state officials April 2 during the Florida Charter School Alliance Excellence in Education Award ceremony. The school was one of only six Florida charter schools to earn the recognition.



Eileen Soler

Children scramble for plastic pastel Easter eggs April 11 during an egg hunt at the annual Big Cypress Easter celebration at Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena.



Beverly Bidney

Courtney Gore watches as judge Pat Hogue examines her steer March 29 at the 28th annual Seminole Indian 4-H Livestock Show and Sale in Brighton. More than 100 kids tribalwide convened in the ring to parade the small animals, hogs, heifers and steers they raised throughout the year.



Eileen Soler

Miss Florida Seminole 2013-14 Tia Blais-Billie waves to spectators during the public speaking segment of the 2014 Miss Indian World pageant at the Gathering of Nations Pow-Wow in Albuquerque, New Mexico.



Eileen Soler

Chairman James E. Billie welcomes Tribal members, friends from Indian Country nationwide and spectators to the 'Decade of Rock' celebration May 9 at Hard Rock Live. The event commemorated the success of Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood, which has a direct annual economic impact of \$276 million including \$138 million for payments to employees and another \$138 million for in-state purchases of goods and services. Roughly 3,750 employees work for the complex.



Peter B. Gallagher

Kiauna Martin and Ahnie Jumper celebrate with family after their American Heritage softball team claimed the Class 5A state title with a dramatic 11-10 walk-off win against Belleview in May.



Beverly Bidney

Remus Griffin and his daughter Naomi Griffin, 19 months, relax at the Fort Pierce Father's Day dinner June 11 at Chupco Ranch.



Photo courtesy of Seminole Police Department

Kamani Smith, of Brighton Reservation, SPD Officer Kyle Boyd and Tye Thorpe, of Hollywood Reservation, pose in front of the White House in Washington, D.C. during National Police Week held May 12-16. Students visited the capital as part of the Police Explorers Program.



Beverly Bidney

Sherri Micco has her makeup done May 8 for Mother's Day at the Seminole Medical Building in Hollywood.



Eileen Soler

Seminole wrestler Michael Garcia keeps his opponent on defense June 9 at the Jim Thorpe Native American Games in Shawnee, Oklahoma. The June 8-14 event was attended by Seminole Tribe members who competed in golf, wrestling, basketball and track.



Eileen Soler

Ahfachkee School high school graduates line the stage May 30 during commencement ceremonies at Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium at Big Cypress Reservation. From left are Malari Baker, Sarah Osceola, Gianna Wargolet, Quenton Cypress and Savannah Tiger.



Eileen Soler

Jennie Shore helps first-graders at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School drop frybread dough into boiling oil April 30 during Culture Camp Days. The camp focuses on passing down Seminole traditions to youth.



Beverly Bidney

Alex Johns, right, talks to members of the Florida Cattlemen's Association during a reception hosted by the Seminole Tribe at the organization's annual convention on Marco Island June 17. Johns was named treasurer of the 4,300-member organization established in 1934.



Photo courtesy of the NABI Foundation

Comprised mostly of Seminoles and coached by Andrew Jordan Bowers, the Rez Runners boys basketball team is joined by family and fans July 5 to celebrate its championship victory in the Native American Basketball Invitational (NABI) in Phoenix, Arizona.



Staff photo

Team Florida wrestling gold medal winner Samuel Micco Sanchez, left, and wrestling silver medal winner Jesse Sanchez, right, pose for a photo July 22 with President Tony Sanchez Jr. at the North American Indigenous Games in Regina, Saskatchewan. Youth traveled to the event to compete in wrestling, archery, track and field, basketball, golf, rifle shooting and swimming.



Eileen Soler

Ada Jo Bruised Head, 3, on Hawk, is deliberate and sure as the youngest barrel racer Aug. 16 at the first show of the 5-D Barrel Series at Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena. The event was one of many new offerings at the Big Cypress venue in 2014.



Beverly Bidney

Florida State University wide receiver Justin Motlow, No. 86, runs through a play during football camp in August. Motlow, of Tampa, is the first Seminole Tribal member to play for the FSU football team.



Beverly Bidney

The 2014-15 Miss Florida Seminole Brianna Nunez, right, and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Cheyenne Nunez – cousins from the Brighton Reservation – beam after taking the crowns July 26 at the 57th annual Princess Pageant in Hollywood.



Beverly Bidney

This Camp Kulaqua camper traverses a relay, which is a wet and muddy obstacle course, while other teams play soccer with a 6-foot diameter earthball during the Seminole Olympics in August. Kids were divided into teams to compete in a host of fun events, including human foosball, steal the bacon, earthball soccer and mind mayhem relay.



Eileen Soler

Fourth of July fireworks light up the sky over the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena at the Big Cypress Reservation.



Eileen Soler

The Miami Heat's Chris 'Birdman' Andersen takes a sip from a Hard Rock Energy drink while surrounded by models during an Aug. 29 photo shoot featuring the 6-foot-10 forward as the new celebrity spokesman for the product produced by Enterprise Beverage Group.



Kevin Johnson

Malarie Baker, a 2014 high school graduate, receives an award Aug. 13 during the Big Cypress incentive awards program at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium on the Big Cypress Reservation. Throughout the summer, the Education Department honored students with fun-filled events to reward them for their hard work during the year.



Eileen Soler

Gene Jimmie smiles Aug. 18 as he heads to first grade on the first day of school at Ahfachkee School in August.



Beverly Bidney

Native American actor Saginaw Grant addresses the crowd at the Education Expo Sept. 5 at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood. Grant stressed the importance of passing down traditions and getting an education.



Eileen Soler

An example of the Creek alphabet, which consists of 19 letters, hangs in art form at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's Mosaic Gallery. In June, Tribal Council approved the publication of the first Creek dictionary – dubbed 'Este Semvnoivke Enponakv, The Language of the Seminole People: An Outline Grammar and Basic Dictionary of the Florida Seminole Creek' – to help keep the language alive for future generations.

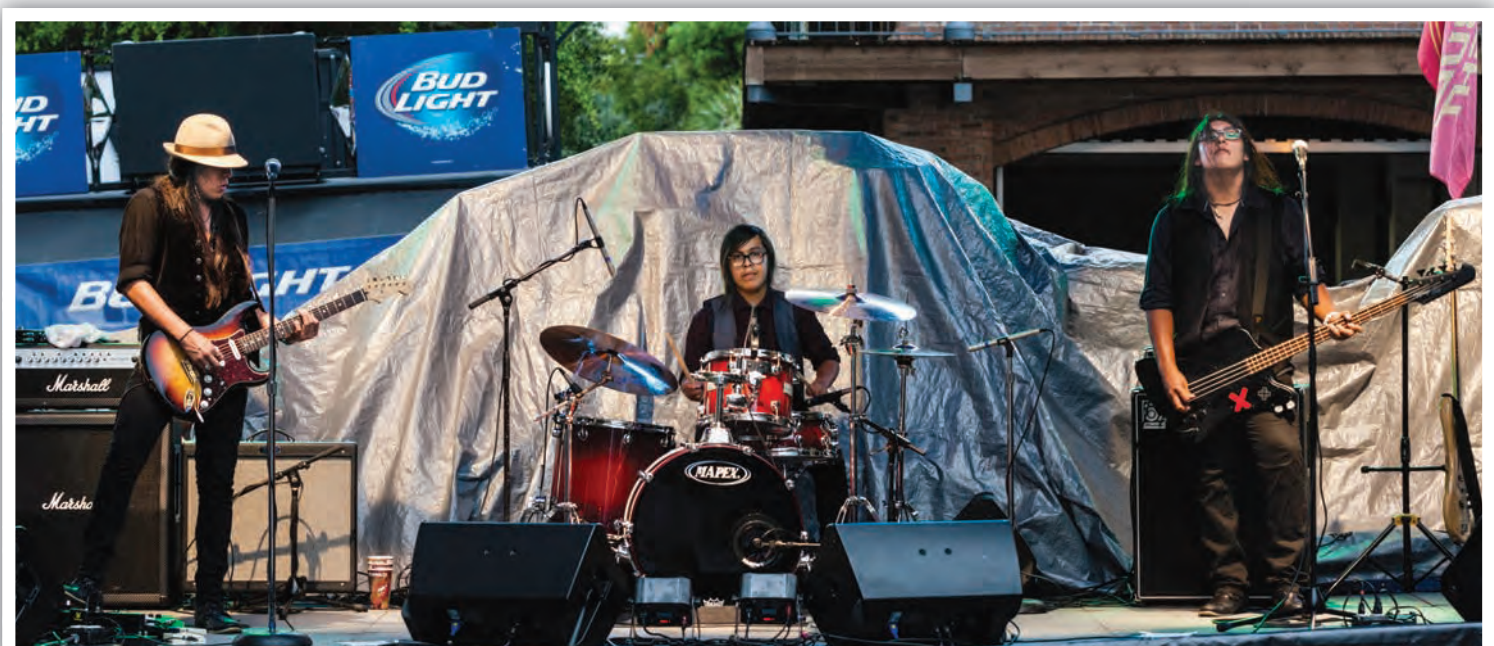


Photo courtesy of Jason Dennard

The Osceola Brothers Band performs at the Friday Night Block Party in Tallahassee Sept. 5 – the night before FSU football's home opener. From left are Cameron, Sheldon and Tyson Osceola.



Photo courtesy of Pete Hahn

Treasurer Pete Hahn, 33, is named one of the 2014 'Native American 40 Under 40' award recipients by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development for his leadership to the Seminole Tribe. Hahn received the award during the 39th annual Indian Progress in Business Awards Gala Oct. 8 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



Eileen Soler

Seminole Gaming Commission Chairman Allen Huff and Seminole Gaming Compliance Director Ed Jenkins are flanked by National Indian Gaming Commission Acting Chairman Jonodev Osceola Chaudhuri and Associate Commissioner Daniel Little during the Oct. 16 self-regulation certification announcement. The Tribe became the first in Indian Country to achieve gaming self-regulation certification.



Beverly Bidney

Pemayety Emahaky Charter School eighth-grader Krysta Burton helps her volleyball team win its last home game versus Osceola Middle School on Oct. 14. The team completed its season with a 10-0 record that included nine shutouts.



Kevin Johnson

Community members gather outside Chupco's Landing Community Center before the Sept. 25 dedication ceremony on Fort Pierce Reservation. The facility includes an indoor basketball court, offices, conference room, full-service kitchen, fitness room, two outdoor swimming pools and lounge with two pool tables. It also houses other Tribal departments, including Culture, Education and Housing.



Beverly Bidney

A happy group of runners passes through the yellow flour station Oct. 21 at Seminole Estates during the Hollywood Red Ribbon color run. Since 1985, Red Ribbon Week has raised awareness about the negative effect drugs have on communities.



Eileen Soler

Amy Yzaguirre attacks a palm frond with fierce concentration in the chickee fan tacking contest Sept. 26 at the Immokalee Indian Day celebration. Revelry, culture and the unconquered spirit prevailed in September as Seminole communities tribalwide gathered to celebrate the holiday.



Beverly Bidney

From right, Mike Tiger, Rusty Tiger and Nicholas DiCarlo listen to tributes paid to their patriarch, Howard Tiger, Nov. 20 during the grand opening ceremony of the Howard Tiger Recreation Center in Hollywood. The 39,000-square-foot, two-story facility houses the Culture, Fitness and Recreation departments, gym, and Boys & Girls Club.



Peter B. Gallagher

The Naples Botanical Garden names a lake Nov. 15 after the Seminole herbalist and medicine carrier Alice Micco Snow, who was known by her Creek nickname, *Tupke*. From left are Chairman James E. Billie, Elbert Snow, philanthropist Duane L. Burnham, Garden executive director Brian Holley and medicine man Bobby Henry.



Beverly Bidney

Team Tampa's Nancy O. Frank competes in the cone weave Oct. 30 during the 10th annual Trike Fest in Big Cypress. Tampa seniors won the prize for having the largest percentage of their reservation's seniors compete, while Big Cypress won best overall for the first time in four years.



Kevin Johnson

As quarterback Torrance Gibson hoists the Class 5A state championship plaque, Andre Jumper, left, celebrates with his American Heritage teammates following their 38-0 win against Godby in the state championship game Dec. 12 at the Orlando Citrus Bowl. Jumper finished the season fifth on the team in total tackles with 70, which included 27 in five playoff games. His 50 assisted tackles were second most on the squad.



Beverly Bidney

Louise Gopher gives the commencement speech at the FSU graduation Dec. 13 after being honored with an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. In March, Gopher was inducted into the Florida Women's Hall of Fame, and in May, she received the Presidential Service Medallion from Florida Atlantic University, her alma mater.



Eileen Soler

Ahfachkee Preschool students take in an afternoon hayride during a class field trip to the Flamingo Road Nursery's Fall Harvest Festival in Davie. The event was just one of several Halloween-related activities the students celebrated in October.



Eileen Soler

Rows of pumpkin, apple and pecan pie fill tables for hungry employees and Tribal members Nov. 20 during the Big Cypress Thanksgiving luncheon at Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena.



Beverly Bidney

Hopeful kids wait to hear their names called by Amy Yzaguirre, who distributed presents at the Immokalee Christmas party Dec. 19.