



# The Seminole Tribune

Voice of the Unconquered

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## Indian Day strong



Beverly Bidney

Brighton Board Rep. Larry Howard lugs four cypress logs during the cypress run competition at Brighton Reservation's Indian Day celebration Sept. 25. About 300 people attended the event, with many showing off their skills as they competed in various cultural activities, including thatch races, skillet throwing, frybread making contests and canoe races. Check out the October issue of The Seminole Tribune for full coverage of Indian Day.

## Proposed national park rule to ease plant gathering restrictions

BY EILEEN SOLER  
Staff Reporter

The Department of the Interior, through the National Park Service (NPS), aims to adopt a new rule that will allow designated members of federally recognized Tribes to gather plants from national parks.

When adopted, the new rule will regulate agreements between parks and Tribes for picking and collecting plants for medicinal, ceremonial and traditional purposes.

Since 1983, laws geared to preserve and protect nature at national parks and other sites have prohibited all people from taking dead or alive plants, wildlife and fish; archaeological and historical objects; and raw materials, including minerals.

But first Americans have harvested plants from sea to sea long before the first national park, Yellowstone National Park, was established in 1872. The 2 million acres in Wyoming and parts of Montana and Idaho were used by Crow, Blackfoot and Nez Perce Tribes when the land was taken for tourism under the Secretary of the

Interior. By 1888, after bloody skirmishes with the Army, Native American presence at Yellowstone evaporated.

NPS, formally created in 1916 under the Department of the Interior, holds 84 million acres that include 408 protected sites, 59 of which are national parks. Florida's three national parks are Biscayne National Park, Dry Tortugas National Park and Everglades National Park. Big Cypress National Preserve is one of 11 NPS protected units in Florida.

The new proposed rule, entered into the Federal Register in April, is nearing its formalization – but not without comments and suggestions from Indian Country.

For Chairman James E. Billie, the rules that ban plant removal barely matter.

"A lot of our medicine is right on our reservations. We happen to be in a lucky location," Chairman Billie said.

The Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes via the Big Cypress Enabling Act, already access Big Cypress National Preserve for traditional and cultural purposes.

♦ See NATIVE PLANTS on page 7A

## Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum reopens with burst of 'Seminole Spirit'

BY EILEEN SOLER  
Staff Reporter

**BIG CYPRESS** — World-renowned photographer Russell James did not seek to tell a simple story about Seminole culture and tradition when he reached out with his camera to Chairman James E. Billie three years ago.

Instead, the Australian-born artist best known for capturing the beautiful faces and perfect bodies of Victoria's Secret supermodels sought to embrace the Tribe with his lens via his indigenous peoples art foundation, Nomad Two Worlds.

"Who am I to express what a people's culture and tradition is? This was not about a project; it's always been about collaboration," James said Sept. 25 at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum in Big Cypress during an Indian Day reveal of selections from his collective work called "Seminole Spirit."

Three large photographs displayed in the Mosaic Gallery preview a much larger 20- to 30-piece show to be staged Nov. 6-7 during the Museum's 18th annual American Indian Arts Celebration (AIAC).

Currently showing at the Mosaic space through Nov. 22, the first photo depicts the humble yet awesome beauty of a cypress dome. The last emphasizes the enduring strength of a mighty alligator. In the middle,

mystical and out of focus, Tribal members Stomp Dance around a ceremonial fire.

The larger show opened publicly in late 2014 to an international audience at Urban Zen gallery in New York City's Greenwich Village. It garnered worldwide media acclaim.

Shot in Big Cypress' wild lands amid thick cypress hammocks and pristine prairies, the photographs reveal the essence

**"People want to understand the Seminole story. It is the Florida story."**

— Paul Backhouse, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum director

of Seminole life as it was observed for two years with unusual access by James with Chairman Billie's blessing. Jim Osceola, director of hospitality at Seminole Gaming, and Tampa medicine man Bobby Henry offered guidance and support.

"The Chairman is a man of big ideas. One of them is this Museum, which has progressed from a focus on historical preservation at first to now including contemporary works about our people as seen through the eyes of a fashion photographer," Osceola said.

James said he created Nomads Two Worlds in 2001 after he began questioning indigenous art and culture in Australia. He then realized the stark divide of his nation's indigenous and non-indigenous people.

"I peeled away 5,000 years and layers on top of layers of indigenous culture and

♦ See SEMINOLE SPIRIT on page 4A



Eileen Soler

Little Miss Florida Victoria Bernard and photographer Russell James are happy to pose in front of James' 'Seminole Spirit' photographs Sept. 25 at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on the Big Cypress Reservation.

## Everett Osceola named cultural ambassador for Seminole Tribe

BY GORDON WAREHAM  
Contributing Writer

**HOLLYWOOD** — Tribal Council unanimously appointed Everett Osceola as cultural ambassador for the Seminole Tribe of Florida during the Sept. 11 Council meeting in Hollywood.

With the appointment, Council authorized Osceola to speak on behalf of the Tribe in connection with news, events, exhibits and similar activities regarding Seminole history, culture and traditions to ensure the integrity of the information dispersed to the public.

"With this position I hope to work with other museums and outside organizations

to help spread the stories, history and more importantly, the message of the Seminole people," Osceola said. "My love has always been history, and growing up I have always been proud of my Tribe and my Tribal members' past and present, and especially of our rich history. I believe our story should be respectfully told and handled by us."

Osceola graduated from Valencia Community College with an associate degree in psychology. He worked for Seminole Media Production's Broadcasting Department for three years before accepting a position with the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum as an outreach specialist, a job he held for nine years. Under the mentorship

of Brian Zepeda, Osceola learned the art of Seminole storytelling, presenting and event coordination. He presented Seminole history and culture at school and museums around Florida.

Osceola has had a strong presence in Broward County, coordinating events with local organizations to showcase Native culture in Fort Lauderdale, where Seminoles once thrived along the New River before being displaced by white settlers. In conjunction with the Bonnet House Museum & Gardens, he recently organized a cruise along the river to provide locals an accurate account of what

♦ See EVERETT OSCEOLA on page 8A

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**New firefighter-paramedics pledge commitment to Tribe. See page 5A.**

# Editorial

## Seminole 'Cowboys'

*Editor's note: On Sept. 3, 2015, National Public Radio (NPR) broadcast a short documentary titled "The Indian Cowboys of Florida," referring to the Florida Seminole Indians. It was a Q-and-A between NPR writer Linton Weeks and Florida Department of State Director of Communications Meredith Beatrice. The story, also posted online, contained errors of fact, including a miscalculation of the Seminole Indians' anthropological equity in Florida. Because the Seminole Tribe of Florida was not contacted by NPR or Beatrice concerning this story, The Seminole Tribune contacted Patricia Riles Wickman, a leading historian, researcher and anthropologist regarding the Seminole Indians, and asked if she would correct the misinformation in the NPR report and detail the documented history of the Seminole Indians in Florida.*

### • Patricia Riles Wickman, Ph.D.

The joke in Florida goes like this: Among the Seminoles, they're "Cow men," and not "Cowboys" because in Texas it may only take a boy to handle cattle, but in Florida it takes a man! And this is not a new concept. The ancestors of the Seminole people of Florida were among those standing on the shore when the Spaniards established the first permanent settlement in this part of their "New World" and, so, they soon came into contact with cattle and horses, not to mention all the other things that the Spaniards brought with them to La Florida in the 16th century. Needless to say, there was nothing "new" about this world to the Indians living here, and the Seminoles – the descendants of so many of those First People – still know that. Some of the tribal elders say that white people are white because they are made of the foam of the ocean that threw them upon these shores. Still others say that white people are white because they have no guilt.

But, first things first. In order to understand how long the Indian people of Florida have been associated with cattle, we first have to look clearly at how long the ancestors of today's citizens of the Seminole Tribe of Florida have lived and traveled the land that has been, only since 1810, viewed as "Florida." Before that, there were East and West Florida, and before that there was La Florida. And before that, there were Maskókí tribes, and Hitchiti, and Calusa, and Yamásí, and Chicása, and Apalachi, and Timugua, and on and on and on. Sometimes they fought the Spaniards, and sometimes they fought the English, and sometimes they fought the French, and before that, and between those conflicts, they fought each other.

With the establishment of the first permanent European settlement, that is, when the Spaniards created San Agustín (St. Augustine) in 1565, movement and change among the tribal towns became more rapid. As with all the other, later, European colonists, the Spaniards wanted to establish an economic base here, and they wanted to use the Indians as laborers. And, equally important in their eyes, they wanted to convince and, often, force the Indians to accept the Spanish religion. To further these ends, they began to do several things. They sent missionaries and soldiers out across the head of the peninsula. They set up fortifications and established mission villages, and gave out land grants for cattle ranchos (fortified cattle ranches).

The (West Florida) area of Apalachi, and that which the Indians thought of as Talahasi, today's Tallahassee, soon became an important source of cattle, horses and pigs for the Indians and the Spaniards. By 1675, the area was producing enough cattle, with the labor of the Indians, that the Spaniards were able to send 150 hides and 3,800 pounds of tallow (animal fat) to Cuba for sale. As for the ranchos, the Spaniards chose several areas where they gave land grants for cattle raising. One was near the mouth of the St. Marys River, another was in today's West Florida. But the largest was what Maskókí speakers called chua – the little pot with a hole in the bottom. In this area, the karst (limestone) land sometimes filled up with water, but about every hundred years some lime rock dissolved, the water drained away, and the land reverted to prairie. The Spaniards added the prefix, la- and called it La Chua, and the later English speakers corrupted that, as they did so many other Maskókí and Hitchiti words, into Latchaway, today's "Alachua" savannah. From this area, by the later 1600s, the Indians sent cattle to St. Augustine for sale and, despite raids by the English and their Indian allies that did much damage to the ranchos in 1704-05, the Indians continued to

favor this rich environment for cattle raising.

It was on this prairie where, almost 60 years later, the word "Seminole" would first enter the English language and, once again, it would be misunderstood. And that misunderstanding persists among non-Indians to this day. In the first half of the 1600s, the Spaniards had seen more and more Indians leaving their villages and their families and their Clans to escape Spanish control. They took refuge and found work at and around the cattle rancho on the Alachua savannah. The Spaniards called them cimarrones, or runaways, because they refused to stay where the Spaniards wanted them to stay. It was a word that the Spaniards had adapted from Caribbean Indians who also had preferred independence to Spanish control. The Florida Indians accepted the word, pronounced it in a manner consistent with their own languages, and the English speakers heard it for the first time in 1765 when they met with the Florida Indians on the Alachua savannah to conclude what we call today a "non-aggression pact." Thus, the word "Siminolie," today pronounced "Seminole," entered the English language. The word, and the Indians, were new to the English speakers, but the Indians knew who they were.

These independent Indians were representatives of a number of Tribes, some of which had long, long equity in the peninsula and others were their cultural kin who had hunted all across this land and knew it well. (It's important to realize that state boundaries are important to Americans but not so much to Indians.) When the Spaniards were required, by treaty, to relinquish La Florida to the English in 1763, a very few Christianized Indians left with them. But many others, at least hundreds but we have no real way of knowing how many, remained, all over the peninsula. On the Alachua savannah, they took possession of the livestock left behind by the Spaniards. Many already had learned to speak Spanish, and their connections to the Spaniards were apparent in their speech and in their dress, and in their abilities with cattle and horses.

The American naturalist William Bartram, who visited Alachua in the 1770s, observed: "The manners and customs of the Alachuas, and most of the lower Creeks or Siminoles appear evidently tinged with Spanish civilization. Their religious and civil usages manifest a predilection for the Spanish customs. There are several Christians among them, many of whom wear little silver crucifixes, affixed to a wampum collar round their necks, or suspended by a small chain upon their breast. These are said to be baptized, and notwithstanding most of them speak and understand Spanish, yet they have been the most bitter and formidable Indian enemies the Spaniards ever had." A few Spanish borrow words still are in common use today, in Hitchiti (now known as Miccosukee) and in Maskókí (commonly called Creek). For example, waki(t) is from the Spanish vaca for cow, and kawáyí is from caballo or horse, although the older terms for horse, icho thlacco and ichí chobi, or big deer, are also used.

Horses, cattle and pigs would be sources of great wealth for the Florida Indians for all of the centuries of the Spanish occupation of Florida, as well as for the short British period and beyond. In fact, descendants of the Andalusian long horn cattle still survive in Florida today. Bernard Romans, the assistant surveyor for the Southern District, wrote in 1775 that there were between 7,000 and 10,000 head of livestock grazing on the Alachua prairie. Ahaye, called "Cow Driver" by the English, or later, Cowkeeper by Americans, was a prominent miko anbopi(t) or keeper of domesticated animals. The descendants of his family, which included some of the most prominent Indians in Florida's modern history – Boleck or Billy Bowlegs (I) and Billy Bowlegs (II), "King Payne," Philip, Micanopy (another miko anbopi(t) who was a tasanaki of halpata Clan, and Coe cuchí (wildcat) – still remember this today. And the memories of the Florida people are a great deal longer than that. One family carries the tradition that they are tall because of an Apalachee ancestor. Others remember the people the Spaniards called the Calusa and have carried their "songs" into the 20th century. Small wonder, then,

## Questions for the President: Cigarettes

**Q**uestion: How much time have you spent, both as Chairman and now as President, on the cigarette issue?

**Mitchell Cypress:** How many years have I served in the capacity as President or Chairman? Sixteen? The cigarette issue is always on the table.

**Q:** The law known as Protecting Florida's Health Act included an across-the-board \$1 per pack surcharge that the Tribe added to non-Tribal member smoke shop customers back in 2009. What was it that convinced the Tribe to go along willingly with changes that were likely to hurt a Tribal money-making industry?

**MC:** The State reneged on its prior agreement with the Seminole Tribe by enforcing a surcharge on sales of cigarettes on the reservations. Thus, the tribal enterprise was harmed. We didn't fight the issue then because we knew it would come back to the table later down the line and it would give both the state and the Tribe time to explore a more equitable solution. It is part of our "Good Neighbor Policy." We are not looking for a fight with the state.

**Q:** What is the official position of the Board and the Tribe regarding this

situation? What would you like the legislature and governor to do about it?

**MC:** Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc. feels a solution can be found that would be mutually beneficial to the Tribe and the state. The Board continues to monitor all tobacco developments and remains on the forefront of potential issues.

**Q:** Is the expansion of the Tribe's wholesale cigarette business to convenience stores throughout Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Texas and five other states (approved by Council last November) still in the works?

**MC:** Seminole Wholesale Distributors is currently selling to convenience stores and other operations off the reservation. Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc. is constantly evaluating the profitability of this new venture in order to determine any future expansion plans.

**Q:** Since 1977, when the first Seminole smoke shop opened, smoke shops were unique because of their lower prices. Without this advantage, have sales dropped? Do you foresee the day that smoke shops will no longer bring in profit to the Tribe?

**MC:** Sales have declined on the reservation since those (2009) changes;

however, the decline is not unique to just the Tribe. All cigarette sales across the state of Florida have declined as well. Nevertheless, cigarettes remain a large revenue generator for the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc. With the decline of cigarette sales, Tribe, Inc. and its staff remain extra-vigilant in exploring other product offerings at all of our locations.

**Q:** What do you see in your crystal ball? How do you think this issue will all come out – favorably or unfavorably for the Tribe?

**MC:** Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc. continues to expand its portfolio of businesses and believes that by exploring off-reservation sales and further refining other plans already underway, our success will continue.

*Mitchell Cypress is President of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc.*



that their memories of cattle raising should be equally as long.

The Alachua people went in and out of St. Augustine or to the St. Marys River frequently to sell their livestock, although the beginnings of the American Revolution would cause many Georgians and Indians to raid herds back and forth. One major result of this period was to force the survivors further down the peninsula – the ichi bome(t) or nose of the deer as some knew it, or the ekon fuske(i), the pointed land, as it is also viewed. Americans began to move into the Indians' lands and take over their hardy scrub cattle.

The 1800s would prove to be a time of even more difficulty for Florida's Indians. White men's wars would try hard to push them out of their home; taking more of their cattle and livestock away and forcing several thousand to remove all the way to Indian Territory on their own Trail of Tears. Despite the determination of the U.S. government and the force of the white soldiers, however, a few hundred stalwart Florida Indians managed to remain. Hunting and driving scrub cattle would keep them alive and feed their families into the first half of the 20th century. The tough strain of cattle and horses introduced to Florida by the Spaniards had proven to be capable of surviving the ticks and other problems created by life in the Florida scrub. Even today, not every breed is so hardy.

In 1936, the U.S. government, in yet another act of paternalism predicated on their continuing determination to force Florida's Indians to assimilate, brought a

herd of bedraggled, drought-stricken cattle to Brighton Reservation in South Florida from the western Dust Bowl, and the "Seminoles" as they were still known collectively to outsiders, were once again in the cattle business. It was a rocky start. The sickly cattle were in such poor condition when they reached the Brighton Rez that many did not survive, but the Indians had centuries-worth of knowledge to draw upon. A Spanish descendant, Fred Montsdeoca, was an early guide, and Frank Shore, Charlie Micco, Naha Tiger and Willie Gopher Sr. worked hard to revive the Tribe's traditions.

But it took years. Elders from the other reservations recall what they knew as "The Sad Time," when, in the 1940s, the state began its programs of tick fever eradication and ended open range for cattle herds in an effort to curb cattle rustling around the state. The new fences severely restricted the movements of Seminole hunters who needed to be able to move freely in the Florida bush to feed their families. The men remember their Clan uncles and fathers sitting around the camp fires, with their rifles across their knees, feeling that they had lost their value because they had lost their traditional roles as hunters. It was this moment that pushed many Seminole women out into the labor-for-hire market as agricultural workers. But cattle raising survived. Clans divided the herds and spread increasing numbers out to other reservations; the Tribe began to invest its meager funds in the industry; and the Seminoles began to look outward, determined to compete in a huge

national and international market.

The long effort, combined with their centuries of experience, have brought today's Seminole Tribe of Florida to a position of prominence, nationally and internationally, in the cattle industry. Their herds are among the largest in the state and, despite their willingness to apply technology to their management of the herds, some things have never changed. Women of the cattle-owning Clans still go out into the fields periodically to cook over open fires for the men who tend the herds. Women also tend their own herds, although many of the cattlemen and – women – bounce across the fields in pickup trucks rather than on horseback. The spirit is the same, however, and the tradition remains the same, and their half-a-millennium of experience and expertise have never failed the Seminole people.

*Patricia Riles Wickman, Ph.D., has worked in the fields of Florida history of the Southeast, public history and cultural preservation for 40 years, serving with the Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board, the Florida Museum of Natural History at the University of Florida, the Museum of Florida History, Division of Historical Resources and the Florida Department of State, where she was Senior Historian for the state of Florida. She spent 16 years living among and working with the Seminole people of Florida and Oklahoma, at the invitation of the Tribes, teaching and recording Native American history.*



In this 1940s-era photo, Seminole cowboy Charlie Micco checks on a longhorn Cracker bull, a descendant of livestock brought to Florida by 16th century Spanish explorers.

William D. Boehmer Collection, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

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# Community

A



Peter B. Gallagher

Tribal members participate in a Stomp Dance Sept. 19 during the Tampa Seminole Cultural Exchange on the Lakeland property.

## Tampa Seminole Cultural Exchange: Stomp Dance, storytelling and stickball in the rain

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER  
Special Projects Reporter

**LAKELAND** — The highlight of the four-day Tampa Seminole Cultural Exchange was the all-day and all-night cultural celebration Sept. 19, as Native teachers from several Tribes braved a rainy Florida day on the Lakeland property to dance, tell stories, instruct, eat, play stickball and share the precious culture that connects them all as Creek Seminole American Indians.

In Lakeland, where the Seminole Tribe of Florida owns 900 acres just north of Interstate 4 in Polk County, Natives of all ages participated in a jamboree of unique traditions.

"This was all for education and fun," said Seminole Tribe member Herbert Jim, the Tampa cultural director who organized the event with Poarch Creek language expert Marcus Briggs and Tampa Reservation Administrator Richard Henry. "My grandmother told me that when we stop our ceremonies and lose our language, we lose our connection with the Creator. She was talking about assimilation, going against our culture, losing it all."

Prominent teachers and tradition carriers at the cultural exchange included Oklahoma Creeks' Sam Proctor, Reuben Proctor, Leon Bell, Pat Bell, Marilyn Cloud, Ben Yahola, Tawna Little, Nokos-Afvnoke Cloud, Hemokke Cloud, Patricia Deere, Woxie Deere, Lindsey Little, Pakpvkuce Little, Kococmpv Little and Patti Hall.

From Florida, Mohawk Jerome Rockwell (who was raised in Miccosukee), Pete Osceola Jr. (Miccosukee) and Seminoles Jeanette Cypress and Mary Jene Koenes also participated.

The group's activities included a dinner at the Tampa Hard Rock Fresh Harvest and a day at the Big Cypress Reservation, where they rode in airboats and swamp buggies, observed traditional alligator wrestling and enjoyed a talk by Pete Osceola Jr.

The day at the Lakeland property began early with introductions by Jim, Henry and Briggs. It continued with a demonstration of cultural traditions by Cypress and Koenes, a discussion on cultural laws led by Osceola, a Ribbon Dance by Marilyn Cloud and a talk about food sovereignty by Yahola.

As rain fell, the group gathered beneath a tent to hear Leon Bell tell stories and further discuss cultural laws. A short break in the rain sent a dozen young boys and girls out to the stickball area where Tampa maintenance supervisor Paul Simmons found and replanted a tall tree pole, skinned except for the bush at the top.

When the girls (who can only use their hands during the game) began to dominate the boys (who only use sticks), Joel "JoJo" Frank Jr. grabbed a couple sticks and began whooping and running around waving his paddles in the girls' faces. When heavy rain returned, the game merely continued.

After dinner, as night came out and the half-moon lit the dance area, Rockwell, beneath his big cowboy hat and holding a redbay twig, began calling and singing as

he led the first of more than four hours of dances — some quiet, some wild.

The idea for a cultural exchange was born last year during a Tampa youth campout sponsored by the Seminole Police Department. Jim and Bobby Henry decided to put on a Seminole Stomp Dance for youth.

"Chairman James Billie was in attendance and watched his children take part," Jim said. "He came to me with the idea of a cultural exchange with our brothers out west, to see what they do and show them what we do."

The first time such an event took place, according to Jim, was in 1987 when medicine man Sonny Billie traveled to Oklahoma to participate in a Green Corn Dance with Oklahoma Seminoles.

"We got the idea to invite here all the ones who were at that Corn Dance when Sonny went out there," Jim said.

Most, however, had passed away.

"So we all sat down and came up with a list of people who had great knowledge of cultural traditions and were able to talk about themselves, their Clans, their lineage and what their Tribes were all about," Jim said. "We came up with some very good teachers. Some had never been on an airplane or traveled very far."

After a much needed rest, the visitors left for home on Sept. 20.

"This was such a great event," said Briggs, who teaches a language immersion program for Tampa Seminoles. "It was magical."



Peter B. Gallagher

Traditional Stomp dancers move around a raging fire that sparks toward rain clouds Sept. 19 during the Tampa Seminole Cultural Exchange.

## Fickle Erika fizzles to hurricane drill

BY EILEEN SOLER  
Staff Reporter

When all was said and done, Tropical Storm Erika, the first real hurricane threat to Florida in a decade, delivered nothing more to Seminole communities than a long overdue reality check.

"Let's call it a drill — just in case," said Business Marketing Department manager Tiffany Marquez, passing the word Aug. 27 for Seminole Media Production employees to prepare for a hurricane according to new tribalwide procedures.

Executive Director of Public Safety and Chief of Police William Latchford said that for many years common sense guidelines steered departments toward ensuring positive outcomes should a hurricane occur but no formal directive was in place to dictate specific actions.

This year, under the All Hazard Standard Operating Procedures plan adopted in 2013, when Erika revved on Aug. 27 with 48 to 68 mile per hour winds that slashed through the Caribbean killing 20 on a potential march toward South Florida, departments went into preparation mode.

"In the past, one issue that always came up was that departments knew what they had to do but there was nothing in writing. Now, because over a year and a half ago everyone wrote down their policies and procedures, we had instructions at our fingertips. Even if someone was new to a department, they could open a book and read what to do," Latchford said.

Directives, procedures and specific job functions were noted clearly in handy binders. By early Aug. 28, Gov. Rick Scott had declared a state of emergency and by 5 p.m. all Seminole departments were prepared. Department buildings deemed at risk or insecure were buckled up.

As the leader of a sovereign nation, Chairman James E. Billie also declared a state of emergency throughout Seminole land. By Aug. 29, Erika had become so weak that she was no longer named.

Latchford said Erika's ever-changing trajectory and strength made the storm hard to predict.

"Information from the National Weather Service was so fluid; it was changing all the time. It became our

♦ See HURRICANE PREP on page 6A



Eileen Soler

Tribal employees from multiple departments hustle to unload cases of bottled water Aug. 28 at the old Hollywood gymnasium as the threat of Tropical Storm Erika loomed.

## Big Frog Custom T-shirts business fits Jason Billie

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — Jason Billie went from broker to business owner in April when he opened the Big Frog Custom T-Shirts & More store at 1614 Sheridan St. in Hollywood.

The former printing broker and Seminole Gaming Tribal Career Development Program graduate felt the need to change direction after his business partner Bill Sinclair lost his battle with cancer.

"We worked together for nine years. Before he passed he told me to open a store," Billie said. "He taught me to work smarter, not harder."

Because of his familiarity with the printing industry, Billie believed he could successfully transition into a retail printing business. In 2014, he searched for a franchise to capitalize on his skills and found Big Frog Custom T-Shirts Inc. Once he met founders Leeward J. Bean, Tina Bacon-DeFrece and Ron DeFrece, Billie signed on the dotted line.

"I felt comfortable with them," he said. "It felt like the right place to be and

the right people to be working with."

Founded in 2008, the company has 63 franchised stores nationwide and ranks 485th on the 2015 Entrepreneur.com Franchise 500 list. Each Big Frog store follows the same business model: custom printed apparel with no minimum quantity and no design or setup fees. Most orders are printed on the spot or within 24 hours.

Billie said it took about nine months to find the right location and build it out. He chose the Westlake Commons shopping plaza, which is anchored by a Publix grocery store, for its convenient location and ample foot traffic.

"They give you all the tools you need and don't hide anything," Billie said. "Literally, they give you a store in a box."

The sounds of a frog's rippet greet customers as they walk in the store, where they find green walls lined with T-shirts in every color and style adorned with sample artwork. A bamboo feature wall helps complete the ambiance. Billie and his customers design artwork together at two computer stations at the front of the store.

♦ See BIG FROG on page 7A



Beverly Bidney

Tribal business owner Jason Billie poses in his Big Frog Custom T-Shirts & More store located at 1614 Sheridan St. in Hollywood.

# NIGA headquarters in D.C. expands with assistance from Indian Country

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

WASHINGTON — The National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) headquarters building in Washington, D.C. recently underwent a \$4.4 million expansion that added more than 10,000 square feet of meeting and office space to the historic early 19th century building on Capitol Hill.

The federal-style building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has been NIGA's headquarters since 1994. Known as the Watterston House, it was built between 1802 and 1819 as a home for George Watterston, the Librarian of Congress from 1815 to 1829. The façade remained intact during renovations.

NIGA reached out to Tribes nationwide and raised \$2.2 million for the expansion project, which began in 2012. The Seminole Tribe contributed \$50,000 in 2011. But the eventual cost of the project far outpaced funding by an additional \$2.2 million, which prompted the organization to seek out more donations.

Recently, with only \$300,000 left to raise, NIGA contacted the Seminole Tribe's Business Marketing Department to create a call-to-action fundraising video. The video is currently in edits.

"The Seminoles have been here from day one," NIGA Chairman Ernest L. Stevens Jr. said. "Every time there is a need for support here in D.C., we count on them to support us and they have."

Seminole Tribe member O.B. Osceola Jr.'s company, Talako Construction, won the construction contract and began work in 2012.

"It supports NIGA's basic goal to create a Native-to-Native economy," said Osceola, of Naples. "When you look at gaming, it all started with the Seminole Tribe. The job NIGA does in D.C. trickles down to guys like me, who are beneficiaries of that hard work. I'm thrilled and honored to be part of it."

The cornerstone of the expansion is the Stanley R. Crooks Tribal Leaders Conference Center, named for the former chairman of the Shakopee Mdewakanton

Sioux Tribe of Minnesota. The center can accommodate about 150 people. New construction also includes an underground parking garage, outdoor terrace and offices. Its location, just two blocks from the Capitol, makes it easy for NIGA to lobby Congress on issues important to Native Americans, Stevens said.

"This is Indian Country in Washington, D.C.," Stevens said. "It's unprecedented that we can bring a team of tribal leaders into this room and they can be in a House or Senate meeting in five or 10 minutes."

NIGA plans to rent the conference center to groups, but preference will be given to Native Americans. Because of its prime location, NIGA Executive Director Jason Giles believes the bulk of the business will come from non-Native organizations, politicians and political parties for fundraisers and meetings.

"This could be a 24/7, 365-day fundraising facility, but obviously Indian Country and our sister organizations have first priority," Giles said.

Of the 566 federally recognized Tribes, 240 participate in gaming and 184 are members of NIGA. In a brochure about the building renovation, the organization states that "gaming is the only form of economic development that has ever worked for Indian Tribes" and has provided them resources to provide benefits once promised by the government in treaties and agreements.

The Seminole Tribe plays a significant role in NIGA in part because of its history as being the catalyst for tribal gaming nationwide. Stevens said part of NIGA's philosophy is promoting economic development beyond gaming and the Seminole Tribe has accomplished that.

"From a standpoint of helping and promoting and mentoring, they are amazing folks," he said. "The Seminole Tribe of Florida has been a great asset to all of Indian Country, not only in terms of helping and contributing, but walking the walk. They reach out, they care and they help; that's kind of the Indian way."

Next up for NIGA is its mid-year conference Nov. 2-5 at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood, where the conference



Robert Fulp, Seminole Media Productions

The National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) headquarters building in Washington, D.C. recently underwent an expansion that added more than 10,000 square feet of meeting and office space to the historic early 19th century building on Capitol Hill. A donation from the Seminole Tribe helped make the renovations possible.

agenda will focus on major issues facing Indian Country, including the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act, Internet gaming and addressing the Supreme Court's Carciari decision, which made seeking trust status for lands acquired outside a Tribe's reservation boundaries more difficult. Trust status is usually a precursor for gaining approval under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act

for gaming activities.

"We'll put our minds together in the heart of Seminole country and strategize how we will close this year out," Stevens said. "We cannot lose focus on our responsibilities to our jobs as it relates to legislation. At the same time, we have to get a strong message out there."

Giles said they also plan to focus on

fiscal matters during the conference.

"We need clarity going into the New Year," he said. "It's a presidential election year and everyone's operating costs go up; there is a lot more travel and a lot more meetings and events you have to host. We're going to see how we can best meet those challenges for 2016 and start that discussion at the mid-year."

## SEMINOLE SPIRIT

From page 1A

then I wanted to give it interpretation," James said.

The foundation so far helps support 10 indigenous artists in Australia, Haiti and Native American reservations in the United States.

He heard about the Seminole Tribe of Florida from an aboriginal artist in Australia and then took his first trip to see Chairman Billie in 2012.

"The nucleus of the work came from Chairman Billie's great humor and light-spirited wisdom. Then he said something that really resonated with me during one of our early talks that helped me understand," James said.

James asked Chairman Billie why he fought with the Army in Vietnam after the United States government had battled his ancestors to the brink of genocide.

"He told me, 'We just have to move forward; acknowledge the past, but don't live in it.' When it was time to fight as an American, James Billie did, but he will never forget that he is a Seminole every day of his life," James said.

Chairman Billie further stressed to James that tradition is preserved in facts, artifacts and customs that are carried through generations. But culture changes; it evolves in modernity.

James then loosed his artistic vision and photographic expertise to blend the

Seminole cultural story, past and present, in metaphors.

"Seminole Spirit' is a metaphoric snapshot — very modern, evolving, forward thinking, cool, spiritual and connected to the land," James said.

A short film that preceded the current mini-show blended powerful images of the landscape, Tribal members and the unlikely casting of supermodel Behati Prinsloo, of Namibia, Africa, as a mythological character. The sounds of morning and night, rain and wind, and wise words spoken in Mikasuki by Bobby Henry, are edited together like poetry.

"It was beautiful. I love poetry and photography so for me it meant so much to see something so visual translate into something powerful and proud," said Miss Florida Seminole Destiny Nunez. "We really are not just the Hard Rock and other businesses. We are a strong and beautiful people."

Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Skylia Osceola and Little Miss Florida Seminole Victoria Bernard also attended.

The event marked the Museum's reopening celebration following nearly two months of renovations and upgrades. Also featured were live demonstrations by master woodworker Pedro Zepeda, award-winning basket maker Linda Beletso and fine art painter Elgin Jumper.

Self-described "cracker cowboy" Wilse Bruised Head provided a cattle whip demonstration during which generous portions of guava sofkee and pumpkin

frybread were served to spectators.

Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank welcomed the standing-room-only crowd to experience Seminole country and encouraged guests to befriend Tribal members. He compared the opportunity to one he enjoyed more than 40 years ago during a trip with friends to the Ozark Mountains.

"We spent several moons in central Arkansas as new college graduates, and throughout the countryside we came across old folks who were as curious about us as we were of them. They were happy to share the fresh water that trickled off the mountain and happy to let us see the world as they saw it," Rep. Frank said.

Museum Director Paul Backhouse said the physical improvements at the Museum come on the heels of huge increases in visitors. Since July, attendance has nearly doubled.

"People want to understand the Seminole story. It is the Florida story," Backhouse said.

Improvements include roof repairs, a lighter coat of ceiling paint, new carpeting, gift shop expansion and a new wheelchair accessible front desk. Several new interactive exhibits include a traveling bundle kit game, a coontie root-sifting station and a listen

and learn area at the "Guy LaBree: Painted Stories of the Seminoles" exhibit.

"It's really cool to finally see the finished product after so many months of planning, coming up with great concepts and then going through the whole process. It's better than I expected," said Eden Jumper, a senior at Ahfachkee School who was a Museum volunteer last school year and a paid intern during the summer.

New signs at the Clan Pavilion were designed by artist, photographer and filmmaker Sam Tommie.

Backhouse said the reopening on Indian Day gave great reason to celebrate. He called the "Seminole Spirit" preview and upcoming show "phenomenal."

"Seeing the Seminole culture making it into the contemporary art world and seeing it translated like this couldn't make us any happier," Backhouse said.

Designated as a Smithsonian Institute Affiliate, the Museum is the first tribally governed museum in Indian Country to be accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.



Eileen Soler

Miss Florida Seminole Destiny Nunez and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Skylia Osceola play roles with life-size statues in a Seminole eating chickee Sept. 25 at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on Indian Day.



Eileen Soler

Miss Florida Seminole Destiny Nunez and photographer Russell James leap for joy on Indian Day in front of a preview of James' 'Seminole Spirit' photography show.



Eileen Soler

Photographer Russell James gets 'captured' by cattle whip-yielding Wilse Bruised Head at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.

# Firefighters respond to wildfires nationwide

BY EILEEN SOLER  
Staff Reporter

Firefighters of the Seminole Tribe of Florida Fire Rescue Department are always prepared to answer emergency calls on Seminole land, but they are also duty driven to respond to needs throughout Indian Country.

"We have an obligation to maintain our jobs at home, but we also support the national fight," said Division Chief Jeff Alter during the department's Aug. 27 recruit graduation in Hollywood.

Absent from the ceremony were four veteran Seminole wildland firefighters who were battling blazes throughout Indian territory in California and Idaho. Wildland firefighters are all trained in CPR and first aid response, and one is coincidentally a certified emergency medical technician (EMT), but wildland firefighters are not required to be paramedics.

Battalion Chief and Assistant Fire Management Officer Don Mitchell was deployed to the Hoopa Valley Reservation in California; firefighter Nick Apostolopoulos was stationed in the Nez Perce National Forest near the Nez Perce Indian Reservation in Idaho; and Wildlife Protection Field Ops Supervisor Michael Lightsey and Fire Rescue Tech Dane Martin were serving in northern California with the Ute Mountain Agency Fire and Aviation helicopter team.

"Right now all the western Tribes are involved in one firefighting way or another but everyone registered with the national Resource Ordering and Status System can be called up," Alter said.

As of Sept. 8, more than 9 million acres had burned in wildfires across the United States, making 2015 the worst fire year since official record keeping began in the 1960s, according to a Department of the Interior press release. On Sept. 10, a National Interagency Coordination Center report indicated that 117 fires, consisting of 43 uncontained large fires, were burning in Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Utah and Montana.

Alter said the Seminole department's recent response came on the heels of an Aug. 14 alert from the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group that raised the National Fire Preparedness Level to 5 – the highest readiness level for wildland fire operations.

Then, 60 uncontained large fires were ablaze across 13 states and more than 19,000 interagency personnel were deployed.

On Aug. 21, the Obama administration approved an emergency declaration for 11 counties in Washington state and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Kalispel Tribe of Indians, Spokane Tribe of Indians and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation.

"And even right now, today, they are requesting every available person to respond," Alter said.

Wildfires are common foe to Florida firefighters.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Florida sees the most lightning strikes per year in the United States. Lightning, according to the National Fire Protection Agency, is the leading cause of about 24,600 forest, grass and house fires annually.

In early summer, after a May 8 lightning storm ignited a wildfire in the Big Cypress National Preserve, about 350 personnel from multiple agencies mustered to extinguish multiple fires that left 35,000 acres charred just 3 miles southwest of the Big Cypress Reservation.

"Drought doesn't help," Alter said.

In a May interview with The Seminole Tribune, Mitchell called Florida a "fire ecosystem" because of its propensity for lightning fires.

"It's not 'if,' but 'when' and how bad [the fire] is going to be," Mitchell said.



Eileen Soler

Class 15-01 graduates of the Seminole Tribe of Florida Fire Rescue Department take an oath to serve the Tribe and its communities during graduation night Aug. 27 at Tribe Headquarters in Hollywood.

# New firefighter-paramedics pledge commitment to Tribe

## Nine graduates join Seminole Fire Rescue Department ranks

BY EILEEN SOLER  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — Though the newest members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida Fire Rescue Department already boasted nearly half a century of combined lifesaving experience, graduation Class 15-01 was honored at Tribe Headquarters Aug. 27 after completing six weeks of intense and specific training.

"These men and women are the best of the best," said Fire Marshal Robert Brown. "And tonight they are full-fledged Seminole Tribe of Florida Fire Rescue."

Brown said the seven men and two women, previously certified as firefighters and paramedics, earned Seminole badges after completing rigorous additional

instruction on Seminole land. Specific exercises prepared recruits for emergency situations at reservation locations that could require helicopter rescues, wild brush firefighting and medical response to vehicle crashes on remote roads.

Newcomers also were familiarized with off-grid locations of camps, homes and wild land.

Graduation night at the Hollywood Reservation unfolded in grand ceremony. The Seminole Police and Fire Honor Guard presented flags, the Black Pearl Pipes and Drums band performed a bagpipe march, and department certificates and badges were presented by Fire Rescue Chief Donald DiPetrillo and Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola.

Family members and friends

applauded when Councilman Osceola praised the class and welcomed them into the Seminole community.

"We are happy to have you learn from the best in the business, learn our culture and experience what it's like to work in Indian Country," Councilman Osceola said. "Anyone willing to stand up and sacrifice themselves for others when called upon is a true hero."

Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank, who earned his first paycheck as a firefighter in the early 1970s, also commended the class – with a dose of humor.

"So now I can say, 'Welcome to the family.' You have to be crazy as a caged coon to face down this job and do it in a controlled manner," Rep. Frank said.

The Tribe's newest firefighter-

**"Anyone willing to stand up and sacrifice themselves for others when called upon is a true hero."**

— Chris Osceola,  
Hollywood Councilman



Eileen Soler

Tyler McKerchie, the youngest among nine newly graduated Seminole Tribe of Florida Fire Rescue Department firefighter-paramedics, receives his badge and certificate from Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola and Fire Rescue Chief Donald DiPetrillo during the graduation ceremony at Tribe Headquarters.

paramedics are Cherie Arroyo, Ruben Cruzalvarez, David Escobar, Nicholas Garcia, Michael Hopkins, Daniel Korn, Jenni Lebron, Tyler McKerchie and Stephan Michael.

For Hopkins, the ceremony was also a homecoming. He became a Seminole Tribe firefighter-paramedic in 2002 but had to leave in 2013 when he faced a personal battle with lymphoma. Now cancer free, Hopkins relaunched his career by retraining with Class 15-01 and resuming his former role as a trainer.

"I have been on this stage at least 20 times as a training officer for 20 classes but now I see things differently," Hopkins said. "Cancer changes perspective on everything. I used to be a man's man; now I know how much family means."

Graduates ranged in ages from 23 to 39 with varied backgrounds – from restaurant workers to a stay-at-home mom. Now, Brown said, they are all equal in the brother and sisterhood of firefighters.

DiPetrillo, who said the recent recruits were chosen from hundreds of applicants nationwide, echoed Brown.

"We are family and the Tribe is family. We back each other up," DiPetrillo said. "We are dedicated to do whatever they need, and they help us with whatever we need."

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Eileen Soler

Jeremy Torres, left, and Michael Cid, of JT Contractors, sandbag the Seminole Media Productions building Aug. 28 during the potential threat of Tropical Storm Erika.

## HURRICANE PREP

From page 3A

mindset to prepare for the most severe storm. We could always scale back, but it's always hard to ramp up in the middle of it all," Latchford said.

"Just in case" measures are important to document before a storm hits to justify Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding after the storm. The Tribe, like all communities, must prove assets, manpower hours used and precautionary actions taken in order to recoup money spent and property lost.

Latchford said the balance was struck between monitoring the storm and not creating panic. All hands were on deck throughout the reservations. Latchford said, to share preparation duties while carrying out the regular work day.

In Hollywood, a truckload of bottled water was unloaded by hand at the old gymnasium under the direction of Recreation Department site manager Joe Collins.

"We're preparing for the worst and hoping for the best. If the storm gets worse, we'll be sandbagging the floors tomorrow. Tonight, we'll bag the computers," Collins said. "Otherwise, it's business as usual."

Hollywood swimming pool lifeguard Jonathan Funes helped unload the cases of water.

"Usually I keep people safe in the water. This time I want them to drink it," Funes said.

Throughout the Taft Street building,

where the Native Learning Center, Construction Management and several other departments operate, employees hustled to simultaneously finish an ordinary day of work and move important documents and equipment into safe quarters.

At the Seminole Media Productions building, sandbagging and shuttering had already begun.

Latchford credited Tribal Community Development Director Adam Nelson for leading the brunt of tribal businesses, homes and community buildings into secure situations. Nelson's department mobilized about 80 employees in Housing, Public Works and the Environmental Resource Management departments.

"We have to be beyond prepared every day ... for streamlining communication and action for the betterment of all communities," Nelson said.

Hurricane preparation began in May, Latchford said. Partnering with the Health, Housing, Building and Construction Management departments, Public Safety had already "touched base door to door" with homeowners and department heads to access needs and to remind all to have supplies ready and areas cleared of loose objects that could become projectiles.

During the Erika threat, police and fire personnel made additional community visits.

"It was a good test run," Latchford said. "We never like to see a storm come at us, but we haven't had a significant event to worry about in years. It was good to see emergency management and all the departments prepared."

# Okeechobee WWII veteran receives medals in Brighton

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**BRIGHTON** — It's been 67 years since World War II veteran Lemoyne Ezell's service in the U.S. Navy ended, but it took until last October for the Okeechobee resident to receive his discharge papers and service medals, which were officially presented to him at the Florida Seminole Veterans Building in Brighton.

Capt. Ronald K. Williams, of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), presented Ezell the medals with help from Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) regional director Marc McCabe and VA outreach coordinator Elaine Westermeyer.

"He's severely ill and only wanted his WWII Victory Medal, but he got seven others," McCabe said.

McCabe and Westermeyer work with veterans at the Brighton building every month. Ezell's situation was brought to their attention through the Sons of the American Legion's Ray Worley.

In addition to the WWII Victory Medal, Ezell earned the American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, Navy Occupation Service Medal (with Asia Clasp), China Service Medal (Extended), Discharge Button and the Honorable Service Lapel Pin (Ruptured Duck).

"I didn't even know I deserved them," said Ezell, 86. "I joined the Navy at 16 years old, and at 17 I got rid of two Japanese mines; two shots and I got rid of them both. After that I was the No. 1 gunner on the USS Gendreau. I was very expert in marksmanship — over 500 yards I could shoot anything and take it out."

As a child in 1935, Ezell helped his father build a schoolhouse in Brighton. His father, an electrician, sent young Ezell up to the roof to hand drill holes for wires and feed them through. His fifth-grade education didn't qualify him to be an electrician as an adult, so he spent his postwar years as a laborer in the Okeechobee area.

McCabe and Westermeyer also procured a new wheelchair and more monetary benefits from the VA for Ezell.

"He's the vet who fell through the cracks and nobody ever cared for," McCabe said. "That's why I come out to Brighton — to facilitate all these claims for vets who don't

have anyone else to speak for them."

Ezell wanted to enlist in the Navy but knew he was too young, so he lied about his age. He was a seaman 2nd class in the Navy, qualified as a Blue Nose for crossing the Arctic Circle and served on the USS Cole, USS Wiltsie, USS Gendreau and USS Fechteler. After he left active duty, he served in the U.S. Navy Reserve until 1955.

McCabe, who has worked out of the Florida Seminole Veterans Building for about five years, said he has seen many cases like Ezell's. McCabe's efforts have helped Seminole veterans, tribal employees and veterans in the tri-county area and in towns near Lake Okeechobee. Typically, McCabe sees 40 to 50 vets in Brighton each month.

"We've recovered over \$45 million in earned benefits for veterans this year alone in Florida," he said. "If I see a wrong I'm going to bring it to attention and right that wrong. I fight for the vet who can't fight for himself and get him the highest amount allowed by law."

A broad range of benefits and services from the VA are available to all veterans, but McCabe and the VVA are frustrated with the backlog of claims. As a result,

veterans can wait for more than five years for an accurate decision to be made in their cases, according to a recent press release on the VVA website.

Illnesses are paid based on a VA rating system, which McCabe believes is problematic.

For example, post-traumatic stress disorder is always underrated and the VA often only pays 30 percent of the allowable amount, McCabe said.

"It is an earned benefit, not a handout," he said. "There needs to be a set of accountability rules determining everything within the VA system. But no one is held accountable. The staff is overwhelmed and backlogged. They are dedicated employees, some are veterans, but the system holds them back."

For Ezell, the process to receive his medals stalled 67 years ago, but the effort that resumed in March 2014 was finally completed six months later. Now he can display the medals on the Navy shirt he wore when he was 17.

"It feels good to have my medals," he said. "They (McCabe and Westermeyer) helped me a lot and they are still helping me."



Photo courtesy of Ray Worley

Veteran Lemoyne Ezell, seated, receives his World War II medals at the Florida Seminole Veterans Building in October 2014. From left are Elaine Westermeyer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dan Hunt, Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Okeechobee Chapter; Marc McCabe, regional director VVA; and Ray Worley, Sons of the American Legion.

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From left, Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, Fire Rescue Lt. Evan Weiner, President Mitchell Cypress, Chairman James E. Billie, Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr. and Big Cypress Councilman Cicero Osceola pose for a photograph after Weiner was honored with a lifesaving award from Executive Director of Public Safety and Chief of Police William Latchford Sept. 11 prior to the Council meeting in Hollywood.

# Fire Rescue, Seminole Police honored at Council meeting

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — Five Public Safety personnel received lifesaving awards from Executive Director of Public Safety and Chief of Police William Latchford prior to the Council meeting in Hollywood 14 years to the day after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

In a letter to the community prior to the meeting, Latchford emphasized that the two firefighters and three police officers recognized saved the lives of individuals who would not be alive if they did not act.

“These same men and woman are the ones that will run into a burning building while everyone is running out, run towards shots being fired while everyone is taken cover and running away,” he wrote. “Please know these men and women are not in the police or fire service for recognition; they are in the noble profession because they care and want to help people.”

Honored were Fire Rescue Lt. Evan Weiner, SPD Sgt. Michael Birch, SPD Sgt. Jeffery “Scott” Akin, firefighter David De Cardenas and SPD Lt. Jeff Maslan.

## Lt. Evan Weiner

Lt. Evan Weiner was recognized for being named Paramedic of the Year by the Fire Chiefs’ Association of Broward County for his professionalism while taking charge of a deadly accident on Snake Road last year.

On Dec. 7, 2014, an SUV traveling southbound on Snake Road hit a black bear. The single vehicle accident quickly turned into a chain-reaction catastrophe involving five vehicles when a group of eight men who stopped to help the unharmed SUV driver were struck by a car that rolled over after colliding with their vehicles. Weiner, who has been with the Fire Rescue Department for eight years, was the first responder to the chaotic scene where victims were spread out over a 300-yard area.

Weiner prioritized the victims’ injuries, and realizing backup responders were more than 45 minutes away, declared the accident a high-priority, multi-casualty incident. He then established aircraft landing zones, created a unified command for treatment and transport of the victims, and coordinated the involvement of multiple agencies, including the Seminole Tribe and fire rescue/air rescue from Broward Sheriff’s Office and Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties.

By the end of the incident, three people had died at the scene and eight people

were transported to two Broward County hospitals.

“As emergency responders we go through years of training,” Weiner said. “I felt prepared for whatever came up. I am thankful to the fire department and the Seminole Tribe for offering such extensive training, which prepares us to encounter these types of events.”

Weiner was presented with the FCABC Paramedic of the Year award in May during National Emergency Medical Services Week at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.

“Being exposed to significant events makes you realize anything can happen and to appreciate everything you have,” Weiner said. “Enjoy every day because you never know when something significant can happen to you.”

## Sgt. Michael Birch

Four-year SPD veteran Sgt. Michael Birch had never saved a life until July 19. While in a restaurant at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa, he noticed a commotion at another table. Eldora and Jerry Bakelman, of Lehigh Acres, were having dinner when a piece of chicken became lodged in Eldora’s throat.

Jerry performed the Heimlich maneuver on his choking wife repeatedly but was unable to clear her airway. As Eldora began to lose consciousness, Birch took over and successfully dislodged the obstruction.

“My training kicked in and I started working. I just did what I was trained to do,” Birch said. “It was great to see her come around.”

The Bakhelmans, who recently celebrated their 23rd wedding anniversary, are extremely grateful and have returned to the casino a few times to see Birch.

“Without him, I would have died,” Eldora said through tears. “I remember looking at a bunch of people around me and then suddenly I was breathing. It’s overwhelming to realize I almost died and wasn’t going to be here for Jerry or Tyler (her 15-year-old son).”

Since the incident, Eldora said she lives life to the fullest. Birch said he just happened to be in the right place at the right time.

In the process, he learned an important lesson.

“Never slack on your training because you never know when you will need to use it,” Birch said. “Always be prepared and never hesitate to act.”

## Sgt. Jeffery “Scott” Akin and Firefighter David De Cardenas

Sgt. Jeffery “Scott” Akin and firefighter David De Cardenas were floating down the Ichetucknee River on Aug. 6 with 181 campers and counselors from Camp Kulaqua. The day began as an idyllic trip down the waterway until Akin noticed tourist Robert Massey’s shoelace was caught on a tree branch and he was being pulled under by the current.

The water was moving fast. Massey, a veteran who was with a group of about five people, struggled to free himself, but to no avail. Akin dove underwater and cut the shoelace from the branch as De Cardenas put a lifesaving float under Massey’s arms to keep his head above water.

The officers helped Massey back into his inner tube and stayed with him until he reached the rest of his group.

## Lt. Jeff Maslan

After 40 years as a police officer, the motto “to protect and serve” is so ingrained in Lt. Jeff Maslan that on May 17, as he was running errands on his day off, he saw a disturbance on the side of the road in Sunrise and stopped to offer assistance. He saw a man in his mid-50s lying face down and unconscious on the side of the road surrounded by several people.

Maslan’s instincts took over and although he found no pulse or other signs of life, he began CPR and instructed the bystanders to call 911. He continued until the Sunrise Fire Rescue unit arrived and took the man to the hospital. Three hours later Maslan learned the man had a heart attack and survived thanks to his efforts. It was the second life he saved during his career.

“He went into emergency surgery to clear blockages,” said Maslan, a five-year SPD veteran. “I knew he survived whatever happened to him on the roadside.”

Maslan was invited to attend the Sunrise City Commission meeting July 14, where he was told his efforts were a key factor in saving the victim’s life. The City of Sunrise and the Sunrise Fire Chief recognized him for his lifesaving actions.

“They said if I didn’t do what I did, they wouldn’t have had anything to work with and he may not have survived,” Maslan said. “This is why I wanted to be a police officer. It solidifies my reason for choosing this profession.”

All honorees received glass achievement awards and posed for photos with Council.

## ◆ NATIVE PLANTS

From page 1A

Other Tribes have not been as fortunate. Jonathan B. Jarvis, director of the NPS, bought the issue to light in a 2010 letter to tribal leaders.

“The NPS recognizes that Indian Tribes view the continued access to and use of plants and other resources as critical to the continuity of their distinct culture. It is now time to look at the specific provisions of the regulations in light of current legal mandates and policies to see if the needs of traditional Indian cultural practitioners might be met,” Jarvis wrote.

In 2010, six tribal consultation meetings were held. About 150 members from 50 Tribes attended meetings in Arizona, California, Maine, Minnesota, North Carolina and Washington. Additional meetings were held during two Native conferences in Alaska.

Tribes had through Sept. 28 to comment on the language of the new proposed rule, which lifts the prohibition of plant gathering. After comments are reviewed and analyzed, the new proposed rule will be published in the Federal Register, the federal government’s official notice for proposed and final administrative regulations.

Through Sept. 20, almost 80 responses were received from individuals, federally recognized Tribes and indigenous groups throughout Indian Country, said Jeffrey Olson, a public affairs officer at NPS.

Under the new proposed rule, Tribes can enter agreements with park sites to which they are traditionally or historically associated. Tribal members allowed by tribal leaders to gather plants will be registered and the plants to be harvested will be listed. The agreement will also note plant quantities to be gleaned and what days and what times the gatherings will happen.

Agreements can also include cooperative plans between parks and Tribes to ensure the continued health and protection of the plant and programs for plant site management that could include research, monitoring and regular consultation to assure that the park resources flourish for future generations.

The final rule could be published in the Federal Register as early as spring 2016. It will go into effect 30 days after it is published.

“The committees are pretty good about looking at the comments carefully, seeing how they can address them and take the course of action needed to move forward,” Olson said.

United South and Eastern Tribes Inc. (USET), comprised of 26 Tribes from Maine to Florida, provided in-depth remarks endorsed by tribal leaders and signed by USET President Brian Patterson and Executive Director Kitcki A. Carroll.

Overall, USET is pleased that the ban will be lifted but is wary that government rules could expose Native traditions that have long been kept within Tribes and Clans.

Among USET recommendations:

- Allow tribal governments to designate members who may gather in order to maintain sustainability of ecosystems.
- Include gathering of minerals traditionally used for religious purposes, artistic endeavors and personal consumption.
- Allow minor commercial use of natural resources, including plant or plant parts that are used for Native craft items traditionally offered for sale.
- Establish provisions that will not reveal publicly the locations of natural resources important to Tribes.
- Treat agreements covering minor gathering activities as exclusions under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Comments from traditionalists and independents, including the Council of the Original Miccosukee Simanolee Nation Aboriginal Peoples, led by Clan Leader and Spiritual Leader Bobby C. Billie, offer no compromise but instead demand unconditional access to all indigenous people, regardless of Tribe enrollment.

“By creating defined parameters and designated individuals, the federal government assumes control over those practices by determining who is allowed to engage in a cultural way of life and what that way of life might be. This is illegal and unacceptable,” read the May 20 letter.

The comment letter was also signed by Chief Arvol Looking Horse, the 19th Generation Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe Bundle and Spiritual Leader of the Great Sioux Nation; Leland Grass, a Dine’ Traditionalist; and Faith Spotted Eagle, of the Brave Heart Society, Ihanktonwan Dakota.

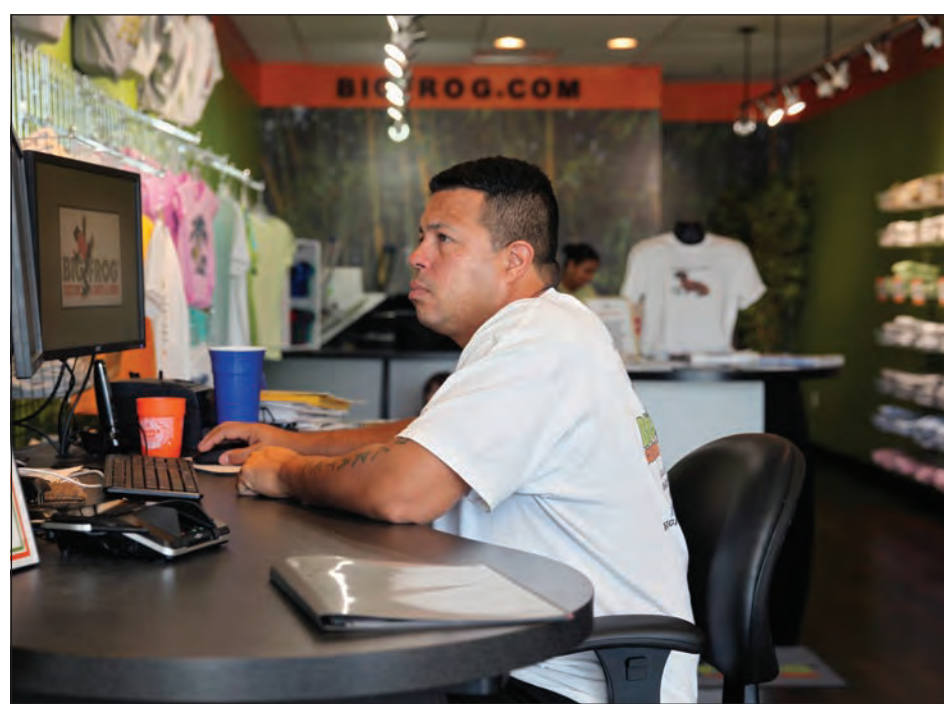
The letter further states “to deny [them] traditional rights is a direct violation of law, and it is racist and divisive.”

Chairman Billie said Native Americans will always be respectful of nature no matter what laws are handed down.

“The government can make all the rules and regulations they want. We’ve been here a long, long time and we haven’t violated or devastated our Earth in the least,” Chairman Billie said.

“We’ve been here a long, long time and we haven’t violated or devastated our Earth in the least.”

— Chairman James E. Billie



Beverly Bidney

Tribal business owner Jason Billie designs one-of-a-kind T-shirts at his store Big Frog Custom T-Shirts & More located at 1614 Sheridan St. in Hollywood. Billie went from broker to business owner when he opened the store in April.

## ◆ BIG FROG

From page 3C

In the back, a large tabletop Brother printer makes high-quality, on-demand printing possible.

The machine uses the direct-to-garment printing method, in which the ink is incorporated into the fabric instead of being placed on top of it. Because there is no vinyl in the ink, the design can only be seen, not felt. The machine prints one shirt at a time and can complete about 35 per hour.

“It’s a cost-efficient way to print,” he said.

Billie said he recently finished printing 600 T-shirts for the 2015 Big Cypress Indian Day celebration. He fulfilled the order in a day and a half.

Billie used to act as the middleman between customers and printers, but now he prefers the retail setting where he interacts directly with customers and controls the order from start to finish. He enjoys the perks of being his own boss but also appreciates the ongoing support from the corporate office and the online forums where franchisees share ideas.

Marketing is an important component of any business, so Billie actively posts on Facebook, advertises on Google,

Yahoo and Yext, and sends email blasts to customers. He is an active member of the Greater Hollywood Chamber of Commerce and networks continuously.

Billie said he cooperates with the community of stores in the Westlake Commons shopping plaza on joint promotions and has given local schools free T-shirts, including more than 100 to Olson Middle School and Hollywood Hills High School bands.

At Hollywood Hills High, where his daughter Carissa Billie, 18, is a senior, he offered to make the cheerleader squad, or any group at school, T-shirts for them to sell. The group will pocket 25 percent of the profits with zero expenses if they take him up on the offer.

Billie said he works hard so he can build a family business and set a good example for his children.

“The end game is to give [the business] to my kids,” said the single father of four. “They need to have the sense that you have to work.”

Billie advises anyone interested in launching a business to research it well and have a plan.

“Do your due diligence,” he said. “Don’t put the responsibility of getting something done in someone else’s hands. If you want something done right, do it yourself.”



Beverly Bidney

Eldora and Jerry Bakelman, of Lehigh Acres, show their appreciation of the Seminole Tribe during the Sept. 11 Council meeting. Eldora was choking at a Tampa casino restaurant when SPD Sgt. Michael Birch performed the Heimlich maneuver and saved her life.

# Fashionably unique: Celebrating tradition, innovation

**SUBMITTED BY REBECCA FELL**  
 Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum



Photo courtesy of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum acquired this colorful patchwork quilt sampler in 1994 and would like to know more about it. ATTK Catalog No. 1994.25.1

One of the great things about the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's collection is seeing the variety of each type of object. For instance, we have hundreds of pieces of patchwork, which include everything from early pieces to ones made just last year. This broad range of patchwork – skirts, shirts, jackets, vests, long shirts, capes and dresses tells us about patchwork designs and fashions. They show how the fashions have changed and what styles and designs have endured. Occasionally, we receive a very unique piece that clearly tells a different story than most pieces. In this month's installment of "Identifying the Past," we look at a unique patchwork quilt/sampler.

Patchwork is rarely seen in a sampler style quilt or panel. After all, patchwork is supposed to be worn. Samplers, on the other hand, show off the patchwork creator's skills – they show different patchwork designs, usually in a pattern of rows. More advanced patchwork artists will have whole books showing their designs, not just samplers.

This quilt sampler, however, is different because of its "crazy quilt" pattern – meaning there is no regular, discernable pattern. There is a broad range of different patchwork designs stitched together – sometimes in panels and at other places at an angle from the surrounding designs. Some designs are tiny, complex and neatly done while others are large and relatively easy designs. It also has an intense quilting pattern. The usual patchwork samplers have little if any actual quilting; they are meant to show off the patchwork itself. This quilted sampler seems to suggest a different purpose – perhaps as a blanket.

A talented patchwork artist, or perhaps more than one artist, created this piece. The Museum would love to know more about this beautiful and unique piece of patchwork design.

Other modern pieces of Seminole patchwork are on display in the exhibition, "It's Not a Costume – Modern Seminole Patchwork," through the end of November at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum. While showcasing several pieces from the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki collection, the exhibition makes clear that patchwork is a vibrant, practical

form of wearable art.

The Museum will continue to celebrate modern patchwork by sponsoring a fashion show at our annual American Indian Arts Celebration (AIAC). The fashion show will take place on the afternoon of Nov. 7. It will feature modern patchwork design, including

some unique and non-traditional fashions. We still have several slots available for the fashion show. If you are interested in participating in the patchwork fashion show or would simply like to know more, call 863-902-1113, ext. 12251 or email RebeccaFell@semtribe.com.

# Hah-pong-ke: Rita Youngman

**BY PETER B. GALLAGHER**  
 Special Projects Reporter



Peter B. Gallagher

Rita Youngman, accompanied by John Boise, performs during the Guy LaBree Tribute in Arcadia in February.

In "Hush," a song by Okeechobee native Rita Youngman, a Seminole Indian mother is forced to suffocate her crying baby as soldiers march past their hiding place during the mid-1800s Seminole Wars. It is a dramatic scene taken from real events during the U.S. military's effort to cleanse Florida of its Native people by either killing or forcibly removing them to lands out West.

Youngman feels a strong kinship with this haunting episode. She and her four sons are members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. When she first heard these war stories as a young child, she said she tried to imagine how it could happen. Eventually, "Hush" was born.

In only a few words spoken as the mother, she captures the essence of a volcanic heartbreak, while justifying the killing of her own baby: "Our people were safe that day/At the expense of my baby's fate/In this war he's a consequence/In my life he's my biggest, my biggest heartbreak." She borrows a key phrase from the American traditional children's folk song, "Hush, Little Baby," whose lyrics promise rewards to the baby – a mockingbird, diamond ring, billy goat, a dog named Rover – if he or she stops crying. Youngman twists that whimsical thought into a promise only of life itself: "Hush little baby don't you cry/ I hoped the soldiers would quickly pass by/ But there were many soldiers that day/ I held you tight and I covered your tiny face."

Raised off reservation in the Palmdale section of Glades County, Youngman is the granddaughter of the late Toby and Rosa Johns, of the Brighton Reservation, and the daughter of Seminole Tribal member Mable Tichenor (Bird Clan) and

railroad worker Mike Haught. Married to Frank Youngman, their children are Talon Youngman, 19, *Foosh Huitkee*, white bird; Wyatt Youngman, 17, *Tuci batchee*, ancient village on Tampa Bay; Tiger Youngman, 12, *Gotcha*, tiger; and Colt Youngman, 7, *Chothloy gogee*, colt.

Rita Youngman lives in Lake Placid and is a realtor. She and Frank own Florida Grove Hedgers, Florida Grove Foggers and Florida Grove Manufacturing. Recognizable from her ever-present Seminole skirt, Youngman appears occasionally with her band – including Australian hall of fame guitarist John Boise (formerly of the Dingoes) – at festivals and small venues around the state "when I have time," she said. "I'm pretty busy."

That includes writing lyrics and music for songs, most about the history of the Seminoles; her own life in modern society infused with Seminole culture, art and beliefs; and her love for God and her family. She has two CDs and is working on a third.

An extensive collector of Seminole Indian dolls, Youngman is also owner of the largest collection of original paintings by the late Florida artist Guy LaBree.

"Guy was like a father to me. I can't believe he is gone," she said.

Youngman's short-term goal is to study anthropology at the University of Florida.

"My long-term goals are to learn as much as possible about the ever-changing Seminoles and to learn to speak the Seminole languages," she said.

## 'Hush,' words, music by Rita Youngman

Hush little baby don't you cry  
 I hoped the soldiers would quickly pass by  
 But there were many soldiers that day  
 I held you tight and I covered your tiny face

Hush little baby don't you cry  
 I hoped the soldiers would quickly pass by  
 But there were many soldiers that day  
 I held you tight and I covered your tiny face

Soon enough I'll see him again  
 When the breath maker calls me in  
 He's my hero my littlest one  
 I'm so proud of you my baby son

Our people were safe that day  
 At the expense of my baby's fate  
 In this war he's a consequence  
 In my life he's my biggest, my biggest heartbreak

His memory I will always cherish  
 Even after his little body I bury  
 Times are hard and Times are tough  
 I wonder how many lives will be enough

Hush little baby don't you cry  
 I hoped the soldiers would quickly pass by  
 But there were many soldiers that day  
 I held you tight and I covered your tiny face

Betty Mae Jumper

## Wisdom from the past

# Hurricane bird

The following column was written by Betty Mae Jumper and printed in the October 22, 1999 issue of The Seminole Tribune.

When Hurricane Irene came through South Florida recently, the Seminole Tribe closed the office so the staff could take care of their homes and prepare for the storm.

As I was home sitting and looking out the window, I saw palm fronds flying across the yard, blown by the wind. The trees were really whipping around, and my mind wandered back to years ago. I remembered another hurricane from my young days and how my family and I passed that storm near this exact same spot.

I remember my brother Howard and I were sitting quietly while my family was getting ready for the *ho-tale-tha-ko*, or "big wind."

My Great Uncle Jimmy Gopher was in charge of preparing for the storm. Jimmy was a powerful medicine man, and he always knew the right thing to do.

The first thing Jimmy did was to get four axes. The number four is important in Indian culture and medicine. You always do things in four. Like, if you take medicine, you take four sips. You always have four logs in the fire.

So, he got four axes. One he got from the woodpile where he cut the wood. I don't know where he got the other three, but he got them.

He jammed the handles into the ground so the blades were facing out in the direction that the wind would be coming. This, he said, would slow and turn the big wind away.

After he put the axes down in the ground, he jumped up and went around whooping and yelling four times. This was a powerful chant to also protect us. Then we all got to a safe place and stayed put until the big wind passed by. The safe place was our chickee.

The chickee was our traditional house, which was made of cypress logs covered with palm thatch. The chickees were built so that the roofs could slide down on the corner poles and lie flat on the ground. When Indians knew the big wind was coming, they would drop the chickee roof to the ground. Then, the entire family would crawl under the roof and stay there until the storm passed. In all the years I have known, no Indian ever lost a life while being sheltered under a chickee roof.

Some people ask me why is that?

Well, we didn't get out until we knew the big wind was out of the way and gone.

Another thing people ask is how the Indians knew that the big winds were coming. Back then, we didn't have television weather shows giving us warnings. Yet, the Indians always knew when the big winds were coming.

I think some of the Indians could feel the weather changing in their own bodies. They also watched the animals and picked up clues from them. I know one of those tricks myself. My family



always seemed to know if the big wind was going to be strong or light. One time my mother said to me when I was about 10 years old, "Follow me," and I did. She said, "You know the big wind is coming." I said I had heard the adults talking about it. She said she would tell me how to tell if the storm would be bad. She pointed to the dark sky where the storm seemed to be coming from and she said, "We will stand here and you will know how strong the wind is going to be."

I stood with my mother a while and finally she pointed toward a bird way out in the sky. She said, "You see that bird high in the sky?" I said, "Yes." She said, "Well, that bird with the fork tail is the one that will tell you how strong the wind is going to be. If that bird is flying low it means the wind will be real strong. When the bird is high, like this one, it means the wind isn't going to be strong."

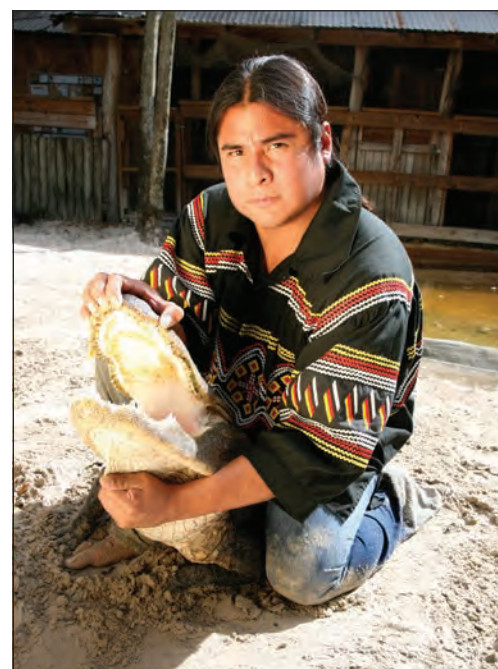
She was right. That storm wasn't bad. She said this was how our people lived through the big winds. By looking at that bird, they knew if the winds would be strong or not.

In my later teen years, another hurricane was coming and I asked my mother how strong the winds were going to be. She said, "Go look." So I did. I looked in the direction of the dark cloud and waited until I saw the bird with the forked tail flying. When I got home, she asked me how the bird was flying. I said, "Low." She said, "Well, what's it going to be?" I said, "Strong," and it was. So I truly can say my people knew how to prepare for the big winds back in those days. They didn't have radios or news, but they knew when things were going to happen.

I can't tell all the tricks they knew because I can't remember them. But I know you can tell how strong the wind will be if you watch for the bird with the forked tail. If it's high in the sky, don't worry. But if that bird is lying low, get ready. *Ho-tale-tha-ko* is on the way.

## EVERETT OSCEOLA

From page 1A



Gordon Wareham

Everett Osceola wrestles a gator at Okalee Village.

happened between whites and Natives during the Second Seminole War.

He has also worked closely with the Stranahan House, where Seminoles traded with owners Frank and Ivy Stranahan during the turn of the 20th century.

Osceola said he will put his experience to use with the new appointment.

"I also want to take this moment to show gratitude and appreciation for those who have helped me and even pushed me to where I am now: Marlene Schotanus, Oliver Wareham, Brian Zepeda, April Kirk, Pete Hahn, William Sydnor, Van Samuels, and last and certainly not least, my mother (WACHEE) who has always been watching over me and when I was young would always tell me, 'We all have to fight real hard at one point in our life.'"



Seminole Tribune/File photo

Everett Osceola tells nearly 130 guests during a two-hour yacht tour of the New River about the Seminole influence on Fort Lauderdale history and modern time.



# Health



**Chad Billie celebrates his win in the men's adult walker category as he passes under the finish line balloons Sept. 19 during the sixth annual Seminole in Recovery 5K Run & Walk at T.Y. Park in Hollywood.**

## Runners, walkers cheer for sobriety during annual 5K

**BY BEVERLY BIDNEY**  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — More than 40 determined people gathered before dawn Sept. 19 ready to walk, run or stroll through Hollywood's Topeekeegee Yugnee (T.Y.) Park for the sixth annual Seminole in Recovery 5K Run & Walk.

"We try to teach a new way of life," said Helene Buster, organizer of Seminoles in Recovery events. "We promote being healthy physically, spiritually and emotionally. This is the physical part of the process."

The event attracted individuals new to recovery and those who have maintained their sobriety for years.

Buster said she hopes they learn from each other and that the more experienced people can be an example for those new to the program.

"Being sober for years isn't any different than being sober for one day," Buster said. "This program teaches us one day at a time. If old-timers think they don't need this, then they will start going into their old way of thinking and living. That's why we have at least quarterly events to encourage fellowship and get people trying to recover together, so they can get support from each other."

The T.Y. Park event was open to the community. Families with babies and children, seniors and everyone in between took to the course through the wooded park at their own pace.

Despite being well along in her pregnancy, Jo Jo Osceola walked with her children Sarafina and Byron Billie, ages 9 and 7, and her sister Courtney Osceola, who is training for the San Francisco half marathon Oct. 18 and the Disney Avengers back-to-back half marathons Nov. 13 and



**Women's senior runner winner Helene Buster receives a hug from her husband, Andy Buster, after crossing the finish line of the Seminoles in Recovery 5K Run & Walk at T.Y. Park in Hollywood.**

15 in Los Angeles.

"We came to show support for our people," Jo Jo Osceola said. "It's a good cause and they (her children) need to remain active even early on a Saturday morning."

The winners of the sixth annual Seminole in Recovery 5K Run & Walk were: men's adult walker: Chad Billie (first), Kenneth Tommie (second), Brian Billie (third); women's adult walker: Jennifer Billie (first), Lila Osceola (second), LaDonna Tucker (third); men's adult runner: Clinton Billie (first), Timothy Bearden (second), Travis Duncan (third);

women's adult runner: Cheri Thompson (first), Alice Brady (second), Jackie Velasquez (third); men's senior runner: Tony King (first), Patrick Doctor Sr. (second); men's senior walker: Lawrence Osceola (first); women's senior runner: Helene Buster (first).

"It was fun," said Chad Billie after winning the men's adult walker category. "It was my first time doing it and I sweated more than I thought I would."

The event raised more than \$1,000 for the eighth annual Florida Native American Recovery Convention to be held in Clewiston in March.



**From left, Courtney Osceola, Byron Billie, 7, Jo Jo Osceola and Sarafina Billie, 9, walk together during the Seminoles in Recovery 5K Run & Walk at T.Y. Park in Hollywood.**

## 'Disease detectives' offer help, treatment

**SUBMITTED BY BOB LAMENDOLA**  
Florida Department of Health in Broward

Disease intervention specialists (DIS) at the Florida Department of Health in Broward County spend their days locating people who have tested positive for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) — and their sex partners — and offer them treatment.

Call them the disease detectives.

Sonya Richards, a former U.S. Army psychological intelligence operator who is now a DIS, went to pick up a girl, 14, to receive treatment but found the repeat runaway was gone again. The girl's upset mother had no idea where to find her daughter, but Richards remembered the teen previously mentioning a friend and a park where they liked to hang out. Sure enough, she found the girl there and drove her to the clinic.

"I told her that once a week, I would pick her up wherever she desired and take her in for her three weekly injections. That's an hour-long round trip, but during that traveling time, we talked a lot," Richards said. "She was in a gang and she was doing drugs I've never heard of in my life. But she was a beautiful and intelligent young lady. She said she had seen how her siblings acted rebelliously and she did the same thing, too. Eventually she agreed to talk about outside counseling. Now the family is in counseling."

Cases like the 14-year-old are a regular occurrence for the 25-person STD staff.

Their efforts have helped DOH-Broward reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS and STDs in the community.

DIS workers are trained to perform STD tests, but most of their work is locating clients. They sometimes work at night and on weekends to find those unavailable during business hours. Phone numbers, addresses, family members and official databases typically are enough to locate STD clients. But like good detectives, DIS staff must learn to think creatively when they come up empty.

"I once got a phone number off of a dog collar," DIS Katy Anderson said. "I did about three field visits and each time, no one was home. There was a dog there each time I could see through the glass door. When it jumped up to bark at me, I got the phone number and surprisingly enough that phone number helped me reach the client."

DIS staffers learn to make their methods fit the surroundings. They must speak plainly and directly, and dress appropriately. Most importantly, they must be absolutely vigilant to protect a client's confidentiality. For instance, when they talk to a minor for the first time, they can't tell the parents why they are there until they have told the child first.

"The parents may get angry. You have to be polite but firm," DIS Gabrielle McKoy said. "People look at us in a negative light. I like to view us in a positive light. I'm not always bringing good news but when I bring bad news, I have a solution to bring them. You can get treatment."



## Native youth continue to face mental health obstacles

**BY LENZY KREHBIEL-BURTON**  
Native Health News Alliance

**TULSA, Okla.** — For Rose, the struggle is real.

A Cherokee senior at a northeastern Oklahoma high school, Rose has wrestled with depression since seventh grade. Although she has not attempted suicide, she has resorted to other physical measures to handle her illness.

"How I cope is with self-harm," she said. "Everything just blows up in my face and then keeps building on top of that until I can't really take it anymore. When I cut myself, I feel like all of those problems just melt away."

With few people beyond her counselor, immediate family and a handful of close friends aware of her cutting habits, Rose only agreed to be interviewed if no identifying information was published, including her actual first name.

Although there is little data on depression rates in Indian Country, what information is available implies a higher frequency of mental health issues among American Indian and Alaska Native youth than their non-Native peers. Among the risk factors for mental illness seen more commonly in Indian Country are poverty, exposure to trauma such as witnessing domestic violence, higher rates of substance abuse and lack of access to care.

Reliable statistical data is also scant on the rates of cutting and other forms of self-harm. According to a 2010 article in the Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine, an estimated 15 percent of teenagers nationwide reported in engaging in some form of self-harm, with even higher rates among college-age students.

Men more frequently report burning or hitting themselves, while women are more likely to cut or burn themselves.

Additionally, simply accessing preventative care is often difficult. According to the National Rural Health Association, among rural counties nationwide with a population of 20,000 or less, 75 percent do not have at least one practicing psychiatrist. Ninety-five percent of those counties do not have a practicing child psychiatrist.

Among the estimated 605,000 Natives eligible to utilize one of Indian Health Services' 41 urban health centers nationwide, only one in five reported being able to access those programs in 2000.

According to a 2014 report released by Indian Health Services, suicide is the second-leading cause of death for American Indians and Alaska Natives between the ages of 15 and 24, only trailing accidental deaths. With a suicide rate four times higher than their non-Native peers, Native youth account for 64 percent of all suicides in Indian Country.

The data has drawn more attention to the mental health situation from outside Indian Country, including the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. Earlier this year, the committee conducted an oversight hearing on the youth suicide rate — its sixth within a decade.

"Native children experience PTSD at the same rate as veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan," Sen. Jon Tester (D-Montana) testified. "We've got some problems. To say that this is troubling doesn't even begin to characterize it."

Among the witnesses called in to testify were representatives from the Oglala Lakota Tribe, whose South Dakota reservation, Pine Ridge, is home to one of the lowest life expectancy rates in the Western Hemisphere.

With almost half the reservation's population age 18 and younger, 11 of the Tribe's teenagers committed suicide between December 2014 and June 2015. Another 176 attempted it, prompting a state of emergency proclamation from Chairman John Yellow Bird Steele.

"It is the totality of the environment in which they live," he said before the congressional committee. "If you put an animal in a cage with clean water and water laced with drugs and nothing else, over time, that animal will go for the water laced with drugs and do so until it dies. The environment is just too barren, too negative, and the drugged water lets it cope and forget."

"If you put some food in the cage, place some toys in the cage, pet the animal from time to time and pay it attention, the animal will go for the clean water because he is healthy, safe, well-treated and hopes that life will continue. Even with the loving parents we have on our reservation, the totality of our youths' surroundings is analogous to that barren, sparse, negative cage. It does not have to be this way; we have to give our youth hope."

In an effort to deal with the problem, the Tribe designed its own intervention campaign, the Sweet Grass Suicide Prevention Program. Staffed around the clock, the program incorporates traditional cultural components. During the first half of 2015, it made contact with almost 300 Oglala Lakota youth who were exhibiting suicidal behaviors.

Other Tribes, including the Navajo Nation, have established similar programs in an effort to address the problem at the grassroots level.

More partnerships and initiatives aimed at addressing mental health among Native youth are starting to take shape, including the Zero Suicides campaign from IHS, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center. However, the evidence-based, community-driven program is contingent upon an additional \$25 million appropriation from the federal government.

Meanwhile, Rose is just trying to hang on until graduation in May 2016. Her grades took a hit during her junior year when she hit a self-described "low point" and her life outside of the classroom has felt an even bigger impact.

"Socially, it makes it hard to make friends, or actually stay true to the plans we make," she said. "Most of the time, I end up backing out of going to the movies or just hanging out in general because of how my depression makes me feel."

# SEMINOLE SCENES



Eileen Soler

**ZAP, CRACKLE, POP:** A live oak tree along a swale at the Howard Tiger Recreation Center parking lot is zippered in a lightning strike Aug. 26. Witnesses said the bolt of lightning hit the tree as children and adults were walking to and from the gym.



Beverly Bidney

**CAN YOU DIG IT:** Players on the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School junior varsity girls volleyball team get pumped up for their Sept. 18 match against West Glades Middle School.



Photo courtesy of Vanessa Osceola

**9/11 SALUTE:** From left, Noah Osceola, 6, Sally Osceola, 8, Joseph Osceola, 15, and Eleanor Osceola, 4, help hoist the Seminole flag at Montverde Academy in Montverde, Florida. The flag was raised for the first time at the school Sept. 11 following the school's 9/11 memorial service. The flag-raising ceremony included several flags from countries worldwide to symbolize international unity, cooperation, collaboration and respect.



Beverly Bidney

**ROLLIN', ROLLIN', ROLLIN':** Construction on 64th Avenue in Hollywood proceeds as a steamroller packs the dirt to prepare for paving. The project, which includes a security wall that separates the reservation from the surrounding community, is scheduled for completion later this fall.



Eileen Soler

**A BIRD IN THE HAND:** Billie Swamp Safari falconer Hans Lago hangs out with Chirp, a Harris's hawk, between birds of prey shows at the Big Cypress Reservation educational tourist attraction.



Eileen Soler

**HEALTHY PATHWAY:** Big Cypress community members enjoy an early morning walk Sept. 23 along Canal Bank Road. The 5K walk was hosted by the Big Cypress Wellness Center.



Eileen Soler

**ROAD MOST TRAVELED:** Road maintenance and repairs are underway between the 3-Mile Canal Maintenance Road and Airport Road on Josie Billie Highway on the Big Cypress Reservation. Motorists who drove in and out of Big Cypress from Alligator Alley along Snake Road saw minor delays. Repairs were to have been completed by Sept. 30.



Eileen Soler

**HOLE LOT OF FUN:** Javion Wyatt, 4, plays the day away on a recent Wednesday at the playground jungle gym at Chupco Youth Ranch in Fort Pierce.



Photo courtesy of Kathreen M. Martinez

**EIGHT-SECOND RIDE:** Anani Griffin enjoys riding a mechanical bull Aug. 15 during the Fort Pierce Reservation's Chupco Youth Ranch event. Other activities during the fourth annual event aimed at bringing the community together included archery, ax throwing, waterslides and food.



Beverly Bidney

**BATH TIME:** 4-H'er Dyami Nelson, 15, cleans his steer Sept. 21 at the 4-H pen in Hollywood. The home-schooled 10th-grader said he walks and bathes the steer every day and sometimes twice a day.



Eileen Soler

**SEE A SEESAW:** Shanya Holloman, 9, Tamyra Holloman, 9, Delija Sinclair, 4, Darianna Phelps, 8, and Harmonie Moss, 7, have an afternoon blast of laughs on a seesaw at Chupco Youth Ranch in Fort Pierce.



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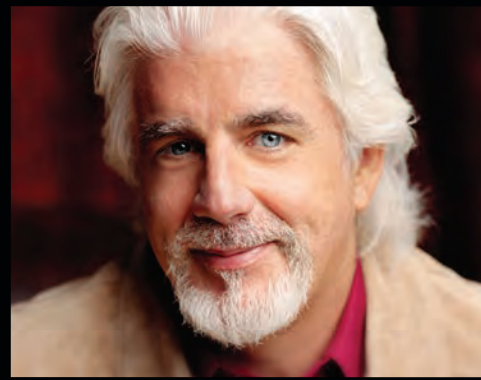
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HOLLYWOOD, FL

# Education



## Foreign exchange students learn about first Americans

BY EILEEN SOLER  
Staff Reporter

**BIG CYPRESS** — Foreign exchange students from Italy who visited the United States in early September learned more than they expected after a day-long educational adventure at Billie Swamp Safari.

"I had no idea that when we would tour America we would come here. I never made the connection that the first people here were not what you call 'American,'" said Andrea Cusumano, 17, of the Italian high school Liceo Scientifico Galileo Galilei in Palermo, Sicily.

The 28 foreign exchange students were hosted in South Florida by Archbishop McCarthy High School in Southwest Ranches and on the Big Cypress Reservation attraction by Seminole Tribe members John Osceola, 16, who is a junior at McCarthy, and John's father, Gem Osceola.

McCarthy principal Richard P. Jean said he chose the field trip to Billie Swamp because he wanted the Italian students to see an authentic slice of Florida history.

"When we took McCarthy students last year to Palermo for cultural exchange, there was so much history to see everywhere we looked. But where can we go at home for real history? Where can kids ask someone, 'How long have you been here,' and the answer is, 'Forever,'" Jean said.

John, who lives in Davie, said he hoped the Italian students and his McCarthy classmates who attended the outing would garner appreciation for the indigenous culture his family has known for generations.

"I am honored that they came out here to experience the culture that is native to Florida," he said. "It's the true culture. Even though I live in the United States, the reservations have always influenced who I am."

John said most of his immediate family lives on the Hollywood Reservation.

Gem Osceola said Big Cypress Councilman Cicero Osceola helped arrange the excursion that included a swamp buggy



Eileen Soler

**Big Cypress Culture Department representative Victor Billie, right, shows Italian foreign exchange students and teens from Archbishop McCarthy High School a Seminole canoe in the making Sept. 3 during a tour of Billie Swamp Safari on the Big Cypress Reservation. Seminole Tribe members John Osceola, 16, who is a junior at McCarthy, and John's father, Gem Osceola, helped organize the excursion.**

ride through wild land, airboat spree through marsh and sawgrass, alligator wrestling exhibition and tour of a replica Seminole village.

Victor Billie, a representative from the Big Cypress Culture Department, guided students through the chickee camp that

included chickees for sleeping, cooking and canoe carving. They stopped to admire and purchase beaded bracelets, necklaces and other jewelry fashioned by Linda Beletso and her daughters Lorraine Posado and Lenora Roberts.

Throughout the camp tour, Billie shared

bits of the Tribe's history and revealed how some of the culture has evolved because of circumstance. For instance, prior to European occupation, Seminoles carved canoes with rounded ends out of 50- to

♦ See CULTURE EXCHANGE on page 3B



Beverly Bidney

**Lee Zepeda, the new Education Department director, poses in Hollywood.**

## Lee Zepeda named Education director

*Former Ahfachkee principal aims to stabilize department*

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

Lee Zepeda, a former teacher and principal at Ahfachkee School, was recently tapped to serve as Education Department director as the new school year began.

"This was a huge opportunity to step back into education again," Zepeda said. "It's an opportunity to refocus the department and remind ourselves we are supposed to encourage students and equip them with what they need to be successful."

Shortly after graduating from Stetson University in 1993, Zepeda joined the faculty at Ahfachkee, where he taught for five years before being promoted to lead the school. He served as principal for five more years before joining the Tribe's Human Resources Department as chief executive officer in 2005. In 2010, Zepeda left to spend time with his family and pursue a master's degree in biblical studies from Liberty University.

Zepeda plans to bring stability to the department by filling open positions with employees who will build relationships with students and get to know them personally.

"We need to find out what the students like and don't like, so we can guide them based on their interests," Zepeda said. "The only way to do that is by getting to know them well. The students aren't just numbers; they are actual people."

Zepeda believes hiring the right people will make the department more functional.

"The possibilities are wide open," he said. "When students are successful, the Tribe is successful."

As a parent of a 16-year-old son, Nick, Zepeda has interacted with the Education Department for years. To prepare for the challenges facing the department, he has been meeting with Parent Advisory Committees on each reservation to learn what issues are important to parents and to gain their trust.

"Students bring everything to us," Zepeda said. "We don't have anything without them. We need to help them accomplish what they want to. We can make this happen. It's entirely possible."

Zepeda believes the department exists to help move students forward. He plans to accomplish this by returning to basics and providing students with skills they can use to succeed. He doesn't believe in looking backward — only to the future.

"It's hard to drive forward if you're only looking in the rearview mirror," he said. "For children, the world is wide open to them and they believe they can do anything. As we get older, we limit ourselves and let other people limit us. But for them, the world is open to any possibility."

## Explorers program kicks off school year with new twist

BY EILEEN SOLER  
Staff Reporter

Something newfangled took children and teens by surprise during the first Police Explorers Program meetings of the school year at Big Cypress, Brighton, Fort Pierce, Immokalee, Hollywood and Tampa reservations.

"We are evolving," said Seminole Police Department Officer Michele Harbin at the Sept. 9 meeting at Big Cypress Community Center. "And we are incorporating all of

Public Safety into the program."

Harbin and SPD Sgt. Colleen Hardin, who supervises the program on all reservations, then introduced Seminole Tribe of Florida Fire Rescue Department Lt. Roberto Vega and firefighter-paramedic Steve Pagan. No longer will Fire Rescue Department personnel be present merely to respond to an unlikely emergency, she said.

The program that for decades gave youth an exciting inside peek into the world of police work is now integrating fire rescue. Tribalwide, SPD and Fire Rescue personnel

work under the umbrella of the Seminole Tribe of Florida Public Safety Office.

"We're going to bring fire hoses out; you'll be able to try on fire gear; and we'll teach you about all kinds of jobs in the Seminole Fire Rescue Department," Vega told the children.

Vega said he and Pagan will also help the Explorers draw exit maps in case of fire at their homes and get basic knowledge about a slew of other lifesaving measures.

"Will we get to spray people with the fire hose?" asked Riley Hill, 8. "I just want

to wet someone with the fire hose."

Vega promised that he, and only he, can be sprayed — a little bit — maybe.

Last year about 150 kids ages 6 to 19 participated in the Police Explorers Program tribalwide. The organization spotlights a specific topic, such as crime scene investigation or traffic stops, two evenings per month. Typically, the first meeting teaches the basics of the topic. The second meeting puts kids in hands-on situations to practice what they learned.

Hardin said the Police Explorers' dual mission with the Fire Rescue Department is geared to inspire more youth into public safety service.

"This year kids will get one side from police and the other side from fire rescue," Hardin said. "When a 911 call comes in, like for a car crash, whoever arrives first knows what to do first. After that, police and fire have a constant correlation but different jobs."

The first exercise of the year featured fingerprinting. On one hand, the children learned how fingerprints are obtained from an individual. On the other hand, they supplied their fingerprints to a permanent record in case they are needed for identification later.

Harbin, who is the Explorers adviser for Big Cypress and Naples, said members learn and have fun at the same time. Some of the coolest activities include ATV driving training, water safety and an annual field trip to Washington, D.C.

Fundraising fun happens year-round. Members shouted out ideas: bake sales, face painting, raffles, lunch sales, car washes. Active members will earn coins to carry in their pockets to prove that they are members in high regard among important public safety employees.

"The coins are very, very rare," Harbin said. "The Chief (of Police William Latchford) has one and I have two. I carry them with me all the time."

Hardin already deems the expanded Explorers club as "great."

"We want to open the door for any child or youth," Hardin said. "If they are even slightly interested in careers to serve and protect then they can be drawn in and welcomed."



Eileen Soler

**Members of the Police Explorers Program at Big Cypress Reservation participate Sept. 9 with Fire Rescue and Seminole Police Department personnel at the first meeting of the year.**

# Bullying beaten on PECS b-ball court

**BY BEVERLY BIDNEY**  
Staff Reporter

**BRIGHTON** — Dunkers, high fliers and trick dribblers of the Court Kingz basketball team challenged Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School faculty to a game Sept. 18 and shared their anti-bullying message with students while they were at it.

Principal Brian Greseth led a team of 10 teachers and aides, but while the faculty gave their all, they didn't stand a chance against the entertainment basketball team comprised of hot shot basketball players.

"I lost my game a long time ago," said Greseth, who played at Augsburg College in Minnesota 35 years ago.

The event was a precursor to National Bullying Prevention Month in October, which was founded by the Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights (PACER) in 2006 to raise awareness for bullying prevention. Greseth said the school wanted a bullying prevention program and the Court Kingz had experience working with a variety of groups.

The game started with a little trash talk. Court Kingz asked the teachers if they were scared, to which they all yelled, "No way."

On the court, the teachers were outplayed, but that didn't stop them from laughing their way up and down the court during the game.

Students cheered for their teachers but also when a Court Kingz player dunked the ball.

Court Kingz won 57-34, but the most important outcome was that students heard the team's anti-bullying message loud and clear.

Angelo "Mr. Viral" Sharpless, who has been featured on ESPN's "SportsCenter" and toured with the Harlem Globetrotters, spoke to students during halftime.

"If you see someone getting bullied, doing nothing isn't the right thing at all," Sharpless said. "If you can help that person out, he will help you one day, too, and you'll have a friend for life."

Inspirational talk continued as Tim Vester, of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, addressed students.

"Believe you are special because you are," he said. "I challenge you all to look in the mirror and tell yourself you are beautiful and smart. When you believe in yourself, you will make a difference in the lives around you."

PECS will hold additional anti-bullying programs throughout the month. Classroom doors will be decorated with anti-bullying themes, and students will pledge to unite against bullying. They will wear orange on Unity Day, Oct. 21, to stand against bullying.

Students will cap events by joining in an end bullying simulcast presented by Stand Strong Florida on Nov. 7.

PACER's website details that bullying has devastating effects on children, including avoiding school, loss of self-esteem, increased anxiety and depression. The group works with education-based organizations to provide schools with resources to help them respond to bullying behavior and to educate the community about their role in preventing bullying.

After the basketball game, students lined up to meet players, take photos and get autographs on anything they could, including shoes, shirts, cell phone and tablet cases, backpacks and even a math homework assignment.



Beverly Bidney

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School faculty plays against the Court Kingz in an exhibition basketball game Sept. 18 as part of the bullying prevention program at the school.



Beverly Bidney

Michael 'Jet' Blue, of the Court Kingz, leads Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students in an impromptu dance before the basketball game between the faculty and the Kingz during a bullying prevention program.



Beverly Bidney

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students interact with Michael 'Jet' Blue, of the Court Kingz, during the bullying prevention program at the school, which featured a game between the faculty and the Kingz.

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# Music room adds Hard Rock 'stepping stones'



Eileen Soler

Hard Rock design and installation technician Michael Edgar displays a Beatles poster Aug. 29 at the Hollywood Boys & Girls Club music studio.



Eileen Soler

Italian foreign exchange students and students from Archbishop McCarthy High School in Southwest Ranches gather Sept. 3 under a cooking chickee at Billie Swamp Safari for a presentation about Seminole culture by Big Cypress Culture Department representative Victor Billie, right.

## ◆ CULTURE EXCHANGE

From page 1B

60-foot-tall, very thick cypress trees, Billie said. But when the Seminole learned from the Spanish that pointed ends on the stern and bow would cut easier through sawgrass swamp, they altered their own tradition.

In the cooking chickee, a small army of women from the Immokalee Culture Department served up tastes of corn sofkee, Indian stew made of fatty beef and naturally sweet pumpkin frybread.

"Our fire is always burning so we say our village is alive. The cooking chickee is always in the middle of the camp, and the fire is always made of four logs," Billie told the group. "In the past days, we would eat anything wild like deer and boar, but

now, like you, some of the Tribe goes to Kentucky Fried Chicken."

Gem Osceola said the visit gave him pause to think about "then and now."

"Seeing the culture alive here and knowing how the Seminole lived and some still do makes me see how much has changed between me and [Victor] even though we are only one generation apart," he said.

McCarthy students Giovanna Raffa, 16, and her sister Isabella Raffa, 15, admitted they were awed by the tour.

"I kept imagining how the Indians survived here, how they made the canoes, cooked at the fire and dealt with alligators," Isabella said.

"I thought about Victor Billie's grandfather and the details of what his life must have been," Giovanna said.



Eileen Soler

Italian foreign exchange students try tasty bites of pumpkin frybread during a tour of Billie Swamp Safari on the Big Cypress Reservation.

BY EILEEN SOLER  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — Robert North sees rock 'n' roll possibilities inside the Hollywood Boys & Girls Club music studio. Two top-notch, complete drum sets fill the floor; a row of electric and acoustic guitars, including two Fender Stratocasters, line a wall. Among the periphery: two keyboards, a xylophone, several amps,

yards of electric cords and a "state-of-the-art" soundproof recording booth.

"If a tribal youth is so inclined to music, art or poetry, then the metaphor that 'the world is a stage' can be right here. We encourage them to take the stage," said North, director of the Seminole Boys & Girls Club tribalwide.

On a Saturday morning in August, the Tribe's business giant, Hard Rock International, kicked in with a little decorative inspiration.

Using a hammer and level, Hard Rock design and installation technician Michael Edgar graced doorways and walls with two sets of drumsticks and four retro posters.

The drumsticks are from the Hard Rock Hotel San Diego and the former Hard Rock Café in Sacramento. The posters include Little Richard with the Beatles at the Tower Ballroom and the Silver Beatles at the Cavern Club, both in 1962; the Jackson Five and Diana Ross and the Supremes at the Grand Theater in 1971; and Michael Jackson at Wembley Stadium in 1988.

Hard Rock boasts more than 70,000 items of memorabilia in its collection. Items can be seen, according to the website, "from a lock of hair to a 5-ton psychedelic bus" at [www.memorabilia.hardrock.com](http://www.memorabilia.hardrock.com).

"I take real joy in my work. It's fun getting to see all the awesome pieces," said Edgar, who recently helped stage an exhibit completely in

Fender guitars played by Jimi Hendrix. "It's always good to have an element of Hard Rock in the music environment."

North said the donation came after a conversation he had with Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola.

Councilman Osceola told North, "Whatever you need let me know." North asked him to help decorate the room, so Councilman Osceola called Hard Rock, "and here it is. We're bringing the outside in," North said.

The Hard Rock donation adds to creative "stepping stones and building blocks" already in place at the Boys & Girls Clubs, North said. In Immokalee, Brighton and Big Cypress, the clubs have similar spaces to create and explore artistic expression but in ways dictated by the children's collective interest.

"The whole goal (of Boys & Girls Clubs) is not necessarily to produce a bunch of musicians but to help children become comfortable knowing that their expression is important," North said.

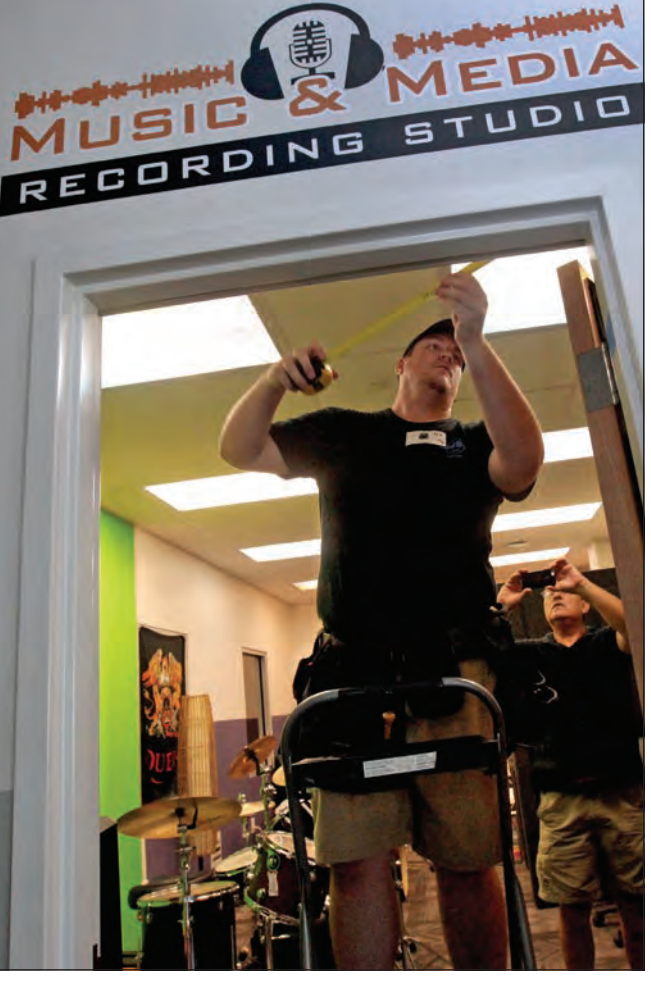
Immokalee children show more interest in photography and video so they have more iPads and digital cameras. Big Cypress kids enjoy performing arts so the community center stage has been upgraded with surround sound for big-time karaoke nights.

In Brighton, the Boys & Girls Club relocated last school year from a trailer at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School to the old culture education building. North said the larger space will allow for future enhancements as the community sees fit.

For Hollywood kids, the music studio, which also includes a separate recording control room, is used by individual musicians and departments.

The Culture Department uses the rooms twice annually to record preschool children singing at Christmas and showcasing Mikasuki language skills at graduation. Meanwhile, youth, including Ozzie Holdiness and Kyrell Josh, rehearse and record for monthly and quarterly community performances that attract crowds.

"There are all kinds of opportunities. Our children are taking us one step closer to the future," North said.



Eileen Soler

Hard Rock design and installation technician Michael Edgar prepares to hang authentic Hard Rock drumsticks at the Hollywood Boys & Girls Club music studio.

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# Hollywood preschoolers load up on books

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — Hollywood Preschool welcomed the new school year with a Scholastic Book Fair to help equip students and parents for a year of reading and learning. The fair, which ran from Aug. 31 to Sept. 4, raised money for new books in the classrooms.

"After the last one in March, each class got about \$200 worth of books," said Jennine Perez, center manager. "We brought it back because all the purchases benefit the preschool."

The book fair was deemed a success as the preschool raised about the same amount compared to its spring book fair.

Scholastic, which began as a western Pennsylvania magazine in 1920, has

grown into a global business that promotes literacy through revenue-generating events in schools worldwide. For more than 30 years, Scholastic's book fairs have raised millions in cash and educational resources for schools.

In addition to the money raised, Scholastic gives schools a percentage of the income back in "Scholastic dollars," which have twice the value of cash. Perez said they may go shopping in Scholastic's warehouse in Pompano Beach.

"We hope to restock all the classroom libraries and get more audio books," she said.

After the last book fair, preschools tribalwide earned enough to purchase listening centers for every classroom on each reservation. The listening centers include equipment and eight headphones for students to listen to audio books while the teacher turns the pages.

All week, students and parents shopped the colorful displays of books, toys, puppets and school supplies together. The kids searched the shelves for just the right book to take home and the adults gladly complied.



Beverly Bidney

Kru Gowen, 4, and his father, Nathan Gowen, search the shelves for just the right books Sept. 4 at the Hollywood Preschool Scholastic Book Fair. Kru and his sister Irie went home with arms full of treasured new books.



Beverly Bidney

Laden with books, Alexandra Beasley, 19 months, looks at a toy her grandmother Bobbie Billie handed her Sept. 3 at the Hollywood Preschool Scholastic Book Fair.



Beverly Bidney

Benjamin Smith, 3, plays with a twirly topped pen Sept. 4 at the Hollywood Preschool Scholastic Book Fair.



Beverly Bidney

Irie Gowen, 3, is thrilled by the selection of books Sept. 4 at the Scholastic Book Fair.

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# Seminole Tribe's youngest celebrate Indian Day with gators, games galore



Beverly Bidney

Serenity Buck, 3, shows her skill at the skillet throw Sept. 18 during the Brighton Preschool Indian Day celebration.

**BY EILEEN SOLER**  
Staff Reporter

Indian Day celebrations came earliest for the youngest Tribal members Sept. 18 when preschool students tribalwide attended simultaneous events to honor culture, tradition and Seminole pride.

Thommy Doud, director of the Tribe's preschools, said nearly 220 children participated in Indian Day happenings at the same time in Immokalee, Big Cypress, Hollywood and Brighton reservations.

In Hollywood, the Tribe's tiniest students fashioned patchwork posters out of construction paper, petted a real alligator named Wally, tossed toy hatchets and competed for cardboard crowns in clothing contests.

The Rev. Paul Buster treated all the children, and plenty of grown-ups, to traditional storytelling.

In one story, Buster told of a talkative turtle's adventure. The turtle lumbered on his way to finding food but stopped to chat with many creatures returning from dining on the same berry bush to which he was headed.

"He was taking his time and asking everyone coming back from the bush about the food. Was the food good? What did it taste like? By the time he got there, it was too late; all of the animals had eaten all the food except for one shriveled berry," Buster said.

The moral of the story: Do not waste time; do not stop and just talk about goals. A person who doesn't move forward will lose out.

"If there is something to do in life, just do it. Do your homework, practice your music or sport. Do it," Buster said.

Preschoolers in Brighton celebrated with their hands, hearts and minds deep in Seminole culture.

The youngsters kneaded dough into frybread, tossed kid-size skillet and threw lightweight wooden hatchets. Together, they sang "The Numbers Song" sweetly in the Creek language of their ancestors.

Immokalee and Big Cypress events were also staged for children to mark the day.

Buster said the special day of activities just for preschoolers provided important educational opportunities — even if the pint-size participants did not realize it. Traditional and cultural lessons at any age can last a lifetime, he said.

"When I was little my mom said that I might not understand; but as I grew up at 10 years old, 20 and 30 — and probably when I am 100 years old, I still hear her voice and I still say to myself, 'This is what my mother meant,'" Buster said. "Little children might not ingest the message yet but the mindset is there."

Staff reporter Beverly Bidney contributed to this report.



Beverly Bidney

Teodoro Estrada, 3, throws the hatchet during the Brighton Preschool Indian Day celebration. The youngsters also made frybread, tossed skillet and learned songs in the Creek language.



Eileen Soler

Daniel Osceola and Ava-Jae Cypress are proud clothing contest winners Sept. 18 at Hollywood Preschool Indian Day festivities.



Beverly Bidney

Damahni Bonilla and Teodoro Estrada, both 3, concentrate on learning 'The Number Song' in Creek from culture teacher Laverne Thomas at the Brighton Preschool Indian Day celebration.



Eileen Soler

Resha Doctor tries to distract her son Caden Jumper from fearing Wally, an alligator held by alligator wrestler James Holt, during Hollywood Preschool Indian Day festivities.



Eileen Soler

Alligator wrestler James Holt and his sidekick gator Wally try hard to entice children into their fold during Hollywood Preschool Indian Day festivities.



Eileen Soler

Delilah Hall, 2, is crowned by her mother, Lily Hall, after winning a clothing contest during the Hollywood Preschool Indian Day festivities.



Eileen Soler

The Rev. Paul Buster tells a traditional story to children from Hollywood Preschool during Indian Day festivities. Buster's story told about a hungry turtle who dawdled and talked so much along the way to finding food that by the time he arrived at a berry bush, all but one shriveled berry was left.



Eileen Soler

Girls from the Hollywood Preschool 4- and 5-year-old classes line up to be judged in a clothing contest during Indian Day festivities geared just for kids.



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# Sports



Eileen Soler

Terrance 'Big Jim' Marbra delivers a left hook to Ernest 'Zeus' Mazyck Sept. 5 during bout 4 of the eight-card World Heavyweight Champions Fight Night at Hard Rock Live in Hollywood. Marbra won the four rounds by decision.

## Heavyweight event packs a punch at Hard Rock Live

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Copy Editor

**HOLLYWOOD** — As an undisputed world heavyweight boxing champion in the early 1990s, Riddick Bowe didn't share the spotlight with anybody. Nearly 25 years later, as he sat at a round table at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood, Bowe surveyed a ballroom chock-full of heavyweight boxing champions — some older than the 48-year-old and some younger — and gladly accepted the split attention he received.

Bowe's right-hand, which helped earn him millions during his career, pointed to a sample of the other boxing greats in the room.

"You got Oliver McCall, Evander (Holyfield), Tony Tubbs," Bowe said. "To me, it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be with all the former world champions, and most of them are nice guys."

Those "nice guys" were fierce competitors inside the ring during the peak of their careers, but they proved to be

gentle giants Sept. 4 as about two dozen heavyweight champions — most retired — met in one room to reminisce, gather for a group photo in black-and-white tuxedos and interview with the media and a documentary filmmaker.

In one corner, Mike Tyson sat in a chair while makeup was applied to his tattooed-face before the photo shoot. In another corner, 65-year-old Larry Holmes, who beat Muhammad Ali 35 years ago in Ali's second-to-last fight, chatted with current heavyweight champion Wladimir Klitschko.

Using a rolling walker for assistance, Leon Spinks, 62, entered the ballroom to hearty applause from his fellow champions.

For the group photo, Tyson and Holyfield — who were at the center of the sports world in a notorious 1997 fight when Tyson was disqualified for biting Holyfield's ears — sat next to each other in the center of the front row.

The following night most of the boxers

◆ See BOXING on page 5C

## Seminole senior, freshman join Terriers on the gridiron

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Copy Editor

**MOORE HAVEN** — Being in the middle of a memorable victory for the Moore Haven High School football team is right where Yopalakiyo Osceola wanted to be on an autumn Friday night during his senior year.

Osceola, a newbie to football, started on the offensive line at right tackle and helped Moore Haven post its first victory against Glades Day in nearly 20 years.

"I love it," Osceola said in summation of his first few games as a Terrier.

Moore Haven shrugged off a two-and-a-half hour weather delay at the start and emerged with a 27-21 win against Glades Day in a Sept. 11 game that ended about 10 minutes past midnight.



Kevin Johnson

Moore Haven senior offensive lineman Yopalakiyo Osceola battles Glades Day's Christian Fiedor (44) during the first quarter of Moore Haven's 27-21 win Sept. 11 at Moore Haven High School. Osceola is in his first season playing football and starts at right tackle.

"Big rival," first-year Moore Haven coach Richard Roudybush said. "We haven't beat them since 1996, about 14 times. It's a big deal."

Not only did Moore Haven win a rivalry game, but it also knocked off a team that has won more state football championships than all but two other schools in Florida.

Osceola and Conner Thomas are the lone Seminoles on Moore Haven's varsity squad. Thomas, a freshman lineman, suited up for the game but didn't see any action. Both players play other sports, but they are football rookies who have quickly fit in with the Terriers.

Osceola, son of Richard and Dana Osceola, stepped into a starting role right away. Thomas, son of Frank and Cecilia Thomas, has split time as a backup on the varsity and a starter on the junior varsity in the first month of his high school career.

"We love having them," Roudybush said.

Osceola plays basketball for Moore Haven, but with time running out to play football in his high school career, he decided to give the gridiron a shot thanks in part to lobbying by his coach.

It doesn't take long for new football coaches to recognize big kids at small schools, which is why Osceola landed on Roudybush's radar right away.

"When I first got hired I saw him walking the hallways and I said, 'Who is that kid?'" Roudybush said.

Osceola said he's 6-foot-2 and about 250 pounds, but No. 65, whose black curls escape from his helmet, looks bigger while playing on a Terrier line that has provided guidance along the way.

"I'm still learning plays. I get help from my right guard Sean Cowen," Osceola said.

Osceola made his debut in a preseason win against Jupiter Christian in August. Comfortable regular season wins against Somerset Academy and Lake Placid set the stage for the showdown against Glades Day in week 3.

◆ See FOOTBALL on page 2C

## FGCU clinic teaches athletic, academic feat

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Copy Editor

**BIG CYPRESS** — While they waited for their pasta lunches to arrive, about 25 youngsters used free time after a private basketball clinic to quiz members of the Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) women's basketball team. Questions ranged from what positions the women play on the court and what majors they study in the classroom to whether they arrived in Big Cypress in a limo.

For the record, the Eagles didn't arrive at Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium in a limousine Sept. 12, but the reigning Atlantic Sun Conference champions from Fort Myers did bring a wealth of knowledge about becoming a college basketball player and balancing academics with athletics. Kids learned that GPAs are more important than PPGs.

"Our players are on scholarship, but to get that scholarship they had to do well in high school academically just be eligible by NCAA standards for a scholarship, and then once they arrive on campus, they have to do well in their coursework just to keep their scholarship," said FGCU head coach Karl Smesko, who guided the squad to a 31-3 record and NCAA Tournament appearance last season.

A year ago, the FGCU men's basketball team hosted a clinic at Big Cypress. Earlier this year, coaches from the Eagles' volleyball and golf teams provided instruction on the reservation. This time it was the women's turn to run basketball drills as Smesko, associate head coach Chelsea Dermeyer and five players offered pointers for more than two hours to a mixture of high schoolers and younger kids.

Haley Laughter, a redshirt sophomore forward, said clinics played a big part in her early development as a basketball player in Asheville, North Carolina, where she used to tag along to gyms with her older brother.

"That's how I got into basketball, by going to clinics like this and learning from older people who love the game, too," she said.

Laughter said her parents always pushed her to achieve good grades in high school, which proved beneficial when it came time to select a college.

"A lot of people think, 'You're really good at basketball, you're going to get a scholarship,' but it has a lot to do with grades," Laughter said.

In addition to playing basketball, Laughter is dribbling two majors — biology and psychology — as she prepares for life after hoops. She's on track to graduate in two years and plans to attend dentistry school.

Maintaining good grades and athletic responsibilities — including practices, games and travel — can be overwhelming at times, Laughter said, but she manages.

"You have your good days and bad days," she said, "but we're all in the same boat; we're all doing it together, so if you have a bad day, you always have a teammate picking you up."

If someday she becomes Dr. Laughter, it won't be the first time an FGCU player tackles the medical profession. Smesko said former player Ashley Haegle is a doctor and former player Kelsey Jacobson is in medical school.

"When they've been able to balance



Kevin Johnson

Mary Jane Vasquez, 11, lines up a shot during Florida Gulf Coast University's basketball clinic Sept. 12 on the Big Cypress Reservation.

the athletics commitment and the academic commitment well enough that they can get into med school and get through it and work in their chosen profession, it makes you feel good as a coach," Smesko said.

Smesko said she likes players who want to excel both on the court and in the classroom.

"When you see a really good player, you're always extra excited when you see that they're responsible enough to really take their studies seriously and that the academic portion is really important to them and they're thinking about a future after college," he said.

Before Kaneisha Atwater arrived at FGCU and became one of the conference's top players, she admittedly didn't take academics seriously. As a freshman at Westwood High School in Fort Pierce,

Atwater neglected her schoolwork and eventually paid a price.

"Honestly, I really just focused on sports," she said.

Sitting out nearly her entire sophomore season at Westwood because of poor grades forced Atwater to adjust her priorities and focus on education.

"That was a turning point for me. It made me realize that without studies, there's no basketball," Atwater said. "The fact I couldn't get out there and help my team, it hurt me to see them suffer from my bad decisions."

Atwater boosted her GPA to get back on the Westwood team for her final two years before she embarked on what has become a standout career for the Eagles.

◆ See FGCU on page 2C



Kevin Johnson

Florida Gulf Coast University's Jessica Cattani gets ready to lead a drill during FGCU's clinic on the Big Cypress Reservation.

# Seminoles star on Clewiston, Moore Haven volleyball teams

## High school teams face off in Tiger territory

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Copy Editor

**CLEWISTON** — Alicia Fudge's little dance in the middle of the team huddle had a purpose.

Coming off a loss in game three, but still nursing a 2-1 lead, the Moore Haven High School volleyball team could have tightened up in a rival's gymnasium Sept. 17, but the Terriers remained relaxed during a break thanks to Alicia's impromptu performance.

"That's to keep the momentum going," Moore Haven captain Tyra Baker said.

Moore Haven's momentum helped the Terriers close out Clewiston in the fourth game. Scores were 25-15, 25-19, 19-25, 25-18 in a match that featured seven Seminole players: six on Moore Haven and one — Dayra Koenes — on Clewiston.

Tyra Baker and Trista Osceola comprise half the senior class's representation on Moore Haven.

At the other end of the age spectrum is a youth movement led by Seminole players, including freshmen Alicia Fudge, Aleina Micco, Caroline Micco and sophomore Sunni Bearden.

The victory was only Moore Haven's third in its first eight games, but the Terriers haven't let a sub .500 record dampen their enthusiasm.

"We have fun," Tyra said. "We try to make the best of it. We take it day by day, practice by practice."

The team is adjusting to new coach Matt Hill, a former college volleyball player and high school coach from Pennsylvania.

"It was a rough transition, I'll be honest, but they have definitely met my expectations," Hill said. "I don't think they've ever had to work as hard in their life, and they have been up to par, and it

shows on the court."

Clewiston was a non-district foe for Moore Haven, which faces an uphill battle throughout its Class 3A-District 9 slate. The six-team district is filled with private schools from Fort Myers and Sarasota with far lengthier playoff resumes. For example, Evangelical Christian School is a four-time state champion and Canterbury School has three state titles. As for Moore Haven, the Terriers have reached the state playoffs only once in their history and that came in the mid-1980s, long before the current players were born.

"We play all these schools [whose players] are huge; they're as big as I am," said the 6-foot-2 Hill. "These girls are coming from all over America and that's because they're coming on athletic scholarships. Those are the people we're up against, so it's tough."

Alicia and Sunni played against each other last school year in a regional softball final when Alicia attended Admiral Farragut in St. Petersburg; now they are Moore Haven's biggest hitters on the volleyball court.

When the fourth game against Clewiston was close, Sunni earned a service point thanks to Alicia's kill that gave Moore Haven a 15-10 lead.

Whether it's serving, hitting or diving, Sunni has brought a lot of versatility to the Terriers in her second season.

"She has completely stepped it up. She's probably one of my biggest stars on the court," Hill said.

The job of setting up hits belongs to Aleina. The rookie is one of the team's top servers, but she shines at the net, too. She set the ball for Tyra to deliver a kill that gave Moore Haven a 22-15 lead in game four.

"She's a beautiful setter; we just need

to get her more vocal," Hill said.

Meanwhile, Tyra juggles a variety of tasks, including middle blocker, hitter and cheerleader in her role as captain.

"Absolutely a great leader," said Hill, who also received a strong serving match from Trista and some key kills from Caroline.

Moore Haven's victory was its second this season against Clewiston, which plays in Class 4A-District 11. With only three teams in its district, Clewiston's odds of making the state playoffs — two of the three teams will qualify — are far greater than Moore Haven. The loss left Clewiston with a 3-4 record and still searching for consistency as the season neared its midpoint.

"I think we have a lot of talent on the team; we just need to work together," said Dayra, a sophomore outside hitter who is in her second season on the varsity squad.

Dayra delivered a series of pinpoint serves that helped stake Clewiston to a 5-1 lead early in game two. She also registered two kills in game three and topped it off with the winning service point for Clewiston's only victory of the night.

Compared to a year ago, Clewiston coach Samantha Ortiz said Dayra's hitting has improved.

"Her hits are stronger and her accuracy is better," Ortiz said.

Among Dayra's kills from the outside was a crosscourt bullet in game four that kept the score close at 13-9 before Moore Haven pulled away.

Unlike her fellow Seminole players on the other side — who were rotated in and out of the lineup — Dayra played the entire match.

"She's our starting outside hitter, so we really depend on her, but she's only a sophomore so developmentally she has a lot of ways to go, but she's going to be great," Ortiz said.



Kevin Johnson

Florida Gulf Coast University's DyTiesha Dunson controls the ball under the hoop while teammate Kaneisha Atwater and other youngsters look on during FGCU's clinic Sept. 12 on Big Cypress.

### ◆ FGCU From page 1C

Last season she recorded a double-double in the conference championship game, scored a game-high 26 points in an NCAA Tournament win against Oklahoma State and earned a spot on the Atlantic Sun's All-Conference First Team. All the while, Atwater, who has a 3-year-old son, has stayed on track to earn a criminal justice degree this spring.

"Now being here at FGCU, the coaches force us to get above average," she said. "We don't settle for average. Here, it's been a big change for me and I definitely think it's helped me out a lot. I study more. I'll be graduating with over a 3.0 GPA."

In addition to Atwater, FGCU returns a good chunk of its roster from last season, which means the five players who visited the Big Cypress Reservation and the rest of their Eagles teammates are expected to soar again.

"There are high expectations this year for sure," said Smesko, whose team opens Nov. 13 at North Carolina A&T. "We finished in the top 25 in the nation last year. Only one starter graduated, so we have a nice nucleus of players returning. We play an extraordinary difficult schedule, but



Kevin Johnson

Florida Gulf Coast University's Jessica Cattani teaches Rebekah Tigertail, 5, how to box out during FGCU's clinic on the Big Cypress Reservation.

we feel we have the type of team that can handle that type of competition."

### ◆ FOOTBALL From page 1C

"Glades Day has one of the best defensive lines we'll play all year," Roudybush said.

Osceola and his fellow linemen met that stern test early and often as they paved paths for the team's speedsters coming out of the backfield. Osceola provided a couple blocks on the first play of the game. On the third play, he helped clear the way for D'angelo Ware, one of several Terriers with impressive speed, to pick up 15 yards and a first down.

Later in the quarter, the elusive Ware rushed for a touchdown that gave Moore Haven a 14-7 lead as the Terriers' marching band belted out "Louie Louie" on the homside bleachers that were nearly full. A late touchdown and a fumble recovery sealed the victory for the Terriers.

In addition to his right tackle duties, Osceola also plays on the interior line for extra points and field goals.

"He's done a great job learning the game in his first year of playing football," Roudybush said. "He's done really well. Each week he's learning and he's starting to pick more and more up. He's big, strong, moves real well, athletic. He's a basketball guy, so he's got good feet."

After the football and basketball seasons end, Osceola said he plans to play baseball before he graduates. He and Thomas played for the Tribe on the diamonds in Alabama at NAYO this summer.

Similar to Osceola, Thomas, at 5-foot-9 and about 245 pounds, provides decent size on the line, whether it's on varsity or junior varsity. Roudybush said the future is bright for Thomas.

"He has a chance to be a

really good player for us," Roudybush said. "He's played well. He loves lifting weights and he's always smiling."

Thomas survived grueling practices before the regular season started.

"The first two weeks of practice were tough," he said, but added that he never considered giving up. "I like it too much to quit."

Thomas saw varsity playing time against Jupiter Christian and in the season opener against Somerset Academy. Even though he didn't play in the Glades Day game, he knows he was part of something special.

"I'm not sure about all the big rivals; I just got here," he said, "but I know Glades Day was a big rival."



Kevin Johnson

Moore Haven freshman lineman Conner Thomas (51) hits the field with his varsity teammates Sept. 11 as they prepared to face Glades Day.



Kevin Johnson

Moore Haven senior offensive lineman Yopalakiyo Osceola, center, squares off against Glades Day's defensive line Sept. 11 at Moore Haven High School. Osceola, a first-year player, helped Moore Haven notch a 27-21 win.



Kevin Johnson

Moore Haven freshman Aleina Micco controls the ball Sept. 17 during a match against host Clewiston High School.



Kevin Johnson

Clewiston sophomore Dayra Koenes lunges to make a return during a match against Moore Haven at Clewiston High School.



Kevin Johnson

A range of emotions grips Moore Haven's bench during a close volleyball game against Clewiston at Clewiston High School. The players are, from left, Tyra Baker, Olivia Everett, Monica Devine and Caroline Micco. Moore Haven won in four games.

# Pemayetv Emahakv girls volleyball team christens new gym with victory

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Copy Editor

**BRIGHTON** — After receiving a boost of encouragement from the student body during a pep rally before its first home game, the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School girls varsity volleyball team came from behind to notch a win Sept. 14 in the school's first-ever volleyball match on the Brighton campus.

Osceola Middle School proved to be a tough opponent for Pemayetv Emahakv as the Lady Seminoles trailed at times by large margins, but they still emerged with a 2-0 victory (25-19, 25-22).

"They were pretty good, but we made a couple of mistakes, then we picked it up and started focusing. I didn't want to lose in the new gym," said Julia Smith, an eighth-grader who started alongside Jacee Jumper, Janessa Nunez, Madisyn Osceola, Aubrey Pearce and Elle Thomas.

Before the first serve was launched, PECS principal Brian Greseth picked up a microphone at the scorers' table and welcomed about 85 spectators who filled eight rows of gray bleachers across the court from team benches.

Fans have a prime view of the gym's decor, which includes two banners that recognize the school's undefeated 2014-15 volleyball team and 2012-13 girls basketball team. The banners include the players and coaches' names and hang on a wall with ample space for future accomplishments.

"We're trying to start a tradition with the banners," Greseth said.

This year's volleyball edition continued the winning tradition by upping its record to 3-0.

The match started at 4:34 p.m. PECS won the opening point on an Osceola Middle hitting error and took a 3-0 lead behind a pair of points from Elle's serves. But the upbeat tone quickly changed as Osceola Middle won 10 of the next 11 points. Not only was PECS reeling on the scoreboard, but the Lady Seminoles also lost Aubrey to a hand injury that kept her on the sideline for the rest of the afternoon.

The gym's first timeout came from PECS coach Kim Jackson with her team behind 14-4. The pep talk — as well as a kill by eighth-grader Alaina Sweat and an ace from Julia — helped shift momentum in PECS' favor.

By the time Alaina finished cranking out four straight service points, the re-

energized Lady Seminoles had regained the lead, 18-17. A pair of late aces from Elle helped clinch the game one victory for the hosts.

In game two, PECS again dug an early hole and trailed 10-4 and 17-9 before Madisyn and Alaina came to the rescue with a series of strong serves while defensive specialist Janessa controlled the back court.

Osceola Middle was three points away from winning the game, but Alaina erased a 22-20 deficit with five straight service points to seal a hard-earned shutout that took 43 minutes and plenty of determination.

"They showed a lot of heart," Jackson said. "They fought really well. Getting down almost 10 points is very hard to come back from in volleyball. They showed a lot of resilience and I'm very proud of them."

Alaina finished with a team-high five kills and five aces. Elle delivered three aces and one kill. Madisyn had two aces and one kill. Julia and Karey Gopher each notched one ace and one kill.

The early errors in both games didn't make the players or coach panic.

"We made some mistakes that are easy to fix, so hopefully we'll work on that part of our game be a lot more sound," Jackson said.

PECS hit a rough patch in mid-September with consecutive losses to Yearling and West Glades, but the Lady Seminoles bounced back to beat Yearling 2-0 on Sept. 21. Jacee delivered five aces and four kills. Elle also had a solid serving performance with five aces, while Julia had three aces and two kills. Alaina notched three kills and one ace, and Madisyn provided two kills.

PECS opened its season Sept. 2 with a 2-0 win at Clewiston Middle. Elle led a balanced attack for the Lady Seminoles with seven aces and one kill. Jacee registered five aces and one kill. Alaina had three aces and two kills. Aubrey and Karey each served up two aces, while Madisyn delivered one ace and one kill. Janessa and Julia had one kill apiece, and Jenna Brown had one ace.

The following day Karey led the way to a 2-0 win against LaBelle with seven aces.

Madisyn contributed six aces and one kill. Julia notched four aces and three kills. Elle delivered two aces and Mariah Billie added one ace. Janessa and Alaina both had one kill. Jacee had one kill and one block.



Kevin Johnson

Spectators fill the bleachers to watch the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School girls varsity volleyball team play its first match in the school's new gymnasium Sept. 14 in Brighton.



Kevin Johnson

Elle Thomas delivers a serve for the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School volleyball team. The Lady Seminoles shut out Osceola Middle School.



Kevin Johnson

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's Alaina Sweat (13) sends the ball over the net against Osceola Middle School.

## 2015-16 Pemayetv Emahakv varsity volleyball

- 1 Jenna Brown
- 2 Aubrey Pearce
- 3 Julia Smith
- 4 Janessa Nunez
- 6 Karey Gopher
- 8 Mariah Billie
- 12 Elle Thomas
- 13 Alaina Sweat
- 14 Jacee Jumper
- 15 Madisyn Osceola

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# 5-D Barrel Series gallops to a close in Big Cypress

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Copy Editor

**BIG CYPRESS** — The 5-D Barrel Series held its final event of the season Sept. 12 at the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena in Big Cypress.

The six-event series started in April and was bumped up from four events last year.

"We're trying to build and hopefully it becomes one of the better-known series in South Florida," said arena director Ayze Henry in a June interview with The Seminole Tribune.

First-place winners of the Sept. 12 event were Taylor Zbytek (1-D, 5-D), Julie Navin (2-D), Madison Kobs (3-D) and Chris Caldwell (4-D).

Zbytek's winning time was 16.86, a fraction of a second ahead of runner-up Loretta Peterson.

The season's top five overall riders received awards from Custom Tack.

Final overall season results:  
1-D: Taylor Zbytek (champion), Loretta Peterson (reserve champion), Julie Navin (3rd), Hannah Moss (4th), Mollie Gomez (5th).  
2-D: Julie Navin (champion),

Mollie Gomez (reserve champion), Natalie Holler (3rd), Kali Parrish (4th), Loretta Peterson (5th).

3-D: Chris Caldwell (champion), Natalie Holler (reserve champion), Mollie Gomez (3rd), Loretta Peterson (4th), Jade Dennison (5th).

4-D: Natalie Holler (champion), Stacey Claire (reserve champion), Jade Dennison (3rd), Cathryn Durso (4th), Chris Caldwell (5th).

5-D: Emily Goffena (champion), Cathryn Durso (reserve champion), Robyn Anderson (3rd), Alvia Dennison (4th), Madison Murphy (5th).



Kevin Johnson

Auburn Skubic and her horse make the final barrel turn and head for the stretch Sept. 12 during the 5-D Barrel Series at Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena.



Kevin Johnson

Wyatt Bruised Head and his horse maneuver around a barrel during the 5-D Barrel Series at Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena in Big Cypress.



Kevin Johnson

After successfully circling the second barrel, Teal Hampton and her horse focus on the final barrel during the 5-D Barrel Series.



Eileen Soler

Esther Buster focuses on her shot Sept. 11 at a Big Cypress senior pool tournament.

## BC pool tourneys cue friends for fun

BY EILEEN SOLER  
Staff Reporter

**BIG CYPRESS** — When it comes to playing pool, Big Cypress seniors are serious about winning, but mostly interested in hanging with friends and having fun.

"It's about friendly competition," Laura Clay said.

"And bragging rights," David Cypress added.

A group of nearly 20 seniors meets about twice per month at the Big Cypress Senior Center to put cue sticks to the table and knock balls into pockets during tournaments.

Clay said some players have been pool buddies for decades. For many years scores of pool-playing enthusiasts turned out for the annual Randolph Clay Memorial Pool Tournament.

"Now we get together only now and then," she said.

A handful of die-hard competitors are members of the Billiard Congress of America and play in leagues at Lucky 7 Billiards in Hollywood.

During a senior pool tournament Sept. 11, the group of longtime friends gathered in Big Cypress for a morning of men's and women's 9-ball and 8-ball and scotch doubles. Winners progressed in the double-elimination format.

Some friendly trash talk kicked off the tourney, primarily among the men. Cypress offered digs in the race to two 9-ball challenges, but Daniel Gopher placed first. Joe Billie took second place; Cypress came in third.

Winners in the ladies 9-ball and 8-ball competitions were identical: Clay won first place, Louise Osceola placed second and



Eileen Soler

David Cypress tells a joke in the middle of a shot by Rudy Osceola during a Big Cypress senior pool tournament.

Esther Buster captured third.

Among the three teams in the scotch doubles tourney, first-place winners Clay and Cypress beat out runners-up Buster and Rudy Osceola. Louise Osceola and Billie finished last.

"Really, we just want to get together so we can see each other," Clay said.



Eileen Soler

Louise Osceola concentrates on pocketing a ball during a senior pool tourney in Big Cypress.

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# Annual Tigertail Brothers Memorial Basketball Tournament records largest turnout in Big Cypress

## Twenty-four teams face off during three-day tourney

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Copy Editor

**BIG CYPRESS** — A packed parking lot in front of the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium served as a good indication to the popularity of the eighth annual Tigertail Brothers Memorial Basketball Tournament. This year's tournament drew the most participants in its history. Vehicles filled all the parking spaces and the grassy perimeter for the adult men's division, which attracted 14 teams and about 100 players to Big Cypress on the final day of the Sept. 17-19 tournament. Opening night drew seven legends teams for the 40-and-above crowd. The following night, three teams vied for the adult women's title. "The turnout is pretty good this year," tournament organizer Minnie Tigertail said. "We have 24 teams. That's the most I've had. I'm so glad they're all enjoying it." The tournament is held in memory of Minnie's sons: Duane and Malcolm. "My sons loved to play basketball. They participated in tournaments on the rez and off the rez," Minnie said. Each year Minnie changes the design and colors of the tournament T-shirts. The 2015 edition featured yellow shirts with tournament information on the front, Duane and Malcolm's names on opposite shoulder

sleeves, and photos of them on the back accompanied with a passage from Psalm 119: 113: "Direct my footsteps according to your Word; Let no sin rule over me." The tournament began on a winning note for Minnie, her sister Mary Tigertail and the rest of the Real Legends team. They captured the women's legends championship with wins against the Young Legends and the Magic. "The older team beat the younger team," Minnie said. The Real Legends consisted of Nadine Bowers, Carla Gopher, Rita McCabe, Cassandra Osceola, Nora Osceola, Mary Tigertail, Minnie Tigertail and Vodne Whiteskunk-Chapoose. The Miami All Timers, a non-Tribal team, won the men's legends title. The defending champion Lady Ballers retained the adult women's title with two wins and no losses. The adult men's division featured a marathon of nearly 30 games that started Sept. 18 and continued throughout the next day. Show Time won the championship. The tournament serves as a competitive weekend for a range of players, including former college players and those who aspire to play in college. "I like it. There's some good competition," said Andre Poux, a 6-foot-7



Jovan MacLean, left, and Jordan His Law battle for the ball under the hoop Sept. 19 during the eighth annual Tigertail Brothers Memorial Basketball Tournament at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium in Big Cypress.



Trewston Pierce drives to the hoop Sept. 19 while guarded by Horacio Moore during the eighth annual Tigertail Brothers Memorial Basketball Tournament at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium in Big Cypress.

forward who played for the University of Maine at Fort Kent and now suits up for the Miami Midnites' semi-pro team with hopes of playing overseas. "I'm trying to get to Russia, or somewhere like that. This helps me keep in shape and get exposure. You

attend all different kinds of people." Facing experienced, older players has its benefits, said Trewston Pierce, of the Hollywood Reservation. "It toughens me up," said Pierce, a Division I college prospect who earned All-

Broward County First Team honors at Fort Lauderdale High School last season and now plays for IMG Academy's National team in Bradenton. Players on all championship teams received hooded sweatshirts.

### BOXING

From page 1C

attended a full card of heavyweight fights at Hard Rock Live. The evening was highlighted by Shannon Briggs' second-round knockout against Mike Marrone. Briggs' victory wrapped up several days of boxing-related events organized by the Heavyweight Factory gym in Hollywood. "I thought it was a great idea. I want to be here," Bowe said. Those sentiments were echoed in the ballroom by President Mitchell Cypress and tribal senior David Cypress. The Cypress brothers went from chatting with Holyfield one moment to mingling with Michael Moorer seconds later. Those fighters staged a memorable battle in 1994 when Moorer edged Holyfield at Caesars Palace with three heavyweight titles on the line. Three years later, Holyfield earned redemption with a rematch victory. President Cypress said the boxing events in Hollywood will help grow Seminole Hard Rock's recognition. "For the Seminole Tribe, that's a good promotion for Hard Rock, plus all these ex-fighters are here. It's the first time it's ever happened," President Cypress said. "I'm thankful to (Heavyweight Factory owner) Kris Lawrence for getting everything here together so that way the whole world knows that Seminole Hard Rock is located in [Hollywood]. I think it's fantastic." "It's awesome," David Cypress said. "It's the best thing that could happen to the sport of boxing. It's history." Holyfield said the gathering of legends should be the spark that reignites heavyweight boxing. The division's popularity has waned since the 1990s when Holyfield, Bowe, Moorer, Tyson, Lennox Lewis and Roy Jones Jr., among others, ruled the ring. "I truly believe this is an eye-opener for all the fighters," Holyfield said. "For them to put this together, this is what boxing needs."



President Mitchell Cypress sits next to three boxing stars during a gathering of former heavyweight champions Sept. 4 at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood. Seated next to President Cypress are, in order, Evander Holyfield, Riddick Bowe and Mike Tyson.

How much momentum is gained from the boxing extravaganza remains to be seen, but Holyfield said at least it's a step in the right direction. "They did one thing: They got us here," Holyfield said. "The next thing is how do they take the brilliant minds of everybody and use it to enlighten the game of boxing, to carry this thing forward." Holyfield was among the stars who strutted across a red carpet before a media crush during Fight Night Sept. 5. Some mugged in sure-footed poses and balled fists for the cameras. Others gave impromptu sound bites for video. "The most important thing about tonight is that we finally are together for the first time in boxing history. Hopefully we can help change the future of boxing," Holyfield said. Several veteran fighters were still

backstage when fighters on the night's card filtered through after bouts. Brandon Spencer, of Atlanta, emotional after beating Dieuly Aristilde, of Boynton Beach, by unanimous decision, gave credit to the legends. "You and all the other boxers here tonight, just watching you all, you put it in my heart to box," Spencer said drenched in sweat and tears. In the main event, Briggs, 43, with his fans chanting, "Let's go champ," sent Marrone, 30, to the mat in the first round with a right hook to the head. In the second, with 2:52 on the clock, Marrone crumbled to the canvas when Briggs delivered a knockout left to his head that ended the fight and concluded a heavyweight weekend. Staff reporter Eileen Soler contributed to this report.



Davorn Bryant delivers a slam dunk Sept. 19 during the eighth annual Tigertail Brothers Memorial Basketball Tournament at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium in Big Cypress.



Michael Marrone is given the count by referee Sam Burgos while winner Shannon Briggs is wowed by the crowd Sept. 5, ending the eight-card World Heavyweight Champions Fight Night at Hard Rock Live in Hollywood.

# Announcements



## Tigertail Brothers Memorial Basketball Tournament

"I would like to thank all the participants. Thank you to them, and they're welcomed to come back next year."

– Minnie Tigertail



Kevin Johnson

The Tigertail family gathers in front of the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium on Sept. 19 during the final day of the eighth annual Tigertail Brothers Memorial Basketball Tournament. From left, front row: Athena Bert, Thelma Tigertail, Lania Bert; middle row: Cecilia Tigertail, Mary Tigertail, Minnie Tigertail; back row: DeForest Carter, Myra Jumper, Greg Carter.

## 'Recollection' by Elgin Jumper

I recall the daunting blue of your eyes. It was day and you were a blue painting by Picasso - Your painted sky was warm and cool at sunrise. There were other colors in motion, too, engaging in battle in the momentous marshes of melancholy and the arrows and spears and tomahawks blocked out the very brilliance of the sun. For a swamp flower clutches a ghost orchid from the past, an ancient boardwalk glistens after a rain, sunlight spills through the tops of the tallest trees, swaying the wind. It cleanses like crystalline waters from whence exquisite sorrow flows. Now comes feathery light blues of morning cypress, of daybreak pine, spiraling kaleidoscopic scents, ascents, descents. And so, I dream within the reflections and the seasons

therein change all the time. Now light blue sky painted by Van Gogh, the sizzle of a gaze and glance, where golden light shines. Yet you pulled your sadness with a chain attached to a sled through treacherous paths, uphill. And I saw right away you were long overdue a warm embrace. The drawing to a painting. Rough draft to a work of art. And I recall descending into to the colorful light of your eyes - Every color of the Everglades there - colors engaged in battle in the momentous marshes of melancholy, where arrows and spears and tomahawks block out the very vibrance of your soul.

– Elgin Jumper, First Draft, 8/20/15, Revised, 9/8/15.

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