



The Seminole Tribune

Voice of the Unconquered

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Profit reigns at annual shareholders meeting

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The annual Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc.'s shareholders meeting Jan. 9 welcomed several newcomers to Board offices, reported good news overall for 2015 and predicted profits for 2016 through continued business diversification.

But before talk about dollars and cents commenced, the Cowbone Band ushered more than 250 Tribal citizens into the Hard Rock Live concert hall turned conference room with thoughtful music.

"Just give me a Cypress hole and a tree for shade ... to me, that's as close to heaven as a man can get ... I got a few good friends, all my bills are paid, I got the moon and stars, I got it made," sung the Rev. Paul Buster.

Board President Mitchell Cypress opened the meeting with a brief address in Mikasuki and English.

"It's good for us to take time to come out, get some reports from new and old products and services, and find out what we need to do to continue doing well and make improvements," President Cypress said.

New employee announcements included Joel Frank Sr. as the Board's chief operating officer (COO). Frank served the Tribe most recently as director of government relations and initiatives.

Others in new employee positions include Carlene Osceola as executive assistant to President Cypress, Sue Jane Cypress as executive assistant to Council Vice President Cypress and Peggie Reynolds as assistant to COO Frank. Diana Betancourt is the Board's new office manager.

Mike Ulizio, the Board's chief financial officer, provided a brief overview of Seminole products from wine and juice to cattle. Ulizio said the Tribe's businesses experienced "rapid growth" in 2015 through diversification of consumer services and products.

♦ See PROFITS on page 5A



Photo courtesy of Perrone Ford (Florida State Sports Information)

The Seminole Tribe's Justin Motlow focuses on the ball during Florida State's 2015 season. Motlow saw his first game action this season for FSU, which finished with a 10-3 record.

Season of progress for FSU's Justin Motlow

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

TALLAHASSEE — A year after he became the first Seminole Tribal citizen to make the Florida State University Seminoles football team, Justin Motlow took his trailblazing a step further.

This season Motlow saw his first game action for FSU, which finished with a 10-3 record and ranked No. 14 in the country.

Motlow, who did not play in any games in 2014, made his debut Sept. 5 in a 59-16

opening day rout against Texas State at Doak Campbell Stadium in Tallahassee.

"It felt amazing. It hadn't happened since high school," said Motlow, whose last action in an official game was in 2013 at Tampa Catholic High School where he racked up more than 1,000 receiving yards and helped lead the Crusaders to the state semifinals.

Motlow said he was in the Texas State game for just one play in a blocking role at wide receiver, but he did not take the brief appearance for granted.

"Another small milestone was reached.

Now I'm on to the next one. It finally happened," Motlow said.

Making it into a game was among Motlow's goals this season. Similar to 2014, he spent most of the year on the scout team facing Seminole defensive starters in practice. He said he improved a lot this season and gained a better grasp of the team's playbook.

Motlow also appeared in one other game, a 52-13 win against Chattanooga on Nov. 21 in FSU's home finale as the team

♦ See MOTLOW on page 5C

Hendry County allows delay on FPL plant decision

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

CLEWISTON — Hendry County's Board of County Commissioners agreed Jan. 12 to postpone the last public hearings of three Florida Power & Light amendment proposals from the commission's Feb. 9 meeting.

Submitted by FPL, the amendments could change the county's comprehensive land plan and allow the energy monopoly to build one of the largest power plants in the United States on 3,200 acres of land next door to Big Cypress Reservation.

In a letter from FPL's lead attorney Ethel D. Hammer, the request to delay the readings to March 8 was submitted to allow time for negotiators to "finalize an agreement to resolve concerns raised by an adjacent property owner."

FPL spokesman David McDermitt confirmed Jan. 22 that tribal leaders and FPL staff have been in discussions that will likely result in significant revisions to the current amendment application.

Two major concerns are on the table, McDermitt said: location of the plant and the protection of the Tribe's cultural resources.

"Both are very important issues, and we are very sensitive to the Tribe's concerns. We entered into ongoing discussions that are amicable and collaborative, and we are hoping to file the amendment plan in time for the March meeting," McDermitt said.

Changes to the plan could mean the power plant will be built on different property owned by FPL than was previously suggested. The new potential site ends

♦ See FPL on page 4A

Project to restore Devil's Garden to natural state

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

DEVIL'S GARDEN — A \$150 million restoration project on land just north of Big Cypress Reservation is helping return 14,437 acres to its original state as a wet prairie with scattered cypress domes, tree-island hammocks, depression marshes and slough-ways.

The land, owned by the South Florida Water Management District, is also the site of Sam Jones' Old Town, where the legendary medicine man and spiritual leader lived in the late 1820s.

The project, officially named by the Tribe as the Sam Jones/Abiaki Prairie project, is geared to restore historic Everglades hydrologic conditions and contribute to water quality improvement, restore historic wetlands and upland habitat, expand habitat area for plant and animal species, promote restoration of a self-sustaining ecosystem and maintain current levels of flood protection for surrounding properties.

The Tribe consulted with the District and the Army Corps of Engineers, which issued the permits, before the project began in 2012.

"We engaged with them early in the planning process to make sure their plans were respectful to tribal cultural resources," said Paul Backhouse, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum director and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. "We looked at the plans and identified areas they needed to stay away from."

Sam Jones' Old Town was marked on maps in the 19th and 20th centuries, but the specific location cannot be confirmed, as the original markers were lost during

♦ See DEVIL'S GARDEN on page 5A

NLC moves into future with facility upgrades

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — When Tribal citizens attend the first homeownership training classes of the New Year on Feb. 24-25 at Native Learning Center (NLC) in Hollywood, they might believe that the center has a new home of its own.

The two-level facility, supported by the Tribe and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Office of Native American Programs, recently wrapped up a \$2.1 million HUD-funded makeover.

"It might sound like a lot of money, but it is not for everything we've done. We've been good stewards. We've crunched every single dollar," said Vince Franco, compliance and

resource development director.

According to public records, the three-story building at 6363 Taft St. was constructed in 1983. Prior to the Tribe's purchase of the structure in 2009, it was primarily used by small businesses that included medical, law and financial service practices.

"There were many, many small office spaces in the building. Now, we have the same square footage but the walls have come down. A lot of blood, sweat and tears went into the renovation, but it's been a wonderful experience," said Executive Director Georgette Palmer Smith.

NLC, charged since 2008 to teach and promote the development of Native housing and housing-related activities in cooperation with HUD and the agency's Eastern Woodlands Office of Native American Programs (EWONAP), takes up the first two floors.

At first glance, the changes seem mostly cosmetic. The exterior is repainted from chalky white and coral to a much brighter and professional almond and gray.

The reception area, refurbished and decorated in fine art pieces, is cheerful and welcoming.

Vintage Seminole photographs and artwork that were donated to NLC by Tribes throughout Indian Country decorate walls that

lead to a suite of offices for staff members, including Smith, of the Kiowa Tribe in Oklahoma, and Deputy Executive Director Kyle Doney (Seminole/Gros Ventre).

Also on the first floor, a large multi-purpose room with accordion foldout walls shoulders the building's corner. New furniture and plenty of light set the scene for informal meetings and dining during long training days.

But not in sight, in the ceilings and walls, is a labyrinth of wires that enhances the center's ability to deliver training via state-of-the-art technology. For example, Internet video conferencing and web-based lectures can be integrated with in-person training at the touch of a finger.

The "big ticket" items are in the maze of second floor rooms that make up classrooms, conference rooms, a recording space for webinars and a library, said Marie Dufour Bonville, director of training and technical assistance.

There, floor-to-ceiling erasable white boards fold into and out of walls to divide rooms into classrooms and smaller breakout spaces; drop-down projection screens are stored in ceiling recesses; and rolling smart boards with touch screens can be transported from space to space as needed.

Televisions are strategically placed in various locations in all rooms. In one lecture room, long conference tables are equipped with more than a dozen individual computer hook-ups. In the library, comfy chairs invite guests to relax while reading books that range from biographies to resource manuals. Computer stations allow guests to catch up with work back home, send and answer emails, print out documents and complete

♦ See NLC on page 4A



Eileen Soler

Native Learning Center training and development specialist Patti Kay Mitchell (Cherokee Nation) tidies a shelf filled with books at the facility's new library and media center.

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Looking back on 2015.
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Editorial

A moment of excitement

• James E. Billie

When I saw the billboard with \$1.5 billion on it, I went and bought several Powerball tickets. People were lined up doing the same thing I was at our local country Brighton Trading Post.

I selected all my numbers and marked them on the card.

What was disappointing was none of the 25 numbers I chose even came up!

But, during the time before the Powerball numbers were announced, I wondered what I would do with all that money "if" I won.

1) I thought about getting my health back in order; 2) go to a fat farm and lose at least 80 pounds; 3) get a facelift to look younger (at least 70 years old instead of 100 lol); 4) fill up trust funds for my kids, grandkids

and great-grandkids; and 5) get a nice RV and load it down with about 100 pounds of bologna and bread and hit the road!

Later that evening, when the numbers were announced, I nervously checked my cards.

My numbers never came up.

Like many other folks around the country, I had my moment of excitement, hoping, wishing and dreaming.

Maybe next time ...
Sho-naa-bish.

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



Pow-wow or Sundance, what's the difference?

• Vince Two Eagles

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings my relatives), August or *Wasuton wi* (Moon when all things ripen) of 2015 proved to be an absolute scorcher! As with all things, "Some like it hot; some like it cold."

Although record heat blanketed our area this past summer, not only is it a time when things ripen but it is a time when Indians like to pow-wow. One of our most important and sacred ceremonies, the Sundance, is held throughout Indian Country as well.

So what's the difference? Many of our non-Indian brethren always want to know. Prompted by reader inquiry, here are some thoughts about that very topic.

Many things are told about these cultural and spiritual events held literally around the globe these days. There are pow-wows and Sundances held routinely throughout many European countries and therein lies the rub for many Indian people.

Let's talk about the pow-wow first. Pow-wow is a universal term used by many Indian people throughout North America. In "American Indians: Answers to Today's Questions," author Jack Utter tells us that the word "pow-wow" is "derived from the Algonquin-speaking Narragansett Tribe of the Rhode Island region. In its original usage, it meant a Native healer or priest."

Utter continues: "For example, in 1646, the Massachusetts Bay Colony defined pawwows as 'witches or sorcerers that cure by the help of the devil.'" In 1674, another observer wrote, "Their physicians are Powaws or Indian Priests. Early on, the meaning of pow-wow was expanded by non-Indians to include ceremonies in which Indian healers or religious leaders participated. The word was later widely applied and accepted by Indians and non-Indians as a generic term to cover nearly all gatherings involving feasts, councils or inter-tribal conferences."

Today the term is still applied to healers and spiritual leaders, but that meaning is used by some of the Eastern Tribes. In Indian Country, "pow-wow" currently means a tribal or inter-tribal dance, fair, rodeo, celebration or other gathering.

These may vary in size from small social functions to the very large Gathering of Nations pow-wow, which annually draws people to Albuquerque, New Mexico, from throughout the U.S. and Canada.

In addition to their recreational value, pow-wows are socially significant for individual participants and are important to Indian solidarity, spirituality, cultural identity and exchange of

social-political information.

As far as I know, pow-wows are usually open to the public. There will not only be many different styles and types of dances and dancers but it is not uncommon to see Indian Name-Giving, Wiping of the Tears, Honoring and other ceremonies. Additionally, it is quite common to see Giveaways (these are quite often "Memorial Ceremonies" remembering those who have deceased).

The Sundance on the other hand is a bird of a different feather, so to speak. Many traditional Indian people who still practice the old religious ceremonies believe it is disrespectful to allow non-Indians to either participate or observe the Sundance. This is, of course, their right.

If, on the other hand, the dancers or the sponsor of the Sundance think it is alright to allow non-Indians to attend and/or participate then so be it. The bottom line is that you have to ask before attending or participating in this very sacred ceremony.

I know the allowing of non-Indians to attend a Sundance, let alone participate in one, is highly controversial in Indian Country. Even among Indian people I have observed a tendency to generalize ritual. This means that there are those who say one way of conducting a Sundance is right while another way is wrong. It is next to impossible, in my estimation, to win such an argument especially when we know different *Tiyos'payes* (Indian families) have their own particular way of doing things.

I don't believe this necessarily represents disunity among Indian people but allows for diversity in thought and individuality in religious practice. I understand that Indian people have always respected each individual's right to develop and explore their own personal relationship with the Creator without interference from someone else.

If this is true then to each his own – some like it hot; some like it cold. There is very little room for criticism but plenty of room to support and keep alive our Indian ways, especially our ceremonial life.

Once again, for you non-Indians, don't be afraid to ask and you can't go wrong.

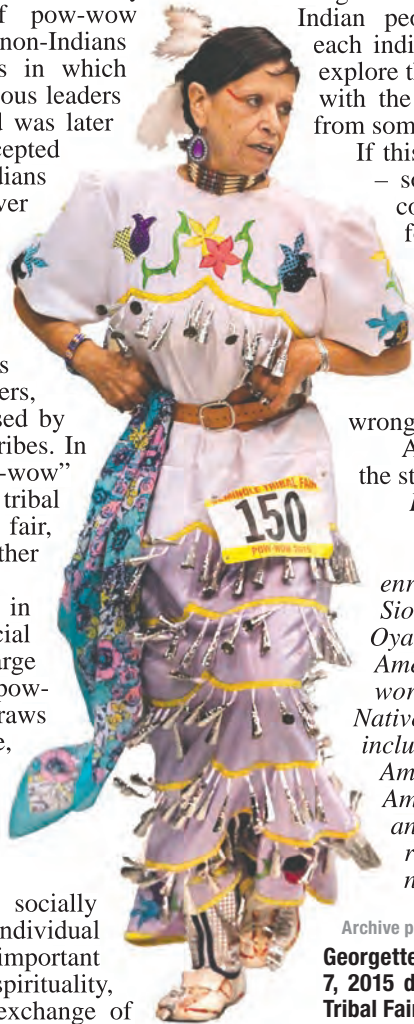
And now you know the rez of the story.

Doksha (later).

Vince Two Eagles is an enrolled citizen of the Yankton Sioux Tribe (hanktowan Dakota Oyate). He is a nationally known American Indian writer whose work is featured in several Native newspapers and blogs, including Partnership With Native Americans, a blog about Native American culture, challenges and hope on remote and isolated reservations with the highest need in the U.S.

Archive photo/Eileen Soler

Georgette Palmer Smith competes Feb. 7, 2015 during the 44th annual Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow in Hollywood.



Spreading joy in communities

• Stephanie Bowers Hiatt

I am inspired by Kid President. Aren't we all? Who wouldn't like someone who inspires others by using dance parties, corn dogs, cupcakes and high-fives? If you are unfamiliar with Kid President, let me familiarize you with some of his famous one-liners off his YouTube channel and recent book, "Kid President's Guide to Being Awesome."

"Humans are capable of mistakes and also cupcakes."

"Master the art of the surprise burrito."

"Mail somebody a corn dog."

"Give the world a reason to dance."

And probably his most popular quote, "You were made to be awesome."

I think I am inspired by Kid President because he challenges all humans to be joy-filled by inspiring us to act generously in community with one another. Yes, joy through community.

What is community, you ask? Dictionary.com defines community as a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government and often have a common cultural and historical heritage. That would be us! All of us. We all live in community whether we live on a Seminole reservation or in another area of the country. Kid President challenges us to generously spread joy in our communities.

According to a research study, "A Simple and General Explanation for the Evolution of Altruism," spreading generous joy is actually great for your health. Neuroscientists have studied the effects that generous joy-spreading has on your health and found that joy-spreaders actually produce endorphins in their bodies which cause a "helper's high." Similarly, this "helper's high" has been compared to a mild

dose of morphine. In fact, the health benefits of generous joy-spreading are equivalent to the health benefits that, believe it or not, one would experience from quitting smoking.

In the same study, neuroscientists also found when teenagers live a generous, joy-spreading lifestyle, they are less likely to struggle with depression, quit school or fail a subject. They are three times happier than people who are not generous joy-spreaders.

Personally, I really value community. Due to my background in public education, I am aware of the strategic planning that cities should implement in order to develop meaningful communities, which include libraries, schools, and commercial and residential zoning or rezoning.

Zoning. Strategy. Forethought. It matters. Communities are not, however, only comprised of buildings, but the epicenter of community is its people. Author Peter Block has spent a large part of his career writing about community. In his research, he discovered the "one thing that distinguished the more successful towns from the less successful towns was the extent of social capital, or widespread relatedness that existed among its citizens." Isn't that interesting?

So, Kid President hits the nail on the head in his book when he writes, "You matter." We all matter! Not only do we matter, but we need each other in order to thrive. Prominent psychologist Jean Piaget asserts that when we are without social interaction, "apathy, withdrawal and generally depressed functioning is produced."

In order for a community to grow and thrive, each area should be working toward the health and betterment of the whole. When communities are healthy and thriving, they can be compared to a garden. When a garden is healthy, each part of the garden,

"contributes to the health of the greater whole in its own way." What does this mean for you in your community? It means to offer your unique giftedness to help advance your community. In order for our tribal communities to thrive and transform, it takes all of our gifts, strengths and talents to make it happen.

You matter! How you use your time also matters, whether you spread joy or use your unique gifts and strengths to improve your community or both. Kid President exclaims, "We were made to be awesome." How will you be awesome this year? Perhaps we can glean some wisdom from Kid President's suggestions:

"Give people high-fives for getting out of bed because being a person is hard sometimes."

"Be somebody who makes everybody feel like a somebody."

"Treat everyone like it's their birthday."

"Focus on the awesome."

"Throw kindness around like confetti because kindness is less messy."

Stephanie Bowers Hiatt, a citizen of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, is a second-year doctorate student at Hamline University in Saint Paul, Minnesota, studying educational leadership. She is the daughter of Stephen Bowers and is originally from the Hollywood Reservation. She has three sons and has been married for 18 years. Hiatt enjoys working out and competing in triathlons. Reach her at Hiatt@sio.midco.net.



Tribes disagree on Mother Earth's coal

• Mark Trahant

It's tempting to think of Indian Country as a "singular" voice. The vast majority of Native Americans agree that the United States should live up to its treaty promises. Most of us think that Tribes are the best mechanism for governing our lands and people (all the while watching a steady stream of our citizens moving from reservations to cities and towns across America). And, we share a deep respect for the land, Mother Earth. Add it up and it shows that if we all vote together, our voices will represent a powerful bloc.

Except, that is, when we disagree.

That should not be a surprise. The phrase "tribal politics" earns an instant nod from folks who understand that Native people have the same divisions – philosophical, tribal, and familial – that surface in any governing structure. Generations ago this was an easy problem to resolve: Leaders who found themselves in a minority, just left camp, and followed their own way. Today tribal people who have different ideas about the future live and work in the community and use elections to determine the governing coalition.

Perhaps the greatest division within Indian Country is the debate about the environment and the extraction of natural resources. There are Native people on all sides of this question and it's already an election issue.

Since reaching a high point in 2008, coal production in the United States has continued to decline. U.S. coal production in 2015 is expected to be about 900 million short tons (MMst), 10 percent lower than in 2014 and the lowest level since 1986. Regionally, production from the Appalachian Basin has fallen the most. Low natural gas prices, lower international coal demand, and environmental regulations have contributed to declining U.S. coal production.

Earlier this month the Crow Nation announced that some tribal employees "will have to be furloughed for some time during this quarter."

Crow is rich with coal – one estimate shows a reserve of 17 billion tons – and it's the primary source of tribal revenue as well as jobs for more than 13,000 tribal members. Obama might get the blame, but the coal industry has been collapsing on its own. Its use as an energy source in the United States is being replaced by natural gas which is both cheaper and cleaner. That leaves China as the major market for coal. But China is giving up on coal too.

A report by Clark Williams-Derry from the environmental think-tank Sightline sums it up this way: "Many folks still believe that China has an unlimited appetite for coal and that the country's industries and power plants would be delighted to buy any and all coal we send their way. But in reality, China's coal consumption peaked in 2013, fell by about 3 percent in 2014, and fell another 4 to 5 percent over the first 11 months of 2015. All told, China's cutbacks have totaled some 300 million tons per year – the equivalent of one-third of total coal output in the U.S., the world's second largest coal producer. So while China still has a huge appetite for coal, the country has slimmed down impressively."

The sharp decline in the Chinese stock market will likely speed up this trend.

But proponents of coal continue to promote plans that would make it easier for coal to reach Asia. Cloud Peak Energy Company has the option to lease 1.4 billion tons of coal from Crow lands. That company, and the Crow Nation, are investors in two new shipping terminals in Washington state. If completed, this would be the biggest coal export terminal in North America and account for nearly 500 sailings of ships transporting coal to Asia.

Northwest Tribes are adamantly opposed to the terminal. Swinomish Chairman Brian Cladoosby told The Seattle Times recently: "Coal is black death... There is no mitigation." He and other tribal leaders say that the project would be a clear violation of treaty fishing rights. Cladoosby is president of the National Congress of American Indians which in a 2012 resolution called for a full, transparent environmental review.

Then again, as The Times put it: "Burning coal creates pollution that harms human health and the environment. In addition to particulates, burning coal generates more carbon dioxide emissions than any other fuel, implicated as the number one source of human-caused climate change."

The politics of coal remain a dividing line in U.S. and tribal politics. The Obama administration has stepped up environmental regulations of coal and recently the Interior Department announced a review of coal leasing on federal lands. "Given serious concerns raised about the federal coal program, we're taking the prudent step to hit pause on approving significant new leases so that decisions about those leases can benefit from the recommendations that come out of the review," said Interior Secretary Sally Jewell.

Coal is considered the most polluting

type of fossil fuel. "The implication is that our fossil fuels that would take us over-budget will have to be left in the ground," writes Roz Pidcock for CarbonBrief. "Globally this equates to 88 percent of the world's known coal reserves, 52 percent of gas and 35 percent of oil." So the tribal bets on coal are coming at a bad time, both in terms of market-prices and meeting international agreements to reduce emissions. Neither the Congress nor a future president can change this fact. Markets are not going to suddenly come back for coal and the rest of the world has already made a decision about the future of energy.

Of course, the Crow are not the only tribal government or Alaska Native corporation that sees a future in coal.

The Navajo Nation purchased a coal mine in 2014. And the Tyonek Native Corporation has plans to develop the Chuitna Coal project with the PacRim Coal Company. The village corporation favors the project, while the Tyonek Native village, a tribal government, is opposed because of the mining's impact on rivers, salmon and the community.

The impact of climate change is a huge concern for many Tribes. But even before climate change the Northern Cheyenne – also a coal rich Tribe – decided on a different route.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the Northern Cheyenne demanded that its trustee block leases with Peabody Coal. Then the Northern Cheyenne successfully set higher air quality standards. According to the Bureau of Land Management: "The Tribe became concerned that, because of prevailing wind patterns, air pollution from these massive plants would pollute the Reservation airshed. Under prevailing legal standards, the powerplant was not obliged to minimize such pollution... The Tribe decided to become the first unit of government in the Nation – federal, state, local or tribal – to voluntarily raise the air quality standard within its territory to the most pristine standard under law. Specifically, the Tribal Council moved to raise the Reservation air quality standard to the highest permitted by law – Class I – a standard which theretofore applied only to National Parks and Wilderness Areas."

Mark Trahant is the Charles R. Johnson Endowed Professor of Journalism at the University of North Dakota. He is an independent journalist and a member of The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. This story first appeared on Indian Country Today.

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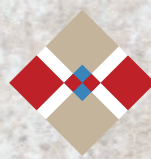
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Community



Sally Tommie appointed to national Native arts board

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Sally Tommie, daughter and granddaughter of traditional tribal artists Minnie Tommie and Sallie Chupco Tommie, respectively, grew up surrounded by art and experienced how sweetgrass baskets, dolls and patchwork put food on her family's table.

As a recently appointed Native Arts and Cultures Foundation (NACF) board of directors member, Tommie will be in a position to help support Native American artists nationwide through monetary grants.

NACF is dedicated to supporting and preserving American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian arts and cultures for future generations. The national nonprofit organization has raised nearly \$6.3 million since 2010 and awarded it to 163 Native artists and organizations in 26 states.

Tommie, owner of Chupco Indian Art Gallery in Hollywood, believes Native American art's importance includes bringing a valuable perspective to contemporary life. She said she is honored to serve on the board.

"The foundation has been able to transform lives," Tommie said. "We are charged with the preservation of art and culture. Art tells our story in our own voice."

The 11-member board meets nine times a year, four in person and five via conference call, during which they review portfolios submitted by artists through a national call for entries process. A committee of arts professionals and NACF staff chooses the candidates, and the board chooses the fellows, or grant recipients.

"NACF's goal is to change communities through art," Tommie said. "Once we decide on the artists, the money awarded is based on the art that will be produced."

Fellowship awards up to \$20,000 are bestowed on individual artists working in traditional arts, music, visual arts, artistic

◆ See SALLY TOMMIE on page 4A



Miss Florida Seminole Destiny Nunez practices public speaking Jan. 24 during a mock interview with professional pageant coaches Jules Meyer, Michelle Aguirre and Jaime Converse-Estrada Jan. 24.

Miss Seminole takes expert track toward Miss Indian World

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Since she was crowned Miss Florida Seminole in July, Destiny Nunez has appeared at 11 events in Florida and Oklahoma. Representing the Tribe is part of her responsibilities, as is vying for Miss Indian World during the Gathering of Nations Pow-Wow in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The April competition will feature

contestants from throughout Indian Country who will be judged on tribal knowledge, public speaking, dance, traditional talent and personal interviews. To prepare, Nunez has been training with an experienced pageant coach since November.

"I'm more confident, there is no shakiness in my voice and I don't get as nervous as I used to," Nunez said. "I've learned to manage my nerves and gotten progressively better."

One of Nunez's biggest events to date

was speaking to about 50 fourth-graders and teachers at a Fort Pierce school. Nunez said she would not have spoken so well without help from her coach, Jules Meyer.

Meyer, of PR Pageant Coaches, leads a team of experts who advise contestants and teach techniques necessary to command the pageant stage, which include interviewing skills, stage presence and public speaking. Meyer said Nunez can use the skills for the

◆ See PAGEANT TRAINING on page 5A

Record crowd attends 'Struggle for Survival'

BY AARON TOMMIE
Contributing Writer

BIG CYPRESS — In what was once Chairman James E. Billie's Big Cypress camp, the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum hosted its largest opening reception Jan. 16 with the celebration of three new exhibits that document the Seminoles' stamp on U.S. history.

More than 200 attendees gathered at the Museum's picnic area to hear guest speakers share experiences of how the Seminole Tribe of Florida has benefited from the efforts of past Seminoles before witnessing it for themselves through "Struggle for Survival: 1817-1858," "Telling Our Stories: Oral History and Traditions" and "Conversations."

Preparation took three years to make the exhibits successful.

"People have said the three exhibits go nicely together since the 'Telling Our Stories' exhibit is orally oriented, the prize-winning Seminole Tribune photographers' exhibit is aesthetically oriented and the 'Struggle for Survival' exhibit is fully immersive," said Eric Griffith, oral history coordinator.

"Telling Our Stories: Oral History and Traditions" features 10 personal accounts of life from notable Seminole elders and others whose lives have been impacted by Seminole culture and tradition. Attendees could don headphones and hear accurate portrayals of Seminole life.

"Conversations" consists of 14 images captured while reporting news during the past

three years by award-winning photographers Beverly Bidney, Kevin Johnson and Eileen Soler.

"The juxtaposition of cultural activities and everyday events symbolizes that Seminoles are modern-day people who look to the future while preserving their past," reads a synopsis of the photos on the Mosaic Gallery wall.

On her Facebook page, Fort Lauderdale art gallery owner Robin Merrill congratulated "Conversations" exhibit photographers for their "top-notch journalism in an age of diminishing newspapers."

The main exhibit, "Struggle for Survival: 1817-1858," covers the Seminole Wars and the Seminoles' fight to remain Unconquered. The exhibit entrance immerses guests into a

swamp-like environment filled with cypress knees and Spanish moss with crickets chirping and other noises of the night.

A small re-creation of the Grey Cloud steamer that transported conquered Natives from Florida to Oklahoma allows guests a place to reflect on the plight.

"We hope our visitors will come out with a new way of viewing the Seminole Wars," said Annette Snapp, operations manager.

An interactive app allowed attendees to experience what survival entailed during the wars. Seminoles lived off what the land provided, and knowledge of the land was used against militias to better ensure their survival. Learning from the Spanish, they used more advanced weapons to defend themselves.

"We wanted people to understand the challenges that the Seminoles faced. Against those innumerable odds, they are still here. That is why they are Unconquered," said Museum curator Rebecca Fell.

Speakers at the event included the Miccosukee Tribe's Lee Tiger, Moses Jumper Jr., Chief Justice Willie Johns, Miss Florida Seminole Destiny Nunez and Dr. Harry A. Kersey Jr., who has been heavily involved in Seminole and Miccosukee affairs for decades and penned a book on the late Buffalo Tiger.

Lee Tiger read the Buckskin Declaration — on display in the Struggle for Survival exhibit — while also providing background information on its origins. His father, Buffalo Tiger, translated and transcribed the document, which Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank described as being "comparable in the outside culture to the Magna Carta or the Constitution of the United States."

Past treaties promising that tribal lands would be available didn't hold true, resulting in the declaration of sovereignty, Lee Tiger said.

"How easy it must have been for them to just fold over. I'm sure they were broken and it was difficult, but what they were doing and what they were wanting in the document paved the way for us to be the strong Tribe we are today," Nunez said. "It's something that we look over quite often, especially the people younger than me."

Chairman Billie spoke of Seminole life prior to the Buckskin Declaration and its importance. He mentioned spending time living in a camp off Tamiami Trail and living with his clan uncle Morgan Smith, who was one of the people working to help the Seminoles become a federally recognized Tribe.

◆ See RECEPTION on page 8A

45th Tribal Fair and Pow Wow to kick off Feb. 5

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The 45th annual Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow will be filled with colorful sights and traditional sounds as about 500 competitive dancers and drummers from throughout Indian Country vie for their share of a \$150,000 prize purse.

The celebration of Native arts and culture kicks off Feb. 5 with the Grand Entry at 10 a.m. and continues through Feb. 7 at Hard Rock Live arena at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.

In addition to dance and drum competitions, the event will feature about 60 vendors selling Native arts, crafts, jewelry, clothing and food at Hard Rock Live and in the Hooters parking lot at Seminole Paradise. The venues are expected to attract thousands of visitors daily.

The Grand Entry will introduce tribal leaders, Seminole royalty and exhibition dancers twice daily before competitions commence.

Competitive dance events will feature Fancy, Grass, Chicken, Northern Traditional, Southern Straight, Jingle, Southern Buckskin and N/S Cloth (combined) for men, women and teens. The drum competition will include Northern and Southern categories and a hand drum competition. Four special exhibition dances sponsored by Tribal citizens round out the event.

Entertainment will include the blues rocker Kenny Wayne Shepherd Band Feb. 7 at 1 p.m. at Hard Rock Live. Other musical artists on the schedule are country singer Elizabeth Cook, and The Osceola Brothers, Derek Miller, Ted Nelson and Cowbone bands. Alligator wrestling, wildlife shows and hoop dancer Daniel Trampler will add thrills to the weekend.

The Native Reel Cinema Fest, a new addition to Tribal Fair, will premier three short films by filmmaker Steven Paul Judd, of the Kiowa and Choctaw tribes, followed by a question and answer session with him. One film was co-produced by Seminole Tribal citizens Everett Osceola and Gordon Wareham. The films will be shown Feb. 5 at 5:30 p.m. and Feb. 6 at 5 p.m. in Seminole Paradise.

Tribal Fair and Pow Wow events will be shown online during a Seminole Media Productions livestream.

Brighton Field Day expected to draw 30,000

BY AARON TOMMIE
Contributing Writer

BRIGHTON — The 78th annual Brighton Field Day Festival & PRCA Rodeo is sure to provide thousands of people with entertainment, food and lasting memories Feb. 12-14 on the grounds of the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena. The weekend helps present generations bridge the gap with Seminole traditions of the past.

In 1938, teachers William Boehmer and his wife, Edith, started the event to bring Seminoles from all reservations together. Early competitions included the 100-yard dash and sewing for women. When the event opened to the public, non-Indians were able to buy Seminole-made items, such as dolls, dresses and shirts. In the late 1960s, the rodeo was built. In 2014, Indian horse relay races were introduced.

About 20,000 people flock to Brighton for the fun-filled weekend each year, and an estimated 30,000 are expected to attend this year's event.

Ever since Chairman's special assistant Norman "Skeeter" Bowers invited Florida State University to attend the event several years ago, FSU's band The Marching Chiefs and Osceola and his horse Renegade have been popular additions.

"Whether you are an FSU fan or not, their presence is moving, especially during the pre-show of the rodeo on Saturday. The band performs the National Anthem and then the band brings in Renegade and Osceola with the FSU war chant. Your chest just fills with pride," said Lucy Bowers, Council executive administrative assistant and the festival's lead coordinator.

The Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association and Xtreme Bulls will feature 200 contestants during the festival's rodeo events. Jimmy Riffle, from the Animal Planet show "Gator Boys," will also return. Several musical guests, including Native hip-hop artist Supaman, will perform throughout the weekend. Country musician Neal McCoy

◆ See FIELD DAY on page 8A



Aaron Tommie

Guests observe the 'Struggle for Survival: 1817-1858' exhibit, which includes a re-creation of the Grey Cloud steamer used to transport Natives to Oklahoma, Jan. 16 at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum in Big Cypress.



Fishermen beach their boats on the bank of a Big Cypress canal to bring their catch to the weigh-in Dec. 29 at the Big Cypress First Baptist Church fishing tournament.

Fish, prayer center of Big Cypress tournament

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Big Cypress Reservation's canals and ponds were crowded Dec. 29 with competitive fishermen, women and children vying to haul in the biggest catch during the Big Cypress First Baptist Church's adult and youth fishing tournament.



Blevyns Jumper hauls a net of big bass to be weighed during the Big Cypress First Baptist Church fishing tournament.

About 30 adults and 30 youth participated in the catch-and-release tournament, and plenty of fish took their bait. Adults were limited to artificial lures and a catch of five bass, while youth could use minnows, worms and lures to catch five of any fish to qualify for the weigh-in.

Pastor Salaw Hummingbird manned the scale, and Josh Jumper tallied the results at the end of the day.

"Our church is a brotherhood of fishermen," Pastor Hummingbird said. "The main thing is to get together and just have a good time. We will feed them and share the gospel at the end of the day."

Blevyns Jumper, who fished with his father, Josh Jumper, reeled in 14.43 pounds of fish. As he released his catch, he made sure the fish survived the ordeal. He took each one by the mouth and gently moved it through the water to ensure the gills were saturated enough for the fish to breathe underwater.

Maleah Smith, who loves to fish with her grandfather Chucky Osceola, brought in two bass.

"When she's not in school, she's fishing," Osceola said. "I tell her she needs to get a boat and go out more."

After all the fish were weighed and released, the group enjoyed dinner, prayer and prizes.

The adult winner was Josh Jumper with a total weight of 14.43 pounds; the youth winner was Thanoke Billie with a catch of 5.09 pounds.

After the final reading occurs, county commissioners will then be permitted to adopt the amendments and effectively change the comprehensive land plan.

The amendment process is complicated, but according to Florida law the adoption of amendments must be finished and changes made into law within six months of the time when government agencies, such as the South Florida Water Management District, issued formal comments on the changes. In this case, six months is up in April 2016.

However, anticipating that more time may be needed to complete FPL and Tribe agreements, Hammer also submitted a letter to the county to delay adopting the amendments through May 31. The adoption delay was also granted.

staged two webinars from Hollywood: Indigenous Evaluation 101: Designing Program Evaluations that are Tribally Responsive and Roadmap to Healthy Native Homes — Developing Recommendations for Your New Housing Project.

The Home Expansion Loan Program session in February will be the first Seminole Tribe training held since renovations were completed in late January. In March, NLC will host the first multi-Tribe event when it opens doors for the annual EWONAP Regional Meeting. EWONAP serves 66 Tribes in six states.

Smith said housing training via NLC is available to all Tribes in the United States, as requested and logistically available. So far, about 10,000 trainings have been provided.

Out-of-state trainings will still be provided by NLC, but the at-home renovations make it easier and more affordable to host trainings in Hollywood, Smith said. Previously, ballrooms at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood were utilized. Now, 80 to 100 trainees can be accommodated in NLC's remodeled space.

"Everyone loves to come to Florida, and Tribes everywhere are appreciative that we are here to provide the housing training they need," Smith said.

Fishing reels in old memories, future fun for Brighton seniors

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Fish began to bite almost immediately for seniors on a chilly January night at the Harney Pond Canal lock near Brighton.

Five hours later, 70 black crappies and a handful of catfish and bass filled a cooler.

"It's good eating," said Willie Johns, smiling as his first catch wiggled and wrestled still hooked on the line.

Nighttime fishing, hosted monthly through winter for the past nine years by the Brighton Elder Services Department, brought 17 seniors to the water's edge Jan. 12 for relaxation and good company. The previous night out, Dec. 20, landed 50 fish.

Chairs, poles, rods, snacks and drinks are provided by the department. Staffers stand by from 4 to 10 p.m. to serve all senior needs from baiting hooks to releasing fish into the collective catch.

"And if fish are biting and they want to stay until 11, we stay," said the center's site manager Patricia Yates. "In the past, when we had enough volunteers, we'd clean some catch and cook fish snacks up right then and there."

Activity coordinator Donna Turtle said the winter activity series can run through April if night temperatures are cold enough to keep most mosquitoes away and all seniors cool and comfortable.

The next fishing night is Feb. 18, but seniors will enjoy December and January's now frozen catch several days earlier. On Feb. 11, the fish will be fried outdoors on the senior center patio and then brought inside to eat with hush puppies and cheese grits at a luncheon Valentine's Day soiree.

Officially, the elder fishing nights were started by Turtle's mother, Leah Minnick, who for 35 years worked for Elder Services until her retirement as the department director in 2012, Turtle said. Minnick passed away a year later, said her other daughter

Debbie Carter, who fished for hours on the recent Wednesday.

"Our mom loved to fish. When she was alive we'd just come out, sit on the concrete and fish all day. We didn't even care if we caught fish or not. Now, every time I come fishing I think of her," Carter said.

Then, the lock was more accessible without fences and danger signs that now infringe on the otherwise bucolic scene.

Born and raised in Brighton, elder Onnie Osceola remembers earlier days when night fishing was a necessity, not a pastime, and Tribal citizens lit small fires in the rocks along the canal bank to keep warm. She recalled when groups of seniors met up at Indian Prairie Canal closer to Lake Okeechobee where more fish seemed to bite

— until Seminole seniors were prohibited from the site.

"Now we have heaters out here, we get to eat sandwiches and drink hot coffee, and our grandkids come out," Osceola said.

Onnie Dallas Cypress, Onnie Osceola's daughter, brought her fiancé, Jose Serrano, and four of their children to enjoy the night. Mostly, the kids wanted to play on the rocks but Oddysie Cypress, 6, made her first catch and Marley, 3, sat on a folding chair patiently watching and learning about fishing from her grandma.

"The children have more questions about alligators being in the water than fish these days, but Marley still told me, 'Get that fish on the hook.' It's nice out here," Onnie Osceola said.



Debbie Carter, whose mother, Leah Minnick, established senior fishing nights out hosted by the Brighton Elder Services Department, shows her fresh-caught black crappie.



From left, Brighton elders Norman Johns, Willie Johns and Elbert Snow enjoy a brisk night Jan. 12 of fishing for winter catch out on Harney Pond Canal.

◆ FPL From page 1A

about 4 miles north of Big Cypress.

According to the county's Property Appraiser's Office, FPL owns 26 parcels of land in Hendry, 25 of which stretch along the west side of Country Road 833 from the Big Cypress Reservation's north border to Deer Fence Canal. Five parcels in between are still owned by McDaniel Ranch.

In government, public readings occur to allow all people a chance to hear proposals before elected officials take final action. The public is generally able then or before the reading to speak about the issue — regardless of whether they agree.

◆ NLC From page 3A

other personal and business tasks.

Smith called the renovation project a "birthing process" that began in 2010 with plans to create the first LEAD-certified Native Learning facility in the United States, but that did not happen due to exorbitant cost.

The center is "tribal centric," Bonville said.

Classrooms are tagged with clan names such as Panther and Big Town. The floors are covered in tribal graphic designs.

"The room names pay respect to the Tribe," Bonville said.

NLC staff stayed on schedule throughout the nearly two-month renovation.

For example, during the first week of December alone, the team, which through HUD holds dozens of trainings at home and throughout the nation annually, held Section 184 housing training in Portland, Oregon; a seminar on grant writing for the Seneca Nation in Buffalo, New York; and a policies and procedures technical assistance training for Mashpee Wampanoag in Mashpee, Massachusetts.

During the same week, the department

◆ SALLY TOMMIE From page 3A

innovation and literature. Community Inspiration Projects (CIP) grants, ranging from \$10,000 to \$40,000, are doled out to artists whose work will effect social change in communities.

Tommie said her mother often worked late into the night to make traditional arts

and crafts in their Fort Pierce camp. As an adult, Tommie understands the sacrifices her mother made to pay the bills.

"That art fed us many days and kept us warm many nights," she said. "I owe my life to the arts. That's why I'm so passionate about this organization. So many people depend on art; it's important that it survive."

Tommie was recommended to NACF by two board members. After a rigorous vetting process that included her explanation of why Native American art is important and her involvement with the genre, she was nominated, interviewed and recommended for approval.

"We were so impressed with her communication skills and spirit of positive can-do-ness," said NACF President and CEO T. Lulani Arquette, a Native Hawaiian. "She is an inspiring person."

Arquette appreciates Tommie's leadership abilities. Owner of Redline Media Group, Tommie is a successful entrepreneur with a background in communications. She also has a passion for art, which made her the perfect choice for the position, Arquette said.

Tommie said she has shared several marketing ideas since joining the board and hopes her contributions will make a difference in the organization. She would also like to host a fundraising gala for fellows at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood in the future to bring more attention to NACF.

"I'm an outside-of-the-box thinker," Tommie said. "I'm excited that I get to combine my worlds. I'm pleased to volunteer to make a difference in this way through art and culture."



Sally Tommie poses in her Chupco Indian Art Gallery in Hollywood.

The Native Arts and Cultures Foundation call for entries for the annual NACF National Artist Fellowship is open now through March 21. Eligibility to apply is for artists who are

enrolled as a Native citizen among any of the federally or state recognized Native Nations in the borders of the U.S. or Alaska Native Corporations or with documentation of Native Hawaiian ancestry. To apply or view any previous National Artist Fellowship profiles, visit the NACF website at <http://www.NativeArtsAndCultures.org/>.

"We were so impressed with her communication skills and spirit of positive can-do-ness. She is an inspiring person."

— T. Lulani Arquette, NACF President and CEO

Seminole Restaurant Review

Cuban Cafe of Jupiter: A recommendation made by Connie Gowen

BY GORDON WAREHAM
Contributing Writer

JUPITER — Since its soft opening at the end of 2015, Cuban Cafe of Jupiter has had a steady stream of loyal customers. Seminole Tribal citizen Melissa Pichardo opened the restaurant with her husband, Arnold Pichardo, to bring a little taste of Cuba to the Jupiter area.

For this review, I made two trips to the cafe to try different menu items and to compare the food quality and service.

My first visit was on their opening day. The cafe seemed tiny because of the rush of nonstop customers coming in to try the Cuban cuisine. A line of customers formed from the front counter to outside the door. When I reached the front counter, Melissa greeted me with a warm smile and whispered, "It's been like this since we've been opened at 6 a.m. We thought we might have two or three people waiting for us this morning to get some coffee but we had 15 people waiting."

I took a quick glance over the menu and selected the homemade chicken soup and everyday special, Cuban tamale with pulled

pork. The special came with black beans and white rice and plantains.

I first tried the homemade chicken soup with a slurp of the noodles and smile on my face. I quickly found myself looking at the bottom of an empty bowl. The chicken was plentiful and tender, the broth was well-seasoned, and the noodles and potatoes were fresh. I wanted another bowl but I had the everyday special to try. Wiping my lips with a napkin, I focused my attention to the Cuban tamale with pulled pork and the side of black beans over rice.

As I opened the container, the aroma of the tamale and pulled pork was intoxicating. The tamale had a good blend of spices and the texture was firm and moist. The black beans and rice were delicious and could be a meal by itself. But the best was the pulled pork. When I took a bite of the pulled pork my eyes closed with delight — the juicy pork was perfectly seasoned, not too salty and not overpowered by garlic. The only problem I found with this meal was that I finished it too quickly.

I asked Melissa and Arnold why they decided to open the cafe, and Melissa

responded, "We were only going to do Cuban pastries and coffee but people started to ask about Cuban sandwiches and other dishes, so we decided to expand our menu." Arnold said all food on the menu comes from his mother's recipes for an authentic Cuban taste.

On this visit the cafe closed at 6 p.m., so I ordered a Cuban sandwich to take home for dinner and a box of Cuban pastries for the dinner crew who were going to sample them for this review. I can honestly say that because I got stuck in rush-hour traffic and took two-and-a-half hours to drive back home, the Cuban sandwich never had a chance to make it home for dinner. The bread was toasted to a nice crispy crunch and ingredients of the sandwich blended perfectly. The dinner crew reported the Cuban pastries were delicious and asked for more when I returned for the second visit.

I returned to Cuban Cafe of Jupiter on Jan. 14 wanting to try other items on their menu and to see if the quality of their food matched my first visit. As I entered, I saw the cafe was busy with customers coming in for lunch, coffee and Cuban pastries. As I stepped up to the front counter Melissa welcomed me back and said, "We are open till 8 p.m. and serve dinner now. The requests from our customers for dinner has been overwhelming."

My order for lunch: chicken empanadas and a bowl of chicken noodle soup as appetizers and grilled chicken breast with black beans and rice and sweet plantains for my meal. The chicken empanadas' crust was crunchy and the chicken was tender. The big question I had was would the chicken noodle soup be as delicious as the first visit. With the first slurp of noodles and broth, I could taste it was better than before and found myself staring at another empty container wanting more.

The chicken breast was cooked by Melissa's sister, Seminole Tribal citizen Victoria Frank. The chicken breast was seasoned and cooked to a golden brown, plated with black beans over rice and served with sweet plantains; the meal was absolutely delicious and I was wondering if I had room in my belly for dinner.

I had an appointment at the Elliott Museum in Martin County and would return to the cafe later for dinner. On my way back to the cafe, I was informed that Victoria prepared a special dinner that she makes for only a few of their special customers.

As I entered the cafe, I could not wait for what was prepared for my dinner. I sat down at the table with excitement and my dinner was served. A plate of chicken and rice smothered in picadillo was placed before me and my mouth watered. A customer that was ordering looked to Melissa and pointed at my plated and asked, "Can I have that to go; that looks so delicious."

I sampled a small portion of the chicken and yellow rice and it had a very nice taste. The marvelous blend between picadillo and seasoning of the yellow rice made the dish incredible.

With a full belly and a box of Cuban guava and cheese pastries for the dinner crew I made my way back home.

Cuban Cafe of Jupiter is located at 9260 W. Indiantown Rd, unit B5, Jupiter, FL 33478, so if you're on your way to Brighton, Okeechobee or making your way up to Orlando, stop by and try some delicious Cuban cuisine. Their menu and prices can be found on their Facebook page or by calling 561-295-5332.

If a Tribal member has a restaurant recommendation, message Gordon Wareham through The Seminole Tribune. The Tribune does not pay for the meal.



Gordon Wareham

The everyday special: Cuban tamale with pulled pork, chicken noodle soup and black beans and rice.



Gordon Wareham

Grilled chicken breast with black beans and rice, sweet plantains, chicken empanadas, chicken noodle soup and cafe con leche.



Gordon Wareham

Melissa Pichardo, Connie Gowen and Victoria Frank pose for a photo at Cuban Cafe of Jupiter.

DEVIL'S GARDEN From page 1A

development of the land, Backhouse said. THPO has an educated idea of the site's exact location but keeps it hidden to prevent disruption of the site, he said.

A group of Loxahatchee Battlefield Preservationists toured the area Jan. 16 with Clewiston Museum Director Butch Wilson. Also in attendance was historian Patsy West, whose book about Jones will be published in April.

Jones, aka Abiaki, led the resistance against removal by the U.S. Army during the Second and Third Seminole Wars. He is

said to be the reason the Seminole Tribe of Florida is not part of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma.

"He protected his people, language and culture," West said. "His main objective was to keep his people in Florida and keep the tradition and culture going."

Jones' military strategy prevented the Tribe from being forced into Oklahoma, more so than any other Southeastern Tribe, according to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum website. U.S. troops called him "the devil" because he hid his people so well.

"Knowing all of the water roads across the Everglades gave Sam Jones a legendary and uncanny reputation, as he could surface quickly to be seen in many diverse locales,"

West said. "Fear then caused the enlisted men to refer to Jones as 'the devil' in poems and songs."

Jones took advantage of the time during peace negotiations to plant crops, trade goods and fortify his Tribe for future skirmishes, Wilson said. Soldiers destroyed the abundant crops whenever they found them and the land is still referred to as Devil's Garden.

"This was a place of refuge, but there was no secure place in South Florida for the Seminoles," Wilson said. "Jones was the core of the Seminole heart."

The land was purchased in 2010 and restoration of the first 2,800 acres is underway. Work on the remainder of the property, which is leased by U.S. Sugar's Southern Gardens Citrus for citrus production, will begin in 2018 when the lease ends. Completion of the project is slated for 2021.

To accomplish the project goals, the District will remove buildings, tanks, solid waste and abandoned wells, clear citrus trees, level planting beds, remove exotic and nuisance vegetation, backfill canals and degrade roads and levees to restore sheetflow. The land will be replanted with pines, cypress, sable palm and other native plants.

In a 2013 land assessment, the District stated the restored land will be heavily used by wildlife and will serve as an excellent habitat for Florida panthers, black bears, deer, cara caras, turkeys, raptors, wading birds, muskrats and other species.

Backhouse and his team will ensure restoration efforts remain respectful of culturally sensitive areas.

"We are monitoring the work to make sure the historic sites aren't impacted," Backhouse said. "We made sure their plans respected the sites and we want to make sure the sites aren't disturbed."



Beverly Bidney

A \$150 million restoration project on land just north of Big Cypress Reservation is helping return 14,437 acres to its original state as a wet prairie with scattered cypress domes, tree-island hammocks, depression marshes and slough-ways.



Beverly Bidney

Miss Florida Seminole Destiny Nunez speaks with pageant coach Jules Meyer after a mock interview to prepare her for the Miss Indian World competition in April at the Gathering of Nations Pow-Wow.

PAGEANT TRAINING From page 3A

rest of her life.

"I'm so proud of Destiny, she's been working hard," Meyer said. "Every day she is getting stronger and becoming the best version of herself, which is what this is all about."

During a Jan. 24 coaching session, Meyer's team worked with Nunez on her onstage walk, one-on-one interview and talent presentation. At the end of the day, a mock panel of judges asked Nunez questions under pressure.

Nunez is the first Miss Florida Seminole to receive coaching prior to Miss Indian World, a decision Council made to help prepare her for the competition.

"They wanted to build up her confidence and speaking abilities," said Wanda Bowers, Miss Florida Seminole Pageant Committee chairwoman. "Hopefully we will send her all polished, and she will be prepared. It's a big contest and is intimidating, so this year we are helping her."

By the time she joins other Miss Indian World hopefuls in New Mexico, Nunez will know exactly what to say and do so eloquently. Meyer has been working with her on storytelling skills, which will be her talent for the pageant.

"There is storytelling and there is a way you can impact people with your

words," Meyer said. "She will do that if she is passionate about it and can deliver it from her heart."

Nunez said her confidence has spilled over into other areas of her life, including at the University of Central Florida where she is a junior majoring in education. She said she would have dropped out of a speech class if not for the coaching.

"I would have taken something else, so I wouldn't have to speak to everyone," Nunez said. "Instead, I have the confidence to give it a shot. I realize I am able to stand up in front of people and talk to them, converse one on one and not shy away. This is helping me in my life every day."

Meyer felt confident she would see positive changes in Nunez. When she first met Nunez at the Princess Pageant in July, Meyer said she saw a young lady with incredible potential.

"She is taking so much initiative in the community," Meyer said. "The only way to get stronger is by doing these public events and telling people who you are and what you represent."

Meyer said she teaches personal growth; she shows her clients how to be their personal best.

"Winning is all about believing you can win," she said. "The more she embraces the journey, the more she loves it. I want her to know I'm on team Destiny."

"Every day she is getting stronger and becoming the best version of herself, which is what this is all about."

— Jules Meyer, pageant coach

PROFITS From page 1A

Services and products include Intermezzo Wines, Jani-King janitorial franchise, Seminole Pride fresh fruit, Noble Juice, Seminole Pride Beef, OWV natural spring water, the Brighton RV Resort, Seminole Board Construction, Hard Rock Energy Drink and Askar Energy fuel distributors.

Most successful were: Noble Juice, now with nine product choices available at Publix grocery stores; Hard Rock Energy drinks now selling at 600 7-Eleven stores in Texas; and the Tribe's cattle business, which has soared in recent years to become the second largest Brangus seed stock operation in the United States.

Ulizio credited the cattle business as a prime example for continued success in consumer product sales: the Tribe's legacy stock, born and raised on Florida land, and the Tribe's 4,500-acre Salacoa Valley Farms in Georgia boasts top Brangus stock.

"Long ago the Salacoa bulls were ones we looked at but could never buy. Now the Tribe owns the entire herd," Ulizio said.

In the boxed beef category statewide, Seminole Beef has sold a record 1.75 million pounds of beef and is currently the only among 15,000 beef producers in the state to be defined by Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as Fresh From Florida.

In 2015, ground beef was added to the list of prime cuts served up at about 200

restaurants nationwide.

Other businesses also showed positive results in 2015.

The B&I restaurant at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood was noted for earning \$3.5 million in revenue last year. Hollywood Board Rep. Steve Osceola said the Tribe will add another location later this year at Seminole Casino Coconut Creek.

The Brighton RV Resort has doubled in revenue since 2013. The campground boasts four new family-sized cabins; 56 renovated campsites with water, electric and sewer; a salon and day spa; swimming pool; recreation room; and wheelchair accessible bath house.

Sugarcane crops delivered more than \$1 million in sales for the third consecutive year; Seminole Construction is up more than 15 percent and Jani-King has "skyrocketed."

Though the annual shareholder recap was significantly positive, business leaders are not resting on achievement. Reviews of business strategies and results revealed needed improvements in marketing. Currently, websites and social media campaigns are in flux.

Alex Johns, natural resource director and head of the cattle business, said Tribal citizens and others with interest in the Tribe's success can help.

"Tweet, Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest ... some of the fastest ways to generate interest and business profit is to get word out. The more buzz, the more business, the higher premiums," Johns said.



Eileen Soter

Tribal citizens gather Jan. 9 at the Hard Rock Live concert arena turned conference hall for the Tribe's annual shareholders meeting.



Holiday joy delivered Tampa to Trail



Eileen Soler

Scarlett Billie, 7 months, gets one of her first glimpses of Santa Claus during the Dec. 12 Big Cypress holiday celebration dubbed Candyland Christmas.



Beverly Bidney

Feeling the joy, Pete Hahn is surrounded by his children Presleigh Osceola-Hahn, 8, Davny Osceola, 6, Skyla Doctor, 2, and Pagaache Osceola, 9, at the Hollywood Christmas party at Hard Rock Live Dec. 19.



Aaron Tommie

A gleeful grandmother smiles as her granddaughter looks at a present she received from Santa during the Trail Christmas party Dec. 11 at the Miccosukee Resort.



Peter B. Gallagher

With his balloon saber lying across his back, Colby DeMontmollin waits for emcee Paul Simmons to call his name for a gift during the Tampa Christmas party Dec. 16.



Beverly Bidney

Mother daughter duo Linda Beletso and Lorraine Posada enjoy the tribalwide senior's Christmas party Dec. 10 in Immokalee.



Rachel Buxton

Brighton kids enjoy a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus during the Brighton Christmas celebration Dec. 17 at Fred Smith Rodeo Arena.



Eileen Soler

Ali Anderson, 10, shows off her cheerful reindeer artwork made from a popsicle stick, pipe cleaners and googly eyes during the Dec. 12 Big Cypress holiday celebration at Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena.



Rachel Buxton

Charlie Micco enjoys snowboarding during the Brighton Christmas party at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena.



Aaron Tommie

Anani Griffin and Amir Johnson are all smiles as they pose with Santa Claus during the Fort Pierce Christmas party Dec. 16 at Chupco's Landing Community Center.



Beverly Bidney

Teens celebrate a good time during their own Christmas party Dec. 19 at Paradise Live, where the DJ and entertainers kept the fun going until the wee hours.



Rachel Buxton

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students sing and perform for the Brighton community Dec. 17 during the Elf on the Shelf Christmas party at Fred Smith Rodeo Arena.



Aaron Tommie

A baby is mesmerized by Santa Claus during the Trail Christmas party Dec. 11 at the Miccosukee Resort.



Aaron Tommie

Chupco's Landing's matriarch Bessie Tommie poses for a photo with her son Kevin Tommie Sr., as President Mitchell Cypress smiles in the background.



Aaron Tommie

Children at the Fort Pierce Christmas party construct candy-filled gingerbread houses Dec. 16 at Chupco's Landing Community Center.



Beverly Bidney

These youngsters dance the night away at the Hollywood Christmas party Dec. 19 at Hard Rock Live.



Peter B. Gallagher

Andrew Henry, Kelsey Lunch and baby Jordyn enjoy a photo with Santa and his Chief Elf at the Tampa Christmas party Dec. 16.



Beverly Bidney

Sandy Billie shows off his University of Miami pendant, while Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr. flaunts his University of Florida Santa hat in a good-natured rivalry among friends Dec. 10 at the tribalwide senior's Christmas party in Immokalee.



Aaron Tommie

Jeanie Osceola bursts with happiness with her family during the Trail Christmas party at the Miccosukee Resort.



Beverly Bidney

Immokalee preschoolers don reindeer antlers while serenading seniors with a selection of Christmas carols at the tribalwide senior Christmas celebration in Immokalee.



Eileen Soler

A little girl skips along a colorful, cheerful path Dec. 12 that led in and out of the Big Cypress joy-filled holiday party dubbed Candyland Christmas.



A journey through Seminole history through memorabilia

SUBMITTED BY NATASHA CUERVO
 Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Ever since arriving at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum three months ago I've been delighted with the broad range of objects we collect in our efforts to preserve and promote Seminole culture. We have a fantastic collection of patchwork textiles, photographs and oral histories, to name a few, but we also collect tribal memorabilia documenting events regularly organized by the Tribe. With the 45th annual Seminole Tribal Fair approaching, I couldn't help but think about the different Tribal Fair booklets I've seen and how their covers reflect the different stages of this growing community.

The first Tribal Fair, actually called the Seminole Indian Fair and Rodeo, took place in February 1972 at the Seminole Okalee Indian Village in Hollywood. Despite his alligator wrangling skill and power displayed on the cover, the young man, George Storm, humbly welcomes the viewer to the gathering.

Two years later the fair's title had changed to the Annual Seminole Tribal Fair and a more formal picture of two men and a boy in traditional dress were featured on the cover, standing tall and looking off into the distance. As was the case with the cover featuring George Storm, we rely on assistance from the community to identify the people in the images. We may not know who these three figures are yet, but their gaze ushers us forward while keeping us grounded in tradition.

By 1976 the fair went with a full-color cover, this time featuring a painting titled "Looking Towards the Future," by Fred Beaver, a nationally acclaimed Oklahoma Seminole artist. In the painting a Seminole family is looking from the camp toward the growing city, bridging tradition with a time where the Tribe had started to see their first contemporary business enterprises boom by way of tax-free cigarette sales and bingo.

Fast forward 25 years and the Seminole Tribal Fair had become a full-fledged tradition open even to visitors to the community. The cover, designed by Guy LaBree, another renowned artist who immersed himself in Seminole culture, encompasses the evolution of the Tribe up until that point. Couples appear as if walking through time, donning the dress of the era and showing the many versions of the Seminole warrior from hunter and fighter to cattle rancher and businessman. Patchwork style designs decorate the borders and the composition is brought together by a ring bearing the names of all the tribal reservations established by that time.

Here again progress and growth walk hand in hand with tradition.

Today we know the fair as the Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow and are familiar

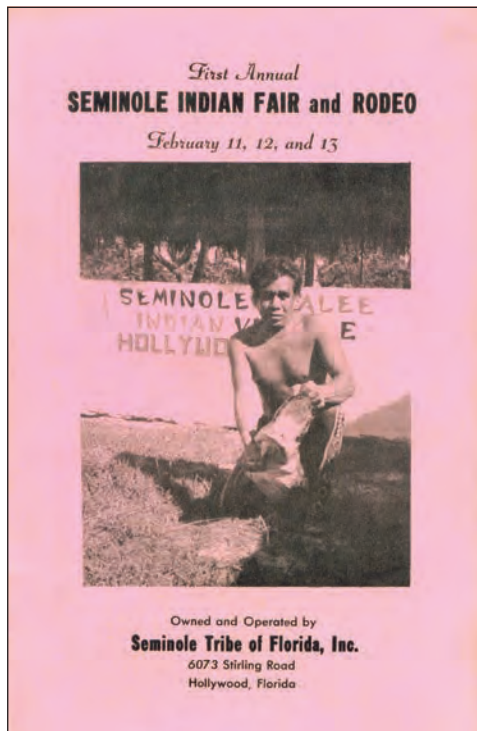


Photo courtesy of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum
 First Seminole Indian Fair and Rodeo booklet cover from February 1972.

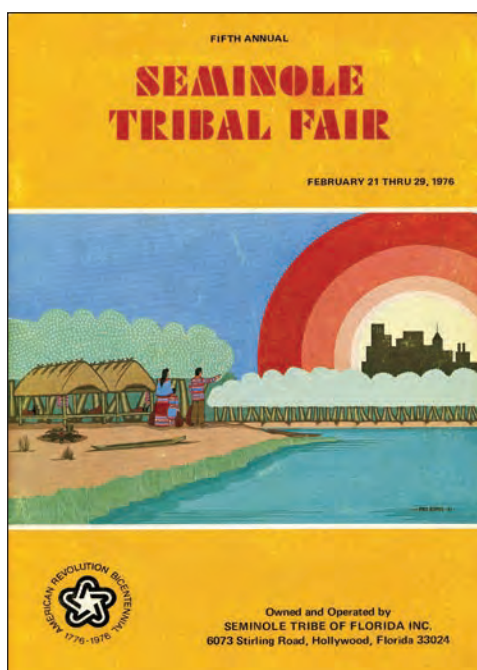


Photo courtesy of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum
 Fifth annual Seminole Tribal Fair cover from February 1976.

with a wide range of its advertisements, but it's the diligent collecting or donation of objects like these booklets that allows us to illustrate how the Tribal Fair, and by extension the Seminole Tribe, has grown



Photo courtesy of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum
 Third annual Seminole Tribal Fair cover from February 1974.

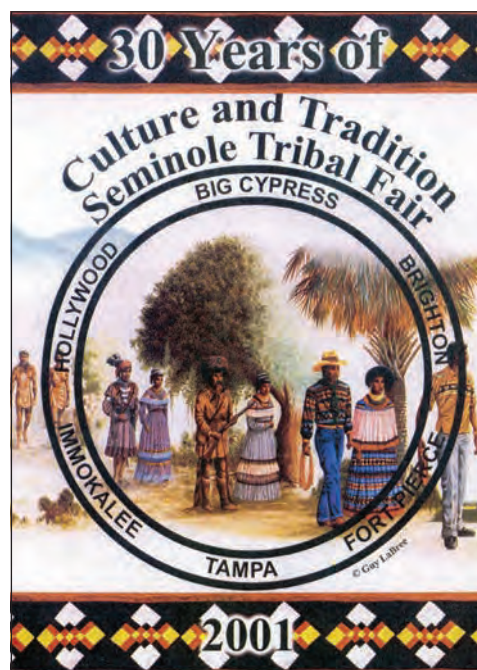


Photo courtesy of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum
 Thirtieth annual Seminole Tribal Fair cover from February 2001.

and evolved. As always, we invite you to explore our vast collection and welcome any assistance in identifying the objects and photos that are waiting to tell us so much about Seminole culture and history.

Betty Mae Jumper

Wisdom from the past

Lak Ka Che Hoo Mashe Ahfachkee

The following column was written by Betty Mae Jumper and printed in the January 23, 1998 issue of The Seminole Tribune.

The New Year is on its way and it is already Jan. 8, 1998. Hope all of you had enjoyable holidays and visited all your families and friends. There is hope that this New Year will bring you better things than last year. That is why we make resolutions.

Today, if you are a drinker or use drugs, see that your children are in a safe place before you go out. In the past it would be reported that young children were on the streets past midnight. There is nothing worse than to hear a child got hurt or is lost.

You don't want to have the regret of being that parent if something does happen to your child. Instead of ignoring your children, take them fishing or on some other outing.

I've seen one family caught in a life of alcohol abuse and saw how it destroyed

the family. I would see them out on the streets stealing to get money in any way to support their habits. It's sad, as they are good looking kids.

I told their father once, "Don't lose your children out in that world." He told me he wasn't going to change. He is no different and his children are following in his footsteps. Sadly, they're all still drinking.

If you don't have God in your life you can't lead your life or your family. You can enjoy it without everything being messed up. I know a lot of you have seen many of our people lose their lives this year. Think before it's too late. You are all smart. This is what I pray for you all.

If you need help with a problem, go to the Christian people. In Hollywood, at the Chickee Church, we have lots of Christians who are willing to come to you if you call.

This is the time to make a resolution. Don't let Satan control your life or the lives of your children.

You can turn your life around this year before it's too late!



◆ FIELD DAY From page 3A

will close out Saturday's events at 6 p.m. Christian country artist Susie McEntire, sister of Reba McEntire, will be a special guest during the festival's Sunday morning service.

Tickets for each of the first two days are \$10 in advance and \$15 at the gate. Tickets for Feb. 14 are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the gate. Admission is free all weekend for

children 10 and younger.

"There is a lot that goes on all day, every day throughout the weekend, which is our goal each year, to keep you busy during your stay," Bowers said. "When you walk out of the gates at the close of each day we hope that you can say that you've had the ultimate entertainment experience for just \$15 or \$25 and you will want to come back for more."

Gates open at 8 a.m. each day; events start at 10 a.m.

Visit www.RezRodeo.com for more information.

◆ RECEPTION From page 3A

"Our grandfather, our fathers and grandparents were laying the groundwork for what we are today," Chairman Billie said.

Charlie Osceola and his team of trained mixed martial arts fighters reenacted tactics Seminoles used in battle. Armed with mock weapons and dressed in battle attire similar to that used during the Seminole Wars, Seminole reenactors demonstrated how Natives used tomahawks, knives and their clothing to take down U.S. troops.

Attendees included Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr.; author and historian Patsy West; John and Mary Lou Missall, of the Seminole Wars Foundation; Florida International University associate professor of anthropology Dr. Dennis Wiedman; and former Hollywood Councilman Max Osceola Jr.

"I thought the reception was very nice. I've been to a good number of receptions, and this one was extraordinary because it dealt with the Seminole's values," Wiedman said. "The Buckskin Declaration was a highlight. The Seminoles honor their elders, their past and their heritage."

Mother and daughter Michelle Sujai and Michelle Lynn attended the receptions because of Lee Tiger. Having bloodlines with the Powhatan and Cherokee, the

Buckskin Declaration resonated strongly with them.

"It was very good. The Buckskin Declaration was important and really poignant because when it was read aloud, we can see how much now rings so true," Lynn said.



Aaron Tommie

Men reenact fighting tactics and strategies used during the Seminole Wars as part of the Jan. 16 Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum reception.

Hah-pong-ke: Black Lips

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
 Special Projects Reporter

The Black Lips alternative punk music band formed in 1999 in the Atlanta suburb of Dunwoody when guitarist Cole Alexander and bassist Jared Swilley needed something to do after being expelled from high school; it was two weeks after the Columbine massacre and the two pranksters were regarded as a "subculture danger," according to OC Weekly. Drummer Joe Bradley and guitarist Ben Eberbaugh joined later. They released a seven-song album in 2002 on their own record label, Die Slaughterhaus.

Days before their first tour was to begin, however, Eberbaugh was driving a car when he was struck by a drunk driver and killed. The band soldiered on, slowly building a fan base with their pastiche of blues, rock, doo-wop, country and punk. They gained national attention in 2006 with features in Spin and Rolling Stone. The band got exposure in The New York Times during the 2007 South by Southwest music festival in Austin, Texas, and eventually embarked on a world tour in 2009.

The Black Lips are famous for "provocative theatrics" — including vomiting, fireworks, live chickens, guitars on fire and other unpredictable, often profane antics. According to guitarist Alexander, most of these antics, which are center point in media coverage of the band, occurred in the band's early days, a time when the band had not yet learned how to play their instruments. Despite constant media attention surrounding their antics, bassist Swilley said "it doesn't seem all that crazy to me. It's not like we have ever done a human sacrifice on stage or anything like that."

Bizarre behavior during a musical sojourn through India in 2009 caused the band to flee the country in mid-tour, when they felt threatened by law enforcement. iTunes web editor's notes read: "Despite their reputation as venue-trashing avatars of sweaty debauchery and roaring garage rock chaos, the Black Lips possess a strikingly appealing pop sensibility and a

knowing sense of humor that charmingly offsets their hedonistic poses. This is a band whose freewheeling carelessness reminds the listener that rock and roll is first and foremost about unbridled fun and youthful exhilaration."

In the song "Navajo," described as a "trippy Native American jingle," by reviewer Jeffrey Canino, the word Seminole is used as part of a string of Native tribal names in the chorus, which repeats itself at the end of the song, following a lengthy trilling of war whoops and other stereotypical American Indian "sounds." Written in the dramatic Am key, the song is a stream of consciousness ride through a dream world of Native American symbols. The word "tipi" is misspelled, but the offensive word "squaw" is misspelled as "squall."

Reviewer Canino writes, however, that "'Navajo' avoids being completely racist and winds up as a playful and spirited jaunt through a tee-pee (sic) romance."

In truth, one of the tribal names is not a Tribe. Etowah is a Muskogean word derived from *italwa* meaning "town." According to Dean Snow, author of "Archaeology of Native North America," the federally recognized Muscogee (Creek) Nation and Poarch Band of Creek Indians consider Etowah "to be their most important ancestral town. From 1000-1550 C.E., Etowah was occupied by a series of cycling chiefdoms over the course of five and a half centuries."

Etowah Indian Mounds comprise a 54-acre archaeological site near Cartersville, Georgia about an hour by car from the Black Lips' Dunwoody hometown. According to authors Theodore Isham and Blue Clark, "Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History & Culture," the mounds were built and occupied by prehistoric indigenous peoples of the South Appalachian Mississippian culture (a regional variation of the Mississippian culture) of eastern North America, ancestors of the historic Muskogean language-speaking Muskogee (Creek) people. Etowah Indian Mounds Historic Site is a designated National Historic Landmark and the most intact Mississippian culture site in the Southeast.



Photo courtesy of Black Lips publicity
 The Black Lips alternative punk music band.

'Navajo' lyrics

I fell in love with a little Indian girl
 And she stole my heart away
 She took me to a pow-wow way out on the plains
 And runs with bears, danced and brought the rains
 I listened to the stories all through the night
 Through the haze of that peace pipe
 The night grew long so I found a tee pee
 And you can bet I brought that squall girl with me

Could be Cherokee, Inuit, Etowah, Navajo, Sioux, Creek, Apache, Seminole bravo Tomahawk, arrow, anyway the wind blow
 It's just fine with me
 Buffalo, wolfpack, rawhide knapsack Arrowhead, Mohawk, other Tribe to attack

Take my wife back to that land with me
 All I gotta do is take that love to the floor
 After all, I liked the way you were before



Aaron Tommie

Tribal citizen Moses Jumper Jr. speaks to mixed martial arts fighters before their reenactments of Seminole tactics used during the Seminole Wars.

Health



Rez Rally tackles diabetes, everybody wins

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Good-hearted competition set the stage for the Tribe's 16th annual diabetes awareness Rez Rally hosted at Big Cypress Reservation.

"I'm going to win," said Dantae Russel, 12, of Immokalee, just before the start of the reservation vs. reservation Jan. 16 contest.

"No, me," laughed Caleb Billie, 12, of Big Cypress.

"It's me, me, me," said Takoda Howard, 9, of Brighton, predicting that he would be first among his cousins and friends to pass the finish line.

Though nearly 400 Tribal citizens and employees turned out to compete and represent their communities, the fix was in years ago with the first "on your mark, get set, go."

All Seminole citizens win in the long run, said Brighton Board Rep. Larry Howard as hundreds gathered at the Big Cypress airport hangar.

"We're here today to support keeping everyone in shape so we all can live longer. It's a win-win all around. We are the Unconquered and we aim to conquer diabetes," Rep. Howard said.

Health Department Director Connie Whidden, who created Rez Rally in 2001, said diabetes is one of the Tribe's main adversaries. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, Native Americans throughout Indian Country get diabetes 2.7 times more than any other ethnic group.

A count of how many Seminole Tribe citizens currently battle the disease is not available, Whidden said, but she is certain that diabetes affects nearly every Seminole family. Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of the disease. People are not born with it; Type 2 is often the result of familial predisposition or obesity, unhealthy eating

and not enough exercise.

"I always say that if you are Indian, you will probably get diabetes," Whidden said. "All of us know someone who has died of it. My brother has it and most of my aunts died of diabetes complications. I think it's safe to say that every Seminole family has at least one diabetic."

Immokalee resident Edward Aguilar, who walked the Rez Rally route while pushing his mother, Elaine Aguilar, in a wheelchair, said he is battling Type 2 diabetes and winning the fight through diet control and regular workouts.

Having lost 60 pounds in one year, Aguilar said he was close to death and insulin dependent when he took control of the disease and began to truly live. He now holds two college degrees, works as a director at Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee, takes no medication and boasts his best physical condition.

Whidden said everyone in the Tribe should be in front of diabetes by receiving annual physicals that include vision and dental checkups.

"There are many early signs to diabetes that if we get on the right path, live carefully and eat right, we can control it," Whidden said. Increased thirst, blurred vision, loss of feeling in feet and frequent urination are common early warning signs.

All along the event routes, which varied for walkers, seniors, strollers and runners, placards promoted healthy eating, proper exercise and regular physical checkups. Signs that decorated the airport hangar read: Pedal a bike; drink lots of water; don't be a couch potato.

Rez Rally 2016 followed the traditional schedule. Council and Board representatives rallied participants with pep talks and a little trash talk about whose constituents would bring home the coveted awards: a basket for the most tribal team representation or a large gold cup for overall reservation participation.



Eileen Soler

Competitors take off running at the start line Jan. 16 during Rez Rally at Big Cypress Reservation. Nearly 400 Tribal citizens and employees turned out to compete and represent their communities.

This year, Brighton won for most tribal participants (by resident percentage) and Big Cypress won for overall team participation.

Before heading to the start line, Chairman James E. Billie made his "clan call." Big Town Clan was the only clan that did not respond with hands held high, cheers or hoots, which led Chairman Billie to believe none were present. He issued a public

scolding half in jest.

"Big Town, you are the only clan missing which makes this the first Rez Rally without all clans represented. I wonder where you are. Let's see if you get your next dividend," Chairman Billie teased.

Whidden said about 250 competitors turned out for the first Rez Rally, which was held at Big Cypress. Typically the

event brings out up to 700 participants, she said, but this year the annual Native American Sports Association basketball tournament, hosted by the Tribe in Hollywood, was held on the same day as Rez Rally and attracted 30 registered teams, 10 from the Seminole Tribe alone.



Eileen Soler

Immokalee Reservation's Rez Rally team organizers share a goofy, cheerful moment at the registration booth before the start of the day's race.



Eileen Soler

Team Big Cypress basks in the glory Jan. 16 after winning the coveted Rez Rally prize cup for overall reservation participation.



Eileen Soler

Chairman James E. Billie does his 'clan call' during Rez Rally kickoff remarks.



Eileen Soler

Rez Rally participants warm up by jogging in place before heading to the start line.



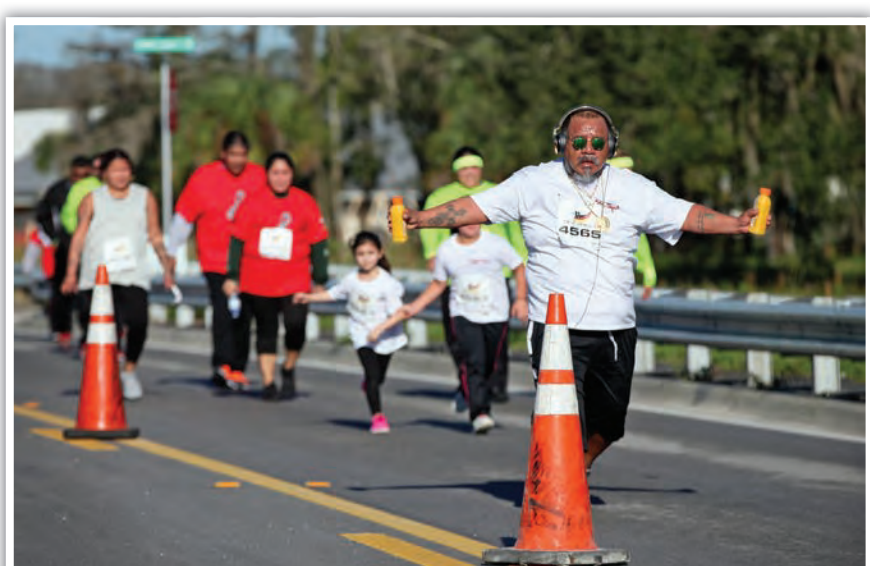
Eileen Soler

Ronnie Billie Sr. lifts his hands in victory at the start line even before the Rez Rally race gets underway at the Big Cypress Reservation.



Eileen Soler

Curtis Motlow, 6, of Big Cypress, dashes toward the finish line at Rez Rally. He was the youngest participant in the race and came in first in the tribal 6-11 age category.



Eileen Soler

Sandy Billie, of Brighton, jogs along the Rez Rally course while carrying Noble juices, the Seminole fruit juice brand.

SEMINOLE SCENES



Photo courtesy of Councilman Chris Osceola

JOHN HANCOCK: Chairman James E. Billie signs a gaming compact Dec. 7 that will give the Tribe the exclusive right to operate blackjack and add craps and roulette at its seven Florida casinos if passed by the Florida Legislature. The legislative session runs through March 11.



Beverly Bidney

PROTECTED PLAY: Workers team up to place a canopy over the newly constructed playground Dec. 29 on the Hollywood Reservation. The 40-by-60-foot nylon canvas will provide shade and protection from the rain.



Beverly Bidney

BETTER THAN COCOA: The warmth of hot sofkee takes the chill out of a cold winter morning in Hollywood.



Kevin Johnson

DANCE OFF: Pemayetv Emahav Charter School students follow the lead of P.E. teacher Kim Jackson during a massive dance performance Jan. 19 at halftime of the girls basketball game in Brighton. About 80 students from pre-kindergarten through grade five entertained spectators. Jackson said it was the first time all the students danced together.



Eileen Soler

SUPER SQUASH: Big Cypress Councilman Cicero Osceola carries a massive squash grown by Agnes Cypress in her home garden near Big Cypress Reservation. Osceola maintains that 'everything grows bigger and better in Big Cypress.'



Beverly Bidney

ROARING GOOD TIME: These young bears enjoy an afternoon playful joust at Billie Swamp Safari Dec. 29. Noogie, the grizzly, and Little Girl, the black bear, were both orphaned as infants and share a habitat.



Eileen Soler

RX FIRE: Wildland firefighters from the Seminole Tribe of Florida Fire Rescue Department administer a prescribed fire on cattle land at Big Cypress Reservation. Prescribed fires are purposely set to help control potential for fire outbreaks that could be caused by lightning strikes. They also manage land and ecosystem resources.



Photo courtesy of Stephen Bowers

MOBILE VET: Veteran Billy Micco poses on the motorized scooter he received from another local veteran just in time for Christmas.



Beverly Bidney

NEW YEAR, OLD TRADITIONS: Madeline Benard and Myra Frank make breakfast for the Hollywood community in the cooking chickee Jan. 4 during a New Year's breakfast courtesy of the Community Culture Department.



Beverly Bidney

HORSE WHISPERER: Leanna Billie leads horses out of the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena Jan. 9 during the EIRA rough stock clinic in Big Cypress.



Eileen Soler

DUCK, DUCK, TORNADO WARNING: Pemayetv Emahav Charter School teachers and students make the best of a tornado warning Jan. 15 in the safety of the school's gymnasium with a game of Duck, Duck, Goose.



Kevin Johnson

BRONZE WELCOME: Bradley Owen Cooley's 'Signing of the Treaty' sculpture greets visitors in the lobby of the Howard Tiger Recreation Center in December.



Beverly Bidney

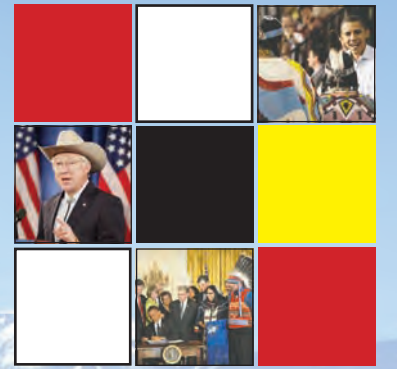
GIRL TALK: Agnes Motlow and Diane Buster enjoy breakfast together with other members of the community Jan. 4 during a New Year's breakfast in Hollywood.



Photo courtesy of Kimberly Clement

4-H SERVICE: Brighton Seminole Indian Sukkv Life 4-H Club hosted a Christmas breakfast for elders Dec. 21 as part of a community service project. Here, Jr. Club President Jarrett Beachum and Int./Sr. President Lainey Baker pose with Beulah Gopher and Alice Sweat. The annual 4-H Show and Sale will be held at the Brighton 4-H barn March 10-11.

NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS



Feds open door for Wampanoags to build first Mass. casino

MASHPEE, Mass. — Mashpee Wampanoag tribal lands have been placed in reservation trust by the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), paving the path for the Cape Cod Tribe to start construction of a Taunton casino.

The DOI's designation was published in the federal register less than two months after the Wampanoags transferred formal ownership of 321 acres of lands in Mashpee and Taunton to the federal government to be held in trust.

Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Council Chairman Cedric Cromwell released a statement affirming that the designation "cements our right to self-determination now and for future generations."

The Mashpee Tribe gained federal recognition in 2007. Their casino, referred to as Project First Light, would be located in what is currently an industrial park, which they have applied to the federal government to take into trust, making it sovereign tribal land.

In addition to reaffirming the Tribe's intent to build a resort casino, Cromwell said the move also allows the Wampanoags to establish public safety services on tribal lands.

Both the state's federally recognized Tribes have worked for years to open gaming facilities on tribal lands, under the federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

The Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) announced plans for a Class II gaming facility on Martha's Vineyard in 2013, but the state quickly sued to block the project, arguing that the Tribe gave up gambling rights in a 1983 land settlement, in which the Tribe agreed its lands would be subject to state law. The Tribe argues that this agreement was superseded by the 1988 Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

— Boston.com

Tribe is 'offended' by militants occupying ancestral land

BURNS, Ore. — When self-described militiamen took over the Malheur Wildlife Refuge in Burns, Oregon, recently, the insurgents demanded the federal government give up that land for people to use for ranching, mining and logging. A nation watched the drama play on national TV.

Forgotten in the hysteria of a modern-day vigilante armed occupation is the Burns Paiute Tribe. The Malheur Wildlife Refuge is part of the Tribe's ancestral lands.

"The Tribe is very offended," said Charlotte Rodrigue, Chairperson of the Burns Paiute Tribal Council, in an interview with NPR's Michel Martin. "[The militants'] theme, of course, was that we're going to give it back to the original owners, which were the ranchers. Of course, that rubbed me the wrong way because that's our aboriginal territory."

It's not simply the Tribe's land, she pointed out; the Indians have maintained a long history there, too.

"We do have burial sites, we have artifacts, we have petroglyphs, we have resources there that we utilize as a Tribe," she said. "We take our children out to teach them traditional lifestyle. Identifying plants and medicines that are traditional to our people. In fact, our band of Paiute people is named after that seed that grows on the shores there at the marsh."

By all accounts, the Tribe has had a good working relationship with employees of the wildlife refuge over the past 25 years. Rodrigue expressed frustration that the federal government hasn't forced the occupiers out, comparing how law enforcement treats the anti-federalists with how the U.S. historically treated Native Tribes. She said the occupiers are allowed to go into town to buy groceries and gas, then return to their armed occupation. Rodrigue would like the FBI to remove the armed men, and she thinks the FBI's inaction is a double standard.

"They did disconnect their utilities and things like that, but it's not really forcing them out. You know, in our history, that was how the military got us. They basically starved us into submission. And you could do the same thing with these occupiers. If I, as a Native person, a person of color, were to go down there and do the same thing, they would have hit me on the forehead with a baton" and dragged her out, she said. But "because they're white people, I feel that they're being treated differently."

— NPR.org

Oneida County town votes to keep racist logo

WHITESBORO, N.Y. — A village whose logo has been called racist, offensive and politically incorrect because it appears to show a white man choking a Native American voted overwhelmingly, recently, to keep using the emblem on the town's trucks, police cars, signs and documents.

The emblem dates to the early 1900s and depicts a fight between village founder Hugh White and an Oneida Indian with White overpowering the Native. The

Whitesboro website says White, who had originally been adopted into the Oneida Tribe and built the first permanent settlement there in 1784-85, won the match and the lasting respect and goodwill of the Oneidas.

Years of controversy over the logo came to a head last summer when someone from out of town saw the logo, took offense and posted an online petition. It led the Village Board to call for a straw vote; the Board must officially decide the issue in an upcoming meeting.

Of 212 votes cast, 157 were in favor of retaining the current seal. Whitesboro's population was 3,772 at the 2010 census, of which 2,829 are adults. The racial makeup of the village was 97.69 percent white and only 0.03 percent Native American.

Village clerk and historian Dana Nimey-Olney told CBS News that residents were presented several drawings to choose from, including settlers and Indians standing together and the old Erie Canal. "Whitesboro views this seal as a moment in time when good relations were fostered," said Nimey-Olney, who pointed out that the seal had been modified slightly in the 1970s and redrawn with White's hands on the Indian's shoulders instead of on his neck. "It is a wrestling match, part of the history, and nothing more."

Joel Barkin, a spokesman for the Oneida Indian Nation of central New York, said in July, that regardless of the backstory, people tend to see the seal as depicting violence against Native Americans.

— CBSNews.com

Tribes unite against desecration of burial mounds legislation

LAC DU FLAMBEAU, Wis. — The Wisconsin Legislature is currently considering the legal excavation of prehistoric burial mounds for exploration, mining and other commercial purposes.

While burial and effigy mounds in Wisconsin have long been afforded protection from exploration and exploitation, the proposed legislation — designated AB 620 — directly opposes the policy and practice of the 1990 federal Native American Graves and Repatriation Act.

The Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council Inc. (GLITC), a consortium of federally recognized Native American Tribes located in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan and administered by a board of directors consisting of the highest elected officials of member Tribes, condemns the proposed legislation as shameful ignorance and abuse of Native history, culture and religious practice.

The proposed legislation would permit any landowner throughout the state to dispute the significance of mounds or other works, and to excavate, explore, exploit and privately and covertly remove or destroy artifacts or human remains without oversight by independent archaeological experts. Directly in the proposed bills' sights are specific mounds within territory historically occupied by the Ho-Chunk Nation and its Native ancestors.

In the event of passage into law, the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council Inc. has served notices upon the Department of the Interior that it expects the federal trustee "to assert federal and tribal interests in protected sites and to intervene in any attempt to violate the protection extended to Native burial and religious sites."

— NativeNewsOnline.net

Peltier's illness sparks renewed effort for clemency

COLEMAN, Fla. — News out of the U.S. penitentiary in Coleman, Florida that convicted murderer Leonard Peltier (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians) is in need of surgery for a serious medical condition — abdominal aortic aneurism — has renewed the call for presidential clemency by President Barack Obama.

Peltier has been in prison for 40 years, incarcerated for the killing of two FBI agents at Oglala on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in 1975, following a much-disputed trial that some legal experts maintain that parts of the United States' case was false, leading to an unfair trial.

The International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee (ILPDC) feels Peltier, who turned 70 on Sept. 12, deserves to spend the remainder of his life as a free man.

In a recent statement to Native News Online, the ILPDC wrote: "The ILPDC requests that all individuals, groups and organizations dedicate themselves to working in support of clemency for Leonard Peltier by continuing to call, write and email the White House to voice support for his immediate release. Many feel that should Leonard die in prison he will become a martyr and this will have significant negative impacts on the gains made in improving the relationship between President Obama's administration and tribal Nations."

Lenny Foster (Diné), who has served as Peltier's spiritual adviser for decades, told NativeNewsOnline.com, "(Peltier) is eligible for release on executive clemency. He has spent the last 40 years in federal prisons and too many questions remain.

He was not the shooter. Many witnesses were threatened, some were coerced into providing false testimony, evidence was fabricated and he did not receive a fair trial. We need to support the executive clemency for Leonard Peltier. He is not in the best of health and he needs to be released by President Obama so he can go home and spend his remaining days with his family, friends and grandchildren and great-grandchildren."

"Measures of reconciliation should include efforts to identify and heal particular sources of open wounds... new or renewed consideration should be given to clemency for Leonard Peltier," stated then UN Special Rapporteur James Anaya in a 2012 report.

Interested parties can make phone calls to the White House and write letters of support for executive clemency.

— NativeNewsOnline.net

Las Vegas Paiute Tribe awarded \$559K diabetes grant

WASHINGTON — A \$558,575 grant has been provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to help the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe fight diabetes.

"Native American communities see higher rates of diabetes than many others across the country," Rep. Dina Titus, D-Nev., told the Las Vegas Review-Journal. "This grant will help address this epidemic by providing vital services to the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe."

Titus is a member of the Congressional Diabetes Caucus and co-sponsor of legislation to bolster public awareness about the disease.

— Las Vegas Review-Journal

Cigar store Indian started as sign for illiterate

NORWICH, Conn. — The beginnings of woodcarving dates to the mid-1500s when Europeans discovered the use of tobacco from Native Americans and developed the plant into a valuable commodity in global trade. At about the same time, professional woodcarving evolved.

The raw material (the tree) was readily available and carvers quickly began showcasing their skills: One outlet was the creation of ships' figureheads. Originally, those figureheads were placed at the prow of a sailing ship in order to please the gods and also to terrify an enemy. But the figurehead business sank after 1827 with the first transatlantic passage of a steam powered ship.

Woodcarvers then turned their skills in other directions: ornamental garden figures, shop signs, portrait busts and cigar store wooden Indians.

These Native American likenesses first appeared in the 1800s, an advertising sign for a tobacconist's store. They were used for the illiterate as well as those non-English speaking immigrants who could then easily determine the contents in the store by the Indian, who stood outside the door of a tobacco store, colorful and with detailed expressions. The image might be of a male chief, a warrior, a mother and child, often tobacco leaves in their hands.

Most carvers worked on the Eastern seaboard or in mid-Western cities and some historians believe many of the carvers never saw an American Indian in person. Experts estimate there were 100,000 wooden Indians carved by 1900. In addition to their place on sidewalks outside stores, they also could be found in high-class smoking rooms and in hotel lobbies.

The figures were also constructed by companies who employed carvers and painters and even produced catalogs.

The wooden statues can be compared with another "non-written" sign: the barbershop pole, used today, mostly, to trigger a sense of nostalgia.

Two factors spelled the decline of the cigar store Indian: After World War I, production of the statues halted and many were brought inside the shops because of 1910 urban sidewalk obstruction laws, and electrified signs. Cigar store Indians became known as "silent hawkers."

Later developed "silent hawkers" were Chinese figures for a tea shop, a jockey for a leather or saddle shop, and a Santa Claus for a department store.

— Norwich Bulletin

DiCaprio dedicates Golden Globe to indigenous peoples

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — Leonardo DiCaprio, one of Hollywood's biggest stars, dedicated his Golden Globe Best Actor award to indigenous peoples, finishing his acceptance speech Jan. 10 by recognizing the indigenous actors in the already successful film, "The Revenant."

"I want to share this award with all the First Nations people represented in this film and all the indigenous communities around the world," DiCaprio said to an international television audience.

In "The Revenant," DiCaprio plays Hugh Glass, a hunter-trapper of American folklore who lived in the early 1800s. After being attacked by a bear, witnessing his son

killed and left for dead, Glass crawls his way through the frigid wilderness to seek revenge. The movie was shot in Alberta, British Columbia and Montana and features indigenous actors from Canada.

DiCaprio said recognition of indigenous history is overdue and spoke against the profiteering off indigenous lands: "It is time that we recognize your history and that we protect your indigenous lands from corporate interests and people that are out there to exploit them," he said.

In August 2014 the actor visited Fort Chipewyan in northern Alberta along with director Darren Aronofsky to learn about the plight of the community, which sits downstream from oil sands. There the actor/environmentalist struck a friendship with Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Chief Allan Adam and later joined Adam at the Peoples Climate March in New York City in September 2014. The event drew hundreds of thousands of people to raise awareness about climate change.

DiCaprio, a United Nations delegated Messenger of Peace, also acknowledged indigenous knowledge in protecting the Earth: "It's time that we heard your voice and protected this planet for future generations."

— APTN National News

Study: Climate change could devastate First Nations fisheries

BRITISH COLUMBIA — The effects of climate change will have a devastating effect on coastal British Columbia First Nations within the next few decades, according to a new scientific report.

"First Nations fisheries could decline by nearly 50 percent by 2050, and coastal First Nations communities could suffer economic losses between \$6.7 and \$12 million," lead researcher Laura Weatherdon told Indian Country Today Media Network.

The study was conducted by an international research team led by University of British Columbia scientists at the Institute for Oceans and Fisheries. The researchers modeled how climate change is likely to affect 98 fish and shellfish species up to year 2050. Forecasted changes in ocean temperature upward of 1 degree Celsius were examined, along with salinity and oxygen levels.

As the North Pacific warms, Weatherdon said, fish stocks will begin moving north at a rate of 6 to 11 miles per decade. First Nations on the west coast of Vancouver Island say they're already seeing the effects of climate change on the herring and salmon stocks they depend upon. A drought this past summer caused river levels to drop and water temperatures to reach lethal levels for the 1 million sockeye salmon trying to swim up the Somass River near Port Alberni.

"We were really worried about the sockeye this year," said Andy Olson, Fisheries Manager for the Tseshaht First Nation to Indian Country Today Media Network.

Olson said warming trends will hit them first because they are at the southernmost range for sockeye. When it happens it will mean the loss of millions of dollars to the local economy, said Olson, as well as the untold effect on the diets and cultures of First Nations people.

"Climate change is likely to lead to a decline in herring in salmon, which are among the most important species commercially, culturally and nutritionally for First Nations," said Weatherdon, who is now a researcher at the United Nations Environment Programme's World Conservation Monitoring Centre.

Weatherdon and her colleagues predict that salmon stocks could decline by more than 30 percent and that already-depleted herring stocks could dwindle by almost half, causing a 90 percent reduction in coast-wide revenue from the fisheries.

First Nations leaders are actively discussing the issue and are adjusting fishing plans to reduce impacts on fish and shellfish species in a changing climate, Olson said.

— Indian Country Today

New Lumbee chairman promises new vision for the people

LUMBERTON, N.C. — Harvey Godwin Jr., who won the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina tribal election in November, was sworn in recently for a three-year term as the chairman of the Lumbee tribal government.

Godwin, founder of Two Hawk Employment Services and Two Hawk Workforce Services in Lumberton, takes over the Tribe's chairmanship from Paul Brooks, chairman since 2001.

"One of the things that I think is important right now that people themselves are expecting is an open and transparent tribal government," said Godwin to WBTW.com. "My vision going forward is to enhance our educational programs among our people. Three generations from now, into the future our children and our grandchildren can look back in time and say this is when the people really united. This is when they developed a government that was open and transparent."

He said military veterans will have their needs taken care of, too: "It's left up to us when they come home and to help them find jobs, help them find housing and make sure that they come back into the Lumbee Tribe as our brothers and sisters."

— WBTW.com

Treasury announces appointments to Tribal Advisory Committee

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of the Treasury announced the appointment of three tribal representatives to serve on the Department's Tribal Advisory Committee (TTAC). Committee members will advise the Secretary on matters related to the taxation of Indians, the training of Internal Revenue Service field agents and the provision of training and technical assistance to Native American financial officers.

The three individuals appointed serve as members of the TTAC are:

W. Ron Allen, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. Allen has served as chairman since 1977 and as CEO since 1982. Under his leadership the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe transitioned from a landless reservation base to a land base of more than 1,200 acres and established several business enterprises. Allen was president of the National Congress of American Indians from 1995-1999.

Lacey Horn, Treasurer of the Cherokee Nation. Horn has served as the top financial executive of the Cherokee Nation since 2011, overseeing the Tribe's budget and an array of general welfare programs. In 2014 the Native American Financial Officers' Association named Horn its Tribal Executive Officer of the Year.

Marilynn "Lynn" Malerba, Lifetime Chief of the Mohegan Tribe. Malerba was appointed the traditional leader of the Mohegan Tribe in 2010. She is a member of several federal advisory committees, including the Indian Health Service Tribal Self Governance Advisory Committee. Malerba has also served as Mohegan Tribal Council chairwoman and as a member of the board of directors for the Mohegan Sun and Pocono Downs Casinos.

The Treasury's appointees to the TTAC will be joined on the committee by four members to be appointed by the Chairs and Ranking Members of the Senate Finance Committee, and the House of Representative Ways and Means Committee. Each committee chair or ranking member will appoint one TTAC member.

— Treasury Department Press Center

Justin Bieber asked to leave Mexico's Tulum ruin site

MEXICO CITY — Canadian pop star Justin Bieber and his entourage were asked by Mexican officials to leave the Mayan archaeological site of Tulum, recently, after he apparently tried to climb onto or among the ruins, an official of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (who spoke on condition of anonymity) told NBCNews.com.

The official could not specify which of the site's structures Bieber allegedly had climbed, but said he was "asked to leave." Visitors are permitted to climb some pre-Hispanic pyramids in Mexico, but officials rope off or place "no entry" signs on ruins that are considered vulnerable or unstable.

Bieber had apparently been on vacation in the Tulum area, on Mexico's Caribbean coast, south of Cancun, for several days.

Despite the singer's reputation for getting out of line, Nathalie Leño, the spokeswoman for AllTourNative, a cooperative effort with Maya communities at the Jungla Maya Park that Bieber visited, told NBC News that Bieber "expressed a lot of interest in the work we do to preserve the environment."

Bieber has had several bizarre incidents in Latin America in recent years: In 2013, Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto denied a tweet by Bieber saying the singer met with the leader and his family prior to a show. The actor made it worse when he corrected the original tweet: "Correction. I met the president's family and all their friends in the private meet and greet with all their security. They were very nice."

That same year, Bieber faced two criminal complaints and demands for refunds in Argentina by abandoning a concert after less than an hour and not showing up for a photo-op that some fans paid hundreds of dollars extra for. The singer's manager said Bieber was struck with food poisoning after a concert. In Brazil, police accused him of spraying graffiti and sending bodyguards to attack a photographer outside a Buenos Aires nightclub, defiling the national symbol by dragging two Argentine flags off stage with his feet and a microphone stand before 45,000 "beliebers" during the first of two concerts in River Plate stadium.

— NBCNews.com

Compiled by special projects reporter Peter B. Gallagher.

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Living the ACD experience: No better time than now

BY AARON TOMMIE
Contributing Writer

I've always aspired to uplift my people and pave the way for future generations to continue the success our ancestors fought for us to have. My inspiration comes from past and present leaders who put others' needs before their own desires. As we continue to progress, it can be difficult to relate to the struggles our forebears experienced, some of which were caused by racial tension and dire economic circumstances. If the objective was to escape poverty and scarcity, then to say we've been triumphant would be an understatement. Our ambition stemmed from instincts necessary to survive in the plains of Alabama and Georgia and then the swamplands of the Everglades. Our drive to endure the hardships has led to the booming eminence we experience today, making us one of the most prosperous groups of Native Americans in the United States.



Beverly Bidney
Aaron Tommie

One of my biggest heroes is my maternal grandfather. To support his 10 children, he at times worked three jobs while my grandmother stayed at home with the kids. It wasn't uncommon for him to have two full-time jobs the same day. My grandfather seldom missed work, even when he would get sick from the brutal New York winters. He'd show his children his calloused hands, wanting them to work hard, but not in the manner in which he had to because of his lack of formal education. My grandparents emphasized the importance of each generation accomplishing more than the previous one.

Learning of my grandfather's work ethic and passion he had for his family has influenced me tremendously. It's given me a desire to work with the same hunger and urgency as someone who doesn't have as many opportunities as I. It's difficult to feel entitled when the majority of people I've encountered have struggled to make a decent living. There are no early retirements but only years of working long hours and lifestyles often filled with anguish and little luxury. It's the reality for millions of people in this country. Seeing war veterans with missing limbs on the sides of streets asking for money or hearing stories of children whose only meals come from school helps me appreciate the gifts we've been given that can be taken away at any time. Nothing lasts forever. So education and strong work ethics are vital.

Before I began working for The Seminole Tribune, senior editor Brett Daly had a list of objectives she wanted me to accomplish. She's truly been the quintessential boss. Every time I speak with her, I feel my words and time are of the utmost importance. Although I'm a Tribal citizen, I'm treated the same as my co-workers. The support and guidance I've been given from everyone at The Tribune has been amazing. They have made the transition from the Executive Operations Office seamless. Everyone has been willing to help me get the most out of my time at The Tribune. Staff reporters Beverly Bidney and Eileen Soler and copy editor Kevin Johnson have been a joy to work alongside. This past October, special projects reporter Peter Gallagher invited me to attend an interview of Bobby Henry for the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's Oral History Project. I learned some of the Seminole traditions and beliefs. I was also given a tour of the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa.

Working for The Tribune has forced me to structure my time more effectively because I work on deadlines. But time management has long been my kryptonite. During my freshman year of college, one of my roommates and I posted a video online showing us working on assignments after 4 a.m. It was far too often that I'd let assignments pile up and then stress over how much I had to do in such a short amount of time. Procrastinating was my comfort zone. A reason I was originally nervous prior to working for the Tribe was that I was scared that those poor habits would carry over into my professional career. To stay on track, I plan out each day and organize assignments accordingly. Multi-colored Post-its litter my desk with reminders and notes to stay on top of my work.

As a contributing writer for The Tribune, I travel to the different reservations and meet a lot of people. There have been many who remember my twin and me from more than 20 years ago. Recently, I went to Brighton for an assignment and rode past a

Ahfachkee kids till land, dig into roots

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Students from Ahfachkee School culture classes are digging so deep into their roots that they can almost taste it — almost.

On a recent Wednesday afternoon inside the perimeter of a Seminole camp at Billie Swamp Safari, ninth-grader Zoey Puente tilled lines of edible aloe plants while classmates raked dirt around fledgling vegetables in a garden about a dozen rows deep.

Within yards at the Big Cypress attraction's native camp that also includes cooking, sleeping and work chickees, other teens planted a seedling papaya tree.

In a few short months, the rows of now leafy green plants will yield squash, cucumbers, tomatoes, carrots and other vegetables; the trees will bear tasty fruit; and the teens will be as proficient in their ancestral language as their forefathers were at growing food in the swamp.

"This is Elaponke language class," Zoey said while wiping sweat from her forehead. "And it makes me want to start my own garden at home."

Also known as Seminole 1 and Seminole 2 in the Florida Department of Education's Course Code Directory, Elaponke 1 and Elaponke 2 meet the state's two credit high school graduation language requirements.

And the garden at Billie Swamp, planted by students and tended by them as needed, provides an outdoor classroom for learning Mikasuki and Seminole culture at the same time.

"Here, we teach the kids about how our ancestors survived when we had nothing and how the plants are used in other ways," said the school's traditional preservation program director Jeannette Cypress. "We don't want them to only know about food they can buy at the store, but about food they can start from seeds and clippings."

All plants in the Billie Swamp garden started from seeds and cuttings gathered from plants that already flourish at Ahfachkee School garden about 2 miles away.

The campus garden was established by elders as an elective learning opportunity for all grade levels and has been maintained by students and gardening instructor Maxine Gilkes for the past decade.

The garden at Billie Swamp is different, said assistant program director Danielle Jumper-Frye. High school student participation is mandatory as part of Elaponke



Eileen Soler

Ahfachkee ninth-grader Zoey Puente tills a line of edible aloe plants at the school's Elaponke class garden in Billie Swamp Safari. The garden provides an outdoor classroom environment for learning Seminole culture and the language of the Tribe's ancestors.

classes and as a community service benefit.

"At the Billie Swamp garden, kids get higher levels of hands-on experience while learning all the words for everything that has to do with growing plants, gardening and farming. They also get a great break from the classroom," Jumper-Frye said.

Cypress and Jumper-Frye also use the class to introduce students to interesting plants that most people outside the Tribe would never consider eating.

For instance, the roots of three plants typically used in South Florida home landscaping have been cooked and served as potatoes by Seminoles for generations. One "potato" root, from the decorative elephant ear plant, is especially tasty when roasted and

topped with molasses or bacon, Cypress said.

Gilkes said two decorative floral plants, both which grow pretty red blossoms, are used by children to make swamp Kool-Aid: they drop the pedals into glasses of cool water that turns red and sweet.

Wild hibiscus is a perfect example, Cypress said, but as a child she went straight for the "candy" part; Cypress would pluck the flower's stamen and pop it into her mouth for a quick nectar treat.

Jumper-Frye and Cypress often hike through remote areas of the reservation in search of food plants that were part of Seminole diets long ago. Some plants, such as wild cherry, bananas and strangler plums, have been relocated to Billie Swamp in hopes

of reintroducing them into regular use.

Gilkes said today's teens are always amazed by what they learn in the garden.

"What everyone else thinks is a root at the end of a weed is food and medicine to someone else. The U.S. government threw this land away because they thought it was useless. The Seminole thrive on it — to me, this is holy land," Gilkes said.

A favorite eye-opening activity is the school's unofficial annual end-of-harvest student salsa-making contest. To garner interest, students are allowed to dedicate sections of both gardens for salsa fixings that include necessary herbs and spices.

♦ See GARDEN on page 3B

Pemayetv Emahakv students explore the past during archaeological dig

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Fortified with the spirit of adventure, 33 Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School sixth-graders approached an archaeological dig like treasure hunters. But instead of gold, they found evidence of human life from before Brighton became a reservation in 1935.

The Dec. 17 field trip marked the second year PECS teacher Mindy Wells took students to a pasture under excavation by the Tribal Historic Preservation Office. The site, a pre-reservation European homestead, was probably a two-room wooden house with a brick chimney.

Tribal archaeologist Maureen Mahoney said students enjoyed digging up old relics, which included animal bones and bricks.

They were assigned to clean the artifacts and determine what type of bones they found to know what the homeowners ate.

"It's always interesting when you find things someone left behind years ago and you try to piece together their lives," Mahoney said. "We wanted the students to learn archaeological techniques which would help them to interpret the site."

The site was divided into three stations:

"It's always interesting when you find things someone left behind years ago and you try to piece together their lives."

— Maureen Mahoney, Tribal archaeologist



Photo courtesy of Alyssa Boge

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School sixth-graders sift through dirt of a pre-reservation European homesite Dec. 17. The class traveled to the Brighton Reservation pasture being excavated by the Tribal Historic Preservation Office as part of a school field trip.

♦ See ARCHAEOLOGY on page 3B

♦ See ACD EXPERIENCE on page 5B

And the Pemayetv Emahakv awards go to . . .



Eileen Soler

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School principal Brian Greseth calls the names of students singled out for achievement certificates Jan. 15 during the school's nine weeks awards ceremony, while Winnie Gopher accepts an award from teacher Heather Dobbs.



Eileen Soler

From left, students Hannah Wilson, Carriss Johns, Alton Crowell, Nena Youngblood, Kendra Thomas, Sydney Matthews and Zach Riley display certificates for good citizenship at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's nine weeks awards ceremony.



Eileen Soler

Honored for displays of good citizenship, Karlyne Urbina, Kanyon Billie and Pearcetin Trammell show winning certificates at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's nine weeks awards ceremony.



Eileen Soler

Nena Youngblood beams while showing her certificate for long-distance walking.



Eileen Soler

Bryce Baker and Creek Gopher share a little pride over their certified accomplishments for P.E. class long-distance walking during Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's nine weeks awards ceremony.

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Mentoring program connects Hollywood teens and children

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Competition was fierce Jan. 7 at the Hollywood Boys & Girls Club as teens battled youth in a Smash Bros. video game tournament. While fun, the contest offered teens a chance to mentor younger club members through a new program.

The Hollywood mentoring program began last summer when the club had an influx of teen volunteers looking to secure community service hours. High school students must earn between 80 to 120 hours to graduate.

Boys & Girls Club assistant director Bryan Granie encouraged the teens to work with and be role models for the youth. He said many continued after the summer because they enjoyed mentoring and seeing the youth develop.

Hollywood teens grew up in the program so they have the confidence to take on the new role, Granie said.

"It is 100 percent a teen-driven program; they come up with the ideas and we make

it happen," Granie said. "Teens get the satisfaction of being able to lead and teach the youth."

Sixteen teens mentor about 30 youth twice a week. Activities include soap carving, cooking, origami, music, crafts and games. Staff members give them structure and supervise activities.

"It's clear in the way they all act that it is fun for both sides — youth and teens," Granie said. "A lot of the youth look forward to the day they turn 12 and can graduate into the teen side."

Caidence Smith, 11, is one example. She helped Brian Billie, 8, construct a catapult Jan. 7 to fling Fruit Loops in a longest-distance-launched contest.

To better transition youth into the less-structured teen program, Boys & Girls Club counselor Andrea Stinson assigns a mentor to the 11-year-olds so they can spend time in the teen center.

Criteria for mentors is strict; they must have at least 60 percent monthly attendance, previous volunteer experience and teen center participation. The teens must also generate ideas, work well with others and be good students.

"They should exemplify what we stand for," Stinson said. "We hold them to higher

standards as mentors since the youth look up to them."

Stinson said she has noticed significant changes in the mentors, especially in the older teens.

"I see the teens maturing into leadership positions," Stinson said. "I tell them I'm proud of them. Mentoring gives them the opportunity to make their mark in the center."

Brent Frank, 16, organized the Smash Bros. tournament because he wanted to include the youth, who play the same games in the youth center. Brent took charge, set up the bracket and kept score.

The winner of the tournament was Franklin Primeaux, 10.

The mission of Boys & Girls Club is to enable all young people to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Director Robert North believes the mentoring program plays an important part in that mission.

"We are planting seeds and watching them take root," North said. "Mentoring helps them for the bigger picture in the world and gives them real work experience with counselors, peers and younger children. It teaches patience and gives teens a sense of accomplishment on which they can build for success."



Eileen Soler

Eileen Soler

Franklin Jumper shows the juvenile roots system of a plant that most people see as a weed but Seminoles know will eventually produce a string of small bulbous edibles with taste and texture similar to potatoes.

Ahfachkee high school students Ethan Balentine, Romeo Garcia and Leslie Gopher take in the splendor of their Elaponke class garden at Billie Swamp Safari on the Big Cypress Reservation in January.



Beverly Bidney

Elizabeth Frank, 15, competes in the Smash Bros. video game tournament Jan. 7 at the Hollywood Boys & Girls Club as her brother Brent Frank, 16, and counselor Andrea Stinson cheer for her.



Beverly Bidney

Lee Lee Wilson, 10, works with mentor Jailyn Mowatt, 14, as they make catapults Jan. 7 for a contest at the Boys & Girls Club in Hollywood.

◆ GARDEN From page 1B

"They can't believe sometimes how they can take tomato plants, make salsa, then pluck the seeds from compost for the next season's tomato crop. It's the cycle of life and the value of life that they are learning because they grow salsa," Gilkes said.

The garden yield is served up in many recipes.

Some students earn bragging rights from harvest concoctions. Last year high schooler Bradin Jim served up the hottest winning salsa, but classmate Ethan Balentine remains a favorite garden chef for his delicious papaya smoothies.

Franklin Jumper, who has been gardening at Ahfachkee for two years, said the gardening part of Elaponke is plain fun.

"How can a kid not like to be outside playing? And it's always nice to be able to get fresh food from your own backyard," Franklin said.

◆ ARCHAEOLOGY From page 1B

the day. Students also found plenty of turtle shell pieces, animal and fish bones, pieces of glass and old bricks. The house backed up to a pond, which accounts for the abundance of fish bones and turtle shells, the students concluded.

"They used to eat turtles and fish and left the bones where they ate," Angelie said. "It looks like they sat anywhere to eat."

Students learned about historic features of the time. Aleah Pritchard, 11, found a brick embossed with a date of 1875.

"They seemed to be civilized," she said.

"I liked learning about the layers of dirt and the different time periods. The deeper you went, the older the things were."

Longtime Brighton resident and historian Willie Johns talked to students about growing up on the reservation and hunting with his friends in the pastures.

"He walked a lot and his mom let him shoot," said Jaytron Baker, 12. "It would be hard to walk everywhere."

The dig was more than just a fun outing for students; the lesson included all parts of the curriculum, including math, writing and science. The lesson will culminate in May with a trip to Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, where students will visit the archive rooms and witness how artifacts are preserved.

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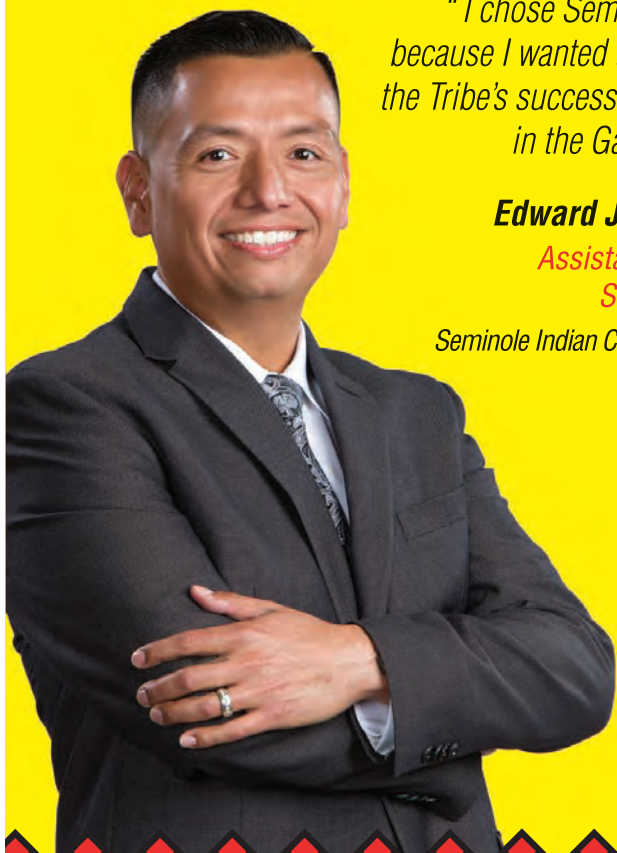
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PECS honors four faculty, staff members

BY AARON TOMMIE
Contributing Writer

BRIGHTON — Four exceptional Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School faculty and staff, nominated and voted on by their peers, were recently named 2015-16 Teachers and Non-instructional Employees of the Year for demonstrating excellence in the workplace.

"The goal was to get the cream of the crop of local employees from the district," principal Brian Greseth said. "The teachers and staff work extremely hard. For their peers to see them and select them is a huge honor. [It's] very humbling."

Cindy Ringstaff and Traci Mendez were chosen as Teachers of the Year, and Mollie Jolly was named Culture Employee of the Year. ESE paraprofessional Macy Randolph was voted Non-instructional Employee of the Year.

The teachers were finalists for Glades County District Teacher of the Year, a distinction PECS landed for the second consecutive year.

**Cindy Ringstaff
Elementary Teacher of the Year**

After securing the PECS Elementary Teacher of the Year title, second-grade instructor Cindy Ringstaff went on to capture the Glades County District Teacher of the Year.

In its nine-year history, PECS has earned four Glades County District Teacher of the Year awards.



Aaron Tommie
Cindy Ringstaff and students

"The award itself is a great honor," Greseth said. "We have some amazing teachers and staff."

Ringstaff, a teacher for 18 years, is one of the original PECS teachers, having been at the school since its opening in 2007. She said she wanted a career that would allow her to spend time

with her children. Teaching allowed her to accomplish that.

Ringstaff teaches language arts, social studies, math and science. Her classes average eight students, which she described as a "teacher's dream."

"I was astonished," Ringstaff said when asked about the award. "I truly believe I was called here for a purpose."

She said in order to bring out the best in her students, she needs to always be on top of her game. She fuses Seminole heritage and culture in her teaching style, which provides a unique learning experience for students.

"I love this school and community,"

Ringstaff said. "I want them to be competitive with the students in the state."

**Traci Mendez
Middle School Teacher of the Year**

In her third year teaching at PECS, seventh- and eighth-grade reading teacher Traci Mendez was named PECS Middle School Teacher of the Year.

From as long as she can remember, Mendez said she has always wanted to teach. She even practiced teaching with her family members. Prior to teaching, she was a single mother waitressing at an Okeechobee restaurant. The Florida Atlantic University graduate started at PECS as a teacher's aide, in 2002.

Mendez said small class sizes allow her to give students the one-on-one help they need; she averages 13 students per class. Mendez wants her students to know the potential she sees in them and to continue to strive and improve upon their education.

"Kids don't care how much you know until they know how much you care," Mendez said.



Aaron Tommie
Traci Mendez

**Mollie Jolly
Culture Employee of the Year**

Tribal citizen Mollie Jolly found out she was Culture Employee of the Year when she saw Greseth coming toward her with a bouquet of flowers.

"I didn't know it was for me at first. I thought they had the wrong teacher," Jolly said.

Because Jolly is fluent in Mikasuki and Creek, the late Lorene Gopher saw her as an asset and brought her on board at PECS. Jolly started five years ago as a translator and substitute teacher. Two years later, she became the fourth- and fifth-grade Creek teacher.

"I love helping them learn the language," she said. "The students have to pick it up and continue teaching it."

Jolly stresses the importance for Tribal citizens to learn the language and culture. She teaches students through various activities and said students love hearing Seminole legends. Jolly opens her Creek classes to parents and Tribal citizens to help them learn the language as well.



Aaron Tommie
Mollie Jolly



Photo courtesy of Ashton Armstrong

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School faculty, staff and students celebrate the 2015-16 Teachers and Non-instructional Employees of the Year.

"They need to practice every day or else the language will be lost. We need to start being more involved," Jolly said.

Jolly said she loves to work hard and encourages the younger Tribal citizens to do so as well. Spending time with elders has traditionally been the way many have learned the language in the past.

"They need to sit down with the elders and learn the language," Jolly said. "It's also important to have respect for your elders."

**Macy Randolph
Non-instructional Employee of the Year**

Macy Randolph has worked at PECS for five years. Her first four years were spent as a paraprofessional, and she is now an ESE paraprofessional. Randolph said working with exceptional students gives her the opportunity to better meet students' needs and aid their educational development.

As a paraprofessional, Randolph assisted in classroom management and small groups with children. She attends classes with her students and teaches small groups.

Randolph said she's very "grateful that my hard work was appreciated from my co-workers and bosses" to earn the Non-instructional Employee of the Year award.

In the future, she plans on finishing her degree in elementary education and becoming a teacher.

"My whole life I thought I was going to be a teacher. Over the last two years, it's become stronger," Randolph said. "I hope to be a positive role model and teach them love and care. So many kids lack that. I want to show kids that they can do whatever they want."

◆ **ACD EXPERIENCE**
From page 1B

home I lived in as a toddler. It was surreal seeing it because it looked very similar to the way I remember seeing it years ago. The more I talk with other Seminoles, the more I want to learn of my heritage and lineage.

I may never learn exactly where my African ancestry originates primarily because of the negative effects slavery had on enslaved Africans. For centuries, slavery broke up African families, leading to broken traditions, lost languages and identities. Learning of my Seminole history helps clarify some of the unknown.

During my four months in the ACD program, I've had a truly gratifying experience. Three years ago, I wanted to

work for the Tribe, but the timing wasn't right. Now, it seems as if everything is falling in place. The Tribe has given me the opportunity to mold many of my childhood dreams into a reality. Being a Tribal citizen has exposed me to a world foreign to the one I grew up in. No longer having to worry about making ends meet really changes your perspective in life. For so many years, my focus was on being financially secure. The Tribe has given me the stability I've sought after, albeit I still have goals I want to achieve. Elders have vehemently conveyed the importance of us keeping our traditions close and alive.

We're the new trailblazers. It's imperative that we properly guide future generations and that we possess productive characteristics and instill them into our youth.

What better time to do so than now?



Michele Thomas
Macy Randolph

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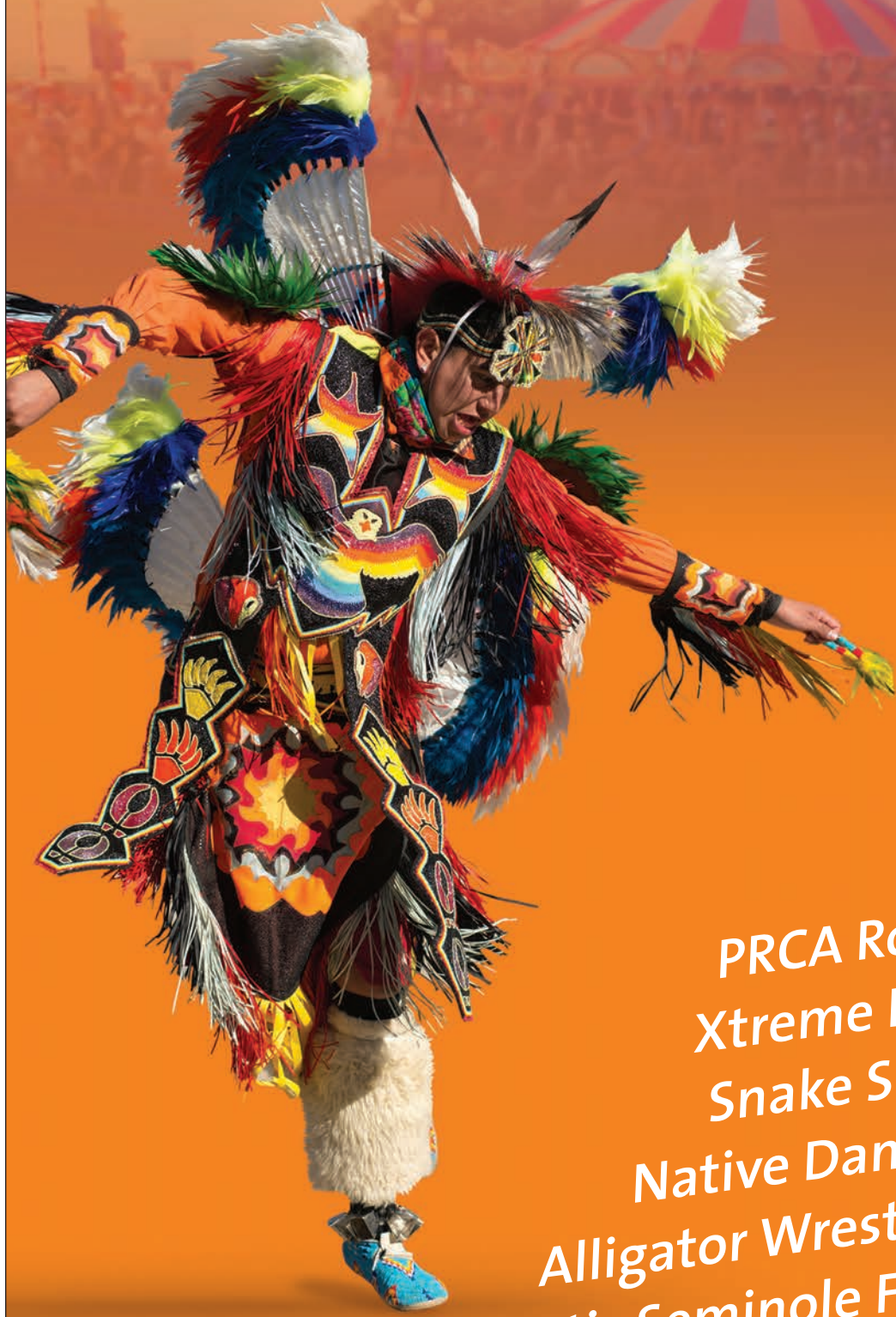
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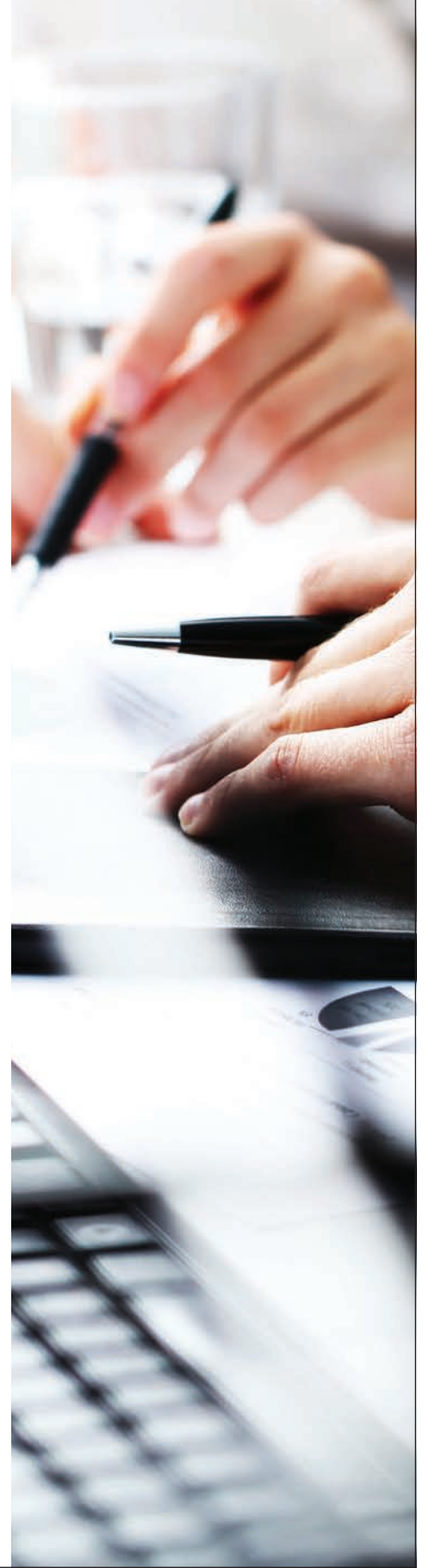


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Sports



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee High School freshman Lucas Osceola attempts a shot Jan. 8 during a junior varsity game against Seminole Ridge in Loxahatchee. Lucas scored eight points.

Okeechobee basketball boosted by Seminoles

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

LOXAHATCHEE — The Seminole Tribe's representation in the Okeechobee High School boys basketball program will be robust for at least several years.

With three freshmen and a sophomore from the Tribe making significant contributions in their first seasons with Brahman teams on the court, the future looks bright for Okeechobee.

Sophomore Sean Osceola is the leading scorer for the junior varsity team, whose offense is run by starting freshman point guard and co-captain Lucas Osceola. On the freshman team, Michael Harvey Jr. is the team's top point-getter and Alyke Baker is among the top rebounders.

The freshman team had the night off Jan. 8, but the junior varsity and varsity squads were in action against Seminole Ridge High School in a pair of games at Osceola Creek Middle School in Loxahatchee.

Sean scored nine points and grabbed nine rebounds and Lucas notched eight points as Okeechobee JV upped its record to 10-4 with a 69-46 win.

Sean's primary sport is baseball. Even on the court, his passion for baseball follows him. He wears jersey No. 42, perhaps the most famous two digits in baseball because they belonged to Jackie Robinson.

"I had a choice of 32 and 42," Sean said,

"but 42 is a baseball number and I liked it."

After a stellar freshman season as one of the top arms on the Brahman's varsity pitching staff last spring, Sean decided to play basketball as a way to stay in shape for the upcoming baseball season. He's had no regrets.

"It's been a lot of fun and it's been challenging," Sean said. "I'm new to the sport, so I don't really know how to play it, but thanks to my coaches and my players, they've really helped me become a good basketball player."

In the game against Seminole Ridge, Sean showed why it has been a smooth transition from the diamond to the hardwood. Sean entered the game midway through the first quarter with the Brahman's in front 8-3 and immediately made an impact.

Within two minutes, he grabbed two rebounds, dished out an assist and scored two points as Okeechobee's lead ballooned to 17-5.

Okeechobee enjoyed a comfortable lead for the rest of the night, which meant Sean and a few other regulars played fewer minutes than normal. Junior varsity coach Raymond Collins said Sean is averaging 17.5 points and 12.6 rebounds per game.

"He's a beast among boys for a first-year player," said Collins, who noted that there is room to improve. "He's a work in

◆ See OKEECHOBEE on page 4C

Tough kids ride rough stock at EIRA clinic

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Young rodeo riders who needed to polish their steer wrestling, calf roping and barrel racing skills converged at Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena for the 19th annual Eastern Indian Rodeo Association (EIRA) rough stock clinic Jan. 8-9 in Big Cypress.

EIRA charter member and special event director Moses Jumper Jr. said the annual

clinic gives riders a chance to get their rhythm back before the start of the rodeo season.

"The kids can do this as much as they like," Jumper said. "This is about the only time they ride before the rodeos."

The 2016 EIRA rodeo season, comprised of six adult and four youth rodeos, begins Feb. 6 with the Bill Osceola Memorial Rodeo and finishes with the Regional Finals Sept. 16-17.

For the first time, the clinic also included an evening of calf, breakaway and team roping. Sheep, calf, steer and junior bull riding, along with steer wrestling, chute dogging and barrel racing, were covered during the Jan. 9 session.

EIRA directors coached the youth during each activity. To teach basic chute dogging catching and sliding techniques, Ivan Bruised Head drove a tractor equipped with a steer saver device through the arena dirt.

Creek Gopher, who at age 11 has about seven years of rodeo experience, worked on his form behind the tractor. This season will be his first competing in chute dogging.

Adults shouted out tips and encouragement as kids worked with the animals. The chute dogging youngsters learned not to touch the steer's horns until the nose went past the line in the dirt. As the youth struggled to wrestle the beasts to the ground, instructions rang out.

"Turn his head," Bruised Head said. "The body goes where the head turns."

Practice commenced with youth from the tallest to the smallest. At 6-foot-6, Blevyns Jumper was up first and easily wrestled a steer to the ground. Creek took his turn after



Beverly Bidney

Ivan Bruised Head watches as Blevyns Jumper wrestles a steer to the ground during chute dogging practice at the EIRA rough stock clinic Jan. 9 at the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena in Big Cypress.

◆ See EIRA on page 3C

Mississippi team edges Seminole squad at NASA

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

HOLLYWOOD — FL Noles guard Jerome Davis and Victorious Secret forward Jennera Bolin spent nearly the entire three-minute break between overtimes hunched over with their hands on their knees near midcourt. They chatted and tried to catch their breath toward the end of an exhaustive battle for the Native American Sports Association (NASA) men's basketball championship.

Hosted by the Seminole Tribe of Florida's Recreation Department, the tournament drew 30 teams to the Hollywood Reservation Jan. 15-16 to vie for championships in men's and women's divisions and legends. The best game turned out to be the last one between the FL Noles and Victorious Secret with the men's title up for grabs at the Howard Tiger Recreation Center.

After losing its first game in the 16-team bracket, the FL Noles, filled with Seminoles, displayed plenty of resilience and endurance by reeling off six straight do-or-die wins within 26 hours to reach the final. But the uphill climb for the FL Noles was far from over. In order to claim the title, they needed to beat Victorious Secret, from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI), twice.

The FL Noles accomplished the first part of their mission with a 55-47 win, but Victorious Secret captured the winner-take-all game, 67-66, in a grueling double overtime thriller. Players from both sides played either the entire games or nearly every minute because the teams only had one substitute each.

"Honestly, it was like the hardest thing I've ever went through; I never played two overtimes like that in a championship game," said Victorious Secret's Trent Thompson. "We actually never got this far anywhere; it's surreal. I would be crying, but I'm too old for that."

Thompson, 22, a Cheyenne and Arapaho who lives in Mississippi, made the 1,000-mile trip to Hollywood with his teammates from MBCI.

"It's a long drive [back] to Mississippi. It's going to be worth it," said Thompson, who scored a game-high 26 points in the deciding game. The champions also received 15 points from Isiah Lewis and 12 points — all on 3-pointers — from Brison LaSarge.

In the first game, the teams were knotted at 35-35 with 15 minutes left before the FL Noles surged ahead thanks to a 3-pointer from guard Josh Boromei, an underhanded layup between two defenders by Ethan Cypress and a layup from Ty Pierce.

Pierce took command of the game in the second half when he scored 10 points and grabbed several rebounds. Pierce and Cypress finished with a team-high 15 points each. Dougie Sanders sank four 3-pointers for his 12 points and Jerome Davis scored nine points.

In the second game, both sides showed signs of weariness. Early shots hit the front of the rims, but Sanders still flashed a smooth touch. He found the net with a pair of 3-pointers and another one from Boromei staked the FL Noles to a 10-point lead that was trimmed to seven points by halftime.

A basket by Cypress, on a nifty feed from Pierce, gave the FL Noles a 32-21 lead early in the second half before Victorious Secret responded with a 21-7 spurt to pull ahead as the heavyweight scorecard went back and forth.



Kevin Johnson

FL Noles' Ty Pierce, right, battles Victorious Secret's Jennera Bolin for a tip in the men's championship during the NASA tournament Jan. 16 at the Howard Tiger Recreation Center in Hollywood.

Sharp shooting from Pierce and Cypress helped the FL Noles regain the lead. Pierce's 3-pointer gave his team a 51-48 lead. Moments later, a layup from Cypress, a senior at Hollywood Hills High School, made it 53-48 lead with 1:40 left.

Another layup by Cypress made it 55-51 with under 60 seconds left, but a 3-pointer from LaSarge and a layup from Lewis with 25 seconds left put Victorious Secret in front by one point.

Pierce sent the game into overtime with a free throw with nine seconds left.

Both teams scored seven points in the first overtime that remained close for all four minutes. The FL Noles' scoring came from Cypress, Boromei and Pierce.

In the second overtime, Sanders, playing with a noticeable limp that forced him out of

the game earlier, made a pair of free throws to knot the score at 65-65 with one minute left. Cypress drew a foul and made one free throw to put the FL Noles in front, but with 18 seconds left Lewis made two free throws and an ensuing turnover by FL Noles sealed the victory for Victorious Secret.

Cypress finished with a team-high 22 points followed by Pierce with 18 and Boromei with 13.

Before playing in the epic championship, Boromei, Cypress, Pierce and Sanders scored in double figures in a 63-49 win that eliminated fellow Seminoles from the SSJ Squad in the final of the losers' bracket.

"It was a rough one, but it was close," said Sanders, who lit up the Classic Gym

◆ See NASA on page 5C



Kevin Johnson

FL Noles' Ethan Cypress takes a jump shot against SSJ Squad during the NASA tournament Jan. 16 at the Classic Gym in Hollywood.



Kevin Johnson
Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's Karey Gopher (3) and Kayln Hammil battle an Osceola Middle School player for a loose ball Jan. 19 in Brighton. PECS went on to win 37-14.

PECS girls basketball ends year on high note

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

BRIGHTON — The only two eighth-graders on the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's girls basketball team will be tough to replace.

Julia Smith and Luzana Venzor finished their middle school careers in style Jan. 20 by leading PECS past Moore Haven, 46-7. Julia, the team's leading scorer throughout the season, scored a game-high 26 points and Luzana added 10 points.

"We had another successful season finishing the year with a 7-5 record," PECS coach Tim Thomas said.

The victory in Moore Haven came on the heels of the team's annual eighth-grade parent night Jan. 19 when Julia, Luzana and their families were recognized in a brief pregame ceremony before PECS cruised past Osceola Middle School, 37-14.

Julia made sure her final home game would be memorable. In the first half alone, she won the opening tip, scored six points, made five steals and picked up three fouls, including a technical. She set the early tone on defense by not allowing Osceola guards room to breathe, a style that Thomas likes to see from all his players.

"The whole team is very aggressive," Thomas said. "I teach them to be aggressive and to get turnovers, so we can get some easy points. That way we can get a lead and we can relax later on."

Julia's glasses were knocked to the floor in the fourth quarter, but that didn't

stop her from scoring points. She finished with 18 points in front of more than 100 spectators in a packed gymnasium, a sight that didn't go unnoticed.

"Playing basketball with my friends, that's what I'm going to miss, and just playing for the crowd and making shots and hearing them cheer for you," Julia said. "It's really nice hearing them cheer for you."

Julia said she will probably attend Moore Haven High School. Luzana said she will likely head to Okeechobee High School, where her brother Demetrius Clark is a standout on the boys basketball team.

Luzana echoed Julia's sentiments about missing her teammates.

"My favorite part was getting with my girls, practicing, teaching them what they need and some of them telling me what I need," she said.

A few minutes into the home finale Luzana was accidentally struck in the face by a defender. Luzana quickly shrugged off the contact and moments later scored on a driving layup. She finished with five points.

As for the team's younger players, Caylie Huff led the way with nine points, which included a 3-pointer to start the game. Haylie Huff had four points. Strong defense from Karey Gopher, Kayln Hammil, LaShae King and Elle Thomas was one reason why Osceola was held to just 14 points.

Even though next year's team will have to replace its two captains, Julia expects the squad will be fine.

"I think they're going to be pretty good without me and Lu," Julia said.



Kevin Johnson

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's Luzana Venzor fires a pass over an Osceola Middle School player in Brighton.



Kevin Johnson

Julia Smith soars above the court to win the opening tip for PECS against Osceola Middle School. Julia scored a game-high 18 points.

Filled with eighth-graders, PECS boys conclude 'great season'

Brighton Reservation team ends with strong 11-1 record

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

BRIGHTON — With nine graduating players to honor, Kevin Jackson might as well have added florist to his duties as Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School boys basketball coach. Jackson's hands were full of yellow roses that he distributed to families of each eighth-grader during a pregame ceremony at midcourt before the varsity team's final home game Jan. 19, a 44-36 win against Osceola Middle School.

The following night PECS raced past Moore Haven, 44-29, to finish its season with an 11-1 record.

"It's a great season; no complaints," Jackson said.

PECS cranked out seven straight wins to start the season before encountering its only blemish, a loss to Clewiston in mid-January.

"Sure, I would have loved to go undefeated, but sometimes that happens," Jackson said.

The annual eighth-grade parent night recognized Alex Armstrong, Jarrett Bert, Robert Harris, Silas Madrigal, Tucker Johns, Travis Jumper, Kamani Smith, Dante Thomas and Alex Valdes. A few of the players spent the season on junior varsity, but most were on a varsity club that went 6-0 at home.

Some of the favorite memories players listed for their introductions included a blowout win against Yearling (Travis), keeping the winning streak alive with a victory against LaBelle (Dante), making four 3-pointers against Moore Haven (Silas) and an opponent mistakenly scoring a basket for PECS (Kamani).

The starting five in the home finale consisted of Alex, Dante, Kamani, Robert and Silas. The Seminoles showed they could score from inside and outside with power and finesse that Osceola Middle struggled to contain. The balanced attack included a game-high 17 points from Silas and five points from Alex, both guards, and 12 points from Robert and six points from Kamani, both center/forwards whose size will no doubt be missed next season.

PECS emerged from the locker room at halftime with a 20-15 lead and promptly displayed how much they like to run. They went on an 8-2 spurt, which included baskets from Silas on a fastbreak layup and a fadeaway jumper, and a score from Robert on a smart inbounds pass from Alex.

Later in the game, Alex heeded the



Kevin Johnson

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's Dakoya Nunez dribbles past an Osceola Middle School defender during a varsity game Jan. 19 in Brighton.

"Arizona" play call from Jackson on the sideline and again successfully worked an inbounds play under the basket. This time the result was an easy basket by Kamani.

"We played much better than the first time we played them. We showed a lot more patience, a lot more discipline," Jackson said. "We came out scoring in the second half. That's when we started picking it up and playing better; a little more up tempo."

In the fourth quarter, Dakoya Nunez banked in a 3-pointer that opened a 10-point lead for PECS. Silas scored five points in his final quarter at home, highlighted by a coast-to-coast layup.

In the season finale at Moore Haven, Silas led the way with 22 points and Robert chipped in 13 points.

Most of the eighth-graders noted that they planned to continue playing basketball after middle school. Whether all of them suit up for teams again remains to be seen, but at least they will have a memorable eighth-grade season to recall.

"I'm proud of these guys," Jackson said.



Kevin Johnson

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School center Robert Harris blocks a shot Jan. 19 in the fourth quarter of the Seminoles' 44-36 win against Osceola Middle School in Brighton.

Change of seasons as Sanchez boys shine on wrestling mats

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

FORT GIBSON, Okla. — After spending part of their Christmas vacation on Hollywood Reservation, the Sanchez brothers returned home to rack up more wins on the wrestling mats in Oklahoma.

In January, Fort Gibson High School's wrestling team won district matches against Poteau and Stilwell, and then successfully defended its district championship with a win against Cascia Hall.

Sammy Micco Sanchez upped his personal record this season to 21-2 with a win in the 195-pound bout against Cascia Hall.

"Sammy won a big match for us, 5-0. We needed Sammy and the next guy to win to clinch our district," said Fort Gibson wrestling coach Sammy Johnson.

Despite a football injury that sidelined him for several games last fall, Sammy picked up where he left off last year when he qualified for the state wrestling tournament as a freshman. In December, he won all seven of his matches to help Fort Gibson capture the Bristow Dual Tournament, and subsequently, was named the team's wrestler

of the week. He also won both his matches against two Missouri schools at a tournament in Arkansas.

"He's wrestling really well," Johnson said. "He's working hard and getting his weight under control. He's doing a great job, especially as a sophomore stepping up."

Sammy said his goal this season is to return to states and place in the top four.

Jesse Sanchez, a junior, lost to a state champion in the 152-pound match against Cascia Hall, but Johnson said Sanchez has wrestled far better than his 13-8 record indicates.

"One fifty-two is one of the tougher weights in [Class] 4A. He gets a lot of tough kids. He's wrestling his butt off, no matter who it is," Johnson said.

While in Hollywood, the brothers and their nephew Julius Aquino did not take a holiday from working out. Football and wrestling play huge roles in all three of their lives; so does fitness.

"I like that I play sports because I know that if I didn't play sports I probably wouldn't be lifting as much, running as much," Sammy said during a break as he switched from running on a treadmill to lifting weights

at the Howard Tiger Recreation Center. "It's good that I play sports because it keeps me in shape and it keeps me healthy."

The workouts are paying off. Sammy, a middle linebacker for the school's football team, said he squatted about 245 pounds a year ago; now he's doing about 385. Jesse hit the wrestling mats after finishing as the football team's second leading rusher.

A few years younger than his uncles, Julius is becoming acclimated to weight rooms.

"I'm starting to focus on that because I'm starting to get my strength up and leg speed," said Julius, 13, whose strength and leg speed weren't too shabby last fall when the seventh-grader rushed for 30 touchdowns in eight games for Fort Gibson Middle School. Similar to his uncles, Julius wins more often than he loses on the mat; his record was about 10-4 for the middle school team as of late December.

As for Sanchez vs. Sanchez bouts on the mat, they do happen, but just not officially.

"I hate when [Jesse] talks that he can beat me, so I wrestle him all the time," Sammy said. "I usually win, but he gets me sometimes because he's fast."

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Junior varsity's success bodes well for Pemayetv Emahakv's future

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

BRIGHTON — A glimpse of a bright future was on display during a Saturday

sweep by the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School junior varsity boys basketball team. PECS ended its season at home Jan. 16 with a narrow win against Osceola Middle School and a blowout victory against Yearling

Middle School. The young Seminoles finished with a 6-2 record, an encouraging sign considering several spots need to be filled next season on the varsity squad.

"The guys are hard workers," said PECS coach Kevin Jackson. "We've definitely improved along the way. That's all you can ask — that your guys get better as the season goes on and understand the system, especially the younger guys who have a chance of playing up next year."

Led by speedy guards Ramone Baker, Dathen Garcia, Dakoya Nunez and Kai Osceola, the JV showcased its bevy of capable ball-handlers who thrived in transition against Yearling. Dathen and Dakoya worked a nifty give-and-go that opened the scoring and moments later they alertly executed an inbounds play to perfection under the basket that gave the Seminoles an 8-0 lead.

With Jayton Baker ruling the paint at both ends, PECS flexed its strength on the boards. Jayton seemed to get every rebound he wanted against opponents who couldn't match his size and reach and did more than just pluck balls out of the air; he displayed agile moves by a big guy and a soft scoring touch on his way to notching 25 points in the two games.

The Seminoles grabbed seven consecutive offensive rebounds in one trip against Yearling, and even though the ball somehow stayed out of the hoop, the sequence served as proof that help is on the way to a varsity team that will lose its two tallest players.

In the 38-36 win against Osceola Middle, Ramone and Jayton each scored 11 points. Kai and Tanner Shore scored six points apiece and Dakoya scored four points.

Jayton's 14 points led the squad in the 49-21 win against Yearling. Kai and Dakoya scored 10 and eight points, respectively. Tanner contributed six points. Ramone and Jayton Baker each scored four points.

In a January varsity game against West Glades, Ramone shined with a game-high 15 points. Dakoya sank two 3-pointers and finished with 10 points. Tucker Johns was nearly perfect from the foul line. He made five of six free throws and finished with seven points.

A handful of JV players received a healthy dose of varsity action during the season as they bounced back and forth between teams, an experience that should help cushion the loss of nine eighth-graders.

"It's going to be tough," Jackson said, "but some of the young guys are going to be the guys stepping up next year."



Kevin Johnson

Tanner Shore reaches over Yearling Middle School players to grab a rebound while his teammate Jarrett Bert looks on during a junior varsity game Jan. 16 in Brighton.



Kevin Johnson

Amid a crowd, Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's Jayton Baker eyes the basket during a junior varsity game in Brighton against Yearling Middle School.



Kevin Johnson

PECS' Kai Osceola takes a short jump shot during a junior varsity game in Brighton against Yearling Middle School.



Beverly Bidney

Ivan Bruised Head shows Creek Gopher, 11, how to use the steer saver machine to practice his chute dogging technique at the EIRA rough stock clinic Jan. 9 in Big Cypress.

◆ EIRA From page 1C

the taller boys. He brought down a steer on his second try.

Jacoby Johns helped kids gain a feel for bareback bronc riding by setting up his rigging on a suspended barrel to simulate a horse. No bucking, of course.

Girls sat on their horses in the outdoor riding ring as they listened to experienced barrel racers and EIRA Directors Lisa Osceola and Mackenzie Bowers share tips and answer questions. They learned to cinch saddles after warming up to ensure they do not enter the ring with a loose saddle.

Other words of wisdom included washing the horse's bits and not letting it drink water from a common trough to prevent the animal from getting sick.

"Love on your horses," Osceola said. "Let them know they did something right and take care of them if they're hurting."

Florida humidity takes a toll on leather saddles, so the girls

were told to condition them often. Bowers admitted to not knowing everything and said she and Osceola always learn new things.

"The more you ride and the more people you are around, the more you will learn," Bowers said. "Go to as many clinics as you can. The more you ride your horse, the more you will know if something is wrong with them."

This EIRA season will feature two firsts; the first Betty Mae Jumper Memorial Rodeo will be held at the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena Feb. 20, and the first rodeo held in Fort Pierce will take place at Chupco Ranch Rodeo April 23.



Beverly Bidney

Mackenzie Bowers teaches young rodeo riders the finer points of barrel racing Jan. 9 at the EIRA rough stock clinic at the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena in Big Cypress.

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Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee High School guard Demetrius Clark dribbles past Seminole Ridge's Santana Presley during a varsity game Jan. 8 in Loxahatchee. Demetrius scored a team-high 28 points and snagged nine rebounds in the Brahman's 85-81 overtime loss.

◆ **OKEECHOBEE**
From page 1C

progress. He's still learning the game. He's a coachable kid."

In addition to the conditioning benefits, Sean said playing basketball can help him in other areas of baseball.

"It's a lot of footwork and I think it will help me in baseball for pitching and running, and also defense," said Sean, who also plays first and third base.

In the fourth quarter, Sean provided examples of power and finesse. He outmuscled an opponent as part of a 3-point play. He also showed a big man's soft touch when the 6-foot-3, about 235-pound forward/center scored on a layup that was set up by Lucas on a coast-to-coast fast break.

Described by his coach as "the floor general," Lucas has made a seamless transition in his freshman season after playing three years of middle school ball for Pemayetv Emahaky Charter School.

"It's faster with more big people and more competition," said Lucas, whose southpaw skills as a dribbler and shooter can surprise opponents, especially those who watch him in pregame drills. "Sometimes when we warm up, I go with my right [hand] to make them think I'm right."

Lucas was right on target when he ended the 2015 calendar year on a high note with a season-best 22 points — which included a handful of 3-pointers — in a 60-52 win against Jensen Beach on Dec. 18.

"Lucas is doing great; ball handling, shooting, he controls the offense the way I want it controlled," Collins said. "He's averaging about 8.5 points and three or four assists."

While Sean and Lucas have supplied plenty of help for the JV at both ends of the court, the same can be said for Michael Harvey Jr. and Alyke Baker on the freshman squad.

"Michael Harvey is probably the best player on the team. He's the leading scorer, a great leader," said freshman coach Jovanny Torres, whose team was 4-4 as of early January. "Alyke is a big rebounder and plays great defense. They're both great kids."

Torres said Michael scored in double digits in just about all the team's games. But Michael's value to the team extends beyond scoring from the shooting guard position.

"If there's a good player on the other team, [Michael] is the first one I put on that guy," Torres said. "He has a great basketball IQ. He uses his teammates. He doesn't dribble with his head down. He sees the whole court."

The defensive zone is where Alyke has excelled as a power forward/center. Torres said Alyke makes two or three blocks per game.

"He is a great athlete," Torres said. "He's undersized for his position, but he's really strong and he knows basketball. He's a really good defender. Once his offensive game comes around, he's going to be a really good player."

Okeechobee varsity guard Demetrius Clark is already in that "good player" category.

Demetrius, whose stepmother is Tribal citizen Pamela Snell, sank six 3-pointers and scored a season-high 28 points with nine rebounds in the Brahman's marathon 85-81 triple overtime loss to Seminole Ridge.

The setback left Okeechobee with an 11-5 record. Demetrius, a 6-foot-1 starting junior guard, is one reason coach Demetre Riles' varsity team is in good shape to finish with a winning record for the first time since 2010.

As of early January, Demetrius had eclipsed the 20-point plateau five times and was second in scoring with 16.7 points per game.

As a longtime resident of the Brighton Reservation and a former three-year standout at PECS, Demetrius is more than willing to help the young players from the Tribe as they ascend toward varsity.

"I take time at practice to work with them; Lucas with his dribbling and shooting, and Sean [with his moves]," Demetrius said. "I miss them up here. Next year they'll definitely be up. I'm looking forward to it."



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee High School sophomore Sean Osceola grabs a rebound Jan. 8 during a junior varsity game against Seminole Ridge in Loxahatchee. Sean, the team's leading scorer as of mid-January, scored nine points in the 69-46 win.

Pierce family well represented on Hollywood Christian courts

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

HOLLYWOOD — It didn't take long for the trio of Pierces — Shae, Burgundy and Todd — to make good impressions on the basketball courts at Hollywood Christian School.

Shae and Burgundy are firmly entrenched as the top two players on the girls varsity team, while their younger brother Todd has begun to make inroads on the boys varsity team as a seventh-grader.

Hired a few days before the start of this season, girls varsity coach Tremayne Fisher knew about the kind of basketball talent that the Tribe produces — he was an assistant coach on the school's state championship team in 2011 that featured Seminole players — but he had been away from the program for a few years. He didn't know anything about Shae and Burgundy. Upon his return, he quickly discovered how much the sisters from the Hollywood Reservation mean to the team.

"The first game [Shae] had 26 points. I'm like, 'OK, she can play.' As we got further into the season, I saw I had me a nice guard, a very smart guard, definitely an offensive guard," Fisher said.

Fisher also gladly learned that Shae isn't the only Pierce who can put up big numbers. Burgundy has blossomed into a consistent double-digit point player who handles a lot of the dirty work down low and is not afraid to step out from her post position and hit 3-pointers.

"Burgundy plays big in the post, rebounding and scoring inside, but she also brings her long range game. She can shoot the 3 really well," Fisher said.

With two games left in the regular season, Hollywood Christian, with just one senior, had a 12-7 record. One of the team's goals is to advance past the district playoffs for the second year in a row.

"The girls have more confidence in themselves this year. I think we're going to go far. We're doing pretty good," Shae said following a game in early January. "This year a lot of girls stepped up and know their position and know what they're supposed to do on the court and do what they do well."

Offensively, the team relies heavily on Shae and Burgundy for production, and both players have answered those calls time after time, often while playing entire games.

Shae, a 5-foot-6 scoring machine, scored 46 of the team's 53 points in a five-point loss to Highlands Christian Academy in late November. Less than two weeks later, the junior point guard poured in 37 points against SLAM Academy, and four days after that she dropped 44 points against Sagemont School.

In an early January game against Highlands Christian, Shae showed no nerves as she hit two clutch free throws with 18 seconds in regulation to tie the game and then forced overtime with a steal in the final two seconds. Hollywood Christian lost, 61-56, but Shae finished with 37 points. She made 11 consecutive free throws during one stretch.

Fisher said Shae accounts for "about 75 percent" of the offense and she excels in other areas, too.

"She carries a heavy load. Defensively, offensively, leader-wise; she just does a lot for us," Fisher said.

Beyond the impressive numbers and leadership, Shae brings the kind of knowledge to the game that, in Fisher's eyes, is like having a coach on the floor.

"I ask a lot of her, but her basketball IQ is really high," Fisher said. "If I say something, she can really make it happen for me on the court. If I tell her what I want, as far as getting a layup or getting someone the ball, she does that."

Burgundy, a 5-foot-8 forward who plays with skill and determination far beyond her eighth-grade status, has eclipsed the 20-point mark several times. She had 19 points in a one-point win against Sheridan Hills in early January.

Offensively and defensively Burgundy has a greater presence on the court than a year ago.

"She's being [more] aggressive and she got a lot taller," Shae said. "She's gained about 3 inches in the last year. She's being big on the boards this year."

"She's young, and I'm asking her to play major minutes," Fisher said. "I like her intensity."

Intensity is also a big part of Todd's game, and it's one reason why he's earned promotions to the boys varsity level from the junior high team this season.

"The one thing we noticed about him the first game he came up was his heart," said assistant coach Konrad Hyppolite. "His heart, his aggressiveness, his ability to not be scared or nervous in a situation, that's one of the things we love most about him."

No matter what level he's playing and despite going up against some opponents five years older, Todd, a shooting guard, is not shy about taking shots, even in limited playing time on varsity.

"There's not a shot Todd doesn't like," head coach Josiah Martinez said. "He's one of those kids that if he's in for five or six minutes, he'll get up five or six shots."

Todd, Shae and Burgundy come from a basketball family that includes their brothers Ty and Trewston Pierce, the latter of whom plays for IMG Academy in Bradenton, and stepbrother Duelle Gore, a star for for Haskell Indian Nations University. As the youngest of all these players, Todd has plenty of time to develop. He still has eighth-grade and four years of high school ahead of him.

"He's doing great. He averages about six or seven minutes a game. He's probably the best shooter on the team as far as 3-point shooting. A ton of potential, great attitude,"

Martinez said. "He'll play six years of high school basketball. He's only going to get better. We're happy to have him."



Kevin Johnson

Hollywood Christian School junior point guard Shae Pierce drives to the basket during a girls varsity game Jan. 12 against Highlands Christian Academy in Hollywood. Shae scored a game-high 38 points.



Kevin Johnson

Hollywood Christian School eighth-grade forward Burgundy Pierce splits Highland Christian Academy defenders during a girls varsity game Jan. 12 in Hollywood. Burgundy scored 16 points, which included four 3-pointers.



Kevin Johnson

Hollywood Christian School seventh-grader Todd Pierce battles Grace Academy International during a boys varsity game Jan. 12 in Hollywood. Todd has been splitting time between varsity and the school's junior high team.

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Lady Ballers use long ball to win NASA women's title

Former Oklahoma Sooner scores 38 in finale

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

HOLLYWOOD — One of the shortest players in the Native American Sports Association (NASA) women's tournament made a big impact.

Jenna Plumley, a 5-foot-4, high octane point guard from Oklahoma, scored 38 points as the Lady Ballers drained 15 3-pointers on their way to an 84-53 win against the Lady

Seminoles in the championship Jan. 16 at the Howard Tiger Recreation Center in Hollywood.

The Lady Ballers featured players from a variety of Tribes, including Seminole and Miccosukee. Plumley, a Native from Oklahoma, put on a dazzling 3-point clinic by making 10 shots from beyond the arc, including a few from NBA range.

Plumley, 28, was an Oklahoma high school star and played at the University of

Oklahoma and Lamar University. She also played professionally in Italy.

"This is my second year playing [in NASA]," said Plumley, who runs basketball clinics for kids. "I usually spend a lot of time here in Florida with my friends. It's fun to come back and hang out."

With Plumley wearing jersey No. 1 and Courtney Osceola in the No. 2 threads, the Lady Ballers' 1-2 punch in the backcourt proved to be a powerful combination. When Plumley wasn't dropping bombs, Osceola displayed a smooth scoring touch that resulted in 17 points, including three 3-pointers. Other production came from Tasha Osceola (10 points) and Anna Van Stippen (9 points).

"We have some great shooters," said Van Stippen, a Florida resident from the Oneida Tribe in Wisconsin.

The Lady Ballers led 42-28 at halftime. Their lead grew to 60-42 on back-to-back 3-pointers from Plumley.

Ariah Osceola led the Lady Seminoles with 18 points followed by Kristen Billie with 12. The Lady Seminoles won their first two games of the tournament and finished with a 3-2 record.

The Lady Ballers, which went 4-0, featured Chantay Frazier, Adriana Huggins, Courtney Osceola, Juanita Osceola, Phalyn Osceola, Tasha Osceola, Jenna Plumley and Anna Van Stippen.

Women's Legends

Southern Smoke, a Miccosukee team, won the women's legends division, which featured just three teams. Southern Smoke topped the Lady Seminoles, 55-22, in the championship. Vodne Chapoosa scored 14 points and Stacy Jones had 12 points for the champions.

The Lady Seminoles received six points each from Gwen Smith, Shirley Clay and Danielle Jumper-Frye, and four points from Leslie Osceola. The Lady Seminoles played the championship with just five players.



Kevin Johnson

Hollywood Heat's Edwin Garcia, center, battles two defenders from MS Legends during a Native American Sports Association men's legends game Jan. 15 at the Howard Tiger Recreation Center in Hollywood.

◆ NASA From page 1C

with four 3-pointers. "We kept shooting and knocking down our shots. They had good [defense], but we broke them down with our shots and was able to penetrate and came out with the win. It's always rivalry time when we play against them."

Men's Legends

The Seneca Chiefs, from the Buffalo, New York area, proved to be the class of the five-team men's legends division for ages 40 and up.

The Chiefs won the title with a 3-0 record, which included a 71-41 win against the Mississippi Legends in the championship. Terry Garrow led the Chiefs with 16 points, which included four 3-pointers. Clint Jones contributed 13 points and Angel Cortes pumped in 11 points.

The Chiefs used their trip through the winners' bracket to their advantage against the Legends, which came out of the losers' side.

"When you have to come in the back end of these tournaments — you've got to play three games in like six hours — it's pretty hard on the body, especially when you're 40-plus," Garrow said. "We just came out and ran them, and that's the reason we won. We had more legs than they did."

The hometown favorite Hollywood Heat didn't reach the title game and finished 0-2 but still enjoyed playing in their backyard.

"It's fun. We keep it fun," said Heat guard Kenny Tommie, who grew up playing basketball on the reservation. "We used to play in the old gym and we used to play on the outside court before the gym was built."

In their first game, the Heat fell behind the Mississippi Legends 9-0 and trailed all game. The Heat closed to within four points with three minutes left on a 3-pointer from



Kevin Johnson

Hollywood Heat players, including Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, right, battle the MS Legends for a rebound during a NASA men's legends game Jan. 15 in Hollywood.

Charlie Tiger, but the Legends pulled away for a 49-34 win.

In addition to Tommie and Tiger, the Heat included Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, Vincent Billie, Edwin Garcia, Wes Garcia, Norman Huggins, Rob Landon, Mike Primus, Alfonso Tigertail and Shawn Willie.

The Heat's other loss came against the Seminole, which lost a tight game to Seneca, 46-38, in the tournament opener. The Seminole was led by Preston Baker with 11 points followed by Chris Thomas (7 points), Jason Don Billie (6 points) and Clyde Tiger (6 points).



Kevin Johnson

Lady Seminole's Ariah Osceola blocks a shot by Lady Ballers' Courtney Osceola during the NASA women's championship Jan. 16 at the Howard Tiger Recreation Center in Hollywood.



Kevin Johnson

Lady Seminole's Leslie Osceola attempts to block a shot during the NASA women's legends championship at the Howard Tiger Recreation Center.



Kevin Johnson

Lady Ballers' Tay Osceola tries to keep the ball from Lady Seminole's Chassidy Harjochee during the NASA women's championship at the Howard Tiger Recreation Center in Hollywood.

◆ MOTLOW From page 1A

wrapped up its second straight season without a loss at Doak Campbell. He saw action on special teams for one kickoff.

Motlow hopes to earn more playing time next season.

"That's ultimately always the goal. We'll see what happens based off the spring," he said.

Because of renovations to their home stadium, FSU's spring game will be held April 9 at the Citrus Bowl in Orlando.

If Motlow and other walk-ons around the country need additional inspiration, they only have to look at the national championship game in January when Clemson wide receiver Hunter Renfrow, a former walk-on whose 5-foot-10, 175-pound frame is similar to Motlow, caught two touchdowns against Alabama.

"He's good," said Motlow, who joined FSU out of high school as a preferred walk-on. "That's what I was thinking that could be the case; he was sort of in the same scenario."

FSU was not far off from an undefeated

regular season and a spot in the playoffs. The Seminole no doubt would have liked a mulligan following a last-second loss to Georgia Tech, which only won three games. In early November, the Seminole and Clemson were tied with eight minutes left before the Tigers pulled in front on their way to the national title game.

FSU fell to Houston, 38-24, on New Year's Eve in the Peach Bowl.

As for the 2016 season, Motlow will enter the campaign as a redshirt sophomore and have three years of eligibility left.

He expects the Seminole will be stronger.

"We played a lot of young guys this year," said Motlow, who is in the midst of changing majors from business to another field.

One caveat to the 2016 schedule for Motlow is a game Sept. 24 at the University of South Florida in Tampa. This season Motlow was among the players who did not travel to away games in the regular season, so making it onto the travel squad would be another significant step, especially if it includes a game in his backyard.

"It would be amazing to be home in front of all my family," he said.

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February	Monday, February 29	Wednesday, February 10
March	Thursday, March 31	Wednesday, March 16
April	Friday, April 29	Wednesday, April 13
May	Tuesday, May 31	Wednesday, May 11
June	Thursday, June 30	Wednesday, June 15
July	Friday, July 29	Wednesday, July 13
August	Wednesday, August 31	Wednesday, August 17
September	Friday, September 30	Wednesday, September 14
October	Monday, October 31	Wednesday, October 12
November	Wednesday, November 30	Wednesday, November 9
December	Friday, December 30	Wednesday, December 14

FOR SALE

LAST SIX OF VIN#	YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILEAGE/ HRS	CONDITION	STARTING BID PRICE
A82206	2007	FORD PICKUP	F-150 XLT (4WD)	118,478	Poor	\$6,200.00
A36787	2008	FORD PICKUP	F-150 XLT (4WD)	167,598	Poor	\$7,200.00
138856	2007	FORD SEDAN	CROWN VIC	110,236	Poor	\$1,170.00
345926	2007	CHEVROLET SUV	TAHOE K9 UNIT (4WD)	160,217	Poor	\$4,300.00
348841	2007	CHEVROLET SUV	TAHOE (4WD)	156,251	Poor	\$6,300.00

Note - Previously advertised items are not reflected on this advertisement, only new listings. For more information contact Fixed Assets Dept. 954-966-6300 ext. 20034.

NEW!! - Tribal Members only- access this information at the website: <http://semtribe.com/FixedAssets>. (Registration required)

Poetry by Lyle V. Billie

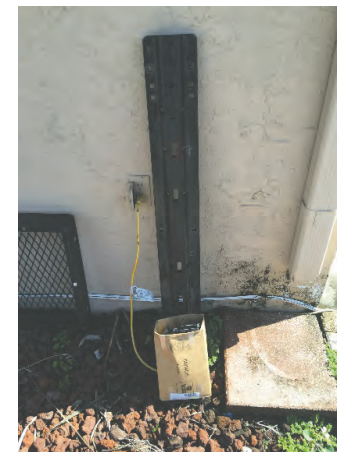
A Brothers Tear

Bra, my tears you never seen but your pain I felt, no love I would show now that's my heart's regret. Years of only wishing to walk by your side, your secrets I will honor and that's my pride. I never understood you until that night you cried, my big bra you was but I let you tell your lie. Somewhere within these years we had some

crazy times, the Big Pimp with a limp this big brother of mine. I will always love you and that's from deep down in my soul, right now my heart is shattered but your memory I'll never let go.

A Brothers Tear
Lil Kraze
Submitted by Lyle V. Billie

Hitch for Sale



- 5th Wheel Hitch
- Universal Rail Kit
- RV Compatible
- 16,000 LBS
- Mounting Kit
- Gooseneck Compatible

\$500

Contact Jason Trinder: 954.790.1165



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LOOKING BACK on 2015



Eileen Soler

Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell signs documents Jan. 8 before Chairman James E. Billie that turn power from the Department of the Interior to the Tribe for land leasing agreements according to the Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Homeownership Act (HEARTH Act) of 2012. HEARTH aims to promote tribal self-determination and enables Tribes to exercise sovereignty over tribal lands.



Beverly Bidney

Immokalee participants accept congratulations Jan. 17 as they pass the finish line during the 15th annual Rez Rally. More than 400 runners, walkers and strollers competed in the tribalwide event hosted by the Immokalee Reservation, which captured two trophies for most participation.



Eileen Soler

The one-story Seminole Youth Home rests on nearly a half-acre on the Big Cypress Reservation. The 5,381-square-foot, eight-bedroom home opened in January 2015 to help comfort kids in crisis.



Eileen Soler

Orange barrels mark the new median along Josie Billie Highway where the road cuts through the center of the Big Cypress Reservation community. The thoroughfare underwent a 2.25-mile widening project that was celebrated during a ribbon cutting Jan. 30.



Eileen Soler

Chairman James E. Billie delivers a speech Jan. 21 during the 2015 Hard Rock International Global Conference at the Hard Rock Riviera Maya in Mexico, south of Cancun. Seminole Gaming's seven gaming outlets ranked ninth, while Hard Rock International ranked 23 of 96 in 2014 among gaming, leisure and lodging companies in the United States, according to the Standard & Poor's Financial Services (S&P) stock market index.



Eileen Soler

At Tribal Fair on Hollywood Reservation Feb. 7, Mervel LaRose, of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, embodies what it truly takes to sing and drum in authentic Native American style. LaRose and his Native American Music Award-winning drum group, The Boyz, based in Minnesota, earned first place in the Tribal Fair northern drum competition.



Beverly Bidney

Victoria Benard and Gregory James II stand proudly after winning the Little Miss and Little Mr. Seminole titles at Hard Rock Live Feb. 6 in Hollywood.



Beverly Bidney

Tribal and construction officials turn the dirt Jan. 28 on the site of the future Big Cypress Medical Center. Located on a 2.6-acre site across from the Frank Billie Field Office on Josie Billie Highway, the two-story center will include dental, optometry, pediatric and medical offices, a gym for physical therapy, a pharmacy with a drive-thru window, a teaching kitchen and the Children's Center for Diagnostics and Therapy.



Beverly Bidney

Tribal Court officials pose under the boughs of the historic Council Oak tree after the Feb. 19 inauguration ceremony. From left are Associate Judge Tina Marie Osceola, Associate Judge Mary Tigertail, Chief Judge Moses B. Osceola, Chief Justice Willie Johns, Associate Justice Amy Johns and Associate Justice Moses Jumper Jr.



Kevin Johnson

DeForest Carter controls the ball March 21 during the NABC-NAIA All-star Game in Kansas City, Missouri. Carter, a 6-foot-2 point guard from Big Cypress, finished his college career as Embury-Riddle's all-time leader in assists and steals.



Eileen Soler

Cowhands, cowboys, friends and Tribal citizens lead 44 cows, steers and bulls March 21 through Big Cypress Reservation during the 19th annual Junior Cypress Cattle Drive.



Beverly Bidney

Tribal citizens race their horses around the track Feb. 14 before an exhibition of Indian Relay Horse Racing during the 77th annual Brighton Field Day and PRCA Rodeo. More than 6,300 people attended the three-day event that showcased Seminole culture, rodeo competitions, concerts and members of the FSU Marching Chiefs band.



Eileen Soler

Seminole Tribe citizens, artists and community supporters view 'Florida' A Seminole Girl after its March 20 unveiling on the bank of the New River across from Stranahan House in Fort Lauderdale. The bronze sculpture commemorates the timeless Native presence along New River.



Beverly Bidney

Seminole Tribe and Hard Rock officials cut the ribbon to the luxury 99-room hotel that opened for business March 12 at Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee. In addition to the four-story hotel with 19 suites and 80 guest rooms, the multimillion-dollar project encompassed the 800-seat indoor Seminole Center entertainment venue, Asian-inspired Lucky Mi Noodle House restaurant, Seminole Poker Room, remodeled Paradise High Limit Room and 5,600 additional square feet of casino space for more slot machines and live table games.



Beverly Bidney

Tylor Tigertail, portraying a Seminole warrior, takes out a U.S. soldier during the Big Cypress Shootout on March 14. The event, which attracted more than 2,100 people over three days, reenacted battles from the Second Seminole War, the longest and most expensive U.S. war waged against Native Americans during 1835-1842.



Eileen Soler

Noogie, a northern grizzly bear, seems cuddly cute but only from behind the protective fence of a new 5,000-square-foot habitat he shares with Little Girl, a black bear, at Billie Swamp Safari. Bears were just one of dozens of new animals added at the Big Cypress attraction in 2015.



Beverly Bidney

The Osceola Brothers Band – comprised of lead singer and guitarist Cameron, bass guitarist Tyson and drummer Sheldon Osceola – pose March 26 at Hard Rock Rising Miami Beach, at which 52,000 people celebrated the city's 100th birthday. Hard Rock Rising concerts, which began in London with Hard Rock Calling in 2006, provide a forum for music icons and up-and-coming artists to connect with fans around the world.



Beverly Bidney

Jaylen Baker watches as his steer is evaluated by a judge during the Seminole Indian 4-H Show in Brighton March 27. Seventy-six young competitors showed their steer, heifers, hogs and small animals during the show.



Eileen Soler

Mary Tommie Robinson gives her love to her grandson Travels Timothy, 3 months, May 4 during a Mother's Day dinner at Chupco's Landing Community Center in Fort Pierce.



Eileen Soler

David Nunez greets his daughter Apolonia Nunez, 16, after commencement exercises May 2 at Indian River State College. Apolonia is the youngest Seminole to graduate with an associate of arts degree.



Eileen Soler

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students and teachers gather around an open flame in the cooking chickee to make Indian hot dogs, frybread and hamburger with tomatoes May 15 at the Brighton chickee village near Fred Smith Rodeo Arena. Divided into groups, children in grades one through eight participated in outdoor experiences that summoned the past on three separate days in May. During age-appropriate activities, they prepared foods gleaned from earth and beast, cooked over an open fire, carved tools and listened to timeless legends that for generations taught the lessons of life.



Rachel Buxton

Alice Sweat is named winner of the Easter bonnet contest during the Brighton senior Easter celebration April 6.



Beverly Bidney

President Mitchell Cypress delivers his acceptance speech June 1 during the inauguration ceremony on Hollywood Reservation. Council and Board members are, from left, Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr., Big Cypress Councilman Cicero Osceola, Chairman James E. Billie, President Mitchell Cypress, Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank, Brighton Board Rep. Larry Howard and Hollywood Board Rep. Steve Osceola.



Beverly Bidney

The Big Cypress Preschool Class of 2015 waits in the shade of a chickee May 20 before collecting their diplomas and graduating onto Ahfachkee School.



Beverly Bidney

Adrian Cypress, 6, center, chows down during a watermelon-eating contest at the Big Cypress Fourth of July celebration July 2. He won by eating more than anyone else in his age group in one minute.



Beverly Bidney

Keith Condon enjoys a Father's Day brunch with his children Kiana Bell, Tyler Bell and Adrian Bell at the Council Oak at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood. Condon is holding what he hoped would be a winning raffle ticket for a father-themed prize.



Beverly Bidney

Destiny Nunez, of Brighton Reservation, is named Miss Florida Seminole 2015-16 and Skyla Osceola, of Hollywood Reservation, is named Jr. Miss Florida Seminole during the the July 25 Princess Pageant in Hollywood.

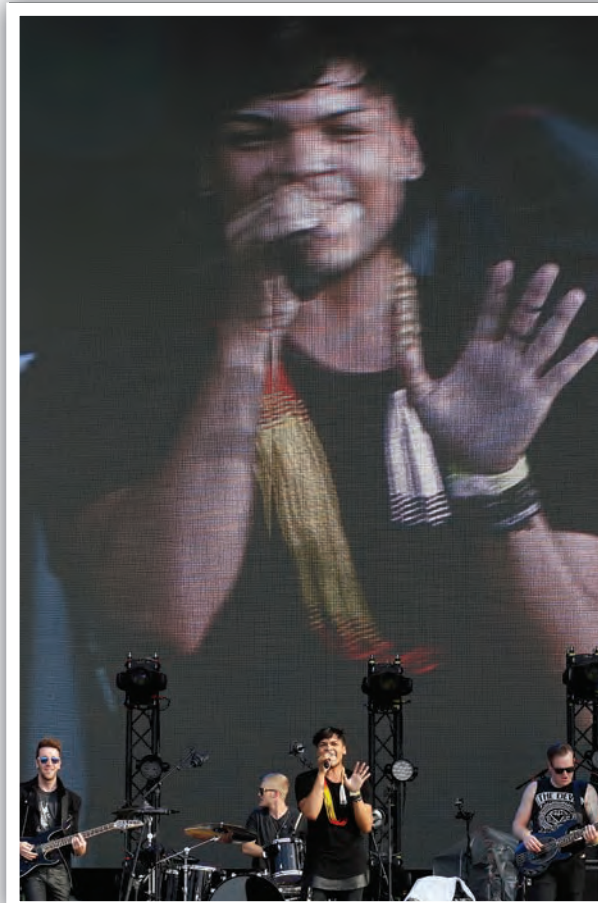


Photo courtesy of Hard Rock International

Singer-songwriter Spencer Battiest, originally of the Hollywood Reservation, belts out one of his newest rock love songs to an enthusiastic international crowd in Spain during Hard Rock Rising Barcelona. Set on the picturesque Platja del Forum, the July 24-25 concert headlined with American rock band Kings of Leon, Latin superstar Juanes, American rock singer-songwriter Lenny Kravitz and Swedish electric dance disc jockey Avicii. Nearly 32,000 spectators attended the event.



Kevin Johnson

As the gate opens, Jobe Johns starts the chase during the steer wrestling portion of the Florida High School Rodeo Association's state finals June 12 at the Okeechobee County Agri-Civic Center. Later that night, Johns posted the season's fastest time in tie-down calf roping in 7.2 seconds. He qualified in both events for the National High School Finals Rodeo from July 12-18 in Rock Springs, Wyoming.



Beverly Bidney

Members of the Immokalee Reservation tour the new townhouses June 26 during a grand opening event. The 1,800- to 1,900-square-foot rental townhomes have three bedrooms, two or two-and-a-half bathrooms, tile flooring, granite countertops, window treatments and plenty of storage. Similar townhomes were built in Big Cypress, Brighton and Hollywood with the intention of giving Tribe citizens who cannot secure mortgage financing access to the amenities of reservation living.



Photo courtesy of Kyla Davis

President Mitchell Cypress inspects the Seminole Pride Beef display July 29 at the first retail outlet for the meat, Broward Meat and Fish Co. in North Lauderdale.



Eileen Soler

CNN reporter Jeremy Diamond interviews Chairman James E. Billie about Trump, an alligator named for Donald Trump following a 1996 visit to Big Cypress by the current presidential candidate. The reporter met with the Chairman at Billie Swamp Safari after research revealed good potential for a novel news story: An alligator named for billionaire Donald Trump, a leading Republican contender, was alive and well and living on an Indian reservation in the Florida Everglades.



Kevin Johnson

The Lady Seminoles celebrate with the championship trophy for winning the Native American Youth Organization (NAYO) 16-17 softball championship July 19 in Atmore, Alabama. They defeated the Cherokee's Rez Raiders 24-2 to clinch the title.



Beverly Bidney

Campers race across the field in the Box Car Derby at Camp Kulaqua Aug. 5. More than 200 youngsters ages 7 to 17 attended the sleep away camp in High Springs, Florida.



Eileen Soler

Pemayev Emahavk Charter School students stream into the school's new media center after a ribbon cutting ceremony Aug. 13. The new 6,898-square-foot building features hundreds of new books, a broadcast studio for student-led news and announcements, a teacher training area and a specialized reading assistance room for children who need extra help. The ribbon cutting also marked the official opening of the school's new gymnasium.



Beverly Bidney

'Ted' the movie star bear – aka Nettie Stewart, peace-loving hippie Cornelia Osceola and Lawanna 'Minnie Mouse' Osceola show off their costume creativity Oct. 29 during the Hollywood senior Halloween party.



Beverly Bidney

Nancy Motlow maneuvers her tricycle around cones during the 11th annual Senior Trike Fest in Big Cypress Nov. 19. Seniors from Big Cypress, Brighton, Hollywood and Immokalee competed for glory and trophies at the military-themed event, and Big Cypress Reservation came out on top.



Eileen Soler

Moses Jumper Jr. and Osceola (Brendan Carter) and his horse Renegade lead the Nov. 13 Florida State University homecoming parade through the streets of Tallahassee. Hailed among guests of honor at special events and ceremonies that peppered the two-day event, the Seminole Tribe's royal court and about 20 other Tribe citizens were received with appreciation and respect.



Eileen Soler

Tribal medicine man Bobby Henry leads students, teachers and Seminole Tribe citizens in a friendship stomp dance Nov. 6 at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's 18th annual American Indian Arts Celebration. Nearly 1,800 turned out for the two-day happening that heralded everything Seminole plus artists and performers from other Tribes.



Beverly Bidney

Janelle Robinson helps Jolietta *Hvsehecet* Osceola learn Creek by playing at the Creek Language Enrichment House in Brighton. The immersion program, which began in August at the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School, is filled to capacity with 10 babies – from 4 months to 3 years old.



Beverly Bidney

Weighed down by four heavy cypress logs, Preston Baker maneuvers around the obstacle course during the log race at Brighton's Indian Day celebration Sept. 25 at Tucker Ridge. Individual reservation celebrations were staged during late September through early October. Schedules were packed with clothing and craft competitions, traditional meals and fun contests that included frybread cooking, canoe races and skillet tossing.



Beverly Bidney

Miss Brighton contestant Krysta Burton recites a Seminole legend to Caleb Burton and Harmony Urbina for the talent portion of the 35th annual Miss Brighton Princess Pageant Sept. 26 at the Florida Seminole Veterans Building. Krysta went on to capture the Miss Brighton Seminole title, while her sister Leilani Burton won Jr. Miss Brighton.



Eileen Soler

Devin Osceola, of Trail, is congratulated by Marine Corps veteran Joel Frank during a Veterans Day community luncheon Nov. 11 in Big Cypress. Osceola was called to the stage to join a line up of veterans because he had recently enlisted into the Marine Corps. The lunchtime event at Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium also recognized the Tribe's current service members and other Native warriors who have passed on.



Eileen Soler

A Brangus bull is led by a cowboy Nov. 21 to a cattle transport truck after being sold at the Salacoa Valley Farms Fall Bull and Female Sale in Fairmont, Georgia. The Tribe pulled in nearly \$1.5 million for 250 cows, calves and bulls during the sale.



Kevin Johnson

Spectators fill the bleachers to watch the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School volleyball team play its first match in the school's new gymnasium Sept. 14. The girls varsity volleyball team came from behind to notch a 2-0 victory (25-19, 25-22) against Osceola Middle School.



Eileen Soler

Dozens of elders from reservations tribalwide gather Dec. 8 for an all-senior Thanksgiving lunch at the Big Cypress Senior Center. Seniors played bingo, won raffle gifts, listened to live music and feasted on chicken, beef and loads of holiday fixings.



Beverly Bidney

President Mitchell Cypress and Curtis Motlow pose together Dec. 3 during the President's toy drive in the Classic Casino parking lot in Hollywood. After collecting hundreds of donations during the three-day drive, President Cypress delivered the toys and Christmas cheer to young patients at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital.