

The Seminole Tribune

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Seminole Tribe honors veterans



With Sally Tommie and Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank at his side, World War II veteran Richard Reynolds is honored with a specially made blanket during the Veterans Day celebration in Big Cypress on Nov. 9.



Seminole veterans, from right, Sallie Josh, Paul Bowers Sr. and Curtis Motlow accept greetings from fellow veterans at the Brighton Veterans Day celebration on Nov. 7 at the Florida Seminole Veterans Building in Brighton.

Big Cypress salutes veterans

BY ANALICIA AUSTIN
Digital Content Coordinator

BIG CYPRESS — Veterans Day celebrations took place at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium on Nov. 9 in Big Cypress. The program was led by Sally Tommie, who was the master of

ceremonies, and began with an invocation by Jonah Cypress. Ahfachkee students Tahniah Billie and Thelma Tigertail delivered the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a rendition of "God Bless USA" by sophomore Aujua Williams. Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie told the audience: "I have my right to stand here and speak

to you all, thanks to our veterans, with them everything is possible. Our veterans are everyday men and women who heard the call of duty and swore to answer it; they made oaths to our people, our country, to our rights, and to our freedom."

♦ See BC VETERANS on page 6A

Patriotic day in Brighton

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Veterans Day was commemorated in Brighton Nov. 7 at the 32nd Seminole Veterans Celebration and Recognition where Tribal and non-Tribal veterans were honored for their service and

sacrifices. The patriotic day began with the Seminole color guard, which presented the Seminole Tribe of Florida, American, MIA/POW and Florida flags. Students from Pemayetv Emahaky Charter School then recited the Pledge of Allegiance in Creek and English. President Mitchell Cypress

described how the annual Veterans Day event came to fruition when he, Roy Nash Osceola and Jacob Osceola realized they wanted to do something to honor other Tribal members for serving the country.

♦ See BRIGHTON VETERANS on page 7A



Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, far left, and members of Joe Dan Osceola's family are presented with a star quilt and plaque on his behalf at USET's 50th annual meeting on Nov. 4 at the Pearl River Resort in Choctaw, Mississippi.

Joe Dan Osceola's life, influence celebrated by USET

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

CHOCTAW, Miss. — The Seminole Tribe lost one of its longtime greats on June 9 when Joe Dan Osceola passed away at 82. Osceola was the Tribe's first president 50 years ago, when he was just 32. That distinction also made him the youngest Tribal president on any council throughout all of Indian Country. Those milestones were just the beginning of a long lasting and influential presence in the Tribe. Osceola was also the first president of the United South & Eastern Tribes from 1969 to 1970. USET leadership recently took note of the significance of his life and legacy. The organization honored Osceola with its "Earl J. Barbry Sr. Lifetime Achievement Award" Nov. 4 at its 50th annual meeting.

The meeting was hosted by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians at the tribe's Pearl River Resort. Seminole Tribal member Sally Tommie, who is a close family friend, nominated him for the recognition. "That's based on his work within the Tribe, within the community, as a family man, as a fellow Tribal member that has built homes and chickees for so many on ceremonial grounds and all the way from Key West to Tallahassee and all points in between and having a tremendous number of grandchildren that will one day continue to move on and do amazing things within our Tribe," Tommie told the Tribal Council at its meeting on Oct. 18. Several members of Osceola's family made the trip to Choctaw to be a part of the USET honor. Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. and Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola were also in attendance.

"The organization was near and dear to his heart," Virginia Osceola, his wife of 35 years, said. "He would try to go to every meeting." USET leadership highlighted a quote during the ceremony that Osceola is known for, which was also mentioned by Chairman Osceola. "If we don't tell our true story, then somebody else will and it may not be our truth. Therefore, we must take that responsibility serious and be a part of the narrative," the Osceola quote reads. USET officials presented Virginia Osceola with a star quilt and plaque in her husband's honor. The plaque reads, in part: "For 50 years, USET has built upon and tried to emulate the strength and resolve of President Osceola in all we do. Without his guidance and leadership, who knows where we would be." Virginia Osceola said that when USET

was in its infancy, two of the original four founding members were reluctant to join. She said her husband brought eight arrows to a meeting and proceeded to pick up each of four arrows one at a time and snap them in half. Then he held four arrows tightly together and showed how it was impossible to break the bunch in two. "He [told them]: 'We have to stick together,'" Osceola said. "The two [reluctant] members came onboard."

A Seminole life

Osceola was a Seminole Tribal ambassador, both in official and unofficial capacities. He traveled extensively to spread the word about Seminole culture and to also learn from other tribes.

♦ See JOE DAN on page 4A

ICWA challenge to be reheard by Fifth Circuit

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

Tensions are high once again as the fate of the Indian Child Welfare Act is back up for review in a rehearing. The 1978 law has been in and out of legal limbo for more than a year. The latest action came Nov. 7 when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit granted a rehearing "en banc" in the Brackeen vs. Bernhardt case. An en banc session takes place before all the judges of a court rather than by a panel of selected judges. It is often used for complex cases or those considered to be of greater importance. Many in Indian Country had been encouraged in August when two members of a three-judge panel of the Fifth Circuit upheld ICWA as Constitutional, finding it was not a race-based statute that would violate the Equal Protection Clause. The August decision affected non-Native American families in several states who had adopted or sought to adopt Native American children. Opponents of ICWA say it's an unconstitutional race-based intrusion on states' powers to govern adoptions. Now the New Orleans-based court said a majority of its active judges have voted to rehear the case. The assertion that ICWA is race-based stems from the challenge more than a year ago by Chad and Jennifer Brackeen, a Texas couple who fostered a baby who was eligible for membership in both the Navajo and Cherokee tribes. Court briefs state the boy's parents had voluntarily given up their parental rights and the Brackeens then petitioned to adopt him — as well as his younger half-sister. Texas, Indiana and Louisiana would later join the lawsuit, siding with the Brackeens. In this latest development, the federal government filed a brief in response to the

♦ See ICWA on page 5A

Editorial

Veterans Day appreciations

• Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr.



Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr.

Welcome to all veterans, family members and friends,

The Seminole Tribe of Florida is proud to welcome you to the 7th annual Big Cypress Veterans Day Celebration, when we honor all veterans for their courageous service and bravery.

To veterans, I want to personally thank you for serving in the U.S. Armed Forces to ensure the freedom that we all appreciate and treasure every day. On behalf of all members of the Seminole Tribe, thank you for protecting us from threats to our lives and liberty.

To those Native brothers and sisters who serve so admirably, I want to offer an extra salute for your meaningful commitment to this great nation. As you stand with veterans from all parts of this country and all walks of life, please know that we take great pride in your desire to protect and defend everyone. Your service is important and meaningful, and you exemplify the finest qualities of Native people everywhere.

To our Seminole veterans, and to their families and friends, you hold a special place in our hearts. You make us all proud to be Seminoles, knowing that you have sacrificed in so many ways to keep us safe. This includes many of you who have served in active combat overseas, in multiple conflicts during the past several decades. Our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you.

We must also acknowledge the memories of those Veterans who have gone before us, with the understanding that we will always recognize your service and sacrifice. Thank you.

veterans, today is your day, and I am humbled and honored to once again welcome and recognize you.

Sho-Na-Bish & Mvto,
Sincerely,
Marcellus W. Osceola, Jr.
Chairman, Seminole Tribe of Florida

(This letter appeared in the Big Cypress Veterans Day Celebration program).

• President Mitchell Cypress



Beverly Bidney

President Mitchell Cypress

Greetings to our esteemed guests and welcome home to my fellow veterans.

It is with a happy heart, as a veteran of the United States Army, that I welcome you to our annual Big Cypress Veterans Day Celebration. As a citizen of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, it brings me great joy to be a part of an organization that makes it a priority to honor our Nation's Warriors, known by many as our military veterans. Recognizing Veterans Day, has long been a part of our practices, as a tribe and we are honored that you have joined us today.

Many years have passed since I was honorably discharged from the United States Army, however, everyday my heart reminds me of those that became my brothers and sisters during a challenging time. It was a time in our history where we willingly committed ourselves and gave everything to serve our country. Some of those military family members have gone on, yet they shall forever live in my heart. While I am a veteran and grateful for the opportunity to serve my country, I am also an individual that places an emphasis on the importance of recognizing those that have served and are currently serving our country. These men and women sacrifice in many untold ways, to provide the utmost protection for our families, communities and country.

Words cannot begin to express my gratitude for the time that you have taken out of your schedule to travel to the middle of the Florida Everglades, for our Annual Veterans Day Celebration. Your presence acknowledges your appreciation for the service to a great country that we call home. Please know that as a veteran, it means a lot to me and my fellow veterans to look out into the audience and see faces of those that have a rich and meaningful connection to this day, and for those that have dedicated their lives to protect our freedoms.

There are many things in life that I can ask for, however, if I could ask one thing of

you, it would be this; whenever you come in contact with a veteran that has served and are serving now, please extend a handshake or some type of honorable gesture to proclaim your support and appreciation for the many sacrifices that they have made in your honor. It may be a small act to you, but trust me, when I say that it is a huge act for us as veterans, it simply means that you care.

I would like to take this opportunity to say Sho-na-bish, Mvto and Thank You, for taking the time to show your support to a group of women and men that have given their best, while many have given their all, including their lives.

I am humbled to be one of the Native American Indians that has served my country. According to the U.S. Department of Defense, as of 2012, there were over 22,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives on active duty, and the 2010 Census identified

over 150,000 American Indian and Alaska Native veterans. We are grateful to share that there has been 27 Native Americans awarded the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military honor.

I offer my heartfelt appreciation to you for taking the time to be with us today, during our 7th annual Big Cypress Veterans Celebration.

May God always bless you and your family,

Sincerely,
Mitchell Cypress
President,
Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc.

(This letter appeared in the Big Cypress Veterans Day Celebration program).

Native organizations respond to court's rehearing of ICWA case

Today (Nov. 7), the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit granted rehearing en banc in the case *Brackeen v. Bernhardt*. The Protect ICWA Campaign, consisting of the National Indian Child Welfare Association, the National Congress of American Indians, the Association on American Indian Affairs, and the Native American Rights Fund, issued the following statement in response:

"This summer, a three-judge panel of the Fifth Circuit upheld the constitutionality of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), and we remain confident that upon rehearing en banc the full court will do the same.

For centuries, the United States Congress, Executive Branch, and Supreme Court have affirmed the unique political status of tribal nations and Native people. ICWA was enacted with that unique political status in mind and applies only to tribal nations that share a government-to-government relationship with the United States and to Indian children and families who share in that relationship. We are confident the Fifth Circuit will affirm

ICWA's strong constitutional grounding.

In addition, for more than 150 years, the U.S. Supreme Court has recognized that this federal authority to legislate with regard to tribal nations and native people is not limited by reservation borders but extends to wherever Indians may live. When Congress enacted ICWA, it carefully balanced the respective powers of tribes, states, and the federal government to create process that protects Indian children nationwide.

ICWA has long been recognized as best practice in child welfare and it includes broad support in this case from, among others, 21 states, 325 tribal nations, 57 Native organizations, 31 leading child welfare organizations, Indian and constitutional law scholars, and members of Congress.

ICWA is vital for protecting the well-being of Indian children across the United States today and tomorrow. The Protect ICWA Campaign will continue to work with tribal nations, tribal leaders, and allies to ensure a strong Indian Child Welfare Act for future generations of Indian families."

• The Community Editorial Board (The Chronicle, Duke University)

More than half a millennium ago, in 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed the ocean blue—as the common elementary poem goes. On Oct. 14, the federally recognized holiday Columbus Day celebrated his arrival to and discovery of the Americas. What the poem and the holiday fail to reflect, however, is how Columbus got lost and ended up on Indigenous land only to leave in his wake horrifying and devastating legacies of mass genocide, rape and sexual exploitation, enslavement and land seizure. To correct the gross celebration of genocidal settler colonialism and to instead recenter Indigenous histories and communities, many states and cities have moved towards the celebration of Indigenous Peoples' Day instead.

Historical commemorative holidays usually look back and reflect upon the past. In this shift, it is important to note that Indigenous Peoples' Day is not only a recognition of and reflection on history, but also a reckoning with the ongoing and invisible issues that Native Americans face. Today, there are more than five hundred federally recognized Indigenous nations that makes up nearly three million people, descendants of the fifteen million Native people who once inhabited the United States. As a result of land seizures of over 1.5 billion acres, isolation by reservations and environmental destruction, Native Americans experience high poverty and incarceration rates, low educational attainment and alarming health disparities related to diabetes, alcohol-related and drug-induced deaths.

Despite centuries of violence and erasure, Native Americans are reclaiming their narrative and calling upon allies to amplify Native voices and stories about Indigenous resistance and resilience. However, the few Indigenous news stories

that make it onto timelines and news feeds tend to be based on stereotypes or only relevant to allies that find common ground with certain issues such as environmental justice. This is convenient for liberals who already believe in environmental preservation and sustainable land use and subsequently co-opt the movement. Meanwhile, these 'allies' remain willfully or unintentionally silent around issues that do not directly impact them, contributing to the erasure of the multifaceted Indigenous experiences.

On Monday, Oct. 14, 2019, the only readily available recognition of Indigenous Peoples' Day from Duke University could be found in a tweet from the Duke University Archives' Twitter page. Although it may be little known, there exists a valuable long-standing history and presence of Native Americans at Duke that deserves much greater recognition. Beneath the glass boxes and beyond the Gothic architecture, the Community Editorial Board acknowledges that the Duke University campuses sit on the occupied land of the Catawaba and Shakori Peoples who have stewarded this land for generations. In 1880, at a time when Trinity College struggled financially, twelve children from the Eastern band of the Cherokee nation were admitted into Trinity College's "Cherokee Industrial School." This was the result of the College taking advantage of an assimilationist federal policy established by the Bureau of Indian Affairs which paid educational institutions to clothe, board and provide education to Native American children, mostly boys and some as young as eight years old. This lasted for almost five years before Joseph Maytubby, a member of the Chickasaw nation from Oklahoma, entered Trinity College in 1892 and became the first Native American student to graduate from Trinity College in 1896.

North Carolina is home to the largest Native American population east of the Mississippi River and the eighth-largest Native population in the United States. This contrasts sharply with the statistic that Native American students make up

2% of the undergraduate population for the class of 2022, but Duke does not require verification of students' Indigenous heritage/affiliation when they apply. In spite of the lack of visibility and Duke's deliberate or ignorant silence in confronting its colonial history, Native students are actively working to decolonize and reclaim their space. It has only been in recent years that cultural space and recognition has emerged such as the Wekit, a new space in the Center for Multicultural Affairs in the Bryan Center for the Native American Student Alliance and Native students on campus. However, even this designation of space to Native students speaks to the colonial nature of the institution—what does it mean for the University which sits on stolen, occupied land to afford a slice of its space back to Native students?

Beyond a physical space, Native students have rightfully begun to ask for the hire of Indigenous faculty and the establishment of Native American studies. There have been calls for allies to uplift and make space for Indigenous voices, to show up to their events on campus and within the community, to actively educate themselves on Indigenous culture, beliefs and history, and to avoid appropriating Indigenous culture. The designation of the Wekit can only be the start of the University grappling with its colonial history, listening to and amplifying the struggles and visions of Indigenous Peoples, and actively supporting a material decolonial movement towards reconciliation and self-determination for Indigenous Peoples.

The Community Editorial Board would like to thank Native American Student Alliance and the Native students who gave us their time and who spoke with us about Native student experiences and visions at Duke. The members of the Community Editorial Board are independent of the Chronicle's editorial staff. This article appeared in The Chronicle, Duke University's independent student newspaper

Native music goes missing in the mainstream

• Doug George-Kanentiio

The music of America was rightfully indigenous for thousands of years prior to the arrival of the immigrants from the east. Not only drums and flutes by the power of the human voice drifted across the plains, through the forests, across the mountains and back into the thousands of communities emanating from the millions of Native people who defined pre-contact Anowara: kowa-the Great Turtle.

The music produced by the first peoples could be as complex as a symphony or as simple as a personal chant sung along a southwestern mountain trail. Songs were made to celebrate life, to communicate with

the winds or to cross across species to speak with the animals. Music was the first thing a child heard upon birth and marked the passing of an elder into the spirit world.

One of the most wicked of myths is that other music forms have been classified as the first "true" American art in this genre. It is not jazz, the blues or rock and roll—it is the music composed and performed by indigenous artists in the pueblos of the southwest or the longhouses of the northeast.

Native music remains in a cultural ghetto, unheard by most people, unmarketed by the major music companies and alien to a world which is in desperate needs of its power and beauty. For the past 19 years the Native American Music Awards, under

♦ See MUSIC on page 6B

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Community



Friends seek to spread Seminole warrior spirit

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

FORT LAUDERDALE — Tucomah Robbins and Jason Melton have been friends for many years, and also have a shared interest in and respect for Seminole culture — particularly through war reenactments and weapons techniques.

Their talents have coalesced through their work with the Tribe's Osceola Warrior Legacy and at ISR Matrix International in Fort Lauderdale.

The Osceola Warrior Legacy — created by Charlie Osceola — does demonstrations of traditional Seminole weaponry in the hopes of educating and sharing historical knowledge.

The original members of the group are Robbins, Travis Billie and Quenton Cypress. Melton joined about six months after the group started.

Robbins and Melton have excelled at their crafts, including a steady rise in skill levels and certifications at ISR — which stands for Intercept, Stabilize and Resolve.

ISR specializes in tactical training and consulting for state and federal law enforcement and military special teams. It also offers self-defense and personal protection programs to civilians.

South Florida's Luis Gutierrez is the founder and CEO who launched the company in 1999. He's known Robbins, 25, and Melton, 26 since they were youngsters.

Robbins' specialties include the Spanish rifle and Muay Thai (Thai boxing), while

Melton's consist of the knife, tomahawk and Jiu-jitsu martial art. They know many other skills as well.

The three met at Big Cypress Martial Arts, both a training spot for Osceola Warrior Legacy and a place that offered martial arts, sports and fitness programs for Tribal members ages five and up. BCMA operated for 10 years before closing its doors in 2018.

Gutierrez was often at BCMA helping with choreography that would improve the group's demonstrations.

"In that time, we developed our traditional Osceola Warrior Legacy reenactment and stunt team under Charlie Osceola's vision," Gutierrez said.

Gutierrez said he also immediately saw the potential in Robbins and Melton. He began to teach them the core concepts and



Damon Scott

Luis Gutierrez, founder and CEO of ISR Matrix International, presents Jason Melton, left, and Tucomah Robbins with their "Subject Control Instructor" certificates on Nov. 8 in Fort Lauderdale.



Damon Scott

Jason Melton, left, and Tucomah Robbins practice with other members of ISR Matrix at a facility in Fort Lauderdale on Nov. 8.

techniques of ISR.

"He gave us bits and pieces and when he saw we could handle it, he started showing us more," Robbins said.

Eventually Gutierrez invited the two to an ISR training.

Robbins and Melton have since joined Gutierrez on trainings in Iceland — ISR's flagship location — and also in Reno, Nevada. They are going back to Iceland in February as instructors — the first as ISR civilian leaders (other than Gutierrez) who are not law enforcement or military.

There's a future trip planned for Japan as well.

'Warrior mentality'

Robbins and Melton, both from Big Cypress, have a goal to combine what they have learned from their time at BCMA, in the Osceola Warrior Legacy and at ISR, and offer it to Tribal members.

Part of the goal includes reopening BCMA.

"We're trying to bring it back. We had a petition at [the American Indian Arts Celebration]. We're going to try and go to [Council] meetings and bring it up," Melton

said. "We want to step in as instructors over there. We want to keep it within the Tribe. We have community support."

The pair also have plans for what classes they'd offer: Jiu-jitsu for younger kids; ISR courses for adults; and stunts for a Native American team to perform at Osceola Warrior Legacy events.

"There's no other Tribe that we know of doing what we do," Melton said. "There's no young group of men showcasing how to be a warrior, or to show that they can fight."

They'd also like to take the Osceola Warrior Legacy on the road throughout Florida and outside of the state to other Indian Country locations.

The group currently showcases the weapons tactics used in the Seminole Wars at Tribal events, the Fort King reenactment in Ocala and at other Florida locations.

"One of our goals is to bring back a warrior society and bring back that warrior spirit," Robbins said. "There are different kinds of warriors, too. There's not just a warrior that's physical. You can be a warrior of the mind. But the warrior mentality is what we're trying to bring back."

Added Melton: "We're trying to cultivate that with the youth."

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As USET turns 50, Seminole Tribe's impact recognized

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

CHOCTAW, Miss. — Betty Mae Jumper was the first female chairwoman of the Seminole Tribe of Florida in 1967.

But during her long and eventful life, she also founded the United South & Eastern Tribes in 1969.

The Seminole Tribe would go on to establish and maintain a constant and influential presence in the organization — one that continues today. USET's reach has expanded over the decades as well.

The Tribe's influence was evident as USET held its 50th annual meeting Nov. 4 through Nov. 7 in Choctaw, Mississippi. The three-day gathering took place at the Pearl River Resort where the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians served as hosts.

"If not for the vision of our founders, we would not be gathered here today," Kirk E. Francis Sr., current USET president and chief of the Penobscot Indian Nation, said at the meeting's first day. "That is why it's most appropriate to start our week by first recognizing our founding tribes."

The Seminole Tribe was one of the four founding members. The other three were the Miccosukee Tribe, Eastern Band of Cherokee and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw.

Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. was presented with a plaque in honor of the Tribe's footprint and for Jumper's role as founder.

"It's truly amazing what this organization has become over the last 50 years," Chairman Osceola said. "Just because you aren't one of the founding four doesn't mean you're not just as important as we are."

Chairman Osceola thanked the "founding fathers, mothers, uncles and aunts." "There is truth in unity and strength, and I think the four founding fathers of this organization realized that long ago," he said.

Chairman Osceola added that today's fights for Native Americans aren't on battlefields anymore, but in courtrooms.

"A lot of people don't know our story. And I know that if we don't tell our story as Native Americans, no one is going to tell it for us, and if they do, they're going to tell it wrong, so it's up to us to carry that on," he said.

Several Tribal members have served as president of USET. They include Joel M. Frank (1986 to 1989), Michael Tiger (1978 to 1982) and Howard Tommie (1973 to 1975).

USET's first president was Joe Dan Osceola, who served from 1969 to 1970.

Tribal members and Tribal employees have also had a role in USET leadership positions, including on committees.

For example, Chairman Osceola and general counsel Jim Shore currently serve as the Seminole representatives on USET's board of directors. In addition, Dr. Paul Isaacs, executive director of Health and Human Services for the Seminole Tribe, is the USET committee chair for health.

"I appreciate everybody who has fought and given, if they haven't given all, they've given some," Chairman Osceola said. "And we appreciate just the honor to be here representing our people, as Native Americans, not just our Tribe, but Native



Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. accepts a memento on behalf of the Seminole Tribe of Florida — one of the founding members of USET.

Americans as a whole."

Expanded mission

In USET's early years, the organization primarily focused on health and education issues.

Five decades later, it still tackles those

areas, but has also become a powerful lobby with state governments and in Washington, D.C. USET oversees an expansive list of issues that affect its — now 30 — member tribes.

Additional committees have been added on culture and heritage, economic development and entrepreneurship,

homeland security and emergency services, housing, natural resources, social services, transportation, tribal administration and veterans affairs.

USET's headquarters are in Nashville, Tennessee. It operates an office in Washington, D.C., as well.



Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr., far right, stands with other representatives of tribes that were founding members of USET.

◆ JOE DAN From page 1A

"He would do anything that would promote the Tribe and all Native People," Virginia Osceola said.

She said his travels took him not only across Indian Country, but also to international destinations like the rainforests of Peru, Brazil and Bolivia.

"He had a connection with people. People were just drawn to him. He'd visit the chiefs wherever he'd go," Osceola said.

She said her husband was always in contact with Seminole leadership and showed respect for whoever was in charge at the time.

In addition to being the Tribe's first president, Osceola was vice chairman from 1967 to 1971 and pushed to change the way Indian Health Service funds were allocated — something he also did as president of USET.

He wanted to ensure IHS funds went directly to tribal nations without having to first go through state government.

Osceola was also instrumental in the expansion of the Tribe's cattle program that first began in the 1930s.

He was a successful businessman and entrepreneur. He built chicken, owned a 24-hour smoke shop and sold arts and crafts on the site where the Guitar Hotel now sits in Hollywood.

The unassuming Osceola had a long list of perhaps unlikely friends.

"He'd say: 'Honey I'll be home at 5:30, but I'm bringing someone for dinner,'" Virginia Osceola recalled. "He'd show up with Rita Coolidge, Bo Diddley, Robin Leach. One of his best friends was [Mötley Crüe lead singer] Vince Neil."

Family man

Osceola had 10 children, many grandchildren and more than a dozen great grandchildren.

His daughter, Courtney Osceola, said that what she remembers most about her father is how family came first.

She said her father often taught her the

lessons of the past — including as it applied to health care.

"He'd say: 'You know how hard we fought for this?'" she said, when he'd talk about the Betty Mae Jumper Medical Center being built on the Hollywood Reservation.

"He told me that sometimes a doctor would come once a week or once a month. They cut funding for IHS. He didn't feel like that was right. It's part of the reason he was the first IHS director," Osceola said.

She said her father was keenly aware of how far the Seminole Tribe had come financially.

Virginia Osceola said when he took office in the 1960s, Betty Mae Jumper was

the accountant and she'd told him the Tribe had \$100 in the bank.

"He made sure the Tribe sustained during those rough years," she said. "He told us you have to know where you came from and the struggle."

Virginia and Courtney Osceola said they and their entire family have good memories of Osceola and are proud of all he did.

"He put family above everything and was so proud of his Tribe and people and the culture," Courtney Osceola said. "He put a big emphasis on education."

She said her father was one of the first Seminoles to graduate from an Indian boarding school; was one of three Seminoles

to attend school in Okeechobee; and was the first to receive an athletic scholarship.

He played football, basketball and ran track in high school.

"He had keys to the city, knew governors, had letters from the Pope and Burt Reynolds was a close friend. He was well known everywhere," Osceola said.

She said her father kept all his family memorabilia in the front of the house, and all his personal mementos hidden away in the back.

"He is his Tribe and he is his people," Osceola said.



Hollywood Councilman Christopher Osceola spoke to attendees of USET's annual meeting in Choctaw, Mississippi, with the family of Joe Dan Osceola gathered behind him. Joe Dan's wife, Virginia Osceola, is holding the star quilt that was given to her. Her daughter, Courtney Osceola, is holding a plaque from USET.

Census 2020 officials focus on full Native American count

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

Indian Country has much to gain, and potentially lose, when Census 2020 arrives next year.

As a result, officials are spreading the word now about how the count — which takes place every 10 years — is important to tribes.

Native Americans and Alaska Native populations were undercounted by 4.9 percent in the last Census in 2010.

Part of the reason for the undercount is the estimate that 26 percent of the Native population lives in hard-to-count Census tracts. The figure fluctuates depending on whether someone lives on or off a reservation, but it is more than double the next closest population group.

"We have been working closely with tribal governments for years on the best way to accomplish our goal of counting everyone in the 2020 Census," Dee Alexander, tribal affairs coordinator for the Census Bureau, recently said in a statement.

Another reason officials cite for the undercount in Indian Country is a general distrust of the U.S. government.

One hope to combat the distrust is the hiring of Census workers who canvass in the communities where they live. The Bureau is offering competitive pay and flexible schedules to help accomplish that goal.

Why it matters

An accurate count is critical because Census Bureau population statistics are used to decide how billions of dollars in federal funds are allocated for public services like health care clinics, schools, roads and bridges.

About \$800 billion will be allocated across the country for 2020, including \$45 billion in Florida alone.

The Census also determines how many seats each state gets in Congress and in state legislative districts.

Florida gained two House seats after the 2010 Census and could add up to two more seats this time around.

Further, companies rely on Census data to decide whether to locate or expand in a particular region and where they will have the best chance for a high return on their investment.

Philanthropic and nonprofit organizations, including hospitals, also use the data to assess community needs and make charitable investments.

2020 challenges

While the Census has never been immune to politics, it has been particularly political this time around.

The Trump Administration made an attempt to add a citizenship question to the 2020 Census, sparking heavy public and political backlash and a battle in the courts.

The addition of a citizenship question was ultimately rejected by the courts, but Census watchers say damage was already done.

For example, some Latinos and immigrants have been scared off by the mere suggestion of the question, and experts are expecting an undercount as a result.

The politics have exacerbated the already ongoing distrust among some groups concerning the federal government.

The truth is that the Census only records how many people live at a given residence as of April 2020 — Census Day. It asks for basic information like age, race and sex.

Census responses are also confidential and protected by law. The Bureau does not share information with law enforcement agencies or immigration officials.

How it works

Most households will receive a notification in mid-March 2020.

The short questionnaire can be completed online, by phone or by mail. This Census marks the first time participants are able to respond online.

Census Bureau tribal specialists said that those who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native should mark the American Indian or Alaska Native checkbox and then enter the name of their enrolled or principal tribe(s) in the write-in area.

Individuals will be able to report multiple races and/or tribes as well.

Higher self-response rates increase accuracy and save taxpayer money by lowering the follow-up costs for nonresponding households.

Participating in the Census is required by law, even if you recently completed another survey from the Census Bureau.

Important dates

- April 1, 2020: Census Day
- May 2020: Bureau begins visiting homes that haven't responded.
- Dec. 2020: Bureau delivers apportionment counts to the President and Congress.
- March 31, 2021: By this date, the Bureau will send redistricting counts to states.

Kiana Bell discovers passion for traditional basket making

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — What most people see is the finished product, not all the behind the scenes work and care that happens along the way.

Kiana Bell experienced the reality quickly though, as she moved through the process of completing a traditional Seminole basket.

“There’s a side to basket making that most people don’t see,” Bell said. “You get blisters on your hands and it’s a lot of hard work. When you finish your hands cramp up.”

Nevertheless, Bell said there’s much more to experience and enjoy about the process despite any blisters or cramps.

For the past two years, Bell, 21, has been learning from other basket makers at the Hollywood Community Culture Center.

It’s where she’d previously seen other women making baskets and was intrigued.

“When I first started, I heard stories from women that the younger women would start basket making, but then stop after a short time,” Bell said.

She decided she wouldn’t be one to give up, and soon recognized that she not only enjoyed the process, but was very good at it.

Bell’s main teacher and mentor is Donna Frank, who has taught at Hollywood Culture for about three years.

“It’s a blessing and fills your spirit,” Frank said about the basket making process.

Her mother – Lena Osceola – started teaching her the craft when she was 12 years old.

Basket making begins by harvesting sweetgrass while it’s still green – usually in the summer months. Then it must go through a special washing process and be set out to dry in the sun for about three days.

“You’re standing under a hot sun,” Bell said. “And you have to know the right moment to pick it.”



Kiana Bell, left, with Donna Frank, who Kiana said helped inspire her to learn basket making.

The bases of the baskets are made from the palmetto palm fiber – typically harvested in the winter months.

Frank said basket makers learn about the importance of weather cycles and the health of the earth’s environment through the sweetgrass and palmetto palm harvesting process.

She said basket making is traditionally done outside under a chickee, and that’s where she usually teaches her students today.

Frank stresses the craft’s rich Seminole history, too. Many basket makers sold their finished products to tourists in order to make a living.

Bell said she’s known Frank for about four years, and while she’s a demanding teacher, she appreciates her commitment to

the traditional ways.

Frank returned the compliment: “She astonished me,” Frank said of Bell. “She took [basket making] to a whole other level.”

Bell plans to continue on with the craft and has encouraged her sister, Adrian Condon, to follow in her footsteps.

Bell and Frank are also working with staff at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum in Big Cypress to possibly have her baskets featured in a future display.



Damon Scott (2)

Above, Kiana Bell’s work could be displayed in the future at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum in Big Cypress. Below, sweetgrass is set out to dry.



Damon Scott

Kiana Bell learned the craft from Donna Frank at the Hollywood Community Culture Center.

Talon Youngman promoted to sergeant in Glades County Sheriff's Office

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Talon Youngman has always wanted to help people and found the way to his passion in the Glades County Sheriff’s Office.

Youngman is the first Seminole and Native American in the department; he joined in 2017 and was promoted to sergeant last month.

“I can’t believe no one else put in for it; I get to blaze a trail wherever I go,” said Youngman, 23. “Wanting to help people is just something that’s always been there. It’s not something you can put into words; you’re probably born with it.”

Sheriff David Hardin pinned a new badge on Youngman during a ceremony Oct. 28 as his parents Rita and Frank Youngman watched proudly.

“He is a very conscientious young man, his heart is in his community,” said Hardin. “He’s a great deputy and has the personality to bond with the community. That’s something I look for because I’m very community oriented in our approach to law enforcement. He is a good fit.”

The Glades County Sheriff’s Office consists of 16 deputies and four sergeants who patrol the county in rotating 12 hour shifts. Youngman leads the team of three deputies on the overnight shift, although he has worked on the day shift. He said the day shift is typically filled with delayed calls about burglaries and fraud. The overnight shift has more in-progress calls such as domestic violence and break-ins occurring in real time.

“You get to find the suspicious people in places they shouldn’t be and can stop a crime from happening,” said Youngman. “Anytime I can deter a crime, it’s always fantastic. You keep someone’s peace of mind when you prevent that from happening.”

Earning the promotion to sergeant includes meeting certain qualifications and passing a written test with questions about administrative duties, disciplinary actions, documenting reports and other daily responsibilities.

“Sergeant Youngman came in at the top of his group,” Hardin said. “He is responsible for the day to day safety of his shift. They come on whole and healthy and we like to send them home that way.”

In addition to his responsibilities as sergeant, Youngman is a certified firearms instructor, general instructor, radar operator and other things that complement his ability to do the job. He said the best part of the job is all the people he gets to meet.

“Granted, sometimes they aren’t the best people, but other times you meet the best of people,” said Youngman. “You get to learn how you fit into the picture, how the county works and how you can make everyone safer. I also enjoy how I can still help my people from Brighton. I can help Seminole Police Department out when they need anything and they are always willing to help me. Out here in the middle of nowhere, we always help each other.”

The population of Glades County is about 13,600 year-round, but balloons to



Courtesy photo

Sergeant Talon Youngman shakes hands with Glades County Sheriff David Hardin after being pinned with his Sergeant badge at a ceremony on Oct. 28.

about 25,000 during the winter season. However, the sheriff’s department doesn’t increase its numbers during the season so each deputy learns to be adaptable.

“We have a pretty big county for four people to cover,” Youngman said. “You learn a lot about how to be a Swiss Army knife cop because we don’t have specialized units. We have to do property crimes, vehicle thefts, battery, animal cruelty and keep the cattle from getting out on the roads. You have to have a pretty varied tool belt.”

Youngman, who grew up in Venus and Lake Placid, has roots in the Brighton Reservation where his grandmother Mabel Tichenor lives. His family has a small cow/calf operation, his father has an orange grove trimming business and his brother has a 300 acre orange grove. Youngman comically calls himself the “black sheep” of the family.

“He is very well respected among his peers and always eager to lend a hand,” said Hardin. “He and I share a great fondness for firearms so we have a lot to talk about when we get together. He’s an avid hunter.”

The future is bright for this young sergeant, the youngest in the department. Youngman would like to get a lot more experience and would love to eventually serve his Tribe in the Seminole Police Department. He believes he chose the right profession.

“Law enforcement is fantastic, you can build a retirement just in case the Tribal money goes away one day,” Youngman said. “There is no guarantee that it will always be there. This is an honorable trade. You hear every elder say to always have something to fall back on and don’t take what you have for granted. That always stuck with me.”

NIGC's Shawna Castellano named 40 under 40 award recipient

FROM PRESS RELEASE

WASHINGTON — National Indian Gaming Commission’s St. Paul (Minn.) Region Director Shawna Castellano was named a 2019 honoree of the Emerging Leaders of Gaming 40 under 40 award. The award was presented by the Emerging Leaders of Gaming and Global Gaming Business magazine. The Innovation Group

designed the Emerging Leaders of Gaming program to provide ongoing networking and career advancement opportunities that propel next-generation executives toward future senior-level and C-suite management positions.

Global Gaming Business Magazine has published the full ELG 40 under 40 list in a featured article for its November issue.

ICWA From page 1A

en banc rehearing, arguing that the plaintiffs “miss the fundamental point . . . [namely that] tribes have authority to set their own membership criteria, which may be based in part on biology or descent[.]”

Once again, the federal government and stakeholders in Indian Country will have to defend the more than four decades old law.

One influential organization in the fight is the Protect ICWA Campaign, formed by the National Indian Child Welfare Association, National Congress of American Indians, Association on American Indian Affairs and the Native

American Rights Fund.

The group works to inform policy, legal, and communications strategies with the mission to uphold and protect ICWA.

There is further support for ICWA in this case from at least 21 states, 325 tribal nations, 57 Native organizations, 31 child welfare organizations, American Indian and constitutional law scholars, and members of Congress.

ICWA has long been recognized as a best practice in child welfare.

“For centuries, the United States Congress, Executive Branch, and Supreme Court have affirmed the unique political status of tribal nations and Native people,” the Protect ICWA Campaign said in a statement after the Nov. 7 announcement.

“ICWA was enacted with that unique political status in mind and applies only to tribal nations that share a government-to-government relationship with the United States and to Indian children and families who share in that relationship. We are confident the Fifth Circuit will affirm ICWA’s strong constitutional grounding,” the group said.

“[The Nov. 7] order does not necessarily mean that the Fifth Circuit will find ICWA unconstitutional, but does vacate its earlier decision and add another round of briefing to the case,” added the National Council of Urban Indian Health in a statement.

A firm rehearing date had not been set as of press time, but is expected to occur sometime in January 2020.

Fawn Sharp elected president of NCAI

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Fawn Sharp was elected president of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) on Oct. 24 at NCAI’s 76th annual Convention & Marketplace. Sharp is the third woman to hold the

position of NCAI president.

Sharp is the current president of the Quinault Indian Nation in Taholah, Washington. Her past positions included managing attorney and lead counsel; and staff attorney for the Quinault Indian Nation, administrative law judge for the Washington state Department

of Revenue – Tax Appeals Division, Quinault Tribal Court Associate Judge, and Counsel for Phillips, Krause & Brown. Sharp graduated with a bachelor of arts from Gonzaga University at the age of 19. She received her juris doctorate from the University of Washington in 1995



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Seminole Veteran Profile

Billie Micco

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

Billie Micco was drafted in 1968 and served for two years in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War.

Micco was going to college in Oklahoma when he received the draft letter. He was soon sent to Fort Gordon in Georgia to complete basic training and then it was on to infantry training at Fort Jackson in South Carolina.

"It was hard at first," Micco said. "Basic [training] is kind of rough. I wasn't used to getting up at 4 a.m. It taught me discipline and responsibility. It's too bad for our youngsters that they did away with the draft."

The draft ended in 1973. After infantry training, Micco was sent to Fort Sherman in Panama for 18 months where he stayed with his Bravo Company until 1970. He then left Panama for home after serving his two-year term.

"I remember it as a poor country; it's where (Jungle Warfare School) was, to simulate Vietnam. I was used to the heat and rain though," Micco said. "They kept saying: 'Get ready we're going to Vietnam.'"

Micco said he came close, but would never be sent to the Southeast Asia country.

While he remembers the overall military experience as being sometimes stressful, Micco said he thinks it's a good option for some of today's young people who lack direction.

There are others in his family that have served in the military, like his cousin Mitchell who was also drafted.

Micco, 77, is a member of the Otter Clan and has lived on the Brighton Reservation for most of his life. His two sisters live on the reservation, while his parents and a brother have since passed away.

He remembers growing up with the "old-timer cowboys" in his early years and helping with farming and other jobs.

Micco would go on to work for the Tribe in its public works department – specifically



Billie Micco

Damon Scott

in water treatment – for 13 years. After that he became a transporter for the health clinic, taking patients to and from appointments.

He retired in 2013 after working for the Tribe for 38 years.

Micco has been married to Mary Jo Micco since 1973 and they have three adult boys – Michael, George and Joey – who all have families of their own.

You might wonder how many grandkids he has.

"Fifteen," Micco said. "Or maybe more," he said with a chuckle.

Some of the grandkids play softball now and he goes to their games when he can.

Micco spends time at Brighton's senior center and attends a lot of the events at the Veterans Building, too.



Beverly Bidney (above), Courtesy photo (below),

Above, Billie Micco stands with Andrew J. Bowers Jr. with the recognition award he received during the Brighton Veterans Day event. Below, Micco is pictured with his mother. The photo was taken sometime between 1968 and 1970.



◆ BC VETERANS From page 1A

After the opening remarks, special guest speaker Anile Adair Locust (Cherokee), of Oklahoma, said she was proud to be here as a "veteran among veterans."

"There's a certain thing called motivation that provides the drive, and ambition, enthusiasm and everything that builds into your inner spirit, believe me a veteran has every bit of that," said Locust, who served in the U.S. Air Force.

The ceremony paid tribute to fallen warrior Johnny Osceola, who served in the U.S. Army from 1976-80. He was stationed in California and Germany during his time in service.

Osceola's family was presented with a plaque made in his honor.

"His exemplary leadership as a member of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, and the selfless commitment, and sacrifice to the protection of our freedom, his service and sacrifice will never be forgotten," Tommie said.

Osceola passed away of cancer and is survived by his wife, mother, siblings, his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

The recognition of veterans continued with World War II veteran Richard Reynolds, 94, who served in the U.S. Marines. He was presented with a blanket made by the Tribe to thank him for his services.

The celebration concluded with guests thanking the veterans on a reception line and a prayer followed by a luncheon.



Analia Austin

Seminole veteran Stephen Bowers, who served in the Vietnam War with the U.S. Army, gives a speech on Nov. 9 during the Big Cypress Veterans Day event at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium. Listening in the background are, from left, Sally Tommie, Hollywood Board Rep. Gordon Wareham, Moses Jumper Jr. and Pastor L.W. Howard.



Analia Austin

U.S. Air Force veteran Anile Adair Locust (Cherokee) addresses the audience in Big Cypress.



Analia Austin

Big Cypress Councilman David Cypress speaks to the audience at the Big Cypress Veterans Day event as his brother, President Mitchell Cypress, listens.



Analia Austin

Aujua Williams singing "God Bless the USA" during the Veterans Day celebration in Big Cypress.



Analia Austin

The family of Johnny Osceola, a veteran of the U.S. Army, is honored at the Veterans Day celebration alongside Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank, President Mitchell Cypress and Big Cypress Councilman David Cypress as Sally Tommie reads the honor.



Analia Austin

Tahnia Billie and Thelma Tigertail deliver the Pledge of Allegiance during the Veterans Day celebration in Big Cypress.

◆ **BRIGHTON VETERANS**
From page 1A

The men decided to have a barbecue and pay tribute to veterans. Word spread, veterans from other reservations attended and over the years the event grew too large to be held in the Big Cypress field office. Eventually it was moved to the Brighton Veterans Building.

During the ceremony, two PECS eighth grade students, CeCe Thomas and Wyatt Thornton read their essays about Veterans Day.

“Each year we set aside a day to honor those who gave,” Thomas read. “They all gave something and some gave everything so that we might live in a country that is free.”

“A soldier displays courage and bravery by trudging through monstrous conditions and back again,” Thornton read. “All the while, they still fight for the citizens of this country without uttering a word of protest. The world would not be safe without such heroes.”

Miss Florida Seminole and Miss Indian World also addressed the crowd.

“Our veterans who fight for what they believe in embody the pride of not only us standing here today, but our ancestors and our future generations to come,” said Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie. “Seminole veterans carry the spirit of courage and unselfish sacrifices from our ancestors. Our Tribe has come far from the persecution we faced during the Seminole Wars, thanks to the men and women who devoted everything to a cause beyond themselves and inspire each of our people to do the same.”

“The quality of this life has been defended time and time again by the sacrifices and bravery of veterans,” said Miss Indian World Cheyenne Kippenberger. “When one is willing to put their life on the line to protect something larger than themselves, it shows the character of a true warrior. You are loved and appreciated every day.”

When guest speaker and U.S. Navy veteran Mike Trim took the podium, he began with a roll call of veterans in the Navy, Marine Corps, Army, Air Force and Coast Guard. Those who served in each branch shouted out their presence.

“There is one language we can all speak as veterans,” said Trim, a journalist and anchor on WPTV in West Palm Beach. “Where did you serve? How did you deal with it when you came back? Veterans Day honors that. The military is separate from civilian life; it’s like two different universes. But you can sit in a room with anyone in the world and connect on a veteran level.”

Trim served during peacetime from 1997 to 2001 on the guided missile destroyer USS McFaul DDG 74 as an information system technician second class petty officer. During his years of service, he went to the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas and “everywhere in between.”

Two special presentations were made to Paul Bowers Sr. and Billie Micco for their service in the Marine Corps and U.S. Army.

Another special presentation, this one a surprise, was given to former Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr., who also served as emcee during the Veterans Day celebration.

“We want to recognize someone who always says he doesn’t want to be recognized,



Beverly Bidney

Seminole veteran Stanlo Johns places his hand over his heart during the opening ceremony of the Brighton Veterans Day event on Nov. 7 at the Florida Seminole Veterans Building.



Beverly Bidney

PECS student CeCe Thomas reads an essay she wrote for Veterans Day at the Brighton celebration on Nov. 7.

to let someone else get it,” said Stephen Bowers, U.S. Army veteran. “During his years as Councilman he [Andrew J. Bowers Jr.] helped get this building done, got the veterans service officer program funded, was integral in getting Pemaayev Emahavk Charter School started and got the Red Barn recognized on the National Register of Historic Places. For all of his achievements and milestones, we had to do it this way because he wouldn’t have wanted it.”

Bowers’ family was on hand to celebrate his work and listen to him accept the honor. He spoke about volunteering for the military in 1968 when he and Stephen Bowers were both at Haskell Indian Nations University

in Lawrence, Kansas. Bowers served in the U.S. Marine Corps in Vietnam from 1968-1972.

“No one asked me to go into this thing,” he said. “We saw a sign that said ‘Uncle Sam just takes the best, do you qualify?’ So we gave it a shot. The man sent us to do a job, we did it and we came home. We didn’t expect fireworks. But 58,000 didn’t make it home. They are who we should be honoring today.”

With that, a roll call of Seminole veterans was read. Those in attendance lined up to shake the hands of other veterans and community members. “Taps” was played to honor the veterans and signal the end of the ceremony.



Beverly Bidney

Seminole U.S. Army veteran Joe Osceola Jr. shakes the hand of World War II veteran Richard Reynolds at the Brighton Veterans Day event.



Beverly Bidney

U.S. Army retired Major General Wayne Jackson salutes as PECS students say the pledge of allegiance in English and Creek.



Beverly Bidney

Seminole veterans Andrew J. Bowers Jr., center, who received a special recognition plaque, and Stephen Bowers are joined by Cheyenne Kippenberger, the Seminole Tribe’s first-ever Miss Indian World, and current Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie at the Brighton Veterans Day event.

Seminole Veteran Profile

Paul Bowers Sr.

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter



Beverly Bidney

Paul Bowers Sr.

Paul Bowers Sr. served as a corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps, but his fellow soldiers in the fields and jungles of Vietnam just called him Chief.

“Since I was a Seminole they thought I knew everything because I was from the swamp,” Bowers said. “They had me walk [up front]. But it was a different swamp; it was more of a jungle and had lots of rice patties.”

Bowers’ service began in 1967 at boot camp at Camp Pendleton in San Diego and ended in 1970 in Vietnam. After eight months in Vietnam, his eardrum was ruptured and he was honorably discharged. But during those months on the ground he demonstrated courage, strength and leadership.

His first time in the field took Bowers and his company to the demilitarized zone between North and South Vietnam. The Viet Cong shot at the American troops and used mortars. Unfortunately, the machine gunners there were taken out. Bowers’ sergeant ordered him to pick up one of the machine guns and keep on going.

“That’s how I got stuck with a machine gun, an M60,” Bowers said. “My MOS [military occupational specialty] was a grunt or warrior.”

He said since he was Indian, the troops had him follow an escaped wounded Viet Cong soldier into the jungle.

“I heard an AK go off and I hit the dirt,” Bowers said. “Three guys behind me got wounded, but they called out ‘Hey Chief: are you still alive?’ I don’t know how I got out of there, but they missed me and we kept on going.”

That excursion led to the discovery of a tunnel, into which they threw grenades.

Although U.S. troops weren’t supposed to go into Laos, many of them did, including Bowers and his company. As usual, Bowers was up front.

“I saw some tripwire lines attached to mines and stopped the rest of the guys,” he said. “I saved the whole company.”

Bowers has plenty more stories to tell about his military service. One day someone yelled his name from a passing truck and it turned out to be fellow Seminole John Wayne Huff.

“He got out of the truck to see me,” Bowers said. “The next day he came back and we talked and talked all day. We talked about Brighton and different things. I never saw him again until I got home.”

And then there is the story about the bear.

A spotter plane told them something was coming their way so Bowers was sent up front with his machine gun.

“I heard something in the bushes. I was kind of scared,” he said. “It was a black bear, but I shot it anyway. I was hungry so I got some of his leg and cooked it. The other soldiers wanted some, too. I told them to go

get it. When you’re hungry, anything tastes good. The next morning there was nothing left but skin and bones.”

Being in Vietnam was challenging and Bowers, like everyone else around him, just wanted to stay alive and get home. His ticket home came at a price, though.

His platoon had to cross a minefield, so instead of walking, Bowers rode on a tank. The tank ran over a mine, which blew up right where he was sitting, causing his eardrum to rupture and leading to the honorable discharge.

Bowers was sent to the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville and from there went home to his parents on the Brighton Reservation. He earned two Purple Hearts for being wounded by enemy fire, but only received one of them.

Jobs were nonexistent, so Bowers traveled to Hollywood to find work. His skills as a machine gunner didn’t open any doors for him, so he took a job at the Indian Village wrestling alligators.

When a gator took a finger, Bowers left and got a job as a day worker for ranchers near Big Cypress and Brighton. That led to working as a cowboy for the Seminole Tribe’s herd, which he did for a long time.

In the 1980s, Bowers started his own herd in Big Cypress and has been doing that ever since. He also served as the Big Cypress Board Representative for about a dozen years.

He met his wife Charlotte Tommie at the rodeo. They have been together for about 44 years and have two daughters, Clarissa and Pauletta, and two sons, Wilson and Paul Jr. Bowers considers Charlotte’s daughter Cathy Alexander as one of his own, too.

Today, Bowers tends to his herd; he has about 100 head. He also is an avid carver and sells his sculptures at a variety of events.



Beverly Bidney (above), Tribune file (below)

Above, Paul Bowers Sr. accepts a plaque from emcee Andrew J. Bowers Jr. during the Veterans Day event in Brighton. Below, Paul Bowers Sr., in a file photo, serves as one of the first members of the Tribe’s color guard.



SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA
AH-TAH-THI-KI
M U S E U M
 A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

Preservation goes digital

BY MISTY SNYDER
 Registrar
 Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

In the Collections Division at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum working to preserve and protect historic objects that tell the Seminole Tribe's story is a top priority. Ensuring that historic objects are protected and preserved includes processes that limit their exposure to harmful levels of light, temperature, and humidity. It also involves storing them in special acid-free and dye-

free protective housing and in collection storage areas that utilize special cabinetry and are areas that are kept secure. All of these practices are designed to protect the objects against external forces and to slow and reduce inherent vice — the inevitable deterioration of objects due to the instability of the materials of which they are made.

Inherent vice applies to all objects but it presents a unique challenge when it comes to our audiovisual materials. From reel-to-reel films and audio recordings to Betamax, 8-tracks, cassettes and VHS tapes and even CD, DVD, and Blu-ray discs — we have all of these types of objects in the museum's Collection- and while the technology has gotten more sophisticated, provided better



An example of the audiovisual objects sent to be digitized.

quality outputs and become more stable with time, they are all still subject to deterioration as well as to simply becoming obsolete. Have you ever put a CD into a CD player and had it skip or not play at all? The organic dye used in the data layer of a CD will degrade over time and it will degrade even more quickly if exposed to UV light or high temperatures, for instance, if you have left the CD in your car for an extended period. This is an example of deterioration. Or have you ever come across an old favorite movie on a VHS tape or music album on a cassette but not been able to play it because you no longer have a VCR or tape player? This

illustrates the problem we can have when objects become obsolete and we no longer have access to the information that is stored upon them.

In order to protect against inevitable deterioration and to continue to provide access to the information that is recorded on these devices the museum actively manages its audiovisual materials through ongoing collection assessments and digitization projects. We recently undertook one of these projects and were able to digitize 117 objects. These projects require careful planning and a detailed process of execution. First, objects are reviewed to assess what

needs to be digitized. This may be objects that we recently acquired or objects that are already in the collection but that haven't yet been converted to digital format. Next, the materials are inventoried and packed up within archival boxes and shipped using an art shipping company to insure that the objects are stored at acceptable temperature and humidity and handled with proper care on their journey. The objects are shipped to a company that specializes in archival quality digitization. Once there, they are processed by specially trained technicians using the appropriate equipment to carefully extract the information from these sometimes fragile devices. When all of the objects are digitized they are returned to us at the museum along with hard drives containing the archival digital files.

After the objects are returned and the initial inventory completed then museum volunteer, Marlin Billie, and I review each of the digital files to be sure that they are functioning, complete and correct. While helping me to complete this part of the project Mr. Billie came up with the idea of showing some of these movies that we now have digitized at the Big Cypress Senior Center. This is exactly the kind of reason that we complete these types of projects: to safely provide access to the Tribal Community to these resources while still also protecting them at the museum for generations to come. The first movie day at the Big Cypress Senior Center was scheduled to be held Nov. 22 with the showing of "Joe Panther."

For more information call the Museum Collections team at 863-902-1113.

Crowds come out for 22nd annual American Indian Arts Celebration

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
 Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS— Nearly 2,000 visitors enjoyed the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's American Indian Arts Celebration in Big Cypress Nov. 1 and 2, the second highest attendance in its 22-year history. More than 600 students from about 13 schools in central, southwest and south Florida filled the museum grounds during the celebration's first day.

Art and culture aficionados from around the state took in the display of Native American art, crafts, jewelry, music, dancing and food. Shoppers were aplenty as they perused booths of patchwork, beadwork, basketry, painting and carving.

"It was our second highest attendance on record," said Carrie Dilley, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki visitor services and development manager. "It was awesome and such a great event."

For the first time, AIAC hosted a frybread contest. Seven contestants were judged by 40 visitors who purchased tickets to taste the frybread and choose the best one. The winner was the only man to enter, Jason Melton. Proceeds from the tickets will be added to the capital campaign for the museum's exhibit redesign project, "Telling Our Stories."

A fashion show featuring the high fashion designs of Lenora Roberts was another new event this year. AIAC's entertainment headliner was the comedy troupe the 1491s, who played one show each day.

"They were hilarious," Dilley said.



A dancer from the Deer family dances in the main tent Nov. 1 at the American Indian Arts Celebration on the grounds of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.

"People stayed until the very end to see their show."

In the demonstration tent, attendees got an inside look at how some of the art is created and students decorated paper feathers. A few Tribal members explained their artwork, carving techniques and even what it meant to be Native American royalty.

The bleachers in the main tent remained full as Miss Indian World Cheyenne Kippenberger, Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie and Jr. Miss Indian World Lena Stubbs explained the role Native American royalty plays in tribes around the U.S. Kippenberger even taught the crowd two words in Elaponke; che-hun-tamo (hello) and shonabish (thank you).

Gator wrestler Billy Walker needed some help carrying a seven foot gator out of its holding box, but handled the creature with ease as he showed off his 30 years of skills and warned the eager crowd not to try it at home.

The Leading Fox and Deer family pow wow dancers followed with a more interactive show than Walker's. After the two families demonstrated a variety of dances, everyone in the audience joined in and danced in a large circle together.

Jim Downey, of Naples, and Mike Stafford, of Manchester, England, enjoyed the activities and shopping to their hearts content.

"He really wanted to experience something Native American while he is here," said Downey about his friend. "It's my first time here and I really like the nice atmosphere."



Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Lena Stubbs and Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie talk to visitors at the AIAC in Big Cypress.



Billy Walker shows the inside of the alligator's mouth to the crowd in the AIAC show tent.



Anthony Gentry, James Mora and Chandler Demayo carry a seven foot long alligator out of the tent at AIAC after a performance by Billy Walker, Gentry's uncle.



Daniel Tommie explains how he carved a canoe to a group of students from the Cornerstone Christian Academy in Avon Park in the demonstration tent at the AIAC.



This young boy demonstrates the chicken dance as a crowd watches at the AIAC.



Bobby Henry talks to a student from the Sagomont School in Weston as he sells her an item from his booth at the AIAC.



Seminoles participate in Tampa breast cancer walk

STAFF REPORT

TAMPA — About 15 members of the Tampa community joined 26,000 others at the Making Strides Against Cancer walk on Nov. 3 at Raymond James Stadium. The original Walk was scheduled for Oct. 19, the same day Tropical Storm Nestor hit the area. Nancy Frank, a 16-year survivor, attended the walk with her family. April Simmons and her family also participated and two of her children, Michael and Azaria, ran a good portion of the 5K course. The American Cancer Society walk, sponsored by Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa, raised more than \$800,000 to help support individuals facing breast cancer. The money will help provide cancer research, patient services such as free rides to chemo, free places to stay near treatment and a 24/7 cancer helpline.



Laura Billie
Nancy Frank holds up the number 16 to show the number years she has been a breast cancer survivor.



Korin Deitch
April Simmons and two of her kids, Michael and Zariana, participate in the Making Strides Against Cancer Walk on Nov. 3 in Tampa.



Korin Deitch
Nancy Frank and her daughters Laura Billie, left, and Connie Osceola.



Korin Deitch
Brian Osceola, grandson of Nancy Frank, and his kids Nigel, Dominic, Dorian and Amari show their support at the walk.

Hard Rock Atlantic City's Pinktober campaign raises over \$32,000

FROM PRESS RELEASE

ATLANTIC CITY — Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City closed out their month-long Pinktober campaign on Oct. 30 by donating over \$32,000 to the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, in which \$21,000 was raised by team member contributions alone. The property employs more than 3,500 team members, all of whom came

together in various aspects to raise money throughout October. Hard Rock Atlantic City raised funds and awareness for Making Strides Against Breast Cancer through internal fundraising efforts, along with food and beverage specials, a concert series, spa specials and pink merchandise sold in the Rock Shop to guests visiting the resort destination. "We sincerely could not be more proud of our team members and guests who came together collectively to make a significant contribution and commitment to American

Cancer Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer," said Joe Lupo, Hard Rock Atlantic City president. "Our team members especially have taken their contributions to the next level this year continually devoting their time and commitment to supporting our community efforts."

Hard Rock
Below, Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City celebrates its Pinktober success.



ERMD manages water levels in Big Cypress

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — In preparation for the possible landfall of Hurricane Dorian in early September, the Environmental Resource Management Department (ERMD) released water in canals across the reservations to lower water levels, thus avoiding the possibility of flooding due to excess rainfall.

To accomplish the task, the department worked with the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The hurricane didn't hit, the dry season started early and cattle owners needed water. But the water levels remained below normal heading into October.

Water on the reservations is usually managed by SFWMD and USACE, which both adhere to strict schedules. Because of the unusual circumstances, ERMD petitioned the agencies to deviate from these water management schedules, assume control of the water moving through the reservation and restore seasonally appropriate water levels within Big Cypress.

"We wanted the agencies to deliver more water into the reservation to give ERMD operations and maintenance staff the ability to move water through the system in a controlled manner," said Kevin Cunniff, ERMD director. "The agencies complied with our request by delivering more water into the reservation and adjusting downstream control structures to allow water to be retained within the reservation."

The ERMD request for a deviation from the schedule was granted and the water flowed freely. The rehydration process, which began Oct. 4, took about a month to complete.

The rehydration operation required a careful, strategic orchestration of pumping water to raise canal levels, manipulating on-reservation water control structures to keep it in a location and allowing for gravity to ultimately disperse the water into the ground and surficial aquifer. There was ongoing coordination with the agencies, which were quick to respond to ERMD's requests. The deviation ended Nov. 6 when ERMD deemed that restoring optimum water levels throughout the reservation had been achieved.

"This is the first time the Tribe was able



Courtesy photo
Chris Self, ERMD water master, runs the E2 pump in Big Cypress in October.

to autonomously manage water operations on any reservation in this manner," said Cunniff. "Now that we have demonstrated the capacity to do this, it is a significant step forward for the department and for the Tribe. We very effectively coordinated with both agencies, which were cooperative and allowed ERMD to critically assess and direct where the water needed to be within the system."

The deviation from the agencies' regular water schedule was an extraordinary circumstance. They still have a schedule they need to keep, but now the agencies know the Tribe can manage its own water.

"We are helping to assert sovereignty for the Seminole Tribe of Florida by demonstrating our capability to manage these water operations," Cunniff said. "It is a new level of service we can provide to the Tribe to protect and enhance Tribal resources. The result is now we better understand how we can manage water operations to meet the Tribe's needs in the future. This is a very powerful tool we have to use; we are very pleased about all of this."



Courtesy photo
The E2 pump in Big Cypress feeds water into the north feeder by the S190 structure.

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Performers are allowed to bring folding chairs into the venue.



SEMINOLE SCENES



HEROES HERE: A panoramic photo of veterans being honored at the Big Cypress Veterans Day celebration on Nov. 9.

Robert Kippenberger



Ginoux Casseus /Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee

IMMOKALEE FUNDRAISER: More than 2,200 fans attended a concert by the Gin Blossoms on Nov. 2 at the Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee. The concert by the popular '90s band was a fundraiser for the Immokalee-based Guadalupe Center, which provides educational programs for more than 1,300 Immokalee children from infancy through high school.



ART FROM THE HEART: Artwork made by students from the Ahfachkee School to commemorate Veterans Day is displayed at the Veterans Day celebration in Big Cypress.

Analia Austin



Courtesy photos (2)

DANCE DEMO: Above and right, Pastor Josh Leadingfox and his daughter Layla demonstrate traditional Native American dances for kids at the Immokalee Boys & Girls Club on Nov. 7.



Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood/Facebook (2)

ROCKIN' & RIDIN': Thanks to Paul Jr. Designs, a custom made motorcycle, complete with a Guitar Hotel front wheel, is on display at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood. Paul Teutul Jr. is one of the stars of "American Chopper" TV show.

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Education



PECS students create videos to spur activism

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — At the beginning of the school year, a group of Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School sixth-graders read some current event articles in class and decided they needed to do whatever they could to change the world.

Living in the digital age, it was natural to use a digital platform to get the word out. They chose YouTube and named their channel “Wild Tribe Studios.” They produce a weekly video about different subjects. The videos are emailed to teachers, who show it to their classes during the week.

“[The students] promote the uses of positive character traits, address and inform on current event topics, generate suggestions on how to fix

and/or prevent these issues and create campus challenges to motivate others to join their cause,” English and science teacher Amy Carr wrote in an email.

The students involved in the program are Sariya Alvarez, JB Anderson, Hilowa Garcia, Brandon Greene, Miley Jimmie, Jayleigh Braswell, Alyssa Madrigal, Jetta Osceola, Yani Smith, Ava Taylor, Bryce Trammell and Haden Woodward.

Subjects they’ve focused on include bullying, a telescope scheduled to be built on a sacred mountain in Hawaii, zero waste at school and other environmental issues. The students read and discuss articles from the Achieve 3000 instructional program and share what they learned.

Through their discussion of the articles, the

students create a script for the videos. Middle school instructional coach Stephanie Tedders lets them use the video equipment and, along with Carr, edits the footage. New episodes are posted weekly.

Each video describes a character trait, summarizes the article, gives tips on how others can help solve the problem and describe a new challenge designed to motivate other students to join their movement for positive change.

The students have also used the videos to promote a fundraiser they did for the Bahamas Red Cross after Hurricane Dorian — they raised \$300 — and the ongoing program promoting a different character trait each week. Some of the character traits, or totems, are kindness, gratitude, leadership, integrity, compassion, assertiveness and self-discipline. When a student is “caught”



Courtesy photo

Alyssa Madrigal, Miley Jimmie, Yani Smith, Hayden Woodward and Brandon Greene help raise funds for the Bahamas Red Cross on Oct. 18 in the school cafeteria. The students raised \$300 to help with post-Hurricane Dorian recovery on the island nation.



Beverly Bidney

Some of the PECS sixth-grade activists pose for a photo on campus Nov. 7.

demonstrating that trait, the group gives them a raffle ticket for a surprise gift such as reusable metal straws, reusable bags and other items. Each video ends with the name of the winner of the week’s raffle prize.

“They have lots of ideas,” Carr said. “We’re trying to choose one at a time.”

During Red Ribbon Week, the group challenged students to pick up trash as they participated in the community walk on Oct. 8.

“You never really notice how dirty the world is until you actually look,” Yani Smith said.

The students realize that most people don’t listen to kids as closely as they do to adults, so they wanted to figure out how to reach out to more people.

“There are a lot of problems in the world and we want to solve them and make the world better,” Bryce Trammell said. “With YouTube you have a larger audience that can spread the message faster.”

“Most people won’t listen to kids, but on a bigger platform we can be heard,” Alyssa Madrigal said. “We are trying to get it to government officials. If we give it to bigger people, then we can get the word out quicker.”

There are some challenges to creating the videos, such as finding the time, keeping up with schoolwork, pronouncing words correctly and choosing only one thing to focus on at a time. But the students clearly enjoy having a voice and seeing how many others watch the videos.

“We’re showing leadership and making a path for people to follow,” Yani said. “They could follow anyone else, but they choose to follow us.”

Through their work the students realize they can make a change. A few said they feel accomplished.

“We know people will listen to us and not judge us because we’re kids,” Hayden Woodward said. “Don’t ever let anyone tell you you’re too young.”

Florida Gulf Coast University celebrates Native Americans

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

FORT MYERS — Native American culture was celebrated at Florida Gulf Coast University throughout November. The second Native American Festival centered on the Seminole and Miccosukee tribes, their involvement in the arts and how their values and cultures are passed along.

“This year we wanted to focus on people in our own community,” said professor Tatiana Schuss, an organizer of the event. “We are hoping to create a regular bond and connection to the Tribes.”

In an event on Nov. 14, the topic for exploration was the Princess program and included a panel discussion with Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie, Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Aubee Billie and Miss Florida Seminole 1985 Naomi Wilson.

FGCU student and Tribal member Lewis Gopher Jr. opened the program with some first-hand stories about the annual Princess Pageant. He was a stagehand for the pageant and got to know it from behind the scenes.

“I heard the stories and saw the photos of the aunts and grandmothers who traveled the country and the world as Seminole princesses,” Gopher said. “Wanda [Bowers] needed an escort for the princesses and I had a nice suit. But she also needed me to carry out the props for the talent competition. I never got to dress up and walk next to a beautiful woman.”

The presence of strong women in her life encouraged Wilson to be independent. She grew up on the Brighton Reservation, moved to Nashville at age 17, came back to Florida at age 24, competed in the pageant and won the crown in

1985. To date, she is the only princess to wrestle an alligator.

“Wrestling alligators was one of the first avenues of economic independence for my people and I had to show I could do it,” she said.

Wilson shared the history of the pageant, starting with the fact that the Seminole Tribe of Florida is a matriarchal society. The first princess, Connie Frank Gowen, was named in 1957 when the Tribe was federally recognized.

“She is still involved in the pageant,” Wilson said. “She is backstage at every pageant. As the ‘backstage grandma’ she helps, supports and encourages the girls.”

In 1960 a new economic venture, the Seminole Okalee Village, was built and a Princess Pageant was held there.

“It had the first and last swimsuit competition,” Wilson said. “Lawanna Osceola won that pageant. Her daughter LaVonnie is involved in the program today.”

It isn’t unusual for generations of families to be involved in the program. Osceola’s granddaughter, Cheyenne Kippenberger, was Miss Florida Seminole and is currently Miss Indian World.

In 1981, the Jr. Miss Florida Seminole was added to encourage younger girls to aspire to Miss Florida Seminole. Also in the 1980s, the Princess Committee was formed to help the Princesses with appearances and travel. The volunteer committee also took over running the pageants to add consistency from year to year.

“The Princess program allows them to grow and achieve their personal goals,” Wilson said. “They are ambassadors for the Tribe and become leaders in the Tribe. The title is treasured by all who reign.”

After a video of highlights of the last Princess Pageant was shown, Miss Florida



Beverly Bidney

From left to right, Florida Gulf Coast University professor Tatiana Schuss, FGCU student Lewis Gopher Jr., Naomi Wilson from the Seminole Tribe’s Princess program, Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Aubee Billie, Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie, Miccosukee Tribal member Houston Cypress and FGCU professor Noemi McDonald pose for a photo after a presentation on Nov. 14 at the FGCU Native American Festival program in Fort Myers.

Seminole Durante Blais-Billie and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Aubee Billie gave their take on the Princess program.

“I loved the bonds we made during the pageant,” said Billie. “We got to know each other and help each other out.”

Blais-Billie wants to use her platform as Princess to bring the Tribe’s perspective to the world at large.

“The program gives you a beautiful network of support from elders, the community and other young women. It is very uplifting and just the most wonderful thing ever.”

A lively question and answer period followed, starting with one from Gopher, who wanted to know how it felt to have young women look up to them.

“It’s one of the things I love most about it,” said Billie. “I was a Little Miss Florida Seminole before they ended the program. I want to bring it back to the Tribe.”

“Being a role model is very important,” added Blais-Billie. “It’s important to be able to see strong Indigenous women.”

Rev. Houston Cypress, of the Miccosukee Tribe, asked since past Princesses helped the current ones, what is their advice for the next Princess contestants?

“Don’t be afraid to be yourself,” Blais-Billie said. “I wasn’t sure what they were looking for in a Seminole woman, but there isn’t just one way to be a Seminole woman.”

Wilson noted that she didn’t have the opportunities these Princesses do, but the role of Princess is what each one makes it.

When the Princesses are out in the world, they invariably encounter individuals who may never have met a Native American. A question about how they educate those people was posed.

“Coming from the reservation to a private school, I get a lot of questions like that,” said Billie. “They even ask if we have running water and wash our clothes in a river.”

Billie said she tries to laugh at those questions and move on.

“I’ve learned to be diplomatic about it,” added Blais-Billie. “We have to have a lot of patience. In this role you have to maintain relationships and learn how to voice your opinions patiently.”

The Princesses were asked what living in a matrilineal society meant to them.

“I can’t imagine life without it,” said Blais-Billie. “It’s ingrained in our culture to respect our women.”

“It empowers us to reach our goals,” added Billie.

Wilson gave a more historical answer.

“We are the ones who helped us survive,” she said. “If there was an elder woman in your camp, you had to listen and respect her. It’s hard to think of any other way of life; it’s who we are.”

Someone in the audience of a couple dozen people, mostly students, asked if the pageant elevates the status of women.

“One of our main roles in the program is to maintain relationships outside of our community,” said Blais-Billie. “It shows we put women in respectful and responsible positions. We maintain our society and the pageant showcases the value of women.”

Kippenberger has been very present in the Tribe and outside of it since she was crowned April. The question was how it affected the pageant. Wilson said it had a positive impact and may have been the reason so many more girls competed in the pageant.

“She brings so much opportunity to us and has brought a lot of attention to the Tribe,” Blais-Billie said.

“Her presence on pageant night helped us and made us all better contestants,” Billie added.



Beverly Bidney

Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie and Jr. Miss Florida Aubee Billie talk to attendees after a presentation about Seminole royalty at FGCU.

Halloween



Courtesy photo

Kinsley Briggs enjoys her food while all dressed up for the Tampa Halloween party on Oct. 25.



Courtesy photo

Seminoles and staff celebrate the first Spooktacular Halloween Party at the Tampa Recreation Center on Oct. 25.



Courtesy photo

Young Seminole enjoy a Halloween costume contest in Tampa.



Courtesy photo

Katlyn Henry, Keason Holmes and Tina Smith enjoy activities at Tampa Recreation Halloween party.



Analia Austin

Margarita Ortiz, Dee Turing, Pamela Spitzer, Jeffrey Maslan of the Seminole Police Department offer trick-or-treat goodies at the Hollywood Fall Festival on Oct. 28.



Analia Austin

Iretta and Viola Tiger strike a pose in their Halloween costume at the Fall Festival in Hollywood.



Analia Austin (2)

Above, creative pumpkins carvings for the pumpkin contest at the Fall Festival. Below, Charlotte Watkins, Leila Patterson, Hurvens Monestime and Kajir Harriott are all smiles at their table for fall themed décor in Hollywood.



Analia Austin

Leona Tommie, Dana Rolle, Tangelo Robinson, Tanya Gibson, Yurima Perez, Jacklyn Burrcon, Coloria Camacho, Concepcion Hernandez, Sergine Boudeau, and Rosemary Chavez of the Hollywood Preschool strike a pose in their mime costumes for their circus-themed booth at the Fall Festival in Hollywood on Oct. 28.



Analia Austin

Members of the Stewart family pose for a family photo in the photo booth at the Fall Festival in Hollywood.

Another leading role for Aubee Billie in 'The Hunchback of Notre Dame'

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

WEST PALM BEACH — One of these days Aubee Billie isn't going to be shocked when she lands a leading role. But that time hasn't arrived yet for the budding young actress and singer from the Brighton Reservation. As a sophomore at The King's Academy



Amber Loveland

Esmeralda (Aubee Billie) is consoled by Captain Phoebus de Martin (Albert Elias) in The King's Academy production of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame."

prep school last spring, she surprised herself when she won the leading role as Kim in the school's production of "Miss Saigon."

Ditto as a junior this year when she earned the leading female role of Esmeralda in the school's "The Hunchback of Notre Dame."

"It's crazy because I wasn't expecting it all. Same with "Miss Saigon" because I wasn't expecting to get it," Billie said after her performance in the "Hunchback" on Nov. 7 as the show, which oozes with professional quality from its high school cast and everything else associated with it, including an orchestra, neared its final run.

"Hunchback," the only school production Billie is doing this academic year, presented singing challenges for its female star. She worked with director David Snyder over the summer on expanding her vocal repertoire in order to successfully grasp the character.

"I usually belt a lot, like being loud, but soprano-wise, I'm not really good at that, so him building my soprano over the summer was the hardest part ever," she said. "He was like, 'Okay, Aubee, stop being loud.' I'm like: 'I'm sorry.'"

"I think I figured it out."

The audience concurred, judging by the energetic ovation she received at the end of the night.

As Esmeralda — a gypsy filled with good intentions — Billie deftly balanced a love interest with Captain Phoebus de Martin (Albert Elias) and a sympathetic concern for the well-being and life of Quasimodo (Christopher Santiago), the Hunchback who desperately needed a friend and found one in Esmeralda.



Amber Loveland

Aubee Billie, center, performs as the gypsy Esmeralda in The King's Academy production of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," which was held in November at the West Palm Beach school.

Billie's characters in "Miss Saigon" and "Hunchback" shared common traits. They both featured her brandishing a weapon — she fired a gun in "Miss Saigon" and wielded a knife in "Hunchback." And although she inserted so much vitality and likeability into her characters, neither survived to see the curtain descend.

Billie, the current Jr. Miss Florida Seminole and daughter of Maria Billie and James E. Billie, said one difference between the two productions is that she felt more comfortable with her castmates in "Hunchback" thanks to getting to know many of them through "Miss Saigon." Trust created in "Miss Saigon" was cemented in

"Hunchback."

"Now during "Hunchback" it's like we're family. Me knowing everyone, it helps our stage presence so much," said Billie, who is in her third year at the school.

PECS' students of the month - October



PECS (2)

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School elementary school students, left, and middle school, above, are honored for being the students of the month for October.

Elementary school
Charleigh Carter
Ja'Vaiah Jones
Malliea Alvarez
Maddox Tommie
Emanuel Estrada

Ryker Miller
Kanae Jumper
Ciel Cypress
Aiyanna Robinson
Jakayah Johns
Aven Fonseca

Jaelle Weimann
Elaina Fonseca
Alanna Pritchard
Dominic Gaucin
Lindi Carter
Marley Jimmie

Liam Berry
Tehya Nunez
Timothy Urbina
Rylie Peacock
Margana Fudge

Middle school
Suriya Alvarez
Serenity Lara
Zach Riley

Legislative internship program available

FROM PRESS RELEASE

WASHINGTON — A Native American Congressional internship is available through the Udall Foundation. The foundation's fully-funded, 10-week summer internship in Washington, D.C., offers distinctive opportunities for Native American and Alaska Native students who

are interested in learning more about the federal legislative process while gaining an insider's view of the government's unique trust relationship with tribes. The deadline to apply is Jan. 31, 2020. For more information visit udall.gov.

Collier County museum showcases artists of Southeastern Tribes

FROM PRESS RELEASE

NAPLES — An exhibition of artists from Southeastern Tribes, including Seminole Jessica Osceola, is featured at the Collier Museum at Government Center in Naples through Jan. 11, 2020. The show, entitled "We Never Left,"

celebrates contemporary artists descended from Native Americans who remained in the Southeast despite the Indian Removal Act of 1830. The highly diverse art on display addresses issues such as cultural preservation, language revitalization, personal identity and expression, community pride and threats to homeland and the natural environment.

The Collier Museum at Government Center is located at 3331 Tamiami Trail East, Naples, Florida. Hours are Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free. For more information, contact the museum at Museums@CollierCountyFL.gov or call 239-252-8476.

Credit and Finance: We have options for Tribal members

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — One of the enterprises of the Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. is the Credit and Finance department.

Bob Maza is the director and has been in the position since 2002. He and his staff of six work with Tribal members to make funds available through various loan programs.

Maza said a lot has changed since he began working for the Tribe about 18 years ago. Namely, the department is working with assets that are literally about 100 times greater than before.

He said the department now processes about 2,000 loans every month.

“As the years have gone on, more programs and funding has been made available to meet the needs of Tribal members,” Maza said. “There hasn’t been one year that we haven’t grown.”

Maza said the board has been able to offer programs with greater flexibility to those who are interested in paying down debt and making their finances more streamlined and stable.

Two of the five loan programs that are of particular value to a wide variety of Tribal members, Maza said, are the debt consolidation loan and the short term loan.

Through the debt consolidation loan, Tribal members are able to consolidate current loans they have up to \$25,000.

For example, consider a Tribal member who is paying on several different loans (credit card, vehicle, bank, etc.) totaling \$23,500 with monthly payments of \$1,030. Through a debt consolidation loan, the payment could be reduced to \$490 a month at a 9% interest rate.

Maza said many, if not most, interest rates under the scenario would be higher. The consolidation also frees up a client’s cash flow.

“It’s used to free up money on high interest loans and high payments,” he said. “You can pay [creditors] off and lower the



The team at the Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc.’s Credit & Finance department includes, from left, Natasha Corona (loan assistant), Bob Maza (director) and Alexis Collard (office manager).

monthly payment. This is the one that’s most effective and valuable to Tribal members.”

Maza said the department has enrolled over 700 Tribal members in the program since it was revitalized in 2012.

Credit and Finance is currently running a special on the short term loan program. Maza and his staff have been promoting it for the past couple months.

“The [short term] loan limit used to be

\$10,000, but now it’s \$15,000,” he said.

Maza said the short term loan can be used for just about anything – vacations, holiday purchases, supplies for kids, smaller vehicles or to catch up on bills.

The loan is offered at a 14% interest rate.

“It basically works like a small mortgage, if you keep the loan open for one month and pay it off it will be prorated,”

Maza said.

The most common loan by volume at Credit and Finance is the dividend advancement program.

It was created in 2004 to combat the predatory practices of lenders who were taking advantage of Tribal members with exorbitant interest rates – often at a 10% interest rate that compounded monthly.

“The board and council said: ‘Let’s

create our own program to combat unscrupulous lenders with [a] 3.5% [rate] instead of 10%,” Maza said.

The program typically operates as a one-month loan used for a particular need.

The other two available loan programs are the agribusiness loan and the payroll loan.

The agribusiness loan can be used for any type of business that is related to agriculture.

Maza said it was previously only offered to cattle owners, but has been expanded to any agribusiness, for items such as supplies, soil, equipment and fencing.

The loan is offered up to \$50,000.

Finally, the payroll loan program is available to any Tribal member who is also a Tribal employee.

Under the terms, a Tribal member can borrow up to \$2,500 at a flat fee of 6%, Maza said.

Maza wants Tribal members to know that his department is available to assist.

“If a member comes in and wants to borrow money for whatever reason, we always look for ways to help them,” Maza said. “Maybe you’re in a financial hardship and need to borrow \$5,000. Even if you are maxed out, we’ll still look at debt consolidation. We try and figure it out.”

For more

Each of the five loan programs has its own set of policies and procedures. Maza said changes to loan policies are typically made known to Tribal members through community meetings and email.

Credit and Finance has three operational offices in Hollywood, Brighton and Big Cypress. There are also satellite offices in Immokalee and Tampa.

The Hollywood office is located at the Seminole Estates Clubhouse at 220 Escrow Lane.

Call 954-966-6300, ext. 10977 for more information.



Hard Rock

A guitar smash is part of the grand opening celebration of Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sacramento on Oct. 30. At far left are Hard Rock International Chairman and Seminole Gaming CEO Jim Allen and Seminole Tribe Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. Other Seminole leaders who participated in the guitar smash included Brighton Councilman Larry Howard and Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola.

Seminole Tribe, Enterprise Rancheria Tribe celebrate grand opening of Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sacramento

FROM PRESS RELEASE

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A Hard Rock guitar smash ceremony helped christen the grand opening of Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sacramento at Fire Mountain on Oct. 30 in Wheatland, California.

“We are extremely excited that Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sacramento at Fire Mountain is able to open its doors to locals, travelers, and lovers of the Hard Rock brand,” said Jon Lucas, chief operating officer of Hard Rock International. “The development of the property has been such an amazing endeavor, and we could not have done it without the incredible partnership between the Enterprise Rancheria Tribe and the Seminole Tribe of Florida.”

The ceremony also included the donation of \$100,000 from the Hard Rock Heals Foundation and the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sacramento at Fire Mountain to the Enterprise Community Foundation, the charitable entity of the Enterprise Rancheria Tribe.

The grand opening party featured a concert by Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductees Def Leppard along with Don Felder and Last in Line. The hotel at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sacramento at Fire Mountain features 169 hotel rooms and suites. The casino has 1,587 slot machines and 57 table games, with exclusive high limit gaming rooms.

“Guests are welcomed with our unique brand of Hard Rock hospitality; it’s a combination of the vibe of our beautifully designed building blended with the passion for service from our team members,” stated Mark Birtha, president of Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sacramento at Fire Mountain. “Many of our employees come from right here in the Sacramento area. We made a promise to hire locally, and that resulted in 70% of our

staff coming from Yuba and Sutter counties. We had over 35,000 applications for 1,300 positions, which shows you the power and appeal of the Hard Rock brand.”

Dining venues include Asian options at Song, and YouYu Noodle Bar, both run by Michelin-starred Executive Sous-Chef Richard Chen. Guests can get quality cuts of California beef and fresh seafood at Council Oak Steaks and Seafood, or they can try options from around the world, buffet-style, at Fresh Harvest. The Hard Rock Cafe brings its world-renowned classic vibe to Sacramento, and guests can find grab-and-go options at the 24/7 Constant Grind. Many of the food, beverage, and sundry offerings are sourced locally from vendors and businesses in the region.

The hotel offers guests an array of

signature brand offerings and amenities, including the Sound of Your Stay music program, where the mood can be set with a complimentary Crosley turntable or rock out in their room with a Fender guitar, reserved at the front desk complete with headphones. Additionally, the property offers a Rock Shop selling all brand merchandise, and the Body Rock fitness center, with Technogym equipment.

“This project is the first of its kind, with two tribes joining together to bring this integrated resort to life,” said Glenda Nelson, chairwoman of the Enterprise Rancheria Tribe. “We are proud of our partnership with Hard Rock and the Seminole Tribe, and we are enthusiastic to continue collaborating to provide guests with an unparalleled entertainment destination experience.”



Hard Rock/Facebook

The traditional Hard Rock guitar smash at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sacramento at Fire Mountain includes Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, Brighton Councilman Larry Howard, Seminole Gaming CEO Jim Allen and Seminole Tribe Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr.

Indigenous Environmental Network, Haskell host first Indigenous Just Transition assembly

FROM PRESS RELEASE

LAWRENCE, Kansas — The Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) and Haskell Indian Nations University gathered Indigenous leaders from across Turtle Island and Haskell students at the first-ever Indigenous Just Transition Assembly in October.

“This is the first convergence of Indigenous peoples on Just Transition. The Indigenous Environmental Network felt the need to compile a set of Indigenous-based principles of what Just Transition means to Indigenous Peoples in North America. Just Transition is a vision-led, place-based set of principles, processes and practices that build spiritual, cultural, social and economic power based upon Indigenous Original Instructions,” said Tom BK Goldtooth, Executive Director of Indigenous Environmental Network.

Haskell hosted the two and half-day assembly followed by the first It Takes Roots Encuentro on their campus. The Indigenous Just Transition assembly is the beginning of a relationship between IEN and Haskell to develop a Just Transition curriculum for Haskell students.

“Indigenous Peoples understand that justice is at the center of all the features of our daily lives. Given the deep experience

of injustice in the lives of our Peoples and the power of our own justice-centered intellectual traditions, I believe this IJTA will help guide the difficult work of moving to economies that enhance all life on our Mother Earth,” said Dr. Daniel Wildcat, Haskell Indian Nations University Indigenous and American Indian Studies interim president.

IEN contracted Lakota artist Arlo Iron Cloud to draw illustrated interviews that resulted in artwork telling the story of what an Indigenous Just Transition means to six assembly attendees.

Haskell students were a pivotal part of the conversation at the assembly and prepared a southern traditional style meal that included buffalo roast, hand-harvest wild rice, salmon, Wojapa, fry bread, and Ponca silver tea.

“It is important for Indigenous communities to come together and have a dialogue about how we define Just Transition,” said Marie Gladue, Just Transition campaigner. “Creating spaces for these dialogues with Indigenous peoples and allies will bring forth how we see our work going forward, what projects are people doing, and learning about issues that impact our environment. I look forward to having a conversation about the importance of Natural Law, healing, and action.”



Courtesy photos (2)

Scenes from the first Indigenous Just Transition Assembly at Haskell Indian Nations University in Kansas.



Arts & Entertainment

Wes Studi becomes first Native American to receive Academy Award

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

There's no doubt the movie business has often had a questionable past with how Native Americans are portrayed in film, but there was no question to the Hollywood honor bestowed to Wes Studi for the quality of his work as a Native American actor.

Studi (Cherokee) became the first Native American to receive an Academy Award on Oct. 27 when he was presented with an "Honorary Oscar" at the Governors Awards in a star-studded Ray Dolby Ballroom in Hollywood, California.

"I'm really proud to be here tonight as the first Indigenous Native American to receive an Academy Award," Studi told the audience, later adding that, "It's a total and humbling honor to receive an award for doing something I love to do."

The Governors Awards is an annual event celebrating awards conferred by the Academy's Board of Governors. The awards include the Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award, the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award and the Honorary Award.

The Honorary Award is given for "lifetime achievements, exceptional contributions to motion picture arts and sciences, and outstanding service to the Academy," according to the Academy's website.

Previous Honorary Award recipients include Gene Kelly, Harold Lloyd, Bob Hope, Greta Garbo, Gary Cooper, Stan Laurel, Cary Grant, Orson Welles, Edward G. Robinson, James Stewart, Paul Newman, Sophia Loren, Sidney Poitier, Robert Redford, Lauren Bacall, James Earl Jones and others.

Christian Bale, who worked with Studi in "Hostiles," presented the award.

"It's clear that Wes is in possession of a brilliant mind and prodigious talent, but more importantly as an artist he has had a profound influence on the perception of his people," Bale said. "When we think of Native Americans in film, his are some of the most distinctive performances that we all remember."

Indeed, Studi has appeared in major motion pictures such as "Dances with Wolves," "The Last of the Mohicans," and "Heat." He's shared the screen with some of giants in the business, such as Bale, Bradley Cooper, Kevin Costner, Daniel Day-Lewis, Robert De Niro, Robert Duvall, Colin Farrell, Gene Hackman and Al Pacino.

Studi's most recent film, "Badland," a Western with Kevin Makely, Mira Sorvino, Bruce Dern and Trace Adkins, opened Nov. 1.

Bale said Studi's face tells a lot about the man.

"When I think about Wes, I think 'My God, what a face. That face that is etched with history, with experience, character, dignity, every emotion under the sun; that face that tells so many stories all at once,'" Bale said.

Bale also said Studi takes Native language seriously, even serving as a language consultant for "Avatar," in which he also appeared.

"He is passionate about the preservation of Native languages and communities. He serves as spokesman for both the Indigenous Language Institute and the Partnership with



Wes Studi gives his acceptance speech after receiving an Honorary Oscar on Oct. 27 at the Governors Awards in Hollywood, California. Looking on, from right, are U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo, and actors Christian Bale and Q'orianka Kilcher.



Wes Studi celebrates with his Oscar.

as everyone else who has had a hand in his films. He also thanked his parents, children, wife of 30-plus years Maura and his fans.

"A big shout out to the fans and followers on social media and the moviegoers that make all this possible for us," he said.

Studi also singled out directors Georgina Lightning (First Nations) and Chris Eyre (Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes) for their films that he was a part of, "Older than America" and "Edge of America," respectively.

In addition to Bale, U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo (Muscogee Creek) and actress Q'orianka Kilcher praised Studi as an actor and a person during the ceremony.

Harjo read a lengthy list of roles Studi has played, including warrior, toughest Pawnee, sheriff, girl-crazy stud, detective, hijacker, trainer of superheroes, bingo caller, foreman, priest, auto mechanic, medicine man, bounty hunter, werewolf and others.

Away from the camera, Kilcher recalled the first time she met Studi. She was 14 and starred with him in "The New World." She said she has come to know Studi as "one of the kindest, most generous humans on this planet."

Studi's impact is destined to resonate for Native and non-Native generations to come. "Over the years," Kilcher said, "Wes has really revolutionized how Indigenous People are portrayed in cinema."



Governors Awards recipients Geena Davis, Lina Wertmüller, David Lynch, and Wes Studi gather for photos at the 2019 Governors Awards in Ray Dolby Ballroom on Oct. 27.

Before presenting the Oscar to Studi, Bale urged the industry to open more doors to Native Americans.

"Too few opportunities in film – on both

sides of the camera – have gone to Native or Indigenous artists," he said. "We're a room full of people who can change that; it is imperative that we do."

The '1491s' deliver numerous laughs at AIAC

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — The American Indian Arts Celebration's headlining comedy group the "1491s" made lemonade during their performance on Nov. 1.

As it is every year, the first day of the AIAC is school field trip day. More than 600 school kids attended every event in the tent which included alligator wrestling, the Billie Swamp Safari critter show and pow wow dancing. Now they were ready to laugh.

The 1491s were faced with a tent full of lemons.

The secret to any good comedy act is the ability to think quickly and know how to handle every situation with humor and grace.

The five members of the 1491s, armed only with microphones and their quick wits, sat on the stage inside the tent and told the crowd they are an "R-rated" group and didn't know they would be performing for children.

"So we're just talking today," said Ryan RedCorn. "We're doing 'Ask an Indian.' There's a lot they don't teach you in school."

The group, comprised of Dallas Goldtooth (Mdewakanton Dakota-Diné), Sterlin Harjo (Seminole-Muscogee), Migizi Pensoneau (Ponca-Ojibwe), RedCorn (Osage Nation) and Bobby Wilson (Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota), proceeded to take questions from the crowd of mostly students. The questions ran the gamut, but started with one from an adult.

"Is Johnny Depp a real Native American," asked Everett Osceola, organizer of the Native Reel Cinema Festival.

"Johnny Depp is as Comanche as Barack Obama is Crow," answered RedCorn.

The 1491s, who call themselves a group of indigenous misfits, started their comedy career with a series of YouTube videos in



The 1491s, Ryan RedCorn, Dallas Goldtooth, Migizi Pensoneau and Bobby Wilson, entertain the crowd at AIAC on Nov. 1 in Big Cypress.

2008. Since then they have produced a play—"Between Two Knees"—and perform about twice a month throughout the U.S. Their name is a nod to the year before the arrival of Christopher Columbus and European colonialism.

Most of the rest of the questions came from the kids.

Q- Have you ever seen an animal make a baby?

A- Sometimes on the res you see

two dogs stuck together. You have to stop everything and watch; it's good luck.

Q- How do alligators communicate?
A- Hisses and clicks, but there's also email.

Q- Why did you start a comedy show?
A- Because we're unemployable. But we are a pretty big deal outside of this tent.

Q- Can an alligator kill a shark?
A- If the shark was on land, I'd say yes. But legally, I don't think they can do

that.

Q- How do you guys make money?
A- We're doing it right now.

Q- Do you pay taxes?
A- Are you from the government?

The crowd loved the show and applauded heartily.

"You learn the most from the hard situations and having to recover when you bomb," said Harjo. "You learn to just start messing with them [the audience] and don't

let it get you down."

All the members of the group have careers in addition to comedy.

"We all do a lot of different things," said Pensoneau. "1491s is something we all love doing, but it isn't a career. We like making people laugh."

Goldtooth is an organizer for the Indigenous Environmental Network, a Dakota cultural/language teacher, poet, artist and pow wow emcee.

Harjo is a feature and documentary filmmaker. He created and is writing and executive producing a television series called "Reservation Dogs" for FX about contemporary Native Americans living in Tulsa.

Pensoneau, a television and film writer and producer, is currently working on "Barkskins" on the National Geographic channel. The series is based on the book by author Annie Proulx.

RedCorn owns a marketing agency, Buffalo Nickel Creative in Oklahoma, and is an artist, photographer and produced the tribute video played before Wes Studi received his Academy Award in October.

Wilson is a visual artist and actor.

"We like to make people laugh," said RedCorn. "A happy, smiling Indian is a dangerous thing. Even though we are a comedy group, a certain demographic is threatened by our narratives; older, white males. I laugh at that."

The group performs about twice a month somewhere in Indian Country.

"What we love about this job is we get to see all the faces of Indian Country," said Goldtooth. "It's our first time here and it's awesome. The nature of this job takes you to the offbeat paths, which are the best places to be."

Celebration in the Sky, largest fireworks show in Southwest Florida, Comes to Seminole Casino Hotel

FROM PRESS RELEASE

IMMOKALEE — Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee will light up the sky with “Celebration in the Sky,” Jan. 18 at 9 p.m. The fireworks display will be choreographed to lights and a custom soundtrack. “Celebration in the Sky” is the largest land-based fireworks show in Southwest Florida. All ages are welcome and admission is free.



Platinum recording artist and actress Jordin Sparks joins Gay Men’s Chorus of South Florida for “Holidays at Hard Rock Live!” In December

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — The Gay Men’s Chorus of South Florida’s holiday concert returns to Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Hollywood on Dec. 15, at 7 p.m. “Holidays at Hard Rock Live!” will feature an evening of festive and celebratory music from the Gay Men’s Chorus of South Florida accompanied by Grammy nominated, multi-platinum, singer/songwriter and actress Jordin Sparks.

Tickets are on sale now and cost \$80, \$60, \$50 and \$40. All seats are reserved and available at all Ticketmaster outlets online at www.myhrl.com and www.ticketmaster.com.

The 130-member Gay Men’s Chorus of South Florida is the largest gay men’s chorus in the southeastern U.S. and is beginning its 10th season.

Sparks received worldwide attention as the winner of American Idol’s season six. Sparks was just 17 years old when she won the coveted title. She has garnered two BET Awards, one American Music Award, one People’s Choice Award and has been nominated for two VMA Awards and a Grammy.

Her self-titled debut album went platinum, selling more than two million copies worldwide.

She has been featured in films such as Disney’s “African Cats,” “Beauty and the Beast” and “Best Man Holiday.”

John Mulaney and Pete Davidson comes to Hard Rock Live in December

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — John Mulaney and Pete Davidson are coming to Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on Dec. 9, at 8 p.m. The comedians will perform two separate sets during the show.

Tickets cost \$105, \$80, \$60 and \$40. All seats are reserved and available at all Ticketmaster outlets online at www.myhrl.com and www.ticketmaster.com.

John Mulaney is an Emmy Award-winning writer and comedian. His most recent tour, “Kid Gorgeous,” won the Emmy for Outstanding Writing in a Variety Special. In 2008, he began writing at “Saturday Night Live” where he appeared as a “Weekend Update” correspondent and co-created characters such as “Stefon” with Bill Hader.

He currently writes for IFC’s Documentary “Now” and for Netflix’s “Big Mouth” on which he voices the character of Andrew. Mulaney’s first comedy album, “The Top Part,” was released in 2009.

Pete Davidson is a cast member on “Saturday Night Live”. Davidson’s current film projects include “Suicide Squad” and “Big Time Adolescence,” which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in January. Davidson is set to star in Judd Apatow’s next feature film for Universal Pictures, which he also co-wrote. Davidson was named one of “Variety’s” Top 10 Comics to Watch in 2014.

Comedian Jeff Foxworthy heading to Seminole Casino Coconut Creek in February 2020

FROM PRESS RELEASE

COCONUT CREEK — Comedian Jeff Foxworthy will be performing two shows in The Pavilion at Seminole Casino Coconut Creek on Feb. 9, 2020.

Tickets priced at \$40/\$50/\$75 per person can be purchased via Ticketmaster locations, online at Ticketmaster.com, or by calling 800-653-8000.

Foxworthy is the largest selling comedy-recording artist in history, a multiple GRAMMY Award nominee and best-selling author of more than 26 books. In 2014, he was inducted into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame.

Foxworthy was one of the judges on the new NBC comedy competition show “Bring The Funny,” which premiered last July. He also has his own comedy channel “Jeff and Larry’s Comedy Roundup” on SIRIUSXM.

Foxworthy’s last comedy special “We’ve Been Thinking,” is currently available on Netflix. He also created and released a game called “Relative Insanity” which uses bits of his material.



Now Open: four new concepts offer guests new taste experiences at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Tampa

FROM PRESS RELEASE

TAMPA — Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa is announcing the opening of four new concepts within the expanded hospitality complex. The four new concepts include Cipresso, a contemporary Italian-American trattoria; Constant Grind, featuring fresh casual eats and coffee; the Pool Bar & Grill serving lunch and dinner; and The Cellar, an upscale wine and retail experience. These four options join the eleven other restaurants, lounges and bars open at the hotel and casino.



Traditional Italian-American Cipresso restaurant features a cocktail and wine program, complete with housemade limoncello, a selection of over 100 wines, and crafted cocktails. Diners can enjoy handmade pastas and pizza in the main dining room, 24 seat bar and pizza counter, or host an exclusive meal in the 16-seat private dining room.

The Pool Bar & Grill restaurant serves casual-yet-upscale selections for lunch and dinner seven days a week, and also offers a selection of ice cream sandwiches filled with house made gelatos. The bar program fea-



tures a list of specialty and frozen cocktails. At Constant Grind, guests will find a selection of casual, on-the-go snacks and light meals, including freshly made pastries, fudge and sandwiches, as well as 12 varieties of house-made gelato. Executive Pastry Chef Stephan Schubert has also developed a menu of handcrafted chocolates. The coffee program features Lavazza coffee and espresso specialty drinks.

The Cellar is a haven for oenophiles, where they can taste and purchase award-winning wines and premium spirits. The Cellar also features Enomatic machines, where guests can taste a selection of wines also available for purchase.

Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons returns to Hard Rock Live in February

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons return to Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on Feb. 7 and Feb. 8, at 8 p.m.

Tickets cost \$90, \$65, \$60 and \$40. All seats are reserved and available at all Ticketmaster outlets online at www.myhrl.com and www.ticketmaster.com.

Guests at Hard Rock Live can expect to hear Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons perform countless hit singles, including “Sherry,” “Walk Like A Man,” “Big Girls Don’t Cry,” “Rag Doll,” “December, 1963 (Oh, What A Night),” “Can’t Take My Eyes Off You” and “Grease.”

Valli rose to fame in 1962 as the lead singer of the Four Seasons, which have more than 175 million worldwide in sales. The group also was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1990.

Bert Kreischer’s “The Berty Boy World Tour” comes to Hard Rock Live in May 2020

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — Bert Kreischer’s “The Berty Boy World Tour” is coming to Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on May 2, at 8 p.m.

Tickets cost \$60.75 and \$40.75. Tickets are available for purchase through Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood’s Facebook and Twitter pages. All seats are reserved and available at all Ticketmaster outlets online at www.myhrl.com and www.ticketmaster.com.

Kreischer is an American stand-up comedian, actor, writer and host. His standup specials “Secret Time” and “The Machine” are currently streaming on Netflix.

Back by popular demand: Rod Stewart returns to Hard Rock Live in February 2020

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — Rod Stewart returns to Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on Feb. 23, at 7 p.m.

Tickets cost \$380, \$230, \$155, \$105 and \$85. All seats are reserved and available at all Ticketmaster outlets online at www.myhrl.com and www.ticketmaster.com.

In 2020, Stewart will celebrate more than 50 years as a solo artist. The singer-songwriter is one of the best-selling music artists of all time, with more than 250 million records sold worldwide during a career that includes nine No. 1 albums and 26 Top-10 singles in the U.K. Plus, 17 Top-10 albums and 16 Top-10 singles in the U.S.

Warner Bros. Records will honor the singer-songwriter with a new album to be released Nov. 22, featuring full orchestral arrangements by The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Stewart has two inductions into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Grammy Living Legend, and in 2016 he officially became “Sir Rod Stewart” after being knighted at Buckingham Palace for his services to music and charity.

Jo Koy’s “Just Kidding World Tour” comes to Hard Rock Live in February

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — Jo Koy brings his “Just Kidding World Tour” to Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on Feb. 28, at 8 p.m.

The 7,000-capacity Hard Rock Live is equipped with state-of-the-art in-house sound and lighting, in addition to clamshell-style seating giving guests an intimate experience.

Tickets cost \$90, \$70 and \$45. Tickets are available at www.myhrl.com. Doors open one hour prior to show time. Additional fees may apply.

Fresh off the release of his highly anticipated special, “Comin’ In Hot,” streaming worldwide on Netflix, Koy’s “Just Kidding World Tour” will feature all new material.

The comedian has had four highly rated and successful stand-up specials on Comedy Central and Netflix. He can also be heard on his weekly podcast, “The Koy Pond with Jo Koy” by Starbuds Audio.

In 2018, Koy was given the prestigious “Stand-Up Comedian Of The Year” award at the Just For Laughs Comedy Festival in Montreal. In 2019, the comedian reached No. 1 on the Billboard Charts for his stand-up comedy album, “Live From Seattle.”

Koy has appeared on more than 140 episodes of “Chelsea Lately” as a season regular roundtable guest.

Psycho Bunny continues retail expansion with Hollywood, Florida

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — Psycho Bunny, the men’s contemporary and golf clothing brand, recently opened its new retail store in Hollywood. The store is located at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood, home of the world’s first guitar-shaped hotel.

The store design concept continues the evolution of the Psycho Bunny retail concept, infusing art with mischief, for a unique shopping experience. Features include an oversized cropped bunny graphics installed on side panels, a neon bunny sign integrated in a gallery wall that is fully customizable to display an array of merchandise, and an LED wall that will be a showcase for the brand to

promote different collections. “Psycho Bunny is thrilled to enter a new market with the opening of its second retail space in Hollywood, Florida.” Psycho Bunny’s Co-Founder, Robert Goldman said, “Following the success of Aventura, we focused on top markets for our continued retail expansion. Florida is one of our fastest-growing markets so it was a natural fit for us. The Hard Rock ethos is shared with Psycho Bunny and we couldn’t be more excited to bring the world of mischief to this location.”

Merchandise is priced accordingly with T-shirts beginning at \$45, polos at \$85, and sweaters/jackets at \$135.



Analicia Austin

Winterfest 2019

FROM STAFF REPORT

Winterfest Inc. is best known for producing “The Greatest Show on H2O,” the Seminole Hard Rock Winterfest Boat Parade.

This Winterfest Celebration welcomes grand marshal singer Brett Michaels and includes dignitaries and other celebrities.

The parade will start in Fort Lauderdale’s downtown, traveling east on the New River and north on the Intracoastal to Lake Santa Barbara in Pompano Beach.

This celebratory event also honors the people who play a huge role in the success of Winterfest – the volunteers. Carolyn McLaughlin Spirit of Volunteerism Award winner will be announced during event.

Here are some activities from this year’s event:

- Black Tie Ball – Dec. 7 at 6 p.m.
- Captain’s Meeting hosted by Hilton Fort Lauderdale Marina Dec. 10 at 5:30 p.m.
- Grand Marshal Experience Dec. 13 at 6 p.m.
- Grandstand Viewing Area – Dec. 14.
- The Seminole Hard Rock Winterfest Boat Parade Dec. 14 from 6:30 p.m to 8:30 p.m.
- VIP Viewing Party Dec. 14 from 5:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.
- Volunteer Party Feb. 27, 2020 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

More information can be found at www.winterfestparade.com.



Trevor Noah’s “Loud & Clear Tour” comes to Hard Rock Live

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — Trevor Noah’s “Loud & Clear Tour” is coming to Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on Jan. 18, at 8 p.m.

Tickets cost \$115, \$90, \$75, \$60 and \$45. All seats are reserved and available at all Ticketmaster outlets online at www.myhrl.com and www.ticketmaster.com.

Noah is traveling the globe and expanding his “Loud & Clear Tour” to 2020 due to popular demand.

The Emmy-winning “The Daily Show” host and celebrated comedian is known around the world for his insightful and authentic take on politics and current events. Noah has written, produced, and starred in eight comedy specials, most recently including “Son of Patricia” on Netflix.

MUSIC From page 2A

the direction of the remarkable Ellen Bello, has put forward the best in aboriginal music through its annual award ceremony.

While the Recording Academy, sponsor of the GRAMMYS, removed the Native music category and regulated it to the obscure “regional” niche, the NAMMYS solicits hundreds of submissions each year. This year alone over 200 artists submitted their work for consideration as the best in Native music over the past year.

These recordings are creative and professional, equal to non-Native musicians in quality. But they will not find a way into the mainstream markets which would then enable the performer to actually make a living do what they clearly do very well. How many North Americans will hear the music of Artist of the Year Shelley Morning Song? Group of the Year The Cody Blackbird Band should be performing their unique rock and roll in much larger venues than they now booked into; my wife Joanne Shenandoah won “Indie Single of the Year” but cannot crack apart that race based ceiling.

Others like Alex Fire Thunder, Shon Denay, Painted Raven, Young Spirit and Atlatl are now part of a long list of honorees stretching back to the first NAMMY show in

1998 which highlighted Native artists who do have national standing: Wayne Newton, Robbie Robertson and Rita Coolidge.

This year’s event held on November 2 at the Seneca Niagara Casino in Niagara Falls, New York, was hosted by Wes Studi, the most noted Native actor of the past generation and Mickie James, the world women’s wrestling champion. They were also elected to the NAMMY Hall of Fame joining other artists of Native heritage whose honorees include Hank Williams, Kitty Wells, Link Wray, Jesse Ed Davis, Ritchie Valens, Felipe Rose, Redbone and the great Lakota ballad singer Buddy Red Bow.

Clearly, a breakthrough has to be made. The NAMMY show is tailor made for national broadcast and the artists of the highest quality. They need their time. The current state amounts to an unacceptable form of blacklisting.

Doug George-Kanentiio, Akwasasne Mohawk, is the vice-president of the Hiawatha Institute for Indigenous Knowledge. He has served as a Trustee for the National Museum of the American Indian, is a former land claims negotiator for the Mohawk Nation and is the author of numerous books and articles about the Mohawk people. He may be reached via e-mail at: kanentiio@aol.com or by calling 315-415-7288. This article appeared on indianz.com.

Sports



Moore Haven finds groove in postseason

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

(Editor's note: Moore Haven's regional final playoff game against Champagnat Catholic was scheduled to be played Nov. 22, after the Tribune's deadline.)

FORT LAUDERDALE — After a few splendid seasons, Moore Haven High School football appeared headed toward a mediocre campaign this fall, but thanks to a pair of upsets in the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) playoffs the Terriers turned an average season into yet another memorable one.

Moore Haven, with a 5-5 regular season record, eliminated teams with a combined 19-1 record in the first two weeks of the playoffs.

Moore Haven, whose roster includes former Pemaeytv Emahakv Charter School students Rob Harris (Seminole Nation of Oklahoma) and Wyatt Hines, barely made the Class 2A playoffs as the sixth and final seed in its region.

In a playoff opener, the Terriers stunned previously undefeated and No. 3 seed First Baptist Academy with a 50-29 win in Naples on Nov. 8. The win was especially shocking because First Baptist had not allowed more than 18 points in a game all season. In fact, just two weeks earlier in a regular season game, First Baptist suffocated Moore Haven on the way to an 18-6 win. Yet, Moore Haven's offense, led by Leonard Sampson Jr.'s five touchdown passes, hit its stride at the right moment in the postseason.

Moore Haven's surprising playoff push continued the following Friday night in Fort Lauderdale as the Terriers ousted No. 2 seed Westminster Academy, 32-13. Once again Moore Haven threw a team off script from its regular season performance. Westminster averaged 35 points a game in the regular season, but didn't muster much success

against a Terriers defense that constantly forced quarterback Bryan Lodge away from the pocket.

Moore Haven struggled with poor field position and penalties in the first half, but the Terriers found their rhythm on offense in the second half.

Trailing 7-6 at halftime, Moore Haven surged ahead for good on the opening drive of the third quarter on a 1-yard plunge by Nate Crawford, whose path to the end zone was cleared in part by the 6-foot-6, 350-pound Harris on the offensive line.

After Westminster trimmed the deficit to 14-13, Harris and the rest of the offensive line continued to win battles as Moore Haven running backs started cranking out double digit gains, including a 60-yarder by Johnny Crawford III that set up another short TD run by Nate Crawford that gave Moore Haven a 20-13 lead early in the fourth quarter.

The Terriers, whose defense came up with a key extra point block and a late interception, broke the game open on Javon Jones' long TD catch with 4:39 left.

The victory secured Moore Haven's second trip to a regional final in the past three seasons. It's also the first time since 1997 — and only the second time in school history — that the Terriers have won two playoff games in a season.

In its regular season finale, Moore Haven blanked LaBelle, 17-0, on Nov. 1 in LaBelle. Freshman Wyatt Hines helped with the shutout on defense. He came in as a substitute at defensive end in the second quarter and made his impact felt immediately with two tackles on his first two plays that led to a 3-and-out. In the fourth quarter, he pressured LaBelle's quarterback to fire a poor pass. Late in the game, Hines switched to offense and took three snaps at quarterback, all of which he handed off on running plays.



Kevin Johnson

Rob Harris and the rest of the Moore Haven High School Terriers burst through a banner as they take the field in a Class 2A regional semifinal against Westminster Academy on Nov. 15 in Fort Lauderdale. Moore Haven advanced in the playoffs with a 32-13 win.



Kevin Johnson

Moore Haven's Wyatt Hines (15) is among a group of Terrier tacklers who bring down a LaBelle player during the regular season finale Nov. 1 in LaBelle.



Kevin Johnson

Six-foot-six 350-pound Moore Haven offensive lineman Rob Harris squares off against a Westminster player during a regional semifinal.

Andrew Fish, STU wrap up solid first season

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

It's a good time to be a St. Thomas University student-athlete as its athletics program continues to expand. The school's new football program, which includes Pemaeytv Emahakv Charter School and Moore Haven High School graduate Andrew Fish (Seminole Nation of Oklahoma), wrapped up its inaugural season on Nov. 16. A few weeks earlier, St. Thomas announced wrestling and men's and women's swimming and diving have been added to its sports roster starting in the fall of 2020.

St. Thomas now has 21 varsity sports which compete in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA).

"Over the past year, St. Thomas University has gained a lot of momentum and notoriety, due to our record fundraising and being ranked No. 1 for social mobility for regional universities in the South by U.S. News & World Report," St. Thomas President David Armstrong said in a press release. "We know that students who participate in athletics are more engaged, socially and academically. We look forward to these new students continuing the positive momentum."

Positive momentum is certainly something the football team will take into the offseason after the Bobcats concluded their first season with a 24-14 win against Faulkner University of Mobile, Alabama.

St. Thomas trailed 7-0, but then reeled off 21 unanswered points in a momentum-changing second quarter en route to its first-ever home victory in front of 1,850 at Monsignor Pace High School in Miami Gardens.

The Bobcats concluded the season with a respectable 4-6 record for a first-year

program. Other wins came against Union College, Allen University and Warner University.

The night before the season finale Fish showed support for his alma mater as he watched Moore Haven advance in the FHSAA playoffs with a win against Westminster Academy in Fort Lauderdale. Fish said the triumph against Warner — a 38-31 come-from-behind win in Lakeland — had been the team's best win.

Fish, a left tackle, started every game. He said the offense improved throughout the season and that he's looking forward to next year. The offensive line did not allow a sack in the season finale against Faulkner and helped pave the way for 266 yards of total offense.

St. Thomas won two of its final three games with the lone setback coming against Keiser University, 39-32, a game Fish said St. Thomas should have won.



Kevin Johnson

Andrew Fish (77) in action in St. Thomas University's first-ever football game on Sept. 7 in Miami Gardens.



Kevin Johnson

Former Pemaeytv Emahakv Charter School and Moore Haven High student Andrew Fish (77) was a starting offensive lineman for the St. Thomas University football team this season. The Bobcats finished their inaugural season with a 4-6 record.

Seminoles, EIRA compete at INFR in Las Vegas

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

Three top 10 overall finishes were among the highlights for the Seminole Tribe and the Eastern Indian Rodeo Association at the Indian National Finals Rodeo.

Held in late October at South Pointe Equestrian Center in Las Vegas, the annual event draws hundreds of the best cowboys and cowgirls from Indian Country.

Blevyns Jumper turned in the top performance from the EIRA. He finished seventh overall in tie-down roping, which included round 4's fifth-fastest time (11.19). He also competed in steer wrestling, garnering the ninth fastest time in round three (10.15).

Jacoby Johns finished ninth overall in bareback riding. He had the fifth best score in round two (75).

Shelby Osceola finished tenth overall in ladies breakaway roping. She started the competition in strong fashion with the sixth fastest time on day one (2.64) and the fifth fastest time on day two (2.52).

Madisyn Osceola had the eighth fastest time in ladies breakaway in round three (3.61).

Also, Loretta Peterson (15.5) and Cyiah Avila (15.6) finished ninth and tenth, respectively, in round three of ladies barrel racing. Peterson also finished ninth in round four.

Justin Gopher and Adale Driggers teamed up for the eighth fastest time in team roping in round three (12.13).

Connor Osborn and Josh Jumper turned in the 12th fastest time in team roping on day two (10.34).

2019 INFR World Champions

- Bareback - Jayco Roper
- Steer Wrestling - Bryton Edmundson
- Ladies Breakaway - Jareth Hale
- Saddle Bronc - Cole Elshere
- Tie-down Roping - Quinton Inman
- Team Roping - Edward Hawley, Myles

- John
- Ladies Barrels - Sonya Dodging Horse
- Bull Riding - Wyatt Nez
- Ladies All-Around - Shantell Brewer
- Men's All-Around - Fran Marchand



Starlyn Smith

Blevyns Jumper gets ready for the take down in steer wrestling at the Indian National Finals Rodeo in October at South Pointe Equestrian Center in Las Vegas. Jumper also excelled in tie-down roping.



Starlyn Smith

Norman Osceola competes in bull riding at the Indian National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas.



Starlyn Smith

Jacoby Johns, one of Indian Country's top professional bareback riders, competes at INFR.

♦ See INFR on page 6C



Starlyn Smith

Janee Bankston and her horse avoid hitting the barrel in barrel racing.



Starlyn Smith

Shelby Osceola puts in an impressive performance in ladies breakaway roping.



Starlyn Smith

Loretta Peterson and her horse make a tight turn around the barrel.



Starlyn Smith

Jalee Wilcox and her horse make the turn in barrel racing.

NSU's Skyla Osceola doesn't allow injuries to keep her down

Point guard from Hollywood Reservation scored 17 points vs FAU

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

DAVIE — It's a good thing Skyla Osceola can find silver linings in injuries because the Nova Southeastern University point guard from the Hollywood Reservation has had to overcome more than her fair share of obstacles in her playing career, including another injury to start this season.

She's become accustomed to dealing with injuries — she missed a full season in high school and another one last year at NSU — but rather than sulk while healing and rehabbing she looks for ways to improve her game while always carrying an optimistic outlook.

"I think my injuries have made me play a lot smarter," she said. "I'm not the quickest or the fastest, but it definitely makes me understand more angles better because basketball is all angles. The more I can anticipate where the person is going to go the quicker I can get there and cut them off."

Osceola's comment came a couple days after NSU faced Florida Atlantic University on Nov. 2 in an exhibition game in Boca Raton. It marked Osceola's first game action since February 2018. Although FAU, a Division I program, cruised past Division II NSU, 91-65, Osceola's return was chock full of encouraging signs. She scored a team-high 17 points thanks to a sharp shooting night that saw her go 5-of-6 from the field and 2-of-3 from the foul line.

"In the beginning I was a little nervous," she said. "When I went in I was a little rusty, but after I came out and caught a breather I relaxed and I was like 'I'm just playing. I've got nothing to lose; it's just an exhibition game. I'm going to out and do the best I can.'"

Being back on the court signaled a personal triumph for Osceola, who was sidelined for the entire 2018-19 season with a torn plantar fascia in her left foot; that's the ligament that connects the heel bone to the toes.

"It had been over a year-and-a-half since I had played and I really missed it," she said. "I think that first game showed how hard I've been working and how much work



Skyla Osceola, second from right, and the rest of the Nova Southeastern University bench erupt with joy while cheering for their teammates in the Sharks' 81-66 win against Bentley University on Nov. 18 at Rick Case Arena on the NSU campus in Davie. Osceola did not play due to an injury.

Kevin Johnson

I've put in to perform when I came back."

But the joy of being back on the court didn't last long. In the team's second regular season game — an 85-78 loss to Delta State on Nov. 9 in Cleveland, Miss. — Osceola suffered a left knee injury late in the game.

"I was playing defense and I stopped to plant and it just buckled on me," she said.

Osceola said the initial prognosis was a partial tear in her ACL. She hoped to be back in about four weeks providing further damage wasn't discovered with additional testing.

Osceola, who has previously had surgery on both her knees, can't seem to shake the injury bug.

"Adversity is really testing me," she

said.

Her health and her play were good as a freshman in 2017-18 when she led NSU with a team-high 90 assists and posted a 3.33 assist-turnover ratio, which was best in its conference and ranked second in the nation.

Despite having to deal with another injury this season, Osceola remains an upbeat, positive-thinking leader for the Sharks. After cheering for her teammates from the bench in NSU's home opener on Nov. 18 at Rick Case Arena — an 81-66 win against Bentley University — Osceola praised the play of her team.

"I was really proud of them. We struggled the first two games and we bounced back really well," she said.

Osceola, too, will have to bounce back. "My main goal is to be healthy once conference time comes around," she said.

NSU plays in the Sunshine State Conference. The early part of the season includes several games against non-conference foes.

"It's a difficult schedule," she said. "We're playing a lot of nationally ranked teams, which is great for us because that will help us in the long run when we get ready for playoffs."

NSU finished 21-12 last season and reached the NCAA Division II Elite Eight.

Osceola, a junior, has three years of basketball eligibility left, including this season. Her major is exercise sports sciences.

Although she's not certain yet what career path she wants to pursue, she knows that she wants to coach after her playing days end. She already has experience within the Tribe having coached high school players in Native tournaments and younger players at youth camps.

She said she plans to graduate next year and then perhaps pursue a master's degree.

As for basketball, she said she won't let her most recent injury derail her playing career.

"It doesn't get easier," she said, "but you kind of get used to it."

Okeechobee boys cross country season ends at regionals

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

Kaleb Thomas, from the Brighton Reservation, wrapped up his high school

cross country career Nov. 2 at the Class 3A-Region 4 meet in Stuart.

Thomas, the only senior on the Okeechobee High boys cross country team, improved his time by nearly a full minute

compared to his mark in the district meet. He finished regionals in 21:39 (91st out of 123). A week earlier his time was 22:32 (85th place) in districts.

Although Thomas's high school cross country career has ended, Okeechobee has two other younger runners with Seminole

connections. Pematv Emahav Charter School grad Jace Brown turned in a strong showing at regionals with a time of 21:12, which was good enough for second on the team and he was the fourth fastest freshman in the entire race. He finished regionals with the exact same time as he did in districts.

Also, sophomore Seminole Dakota Entry, who did not run in regionals, finished in 25:19 in districts.

As a team, Okeechobee finished ninth out of 11 teams in districts and 14th out of 17 in regionals.

Nobody from the boys squad qualified for the state finals.



Kevin Johnson

The Tribe was represented on Okeechobee High boys cross country team this fall as senior Kaleb Thomas, left, and sophomore Dakota Entry, right, competed for the Brahmins.



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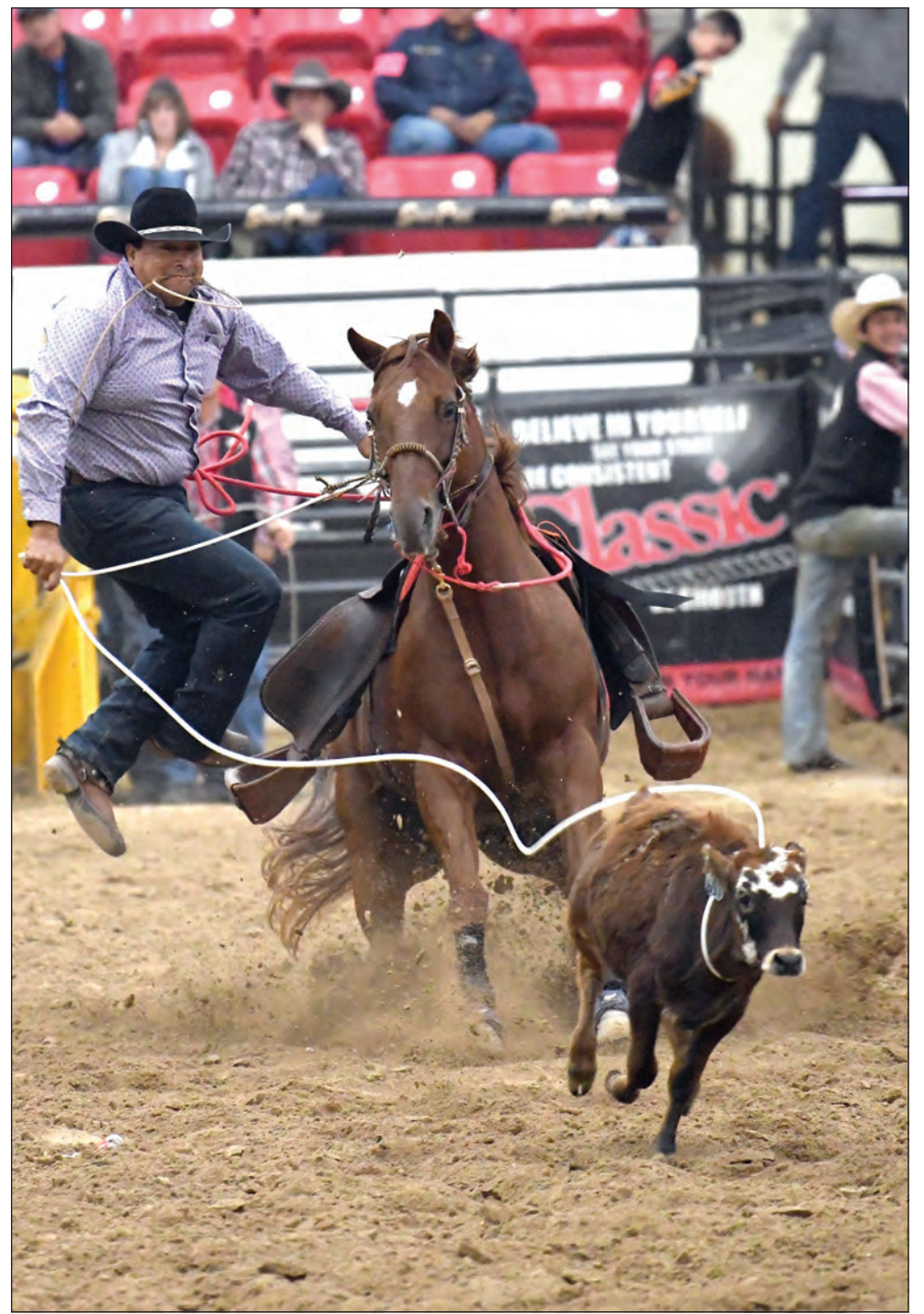


◆ INFR
From page 2C



Theresa Johns lassos the target in senior breakaway at the Indian National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas.

Starlyn Smith



Ivan Bruised Head dismounts as he goes after the calf in tie-down roping.

Starlyn Smith



Jaylen Baker shows good form as he tries to stay on the bull for eight seconds in jr. bull riding.

Starlyn Smith



Cyiah Avila and her horse kick up the dirt as they go around a barrel in ladies barrel racing.

Starlyn Smith



Madisyn Osceola gets a perfect lasso in ladies breakaway.

Starlyn Smith



Adale Driggers and Justin Gopher compete in team roping.

Starlyn Smith



Josh Jumper, left, and Connor Osborn team up in team roping.

Starlyn Smith



Jaytron Baker competes in jr. breakaway.

Starlyn Smith



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Isleta Pueblo Chief judge becomes first Native American to deliver opening Prayer in the U.S. House of Representatives

FROM PRESS RELEASE

WASHINGTON — Isleta Pueblo Chief Judge Verna Teller made history Nov. 13 when she became the first Native American to deliver the opening prayer in the U.S. House of Representatives. Teller, a guest of Congresswoman Deb Haaland, delivered the invocation as Congresswoman Deb Haaland (NM-01) celebrated her first Native American History Month as a Member of Congress.

Teller's prayer highlighted the Native American connection to the Earth as a call to respect natural resources and the life they provide. Haaland invited Teller to deliver the historic prayer as part of her work to bring the indigenous voices to Congress and inspire young girls to reach for leadership positions.

Teller's full prayer as prepared for delivery:

Oh Creator and Great Mother. Having asked and received your permission to invoke your blessings today to

all directions: East, North, West, South and the Center.

We thank you for the life you give to all your children: the two legged ones, the four legged, those who live in the waters, and those who watch over us from the skies above.

Sacred Pollen, sacred Earth Mother, sacred Water that manifest your desires, oh Creator and Great Mother, we thank them for the nourishment they give us equally with no regard to race color or creed.

Creator and Great Mother bless those standing before you, who carry a sacred trust to all of us who inhabit Turtle Island, our homeland, and I pray today that you will give them the wisdom and the courage to carry out their sacred trust with the same equality that we receive from the Sun and Rain.

Haaland's remarks honoring Chief Judge Teller were:

Good afternoon. I am honored to have a fierce woman from my district, to deliver a historic opening prayer.

Isleta Pueblo Chief Judge Verna Teller is the first Native American to deliver the opening prayer in US House of Representatives.

This is a special time not only in history, but also in honor of Native American Heritage Month, a time to reflect on the contributions of Native Americans to this country.

Chief Judge Teller made her own history in New Mexico.

She broke barriers when she was elected as the first woman Pueblo Governor.

Because of the history of colonization, many Pueblos don't allow women to hold leadership positions, but that didn't stop Judge Teller from knowing her value as a tribal leader.

I am proud to stand with Chief Judge Teller to highlight the resilience of indigenous women and our perseverance to uplift our girls and our women in all of our communities.

Thank you.



Isleta Pueblo Chief Judge Verna Teller made history on Nov. 13 when she became the first Native American to deliver the opening prayer in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Red Ribbon rolls into Big Cypress

FROM STAFF REPORT

BIG CYPRESS — Big Cypress sent a message as it held its Red Ribbon parade Nov. 6 on Josie Billie Highway. Ahfachkee

students gathered outside of the school to greet the 15 floats and catch candy tossed their way. The theme of Red Ribbon 2019 is "Send a Message, Be Drug Free," which was displayed on the floats made by Tribal departments.



Beverly Bidney

Ahfachkee students reach out to catch candy during the Red Ribbon parade Nov. 6. The theme, 'Send a Message, Be Drug Free,' is displayed on this float, which was one of 15 in the parade.



Beverly Bidney (2)

At left, President Mitchell Cypress throws candy in one direction as he smiles at kids in the other during the BC Red Ribbon parade. At right, Fred Mullins, Center for Behavioral Health aftercare prevention counselor and emcee for the Red Ribbon parade in Big Cypress, gives Jayde Billie a certificate for the poster she made for the poster contest.



Beverly Bidney

The winning float, courtesy of the Big Cypress housing department, featured a real wood fire. Ahfachkee students watch as it passes by during the parade.

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