



Edward Aguilar graduates culinary school
EDUCATION ♦ 1B

Tribe gives back through Native Relief Foundation
COMMUNITY ♦ 3A

Andre Jumper helps win state football title
SPORTS ♦ 3C



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All in for the fight against FPL

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger is hoping to fire up all Tribal communities into a united stand against a massive power plant that Florida Power & Light (FPL) wants to build right next door to the Big Cypress Reservation.

“We’re going to Naples to tell them about the invasion and then we’ll hit Hollywood, Tampa, Trail and Brighton,” he said. “We need them to join up with us in the fight.”

Armed with facts and a video featuring the West County Energy Center in Palm Beach County, a near replica of what FPL plans to build on 3,200 acres just north of the Big Cypress line, Councilman Tiger wants Tribal members to see what is at risk with their own eyes.

The proposed site, just 1 mile from the future Ahfachkee High School along Josie Billie Highway (County Road 833), is a proven habitat for the endangered panther, wood stork, eastern indigo snake and crested caracara.

Several archaeologically sensitive areas and some medicinal plants are also located on or near the site.

The plant, about three city blocks long and two blocks wide with towers 15 stories high, will be visible like a steel mammoth from the two-lane road, which is the only paved thoroughfare in and out of the reservation.

“People need to talk about the changes that already happened and hear about the changes that could happen next,” Councilman Tiger said.

♦ See FPL on page 9A

Behind the Salacoa Valley Farms purchase

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

FAIRMOUNT, Ga. — The Board of Directors’ recent purchase of Salacoa Valley Farms in Georgia has given them access to the third-largest purebred Brangus cattle operation in the country.

Primarily a seed stock operation, the farm produces purebred bulls and heifers for cattlemen who want to upgrade their cowherds. A typical commercial calf costs about \$700; a purebred calf can cost anywhere from \$4,000 to \$30,000. Using high-quality bulls increases the weight of the calves by 50 to 100 pounds, which translates into better beef and larger profits.

“We couldn’t always afford that quality,” said Alex Johns, Natural Resource director, about the Salacoa purchase. “Now we’re getting better bulls at a cheaper price, which has an economic benefit, and we are installing better genetics into our herd.”

Johns first learned of the opportunity while attending a Florida Cattlemen’s Association meeting in September. A friend told him David Vaughn, the owner of Salacoa Valley Farms, was ill and wanted to liquidate his nearly 1,000-head cowherd at an auction scheduled in 45 days.

Johns saw a chance to avoid paying other bull producers for seed stock and to gain access to superior genetics. He also believed it would increase the quality and quantity of Seminole Pride Beef. He contacted the Board and recommended they jump at the chance to purchase the entire operation.

“From a business perspective, it is best for us to absorb this and make the best of it,” Brighton Board Rep. Larry Howard said. “We’re amping up our genetics and you can’t get any better than that. Eventually they will become part of our herd.”

Johns, Rep. Howard and Tribe CFO Mike Ulizio toured the facility and liked what they saw.

“We thought the price they were asking was fair but negotiated a better price — 20 percent below the appraised value,” Johns said.

♦ See SALACOA on page 9A

Hard Rock Energy drink ready to rock the beverage industry

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Ever thirsty to expand its ventures, the Board of Directors introduced its latest Seminole product, Hard Rock Energy drink, Dec. 12 during a kickoff party at the Hard Rock Cafe in Hollywood.

Emblazoned with a colorful electric guitar below the Hard Rock logo, the first sets of cans came off the assembly line Dec. 5 in Miami. By the end of the day, 72,000 cans were filled and ready for distribution.

“Everybody believes this is a home run,” Hollywood Board Rep. Steve Osceola said. “We think we have a winner.”

Hard Rock Energy drink will be targeted at young music lovers through guerilla marketing techniques at music festivals, colleges and sporting events nationwide. Most other energy drinks concentrate their marketing efforts at extreme sports events, said David Drow, CEO of Enterprise Beverage Group, the Tribe’s beverage company.

“I have no doubt it will be well received and capture its share of the edgy drink market,” President Tony Sanchez Jr. said. “Music reaches everybody.”

Red Bull and Monster energy drinks each command about 32 percent of the market, followed by Rock Star with about 8 percent, Drow said. The other brands, including Amp and Full Throttle, have about 2 or 3 percent each.

The Hard Rock Energy drink aims to maintain a 3 percent market share.

With sales in the U.S. of about \$8.3 billion in 2012, according to market research company Euromonitor, 3 percent could be worth hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

“Projected annual sales of energy drinks could reach \$17 billion by 2015,” Drow said. “It’s the fastest growing category in the beverage business.”

The Board is encouraged by the numbers.

“We hope it does well,” Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank said. “If it does well, we’ll be doing great. It’s just another step in trying to diversify the Tribe’s businesses.”

The Tribe, which is the manufacturer of the drink, worked with a national lab to develop flavor profiles for Hard Rock’s three options: original, fruit punch and



Beverly Bidney

From left, Amy Yzaguirre, of Immokalee, Immokalee Board Liaison Dorothy Scheffler, Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank and Hollywood Board Rep. Steve Osceola watch as the first cans of Hard Rock Energy drink get filled at the bottling facility in Miami Dec. 5.

sugar-free. Immokalee Board Liaison Dorothy Scheffler went to the Kentucky lab to help develop the flavors.

“It was a little overwhelming; we had to taste a lot and figure out what people will like,” she said. “Then, it was just an idea; now it’s real. It was a great experience and I stand behind the product.”

Part of developing the flavors included a blind taste test at Seminole Paradise where 400 energy drink consumers judged

unidentified drinks. Hard Rock went up against Red Bull, Monster, Rock Star and Full Throttle. It beat every brand except Red Bull.

“We know we have the product,” Drow said. “I’m comfortable with our liquid. The real opportunity is the 15- to 30-year-old demographic that is important to the Hard Rock brand, and one they haven’t captured yet.”

The Board is working closely with Hard Rock International to meet the challenge of

bringing a young clientele to the brand and the lifestyle it represents. Because younger people haven’t reached the apex of their earning potential, the objective is to create loyalty to the Hard Rock brand even before they can afford to stay at the hotels or eat at the cafes regularly.

“It’s not about the Rolling Stones or Bon Jovi,” Drow said.

♦ See ENERGY DRINK on page 9A

Emateloje Estenletkvte: Polly Parker got away

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

GULF OF MEXICO, Fla. — A thick fog began to steal the faraway horizon from the moment Capt. Mark Hubbard aimed his double-decker catamaran Dec. 1 to the open Gulf through the opening of the John’s Pass Bridge. For more than 12 hours, the miasma crept closer to the boat, registered under the name Florida Fisherman II, but acting the part of a mid-19th-century steamboat known as the Grey Cloud.

The Grey Cloud took more than two dozen voyages during the Second and Third Seminole Wars from the Fort Dade stockade

on Egmont Key at the mouth of Tampa Bay to Fort San Marcos, just south of Tallahassee on the Florida panhandle.

There, the boat would refuel with fresh-cut wood and continue its trip, hull full of captured Seminole Indians, up the Mississippi River at New Orleans and north toward Arkansas.

Once there, those Seminoles still alive were herded from the boat to join the Cherokee and Choctaw, and forced to walk, by men on horseback with whips, to the new Indian territories in Oklahoma.

“I kept trying to imagine how it was for the Seminoles being taken up the Gulf like that,” Norman “Skeeter” Bowers said. “I

mean, the fog was so thick we couldn’t see much further than the boat. How depressed those Seminoles must have been, forced to leave their homeland for a place they didn’t know, in conditions like this.”

“Then I remembered, they were probably all locked up deep in the hull of the boat. They couldn’t see anything at all. That was worse. How painful that must have been,” Bowers said.

Bowers was one of five Seminole Tribal members who accepted Chairman James E. Billie’s invitation to take the marathon boat trip along the same route that hundreds of captured, deported Seminoles were forced to take in the early 19th century, when U.S. policy forbade any American Indian east of the Mississippi River. For most of the Eastern Indians, the deportation required a long and often deadly walk — the infamous Trail of Tears. The Seminoles, however, began their deportation with a voyage from the Egmont Key stockade.

“I don’t know how she did it, but I am glad she did. Because, if she hadn’t escaped, we would not be in Florida now,” said Willie Johns, a Tribal historian and community outreach specialist from Brighton. “Polly Parker’s escape was a brave and defining moment in both Seminole and American history.”

Johns carried two rare photographs of Parker, in whose memory the trip was devoted.

On May 5, 1858, during one of the Grey Cloud’s Gulf journeys, the young Seminole woman escaped. Despite soldiers and dogs and a posse that hunted her for weeks, Parker traveled across the Florida outback for nearly 200 miles and slipped safely back to the Lake Okechobee area.

Chairman Billie wanted to honor her progeny, including many leaders and prominent Seminoles over the past 150 years, by recreating her legendary trip.

“I wonder what kind of Tribe we

would have today if Parker had been killed or caught and sent to Oklahoma,” he said. “Her brave act saved our Tribe.”

Parker’s exploits were well-known in the early part of the 20th century. She lived past 100 years old and was well-known among Seminoles of the era. The years since, however, have dulled the memories of her escape in favor of war stories like Osceola stabbing the peace treaty and the Seminoles’ massacre of Major Dade.

“It’s been handed down in my family. We have always known about it,” Bowers said. “But, I guess so much time has passed most everyone else forgot about it.”

In August, Chairman Billie sent an advance group of Tribal members and staff to Egmont Key to begin planning the Polly Parker voyage. While there, the group discovered that the tiny island itself, both a Florida State Park and a National Wildlife Refuge, was falling into the sea. Ongoing coastal erosion, caused partly by huge ships passing nearby heading for the ports of Tampa and Manatee, has shrunk the island to less than half its original size, threatening the world’s largest brown pelican rookery and putting Seminole gravesites on the island at risk of being submerged.

A letter from Chairman Billie to Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell reminding her of the federal responsibility to protect Native burial sites has not yet been answered.

“That’s an ulterior motive for this event — to save Egmont Key,” Johns said. “There are a lot of projects ahead of Egmont waiting for funding. The squeaky wheel gets the grease. You know what they say.”

The 2013 Polly Parker journey, which began at the Hubbard Marina in Madeira Beach Dec. 1, took two dozen voyagers — Seminoles, staff members, media and guests — to Egmont Key.

♦ See POLLY PARKER on page 4A



Peter B. Gallagher

Willie Johns presents Egmont Key State Park manager Peter Krulder and Florida State Parks director Donald Forgiione a historic photo of Polly Parker Dec. 1 during a voyage commemorating her escape from deportation out West in 1858.

Editorial

The Christmas I had Toys Galore

• James E. Billie

Back around 1948 or '49, my grandparents moved to Delray Beach, Fla. West of town was a small cattle ranch owned by Neil McMillin and his family. There, Johnny Buster and my grandmother worked as ranch caretakers. The ranch had horses, cows, cow pens and a small barn where they stored saddles, horses, feed, hay and other ranching stuff.

It must have been close to Christmastime when I noticed Mr. McMillin coming to the ranch without telling anybody. He would drive over to the little barn, back his vehicle up to the building and start unloading whatever was in his truck into the barn.

Mr. McMillin did this several times during that week or so. When he stopped coming, my curiosity overwhelmed me. I just had to see what he was storing in that barn besides the saddles, hay and stuff.

Now the barn was clapboard style and, you know, one of those boards was loose enough where I could pull it out and crawl through. I squinted through the darkness and, to my surprise, there were toys everywhere – trucks and games and scooters and a bicycle. It was Toys Galore inside that barn.

Well, I took some of the little trucks outside and had myself a great time playing with them. I even tried to ride the little bicycle but there was too much sand around that place. I went back every day and had fun

with a different toy. Needless to say I had a lot of fun and joy with my discovery.

One early morning, I heard the familiar sound of Mr. McMillin's vehicle coming up to the ranch. He was honking his horn and I heard him yelling my name: "Jimmy Billie, Jimmy Billie, are you awake? Jimmy Billie, come out here!"

When I heard my name called, my heart sunk. I just knew I was in trouble for messing around with all those toys. Man, I was scared, but I knew I had to face up to the situation. So I hurried over to where they were. I could see Mr. McMillin had brought his family over with him and as I approached the barn, they all started singing *Jingle Bells* and saying, "Merry Christmas, Jimmy!"

Then Mr. McMillin took me by the hand while the others opened the barn door. It was my Toys Galore! They all said, "Looky here, Jimmy. Look what Santa brought you!"

Merry Christmas!
Thank you Jesus for taking care of me!
Sho-naa-bish.

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



President's holiday message

• Tony Sanchez Jr.

As the holiday season is upon us and the current year comes to a close, we have many blessings to be thankful for. This not only relates to the Tribe's success but also to the joy of being able to wake up each morning and share the days with our families – which is what the holiday season is all about. It's not about what you did or didn't get. It's all about the opportunity to share special days and nights of fellowship with family and friends.

It is during this time that, for a brief moment, we should set aside our differences and focus upon the meaning of Christmas and celebrate the New Year.

We all have enough to worry about, for sure. It is my sincere hope that we can set all that worry aside and just focus on the joy and happiness of this holiday season.

We all know work never ends, but the holiday season is brief. So, that is why I hope you will take time to just relish the moments. For a short while, put down your cell phone; don't answer that email or that text message. Just enjoy a few days with family and friends. Because come January, we'll be right back at it again, answering all our emails and text messages and

so on and so forth.

It's been an exciting year, and there is more excitement on the horizon as everything continues to come together.

It's also the time of year to remember those friends and family who have passed on.

This will be the second Christmas without my Dad, and although I miss having him around, I have so many happy memories that help me through those rough patches. It can be difficult at times, but family and the spirit of the holidays help us make it through.

So, remember to keep joy in your heart this holiday season. It's the time of year for everyone to cherish the moments with friends and family. I wish you all a safe, happy, healthy holiday season and a very prosperous New Year!

Sho-naa-bish.

Tony Sanchez Jr. is President of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc.





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Publisher: James E. Billie
Senior Editor: Brett Daly
BrettDaly@semtribe.com
Copy Editor: Amanda Murphy

Staff Reporters:
Peter B. Gallagher
Beverly Bidney, Eileen Soler

Contributors:
Emma Johns, Reinaldo Becerra,
Omar Rodriguez, Madeline Newcomb

If you would like to request a reporter or would like to submit an article, birthday wish or poem, please contact Senior Editor Brett Daly at 954-985-5701 ext. 10725 Or by fax at 954-965-2937

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Community

A



Eileen Soler

Rhonda Roff and Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank pose in front of their environmentally friendly, solar powered home on the Big Cypress Reservation.

Solar home lets sunshine work

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — When an environmentally conscience couple builds their dream home, size and beauty are secondary.

“What’s important is to demonstrate that you can have a wonderful living space without having a 4,000-square-foot McMansion,” said environmental activist Rhonda Roff, the wife of Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank.

And demonstrate they do. Their 2,200-square-foot home, built on an elevated lot on the Big Cypress Reservation in 2009, is the only solar powered home in the six Tribal communities — and it is available for anyone to stop by and check out, Roff said — by appointment, of course.

She said the couple had been living in a smaller, less efficient home before their family and the need for more space grew.

“Once the Tribe said OK that we could build a new home, we started working,” Roff said.

They employed a civil engineer then embarked full course on a solar energy conservation project.

Starting from scratch, the house the Roff/Frank family built is square, a shape which maximizes interior space while minimizing exterior surface area. The less exterior wall, the less thermal transfer of outside temperature to the inside conditioned space, heat in summer and cold in winter.

Instead of cinder blocks, walls are constructed with insulated concrete forms put in place and poured on the scene. Called “Greenblock,” the material can be twice as hurricane wind resistant and can cut heating and air conditioning costs by 50 percent.

In South Florida, cooling a home is more necessary than heating it so other design features of the home help lower air conditioning costs.

Roff said the family of four’s electric bill from August, typically the hottest month of the year, was a mere \$121 for the four bedroom, two bathroom home.

The white, metal roof is a double plus because the white paint provides higher sun reflectiveness (requiring less cooling) and the metal, as opposed to other roofing materials, creates less emissivity, which is a measurement of radiated energy sent back into the air. The underside of the roof has a 5-inch thick coating of a spray foam insulation called Icynene. As a result, the attic never gets hot.

Further, the exterior walls are practically shielded from the sun by a roof overhang that juts about 8 feet over a wrap-around porch.

Steve Hoag, a solar engineer and the

owner of All Efficient Products based in Davie, said some of the structural aspects of the Roff/Frank home are common sense features used by builders long before air conditioning and other modern appliances.

“It’s going back to basics,” Hoag said. “Solar techniques go back to the Romans, like the wrap-around porch, but we’ve lost a lot of the desire and attraction of simple things in lieu of technical gadgets. Combining solar and gadgets is a killer combination, but we should do the simple first.”

Rep. Frank agreed.

“For millennia, our people have used solar energy to provide materials for our camp (housing) needs but over the past several decades we have gone to more oil-based materials to replace our traditional ones,” Rep. Frank said. “My family’s incorporation of solar use for our house pays some respect to our ancestors’ use of solar energy.”

Hoag said it’s easier and less expensive to build from the start with solar power ability than to retrofit the home later. Retrofit costs can range from about \$3,700 to \$8,000, first depending on how aggressively a company prices the same job, materials and labor — and then on specific climate needs, he said. The technical makeup of a water heater, for instance, can change from a colder or warmer region.

“People can jump into the solar energy market anytime — and save a lot of trees,” Hoag said. “But don’t be at the mercy of boiler room sales. Be diligent and look for a good contractor.”

The carbon footprint of the home was also considered when purchasing all materials and hiring workers.

“That’s where we stepped into the social justice and fair trade arena. We fed the engine for local economics,” Roff said.

The couple lives by the environmentalist mantra “reduce, reuse, recycle.” Nearly everything in the house has a former life — even the vintage kitchen sink, which they purchased at a secondhand store when a family road trip passed through a tiny town in Georgia.

They bought lamps at a local thrift store. All the wood for the kitchen cabinets came from certified sustainable American forests. The living area floors are made of bamboo, the kitchen and baths of “Marmoleum,” the original formulation of linoleum which was made from the oils and fibers of the flax plant — hence the artistic mini dings and ditches that whisper character.

The bedroom windows face the east to soak in daylight. Solar tubes that spike from the roof through the attic deliver natural light in a hallway, closet and bathroom.

♦ See SOLAR HOUSE on page 5A



Eileen Soler

On the roof, a photovoltaic system uses the sun to make electricity. Also on the roof is a solar water heater. The roof itself is painted white to provide higher sun reflectiveness.

Donations packed and ready for delivery to Pine Ridge

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

For several years, Seminole Tribe members have ensured residents of Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota have practical items to help make their harsh winter more bearable.

This year, the Native Relief Foundation, ABC Foundation, Seminole Princess Committee and Rez Dawgz bike club coordinated a tribalwide effort to collect warm clothing, shoes, blankets and other items destined for various Sioux Tribes living on the reservation.

The nearly 40,000 residents of Pine Ridge endure extreme temperatures often well below zero, in addition to an 80 percent unemployment rate and crushing financial, health, housing, educational and social issues. Only 84,000 of its 2.2 million acres can sustain agriculture, and life expectancy — 48 years for men and 52 years for women — is lower than anywhere in the western hemisphere except for Haiti.

To help make a difference, Seminoles

from every reservation donated items to the cause.

“We had a tremendous response from people who wanted to help out,” said Gloria Wilson, of the Native Relief Foundation. “It exceeded our expectations; we got more than we had last year.”

Florida State University also participated in the effort. The school sent boxes filled with new men’s and women’s sweatpants, sweatshirts, long-sleeve shirts, basketball fleece jackets and other assorted clothing — all adorned with FSU logo.

A couple dozen people gathered at Wilson’s home in Hollywood Nov. 23 to sort and pack donations, some of which were trucked in from Brighton and Big Cypress. Wilson’s driveway, front yard and garage overflowed with stacked bags and boxes. Volunteers made quick work of organizing the items into specific areas for shoes, clothing, blankets and linens, toys, non-perishable foods, furniture and other miscellaneous things.

“We got a lot of stuff; it was good,” said Alice Billie, Big Cypress coordinator.

“We had a truck and a trailer filled with donations. We expect more people to drop stuff off here all day.”

As a child growing up in Brighton Wilson recalled when she and her family depended on donations like this.

“The churches used to bring in clothes and put them in a big pile,” she said. “They told us to go get what we wanted. I used to go home with an armful of books.”

“She used to receive back in the day,” added Wilson’s business partner Juan Menendez. “Now she’s paying it forward.”

Last year, Bobbi “BJ” Billie, of the ABC Foundation, Pete Osceola III, of the Native Relief Foundation, and Misha Winters, a Sicanu Oyate Tribal member from the Rosebud Reservation, drove a truckload of donations to South Dakota where they delivered items to five of the reservation’s nine districts. This year, Billie and Winters will deliver to as many districts as possible, as well as a women’s shelter in Rapid City and the Wounded Knee District School.

♦ See NATIVE RELIEF on page 5A



Beverly Bidney

Pete Osceola III, center, helps unload a trailer filled with items to be donated to Pine Ridge Reservation residents. Volunteers met to sort and pack items on Nov. 23.

Seminole Tribe firefighter fires up holiday spirit

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

STUART — Seminole Fire Rescue Department’s chief of operations Jeff Alter takes three days off every year to prepare for Thanksgiving dinner, but when the time comes to dine, he’s all turkeyed out.

“I eat steak for Thanksgiving,” Alter said on day one, Nov. 25, of an annual project that makes sure nearly 50,000 people in Martin, St. Lucie and Indian River counties eat the holiday meal.

Alter, a four-year employee of the Tribe, is a member of the all-volunteer Big Heart Brigade. Created in 1992, the organization is operated by people who include corporate executives to stay-at-home moms, but it sizzles with help from scores of firefighters who prepare and distribute the meals.

Alter joined assembly lines of firefighters who stripped dozens of turkeys of giblets and necks, covered the gobblers in olive oil and Everglades seasoning, wrapped them in aluminum foil and placed each in its own cooking pan. Cases of stuffing, cranberry sauce, canned vegetables and other fixings were counted, divided and shared. Over the next two days, an extra-large outdoor oven, hand built by brigade members, cooked 60 turkeys at a time at separate locations in each county.

“We serve on and off duty,” said Renzo Urzola, a firefighter with Martin County Fire Rescue Station 30. “It doesn’t matter if we just came off a 24- or 48-hour shift; it’s the right thing to do.”

Alter said the bulk of needy families were identified by school police officers and guidance counselors. About 900 large, raw turkeys go to families who have utilities to cook them. The others receive cooked birds.

The firefighters also reach out to



Eileen Soler

Seminole Fire Rescue Department chief of operations Jeff Alter, left, helps load tons of turkeys into a smoker Nov. 25, in Stuart, as part of the Big Heart Brigade organization that feeds 50,000 needy people for Thanksgiving.

men and women who have served in the military. Individual meals are packaged and delivered to veterans from organizations including AMVETS, American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars.

For first responders and public safety workers who serve communities on Thanksgiving Day, meals were delivered to their doorsteps at fire stations and police stations in all three counties. In Martin County, deliveries went to ocean safety guards at lifeguard stands along the beach.

Firefighter Stuart Flank, of Martin County Fire Rescue Station 30, said he

was bit by the holiday helping bug about five years ago when he saw his wife give a holiday basket that included toys to a family with a little boy. Flank witnessed the joy that came over the boy’s face.

“The toy must have cost as little as \$10, but the effect it had on the boy and me was priceless,” Flank said.

Alter said the firefighters’ urge to help feed the needy during Thanksgiving is “a natural extension of why we do what we do in the first place. We come into the profession to serve the community, but it becomes more than that.”

◆ POLLY PARKER

From page 1A

The trip to Egmont Key lasted about an hour, from medicine man Bobby Henry's blessing of the boat to the at-sea transfer of passengers onto a smaller ferry boat. The larger boat was too big to dock any closer to Egmont.

There, after the smaller ferry floated right up to the sandy beach, the disembarked passengers were greeted by Egmont Key State Park manager Peter Krulder and Florida State Parks director Donald Forgione, who was on his first trip to Egmont, one of 171 state parks in Florida's chain.

"I am honored to be associated with this event," Forgione said. "The Florida State Park system has always enjoyed a great relationship with the Seminole Tribe."

Fort Myers resident Woody Hanson displayed several notebooks of old photographs and historical documents that his grandfather created decades ago. A crowd of Seminoles swirled around avidly perusing the photos taken by Dr. Stanley Hanson, a trusted adviser of the Seminole-Miccosukee Indians in the 20th century. Woody Hanson, now in his 80s, is seeking a venue for his collection.

"It should stay with the Tribe," said Bobby Henry, who noted there were many photos of his family members in the Hanson Collection. "We'll take care of it."

Once again, after the group said goodbye and rode the beached ferry back out to the Florida Fisherman II, gangplanks were lowered and there was a transfer of passengers at sea. The fog had worsened and it was not long before Egmont Key and the entire West Coast of Florida disappeared from view.

"This is the worst we've seen this fog in a long time," said Capt. Hubbard, whose three-man crew and galley cook helped the travelers get comfortable for what would be more than 20 hours of Gulf travel at around 10 knots – similar to the speed of the steamboat Grey Cloud.

For the next several hours, the weather held. Passengers could barely see, up ahead, the escort boat provided by the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission (GFC). Somewhere northwest of Cedar Key, that boat turned south and was replaced by another GFC law enforcement craft that would help the Florida Fisherman II navigate the tricky St. Marks River channel.

A waiting bus took the group through the city of St. Marks, where city manager Zoe Mansfield and mayor Charles Shields prepared refreshments for the voyagers, who also toured the perimeter of the old fort.

Also waiting there were Forgione and Secretary of State Ken Detzner, who provided welcoming speeches. As they had done in Egmont Key, Henry gave an invocation and Johns provided an impromptu speech, putting the journey, Parker and the Seminole Tribe in proper perspective. He explained the Tribe's matrilineal descendants, noting Parker was of the Little Bird Clan and he was of the

Panther Clan.

"This has been a wonderful event," said Rachel Porter, coordinator of Florida Viva 500, who helped organize the event. "I am so glad to be able to work with the Seminole Tribe for this event."

Johns presented the framed Polly Parker photos to Forgione at both Egmont Key and the San Marcos de Apalache Historic State Park.

"No need to wait," Forgione said, directing the immediate installation of Parker's photo on empty wall space in both museums.

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum director Paul Backhouse and Tribal member Shannon Purvis, on business in nearby Tallahassee, met the group at St. Marks.

"This signifies the beginning of a new relationship (between the two state park museums)," Backhouse said. "It's just amazing that the incredible history of Polly Parker's escape has stayed in the background so long."

The next day, after the Seminole mariners landed in St. Marks and were bused to Tallahassee, Forgione took the lead in setting up an impromptu meeting with Detzner and his staff to hear a scientific presentation on saving Egmont Key. Marine scientist Beau Williams, an island restoration specialist for Aquatic Environmental Solutions, was invited on the trip to educate people about the Egmont Key erosion issue.

Forgione invited Seminole Tribal members to crowd into the standing-room-only meeting.

"They should know the facts about the problems and the solutions because one day we'll need them to come forward as well," he said.

Attendees at the Tribal Historic Preservation Officers meeting were also invited into the meeting.

Williams produced a miniature plastic model of what he called a "wad," a pyramid with holes similar to the 8,000-pound moveable structures that anchor an ocean bottom and help build back a ravaged beach. Williams described how they work, answering rapid-fire questions from Detzner and others. Forgione promised to begin discussions with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"They are the actual owners of the property. We (Florida State Parks) are just tenants there. It's a very unique situation," he said.

"That was a great meeting," Detzner said. "In my job, I mostly hear problems. But here we were talking about solutions. That man answered all my questions. My staff and I are on board. Tell us what you want us to do."

After a welcome night at the Doubletree in Tallahassee, the group convened at the Museum of Florida History, where museum director Jeana Brunson and staff provided special tours, including the famed museum lab, where hundred-year-old artifacts are processed by state archaeologists. The whole party crammed into the tiny lab, where bits of bone and rusty metal – puzzle pieces of history – were strewn about high tables.



The St. Marks Lighthouse, built in 1830, appears on the horizon.

Peter B. Gallagher

After touring the museum, the Seminoles and their entourage boarded the bus for the last stop, a visit to the nearby Mission San Luis, the former home of the Seminole ancestors, the Apalachee Indians.

The group was taken through a small museum and on a short walk to the tallest native structure east of the Mississippi River, the Council House.

It served as a ceremonial city hall for the more than 1,500 Apalachee residents at Mission San Luis in the late 17th century. The structure stands five stories tall, circling more than 140 feet in diameter with 72 foot rafters weighing more than 1,000 pounds each.

Henry took center stage and had everyone join hands in a circle around the fire pit to bless the house.

"You could feel it. Something was going on there," said Ken Crawford, a retired State Department employee who participated in the blessing of the Apalachee Council House. "I don't know what it was, but Bobby had made it work."

Travelers soon gathered souvenirs, gifts and luggage onto two buses – one heading to Hollywood and the other going to Brighton via Tampa.

Each participant was provided a gold "challenge coin," provided by Chairman Billie, whose schedule did not permit him to attend. On one side is the Tribal Council seal – the chickee backed by medicine colors – and the other side featured an engraving



Bobby Henry says a blessing before taking off on the double-decker catamaran for the first part of the Polly Parker voyage Dec. 1.

Peter B. Gallagher

depicting Parker hiding in the palmettos while soldiers in the distance looked for her with the Grey Cloud anchored in the St. Marks harbor.

Prior to the trip, Lorene Gopher, a direct descendant of Polly Parker and an expert in the Creek language, was asked to provide

a title, in Creek, for the coin, something to commemorate the trip. Polly Parker's Voyage of Tears was suggested to Gopher.

"We don't have those words in our language," she said, suggesting, instead the phrase *Emateloje Estenletkvie*. "Polly Parker got away."



Peter B. Gallagher

Bobby Henry has everyone hold hands prior to blessing the Apalachee Council House, which served as a ceremonial city hall for the more than 1,500 Apalachee residents at Mission San Luis in the late 17th century. The Apalachees are Seminole ancestors.



Peter B. Gallagher

From left, Willie Johns, Norman Bowers, Bobby Henry, Secretary of State Ken Detzner, St. Marks mayor Chuck Shields, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum director Paul Backhouse, Edna Bowers, State Parks director Donald Forgione, Shannon Purvis, Kerri Post, of the Department of State, St. Marks State Park manager Rob Lacey and St. Marks city manager Zoe Mansfield pose for a photo in Tallahassee.



Peter B. Gallagher

Norman Bowers examines an ancient sword hilt guard at the Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee.



Peter B. Gallagher

Independent filmmaker Kristy Anderson interviews Bobby Henry.

Alan Jackson to headline BC's 118th anniversary event

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Entertainment galore is in store at Big Cypress' 118th Anniversary Celebration Jan. 23-25 at the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena.

Guests and Tribal members can expect two full days that culminate with a concert with chart-topping country music star Alan Jackson followed by a heart-stopping bull riding rodeo. South Florida's own Tom Jackson, known for a new kind of aggressive country beat, will open the show.

But first, the event kicks off Thursday, Jan. 23 at 7:30 p.m. with a rodeo featuring the real cowboys of Indian Country in a showcase of roping, wrestling, tying and riding traditions of ancestors who forged the Seminole Tribe more than a century ago.

Friday, Jan. 24 starts with an educational meander through a sprawling Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum exhibition inside the rodeo ground show barn. The exhibit, providing historical documents, photographs and artifacts that reveal the history of the Unconquered Seminoles, will be open through Saturday, Jan. 25.

"We want to better educate people from all over — let them get inside the Seminole head and find out where we come from," said Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger.

The 118th event will also highlight the culture and history of the Tribe with an ongoing schedule of events, shows and concerts open to the public to observe and some to watch.

From 12 to 3 p.m. Friday, Jan. 24, Tribal members only will compete in a barbecue cook off; at 3 p.m. live creatures of the Everglades will be showcased by wildlife experts associated with Tribal tourism. At 4 p.m., spectators can watch Tribal members wrestle dangerous alligators plucked from the Everglades.

Dancers in traditional clothing will display

ceremonial dances at 5 p.m.

"The fire behind us has always been tradition and culture," said Vincent Jimmie, center manager for the Big Cypress Culture Department.

Councilman Tiger created the event last year with the 117th Anniversary Celebration.

According to public records, 160 acres of what is now the southwest area of the Big Cypress Reservation was purchased in two tracts by the Bureau of Indian Affairs — one in 1889 and the other in 1896. The reservation was formally dedicated in 1936 and now comprises 82 square miles.

Councilman Tiger said visitors and Tribal members will likely learn much about how the Tribe evolved from the Seminole Wars when survival of men, women and children was at stake, to now when Tribal members can enjoy the fruit of successful Seminole businesses that span the gamut from orange juice to gaming.

"Long before casinos we were craftsmen, hunters and cattle owners. It was never a 'give me.' It was always a struggle," Councilman Tiger said. "Outside people need to know us."

Saturday, Jan. 25 at 10 a.m. will be the Grand Entry of Tribal leaders, members and dancers. A clothing contest at 11 a.m. will feature the best patchwork by Seminole and Miccosukee Tribal members in old and modern traditional plus contemporary and jacket categories.

At 4 p.m. there will be a critter show, gator wrestling and stomp dancing. Pow Wow dancers will take the stage at 4 p.m. Native food, jewelry and art vendors will round out the event.

Frank Billie Jr., of Big Cypress Council Compliance, said visitors to the reservation will "feel" the history from the moment they walk onto the rodeo grounds and through the last rodeo event.

"It will be like walking through history," Billie said.

For more information visit www.BigCypressCelebration.com.



◆ NATIVE RELIEF

From page 3A

The school, which serves an impoverished population, has 147 students.

"It's not possible for some of these kids to have a normal life," said Billie, who lived on Pine Ridge for 12 years. "They come back to school on Monday and look like they haven't eaten all weekend. Their parents had parents who didn't take care of them, so they do the same for these kids who are left to survive on their

own."

The school is trying to organize "lock-ins" to make sure students are fed and cared for during the weekends. They are also trying to purchase washing machines for the schools to encourage parents to do laundry at school while simultaneously interacting with their children and teachers.

"We are already putting our heads together to see how we can improve things for next year," Wilson said. "A lot of people want to stay involved with us now. Our efforts will center on fundraising for the school; we want to meet as much of their needs as we can."



Beverly Bidney

Gloria Wilson and Juan Menendez sort through a pile of clothing to be sent to Pine Ridge. Volunteers met Nov. 23 to organize the donations.

◆ SOLAR HOME

From page 3A

Near the apex of the roof, a photovoltaic (PV) system uses the sun to make electricity from one hour after the sun comes up to an hour before sundown. On a sunny day, the panels can make 15 to 30 kilowatts of power, Roff said, which is as much as they need.

Batteries are charged by the solar PV to work as a backup power source for the home when needed rather than the more commonly used fossil fuel powered generators. A backup power source is required by the Tribe, but a generator system which also costs the homeowner for installation, only kicks in during outages. The Roff/Frank's solar power system with battery backup allows the family to save money every day.

On rainy days, when only dribbles of electricity can be produced by solar power, Glades Electric Cooperative, a nonprofit customer owned corporation that provides electric service to more than 15,000 members, comes in handy. Only the oven and the clothes dryer are not connected to the solar panels.

Also on the roof is a solar water heater powered by its own dedicated PV powered pump that moves water into the panels where it is heated. The water is then saved in a 120-gallon tank, which can be heated by conventional electricity if necessary, on especially dreary days.

Hoag said homeowners with solar water heaters can testify to the advantage best after a power outage like one caused by severe weather.

"There are no switches that go off and on. It's a matter of the sun coming out and being intense enough to heat the water. If there is a brownout or a blackout, then you still have one luxury — it is hot water," Hoag said.

Roff said her electric bill reflects less than the average 1,100 kilowatt hours (kWh) per month per household. On average, the house requires 980 kWh per month. About 740 kWh come in from the Glades Electric grid and 240 kWh is made via the solar power system and used in the house. Another 240 kWh is made and sent back to the grid. Therefore, the family pays for 500 kWh.

Rep. Frank said modern technology gives the family the ability to create electrical power to offset their consumption from the grid.

"We heat our water without electricity and the solar tubes allow us to light the interior space of the house without turning on a light switch during the day. Any actions we can undertake to lower our carbon footprint will help our Tribe, as well as the state and nation, achieve energy independence for our future," he said.

Roff said she would still like to see a bigger impact.

"Every time I see a coal hour on my electric bill I feel guilty," she said.

Still, the environmentally friendly home is a model for being gentle on nature while putting it to work. The house is surrounded by native plants, bushes and trees that are naturally drought and deluge resistant — which require no use of additional water supply, while providing a food and shelter source for all neighboring native creatures. Even the steps that lead to the elevated front porch are made of reclaimed coral culled from the Florida bedrock.

"The house was never just about the electric bill. We want it to withstand all of the crazy Florida weather and we want the home to still be around for our daughter to use when she is grown and her grandchildren to pass to generations," Roff said. "It does not really belong to us; it's giving back to the Tribe already."

American Indian Veteran Memorial Initiative update

• Stephen Bowers

We have the New Year coming upon us very soon so I thought I would provide an overview of the American Indian Veteran Memorial Initiative project from its very beginnings in December 2010.

In mid-December 2010, I was called into former Chairman Mitchell Cypress' office. I figured that it was about another Color Guard trip; however, it turned out to be a different assignment — one that would change my life, and my wife's, forever. The project that Chairman Cypress wanted me to take over was the Native American Veteran Memorial Initiative (NAVMI).

To be brief, the NAVMI is a project to put a Native American veteran statue on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. This statue would recognize the contribution of the American Indians, Alaskan Natives and Native Hawaiians during the Vietnam War. We wanted a veteran American Indian statue near the Three Servicemen Statue in the same proximity as the Vietnam Wall Memorial.

Now, you have to understand that I have never helped pass any legislation, or stated a political position to any committee of the U.S. Congress. My first trip regarding the Native American Veteran Memorial Initiative to Washington, D.C. was in March 2011 to visit members of Congress and their staff. I initially met with staff of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and staff of the House Sub-Committee on Indian Affairs. I met with Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.) and had a meeting with Rep. Jeff Denham, (R-Calif.) While Denham was very supportive, he wanted to know how many Indian Tribes from his state supported the NAVMI project. We did not have any support other than the Seminole Tribe of Florida. It was my first trip advocating for the statue.

Denham simply gave me some advice. "Go out and get support from other Indian Tribes, Indian organizations and veteran organizations. Congress will not authorize a statue just for one Tribe," he said.

In order to do all that, I had a lot of work ahead of me.

I came back home from my trip to Washington, D.C. and sat down to get started reviewing upcoming Indian Tribe conference schedules. I learned when the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) and National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED) conferences would be scheduled and where.

The first meeting that we attended was NCAI in Milwaukee, Wis. in April 2011. I took along with me our Resolution Booklet which contained the few Support Resolutions for NAVMI collected so far. We also had copies of different news articles of the Three Servicemen Statue and the veterans that the statue represented — Caucasians, African-Americans and Hispanics. It's a known fact in military and veteran news articles that American Indians served in Vietnam more per capita than any other ethnic group in the whole country. Still we, American Indian Veterans, are not represented on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. — not just on the National Mall. The Indian Veteran is not recognized anywhere, nowhere, nada, zilch. We want to change that.

I met with the NCAI Veterans Committee in Milwaukee. We felt that to be successful, the support of NCAI was paramount, so I changed the name from Native American Veteran Memorial Initiative to the American Indian Veteran Memorial Initiative (AIVMI). I brought copies of the Resolutions of Support we had collected and distributed them at the NCAI Veterans Committee. The two co-chairs of the committee, Dan King, of the Oneida Nation in Wisconsin, and Larry Townsend, of the Lumbee Tribe in North Carolina, allowed me a few minutes to make the case for the AIVMI project. Several veterans agreed that something should be done to recognize the American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian veterans. King stated to the committee that NCAI had supported a resolution to put a veteran statue inside the National Museum of the American Indian back in 1994.

I stood up and said, "Hello, is everyone sleeping? This is April, 2011." It's been 17 years since anyone has done anything about a statue on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. In 1994, the National Museum of the American Indian had not even been built.

It's been three years since I walked into Chairman Cypress' conference room to receive the NAVMI/AIVMI assignment. Although Mitchell Cypress was not re-elected as Chairman in May 2011, incoming Chairman James E. Billie has been very patient and supportive. The entire Tribal Council has been very patient and supportive. A project like AIVMI takes time but it takes even more time when there is another project similar to "yours" that gets resurrected out of the past. I'll explain what I mean by "resurrected."

Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) was one of Indian Country's biggest supporters and advocates for Indian self-determination and sovereignty. Prior to his death, Inouye sponsored the

Native American Veteran's Memorial Establishment Act of 1994. This bill is the same one that I mentioned in my first meeting with NCAI in Milwaukee and the same one King had also referenced. My wife, Elizabeth, and I have come to the conclusion that our travels to get support from Indian country for the AIVMI woke someone up. Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) was appointed in December 2012 by Gov. Neal Abercrombie to finish the term of deceased



Inouye.

Schatz is looking for re-election in 2014. If Schatz can pass this legislation to put a Native American, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian, he is bound to be re-elected in his home state of Hawaii. This is where the term resurrected comes into play. The statue act has been lying around for 19 years. If he can bring that act to life he should be re-elected. The thing is everyone wants a statue at the National Museum of the American Indian — everyone except Indian Veterans. Indian Veterans want our recognition on the National Mall with the rest of the soldiers who have been recognized. We fought side by side the Caucasians, African Americans and Hispanics. Why shouldn't we be recognized with them on the National Mall? That is why, over the past two years, we have been traveling across the country to get support from Indian Country. This support was for an American Indian veteran statue on the National Mall. We have been in contact and visited with various veterans from the Navajo Nation, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest Indians, the Alaskan Federation of Natives and the Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association. We have received support resolutions from all these organizations, and more, to put a veteran statue on the National Mall, not at a museum tucked away in a corner behind some trees.

During these past two years, we have been able to develop a friendship with Jan Scruggs, founder of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF). Scruggs was the brains and the muscle behind getting the land and the money and congressional approval to have the Vietnam Wall built on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Scruggs served in Vietnam with the 4th Infantry. When he returned home from Vietnam, he was determined to have a Memorial recognizing the service and sacrifice of the men and women who served during the Vietnam conflict. It took him and those who supported the VVMF several years to finally complete the Vietnam War Memorial, often referred to as The Wall. Now Scruggs and VVMF are working on another project with which my wife and I became involved, the Education Center at the Wall.

Thousands of memorabilia have been left at the The Wall by the people who visited over the past 31 years since it was built. Letters, dog tags, flowers, poetry and photos of buddies killed in Vietnam have been left at the Wall.

The new project, the Education Center at the Wall, is to build a place where memorabilia left at The Wall can be displayed for all to see. It will have exhibits of the early days of the Vietnam War, the buildup, the gradual draw down of troops and finally the departure of American troops. The Education Center will also have exhibits of the fallen soldiers. Families of the fallen, whose name appears on The Wall, have an opportunity to submit a story about their loved ones along with photos of their high school graduation, football games and/or a photo from the family. Putting a face with the name is the intent of the exhibit. The Education Center is \$87 million short of a \$224-million project.

The AIVMI has an opportunity to help establish a veteran statue at the entrance to the Education Center at the Wall, but to have an exhibit of the many men from various Indian Tribes who served in Vietnam. It will also allow us to tell the story of the code talkers from the numerous Tribes, including the Navajos, who served in World War I and II.

I have had two rotator cuff surgeries in the past 5 months from carrying the 80 pound AIVMI booth exhibit from one event to another. I now have Elizabeth helping with the traveling. I pay her way through all the travels we have made. Elizabeth helps me talk to visitors at our booth. We explain to visitors why we are doing this and that we need their help.

We initially set out to build a memorial to recognize the Indian Vietnam veteran, but we have come to realize that we need to also pay tribute to Indian veterans from all wars.

We are still on the road to building this Memorial to the American Indian, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian veterans.

We, personally, have put so much time and money into this Initiative, we will not quit.

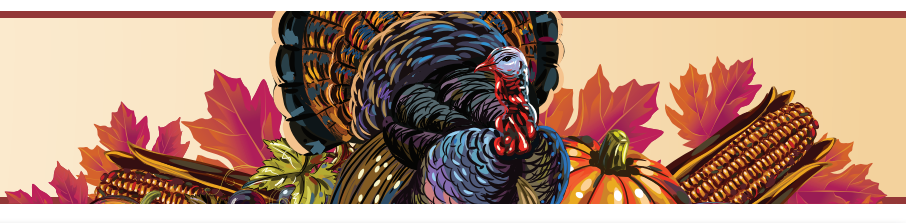
We will be attending the Big Cypress Reservation 118th anniversary event, the Seminole Tribal Fair and Brighton Field Days. Please come by and visit the AIVMI booth.

Buy a T-shirt, and/or coffee mug to show your support for the American Indian Veteran Memorial Initiative.

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year.

**SUPPORT
AIVMI**
www.aivmi.org

HAPPY THANKSGIVING



Beverly Bidney

Gail Cypress, center, sits with daughters Relle Lebron, 4, and Renee Lebron, 15 months, and nephew Elias Vasquez, 2, at the Hollywood Preschool Thanksgiving luncheon Nov. 19.



Andrea Holata

The 4-year-old Brighton Preschool class sings the turkey song for their families before enjoying a festive Thanksgiving day luncheon Nov. 21.



Beverly Bidney

Sandy Osceola holds Brooke Osceola, 6 months, as Aaliyah Billie, reaches out to her during the Trail Thanksgiving dinner at the Chuck Wagon restaurant in Miami Nov. 26.



Andrea Holata

Aryannah Julien shows off the door hanger she made during dinner at the Fort Pierce Thanksgiving celebration.



Andrea Holata

Shamy Tommie gets ready to serve up turkey during the Fort Pierce community Thanksgiving dinner Nov. 19.



Beverly Bidney

Amos Billie and Amos Billie III, 10, enjoy each other's company during the Trail Thanksgiving dinner Nov. 26.



Reinaldo Becerra

The Brighton community gathers to share a Thanksgiving meal Nov. 22 at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena.



Beverly Bidney

Elizabeth Frank, 13, and Carissa Tucker, 5, smile big during the Hollywood Thanksgiving dinner Nov. 21.



Eileen Soler

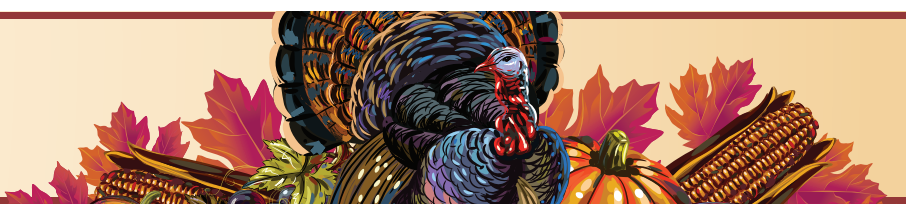
From left, Josh Jumper, the Rev. Salaw Hummingbird and Frank Thomas compare shots Nov. 14 at the Seminole Indian 4-H Turkey Shoot on the Big Cypress Reservation.



Eileen Soler

Diane Buster, Dalvina Eloise Buster, Celesta Osceola and Koda Osceola share smiles with the camera Nov. 22 at Big Cypress Reservation's Thanksgiving lunch.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING



Beverly Bidney

Mae'anna Osceola-Hart and Alyss Cypress have a good time together at the Trail Thanksgiving dinner held at the Chuck Wagon restaurant in Miami Nov. 26.



Beverly Bidney

Tristina Osceola and her father, Vince Motlow, bask in the cuteness of Blaine Micco, 7 months, who was not the main course at the Hollywood Thanksgiving feast Nov. 21.



Andrea Holata

Cyndil Purvis proudly shows off the turkey her mother, Shannon Purvis, helped her make for the Brighton Preschool Thanksgiving.



Eileen Soler

Miguel Albarran, of Hollywood, fires at a paper turkey target for a chance at a real one at the Seminole Indian 4-H Turkey Shoot on the Big Cypress Reservation.



Andrea Holata

Mary Wilcox adores grandson Bryan Villegas during the Fort Pierce Thanksgiving dinner Nov. 19.



Beverly Bidney

Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola works the food line at the Hollywood Thanksgiving dinner Nov. 21.



Reinaldo Becerra

Louise Cypress and her daughter Arica Osceola celebrate Thanksgiving with the Brighton community at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena Nov. 22.



Reinaldo Becerra

Brighton Board Rep. Larry Howard enjoys the Brighton community Thanksgiving lunch with Eddie and Jennie Shore Nov. 22.



Andrea Holata

Timothy Urbina, center, displays the turkey his dad, Jessie Urbina, and grandmother Linda Tommie helped him make for the Brighton Preschool Thanksgiving.

Business

From a rough upbringing to winning an international business competition

BY ADRIAN JAWORT
Indian Country Today

For Curtis Walette, there was no silver spoon background that helped him win an internationally renowned business competition called the Capsim Challenge held this spring in Chicago.

Following what he described as growing up with a “rough” early childhood before he was adopted when he was 3, he lived in various places from Lane Deer, Mont., to Oklahoma and wherever his father’s Indian Health Service job took the family.

After high school, Walette headed “out west” with all of his belongings in a backpack and lived in major cities, from Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego to Las Vegas, as well as in New Mexico.

“I was just drifting basically,” he said. “I worked a lot of good jobs and operated businesses for people, but if I got tired of someplace, I’d just go. ‘I want to see what L.A. looks like,’ and I was off.”

He eventually came back to Montana, and after the birth of his daughter he went back to school.

“The light switch turned on, and I didn’t want to struggle and work all of these jobs with a glass ceiling without a degree,” he said.

Starting off as an unconventional 29-year-old freshman at Montana State University Billings, Walette initially had doubts on whether he was college material. A 4.0 GPA after his first semester erased those doubts.

“You’ve got to be intelligent, but it’s mostly about putting in all the hard work,” he said.

A Northern Cheyenne Tribal member, Walette became involved with the American Indian Business Leaders while at MSU Billings and was part of the College of Business’s American Indian Business Leaders (AIBL) team that won first place at the 2009 AIBL contest in Phoenix.

After graduating from MSU Billings with a double major in marketing and management, he attended the University of Montana School of Business Administration where he’s due to graduate in 2014. Recalling the experience of reveling in the spirit of that competition, he entered this year’s Capsim Challenge that pits students “against each other in a biannual competition to crown the world’s best at running a multimillion-dollar simulated company.”

While competing against 1,750 students from 280 universities representing more than 20 countries from

Australia, India, China to the prestigious Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, just to make it to the finals was an honor in itself. Walette, however, wasn’t merely content to just be a part of the experience.

“I didn’t just want to make it, I wanted to win,” he said.

In describing what the competition was like, Walette said, “It’s like a game of chess but with a thousand pieces.”

There were eight rounds in two weeks representing eight years of running a theoretical \$100-million company in decline, and Walette took a long-term strategic strategy after gaining an early points lead.

“I exposed the weaknesses of my competitors and took advantage of my own strengths,” he said. “What I did was focus on the big picture.”

While there were a lot of complexities that consisted of “hundreds of decisions per round,” part of Walette’s strategy was he’d borrow money with a 10 percent interest rate, but with a steady 25 percent turnaround continually coming his way via his other strategies, his lead kept extending.

For instance, one strategy he used to further his lead in points included raising the overall cost of labor from manpower to machines so his competitors couldn’t keep up with his production.

“I kind of did what like a Walmart would do. It’s kind of dirty,” he said with a chuckle, “but it’s fair. You’re not in business to be nice or help competitors.”

His theoretical company ended the competition with \$250 million in sales with \$100 million in profits.

“There was only one person who was relatively close [Yijiao Jiang from Australia’s University of Queensland], but he was still way back, so it was great to compete against the best students in the world and do so well,” he said.

In such a multiethnic diverse international competition, Walette’s Native roots gave him added motivation.

“It was good to represent my Tribe and be a Native American,” he said. “We always get all of this negative press, and for me to be Northern Cheyenne and do something like that, it’s really cool. My family was proud, my Tribe is proud, and the school is real proud and making a big deal out of it.”

This article originally appeared in Indian Country Today and was reprinted with permission from the publication.

Upcoming seminars in Indian Country

USET Impact Week

The 2014 United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) Impact Week will be held Feb. 3-6 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel in Arlington, Va.

USET aims to promote Indian leadership, improve the quality of life for American Indians and protect Indian rights and resources on Tribal lands. The conference will begin with a general assembly followed by two days of presentations for the Board of Directors. The Board will hold a business meeting after the presentations.

Anyone who wishes to present or suggest a topic for consideration may submit a letter to Kitcki Carroll, Executive Director, at kcarroll@usetinc.org by Dec. 20. USET Committees will also meet during the conference. Anyone interested in presenting to a committee may contact the committee chair at 615-872-7900.

For more information visit www.USETinc.org.

NCAIED RES Las Vegas 2014

The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development will hold its 28th annual National Reservation Economic Summit (RES) in Las Vegas from March 17-20.

Located at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, the event will feature Tribal leaders, state and local

elect officials and top CEOs, networking, teaming opportunities, business development sessions and American Indian procurement opportunities.

The Twenty Grand Business Plan competition, 40 Under 40 networking reception and Tribal Business Leaders Forum will be highlights of the event.

For more information visit www.NCAIED.org.

NICWA Annual Conference

The 32nd annual Protecting Our Children National American Indian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect will be held April 13-16 in Fort Lauderdale. The conference will feature expert plenary panels, innovative workshops, networking opportunities and celebratory events focused on serving the best interests of Native children in children’s mental health, child welfare and juvenile justice.

For more information visit www.NICWA.org.

NIGA Tradeshow and Convention

The National Indian Gaming Association 2014 tradeshow and convention will be held at the San Diego Convention Center from May 11-14. NIGA’s premier event will include a tradeshow, seminars, training sessions and an awards banquet.

For more information visit www.IndianGaming.org.

Fisheries are the lifeblood of the Nez Perce economy

BY JACK MCNEEL
Indian Country Today

The Nez Perce Tribe has the second-largest economic impact in North Central Idaho and is the third-largest employer in the region. The massive fisheries program, which employs upwards of 180 people, is a major contributor to those statistics.

Fish have always been vital to the Tribe. Salmon in particular were a major food source for generations. That importance was recognized and protected during the Treaty of 1855 which gave the Tribe total fishing rights within the original 13.4-million acre reservation.

The Columbia River and its upstream major tributaries in Idaho, the Snake and Clearwater rivers, once produced incredible numbers of anadromous fish, primarily salmon and steelhead. These species hatch in the rivers and streams, return to the ocean to grow into adults, then return to the headwaters to spawn and start a new generation before they die. Those numbers were before dams were constructed for flood control and hydroelectric production which in turn caused other forms of habitat destruction.

Fish populations plummeted. Management for this massive area fell in large part to the Nez Perce Tribe and its Division of Fisheries Resources Management (DFRM) to try to improve the situation. Their website states, “Our vision is to recover and restore all species and populations of anadromous and resident fish within the traditional lands of the Nez Perce Tribe.”

Dave Johnson, Navajo, is program manager. Under his direction are seven divisions overseeing enforcement, production, harvest, watershed, biological services, research and resident fish. It’s a big operation, all of which contribute to Tribal economics.

There are offices in Joseph, Ore., and in McCall, Orofino and Sweetwater, plus staff who operate out of both Powell and Grangeville, all in Idaho.

“The money we bring in is typically spent in those communities so it is a huge economic impact,” Johnson said. “The type of salaries they make are comparable to what they’d make with the federal government doing the same sort of thing.”

The annual budget is just more than \$20 million from 56 contracts with just more than 80 percent of that coming from Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

“That’s huge,” Johnson said. “It’s huge for Indian Country.”

The program began in 1981 and has grown steadily. Approximately 60 biologists, or other class descriptions requiring a professional degree, are presently employed. Thirteen of those are Tribal members and four of them have master’s degrees. All but one are Nez Perce members.

“We’re competing with federal agencies, state agencies, other Tribes, for projects,” Johnson explained.

Much of that competition is based on geography and it’s the projects within those historical Tribal lands the Tribe focuses on.

“All the Tribe’s country as defined by the Indian Claims Commission boundaries as being specifically Nez Perce country,” he said.

“I think the largest accomplishment is the whole entre of the Tribes, all Tribes, on salmon management, not just user based on traditional use, but as a manager, as one entity who can help restore those runs, help manage those runs,” Johnson said. “I think the Nez Perce really are leaders in this relative to other Tribes in the Columbia River drainage,” but he adds that the Yakama Tribe is right up there as well with programs largely funded by BPA.

The Tribe now manages the Kooskia Hatchery, co-manages Dworshak Hatchery and operates the Nez Perce Tribal Hatchery plus acclimation sites at Lookingglass in Oregon and other sites on the Clearwater and Snake rivers.

“We’re a strong leader in the management of all the salmon hatcheries, not just the ones we actually manage ourselves but the ones the state manages. We have a strong say-so in how they are being managed as well,” Johnson said.

The Tribe has particularly stepped up in the matter of restoring fisheries habitat.

“The states aren’t as involved in restoration work. I’d say a third of the program’s budget goes to habitat restoration work. We’ve been shouldering a lot of the work,” he said.

The combination of good salaries and attractive nature of the work has created a highly skilled workforce with little turnover and become a major economic driver for the Tribe and the region.

This article originally appeared in Indian Country Today and was reprinted with permission from the publication.

Navajo Nation president addresses uranium problem at international film festival

WINDOW ROCK — Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly addressed the audience in December at the International Uranium Film Festival (IUFF) at the Navajo Nation Museum.

The Navajo Nation banned uranium in 2005. In March 2013, Shelly signed into law the Uranium Ore Transportation Protection Act, which banned transportation of uranium on the Navajo Nation.

In its third year, the IUFF was the brainchild of founder Norbert Suchanek and executive director Marcia Gomes de Oliveira. Forty documentaries from 15 countries were screened, exploring both the uranium and nuclear industries impact on the global community.

“This year, there are at least 10 films about the Navajo Nation and uranium, including some films by Navajo filmmakers,” Shelly said.

Films depicting uranium mining on the Navajo Nation include *Dii’go To’ Baahaane: Four Stories About Water, Poison Wind* and *The Four Corners: A National Sacrifice Area?*

Shelly noted that sharing the Navajo story on uranium was critical and that books like *If You Poison Us* and *Yellow Dirt* brought awareness of the uranium legacy on the Navajo Nation to the forefront of the national consciousness.

In Navajo, uranium is referred to as *leesh litso*, or “yellow dirt.”

“The Northeast Church Rock Mine is the largest abandoned uranium mine on the Navajo Nation. It is approximately 145 acres,” Shelly said.

On July 16, 1979, an earthen dam at the United Nuclear Corporation uranium mill tailings facility collapsed, releasing 1,100 tons of radioactive tailings and 94 million gallons of toxic wastewater into the Puerco River.

The spill is the largest release of radioactive waste by volume in U.S. history and ranks second only to the Chernobyl nuclear reactor accident in total radiation release.

It contaminated the river for 80 miles, affecting Navajo communities like Church Rock, Pinedale and Tseyatoh, as well as Arizona communities as far away as Chambers.

Initial cleanup of the mine began in 2006. Residents living near the mine had their homes and yards screened and cleaned up. Additionally, contaminated soils were reconsolidated back to the former mine site. Land areas in the drainages east and north of the site were also screened and cleaned up.

On Sept. 29, 2011, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced its commitment to transport 1 million cubic yards of radium and uranium contaminated soil and waste from Church Rock to the



Rick Abasta

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly addresses the audience of the International Uranium Film Festival in December. Shelly gave an update of the Five-Year Plan and current remediation efforts of a uranium spill on their reservation.

nearby UNC mill site.

The cost of the cleanup was \$44 million.

The mill site land is owned by the UNC and General Electric. It is a Superfund site undergoing remediation and will eventually be turned over to the U.S. Department of Energy’s Office of Legacy Management for long-term surveillance and remediation.

The U.S. EPA warned that exposure to elevated levels of radium over a long period can result in anemia, cataracts and cancer, especially bone cancer.

“The Navajo Nation and the people living closest to this former uranium mine are resolved to see this cleanup action completed,” Shelly said. “Since 1985, we have been building our own technical capacity.”

The Navajo Nation argued its case before Congress in 1993 and 2007, requesting resources for the Nation and federal agencies involved in the clean up effort. Congressional support came from Rep. Henry Waxman (Calif.) and Sen. Tom Udall (N.M.).

In April 2013, the Navajo Nation expressed appreciation for the completion of the first multiagency Five-Year Plan from 2008 to 2012. Shelly met with the U.S. EPA and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission in February, April and August 2013 for the timely approval of the final remedy for clean up of the Church Rock mine site.

Shelly said the Navajo Nation received word in 2012 that the federal government would commit to a second Five-Year Plan to span from 2013 to 2017. The Navajo Nation submitted eight objectives and three recommendations for the new plan in April 2013, at the Uranium Stakeholders Workshop.

Shelly formed a Uranium Task Force in 2012 to establish an advisory board or commission to assist the Navajo Nation in developing recommendation for disposal options and other policy issues.

— Source: Navajo Nation press release



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The hiring of an attorney is an important decision that should not be based solely upon advertisement Castillo worked as a Public Defender in Broward County from 1990-1996 and has been in private practice for nine years. In 1995 he was voted the Trial Attorney of the year. He graduated from Capital University in 1989 and was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1990, Federal Bar in 1992, and the Federal Trial Bar in 1994.

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Beverly Bidney

The first sets of cans move quickly down the line at the bottling facility in Miami Dec. 5. By the end of the day, 72,000 cans were filled and ready for distribution.

◆ ENERGY DRINK

From page 1A

“It’s about Imagine Dragons and Miley Cyrus. We are trying to bring new customers to the Hard Rock brand – we aren’t trying to market to existing customers,” he said.

The customers aren’t the Hard Rock properties either; they’re 7-Eleven, Circle K and other retail stores. The Tribe sells the energy drink to distributors who already have seasoned sales people and relationships with businesses in Miami. They hope to sell about a million cans per month. The drink will be rolled out in other areas in the near future, starting with Chicago in February or March.

“As we grow, we will have other locations nationwide to cut down on shipping costs,” President Sanchez said.

Rep. Osceola has seen the venture evolve since the first meeting took place a couple years ago – before he was involved with the project.

“It’s very exciting for me to help the Board reach this milestone,” he said. “But

we still have a lot of work in front of us. People are interested in the product all over the world. We are waiting to get worldwide distribution. It’s a step-by-step process.”

To make the drink in locations nationwide, the lab sends ingredients for the exclusive formula to bottling companies contracted by the Tribe, who then mix it and can it.

The driving ingredient in energy drinks is no secret: caffeine. The amounts make the brands different. Drow said a 16-ounce can of Hard Rock Energy drink contains 200 mg of caffeine; a 16-ounce can of Red Bull and Monster have about 160 mg; and a 16-ounce cup of Starbucks coffee has about 315 mg of caffeine.

Drow said the rollout marks an exciting time for the Hard Rock Energy drink business but that there is still much work ahead to ensure success. It will take time, he said.

“Once it takes off, it will have exponential growth,” Drow said. “As long as we don’t take a lottery mentality and expect immediate returns, we’ll do better than we can imagine.”

◆ SALACOA

From page 1A

The sale included all livestock, equipment and hay on the 4,500-acre farm but not the land, which the Tribe will lease. The Tribe will also get the revenue generated from leasing a portion of the land for farming and hunting.

Salacoa holds two cattle auctions per year, which will continue as scheduled. The money raised at the auctions typically keeps the farm running until the next auction; any additional profits will benefit the Tribe’s cattle operations.

Located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains north of Atlanta, the Salacoa Valley Farm offers its customer base a convenient location, preventing them from traveling to big cattle-producing states like Texas or Kansas to buy cattle.

“We sell to 11 different states; our goal is to be the largest breeder in the Southeast,” Johns said. “About 30 percent of the bulls make their way to Florida, either to us or another customer.”

Johns said they will use Salacoa’s superior genetics to infuse into the Tribe’s commercial cowherd to increase the value of the calves. Johns also wants to increase the supply for Seminole Pride Beef.

“Even a small piece of the larger market requires a larger-scale operation,” Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank said. “Putting our brand on a certain genetic line allows us to expand our market.”

The management and staff of Salacoa remain in place. Christopher Heptinstall, general manager of Salacoa, entered the cattle industry in 1994 and has worked at the farm for about four years. With the new ownership, he continues his plans to double the size of the cowherd, currently comprised of 1,117 cows, heifers, calves and bulls, and to increase the number of mature cows from 650 to about 1,000.

“I’ve known Alex for a while and we’ve sold some bulls to the reservation,” Heptinstall said. “The Tribe will be able to facilitate the growth faster than we were going to; we’ll be ramping up the embryo program.”

Once the cowherd doubles in approximately three years, Johns plans to bring some bulls to Florida. To meet the goal, they will artificially inseminate cows, retrieve the embryos, implant the embryos in surrogates of lesser genetic quality and get six calves out of a cow instead of one. Veterinarians and technicians will perform the embryo transfers, in vitro fertilization and semen production.

“Having six full siblings on the ground at one time would take seven to eight years naturally,” Johns said. “This speeds up the process.”

Some embryos and semen will be available on the open market. It is a small but important part of the business, Johns said.

“It lets people know those genetics are available,” he said. “We want people to utilize the cattle and word of mouth spreads.”

The Salacoa operation is all about quality, he said. “The lower end of these bulls is better than the more expensive commercial bulls we’ve been getting for Brighton and Big Cypress,” Johns said. “It takes years to put together a purebred operation and if you disperse it, it’s like letting go of family.”

For nearly 30 years, Salacoa was a family owned farm. In addition to keeping the cowherd intact, the Tribe has kept the staff together.

“The employees are like a family and we work closely together,” Heptinstall said. “And the herd has a personality like a family. There is a lot of interest in our younger generation of cows. We have always been very selective about the animals. We’ve built something that is really advantageous, especially for the branded beef program.”

When Heptinstall heard about Vaughn’s plan to disperse the herd, he had offers to work elsewhere but decided to stay “until the last bale of hay was moved off the place.”

He is pleased to stay and work for the Tribe.

“Those guys took our goals and plans and made them a bit larger,” he said. “They bought a business that was up and going and plan to make it better.”



Photo courtesy of Salacoa Valley Farms

Primarily a seed stock operation, the Salacoa Valley Farms in Georgia produces purebred bulls and heifers for cattlemen who want to upgrade their cowherds. The Board of Directors’ recent purchase of the farm has given them access to the third-largest purebred Brangus cattle operation in the country.

Townhome cluster rises on Big Cypress Reservation

Construction scheduled for completion in August 2014

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Decades ago, when Wovoka Tommie tested his youth with daredevil BMX tricks in the old skate park at Big Cypress, he was too much of a kid to imagine the future.

On Nov. 20, reminiscing at a groundbreaking ceremony on the same land for phase one of the Big Cypress townhome development, Tommie said the reservation – and he – had grown up.

“We’d have little derbies going on where we’d do these stunts called power sliding...now we’re using this place for something desperately needed – shelter,” Tommie said. “It’s good to see the community grow not in malls but in shelter for our people.”

About 50 people turned out to shovel the first dirt for the project at Eloise Osceola Street and Cypress Lane that Councilman Mondo Tiger said was on a wish list for nearly four years.

Located on three lots, the project will consist of three multi-family residential buildings when finished in August 2014. Two of the structures will be two stories with three units each. The third building will be a one-story, two townhome dwelling built to Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

Councilman Tiger said about 60 families are waiting to apply for housing in one of the eight dwellings. Many of the families currently live off the Big Cypress Reservation in cities like Hollywood and Tampa, he said, but most are formerly of the reservation and are anxious to return.

“It’s a historic thing for us to start building and get people back to living on the rez,” Councilman Tiger said.

Housing regional manager Cicero Osceola said his office takes calls every day from interested applicants.

“It’s definitely not enough homes for everyone, but it’s a good start. In the future, we’ll see townhomes all the way down this side of the street and on the other side,” Osceola said.



Eileen Soler

Shovels go into the ground at a ceremony to mark the start of construction of a townhome cluster Nov. 20 on the Big Cypress Reservation.

Councilman Tiger and Mitchell Cypress, who was the Tribe’s Chairman when the idea for the townhomes was born, were applauded for seeing the project through several starts and stops. Cypress said Councilman Tiger picked up the ball when he was elected and did not let it go until plans were drawn and funding was provided.

“There’s always a tug of war at budget time,” Cypress said. “In this case, the better man won.”

Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank was also lauded for his support of the plan. Rep. Frank said the lack of housing had created a “steady drain on the reservation” population, but the new townhomes – and hope for more – will lead to a bigger, stronger community.

All structures will be environmentally friendly, said Rick Gonzalez, of REG Architects, designers of the project. All appliances will be Gold Star energy efficient, the roofs will be metal for

better cooling potential, windows will be made of high-grade impact resistant material and all carpets and interior paint will consist of low volatile organic compounds, or VOCs.

The Rev. Salaw Hummingbird, of Big Cypress First Baptist Church, called the project a privilege and lifted the gathering in prayer for the Creator to bless the site.

He compared the groundbreaking to the Old Testament story of Joshua and Caleb – that if men keep faith in God while enduring hardships toward what He promises, then they will be rewarded with victorious accomplishments.

“The Seminoles are truly fighters and what we see today is another stone that the Lord has laid for us,” Rev. Hummingbird said. “(The Seminoles) started with one little house here and look what they are doing now. . . It is a sign of what hard workers the Seminole people are and that we can still build on the future.”



Photo courtesy of REG Architects

A rendering depicts what townhomes now under construction on the Big Cypress Reservation will likely resemble when completed at Eloise Osceola Street and Cypress Lane.

◆ FPL

From page 1A

Frank Billie Jr., of Big Cypress Council Compliance, and Vincent Jimmie, of the Culture Department, are working with Councilman Tiger to emphasize the magnitude of potential loss to wildlife, culture, history and the Tribe’s rural tourist industry.

“It’s very scary,” Billie said. The steam that would discharge from the towers will be seen far and wide across the rural horizon, he said. The towers will be visible from nearly every bucolic view, including the Tribe’s cultural tourism attractions Billie Swamp Safari and the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.

More than 22 million gallons of water per day, pumped from the underground Tamiami Aquifer, which is the main water source for all Hendry County, will be required to cool the plant.

At a meeting with Big Cypress residents in October, Andrew Bauman, a lawyer with Lewis, Longman & Walker who is representing the Tribe in an ongoing lawsuit to stop the project from moving forward, said the plant would be “the largest natural gas plant in Florida and one of the largest in the United States.”

Formerly a cattle ranch owned by the McDaniel family, of Clewiston, the land was purchased by developer Eddie Garcia, of Virginia Beach, who was granted a zoning change from agriculture to Planned Use Development (PUD) by the Hendry County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). PUD allows for mixed compatible uses such as homes, businesses, recreation



Eileen Soler

The proposed FPL power plant on land just beyond the Big Cypress Reservation is depicted in an aerial view. The road that runs top to bottom of the photo is Josie Billie Highway/CR 833. The white line (an access trail and canal) that intersects Josie Billie Highway/CR 833 at the bottom of the photo is the reservation and FPL property border. The proposed Ahfachkee High School site is less than a mile from the FPL property, located on the left side of Josie Billie Highway/CR 833.

and industry.

Later, Garcia sold the land to FPL, which proceeded to plan the plant. The Tribe went to court against the county to reverse the rezoning on grounds that the FPL plant will go against the county’s own land use guidelines. But the battle was lost on claims that FPL’s plans were consistent with the Florida Electrical Power Plant Siting Act.

The ruling was overturned on appeal

in June because an application for the plant had not been submitted.

The court date has been rescheduled from January to April.

“We feel like we’ve been violated, raped and left on the side of the road to die,” Councilman Tiger said. “If we let this happen, our historical sites will be lost forever, the water will become contaminated and everything will go down from there.”

Health



Happy, healthy holidays

• **Paula Bowers-Sanchez**

Within the spirit of the holidays and the end of the year, we can focus on being thankful, giving good cheer and wishing for a bright future in the coming year of 2014.

This also applies to our health, fitness and wellness.

You don't have to wait for the New Year to make a resolution to get fit and eat well. It only takes a few days to begin a smart and balanced routine and get your body moving. It does require making a commitment and sticking to it. Yes, I know at times it can be hard, but once you experience success, you will be hooked.

Remember, it's OK to start off with small steps, working toward your ultimate goal. Sometimes a goal too large can overwhelm you and make you feel like quitting.

Most doctors recommend at least 30 minutes to an hour of activity at least three days a week.

Whether you hit the gym, go for a walk, ride a bike or climb the stairs, find a physical activity that keeps your interest – something you enjoy doing.

So get on it. Develop an overview of where you are in regards to your health, complete your blood work and physicals, and create a plan to get where you want – or need – to be.

Always stay hydrated, control the portions on your plate, get plenty of sleep (which does seem impossible sometimes), maintain a positive attitude and get moving at least three or more days a week.

Basically, what I am saying is stay happy, stay healthy, enjoy life and have a safe and Happy New Year.



OxyContin: Who is really to blame for the Florida epidemic?

SUBMITTED BY ERIC BRICKER
Addictions Program Administrator

A recent article published in the *LA Times* revealed that Purdue Pharma, the makers of OxyContin, withheld a list of nearly 1,800 doctors known to have questionable prescribing practices in regards to prescription narcotics, specifically OxyContin.

OxyContin is the brand name of one of the most potent forms of the synthetic opioid pain killer, Oxycodone.

According to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Oxycodone was implicated in the deaths of 1,247 people in Florida in 2011 and another 759 in the first half of 2012. The numbers represent a reduction from the 2,384 Florida Oxycodone-related deaths reported in 2010.

The reduction may correlate to stiffer laws passed in 2011 that restricted the narcotic prescribing practices of Florida physicians. The "Pill Mill" laws, as they are often called, bar Florida physicians from dispensing narcotics from their offices or clinics.

Unscrupulous practices by physicians and pain management clinics earned Florida the title of home of the "OxyContin Express."

The term refers to the practice of out-of-state drug dealers commuting to Florida for cheap prescription narcotics which they sell at a substantial markup in their home states. Pill Mill laws drastically reduced this practice.

In 2011, doctor purchases of prescription pain killers dropped 97 percent in the first six months of 2011 from the same period in 2010. Because doctors could not resell pain killers out of outpatient clinics, there was no reason to buy the drugs from wholesalers.

While the bulk of the responsibility for the Florida prescription drug epidemic has been focused on corrupt physicians, pharmacies and drug dealers, a compelling question remains: What about the people who manufacture the drugs?

The recent revelation that Purdue Pharma withheld the names of nearly 1,800 doctors it suspected of illegal prescription practices sheds light on that question and raises another: Why would the pharmaceutical company withhold information from law enforcement officials that may have saved lives?

Profitability seems to be the answer, as Purdue Pharma sold \$27 billion of OxyContin since the drug was first introduced in 1996. Representatives of the pharmaceutical company appear to deny culpability as they justify withholding their list from law enforcement agencies.

In an era where greed often outweighs the value of human life and corrupt medical professionals and large pharmaceutical companies cannot be relied on to police the sale of their own products, the burden of protecting the public will continue to fall upon policy makers, law enforcement agencies and the foot soldiers who dispense justice one drug dealer or corrupt doctor at a time.

Handling kids' grief responses

SUBMITTED BY REBECA FERRER
Child Psychologist

Grief describes the intense emotions a person feels after a loss. It is a natural response to losing a loved one and takes many forms, including feeling scared, sad, angry, confused or a combination of these things.

Everyone grieves differently. While adults may talk about their feelings, children often show their feelings through their behavior.

Children's grief responses generally come in several different stages.

Shock and denial: Children may believe the person will come back and act like everything is fine. This stage allows children time to slow down negative feelings. Parents can help by talking to children honestly and directly in words they can understand.

Panic: Children may think, "Will someone else I love die, too?" or "What if something happens to me?" They may feel sad, insecure or overwhelmed and act irritable or unfocused. They may also complain about body aches and pains that do not exist. It is not helpful to punish children; they need extra comfort and assurance that they are fine and will be cared for.

Anger: Children can turn from denial to anger. They may show rage, blame and jealousy. They may act out and be difficult to manage. It is not helpful to discourage these emotions. Parents can help by letting them express these feelings but by setting limits. (It's

OK to be angry but it's not OK to punch the wall, call your sister mean names, etc.)

Guilt: In children's experiences, good things happen when they are good, such as getting ice cream when they make good grades, and bad things happen when they misbehave. Children will likely blame themselves for the death or for the grief of those around them. If they see a parent crying, they may think it is their fault. It is most helpful to let children express these feelings and help them understand that nothing they did, said or thought caused the loss.

Sadness: As children begin to understand the reality of the loss, they start showing signs of sadness, depression, hopelessness and loneliness. They may cry often and may not want to participate in anything. These feelings could come weeks or months after the loss. It is most helpful to let children express feelings of sadness.

Acceptance: No one, child or adult, ever gets over a loss. But over time, the feelings are not as strong. Children may feel a renewed sense of energy and hope.

The best thing parents can do is be patient and allow children to grieve in their own way. Children have a healthier grieving process when they feel safe and supported.

The Family Services Department offers individual grief and supportive counseling. The goal of grief therapy is to help someone move from pain to accepting loving memories.

If you would like to make an appointment, contact the Family Services Department at 954-964-6300.



Leftovers: Are they still good?

SUBMITTED BY NICHOLAS PERSAUD
Environmental Specialist

With the holiday season comes parties, potlucks and other events, which means lots of leftovers. For safety reasons, it's important to remember how long food is kept and at what temperature. Below are a few tips on how to safely handle leftovers.

Eat leftovers within three to four days after cooking – unless frozen – provided that hot foods are kept 135 degrees Fahrenheit or higher and cold foods are kept 41 degrees Fahrenheit or lower.

Reheat all cooked leftovers to 165 degrees Fahrenheit. Soups, sauces and gravies should also be brought to a boil. Check food temperatures with a calibrated thermometer.

Reheat leftovers using a microwave oven. If there are any cold spots in the food, stir and rotate the food during the reheating process. Let leftovers sit for two

minutes after reheating to ensure the same temperature throughout the food.

Refrigerate cooked leftovers as soon they have cooled, usually two hours after cooking. Do not let food sit unattended in the danger zone (41 to 135 degrees Fahrenheit) for more than four hours. Discard food left in the danger zone for more than four hours.

Wash hands when handling food to prevent cross contamination. To wash hands properly, use soap and water and vigorously rub hands for a minimum of 20 seconds; then rinse and dry them with a clean paper towel.

This information only covers the basics, so use common sense when deciding if leftover food is safe to eat. When unsure, throw it out.

For more information on food safety and leftovers, call the Environmental Health Office at 954-985-2330 or sign up for one of the food safety classes held throughout the year.

SEMINOLE TRIBE FIRE RESCUE
Presents

Santa's Holiday Safety List




Fact: Did you know that most residential fires occur during the winter months?

- ❖ Most residential fires occur during nighttime. Unplug holiday lights when leaving your home or going to bed and NEVER leave burning candles unattended.
- ❖ Do NOT overload electrical outlets and extension cords. A maximum of three strands should be connected to prevent an electrical fire.
- ❖ Choose child-friendly holiday lights, decorations, ornaments and toys that will NOT harm children (no sharp edges and small pieces that are choking hazards).
- ❖ The signs of a freshly cut tree as opposed to a dry combustible tree are green pine needles that do not fall easily off of branches when they are shaken and sticky resin along the bark.
- ❖ Cut ½" off of the Christmas tree trunk and keep your tree stand filled with water for moisture. A dry tree can ignite into a blazing fire within a matter of seconds. See the "Christmas Tree Fire" video at <http://youtu.be/lwBiZtjjiou>
- ❖ Do NOT place your tree close to a heat source, by an exit or along the pathway of an exit.
- ❖ Remove your Christmas tree from the home and place it along the roadside for a scheduled community pick up shortly after the holidays have passed.



"Have a Safe & Happy Holiday"

For more on safety information, contact Deputy Fire Marshal Bruce Britton at BruceBritton@semtribe.com or (954) 986-2080 Ext. 11616.

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Get in the Game

Under the new health care law, more American Indian and Alaska Native people can get better coverage from a variety of providers, including tribal, urban, and Indian Health Service programs. But there is more! Doctor visits or hospital stays are all included, and you won't have any out-of-pocket expenses if your care is coordinated by an Indian health program. There are more health care choices for you, and better health for your whole community. The time to sign up is now, before you or someone you love really needs it. You may even be eligible for tax credits to help pay for health insurance. This makes it easy to afford health coverage. Sign-ups are happening now. Contact your local Indian health program about how you may qualify, or find out more at www.healthcare.gov/tribal.

Get in the game!

Have questions?
Call 1-800-318-2596
24 hours a day, 7 days a week
(TTY: 1-855-889-4325)



Elloise M. Packer donates patchwork apron to Museum



Photo courtesy of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Mary Parker Bowers is in the Arts and Crafts Center of the Seminole Okalee Indian Village on the Hollywood Reservation, circa 1960. Photograph taken by William Boehmer.

SUBMITTED BY JAMES H. POWELL
Registrar

In October, Elloise M. Packer contacted the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum to donate a girl's Seminole patchwork apron. Packer said that as a child, she traveled with her family from Connecticut to Miami in 1950. During the vacation, the family visited a Seminole store where her mother purchased the apron for her.

Packer kept the apron for more than 60 years and said that she, her daughter and her granddaughter all wore the apron when helping their mothers and grandmothers cook.

The Museum gladly accepted the donation and would like to thank Packer for donating the apron and for sharing her memories of it.

The Museum holds several girls' patchwork aprons but none of this style, color or date. It is a great addition to the Museum's textile collection and a great example of the patchwork styles and designs created in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

This apron also demonstrates the types of textiles and items made and sold at the Seminole tourist camps and stores in the 1950s. The accompanying photo shows Mary Parker Bowers in the Arts and Crafts Center at the Seminole Okalee Indian Village on the Hollywood Reservation in the late 1950s or early 1960s.

The photo, from the Museum's Boehmer Collection, helps document items, including aprons, from this period.

The Museum staff aims to collect examples of all items that have been made available for sale, especially



Photo courtesy of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Girl's Seminole patchwork apron, circa 1950.

those from the earliest Seminole tourist camps and arts and crafts stores. The Museum already holds many of these items, and Packer's donation helps complete its holdings.

If you can identify the maker of this apron, or if you would like to view it, contact the Museum. To make an appointment, call 863-902-1113 or visit www.AhTahThiKi.com.

The Museum thanks Packer, and all donors, for her generous donation and also thanks *Tribune* readers who have helped identify photographs from recent *Identifying the Past* articles.

Filling in details at the Jake Morgan Camp

SUBMITTED BY KAREN BRUNSO
Field Technician

During the past year, the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) investigated the Jake Morgan Camp on the Brighton Reservation to assess its significance for the Tribal Register of Historic Places. The camp is located in the central portion of the reservation in a hammock surrounded by a pasture. The site has seen heavy disturbance from cattle wandering in from the pasture.

In order to investigate the camp, archaeologists with the THPO conducted background research and an archaeological investigation that included both a pedestrian survey and an archaeological survey. Pedestrian surveys involve walking through an area to look for artifacts on the ground surface. This type of survey was used to investigate a possible trail shown in a 1948 aerial photograph leading to the southeast from the Jake Morgan Camp. However, the THPO found no evidence of the trail and its use remains unclear.

While archaeological evidence makes up an important part of the THPO's investigation of camps, determining the occupants of a camp and how they lived is more significant. By working with the Tribe's genealogist Geneva Shore and by conducting further background research and interviews, details of Morgan's life became clearer.

Morgan was born in 1885 to Tommy Bigelow and Elsie Smith. He had two sisters, Mamie Bigelow and Shelia Bigelow Johns, and one brother, Joe Bowers.

Shore said Morgan never married and lived with his sisters. Community outreach specialist Willie Johns recalled that Morgan was a respected elder in the Brighton community. He said Morgan walked to all the camps in Brighton carrying a burlap sack and would punish children who misbehaved by scratching them. Census records show Morgan worked in the cattle industry.

Much of the background information about Morgan comes from Alexander Spoehr, who documented Seminoles living on the Brighton Reservation in 1939. According to Spoehr's research, Morgan's camp was comprised of 15 individuals related through their mother's side, including Morgan, Shelia and her children, Mamie's children, and four of his cousins and their children. Archaeological evidence for the camp includes several glass fragments, such as a St. Joseph's aspirin bottle, a glass marble and a green glass bottle. Several metal artifacts were also located within the camp, including military buttons possibly from World War I or II, iron spikes, nails, a bolt with the Ford logo and a buckle fragment. A large, thin copper object folded several times with intentional holes perforating the surface was also found.

The THPO found very little recorded information about the Jake Morgan Camp, so any additional information to enhance the history of Morgan and his

camp is welcomed.

If you would like to contribute information, contact the Tribal Historic Preservation Office at 863-983-6549.



Photo courtesy of THPO

Pictured is a military button found at the Jake Morgan Camp.



Photo courtesy of THPO

Pictured is an unknown copper object found at Jake Morgan Camp.

Betty
Mae
Jumper

Wisdom from the past

Christmas Doll

The following column was written by Betty Mae Jumper and printed in the December 17, 1999 issue of *The Seminole Tribune*.

This time of year, I always have memories from years ago when I was a small girl and didn't know what Christmas was about.

One year I saw young white girls my age. They were wearing black patent leather shoes with little straps across the top. And they were carrying dolls. They said, "Santa gave it to them."

For the longest time I used to wonder who was this man Santa Claus who went around and handed out shoes and dolls to children and why didn't he come to me. I wondered how you ask Santa to give you those things. But, I never learned how to go about asking. Finally, I just figured you had to be white to get a doll and shoes, so that's that. I never got my black patent leather shoes or the doll when I was a child.

Years later, when I was a teenager - about 15 - I was attending the Cherokee Boarding School in Cherokee, N.C. My family didn't have any money, so over the Christmas holiday I couldn't go home like the other kids. I had to stay at the boarding school.

One day, I was out in the hall cleaning for my room and board, and two big boxes came to the girls' building. I called my matron. She came out and signed for the boxes.

"Oh," she said, "I wonder what's in these boxes?"

She opened one large box and what did I see? Nothing but dolls and dolls. They were gifts collected by local women and donated to our school for the young girls.

As I looked I saw an old-fashioned doll

that looked like a real baby. I picked it up and admired it. I was saying to myself, "Why couldn't something like this ever come in my day?" I questioned myself while standing there holding the baby doll.

The matron saw me and said, "You like that doll, don't you?" Then, I told her my story of wanting a doll and never getting it in my life.

I laid the doll back in the box, but the matron picked it up and said, "Here, take it and wash her clothes and clean it up and put it on your bed."

I stood there thinking, "I'm too old for a doll." But the matron kept up saying, "Take it. Take it." So I picked up the baby doll and took it to the wash room and washed it. Then I took the doll clothes and I washed them. Then I took the doll to my room and laid it on my pillow.

That doll stayed on my pillow every day while I remained in Cherokee and finished high school. Then, I took it to my nurse training at the Kiowa Indian Hospital in Lawton, Okla. It stayed on my bed until I finished that, too.

Then I brought it back to Florida and laid it on my bed. It stayed on my bed every night until my house burned down and it was lost in the fire.

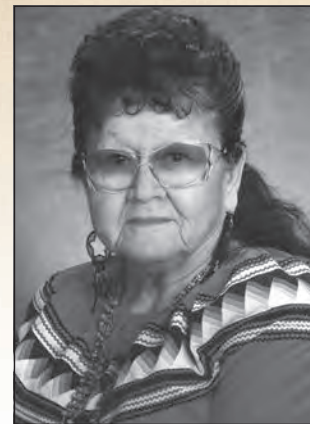
The lesson I learned from this and what I like to tell parents is that it doesn't take a lot of presents to

make an impression on a child. Christmas is the day we celebrate the birth of Christ, a baby who was born in a stable where animals were kept.

The mother of Jesus didn't have any fine blankets, so she wrapped Him in rags and laid Him in a manger. Jesus never had fine clothes, but he came to teach love and peace, and that's why Christmas is such a wonderful holiday.

Christmas is not about gifts. You don't have to give your child a mountain of things.

Give them love and guidance and a good example to follow. Those are the important gifts and they're the things that even a fire can't destroy.



Hah-Pong-Ke: Denice Franke

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

Singer and songwriter Denice Franke's song *Seminole Girl* is a tribute to Franke's mother, who grew up in Wewoka, Okla., near Oklahoma Seminole country, claiming to be one-fourth Indian.

"My grandfather actually lived on the reservation," said Franke, who often discussed those early days with her mother, who died two years ago. "When she was growing up, having Native American blood was not talked about. It was looked down upon by prejudiced persons."

She said her mother grew up, often hearing and repeating a family motto that she did not understand until she grew older: "We took the Indians land and it wasn't ours."

The song describes the hardships and life of her female ancestors through a fictional Seminole woman.

"My mother was 6 years old when the Depression hit. She basically had no childhood and had to grow up fast. She grew up with a deformity on her hand. She lost her father at a very young age," Franke said. "But she never allowed herself or any of us to feel sorry for her. I tried to look for the real heart of the situation she and my sister experienced. That's what a real songwriter does."

Born and raised in Dallas, Texas, she sang in her father's church choir and learned to play the ukulele and guitar by age 16. In a contemporary songs class in the eighth grade, Franke first heard Joni Mitchell's *The Circle Game*.

"I became infatuated with everything she did," Franke said, crediting Mitchell's songs, the hymns

of the church and the music of Jackson Browne, Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Eric Taylor, David Olney and Tom Waits as her major musical influences.

By high school she was a full-fledged songwriter and performer, a star of the school talent show. After graduating from high school in 1977, Franke performed as a solo artist while attending Southwest Texas State University. By 1979 she was singing and recording with the Beacon City Band, covering Nanci Griffith's iconic *West Texas Sun*.

Soon after they released an album, Griffith discovered Franke performing at the historic Alamo Hotel and Lounge in Austin and hired her as a backing vocalist. After a European tour, "longing to be in a bigger place," she enrolled as a German major at the University of Texas at Austin, graduating in 1987. Franke's songs and voice have been recorded on numerous compilation albums and she has released four of her own: *Shadow No More* (1991), *You Don't Know Me* (1998), *Comfort* (2001) and *Gulf Coast Blue* (2008). *Gulf Coast Blue* includes the song *Seminole Girl*, which features famous folkie Eliza Gilkyson on background vocals and Mark Hallman on rebana, a hand drum, and Hopi skins.

Well-known throughout Texas and the American folk music songwriting community, Franke has not performed publicly since her mother's death in 2011. She moved from Austin to Galveston in southeast Texas.

"I couldn't get through a song. I needed to take a break," she said. "But I am going to come back soon. I miss performing and putting myself on the line before an audience and the magical thing that always happens. I want to feel that again."

'Seminole Girl'

He said "I never knew the love 'til I fell in deep
with a Seminole girl,
She sent that arrow right through me
Sharp and pretty as a desert rose, don't be fooled,
by boys
She no fool, she is her own
What do you say about the black crow hair?
Cheek bones rise to the gods, they smile on high
I asked her for a dance
She took my hand, she moved into me
shining, strident, and graceful"
Oh, no time for wonderin'
No time for worryin' if that girl say yes
Oh, no time for idlylin', get on your feet boy, go
ask that girl to dance
What about the mistress on the rural route?
She'd taken a few
That moon kept her shine left nothin' but the black
of night
The drone of the wheels on highway 9
Daddy fell in deep in a sweet dream never knew
what hit him
There's a lot to say about the dust bowl girls
Six little hands, mama put them to work feedin'

hungry workin' men
Mama pushed them hard, made them strong
No time for play, this grown-ups' game, you better
grow up fast
Oh, no time for idlylin'
No time for worryin' where the next meal's comin'
Oh, no sense in cryin' now
No time for feelin' sorry for yourself
She had a little boy in the Truman times
Her man turned hard, she kept her mind,
Left him sitting there with his drink
She took the job at the Elko shop
Trying to make ends meet
Alone with her son living in the projects
There's a lot to say about a woman who's strong
She takes charge
She needs no man to appraise her
That's what I love about the Seminole girl
She no fool, boys, she is her own.
Oh, no time for idlylin'...
He said, "I never knew the love 'til I fell in deep
with the Seminole girl
She sent that arrow right through me..."

SEMINOLE SCENES



Photo courtesy of Bobby Henry

HERE COMES THE BRIDE: Seminole medicine man Bobby Henry sports a tux as he walks granddaughter Jamey down the aisle at her wedding, recently, in Tampa.



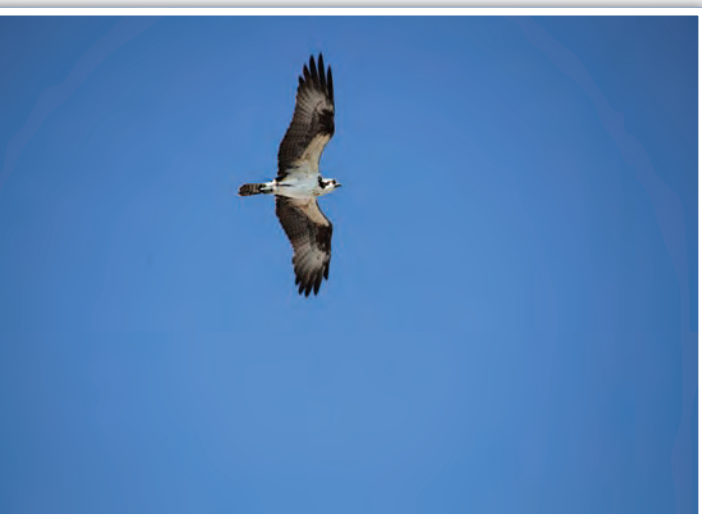
Beverly Bidney

BUILDING THE FUTURE: The Public Safety Administration Building in Brighton takes shape with each new day on the construction site. This shows progress as of early December.



Beverly Bidney

SKATEBOARD SUPERSTAR: Trail skateboarder Ezekiel Tiger, 11, shows his stuff on the ramp leading from the baseball bleachers. He was at the Hollywood Reservation for the annual Big Ballers basketball tournament Dec. 6.



Peter B. Gallagher

FREEBIRD: An osprey takes flight over the Gulf of Mexico during the first part of the Polly Parker voyage Dec. 1.



Photo courtesy of Wanda Bowers

Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr., Miss Seminole Tia Blais-Billie and Jr. Miss Seminole Brianna Blais-Billie present FSU athletic director Stan Wilcox a traditional Seminole jacket designed with the school's colors during the FSU basketball game against University of Tennessee at Martin Nov. 17.



Peter B. Gallagher

Norman 'Skeeter' Bowers reels in a fish during the Polly Parker voyage through the Gulf of Mexico.



Eileen Soler

JAWS OF LIFE: Seminole Fire Rescue Department staff practice using a battery of hydraulic tools and hand tools to cut through thick, mangled metal during extrication exercises on the Hollywood Reservation.



Beverly Bidney

ENERGY BOOST: Brighton Board Rep. Larry Howard, Immokalee Board Liaison Dorothy Scheffler and President Tony Sanchez Jr. pose at the ice bar during the launch party for Hard Rock Energy drink at the Hard Rock Cafe in Hollywood Dec. 12.



Eileen Soler

WORKING AT THE CAR WASH: A member of the Rez Dawgz motorcycle club helps rinse a car during a car wash the club held to raise money and goods for the Native Relief Foundation.



Beverly Bidney

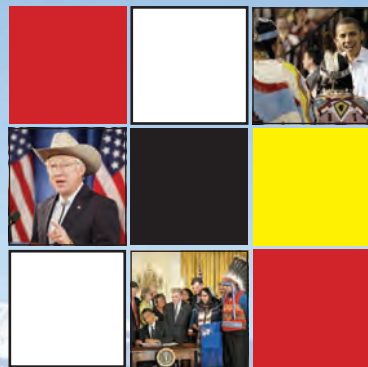
KICKING BACK: The Tribe's Hollywood Recreation and IT departments play a game of soccer on the field in Hollywood Dec. 6. The pick-up game is a popular after-hours activity for the employees. Hector Casallas tries to get the ball past an IT employee.



Beverly Bidney

BBQ: Iona's Fry Bread sets up shop on the Hollywood Reservation during the Big Baller's basketball tournament Dec. 5-7. Cook Linda Malinofski keeps customers happy by cooking burgers.

NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS



South Florida lawyer guilty of stealing \$1.3 million from Seminole Tribe of Florida

FORT LAUDERDALE — Following a year-long fraud conspiracy, South Florida lawyer Frank Excel Marley III, 39, of Southwest Ranches, was convicted in U.S. District Court for stealing \$1.3 million from the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

Marley, who was convicted of one count of wire and mail fraud conspiracy and six counts of theft from Indian Tribal organizations from 2006 to 2011, is scheduled for sentencing Feb. 21. He faces a maximum penalty of 20 years and a \$250,000 fine for the conspiracy charge, as well as five years in prison for the other six counts.

Prosecutors proved that bills submitted to the Tribe by Marley included “padded” charges for services, travel, phone calls and meetings “that did not occur.”

Marley had been retained by Tribal leaders in 2006 to represent the Tribe on sports and entertainment matters and to assist in obtaining Federal Communications Commission licenses, approvals, transmitters and other equipment for radio stations planned at the Brighton and Big Cypress Reservations.

Marley’s assistant, Maria Hassun, 66, of Coral Gables, was sentenced to a year and a day in federal prison after pleading guilty to her role in the crime and testifying against Marley. She must also repay \$148,658 to the Tribe.

— Source: Sun-Sentinel

24,000-year-old body shows kinship to Europeans and American Indians

SIBERIA — A 24,000-year-old body of a boy buried at Mal’ta near Lake Baikal in eastern Siberia that has been stored for more than half a century has recently raised some interesting historical questions. The body of the boy, who was 3 or 4 years old and buried wearing an ivory diadem, a bead necklace and a bird-shaped pendant, was excavated over a 20-year-period ending in 1958 by Russian archaeologists.

However, when University of Copenhagen DNA expert Dr. Eske Willerslev extracted DNA from the boy’s bone, hoping to find ancestry in the East Asian peoples from whom Native Americans are known to be descended, he found something else.

He discovered the boy’s DNA matches that of Western Europeans; this showed that during the last Ice Age, European people had migrated farther east across Eurasia than previously thought. In addition, the Mal’ta boy’s genes suggest he would have had brown hair, brown eyes and freckled skin.

Surprisingly, his DNA also matches about 25 percent of the DNA of living Native Americans. The first people to arrive in the Americas have long been assumed to have descended from Siberian populations related to East Asians.

It now seems that they may be a mixture between the Western Europeans who had reached Siberia and an East Asian population.

The same markers of European origin were found on a 17,000-year-old adult, matching both Europeans and Native Americans but not East Asians.

“We estimate that 14 to 38 percent of Native American ancestry may originate through gene flow from this ancient population,” Dr. Willerslev and colleagues wrote in a journal article published by *Nature*.

A European contribution to Native American ancestry could explain two baffling mysteries about the people’s origins. One is that many ancient Native American skulls, including the well-known Kennewick man, are very different from those of present day Native Americans. Another is that the X lineage — one of the five mitochondrial DNA lineages found in Native Americans — also occurs in Europeans.

One explanation is that Europeans managed to cross the Atlantic in small boats some 20,000 years ago and joined the Native Americans from Siberia.

Dr. Willerslev thinks it more likely that European bearers of the X lineage had migrated across Siberia with the ancestors of the Mal’ta culture and joined them in their trek across the Beringian land bridge.

— Source: New York Times

Seminole casinos offer Asia’s hottest slots

TAMPA — *Fa Fa Fa*, which translates to “richer” or “fortune,” is Asia’s most popular slot machines and has been installed at the Seminole Hard Rock in Hollywood and Tampa, as well as the Tribe’s casinos in Coconut Creek, Immokalee, Seminole Classic and Brighton.

Sporting minimum jackpots of \$150,000, the machines feature Asian symbols of prosperity, such as turtles, gongs, fish, phoenix and Choy Sun Doa, a Chinese god of wealth and prosperity.

“This is the most prevalent game in Macau by leaps and bounds, and we’re excited not only for the opportunity to bring it here but to offer life-changing jackpots,” Kevin Sweet, vice president of slot performance for Seminole Gaming, told the *Sun-Sentinel*.

The 42 machines are to be linked, and a cent or two from each slot pull will feed into a progressive jackpot that increases until someone in Florida hits it. The Seminoles already offer machines with progressive jackpots, *Wheel of Fortune* the most notable, but unlike *Fa Fa Fa*, they are linked to casinos across the country.

“We hope they see they’re not feeding a Wheel of Fortune-type meter that hits anywhere, but one that’ll stay in Florida,” Sweet said.

— Source: SouthFlorida.com

Creek Jonodev Osceola Chaudhuri appointed acting NIGC chairman

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Jonodev Osceola Chaudhuri, an enrolled member of the Muscogee Creek Nation, was designated acting chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC). Chaudhuri stated he would continue former Chairwoman Tracie Stevens’ prioritization of collaboration and assistance to gaming Tribes in order to minimize the necessity of punitive enforcement actions.

The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) provides for a three-person NIGC. The chairperson is generally appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate, and two associate commissioners are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. IGRA requires that at least two members of the Commission must be enrolled Indian Tribal members, and no more than two members of the Commission may be of the same political party.

Due to the unique structure of the NIGC, as acting chairman, Chaudhuri alone is the decision maker in most Commission regulatory and enforcement actions. IGRA specifies that the powers of the chairman include the issuance of temporary closure orders, levying of civil fines, approval of Tribal gaming ordinances and management contracts, and any other powers delegated by the Commission. In general, the full Commission only acts to confirm or reverse the chairman’s actions on appeal.

Prior to his appointment, Chaudhuri had served as Senior Counselor to the Department of the Interior’s Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Kevin Washburn. Before his government service, Chaudhuri worked in private practice and served as a judge on several Tribal courts, including service as Chief Justice of the Muscogee Creek Nation Supreme Court.

The NIGC’s latest reports show that in 2012, Indian gaming brought in \$27.9 billion in revenues from 420 gaming facilities operated by 240 Tribes in 28 states.

— Indian Country Today Media Network

Comedian Charlie Hill fighting cancer

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — Oneida-Mohawk-Cree stand-up comedian and actor Charlie Hill has been battling lymphoma for more than a year, and his family has set up the Charlie Hill Fund at the donating site EverRibbon.com.

Donations are to help Hill’s family take care of him at home and also for Charlie’s immediate family which consists of his wife, two sons, two daughters and granddaughter.

Charlie Hill has appeared on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*, *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and *Late Night with David Letterman*.

Hill has been the topic of a PBS documentary *On and Off The Res’ with Charlie Hill*.

— Source: Indian Country Today Media Network

Cherokee Nation Day feeds homeless

TULSA, Okla. — Past and present Cherokee Nation officials helped feed the homeless and hungry Nov. 26 for Iron Gate organization’s Cherokee Nation Day. Tribal Councilors Cara Cowan Watts and Lee Keener joined former Tribal Councilor Meredith Frailey and former Principal Chief Ross Swimmer to serve food in the downtown cafeteria of Trinity Episcopal Church, where the organization began feeding people in 1984.

Watts gave the nonprofit \$1,000 from the Tribal Council’s General Assistance Fund to help pay for the food served that day. She made the donation to show that the Nation cares about its hungry and homeless citizens.

— Cherokee Phoenix

Governor blocks Martha’s Vineyard casino plan

BOSTON — Less than a month after the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head

(Aquinnah) of Massachusetts announced it had secured federal approval to convert an unfinished Tribal community center into a temporary gambling hall, Gov. Deval Patrick filed suit in Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court to block the Tribe from building and operating a new casino on the vacation getaway of Martha’s Vineyard.

The lawsuit contends that the Tribe forfeited any gaming rights in Aquinnah when they agreed to a land-settlement deal with the state roughly 30 years ago.

“We have a genuine difference of legal opinion, and that needs to be sorted out by a court, and this is how you do that,” Patrick told the *Boston Globe*. “I don’t have a position on the substance (of the casino plan). I have a position on what the law provides.”

— Source: Boston Globe

Beef and money stay in Navajo Hands

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — Since its inception a year ago, the Navajo Beef program has produced 545 head of cattle and generated half a million dollars for Navajo ranchers and their communities.

Through the program, local Navajo ranchers raise high-quality beef. Labatt Food Service distributes the beef, ensures the quality of the beef and makes sure local Navajo ranchers receive fair payment for the use of the entire animal, and the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise (NNGE) purchases it all to serve in its resort, casinos and restaurants.

Navajo Beef Program ranchers are located at three Arizona ranches, including the 14-R Ranch located on a 365,000-acre parcel of ranch land in Nahata Dził, where hundreds of Navajo families were relocated as a settlement between the Hopi and Navajo during the 1980s, and at Turquoise Grazers in Window Rock, Ariz. 14-R President Al Pahi told the *Navajo-Hopi Observer* that casino chefs are happy with the taste of Navajo beef.

He said it mirrors a taste he used to enjoy when eating the sheep his family raised.

“This is only a guess, but this shrub grows in the high country and I know back in the old place where we ran sheep...I used to crave mutton because of that,” he said.

The ranchers uphold traditional practices to produce premium, quality beef that is always tender and full of flavor. All the cattle are grass fed and Navajo certified beef is choice grade or better and aged 21 days.

— Source: Navajo-Hopi Observer

Mobile device gaming to increase by 2018

BASINGSTOKE, England — The number of consumers using mobile devices including phones and tablets for online gaming is predicted to reach 164 million by 2018, according to a report from Juniper Research, a market intelligence, analysis and research think tank that appraises high growth opportunities across the mobile telecoms, content and applications sectors.

The report foresees a 100 million increase in subscribers who are expected to use their devices to place bets, visit mobile casinos or buy lottery tickets, leaving desktop services behind.

“Mobile can frequently provide a more immersive and convenient gambling experience than a desktop PC or laptop,” JRR author Siân Rowlands told YahooFinance.com. “As a result of this, gambling operators have been required to shift the nature of their organization away from ‘legacy’ services such as telephone betting towards becoming a more mobile-oriented company, with the aim of achieving over half of their online revenues from mobile in the next 1-3 years.”

— Source: YahooFinance.com

Native American-focused charity president indicted

PORTLAND, Ore. — The president of National Relief Charities has been indicted and arrested for allegedly defrauding the organization of \$4 million. Brian Brown, 56, was arrested at the Portland Airport where he was returning from a trip to Thailand and Japan.

National Relief Charities’ mission is to help Native American people improve their quality of life by providing opportunities for them to make positive changes in their communities. The charity works mostly with Tribal communities on the Plains and in the Southwest.

The organization said it helped more than 420,000 Native people last year, sending out more than 5 million pounds of goods to Native people each year. The unsealed indictment charges Brown with conspiracy to defraud the organization, alleging that in 2005, when Brown relinquished his role as president of NRC, he established a nonprofit group that he managed called Charity One and began doing business as the American Indian Education Endowment Fund. He would then draw funds from NRC to his other organizations.

However, instead of funding scholarships for Native students as claimed, he kept the money along with other co-conspirators.

— Native American Times

Film: Can Native traditions heal PTSD?

ELKO, Nev. — Modern-day veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may be helped by Native American traditions.

Western Folklife Center producer Taki Telonidis has been working on a documentary called *Healing the Warrior’s Heart* that explores the ways some Native American Tribes treat their veterans upon their return from war.

Some Tribes refer to PTSD as a wounding of the soul, while part of the veteran’s spirit still roams the battlefield, Telonidis told the *Elko Daily Free Press*, adding that many Tribes have traditions that can heal a veteran’s heart.

“What they’re trying to do is bring their spirit home,” he said. Telonidis is concentrating on two specific locations for his film: the George E. Wahlen Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Salt Lake and the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana and Canada.

At the VA center, a Shoshone-Paiute medicine man offers sweat lodges for anyone who is interested. The medicine man instructs the veteran to bring the spirits of the people in those memories with them into the sweat lodge. He tells veterans to have the conversation they have wanted to have with them all these years. Veterans are encouraged to talk to those people and tell them how they feel and to ask forgiveness if they feel they need to.

“Guilt and shame are the biggest things guys bring back with them,” Telonidis said. “Often, veterans with PTSD have one particular image that is frightening and they relive it over and over. Sometimes it’s the death of a colleague or friend or a memory of killing an enemy.”

Those veterans who shun the Tribe’s traditions usually find the transition from soldier to citizen harder, Telonidis said. The documentary is following one young man who served several tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. He initially ignored the traditions of the Tribe and was having a hard time adjusting to being home.

Healing the Warrior’s Heart is a Western Folklife Center production in partnership with KUED Channel 7 in Salt Lake as the PBS affiliate. Gary Robinson from Tribal Eye Productions is a partnering producer.

— Source: Native Times

Navajo Ellsburry signs \$153 million deal with Yankees

NEW YORK — The Yankees, retooling after missing the playoffs for just the second time in 19 years, have landed Boston Red Sox free agent centerfielder Jacoby Ellsburry with a \$153 million, seven-year deal — third most lucrative for an outfielder in major league history.

Fresh from a World Series win with the Yankees arch-rival, Ellsburry is a member of the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT); he is Navajo, one of the four Tribes in CRIT.

Ellsburry, who turned 30 in September, led the majors with 52 stolen bases despite a late season broken right foot. The lefty-hitting leadoff man batted .298 with nine home runs and 53 RBIs.

Ellsburry’s deal includes a \$21-million option for the 2021 season, with a \$5-million buyout. If the option is exercised, the deal would be worth \$169 million over eight years. Among outfielders, only \$160 million contracts for Manny Ramirez and Matt Kemp are more lucrative.

— Source: Washington Post

S.C. Catawbas want reservation, casino in N.C.

ROCK HILL, S.C. — The Catawba Indian Nation wants the federal government to designate land in North Carolina as a reservation, so they can build a new casino in Cleveland County that is fiercely opposed by Republican and Democratic leaders.

The application notes that the South Carolina-based Tribe’s “service area” includes several counties in North Carolina, including Cleveland County, and that its current reservation lands are well under the limit at 1,006 acres. The Tribe says the 16-acre property, just off Interstate 85 outside Kings Mountain, would be used for an “entertainment complex” that will include gaming “to the extent permissible under relevant law.”

The ability of the Catawbas, based near Rock Hill, S.C., to expand across the state line into North Carolina has been opposed by Republican Gov. Pat McCrory, Democratic Attorney General Roy Cooper and a bipartisan coalition of state lawmakers who said it could open the door to other out-of-state Tribes bringing gaming into North Carolina.

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, which operates a casino in

Western North Carolina, also opposes the move. So does John Rustin, the president of the N.C. Family Policy Council, who reviewed the application this week and called it “baseless.” Local Cleveland County and Kings Mountain officials like the idea, however, licking their chops over a project predicted to bring in \$339 million and more than 4,000 permanent jobs to the county.

The Catawba Nation has been unlucky so far in its gaming pursuits. A gaming operation on its 700-acre reservation about 30 miles south of Charlotte is tied up in court and approval of a bingo hall near Interstate 77 in Rock Hill is stalled.

Former Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan supports the Catawbas, expressing concern that the 1993 settlement sold out the Tribe’s “long-term interests,” he wrote in a letter.

An attorney for the Catawbas said it can take six to eight years for a Tribe to receive approval to place land in trust but that the Tribe has faced shorter wait times because of its settlement, ranging from nine months to two years.

— Source: Charlotte News Observer

Coal exporter disturbs Native American burial site

BELLINGHAM, Wash. — Coal company Pacific International Terminals (PAT), which plans to build the largest coal terminal in North America, bulldozed more than 4 miles of roads and cleared more than 9 acres, three years ago — without state and federal permission — disturbing a protected burial site where 3,000 year old remains had been removed.

The company ignored federal and state laws requiring consultation with the local Lummi and Nooksack Tribes before bulldozing, despite a memo they submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers four months before bulldozing, promising to avoid it. The company further promised to have an archaeologist present for work done within 200 feet of the site. None of this occurred.

PAT drilled 37 boreholes throughout the site, ranging from 15 to 130 feet deep.

The drilling became public only recently when environmental watchdog groups EarthFix and KUOW obtained documents made public in federal court as part of a lawsuit against PAT by environmental group RE Sources.

Though the drilling has since stopped, and PAT settled for \$1.6 million in July 2013 for violations under the Clean Water Act, some of the bulldozing damaged wetlands, which are protected by state and federal laws. The disruption of the native ancestral grounds, however, remains a bitter gift.

Although the Lummi Tribal Council asserted its opposition in a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers last summer, the Tribe chose not to join the civil suit brought by RE Sources. It is unclear why the Tribe decided against joining the suit, but observers said their inaction weakens the suit.

The Army Corps of Engineers is now finalizing a “memorandum of agreement” between Pacific International Terminals and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. The Army Corps said the memorandum, obtained by EarthFix and KUOW under the Freedom of Information Act, would serve as a retroactive permit. The Lummi Nation refused to sign the memorandum or accept the \$94,500 offered as mitigation. For now, the coal company is allowed to move ahead with the permitting process. The question of the compatibility of a coal mine to land where Native ancestors lived over thousands of years remains unanswered.

— Source: KUOW.org

Cherokee girl eyes Olympics

KANSAS, Okla. — Every time Cherokee Nation citizen Kylee Russell, 16, competes at an Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) weightlifting meet, she continues to shatter stereotypes and records.

The Kansas High School sophomore holds national and world records in bench press, squat, dead lift and total weight lifted in the 14-15 age group and 181-pound weight class.

And she dreams of the Olympics. “My ultimate plan is to become an Olympic lifter,” Russell told *Indian Country Today Media Network*. “I went to the Junior Olympics in 2011 to lift weights, and I realized that it’d be really cool to compete.”

Russell’s world records are 203.93 pounds on bench press, 385.8 on squat, 341.71 on dead lift and 931.44 in total weight. Her national records are 195 pounds on bench press, 405 on squat, 335 on dead lift and 935 in total weight, according to AAU sports.

In July, she became the first competitor to squat more than 400 pounds at age 15 while competing in the AAU Oklahoma State Powerlifting competition in Tulsa.

— Source: Indian Country Today Media Network

Compiled by Special Projects Reporter Peter B. Gallagher.

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Education



B



Emma Johns

Pemayev Emahakv Charter School students plant a garden with the help of Culture Department staff, as part of their culture curriculum.

Culture Department keeps traditions alive through school curriculum

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — For Lorene Gopher, director of the Culture Department, language is the most important element of Seminole culture.

"Language is key because it identifies who you are," Gopher said. "Anyone can sew our clothing and cook our food. If we don't have language, we are just like anyone else."

Gopher oversees a department of 22 people, including five fluent Creek speakers, who teach culture to the 254 Pemayev Emahakv Charter School (PECS) students every day and to 23 high school students once a week. The cultural education program is in its sixth year at the school.

"Very few people pass the language down," Gopher said. "The youngest fluent speaker is about 55 years old, but some people say they can understand it."

Gopher has taught the Creek language since she came to the department in 1995 and traveled to schools in Okeechobee twice a week to teach Tribal students. In 1999, she attended a workshop about teaching language, which was a pivotal event in her career, she said. From that workshop, she learned how to develop lesson plans to methodically teach language using words and pictures.

The Culture Department incorporates books of curriculum so even non-fluent speakers can teach Creek. To make the job easier, Gopher is in the process of writing a Creek dictionary.

"If we didn't write the language down, I knew it would be gone," she said.

For the last 10 years, she has been working on the 300-page dictionary, which will contain about 2,000 words and a historical overview when complete. Definitions will be from Creek to English and from English to Creek. In 2004, Carol Cypress published a similar dictionary in

Mikasuki, which is available at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.

Gopher consulted with a language committee to determine which words to include in the dictionary, but some English words have no Creek counterpart and need to be created. For example, *estvmkev* is the Creek word for "airplane," but it actually means "something to fly with." *Cvto eshotcickv* is the word for "typewriter," which means "writing with metal."

"We don't have a word for television or computer; we'll have to make it up," Gopher said.

Like most children learn to read English by first learning the ABCs, Tribal children at PECS are taught Creek by learning their *Ah Chee Ees*. There are only 19 letters in Creek, compared to 26 in English. Younger students learn one letter per day and words that begin with it. For example, *Ah* is for *aha*, which means "potato."

The comprehensive cultural education program also teaches history, arts and crafts, gardening, traditions, songs, morals and values. Field trips to old campsites are also part of the curriculum.

"The culture was never meant to be in the classroom," said Culture teacher Jade Osceola. "We are trying to incorporate it into the 21st century."

PECS students attend daily Culture classes in addition to academics. Some teachers try to incorporate Creek words into the academic curriculum, but the language is mostly taught in Culture classes. The sixth-graders have had Culture class every day of their school career, so Osceola believes monitoring the group will be interesting. "There is a consistency in the Culture classes," she said. "It's more of a family atmosphere. We see them every day at school and at events in the community. There is a closeness since we share the culture with them."

Elders teach students the language and are referred to as Grandma Jenny

(Shore), Grandma Mollie (Jolly), Grandma Lorene (Gopher), Grandma Martha (Jones), Grandma Alice (Sweet) and Grandma Emma (Fish). The designation adds an additional measure of respect for the culture, as well as the women, because culture elements were traditionally taught by grandmothers and aunts, Osceola said.

Part of the curriculum takes place outside at the camp behind the school. There, the garden thrives, the fire burns and lessons are learned.

"There are teachable moments when someone messes up," Osceola said. "More teaching goes on around that fire than you could ever do in the classroom."

Students demonstrate a sense of pride every time they wear beadwork and patchwork. Identifying with the culture reinforces it and fosters more learning. A class of eighth-graders recently discussed the importance of learning their culture and the impact it has on their lives.

"To carry on the culture so it doesn't die," Brady Rhodes said. "And so we can pass it down to our kids."

"It helps our identity of who we are," added Aiyana Tommie. "To be a Seminole, we have to have language and many traditions. It's good to carry on the dos and don'ts; if not, then no one would know what to do and what not to do."

"A Tribe needs a certain amount of things to be considered a Tribe," Rudy Juarez said. "They need language, a system of government and land."

"The legends are also important to the culture," added Mason Sweet.

For Osceola, knowing the Tribe's history is critically important to its future.

"We tell the students you never know who you are unless you know where you come from," she said. "It shapes who you are and where you want to go in life. The future is shaped by the past and we want them to be proud of who they are and who their ancestors were."

Edward Aguilar has right ingredients for new future

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

FORT LAUDERDALE — Sometimes a fork in the road is a choice between life and death.

For Edward Aguilar, of Immokalee, who nearly died of alcohol-related disease just two years ago, the path chosen led to graduation Dec. 12 from The Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale (AIFL), magna cum laude, with an associate of science in culinary arts.

The husband of Cindy Aguilar, father of three and grandfather of two, will next attend Florida Gulf Coast University to earn a bachelor's degree in hospitality management.

Meanwhile, Aguilar is also in the Tribal Career Development Program, a multifaceted training initiative through Seminole Gaming that gives qualified Tribal members a chance to learn gaming, hospitality, hotel and food business from the ground up.

Dressed in a chef coat and pleated toque, Aguilar, 35, marched to *Pomp and Circumstance* with more than 200 other AIFL graduates.

He wore two honor cords around his neck: silver indicated "great distinction" with a grade point average as high as 3.99; red identified winners of the Future Design Award in various categories for exceptional design sense, variety and talent.

"My baby is a miracle. God gave him

a second chance and I am really proud of what he has done with it," said Aguilar's father, Pedro Aguilar, with his mother Elaine Aguilar, who served in various Tribal offices for 27 years by his side.

Aguilar's work ethic has always been superior. The youngest of six siblings, he worked Tribal jobs since age 14 — first, he was a summer camp counselor for younger kids at the Immokalee youth center. Later, while playing football for Immokalee High School, he cleaned swimming pools and worked part time for Seminole Media Productions.

He admits he took six years to finally graduate high school in 1999 — even as he wowed friends and family with his barbecue cooking. Eventually, he launched his own barbecue catering. He also worked seven years as the Lead Commission Officer at Immokalee Casino and later as the administrative assistant to Board Rep. Delores Jumper.

"I was good, but I was young and drinking. I was a functional alcoholic,"



Eileen Soler

Edward Aguilar, of Immokalee, shows off his diploma.

Aguilar said.

Aguilar said nearly dying saved his life.

"I got sick on April 4, 2011, and was hoping to get into detox — instead I went into a coma," he said.

First his pancreas shut down and then the rest of his organs began to fail. The doctors gave up, he said.

♦ See GRADUATE on page 5B

Police Explorers learn gun safety



Amanda Murphy

Seminole Police Officer Kyle Boyd shows Police Explorers that playing with guns is not funny at the Police Explorers gun safety meeting Dec. 10.

BY AMANDA MURPHY
Copy Editor

HOLLYWOOD — Since 1963, three times more children and teens have died from guns on American soil than U.S. soldiers killed in action in wars abroad. Although many of these incidents occur accidentally, they could be prevented through gun safety education.

For a lesson on gun safety, 29 Police Explorers gathered at the Native Learning Center Dec. 10 where Seminole Police Officer Kyle Boyd presented the 12 Golden Rules of gun safety — No. 1 being "Always treat the gun as if it is loaded."

Boyd told the story of a sergeant he worked for in the prison system whose 18-year-old son decided to show his friend his father's gun. The gun accidentally went off and killed the friend, putting the son in jail for manslaughter.

When Boyd asked if any of the Explorers knew of guns in their house, a handful raised their hands.

According to federal statistics, there are more than 200 million guns in the U.S. spread out across half the households in the country. A gun kept in a house is 43 times more likely to kill someone the family knows than to kill someone in self-defense. And even if there are no guns in a house, chances are a friend, neighbor or relative has a gun that a child could come across.

Boyd used the National Rifle Association's (NRA) gun mascot, Eddie the Eagle, to demonstrate the steps to take when a child encounters a gun:

Stop. Don't touch. Leave the area. Tell an adult.

The NRA encourages schools, law enforcement officials, clinical psychologists

and parents to use Eddie's four easy steps to teach gun safety.

A good time to start teaching children about guns is when they begin to show interest in them through video games, TV shows or toys, the NRA suggests. Simply ordering children to stay out of the gun closet may stimulate a child's natural curiosity to find the gun, but talking openly about guns and answering all the child's questions removes the mystery.

It's important to clarify the difference between entertainment and reality in reference to guns, as children often see them used haphazardly on TV and in movies. When they see a character shot and killed in one movie appear in a different movie, their views of guns may be distorted.

"The most important thing [for parents to know] is to keep [the gun] out of reach of those who are not familiar with handling a gun," Boyd said.

At the end of the presentation, Boyd showed the Explorers a video with examples of gun negligence, including people accidentally shooting themselves or others because of poor gun handling.

Another video displayed proper gun etiquette when handling guns, which is helpful for children who are already familiar with guns from hunting or practicing at a shooting range. This video emphasized knowing the target and never pointing the gun at anything not meant to be destroyed, including walls. Oftentimes, people don't realize that bullets can go through walls and shoot people on the other side of them.

To close the meeting, Boyd sent Explorers home with gun locks and the important reminder that Brandon Cypress repeated when asked what he learned: "Never touch guns."



Emma Johns

Julia Smith makes Indian burgers with the help of teacher Marilee Johns.



Emma Johns

Aiyana Tommie keeps an eye on the food cooking over the fire.



Emma Johns

Echo Billie learns proper woodcarving techniques.

Ahfachkee students grateful for life, family, love

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Basketball, church, family and earth – but not necessarily in that order – were the things Ahfachkee School student Nicholas Andrews was especially thankful for this Thanksgiving. He even inscribed those words around his hand-painted chubby turkey on a holiday plate.

But for Seminoles, Thanksgiving Day does not include the romanticized myth that pilgrims from England and Native people sat down for a meal in 1621 then lived happily ever after.

Giving thanks for everything except that one single day in history is the impetus throughout November – after all, it is Native American Heritage Month and the day after Thanksgiving is Native American Heritage Day.

“We reinforce to our children that they are Native American,” said Mary Jene Koenes, Ahfachkee’s curriculum specialist. Though turkey and cranberries can be on the menu, traditional Seminole foods make the holiday special.

“I love it when I ask a child what they will eat on Thanksgiving and they tell me deer meat and frybread,” Koenes said.

The Ahfachkee School Thanksgiving brunch Nov. 27 featured a vast buffet of comforting fall fixings, but first everyone bowed heads to pray.

“We are thankful for the bountiful blessings of food on our tables, clothes on our backs and roofs over our heads,” said the Rev. Arlen Payne, of Big Cypress New Testament Baptist Church, as he led nearly 200 students, parents and teachers to feast.

For Erin Buster, her husband, Alvin, and sons Leviticus and Ezekiel, the brunch was about being grateful for “everything good in our lives.” Buster said the family

usually spends a portion of Thanksgiving Day in church. It is a tradition passed from her great-grandfather Frank Billie and her mother Betty King, Ahfachkee’s administrative assistant.

Buster said most of the Tribe’s children grow up knowing the real story that surrounds the historic Thanksgiving meal shared by the Wampanoag people and Pilgrims in 1621.

“We don’t hide anything from them,” she said.

According to an account from Plimoth Plantation, a major historical attraction in Plymouth, Mass., staffed by 23 mostly Wampanoag, the Tribe had already lost one-third of nearly 100,000 of their people from disease brought by white explorers when they arrived in 1616. Others in the Tribe had been captured then sold as slaves.

About four years later, the Wampanoag watched as white families encroached on

Wampanoag land and built a village, all the while suffering many deaths under harsh, unfamiliar conditions. An Abenaki chief, Samoset, was first to visit the settlement. Later, he brought Squanto, a Wampanoag, who taught the English how to fish, plant corn and gather edible plants and berries necessary for survival. The groups entered into a mutual protection alliance.

In the fall of 1621, after crops yielded a surprising large bounty, the Pilgrims planned a harvest feast. Men went into the woods to shoot fowl for meat while others celebrated by shooting guns in the air. Hearing the gunfire and fearing an attack, the Wampanoag, led by Massasoit, showed up at the village expecting an altercation but were greeted instead. That’s when Massasoit sent his men hunting for enough deer, fish and other meat that would last a few days while they kept close watch over the white settlers.

The two groups shared food during the ensuing three-day harvest feast, but they likely did not sit down at the same table dining on turkey and pumpkin pie.

Koenes said her family did not commemorate the American-made holiday when she was a girl, but they knew it existed because it was on the calendar.

“It was not our creation. For us, Christmas was the big sacred day,” Koenes said.

Ahfachkee students Nigel Wells and his brother Anthony said they know that the Indians helped the Pilgrims learn how to survive when they came to the new land. But they do not celebrate the storybook version of Thanksgiving Day.

“In school, we saw a video about what Thanksgiving really means to us. It means being grateful for God, food, family and friends all the time but especially in November,” Nigel said.



Eileen Soler

Pre-kindergarten student Tuff Haught wears a handmade turkey hat and gobbles a fresh Florida orange Nov. 27 during the Ahfachkee School Thanksgiving brunch.



Eileen Soler

A line of children and adults step up to a buffet filled with breakfast, lunch and dinner fixings Nov. 27 during the Ahfachkee School Thanksgiving brunch.



Eileen Soler

Children and parents enjoy a Thanksgiving meal together.



Eileen Soler

Erin Buster, Alvin Buster and their children Ezekiel and Leviticus show family love Nov. 27 during the Ahfachkee School Thanksgiving brunch.

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Eileen Soler

Parents and students trickle through the Ahfachkee School science fair held Nov. 14 at the Boys & Girls Club auditorium.

Fascinating science discoveries on grand display

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Fashion and food were fodder for many presentations at the 2013 Ahfachkee School science fair.

From fabric dye made of berries to honey hair lightener, things edible and personal made for recurring components in nearly a third of dozens of projects that lined tables Nov. 14 at the Big Cypress Boys & Girls Club auditorium.

"Both are everyday things students can relate to," said the school's science teacher Elizabeth Jack. Each presentation, food-based or not, included an abstract research question, hypothesis, test procedures, experiment results and final conclusions.

The school's first-place winning project overall, "Healthy Hair," by ninth-grade students Nashoba Gonzalez and Ignacia Rodriguez, combined beautifying hair with two tasty ingredients.

The girls compared several home-based ways to highlight brown hair: lemon juice; a mixture of olive oil and honey; industrial hydrogen peroxide; and over-the-counter hydrogen peroxide.

Adults who viewed Nashoba and Ignacia's project were surprised, Jack included. According to Nashoba and Ignacia's experiment, the olive oil and honey mix is the best way to enhance

natural highlights.

"It's a natural alternative that anyone can do — and we learned about it at a school science fair," she said.

Other food-friendly projects included: "Egg is an Egg" to determine if brown or white eggs float best; the "Hershey vs. Hershey Challenge" to find which chocolate bar melts fastest; and "Magnet Cereal" to measure the amount of iron in four different cereals by using a magnet to extract pieces from the bag.

More traditional projects also answered important questions: Can the color of a roof absorb more energy; what type of light speeds bacteria growth; do we know what is in the water on Big Cypress Reservation? Ramona Jimmie said her project was inspired by the beauty of nature. Ramona plucked leaves from several different plant species; then, by soaking the leaves in laundry detergent, she created delicate and ornate leaf skeleton art.

"I didn't win or place but I didn't do it to win. I learned," Ramona said.

Jack said 13 science fair projects were produced by elementary grade students, while 29 projects were turned in by students in middle school and high school. Though fewer projects were produced this year over last, more students combined efforts for group projects.

"This year, the projects were more

about quality than quantity," Jack said.

The school's first-place winners in each grade are: 12th — Sarah Osceola, Gianna Wargolet and Isaiah Anderson; 11th — Kaitlin Osceola; 10th — Devon Bowers; ninth — Nashoba and Ignacia; eighth — Dasani Cypress; seventh — Les Gopher and Bradin Jim; and sixth — Mikiyela Cypress.

Creators of the top three winning projects overall will compete in the National American Indian Science & Engineering Fair (NAISEF) in spring 2014.

They are: Nashoba and Ignacia; Kaitlin Osceola; Sabre' Billie and Nena Waggerby; and Dasani Cypress. Seventh and eighth grade overall winners were: Mikiyela Cypress for first place; Charlie Billie for second place; and Thoya Robbins in third place.

Because of increased costs, according to the American Indian Science and Engineering Society that hosts the national event, the annual fair will be staged virtually via the Internet for the first time in the organization's 36-year history.

Student Jaiven Washington said he is already looking forward to next year's Ahfachkee science fair. He said his third-grade class presented an experiment that proved how vinegar "rubberizes" hard boiled eggs.

"It was fun. I'm a lot more curious now," Jaiven said.



Eileen Soler

Sara Robbins, Ramona Jimmie, teacher Patricia Jolly and Markayla Cypress take in a bit of robotic engineering fun Nov. 14 during the Ahfachkee School science fair.

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Announcements

Letter of appreciation from SPD Sgt. Bobby Betz

Dear Seminole Tribe of Florida Council members, Tribal members, Seminole Police Department employees and Tribal employees,

I would like to take a few moments to express my deepest gratitude and most sincere appreciation to you all. There are no words that can truly express my feelings regarding the outpouring of concern, compassion and, most of all, support everyone has shown me during this difficult period since my accident Sept. 12.

The past two months have been very trying and difficult to say the least for myself and my family. Without the extra support from everyone, I believe it would have been a much more difficult time.

It is a real blessing to know how many people I have truly affected in my life and how they in turn have been there for me in

my time of need.

I am not only blessed to have such a loving and caring family but also employers who truly care and stand beside employees, as they have for me. From the first moment after my accident, through my hospital stay, as well as my current recovery time at home, knowing everyone was there supporting me has been a true blessing. It is my goal to fully recover and get back to full duty so I can return to "Caring for the Community" as everyone has for me. I have a few more hurdles in front of me before I get to that point, but I know I will get there soon.

Once again, I am sending my most sincere appreciation to everyone for their well-wishes, support and generosity. I will see everyone soon.

Sincerely,
Sgt. Bobby Betz

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Dates subject to change

Month	Issue Date	Deadline
January	Friday, Jan. 31	Wednesday, Jan. 15
February	Friday, Feb. 28	Wednesday, Feb. 12
March	Monday, March 31	Wednesday, March 12
April	Wednesday, April 30	Wednesday, April 9
May	Friday, May 30	Wednesday, May 14
June	Monday, June 30	Wednesday, June 11
July	Thursday, July 31	Wednesday, July 9
August	Friday, Aug. 29	Wednesday, Aug. 13
September	Tuesday, Sept. 30	Wednesday, Sept. 10
October	Friday, Oct. 31	Wednesday, Oct. 15
November	Friday, Nov. 28	Wednesday, Nov. 12
December	Wednesday, Dec. 31	Wednesday, Dec. 10

Happy Birthday wishes

Happy belated birthday to Ms. Zoey Puente on Nov. 2.

My Princess, you're turning into a beautiful, young lady. I remember you being born like it was just yesterday. Every time I think about you my heart smiles. I love you so much, Zoey. I am very proud of you as well. You have always been smart. I know whatever Mom had planned for your birthday it was fun and you enjoyed yourself. I really miss you all and cannot wait to see you all again. Take care of Mom and your brothers and sisters...I know you will though. Well, Princess, I just had to wish you a Happy Birthday. I love you.

Fooshee Forlife,
Love Always,
Aunt Lee

Happy Birthday to Mae on Nov. 12.

Hey sis, I wanted to wish you a great birthday...you deserve it. Boy, you always have my back and stick by my side. I'm glad I have family like you and I appreciate you and all my babies. I love you, Mae. I'm glad you are finally happy and have Clint and life is so much better for you...You know what I'm talking about. I'm proud of you despite life's obstacles. You always stayed strong and kept smiling. I look up to you. Thank you for being you in my life.

Fooshee Forlife,
Love Always,
Carolee 'Lee'



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Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School Students of the Month



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas

Elementary School Students of the Month at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School are Kimberlynn Toms, Aaryn King, Truly Osceola, Kayden Warrior, Kaydence Swanson, Iann Jimmie, Keenan Jones, Summer Gopher, Karlyne Urbina, Winnie Gopher, Ysla Meras, Katyn Hammil, Isaac Watford, Jahcole Arnold, Ramone Baker, Donovan Harris, Laila Bennett and Caleb Burton.



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas

Middle School Students of the Month are Jarrett Bert, JJ Toneges and Brady Rhodes.

Student profile: Janine Vazquez

BY AMANDA MURPHY
Copy Editor

BOCA RATON — Recreational drug use is not the only road to addiction. Prescription drug use after surgery or for chronic pain has become an easy route to drug addiction or relapse for recovering addicts. Janine Vazquez, a recovering addict of three years, recently began studying alternative medicine at Everglades University in Boca Raton to help others find different ways to heal from addiction and maintain good health.

"I look for alternatives like acupuncture or massage therapy," she said. "It takes longer, but I feel better."

Alternative medicine refers to any health care treatment not used in a physician's standard approach to illness or disease. Some of these methods include acupuncture, chiropractic, massage therapy, homeopathy and herbalism.

Vazquez, 32, said that drug addicts may use a medical problem, like chronic back pain, to be prescribed drugs, inhibiting their recovery. She wants to help these people without relying on pharmaceuticals.

"Being serious about my recovery, I don't want to be dependent on pills and medication," she said.

According to Discovery Health, alternative medicine therapists say that

many addiction treatment programs fail to support the body as it withdraws from the presence of alcohol or drugs. Alternative methods, along with counseling and education, can offer that support.

"If you don't know better you can't do better," Vazquez said. "I want to educate myself so I can educate others."

Vazquez wants to become a homeopathic nutritionist, specializing in a natural health therapy developed 200 years ago that uses small, diluted amounts of substances that cause symptoms to treat the very same symptoms. Mimicking specific symptoms stimulates the body's own healing responses, instead of quickly suppressing the symptoms with pharmaceuticals, according to AllThingsHealing.com.

With her degree, Vazquez plans to open a private health club with her sister, Gail Cypress, who is working toward a personal training certificate at World Fitness Association. Although she is majoring in homeopathic nutrition, Vazquez is also open to other fields of alternative medicine.

Vasquez, of Hollywood, has seven children, and with the help of her husband, Tory Vazquez, she commits herself to a 25-minute drive to school three times a week. She recently spoke at the Higher Education College Fair on her experience and the opportunities education provides.

"I wanted to tell the kids how important

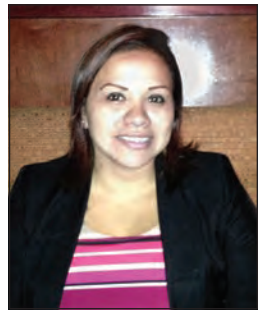
education is," she said. "Once you have your degree, no one can ever take that from you."

Alternative medicine wasn't always Vazquez's plan, but with time and new experiences came new passions. When she was 19, she studied early education at then Broward Community College but stopped to become a foster parent. She fostered eight children and adopted one from the program. It was her drug addiction and recovery that inspired her to enter the health field.

She discovered Everglades' alternative medicine program with the help of Shrutti Elliot in the Education Department. Vasquez said Elliot helped her find a school that fit her needs.

Her role model is her grandfather who always told her not to rely on the Tribe and to get an education.

"I didn't understand what he meant until I got older and learned," she said. "For me, education equals independence."



Courtesy of Janine Vazquez
Janine Vazquez, 32, is pursuing an alternative medicine degree.

GRADUATE

From page 1B

Eight months later, he had awoken and was fit to return home but not cleared for work. Unwilling to sit still, he went to cooking school. Aguilar said cooking was always his passion. He was taught the basics by his mother who warned her son that food preparation is essential knowledge for every man — especially if he grew up to marry someone not so fond of the kitchen.

Elaine Aguilar said her son's graduation made her a happier parent.

"When you have kids and they grow up to succeed it makes you feel good. Now, if he can learn to make frybread..." she said.

The self-described "meat and potatoes man" attended a "hamburgers and fries" tech school first, then switched to AIFL where he studied pastry baking and Latin, European, Arabic, American and South American cuisine.

With a home in Tampa, most family in Immokalee, school in Fort Lauderdale and Palm Beach living arrangements during the school week, earning a college degree was a challenge for the entire Aguilar family — but a welcomed one.

"I'm so excited and proud of my

husband. We can't wait to start the next chapter," Cindy Aguilar said.

Edward Aguilar said the Tribal Career Development Program "opened a whole new world."

Since he started in February 2012, Edward Aguilar spent six months in food and beverage and another six months in marketing.

He plans to continue working in the casinos but next time armed with a solid education to be a Hard Rock International manager in the food and beverages side of hospitality.

In January, he will become the first Tribal member to go through the



Eileen Soler

Edward Aguilar, of Immokalee (in chef's hat), is surrounded by loved ones at The Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale's Fall 2013 graduation. He was awarded an associate of science, magna cum laude, in culinary arts. From left: Cindy Aguilar, Edward Aguilar Jr., Pedro Aguilar, Jennie Martinez, Elaine Aguilar. Bottom: Ayden Aguilar, 4.

Hard Rock's formal management training program.

Orientation is set for Jan. 20 in Orlando. "One door has opened another and now the sky is the limit," Edward Aguilar said.

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Sports



FSU basketball team wears N7 to support Native American sports

BY AMANDA MURPHY
Copy Editor

TALLAHASSEE — In a series of college basketball games throughout Native American Heritage Month, Florida State University honored Native Americans by swapping their traditional school colors for turquoise Nike N7 uniforms during their game against University of Tennessee at Martin Nov. 17.

Nike's Native clothing line, N7, partnered with FSU and three other schools — Nevada, New Mexico and Oregon State — to recognize the importance of bringing physical activity to Native American communities.

The goal of the games, inspired by the Native American wisdom of the Seven Generations, is to encourage Native youth to lead active lifestyles and be a positive force for future change.

Proceeds of the N7 line go toward bringing sports programs to communities to fight obesity and help youth develop discipline, focus and the will to succeed.

College players wore turquoise, a symbol of friendship and community in Native American culture, to reflect the support of the four schools, which all have unique connections to N7 and Native Americans.

Oregon State was the first to sport the uniforms in 2010; one of the players, Joe Burton, a member of Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians, was the first member of his Tribe to earn a full athletic scholarship at a major university.

Nevada is inspired by former team member and current professional basketball player, Tahnee Robinson, a native of the Wind River Indian Reservation in Fort Washakie, who also serves as an N7 athlete ambassador.

New Mexico has a unique relationship with the 19 Pueblos, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Mescalero Apache Tribe, the Navajo Nation, the Notah Begay III Foundation and partners through its hospital and education programs.

In Tallahassee, FSU highlighted the positive relationship it has with the



Steve Musco, Florida State Sports Information

Ian Miller, of Florida State University, wears the turquoise N7 uniform to support Native Americans during a Nov. 17 game against University of Tennessee at Martin.

Seminole Tribe, while also supporting the N7 mission. During halftime, Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr., along with Miss Seminole Tia Blais-Billie and Jr. Miss Seminole Brianna Blais-Billie, presented FSU athletic director Stan Wilcox a traditional Seminole jacket designed with the school's colors.

"I know that we'll continue to have a great relationship with the Seminole Tribe, as well as Nike," Wilcox said. "We are very big supporters of N7. It brings us all together to celebrate and to recognize a great tradition and a great people."

Wilcox said that FSU will continue to support N7 and participate in future N7 games. The basketball team will don the uniforms a second time Dec. 21 at the BB&T Center in Sunrise during their game against University of Massachusetts.



Beverly Bidney

A Trail player is under attack by the YDWI team as he tries to make a basket during the Randall Huggins Memorial Big Ballers basketball tournament held Dec. 5-7 in Hollywood.

Big Ballers basketball tournament occupies Hollywood Reservation

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — More than 200 Native American athletes representing about 30 Tribes from 12 states made their yearly trek to Hollywood for the 10th annual Randall Huggins Memorial Big Ballers basketball tournament, held Dec. 5-7.

One of the largest Native American tournaments in the country, it is known for its hospitality and attractive prizes. Organized by Trail Liaison Norman Huggins, his wife, Kathy, and their children Marilyn, Kelvin, Adriana, Bianca, Kailyn and Lucas, the tournament gets high marks from those who travel great distances to attend.

"The first word out of everyone's mouth is hospitality," Norman Huggins said. "Nobody takes care of you like we do; we provide food and drinks for three days."

Teams from colder climates also appreciate the subtropical location of the tournament.

"We are glad to be here in the warm weather," said Maria Parker, a member of the Oneida Wisconsin Tribe, who lives in Montana and plays on the Outlaw Women team. "We've been coming here for seven or eight years. It was negative 6 degrees in Montana the first day of the tournament."

The tournament began as a way to remember Randall Huggins, who passed away at 21 during a boxing match, and to bring Tribes together, Kelvin Huggins said. The family promotes the event through Facebook and other tournaments in Indian Country, but mostly through word of mouth.

"When they get here, they are treated like family," Marilyn Huggins said. "Everybody knows about this tournament and plan for it all year."

Twenty-six teams competed, 14 men's and 12 women's. Each team had a roster of eight, but many were accompanied by family members, so the crowds in the Hollywood Gym were large and vocal. After three days of competition on the court, the tournament came to an end with two victorious teams.

Lady Ballers, comprised of players



Beverly Bidney

The Huggins family, Trail Liaison Norman Huggins, Adriana, Kelvin and Bianca, share a moment with a member of the Siouxper Women team outside the gym during the Randall Huggins Memorial Big Ballers basketball tournament.

from Florida, Mississippi and Oklahoma, took the women's title. LOP (Lords of the Plains), comprised of players from Oklahoma, won the men's tournament.

Throughout the tournament, the gym was full and the Hollywood Reservation teemed with activity. Iona's Fry Bread, from Trail, set up a tent and served food; another food tent was set up on the outside basketball court for the players. Families and friends from all over Indian Country took time to get reacquainted with each other.

"We love it here," said Shavonne Steppe, of South Dakota, who plays on the Siouxper Women team. "Friends down here invited us. It's awesome."

In the early years of the Big Ballers

tournament, Norman Huggins looked at how other tournaments operated and incorporated those practices into his own. But he also went further and runs it as professionally as possible, which includes having three officials on the court instead of the standard two.

"We don't want them to miss a call," he said.

He said he recognizes how much work and organization go into producing the tournament and appreciates the help of the Hollywood Recreation Department.

"I want to thank the Hollywood community for letting us come in and disrupt things," he said.

♦ See more BIG BALLERS photos on page 4C

Lacrosse comes to Hollywood



Beverly Bidney

Recreation employee Carlos Casallas observes as Cameron Osceola gives Leele Wilson tips about scooping the lacrosse ball at the Hollywood Recreation lacrosse class Dec. 2.

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Lacrosse has come to the Hollywood Reservation, with classes every Monday at 4:30 p.m. Because many Tribal kids are familiar with stickball, they are taking to lacrosse naturally.

The ancient Native American game of stickball — once played by warriors for training, recreation and religious reasons — evolved over the centuries into lacrosse.

Lacrosse and stickball use similar types of sticks and follow some of the same rules. Differences include how players score points, gender of teams and use of hands. Stickball incorporates poles to score points, while lacrosse has goals. Stickball teams are men versus women, while lacrosse is single gender. And stickball calls for men to use sticks and women to use their hands, while lacrosse does not allow players to use their hands at all.

An early game of stickball was documented in the 1612 book *Historie of Travel into Virginia Britanica* by William Strachey but could have been played by Native Americans for hundreds of years before Europeans

witnessed it. Strachey, who watched the Powhatan Tribe in Virginia play, compared it to a game played in England similar to field hockey but with two trees as the goal.

Although common throughout Indian Country, stickball varies from Tribe to Tribe. For some Tribes in the southeastern U.S., including the Choctaw and Cherokee, stickball is a highly competitive sport. For the Seminole Tribe, stickball is a social game.

"It is between men and women," said Bobby Frank, Hollywood Community Culture Center manager assistant. "It's how they meet, like a sock hop for boys and girls. People really look forward to it. Older generations watch the younger ones play; it's a happy game."

According to the Federation of International Lacrosse, the game may have originated in the St. Lawrence Valley by the Algonquian Tribe and moved to other Tribes near the Great Lakes and the eastern U.S. Games were major events played over massive open areas between villages, sometimes with hundreds of players and sometimes lasting for days.

♦ See LACROSSE on page 4C



Beverly Bidney

Ball Hawgs player Chelsea Mountain does her best to ignore the defensive move of the Toon Squad player, from Oklahoma, despite the arm around her waist during the tournament.

Hollywood shoots hoops for Thanksgiving



Beverly Bidney

Action during the Hollywood Thanksgiving basketball tournament Nov. 23 is intense between the teams vying to win the championship. The Recreation Department hopes to make the tournament an annual tradition.



Beverly Bidney

Boys' high school teams Dunk City, from Immokalee, and Ty Pierce, from Brighton, compete for dominance in a very close game during the Hollywood Thanksgiving basketball tournament.



Beverly Bidney

Lenny Maugir, of Dunk City, prepares to shoot a basket during the Hollywood Thanksgiving basketball tournament. Young athletes starting at age 9 competed on 13 teams Nov. 22-23.



Beverly Bidney

Trewston Pierce battles to control the ball on the way to the basket Nov. 23.



Beverly Bidney

Austin Jackson, of Ty Pierce, and Chris Davis, of Dunk City, fight it out for control of the ball. Neither player won; the ball went out of bounds.



Beverly Bidney

Trey Boone, of Dunk City, tries to get past defender Jonas Holmes, of Ty Pierce, on his way across the court during the tournament.

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American Heritage wins state title

Seminole Tribal youth Andre Jumper stars on team's defense

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

ORLANDO — Andre Jumper admits he was surprised at the Citrus Bowl Dec. 13. "I knew we were going to win. We worked really hard to get to this game," said the American Heritage School defensive end, after he and his teammates pulverized shell-shocked Clay High School, 66-8, in the 5A high school state football championship. "But I never would have believed 66-8. I knew we were No. 1, but they were No. 2. I would have thought it would be a lot closer."

But, with 10 touchdowns and a whopping 697 all-purpose yards, state champs American Heritage, of Plantation,

showed why it ended the regular season ranked No. 4 among all Florida gridiron teams, No. 61 nationally and the only Broward County team to make the state finals this year.

During the playoffs, the Patriots beat their five opponents by a combined score of 255-78 — scoring 41 points or more in every game.

The Patriots' regular season output included five wins against eventual playoff teams, including Class 4A finalist Bolles School, of Jacksonville, and Class 6A state semifinalist Mainland, of Daytona Beach.

Jumper was a starter all year for the Patriots, who won their last 13 games to finish 14-1. Against the Clay Blue Devils, from Green Cove Springs, Jumper led all de-

fensive players with seven tackles, six assisted tackles and a fumble recovery, completely dominating the left side of the field, where the 6-foot, 180-pound junior lined up as defensive end.

In fact, Clay's only score,

35-yard run by quarterback Wes Weeks (followed by a successful two-point conversion), came with less than five minutes left in the game while Jumper was on the bench. Ironically, fans for both teams cheered when Weeks scored, diminishing the possibility of the game being the most lopsided in Florida High School Activities Association (FHSA) championship game history. Midway through the fourth quarter, referees ordered the game clock to run, without stopping for incomplete passes or out-of-bounds plays, to minimize the rout.

Though the game was televised statewide, some 20 Tribal members made the trip to Orlando, including grandfathers Moses Jumper and Jonah Cypress and their immediate families.

After the game, Andre left a raucous post-game, on-field celebration to jump into the stands to hug and pose for photos with each group.

"I'll tell you what; he's pretty good. And he's growing. He's only a junior, so we are really looking forward to next year," said proud grandpa Moses Jumper.

A scholarship to a Division I school may be in the future for Andre, Moses Jumper said, who added he's not worried about concussions and other injuries, despite so much news attention given the subject this year.

"This boy has been raised around rodeo," he said. "Rodeo cowboys don't worry about that stuff."



Peter B. Gallagher

Andre Jumper, No. 15, at left, and teammate stop a Blue Devil running back. During the state game at Orlando's Citrus Bowl, Jumper led all defensive players with seven tackles, six assisted tackles and a fumble recovery.



Peter B. Gallagher

Andre Jumper, No. 15, leaps to touch the trophy during the post-game celebration.



Peter B. Gallagher

Andre Jumper receives his state championship medal.



Peter B. Gallagher

Andre Jumper climbs into the stands to pose with family members after winning the state championship game.



Peter B. Gallagher

Andre Jumper tackles Clay quarterback Wes Weeks from behind, one of his game-high seven tackles during the Dec. 13 Class 5A state championship game in Orlando.

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Drayton Billie completes first season of high school football

BY EMMA JOHNS
Freelance Writer

BRIGHTON — Drayton Billie, a freshman at Okeechobee High School, has high aspirations for his future as an athlete with plans to play football at the collegiate level.

Billie, of Brighton, recently completed his first season of high school football as both a running back and a cornerback.

"Football is my favorite sport," he said. "I love and play many sports, including wrestling, baseball and basketball, but football is my favorite."

Billie's love for the sport began while playing flag football as a child and has carried him through his freshman year with success. This year he had 49 rushes for 194 yards, an average of 4 yards per carry. He said he has scouts looking in his direction.

Billie gives credit to his father, Emerson Billie, for always being his

biggest influence.

"My dad always pushes me to do my best and be the best at everything I do," he said.

Billie also strives to honor the memory of his late younger brother, J-Wayco, who always traveled to his older brother and loved to travel along to all his sporting events.

"He is still with me, motivating me today," Billie said.

He said he loves being part of a loving and supportive family, including his father, mother, Jeannie Billie, four brothers and two sisters.

With the football season's end, Billie has moved on to wrestling but works hard each day to stay in shape for all sports. His love for football motivates him in the classroom, too.

"Football helps keep me in shape and mentally helps me stay focused in school," he said.



Photo courtesy of Drayton Billie

All-around athlete Drayton Billie completes his first high school football season.



Beverly Bidney

At right, Cameron Osceola watches the ball he threw to Leele Wilson during lacrosse practice.

◆ LACROSSE From page 1C

Tribes and villages also played games to diplomatically settle disputes. These games, although peaceful in nature, were hard-fought contests. In fact, the Cherokee name for the sport translates roughly to "little war."

Since the mid- to late- 20th century, stickball has had a renaissance in Indian Country. Several Tribal tournaments are held at events across the nation, including the Jim Thorpe Games, the Choctaw Labor Day festival and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians World Series of Stickball.

Lacrosse has also gained popularity. The objective is to throw the ball into a net at either end of the field. A game is 60 minutes long, played in four quarters. Similar to field hockey and soccer, there are 10 players on the field at a time: three defenders, three midfielders, three attackers and a goalie.

A group of kids came to the Hollywood Ball Field for class on a recent Monday afternoon, where the Recreation Department provided sticks, nets and instructions.

"Lacrosse is fun and it's a Native American sport, so it honors our heritage," said Cameron Osceola, 16, a former player for the University School. "It's similar to stickball, but our Tribe plays boys against girls. Other Tribes made their own version of it so they could have something they could call their own."

Osceola said the stick is an important part of the game. How a player strings it identifies his culture; Osceola uses traditional stringing.

He and Alexander Lieberman, a former teammate at University School, helped coach kids less familiar with lacrosse. They practiced throwing, catching and scooping



Beverly Bidney

Leele Wilson puts her all into throwing the ball with a lacrosse stick at the Hollywood Recreation lacrosse class Dec. 2.

up ground balls.

Recreation site managers want to initiate lacrosse programs on the reservations. Hollywood site manager Brian Dodd believes it will catch on because they aim to start a tribalwide program with competition between reservations.

"Being a Tribal game and having Tribal kids play it is a win-win," Dodd said. "We don't want to lose sight of the culture. Just like every other sport, we want to create that fun, family togetherness on all the reservations."

◆ More BIG BALLERS photos from page 1C



Beverly Bidney

A player on the Immokalee Recreation team tries to shoot between the arms of the defenders on the East Indies team.



Beverly Bidney

A player on the Ball Hawks team, from Hollywood, goes for the shot as a member of the Toon Squad, from Oklahoma, tries to block her.

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Contestants must be an enrolled tribal member, between the ages of 5 – 7 years old by February 6, 2014 and reside in the state of Florida. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Registration deadline is Monday, February 3, 2014 at 5:00pm. All contestants must be preregistered. There will be no applications taken on the day of contest.

Confirm that your applications have been received by fax, email, Committee member, or walk-in's to the Secretary's office. Call Wanda Bowers at (954) 444-9827, fax (954) 967-3488, or email wowers@semtribe.com.

CONTACTS:

Hollywood – Wanda Bowers, (954) 444-9827
Brighton – Charlotte Burgess, (863) 634-8924
Brighton – Carla Gopher, 1-(813) 299-4071
Ft. Pierce – Mary Stomboli, (772) 467-2454
Big Cypress – Alice Billie, (954) 790-0237
Trail Seminoles – Michael Cantu, (305) 553-8245 ext. 18702
Immokalee – Crystal Salinas, (239) 867-5300
Tampa – (813) 246-3100 Vicky Aspey ext. 19312 or Sunny Ploch ext. 19300

Fishing tourney reels in big (enough) ones

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — It was no secret from the boss when Paul Scott played hooky from work to go fishing on a recent Saturday.

"It's a great day to be with my kids," said Scott, who owns a maintenance business in Hollywood. "Luckily, work will wait for me. My boys won't."

Scott and his sons Kadin Tommie, 8, and Xzavion Tommie, 6, were among 60 competitors Dec. 7 at the Take a Kid Fishing Tournament sponsored by Big Cypress Recreation and based at Moses Jumper's boat ramp and dock.

There, grown-ups and children teamed up with poles, reels, tackle and bait to fish from docks, banks and boats at the 8 a.m. start. Some stayed put, casting lines along the canal. Others motored off in trucks or water crafts.

Categories included heaviest 12-inch or longer bass, heaviest five bass catch and biggest "critter sizes" among tilapia, speckled perch, brim, garfish, catfish and mudfish.

Twenty-one teams brought back something — even a few fish stories.

Winners took home trophies at the catch-and-release event.

All participants received tackle boxes, and all children were given new fishing rods.

E.J. Marrero and his grandfather, Frank Marrero, used spinner reels and top water lures at the west feeder canal for their combined 9.7 pound bass catch.

"There are some monsters out there, but not today," Frank Marrero said.

Some winning teams kept fishing

techniques and "sweet spots" a mystery.

Sheila Billie, Trinity Williams, Sabre Billie, William Bevenue and Reginald Ling won third place in both bass categories. The team weighed in with a 10.48-pound combined catch and one 5.36-pound bass but was mum about where and how the catches were made.

"It's a secret," Sheila Billie said.

Recreation site manager Josh Jumper with Canaan Jumper and Trevon Marks took second place in the bass total weight (11.91 pounds) and first place in the biggest bass (6.11) categories. Josh Jumper said the fishes were caught "on a canal" using artificial worms. Their gar, at 4.73 pounds, was lured with live bait — location unrevealed.

Albert Snow won first place in the garfish contest with a 6.45 catch, while Eric McCree took first place for the largest mudfish at 2.94 pounds. Snow's team, which included Rudy Juarez and Jagger Gaucin, brought in a 5.5-pound bass for second place.

The big winners of the day were Jacob Cotton and Catlen Tommie, who brought in five bass that totaled 12.16 pounds.

Cotton said the team used rubber worms, Duckett poles, REVO reels and a Bass Tracker boat to win.

"We actually caught 45 fish — but all went back to the water except for the biggest," Tommie said.

Moses Jumper and his grandson Javian Cypress did not hook a single catch along the west boundary canal but enjoyed the experience.

"That's what today is about. Now kids will be bugging us to go fishing and that's a good thing because fishing is a good sport," Moses Jumper said.



Eileen Soler

Kadin Tommie, 8, is super proud of the catch his father, Paul Scott, of Hollywood, reeled in Dec. 7 during the Take a Kid Fishing Tournament on the Big Cypress Reservation.



Eileen Soler

Ricky Garza is thrilled with his catch of the day.



Eileen Soler

Javian Cypress and his grandfather Moses Jumper enjoy the peaceful serenity of a morning spent fishing.



Eileen Soler

Jacob Cotton and Catlen Tommie, reeled in 12.16 pounds of bass to take first place in the highest collective weight of bass category in the tournament.



Eileen Soler

With a miniature pink and yellow fishing pole to match her outfit, Jayla Billie fishes off Moses Jumper's boat dock.



Eileen Soler

E.J. Marrero proudly displays his net filled with bass.



Eileen Soler

Kadin Tommie casts a fishing line for pond fishing. He spent the day fishing with his father, Paul Scott, and brother Xzavion.



Eileen Soler

Xzavion Tommie, 6, shows off his catch of the day Dec. 7 during the Take a Kid Fishing Tournament on the Big Cypress Reservation.



Eileen Soler

Kids and parents line up at a boat dock for a relaxing day Dec. 7 during the Take a Kid Fishing Tournament on the Big Cypress Reservation.

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