



**Florida Tribes greet
Hawaiian canoe crew**
COMMUNITY ♦ 4A

**Ahfachkee students rock
in spring extravaganza**
EDUCATION ♦ 2B

**Cheyenne Nunez signs
with FGCU softball**
SPORTS ♦ 1C



The Seminole Tribune

Voice of the Unconquered

www.seminoletribune.org • 50¢

Volume XL • Number 4

April 29, 2016

Immokalee seat on Tribal Council rejected by voters

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

The voters have spoken and the makeup of Tribal Council will remain unchanged.

An election administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs ended April 12 with 258 votes cast. The tally was 176 against and 80 in favor of an amendment that would have given Immokalee a seat on the Council. Two votes were voided.

"The proposed amendment was defeated by a two-to-one margin, but there is expressed concern for some type of change," Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank said. "Council and others shouldn't stop exploring other avenues of getting representation for Immokalee. The Tribe is growing and I don't think it hurts to have more voices being heard. There is a strong sentiment there."

After Tribal Council unanimously approved Immokalee's request for an election during its Nov. 13, 2015 meeting, Tribal Secretary Lavonne Rose submitted the request to the Secretary of the Interior. The BIA approved the election on Jan. 6.

About 44 percent of those who registered for the election voted. The election was conducted exclusively through the U. S. Postal Service. Voters mailed ballots to a post office box in Hollywood. Supervisor of Elections Naomi Wilson and BIA tribal relations specialist Becky Smith retrieved the ballots after the noon deadline April 12.

"It looks like there are more than 175 in here," Wilson said as she opened the box. The figure represented 30 percent of the 582 registered voters, which was required for the election to be valid.

Rose, Wilson, Smith and BIA Tribal government officer Sherry Lovin counted the ballots behind locked doors. The results were announced via an email blast to the Tribal community shortly thereafter.

♦ See RESULTS on page 5A



Eileen Soler

Spiritual followers from churches tribalwide join hands and hearts in prayer April 7 at Big Cypress New Testament Baptist Church to bring collective strength and faith to each other and the Tribe's communities and leaders.

Prayer service provides fortress of faith for Tribe's elected officials

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — When hands were laid on the shoulders of elected Tribal officials April 7 in the sanctuary of Big Cypress New Testament Baptist Church, a communion of people put trust in an even higher authority.

"We are only human and that is why we need prayer. We have to ask the Lord to guide us," said President Mitchell Cypress seconds before he was joined at the altar by Hollywood Board Rep. Steve Osceola and Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank.

Nearly 100 members, guests and clergy from Tribal community churches gathered

for the latest Intercessory Prayer Gathering event to pray for many needs but especially for tribal leaders. The Rev. Matt Tiger, pastor of First Indian Baptist Church of Brighton, led the service.

"We look to our pastors to lead us spiritually, but some things we need from our elected officials. Let us pray to God for their protection, wisdom and knowledge to go on with their duties," Pastor Tiger said.

Intercessory prayer is the act of prayer on behalf of others, Pastor Tiger said. Supported throughout the Bible from the first chapter of Genesis through the last chapter of Revelations, the Tribe's all-church prayer gatherings started in 2008 by Pastor Tiger's

predecessor, the late Pastor Wonder Johns, during President Cypress' second term as Chairman.

President Cypress said the idea was sparked during an extraordinary time when the Tribe suffered an alarming spike in deaths due to alcohol and drug abuse.

"I called Pastor Wonder and I said our youth are dying. Maybe all of our ministers can get together and have a prayer meeting. He organized it to include everyone," Cypress said.

Grassroots events were held quarterly throughout the years at different host

♦ See PRAYER on page 6A

FPL gets nod to proceed with solar, gas plants near Big Cypress

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

CLEWISTON — The Hendry County Board of County Commissioners on April 12 unanimously approved four Florida Power & Light (FPL) petitions for county land use plan amendments that effectively clear the way for electrical power generation facilities to be built near the Big Cypress Reservation.

Without discussion from the county board and despite pleas from Tribal citizens and environmentalists to block the effort, FPL is now free to move forward with constructing a solar energy farm on 3,120 acres of land next door to Big Cypress on County Road 833.

The amendments further open the door for FPL to use about 4,600 connected acres immediately north of the solar facility for gas, coal or nuclear-powered electrical generation.

The public reading followed nearly five years of back and forth maneuverings by FPL and the Tribe that launched, stalled and restarted the power monopoly's attempts to build a monster power plant equal in size to the West County Energy Center — the largest power plant in the nation — in Palm Beach County.

The property's former owner, developer Eddie Garcia, initiated amending the land zoning from agriculture to industrial in 2011. He later sold the land to FPL.

The county's first attempt to approve land changes was stymied when the Tribe petitioned the state of Florida for an administrative hearing and filed suit against the county, FPL and Garcia. The legal drama came close to an end last year, on Indian Day, when the Florida Second District Court of Appeal ruled in favor of the Tribe largely because the amendment language was not consistent with the county's comprehensive land plan.

Amendments passed at the April 12 final reading were rewritten and

♦ See FPL on page 5A

Public Works earns statewide praise for drinking water, plants

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

Perfection could be a main ingredient in the Public Works Department's recipe that makes Seminole Reservation water among the most highly regarded in Florida.

"People have no idea. They turn on the tap and there it is — water," said John Holdman, manager for the department's

computerized maintenance management system.

Constant laboratory testing keeps tabs on drinking water. Weekly and monthly tests ensure higher than the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's standards for bacteria presence such as e-coli and other coliforms. Recent upgrades and expansions keep the department on the cutting edge of technology and service.

"We go above and beyond, and that is where awards come from. You have to be some of the best and brightest in the state to beat the other brightest and best," Holdman said.

In recent months the Public Works Department has been heralded on several water fronts.

Brighton's water treatment plant in March won first place in the Best Tasting

Water Competition for the American Water Works Association (AWWA) in Florida's District 8, which includes six counties in east Central Florida.

In April, the Tribe's Hollywood plant came in second place for best tasting water in AWWA District 6, which encompasses 68 cities in Broward and Palm Beach counties. The city of Hollywood came in first.

On April 26, during the Florida Water Environment Association's (FWEA) annual convention in Orlando, all of the Tribe's waste water treatment plants — Big Cypress, Brighton, Hollywood and Immokalee — were scheduled to receive a second-place collective honor for safety by the statewide 1,500-member organization.

"This award recognizes the outstanding effort of the management and operational staff with resulted in zero lost time accidents during calendar year 2015," wrote FWFA Safety Committee chairman Judd Mooso. The recognition marks the Tribe's third consecutive annual award for safety through FWFA.

Days before the convention, the entire utility garnered an Operational Performance Award by the FWFA. On the same day, word arrived that Brighton operator Doug Wyatt had earned an esteemed Meritorious Water Treatment Plant Operator Award.

FWFA also recently bestowed Public Works Director Derek Koger with its prestigious 2016 Thomas T. Jones Public Education Award for "significant accomplishments that foster and support the development of public outreach programs and integrating public education as a core element of wastewater and water utility planning and management," according to the association's website.

Engineer Cynthia Fuentes said Koger ensures that all personnel are certified in respective fields and consistently training in

related fields that interest them and serve the Tribe.

Plant operations manger Juan Mata said education is necessary to assure top quality water and the professional base to make it happen, especially when Seminole families are asked to support the spending of millions from Tribal coffers. Five years ago, no engineers were staffed. Today, four engineers are employed by Public Works and the Tribe is about to embark on a \$150 million expansion program to design and construct treatment facilities and infrastructure to provide service for the next 30 years.

Recently, Brighton water plant operator Jason Kite and his crew showed off their newly updated reverse osmosis process. The technical process purifies ground water and provides award winning drinking water.

"We can't overemphasize training and education from our engineers to administration and project managers. All of that goes back to Council to look at what we can do and how we can implement what they need," Koger said.

The department is also often tapped to share its knowledge with outside industry agencies.

"We've been in competition with places that have pristine water sources like Niagara Falls in New York," Koger said. "And we've gotten so good at what we do that they ask us to come and speak to them about our water treatment programs."

Koger said the department strives to serve everyone on the reservations including Tribal citizens and visitors at restaurants, shops and casinos.

"We're here to protect the public health and assets of the Tribe. We couldn't operate gaming or schools if we didn't do the job we do. We take pride in that," he said.

♦ See WATER HONORS on page 4A



Eileen Soler

The Brighton Water Treatment Plant employee team, from left, Jason Kite, Doug Wyatt, Pedro Rangel, Rafael Corona and Joshua Niemann, stand before a massive reverse osmosis unit consisting of dozens of nano-filtration membranes that ensure Brighton Reservation and nearby Lakeport are supplied with clean drinking water. The water, contained and cleaned at the site, recently won the industry distinction of best tasting drinking water in east Central Florida.

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PECS students hit the track in middle school meet. See page 4B for full coverage.

Editorial

Come join me at the Florida Folk Festival

• James E. Billie

Memorial Day weekend is coming up soon at the end of May. The annual Florida Folk Festival at the Steven Foster State Park in White Springs is where folk singers, songwriters, quilters, blacksmiths, cabin makers, Seminole Tribal citizens and all sort of artisans gather together on the banks of the Suwannee River.

Seminole such as Medicine Man Jose Billie, the late Chieftain Betty Mae Jumper, Rainmaker Bobby Henry, O.B. Osceola and dollmaker Minnie Doctor have taken part in the festival since the 1960s.

At the main stage in past years, you may have seen country artist John Anderson, rock 'n' roll star Bo Diddley, Billy the Kid and many others, such as legendary Arlo Guthrie, who will return again to headline this year with Florida stars Jim Stafford, John McEuen, Billy Dean, Frank Thomas and Mark Johnson. There are always surprises. You never know who will be there.

My family members always enjoyed a cool swim in the Suwannee. Jose Billie said it was like swimming in medicine water. Medicine trees grow on the edge of the river, leak-

ing healing powers into the stream.

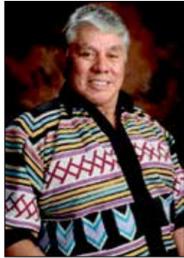
A few years ago, we built a chickee village consisting of a cook hut, five sleeping huts, eating hut, 30-by-30 entertainment hut and a canoe storage hut. Our Seminole entertainment hut is open for anyone who will share their songs or music.

Many folk singers such as Cherokee Don Grooms, Troubadour Will McLean, Bobby Hicks, Gamble Rogers have shared their music here before they crossed over. Our own Rita Youngman sang to an overflow crowd last year. And she will be there this May, too!

So if you got nothing going on this Memorial Day weekend, join us at the Florida Folk Festival. Fry bread and Pumpkin bread will be served.

Sho-naa-bish!

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



From little flat rocks came archaeology

Excerpts from a welcome speech

• Jack Chalfant

Orlando is part of our homelands because we lived from north of Gainesville all the way south to the Keys. When I was growing up, a lot of people my age lived in camps. We didn't have houses until 1969. Camps were our life.

A hammock next to our camp was where we played war and threw flat gray rocks at each other. That was our ammunition. Later on, when I got the job at the THPO, and they wanted to survey that area where I grew up, I thought, "Yeah, I know how to get out there when it's wet." We went out there, and indeed it was wet.

As we walked through the hammock, some of the archaeologists became excited because they were finding those gray flat rocks. They started picking them up and saying, "This is pottery we're finding here. This is great. It's just laying on the ground."

I laughed at them and they wondered why. One of them asked me, "What are you laughing about?" I said, "Well, when I was growing up, my camp was the next hammock over. This was where we used to come and play." I told them that we would throw those little flat rocks at each other and all through the hammock.

I did not know until then, that me and my cousins are probably responsible for breaking and scattering thousands of pieces



Peter B. Gallagher

Diane Gifford-Gonzalez, of the Society for American Archaeology, receives a sweetgrass basket in April from Tribal citizen Jack Chalfant, of THPO, at the organization's worldwide conference in Orlando.

of pottery because we never knew any better.

Basically, what Tribal archaeology is to me is preserving. It's preserving the past for the future. That's what we do in the Seminole Tribe THPO, not only do we do artifact collecting and archaeological surveys, we also do the oral histories. We collect that and when we find something and we go back and we ask the elders, "What do you know about this place or who lived there or what lived there?" Basically all our research is going back through the community.

We ask the community for everything. Even when we come to home sites, we ask them. Once there was a site where a person wanted to build his house but it was someone else's camp, his relative's, and it was considered a historical camp; there was no disturbing it. We had to let the community decide what to do with this camp. That's just one of the things we do at the Seminole THPO.

Jack Chalfant, THPO management trainee, gave welcoming remarks at the Society for American Archaeology conference, April 6, at the Dolphin Resort in Orlando.

Tracking seas, stars on Hōkūle'a canoe

A Seminole's hands-on adventure

• JD Bowers

My cousin Everett Osceola was asked to go but he couldn't make it so he suggested me. I can't tell you how excited and humbled I was to get that call. I drove right to Key West, found the famous crew of the Hōkūle'a and experienced that great energy and aloha spirit right away.

I had heard they were coming to visit South Florida in canoes and I admit I thought I was going to be paddling. Then I saw the Hōkūle'a and I can tell you that our canoes and their canoes are two totally different vessels. In fact, we joked about it on our trip from Key West to Everglades City. I would refer to their vessel as a boat and they would correct me: "No, it's a canoe!"

I wondered out loud "Do we paddle?" and they laughed: "No, man. We sail!" Well, did I have fun from the minute we left the next day at 2 p.m. until we finished 14 hours later into the next day. I got to man the rudder to guide the boat. I gave them two four-hour shifts which was hard, hard work, pulling and pushing for hours. I slept like a baby when it was time to sleep.

I learned a lot from those people who sail the world. I watched the master navigator use the sun and clouds and currents to fix his direction; all in a very traditional way. There is nothing about this boat (I'm sorry, I mean canoe) that takes in modern technology. Not even bolts or screws. It's an absolutely amazing vessel — as are the amazing sailors from Hawaii.

They let me help put the sails up, take them down and generally man the boat everywhere. It is really true that the best way to learn how to do something is by actually doing it. When they train people there is very little book work, they told me, and a lot of hands-on.

They had asked for a Seminole guide to ride with them from Key West where they stopped after leaving Havana.

When we took off, I spent time giving them the history of my Tribe and the area we were sailing through. I included the burial mounds in Chokoloskee, how we lived in the Everglades and how the Seminoles also once navigated by the stars.

I've heard stories about our canoes with sails on the open water going to Cuba and Andros Island and the Bahamas.

I explained how we lost our ocean ways when the Wars caused us to go inland and we had to hide in the swamps far from the ocean. And I shared with them

how we eventually lost our navigational skills because we weren't using them anymore. Those who knew the ways died without handing it down. We just weren't doing that anymore. The culture isn't gone, I said. It's just lost.

The crew of the Hōkūle'a understood because that is why they are doing their world tours.

They are reviving the tradition of navigating by star, all the while letting their kids know they come from great people who did great things. Their entire trip is helping people remember their past. I know what that means; our ancestors live inside of us. Their traditions are not dead; just lost. We have to reconnect.

Chickees do that for me. They are very healing to me but I really can't explain why. It's hard work, but I am never happier than when I am working on a chickee. And that is exactly what the Hōkūle'a crew is doing - having a lot of fun gaining back the old knowledge and reminding people of our duties to Mother Earth. And Mother Ocean.

I had a great time. Out in the open ocean we saw pods of dolphins, big turtles. We ate together and sat around sharing. It was just too shallow to get the boat close enough for people waiting on shore to see, but I respected the captain's decision. He is responsible for the safety of the boat and crew.

I was amazed at the large number of Hawaiian people who were waiting and cheering at the Everglades Park Visitor Center when we arrived after the trip.

What wonderful friends I now have. It's very hard in South Florida to find people who don't want to get money from you; hard to find people who want to share real experiences and traditions. I was humbled by the way the crew was so courteous and respectful towards me, my Tribe and the waters of Florida. And, man, did we all work!

Finally, I asked the crew if I could join the Hōkūle'a for their trip back to Hawaii later this year.

I was so humbled when they told me it might be arranged and they would let me know. There's nothing I would love to do more right now than ride the Hōkūle'a again. The name means "Star of Gladness," by the way. In their culture it is the star at the very top of the sky. They say if you follow that star, it will guide you to Hawaii from wherever you are on earth.

JD Bowers is a citizen of the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

Childhood memories of Wounded Knee

• Tim Giago

When some folks say leave Wounded Knee alone, leave it as it was, what are they talking about? Do they mean like it was 90 years ago or like it is now?

In the 1920s, the Gildersleeve family, Clive and Agnes (Ojibwe), built a store at Wounded Knee that sold canned goods, a butcher shop that cut meat fresh daily, bread and milk were sold there and there were gas pumps out front for Indian people to fill up their cars. More likely than not in those days one saw teams of horses pulling wagons in front of the store.

Their store also housed a U.S. Post Office, and it had benches on the front porch for the Lakota elders to sit, smoke and visit. The Gildersleeves sold a lot of Bull Durham tobacco because that was before the cigarettes known as "tailor-mades" came along. Because of the store's location it soon began to be known as The Wounded Knee Trading Post.

And it was indeed a trading post. Renowned Lakota artists like Hobart Keith, Andrew Standing Soldier, Jake Herman, Vincent Hunts Horse, Paha Ska, Richard Red Owl and Felix Walker brought their paintings to the store and sold them on consignment.

Walker is the artist who painted the pillars and spirals in the old Holy Rosary Mission Church at Pine Ridge. His full Lakota name was Felix Walks Under the Ground and Comes Up Holding Two Sticks.

In later years, Agnes Afraid of Hawk and her daughter Belya worked at the store, creating intricate beadwork that they in turn sold at the store. Joe Spotted Horse, Howard Wounded Horse and Patricia Pumpkin Seed also worked in and around the store as did my father Tim Giago Sr. Tour buses would come to the store and the Lakota residents would make money for the winter by selling their arts, crafts and beadwork to the tourists. They were entrepreneurs and not exploiters.

There were several cabins built by the Gildersleeves for their employees and I lived in one of them with my mother, father and siblings from 1935 to 1939. In 1968, when

Jim Czywczynski bought the store from the Gildersleeves, he remodeled some of the cabins and let his employees stay there rent free.

In fact, Agnes Afraid of Hawk did much of her beadwork in his home.

In the summer the main and only street leading through the community was filled with happy, laughing children playing catch or stick ball. The daughter of Clive and Agnes, JoAnne, would be riding her tricycle on the sidewalk in front of the store and I'd usually be standing on the back of it, pushing her along with one foot. Wounded Knee was a wonderful place to live and play.

As children, we would walk along the banks of Wounded Knee Creek and pick chokecherries, plums and currants and my mother and the other women in the village would make jams and jellies. The one thing all of the children loved: wojapi (a berry pudding). Back then there was water in the creek and we would catch tadpoles and frogs.

One day, a few days after Christmas in 1938 when my siblings were home on vacation from the Indian mission boarding school, my mother Lupe had my older sisters gather sage. She took the sage and made small bundles out of them and tied them with colorful ribbons. She then took more of the ribbon and filled them with tobacco and made bundles.

The next morning, my dad pulled up in front of our cabin driving the Wounded Knee Trading Post Model A pickup, loaded us all on board and drove the couple of miles to the site of the mass grave where the victims of the Wounded Knee Massacre were buried. When we got there, my father prayed and we took the prayer bundles and sage and laid them on the gravesite. It would have been the 48th anniversary of the massacre, and it is hard to believe that we just commemorated the 125th anniversary in December.

On that cold December morning in 1938, there were other Lakota families gathered at the gravesite to leave prayer bundles and to pray. My father went to some of them and shook hands as they spoke softly and reverently in Lakota.

From the 1920s until Wounded Knee Village was burned to the ground in 1973 in

a militant takeover, it was a wonderful place to live. My brother, sisters and the other children living in the village often kicked a soccer ball up and down the dusty street in front of the trading post.

As children, we knew something terrible had happened at Wounded Knee and we respected and honored those who had died there, but Wounded Knee was our home and these were some of the happiest days of our lives living there.

A respected Lakota elder, a man who was a descendant of a family who died there, recently asked me a question: "What is your connection to Wounded Knee?"

I said simply, "As a boy I lived there, I am a former resident."

But after considering it, I know that it was much more than that. Wounded Knee was a place where so much of my young life was shaped. It was a place where my family was all together before World War II came and we moved to Rapid City, where my parents got divorced and the family broke up and scattered in all directions. It was a place that held all of my memories of a good life.

My sister Lillian and I are the only two children out of seven who are still alive and, like me, she remembers Wounded Knee as a place where she had her happiest memories. In a spiritual way, many of my childhood memories are still buried at Wounded Knee.

So yes, I have my special memories and my wish is to raise the funds to buy Wounded Knee (does not include the gravesite) from the owner. The land will be put into trust for the Lakota people and they will decide its future.

When they get the land, I hope they will never forget that long before it was destroyed, Wounded Knee was a village filled with happy, laughing and loving Lakota families. It was and still is a sacred place, but back then it was also home.

Tim Giago (Nanwica Kciji — Stands Up For Them) is an Oglala Lakota journalist and publisher born, raised and educated on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. He is founder of the Lakota Times Indian Country Today, the Lakota Journal, Native Sun News and the Native American Journalists Association.

The Seminole Tribune is a member of the Native American Journalists Association.

Letters/emails to the editor must be signed and may be edited for publication.

Subscription rate is \$35 per year by mail. Make checks payable to: The Seminole Tribune 3560 N. State Road 7 Hollywood, FL 33021 Phone: 954-985-5700 Fax: 954-965-2937

The following deadlines apply to all submissions to The Seminole Tribune:

Issue: May 31, 2016
Deadline: May 11, 2016

Issue: June 30, 2016
Deadline: June 15, 2016

Issue: July 29, 2016
Deadline: July 13, 2016

Please note: Submissions that come past deadline will be published in the following issue.

Advertising: Advertising rates along with sizes and other information may be downloaded online at: <http://SeminoleTribune.org/Advertise>

Postmaster: Please send address changes to: The Seminole Tribune 3560 N. State Road 7 Hollywood, FL 33021

Publisher: James E. Billie

Copy Editor: Kevin Johnson
KevinJohnson@semtribe.com

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

Contributors: Aaron Tommie, Elgin Jumper, Gordon Wareham

If you would like to request a reporter or would like to submit an article, birthday wish or poem, please contact Copy Editor Kevin Johnson at 954-985-5701 ext. 10715 or by fax at 954-965-2937

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Community

A

Protection of Indian children at core of NICWA event

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) hosted a house party at Paradise Live in Hollywood March 23 to discuss its mission and let attendees know how they can become involved in the organization.

The evening began with a traditional dinner and entertainment by rockers Ted Nelson, Lee Tiger and Rod Kohn.

“Our mission is to keep Indian families and children together,” said Nelson, a NICWA board member. “Every time an Indian child is adopted out of the Tribe, you lose one Indian. The more they take away, the more it threatens sovereignty.”

NICWA, a privately funded non-profit membership organization dedicated to the well-being of Indian children and families, works to assure the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is enforced throughout the country. The purpose of ICWA, passed by Congress in 1978, is to protect Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian Tribes and families.

“It’s important for everyone to be part of this to make sure our children are safe, our families strong and our rights are protected,” said featured speaker Terry Cross, NICWA founder and senior advisor.

Cross, a member of the Seneca Nation, has worked in child welfare since 1972. After he graduated from Portland State University with a master’s degree in social work, Cross returned to the Seneca reservation in western New York to connect with his people and make a difference.

“I thought I’d change the world, right all the wrongs, but I got knocked off my pony big time,” said Cross, who had a Seneca mother and white father.

He experienced prejudice from Indians and non-Indians as he tried to protect Tribal children. A supervisor of education at a boarding school told him they knew how to work with “their Indians.”

“I knew I was a target and that my time was at an end,” Cross said. “They succeeded at running me out of town. I knew if there was anything I could do to help change things, I’d dedicate my life to it.”

Cross said ICWA became law because up to 95 percent of Indian children who were adopted went to non-Indian homes; something adult adoptees never get over.

“For every child that is lost, there are a whole lot of broken hearts in the families; a part of them is missing,” he said.

ICWA established a path for Tribes to reassert their authority, run child welfare in their own communities and create legal structure put programs in place. Cross was called upon to help.

In 1983 he created the Northwest Indian Child Welfare Institute, which went nationwide as NICWA in 1994. The organization has written more than 20 curriculums for Tribes to use for training.

Tony Bullington, Center for Behavioral Health assistant clinical director, said the Seminole Tribe and NICWA are discussing the possibility of a training program here. CBH is responsible for about 100 children in foster care and another 10 in the Big Cypress youth home who are awaiting foster homes.

Finding family placement for the children is the department’s priority. Bullington said the children are thriving, being cared for and loved. CBH encourages parents to contact the children.

“We train staff that they are advocates for the child first,” he said. “ICWA is always in play; we use it to guide proceedings and we follow the guidelines.”

Guidelines include placing a child first with a relative or a Tribal foster family. The group home is a temporary solution with a capacity for up to 18 children.

“No child should have to experience abuse and neglect,” Cross said. “All of us need to have our eyes and ears on children because there is so much that can go wrong. When we see people make bad choices, we have to say that is not OK.”

Cross spoke about trauma inflicted on Tribes during European colonization and how it affects Native Americans today. He said all Indians have trauma in their DNA.

“They dismembered our people and our families,” he said. “I’m angry at conditions that cause us to turn against one another when we are in trouble. We have a level of trauma that keeps us from being able to love and trust one another. Those families are broken because they are so hurt by the past.”

The way to strengthen community and family bonds is with “a loving word, comforting touch and an offer of help when someone is struggling,” Cross said.

“Every family deserves respect but each of us needs to be willing to step up and help,” Cross said. “Stopping the trauma today is the only way to heal the trauma of the past.”

Indigenous women discuss cultural, educational knowledge at FIU forum

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

MIAMI — Louise Gopher, Destiny Nunez and Betty Osceola led a panel discussion entitled “Seminole and Miccosukee Women; Culture, Community, Family and Public Life” at Florida International University’s Global Indigenous Forum March 29 in Miami.

Students and professors listened as the women shared their perspectives on life. Gopher presented the history of the Seminole Tribe’s push for cultural education which led to the founding of Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School in Brighton. Nunez spoke about the importance for young people to learn Tribal traditions. Osceola, a Miccosukee Tribal citizen, stressed the significance of caring for the environment.

Professor Mary Lou Pfeiffer, senior instructor at FIU’s Honors College, opened the forum with the concept of seven generations in which each generation must consider how today’s decisions affect descendants seven generations in the future.

“There are 600 million indigenous people in the world,” Pfeiffer said. “The natural resources on earth are being depleted. This is where seven generation thinking comes in; do we want to deprive the future generations of those resources?”

Environmentalist Osceola took the discussion from the abstract to the reality of life in the Everglades.

“I just walked 80 miles across the Everglades and our walk was all about that,” said Osceola, who joined a group of demonstrators to raise awareness of the effort to protect and preserve the Everglades. “We have to speak out more and educate more to keep our natural world.”

As a volunteer, Osceola takes groups of Miccosukee youth to tree islands to plant corn and pumpkin the traditional way.

“We teach culture while we are planting,” she said. “Everything is interconnected; they interact with elders who pass along the tradition of living more simply. Nature has a right to exist, just like the rest of us. We only take what we need. It provides us abundance and that’s what we pass on to our children.”

Osceola believes Native Americans must speak for themselves. She went to Tallahassee



Florida International University students and guests listen March 29 while Miccosukee Tribe citizen Betty Osceola discusses environmental concerns during a Seminole and Miccosukee Women; Culture, Community, Family and Public Life session at the school’s Global Indigenous Forum.

during the recent legislative session to lobby against the proposed “citizen archaeologist” bill, which failed to become law. She said legislators were surprised to see Osceola and her group.

“Everyone else wanted to speak for us,” she said. “Every day I think what do I have to fight for tomorrow? They want to determine what’s important to me, but I’m not going to go into the church and tell the Pope what is important to him. That’s called respect and you need that to live how we’ve always lived.”

Gopher learned to respect education at a

young age. Born in a chickee in a Fort Pierce orange grove, Gopher spoke no English until she was sent to public school. She eventually became the first Seminole woman to earn a bachelor’s degree. Education remains an important aspect of her life. Although she was bestowed with an honorary doctorate from Florida State University in 2014, she still remembers her earliest days as a student.

“I came home and played school with my mother to try to teach her,” she said. “Going to school was a culture shock. I had to eat things not familiar to me like okra and milk, but I liked the iced tea. Only teachers got to

drink it so I thought I’d have to be a teacher when I grew up.”

After high school graduation, Gopher went to junior college, where she earned an associate’s degree, then transferred to the University of Florida and later graduated from Florida Atlantic University.

“College wasn’t hard for me. I knew how to study,” said the Brighton resident.

Gopher spent about 10 years working at the Florida School for Boys, a reform school in Okeechobee. Around that time, she said

♦ See FIU FORUM on page 8A

‘Wrestling Alligators’ film details candid story of Chairman Billie’s life

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

MAITLAND — The audience at the Enzian Theatre in Maitland rose in standing ovation April 16 following the Florida Film Festival world premiere of “Wrestling Alligators,” a documentary about the life and times of Seminole Chief Jim Billie.

Five years in the making, the 90-minute film follows the trials and tribulations of the longtime Seminole Chairman, from his humble birth at the Dania Chimp Farm through his war experiences in the killing fields of Vietnam, his battles with a federal government that preferred to keep Indians down, his struggles within his own Tribe, all the way to current times where he still lives in a chickee in his 28th year as the Seminoles’ top leader.

More than anything else, the film certifies Chairman Billie’s role as the defiant protector of Tribal sovereignty who stubbornly transformed the economics of all American Indians by pioneering legal Indian gaming — “the new Buffalo,” an economic power engine now pulsing through much of Indian Country.

“I liked the movie, but I wasn’t really surprised at anything, like most movies,” Billie said as a crowd gathered for photos and autographs after the final credits rolled. “I lived my life. I already knew what was going to happen.”

Chairman Billie was accompanied by his daughter Aubee, 12, whose eyes widened as she recognized a younger version of herself on the big screen.

“The funny thing is these cameras were always around us, but I really never knew they making a movie,” she said with a laugh as she hugged her father. “I don’t know what I was thinking back then, but I never really thought there would ever be a day like this.”

All the film principals attended the premier, including director/writer Andrew Shea, producer/writer Udy Epstein, producer James Eowan, executive producer Jonathan Cordish and CEO David Cordish of the Cordish Companies, which financed the venture.

“We plan to place “Wrestling Alligators” in film festivals, as many as we can, for a year,” said David Cordish, whose film divisions have created several Academy Award-nominated films. “After that, we’ll make a decision which way to go next.”

Hard Rock International Chairman and Seminole Gaming CEO Jim Allen, whose efforts to bring big-time casino gaming to the Seminoles — and Indian Country — were well portrayed in the film. His wife, Isabel, joined Tampa Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino President John Fontana for the premiere at the

Enzian, a unique art playhouse which offered food and drink for the film experience. Allen, used by the filmmakers to articulate the complicated paths taken to push gaming through a blockade of objectors, was singled out for praise by Chairman Billie during a question-and-answer session after the film.

Eowan said efforts will also be made this year to show the film on Native American reservations. He expects the film to garner a lot of attention because of how well known the Chairman is in Indian Country.

“Unfortunately, individual people will not be able to acquire a copy of the film just now,” said Eowan, who added the film should go on sale toward the end of this year. “People who want to follow the film as it gets reviews around the world can go to the movie’s Facebook page.”

“As a Tribal member, I can say I am very proud of that film. There were many things I didn’t know about the story of the Chairman’s life and I found it very interesting,” said Trishanna Storm, Chairman’s executive assistant. “I’m sure there are some political things in there that will be controversial around here. But it was a real documentary and it told the whole story.”

The film is filled with historical images — still and video — of Seminole life, history, culture and people gleaned from many archives, including collections housed at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, Seminole Media Productions and The Seminole Tribune.

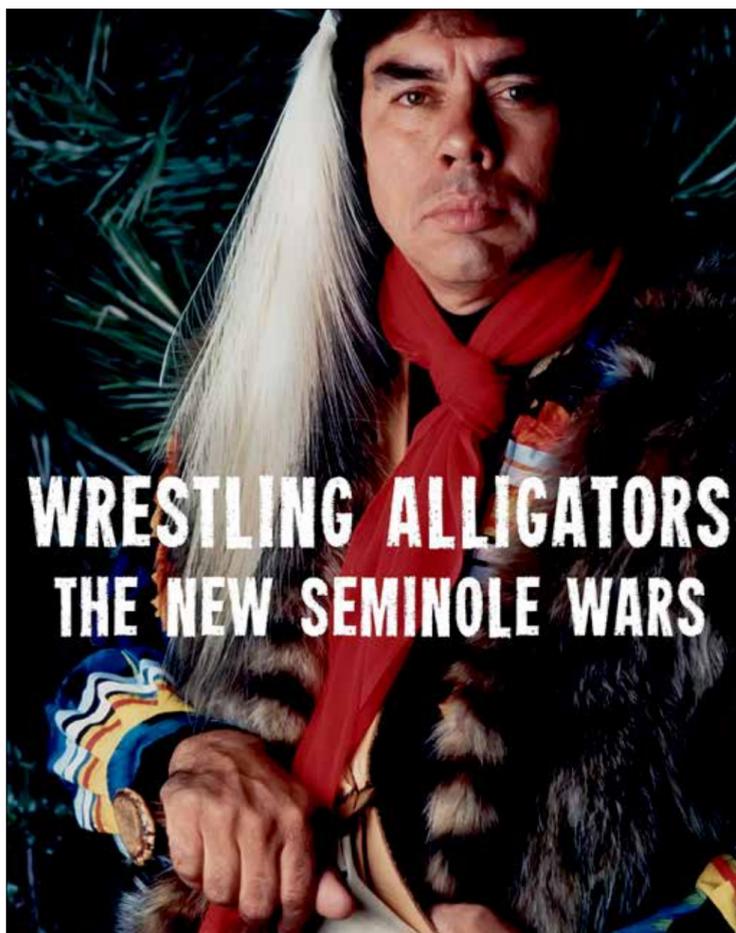
“I especially liked seeing all the old footage of our ancestors,” Storm said.

Highlights of the film include footage shot in 1997 by filmmaker Leslie Gaines depicting Chairman Billie and his musical band performing the song “Buzzard Dance” at the ornate Tampa Theatre. Eight of the Chairman’s songs appear in the documentary. Several scenes feature Chairman Billie wrestling alligators, including the incident in 2000 when his finger was bitten off.

Other scenes include various dramatic courtroom scenes, the young Florida folk music duo Frank and Ann Thomas singing “Bingo!” and interviews with attorney Bruce Rogow, former Broward Sheriff and state Attorney General Bob Butterworth and former Tribal leaders Max Osceola and Howard Tommie.

“We couldn’t put everything we wanted in the film. It would have been three hours long or more,” Epstein said. “James Billie is a man with a very large story to tell. I hope we did him and history justice with this production.”

The next showing of “Wrestling Alligators” will be May 28 at 9 p.m. at the Florida Folk Festival in the Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park in White Springs.



A promotional poster for the documentary ‘Wrestling Alligators’ depicts Chairman James E. Billie in younger years dressed in full Seminole warrior regalia.

East meets West as Florida Tribes greet Hawaiian canoe crew

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

EVERGLADES CITY—The brackish waters of Florida's Ten Thousand Islands were just too shallow in March to allow the a famous "canoe" to reach the docks of the Everglades National Park Gulf Coast Visitor Center.

The Hōkūle'a, a performance-accurate full-scale replica of a wa'a kaulua, was forced to anchor miles out in Florida Bay following the 90-mile trip from its previous port of call in Key West. Spanning just over 61 feet, the Polynesian double-hulled voyaging canoe carried a crew of 13 and a mission to spread peace, goodwill and environmental consciousness around the globe.

Seminole Tribal citizen J.D. Bowers boarded the boat in Key West and sailed to Everglades City, regaling the Hawaiian seafarers with cultural and historical stories about the Seminoles and Southwest Florida. Bowers and the rest of the crew, under the direction of Captain Kalepa Baybayan, were brought to shore by motorboat. Bowers sent blog messages as they traveled and invited Tribal citizens to meet the boat in Everglades City.

Canoe owner, the Polynesian Voyaging Society, and Kanaka Maoli – the indigenous people of Hawaii – are sailing the catamaran-like Hōkūle'a around the world. They arrived in Everglades City having completed about half the journey.

A large crowd that included representatives from the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida and the Original Miccosukee Simanolee Nation Aboriginal People (Independents) waited at the Visitor Center to welcome the current crew of the renowned boat that has sailed continuously since 1976 while greeting and honoring natives and indigenous peoples everywhere. Since its maiden voyage to Tahiti and back, Hōkūle'a has sailed nine expeditions to Micronesia, Polynesia, Japan, Canada and the United

States while employing ancient wayfaring celestial navigation techniques.

"Our purpose is to lift up ancestral wisdom and to inspire the world to draw from ancient knowledge to protect our environment and its precious resources, especially the oceans and waterways," wrote Dr. Randie Kamuela Fong, with the Polynesian Voyaging Society, in a pre-visit letter to the Seminole Tribe.

The voyage's name is Mālama Honua, which means "caring for Island Earth."

Just after sunrise, Independent leader Bobby C. Billie conducted a private "circle" ceremony for the crew, which included four females, at an undisclosed location in Everglades City. Later, as the foggy morning changed into a sun-splashed Florida day, a crowd gathered at the Visitor Center and included surprised tourists and dozens of Hawaiian natives now living in Florida who follow the exploits of the Hōkūle'a online.

The singing and dancing canoe crew greeted officials from the Seminole Tribe of Florida and other Florida Indians in a "Ceremony of Friendship" at noon. Medicine man Bobby Henry provided a prayer of blessing and statement in his native Miccosukee language, which was interpreted by Tribal language coordinator Herbert Jim. Speeches, singing, dance demonstrations and gift exchanges kept the ever-growing crowd clapping.

Other Tribal citizens present included Chairman James E. Billie and Chairman's Executive Assistant Trishanna Storm.

Following a friendship dance led by Henry and family, which featured a huge circle of hand-holding friends, the crew returned to work. The next stop later that afternoon was Fort Myers, where the boat went through the locks, down the Caloosahatchee River, across Lake Okeechobee and arrived at Titusville Municipal Marina on the East Coast.

Other scheduled stops for Hōkūle'a include South Carolina, Virginia, Washington, D.C., New York City and New England by June 8 for World Oceans Day.



Peter B. Gallagher

Above, Chairman's Executive Assistant Trishanna Storm bestows a gift of Seminole medicine beads to Hawaiian canoe Captain Nainoa Thompson.

Right, Tribal Language Coordinator Herbert J. Jim and Medicine Man Bobby Henry greet crew members from the Hawaiian voyaging canoe Hōkūle'a, arriving in Everglades National Park.

Bottom left, Seminole citizen JD Bowers puts his might into rowing aboard the Hōkūle'a during a local leg in the course that ended with fanfare at Everglades National Park.

Bottom right, Polynesian dancers from a Broward County dance troupe pay homage to visiting crew members from the Hawaiian voyaging canoe Hōkūle'a.



Peter B. Gallagher



Photo courtesy of Polynesian Voyaging Society



Peter B. Gallagher

♦ WATER HONORS From page 1A

On the Hollywood Reservation alone, the drinking water plant serves about 800 homes and offices. The wastewater treatment plant serves about 300 homes.

A Public Works crew also serves the needs of about 130 homes in Trail, Fort Pierce and Tampa.

All of the Tribe's water supply wells are tested daily for pH levels, which is the measure of acidity and alkalinity in water. Quarterly, the water is sent to an outside laboratory to test for all sorts of metals, synthetic organic compounds and volatile organic compounds.

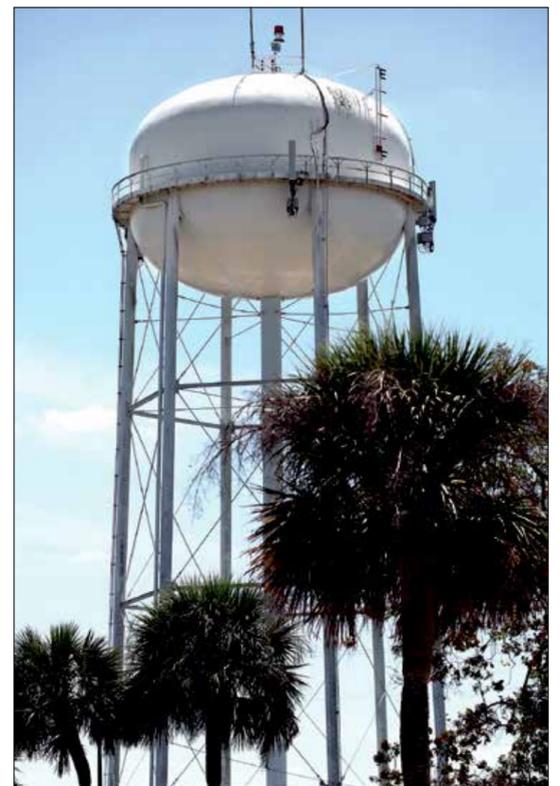
Samples are returned with red flags if problems are detected. Public Works has been red flag-free for more than five years.

From May 15-21, the department will celebrate National Public Works Week by hosting a drinking bottle label competition for children and providing tours of water treatment facilities for elders.

Brighton Water Treatment Plant operator Jason Kite poses proudly with one hand holding a plaque awarded to the facility for the best tasting drinking water among six counties in east Central Florida and in the other hand a jug of the proven delicious H2O. At far right, the Brighton water tower that holds thousands of gallons of water to serve the Brighton community.



Eileen Soler



Eileen Soler

Ahziya Osceola remembered during National Child Abuse Awareness Month walk

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Ahziya Osceola lived only three years, but his grandfather Kenny Tommie is working to assure the boy's short life makes a difference for years to come.

The fourth annual Child Abuse Prevention Community Walk, sponsored by the Center for Behavioral Health, was held simultaneously April 22 in Immokalee, Big Cypress, Brighton and Hollywood to raise awareness of child abuse and neglect.

Dressed in blue, the Hollywood community walked through the reservation, some carrying signs pleading for an end to child abuse.

"I want families to be aware that child abuse isn't just in the form of physical, but is also verbal. And with drug and alcohol abuse, children are neglected," said Tommie. "It happens everywhere and it is among us. We want to make sure this doesn't happen to another child."

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, signed into law by President Richard Nixon in 1974, provides federal assistance to states for prevention, identification and treatment programs.

Since 1983, April has been designated National Child Abuse Prevention Month for communities to work together to prevent abuse and neglect, and promote the well-being of children and families.

"Our goal is to raise awareness of child abuse prevention, bring the community out and get them involved," said event organizer Shamika Beasley, who works at the center in family and child advocacy compliance and quality assurance. "We are also here to honor Ahziya and memorialize him."

According to the Children's Bureau within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in 2014 child protective services nationwide received about 3.6 million referrals of child abuse involving approximately 6.6 children in 46 states. Reports were made mostly by professionals including legal and law enforcement officers, teachers

and social service personnel. More than 82 percent of perpetrators were between the ages of 18 and 44 years and more than half were women.

The tragic end to Ahziya's life in April 2015 gave the community walkers a somber reminder of the consequences of abuse.

Ahziya passed away from physical abuse allegedly at the hands of his stepmother, who was charged with aggravated manslaughter, child neglect with great bodily harm and giving false information to police.

His father was charged with one count of child neglect. Both of his custodial parents, and other adults who lived at the house, were known drug abusers with long arrest records. In Hollywood, Paul Buster opened the event with a prayer and some words of wisdom. As a culture and language teacher at the Hollywood preschool, he knew Ahziya.

"God gives babies to us to love and take care of," Buster said. "Without them, we are lonely. Babies make you laugh and smile; God knows what you need. The worst thing

you can do is to abuse and hurt them. Your first responsibility is to take care of your children."

National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) board member Ted Nelson talked about the importance of NICWA's work. He urged the crowd of about 40 to come together as a community and take responsibility.

"We all need to join in and help to prevent child abuse and neglect," he said. "When we see things, it's our responsibility to let someone know. If you see a child with bruises or marks on his body, you need to report that. Treat it just like that child is your own. The children are our future."

With that, community members took to the streets silently marching while holding banners that decried child abuse. Some signs were emblazoned with Ahziya's smiling face.

The message was clear: stop child abuse and honor the memory of an innocent boy who lived a very short life but whose memory will live on with purpose.



Tribal citizens and friends demonstrate on the Hollywood Reservation April 22 to stand up for children and against child abuse. Since 1983, April has been designated National Child Abuse Prevention Month for communities to work together to prevent abuse and neglect, and promote the well-being of children and families.



Protestors from the Miccosukee Tribe and Seminole Tribe make their voices heard April 12 outside of the Clewiston City Commission Chambers where county leaders cleared the future for new power plants near the Big Cypress Reservation.

◆ FPL From page 1A

by FPL to correct the inconsistencies.

During the final reading of the FPL written proposals, FPL's lead attorney Ethel Hammer briefly referred to the company's additional acreage that runs about four miles beyond of the reservation border. She implied that the area will likely be used for the larger, gas powered plant.

"We plan to submit a plan later this year," Hammer said.

The county board's vote to proceed came on the heels of an agreement struck by Tribal lawyers and FPL lawyers days prior to the Hendry meeting.

Tribal Council voted 4-1 April 8 to move forward with the negotiated agreement. Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola cast the only dissenting vote.

Money and time spent on litigation to fight FPL's plan, which has been continually backed by the county board, were reasons given by the Tribe to cease opposition. The long story short: FPL owns the property and the county board supports the power plants to be located there.

"I know the opposition to it, but I also know the consequences of opposing it outright. We're looking at long court battles which guarantee no victory for the Tribe — and on the other hand no guarantee of victory (for FPL)," said Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr. during the Council meeting. "...this is not on the Seminole Reservation. Somewhere along the way they are going to get the plant in."

A confidentiality agreement prevents the Tribe or FPL from disclosing details, but some hint that compromises include the additional gas-powered plant be built on a smaller scale as originally planned and as far away from the reservation as possible.

Information available to the public reveals that FPL agreed to a 2-mile buffer between the reservation and a nuclear, gas and/or coal powered generation plant and

that the 3,125 acres be used only for the solar energy generation. For the solar facility, FPL wrote additional amendments that limit the height of the structure to be no taller than 20-feet high and provide no less than 30 percent of the property for open space, which includes buffer space for conservation and wetlands.

FPL's fourth application approved by the county board changes the solar energy site from agriculture to planned unit development, or PUD, in order to allow the solar-only facility and related facilities. Conservation measures for 23 archaeology sites, various wildlife issues and nighttime lighting were addressed.

Sam Tommie, of Big Cypress, showed signatures from Tribal citizens against the power facilities and implored the Council to give more consideration to the issue.

Protestors who attended the county board meeting four days later carrying signs and speaking out against the rezoning for power plants said the concessions were also not good enough.

Betty Osceola, of the Miccosukee Tribe, said FPL failed to consider the opinions of her Tribe, the Original Miccosukee Seminole Nation Aboriginal Peoples and independents.

"FPL has only been speaking with the Seminole Tribe of Florida, who does not have the authority to make decisions that impact our Tribe — so expect someone else knocking at your door," Osceola told the county board.

County commissioner Karson Turner told Osceola after the meeting that FPL would contact her and others.

Tommie, Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank, Wesley Garcia and Matt Schwartz, executive director at South Florida Wildlands Association, also spoke against the plant. Three speakers spoke in favor of FPL.

On April 19, Seminole Tribe citizens, Miccosukee members, the Original Miccosukee Seminole Nation Aboriginal Peoples and independents met in Big Cypress to discuss next steps.

Seminole Story Days to meet tradition, history, modern times

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum will burst with activity May 5-7 during Seminole Story Days.

Produced by museum intern Eden Jumper, 18, a senior and top scholar at Ahfachkee School in Big Cypress, the professional level event promises to engage and thrill visitors all three days.

Jumper's first full scale event will highlight Seminole War hand-to-hand combat demonstrations by Tribal citizens trained on the reservation in martial arts; an interactive 17th and 18th century weapons of war exhibition complete with a saddled cracker horse; curated tours of the museum's most ambitious exhibit to date - Struggle for Survival 1817-1858; and an intimate conversation with Tribal elder and matriarch Carol Cypress.

"As an intern, I've seen many ways to be involved in the culture. This is where I am comfortable; exercising my creativity, sharing the Seminole life, and being with people," Jumper said.

Jumper, of the Panther Clan, is the grandson of Carol Cypress and the nephew of Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank.

The weekend event is the result of Jumper's internship through the Tribe's Education Department under the Museum's education coordinator Alyssa Boge. Because Jumper's career interests include culture and marketing, he was paired to work closely, about five to seven hours weekly, with the Museum's

development assistant Virginia Yarce, who also handles marketing and social media.

A marketing curriculum, following the state's Department of Education Sunshine Standards, was devised for the project by chief data analyst Juan Cancel, of the Tribal Historic Preservation Office, to insure that Jumper receive high school credits.

Yarce said Jumper took the lead on all creative endeavors. He conceptualized the event; created newspaper and multi-media advertising; connected to broader audiences via Facebook and Twitter; designing logos, posters and postcards; and fashioned patchwork inspired triangular buttons to give away as souvenirs.

"It looks ambitious from the outside but the project is collaboration. The goal is always for the Museum to produce more programming that is Tribal member driven ... after all, the Museum belongs to the Tribe," Yarce said.

From the start, Jumper said he envisioned the three-day event to be all inclusive for Tribal citizens and outsiders from toddlers to grandparents.

"My focus is family. I want it to be educational, colorful, interactive, enjoyable and fun so that people can connect to our elders and each other. The Museum is a perfect platform and the proof is that my own grandmother will be here," he said.

The martial arts demonstrations with Museum interns Quentin Cypress and Tucomah Robbins and others dressed in clothing from the Second Seminole War, will showcase hand to hand combat tactics derived from

Seminole hunting skills.

At the Tools of War exhibit, cultural outreach specialist Reinaldo Becerra with his sidekick cracker horse, will display his vast personal collection of Seminole War era weapons that include an 1817 flintlock rifle, an 1850 repetition caps rifle, a six-shot .32 caliber army revolver and an Army saber.

A native of Cuba, Becerra will also offer interesting tidbits about the Seminole's pre-war cattle business with the island nation which he contends was a factor of the first Seminole war.

Jumper and his grandmother will sit down in front of guests 2 p.m. on May 7 for frank discussions on several topics.

Guests will also get to view the recently discovered Buckskin Declaration, a treatise hand written on cowhide and signed by leaders of the Miccosukee Seminole Nation in 1954, and delivered to then President Dwight D. Eisenhower, before the formal establishment of the Miccosukee or Seminole Tribes.

The document declared freedom and independence for the Florida indigenous natives, and the return of the people's rights to fish, hunt and live freely so that "we and you may live together in this land which was all once our land."

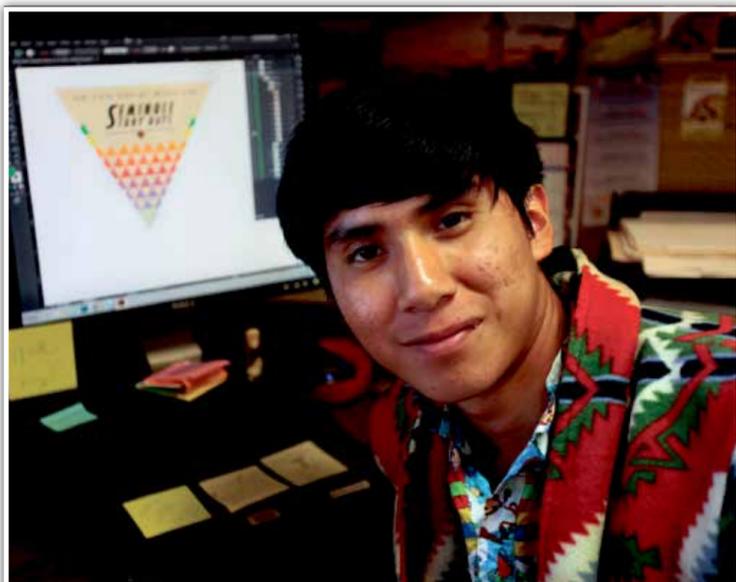
With days to go until Jumper's first project opens, he had already accepted new challenges. Jumper will attend Florida International University in the summer and Savannah College of Art and Design in Georgia in the fall.

SEMINOLE STORY DAYS

Thursday, May 5
1-1:30 Tools of War
1:30-2 Struggle for Survival Tour
2-2:30 Curator Talk by Eric Griffiths
2:30-3 Struggle for Survival Tour

Friday, May 6
11-11:30 Tools of War
11:30-12 Struggle for Survival Tour
1-1:30 Tools of War
1:30-2 Struggle for Survival Tour
2-2:30 Big Cypress Martial Arts
2:30-3 Struggle for Survival Tour
3-3:30 Curator Talk by Rebecca Fell

Saturday, May 7
10-10:30 Tools of War
10:30-11 Struggle for Survival Tour
11-11:30 Big Cypress Martial Arts
11:30-12 Struggle for Survival Tour
1-1:30 Big Cypress Martial Arts
1:30-2 Struggle for Survival Tour
2-2:45 Eden Jumper/Carol Cypress
2:30-3 Struggle for Survival Tour
3-3:30 Tools of War
3:30-4 Struggle for Survival Tour



Eden Jumper, 18, a senior at Ahfachkee School in Big Cypress takes a quick break from designing event buttons April 13 for his upcoming Seminole Story Days event May 5-7 at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.



Indigenous and non-Native people join April 12 at Clewiston City Hall in protest against Florida Power & Light's plans for electrical power plants next to Big Cypress Reservation.

◆ RESULTS From page 1A

"I didn't expect it to pass, but I appreciate the votes in favor of us," said

Immokalee Board liaison Gale Boone. "Immokalee is small but proud. We will keep praying; this won't be our last effort. The Immokalee community cares and has a vision of the Tribe as a family. We want to be part of the bigger family."



Supervisor of Elections Naomi Wilson, Tribal Secretary LaVonne Rose and Bureau of Indian Affairs government officer Sherry Lovin look over the ballots cast for the election for an additional seat on Tribal Council to represent the Immokalee community.

'7th Generation' film faces pain, ushers in healing nationwide

EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

A partnership between the Seminole Tribe's Native Driven Network, under Seminole Media Productions (SMP), and Warrior Society Development Productions, is reaping praise at film festivals and university screenings nationwide.

"7th Generation" explores a late 19th century prophecy by the legendary Lakota Medicine Man and spiritual leader Black Elk. The 45-minute film won for Best Documentary Feature at the LA Film Festival in Hollywood, California on April 8. In January, the film took the Inspiration Award at Cinema on the Bayou Film Festival in Lafayette, Louisiana.

Sunshine Frank, the film's executive producer and broadcasting manager for SMP, said the idea began to jell in 2013 when SMP professionals filmed Oglala Lakota member and motivational speaker Jim Warne, founder of the San Diego, California-based Warrior Society Development, during a Native Learning Center event on the Hollywood Reservation.

"We had the right story and the right team at the right time," Frank said.

Warne's compelling lecture addressed the seventh generation philosophy rooted in a vision experienced by Black Elk that prophesied the Dec. 29, 1890 massacre of 300 Lakota in Wounded Knee, South Dakota.

Black Elk, who later witnessed the aftermath of the brutal killings by the U.S. Army, revealed that it would take seven generations to heal the broken circle of life caused by centuries of constant oppression that reached a peak on that day. It was indeed the last great battlefield defeat of an Indian Tribe before indigenous peoples fell under the grip of systematic U.S. government control.

Estimations vary on the number of indigenous people killed by disease or slaughter as part of extermination measures since the arrival of Europeans in the mid-1500s. Numbers could average to about 10 million.

"Some people would say it is too hard to hear, but it happened. We teach about African American slavery and the Holocaust during World War II, but we don't teach the truth about Indian history," Warne said. "It's hard for America to say out loud that a holocaust happened here, but millions upon millions of indigenous people were killed to make America. Instead, they cut out pilgrim hats and Indian headdresses and made up a story about friendship. That is the Native frustration."

Believers of Black Elk's vision say it refers back to the Wounded Knee Massacre and that the children of the seventh generation are the youth of today. Warne said telling the story at lectures and in the film makes way for healing.

Warne, who accepted the Inspiration Award at Cinema on the Bayou Film Festival after the viewing, said many spectators responded to the film with tears.

"There were tears and appreciation and I was able to provide counseling. It is hard information to take in but once we learn about it together we can heal together," Warne said.

Film director John-L Voth, who in 2013 was SMP's senior editor, took the lead in establishing a relationship with Warne that led to SMP hosting Warne's lecture series, called the 7th Generation Project, throughout Seminole reservations in 2014.

"When I pitched the story for the film I did not know the weight of it because I was looking through an American lens. I had to go on the journey to figure it out," Voth said.



John-L Voth and Ishma Fray.

Former SMP videographer Omar Rodriguez and current SMP writer and sound specialist Ishma Fray took the mission on the road with Voth, primarily through the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Voth and Rodriguez took the first trip alone in the dead of winter, knocking on doors in minus-10 degrees weather. All three met with Warne months later to fine tune the project.

The documentary trailer alone shows the mass grave of those killed at Wounded Knee, a Sept. 24, 1863 newspaper clipping from The Daily Republican in Minnesota that advertised "\$200 for every red-skin sent to Purgatory ..." and June Braveheart's firsthand account of forced boarding school "worse than boot camp."

Rows and rows of headstones still stand in fields on boarding school grounds at the graves of children who died from abuse and neglect while "imprisoned" like animals through the 1900s.

"We were herded around like cattle," said Warne's mother Beverly Warne, who attended Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school in Pine Ridge during the 1940s.

The film reveals that for many, like Beverly Warne, forced participation in BIA programs bolstered determination to rise through education and leadership.

For others, the trauma of their ancestors is still manifested today through social ills that include extreme rates of drug and alcohol abuse and the highest mortality rate among all races in the United States.

Suicide at Pine Ridge among Oglala Lakota youth is 3.2 times higher than the national average, which caused tribal leaders in February 2015 to call a state of emergency.

The Native Driven Network team, including Voth, reported several feature stories and an anti-suicide public service announcement. Voth said he witnessed hope among the trials. Fray said he saw "the way out" through leaders who include activist Virgil Bush and Yvonne "Tiny" DeCory, the outreach coordinator for the Sweet Grass Suicide Prevention Project.

"Black Elk didn't only talk about the bad things, the pain and the suffering. He saw the way out. He gave a voice to the coming generations who would lead the people out of the problems. What is happening today is a story bigger than poverty," Fray said.

So far, Warne has presented the film "7th Generation" at the London Shows International Film Festival, the California American Indian Indigenous Film Festival, the LA Skins Fest at Culver Studios in Los Angeles, the American Indian Film Festival, and the NatiVisions Film Festival in Arizona.

He also screened the film at lectures at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona; Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma; Arizona State University in Tempe; and the University of South Dakota in Sioux Falls.

Warne said he aims to make the 7th Generation Project a movement that motivates young indigenous people to learn the Indian ways and to keep their "tribal heart" but to go out into the world and become educated leaders in the contemporary American system.

"The seventh generation is the youth of today. They have a lot of challenges, as the ancestors did, but the generation is here to succeed ... I am a firm believer that one among this seventh generation will be a president of the United States," Warne said.



In a screenshot from '7th Generation,' Jim Warne talks about the spiritual significance of the Black Hills in South Dakota.



Tribal officials are surrounded in prayer April 7 at Big Cypress New Testament Baptist Church.

PRAYER From page 1A

churches until Pastor Johns passed in 2012. Prayer services have been offered intermittently for the faithful to gather under one roof and pray.

The recent gathering, hosted by Big Cypress New Testament Baptist Church Pastor Arlen Payne, welcomed congregants from First Seminole Baptist Church (Pastor Paul Buster) and Chickee Baptist Church in Hollywood, Big Cypress First Baptist Church (Pastor Salaw Hummingbird), Bible Baptist Church (Pastor Clay Jones), All Families Baptist Church (Pastor Bill Blomberg) and Immokalee First Seminole Baptist Church (Pastor Josh Leadingfox).

Prayers and scripture readings were interspersed throughout the two-hour event that began in the church hall with catered and pot luck dinner.

In the sanctuary, Jonah Cypress led rousing Christian spirituals that included

"Lord, I Lift Your Name on High" and "Victory in Jesus." Pastor Tiger sung the lead in several traditional Creek hymns.

The evening's sermon, provided by the newly certified Rev. Fred Phillips from the Big Cypress First Baptist Church, was directed toward inspiring daily prayer for leaders in government, the military, public safety and churches so that they can serve in good health and spirit.

Before the crowd dispersed, congregants formed a human chain around President Cypress, Rep. Osceola and Rep. Frank. Laying hands on the officials, they prayed aloud for their well-being.

Rep. Osceola said he was "humbled" by the experience.

"Prayer really does help us. I can feel it," Rep. Osceola said. "It's a hard job we do; something I never thought would be so hard. When people say 'we are praying for you' it means a lot to us."

"It's amazing how God makes things happen," Pastor Tiger said.

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E a s t e r

Happy, hopsy Easter parties welcome spring



Beverly Bidney
Minnie Doctor gets an assist collecting Easter eggs during a hunt from her granddaughter Nettie Smith at the Hollywood Easter celebration March 22.



Beverly Bidney
Big Cypress Reservation adults scramble for plastic eggs during the March 22 Big Cypress Easter Eggstravaganza.



Aaron Tommie
Sereniti Smith helps her younger brother Bryan Villegas decorate an Easter egg at Chupco's Landing Community Center on March 21.



Beverly Bidney
Armed with baskets and determination, children search through piles of soft hay for hundreds of colorful candy-filled Easter eggs at the Big Cypress Easter Eggstravaganza on the ball field March 22.



Beverly Bidney
The Easter bunny goes above and beyond the call of duty during his appearance March 22 at the Hollywood Easter celebration by wrestling an alligator Seminole style. Dozens turned out for the late afternoon event that culminated with an Easter feast under the airnasium. The springtime themed festivities also included Easter egg hunts for various age groups.



Eileen Soler
Maggie Osceola, the eldest of elders at the March 17 Hollywood Senior Center Easter party, enjoys a table egg hunt.



Beverly Bidney
Amare Alex and the fluffy, huggable Easter bunny share a cheerful high five at the Hollywood Easter celebration March 22. Children and adults by the dozens turned out for the spring event.



Eileen Soler
Tom Motlow and Joe P. Billie pose with their award winning baskets for first and second place, respectively, March 17 in the Hollywood Senior Center Easter basket competition.



The coming of the Grey Cloud

SUBMITTED BY NORA HERNANDEZ
 Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

The team is ambitious, hardworking and unswaying to tumultuous winds. Within two days they construct the boat's steer and on the last day they brand the vessel's name onto a round buoy. This, of course, is a description of the Exhibits team at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.

But no crew is strong without the support of their fellow mates – everyone working at the Museum. Together, we built a boat in the gallery for the "Struggle for Survival: 1817-1858" exhibit. Not a whole boat of course, just one-fifth of a boat and scaled down a bit – but still a boat in which you may enter and exit through a dock.

This particular boat is meant to represent the Grey Cloud – a sidewheel steamboat. Though active only during the Third Seminole War it contributed to the removal of thousands of Seminoles.

The Grey Cloud was built in 1854 for commercial use on the upper Mississippi River but served a variety of purposes, including transporting U.S. Army supplies in the Missouri River Basin during the

Sioux Expedition. Afterward, the steamboat was used in the Third Seminole War for transporting troops and supplies to Fort Myers, a U.S. military operation base. Lastly, it served as a Confederate military transport vessel during the Civil War before it became an armed steamer for the U.S. Army and was renamed the USS Colonel Kinsman.

The Grey Cloud's last task during the conflict between the U.S. and the Seminoles was to remove over 100 Seminoles. The Seminole Wars had a huge impact on the daily life of the Seminoles. Families were torn apart, camps destroyed, and promises were broken. The Third Seminole War brought an enormous amount of pressure upon the Seminoles; some were captured and others surrendered because of exhaustion. Warriors, women and children were removed from their homes and boarded onto the Grey Cloud, which departed from Egmont Key to New Orleans on May 7, 1858. There they continued an even longer and more dangerous journey to Oklahoma.

The multiple removals of Seminoles during the war years magnify the endurance of the Seminoles who remained in Florida despite unfavorable conditions. To bring

the story alive we had to bring to life the Grey Cloud. Without pictures of the actual Grey Cloud we deduced the steamboat's architecture from telegraphs, official survey documents and pictures from similar types of boats.

Correspondence from Lt. Col. Tomkins indicated the cost of repairing and altering the Grey Cloud for use in the Gulf of Mexico was about \$8,000. The steamboat's square stern, best suited for use on the Mississippi River, was altered to a pink, pointed stern with rounded sides, best suited for open water usage (Gulf of Mexico).

After the Third Seminole War the ship was remeasured and assessed. Based on the Surveyor's Certificate of Admeasurements from 1859, the Grey Cloud had "one deck, no masts, pink stern, has upper cabin and plain head; that she is in length of one hundred and seventy seven feet, in breadth twenty seven feet four inches and in depth average six feet."

From these records we were able to reconstruct the Grey Cloud to what you can see today in the museum. We hope you will visit the Museum soon and take a step into the past.



Photo courtesy of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Reconstruction of the Grey Cloud steamboat that was used to transport captured and surrendered Seminoles from Egmont Key to New Orleans during the Third Seminole War.

FIU FORUM From page 3A

the Tribe realized their children knew nothing about Seminole history, culture or language. A cultural education program was started and Gopher was tapped to be its coordinator.

"They gave me the job, said here's the problem, now go fix it," she said. "We had a whole generation of kids who only knew English. The nice houses broke up the extended families and our way of life that enabled us to pass on our customs and language."

The challenge led Gopher to create a program for Tribal students in area schools. She approached the Okeechobee County superintendent of schools with a proposal to allow students to stay in Brighton one day a week to learn Seminole history, culture and language. It was approved, so Gopher went to work building a curriculum and getting teachers on board. The pull-out program for kindergarten through fifth grade students was like any other academic program; attendance was taken and grades were given.

"The kids loved it," she said. "Self-esteem went up and the regular teachers noticed they were more engaged in class."

The program grew from 40 to about 100 students over five or six years, which prompted the Tribe to provide a trailer for the classes. Eventually, parents wanted more than one day a week, so Gopher began to work on transitioning the program into a charter school with a focus on culture and language.

The principal hired top teachers, obtained the best technology and put a teacher and an aide in each classroom. PECS opened in September 2007.

Today 300 K-8 students attend the school.

In addition to the culture program, PECS offers a regular education curriculum identical to any public school and a sports program for teams to compete against area schools. It recently began a language immersion program for infants and toddlers.

"It's sad that we have to go into a school setting to teach language and culture, but I'm glad to see young adults working in the program," Gopher said.

Culture is at the core of what Miss Florida Seminole Destiny Nunez holds dear. An education major at the University of Central Florida, she explained the history and meaning of the Princess Pageant, shared her experiences appearing at events. She also announced her plan to compete for the Miss Indian World title at the Gathering of Nations.

"As Miss Seminole, you are an ambassador of the Tribe," said Nunez. "All the women who have had this title are leaders in the Tribe. I strive to be a leader, too."

Nunez realizes children are the future of the Tribe and plans to become a kindergarten teacher. Prior to becoming Miss Seminole, she wasn't comfortable speaking in public, but her experience has given her the confidence to do it well. She believes some stories need to be told – instead of written – to be passed down across the generations. Her talent portion for the Miss Indian World competition will be traditional storytelling.

"I may not be the best speaker, but I speak to young people about our history, culture and who we are. My job is to be a role model and empower all children and Tribal members and to inspire them to be better people," Nunez said.

Before the forum ended, Gopher mentioned other influential Seminole women, including Laura Mae Osceola, the Tribe's first secretary and treasurer; Betty Mae Jumper, the first female chairman of the Tribe; and Polly Parker, who escaped extradition to Oklahoma and whose descendants includes many Tribal leaders. She also mentioned that many other women who sacrificed much during the Seminole Wars go unnamed and unsung.

"When they were hiding from the troops, if their babies cried they had to suffocate them," Gopher said. "They were willing to sacrifice one to save the group. Because of that, we have all this."

After the formal presentations, the



Beverly Bidney

Miss Florida Seminole Destiny Nunez addresses the FIU Global Indigenous Forum March 29 in Miami as Miccosukee Tribal member Betty Osceola and Louise Gopher react to her speech.

women answered questions from the audience. One student wanted to know how she could learn all there was to know about the Tribe.

"We are very protective of ourselves," Gopher said. "Now we go out and educate people, but we keep our legends private and sacred."

One student asked Nunez what she would wish for if she had a magic wand.

"For our culture to be stronger with the younger generations," she said. "Our people need it."

Betty Mae Jumper

Wisdom from the past

Heaven's Grocery Store

The following column was written by Betty Mae Jumper and printed in the February 9, 1987 issue of The Seminole Tribune.

Writer unknown but was written by a young student. When I went to one of the Bahama Islands to church, a Christian handed me this little poem, and I would like to share it with you all.

I was walking down life's highway a long time ago, One day I saw a sign that read, "Heaven's Grocery Store."

I saw a host of Angels they were standing everywhere, And handed me a basket and said, "My child, shop with care."

Everything a Christian needs was in that Grocery Store, And all you could carry you could come back the next day for more.

First, I got some patience and love in the same row, Farther down was understanding, you need that everywhere you go. I got a little box or two of wisdom and a bag or two of faith, I just couldn't miss the Holy Ghost for it

was all over the place. I got some strength and courage to help me run this race, And by then my basket was getting full. But, I remembered I needed some grace. I didn't forget salvation, it was free. So, I tried to get enough of that to save both you and me.



Then I started up to the counter to pay the grocery bill, For I thought I had everything to do my Master's Will.

As I went up the aisle I saw a prayer, I just had to put that in, For I knew when I stepped outside I would run into sin. Peace and joy was plentiful, they were on the

last shelf, Some praises were hanging near, so I just helped myself.

Then I said to the Angels, "How much do I owe?" He just smiled and said, "Just take them everywhere you go."

I smiled at him and said, "How much do I really owe?" He smiled again and said, "My child, Jesus paid your bill a long time ago."

Seminole Restaurant Review Marumi Sushi: A recommendation by Paladin Willie

BY GORDON WAREHAM
 Contributing Writer

The question of the day: is it food for human or bait to go fishing? On March 16, the dinner crew – Paladin Willie, Jonathon Frank, Justin Frank and myself – visited Marumi Sushi in Plantation on a recommendation made by Paladin. That night we prepared ourselves for a feast by ordering 10 dishes to sample the menu.

As we entered Marumi Sushi, I was very pleased with the comfortable feeling of the restaurant. With wood floors and warm colors to room, the restaurant felt like we were welcomed into someone's home to have dinner with friends. The menu had a wide

outside our comfort level. Paladin ordered two pieces of uni and I ordered the fantasy roll. The first piece we tried was the uni, which is sea urchin. The taste is unique and I wasn't in a rush to order another piece. I guess uni is an acquired taste.

The fantasy roll was shrimp tempura with crunchy, spicy tuna and avocado. I could not wait to try it. When the plate arrived, the sushi was beautifully presented and my mouth watered with anticipation. With the first bite I was very disappointed. The sushi had everything going for it; fresh ingredients that should have worked together, but the sushi had no taste. Paladin agreed and said that this was his least favorite dish of the night.



Courtesy photo

Paladin Willie, Jonathon Frank and Justin Frank enjoy their visit to Marumi Sushi in Plantation.

range of selection to choose from including sushi, noodle soups, seafood and a variety of rice bowls.

We started the feast with orders of sushi. My selections were the spicy conch salad and salmon roll. Paladin ordered the California roll with sesame and shrimp tempura roll. All of the sushi was delicious and the ingredients were fresh. My favorite sushi was the spicy conch salad. My dinner guests agreed that the shrimp tempura roll was best. As we finished the delicious sushi our table became overloaded with the main dishes.

The first dish was the shoyu ramen with veggie. A noodle soup featured a delicious blend of vegetables and seasonings served in a giant bowl so everyone could share. That was the idea. Justin was the first to get his serving from the huge bowl and ended up with a majority of the noodles, but there was still enough for everyone at the table to get a taste of this wonderful soup.

The next dish was the soft shelled crab lettuce wrap. This simple, delightful dish of crab salad on top of a large lettuce top with a slice of tomato and a house dress was scrumptious. The crisp of the lettuce and blend of the house dressing and crab salad only made me want more after the final bite. Paladin ordered this delightful dish.

The third dish, ordered by the Frank brothers, was two orders of the yakiniku over rice. Translation: grilled beef smothered in teriyaki sauce served over white rice. This dish was overwhelmingly accepted as the favorite dish. The grilled beef was tender and the teriyaki sauce blended the dish together.

For the last two dishes we decided to go



Spicy conch salad

I asked Paladin why he recommended Marumi Sushi and he responded, "I like the ramen noodles; it's very good here. The people who work here are very friendly and it's open late."

The dinner crew rated Marumi Sushi 8.75 out of 10, and I agree with this rating. The prices are reasonable and the food is fresh and tasty, except for the last order. This was a very enjoyable night with a good friend and family members.

Marumi Sushi is located at 8271 W. Sunrise Boulevard in Plantation. Telephone 954-318-4455. The restaurant is open every day from 5:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.

If Seminole Tribal citizens would like to recommend restaurants that they would love follow their Seminoles to find out about, please message me through the Seminole Tribune. Rules are: The Seminole Tribune does not pay for the meal, photographs will be taken but not while eating, and questions will be asked.

Health



Young chefs cannot wait to be first to cook pigs in a blanket during the April 5 youth chef program session at the Hollywood community culture kitchen. Hollywood Council Rep. Chris Osceola, who spearheaded the program, looks on.

Eileen Soler

Popular Hollywood cooking program for kids to be served up tribalwide

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Due to popular demand, an afternoon activity for kids originally planned only for March and just in Hollywood to provide kids with food for thought and yummy eats, was extended through April and is now on the menu for summer camps Tribal wide.

Called the Seminole Youth Chef Program, the limited series at the Hollywood Culture kitchen was held over and then expanded by Hollywood Council Rep. Chris Osceola in response to overwhelming claims of tasty and healthy learning fun.

Now, with a decision as refreshing as homemade lemonade, the Recreation, Culture and Health department joint effort will be offered to children at reservation summer camps from Hollywood to Fort Pierce.

Rep. Osceola, who spearheaded the cooking with kids program, was in the house (actually the kitchen down the hall from the Howard Tiger Gymnasium) on April 5 to witness Tribal children cook with delight. Dressed in aprons and chef hats, they eagerly peeled sweet potatoes, roll dough, slather condiments and proved that the fruit of Osceola's labor had paid off.

"I'm only here to observe," Rep. Osceola said, though he stayed long enough to pop a few of the baby hot dogs wrapped in biscuits into his mouth like a well-deserved reward.

The program, established at Rep. Osceola's request to give children an alternative to sports at the Hollywood gym, was an overwhelming success said Allied Health Program Director Suzanne Davis.

Up to 30 children had been showing up regularly to try their culinary hands at crafting delicious snacks and meals that are as fun to cook as they are healthy to eat.

"Not all children are interested in, or even good at, playing sports. That's just a fact," Davis said. "So, Rep. Osceola came up with the idea to give kids something else to do that is also fun and healthy for them."

Davis said Hollywood community advisor Francine Osceola gathered adults from several departments together to conjure the right ingredients for a kid friendly cooking program. Tossed into the mix were two Tribal nutritionists, four professional chefs who are also Tribal citizens, one environmental health specialist and a dash of recreation staff.

Peppered into each lesson are factoids



Darryl Tiger concentrates while trying his hand at using a pizza cutter during a cooking class through the Seminole Youth Chef Program.

Eileen Soler

about healthy eating. For instance, green beans may all look alike but canned greened beans require salt to kill bacteria a preservation process that depletes much of the vegetable's nutritional value; frozen green beans are the next best thing but some vitamins are lost through the flash freezing process.

"We try to relate to the children that the best foods are fresh foods," Davis said.

No matter how potentially exciting the cooking lesson is (especially the eating part), the chef's always include tips about choosing foods that promote healthy minds and bodies while preventing common Native American health issues such as diabetes.

Pathways poker, meals delivery programs help tribal citizens focus on healthy nutrition

BY AARON TOMMIE
Contributing Writer

HOLLYWOOD — Spring cleaning was not the only change a group of Tribal citizens incorporated in their lives throughout weeks in March and April.

The Hollywood Pathways program coordinated Activity Poker and Deliver Lean programs to assist them on their paths to healthier lives.

"[These programs] help people be more aware of how they are doing things and what they should be doing," said Joel Palau, a nutritionist for the Tribe.

The Activity Poker program took place at Seminole Estates from March 7 through

April 18. Each participant received a Fitbit fitness wristband, which measured footsteps taken, heart rate, activity levels, and amount of time spent sleeping. It can also sync with smartphones and serve as a caller ID.

Each week, participants who made at least 40,000 steps chose one card from a deck to contribute to their poker hand.

During the program, the poker hand was built.

The person with the best hand won, as well as the person who took the most steps over the six weeks. This year, Holly Tiger had the best hand and Martha Doctor took the most steps.

Deliver Lean, considered by some to be

South Florida's number one best gourmet diet delivery service, prepared the meals. The pre-packaged meals were delivered to over 60 Tribal citizens in Broward and Miami-Dade counties. Breakfast, lunch and dinner were delivered three days a week from April 4-15.

Each week, Tribal participants weighed themselves and tracked fat percentage and muscle mass along with their weight. The meals accounted for approximately 1,200 calories per day. The meals varied based on the participants' food preferences.

"The way they eat mainly does make a difference," Palau said. "The goal is to show them some foods to use [at home]."

Advice to help fight mosquitoes

SUBMITTED BY PATRICK REED
Environmental Health Program Manager

It seems like every other day, a new strain of mosquito-borne virus arrives on our shores.

With international travel being so common these days, many exotic mosquito-borne viruses are landing on our doorsteps and becoming endemic in our area. Unfortunately, there isn't much we can do about that.

You can, however, protect yourself and your community by making sure that mosquito propagation is minimized around your household.

Mosquitoes can carry dangerous diseases. They can even breed in a bottle cap of water.

So protect yourself and your family. Remember to drain standing water and cover to stop mosquitoes from multiplying.

- Discard old tires, drums, bottles, cans, pots, pans, broken appliances and other items that are not being used.
- Empty and clean bird baths and pet

water bowls at least once or twice a week.

- Protect boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that do not accumulate water.

- Maintain the water balance in your pool, and empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.

- Cover your skin with clothing and use mosquito repellent.

- If you must be outside when mosquitoes are active, cover up. Wear shoes, socks, long pants and long sleeves.

- Apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing. Always use repellents according to label. Repellents with DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus and IR3535 are effective. Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than 2 months.

- Cover doors and windows with screens to keep mosquitoes out.

- Keep mosquitoes out of your house. Repair broken screens on windows, doors, porches and patios.

For more information on mosquito-borne illness, please call the STOF Health Department at 954-985-2330.

New 'Pool Safely' initiative aims to protect families

SUBMITTED BY BOB LAMENDOLA
Florida Department of Health in Broward

The Florida Department of Health in Broward County has launched a new project to teach pool safety to homeowner associations, pool stores, city inspectors and paramedics.

The effort is funded by a \$250,000 federal grant, one of just five in the nation from the Consumer Products Safety Commission's "Pool Safely" initiative.

"This grant will do a lot more to make our swimming pools safer and our families more aware about water safety," said Dr. Paula Thaqi, director of DOH-Broward. "Every drowning is a tragedy that is 100 percent preventable."

Drowning is the leading accidental cause of death for children younger than age 5, especially in Broward, with its 130,000 swimming pools and miles of beaches and waterways. In 2015, six kids ages 1 to 4 died by water, said Cassie McGovern, drowning prevention coordinator.

The best ways to prevent drowning are simple: Have a swim-capable adult watch children every second they are around water. Install fences, alarms and other barriers to block children from the water. Maintain a safe pool. Learn to swim.

The Pool Safely project is doing three things:

1. Educate paramedics, other first responders and code enforcement inspectors about pool safety problems, such as broken gate locks, dangerous filter drains and missing safety equipment.

In some drowning tragedies, pool safety protections were not there. The goal is to raise the likelihood that someone will notice and report unsafe conditions before a tragedy occurs. DOH-Broward inspects all public pools in the county.

2. Educate public pool owners, including homeowner associations, about safety protections pools should have – even if their pools are older and covered by looser rules. The information also is being shared with pool builders, installers, maintenance firms and supply stores.

The goal is to encourage everyone to bring unsafe pools up to standards. For the first time, pool stores will be asked to help promote drowning prevention to families.

3. Increase education for families, child care providers, health care organizations and social service agencies about pool safety and drowning prevention.

Also, the project will include giving out door alarms and promoting free and reduced-price swim lessons for children and adults.

For more information, call 954-467-5695 or email Cassie.McGovern@flhealth.gov.

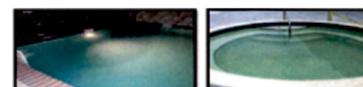


Pool Assessment Checklist

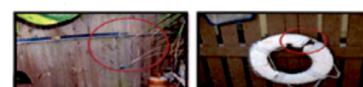
1. A main drain grate is missing, unsecured, improperly secured or damaged.



2. The clarity of pool water is such that the main drain grate is not visible from pool deck.



3. Safety equipment is missing or broken.



4. Ladders and handrails to enter or exit a pool are missing or broken.



5. Fences or latches to enter or exit the pool area are missing or broken.



6. The underwater light is not securely fastened to the pool wall.



Be assured, this effort is **not** to pursue violations, rather to protect children and their families from the devastating consequences of drowning.

SEMINOLE SCENES



Beverly Bidney

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT: Miss Florida Seminole Destiny Nunez and Miss Seminole Committee chairwoman Wanda Bowers practice stomp dancing during a rehearsal April 20 for Nunez's competition in Miss Indian World at Gathering of Nations in New Mexico April 28-30. Nunez will stomp dance on the pow wow floor with shakers on her ankles, Seminole style.



Beverly Bidney

SAFE: Niculus Andrews gets away without being tagged during a kickball game during the Big Cypress Easter Eggstravaganza March 22.



Photo courtesy of Brian Hill

PROUD PAINTING: Larry Mike Osceola admires a painting of himself by Blair Updike on exhibit at the Bonnet House Museum in Fort Lauderdale.



Photo courtesy of Melissa Sherman

CULTURE SESSION: Gordon Wareham and students take a break during a special culture day presentation in late February at the Big Cypress Preschool. Wareham provided the students with traditional storytelling and he played the flute.



Photo courtesy of Naomi Wilson

LIFELONG VOTER: Maggie Osceola, 96, exercises her right to vote as she signs the certification envelope containing her ballot for the secretarial election April 7. Since she signs with an X, her daughter Mary Gay Osceola and Supervisor of Elections Naomi Wilson witnessed her signature.



Photo courtesy of Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee

EASTER KINDNESS: Members of Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee's slot team display Easter baskets that they delivered March 25 to the Shelter for Abused Women & Children and Immokalee Friendship House. The employees purchased all materials and assembled the baskets after a challenge to each other to support the community.



Kevin Johnson

SENIOR MOMENT: Daliyah Nunez, 6, gives her big sister Cheyenne Nunez a hug before the Okeechobee High School shortstop was honored during the team's senior night April 7.



Photo courtesy of Luis Suarez

READY TO SOAR: Seminole Tribe citizen Joe Dan Osceola, third from left, stands among wildlife advocates, including Luis Suarez of the Suarez Museum of Natural Science & History, during a bald eagle release March 19 near the Brighton Reservation.



Beverly Bidney

GATOR GIRL: Most little girls love cute, furry mammals, but B.B. Quenones, 5, cuddles up to this 4-year-old gator at the seniors culture day event April 13. The gator was part of a Billie Swamp Safari critter show that entertained about 100 seniors at the new culture camp in Immokalee.



Beverly Bidney

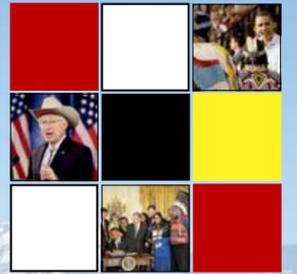
TRADITIONAL FEAST: A typical Seminole lunch cooks over the open fire at the new Immokalee culture camp cooking chickee April 13. On the menu for the senior culture day event were traditional items such as fry bread, Indian stew, cabbage and fried chicken.



Kevin Johnson

HELPING HANDS: Seminole Tribe Fire Rescue Lt. Tony Eugues, left, Lt. Michael Setticas, center, and Firefighter Anthony Berger, right, help Audrey Whitegrass off the court during the NAYO girls basketball tournament March 26 at Choctaw High School in Choctaw, Miss. Fire Rescue provided aid to injured players throughout the four-day tournament that featured more than 70 teams.

NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS



WWII hero, Native historian Joseph Medicine Crow dies

BILLINGS, Mont. — Joseph Medicine Crow walked in “two worlds” — white and Native American — and made his mark on each.

Medicine Crow, who died recently in a Billings hospice at the age of 102, grew up in a log home on Montana’s Crow Indian Reservation as a child listening to stories from direct participants in the Battle of Little Bighorn, including his grandmother’s brother, White Man Runs Him, a scout for Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer.

Decades later, he returned from World War II a hero in his own right for performing a series of daring deeds that made him his Tribe’s last surviving war chief. Medicine Crow went on to become a Native American historian who gained recognition in scholarly circles, even as he sought to live according to Crow tradition. His Crow name was “High Bird.”

“I always told people, when you meet Joe Medicine Crow, you’re shaking hands with the 19th century,” said Herman Viola, curator emeritus at the National Museum of the American Indian. “He really wanted to walk in both worlds, the white world and the Indian world, and he knew education was a key to success.”

President Barack Obama, who awarded Medicine Crow the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009, released a statement praising the World War II veteran as a “bacheitche,” which translates to “a good man” in Crow.

“Dr. Medicine Crow dedicated much of his life to sharing the stories of his culture and his people,” Obama said. “And in doing so, he helped shape a fuller history of America for us all.”

A member of the Crow Tribe’s Whistling Water clan, Medicine Crow was raised by his grandparents near Lodge Grass, Montana, where he returned to live in his last years.

His grandfather, Yellowtail, raised Medicine Crow to be a warrior, beginning training when Medicine Crow was a young boy, with a grueling physical regimen that included running barefoot in the snow to toughen the boy’s feet and spirit.

“Warfare was our highest art, but Plains Indian warfare was not about killing. It was about intelligence, leadership, and honor,” Medicine Crow wrote in his 2006 book “Counting Coup.”

During World War II, Medicine Crow earned the title of war chief by stealing horses from an enemy encampment and engaging in hand-to-hand combat with a German soldier whose life Medicine Crow ultimately spared.

Prior to leaving for the European front, Medicine Crow became the first of his Tribe to receive a master’s degree, in anthropology. Back from the war, Medicine Crow was designated Tribal historian by the Crow Tribal Council, a position he filled for decades, cataloging his people’s nomadic history by collecting firsthand accounts of pre-reservation life.

Medicine Crow could accurately recall decades later the names, dates and exploits from the oral history he was exposed to as a child, Viola said. Those included tales told by four of the six Crow scouts who were at Custer’s side at Little Bighorn and who Medicine Crow knew personally.

Yet Medicine Crow also embraced the changes that came with the settling of the West, and he worked to bridge his people’s cultural traditions with the opportunities of modern society, said Viola, who first met Medicine Crow in 1972 and collaborated with him on several books.

Even after his hearing and eyesight faded, Medicine Crow continued to lecture into his 90s on the Battle of Little Bighorn and other major events in Crow history. His voice became familiar to many outside the region as the narrator for American Indian exhibits in major museums across the country.

—SFGate

Native activist Iron Eyes eyes U.S. House

BISMARCK, N.D. — Attorney and American Indian activist Chase Iron Eyes (Sioux) delivered a rousing speech recently in accepting the Democratic-NPL Party’s endorsement for the U.S. House of Representatives.

“I got into this to defeat (Republican U.S. Rep.) Kevin Cramer because I think I have the grassroots appeal that we desperately need,” Iron Eyes said after delegates nominated him by unanimous ballot. He went on to offer yet another reason for seeking the seat: Cramer’s “cozying up to Donald Trump,” a comment that drew boos from the more than 450 delegates at the mention of the GOP presidential frontrunner.

“I don’t even need to say any more. We represent the antithesis to fear, to ignorance, to hate,” he said, bringing the crowd to its feet.

He immediately addressed his well-known criminal history, saying he had developed a serious alcohol problem and had “hit rock bottom” in 2002, suffering convictions of four felonies, including stealing a car, breaking into a house and

stealing firearms. He served 10 months in a minimum-security prison.

Now a decade sober, the 38-year-old credited two things for turning his life around.

“I became a family man and I realized that the powers of creation were giving me a second chance,” he said.

Iron Eyes has used his career as an attorney to advocate for Native American civil rights and preservation of sacred native sites, including raising awareness of Pe’Sla, a sacred site related to the Lakota Creation beliefs and Bear Butte.

—Grand Forks Herald

Tribes mobilize against oil pipeline

STANDING ROCK INDIAN RESERVATION, N.D. — More than 200 tribal citizens from several Native American nations took to horseback recently to protest the proposed construction of an oil pipeline crossing the Missouri River just yards from tribal lands in North Dakota.

Protestors expressed extreme worry that the Dakota Access Pipeline, proposed by a subsidiary of the Dallas, Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners, would lead to contamination of the river. The proposed route also passes through lands of historical significance to the Standing Rock Lakota Sioux Nation, including burial grounds also associated with the Yanktonai, Dakota, Cheyenne River Lakota and the Rosebud Sioux.

“They’re going under the river 500 yards from my son’s grave, my father’s grave, my aunt who I buried last week,” said Standing Rock citizen Ladonna Allard, the closest landowner to the proposed pipeline. “I really love my land, and if that pipeline breaks, everything is gone... We must fight every inch of our lives to protect the water.”

A “spiritual camp” has been set up at the point the proposed pipeline would cross the river, and the tribal citizens plan to stay and protest indefinitely.

The group joined together to ride, run and walk from the Tribal Administration Building north to Cannonball, North Dakota, on the reservation’s northern edge.

The Missouri River is the primary source of drinking water for the Tribal reservation, according to Doug Crow Ghost, director of the Tribe’s water office. Tribal citizens also fish in the river, he said.

“Because we are going to be fighting this giant, all the rest of the nations came on horseback to say ‘we support you,’” Allard said. “That is why this horse ride is so important to us. Because we’re not alone in this fight. All of our nations are coming to stand with us, and all our allies and partners. This pipeline is illegal.”

The pipeline is currently waiting on a decision from the United States Army Corps of Engineers, who oversees such projects, on whether Dakota Access will be granted a permit to proceed, according to Dallas Goldtooth, a Keep It In The Ground campaign organizer for the Indigenous Environmental Network. The Tribes are petitioning for an environmental impact study, which has not yet been done.

“(The pipeline) infringes on the Tribe’s water rights, which are guaranteed by treaties, and the protocols associated with those rights were not followed,” Goldtooth said. “The Tribes have a really strong standing point on this issue and we’re confident that we’ll see a whole environmental impact study enacted.”

Energy Transfer Partners did not respond to a request for comment.

“Although we do live on a reservation, the land that [the Dakota Access pipeline is] going to be crossing is on original land that was given us by treaty,” said Standing Rock citizen Dakota Kidder. “This is where it gets people fired up when you talk about broken treaties.”

—The Guardian

Cherokees, school for deaf join for culture program

CHEROKEE, N.C. — The North Carolina School for the Deaf (NCSd) will host a Native American Experiential Program this summer in honor of Charles “Inky” Crowe (Cherokee) a NCSd graduate from 1963 who was heavily involved in sports programs as both the star running back for NCSd during its powerhouse days and a dorm supervisor and coach for NCSd football, wrestling, basketball and track teams.

“We wanted to honor him and this Native American Experience program for a summer camp we wanted it to be dedicated in his honor because he was so important in our community,” NCSd Instructional Coach Sarena Fuller said. “We wanted to honor that and North Carolina’s history as well.”

The NCSd teachers organizing the camp reached out the Cherokee Tribe and were invited to present the proposal in person to the tribal council. “(That) is a huge deal and they wanted to get their blessing on it,” Fuller said. “We don’t want to have a Native American Experiential program without the blessing of the

Cherokee Tribe itself.”

The summer camp is planned to be as authentic as possible, according to Fuller, who said participants will learn early Native American living skills, such as fire building, cooking and shelter construction. The camp also will include traditional Native American games, stories and art, she said.

—The News Herald

Possible second Viking site found in North America

PT. ROSEE, NEWFOUNDLAND — A team led by University of Alabama at Birmingham anthropologist Sarah Parcak has discovered a possible second Viking settlement in North America.

The Washington Post called the potential breakthrough one which could “rewrite the history of Vikings in North America.”

“Either it’s ... an entirely new culture that looks exactly like the Norse and we don’t know what it is, or it’s the westernmost Norse site that’s ever been discovered,” Parcak said.

Parcak has risen to stardom in a field that’s historically been more academic, having been called a “real-life Indiana Jones” and “space archaeologist” for her groundbreaking work using satellite images to identify hidden and buried historical sites. She’s reportedly found as many as 17 previously unknown Egyptian pyramids and mapped out a number of long-observed landmarks of the Roman Empire using this method over the years.

And she’s also been a guest on “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert,” grabbing an invite more commonly reserved for Hollywood stars and blowing the talk show host’s mind in an interview video that took the Internet by storm.

Although there have been theories about other Norse landing spots in what Christopher Columbus called the “New World” a few centuries later, the only confirmed such settlement is the 11th century L’Anse aux Meadows site in Newfoundland.

Parcak found hundreds of potential “hot spots” that high-resolution aerial photography narrowed to a handful and then one particularly promising candidate — “a dark stain” with buried rectilinear features. Magnetometer readings later taken at the remote Point Rosee site by researchers showed elevated iron readings. And trenches exposed Viking-style turf walls along with ash residue, roasted ore called bog iron and a fire-cracked boulder — signs of metallurgy not associated with native people of the region.

In addition, radiocarbon tests dated the materials to the Norse era, and the absence of historical objects pointing to any other cultures, helped persuade scientists involved in the project and outside experts of the site’s promise. The experts are to resume digging there this summer.

—Bangor Daily News, Washington Post

Natives join forces to halt coal mine

Members of several Native American Tribes are joining long-running attempts by environmentalists and local activists to shut down a coal mine they say threatens sacred ancestral ground in a remote area near the border of Texas and Mexico.

Members of Texas’ Lipan Apaches, Patache Band of the Coahuiltecan Nation and Carrizo Comecrudo Tribe have teamed with the Comanche Nation of Oklahoma to draw attention to what they allege is the desecration of land being mined by Dos Republicas, owned by Mexican companies partnered in Texas with the Plano-based North American Coal Corporation and its subsidiary Camino Real Fuels.

“This land is sacred and holds ancestral knowledge of the many Native Nations who have shared this living space over thousands of years,” the organizers state on an online petition on Change.org, which has more than 3,500 signatures.

The groups allege the Tribes were not consulted before permits were issued, and that provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act were not followed.

—The Texas Tribune

U.S. Senate hears testimony on school choice for Native Americans

WASHINGTON — That legislation would give students in schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Education access to education savings accounts. Introduced by Arizona senator McCain, this bill would apply to states that already have ESA programs in place, such as Arizona, Nevada, Florida and Mississippi.

“When you have a 50 percent graduation rate, you need to think outside-the-box,” said McCain, who sits on the Indian Affairs committee. “I’ve been on this committee for many years and there hasn’t been much improvement in BIE schools. Here we have a proposal to allow parents another opportunity to provide their children with another education.”

The legislation would allow parents to divert BIE funds of \$15,000 per student towards other education expenses including tuition, tutoring or online courses.

“The Native American Education Opportunity Act will serve as a lifeline to students trapped in literally some of the worst schools in America — it is morally unacceptable to stand by and defend the status quo,” said Betsy DeVos, chairman of the American Federation for Children. “Only 53 percent of students attending BIE schools graduate high school — far below the national average of 81 percent. Just as concerning, a report that came out this week cited numerous safety concerns at BIE schools. Simply put, these schools are unsafe and academically unfit for our Native American children.”

Arizona state Sen. Carlyle Begay testified about his own experience being educated in BIE schools in the Navajo Nation.

“The Native American Education Opportunity Act allows BIE families to participate in a program that is open to almost every other tribal student in Arizona’s reservation communities,” he said. “There are 185 BIE schools in the nation. Nearly five out of 10 students attending these schools will not graduate high school. What if we could give ESAs to those BIE students in Arizona who would not have made it to graduation otherwise?”

Importantly, Begay also said ESAs are the “true essence of self-determination and self-empowerment” that Tribes desire.

—Watchdog.org

Court: Native American church not excused from cannabis laws

HONOLULU — A federal court has ruled that a church for Native Americans in Hawaii should not be excused from federal marijuana laws despite the group’s claim that ingesting cannabis is part of their sacred sacrament.

The Native American Church of Hawaii had asked for relief from federal marijuana laws under the U.S. Religious Freedom Restoration Act, saying they used cannabis during sweat lodge ceremonies to help people connect with their creator.

A district court ruled against the claim, saying the church didn’t produce enough admissible evidence about its religion other than a strong belief in the benefits of marijuana. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on April 6 upheld the district court’s decision, saying a prohibition of cannabis doesn’t impose a substantial burden on their right to exercise their religion.

“It’s really disappointing,” said Michael Rex “Raging Bear” Mooney, who founded the church. “Cannabis is a prayer smoke, so it’s a sacrament ... through the effects of the medicine, it also helps us become closer to our creator. It puts us in a place, a state of mind, where we can actually feel the presence and an actual relationship with our creator.”

The issue stems from an incident in 2009 when the church, then called Oklevueha Native American Church of Hawaii, filed a complaint against federal officials, saying a member of the church had his cannabis seized.

But the church in its practice can also use peyote, a hallucinogenic drug used in Native American rituals. Federal law allows tribal Indians and members of the Native American Church to use peyote in religious ceremonies.

The court in its ruling said the church made no claim that peyote is unavailable or that cannabis serves a unique religious function, so prohibiting cannabis doesn’t force Mooney or the church to choose between obedience to their religion or criminal sanction.

The church, which has at least 250 members, plans to appeal the court’s decision, said Mooney’s lawyer, Michael Glenn.

“Man’s relationship with the divine can’t be dictated by any other person or government entity,” Glenn said.

—ABCNews

Tribe breaks ground on casino project

TAUNTON, Mass. — The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe broke ground April 5 on what it hopes will become Massachusetts’ first Las Vegas-style resort.

The federally recognized Cape Cod Tribe has set out an ambitious timetable: The projected \$1 billion First Light casino, hotel and entertainment complex will be partly open by next summer.

“On this land, we’re building a modern Indian nation,” said Tribal Council Chairman Cedric Cromwell as he led hundreds in a lengthy, boisterous ceremony punctuated by Native American songs, chants and prayers. “This is so much more than a casino. This is self-determination. We’re paving the way for our economic future.”

The resort is being built on a Tribe-owned industrial park in the southeastern Massachusetts city of Taunton. The land is part of an over 300-acre federal reservation recently designated for the Mashpee Wampanoag, who trace their ancestry to

the Native Americans that encountered the Pilgrims about 400 years ago.

Opponents of the project were quick to throw cold water on Tuesday’s festivities.

“It is a high-risk bluff being taken by the Tribe, but it does nothing to change the dynamics of the suit,” said Adam Bond, a Massachusetts lawyer representing Taunton residents challenging the decision to grant the Tribe reservation land and, by extension, its right to open the casino.

MGM and Wynn are also racing to open resort casinos in Massachusetts but have faced delays and aren’t slated to open their facilities until late 2018, at the earliest.

Taunton Mayor Thomas Hoye called the Tribe’s project, which is being financed by the Genting Group, a major Malaysia-based casino developer, as a “game changer” in the casino race.

First Light jumps into an increasingly crowded gambling picture in the region between Boston and Providence, Rhode Island.

Plainridge Park, a more modest slots parlor and harness racing track, opened last year in Plainville, Massachusetts, some 25 miles from Taunton.

Over the state line in Lincoln, Rhode Island, the Twin River Casino has evolved from a greyhound track to a slots parlor and now a full-scale casino.

Rhode Island voters in November will also decide on the company’s plan to open another full-scale casino in Tiverton, near the Massachusetts state line.

And Neil Bluhm, a prominent casino builder from Chicago that’s helping finance the lawsuit against the Tribe, is proposing a \$677 million resort in Brockton, Massachusetts, roughly 16 miles from the Tribe’s Taunton casino site.

—WBUR

Former gaming commission chairman returns to Pequot

MASHANTUCKET, Conn. — Robert D. Hayward has returned to a leadership position with the Mashantucket Pequot. The former chairman of the Tribe’s gaming commission, who helped develop the agreement that gives the state of Connecticut 25 percent of Foxwoods Resort Casino’s slot revenue, has been named the Tribe’s state government affairs manager in a new department that combines public and legislative affairs.

Hayward, 52, assumes the post — vacated by Bill Satti who left to become chief of staff to the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians in Southern California — with the state’s gambling industry under siege from neighboring states.

In his previous stint as gaming commission chairman, Hayward dealt directly with regulation of gaming operations and, later, on the executive staff to his brother, Richard “Skip” Hayward, who was deposed as tribal chairman in 1998.

—The Hartford Courant

Trudeau promises money for hard-hit First Nations to flow this year

THUNDER BAY, Ontario — First Nations communities struggling with persistent Third World conditions should begin seeing some help from Ottawa this year, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said April 8.

Speaking in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Trudeau defended his Liberal government’s approach to what many aboriginal leaders say is an unmitigated crisis.

“We actually are flowing money this year,” Trudeau said. “We are working very closely with [First Nations] on urgent needs and we’re investing in a significant way in respectful partnership.”

First Nations leaders say they like the tone of the government — particularly in contrast with its predecessor.

At the same time, they say they want quick action and firm commitments that go beyond promises and good intentions.

“What we need the prime minister to do — and he’s certainly making positive steps toward this — is he needs to look at this as a major crisis in Canada,” regional Chief Isadore Day told The Canadian Press.

“A hundred First Nations or more in Canada are living in Third World conditions — he has to make this a priority in terms of a crisis.”

Trudeau noted his government committed \$8.4 billion for First Nations infrastructure, education, health and other areas in the March budget.

Yet he offered few immediate answers to the problems many aboriginals face, including a lack of basic health care and housing, unsafe tap water and grinding poverty.

—CBC

Compiled by special projects reporter Peter B. Gallagher and copy editor Kevin Johnson.

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Education



Kiana Bell helps robotics team win Oklahoma state competition

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Hollywood Boys & Girls Club member Kiana Bell represented her school and the Seminole Tribe when she competed on the Sequoyah High School team at the 2016 VEX Worlds-VEX Robotics Competition High School Division April 20-23 in Louisville, Kentucky.

Kiana's team placed 43rd in their 100 team bracket with a record of five wins and five losses. They also won the Sportsmanship Award, which was voted on by all the teams in the bracket. During the opening ceremonies, the Sequoyah School was introduced as the Cherokee Nation.

To qualify for the VEX Worlds competition Kiana and her team, the AI's-Delta, bested eight teams at her Tahlequah, Oklahoma school's competition. They went on to beat 35 teams statewide to win the state championship in robotics March 5.

"It was surprising to me," said Kiana, 17. "I didn't know anything about robots before I took the first class two years ago."

The class taught her how to build and program robots. She liked it so much she decided to join the school robotics club.

"I like to build robots, but programming it is the hard part," said Kiana, a senior. "Once you get used to it, you know what to do."

Kiana and her two teammates spent a lot of time practicing how to operate the 18-by-18 inch robot while learning strategies for tournaments.

The robot has a cannon that shoots balls into goals of two different heights. The higher goal is worth more points, so Kiana's team practiced aiming high. That strategy helped put them on top and sent them to the VEX Worlds.

"This was my second year competing," Kiana said. "The first year we were nervous, but this year we knew what to do."

Kiana's mother Dawna Bell, compliance manager for the Boys & Girls Club in Hollywood, said the experience has done wonders for her daughter.

"She has always been hands on, likes to build stuff and put things like appliances together," Dawna said. "Kiana got into robotics in her sophomore year. This year she had the opportunity to graduate early, but chose to stay just to make the state robotics tournament."

The 2016 VEX Worlds robotics competition brings robotics teams from around the world together for rigorous and fun competition. VEX Worlds is affiliated with Robotics Education & Competition Foundation, which helps to promote and support robotics and technology events to inspire students about science, mathematics and physics.

Teams from North America, South



Photo courtesy of Dawna Bell

Students from Sequoyah High School in Tahlequah, Okla. compete at the Oklahoma State Robotics Competition in March. Seminole Tribe teenager Kiana Bell, 17, far right, and her two teammates beat 35 teams throughout Oklahoma to win the state competition and advance to 2016 VEX Worlds-VEX Robotics Competition in Louisville, Ky. Kiana is a member of the Hollywood Boys & Girls Club.

America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia flock to the challenge.

At the competition, 500 three-member student teams vied for trophies as they commanded their robots to play the fast-paced game "Nothing but Net." The game pitted teams against each other on a 12-by-12-foot field as they tried to control their robot and score points by shooting balls into low and high goals.

Students programmed the robots to compete in a 15-second hands-off, autonomous bout. That was followed by the driver's mode one minute, 45 second session in which the students operated the robots with hand-held controllers.

To prepare for the competition, Kiana and her team practiced fixing damage to the robot, shooting the balls and discussed strategies.

"We wanted to see how far the robot will hold up," she said. "If the robot breaks down in the field, you can't touch it but you can pick it up when the match is over."

Kiana, who has attended Sequoyah for two years, will be the third generation of her family to graduate from the boarding school. Her grandmothers graduated from the school and her mother and her father, Adrian Condon, met there.

"Robotics has helped Kiana's self-confidence level and brought her out of her shell," Dawna said. "She used to be very quiet and wouldn't even answer questions. Now she is a completely different person."

She hopes the experience will help broaden Kiana's post-secondary choices and open doors for her.

"I just want her to see there are multiple possibilities," Bell said.



Photo courtesy of Dawna Bell

Sequoyah High School's 2016 Robotics State Champions and VEX Worlds Qualifying Team, AIs 2398 - Delta, sophomore Kylee Myers and seniors Ashley Baldridge and Kiana Bell give hearty thumbs up while posing for photos at the VEX Worlds competition April 21 in Louisville, Ky. During the opening ceremonies, the Sequoyah school was introduced as the Cherokee Nation.

Living the ACD experience: Patience with a vision

BY AARON TOMMIE
Contributing Writer

The Advanced Career Development (ACD) program was created to mold participating Tribal citizens into leaders on their chosen professional paths. By working various occupations within the department that best caters to their qualifications, they gain the experience necessary to propel them to further success, whether that entails working for the Tribe or elsewhere.

As of April 2016, I have completed over 25 percent of the program. I am pleased with my progress during the six months I have worked at The Seminole Tribune, albeit there is room for improvement. Broadcasting and Business Marketing are the departments within Seminole Media Productions that I will transition to next.



Beverly Bidney

Aaron Tommie

After seven months of being in the program, I can honestly say that this has been a great fit for me. From working in the Executive Operations Office to my time with the newspaper, I have been treated as part of the team, despite my youth and inexperience. My co-workers never gave me any indication they doubted my abilities. Two news writing courses in college helped prepare me for my tasks at the Tribune, but nothing replaces real world experience.

The family atmosphere that permeates throughout the department makes working for the Tribe more enjoyable. My co-workers have been great to work with and their 80-plus years of combined experience in the newspaper industry has helped me improve my journalism skills and mature as a professional. The guidance they have provided is immeasurable. Their work ethic and determination to complete tasks, regardless of the circumstances, are characteristics that I continue to model myself after.

Witnessing the long hours and hard work put into the production of the newspaper each month has given me a strong sense of appreciation and respect for what has been accomplished in The Seminole Tribune.

In addition to gaining work experience, there are other goals that I want to accomplish. I plan to enroll in graduate school. Constant improvement is important to me. As future leaders, the opportunities to become catalysts for change are there, which usually occurs when the time is right. For myself, there have been times when I wanted that change to happen immediately, but I am reminded that there has to be a process. I know of people who have worked for the Tribe for several decades. That helps me put into perspective that the fact that this is only the beginning.

Recently, Board receptionist Eve Ifill and I had a conversation that included a discussion regarding Aesop's fable about the tortoise and the hare. As the story goes, there was a race between the two animals. The hare did not see the tortoise as a threat and let his guard down. Being arrogant and underestimating his competitor, the hare lost the race. That fable reminds me of my ACD experience. Often we want to speed up the time for events to take place in our lives that we miss out on the importance of the journey that occurs. It can be easy to lose focus and get caught up in the present, but the future is the bigger picture.

Ultimately, my goal as a future leader within the Tribe would be to serve the community as best as possible. Although this is a two-year program, the experience gained is something that I can use for the rest of my life. Throughout the rest of my duration in the ACD program, I want to continue to learn about my Seminole culture and continue to progress as a professional. As a leader, an example and tone has to be set for others to follow.

It is important to have others feel as if their contribution to the organization has a purpose. By working in each SMP department I'm able to get a better understanding of what they consist of which will definitely help me to be a more effective leader. With 17 months left in the program, it can be easy to lose focus and get caught up in the present, but the future is the bigger picture.

Sometimes when I wish I were able to speed through it, I think of something one of my older cousins told me, "You can't rush quality."

John Osceola shares McCarthy High's iPad success story with sister's Davie school

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter



Beverly Bidney

John Osceola, a senior at Archbishop McCarthy High School in Southwest Ranches, shows students at the Alternative Education Foundation School in Davie how to utilize iPads to make learning more efficient and effective.

DAVIE -- As part of his senior thesis, Archbishop McCarthy High School junior John Osceola, 17, presented his school's iPad technology April 8 to the Alternative Education Foundation School (AEF) in Davie, where his sister Faith is a ninth-grader.

John, his father Gem Osceola, McCarthy principal Richard Jean and technology team administrator Irene Benitez went before Tribal Council in October 2015 to request a few iPads for AEF. The Tribe donated five to the school.

Since 2009, Archbishop McCarthy students have used a learning management system on iPads that help them manage school work and become more efficient.

Programs on the devices include a notebook organizer, textbooks and a virtual locker. The calendar and schedule application help students learn and sharpen time management skills.

"It's helped me immensely," John said. "This is my sister's school and I believe it will help her, too. It has made my life easier academically and helps me learn more. When you incorporate technology, it will always help with efficiency."

Assignments are organized by subject. Homework is completed and turned in via the iPad. Schoolwork is stored on the Google Drive cloud storage system so students can access it and use the files for college applications. With the exception of tests, the school is entirely paperless.

"This made John a better student," Benitez said. "It helps with learning and the programs are very user friendly."

Another application allows students to view videos of lessons by their teachers "which they can view over and over until they learn it," Benitez said.

The iPad texting function is useful for those students who don't usually speak up and participate in class. There are many options for students with learning challenges.

"It would allow us to have more one on one time with our students," said AEF technology and English teacher Jose Marrero. "It's a good tool and would add a beneficial new approach for students having difficulties."

During the AEF presentation, John and Benitez reviewed the programs with about two dozen juniors and seniors and had them perform tasks on the iPads. John was confident in front of the group as he explained the "cool" features of the programs, including a demonstration of how to record video and play it back.

The AEF students worked in teams to accomplish a list of tasks, which included taking a photo and inserting it into the Notability program, typing their names and recording a video.

John and Benitez answered questions, checked their work and rewarded them with lollipops.

"This is your language," Benitez said. "This is your future, so embrace it."

"This made John a better student. It helps with learning and the programs are very user friendly."

— Irene Benitez,
Archbishop McCarthy High

PECS students of the month



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas
 Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School middle school students of the month for March: Alex Armstrong, Karey Gopher, Kai Osceola.



Photo courtesy of Michelle Thomas
 Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School elementary students of the month for March: Peyton Thomas, Jaelle Weimann, Meleah Billie, Walnard Fortner, Melaine Bonilla, Ukiah Billie, Landon French, Oreste Perez, Malakai Garland, Aaryn King, Juanita Billie, Waylon Yates, Jaydence Urbina, Jana Johnson, Lexi Thomas, Wyatt Thornton, Mano Fish, Winnie Gopher, Makya King, Caitlyn Olivarez.



Courtesy photo
 Seminole scholars Nigel Osceola and McKenna Smith, of Tampa, flank Brandon Academy Principal Sondra Cliggitt during an induction ceremony for the students April 5 into the National Elementary Honor Society.

Two Tampa students earn induction into National Elementary Honor Society

STAFF REPORT

Two of the Tribe's youngest Tampa community scholars were inducted into the National Elementary Honor Society (NEHS).

Fifth-grade student Nigel Osceola, who is the grandson of Connie Osceola, and fourth grade student McKenna Smith, who is the daughter of Carol Foret, were bestowed the prestigious and coveted honor April 5 with certificates and applause

during a Brandon Academy school wide assembly.

Led by Principal Sondra Cliggitt, the event was held in front of an audience that consisted of family, friends, fellow students and community dignitaries.

According to Tampa Education Outreach advisor Elizabeth Shelby, NEHS requirements include stellar attendance and a minimum grade point average of 3.5.

Bunnies, baskets make Easter egg-stra special



Beverly Bidney
 Above, the Easter Bunny and a Hollywood Preschool toddler Torin Frank meet up for a fun time March 11 in the ball field at the Hollywood Reservation. The morning Fun Friday event featured springtime activities that included an egg hunt and festive lunch. At right, Isaiah Josh fills a red plastic basket with a fortune in pastel colored Easter eggs. Children, parents and grandparents joined with teachers, siblings and friends for the morning event that delivered loads of happy smiles and springtime treats.



Beverly Bidney
 Above, Hollywood Preschool children dash for candy and toy-filled Easter eggs March 11 during the school's Fun Friday holiday event. At right, Juanita Osceola and her daughter, Candy, 1, dressed in a pretty Easter dress, check out photographs taken during holiday-themed activities that included the Easter egg hunt on the Hollywood ball field.



Ahfachkee students rock the gym with musical showcase

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Pint-sized performers from Ahfachkee School in Big Cypress received wild applause from a packed house March 31 at the first happy (and also hippie) Rock 'n' Roll Ahfachkee Spring Extravaganza.

More than 200 family members and friends filled the Herman L. Osceola

Spectators were invited to wear era-appropriate clothing like leather jackets, bell bottom pants and tie-dye T-shirts.

Harden, a professional jazz, gospel and pop singer and music teacher, began rehearsals for the show at the end of the last semester under strict time constraints. Because children from pre-kindergarten through grade six get only one 30-minute music class per week, Harden picked an already familiar genre.

"Music is something we all share. It's everywhere, and everyone loves classic rock. That's where the theme for the show came from. Some kids knew the words of the songs before we started rehearsals," Harden said after the show.

Lucee Cypress, 8, remembered "Eye of the Tiger" by singing the 1982 hit song for hours at home, she said. Lucee also made sure she memorized the words by writing them in magic marker on her bedroom door, a surprise to her parents Nanette Cypress and Albert Graham.

"She said, 'but I have to be ready for the music extravaganza.' I decided that we have plenty of paint to cover it later," Graham said.

Lucee's brother Herbert Graham, 5, who dressed in red to sing the 1972 pop hit "Rockin' Robin" with his pre-kindergarten class, described his stage experience in one word: "awesome."

Principal Gwendolyn Coverson launched the musical night by welcoming parents, friends and "all stakeholders."

"Sit back, relax and enjoy," she told the crowd.

Harden said participation by elementary and middle school students was mandatory per music course requirements. High school students who chose music class as an elective were obligated to perform.

High school student Eyanna Billie stirred the crowd with a pitch-perfect rendition of "Let it Go" from the Disney movie "Frozen." Elisah Billie followed with the sentimental ballad "Careless Whisper" by George Michaels.

"I can't believe everyone said I was good," Eyanna Billie told Harden during a tight embrace after the show.

Harden said the students all have music ability, but while music can be enjoyed equally with little effort, performing music through song or instruments takes desire, determination and dedication. For high school students, Harden is available for two or three 30-minute classes per week. Because the high school population is small, the time works as if she is a private teacher.

"It's like having a private studio. The kids learn the song on their own; I check on their progress, teach technique of breath support, how to enunciate vowels. One student learned a piano piece all by himself with just a little guidance," Harden said. "It depends on what they want to do. I don't influence their interpretation. My job is to guide their music interpretation and focus on technique."

Children are also exposed to different disciplines such as mathematics and science while they learn music. Reading music involves learning fractions. Singers get wind of biology while learning how to breathe air into their nostrils, through the trachea, into the diaphragm and then releasing the air in reverse.

But when all is said and sung, the result should always be pleasure and joy for the student and the audience, Harden said.

Big Cypress Council Rep. Joe Frank, who wore a tie-dye peace sign T-shirt to the event, gave kudos to the kids. "Job well done," he said.



Eileen Soler

Solomon Cypress, dressed like a 1980s rock star, impresses the audience March 31 during a performance of We Will Rock You at the Ahfachkee spring musical concert.

Gymnasium for the 90-minute showcase that plucked musical hits from the 1960s, 70s and 80s into the spotlight thanks to student singers under the direction of music teacher Ja'Nia Harden.

Starring kids dressed in pop culture costumes drove the audience to clap, stomp and sing along to tunes that included Queen's "We Will Rock You," Elvis Presley's "Hound Dog," and Bobby Day's "Rockin' Robin."

"I don't think the school had a spring concert in 10 years. We wanted to bring it back in a big way and that's just what we did; not only to involve the students but involve the entire community," Harden said.



Eileen Soler

The 1980s are represented in big hair and frilly skirts by Ahfachkee School fourth- and fifth-grade students who rocked the stage with "Moving Out" by Billy Joel. The March 31 showcase, dubbed Ahfachkee Spring Extravaganza, featured hit tunes from the 1960s through the 1980s.



Eileen Soler

Poodle skirts and grease slicked hair made authentic 1960s costumes for a super-charged rendition of Elvis Presley's hit song "Hound Dog" by Ahfachkee School second grade students.



Eileen Soler

Above: Ahfachkee School pre-kindergarten students give a rollicking performance March 31 of "Rockin' Robin" during the Ahfachkee Spring Extravaganza at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium. At right, singing and dancing made for an interesting experience for some pre-kindergartners.



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Students run fast, jump high at PECS track meet

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON – Running, jumping and throwing counted for more than just fun for 210 students at the Pemayetv Emahaky Charter School elementary track meet April 14-15.

Pre-kindergarteners through fifth graders put on their sneakers and competed in softball throw, standing broad jump, hurdles and team relay races ranging from 50 to 800 meters.

The top two finishers in the 9-10 and 11-12 age categories advanced to the Okeechobee County track meet May 6 at Okeechobee High School.

“This is an annual event we have been participating in since the school opened in 2007,” said Pam Matthews, physical education teacher.

The track meet began as the Hershey’s Track and Field Contest. Students who did well went on to compete in Okeechobee County and then the state contest in Miami or Orlando. Winners there could qualify for the Hershey’s Track Meet in Pennsylvania. Although the program was eliminated last year, Okeechobee County Recreation Department continues to host the event as a local track meet.

Families and fellow students cheered from the sidelines. Winners were rewarded with ribbons.



Presslynn Baker, center, gives it her all in the 100 meter race at the PECS elementary track meet April 15.

Beverly Bidney



Beverly Bidney

Jayko Billie represents his team as he races against two other 11-12 year old boys at the start of the relay race at the PECS elementary track meet.



Beverly Bidney

Carris Johns, Lason Baker, Bryce Baker and Chayton Billie proudly show off their ribbons after the PECS elementary track meet.



Beverly Bidney

Lexi Thomas runs to a first place finish in the 200m race at the PECS elementary track meet April 15. Carlee Osceola and Lason Baker took second and third place.



Beverly Bidney

The start of the 9-10 year old boys relay race was fraught with tension as they each vied for the lead at the PECS elementary track meet.



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Leadership gets an early start for Curtis Motlow

BY AARON TOMMIE
Contributing Writer

At only 12-years-old, Curtis Motlow has already begun to demonstrate leadership beyond his years. From volunteering on the Immokalee Reservation to keen interest in the military and success on the judo mats, Curtis is determined to create a bright future.

Curtis made sure he went home with awards home after his first judo tournament. After just two months of training at Real Judo of Naples, Curtis captured a bronze medal in the 12-to-14 age group March 19 at the sixth annual Kodokan Yoichiro Matsumura Championship that featured more than 20 teams at Oasis High School in Cape Coral. "I'm really proud of him," said Curtis' mother Jessica Portalatin. "I'm his biggest supporter."

He won bronze in front of a cheering audience that included Sensei Marc Cohen and Sensei John Paccione, president and

vice-president respectively of the United States Judo Association. Olympians Rhadi Ferguson and Celita Shutz, the latter who was trained by Sensei Yoichiro Matsumura were also in the house. Before the matches began, Matsumura, a judo competitor for more than 70 years, was honored with a promotion to 9th degree black belt.

Curtis started practicing the Asian martial arts seven years ago. He began with karate and taekwondo. In January, he decided to tackle judo and less than three months later earned a yellow belt. His father Larry Motlow was a well-decorated wrestler and a boxer.

In addition to fitness, martial arts also teaches self-respect, builds confidence, and helps people focus.

"It's good. It keeps you in line," Curtis said. "It's a great workout."

Curtis also keeps fit through physical education instruction at New Beginnings Immokalee, an alternative school geared to help struggling students improve academically and socially.

Through a partnership with the Marine Corps League, the school provides students with mentoring in a military-structured environment. As students ascend in the ranks, they earn a chance to go to a non-alternative school. On March 29, Curtis was promoted to corporal.

After school, Curtis attends the Immokalee Reservation's Boys and Girls Club. He prefers reading over playing video games or watching television. In addition to martial arts, he also enjoys football and basketball. Math is his favorite subject and it comes easy to him, he said. At age 7, he began to think about joining the military.

Curtis was recommended to be part of the Seminole Police's mentorship program, which began about 10 years ago to meet children's mentoring needs. Police officers serve as mentors and role models for the children.

The officers sign up to volunteer and Police Chief William Latchford chooses the officer best suited for the child. Mentorships are not bound by time.

The officers usually develop close relationships

with the children's families that last a lifetime. Chief Latchford paired Curtis with Detective Jarret Romanello.

"The mentorship is ongoing. The goal is to have it last forever," Latchford said. "Young people and community members are the future of the Tribe. Having the support of the community members is what helps us be successful."

Detective Romanello, a military veteran, encouraged Curtis to be heavily involved in volunteering. He assisted Curtis with a food drive on the Immokalee Reservation that lasted for two weeks. Boxes were set up throughout the reservation. On March 11, Curtis delivered the boxes to Harry Chapin Food Bank in Fort Myers.

"It's been a very rewarding experience," Romanello said. "We're a good fit. He's a good kid. I'm honored that Chief put me in a position to do this."

To coincide with volunteering, self-discipline was an attribute Romanello, who has children that practice at Real Judo of Naples, wanted Curtis to improve upon. Traditionally, self-discipline is an attribute of martial arts.

For four days each week, Curtis practices judo under the guidance of his coach, Ruperto Arteaga, from Real Judo of Naples. Curtis has used his experience in other martial arts to thrive in judo. He beat seven kids in his first night of practice.

Curtis's leadership experience will continue in June when he will train for CPR certification with the Seminole Fire Rescue Department. Currently he is preparing for the U.S. Open Judo Championships in Fort Lauderdale, a national competition.

The Seminole Police Mentorship Program has been a benefit to Curtis. Romanello has coordinated tours for Curtis that includes Florida Gulf Coast University, Florida SouthWestern State College and a U.S. military career center.

"The earlier Curtis identifies a path he wants to take the quicker he will have a goal to focus," Romanello said. "Kids with goals stay out of trouble."



Eileen Soler

Curtis Motlow, a member of the Immokalee Boys & Girls Club, poses outside of the clubhouse March 31 wearing the military uniform he wears daily at his school New Beginnings Immokalee.



Photo courtesy of Jarret Romanello

Curtis Motlow is presented with a yellow belt March 29 during a promotion ceremony at Real Judo of Naples where he trains in the Japanese martial art.



Photo courtesy of Jarret Romanello

Curtis Motlow, 12, stands March 11 in front of cartons of food he collected in Immokalee for the poor and hungry.



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 - Ft. Pierce: Indian River College Assessment Services
 - Hollywood: FIU Biscayne Bay Campus or Broward College Testing Center
 - Immokalee: FL Southwestern College Testing Services
 - Naples: FL Southwestern College Testing Services
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Sports



Softball standout Cheyenne Nunez signs with Florida Gulf Coast University Eagles

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

BRIGHTON — Dressed in a blue blouse and white pants, Cheyenne Nunez greeted guests at her college signing party looking every bit the part of where she plans to spend the next four years.

Cheyenne wore two of Florida Gulf Coast University's primary colors as the Okeechobee High School multi-sport standout from the Brighton Reservation



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee High School's softball coach Mary Huff, left, and senior shortstop Cheyenne Nunez pose during a signing ceremony party for Cheyenne April 17 at the Brighton gymnasium.

signed a letter of intent April 17 to play NCAA Division I softball for the Fort Myers school. About 50 guests, including family, friends, coaches and teammates, gathered in the Brighton gymnasium amid festive blue and green balloons on a Sunday afternoon.

With her parents Peggy and Daniel Nunez Sr. at her side — both clad in blue FGCU mom and dad T-shirts — Cheyenne signed the paperwork. Behind the 18-year-old infielder was a "Congratulations Cheyenne" banner decked out with the FGCU logo and a softball; in front of her was a throng of well-wishers who formed a half-circle and eagerly snapped photos. Moments later, she was joined behind the table by her older brother Daniel Jr. and sisters Joleyne, 7, and Dalayah, 6, for a family photo.

"My mom is happy because she always wanted me to play softball in college, and my dad is happy because he just wanted me to go to college," Cheyenne said.

Cheyenne has earned 12 varsity letters — a rare accomplishment for high school athletes — as a member of Okeechobee's varsity volleyball, basketball and softball teams for four years. She opted to pursue softball over volleyball in college thanks to a basketball injury. A torn medial collateral ligament in her left knee in early January provided the necessary, albeit painful guidance.

"What really made the decision between the two was when I hurt my knee," Cheyenne said. "In volleyball, I was an outside hitter and I was constantly jumping. I was afraid I could re-tear it. Where in softball, I have to jump and make some plays, but most of the time it's not so much up and down motion; it's forward and backward."

Cheyenne will suit up for an FGCU squad that plays in the Atlantic Sun Conference. FGCU coach David Deiros, who built the program from scratch starting in 2001, is in his 14th season at the helm. He guided the Eagles to the college's first-ever NCAA tournament victory in any Division I sport when the softball squad stunned the University of Florida in the 2012.

The team's slate this season has included games against Central Florida, Michigan State, Notre Dame, Purdue and Utah.

Although she has protected the left side of Okeechobee's infield for four years as a shortstop and third baseman, Cheyenne said it's possible she could begin her college career in another position.



Kevin Johnson

With her parents Daniel Nunez Sr. and Peggy Nunez at her side, Okeechobee High School senior softball player Cheyenne Nunez, of the Brighton Reservation, signs a letter of intent to play for Florida Gulf Coast University during a ceremony April 17 at the Brighton gymnasium.

"I feel like I could see myself playing outfield, but I'm going to work my butt off to be an infielder. They're losing five seniors," she said. "I'm going to try my hardest to get some playing time."

With a reputation as a fiercely competitive leader, Cheyenne serves as a role model to fellow student-athletes from the Tribe.

"We're almost the same age and we're on the same team, but I've always looked up to Shy," said Okeechobee senior softball player Rumor Juarez.

"She's older and I look up to her a little bit more," said Okeechobee sophomore baseball pitcher Sean Osceola, who has aspirations to play Division I college ball. "We talk about sports and everything. She

tells me to try my hardest and work hard, and hopefully I'll get recognized like she does."

Okeechobee softball coach and Tribal citizen Mary Huff emceed the ceremony. Similar to Cheyenne, Huff starred at Okeechobee before she embarked on a collegiate softball career that included a stint of Division I ball with the University of Central Florida. Huff has always figured Cheyenne would thrive in sports.

"From the moment that she stepped on any field or court, I knew she was going to be somebody who would do big things in the world, and make not only her peers proud, but her parents and also the Tribe," said Huff, whose first Division I signing as a coach came two years ago when Carissa LiCata

signed with FGCU.

Some of Cheyenne's former coaches and teachers addressed the audience during the ceremony.

"She has the 'it' factor," said Okeechobee basketball coach Joe Smith. "It cannot be coached; it cannot be taught. There's something inside the individual player that when the game is on the line, they want the ball."

Norman "Skeeter" Bowers provided congratulations on behalf of Chairman James E. Billie. Bowers praised Cheyenne for her success on the field and in the classroom.

♦ See NUNEZ on page 2C

Successful senior night for Tribe's Okeechobee High softball players

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

OKEECHOBEE — Okeechobee High School softball players Cheyenne Nunez and Rumor Juarez made sure their senior night game would be one to remember. After being honored on the field during pregame ceremonies with their families April 7, both players from the Tribe notched two hits to lead the Brahmans past Glades Day, 10-0. It was the final regular season home game for Okeechobee, which is coached by the Tribe's Mary Huff.

"Both of them are great kids," said Huff, who has known the girls since they were just starting softball in 8 and under leagues. "They're definitely role models for younger kids in the Tribe."

Individually, Cheyenne, Rumor and the team's other seniors stood with their families in the pitcher's circle while showered with

gifts and hugs from teary-eyed teammates and coaches.

"I was emotional all day," said Rumor, who plans to attend Florida International University in Miami.

On their way to the circle, Cheyenne and her family crossed over third base, site of a fond memory for Cheyenne that came in a district championship game during her freshman season.

Late in the game, Okeechobee was clinging to a tight lead against South Fork, which had a runner at first. A hard hit line drive came Cheyenne's way at third.

"A girl drove the ball down my throat. I caught it somehow. I remember (first baseman) Sarah Davis running back to first base and everyone yelling 'throw it,'" Cheyenne recalled.

Cheyenne fired the ball to Davis for a double play that helped seal the championship victory.

Fast forward to a senior year that hasn't been void of obstacles for Cheyenne, who had to battle back from a serious leg injury that the three-sport star suffered during an Okeechobee basketball game against Martin County.

"The game was intense," Cheyenne recalled. "I got a fast break. We were winning by five. It was the fourth quarter. This girl, I think she was 6-foot, she was a big girl, and she was very mad because I took the ball from her. I was going for a layup, and she just literally fell on top of me. It was an intentional foul. When I landed, my knee twisted. I thought it popped. It hurt so bad."

Despite the mishap, Cheyenne's competitive nature didn't skip a beat and she kept playing that night, but paid the price the next morning. She couldn't walk or even get out of bed. A trip to the doctor confirmed that the injury was a torn medial collateral ligament which required surgery and time



Kevin Johnson

Rumor Nunez is joined by her family during senior night ceremonies for the Okeechobee High School softball team April 7.

away from the softball field.

Upon her recovery and return, Cheyenne picked up where she left off last season as one of the team's top hitters. Highlights in her final year included four RBIs against Martin County, a 3-for-4 night with three RBIs against Vero Beach and two RBIs and a stolen base in an 8-5 district semifinal win against Jensen Beach that earned Okeechobee a spot in the regional tournament.

The Brahmans fell to South Fork in the district title game and their season ended April 20 with a 9-6 loss to Dwyer in a regional quarterfinal.

As for the senior night game against Glades Day, Cheyenne used her strong vocal cords to pump up her teammates in a huddle before taking her regular spot at shortstop.

"She's a great teammate and a great leader," Huff said.

Rumor, who worked her way up to the varsity squad last season after two years on JV, started in right field.

In the second inning, both Rumor and Cheyenne ended up on base at the same time. Rumor drilled a two-run double into left-center that gave Okeechobee a 5-0 lead. One batter later, Cheyenne, from the No. 2 spot, delivered a single. Both players scored on an error as the Brahmans cruised to a comfortable win.

Rumor finished with three RBIs to cap a season that was filled with more success in

"They're definitely role models for younger kids in the Tribe."

— Mary Huff,
Okeechobee High School
softball coach

the batter's box than in previous years.

"I think I've made really good improvements," she said. "I've had the same problem with my hitting for four years, but this year I felt I've grown a lot. It's better this year than in the past because my coaches have worked with me a lot and I finally found out my problem; I finally understood. I was using too much of my arms and not enough of my hips."

Next season Okeechobee will have to get used to not having Cheyenne, a starter for the past three-plus years, and Rumor in the lineup.

"I can't ask anything more of those two," Huff said. "They're definitely giving me big shoes to fill."

♦ See SENIOR PHOTOS on page 2C



Kevin Johnson

Cheyenne Nunez and her family enjoy senior night ceremonies for the Okeechobee High School softball team April 7.

PECS baseball concludes season

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

BRIGHTON — After coach Preston Baker talked to the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School baseball team in right field after its final game, players removed their jerseys and piled them into his hands. For nearly the entire team, it was the last time wearing the white jerseys with "Seminoles" splashed across the front.

The team said goodbye to seven players April 6 during its annual eighth-grade parent night ceremony prior to facing Clewiston High School's junior varsity. One-by-one, eighth-graders Alex Armstrong, Kaleb Doctor, Tavis Jumper, Silas Madrigal, Kamani Smith, Dante Thomas and Alex Valdes were honored while accompanied to home plate by family members. Baker handed each player a small bouquet of red and yellow roses.

Some of the eighth-graders' aspirations include attending the University of Miami (Tavis) and the University of Florida (Alex), playing football for Baylor University and then going into the U.S. Air Force (Alex) and playing high school ball for Okeechobee (Silas) and Moore Haven (Kaleb).

No matter what the future holds, Baker said the team generated plenty of memories this season.

"The guys played good together. They learned a lot just by coming out and playing," he said. "They learned that this game is hard. We struggled, but we had some good times."

No better time was enjoyed than the team's lone victory, an 11-6 triumph against Moore Haven High School's junior varsity. The potential that Baker saw in the offense all season came to fruition in that game.

"We saw a lot of improvement with our bats," he said.

PECS finished with a 1-5 record, which included a lopsided loss to Clewiston in the season finale. Tanner Shore delivered one of the Seminoles' final highlights when the smooth-swinging lefty belted a hit to the opposite field.

"Every time Tanner comes to the plate, he swings the bat. I love the way he swings the bat," Baker said.

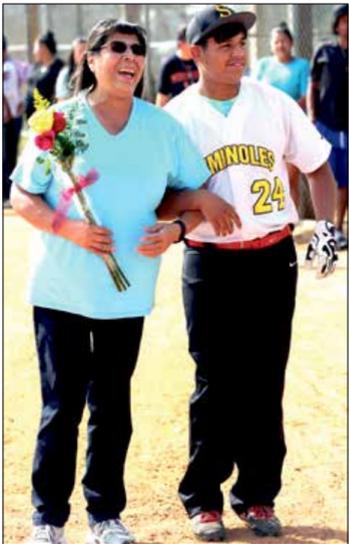
Defensively, Baker said he saw improvement during the season. Plenty of jobs will be open in the infield next season since Kamani (first base), Kaleb (second base) and Silas (third base and pitcher) will move on to high school. Holes will have to be filled in the infield and elsewhere.

"It will be a whole new team next year," Baker said.



Kevin Johnson

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's Ramone Baker races back to first during a rundown in the team's final game of the season April 6 in Brighton.



Kevin Johnson

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's Tavis Jumper escorts his mother Joyce Piz during the team's 8th grade parent night ceremony April 6 in Brighton.

Baker's power, Cypress' speed lift Keiser University softball

Brighton players settle into first season in West Palm Beach

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

WEST PALM BEACH — Jaryaca Baker brings the thunder; Darlah Cypress provides the lightning. Together, the two players from the Brighton Reservation have settled into their first seasons on the Keiser University softball team.

"They've done a great job at it," Keiser coach Chelsea Nowell said.

Keiser's season wrapped up April 24. Baker, a power-hitting catcher, finished among the team leaders in several offensive categories, including a tie for most home runs with five. Her .531 slugging percentage was second on the squad and she was third in RBIs with 15. Cypress — described by her coach as the team's fastest player — was third on the squad in steals with three in limited playing time as a rookie.

Less than a year ago, the possibility of Baker and Cypress playing college softball anywhere, let alone the same team, seemed remote. After playing for two other colleges, Baker had taken a year off. Meanwhile, Cypress concluded a stellar high school career in which she helped Moore Haven reach the state's final four twice, but she was uncertain about continuing her education. Eventually, their desire to keep playing softball helped point them 90 miles east of Brighton to Keiser, which took over the West Palm Beach campus from Northwood University in 2015.

"I wasn't too sure even about going to college, but I wanted to keep playing softball and I wanted to get into psychology," Cypress said during a break between games of a doubleheader against Ave Maria University on April 1.

Baker, who has shared catcher duties and played first base, and Cypress, who has played left and right field, said they're glad they both landed at Keiser.

"It's different from the (junior college) I was at, but I like it," Baker said.

"I don't know what I'd be doing if I wasn't still playing softball," Cypress said.

Baker, a 21-year-old sophomore, arrived at Keiser with college softball experience on her resume. The former Okeechobee High School slugger, who hit 12 home runs in her senior season in 2013, previously played for a junior colleges in Oklahoma and Florida.

Baker made an immediate impact on the team by slamming a 3-run home run in the team's second exhibition game of the season. When the regular season started in early February, Baker looked right at home with her new team by driving in five runs in her first two games. She continued to deliver the long ball with home runs against Indiana Southeast, Middle Georgia, Cleary, Grandview and St. Thomas.

Belting the ball out of parks isn't Baker's main objective; she said she strives just to get on base regardless of where the ball goes.

That's why she's as proud of her on-base percentage (.393) as she is of her home run total.

"I feel like I've always been a stronger hitter, but I've matured a little bit more," said Baker, who hit safely in eight of 11 games during a stretch from mid-March to mid-April and finished with a .308 batting average.

Behind the plate, Baker could be in line for more playing time next season.

"I can see Jaryaca catching a lot more. We have a senior catcher this year, so our senior catcher sees a lot behind the plate," Nowell said.

Cypress, one of four freshmen, hasn't seen nearly the same amount of playing time as Baker, but has made an impact when opportunities come about. She had two-hit games against Cleary, St. Thomas and Ave Maria and finished with a .308 batting average in 26 trips.

"I get on base and do what I can and make plays as much as I can," she said. "I'm doing my best. I just have to keep working hard."

On April 7, Baker and Cypress delivered two hits apiece to help Keiser edge St.



Kevin Johnson

Darlah Cypress lays down a bunt during the first game of a doubleheader April 7 against Ave Maria University.



At left, Keiser University softball players Darlah Cypress, left, and Jaryaca Baker take a break in between games of a doubleheader April 1 against Ave Maria University. At right, Baker handles catcher duties in the first game of a doubleheader April 1 against Ave Maria University.



Kevin Johnson

Thomas, 4-3, in Miami Gardens. Baker scored a run and Cypress stole a base.

Keiser started the season by winning six of its first 10 games, but struggled during stretches and finished with a 15-25 mark.

The Seahawks belong to the National

Association of Intercollegiate Athletics and play in the eight-team Sun Conference with schools from Florida, Georgia and South Carolina.

"It's really competitive," Baker said while her family's mammoth Great Dane,

Jax, drew plenty of attention from spectators at the Ave Maria game. "It's a lot different. It's more fast-paced. (Junior college) was kind of like high school still, you're just adjusting. I feel the NAIA is closer to the NCAA."



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee High School senior softball player Cheyenne Nunez cuts her cake after she signed with Florida Gulf Coast University on April 17 at the Brighton gymnasium.

◆ CHEYENNE NUNEZ From page 1C

"She not only excels in sports, but she excels in school, too," Bowers told the audience. "That's very important."

Cheyenne said she was thrilled with the outpouring of support she received at the ceremony as well as the response to a recent feature about her in Okeechobee The Magazine.

"So many people were calling and congratulating me. [I heard] from (Brighton Councilman) Andrew Bowers and

(Brighton Board Rep.) Larry Howard," she said. "Oh my gosh, I know a lot of people knew, but I didn't think all these people would take time out of their day to call me and wish me good luck. It makes me feel so good that my hard work is actually going toward something, and people are proud that I'm going somewhere after high school."

After she sliced into a celebration cake made by her aunt Deanna Nunez, Cheyenne handed out pieces and looked to her future at FGCU.

"I'm very excited. I'm anxious," she said. "I'm ready to go."

◆ SENIOR PHOTOS From page 1C



Above left, Okeechobee High School senior Cheyenne Nunez fires up her teammates before facing Glades Day on senior night April 7 at Okeechobee High School. Above right, Rumor Juarez gets ready to blast a two-run double in the Brahman's 10-0 win. Okeechobee went on to finish runner-up in its district playoffs. The season ended with a 9-6 loss to Dwyer in the Class 7A regional quarterfinals.



Kevin Johnson

Seminole teams soar at NAYO basketball tournament

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

CHOCTAW, Miss. — No Seminole teams shined brighter at the Native American Youth Organization basketball tournament than the girls' Native Elite and Native Hoops.

In a division that featured 20 teams, Native Elite made it all the way to the championship game in the 12-14 age group. They finished runner-up. Meanwhile, the older Seminole girls overcame plenty of adversity to produce an inspirational run as Native Elite earned third place in the 15-17 division out of 17 teams.

A strong turnout of more than 70 teams, including 50 from the host Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, filled four gymnasiums March 24-26 for the double-elimination tournament. Girls games were played on MBCI's reservation in Choctaw; the boys played about 20 miles away in Carthage.

Native Elite used physical defense under the boards and balanced scoring to win five games, but ran into MBCI's powerful and undefeated Rainmakers that dealt the Seminole squad its only two losses, including 40-26 in the championship at Choctaw Central High School.

The runner-ups included Alexis Foreman, Charli Frye, Amarys Huggins,

Buddha Jumper, Madelyn Osceola, Talia Rodriquez, Alena Stockton, December Stubbs and Tiana Stubbs.

Making it the farthest of any Seminole team in the tournament made the 15-hour drive back home a little more relaxing.

"It means a lot to the team," said Native Elite coach Ashley Wilcox, who was assisted by Charlie Frye. "We traveled a long way. They played hard. They played against the refs and the (other) team."

In the 15-17 division, Native Hoops had a wild journey on its way to third place. They accumulated plenty of memories along the way, including playing with just six players in its first game because a snow storm delayed the arrival of forward Audrey Whitegrass, and finishing the tournament again with a half-dozen because of an ejection to high-scoring point guard Shae Pierce. In between, there were injuries, an overtime, an impressive stretch of six straight wins in the losers bracket and a serene final minute to a game that was interrupted when officials cleared the gym of spectators.

Native Hoops' losers bracket game against Smokin' Hot, from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, was already at a fervent pitch thanks to what was at stake: winner advances, loser goes home. The intensity meter increased a few notches early in the second half when Shae, who scored 22



Kevin Johnson

Tiana Stubbs, center, wins a tip ball for the Seminole's Native Elite squad during the NAYO girls tournament March 26 in Choctaw, Miss.

points in a victory earlier in the day, and an opponent dove for a loose ball. The officials apparently didn't like Shae's slight shove in the battle and ejected her for the remainder of the game and the following game.

"That was a huge loss for us," Native Hoops forward Skyla Osceola said. "She really helps me out, taking care of the ball and making passes. I know we all had to step up, and we all stepped up together because we wanted to win."

Native Hoops led by five points at the time of the incident, but was forced to play the final 17 minutes without their point guard.

Despite the adversity, Native Hoops didn't wilt. Saige Osceola drained a 3-pointer for a 28-22 lead. Audrey had a block and converted a put back and short jumper to help maintain a small lead, but Smokin Hot rallied to go in front by one. Just after a basket by Skyla put Native Hoops ahead 35-34 with 1:10 left, things turned ugly in the bleachers. After officials ejected one spectator, a few others became involved in shouting matches.



Kevin Johnson

Jaylen Baker goes airborne for the Tribesmen during a 12-14 NAYO boys game March 25 in Carthage, Miss. Looking on are Native Runners' and Daewon Huggins (21) and Tribesmen Alyke Baker (31) and Dakoya Nunez (43).

When one fan shoved another, officials decided they had seen enough and emptied the gymnasium of all 300 or so fans. Only the players, coaches and personnel remained, which meant the final 60 seconds was played in near silence.

Fans or no fans, it didn't matter to Native Hoops. Saige forced a turnover on a baseline inbound pass and Sydnee Cypress made a steal with 13 seconds left. Skyla grabbed a rebound at one end and hit two free throws at the other to preserve the entertaining 38-34 win.

More drama followed Native Hoops in its next game, but they were eliminated by Lady Ballerz, 40-38, in overtime. In

the second half, Skyla and Audrey were helped off the court by Seminole Fire and Rescue personnel, but both showed plenty of determination by returning to action. A steal by Saige and a layup by Lahna Baker tied the game with 70 seconds left, but Lady Ballerz made late free throws to advance.

Although she could barely walk at one point, Skyla epitomized the spirit of the squad as she continued to grab rebounds and be a force at both ends in the second half.

"Skyla was incredible; all the ladies were incredible," said Native Hoops coach Andrew Jordan Bowers. "I know they were

◆ See SEMINOLES on page 5C



Kevin Johnson

Native Elite celebrates a victory on its journey to finishing in second place in the girls 12-14 division at the NAYO girls tournament March 25 in Choctaw, Miss.

Teams receive helping hand from beyond their Tribe

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

CHOCTAW, Miss. — It didn't bother Isaiah Chickaway that he didn't yet know the names of his new teammates on the Lost Tribe team. After all, Isaiah had only been with the Seminole team for less than 24 hours when they gathered outside the Red Water Gymnasium in Carthage, Mississippi for a postgame chat after their first victory.

"I don't really know their names, but

basketball is like a worldwide sport," said Isaiah, from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, which hosted the annual tournament for ages 12-18. "They don't care who you play with; it's how you play with them. Even though you don't know them, when they're on your team, you're all a family."

Beyond the wins and losses and marathon slate of games, the NAYO basketball tournament often unites players from different Tribes and with common goals.

After Lost Tribe dropped its opening game, Isaiah teamed up with 6-foot-5 Isaac Osceola to rule the boards as the Lost Tribe

rolled to a victory. They didn't know each other, but they clicked on the court.

"I depended on him and (Isaac) depended on me," Isaiah said.

"I think we had good chemistry," said Isaac, who used to live in Brighton and now lives in Orlando.

The victory in their second game allowed the Lost Tribe, which was organized by Donovan Osceola, to breathe a sigh of relief because the last thing any of them wanted — or any team at NAYO — was to be eliminated after just two games.

"We had better chemistry, better ball movement and we took good shots," said Donovan, who helped his high school team — Everglades City — win a district championship this season.

Sometimes players face teams from their own Tribe, which is what Yo Osceola encountered when he joined MBCI's Running Rebels. On the second night, the Running Rebels squared off against the Seminole Warriors.

"It was good. I always play them when I go to the reservations. Most of them are from Hollywood and Big Cypress," said Yo, who recently completed his senior season on the Moore Haven High School basketball team. "I just wanted to play, and my dad is from Mississippi."

Yo and the Running Rebels raced past the Warriors, 63-33.

Although Yo didn't know his Mississippi teammates, there was a Seminole connection at the helm of the team: Ivan Billie, who used to live in Hollywood and now lives near the Pearl River reservation.

"I saw a lot of familiar faces, like I was home," Billie said.

When Yo was looking for a team to join,



Kevin Johnson

Above, Shae Pierce, left, of Brighton, and Audrey Whitegrass, of Nebraska and Montana, double team an opponent during the NAYO girls basketball tournament March 26 in Choctaw, Miss. At left, Yo Osceola, of Brighton, takes a jump shot for a Mississippi team while playing against the Seminole Warriors in Carthage, Miss.

Billie gladly accommodated him.

"Anything to help a fellow tribal member out," said Billie, whose son, Ivan Billie Jr., played on the team.

Players helping other Tribe teams extended to the girls side, too, as did the determination just to get to Mississippi that went above and beyond the call in the situation of Audrey Whitegrass, from the Black Feet and Winnebago Tribes. A snow storm in the upper Midwest elongated an already long trip for Audrey, who grew up in Nebraska and played her senior season this winter in Mon-

tana. Thanks to the late blast of winter, it took Audrey and her family 36 hours to drive to Mississippi.

"We hit a snowstorm coming through. We were stuck on the freeway for like six hours coming from South Dakota into Iowa," said Audrey's father, William Whitegrass Jr.

The weather forced Audrey to miss the Seminole's Native Hoops first game, but her extra effort to get to the tournament paid off. She arrived in time to help the squad tear through the losers bracket on its way to third place.



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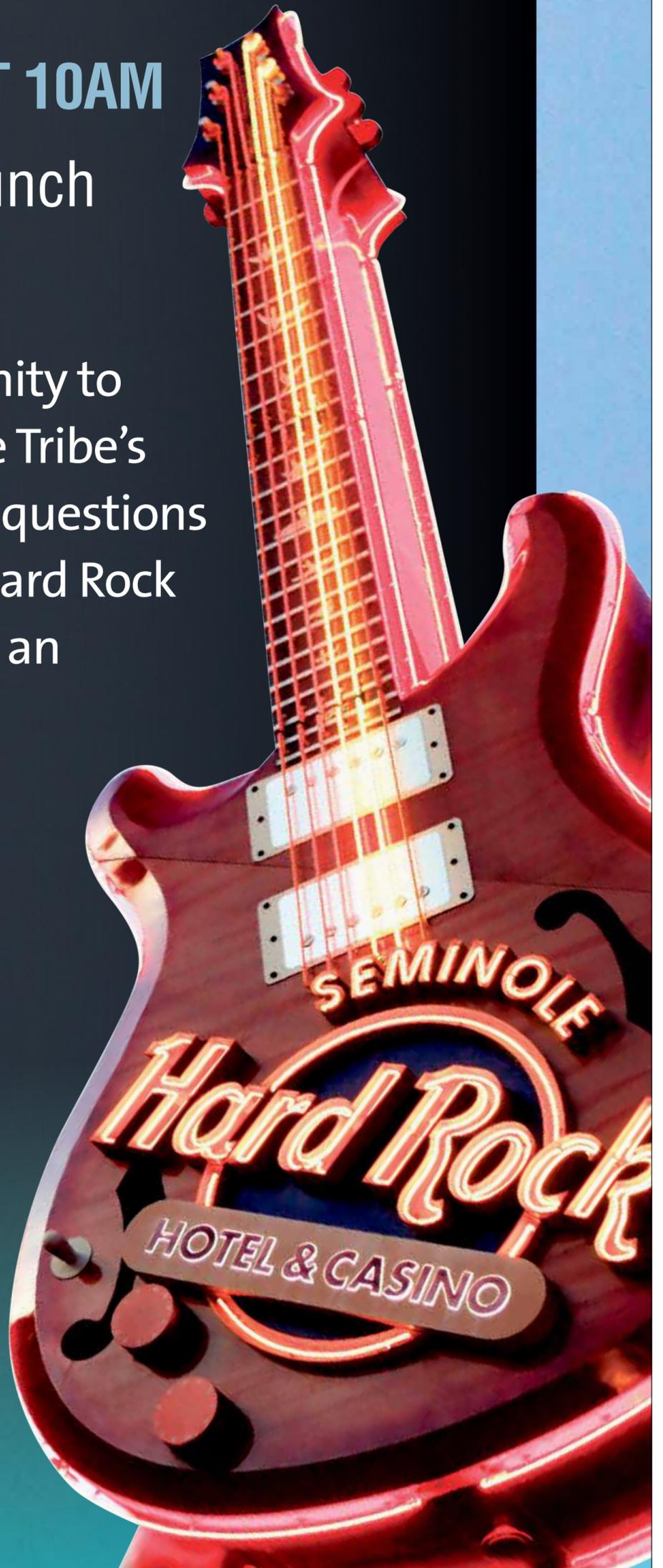




Photo courtesy Recreation Department

Youngsters gather for a photo during a Florida Gulf Coast University volleyball clinic April 9 at the Brighton gymnasium.

FGCU volleyball provides tips to Brighton youngsters

STAFF REPORT

BRIGHTON — Youth volleyball's popularity on the Brighton Reservation isn't hard to miss. The Recreation Department has club teams ranging from the 10 and under age division to 14 and under. Pemayetv Emahavk Charter School features girls and boys teams.

Staff from the Florida Gulf Coast University women's volleyball team in Fort Myers received a taste of the sport's prominence in Brighton on April 9 when they conducted a clinic for about 40 girls at

the Brighton gymnasium.

"We had a big turnout. There's a lot of girls who play volleyball here," said Brighton Recreation site manager Dallas Nunez.

FGCU volleyball offered a similar clinic on the Big Cypress Reservation last spring, but this was the program's first trip to Brighton.

"For them to come out here for the first time and to have such a big (turnout) was a good thing," Nunez said. "The girls enjoyed it."

SEMINOLES From page 3C

out of gas, but they were putting their heart out there on the line. I was very proud of them. They definitely persevered through some adversity the whole time."

Skyla's strong performance came as she is rebounding from a torn ACL that forced her to miss her junior season at American Heritage School in Plantation.

"I'm just getting back into it, but it feels great," Skyla said.

The 15-17 division was captured by MBCI's Team Tenacity, which featured Dalmericka King, a Seminole who earned several honors — including Big Smoky Mountain Conference Player of the Year — as a junior this season at Cherokee High School in North Carolina.

On the boys side, Seminoles met Seminoles in a 12-14 losers bracket game. Tribesmen, coached by Preston Baker, faced off against Native Runners, coached by Kenny Tommie.

When Cedric Martin hit a 3-pointer, the Native Runners trailed only 34-29, but the Tribesmen seized command the rest of the way and went on a stunning 26-0 spurt led by guard Silas Madrigal, who was unstoppable as he scored 11 consecutive points during the stretch. He finished with a game-high 20 points followed by Alyke Baker with 13. Robert Harris and Kamani Smith were dominant forces on the boards, and Jaylen Baker proved to be elusive in the lane as he

made several layups. Todd Pierce's crisp shooting also proved to be tough to defend throughout the tournament.

Native Runners started the tournament with a loss, but bounced back with a win against MBCI's Minions behind a bevy of 3-pointers from Cedric, Krishawn Henry, Daewon Huggins and Ezekiel Tiger.

"A lot of improvement, a lot of playing together, a lot of defense, staying with the game plan, and passing the ball better," Tommie said.

In the 15-17 division, Lost Tribe received 13 points from Isaac Osceola and 12 points from Chase Osceola in a win against an Iroquois squad.

Alonzo Wargolet had the hot hand early with a bunch of 3-pointers in the Seminole Warriors' loss to MBCI's Running Rebels.

2016 NAYO Basketball Tournament Winners

12-14 Girls

1. Rainmakers - Choctaw
2. Native Elite - Seminoles
3. Nation 1 - Choctaw

12-14 Boys

1. Crazy Nation - Cherokee
2. Hawks - Choctaw
3. Hurricanes - Choctaw

15-17 Girls

1. Team Tenacity- Choctaw
2. Lady Ballerz - Choctaw
3. Native Hoops - Seminoles

15-17 Boys

1. Angry Ducks - Choctaw
2. Seneca Chiefs - IAC
3. Braves - Cherokee



Kevin Johnson

Tribesmen center Kamani Smith grabs a rebound against Native Runners' Ezekiel Tiger (22) and Cedric Martin (3) during a 12-14 NAYO boys game March 25 in Carthage, Miss.

Spring practice wraps up for FSU's Justin Motlow

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

ORLANDO —Florida State brought more than just its football team to Orlando. The Seminole faithful, announced at 49,913, came to Mickey's neighborhood April 9 for a glimpse of the 2016 edition.

FSU's spring game was held in the Citrus Bowl because of renovations being done to Doak Campbell Stadium in Tallahassee.

Seminole Tribe of Florida citizen and FSU Seminole Justin Motlow wore No. 86 for the Gold team, which faced their teammates on the Garnet team.

Several former Seminole players watched from the sidelines, including Jameis Winston and Nick O'Leary from the 2013 national championship squad. The game, which finished in a 24-24 tie, signaled the culmination of the spring practice season.

Motlow, a redshirt sophomore who will be entering his third season on the team this fall, said no matter where he is on or off the field, being a representative of the Tribe carries great significance.

"I love representing the Tribe; I always will, no matter what I do, not just football, but everything in life. It's a true honor," he said after the game.

FSU coach Jimbo Fisher opted to play a lot of starters and second stringers for a majority of the game, including in the waning moments when the teams traded touchdowns before Ricky Aguayo's 46-yard field goal ended the scrimmage in a deadlock.

Motlow was one of 15 wide receivers listed on the rosters. His playing time was sparse. He lined up as a kick returner once, but the ball was kicked to the other returner. He also saw action on the kicking team for three other kickoffs.

"I was on kickoff today and I'm hoping that's something I can work my way onto during the fall," he said.

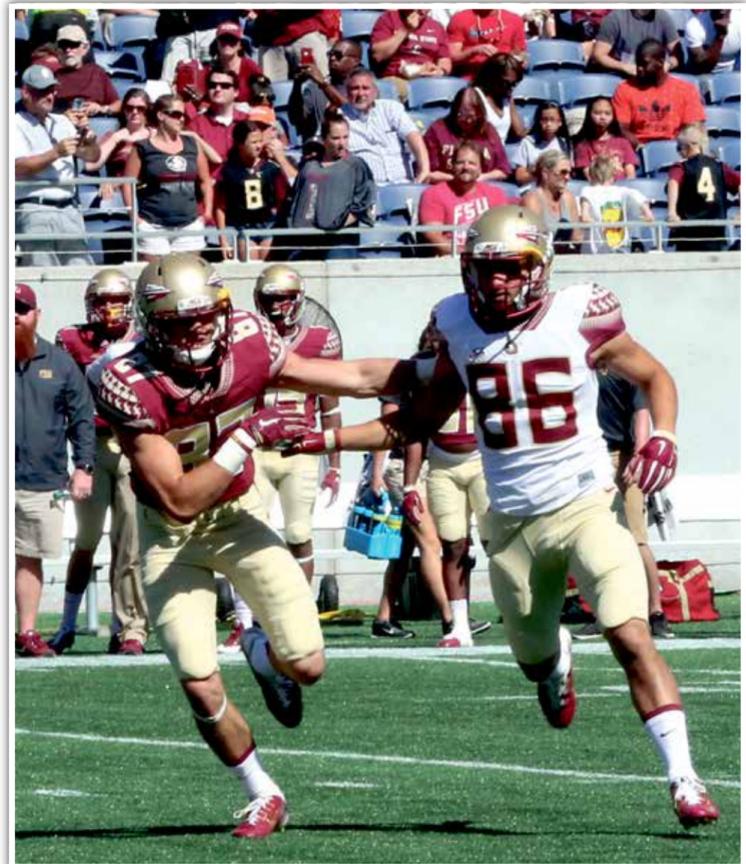
The former Tampa Catholic standout played one series at wide receiver in the fourth quarter, but it was a quick three-and-out with three pass attempts that never came in his direction.

Overall, Motlow, who briefly played in two games last year, said spring practice was full of improvement. He believes he is "closer than I was a year ago" to seeing more playing time.

"I grew as a player. I've learned the playbook a lot better," he said. "I just felt like I definitely improved my game a lot and I'm excited to see what the future holds."

FSU is coming off a 10-3 season. The team is ranked in the top five in some early polls for the upcoming season.

FSU will return to the Citrus Bowl for its season opener Sept. 5 against Ole Miss on a Monday night. The game is one of three the Seminoles will play away from Tallahassee, but in Florida. They will visit the University of South Florida in Tampa on Sept. 24 and play at Miami Oct. 8.



Kevin Johnson

An announced crowd of more than 49,000 watch the Florida State Seminoles, including Justin Motlow (86), in the team's spring game April 9 at the Citrus Bowl in Orlando.



Kevin Johnson

Florida State's Justin Motlow, center, chats with teammates Jared Jackson, left, and N'Namdi Green following the team's spring game April 9 in Orlando. FSU will be back in the Citrus Bowl for its season opener Sept. 5 against Ole Miss.

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Announcements



From an occasional series of poetry, prose, short stories and other creative musings by Seminole Tribe citizen and artist Elgin Jumper

The Storytellers

BY ELGIN JUMPER

Before The Story

It's Springtime. Scents of light rain and fresh-cut lawns. Tourists, children, and teachers in yellow school buses had turned out earlier in large groups. Now with the afternoon rolling along the village has dialed down somewhat. Me and some other kids are getting ready to enjoy sodas and potato chips from our tip money. The Old Storyteller puts his flashy Seminole jacket away. He then turns to us.

"Now who wants to hear a story," he asks.

"Me!" we shout in unison, some of us raising our hands. "Me! Me!" I hold my story notebook and pencil close to me.

"It's a new story," he says. "Something different."

"Yay!" we cry, "Whoo-hoo!"

He stands still and makes eye-contact with each of us, a serious look, too.

"It's about an alligator wrestler," he begins, "a Hero."

We crunch chips and sip sodas and hang on his every word and movement.

"Imagine it," he says.

And then, as I've done many times before, I begin to take notes.

A small mixed-breed dog joins the audience, as if not wanting to miss the show.

"Is it true," I ask.

He smiles. "As true as I can make it," he says. "You know, Otter, you're coming along just fine as a storyteller. You really have something there."

I hold my story notebook closer.

"You mean it?"

"Yes," he says, "keep up the good work, we need more Seminole storytellers like you."

I look to the other kids, shrug, and smile. The other kids are glad of it, paying closer attention to us.

"When you pitch in like that, people see, doors open. You'll see," the Old Storyteller explains.

I watch him, thinking of stories.

He clears his throat. He takes a beat or two before he speaks.

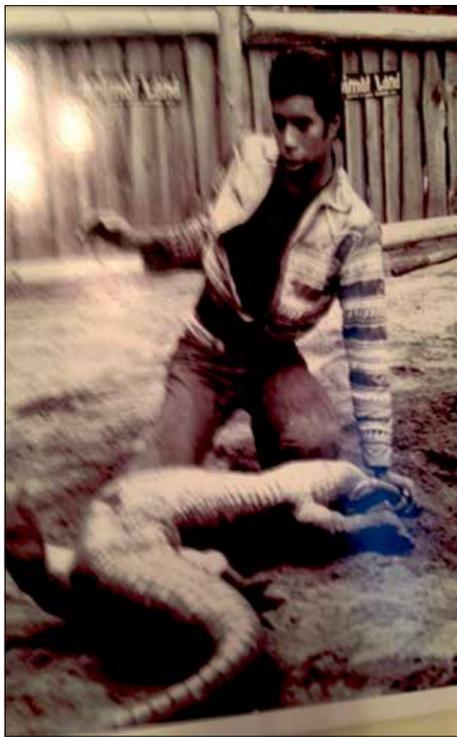
"Okay," he says, "listen up, this is how the story goes."

The Story

The alligator wrestler approached the gate leading to a deep pool with alligators at the bottom. A long chicken hut encircled the alligator wrestling show area. A PA system had earlier announced it was showtime. Tourists began to gather. One lady stood too close to the gate.

"Please, ma'am, if you'll just take a few steps back," the alligator wrestler warned. "Dangerous, these alligators."

The lady recognized her peril and abruptly moved to a safer distance.



The alligator wrestler, in blue-jeans and no shirt, stepped inside the enclosed pool area, locking the gate securely behind him. He wet his arms and hands. The smell of dark water. Smartphones documented the scene in photo and video. A tour guide gave helpful information concerning the show. The alligator wrestler was a natural showman. You could see it. He knew hard work and the treasure of tips after a good show. He had theatre and drama in his movements, this one.

He knew performance. He would go out of his way and go the extra mile, as it were, notwithstanding personal sadness or despair, for as you know, the show must go on.

He recalled mentors in momentary glimpses. Flashes of memory. He remembered those who'd gone before him into danger, those who'd taught him and helped him along his way. He paused and peered into the dark waters, as if at the start of great quest. Perhaps, he thought to himself, perhaps I can locate the Mansions of Atlantis in there. He was definitely ready to find out.

He paused for dramatic purposes in front of the audience and for photo and video ops. He looked through them, beyond them. He shaded his eyes from the sun's rays as he did so. He carried a cypress pole like a staff.

He turned suddenly to the dark pool and let the pole drop. And then back to a fascinated audience.

"This is life," he said, speaking loud enough for all to hear. "Come, let us live it."

There is noise. There is no noise. It was like slow-motion at times, surreal, but deep, poignant. There were great cheers from the audience.

At once, he dove into the dark waters, past the ripples and billows and swells, past the threshold and on into the perils of the adventure.

The alligator wrestler descended then to the lair of the modern-day dragon's realm. He managed to grab tight hold of a thrashing beast. He pulled it to the shallows to more cheers and applause as well as more smartphone camera work. Holding the frightening jaws tight, he re-emerged from the pool, holding the alligator aloft in front of him.

He carried the beast to a grassy performance area as the tour guide narrated the show like a Greek Chorus. The tour guide urged the audience to be diligent and to hold their cameras at the ready.

The alligator wrestler then opened up powerful dragon jaws and held them wide for the audience to document the drama of dragon battle. Next he bull-dogged the alligator, holding the jaws shut with his chin and upper chest.

There was a definite confrontation and conflict in the event. A clear showdown.

Next he rolled and flipped the alligator onto its back, stunning it for a moment. Yet soon the alligator regained its bearings, its jaws ever-wide and lethal, and righted itself. The alligator wrestler brandished the cypress pole and urged the beast back into the deep dark pool. He bowed, savoring the moment, a grand showman, a master of two realms.

The audience showed their approval with a resounding cheer and applause. They bestowed upon him a worthy reward of tips.

"Oh! My Hero!" a lady cried out.

After The Story

"Yay!" we shout. "Whoo-hoo-hoo!"

He never fails to inspire me. We watch him, always learning.

"Glad you like it, Otter," the Old Storyteller says.

"I do, sir," I say. The others nod delighted endorsements as well. We discard empty soda cans and potato chip bags. I make sure I have my writing materials.

"Well, kids, I'm glad you all like it, how about that?" the Old Storyteller says. He takes a sip of bottled water.

"We all sat still and quiet, no one said a word," I say. "No one moved or anything. Not even the dog. And I took notes."

"I saw that."

"I want to get better."

The Old Storyteller smiles. I see worlds of light and joy in his eyes.

"Yes!" he exclaims, raising his arms. "Yes!"

I'm elated! He has given me wings with which to fly. I'm not the same anymore. I become misty-eyed.

"Yes . . .," I say softly. "Yes . . ."



LeAnna Billie

LeAnna Billie - worldwide sponsorship

SUBMITTED BY HOLLY BILLIE

LeAnna Billie is very proud of the numerous sponsorships that currently support her interest in rodeo. In addition to several sponsors within the United States, she is blessed with sponsorships from Australia, Canada, Ireland and Sweden.

LeAnna was raised on the Big Cypress Reservation where her love for horses grew. As a young teenager, LeAnna became active with Brighton Reservation 4-H and Seminole Youth Rodeo. In 2015, LeAnna received the All-Around Cowgirl award for the sixth time.

Marina Tigertail earns MBA from Phoenix University

SUBMITTED BY HOLLY BILLIE

The Seminole community is very proud of Big Cypress resident Marina (Renee) Tigertail. Renee recently received her Master's in Business Administration (MBA) degree from Phoenix University, obtaining straight A's.

Renee is continuing her studies in Nursing Administration. Prior to working on

this degree, Renee received a Bachelor of Science of degree from the University of Miami.

Renee is a registered nurse and the supervisor at the Big Cypress Health Clinic. Renee has enjoyed returning to the reservation where she was raised, working with and providing services to Tribal citizens she has known and loved her whole life.



Marina Tigertail

Classified ad

Wanted to buy: collector who appreciates the art and culture of the Seminole seeks early (pre-1940) beadwork, baskets, sofkee spoons, turbans, patchwork clothing, silver, necklaces, moccasins, etc. Contact Keith Reeves, P.O. Box 1210, Winter Park, FL 32790 or ISKR5@aol.com, or 407-620-9744.

FOR SALE

LAST SIX OF VIN#	YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILEAGE/ HRS	CONDITION	STARTING BID PRICE
C17321	N/A	VALLEY COUGAR POOL TABLE	C/O 7' POOL TABLE	N/A	Fair	\$680.00
C17331	N/A	VALLEY COUGAR POOL TABLE	C/O 7' POOL TABLE	N/A	Fair	\$680.00
79569	N/A	VALLEY COUGAR POOL TABLE	C/O 7' POOL TABLE	N/A	Fair	\$680.00
79595	N/A	VALLEY COUGAR POOL TABLE	C/O 7' POOL TABLE	N/A	Fair	\$680.00
79570	N/A	VALLEY COUGAR POOL TABLE	C/O 7' POOL TABLE	N/A	Fair	\$680.00
101861	2007	FORD SEDAN	CROWN VICTORIA	89,346	Poor	\$1,520.00
138844	2007	FORD SEDAN	CROWN VICTORIA	76,801	Poor	\$605.00
101846	2007	FORD SEDAN	CROWN VICTORIA	99,310	Poor	\$1,680.00
138851	2007	FORD SEDAN	CROWN VICTORIA	81,849	Poor	\$900.00
138843	2007	FORD SEDAN	CROWN VICTORIA	84,323	Poor	\$970.00
138855	2007	FORD SEDAN	CROWN VICTORIA	49,907	Poor	\$980.00
101860	2007	FORD SEDAN	CROWN VICTORIA	94,922	Poor	\$790.00
138848	2007	FORD SEDAN	CROWN VICTORIA	78,561	Poor	\$870.00
A27382	2003	FORD PASSENGER VAN	E350 ECONOLINE EXTENDED CAB (RWD) GAS	68,911	Fair	\$4,275.00
223933	2005	CHEVROLET SUV	TAHOE LS (4WD)	136,664	Fair	\$3,800.00
031478	2006	POLARIS UTV	RANGER R08RD500AA 4x4	N/A	Poor	\$1,115.00

Note - Previously advertised items are not reflected on this advertisement, only new listings. For more information contact Fixed Assets Dept. 954-966-6300 ext. 20034.

NEW!! - Tribal Members only- access this information at the website: <http://semtribe.com/FixedAssets>. (Registration required)



Theodore Nelson Sr.

Licensed Clinical Social Worker, SW5813, Indian Child Welfare Consultant-Expert, Board Member National Indian Child Welfare Association, Licensed and Insured, Seminole Health Plan Provider

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