



# The Seminole Tribune

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## Global coronavirus shuts down Tribe, Indian Country

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

The coronavirus pandemic, known as COVID-19, has had a profound impact on Indian Country, including the Seminole Tribe, which has taken numerous steps to protect community members, employees and guests at its businesses.

Tribal Council declared an emergency closing of Tribal offices effective March 16 until further notice. Some Tribal businesses remained partially operational.

Here is what the status looked like as of March 26:

Until further notice the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum and Billie Swamp Safari are closed. The Swamp Water Café is open for takeout for Big Cypress community members only. Sadie's restaurant in BC is open for takeout, and the store is limiting the number of customers inside at one time. BC's Seminole Fuel is pay at the pump only, no cash accepted. The Ahfachkee School is closed and is in the process of creating a digital learning plan for students.

◆ See COVID-19 on page 4A

## Egmont Key trip evokes 'sadness and sense of pride' for Seminoles

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

EGMONT KEY — When about 40 people — mostly Seminoles — braved the cold air and the Gulf of Mexico's choppy seas to visit an island near the mouth of Tampa Bay on Feb. 29, they were stepping back into a critical chapter in the Tribe's history.

In what was essentially a concentration camp set up by the U.S. Army in the late 1850s, Seminoles were held captive on the island as they awaited a forced removal to Indian Territory in Oklahoma.

The trip to the uninhabited island, which is accessible only by boat, was organized by Quenton Cypress, Heritage, Environment Resources Office community engagement manager, and Lois Billie, Executive Operations Office administrative assistant II. The trip was sponsored by the Brighton Council Office and the Tribal Historic Preservation Office. It provided an in-depth history of Egmont Key.

It was the first time some in the group visited the island. For many, their roots can be traced back to Polly Parker, who escaped as she was being sent to Oklahoma.

"The U.S. Army tried to destroy us, but here we are in our colors, in our patchwork," Cypress said. "That's why we do these trips."

The ages of the assembled group ranged from elders to newborns. They gathered by the lighthouse to listen as Cypress and David Scheidecker, THPO research coordinator, shared the history of Egmont Key. THPO has been taking Tribal members to the island for the past few years and this was the largest



Beverly Bidney

Resplendent in patchwork, a group of Seminoles visiting Egmont Key on Feb. 29 gather at the site where a canon once took aim at the sea.

group so far.

Edna Bowers, a descendant of Parker from Brighton, was glad to see so many young people in attendance.

"I want them to be interested in their

history," Bowers said. "We have informed them about it and wanted them to see it for themselves."

A couple of teenagers climbed the ruins of an army battery as they soaked up

information.

◆ See EGMONT KEY on page 6A

## Inaugural Seminole Warrior event crowns first winners

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — The first-ever Seminole Warrior Competition is in the books, and organizers said it was a success.

The event was held Feb. 29 on the Big Cypress Reservation. It was designed to mimic the CrossFit Games, meaning competitors had to complete a variety of skill stations and strength moves as quickly as possible.

That meant flipping an oversized tire, doing multiple burpees, jumps, planks, squats and so on.

The competition started out with a run — from the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium to the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena — about 1.3 miles. Participants then completed nine fitness stations.

Vera Herrera, BC recreation department site manager, said everything went smoothly.

"Everyone got off to a good start," she said. "All the recreation departments were out and had personal trainers helping to make sure no one got injured."

Herrera confirmed that there were no injuries, just tired participants — all eight of them.

◆ See WARRIOR on page 7A



Matt Goes

Participants run past the Ahfachkee School during the first Seminole Warrior Competition on Feb. 29 in Big Cypress.

## Cheyenne Kippenberger retains Miss Indian World title

*Agrees to serve another year due to Gathering, pageant cancellations*

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Organizers of the Gathering of Nations Powwow held each year in Albuquerque, New Mexico, have canceled the event due to the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency.

The event was set to take place April 23-25. The large gathering of spectators

and thousands of dancers from hundreds of Tribal Nations coincides with the Miss Indian World Pageant and ancillary events such as Stage 49, the Traders' Market and the Horse & Rider Parade.

"Due to the cancellation of the Gathering of Nations activities, the Miss Indian World Pageant is also canceled," organizers said in a statement March 17. "The current reigning Miss Indian World, Cheyenne Kippenberger, will remain the title holder until April 24, 2021."

◆ See MISS INDIAN WORLD on page 5A

File photo

Cheyenne Kippenberger's reign as Miss Indian World has been extended for another year due to the cancellation of the Miss Indian World Pageant amid the COVID-19 public health emergency.



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# Editorial

## How the Mohawks responded to historical plagues

• Doug George-Kanentio

When I was growing up on Akwesasne Mohawk Territory there were social habits which reflected an historical response to the devastating communicable diseases which came close to wiping out our ancestors.

Beginning in the early 17th century illnesses such as smallpox and influenza struck the Iroquois hard. As with the Native nations along the Atlantic coast European borne viruses caused the death of millions of people. The European colonial powers had tried in vain throughout the 1500's to establish settlements on the eastern shores of North America only to be met with resistance by indigenous nations in a region noted as being extensively populated. Not until the first decades of the following century, when the great plagues brought death to a vast majority of Natives, were the Europeans able to establish their settlements. This trend continued for the next 400 years and was the greatest factor in enabling the colonists to assume physical control of the continent from its aboriginal inhabitants.

It was not European technology, theology or national will nor was it guns or military strength but those types of viruses against which the Natives, including our Mohawk ancestors, had no natural immunity. From being a society in which physical contact was a constant given the communal longhouses and the rituals and customs which stressed social activities such as dancing, music, the sharing of food and collective labor having to adopt to behaviors meant to reduce contact had brutal and long-lasting effects on the Mohawks.

This was reflected in the way people responded to others which I noticed as a child was detached and cautious. At Akwesasne the last epidemic took place in the late 1890's when an outbreak of cholera killed hundreds. I had been reviewing our census data and noted that for most of the 1800's the population of Akwesasne remained fairly constant at just over 3,000. This did not increase at any great rate until after WWI when there was a noticeable increase in the birth rate and a decline in mortality. The current population on the territory is now over 15,000 and will double within the next generation.

This rate of recovery is remarkable and has many factors but the most important was the ability of the Mohawk people to finally develop partial immunity from those illnesses which had nearly brought about extinction. Still, there were those familial and personal habits which were peculiar and seen by our non-Native neighbors as anti-social. As an example, our Mohawk ancestors did not embrace each other. They did not like to be touched and had a strong, hostile reaction to those who tried and envelop us. They avoided eye contact, were hesitant to shake hands, coughed away from another person, kept meticulously clean homes and were said to be very shy around strangers.

I asked the late Salli Benedict,

Akwesasne's most knowledgeable historian, why. She said it was in response to diseases such as smallpox, measles, cholera, typhoid and influenza. The people learned, as a matter of survival, to keep their distance and refrain from contact. Those who did not understand why attributed our behavior as odd and condemned it as such but it was a rationale response to becoming infected.

I looked further into how viruses changed the Iroquois. In a Phd dissertation written for Pennsylvania State University in 2008 by Eric E. Jones the son to be doctor of anthropology summarized the research done by scholars who studied the population of the Iroquois from pre-contact to the 19th century. His essay is entitled "Iroquois Population History and Settlement Ecology 1550-1700". His conclusions substantiate the oral traditions of the Mohawks.

Dr. Jones based his analysis on the physical remnants of the communal longhouses and the number of families living within each one of these elongated buildings, some of which were over 100 meters in length. He concluded that the Mohawks numbered 8,025 people in their communities in central New York State. He committed those Mohawks who lived along the St. Lawrence River or the Lake Champlain region. Dr. Jones set the entire Iroquois Confederacy population at an apex of 22,000.

By the 1660's the Mohawks had lost over 78% of the people and were reduced to 1,140 individuals. Extinction was imminent.

How did the Mohawks survive? By doing the opposite of current international policies. The Mohawks began an aggressive immigration campaign to bring other Natives to our territory to replace those who had died. The Mohawks made land available to refugees. They reorganized their economic policies to provide for the flow of goods across Iroquois territory and they adopted, in part, the customs of the immigrants to make the transition easier. Greater emphasis was placed on diplomacy to reduce international tensions while the Mohawk Valley homelands were left behind to re-establish communities far from the disease areas resulting in the current territories of Kahnawake, Kanasatake and Akwesasne.

Any nation which loses 3/4 of its people it certain to experience profound psychological, physical and social stress. The Mohawk response was not to turn inwards but to attack the disease by expanding its approaches and becoming more inclusive. With regards to the coronavirus these insights may be of value in the recovery stage as the world emerges from this current pandemic.

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

## USET SPF statement on DOI withdrawal of M-Opinion 37029

• USET SPF

*The United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund issued the following statement March 12 regarding Tribal sovereignty:*

The right of a Tribal Nation to have a land base is a core aspect of Tribal sovereignty and cultural identity, and it represents the foundation of our Tribal economies. In response to federal policies that stripped us of our land base, the Department of the Interior (DOI) has, for nearly 86 years, as a result of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), provided the framework for Tribal Nations to restore our homelands through trust acquisitions. These trust acquisitions have enabled Tribal Nations to build our schools, health clinics, hospitals, and housing, to exercise jurisdiction over our land and people, and to provide other essential services to our Tribal citizens...to rebuild our Tribal Nations. Over this same period of time, Tribal Nations have restored approximately 5 million acres of our former Tribal homelands, far short of the more than 100 million acres that we lost through Federal policies of removal, allotment, and assimilation. We still have more work to do in restoring our Tribal homelands, and DOI maintaining its IRA framework is essential for that work.

The federal government's shameful treatment of Tribal Nations throughout history, particularly the millions of acres of land that we lost as a direct result of intentionally harmful federal policies, should compel every justice-minded and honorable American to support the restoration of our Tribal homelands. However, since taking office, this Administration has made clear its intent to disrupt and restrict trust land acquisition. As early as July 2017, DOI stated during a Congressional hearing that it had concerns about the fee-to-trust process overall and, in particular, about M-Opinion 37029, which has allowed fee-to-trust acquisitions under the IRA to move forward in a measured and predictable manner under the current circumstances created by the flawed 2009 SCOTUS decision in *Carcieri v. Salazar*. In its testimony, DOI expressed its opinion that the criteria of M-Opinion 37029 were "loose" and "wide", despite the courts' acceptance and deferral to the interpretation, analysis, and guidance encompassed within the 2014 M-Opinion.

In the months following the hearing, DOI proposed its own revisions to the Part 151 Fee-to-Trust process, and those proposed revisions were withdrawn after strong Tribal opposition. A subsequent consultation regarding the Part 151 Fee-to-Trust process yielded no results. Despite consistent concerns and questions expressed by this organization and many others across Indian country regarding this Administration's dedication to the restoration and rebuilding of Tribal homelands, it has repeatedly publicly expressed its strong commitment, despite its actions indicating otherwise. In addition, on numerous occasions, this Administration has also underscored its commitment to a

positive Tribal Nation-Federal partnership and working relationship.

On February 4, 2020, the USET Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF) reached out directly to the DOI Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs (AS-IA) after we became aware of a rumor circulating that DOI intended to take action on M-Opinion 37029 that could potentially be detrimental to the interests of Indian country. Unfortunately, and disappointingly, DOI chose not to respond to our proactive outreach. On March 10th, we learned that DOI withdrew M-Opinion 37029 and would be replacing it with new "procedures" that it claims will guide DOI in determining whether a Tribal Nation is a "recognized Indian tribe now under federal jurisdiction" for purposes of the IRA. Not only was this action taken

of the flawed 2009 SCOTUS decision in *Carcieri v. Salazar*. Its consistent framework has reduced uncertainty and thereby reduced costs associated with fee-to-trust acquisitions, benefiting Indian country and DOI alike. Courts reviewing decisions that rely on the analysis of M-Opinion 37029 have upheld the analysis as a reasonable and valid interpretation of the IRA as interpreted by *Carcieri v. Salazar*.

In its withdrawal of M-Opinion 37029, DOI alleges that it is not consistent with the intent of the IRA. USET SPF disagrees in the strongest possible terms. In giving the Secretary broad authority to acquire land in trust through the IRA in 1934, Congress aimed to end the devastating loss of Tribal land that marked the federal policies of removal, assimilation, and allotment. Successfully fulfilling the IRA's promise requires DOI to fully implement its IRA authority by favorably viewing land acquisition requests from Tribal Nations, thereby promoting Tribal self-determination and economic development. The restoration of Tribal homelands through trust land acquisitions should be considered part of DOI's core responsibilities in its relationships with Tribal governments and individual Indians. DOI must work to fulfill this objective, as Congress mandated in enacting the IRA.

Late in the evening on March 10th, the Department posted M-Opinion 37055 that withdraws M-Opinion 37029. [On March 11], the Department posted (1) a March 5, 2020 memo titled "Determining Eligibility under the First Definition of 'Indian' in Section 19 of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934", and (2) a March 10, 2020 memo titled "Procedure for Determining Eligibility for Land-into-Trust under the First Definition of 'Indian' in Section 19 of the Indian Reorganization Act". These two memos contain 40+ pages of detail that warrant close review and examination that our organization, as well as many others, will be conducting in the coming hours and days.

The restoration of our Tribal Nation homelands should not be held hostage by the politics of Washington D.C. or the interests of those working against Tribal sovereignty. Any efforts that support these intentions stand in direct contrast to the intent of Congress in passing the 1934 IRA. Through the IRA, as a matter of justice and principle, Congress intended to affirm the equal right of all federally recognized Tribal Nations to rebuild and restore our homelands. The Department is taking the position that these changes will be favorable to the interests of Indian country. We will reserve final judgement until the nuances of the actual effects of the changes on Tribal Nations' trust acquisition applications are fully understood, but we are deeply alarmed with the manner that the Department chose to move forward with these changes.

We will follow up with an additional communication once our review and analysis is complete.



without any Tribal consultation or input, but DOI also did not find it necessary to issue a Dear Tribal Leader Letter (DTLL) to notify Tribal Nations directly of this significant change. Instead, it simply posted notice of its withdrawal of M-Opinion 37029 to its website for Indian country to discover on its own.

This action is not only disappointing, as we expect more from our federal partner, but it flies in the face of DOI's legal responsibility to consult with Tribal Nations and stands in direct contrast to its previously expressed commitment.

The flawed 2009 SCOTUS decision in *Carcieri v. Salazar* has created tremendous confusion and instability across Indian country. It has made the effort to rebuild our Tribal Nation homelands much more complicated, costly, and time consuming. Unfortunately, despite great effort by Indian country, Congress has failed to pass a fix for reasons that have nothing to do with the principle of restoring and rebuilding Tribal homelands. Fortunately, for the past 6 years, Indian country has been able to rely on M-Opinion 37029's measured and consistent interpretation of the phrase "under federal jurisdiction" that supports fee-to-trust land acquisitions for Indian country. The M-Opinion has governed DOI's analysis of whether a Tribal Nation was under federal jurisdiction in 1934, and it has allowed fee-to-trust acquisitions to move forward in spite

## Charles Trimble's passing leaves big hole in Native journalism

• Tim Giago

When Charles Trimble first showed up at the Holy Rosary Indian Mission Boarding School on the Pine Ridge Reservation he was dropped off by his mother.

At the beginning of every school year some of the HRM veterans would stand in front of Red Cloud Hall and scrutinize the new students. The first question asked of Charles by some of the older boys was, "Where are you from?" Charles was about six years old at the time and when he told us he was from "Wanbli" it sounded to us like "Wobbie." Wanbli is one of the communities on the reservation.

"Wobbie" became his nickname from then on. Even when he became "Chuck" Trimble, Executive Director of the National Congress of American Indians, his old friends still called him "Wobbie."

I was working for Cleveland Neiss at the American Indian Business Association in the 1970s when Chuck stopped by the office. Of course everybody was excited about his visit because he was a VIP to all of us. One Lakota man who knew Chuck from the boarding school said, "Hi Wobbie." He then caught himself and said, "Sorry Chuck." Of course Trimble was not offended. He said, "That's alright, I will always be Wobbie to my friends."

In the 1940s Wobbie and his mother moved to Rapid City. His mother, ironically, got a job at the Virginia Café. I say ironically because my mother was also working there. They had rented a small, wooden shack off of Osh Kosh Street, a place that was now called "Osh Kosh Camp" by the white folks. In fact on some Saturday nights, when the white boys had too many beers, they would find great sport in driving by Osh Kosh Camp and throwing empty beer bottles at the wooden shacks.

One summer day I stopped by the Camp and got Chuck and we walked downtown to check out the sights. As we were walking by the famous Alex Johnson Hotel we were fascinated by the revolving door. We sort of looked at each other, shrugged and dared each other to try out the revolving door. We made it inside of the hotel when the doorman grabbed both of us by the collar of our shirts. He kicked us and threw us out into the street shouting, "Get out of here you dirty little Indians."

That was a memory neither of us ever forgot. In fact the day that Chuck stopped by the AIBA office we decided to go to the Alex Johnson and walk through those revolving doors as adults, walk up to the bar and have a beer. And that is what we did. The doorman tipped his hat to us as we walked in.

We sort of followed in each other's footsteps over the years. Chuck formed the American Indian Press Association in the 1970s and ran it for two years until it ran

out of funds. In the 1980s I founded the Native American Journalism Association and invited Chuck to one of our first organizational meetings to speak to us.

We attended Holy Rosary Mission together through elementary and high school. Chuck was a great fan of the West Point football team and I was a fan of Notre Dame. We had our spats over which team was the best and they were both great teams in the 1940s. It is ironic that we both pursued careers in journalism. Chuck went on to Washington and ran the NCAI and I stayed on the Pine Ridge Reservation and started a newspaper, but we never lost touch with each other. Oftentimes he would blow his stack over something I wrote especially if it was about the Holy Rosary Mission Boarding School. He thought highly of the school and I detested it. I made sure I included Chuck in my book "Children Left Behind," a book about the boarding school. I admit he wasn't too happy about it. But we still remained

friends.

Charles "Wobbie" Trimble passed away March 2 and his passing has left a big hole in the field of Native American journalism.

For two "dirty little Indian boys" who were kicked out into the streets of Rapid City for having the audacity to walk through a revolving door, we both survived and made good lives for ourselves and we both hope that we made a strong contribution to Native American journalism.

"Wobbie" my kola, you will be missed.

*Tim Giago, a 1991 Nieman Fellow, is the publisher of Native Sun News Today and founder of Indian Country Today (originally Lakota Times), the first independently owned Native American weekly newspaper. Giago, a member of the Oglala Lakota Tribe, is the founder and past president of the Native American Journalists Association. Contact him at najournalist1@gmail.com. This article is from Indianz.com.*

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# Community

A

## 'No More Stolen Ancestors' campaign urges return of Seminole ancestral remains

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**BIG CYPRESS** — The Seminole Tribe's effort to get 1,496 ancestral remains back from the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) continues after more than eight years of trying.

The repatriation effort, led by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Committee (NAGPRA), from within the Tribe's Tribal Historic Preservation Office, and the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, is raising awareness about the fight to return the remains. Committee member Tina Osceola hopes the #NoMoreStolenAncestors campaign will gain traction throughout Indian Country.

To spread the word, Osceola gave a lecture about the repatriation efforts and the campaign Feb. 21 at the To-Pee-Kee-Ke Yak-Ne Community Center in Big Cypress.

"This is going to help all of Indian Country," she said. "What we did for Indian gaming, we can do for repatriation. Other tribes are ready to back up the Seminole Tribe and take it to the next level. We are sitting in a powerful position in a pivotal time."

The backstory is a familiar one in Indian Country. Instead of giving remains of Native Americans to ancestral tribes in the areas in which they had been dug up, they are often sent to the NMNH to be used for research.

The Seminole Tribe is fighting for ancestral remains that range from thousands of years old to the early 20th century. NMNH claims they are culturally unidentifiable since there is no written record of the Tribe's existence from those early times, hence, according to NMNH, there's no evidence they belong to the Seminoles.

In 2019, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) passed a resolution urging the NMNH to return ancestors to their tribes and revise its repatriation policy. Osceola, THPO and NMNH staff met in March 2019 to discuss the remains, but nothing substantive came of the meeting. In February, Osceola and THPO collections manager Domonique deBeaubien went to the NCAI executive council winter session

and to Capitol Hill.

"Federal Indian Law wasn't put in place to help Native people," Osceola said. "Through the Indian Reorganization Act [of 1934] there was to be termination of all Indian people. They hoped we would die out. But now we see Native women in Congress and at the NCAI."

### Smithsonian position

The Smithsonian, which oversees NMNH, claims Florida was devoid of all Indigenous people in the 17th and 18th centuries. According to THPO collections manager Domonique deBeaubien, the Smithsonian views the Seminole Tribe's movement into the state as a singular event where Creek people moved into an empty state over a short period of time, rather than a process that started thousands of years ago. The large movement of Creek people in the 18th century, who then mixed with existing Indigenous peoples, formed what is now the Seminole Tribe of Florida. The NMNH believes the Seminoles are completely separate from their Indigenous ancestors and that the Tribe legally has no claim to them under current Smithsonian policy.

One objective of the "No More Stolen Ancestors" campaign is to change that policy.

"They allow scientists access to the remains, but they cannot convince me they can improve humanity by holding onto those remains," Osceola said. "They respond to requests for research, but meanwhile human remains are consistently being raped and molested. What does it mean if we can't protect our ancestors?"

During the meeting with NMNH last year, the Tribe's representatives were told the NMNH wasn't there to negotiate; they were just there to listen.

"It was a polite way to do nothing," Osceola said. "We are unable to push them any further by following their policies. Fortunately, we have a wicked group of people at THPO and [Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki] who don't take no for an answer."

### Ammunition

Tribal leaders have given assets and



Tina Osceola and Domonique deBeaubien in the halls of Congress after meeting with Sen. Marco Rubio in February.



Beverly Bidney

Tina Osceola speaks Feb. 21 during a lecture about THPO's effort to get remains returned to the Tribe from the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. The lecture was held at the To-Pee-Kee-Ke Yak-Ne Community Center in Big Cypress.

resources to the cause. Osceola is grateful the Tribe is putting its resources to something as intrinsic as tribal identity. During the trip to Capitol Hill, the group met with Sen. Marco Rubio, R-FL, to advocate for the stolen ancestors. Osceola said the meeting didn't generate the results she had hoped it would.

"We will take the adversity they threw at us and are going to make a touchdown with it," she said.

During her lecture, Osceola, who comes from a large family, talked about growing up

### End of Smithsonian affiliation

In January, the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum ended its longtime association with the Smithsonian Institution's affiliations program, which develops partnerships with museums and educational organizations to make its collections and resources widely available. Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki director Kate Macuen informed the Smithsonian that it left because of the repatriation issue.

Macuen has worked with Osceola for more than 10 years and appreciates the strength of her leadership.

"She is a woman of action," Macuen said. "I'm inspired by her willingness to fight these difficult fights."

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki had no problem with the affiliates program, but the decision was made in collaboration with the THPO's NAGPRA committee.

◆ See REMAINS on page 7A

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# Tribes consulted on speedy, fair distribution of COVID-19 funding

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Indian Health Service (IHS) officials held a consultation call with tribal leaders regarding COVID-19 funds for Indian Country late on March 23.

At issue are two pots of approved funding, and a potential third source that is making its way through the U.S. Congress now.

One source of funds for tribes was designated via the "Families First Coronavirus Response Act" (FFCRA) signed into law by President Trump on March 18. It provides \$64 million to support the cost of coronavirus testing across the Indian health system.

In addition, the IHS is set to receive \$70 million in emergency funds to assist in preventing, preparing and responding to the virus. That funding can be used for items like personal protective equipment (PPE) for health care workers, transportation for patients and erecting field stations.

The third source would come from a supplemental appropriation lawmakers are expected to vote on soon, which would provide \$1 billion for IHS to combat the effects of the virus. That includes a wider variety of options for use that is not just limited to testing, but to "... get the funding in the hands of those on the front lines as quickly as we can," Jullian Curtis, the director for the office of finance and accounting at IHS, said. (Editor's note: The supplemental appropriation designating \$1 billion for IHS was approved).

Rear Adm. Michael D. Weahkee (Zuni), principal deputy director of the IHS, said the organization is working closely with tribal, urban, state and local partners, including the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA).

"We've heard from tribal leaders. We have taken that feedback to heart to figure out how to best allocate resources," Weahkee said on the call, which had more than 500 participants. "Our goal is speed - to hit the broadest base."

At issue is the logistics of how best to quickly and fairly distribute funds received by the Indian health system to combat the virus.

The IHS had not finalized a distribution methodology at the time of the call, which was part of the reason for the conference with Indian Country leaders.

"Our intention is to get resources out as quickly as possible, hitting all across the IHS-tribally run facilities and entire system," Curtis said.



The Seminole Tribe of Florida's health facilities are run by the Tribal government, which is eligible as a federally recognized tribe to receive assistance from IHS, according to STOF Health and Human Services Director Dr. Paul Isaacs.

"We will be applying to receive whatever is available," he said via email March 23.

It was clear from those participating on the call that distributing the funds through a competitive grant system was not preferred, but through noncompetitive "contracts and compacts."

IHS officials are also trying to get access to the Strategic National Stockpile for Indian Country needs. The stockpile is the nation's largest supply of lifesaving pharmaceuticals and medical supplies to be used during a public health emergency in which local supplies are running out or gone completely.

The most pressing question from callers was: When will the funds come?

IHS officials said some of the funding has already been received by the agency and that it would be "flowing in the coming days."

"I would not be surprised to see it as quickly as [March 26] or [March 27]," Weahkee said. "We will work to meet allocations as quickly as we can after getting feedback. There's a desire to maintain our established funding methodologies - it would likely be a proportional distribution. Our goal is to get this funding out as quickly as possible and be fair about it."

More information is at [ihs.gov](http://ihs.gov).

## COVID-19 From page 1A

Also in BC, the 24th annual Junior Cypress Cattle Drive & Rodeo, which had been scheduled for April 4 at the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena, has been postponed until further notice.

In Brighton, the Trading Post is operational. The Brighton Subway store at the Trading Post is takeout only. The Glades County School District, which includes Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School, announced that schools will be closed until at least April 15. PECS has a virtual instruction program ready to implement if necessary.

All state assessment tests have been cancelled for the 2019-20 school year.

The Hollywood Trading Post is open, but Bigg E's BBQ at the site is closed.

Spencer Battiest, of the Hollywood Reservation, was scheduled to star in the world premiere of the musical "Distant Thunder" at the Lyric Theater in Oklahoma City, but the coronavirus put it on hold. The show was supposed to run from March 25-April 11 but has been postponed. The new dates are Sept. 23-Oct. 11.

All Seminole casinos and hotels, including Hard Rock Hollywood and Hard Rock Tampa, closed March 20 until further notice.

"With a primary focus on the health and safety of guests, team members and the public, the Seminole Tribe of Florida and Seminole Gaming have voluntarily decided to temporarily close all Seminole and Hard Rock Casinos throughout Florida [March 20]," read a statement from STOF and Seminole Gaming.

"This decision was not taken lightly as Seminole Gaming employs nearly 14,000 Seminole Gaming team members in the state. The goal has been to protect their livelihood without jeopardizing public safety. We have now reached a point where we do not feel comfortable taking that risk."

"The safety and security of its guests and team members are of the highest priority to the Seminole Tribe, which is especially proud of its team's response during this difficult time. The proactive measures put in place allowed Seminole Gaming to operate within the guidelines established by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, whom the Seminole Tribe wants to recognize and thank for his ongoing cooperation and leadership."

"The Seminole Tribe of Florida and Seminole Gaming are very grateful to our loyal guests and team members. We look forward to welcoming everyone back soon."

Elsewhere, with Native American casinos closing their doors around the country, the National Indian Gaming Association has asked for \$18 billion in U.S. federal aid to help soften the financial hit to Indian Country. In a letter to addressed to Representatives Deb Haaland, D-N.M., and Tom Cole (R-OK) of the Congressional Native American Caucus, NIGA wrote that tribal governments will default on loans and won't be able to provide health and education services without federal support to make up for lost casino revenues due to the coronavirus pandemic.

NIGA's Indian Gaming Tradeshow and Convention, scheduled for March 24-27 in San Diego, has been postponed.

### Disruptions abound

A host of other events throughout Indian Country have had to adjust to the pandemic with cancellations and postponements. One organization even moved from the real world to the virtual one.

The 38th annual conference of the Native American Finance Officers Association was supposed to be held in Nashville, Tennessee, April 6-7, but COVID-19 changed all that. NAFOA will hold a virtual version of the conference April 20-21. For more information, visit [nafoa.org](http://nafoa.org).

Like many other colleges and universities in the country, Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas, has told students not to come back to school after spring break. It also suspended spring commencement, athletics seasons, intramural athletics and prospective student visits because of the pandemic. Students were told that all course instruction and associated requirements are transitioning to virtual, or remote, instruction. The transition was expected to be completed by March 23.



A sign is posted on an entrance door at Tribal Headquarters in Hollywood notifying people that the building is closed.



Spencer Battiest/Facebook

Spencer Battiest, of the Hollywood Reservation, was scheduled to perform this spring in the musical "Distant Thunder" in Oklahoma City, but the show has been postponed until the fall due to COVID-19.

Students have been advised to remain in contact with faculty and advisers.

In more student news, the annual Heard Museum Guild student art show and sale in Phoenix, Arizona, has been changed from March 27-30 to April 24-27. Every year Native American students in grades 7-12 are invited to submit their artwork. Founded in 1986, the show provides emerging young artists a venue to showcase their talent in traditional and fine art. The Heard Museum is world renowned for its presentation, interpretation and advancement of American Indian art.

The coronavirus has caused the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., which includes the National Museum of the American Indian, to close its doors but that hasn't stopped it from offering online education and enrichment. In an effort to ease the effects of massive school closures nationwide, the Smithsonian has an array of distance learning resources available. NMAT's Native Knowledge 360° provides educators and students with new perspectives on Native American history and cultures. For more information visit [americanindian.si.edu/nk360/about.cshtml](http://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/about.cshtml).

Although the vast majority of the Big Cypress National Preserve in the Everglades is outside, it has closed two visitor centers and a ranger-led program has been cancelled.

### Indian Country news

COVID-19's impact in Indian Country could be more severe than the rest of the country because many Native Americans suffer from diabetes and heart disease, clean water for washing hands isn't accessible in more rural tribal communities and multi-generational homes are not uncommon in Indian Country, making social distancing a challenge.

With 69 reported cases of COVID-19 on March 25, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez issued a stay-at-home order for all residents of the Navajo Nation, except for essential trips to get food and medicine. The country's largest reservation, at 27,413 square miles from Arizona to Utah to New Mexico, contains only nine grocery stores, making conditions more challenging for residents.

Other tribes have also been affected by COVID-19. The Northern Arapaho Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming has declared a state of emergency for the reservation that spans over 2.2 million acres.

The Cherokee Nation reported its first cases of the coronavirus on March 24 in Adair County, Oklahoma, east of Tahlequah.

The Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska postponed the 85th annual tribal assembly because of the pandemic. It had been scheduled for April 22-24 in Juneau, Alaska, and will be rescheduled at a later date. Meanwhile, to ensure the safety of its employees, citizens, clients and the general public, the Central Council has closed its offices in Juneau and all remote field offices until further notice.

### Saginaw Grant statement

Native American actor, dancer, motivational speaker and the Hereditary Chief of the Sac and Fox Nation Saginaw Grant, 83, issued a statement about living in the time of the coronavirus.

"This isolation is temporary for most, but for many elders what you are now experiencing is the norm," he said. "It is human nature to come together in times of crisis, but this time we are having to stay apart for the health and safety of one another. Take this opportunity to get to know yourself and what's important. Take this time to reflect on God's purpose for you. Check on others and let them know you care. Take a moment to find the beauty in a negative situation...spend extra time with someone and let them know they're loved. Recognize the opportunities you have in every situation, know that your choices in a crisis define who you are, let this define you in a positive light."

# Latest COVID-19 funding includes \$8 billion for Indian Country

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

The third major emergency funding package making its way through the U.S. Congress to address the COVID-19 public health and economic crises includes \$8 billion for Indian Country.

The Senate passed the \$2.2 trillion "CARES Act" late on March 25. It now goes to the House for consideration before it would make its way to President Trump's desk for potential approval.

Indian Country leaders discussed the funding and Indian Country's situation in the midst of the pandemic in a "Tribal Leader Town Hall" teleconference organized by the Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA) on March 26 - one of many that has taken place in the last two weeks.

The current funding bill is massive in scope and is intended to stave off total economic collapse.

The funding level is more than twice the size of President Barack Obama's 2009 Recovery Act and more than twice the size of President George W. Bush's 2008 Wall Street rescue.

One of its more urgent pieces is \$150 billion for hospitals and other health entities. (The Indian Health Service (IHS) secured \$1 billion in funding in the previous funding package).

The CARES Act provides direct payments to most Americans - including Native Americans - in addition to a major increase in unemployment benefits.

There is \$850 billion worth of loan programs for distressed businesses, with some provisions to try and incentivize companies from laying off workers.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is looking at options for voting on the bill without members physically returning to the Capitol.

Congressional leaders already acknowledge the need for a fourth or fifth response.

For tribal leaders the immediate task has been making sure members of Congress are listening to them and that funding appropriations are fair.

Sen. Martha McSally, R-AZ, is on the Senate Committee for Indian Affairs. She spoke to tribal leaders on the March 26 teleconference.

"We are all in this together and I know there is a lot of fear and uncertainty," McSally said. "This is an all-of-society effort. I believe we will prevail."

McSally said a concern for Indian Country is having a mechanism in place for entities and individuals to get needed funds quickly.

"To get food on the table and meet basic needs," she said. "Tribal members will benefit from this [funding package] immediately."

The package includes checks for individuals and families and a boost in unemployment insurance for four months. McSally said checks could be distributed as quickly as two to three weeks after the bill is signed into law.

"People laid off from Native American communities will benefit from it," McSally said. "We want to make sure we're getting resources to people so they aren't falling into food and health insecurity."

One of the efforts in the bill is to make sure employees stay connected to employers to the maximum extent possible. That means quickly getting money to businesses so that they can keep pay flowing to employees, McSally said.

"It's better than standing in line to get unemployment benefits, especially when [the system] is overwhelmed. And it's better psychologically," she said.

"McSally said the funding package contains loan incentives of differing levels for businesses with fewer than 500 full time employees, as well as for companies with more than 500 full time employees."

"It's to provide liquidity and cash flow

to incentive them to keep people on the payroll while we defeat this disease; and we will," she said.

There are other elements to the bill that address broadband and access to telehealth, which disproportionately affect Indian Country, McSally said.

Rep. Kendra Horn, D-OK, also spoke during the teleconference. She echoed many of the points McSally made.

"We have so many needs. It's critical for us to include Native Americans and tribal communities," she said.

Horn reiterated that the first \$8.3 billion funding package was focused on health and research and acknowledged that tribal communities did not receive enough funding or support from it.

"We need to make sure Tribal Nations have direct access to the Strategic National



Courtesy photo

Sen. Martha McSally

Stockpile," she said. "We cannot be leaving our communities behind."

The stockpile is the nation's largest supply of lifesaving pharmaceuticals and medical supplies to be used during a public health emergency in which local supplies are running out or gone completely.

"There will be continued work to lift up the voices of Indian Country and the unique needs and challenges that can often be overlooked," Horn said.

She said those needs include access to education, housing and food distribution. The next package she expects will address ensuring uninterrupted access to water and power.

The host of the teleconference, Dante Desiderio, executive director of NAFOA, asked Horn what the most efficient method was for Indian Country to secure funding.

"The speed at which things are moving means that we are continuing to get answers moment by moment," Horn said.

Kevin Allis, the CEO of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), said he and his team of other leading tribal organizations have devised a three-category overview of Indian Country needs that will continue to be monitored and advocated for legislatively in Washington and at the local levels.

The categories are:

1. Economic development and employment
  2. Health care and human services (including nutrition)
  3. Tribal governance, housing, and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) appropriations
- "There is nothing more important to Indian Country right now other than addressing this health crisis," Allis said. "All governments are experiencing revenue shortfall in the face of increased demand for government services and tribes are in a unique position. Tribes don't have a tax base. Tribes rely on tribal businesses to fund essential services. Legislation that recognizes that couldn't be more important."

## Close Up USET postponed until fall

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

Another casualty of the coronavirus is the Close Up / USET Impact Week program, which had been scheduled for March 16-19. The good news is that it is tentatively rescheduled for Sept. 27-Oct. 1, according to the Close Up Foundation.

The cancellation has impacted students and parents who were looking forward to attending. According to Alvaro Perez, CSSS assistant director, students who attended in previous years were hoping to build on their knowledge and re-connect with other participants.

"I'm disappointed," said Chandler Demayo, a senior at Nova Southeastern

University School who has attended Close Up for four years. "I understand why they did it and completely agree that we have to take this seriously. We have a lot of people at risk on all the reservations. I guess they wanted to keep us safe since we are the future of the Tribe."

Close Up is designed for high school students, so Demayo isn't sure if he will be eligible to attend in the fall.

"This will be the first time in the history of the USET Close Up program that we don't attend," Perez said.

The Tribe pulled out of Close Up a week before it was cancelled by the Close Up Foundation and USET.

## Amid COVID-19 outbreak, Indian Country pushes for its share of federal help, funds

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

A slew of Native American organizations, groups and stakeholders have been in contact with federal lawmakers and officials as the fallout from the COVID-19 public health emergency continues to unfold. At issue is ensuring Indian Country is not left out or shortchanged in relief efforts for both health care and economic needs.

The Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA) is one of the groups that has taken a lead to keep tribal leaders apprised on the fast-moving pace of bills passed and bills considered in Congress and signed by the president.

The following is a timeline and summary of coordinated actions of national and regional Native organizations as of March 19.

**March 6:** The "Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2020" was signed into law. The legislation provided at least \$40 million for "tribes, tribal organizations, urban

Indian health organizations, or health service providers to tribes, to carry out surveillance, epidemiology, laboratory capacity, infection control, mitigation, communications, and other preparedness and response activities."

**March 7:** The National Indian Health Board (NIHB) submitted a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services advising how the \$40 million tribal set-aside could best be distributed to get needed resources to Indian Country quickly and efficiently. The letter is available at nihb.org.

**March 17:** NAFOA, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and NIHB convened one of several "Tribal Leader Town Halls" on the COVID-19 pandemic to discuss updates and policy implications. Nearly 500 people participated in the webinar. More is at nafoa.org.

**March 18:** The "Families First Coronavirus Response Act" was signed into law. The legislation guarantees free coronavirus testing, establishes paid sick leave, enhances unemployment insurance, expands food security initiatives and increases federal Medicaid funding. The

act specifically allocates \$64 million to the Indian Health Service (IHS) to cover the costs of COVID-19 diagnostic testing for Native Americans receiving care through IHS or through an urban Indian health organization. The act ensures coverage of testing for COVID-19 at no cost for Native Americans receiving contract health services. Additionally, it provides nutrition services for older Native Americans.

**In progress:** Congress is working through a third relief package that is expected to pass soon. It is slated to provide billions of dollars in relief to individuals, governments and industries. The tribal priorities Indian Country is advocating for are focused on health care and health-system capacity, economic development and governance. NAFOA and others have been working with Senate and House offices, both Republican and Democrat, to ensure that tribes are meaningfully included in the package. (Editor's note: As of press time, the third relief package passed the Senate and was expected to be voted on soon in the House).

## Indian Country stays engaged with federal government on COVID-funding

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Even before the COVID-19 public health crisis began to grip the globe, Indian Country faced significant challenges from underfunding in health care, education, broadband and internet access, economic development, housing, human services and more.

A group of Indian Country leaders said in a March 20 teleconference for members of the media that COVID-19 is making all those problems worse, and fast.

In addition, the leaders have been worried that Native Americans are being largely left out of the conversation in Washington, or at best are being underfunded through passed and proposed recovery and stimulus legislation.

The short-term goal is to be visible, funded and part of recovery efforts.

National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) president Fawn Sharp said it is a situation Indian Country has had to deal with for decades, if not centuries.

"Tribal nations have been chronically underfunded in every sector imaginable," she said on the teleconference. "There are already vulnerable and stressed Tribal Nations."

Kevin Allis, CEO of NCAI, echoed the seriousness of the situation for Native Americans in all areas, but especially in health care.

"There is a higher rate of underlying medical conditions that increase the severe risk and illness by COVID-19, including overcrowded housing situations," he said. "Put all these things together and lay on top of this risk the facts of health disparities and distance to get goods – the recipe is for disaster."

Allis said national leaders, state leaders and the mainstream media were not giving Indian Country enough attention.

For example, he said the draft bill for the third stimulus package has "completely ignored and does not include" Indian Country.

"There is no consideration on any front in that draft bill at this point by the GOP that addresses any of this stuff we've addressed," he said. "We're hoping things change very quickly."

(Editor's note: The bill that subsequently passed the Senate, and as of press time was being considered by the House, contained \$8 billion for Indian Country).

Allis said the situation is made worse by the fact that tribes already have a limited ability to generate tax revenue, rather depending heavily on their businesses located on and off reservations.

"When tribes have to close, the unemployment rate skyrockets, and there is no funding coming in for law enforcement, criminal justice and health care," he said.

Dante Desidario, executive director of the Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA), agreed that Indian Country was in a particularly vulnerable position on the health care and economic fronts.

"Indian Country relies on economic development in a critical and different way from other governments," Desidario said. "What we see in this pending crisis is the idea that tribes are vulnerable to a significant reduction in government revenues, and the industries impacted most immediately are the hospitality, tourism, gaming and oil and gas industries. The federal government can't forget about Indian Country."

Stacy Bohlen, the CEO of the National Indian Health Board (NIHB), said she is working to ensure tribes remain informed on the epidemic and that there is access to resources.

She said the NIHB will launch a "Tribal COVID-19 Resource Center" from its website at nihb.org.

Bohlen said NIHB is searching for

resources from local, regional, national and international sources.

She is concerned about all Tribal Nations, but particularly those in the Great Plains, Rocky Mountains, Nebraska, North and South Dakota and elsewhere – places that rely directly on the federal government for their health care.

"It's requiring everyone to come to the table with their tools and information – including private sector, philanthropic and global. We're running as fast as we can with blindfolds on," she said.

Education is yet another immediate concern with amplified implications for Indian Country.

Diana Cournoyer, executive director of the National Indian Education Association (NIEA), said it boils down to funding.

"We need to be included in the conversation at federal, state and local level. [The crisis will] disproportionately impact tribal students where lack of broadband exists and there is a lack of adequate equipment," Cournoyer said. "A lot of our students receive breakfast, lunch and a snack [at school]. Sometimes it's their only food of the day."

She said tribal schools were working feverishly to print educational packets so students without internet access would have something to work on at home.

"The school year is a wash in a lot of communities," Cournoyer said. "The technology gap is going to be significant."

David Simmons, director of government affairs and advocacy for the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA), said he's concerned about the wellbeing of children and families through the crisis.

"Even before COVID-19, tribal human services were stressed," Simmons said.

He said NICWA has begun to hold a series of webinars with providers to access resources and to partner on outreach to policymakers and constituent groups.

stop the spread of coronavirus and other communicable diseases in our respective communities," the statement read.

The Gathering of Nations, a nonprofit organization, said that passes, tickets, vendor fees and other purchases were not refundable, but that credit vouchers would be issued and would be redeemable within the next two events through April 2022.

"We understand that this sudden cancellation is a tremendous inconvenience and recognize the difficult situation all of us are now facing," organizers said.

The dates for the next Gathering of Nations Powwow is set for April 22-24, 2021.

More is at gatheringofnations.com.

## Native Learning Center offers podcasts, webinars online

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — For those sheltering at home and practicing social distancing, there is only so much internet browsing and television watching one can do before cabin fever really sets in.

Luckily, the Native Learning Center (NLC) is ready to step in to expand minds through podcasts and webinars on a multitude of subjects.

In addition to the free training and technical assistance NLC offers to Native Americans and those working in Indian Country, it has a library of webinars and podcasts available for anyone to access on its website.

Since the focus of NLC comes from the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) of 1996, all content on the site has to do with housing.

All the Hoporenkv podcasts (Hoporenkv is the Creek word for wisdom) can be accessed anytime online. The latest podcast is about how the Navajo Tribe created a community garden project to provide healthy food for the community. Other podcasts include Indigenous women in leadership, why it takes so long for Congress to appropriate funds to Indian Country, human trafficking in Indian Country and the use of drones on reservations for law enforcement, infrastructure maintenance and agriculture management.

"The podcasts are short little bites, about 10 to 20 minutes long," said Louis Porter, NLC marketing coordinator. "Some

podcasts are very approachable. We try to find topics that are interesting and different but also relate to NAHASDA. We try to do it in a fun way to engage the listener and keep it fresh, interesting, new and informative."

The Kerretv webinars run about 45 minutes and are more detailed than the more informal podcasts. There are four years of webinars to choose from with subjects such as spending behaviors that impact your budget, planning for retirement and respecting differences and remaining sensitive within tribal communities.

Anyone may access podcasts and webinars on the NLC website. There are about 30 podcasts and more than 100 webinars available.

Podcasts are usually posted once a week, but during these times of social distancing, NLC is posting three times a week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 11 a.m. Many are done in-house at the NLC studio in Hollywood, but interviews can be done remotely by telephone or internet.

"The best thing is we are updating on a regular basis, there is always something new," Porter said. "We want to make it enjoyable for people to come and listen."

There is also something new for kids to do; NLC announced its first Tribal housing poster contest for elementary, middle and high school students. The theme is "What Home Means to Me" and submissions will be accepted from April 1-June 30.

For more information go to nativelearningcenter.com or contact Wilma Noah at Wilmanoah@semtribe.com or Krystal Cedenno at Krystalcedeno@semtribe.com.

## Census count continues while COVID-19 delays field operations

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Households started to receive invitations to participate in the 2020 Census in March. It's the first time the every-decade count includes an online option to participate.

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, the census has not stopped, but some operations have changed. As of the publication of this story, more than 11 million households had already responded.

Officials are encouraging those who have received the invitation, and have online access, to continue to submit their responses. The invitation has a unique identification number that is entered online at 2020census.gov to launch the questionnaire.

The process takes about 10 minutes to complete.

The results of the census count are used to direct billions of dollars in federal funds to local communities for schools, roads and other public services. An accurate count is crucial to helping communities prepare to meet transportation and emergency readiness needs.

In addition, the results will determine the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives and political representation at all levels of government.

Tribes and other Indian Country organizations have pushed for an accurate count of all Native Americans for more than a year. Tribal members are urged to use the name of their tribe exactly as it's listed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Otherwise, officials said, there is a risk of their tribal affiliation being represented inaccurately.

Indian Country leaders are, naturally, concerned that the COVID-19 public health emergency will disproportionately harm the Native American count.

"Indian Country will be faced with another 10 years of bad census numbers," Kevin Allis, the CEO of the National

Congress of American Indians (NCAI), said on a March 20 teleconference with other leaders.

"It has an effect on programs for Native Americans and Alaska Natives. Almost half of rural Indian Country has no access to internet or broadband service," he said.

For households with no internet access or that are located in hard to reach communities, census enumerators go door-to-door to get accurate information. Those field operations have been delayed until at least April 1.

Census officials are following other guidance from public health authorities as well.

"The Census Bureau will continue to evaluate all 2020 Census operations," officials said in a news release in late March. "Should any additional adjustments need to be made, the Census Bureau will communicate these changes broadly and promptly."

The bureau also announced that its count of the country's homeless population has been postponed until late April.

Enumerators, who are expected to be deployed in late May, will be trained online and won't be allowed to gather in groups of more than 10, the bureau said.

For those unable to complete the questionnaire online, there is an option by phone at (800) 923-8282. There is also a mail-in option that will be sent to those who don't respond online or by phone.

For more information, including how to respond online, by phone, or by mail, go to 2020census.gov.

To dispel some of the more common bits of misinformation that has circulated about the census, officials want households to know that the questionnaire does not include a citizenship question and that information is confidential. Also, the questionnaire does not ask about religion, political affiliation or income.

### ◆ MISS INDIAN WORLD From page 1A

Kippenberger earned the title April 27, 2019 – the first-ever Seminole Tribe of Florida member to be crowned Miss Indian World.

The 24-year-old is from the Hollywood Reservation. She is the daughter of Joe and Susan Kippenberger.

"It was upsetting to hear the news of the cancellation of [Gathering of Nations], but I was honored when asked if I was willing to serve another year," Kippenberger said in an email to the Tribune. "Being Miss

Indian World is a privilege. I look forward to another year of serving as an ambassador and representing our people. I am hoping to accomplish more community oriented work, like language revitalization, human trafficking awareness, and mental and physical health."

Organizers did say the Miss Indian World Pageant raffle drawing would still take place at a date to be determined before April 22, 2020.

"While this was not an easy decision, the Gathering of Nations continues to pray for the health and well-being of individuals infected with COVID-19 and encourages everyone to take precautions and the necessary preventative steps to help

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

RICHARD CASTILLO  
FLORIDA CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEY  
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◆ **EGMONT KEY**  
From page 1A

"It's pretty creepy," said Rylec King, 14, a student at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School in Brighton. "I learned about it in Miss Jade's class. I thought it was just some island, but my people stayed and died here. There is a lot of history here."

"It's crazy how they sacrificed themselves to get out of here," added Joseph Toneges, 18. "It's pretty cool to be out here to experience it."

Rita Youngman was also pleased so many young people were there to explore the island.

"They are searching for who they are," she said. "I'm proud to see young people here with their children. This is so important for them."

**Emotional Journey**

Parker was Brighton Councilman Larry Howard's great-great-grandmother. Being on the island for the first time was a moving experience for him.

"I wanted to stand on these grounds and visualize what happened here," Councilman Howard said. "It speaks volumes to me."

Egmont Key itself is a contradiction. On the one hand, it is a peaceful destination for

The island was the embodiment of the U.S. government's Indian Removal Act of 1830. The legislation authorized the removal of all Native Americans east of the Mississippi River from their lands in what became known as the Trail of Tears, which ended in Oklahoma. The Army referred to Egmont Key as an Indian depot.

"It was really a concentration camp," Scheidecker said.

Captured Seminoles were taken aboard the ship, the Grey Cloud, to New Orleans where they were marched to Oklahoma. However, one extraordinary Seminole woman escaped.

Parker bolted from the Grey Cloud when it stopped for fuel at Fort St. Marks in the Florida panhandle. Parker led a few other escapees and walked more than 330 miles to join their families near Lake Okeechobee. It was hostile territory, but they managed to survive.

Parker's determination to escape and live can be felt throughout the Tribe's history, then and now. Many of her progeny, such as Councilman Howard, live on the Brighton Reservation today.

In a 2016 story in the Tribune, then-Chairman James E. Billie mentioned former chairmen Howard Tommie and Betty Mae Jumper and then-Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr. "as examples of highly successful Polly Parker descendants."



Beverly Bidney

Brighton Councilman Larry Howard listens intently as THPO research coordinator David Scheidecker gives the history of cemetery on Egmont Key



Beverly Bidney

Descendants of Polly Parker pose together near the lighthouse on Egmont Key.



Beverly Bidney

Tribal members help each other off the boat from Fort DeSoto Park at Egmont Key. When seas are choppy, getting off the boat includes wobbly conditions and wet feet.

day-tripping beach-goers. On the other, it is the remnant of a horrific chapter of Seminole history.

"I can feel things out here," said Youngman, who has been to Egmont Key four times. "There is a sadness and a sense of pride because we survived. The voices are here. The ancestors wanted to be found, remembered and not lost."

THPO archeologists have been working to find evidence of the internment camp and other relics for about four years.

**Island's History**

A cemetery built on the highest part of Egmont Key is empty of graves now. The identities of all who were interred remain a mystery, but through intense research Scheidecker found handwritten records of six Indians who were buried there. Those remains were moved to other cemeteries and ultimately reburied in two graves in St. Augustine. The graves are labeled "Unknown Indians."



Beverly Bidney

Helene and Andy Buster, Connie Whidden, Rylec King and Michele Thomas listen and learn about Egmont Key.



Beverly Bidney

Quenton Cypress, Arnie Gore Avalos and others walk past the ruins of Fort Dade on their way back from the beach on Egmont Key.



Beverly Bidney

Edna Bowers and Rita Youngman rest in the window of a building that was part of the U.S. Army's Fort Dade on Egmont Key.



Beverly Bidney

Seminole walk the ground the ancestors did on Egmont Key as they tour the island's ruins on Feb. 29.

♦ **WARRIOR**  
From page 1A

Tribal member Tianna “Halie” Garcia of the Panther Clan and the daughter of Virginia Garcia was the female winner. Chris Torres, the spouse of Tribal member Doreen Cypress-Torres, was the male winner. They won a Seminole Warrior Champion belt in the style of WWE wrestlers or MMA fighters.

The other competitors were Joelli Frank, Jessica Osceola, Angel Billie, Marlin Miller, Mercedes Osceola and Elena Jim.

In addition to recreation department staff and personal trainers, there were emergency medical services (EMS) personnel on standby and Seminole police making sure the roads were clear.

“They all worked together and it was beautiful weather and a great day,” Herrera said.

One wish Herrera has for the next Warrior Competition: more participants. She said the department is hoping to make it an annual event that will hopefully drive more interest.

“Everyone who came had a good time and we received positive feedback,” she said.

The competition was open to Tribal members, descendants and community members who live on reservation. Participants had to be at least 18 years old.



Women's champion Tianna “Halie” Garcia, left, and men's champion Chris Torres hold up their championship belts after they won the first Seminole Warrior Competition on Feb. 29 in Big Cypress.

Matt Goes



Chris Torres competes in the tire lift portion of the Seminole Warrior Competition.

Matt Goes



Participants in the first Seminole Warrior Competition are all smiles as they get ready for the event.

Matt Goes

# Native Americans begin to take some traditions online

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Public health and government officials have advised (and sometimes ordered) people to stay in their homes except to access certain essential services in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Social distancing, quarantines and isolation have replaced group activities, public gatherings and events.

The new reality has forced many to work from home and to stay connected with friends, family and neighbors through virtual means.

It's been a challenging transition, including for Native Americans who use community song and dance as part of traditions both spiritual and healing.

As Indian Country Today reported this week, Native Americans in several communities have begun to put a “digital spin” on such traditions.

“People all over Indian Country are organizing virtual powwows and other social dances via social media as a means to offer hope and spiritual support during the COVID-19 pandemic,” the report said.

There are “social distance powwows” organized for the coming weekend on Facebook, for example, where dancers, singers and even vendors gather from their homes.

Jingle dress dancers from the Bad River Reservation in Wisconsin have organized a social distance dance in the tribe's parking lot on March 28. The dancers keep the recommended six feet of distance from each other as community members watch from their cars.

The tribe loaned dancers orange safety cones to mark off a safe dance circle.

“Organizing the dance was super organic; it offered a good way to offer healing to our community and the world,” Maday Bigboy, Bad River youth service coordinator said, in the report.



Bert Crowfoot Photography

A jingle dancer shown in competition.

# Seminole Hard Rock Tampa donates food

TRIBUNE STAFF

TAMPA — Even during its closure due to COVID-19 the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa is helping the community.

On March 24, Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa donated more than 11,000 pounds of food to Metropolitan Ministries in support of their initiative to serve 3,000

to-go meals at 25 locations daily during the COVID-19 crisis. The organization helps the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless in the Tampa Bay area.

“We're thankful to have such an amazing community partner and for the opportunity to give back to our Tampa Bay community,” Hard Rock posted on its Facebook page.



Hard Rock Tampa/  
Facebook

Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa donated more than 11,000 pounds of food.

# NAIG postponed until 2021

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

Young Indigenous athletes from the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the rest of North America will have to wait another year before competing in the North American Indigenous Games. NAIG officials announced March 25 that this year's games, scheduled to be held in July in Nova Scotia, Canada, have been postponed until 2021.

NAIG joins the endless list of postponements and cancellations around the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic that a day earlier forced the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics to be pushed back until 2021.

“The collective goal for all of us at this time is to keep everyone safe and healthy,” Tex Marshall, president of NAIG 2020, said in a statement. “To abide by the recommendations and guidance of the Nova Scotia government and its healthcare professionals is critical to slowing and eliminating this pandemic, even if it means the delay of something amazing. We at NAIG 2020 are proud of Nova Scotia's remarkable and unflinching efforts during this crisis.”

In an announcement on its Facebook page, NAIG explained that athletes who would have become too old to compete in the rescheduled 2021 Games will still be eligible.

The plan is to keep the Games in Nova Scotia. The event has been billed as “the largest multi-sport and cultural event ever to be held in Atlantic Canada.” The venues are

in in Kijipuktuk (Halifax), Millbrook First Nation, and Aldershot.

“The magic of the Games, even before they happened, had already begun to reverberate throughout the beautiful city of Halifax,” Dale Plett, President of the NAIG Council, said in a statement. “The focus now is for NAIG Council to work with the Host Society, NAIG funding partners and other key stakeholders to deliver the Games, in Halifax, in 2021.”

NAIG was created in 1990. It is held about every three to four years with cities in Canada and the U.S. serving as hosts. Recent hosts were Regina, Saskatchewan (2014) and Toronto (2017). It usually draws about 5,000 Indigenous athletes ages 13 to 19 who compete in 16 sports, including archery, baseball, basketball, golf, riflery, soccer, softball, track and field, swimming, volleyball and wrestling. It also serves as a cultural celebration with Indigenous vendors, musicians and pro athletes in attendance. Native American star Taboo, from the Black Eyed Peas, performed for the athletes at the 2017 opening ceremonies. Seminole athletes also met NHL player Jordan Nolan (First Nations Ojibwe), a three-time Stanley Cup champion.

Seminole athletes have represented the Tribe and Florida throughout the years. In 2017, Seminoles Connor Thomas (archery), Sammy Micco Sanchez (wrestling) and Santiago “Echo” Billie (rifle shooting) won gold medals and Aubee Billie (archery) won a bronze medal.



Kevin Johnson

Santiago “Echo” Billie, second from right, was one of three Seminole gold medal winners at the 2017 NAIG in Toronto. At far left is NHL player Jordan Nolan.

♦ **REMAINS**  
From page 3A

In addition to Osceola, who is a Tribal Court Associate Judge, the committee consists of Tribal Court Chief Justice Willie Johns, THPO staff and one staff member from the museum. It looked at the pros and cons of remaining an affiliate.

“Having that logo sent the wrong message,” Osceola said. “Being part of the program was a gold star for the museum. The Smithsonian provided resources, programs and education. Visitors saw it and it may have drawn them in. But at the end of the day, it's more important to stand behind this cause.”

“The Smithsonian was sad we made that decision,” Macuen said. “But if things change in a positive direction, we can consider going back.”

Osceola hopes other museums will follow suit. The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian has its own policy on repatriation, which she said is much better but isn't adhered to throughout all the museums of the Smithsonian.

“There is always an expectation of what the Smithsonian is, but it's disappointing when you are working with a national icon in the museum field and see these ethical issues,” Osceola said. “Our goal isn't to speak poorly of the other museums; it would be great to see them all work together on this issue.”

# Making Seminole voices heard to protect the future of South Florida

# H.E.R.O.

HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENT RESOURCES OFFICE

BY PAUL N. BACKHOUSE, PH.D.  
Senior Director  
Heritage and Environment Resources Office

Fact: Everglades "restoration" is the largest environmental project in the history of the planet. This monumental endeavor being carried out by the U.S. government extends from the headwaters south of Orlando that fill Lake Okechobee all the way to the southern tip of the Florida peninsula.

The effects to the reservations and ancestral lands of the Seminole people for current and future generations will be huge. This project could potentially transform the landscape of Florida.

While we all hope that this transformation will return some of the natural water-flow and the natural environment and wildlife that Tribal elders remember, the truth is that it is an uncertain process where numerous stakeholders all vying to have a seat at the table and a hand in planning process.

As a sovereign government the Seminole Tribe is in a unique position to have its voice heard because the U.S. government has a fundamental Trust obligation to listen to the concerns of the Tribe when planning these large projects. After all, it makes very good sense also that Seminole voices be heard during this process as it has been the Seminole people themselves who have survived and indeed thrived in the unique South Florida environment.

Numerous stories from community members and Tribal elders, works of art, photographs, postcards, clothing, and objects like canoes in the collection of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum point to how the environment of South Florida has changed over the last 100 years. Likewise, former camps on tree islands in the Big Cypress swamp and in the Everglades itself point to the Tribe's long occupation of the region and deep understanding of the ecology of the region. Many of these camps are remembered by Tribal elders and have



also been recorded in the records of the Tribes Tribal Historic Preservation Office. Community members remember when the Big Cypress Reservation still had Big Cypress trees sufficient to carve canoes for hunting, fishing and transportation – these are no longer available. Indeed, the Tribes Environmental Resources Management Department has been working with the community and collecting data on these changes to the environment for more than 20 years.

Unfortunately, Seminole concerns are rarely considered early in the process by the engineers who are planning

Everglades "restoration." This situation has led to difficulties in getting engineers and planners to appreciate the Seminole cultural landscape and thus avoid sensitive ancestral cultural sites. A good example of this situation is the current U.S. Army Corps project called the "Lake Okechobee Water Restoration Project," which threatens to impact ancestral cultural sites just to the east of the Brighton Reservation. In response to this and other large projects being planned, the Tribe has for some years been requesting that the U.S. Army Corps complete a report on the Seminoles' understanding of their own ancestral homelands so the Corps can

do a better job of planning future projects. Unfortunately, prior to this year, no money was set aside to complete this important study.

A glimmer of hope emerged however in early 2020 as sufficient funding was set aside by the U.S. Army Corps to complete the study. The Seminole Tribe is completing this important work itself; after all, who better to tell its own story. The study will allow the Tribe to point to its rich culture and understanding of the environment without giving away any of its cultural secrets. Work is already underway and we will be working directly with the community on the best

ways to make sure your voice is heard so that the culture and environment of current and future generations of Seminole people are acknowledged and protected.

If you want to know more about this project or would like to be involved please let us know. We will be reaching out on all reservations and also to the non-reservation community also. You can contact either myself or Quenton Cypress at the Billy L. Cypress Building on the Big Cypress Reservation or at the To-Pee-Ke-Ke Yak-ne Community Center also on Big Cypress.

## SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA AH-TAH-THI-KI MUSEUM A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

### NMAI: A landmark institution working for Indian Country

BY TARA BACKHOUSE  
Collections Manager  
Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Your own local museum, the Ah-Tah-Thi Ki Museum on the Big Cypress Reservation, works hard to share the Seminole story and to represent the Tribe's

interests in all our work. We are able to collaborate with many museums and other institutions in Florida, and we help them tell the Seminole story to all their visitors. But did you know there's another museum that strives to do that for all of Indian Country? It's the National Museum of the American Indian, commonly known as NMAI. And did you know that there's been a connection between the Seminole Tribe of Florida and

that institution for over two decades?

Although NMAI opened the doors of its newest Washington, D.C., facility in 2004, it has a much longer history. Its first facility in New York City became part of the Smithsonian Institution in 1989. Coincidentally, this was also when the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum was chartered and began building its collection. At the time the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki opened in 1997, we had an extensive working relationship with NMAI. The Tribe consulted with their professionals about how to build the world-class facility now on Big Cypress. And when it came time to build the permanent exhibits, NMAI loaned pieces from its collection in order to help the museum tell the Seminole story.

When NMAI opened in Washington, D.C., many tribes were very excited. Representatives from the Seminole Tribe joined others at the opening ceremonies to lead a procession on the National Mall to show their support. The Seminole Tribe had a strong presence that included the Seminole Color Guard and Tribal government officials.

If you go to NMAI, you might be surprised that the Seminole Tribe is only represented in a small way. Remember that NMAI has the responsibility of advocating for all the Indigenous people represented in



Nery Mejicano

The National Museum of the American Indian sits prominently among other Smithsonian museums on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

its collection. That's a big job. Come to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki for a total Seminole focus; go to NMAI to broaden your horizons.

One of the most important ways that NMAI fights for Native rights is in the area of repatriation. Responding to outrage over the state of national repatriation efforts, the National Museum of the American Indian Act was enacted in 1989. Under this law, NMAI has led repatriation efforts within its institution and has returned over 5,000 ancestors to their homes, getting them out of the hands of the non-Native institutions that have allowed research and other culturally insensitive treatment of those remains and significant cultural items for many years.

But repatriation is a work in progress. NMAI does a great job, but does not have control over every other Smithsonian Institution. Not everyone realizes how

separately the individual museums of the Smithsonian Institution are managed. This is why the Seminole Tribe's Native American Graves Protection from Repatriation Act Committee has had to mount a #NoMoreStolenAncestors campaign aimed at the Smithsonian Institution. It's not because we've cut off relations with the flagship museum of Indian Country; they are still fighting the good fight, and we think of them as a sister institution. However, there's work to be done elsewhere in the nation's capital. Join in the fight to advocate for the return of all Seminole ancestors. Our work and your voice will not only help to address historic and current offenses to the Seminole Tribe but also those committed against fellow tribes and Indigenous peoples across the Indian world.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

A silversmith can be seen working with silver above the display of an early 20th century silverworker's kit, on loan from NMAI's collection, in the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's "Camp Life" gallery.



Nery Mejicano

Helene Buster and Michelle Thomas carried the banner that led the Seminole contingent of the procession celebrating NMAI's opening in 2004. The Seminole color guard follows closely behind.



# Health



## A guide to preventing coronavirus

**FROM PRESS RELEASE**

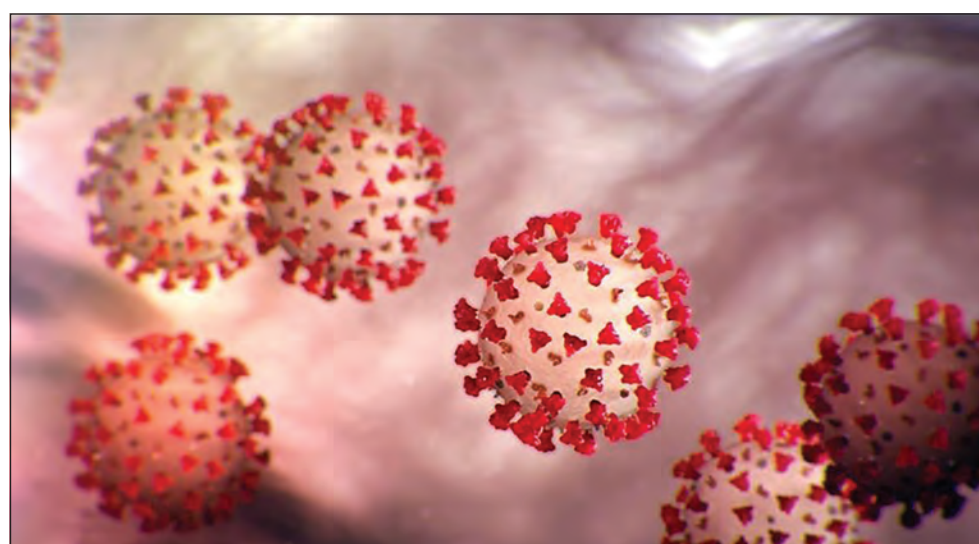
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers these guidelines for coronavirus (COVID-19):

**Know how it spreads**

- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

**Clean your hands often**

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they



feel dry.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

**Avoid close contact**

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Put distance between yourself and other people if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting

very sick.

**Stay home if you're sick**

- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care. Learn what to do if you are sick.

**Cover coughs and sneezes**

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.

- Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

**Wear a facemask if you are sick**

- If you are sick: You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes, and people who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room. Learn what to do if you are sick.
- If you are NOT sick: You do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a facemask). Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.

**Clean and disinfect**

- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them:

Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

To disinfect: Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work. Use disinfectants appropriate for the surface.

- Options include:
- Diluting your household bleach.
- To make a bleach solution, mix:
- 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water
  - or
  - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

- Alcohol solutions. Ensure solution has at least 70% alcohol.
- Other common EPA-registered household disinfectants.

Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens pdf icon[7 pages]external icon claims are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

## New Native American center opens to serve Houston's underserved indigenous community

BY KATRINA MARTINEZ  
The Daily Cougar

HOUSTON — There are an estimated 70,000 Native Americans who call Houston and its surrounding areas home, but there have been little to no services, centers or programs geared toward the needs of natives in the fourth largest city in the country.

To fill the void, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana, which has about 400 of its 1,200 enrolled tribal members living around Houston, opened the new American Indian Center of Houston in late February with their goal to help the underserved Native American population that lives in the Houston area.

"They've been here," said Nikki

McDonald, the director of the new center and Tunica-Biloxi tribal member who has lived in the area for about 10 years. "They've asked for help. They haven't been able to receive help. It's almost kind of — I don't want to say — a slap in the face, but there's so many programs to help other communities, but I haven't seen that program for Native Americans yet."

The center, which hopes to provide things like health services, mental health support, substance abuse rehabilitation, a fitness center, mentorship programs and community events in the future, was conceived after Tunica-Biloxi tribal councilmembers found Houston had such a large and underserved population of Native Americans.

"We started looking at what programs

and services are available for Native Americans in the Houston area," McDonald said. "There's not really a whole lot. Houston is the fourth-largest city in the United States of America, and we have a population of 70,000 (Natives). We have to do something about that."

McDonald hopes to grow the center into one like those in Dallas or Oklahoma, which both have large inter-tribal centers that have served natives for many years.

They have even partnered with the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe, which is based out of Livingston, to provide more to the Native community. The hope is to create a hub where all Native Americans can turn to for assistance and services, McDonald said.

## NIHB postpones Tribal Public Health Summit

TRIBUNE STAFF

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Due to concerns about the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the Board of Directors and CEO of the National Indian Health Board (NIHB) announced March 11 that the 2020 National Tribal Public Health Summit, scheduled for March 17-20 in Omaha, Nebraska, has been postponed to a later time during 2020.

NIHB said in a press release:

"NIHB, as a Tribal health organization, believes that we have a commitment to safeguard the health of all Tribal members, and that postponing the Summit to a date later in the year, could help to keep our Peoples healthy. This decision also recognizes that Tribal public health staff and Tribal leaders are committed to being available within their own communities where they may be needed to address this outbreak locally.

"In addition, Tribal communities are the most vulnerable and least resourced to address a public health outbreak such as

the COVID-19 virus. Tribal communities are disproportionately impacted by health conditions that increase the risk of a more serious COVID-19-related illness. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, these conditions include (but are not limited to) heart disease, diabetes, and respiratory illnesses. Among our Peoples who are 8 years of age and over, rates of coronary heart disease are 1.5 times the rate for Whites, while rates of diabetes among our Peoples are nearly three times the general population. Studies have shown that American Indians and Alaska Natives are also at increased risk of lower respiratory tract infections, and in certain regions of the country are twice as likely as the general population to become infected and hospitalized with pneumonia, bronchitis, and influenza. These vulnerability factors were key in informing our decision to postpone the NIHB National Tribal Public Health Summit."

For more information go to nihb.org.

## Diné doctor honored

FROM PRESS RELEASE

TULSA, Okla. — Dr. Tarajeau Yazzie-Mintz (Diné), founder and principal consultant at First Light Education Project and former vice president for program initiatives at the American Indian College Fund in Denver, Colorado, has been named the 2020 Brock Prize in Education Innovation Laureate.

Dr. Yazzie-Mintz has committed her life to developing and implementing culturally-grounded educational programs and services for American Indian and Alaska Native children, their families, communities, and tribes. Through her leadership and vision in overseeing Wakanyeya ("Sacred Little Ones") Early Childhood Education Initiative at the American Indian College Fund, Dr. Yazzie-Mintz positively impacted

the lives of more than 4,000 children, 3,000 families, and 1,200 teachers in Indigenous communities.

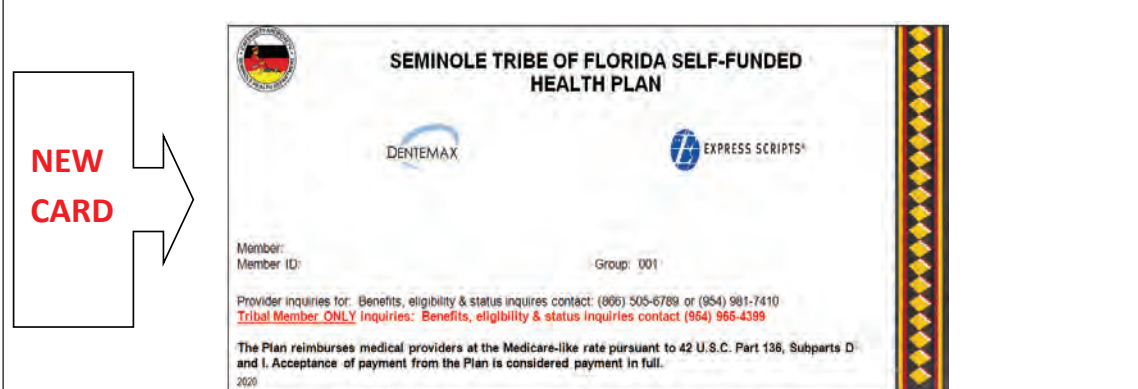
Dr. Yazzie-Mintz was scheduled to be the featured speaker at the 19th annual Brock Prize Symposium in March, but the event has been postponed until the fall due to COVID-19.



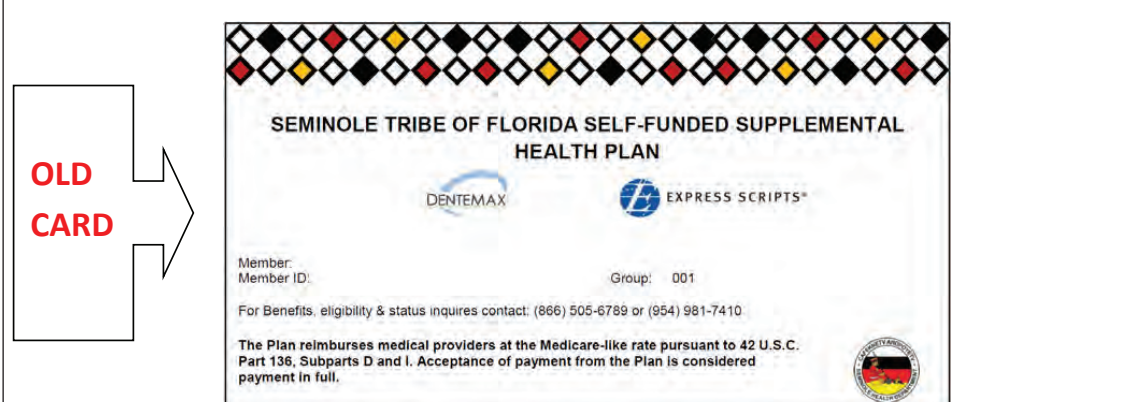
Courtesy photo

Dr. Tarajeau Yazzie-Mintz

### NEW HEALTH PLAN CARD - EFFECTIVE MARCH 1, 2020



### OLD HEALTH PLAN CARD



The STOF Health Department anticipates mailing a new STOF Member Health Plan card and benefits book to you in March 2020. If you have an address change, please contact one of the STOF Health Clinics to provide your current mailing address.

Please begin showing your new card to medical, dental, and pharmacy providers immediately.

If you do not receive your new card and benefits book in the mail, please contact the STOF Health Clinic so that we can ensure you receive these important documents.

Hollywood Health Clinic  
(954) 962-2009

Big Cypress Health Clinic  
(863) 983-5151

Brighton Health Clinic  
(863) 763-0271

Immokalee Health Clinic  
(239) 867-3400

## Children are not immune to stress.

That's why it's important to keep an eye on their mental and emotional health.



Complete health care coverage supports the mind and spirit with the same care as physical health.

Contact your local Indian health care provider for more information, visit [HealthCare.gov](http://HealthCare.gov), or call 1-800-318-2596.



# SEMINOLE SCENES



Beverly Bidney

**KID ON THE KEY:** Annie Washington, 2, stands on the ruin of a battery of Fort Dade that was once armed with a cannon aimed at Tampa. A Tampa resident, Annie was one of the youngest children who attended a trip to Egmont Key on Feb. 29.



Kevin Johnson

**SEMINOLE SUPPORT:** Okeechobee High softball player Jacee Jumper, of the Brighton Reservation, left, helps her teammate Lauren Sills off the field after Sills was injured on a play at second base during the Brahman game against South Fork on March 13.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

**MUSEUM TOUR:** From left, Karson Turner, Hendry County Commissioner; Alex Johns; Sonny Perdue, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture; and Johnny Morris, owner and CEO of Bass Pro Shops, gather outside the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum following a VIP tour on March 7.



Beverly Bidney (2)

**INSPIRATIONAL ASCENT:** The staircase at the Tribal Historic Preservation Office Major Billy L. Cypress building may not be an art museum, but its stairwell boasts a mural by Tribal artist Wilson Bowers. Themes of the fresco- resistance, inspiration, strength and excel- are on display throughout the piece.



Seminole Casino Coconut Creek/Facebook

**HULK IN THE HOUSE:** Actor Lou Ferrigno, who starred in The Incredible Hulk TV series in the late 1970s and early 1980s, smiles with chips in hands as he hosts a blackjack tournament Feb. 21 at Seminole Casino Coconut Creek.



Hard Rock

**POWER SHIRT:** In celebration of March being International Women's Month, Hard Rock Café is offering a limited edition "Who Runs the World" T-shirt at select Hard Rock Café Rock Shops and at hardrockcafe.com. Hard Rock has been recognized by Forbes magazine as one of "America's Best Employers for Diversity" in 2020, as well as one of "America's Best Employers for Women" in 2019 within the travel and leisure category.



Jimmy Johnson Fishing Week/Facebook

**GONE FISHTIN':** Former University of Miami, Dallas Cowboys and Miami Dolphins coach Jimmy Johnson holds one of his signed guitars March 6 that were part of the ninth annual Jimmy Johnson's "Quest for the Ring" Championship Fishing Week held March 3-7 in South Florida. Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood was the title sponsor of the event, which drew about 100 teams to the waters off Key Largo, Miami and Fort Lauderdale in pursuit of fish and hundreds of thousands of dollars in prize money. Hard Rock was the site of several events, including a captain's meeting at the Comedy Club, VIP Ring of Honor Champions dinner at Abiaka restaurant, a cocktail kickoff party at Daer Day Club and a closing awards celebration on the pool deck.

# NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

## Native American tribes file lawsuit to challenge Montana voter registration law

Voting rights organizations filed a lawsuit March 12 on behalf of Native Americans in Montana over the state's new Ballot Interference Prevention Act (BIPA), which they argue restricts Native Americans from casting ballots.

The majority of Montanans cast their ballots through mail, but because Native American reservations in the state are geographically isolated and lack postal service, those who live there rely on voting organizations to collect and transport ballots to election offices that would otherwise be inaccessible, the plaintiffs said. BIPA imposes new restrictions on who can collect ballots and how many ballots can be collected, reducing what used to be 80 ballots to only six.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Montana and the Native American Rights Fund, which filed the lawsuit on behalf of the Western Native Voice and Montana Native Vote, argue the law prevents indigenous people from voting.

"We are urging the court to immediately block this law that would disenfranchise thousands of eligible voters who live on rural reservations," Alora Thomas-Lundborg, ACLU staff attorney, said in a statement. "This case is about making sure every eligible voter who wants to vote can actually do so."

The plaintiffs also argued that BIPA is in many ways incompatible with the social structures of Native American life, such as the definition of "family member," which to indigenous people can extend past blood-relationship.

"BIPA ignores the everyday realities that face Native American communities," said Jacqueline De León of the Native American Rights Fund. "It is not reasonable to expect voters to drive an hour to drop off their ballot, so collecting ballots in reservation communities just makes sense. Criminalizing this behavior is unfair to Native American voters and does nothing to solve the real problem of mail not being picked up and delivered to Native homes."

Montana Secretary of State Corey Stapleton told the Great Falls Tribune that BIPA was passed to prevent voter fraud and was "overwhelmingly" embraced by voters, including indigenous people.

"BIPA is supported overwhelmingly by Montanans, including the counties in Indian Country," Stapleton said. "It's always dicey when plaintiffs try to overturn the will of the people."

- *The Hill*

## Margaret Treuer, trailblazing Native American lawyer and advocate, dies at 76

Maximum Margaret, Peggy Legs, Queen of Bena.

Although Margaret "Peggy" Seelye Treuer took with her a collection of titles garnered throughout her lifetime when she died March 18 at the age of 76, the world was left with memories of an inspiring woman whose ambitions defied her humble beginnings, trailblazing a path to become the first female Native American lawyer in Minnesota.

Treuer — whose Ojibwe names were Giuwedinookwe (North Wind Woman) and Aazhideyaashiikwe (Crossing Flight Woman) — was born in 1943 and grew up in a one-room, 8-foot by 14-foot cabin in Bena, Minn., in the middle of the Chippewa National Forest on the Leech Lake Reservation.

Her family had inhabited the south shore of Lake Winnibigoshish for many generations, living off the land and making use of its natural abundances.

"We had five kids in the family," Treuer said in a 2012 interview. "We were pretty poor. We lived on a subsistence diet of rice, deer, partridge and rabbits."

Nevertheless, Treuer was an enthusiastic student, and graduated from Cass Lake High School in 1961. She then proceeded to get her degree from St. Luke's Nursing School in Duluth.

She utilized her nursing degree to advocate for tribal health programs and founded Leech Lake Reservation's Community Health Program, later writing the grant to administer Red Lake Reservation's first nursing program.

After meeting and marrying Robert Treuer, an Austrian Jewish immigrant and Holocaust survivor, Treuer moved with him to Washington, D.C. During this time, she gained the title of mother upon giving birth to two sons, Anton and David.

While juggling her role as a full-time mother, Treuer also entered law school at Catholic University and volunteered at the Native American Rights Fund. There, she worked with Ada Deer and Silvia Wilbur, two figures involved in the reestablishment of the Menominee Reservation in Wisconsin.

"Because of my work on Menominee restoration, I came to see how important the law was to Indian people," Treuer said in the 2012 interview. "I'd decided that since I was living in D.C. — I would rather have been home — I would do something that I couldn't have done at home."

Treuer succeeded in earning her law degree, going on to be an American Indian housing advocate at the Bureau of Indian Affairs for a short time. In her personal life, she and her husband expanded their family when she gave birth to twins, Megan and Micah.

And in 1977, Treuer became the first Native American female lawyer in Minnesota. She would go on to become the first Native American female judge in the

country.

"Even as a small child, my mother worked hard — at everything from the Ojibwe seasonal harvest to her school work to her jobs at the local cafe," Treuer's son, Anton, said in a 2017 essay.

When her family moved back to Minnesota in the late 1970s, Treuer and attorney Paul Day opened the first Native American law firm in the state. The practice continued for four years until he was appointed to Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Minnesota.

Continuing her advocacy for Native people, Treuer worked for the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa as a contract tribal judge in the '80s and then expanded to Red Lake Nation in the 1990s. In 1998, she continued her work on the Leech Lake Reservation.

Throughout her time practicing law, Treuer worked as a lawyer, federal magistrate and a tribal court judge. In 2012, she was awarded the National Association of Women Judges Lifetime Achievement Award.

Of the Turtle Clan, Treuer continuously embraced her Native culture throughout her life, having taught her four children how to gather wild rice, hunt, tap maple trees and live off the land. She also served as a mentor and guide to many individuals in their quests for healing and ceremonial connection.

- *MPR News*

## Native American campus community prepares for new Native Resource Center

SAN DIEGO — San Diego State University's Native American population will now have a home of its own on campus: the Native Resource Center.

The Native Resource Center, along with the newly added Latinx Resource Center, was part of the Instructionally Related Fee proposal approved by the university in the fall. The fee revenue will support these two centers as well as a planned Asian American Pacific Islander/Desi Resource Center.

The center was set to have an official grand opening on Mar. 17 at Arts and Letters 202, but due to the coronavirus concerns and recent SDSU decisions regarding public campus events, the event was postponed.

Sociology and American Indian studies sophomore Jeremy Billy is a part of the Native Resource Planning Committee and the treasurer of the Native American Student Alliance organization on campus. He said he is happy and thankful for this new space.

"I'm just happy that we finally have a space solidified. It's been a long road and I'm just glad to have something that we call our own," Billy said. "It's a place for us to meet instead of having to find someplace off-campus."

- *The Daily Aztec*

## Pamunkey Tribe eager to move forward with casino proposals

The recently recognized Pamunkey Tribe is seeking to build two casinos in Virginia as full-scale gaming moves closer to reality.

The Tribe has its eyes on Norfolk, where local officials already support plans for a facility on 13.4 acres on the waterfront. The Tribe is also hoping to bid on a potential casino in the capital city of Richmond.

"The Pamunkey Tribe is eager to move forward with its plans to build a world-class resort and casino in Norfolk and ready to respond to Richmond's Request for Proposals to bring a casino to the River City," a statement released to the media read. "Its plans to build two resorts with casinos will allow the Tribe to provide needed programs and services to its members. It will be a great partner for Norfolk and Richmond. The Tribe will keep profits in Virginia through reinvestment locally and will provide tremendous benefits to these regions of the Commonwealth for decades to come."

Moving forward depends on additional steps at the state and local levels, as Gov. Ralph Northam has yet to sign legislation that paves the way for full-scale gaming. Assuming the bill becomes law, voters in Norfolk and in Richmond would then be asked whether they want a casino in their community, the outcome which will affect the Tribe's plans.

The Tribe could go another route, by seeking federal approval to have land placed in trust in order to open a casino. The process, however, is likely to take several years, if not longer, due to hurdles at the Bureau of Indian Affairs and potential legal challenges.

Opening a casino under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act also requires a Class III compact if the Tribe intends to run slot machines, card games and related offerings. The state would have to come to the table and negotiate.

As a recently recognized Indian nation, the Tribe would have to prove that it was "under federal jurisdiction" in 1934 in order to qualify for the fee-to-trust process at the BIA. The Tribe could also ask Congress to acquire trust lands.

- *Indianz.com*

## House bill on property tax exemptions for tribal owned properties passes the Washington state Legislature

House bill 2230 is on its way to the governor's desk, having passed the Washington state Legislature.

Its subject matter was a recent topic of heated discussion between city of Snoqualmie Mayor Matt Larson and Snoqualmie Tribal Council Chairman Robert de los Angeles. After Larson emailed remarks to state representatives, de los Angeles formally requested an apology. Larson remains unapologetic.

The bill would amend property tax exemptions for off-reservation tribal-owned properties used for economic development, removing a previous expiration date as well as the requirement for properties to have been purchased prior to March 1, 2014. Essentially, more properties could be eligible for property tax exemption, and the exemption could be permanent.

The Snoqualmie Tribe purchased the Salish Lodge & Spa and held-sacred land surrounding Snoqualmie Falls from the Muckleshoot Tribe for \$125 million in fall 2019, saving the land from development. The Tribe also recently purchased Eighth Generation, a native lifestyle brand located in downtown Seattle.

Since both were acquired after 2014, they would only qualify for property tax exemption if the purchase date restriction was removed.

HB 2230 passed the House 83-13 on Feb. 13. It passed the Senate, with an amendment allowing cities to be part of negotiations between counties and tribes, 47-1 on March 5. The House concurred with the amendment and the bill passed final passage on March 9, 84-12.

Larson, in an emailed statement to the Record, said, "I am very disappointed. It is fundamentally unfair to all other taxpayers in my community."

The Snoqualmie Tribe chose not to comment while the legislation is still pending the governor's signature.

On Feb. 27, there was a public hearing on HB 2230 in the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. Staff gave a brief overview of the bill and several people testified in support of it.

Property owned by federal, state or local governments is exempt from property tax under the state Constitution, including land held in trust by the federal government for tribes. In 2004, a law exempted tribal-owned land used for essential government services — such as police and fire — from having to pay property taxes.

In 2014, the state passed Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1287 (ESHB 1287). The bill expanded the types of tribal properties eligible for property tax exemption to include off-reservation land used for economic development, if it was already owned as of March 1, 2014.

The 2014 legislation also requires state and local leasehold excise tax if the exempt property is leased to a private entity. There was also a provision requiring a tribe and county to negotiate a payment in lieu of leasehold excise taxes (PILT) for exempt property used for economic development located outside of the tribe's reservation without a lease to a private entity.

A tribe makes the PILT to the county in which the property resides, and some of those funds are redistributed to the city in which the property is located. Cities are not a part of those discussions.

The 2014 changes are set to expire Jan. 1, 2022. HB 2230 would eliminate the expiration date and the requirement that the property used for economic development must have been owned prior to March 1, 2014.

There could be a revenue reduction to the state of approximately \$400,000 per year beginning in 2021. There is also a slight shift to other property owners, staff explained, because the currently exempt property that would otherwise get added back to the tax roll under current law would now stay off of the tax roll.

Therefore the tax rate for other property owners would go up by a fractional amount to offset that.

Donny Stevenson, vice chairman of the Muckleshoot Tribal Council, testified on behalf of the Muckleshoot Tribe, stating that they helped lead the effort on tribal property tax equity over the last 15 years.

"House bill 2230 can finally complete what was started in 2004, placing federally recognized Indian Tribal governments on the same level as state and local governments when it comes to property taxes and the essential governmental services of economic development," he said. "Sovereign governments should not be treated differently from state and local governments when it comes to taxation."

Stevenson said that tribes provide essential services just like other governments, and that the bill would remove uncertainty for tribes as they continue to provide services to their tribal members and their communities by removing the economic development exemption expiration date. He also said removing the March 2014 date restriction on ownership would allow more tribes to qualify for these property tax exemptions.

He noted that the legislation would still have the protections of the leasehold excise tax provisions and the PILT. He urged the support of the committee to complete what was started in 2004 — "actual equity and fairness for tribes and equal footing with the state and local property taxation."

Dylan Doty, also on behalf of the Muckleshoot Tribe, also emphasized that 2014 policy would not be removed aside from the two date restrictions.

"This is not about trying to get away from supporting our local partners, it's simply about the property tax fairness that underlies all of that," he said.

He said the date restrictions created uncertainty and limited this exemption to three tribes in the state — the Puyallup, the Suquamish and the Muckleshoot.

"The three counties in which this has been utilized ... are all supportive of the bill," he said. "We ask for your support to remove those date restrictions and allow us to move forward with certainty."

Snoqualmie Tribal Council Vice Chair Michael Ross testified at the hearing. He thanked the Muckleshoot Tribe for their work on the matter.

"It's really an honor to be in front of you, and I'm glad to be here supporting our cousins in the Muckleshoot Tribe and putting our efforts behind them," he said. "It does benefit all tribes and not just the few that have been able to access it over this time."

He explained how the Snoqualmie Tribe had recently purchased the Salish Lodge & Spa

from the Muckleshoot Tribe, after 2014, so it is subject to taxation. He also mentioned the recent Eighth Generation purchase.

"Both of these things would help us out tremendously," he said. "And we'd also like to thank the mayor of the city of Snoqualmie for putting this on our radar and allowing us to get in front of you today. We hope that it all passes smoothly, and we thank you for your time and effort."

Ross was joined by Matthew Randazzo, state lobbyist for the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe and the Quinault Indian Nation. Since Ross had spoken on behalf of the Snoqualmie Tribe, he chose to limit his comments to representing the Quinault Nation.

"President Fawn Sharp of the Quinault Nation and National Congress of American Indians has asked me to stress that this is a fundamental equality issue and a matter of simple respect for tribal sovereignty and tribal equality," he said. "We also wanted to acknowledge both the work of the legislature in moving this bill this year but also the incredible work of the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe for over a decade of working on this issue. We are really standing on the shoulders of giants and following in their footsteps."

The amendment added to HB 2230 was to the section on PILT negotiations. The effect is that it will allow cities to participate with the counties in PILT negotiations with tribes.

A desire for cities to be part of these discussions was previously expressed as part of the argument of those opposing the bill during another hearing. Arguments against the bill also included unknown economic impacts, covert property tax shifts, and property tax revenue being a primary source of revenue for cities and counties.

Those who previously testified in support of the bill called it a tax equity issue and noted an expiration date creates uncertainty and difficulty in the planning of investments. They also emphasized the importance of economic development for their communities.

Larson's original email on Jan. 7 was sent to state senators and representatives requesting they join the city in opposing the bill. He also copied members of the Snoqualmie Tribe on the email as well as various community members, city councilmembers, city staff, county representatives and regional officials.

Larson wrote that he had learned the Tribe lobbied for the legislation so the Salish Lodge & Spa could be eligible. He also said he was concerned about a covert tax burden shift onto his lower income residents, and that he feared "local sovereignty" was at risk.

He reminded everyone that the city previously challenged the law — now up for amendment — in 2014. They prevailed in King County Superior Court but then lost in Supreme Court at the state level. The 2014 legislation was upheld.

De los Angeles sent back a letter via email, formally requesting an apology for Larson's message that he wrote was offensive, disrespectful, accusatory, sent without discussion and "filled with inaccuracies and fear-mongering that are damaging to the diplomatic civic discourse we would like to foster with our governmental partners."

He said the Tribe had not advocated for the legislation, and that they actually had not previously heard of it. He took issue with some of Larson's language choices, labeling it as offensive and parts of it cultural appropriation. He also wrote that the interaction was consistent with past interactions with the mayor's office.

Larson responded that he stood by his comments, still had the same concerns, and found the letter to be lengthy hyperbole and an overreaction.

- *Snoqualmie Valley (Wash.) Record*

## Proposed Catawba Indian casino in King's Mountain moves forward

RALEIGH, N.C. — On March 12, the Catawba Indian Nation held a press conference to present renderings and construction plans for a new destination casino on a site in Kings Mountain, North Carolina.

According to a press release, the U.S. Department of the Interior has taken the land in question into trust and, as a result, the Catawba Indian Nation can now move forward with the proposed project.

"The Nation is very thankful for the Department's decision to take this land into trust, enabling us to achieve the promise of self-determination though economic development," said Chief Harris in a statement.

"The Department has a very rigorous process for reviewing proposed trust land acquisitions. We are very thankful for the hard work of the Department's solicitors and staff on our application, who carefully reviewed our history, including our historic land settlement, ensuring that it is consistent with the Supreme Court's Carciere decision," Harris said.

The proposed destination casino and resort is projected to bring as many as 5,000 construction jobs and 4,000 permanent jobs to the King's Mountain area. Supporters of the casino estimate it will bring \$350 million in potential revenue to the town, which is located just 35 miles west of Charlotte.

The Catawba Indian Nation statement said that the tribe plans to "begin working closely with Gov. Cooper's office so that the state of North Carolina can also benefit from the project in Kings Mountain."

The proposed casino project, which was first discussed during tribal meetings in 2013, now is expected to include a \$600 million 220,000-square-foot casino complex with an estimated 1,796 electronic gaming devices and 54 table games. There is a plan for a 1,500-room hotel, as well as restaurants, shopping and a full-sized concert and event venue.

The Catawba Indians are located in South Carolina, but claim tribal lands that extend north into the area of the casino

project near King's Mountain. The project has been met with strong opposition from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians located in North Carolina, which operate casinos further to the west of King's Mountain.

The Catawba River is named after the tribe and originates in Western North Carolina. The word "catawba" means "the people of the river" in their Siouan language. The tribe's name is also referenced in Catawba County, a foothills county whose county seat is Hickory. Catawba College, now located in Salisbury, was founded in Newton, a town in Catawba County.

The federal government terminated recognition of the tribe in 1959. In 1973, the Catawba Indian Nation reorganized and began the process of reestablishing federal recognition. In 1993, the federal government recognized the Catawba nation and paid, along with the state of South Carolina, a \$50 million settlement for land claims.

The Eastern Band is promising to sue the U.S. government for "its illegal and corrupt decision" to allow Catawba casino to go forward.

In a press release, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians claim that the government is ignoring federal laws that prohibit the "Catawba Indian Tribe of South Carolina" from tribal government gaming under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

"The federal government has no right or authority to create a new reservation for the Catawba Nation across state lines, into Cherokee historical territory, just to build a casino," Chief Richard Sneed said in a statement.

The statement also says that the Bureau of Indian Affairs also has yet to consult with the Cherokee on protection measures and that a possibility exists of archaeological artifacts and resources being discovered during construction on the proposed casino site.

"This decision creates a dangerous precedent for all federally recognized tribes that empowers corrupt developers and their lobbyists to use politicians to determine what laws and precedents are followed and which ones are ignored. This decision cannot and will not stand," said Sneed.

The Cherokees operate two casinos west of King's Mountain: Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort, which is 130 miles away; and Harrah's Cherokee Valley River Casino and Hotel, around 190 miles away. The Catawba casino would be located just 35 miles from Charlotte.

The casino project also drew harsh criticism in early 2019 from North Carolina state lawmakers after North Carolina's two U.S. senators, Republicans Richard Burr and Thom Tillis, signed on as primary sponsors of a bill introduced by South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham.

U.S. Senate Bill 790, which has had no activity since being introduced in March of 2019, would have authorized the U.S. Department of the Interior to allow the South Carolina Catawba Nation to obtain around 16 acres near Kings Mountain in North Carolina for its proposed casino complex. With the Department of the Interior now taking the land into trust, the bill has been rendered unnecessary.

Thirty-eight N.C. state lawmakers signed a letter opposing the casino project bill. The letter dated May 16, was sent to the chairman and vice chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and called Senate Bill 790 an "unprecedented overreach."

The letter to the committee also said if the project was allowed to go forward it would "encroach upon Cherokee aboriginal territory defined in the Cherokee Treaty 1777 map." The letter also said it would "deal an economic blow to a region of the state that depends on this industry and the thousands of jobs it provides annually."

At the time, Senate Leader Phil Berger (R-Eden) said "This bill that was introduced by a South Carolina senator to allow property in North Carolina to be given to a South Carolina tribe is something that I would hope our representatives would fight."

- *North State (N.C.) Journal*

## Wyoming governor signs bill to make it easier to use tribal IDs for voter registration

It is easier for Indigenous people in Wyoming who want to use their tribal identification when registering to vote, now that Gov. Mark Gordon has signed legislation addressing the issue.

The new law makes it clear that tribal IDs can be used as the sole form of identification when registering to vote, as long as a valid driver's license number or last four digits of a Social Security number are printed on the ID. Previously, a tribal ID could be used if a valid driver's license accompanied it, or if the license number or last four digits of a Social Security number were presented when registering to vote.

The legislation was supported by the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes, though leaders have said they wanted it to go further by not requiring a driver's license number or last four digits of a Social Security number.

"What this bill does is provide clear expectations to the tribes, every county and the state regarding tribal IDs," said Rep. Andi Clifford, D-Fort Washlake.

Clifford, a member of the Northern Arapaho Tribe, sits on the state's Select Committee on Tribal Relations, which took up the issue last year after concerns surfaced that tribal citizens struggled to use their tribal IDs when registering to vote for the 2018 election.

- *Casper (Wyoming) Star Journal*

# THE SHOPPES AT THE GUITAR HOTEL.

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# Education

B

## Tribal students travel to Hawaii for Close Up Asia Pacific program

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

It took a journey about 5,000 miles from home for a group of Tribal students to understand first-hand how international diplomacy works, and sometimes doesn't.

Twelve students from Big Cypress, Brighton, Hollywood and Immokalee attended the Close Up Asia Pacific program held in Honolulu, Hawaii from Feb. 15 to 21. The program focused on foreign policy and included an international relations simulation, during which the students role-played as leaders of various nations.

Seminole students have been attending the Close Up program in Washington D.C. for about 21 years, but this was the first time they participated in the Asia Pacific program. In the D.C. program, students learn how to relate and communicate with the U.S. government as a sovereign nation. The Hawaii program is similar, but on a global scale.

"Students learned to negotiate diplomatically from one region to another," said Alvaro Perez, Center for Student Success and Services assistant director. "Real life issues were discussed, including how the coronavirus is impacting tourism and trade between China and the rest of the world, other countries and your own local government."

The high school students, which included groups from the Tribe, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Apache Nation of New Mexico and School of the Sacred Heart Academy in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, were divided into four groups for the three day international relations simulation. Each group was assigned a fictional Pacific nation for which they had to make decisions by negotiating with the other countries. Each country was ruled by a different type of government including democracies and dictatorships.

During the simulation, students discussed culture, economics, the environment and each country's federal policies.

"They had to negotiate treaties and trade

deals," said Shavonna Daniels, CSSS K-12 program manager. "They each had a press secretary, communicated with news outlets and live tweeted."

"It was very engaging," added Keivon Bell, CSSS K-12 project coordinator. "They had to figure out how to make their own countries better and work with other nations."

The simulation focused on how foreign policy is developed and implemented and how nations work to promote their own interests and values as they manage their relations with other nations. Students learned one of the biggest challenges is balancing core national values, ideals and commitments with necessary actions and choices that must be made.

"They had to learn to work with other people, and they weren't all native," said chaperone Mariann Billie, who is also Mahala Billie Osceola's mother. "There were obstacles they had to work out to be able to help each other. Even though we aren't the same, we all have to learn to work together."

Ahfachkee ninth grader Carlise Bermudez and University School senior Chandler Demayo enjoyed the simulation. Even though their country was a dictatorship, they learned decisions aren't just made by one person; a lot of different people had to weigh in first.

"Our country wanted to go to war, nuclear war," Bermudez said. "But it didn't pass. It showed me that high schoolers running a country is not a good thing."

During the simulation each country had to negotiate with each other using the tools of foreign policy which include intelligence and information, diplomacy, aid, economic development and trade, and military influence or force.

"We interacted as diplomats, leaders and security advisors," Demayo said. "It was funny that it almost escalated to nuclear war and interesting to see how diplomacy works between nations. Our country had a dispute about islands the other countries had claim

to, but we had the most resources and power."

Both students said the simulation was a good experience.

"Our country was overpopulated so bombs would have solved our problem," Bermudez said. "Again, high schoolers running a country. Most of the other countries were mad at us because we were only for ourselves and didn't care about the other countries."

In the end, thanks to the skills of a skilled debater on their team, Bermudez's and Demayo's country negotiated and got the extra land they needed without giving anything in return.

"The curriculum provided so much rigor for the students and aligned with what they do every day in school, such as language, social studies, math and science," Daniels said. "It was an enriching program."

The week wasn't all work; the students had a chance to experience the lifestyle and history of Hawaii. They hiked Diamond Head, an inactive volcano, went to the aquarium, surfing, a luau and visited the Polynesian Voyaging Society and the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies. A nature preserve, state park and Waikiki beach were also on the schedule.

"It was wonderful," Bermudez said. "The first night we wore our traditional clothing and some kids had never seen that before. We showed the other kids who we are and that we are still here. By the end of the week we were all good friends and it was sad to see them go."

Perez said the Asia Pacific program was more rigorous than the D.C. program, but the long distance travel added another dimension to the week.

"It taught the kids to be flexible and more independent," he said. "Flexibility and getting out of their comfort zone was a really big thing for these kids. It is non-tangible, you can't measure it. But that was also part of the learning process."



Courtesy photo

A group of students hold the tiller of a sailboat at the Polynesian Voyaging Society. The tiller steers the double hulled canoe/sailboat by moving the rudder under the water.



Courtesy photo

The participants in the Close Up Asia Pacific program gather for a photo at the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies.



Courtesy photo

Exploring the beaches of Hawaii was one of the recreational activities during the Close Up Asia Pacific program.



Courtesy photo

Seminole students proudly wear patchwork as they pose together in Hawaii during the Close Up Asia Pacific program in February



Courtesy photo

Students listen to a lecture about international relations during the Close Up Asia Pacific program.

# Students learn to live off the land in Ahfachkee's traditional garden

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**BIG CYPRESS** — Ahfachkee students have realized the fruits, and vegetables, of their labor in the school's traditional garden and have reaped the benefits in the form of healthy meals.

The school's large garden, which features many traditional Seminole crops, is tended by students with some help from traditional preservation program instructors. High school students are in the garden every day, elementary students work there twice a week. On March 10, students harvested some of its bounty.

"It's so positive and calming," said Carlise Bermudez. "After all your core classes are done, coming to the garden is the best thing."

The traditional preservation department starts bringing the students to the garden

in pre-K, so by the time they graduate they have the knowledge and experience to have their own gardens.

"We have to protect the garden so it can last for more generations," said ninth grader Kassim Stockton.

At the beginning of every school year, after a summer of letting the garden go wild, students dig up the old plants, refresh the rows with more soil and plant new crops.

"Being able to plant something and see it grow is exciting for them," said Maxine Gilke, traditional preservation agricultural instructor. "They put their time and effort into it and get to see something grow."

Some of the produce that grows in the garden includes avocado, banana, carrots, celery, cabbage, chayote, coconuts, collards, corn, eggplant, garlic, green beans, lemongrass, limes, onions, mango, mint, okra, papaya, pigeon peas, peppers, sweet potatoes, white potatoes, scallions, sugar cane and tomatoes.

"A lot of plants came from elders who

have passed," said Gilke. "The corn came from a medicine man."

Traditional plants are a big part of the garden with aloe, coontie, assorted medicine plants, wild hibiscus aka "Seminole candy", strawberry leaf plant and potatoes found in the roots of elephant ear plants. Some of the plants and herbs, such as lemongrass and strawberry leaf, are often used to make tea.

"I hadn't had wild hibiscus since I was a kid," said Jeannette Cypress, Ahfachkee's traditional preservation program director. "A few years ago we found some growing wild and planted one at school. Now it grows everywhere."

The wild hibiscus flower doesn't open wide like the domesticated version, but it holds a drop of sweet nectar on the stem inside the blossom. Students love the "Seminole candy," and were rewarded with one after they harvested the vegetables.

True to tradition, corn is only found in the boys' garden. Both genders take care of the larger garden, but only the boys may

grow and harvest the corn.

For the last two years, the high school science program has been integrated into the garden through a compost bin. The students are responsible for feeding it every day with buckets of scraps from the school kitchen. Vegetables, fruit and eggshells are included in the mix.

"I call them compost angels," said Horacio Smith, cafeteria manager.

The older kids take the elementary school students to the compost bin and show them how it works. Tenth graders add the scrap bucket and teach the youngsters how to spin the bin so the oxygen moves around and helps break down the refuse. The bacteria consume everything and turn it into fertilizer and rich soil.

"It's a good program," said Bermudez. "We get to be good role models for them and show them if we take care of the garden, it will take care of us."

Smith uses all the items from the garden in the cafeteria; he makes a lot of soups and

other dishes. He is fond of the herbs and sometimes sends students to the herb garden to fetch some fresh ones. Each Friday, the high school students cook the week's bounty in the culture chickee and enjoy the feast.

"You can tell when food is made from the garden," Bermudez said. "It is way fresher and you can really taste the difference."

The students enjoy their time in the garden.

"It means coming together like one big family to plant stuff," said fifth grader Alice Jimmie.

Second grader Hank Jumper likes using the hoe to build the rows and straighten out the dirt.

"No matter what grows here, it is always green," said ninth grader Billie Cypress.

"We have to work together and know what is going on," added ninth grader Ramona Jimmie. "It teaches us how to live and go back to our roots. It's a good experience."



Allie Billie shows off an assortment of carrots she harvested from the garden.

Beverly Bidney



Ahfachkee traditional preservation agricultural instructor Maxine Gilke shows Allie Billie and other students how to harvest collard greens in the Ahfachkee traditional garden on March 10.

Beverly Bidney



Together, Carlise Bermudez, left, and Talia Osceola harvest cabbage and a carrot from the Ahfachkee garden.

Beverly Bidney



Julian Clay Martinez smells a freshly picked scallion in the Ahfachkee garden, but he didn't really enjoy the pungent aroma of the vegetable.

Beverly Bidney



Ramona Jimmie trims some errant pieces of the celery she just picked in the Ahfachkee garden.

Beverly Bidney

## PECS students of the month- February

**Elementary school**  
Esteban Santibanez  
Dylan Peak  
Lilie Coleman  
Chaeyton Robinson  
Isabella Virto  
Kahnnyah Billie  
Miranda Tommie  
Jeremy Jones  
Malarie Alvarez  
Maliyah Jackson  
Derrick McQueen  
Damahni Bonilla  
Zoie Foster-Snow  
Koty Gopher Turtle  
Jalene Smith  
Dyani Kayda  
Marley Jimmie  
Luci Banda  
Rylee Bowers  
Adarius Ford  
Bailey Bowers  
Layla Osceola

**Middle school**  
Jetta Osceola  
Yauvani Bettran  
Chayton Billie



PECS Principal Tracy Downing joins the students of the month for February (elementary above, middle school right).

PECS



# Original Ahfachkee building demolished

TRIBUNE STAFF

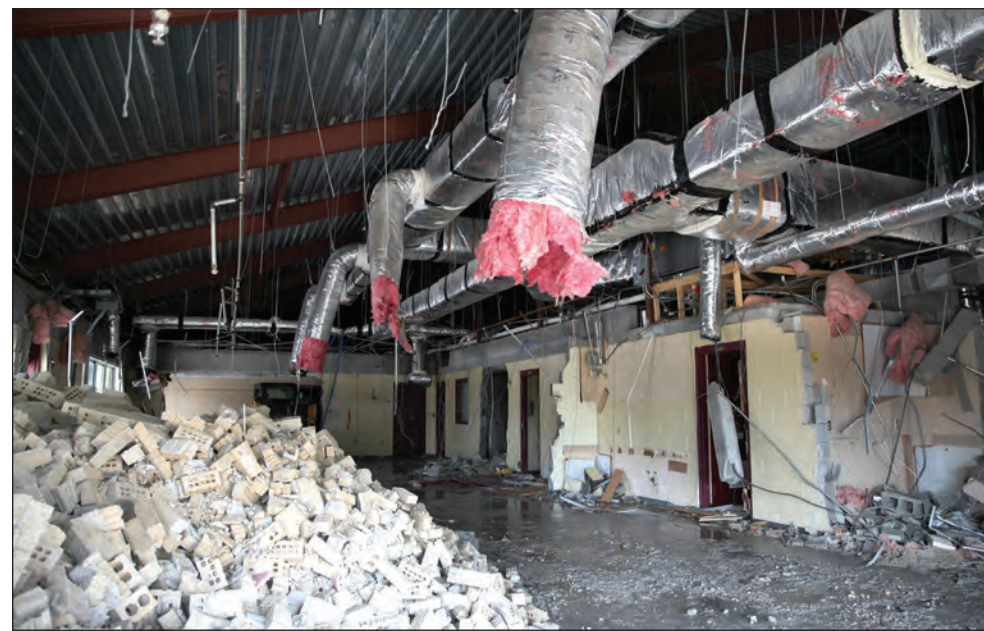
Built in 1991, the original one-story Ahfachkee School building has been demolished to make way for a larger one. Demolition of both the classroom building and the science classroom building began March 5 by Pirtle Construction Company, which built the middle and high school building. The two buildings were 22,000 square feet combined.

Details on what will be built to replace the elementary school building have not been announced. Students schedules have not been disrupted by the demolition, they are in portable classrooms on campus.

Pirtle also built Ahfachkee's middle and high school building, which opened in August 2019.



Demolition of the original Ahfachkee School took place in early March.



Beverly Bidney (2)

The 30,000 square foot state-of-the-art building contains a cafeteria, art studio, music room and media center with a large

computer area. Classrooms are on the second floor along with labs in science, engineering, robotics, bio-medical, MakerBot 3D printing

and TV production.

The building fits the concept of collaborative learning with flexible furniture

that allows students to move around and all the latest technology.



Courtesy photo

Roberta M. Osceola, second from right, is honored for being named Student of the Month at Indian River State College. Her instructor, Cecilia Carran, is in the middle.

## Roberta M. Osceola earns Student of the Month honor at Indian River State College

TRIBUNE STAFF

Roberta M. Osceola received Student of the Month honors at Indian River State College for February.

The nomination that was submitted for her to win the accolade mentions "her

constant willingness to achieve her goals, for her commitment and dedication she has showed during her time in my class and for believing that even at her age everything is possible if you work hard."

The nomination was from her instructor Cecilia Carran.

BY ADAKAI ROBBINS

My experience at Harvard was a much unexpected one. Upon arrival, it felt very unfamiliar because of how different all the architecture is, as well as how different the people's attitudes are over there. People in that area seemed very polite and trustworthy, which gave me a lot more comfort.

It was all the same when I entered Harvard; the buildings looked like the set of a Harry Potter movie, but everyone felt honest and ready to learn. You can feel the passion and love that the students have for their learning at that school, especially when they brought in two students to discuss their experiences at Harvard.

I was surprised at how inclusive Boston was. You can tell that the college is doing its best to satisfy all types of people. If there were a large group of indigenous students there, I'm sure that the college would try to figure something out to accommodate us the way they do to all the other cultures. It takes one step at a time for us to have a strong community there, and I feel like if the Seminole Tribe had a strong community there then we would have an even broader range of connections to different types of people and resources that could support all of our genius youth.

Many of our youth want to change the world because they don't like what they see around them. I am one of them, and these kids would never think that they could ever make it to a college like Harvard. It is very disheartening to say that we think of ourselves on such a low level because we are more than what we have gone through. Most of us come from families that are broken and dysfunctional, but that doesn't mean we can't go on to do wonderful things for ourselves.

Places like Harvard were made for us because everyone there is trying to improve the world, and our tribes' youth is full of innovative kids who can do just that. All we have to do is just focus and believe in ourselves, but we don't have to make it to a big college to get the things we want.

We are the unconquered; we are resilient in the flesh; we can change the world any

# Adakai's Harvard trip



Courtesy photo

Adakai Robbins tours Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

way we wish, it just starts with you believing in yourself. We may be a small part of the world, but our impact can be great with the help of inclusive places like Harvard that

not only strengthen our minds, but also strengthen our community.

## Students go book shopping at Ahfachkee School

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**BIG CYPRESS** — Books about elephants, tigers and other animals took over the Ahfachkee media center as the Scholastic Book Fair, Jungle version, encouraged students to shop for books from March 9 to March 13.

The school has two book fairs each year, one in the fall and the other in the spring. Before the fair, videos about featured authors are shown to the students. According to media specialist Michele Horrell, books by those authors fly off the shelves.

Justin Billie loves to read and bought a few books, pens, pencils, a pointer and other assorted items.

"I read about 10 books a



Beverly Bidney

Ahfachkee media specialist Michele Horrell reads to a group of third graders after they finished shopping at the Ahfachkee book fair.



Beverly Bidney

Haloma Jimmie and Kylie Billie talk to a friend as they shopped for books and other goodies at the Ahfachkee book fair.

month," said the seventh-grader. "I like action novels. My favorites are Dragon Ball Super Books."

The book fair also benefits teachers and their classrooms. Each teacher and non-instructional staff member receives a stipend which they may spend for books and supplies.

Prices for books and other things such as posters, pencils and other fun things ranged from \$.79 to \$30.

Sixth-grade English teacher Janice Ryner cobbled together \$60 from employees who weren't planning to shop for anything.

"I always recruit my friends

who aren't using it," said Ryner. "It's just me thinking outside of the box. I bought some chapter books, novels and some fun stuff for the class."

Although the family night at the book fair was cancelled, the students shopped all week and the fair was a success.

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# Chalo Nitka Festival in Moore Haven



Alyssa Purvis, Jesiah Madrigal, Joshua and Chance Madrigal pose for a family photo at the Chalo Nitka Festival.



Jarrett Beecham, Jimi Jamison, and Vickey Huff pose for a photo at the Chalo Nitka Festival in Moore Haven on March 7.



The Terriers marching band performs at the Chalo Nitka Festival parade.



Valene Clay and Jennifer Billie cook fried bread at the festival.



Anuthkee Henry and Jaryaca Baker in traditional Seminole clothing at the festival.



The PECS students float at the Chalo Nitka Festival parade.



Cruising along at Chalo Nitka.



Seminole youngsters participate in the clothing contest.



## Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa donates \$40,000 to commemorate 16th anniversary

BY TRIBUNE STAFF

TAMPA — Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa marked its 16th anniversary March 11 by donating \$10,000 each to four Tampa Bay charities. Seminole Hard Rock Tampa President Steve Bonner presented checks to the DeBartolo Family Foundation, Metropolitan Ministries, the Bill Edwards Foundation for the Arts and Julie Weintraub's Hands Across the Bay.

Hands Across The Bay helps the Tampa community in several areas, including violence prevention advocacy, family crisis assistance and back-to-school support. The organization posted this message on its Facebook page in regard to Hard Rock Tampa's donation:

"We are truly so grateful for their team's commitment to help our community and we are very blessed to be selected as one of the organizations to pour such generosity and kindness into. This donation will go far because every dollar raised at Hands Across the Bay directly helps families and survivors in our area because Gold & Diamond Source covers all of our expenses. Thank you to everyone at Seminole Hard Rock Tampa from the bottom of our hearts."

In 2014, Seminole Hard Rock Tampa announced during its 10th anniversary celebration that it would give away a total of \$100,000 each to these four designated charities. The money is being distributed in increments of \$10,000 a year for 10 years.



Courtesy photo

Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa donated \$10,000 each to four area charities March 11.

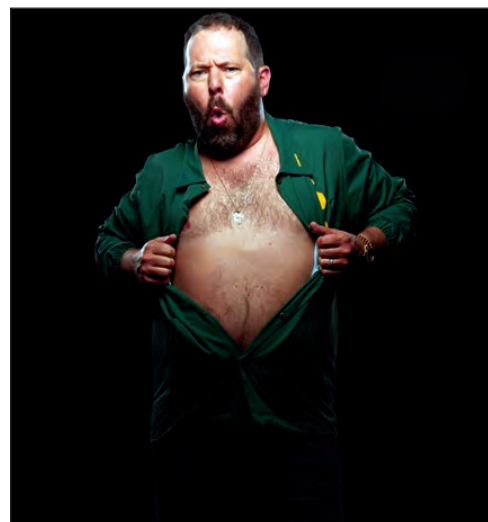
## Bert Kreischer's "The Bertie Boy World Tour" rescheduled for Aug. 23 at Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — Due to the current global health crisis as well as travel and performance restrictions, comedian Bert Kreischer's upcoming performance at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood's Hard Rock Live has been postponed. It is now scheduled for Aug. 23 at 7 p.m. This decision was made following the recommendations of government authorities including the Center for Disease Control to reduce the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

For guests who purchased tickets, all tickets for the scheduled May 2 show will remain valid for the rescheduled date.

Tickets are on sale and cost \$60.75 and \$40.75. All seats are reserved and available at all Ticketmaster outlets, online at [www.myhrl.com](http://www.myhrl.com), [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com) or charge by phone at 1-800-745-3000. Additional fees may apply.



Courtesy photo

Bert Kreischer

## Howie Mandel performance in Tampa rescheduled for November

FROM PRESS RELEASE

TAMPA — Comedian Howie Mandel show's scheduled for March 21 at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa's Event Center has been rescheduled for Nov. 20. Fans who purchased tickets to this show are encouraged to hold on to

their tickets. For those unable to attend the rescheduled show, refunds will be available at original point of purchase.

Tickets are on sale at [Ticketmaster.com](http://Ticketmaster.com). No video and no refund. Must be at least 21 years old to attend.

## Native photography exhibit online at NMAI

BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

Although the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian is closed due to the coronavirus, its latest exhibition of work by Native American photographers is available for viewing online.

"Developing Stories: Native Photographers in the Field" features photo essays by photojournalists Russel Albert Daniels, Dine and Ho Chunk descent, and Tailyr Irvine, Salish and Kootenai. The photographers explore issues that touch the lives of Native people and show the diversity and complexity of their lives.

The first exhibit, by Daniels, is available

to view now. Irvine's exhibit will be available July 14.

"Each photographer is committed to portraying the reality of contemporary Native life with honesty and integrity," said Cecile Ganteaume, exhibition curator. "Through the modern Indigenous stories portrayed in their work, these photographers are breaking down stereotypes of Native peoples still prevalent in the mainstream media."

Daniels documented the Genizaro people of Abiquiu, who have lived on the same land in New Mexico for nearly 300 years.

Those years were fraught with violence and slavery as Spain and the Catholic Church began to colonize and reeducate the Native people in the Southwest. Starting in the early 1600s, the Spanish abducted and purchased

Indigenous people of mixed tribal heritage including Apache, Comanche, Kiowa, Navajo, Pawnee and Ute. They were taught Spanish and converted to Catholicism and forced into slavery. The Spanish called these captives and their children Genizaro, from a Turkish word for slaves trained as soldiers.

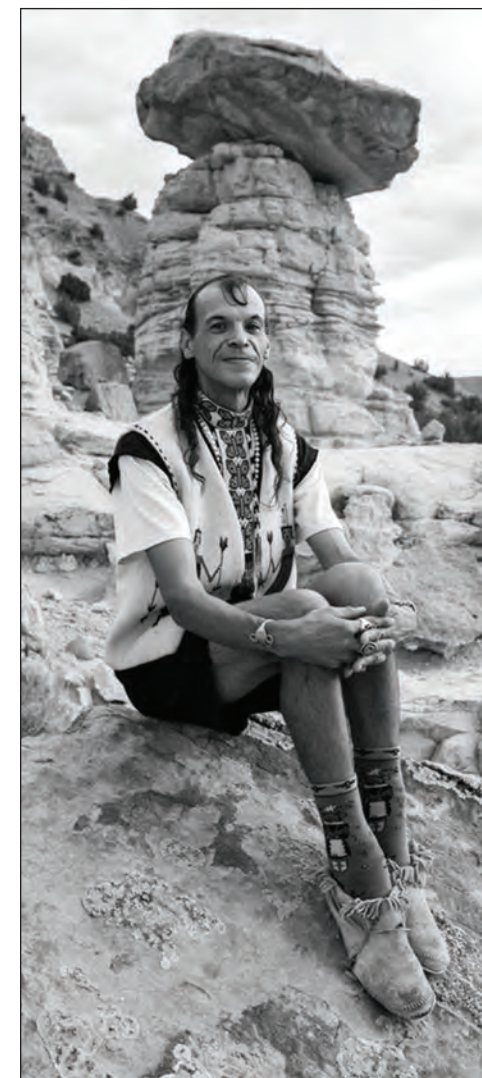
As a result of the oppression, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs were destroyed. Outside of the Genizaro communities, the history has disappeared from memory but for the Genizaro people it is embedded in their land and commemorated in their observances. Today they are reasserting their identity and culture.

To view the exhibition online visit <https://americanindian.si.edu/developingstories/index.html>.



Russel Albert Daniels (2)

Above, Frankie and Carmen López holding Santo Tomás Bulto. At right, Maurice Archuleta in the high desert surrounding Abiquiu.



Russel Albert Daniels

Delvin Garcia standing in remains of the Santa Rosa de Lima Church.

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# Federal district court rules for Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, strikes down DAPL permits

BY NATIVE NEWS ONLINE STAFF

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe earned a “significant legal win” March 25 when a federal court judge struck down a permit for the controversial Dakota Access Pipeline, ordering an environmental impact study and calling for legal arguments about an interim shutdown of the pipeline.

Judge James E. Boasberg of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia found that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers violated the National Environmental Policy Act when it affirmed federal permits for the pipeline originally issued in 2016.

In his opinion, Boasberg cited a number of unresolved concerns, including the agency’s failure to address expert comments “that the pipeline suffered from serious flaws that could result in extensive environmental harm in the event of a spill.”

“Too many questions remain unanswered,” Boasberg wrote, citing concerns such as the pipeline’s leak-detection systems and the Corps’ failure to consider the effect of harsh North Dakota winters on response efforts in the event of a spill. The court also questioned the safety record of the company that operates DAPL, writing “the operator’s history does not inspire confidence.”

### The ruling notes:

“The Court acknowledges that in projects of this scope, it is not difficult for an opponent to find fault with many conclusions made by an operator and relied on by the agency. But here, there is considerably more than a few isolated comments raising insubstantial concerns. The many commenters in this case pointed to serious gaps in crucial parts of the Corps’ analysis — to name a few, that the pipeline’s leak-detection system was unlikely to work, that it was not designed to catch slow spills, that the operator’s serious history of incidents had not been taken into account, and that the worst-case scenario used by the Corps was potentially only a fraction of what a realistic figure would be — and the Corps was not able to fill any of them.”

The court ordered the Army Corps of Engineers to prepare a full environmental impact statement (EIS) on the pipeline, something that the Tribe has sought from the beginning of this controversy, according to a statement. That process, which requires the Corps to draft an EIS and then submit it for public comment, can take six months or more, according to experts. The current global pandemic and the fact that it is an election year may also affect the timeline to complete the EIS process and submit it to the federal government.

More immediately, the court ordered the parties to submit additional briefings on the question of whether to shut down the pipeline in the interim. That briefing is expected to occur in the next few weeks.

The Army Corp of Engineers declined to comment on the ruling, referring media calls to the U.S. Dept. of Justice. A request for comment was submitted to the DOJ’s Public Affairs office, but Native News Online did not receive a reply before the story went to press.

“After years of commitment to defending our water and earth, we welcome this news of a significant legal win,” Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Mike Faith said in a statement. “It’s humbling to see how actions we took four years ago to defend our ancestral homeland continue to inspire national conversations about how our choices ultimately affect this planet.”

“Perhaps in the wake of this court ruling the federal government will begin to catch on, too, starting by actually listening to us when we voice our concerns.”

The attorney for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe echoed Chairman Faith’s sentiments.

“This validates everything the Tribe has been saying all along about the risk of oil spills to the people of Standing Rock,” Earthjustice attorney Jan Hasselman said in a statement.

“The Obama administration had it

right when it moved to deny the permits in 2016, and this is the second time the Court has ruled that the government ran afoul of environmental laws when it permitted

this pipeline,” Hasselman said. “We will continue to see this through until DAPL has finally been shut down.”



Former Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II outside U.S. Dept. of the Interior in September 2016.

# Martha Tommie reflects on Standing Rock DAPL decision

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

Back in 2016, Martha Tommie and other Tribal members drove thousands of miles to stand in solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe as they fought against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline on their ancestral tribal land.

Unfortunately the efforts of thousands of Native American protesters, or water protectors, at the Cannonball, North Dakota site did not halt construction. The pipeline was built and now crosses the Standing Rock Sioux’s primary source of water, the Missouri River.

The tribe sued in federal court and on March 25, the court found the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers violated the National Environmental Policy Act by not doing an adequate job studying the risks of a spill in the pipeline. The ruling was a clear win for the Standing Rock Sioux.

When Tommie heard the news, she cried.

“I woke up this morning and saw the decision,” Tommie said. “Oh my goodness,

what a blessing. I was so proud to go and protest; I wasn’t scared I just did it because water is life. God saw humans on this earth fighting for water and I thought God, you are awesome.”

Tommie reflected on her days spent protesting in North Dakota.

“We sent powerful prayers no matter what was thrown at us, rubber bullets and hypothermia,” she said. “We kept singing. It’s a big miracle for us to see the Standing Rock Sioux tribe keep fighting for what’s right. This is our water; everything needs water. How will we continue to make medicine if we don’t have good water? The whole world needs water.”

Hearing all the Native languages, the flags and medicine colors together has had an impact on her life.

“I’m proud of the water protectors, we never gave up,” Tommie said. “This is my testimony of how I’m happy to see the Standing Rock Sioux get this huge victory. I still stand with you all in my humble powerful prayers.”



Martha Tommie shows her solidarity at the Standing Rock protest camp in Dec. 2016.

# Havasi Symphonic concert show, with Seminole presence, rescheduled to October

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — Classically trained virtuoso pianist Havasi is scheduled to bring his first North American symphonic concert show to Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on Oct. 24 at 8 p.m. rather than the originally scheduled date of March 21.

“Havasi’s North American symphonic show debut will feature the global premiere of a special cultural presentation. This musical and video composition is a collaboration that conveys a historical portrayal of the journey of Florida Seminoles,” said S. R. Tommie, founder and president of Redline Media Group, promoters of the show. “In an effort to deliver an unforgettable experience, and in consideration of the International artists that play an integral role in the show, traveling from various parts of the globe, we have rescheduled the date of the Havasi Symphonic Concert Show to October 24th. This event will serve as a kick off to Native American Heritage Month in November

with the release of this cultural tribute. Many thanks to the team at Hard Rock Live for accommodating our new date. Our goal for collaboration with Havasi remains the same: an unrivaled musical experience across North America with the Symphonic Show for many years to come.”

Havasi’s musical style blends classical tradition with the diversity of world music, soft rock and the spectacle of high-energy performance. The program will feature original composed works by Havasi.

“I’m looking forward to our October date,” Havasi said. “The show will provide different moods for the audience in a memorably intense experience, like a thrilling ride on a rollercoaster. And Hard Rock Live, with its great sightlines and state-of-the-art acoustics, provides the perfect environment for both our performers and the audience to enjoy.”

Ticket pricing is the same: \$229, \$189, \$159, \$129 and \$89. Tickets will remain on sale through www.myhrl.com as well as www.ticketmaster.com.



Havasi

# Country legend Kenny Rogers of Native American ancestry journeys on

FROM NATIVE AMERICAN MUSIC AWARDS

The Native American Music Awards issued this statement following the death of music star Kenny Rogers, who passed March 20:

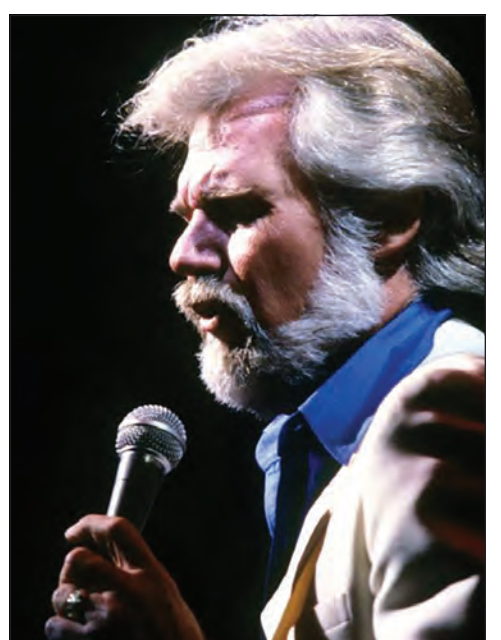
Kenny Rogers has died at the age of 81 of natural causes. His heritage was mixed: Irish on his mother’s side and Native American on his father’s side because of his grandmother, Della Rogers.

Rogers was a staple on the country-music charts, and starred in TV movies. His legendary music career spanned six decades and he left an indelible mark on the history of American music.

“His songs have endeared music lovers and touched the lives of millions around the world,” a statement posted by his publicist Keith Hagan said.

Rogers was inducted to the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2013. He had 24 No. 1 hits and through his career more than 50 million albums sold in the US alone. He was a six-time Country Music Awards winner and three-time Grammy Award winner.

Rogers passed away while surrounded by his family at his home in Sandy Springs, Georgia, on [March 20]. The Native American Music Awards extends their sincerest sympathies and prayers to the family of Kenny Rogers.



Kenny Rogers

# Hard Rock Atlantic City donates food for those in need

TRIBUNE STAFF

ATLANTIC CITY — New Jersey organizations that help feed people in need received a boost thanks to the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City. In mid-March, Hard Rock, despite being temporarily closed due to COVID-19, donated two truckloads of food to the Community FoodBank of New Jersey and Turning Point Day Center for the Homeless.

“Though uncertain and frightening, times of crisis can also inspire incredible acts of kindness,” Community FoodBank posted on its Facebook page. “Our friends at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City have come to our aid, donating a tractor-trailer load of food to help us feed individuals, families, and communities in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.”



Food donations from the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City are received by the Community FoodBank of New Jersey.

Community FoodBank/Facebook

# Sports



## Stubbs sisters finish Heritage careers with third straight state championship

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

LAKELAND — December Stubbs sat in a chair on the sideline with her face smothered in her No. 15 American Heritage basketball jersey. For more than a minute, she didn't look up. The emotions, rightfully so, poured out of the senior point guard for many reasons at the conclusion of the Class 5A girls basketball state championship.

The 51-33 win against Pine Forest-Pensacola on Feb. 29 at RP Funding Center in Lakeland marked her final high school game for Heritage, her last game with her sister Tiana as a Heritage teammate and the last time she would play in a state championship game which have come to serve as proud, culminating accomplishments each year since the passing of December and Tiana's mother.

For most of their high school basketball

dedicated student-athletes.

"I'm really proud of them because it's not something that's forced on them; it's something they want to do. That makes it even more special for me," he said. "I'm proud of them because they motivated themselves."

The girls are not only motivated on the court, but also in the classroom, where they carry grade point averages above 4.0.

"They're at a really good school. Thanks to the Tribe, they're afforded a real good education," Glen Stubbs said. "On top of that, I'm proud of them for achieving the GPA they have."

He said his daughters started playing basketball at about age 8 in the Tribe's recreation program. Soon after, recreation's Ashley Wilcox was taking them to travel tournaments. It wasn't until about 12 that the girls became serious about the sport. That was about the time they started to attend American Heritage, where so many student-

athletes from the Tribe have excelled in sports and won state championships in recent years. Those include the Jumper brothers - Blevyns and Andre - in football and their sister Ahnie in softball as well as Hunter Osceola, who helped Heritage win its first boys basketball state championship in 2014. Hunter's sister, Skyla, who now plays for Nova Southeastern University, paved the foundation for the recent success of the Heritage girls team, which included a trip to the state Final Four in Tiana and December's freshman season.

When December Stubbs and Tiana Stubbs entered high school, the Heritage girls team had never won a state championship.

Now the Patriots have three. Unfortunately, Tiana suffered a torn ACL injury late in her junior season that prevented her from playing in last year's state final and also kept her out of action all this season. She was regulated to cheering for her teammates from the bench. What she saw



Kevin Johnson

With her coach Greg Farias looking on, American Heritage guard December Stubbs looks for an open teammate during the Class 5A girls basketball state championship Feb. 20 at the RP Funding Center in Lakeland. Stubbs dished out a game-high nine assists to help the Patriots defeat Pine Forest, 51-33, for their third consecutive state championship.



Kevin Johnson

Sisters December Stubbs, left, and Tiana Stubbs, of the Hollywood Reservation, hold the Class 5A state championship trophy after American Heritage defeated Pine Forest. The Stubbs are seniors and have attended Heritage since grade six. Tiana did not play in the championship due to an injury.

in this year's championship game was her team executing its game plan to perfection. Heritage wanted to pound the ball inside and it was December Stubbs' job to get it there. Similar to the success she had setting up teammates throughout the season, Stubbs fed the ball to Heritage's tall and talented twins Taiyah and Tatyana Wyche. It worked time after time as Taiyah racked up 31 points

and Tatyana had 16. It's not like Heritage is a one-dimensional team - they have plenty of other scoring threats with Stubbs, Daniella Aronsky and Maurissa Edwards - but on this Saturday afternoon Heritage flexed its power inside on the way to a convincing win.

For the most part, Heritage has made it look pretty easy in Final Fours.

The Patriots toughest game in Lakeland



Kevin Johnson

Players on the American Heritage bench, including Tiana Stubbs, far right, cheer for their teammates during the Class 5A state championship.



Kevin Johnson

December Stubbs dribbles between two Pine Forest players during the Class 5A state championship.

careers, the sisters played without their mother watching from the stands as she often did while they were growing up. Victoria Stubbs, at age 49, passed during their freshman season in 2016. Since then, with the memories of their mom and her support of their basketball careers, December and Tiana proceeded to win state championships as sophomores, juniors and, this year, as seniors.

"In ninth grade, my mom passed and she was one of my biggest supporters, so to be able to win three times in a row, I feel like I made her proud," December said after she doled out a game-high nine assists to help Heritage win title No. 3.

The Stubbs sisters also made their dad, Glen, proud. He said that as the girls were growing up on the Hollywood Reservation, he and Victoria never pushed them into playing basketball, but simply guided them along the way as they fell in love with the sport on their own and became

Kevin Johnson

The American Heritage girls basketball team celebrates after winning the Class 5A state championship.



the past three years came in a 2018 overtime state semifinal win against Lakewood when the Stubbs sisters were sophomores. December had five rebounds in 12 minutes of playing time and Tiana had an assist and a steal. The following day Heritage blew out Ponte Vedra as the Stubbs sisters shined. December had 7 points, 4 assists, 3 rebounds and 2 steals; Tiana had 9 points, including three 3's, 1 assist, 1 steal and 1 rebound.

In 2019, December had 7 points, 4 steals and 3 rebounds in the state semifinal win against Weeki Wachee, and then had a balanced day in the state final win against Bishop Kenny with 4 points, 3 rebounds, 6 assists and 5 steals.

There's no doubt the Stubbs are leaving quite a legacy.

"This is the third in a row, so it's special to us and the school. Hopefully we leave something behind for the younger players to come up and do the same thing we've been doing," Tiana said.

"Three times in a row. They made history," their father said. "That's a legacy. They left a legacy."



Okeechobee High School's softball team includes infielders Elle Thomas, left, and Jacee Jumper. Both are shown in the Brahmans home game against South Fork on March 13.

Kevin Johnson (2)

# Seminole trio plays big role for OHS softball

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**OKEECHOBEE** — Mary Huff knows first-hand what to expect with a high school softball player from the Tribe. It was a little more than a decade ago that she was one herself as a standout for Okeechobee High School.

When Tribal players arrive, they usually come ready to play right away.

“That’s the thing with rez kids, Tribal kids, they’re unreal athletes. When they keep their head on, they can definitely go far. You see Cheyenne (Nunez); she’s doing well,” said Huff, who has been head coach of OHS since the fall of 2013.

Indeed, Nunez was a multi-sport standout for the Brahmans and is now playing NCAA Division I softball for the University of South Carolina Upstate. Huff is a good example, too, having played four years of varsity at OHS and then playing in college.

This year’s team includes two Tribal players: senior Jacee Jumper and sophomore Elle Thomas. Both contributed to the team’s hot start. Okeechobee won five of its first six games before dropping two games on the same night to different opponents right before the coronavirus outbreak forced the suspension of the season.

Before the twin bill, Huff talked about how she liked Thomas’s versatility, having started her in the outfield and at second and third base.

“She may even move to short,” Huff said.

It didn’t take long for Huff’s words to come true. Thomas started at second base against South Fork in place of a teammate who tore her ACL earlier in the week, but it was only minutes into the game before Thomas shifted to shortstop when starting shortstop Lauren Sills was injured while making a tag at second base.

The move put Thomas right next to Jumper, who started at third.

Huff said Thomas had a strong season a year ago as a freshman and picked up where she left off. In fact, Thomas belted her first high school home run in a win against Fort Pierce Central and she had two hits, including a double, in a win against Centennial. Jumper hasn’t had too many trips to the plate this season, but is still



The Seminole Tribe is well represented on the Okeechobee High School softball team with sophomore Elle Thomas, left, head coach Mary Huff, center, and senior Jacee Jumper. The team won five of its first six games.

Kevin Johnson

making an impact. She notched the team’s first hit of the game against South Fork by slicing an opposite field single to right field.

“Jacee hasn’t seen a lot of [playing] time, but whenever she plays, she’s doing well for me. She’s good,” Huff said.

If the season resumes, Okeechobee will be looking to go further than it did a year ago when the Brahmans reached the regional finals.

“We were one game away from state last year and I only lost two seniors, so everybody came back and we even have a couple of new additions,” Huff said. “I think they’re definitely a force to be reckoned with.”



Elle Thomas makes solid contact in an at-bat against South Fork.

Kevin Johnson



Jacee Jumper puts on the brakes after deciding to go back to third instead of trying to score.

Kevin Johnson

# Brighton's Cheyenne Nunez enjoying first season in NCAA Division I softball

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

DELAND — Cheyenne Nunez had March 11 marked on her calendar. She knew that would be the one and only time her softball team — the University of South Carolina Upstate Spartans — would be in Florida this season. What Nunez didn't know is that the doubleheader at Stetson University in DeLand — about 40 miles northeast of Orlando — would also be the final games of the season.

Twenty-four games into their season and with about 50 games remaining, the Spartans were forced to call it a season due to the global coronavirus outbreak.

The shutdown was a harsh way for Nunez to end her first season with Upstate. As a junior college transfer, she only has two years of eligibility. Reports indicate the NCAA could grant another year of eligibility to spring athletes impacted by the virus shutdown.

The timing was tough to handle, too, because after spending a lot of games as a reserve, Nunez made the most of a rare starting opportunity in what turned out to be the team's final game. With her parents Daniel and Peggy and her younger sisters and other relatives in the stands, Nunez started game two of the doubleheader in left field, batted in the No. 8 spot, drilled a deep shot to the base of the centerfield fence that was caught, and played the entire game as Upstate rallied from a 5-1 deficit for a 9-6 win. She walked and scored a run in three trips, and shined defensively in the outfield



Kevin Johnson

University of South Carolina Upstate's Cheyenne Nunez, of the Brighton Reservation, drills a shot to deep centerfield for a long out against Stetson University on March 11 in DeLand. Nunez is in her first year with USC Upstate after playing the past two years for State College of Florida in Bradenton.



Kevin Johnson

Cheyenne Nunez starts in left field for USC Upstate against Stetson.



Kevin Johnson

Cheyenne Nunez, center, and her USC Upstate teammates look to the U.S. flag in the outfield during the National Anthem in DeLand.

College of Florida in Bradenton where she played every day in the heart of the batting order and set school records for stolen bases.

"I'm used to competing, but I'm not used to not starting all the time," she said.

She added that everyone on the team is a great player and that earning a starting role is a battle.

"This team is so hard working," she said.

Upstate ended its season with a 17-7 record. The Spartans had yet to start their Big South Conference slate. Nunez finished with a .250 batting average that included three hits in 12 at-bats and three runs scored, two walks and one hit-by-pitch. Her first hit for the Spartans was a single against LaSalle.

She went 2-for-3 against the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

Off the field, Nunez has been busy. After switching majors earlier in her college life, she's settled on sociology. She also became engaged and has a December 2021 wedding date with her fiancé Eddy Gonzalez. After Nunez graduates from Upstate, they plan to move to Bradenton. Nunez would like to coach softball on the college level and continue to coach her younger sisters and other Tribal youngsters in NAYO.

She encourages younger Tribal players to follow their dreams and follow in her footsteps by experiencing education and life beyond the borders of the reservations.

"That's why I left. I wanted to

experience all of this," she said.

After she graduates, Nunez wants to work for the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa.

"I don't know what I want to do in the hotel industry yet, but I want to work for the Tribe. I just love being around Native Americans, I love being around the culture," she said.

Similar to when she was starring in volleyball, basketball and softball at Okeechobee High, Nunez continues to adhere to the philosophy of working hard and getting better in whatever she does.

"At the end of the day, I know if I fail then I have to be better. I can't make the same mistake twice," she said.

by throwing out a runner at home.

Ever since she was a multisport athlete at Okeechobee High School, Nunez's goal was to play NCAA Division I. She attained that goal after battling her way through the junior college ranks for two years.

"It's been an adjustment. I knew [Division I] was going to be tougher and it would be more competitive," Nunez said in an interview on the field before the start of the doubleheader at Stetson and before the season was stopped.

It hasn't taken long for Nunez to make a positive impact on the team.

"Phenomenal kid. Great work ethic. Just an awesome person," said Upstate coach Chris Hawkins. "She's always the motivator. Always picking someone up when they need it."

Nunez said she loves the team, the school and her new town, but adapting to playing in cooler temperatures compared to Florida has been a challenge.

"I think the biggest transition is going from hot to cold. We've been playing in like 20-degree weather and it's a big transition for me because I'm used to 90-degree weather and not having to wear leggings and extra socks," she said.

Pitching is also different than what she usually saw in junior college.

"I faced a couple good [junior college] pitchers last year, but this year some people will have a lot of spin, but they'll be slower; or some people will have a lot of speed, but not as much spin," she said.

Another adjustment that Nunez has faced is that she hasn't been a regular starter. She's fresh from a two-year career at State



Kevin Johnson

During a break in the doubleheader, Cheyenne Nunez is visited by her family and relatives, including her parents Daniel and Peggy.

# Sports seasons come to abrupt halt

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

The sports seasons for several Seminole Tribe of Florida athletes in college and high school came to a sudden halt due to the global outbreak of the COVID-19 virus.

Winter sports that were in playoff mode have been canceled. Spring sports have either been suspended or canceled. Most college baseball and softball teams were at about the halfway point in their regular seasons.

Here's a look at some Seminole athletes:

- **Ahnie Jumper** (Florida Gulf Coast University softball): The junior catcher from Big Cypress had started 13 games and seen action in 22 games, compiling a .212 batting average with 7 hits in 33 trips; 2 doubles, 4 RBIs, 6 runs scored. The doubles came against Georgetown and Fordham. The Eagles had a 19-8 record. They had won six in a row until their final game before the shutdown, a 10-6 loss to Florida Atlantic on March 10. Their conference – the Atlantic Sun – has canceled all spring sports.

- **Cheyenne Nunez** (University of South Carolina Upstate softball): The junior outfielder from Brighton started 3 games and appeared in 9 in her first season with USC Upstate. She batted .250 with 3 hits in 12 at-bats and scored 3 runs. The team finished the year with a 17-7 record. She had a walk, run scored and threw out a runner at home plate in the team's final game, a 9-6 win against Stetson in DeLand, Florida. The school has canceled all its spring sports.

- **Jillian Rodriguez** (Tennessee State University softball): The freshman outfielder from Immokalee appeared in 12 games with no starts. She was 0-for-2 with a walk and scored two runs. The team had a 7-11 record. The school announced March 13 an "indefinite suspension" of all athletics. Its conference – the Ohio Valley Conference – has canceled all athletic competitions through the end of the academic year.

- **Sean Osceola** (Pasco-Hernando State College baseball): The sophomore right-handed pitcher from Brighton had a 1-0 record in six appearances, five of which were starts. He had a 4.13 ERA in 24 innings with 16 strikeouts. Pasco-Hernando, which reached the National Junior College Athletic Association Division II World Series last season, had a 17-7 record. The team was on a hot streak at the time of the cancellation, having won seven in a row and scoring 14 or more runs in five of those wins. Osceola notched the win March 10 in a 14-8 victory against Eastern Gateway Community College when he scattered five hits and fanned four in 5.2 innings. His longest outing came March 1 when he pitched 7.1



Courtney Culbreath/Florida Communications

Happier times for Ahnie Jumper (sixth player from the left wearing catcher chest protector) and the Florida Gulf Coast University softball team as they celebrate a home run March 4 against the University of Florida in Gainesville. FGCU's season stopped the following week due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

innings and struck out 7 in a 5-4 loss to the University of Tampa B team. In that game, Osceola, who rarely bats, notched a hit in three at-bats. All sports at the school have been canceled for the rest of the spring.

- **Trevor Thomas** (Warner University baseball): The junior outfielder from Brighton had a .268 batting average with 11 hits in 41 at-bats. He also had 13 walks and scored 11 runs. He notched two doubles against Montreat (North Carolina) on Feb. 2. He also had a 3-for-3 game against Grand View (Iowa) on Feb. 6. Warner had a 14-19 record when its season was canceled.

- On the high school level, COVID-19 brought an end to another outstanding season for Oklahoma girls basketball defending state champion Anadarko, which includes junior

starting guard **Lexi Foreman**. Anadarko had reached the state quarterfinals before play was halted. The Oklahoma high school sports governing body announced March 25 that the tournament was canceled. Anadarko finished with a 26-1 record.

- Lincoln High School senior **Tyler Hiatt** (non-Tribal member), who is the son of Stephanie Bowers Hiatt and grandson of Stephen Bowers, was preparing to defend his South Dakota state titles in shot put and discus this spring. High school sports in the state are postponed until at least May 3, according to a statement from the South Dakota High School Activities Association.



Kevin Johnson

The baseball season for Warner University's Trevor Thomas, of the Brighton Reservation, came to an end when the school canceled its spring sports due to COVID-19.

## OHS season ends in regional final

*Brahmans finish 26-3 in Silas Madrigal's final year*

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**OKEECHOBEE** — The Okeechobee High School boys basketball season had just ended with a loss in a regional final in front of a packed home crowd.

Yet the team found one more triumph to enjoy in a season full of wins. In what was essentially a victory lap to stamp a positive note on an outstanding season, the players – including the Tribe's Silas Madrigal – and coaches emerged from the locker room and made an emotional journey around the court to shake hands and to give and receive hugs – when doing so was still safe – with their fans. It lasted a good 15 minutes as the team received an outpouring of support.

"I couldn't ask for a better team," said Okeechobee coach Demetre Riles, who guided his alma mater to a 26-3 season, which included a second straight district championship and playoff wins against two South Florida teams (Belen Jesuit and Boyd Anderson) before succumbing to a third – Broward County's Pembroke Pines Charter – in the Class 5A regional final Feb. 28.

The team's only other losses all season came on opening night to Treasure Coast and in mid-January against Sebastian River in overtime. The rest of the way they were untouchable with all their regular season wins – except one – coming by margins of 10 points or more.

"They got the heart of a lion. They played hard throughout the whole season. They have a real business, professional approach," Riles said.

Madrigal, a starting guard, played a vital role in it all. Riles said he admired the way Madrigal emerged as a leader this season.

"He came from being a guy coming off the bench to a good team player, a good starter, being able to knock down a 3 and play defense and he has speed and quickness. He's a very important part of our team," Riles said.

On a squad that featured very balanced scoring, Madrigal led the way with an average of 10.8 points per game, which included 17 in a 65-62 win against Boyd Anderson in the regional semifinals. He sank five 3-pointers in that game, all part of the team-high 45 he made from beyond the arc this season. Sixteen times Madrigal reached

double digits in scoring. His season high 25 points came in December against Clewiston.

In the regional final, Madrigal made a layup and went 2-for-2 from the line in a fast and fierce first quarter which ended with the Brahmans ahead 16-14. Madrigal didn't play much in the second quarter as Okeechobee, with a deep bench, rotated in several players. The game remained tight with Pembroke Pines Charter taking a 28-27 lead into the break.

In the third quarter, Okeechobee couldn't contain the hot hand of Dallas Graziani, whose 3-point bombs – five in the quarter – broke open a close game on his way to a 31-point night. Okeechobee pulled to within seven points early in the fourth quarter, but never got closer in the 72-55 defeat.

Madrigal finished with eight points and teammate Mikal Kelly had 14.

With the core of the team graduating this spring – Madrigal and six other seniors – Okeechobee will look vastly different next season, but this year's squad won't soon be forgotten.

"Best team I've ever coached," Riles said.



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee's Silas Madrigal goes airborne to catch a pass during the Brahmans' playoff game Feb. 28 against Pembroke Pines Charter.



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee High senior Silas Madrigal scores on a layup in front of a packed gym at OHS in a Class 5A regional final against Pembroke Pines Charter.



Kevin Johnson

From left, Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School baseball players Deanthony Torres, Chayton Billie, Santana Alvarez and J.B. Anderson warm-up before facing Clewiston JV on March 5 at Clewiston High School.

# Baseball returns to Pemayetv Emahakv

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**CLEWISTON** — If you blinked you might have missed the return of baseball to Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School.

After being absent for a few years due to not having enough players, PECS returned to the diamond Feb. 25 for the start of what was supposed to be a seven-game season. Instead, the global pandemic sliced the season to just three games.

What turned out to be the team's final game of the season was a tough matchup against an older Clewiston High School's junior varsity team. PECS didn't win, nor did it win its other two games, but victories weren't the primary objective for first-year coach Christian Crews. His emphasis was

on quelling nerves and having fun.

"We have all the tools, but we're young and we get nervous at game time. I'm just trying to make them have fun," said Crews, who is a former Okeechobee High baseball player and husband to Tribal member Delaney Osceola.

PECS' starting lineup included four sixth-graders, so it's only natural that there was some trepidation facing 9th-and-10th-graders from Clewiston. Crews hopes this season's experiences will pave the way toward improvement next year.

"This is more of a learning year. Next year I'll have tryouts a little earlier and we'll be able to practice a little bit more ahead of time," Crews said.

Eighth-graders Jayko Billie and Jaydence Urbina provided some of the highlights against Clewiston. Billie ripped a

clean single up the middle for the team's first hit; Urbina came on in relief and notched a strikeout to end a bases-loaded threat.

In addition to being on the mound, Billie and Urbina also were the team's primary catchers. Other pitchers include Brandon Gabbard, Deanthony Torres and Kayden Warrior.

Crews said another goal this season was to help the eighth-graders get ready for high school baseball next season.

Encouraging signs that point to more progress next season include this season's healthy turnout; the team had plenty of reserves on the bench. Also, enthusiasm and effort have been with the club since day one.

"Everything has been good effort-wise, but we just have to make sure they're not nervous. We're young, we're small and we get really nervous quick," Crews said.



Kevin Johnson

Left-handed pitcher Jaydence Urbina delivers a pitch in a relief appearance.



Kevin Johnson

Jovanny Torres takes a powerful rip during an at-bat.



Kevin Johnson

Head coach Christian Crews, left, and assistant coach Jovanny Torres go over strategy before the players take the field against Clewiston JV.



Kevin Johnson

Starting pitcher Jayko Billie fires a pitch in the first inning against Clewiston JV.



Kevin Johnson

Zach Riley sprints to first base trying to beat the ensuing throw from the Clewiston JV catcher.



Kevin Johnson

From left, Kayden Warrior, Jaydence Urbina and Jayko Billie get their running in during warm-ups.

# 'Native artists are resilient. We'll get through this'

Native artists, musicians, comedians, actors and writers speak on careers affected by the COVID-19 virus

BY VINCENT CHILLING  
Indian Country Today

Native comedian Joey Clift, Cowlitz, says he is seeing firsthand the effects that the coronavirus is having on the film industry living in Los Angeles. As a television and film production comedy writer that has contributed to the Cartoon Network, Dreamworks, Nickelodeon and more, Clift says that he is in the same boat as many Native artists in that they often work as an independent contractor.

"We don't have 401ks, we're contract employees," says Clift. "So for the next two weeks to several months that we're out of work, we're just out of work. As far as I know, there are no productions going in Los Angeles right now. So it's up to us to fend for ourselves, for lack of a better term."

Due to the coronavirus, Many Native artists, musicians, writers, and other creative professionals are seeing doors close to upcoming opportunities. Some are also seeing jobs they previously had on their schedules now getting cancelled.

Hip hop artists Tall Paul, Nataanii Means Last week on social media, Native hip hop artist Tall Paul, Ojibwe and Oneida, posted he had lost \$4,000 due to gig cancellations in the past month.

In a tweet, Paul wrote, "Hopefully it all works out, but like all the other bullshit that's found it's way in my life over the years, this already feels like a blessing in disguise waiting to fulfill itself. What don't kill you makes you stronger."

Paul also posted several humorous tweets about self-isolation to include funny Tik Tok videos and one about working out even though he couldn't go to the gym.

Lakota hip hop artist Nataanii Means, also said he was hurting due to cancellations and delayed payments for his work. On March 18, he tweeted.

"Bruh this gig I did 4 weeks ago still hasn't paid me. 4 weeks I've been waiting for payment and now there's a pandemic happening. They haven't updated or nothing. They owe me big racks too. F\*\*k this pisses me off cause all my upcoming gigs have been canceled and I'm stuck."

Illustrator Weshoyot Alvitre: 'I have been financially impacted by this'

Weshoyot Alvitre is a Tongva/Scots comic book artist and illustrator that said she is seeing a negative hit to her income as an artist. She has a children's book with Cherokee author Traci Sorrell titled "At the Mountain's Base" as well as an educational game "When Rivers Were Trails," as well as numerous award-winning books and anthologies.

"I have been financially impacted by this," wrote Alvitre in an email. "I started seeing it prior to any of the shutdowns, as I was scheduled to attend Indigenous Pop Expo March 26-29 (formerly Indigenous Comic-Con.)"

Alvitre says the Comic-Con, where she

sold prints, original art and merchandise helps her financially, as well as helps her make critical connections in her industry.

She explained the impact of the COVID-19 event closures on her artistry.

"Our recent graphic novel, GHOSTRIVER, came out of an interview at Indigenous Comic-Con in 2017. I have had an upcoming gallery even for GHOSTRIVER canceled as well, which has impacted more potential to line up future work and promote my current work. I have begun speaking at Universities and conferences. Most recently I spoke at UCLA, the day they announced potential cases of COVID-19 on campus. That will probably be my last in-person chat for a while. A conference in May will most likely be put on hold or canceled, and the honorarium as well."

"So three major events over the next two months have been canceled for me, and I now cannot rely on the income I would have expected from those events. Luckily the projects I have been working on have not been cancelled."

Alvitre says she and many fellow artists are being affected. She says she is also worried about her sister who works at a hospital, and for her husband who is an artist, that is seeing reduced hours at his retail job. But she does say she appreciates working at home with her children close by, even if things can get chaotic.

"One upside to this, is that I have experienced the ups and downs of being an independent contractor. It is something that usually does not have a set income, a consistent flow, etc. so you really need to always be prepared with several backup plans to be able to maintain your needs during slow times."

Loren Anthony, Dine', is an actor, public speaker and musician that has had several contracts recently cancelled due to COVID-19.

"Everything has stopped. Everything in the film industry has stopped and I've had eight contracts cancelled and just lost three months of work."

Anthony says that though the situation is disconcerting, he is going to take advantage of the situation in the best way that he can. He said he was employing two courses of action. The first is outreach to the community in a safe way that would not endanger the elderly or increase the possibility of transmitting any possible viruses and working on improving his own craft.

"I will do whatever is safest to do in my community, such as chopping wood for elders, or bringing them groceries and leaving them on the porch without coming into contact with him. It is important to be safe, said Anthony who shared a tweet of himself and 16-year-old Damien Slinky.

"Did what we could, helped three grandmas with wood and delivered food care packages to as many elders as possible. So many elders out there need attention to the homestead and for their children to check in with them. Be safe out there everyone, love and prayers to all. #COVID19."



## Hawk-eye in Big Cypress

Beverly Bidney

This red-shouldered hawk took a break from the hunt inside the safety of a chickee at the Ahfachkee School culture area. The raptor was not at all bothered by the group of students just a few feet beneath it, who had spent the afternoon working in the school's traditional garden March 10.

## Bored? This Indigenous list is for you

BY DALTON WALKER  
Indian Country Today

Bored at home? Nonsense.

Practicing safe social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic can also mean opportunity. We can finally catch up on all the streaming shows, Native YouTubers, read all the books we never have time for and listen to all the saved podcast episodes tucked away on our devices.

Here's a starting list of streaming shows, audiobooks, YouTubers and podcasts to take advantage of and eat up all the new isolation time upon us. Your local library might be available online so make sure to check out their website for ebooks. Each recommendation has an Indigenous take.

### 5 podcasts:

#### Well For Culture

Native health power couple Chelsea Luger and Thosh Collins have launched season two of their Indigenous wellness podcast.

#### This Land

Award-winning author Rebecca Nagle details Native American treaty rights in Oklahoma related to a Supreme Court case.

#### Toasted Sister Podcast

Journalist Andi Murphy talks Native American food with Native chefs and foodies.

#### Missing & Murdered: Finding Cleo

Investigative reporter Connie Walker tells the tragic story of Cleo Nicotine Semaganis in this award-winning podcast.

#### Natives On a Budget

Show hosts Monica

Braine and Shawn Spruce talk money management for Indigenous people in this new podcast.

### 5 shows:

#### Chambers

Netflix's supernatural thriller follows a Native teenager after a near-death experience.

#### Basketball or Nothing

Rezbball on Netflix. Follow a Navajo Nation high school basketball team's journey to win a state championship.

#### Lorena, Light-Footed Woman

Indigenous runner Lorena Ramirez runs ultramarathons in traditional clothing and sandals.

#### Osiyo: Voices of the Cherokee People

This Emmy-winning show highlights the people, places, history and culture of the Cherokee Nation.

#### Molly of Denali

Follow Alaska Native Molly Mabray's adventures in this first-of-its-kind animated television series. The show also has a podcast.

### 5 audio books:

#### Trail of Lightning

Rebecca Roanhorse shares a climate apocalypse story that follows Maggie Hoskie, Navajo, monster hunter. Roanhorse isn't Navajo and her fictional book has caused some controversy about her using certain Navajo traditions.

#### The Night Watchmen

Louise Erdrich's new novel focuses on a character based on her grandfather and his fight for treaty rights.

#### There There

The New York Times called Tommy Orange's book "groundbreaking, extraordinary." Orange shares multiple stories of Oakland urban Natives.

#### This Town Sleeps

A new novel by Dennis E. Staples that sheds light on reservation life for a young gay man. It's not clear if this is available via audiobook yet, but it is available to read digitally.

#### An American Sunrise

Poems by U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo connects listeners to her Mvskoke heritage.

### 5 YouTubers:

#### The Adventures of Nat

Natalie Franklin documents her visits across Indian Country and beyond.

#### Seukteoma

Hon'mana Seukteoma shares her experiences from college life, traveling to make-up tutorials.

#### Dollar Blazing

Jessica talks about her debt-free journey and saving money to hike the Appalachian Trail.

#### Reg and friends

Reg talks about reservation life, language and of course, his shenanigans.

#### Athabaskan Woman Blog

Angela Gonzalez shares her Athabaskan culture and other Alaska Native happenings.

## FOR SALE

LAST SIX OF VIN#	YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILEAGE/HRS	CONDITION	STARTING BID PRICE
168205	2006	CHEVROLET MINIVAN	UPLANDER LS (FWD)	210,077	Poor	\$296.00
B31933	2004	FORD CARGO VAN	E250 EXT CARGO VAN (RWD)	154,750	Poor	\$346.00
D98067	2006	FORD PICKUP TRUCK	F150 XLT SUPERCREW (4WD)	240,092	Poor	\$563.00
202297	2004	WINSTON EQUIPMENT TRAILER	AP21025EL - 20 TON	N/A	Poor	\$616.00
010660	1992	TRAIL EZE TRAILER	N/A	N/A	Poor	\$950.00
A64933	2008	FORD SUV	EDGE SE (FWD)	153,183	Poor	\$1,142.00
004218	N/A	SCAG RIDING MOWER	TIGER CUB STC48V-24BS - 48"	N/A	Fair	\$1,469.00
731537	N/A	SCAG RIDING MOWER	TURF TIGER STT61A-27CH - 61"	1,263	Fair	\$1,678.00
A09966	1992	FORD TRUCK TRACTOR	L-8000 (4WD) Diesel	28,832	Poor	\$2,242.00
032904	2006	CASE TRACTOR	JX95 (4WD)	1,139	Poor	\$4,895.00
A67814	2012	FORD PASSENGER VAN	E350 XL (RWD)	47,787	Fair	\$6,910.00

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)

# 24th Annual Junior Cypress Cattle Drive & Rodeo

## Saturday April 4, 2020

**Per Person**

**\$50- ages 13 & UP**

**\$25- ages 7-12**

**Age 6 and Under FREE**

**Package includes:**

**Breakfast, Dinner, Rodeo Admission and a Commemorative Bandana**

**Register**

**7:30-9:30am**

**Billie Swamp Safari**

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Alice Billie- (954) 347-9220 EXT 13216

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