

# The Seminole Tribune

Voice of the Unconquered

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## Rocksino By Hard Rock Deadwood now open

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

The Rocksino by Hard Rock Deadwood celebrated its grand opening in Deadwood, South Dakota, on Aug. 8. Hard Rock International officials said the property is a first of its kind offering in the company's portfolio – a boutique hotel and casino experience.

Deadwood is a historic city with a population of about 1,200, located in the heart of the Black Hills National Forest and known for its gold rush history.

According to an Aug. 9 news release, the grand opening event included a proclamation read by South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, remarks from the Seminole Tribe's Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola and Sioux tribal leaders, a traditional guitar smash, and live music.

The Seminole Tribe is the parent entity of Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming.

"For years, historic Deadwood and the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally have given countless individuals the opportunity to vacation and to enjoy the state of South Dakota," Gov. Noem said. "This new Rocksino by Hard Rock Deadwood will make those opportunities even better for years to come. In fact, as governor of South Dakota, I am proclaiming today 'Hard Rock Day' across the entire state."

◆ See ROCKSINO on page 7A

## Holly Tiger becomes tribe's first female president

Won special election to fill vacant position

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — The Seminole Tribe installed Holly Tiger as its new president Aug. 28. She is the first woman in the role. The ceremony took place in the auditorium at tribal headquarters on the Hollywood Reservation in front of current and former tribal leaders and a host of others in the tribal community.

Tiger is president of the tribe's business arm – Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. (STOFI). As such, she also serves as vice chairwoman of Tribal Council.

"Our tribe has had a long, storied history with strong matriarchs and we have another one here," Brian Zepeda, Naples liaison and master of ceremonies, said at the start of the ceremony. LaVonne Rose, tribal secretary, then installed President Tiger as members of her family stood at the bottom of the stage and looked on.

"Being the first woman as president, that's not lost on me. I think it's a great milestone for the tribe," President Tiger said. "It's important to me that we recognize it, but it's also important to know that the work is the same whether you're male or female, and our job now is to keep moving forward and do the best that we can for the tribe."

President Tiger won a special election Aug. 10 to fill a position left vacant by the unexpected death of James Holt II, who died June 8 at 44, just three days after he was inaugurated as president. She earned 266 votes in a four-person race that included former President Mitchell Cypress (220 votes), former Brighton Board Rep. Helene Buster (178 votes) and former Trial Court



Calvin Tiger

Holly Tiger is sworn in as president of the Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. by tribal secretary LaVonne Rose on Aug. 28 in Hollywood.

Chief Judge Moses B. Osceola (91 votes). President Tiger joins Hollywood Board Rep. Christine McCall, Big Cypress Board Rep. Nadine Bowers, and Brighton Board

Rep. Bryan Arledge. Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. serves as board vice-president. STOFI is a section 17 federal corporation established in 1957 in which each enrolled

tribal member is a shareholder.

◆ See PRESIDENT on page 6A

## Seminole play big role at Santa Fe Indian Market

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

From music to film to make-up, Santa Fe, New Mexico, was the place to be for Seminoles in the entertainment industry Aug. 17-20.

At the Santa Fe Indian Market, the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian's (NMAI) annual Native Cinema Showcase included films, music videos and a concert by Seminole brothers Doc Native and Spencer Battiest, and music from DJ Emcee One, Marcus Anthony Guinn (Osage and Potawatomi)

The Aug. 19 show included the brothers' music videos "Dream" and "The Storm," Battiest's "Love of My Life," Native's "Buss Down" and additional videos which they collaborated with others on including "Stand Up" and "One World (We Are One)."

"We brought live elements to the show with the Indigenous Enterprise dancers," Battiest said. "Our approach was to bring the music videos to life onstage."

The sold-out concert was held in the showcase's prime Saturday night spot.

"It was thrilling to see a packed house with a lot of Indigenous creative people who came by and showed respect," Battiest said.

"We did that for them, too. I really liked that about the whole weekend, we made sure to support each other. These are all people at the top of their game."

"It was packed and it was loud," Native said. "The cheers and crowd interaction were great. There were friends and new faces in the crowd; it was a great mixture of people. During 'Buss Down' I had them sing the chorus with me."

During "The Storm," Seminole Tribe cultural ambassador Everett Osceola and Miss Florida Seminole Thomlynn Billie went onstage with the brothers and did a stomp dance as the video played behind them.

"We wanted to have a real Seminole moment and we did," Battiest said.

After "The Storm" they went into "Stand Up," which won an MTV Video Music Award in 2017. Battiest, Native and Emcee One each performed their parts in the song. They ended the concert with "One World (We Are One)."

"Being able to represent our tribe onstage and tell our story of the Seminole people and our music was an honor," Native said. "It was an honor to play for the Smithsonian."

◆ See SANTA FE on page 6A



Courtesy photo

From left to right, Doc Native, Miss Florida Seminole Thomlynn Billie, Seminole Tribe cultural ambassador Everett Osceola and Spencer Battiest are on stage Aug. 19 at the Native Cinema Showcase in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

## Department strives to preserve language, culture

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

The Seminole Tribe's Language Department aims to preserve the Elapokne and Creek languages by making it a part of daily life. To achieve that goal, the department has begun programs to engage the community and is working toward creating a comprehensive audio dictionary.

"Language connects us all and is elemental to us," said Lee Zepeda, executive director of Administration. "Language is the

core of everything that makes us a tribe. It's such a basic part of who we are."

Zepeda believes it is important to revitalize the language by creating more fluent speakers instead of having it relegated to something only found in a museum. The department recently put out a call for fluent speakers to participate in recording information for the new audio dictionary. Many fluent speakers today are Elders; several responded to the flyer, according to Bryan Granie, senior director of Administration.

The department, which was approved

by the Tribal Council in January 2021, is in the process of retaining a company that Zepeda said believes in preserving and revitalizing language to help develop the audio dictionary. Zepeda said they want to get it done sooner rather than later.

"The [Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum] also has audio files and we are going through those," Granie said. "We will have a full scale audio version of the dictionary and offer it to the community. We also want to engage fluent speakers for a future version of an app."

◆ See LANGUAGE on page 6A



Courtesy photo

The Language Department hosts a family bingo night in Hollywood on July 6.

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Visit the Tribune's website for news throughout the month at [seminoletribune.org](http://seminoletribune.org)



# Community



## Tribe preserves historic trails amid FPL solar projects

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**BIG CYPRESS** — In 2013, the Seminole Tribe learned about Florida Power and Light's (FPL) plan to build a massive power plant about a mile from the northern border of the Big Cypress Reservation. The tribe filed a lawsuit to prevent its construction, and after a few years of litigation, won the fight.

Now, instead of a power plant, FPL shifted its focus to cleaner and less obtrusive solar energy fields.

"Initially they wanted a natural gas

power plant, so we went to court to block the permit application," said Paul Backhouse, senior director of the tribe's Heritage and Environmental Resource Office (HERO). "A lot of time passed and the world changed a bit."

That change includes construction of four solar fields located on former agricultural land, which is also the location of historic trails previously used by Seminoles to travel to Immokalee and other points. FPL has worked closely with the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) to ensure those culturally important sites are undisturbed as they build.

The tribe and FPL entered into an alternative mitigation agreement in August 2021 to protect culturally significant sites by avoiding them during construction. FPL archeologists were provided a map from THPO that identifies areas to be left untouched.

THPO, along with Seminole Media Productions, created a story map to memorialize the trails and their meaning using drone footage and educational videos. The story map uses geographic information system (GIS) technology to connect maps, images and a narrative to tell a story.

"The cultural landscape is significant

and we need to capture that," said THPO Assistant Director Juan Cancel. "This is a Seminole story, a story of the community."

THPO conducted interviews with community members to get a cohesive picture and analysis of the trails. THPO didn't find any physical artifacts on the FPL sites, but gathered a lot of stories from tribal members.

"The area had been traversed by tribal members since before any roads were built," Cancel said. "There are a lot of trails that connected Big Cypress to Immokalee and other communities. We were able to paint an oral history. People remembered going through the land on buggies to go to the grocery store."

FPL has four solar fields in the area, two of which have been operational since 2022. Another is under construction and one is in the permitting stage. The fields are about 650 to 700 acres each and provide 74.5 megawatt solar photovoltaic power. However, none of that energy will go to the Big Cypress Reservation since it gets its power from Glades Electric.

"FPL is doing an outstanding job of making sure places the tribe cares about are being protected," Backhouse said. "They've been good to work with in that regard."

The THPO story map can be accessed at: <https://arcg.is/19f5ey>.



This image from the story map shows the historic trails between Big Cypress and Immokalee that were once used by the Seminoles.

THPO

## Kids Day to kick off Brighton Field Day

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**BRIGHTON** — The Seminole Tribe will host its 85th annual Brighton Field Day Festival Feb. 16-18, 2024. Gates open at 9am.

Kids Day is scheduled for Feb. 16 with free admission to all schools.

The festival will feature American Indian arts and crafts, Native dancers and music, authentic Seminole food, alligator wrestling, PRCA Rodeo, concerts and more.

Organizers said the goal for the event is to offer a hands-on and immersive experience that showcases Seminole culture and heritage. A cultural village and various events allow students opportunities to engage directly with Seminole traditions.

The festival will be held at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena on the Brighton Reservation. To schedule a field trip, contact the Brighton Education office at (863) 763-3572.

Brighton Field Day started in November of 1938. It is one of the longest-running Native festivals in the U.S. Initially meant to be a day of fun for the Seminole Tribal communities, the festival now attracts thousands of visitors who join in and celebrate Seminole traditions and culture. For more information visit [brightonfieldday.com](http://brightonfieldday.com).



File photo

Children check out a vendor's display at the Brighton Field Day Festival in 2018.

## Micosukee Tribe to open new casino

STAFF REPORT

The Micosukee Tribe is due to open a new casino in November at the Micosukee Service Plaza, located just off Interstate 75 at exit 49 at 47801 W State Road 84 in Ochopee.

The Micosukee Service Plaza Casino will feature 150 slot machines in an 8,500 square foot nonsmoking space, located next to the already open Glades Cafe and Dunkin' Donuts, according to the tribe. It will also offer beer and wine. Officials describe it as a multimillion-dollar expansion of tribal operations.

The tribe first ventured into the gaming industry when it opened the Micosukee Indian Bingo Hall in 1990. After many successful years, it opened the Micosukee Casino & Resort in 1999 at the edge of the Everglades at 500 SW 177 Ave. in Miami.

"We haven't had an expansion in about two decades since the resort," William J. Osceola, the tribe's Business Council secretary, said at the groundbreaking event according to media reports. "It's important because we need room to grow as a community. A tree doesn't get bigger if you contain its roots."

Chairman Talbert Cypress said the tribe expects the casino to be a revenue generator that will help fund future projects.

"This is original reservation land and we haven't had the resources to build out here, and we're hoping this does that," he said at the event.

"We're proud of how far the tribe has come and I'm glad they're finally adding onto this part of the tribal land," Jane Osceola Billie, a former tribal judge, said at the groundbreaking.

More is at [micosukee.com](http://micosukee.com).



Facebook

The Micosukee Tribe hosted a groundbreaking for a new casino at the Micosukee Service Plaza on Aug. 16. From left to right are Business Council Secretary William J. Osceola, Chairman Talbert Cypress and Assistant Chairman Lucas K. Osceola.

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### DEER From page 2A

Twenty years later, as she prepared to take charge of the BIA, Deer said, "As Menominee, we collectively discovered the kind of determination that human beings

only find in times of impending destruction. Against all odds, we invented a new policy — restoration. This legislation is a vivid reminder of how great a government can be when it is large enough to admit and rectify its mistakes. It is also indicative of my tribe's spirit, tenacity, and ability to hold other

sovereign entities accountable."

John Nichols is associate editor of The Capital Times in Madison, Wisconsin.

# New center of Hollywood community emerges

*Projects progress on all reservations*

**BY DAMON SCOTT**  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — A slew of construction projects on the Hollywood Reservation have begun to form a new and growing center of the community.

Generally referred to as Seminole Estates, bounded by State Road 7 to the east, Florida's Turnpike to the west, Stirling Road to the north, and near the area of Sheridan Street to the south, it now includes new and existing homes to its east and west. The Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino is to the north and the rodeo arena and 4-H complex make up its southern end.

One of Seminole Estates most recent significant projects (completed in 2020) is the Betty Mae Jumper Medical Center, which relocated and expanded the reservation's health care services. Since then, there have been several other notable projects in the planning and construction stages, including a new recreation center, preschool, senior center and tribal headquarters.

"We're bringing the new amenities to the middle of the reservation," Derek Koger, the executive director of Tribal Community Development (TCD), said.

Koger said the plan for a new tribal headquarters is in the consultation phase with Tribal Council in order to first determine who the architects would be.

"What the Council wants is for this to be the Seminole Tribe's flagship office building across from the Hard Rock," Koger said. "It will be something that screams Seminole Tribe."

The new headquarters would be located south of the Seminole Classic Casino and new senior center.

Koger said the tribe has outgrown its current headquarters, which is more than 30 years old. The current headquarters at 6300 Stirling Road would eventually be demolished to make way for additional homes, he said.

Koger and Fabian Lefler, director of community planning and development at TCD, said they're preparing a questionnaire for all the tribe's executive departments to help identify what office space would be needed in the future, before any design plans are drawn up.

"It's definitely going to be an exciting project that the Council will elicit community feedback on," Koger said. "These facilities that we build will be here longer than any of us."

Set to surround the medical center is a new preschool, senior center, recreation center and skate park. Lefler said the new recreation center plans are under consideration by Tribal Council. It would be a state-of-the-art facility that's double the size of the existing center. Meanwhile, the preschool is in the first phases of construction just east of the medical center, and the senior center would be located adjacent to the preschool.

Residential projects continue to move along as well. Koger said the first phases of the Seminole Park single-family homes and townhomes have been completed. Phase three — the Townhomes at RV Hideaway — would add 29 homes and a playground. In addition, the former Eight Clans Estates buildings have been demolished to make way

for 18 new townhomes with a playground and additional parking for the cemetery. Finally, Koger said the Priscilla Sayen Way apartments (16 three and four-bedroom units) are in the final inspection phase and he expects residents to start moving in sometime in September.

**Brighton**

The Brighton Reservation has seen perhaps more new construction in recent months than any other community. In addition to the Flowing Well residential community — with 30 single-family homes and 40 rental homes — commercial projects underway include the new Seminole Casino Hotel Brighton and a complex that will host a new Boys & Girls Club, library and community cultural center. The new Pemaayev Emahakv Charter School culture and immersion program buildings opened in August.

Koger said more phases of homebuilding are in the pipeline, including a new playground in the Knots Landing neighborhood.

On the commercial end, the community can expect to see ground break in the near future on a new preschool, an upgraded skate park, and a new health clinic.

**Big Cypress**

One of the biggest projects on the Big Cypress Reservation that is nearing its final phases is the massive expansion of the Ahfachkee School. Other commercial projects in different phases of development include a new preschool and playground, senior center and a recreation center.

The Groves residential development, with 57 rental homes, is under construction with some homes complete, Koger said. The neighborhood is similar to that of the Mabel T. Frank residential development.

**Immokalee**

The Immokalee Reservation can expect a new recreation center to break ground in January 2024, and to host a ribbon cutting for a new public safety building in about six months, Koger said.

In addition, a new health clinic similar to the one in Big Cypress is under construction.

**Lakeland**

Koger said a groundbreaking for the new Lakeland Community Center will likely happen toward the end of September.

"This is going to be an amazing amenity to the community," he said.

In addition, the Lakeland Reservation's first phase of 46 homes are occupied, and Koger said phase two will feature 26 homes for sale and rent.

**Fort Pierce**

On the Fort Pierce Reservation, the community's new playground, located adjacent to its community center is almost complete.



Tribal Community Development's Hollywood land use map shows some of the future projects for the community in green and light blue.



A new Hollywood Preschool building, as seen in this rendering, is one of many projects on tap for Seminole Estates.

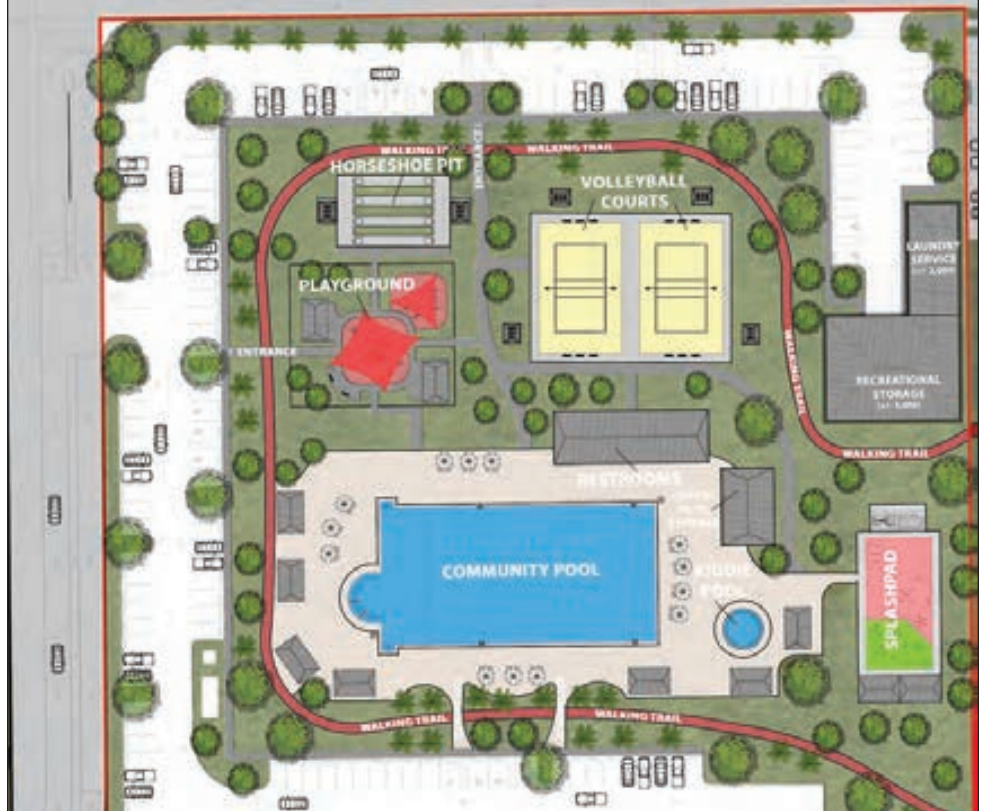
**Trail community**

Construction of a new building that will serve as a government center, community center and hurricane shelter for the Trail community is still in work. Located at 57257 Tamiami Trail in Ochopee, Lefler said the project is still moving through environmental permitting and it could be another year or year and a half until ground breaks for construction.

For more, go to [tcd.semtribe.com](http://tcd.semtribe.com).



Among the many projects coming to the Brighton Reservation is a preschool and playground as seen in this rendering.



The recreation complex on the Big Cypress Reservation would include a number of features, including a gymnasium, playground and community pool.

# Lolita dies at Miami Seaquarium

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

After more than five decades in captivity in questionable conditions at the Miami Seaquarium, the 57-year-old orca best known by the public as Lolita died Aug. 18.

“... Toki started exhibiting serious signs of discomfort, which her full Miami Seaquarium and Friends of Toki

medical team began treating immediately and aggressively,” a statement from the Seaquarium said Aug. 18. “Toki was an inspiration to all who had the fortune to hear her story and especially to the Lummi Nation that considered her family.”

Seaquarium officials said Lolita, who was captured in Puget Sound in the Pacific Northwest and transferred to Miami when she was approximately four-years-old, died from what was believed to be a renal condition.

Members of the Lummi Nation, located just west of Bellingham, Washington, near Lolita’s home waters in the Salish Sea, long considered it a “sacred obligation” to see her freed. They refer to Lolita as Tokitae, Toki, and Sk’aliCh’elh-tenaut. The Lummi have received support in their efforts from other tribes over the years, including the Seminole Tribe and the Miccosukee Tribe.

Groups like Friends of Toki (formally Friends of Lolita), People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and SacredSea.org, among others, sought to have Lolita released for the remainder of her life in an ocean sanctuary. Eduardo Albor, the CEO of The Dolphin Company, which acquired the Seaquarium in 2022, had recently set those wheels into motion.

“Not a single effort we made to give Lolita an opportunity was a waste of time and money. My heart is truly broken,” Albor said in a social media post soon after her death.

The Dolphin Company had first announced its intentions to release Lolita earlier this year. Officials said they had entered into a “formal and binding agreement” with Friends of Toki and other entities to move her to her home waters. Philanthropist Jim Irsay, the owner and CEO of the NFL’s Indianapolis Colts, was also helping to fund Lolita’s relocation. Last March, Albor said relocating Lolita was one of the reasons that motivated The Dolphin Company to acquire the Seaquarium.

“Plans to make this move came too late, and Lolita was denied even a minute of freedom from her grinding 53 years in captivity,” Ingrid Newkirk, president of PETA, said in an Aug. 18 statement. Newkirk said PETA wants SeaWorld



Miami Seaquarium

Lolita in her tank at the Miami Seaquarium in an undated photo.

San Diego to “learn from this tragedy” and free the orca Corky that she said has been in captivity there for nearly 54 years. She also called on the Seaquarium to continue with its plans to send the dolphin that was Lolita’s tank mate to a seaside sanctuary, along with all other dolphins in captivity.

### ‘She needs to come home’

The Lummi Nation still wants Lolita returned to her home waters for burial, and efforts to do so look possible.

“The Nation fully supports bringing her home and that has not changed,” Lummi Nation Chairman Anthony Hillaire, said in a statement. “We have our culture, our way of life, the way we do things, our own protocol, and we believe she still needs to be here. She needs to come home to her family.”

Albor has said he’s also supportive of

the effort, but details have not been released.

Soon after her death, the Seaquarium used construction equipment to lift Lolita out of the 80-foot long, 35-foot wide, and 20-foot deep tank where she lived, and placed her on a refrigerated semi-trailer truck to be transported to the University of Georgia for a necropsy.

Lolita was one of the few remaining orcas in captivity. The Seaquarium discontinued the shows that featured her in 2022, the same year it was acquired by The Dolphin Company.

The Seaquarium, located at 4400 Rickenbacker Causeway on Virginia Key east of downtown Miami, first opened in 1955. It features a variety of sea creatures, including dolphins, sea lions, manatees, reef fish and sharks.



PETA

PETA activists gathered to mark Lolita’s death and protest against the Miami Seaquarium on Aug. 20.

# Q&A: Tena Granit retires after 23 years

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — Longtime Seminole Tribe employee Tena Granit has retired after more than 23 years of service. Her latest post was as executive director of finance for the Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. (STOFI). The tribe hosted a retirement luncheon for Granit at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino on Aug. 3.

Granit held four positions at the tribe, starting as a staff accountant on the governmental side in April 2000. She was also the accounting manager for economic development at STOFI and later its financial controller. Granit would begin a seven and a half year stint as executive director of finance in January 2016.



Calvin Tiger

Tena Granit is joined at the retirement luncheon by Rafael Sanchez Sr., STOFI’s Immokalee liaison.

South Florida, Miramar to be exact. I am the youngest of four children, the only daughter, and was the first to receive a college degree. I am married and have a son who is 17 and a daughter who is 14.

**Tribune:** How would you describe the work you did with the STOFI and why is it important?

**Granit:** STOFI has over 4,000 shareholders (tribal members). Every year, it has a shareholder meeting in which it provides a financial report. The goal is to provide the shareholders with information to assess how their corporation is performing.

The goal of the STOFI team is to increase shareholder value each year. This is accomplished by growing the businesses net income year after year. That can be through increasing revenues, reducing costs, business growth through acquisitions, and/or removing businesses that are operating at a loss.

In the last seven and a half years as the executive director of finance, STOFI has grown its net position\* by 382%. I am proud to have been a part of that.

**Tribune:** What’s your assessment of STOFI now that you’re leaving?

**Granit:** STOFI is in a prime position to accelerate its growth over the next several years.

**Tribune:** Is there anything else you’d like to say to the tribal community?



Calvin Tiger

At the retirement luncheon, from left to right are Hollywood Board Rep. Christine McCall, Big Cypress Board Rep. Nadine Bowers, Tena Granit and Brighton Board Rep. Bryan Arledge.

**Granit:** After 23 and a half years, it is hard to say goodbye. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to have served both the Seminole Tribe of Florida and STOFI. I met so many amazing people during my time

here. Some of them became like family to me.

I will thoroughly miss working for STOFI. I will miss coworkers, staff, and the shareholders whom I have proudly served all these years. With that being said, my

children are now teenagers and I feel it is critical to dedicate more of my time to them.

*\*Editor’s note: Net position is the difference between assets and liabilities.*



Calvin Tiger

STOFI board members, staff and others attended the retirement luncheon for Tena Granit, who holds an appreciation trophy that was presented to her.

**Tribune:** How did the tribe get on your radar in the first place?

**Granit:** I was born and raised in

Granit earned a degree in accounting and a master’s degree in business from Florida Atlantic University. She’s also a certified public accountant (CPA).

The Tribune asked Granit more about her experience at the tribe, including what’s next. Answers have been edited for length and clarity.

**Granit:** While I was finishing my college education, I worked for the audit firm that handled the tribe’s audit. When I graduated, I went on to work for a larger audit firm and then for Franklin Templeton. While I was at Franklin Templeton, I heard about an opening for an accountant position at the tribe. I knew what a great employer they were, so I applied.

## ◆ SANTA FE From page 1A

The brothers are no strangers to performances for the NMAI. They performed in New York City and Washington D.C., in August 2017, and again in Washington D.C. in November 2022 for the opening of the National Native American Veterans Memorial.

Among the memorable moments of the weekend for Native was getting together with others in the creative industry.

"Getting to sit down and talk about what going on in our lives and communities was special because we all come from different nations and regions in the U.S. and Canada," Native said. "To be in one spot and see each other's growth in our industries was great; a lot of us have been friends since we were just getting our careers started."

In the same Saturday night time slot but at a different venue, The Osceola Brothers band performed as part of the Native Guitars Tour, which consisted of several bands. It was their third show with the tour this year, which is a collective of Indigenous artists striving to promote Native music, art and fashion. The Osceola Brothers band consists of Cameron on guitar, Tyson on bass guitar and Sheldon on drums.

"The best part of the concert was being able to impact people and have them take our message and spread it to others," Cameron Osceola said. "Our message is to keep hope alive and do what you want to do; you can achieve whatever you put your mind to. We were received really well."

Another highlight for Osceola was meeting people who only knew each other



Courtesy photo

The Osceola Brothers perform at the Native Guitars Tour on Aug. 19 in Santa Fe. From left to right are Cameron, Sheldon and Tyson Osceola.

from Instagram, such as writer, producer and director Sterlin Harjo and actor, filmmaker, director and writer Steven Paul Judd, but he also liked hearing from the crowd.

"When people come up and say they appreciate our music, it makes my life worthwhile," Osceola said. "Music really saved my life and I see that as my duty to give that back to the next person who will go on to change the world."

Everett Osceola, who runs the Native Reel Film Festival, attended the cinema showcase to see films and get ideas for the

festival, which will be held Feb. 9-10, 2024. He arrived at the festival a day early and met a lot of Natives in the industry including Harjo, actor and producer Simon Baker, and actor, director and writer Cody Lightning.

"It was a who's who of Native cinema and TV," Osceola said. "I may try to bring some of them down for Native Reel's 10th anniversary in February."

Osceola, who dressed in traditional Seminole warrior clothing, said dancing to "The Storm" was exhilarating.

"It was great to see Spencer and Doc



Courtesy photo

Coral Battiest touches up the models' makeup before going down the runway during the Indian Market fashion show.

work together; it kind of felt like home," Osceola said. "I was honored to perform with them and bring Seminole culture and tradition to the stage that night. I was proud to be part of that."

The Battiest family's contributions to the Indian Market weekend extended beyond the brothers. Spencer and Doc's sisters, Petra and Coral Battiest, are makeup artists who did the makeup for 30 models at the Lauren Good Day portion of the Indigenous Fashion Show and for actors, such as Kiowa Gordon and Eugene Brave Rock.

"It was a big deal that they were invited," Spencer Battiest said. "The people on the runway weren't all models, some were actors, singers and dancers. It was special that they got to do those big time celebrities' makeup. We're all very proud of them."

"It was such an amazing time," Native said. "Being around so many tribes and nations felt like home and I can't wait to go back."



Courtesy photo

Designer Lauren Good Day, in the center of the group looking toward the left, with the models for the Indian Market fashion show.



Courtesy photo

Posing at the Lauren Good Day fashion show are actor Kiowa Gordon, actress Jessica Matten, Spencer Battiest and actor, producer Eugene Brave Rock.



Courtesy photo

Petra Battiest puts on Eugene Brave Rock's makeup before the fashion show.

## ◆ PRESIDENT From page 1A

"We didn't get here on an easy note, but today we're here to celebrate," Rep. McCall said. "Our tribe is growing, and it's exciting to see what we're going to be able to accomplish. The board is more educated than ever and has a healthy financial position. We're all one tribe and one family and I'm very excited to work with Holly."

From Hollywood, President Tiger has many years of experience working for the tribe. She was a liaison for former President Richard Bowers and was the tribe's housing director. Tiger was also instrumental in the creation of the Native Learning Center in Hollywood and was its executive director. She earned a law degree from Nova Southeastern University.

"She's already been in here, hitting the ground running," Rep. Arledge said. "As soon as she was [elected] she came into the Brighton office and we were sitting there working the first day. I know she's ready to

go, she's ambitious."

On Tribal Council, President Tiger joins Chairman Osceola, Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie and Brighton Councilman Larry Howard.

"It's been a journey. My heart and my love goes out to James Holt II. We'll never forget that gentleman," Councilman Howard said after congratulating President Tiger. "I'm looking forward to seeing what [the board] brings to the table for the corporate side and I'm looking forward to working with you on the council side."

President Tiger thanked her family, friends and supporters, both past and present.

"I look around at a lot of young people in this room and I tell you, don't give up. Everything comes with hard work, commitment and having a little bit of gumption. I encourage all of you to do that," she said. "My goal is to lead with compassion, lead with empathy and love for your people, because that's what's going to get you through. That's what's going to make you shine."



Calvin Tiger

After being installed as president, Holly Tiger, center, is joined by, from left to right, Brighton Councilman Larry Howard, Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, Big Cypress Board Rep. Nadine Bowers, Brighton Board Rep. Bryan Arledge and Hollywood Board Rep. Christine McCall.



Calvin Tiger

President Holly Tiger, left, with Miss Florida Seminole Princess Thomlynn Billie and Hollywood Board Rep. Christine McCall.



SMP

With family and fellow board members watching, Holly Tiger is installed as president by tribal secretary LaVonne Rose.

## ◆ LANGUAGE From page 1A

The department also started hosting

Elaponke family bingo nights to raise awareness of the language and have some fun. Language program teacher Samantha Hisler recently held a bingo game at Camp Kulaqua, where about two dozen girls filled

their bingo cards and learned numbers in Elaponke at the same time.

"It takes a community to save the language," Zepeda said. "The more fluent people we have, the better off the tribe will

be. The bingo nights are gaining in popularity and we want to spread it to all reservations."

The goal is to make learning the language interesting instead of just memorizing words on paper without context.

"Without language, culture would cease to exist," Zepeda said. "This is long overdue. It's time for language to be a priority. It's exciting and can't happen soon enough for us."

**ROCKSINO**  
From page 1A

The Rocksino by Hard Rock Deadwood will have familiar touches for fans of the Hard Rock brand, just at a smaller scale. The casino area has 86 slot machines, a restaurant and bar, music memorabilia and a Rock Shop retail store. Officials said renovated guest rooms in the hotel are scheduled to open later this year.

“Hard Rock prides itself on being able to provide authentic and memorable experiences for our guests, embodied by music and rich cultural history,” Jon Lucas, chief operating officer of Hard Rock International, said in the release. “We are thrilled to become a part of one of the most celebrated historic places in the U.S. and provide an economic stimulus to the city of Deadwood.”

“As a community famous for entertaining guests since 1876, Deadwood is excited to welcome Rocksino by Hard Rock Deadwood as our newest, can’t-miss property,” Deadwood Mayor David Ruth, said in the release. “Our rich, Old West history combined with the Hard Rock brand will enhance the Deadwood experience for which we are known for. The Rocksino by Hard Rock Deadwood is sure to be an additional gem luring visitors to this amazing town.”

The festivities also included a gift exchange between Councilman Osceola and Sioux tribal leaders, a performance by the Wakinyan Luta drum circle from Pine Ridge, and music act Sublime with Rome



The Rocksino is located in historic Deadwood, South Dakota.

California Indian Legal Services/Facebook

performing an outdoor concert.

As part of the event, a \$40,000 check from the Hard Rock Heals Foundation – the nonprofit arm of Hard Rock International

and Seminole Gaming – and the Willie G. Invitational golf tournament was presented to representatives of the Oglala Sioux Tribe Veterans Shelter.



Kevin Eilbeck

Big Kenny of country music duo Big & Rich, center, celebrates during the traditional guitar smash. Hard Rock International COO Jon Lucas is to his left, while Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola is to his right.



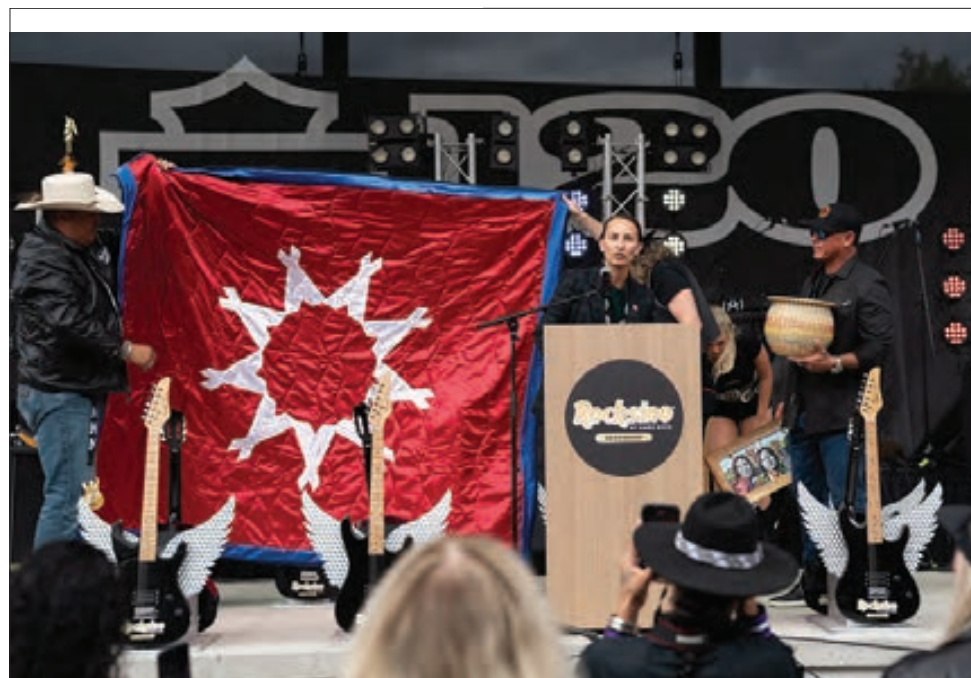
Kevin Eilbeck

Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola gave remarks at the event.



Kevin Eilbeck

A \$40,000 check presentation was made to the Oglala Sioux Tribe Veterans Shelter at the grand opening. The donation came from the first Willie G. Invitational golf tournament and the Hard Rock Heals Foundation. From left to right are Hard Rock International COO Jon Lucas, Oglala Sioux Tribe vice president Alicia Mousseau, Karen and Bill Davidson of the Harley-Davidson Motor Co. and Marlin and Camille McMakin of the Boulder Canyon Golf Club.



Kevin Eilbeck

The festivities also included a gift exchange between Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, at right, and Sioux tribal leaders.

# Classic Casino to host breast cancer fundraiser

STAFF REPORT

**HOLLYWOOD** — The fight against breast cancer will come to Seminole Classic Casino in Hollywood Sept. 7 for the Making Strides Kickoff and Men Wear Pink Fashion Show. The event will run from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The casino and Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood and Seminole Casino Coconut Creek are sponsors of the American Cancer Society’s Making Strides. For more information go to eventbrite.com.

# Casinos help with back to school supplies

STAFF REPORT

Seminole Classic Casino in Hollywood sponsored a big back-to-school supply distribution event in August at Hollywood Hills High School. More than 3,000 backpacks were distributed to Broward County students.

In Collier County, Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee helped out in the 2023 Lipman Backpack Giveaway and Back to School event.

# Hard Rock Casino Rockford backs regional park concert venue

STAFF REPORT

Hard Rock Casino Rockford joined Ringland-Johnson Construction and the Rockford Park District on Aug. 2 to unveil plans for a permanent outdoor community concert venue at Levings Park, a regional public park in Rockford, Illinois, that hosts summer concert series and often features up and coming artists. The venue would include a concrete stage, cedar structure, metal roof and upgraded lighting and sound equipment.

“Hard Rock’s commitment to the Rockford region goes beyond the four walls of our casino,” Geno Iafrate, president of Hard Rock Casino Rockford, said in a news release. “We are honored to be a part of the long history of entertainment at Levings Park. We envision this venue as not just an entertainment destination, but as a platform for cultural enrichment, a hub for local talent, and a catalyst for unforgettable experiences.”

The venue would feature an 807-square-foot stage and timber structure and two 165-square-foot dressing rooms.

Costs for architecture, engineering, and construction are being funded by the casino and Ringland- Johnson Construction.

# Hard Rock Tampa to host TESLA

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**TAMPA** — The California rock band TESLA will perform in the Hard Rock Event Center at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa on Jan. 16, 2024, at 8 p.m.

For ticket information go to seminolehardrocktampa.com or ticketmaster.com.

# Jose Feliciano to perform in Immokalee

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**IMMOKALEE** — Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee will host legendary singer/songwriter Jose Feliciano on Dec. 5 at 8 p.m.

For ticket information go to ticketmaster.com or moreinparadise.com. Attendees must be 21 or older.

Feliciano is recognized as the first Latin artist to effectively cross over into the English music market, opening the doors for other artists who now play an important role in the American music industry. He’s been awarded more than 45 Gold and Platinum

records, has 19 Grammy nominations, and won nine Grammy Awards including the Latin Recording Academy’s lifetime achievement award.

Three songs have been milestones for Feliciano: “Light My Fire,” which topped the charts globally in 1968 and, according to the song’s publisher, is now a standard because of Feliciano’s interpretation; “Che Sarà” the 1971 San Remo Music Festival entry that became a mega-success for Feliciano throughout Europe, Asia and South America; and “Feliz Navidad,” the Christmas song that has now become a tradition worldwide during the holiday season.

# Country music band comes to Immokalee

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**IMMOKALEE** — The country music band Sawyer Brown will bring its energetic live show to Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee on Nov. 18 at 8 p.m.

For ticket information go to .moreinparadise.com. Attendees must be 21 or older.

The recipients of numerous CMA, ACM and CMT awards, Sawyer Brown has released 23 albums with more than 50 chart singles including three number ones: “Step

That Step,” “Some Girls Do” and “Thank God For You.”

The band has earned its place as one of the premier live acts in music. Sawyer Brown began by playing 275-300 nights a year for the first decade or more of its career and has never come off the road. Known for their high-energy, no-holds-barred approach to the concert stage, the band continues to fill venues across the country with the same enthusiasm they have had from day one.

# Hard Rock Bristol sponsors, participates in benefit 5K



Hard Rock Bristol

Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Bristol sponsored and participated in Bristol Regional Speech and Hearing Center’s Run Your Mouth 5K walk and run Aug. 19 in Bristol, Tennessee. Funds raised go toward providing services for underserved people in the community.

# Hard Rock AC hosts Heart of Surfing



Hard Rock Atlantic City

A youngster smiles while surfing at a Heart of Surfing event hosted by Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City on Aug. 11. Heart of Surfing is a New Jersey nonprofit that provides children with autism and other developmental disabilities opportunities to enjoy surfing and skateboarding lessons.

# SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA AH-TAH-THI-KI MUSEUM

A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

## History comes alive in Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's collections

BY TARA BACKHOUSE  
Collections Manager

**BIG CYPRESS** — When several pieces of history come together, events from the past seem to come alive and inspire us. This is what is happening as a new program comes together at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum. The museum has helped host many Seminole War reenactments, starting in the late 1990s. The Seminole Tribune documented these events. Thanks to this very newspaper, the museum protects hundreds of pictures of Seminole hosted reenactments that took place over the years.

Also, museum staff tended to keep flyers and other memorabilia from the reenactments, and that's why they are still preserved today. Finally, some of the first antiques that were acquired for the museum were 19th century militaria and clothing. The museum vaults hold nearly 100 19th century weapons, the type of guns and swords used primarily by U.S. soldiers during the Seminole Wars. We also have some fantastic examples of what both Indigenous and U.S. Army personnel wore and used during the extensive wars, which lasted for nearly 100 years in the 18th and 19th centuries. These pieces illustrate the purpose of museum collections: to preserve history and share the stories with our community and visitors.

Not all of the reenactments have been designed from an Indigenous perspective. However, over the past 10 years one group has been changing this. Osceola's Legacy is a martial arts group led by Charlie Scott Osceola on the Big Cypress Reservation. During performances the group demonstrates



Seminole forces celebrate a victory during this 2001 re-enactment on the Big Cypress Reservation.

realistic fighting moves that historic Seminole warriors could have used during hand-to-hand combat in the Seminole Wars. At that time, Seminoles knew how to fight better than the U.S. soldiers who were sent to a land that was inhospitable to them. This was good because Indigenous people in Florida remained unconquered in the sense that not all were removed from Florida and complete genocide wasn't accomplished by the U.S. government.

Removal and extermination were the two options considered by the U.S. toward the end of the Seminole Wars because it hadn't won the wars. These strategies were boldly stated in 19th century newspapers that the museum have preserved. The U.S. government tried both these strategies and decimated the original inhabitants of Florida, but it ultimately wasn't successful in its goals. These days, Osceola's Legacy performs successful fighting moves on non-Seminole participants who are on the losing side of the conflict.

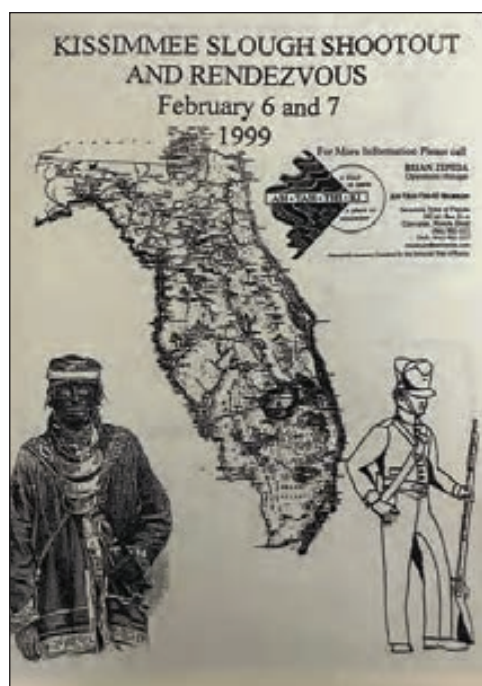
Now a new group is forming, one that will use the historic pieces at the museum to inspire its own creations. Eventually, the moccasins and other items the group makes can be worn during live reenactments in order to add increased authenticity to the performances. Tylor Tigertail is looking for people to join the group and learn about the history that shaped Florida.

"One of the things I have been the most passionate about is to start up the Seminole reenactment here in Big Cypress," Tigertail said. "I have participated in the reenactments since I was 13. It has always given me pride to portray my ancestors in their fight for independence and freedom. Being older, I want to provide the younger generations, or even my generation, to be able to feel that

pride as well."

Tigertail plans to hold workshops for participants to learn to make their own regalia and learn battlefield safety, as well as other important aspects of reenactments. The museum will help in any way the group needs.

If you'd like to see more of the museum's collection, stop by or call us to arrange a tour, (863) 902-1113. Thank you!



A brochure from an early re-enactment held by the museum shows the clothing and guns that participants on each side might have worn.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Moses Jumper Jr. shows off the kind of moccasins and clothing that Seminole Wars reenactors make for their activities.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

These 19th century plain buckskin moccasins are the kind that Seminole warriors might have worn during the Seminole Wars.

Presented By Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

# WE WANT YOU!

**Seminole Tribal Members Sign up now for the Seminole Reenactors Workshop!**

**Thursday, September 14<sup>TH</sup>**

**3PM**  
Vault Tour  
Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

**6PM**  
Workshop  
To-Pee-Ke-Ke Yak-Ne Community Center

**For More Info Contact:**  
**TYLOR TIGERTAIL**  
954.612.4979

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

# SEE YOU THERE

## ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH September 2023

Throughout the history of humanity, plants have played a vital role in our survival by providing us with food, materials for construction and crafting, medicine, and many other benefits. One of the thousands upon thousands of plant species utilized by humans is *Eupatorium serotinum*, more commonly known as late-flowering thoroughwort or late boneset.

A member of the Asteraceae family (which also includes daisies, sunflowers, and dandelions (NHPB)), *E. serotinum* is a perennial plant that thrives in wet environments, making the swamps of Florida an ideal habitat for this species. *E. serotinum* can also be found all along the east coast of the United States. This plant blooms in late summer and early fall, so there is a chance you might be able to spot some growing near a source of water at this time of year! The thin stems of this plant range from green to reddish purple, and they are covered in fine hairs (a condition known in botany as "pubescence").

The leaves of this plant are lanceolate, meaning that they are wider and rounded at the base before tapering to a point, and the edges of the leaves are serrated. (*Flora of North America, Wildflowers of the United States*). *E. serotinum* produces white flowers that form in clusters at the tips of the stems. Its flowers make it a popular choice for pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and moths, who feed on the flowers' nectar (*Illinois Wildflower*).

Not only is *E. serotinum* important to pollinators, it also played a role in the medicinal practices of some populations in the United States. Specifically, *E. serotinum* was used by some peoples as a febrifuge, or a medicine that reduces fever (Hutton, 2010). The medicinal properties of this plant were attained through the process of decoction, or boiling the flowers (Lawson et al., 2020).



THPO



Flickr, 2012

Note that the medicine made from *E. serotinum* was prepared by experts who were knowledgeable in herbal medicine, and if prepared incorrectly or if too much is ingested, it can result in illness, so **DO NOT** try it at home!

To learn more about all the incredible artifacts within our collection, please visit the THPO website at [www.stofthpo.com](http://www.stofthpo.com).



SEMINOLE HISTORY STORIES  
SEPTEMBER 2023

## CHARLIE MICCO THE FIRST FOREMAN

Charlie Micco (Panther Clan) already had several decades of experience as a ranch hand under his belt when the Brighton Reservation's cattle program began in 1935. He had been working outside of the reservations on the local ranches, and had become one of the most trusted cattle workers in central Florida. From the start he would bring this wealth of knowledge and experience into the new Tribal program. When the new venture received funding from the BIA, Charlie Micco was picked to be the first cattle foreman, and in this capacity he trained a new generation of Seminole cattlemen.

Charlie was never far from his work, making his camp next to the Brighton Red Barn, which served as the center of the cattle operations. He oversaw the barn (now listed on the National Register of Historic Places) the horses, and the day to day activity that supported it. He and his wife Emma (Bird Clan) kept their garden within easy reach, always having food ready for hungry cattlemen or visitors. Whatever the situation, Charlie could be depended on to always be ready.

In 1939 the Seminole Tribe took over full control of the program, and a vote was held to elect the first three cattle trustees who would oversee it. Charlie Micco was elected easily, joining John Josh and Willy Gopher as the first Tribal officials. In this position he continued to help drive the success of the cattle program and the Tribal government that would be inspired by it. With his knowledge, practical mind, and experience Charlie Micco worked hard to guarantee the future of the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

Top photo: Charlie Micco, 1960 (Colorized) Photo by William D. Boehmer Courtesy Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum Catalog Number 009.34.1266

Bottom photo: Charlie Micco (Right) teaching his grandson Fred Smith (left) 1950 Photo courtesy State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.

### TO LEARN MORE

Visit the Tribal Historic Preservation Office website at [stofthpo.com](http://stofthpo.com) or use the QR code for more Seminole history resources.

If you want to learn more about the Seminole Cattle Program and its history, look for *Cowkeeper's Legacy: A Seminole Story*, the second Seminole Story book coming soon from the THPO.





# Health



## HHS warns of spike in Covid-19 cases

STAFF REPORT

The Seminole Tribe's Health and Human Services Department (HHS) has recently issued warnings about a spike in the number of Covid-19 infections on and off the reservations. HHS began to send informational email alerts to the tribal community in August.

HHS included a list of recommended precautions that people can take, including receiving the Covid-19 vaccination, avoiding group gatherings, maintaining social distancing, and practicing good hand hygiene. HHS said the use of masks also "prevents isolation." HHS offers free at home Covid-19 tests are available for tribal members at respective health clinics.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said in an Aug. 23 risk assessment that existing Covid-19 tests and medications appeared to be effective with a new highly mutated variant called BA.2.86, nicknamed "Pirola."

The CDC is also forecasting an

acceleration in new Covid-19 hospitalizations in September, which replaced a previous projection that admissions would "remain stable or have an uncertain trend."

The CDC said it was too early to know whether BA.2.86 would drive an additional surge in hospitalizations. It said updated vaccines that are scheduled to be rolled out in September are expected to "be effective at reducing severe disease and hospitalization" from BA.2.86. But the strain's large number of mutations could also pose new challenges for immunity from prior infections and vaccinations, it warned.

### Flu prevention

Meanwhile, HHS said flu season is underway, and vaccines are available for tribal members who are six months and older.

"Flu season leads to other immune diseases," HHS said in an August informational email to the tribal community. "This is peak season for flu and Covid-19."

The HHS recommendations are to

receive a flu vaccine, cover a cough or sneeze, wash hands, avoid touching the eyes, nose and mouth, and to stay home if sick.

### Mosquitos

HHS contractors have been performing aerial and ground treatments to prevent mosquito bites in recent weeks. It has warned the tribal community about mosquito bites in informational emails to the tribal community.

"Mosquitos can transmit painful, disabling, and potentially deadly disease such as West Nile virus, dengue fever and malaria," HHS said.

It said effective and long lasting repellents contain one of the following Environmental Protection Agency-registered ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535 and oil of lemon eucalyptus.

Repellent is being distributed at the end of scheduled clinic appointments, HHS said.

For more information, call the HHS hotline at (833) 786-3458. More from the CDC is at [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov).

## Officials say Native diabetes program effective

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Indian Country officials are singing the praises of the Indian Health Services' (IHS) Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI), even in the face of decades of flat funding. The program was established by Congress in 1997 and is funded annually. The current round of funding is set to expire Sept. 30.

On July 27, Buu Nygren, president of the Navajo Nation, testified before the U.S. Congressional Joint Economic Committee on the economic impact of diabetes across Indian Country and the importance an SDPI fund increase. He said the Navajo Nation has seen improvements through its community-based diabetes prevention programs.

SDPI helps keep type-2 diabetes intervention and prevention programs running in Native communities. SDPI has helped to increase the number of on-site nutrition services and the number of physical activity and weight management specialists and sites for adults and youth.

The Seminole Tribe has received SDPI funds for several years. It is used for a variety of diabetes prevention and mitigation programs through Integrative Health, part of the tribe's Health and Human Services Department.

The program is important as Native American communities have traditionally experienced higher numbers of type-2 diabetes compared to other populations. Nygren said, however, that from 2013 to 2017, diabetes incidence decreased across Indian Country. In addition, he said between 1996 and 2013, incidence rates of end-stage renal disease among Native Americans with diabetes declined 54%. The improvements are estimated to have saved health care systems \$520 million so far. Nygren said programs like SDPI directly contribute to the decreases.

"... SDPI has become the nation's most effective federal initiative to combat diabetes and serves as a useful model both for diabetes programs nationwide and public health programs in Indian Country," he said in his testimony.

Even with the decreases, however, officials say the funding doesn't meet the ongoing demand. In his testimony, Nygren said the annual discretionary appropriated budget for IHS isn't adequate. He said, for example, that in fiscal year 2021, IHS spending equaled \$4,140 per patient, while the national average was \$10,680.

SDPI is currently funded through mandatory appropriations at \$150 million per year – the same amount for the past two decades. Nygren said current bills in both the House and Senate that would renew SDPI at \$170 million, a \$20 million increase, encourage him.

"While this is less than the \$250 million per year requested by tribal nations and in the president's [fiscal year] 2024 budget request, we appreciate Congress' attention to the need for a funding increase for SDPI," he said. "While type-2 diabetes continues to impact our people at alarming rates, there is hope. Thanks to the impact of SDPI, we have increased nutrition counseling and patient interventions to help them treat or even reverse type-2 diabetes."



Navajo Nation president Buu Nygren recently gave testimony to a Congressional committee about diabetes and SDPI.

## Certificate program offered for medical professionals in Indigenous communities

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW (SPOKANE, WASH.)

Washington State University is launching an online certificate program focused on building trust between tribal communities and medical professionals by creating greater understanding of traditional ways of health and healing.

The Indigenous Healing Perspectives Certificate was developed in partnership with Northwest tribal communities and elders and is taught by regional Indigenous health leaders and educators. The program is part of WSU's Native American Health Sciences Department, rather than through the Spokane-based medical school.

The online certificate is aimed toward working medical professionals who provide care for tribal communities and need to have the cultural competence to adequately do their job.

Native Americans and Alaska Natives often distrust medical professionals who come in from outside tribal communities

because of historic discrimination and genocide perpetuated against their peoples, said Native American Health Sciences Assistant Director Jerry Crowshoe.

This, along with historic disinvestment, have led to large health disparities.

"I've worked with tribal communities all across the Lower 48 – helping them develop strategic action plans around suicides, substance abuse, mental health. And a lot of communities trace those disparities back to historical trauma and genocide that they experienced. And so medical professionals need to understand about that impact and how that might affect the patient-medical professional relationship," he said.

"Coming from a tribal community, we really need people to go into the doctor and get checked up. We want them to take care of their bodies. We want them to have a long and lasting life. We want them to trust the health care profession."

According to the Indian Health Services, the federal health program for American Indians and Alaska Natives,

Indigenous communities in the United States experience a five-and-a-half year lower life expectancy as well as inequalities in health outcomes – especially in the areas of chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, diabetes mellitus, unintentional injuries, assault and homicide, intentional self-harm and suicide, and chronic lower respiratory diseases.

A traditional medical school education often leaves doctors less than fully prepared to adequately provide care for Indigenous people, especially those within tribal communities.

"Western models of education rarely provide students with an understanding of how to best support Indigenous patients," said Naomi Bender, director for Native American Health Sciences at WSU. "This certificate offers anyone, Native or non-Native, working in Indian Country the opportunity to bridge this knowledge gap so they can serve their Indigenous patients and help address the health disparities that can be prevalent in our communities."

## Biden administration injecting funds into tribal clean energy programs

VOICE OF AMERICA

The Department of the Interior in August announced a new program that will initially make available \$72.5 million to help Native American communities bring clean energy to tribal homes.

An estimated 17,000 tribal families live without electricity, most of them in the Southwest and Alaska. The Tribal Electrification Program will provide money and expertise to help tribes electrify homes using environmentally friendly energy

sources.

It will also help homes that already have electricity switch to cleaner energy options and provide support for home repairs and changes needed to make this happen.

The new funding announcement is part of an overall \$150 million investment from the Inflation Reduction Act to support the electrification of homes in tribal communities.

"Climate change is the crisis of our lifetimes and has left far too many communities managing for worsening

water challenges, extreme heat, devastating wildfires and unprecedented storms. Every action we take now to lessen the impacts for future generations is critical," Interior Secretary Deb Haaland said.

"Through President [Joe] Biden's Investing in America agenda, we're launching a new program to electrify Indian Country to provide reliable, resilient energy that Tribes can rely on, and advance our work to tackle the climate crisis and build a clean energy future."

### Renewable energy conference to be held in Hollywood

The sixth annual Seminole Tribe of Florida Renewable Energy & Sustainability Conference will be held Feb. 6-8, 2024, at

the Native Learning Center in Hollywood.

The conference is geared toward tribal officials, tribal government staff, tribal

housing departments, utility staff, tribal code officials and construction staff.

Visit [nativelearningcenter.com](http://nativelearningcenter.com).

## American Indian Elders Conference to be held in Cherokee

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The National Indian Council on Aging (NICOA) will host its American Indian Elders Conference Sept. 25-29 at the Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort in Cherokee, North Carolina.

NICOA's conference is the only national conference in the country focusing exclusively on the needs of Native elders. It serves as a national forum for Native elders from across the country to come together to meet and receive updated information on aging in Indian Country.

Every two years, the conference welcomes more than 2,000 attendees from all over the country. Conference attendees

represent Native elders, stakeholders, elected tribal representatives, government agencies and aging network providers.

The conference offers an opportunity for tribal elders to express their needs and make policy recommendations for the vital events occurring in years to come. This year's theme is "A Trail of Determination: Our Culture, Our History and Our Future."

Additionally, the Older Americans Act was last reauthorized in 2020 with another reauthorization possible in 2025. Title VI, Title V (the Senior Community Service Employment Program), Title IV and Title VII all directly impact our Native elders.

Go to [nicoa.org](http://nicoa.org) for more information.

### Native healthcare among series of conferences

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The 14th annual Native American Healthcare Conference will be held June 18-19, 2024, at Pechanga Resort Casino – Temecula, California.

Healthcare directors, decision-makers and Tribal leaders will hear from the industry's top experts on preventative disease, wellness, and other health-related topics facing Indian Country. Attendees will learn about cutting-edge updates, the newest

treatments, equipment and industry trends.

The event is being held in conjunction with the Native American Economic Development Conference, the Native American Housing Conference, the Native American Cannabis and Hemp Conference and the Tribal Financial Management Symposium.

Registration for one conference gives attendees access to all five conferences.

Go to [nativationevents.org](http://nativationevents.org) for more information.



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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  
[WWW.CASTILLOLAWOFFICES.COM](http://WWW.CASTILLOLAWOFFICES.COM)

# SEMINOLE SCENES



Kevin Johnson

**CHEERS FROM CHAIRMAN:** After winning the NAYO 14U softball championship July 29 in Cherokee, North Carolina, the Seminole Impact were congratulated by Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. From left to right are head coach Cheyenne Nunez, Haydn Billie-Alvarado, Joleyne Nunez, Daliyah Nunez, Hannah Platt, Aaryn King, Tehya Nunez, Chairman Osceola, Kierra Snell, Ila Trueblood, Charisma Micco, Serenity Billie, Jayleigh Braswell and assistant coach Eddy Gonzalez.



Courtesy photo

**WES IN THE WEST:** Miss Florida Seminole Thomlynn Billie met actor Wes Studi in August during the Santa Fe Indian Market in New Mexico. Studi (Cherokee Nation) has appeared in numerous films, including "Dances With Wolves," "The Last of the Mohicans," and "Avatar." He is an Academy Award honoree.



Beverly Bidney

**WILD WAVES:** Kids ride the waves in a pool during the Seminole Tribe's week at Camp Kulaqua in High Springs.



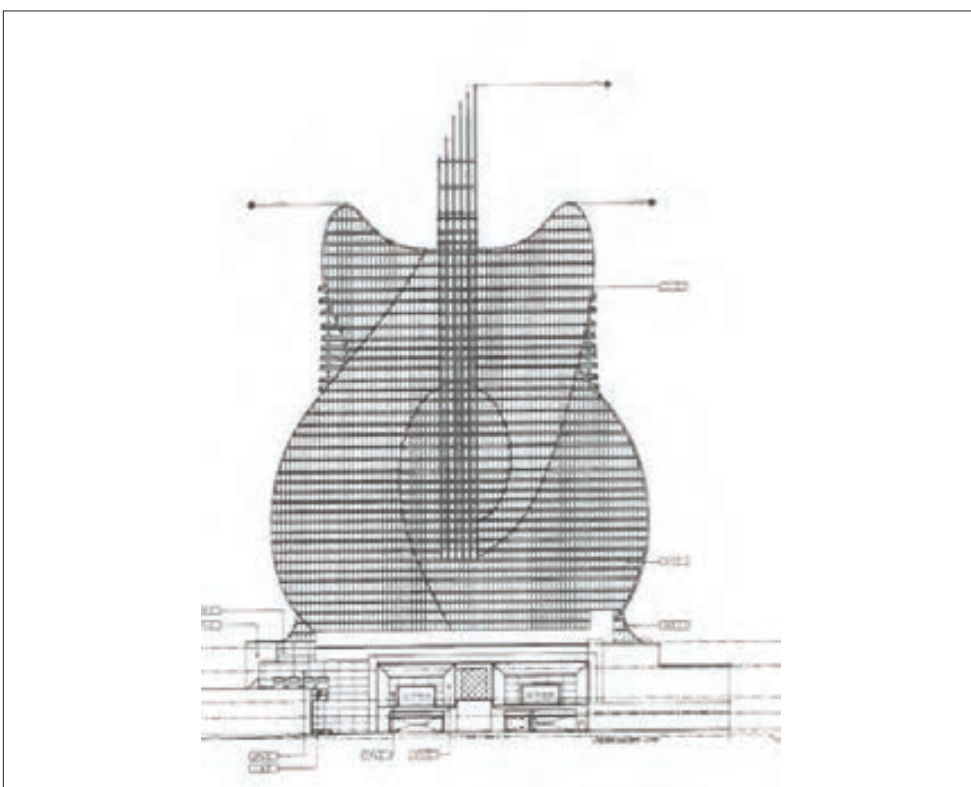
Courtesy Hard Rock

**HARD ROCK DAY:** An executive proclamation from South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem declared Aug. 8, 2023, "Hard Rock Day" in the state. The proclamation coincided with the grand opening of the Rocksino by Hard Rock Deadwood in Deadwood, South Dakota.



Beverly Bidney

**SMOOTH SOUNDSCAPE:** Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum director Gordon Wareham, left, and artist, musician and poet Elgin Jumper perform a musical soundscape in front of a slideshow of images of the Everglades during the museum's Seminole artist experience event July 29 at Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee.



Clark County

**GOODBYE VOLCANO, HELLO GUITAR:** The Clark County board of commissioners approved a performance agreement Aug. 16 that further paves the way for construction of a 600-foot Guitar Hotel on the Las Vegas Strip. The 660-room hotel will be part of the forthcoming Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Las Vegas, located at the site of the Mirage Hotel & Casino, which Hard Rock purchased in late 2022. Under the agreement, the Guitar Hotel will replace the Mirage's iconic volcano experience. This blueprint of the Guitar Hotel was included in the agreement documents released by Clark County.

## 30 years ago: 'Seminole Wind' up for CMA Awards



Hard Rock Tulsa

John Anderson, 68, performs July 27 at Hard Rock Live in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Thirty years ago, Anderson's hit "Seminole Wind" was nominated for song of the year and video of the year at the Country Music Association (CMA) Awards on Sept. 29, 1993, at the Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville, Tennessee. "Seminole Wind" was one of five songs up for song of the year, which was won by Vince Gill and John Barlow Jarvis's "I Still Believe in You." "Seminole Wind" was also among five video of the year nominees that included videos from Gill, Alan Jackson, Pam Tillis and George Jones. Jackson's "Chattahoochee" won the award. Anderson's hit is often played at Seminole Tribe events.



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# Education



Beverly Bidney

Tribal elected officials, teachers, staff and students of Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School cut the ribbon to officially open the school's culture and immersion complex Aug. 10.

## Culture, immersion complex opens at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**BRIGHTON** — Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School opened its new culture and immersion buildings with a ribbon cutting Aug. 10, the first day of the new school year. The complex on the campus features two buildings — one for the school's culture program, the other for its immersion program. Together the buildings provide 17,713 square feet of space. The culture building features four classrooms and a

large arts and crafts room. The immersion building has four classrooms, a living room, a multipurpose classroom/playroom and a kitchen. The two buildings are divided by a courtyard and playground. A culture village is being built in the back that will feature chickees, animals and a garden.

A ceremony was held as tribal officials, school administrators, teachers and students cut the ribbon under the eaves of the new immersion building. Earlier, a ceremony was held in the school's gymnasium.

PECS principal Tracy Downing told the assembled student body, community

members and other officials that the complex is dedicated to the school's founding mothers: Lorene Bowers Gopher, Louise Jones Gopher and Jennie Micco Shore.

"These founding mothers have dedicated their lives to the preservation of the culture and heritage of the Seminole people," Downing said. "Their tireless efforts to empower future generations, their guidance and their wisdom have fostered a strong sense of cultural identity. Their legacy and the footprint they have left will have an everlasting impact."

The freeing up of the space previously

used by culture and immersion in the main school — four classrooms and two portables — comes as PECS has a record 329 students enrolled this year. Downing attributes the increase to the opening of the nearby Flowing Well residential development.

"[This facility] is not only a physical space but a commitment by the tribe to not only preserve the language, but to revitalize and reclaim it," said Lee Zepeda, executive director of Administration. "Language is what connects us and allows us to share our thoughts and our stories. As the ribbon is cut today, let's remember that this is not just a

ceremonial gesture but also a commitment to a brighter future and our belief in the power of language."

Between the buildings are bronze busts of the founding mothers. At the ceremony, PECS administrative assistant Michele Thomas introduced Shore, who has been working in the Brighton community for more than 50 years and is one of the fluent speakers in the immersion program.

♦ See PECS on page 3B

## Jason Billie fills latest liaison post at Education

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — The Seminole Tribe's Education Department recently hired Jason Billie to fill a new tribalwide community member liaison position — one of two that are staffed by tribal members. The school year began for most tribal students by mid-August.

The liaison serves as an advocate to help students and parents access programs and services, and interact with Education staff and administrators and teachers at tribal and non-tribal schools. Part of the job includes advising Education staff on cultural topics, and assessing the cultural needs of students.

"It's a new position [in Hollywood] and it's needed because sometimes when a tribal member goes into the school environment they don't feel comfortable," Billie, who started July 17, said. "Even though we're

here in the Hollywood area, we're kind of closed off by choice. The schools don't know what it's like here; we're kind of self-secluded."

Billie is from the Hollywood Reservation and operates out of the Dorothy S. Osceola building. His counterpart, longtime tribal employee Dana Osceola, who has been a community member liaison for more than a year, operates from the Brighton Reservation.

Billie expects his workdays to fluctuate between department meetings, parent-teacher meetings, and school events like open houses.

"Maybe a family member has an issue with a school or teacher or administrator," he said. "I can get an understanding of where the parents are coming from and what the certain department is wanting to do, and I can say: 'I know this family, this is what's going on there.'"

Billie said there are 385 tribal students

who attend private schools, in addition to those who attend the Ahfachkee School in Big Cypress and Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School in Brighton. He added that he and Osceola also assist students who aren't registered with the Education Department.

### Diverse background

Billie, 50, said his experiences working on and off the reservation has helped prepare him for the job.

When he was 20, in 1993, he worked for the Education Department as the principal's assistant at the Ahfachkee School. He also attended Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas, and operated a custom T-shirt business in Hollywood. Billy went on to graduate from the tribe's Tribal Career Development program in 2012. The program gives tribal members a taste of working in the tribe's many hospitality and gaming departments at Hard Rock and Seminole

Gaming properties.

Basketball has also been a staple of Billie's life for many years, as a player and a coach. He worked in the Hollywood Recreation Department for six years from 2017 to 2022. During that time, Billie did a stint as an assistant basketball coach for Standing Rock High School in Fort Yates, North Dakota, for its 2017-2018 season.

"In Recreation I tried to come up with activities to get the kids moving, trying different things — alternative fitness," he said. "Some kids don't really want to play basketball, dodge ball, kickball, so I tried to find different games for them to play."

Billie has four adult children and is the son of the late Joe Don Billie.

For more information, go to [seminoleeducation.com](http://seminoleeducation.com).

Damon Scott

Jason Billie stands outside of the Dorothy S. Osceola building on the Hollywood Reservation on Aug. 14.



## After earning master's degree, Alicia Nunez Joyner pursues doctorate

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

Alicia Nunez Joyner has always been interested in how the mind works and how people interact with one another. When she was a teenager, she knew she wanted to study psychology. She graduated with a master's degree in clinical mental health from Wake Forest University in North Carolina on Aug. 12.

But Joyner's education isn't over yet. In October, she will begin a two-year doctoral program at the International Institute of Clinical Sexology in Miami Shores, where she plans to earn a Ph.D. and become a sex therapist. She did an internship at the Seminole Tribe's Center for Behavioral Health in Brighton, where she will continue to work as a child clinical associate while pursuing her degree.

"My goal is to become a mental health counselor and a Ph.D. at the same time," Joyner said. "I hope to work with the tribe after that. Being tribal has made it easier to build rapport with clients and get to work faster. There is an initial lack of trust in systems in Native America because of trauma, so seeing a familiar face breaks down walls faster. I want to help people within the community. I never really understood that working with my own people is something really special."

Joyner graduated with a bachelor's

degree in psychology from Columbia College in Columbia, Missouri, in 2020. At the college, she said she was too insecure to reach out to her guidance counselor, but in graduate school she was able to engage with the faculty and ask questions.

"I was transitioning into adulthood and thought I should be farther along than I was," she said. "It wasn't until my master's program that I gained the confidence I needed. Those insecurities left."

While she was working on her master's degree, Joyner wrote and published three workbooks for early elementary school students: "I Know My ABCs," "I Know My Numbers" and "I Know My Addition and Subtraction." "I Know My ABCs" was a best seller on Amazon's best first release list in the early childhood education category.

"I wanted to do something that I could give back and donate to people," Joyner said. "If I made it on my own, I'd be able to distribute it myself."

She gives the books to the tribe's Education Department and local charities. Joyner also has a home design business — MACO Designs — and runs another business — Encore Sod — with her husband Mason Joyner.

As a student in Okeechobee High School's class of 2011, Joyner was motivated and involved in sports and clubs and served as class president and secretary for the short-lived LGBTQ club. Psychology



Courtesy photo

Alicia Nunez Joyner

isn't Joyner's only interest; she is also a special effects makeup artist and painter. As a graduate student, she was nominated for Forbes "30 Under 30" list in the art and style category.

"She is very talented and was in the gifted program all through school and college," said her father David Nunez. "The kid got straight A's and would settle for nothing less. We knew she was capable of it and we pushed it. We're very proud of her. She is the first in our family to get her master's degree."

## Arizona School Boards Association elects first Indigenous president

PUBLIC NEWS SERVICE

The Arizona School Boards Association has for the first time in the organization's approximately 80-year history chosen an Indigenous woman to be president of its board of directors.

The ASBA is a nonprofit group that provides training and other services to public-school governing boards across Arizona.

Desiree Fowler, a Navajo Nation tribal member, said she is committed to representing Native communities and border towns, as well as working to address the unique challenges rural and urban school districts face.

"A large percentage in Northern Arizona is going to be Navajo, so I just felt that our voices weren't heard at the state level," she said, "and I felt that it was important that we continue to advocate at the association level to be able to be transparent and just be diverse in every aspect."

Fowler called the new appointment a "milestone" for her and for all Native Americans as she said she is opening doors for future generations. Fowler has served in other positions with the ASBA and added that those experiences have given her the tools and knowledge to be a "strong advocate for public schools and equitable education."

Fowler has also served at the Page Unified School District, which borders the Navajo Nation, where 80% of the students in the community are Native American. At



ASBA

Desiree Fowler

the administrative and school board level. Fowler said, she is the only full-blooded Native American that represents that 80%, which she called a "sad" situation.

"But in reality, I'm the only one that lives out on the reservation," she said, "and I purposely do that because I want to continue to make it known that we can make changes happen. We can accomplish big things."

When it comes to Northern Arizona and Native communities, Fowler said, things such as infrastructure, lack of access and cultural differences can make getting an equitable education more challenging, but she said she hopes to help change that.

# Back to school bashes get students ready



Beverly Bidney

Immokalee Community Culture assistant manager Cecilia Pequena shows fourth grader Martha Davis, center, and fifth grader Ira Davis, school supplies at the Education Department's back to school bash Aug. 10 in Immokalee. They attend Seacrest Country Day School in Naples. Education held bashes throughout the tribe to help families get ready for the new school year. Several tribal departments had booths at the bashes.



Beverly Bidney

Mom Crystal Billie and son Wade Martinez, a fourth grader at Evangelical Christian School in Fort Myers, collect school supplies in Immokalee.



Calvin Tiger

From left to right, Lacreia Gibbons and Claudia Otero, from the tribe's Dental Program, work at a booth visited by student Brantley Osceola, Edith Osceola and Evin Osceola at the Hollywood back to school bash Aug. 11 at Seminole Estates.



Beverly Bidney

Mercedes Rodriguez gathers school supplies for her children, first grader Chance Rodriguez and fourth grader Jonathan Rodriguez. They attend Sable Palm Elementary school in Naples.



Calvin Tiger

The Education Department's Dora Tiger, left, and Hollywood Board Rep. Christine McCall help out at the Hollywood back to school bash.



Calvin Tiger

4-H program assistant Sarah Whitehead, second from right, and Sheri Trent, far right, youth agriculture extension agent, present prizes and school supplies as students spin the wheel in Hollywood.



Calvin Tiger

Center for Behavioral Health staff help students with fun activities at the back to school bash event in Hollywood.



Calvin Tiger

Skylimm Billie, center, holds her new tote bag with Melinda Billie, right, as they receive back to school supplies from the Education Department's Shayla Brown.

## Seminole Artist Experience comes to Immokalee

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**IMMOKALEE** — More than a dozen Seminole artists displayed and sold their art at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's Seminole Artist Experience at the Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee on July 29. Artists set up booths which showcased their talent in painting, printmaking, beadwork, artisan soap making and woodcarving.

Alyssa Osceola sat surrounded by her artwork as she worked on a painting of alligator flag plants. A recent graduate of the Ringling College of Art and Design in Sarasota, she published a book on her graduate thesis and offered it for sale.



Beverly Bidney

Jackie Osceola holds a block of wood she designed with the Seminole clans represented with wood stain, wire wrap and metal cut outs.

"It's about the history of the Sarasota area and how it was influenced by the Seminoles in the area, including my family," Osceola said. "It's about Polly Parker, my family, the Ringling College and [Ringling Museum of Art] and all the stuff that waterfalls into me having an exhibit in the museum with other tribal members."

Osceola's work is a part of "Reclaiming Home: Contemporary Seminole Art," the Ringling Museum of Art's 100-piece exhibit of Seminole and other Native American art which opened in March and closes Sept. 4.

Artist, poet and musician Elgin Jumper teamed up with Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum



Beverly Bidney

Dakota Osceola, who shared a booth with Tina Osceola, O.B. Osceola I and Broden Osceola Haden, proudly shows off some of her jewelry July 29 at the Seminole Artist Experience in Immokalee.

director Gordon Wareham for a live performance called "Soundscapes." Jumper played piano and electric guitar and recited poetry while Wareham played traditional Native flute as a slide show of Everglades landscape photography played in the background.

"We want to show the world there is more to us than they know," Jumper said. "Seminole art is done in creative and artful ways. We get together to have fun and transport the audience by presenting something different."

Jumper also displayed original oil and acrylic paintings along with high quality prints. His latest is called "Abstract Patchwork."

"The movement in the painting takes your eye all around it," Jumper explained. "It's my version of Seminole patchwork."

Jackie Osceola attended college at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she explored many mediums. Her booth displayed a variety of examples of her work including plaster garfish bookends, linoleum block prints and a block of wood embellished with carvings, wood stain, wire wrap and cut outs of Seminole clans.



Beverly Bidney

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum director Gordon Wareham, left, and Elgin Jumper perform a musical soundscape in front of a slide show of images of the Everglades.



Beverly Bidney

Annie Joe, left, and Nashoba Gonzalez work on beadwork at their booth at the Seminole Artist Experience at the Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee July 29.

Participating artists were Elgin Jumper, Osceola, Alyssa Osceola, Tallbird Pewo, Anthony Joe, Vincent Osceola, Annie Joe, Osceola Hagen, Dakota Osceola, Justine Osceola and Jackie Osceola.

## PECS From page 1B

"We are educating the second generation of the community at this school," Thomas said. "I want to honor our founders, who worked so our people could have the best education around. We are increasing the high school graduation rate. We want to educate you guys so you can come back to the community and return that education to our tribe."

Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. thanked everyone at the school and the parents for making sure the students get the education they need.

"This is an exciting day because dreams do come true," Chairman Osceola said. "Two cornerstones of our tribe in 1957 [the year the tribe was federally recognized] were education and health care. We told the government to give us 25 years because the babies born today will be educated and can work for the tribe. I'm happy to see the tribe flourishing in our culture and language in this way."

"This has been a long time coming,"



The exterior of the new culture building at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School.

PECS

## 'Visual Poem'

BY ELGIN JUMPER

*Author's note: "I got the idea for "Visual Poem" while I was reading Irving Stone's, "The Agony and The Ecstasy," about Michaelangelo painting the Sistine ceiling. When I decided I was going write a short story inspired by the book (and the film, of course) the ideas just started converging. They say write about what you know and I do know what I go through before an exhibition, having gone through the process on numerous occasions. And yet, it is a story as well. As for the piece accompanying the story, I did see the Pollock painting on display at the Norton, but this was years back, at the beginning of my painting journey, and since then, I still visit the museum and painting, for inspiration."*

"Painting is a different kind of Poetry," the painter philosophized to no one in particular. "A Poetry without Words."

It was early-morning, he was in his studio, "Paradise in an apartment," as he put it, deep in thought. The opening/reception for an impending art exhibition was but one week away.

He stood next to a table, with a large deep canvas on it, working on an abstract, horizontally, the frenzied brushwork, the drips and splatters of spirited painting, lively paint applications, the clash of multiple colors in mutual chaos. Sometimes he would secure the canvas onto a large easel and work. Disorder brought forth to a design.

It was a vivid picture of the strife and struggle of dark blues and deep purples, passionate, bold brushwork, as if vibrant silhouettes in motion, maneuvering, attempting to reach upwards from the foreground, and upwards still into the light blues and light violets and varied greens and magentas in the rest of the work.

"That dang Jackson Pollack, what did it," he thought to himself in jest. "The nerve of the guy. I mean, I still haven't gotten over his work. Brilliant!"

He repositioned a small container of odorless paint thinner - which he used as a medium - on a wooden palette. Then he executed a flurry of brushwork, "keeping time, distance, and proportion," having been inspired by, "Night Mist" the 1945 canvas by Pollock he'd seen recently at The Norton Museum, in West Palm Beach. He loaded up his brush, leaned forward, added even more polychromatic motion and energy, more involved rhythm and action. He nodded, and smiled.

"Ah, yes!" he exclaimed, walking around the canvas to see the big picture. "Now its starting to look the part. You really gotta give that dude his props."

He heard the early rumble of a trash truck, swooping in, making prey upon the contents of a dumpster. The sun's glowing warmth would enter the stage soon from the east. Just then he received a text from his good friend, Dana, saying she'd be arriving soon. She was on the verge of leaving her townhouse in Fort Lauderdale. He quick returned a thumbs up emoji.

"Yes!" he sung out. "Errands!" And so, he ventured out from "the zone," from where he'd been working, and prepared for the day.

Dana arrived forty-five minutes later, claiming traffic on L-I-E was an absolute bear. She was thirty, or at least that's what the painter had discerned in the seven years they'd been friends. She had striking dark-brown eyes, that could see right through you, and stunning long black hair. She was kind, trim, ate right, and exercised. But, having no immediate family, she occasionally felt alone.

Yet, early on, she'd taken to helping the painter with his social media presence, managing his public relations initiatives,

while simultaneously maintaining her own thriving social media stance. She painted whimsical portraits of her friends, in a contemporary style, and was on her own artistic journey, in her own right.

Leaving the Hollywood reservation, they set their controls for Blick Art Materials in North Lauderdale. The skies were cloudy, creating one heck of a gloomy gray scale. Dana watched the traffic flow, and alternated from chatting with the painter about Art, gazing into the mirror on the visor, and fixating on her cellphone.

"Still working on the Pollock-inspired piece?" she managed during a lull of activity.

"Well, it's coming along," he answered. "I've got other pieces I'm working on at the same time. It's always a controlled madhouse before a show . . . Ah, but I love it so. You know that."

"It's the ultimate," she said, then she went theatrical and feigned prayer, as if to some all-seeing deity. "But I urge you, painter, to have fun with it, don't sweat it. I know you of old."

They took Sterling to I-95 and then, passing the airport, massive highway construction projects, and suchlike, got off at Sunrise, where they stopped for coffee at Duncan. Then they headed eastward till Sunrise peeled off and became Federal, before the beach and headed north a good five, ten minutes, to Blick, just across from Barnes & Noble.

"Need colors," the painter declared, "and I know you'll prob'ly need colors yourself."

I already know I'll be working right up to the wire. That's the usual modus operandi."

He gently tapped the steering wheel with an open palm, much excited. "Painting is everything!" he proclaimed, a catch in his voice.

"I agree," she returned.

Then she recited a Joy Harjo poem by heart, a magical poem

about the epic search for Grace. Dana well-knew the painter's heart and mind, for she'd been present on many occasions, when he'd revealed the passions of his heart, and all the heartfelt elements so mixed in him, made clear.

The painter rubbed his palms together, and half-suppressed a laugh. They then made their way into the artstore. The store was longer than it was wide, with a slight smell of paint, wood from easels, canvas, copious art materials and art paper.

There were finished pieces on the walls, primarily on the wall behind the cash register, where painters who patronized the establishment could show their work. The associates were busy as usual. The two friends went right to search for supplies.

"Ever hear of a blue oil color with purple in it?" the painter asked. "A purplish kinda blue?"

Dana said, "Sure. They call it, Violet Blue."

"Ah, you're a lifesaver! I need it for a couple two, three things. You enhance it with the least little bit of white, sorta a sacred mist. That's where the magic is." He located the right tube of paint, dropped it into the shopping basket.

"Okay, sounds good," she said, leading them to the check out counter, where there was a line. "I remember you sketching landscapes in that studio just around the way."--She pointed back to the southwest-- "You always included that mist on the horizon-line, especially when you worked with conte crayon. There's magic there, too."

"You're good for me," the painter expressed without skipping a beat. "I'm fortunate, very fortunate. My cloudy days vanish."

◆ See POEM on page 5B



Beverly Bidney

PECS administrative assistant Michele Thomas, far left, and Jennie Shore, in center, are surrounded by PECS students and families after the ribbon cutting.



Beverly Bidney

Tribal officials, the Seminole princesses and others visit a classroom in the new culture and immersion complex to hear about a typical day for a student.

said Brighton Councilman Larry Howard.

"We knew we had to protect our culture and have this facility where they only speak Creek. Today is a historic day for our tribe and culture. One of you students will come back here and teach the language or run the school. You are going to school for a reason - to make a better life for you and the tribe."

Former Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr. played an important role in getting the buildings off the ground.

"All of you here should understand the Creek language," Bowers said. "Many of us have gotten too comfortable in a non-Indian world. That's OK because we have to live there, too. But we have to remember who we are. I challenge you young folks to keep what we have preserved. You are our hope. Some people are rediscovering themselves as Seminole Indians and that's encouraging to me. I challenge you students to go to the Elders to learn. If you lose it, you lose everything."

Brighton Board Rep. Bryan Arledge, a lifelong resident of the community, has watched PECS keep traditional Seminole values alive. He said he is looking forward to being involved as a parent for the first time now that his son attends the school.

Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie grew up in a family of Elaponce and Creek speakers. "Take the opportunity to preserve the language, culture and traditional teachings of the tribe," Councilwoman Billie said. "I encourage you to be resilient and preserve what has been passed down through the years."

After the speeches, attendees toured the buildings. Immersion teacher Jade Osceola led a group of officials and others as she explained how the immersion program works in the space designed for it.

"A building doesn't save a language, people do," Osceola said. "The Elders are the forefront of everything. Language is the No. 1 priority. We plan to keep these kids until they are 18 years old. We changed their diapers and now we want to be able to talk to them in Creek about adult things, too. The four walls don't do us justice. We have to live it every day. Our

day starts outside taking care of the animals, starting a fire, having sofkee and saying prayers."

Although English class is taught for two hours every day, Osceola said the immersion program is educating the students in its own way by focusing on Seminole Creek language and culture. Eventually, the hallways will contain a timeline of Seminole history.

Currently, there are 15 students from 11 months to nine years old in the immersion program, but Osceola expects more babies to join soon. The program runs from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for 11 months a year.

The program's setting is more like a home with comfortable couches, a playroom and a kitchen the students are responsible for in age appropriate ways.

"It mimics camp life with three or four generations together," Osceola explained. "The magic happens here. Younger kids also learn from the older ones."

In addition to the new building, the existing PECS cafeteria was expanded by 4,619 square feet, nearly double its original size.



Courtesy photo

PECS immersion student KyLynn Lawrence, center, stands with Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr., left, and Brighton Board Rep. Bryan Arledge.

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# Seminole campers experience daily fun at Camp Kulaqua

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**HIGH SPRINGS** — More than 165 Seminole kids had loads of fun at Camp Kulaqua from July 30 to Aug. 3. They made new friends, experienced how to live with non-family members and learned new indoor and outdoor games at the camp in High Springs, about 20 miles northwest of Gainesville.

The kids, ages 7 to 17, lived in cabins with their peers and two counselors, followed the rules of camp and participated in new activities.

Recreation Department staff from every reservation, who see many of the kids on a daily basis, were on hand to lead the activities. Some staff noticed the behavior of the kids in general was a bit different compared to when they are at home.

"They get to mingle with other kids and make new friends," said Big Cypress Recreation site supervisor Dessie Thomas. "Camp gives them an opportunity to be independent away from their parents. They

race. When the younger kids were racing, the older kids cheered them on and vice versa.

"They light up when they see kids from other reservations," said Big Cypress Recreation staff member Marcus Thompson. "There is a brightness in their eyes and a little more tempo and energy. They are more competitive here and want to be the best. When they go home, it should bring up their spirit and morale."

"They aren't so clingy here and they seem to be enjoying themselves a lot," said Brighton Recreation site supervisor Marvin Newkirk. "They are interacting with kids they didn't know from other reservations and are making new friends. Even the older youth who weren't sure about coming to camp are enjoying themselves and want to come back next year. I hope they bring this enthusiasm back home with them."

The low ropes course for the younger campers and the zip line for the older ones were a fun challenge for them all.

"The zip line was scary at first but then it was cool," said Jaliaya Huntsinger, 12, who was at camp for the first time. "I made new



Campers cheer their favorite boxcar during the boxcar show held just before the races began.

Beverly Bidney



Torin Frank skillfully swings across a "pit of hot lava" during an activity at the low ropes course as his cabinmates await their turns.

Beverly Bidney

are just kids having fun. They are forced to make friends and I'd say 95% of them are engaging with one another. Even the quiet ones made friends and are bubbly. There is culture and crafts, it isn't just sports oriented so there is something for everyone at camp."

Boys and girls culture classes were held separately. Boys learned how to carve wood and hold a knife at the proper angle to avoid injuries. Girls were taught how to bead, sew patchwork and practiced their language skills during a game of Elaponke bingo.

"It's OK to understand the language, but if we don't speak it out loud there will be no one else to carry it on," said Language Department teacher Samantha Hisler.

The campers participated in a variety of field games such as flag football, kickball, soccer and an old school game of freeze tag versus the counselors.

"They get to meet and interact with kids from other reservations," said Immokalee Recreation site supervisor Dennis Gonzales. "They are more energetic and happier here. We even have the girls and boys playing together."

"The kids are more outgoing here, are more involved in the activities and are interacting with kids from other reservations," said Immokalee Recreation fitness specialist Joey Garcia. "I think this will change them a lot. I know they will be talking about camp and may be more competitive and involved when they get home."

Another highlight of camp is the annual boxcar derby. Each cabin built and decorated a boxcar from a large cardboard box and then held a boxcar show followed by a relay



Sisters, from left to right, Abby, Anna and Bekah Tigertail enjoy their time at the camp.

Beverly Bidney



Big Cypress cultural instructor Tammy Billie provides sewing guidance to Amora Osceola.

Beverly Bidney

campers high into the air before splashing into the cool 72 degree spring. Horseback riding and swimming at the River Ranch were other popular activities.

During Wacky Wednesday at the River Ranch, kids competed in a lazy river relay race, a tube tug where they vied for the most tubes, a canoe sink in which the teams tried to sink each other by throwing buckets of water into their opponents' canoe, and extreme tic-tac-toe which included swimming in a pool of ice water, grabbing an "X" or an "O" from a pool of oatmeal and racing to complete the tic-tac-toe board first.

"The kids enjoy coming here because there are new things to do," said Immokalee Recreation program coordinator Ruby

Anzualda.

"The kids are willing to try new things," added Big Cypress Boys & Girls Club manager Vera Herrera. "There is a lot of bonding that takes place in the cabins. I see that rapport when they get back to the reservation. It's all about the kids being seen, heard and valued. We try to create positive and motivational activities and for them to have fun in a safe environment. Trying to keep them busy is the key. The friendships carry over at home because they still have the connections."

◆ See CAMP on page 5B



Khoal Cochran watches as Brighton Community Culture wood carving instructor Mike Micco shows him how to smooth the surface of the wood.

Beverly Bidney

friends in my bunk. The hardest thing about camp is not seeing my mom and dad. It's just different without them, but it's great."

Life at camp was different than at home in many ways, but not having a cellphone was a challenge for some campers until they got used to it.

"This is my second year and it's more straight," said Armani Torres, 17, from Big Cypress. "They take our phones, but it's

not too bad. You can meet new people and actually have fun. And you don't have to worry about losing it or dropping it in the water."

The camp has its own spring, Hornsby Springs, featuring the "blob" which catapults



Girls enjoy a leisurely stroll atop horses.

Beverly Bidney



During culture class, Candice Melton demonstrates to a friend across the table how to make a beaded daisy chain

Beverly Bidney



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum educator Chandler Demayo teaches boys how to safely carve wood into a knife during a culture class in the camp's outdoor pavilion.

Beverly Bidney



## EV owners should be prepared for power loss in hurricanes

BY CALVIN TIGER  
Staff Reporter

Power outages during hurricane season can be a common occurrence in Florida. Electric vehicle (EV) owners should be aware of what to do in the event of a power outage. Essentially, owners would prepare for a power outage with some similarities as a gas-powered vehicle, however, there are differences.

According to an Innovation & Tech Today article, one benefit of owning an EV in an unforeseen power outage is the access to solar fueling, which uses solar panels to convert sunlight into electricity, which in turn can be used to charge an EV. With an

abundance of sunshine in the Sunshine State, EV owners could benefit greatly from solar charging. According to an article in the Palm Beach Post, Florida Power and Light (FPL) is testing an emergency charging station in Fort Pierce that uses solar energy. Being aware of local charging stations that have solar energy or a battery backup can be a major benefit in the event an EV owner doesn't have power at home. EV owners might be out of luck if the local charging stations don't have the backup systems available.

EV owners can use an inverter on a gas-powered generator if they choose to plug their vehicle into a generator. Keep in mind that charging an EV with a generator could reduce the power available for household

items such as appliances.

Lastly, living through a power outage is not fun whether you own an EV or a regular gas-powered vehicle. Keep your EV fully charged before an anticipated hurricane landfall. Being aware of local weather reports is also another way to stay a step ahead.

For EV owners who get trapped in traffic trying to evacuate their local community, EVs do not waste their energy idling, unlike a gas-powered vehicle. According to a story from insideevs.com, "Even if you're stuck in traffic on the way to the shelter, you won't be much better off in a gas car. EVs don't idle, so if you're not moving, you're not using energy, except to run the AC or heater."

## Native folklore, identity converge in "Thinning Blood"

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

A debut memoir by Leah Myers, a member of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe of the Pacific Northwest, was published in May and has since received rave reviews.

Publisher W.W. Norton describes the author of "Thinning Blood: A Memoir of Family, Myth, and Identity" as "a vibrant new voice [who] blends Native folklore and the search for identity in fierce debut of personal history."

In the book, Myers says that she may be the last member of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe in her family line, due to her tribe's strict blood quantum laws. In order to leave a record of her family, she uncovers the stories of four generations of women. Beginning with her great-grandmother, the last full-blooded Native member in her lineage, she connects each generation in order to construct her family's totem pole: protective Bear, defiant Salmon, compassionate Hummingbird, and perched on top, Raven.

"As she pieces together their stories, Myers weaves in tribal folktales, the history of the Native genocide, and Native mythology," the publisher said in its book summary. "Throughout, she tells the larger story of how, as she puts it, her 'culture is being bleached out,' offering sharp vignettes of her own life between white and Native worlds: her naive childhood love for Pocahontas, her struggles with the Klallam language, and the violence she faced at the hands of a close white friend as a teenager."

Attempts to reach Myers by the Tribune were unsuccessful.

In May, the book received a rave review in the New York Times. It was also named one of 2023's "most anticipated books," by online literary magazine The Millions.

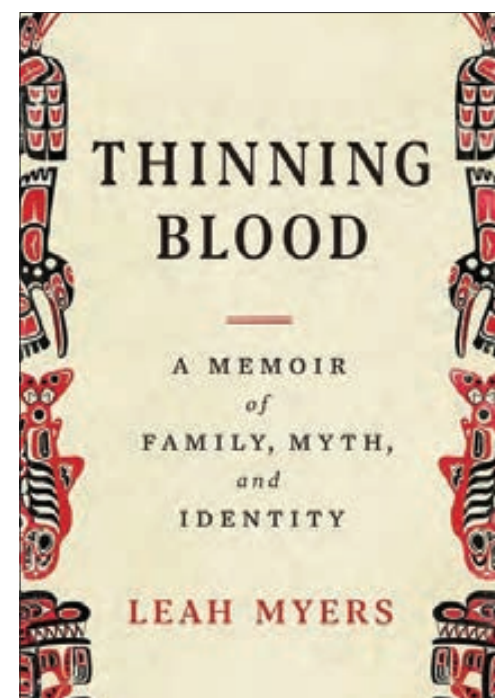
"Powerful... [W]ith scenes so vivid they left me gasping for air... Thinning Blood is slender and poetic, but also wide-ranging, moving with ease from memoir to Native history to myth and back again, yielding a blend that transcends genre," Maud Newton said in the New York Times Book Review.

Myers earned a Master of Fine Arts in creative nonfiction from the University of New Orleans, where she also won a Samuel Mockbee Award for nonfiction two years in a row. Her work has appeared in the Atlantic, Craft Literary Magazine, Fugue Journal and elsewhere. Myers lives in Alabama and has roots in Arizona, Georgia and Washington.

For more, go to leahmyers.com.



Blaine Burroughs  
Leah Myers



W.W. Norton

'Thinning Blood' was published in May by W.W. Norton.

## Cherokee Nation part of EV company agreement aimed at job creation

BY CALVIN TIGER  
Staff Reporter

California-based automotive startup Canoo, which designs and manufactures electric vehicles, has reached an economic and workplace incentive agreement with the Cherokee Nation and the state of Oklahoma. The agreement was announced Aug. 14. It focuses on vehicle assembly and creating battery module manufacturing plants in two Oklahoma cities – Oklahoma City and Pryor. Together, the facilities are slated to create more than 1,360 jobs with wages that

exceed state and local salaries, according to the state's Department of Commerce.

"It's been a multi-year effort to get to this point, and we are delighted to have finalized these agreements which enable Canoo to hire more than 1,300 Oklahomans and fulfill the vision of its state and tribal leaders to bring new industry to the state," Tony Aquila, chairman and CEO of Canoo, said in a news release.

According to the release, the estimated combined value of the incentive agreements is up to \$113 million over 10 years. The company is required to meet job creation and

investment targets.

Canoo also signed on-the-job training agreements with the Cherokee Nation to assist the company with identifying skilled workers within the Cherokee Reservation to staff the plant in Pryor.

Some of Canoo's previous higher profile agreements include the delivery of three crew transportation vehicles to transport astronauts to the launch pad at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida for the Artemis lunar missions. Last year, Wal-Mart agreed to purchase 4,500 all-electric delivery vehicles from Canoo.

### CAMP From page 4B

The Center for Behavioral Health (CBH) and Project AWARE engaged the campers with presentations.

The CBH program was about nurturing personal connections to maintain good mental health. CBH community programs administrator Erin Kashem said sleep, diet and physical activity are the three most important things that contribute to good mental health.

"We are all connected to each other and are part of a community," Kashem said. "Spending time with family and friends and doing activities we enjoy boost our mental health."

Project AWARE held a group activity for teens about acceptance and diversity. The campers were divided into four random groups. Project AWARE early intervention specialist Jheanelle Henry asked the campers a series of questions about events in their lives, such as being bullied, losing someone close to them and wanting to prove someone wrong who has doubted them.

With each question, kids were told to stand on a line if the answer to the question was yes. Each time, the vast majority of kids wound up on the line.

"We are all different, but sometimes we share the same things," Henry said. "We have more in common with each other than we realize. Be kind to one another."

Recreation staff typically see kids on the reservations after school for a few hours and at day camps



Beverly Bidney

Launched from the "blob," a boy prepares to hit the water in Camp Kulaqu's Hornsby Spring.

during school breaks and summer.

"You usually don't get to see them for this long at a time," said Hollywood Recreation site supervisor Joe Collins. "You don't get to see their humor when they are just running around the gym. When they first got to camp, they were more timid. Then they started to bond with kids from other reservations. They get a little bit of freedom here. It's fun to see them being kids again and not putting on airs to be cool."

Collins said the kids, who stay connected during the year through tribalwide sports teams and NAYO, are always happy to see their Camp Kulaqu friends again.

"You don't have a lot of time here, but you really get to know

your campers," said junior counselor Aujua Williams, 19, who was a camper at Kulaqu in 2019. "It's fun but it's a big responsibility. You are taking care of someone else's kids. The best thing is getting to know the kids, but you have to stand strong. None of them knew each other before camp, but I think they are all getting along."

Williams had some advice for other young people her age: "Come up here, have fun and learn some responsibility about how to take care of another life, because you never know," she said. "Come try it out, maybe you'll become a leader."

Camp ended a day early due to Covid-19 issues, which forced the cancellation of a rafting trip.

### POEM From page 3B

Suddenly an image of Dana came to the painter's memory! She came waltzing in, lovely as a morning flower, as though onto a ballroom dance-floor. Back then, she was studying the paintings of Artemisia Gentileschi, and the painter was exploring the works of Michaelangelo Buonarroti. The memory came with a relaxing, reassuring violin playing in the wings. They had recognized a sincere kindred spirit in one another and had been close friends ever since.

Thereupon she wrested him from his fond reminiscence, saying softly, "Uh, Earth to painter, come in, please."

"Is-Is there anything more thought-provoking than the final days leading up to an exhibition?" he inquired. "I mean, painting-wise, of course. I'm just a tad concerned about how my work's gonna be perceived. Alright, there--I said it, heh-heh."

"Why am I not surprised?" she implored. "I know you like the back of my hand"--She studied the back of her hand--"Hey, wait a sec, I-I never noticed that. Listen, we go back years, Ol Chap. You must look within, not without, please."

He noticed drawing pencils and various charcoals in a display overhead. "Oh, I'll need those, and some of those grey erasers. Kneaded erasers, they call 'em. Ever see Sargent's drawings? Incredible!" He added the pencils and charcoals to the goods.

She answered, "Of course! I wanted to turn in my art materials after that, he-he. He's a miracle-

worker."

The line diminished and so, they made their purchases. The painter paid for both. "Hey, yeah!" he said cried. "Maybe I'll put a huge Tesla Coil smack dab in the middle of the abstract."

Dana paused, not knowing if the painter was serious or no. The artstore was just what they needed, a chance to connect before the exhibition, touch base, a pretty good haul of art supplies. They returned to the reservation, and the painter immersed himself back into his painting.

Two days before the opening/reception, the two friends attended a Poetry event at a coffee house in North Miami, across from The Museum of Contemporary Art. The painter quite enjoyed the deep words and the atmosphere, the camaraderie and the art. "Lovely," he was heard to remark. "I'm so glad we came."

It rained the evening of the opening/reception. Dana met the painter in front of the venue in Fort Lauderdale. The painter had been to so many of these art events. He was a seasoned veteran as far as the night's agenda was concerned.

The art on the walls were fantastic. Colorful paintings mounted next to monochromatic drawings. Landscapes and Still Life juxtaposed in an artful way. The painter's abstract pieces were situated in a prominent location. Groups of art lovers gathered near and marveled at the compositions. Art crowds congregated in various areas of the galleries, milling about, talking art, taking selfies and individual shots of the different pieces.

Each artist finessed a walk-thru of their artworks, shinning light

on every one of their submissions, revealing the inspirations and stories behind the work. The Curator was active, making announcements and speeches.

A reporter from The Seminole Tribune, the tribal newspaper, was on hand, asking questions, taking photos. The painter, well-dressed in a red and black outfit, and red shoes, conveyed his knowledge of Art History, and all the painters down through history, who he himself deeply admired. It was a clear triumph of a night! Dana, elated, gave him a warm congratulatory embrace!

"All the worries over your work were for naught," she consoled. "You did it! They're Visual Poems!"

In a fast-changing world, in a time of Social Media, Wi-Fi, TikTok, YouTube, Drones, AI, smarter devices, etc, etc, etc, the painter marveled at the truth that people could still be charmed and enchanted by the poetry of painting.

So now, the show would now be up for several months. Opportunities for inspiration. The opening/reception to the exhibition came and went, like a theatre troupe, and such stuff as dreams are made on.

Back in the studio, a poem came to the painter, as if on silver wings. Thus he spoke the words: "I want to explore the poetry of painting, like a great explorer, encountering wonders and elegance, light and shadow, disarray and havoc, a road back and redemption, at long last. Just saying, "Take my hand. Follow me."

Seminole artist and writer  
Elgin Jumper is a contributor to the  
Seminole Tribune.

## Dwight Yoakam to perform in Coconut Creek

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Country music star Dwight Yoakam will perform at Seminole Casino Coconut Creek's The Stage at Coco on Nov. 16 at 8 p.m. For ticket information go to ticketmaster.com.

Yoakam has sold more than 25 million albums worldwide and is a 21-time nominated, multiple Grammy Award winner. He has 12 gold albums and nine platinum or multi-platinum albums, with five of those albums topping Billboard's Country Albums chart and another 14 landing in the Top 10.

Other upcoming events at The Stage

at Coco include the 12th Annual Brazilian Festival from noon to 11 p.m. on Oct. 28.

The festival will feature music, dance, gastronomy, and a kaleidoscope of Brazilian traditions.

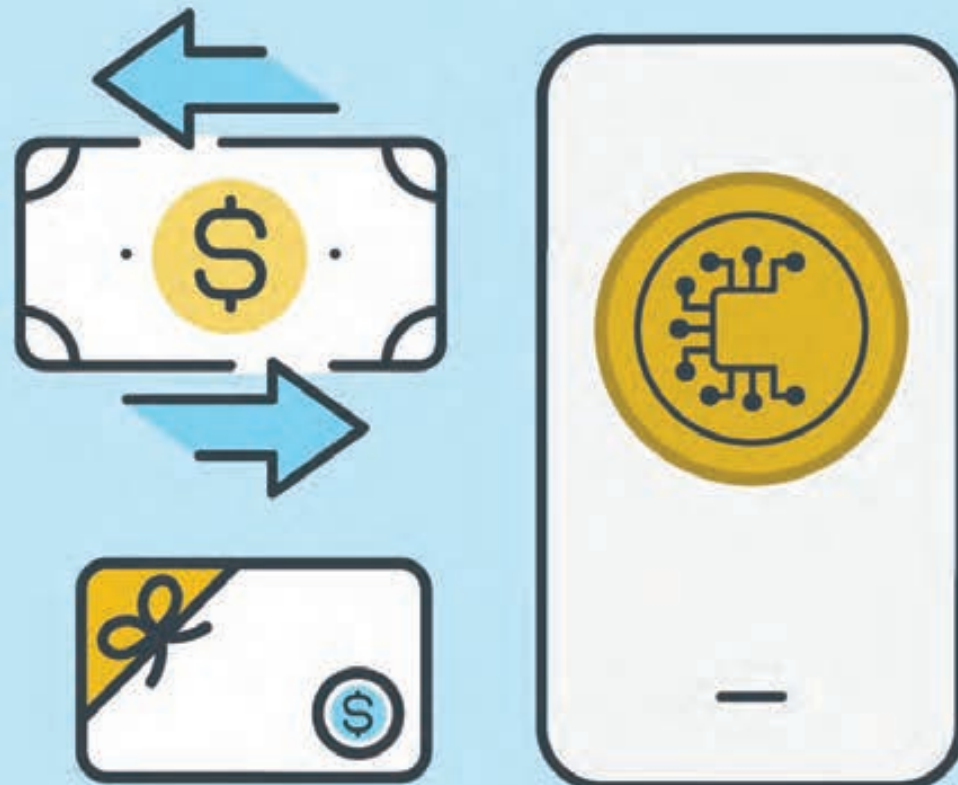
Guests will be able to immerse themselves in the vibrant rhythms of samba, forro, pagode, country, reggae and pop, the seductive moves of capoeira, and the hypnotic beats of traditional Brazilian music, expertly curated to transport guests to the vibrant streets of Rio de Janeiro.

Ticket prices range from \$20 to \$100. For ticket information go to ticketmaster.com.

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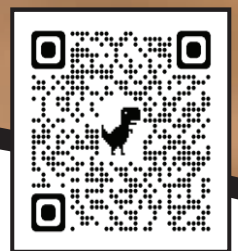
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# Sports



## Three Seminole teams win NAYO titles

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**CHEROKEE, N.C.** — The final day of the NAYO tournament saw three Seminole Tribe teams win championships in the mountains of western North Carolina.

Not only did the tribe's FL Boyz (10U baseball), Seminole AMP (12U softball) and Seminole Impact (14U softball) win championships July 29, but they did so without losing a game during the three-day tournament.

Other top three showings from the tribe's teams came from Seminole Storm (12U baseball, second place), Flo Grown (8U baseball, third place), Diamond Dolls (10U softball, third place), Dreamcatchers (17U softball, third place) and B Town Bad Boyz (17U baseball, third place).

The tribe had nine teams. In addition to the Seminole Tribe, the tournament featured teams from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Seneca Nation of Indians and host Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

### Seminole Impact

It's common at NAYO to hear about teams that were put together one or two weeks before the first pitch and had only a few practices. Seminole Impact didn't fall into that category. They prepared for NAYO (and other tournaments) months in advance and with a structured regiment under the wife-husband coaching duo of Cheyenne Nunez and Eddy Gonzalez that included three practices a week and a trip to a summer camp.

All that preparation paid off with a 4-0 record that culminated with a 14U championship win against MBCL.

"I told them if we play our game, we'll be fine," Nunez said.

Haydn Billie-Alvarado was in control from the circle the entire game. She held the opposition to just two hits and tossed a complete game.

The team featured a powerful pitching duo comprised of Billie-Alvarado and Charisma Micco in the tournament.

Micco also shined at the plate in the championship. Nobody hit the ball harder than her.

In the tournament, Micco hit two home runs; Billie-Alvarado and Serenity Billie each had one home run.

The team also received a big boost from Nunez's youngest sister, Daliyah, who was a standout in the field and at the plate in the final.

"She caught a line drive that easily could have got past her, she had a hit, she drew walks. I couldn't be more proud of her. I'm proud of all of them," Nunez said. "Next year we move up to 17U. That will be another challenge, but we're ready for it."

### Florida Boyz

After winning the 10U baseball title, Florida Boyz coach Marshall Tommie was full of praise for his champions.

"These kids put in a lot of work. They love the game. Nothing can beat hard work and heart, and that's what the kids have," Tommie said. "They always kept their spirits up. Some kids struggled hitting, but they had others behind them that picked them up."

The team received outstanding pitching throughout the tournament from Nakoia Smiley, Maddox Tommie, AJ Yzaguirre and Charlie Julian. Smiley threw a complete game in the championship win.

### Seminole AMP

Seminole AMP successfully defended its 12U softball title with an undefeated record.

Nobody beat the AMP, but head coach Danny Bonilla said at times his team beat itself.

Case in point came early in the championship when errors by the AMP led to an unearned run.

But the AMP shook off the shaky inning and played a sharp game the rest of the way, which impressed their coach.

"I like how they responded. They responded well," Bonilla said.

The AMP were led by the twin sister pitcher-catcher duo of Paizley Billie and Paiton Billie, respectively, in the championship. The home plate umpire awarded Paizley the game ball after the game.

Paizley and Melaine Bonilla handled pitching duties throughout the tournament.

### Powerful display

Coach Jaryaca Baker's team didn't win the 17U softball title — the Dreamcatchers finished third — but they had plenty of highlights along the way, especially with the long ball.

Baker's younger sister Preslynn provided fireworks with a three run walk-off blast on the second day.

She was also the team's main pitcher in the tournament and threw out a runner at home plate from centerfield.

"As a player, I've seen her grow a lot this weekend. She's really shown what she can do on the field," coach Baker said.



Kevin Johnson

Seminole AMP won NAYO's 12U softball championship. In the front row, from left to right, are Chanel Cypress, Naylhnice Hardy, Amalia Estrada, Melaine Bonilla and Kulipa Julian. In the back row, from left to right, are assistant coach Lois Billie, Paizley Billie, Paiton Billie, Cherrish Micco, Dyani Kayda, Jalene Smith and head coach Danny Bonilla.



Kevin Johnson

Florida Boyz captured the 10U baseball championship at NAYO. Kneeling, from left to right, are Javoni Gore, Chosin Micco, Cody Tommie, Ryker Miller, Charlie Julian and Makai Newkirk. Standing, from left to right, are assistant coach Christian Crews, Tyse Osceola, Nakoia Smiley, head coach Marshall Tommie, Maddox Tommie, assistant coach Ray Yzaguirre, AJ Yzaguirre and Maddox Newkirk.



Kevin Johnson

Seminole Impact won the 14U softball championship at NAYO. From left to right are head coach Cheyenne Nunez, Haydn Billie-Alvarado, Joleyne Nunez, Daliyah Nunez, Hannah Platt, Aaryn King, Tehya Nunez, Kierra Snell, Ila Trueblood, Charisma Micco, Serenity Billie, Jayleigh Braswell and assistant coach Eddy Gonzalez.

♦ See NAYO on page 3C

◆ **NAYO**  
From page 1C

Baker said Teena-Maree Covarrubias and Kenna Martinez each hit their first home runs ever in their softball careers. In fact, Covarrubias hit two home runs in the same day.

The Dreamcatchers were undefeated heading into the final day, but lost two straight to get knocked out.

“Overall, I’m very proud of them,” Baker said. “We never practiced together; some had never met each other. I told them this is the most talented group of girls I’ve seen in a long time.”



After belting a walk-off home run, the Dreamcatchers' Preslynn Baker (77) is mobbed at home plate by jubilant teammates.

Kevin Johnson



Kevin Johnson

Seminole Impact pitcher Haydn Billie-Alvarado delivers a pitch in the team's championship victory.



Kevin Johnson

Diamond Dolls pitcher Serenity Bishop winds up for a pitch.



Kevin Johnson

Florida Boyz shortstop Makai Newkirk makes a leaping catch on a throw to second base. Backing him up are second baseman Cody Tommie and outfielder Ryker Miller.



Kevin Johnson

Dreamcatchers catcher Kenna Martinez tags out a runner at home plate.



Kevin Johnson

The Seminole Storm, coached by Richard Osceola, finished in second place in 12U baseball.

Kevin Johnson

Seminole Impact's Tehya Nunez looks back at an umpire to see if she slid safely into third base; she did.





Dreamcatchers shortstop Carlee Osceola applies a tag on an opposing runner.

Kevin Johnson



Kevin Johnson

Dust comes out of the catcher's mitt of Seminole AMP's Paiton Billie on a hard-thrown pitch from her sister, Paizley.



Kevin Johnson

Nakoa Smiley notches the victory on the mound in Florida Boyz championship win.



Kevin Johnson

B Town Bad Boyz batter Tim Urbina follows through on a swing.



Kevin Johnson

Flo Grown's Kreed Snow takes a big cut at the plate.



Kevin Johnson

Flo Grown's Asher Micco scores a run. Coach Daniel Nunez Sr. is in the background



Kevin Johnson

Dreamcatches pitcher Denise Gonzalez eyes the strike zone.



Kevin Johnson

Ashton Garza, shortstop, and Joshua Torres, third base, take care of the left side of the infield for the Seminole Storm.



Kevin Johnson

Diamond Dolls batter Ameliana Osceola makes solid contact in a game.

**NAYO**  
From page 3C



Kevin Johnson

Truely Osceola fires a pitch for the Dreamcatchers team.



Kevin Johnson

Dahmani Bonilla delivers a pitch for the Seminole Storm.



Kevin Johnson

The AMP infield are, from left to right, Paizley Billie, Amalia Estrada, Melaine Bonilla, Kulipa Julian (with ball) and Jaleyne Smith.



Kevin Johnson

Seminole Impact's Serenity Billie gets ready to make contact.



Kevin Johnson

Silas Billie delivers a pitch for the B Town Bad Boyz.



Kevin Johnson

Seminole Impact shortstop Ila Trueblood gets ready on defense.



Kevin Johnson

Josiah Hardy scores a run for the B Town Bad Boyz.



Kevin Johnson

One of the most colorful helmets at NAYO was worn by B Town Bad Boyz Hilowa Garcia.



Kevin Johnson

The Diamond Dolls sprint out of their dugout to congratulate Arrow Johns (wearing helmet) on her home run.



Courtesy photo

Blaze Cypress scores a run for the B Town Bad Boyz.



Kevin Johnson

AJ Yzaguirre makes solid contact for Florida Boyz.



Kevin Johnson

Florida Boyz' Tyse Osceola, left, and Ryker Miller, center, congratulate Makai Newkirk following his home run.



Courtesy photo

The Seminole Tribe's Jasie Smith, left, and Whiteleigh Huff played in the Dixie Sweeties X-Play World Series in Louisiana.

## Okeechobee All-Stars shine in World Series

### STAFF REPORT

The Okeechobee Citizens Recreational Association (OCRA) All-Stars returned home from Louisiana in early August after an impressive showing at the Dixie Sweeties X-Play World Series (ages 9-10). The Okeechobee team, which included two Seminole tribal members (Whiteleigh Huff and Jasie Smith), represented Florida as state champions and finished runner-up at the World Series.

The team opened with a 19-6 win against Texas.

After a loss to Alabama, Okeechobee came through in must-win situations with back-to-back victories against Louisiana (25-4) and Georgia (21-4) to reach the championship. In the final, Okeechobee lost to Alabama.

The Okeechobee All-Stars included (in

alphabetical order) Adilynn Boles, Lennon Cauley, Jadelynn Chavez, Aniya Dunn, Miah Herrera, Whiteleigh Huff, Brooklyn McMiller, Callie O'Berry, Kemma Ottiwell, Jasie Smith, Bailey Tinajero and Kaleia Tindall. The coaches were CJ Cauley, Cody Dunn, Niki Herrera, Aaron McMillan and Tina Tinajero.

**OCRA Dixie Sweeties X-Play World Series results**  
(At Johnny Downs Sports Complex, Alexandria, Louisiana).

- W 19-6 vs Texas
- L 22-13 vs Alabama
- W 25-4 vs Louisiana
- W 21-4 vs Georgia
- L 14-3 vs Alabama (championship)



Courtesy photo

The Okeechobee team represented Florida at the Dixie Sweeties X-Play World Series.

## Miami Dolphins 2023 schedule

- Sept. 10 Los Angeles Chargers 4:25 p.m. (away)
- Sept. 17 New England Patriots 8:20 p.m. (away)
- Sept. 24 Denver Broncos 1 p.m. (Hard Rock Stadium)
- Oct. 1 Buffalo Bills 1 p.m. (away)
- Oct. 8 New York Giants 1 p.m. (Hard Rock Stadium)
- Oct. 15 Carolina Panthers 1 p.m. (Hard Rock Stadium)
- Oct. 22 Philadelphia Eagles 8:20 p.m. (away)
- Oct. 29 New England Patriots 1 p.m. (Hard Rock Stadium)
- Nov. 5 Kansas City Chiefs 9:30 a.m. (Germany)
- Nov. 19 Las Vegas Raiders 1 p.m. (Hard Rock Stadium)
- Nov. 24 New York Jets 3 p.m. (away)
- Dec. 3 Washington Commanders 1 p.m. (away)
- Dec. 11 Tennessee Titans 8:15 p.m. (Hard Rock Stadium)
- Dec. 17 New York Jets 1 p.m. (Hard Rock Stadium)
- Dec. 24 Dallas Cowboys 4:25 p.m. (Hard Rock Stadium)
- Dec. 31 Baltimore Ravens 1 p.m. (away)
- Jan. 7 Buffalo Bills TBD (Hard Rock Stadium)



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee High School senior varsity football players Santana Alvarez, left, and Carriss Johns, right, are joined by freshman Brody Riley, who is on the junior varsity team.

## Santana Alvarez, Carriss Johns eye strong senior seasons for OHS football

KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**OKEECHOBEE** — The Seminole Tribe's presence in the Okeechobee High School football program can be found on and off the field.

Varsity players Santana Alvarez and Carriss Johns and junior varsity newcomer Brody Riley all have family ties to the tribe. Alvarez and Johns are descendants; Riley is a tribal member.

Alvarez and Johns are established veterans who enter their senior season with hopes that it won't be their final year of football. Both players want to play in college. According to Joe Smith, the team's offensive coordinator, both players should be on college teams' radars.

"Carriss and Santana are Division I players," he said.

Johns, the team's top running back who also plays strong safety, is in his fourth year on varsity; Alvarez, a wide receiver and cornerback, has been on varsity for the past two years after playing JV as a freshman.

They were smaller players a few years ago. Alvarez, now 5-foot-11, 180 pounds, weighs about 50 pounds more compared to his freshman year and he has grown a few inches; ditto for the 5-foot-10, 180-pound Johns, who has bulked up by about 30 pounds since his rookie year.

OHS coaches said both players possess versatility, reliability and leadership that the team will count on this season on both sides of the ball.

"Carriss is Okeechobee's running game," Smith said. "He is everything that we need. He is capable of doing everything that we ask him to do. I'm leaning on him and his ability because I know he can do it. The kid

is up for the challenge.

"Santana is a physical, lockdown corner. He has the speed to be able to run with those small guys and still has the ability to come up on the run and make tackles on running backs. I'm expecting to have a big year out of him."

After notching just one win last year, the team is already off to an encouraging start. Led by Johns' two touchdown runs and 97 rushing yards on 11 carries, Okeechobee routed Desoto County, 49-0, in the week 1 opener Aug. 25.

Johns was named the team's offensive player of the week.

"We're going to showcase him," varsity head coach BJ Pryor said. "He's been a vital part of this program for four years. We're expecting to utilize him in just about every capacity, defensively, special teams and as the main focus running back."

The shutout also bodes well for the team's defense, which counts Alvarez among its leaders.

"Santana is one of our best defensive players," Pryor said, "but he has the skill set that we can use on offense as a wide receiver and as a running back. We use him on special teams because he's such a great tackler and he's an excellent cover guy."

Johns said before the start of the regular season that there is a different energy surrounding this year's team compared to others. Even though victories were scarce the past couple years, Johns said he loves every minute of being a high school football player.

"I've enjoy it a lot," he said. "Playing football, experience it with your friends, it's a great environment. I'm hoping to be a team leader and be a captain and lead my team in the right direction."

Alvarez said he's trying to be the best player he can be this season and get noticed by colleges.

While the high school careers of Johns and Alvarez are nearing an end, it's just the beginning for Riley, who is a freshman linebacker and tight end. So far, the coaches like what they see from Riley.

"He's showing some promise," Pryor said. "We expect him to be a big contributor on JV. He's a big kid. We'll get him in the weight room and see where his potential is. He looks like he can catch the ball and looks like he can do a little bit of running and blocking."

Riley is 5-10 and 174 pounds. He said the summer program was tough, but that he's glad he's now a Brahman.

"The workouts were challenging, but I'm trying to prove myself and represent the tribe," said Riley, who also plans on playing baseball for OHS.

As for Seminole presence off the field, in late August, as the varsity team neared the end of its preseason, a large Seminole Hard Rock gift basket sat in an office at the team's field house. The gift — compliments of Brighton Recreation Department site manager Richard Osceola — was slated to be auctioned at a regular season home game as a fundraiser.

Pryor thanked Osceola and Hard Rock for helping the program.

"We'll use [the money raised] toward purchasing equipment and uniforms and stuff like that," Pryor said.

The relationship between the football program and the tribe could get more of a boost next season. Pryor said he hopes his team will be able to play a scrimmage on the reservation.

## Stars to return for Pickleball Slam

### FROM PRESS RELEASE

**HOLLYWOOD** — Another round of pickleball featuring former tennis stars will be coming to the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino on Feb. 4, 2024.

After competing in the inaugural

Pickleball Slam in April, John McEnroe and Andre Agassi will return for Pickleball Slam 2. Joining them will be former women's tennis stars Maria Sharapova and Steffi Graf. The husband-wife team of Agassi and Graf will play McEnroe and Sharapova at 8:30 p.m. live on ESPN.

All of the players ascended to world No. 1 rankings during their careers. They won a combined 44 grand slam titles, including 22 by Graf.

For more information, including tickets, go to [thepickleballslam.com](http://thepickleballslam.com).

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# PECS volleyball season gets underway

## STAFF REPORT

The 2023 Pemaayev Emahakv Charter School varsity and junior varsity volleyball teams were scheduled to start their seasons Aug. 29. PECS will have seven home matches starting Sept. 5 against Yearling Middle School. Eighth grade parent night is scheduled to be held Sept. 28.

JV plays at 4:30 p.m. followed by varsity at 5:30 p.m.

### PECS volleyball schedule

- Aug. 29 at West Glades
- Aug. 31 at Glades Day
- Sept. 5 home vs Yearling
- Sept. 6 at Moore Haven
- Sept. 7 home vs Clewiston
- Sept. 12 home vs Moore Haven High JV (4:30 p.m. only)
- Sept. 14 home vs LaBelle
- Sept. 18 home vs Moore Haven
- Sept. 19 home vs West Glades
- Sept. 26 at Yearling
- Sept. 28 home vs Glades Day
- Oct. 3 at LaBelle
- Oct. 5 at Osceola
- Oct. 12 at Clewiston



Melaine Bonilla controls the ball during a varsity match in the 2022 season.

File photo



Amalia Estrada keeps her eyes on the ball during a varsity match in 2022.

File photo

## 2023 Lady Seminoles Volleyball Team

### Varsity

Melaine Bonilla
Amalia Estrada
Kulipa Julian
Dyani Kayda
Dalayah Nunez
Eleanor Osceola
Ciani Smith
Jalene Smith
Azariah Washington
Jaelle Weimann

### JV

Meleah Billie
Zoocy Bowers
Onnie Cypress
Jaiden Fludd
Neveah Gopher
Jalaaya Hunsinger
Bobbi Johns-Osceola
Jaydin Ottiwell
Caysie Platt
Mattie Platt
Jaelee Weimann

PECS

The varsity and junior varsity rosters for the 2023 PECS volleyball program.

# Hard Rock Tampa hosts poker series

## FROM PRESS RELEASE

TAMPA — Poker tournament action returns to Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, Tampa with the Seminole Hard Rock Signature Poker Series kicking off Sept. 6 with a \$400 Deep Stack series opener.

As the inaugural Seminole Hard Rock Signature Poker Series, the tournament will feature a \$1 million championship starting on Sept. 14 with a \$1,700 buy-in. The

championship event boasts a \$1 million guaranteed prize pool.

Other highlight events in the first Signature Poker Series schedule include:

- \$200 Multi-Flight NLH (Re-Entry), \$100,000 Guaranteed, starts Monday, Sept. 11 through Wednesday, Sept. 13
- \$1,100 Deep Stack Six Handed NLH (Re-Entry), \$50,000 Guaranteed, Tuesday, Sept. 12
- \$2,200 Deep Stack Eight handed NLH (Re-Entry), \$75,000 Guaranteed, Wednesday, Sept. 13

- \$600 One Day 100K NLH (Re-Entry), \$100,000 Guaranteed, Sunday, Sept. 17
  - \$400 Seniors (50+) NLH (Re-Entry), \$50,000 Guaranteed, Monday, Sept. 18
  - \$3,500 Signature NLH (Re-Entry), Monday, Sept. 18 through Tuesday, Sept. 19
  - \$600 8-Game Mix (Re-Entry), Tuesday, Sept. 19
- For more information visit [SHRTPoker.com](http://SHRTPoker.com).



Via MaxPreps

American Heritage cornerback Greg "Zae" Thomas, lower left, lines up against St. John's College High School of Washington, D.C., in Heritage's first game of the season Aug. 26.

# As offers increase, Greg "Zae" Thomas has strong start for Heritage

## STAFF REPORT

Week 1 of the high school football season marked a positive start for the Seminole Tribe's Gregory "Zae" Thomas and the American Heritage Patriots.

American Heritage walloped St. John's College High School of Washington, D.C., 45-20, on Aug. 26 in Plantation.

Thomas, a 6-foot-2, 190-pound junior cornerback and wide receiver, made at least five tackles in the victory (official stats were not immediately available).

Off the field, Thomas has begun attracting more offers from big time programs.

In a span of a few days in late July, Thomas received offers from Florida State

and Miami. Western Kentucky was the first school to offer Thomas a scholarship.

Thomas is listed 72nd in 247Sports rankings of Florida's top players in the class of 2025.

Heritage will host Hollywood's Chaminade-Madonna on Sept. 15 in a South Florida powerhouse showdown.

# Season ready to kickoff for 'Fresh' Walters, Charlotte

## STAFF REPORT

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte football team, which includes Seminole descendent Roger "Fresh" Walters, opens its 2023 season Sept. 2 at home against South Carolina State.

Charlotte's schedule includes two visits to Florida: Sept. 23 at Florida in Gainesville and Nov. 25 at South Florida in Tampa.

Charlotte is guided by first-year head coach Biff Poggi. This season marks the 49ers first year in the American Athletic Conference after departing from Conference

USA. The team features more than 20 transfers from Power Five schools such as Michigan, Notre Dame and Oklahoma.

Walters redshirted in his freshman year last season. Earlier this year, he caught a touchdown pass in the team's spring game scrimmage.

Walters spent part of his youth living at the tribe's Chupco's Landing in Fort Pierce. He is the son of tribal member Sheree Snead.



Charlotte Athletics

Roger "Fresh" Walters

# Moore Haven High volleyball wins first two matches

## STAFF REPORT

There is a significant Seminole presence on this year's Moore Haven High School varsity volleyball team.

Half the team is comprised of Seminoles, who have helped the squad get off to a fast

start. The Lady Terriers won their first two matches, 3-0 against Immokalee and 3-2 against Gateway Charter. The latter score could be a sign of an improved Lady Terrier squad this season considering Gateway beat Moore Haven, 3-1, last year.

Seminoles on the team include Preslynn

Baker, Ayana Fonseca, Summer Gopher, Marley Jimmie, and Miley Jimmie.

Many of the players have been teammates for a few years on the varsity level.

The team's head coach is Mona Baker, mother of Preslynn.

File photo  
Preslynn Baker, shown in a 2022 match, is one of the top returning players on this year's Moore Haven High School varsity volleyball team.



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A45266	2006	FORD CARGO VAN	E250 (RWD)	127,357	Poor	\$456.00
037979	N/A	PORTER-CABLE AIR COMPRESSOR	CPLC7060V-1 (ELECTRIC)	N/A	Poor	\$18.00
411511	N/A	HUSKY PORTABLE AIR COMPRESSOR	VLH1582609 (ELECTRIC)	N/A	Poor	\$16.00
B56979	2010	FORD PICKUP TRUCK (RWD)	F150 CREW CAB (RWD)	131,615	Poor	\$5,053.00
817562	2018	NISSAN CARGO VAN	NV 2500 (RWD)	246,887	Fair	\$15,450.00
C90245	2011	FORD PICKUP TRUCK	F250 CREW CAB (4WD)	134,299	Poor	\$10,338.00

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