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The **Seminole** *Voice of the Unconquered* **Tribune**
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Big Cypress wins 12th annual Rez Rally



Naji Tobias

Team Big Cypress is all smiles after being awarded the 2012 Rez Rally trophy for having the most participants. Big Cypress, this year's Rez Rally host, had 273 participants from their reservation at the event, which was held on Jan. 21.

BY NAJI TOBIAS
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — For the second time in three years, the home team has come out on top.

Team Big Cypress enjoyed their victory at the 12th annual Rez Rally on Jan. 21 with sunny skies and plenty of smiling faces. The team garnered 273 registered participants in the Tribe's top health competition — an astonishing 42 percent of the 643 total participants Tribalwide.

"It surprised me that we got that many to participate in the

Rez Rally," former Tribal Chairman Mitchell Cypress said. "I thought we were going to get a little bit over 100 people to be here, but it showed how serious everyone was about winning this year. A lot of us wanted to get first, second and third place in the races. It looks like all our training for this paid off."

Last year's top winner — Team Hollywood/Fort Pierce/Trail — placed second overall this year.

Team Brighton/Tampa, which hosted and won the 2010 Rez Rally, finished third overall.

♦ See REZ RALLY on page 8A

Tribal Fair showcases culture



Chris C. Jenkins

A member of the Three Feathers Dance Troupe performs the Men's Fancy Dance at the Hard Rock Live for the Tribal Fair on Feb. 10. The fair was free and open to the public.

BY CHRIS C. JENKINS
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — A dose of tradition, culture and fun summed up the 41st annual Tribal Fair.

Tribal citizens and special guests came together from Feb. 10-12 at Hollywood's Paradise Live for the festivities.

The tried-and-true formula brought back music and dance performances; authentic, Native apparel and merchandise; live animal shows; and other entertainment.

"Our heritage and culture was on display, and we only get one chance per year to do this," Hollywood Tribal Council Rep. Marcellus Osceola Jr. said. "We got to educate the visitors the best we could. Hopefully, we touched everybody and gave them something to take away."

"Our main focus and challenge was and has been the advertising and turnout for it," Tribal citizen and co-program scheduler Leoma Poore said.

This year, the Tribe publicized the event in a special way, partnering with Mobile Mike — Advertising and Promotions, who broadcasted information about the Tribal Fair on several Clear Channel radio stations.

For the first time, Mobile Mike also kicked-off Tribal Fair weekend with a promotional event at the Hollywood Trading Post in the early morning hours on Feb. 10.

The event featured free car washes, gas, T-shirts and Seminole orange juice and lemonade.

Seminole Tribe President Tony Sanchez Jr. and other Board representatives stopped by to say hello.

Spectators gaped at an exciting, live animal show held in the middle of the gas station, featuring an alligator, an albino rattle snake and a snapping turtle.

"The Seminole Tribe of Florida has global reach and local reach," Mobile Mike said. "A lot of people don't know what the Tribe is. They educate people."

At the Hard Rock Live, several Tribal performers made their way to the stage to perform throughout the weekend, including Paul Buster and Cowbone Band; RC North and Hybiskus; Ted Nelson Sr. and the Fried Yaat-Hutkee Band; and the Osceola Brothers Band.

Miss Indian Nations Shanoa Pinkham

came for her first visit to Seminole Country and the Sunshine State.

"It was very beautiful," Pinkham said. "It was a great honor to be there. [The Seminoles] take a lot of pride in their leaders and their youth."

"I was also very impressed with their regalia and how it's completely different than my own Tribe," Pinkham said. "It's great to see cultures still thriving and being diverse."

Emcee Lawrence Baker has spent more than a decade with the Tribe. He hails from the Hidatsa-Mandan Tribe of Fort Berthold in New Town, N.D.

He said that this year's festivities emphasized diversity among the dancers and their styles.

"I enjoy the crowds each year and touching those people that didn't have an understanding of us before they came," Baker said. "There is always still that surprise that we are still here. We are alive and are still relevant... We are so much more than what's in a book."

Guests Jan Lenartowicz, of Jupiter, and Jonathan and Meagan Pace, of Plantation, were happy to take in the festivities for the first time.

"I heard about it through family and researching it on the Internet," Lenartowicz said. "The quality of the (vendors') craftsmanship was great to see. There was also such diversity in all the activities adults and children could enjoy."

The Pace family agreed. "It was all something different, and it was all interesting," Meagan Pace said. "We didn't have any plans for the weekend, so it worked out to just come and check it all out."

Other Tribal Fair activities included the Little Mr. and Miss Seminole pageant; a clothing contest at the Paradise Theater; the Eastern Indian Rodeo Association Bill Osceola Memorial Rodeo at Davie's Bergeron Rodeo grounds; and a volleyball tournament at the Hard Rock Hotel for Tribal citizens and employees.

Kathryn Stolarz contributed to this article.

♦ See TRIBAL FAIR on page 6A

Seminole Casino Coconut Creek
"moves that bus" for grand reopening



Chris C. Jenkins

Tribal Council members stand ready to cut the ribbon for Seminole Casino Coconut Creek's grand reopening on Feb. 2, just seconds after Ty Pennington shouted, "Move that bus!" to unveil the casino entrance.

BY CHRIS C. JENKINS
Staff Reporter

COCONUT CREEK — Seminole Casino Coconut Creek continued its rise in the South Florida casino scene with its grand reopening on Feb. 2, after undergoing a \$150-million expansion.

Tribal officials and guests opened the day with a Tribal procession, including a Seminole Stomp Dance and a live alligator. Pyrotechnics lit the media-heavy scene.

"Words can't describe how I feel today," said Seminole Casino Coconut Creek President Steve Bonner. "I speak for the 1,700-plus employees when I say this is a great day."

The opening ceremony culminated with the unveiling of

the casino, led by special guest Ty Pennington, the well-known host of ABC's *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*. He and the hundreds of Tribal guests and patrons in attendance yelled those three famous words, "Move that bus!"

"We thought that not only was he (Pennington) appealing, but he was a perfect fit, especially with him being involved before in the Immokalee event a few years ago," said Tribal Board of Directors President Tony Sanchez Jr. "He's been very gracious as always, and we appreciate him being a part of it all."

Pennington said he was pleased to attend and support the Tribe's casino, which employed nearly 2,000 construction

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Winter Symposium**
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Bobby Henry celebrates 75th birthday



Ryan Watson

Bobby Henry celebrates his 75th birthday with family and friends on Feb. 4 in Tampa.

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

LAKELAND — Seminole Tribal elder Bobby Henry, known as The Rainmaker, celebrated his 75th birthday on Feb. 4. Family and friends joined the much revered medicine man for the festivities at the Tribe's 900-acre Polk County property.

Born in an Indian village near Ochopee on the Tamiami Trail, Bobby has no birth certificate or official records documenting his birth. Fifteen years ago, however, the U.S. government issued Bobby a passport after extensive research by *The Seminole Tribune* found sufficient evidence of his existence (and age) on various American Indian census rolls, missionary lists and other Southeastern Tribal documents.

"I feel fine. Not old," he said. "Might be a little bit harder to jump up into my truck, but I can still build a chickee and carve a canoe!"

The day-long event featured a catered meal and a birthday cake served up by the medicine man himself. Dozens of children ran about the beautiful green landscape near a large chickee where the former Tampa residents often go for meetings and parties.

"I got everything I need but one thing," said Bobby, the familiar smile spreading over his face. "A village!"

He was referring to the Seminole Tribe's application to have the Lakeland property put into federal trust status, now meandering its way through the complicated federal system.

"I'm not worried," he said. "It will soon come."
See a profile of Bobby Henry on page 5A.

Tribal member travels to Jamaica



Photo courtesy of Debbie Allen

Reggae Singer Sheena Spirit; Ionie Wright, executive secretary to Prime Minister of Jamaica Portia Simpson Miller; and Tribal member Doris Osceola stand in front of Jamaica House.

SUBMITTED BY DEBBIE ALLEN
Contributor

On Feb. 8, two days after jamming at Bob Marley's commemorative birthday party in Kingston, Jamaica, Doris Osceola and her reggae singing sidekick, Sheena Spirit, made a special delivery. They brought a hand-crafted Seminole doll made by Grandma Minnie and a copy of the Seminole Media Productions' DVD of the Dennis Brown Unveiling at the Hard Rock to Ionie Wright, executive secretary to the new Prime Minister of Jamaica Portia Simpson Miller.

Although the Prime Minister was not available because she had to attend several dignitaries' funerals, Osceola and Spirit were promised faithfully that the next time they visited Jamaica, Simpson Miller would put them on her calendar.

Osceola and Spirit had met the Prime Minister on a flight returning from a trip to Jamaica in July 2011.

Big Cypress seniors show Seminole pride at Culture Day

BY NAJI TOBIAS
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Every three or four months, Big Cypress seniors gather at the reservation's Culture Camp to reflect on Seminole traditions for Culture Day.

At the most recent Culture Day, held on Jan. 26, Tribal seniors enjoyed a variety of activities.

About 30 seniors attended. Some played bingo or horseshoes, while others took part in an archery tournament.

In addition, the seniors enjoyed Seminole traditional foods for lunch, including frybread, pumpkin bread, sofkee, stew and turtle.

The seniors described the function as one that promoted togetherness and happiness.

The event was co-sponsored by the Big Cypress Senior Center, the Big Cypress Culture Department and the Big Cypress Councilman's Office.

The next Culture Day is slated for the last week of May. Culture Day is typically held in conjunction with the seniors' monthly birthday luncheon.



Naji Tobias

Senior Louise Billie gets into action during the horseshoe tournament.



Naji Tobias

Tribal senior Jonah Cypress, right, competes in the horseshoe tournament.



Naji Tobias

Big Cypress Tribal senior Daisy Jumper plays bingo during the Big Cypress seniors' Culture Day on Jan. 26.



Naji Tobias

From left: Rudy Osceola, Maria Galvan, Nadine Bowers, Jonah Cypress, Louise Osceola, Louise Billie and Esther Buster have fun at the Big Cypress seniors' Culture Day on Jan. 26.



Naji Tobias

Mitchell Cypress, left, aims his bow and arrow during the archery tournament as Ricky Doctor looks on.

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Community

A

Senior Profile: Big Cypress Tribal citizen Alice Billie

BY JUDY WEEKS
Freelance Writer

BIG CYPRESS — Alice Billie is a throwback to another age — a walking, talking anachronism. From her hair twisted into a bun on top of her head to her long Seminole patchwork skirt, she appears to have walked out of a postcard from the early 1930s. Quite agile for a woman older than 90, she stands tall as she takes a morning stroll around her Big Cypress yard for exercise and then travels to the Senior Center for a luncheon with her many friends.

To the casual observer, Alice appears to be non-communicative as she sits quietly, staring across the room, but she is actually a treasure chest of Seminole history just waiting to be opened. The simple key to her priceless memories is a smile, a gentle hug or a pat on the hand, and she will share her lifetime of adventures.

Alice was born into the Wind Clan in a Seminole camp at Black Hammock, in the Everglades southeast of Ochopee in Collier County, sometime before 1922. The daughter of John Billie and Margaret Huff Dixie, she had numerous brothers and

sisters who have distinguished themselves within the Tribal community.

With a limited command of English, Alice had her son, Ronnie Billie Sr., translate as she journeyed back to her childhood.

“My father hunted alligators, deer and raccoons for hides and meat to trade for bullets, flour, salt, sugar, cloth, candy and tobacco. All of us kids would run to get in my father’s dugout canoe when we knew that he was going to the trading posts in Everglades City. It would take all day to get there, but we knew that there would be candy and all the wonderful things in the store to see.”

The Bureau of Indian Affairs has assigned Alice a birth date of Jan. 1, 1922, but this is contradictory to her vivid memories. She recalls climbing on the loose dirt dike being built by the walking dredge for the future Tamiami Trail and following it with her family into Everglades City for a day of trading. Construction of the Trail in her vicinity took place around 1923, and she had already made the trip by canoe for several years.

With the opening of the Trail in the late 1920s, produce farms began to spring up around Ochopee, and Alice’s father moved

his family closer to the community so that they could find work in the fields. The first car that she ever saw was a Ford Model T, and her brother, Frank J. Billie, was scared to death of the vehicle.

“My mother moved around a lot, and I stayed with my father,” Alice said. “He was a strong, hard man and had always made his living off the land, but he was also very gentle and kind. One time when we were moving through the swamp, he was walking with a heavy pack on his back. I started to cry because I was afraid of the big bugs on the leaves of the plants. Even though I was a heavy load, he came back and carried me for a long ways to the edge of the swamp on top of his pack.”

Sometime around 1940, Alice was taken in an old flatbed truck over the bumpy dirt road that ran from Immokalee to Big Cypress for what she had been told was a short visit. Much to her surprise and anguish, she found that she had been tricked, and she was left to live at the new reservation where there were very few people.

She spent the next 25 years living in various camps scattered throughout the area and raised her four children as a single parent. Her first three children were born

in the woods, but by the time Ronnie came along in 1954, she made his delivery at the hospital in Clewiston.

Life wasn’t always easy for Alice as she made her living working in the fields, making dolls and sewing patchwork, but it was very rewarding, and she looks back upon it with a smile. However, there is one thing that she regrets. “When I was a little girl, the people in Everglades City said they would teach me to read and write. My uncle and grandma told us that we could never hold a pencil in our hand because it was a white man’s trick to take us away.”

“The government made a wood building where the water tower is today and sent a man to teach the children of Big Cypress,” Alice said. “The teacher was always happy and smiled and he made the children happy, too. That is why they called the school ‘Ahfachkee.’ They only had first through fourth grade, and then the kids had to go to Clewiston. Education is important, and I sent my children to school to learn what I was not allowed to do. I want them to have a good life.”

Alice’s son Ronnie Billie Sr. recalls the

◆ See ALICE on page 9A



Judy Weeks

At the age of about 90, Alice Billie gets her exercise walking around her yard in Big Cypress.

Brighton Reservation prepares to open new senior center facility

BY CHRIS C. JENKINS
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — The long-awaited and highly anticipated Brighton Elder Activity Center will soon open its doors.

Tentative plans are to complete construction by the end of March and open the facility for use in April.

The 17,500-square-foot facility set on 7.5 acres has been the buzz since its initial planning, dating back to 2004.

“It looks even better than what I thought or expected when it was being discussed,” said Elder Services Director Leah Minnick.

The building will have inlaid glass mosaic designs using the Tribe’s eight clans.

“You really have to also see the inside to appreciate it,” Minnick said. “We can’t wait to move in. It’s a very nice building, big and huge.”

Minnick said the new building will address several long-time concerns of the community, including much-needed shelter space and coding standards.

The project was developed under the direction of architect Michael Noell. He and his company, MSN_Architecture LLC, based out of Boca Raton, also oversaw the design and construction of the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino facilities in Hollywood and Tampa.

“This facility will provide a fairly significant activities area and sophisticated outdoor area also,” Noell said.

“I think it’s going to be sensational for the Tribe. The materials and the look are going to be great, and it’s been a long time coming,” he said.

The building will be the Tribe’s first LEED Gold-Certified building. This means the facility has been recognized as green and in the highest standard for measuring sustainability, making it environmentally friendly, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council website.



Photo courtesy of Florida Aerial Services Inc.

Brighton’s Department of Elder Services plan to open their new senior center in April.

“This facility will provide a fairly significant activities area and sophisticated outdoor area also. I think it’s going to be sensational for the Tribe.”

— Architect Michael Noell

For instance, about 60 percent of the construction debris was recycled; a tank that catches all the rain water will be used to flush the toilets; and a TV will play a short video in the lobby about the green aspects of the project and the unique features of the building.

Beyond the four offices the center will house, elders can look forward to billiard tables, a miniature golf course, a shuffle

board area, a horseshoe section, a walking trail, new sewing machines, a fire and barbecue pit and a rocking chair seating area.

The new facility’s parking area can accommodate close to 30 cars, and there will be onsite bus transportation under a covered, custom-designed entranceway.

Tribal senior Happy Jones, 84, who the department believes to be the eldest on the Brighton Reservation, said she is excited about the center.

“I was very happy when I found out about it, even though I haven’t seen it up close,” Jones said. “I’m hoping that it’s better and we (as seniors) can have a lot more activities over there.”

For more information, call the Department of Elder Services at 863-763-0638.

Hard Rock Hotel sponsors Gasparilla Pirate Fest

BY BRETT DALY
Senior Editor

TAMPA — Hard Rock Hotel & Casino enjoyed their third year as title sponsor of Tampa’s annual Gasparilla Pirate Fest on Jan. 28, and they didn’t disappoint.

Along with EventFest Inc., the casino helped organize the legendary tradition held in Tampa since 1904 to reenact pirate Jose Gaspar’s invasion into the city.

The reenactment featured the Jose Gasparilla pirate ship — the world’s only fully rigged pirate ship — complete with cannons and flags. The ship entered Hillsborough Bay, and Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn surrendered the Key to the City into the hands of the Captain of Gasparilla.

In addition to the invasion, the event included brunch, a Parade of the Pirates and an evening Pirate Fest Street Festival.

Dozens of Tribal members and Tribal

employees participated in the parade. Dressed in purple and decorated with beads, they walked alongside Hard Rock’s float that sported a huge guitar and the Hard Rock logo. The parade boasted more than 90 elaborate floats, 14 marching bands and more than 50 Krewes and pirates.

“The reason we participate in these types of events is to embrace the community and give back to the community,” said Gina Morales, Public Relations manager for Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa. “It helps [the Tribe] be a part of the community.”

While Hard Rock does not plan to continue as the title sponsor of the event, Morales said it’s definitely possible that they will continue to participate with Gasparilla.

The Pirate Fest Street Festival, which stretched along Ashley Drive in downtown Tampa, completed the 2012 Gasparilla celebration; attendees enjoyed live entertainment and plenty of food.



Ryan Watson

The Seminole Hard Rock crew sit on their Gasparilla parade float. The Seminole Hard Rock was the title sponsor of the Gasparilla Pirate Fest for the third year in a row.

Frankie’s Gas Station and Convenience Store opens in Big Cypress

BY NAJI TOBIAS
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Full service is now available at the Big Cypress Reservation.

Frankie’s Gas Station and Convenience Store held its grand opening on Jan. 17, and scores of Tribal citizens paid a visit to the newly re-opened facility.

Formerly the Big Cypress Trading Post, the long-running gas station and convenience store closed down several months ago; it’s now owned by family members and friends Twila Billie, Eagle Billie, Frank Billie Jr. and Phil Desilva.

For Frank Billie Jr., it’s more than just a job, it’s a renewal of life, he said.

He gets joy out of seeing his Tribal people feeling like they’re at home, he said. That’s exactly what he wants for all the customers who stop by.

“I missed the idea of having a full-service gas station, so I wanted to implement that here,” he said. “I’ve always had an inspiration to serve my community. It’s going to be very beneficial to everyone here.”

At Frankie’s, customers get their gas pumped for them. Other convenience features include: a windshield wash and a complimentary check of the customers’ vehicle tires, engine and windshield wipers.

Frankie’s will be open from 6 a.m.-11 p.m., seven days a week.



Naji Tobias

Big Cypress Tribal Council Rep. Mondo Tiger, center, celebrates the grand opening of Frankie’s Gas Station and Convenience Store with co-owners, from left, Twila Billie, Eagle Billie, Frank Billie Jr. and Phil Desilva.



Naji Tobias

A customer patronizes the newly opened convenience store on Jan. 17. Frankie’s will be open from 6 a.m.-11 p.m., seven days a week.

◆ COCONUT CREEK

From page 1A

workers; created 800 new full-time jobs with benefits with its expansion; and doubled the total number of permanent employees to nearly 1,900.

"The Seminoles are great," Pennington said. "Giving so many jobs to so many people is a wonderful thing."

Pennington joined Bonner in presenting a \$20,000 check to one of the casino's favorite charities – the Coconut Creek foster care facility SOS Children's Village – for a new roof makeover.

Later, the popular rock group Foreigner concluded the day by performing some of their classics onsite in concert.

Newly renovated, the first-rate casino now houses accommodations on par with the best in the state including: a second-floor, non-smoking, 9,000-square-foot Stax Poker Lounge with 30 tables, which includes a high-limit room; a now 100,000-square-foot casino floor accommodating more than 2,300 slot machines; a doubling in the number of table games to 65; and a new casino promotions staging area.

The new Player's Club is the first of its kind in the United States, featuring revolutionary electronic guest interaction

technology to eliminate guest waiting lines and to immediately immerse players in the casino's action.

Seminole Casino Coconut Creek is no stranger to growth; it underwent its first major expansion in 2007 at approximately \$32 million with popular additions, such as the Nectar Lounge and the Fresh Harvest buffet restaurant. This time around, three restaurants have been added – the upscale NYY Steak, Sorrisi Italian Restaurant and the New York-style 1st Street Deli.

A new show venue, The Pavilion, seats 1,200 people. The property also sports a new parking garage – a 2,400-space LEED Silver Certification-registered facility located on the first-floor courtyard.

"It's all another example of the Tribe creating something that sets the standard and can compete with anything going on in Vegas," Seminole Gaming Chief Executive Officer Jim Allen said.

President Sanchez was also thrilled with the new facility. "From the time we began talking about and having this property, we never thought it would turn out to be like it has," he said. "Our whole gaming history has always been about uncertainty and challenges. For us, it's our responsibility to keep it going. Words can't describe it all."

Kathryn Stolarz contributed to this article.



Chris C. Jenkins

In a hail of pyrotechnics, Special guest Ty Pennington, host of ABC's *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, gets the crowd excited as he tells the bus driver to move the custom-decorated bus, unveiling the latest expansions at Seminole Casino Coconut Creek.



Chris C. Jenkins

From left: Tribal citizens Vinson Osceola, Billy Walker and Herbert Jim, dressed in traditional Seminole attire, stand with a casino show girl.



Chris C. Jenkins

Bobby Henry leads Tribal citizens in a Seminole Stomp Dance as part of the opening ceremonies for Seminole Casino Coconut Creek's grand reopening.



Chris C. Jenkins

Lewis Gopher takes part in the Tribal procession at the opening ceremony.



Chris C. Jenkins

Seminole President Tony Sanchez Jr. thanks patrons and guests for supporting Seminole Casino Coconut Creek.



Chris C. Jenkins

The new Player's Club is the first of its kind in the United States, featuring revolutionary electronic guest interaction technology to eliminate guest waiting lines and to immediately immerse players in the casino's action.



Chris C. Jenkins

The newly reopened casino presents foster care facility SOS Children's Village with a \$20,000 check at the event.



Chris C. Jenkins

Tribal members keep a live alligator in place during the opening ceremony at Seminole Casino Coconut Creek.

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Tampa citizen Bobby Henry: good medicine!

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter



Seminole Media Productions archive photo

Tribal senior Bobby Henry is known around the world for his good medicine.

When Seminole medicine man Bobby Henry has to make it rain, he tosses a live gopher tortoise into the air. That angers the gods because “turtles not s’posed to fly,” he said. When the gods get sufficiently angry, they roar with thunder and hurl spears of lightning. If Bobby keeps throwing that turtle up, or if he adds a frog, as he did when he ended the drought in Tampa several years ago, the furious gods will send down torrents of angry rain.

But there is obviously more to it than that. You and I can throw reptiles or amphibians into the air and nothing would happen. There are ancient words that Bobby utters in his native language and thoughts in his mind that no one can know about, he said. Some of this came to him naturally not long after he was born, in the mid-1930s, out in the cypress swamps near Ochopee on the Tamiami Trail. He doesn’t know why, and he doesn’t really want to talk a lot about it. In traditional enigmatic fashion, however, he will give you his commercial business card. It reads “Rainmaker” and lets you know how to reach him if you need a canoe, a totem pole or a chickee hut built.

Or if you need it to rain. Bobby Henry is not a typical medicine man. None of them are, as far as I know. For the first 10 years I knew Miccosukee medicine man Sonny Billie, he scowled at me whenever I was around, refusing to allow me to take his photo. A large, tough man, Sonny spent his working days operating a bulldozer. Out of the blue one day, he just sat there and allowed me to photograph him blowing into a jar of clear liquid through a long straw. And, from that day forward, he was very cordial and friendly to me, even mugging for the camera!

Though I knew many in Seminole medicine woman Susie Billie’s family and had been in her presence dozens of times, she never seemed to acknowledge me. When I had my camera, I was aware that she seemed to never even look at me. Then, one day, I noticed her walking all by herself along the side of Snake Road, way south of the Big Cypress Reservation, looking at the ground. Something told me to stop, and I walked up to her with my camera draped over my shoulder. She looked up and held out her hands to reveal a sprig of herb she had found on the roadside. It was one of the best photographs I ever took – I call the image “Grandmother’s Hands.”

From then on, she would look toward the camera whenever I was around. She even sat down with Tribal member Danny Jumper and me to voice, on video, her opinions about the Florida panther.

Powerful medicine people, Sonny, 75, and Susie, 107, both died in 2003. “One year, six people die,” Bobby said, referring to deaths of Seminoles he considered his elders, rapidly shaking his head as if to bolt the thought from his mind. “Boom, boom, boom!”

How many medicine men and women are left among the Seminoles and Miccosukees? “I don’t know,” Bobby said. I think he knows, but he won’t say. “When you find out, let me know!” he joked. Where Sonny could be menacing and Susie quiet and reserved, Bobby is personable, always mixing humor and humility with a smile and a handshake for all. He turned 75 last month.

“Bobby Henry is the main medicine man,” said Seminole Chairman James E. Billie, who sent Bobby to the funerals of non-Seminole friends to attend their “crossover” journeys. “When he shows up at your event, or anywhere he is around, everyone whispers and nods towards him. Everyone is impressed. Bobby Henry is powerful and very respected by all Indians. Bobby is the most famous medicine man in the world.”

Bobby and his family are known in indigenous circles around the globe for their compelling demonstrations of traditional Seminole dances, foods and crafts. They are well known to most American Indian Tribes and have made their mark in Europe and Asia. A giant totem pole Bobby carved and emblazoned with his own likeness stands in downtown Singapore to this day. A lifelong entrepreneur, Bobby has made his living picking fruit, building chickees, wrestling alligators, installing septic tanks, hauling fill and carving canoes. Now, he’s the proprietor of his own American Indian gift shop, Rainmaker, at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Tampa.

Son of Maggie Henry Doctor and Jim Henry Doctor, Bobby Henry had three siblings: Tommy, Lois and Dorothy. The way Bobby tells it, the Tribal elders of the 1930s must have noticed something special in him. As a little boy, he said he was taken aside and provided special training. What to eat and how to cure. Thoughts and chants. Discipline and concentration. “Hear the owl, respect panther, stare with snake’s eye,” is all he will say. He watched the elders closely at the Green Corn Dance and other Tribal events and learned to shuffle and shove his legs hard into the ground, over and over, with a rhythm called to him by the earth in the peculiar choreography of the Southeastern Indians known as the Stomp Dance. In later years, he would

become the dance leader, first in line, the caller who chooses the dances and calls out the lyrics of the songs.

In 1956, Bobby Henry married Annie Osceola, one of six daughters of clan matriarch Ruby Tiger Osceola. Annie and Bobby will celebrate their 56th wedding anniversary on May 12; they have five children: Suzie Q, Linda, Barbara, Joanie and John Henry.

By the mid-70s, the 18 members of the Ruby Tiger Osceola family were scattered about the West Coast of Florida, working alongside migrants in tomato and gladiola fields; doing road and construction projects; and entertaining tourists at small pre-Disney tourist attractions. Bobby and Tommy Henry purchased and repaired an old dump truck and crane. They would rent out the equipment themselves to do jobs most did not like.

“We did a lot of septic tank work,” Bobby said. Tommy and a third partner both died in 1975, however; the heavy equipment was eventually sold, and Bobby resumed building chickees. “We were poor, but we were makin’ it. We worked hard,” Bobby said.

“In 1979, James came to town,” said Bobby, who listened with enthusiasm to the new Chairman’s vision for a reservation and village in Tampa. “I asked him, ‘Do you need workers? I got ‘em.’”

Up from Bradenton came Ruby and her descendents. They converged on a 4-acre plot in East Tampa, granted official reservation status. During the next few years, a village, museum and small zoo of Florida animals was built. In 1982, Chairman Billie had another offer for Bobby. “He told me he needed someone to manage the village. I said I could do it,” Bobby said. “He put out his hand, I shook it, and he paid me \$275 a week!”

For the next 20 years, Bobby and his family operated the Tampa Reservation as a living, native village tourist attraction, complete with Florida animals, alligator wrestling, museum programs, Florida music and Seminole culture shows; it was all nestled between the Tribe’s popular discount cigarette shop and the original Seminole bingo hall and hotel that preceded Tampa’s Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, which opened in 2004.

Once, during a severe 1985 drought in West Central Florida, Bobby was summoned to the steps of City Hall; exasperated municipal officials were worried about the area’s dwindling water supply and out-of-control fires. With newspapers and television stations documenting the event and former Tampa Mayor Bob Martinez looking on, Bobby got out the turtle and the frog. Immediately following his ceremony, the skies

mysteriously darkened, and rain fell in torrents. Area weathermen, who were predicting no end to the drought in sight, were shocked. The Associated Press sent word of the miracle around the world. The Rainmaker was born.

Ruby died in 2002, at the age of 106. Her bronze likeness can be seen today at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Tampa in a diorama which includes images of her six daughters: Suzie, Nancy, Peggy, Maggie, Linda and Annie. By 2004, when the Tampa Hard Rock Hotel & Casino opened, Ruby’s family – the original 18 had grown to more than 100 – were relocated into dozens of single-family homes spread about several nearby towns. Keeping a promise made to the Tampa Seminoles, Tribal leaders OK’d the purchase of 900 acres of pasture and woodland in a Polk County greenway, about 20 miles east of Tampa. At this writing, the tract is still going through the federal trust process to become an official American Indian Reservation.

“I’ll have my school,” Bobby said, referring to a medicine man training camp of sorts he has dreamed up in his desperation to preserve the vanishing Seminole culture. “Then, my family, we’ll be all together again.”

Short and strong, with black hair barely graying, a wide, toothy smile and a perennial twinkle in his eyes, Bobby is a living museum, holding the precious tablature of Tribal medicine in his brain. He is bothered by what he regards as a rapid and ongoing disenfranchisement of the Tribal culture, fueled by the money and morays of modern times. It has created a strange world for a medicine man who carries business cards and a cell phone in his pocket and wears a gold chain hanging over his patchwork shirt.

“Don’t know what happens when I’m gone,” lamented the full-blooded Seminole. “Tribe’s culture may die. I need to train people.”

I have many fond memories of times I spent with Bobby Henry: driving all over Connecticut seeking a restaurant to satisfy his ungodly urge for fried chicken; waiting hours in Miami trying to secure a passport for a man born in a palmetto thatch with no birth certificate; watching him jump from his pickup truck and scale the banks of a ditch to catch a scared alligator with his bare hands; joining hands with an entire mall full of people in Singapore to perform the traditional Seminole Snake Dance. . .

One memory, however, stands out among the rest: I will always remember Bobby strolling through a thick fog on the football field at Jacksonville Stadium in 1994. The fog was a precursor to a huge thunderstorm

a weatherman said was coming in off the Atlantic. By all predictions, it would wipe out the festivities for hundreds of Indian dancers from all over the country and for thousands of spectators. They were at the stadium that day for the Seminole-sponsored Discover Native America (DNA) Pow-wow.

West of Jacksonville, an organization which claimed to be American Indian had scheduled a competing pow-wow, hoping to cut into the crowd at the DNA. The organizers were upset with the Seminole event because the DNA rules limited pow-wow participation to “card carrying” Indians – those who were members of federally recognized Tribes. Dancers who could not prove their federal affiliation were not allowed in the arena.

Thunder could be heard in the distance. As one of the DNA event producers, I saw months of hard work about to be drowned. Suddenly, through the fog, Bobby walked by. “Bobby,” I implored, “can’t you make it not rain?”

He suddenly pulled a gigantic knife from a scabbard hanging on his side.

“Sure,” he said. “Cut the clouds.” He walked off by himself, holding the knife high and still, as if slicing the atmosphere as he strolled. For a good hour, he walked back and forth the length of that football field, through that smoky fog, saying words no one could understand, thinking thoughts no one will ever know, holding his knife high. Indians from all over North America, in traditional Tribal garb, stood silently on the sidelines watching him in awe.

Suddenly, the sun peeked and then came gloriously out. A great cheering commenced among all present. Even the weatherman on TV was amazed the storm passed Jacksonville by in such a manner. Swelled with rainwater, the black thunderhead traveled more than 100 miles west, where it finally stalled and dumped the predicted deluge right atop the other pow-wow.

I was there. I saw it. It’s true. I went to shake his hand. The fog was gone. He saw me running across the field.

“Bobby Henry!” he yelled his own name out to me, his ruddy face all twinkling and smiling; the gods having come through for him once again.

“Bobby Henry! Good medicine!”

Portions of this story have appeared in FORUM, the magazine of the Florida Humanities Council.



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2012 Little Mr. and Miss Seminole crowned at 41st annual Tribal Fair



Chris C. Jenkins

2012 Little Mr. and Miss Seminole winners Jordan Osceola and Vincenzo Osceola celebrate on stage after the annual Little Mr. and Miss Seminole pageant at Seminole Paradise on Feb. 10.

BY CHRIS C. JENKINS
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Among the dozens to sign up, only two were chosen to represent the Tribe as royalty on Feb. 10.

A new batch of close to 50 female and male candidates vied for the popular, year-long positions of Little Mr. and Miss Florida Seminole. The Paradise Theater hosted the event in conjunction with the annual Tribal Fair.

"Each year, we do this and it seems to go smoother," said longtime Princess Committee Chairwoman Wanda Bowers. "I have maintained my staff also, and they just know what to do."

Emceed by former Miss Florida Seminole Christine McCall, the main event involved the usual question-and-answer period while judges looked for spunk and a winning personality for the 5-7-year-old winners.

"It's gotten so much easier over the years dealing with the more outgoing children, and this is something we definitely look for each year when selecting our representatives," Bowers said.

This year, Tribal youths Jordan Osceola, of Immokalee, and Vincenzo Osceola, of Hollywood, claimed top honors, taking the titles from Brooke Yescas and Caleb Burton. Both Yescas and Burton were short and sweet in their goodbyes as they addressed their families and supporters.

"I would like to thank my mom and parents and Wanda and say great job," Yescas said.

"It was fun and great, and good luck to the next group of winners," Burton said.

Perseverance was the key for Jordan Osceola, the new Little Miss Seminole who came in as second runner-up last year.

"The whole pageant was awesome. I really looked forward to it all," Jordan Osceola said. "I feel great and confident...It all feels great and my heart won't stop pounding."

Proud mother Geraldine Osceola said her daughter was determined to win this year.

"I'm so excited and shocked. It is still settling in," she said. The newly crowned Little Mr. Seminole Vincenzo Osceola said he will spread the word about his new position.

"I'm going to tell all my friends about it," Vincenzo said. "I feel great."

Proud grandfather Samuel Osceola and mother Sharon Olvera shared in Vincenzo Osceola's happiness.

"I'm really happy for him," Samuel Osceola said. "His mother has been working really hard with him."

Tribal grandmother Diane Cypress supported grandson Brandon Cypress as a Little Mr. contestant and said this type of competition can teach the Tribe's leader on many levels.

"I think it's important that he continue to learn how to present himself in the communities," Cypress said. "This competition helped him."

Two-time contest judge and current Miss Florida USA Karina Brez said it was a privilege to be back.

"I represent the State of Florida, and the Seminoles are a big part of that," Brez said. "They are a strong Tribe, and I wouldn't have wanted to be anywhere else but there to represent them and the State. You get to see these kids from a young age learn and represent their Tribe, which is great."



Chris C. Jenkins

Junior Miss Florida Seminole Princess Jaryaca Baker asks Little Mr. contestant Leviticus Roberts a question during the competition.



Chris C. Jenkins

Third place Little Miss Seminole runner-up contestant Desiree Tucker and mother LaDonna Tucker smile for the camera after the competition.



Chris C. Jenkins

From left: Little Mr. and Miss Seminole judges Miss Indian Nations Shanoa Pinkham; Kansas District Representative Ponka-We Victors; and Miss Florida USA Karina Brez prepare to make their selections at the pageant.

Vendors keep tradition alive at Tribal Fair



Chris C. Jenkins

Hollywood Tribal elder Betty Osceola waits for customers and visitors with her handmade crafts at the Tribal Fair. She has been a vendor for about 30 years.

BY KATHRYN STOLARZ
Copy Editor

HOLLYWOOD — They come from all across the country — and even beyond. They pack pieces of their hearts, their histories, their cultures. And they showcase it all once a year at the Seminole Tribal Fair.

Vendors and their booths have been Tribal Fair staples since the event began, back in 1971. They aim to showcase their traditional, handmade goods and, of course, make a buck or two.

Priscilla Sayen, this year's Tribal Fair vendor coordinator, was one of 74 vendors at the 41st annual event, selling beaded and metal jewelry, dolls, traditional clothing and more.

"The general public doesn't realize what Tribes are capable of producing," Sayen said. "They're beautiful items, but they don't realize how these things are made by the hands of these people."

Sayen has been involved in the fair since 1984. She remembers selling frybread in the '80s to raise money for the fair and participating in parades across the state, from Plantation to St. Augustine to Tallahassee, to advertise the fair. She remembers the days before Hollywood's Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino was erected on the fairgrounds in 2004, back before vendors were funneled inside the hallways and back portion of Hard Rock Live.

And she remembers when the Tribal Fair Pow-Wow was in full swing, before it was discontinued because of the cost of prize money.

"It used to be the biggest event of the year," Sayen said. "It kind of lost its luster for a while, but we're trying to bring it back."

Through the years, in the midst of change, one thing has stayed the same — its loyal vendors.

In addition to making sales and showcasing their artistry, the fair has become somewhat of a reunion for these vendors who return year after year.

"It's just an enjoyable time visiting with the other Tribes that are here," Sayen said.

Tribes from different regions came together to sell their proud handiwork this year, including the Cree Nation from Canada; Apaches and Navajos from New Mexico and Arizona; Mohawks from New York; Wompanoag from New England; Cherokees from North Carolina; and Southern Utes from Colorado.

"Each Tribe brings their own unique arts and crafts," Sayen said.

Sayen's friend and fellow vendor Cideahzah Pinnecoose came from Oregon, representing the Southern Ute and Jicarilla Apache Tribes. Her family has set up a booth at the fair since 1984. Her mother used to make Pendleton coats, and her brother, Malvin, made beadwork and hides before he passed away. Now, Pinnecoose continues to represent her family's handiwork at the fair — she is known for her intricate beading. She makes watches and bracelets, necklaces and medallions, and she treasures the time she spends socializing with other vendors.

"I love the people," she said.

So does Betty Osceola, a Hollywood Tribal senior. Osceola said the fair is one of the few times a year that some of her grandchildren — and even her great-great-grandchildren — visit her.

Osceola has been a Tribal Fair vendor for about 30 years, selling dolls, skirts, shirts, hats, aprons, pillows, beaded bracelets, necklaces, earrings, barrettes — you name it. Although she sells her handiwork year-round, the Tribal Fair brings in her most successful sales of the year.

She said Tribal members make up most of her customer base because they appreciate her work and understand the prices. Many people outside Indian Country think the prices are high because they don't know the hours of tedious work that went into making the items, she said.

Osceola's mother taught her how to sew by hand and later by machine.

"Today, it's a lot easier, a lot faster (with the electric sewing machine)," she said.

Osceola has certainly passed forward her knowledge and skill. She taught her great-granddaughter and nieces how to sew and make patchwork, and she teaches classes to youth with her sister, Maggie, for the Head Start afterschool program on the Hollywood Reservation.

Osceola is most proud of the men's traditional Tribal shirts she has made for prominent Tribal leaders like former Chairman Mitchell Cypress and current Chairman James E. Billie.

"I like to see when [the Chairman] wears it," Osceola said.

She said it's important for Tribal members to continue wearing traditional Tribal gear to preserve the history. "That way people know who you are," she said. "That's all we wore a long time ago."

Every year, new vendors come to Tribal Fair, adding their own touch to the list of sellers.

Frank Mirabal, of the Taos Pueblo, for example, traveled from New Mexico to sell his buckskin drums for the first time.

"A lot of vendors talk about [the Tribal Fair]," he said. So he wanted to see for himself what it was all about.

Mirabal makes traditional drums, including hand drums, ceremonial drums and pow-wow drums, ranging in size from less than a foot wide to almost 5 feet wide. He makes them using elk hide, aspen wood and cotton wood.

Vendor coordinator Sayen hopes to increase vendor participation next year with more Natives like Mirabal coming out to see what it's all about.

"It's something that our people enjoy doing," Sayen said. "It's our pride."



Kathryn Stolarz

Frank Mirabal of the Taos Pueblo stands proudly by his buckskin drums as a vendor at the Tribal Fair. Mirabal traveled from New Mexico to attend the fair for his first time.

Osceola Brothers Band makes Tribal Fair debut



Travis R. Billie



Travis R. Billie

Cameron, Tyson and Sheldon Osceola of the Osceola Brothers Band perform at the 41st annual Tribal Fair on Feb. 10.

The Osceola brothers celebrate after the show with family and Hollywood Board Rep. Chris Osceola.

BY TRAVIS R. BILLIE
Contributing Writer

HOLLYWOOD — The group known as the Osceola Brothers Band, led by Cameron, 15, and backed by Tyson, 13, and Sheldon, 10, is explosive. The Hollywood natives rocked their last show, which was at the Tribal Fair, leaving audience members screaming for more. After a few encores, they were completely out of songs for the day's set.

After picking up a guitar for the first time at 9 years old, singer and guitarist Cameron began to learn how to play at the Boys & Girls Club on the Hollywood Reservation. A short time later, he received a bass guitar and a drum set as gifts — on two separate occasions — and began teaching his younger brothers: Sheldon on the drums and Tyson on the bass. Even their youngest

brother, Theron, who is 7, is learning how to play.

Their first show was Paul Buster's Memorial in October 2011. They opened with a cover of *Purple Haze*, made famous by Jimi Hendrix. The entire band agreed it was nerve wrecking, but with little mistakes, they put on a good show.

Now, Cameron writes his own material that he will record onto a record demo with the help of Chairman James E. Billie.

At the Tribal Fair, the audience got a taste of their upcoming demo from a song titled *No Sunshine*.

Until the demo is released, no other sneak peeks are available. However, you can get a view of the singer and guitarist performing at the Youth Beach Bonanza on YouTube.

With six shows under their belt, the musically inclined young men are on their way to the top, only

being invited to play live shows.

With a unique rock/blues sound, they hit the stage with a style similar to Joe Bonamassa, B.B. King, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Derek Miller.

The Osceola Brothers Band got to meet Miller after they performed at the Tribal Fair.

"Pretty impressive rocking blues set," Miller tweeted after watching the boys perform. "Good to see some fresh talent!"

Cameron is considering a career in music, while his younger brothers are keeping their musical talents as a hobby.

Their mother, Tammy Osceola, who supports them fully, said, "Do what you like, as long as you get good grades."

With an A/B Honor Roll record for Tyson and President's Honor Roll for Sheldon and Cameron,

anything is possible for these young, upcoming celebrities.

"We just want to make people feel good with our music," Cameron said. Sticking to that motto will help their hopes of becoming well known and recognized a reality. Already, they are gaining a strong fan base, with their uncles in full support, as well as non-family members.

The Osceola Brothers Band said they would like to thank their parents for providing the equipment they need to play, as well as God for blessing them with their musical abilities. In addition, Cameron would like to thank the Boys & Girls Club for the opportunity to learn music, while Sheldon would like to thank big brother Cameron for teaching him how to play.

Their advice for fellow Tribal youth: have fun in life, learn and, of course, STAY IN SCHOOL.

More scenes from the 41st annual Tribal Fair



Chris C. Jenkins

A Native American woman performs a cultural dance at the Hard Rock Live for the Tribal Fair on Feb. 10.



Chris C. Jenkins

Trina Bowers comes out of the gates for her first lasso attempt in the ladies calf roping breakaway competition.



Chris C. Jenkins

Grass dancers of the Three Feathers Dance Troupe perform a Team Dance for guests.



Chris C. Jenkins

An Okalee Indian Village staff member attempts a popular alligator trick as part of a special wildlife show.



Mobile Mike pumps up the crowd as a visitor spins the wheel to win a prize at the Tribal Fair.



Chris C. Jenkins



Chris C. Jenkins

Parker Payne Osceola, with father Charlie Osceola, takes home the first-place prize in the infant clothing category.



Chris C. Jenkins

From left: Junior Miss Florida Seminole Jaryaca Baker is joined by Miss Indian Nations Shanoa Pinkham and EIRA Queen Erena Billie at the Bill Osceola Memorial Rodeo.



Chris C. Jenkins

Tribal citizen Leoma Poore participates in a two-step Friendship Dance with a Three Feathers Dance Troupe performer.



Chris C. Jenkins

Elle Thomas, of Brighton, shows off her first-place ribbon in the girls' ages 5-8 old traditional clothing category.

◆ REZ RALLY

From page 1A

Team Immokalee/Naples, last year's Rez Rally host, placed fourth.

Team Big Cypress, which won its fifth Rez Rally overall and its first since 2008, led all reservations with 36 total race winners. Team Hollywood/Fort Pierce/Trail had 32 winners; Team Brighton/Tampa had 20 winners; and Team Immokalee/Naples had seven winners.

"We worked hard, which is what it takes to win," said Big Cypress Wellness Coordinator Edna McDuffie. "We tried to talk to people and tell them that it's for their health. I'm glad that we got a lot of participation, and I hope we could continue this journey."

Big Cypress team captain Cathy Cypress said many of the participants took steps toward their health long before race day.

"We had a lot of seniors walking and biking every day prior to the race," Cypress said. "There were a lot of kids who also came out to the gym and worked out. We were able to get a whole lot of people excited about exercising. All of that was encouraging to see."

Team Immokalee/Naples captured their second consecutive Team Percentage traveling trophy, with a participation rate of 70 percent. Team Brighton/Tampa placed second with a 67 percent participation rate; Team Big Cypress had 61 percent participation; and Team Hollywood/Fort Pierce/Trail had 51 percent participation.

Regardless of the results, Seminole Health Director Connie Whidden said that everyone who participated in this year's Rez Rally had a reason to feel proud.

"You are committed to your health," Whidden said to the Rez Rally participants prior to the races. "We started it 12 years ago to give our community members support and strength in our fight against diabetes

and other diseases."

Tribal minister Paul Buster, who delivered the invocation for this year's Rez Rally, offered some words of encouragement to all the participants.

"It's not about who's the fastest or the strongest. It's about those who endure to the end," Buster said. "I hope you all do that with the strength of God."

Following remarks by Tribal leaders, the Tribe's Fitness Department led a stretching session. Then it was on to the 3.1-mile race course.

Participants chose from four Rez Rally categories: run, walk, stroller and wheelchair. In the end, one unifying message resonated.

"Together, we can manage diabetes," Whidden said. "That's our theme every year and we're sticking to it."

Team Hollywood/Fort Pierce/Trail will host the 13th annual Rez Rally, which is tentatively scheduled to take place at Markham Park in Weston.



Naji Tobias

The 12th annual Rez Rally begins with the runners as they jockey for position.

Tribal citizens exercise enthusiasm for Rez Rally

BY NAJI TOBIAS
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — "Everybody is a winner!"

It's a phrase that Seminole Health Director Connie Whidden likes to use when it comes to all Rez Rally participants.

Whidden, like many other Rez Rally participants, spent months preparing for the Tribe's biggest race of the year and getting into shape. The 12th annual event was held on Jan. 21 in Big Cypress, and Whidden competed in the walk category.

"I've been walking just about every morning for the past two years," Whidden said. "After last year's Rez Rally in Immokalee, my sister (Brighton Tribal senior Patty Waldron) and I started working out with the fitness trainers two days a week. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, we'll walk 2 miles; and on Tuesdays and Thursdays, we have been working on our upper bodies and our legs with the Fitness Department."

Hollywood Tribal senior Wanda Bowers said she spent most of her days working out at the Hollywood Senior Center to prepare for the big race.

"I don't know about everybody else, but I've gotten on the stationary bicycle and treadmill for at least a month," Bowers said. "It doesn't take me long to get into good shape."

Fort Pierce Tribal citizen Shamy Tommie, a Rez Rally participant who competed on Team Hollywood/Fort Pierce/Trail, said that working out year-round prepared him for a good race.

"I walk a lot," said Tommie, who regularly rides his horse on Fort Pierce's Chupco Ranch. "I work out at least once every week. I watch what I eat every day, and I try to keep myself in shape."

Tampa Tribal citizen Gladys Guzman said her reservation's training regimen included a walk every Wednesday at Tampa's Lettuce Lake Park.

"We've had a trainer that comes out to us three times a week for an hour," Guzman said. "We have been doing cardio exercises and we've been working on leg stretches. We've been working on our breathing techniques as well. The workouts have helped us get ready for the Rez Rally."



Naji Tobias

Tribal senior Jonah Cypress stretches before the Rez Rally race begins.

Meanwhile, Trail Liaison Norman Huggins opened up on how he kept himself in shape for the Rez Rally.

"I didn't really have to try too hard to get ready because I work out every day," Huggins said. "I play a lot of basketball, and I walk 3 miles at the Trail Reservation every day. I try to eat a lot of salad, chicken and fish to keep myself healthy. It makes me feel good about myself and for this Rez Rally."

Immokalee Tribal citizen Christopher Briscall said he used his regular play of pickup basketball and flag football with his siblings as a way to prepare for the Rez Rally.

"I want to stay in shape and be healthy," Briscall said. "I make sure I eat a lot of fruits and vegetables like apples, bananas, carrots and broccoli."

The amount of time spent preparing for Rez Rally not only helped participants complete the 3.1-mile race but also helped them establish regular healthy exercise regimens, making everybody a winner.

Rez Rally a success thanks to community

SUBMITTED BY SEMINOLE HEALTH DEPT.

Since 2000, the Seminole Health Department has been working to promote diabetes management and prevention through the Rez Rally race. Tribal members exercise and train all year for the opportunity to compete. Each year, the event starts with families driving to a neighboring reservation in the wee morning hours, and many are returning for another year. Sometimes, the participant is new to an active lifestyle – trying to live healthier and set an example for young family members. Along the way, the event has become familiar to Tribal members as a gathering for friends, families and communities, and the 2012 Rez Rally was immersed in these stories. Families and friends joined together for a day of fellowship and health.

The Seminole Health Department would like to extend thanks to all Tribal departments and volunteers who worked to make the 2012 Rez Rally successful. In the words of Henry Ford, "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."

- Thank you to:
- Council and Board Representatives
 - Big Cypress Host Reservation
 - Rez Rally Team Captains
 - Aviation Department
 - Big Cypress Administrative Services
 - Boys & Girls Club
 - Big Cypress Public Works
 - Seminole Police Department
 - EMS & Fire Rescue Department
 - Big Cypress Recreation Department
 - Event Makers
 - Information Service Department
 - Family Services Department
 - Seminole Media Productions
 - Community Care for the Elderly Department
 - Culture Department
 - Accounting Department
 - Payroll Department
 - Purchasing Department
 - Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum
 - Renegade Barbeque
 - Kipp Photography
 - All Rez Rally participants and volunteers



Naji Tobias

Tribal members of all ages crossed the finish line at Rez Rally 2012.



Naji Tobias

Team captains from Immokalee/Naples led their squad to a Tribal member participation trophy.

12th annual Rez Rally results

Tribal Categories: Male Run/Walk Age Group: 6-12: 1. Lance Howard, 2. Andrew Bowers, 3. Grant Osceola. **Female Run/Walk Age Group: 6-12:** 1. Tammy Martinez, 2. Alyssa Osceola, 3. Charlie Osceola. **Male Run Age Group: 13-17:** 1. Trevor Osceola, 2. Hunter Osceola, 3. Christopher Briscall. **Female Run Age Group: 13-17:** 1. Carson Knaby, 2. Leandra Mora, 3. Lauren Posada. **Male Run Group: 18-35:** 1. Joseph Hiers, 2. Wilson Bowers, 3. Jarrid Smith. **Female Run Age Group: 18-35:** 1. Ariah Osceola, 2. Jessica Osceola, 3. Demetria Tigertail. **Male Run Age Group: 36-54:** 1. Norman Bowers, 2. Charlie Cypress, 3. Mondo Tiger. **Female Run Age Group: 36-54:** 1. Cathy Cypress, 2. Lenora Roberts, 3. Carla Gopher. **Senior Male Run Age Group: 55-68:** 1. Joe Osceola, 2. Ronnie Billie, 3. Willie Johns. **Senior Female Run Age Group: 55-68:** 1. Patty Waldron, 2. Shirley Clay, 3. Helene Buster. **Male Walk Age Group: 13-17:** 1. Randy Shore, 2. RickyJoe Alumbaugh, 3. Uriah Wagerby. **Female Walk Age Group: 13-17:** 1. Cheyenne Kippenberger, 2. Kaitlin Osceola, 3. Fairuza Billie. **Male Walk Age Group: 18-35:** 1. Brett Green, 2. Wovoka Tommie, 3. Craig Johns. **Female Walk Age Group: 18-35:** 1. Desiree Jumper, 2. Kristen Billie, 3. Kurya Kippenberger. **Male Walk Age Group: 36-54:** 1. Norman Huggins, 2. Vince Motlow, 3. Brian Billie. **Female Walk Age Group: 36-54:** 1. Janice Braswell, 2. Francine Osceola, 3. Marissa Cypress. **Male Walk Age Group: 55-68:** 1. Jonah Cypress, 2. Mitchell Cypress, 3. Stephen Bowers. **Female Walk Age Group: 55-68:** 1. Minnie Tigertail, 2. Mary Tigertail, 3. Nancy Frank. **Male Walk Age Group: 68-99:** 1. Bobby Henry. **Female Walk Age Group: 68-99:** 1. Edna McDuffie, 2. Mable Tichenor, 3. Louise Billie.

General Categories: Run General Age Category, Male Youth: 6-17: 1. Issiah Alvarado, 2. Dyami Nelson, 3. Carmello Shenandoah. **Run General Age Category, Female Youth: 6-17:** 1. Ashley Faz, 2. Madison Martinez, 3. Sabre' Billie. **Run General Age Category, Male: 18-54:** 1. Giovanni Alvarez, 2. Michael Miller, 3. Mario Silva. **Run General Age Category, Female: 18-54:** 1. Kristin Stoots, 2. Kristi Hinote, 3. Kristi Hill. **Run General Age Category, Female: 55-99:** 1. Lana Payne. **Walk General Age Category, Male Youth: 6-17:** 1. Elisah Billie, 2. Mario Fish, 3. Sam Osceola. **Walk General Age Category, Female Youth: 6-17:** 1. Keyana Nelson, 2. Kirsten Metcalf, 3. Jolee Metcalf. **Walk General Age Category, Male: 18-54:** 1. Beau Emley, 2. Michael Osceola, 3. Fermin Carranza-Avila. **Walk General Age Category, Female: 18-54:** 1. Helen Gutierrez, 2. Janae Braswell, 3. Chantel Lynch. **Walk General Age Category, Male Senior: 55-99:** 1. Arlen Payne, 2. Terry Tichenor. **Walk General Age Category, Female Senior: 55-99:** 1. Martina Dawson, 2. Ellen Batchelor, 3. Hanna Marchel.

Best Overall - Tribal Category: Male: Joseph Hiers, Hollywood - 22:29. **Female:** Ariah Osceola, Hollywood - 26:03.

Best Overall - General Category: Male: Giovanni Alvarez, Big Cypress (EMS/Fire Rescue) - 19:58. **Female:** Kristin Stoots, Big Cypress (Ahfachkee School) - 28:23.

Team with most winners: 1. Big Cypress - 36, 2. Hollywood/Fort Pierce/Trail - 32, 3. Brighton/Tampa - 20, 4. Immokalee/Naples - 7.

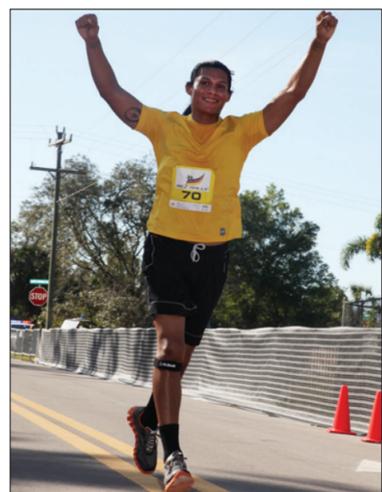
Most Clan Members: Panther - 159.

Total Participants in Rez Rally Competition: 643.

Total Onsite for Event: 783.

Rez Rally Tribal Member Participation Trophy: 1. Immokalee/Naples - 69.77 percent, 2. Brighton/Tampa - 67.26 percent, 3. Big Cypress - 61.17 percent, 4. Hollywood/Fort Pierce/Trail - 51.40 percent.

2012 Rez Rally Most Participants Trophy: 1. Big Cypress - 273 Participants.



Naji Tobias

Tribal citizen Jarrid Smith crosses the finish line. Smith placed third in his age group.



Naji Tobias

Hollywood Tribal senior Joann Osceola crosses the finish line in the Rez Rally's wheelchair race.



Kathryn Stolarz

Brighton's Kayven Osceola Emley celebrates winning first place in the wheelchair category.



Naji Tobias

Tribal youngster Kamani Smith shows off his medal after crossing the finish line.



Naji Tobias

It's a foot race to the finish between Tribal seniors Nancy Motlow, left, and Wanda Bowers.

Tribal youth compete in South Florida Fair

Tampa honors community members

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter



Photo courtesy of Sharon Cannon



Photo courtesy of Sharon Cannon

Karlyne Urbina shows off her skills at the South Florida Fair.

Troy Cantu shows off his ribbon.



Photos courtesy of Sharon Cannon

Rosalinda "Mika" Lopez in action at the South Florida Fair, which took place in January.



Photos courtesy of Sharon Cannon

Immokalee 4-H leader Melonie Hamlett, left, and 4-H coordinator for the Tribe Polly Hayes cheer on Tribal youth.

BY MICHAEL BOND
Contributing Writer

WEST PALM BEACH — The Seminole Tribe of Florida conquered yet another victory — this time at the South Florida Fair's livestock show.

In January, members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida 4-H program participated in the South Florida Fair, held in West Palm Beach. Collectively, the Seminole Tribe made up approximately one-fifth of the total show.

This was just one step in the 4-H arena. The program had some special winners at the fair.

Troy Cantu won the overall Best Record Book of the entire fair and also won Reserved Grand Champion in Showmanship. He has been in 4-H for seven years.

Brianna Bowers came in seventh place in class for her division. She has been a 4-H member for four years. It was her first showing at the South Florida Fair.

Rosalinda "Mika" Lopez has participated in 4-H for eight years.

Rosa Urbina, Dayra Koenes and Carolyn Urbina

were first-year contenders.

A great thank you to the kids for representing the Seminole Tribe of Florida so well.

Special recognition also goes out to club leaders who helped guide the youth to their victories, including Dionne Smedley, from the Brighton Reservation; Melonie Hamlett, from Immokalee; Toi Andrews, from the Big Cypress Reservation; and Donnie Hayes for helping in the swine staging area.

Many community members also supported the youth, such as Paul Bowers, Linda Tommie, Cicero Osceola and Gary Sampson.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida will host their own county 4-H Show and Sale at the end of March at the Big Cypress Reservation.

March 29 will be weigh-in day for participants; March 30 at 4 p.m. will be the show; and March 31 will be lunch from 12-2 p.m. for buyers followed by the sale at 2 p.m.

The small animals will do a walk through the arena at 1 p.m. on Saturday as well.



Peter B. Gallagher

From left: Colleen Henry, Peggy Cubis and Nancy Frank receive gifts for their Tribal Culture contributions at Tampa's Jan. 25 meeting.

TAMPA — The Tampa community gathered for a meeting and dinner on Jan. 25 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Brandon. Brighton Council Liaison Richard Henry welcomed more than 100 Tribal citizens, leaders, staff and their families to a grand buffet in the hotel ballroom.

A loud round of applause greeted community patriarch Bobby Henry, whose 75th birthday party took place on Feb. 4 at the Lakeland property. Liaison Henry welcomed Brighton Council Rep. Andrew J. Bowers Jr., who smiled broadly as he addressed the audience, "It's great to get back to Tampa!"

Tribal department directors gave brief presentations, and three women — Colleen Henry, Peggy Cubis and Nancy Frank — were honored with special gifts for their contributions to the Tribal Culture program.

ALICE

From page 3A

stories his mother passed on to him.

"We were riding along in silence on State Road 29 near Copeland a few weeks ago," Ronnie Billie Sr. said. "Suddenly, my mother pointed to the east side of the road and said that her father cut down a huge cypress tree there and made it into a dugout canoe when she was young. There used to be some very big trees here, but the logging companies took them away many years ago. Her brother Henry John Billie learned how to make canoes from his father and grandfather, but very few people know how anymore."

"I love taking my mother back down to the old Trail area because she always surprises me with the things that she remembers," continued Billie. "Passing the old logging and farming community of Copeland, my mom told me how she used to live in a camp beside the Deep Lake Railroad line in the 1930s. They liked to swim in the canal beside the tracks because the people on the train would throw them candy. Her grandmother tried to keep them out of the water, but they still went back. One day, she scared them when she said that a big otter was in the water and he would eat their toes. They never swam there again."

It wasn't until the early 1970s that Alice had a permanent camp of her own along the Josie Billie Highway in the middle of the Big Cypress Reservation. This is where she lives today in a cement block house constructed for her by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

However, she continues to spend considerable time in the chickees in her yard as she fondly remembers the lifestyle to which she was accustomed.

It makes Alice very sad that the camp life is gone because everyone was part of the daily activities, regardless of their age, she said.

Now, the children are in school, the adults

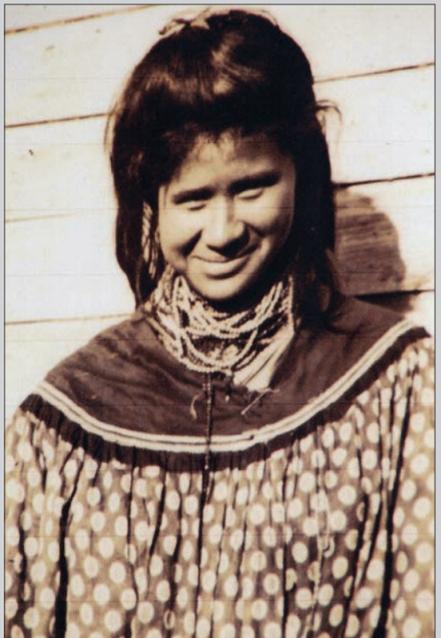


Photo courtesy of Hanson Collection

As a teenager, Alice Billie poses for the camera on a trip to Everglades City.

are on the road all the time, and the seniors sit alone with their caregivers. The next generation is losing their language, and she fears that their children will not remember where they came from and their culture will soon die. She would love to have little children around to sit in her lap, and she would tell them about their ancestors.

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NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS



Petition may restore Sioux nickname

BISMARCK, N.D. — Supporters said they have 17,213 signatures on a petition to restore the Fighting Sioux nickname to the University of North Dakota (UND). The name and the school's American Indian head logo were removed recently to head off NCAA sanctions, which include a ban on hosting postseason games or fielding teams in postseason play.

Backers of the nickname referendum are also circulating a separate petition that would amend the North Dakota Constitution to require UND to keep the Fighting Sioux nickname. That petition does not need to be turned in until August to qualify for the November general election ballot.

— Associated Press

Creek Entertainment Gretna opens in Gadsden

GRETNA, Fla. — The Poarch Band of Creek Indian business leaders have opened the controversial \$20 million Creek Entertainment Gretna, in Gadsden County, with a poker room, barrel racing and plans for other equestrian events.

The Poarch Band, which also owns Wind Creek Casino in Atmore, Ala., has a five-year goal to build a \$200-million-plus resort casino with hotels, an equestrian center, quarter-horse racing and 2,000 slot machines.

The Gretna location, off I-10 and 20 miles west of Tallahassee, features the only horse racing north of Ocala. Slot machines, if added, would be the first north of Tampa. Florida officials, led by Attorney General Pam Bondi and Gov. Rick Scott, have said slot machines would be illegal and would violate the Seminole Tribe of Florida's gaming compact. Court and legislative battles loom.

— Florida Trend

Casinos: significant slice of U.S. economy

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The American Gaming Association released a study with the attention-grabbing assertion that casinos generated roughly the equivalent of 1 percent of U.S. gross domestic product in 2010 — or nearly \$125 billion of the country's \$14.5 trillion. In addition, 566 casinos in 22 states supported 820,000 jobs and directly took in \$49.7 billion from visitors, according to the research.

— News From Indian Country

Senate panel passes Indian Nursing Home Bill

PIERRE, S.D. — A bill (SB69) that removes a two-year time limit for building American Indian nursing homes receiving Medicaid dollars has passed a Senate committee and now heads to the full Senate. In 2010, lawmakers lifted a moratorium on receiving the state's Medicaid dollars to cover care at these nursing facilities, but construction was limited to a two-year period. Senate Bill 69 removes the time limit.

— Associated Press

France returns 20 Maori heads to New Zealand

PARIS — French Culture Minister Frederic Mitterrand and New Zealand's ambassador presided over a solemn ceremony at Quai Branly Museum in Paris, where the heads were encased in a box — the largest single handover of Maori heads to be repatriated.

France long resisted handing over such cultural artifacts, but a law passed in 2010 paved the way for the return of the Maori heads, which were obtained as long ago as the 19th century (and one as recently as 1999).

Some Maori heads, with intricate tattoos, were traditionally kept as trophies from Tribal warfare. The practice of preserving heads was begun by Maori as a way of remembering dead ancestors. In the decades after Europeans arrived, the heads became a curiosity and sought-after trade item, prompting Maori to ramp up their production levels.

The idea behind getting back the body parts was that they would be returned to their home Tribes throughout New Zealand, where Tribal elders could mourn them and, if they chose, give

them proper burials.

Heads and body parts from more than 500 people now sit in storage at the national museum, Te Papa, in Wellington. Most aren't readily identifiable; only a small percentage have been returned to home Tribes — who are loath to accept any remains that aren't their own.

— Associated Press

Miami Herald says no to Internet gambling cafes

MIAMI — In a sharply worded Feb. 7 editorial, the Miami Herald, which sold its headquarters building to a Malaysian company wanting to build a destination resort casino, has come out against Internet gambling cafes.

The Herald said: "As many as 1,000 of the upstarts can be found across the state, many of them in neighborhood strip malls. Their gambling purpose is clear: Customers buy a phone card, which gives them points to play various sweepstakes games on the cafe's desktop computers. Customers then wager those points in hope of winning money . . . Earlier this month, the Seminole Indian Tribe warned it will stop its annual \$230 million payments to the state if Internet cafes aren't banned this session. Under the 2010 compact, the Tribe has exclusive rights to operate slot machines outside South Florida . . . Ban Internet cafes. Florida will be better off without them."

— Miami Herald

Program pairs Native elders, future teachers

GREEN BAY, Wis. — University of Wisconsin-Green Bay (UWGB), which has offered a First Nations Studies program for about two decades, has partnered with the Professional Program in Education to open a Center for First Nations Studies, a place where education majors and other students can meet with Tribal elders to learn about Native American history and traditions — the only program in the United States to have Native American elders consistently on staff to work with future teachers and other students, according to Lisa Poupart, chairwoman of First Nations Studies, an interdisciplinary degree program aimed at breaking down stereotypes and creating an awareness of Native Americans in Wisconsin.

"This way, students get the chance to interact with elders one on one. It's very unique," said Tim Kaufman, chairman of the education program. "They gain an appreciation of culture, rather than someone saying, 'It's Indian Day, here's a seminar.' It's much more appropriate to learn culture the traditional way, orally and from the elders."

— Green Bay Press Gazette

Interior releases \$1.9 billion plan to buy Indian land

HELENA, Mont. — Federal officials released a proposal on how they plan to spend up to \$1.9 billion to buy up Native American-owned fractionated lands and turn them over to Tribes.

The program is a major part of the \$3.4 billion settlement of a class-action lawsuit brought by the late Elouise Cobell of Browning, Mont., over Indian land royalties mismanaged by the government for more than a century.

The program aims to reduce the number of fractionated lands within 10 years by prioritizing tracts with the most individual owners, finding landowners willing to sell and targeting land that can be bought with little preparatory work and where controlling interest can be gained quickly.

The program is voluntary for people willing to sell their individual allotments. Land fractionation was caused by the 1887 Dawes Act, which split Tribal lands into individual allotments often inherited by multiple heirs with each passing generation. In some places, individual allotments now have dozens to more than 1,000 individual owners.

The Interior Department has identified 88,638 fractionated land tracts owned by nearly 2.8 million people. Out of the \$1.9 billion allotted the program through the Cobell settlement, only 15 percent, or \$285 million, can be used for administrative costs. Another \$60 million will be used for scholarships for Native American students.

The draft plan was compiled after a series of meetings last summer and fall with tribal representatives in Montana, Minnesota, Washington, New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma and South Dakota. Under the settlement, another

\$1.4 billion would go to compensate individual Native American account holders. Cobell died in October, just months after the settlement was approved by federal judge in Washington, D.C.

— Associated Press

Navajo may be first Native woman in Congress

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — Wenona Benally Baldenegro, a Democrat from Flagstaff, is running for the newly redistricted District 1 U.S. congressional seat.

If elected, she would be the first American Indian woman and the first American Indian from Arizona to serve in Congress.

Raised in Kayenta, a rural town on the Navajo Reservation in northern Arizona, Benally Baldenegro was the first American Indian to graduate summa cum laude from Arizona State University's Barrett Honors College; Benally Baldenegro also earned a juris doctorate degree from Harvard Law School and a master's degree in public policy from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

An advocate of protecting heritage sites on Tribal and federal lands, she focused her academic coursework on assisting and empowering rural, minority and low-income individuals, families and communities in the areas of financial services, home ownership, small businesses and community development.

— TriValleyCentral.com

Did you know?

- The population of American Indians has increased 27 percent since 2000. According to the U.S. Census, there are now 5.2 million American Indians — 61 percent of whom live outside Indian Country;

- President Obama's goal to end veteran homelessness by 2015 is on track. The Department of Housing and Urban Development reports homelessness among military veterans has dropped 12 percent since 2011 — there were 67,495 vets homeless in the United States in January 2012, down from 76,329 the year before;
- Permafrost, which covers nearly one quarter of the Northern hemisphere, contains as much "trapped" carbon as the entire world's atmosphere. As temperatures rise globally and the permafrost thaws, the release of these gases will greatly speed up global warming.

— News From Indian Country

Attorney Lehtinen fights back at Miccosukees

MIAMI — Accused of malpractice by the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida Indians, prominent Miami Attorney Dexter Lehtinen struck back, releasing highly sensitive information about the Tribe's lengthy tax battle with the federal government.

Contrary to the Tribe's public position that its members don't have to pay income taxes on gambling profits routinely divvied up on the reservation, Lehtinen brought forth internal memos revealing his private advice to the Miccosukees that they could be liable for millions of dollars in back taxes.

In their suit, the Miccosukees accused Lehtinen, their attorney for two decades, of misleading them and providing bad advice regarding their huge income-tax problem.

In asking the malpractice suit be dismissed, Lehtinen says his advice to create a tax-reserve fund as a "prudent step" (should the IRS prevail) was implemented by former Chairman Billy Cypress, who put more than \$20 million in the fund. But after Cypress lost his post in late 2009, the Tribe "dissipated" the fund.

The Miccosukees are the only American Indian gaming tribe that has no "revenue allocation plan," (RAP) on file with the Interior Department. The Miccosukees have historically kept secret their gambling revenues from their bingo-style slot machines and poker games at their Casino in Western Dade County.

— Miami Herald

Is Saint Kateri American? Canadian? Mohawk?

MONTREAL, Quebec — As far as McGill University history professor Allan Greer is concerned, Kateri Tekakwitha, who lived from

1656–1680, was Mohawk, pure and simple. This despite efforts by both the United States and Canada to claim the (soon to be) first aboriginal Catholic Saint.

"Because she lived in a time long before Canada or the United States as we know it existed, there are ways that different groups can kind of identify with her. But really I think probably the most plausible claim is that of First Nations. The salient fact about Kateri Tekakwitha was she was a Mohawk through and through." Greer said.

"And I think particularly First Nations people in the United States and Canada see her really as a symbol of them as a collective symbol. For me they've got the most plausible claim, because they were here long before there were these nation-states that we identify with."

In December the Vatican Tekakwitha was slated for canonization. Also known as the "Lily of the Mohawks," she was born in 1776, in what would eventually become New York State.

At age 19 she moved to Kahnawake, today a reserve of the traditionally Iroquoian-speaking Mohawk nation on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River in Quebec, where she accomplished her most religious work before dying at 24.

Dubbed the Protectress of Canada, among other epithets, Tekakwitha's remains are interred in a marble tomb at St. Francis Xavier Church in Kahnawake.

Three national shrines also pay homage: the National Shrine of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha in Fonda, NY, the National Shrine of the North American Martyrs in Auriesville, NY, and the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. A statue of Kateri is on the outside of the Basilica of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré in Quebec as well.

"All kinds of people can say, 'She's our saint,' and mean it sincerely. The actual historical facts give them all some plausibility," says Greer. "There's no way of adjudicating today who is right, because, in a certain sense, they all are."

— Toronto Star

South Dakota healthy snack maker expects big growth with Whole Foods

ST. LOUIS, S.D. — A South Dakota company created to provide a healthy snack for American Indians expects its sales to grow by a third this year after seeing its product picked up by national grocery chain Whole Foods Markets.

The development also could lead to more hiring at Native American Natural Foods in Kyle, adding valuable jobs on the Pine Ridge Reservation, which encompasses some of the poorest counties in the United States.

Native American Natural Foods produces Tanka Bars, which are made with bison meat and cranberries. The high-protein, 70-calorie snack bars are based on the traditional Lakota food called wasna.

The company sold 1 million units of Tanka products, which include bars and packages of smaller bites, last year and expects that to increase by a third this year with sales at Whole Foods, co-owner Mark Tilsen said.

The products are sold at 3,500 stores nationwide and online, including 67 Whole Foods stores in the Northeast and South.

Whole Foods began selling the bars late last year, and its stores in other regions are expected to add them before the end of this year, Tilsen said.

— CBS News

U.S. Department of Energy awards \$6.5 million to Native American clean energy

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of Energy has awarded \$6.5 million to 19 clean energy projects being developed by Native American Tribes.

The ventures were competitively selected in partnership with the Tribal Nations representative body.

From the funding, \$3.6 million will go to 13 projects to access the technical and economic viability of developing renewable energy resources on Tribal lands and installing energy management systems for buildings.

Four renewable generation projects will receive \$1.7 million for pre-construction development activities.

— NewEnergyWorldNetwork.com

Tribal members celebrate Valentine's Day



Naji Tobias

From left: Big Cypress seniors Minnie Tigertail, Janice Osceola, Virginia Tommie, Mary Robbins, Louise Osceola and Patsy Billie line up for the Best Dressed contest at the Valentine's Day party.



Naji Tobias

Big Cypress elder Virginia Tommie shows off her raffle prize at the seniors' Valentine's Day party.



Naji Tobias

Tribal elder Janice Osceola, left, kisses her father, Joe Osceola Sr., at the Big Cypress seniors' Valentine's Day luncheon on Feb. 14.



Naji Tobias

Tribal elders Rudy Osceola and Oneva Smith spend time together at the Big Cypress seniors' Valentine's Day party.



Naji Tobias

The Big Cypress Preschool's 3-year-old group smiles as they get ready to celebrate their Valentine's Day party on Feb. 14 at the Big Cypress Preschool.



Naji Tobias

Blake Osceola-Billie gives his mother, Rebecca Osceola, a hug at the Big Cypress Preschool.



Naji Tobias

Tribal mother Alice M. Billie smiles with her daughters, Mohayla Billie, left, and Tahnna Billie, right, with grandmother Jane Billie.



Chris C. Jenkins

Phillip Frank shows his Valentine's spirit by playing with balloons at the Hollywood Preschool party.



Naji Tobias

Big Cypress elder Louise Osceola and Seminole Fire Rescue's Steve Luongo have a dance.



Chris C. Jenkins

Tribal seniors Dorothy Tommie, left, and Bobbie Lou Billie dance the night away at the Hollywood Valentine's Day party.



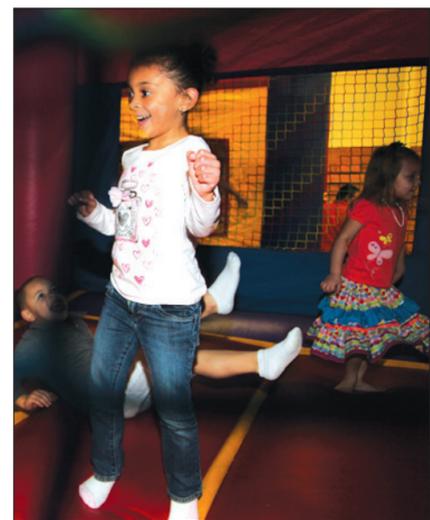
Chris C. Jenkins

Tribal preschoolers play with Valentine's Day balloons.



Chris C. Jenkins

Tribal senior and women's first-place clothing contest winner Maggie Osceola shows her Valentine's Day spirit in her custom-made outfit.

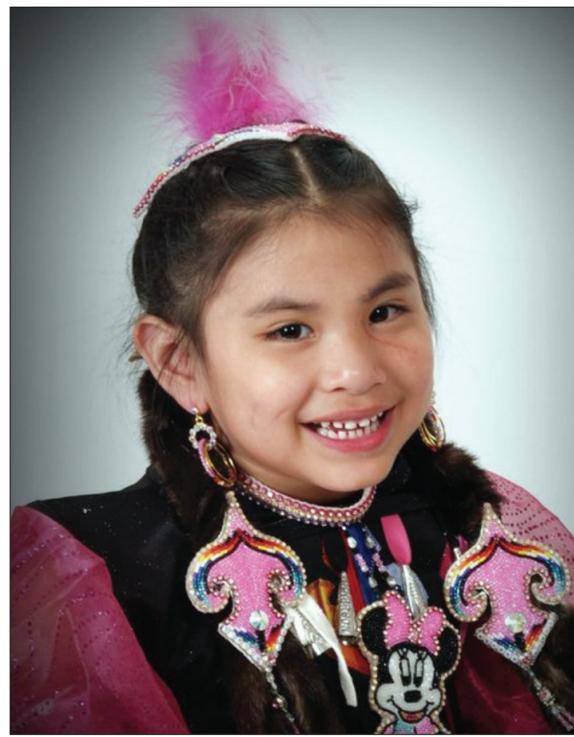


Chris C. Jenkins

Tribal youth hop around in one of three bounce houses during the Valentine's Day Preschool party.

Announcements

Birthdays



Happy 5th birthday Gabrielle! We love you so much and we are so grateful God sent you to us. Love momma, Momo and baby Josie!

Poems

Canvas

The soul is a brush, within each stroke he creates with words what pictures cannot say
To their tune the winds whistle and in a colorful dance the leaves sway
Do dreams come true for a child forever to sleep
A question he must ask on a day he longs to greet
The heart claims to heal but who hopes theirs is broken first
Pain can be refreshing yet it will never quench its thirst
The wise speak of a day when many will cry
And still there are fools who boast of tears they say have run dry
Fears govern weakness...indeed a tragic blow
Seeds have withered...how could the garden not know
Eternal it can be should love whisper goodbye
For angles fall, even he who was once beautiful to the most high
Burdens beg to be forgotten but never will their scars
The reminder basks in the rays of the sun

and rests beneath the twinkle of the stars
Truths he's discovered amongst these cool shades of dark
And with his pen he paints on the canvas of his heart

– Leslie J. Gopher
“Every man is a canvas.”

Carpe Diem (Seize the Day)

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To fix one must break
To give one must take
To accept one must deny
To fail one must try
To care one must hate
To destroy one must create
To welcome one must leave
To rejoice one must grieve
To laugh one must cry
To live one must die

– Leslie J. Gopher
“No time better than today.”

Classifieds



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Tribune Announcement Submission Form

Attention Seminole Tribal members: If you would like to submit an announcement (birthday, new baby, marriage, etc.) or story idea to *The Seminole Tribune*, please fill out the information provided below. Please print clearly.

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NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

AGENCY: Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
ACTION: Notice of Availability (NOA)

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is issuing a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for approving the construction and leases of homes on trust property for Seminole Tribal member leases received on January 17, 2012. The BIA has approved and adopted the following Environmental Assessments (EAs), dated January 2012, prepared by the Seminole Tribe of Florida Environmental Resource Management Department:

- *Serena Green Proposed Lease, Big Cypress Reservation, Hendry County*
- *Demetrio Pulido Proposed Lease, Big Cypress Reservation, Hendry County*
- *James E. Billie II Proposed Homesite Lease, Big Cypress Reservation, Hendry County*

The EAs above have been adopted and a FONSI issued for the approval of the home construction and leases of trust lands in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.

NOTICE: This is a Notice of Availability (NOA), that the EAs and FONSI for the federal action of approving the proposed home construction and leases of trust property are available for public review. The BIA has approved and adopted the above referenced EAs which address these proposals. The FONSI determination was based on review and analysis of the information in the EAs. Based on a review of the EAs listed above, it has been determined that the proposed actions will not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment, therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. You may obtain a copy of the EAs and FONSI from the BIA Eastern Regional Office or the Environmental Resources Management Department of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, 6365 Taft Street, Suite 3008, Hollywood, FL 33024, telephone (954) 965-4380.

APPEALS: “Any person who may be adversely affected by this decision may appeal the decision to: Regional Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs Eastern Region, 545 Marriott Drive, Suite 700, Nashville TN 37214 in accordance with the regulations set forth at 25 CFR Part 2. The notice of appeal must be signed and mailed within thirty days of the date of this decision. The notice should clearly identify the decision being appealed, and a copy of the decision should be attached to the notice of appeal. Copies of the notice must be sent to the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, MS 4140-MIB, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20240, as well as to my office and to all other interested parties known to the person appealing the decision. The notice of appeal to the Regional Director must also certify that the appealing party sent copies to each of these parties. The Regional Director will notify an appealing party of further appeal procedures. If no appeal is timely filed, this decision will become final for the Department of the Interior.”

Health

Seminole Tribe emphasizes healthy lifestyle for youth



Naji Tobias

Youth Allied Health specialist Amy Kimberlain stretches with the Boys & Girls Club's Tribal and community youth.



Naji Tobias

Youth Allied Health specialist Amy Kimberlain and nutritionist Lance Vaz lead the Boys & Girls Club youth in a running demonstration.



Naji Tobias

Aaliyah Billie, left, and Sarah Robbins make grape-and-cheese kebabs for a healthy snack at the Big Cypress Kids Hip to be Fit event.

BY NAJI TOBIAS
Staff Reporter

The Tribe's Health Department collaborated with both the Big Cypress Library and the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum to promote healthy living habits for Tribal youth.

On Jan. 31, staff from the Health and Library departments hosted a youth health event, titled Kids Hip to be Fit, at the Frank Billie Tribal Field Office's Learning Resource Center.

The hour-long event, in which eight Tribal and community youngsters from the Ahfachkee School's Boys & Girls Club took part in, highlighted the importance of exercising daily and eating healthy snacks.

Youth Allied Health specialist Amy Kimberlain led Boys & Girls Club's the enthusiastic youth in exercises such as jumping jacks, pushups, lunges, squats and yoga.

After the workout, Kimberlain helped youth prepare snacks, along with Allied Health nutritionist Lance Vaz, Big Cypress Librarian Gretchen DeBree and Boys & Girls Club staff members Statira Huckabee and Michelle Walker. Youth enjoyed bowls of trail mix, grape-and-cheese kebabs, ants on a log (sunflower seed butter and raisins on celery) and smoothie drinks.

"Teaching them in a fun manner allows for them to get excited about eating healthy and exercising," Kimberlain said. "Their hands-on involvement in making the snacks created a sense of pride for them, in that they shared with all the other kids the snack they had made. But even more than that, they got excited about the food, and the food was healthy! They wanted to know if they could have more. Who wouldn't want to see a kid excited about eating celery?"

Leatrice Cypress, the mother of Boys & Girls Club participant Markayla Cypress, spoke of her impressions of the Kids Hip to be Fit initiative.

"This exercise taught me and my daughter to eat healthy," she said. "I want her to live a long life because I would like to see her healthy for a very long time."

Benefits from eating healthy and exercises on a daily basis include a higher level of self-esteem and a lower risk of diseases such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

The Health and Library departments would like to collaborate on more events of this magnitude every three to four months, Kimberlain said.

Meanwhile, the Health Department has taken the health initiative a step further by partnering with the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum for a separate venture: the formation of the exhibit Through the Eyes of the Eagle:

Illustrating Healthy Living for Children.

The exhibit features an array of original Native American watercolors and aims to guide children in selecting healthy living choices.

Based on a series of Eagle books written by Georgia Perez and illustrated by Patrick Rolo, of Bad River Band of Ojibwe, Wis., and Lisa A. Fifield, of Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin, the new exhibit will also show how Native Americans have shared health stories for thousands of years in an effort to pass on their knowledge, history and culture to their descendants.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention developed the series and exhibit in collaboration with the Tribal Leaders Diabetes Committee and Indian Health Service.

"My hope for the exhibit is that it will spark an interest in Tribal youth to put down the game controller and head outside to play and move their bodies in a healthy direction," said Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum Exhibits Manager Greg Palumbo.

Seminole Health Director Connie Whidden served as the guest speaker for the Feb. 10 grand opening, which was held at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum in Big Cypress.

The traveling exhibit, which will be on display until May 28, is open to Tribal citizens, community members and the general public.

For more information on the museum, visit www.ahtahtiki.com.

Important notice to Tribal citizens regarding filling prescriptions at Walgreens

SUBMITTED BY CONNIE WHIDDEN
Health Director

The Seminole Tribe of Florida uses Express Scripts as the company to manage your prescription drug benefit. Express Scripts is attempting to control costs and therefore to keep your prescription drugs affordable to the Tribe and accessible to you.

Express Scripts has told us that because of proposed price increases by Walgreens, Express Scripts and Walgreens were unable to reach an agreement to retain Walgreens as a participating provider in our prescription drug network in 2012. Therefore, as of Jan. 1, 2012, you may no longer use Walgreens to fill your prescriptions. If you choose to use Walgreens (or any other non-participating pharmacy) to fill a prescription in 2012, payment of the full (un-discounted) price for the prescription will be your responsibility.

Fortunately, Express Scripts has analyzed other pharmacy options for you, and they have told us that on average, there is another pharmacy within one-half mile of a Walgreens pharmacy that will still be considered "in network" after Jan. 1, 2012 and can fill prescriptions. Of course, we encourage you to consider utilizing our "in house" pharmacy (Seminole Pharmacy).

If you wish to switch pharmacies for 2012 or at any other time, you can do any one of the following things:

1. Take your prescription bottle to the Seminole Pharmacy or other participating retailer; they will contact your old pharmacy to transfer your prescription.
2. Call the Seminole Pharmacy at 1-866-961-7210 or other participating retail pharmacy and ask

them to contact your old pharmacy to transfer your prescription.

3. Ask your doctor to call the Seminole Pharmacy or other participating retail pharmacy with your prescription information.

You can find a complete list of local participating pharmacies by signing on to www.express-scripts.com and clicking on "Find a Pharmacy."

We appreciate your patience and understanding, and we apologize for any inconvenience. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Express Scripts at 1-877-508-1379, Seminole Pharmacy at 1-866-961-7210 or one of the Seminole Tribe of Florida Clinics.

Hollywood Health Clinic
954-962-2009

Brighton Health Clinic
863-763-0271

Big Cypress Health Clinic
863-983-5151

Immokalee Health Clinic
239-867-3400

Tampa Office
813-620-2860

Do you get a physical every year?

• Paula Bowers-Sanchez

Are you hesitating to answer? Then the answer is most likely "no." An article I read recently in *TIME Magazine* said that only one in five Americans gets a yearly physical. I do not know the numbers for our Tribe, but using the aforementioned statistic, my guess is that not very many of us get regular physicals. I know school-age children most likely do because schools require one for admittance.

The truth is we should treat our bodies like the fine, well-oiled machines they are meant to be. A lot of effort is put into our cars and trucks running smoothly, getting regular tuneups and oil changes. So, let's take care of our one body (the only one we are ever gonna get) and get regular checkups.

How do we know if we are healthy or if we are on the fast track to sickness?

GENERAL PHYSICAL EXAMS.

This includes taking a detailed history to learn all about you and your family history plus a head-to-toe physical exam (inside and out).

Also important for us women is a yearly gynecological exam, as well as mammograms.

Here are some general health guidelines to see where you might need to improve. Just remember, everybody has different health needs, so you should consult with your doctor for specific guidelines to reach your optimal health.

* Waist circumference smaller than 35 inches for women

* Blood pressure around the normal 120/80 measurement

* Blood lipids: "bad" low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol less than 100 mg/dL; "good"

high-density lipoprotein (HDL) higher than 50 mg/dL; triglycerides (TG) less than 150 mg/dL

* Fasting blood glucose less than 100 mg/dL

* Sleep seven to eight hours a night. (This one I'm not in line with; there never seems to be enough hours in the day.)

* Eat fruits, veggies, grains, proteins, dairy and healthy fats.

* Don't smoke.

* Reduce stress in your life.

* Drink one glass of wine or less daily.

* Exercise at least three to four days a week.

MENTAL HEALTH:

* Build strong friendships and relationships.

* Sleep seven to eight hours a night. (I'm lucky if I get six hours!)

* Make time to relax and reduce stress.

MENOPAUSE ASSESSMENT:

* Weigh the pros and cons of hormone therapy.

* Assess your menopausal status and risk with a practitioner.

OSTEOPOROSIS:

* Consume 1200 mg calcium and 600 IU of vitamin D daily

* Exercise at least three to four days a week (walk, run, resistance training...any activity that gets your heart rate going and makes you sweat!)

So get up and get to the doctor!



Diabetes No. 1 health problem among Native Americans

BY RACHEL BUXTON
Freelance Writer

Unfortunately, diabetes is not a foreign word to the Seminole Tribe of Florida – or to any Tribe, for that matter. Diabetes is the No. 1 health issue plaguing Native Americans across the nation.

On average, Indians are twice as likely to die from diabetes complications as non-Indians, according to the National Institutes of Health. The numbers continue to skyrocket across Indian Country as obesity and high blood pressure – diabetes contributors – become more prevalent in today's society.

The fast-paced hustle and bustle of today's society and the American diet filled with processed and junk foods adversely affect Natives' health.

Tribes across the nation are looking for solutions. The Tohono O'odham Indian Nation in south central Arizona, for example, is returning to old Tribal ways to help the adults on the Tohono O'odham Reservation who have Type 2 diabetes. They hope to reintroduce their healthy, native foods – which include tepary beans, cholla buds, prickly pear cactus, saguaro fruit, squash and corn – into their schools and restaurants while adding a contemporary spin. They also educate the Tribe about those foods' nutritional benefits.

The Seminole Tribe has tried a similar approach to fighting diabetes through education and prevention.

The Tribe's Pema yetv Emahakv Charter School planted a traditional garden last school year where the students grew fruits and vegetables native to their people. After harvesting the crops, the school used the produce in students' lunches.

Jade Braswell, Culture teacher at the Charter School, said it was a way for the students to learn about how their ancestors survived.

The Seminole Health Department has also taken a huge initiative to educate Tribal members on healthy eating. They have conducted cooking classes, health fairs, nutritional classes and more to help teach the Seminole Tribe how small

adjustments to diet and lifestyle can make a large change in the outcome of their future.

Last year, Seminole Tribe nutritionist Valari Fauntleroy said during one of her healthy cooking classes, "There is a relationship between the diet, excessive weight gain and the onset of diabetes, as well as sedentary lifestyle. And so, we really want to attack that with encouraging people to make better food choices, keeping their weight down, lose weight if they need to and to be a little more physically active."

The Seminole Tribe and Seminole Health Department have created lots of opportunities for Tribal members to become and stay physically active.

The major event of the year, Rez Rally, was started to raise awareness against the prominent disease. What began as a simple 5K (3.1-mile) race has grown into a large-scale cultural event. Not only does it bring out friendly competition among reservations, but it also unites the entire Tribe.

The Health Department also created Seminole Pathways, a weekly walking program held across reservations, to keep everyone active. This past year, the department added an educational element to it by hosting short nutrition classes before walks. In the classes, health educators teach Tribal members about food components such as sodium, sugar and fat – all things that can lead to diabetes when consumed in quantities higher than recommended.

Since the Seminole Tribe is not alone in their fight against diabetes, learning how other Tribes attempt to combat the disease could help.

"Really, what I'm trying to get them to see is that you can still make good, nutritious food that is quick and easy but is full of the fruits and the vegetables and all those wonderful antioxidants and all those wonderful things that we need in order to stay healthy," Fauntleroy said. "It is never too late to change your diet; it is never too late to make those lifestyle changes; and if you are not successful the first time, dust yourself off and start all over again."

As Brighton Tribal Council Rep. Andrew J. Bowers Jr. always says when speaking about diabetes, "If you don't have it, prevent it; if you do, [manage] it."

Insect activity and moisture intrusion

SUBMITTED BY KIRK TRENCHFIELD
Environmental Health Program

Do you ever see ant trails or other insects on an exterior wall of your home and wonder why they are there? Where are they going? Well, this may indicate a moisture intrusion problem because insects normally follow moisture into a building. Even termite infestation is often related to a moisture intrusion problem.

The reason for this is because with moisture comes the growth of microorganisms, which is then a food source for the insects. So if you currently see ant trails on the exterior of your home, try to see where it leads and chances are you will need to either caulk that area or have it inspected further for underlying moisture intrusion, which can often lead to mold growth inside your home.

Mold left untreated can lead to more expensive repairs down the road, as well as potential health implications. So the next time you encounter these insect activities, remember it may indicate the presence of moisture problems.

For any questions or concerns on this matter, please contact the Seminole Tribe of Florida Environmental Health Program.

Editorial

Weather the storm

• James E. Billie



This has been a very strange winter out on the Brighton Seminole Reservation. The warm weather seems to have confused the plants and animals. Flowers that normally bloom in the spring have already spread their blossoms in December's warm winds. Warmer waters have the alligators all frisky when they're not supposed to be mating and the fish all biting even when they're not supposed to be hungry!

I don't remember anyone predicting our winter would be spring and our coats and jackets would still be hanging in the closet here in February. But, there are so many factors that control the fate of the weather that not even the smartest weathermen, with their Doppler radars and satellite feeds, can accurately foretell Mother Nature's weather personality. They say the old Seminoles who lived in the 'glades could tell when a hurricane was coming and would always find safe haven when the big storms came rolling across the sawgrass and prairies.

Today, we call it a drop in barometric pressure when the hair rises on your arms and the feeling of a headache comes on. Back then, the Seminoles somehow knew it meant a bad storm was coming. In fact, no Seminoles are known to have perished in the great hurricanes of the '20s and '30s that killed so many around Lake Okeechobee.

While all this was going on, the Seminole Tribe weathered a storm that came up unexpectedly in the Florida Legislature. In an effort to soften Florida's financial woes, a bill was presented that would significantly expand gaming beyond Indian reservations. And, at the same time, it seems gaming became an issue in every part of the state. Dog tracks and jai-alai frontons reached for slot machines. They even started pari-mutuel betting on barrel racing, a rodeo sport, hoping that would make them eligible for slot machines someday.

Many called to inquire what the Seminoles thought about all this. That was easy. The Seminoles could not take sides in the issue. But we did have the biggest dog in the fight. Our Compact, which was signed by the Governor of Florida and approved by the Legislature almost two years ago, gives the Seminole Tribe exclusive rights to conduct casino gaming in Florida for 20 years. In return, the Tribe pays a gigantic tax. In fact, by the second anniversary of the Compact, the Seminole Tribe will have paid more than \$500 million to the State for this exclusive right.

Our stand was merely to protect our Compact. It is wrong to break any legal contract. And this Compact is a legal contract. If it is broken, then the contract says the Tribe's payments to the State would immediately cease. Many questioned if taxes on new casinos would even be near the money the Tribe had already demonstrated it would pay. On this subject, we appreciate the stand taken by Attorney General Pam Bondi against non-Indian gaming expansion outside of Broward and Dade counties. We appreciate Gov. Rick Scott backing up his Attorney General. They stood strong in defense of a legal contract protecting the people and the interests of both the State of Florida and the Seminole Tribe.

With support for the new legislation dropping like flies during a hard freeze, the bill's sponsors withdrew their "destination resorts casino" bill. Of course, we know that it will be back, just like the weather, riding the winds of change. The next time, it may have a different name and a different head. And a million statistics that support why we should and why we shouldn't expand gaming in Florida. We can only be confident that our Governor, Attorney General and State Legislature will stand behind the Seminole Tribe and continue to protect us from further assaults on our Compact.

As one famous songwriter pointed out: "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the winds blow." Sho-naa-bish.

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

Blood, budget: touchy subjects

• Tony Sanchez Jr.

Some very touchy subjects came up recently at a community meeting I attended in Trail. These are important issues that have long needed to be addressed but have not really been adequately approached because of their nature. I'm talking about budget cuts, reduction in services, elimination of Tribal Council allocations, non-Indian resident issues and blood quantum. Instead of addressing these and other touchy issues, they have been swept under the rug.

This administration realizes that when we take on any discussions of certain issues, the emotional levels in a lot of people go sky-high. Even so, the time has come to pick up the rug, bring these issues to the table and make some decisions. This administration needs to talk among ourselves and ask the questions: What do we want this Tribe to look like in 10, 50, 100 years? The answer to that question will drive what winds up in the Constitution and provide support for whatever changes and practices we choose to implement and follow.

I realize that we are going to probably create some divisions among ourselves, but there is simply no other way to do it. These issues can no longer be ignored. They must be tackled and fully addressed. Defining and deciding the direction the Seminole Tribe must take regarding these issues will directly impact how we allocate the funds we receive from gaming; what services we offer Tribal members; how much additional land we need to acquire; and many, many other aspects of our Tribal government and social systems.

And, at the end of the day, this will give us a real portrait of the look and feel of the future Seminole Tribe.

One subject we spent a lot of time on during that community meeting in Trail was blood quantum. How do we raise the blood quantum requirement for Tribal membership? The discussion immediately brought thoughts of myself growing up in Immokalee back in the '70s, when so many left to live in the new homes built on the Hollywood Reservation. When that happened, my family and my Aunt Nancy's family were the only Seminoles left in Immokalee.

Talk about blood quantum in that situation! My only possibilities were the girls in school or the girls in town. And I guarantee 99.9 percent of them were non-Indian! You naturally end up moving toward people outside the Tribe. This, of course, affects the blood quantum of our children and directs whether the child has a clan or whether the child can even be a Tribal member.

So what can we do today? We must go to the heart of this issue. We need to introduce our children to each other, let them know who they can consider within the Tribe. We need to teach our children about blood quantum and what it means to them, their potential children and the Tribe. We need to teach them: this one is OK, but this one, no – this is your clan; you have to stay away.

We should put on large, fun get-togethers and do just

that: get our youth together. And we must never forget that we are doing these things because we want to preserve the future of our Tribe and keep our blood quantum up. If we are really serious, we have to create those opportunities. Maybe get our youth together every quarter to interact with each other through such a process, and let our youth find out who is who, what clan everyone belongs to and who is available for them individually.

We have to keep the blood quantum up and the bloodlines going. The time has come to see what needs to be done to get this all in place.

Another topic we spent time on – both as the Council and the Board – is the need for this administration to be smart on how we spend money. On the Board, we strive to spend money to make money. But we have to be smart about it. We have to collect as much information as we can before making a decision. And we have to always be knowledgeable that any decision we make not only affects each Board member, but it affects the whole Tribe.

On the Council side, casinos represent the only source of income we have. Above all, we are going to protect Tribal member dividends. But we have to take a hard look at all the services we have to offer and make sure we are very, very efficient. If we need to cut, we have to cut.

There is a method to this madness: Believe me when I say we aren't trying to reduce Council costs just to say we are reducing costs. The casinos are our only revenue source; if we don't reduce costs, the Tribe would be living month to month, paycheck to paycheck. We all know that is not the way to live and survive. We are talking 3,700 Tribal member dividends, not just one person. That dividend will be the last thing we would ever touch. And that requires decisions, difficult decisions that we have to make.

But there has been good news! We recently received word that the "destination resorts casino" bill was withdrawn from the Florida Legislature. I really want to commend the hard work of the Tribal Council, the lobbyists, the General Counsel's office and the Seminole Gaming staff. All their hard work and diligence fighting this issue was well worth it.

So, we are OK for this year. But don't worry, it will be back. But so will we; we will be ready to fight that fight again to protect the Tribe. There will be new twists and turns, legal challenges, political maneuvering and threats to our Seminole Gaming compact. There is still more hard work to be done. We will keep you updated.

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



38 years of sports and recreation memories



Photo courtesy of Moses Jumper Jr.

Moses Jumper Jr. and Max Osceola coach Seminole Youth Flag Football during the 1980s.



Photo courtesy of Moses Jumper Jr.

Moses Jumper Jr. speaks with children on the Seminole Youth Baseball Team in the 1980s. Jumper coached the team all the way to District and State Finals.



Photo courtesy of Moses Jumper Jr.

Moses Jumper Jr. and Tribal youth from the Seminole Bike Club get silly for the camera.

• Moses Jumper Jr.

I sadly regret that this will be my last column for *The Seminole Tribune* because by the time this article hits the newsstands, I will officially be unemployed from the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Because of the Tribe's restructuring plans, I decided to retire. I guess like Joe Paterno or Bobby Bowden, I've outlasted my time.

I want to thank Pete Gallagher for motivating me to write these columns; I believe he saw the similarity my mother and I shared in the feelings we put into our writing. I especially want to thank all those Tribal officials who encouraged and supported me in building an exceptional overall Tribal recreation program throughout the years.

In 1974, after returning from college, I worked and applied for small jobs within the Tribe. I was approached by Chairman Howard Tommie, Executive Director Mike Tiger and Tribal coordinator Bert Jones with a special request. Because of my background in sports, they thought I would be a good candidate to start a Tribal recreation program. All these men were former athletes and understood the importance of sports and recreation in the lives of our youth and adults.

That was the start of a career that has taken me on a journey that lasted for the next 38 years. I have so many memories of the friends I've made, the places I've been, the games I've played and, probably the most important of all, the impact sports and recreation have had on the young people in our Tribe. It is with great pride that I see the effect our program has had in forming the character and personalities of many of our leaders in the Tribe today.

Our program has always been very diversified. I always believe that if the program could create interest for a few, then perhaps we could attract many. Nothing was beyond trying. Yes, we did the major sports – I remember the all-night tournaments we would have on the outdoor courts at each reservation. The lighting was terrible, the court was slippery from

all the sand and you tried not to break your ankle from the cement edge that was so much higher than the level of the ground. Not to mention all the bugs those lights attracted at night!

The bigger tournaments we sought to play at local high school gyms. There was always a lot of red tape in trying to get those gyms secured. When we finally got our own gymnasiums on the reservations, we had some kind of tournament every weekend, it seemed. Those gyms hosted volleyball tournaments, weight-lifting contests, dodge ball, pool, bombardment, archery, boxing and even pingpong tournaments.

When we managed to get our ball fields in somewhat of a resemblance to a diamond, we would play daytime tournaments because we didn't have lights on our reservation fields. We utilized our ball fields to the fullest. We played baseball tournaments, slow-pitch, one-pitch and fast-pitch tournaments. We had some great Little League teams in Brighton, Big Cypress and Hollywood.

I remember coaching one Little League team comprised of boys from Brighton, Big Cypress and Hollywood – we went all the way to the state tournament before we were finally beat by a Cuban team from Miami. Those ball fields also hosted the annual Turkey Bowl fiasco. Sometimes I regretted starting that football tradition that came every Thanksgiving weekend. Each rez had a team, and we beat up on each other all day and usually the Brighton teams punished everyone for playing them.

As I continue down memory lane, I think of all the Rec directors and young people we had employed with our programs throughout the years. We had quite a number of turnovers in our programs, yet we had some good people who have worked with Recreation. If a young person wanted a job, we always tried to hire him. I look at many of those young men and women today, and I am very proud.

I think of the Recreation Directors who have passed on, great men like Ernie Bert and Richard Smith. I truly believe they loved what they did. I also remember those young men and women who didn't make it in society

and have either gone on to the spirit world or who sit in prisons today. For them, I can't help but think: Maybe there was a sport we could have got them hooked on or a coach who could have mentored them a little more. Did I talk enough with these young people in my office or on the court or the ball field?

I hope we don't stop trying. I hope we will continue to place a high value on the impact sports and recreation have in our young peoples' lives. No, sports and recreation are not the total answer for all our problems, but I could join with other programs to help find a solution. We can't save them all, as I can attest in my own family, but we will impact them all.

If you don't think so, check out our youth Rec leagues and see the Indian kids playing. How about a high school basketball game where you will see Seminole young men or women playing? We even have a young man coaching at the high school level who may coach a team to a state championship. When was the last time you attended a NAYO tournament and measured how our small Tribe matches up to bigger Tribes, like the Cherokees and Choctaws?

Better yet, stop by and see one of our EIRA Rodeos this year. I didn't mean to get into the effects of sports and recreation so much, but it has always been a passion and a way of life for me. Is there a price too high to pay for character? Is the cost too much? I hope not!

Well, I know this column has been a little long, but since it is my last, I made the most of it. I hope there are some people who have enjoyed reading my little memoirs in the last few issues. My mother always told me and showed me to always put your trust and faith in God. When God closes one door, He will open another.

I'm looking forward to what God has in store for me. Remember, "Old dogs never die; they just find another place to lie down."

God bless.

Hah-Tung-Ke: Bobby Hicks

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

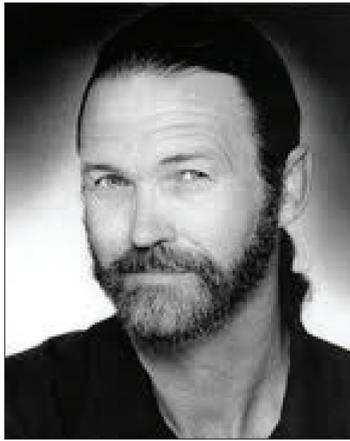
Bathed in controversy and washed in resolve, Bobby Hicks was one of Florida's greatest folksingers and songwriters, a man fiercely protective of Natural Florida's flora and fauna. As intimidating and gruff as he was generous and compassionate, Hicks spent most of his adult life writing and singing about his native Florida, constantly touring across the state on his Harley "Shovelhead" with his guitar and unique "I'm Florida. Need I Say More?" message.

Known for his thundering on-stage condemnations directed at anyone who would despoil Florida's environment or desecrate the state's precious vanishing cultures and traditions he held so dearly, Hicks was a popular performer at state festivals, including the Florida Folk Festival, for more than three decades. For several years, as "the voice of native Florida," he helped host WMNF radio's popular "Florida Folk Show," where he railed on about politicians and developers in deep, gravely intonations that took no prisoners and never surrendered.

Since his youth in his hometown of Tampa, Hicks maintained a strong connection with many Seminole Indians and frequently visited the Brighton and Big Cypress Reservations through the years, where he enjoyed playing around the cookfire with James Billie, Paul Buster and other Tribal citizens. He always defended Florida's Indians when he

felt the government treated them unfairly; his popular song *Hang Another Indian* is a testament to his disgust at the hypocritical policies employed by state and federal leaders in their dealings with the Indians.

Cancer silenced Hicks at the young age of 54 on Dec. 19, 2007. With a catalogue unmatched by his peers, Hicks recorded but two classic CDs of Florida songs, including the live CD *The Heart of Me*, which was released after his death. Noted filmmaker Gary Horrell produced several live videos of Hicks performing during his last two years. They can be found on Horrell's website at www.whistleentertainment.com or on YouTube.



"Hang Another Indian" Song lyrics by Bobby Hicks

Through all my studies 'bout Florida
I was ashamed to discover that
The road from Tallahassee to
Washington
Was lined with bureaucrats
Who spend millions without thinking
Like a high roller out on the town
And want me to think I'm saving my
money
By putting the Indians down
They tell me all about Seminoles
Claim they're rich and drivin' Cadillacs
Said they did it all with cigarettes and
bingo
Without having to pay any tax
I ask about excessive government
spending
The answers I get are the same
It seems they'd rather hang another
Indian
Before the white man'll take the blame

The first news I heard about the panther
The bureaucrats wanted Jim Billie's
head
Wanted me to think him killing just one
Was the reason all the panthers are dead
I ask about Highway 27
Which was rollin' up such a toll
Or encroachment of the panther's
habitat
From big buck Florida on the dole
I asked a whole lot of different questions
Of a whole lot of different men

Each pointed their fingers at the others
Pass the buck onto them
Forced to draw my own conclusions
At the solution I was ashamed
Seems like they'd rather hang another
Indian
Before the white man'll take the blame

They'll try and hang another Indian,
Hang another Indian
Hang another Indian
Before the white man'll take the blame

Associated wire from Miami
Said a Florida black bear's been shot
Spokeswoman for Everglades National
Park
Said a dangerous bear it was not
Miccosukee had reported it chasin'
Children, a ma and a pig
I guess the rangers were waiting around
Until it chewed up an Indian kid
Authorities all cried "Foul!"
Miccosukees, they all cried "Fair!"
If it comes to a bruin or an Indian child
It ain't gonna be the bear
History often repeats itself
You can expect about the same
Seems they'd rather hang another
Indian
Before the white man'll take the blame

Bureaucrats and politicians
They're a strange and greedy bunch

They discuss the rape of the Florida
wetlands
In bed and over lunch
With a flick of the hand they condemn
the land
So they can throw up these corporate
towns
And if the cypress 'neath the sky ever
catches their eye
Well, they'll drain the big swamp on
down
History often repeats itself
So you can expect more of the same
When it comes time to explain to the
voters
Who flush Florida down the drain
They'll look around for the scapegoat
I know it's sad but true
They gonna look down in Hollywood
and James
They gonna point the finger at you
'Cause they'd rather hang another
Indian
Before the white man'll take the blame

They'll try and hang another Indian,
Hang another Indian
Hang another Indian
Before the white man'll take the blame
They'll hang every Indian on the face
of this earth
Before the white man'll take the blame

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

Identifying the Pas



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum acquires Confederate document

BY JAMES POWELL & JONATHAN MCMAHON
Associate Registrar & Research Coordinator

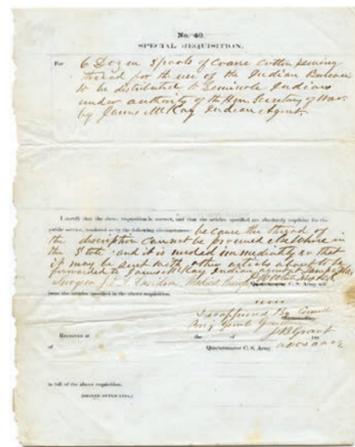
In 1861, the American Civil War brought uncertainty to the Florida frontier, and the Confederacy speculated that Florida's remaining Seminoles, Miccosukees and Tallahassee Indians might once again take up arms against encroaching settlers. The end of the Third Seminole War left the remaining Indians in difficult conditions. Surviving mostly on salvaged wrecks on Florida's East Coast and on occasional friendly trade with white settlers, Seminoles lived without many of the essential items necessary for survival in South Florida. Using the unrest of the Civil War to their advantage, Seminoles stayed neutral and maintained peaceful relations with both the Union and Confederate governments.

The Confederacy tried to meet the needs of Florida's Indians, but certain items were not available because of the blockades imposed by federal forces, namely goods used in the production of textiles.

Pictured above is a new acquisition to the Museum. The image shows the first page of a four-page document, which is a Civil War era Confederate government special requisition form. The form consists of pre-printed text and a handwritten request for six dozen spools of sewing thread.

The handwritten request reads in part, "6 dozen spools of coarse cotton sewing thread for the use of the Indian Bureau to be distributed to Seminoles, Indians under authority of the Hon. Secretary of War by James McKay Indian Agent."

The handwritten justification for this special request reads in part, "the thread of the description cannot be procured elsewhere in the State and it is needed immediately so that it may be sent with other articles about to be forwarded to James McKay Indian Agent at Tampa, Florida."



Front page of the Confederate government special requisition form.

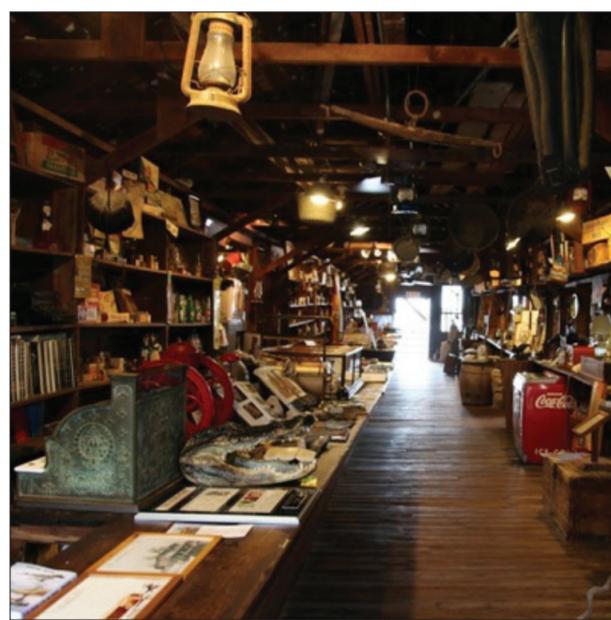
A subsequent, handwritten note dated 1863 states that Brigadier General Gardner disapproved of the special request most likely as a result of the shortages caused by the blockades.

In order to fully research and catalog this document, the Museum seeks the assistance of *Tribune* readers. Can anyone provide further information on the document or further information on the relations between the Confederate government and the Seminole Tribe? Would any *Tribune* readers like to join us on a project to further research this document?

Please contact the Museum at 877-902-1113 to share your knowledge or to share your time to help us discover more about this document and the Seminole Tribe during the Civil War era.

If you would like to view this document, other historic documents and manuscripts, please call 877-902-1113 or visit the Museum's website at www.ahtathiki.com to make an appointment. Thank you!

Smallwood Store saga continues: Developers want to move road



Peter B. Gallagher

The historic Smallwood Store is fighting to have its road repaired.

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

CHOKOLOSKEE — One thing that Lynn Smallwood-McMillin can't get out of her mind is the unfairness of it all.

"If a Circuit Court Judge ordered you or I or just about anybody on the street to do something and we openly defied the order, why, we would go right to jail and pay a big fine. Right?" she said.

"That's why I don't understand why these guys are given such special treatment. They aren't even from around here."

The frustration, which has been building up ever since her world literally exploded last April 14, is taking its toll on McMillin.

"We supposedly won our case," McMillin said. "But I sure don't feel like a winner."

McMillin is the executive director of the small trust that owns the historic Smallwood Store at the southern tip of an island, nestled in brackish waters of the Ten Thousand Islands of Southwest Florida. Last April, without warning or even notice to the town or its neighbors, a development outfit from Highlands County called Florida Georgia Grove LLC (FGG) snuck into town and literally removed 900 feet of Mamie Street, wiping out the only access to the famous Store.

Outrage from townsfolk, state museum officials and county commissioners led to numerous hearings, the recusing of two judges and a pair of full-fledged hearings in which two judges have ordered FGG to put the road back.

In the meantime, the Store has barely remained open because the only access is a jagged, pothole-littered, limerock path suitable for four-wheel drives. A popular school field trip destination and an international tourist stop, the Store is in disrepair — money saved to make structural repairs has gone to pay legal costs.

"It sounds pretty straightforward to me. Put the road back where

it was and pave it. Or go to jail and pay daily fines until the order is complied with," said Collier County Commissioner Jim Coletta, who has been the government's point man for this issue.

Coletta has notified FGG, in person and in the media, that the County Commission will not provide any variances or rezonings or work with FGG in any way to develop the property they purchased next to the Store six years ago.

"The people out there are angry. No commissioner would ever get re-elected who tried to help them out," Coletta said.

At the last hearing on Dec. 29, Judge Lauren Brodie echoed the words of Judge Hugh Hayes: "Put the road back the way it was" — a paved thoroughfare that crossed the heart of Chokoloskee for more than a century and, in fact, was a prescribed county road. Collier County is a partner in the legal actions against FGG.

FGG did, in fact, replace the torn out landscape with a road of sorts, but it did not meet the criterion set by the two judges. Most vehicles, in particular tour buses, could not safely traverse the road. Judge Brodie gave FGG 45 business days to replace the road. That deadline will be up on March 1. As of Feb. 16, there has not been any action by FGG to comply with the judge's order.

County attorney Steve Williams, whose mistaken assessment of the road ownership convinced FGG to remove the road, has been in discussions with FGG about a proposal to rebuild a new access road that would make the property more "developable." Williams refused to discuss the case with *The Seminole Tribune*.

FGG attorney Jim Kelly, however, confirmed that his group would like to work out a compromise: "We want to build them a beautiful road...just in another part of the property," said Kelly, who also said that FGG has never lost money on any land investment.

"These guys don't want to give up," Kelly said. "There's no thought about cutting our losses."

When he learned about the discussions about moving the road, Coletta vowed to head it off at the pass.

"I don't think our county attorney has any business doing anything with those guys but make them follow the Judge's order to the letter of the law." (According to Coletta, Williams called *Seminole Tribune* reporter Pete Gallagher "a troublemaker" and warned the public official not to talk with the paper.)

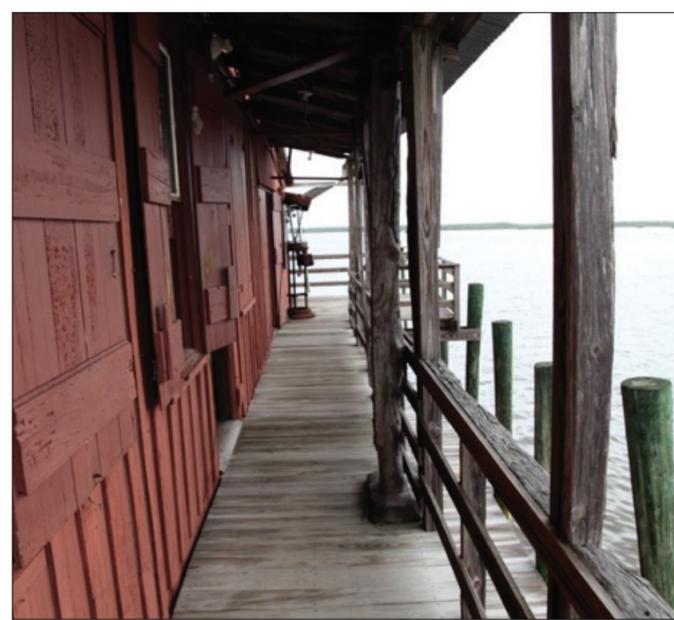
McMillin said she is being "intimidated" by her own attorneys, as well as county attorney Williams, to reach a compromise with the developers to move the road to a new location "that will make it easier for us to develop and/or resell the property," said FGG attorney Kelly. "That is what FGG does."

"I don't see why we have to waste another six months arguing about the road. And don't forget, there are neighbors out there who are affected by any change in the road," McMillin said. "Why not pave the road, so we can go back into business and then we can talk?"

According to McMillin, county road officials are joining in with FGG in declaring that "Mamie Street is not a county road. Even though the Judge declared that it was, they claim they will not maintain the road. That road has been here and used by citizens for a hundred years. For most of that time, it was the only way you could get to the post office. It satisfied all the requirements and the Judge made a decision."

With legal costs mounting and no end in sight, McMillin feels she is being unfairly used to forge a compromise that will benefit FGG. At this writing, she is not sure she will ever sign any "deal" with FGG until after the road is paved: "I'm not sure of anything, anymore. I don't have the money to fight these guys. And the county knows it. But, when it is OK to defy a judge, when county employees can refuse to support legal decisions, something is really backwards! Why are these guys being given special treatment? Somebody in Collier County government is hiding something. Somebody needs to look into this case!"

Smallwood benefit set for Feb. 25



Peter B. Gallagher

The Smallwood Store is located at the southern tip of one of the Ten Thousand Islands of Southwest Florida.

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

CHOKOLOSKEE — A Ten Thousand Island kayak race, fresh Gulf fish fry and Florida folk music concert will take place on Feb. 25 to raise money to cover outstanding legal costs and structural repairs for the historic Smallwood Store.

Kayakers from across the state will gather early that Saturday morning in Florida Bay waters near the store, located at the southern tip of Chokoloskee, on the Western edge of Everglades National Park. The concert and fish fry will follow the event, starting around noon, right on the grounds of the 106-year-old structure.

Scheduled headline performers include: Frank Thomas, Jim Mason, Ronny Elliott, Raiford Starke, J. Robert, Fiddlin' Gary Mackey, Valerie Wisecracker, Dog Peter Pat, the Bullard Brothers, Gordon Mac Martin and others.

A property dispute with a nearby landowner that hindered access to the Store since last April has led to a lengthy and expensive legal case involving several court hearings.

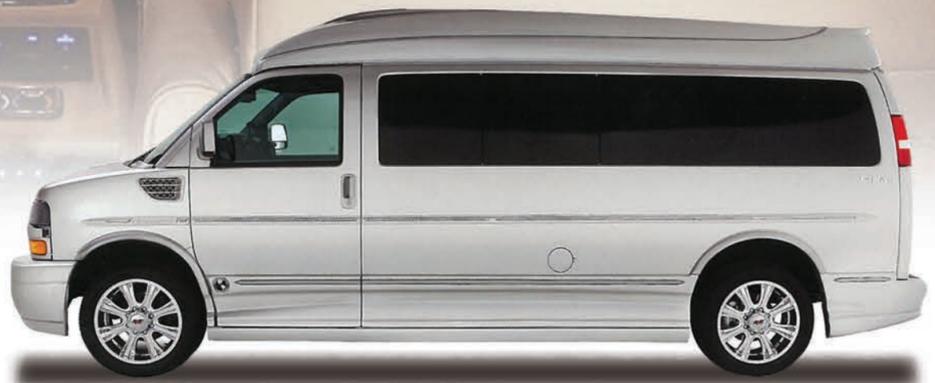
"All of our savings are gone that we planned to use this summer to fix the Store," said Lynn Smallwood-McMillin, granddaughter of founder Ted Smallwood and executive director of the nonprofit trust that owns the Store. "After they removed our road, we have barely had any attendance over the last 10 months."

The Store occupies a special place in Seminole Indian history. Proprietor Ted Smallwood provided safe haven, credit and trade with Seminoles when they began to emerge from their Everglades and Big Cypress hideouts following the end of the Indian Wars in Florida.

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Education

B

Native Learning Center hosts second annual Winter Symposium



Chris C. Jenkins

Tribal officials, including President Tony Sanchez Jr., middle, join Native Learning Center staff and guests for opening day festivities for the NLC Winter Symposium.

BY CHRIS C. JENKINS
Staff Reporter

FORT LAUDERDALE — The Native Learning Center held its second annual Winter Symposium from Jan. 24-26 at the Sheraton Suites Cypress Creek. About 70 attendees came together from all over Indian Country — from as far as Alaska — to discuss, measure and address community needs.

Participants included Native American and Indigenous Tribal members and community leaders, as well as employees working with Native businesses and communities.

The three-day event offered a wide range of speakers and lecturers on more than 20 topics central to Native communities, including grant writing, cultural preservation, fundraising and drug abuse.

“The desire to improve our reservations and lives is a priority. In years past, when the economy was good, you could slide by and not examine the issues,” said guest speaker and President Tony Sanchez Jr. “This (event) gives people an opportunity to tell about their experiences and learn about others.”

Big Cypress Board of Directors Rep. Joe Frank also chimed in on the importance of the event.

“This event provides information on a wide range of subjects, and I wanted to see what they have to offer,” Frank said. “The setting gives you a chance to sit down with the presenters and share information.”

This was Frank’s first Winter Symposium, although he also participated in last year’s Fall Symposium in Tampa.

Both Native Learning Center (NLC) Interim Executive Director Georgette Palmer Smith and Deputy Executive Director Kyle Doney said higher attendance and a continued diversity of lecturers and topics contributed to another successful event this year.

“We are being looked to for training and assistance

at an exciting time,” Smith said.

The NLC was created in 2008 and is the first educational facility and resource for Native Americans that is owned and operated by a Native Tribe with programs developed specifically for Natives.

“We reached out to several instructors and were hoping to be more helpful throughout Indian Country, so they could take away whatever they can to their communities,” Doney said.

Mary Helen Deer of the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma led the workshop on Grant Writing for Tribal and Urban Organizations. A seasoned veteran in grant writing, social competency and health, Deer said grants are vital to many poor and developing Tribal communities.

“All Tribes depend on different types of grants to help fund their reservations. They need to know how to write and add to those needs,” Deer said.

First-time symposium guest Venus Brightstar of the Ma-Chis Lower Creek Tribe of Alabama took particular interest in the networking and educational opportunities throughout the week. As an entrepreneur for the wearable art company Red Clay People, she said expanding her business and gathering support for a larger project involving a hydroponics greenhouse on her 100-acre farm (originating in 2000) will help reverse the negative diet trends plaguing her Tribe and other Natives.

“Hopefully, I can collaborate, get a grant and move forward,” Brightstar said. “I want to educate people through this. My father’s legacy and blood runs through me, and after his death, it sparked a fire within me to do this.”

The Native Learning Center’s fourth annual Summer Conference will take place from June 5-7 at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Hollywood.

For more information on the Native Learning Center, call 954-985-2315 or visit www.NativeLearningCenter.com.

Pemayetv Emahakv students receive second quarter honors



Naji Tobias

Kindergarten students show off their honors as they receive Bronze Awards for earning at least a “B” average in all their classes during the second quarter of the 2011-2012 academic year.

BY NAJI TOBIAS
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — At Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School (PECS), scores of students from kindergarten through eighth grades received a slew of academic honors on Jan. 23.

To culminate the Tribal school’s second quarter of the 2011-2012 academic year, many of them were honored for earning at least a 3.0 GPA (“B” average), while others were honored for scoring perfect marks with a 4.0 GPA (“A” average).

During the ceremony, Chairman James E. Billie spoke of his appreciation for the students, teachers and staff for their efforts to achieve academic greatness.

“This school is one of the finest in the state,” Chairman Billie said. “When we honor and recognize our kids like this, it inspires them to go higher. I have watched their progress, and I know they’ll continue to achieve great success in the classroom.”

Students received academic awards for craftsmanship, effort, improvement and good grades. Students earned Bronze Awards for a 3.0-3.49 GPA, Silver for a 3.5-3.99 GPA and Gold for a 4.0 GPA.

They were also recognized for participation in their Creek classes, receiving a variety of awards for their efforts to learn their Seminole language.

In addition, middle school students received special recognition for their efforts in Physical Education and History, while kindergarten students received recognition for making the 100’s Club, a special award given to those proficient in knowing their letters, sounds and sight words.

“We are very happy so many of our students earned academic awards for the second quarter,” PECS Principal Brian Greseth said during the

awards ceremony. “I feel we can attribute the students’ success to hard work by the students, parent assistance at home and great instruction from our teachers and staff.”

PECS fourth-grade student Kamani Smith was one of many students recognized for his work in the classroom. Smith earned the Gold Award for achieving all A’s on his second quarter report card.

“I read at home every day after school,” he said. “My parents tell me to finish all my homework before I do anything else.”

Smith’s mother, Tribal citizen Suraiya Smith, said she believes students need a solid education and work ethic in academics.

“I just pushed it on Kamani since he was a little baby,” she said. “I told him that with education, he can be whatever he wants to be later on in his life. So far, it’s showing with how well he’s doing in the classroom. I’m so proud of him for that.”

PECS administrative assistant Michele Thomas encourages students to keep working hard, especially as they prepare to take their FCAT and final exams in the final half of the school year.

“We are very proud of the level our students achieved on this grading period,” Thomas said. “I want to encourage all students to work hard and set a high goal for the third grading period. Make your daily priority your school studies. Our community and Tribe have made it their priority, and we owe it back to them to work hard every day and do our very best.”

Principal Greseth encouraged the students as well.

“Keep up the good work,” he said. “Your teachers, parents and administrators are all very proud of your hard work.”

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum displays Ahfachkee students’ artwork



Naji Tobias

Ahfachkee student Elijah Cook and his mother, Tabitha Cook, celebrate his art being on display at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on Feb. 8.



Naji Tobias

Ahfachkee fourth-grader Carlee Billie shows off the teepee and chickee hut she drew because of how much she liked the Seminole structural designs.



Naji Tobias

During a special presentation at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on Feb. 8, Museum Programs Officer Paul Perry, right, encourages the Ahfachkee students in third, fourth and fifth grades to continue working on their art. “You will always look back on your drawings and remember that you’re talented,” Perry said. “If you want to go to art school, just keep speaking it.”

BY NAJI TOBIAS
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Ahfachkee School students now have their very own art exhibit at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.

Thanks to a collaborative effort between the school and the museum, 25 students showed off their work in a collection titled “Mosaic: The Art of Ahfachkee Students — Big Cypress Reservation.”

“The Mosaic exhibit is a type of gathering of all the different creative minds and styles from all the students,” Museum Programs Officer Paul Perry said. “It’s simply a lot of tiny pieces to form a whole picture of this exhibition.”

On Feb. 8, Ahfachkee students from the third,

fourth and fifth grades took a trip to the museum to view 21 of their masterpieces.

Perry said they’ve been working with the Ahfachkee School on the project since 2010.

“This is a brand-new initiative in the sense that we wanted to feature the students’ artwork from all grades,” Perry said. “We wanted to erect a dedicated student art exhibit at the museum.”

In October 2011, the Ahfachkee School’s kindergarten, first-grade and second-grade art students viewed their work at the museum. The final art group, which includes grades six-12, will make its trip to the museum later this year.

“The kids studied famous artists from the past and re-interpreted their drawings through their own eyes,”

Perry said.

Ahfachkee art teacher Ivette Lopez was instrumental in the students’ artwork designs, which were painted and drawn with a variety of art techniques such as print, watercolors, acrylic and mixed media.

“The students were inspired by artists such as Vincent van Gogh, one of the most famous artists in the world,” said Lopez, who worked with her students on these designs during four weekly art courses.

“Paul Klee, a Swiss artist, was another one they were inspired by as they re-interpreted designs from his famous shapes and patterns,” Lopez said. “Jasper Johns, an American artist, was the inventor of the letters and numbers drawing designs. The students learned a lot from them.”

The students created pieces including: Letters and Numbers, Coffee, Seminole Pot with Flowers, Seminole Big Town, My Favorite Animal and Riding Down Okeechobee River.

The Ahfachkee School awarded the art students with Excellence in Art certificates following the art exhibit presentation. To further recognize the Ahfachkee students, the museum plans to host a special end-of-year reception in May and present them with their own commemorative exhibit catalogs.

Lopez said she’s extremely happy that her students had this opportunity to display their art.

“They are all very talented,” she said. “As Native Americans, they have art on the inside. It just comes out in a natural way for them.”

Pemayetv Emahakv's top Science Fair projects compete at Districts

BY RACHEL BUXTON
Freelance Reporter

BRIGHTON — Six Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students presented their science projects with confidence at the Glades County District Science Fair on Jan. 26.

"I wasn't nervous at all," eighth-grade contender Michael Garcia said. "I already knew what I was going to be asked, and I just prepared for that."

The Glades County District Science Fair included more than 50 projects from the Charter School, West Glades Elementary, Moore Haven Elementary and Moore Haven High School.

The Charter School students who competed were Michael Garcia, Zach Hudson, Elijah Finney, Jaron Johns, Sean Osceola and Andrew Dobbs.

The students who represented the Charter School at the district level received either a first- or second-place ribbon in the school's Science Fair to become eligible to compete.

"Those kids that went on today had a good grasp of the scientific method, and we knew they could be successful at this level," said Renea Finney, Charter School science teacher who attended the event with Kelly Bass, PECS middle school math teacher. "Last night when we were looking at the projects as they were being checked in, Ms. Bass and I were high-fiving each other because our projects are really tops. We expect our kids to do very good."

After placing in their school's Science Fair, the Charter School students had less than two weeks to

prepare for the Glades County District Science Fair, which was held at the Brighton Veteran's Building.

"I had to do my whole book of experiments, but it was fun," said Garcia, whose project measured sound waves. "I learned from my experiment, and I got to play my guitar."

Dan Thomas, director of the Heartland Regional Science and Engineering Fair and District Science Fair judge, said he was impressed with the Charter School's submissions, particularly Hudson's project on golf balls and Elijah Finney's experiment testing whether a player's baseball batting average changes when hitting indoors opposed to outdoors.

"They did a great job," Thomas said. "It is always neat to see what kids come up with in their little minds, and this year's had some interesting topics, some eclectic, neat little stuff. But what I really liked is that they take what they or their parents do, such as golf, and they turn it into a project. That's always fun to watch."

Thomas thanked the Seminole Tribe for their involvement in science and for furthering students' interest in science by hosting the District Science Fair. He said it is great to see them put education at the forefront.

Students who take a first-place ribbon at the Glades County District Science Fair will be eligible to compete in the Regional Science Fair on Feb. 16 in Clewiston. The Regional Fair includes Glades, Okeechobee, DeSoto, Highlands and Hendry counties.

Thomas said he is confident that Glades County and the Charter School will be well represented at the State Science Fair, following Regionals.

Charter School students take on statewide speech finals



Photo courtesy of Crystal Drake

The Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's eighth-grade speech class traveled to Orlando on Jan. 13 to compete in the We the People speaking contest at the University of Central Florida.

BY NAJI TOBIAS
Staff Reporter

ORLANDO — For much of the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's first semester, a group of eighth-grade students prepared for a statewide speech competition.

On Jan. 13, the group faced off against nine teams in the finals for the We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution state speech competition.

The competition was held at the University of Central Florida's Rosen College of Hospitality Management in Orlando and was sponsored by the Florida Law Related Education Association Inc. Retired Florida Supreme Court Justice Harry Lee Anstead (1994-2009) was the speech competition's keynote speaker.

To prepare for the competition, 12 students from Brighton's Charter School completed a multi-unit Constitutional studies program that taught them the intricacies of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

According to PECS Language Arts and Speech teacher Crystal Drake, the competition tested the students' communication skills through hearing exercises and speech presentations on a variety of contemporary issues on the U.S. Constitution.

The students were grouped into teams of four and placed in a simulated Congressional hearing at UCF. They presented to three judges who were experts in law and media.

The competition allowed the Charter School students to gain a better understanding of the U.S. government.

The winning team consisted of Rumor Juarez, Boyd Brown, Elijah Finney and Kaylen Buster. The other eight students who represented the Brighton Charter School included Thomas Bearden, Kailin Brown, Michael Garcia, Zachary Hudson, Jaron Johns, Zeke Matthews, Jayce Smith and Melany Williams.

PECS Social Studies teacher Quenten Pritchard and fellow teacher Drake prepared the 12 students for the competition.

"I have taken several high school student groups to this competition in the past, and I was very impressed with our middle school students' abilities to articulate their ideas with the adult judges," Drake said. "I want to thank Mr. Pritchard for helping me with this project by presenting the material in his social studies classroom and helping the students with their answers."

Seminole Education Director Emma Johns, PECS Principal Brian Greseth and PECS staff member Rita McCabe also supported the competitors, who were recognized with special certificates at the Brighton Charter School's second quarter awards ceremony on Jan. 23.

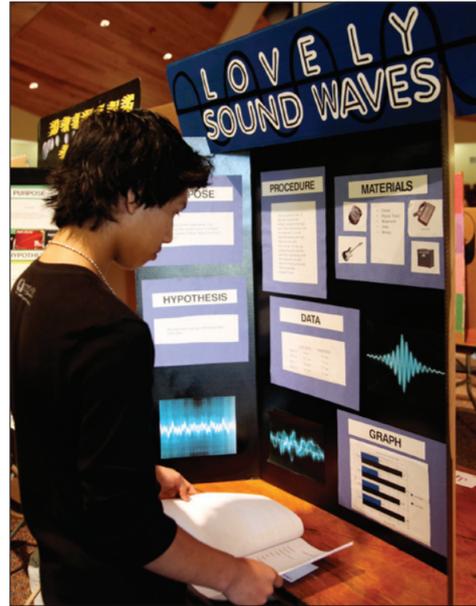
"The speech students performed exceptionally well there," Principal Greseth said. "I'm very proud of all of them for what they accomplished."

The eighth graders are on track to earn a high school credit in Speech I.



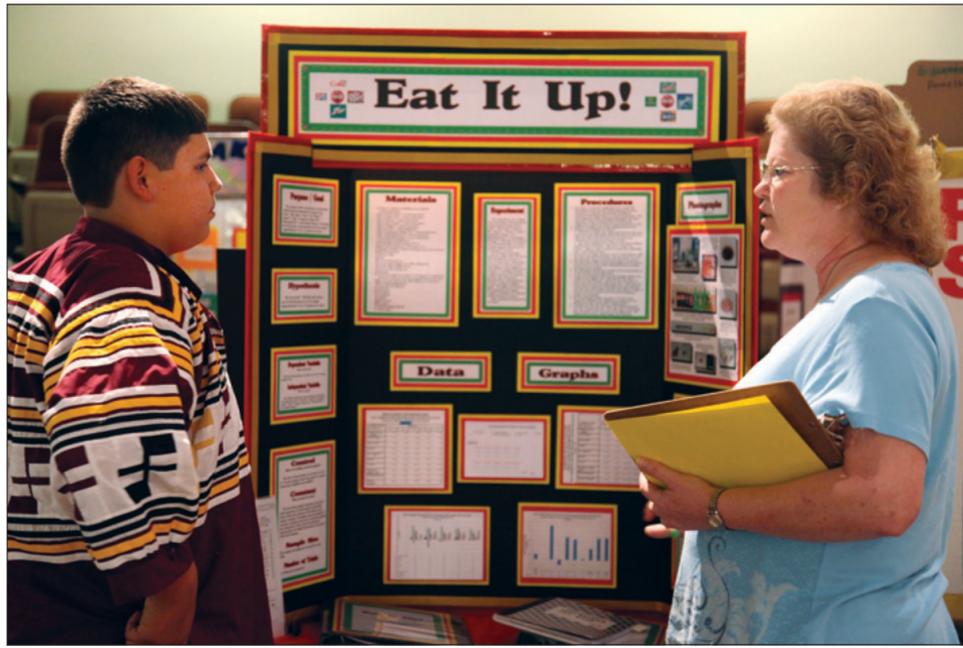
Rachel Buxton

Dan Thomas questions Elijah Finney about his findings on Major League Baseball players' batting averages.



Rachel Buxton

Michael Garcia reviews his freshly written research paper before the judges make their rounds at the Science Fair.



Rachel Buxton

Sean Osceola shows no nerves as district judge Karen Cotton questions him about his research on soda deteriorating beef.

Ahfachkee students receive second quarter academic honors

BY NAJI TOBIAS
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — The Ahfachkee School's second quarter for the 2011-2012 academic year ended as a significant success for its student body.

On Feb. 1, students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade received academic honors in multiple categories, with 10 students earning perfect attendance marks.

Ahfachkee junior Tequesta Tiger was the school's top achiever for the second quarter, as she was the only student who earned all A's, earning Chairman's Honor Roll status for a 4.0 GPA.

An impressive 80 students received a combination of A's and B's in all their classes, earning the President's Honor Roll for a GPA between 3.5-3.99.

An additional 37 students received Councilman's Honor Roll status for earning at least a "B" average overall, making a 3.0-3.49 cumulative GPA.

In total, 118 students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade made the Ahfachkee School's Honor Roll for the second quarter.

The Ahfachkee School's Culture program gave out its own awards to students in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. The culture program also recognized students in the following categories: E-lá•pon•ke I, E-lá•pon•ke II, Tribal Arts, Wood Carving and Citizenship.

In addition, 24 students earned Perfect Punctuality, and the entire sixth grade and 40 other students achieved an Attendance Rate of 90 Percent or Greater.

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

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Charter School students read to community for Literacy Week



Rachel Buxton

Cyrus Smedley, left, and Jalynn Jones, middle, help Carley Osceola sound out the words in the story for Literacy Week at PECS.



Rachel Buxton

Sunni Bearden reads *Silly Sally* and shows the colorful illustrations.



Rachel Buxton

The preschoolers give their full attention as they get told a story by the big kids.



Rachel Buxton

Morgan King, left, reads as Bly Davidson acts out the story with animal figurines.



Rachel Buxton

Keanu Bert is captivated by Jalynn Jones' storytelling.



Rachel Buxton

The preschoolers help tell the story with their stuffed animals.

BY RACHEL BUXTON
Freelance Reporter

BRIGHTON — In honor of this year's "Celebrate Literacy Week Florida!" from Jan. 23-27, Pemyetv Emahakv Charter School students ventured outside the classroom to read to the Brighton community.

"We don't do it too much, but we do take the opportunity when we think it is a good, educational, teachable moment where we can share with our community," Charter School administrative assistant Michele Thomas said.

This year's Literacy Week theme was "Take the Lead and Read." The Charter School's first-graders kicked off Literacy Week by heading to the Senior Center to share a few literary treats with their grandparents and great-grandparents.

Students took turns reading short stories to the Brighton elders and showing off book illustrations. Page by page, story by story, students

captured the elders' attention.

"It is kind of a win-win for us," Thomas said. "They (the students) like to come out; the elders love for the kids to come in."

The Charter School's kindergarten through eighth-grade reading coach, Pamela Hudson, said she feels it is extremely important for the young students to share what they learn with the elders.

"Our little children just couldn't stop talking about it on the bus ride home: 'Are we going to do it again?' I loved seeing them. It was so fun," Hudson said. "We've opened the door with them (the elders), and we hope we can continue to do that with them more and more."

Continuing on with Literacy Week activities, the Charter School visited the Brighton Preschool to reach out to the younger children. On Jan. 26, sixth-graders read several stories to the preschoolers, who will join them at the Charter School next year.

The older students brought stuffed animals, along with their stories, to help engage the preschoolers.

Weeks prior to their visit, the sixth-graders received literacy lessons from their teacher.

Research shows that reading to children and creating interactive learning experiences is crucial to a child's future reading and educational success. The Charter School has continued to keep reading and literacy a primary goal in their curriculum. The school also holds an annual guest reader day.

"Children should be reading and be read to as early as possible" reading coach Hudson said.

Thomas said she feels blessed to be able to demonstrate to the community what their youth learn and show off the progress being made within their Tribe.

"This is not something we would have been able to do if our kids were going to Okeechobee," Thomas said. "We're kind of seeing the rewards of our money that we've put into this school, and we're getting to show it off firsthand to the grandparents."

PECS recognizes Students of the Month



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas

Congratulations to the Pemyetv Emahakv Charter School December Students of the Month. Pictured: Talena Holata, Keenan Jones, Saniya Rodrigues, SirMarcus Osceola, Jace Brown, Kayven Emley, LaShae King, Diego Meras, Aubee Billie, Daven Buck, Mallorie Thomas, Kaleb Doctor, Nyah Davidson, Alyke Baker, Logan Ortiz and Drayton Billie. Not pictured: Pearcetin Trammell, Caitlyn Olivarez, Kano Puente and Zachary Hudson.

Ahfachkee School students tour FGCU



Photo courtesy of Carine Eugene

To help encourage higher education, the Ahfachkee School students toured Florida Gulf Coast University's campus on Jan. 30. Students watched lab demonstrations in the U.A. Whitaker College of Engineering, toured the main campus (classrooms, library and Cohen Center Student Union), visited the Arts Complex and walked through a model suite in South Village freshman housing. They also toured the Alico Arena (FGCU's main athletics arena) and watched an FGCU men's basketball game.

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Sports

C

Ahfachkee Warriors basketball program completes its second season



Chris C. Jenkins

Ahfachkee School boys' and girls' basketball players, staff and family members of the late Georgina Bert gather together at the Herman L. Osceola Gym for Homecoming on Jan. 27. The event honored the memory of Bert.

BY NAJI TOBIAS
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — The Ahfachkee Warriors' fledgling basketball program completed its second year with strong improvements from both the girls' and boys' teams.

The Lady Warriors finished their season with an astonishing 11-3 record, while the Warriors boys surged to a final record of 4-9 — a noticeable improvement from their 0-5 start back in December 2011.

Neither team qualified for the Florida High School Athletic Association's basketball playoffs because the state's athletic governing board requires a new athletic program to serve a two-year probation period before it can qualify for the postseason. But now, the probationary period is over.

"We couldn't be more excited about getting off probation," Ahfachkee Lady Warriors head coach Kristin Stoots said. "It's been a really good two building years for our program. We're looking forward to a lot of positive things to come in the future."

Next season, the Warriors will be eligible to join a district. Since Ahfachkee is classified as a small school, the FHSAA will likely place the Tribal school in a Class 1A district, the smallest classification possible.

One thing's certain: the Ahfachkee Warriors basketball program will continue on its upward march toward greatness, something that makes the Warriors boys' head coach Cicero Osceola proud.

"I think we're going to be tough next year," Osceola said. "We're a small school, but we don't mind playing anybody. It's a great opportunity for us because we'll get to play a 22-game schedule. We'll get to play for district, regional and state championships. And now we'll get to pick more teams and travel a lot more. It's a really good look for our program."

their season.

"I was very impressed with how the season turned out," Stoots said. "We had a wide age range of girls on our team, and that could have created a lot of adversity. But they came together so well from the beginning to the end. I saw a lot of maturity and growth in the girls this season."

"We improved our fitness a lot, which allowed us to get a lot of steals off our opponents. I really saw a lot of movement from our girls, and it showed in our record," she said.

Stoots said team building and unity played a large role in the team's success.

"There were days that I would cancel our practices just to have team-building sessions with the girls," Stoots said.

The Lady Warriors went on a seven-game winning streak after going into the 2012 portion of their schedule with a 4-2 record. They defeated the following teams: St. John Neumann 38-33; King's Academy 48-23; Hialeah 49-21; Boynton Beach Charter 50-20 and 53-21; LaBelle 44-27; and Moore Haven 36-34.

The Big Cypress Community showed full support for the Lady Warriors throughout the season — particularly at home games.

"In our home games, you couldn't even find a seat anywhere on the bleachers," Stoots said. "The girls received a huge boost from all the support they got this season."

Although the girls' season finale against Donahue Academy turned into a loss, Stoots was still pleased with their efforts at the Jan. 27 homecoming game.

"We had only eight players to suit up for the Donahue game," Stoots said. "We were the clear underdogs in that game, with a few of the Donahue players on their way to college. But I was proud of the way our girls hustled and hung in there. They knew they were playing a bunch of juniors and seniors from

◆ See **WARRIORS** on page 3C

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's completes its basketball season



Naji Tobias

Lahna Baker, Lanie Baker, Sunni Bearden, Kailin Brown, Deliah Carrillo, Courtney Gore, Chastity Harmon, Martina Herrera, Rumor Juarez, Kalgary Johns, Jaylynn Jones, Bridgett Koontz, Shae Pierce, Bailey Tedders and Camryn Thomas.

BY NAJI TOBIAS
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — It's been a fun and spirited basketball season for the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School (PECS) Seminoles.

Both the girls' and boys' basketball teams completed their seasons on Jan. 24, after playing on the road against Clewiston Middle School.

The PECS girls' basketball team closed its 2011-2012 season with a 12-4 record, while the boys' basketball team finished with a 4-10 record.

Lady Seminoles finish strong

PECS Lady Seminoles head coach Tim Thomas said he could recall at least two standout moments when the girls shined on the court this season: the 36-12 season-opening win at Osceola Middle School on Nov. 30 and the 46-24 win over Yearling Middle School in Okeechobee on Dec. 16.

"I remember our rivalry game with Yearling," Thomas said. "We really wanted that game."

In the Dec. 16 game, PECS Seminoles' star Shae Pierce led all scorers with 32 points, helping bring her team to victory.

The Lady Seminoles finished the 2011 portion of their season with a 5-1 record, having defeated West Glades Middle, Moore Haven and Yearling.

The loss to Storm Grove Middle, however, was a rough moment that the team had to overcome.

"A lot of my girls were away on a trip the week before," Thomas said.

"Even though they had just flown back home from Washington, D.C., they learned how to shake off the rust from the break they had."

After a 37-13 win over Clewiston Middle School at Brighton on Jan. 5, the Lady Seminoles lost two in a row to Sebastian River Middle and Yearling Middle to drop to a 6-3 record.

The rest of the 2012 portion of their schedule

proved to be a lot smoother, as the Lady Seminoles finished their last five games with a 4-1 record, with the only loss coming against Sebastian River Middle.

The Lady Seminoles beat the following teams: Moore Haven 31-17; West Glades 36-4; Storm Grove 45-30; and Clewiston Middle 36-12.

The PECS Lady Seminoles basketball team was made up of: Lahna Baker, Lanie Baker, Sunni Bearden, Kailin Brown, Deliah Carrillo, Courtney Gore, Chastity Harmon, Martina Herrera, Rumor Juarez, Kalgary Johns, Jaylynn Jones, Bridgett Koontz, Shae Pierce, Bailey Tedders and Camryn Thomas.

"I told my girls that if we worked hard in practice, played team defense, forced turnovers and got easy baskets, then we would be successful," Thomas said.

"I really thought the girls played hard and aggressive every game. If they can play in some basketball tournaments in the offseason and continue to work on their ball skills, then I can see us going undefeated next year."

Seminoles boys' team comes together

For PECS boys' basketball head coach Ryan Tedders, this season proved to be challenging, yet rewarding.

Despite the 4-10 final record, he and his team learned the virtues of patience and steady growth throughout the 14-game season.

The boys started out their season with a 0-2 record before storming out to its first win of the season, a 48-19 road win over West Glades Middle on Dec. 12.

Tedders said the win over West Glades was one of the team's best games. After a strong beginning, the starters chanted some of the non-starters names, encouraging him to give them playing time.

"Our starters unselfishly gave up their usual playing time to see their teammates gain some valuable experience," Tedders said.

◆ See **SEMINOLES** on page 3C

Buildings and Grounds wins Big Cypress Employee Fun Day's flag football tourney



Naji Tobias

The Buildings and Grounds Department outlasted six other departmental teams to capture the Employee Fun Day's Toilet Bowl Tournament title on Jan. 27.

BY NAJI TOBIAS
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Down, set, hike! Seven Tribal department teams faced off in a flag football tournament for the right to claim Toilet Bowl honors during Big Cypress' Employee Fun Day inside the Big Cypress Rodeo Arena on Jan. 27.

"Councilman Tiger wanted to have this event to boost the morale of all the employees we have here in Big Cypress," said Council's Office Coordinator Marlin Miller, who served lunch for the employees with the help of Tribal Council representative assistants Noella Dyan O'Donnell and Wovoka Tommie. "We wanted to do something for the employees and let them know we appreciate them for all the work they do for us."

Council-sponsored initiative, Buildings and Grounds squeaked by Recreation/Rodeo in an overtime thriller to take home the Toilet Bowl trophy with a final score of 14-7. Buildings and Grounds' final record was 4-0, while Recreation/Rodeo's final record was 4-2.

After two five-minute halves, both teams went into overtime. Buildings and Grounds used seven plays to march its way to the end zone, thanks to a perfect 15-yard touchdown pass from Joel Cavazos to Victor Becerra that proved to be the tournament clincher.

"It felt great to step up for my team," said Becerra, who was named the Toilet Bowl MVP. "I threw a pick early in the game that caused a touchdown, so I needed to redeem myself there. We just threw it up and I just got open to be in position for the catch."

The final game between Buildings and Grounds and Recreation/Rodeo seemed to be poised for a rubber match early on, as Becerra threw an interception right



Naji Tobias

Big Cypress Tribal Council Rep. Mondo Tiger zooms his way past a group of defenders on a screen pass play during Employee Fun Day.

into the hands of Recreation's Frank Moody in the first half. Becerra was one to watch, having made four touchdown catches and two defensive interceptions.

Buildings and Grounds faced a 7-0 halftime deficit because of Becerra's thrown interception, but they found their way back into the game after Guillermo Rodriguez caught a touchdown pass from Cavazos. Cavazos' talent shined in the eight touchdown passes he made in the four games he played.

At 7-7, all Recreation/Rodeo needed to do was throw for another score to be one win away from the title. Unfortunately for Recreation/Rodeo, Dustin Lowman threw a pick to Rodriguez close to the end of regulation, with his team having to play defense the rest of the way. Lowman was a force to be reckoned with, having made 16 touchdown passes in the six games he played.

Big Cypress Tribal senior Mitchell Cypress, who

did not play in the tournament, said he liked what he saw at the Rodeo Arena.

"I'm a little bit too over-the-hill, so I just wanted to watch the youngsters play the game," Cypress said. "It was fun to see them all having a good time out there."

Council, who sponsored the event, ended with a 2-2 final record. Council's team was led by the Tribal trio of Cicero "Tebow" Osceola, who threw five touchdown passes; Charlie Cypress, who made four touchdown catches; and Big Cypress Tribal Council Rep. Mondo Tiger, who threw two touchdown passes.

The tournament's remaining teams were: defending Toilet Bowl champions Utilities, who ended with a 1-2 final record; Housing, with a 1-2 final record; Museum/Tribal Historic Preservation Office, with a 0-2 final record; and Community Care for the Elderly, with a 0-2 final record.

Okeechobee Tribal hoopsters close seasons with high hopes



Chris C. Jenkins

Jaide Micco attempts a 3-pointer in early first quarter play.



Chris C. Jenkins

Delaney Osceola receives last-minute game instructions from head coach Morgan Benion.



Chris C. Jenkins

Okeechobee Tribal freshman Jenni Eagle warms up before game time.

BY CHRIS C. JENKINS
Staff Reporter

LAKE PLACID — The four Tribal hoopsters of Okeechobee High School are stepping up their games and looking forward to next season.

Varsity and junior varsity players Janet Smith, Jaide Micco, Delaney Osceola and Jenni Eagle closed out their 2012 campaigns on the road versus Lake Placid on Jan. 24 to cap off solid seasons for both teams.

As freshmen, Osceola and Eagle, who play guard and forward, will have plenty of time to hone their skills. The pair finished on a 10-6 junior varsity squad under first-year head coach Morgan Benion.

Benion said it has been a season of growth for both.

"They both started off very timid. As the season went on, though, they definitively improved," Benion said. "Delaney has been a mainstay and big defensively. Jen had a lot more pep in her step and began to care a lot more as the season progressed."

Osceola and Eagle of the varsity Lady Brahms faced the Lady Dragons for a second time, winning convincingly 35-14 in an earlier season matchup. In round two, they came up short in a close 31-28 loss. Osceola pitched in with 4 points and averaged 8 points throughout the season. Eagle gave defensive help off the bench.

"I have enjoyed my family coming out and supporting me," said an upbeat Osceola. She said an improved, positive attitude and developing her passing skills are next season's goals.

With a three-win improvement compared to the 2011 season, the varsity Lady Brahms (9-13) also had a rematch with the ladies of Lake Placid coming off a 56-36 win earlier in their season under second-year head coach Erin Morrow. In the end, however, the Lady Dragons would avenge their loss in a 54-40 win. Micco had extensive playing time but went scoreless. Smith did not play because of an injury.

Morrow said Smith has potential playing both guard and forward, as well as Micco playing guard.

"When they are focused and want to put in the work, they are two of our better players showing leadership, hustle and good skills," Morrow said. "I would consider this a good season and we have improved. We are moving in the right direction for next season."

Mother Reina Micco said her daughter Jaide Micco, a 3-point specialist, continues to progress.

"She's improved since last year and is getting more aggressive," Micco said. "She has also improved on her fundamentals in moving her feet more."

Brighton youth shine on Moore Haven Terriers basketball teams

BY NAJI TOBIAS
Staff Reporter

MOORE HAVEN — It was a short basketball season for Brighton Tribal youth athletes Breanna Billie and Marshall Tommie.

However, they did make the most of their opportunities with the Moore Haven Terriers.

Both the girls' and boys' teams finished their seasons with first-round losses in their Class 3A-District 11 playoff quarterfinal games. The girls' game against Naples' St. John Neumann Celtics ended with a 51-15 loss on Jan. 31; the boys' game against Naples' St. John Neumann Celtics ended with a 64-36 loss on Feb. 7.

Strong end to Breanna Billie's season

Although Breanna Billie was a late season addition for the Moore Haven girls' team, head coach Vincent Lewis was happy with her performance.

"Breanna was a big asset to us toward the end of the season," Lewis said. "She spent a lot of the year on our middle school team but got to move up as the season went along. We did win two of our games because of her contributions."

The two wins were a 35-24 home victory over the Ahfachkee Warriors on Dec. 12 and a 33-30 home win over Cape Coral's Oasis Sharks on Jan. 13. Billie, a freshman point guard for the Lady Terriers, scored eight points in the win over Ahfachkee and scored six in the win over Oasis.

"Breanna stepped up in those games," Lewis said. "That was really good for her because we only averaged about 20 points in all our games this season. Breanna's biggest asset is that she can shoot the ball really well and hit her free throws. We look forward to her playing a bigger role for us next season."

In Billie's final two games of the season — a 48-14 home loss to Sarasota Christian on Jan. 27 and that playoff quarterfinal loss to St. John Neumann — she showed growth on the court, particularly in ball-handling and moving without the ball.

Billie showed flashes of potential in the playoff game against St. John Neumann, as she guarded Neumann junior point guard and Naples Tribal citizen Bryce Osceola for much of that contest.

Billie had a rebound and a steal in the Jan. 31 season finale, while Osceola recorded a rebound, a steal and two assists in her team's home playoff win over Moore Haven.

The Lady Terriers ended the season with a 2-17 overall final record, including a 1-1 record against Ahfachkee.

"We're a young team, and we're going to get better next season," Lewis said. "I expect Breanna to go hard next year. It doesn't matter how much she scores. All that matters is her presence being on that court. With Breanna on our team, it's a plus for us."

Naples Tribal senior O.B. Osceola Sr., the grandfather of Bryce Osceola, talked about the playoff matchup between the two Tribal athletes.

"It's fun to play Tribal members from other reservations," O.B. Osceola Sr. said. "To see Breanna playing against my granddaughter was really nice to see. Both Bryce and Breanna represented our Tribe well out there on the court."

Billie, who averaged 2 points per game this season, said she enjoys playing for Moore Haven.

"It was fun," Billie said. "I plan on playing for Moore Haven



Naji Tobias

Brighton freshman guard Breanna Billie attempts a free throw on Jan. 31.



Naji Tobias

Brighton sophomore guard Marshall Tommie hits one of his four free throws on Jan. 27.

again next season."

Marshall Tommie's first season at Moore Haven

Marshall Tommie's Moore Haven boys' team finished its season with a 4-16 record, including two wins each over Oasis and Ahfachkee.

In Tommie's final game of the season, a 63-51 home loss to Sarasota Christian on Jan. 27, he went 4-for-6 on the free-throw line, gaining 4 points to help his team stay competitive with the Blazers on Senior Night.

"Marshall started with us late, but he's a pretty good shooter, especially on the free-throw line," head coach Wayne Reese said of the sophomore guard. "His knowledge of the game is probably one of the best we have on our team. He's a good athlete and a great guy. I really appreciated his time on the court for us."

Tommie, who averaged 4 points per game this season, played an important role in at least one of Moore Haven's four wins this season, including a 51-44 road win against Ahfachkee in Big Cypress on Jan. 19.

"I've been worried more about the team than myself," Tommie said. "With the position I play, I was just trying to get my team involved. It's not all about me."

Tommie, who said he had a choice to play for either the Okeechobee Brahms or the Moore Haven Terriers varsity basketball team, said he will stick with Moore Haven next season.

"I like the fact that everybody plays as a team and has a chance to contribute on the court," Tommie said. "I got to improve on my dribbling and driving skills. I'm becoming more like a point guard now. It's a fun position to be in here."

Tommie's mother, Martha Tommie, said she was impressed with how he handled himself throughout the season.

"I think Marshall's pretty good," she said. "He has a future in basketball. I would like to see him do well at Moore Haven."

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◆ WARRIORS

From page 1C

the Donahue team. And here they are at 10, 11, 12 and 13 years old, hanging right with them. It's just a sign of where our program is going to go in the future."

The players who starred for the Ahfachkee Lady Warriors this season were: Katie Bert, Sabre' Billie, Michaela Cypress, Alison Herrera, Dayra Koenes, Alyssa Osceola, Danelle Thomas, Danni Jae Tommie, Trinity Williams and Reagan Whitecloud.

Whitecloud led the team with 16.9 points per game, 9.0 steals per game and 2.9 assists per game this season.

Since all of the teammates were underclassmen, they said they plan to be back next season. Most of the teammates were in sixth to ninth grade. Whitecloud was the only sophomore, and Herrera and Tommie were the only juniors.

"We're going to look at a few summer camps to further improve our team bonding," Stoots said. "The girls will definitely be working out a lot in the offseason together. If they keep their grades up and stay as friends, then we'll be ready to go next season."

Boys make major strides

The Ahfachkee Warriors boys' basketball team had a challenging 13-game schedule, as they finished the 2012 leg of their season with a 4-4 record after a 0-5 start.

Regardless of the final record for the boys' team, Osceola said he was proud of his players for persevering to the end of the season.

"They showed a lot of resiliency, and they never gave up," he said. "Our defense wasn't very good in the beginning of the season. We weren't communicating too well, but as we played more games, it got a lot better."

Osceola said he motivated his team to come together as a more cohesive unit.

"Our seniors were already ready to go, but our young guys weren't ready yet," Osceola said. "We had to get them focused and see the game more visually."

Ahfachkee experienced their first-ever win on Jan. 9 – a 60-43 road win over Heartland Christian.

"We kept pulling together, and it finally started to pay off for us," Osceola said.

Aside from the 77-53 blowout loss to Cape Coral Christian on Jan. 10, the Warriors never lost by double digits again the rest of the season.

Moore Haven, a team that blew out Ahfachkee by 40 points in their first meeting, won by just 7 points the next time around – a 51-44 victory over the Warriors at Big Cypress on Jan. 19.

And Donahue Academy, another team that handed Ahfachkee a 40-point loss earlier in the season, defeated the Warriors by just 6 points in the Big Cypress team's season finale on Jan. 27 – a 51-45 win for Donahue.

"Teams that were beating us a lot weren't able to do that again," Osceola said. "It seems like we always got off to a slow start and got better in the second half of our games."

Ahfachkee's four wins this season were two victories over Heartland Christian and two home victories over Boynton Beach Charter.

The following boys starred for the Ahfachkee Warriors: Jonah Alvarado, Nate Anderson, Roderick Bert, Corbin Billie, Stevie Billie, Matthew Bluebird, Quenton Cypress, Nathaniel Jim, Dalton Koenes, Taylor Pratt, Jonathan Robbins and Uriah Waggerby.

All but three players – seniors Stevie Billie, Pratt and Robbins – will return next season.

"We overcame a lot of adversity and now our younger guys can build from that next season," Osceola said.

◆ SEMINOLES

From page 1C



Naji Tobias

Drayton Billie, Boyd Brown, Demetrius Clark, Elijah Finney, Zach Hudson, Jaron Johns, Josh Madrigal, Zeke Matthews, Immilakiyo Osceola, Yopalikiyo Osceola, Chandler Pearce and Trevor Thomas make up the boys' team.



Naji Tobias

After grabbing a steal, Pemayev Emahakv Lady Seminoles' star player Lahna Baker dribbles her way past the Storm Grove Middle defense in the first half of her team's 45-30 victory on Jan. 18.



Naji Tobias

In Pemayev Emahakv's boys' basketball season finale at the Clewiston Middle School Tigers on Jan. 24, the Seminoles' star player Immilakiyo Osceola, who scored 4 points in his team's 34-19 loss, grabs a steal in the first half of play.

"That was the beginning of all the players coming together as a team," Tedders said.

The 2011 portion of the boys' season culminated with a 41-38 overtime loss to Osceola Middle; a 55-46 road win at Moore Haven; and a 36-32 loss to Yearling Middle – a 2-4 record as they headed into the season's second half.

"The team as a whole grew early in the season because teamwork was emphasized and practiced," Tedders said.

"The group started to become a cohesive unit, and they started to really believe in each other as teammates."

The boys played their final eight games of the season in January, including two games against Clewiston Middle, two games against Sebastian River Middle and rematches with Moore Haven, Storm Grove, West Glades and Yearling.

The Seminoles started their 2012 portion of the schedule with three straight losses before bouncing back with a 44-25 home victory over Moore Haven.

"Although our team was undersized against our opponents, they played with heart and determination," Tedders said.

"They never once got down and out. Each game was another challenge that they embraced and tackled head-on with 110 percent effort and pride."

All of that showed on the court, even in the Seminoles' final four games – a 1-3 season-ending stretch.

The Seminoles defeated West Glades 41-7 before finishing out their season with a three-game losing streak.

The PECS boys' team consisted of: Drayton Billie, Boyd Brown, Demetrius Clark, Elijah Finney, Zach Hudson, Jaron Johns, Josh Madrigal, Zeke Matthews, Immilakiyo Osceola, Yopalikiyo Osceola, Chandler Pearce and Trevor Thomas.

"I saw a lot of improvements as the season progressed," Tedders said. "We can definitely build upon this next season by continuing to enforce the value of teamwork."



Chris C. Jenkins

Ahfachkee's Michaela Cypress tries to fend off a Donahue Academy defender during her team's Jan. 27 homecoming game – a 51-40 season-ending loss for the Lady Warriors.



Chris C. Jenkins

In his last game of his high school basketball career, Taylor Pratt drives his way past a Donahue Academy defender during the Jan. 27 season finale.

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