



Seminole Tribune

Voice of the Unconquered



www.seminoletribune.org • 50¢

Volume XXXVIII • Number 4

April 30, 2014

Protests mount against potential FPL power plant

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

LABELLE — Environmentalists continued to take aim at a giant by using Earth Day to stand shoulder to shoulder, wave signs and call out to motorists on Hickpochee Avenue in LaBelle April 22.

“Florida Power & Light (FPL) wants to build a power plant less than 2 miles from the Big Cypress Reservation and we do not want that to happen,” said Frank Billie, among the nearly two dozen protestors who appeared on Earth Day and the previous day to express dissent in front of the Hendry County Courthouse.

Billie was one of several Seminoles at the afternoon protest led by members of Everglades Earth First! and attended by supporters from other environmental groups. The event doubled as an Earth Day rally with more than 75 protestors including Seminole and Miccosukee residents from Tampa, Big Cypress, Hollywood, Trail and Immokalee. Organizations represented were Sierra Club, Earth First!, South Florida Wildlands Association, Stone Crab Alliance, Coalition of Immokalee

♦ See FPL on page 7A

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School gets capital award for top performance



Eileen Soler

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School officials and administrators, Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr. and the Seminole royalty pose with Mike Strader, president of Charter School Associates, which helped establish PECS with Tribal member Louise Gopher, far right. The school was one of six Florida charter schools to win the Florida Charter School Alliance's Excellence in Education Award April 2 in Tallahassee.

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

TALLAHASSEE — Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School is tops among Florida charter schools and here's the proof: The 6-year-old, Tribe-operated school was one of only six charters statewide to be recognized April 2 during a private lunch at the Governor's Club in the state Capitol.

The celebration, hosted by the Florida Charter School Alliance, honored the school with an Excellence in Education Award “in recognition of your dedication to quality and innovations in education. Your outstanding leadership in the charter school movement is visionary,” read the award's inscription.

According to the Florida Department of Education's Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, 200,000 children were enrolled in 578 charter schools statewide during the 2012-13 school year.

PECS principal Brian Greseth revealed the honor to children March 31 during the school's latest quarterly individual student award celebration.

“You made us a top school; you are in

the trenches every day,” he said to students. “We are very proud to be considered one of the top schools in the state. We hope this is the start of a trend.”

The PECS elementary school already boasted the top FCAT scores in the Heartland Educational Consortium of 29 schools in DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands and Okeechobee counties. The middle school is among the top three in the rural Central Florida association.

Charter school advocate Frank Biden, a Florida real estate developer and brother of Vice President Joe Biden, greeted representatives and students from the top schools as they entered the downtown Tallahassee dining hall usually reserved for elite membership.

“You have an iconic school that occupies a unique space and important place in our nation. It is essential that we promote the great things you do,” Biden told Norman “Skeeter” Bowers, one of 18 Seminole members and employees who attended the event.

Additional attendees included Greseth, Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr.,

“You have an iconic school that occupies a unique space and important place in our nation.”

— Frank Biden, charter school advocate and brother of Vice President Joe Biden

Executive Administration Officer O'Hara Tommie, Education director Santarvis Brown and PECS staff members Michele Thomas and Stephanie Tedders.

Others from Brighton were Rita McCabe, Jennie Shore, Louise Gopher and Lewis Gopher.

♦ See TOP SCHOOL on page 5B

Board adds Blue Lake Citrus, OWV water to business portfolio

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

The Seminole Pride brand recently added Blue Lake Citrus Products and OWV water to its lineup of products that includes beef, electronic cigarettes, wines, Seminole/Stiles Construction and Development and commercial cleaning.

Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc. purchased 60 percent of Blue Lake Citrus, the parent company of Noble Food Service, in which a majority stake was acquired by the Tribe in April 2013. The partnership positions the company for significant growth through the Tribe's existing distributors.

“Blue Lake had the products with no exposure; the Tribe has relationships with Cheney Brothers and US Foods,” said John Dembeck, Chief Operating Officer of Seminole Brand Development. “It's a good match.”

Brighton Board Rep. Larry Howard organized a tour of the facility in March to give Tribal members a firsthand look at how the juice is processed. The plant, located in Winter Haven, Fla., produces about 7 million gallons of juice products per year from 1.2 million boxes of citrus fruit, averaging 90 pounds per box.

Blue Lake products can be found in about 5,000 retail outlets, including Publix. The Tribe is converting the name to Noble Seminole Pride to celebrate the partnership. In addition to juice, Blue Lake sells citrus oil and citrus peel to businesses as diverse as flavor, cosmetic and aroma companies to manufacturers of cow feed. Dembeck said the byproducts are almost as valuable as the juice.

The Noble Seminole Pride juice is made from Hamlin, Valencia and pineapple oranges with a hint of tangerine juice for added flavor and color. The company also develops fresh bar mixes to sell to chefs and beverage managers at restaurants for increased sales opportunities.

♦ See PORTFOLIO on page 4A



Photo courtesy of Blue Lake Citrus Products

A filler dispenses tangerine juice into bottles at Blue Lake Citrus in Winter Haven, Fla.

NICWA conference focuses on welfare of Indian children

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

FORT LAUDERDALE — When Kirk Crow Shoe was a young boy, he and his twin sister Kimberly were adopted by non-Native educators working with the Department of Indian Affairs in Canada.

The adoptive father abused Crow Shoe until he was 17.

Crow Shoe told his story April 14 to about 1,000 people at the 32nd annual National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) conference at the Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty-Six in Fort Lauderdale. The Seminole Tribe was the host sponsor.

“The first thing taken from us were our names,” said Crow Shoe, of the Blackfoot Tribe in Alberta, Canada. “He abused me and she didn't save me. Nobody heard me, nobody saved me.”

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), passed by Congress in 1978, was designed to keep Native American children with Native American families. The law aims to protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian Tribes and families. Crow Shoe, born in 1964, didn't benefit from ICWA.

♦ See NICWA on page 5A

Tribe moves forward with new housing

BY BRETT DALY
Senior Editor

New housing will soon pepper the Brighton, Immokalee and Hollywood Reservations to help meet the demand for on-reservation living, said Adam Nelson, Tribal Community Development acting executive director.

Tribal Council approved guaranteed maximum price contracts between the Tribe and Seminole/Stiles joint venture during the April 11 Council meeting for the multi-reservation construction.

The Brighton project, already underway, will consist of three residential buildings; two of the structures will be two stories with three units each, and the third building will be a one-story, two-unit dwelling built to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

Nelson said 22 people are already on the waiting list for one of the eight townhomes to be built in the Knots Landing area. The anticipated completion date is December 2014.

The Immokalee townhome project will follow the same floor plans as

♦ See HOUSING on page 4A

Kids cap season at 4-H show, sale

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — City kids don't hear and smell farm animals often, but the 4-H

program gave 16 Hollywood youth first-hand experience this year. They raised, showed and sold hogs at the 28th annual Seminole Indian 4-H Livestock Show and Sale in Brighton March 28-29.



Beverly Bidney

Jarrett Beecham, 8, does his best to control his yearling heifer in the ring at the 28th annual Seminole Indian 4-H Livestock Show and Sale in Brighton March 29.

More than 100 kids tribalwide convened in the ring to parade their small animals, hogs, heifers and steers for judges while parents, grandparents, friends and relatives filled the stands.

“I'm glad to see kids from Hollywood making their mark,” said Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola.

The Hollywood 4-H'ers tended to their hogs every day in the newly built pig pen on the former Seminole Estates site.

“It teaches them responsibility,” said Polly Hayes, 4-H coordinator. “The Hollywood kids took right to it and even though some of those animals got sick, they stayed with it.”

The 4-H program teaches youth the business of livestock. In addition to taking care of the animals' basic needs, kids track expenses in logs, and at the end of the program, they sell the animal and pocket the profit. Most animals sold during the 2014 sale.

“It's hard getting ready for the show,” said Kimora Alex, 8. “We had to clean, walk and feed them a lot. Now we get to sell them.”

Children begin the 4-H program with small animals like hamsters, chickens, rabbits, goats, puppies, piglets and calves. At age 8, they upgrade to hogs or heifers. At 10, kids can raise steers.

Deliah Carrillo, 16, raised hogs for six years but decided to try a steer this year for a change. Her steer was the second largest

in the show at 1,398 pounds.

“You have to work them every day or you'll be dragged around,” she said, adding that raising a steer was more interactive than working with a hog. “If you miss a day he stops being used to you. But he's a big baby and lets me sit on him.”

Deliah grew attached to the animal, but she understood it was a business venture.

“I thought I wouldn't care about letting him go. But now that we're here, it's hard,” she said. “But I know he'll make good meat.”

Alyssa Gonzalez, 11, showed nearly every type of bovine: a steer, a yearling heifer and a 3-year-old with a calf. She plans to breed the yearling, show her next year as bred and the year after that with her calf.

“The hardest part is showing in front of the crowd,” she said. “Sometimes they are cooperative, but sometimes they are stubborn and lazy.”

Jarrett Beecham, 8, showed his first large animals, a yearling heifer and a hog. In the ring he did his best to lead the cow, but she had a mind of her own.

“I was nervous; it was my first time,” he said. “She is really stubborn; all she does is moo and eat. Once she ate a whole bucket in five minutes.”

The judges rated animals based on appearance, explained the structure of

♦ See 4-H on page 6A

Editorial

Hey Pilot! Pffut-DING!

• James E. Billie

Pilot Billie. I have always been tickled by the name "Pilot." Wasn't that the name of the guy in the Bible who sentenced Jesus to death? I often think maybe it had something to do with an airplane pilot. How he got the name Pilot I'll never know. The people who named him are dead and gone.

Most of us know Pilot Billie as the youngest son of Suzie Jim Billie. I was born in 1944 and Pilot was born in 1946. We were childhood friends and we had a lot of fun together. And we are both still around. He was the first guy I remember playing around with as a kid. So, I'd like to honor Pilot Billie in my editorial this month.

I was born in that zoo that you all know about, and we had a camp over on what used to be known as the Dania Reservation. We lived right behind where the Native Village is. It was a high terrain and there was a big sandy bluff out there. Below the bluff was a kind of lake that was basically the end of the high tide - when the ocean came through the river it would wind up in that lake and at low tide it would run out. Anyway, that's where we used to get our fish and eat manatees and all that kind of stuff.

There was one particular time, when I was, like, 5 years old - old enough to remember quite a bit of it. See, I used to run around naked when I was a kid, around my camp. And so did Pilot. He would run around naked, too. It was a standard thing, I mean, who were we supposed to hide from?

Pilot's family must have been living down on the Trail and had recently come up to a camp close to us. I was out here walking around in the sand. It must have been cool weather during that particular time.

Now, some of the drunk Indians would try to drive into camp and would come through this road that wasn't anything but sand. Then they'd get stuck in that sand and the tires would dig in deeper if they tried to drive it out. On this day, I noticed as I was walking through that sand that no vehicles were coming. Since it was wintertime, the sun had heated up the sand and you could lie in that sand, cover your legs up and your body up and feel nice and warm.

So here I was lying in one of those tire tracks, when along comes this young boy and he was naked, too. So he and I started chatting. I told him "Lie down, I want to put sand on you." I covered his legs. And he thought it was good. So every day - I don't know how long this went on - we would come out there around noontime and play in that sand, covering up our bodies and feeling so warm.

And that's how I first met Pilot Billie. I didn't realize at the time that he had a little problem. We always had a lot of fun and his little problem never really got in the way of our fun.

At that particular time, whatever year it was, Hank Williams Sr., or somebody that sounded like him, was singing a song that went something like this: *Chewin' tobacco, chewin' tobacco, chewin' tobacco rag pffut-DING, pffut-DING, pffut-DING, pffut-DING, pffut-DING, pffut-DING.*

At the end of the verse the singer made a sound like he was spitting.

Every day when we'd see each other, that is the first song that we'd start singin': *Hey Pilot! Chewin' tobacco, chewin' tobacco, chewin' tobacco rag pffut-DING, pffut-DING, pffut-DING, pffut-DING, pffut-DING.* We'd roll in the sand and laugh our tails off.

So this went on for quite a while. He would come to my camp and eat and I would go to his camp where Suzie was. And we would play over

there. Then my mother took me down to Tamiami Trail and I didn't see Pilot for a while. By now I was getting up to be 6-7 years old. When we saw each other, he couldn't talk very well. But that was always our greeting. *Hey Pilot! How you been? Pffut-DING!*

Today if I ran into him that would be the first darn thing that he and I would do.

After I went to Vietnam and came back, I noticed he had a little problem. I had a funny feeling that he might die on me, but he didn't and he is still around today at that camp in Big Cypress where Suzie Jim Billie used to live. You can see him at Big Cypress Hot Meals.

So, from that point on, when I saw people who had little physical problems like he did, I never had a problem going up there and chatting with them. I learned that when I meet someone who is a little different - they may be autistic or somehow different - I always try to find a little niche, something that makes the person happy, and I start my conversation that way.

Pilot Billie is still here today and he looks good. He looks healthy. I just wanted to remember and honor him. The reason why I was remembering him is I just turned 70 on March 20 and, lying around just thinking about different people, I remembered special times when I was a little kid. And a lot of those times, Pilot was there with me.



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

Hear that woodpecker (*Chun-cha-kee*)? He is warning me that I am going to have a visitor or visitors. When I was a kid about 3, 4, 5, 6 years old, whenever I heard the woodpecker sing like that I would run down the canal bank and look up the road and ... no visitors. So one day I got aggravated with that, so I went and asked my grandmother: "Hey Grandma, that woodpecker's singin' again and there's no visitors." My grandmother looked at me: "Well, you know he's warning you about a visitor. But he didn't say it was going to be a human being. It might be a snake, or spiders or a big ol' bear!" *Sho-naa-bish.*

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



Pilot Billie. Seminole Tribune archive photo

Seminole Development and Construction LLC

• Tony Sanchez Jr.

Everyone's always asking about our Seminole/Stiles LLC construction partnership. Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc. got into the construction business and approached Stiles to enter a joint venture (JV) to enhance our profile and further diversify our economic base. This JV allowed us to create an original portfolio - a collection of our best and most recent work that highlights our experience. It's a visual archive of accomplishments that demonstrates our ability and potential as a construction firm. By successfully completing jobs on the reservations we show our capacity to generate lucrative work off the reservation.

So far we have completed the Seminole Classic renovation and are in the process of completing several major reservation projects including the Brighton Public Safety Building, the new Hollywood Recreation Center and the Fort Pierce Hope Community Center. All are scheduled for December 2014 completion. We also are developing townhouses for Brighton and Hollywood that should be completed after the New Year. Seminole/Stiles is also currently working on the Gunther VW dealership in Coconut Creek. This JV has been in place for three years and in that time frame we have built up an impressive portfolio. No dream or vision happens overnight.

It's been a lengthy process but we believed in this JV and the hard work is starting to pay off. Though it's been frustrating at times, we never wavered in our vision and kept pushing forward. The results speak volumes. Though this enterprise is under the Board's umbrella, it's an enterprise that will benefit the Council by allowing us to complete Tribal building projects in a more efficient and timely manner. Think about how many Tribal projects you've heard about, then a groundbreaking happens, then suddenly someone says, "Oh, we need to change the design," then the project is sent back to the

architect, which adds another three months. The project has to go back through all the in-house processes. That's another six months. At that point, what was once a high priority for one administration is dropped by the next administration. All that time and money invested is wasted.

Now we are able to take advantage of all the services this JV has to offer, all housed in one place, architects and any construction service. This allows us to start building faster and saves the Tribe time and money by economizing the true cost of the project. Before, we'd allocate \$50 million for a construction project when we went through our budget planning. At the end of the year, we would end up spending only \$5 million. Why? We wasted a lot of time and energy going through the in-house process before this JV came along. Now that the JV is in operation, look at all the many projects that are off the ground and scheduled for completion more quickly than in the past. These projects are necessary to serve our Tribal communities. Look at how fast the Brighton Public Safety complex is going up. We had originally announced that completion would be in December, but we are a month ahead of schedule. And being ahead of schedule means we will save money.

This is just the beginning. In a perfect world, you and I would see everything happen overnight just by snapping our fingers. That is not how the world works. We've had to be patient and remain committed to our vision and committed to the whole process. I'm excited that things are falling into place. The next step was to establish Seminole, Inc. as the top minority construction partner. Again, we get there by establishing a successful portfolio. When people ask, "What have you built," we open our portfolio and show them the impressive projects we've created.

We often hear concern about growth of the Construction Department and why the focus remains on construction projects on the reservations. The reason is very basic. We are using the on-reservation projects as

our resume for jobs that will be bid for off the reservation. Like any other applicant in the world of employment, the strength of our resume allows us more opportunities.

I'm proud to announce that, in partnership with Gates Construction, we will be the minority developer for the construction of a children's hospital in Fort Myers. Though this job is a partnership with another developer, our Construction Department secured the project by highlighting our portfolio of on-reservation projects. We consulted Stiles on the structuring of the transaction and they are excited as well. This job will lay the groundwork for further off-reservation bids, especially with local governments.

We are scheduled to break ground on this children's hospital April 29. This will probably be a two- to three-year job; completion will be in late 2016 or early 2017. We are very proud of this. Hollywood Board Rep. Steve Osceola was very instrumental to this deal. He traveled over to Naples and Fort Myers many times, meeting and negotiating with the various principals. I am extremely pleased to make the announcement for our off-the-reservation project. As the major contractor, Gates has to provide a qualified minority contractor for this job and we are that contractor. The Fort Myers children's hospital is a \$250-million project.

Again, when people ask, "What have you built," we will open up the portfolio and show them the impressive projects we have been involved with.

Sho-naa-bish. Tony Sanchez Jr. is President of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc.



Congress approves amended Native veterans' memorial act

• Stephen Bowers

In early December 2013, the United States Congress approved the Native American Veterans' Memorial Amendments Act of 2013, which provides for the placement of a veteran statue on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI).

President Barack Obama signed the act into law on Dec. 26, 2013. The fundraising for this statue will be the responsibility of the museum. We congratulate NMAI for this milestone in their history.

In the fall of 2010, the Seminole Tribe of Florida spearheaded a project to build a veteran statue on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall that would provide recognition for American Indian, Alaskan Native and Pacific Islanders veteran contributions and sacrifices in the U.S. military. We fought side by side with those groups honored through The Three Servicemen statue at The Wall, the Caucasian, African American and Hispanic.

Why shouldn't we be recognized alongside our brothers with whom we served? Numerous veterans believe that an American Indian soldier should be near that statue, but Congress thought otherwise, so we accept it and move on.

We (my wife, Elizabeth, and I) are starting our fourth year working to obtain a prominent place of recognition for American Indian military service to this country in time of war through the American Indian Veterans Memorial Initiative (AIVMI).

Whenever the United States went into battle, the American Indians, Alaska Natives and Pacific Islanders participated in greater numbers than any other group. We want a more profound recognition of service beyond just a statue at the National Museum of American Indians.

Why does everything Indian have to

go into an Indian museum?

While campaigning for a statue at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall area, we had the chance to meet Jan Scruggs, the founder of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF). He started the organization in 1979 to lobby Congress for the land The Wall sits on now and to raise the money needed to build it using private donations.

He accomplished this task in less than three years, an amazing feat considering the hoops one has to go through to get things passed by Congress, let alone to get permission and approval for something to be built on the National Mall.

The next big undertaking on VVMF's agenda is to build The Education Center at The Wall to be located across the street from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. We were invited to have an exhibit at the Center that will honor the First American Veterans' involvement in military service from the Revolutionary War through Afghanistan.

The Education Center will provide an innovative space where visitors will come face to face with those who gave their lives in service to this country. It will also provide a time line of the Vietnam War and display memorabilia that has been left at The Wall since its 1982 dedication.

We established a working relationship between AIVMI and VVMF to help raise funds for building The Education Center and have committed to raise \$10 million. Our success will ensure that we will have an American Indian Veterans Memorial exhibit at The Education Center.

In an addition to touring the Center, online multimedia programs will help students, educators and all visitors deepen their understanding of American Indian, Alaska Native and Pacific Islander veterans' contributions and sacrifices.

The Education Center is an exciting opportunity for "Honoring First American Veterans." The Education Center at The

Wall will offer a place for our people to be truly recognized and can become a rallying point for younger generations to learn more about their warrior heritage.

The following are the goals of the "Honoring First American Veterans" campaign.

Objective 1. Raise at least \$10 million to build The Education Center at The Wall, pledged at the earliest possible opportunity and paid through the end of the campaign on Dec. 30, 2018.

Objective 2. Collect the missing 67 photographs of First American Veterans who fell in the Vietnam War. During the Vietnam conflict, 227 American Indian, Alaskan Native and Pacific Islanders made the ultimate sacrifice for this country. These young men hailed from 30 states and territories and served in all branches of the Armed Forces. They deserve proper recognition and honor on the National Mall through the Honoring First American Veterans campaign.

Objective 3. Collect photographs and remembrances of American Indian, Alaskan Native and Pacific Islanders who served in America's wars from the Revolutionary War through today's conflicts.

As Jan Scruggs puts it, "The Education Center at The Wall will make it possible for this and future generations to connect with those who served wearing our nation's uniform, as well as those who died, ensuring that their service and sacrifices will always be treasured and that their legacies will never be forgotten."

As Chairman of the Honoring First American Veterans capital campaign, I am honored to be associated with a group led by someone who has never stopped to honor our veterans.

For more information, contact Stephen Bowers, Liaison for Governor's Council on Indian Affairs, at 954-966-6300 ext. 11480, sbowers@semtribe.com, or www.aivmi.org.

Correction: In the March issue, *The Seminole Tribune* incorrectly identified Micah Stockton as Zayden Cypress in "Kids catch fishing fever at Big Cypress event." Dwight Cypress was misidentified as Marl Osceola in "Hunter Osceola helps American Heritage win state basketball title."

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

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

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

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

- Issue: May 30, 2014
Deadline: May 14, 2014
- Issue: June 30, 2014
Deadline: June 11, 2014
- Issue: July 31, 2014
Deadline: July 9, 2014

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

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

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

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Community



Jo Motlow North retires after nearly a half century

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — After 47 years working for the Tribe, Jo Motlow North retired March 1. Her decades of service impacted everything from the Hollywood Culture Department to the Tribe's Boys & Girls Clubs and led to the creation of a new Mikasuki and Creek language app for iPads and iPhones.

"I got tired and just needed to get on to other things," said the Hollywood resident. "I'll still be around. I live here; this is my community."

North began working at 14 at the Okalee Village gift shop and cooking stand. She moved on to various departments within the Tribe, which included the Board of Directors' Office and the food stamp program, where she served as an outreach worker to ensure people needing help received it. She has been involved in youth development since the 1970s working for the Education and Behavioral Health Departments.

She attended the Institute of American Indian Arts in New Mexico, where she fell in love with fellow art student Robert North. They married, moved to his hometown of Winnebago, Neb., had daughter Erica, moved back to Hollywood and had son Robert Cloud. An accomplished artist, she put her brushes away to focus on working and raising her family.

♦ See NORTH on page 6A

Smith family celebrated with cattle drive

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — The Smith family legacy is evident from the pastures and rodeo arena in Brighton to the Tribal halls of power.

Family patriarch Jack Smith Sr. was a pioneer of the Seminole cattle industry and his sons Fred, Jack Jr., Richard and Roger were also cattlemen who served the Tribe as elected leaders.

To honor the work of the Smith men, Diane Smith, Roger's widow, organized a cattle drive and ranch rodeo April 4-6 in Brighton. The large extended family showed up in force during the weekend's festivities.

"They kept us together, that's why we stay together," said Camellia Smith-Osceola, Fred's daughter. "They taught us how to carry on, so we do."

About 80 people rode horseback or used utility terrain vehicles, pickup trucks, jeeps and SUVs to traverse the turf and move 50 cattle from Smith-Osceola's pasture 8 miles to the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena.

The cattle drive took participants through the Brighton Reservation as it once was — filled with scrub, pine trees, cabbage palms, oaks, wild turkeys and signs of wild hogs. Long before cattle owners kept their herds in open pastures and cow pens, they battled rough terrain every day.

"Eighty years ago there were no fences and an abundance of water everywhere," said Norman "Skeeter" Bowers. "Cowboys had to stay with the cattle while they grazed and set up camp."

"The cattle could get away from you because you couldn't see them," added Alex Johns, Natural Resource director and trail boss for the cattle drive. "This was the best cattle drive I've been on outside of normal work."

Working dogs ensured cattle stayed together. They barked, nipped and chased any cow that broke away from the herd.



Beverly Bidney

Fifty head of cattle are driven through pastures and rough terrain April 5 to the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena during the Smith family cattle drive.

Once the cattle arrived safely in the pen at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena, about 150 people including Smith family members, cattle drive participants and other community members commemorated the event with heartfelt tributes to the Smith men.

Fred Smith served as President of the Board of Directors for 16 years — longer

than any other president — and helped diversify the Board's ventures. He also served as Brighton Councilman and helped establish the Brighton rodeo arena.

Jack Smith Jr. served as Brighton Councilman for 14 years; Richard Smith was a Brighton Councilman, Board Representative, Brighton Recreation director and police officer; and Roger Smith

served as Brighton Board Representative and Councilman, won Cattleman of the Year three times and organized the Tribe's sugar cane operation.

Attendees shared fond memories of football games, cattle and lasting friendships.

♦ See CATTLE DRIVE on page 8A

Seminole, Fort Lauderdale history meet on New River cruise

Everett Osceola corrects common misconceptions

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

FORT LAUDERDALE — Those who believe that regional history began with Ponce de León's discovery of Florida during the spring of 1513 are simply wrong, said local historian and author Bill Sydnor.

"Tequesta Indians made their home here during the time of Christ and before that," Sydnor said during a yacht cruise April 5 with 130 history buffs along Fort Lauderdale's New River.

Hosted by Bonnet House Museum & Gardens in Fort Lauderdale, the two-hour tour featured past, present and future focused presentations by Tribal member Everett Osceola, of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum in Big Cypress Reservation; Sydnor, who authored children's books about historic Florida; and Fort Lauderdale Mayor Jack Seiler.

Osceola, a great-great-grandson of the revered Seminole matriarch Polly Parker, provided a compelling account of what really happened between whites and Natives along the New River during the Second Seminole War.

"We are correcting what was told for so many years," Osceola said.

One of the first inaccuracies regards the New River Massacre, the slayings by Seminoles in 1836 of pioneer William Cooley's wife, three children and the children's school tutor at their riverside settlement near the current Seventh Avenue boat ramp. It had been long believed by non-Natives that the attack was carried out for no reason except to whet a people's savage tendency — instead, Osceola said, it was a retaliatory act during a time of war.

"It was the wild west during that time," he said pointing toward the location near a fork in the river where the first of three U.S. Army forts, led by Major William Lauderdale, was built. There, the Army was ordered by President Andrew Jackson to clear the area of Natives and force them on the road to reservations in Oklahoma.

The Cooley incident occurred a year after the Dade Massacre, a victory for Seminoles and the event that launched the Second Seminole War. Matters escalated when Chief Alibama was brutally killed by white out-of-town hunters who were later identified to Cooley. But Cooley, who served as Justice of the Peace for the New River settlement, was ineffective and the men were not charged.

"Cooley was a friend to the Seminoles and the Seminoles trusted him. From there came the misunderstanding," Osceola said.

Though the Second Seminole War accounted for 1,466 recorded deaths of Army soldiers, only 328 actually died in battle. The majority of deaths were listed



Eileen Soler

Everett Osceola tells nearly 130 guests during a two-hour yacht tour of the New River about the Seminole influence on Fort Lauderdale history and modern time.

as "unknown disease." Osceola said the Army's miscalculation of climate and rough terrain benefited the Seminoles.

"It was heat stroke, water deprivation, hunger and other factors that they did not expect ... Our main weapon was the Everglades," he said. Even Major Lauderdale eventually succumbed to illness that began in the punishing Florida wilderness.

Highlighting the second and third Army fort locations, Osceola described how the Seminoles fought to stay, eventually to be driven into the Everglades to thrive unconquered.

At more than a dozen other landmarks, Seiler and Sydnor offered facts about Fort Lauderdale as it struggled through the early 1900s and now prospers — the Stranahan House where Frank Stranahan traded with the Seminoles through the mid-1920s, the Broward Performing Arts Center which is undergoing major expansion — and where Tequesta lived off the abundance of shark, crab and crayfish in the river; plant foods that grew off the river banks; and deer and birds that flourished in the inland woods.

On pillars under the Seventh Avenue bridge, four mosaics pay homage to the early pioneers of the New River, the Seminoles who lived there first, and two historic city neighborhoods that sprang up along river banks.

The river served many military purposes through the decades — even as



Eileen Soler

The Stranahan House, where Frank Stranahan traded with Seminoles during the turn of the 20th century, still sits on the New River now flanked by high-rise buildings.

pirates attempted to rob and pillage. The Coast Guard still has a station at the mouth of the river near Port Everglades.

♦ See BOAT TOUR on page 6A



Eileen Soler

Martha Tommie, of Brighton, testifies to the legacy of Mike Allen Smith at a memorial for the chickee builder April 12 at the home of his sister Oneva Smith at Big Cypress Reservation.

Builder remembered for shaping lives

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — On one hand, Mike Allen Smith's life ended too soon for loved ones to bear. On the other, his death left a legacy of hope and love for all to share.

"We did not lose Mike. He may not be here for us to touch, hug, hold and talk to, but all things happen by God and after a tragedy we have to remember that God is wonderful and Mike is still with us," said Janice Billie during the third annual Mike Allen Smith Memorial April 12.

About 70 relatives and friends gathered at Oneva Smith's home on Big Cypress Reservation to honor the life of her brother whose time was cut short in March 2010 by an accidental drug overdose. He left behind the joy of his life — his daughter Julia, now 11, whose early years with her dad were depicted in a collage of laughs and cuddles posted on a photo board.

The Rev. Paul "Cowbone" Buster picked guitar and sang soulful country tunes. The Rev. Matt Tiger, of First Indian Baptist Church of Brighton, sung a favorite Creek hymn. Mike's sisters — Oneva and Alice — provided a buffet of his favorite foods including fried chicken, ham hocks, spam with tomatoes, collard greens and frybread.

Billie and others who, like Mike, had struggled through battles with drugs and alcohol, spoke about how the carpenter and chickee builder enriched their lives.

Martha Tommie said she did not realize she knew Mike until she was in recovery at the same Ocklawaha treatment

center in Marion County a few years later. There, she came across Mike's name among those who lost the fight.

"I knew him, but I didn't know him at all," Tommie said. "I asked if he was Seminole and when they said yes, I remembered him from the running around days."

She learned that Mike was a leader of the treatment center's sunrise services and was the creator of an intimate meditation chickee that Tommie had used for renewal before eventually taking over the sunrise services herself.

"He was a kind, caring, loving soul," Tommie said.

Longtime neighbor and Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank said he remembers Mike nearly every day when he sees his workshop and shed.

"He'll always be 'Mike the builder' to me," Rep. Frank said. "I miss him."

Indeed, Mike's chickees, sheds, porches and other structures can be found on every reservation, including the sign at the Big Cypress Sober House that he erected during his recovery process.

For Julia, a softball player at Pemaquay Emahaky Charter School, her father was her special fan and her friend. A burly man, he was never too big to ride shotgun in her powder pink ATV for spins around the rez and he was never too grown-up to don a wacky costume on Halloween. He was there to help her ride her first two-wheeler — a Hannah Montana bike. And he rarely missed her softball games, where his fingers gripped the chain-link fence

♦ See BUILDER on page 8A



Beverly Bidney

Navajo Housing Authority members Dorothy Billy, Charlotte Rieck, Evans Bennallie, Nadine Clah and Karen Mitchell pose for a photo April 17 in Brighton.

Navajo Housing Authority visits Brighton Housing Department

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Five members of the Navajo Housing Authority (NHA) traveled from Arizona to Florida to learn about the Tribe's Information Technology (IT) Department, network infrastructure, and property management procedures and software program. The group met April 17 with the Housing Department in Brighton.

"The Tribe's Geographic Information System (GIS) is the most aggressive in Indian Country," said Michell Carter, GIS manager. "This will give them ideas how to create their own system and infrastructure."

The GIS system captures, stores, manipulates, analyzes, manages and presents geographic data.

"We came to see how the software works," said Nadine Clah, NHA IT analyst and GIS coordinator. "I'm a firm believer in Tribes helping each other instead of paying consultants. We need to know the good and the bad about the software program. Another Tribe has already been through this, so we can learn from them."

The 27,000-square-mile Navajo Nation Reservation spans four states: Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah. The Navajo is the largest federally recognized Tribe with about 290,000 members; about 150,000 live on the reservation.

NHA manages about 10,000 homes and needs between 30,000 and 50,000 more.

Susan Coleman, property manager, presented the Tribe's Housing Department program step by step. Coleman said the Yardi Voyager property management software is flexible and customizable to a Tribe's needs.

"Our goal is to present this to our

leaders," said Evans Bennallie, NHA IT analyst.

NHA considered the software program before the visit. It came to test the program's efficiency and to determine whether it can handle the needs of a Tribe of their size. The Navajo Reservation has 15 housing offices, 110 communities with five agencies, and a council representative from each community. NHA also navigates through layers of bureaucracy, including federal and Tribal.

"We need a program to interface with all our branches of government," said Charlotte Rieck, NHA chief administrative officer.

Seminole Housing regional manager Derrick Smith, among others, shared maintenance issues, costs, work orders, processes and efficiencies, noting that each reservation is autonomous and is responsible for managing repairs and costs.

"This is our business," Smith said. "We aren't managing it for someone else."

But high-tech issues weren't the only things shared between the two Tribes; culture was discussed. Leoda Tommie, procurement specialist, told Bennallie about chickees; he told her about the Navajo traditional eight-sided mud and wood hut, or Hogan, which always has a door opening to the east.

Language, the Rosetta Stone Navajo software and the size of the Navajo Tribal Council, which was reduced from 88 to 24 in 2009, were also discussed.

Last year, NHA completed a state-of-the-art satellite imaging database, with terrain modeling technologies, to map the floodplain on the reservation.

The results will determine feasible locations for new homes and will help protect existing ones.

♦ PORTFOLIO From page 1A

The mixes are being used at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood and Tampa.

"The Tribe is growing and diversifying its business interests by partnering with local Florida, family companies to strengthen the people and agriculture of Florida," said President Tony Sanchez Jr. in a statement.

OWV premium spring water comes directly from historic Orange Springs near Ocala and has a higher alkaline content than typical bottled water. Pronounced ooo-wah, which means "water" in Creek, OWV is meant to compete with high-end bottled waters like Fiji and Evian.

"The premium water business is

growing about 12 percent per year," Dembeck said. "There are a lot of waters out there. What makes this one different is the quality of the water, the history of the spring and the story of the Tribe."

Having a variety of products allows Seminole Pride sales staff to ride along with distributors and schedule appointments with their customers' purchasing decision makers.

"That should open doors for other Seminole Pride products," Dembeck said. "We become more important to the distributors."

The Seminole Pride target market includes restaurants, schools, hotels, hospitals, catering businesses and grocery stores in Florida, Georgia and Alabama. Future growth could include the entire Eastern Seaboard.

Otters train for stardom at Billie Swamp Safari

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Super frisky and ferociously adorable, three female baby river otters are training in Hollywood for the spotlight in Big Cypress.

"They are cute, cuddly and obviously very mouth-oriented now," said "Otter" John Jones, Okalee Village wildlife manager and certified animal handler, while being smothered in otter kisses by all three at once.

The 5-month-old sister trio, to be named later, is being schooled to be a cool addition to a menagerie of snakes, hawks, turtles, panthers, alligators and other native beasts and birds at Big Cypress Reservation's 2,200-acre Billie Swamp Safari.

But don't be fooled by baby otter faces with tickly whiskers. As the otters mature, their teeth will become sharp as shards and their jaws will be so strong that they could rip the skin off an alligator, Jones said.

In about a month, fenced safely within 3,600 square feet of freedom complete with a watery 10,000-gallon pool, the gymnastic antics of the squiggly swimmers will surely draw crowds.

That's what they get paid for — in beef, fish and occasional carrots.

"When people visit Billie Swamp Safari they want to see what they see at Disney World — happy critters and smiling faces. And we want them to come back and bring more people," said Wovoka Tommie, acting director of operations at the rustic attraction.

Born in Louisiana, the otters were brought to Okalee Village at just 3 weeks old by Jones, a six-year veteran of the Hollywood animal show venue. There, and at his Miami home, Jones bottle-fed



Eileen Soler

'Otter' John Jones cuddles with furry, sweet otter sisters at Okalee Village in Hollywood.

and burped the pups every three hours. Now housebroken, the otters were coaxed to relieve themselves at appropriate, scheduled times.

In the wild, mother river otters begin teaching babies to swim at about 3 weeks old. Jones had to wait 45 days before introducing them to water via a blue plastic kiddie pool. He cuddled them to gain trust and helped them to sleep on warm heating pads.

"It was just like having new babies in the house," said Jones, also a falconer who is training a hawk and other birds of prey.



Eileen Soler

An otter habitat is under construction at Billie Swamp Safari on the Big Cypress Reservation.

♦ HOUSING From page 1A

Brighton to "fast track the progress and save money," Nelson said.

Like the Brighton dwellings, the ADA units will be two-bedroom, two-bathroom units, and the other six townhomes will be three-bedroom, two-bathroom units.

Twenty-one people are on the waiting list for the homes to be built across from the Administration Building on Lena Frank Drive. The anticipated completion date is also slated for December 2014.

"There's a high demand in the whole Tribe for housing. A majority of our members live off the reservation. There are a lot of advantages (to living

on the reservation)," Nelson said, citing access to clinics, Police and Fire Rescue, and after-school programs like 4-H and Boys & Girls Club among the perks. "It's pretty critical."

The rental units will also help satisfy housing demands for younger Tribal members who may not have established credit or others who may not want to take on mortgages, Nelson said.

The Housing Department will maintain the grounds, as well as the buildings' interiors and exteriors.

Hollywood Reservation will see a two-pronged project. Starting in June, eight homes will be erected across the new Howard Tiger Recreation Center site for those families displaced by the gym's construction. The rent-to-own homes will be completed in October.

Additionally, two townhome dwellings meeting ADA requirements with two units each and three townhome dwellings with three units each will also be constructed off NW 66th Avenue, behind the clinic. Nelson said they plan to start construction by the end of summer with completion in spring 2015.

Nearly 70 people have requested rental housing on the Hollywood Reservation.

"This is step one to get Tribal members in homes," Nelson said. He said more housing in two additional phases will be added, pending Council approval.

The eight Big Cypress townhomes, which broke ground Nov. 20 at Eloise Osceola Street and Cypress Lane, are on track for completion this August.

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Task force takes aim at violence against Native children

◆ **NICWA**
From page 1A



Eileen Soler

Jack Trope, of the Association of Indian Affairs; Terry Cross, of the National Indian Child Welfare Association; Chrissi Nimmo, of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma; and Shannon Smith, of the Indian Child Welfare Act Law Center react April 16 after Nimmo's compelling testimony concerning her involvement with the nationally explosive Adoptive Parents v. Baby Girl case in 2013.

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

FORT LAUDERDALE — Native American children are two and a half times more likely to commit suicide — the No. 1 cause of death among Indian youth — than children of other races, and they are three times more probable to suffer post-traumatic stress disorder than soldiers returning from war.

"You have to ask yourself, what kind of despair takes hold of a community for this to happen?" said Brian Cladoosby, president of the National Congress of American Indians and Chairman of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community.

The answers were hard to tell and hear for more than 50 of Indian Country's strongest leaders, educators, social workers, legal advisers and others who convened April 16-17 in Fort Lauderdale for the third advisory committee hearing to Attorney General Eric Holder's Task Force on American Indian and Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence.

The task force, established in 2012, was born out of a 2009 U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) report that revealed "alarming statistics about the safety and well-being of our nation's children," according to a recent press release. The study concluded that 60 percent of the nation's children suffered from some sort of physical, sexual or other criminal abuse either firsthand or as a witness. Forty percent were exposed twice or more and 5 percent had endured violence 10 or more times.

Though the report utilized input from only a handful of Native American children, common knowledge in Indian Country indicated that the numbers could

spike to alarming proportion in some Tribal communities.

"But, it makes my heart glad that we are all willing to take a step back and see the truth. We need our partners at federal, state and local levels to work with us to find courses of action," said Cladoosby, who sat on one of five hard-hitting panels that offered testimony, comments and solutions to five interrelated issues.

The panel topics included an overview of violence in Tribal communities; the Indian Child Welfare Act and keeping children connected to the community; gangs and sex trafficking in rural and urban communities; Tribal school violence; and actions against violence that are already showing promise in several communities.

Many speakers first stated clearly that the problem is rooted in history. English colonization, genocide, federal Indian policies, internment on reservations, manipulated religious conversion, boarding schools where culture and language were forbidden are leading precursors to the escalation of violence.

"It's a crying shame. The English displaced and abused us. We came to treaties with a pipe. The federal government came with a Bible, placed their hand on the Bible and promised to treat us with respect. I wonder when they will do that," said Cyril Scott, President of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in South Dakota.

Lack of education and extreme unemployment further fuel the problem.

"Poverty is a way of life in too many communities," said Erma Vizenor, Chairwoman of the White Earth Nation in Minnesota. The 20,000-member Tribe, one of the poorest in the United States, was the first to team with federal prosecutors

to share jurisdiction of crimes including murder, rape and felony child abuse.

"Why, in a culture where women and children are considered sacred, should such crimes ever be," Vizenor said. "Children who grow up with threats, with drugs and alcohol abuse, have negative thoughts. They blame themselves when they say, 'If I were good enough, I wouldn't get beat.'"

Gang activity was described by gang and sex trafficking panelist Chris Cuestas, of the National Violence Prevention Resource Center, as a "sleeping giant" in Tribal lands. Not just groups of thugs, he said, but organized cells of individuals who develop criminal enterprises — such as sex trafficking.

In North Dakota, where the oil boom has attracted thousands of non-Natives and Tribes have become divided over money and land, 19 cases of child sex trafficking are in various stages of adjudication. To cope, many of the children have turned to heroin and methamphetamine.

"There is organized crime in the Bakken oil fields," said Sadie Young Bird, director of the Fort Berthold Coalition Against Violence. "But it was not on our radar, so we had to go in blind to fight back and we did."

Young Bird and another advocate opened the domestic and sex abuse center three years ago with 14 clients. Today, the case load is quadrupled.

The advisory committee, also made up primarily of Native Americans, listened to panelists and asked for specific recommendations to improve conditions. Most witnesses said more money to fund education, social services and anti-crime efforts would surely help.

Co-chair Joanne Shenandoah, a performance artist of the Haudenosaunee Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy, said the task force came out of 56 recommendations for action that would expand educations, improve judicial training and establish the advisory committee. When the advisory committee was created, four public meetings were set.

The first public hearing was held in Bismarck, N.D. and focused on violence in the home. The second hearing in Scottsdale, Ariz. honed in on the juvenile justice response to violence. The next hearing will follow the National Congress of American Indians Mid-Year Conference June 11-12 in Anchorage, Alaska, and will bring to light violence specific to Alaskan Indians.

Already, the DOJ has awarded approximately 1,000 grant awards worth nearly \$440 million during the past four years to enhance prosecution, training and outreach efforts to keep Tribal communities safe, said Robert Listenbee, administrator for the DOJ's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and co-chair of the task force.

"We must work together, nation to nation. It won't be easy but we are not looking for easy answers. We are looking for sustainable answers," Listenbee said.



Eileen Soler

Robert Listenbee, administrator for the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and co-chair of the task force, welcomes participants of the Attorney General's Advisory Committee on American Indian and Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence.

"I learned not to trust people and that the adults closest to you will hurt you the most," he said. "But my story is about recovery, healing and resiliency. I am not defined by my history."

When he was 20, his birth mother found him working on a ranch in Wyoming. He returned to his reservation in Canada and learned his culture. He has worked on his recovery ever since.

The theme of the NICWA conference, held April 14-16, was "In the best interest of Native children — ICWA's enduring legacy." Speakers included representatives from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Department of Justice, Department of Health and Human Services, Tribal leaders and professionals in child welfare advocacy.

"Because of you, ICWA stands strong and government is paying more attention to our children," said Gil Vigil, president of NICWA, to attendees during the opening session. "We gather here to learn from one another and help each other with the challenges we face. It's our hope this conference will rejuvenate your mind, heart and passion. We are here for the kids who may not have a voice; we are their voice."

The conference offered workshops on child welfare, foster care and adoption services; children's mental health; data and research; legal affairs and advocacy; and youth involvement and family engagement.

"What brings us to Fort Lauderdale is that promise we make to all of our children: that their safety and well-being is our highest priority, that they are sacred beings — gifts from the Creator to be cherished, cared for and protected," said Tony West, associate attorney general, U.S. Department of Justice. "Tribes no longer face the prospect that a quarter to a third of their children will simply disappear, shipped off to homes halfway across the country."

He said many Tribes and states have partnered to implement ICWA to ensure Indian families and cultures are treated with the respect they deserve.

"Every time an Indian child is removed in violation of ICWA, it can mean a loss of all connection with family, with Tribe, with culture. And with that loss, studies show, comes an increased risk for mental health challenges, homelessness in later life, and, tragically, suicide," West said.

During a youth experiences panel, Dorian E. Le Beau, 14, recounted her seven years in foster homes. The last one wanted to adopt her and her siblings. A lawyer intervened.

"I didn't want to be adopted," said Le Beau, of the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin. "Kids know when they are loved. If they are old enough to speak, they should be heard."

"It's our hope this conference will rejuvenate your mind, heart and passion. We are here for the kids who may not have a voice; we are their voice."

— Gil Vigil, president of NICWA

Angel Van Brunt was among the first Native American children to benefit from ICWA. Now a Title IV-E foster care coordinator with the South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency in Shelton, Wash., she was a foster child herself in non-Native American homes starting in the early 1980s. The system kept her with her siblings, but they moved to many different homes.

"I remember being that kid who had to sleep in a stranger's home," said Van Brunt,

of the Colville Tribe. "Foster kids have to adjust to different homes and environments quickly. Our concept of time was different; if we liked a home, we thought we were there for a really long time. If we didn't like a home, we also thought we were there for a long time. There was no way to keep track of time."

Today she makes sure the foster kids she works with keep a "life book," like a scrapbook, in which they document their lives with photos, report cards, journal entries and anything else they want to include.

Susan Starr, a case worker and foster care licenser with the Muckleshoot Tribe in Auburn, Wash., was also a foster child in non-Native homes. She was raised off the reservation and moving back to her home years later proved difficult.

"My Indian identity is so important to me," she said. "But I don't weave or speak the language, so in trying to find my identity there was a lot of rejection. You have to be strong, if not for a higher power, I wouldn't have made it. I moved back home to share my story and bring healing to people."

Van Brunt and Starr have known each other for years but only on the softball field, often playing against each other. They didn't know they worked in the same field or shared the same kind of childhood until the conference.

"We've already made plans to co-facilitate training together for foster parents," said Van Brunt, who started her professional career as a Head Start early childhood teacher before transitioning to foster care. "I'm doing what I should be doing. I use my experiences to train foster parents."

NICWA participants networked and shared curriculums.

"We can adapt them to our own culture and Tribe," Van Brunt said. "I've learned the issues throughout Indian Country are the same. To be able to network and help



Beverly Bidney

National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) president Gil Vigil, at podium, board member W. Alex Wesaw and vice president Ted Nelson Sr. open the 32nd annual NICWA conference in Fort Lauderdale April 14.

each other and our kids is important."

Shannon Porter, a guardian ad litem who makes recommendations to the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Tribal court in Minnesota, attended the NICWA conference for the first time.

"I've learned so much," she said. "There were a lot of professionals from my area I didn't know before. The networking has been the most useful thing so far. I have new contacts and know of more services available to our kids and parents."

With the passage of ICWA, policies allowing Native American children to be adopted out to non-Native families came to an end. Violations of the law still exist, including last year's Baby Girl case, but the BIA uses those cases to amend and strengthen the law.

The Obama administration is focused on increasing funding for social workers and child welfare workers on reservations, updating the BIA child protection handbook to prevent ICWA violations and re-examining ICWA guidelines for state courts.

"Protecting our Indian children is the most important work," said Kevin Washburn, assistant secretary of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior. "This is the one time each year their work is celebrated. It's nice to have an annual conference where people who do the work come together. They momentarily get to step away from what they deal with every day, although a lot of these people are still on call."

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We are students at the University of New Mexico, accruing loans, and could not have had our child without the help."

— Student, Albuquerque, NM

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◆ **4-H**
From page 1A

each animal and related it to cuts of meat. Eye appeal, structural integrity and heavy muscle don't always translate into better quality meat, but they do lead to a better life for the animal, said judge Pat Hogue.

Hayes has taught 4-H kids for about 25 years, since her son Hollywood Board Rep. Steve Osceola showed his steer in Clewiston as a child.

"It's rewarding when I see the children of someone I taught when they were kids and their grandchildren," Hayes said. "Many of them complete the program and some go into agriculture or the cattle program. They love their animals."



Beverly Bidney
Blake Baker, 14, leads his steer out of the barn.



Beverly Bidney
Troy Cantu and Rylee Smith position their hogs in front of judge Clint McWaters at the 28th annual Seminole Indian 4-H Livestock Show and Sale in Brighton March 28.

◆ **NORTH**
From page 3A

Over the years, drawing and sewing patchwork were her creative outlets.

Because she grew up in a traditional chickee camp off U.S. 441 north of Miami, North was immersed in Seminole culture. Her mother, Mary Buster Motlow, taught her to sew, while her father, Jack Henry Motlow, sold wood carvings and wrestled alligators for tourists. Her upbringing paved the way for her work in the Culture Department.

In 1999, the preschool director asked North to help develop a language program. North agreed, and as the only preschool employee, she traveled to other reservations to teach.

Because language is part of culture, they expanded the program into a full fledged Culture Department to also teach arts and crafts, cooking, chickee building, stickball and gigging. The Culture Department aims to preserve ancient Seminole ways for future generations.

"It's all about utilizing your heritage and keeping it alive for the youth," North said. "Sometimes the kids don't understand how we lived off the land. I lived it, so I know what I'm talking about."

North, a traditional woman with a modern side, also worked with former Hollywood Councilman Max Osceola Jr. and Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola for about a year to complete a language app. The app, available in Mikasuki or Creek, is one more tool to help pass on Seminole language.

Tribal members, one per household, can bring their iPad or iPhone to the Culture Department in Hollywood, Big Cypress or Brighton to download the app.

"If you forget where you come from and don't speak the language, then you become like everyone else," she said. "That's why we work hard to pass the language along. The new app is a tool for people to use and I hope they use it to ask questions. It is perpetuating our culture in a most modern way. You learn what you can from non-Indians."

The app is North's proudest professional accomplishment, and she hopes people will realize its usefulness.

In addition, North spearheaded the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) program on the reservations. Working with Max Osceola Jr., the first club in Hollywood was chartered in 2004.

North worked as a volunteer since the start and served as Chief Professional Officer as required by BGCA charters. In 2013, she earned the National Service to Youth Award for her nine years of continuing concern and deep involvement in the development of the club's constructive activities and guidance for youth.

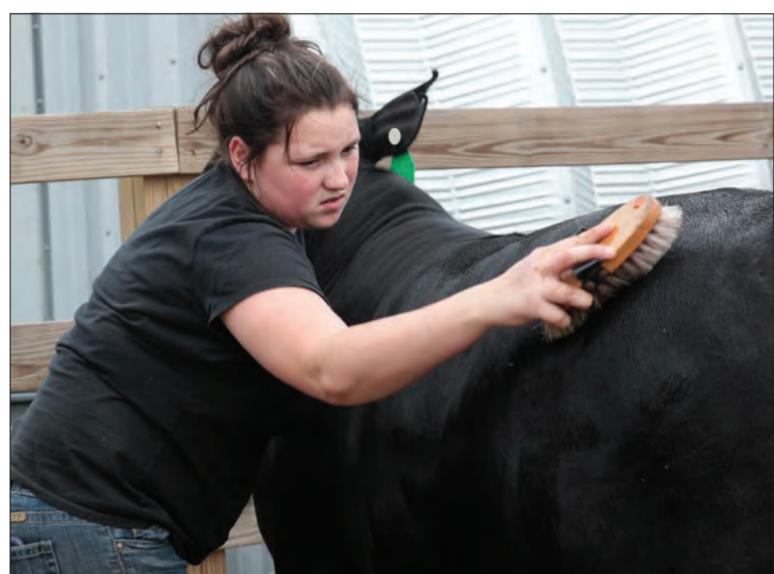
"I'm not there for awards or an 'attaboy,'" she said. "I'm just there to do the job. If it works, it works; if not, we can do it better. I enjoy the work, not the recognition."

Despite her impressive resume, North believes her greatest accomplishments are her children and grandchildren.

"You don't know they are listening, but they were," she said. "They are doing well on their own, doing what they wanted to do and taking care of themselves."

Retirement for North won't be spent sitting in a rocking chair; she will continue her community involvement by serving on committees, caring for her sister's grandchild and finally traveling.

"I can take those trips with seniors now that I'm not working," she said. "I never took the time to travel, but now I can. I'd like to go back to New Mexico, to see my daughter and grandchildren in Idaho and to Alaska in August. I'll probably get back into art, too. But right now I'm just taking my time and not rushing myself."



Beverly Bidney
Courtney Gore, 16, grooms her steer before the show. This was her fourth year raising a steer, but this was the toughest one, she said.



Beverly Bidney
Deliah Carrillo, 16, feeds her 1,398-pound steer before the 28th annual show and sale.



Beverly Bidney
Anna Tigertail, 5, cradles her chicken as she brings it to the show barn to display for judges.



Beverly Bidney
The show ring is filled with kids and their hogs during the 28th annual 4-H Livestock Show and Sale in Brighton March 28.



Beverly Bidney
Shamarion Tommie, right, shows his hog.



Beverly Bidney
Bryce Baker, 7, keeps his sister Lason's calf company in the small animal area.



Beverly Bidney
Quayton Billie, 7, brings his rabbit to the ring.



Beverly Bidney
Kimora Alex, 8, and Hunter Howard, 11, groom their hogs before the show and sale.



Beverly Bidney
Adam Osceola shows his son Clayson Osceola, 4, the right way to handle the 6-month-old calf he would show at the 4-H Livestock Show and Sale. Clayson loves helping his dad with his 150-head herd in Brighton.

◆ **BOAT TOUR**
From page 3A

"There is so much history here that it boggles the mind," Sydnor said.

About half the tour guests were Bonnet House members; the others were tourists.

Charles Bolick, one-third Iroquois who was raised in Pennsylvania, said he attended the cruise purposely to learn more about the Seminole Tribe.

"I always knew (the Seminole) were here, but I knew nothing about the history. Everrett (Osceola) opened doors for me," Bolick said.

Seiler said he learned more about the Seminole Tribe from the boat tour than he expected. He was unaware of connections evident through language and traditions that tie members with the Tequesta and even the prehistoric Calusa. He was also enlightened to how the Miccosukee and Seminole Tribes are tied by culture and family relations - but separate due to politics.

"We are not all about wars or casinos, and we are not just a relic of what happened on the New River. We are in the forefront of education, art, donating to good causes. We were and always will be part of the bigger picture," Osceola said.

Seiler said today's Seminole impact is prominent and vital. He clicked off several collaborative efforts including the Winterfest Boat Parade and last year's historic re-enactment to save the city's first post office near Stranahan House. A dugout canoe, carved by the hands of a Tribal member, is the eighth-floor focal point at Fort Lauderdale City Hall.

"We thank God that we made friends with the Tribe," Seiler told Osceola. "They have been great friends to the city, the county and the state of Florida."

A visit with Guy LaBree, painter of the Seminole ways

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

TALLAHASSEE — When Guy LaBree entered first grade at Dania Elementary School in 1946, he found a whole group of children who hated to wear shoes as much as he did. The first generation of Seminole Indians to attend Florida public schools quickly bonded with LaBree. He would sneak away to visit their camps and was welcomed by elders who served him sofkee and frybread. His Indian friends would sneak to the LaBree home, where he let them stand in the shower as long as they wanted and play the hi-fi just like urban teenagers anywhere.

Though the friends all drifted apart by high school, LaBree never forgot. An amateur oil painter and bored print shop worker, LaBree was confronted one day by his old friend Alan Jumper who told him, "Paint the ways of the Seminoles." Jumper's directive unlocked LaBree's soul, the artist said, creating a prolific urge to paint the Seminoles. He retired from printing, got out his old easel and the rest is Seminole history.

Forty years later he still paints the Seminoles, their traditions, history and the special vanishing culture he personally witnessed as a youth. His work is distinctive for its bright colors, lush landscapes, accuracy and compelling scenes.

Last month, LaBree won the prestigious Florida Folk Heritage Award.

Chairman James E. Billie nominated LaBree for the award, writing:

"I first met Guy LaBree when he was hanging out and running around barefoot with Harry and Tommie Jumper's sons, Alan and Harley Jumper, and with Jimmie and Bobby Matthias on the Dania Seminole Indian Reservation. They were very close friends, almost inseparable. Guy spent many nights in Indian camps and his Indian friends would spend nights at his home. Beginning with those early years when we were all just boys and on through today, Guy has kept closely in touch with the Seminoles, researching our culture and producing outstanding paintings depicting our people, history, traditions and legends.

"The first painting I commissioned Guy LaBree to make for me was *The Legend of the Bridge to Eternity*. I gave Guy my description of what I remembered about this horrifying legend of the narrow bridge crossing from the Earth to the New World and what you had to do to get there. The final product — his painting *Bridge to Eternity* — came forth and I was astounded how true to life it seemed. I believe he could not have brought forth this legend on canvas had he not lived among the Seminoles and spent so much time listening to our legends and stories.

"Guy LaBree paintings are everywhere around me, wherever I go in Seminole Country. They are on the walls of my office and my home. Many other Seminoles treasure their collections of Guy LaBree paintings as well. Our Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum has quite a few in its permanent collection, including the entire series of our folktales he painted for the collection displayed in *Legends of the Seminoles* by Betty Mae Jumper.

"Up until now, I have seen many famous artists and their paintings of Seminoles and Seminole life. Guy LaBree, however, tops them all with his accurate depictions of the way of life of the Seminole."

The Seminole Tribune visited Guy LaBree and his wife, Pat, recently at their home and studio in the Pine Level section of western DeSoto County.

Peter Gallagher: Guy, I want to tape a little conversation with you to see if we can find out what you're doing these days.

Guy LaBree: OK, but you're gonna have to cut out all the bad words.

PG: Tell me something about your friend Patrick Smith, the Florida author who died recently.

GL: I thought a lot of him. The man was brilliant. He took real Florida history stuff and mixed it with fiction, but the

fiction did not interfere with the real story he was telling.

I know when he was in his last days, laying in bed like that, I kept calling him up and his wife would answer, "Who is this?" She didn't know me 'cause I'd never met her. I'd say, "Guy LaBree, a friend of Pat's." She'd go, "Well, he's sleeping right now." I'd say, "Fine, let him sleep."

But, the last time I called, I could hear him in the background: "Who is it?" and she said, "Some guy named Guy LaBree" and he said, "Bring that phone here, lady." Man, he got all excited. I felt real good about that.

PG: I went over to Merritt Island to see him not long before he died and it seemed like he was permanently in bed in the living room of his house, surrounded by bookcases full of his books, books on Florida and all his awards. He told us that he had been honored by the governor with the Hall of Fame award but that he was too ill to go to Tallahassee to pick it up.

So one day, without any forewarning or anything, a big black limousine showed up in front of the house and a bunch of guys in suits got out and none other than Gov. Rick Scott and his wife knocked on the door, walked in the living room and presented the award to Pat, personally. Pat said they stayed a whole hour.

GL: Very cool, very cool. I'm glad they did that. Pat brought a lot of business down to Florida with his writings. He hadn't been busy saying "I'm good" or anything like that. He was just out there doing it.

Rick Scott's wife was one of the ones handing out the award to me up in Tallahassee and I walked up to her with all the racket going on and whispered, "I voted for your husband and I'm gonna vote for him again," and she said, "Oh, that is so sweet."

PG: What are you doing now?

GL: Painting-wise?

PG: Yeah, in your current life. What is Guy LaBree doing these days?

GL: I am getting more and more close to retirement; though, as far as painting goes, I don't guess I'll ever retire. We are not tied down to anything. We only go to a couple of shows a year and they're the ones that Seminoles put on. I think I've gone to one other one — the event honoring Frank Thomas they had last year up near Bushnell. I can't remember. Patty would remember. I got the mind of a sieve, it all passes through. Only some things just hang on.

Other than that I just been doing paintings that I want to do and once in a while I get a commission and I'll do that. I always try to cut that in ahead of everything else. I got one I am working on now that I am waiting to get an OK on a sketch that I sent out.

PG: What's in the painting?

GL: A chickee. This woman had a dream and it was about this bayhead and out there was a golden chickee. She was told that is where she would go when she died and she wanted a painting of it, so I did a sketch and she said the chickee was too big, so I did a smaller sketch and now I'm waiting to hear.

PG: How common is that for people to approach you to paint a dream?

GL: It started a way back with James (Billie). He would describe something to me, tell a story and he would say, "I'd like to see what that would look like," and I'd get a picture in my head and paint it and show it to him and he would always say, "That's exactly what I was thinking of," which is most unusual because most people have their own ideas of their dreams.

PG: People approach you because they see your work and somehow figure you are someone who could create their dream?

GL: Yeah, I guess. Mitchell Cypress had a dream and I did a painting for him. It was a big one and it used to be behind his desk in his office when he was in there with him up on a horse riding up to the clouds. He had a dream — you see his wife had died in his arms years ago and he had dreams about her. He said whenever he went out to check his cattle, he would make



Peter B. Gallagher

Guy LaBree creates a new Seminole painting using his famous palette, which he has used since he was a kid in high school.

a little campfire, heat up some coffee and take a nap. He said he always dreamed the same dream: He would be on an Appaloosa horse going on up in the clouds and she is waiting on him up there on her horse — a paint horse — and an eagle was bringing up his black hat ... and Mitchell said a medicine man told him if he could see all that at one time it wouldn't be bothering him. It wasn't bothering him; it was just the fact that it happened over and over and over that got him wondering. So I did the picture and he said, "That was it, that was it."

Then later, his one daughter died and he had me paint her in there. So I asked him what kind of horse did she ride? I might as well have all the horses right. And, in the dream, she wore the buckskin. And a year or two later his other daughter died so he called me and said I need you to put another one in. She had a black horse.

PG: So you kept adding to the same painting?

GL: Yes, over the years. Then he called again just as we're getting ready to go out to, what do they call it, the Big Cypress Arts and Crafts Festival, and I said I would see him out there. He told me, "I got one more to put in the picture." I told him, "Mitchell, you keep on like this and you aren't going to have any more family left." He says, "No, no, this one is a new one." He had a little baby. So he wanted the baby in there. So I got him laying in there.

Then after that baby, he had another baby, so I put her in there crawling around and I told him, after this little girl was in there, I told him, "I'm afraid to even drive this painting home." He said "Why?" I said, "It's got a history to it. If something happens to it, I can't paint all that again." And that's true. That painting of Mitchell's been going on for years. He said, "Well, we'll just have to start another painting then."

PG: Did you ever think if something happened to you while you were driving that painting, you might actually end up in the painting yourself?

GL: Oh, yeah. Well, one time he wanted a horse in there for one of these other girls and I made one up and put it in there and Mitchell actually went out and bought a horse for her that exactly matched the one I painted. I didn't know that until he told me he wanted another horse for the other little daughter and asked me, "But please don't make it so hard to find." I laughed and

thought, man, this is getting spookier and spookier.

PG: At the same time, it shows how much Mitchell trusted you in translating his dream to canvas. He kept coming back to you.

GL: Sonny Billie used to tell me things, too, but he would only tell me part of the story. He would say, "You don't need to know the rest, just the part that goes on the canvas." Another thing he would say is this is the kind of thing that starts from their religion, it starts right at the very beginning of the world and he says you have to be in that all your life to understand where they are at now cause they teach that every year.

He'd ask, "Guy, you been to a Green Corn Dance?" and I'd say, "No. I been invited a couple times but I don't see no sense in going. You got to stay on the outside of it so you don't know what's happening." People have told me things, but I couldn't look out at what was going on and tell what is really happening. And it is probably embarrassing to them to have people watch 'em. And he said, "Yeah, I don't go to watch you pray, why would you go to watch me pray?"

Sonny was cool like that. He was a brilliant guy. You could get in some deep talks with him. He was very much his own self.

PG: What are you working on now? Do you have something no one has seen that we can publish in the newspaper?

GL: I've got a new one of a gal up on a horse. I'm just finishing it. No one's really seen it yet. *The Seminole Tribune* will be the first one to publish that one.

PG: Tell me about snake hunting with Buffalo Tiger.

GL: I'd always ask him where can I find this one the most, or that one. And he would save me a lot of trouble 'cause he was there and he knew where they were. So I would go out and he would always say, "But don't mess with 'em, 'cause you'll get hurt." He'd always say that. I am surprised he is still alive. He's got to be in his 90s, still going strong. Man, sometimes I look back and I can't believe what we've seen. You know how much history we've lived through?

PG: I think about that all the time. Thanks, Guy LaBree, for your beautiful paintings of Florida and the Seminoles.

◆ FPL From page 1A

Workers, Save Our Creeks, Everglades Sawgrass Warriors and Independent Traditional Seminoles.

Demonstrators hoped to increase awareness about FPL's plans to build a massive power plant on 2,300 acres of land near where the Seminole Tribe plans to build a high school. The plant will require 22 million gallons of water a day to be pumped from the Florida aquifer, the main source of water for Hendry County and the reservation.

According to FPL's 10-year plan, the plant would be a twin to the West County Energy Center in Palm Beach County — one of the largest energy plants in the United States and the biggest producer of greenhouse gasses in Florida.

Tribe member Heather Billie, with her infant son in tow, said she is against what could turn the bucolic, country nature of the Big Cypress (BC) Reservation into a gray industrial town. "Everybody needs business, but

BC is where people come to get away from that. It's peace and quiet. It's our home," Heather Billie said.

A lawsuit against FPL, Hendry County and McDaniel Reserve Realty Holdings (owned by developer Edward Garcia) is scheduled to be heard July 14 at the courthouse. The suit stems from allegations that zoning for the property was changed improperly, thus setting the stage for the power plant to be built.

"If we don't stand and fight against the power plant, why should anyone else," Heather Billie said.

Several protestors voiced concerns to county leaders during the public comments section of a county commission meeting that happened during the second protest. However, interaction was thwarted when commission chairman Karson Turner told members of the dais to "not engage."

Speakers echoed fears about the power plant and pleaded for a reversal of

the zoning change. The land is a proven habitat for endangered Florida wildlife including wood storks, tortoises and Florida panthers.

"The rezoning process was quick and sweet for you guys, but when the plant gets built, what will you tell your children and grandchildren when they ask, "Where is the Everglades, where are the panthers?" said Danny Billie, spokesperson for the Independent Traditional Seminoles. "When the water is gone, when the panther is gone, will you have the courage to tell them it was you who made the decision?"

Tribal elders also contend that several archeological sites and medicine plants are within the area and nearby. Janet Spence, of South Pasadena near St. Petersburg, said she learned about the protest via Facebook. She and her friend Jim Lohead drove two hours to join the demonstration in favor of keeping Seminole tradition alive.

"It's all about saving what needs to be saved," Spence said. "In this case, we are trying to stop greedy acts against Mother Earth."



Eileen Soler

Amy Clay, of the Independent Traditional Seminoles, stands with her family against the proposed FPL plant.



A *Seminole Tribune* exclusive: Guy LaBree's new painting. The Seminole girl on a horse came to him in a dream.

Commemorating our Nation's dedicated police officers

SUBMITTED BY WILLIAM R. LATCHFORD
Police Chief

The Seminole Tribe of Florida has proclaimed by resolution the week of May 11-17 as Police Week. During this time, we ask all Tribal members and each community to know and understand the problems, duties and responsibilities of the officers within Seminole Police Department.

We invite all Tribal members and their communities to observe this very special week. It commemorates police officers past and present, who by their faithful and loyal devotion to their responsibilities, have rendered a dedicated service to the Tribal members and the communities within which they serve. Each and every day our officers take pride in their positions protecting and preserving the rights and security of everyone within the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

I am also pleased to announce the Seminole Police Department's Explorers and their parents will travel to Washington, D.C. again this year during National Police Week May 12-16. This is a special event we participate in to remember law enforcement officers who gave the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. Involving the Explorers the past few years has helped them better understand the duties and sacrifices police officers make each day.

I want to thank all the Explorers and their parents for actively raising funds to ensure a successful week.

Please join me in honoring the extraordinary service and sacrifice the Seminole Police Department officers make on behalf of their true devotion to serving the Tribal members within the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

Tribe celebrates National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week

Council passes resolution recognizing men and women who dispatch for Police and Fire Rescue Departments

SUBMITTED BY MARY M. NEGREY
Seminole Police Department Captain

Each year, the second full week of April honors the men and women who serve as Public Safety Telecommunicators – or dispatchers. The concept started in California in 1981 and in 1994 became permanently recognized by a congressional proclamation.

This year, the Seminole Tribe of Florida passed a resolution recognizing the men and women who dispatch for the Police and Fire Departments to acknowledge their dedication and service to the Tribe during this year's National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week April 13-19.

Dispatch services are provided to all Seminole reservations from one of three dispatch centers located in Hollywood, Big Cypress and Brighton. Each center is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year by personnel assigned to that reservation. Dispatchers answer the phone and take information from callers who need police, fire or medical rescue services.

These men and women gain familiarity with the communities they serve and the geography of the reservations to provide the highest level of service possible. All three dispatch centers answer calls directly from the community; additionally Big Cypress is a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), meaning it answers 911 calls directly.

Dispatchers perform a variety of duties and functions during their work day. They answer emergency, non-emergency and administrative phone calls; enter calls for police or fire service into their computers; dispatch police, fire and medical rescue via the radio; and coordinate other emergency resources as needed, including air rescue, other jurisdictions' police and fire departments or Tribal resources.

Monitoring a variety of cameras and license plate readers, as well as running criminal checks on people and tags, also make up part of their daily responsibilities.

The Seminole dispatchers are all state of Florida certified. Seminole Dispatch is a state certified training facility. Dispatchers must successfully complete the state certification and a series of courses during their training that certifies them as telecommunicators, fire dispatchers and emergency medical dispatchers through the Association of Public-Safety Communication Officials (APCO), an internationally recognized training and certification protocol program. All are CPR certified, and supervisors receive additional training related to their position.

We would like to thank our dispatchers for the service they provide; for their dedication to the Tribe; for their commitment to their profession; and for their achievements and professionalism. We hope you will offer your thanks to these men and women as you encounter them as well.



Beverly Bidney

Class 14-01 is all smiles after members took their oath March 27 at the graduation ceremony in Hollywood. The eight graduates were selected to tackle the training program out of 160 applicants.

Tribe Fire Rescue welcomes eight

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The Seminole Tribe Fire Rescue Department is so selective about who it hires that even to apply, candidates must have completed fire academy and passed the state certification exam.

Out of 160 applicants this year, only eight were selected to tackle the department's rigorous eight-week training program. Only after successfully completing training would they join the ranks of the 139-member department.

All eight made the cut, and they were honored at a graduation ceremony March 27 in Hollywood.

The new firefighters-paramedics from Class 14-01 are Sergio Alcazar,

Dennis Byrne, Eduardo Costa, Kristoffer Durthaler, Joseph Sessa, Jeremy Smith, Darren Thompson and Gannon Yehle. After receiving their certificate from Fire Rescue Chief Donald DiPetrillo and taking the oath, they enjoyed a photo session and refreshments with their families.

"These are a uniquely talented group of people," DiPetrillo said. "If it wasn't for their family support, these firefighters wouldn't be here today."

The training, held on each reservation, included cultural awareness, rural firefighting, hazardous materials, emergency medical response, helicopter transport, heavy extraction and awareness of culturally sensitive issues.

"They're ready," said Deputy Chief Mark Steele. "We prepare them to go to the front line and they are mentally prepared for

different areas – urban or rural."

Expertise in a variety of responses is necessary to serve the Tribe on all the reservations. On the rural reservations, 80 percent of transports to hospitals are for Tribal members. In Hollywood, 80 percent of trips made to hospitals are for non-Tribal people at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino.

Eduardo Costa always knew he wanted to be a firefighter. But after he finished fire and medic school, he learned how hard it is to get a job in fire service. He volunteered at Broward Sheriff Office's Department of Fire Rescue for about a year to gain experience.

"This is still surreal for me," said Costa, of Plantation. "Waking up, putting on the gear and coming to work – I still have to pinch myself. A lot of the other guys feel the same. It feels amazing."

When Costa went through school, he got a taste of the brotherhood and camaraderie among firefighters.

"It's more in perspective now of just how close these guys are," he said. "I'm very fortunate and blessed to be part of it."

Founded in 2004, Fire Rescue responds to more than 7,500 emergency calls and more than 40,000 non-emergency calls annually.

The department staffs three fire stations in Hollywood, Big Cypress and Brighton, and two wild land divisions on Big Cypress and Brighton.

About 22 million people visit the casinos, attractions and hotels on the reservations every year.

Fire Rescue has arrangements with nearby municipal fire departments to provide aid as needed.

CATTLE DRIVE

From page 3A

"Roger stood tall in my eyes and for the Tribe, too," said Richard Osceola, a friend of Roger. "That family now stands tall in my heart."

Brighton Board Rep. Larry Howard remembered watching them interact when he was a child.

"They always cared about everybody," he said.

The event was the second cattle drive to honor the Smith family. Diane Smith said she was pleased with the crowd and the sentiments they shared.

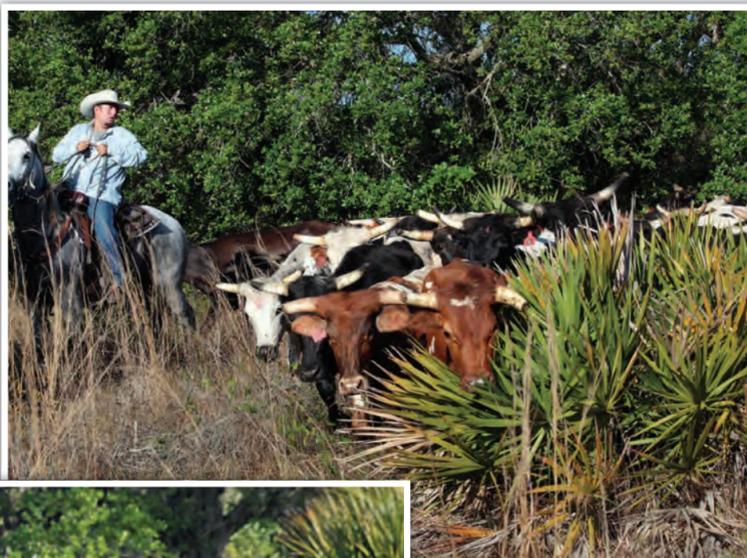
"People had a lot of nice things to say," she said. "The turnout was better than I expected, and I hope it gets bigger every year."

Accolades came easily from those who knew the men.

"I still miss Roger," said Richard Bowers. "He had a knack for getting people together and here we are again."

Judging by the turnout and atmosphere of the weekend's activities, the Smith family tradition of cattle and service will live on.

"The Smith family is about leadership," said Amos Tiger, director of the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena. "Look around and you can see it here."



Beverly Bidney

Riders guide cattle through the rough terrain of the Brighton Reservation during the 8-mile cattle drive that ended at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena.



Beverly Bidney

Trail boss Alex Johns leads the cattle drive through Brighton.



Beverly Bidney

Trail boss Alex Johns and helpers wrangle a cow that got away during the 8-mile cattle drive.



Beverly Bidney

A cow strains to see what the holdup ahead could be while being driven through Brighton during the Smith family cattle drive.

BUILDER

From page 3A

and his cheers boomed over other parents. "He'd call me wonk (baby) and his voice was the loudest of everyone," Julia said.

Just beyond Oneva's house, on land where her brother was to someday build his own home, the memorial get-together continued with horseshoe, beanbag and log peeling contests. Friends from near and far, like the Willis family from Tennessee who Mike taught how to build chickees, competed – but no one cared who won.

Linda Beletso, who grew up with Mike in Brighton, said she will never forget Mike's work ethic and his sense of responsibility. She watched him build and rethatch several chickees at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.

"Mike was always, always working hard at his work and his family. But he is home now where he should be," she said. "Now it's our job to be faithful to God so we will get to see Mike again."



Eileen Soler

Theresa Frost competes in a log peeling contest April 12 at the third annual Mike Allen Smith Memorial at the Big Cypress Reservation.

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum library at your service

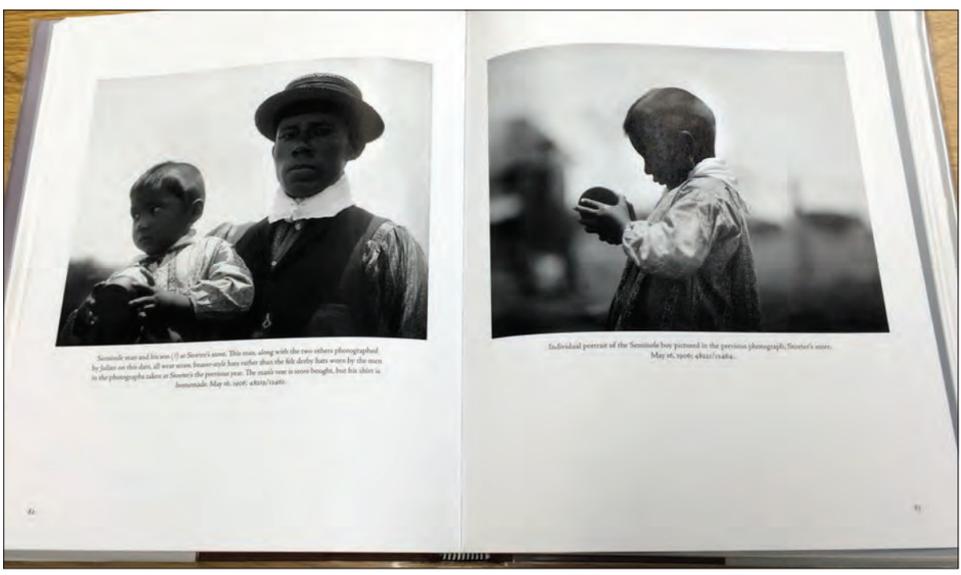


Photo courtesy of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum
Books like *Hidden Seminoles*, *Julian Dimock's Historic Florida Photographs*, by Gerald T. Milanich and Nina J. Root, contain unidentified gems like these two photographs of a man and a boy at Storter's Store on the Big Cypress Reservation in 1906.

SUBMITTED BY MARY BETH ROSEBROUGH
Research Coordinator

For the last year, the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum has worked to establish a closer relationship with the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) in order to better serve the community.

In early 2013, Paul Backhouse was named director of both organizations and was tasked with making them cohesive, working toward the common goal of preserving the Seminole Tribe of Florida's culture and history.

There have been various ways this integration has been implemented, one being the combining of the two libraries formerly separated not just by distance but also by purpose. Previously, the Museum library focused on being a collection relevant to the Seminole Tribe of Florida and related Native American history, along with best museum practices. The THPO library worked toward acquiring books to help its archaeological endeavors. With an emphasis on methods, maps and architecture, the THPO catered to the needs of staff archaeologists and mapping experts.

Then in 2013, Collections managers Tara Backhouse, of the Museum, and Kate Macuen, of the THPO, decided to combine the two libraries as one more concrete way to bring the organizations together.

Now the THPO library would be cataloged and housed in the Museum library space.

The Museum prepared for the additions by weeding out books, journals and magazines that no longer supported the goals set in the 2013 Strategic Plan – to establish the Museum as the leading academic resource for Seminole and Southeastern Native American culture and history. The Museum library will narrow its focus to the Seminole Tribe of Florida in particular and Southeastern Tribes in general. Included are volumes dealing with the history, culture and beliefs of Tribes known to have interacted with the Seminoles.

With the addition of the THPO volumes on archaeology and archaeological methods, the combined libraries will provide researchers with a broader range of knowledge coming from a more comprehensive collection of materials. Not only could one find, for instance, the history of the 1830 Removal Act but also the methods used to find a site where related activity occurred. More thorough and astute conclusions naturally result from more in-depth study coming from an increased amount of resources.

The new, improved library has the potential to help both the academic world and the Tribal members who wish to patronize the library for their own enjoyment.



Photo courtesy of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum
The Museum library has comfortable tables and chairs, as well as a guest computer, in a quiet atmosphere to encourage learning.



Photo courtesy of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum
Some of the rarest books in the library include early reports from the Smithsonian Institution, whose researchers worked with Tribes all over the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The libraries will be fully combined by the end of 2015, but access to the information is already available in both. Tribal members and employees are always welcome to view the materials and see how the Museum and THPO can be of help in identifying the past.

To make an appointment to use the library, call Mary Beth Rosebrough, research coordinator at 863-902-1113 ext. 12252.

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Wisdom from the past

Betty Mae Jumper

Chickee Church

The following column was written by Betty Mae Jumper and printed in the March 6, 1998 issue of *The Seminole Tribune*.

A long, long time ago, before the Chickee Church was built, our group used to go many different places to hold our services. Joann Micco had a restaurant where the Seminole Police Department station is now, and this is where services were held for a while. Before that, we went to the gymnasium and at times we met in the home or empty apartment of one of the church members. I used to think that the way we moved around was the same as Moses when he used to roam with his group in the wilderness.

Then, finally, the Council gave us a small plot of land in front of the clinic. At first, we held services in a tent that was erected on the lot.

Then, one day, Ronnie Doctor got some men together and they went out and cut cypress logs and cabbage palm fronds and they made a church. The Chickee Church. That was more than 10 years ago, and we've been meeting there ever since. But, we always had a problem. The church was built over a water line and we were always being warned that if the line broke, it could wash our whole church right away.

Finally, this month, we're going to move into a new home. A new building is going to become our meeting place and the Chickee Church is coming down.

I thank God that He let our church survive all this time, but I can't tell you how sad I'll be to see that Chickee Church come down. We'd love to keep it, but it's time to move our church away from that water line.

And, we've also gotten much bigger. Last Sunday there were about 87 people at the service. People had to stand outside to hear the sermon. It was a great turnout and it was especially nice because we had a lot of youngsters at the service. That's great to see.

Soon, we'll be in the new building, which holds more than 150 people. It will seat everyone, but it won't be the same. But, we're going to save the old building and maybe we'll use some of the logs to make a covered porch for the new church.

As for a name, well, chickee means "house" in the Mikasuki language. It doesn't mean a thatched covered house. It's any house. So, maybe we'll still call the new place the Chickee Church.

Until then, we'll still be meeting for a few more weeks in the original Chickee Church. Everyone is invited to come and visit before we move into our new home. It's an opportunity that will soon be gone, and I hope you come with us. It's your last chance to follow Moses as we move out of the wilderness for good.

Hope you come out and join us.



Hah-Pong-Ke: Frank Thomas

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

LAKE WALES — Born and raised in Clay County, Frank Thomas is a native Floridian whose ancestors came to Florida to farm in the late 18th century. Members of his family fought in the Second Seminole War and with the Florida Brigade at Cold Harbor in the Civil War; they also continued farming until the 1950s. This direct connection with the land and heritage of English-speaking Florida inspired his music.

Thomas said his entire family played music and he "learned guitar so young that I don't remember learning." Before the age of 10, he began singing with his family's gospel group. Later he began attending square dances, where he learned the fiddle from traditional fiddler Allie Murray. He also received inspiration from his mother who wrote songs about Florida.

Thomas went on to play rhythm guitar with nationally known bluegrass gospel groups and later returned to Florida to perform extensively with his wife, Ann, whom he taught to play bass. A professional librarian, Ann was raised in Lakeland and met Thomas in 1978 at Carl Allen's Restaurant in Lake Wales. Separately and together they wrote more than 400 songs about Florida on subjects ranging from the condition of the environment to Seminole and local history.

Frank and Ann Thomas were awarded the state's Florida Folk Heritage Award in 1993, in a special ceremony at the Big Cypress Reservation. A longtime friend of Chairman James E. Billie and many other Tribal members, Frank Thomas has been a fixture for nearly half a century at the Florida Folk Festival (White Springs) where he hosts a Cracker Music stage at the Suwannee River gazebo during the Memorial Day weekend event.

For decades, even unto this day, their old wooden house on Lake Wales' Rattlesnake Road – nicknamed the "Cracker Palace" – has been a shrine where Florida folk music artists and fans visit to renew their spirit for the music, traditions, history and Florida culture.

In the 1970s and '80s Frank and Ann Thomas also produced a weekly Florida singer-songwriter radio show for WMNF-FM in the Tampa area – the first radio show to feature the Florida Folk Music genre live on the airwaves. They recorded several albums of their own, including *Florida Stories*, *Cracker Nights*, *Bingo!*, *Just Another Day in the Life of a Florida Cracker* and *Spanish Gold*.

For decades, they traveled the state, sometimes with son Michael, performing their music at schools, festivals, folk clubs and concert stages. Ann passed away in 2004; Frank continues to perform with new wife, Lisa, who performs Ann's songs and harmonies.

One of Frank and Ann's most popular collaborative efforts was *Guy LaBree*, a tribute to the legendary artist who has spent his career documenting, in oils on canvas, the history, pathos and beauty of Florida's Seminole Indian history and culture.



Peter B. Gallagher

'Guy LaBree'

He walks barefooted through the Florida sand with a paintbrush in his hand. Upon the canvas flows his very soul as he paints the legends of the Seminole and the Mikasuki . . . The barefoot artist Guy LaBree.

He was raised down in Dania in a palmetto patch; Now he catches rattlesnakes in a croaker sack.

He grew up among the Seminole Indians, he learned their history, learned their legends. He knows more than most white men know about the swamps where the Seminole go.

He didn't go to school to learn his trade, his teacher was the Everglades;

the brilliance of the Florida sky; the grace and beauty of a butterfly; the big bull gator and the old black bear; the colorful clothes that the Seminoles wear

He captures the sadness in the old woman's eye who saw so many young warriors die. He painted Osceola in all his glory; the barefoot artist tells his story of the pain & suffering of the brave red man who fought so hard for his people's land.

He walks barefooted through the Florida sand with a paintbrush in his hand. Upon the canvas flows his very soul as he paints the legends of the Seminole And the Mikasuki . . . The barefoot artist Guy LaBree

E a s t e r



Eileen Soler
Collecting Easter eggs is fun for Evan Ruidiaz at the annual Big Cypress Easter celebration April 11.



Beverly Bidney
The Easter Bunny relaxes with kids April 11 at the Hollywood Preschool Easter celebration.



Fred Joseph
Scotty Roberts adds another egg to his collection during the Immokalee Easter party April 12.



Beverly Bidney
Hollywood preschoolers play with Easter baskets and eggs at their holiday celebration April 11.



Kevin Johnson
Maayana Stockton carefully places her egg into a holder during the egg coloring activity at the Fort Pierce Easter event April 16.



Fred Joseph
Curmya Smith joyfully hunts for eggs during the Immokalee Reservation's Easter celebration April 12.



Beverly Bidney
Jennie Shore collects Easter eggs outside the Brighton senior center during their Easter celebration April 10.



Eileen Soler
Lauren Doctor cuddles with a baby chick at the Big Cypress Easter celebration.



Peter B. Gallagher
Richard Henry hands Melody Urbina an Easter basket during Tampa's event.



Beverly Bidney
Sharlene Roberts, 18 months, collects eggs April 12 during the Trail Easter party at Micosukee Country Club.



Beverly Bidney
Linda Beletso, Jenny Johns and Elbert Snow look for eggs in the hay April 10 during the Brighton senior's Easter soiree.



Eileen Soler
Adaleyah Hall takes a floating ducky challenge for prizes April 11 at the annual Big Cypress Easter celebration at Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena.



Peter B. Gallagher
Kids are wide-eyed over Easter treats during the Tampa celebration on the Lakeland Property April 19.



Kevin Johnson
Youngsters dash under the starting line tape during the Easter egg hunt April 16 in Fort Pierce.



Photo courtesy of Demi Garza
Council Liaison Raymond Garza hunts for eggs in Immokalee.



Beverly Bidney
Kids collect eggs during the Trail Easter party April 12.

Health



Beverly Bidney

Participants mix colorful ingredients April 9 for the Fiesta Lime Southwest Chicken Salad at the Health Department's spring cooking class in Hollywood.

Health Department welcomes spring with cooking class

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — In the spirit of a good old fashioned spring cleaning, the Health Department held a spring cooking class to get rid of old eating habits.

On the menu at the April 9 event in Hollywood was Fiesta Lime Southwest Chicken Salad complete with homemade salad dressing. Six aspiring chefs took their seats around a large conference table, picked up their knives and created a delectable and healthy dish.

"I'm diabetic so I wanted to see how the foods they want us to eat are prepared," Wade Osceola said. "If I have the information, then I can utilize it. Whatever is prepared outside usually isn't good for you."

In the department's first hands-on cooking class, nutritionist Lucy Barrios took the participants through the recipe step by step, imparting knowledge and healthy tips along the way.

"We want to give them skills so they can be more comfortable in the kitchen," she said. "A lot of people eat out often, and we want them to know how easy it can be to prepare food at home."

Each person had his or her own mini-kitchen setup with measuring spoons and cups, mixing bowls, knives and ingredients. Together they created individual salads with enough for two meals — one to eat in class and another to bring home.

"We always tell you to eat healthy and now we are showing you how to do it," Barrios said. "Think about the salad dressings we buy in the store; they are full of salt and other things we don't need."

With that, they mixed olive oil with lime juice and spices and shook it up to create homemade vinaigrette.

"Snacks are like mini meals so you want them to be healthy, too," said Barrios as the budding chefs diced chicken breasts.

Corn and black beans were part of the salad, so Barrios reminded the class to count them as carbs — the

meal they prepared had two servings of carbohydrates.

With the completed dish, participants could eat it as a salad, stuff it into a pita pocket or use it in a wrap. Whichever way they chose, each person ate with gusto with a little bit of pride sprinkled in for good measure.

"The recipe was very good," Diane Buster said. "This is the kind of things they want us to eat."

Fiesta Lime Southwest Chicken Salad

1 cup rotisserie chicken, cubed
½ cup canned corn, no salt
½ cup canned black beans, low sodium (rinsed, dried)
½ cup jarred roasted sweet red peppers, chopped
½ cup Roma tomatoes, chopped
¼ cup red or sweet onion, chopped (if desired)
¼ cup fresh cilantro, minced
In a large bowl combine all ingredients. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Fiesta Lime Southwest Chicken Salad Dressing

3 tablespoons lime juice
3 tablespoons olive oil
4 teaspoons honey
1 teaspoon cumin
¼ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon chili powder
½ teaspoon coarsely ground pepper
In a small container combine all ingredients. Refrigerate until ready to serve.
Add dressing to chicken salad. Mix together.
For salads: Top salad greens with chicken salad; sprinkle with almonds.
For pitas: Line pita halves with lettuce leaves; fill with chicken salad.
For wraps: Place chicken salad off-center on tortillas; top with avocado; roll up.

Wait full term to deliver

SUBMITTED BY BOB LAMENDOLA
Florida Department of Health in Broward

Waiting out the last few weeks of pregnancy can be tough, but it gives a baby's brain the most time possible to mature.

A baby's brain gains one-third of its weight during the final weeks of pregnancy, according to the March of Dimes. Delivering early may raise the risk of health problems, including incomplete development of the brain.

Early delivery is more common among Seminole women. About 18 percent of Native American babies are born before 37 weeks, compared to 13 percent statewide. Childbirth advocates recommend all mothers wait until the full-term period of 39 to 40 weeks for optimal health of the baby.

Parents should resist scheduling the delivery early for non-medical reasons, such as for the convenience of the family or the doctor, said Maggie Votteler, program specialist at the Broward Healthy Start Coalition.

"They might think, 'Oh, my mom is going to be in town on this one week and we can try to have the baby then.' Or someone is going on vacation and they want to schedule the birth to be convenient," Votteler said.

At 35 or 36 weeks, a baby's brain, lungs, liver and other organs are still developing. Babies born before 36 weeks are more likely to have problems with breathing, vision, hearing, suckling and swallowing, the March of Dimes reports.

Any problems may be amplified when delivering

early because the baby's estimated age in the womb may have been off by a week or two.

"We're not saying every baby that goes to 40 weeks will be perfect," Votteler said, "but by waiting you are giving them the best shot."

Childbirth advocates also note that drugs used to induce labor can cause overly strong contractions, or may not succeed, causing other problems. Cesarean section deliveries can cause surgical complications.

Some doctors assure parents there's no problem delivering a few weeks early. Votteler recommends parents ask questions before agreeing.

"If the doctor says we need to induce you at 36 weeks, and there's no medical reason, it's a time for conversation between the parents and the doctor about what is best for the baby," Votteler said.

On the plus side, Native American babies are less likely than average to die before age 1 or to be born with low birth-weight, state figures show. However, Seminole women are more likely to smoke and be overweight while pregnant, and are less likely to breastfeed.

The Healthy Start program offers help. In conjunction with the Florida Department of Health, the program provided prenatal counseling to about 38,000 South Florida women last year.

Healthy Start services include childbirth education, breastfeeding support, home visits, psychological supportive counseling, referrals to community services and smoking cessation counseling.

Women qualify for Healthy Start services based on need, not income. Under state law, every pregnant woman is supposed to be screened by her doctor to see if she needs services, said Solia Matthews, director of Healthy Start at the Department of Health in Broward County. Families can also request services if they have a need. It's open to anyone at no cost.

For more information, visit Healthy Start at www.39weeksfll.com/why-39-weeks or www.browardhsc.org or call 954-563-7583.



Pool safety: An ounce of prevention...

SUBMITTED BY PATRICK PECK
Environmental Health Program Manager

Pool season is around the corner. And although Florida residents have the luxury of year-round swimming pool enjoyment, the peak season for use of swimming pools is May through September.

Parents often question when they should install a pool fence: For families who have a swimming pool and who have a small baby, the answer is when the baby is between 6 to 9 months old, according to the National Safety Council, pediatricians and most drowning prevention committees.

They recommend this age because although the baby may not yet be walking, a small child can't verbally communicate. The baby can't tell their parents, "This week I'm crawling, but next week I'm going to be walking." By having a pool fence installed before a baby is mobile, parents guarantee the safety of their children around the pool.

Pool fences can never be installed too soon. Many families find they have a comfort level if they install a pool fence while their baby is still an infant. Also, many young families have friends who visit with older babies and toddlers. Having a pool safety fence installed gives them a sense of protection.

For families moving into a new home with a swimming pool, the best time to install a pool fence is the day they close on the home. The pool is a novelty to children and moving day is always hectic. People move in and out and leave doors open. Everyone is distracted and too many times nobody watches the little ones. If a pool fence is installed before a family actually moves into the home, there is no chance of an accident. Remember, accidents know no seasons.

When it comes to pool safety, there was never a truer cliché than, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." This is one case where preventing a

pool accident is the one and only answer.

Drowning is the only cause of childhood deaths that can be 100 percent prevented. Parents can inoculate a child against disease, but they can't prevent disease from happening. Parents can put a child in a child safety seat, but they can't prevent a car accident. Conversely, drowning and near drowning can be prevented with the use of a pool fence placed correctly around a swimming pool.

Pool fences create a complete barrier between a small child and the pool and remain in place 24/7. When correctly installed, a swimming pool safety fence with a self-closing, self-latching, walk-thru gate, allows a baby, toddler or small child to safely be outside at any time of the year without access to the swimming pool; therefore, drowning accidents can't occur.

Luckily in Florida, new homes built with pools now require a pool fence, door alarm or pool cover. All new pools require perimeter fencing.

Unfortunately, many parents or households prefer to remove these safety devices later on because they become too difficult or time consuming to operate. That decision may prove fatal.

Florida data indicates that toddlers ages 1 to 4 have the highest unintentional drowning rate in the U.S. Drowning is the leading cause of death in Florida every year with 356 deaths (1999-2003), with above average statistics reported locally.

The American Society of Pediatrics recommends at least a 4-foot-high pool safety fence with a self-closing, key-lockable, walk-thru gate placed around any pool where a small child spends time.

Remember, every pool accident can be avoided and every child can be kept safe around a swimming pool with the installation of a pool fence. It's the most important ounce of prevention available.

— Source: Pool Guard Manufacturing article and Dr. Ashley Bayer

Self-harm: The new epidemic among children, teens

SUBMITTED BY T. RYAN
Family Services Department

Self-harm is a way of expressing and dealing with deep distress and emotional pain. As counterintuitive as it may sound, self-harm can make some people feel better. In fact, some may feel like they have no choice. It is the only way they know how to cope with feelings like sadness, self-loathing, emptiness, guilt and rage.

The relief that comes from self-harming doesn't last long. It's like slapping on a Band-Aid when stitches are needed. It may temporarily stop the bleeding, but it doesn't fix the underlying injury. And it creates its own problems.

If you're like most people who self-injure, you try to keep it secret. Maybe you feel ashamed or maybe you just think that no one would understand. But hiding who you are and what you feel is a heavy burden. Ultimately, the secrecy and guilt affects your relationships with your friends and family members and the way you feel about yourself. It can make you feel even more lonely, worthless and trapped. Self-harm includes anything you do to intentionally injure yourself. Some of the more common ways include:

- Cutting or severely scratching your skin
- Burning or scalding yourself
- Hitting yourself or banging your head
- Punching things or throwing your body against walls and hard objects
- Sticking objects into your skin
- Intentionally preventing wounds from healing
- Swallowing poisonous substances or inappropriate objects

Self-harm can also include less obvious ways of hurting yourself or putting yourself in danger, such as driving recklessly, binge drinking, taking too

many drugs and having unsafe sex.

Because clothing can hide physical injuries and inner turmoil can be covered up by a seemingly calm disposition, self-injury can be hard to detect. However, there are red flags you can look for (but remember, you don't have to be sure that you know what's going on in order to reach out to someone you're worried about):

- Unexplained wounds or scars from cuts, bruises or burns, usually on the wrists, arms, thighs or chest
- Blood stains on clothing, towels or bedding; blood-soaked tissues
- Sharp objects or cutting instruments, such as razors, knives, needles, glass shards or bottle caps in the person's belongings
- Frequent "accidents," with the person claiming to be clumsy in order to explain away injuries
- Covering up injuries by wearing long sleeves or long pants, even in hot weather
- Needing to be alone for long periods, especially in the bedroom or bathroom
- Isolation and irritability

You may also need the help and support of a trained professional as you work to overcome the self-harm habit, so consider talking to a therapist. A therapist can help you develop new coping techniques and strategies to stop self-harming while also helping you get to the root of why you cut or hurt yourself. Remember, self-harm doesn't occur in a vacuum. It's an outward expression of inner pain — pain that often has its roots early in life.

Should you wish to learn more about self-harm or cutting, schedule a confidential meeting with a Family Services counselor on your respective reservation.

— Source: HelpGuide.org

Tips for ensuring payment of medical and dental bills

SUBMITTED BY CONNIE WHIDDEN
Health Director

• Show your STOF Member Health Plan card to medical, dental and pharmacy providers prior to receiving services.

• If you are also covered under another primary health insurance plan, such as Medicare, show that card as well. The STOF Member Health Plan is always the payer of last resort.

• If you do not have a new Health Plan card that looks like this, contact a STOF Health clinic to request your new card.

• Check your Health Plan book or call the Health Plan office to ensure your health care is covered by the Health Plan. Some services are limited or excluded from coverage.

• If you receive an incident report from the STOF Health Plan, please complete the form and return it to the STOF Health Plan office to ensure timely processing of your bills. Make sure to indicate whether care received was due to an accident on the form.

• If you receive a bill or a statement for health care services in the mail, call the service provider and have them mail a copy of the itemized bill to STOF Health Plan Administration, P.O. Box 173129, Tampa, FL 33672 to process your bill. This address is also on the back of your Health Plan card. In addition, bring the bill to a STOF Health clinic.

• If you receive a notice from a collection agency for an unpaid health care bill, call the collection agency and ask that they submit an itemized bill to STOF Health Plan Administration to process your bill.

In addition, please bring the bill to a STOF Health

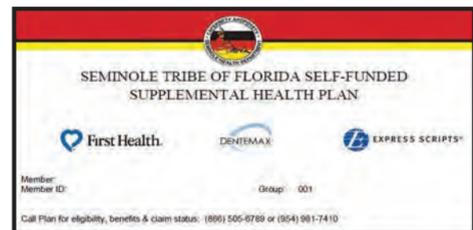


Photo courtesy of Connie Whidden

Pictured is the STOF Member Health Plan card.

clinic. We may ask you to sign a release form to allow the collection agency to speak with us about your bill and to obtain a copy of the itemized bill if necessary.

• Review the biannual explanation of benefits statement which provides detailed information about each medical and dental bill processed on your behalf. Please note that you are responsible to pay the service provider the amounts listed under the patient responsibility column.

• If you currently have unpaid health care bills on your credit report, the STOF Health Plan office will attempt to resolve these debts for you. Contact the STOF Health Plan office at 866-505-6789 for assistance. The office will need a copy of your credit report listing the unpaid health care bills and a signed release form allowing them to contact the collection agency on your behalf to discuss your account and obtain an itemized bill, if necessary, for processing.

• For all other question, call the Health Plan office.

SEMINOLE SCENES



Beverly Bidney

HEAVY LIFTING: A 30-foot live oak tree is moved from a Hollywood home site to the 4-H pig pen on Seminole Estates. The approximately 20-year-old tree is about 16 inches in diameter. Mike Leavitt, of Trees to Please, believes with proper care the tree has a 75 percent chance of thriving in its new home.



Eileen Soler

LINE DRIVE: Canaan Jumper, of the Seminole Lightning softball team, swings for a base hit during practice April 15 at Billie Johns Sr. Ball Field in Big Cypress.



Beverly Bidney

SLIPPERY SLIDE: Boys enjoy the waterslide April 12 during the Trail Easter celebration.



Beverly Bidney

KEEPING TRADITIONS: Emma DiCarlo, 7, and Ewok Osceola, 8, learn how to make frybread at the Hollywood traditional lunch March 27. The girls had made it before, but practice makes perfect.



Beverly Bidney

SPRINGTIME: Daffodils, a symbol of rebirth and new beginnings, also signal the start of spring. These were spotted growing wild next to a field near the Salacoa Valley Farms in Georgia.



Eileen Soler

JESUS IN 3-D: Brother Ben Little, of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Shawnee, Okla., preaches about devotion, discipline and diligence April 15 during the Big Cypress First Baptist Church Homecoming Revival. The four-day event held during Easter week also honored late family members.



Beverly Bidney

CRAWLING CUTIE: McKenna Macais, 1, crawls out of a tunnel April 11 during the Hollywood Preschool Get Fit Day and Easter celebration.



Eileen Soler

'FORE' PRACTICE: A new regulation size golf driving range and golf program management office is under construction in the Big Cypress Reservation on West Boundary Road. Tribal members, employees and community visitors will be welcome.



Beverly Bidney

TIE-DYE TUG-OF-WAR: Hollywood preschoolers put their all into the tug-of-war April 11 during the Get Fit Day and Easter celebration.



Beverly Bidney

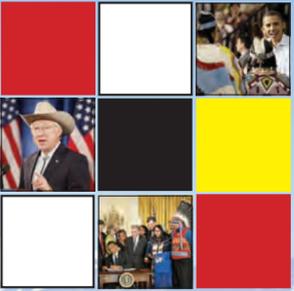
LASTING LEGACY: Members of the Smith family gather at the luncheon following the Smith family cattle drive April 4 in Brighton. About 150 people honored the family for its contributions to Seminole life.



Beverly Bidney

CONTINUED PROGRESS: Workers carefully maneuver a wall for the Howard Tiger Recreation Center to its upright, and straight, position. Construction is ahead of schedule for its December completion date.

NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS



Atlanta picks Shoni in WNBA draft

UNCASVILLE, Conn. — Shoni Schimmel, a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla in eastern Oregon and guard for the University of Louisville women's basketball team, was chosen by the Atlanta Dream as the eighth pick overall in the 2014 Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) draft — the highest any American Indian has been chosen in league history.

The Mission, Ore. native got word via cellphone while she sat in the lobby of the Mohegan Sun hotel with younger sister, Jude, one year younger and a star in her own right for the Lady Cardinals. The sisters — stars of the acclaimed documentary *Off The Rez* — brought Louisville to the Final Four in 2013 and the Elite Eight this year.

Though the team was knocked out both times, the pair caught the attention of Native girls across the country who filled the stands at Louisville games wherever they played. Last March, at Louisville's final regular season game, a record crowd of 22,163, mostly Native Americans from about 40 states, showed up and the girls spent four hours after the game talking and signing autographs. Jude will be a senior next season.

Brash, exciting and fearless, the 5-foot-9 Shoni made "rez ball" her signature playing style. Learned on the reservation "streets," the style was described by Shoni as, "Just have that killer instinct and go out there and just play whatever you're feeling. Hey, you're open? Pull up. Throw a behind-the-back pass? Why not?"

"For me to kind of have that flair to my game, I think it's definitely going to bring a lot more to the WNBA because I'm not just your robotic basketball player," said Shoni, who averaged a team-high 17.1 points and 3.8 assists for Louisville this past season. "I like to mix it up."

— Source: *NativeNewsOnline.net*

Navajo, Seminole code talkers cross over

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Oklahoma Seminole Edmond Harjo, 96, and Navajo Samuel "Jesse" Smith Sr., 88, two of the last surviving members of a group of American Indians who used their native languages to outmaneuver the enemy during World Wars I and II, died recently.

Edmond Harjo died of a heart attack March 31 at Mercy Hospital in Ada, according to his nephew Richard Harjo. In addition to his military service, Harjo was a classical pianist and lifetime school teacher.

Harjo, a member of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, had recently traveled to Washington, D.C. to take part in a ceremony where the Congressional Gold Medal, its highest civilian honor, was bestowed on American Indian code talkers.

At that ceremony, House Speaker John Boehner recalled how Harjo, a member of the 195th Field Artillery Battalion, was walking through an orchard in southern France in 1944 and heard one of his fellow soldiers singing under a tree in the Creek dialect. A captain later heard the two soldiers talking, Boehner said, and immediately put them to work on opposite ends of a radio.

"Edmond and his brothers were at Normandy. They were on Iwo Jima. They mobilized the simplest weapon — language — to thwart the fiercest enemy free people have ever known," Boehner said. "And they made a difference. After serving with honor, they did the honorable thing. They kept their service a secret, even to those that they loved."

Samuel Smith died April 14 in Albuquerque of pneumonia, according to his son Michael Smith. In addition to his military experience, Samuel Smith worked in law enforcement, transportation and water resources for the Navajo Nation and for the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Smith enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps to become a pilot "to get revenge" on the Japanese for bombing Pearl Harbor, his son said. But he was quickly recruited with hundreds of Navajos who used a code based on their native language to confound the Japanese and help win the war.

— Source: *Santa Fe New Mexican, Tulsa World*

Casinos report double-digit declines in March

LEDYARD, Conn. — A sign of the times?

Stiff competition, the economy and nasty weather were blamed for sending slot machine revenues diving by double-digit percentages in March at Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods Resort Casino.

Mohegan Sun's slots "win" — the amount of wagers it kept after paying out prizes — totaled \$51.9 million, down 11.6 percent over March 2013.

Foxwoods kept \$44.6 million, a 10.2 percent decline.

In a statement, Foxwoods President and CEO Scott Butera warned: "The

(falling) numbers are a sign of the times. We are in the midst of an ultra-competitive marketplace."

While the numbers fell in Connecticut, Resorts World Casino in New York City reported a March slots win of \$73.5 million, (a 3.4 percent increase over the \$71.2 million it won the previous March) and a "handle" — the total amount wagered at its machines — of \$1.57 billion, more than the two Connecticut casinos' combined handle.

— Source: *TheDay.com*

BIA watering down Tribal recognition

HARTFORD, Conn. — Angry Connecticut Gov. Dannel P. Malloy hand-delivered a letter to President Barack Obama recently, demanding he step forward and stop the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) from preparing new rules on Tribal recognition that will likely add three previously denied — the Eastern Pequot of North Stonington, the Golden Hill Paugussett of Colchester and Trumbull and the Schaghticoke of Kent — to the federal list.

Calling the possibility of adding more Tribes "devastating" to Connecticut, Gov. Malloy informed Obama that the three "Tribes" have filed or threatened land claims to large swaths of fully developed land in Connecticut, claims that can cloud titles to property and remove property off the tax rolls.

As of the end of last year, there were 566 federally recognized Tribes.

The Schaghticoke and Easterns were denied federal recognition in 2005 when they were unable to prove they had existed as communities with cultural and social interaction through the centuries. The Paugussetts were turned away the year before, unable to prove they were members of an Indian Tribe.

Under the proposed new rules, however, the requirement that a Tribe maintain continuous cultural community and political authority since historical times would be changed to 1934.

"That would appear to make the Hartford Elks Club eligible," quipped an editorial in the Hartford Courant. "These questions were decided a decade ago, and the state moved on. To change the rules now and start over is just wrong. It's been opposed by the state's entire congressional delegation, the attorney general, municipal leaders and others. Let's hope the president hops on the bandwagon."

— Source: *Hartford Courant*

State told to recognize Fort Sill Apaches

SANTA FE, N.M. — The New Mexico Supreme Court agrees with the Fort Sill Apaches, whose efforts for state recognition stretch back more than 125 years after their ancestors were forced from their homeland.

The unanimous court ordered Gov. Susana Martinez to give the Apaches recognition, which includes an invitation to the annual state-tribal summit, inclusion on the Indian Affairs Department's contact list, and otherwise collaborate with Fort Sill as required by state law.

"I think it's a first step ... an opportunity for us to have a seat at the table with the other 22 Tribes," Chairman Jeff Haozous said.

The Tribe has a 30-acre reservation near Deming and has said it wants to put a casino at the site, which Martinez opposes. The order will give the Fort Sill Apaches — whose headquarters are in Oklahoma — access to capital projects funding and other programs in New Mexico.

The Tribe has 712 enrolled members, nearly half of them in Oklahoma. The 2010 census listed 147 New Mexicans who identified themselves as Fort Sill or Chiricahua Apaches. The Chiricahuas — whose leaders included Geronimo — were exiled from the Southwest by the U.S. government in the late 1880s and spent 27 years as prisoners of war in Florida, Alabama and then Fort Sill, Okla.

Lawyer Charles Peifer said the ancestors of the Fort Sill Apaches were the sole occupants of a 14.8-million acre swath of land in southwestern New Mexico, making their current situation a "cruel irony."

— Source: *Albuquerque Journal*

Tribe tells oil truckers to stay off reservation

ROSEBUD, S.D. — The Rosebud Sioux Tribe has a message for truckers hauling loads for oil companies: Stay off the reservation.

Tribal police have been instructed to tell tractor-trailer drivers hauling equipment related to the controversial Keystone XL pipeline or oil fields that they're not allowed on the reservation, nor are they allowed to park equipment at the Rosebud Casino Fuel Plaza.

"We simply request (drivers) to find alternate routes to transport their cargo is the politically correct way of saying don't come through here," said Josh Wilson, the administrative assistant and chief of staff for Rosebud Sioux Tribe President Cyril

Scott. "That is not being said as a threat. It's simply a respectful request in terms of honoring us as a tribe and our stance in opposition to the pipeline."

The Sioux are part of the Cowboy Indian Alliance, a large coalition of Tribes, landowners, environmentalists and property-rights advocates focused on opposing construction of the Keystone XL project.

TransCanada hasn't started construction on the northern leg of the Keystone XL pipeline and isn't moving equipment, spokesman Shawn Howard said. The company is waiting for approval of a presidential permit, which it needs in order to build the pipeline across the border between the U.S. and Canada.

The \$5.4 billion northern portion of the pipeline would carry crude oil from Hardisty, Alberta, south to Steele City. The southern part of the pipeline was built at a cost of \$2.6 billion and began shipping oil in January from Cushing, Okla., to refineries along the U.S. Gulf Coast.

Though, the proposed pipeline route does not go through reservations in South Dakota but does run near them and would cross scarce water sources.

— Source: *Lincoln Journal Star*

Judge rules in favor of Indian casinos in Alabama

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — U.S. District Court Judge Keith Watkins has dismissed a lawsuit filed by the state which challenged the rights of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians to operate three casinos in Alabama.

"The bottom line is that even if defendants are operating illegal class III gaming at the Poarch Band casinos, (state law) does not provide the state authority to prohibit such gaming," Watkins wrote in his ruling.

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians, among 243 Tribes conducting gambling in 28 states, has electronic game-only casinos in Atmore, Montgomery and Wetumpka.

The ruling shot down a huge threat to Indian gambling — a recent Supreme Court decision that challenged the legality of Tribal lands held in trust by the U.S. federal government for Tribes that weren't federally recognized in 1934 or before.

The Poarch Creeks and other Tribes defined the Supreme Court ruling as a narrow decision based on one specific set of circumstances. As far as the Poarch Creeks are concerned, it doesn't apply because a six-year statute of limitations has expired and the Tribe has held the lands for decades.

"We are pleased with Judge Watkins' well-reasoned decision," Tribal spokesman Robert McGhee told the *Gadsden Times*. "This decision not only recognizes the sovereignty of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, but it also confirms that the Tribe's lands are held by the United States of America in trust for the Tribe."

Alabama officials intend to appeal the court ruling, Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange said in a statement. A spokesperson in Strange's office said the appeal would be filed as quickly as possible with the full Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

— Source: *Gadsden Times*

Felon sentenced to prison for having a gun in casino

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. — Mashama Hill, 38, was sentenced to 48 months in federal prison for bringing a loaded gun into the Seneca Niagara Casino in February 2011.

Out of prison since 2010 after separate 1993 convictions for robbery and sexual abuse, Hill was a felon in possession of a firearm when, with surveillance cameras whirring, he got into an argument at a card table, loudly announced he was going to get his gun, left and then returned to the casino wearing different clothes. Security officers confronted him and a loaded firearm was found in his clothing, authorities said.

— Source: *Buffalo News*

Onondagas charge U.S. with human rights violations

NEDROW, N.Y. — The Onondaga Indian Nation has filed a petition at the Organization of American States seeking human rights violations against the United States government in hopes of getting help with a land claim.

The Onondagas want the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to declare that the U.S. government's refusal to hear its lawsuit demanding the return of 2.5 million acres in upstate New York to be violations of international human rights agreements.

The nation asserts that about 4,000 square miles in 11 upstate New York counties stretching from Pennsylvania to Canada was illegally taken through a series of bogus treaties. More than 875,000 people live in the area, which includes Syracuse and other cities.

U.S. courts have refused to hear the lawsuit asking for the return of their land, with the Supreme Court turning away a

final petition in October.

"The problem is that we can't get the governor to sit down with us and the United States to live up to its treaty rights," the Onondaga Nation's attorney, Joe Heath told WTHR.com.

The Onondaga say they are not seeking monetary damages, eviction of residents or rental payments. Instead, the Tribe wants an official declaration that the land belongs to the Onondagas and an admission that federal treaties were violated when it was taken away.

— Source: *WTHR.com*

University and Tribe reach mascot agreement

FORT DUCHESNE, Utah — The University of Utah and the Ute Indian Tribe have signed a five-year agreement that centers on efforts to help reservation youths, according to a joint announcement by University President David Pershing and Ute Indian Tribe Business Committee Chairman Gordon Howell.

In a relationship similar to the one enjoyed by Florida State University and the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the University of Utah will continue to use the Ute name with the support of Ute Indian Tribe leaders.

The university agreed to fund scholarships not only for American Indian students but also specifically for Ute Tribal members and to promote education about the Tribe's history. The university will also donate proceeds from sales of a special football jersey worn during a home game in November to a Boys & Girls Club the Tribe plans to open.

"This isn't about money; we need to be clear about that," Pershing said. "This is about educational opportunity."

Of the four Ute Tribes, the Utes name is most closely affiliated with the Northern Utes, who have a Tribal membership of 3,157 and maintain the second largest Indian Reservation in the United States (4.5 million square miles).

Other aspects of the deal include the Tribal appointment of an unpaid liaison to the president, the creation of a full-time advising position to help reservation students apply for college, the appointment by the Utah Tribal Leaders Council of two members to the American Indian Resource Center's advisory board, and an open door promise from the university to encourage Tribal youth to attend university sporting events.

A University of Utah student group petitioned the school last December to cut ties with the Tribe altogether rather than continue to react to evolving notions of political correctness. Samantha Eldridge, a leader of the initiative and now a liaison for Native American Outreach in the National Education Association in Washington, D.C., pointed out a continuing problem of "education" regarding fans of the team who must repeatedly be told it is inappropriate to wear mock headdresses or paint their faces red at games.

"We are always going to get a negative, stereotypical portrayal of Native Americans," Eldridge said. "We're always going to get a new cohort of students attending the university who we are going to continually have to educate on what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior."

— Source: *Salt Lake Tribune*

Tribes benefit from historic \$5.15 billion uranium cleanup

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Navajo, Sioux and other Tribes will benefit from a \$5.15-billion settlement with Anadarko Petroleum Corp. and its wholly owned subsidiary Kerr-McGee Corp., the U.S. Department of Justice announced April 3. The settlement marks the largest payment ever for the cleanup of environmental contamination.

The court found that the defendants demonstrated "pervasive evidence of both the intent to defraud creditors and a sophisticated plan to carry out that intent."

It took 10 years, but the government, the Navajo Tribe, 11 states and other creditors finally agreed to settle for that amount, which was determined in a December court judgment on fraud charges against Anadarko and "pursuant to the settlement agreement, the defendants agree to pay \$5.15 billion to settle the case, of which approximately \$4.4 billion will be paid to fund environmental cleanup and for environmental claims," the Justice Department said in a written statement.

The Navajo Nation, one of the litigants in the Tronox LLC bankruptcy case that led to the settlement, will receive \$1 billion of the payment to clean up the radioactive waste at 49 uranium mines Kerr-McGee abandoned in the northeastern part of the Tribal jurisdiction in New Mexico, it said.

Navajo President Ben Shelly personally broke the news to the Dził Yijini Regional Council at Black Mesa Chapter House, calling it a major victory for the Navajo Nation.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Robert G. Dreher called the settlement of the resulting claims "a just resolution of an historic injustice to the American people and our environment. The money recovered will result in cleanups of a toxic history the old Kerr-McGee

unsuccessfully tried to walk away from."

Among them is more than \$270 million-worth of cleanup Tronox must undertake at the Riley Pass Mine complex, located upstream from the Cheyenne and Missouri rivers, which provide water for seven South Dakota Indian reservations.

The mine complex, also known as the Dakota Lignite Mining Area, or Slim Buttes Area, is a former Kerr-McGee mountaintop uranium removal site in the Cave Hills of extreme northwestern South Dakota's Harding County, at the headwaters of streams that feed the Standing Rock, Cheyenne River, Crow Creek, Lower Brule and Yankton Sioux Reservations.

Deputy Attorney General James Cole pointed to Kerr-McGee's "enormous legacy of environmental and tort liabilities" included in more than 2,700 cleanup projects in 47 states, among them federal Superfund projects in Jacksonville, Fla.; Columbus, Miss.; Manville, N.J.; Soda Spring, Idaho; West Chicago, Ill.; Milwaukee, Wis.; and Wilmington, N.C., according to court records.

"Kerr-McGee's businesses all over this country left significant, lasting environmental damage in their wake," Cole said at an official announcement made in Washington, D.C. "It tried to shed its responsibility for this environmental damage and stick the United States taxpayers with the huge cleanup bill."

— Source: *Native Sun News*

Crop art calls for rejection of Keystone XL pipeline

NELIGH, Neb. — A crop-art image the size of 80 football fields was installed along the controversial Keystone XL pipeline's proposed path through Neligh, Neb. Its message is not from an alien species, but from opponents of the pipeline.

The image includes the bust of a man in a cowboy hat and an American Indian in a porcupine roach with two feathers. Under the pair of heads is an illustration of water waves and the text, "HEARTLAND #NoKXL."

The massive art installation, which was executed by artist John Quigley in partnership with the anti-Keystone XL Pipeline Cowboy and Indian Alliance, is meant to tell President Barack Obama to protect the heartland and reject the pipeline, according to Bold Nebraska, one of several coalitions of groups and individuals opposing the project.

Opponents argue that Keystone XL will contaminate drinking water and pollute the land. Proponents point to the jobs it will bring to the U.S. Controversial from the start, the project's opposition is digging in even further.

The section of pipeline that still needs approval would cross the border from Canada, and cut through Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas.

Thousands of ranchers, farmers and American Indians who live on the pipeline route planned to descend on Washington, D.C. and camp in protest near the White House beginning on Earth Day.

Descendants of the Ponca Tribe erected a camp in Nebraska in November. A second was established on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation March 29, and the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe opened one April 12.

— Source: *Indian Country Today Media Network*

Tribe honored by NAFOA for GREEN Investment

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA) named the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde the winner of its Deal of the Year award at the seventh annual Financial Leadership Awards luncheon.

The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde were recognized for their \$10-million investment in MicroGREEN's InCycle Cups. The Arlington, Wash.-based company makes high-quality cups from recycled water bottles.

"Their investments have enabled us to buy equipment that will allow us to re-extrude recycled plastic into the plastic sheets from which InCycle cups are manufactured. It is because they are stewards of the environment just like we are that the Tribes have invested," CEO Tom Malone told *Indian Country Today Media Network*.

"It is a great win for us ..." said Titu Asghar, director of economic development of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon. "This strategy of investment is the future, representing an innovative shift in financial diversification for us. We are looking ahead several generations to create an economically sustainable future, supporting clean technology that helps correct wasteful practices with environmentally sound products that are simply better in performance."

Three airlines — Alaska Airlines, Allegiant Air and Virgin America — are using InCycle cups on their planes.

— Source: *Indian Country Today Media Network*

— Compiled by Special Projects Reporter Peter B. Gallagher

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Education



B

Ahfachkee School grooms future business leaders with new program

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Instead of wearing bathing suits during spring break, six members of Ahfachkee School's fledgling Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) club dressed in corporate clothing for a weekend of learning.

Eighth-grade student Elisah Billie said wearing a suit and tie at the Florida FBLA 2014 State Leadership Conference in Orlando was a first-time experience.

"It felt good to wake up, get a shower and then dress up. It gave us a real sense of professionalism that we don't get from baggy shorts and basketball shoes," he said.

Sans neckties but wearing business high heels for the first time were Trinity Williams, Eyanna Billie, Kaitlin Osceola, Mazzy Robbins and Nashoba Gonzalez.

Dressing the part was essential, said Ahfachkee business teacher Troy Meinders, who co-advises the club with classroom aide Elizabeth Vera. Observing 3,500 students from other Florida schools navigate 40 grueling hours of competitions, business workshops and presentations was just as important.

"Even though we could not compete and only watch because we are so new, I'm glad we did it. Now, they've experienced what it will take to prepare for next year," Meinders said.

Contests included school presentations in client service, emerging business issues, global business, marketing and management information systems.

Workshops about networking, challenging the ordinary and establishing habits for success were peppered through the program. Members were tested individually in banking, network design, entrepreneurialism, help desk assistance and other topics.

Eyanna, president of the middle school club, said her favorite session was about making and keeping business contacts. Kaitlin, who wants a career in marketing, said the entire event was special.

"Seeing the dedication of all those students made me think about what we can accomplish at Ahfachkee," Kaitlin said.

Elisah, who wants to start his own business as a video game programmer and also host official sport competitions for gamers, said the conference gave him a chance to meet teens who shared his interests.

"Making relationships with a bigger range of people is really important for business. I did not just go for the ride,"



Several members of Ahfachkee School's new Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) club attend the FBLA State Leadership Conference March 21-24 in Orlando. From left are Trinity Williams, Eyanna Billie, Elisah Billie, Kaitlin Osceola, Mazzy Robbins and Nashoba Gonzalez.

Photo courtesy of Ahfachkee School

Elisah said. "I want to do what I love to do and get paid for it."

The Ahfachkee students likely will not attend this year's national conference June 24-27 in Nashville, Tenn.

Meinders said Ahfachkee will be ready for the state competition next year in Orlando and for the regionals in New Orleans, La.

Ahfachkee principal Lucy Dafeo said the after-school club will work in tandem with business classes "as another educational source besides a textbook" that could, in the future, serve Tribal interests.

"We want to build on the culture and language cornerstone of the school," Dafeo said. "We need to bring students up to be knowledgeable leaders in business practices, business law and entrepreneurialism so they can be part of Tribal business. It's

paramount."

Nashoba, president of the high school chapter, is all in.

"There is a whole other world out there. It's our job to learn everything we can and then bring the knowledge back to the Tribe," she said.

The Ahfachkee FBLA chapter was formed only three weeks prior to the conference — and just three days after Meinders' first day on the job. Of the school's 55 middle and high school students, 22 joined in the first week.

Previously, Meinders advised the largest FBLA club in Chicago with 150 members and he served on the Illinois FBLA board of directors. Nationally, the club boasts 250,000 members and is the largest career-oriented student organization in the world, he said.

Still, kids will be kids.

MegaCon, the largest celebration of comic books, video games, anime and fantasy fiction in the region, was held in the same hotel on the same weekend as the student business conference. Nashoba said it was hilarious to see thousands of teenagers dressed like adults for the FBLA conference while throngs of MegaCon adults sported zany costumes of favorite fictional characters.

Coincidentally, Elisah packed his Harry Potter costume for the weekend and wore it to dinner one night hoping to "totally embarrass" his friends and chaperones. He was such a hit that strangers from MegaCon posed with him for pictures.

"I didn't realize that I would actually fit right in," Elisah said.

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School honors students' achievements

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Pemayetv Emahakv students were rewarded for excellence in reading, writing and arithmetic, along

with Creek, culture and citizenship, at the Charter School's third nine weeks awards program March 31.

"I'm proud to see all these honor roll students," said principal Brian Greseth. "These grades are earned, not given."

One by one, students received their awards, shook Greseth's hand and beamed proudly for their parents.

Eighth-grader Layne Thomas, 13, earned several awards, including silver honor roll (grade point average 3.5-3.9),

"I'm proud to see all these honor roll students. These grades are earned, not given."

— Brian Greseth,
Pemayetv Emahakv
Charter School principal



Beverly Bidney

Principal Brian Greseth hands out awards at the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School third nine weeks awards program March 31.

♦ See more AWARDS photos on page 5B

Summer program offers paid internships

STAFF REPORT

Tribal members ages 14 to 24 interested in paid internships can find employment in their own Tribe through the 2014 Summer Work Experience program.

Qualified applicants will work in a Tribal department of their choosing for \$8 per hour. Participants must have GPAs of 2.0 or higher and good attendance to qualify.

"The Summer Work Experience offers on-site job training and allows Tribal members to see how the Tribe operates," said Leila Patterson, Tribal Professional Development assistant. "Our main goal is to have them hired within the Tribe after completing their degree."

The program, which runs June 9 through Aug. 8, will feature interactive workshops on professionalism, resume and interview tips, and positive social media, among others. The Tribal Professional Development Department partnered with Native Learning Center and Education Department tutoring services to offer three to five workshops during the two-month program.

The Culture Department will also play a more active role in the program this year, said Luis Yeguez, Tribal Professional Development manager. Culture will offer classes on language, chickee building, cooking and more.

Last year, 41 participants interned in 18 departments. Yeguez encourages Tribal members to sign up.

"This is a good opportunity for Tribal members," he said. "The idea is for them to know how the departments work so they know if they want to work for them later on."

The part-time internships will offer flexible scheduling.

Applications — available at each reservation's Education Department — are due May 23. For more information, contact Luis Yeguez at 239-867-5303.

Junior counselors wanted

STAFF REPORT

The Family Services Department needs junior counselors for the Youth Camp at Camp Kulaquqa from Aug. 3-8.

Students with at least 2.5 GPAs and good attendance who will be juniors or seniors during the 2014-2015 school year may apply. Responsible sophomores will also be considered.

Junior counselors will supervise youth ages 7 to 12 years old in a variety of activities, including cardboard box car races, canoeing and poster contests, and will have the opportunity to earn community service hours for school.

Junior counselors last year earned 80 hours of service.

"It's about more than the community service hours," said Brighton Education adviser Vickie Stuart. "It's about giving back to the community and the next generation of Tribal youth. It's an awesome experience."

Owned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the 600-acre camp in the High Springs, Fla. woods includes several villages of rustic cabins, a water play and swim park, challenge ropes course and tower, 72-degree spring lagoon with diving dock and rope swing, theater, gymnasium, horse stable, sports fields and mini-zoo.

Junior counselors will each oversee their own group of youths.

"We try to let junior counselors be the team leaders because the kids look up to them," Stuart said.

Students who attend the Teen Camp the week prior from July 27 to Aug. 1 may still apply to serve as junior counselors. Stuart said they will be able to experience both the fun aspects of camp and the responsible side of it.

Applications are due July 11.

For more information, contact your local Education adviser. Hollywood: Nicole Wilson, 954-989-6840 ext. 10595; Big Cypress: Renee Morales, 863-902-3200 ext. 13133; Immokalee/Naples: Victoria Soto, 239-867-5303 ext. 16484; Brighton: Vickie Stuart, 863-763-3572 ext. 14616; and Tampa: Frank Birts, 813-246-3100 ext. 14604.

Hollywood spring breakers conquer Billie Swamp Safari

The Hollywood Recreation Department kept nearly 40 kids busy during spring break from March 24-28 with trips to Kaboom's Amusement and Party Center, bowling, Billie Swamp Safari, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum and Dave & Buster's. Although most had been to Billie Swamp Safari, the kids had a great time at the attraction spotting wildlife from the buggy and taking an airboat ride in the chilly spring weather.



Beverly Bidney

A curious ostrich looks for a handout from Hollywood kids during a spring break field trip to Billie Swamp Safari March 24.

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School Students of the Month



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School Elementary Students of the Month: Keanu Bert, Alyssa Madrigal, Jordan Johnson, Waylon Yates, Lexi Thomas, Keiyana Osceola, Giselle Micco, Javaris Johnson, Tadan Santiago, Lake Goodwin, Kaiden Sampson, Alice Osceola, Kai Osceola, Norman Osceola and Lupe Mora-Lara. Not pictured: Benjamin Purvis, Adria Morton and Tanner Shore.



Beverly Bidney

Hollywood kids have a boatload of fun during the Recreation Department field trip to Billie Swamp Safari.



Beverly Bidney

Evan Graham proudly holds an alligator after the critter show. Caidence Smith and Nae Nae Wilson wait their turn to hold the beast.



Beverly Bidney

Skye Stubbs, Nae Nae Wilson and Joey Puenta react to splashing water on an airboat ride at Billie Swamp Safari.



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas

Middle School Students of the Month: Dante Thomas, Aidan Tommie and Rudy Juarez.

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Police Explorers campout a big success

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

LAKELAND — Forty-five boys and girls tribalwide gathered on the Tribe's Lakeland Property March 22-23 for the second annual Seminole Police Department Explorers Campout.

The campers were provided tents and other camping gear for a weekend that included four-wheel drives on the new ATV trail (through the Polk County woodlands and prairies that encompass the entire 900-acre proposed reservation), swamp buggy tours, kickball, skillet toss, football, and outside movies and cartoons on a Disney inflatable big screen.

The weekend's highlight was recreating a traditional late-night Green Corn Dance scene. It was a teaching lesson that included a sermon by Tribal Medicine Man Bobby Henry (spoken in his native Mikasuki language and interpreted by Tribal Culture director Herbert Jim), and several traditional dances around a camp fire that Jim ignited with a flint and a handful of moss. Tampa Council Liaison Richard Henry led several dances, which included call-and-response chants with wide-eyed children. Echo Billie, holding a sprig of red bay, stepped forward to lead as well.

When it was over, long marshmallow sticks were passed out, and the group braved the heat for a special treat.

Seminole children arrived on buses from Big Cypress, Brighton, Fort Pierce, Hollywood and Immokalee. They joined the host Tampa Seminoles on property that someday will be their home.



Peter B. Gallagher
Tribal Culture director Herbert Jim interprets Medicine Man Bobby Henry's message to children during a stomp dance.



Peter B. Gallagher
Event coordinator Tom Apsey, of Seminole Police Department, left, poses with the Attendance Award winners, the Hollywood Explorers.



Peter B. Gallagher
Bradley Latchford runs for a score during an impromptu pickup game.



Peter B. Gallagher
Among the many activities over the weekend is the skillet toss.



Peter B. Gallagher
Kids climb down a swamp buggy after a fun ride across the Lakeland Property.



Peter B. Gallagher
Sgt. Karl Furman leads ATV riders along the new Wilderness Trail through the Polk County backwoods.

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Application Deadline is July 14, 2014



Come Watch The Next Princess Crowned



Announcements



4-H Livestock Show and Sale results



Beverly Bidney

Here are results from the 28th annual Seminole Indian 4-H Livestock Show and Sale in Brighton March 28-29: 20 steer exhibitors, 79 swine exhibitors, four exhibitors who showed yearling heifers, three exhibitors who showed 3-year-old cow/calf heifer pairs, 44 small animal exhibitors who showed everything from rabbits to pigs.

Grand Champion Steer: Aleah Turtle with her steer from Leah Minnick's herd in Brighton

Reserve Grand Champion: Rayven Smith with his steer from Polly Hayes's herd in Brighton

Jr. Showmanship: Jacee Jumper, Brighton

Intermediate Showmanship: Oscar Yates, originally from Big Cypress and now resides in Okeechobee

Senior Showmanship: Breanna Billie, Brighton

Grand Champion Hog: Caleb Billie, Big Cypress

Reserve Grand Champion: Jalee Wilcox, Big Cypress

Junior Showmanship: Ramone Baker, Brighton

Intermediate Showmanship: Analise Jimenez, Hollywood

Senior Showmanship: Trevor Thomas, Brighton

Most buyers were from Tribal entities, the Council and Board members, but we extend a big thank you to Okeechobee Feed which came out to the sale and bought an animal from one of our exhibitors. Also, we thank George Williams, Williams Bulldozing and Ritchie Brothers Auctioneers for the support they showed during our annual show and sale, and Native American Cash Systems, Redman Builders and Salacoa Valley Farms, Seminole Construction and Development, Walpole Feed and Precision Surveying Inc.

The average price that the animals sold for this year was \$8.77 per pound.

Everybody who showed an animal sold an animal except for the heifers and the small animals.

Polly Hayes thanks all her staff and volunteers who come out every year to make our show and sale a success. Now that we have an employee on every reservation it made the show and sale go a lot easier.

Also, we welcome Aaron Stam, our new extension agent from the University of Florida. Aaron came on board in September 2013 and is an asset to the 4-H and Natural Resources Program.

— Submitted by Yolanda Gore

In memory of Devin Mindy Cypress-Kimble on April 21

Another year come and gone and I still can't move on. Not one day passes that you're not on my mind. I miss you so much. I know you're in a way better place, but it still hurts not to have you around or to see your beautiful face. You have left a positive impact on my life and you will never be forgotten. I appreciate all you are and all you have done for me and DarRick. I love

you and always will. Our memories will always remain. Till we meet again my beautiful sweet humble cousin. I love you and miss you.

Love always,
Your cuz
Carolee
(Foshee for life)

'Old Time Rock 'n' Roll'

By Patrick "Gator" Doctor Jr.

When I was young I understood what was right.
As I got older I understood what was wrong.
My grandma taught me how to stand strong...
I will never ever forget the old days,
That's what the old people say.
I will give thanks each and every day,
For the Seminole way.

'Youngster'

By Patrick "Gator" Doctor Jr.

When I was young I was no fool,
If you want to know yes I was cool.
Don't look back is what I learned on my own.
Remember, Jesus is the cornerstone.
Don't ever forget the good way that's what the old people say.
Growing up was good.
That's what I now know.
Remember, don't ever explode.

Tribune deadlines 2014

Dates subject to change

Month	Issue Date	Deadline
January	Friday, Jan. 31	Wednesday, Jan. 15
February	Friday, Feb. 28	Wednesday, Feb. 12
March	Monday, March 31	Wednesday, March 12
April	Wednesday, April 30	Wednesday, April 9
May	Friday, May 30	Wednesday, May 14
June	Monday, June 30	Wednesday, June 11
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August	Friday, Aug. 29	Wednesday, Aug. 13
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TOP SCHOOL

From page 1A

Dozens of guests posed for photographs with Miss Florida Seminole Tia Blais-Billie and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Brianna Blais-Billie – even Gov. Rick Scott, who passed through to welcome the crowd.

A special round of applause was received by Louise Gopher who seeded the school in 2001, with help from the Brighton community, when she launched the Pull-Out Program, which plucked Tribal children from off-reservation public schools every Friday for Creek language and cultural arts classes. Later, she worked closely with Tribal members, officials and Mike Strader, of Charter School Associates, who guided the school to its opening in August 2007.

Strader said he nominated PECS for the recent award because the state-rated “A” school has consistently earned the status of “high performing charter school” according to rigorous guidelines. The state’s Commissioner of Education affirmed the nomination.

PECS also boasts a five-star rating on the website GreatSchools.

Biden and former state Rep. Rafael Arza (R-Hialeah), who sponsored the Florida Charter School Bill that lets public schools convert to charter schools and allowed the creation of magnet charter schools, implored participants to demand that Florida senators increase charter school budgets.

“When you talk to (senators), tell them thank you for the \$91 million they provided before for building new charter schools, but tell them that the \$50 million they want to give for next year is not enough,” Arza said.

Biden, a democrat, said the issue is not about politics – it’s a matter of the heart.

“This is not a democrat or republican issue. It’s what’s best for our children,” he said.

Greseth also spoke from the heart during the presentation. He said PECS gives students “fantastic opportunities” to advance the Seminole culture and become future leaders. The school is about 90 percent Tribal and 10 percent children of non-Native staff and employees.



Eileen Soler

Florida Gov. Rick Scott shares a warm moment with PECS founder Louise Gopher, who was recently inducted into the Florida Women’s Hall of Fame.

“We’re showing the kids that it’s OK to be different. Giving them a choice allows them to be different and thrive because of it,” Greseth said.

For Louise Gopher, finding out the school would be honored at the state Capitol was another in a long string of “pleasant surprises.” The first came on the day the doors opened when 30 more students than expected showed for class. By the end of the year, the school had earned its first “A” rating.

She responded to the Tallahassee luncheon invitation with three words: “Yes, yes, yes.”

“It’s been so exciting,” Gopher said. “I never thought we’d have extracurriculars like basketball and volleyball, but we do. I thought K through 5 would be great, and then we had middle school.” Gopher said. “We’ve had many pleasant surprises.”

More AWARDS photos from page 1B



Beverly Bidney

Principal Brian Greseth congratulates students March 31 as they receive their awards at the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School third nine weeks awards program.



Beverly Bidney

Ivess Baker proudly shows off his award.



Beverly Bidney

Principal Brian Greseth hands out awards for the students’ academic achievements.



Beverly Bidney

Pernell Bert receives his award during the ceremony.



Beverly Bidney

Students show off their achievement awards while principal Brian Greseth congratulates them on their accomplishments.



Beverly Bidney

Straight-A student Edward Gaucin accepts his award for making the gold honor roll from principal Brian Greseth at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School.



Eileen Soler

Seminole Tribe education leaders and royalty pose with Florida Gov. Rick Scott. From left are Brighton Councilman Andrew J. Bowers Jr., Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Brianna Blais-Billie, Gov. Rick Scott, Miss Florida Seminole Tia Blais-Billie, PECS founder Louise Gopher, Education director Santarvis Brown and Jennie Shore.

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Sports



Pemayetv Emahakv softball honors eighth-graders in season finale

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

BRIGHTON — As she brushed dirt off her red and black Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School softball uniform one final time, Camryn Thomas managed to smile while she jogged back to the dugout.

The eighth-grader had just been tagged out in the sixth inning while diving headfirst into second base. Her team was losing. Yet Thomas' grin served as a symbolic gesture to the theme of an upbeat evening for the Lady Seminoles on their annual parent night.

Despite a season-ending 8-6 setback against Okeechobee High's junior varsity April 10 at Ollie Jones Memorial Park, the PECS middle school program, which finished with a 5-3 record, had plenty of reasons to enjoy its finale while peeking ahead to an optimistic future.

Pregame festivities helped set a festive tone. Thomas and Sunni Bearden — the team's only eighth-graders — received a send-off as they prepare to embark on their high school careers. Thomas will attend Lake Placid; Bearden will head to Moore Haven.

Starting from second base, Thomas and Bearden were joined by their parents for a brief stroll through the pitcher's circle as teammates lined both sides. First-year head coach Nancy Jimmie and her assistants Kevin Jackson and McKenzie Green handled greeting duties as the players were presented flowers upon arrival at home plate.

Two years ago, Thomas and Bearden debuted with PECS in memorable fashion on an undefeated squad coached by Darryl Allen. This season turned out to be

somewhat of a rebuilding year with several young players after the team lost eight eighth-graders in 2013.

"Whole new team, whole new coach," Jimmie said.

As the team's primary pitcher, Thomas pitched the first four and one-third innings in her final start. Highlights for the right-hander came in the first and fourth innings when she retired the sides in order, requiring just seven pitches for the latter.

Throughout the season, Thomas has been reliable in the circle and at first base,

where she finished the game after being relieved by Aleina Micco.

"Camryn is a big part of the team. She throws hard," Jimmie said.

An injury kept Bearden out of action for most of the season, including the finale, but she had a prime view from the bench of what next year's squad will look like.

"They've gotten so much better since the beginning. They're doing real good," she said about the younger players.

♦ See **SOFTBALL** on page 2C



Kevin Johnson

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School softball players Sunni Bearden, left, and Camryn Thomas share a laugh with Thomas' mother, Cecelia, during a ceremony April 10 honoring the girls as the team's only eighth-graders.



Kevin Johnson

First-year Okeechobee High varsity softball coach Mary Huff hits ground balls to her players April 8 during practice. Huff, a 2008 graduate, enjoyed an outstanding playing career at Okeechobee.

Former Okeechobee High standout Mary Huff settles in as coach at alma mater

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

OKEECHOBEE — While the trees beyond the outfield fence fought back against fierce wind, sporadic light rain pelted the girls who practiced on a muddy infield during a gray afternoon. Despite gloomy conditions, Okeechobee High School's softball coach declared it a glorious time to be on a ball field.

"It's a great day for softball," Mary Huff told her players as she hit ground balls to them April 8.

Then again, just about any day is a great day for softball in Huff's world. The enthusiasm she developed for the sport as a youngster in Brighton and accompanied her throughout her playing days for Okeechobee and in college hasn't dwindled as a young rookie varsity coach at 23.

"I'm kind of intense and I'm really passionate about the game, and they learned that really quickly," said Huff, whose inaugural year at the helm of her alma mater ended April 16 with a heartbreaking 6-5 loss against South Fork in a Class 6A-District 13 semifinal. Okeechobee, which finished the regular season in a three-way tie for first place with South Fork and Jensen Beach, compiled a 15-9 record.

Huff's affection for softball extends beyond practices, games and records. A teary-eyed example of how much the coach cares about her players came in the regular season finale April 7 when she oversaw her first senior night ceremony as a coach. No doubt the seven players from the class of 2014 have earned a special place in Huff's heart.

"I knew it was going to be emotional, but I didn't think it was going to take the toll on me that it did," Huff said. "It was definitely a lot tougher than I thought it was going to be. They definitely had a huge impact on me this first season. I couldn't ask for a better group of seniors."

When some of those seniors were youngsters, such as leadoff batter Carissa LiCata, they watched Huff as a player on the same field.

"When we were in seventh and eighth grade we'd come out here and watch, but we never expected her to be our coach. She was a really good pitcher," said LiCata, the team's speedy spark plug who signed with Florida Gulf Coast University in Fort Myers.

"I saw her play in high school," added sophomore third baseman Cheyenne Nunez, part of the team's contingent from Brighton that includes Breanna Billie, Brianna Nunez and Delaney Osceola. "I'd watch the varsity play and I'd say, 'Dang,

those girls are so good. I want to be out there one day.' I told myself that I'm going to work my butt off and I'm going to be just like Mary. Mary is a heck of a good ball player. She's definitely a role model."

Although Huff went away to play college ball, her presence never departed the field after the second team All-State selection graduated in 2008. Her name adorns a sign in center field for the 2007 team that reached the Class 4A state semifinals, the furthest Okeechobee has ever gone. A neighboring sign in right-center from Huff and her parents, John and Vickie, wishes the team best of luck.

In some ways, it's like old times at Okeechobee High. Huff's parents attend every game, just like they did when their daughter was a player.

"They are huge fans," said coach Huff. "They didn't miss a game when I played and they don't miss a game when I coach. They're always supporting us."

Last summer Huff earned a degree in health and social behavioral sciences and a minor in coaching from the University of Central Florida. She was a member of UCF's softball team, but an ACL injury prevented her from ever appearing in a game. Prior to her arrival in Orlando, Huff played for St. Petersburg College and Indian River State College in Fort Pierce. Her playing days haven't finished yet.

She plays slow-pitch for area travel teams and plans to keep playing as long as she can.

"I will always be like that. When I'm playing 40-and-over, I'll probably be breaking a hip out there," she said.

Even before starting college, Huff figured she would return as a coach at Okeechobee, where the electronic scoreboard purchased by the Seminole Tribe during Huff's sophomore year still stands with the Tribe's name in large letters atop it.

"There's something about this field and the lights and everything, I just knew I was going to come back one day and (coach)," she said.

After serving as Okeechobee's junior varsity coach in 2013, Huff earned the promotion to varsity skipper, becoming the program's third coach in the past four years. She plans to stay much longer than just one season.

"I definitely want to be here, and I will be here until they make me leave. I love it so much," she said.

Intense preseason conditioning and practices served as immediate proof that Huff wanted her players to step up their game, not only physically, but also mentally.

♦ See **HUFF** on page 3C



Kevin Johnson

Pemayetv Emahakv's Jacee Jumper safely slides into home plate as the ball eludes Okeechobee junior varsity catcher Miranda McClanahan April 10.

Track and Field Invitational's debut a big hit with all ages

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

BIG CYPRESS — The significance of the inaugural Big Cypress Track and Field Invitational extended beyond first-place finishes and medals.

Some competitors opted to tackle activities and distances they had never done prior to the March 29 meet on the Big Cypress rodeo grounds.

"It's probably the farthest I've run. It was pretty fun," said Franklin Jumper, 13, moments after the Ahfachkee School student sprinted to the finish line to win his age group in the 1-mile run on a dirt road across the street from the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena.

Spanning the athletic spectrum from a 5-mile run to a 5-foot golf putt, the Invitational featured 15 events and about 50 participants comprised of Tribal members, descendants and community members. Ages ranged from single digits into the 70s.

"I'm just trying to get the young and old to come out and exercise and have better fitness," said Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger, who not only sponsored the meet but also competed in it, winning five events in his 51-54 age group. "Something like this used to be around a long time ago — probably in the 1970s — so I'm just trying to bring it back. Hopefully, we'll get a bigger turnout next year."

A handful of events were offered solely to the dozen competitors ages 55 and older, including Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank, who won the men's archery



Kevin Johnson

Ashley Wilcox pivots during the shot put competition at the first Big Cypress Track and Field Invitational March 29.

competition ahead of Sandy Billie Jr. (second) and Rudy Osceola (third).

The Invitational provided an opportunity for Ollie Balentine to do things she had never tried before, like fling a skillet into the air, maneuver an adult tricycle through an obstacle course dotted with orange cones, and putt a golf ball on an artificial practice green.

"It's my first time. I had a good time," said Balentine, who won the skillet toss in the 71-and-older age group.

Time is something that seldom garners the attention of Issiah Billie, 28, during his daily jogs on Big Cypress.

"I run just to run. I never run for time," Billie said.

This time Billie's runs were timed as he ran faster than anyone in any age group in the 5-mile (38 minutes, 24 seconds), 2-mile (14:28) and 1-mile (6:37) races. After winning the longest race of the day in the morning, he spent the last 200 yards in the 2-miler glancing over his left shoulder to gauge his lead.

"I had to. Everybody said they want to beat me," said Billie, whose headphones were tuned to music from Kanye West throughout his 8 miles of running.

The 5-mile run was one of six first-place finishes in the 46-50 age group for Norman "Skeeter" Bowers, who also won the 1-mile and 2-mile runs, shot put, softball throw and

♦ See **TRACK** on page 2C



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee High School sophomore Cheyenne Nunez, of Brighton Reservation, fields a ground ball April 8 during practice.

TRACK
From page 1C

standing broad jump. Bowers' impressive day earned him the Most Valuable Athlete award from the Recreation Department.

Multiple-event winner Heather Peterson was the only female to complete the 5-mile run. She did so in 39:38.

Tricycle races and golf putting for the 55-and-older contingent were the only events held indoors. Nearly all the golf participants had never played the sport, so the advice and instructions from Ahfachkee School golf coach Amos Mazzant and his wife, Cookie, proved beneficial.

"I think they had so much fun practicing; then they'd make it and they were ecstatic," Amos Mazzant said.

After lunch and the final events ended, Councilman Tiger awarded medals to the top finishers in each event. He said he plans to hold the Invitational every spring.

"Some are asking to do it two times a year. I don't know about two times; that's kind of rough, but we'll see about it," he said.



Tianna Stubbs, of Hollywood, leaps during the standing broad jump at the first Big Cypress Track and Field Invitational March 29.

Kevin Johnson



Rudy Osceola focuses on the target as he competes in senior archery.

Kevin Johnson



Norman 'Skeeter' Bowers, left, receives a first-place medal from Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger, who competed in the meet and sponsored it.

Kevin Johnson



Issiah Billie enjoys a comfortable lead late in the 2-mile run. He won the race and also captured the day's opening event, the 5-mile run.

Kevin Johnson

Tampa Catholic honors Justin Motlow

Senior awarded Offensive Player of the Year, Wide Receiver of the Year

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

TAMPA — Capping off an illustrious prep gridiron career, Justin Motlow was honored with two major awards at the Tampa Catholic High School football banquet March 27 before a packed house of parents and players at the Tampa Club, 40 stories high in the downtown Bank of America building.

Motlow was named both Offensive Player of the Year and Wide Receiver of the Year for the 2013 season.

In a year in which coach Mike Gregory's Crusaders went 10-3 and made the playoffs, Motlow led all players with 68 receptions and 96.1 all-purpose yards per game. He scored 10 touchdowns and racked up 1,151 reception yards, averaging 16.93 yards per catch.

As a punter, he chalked up 1,829 total yards (40.64 yards per punt) and dropped 17 of his 45 punts inside the 20-yard line (30th best in the nation).

Motlow's three-year, 33-game varsity high school career totals include 17 touchdowns and 119 catches for 2,013 yards (16.92 yards per catch). He only lost one fumble.

After he accepted a preferred walk-on spot on the Florida State University football team, Motlow has been inundated with requests for press interviews, including ESPN, which published a lengthy profile on the young man who could be the first Seminole Indian to play for the national champion Seminoles.

Three years ago, Motlow won gold medals (in his age bracket) in the 200- and

400-meter dashes at the North American Indigenous Games.

Come June, Motlow will join his Tampa Catholic teammate Corey Martinez at FSU football practice. Martinez, an offensive lineman, was awarded a full scholarship by FSU.

"Justin was hurt and could not play during the preseason when all the scouts



Justin Motlow receives the Tampa Catholic High School Offensive Player of the Year award from coach Mike Gregory.

Peter B. Gallagher

SOFTBALL
From page 1C

With only one soon-to-be graduate in the lineup, PECS received strong performances from its future. Led by catcher Alaina Sweat (2-for-2, walk, RBI), all nine starters reached base at least once. Micco delivered an RBI single in the first inning that gave PECS a 1-0 lead.

Thomas, outfielders Jacee Jumper and Krysta Burton and infielders Julia Smith, Chynna Villarreal and Luzana Venzor each had one single.

Leadoff batter Janessa Nunez sparked a three-run third. After being hit by a pitch, Nunez eventually scored to knot the game at 2-2. Jumper crossed home plate to make it 3-2 before Sweat tacked on another run with an RBI single.

PECS' aspirations to finish with a victory were spoiled when Okeechobee scored six runs in the fifth, which included an RBI triple from D'Anna Wilson.

Although Sweat and Villarreal scored on wild pitches to trim the deficit to two in the sixth, the Lady Seminoles' rally fell short.

Facing teams with older players — such as Okeechobee's JV — was nothing new to

PECS. In fact, when the Lady Seminoles played Everglades City's varsity earlier in the season, Jimmie was amazed to see opposing players arrive at the field as drivers, not passengers.

"I remember their pitcher drove up in a big, old pink and black Chevy truck," she said.

Despite the age gap, PECS wasn't intimidated. The Lady Seminoles nearly won, but Everglades City emerged with a one-run victory.

"It's all right," Thomas said about playing against older teams. "At least it's competition. It was pretty cool. You get to experience what it's going to be like when you get older."

Starting next season, PECS will have to experience what it's like without Thomas and Bearden. Jimmie said the team's hard work this season — which included two wins against Morningside and one each against St. Anastasia and JV teams from Glades Day and Clewiston — bodes well for 2015.

"They worked their butt off for me," she said. "They're all unique. I do love them all."



Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School eighth-grader Sunni Bearden is accompanied by her mother, Timi, during a parent night ceremony prior to the final game of the season for the Lady Seminoles April 10.

Kevin Johnson



Second baseman Luzana Venzor clutches a short pop-up for an out against Okeechobee High School junior varsity.

Kevin Johnson



Pitcher Camryn Thomas winds up during her final game with the school's softball team at Ollie Jones Memorial Park.

Kevin Johnson



Pemayetv Emahakv softball coach Nancy Jimmie urges Janessa Nunez to hurry to home plate following an errant throw.

Kevin Johnson



Alaina Sweat handles catcher duties during the Lady Seminoles' final game.

Kevin Johnson



Alaina Sweat tries to reach home plate before the ball.

Kevin Johnson



Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School eighth-grader Camryn Thomas is honored during the team's annual parent night ceremony prior to the Lady Seminoles final game of the season.

Kevin Johnson

Indian Country profile: Jacoby Ellsbury

◆ HUFF
From page 1C

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Editor's note: This is part of an occasional series of profiles of notable Native Americans making their mark on the world.

As a kid growing up on the Warm Springs Reservation in Oregon, Jacoby Ellsbury dreamed of being a baseball player. He spent hours hitting balls off a tee made just for him by his father, igniting his passion for the sport.

"Living on the reservation I was always motivated to excel," said Ellsbury, a member of the Navajo and Colorado River Indian Tribes. "People always told me the chance of playing was low; they said to pick a real job. I always wanted to play baseball, so I strived for it and worked hard for it."

Ellsbury, 30, has spent his life chasing the dream and has two World Series championships to show for it, both with the Boston Red Sox in 2007 and 2013. He became a free agent in the offseason, and in December, he signed a seven-year, \$153-million contract with the New York Yankees, where he's the leadoff batter and center fielder. Among outfielders, only Manny Ramirez and Matt Kemp have signed more lucrative contracts at \$160 million.

Baseball plays an important part of his life, but serving as a role model to Native American kids does as well. Ellsbury combined those passions and teamed up with Nike in 2011 to run the N7 Jacoby Ellsbury Baseball Camp on the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community in Scottsdale, Ariz.

"This is a way to give back," Ellsbury said. "If the kids take one thing from camp, it's that they can work hard, go to school, get good grades and have a dream and a goal in mind."

Nike N7 brings the benefits of sports to Native American communities. Proceeds from the purchase of N7 products support the N7 Fund, which helps physical fitness and sports programs on reservations.

"We want to bring the kids in for a fun and exciting experience with Jacoby Ellsbury and have them leave feeling inspired," said Tessa Sayers, with Nike N7 operations. "The skills they learn at camp they can do at home; they don't always need a lot of equipment. We want them to know being physically active is fun."

The camp, for 8- to 15-year-olds from 13 Arizona reservations, is held at the same complex the Arizona Diamondbacks and Colorado Rockies use for spring training. In January, 120 kids came out to learn from the best in the game.

The Diamondbacks lent their coaches to the camp, and Ellsbury brought a few



Jacoby Ellsbury, a member of the Navajo and Colorado River Indian Tribes, is the leadoff batter and center fielder for the New York Yankees.

Photo courtesy of New York Yankees. All rights reserved.

Major League Baseball friends to help out. Cody Ross, formerly of the Red Sox and now with the Diamondbacks, Darnell McDonald, also a former Red Sox player who recently retired, and Eric Young Jr., a former Rockies player now with the New York Mets, added their expertise to the camp.

"At the beginning of camp, the kids are shy," Ellsbury said. "But then they open up and have fun. We want them to move around and get active."

Health issues such as diabetes plague Indian Country, so Ellsbury encourages kids to adopt healthy lifestyles by getting off the couch and staying active.

Ellsbury has never seen his Native American heritage as a limitation. He always knew he would have to put in the time and hard work to achieve his goal.

"I'm very proud of my heritage," he said. His father, Jim, is white; his mother, Margie, is a full-blooded member of the Navajo and Colorado River Indian Tribes. "I was always determined to succeed."

Ellsbury is influenced by a variety of role models. He admires his parents for the sacrifices they made for him and his three brothers. Watching sports stars Ken Griffey Jr. and Michael Jordan also motivated him to succeed.

His competitiveness compels him to win whatever game he plays – even when it was cards, video games or ping pong as a child. He wants to be the best and sees his greatest achievements as the two World Series wins.

"You have to be mentally strong to play this game day in and day out," he said. "You play 162 games, spring training and the postseason. There are a lot of ups and downs. Holding that trophy is the greatest feeling. Once you win, you want to experience that again."

The grind of the season can pose a challenge for Ellsbury, a self-described perfectionist. He is an impressive .300 lifetime batter, but to him it means failing 70 percent of the time. His support group, which includes his wife, Kelsey, keeps him

levelheaded.

Ellsbury's enthusiasm for the game has never wavered.

"I love the excitement of the fans, the kids at camp, making a diving play and seeing a dad bring his son to the game," he said.

As a child, Ellsbury attended baseball games with his father, who explained what the players were doing on the field. He sees kids watching him in the same way now.

Ellsbury believes everyone can find success. He encourages youth to start with a dream, make a goal and devise a plan to achieve it.

"Try to do everything you can to accomplish it," Ellsbury said. "It's important to have a dream but realize there will be sacrifices you have to make along the way. The dream can be anything; a teacher, doctor, anything. Just learn what you need to do to accomplish it and work toward it."

As of April 24, Ellsbury led the Yankees in batting average (.337) hits (28) and triples (2) in 22 games.

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Hoopsters gain experience at NAYO

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

Fisher, a 1983 Philadelphia 76ers draft choice and former point guard for James Madison University.

Seminole Rec I received strong guard play from Hollywood brothers Daniel and Francisco Rodriguez. Daniel led the squad in several facets. He averaged 18.5 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists per game. Valuable contributions also came from Francisco, who averaged 17.5 points, seven rebounds and five assists.

Other top scorers included Ricky Garza (11 ppg), Chaska Osceola (six ppg), Issiah Alvarado (six ppg) and Jason Sanders (five ppg). Helping out on the boards were Reginald Ling, who averaged seven rebounds per game, and Ethan Balentine and Brandon Williams, who both hauled in an average of four rebounds.

Some elite teams in the tournament came from the Choctaw and Cherokee Tribes. "We're playing against Tribes with much larger populations than we have," Blankenship said.

Although Seminole teams didn't return with a championship, Blankenship said the trip was a good experience for the players.

"It's all about the journey, not about the losses or wins. Everybody was well-behaved and everybody had a good time," he said.

Some players were back on the hardwood at the Hollywood Gym the day after returning home. Forward Tanier Gore, 11, said his team lost one game by 20 points.

"They were better than us, but not a lot better," he said.

Seminole youngsters will be back in North Carolina July 17-20 for the NAYO baseball and softball tournaments.

CHEROKEE, N.C. — Next year Seminole youth basketball players won't have to travel nearly as far as they did for this year's Native American Youth Organization (NAYO) Basketball Tournament.

The Tribe will host the 2015 edition in Hollywood. Recreation director Richard Blankenship said about 50 teams are expected to participate.

Six Seminole teams with about 70 boys and girls competed in this year's NAYO tournament April 18-19 in Cherokee, N.C. The 800-mile trip to the western part of the Tar Heel state turned out to be a quick one for most Seminole teams. Only one — the Seminole Rec I boys squad — advanced past the first day of the double-elimination tournament.

Coached by Charles Fisher, Buildings and Grounds facilities assets coordinator, Seminole Rec I split its first two games on day one in the 14-and-under division before being eliminated early in the second day.

"It was a very competitive tournament," said Fisher, who was assisted by coach Al McGriff. "Our kids were a little nervous the first game. The second game they shook off their nervousness. They shot the ball well and played very good defense."

Newly formed, Seminole Rec I only had three practices before the tournament, none of which featured the entire team. Fisher said he was pleased with how quickly the unit became cohesive at the tournament.

"The more we played together, the better we looked. I was impressed with their unselfishness and they were very resilient. They wouldn't give up," said



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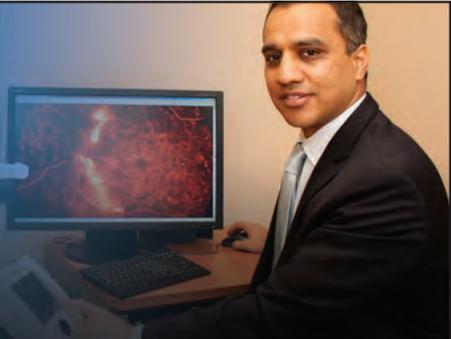
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The hiring of an attorney is an important decision that should not be based solely upon advertisement. Castillo worked as a Public Defender in Broward County from 1990-1996 and has been in private practice since 1996. In 1995, he was voted the Trial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

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