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Louise Gopher bestowed with FSU honorary degree



Louise Gopher is congratulated by Florida State University President John Thrasher after receiving an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree and delivering the commencement speech to graduates Dec. 13 in Tallahassee.

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

TALLAHASSEE — Louise Gopher ended 2014 on a high note Dec. 13 when she received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Florida State University for her contributions to the school and to her Tribe. Gopher is the

third Seminole Tribal member to receive the honor; Betty Mae Jumper received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree in 1994 and Jim Shore received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in 2005. The degrees honor individuals of outstanding achievement who have gained national or international recognition or who have made a

significant scholarly, creative, public, business or humane contribution to the country or to FSU, according to the university. "Being classified in the same group as Betty Mae Jumper is a big honor," said Gopher, 69. "I was there when both she and Jim Shore got theirs."

♦ See LOUISE GOPHER on page 5A

Distinction sought for Sam Jones Trail

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

DEVIL'S GARDEN — James E. Billie said he thinks about Seminole war leader Abiaki every time he drives on or flies over rural County Road 833, as it rolls directly north from the Big Cypress Reservation.

The Seminole Chairman has long championed the exploits and memory of Abiaki, who was also known by the names Sam Jones and The Devil.

Chairman Billie said he can look out at the miles of pasture and prairie between the reservation proper and State Road 80 just west of Clewiston and see Abiaki leading Florida Indians through a maze of palmetto patch and jungle, in and out of the cypress swamps. For days and days they darted from shadow to shadow, eyes looking back over shoulders, covering their tracks, the Chairman muses, dozens of Seminoles hurrying deeper into the safety of the thick Florida outback, far from the U.S. soldiers and the war they were waging on the Seminoles.

"Every time I think the same thought," he said. "For years I've thought that road should be named after ol' Sam Jones."

It just might happen. Under the direction of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum director Paul Backhouse, the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) has assembled research proving CR 833 follows, almost exactly, the final leg of the mid-1800s trail blazed by Abiaki — from today's SR 80 just west of Clewiston to Big Cypress.

Though the entire trail began in the Immokalee area, curved north around LaBelle and then directly south from present-day SR 80, the last 20-mile section "deserves to be named for Sam Jones," said David Brownell, a THPO research assistant. Brownell, along with chief data analyst Juan Cancel, has prepared maps and a narrative on the topic that will soon be delivered to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) with the Chairman's request to rename the highway in honor of Abiaki.

♦ See SAM JONES on page 7A

To South Dakota, with loving care

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — It didn't take a jolly old man and a red-nosed reindeer to deliver tons of comfort just in time for Christmas to some of the poorest communities in Indian Country.

Wheeling in a 24-foot Ryder truck filled to the brim, Christopher Billie and Obadiah Osceola, of Hollywood, braved chilly winter temperatures and a little snowfall to transport clothing, shoes, blankets and toys to five communities on two reservations "out West" where money is scarce and need is great.

"We are so fortunate to have what we have. It's compassion and caring; that's what we do as Natives, from one Native to another," Billie said.

The driving duo left Dec. 12 from Hollywood Reservation for the 2,150-mile trek to Rapid City, South Dakota where they met Seminole Tribal member Bobbie "BJ" Billie, who lives in the area while attending Oglala Lakota College about 80 miles southeast.

On Dec. 14, the group began dropping off goods in Red Scaffold then moved on to

Dupree and Cherry Creek, all communities on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. The humanitarian effort ended in Red Shirt in the Pine Ridge District further north. BJ Billie said Christopher Billie and Osceola were assisted on the journey by two of her close friends, Josh Washington and Marcus Swallow, of the Oglala Sioux Tribe.

"It's compassion and caring; that's what we do as Natives, from one Native to another."

— Christopher Billie, Hollywood Reservation

The goods were donated in recent weeks to the Native Relief Foundation, a charity organization created by Seminole Tribe members to help alleviate desperate poverty in some of the most remote and tiniest communities.

Gloria Wilson, the organization's spokeswoman, said a handful of friends were provoked into humanitarian action in 2011 after seeing a television news report about the destitution suffered by the residents of Pine Ridge, South Dakota.

"We were watching at home, not knowing the others were watching, too, and then we called each other saying, 'Did you see that, did you see it?' We decided we had to do something about it," Wilson said.

♦ See NATIVE RELIEF on page 4A



Eileen Soler

Seminole Tribe members and friends from the grassroots charity group Native Relief Foundation sort and pack thousands of pounds of donated clothing, shoes, blankets, toys and baby care items for shipping to poor and isolated reservation communities in the Great Plains.

Government programs, services to be assessed

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

During the next few months, professional strategists from the American Indian-owned Blue Stone Strategy Group will conduct a "Government Effectiveness Assessment to determine what services and programs are working effectively for our Tribal members," wrote Chairman James E. Billie in a recent tribalwide letter that followed a Tribal Council decision to contract with Blue Stone. "This project will assist the Council to make informed decisions for our Tribe's continued success in delivering quality services and resources to our members, now and for our future generations."

The effectiveness and quality of

Seminole Tribal government programs and services will be measured against both Tribal members' and employees' perspectives.

"We want to hear from everybody, from the Tribal member to the employee on the front lines to the Tribal executive directors," said Blue Stone national project manager William Moon. "If you look at the Tribe as a business, the Tribal members are the consumers and the Tribal government employees deliver the services and resources. Opinions, ideas, information from both perspectives are valuable in developing a forward-looking Seminole solution."

Blue Stone, based in Irvine, California, affords consulting services to Tribal communities, specializing in economic,

leadership and Tribal governance development.

Blue Stone aims to protect Tribal sovereignty and build strong economies, according to the company's website, www.BlueStoneStrategy.com. The company promises an objective process, complete Tribal member and employee participant confidentiality, and a commitment to Indian Country, said Michelle Schenandoah (Oneida), a senior strategist who will serve as project manager.

"The input from Tribal members is the key part of this project. We want to hear from as many Seminoles as possible," Schenandoah said.

♦ See BLUE STONE on page 6A

Editorial

Soldiers called him 'Devil'

• James E. Billie

That ol' Devil, the soldiers called him. It was almost a romantic term. You know: "That ol' Devil escaped us again!" More and more as time went on, the word Devil was also put on the haunts of the Seminole medicine man Abiaki (aka Sam Jones). More than 150 years later, there is an area, between the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation and State Road 80, still called Devil's Garden to this day.

Sugarcane, citrus groves, fields of tomatoes, bell peppers, potatoes and cabbage and cattle ranches stretch mile after mile as County Road 833 slices through Devil's Garden. Millions and millions of dollars have been made in this area, but I'll bet very few of those ranchers and farmers have any idea about the history of that name. There is no mention anywhere about the man the soldiers called The Devil.

Sam Jones started it all back in the 1800s when he and his followers planted bananas, pumpkins, corn, sweet potatoes and other vegetables on fertile hammocks in this area. U.S. soldiers were on a mission to capture these Seminoles, and almost did. Surprised by the soldiers, the Seminoles ran off into the swamps, leaving their gardening tools behind. History tells us that one soldier, looking at the scene, declared, "This must be The Devil's Garden."

You might say Abiaki brought that nickname upon himself. I'm not sure the soldiers really knew what he looked like. There are stories of him walking right into the forts to sell fish directly to the soldiers. He'd walk around and see where everything was and then get his band together to attack the same fort that night. The legend grew and so did the name. The soldiers knew The Devil was in his Garden, but they could never find him.

Something about that place, Devil's Garden, always haunted me. It was something I figured I should know about, but I never could put my finger on what it was. When I was 6 or 7 years old, my clan uncle Morgan Smith fabricated a story to scare me. He came up with the idea that there was a big ol' Devil out there that was just a big ol' head. And he said there were eyes and heads bouncing all over the fields.

At night he would point the eyes out to me and sure enough there they were. They would stare at me and start moving all around. I had no idea what it was, but it scared the shenanigans out of me. I didn't realize those were deer or cows walking around. I guess my uncle was scaring me so I wouldn't go wandering off and get lost out there.

Back then there was no road like the present day, just a dirt path. As time progressed the county started roadwork there for County Road 833, but still when you drove that road you had to have planks with you – planks to lay down to drive over the holes in the road.

Still, I wondered. The '50s, the '60s came and went, then in the '70s I met a young lady named Patsy West. She was a historian who became friends with us at the Okalee Indian Village in Hollywood. We were talking one day, and the subject of Devil's Garden came up. I asked her how that area got that name. She told me the story of Abiaki and how he was also known as Sam Jones, The Devil and The Rascal.

I was not familiar with Abiaki. We have a word *A-bee-ka*, which means "one who leads, is up front." We use the word *Shu-loop-la-pe-thee* (soul with horns) in place of Devil, but no Seminole ever called Sam Jones by that nickname. He was said to be older looking, even when he was young. Quiet and friendly. He mingled around with the white people and was friends with them until some idiot started a war. (A lot of people, white and Indian, were starving to death in those days. It is said that they started the war so they could get rations.)

According to Patsy West, it is a historical fact that Sam Jones always evaded the soldiers and got away even when they had him cornered. Pretty soon I came to realize why the Seminoles were in South Florida. Eight clans followed Sam Jones down here to escape the soldiers. Bird, Wind, Panther, Snake, Bear, Frog, Deer and Otter. Not all the clans followed Abiaki. Many were taken to Oklahoma. Raccoon, Sweet Potato, Long Hair Clan, none of them exist here anymore.

With that knowledge I started recalling a time when Florida maps in the '50s and '60s still listed a place called Sam Jones Old Town. When I was a kid in my teenage years, tourists would come to Big Cypress asking, "Where is Sam Jones Old Town?" and I didn't know what they were talking about. Now I do. That area was east of the Big Cypress Reservation by 2 miles. It was a large pine tree stand with palmettos all around, U.S. Sugar or someone plowed it all up and now, where Sam used to live is nothing but hundreds of acres of orange groves.

When they were first plowing up the ground some anonymous caller told me there were bones being dug up. I didn't follow up the call, but I wish I had. Those could have been Old Sam Jones' bones.

In fact, one day a man came walking into my camp in Big Cypress, carrying a

box. Inside was a skull. It looked like it came out of a museum the way it was cut and numbered. He said it was Sam Jones. He said it had been sitting in a museum and he took it to bring back to Big Cypress. We took the skull to a place where it was said Sam Jones had a camp and buried it.

There is an old Seminole saying: You do not repeat the name of the deceased. If you refer to a deceased person you always do it in the third person: the father of James Billie, the mother of James Billie. But you never let the name of the person who died pass your lips. Sam Jones was a victim of that tradition. Maybe that is why he was never mentioned in our Tribe, or in the history passed down.

Today that tradition has passed by. I hope no bad luck will come on me but my curiosity just got the best of me. I want the world to know about Sam Jones. I prefer Sam Jones over the many great leaders of our Tribe and the reason was that he lived and died in the country he loved and never surrendered.

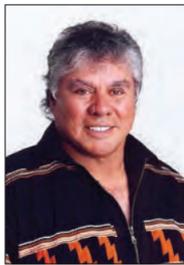
Most Tribal members have only recently started hearing about Sam Jones. The younger generations are starting to teach their kids about Sam Jones, shedding light on the man and what he did for our Tribe.

Eventually, I had a statue made of what we thought Sam Jones may have looked like with the eight clans around him; then we made a 60-foot mound in the middle of Billie Swamp Safari in Big Cypress topped by the statue made by sculptor Brad Cooley. I'm not sure the leaders of that time, the Tribal Council, had any idea about this man and why the statue was made.

The statue overlooks the haunts of Sam Jones and the territory known as Devil's Garden, as well as the path he blazed for those eight clans of Indians to escape deportation. The asphalt of County Road 833 is laid almost exactly on Sam's Trail. It would only be fitting for the Florida Department of Transportation to honor Sam Jones by renaming the road that cuts right through Devil's Garden.

Sam Jones Trail.
Sho-naa-bish.

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



'We are blessed and thankful'

• Tony Sanchez Jr.

As another holiday season approaches and another year begins, we are proud of our accomplishments and the direction we are headed toward. We are blessed and thankful for all the opportunities that have been presented to us. We all have worked tirelessly throughout the year. Sometimes we get so busy with our work schedule and in life that we forget about enjoying life, so it's nice to take the time to relax and cherish this holiday season with our family

and friends; come January we will be right back working diligently.

I wish you all a safe, wonderful, holiday season and a Happy New Year!
Sho-naa-bish.

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



Merry Christmas!

• James E. Billie

To whoever reads this: My first recollection of what I thought Christmas was all about was all about this fat, old, gray-headed guy yelling out, "Ho! Ho! Ho!" He came into our church with a big black bag full of candy, oranges, socks, soap and toys.*

He scared me so bad I crawled under my Grandmother's long Seminole dress. I didn't come out of there until this fat guy left!

As time went on, I got used to him and started looking forward to seeing Santa Claus. I thought then that Santa Claus was Christmas. Now I know that it's our Savior Jesus Christ's birthday.

As you enjoy your holidays, keep Christ in your hearts.
Sho-naa-bish.

* That was 67 years ago!

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

Guest Editorial: The new Immokalee

• Naples Daily News

Immokalee has taken its lumps through the years as one misfortune or another cast the community into a negative spotlight.

But have you heard about what's happening in Immokalee lately?

It's encouraging to see one announcement after another about big plans that could sustain Immokalee, a community that for a long time rose or fell on the success of its seasonal crops.

While job-creating construction is part of the picture, one of the emerging trends that's most exciting isn't taking shape with concrete blocks and trusses.

As documented this summer by Daily News reporter Maria Perez, young adults who came from field labor or blue-collar families are returning to Immokalee with degrees and specialized training to pursue their adult lives where they were raised. The draw of professionals with degrees back to their hometown can help lead the way long-term in reducing Immokalee's poverty, with about 4 of 10 residents living below the poverty line.

2000 census data showed that 3.8 percent of Immokalee residents 25 and older had an associate, bachelor's, graduate or professional degree. That rose to 6.1 percent for 2008-12, based on updated census data.

Enterprising students still in town also are helping people get a taste, in both the literal and figurative sense, of what the Immokalee community can offer.

A group of Immokalee High School students tinkered with their grandmas' recipes to develop a line of food products with a taste of Immokalee. So far they have a spice mix, a fire roasted tomato and jalapeño sauce, orange zest chocolate chip cookies and an idea for an Immokalee hamburger. They recently debuted two of their products at Wynn's Market in Naples.

Not coincidentally, the theme of this year's Immokalee Foundation event was Hope Grows, and sponsors say it set a fundraising record with more than \$2 million in donations. Students who have emerged from poverty to pursue their own careers are helping give hope to today's students assisted by the foundation.

Yet other forms of excitement planned for Immokalee keep its agricultural and

ranching roots in place. The Seminole Tribe of Florida plans to host a rodeo in late January. Fire Chief Paul Anderson, who is leading an Immokalee Fire Control District that is making strides to emerge from near-bankruptcy five years ago, planted the idea. He hopes it will help the district identify more volunteer firefighters. Under Anderson, the district has seen its fire insurance rating improve and is working toward catching up on building inspections that fell by the wayside with its budget crisis during the Great Recession.

About six months ago, years of planning by the Immokalee Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) came to fruition with a nearly \$1 million public plaza and park at First and Main streets. The gathering spot has wood benches and a landscaped area next to a band shell.

Another initiative in the works involving the CRA is a plan with the Safe & Healthy Children's Coalition of Collier County and other organizations for Immokalee Ciclovía early next year. The event would feature families coming together weekly to walk, run and cycle the streets of Immokalee.

Meanwhile, the Seminole Tribe is helping direct the community forward. Part of the vision is a new four-story hotel on the site of the Seminole Casino Immokalee.

Other plans for major new projects emerged this year, including a Walmart at Westclox Road and North 15th Street that will add jobs and eliminate long trips for those in town needing to get to a discount outlet, now dozens of miles away.

A mile or so from the Walmart site, the nonprofit Rural Neighborhoods plans to add a housing complex near Westclox and Carson roads that would be rented to low-income families. It would be the first such new development to break ground in four years. Organizers see it as a chance to further revitalize the area.

Revitalization: There's a lot of that these days in Immokalee. Sure, there's still much to be done, and the idea of a business incubator percolating might further help the town.

Have you heard about what's happening in Immokalee lately?

This editorial originally appeared in the Naples Daily News on Nov. 29, 2014 and was reprinted with permission.



Peter B. Gallagher

Pictured is County Road 833, just south of its beginning at State Road 80. Before the power lines to the east, the canal to the west and miles of cattle range and prairie, this was all Florida jungle. The Seminole war leader Abiaki (Sam Jones) blazed a trail through here all the way to Big Cypress, where he led dozens of unconquered Seminole Indians to safe hiding places from U.S. soldiers. Their descendants are the Florida Seminole and Miccosukee Indians of today.

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Community

A



Beverly Bidney

Alice Osceola helps her daughter Eliza Osceola Thomas, 5, make frybread Dec. 6 as her youngest daughter Cataleya Thomas, 2, watches at the Hollywood community culture lunch.

Traditions revived at Hollywood community culture camp

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Novice chefs tested their skills by cooking a traditional Seminole meal with a modern twist Dec. 6 under the Hollywood culture camp chieftains.

Bobby Frank, Hollywood community culture center manager, said the event was for learning and socializing.

“By the end of the day, the new ones were helping each other,” he said. “That’s what it’s all about.”

About a dozen children and young adults learned to cook over an open fire and to make Indian burgers and Indian dogs. They crowded around long work tables under the cooking chickee and determined the right proportion of flour to water for the perfect frybread. Helpers, including Kurya Kippenberger, taught the basics.

“The biggest challenge is learning how to cook around the fire without burning yourself,” she said.

Young adults Krystle Young and Lacey Jordan cooked Indian burgers for the first time. Lacey was so pleased with her creation, she took a cellphone photo of it cooking on the fire.

“It feels awesome,” Lacey said. “I always love to eat them, so I knew I’d have to learn to make them eventually.”

Several children learned firsthand

from the adults in their lives. Valerie Frank taught her daughter Jewel Frank, 10, and told her they weren’t leaving until she made one herself. It took several tries, but Jewel eventually succeeded and created a delicious hybrid: the Indian burger dog.

“I kept putting holes in it, so I had to start over,” Jewel said. “I kept trying until I got it right. It tastes good, and I’m proud that I learned how to make it.”

Colton Vazquez, 16, was determined to make an Indian burger, while Anthony Doctor, 11, spent his time tending the fire under the watchful eyes of Frank. He added wood to the fire as needed.

“You have to find the white spots and put the new wood there so the fire will be hotter,” Anthony said. “Bobby taught me how to do it; Morgan [Frank], too. I watched them so now I know how to do it. It feels good, but it’s hot.”

Bonnie Williams, community culture program specialist, pointed out how Seminole ancestors cooked over an open fire every day for breakfast, lunch and dinner, but some of the finer points about traditional cooking were learned the hard way.

“The lesson of the day was to stay away from the smoke,” Lacey said. “It keeps shifting and my eyes are really watering.”

Allison Osceola, who helped her nephew Louis Billie, 7, knead dough for the first time, enjoyed the experience.

“I was glad to see everyone come out and try,” she said. “They enjoyed learning and that’s a good kind of learning.”



Beverly Bidney

Kurya Kippenberger teaches her little brother Dante Kippenberger, 5, how to knead dough.

Bug Out Car Wash aims for dirt-free drive

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — What began with a bucket and hope has become a growing business of soap.

Brian Billie and best friend Mark Furlonge, co-owners of Bug Out Car Wash based in Big Cypress, say the business they founded just one year ago is successfully blossoming thanks to the semiannual, super pesky lovebug.

“I think we’re the only people on Earth

who love the lovebug. We call them ‘money in the bank,’” Billie said.

But the buddies who call themselves brothers were not always so cheerful. The operation was born from desperation when Furlonge was suddenly laid off from a management position in the car rental business and Billie was battling legal woes.

During a visit to Furlonge’s Fort Lauderdale apartment to repay a \$20 debt, Billie was alarmed when he saw no food in the refrigerator and Furlonge “losing his mind” because he could not pay his rent, car

payment or utilities.

With Billie’s endorsement, after being taken in as family by Billie’s mother, Patsy Billie, Furlonge drove to Sadie’s at Big Cypress Landing general store and restaurant “with a bucket and hope” and began washing cars, coincidentally in the height of lovebug season.

“We got slammed with customers who needed the bugs out. Then people came back asking if I could wash their cars all the time — hence Bug Out Car Wash,” Furlonge said.

Meanwhile, while Furlonge helped Billie through several serious health and legal issues, Billie sponsored Furlonge, a transplant from Trinidad, to become a citizen of the United States and apply for a small business loan.

Now, the company boasts 32 regular individual customers and three corporate accounts. Two pressure cleaners, a large supply of cleaning agents, a transport trailer and a work tent have been added to the company assets and the business loan is fully paid off.

With help from friend Erica Zpringer, who is a photography student at the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale, the company has a Facebook page and website and recently launched a Bug Out Car Wash clothing line much in the wearable gear style of popular television shows “Overhaulin’,” “Fast N’ Loud” and “Counting Cars.”

The company slogan is, “We get the bugs out before you bug out!”

“I never thought things would be good so soon. I believed it would happen in the future — much later future,” Billie said.

The company took off quickly but the friendship is more than a decade old.



Eileen Soler

Mark Furlonge, left, and Brian Billie, co-owners of Bug Out Car Wash in Big Cypress, are armed with tools of the trade. The company offers car wash and detail services to the Big Cypress community and hopes to expand soon to Immokalee and Hollywood.

Restored 1950s film rekindles concerns, reignites art form

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

FORT LAUDERDALE — The question whether art imitates life or life imitates art went unanswered in Fort Lauderdale at a screening of a 1958 film that provides a 12-hour, neo-realistic view of young Native American adults living in a gritty, low-rent district of Los Angeles.

Instead, when the movie “The Exiles” was followed with the 2014 short film “Legacy of Exiled NDNZ” by Navajo photographer and filmmaker Pamela J. Peters, one thing became clear: Art and life converge and evolve.

“When I first saw ‘The Exiles’ I felt the need for the next thing. We have to look at the times back then and the fact that neo-realism does not need ending. It is a slice of life,” Peters said after the Nov. 23 event at Stranahan House.

In the 1958 flick, one “night-in-the-life” depiction took two years to film with a spur-of-the-moment cast of southwest reservation transplants whose real lives were sifted for accurate circumstance and dialogue. Filmmaker Kent MacKenzie pieced together hopeful but desperate voice-overs with bleak but brilliant black and white images for an ordinary night of dancing, drinking, drumming, brawling and deep introspection.

It was a time in history, Peters said, when many Native Americans were lured off reservations to cities, such as Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas and Denver, with promises of jobs and brighter futures through the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Urban Relocation Program established in 1952.

In Los Angeles, many settled into the seedy Bunker Hill district where jobs were scarce and money provided by the BIA ran out fast. Many ended aimless days with moonlit drumming and singing on Hill X that overlooked the city.

“You can take the Indian off the reservation but you can’t take the reservation out of the Indian,” said Max Osceola, who attended the screening. “Everything else was escapism, but when they came together with the drums, they were one people.”

The appearance of truth and believability was achieved in the stark, sometimes lumbering 90-minute film without a traditional Hollywood beginning, climax and end that ties story lines into a neat finale. Neo-realism in film was a pre-documentary style of narrative storytelling that emerged post-World War II to bring issues to light with bold authenticity.

Peters’ short film — selected for five 2014 film festivals, including the LA Shorts Fest, American Indian Film Festival and the LA Skins Fest — continues the story with contemporary Native American adults, including Seminole Tribe member Spencer Battiest. Battiest, who attended the screening, is the only full-time artist/actor of the bunch.

Battiest and the others, who are all current college students or graduate students in Los Angeles, are connected by the struggles of their grandparents, some of whom also journeyed off southwest reservations during the urban relocation more than a half-century ago.

Filed in Los Angeles on similar streets, the new cast is introduced wearing late 1950s clothing and strolling through an alley as in the last scene of “The Exiles.” In close-up interviews, all say they plan to

return to their reservations or serve Indian communities in urban areas.

Peters said the short is a teaser for a full-length feature film that will follow the new cast for two or three years utilizing neo-realism characteristics.

“It is organic the way it happens,” Peters said. “I want to bring a realistic voice to how Native people are living in LA today ... I want to show the journey.”

Since the short’s debut, some cast members have graduated from universities and launched careers, some have married and one couple has produced a set of twin children. Battiest, who divides time between Los Angeles, New York and the Hollywood Reservation, was nominated for 2014 song/single of the year and best music video by the Native American Music Awards. On Nov. 9, he performed with his brother Doc Battiest at the 39th annual American Indian Film Festival in San Francisco.

“We are now in a different time and era. Originally, young people were coming out of boarding schools and institutions. Now they are coming out of UCLA as graduates,” Peters said.

The original cast was not so fortunate; most fell into obscurity. Tommy Reynolds was the only performer to continue in the film industry, Peters said.

“The Exiles,” by MacKenzie, was available for release in 1961 but never made it to commercial screens. In 2003, snippets of night scenes from the picture were used in the film “Los Angeles Plays Itself.”

Later, the original was restored with help from the UCLA Film & Television Archive and in 2009, it was listed in the National Film Registry at the Library of Congress for its historical, cultural and social significance.

Seminole Cinema Night was the first in an occasional series to be hosted by Everett Osceola, who is the former face of Seminole Media Productions’ SCTV and a current management trainee at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on the Big Cypress Reservation.

April Kirk, executive director of Stranahan House, said they are committed to making the events successful.

“We’re dedicated to making Native American film nights happen so well that we’re going to need guards at the gates because we’re going to bring in the biggest directors in Hollywood,” Kirk said.

Holding Native film nights near the New River carries additional significance because Seminoles once thrived along the river before being displaced by white settlers and then by bloody skirmishes with the U.S. Army. During the turn of the 20th century, Frank and Ivy Stranahan befriended the Seminoles and welcomed the Tribe to their home, where Frank ran a trading post and Ivy taught Seminole children.

In January, a bronze statue of a Seminole girl is expected to be erected directly across the river in a passive park donated by the city of Fort Lauderdale.

Everett Osceola called the film event a “small pebble” in a bigger plan for staging future Native film festivals in Fort Lauderdale.

Peters said momentum is building within the Native film industry.

“There is a renaissance happening. We’re gradually getting into the mainstream,” Peters said. “With artists like Chris Eyre, Sterlin Harjo and Steven Judd, we’re creating a large movement.”

“There is a renaissance happening. We’re gradually getting into the mainstream.”

— Pamela J. Peters,
Navajo photographer and filmmaker



Eileen Soler

From left, Everett Osceola, Spencer Battiest and Navajo photographer and filmmaker Pamela J. Peters address the audience after a screening of ‘The Exiles’ and ‘Legacy of Exiled NDNZ’ Nov. 23 at Stranahan House in Fort Lauderdale.

Graduates climb career development program ladder

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — All eyes were on Ashley Santiago and Jimmy Hank Osceola III when a Christmas party for the Tribal Career Development (TCD) Program segued Dec. 11 into a brief graduation ceremony just as festive and fun.

Osceola, after nine years in the system that mentors motivated Tribal members through job training and into gaming careers, finally graduated. Santiago, after three and half years, will go on to phase two of the five-phase program.

“They are fine examples of people in the program. We tease Jimmy all the time about never leaving, and we really don’t want Ashley to run the tables for too long,” said Ervina Capricien, director of the TCD Program.

To keep the celebratory theme going, Trishana Storm, executive assistant to Chairman James E. Billie, delivered a message from the Chairman who was unable to attend: “Congrats to the graduates ... now go get a job.”

But in fact, all trainees are employees from the start in various capacities and throughout different departments.

Hard Rock International Chairman Jim Allen said the experience is worth every step.

“It sounds cliché to say but I believe it. The person who will stand in my position one day will be someone who started at the beginning,” Allen said to the room full of Tribal trainees, families and department heads. “You guys are the owners of all of this. This is your store.”

Per the program, Osceola worked in every Gaming department: Table Games, Slots, Cash Operations, Poker, Marketing, Food and Beverage, Hard Rock Live, Hotel Operations and Hard Rock Cafe.

Trainees work elbow-to-elbow with higher-level members of the Seminole Gaming team as they advance in phases. Osceola eventually became the director of Hospitality.

All Tribal members, ages 18 and older with high school or general equivalency diplomas, can apply. Betty Jones, now the director of Human Resources for Seminole Gaming, was working for the Education Department when she was asked to formalize and structure training for Tribal members.

“At the time we were building the properties up but had no Tribal members to work in them,” Jones said. “It’s always been what the government side of the Tribe wanted to do – train our own people.”

At age 53, Osceola is likely the oldest of nine graduates so far, but he is the most world traveled having spent years adventuring through 15 countries in the United Kingdom and Europe. With a degree in culinary arts under his belt from Johnson & Wales University, work experience from restaurants worldwide, and several business courses completed in Italy, Switzerland and Spain, Osceola was a unique candidate for the Hard Rock program – he is after all a rolling stone.



Ervina Capricien, director of the Tribal Career Development Program, is flanked by the program's latest graduates, Ashley Santiago and Jimmy Hank Osceola III, during a ceremony Dec. 11 in their honor.

“‘Amazing’ is the best word to describe the training program. It’s win-win. I don’t want to be in one place forever,” Osceola said.

Although his favorite departments at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino are based in food and beverage service (he loves working the Crossroads team member dining room), Osceola is also a good source for weighing in on new Hard Rock locations from the boardroom and on location.

For Santiago, who started the program in her early 20s, the experience is worlds from her original career plan to become a nurse.

“If you asked me four years ago what I would be doing, I would never say working in a casino. It’s crazy. I didn’t like to play cards or gamble. Now, I’m in the gaming game for free and I have been winning since I stepped in the door,” Santiago said.

So far, Santiago has been exposed to jobs in hospitality, security, slots, food and beverage and back of the house, but she dreams of running all table operations, which includes managing 2,000 employees.

Capricien said Tribal trainees follow a strict, fast-moving and challenging schedule. The only reward that comes from being Tribal is entry into the program. Sometimes, new interns become “shell-

shocked” with newfound rules.

“Some, for the first time, have to be on time, work all day – I mean really work – and follow all the rules. It does not matter if you are Tribal or who your parents are. If you accrue points against you, you are out,” said Capricien, who completed the program four years ago.

Beyond the reality of 40-hour workweeks, and some graveyard shifts, recruits forge into every department while learning, working and earning a paycheck.

Training can be flexible. If trainees master four weeks of learning in two or three, they can move on to the next level. Typically, 15 to 20 interns are enrolled at

any given time.

Other successful graduates include Helena Henry (Slot superintendent at Classic) and Karris Tommie (Revenue Audit assistant manager at Hard Rock Tampa.) On average, graduation can take four to six years, but not all interns graduate. Some discover their niche in Gaming and take on full-time jobs outside the program.

Still, the mission of the program remains constant – grooming Tribal members for the highest power careers in Seminole Gaming.

“TCD is an excellent program. You get out of it what you put into it,” Capricien said. “We’re talking about finding the next Jim Allen.”

“‘Amazing’ is the best word to describe the training program. It’s win-win.”

– Jimmy Hank Osceola III, Tribal Career Development Program graduate

Big Cypress to celebrate 119th anniversary

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Country music, culture and critters will share the bill during the Big Cypress 119th Anniversary Celebration Jan. 10 at the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena grounds.

Country music stars Gary Allan and the duo Montgomery Gentry will headline the event performing their chart-topping music for guests and Tribal members. Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger said he chose the acts because of their traditional country music.

“I like their songs. They play down-to-earth, pure country music,” Councilman Tiger said. “I think most people will like it.”

Montgomery Gentry will take the stage at 6:30 p.m. followed by Allan at 8 p.m.

Gates open at 10 a.m. Entertainment will include dancers from the Ponca Tribe, critter shows, alligator wrestling, arts and crafts vendors, traditional food vendors and carnival rides. The day will kick off with an opening ceremony at 11 a.m. with Tribal leaders, members and dancers. The Ponca dancers will perform at 11:45 a.m. and 3 p.m., and the critter show and alligator wrestling will take place at 1 and 4 p.m.

Attendees can also expect to get a glimpse of the Tribe’s rich history.

During the Seminole Wars of the 1800s, Seminoles fled federal soldiers and hid in the Everglades, but ran out of land near Ochopee. They headed north again and settled in what is now Big Cypress after the wars. Councilman Tiger said the event will commemorate the Tribe overcoming adversity and the creation of the Big Cypress Reservation.

According to public records, the Bureau of Indian Affairs purchased 160 acres of land in 1889 and more in 1896. That acreage led to other land acquisitions which ultimately formed the reservation. Formally dedicated in 1936, the Big Cypress Reservation now comprises 82 square miles.

“Our ancestors gave their lives for us to have our freedom right now,” Councilman Tiger said. “Mainly this is to say thanks to the ones who are gone and to celebrate their vision.”

Councilman Tiger encourages everyone to bring their families and join the fun at the celebration.

For more information, visit www.BigCypressCelebration.com.



Employees of Swamp Water Café in Big Cypress pose with the presents they collected for less-fortunate children in the Clewiston area. Pamela Currington, acting café operations manager, organized the toy drive.

Swamp Water Café staff brings cheer to needy

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — The 15 employees of Swamp Water Café recently experienced the joy that ensues from giving at Christmastime.

The staff of the café, located at Billie Swamp Safari in Big Cypress, each brought gifts to give children in Clewiston. Baby dolls, trucks, educational toys, pajamas and mittens were among the presents boys and girls found under their trees Christmas morning.

“Each year we do a Secret Santa exchange, but as acting manager I wanted to do something special in addition to what we usually do for Christmas,” said Pamela Currington, acting café operations manager.

“I told them it’s better to give than receive, which is what my mother always told me.”

The employees responded quickly and brought one present for both a boy and a girl. Currington said they were all happy to contribute to the toy drive. The gifts were sent to the Clewiston Elks Lodge, which donated them to needy kids in the community.

Currington came from a poor family and knows how it feels to have a Christmas with no gifts. She said she knew organizing the toy drive would make her employees feel good.

“I’m happy I did it, even if I don’t get anything for Christmas,” she said. “I’m glad I gave. I hope whatever we gave those kids puts a smile on their faces for their parents to see.”

◆ NATIVE RELIEF

From page 1A

Fifteen friends put their heads together for the first collection drive. Wilson said the giving grows every year. In the past, most of the effort went to Pine Ridge. This year, information filtered through the group that many smaller and more secluded communities are hard hit but hardly noticed.

Wilson said other organizations, such as the Native American Heritage Association (NAHA) and Running Strong for American Indian Youth, also reach out to the Native needy. NAHA, this year alone through November, had provided 3 million pounds of food and 161,000 pounds of clothing and blankets to South Dakota reservations.

But, Wilson said, much of the goods can only be provided to people who make it to distribution sites. On reservations so vast and residents too poor to afford transportation, hundreds of families are left out.

“We want to go right into the communities and help the very people,” Wilson said. “We try to touch the places the other charities do not reach. We help fill the gap.”

Wilson said stories that come out of the reservations are heartbreaking. Last year, a mother of eight was suddenly left destitute when her husband, the only family member who held a job at the time, was struck by a train on the way to work. This fall, a family of six was left homeless when their house burned to the ground in a blaze.

“It’s frightening what people will do to feed their families and keep their homes warm,” Wilson said.

Rhonda Bain, a member of the Rez Dawgz Motorcycle Club who turned out to sort and box the donations, said she saw the pain of the people firsthand – but by accident – while on a motorcycle run to Sturgis, South Dakota.

Last winter, the Rez Dawgz held a car wash to raise money and collect canned goods and jackets for Pine Ridge.

“When I first saw the poverty, it had immediate empathy. You hear about it, but when you actually see it, it’s like wow. It makes you want to do more,” Bain said. “It’s such beautiful land out there, but

stagnant economy.”

According to the Department of the Interior’s 2013 American Indian Population and Labor Force Report, the highest estimated rate of poverty is in South Dakota, with 43 to 47 percent of Native American families in 2010 earning incomes below the poverty line.

In Eagle Butte, the median annual income is \$21,000. The unemployment rate is 34 percent, according to 2010 census data.

The fourth annual Seminole effort wrapped up a week later than expected, which prompted phone calls from people in the Dakotas who worried that help would not arrive from Florida as in previous years. BJ Billie tapped connections throughout the area to ensure the grassroots project would go directly to the people who need the most assistance.

“It’s good to hear that people look forward to what we bring to their communities. I only wish we could do more, but we seem to improve our numbers every year so that helps,” Wilson said.

Christmastime had little to do with timing the drive out to the Great Plains, Osceola said, but because people are more inclined to help during the holiday season,

it made perfect sense. For Osceola, the trip was personal.

“I’ve never been out there, but I’ve wanted to go for so long that it is about time. I really want to meet the Lakota people,” Osceola said.

Other organizers included Charlotte Burgess, who led the Brighton and Tampa collection; Alice Billie and Esther Gopher, who headed the Big Cypress, Immokalee and Naples effort; and Jennifer Osceola and Wanda Bowers, who manned Hollywood.

About 20 Tribe members and friends lent time and patience to sort through pickup trucks and trailers loaded bags and boxes that overflowed with clothes, bedding and toys. Charlie Tiger brought his afternoon work crew from the Tribe’s We Can Recover program.

In March, the group will host its annual spring yard sale fundraiser to support transportation costs and to help purchase extras as needs arise. Last year, the group was assisted by Tribal leaders to purchase coats for 147 children at Wounded Knee District School – pink for girls and yellow and blue for boys.

“This is how the universe works. If it is open to give, it is open to receive,” Bain said. “We’re looking out for our Native people.”



Aida Camero sorts baby clothing donated to the Native Relief Foundation to help poor families in isolated reservation communities in the Great Plains.

Patchwork exhibit sews common thread through time

'It's Not a Costume – Modern Seminole Patchwork' on display at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki through Nov. 30

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — The exhibit "It's Not a Costume – Modern Seminole Patchwork" at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum opened to a generous crowd Dec. 13, proving that ordinary things for one group of people can be quite exotic to others.

"Every piece made is absolutely gorgeous," said Mary Ann Boucher, a snowbird and quilter who winters at the Big Cypress RV Resort.

Mesmerized by the artistry of nearly 30 long shirts, skirts, vests and jackets that make up the year-long show, Boucher asked myriad questions during the afternoon reception and then toured the Museum's private vault where some of the oldest, most-treasured and delicate patchwork clothing is stored for posterity.

"I've done quilting and tried to replicate the work ... it's just too complicated," Boucher said.

For Tribal members, the exhibit showcases the history and evolution of clothing worn on any given day – even before clothing contests.

Ruffles and capes for simply designed dresses and skirts harkened to the 1920s and '30s, before symbols like man on horse and fire were incorporated. The '40s and '50s look was influenced by strips of rickrack. It has only been in recent history that women infused pop culture icons into designs. Florida State University and Miami Heat logos, and even the faces of SpongeBob SquarePants, have found a comfortable home in the Seminole patchwork scene.

"Patchwork is part of the everyday wardrobe distinctive to Seminole culture," said Rebecca Fell, who co-curated the show with Seminole artist Jessica Osceola.

Most of the exhibit features the modern cuts and silhouettes of the attire. Though not considered vogue to the worldwide fashion scene, the combinations of fabrics and cuts absolutely reflect the maker, Fell said. Sometimes the story behind a piece is deeply personal and shared only with whomever the seamstress desires – or no one at all.

Other items are more functional: a skirt to wear to the office, a shirt for the rodeo, a longer skirt for cooking at the chickee.

For decades, men did not wear slacks. The progression of men's patchwork long shirts from pre-Constitution, knee-length to tuckable hip-lengths occurred with the integration of European men's wear. Somewhere between long shirts and pants, patchwork below the belt line was discarded.

Men's vests worn over button-down shirts became fashionable, like the European bow tie, Fell said.

Osceola said printed fabrics are a very modern nuance to patchwork. Though she

generally objects to the use of pop-culture in patchwork, she concedes that the fashion is acceptable because it reflects the personal interest of the creator and wearer.

Osceola, an eclectic artist whose works were featured at the 2011 and 2012 Art Basel in Miami Beach, is also a Master of Fine Arts candidate at the Academy of Art University and a valuable consultant and contributor at the Museum.

"Style is always changing and moving, even in subtle ways," Osceola said.

She noted changes in tailoring over past decades. Puffy skirts and ruffled shoulders can indicate trends that have come, gone and came back. Shorter, wider shirts are trending now for girls and younger women, but Osceola prefers more fitted forms.

But one thing that has never changed with patchwork: "It is a very social thing," Osceola said.

Women often gather in groups to sew. Conversations spark during the creation of the garment. News is shared. Opinions are heard.

Conversation bubbles that appear on walls throughout the exhibit reflect how patchwork is a part of daily life. One bubble reads: "Don't forget to wear your long skirt. You are cooking by the fire today!" The response: "Yes, mom."

Osceola is protective of the cultural treasure that patchwork is to the Tribe. Though she is not concerned that non-Native people may admire Seminole-made patchwork enough to wear it, she cringes thinking about non-Tribal manufacturers attempting to recreate it.

That sentiment is not lost on crafters and quilters like Boucher.

"The question of whether it is ethical for someone else to make patchwork is 100 percent reasonable," Boucher said. "I concluded that it was OK for me to try it once because anyone would know it's not real. I am not and never will be that good."



Eileen Soler

An elaborately designed patchwork dress is displayed prominently in the new Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum exhibit, "It's Not a Costume – Modern Seminole Patchwork."



Eileen Soler

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum collections manager Tara Backhouse, left, and operations manager Annette Snapp, second from left, lead a group from the new exhibit, "It's Not a Costume – Modern Seminole Patchwork," to a private viewing at the Tribal Historic Preservation Office.



Eileen Soler

During a rehearsal for the upcoming 'Elgin Jumper's Theatre Studio Experience' to be staged this spring at South Florida State College, Elgin Jumper, left, paints while others complete the scene with music, song and poetry reading.

Poetry, painting, music to score Seminole performance art show

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

FORT LAUDERDALE — Watching a performance art piece develop from blank canvas to deeply layered expressionism is like watching a metamorphosis.

"It starts off like caterpillars, you see, and ends up as butterflies," said Seminole artist Elgin Jumper.

Case in point: On Dec. 5, Jumper rendered a portrait of his niece Stephanie Hall in brilliant oil while a musician plucked electric guitar and a singer voiced a melody at the historic New River Inn in Fort Lauderdale.

The recent rehearsal for "Elgin Jumper's Theatre Studio Experience," to be staged this spring at South Florida State College (SFSC), was as hip as the upcoming show promises. Featuring artistic director Brittney Brady (vocals) with art and sound designer Philip Huebeck (guitar and special effects), the practice skipped clumsy starts and emerged real.

A member of the Otter Clan, Jumper is a pensive poet, essayist and painter who incorporates multimedia visuals and sound for powerful presentations.

Cheri Thompson, research associate of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society at the 109-year-old inn, witnessed the latest creation.

"It happened organically," Thompson said. "I came in without a perception of what the piece would be but when I saw it being laid out, I saw it mesh."

Brady carefully staged the set – from Jumper's body movements while addressing the audience to Hall's motionless repose – to carefully engage the audience.

Brady and Huebeck, of Ghostbird Theatre Company which is the resident theater group of the Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center in Fort Myers, worked on a similar performance with Jumper for a show in January with other Seminole artists at Florida Gulf Coast University.

There, Jumper recited poetry while Gordon "Ollie" Wareham played the traditional flute. Jumper also performed words and created a charcoal sketch to Wareham's music during a June fundraiser at the New River Inn for Nilda Comas' "Florida – A Seminole Girl" sculpture, which will be erected in January 2015 across from the historic Stranahan House.

Jumper's newest multimedia composition will premier 1 p.m. on March 26 amid the exhibit "At Home: Seminole Reservations and Contemporary Native Art" at the SFSC Museum of Florida Art & Culture. The exhibit, running March 11 to May 1, will highlight works by Jumper and Jessica Osceola on loan from the Tribe's Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum in Big Cypress.

Brady said components of the one-hour performance support the entire piece.

"Like a skeleton, it's a true collaboration with us on the music," she said. "We knew Elgin's past piece with poetry, art and other visuals. This time he will be painting."

The new composition will open with a prologue recited by Hall, who is a student of socialist realism and an Everglades advocate. Jumper's recitations will be punctuated by reflective music and sounds that could range from wind dancing through palm fronds to the metal grating of industrial machinery.

"I was only good for being no good," Jumper read during rehearsal of his own artistic metamorphosis. But his writings are also hopeful. "Paintings and poems, poems and paintings ... the River of Grass, a landscape in poetic form."

For more information about "Elgin Jumper's Theatre Studio Experience" and "At Home: Seminole Reservations and Contemporary Native Art" with Jumper and Jessica Osceola, visit www.mofac.org or call 863-784-7240. The South Florida State College Museum of Florida Art & Culture is located at 600 West College Drive in Avon Park, Florida.

◆ LOUISE GOPHER

From page 1A

Gopher was cited for advocating education, preserving Tribal culture and traditions, and serving as a devoted friend of FSU. She helped create the university's course, "History of the Seminoles and Southeastern Tribes, Pre-Contact to Present," which was first offered in 2006, and she supports the continued use of the Seminole name and symbols.

"We were so pleased to award an honorary degree to Louise Jones Gopher," wrote FSU President John Thrasher in an email to The Seminole Tribune. "Louise has been a champion of education for the

members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida and an ardent friend of the university. Her story of courage and perseverance is inspiring, and I'm glad she was able to share it with our graduating students and their guests during commencement."

A 1970 graduate of Florida Atlantic University, Gopher was the second Tribal member – after Billy Cypress – and the first Seminole woman to earn a bachelor's degree. Although she did not attend her own college graduation, she addressed the graduating FSU class of 2014 as commencement speaker after receiving the honorary degree.

"I want students to be introduced to a real Seminole and learn a little more about the Tribe through me," she said the day before the ceremony at the Donald L.

Tucker Civic Center. "We are not fiction; we are real and we're out there. I hope by me talking to them, they can put a face to the Seminole name."

She told graduates that education plays an important role in her life because, though her father, Willie Jones, couldn't speak, read or write English, he made sure his children attended school. She credits him for instilling the value of education in her.

Gopher spoke about growing up in a chickee near Fort Pierce, starting school before she knew how to speak English and being amazed with modern bathroom facilities. Despite the initial obstacles, she succeeded through college and went to work for the Tribe, where she helped develop the cultural education program. The program led to the formation of Pemayetv Emahakv

Charter School. She said her focus has always been to retain Seminole culture and keep children in school.

"When you graduated high school, you knew you were going on to college," said Gopher's daughter Carla Gopher after the ceremony. "She never said, 'This is what you're doing;' it's just something we always knew."

Carla Gopher was the first Seminole to graduate from FSU, class of 1996.

"It wasn't a question of if you're going to college; it was where are you going," added daughter Rita McCabe, who received an associate degree from Indian River State College.

Family members, including Gopher's daughters, grandsons and cousins, attended the ceremony.

"I was near tears," McCabe said. "I was thinking about how she stressed education all her life and here she is 60-something years old and still doing it. She is leading by example."

The year was bookended with other recognitions for Gopher. In January, she was named to the Florida Women's Hall of Fame. The induction took place in March. In May, she received the Presidential Service Medallion from her alma mater.

Carla Gopher said her mother blazed a path for other Seminole women and children to follow in her footsteps. It will be her legacy, she said.

In 1999, Gopher was included in the Palm Beach Post 100, a list of influential people honored for changing the way Floridians live. In 2007, she received the James D. Westcott Distinguished Service Medal from FSU; she is one of only eight recipients in the school's history.

McCabe believes her mother inspires many.

"She has lived her life around education and is still continuing to strive to be a better person," she said. "She always said education is a gold mine that can never be taken away from you."

Gopher concluded her speech by encouraging the graduates to share their own wisdom, something she has done with the Tribe for decades.

"To those of you who are graduating today, I say treasure your heritage whatever it may be, learn all you can about it and pass your knowledge on to your children," she said. "We move most confidently into the future when we are grounded in the lessons of the past."



Beverly Bidney

Louise Gopher poses with her family and her honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree Dec. 12 at Florida State University. From left are daughter Rita McCabe, grandson Erik Garcia, Louise Gopher, grandson Michael Garcia and daughter Carla Gopher.

Smallwood Store music benefit set for Jan. 31

STAFF REPORT

EVERGLADES CITY — A benefit music festival to raise money for the beleaguered Smallwood Store and Trading Post is scheduled for Jan. 31 beginning at 11 a.m. on the grounds of the historic Everglades Rod & Gun Club.

Many of Southwest Florida's most notable musical acts will perform to help raise money to defray legal expenses involved with the 100-year-old landmark's fight with Highlands County developers Florida-Georgia Grove, whose planned marina project threatens to cut off the only access to the Store – Mamie Street, Collier County's oldest road.

The Wholetones, Raiford Starke, Nate the Gladesman, Florida Boy, Stone Crab Steve Arvey, Cindy Hackney, Fiddlin' J. Robert, Snooker Joe Stem, Sun Guy and Valerie Wisecracker & The Walking Catfish will play from a picturesque natural stage overlooking the Barron River.

Arts and crafts, a raffle and auction will also be part of the daylong festival.

For more information, call 239-695-2905.



Video gamers cross Tribal lines to answer competitive spirit

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Race, gender, religion or political affiliation don't mean didly when it comes to video gamers.

On Dec. 13, when 30 Miccosukee and Seminole youth pooled a sea of computer components for the second installment of BC Gaming Series: A Collaboration, all that mattered was what team would emerge winners of the Kings of the Swamp tournament.

"For gamers, there is no reason why we shouldn't be able to organize together. What rez you live on and Tribe politics don't matter. We're still the same people," said Miccosukee Tribe member Tommy Jesse Tiger, founder of the 2-year-old Trail Gaming League and the mastermind of the newest social and competitive outlet for Tribal teens and young adults.

Tournaments on Trail have so far featured Halo 2, Super Smash Bros. Melee, and Ultimate Marvel vs. Capcom 3.

Tiger, 21, a legal assistant and archivist for the Miccosukee Tribe, said he teamed with fellow Tribe member Darren Cypress to merge with Seminole gamers at the Big

Cypress Boys & Girls Club. Darren, 16, lives in Immokalee and attends Ahfachkee School in Big Cypress.

Darren said the idea came at the perfect time.

The first inter-Tribal gaming event happened in September. At the time, Darren was new to Ahfachkee and spent most of his time outside school playing video games alone at home.

"I didn't know anyone and it was weird. But being able to get the tournaments together and make friends has been great. Over the year, I've been able to develop friendships and hang out with more kids on a regular basis," Darren said.

On the recent Saturday, the walls of the Boys & Girls Club were lined in computer stations where clusters of gamers parked their own computers for "freestyling" competitions. On the stage, eight monitors and eight Xbox systems were interfaced through a local area network (LAN) connection for rounds of Halo II.

Competitors pay a small participation fee, which goes into a pot to be divided among the winners. Winners also received an arcade fight stick.

Rows of chairs in front of the stage

were filled with spectators cheering on the two teams of four. Food appeared pot luck style: the table was thick with Papa John's, Chick-fil-A, soda, water and snack foods.

Spectators were welcome to pick up a microphone and play commentator. Darren and Tiger coached the players on both sides with game tips and jested with them to rile the competition. Trail won the tournament.

"We're not really good enough yet for tournaments," said Big Cypress resident Elisah Billie. "Right now, we're playing for fun."

Elisah said organized video gaming days are a good addition to youth activities already available on the reservation, including basketball and skateboarding.

He said he plays a lot at home but had never before played in a competitive tourney.

"I definitely want to see it continue. Gaming is something all kids can relate to, even the ones who are not athletic," Elisah said.

Tiger said gamers get a bad rap from people who see players as too lazy for sports, antisocial or addicted to games.

"There are people who are very successful in their jobs but just like to play. There are great students who also like to play. We strive to strike a balance for the homeostasis of gaming and school or gaming and work," Tiger said.

"We'll see what kind of gamers we breed. Hopefully we'll have the first Native American gaming champ of the world," Tiger said.

Tiger and Darren hope to host tournaments on Big Cypress every three months and launch a tournament series in Hollywood that will likely be titled Kings of the Swamp II. Darren said the events are open to everyone ages 12 to 22. But there are two rules: no alcohol or drugs, and everyone must have fun.

"Don't be nervous about not knowing anyone; you will know everyone very soon. But don't stay home by yourself—we do the events for you. You just have to show up," Tiger said.

The next video gaming tournament will be held on the Miccosukee Reservation in March. More details will be announced. Call Tommy Jesse Tiger at 786-503-4222.

◆ BLUE STONE

From page 1A

In addition to making themselves available at Tribal events, community meetings and gatherings on all Seminole reservations, Schenandoah and strategists Melissa Thompson (Navajo) and Kim Secakuku (Hopi) will launch a two-week tribalwide "Voice of the Member" survey Jan. 5 and will conduct Tribal member focus groups from Jan. 26 to Feb. 11.

"It's important for everyone to know that both the survey and the focus groups will be kept strictly confidential," Schenandoah said.

The survey will be available online. Assistance filling out the survey will be provided by Blue Stone team members, including at community/senior centers and Tribal events.

An online survey is being finalized for employees – Tribal and non-Tribal – and sent to department heads, "who will be responsible for making sure all employees participate," Moon said. Employees could begin taking the survey before the end of the year.

Focus groups provide an interactive form of qualitative research in which individual Tribal members meet in a group setting and are free to talk with other group members in discussions about their satisfaction, dissatisfaction, perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes regarding their

government, its services and resources, and their quality of life as Seminoles. An all-purpose phone number – 954-985-2300, ext. 10693 – has been set up to provide information, schedule appointments and assist with the survey and events.

Schenandoah said events will be scheduled on and off the reservations, including in Naples and the Trail.

"Anywhere Seminole Tribal members are living or gathered. The more voices we have giving us input, the stronger and more effective this project will be," Schenandoah said.

Chairman Billie expects project results and recommendations from Blue Stone in March.

"We are encouraging all Tribal members to participate in this project with us," he said. "We want to hear your perspective to help us become stronger as one united Seminole Tribe."



Photo courtesy of Blue Stone Group

Pictured from left are Blue Stone strategists Melissa Thompson, Kim Secakuku and Michelle Schenandoah.



Eileen Soler

Miccosukee Tribe members Darren Cypress, standing far left, and Tommy Jesse Tiger, standing far right, lead a sea of gamers at Big Cypress Boys & Girls Club Dec. 13 during BC Gaming Series: A Collaboration and the Kings of the Swamp tournament.

◆ BUG OUT

From page 3A

Billie and Furlonge met in 2000 at the Speed & Truck World race car parts store in Fort Lauderdale. Billie, the founder of the Unconquered Car Club, was having a hood ornament made. Furlonge was building a custom 2000 Celica GT-S. Two years later, Furlonge's car was used for several scenes in the "2 Fast 2 Furious" movie, and Billie and Furlonge were cast as extras.

"I told casting that if they wanted my car, they had to take me and Brian," Furlonge said.

Debra Ray, the assistant director of Family Services in Big Cypress, said the duo keeps the department's vehicle fleet immaculate inside and out. Bug Out also services the Big Cypress Recreation Department and is close to finalizing a deal to serve a third Tribal department.

Billie is the face of the operation while Furlonge is the business manager.

"The cars are always cleaned and detailed very, very well. They are so helpful.

Whenever we've called for anything, they are here and ready to do the job," Ray said.

The company offers VIP treatment, especially for Tribal elders. Cars can be picked up at homes or businesses, detailed at the Bug Out premises and then delivered back. During Thanksgiving week, discounts were given to show customer appreciation.

Regular customers get text messages to alert them to seasonal specials. The Facebook page and website promote deals and provide information about other car industry businesses that include body shops and electrical services.

So far, the company serves the Big Cypress community but occasionally accepts clients outside the reservation. A new company truck and a portable water container, to be purchased in coming months, will allow the business to expand to Immokalee and Hollywood.

Car services range from \$30 per wash and vacuum to \$65 for the "top notch" detail treatment. Truck and SUV prices range from \$45 to \$100. For appointments call 954-778-1977 or check out www.BugOutCarWash.com.



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Sam Jones Trail: An academic perspective

SUBMITTED BY DAVID BROWNELL
Tribal Historic Preservation Office

In 1837, following the Battle of Okeechobee, Sam Jones reportedly “went around the east side of the lake, or to the land known as Hungry Land, then to Miami River. They then went to the Big Cypress where he staid [sic] until he died.” This information, relayed to historian Albert DeVane by Billy Bowlegs III during a visit to the Brighton Reservation, is a rare record of what happened between the battle and the next verifiable account of Sam Jones’ whereabouts as reported by the Tampa Tribune in 1955 by Sampson Forrester, who lived with the Seminoles between 1839 and 1841:

“In the center of the swamp is the council ground. South of this, within 2 miles, is the village of Sam Jones ... No trail [whatsoever] is visible outside the swamp, as such would guide their pursuers. Within the swamp are many pine-islands, upon which the villages are located.”

In his book “The Seminoles of Florida,” historian James W. Covington wrote that Sam Jones’ “headquarters” would “appear to have been the ruins of Sam Jones’ Old Town on a pine ridge 14 miles south of Lake Okeechobee, where councils and other meetings were held.”

The account goes on to describe the Seminoles’ reliance on agriculture for subsistence, which also lends support to the theory of the Devil’s Garden being an area under cultivation by Sam Jones himself, or his band.

Oral traditions still in circulation among contemporary Seminoles give an interesting account for the area’s name. They state that during the Third Seminole War troops made their way into a large hammock and were so overwhelmed by the abundance of cultivated crops that it distracted them from their main purpose of apprehending Seminoles. This was all the opportunity Sam Jones needed to give them the slip, and thus the soldiers named the hammock the Devil’s Garden, said Chairman James E. Billie.

Though there is no accounting for this tale in the historic record, there are some important clues that lean toward its credibility. By this period, the Seminoles’ tenuous relationship with Anglo-American

settlers and military had led them to cultivating agricultural fields within the bounds of hammocks so that they were disguised from view.

In addition, maps from this period – including an 1856 map from U.S. Lt. J.C. Ives – note several locations associated with Sam Jones, including a “Sam Jones Town” in the area of the southern portion of the Big Cypress Reservation, a “Sam Jones Town” or “Sam Jones Island” on the east coast associated with what is now known as Long Key in Broward County, and a “Sam Jones Old Town” to the northeast of the current Big Cypress Reservation; with the exception of Long Key, all Sam Jones Towns were located immediately adjacent to these trails.

The “Sam Jones Old Town” was located at the eastern tumulus of a branch of the Sam Jones Trail and was marked by D. Graham Copeland, though the marker no longer exists. In addition to the fact that there are multiple Sam Jones Towns noted on the map, there are a number of ambiguous “Indian Camps” noted on the maps, including two in the area now known as Devil’s Garden which are located adjacent to the same trail that leads into Big Cypress.

These camps are possibly the same camps as those described in 1889 in the Fort Myers Press as a Miccosukee-speaking camp described as a “semi-circle fronting on a ‘slue’ as they call it (we would call it a canal). This camp consisted of three huts, built square and roofed with palmetto fans, four upright pineposts [sic], planked in roughly ... The other two shanties were simply covered with canvas stretched over four straight oak poles,” Covington wrote.

The camp was located in Devil’s Garden and contained what was purported to be the larger portion of Miccosukee-speaking Seminoles in the area at the time. More historic evidence supports Seminole occupation of the Devil’s Garden area into the early 20th century, including an entry in Lucien Spencer’s 1913 Seminole Census of one “Tom Devil’s Garden.” It was not uncommon for Seminoles to include geographical features in their names pertaining to where the individual lived, Covington wrote.

By the late 1920s, white hunters and trappers “controlled the hunting area for

alligator, otter and raccoon between LaBelle and the Devil’s Garden, but the Seminoles held their own in the Big Cypress Swamp south of the Devil’s Garden,” Covington reported. Soon, however, additional pressure from cattle ranchers and continual encroachments by white hunters into the area “exerted enough pressure to initiate a Seminole withdrawal from the Devil’s Garden area into the Big Cypress Swamp.”

The Sam Jones Trail led northwest out of Big Cypress, loosely following the path of today’s County Road 846 until it splits about 2 miles south of the County Road 833 – County Road 846 junction today, or just north of the “Point of Cypress” noted on Copeland’s Map of Collier County.

One branch of the trail continued west by southwest, eventually ending in the area of Immokalee. The Sam Jones Trail turned due north, running from Devil’s Garden up to the Caloosahatchee River, following the line of CR 833 almost directly north. This trail headed almost directly north, about 10 miles east of the Okaloacoochee Slough.

Once north of the “Point of Cypress,” the trail threaded its way across a large expanse of wet march interspersed with small prairies, and it appears that most of this route would have been traversed by canoe, as it follows shallow pounds and small sloughs as much as possible.

Approximately 5 miles north of “Point of Cypress,” the trail was joined by another trail from the southwest that still exists as the entrance road to the Dinner Island Ranch on the west side of CR 833. From there the trail continued another 6 miles north until it reached a junction of several trails approximately 10 miles south of the Caloosahatchee, in the area of Hilliard Grove Road. The trail continued north across the river; however, it is difficult to determine the exact route from this point, as the entire area was a large slough.

This same junction of trails a few miles south of the Caloosahatchee is also represented on the Ives’ Map, and there are symbols representing “Indian Camps” located around and at this junction.

After crossing the river in the area between the former Lake Flirt and Lake Hicpochee, the trail continued north following the western edge of Lake Okeechobee north to the area of today’s Brighton Reservation.

♦ SAM JONES
From page 1A

In the formal proposal, Brownell wrote: “It is proposed to the Florida Department of Transportation that the 20 miles of CR 833, from its intersection with SR 80, south to where CR 833 crosses the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation Line, be named in honor of Abiaki (Sam Jones), a medicine man and major leader of the Seminole Tribe of Florida through the three Seminole Wars.

“The uniqueness of the Sam Jones Trail is twofold. The trail is positioned to connect four watersheds that were crucial to the survival of the Seminoles and connected the different coasts of Florida: the Okaloacoochee Slough to the west, the Caloosahatchee River to the north, the Everglades watershed to the east and the Big Cypress Swamp to the south. In addition, the Devil’s Garden locale was so remote that the trail remained in its native, unpaved state far into the 20th century, used by Seminoles to move between camps and hunting areas, long after many other trails had been destroyed or forgotten by modern development.

“Naming CR 833 the Sam Jones Trail will help represent a continuum of this narrative of historical usage into the modern era and recognize those who made the trail, and Florida, what it is today.”

Brownell said that the Sam Jones Trail and CR 833 both transverse the Devil’s Garden area of Hendry County.

“There are many historic references to Sam Jones in many places, never more than a mile or so from today’s road,” Brownell said. “It’s remarkable how closely the road

matches the trail when we overlay their maps.”

History provides several different accounts regarding the naming of Devil’s Garden and its connection to Abiaki. A popular tale passed down through time credits U.S. soldiers who, frightened by the eerie sounds that came from the area at night, called it Devil’s Garden. Legend also says that fruits and vegetables planted there grew in abundance in the area’s dark muck. Sam Jones’ innate ability to appear and disappear quickly – even eluding soldiers who were distracted by the abundant food crops – earned the Seminole leader the Devil nickname.

Though the military was sure Abiaki hid in Devil’s Garden, he was never captured. He died a free man in a Big Cypress camp, reportedly well

over 100 years old.

“Sam Jones was the only person that I know from the extensive research I’ve undertaken, to whom the term ‘devil’ was applied in the historic literature, songs, poems, etc. of the Seminole War period,” historian Patsy West wrote in an e-mail to THPO research coordinator Mary Beth Rosebrough.

“As the Devil’s Garden section of the Big Cypress was solidly Jones’ domain, it could be assumed by deduction why the name originated ... I would have to assume that the name was coined after the Seminole War period, when more cattle interests and farmers entered this fertile area,” wrote West.

“All it would have taken was one individual who was intimate or even somewhat familiar with the previous wars and Jones’ pivotal role in them to have come up with such an appropriate name for the region,” concluded West, who is writing a book about Sam Jones.



Painting of Sam Jones by Guy LaBree.

Hah-pong-ke: Ann Thomas

BY PETER B. GALLAGHER
Special Projects Reporter

LAKE WALES — Professional librarian Ann Thomas, raised in Lakeland and musical partner for 58 years to Florida folk songwriter Frank Thomas, was a musical wordsmith in her own right. One of her proudest compositions was her haunting song-story about one of the most important and controversial American Indian battles in U.S. history.

The Christmas Day, 1837 Battle of Okeechobee pitted an estimated 380 to 480 Seminole Indians, led by Abiaki (Sam Jones), Alligator, Coacoochee (Wild Cat) and Billy Bowlegs, against 800 troops of the 1st, 4th, and 6th infantry regiments and 132 Missouri Volunteers under the command of Col. Zachary Taylor. Though the Indians bested the soldiers, Taylor boasted to President Martin Van Buren that his troops had won. The falsely reported exploit earned Taylor a promotion to Brig. Gen. and the nickname “Ol’ Rough and Ready,” a moniker which helped carry him into office 12 years later as the U.S. president.

During the 150th anniversary of the battle in 1987, noted archaeologist and battlefield expert Bob Carr asked Frank and Ann if they would write a Florida folk song about the battle that could be performed at the celebration. They took the assignment.

Born in Clay County, Frank had ancestors who came to Florida to farm in the late 18th century. Members of his family fought in the Second Seminole

War and in the Civil War. A veteran songwriter with more than 400 songs about Florida history, people and places, Frank was only able to come up with a melody. No words.

Three days before the anniversary celebration, Ann decided to give it a try, and “with her nose to the grindstone,” Frank said, came up with a poetic account of a complicated battle.

Everything is in there: the Seminoles setting up their battle areas by cutting the “sawgrass low for seeing” and “notched trees to steady firearms;” the battle beginning with Taylor sending the Volunteers “ahead to take the worst” on a direct charge at the waiting Indians; the death of Col. Richard Gentry who cried “Charge on!” as he fell; and the final battle count: “One hundred twelve soldiers were wounded in the battle. Twenty-seven bled to death there on that day.” Meanwhile, the Seminoles “only left ten dead that day. And knew they earned a victory, not defeat.”

The song is featured on the Thomas’ “Rainbows and Rivers” album.

For decades, Ann and Frank performed their music throughout the state at schools, festivals, folk clubs and concert stages. They hosted a weekly Florida folk music show on the radio, and Frank continues to perform, though Ann passed away in 2004.

“Man, she was very proud of writing that song,” Frank said from his home in Lake Wales. “Until the day Ann died, she was very proud of her words in ‘The Battle of Okeechobee.’”

‘The Battle of Okeechobee’

For two years the Seminole and Miccosukee had retreated,
From the white man, to the shores of Okeechobee.
Now at the winter solstice, Sam Jones and Alligator,
Planned a battle with the firebrand, Coacoochee.

On the north shore of Big Water, Lake Okeechobee,
To a marsh where no white men ever went;
There they planned the strategies of the land’s rightful denizens,
Against invaders whom the government had sent.

They cut trails to a hammock,
Surrounded on all sides, by danger they prepared to make a stand;
Cut saw grass low, for seeing; notched tree’s to steady firearms;
Waiting for the soldiers to invade their land.

Chorus:
The white man said Sam Jones, the Prophet, was just a crazy old Indian,
But, his medicine was the strongest of all men.
He made some warriors invisible and others invulnerable,
To the bullets that the white man would send.

Alligator was the strategist, who led three-hundred warriors,
United them and led them to the fray;
When Taylor’s eight-hundred regulars and Gentry’s hundred volunteers,
Engaged them on that fateful Christmas day.

Zachary Taylor sent the volunteers ahead to take the worst,
Of the Seminole and Miccosukee lead;
Gentry, with his sword in hand, led his men and fell when wounded,
Rose again, and led them onward as he bled.

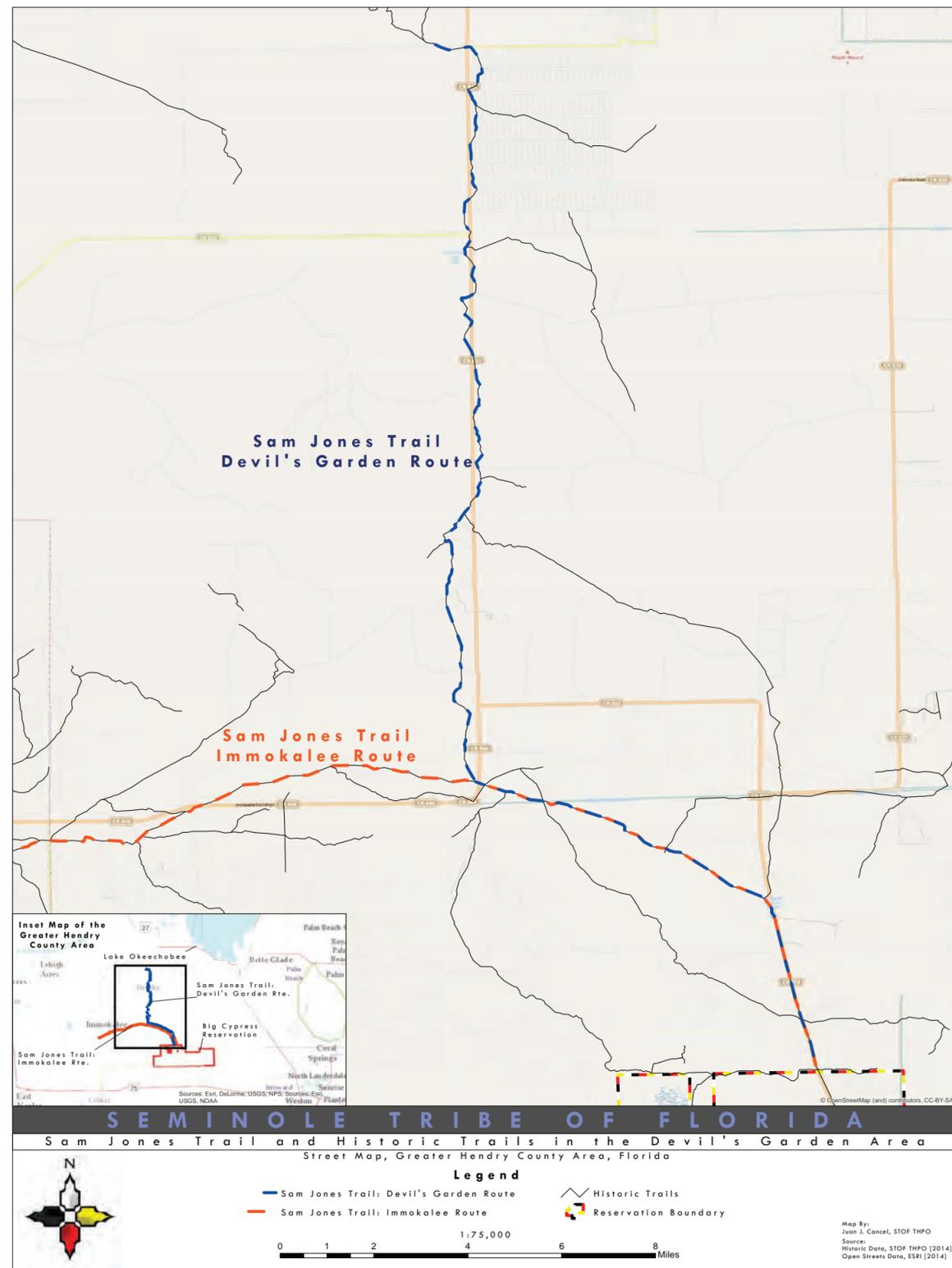
Shot again, Gentry fell, but cried, “Charge on!”
And the Missourians drew fire from foe and from their backs.
Crying, bleeding, dying, they stained the foreign waters;
But pressed on, they’d come so far to fight with Zach.

Chorus
The battle nearly over, Zachary Taylor sent the regulars in;
The Indians were frantic, so hard-pressed;
Foe to North, lake to South, they must break through to Hungry Land;
They couldn’t dare dense hammock to the West.

One-hundred and twelve soldiers were wounded in the battle;
Twenty-seven bled to death there on that day;
Zachary Taylor, ever after, would be called “Old-Rough-and-Ready,”
And he boasted that the battle went his way.

But the warriors had rejoined their wives and children in the scrub,
When the smoke cleared, freed by that retreat;
To fight another time; they only left ten dead that day,
And knew they’d earned a victory, not defeat.

Final Chorus:
And it’s the cries of Coacoochee you confuse with the wind,
And the night birds, and coming of the rain;
They call across more than a century to celebrate that victory,
On the shores of Okeechobee once again.
On the shores of Okeechobee once again.
On the shores of Okeechobee once again.



Sam Jones Trail splits just south of the current County Road 833/County Road 846 junction. The branch marked in red, which continues west, is the Immokalee route. The branch marked in blue is the Devil’s Garden route, which closely overlaps the CR 833 route as it heads due north to where it intersects with State Road 80 south of Moore Haven.

Map courtesy of THPO

2015 SEMINOLE TRIBAL FAIR AND POW WOW

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February 6-8, 2015
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Pow Wow at Hard Rock Live

Host Drums: Young Bear - GON 2014 Singing Champs (Northern)
Yung Bux (Southern)

Emcee: Juquin Hamilton

Arena Director: Ronnie Goodeagle

Head Judge: Delaine Alley

Head Singing Judge: Colin Stonechild

Drum Contest for Northern and Southern Drums:
contest for both divisions.

Prize Payout: \$60,000

Hand Drum Contest - 3-man hand drum contest and
registration will be during the Pow Wow pre-registration at
Hard Rock Live.

Prize Payout : \$1,500

Dance categories: Adults 18-49 yoa - Men: Fancy, Grass,
Northern Traditional, Southern Straight and Chicken; Women - Fancy, Jingle, Northern Traditional,
Southern Buckskin and Northern/Southern Cloth combined.

Prize Payout: \$40,000

Teen/Jr. 8-17 yoa - Boys: Northern/Southern combined; Fancy/Grass combined; Girls: Northern/
Southern combined; Fancy/Jingle combined.

Prize Payout: \$5,600

Golden Age 50+ yoa - Men: Northern/Southern combined; Fancy/Grass
combined; Women: Northern/Southern combined; Fancy/Jingle combined.

Prize Payout: \$12,000

All contestants and drum groups are expected to pre-register prior to the first round of competition.
Early registration will be held on Thursday, February 5, 2015 at the Hard Rock Live arena lobby from
5-8:PM and Friday, February 6, 2015 from 10:AM till noon.

You will also be able to pre-register online at www.Semtribefairandpowwow.com. Primitive camping
will be available for all participants as well as vendors. Indicate on the registration form if you will be
utilizing camping facilities to
reserve your space.

For further information regarding the Pow Wow, you may contact
Gloria Wilson at 954.253.6877 or gwils655@comcast.net.

For vendor space, contact
Virginia Osceola at 954.292.2597.

Deadline for space reservation is December 31, 2014.



HAPPY THANKSGIVING



Beverly Bidney
Claudia Doctor, left, and Ginnie Bowers enjoy each other's company at the tribalwide seniors Thanksgiving luncheon Nov. 13 at Big Cypress.



Peter B. Gallagher
Mark Holmes, grandson of Tampa reservation administrator Richard Henry, waves to the camera Nov. 19 at the community's Thanksgiving dinner at Columbia Restaurant in Ybor City.



Omar Rodriguez
From left, Dorothy Scheffler, Ashton Scheffler, Maddox Benson and Tommy Benson commemorate Thanksgiving in Immokalee Nov. 20 with a holiday photo.



Rachel Buxton
Dana Osceola is all smiles with granddaughter Ameliana Osceola at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena in Brighton.



Beverly Bidney
Ertha Simmons and Dean Stokes arrive Nov. 19 for a Thanksgiving feast in Fort Pierce.



Rachel Buxton
Charlotte Burgess enjoys lunch with son Gregory James and daughter Willa James at the Brighton Thanksgiving luncheon Nov. 21.



Beverly Bidney
Bowling is on the menu Nov. 26 for the Hollywood Boys & Girls Club Turkey Bowl at Seminole Estates.



Peter B. Gallagher
From left, Sally Rockwell, Alana Henry, Liam Patton and Tyler Patton celebrate Thanksgiving in Tampa.



Omar Rodriguez
Demi Garza, right, poses with her sons Jayden, Scotty and Marcelo Garza during the Immokalee community Thanksgiving party.



Beverly Bidney
Elizabeth Frank, left, and Janay Cypress share a hug Nov. 20 at the Hollywood Thanksgiving dinner.



Rachel Buxton
Ryanna Osceola enjoys time with her 6-month-old cousin Emanuel Martin at the Brighton luncheon.



Beverly Bidney
From left, Analyse Stockton, Tavarria Moss, Jarvis Frierson, Shamerion Tommie and Tamia Frierson pose by the Chupco's Landing Community Center pool during a Thanksgiving feast in Fort Pierce.



Eileen Soler
Information Technology employee Franklin Quintero chows down on a turkey leg Nov. 20 during a Big Cypress employee and resident Thanksgiving lunch.



Eileen Soler
Pumpkin, pecan, apple and other pies are lined up for the taking during a Big Cypress lunch at the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena entertainment complex.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING



Henry and Claudia Doctor share a loving moment during a Big Cypress Thanksgiving lunch. Turkey, ham, dressing, mashed potatoes and plenty of pies were on the menu.



Avalon Puente gives thanks for her new baby girl, Kalliope Puente, in Brighton.



From left, Delores Jumper, Leslie Garcia and Bebeyanna Quinones pose for a Thanksgiving photo during the Immokalee community party.



Kristen Billie and her cousin Leah Osceola, who is holding Kyrin Billie, 4 months, and Antonia Osceola, 2, enjoy the Hollywood Thanksgiving dinner.



George Billie is dressed for the occasion at the tribalwide seniors Thanksgiving luncheon at Big Cypress.



Tribal elders Annie and Bobby Henry enjoy Thanksgiving with granddaughter Jayla during the Tampa holiday party at Columbia Restaurant in Ybor City.



Seniors enjoy playing bingo at the tribalwide seniors Thanksgiving luncheon at the Big Cypress Senior Center.



Isabella Nail and Jarvis Frierson, both 6 years old, pose sweetly during the Fort Pierce Thanksgiving feast.



From left, Shamerion Tommie, Beverly Tommie and Tavarria Moss enjoy Thanksgiving in Fort Pierce.



David Cypress is double fisted with holiday fare that included turkey, ham, mashed potatoes and other Thanksgiving fixings in Big Cypress.



Susie Henry has a great time at the Tampa community Thanksgiving party.



Ray Yzaguirre III prepares the turkey for the Immokalee community Thanksgiving meal.



Darline Primeaux, right, holds Indigo Jumper, 5 months, while Sonya Cypress and Brian Billie Jr., 7, look on during the Hollywood Thanksgiving dinner.



Keanu Bert selects the perfect apple at the Health Department's farmers' market in Brighton.

Boy's patchwork big shirt is latest Museum donation

SUBMITTED BY JAMES H. POWELL
 Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum



Photo courtesy of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Figure 1: Donated boy's big shirt.

One of the latest donations to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum is a boy's patchwork big shirt (Figure 1). The shirt is orange with two bands of patchwork on the body, and one band of patchwork on the sleeves. The donor did not provide background information on the shirt itself, so Museum staff hopes that Tribune readers can help further identify and catalog it.

The shirt was donated by the family of John A. Masek, via Ruth A. Griffith. Griffith said that John Masek lived in Hollywood since the 1950s.

The Museum gathers as much information as possible on all items it holds. Staff compiles this information from sellers and donors during the acquisition process and continues researching the items after the acquisition process. Information on the items, including date and maker, is important to the Museum. For example, when an item is displayed, staff wants to ensure the most accurate, complete and up-to-date information is provided.

Currently, the Museum's exhibits department is showing a new exhibition on contemporary Seminole patchwork, co-curated by Rebecca Fell, curator of exhibits, and Seminole artist Jessica Osceola. The exhibit explores modern Seminole fashion, the historical influences on which it is based and cultural identity. The exhibit will run from December 2014 to November 2015.

Each textile displayed in the exhibit helps tell the story of modern Seminole fashion, especially those that have the most information associated with them, including date, maker and patchwork design identification when possible.

If anyone would like to help the Museum research the donated boy's big shirt, or any textiles held by the Museum, stop by, call 863-902-1113 or visit www.

AhTahThiKi.com.

Also, because it is the end of the year, the Museum thanks everyone who helped identify items over the past year.

In its first "Identifying the Past" column in July 2011, the Museum asked for help identifying a photograph (Figure 2). Staff knew the photograph showed some type of signing event related to the Seminole cattle industry and knew the identity of several of the people in the photograph.

But the identification of the signing event was not known.

With help from several sources, including Tribal Historic Preservation Office field technician Matthew Fenno, the

Museum now knows the signing event is featured in a short film produced in the early 1950s (Figure 3). The film, "Seminoles of the Everglades," was created by Old Gold cigarettes and the Lorillard Tobacco Co.

Among other topics, the film briefly features the Seminole Tribe's cattle industry and it shows cattle branding in addition to the signing event. The signing event is related to the Seminole Tribe's repayment of a U.S. government loan and the change in the cattle industry's relations with the U.S. government.

Stop by the Museum if you would like to view this interesting film. Thank you again, and Happy New Year.



Photo courtesy of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Figure 2: Photograph originally featured in Museum's July 2011 'Identifying the Past' column.



Photo courtesy of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Figure 3: Still from the film 'Seminoles of the Everglades,' early 1950s.

Living next to Red Barn: THPO investigates Charlie Micco Camp

SUBMITTED BY JESSICA FREEMAN
 Tribal Historic Preservation Office

The Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) is investigating the Charlie Micco Camp on Brighton Reservation for the Tribal Register of Historic Places (TRHP) because of the important role Charlie Micco

played in forming the Tribal cattle program. The Charlie Micco Camp, also known as Micco Village, was located directly north of the Red Barn in the central western portion of the reservation.

Based on historic aerial photographs and interviews with Tribal members Onnie Osceola, Coleman Josh and Jack Chalfant,

the site boundary measured approximately 210 feet north to south by 184 feet east to west. It was roughly circular and was located in a mesic temperate tree island hammock.

Today, the area has largely been cleared of vegetation and consists of a manicured lawn with light vegetation and three modern structures.

Charlie Micco and his wife, Emma, established the camp in the late 1930s to early 1940s. It was used through the late 1960s and is associated with the Bird Clan.

Charlie and Emma moved to the location after Charlie became a cattle boss on the Brighton Reservation. Because of its proximity to the Red Barn and the cattle pens to the southwest, the area was a prime location for people working in the cattle industry.

The Charlie Micco Camp consisted of several structures, a hog pen and a garden where corn, pumpkins and sugarcane were grown.

Charlie and Emma had seven children (four girls and three boys) who all lived with them: Goby Tiger, Leona Smith, Cody Micco, Alice

Betty Mae Jumper

Wisdom from the past

Christmas

The following column was written by Betty Mae Jumper and printed in the December 17, 1993 issue of The Seminole Tribune.

Again when you're wandering around the stores, the windows are shining with beautiful colors of lights and Christmas trees are already standing for you to buy.

Houses are already shining with all colors through the window, the lights going on and off. As I pass all these things and admire the beauty of the world, my thoughts and my mind fall back to wonder how many of us know the real meaning of this celebration.

When all this beauty pops up before us, why is this month bringing all the colors? Why? Do you know?

If not, about this time years ago, people were getting ready to pay their taxes. Also, at this same time, a son was ready to come into this world to pay for our tax, which is a sin – pay with his life so today we have a place to live.

Yes, a son was born in the city of Bethlehem in a stable with no one around but his mother, Mary; Joseph;

and the animals lying around.

There was no new clothing. The mother wrapped him in only the rag clothing she had. Yes, this was baby Jesus. He came to love us and died for us. The greatest love he gave, which we can never repay, and still he is holding his hand for you to come so that you may live forever in his mansion, which is made out of gold and precious stones. You don't have to do anything but ask him to come into your life and clean your sins. It doesn't matter who you are: red, white or black. He sees no color; he is the same for all people.

If some of you are heavy hearted, grieving or depressed, don't let this year go out without you talking to Jesus. The churches will be open during the Christmas holidays and through the New Year, so go where the Bible can be read to you.

I pray for each and every one of you who don't know Jesus. This Christmas please accept his free precious gift of salvation; you will never regret it.

This is the best gift you will ever have.

God bless all for God is real. Merry Christmas to all.



“God bless all for God is real. Merry Christmas to all.”

– Betty Mae Jumper



Smithsonian Institution's National Anthropological Archives

Charlie Micco, a cattleman, looks at a bull.



Photo courtesy of STOF-THPO, GIS Department

A 1957 historic aerial photograph shows the location of the Charlie Micco Camp and adjacent garden and hog pens.

Snow, Little Charlie Micco, Howard Micco and Jack Micco.

John Josh, his wife, Henley Dennis, and their son Coleman Josh also lived at the camp for about 10 years until they established their own camp nearby.

Each family had its own structure for living/sleeping quarters. Based on the 1957 aerial map, it is likely that 12 structures existed within the camp; Onnie Osceola noted eight, while Coleman Josh recounted 10 structures.

Charlie worked extensively with cattle prior to the Brighton cattle program. He was one of the few Tribal members who knew how to raise cattle. He and the others gained experience working with private cattle ranchers in the Lake Okeechobee Basin area. In the beginning of the program,

Charlie was Fred Montsdeoca's main foreman.

Because he was older, Charlie was well-respected by the younger, less-experienced cattlemen. He played a crucial role in training the younger boys so they also could become successful cattlemen.

In 1939, Charlie, John Josh and Willie Gopher were the first three cattle trustees elected to represent the Tribe – Charlie had the most experience.

Like all Tribal Register nominations, the THPO is working with the community to best determine how the Charlie Micco Camp should be remembered.

If you have any suggestions or if you would like to nominate a site for the Tribal Register, contact the THPO at 863-983-6549.

Health



New food rules on the menu at Florida schools

SUBMITTED BY BOB LAMENDOLA
Florida Department of Health in Broward

Goodbye to sodas, potato chips, candy bars and sugary sports drinks sold in Florida schools. Nutrition standards put into effect Nov. 1 removed many less-healthy foods from vending machines, snack bars and stores in public schools.

The new rules aim to cut calories, fat and sugar from snacks available to children because of increasing rates of childhood obesity. Under the new rules, food items on campus must be healthier.

"This is a big change, and it's not easy," said Darlene Moppert, a registered dietician and manager of nutrition education and training for Broward County Public Schools.

Children from Native American families have higher than average rates of obesity in Florida. The Seminole Tribe has been tackling the problem. Pemaayev Emahakv Charter School and Ahfachkee School do not sell snacks during school hours and won't be affected by the new rules. But Seminole children who attend other schools will notice the change.

School cafeterias in Florida already improved their meals to meet upgraded nutrition standards, which were passed by Congress. Now, food items sold in vending machines and other venues must comply as well. The items must meet at least one of four nutritional standards:

- At least 50 percent of grains are whole grains
- The first ingredient must be fruit, vegetables, dairy or protein
- Contain at least ¼ cup of fruit and vegetables
- Contain at least 10 percent of the recommended daily amount of calcium, potassium, vitamin D or fiber



In addition, snacks must contain no more than 200 calories per serving, no more than 35 percent of calories from fats (no more than 10 percent from saturated fats) and no more than 35 percent of net weight from sugar.

Elementary and middle schools can sell only water, low-fat milk or 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice. High schools may also sell lower-calorie sports drinks.

"This is definitely a change in a positive direction, and we hope that standards will continue to move in the direction of good health for all youth," said Ellen Feiler, director of health promotion and social marketing at the Florida Department of Health in Broward County.

Some school principals and food sellers have expressed concerns that the new standards may decrease vending machine sales, which supplement school budgets to support other student activities. Moppert said the sales are expected to rebound as students embrace healthier snacks.

Nutrition advocates say the standards could be stronger. First, the rules do not apply starting 30 minutes after school ends through midnight, which allows schools, parents and organizations to sell less-healthy foods at after-school games and events to raise money.

Second, principals can waive the rules so students and organizations can sell less-healthy food during fundraisers to support their clubs and activities. High schools can allow fundraisers on 15 days per year, middle schools 10 days and elementary schools five days. Fundraisers may not start until 30 minutes after the last lunch period.

For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Agriculture website at www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-focusing-smart-snacks.

Tips for making a great household pet

SUBMITTED BY JONATHAN VAZQUEZ
Animal Control and Wildlife Department

1. Research what type of pet best suits your family's personality and lifestyle. Dogs require more attention, time and energy than cats do, so if you don't enjoy walks or hikes in the outdoors or can't imagine getting up on cold winter mornings to take your pet out, a cat may be more your style.

Breed characteristics differ, so if you're looking for a lapdog, look into a less-active breed. If you or other members of your family are very active outdoors and plan to bring a pet along, a hardier, more active breed is a better fit.

2. Train your dog for a lifetime of obedience. Behavior problems are one of the reason dogs are relinquished to animal shelters, and they are the No. 1 reason they don't find new forever homes. As a result, behavior problems are the No. 1 reason dogs are euthanized.

From the day you bring your puppy or adult dog home, begin teaching the pet commands, such as come, sit, stay and down. A puppy should begin formal training at 8 weeks, and if you adopt an adult dog that has received no obedience training, consider enrolling it in a class right away.

3. Apply house rules consistently. Each member of the family needs to be on the same page when it comes to what your pet is and isn't allowed to do in your home.

If one family member lets the dog bark at outside noises, but another family member corrects the behavior, you confuse the dog. If you don't mind the dog sleeping on your bed but your husband does, decide which way it's going to be and stick with it.

When your pet knows what to expect from its behavior, it will be much more inclined to do more of what you approve of and less of what you don't.

4. Limit treats to reinforce rewards. This ensures your dog views treats as special rather than expected. It also helps keep your pet from gaining too much weight.

5. Socialize your pet. This is especially important for puppies. Again, behavior problems are the No. 1 reason dogs don't stay with their families and don't get adopted by new families.

Lack of proper socialization can result in inappropriate fears, aggressive behavior, general timidity and a host of other behavior

problems that are difficult to extinguish once a dog matures.

The ideal time for socialization is between 3 and 12 weeks for dogs and between 2 and 8 weeks for cats.

6. Help your pet be as active as nature intended. Exercise and play time are necessary for your pet's mental and physical well-being. If you don't give your dog opportunities to be physically active or if you don't encourage exercise, you may end up with a bored, destructive, overweight pet whose health will spiral downward throughout its lifetime.

7. Find ways to enrich your pet's environment. Your dog needs help staying mentally stimulated. This is important not only to discourage destructive behavior in younger pets but also to keep your older pet's brain sharp.

8. Make sure your pet is in good company. Pets get lonely and depressed just like people do when they spend too much time alone. Cats are generally better on their own, but dogs and especially puppies don't do well left alone for extended periods.

If you're regularly away from home 10 or 12 hours a day or travel out of town often, a dog might not be the best choice for a pet. If you already have a dog and find yourself away from home for extended periods, make arrangements with a friendly neighbor, relative, dog-sitter or a pet day care center to give your pup time and attention.

9. Keep a pet-friendly home. Your dog is a part of the family and needs its own cozy spot, preferably a crate or a comfy bed. Your pet should also have a selection of appropriate toys.

Understand that in households with pets, accidents will happen. Have the right cleaning supplies on hand and learn the best techniques for removing pet stains.

10. Help your pet be the best pet it can be. Train your pet by setting it up to succeed. There's a reason for everything your dog or cat does, and the reason rarely if ever involves being deliberately disobedient.

You should never physically punish your pet. It brings the animal pain and fear, and it gains you nothing. It's also illegal.

Your job as a pet parent is to figure out the reason behind the behavior, learn how to encourage what you want to see more of and how to discourage inappropriate behavior. With dogs, this usually involves additional training or behavior modification. Remember, train your pet; don't let it train you.



Eileen Soler

Runners bolt from the start line at the second annual Panther Prowl 10K Dec. 13 at Big Cypress Reservation.

Runners tackle second annual Panther Prowl on Big Cypress

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — For serious runners, the second annual 10K Panther Prowl on the Big Cypress Reservation's Snake Road was a training run with many benefits.

Temperatures in the low 50s along the USA Track & Field-certified course of asphalt and pasture road near the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena provided natural air conditioning for putting legs and lungs to a grueling test Dec. 13.

"I came for the chill and I came for the road," said Fredison Costa, 37, a three-time winner of the Walt Disney World Marathon.

Costa said he ran the 10K in Big Cypress as one of several practice runs he plans to make before taking on the next 26.2-mile Disney marathon Jan. 11. In Big Cypress, Costa finished first in 31:09 and took home \$500.

Michael Vidal, 22, finished second in 32:35. The Florida Atlantic University distance runner is the FAU current record holder for the 800, 1500 and 3000 meters, and 5 and 10K races. Long distance Olympic runner Ronnie Holassie, of Trinidad and Tobago, also turned out to train. He came in third place at 32:50.

Among women, Alice Henley, 26, a Dania Beach lifeguard and Boston Marathon runner, won the top prize in 37:24. Daniella Espino, 24, winner of the 2013 Baptist Health Turkey Trot, took home second. In third was Angela Cobb, 31, a former NCAA All-American and the founder of Underground Runners, an

organization that hosts races to benefit athletes and the environment.

Prize money was awarded in descending increments of \$100 for first through fifth place in the male and female divisions.

About 150 runners turned out for the race sponsored by the Tribe, Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino and the Health Department, said Kristi Hinote, the Health Department's special events coordinator.

More than a dozen Tribal members participated. In the men's division, Jose Osceola placed sixth in the 35-39 age group, and Brian Billie placed seventh in 40-44. In the women's 40-44 age group, Cathy Cypress finished fifth, two spots ahead of Marlin Miller.

Helene Buster ran in 1:23.00 with a broken toe. Buster, director of the Tribe's Family Services Department, began racing in 2000. So far she has finished five marathons and five half marathons. Her second Panther Prowl was her second 10K. "I love this run. My time wasn't all that great, but it makes me run a little more to gear up for next year," Buster said. "Panther Prowl is on the circuit now."

Buster said runs on the reservation started with Rez Rally 15 years ago. The 5K event was created to promote healthier lifestyles and provide incentives for Tribal members to collectively combat increasing rates of diabetes and hypertension.

Now, the 10K attracts not only competitive runners to the rez but also weekend warriors, dieters and ordinary people who run for exercise.

Cheri Thompson, of Fort Lauderdale, started running for fitness last year when



Eileen Soler

Candy Cypress dashes to the finish line in the last half mile Dec. 13 of the 10K race.

she was unable to run a single mile.

"Look at me now. I can run a 10K on a crisp morning, amid the openness of nature, under the vast blue sky, listening to cows in the pastures. That's beautiful," Thompson said.

New behavioral health program now available

SUBMITTED BY THOMAS RYAN
Center for Behavioral Health Director

The Seminole Tribe recently launched a new program, the Center for Behavioral Health (CBH), under the direction of the Executive Administrative Office.

It is specifically focused on treating the emotional and physical well-being of the Seminole Tribe of Florida's individuals, families and communities. The program aims to be the integrated mental and behavioral health provider of choice for the Seminole Tribe of Florida by utilizing culturally sensitive and empirically based interventions, which promote optimal individual functioning and well-being while treating Tribal members with compassion, respect and dignity.

The CBH program will specifically

address substance abuse and mental health issues by providing the following comprehensive care and services:

- Individual, group and family therapies
- Crisis intervention and stabilization
- On call/after-hours coverage
- Appropriate referral to inpatient treatment programs or outside service providers
- Psychiatric services and medication management
- Psychological services that include guardianship, disability and bariatric evaluations
- In collaboration with the STOF Health Department, a health and weight-loss program
- Education about behavioral health concerns
- Screening for dementia, depression



and gambling addictions

The approach to treatment is twofold: to work collaboratively with clients regarding their needs and preferences for treatment and to simply be the best while maintaining CBH's core values of professionalism, integrity, trust, transparency and teamwork. The center also strives to work collaboratively with other programs under the STOF umbrella to provide the best consumer-driven service delivery.

Offices are located on the following reservations and are open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to service behavioral health needs:

- Hollywood: 954-964-6338
- Big Cypress: 863-902-3206
- Brighton/Fort Pierce: 863-763-7700
- Immokalee/Naples: 239-867-3480
- Tampa: 813-246-3100

On call and after-hours services can be accessed through the Seminole Police central dispatch at 239-657-6956.

CBH welcomes the opportunity to answer any and all questions about the program and what is offered and sincerely wishes the ability to assist Tribal members, their families and the communities should the need arise.



Photo courtesy of Thomas Ryan

Dr. Thomas Ryan is the clinical director of the Center for Behavioral Health.

SEMINOLE SCENES



Beverly Bidney

NEW DIGS: Construction workers make progress on the main building at the new Okalee Village, under construction on U.S. 441 in Hollywood. The building will house a gift shop and offices.



Eileen Soler

END OF AN ERA: A cowboy's timeless pastime meets the future amid road construction along Josie Billie Highway on the Big Cypress Reservation.



Kevin Johnson

BAND OF CHAMPIONS: American Heritage School band member Cameron Osceola, center, plays the clarinet Dec. 12 during halftime of the Class 5A state championship football game between Heritage and Godby at the Orlando Citrus Bowl stadium. Heritage won, 38-0.



Beverly Bidney

FRESH MARKET: Just in time for Thanksgiving, Ashley Clark and T.J. Clark choose the freshest vegetables and fruits Nov. 21 at the Health Department's farmers' market under the airnasium in Hollywood.



Eileen Soler

BATTER UP: The improved baseball and softball complex at Big Cypress is almost ready for re-opening day. Vast improvements to Billie Johns Sr. Ball Field include boys and girls restrooms, concession areas, pedestrian walkways, bleachers and two-story press boxes. A rededication ceremony will soon be planned.



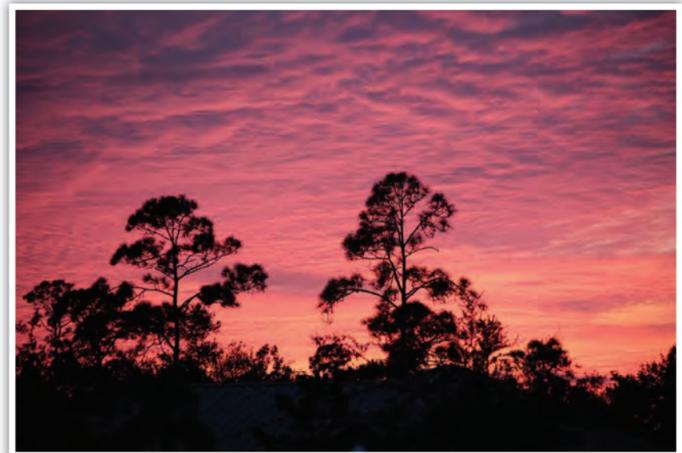
Photo courtesy of Bobby Frank

HONORING HISTORY: The Palm Beach County School Board presents the Seminole Tribe with a proclamation celebrating Native American Heritage Month Nov. 18. Representing the Tribe were Hollywood culture center manager Bobby Frank, Vincent Billie, Little Mr. Seminole Roberto Benard, Madeline Benard, Shannon Tiger Gopher and Bonnie Motlow.



Eileen Soler

MAKIN' BACON: A Dalmatian-dotted porky pal strolls the Big Cypress community like any other domesticated house pet out for a leisurely afternoon walk.



Beverly Bidney

SPECTACULAR SUNSET: Like paint on canvas, an autumn sunset colors the sky Nov. 19 as the Fort Pierce community gathered for a Thanksgiving celebration.



Eileen Soler

YOU LOOKIN' AT ME: An alligator and a handful of tourists see eye to eye on a sunny morning at Billie Swamp Safari on the Big Cypress Reservation.



Photo courtesy of Pastor Salaw Hummingbird

JOYFUL NOISE: Sixteen members of the acclaimed Native Praise Choir, comprised of women from Indian churches throughout Oklahoma, present a concert Nov. 23 at Big Cypress First Baptist Church. The choir, led by Augusta 'Gus' Smith (Creek), perform songs in the languages of the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma.



Photo courtesy of Barbara Boling

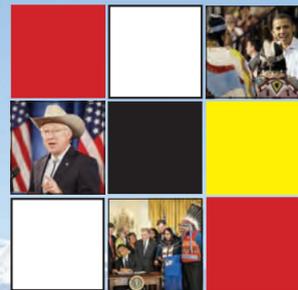
JINGLE JOGGER: Carla Gopher enjoys a hot chocolate Dec. 11 after completing the annual 5K Jingle Jog on Brighton Reservation.



Beverly Bidney

BEATIN' THE HEAT: The pool is calm at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood. A recent face-lift took nearly three months to renovate the 4.5-acre pool oasis. Three luxury chickees were added, the existing chickee cabanas were re-thatched and refurbished, the rock mountain was thoroughly cleaned, the pool deck was given new travertine stone flooring and the pool was resurfaced.

NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS



Suzan Shown Harjo receives Presidential Medal

WASHINGTON — Native poet, activist and Turtle Island history curator Suzan Shown Harjo was awarded the prestigious Presidential Medal of Freedom Nov. 24 in a White House ceremony.

"Through her work in government and as the head of the National Congress of American Indians and the Morningstar Institute, she has helped preserve a million acres of Indian land; helped develop laws preserving Tribal sovereignty; she's repatriated sacred cultural items to Tribes while expanding museums that celebrate Native life," said President Barack Obama while summarizing the accomplishments of the Cheyenne-Hodulgee Tribal member.

"Because of Suzan, more young Native Americans are growing up with pride in their heritage and with faith in their future. And she's taught all of us that Native values make Americans stronger," Obama said.

Other honorees with Harjo included Meryl Streep, Stevie Wonder, Alvin Ailey, Isabel Allende, Tom Brokaw, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, Mildred Dresselhaus, John Dingell, Ethel Kennedy, Abner Mikva, Patsy Takemoto Mink, Edward Roybal, Charles Sifford, Robert Solow, Stephen Sondheim and Marlo Thomas.

In his introduction to the group of winners, Obama grouped Harjo, actress, activist and children's advocate Marlo Thomas, as well as three pioneering civil rights workers murdered by Ku Klux Klan members in 1964 (Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner), under the subheading, "Trailblazers who bent the arc of our nation toward justice."

—Source: *IndianCountryTodayMediaNetwork.com*

Japanese eatery to open at Hollywood Hard Rock

HOLLYWOOD — A \$12 million Japanese restaurant named Kuro, featuring chefs from the restaurant empire of Nobu Matsuhisa and Masaharu Morimoto, will open in January at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.

Alex Becker, who has worked at Nobu and Katsuya restaurants, will double as the endeavor's top hat and culinary director.

Executive sushi chef Shuji Hiyakawa, a veteran of the restaurants of "Iron Chef" Morimoto, will be charge of the raw fish.

The David Mexico Design Group, whose credits include Nobu restaurants and Bobby Flay's Bar American and Mesa Grill, will create the ambiance.

Becker promises "new-style Japanese dining" that will "elevate Kuro to the next level." Extensive wine and sake lists, an artisan cocktails program and an array of Japanese whiskeys are also planned.

—Source: *BocaMag.com*

Iipay Nation sovereignty (and revenue source) threatened?

SANTA YSABEL, Calif. — U.S. Attorney Laura Duffy filed a complaint Dec. 3 for a permanent injunction to close down Desert Rose Bingo, the Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel-hosted online gaming site that allows off-reservation players to place bets and collect cash prizes.

"In a throwback to its unsuccessful mid-1990s efforts to stymie and stifle the progress of (Indian Gaming Regulatory Act Class II) gaming, (California) once again seeks to undermine Tribal sovereignty, innovation and economic initiative by seeking injunctive and declaratory relief from the court declaring that the Tribe may not conduct its legal (Indian Gaming Regulatory Act II) bingo gaming," read a Tribal memorandum of legal points filed Nov. 25 when the issue first arose. At the time, California Attorney General Kamala Harris asked the court to shut down the website; Iipay Nation Tribal leaders refused, however, arguing that the effort threatened the Tribe's rights as a sovereign nation.

That's when the federal government stepped in with the complaint that said in order to be legal, proceeds from lotteries or bingo games must be used for charitable purposes.

—Source: *San Diego Reader*

Congress gives Native lands to foreign mining company

TONTO BASIN, Ariz. — Congress is poised to give Resolution Copper 2,400 acres of Tonto National Forest that is cherished ancestral homeland to Apache Natives. The territory has been used by Apaches for centuries to gather medicinal plants and acorns. It is located 1,500 feet from historic Apache Leap, a summit that Apaches jumped from to avoid being killed by settlers in the late 19th century.

Resolution Copper is a subsidiary of the Australian-English mining company Rio Tinto, which is a partner with Iran in an African uranium mine.

The "deal" affects all nine federally recognized Apache Tribes, including the Apache Tribe of Oklahoma; Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, Arizona; Fort Sill Apache Tribe of Oklahoma;

Jicarilla Apache Nation, New Mexico; Mescalero Apache Tribe of the Mescalero Reservation, New Mexico; San Carlos Apache Tribe of the San Carlos Reservation, Arizona; Tonto Apache Tribe of Arizona; White Mountain Apache Tribe of the Fort Apache Reservation, Arizona; and the Yavapai-Apache Nation of the Camp Verde Indian Reservation, Arizona.

The House and Senate Armed Services Committees quietly attached the controversial "giveaway" to annual legislation funding the U.S. Defense Department as a provision to the "Carl Levin and Howard P. 'Buck' McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015." News of the land provision was kept under wraps until the bill was finally posted online.

Terry Rambler, chairman of the San Carlos Apache Tribe, told The Huffington Post he was saddened by the news but not surprised.

"Of all people, Apaches and Indians should understand because we've gone through this so many times in our history," Rambler said. "The first thing I thought about was not really today, but 50 years from now, probably after my time, if this land exchange bill goes through, the effects that my children and children's children will be dealing with. Since time immemorial people have gone there. That's part of our ancestral homeland. We've had dancers in that area forever — sunrise dancers — and coming-of-age ceremonies for our young girls that become women. They'll seal that off. They'll seal us off from the acorn grounds, and the medicinal plants in the area, and our prayer areas."

Arizona Sen. John McCain proved instrumental in adding the land deal that had been pursued by Rio Tinto/Resolution for a decade to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), according to The Huffington Post. Rio Tinto/Resolution claims mining in Tonto will generate \$61 billion in economic activity and 3,700 direct and indirect jobs over 40 years.

"It seems like us Apaches and other Indians care more about what this type of action does to the environment and the effects it leaves behind for us, while others tend to think more about today and the promise of jobs, but not necessarily what our creator God gave to us," Rambler said.

Rio Tinto/Resolution Copper has said its mining plan for the area has been filed with the National Forest Service and that it will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that protects federal lands.

However, NEPA will only protect lands that remain in federal hands. The rest is fair game, according to federal law.

"We would only have to do NEPA on any activity that would take place on remaining federal land," said Arizona Bureau of Land Management official Carrie Templin.

The 2015 NDAA contains other land deals, including one that would subject 70,000 acres of Tongass National Forest in Alaska to logging and another provision that would give 1,600 acres from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Washington State for purposes of industrial development, a plan that has spurred Tribal protests.

—Source: *Rt.com*

Visions for Grand Canyon clash

EAST RIM OF THE GRAND CANYON, Ariz. — From this edge of the Grand Canyon, Navajo citizen Renae Yellowhorse is 26 miles across the Painted Desert from the nearest paved road. No civilization in sight. She swung her arm over sweeping horizon, pointing to the conjunction of the Colorado and Little Colorado rivers 3,000 feet below.

"This is where the tram would go," Yellowhorse, 52, a leader of the Save the Confluence coalition, told The New York Times. She has lived her whole life on this Navajo land. "This is the heart of our Mother Earth. This is a sacred area. It is going to be true destruction."

She referred to the proposed \$1 billion, 420-acre proposal for restaurants, boutique hotels, stores and trailer park sequestered around a gondola whisking visitors to a canyon-floor restaurant, an Indian cultural center and an elevated river walk — the latest, most ambitious attempt by developers to invade a national landmark that draws 4.5 million people a year.

The Escalade complex, as planned, would be visible from South Rim observation points where visitors gather in the evenings to watch the hypnotic display of shifting hues as the sun sets across the layers of volcanic rock.

There is more. Grand Canyon National Park — the veritable symbol of the national park system, itself — is under siege.

- Italian developers are planning 3 million square feet of retail construction, plus 2,200 homes in newly incorporated Tusayan village (pop: 587) at the entrance to the park — a major threat, say park officials, to the Colorado River water supply.
- A skywalk finished in 2007 over the western rim in partnership with the Hualapai Tribe, is an overwhelming success, drawing thousands of visitors a year, mostly from Las Vegas.

- Helicopters take visitors to the bottom of the canyon, to the distress of conservationists.

- A bitter \$1.5 billion contract war between the Park and Xanterra Parks & Resorts, the private concessionaire that has run hotels and restaurants here for nearly 100 years, threatens a Jan. 1 shutdown by the concessionaire.

"The Grand Canyon is the most protected land in the world," said David Uberuaga, the park superintendent. "It's a World Heritage Site. We have the protections of the National Park Service Act, the act that created the Grand Canyon, the Clean Water Act."

Departing Navajo President Ben Shelly is one of the project's biggest champions, arguing for the jobs and revenue he says will come to the Tribe.

"The president is for business development and job creation," said Desmond Tome, Shelly's senior adviser. "The Grand Canyon Escalade project is a huge step in that direction."

—Source: *NYTimes.com*

High numbers of Alaska Native children in foster care

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — A new report by researchers with the Institute of Social and Economic Research, part of the University of Alaska Anchorage, finds that efforts to reduce the count of Native children in foster care have essentially failed: the number of Alaska Native children in care remains shockingly high.

During the study period from 2006 to 2013, about 2,000 Alaska children were in foster care any given month, and 60 percent were Alaska Natives, according to the recently released "Trends in Age, Gender and Ethnicity among Children in Foster Care in Alaska," which also pointed out that one Alaska child out of 100 — and six out of every 100 Native children — is in foster care because of dangers and dysfunction at home. That's double the national proportion, the report found. This despite state and federal laws passed in the 1990s aimed to reduce the time children languished in foster care and reduce their numbers.

Nationally, the number of children in foster care declined by almost a quarter between 2002 and 2012, and the number of African-American children dropped by nearly half, the report stated.

—Source: *Alaska Dispatch News*

Federal officials seek halt to Osage County wind farm

TULSA, Okla. — Federal authorities are seeking an immediate halt of a large wind farm development in Osage County.

The Osage Nation has long opposed the Osage Wind project, which includes more than 90 turbines at 400-foot tall. Tribal officials said the federal government's lawsuit won't be heard before the project is completed, The Tulsa World reported.

According to court records, each turbine's foundation requires a hole 50 feet wide and 10 to 30 feet deep. Construction would remove more than 60,000 cubic yards of limestone and other rocks, which belong to the Tribe under U.S. law, according to the preliminary injunction request filed by federal officials.

The wind farm's construction is on private property, and the owners have lease agreements with Enel Green Power North America. Federal authorities have warned the developers to stop the work, but "they apparently elected to pursue a beat-the-clock strategy and have intensified excavation activities," the lawsuit states.

—Source: *The Ada News*

Aboriginal family refused service for being Native

WETASKIWIN, Alberta — Kiara Dennehy said she is speaking out against racism in her community. The 15-year-old aboriginal girl said she and her parents were refused service in a local bowling alley.

The three arrived looking for a place to sit at Western Lanes and Overtime Lounge late last month, she told CBCNews.com, when a waitress approached her with a shocking comment.

"She said she doesn't serve Native people," said Dennehy, who lives with her parents in the nearby First Nation community of Maskwacis.

Venue manager Kristie Wolfe expressed disgust upon learning an employee had refused service to an aboriginal family.

"I've grown up in Wetaskiwin my whole life. This city is very diverse. We have people of all cultures, all walks of life, financially, racially," Wolfe said.

The three quickly left, but Dennehy posted about the experience on a Wetaskiwin Facebook page: "That's the first time I've walked into a store and not being able to be served because of where I'm from and what my background is," she said. "I think it's nonsense. Like that's somebody saying they don't want to be served by her because she's white. It's just the other way around."

Wolfe quickly posted an apology to

Dennehy on Facebook.

In a written statement about the incident, the server denied any racism, believing instead that at least one of Dennehy's party was under the influence of drugs or alcohol. She claimed she told them: "I am uncomfortable serving a couple of you."

Wolfe admitted to CBC News that the server had been suspended in the past for making racist comments. The employee is now suspended from dealing with the public, but Wolfe fears no further action will be taken.

She said the company's reputation is at risk and is threatening to quit: "That reputation whether it's true or not, it's going to be there ... that reputation that we tolerate racism. It's going to tarnish the business and I don't want to be the face of that business."

The owner wants a statement from Dennehy before deciding the next step, Wolfe said.

Dennehy said she accepts Wolfe's apology but will still think twice before returning to the bowling alley.

—Source: *CBCnews.com*

Former Blackfeet chair gets fraud judgment

BROWNING, Mont. — U.S. District Judge Brian Morris has issued a civil fraud judgment against Patrick Charles Thomas, former chairman of Montana's Blackfeet Indian Nation.

The U.S. Attorney's office, which said the 56-year-old Thomas lied to claim money in a discrimination settlement and later falsely complained he was discriminated against in a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) loan program, is seeking more than \$944,000 in losses and damages.

Under a 2011 settlement of a \$710 million class action which alleged discrimination against American Indians who sought USDA loans between 1981 and 1999, Thomas applied for and received loan forgiveness, a settlement award and tax waivers of more than \$314,000.

In October, Thomas was sentenced to one year in prison and ordered to pay nearly \$163,000 for selling property he pledged as collateral on his loans.

—Source: *Associated Press*

Too Indian for Indian radio program?

MADISON, Wis. — Native American radio host Richie Plass said he was warned by management at Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR) that he should no longer tell Indian jokes, nor talk about Indian politics and issues as the genial co-host of "Kalihweyo'se," the Native American radio program that airs in Madison, Wisconsin from 10 p.m. to midnight on Thursdays.

Plass said he was told that he was going to be closely observed by WPR officials and that he would have to change his ways to remain a part of the show.

So he quit. Apparently, after a decade as Indian Country's most famous Indian radio star, Plass is too Indian for an Indian radio show.

"It's amazing that an Indian on an Indian radio show can't tell Indian jokes," Plass said a recent telephone conversation with Peninsula Pulse. "I'm sorry man, after 10, 11 years, all of a sudden I'm the scourge of public radio. I don't want to hurt the show. I want the show to stay on. But I ain't doing it. I'm not going to change. I'm going to be me."

Plass believes the "political correctness police" wanted to clean up Richie's on-air presentation, forgetting that as host of a Native American show, Richie was performing the humor of his ancestors. In fact, the "Encyclopedia of Humor Studies" describes American Indian humor as a mixture of trickster stories, teasing and self-deprecating humor.

Trickster stories are essentially morality tales that "instruct American Indians to maintain a positive attitude in the face of even the most severe suffering," the Encyclopedia states. "A key element of having a positive attitude is maintaining a sense of humor. Thus, the importance of having a sense of humor is something that is taught by trickster stories of American Indians, and, as a result, humor is an important part of their cultures."

"Another important aspect of teasing is the ability of an individual to tease oneself, that is, to engage in self-deprecating humor. Making light of oneself demonstrates that one understands one's place in society and seeks to maintain social equality and harmony, two goals of teasing behavior among American Indians. If one is able to make light of oneself, there is also more of a willingness on the part of others to accept teasing from that individual. Thus, self-deprecating humor is an important aspect of humor in American Indian cultures," the Encyclopedia continues.

"We have a lot of listeners who are locked up," said Plass, who was a WPR volunteer. "Just in this last year, I've had so many people, men and women, give me

a hug, shake my hand, thanked me for the stories, the jokes, that it helped them get through their time. The last one was just two weeks ago. I'm not making this up."

Plass said he might to start his own podcast show on the Internet.

—Source: *Peninsula Pulse*

2015 Hard Rock Gasparilla grand marshals named

TAMPA — Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa announced Dec. 3 that U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Chris Faris and television show host Mario Lopez will be the Grand Marshals for the 100th annual Seminole Hard Rock Gasparilla Invasion and Parade of the Pirates.

Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa is in the middle of a three-year run as title sponsor of the Gasparilla Pirate Fest that will be held Jan. 30-31.

Command Sgt. Maj. Faris is former senior enlisted adviser to the Commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command at nearby MacDill Air Force Base. A 30-year distinguished military veteran and special operations leader, he was deployed in support of combat operations in Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq. Awarded the Purple Heart in 1993 (for injuries received during the Battle of Mogadishu, Somalia), as well as seven Bronze stars, he has earned both the Defense Superior Service Medal and Legion of Merit.

Lopez is in his seventh season as the host of the TV show "Extra." Lopez played the character A.C. Slater on the hit show "Saved by the Bell."

Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa President John Fontana described the 2015 Grand Marshals as "two individuals that will help draw positive attention to this iconic event in our community. Command Sgt. Maj. Chris Faris is a true American hero and someone we all look up to with utmost respect for his service to our country."

"Also in line with Seminole Hard Rock's position as central Florida's premier entertainment destination, Mario Lopez is part of the fabric of pop culture that will resonate with Tampa Bay, so we're extremely pleased he'll be a part of this special event as well."

—Source: *Virtual-Strategy Magazine*

First Hard Rock Hotel for India

CALANGUTE, India — Hard Rock International announced plans recently to transform North 16 Goa Resort into the Hard Rock Hotel Goa, the first of its kind in India.

Hard Rock Goa is projected to open in March 2015 with 135 rooms. The property's location is close to a famed beach that attracts an influx of international and domestic travelers year-round.

—Source: *Nasdaq GlobeNewswire*

Two Tribes among 16 national Climate Action Champions

WASHINGTON — Two American Indian Tribes are among 16 communities across the United States designated as Climate Action Champions by President Barack Obama.

For a diversity of efforts in preventing, preparing for and adapting to climate change, Blue Lake Rancheria Tribe of California and the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians joined "a diverse group of communities that are defining the frontier of ambitious climate action," said a White House statement, which added "their approaches can serve as a model for other communities to follow."

The White House launched the Climate Action Champions competition to identify and recognize local climate leaders and to provide targeted Federal support to help those communities further raise their ambitions.

Blue Lake Rancheria Tribe, which began its strategic climate action plan in 2008 and quickly became a regional leader in strategically planning and implementing both climate resiliency and greenhouse gas reduction measures, has reduced energy consumption by 35 percent with a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent by 2018.

The Tribe utilizes a range of approaches including the use of biodiesel to power public buses, and aggressive energy efficiency measures.

Through its energy strategy, emergency operations plan, integrated resource management plan, solid waste management plan, sustainable development code and land use planning process, the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians demonstrates a holistic approach to climate action and preparedness with ambitious goals, including a net-zero energy goal. The Tribe aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 4 percent per year.

Broward County is another Climate Action Champion.

—Source: *The White House Office of the Press Secretary*

Compiled by Special Projects Reporter Peter B. Gallagher.

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Education

B



Students dig first archaeology adventure

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Sixth-graders from Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School were introduced to archaeology with a down-to-earth experience in the heart of a Brighton hammock.

"The most fun part was digging in the dirt. We got down, got dirty and discovered stuff," student Heath Lawrence said.

Led first by bus and then on foot through highland brush by archaeology experts from the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO), 20 children toiled for three hours Dec. 5 at the scene of a pre-reservation European homestead where animal bones, bricks, bullets and pottery were abundant.

"This turns the tables on what people normally expect. Here, we have Tribal children with the ability to uncover and interpret how white people may have lived," said Tribal archaeologist Maureen Mahoney, who organized and managed the educational project.

With mapping, excavation, sifting and item cataloging stations placed at strategic locations, the tree island became a learning laboratory dubbed the "On Reservation Field School."

A box at one table featured clear plastic evidence bags already filled with found objects collected from professional prevent surveys of the area. The bags were tagged with necessary notes that provided descriptions, measurements and geographic coordinates where the items were found. One bag, dated Nov. 25, contained an alligator bone collected from the root ball of a palm tree.

At the mapping station, students armed with clipboards and pencils first recorded visual observations of the scene.

"If you look just a few yards away, you can see the short distance to water through the trees and the formation of the island. You can see some areas already excavated and bricks that we can surmise were used for building a structure," Mahoney said.

THPO site analyst and Brighton resident Jack Chalfont showed students how to gently inspect the bricks without moving them. The bricks were stamped by the Robbins Brick Co., established in Tennessee in 1889, Chalfont said. The company went out of business in the 1930s, according to THPO.

"We found out that a shipment was sent to Okeechobee in the early 1900s, so we're thinking these bricks probably came from that shipment," he said.

Chalfont guessed that the white people who lived at the scene were likely evicted just a few years short of 1935 when Brighton formally became an Indian reservation. He said he remembers seeing survey markers dated 1929 on the land about 30 years ago. Chalfont believed the survey was done by the U.S. Army to determine the size of scale of what would become the reservation.

Connecting stories told by Tribal elders with U.S. census reports, Chalfont also believes the land could have been occupied by members of the Curry family, a family documented to have lived in LaBelle and Moore Haven.

Chalfont, whose own family now uses the land for cattle pasture, said his first encounter with archaeologists was disheartening. He was only about 10 years old.



Eileen Soler

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students Morgan Yates and Norman Osceola use spades to gently collect the top layer of soil and other items from an excavation site Dec. 5 during an archaeology field trip led by the Tribal Historic Preservation Office.

"I basically called them grave robbers," Chalfont said. "Today is a reversal of the past. We usually had people digging up Indian graves; instead we are letting the children see how black and white life was back then without running water or electricity, and we are teaching them to protect the land."

At other stations children used spades to dig layers of dirt from pre-determined areas, measuring tapes to record dirt layers, paper and pencils to draw grids and record findings, and hands to sift buckets of soil through screens.

Student Jagger Gaugin found a .22-caliber rimfire bullet. Mahoney said .22s were used from the late 1850s to the 1930s.

"It's so cool to try to imagine what happened here," Jagger said. Later, in his field report, Jagger supposed that the area was a hideout for "someone running from the cops" or maybe the legendary "Wild Bill" Curry himself, according to local lore. He also concluded that the man ate deer and turtles because several buried piles of deer and turtle bones were found.

"There are bullet holes in the trees. There is very old broken glass. And it's all right in the middle of nowhere," Jagger said. "About half of my guess is from fact and the other half is my imagination."

Student Haylie Huff also hypothesized that whoever lived at the site did not want to be found.

"They lived there where no one could find them because they moved in without paying anything," Haylie wrote.

Indeed, prior research of state records



Eileen Soler

Myron Billie, Melodie Smith and Donovan Harris learn from Tribal Historic Preservation Office site analyst Jack Chalfont how to study and report on a brick artifact, likely from a white homestead, found on the archaeology site.

indicates that no one ever applied for homestead at that location, said THPO field technician Karen Brunso.

In classroom lessons at PECS before the outdoor event, Brunso taught students that educated vision plays a big part in deducing how ordinary people lived in the past. Recreating a picture of the past takes studying how communities sheltered, fed,

protected and clothed themselves.

"I told them how archaeology can be a kind of storytelling. We tell the tale of everybody. We might not know if it is of a historical person but we fill in the gap. It's not just the famous people who make history. History is made by everybody," Brunso said.

♦ See **ARCHAEOLOGY** on page 4B

Education Department to host SAT, ACT prep classes

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

The Education Department is offering SAT and ACT prep classes tribalwide to help students prepare for standardized college entrance exams.

The classes are recommended for all high school sophomores, juniors and seniors.

"Strategy is the big key on these tests — how to take them and prepare for them," said Vickie Stuart, Brighton education adviser. "Students who attend the prep courses are on track and have a focus; they are prepared and know what they need for college."

According to the College Board, the not-for-profit organization that created the SAT in 1926, test scores combined with high school grade point averages most accurately indicate a student's potential to succeed in college. To further track results, the Board developed the SAT College and Career Benchmark to gauge which students will succeed in college without remediation.

In Florida, 72.2 percent of students from the class of 2014 took the SAT. Only 36.8 percent of all students and 31.8 percent of Native American students met the benchmark score of 1550. A perfect score is 2400. In addition, only 14.1 percent of African Americans and 30.5 percent of Hispanics met the benchmark. Students who meet the benchmark are more likely to enroll in a four-year college and complete their degree than those who do not.

The Education Department prep class aims to teach students test-taking skills, give them examples of questions on the exams and help them lose their fear of standardized tests, said Silvia Navas Big Cypress higher education recruiter.

"We want to help them better understand the test so they can excel," Stuart said. "They can take the test several times in their junior and senior years. The more times they take it, the better their scores."

Students may combine their best scores from each exam on the math, reading and writing sections for a higher overall score.

"There is a lot of pressure on this generation with exams," Stuart said. "We want to make the course easy and fun."

Classes will be held at the Brighton Florida Seminole Veterans Building Jan. 16 from 6 to 9 p.m. and Jan. 17 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; and at the Immokalee Education Department office on the second floor of the Field Office Jan. 19 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

To register, contact the Education Department at 863-763-3572.

College Board SAT and ACT schedules:



SAT:

Jan. 24, 2015: registration deadline, Dec. 29, 2014

March 14: registration deadline, Feb. 13

May 2: registration deadline, April 6

June 6: registration deadline, May 8

ACT:

Feb. 7: registration deadline, Jan. 9

April 18: registration deadline, March 13

June 13: registration deadline, May 8

Randee McDonald graduates FGCU

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

FORT MYERS — Randee McDonald, who graduated Dec. 13 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in education from Florida Gulf Coast University, believes at-risk students should be given a chance to succeed, and she intends to help make it happen.

"I want to help the next generation," said McDonald, 23. "I'm really interested

in working with these kids; they could end up in jail or in trouble later on."

McDonald majored in special education and received her certification in K-12 exceptional student education and K-5 elementary education. She said she was inspired by an education professor who shared his experiences working with at-risk students. He motivated her to intern at Fort Myers High School, where she worked with at-risk students for 13 weeks.

"I liked being challenged by the behavior issues," McDonald said. "It pushed me to figure out different solutions to problems that would come up."

At-risk students often require help to succeed academically so they can transition into adulthood and achieve economic self-sufficiency, according to a report provided to the Department of Health and Human Services in 2011.

Students succeed more through academically intensive, interactive programs in smaller class sizes, McDonald said. "It has a lot to do with making lessons more interactive," she said. "If they are more engaged, they retain the information better because they had fun learning it."

During McDonald's internship, student scores increased from 69 to 96 percent in a life skills program that focused on money.

"The most satisfying thing was getting to see my students improve throughout the semester," she said.

McDonald has not finished her

education yet. She is working on a second Bachelor of Arts degree in fine arts, which she should complete by December 2015.

"I've always liked art and found it is a way to express your emotions," she said. "I think I can bring in the art factor while working with at-risk students. It's another way for them to express their feelings; they can draw, paint and sculpt instead of expressing behaviors."

McDonald is inspired by her mother, Sarah McDonald, who pushes her to succeed. A few dedicated professors also made sure she didn't give up. "I want to be that teacher for future students," she said.

McDonald has some simple advice for students: Find a field you enjoy and make sure your heart is in it. She said graduating college makes her feel accomplished.

"My ultimate goal is to work for the Tribe with at-risk students that other teachers have given up on," McDonald said. "I want to get back to my roots; I grew up in the culture, and I want to contribute to the Tribe."

"I want to get back to my roots; I grew up in the culture, and I want to contribute to the Tribe."

— Randee McDonald, FGCU graduate



Beverly Bidney

Randee McDonald, who graduated Dec. 13 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in education from Florida Gulf Coast University, poses for a photo on the Hollywood Reservation.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING



Ahfachkee School fourth-graders, from left, Aleah Rodriguez, Diamond Osceola, Dayne Billie and Dothan Osceola-Rodriguez have a blast of noontime merriment at the school's Thanksgiving brunch.

Eileen Soler



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas

Parents and children participate in reading activities Nov. 6 at the Pemaetv Emahakv Charter School family reading night.

Old-fashioned fun served up at PECS family night

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Reading received the royal treatment with a medieval-themed family reading night Nov. 6 at Pemaetv Emahakv Charter School.

Each grade level created reading-centered activities for students and parents that included board games featuring vocabulary words and trifold displays that focused on reading strategies.

Activities for sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders stressed content and comprehension. After parents and students read passages together, children showed the adults how they determined the meaning of the passage through specific exercises.

"Students had the opportunity to show their parents what they know," said Victoria Paige, PECS reading coach. "And parents got to see what their students were reading. It was a really fun time."

About 100 parents and students attended the event, which also included a photo booth with medieval costumes and props, bounce house and screening of the movie "How to Train your Dragon" shown on a giant screen in the breezeway and served with plenty of popcorn and cotton candy.

Decor for the event featured castles and kings from the Middle Ages.

"We were so pleased that so many people came and had so many positive things to say about it," Paige said. "We will absolutely do more parent night activities, maybe after the first of the year."



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas

Students pay attention at the medieval-themed family reading night.



Eileen Soler

Ahfachkee School teachers and staff serve up delicious Thanksgiving fare Nov. 26 at a special Thanksgiving brunch that featured eggs, waffles, turkey and mac and cheese.



Eileen Soler

Preschool student Cassidi Motlow fills her belly with cornbread and fruit during a Thanksgiving brunch at Ahfachkee School.

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Survival of the fittest: Brighton community competes in annual obstacle course event

BY RACHEL BUXTON
Freelance Writer

BRIGHTON — Students, parents, siblings, teachers and community friends teamed up Nov. 21 for a day of friendly competition during Pemayetv Emahaky Charter School's annual Survivor Day held at the Brighton Gym.

Survivor Day, now in its eighth year, originally celebrated students "surviving" mandated state testing. Now, it allows students, teachers and family to come together for a day of fun.

Teams competed in 10 events: launch and catch, wheelbarrow race, partner situps, football throw, tire jump, broad jump, mighty miles lap, cardio Frisbee, backward bowling and bones puzzle.

"We change [events] every year," said PECS P.E. teacher Pam Matthews. "We just sit down as a group of P.E. teachers and talk and throw out ideas and then we build on each other's ideas."

Teams worked to achieve the highest score or fastest time in the various contests for a chance to compete in the finals and become the ultimate survivors.

"There is competition but it is mostly

for fun," said principal Brian Greseth. "There are some that are very competitive and they want to win, but most of them like the competitive edge but if they don't win, it's no big deal. It's a good time and that's the main thing."

P.E. teachers encourage teams to create team T-shirts. Some teams sported basic shirts adorned with their team name, while some went all out with capes, sparkles and even tutus.

"I'm always impressed when I say make a team T-shirt," Matthews said. "It just amazes me what some of these teams, parents or even the kids come up with. I love it. They are really cute."

After all teams completed the 10-event agenda, the top scorers from each contest competed in an obstacle course to determine the No. 1 survivor team. In the end, Team Luke — comprised of Richard Harris and Lucas Osceola — came out victorious by completing the course in 51 seconds.

"All schools always try to have good bonding experiences between the community and the school," Greseth said. "We want parents to see our staff and see our students as they really are: great kids, hard-working kids who can have fun together."



Rachel Buxton

Bryce Baker tries to take down P.E. teacher Chris Goodwin in the tire jump.



Rachel Buxton

Greyson Johns demonstrates perfect form while throwing the football to his partner.



Rachel Buxton

Chayton Billie flies over the hurdles in the obstacle course Nov. 21 during Survivor Day.



Rachel Buxton

Diane Smith and Naleah Billie race to the finish in the wheelbarrow event.



Rachel Buxton

Sister and brother Krysta and Caleb Burton work to name the bones in the body during the bones puzzle event.

Little Mr. & Miss. Seminole 2015




**6:00 PM Friday Night
February 6th, 2015
at the Seminole Hard Rock Live**







Applications may be picked up at Tribal Offices

Little Mr. & Miss Seminole Contest 2015

**at the 44th Annual
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2015 SEMINOLE TRIBAL FAIR
Little Mr. & Miss. Seminole Contest
Hard Rock LIVE

Friday, February 6, 2015
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Little Miss. Seminole _____ Little Mr. Seminole _____ (check one)

Date: _____ Reservation: _____

Child's Name: _____ Age: _____

Enrollment #: _____ Date of Birth _____

Print Name of Parent or Legal Guardian (circle one)

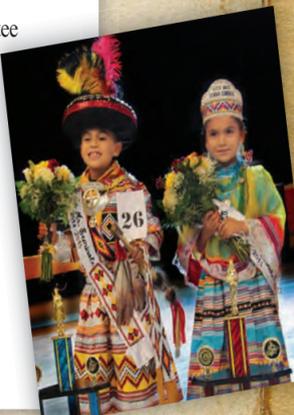
Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Cell #: _____

Contestants must be an enrolled tribal member, between the ages of 5 – 7 years old by February 5, 2015 and reside in the state of Florida. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Registration deadline is Monday, February 2, 2015 at 5:00pm. All contestants must be preregistered. There will be no applications taken on the day of contest.

Confirm that your applications have been received by fax, email, Committee member, or walk-in to the Secretary's office. Call Wanda Bowers at (954) 444-9827, fax (954) 967-3488, or email wbowers@semtribe.com.

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Tampa – (813) 246-3100 Vicky Aspey ext. 19312 or Sunny Ploch ext. 19300



Police Explorers take aim

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The Hollywood Police Explorers learned the importance of gun safety Dec. 2 and then received firsthand experience using training guns through an interactive session Dec. 16.

Before the Explorers stepped up to use the MILO Range interactive video training system, they reviewed important gun safety rules. Seminole Police Department Officer Kyle Boyd asked the group what they should do if they find a gun.

"Stop, don't touch, leave the area and find an adult," the students answered together.

SPD Officer John Barber reviewed other key safety measures: Always treat guns as if they are loaded, never put a finger on the trigger, point guns toward the ground instead of at a person and never play with guns.

"Who here plays a sport?" SPD Officer David Lee asked. "In football, you keep practicing the same plays over and over so you don't even have to think about it, you just know what to do. In law enforcement, we practice all the time. We want our officers to have the same level of awareness and be prepared; it should be instinctive."

MILO provides interactive simulation training for all branches of law enforcement, military, security and public safety agencies throughout the world, according to the company's website. SPD trains officers with the system, and Hard Rock uses the technology to train security guards.

"It allows us to train safely," Barber said. "Officers practice marksmanship, drawing from their holster and shooting only the right targets. On the street, we have to make sure we only shoot the bad guys."

During one scenario on the screen, students helped Officer Lee identify in an instant whether someone was a good guy or a bad guy when they randomly appeared behind doors or windows. The



Beverly Bidney

SPD Officer David Lee watches the targets on the screen as Police Explorers Bailey Latchford, 10, and Kylie Drake, 10, face off Dec. 16 during MILO training.



Beverly Bidney

Anthony Doctor, 11, aims for the target and shoots during the Hollywood Police Explorers MILO training.



Beverly Bidney

Kylie Drake learns how to hold the gun from SPD Sgt. Karl Furman during the Hollywood Police Explorers meeting and MILO training.



Eileen Soler

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students Jahbahn Arnold and Jaylen Baker pour a bucket full of excavated soil for sifting during the archaeological dig.

ARCHAEOLOGY

From page 1B

Willie Johns, a former THPO outreach coordinator who observed the dig, told the students that he knows the area "like the back of my hand" because he played there as a kid, worked cattle there as a young man and later, as a culture leader, helped survey areas nearby.

Several excavations turned up Army

military buttons and artillery indicating that the U.S. Army was there during the Seminole Wars, Johns said. Other sites were determined to be culturally sensitive and were left untouched in reverence to Native ancestors.

"History is a continuous story. It unfolds in different layers," Johns said. He asked the students if they would take the archaeology dig a step further in the future. "Maybe you can write our history."



Eileen Soler

Tribal Historic Preservation Office field technician Jeff Sepanski teaches students how to measure and grid an archaeological excavation site for layers of dirt that could indicate periods of time and other tell-tale factors.

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You may also come by the Secretary's Office to complete your Voter Registration form.

IN ORDER FOR TRIBAL MEMBERS TO SHOW RESIDENCY, AT LEAST A COPY OF ONE OF THE FOLLOWING MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH YOUR REGISTRATION FORM: valid State Drivers' License, valid State ID card, valid Voter Registration card, or for those who cannot produce any of the aforementioned items, a Tribal ID along with a statement from an Election Board member from the same reservation verifying residence. Please ensure all information is current and valid as they will be used in determining the Tribal Member's voting location/residence.

Supervisor of Elections Office • Seminole Tribe of Florida

What: All eligible members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida must register to vote by January 31, 2015 for the General Tribal Election on May 11, 2015

Why: As accorded by Tribal Ordinance C-06-13

How: Complete the Voter Registration form received in the mail

PECS November students of the month



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas

Elementary students of the month: Chase Micco, Charisma Micco, Jace Johns, Kimberlynn Toms, Alyssa Madrigal, Steel Gopher, Tiyanni Anderson, Logan Butler, Kayden Warrior, Kateri Smith, Tiera Garner, Nena Youngblood, Dakota Fish, Melina Steve, Jaime Smith, Elle Thomas, Landon Goodwin, Joss Youngblood and Caitlyn Olivarez.



Photo courtesy of Michele Thomas

Middle school students of the month: Isaiah Bishop, Dante Thomas and Krysta Burton.

'Rising star' Apple Nunez addresses IRSC professionals

BY RACHEL BUXTON
Freelance Writer

OKEECHOBEE — Apple Nunez continued to shine as an academic star Dec. 12 when the 15-year-old from Okeechobee was a guest speaker at Indian River State College's (IRSC) bimonthly meeting for student services.

The meeting, which rotates through IRSC campuses, was held at the Dixon Hendry campus, giving the city of Okeechobee a chance to put a few of their own in the spotlight, including the Seminole Tribe's Apple.

IRSC provost Russ Brown said Apple is a "rising star" in the community because she easily navigates through college classes.

"She is very strong willed, goal oriented, well organized to manage her time to be successful in classes, as well as manage the schedule that she has," Brown said.

Apple spoke before 120 academic professionals. She touched on earning an associate degree through dual enrollment while earning her high school diploma, which she will receive next May, all by the age of 16.

In complete control, Apple thanked the school for helping her pursue her academic goal, and she reflected on how the past year has changed her outlook on life.

"I just went through a flashback of when I started, the reason that I started and how much of a change it has been this past year — what a difference my education has been," Apple said. "A year ago I could have been just another high school student and today I'm giving a speech at IRSC as one of their star students."

Apple admitted that she was surprised when Brown first approached her.

"He pulled me into his office and I thought about all the bad things I could have done and then he ended up asking me to speak at this event," she said. "I was blown away at the opportunity that he was giving me to speak in front of so many people and the trust he was putting into me to come and speak at his meeting, on his behalf and on his recommendation. It meant more to me than actually giving the speech."

Apple captured the attention of many professionals in the audience because she has helped shine light on IRSC's dual enrollment program and has shown that if

someone wants something bad enough and works hard enough, he or she can achieve it.

"I am so impressed, so amazed at her accomplishments, to think that she has accomplished so much at such a young age and seems to have overcome every barrier and obstacle that has been put in her way," said Mary Locke, IRSC vice president of Instructional Services. "To be able to get up in front of a room of over 100 adults and to be able to speak so eloquently and naturally about her achievements in such a warm, poise and confident manner, I know I could not have done that when I was her age."

Brown is no stranger to the Seminole Tribe or their educational efforts. He is the former principal of Pemaquid Emahavk Charter School.

Brown said Apple is a role model, especially to children at the charter school.

"I'm hoping more Seminole Tribe families and children pursue it, that they see what Apple has been able to do and the doors that it has opened for her and will open for her career wise," Brown said. "I think she has now paved a path that others can follow."



Rachel Buxton

Apple Nunez speaks at the Indian River State College's student services bimonthly meeting Dec. 12 in Okeechobee.



Rachel Buxton

Indian River State College dual enrollment student Apple Nunez is joined by IRSC provost Russ Brown.

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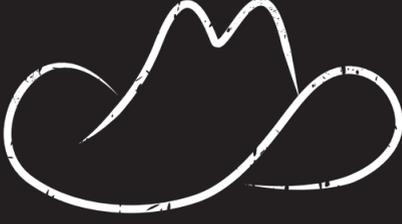


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Sports



Jumper brothers help American Heritage capture second straight state championship

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

ORLANDO — Andre Jumper wanted to soak in every last drop of the state championship atmosphere.

After four years as a standout on defense for American Heritage School in Plantation, Andre made a triumphant departure in his final game Dec. 12 as the Patriots earned their second consecutive state championship with a 38-0 win against Tallahassee's Godby in the Class 5A title game.

In the game's waning minutes at the Orlando Citrus Bowl stadium, Andre and fellow lineman George Ellis III started to make preparations to douse head coach Mike Rumph with a water cooler. At the two-minute mark, they snuck through players on the sideline and emptied the orange tub over Rumph, giving the team another reason to celebrate.

"That's how we show our respect to him," Andre said. "He's a good coach. All of our coaches are good coaches. I'm so thankful that we have good coaches leading me down the right road. Not only did they make me better as a player, but they made me better as a man."

As a sea of black and gold uniforms celebrated at the end of the game, Andre managed to do a mini-Lambeau Leap into the arms of Heritage fans in the stands. Amid the hoopla, Andre didn't lose sight that his first and only season as a varsity teammate with his younger brother Blevyns had come to an end.

"I liked it a lot. I'm glad he made the decision to come and play and get the experience," Andre said.

"It means a lot to me because it's my brother's last year. I love winning the state championship with my brother," added Blevyns, a junior who finished his first season on varsity with a flawless day as the long snapper — a role he handled all year — on five extra points and one field goal in the championship game.



As quarterback Torrance Gibson hoists the Class 5A state championship plaque, Andre Jumper, below Gibson, celebrates with his American Heritage teammates following their 38-0 win against Godby in the state championship game Dec. 12 at the Orlando Citrus Bowl.

Kevin Johnson

The victory for the brothers from Big Cypress came in front of several family members, including their parents, Josh and Andrea Jumper; sisters, Ahnie and Canaan; grandfathers, Moses Jumper Jr. and Jonah Cypress; and grandmothers, Laquita Jumper and Carol Cypress.

"Half of our family is here, so that

means a lot, too," Andre said.

Andre started the game in his usual spot on the far left side of Heritage's line. The 6-foot-1, 240-pound senior defensive end made the first of his three tackles on the game's second play. In the fourth quarter, Andre and Tyler Gordon combined for the team's only sack as they handed Godby

quarterback Darius Bradwell a 12-yard loss.

The intriguing matchup between 5A's champions the past two years didn't feature much drama.

Heritage's 14-0 lead at halftime doubled to 28-0 after three quarters.

♦ See STATE CHAMPS on page 6C

Seasons end for Seminole football players

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

High school football seasons concluded just shy of state championship games for four Seminoles.

Sophomore running back Jesse Sanchez and his younger brother Sammy Micco Sanchez reached Oklahoma's Class 4A state semifinals with Fort Gibson, which went 11-0 in the regular season and won the 4A-District 4 title.

Fort Gibson won playoff games against Catoosa and Newcastle before being knocked out in the semifinals with a 17-14 loss against Oologah Nov. 28 at Sapulpa High School. Fort Gibson led 14-10 after three quarters. Oologah went ahead early in the fourth and held on for the victory.

Jesse finished the season second on the team in rushing touchdowns with five, as well as yards with 242 on 39 carries. He scored two touchdowns against Broken Bow and one each against Central, Muldrow and Newcastle.

"Jessie had a great season as our back-up tailback," Fort Gibson coach James Singleton said in an email to The Seminole Tribune. "He is very elusive for his size and has an incredible burst through the line. He will get a much greater load next season."

Sammy, a 5-foot-10, 185-pound freshman, also saw brief action in the backfield, but spent most of the season on defense and even started a few games at outside linebacker.

"Sammy came on and played for us a lot toward the end of the season. For his size, he is a very powerful runner and tackler," Singleton said.

Singleton said expectations for the brothers will increase next season.

♦ See CONCLUSION on page 6C



Eileen Soler

Javian Cypress is deep in concentration as he releases an arrow during an archery class Dec. 5 hosted by the Big Cypress Recreation Department.

Archery lessons on target at Junior Cypress arena

BY EILEEN SOLER
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Jacob "Jake" Osceola grew up using a bow and arrow to hunt boar, deer and other creatures for meat.

"But archery is different when it's a sanctioned sport. For Olympian competition, it is refined system," said Osceola, site manager for the Recreation Department at Big Cypress.

Archery, a projectile weapon style of hunting and warfare that predates history, is open for Tribal and non-Tribal people to learn from 5 to 6:30 p.m. on Fridays at the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena.

With Osceola at the helm, about 30 children and adults turned out Dec. 5 for the second lesson of the ongoing series. Safety is always first — the crowd also included two firefighter/paramedics from the Seminole Fire Rescue Department.

Rows of chairs made a 6-foot border, called the waiting line, from a trio of tables lined with bows and arrows of various sizes and weights. In front of the tables, bales of hay marked the shooting line. The bales were also used to collect the arrows, tips first, once pulled from the targets.

All the steps of archery were covered, some one-on-one, according to age level, physical ability and understanding of the sport. Osceola reviewed stance, finger and hand placement (called nock), and

demonstrated how to hook and place the bow hand, extend the arm, draw the string, aim and let go of the arrow.

Diamond Osceola was in the midst of her third lesson. At the end of the 90-minute class, with clown face targets used to replace the usual bull's-eye diagrams, Diamond showed three "kill" shots out of five arrow attempts.

"I'm learning just in case I want to compete," Diamond said.

Jake Osceola, who attended a series of workshops to learn World Archery rules, repeatedly used a whistle to blare certain calls.

Two whistle blasts call archers from the waiting line to the shooting line. With one blast, archers may place an arrow on the bowstring and begin shooting. Three blasts signals that archers can walk forward to the targets and retrieve arrows. If four or more whistle blasts are sounded, all archers must stop shooting immediately.

Typically, girls are not permitted to shoot bows and arrows, said Joe Frank, who attended the lesson with his daughter Valholly Frank, 12. For athletic competition, however, and for girls who do not have a clan, giving permission for Tribal daughters to shoot is a family decision.

For Valholly, who owns several archery sets, permission to shoot led to the

♦ See ARCHERY on page 6C

Pierce proves perfect fit for Fort Lauderdale High

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

FORT LAUDERDALE — Fort Lauderdale High School boys basketball coach Rich Belton has been urging his standout guard Trewston Pierce to become "selfish."

"He's looking to make the extra pass, which isn't a bad thing, but in close games we need him to get us over that hump," said Belton, who is in his first season at the helm of the Flying L's.

With Fort Lauderdale locked up with Stoneman Douglas in a tight battle Dec. 8, Pierce heeded his coach's suggestion in an eye-opening manner as he scored nine of his team's final 11 points in a 49-43 win.

After making a steal at one end, Pierce drove the length of the court for a layup that put Fort Lauderdale up 40-37 with five minutes left in the game. A short jumper from Pierce made it 42-37.

With one minute left and Fort Lauderdale ahead by one point, Pierce again went coast-to-coast. This time the result was a 3-point play. Next, he forced a turnover that led to a trip to the foul line, where he made the first shot, missed the second but grabbed his own rebound to help run off more time.

Pierce made another foul shot in the waning seconds. His impressive stretch in the final five minutes came on a night when he scored 20 points and energized the home crowd with three dunks.

All in all, not a shabby outing for a player in just his eighth game with a new team.

"He's doing a phenomenal job of fitting in," Belton said. "A couple games ago, he would have made the extra pass. He has a clear understanding of being aggressive and not being a ball hog."

Pierce, a senior, transferred to Fort Lauderdale this year after spending last season at American Heritage in Plantation.

"It's going smooth," the 6-foot-3, 190-pound Pierce said about his new environment. Four days after the Stoneman Douglas game, Pierce drained a season-high 38 points in an 83-74 win against Monarch, an effort that didn't even earn him high scorer in the Pierce family. His sister Shae Pierce, a sophomore on the Hollywood Christian girls team, scored 42 points in a game earlier in December.

Trewston's value for Fort Lauderdale comes with more than just points.

"In high school, he can guard 1 through 5; he can play 1 through 5," Belton said.

Pierce has been used mostly as a point guard or shooting guard, but he's also tackled another role. As one of only two seniors on a young team, Pierce has had to step up in the leadership department.

"Leadership is a big part. They're all young guys. Stay positive and keep pushing them," Pierce said. "It's a lot on my shoulders. I've never been put in that situation, but I work hard every day. I'm fit for it."

Belton said Pierce would also be a good fit at the Division I college level.

"Absolutely," Belton said, noting Pierce's "size, athleticism and explosiveness."

Pierce said he has received some offers from Division I colleges.

Even though this season is Pierce's first and last at Fort Lauderdale, he's already made a lasting impression.

"It's been a pleasure and a blessing to coach a kid of his skill set," Belton said. "He's done nothing but be receptive to the coaching and the criticism that comes with it."



Kevin Johnson

Trewston Pierce soars through the air Dec. 8 for a layup attempt against Stoneman Douglas.



Kevin Johnson

Fort Lauderdale's Trewston Pierce leads a fast break Dec. 8 against Stoneman Douglas at Fort Lauderdale High School. Pierce scored 20 points in the Flying L's 49-43 win.

SURPASSING EXPECTATIONS

DeForest Carter assists Embry-Riddle's fast start in more ways than one

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor



Embry-Riddle senior point guard DeForest Carter goes airborne for a layup attempt in the first half against Nova Southeastern on Nov. 25 in Davie.

Kevin Johnson



Embry-Riddle senior point guard DeForest Carter looks for an open teammate during his team's 79-63 win against Nova Southeastern.

Kevin Johnson



DeForest Carter scores two of his 20 points in Embry-Riddle's win against Nova Southeastern in Davie.

Kevin Johnson

Daytona Beach in 2011 known more as a shooting guard and small forward.

"He could score and he could guard people and he was good enough for us to aggressively recruit him," Ridder said.

What Ridder didn't know then was that he landed someone who would eventually change roles and morph into a dynamic point guard with a seemingly natural knack for threading pinpoint passes and setting up teammates for scoring chances.

"We had no idea at the time how good of a passer he was; I think if people would have known that in high school, he wouldn't be at Embry-Riddle," Ridder said.

Ridder, whose team will shift from the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) to Division II in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) after this season, believes Carter would have been a standout at college basketball's highest level.

"We're blessed to have him. He's that good. He is not just a Division I player; he's a high Division I player," Ridder said.

Proof that Carter could handle major college basketball came Nov. 3 when he produced game-high totals in assists and steals and a team-high 16 points in a preseason loss at Florida State.

"When we played Florida State several weeks ago, to be honest, I thought he was the best player on the floor," Ridder said.

Carter's roots as a point guard can be traced back to his youth basketball days in Big Cypress when he played with his older brothers Greg and Josie and friends.

"When I played on the rez, I was always the tallest guy and I saw over everybody, so I played point," Carter said. "Growing up playing with my brothers, they were the scorers and the shooters. I'd be the one passing and passing. I'd have 15 assists at the end of the game, but I'd have two points. Everyone would say, 'Nice job, Greg,' or 'Nice job, Josie.'"

Carter, who is also close to breaking the school record for all-time steals, didn't seek praise as a kid nor does he seek it now, but kudos seems to follow him even on those rare occasions when his passes are not on target.

"They'll say, 'Great pass, DeForest.' I'm like, 'No, that was a great catch by my teammates,'" Carter said.

As co-captain and one of six seniors on the roster, Carter is part of an experienced group that hopes to make the program's final season in NAIA a memorable trip. A 10-0 record and top 10 national ranking is a good start.

"The most important thing for (Carter) right now is his leadership ability. He's bringing others with him, and that's another reason we're having a lot of success," Ridder said.

"His demeanor is unbelievable on the court. His leadership is awesome," Pastrana added.

Those traits make Ridder believe Carter could have a bright future as a coach after his playing days end.

"When you've been doing this stuff for this long, you love to win and you love championships, but what you do is you care about people and that's why he would be a great coach," said Ridder, who is in his 26th season at the helm of Embry-Riddle. "He's just a natural. He's got the personality, he cares and that's why I hope he stays in coaching and helps young kids because that's what he would do really well at."

Carter began his night against Nova by draining 3-pointers on his first two shots. The dunk at the end of the game carried more significance for him than simply stuffing the ball through the twine. He said it allowed him to show how far he's bounced back from an off-season injury.

"I have some athleticism," Carter said. "It was nice that I could show it to my family and my friends there because I know they haven't seen me get up like that before. It felt great to finish and have my teammates jump up. It made me feel like I was (Michael Jordan) out there."

DAVIE — With less than a minute left in Embry-Riddle's seventh consecutive win to start the season, DeForest Carter eyed the basket with the ball in his hands. After determining he had enough open real estate along the baseline, Carter drove to the hoop and slammed home the last of his 20 points on a night when dozens of his friends and family members watched at Nova Southeastern's Don Taft University Center.

Dunking represents only a sliver of the vast repertoire that the 6-foot-11, 218-pound senior point guard from the Big Cypress Reservation brings every time he laces up his sneakers.

"I think it's exciting for him to do that," Embry-Riddle head coach Steve Ridder said, "but I'll tell you he'd rather give somebody a great pass."

Making smart, clean, crisp passes — which Carter did on his way to handing out a game-high seven assists in Embry-Riddle's 79-63 win Nov. 25 against Nova — is something his teammates have benefited from for four years.

"He makes everything easy for me. You just have to catch and finish, basically," said Cesar Pastrana, a 6-foot-8 senior center from Columbia, whose game-high 23 points included some via Carter's passes.

As of Dec. 29, the all-around versatile Carter led undefeated Embry-Riddle in several categories, including assists, blocks and steals while averaging 10.8 points per game. Toss in valuable components not found on stat sheets — namely his senior leadership accompanied by an upbeat attitude — and it's no surprise that his coach mentioned the name of an NBA Hall of Famer in the same breath as Carter.

"I think his ability to give other people shots is truly a Magic Johnson," Ridder said, noting that Carter mirrors the three-time MVP's personality and court awareness. "Magic always had a great feel for where his teammates were."

Carter's deft passing ability — which occasionally includes no-looks — comes from all points of the court, whether it's starting fast breaks or finding someone down low from the top of the arc or dishing off at the last second while driving the lane.

Last season, Carter set an Embry-Riddle record for most assists in a season

"We're blessed to have him. He's that good. He is not just a Division I player; he's a high Division I player."

— Steve Ridder, Embry-Riddle head coach

with 246, an accomplishment that helped earn him First Team All-Sun Conference and honorable mention All-American accolades for the second straight year.

This season, he neared Christmas on the cusp of becoming the program's all-time

leader in career assists, an accomplishment Carter said he will gladly share with his teammates.

"It would be a great record to have because it's not just me; it's my teammates as well. It takes two people to get an assist,"

Carter said. "I'll say the whole team got that record."

Carter's ascension into being a top-notch assist man in college has been a somewhat unexpected journey. The Montverde Academy graduate arrived in

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Ahfachkee cheerleaders roar for the Warriors

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Along with their pompoms, Ahfachkee School's new cheerleading squad brings megaphones of school spirit to home basketball games. The squad — comprised of eight first-, second- and third-grade students — practices twice a week to master cheers and choreography.

Dribble it, pass it, we want a basket!
Instructional aide Pamela Caston, who leads the young team, hopes to someday take the girls to watch high school cheerleaders in action or to observe a cheerleading competition so they can witness seasoned cheerleaders in action.

Red, black and white; fight Warriors fight!

The cheer team grew out of a previously, loosely organized group of Warrior fans called the Scream Team.

Home games for the girls and boys basketball season are played at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium in Big Cypress. The schedule for the boys and girls season is Jan. 6 versus Clewiston Middle School at 5 p.m.; Jan. 9 versus Seacrest Country Day at 4 p.m.; Jan. 12 versus Donahue Academy at 4:30 p.m.; Jan. 15 versus Marco Island Academy at 5:30 p.m.; and Jan. 17 versus Florida Atlantic High School at 4 p.m., which will be the homecoming game.

Let's go Warriors, let's go!



The Ahfachkee School cheerleading squad: front row, from left, Abbiegale Green, Sarah Robbins, Kaydence Green. Back row, from left, Felicia Quintana, Layla Billie, Markayla Cypress and Lucee Cypress. Teena Covarrubias is not pictured.

Beverly Bidney

Red, black and white; fight Warriors, fight!



Layla Billie



Beverly Bidney

Age: 7
Grade: First
Favorite subject: Centers
What makes Ahfachkee a great school: We get to eat lunch and play on the playground.

Teena Covarrubias



Beverly Bidney

Age: 7
Grade: Second
Favorite subject: Math
What makes Ahfachkee a great school: Learning the language.

Lucee Cypress



Beverly Bidney

Age: 7
Grade: Second
Favorite subject: Science
What makes Ahfachkee a great school: The school lets me learn.

Markayla Cypress



Beverly Bidney

Age: 9
Grade: Third
Favorite subject: Math
What makes Ahfachkee a great school: We have a big playground.

Abbiegale Green



Beverly Bidney

Age: 7
Grade: Second
Favorite subject: Recess
What makes Ahfachkee a great school: It's named after me; my Indian name is Ahfachkee, which means 'happy girl.'

Kaydence Green



Beverly Bidney

Age: 6
Grade: First
Favorite subject: Computers
What makes Ahfachkee a great school: Learning how to do stuff, like math.

Felicia Quintana



Beverly Bidney

Age: 8
Grade: Second
Favorite subject: Cheering
What makes Ahfachkee a great school: The teachers.

Sarah Robbins



Beverly Bidney

Age: 8
Grade: Third
Favorite subject: Drawing
What makes Ahfachkee a great school: Everybody is always happy.



Beverly Bidney

Ahfachkee cheerleaders recite a cheer Dec. 9 during practice. The squad — comprised of eight students in the first, second and third grades — practices twice a week to perfect cheers and choreography.

Rebuilding in progress for Ahfachkee basketball teams

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

BIG CYPRESS — The Ahfachkee School girls and boys basketball teams share more in common than just playing on the same court at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium. This season both squads are in rebuilding mode.

As of the Christmas break, wins had eluded the Warriors' teams — including a pair of losses at home to Everglades City Dec. 16 — but coaches said encouraging signs abound.

"I like their ability to hustle and their desire to want to play," said girls coach Shaquille Hall. "They want to be out there playing. Even though they may not be the best, they play together as a team and that's what team sports are about."

"They work hard," coach Brandon Jones said about his boys team. "We don't have a lot of height, but everybody comes to practice when they are not sick. We play hard. We've got a lot of eighth-graders. They don't quit."

Case in point came in the third quarter of the boys' 67-23 loss against Everglades City. Despite the lopsided score, Ahfachkee guard Issiah Alvarado showed plenty of determination. After Alvarado missed a 3-point shot and the ensuing rebound, he sprinted back on defense just in time to knock away a layup attempt.

Other highlights for Ahfachkee included three 3-pointers and nine points from Jonah Alvarado and one 3-pointer and five points from Issiah Alvarado. Graysun Billie banked in one 3-pointer. Ethan Balentine scored five points.

Ahfachkee spent most of the night firing away from beyond the arc. With a squad that doesn't have anyone taller than 5-foot-7, getting the ball inside poses a challenge.

"We've got shooters," Jones said, "but we've got nobody in the paint that can get down low and bang on the boards."

Lack of height is only one obstacle the boys team faces this season; they're also thin on numbers and experience. Jones said the team only had five players for a couple games. He offered an option to forfeit some games, but the players nixed that idea.

"They want to play," he said. Ahfachkee hasn't been at full strength too often. Against Everglades City, the Warriors were missing a lot of quickness with junior Devon Bowers and seventh-grader Ricky Garza out of the lineup. Jones said both players could be back on the court in the second half of the season. Ahfachkee will start the New Year with a home game against Clewiston Middle Jan. 6.

Although five players are returners from last year's squad, it's still a young club filled mostly with middle school students.

"I think for the next two years, we'll be rebuilding," Jones said. "Once these guys actually get to high school and start getting more confident, I think we'll be one of those teams to compete with."

Last year, Jones guided the Ahfachkee girls to its best season ever as the Lady

Warriors finished runner-up in their district and qualified for the regional playoffs for the first time. When Jones shifted over to the boys head coaching job this season, Hall took the reins of the girls team.

Hall and Jones know each other from their football connections in Naples. Hall is a 2010 graduate of Palmetto Ridge High School, which is where Jones serves as the running backs coach. Jones coached Hall's brother, Ron Johnson, who led the University of Connecticut in rushing this season as a freshman.

Hall, who attended Bowling Green State University in Ohio on a football scholarship, said being at the helm of an inexperienced team is a good way to begin his head coaching career.

"It's good to start with a rebuilding process because I get to grow as a coach, as well as the players get to grow. Some of these girls, it's their first year playing," Hall said.



Kevin Johnson

Ahfachkee's Mikiyela Cypress closely guards Everglades City's Ashlyn Goff during a high school girls varsity game Dec. 16 at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium.



Kevin Johnson

Ahfachkee's Ethan Balentine (10) attempts to block a shot by Everglades City during a boys high school varsity game at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium. Ahfachkee's Elisah Billie (22) and Jonah Alvarado are also close to the play.



Kevin Johnson

Ahfachkee's Reggie Ling controls the ball against Everglades City Dec. 16 in Big Cypress.

2014-15 Ahfachkee Boys Basketball

- 00 Issiah Alvarado
- 5 Franklin Jumper
- 10 Ethan Balentine
- 14 Reggie Ling
- 20 Graysun Billie
- 22 Elisah Billie
- 23 Jonah Alvarado
- Ricky Garza
- Devon Bowers

2014-15 Ahfachkee Girls Basketball

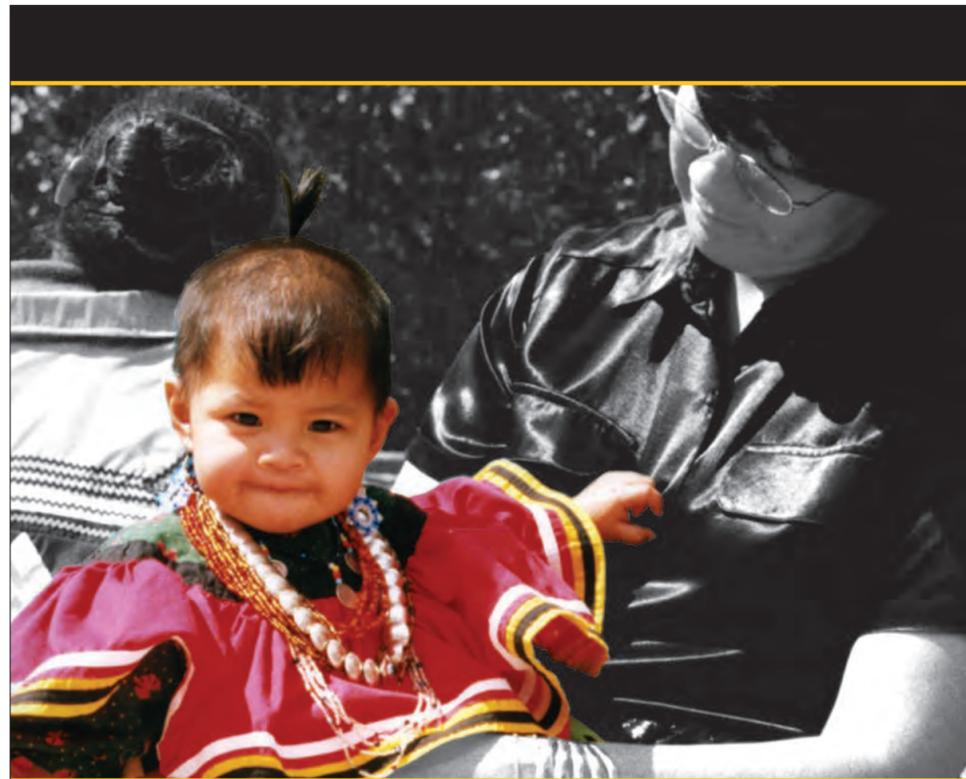
- 1 Mazzy Robbins
- 2 Mikiyela Cypress
- 10 Liberty Robbins
- 15 Carlee Billie
- 21 Eyanna Billie
- 22 Thoya Robbins
- 23 Janessa Jones

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Pemayetv Emahakv kicks off basketball seasons

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

BRIGHTON — A convincing win by the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School boys basketball team helped dissipate early season concerns.

PECS used a 15-0 run to start the game to secure its first victory of the season, 45-17, against visiting Moore Haven Dec. 10.

"It feels good to get the first win," said PECS boys coach Kevin Jackson, whose team upped its record to 1-2. "We did a good job with running our offense and sharing the ball. I was real pleased with our effort defensively."

Moore Haven struggled to contain a trio of quick guards: Lucas Osceola, Dalence Carrillo and Donovan Harris. The Seminoles' offense clicked regardless who handled point guard duties.

Osceola, an eighth-grader, set the tone early with 10 points in the first quarter on his way to a game-high 17-point night that matched Moore Haven's entire output.

Carrillo, a sixth-grader, scored 11 points and Harris contributed six points.

Ball handling is a strength for PECS thanks to the multiple options to run the offense.

"I've never really had that luxury before. It makes things a lot easier," said Jackson, whose team also received eight points from Billy Bailey and two blocks by Dante Thomas on consecutive defensive stops in the second quarter.

PECS ruled the paint in both zones behind Andrew Fish and Robert Harris. The two tallest players on the court started together for the first time this season and made their presence felt by combining for a dozen rebounds. Jackson said Fish, an eighth-grader, is about 6-foot-1 and Harris, a seventh-grader, is about 6-2.

"They're really athletic for being big guys. They looked good tonight. I'm proud of them," Jackson said.

The victory came following a pair of close losses. PECS opened the season with a 49-45 setback against Yearling Middle Dec. 4. Osceola scored 31 points and had six steals. Other scoring came from Aleke Baker with four points and Donovan Harris with three points. Robert Harris, Silas Madrigal and Ramone Baker each had two points.

"I felt like we had too many breakdowns on the defensive end giving up uncontested buckets. We were a little careless with the ball and stagnant at times on the offensive end," Jackson said.

Five days later, Clewiston edged PECS, 36-32. Aleke Baker led PECS with eight

points and six rebounds. Fish and Osceola also scored eight points. Osceola also had five steals.

PECS didn't dwell on the 0-2 start. It dominated Moore Haven from start to finish.

"Compared to our first game, I feel like we've come a long way on the defensive end. We looked a lot better (against Moore Haven), a lot less busted assignments," Jackson said. "In the second half of the season, hopefully we'll be an even stronger team than we were (against Moore Haven)."

Depth rises for PECS girls

The depth of the PECS girls basketball team faced a stern test in just its third game. Already playing without one captain at the start of the game, the Lady Seminoles lost another captain before halftime Dec. 10 against Moore Haven. With Raeley Matthews and Cady Osceola unavailable, PECS coach Tim Thomas turned to his third captain — Aleina Micco — before the start of the third quarter.

"I told her she had to step up," Thomas said.

Micco did more than just step up. She dominated the third quarter by scoring 11 of PECS' 13 points to snap an 8-8 halftime tie. Micco finished with a game-high 14 points as PECS upped its record to 2-1 with a 27-21 win.

"Without Raeley and without Cady, we needed her to step up big time. She did a good job," Thomas said.

Luzana Venzor contributed five points.



Kevin Johnson
Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's Julia Smith, center, and Luzana Venzor, right, guard Moore Haven's Chynna Villarreal Dec. 10 at the Brighton Gym.

2014-15 PECS Boys Basketball

- 1 Ramone Baker
- 2 Aleke Baker
- 3 Jaylen Baker
- 4 Lucas Osceola
- 10 Donovan Harris
- 12 Dalence Carrillo
- 14 Billy Bailey
- 20 Silas Madrigal
- 21 Dante Thomas
- 24 Andrew Fish
- 55 Robert Harris

2014-15 PECS Girls Basketball

- 1 Luzana Venzor
- 2 Caylie Huff
- 4 Cady Osceola
- 5 Haylie Huff
- 15 Alaina Sweat
- 21 Aleina Micco
- 22 Raeley Matthews
- 23 Julia Smith
- 24 Viviana Gore



Kevin Johnson
Lucas Osceola leads a fast break for the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School boys basketball team against Moore Haven Dec. 10 at the Brighton Gym. Silas Madrigal (20) and Andrew Fish, left, also join the break. PECS won, 45-17.

Haylie Huff and Julia Smith had four points each for PECS, which suffered a setback late in the second quarter when an ankle injury knocked Osceola out of the game.

Osceola, a starting point guard, was injured while going for a loose ball near the stands. The game came to a sudden halt. Osceola had to be carried off the court by Thomas and a referee. After the game resumed, Osceola was placed on a stretcher and brought out to an ambulance by Seminole Fire Rescue but not before she received hugs from her teammates.

The Lady Seminoles' 21-13 lead after three quarters quickly grew when Venzor hit a 3-pointer to start the fourth quarter. She also made a steal and a layup that gave PECS a 26-15 lead.

A layup by Moore Haven's Chynna Villarreal cut PECS' lead to 26-19, but the home team pulled away in the final minutes.

"We have a scrappy team. We scrap to the end," Thomas said.

PECS opened its season Dec. 4 in impressive fashion with a 37-5 win against Yearling Middle. Micco led the way with 14 points followed by Osceola with 10. Matthews and Alaina Sweat each had four points.

The Lady Seminoles suffered their first loss shortly after some players returned from a field trip to Washington, D.C.

"My girls were just getting back from



Kevin Johnson
Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's Aleina Micco battles Moore Haven's Chynna Villarreal, center, for a rebound Dec. 10 at the Brighton Gym.

D.C. and all of them were rusty," Thomas said about the loss to Clewiston Middle.

Matthews led PECS with nine points. Micco had seven points.

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Youth swim team forms in Hollywood

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

in regular swim classes.”

HOLLYWOOD — The Hollywood Reservation pool could be a new hot spot for turning little would-be swimmers into Olympic winners.

The Recreation Department’s recently created swim team, for children ages 4 to 13, gathers Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. for learning the fundamentals of competitive swimming. The budding swimmers are taught proper strokes and get plenty of chances to race.

“They like the idea of competition,” said Hector Casallas, lifeguard and swimming teacher. “They are more engaged and pay a lot more attention than

About a dozen kids are on the team. The department aims to establish teams on each reservation for inter-Tribal meets. Casallas said he hopes to certify swim instructors as American Red Cross water safety instructors by the end of the year in Brighton and Fort Pierce. Competitions should begin next summer.

Ultimately, Casallas would like Seminole teams to compete against other local recreation swim programs and at Native American competitive games nationwide.

The pool is heated between 85 to 88 degrees for the winter.

To reserve a spot on the team, contact the Hollywood Recreation Department at 954-989-9457.



Beverly Bidney

Quinton Wilson learns to kick strongly and to come up for air while lifeguard and swim teacher Virginia Paz Elorza monitors his progress Nov. 26 during swim lessons at the Hollywood pool.



Gordon Wareham

The Hollywood Chiefs show their team spirit during the Christmas Youth Basketball Tournament Dec. 13 at the Howard Tiger Recreation Center.

Howard Tiger Recreation Center hosts first basketball tournament

BY GORDON WAREHAM
Freelance Writer

HOLLYWOOD — As basketball swooshed through the nets, kids filled the court Dec. 13 at the new Howard Tiger Recreational Center in Hollywood.

The Christmas Youth Basketball Tournament drew 10 teams and was broken into three divisions: ages 9-12, 13-15 and 16-18. Most teams hailed from Hollywood and Trail.

“It’s good, it’s fun, it’s good cardio,”

said Royce Osceola, who played for the Hollywood Chiefs in the 16-18 division.

The teams included Tasha Squad (Trail), Challengers (Hollywood) and Cedric Squad (Hollywood) in the 9-12 division; Biggie (Trail) and Daniel Squad (Hollywood) in 13-15; and Biggie (Trail), Daniel Squad (Hollywood), 69ers (Mixed/Hollywood), Marcel Squad (Hollywood) and Hollywood Chiefs (South Broward) in 16-18.

Team Biggie won the 16-18 title against Marcel Squad in a close game.

The facility’s first tournament also proved beneficial for Recreation Department staff.

“This tournament is for the kids first, but for us, the staff, it’s to get used to the scoreboards because we have bigger tournaments coming up in January and February with bigger teams coming,” said Joe Collins, site manager.

The double-elimination tournament was held three weeks after Tribal dignitaries officially opened the facility.

◆ STATE CHAMPS

From page 1C

By the end of the game, Heritage’s defense held Godby to 179 yards of total offense and dealt the Cougars their first shutout of the season.

“I expected a win, but I didn’t expect a shutout. I was pleasantly surprised,” said Mike Conrad, Heritage’s defensive line coach.

Andre played in all 15 games for the 12-3 Patriots. He finished fifth on the team in total tackles with 70, which included 27 in five playoff games. His 50 assisted tackles were second most on the squad.

“He had a good year,” Conrad said. “He had some ups and downs, but overall a lot more ups than downs. If he had a substandard performance one week, the next week he is going to be hell on wheels. He’s a tough kid, comes at you 110 percent every single snap.”

Most of Heritage’s playoff run was void of suspenseful finishes thanks to lopsided victories; however, its 20-17 win against Orlando’s Bishop Moore in the state semifinal Dec. 5 was filled with anxious moments right up to the final second.

With the score knotted at 17-17, Heritage marched down the field to set up a 38-yard field goal attempt with four seconds left.

It’s tough to think of a more nerve-racking moment in high school football than a last-second field goal attempt in a state semifinal.

Blevyns delivered in the clutch as he sent a strong snap back to holder Jason

Brown, who set the ball for Oren Milstein’s winning kick as time expired.

“I was a little nervous,” Blevyns said. “Right when I snapped it, I lost my breath. When it went through the goal, I was relieved.”

So was the entire Heritage team, which erupted in celebration as their bid to repeat as state champions remained alive.

“People overlook the snappers, but they come up big,” said Andre, who had five tackles and an interception in his final home game. “I’m proud of (Blevyns) playing big. I had no doubt he was going to get the ball back there; I had no doubt in my mind.”

Heritage led 17-7 at halftime but could have built a bigger cushion. Andre picked off a pass and returned it 46 yards for an apparent touchdown on the final play of the second quarter. However, a Heritage penalty — which occurred far behind Andre as he reached the end zone — negated the points.

Andre also came up big when Heritage’s defense held Bishop Moore to a field goal in the fourth quarter after a turnover in Patriot territory.

“They ran it to my side,” said Andre, who made two tackles in the series, including one for a loss. “We made plays and adjusted to it. I had a lot of players get there to help me out. We’re a team. The defense practices hard.”

Andre made seven tackles each in a regional quarterfinal against Immokalee and a regional final against Island Coast. He had six tackles in a regional semifinal against Lely.

In Orlando, Andre and Blevyns were among the final few Patriots to leave the

field as the celebration — and Andre’s high school football career — had all but wrapped up.

“It kind of hit me in the locker room before the game,” Andre said. “I realized that this is it. These guys mean a lot to me.”



Kevin Johnson

American Heritage junior Blevyns Jumper provides blocking after he snapped the ball during an extra point in the Class 5A state championship game against Godby Dec. 12 at the Orlando Citrus Bowl.



Kevin Johnson

After intercepting a pass, American Heritage defensive end/linebacker Andre Jumper heads to the end zone against Bishop Moore in a Class 5A state semifinal Dec. 5 at American Heritage School in Plantation. The interception stood, but the touchdown was brought back due to a penalty. Heritage won, 20-17.

Basketball tourney debuts at new gym in Chupco’s Landing

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

FORT PIERCE — The gymnasium at the new Chupco’s Landing Community Center received a christening of sorts with its first basketball tournament held Nov. 21-22.

The inaugural Chupco Community Turkey Shoot Thanksgiving Basketball Tournament attracted three Tribal teams and three non-Tribal teams to the complex, which opened in October in the heart of the Fort Pierce Reservation.

Tribal teams squared off in the championship game. We’ll Be There, organized by Brighton’s Adrian Baker, defeated The Shootahs, 87-50, to win the title. Baker contributed 12 points and

earned the tournament’s most valuable player award. Amos Huggins also had a strong game with 27 points.

“That was a good tournament. It’s a good, new facility. It made it worth it,” said Huggins, whose son, Conner Osceola, played for We’ll Be There. The championship team’s roster also included Jim Archambault, from South Dakota, Robert Givens, Kevin Hanks, Catlin Tommie and others.

We’ll Be There, The Shootahs and third-place Dirty Boys received trophies. Fleece pullovers were presented to the champions and runners-up.

“Everything went excellent,” said Remus Griffin, of the Recreation Department, which organized the double-elimination event.

◆ ARCHERY

From page 1C

sixth-grader’s inclusion in the 2014 North American Indigenous Games where she placed fourth among competitors in the 16U traditional style category.

Javian Cypress, 10, said he is learning archery because his mother told him that the sport is important in real life — for survival.

“I always tell my kids that hunting and shooting is always good to know, just in case,” said Javian’s mother, Janie Valdez.

Hunting and competition are both good reasons to learn archery, Jake Osceola said, but he hopes the lessons spark more children to compete on school, community and reservation teams and at national Indian and non-Native tournaments.

“We are absolutely not at competition level yet. We just want it to be fun for now. Who knows what will come of it,” Jake Osceola said. “But so far, I think I see a few ringers in the group.”



Eileen Soler

Jacob ‘Jake’ Osceola, site supervisor for Big Cypress Recreation, displays an arrow during an archery class Dec. 5.

◆ CONCLUSION

From page 1C

“As underclassmen, they did a great job in accepting their roles on our team and being great teammates and did a great job when called upon,” Singleton said. “In 2015 they will both become critical pieces of the puzzle for success. We expect big things out of these two in 2015.”

Fort Gibson’s 12-1 record marked a substantial improvement from the previous season when the team went 6-5. Fort Gibson was the No. 2 seed in the 4A playoffs.

Top seeded and defending Oklahoma 4A state champion Anadarko, which features sophomore linebacker Curtis Osceola, produced an undefeated regular season and won its fifth consecutive district title.

Anadarko opened the playoffs with a

win against Tuttle. But Anadarko’s hopes of successfully defending its state title were dashed by Metro Christian, 16-13, in the quarterfinals Nov. 21.

Entering this season, Florida’s Flanagan had a brief playoff history. The school opened in 1996, but the football team’s only postseason appearance came last year when it lost in the first round.

This year the Pembroke Pines team, which includes senior defensive lineman Neko Osceola, tore through the regular season with an undefeated record and captured its first district title.

After ousting Coral Springs, Monarch and Wellington in the 8A playoffs, Flanagan fell one game shy of reaching the state title game.

Its season ended Dec. 5 with a 16-12 loss against Miami’s Columbus in the state semifinals.

Flanagan finished 13-1, by far its best record ever.

Heritage's Skyla Osceola, Gibbons' Dasani Cypress meet on the court

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

FORT LAUDERDALE — With one minute left in the second quarter, a sophomore from American Heritage attempted to score but was fouled by a freshman from Cardinal Gibbons.

The play was nothing out of the ordinary in the Dec. 2 high school varsity girls basketball game in Fort Lauderdale except that the two players — meeting for the first time as opponents on a court — share common threads. Heritage's Skyla Osceola and Gibbons' Dasani Cypress are cousins from the Hollywood Reservation.

"It was fun playing against her, seeing how she is doing on the team," said Skyla, a point guard. "It was nice seeing her again. She's got much better."

Skyla's 15-point performance in Heritage's 62-33 victory impressed Dasani. "She knows how to work with her team and make stuff happen," said Dasani, a forward/guard who is in her first year at Gibbons.

As the teams entered the second month of their seasons, coaches from both sides praised their Seminole players.

Skyla has been a valuable part of Heritage's success since she arrived at the Plantation school as an eighth-grader fiercely dedicated to the sport.

"If she's not playing travel ball, if she's not playing high school ball, she's probably doing cross fit, and if she's not doing cross fit, she's probably putting up 400 shots a night. She never rests until it's time to go to bed," said Heritage coach Natalya Kossenko, whose team won 32 games the past two seasons and started this season with 10 straight wins.

Putting up double figures has become the norm for Skyla, who is among the team's top scorers. She had 17 points in an early season victory. Against Gibbons, she drilled a 3-pointer from the top of the arc as time ran out in the first half that gave Heritage a 31-18 lead.

"She has been scoring consistently for us this year. She's definitely stepped up in that department," said Kossenko, whose staff of assistant coaches includes Skyla's father, Marl Osceola.

Skyla is the youngest of Heritage's three captains. She said the role is an honor.

"Skyla leads a lot in terms of being very vocal," Kossenko said. "She is probably the most vocal on the team. It's absolute leadership."

Skyla brings experience from playing for Hollywood Christian's varsity in grades six and seven, which included capturing a state title in 2011 and finishing runner-up the following season. Skyla said playing at Hollywood Christian with her older sister Ariah Osceola and other players from the Tribe, including Maleah Isaac and Darlah Cypress, helped her grow as a player.



Seminole players meet under the basket Dec. 2 as American Heritage sophomore Skyla Osceola tries to score while guarded by Cardinal Gibbons freshman Dasani Cypress.

"All my experience I learned from them because playing with older people you've got to learn more and they get you ready for the next level. That properly prepared me," Skyla said.

When Gibbons cut into Heritage's lead in the third quarter, Skyla regained

momentum for her team with a block at one end followed by a 3-pointer at the other.

Skyla started and played nearly the entire game; Dasani came off the bench as a sixth player, although her coach Kevin Gordon said after the game that he plans to promote her to a starting spot. Dasani was held scoreless but had a steal and rebound during Gibbons' brief rally in the third quarter.

"She's playing very well," Gordon said. "She's young and new to varsity. Tonight wasn't her best night, but I'm sure she'll bounce back."

Indeed, Dasani and Gibbons bounced back in a big way with consecutive wins against Pompano, Chaminade and Cypress Bay. Dasani scored five points each in two of the games and four in the other.

"She's a good kid. I'm happy to have her," said Gordon, who hosted a basketball camp last summer that Dasani attended while she was considering schools.

After playing for Ahfachkee, Dasani had to make a sizable adjustment attending a far larger school.

"It's a big difference coming from a small school where everyone knows everybody," she said.

Dasani admitted she was "really nervous" in her first game for Gibbons but has since settled down. She scored seven points, including a 3-pointer, in a one-point victory against Hallandale Nov. 24.

"She's had a solid year," Gordon said. "She's very young, a true 14-year-old. I'm happy with her play."



American Heritage sophomore guard Skyla Osceola dribbles past a Cardinal Gibbons player during Heritage's 62-33 win Dec. 2.



Sylas Billie, 6, delivers one of his three hits for the Nationals Dec. 3 in their game against the Mets at Rotary Park in Hollywood.

Passion for baseball propels Sylas Billie

Six-year-old advances through Hollywood Rotary Park program

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Copy Editor

HOLLYWOOD — Enthusiasm wasn't difficult to detect from the youngest baseball player on the field at Rotary Park.

When a coach asked who wanted to be a captain, Sylas Billie's hand was the first raised.

When a close play at home plate occurred in the second inning, Sylas showed Major League determination to beat the throw, so much that he dove headfirst. When the postgame handshake line formed, Sylas was the first from his Nationals team to meet the opposing players from the Mets.

So it came as no surprise that Sylas — a 6-year-old playing in a Hollywood Hills league filled with 7- and 8-year-olds — was the last player to leave Duke Field before the lights were turned off Dec. 3.

The son of Melinda Billie and the late Markell Billie has been around baseball practically since he was born, and it shows on the field. How many 6-year-olds play with the intensity to dive headfirst?

"Pete Rose would be proud of you," Nationals manager Hank Willen told Sylas during the team's postgame chat in the dugout. He then explained to the players that rules require them to wait until they're older to slide headfirst.

Sylas' dirt-ridden uniform served as evidence to his busy game at the plate, on the base paths and in the field. He scored three runs and belted three hits while batting from the spot in the order that matches his No. 3 jersey. Defensively, his evening at first base including snagging a few high throws and scooping a couple low ones.

Although he likes playing catcher, Sylas also enjoys the action that comes his way at first.

"You get to get people out," he said.

Sylas, who said it's not a big deal playing against older kids in the league, joined his first organized tee-ball program at age 3 on the Hollywood Reservation. Melinda said he was initially slated to play this season with his peers in Hollywood Hills tee-ball, but coaches liked what they saw and moved him up to play in the 8-and-under division where batters see live pitching.

Sylas' affection for baseball was born just after he was born. Melinda, who watched from the stands with Sylas' younger brothers Nahki, 4, and Alihas, 1, recalled taking Sylas to his first Florida Marlins game when he was 3 months old.



During warm-ups, Nationals first baseman Sylas Billie fires a throw to home plate prior to their game against the Mets.

Several more trips to Dolphin Stadium followed prior to his first birthday.

Before he could stand as a toddler, Sylas was winding up thanks to Melinda's dad, Wayne Mulligan, who is an assistant coach for the Nationals.

"He pretty much taught him to throw before he could walk," said Melinda, who is often joined at the games by Sylas' paternal grandfather Alan Jumper and aunt Alana Glover.

Sylas also latched onto a baseball movie: "The Sandlot." Hence, his favorite player isn't a current Marlin, but rather a legendary Yankee who made his Major League debut 100 years ago.

"He wants to be like Babe Ruth," Melinda said.

"I like him because he hit a lot of home runs," Sylas said.

Babe Ruth isn't the only former pro baseball player Sylas admires. He also looks up to his uncle, Nolan Mulligan, who pitched in the Philadelphia Phillies minor league system before Sylas was born.

"Hopefully, Sylas will get there one day," Melinda said.



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Announcements



Happy birthday to Terrijo D. Nelson

Mom, words cannot express my gratitude toward you. You have changed your life and shown me and DarRick that we are your family and you will do anything for us. I acknowledge the strength you possess inside of you and it's remarkable. I'm proud to have come from such a beautiful, loving, astonishing Seminole woman. I thank God every day for you. Mom, I have always had your back and I'm not going anywhere. You are my rock, and trust me, it was well worth the wait. God is truly amazing. I will forever treasure you. You are my one and only mom and nothing or no one will ever change that. I love you so much. Happy birthday to you and may you have many, many more. We love you. Love always, Carolee, Hakeem and DarRick

Correction...

In the November 28, 2014 issue, The Seminole Tribune incorrectly reported that Bob Motlow Sr. and Agnes Motlow had three children. The couple had one child, David Motlow Jr. Bob's children Davina Motlow and Kenny Kittle Jr. were of previous relationships. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

Happy New Year!



From, The Seminole Tribune

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BIG CYPRESS COMMUNITY
JOE FRANK
BIG CYPRESS BOARD REPRESENTATIVE
MANUEL "MONDO" TIGER
BIG CYPRESS COUNCILMAN

18th Annual Junior Cypress CATTLE DRIVE & RODEO

19th Annual Junior Cypress Cattle Drive & Rodeo

March 21, 2015

more info to follow

Honorary Trail Boss
"BIG" CHARLIE OSCEOLA
A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR FOUNDED CONTRIBUTORS,
BIG CYPRESS CATTLEMAN'S ASSOCIATION

Rules - NO HORSE DRAWN CARTS
- PRESENT UP-TO-DATE NEGATIVE COGGINS HORSE PAPER
- NO ATV'S OR DOGS
- HORSES MUST BE UNDER CONTROL BY RIDER AT ALL TIMES
- NO DRUGS OR ALCOHOL
- NO LOUD MUSIC

GENERAL INFORMATION:
BARBARA BILLIE - (954) 347-9220
DIANA BLAKEY - (863) 902-3200 EXT 13237
JUNIOR CYPRESS ARENA - (863) 983-8923
FOR MORE INFO VISIT: WWW.JRCARENA.COM
STALL RENTAL & OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS

TRIBAL ID PHOTO FOR PARTICIPATION
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM, MARCH 22, 2014
EVENING RODEO
JUNIOR CYPRESS ARENA
SUNDAY, MARCH 23, 2014

www.FLORIDASSEMINOLETOURISM.com

SELECTED WORKS by Mary Gay Osceola

A Past Worth Protecting:
Our Tribal Register of Historic Places

MOSAICS Community Art Gallery

Mary Gay Osceola, Untitled, Watercolor; ATTK 1995.67.3

Dec. 12th, 2014 - Mar. 1st, 2015

For More Information call: (863) 902-1113/visit www.ahtahtthiki.com

Selections from the Collection Gallery

Council Oak

Red Barn

Dec. 12th, 2014 - June 9th, 2015