



THE SEMINOLE TRIBUNE SPECIAL SECTION

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Seminole's Past and Present Highlighted in Theatrical Production

By Chris Jenkins

HOLLYWOOD — In what marked the conclusion to a historic day of activities, the past and present history of the Seminole Tribe of Florida was highlighted in a big way at the Hard Rock Live Aug 21.

The event was introduced with a documentary video produced by the Seminole Broadcasting Department. Tribal elders and citizens were interviewed and provided a personal perspective on the beginnings of the Tribe.

Elders offered insight into how the Tribe was formed and their hopes for the future, while Tribal citizens gave thanks for the strength and courage of the elders who had the foresight to champion the rights of the Seminole people.

The video showcased words of wisdom from Tribal elders Betty Mae Jumper and Rev. Frank Billie, who were instrumental in the signing of the Constitution and Corporate Charter, which was the cause for celebration on this special day.

The full theatrical production, which was several months in the making, was a celebration of Seminole culture and tradition. A cast was

◆ See PRODUCTION, page 34



Stephen Galla

The deer and the panther emerge from the Earth.



Felix Dublitz

Brighton Seminole Preschoolers said the Pledge of Allegiance in Mikasuki.

Tribe Kicks Off 50th with Press Conference Ceremony Takes Place Under Council Oak

By Shelley Marmor

HOLLYWOOD — On Aug. 21, 1957, the members of the Tribal Council met under the Council Oak tree to sign the Corporate Charter, creating the Board of Directors, and the Tribal Constitution, officially establishing the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Fifty years later, on Aug. 21, 2007, the Tribal Council again met under the historic oak to re-sign a mock Constitution and Bylaws, and kick off all the anniversary festivities.

At about 9 a.m., event emcee Moses "Big Shot" Jumper Jr. took the stage, saying "Sho Naa Bish" to everyone in attendance. He also read his poem, *The Council Oak*, before asking Tribal elder Betty Osceola to say the invocation.

The Color Guard, consisting of eight Tribal veterans, presented the colors including the flags representing the U.S., the state of Florida, the Seminole Tribe, the Seminole veterans and also the POW/MIA flag. The students from the newly-opened Brighton Charter School then recited the Pledge of Allegiance in Mikasuki.

The entire Tribal Council and Board of Directors, including all reservation liaisons, were present for this historic event. The first to address the gathering was Chairman Mitchell Cypress.

As with many of the speeches to follow, the chairman gave thanks to the Creator, saying "without God and togetherness, we wouldn't be here today." He also acknowledged the significance of having the ceremony beneath the "mighty" Council Oak.

"Oak is a very strong wood," Cypress said.

"You can try to chop it down, but it takes a long time."

Board President Richard Bowers followed the chairman. Also like many speeches to follow,

◆ See PRESS, page 35



Gordian Oliver Warcham

Howard Tommie

Luncheon Fashion Show Features Eras of Seminole Design

By Elizabeth Leiba

HOLLYWOOD — The 50th Anniversary luncheon and fashion show featured a showcase of traditional Tribal clothing spanning the mid-1800s to mid-1900s. The clothing featured intricate designs of patchwork, which signified the various stages in the evolution of Seminole clothing.



Stephen Galla

For the Fashion Show an entire cast of Seminole models walked the runway.

The women demonstrated the progression from the earlier and less ornate constructions to more modern times with elaborate patchwork designs and capes. The men modeled colorful long shirts as they strutted the catwalk. The audience appreciatively cheered as each model took their turn.

The luncheon began with welcoming remarks from emcees Sally R. Tommie, Fort Pierce Tribal Liaison, and Moses "Big Shot" Jumper Jr. Tommie offered a blessing and welcomed the audience to the event that provided an opportunity to celebrate pride in the Seminole Tribe and all of its accomplishments over the past 50 years.

◆ See FASHION, page 36

The Seminole Tribune asks citizens; "What does the Tribe's 50th Anniversary mean to you?"



"Fifty years — I think it's better than good for the Tribe. I'm very proud. I'm very proud of my people and all the Seminole Tribe in general. It's a great day for them."

— Mitch Osceola,
Hollywood Reservation



"I feel really good about it. It's a historical moment. It's a big time for us. It means a lot."

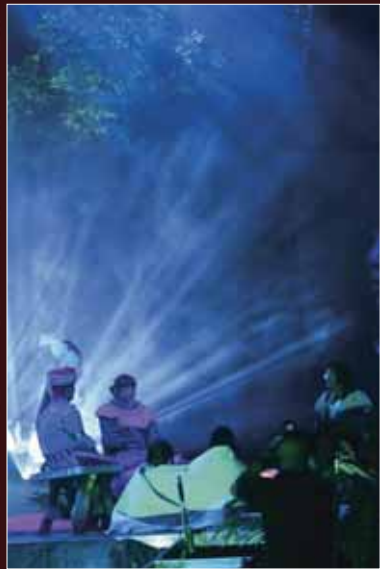
— Leon Wilcox,
Hollywood Reservation



"I think it's a great achievement. Our elders went through a lot to get us here. We've made it to the 50 year mark and hopefully, we'll make it to the 75 year mark and 100 year mark. I can't wait."

— Jennifer Chalfant
Miss Florida Seminole





Stephen Gallia



Lita Osceola-Heard



Lita Osceola-Heard

❖ Production

Continued from page 1

formed to entertain, as Tribal Council, citizens, employees and other dignitaries were all on hand.

The production began with a historic synopsis of the Tribe explained through the eyes of Tribal citizens, as well as past and present Council. Performances on the origins of the Clans within the Tribe, known as "The Creation," were described, complete

with animal costumes depicting the various clans.

Colorful costumes and creative set design enhanced the show, as a cast of characters from Osceola to Billy Bowlegs graced the stage for an appreciative audience.

A progressive historic timeline followed on Seminole life including key events in the Tribe's history including the Seminole Wars, the beginnings of gaming and the signing of the Constitution.



Stephen Gallia



Lita Osceola-Heard



Stephen Gallia



Stephen Gallia



Stephen Gallia



Stephen Gallia



Stephen Gallia



Stephen Gallia



"[There's] a lot of difference from when we started off. Things were simpler then. God has really blessed our Tribe."

— Coleman Josh,
Hollywood Reservation



"At least I know I'm 50 years older. It makes me happier. I thank God he's given me good days to be here and celebrate along with my Tribal members."

— Mitchell Cypress
Chairman



"It's good. We made it. God gave us another day."

— Annie Jumper,
Hollywood Reservation





Gordon Oliver Warshaw



Gordon Oliver Warshaw

Press

Continued from page 1

Bowers paid tribute to the Tribal elders who had the vision to create a Tribal Constitution and Bylaws, and also who keep the Tribe strong today.

"I want to recognize the elders because they keep the language and culture going so we can celebrate another 50 years," he said.

Micosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida Chairman Billy Cypress attended the ceremony as a visiting guest. He called the gathering a "display of unity" and congratulated the Tribe on all their success.

Big Cypress Tribal Council Representative David R. Cypress spoke next. He said he hopes "the Council up here [on this stage] will make the people who signed the Constitution proud."

Hollywood Tribal Council Representative Max B. Osceola Jr., like those before him, acknowledged the Tribal elders. He also remembered the "Unconquered" Seminole who risked everything to remain in Florida when the U.S. government was attempting to relocate them to Oklahoma.

"I want to honor the warriors from the 1800s who told the federal government 'We're not going to Oklahoma,'" Osceola said.

Brighton Tribal Council Representative Roger Smith spoke next. He recognized the Seminole royalty in attendance including: Brighton Seminole Princess Amber Craig, Brighton Jr. Miss McKayla Snow, Little Miss Krysta Burton, Little Mister Kano Puente, Miss Seminole

Princess Jennifer Chalfant and Jr. Miss Seminole Princess Alicia Nunez.

Immokalee Tribal Council Liaison Elaine Aguilar addressed the gathering following Smith. She said she constantly reminds fellow Tribal citizens to not forget their ancestors and their heritage, in order for the Tribe to be able to celebrate in another 50 years.

"I'm always telling people to remember the old ways and to teach their children the Indian ways," Aguilar said.

Brighton Board Representative Johnnie Jones spoke next. He recognized the students from the Brighton Charter School who were in attendance at the ceremony, calling them, "the leaders for the next 50 years."

Next, Big Cypress Board Representative Cicero Osceola, one of the youngest members of the Tribal government, spoke. Osceola said he was "not around 50 years ago" but acknowledged the Tribal elders who were.

Similarly, Hollywood Board Representative Gloria Wilson recognized the elders. She specifically named Howard Tommie and commended him for "getting us over that hump" in the Tribe's earlier years.

Immokalee Board Liaison Delores Jumper spoke after Wilson, only addressing the gathering in her native language. Non-Resident Liaison Holly Tiger-Bowers followed. She recognized the Tribal citizens

"who went to Congress and said 'we're not going to be terminated.'"

Tampa Liaison Richard Henry also offered recognition to the elders and encouraged the Tribal citizens of today to "stick together and we'll make another 50 years."

Naples Liaison OB Osceola Jr. then offered encouraging remarks to the Tribal youth of today. He explained to them that the Seminole Tribe is the first Tribe to ever purchase an international corporation, Hard Rock International, but let them know how they can top that acquisition.

"I know right now you guys like going to Disney World," he said. "Maybe in the next 50 years you can buy Disney World and put some patchwork on Mickey."

Fort Pierce Liaison Sally R. Tommie then took the mic. She also addressed the younger members in the audience telling them "the

Tribe is here for you." Tommie also suggested everyone "remember where you've been to know where you're going."

Last but not least, Trail Liaison William Osceola, the final Tribal representative, spoke. He suggested no one forget their Seminole heritage because "learning the culture made us strong." Osceola also commended the Tribe on the recent Hard Rock purchase.

"This organization went from poverty to owning an international corporation," he said. "That is a great accomplishment."

Invited guest and Seneca Nation President Maurice A. John Sr. then spoke to the gathering. He invited all Seminoles to take a trip to upstate New York to visit the Seneca Nation. Johns also presented the Tribe with a Seneca Nation flag as a token of congratulations.

National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) Chairman Ernie Stevens was also an invited guest at the 50th celebration. He extended congratulatory remarks to the Tribe "on behalf of the 184 gaming Tribes" he represents as chair of NIGA.

Director of Museums Tina M. Osceola took the stage next. She gave a historic account of how the Constitution and Bylaws came about. Osceola said that the ceremony with the Council and Board signing the mock documents is intended to "honor those who stared in the face of termination and said 'no more.'"

"Our Constitution is more than an inanimate object," she said. "It's the heart of our people."

Osceola then asked Tribal secretary of 28 years, Priscilla Sayen, and Tribal Clerk Mercedes Osceola-Hahn to join her on stage. Sayen and Osceola-Hahn had each Tribal Council member sign the replica Constitution and each Board of Directors member sign the replica copy of the Bylaws.

They then collected the two documents and Osceola said they will be kept in the Tribal Clerk's Office in Hollywood should any Tribal citizens wish to view them.

"Our Constitution is more than an inanimate object, it's the heart of our people."



Felix DelBono



Gordon Oliver Warshaw



Felix DelBono



"It's pretty overwhelming. I was 13 or 14 when we had the 25th. We've come such a long way in the past 25 years. It's great to see the Tribal people from all over and everyone takes on such pride. We're glad we could be a part of it."

— Michele Thomas, Brighton Reservation



"I think it's about time we got to a 50th. It is a great milestone. I'm glad that some of the people before us actually got to see this today, and I'm so proud and happy about my people."

— Richard Bowers, President



"It's great to be a part of the celebration. It's been a great ride. It's great to be here."

— Joe Dan Osceola, Davie

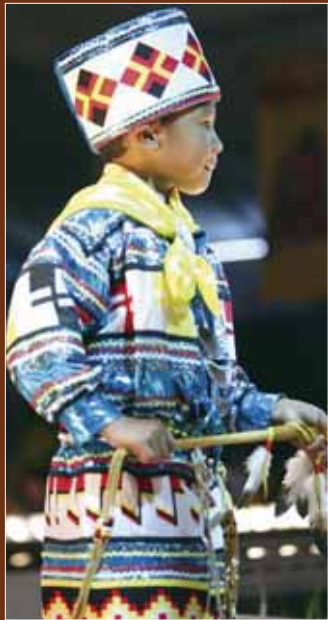


❖ Fashion

Continued from page 33

A special presentation to Chairman Mitchell Cypress and President Richard Bowers was made from Vice Chairman Kenneth Reels of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe in Connecticut. The presentation was followed by Chairman Cypress' official cutting of the 50th Anniversary cake that was enjoyed by luncheon attendees.

The fashion show was the grand finale of the event and provided a chance to witness the diversity, self-reliance and creativity of the Seminole Tribe through an expression of clothing in what Tommie described as an "explosion of patchwork, beauty and color."



Stephen Gallia



Stephen Gallia



Stephen Gallia



Lila Onicola-Heard



Stephen Gallia



Stephen Gallia



Stephen Gallia



Stephen Gallia



Stephen Gallia



Lila Onicola-Heard



"I think it's exciting. We were pleased that we could bring our whole school [Pemayetv Emahaky] up here on their second day of school."

— Louise Gopher,
Education Director



"All the struggles that our elders went through, it's a lot different than what we enjoy today. The elderly held a vision back then; somebody started something and I'm here now to enjoy it."

— David R. Cypress, Big Cypress
Council Representative



"I'm proud to be a part of a historical event. I'm glad that I could come home from California and celebrate with my Tribal family."

— Spencer Battiest, California





Stephen Galla



Stephen Galla



Stephen Galla



Stephen Galla



Stephen Galla



Stephen Galla



Stephen Galla



Stephen Galla



Stephen Galla



“The Council Oak means a lot to me because that’s where I grew up, underneath it. I didn’t understand what was going on then, but now I do.”
— Judy Baker, Hollywood Reservation



“I feel great to know that I was there for this celebration. I know we will continue to survive and be a Tribe together as one. Forever, we will not fall or be torn apart.”
— Shelli Mae Osceola, Hollywood Reservation



“I am very proud to be an Unconquered Seminole along with the very few that chose to remain in Florida. Survival has and will be our goal in culture and heritage shared by our families and Tribe.”
— Victor Osceola, Hollywood Reservation



Behind Every Good Event is a Great Committee

By Melissa Sherman

HOLLYWOOD — The dictionary defines a committee as "a person or group of persons elected or appointed to perform some service or function." Anyone who has been associated with the Seminole Tribe of Florida knows the Tribe hosts lots of events, and that means a lot of event planning committees.

The events have all had significant importance in one way or another. They can range from a 20 person appreciation dinner to a couple thousand happy Christmas party goers. And the 50th Anniversary Celebration was certainly one of the most unique the Tribe has had. For this reason, a committee was formed to make this event unforgettable.

The first mention of the 50th Anniversary Celebration was at a marketing meeting on Aug. 8, 2005. At this point, a new committee needed to be formed to handle such a historic event. After going to the Tribal Council and requesting approval, planning was on its way.

Museum Director Tina Maria Osceola was named as committee chair. The committee members included Bobby Frank, Micki Free, Cima Georgevich, Danny Jumper, Cindy Malin, Virginia Mitchell, Dennis Pellarin, Melissa Sherman, Sally R. Tommie, Johnnie VanDesande. A community representative was also assigned by each council representative.

Members came together and brainstormed on how to recognize the Tribal citizens of today and the founders who made this day possible. One of the first steps for the committee was to name the event. After many wordy attempts, the official name "The 50th Anniversary of the signing of the Constitution and Corporate Charter," was agreed upon.

Some departments, such as Seminole Broadcasting, wanted to make unique contributions to the festivities. Director Danny Jumper arranged to interview more than 60 Tribal citizens and make a video on the history of the Tribe — using the words of those who lived it.

"It was a great experience to learn from other Tribal members about the early history of the Tribe and their thoughts on different topics and the importance of preserving Tribal traditions while enjoying the Tribe's economic success," said Jumper.

The next steps included agreeing on an event date and creating a mission statement. The mission of the committee was to develop, promote and produce events on behalf of the Seminole Tribe of Florida to recognize and celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the signing of its Constitution and Corporate Charter, while keeping the integrity of the rich culture, heritage and tradition of the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

Many different ideas came to the table, from a traveling education tour to a parade down State Road 7. After more than a year of proposals and budget changes, the official events and festivities were finalized and approved by Council. A task list was then created to steer the committee toward its Aug. 21, 2007 goal.

Like each leaf on a branch of

the Council Oak has a function and importance, the 50th Anniversary committee also maintained this role. Contributions big and small were made. Some of its members were valued for



their living knowledge and ways of the Tribe. Others utilized their talents in organizing meetings or a pipeline of communications between the committee and communities. Because of this, many Tribal citizens volunteered their valuable time in the production of the event by participating in the show or offering their talents to assist in the creation of clothing and sacrificing time away from their normal daily activities.

Some other contributors helped out on tasks as needed or even acted as a sounding board such as Elrod Bowers, Holly Tiger-Bowers, Sharon Calderon, Ciara Billie Guerue, Debbie Johnson, Nery Mejicano, Elizabeth Price, Susan Renneisen and Gloria Wilson.

Almost every detail was made

by the committee team or one of its members: burlap bags, collector coins, clothing eras, flowers, casting calls, resigning of the Constitution, press conference, script for the play, the video, commemorative book and the orchestrating of all of these things together on the event day.

Committee chair Tina M. Osceola was impressed by how well the committee worked together to organize the celebration's events.

"It was both a pleasure and an honor to work with Tribal members and employees on this project. The talent that people brought to the day's events was only out-matched by their pride," remarked Osceola. "I was also proud to see that the committee's vision of ourselves as a working group rather than a permanent fixture enabled myself and others to also perform the jobs we were hired to do without the team losing focus."

Osceola also expressed pride in the committee's outstanding teamwork.

"I was unable to attend any meetings for the last several months. But because of meeting minutes, email and task lists, we didn't miss a step; the true definition of the word 'team.'"

Virginia Mitchell wanted to see more involvement from the Tribal community.

"I would have liked to have had more Tribal people and employees in the committee. We could have used a few people more. Some members like Sally [Tommie] and Cima [Georgevich] were really overloaded," she observed.

Ultimately, she sees a bright future for upcoming Tribal anniversary celebrations.

"I would like to say to the committee, I really enjoyed the event. It was a pleasure working with them. I would be happy to do it again, if I'm still here for the next anniversary event," she said. "Even though they will all have new ideas, perhaps the committees from the past can assist the younger generations in future anniversary committees, in the 75th or even 100th."



Special Anniversary Video Coming to a Chickee Near You

As part of the 50th Anniversary committee, Seminole Broadcasting realized this was a special celebration and felt they should put their energies into producing a video that reflected the insights and stories from Tribal citizens in their own words. To achieve this, the department reached out to Tribal citizens from all the reservations and asked them to take part in interviews. As a result, more than 60 interviews were conducted and the direction of the video was developed based on the comments expressed.

The video was produced entirely in-house and was shown as part of the 50th Anniversary celebration at the Hard Rock Live. Tribal citizens who wish to get a copy of this video can call the Seminole Broadcasting office on their reservation to order a free copy.

Hollywood/Ft. Pierce
Contact: Seminole Broadcasting – Lakisha Moore
3560 N. State Road 7 (TeePee Building), Hollywood, FL 33021
Phone: (954) 985-5701, Ext. 10720

Big Cypress Reservation
Contact: Big Cypress Broadcasting – Glynnis Bowers
Family Investment Center 3rd Floor, HC61 Box 46, Clewiston, FL 33440
Phone: (863) 902-3217

Brighton Reservation
Contact: Brighton Broadcasting – Elizabeth Martinez
Broadcasting Trailer/500 Harney Pond Road, Okeechobee, FL 34974
Phone: (863) 763-6380

Immokalee Reservation
Contact: Immokalee Broadcasting – Tushka Hill
Administration Building, 295 Stockade Rd., Immokalee, FL 34142
Phone: (239) 867-5300, Ext. 16468

Tampa Reservation
Contact: Tampa Broadcasting – Kim Cartagena
6401 Harney Rd. Suite E, Tampa, FL 33610
Phone: (813) 620-2882



“I think the 50th is a celebration of the saving of a Tribe from termination. We’ve always been here. We’ll always be here. That spirit is from the warriors who fought the government. That spirit is in our blood.”

— Max B. Osceola Jr., Hollywood



“I hope I’m around for the next one! You’ve got your memories from today and they’re priceless.”

— Wanda Bowers, Hollywood



“The signing of the Constitution and Corporate Charter I think is a symbol of genius and bright Tribal elders. I also believe that our culture ... has always been strong. I believe Seminoles will always be 'Unconquered!'”

— Jesse Mitchell, Davie



Brighton Hosts Community Dinner

By Susan Etchebarria

BRIGHTON — The Brighton Reservation hosted a community dinner on Aug. 18 in conjunction with the celebration of the Tribe's 50th Anniversary. At the dinner there were door prizes and awesome food served by Renegade Barbeque's Chef Cleve Baker. Baker is a Brighton citizen who now lives in Hollywood. Parker Jones provided the music at the dinner.

Brighton Tribal Council Representative Roger Smith recognized the elders who were youth during the creation of the Constitution and Bylaws in 1957. These included: Addie Osceola, Alice Snow, Rosie Billie and Agnes Bowers.



Addie Osceola and Alice Snow

Susan Etchebarria



Josephine Villa

Susan Etchebarria



Brittany Smith

Susan Etchebarria



Sandy Billie Jr.

Susan Etchebarria



Kassandra Baker

Susan Etchebarria



Terry Hahn

Susan Etchebarria



Rosie Billie leads the Fashion Show with seniors following

Susan Etchebarria

Hollywood Seniors Celebrate 50th



Former Ambassador Joe Dan Osceola says a few words.

Chris Jenkins



President Bowers reflects on his youth with the seniors.

Chris Jenkins



Judy-Bill Osceola enjoys the storytelling of President Bowers.

Chris Jenkins



"I'm glad to be here to be alive and well to see the 50th Anniversary that my mother and grandmother couldn't be here to see. But I'm here to see it for them."

— Leona Tommie Williams,
Preschool Director



"I'm grateful that we're celebrating this day. Our people brought us to this day. I feel elated with joy just being here."

— Cicero Osceola
Big Cypress
Board Representative



"I'm honored to be a part of it and I'm glad my Tribe has been around for all these years."

— Amber Craig
Brighton Seminole Princess





“I passed by the Council Oak so many times, but this is my first time actually being there. I’m so honored to be here. I’m so proud to be Seminole on this day — ‘Forever Unconquered!’”

— Zach Battist, Hollywood Reservation



“The next 50 years is going to be interesting. The Seminole Tribe is very blessed. We keep moving up and hopefully, the younger generation maintains. I’m very happy to see this.”

— James Billie, Big Cypress Reservation.



“The 50th to me stands for the accomplishments the Seminoles of Florida have endured, starting with the historical resistance to President Andrew Jackson’s Removal policy and as we historically succeed our endeavors for the prosperity of our people. Fifty years from now my grandchildren will wonder what it was like now in my era as I wonder how it was 50 years ago ...”

— Bobby Frank, Hollywood Reservation.