



The Seminole Tribune

Voice of the Unconquered

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New casino, hotel breaks ground in Brighton

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — A new casino and hotel on the Brighton Reservation took its first step to fruition Jan. 5 with a groundbreaking ceremony. The new Seminole Casino Hotel Brighton will be located at 15005 Reservation Road, a 75-acre site with a 10-acre lake and parking for 1,000 vehicles. It is scheduled to open in 2024.

“It’s been a long time coming for our Brighton Reservation,” Brighton Councilman Larry Howard said. “We started with nothing, just a small herd of cows. Today is a great day for our tribe, we will be able to bring more people in from all over to stay at this resort out here and enjoy themselves.”

The event on the site of the future Seminole Casino Hotel Brighton – a few miles south of the current casino – attracted hundreds of people from the community and surrounding areas. The standing room-only crowd gathered under a large white tent where elected officials from Moore Haven, Okeechobee and Glades County rubbed elbows with officials from the Seminole Tribe and Seminole Gaming. The Tribal Council entered the tent to a live performance of “Seminole Wind.”

The ceremony began with the First Indian Baptist Church choir singing hymns in Creek. The colors were presented by the Seminole Honor Guard and students from Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School recited the Pledge of Allegiance in Creek and English.

The new development should take about 18 months to build and is expected to replace the existing casino sometime in 2024. No plans have been announced about the future of the existing casino building, which opened in 1980.

◆ See CASINO HOTEL on page 6A



Shovels are raised at the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of the new Seminole Casino Hotel Brighton on Jan. 5. From left to right are Seminole Gaming CEO and Hard Rock International Chairman Jim Allen, Brighton Councilman Larry Howard, President Mitchell Cypress, Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr., Seminole Casino Brighton General Manager Marty Johns, Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola and Seminole Gaming COO David Hoenemeyer.



With Health and Human Services Executive Director Dr. Vandhana Kiswani Barley, far left, and Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, second from left, Team Hollywood celebrates its victory at Rez Rally on Jan. 7. Captains Joe Kippenberger and Mercedes Osceola hold the championship trophies alongside Rochelle Osceola, second from right, and Olivia Cypress, far right.

Rez Rally provides healthy camaraderie for new year

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

HOLLYWOOD — It was home sweet home for Team Hollywood as it swept the team awards at the 23rd Rez Rally on Jan. 7.

The Hollywood Reservation hosted the tribalwide event on the grounds of Seminole Estates. Hundreds of runners, walkers and wheelchair participants representing their reservations covered courses of varying lengths up to three miles. The event was organized by Seminole Integrative Health and open to the entire tribal community, including employees.

Hollywood won the team percentage award for highest participation per capita and the overall team championship. Brighton finished second in the participation award

and Immokalee was runner-up in the overall results.

Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola said the day is more about camaraderie than competition.

“Everybody who showed up today is a winner in my book,” he said. “It’s about getting together and having a good time with the other reservations. We’re all winners today; the tribe is a winner today.”

Ideal morning weather – partly cloudy, mid 70s – greeted participants in what was the first in-person Rez Rally since the 2020 race in Big Cypress due to the pandemic. It also marked the first Rez Rally with the 450-foot Guitar Hotel, which opened in 2019, in the background of the course.

“It’s pretty special. We’re super proud of that thing over there. It’s done great things for the Seminole Tribe,” Councilman

Osceola said.

Speakers before and after the race emphasized the event’s main mission: to live a healthy lifestyle and fight diabetes.

Former health director Connie Whidden, who was one of the driving forces behind the creation of Rez Rally nearly two dozen years ago, told the audience that despite good intentions, some events in the tribe fizzle out, but not Rez Rally. She said the race’s longevity and popularity prove that the community is serious about health. She said for people with diabetes in their family, it’s never too early to go to clinics and have their blood tested.

◆ See REZ RALLY on page 4C

Deb Haaland touts Everglades restoration during Florida visit

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) used a visit to South Florida Jan. 28 to give an update on the federal “America the Beautiful” initiative at the Everglades Coalition conference held in Coral Springs.

The initiative, which began in 2021, includes a 10-year strategy for locally led and voluntary efforts to restore and conserve America’s lands, waters and wildlife.

“Thank you for welcoming me to the ancestral lands of the Miccosukee and Seminole nations,” Haaland said during a keynote speech. “The Everglades is the cornerstone of survival for the people, plants and animals who call it home. Restoration of this habitat and others like it is crucial to the fight against the climate crisis.”

Seminole Tribe Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr., Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, Tribal Court Associate Justice Joe Frank and Miccosukee Tribe Chairman Talbert Cypress attended Haaland’s keynote. Several conference attendees were Seminole and Miccosukee tribal members and tribal employees.

The “America the Beautiful” initiative is an effort that includes the Interior, the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration, the White House Council on Environmental Quality, and state agriculture and commerce departments. The goal is to “conserve, connect and restore” 30% of the nation’s lands and waters by 2030.

The Biden administration’s “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” includes \$1.1 billion to protect critical ecosystems, including the Everglades, from the effects of climate change. The Interior called the funding a “once-in-a-generation investment to address climate change and tackle the biodiversity crisis by restoring ecosystems and watersheds.”

The DeSantis administration has invested more than \$3.3 billion to restore the Everglades and bolster Florida’s water resources since 2019. In January, he renewed the commitment through an executive order proposing an additional \$3.5 billion investment toward continued restorative and protective efforts over the next four years. His office has called it the “highest level of funding” for such efforts “in Florida’s history.”

◆ See HAALAND on page 5B



Deb Haaland, Secretary of the Interior, took part in an airboat tour of the Everglades during a visit to Florida for the Everglades Coalition conference.

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Visit the Tribune’s website for news throughout the month at seminoletribune.org

Editorial

Words matter; strike this one

• The Record Eagle (Traverse City, Michigan)

The word, which was derived from the Algonquin language, referred to woman. But it was skewed by racism into a word that disparages Indigenous women. Now it is finally being removed from our national lexicon.

We mention this today to applaud the U.S. Department of the Interior, which announced a week ago that it has given new names to five places that previously had included this racist word. The renamed sites are in California, North Dakota, Tennessee and Texas. This completes a yearlong process to remove the historically offensive word “squaw” from geographic names across the country.

Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland formally declared this word to be a derogatory term more than a year ago and ordered a task force to find replacement names for valleys, lakes, creeks and other sites on federal lands that use this word.

“Racist terms have no place in our vernacular or on our federal lands. Our nation’s lands and waters should be places to celebrate the outdoors and our shared cultural heritage — not to perpetuate the legacies of oppression,” said Haaland, a member of the Laguna Pueblo tribe and the first Native American cabinet secretary.

In Michigan, this word appears in the names of 13 lakes, 10 streams, three canals, two islands, an Upper Peninsula cape, an Alpena County bay and a Lake Superior beach, a total of 35 times, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

But our state lawmakers have yet to

follow the federal lead on this issue.

Several states have passed laws mandating the erasure of the slur from nonfederal sites, including Oregon, Maine, Montana and Minnesota. Michigan has not.

We urge our lawmakers to take a proactive stance.

This is not the first time that words have been identified as derogatory or pejorative. The nation took similar steps in 1962 for Black people and, in 1974, for Japanese.

But what a long time this has been in coming in this country for Indigenous peoples.

Haaland’s order, which took effect immediately more than a year ago, applies to more than 650 place names in the nation that use the term, according to figures from the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

Thankfully, we now subtract five.

Massachusetts needs a new state seal, but what?

• The Republican (Massachusetts)

The commonwealth of Massachusetts needs a new seal and motto. A special commission unanimously agreed on that last May.

But, once it was agreed that the 124-year-old current version has to go, there hasn’t exactly been a rush to decide how to replace it.

The current seal shows a Native American man with a bow and arrow standing beneath an arm holding a sword similar to that of Myles Standish, the military leader of the Pilgrims. The state flag

bears both the seal and state motto, which says, in Latin, “By the sword we seek peace, but peace only under liberty.”

Opponents of “woke” culture say the seal is based on the state’s history. But for decades, protesters have said a glaring Native American figure — with the arm of a colonist brandishing a sword above his head — is exploitive, offensive and at the very least, out of step with the times.

Considering this change is designed to replace a presumably offensive caricature, there seems little urgency to do it. In January 2021, Gov. Charlie Baker created the commission composed of lawmakers, cultural and history experts, and Native Americans with ties to this state.

There is still no seal and, it appears, no

real progress toward what a new one would look like. There has been talk of public surveys, the hiring of graphic designers and so on.

The seal shows up on official documents and on the state flag. It is, in some ways, a “front porch” to the commonwealth.

But in October, a University of Massachusetts Amherst survey showed 40% opposed to a new seal, with 35% in favor and 25% neither for nor against.

Even so, if the reason to replace the image is that it’s offensive or even racist, it’s difficult to justify 24 months of inaction while the traditional image flies on every flagpole.

♦ See SEAL on page 3A

Native youth report: ‘Decrease barriers, increase opportunities’

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

The Center for Native American Youth (CNAY) at the Aspen Institute in Washington, D.C., recently released its annual “State of Native Youth” report titled “Center Us” — an 80-page document that “celebrates and honors Native youth and the issues they care about.”

“‘Center Us’ is a reminder to our relatives, partners and stakeholders to value the voices of Native American youth,” Nikki Santos (Coeur d’Alene Tribe), CNAY executive director, said in a Dec. 6, 2022, news release. “In order to create a more free, just, and equitable society, we must include Native youth — they deserve to be centered.”

The 2022 report features five main sections: “Indigenous Framework,” “Transforming Systems and Redefining Hope,” “Our Land, Our Connections,” “Social Media and Technology,” and “Arts and Society.” There are several subcategories within each section.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida’s Cheyenne Kippenberger is CNAY’s communications coordinator. She coauthored the section on social media and technology with Lily Painter (Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska).

“[The report is] a resource and roadmap to help decrease barriers and increase opportunities for Native youth,” Kippenberger said in the release.

Broad topics covered in the report include climate change, systems that undermine Native sovereignty, and the use of media, technology and art to empower



Courtesy CNAY
Chelysa Owens-Cyr’s (Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux/Pasqua First Nations Plains Cree/Saultea) artwork was chosen for the cover of the annual CNAY report. CNAY said the 23-year-old’s piece represents her interpretation of “identity and being centered.”

Native youth.

“Native youth are leading the way in the preservation of culture and advancing their communities,” the report said in its conclusion.

The full report can be accessed by visiting cnay.org. Questions can be directed to cnayinfo@aspensite.org.

NIGC general counsel departs

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Michael Hoenig stepped down from his role as general counsel of the National Indian Gaming Commission, effective Jan. 27. Hoenig has been with NIGC since

2006. According to NIGC, Hoenig left the commission to take the position of vice president and associate general counsel for gaming for the San Manuel Board of Mission Indians.

New book explains history, impact of ‘bombshell’ case

BY DOLORES TROPIANO
ASU News (Arizona State University)

In 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court made a decision to return more than 3 million acres of land in Oklahoma to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The case, *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, has been described as one of the most significant Native American-related rulings in 100 years.

The returned acreage in Oklahoma, including part of the city of Tulsa, is now recognized as “Indian Country,” as defined by federal law.

A new book, titled “A Promise Kept: The Muscogee (Creek) Nation and *McGirt v. Oklahoma*,” explains the legal and historical implications of the ruling, both for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation people and other Native American nations throughout the country.

The book, which will be available on Jan. 26, was co-authored by Arizona State University Professor Robert Miller and University of Mississippi Professor Emeritus Robbie Ethridge.

Miller teaches at the ASU Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law and has followed the case since 2020. He is a legal scholar and expert in federal Native American law. He also happens to be member of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma. In the book, he offers a legal analysis of how the case unfolded and what contributed to the final decision.

Ethridge specializes in historical anthropology as it relates to Native Americans of the American South. She provides the historic context of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, including the dark period when President Andrew Jackson defied the U.S. Supreme Court decision and violently confiscated land from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

Here, the authors discuss the new book and the history behind and impact of the Supreme Court ruling.

Editor’s note: Answers have been edited for length and clarity.

Question: Your book is titled “A Promise Kept” — what was the original promise made to the Creeks by the Supreme Court?

Ethridge: The promise was that in exchange for Muscogee (Creek) Nation homelands in present-day Georgia and Alabama, the U.S. would guarantee lands for the Creeks in present-day Oklahoma. Once on those new lands, the Creeks would govern themselves and have jurisdiction over their territories in perpetuity.

Miller: This promise to the Creeks and other removed groups was made in the 1830

Indian Removal Act, reiterated in the 1832 Treaty with the Creeks — which was the treaty for Creek removal and in the 1866 U.S. Treaty with the Creek Nation — the treaty forged after the Civil War.

Q: Why weren’t those promises kept?
Ethridge: Before the ink even dried on these treaties, the federal government began interfering with Native Americans’ sovereignty and jurisdictions.

And once Oklahoma gained statehood, it began to encroach on Native American rights. The federal government, for decades, turned a blind eye to Oklahoma and other state encroachments.

So why were federal and state governments interfering and trying to usurp the promise? It’s fairly simple — they wanted the land.

Miller: The land and all of its assets — oil, timber, minerals.

Q: Explain the Trail of Tears and other atrocities Native Americans endured because of the defiance of the original Supreme Court decision.

Miller: The Indian Removal Act of 1830 was a dark stain on American history. Today, we would call what the U.S. did ethnic cleansing. Other tribes were also removed to the Native American territory. My tribe was located in Ohio when we signed a treaty of removal in 1831 and then we were removed to where we are today — in the northeast corner of Oklahoma.

Ethridge: The Trail of Tears is the name of the deadly (1,000-mile) route that the Cherokee Nation was forced to follow when they were moved from present-day North Carolina and Tennessee to present-day Oklahoma. It has also come to refer to the removal of any of the Five Civilized Tribes — the Cherokee, Creeks, Seminoles, Choctaws and Chickasaws — from the southeast.

The U.S. government, wanting to acquire all Indigenous lands east of the Mississippi River, forcibly removed most of the Native Americans (nearly 100,000 people) living there. Each nation signed a separate removal treaty, but almost always under threat and duress.

These treaties forced them to relinquish their homelands for lands in Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska and parts of Iowa. Most resisted and were removed at gunpoint. Many of them lost their lives on the long march. Some perished once they arrived in Oklahoma because of the disease-infested and poorly supplied camps. And many simply died from broken hearts.

Scholars estimate that about 33% of the Creek population was lost in the removal years. It was one of the darkest and dastardly

episodes in American history.

Q: The catalyst of your book was the Supreme Court’s 2020 decision. Explain the decision and why it was necessary?

Miller: In a nutshell, the Supreme Court, in a 5–4 decision, held that the 1866 U.S. Treaty with the Creek Nation is still in force and is still the “supreme Law of the Land” (meaning federal law will generally take precedence over state laws and even state constitutions).

The more-than-3-million-acre reservation that the Creek Nation reserved for itself in the 1866 treaty is still in existence. For more than 100 years, Oklahoma purposely ignored this law and violated Creek sovereignty and jurisdiction. The U.S. is also at fault because it sat idly by and allowed these illegal actions and violations of the U.S. Constitution and federal law to occur.

In the Enabling Act of 1906, Congress placed a restriction on the new state — demanding that Oklahoma forever disclaim any jurisdiction or rights over the Indigenous nations and their lands.

In 1907, the new state codified this requirement in the Oklahoma Constitution, but it then proceeded to ignore that legal restriction for 113 years. The Supreme Court’s *McGirt v. Oklahoma* case stopped those illegal actions and re-recognized the existence of the 1866 U.S. Treaty with the Creek Nation.

Ethridge: The decision also attempts to clear up much of the confusion about jurisdiction, especially that the state of Oklahoma does not have criminal jurisdiction over the Muscogee (Creek) Nation reservation — the Creeks and federal government have that jurisdiction. The history of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation reservation is one in which the state of Oklahoma has, since its founding, attempted to whittle away at Native American jurisdictions, which is a way to whittle away at Native American sovereignty, which is a way to whittle away at Native American land rights. It’s really a centuries-old story. The *McGirt v. Oklahoma* decision attempts to correct all of this.

Q: What was the impact of the U.S. Supreme Court decision on *McGirt v. Oklahoma*?
Miller: I have called the *McGirt v. Oklahoma* case a “bombshell.” It already has and will continue to have a major impact on Native American nations, Oklahoma and the U.S.

Important questions about jurisdiction and which government has criminal or civil jurisdiction over which lands, peoples and topics have already arisen and will continue

to do so. Furthermore, Oklahoma courts applied the analysis of *McGirt v. Oklahoma* and re-recognized the reservations of at least eight other tribal nations.

The Native American nations and the United States now exercise jurisdiction over Indigenous peoples and, to a lesser extent, over non-Indigenous peoples in those areas. Forty-three percent of Oklahoma is now Native American country compared to 27% of Arizona.

Ethridge: The book outlines the immediate and future results of this decision. It shows how it reverberates through most aspects of life for both the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and many other Native American nations facing similar questions.

Q: How will the ruling affect people currently living on the Creek’s land?

Miller: Initially, there were articles written about people losing their homes. No homeownership changed — nobody lost an inch of ground due to the decision. It is just that 1.8 million Oklahomans just found out that they live on a reservation. And the Creeks will start buying up all the land that comes up for sale now within their reservation border.

Q: What will it mean for other Native American nations?

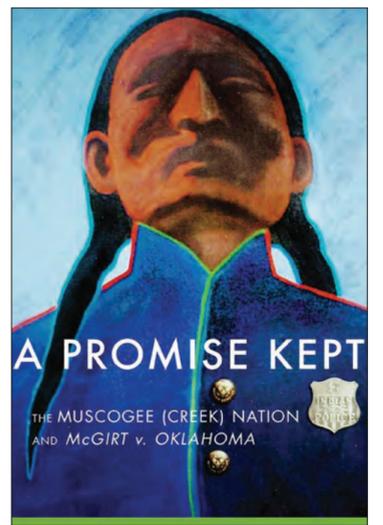
Miller: *McGirt v. Oklahoma* stands for a major proposition that is important to all Native American nations and people in the U.S. The court forced the U.S. and Oklahoma to abide by the “supreme Law of the Land” — the Creek Treaty of 1866 (U.S. Treaty with the Creek Nation). Will the Supreme Court continue to force the U.S. to live up to its treaty and statutory and human obligations to Native American peoples and nations all across the country? This is the promise but also the challenge of *McGirt v. Oklahoma*.

Ethridge: The *McGirt v. Oklahoma* case has large implications for other Native American nations. What happened to the Creeks and the encroachments by the state of Oklahoma on Creek rights has happened to many Indigenous nations. So the future of *McGirt v. Oklahoma* in part will determine their futures.

Q: How might this decision impact the 22 Native American nations in Arizona?

Miller: For tribal nations in Arizona, *McGirt* is a strong affirmation of treaty and tribal rights. In the six years since Justice Gorsuch joined the court, Native American nations have won eight out of nine cases. That is an incredible winning margin since tribes and Native American litigants had only won about 20% of their cases in the Supreme Court since 1986.

Only one tribe in Arizona has a treaty,



OU Press
“A Promise Kept: The Muscogee (Creek) Nation and *McGirt v. Oklahoma*”

so *McGirt* might have a limited immediate application here but this great change in the court’s attitude towards Native American claims helps all tribes.

Q: This Supreme Court decision has been described as one of the most significant decisions related in Native Americans in nearly 100 years. Why?

Miller: Oklahoma now has the greatest percentage of Indian Country. The decision no doubt shocked many people and the government of the state has not yet accepted the decision.

State officials have continued vigorously fighting this decision in every way imaginable and have already tried to get Congress and the Supreme Court to reverse *McGirt v. Oklahoma*. This battle will go on for decades in my opinion, and the Supreme Court and other courts will be the final arbiters on many of these issues. *McGirt v. Oklahoma* impacts and alters almost every aspect of life in Oklahoma.

Ethridge: If you look at the history of the Creeks and other Native Americans, you can see that treaties and legislation have, by and large, eroded Native American self-governance, jurisdictions and land bases. This treaty, in one fell swoop, reversed much of that erosion.

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Community



Jaryaca Baker enjoys smooth transition as business owner

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

Jaryaca Baker was working for the Seminole Tribe's Education Department when she decided that an 8-to-5 job in the office might not be the best fit for her and her family.

Baker, 28, who grew up in a large family on the Brighton Reservation, wrote down a list of ideas for potential businesses she could pursue. She thought back to meeting a woman who had set up a trailer that offered coffee and other items at a softball tournament.

"It was so cute," Baker said. That set the wheels in motion – literally – for Baker, who left her job last year to start Three J's Ice Cream, which offers a variety of ice cream and smoothies. She operates it out of a trailer that she brings to events. Since opening on Oct. 27, 2022, Baker has done several birthday parties and a basketball tournament.

Her biggest event came in January when her black Chevrolet Silverado pickup truck with a Firman dual fuel generator in the bed and trailer in tow pulled into Seminole Estates for Rez Rally, one of the tribe's largest annual gatherings that attracts hundreds of runners and walkers.

Throughout the morning, a steady stream of customers lined up to buy ice creams and smoothies. At times the line was a dozen or so deep. Baker, who received help from her mom, Mona, said it was an exhausting, but



Jaryaca Baker makes smoothies at the Rez Rally on Jan. 7 in Hollywood. The Brighton resident opened her business in 2022.

Kevin Johnson

fulfilling day as they served an estimated 300 ice creams and about the same number of smoothies.

"I like making our people happy, and they love our ice cream," Baker said.

Baker is in a happy place as a business owner and mother of

three kids, all age 8 and under. She said owning and running her business provides an opportunity for her to set an example.

"I want to show my kids you are supposed to do things and not sit around," said Baker, who has a degree from Keiser University and is working on another one in interdisciplinary studies with a focus on business.

Even though the kids are too young to work, Baker made sure they would be part of the business. Hence, the Three J's name, which is for her sons, Jhettzyn and Jherricko, and her daughter, Jhennie.

Before Baker could sell her first fruity pebble ice cream roll – which she said is the best seller – or a banana-peanut butter smoothie

– another popular item – plenty of work needed to be done to get the business rolling.

She purchased a trailer and customized it. She wanted it to be a warm, welcoming set up. Unlike food trucks where people usually walk up to the side to place an order, the Three J's trailer opens in the back and customers can walk up a ramp and place their order while standing at a counter. The more personable set-up is ideal for Baker, who said she enjoys meeting people.

"I wanted the inside to look fun, not cluttered. It's comfortable and fun," Baker said.

Baker received a lot of help from her dad, Preston, to make the trailer a business.

"My dad built everything. He built all the counters and shelves and did the floors. I bought a sink on Amazon," Baker said.

A friend provided electrical help. The

children's father, her mom and her four brothers all pitched in with painting and other assistance. She registered her business with the state and secured purchasing ice cream from a company in West Palm Beach.

Baker said she hopes to be at upcoming events such as the Brighton Field Day Festival and Chalo Nitka as well as continuing to do private events. She arranged a deal for local students of the month to receive a free ice cream or smoothie as a reward.

Being able to own a business that she can operate around her children's schedules has proven to be a win-win situation for Baker.

"It's everything I wanted," she said. To contact Jaryaca Baker about her business, email threejs614@gmail.com.



Jaryaca Baker, left, and her mother, Mona, work during a busy morning at the Rez Rally in Hollywood.

SEAL

From page 2A

This was deemed important enough for lawmakers and advocates to successfully push for change.

Fine. Then change it. Why must that be wrong in the first place.

take years?

It should not, because in some ways, agreeing to correct a wrong - and then going years without doing it, while the wrong is perpetuated - seems worse than not recognizing it

GENERAL TRIBAL ELECTION

May 8, 2023

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS MARCH 1, 2023

ALL TRIBAL MEMBERS MUST BE REGISTERED TO VOTE IN THIS ELECTION

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Mercedes Osceola's unique path leads to tribal events

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Mercedes Osceola says her family life and career at the Seminole Tribe have served as preparation for her new venture. Osceola is the Hollywood Council Office's special events coordinator for Councilman Chris Osceola. Her first day on the job was Oct. 17, 2022. She replaced Francine Osceola, who is now the manager of the Hollywood Community Culture Center.

Osceola's job involves planning and executing year-round events for Hollywood's tribal community. Her first event involved Halloween activities for about 600 people, followed by Thanksgiving for hundreds more, and then one of the largest Christmas events the tribe has ever held — about 1,000 people descended on a huge ballroom at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood for the festivities. Right after Christmas, it was time for yet another big event — the Rez Rally — which was held on the Hollywood Reservation this year.

On Osceola's radar now is Hollywood's signature event, the Tribal Fair & Pow Wow held at the Hard Rock Feb. 10-12. Also on Feb. 12 is a Super Bowl watch party at Seminole Estates by the rodeo arena. Osceola said the Council Office tries to make events family friendly and provide great food and exciting entertainment and prizes. Most of all, she said, the goal is to make people feel welcome.

"We plan four or five events at a time. I have a big family, I plan ahead of time," Osceola said. "If I can plan five, six, seven months ahead of time, that's what I do. I don't wing anything. Plus, I'm very organized, I'm very detail oriented."

Osceola's ability to multitask — she has seven kids — and her natural people skills make sense. She begins her day at 5 a.m., does a workout from 5:45 a.m. to 7 a.m., feeds the kids and gets them ready for the day, goes to work, and then it's more family



Damon Scott
Mercedes Osceola stands outside of tribal headquarters on the Hollywood Reservation in January.

activities at night. If there's an event, it sometimes extends into the wee hours.

Osceola's first job was as a tribal clerk, a position she started in her early 20s and held for seven years. She learned recordkeeping, helped to organize Tribal Council meetings, handled tribal resolutions and so on. Osceola said the job helped her learn a lot about both the government and business side of the tribe.

She'd leave the position to stay at home and grow her family, but said she started to get an itch to work again once her youngest child reached age six. Osceola returned to work as an intern in the Hollywood Council Office, processing event tickets for Loretta Micco, who was on leave at the time. Once Micco returned, Osceola took a position at the Community Culture Center as a language instructor. She'd stay for three years before landing in her current position.

"I loved being in Culture. We taught people how to cook, the language, how to sew, beadwork and baskets — we had everything," she said.

Osceola speaks Seminole (Elaponke), something she said her mother — Virginia Osceola — instilled in her as she grew up. She said her father — Joe Dan Osceola — was one of just a few tribal members who spoke both Seminole and Creek. Joe Dan Osceola, who died in 2019 at 82, was the tribe's first president and the first president of the United South & Eastern Tribes, among many other distinctions.

"He really encouraged us to go out and be advocates for the tribe, to do what we can to make our mark," Osceola said. "We're not limited to just Hollywood, I'm here to help serve the Seminole Tribe."

Osceola, 38, grew up on the Hollywood Reservation and is the oldest of five siblings. "We call ourselves the second batch, because my dad had a family before he married my mom," she said with a smile.

Osceola graduated from Sheridan Hills Christian School in Hollywood, where she played volleyball, basketball and ran cross-country. She was also a Jr. Miss Florida and a Miss Florida Seminole.

Back at the Council Office, Osceola said she's already planning for Mother's Day and Easter events.

"We're lucky to be such a tight-knit community. Everybody knows everybody. We all look out for each other," she said.

Finance head wants to bring 'mind-change' to office

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Accounting, budgeting and the like might not be exciting to some, but John Woodruff will at least convince you that it's an important subject and one he's passionate about.

Woodruff is the Seminole Tribe's new executive director of finance. He oversees four departments from his office at tribal headquarters in Hollywood — budgeting, accounting, travel and purchasing. Woodruff spent his first several weeks on the job — he started Dec. 5, 2022 — visiting the tribe's reservations. By mid-January he'd toured Hollywood, Brighton (more than once), Big Cypress, Tampa and Lakeland.

"I want to get out of the office. I want to get out there and understand people and what they're dealing with and come back here and help the employees support them," Woodruff said.

Woodruff explains that his 84 employees are not typically public facing — having direct interaction with people — but they support those in other tribal departments who are.

"That can be a tough job," he said. "If you can't cut a [purchase order], if you can't find your budget account, if you can't do these basic things and pay a vendor on time, it hamstrings everything."

One of Woodruff's first tasks was to send out an internal and anonymous survey to the department's employees. He said it had never been done before.

"I asked questions like: 'How are we doing? What are we doing well? What do you think we could do better?' The mere act of asking someone what they think is important," he said.

Woodruff said a big part of his job is allocating tribal resources to its many departments — police, fire rescue, public works, recreation, etc. — through the budget process. It's an area he's familiar with. He did finance work for five years at the city of San Antonio, 10 years for Pinellas County on the west-central coast of Florida, and most recently for 10 years at the city of Miami Beach — 25 years of budgeting experience in all. He said while the tribe's structure has similarities to those entities, there are some notable differences, too.

"Here we have the different reservations and each of those communities is unique and different and has different needs," Woodruff said. "So you can't just hang out in Hollywood and assume everything is like it is here."

Woodruff said the length of time it takes to get a generator after one is requested is a good "poster child" example of why his department matters day-to-day.



Damon Scott
John Woodruff sits in his office at tribal headquarters in Hollywood in January.

"Everybody says: 'I can just go down to Home Depot and buy one. Why is it going to take 90 days?' There are reasons, but at the end of the day, are they really good reasons? Maybe that's what would normally happen if you followed a vanilla process and didn't really care about what the real impact is to people on the ground," he said.

Woodruff grew up in Panama in Central America. When the U.S. gave control of the Panama Canal back to the country in 1999, Woodruff said many Americans living there at the time, including himself, moved away.

"Everybody went to Texas," he said. "But I'm more of a Florida guy. When you grow up down there you have two oceans within one and a half hours of each other, palm trees, vegetation, Latin people. That's Miami, not Texas."

Even so, Woodruff would first end up in San Antonio, earning a degree in history from the University of Texas at Austin and later a Master of Business Administration at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Then it was off to Florida, where he's been for 20 years. He lives in Pembroke Pines and has two children, ages 21 and 16. He said he's happy to be in South Florida and is excited to be working for the tribe.

"I want to be out there, I want to have presence," he said. "You've got to think bigger than yourself. Don't do what you always do, be adaptable and flexible. That's a mind-change I'm trying to bring to our department."

Lakeland community building, residential plans advance

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

Tribal Community Development (TCD) officials continue to move forward on construction plans for a community building on the Seminole Tribe's Lakeland Reservation. In addition, phase two of homebuilding is underway at the site.

TCD's director of construction management, Ricardo Rivera, said in early January that four of the companies that went through the request for proposals (RFP) process recently gave presentations in Tampa.

"All four are extremely qualified candidates," Rivera said. "It's good to see so many qualified vendors that want the job. Now the selection committee chooses."

The community building is expected to be a one-story, 35,351-square-foot structure on an almost 3-acre site. For comparison, the Howard Tiger Recreation Center on the Hollywood Reservation is about 39,000 square feet.

The building's amenities are to include a gymnasium, basketball court, exercise room, game room and an outdoor swimming pool, as well as administrative offices. There are spaces to be dedicated to the Culture program, which includes a teaching kitchen. The structure is being built to withstand a Category 4 hurricane and can be used as a shelter during storms.

Rivera said once the selected company is notified, a formal quote is requested. Once finalized, design work and site preparation would begin. Rivera said there's no firm timeline on construction, but work would likely begin sometime this year.

In the meantime, phase two of



TCD
This rendering of the Lakeland community building shows design elements such as canopies and mural walls.

homebuilding is underway.

"Phase two infrastructure is in punch list phase with the first lift of asphalt in place, street lighting installed, and the majority of grading complete," TCD's James Rabideau said.

A punch list phase refers to final aspects of a particular construction phase nearing completion.

Rabideau said 19 homes are under construction, with completion of phase two's first rental homes anticipated in May. In all, phase two will consist of 26 single-family homes — 20 rentals, five for sale and one to be used by the Seminole Police Department.

Rabideau said the tribe's Housing

Department has been working on contracts with tribal members for the homes that will be available for sale. Construction on those homes is expected to begin in March, contingent on permitting, he said.

Phase one of homebuilding consisted of 46 single-family homes on 1-acre lots. Once all phases are completed, the reservation would have a mix of about 150 single-family homes for rent and for sale on 1-acre lots.

The Lakeland Reservation sits on approximately 792 acres, located north of Old Polk City Road and east of Moore Road, about 37 miles east of Tampa.



TCD
This rendering shows what the community pool might look like.

Gary Allan headlines 84th Brighton Field Day Festival

STAFF REPORT

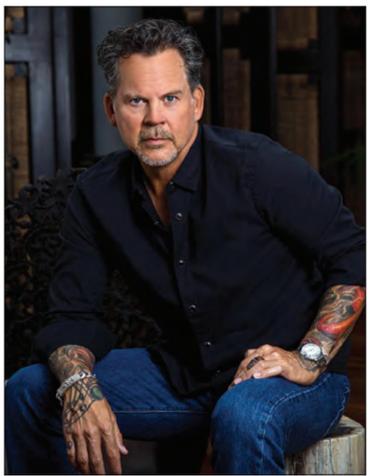
The 84th Brighton Field Day Festival will be held Feb. 17-19 at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena on the Brighton Reservation. It marks the first time the festival will be held since the onset of the pandemic in 2020.

Gates open at 9 a.m. on Feb. 17 and Feb. 19 and at 8:30 a.m. on Feb. 18.

Multi-platinum country artist Gary Allan will headline the music portion of the festival. Allan will take the stage Feb. 18 at 6 p.m. He has five No. 1 hits. He's described as "dark and dreamy" in Entertainment Weekly, "soulful and rough around the edges" in Playboy and deemed a "maverick" by Rolling Stone.

The Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association will hold a rodeo on Feb. 17 at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. and Feb. 18 at 3 p.m. Extreme bull riding will take the ring Feb. 19 at 3 p.m. The festival will also feature clothing contests, American Indian arts and crafts, Native foods, Native dancers and alligator wrestling. A Seminole culture camp featuring a live Seminole village will be on display.

Tickets for the festival are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the gate. Discounts for seniors are available. Free admission for



Gary Allan

children age 5 and under. For more information visit brightonfieldday.com or call (863) 467-6039.

Burlesque, comedy come to Immokalee in February

FROM PRESS RELEASE

IMMOKALEE — Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee will host its first-ever burlesque review Feb. 24 at 8 p.m. with The Las Vegas Burlesque Show. Advance tickets are \$44 and are available at Ticketmaster or moreinparadise.com. The show will feature empowered women rocking the stage during 75 minutes of classic rock and blues music, choreographed dance moves, and fringe galore. The Los Angeles-based women on stage are all full-time working pros in the business.

Longtime comedians Rita Rudner and Robert Klein will perform at Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee on Feb. 26 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$89.50 and are available by 1-800-514-ETIX or moreinparadise.com. Attendees must be 21 years of age.

Rudner has the distinction of being the longest-running solo female comedy show in the history of Las Vegas. She was named Las Vegas's Comedian of The Year nine years in

a row. For more than 40 years, Klein has entertained audiences and continues to have an acclaimed career in comedy, on Broadway and television, and in film. In 1975, Klein was the first comedian to appear in a live concert on Home Box Office. He has gone on to do nine one-man shows for HBO and received his first Emmy nomination for outstanding music and lyrics in 2001 for "Robert Klein: Child in His 50's." He co-starred in the hit NBC series, "Sisters," had a recurring guest-starring role on "Law and Order" and has guest starred on "The Good Wife" and "Royal Pains."



Ritarudner.com
Rita Rudner

Tribe honors FSU football's strong season

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

Florida State University's return to prominence on the football field this past season didn't go unnoticed by the Seminole Tribe and one of its biggest supporters of the team.

After four straight losing seasons, FSU finally resumed its traditional winning ways by posting a 10-3 record that included wins against LSU, Miami, Florida and a Cheez-It Bowl victory against Oklahoma.

Richard Osceola, from the Brighton Reservation, wanted to come up with a way to recognize the successful season, so before the Seminoles game against Florida on Nov. 25, 2022, he joined two other Seminoles — Brighton Councilman Larry Howard and FSU alumnus Kyle Doney — in presenting head coach Mike Norvell with a life-size wooden tomahawk. The giant axe was made from wood in the swamps in Ochopee by Miccosukee-Seminole artist and master carver Leroy Osceola.

Richard Osceola said axes have a significant history in Native American life, including the ancestors who used them to build huts.

"We always have an axe in our traditional life and our Native ways," he said.

Osceola said the presentation was made akin to the team's tradition of putting tomahawk stickers on the helmets of players to recognize athletic and academic achievements. This season marked Norvell's third at the helm. The Seminoles finished ranked 11th in the country.

"He brought the program back. We have a lot of young players. We have a strong program," Osceola said.

Osceola said Norvell thanked him and the Osceola family.

It wasn't the first time Osceola has presented a FSU football coach with a tomahawk. He did the same gesture with Bobby Bowden before the legendary coach's final game at the 2010 Gator Bowl in Jacksonville, an idea that came from former FSU player William Floyd.

In addition to coming from the Ochopee swamps, the tomahawks traveled near or over waterways with historical importance to Native Americans, such as Lake Okeechobee, the Kissimmee River, St. Johns River and Suwannee River, Osceola said.

Osceola planned to give a tomahawk to Jimbo Fisher when he was the FSU coach, but that idea ended when Fisher abruptly left the program in 2017 to coach Texas A&M.

In addition to the tomahawk presentation, another cultural presentation was made by Osceola, Doney and Councilman Howard. They presented a framed arrangement of feathers to Richard McCullough, who has been FSU president since August 2021. The feathers are from an Osceola turkey that was hunted by Richard Osceola's cousin Robert Youngblood.

"He's a game hunter with bow and arrow," Osceola said.



A large wooden tomahawk was presented to Florida State football coach Mike Norvell on Nov. 25, 2022. From left to right are FSU athletic director Michael Afford, Norvell, Kyle Doney, Brighton Councilman Larry Howard, Richard Osceola and Renegade team owner Allen Durham.

The framework was done by Jason Thomas from the Brighton Reservation.

"He did a nice job," Osceola said.

Tribal members Kirsten Doney, a 2021 FSU graduate, and Tomie Motlow were part of the presentation to the FSU president.

Allen Durham, who oversees the Renegade team that helps fire up the crowd at Doak Campbell Stadium, was a part of the tomahawk ceremony.

Osceola said he's already looking forward to the upcoming season. FSU, which has done well in attracting transfers, is ranked No. 4 in ESPN's "way-to-early" rankings for the 2023 season. The Seminoles open the season Sept. 3 against LSU in Orlando.

Osceola, Kyle Doney and Councilman Howard also met with longtime FSU radio play-by-play announcer Gene Deckerhoff at the Florida game. Deckerhoff retired after the team's spring game in April 2022. He had been the voice of FSU football since 1979 and the men's basketball announcer since 1974.



In 2010, Richard Osceola, left, and former FSU player William Floyd, right, presented FSU head coach Bobby Bowden with a giant tomahawk during the week of the coach's final game at the Gator Bowl in Jacksonville.



FSU President Richard McCullough receives an Osceola turkey feathers framed arrangement Nov. 25, 2022. From left to right are Kyle Doney, Kirsten Doney, FSU First Lady Jai Vartikar, McCullough, Tomie Motlow, Brighton Councilman Larry Howard and Richard Osceola.



From left to right, Renegade team owner Allen Durham, Kyle Doney, Tomie Motlow with head coach Mike Norvell's daughter, Mila Norvell, and wife, Maria Norvell.



From left to right, Kyle Doney, Richard Osceola, FSU longtime play-by-play radio announcer Gene Deckerhoff, and Brighton Councilman Larry Howard.

Tribe's energy conference on tap for February

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Officials at the Native Learning Center (NLC) in Hollywood have been putting the final touches on its annual energy conference scheduled to take place in February.

The "Renewable Energy and Sustainability Conference" takes place from Feb. 7 to Feb. 9 at the NLC. Last year's conference took place in a virtual format due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This year the conference will be in-person with a virtual option.

Returning keynote speakers include Lizana Pierce and Thomas Jones with the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs. Pierce is a deployment supervisor and Jones (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma) is a deployment specialist.

The conference, now in its fifth year, focuses on the changing landscapes of tribal energy development and sustainability. It gives attendees a chance to explore a range of renewable energy and sustainability opportunities. In addition to keynote speakers, there are presentations from members of Native American tribes and First Nations, as well as those representing tribal organizations and private industry.

The free conference attracts attendees from across Indian Country — whether tribal members or those working for tribes — who share up-to-date information and best practices on sustainability, energy security and energy sovereignty issues.

The conference is scheduled to dovetail with one of the tribe's signature events — the 50th annual Seminole Tribal Fair & Pow Wow from Feb. 10 to Feb. 12. It was cancelled last year due to concerns about the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Tribal Fair & Pow Wow attracts thousands of people across Florida and the U.S. to the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood for live music, dancing, drumming, food, arts and crafts and other activities.

The NLC is located at 6363 Taft Street. For more information visit nativelearningcenter.com.

For more information about the Tribal Fair & Pow Wow visit semtribefair.com.

Def Leppard, Motley Crue set to play Hard Rock Live

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — Celebrated rock legends Def Leppard and Motley Crue will take the Hard Rock Live stage at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on March 12 at 7 p.m.

Def Leppard, a 2019 Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee, features Joe Elliott (vocals), Phil Collen (guitar), Rick Savage (bass), Vivian Campbell (guitar) and Rick Allen (drums). Motley Crue features Vince Neil (vocals), Nikki Sixx (bass), Tommy Lee (drums) and Mick Mars (guitar).

Both veteran bands have sold millions of albums worldwide.

Some of the other big names coming to Hard Rock Live include:

- Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band, Feb. 7 at 7:30 p.m.
- Kevin James, Feb. 9 at 8 p.m.
- Anita Baker, Feb. 11 at 8 p.m.
- Rod Stewart, Feb. 13 at 8 p.m.
- Jimmy Buffet and the Coral Reefer Band, Feb. 15 at 8 p.m.
- Gladys Knight, Feb. 16 at 8 p.m.
- Roger Daltrey, Feb. 20 at 8 p.m.
- KC & The Sunshine Band, Feb. 24 at 8 p.m.
- The Judds, Feb. 25 at 7:30 p.m.
- Greta Van Fleet, March 8 at 7 p.m.
- Train, March 11 at 8 p.m.

Visit seminolehardrockhollywood.com for more information.

Coconut Creek casino to host upcoming concerts

FROM PRESS RELEASE

COCONUT CREEK — Four concerts are scheduled to be held in March at Seminole Casino Coconut Creek's The Stage at Coco. The Beach Boys will bring their surfin' vibes to the stage March 2 at 8 p.m.

Longtime rock 'n' rollers Joan Jett & The Blackhearts Band will perform March 9 at 8 p.m.

The California-based ska alternative rock group Sublime with Rome will hold a concert March 16 at 8 p.m.

Versatile music star Gary Lewis will perform March 22 at 8 p.m.

Visit seminolecoconutcreekcasinoc.com for more information.

◆ CASINO HOTEL From page 1A

The new casino-hotel will feature a nearly 38,000-square-foot casino, 623 slot machines and 18 tables for blackjack, baccarat and other house-banked card games. Included in the total number of slot machines will be 101 in a smoke-free gaming space and a high-limit area with 42 slot machines and four table games.

Marty Johns has been general manager of the Seminole Brighton Casino since the 1980s. The original casino opened in 1980 in a small red barn. Johns helped his father Josiah Johns, who created the Brighton casino when he added bingo tables to the barn, and learned the bingo business from him. Josiah Johns died in 1983. About year later, Marty Johns became general manager and found out he was good at the job.

"I learned a lot about customer service and marketing," Johns said. "We didn't have much in our tool kit then, but we have that now thanks to Jim Allen, (CEO of Seminole Gaming and chairman of Hard Rock International). "We've gone from a small red barn to a 30,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility. It's been an amazing ride."

"Our most successful casino worldwide is the Brighton casino, on a percentage basis," Allen said. "We made over \$50 million in profit here last year. It's a great job done with Marty's leadership. I'm fortunate to work with Marty and I'm proud of him."

Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. remembered the red barn casino.

"We outgrew it," Chairman Osceola

said. "This tribe has outgrown a lot and we will continue to grow. The revenue we generate from the casinos helps us grow and helps us in many ways because we are blessed by God above. It's a great day and it will be a great tomorrow. Each day we get to see is a blessing."

The hotel – a first for the reservation – will feature 100 guest rooms. It will be the fourth Seminole casino to offer lodging. The others are the Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee, the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood and the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa.

The pool area will have a 1,500-square-foot pool with a built-in sun shelf, a 12,500-square-foot deck with space for 76 chaise lounges, 40 chairs and two cabanas.

Dining options will include a 24-hour restaurant, a steak house and a fast-service and carryout cafe. The property will feature an indoor event space, which can be configured for banquets or bingo with 400 seats or for performances with 900 seats. An eight-lane bowling alley – a first for any Seminole Gaming property – will include 32 seats for dining or events.

An additional outdoor entertainment venue and stage will accommodate 3,000 guests for concerts, comedy shows and other performances.

"I saw Hollywood and Immokalee get casinos and now it's Brighton's turn. This will create a lot of opportunity for our young people," said Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola. "The TCD (Tribal Career Development for tribal members) program will be right here in your own backyard. Learn this; this is your business."



Courtesy image

A rendering of the exterior of the new Seminole Hotel Casino Brighton.



Courtesy image

A rendering of the pool for the new Seminole Hotel Casino Brighton.



Beverly Bidney

From left to right, President Mitchell Cypress, Seminole Gaming CEO and Hard Rock International Chairman Jim Allen and Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. at the groundbreaking ceremony.



Beverly Bidney

From left to right, Rita Youngman, Connie Whidden and Mabel Tichenor chat at the groundbreaking event.



Beverly Bidney

From left to right, Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, Brighton Councilman Larry Howard, Seminole Gaming CEO and Hard Rock International Chairman Jim Allen and Seminole Casino Brighton general manager Marty Johns.



Beverly Bidney

The First Indian Baptist Church choir sings at the start of the groundbreaking event.



Courtesy image

A rendering of the interior of the new Seminole Hotel Casino Brighton.



Team members from Seminole Classic Casino and Seminole Hard Rock Support Services partnered with Bombas, FPL, Soles for Soles and Wawa for a holiday toy drive benefiting 127 families with children registered in Broward County Public Schools' HEART program (Homeless Education Assistance Resource Team) on Dec. 16, 2022.

Hard Rock's Fernandez now SVP of Cafe division

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — Hard Rock International has named Anibal Fernandez as senior vice president of its cafe division. Officials made the announcement in a news release Jan. 18.

Fernandez oversees close to 200 company-owned and franchised Hard Rock Cafes, across the globe. He was most recently the vice president of franchise operations and business development.

"Anibal is an essential part of our Hard Rock team with a proven track record for helping Hard Rock Cafes around the world exceed guest expectations," Jim Allen, Hard Rock International chairman and Seminole Gaming CEO, said in a statement. "With over 20 years' experience at Hard Rock alone, we have the utmost confidence Anibal will continue to support team members and enhance the cafe division in new and exciting ways."

Hard Rock officials said Fernandez was first hired in 1998 as an operations manager and was quickly promoted to a general manager within the corporate division.

After a brief departure, officials said Fernandez returned to Hard Rock in 2003, serving as cafe general manager. He later oversaw the growth of franchised cafes in the Middle East, South Asia, Europe and Africa, in both director of operations and area vice president roles.

"It's with great joy and admiration for my team that I take this next step in my journey with Hard Rock as cafe division lead," Fernandez said in a statement. "I've had the privilege of working and growing within the Hard Rock organization and I'm excited to spearhead a continued era of excellence for Hard Rock Cafes around the globe."

The Seminole Tribe of Florida is the parent entity of Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming. More is at hardrock.com.



Hard Rock
Anibal Fernandez

Classic Casino, Support Services step up for Broward kids

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — Seminole Classic Casino and Seminole Hard Rock Support Services partnered with Bombas, Florida Power & Light (FPL), Soles for Soles, and Wawa for a holiday toy drive benefiting 127 families registered in Broward County Public Schools' HEART program (Homeless Education Assistance Resource Team) on Dec. 16, 2022.

More than 600 backpacks, hundreds of hoodies, drumsticks, necklaces, tumblers and 400 boxed lunches were donated by Seminole Hard Rock Support Services to students between the ages of 11 to 17.

Bombas donated over 1,200 pairs of Bombas socks and Soles for Soles donated 300 pairs of new sneakers.

FPL donated all its "Storm Stock" groceries, food items and an additional \$500 in food for each family to take home. The "Storm Stock" keeps on hand non-perishable items such as peanut butter, canned goods, cereal, snacks, etc. at FPL's individual power locations in the event that team members need to be in the location for a couple of days during a storm.



At left, Kimberly Prince, from Seminole Hard Rock Supports Services, helps with donated items during the toy drive. Above, from left to right, Seminole Classic Casino's general manager Edward Aguilar, advertising manager Angela Devaux and Player's Club manager/community events representative Donna Randazzo provide support.

Hard Rock builds on human trafficking prevention efforts

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

Hard Rock International has expanded its efforts to combat and prevent human trafficking by entering into partnerships intended to support victims, survivors and at-risk youth. The company made the announcement in a Jan. 10 news release.

The release said Hard Rock has already trained 27,000 hotel and casino employees on human trafficking at its locations across the globe.

"Human trafficking, which includes commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor, is a complex challenge for the entire global hospitality industry because it intersects [with] a range of organized criminal activities," Hard Rock said in the release.

Hard Rock said it has teamed up with Covenant House New York — a leading provider of services for runaway and homeless youth in New York City — to help employ youth who are considered vulnerable and assist them in avoiding or escaping human trafficking. The release said youth of color; those in the LGBTQ+ community and those with a background of poverty and abuse are particularly susceptible.

"Vulnerable and exploited youth need stable employment to transition their lives from the street to a better future," Julie Farer, Covenant House New York's executive director, said in the release. "This program seeks to not only offer jobs at Hard Rock, but to help these youth build careers by offering the experience, training and knowledge to build long-term futures in the global hospitality industry."

Participants in the program would be employed at the Hard Rock Cafe in Times Square and at the nearby Hard Rock Hotel New York.

QR code pilot program

Hard Rock is also implementing

a pilot QR code sticker program for both Hard Rock and Seminole Gaming properties. A QR code consists of an array of black and white squares that are scanned by a smartphone. Hard Rock's QR code sticker would direct the scanner to information on trafficking and to support for those who may need it. The sticker would be placed in bathrooms, elevator waiting areas, transportation waiting areas and parking lots.

Hard Rock said the idea was created by trafficking survivors and is part of the Clewiston, Florida-based nonprofit "Twentyfour-Seven."

"Victims who are being trafficked are constantly fed false information by their traffickers," Tsvetelina Thompson, managing director of Twentyfour-Seven, said in the release. "The ... QR code breaks the cycle by providing relevant and accurate information to victims so they may obtain help."

The pilot program will test the stickers at properties in Hollywood (Florida), New York City, Cincinnati (Ohio) and Madrid, Spain.

Town hall

Hard Rock was also a lead sponsor for a town hall organized by the Broward (County) Human Trafficking Coalition on Jan. 21 in Fort Lauderdale. The town hall featured speakers from Congress, the Florida Senate, victim advocacy groups, the Broward County State Attorneys Office and Paul Pellizzari, vice president of global social responsibility for Hard Rock International. Hard Rock bused in dozens of its South Florida casino employees to the event, which was held to call attention to human trafficking in the community.

Pellizzari reiterated that Hard Rock trains its employees to be able to flag suspected trafficking victims. He said companies should speak frankly about the problem, even if it's an uncomfortable topic.

"[To] acknowledge that it affects our business[es] and find a

way to talk about it both internally and externally," he said.

Continuing initiatives

The new activity comes on the heels of other anti-human trafficking work that Hard Rock has been involved in.

In January 2022, Hard Rock launched the "Social Identity Quest" education program designed to help teens understand risks of being lured into trafficking through social media channels. Hard Rock developed content with experts at ECPAT-USA and EduNetwork Partners.

ECPAT-USA said by June 2022, the program had reached about 1.2 million high school students across the U.S. Hard Rock and ECPAT-USA are adapting the program for Native American communities and Indigenous populations as well — groups that disproportionately suffer high rates of trafficking.

In May 2022 at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood, Seminole Tribe leaders, Hard Rock executives and Broward County officials signed ECPAT-USA's tourism child-protection code of conduct — a voluntary set of business principles to help prevent human trafficking. ECPAT-USA is a leading U.S. anti-child trafficking organization.

The code offers a framework for companies to establish policies and protocols and to train and educate employees on how to identify a human trafficker or a victim of human trafficking while going about their workday.

The Seminole Tribe is the parent entity of Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming. More is at hardrock.com. To access the "Social Identity Quest" program, go to socialidentityquest.com. More information about ECPAT-USA can be found at ecpatusa.org. To read about the nonprofit Twentyfour-Seven, go to twentyfour-seven.org. The Broward Human Trafficking Coalition is at bhtc.us.

Go to myhrl.com for more.



Via Facebook

A town hall about human trafficking was held Jan. 21 at the African-American Research Library and Cultural Center in Fort Lauderdale. Hard Rock was a main sponsor. Hard Rock was a lead sponsor. Pictured in the group are Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie (center in front row) and Durante Blais-Billie (in front row, fourth from the right).

Jimmy Buffet to play Hard Rock Live

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — Jimmy Buffett & The Coral Reefer Band will play Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel &

Casino Hollywood on Feb. 15 at 8 p.m.

"It is sure to be one of the biggest parties of the year, and we look forward to welcoming the Parrot Heads to this special

venue for a memorable and iconic performance," said Keith Sheldon, president of Entertainment at Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming.

Go to myhrl.com for more.

Still Here After 35 Years,
Guy Has Some Trustworthy Help.

"Great Reputation
and Worthy of Trust"

Meet **Andy Coffey**
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SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA AH-TAH-THI-KI MUSEUM

A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

Exhibit on contemporary Seminole artists to open at Ringling Museum

BY LAURA DELLO RUSSO
Registrar

BIG CYPRESS — It was nearly a year ago that staff from the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum met with Ola Wlusek, curator of modern and contemporary art at the Ringling Museum in Sarasota, to discuss a potential collaboration on one of its upcoming exhibits. The exhibit would highlight the work of 12 contemporary Seminole, Miccosukee, Muscogee Creek, and mixed-heritage artists from Florida, Oklahoma, and other geographic regions. With the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's culturally rich collection of Seminole paintings and crafts, it was an ideal partnership and the Ringling was eager to include several of these works in the exhibition.

Opened to the public in 1931, the John

and Mable Ringling Museum of Art was built to house the expansive art collection of the couple, who were members of the Ringling Bros. Circus family. The estate of John Ringling passed to the state of Florida upon his death in 1936, and it would eventually be acquired by Florida State University in the early 21st century. Now, the estate features not only the art museum, but also the Ringling mansion, Ca' d'Zan; Mable Ringling's rose garden, the Circus Museum and Tibbals Learning Center, the Historic Asolo Theater, the Ringling Art Library, the Secret Garden, the gravesite of John and Mable Ringling, and the FSU Center for the Performing Arts.

The Ringling's upcoming exhibit — "Reclaiming Home: Contemporary Seminole Art" — will be displayed in the Ulla R. and Arthur F. Searing Gallery Wing in the Museum of Art, which hosts many of the institution's contemporary art



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Noah Billie's "Osceola Wearing an American Flag" will be on display at the Ringling.

exhibitions. The exhibit will explore such themes as representation, ancestry and family, and it will also aim to offer diverse perspectives on environmental, health and sociopolitical issues which are impacting Native communities today. Featured artists include Noah Billie, Wilson Bowers, Houston Cypress, Jessica Osceola, Alyssa Osceola, Brian Zepeda, Corinne Zepeda, and Pedro Zepeda. Additionally, the exhibit will include an associated catalog, which will



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

A bandolier bag by Brian Zepeda, titled "The Riddler," will be included in the exhibit.

feature essays by Durante Blais-Billie, Stacy E. Pratt, and Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie.

When looking at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's collection of artwork and artifacts, the Ringling specifically requested to borrow works by two renowned Seminole artists: Noah Billie and Brian Zepeda. The loan will include 15 paintings by the late Noah Billie, as well as four beaded objects — a sash, two bandolier bags, and a pair of moccasins — made by Zepeda. By including these artists' works, the Ringling hopes to give its visitors the opportunity to learn about Seminole life and culture, as well as Seminole crafts and traditions. This artwork will also show visitors that the Native art scene is thriving and that Seminole artists play a significant role within this scene.

Since that initial visit a year ago, staff have continued to plan, coordinate and

collaborate on this loan, which will finally come to fruition this spring. Staff from the Museum's collections division will travel to Sarasota in February to assist with the transportation and installation of these important works of art. There, they will be available for the Ringling's visitors to admire until they return to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's vaults, where they will continue to be preserved for future generations.

"Reclaiming Home: Contemporary Seminole Art" is set to open at the Ringling on March 18 and run until Sept. 4. Additional information about the exhibit can be found on the Ringling Museum's website (ringling.org/events/reclaiming-home-contemporary-seminole-art) or by contacting the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's collections division at museum@semtribe.com.

Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow returns in-person for first time since 2020

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

The 50th annual Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow will be held Feb. 10-12 at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.

The last in-person Tribal Fair and Pow Wow was held in February 2020, just before the Covid-19 pandemic shut down large gatherings.

The event will feature wildlife shows, drum and dance competitions by Native Americans from around the country and a free concert by Sublime with Rome on Feb. 12 at 1 p.m.

Competitive dance competitions will feature men's straight, fancy and grass, women's cloth, fancy shawl, buckskin and jingle and men's and women's northern traditional. The drum competition will include northern and southern categories.

Fine arts, arts and crafts and clothing contests will also be held. Female arts

and crafts categories include Seminole doll, basketry; the male only category is woodcarving. Other categories are Seminole patchwork design, beadwork, and Seminole clothing with patchwork.

Fine arts categories for youth are pencil, mixed media, watercolor, pen and ink and photography. Adult categories include oil, acrylic, watercolor, pen and ink, pencil, mixed media and photography. Seniors age 60 and up may also enter ceramics. Deadline for entries is Feb. 3.

Clothing contests will be held for adults and youth. Categories include old style, modern, traditional, contemporary, jackets (men only) and skirts (women only).

For more information visit semtribe.com.

Meanwhile, the Seminole Tribal Fair basketball tournament will be held from Feb. 2 to Feb. 4 on the Hollywood Reservation. Teams must be all Native and have an eight-person roster. Categories are men and women age 18 and up, and legends men and women age 35 and up.



File photo

A drum group performs at the Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow in 2020.

Q&A: Native filmmaker Ramona Emerson talks debut novel 'Shutter'

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

Diné writer and filmmaker Ramona Emerson published her first novel — "Shutter" — in the summer of 2022 to quick critical acclaim. The book has been longlisted for a National Book Award in fiction.

Originally from Tohatchi, New Mexico, Emerson spent 16 years as a police department photographer in Albuquerque documenting crime scenes. "Shutter" is about a forensic photographer named Rita who, like Emerson, is a member of the Navajo Nation. The ghosts of the crimes she documents haunt the character, as do Navajo taboos about death.

Emerson, who grew up on the reservation, currently lives in Albuquerque with her husband, Kelly Byars (Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma). Emerson and Byars run the production company Reel Indian Pictures.

The Seminole Tribune recently caught up with Emerson to ask about "Shutter," her films, and what's next. Answers have been edited for length and clarity.

"Shutter" is set in Albuquerque. How would you describe its significance to Indian Country?

Albuquerque has a distinct and solidified reputation as a border town — a town that depends on Native commerce — but doesn't necessarily treat Natives well. Indeed, as a Native woman in Albuquerque, I never have and never will really feel safe. There is a reputation that these towns hold — an effect of colonialism I suppose — that is all about policing and incarcerating Native peoples but not supporting them or their culture.

There have been efforts made to change this, but they fall short. Albuquerque has also seemed to build its reputation on the television series "Breaking Bad" [and] "Better Call Saul," for being kind of a beacon of crime. As a resident, I can tell you this town has some pretty out of control crime and violence at its center. It really is the perfect place for "Shutter" and Rita to be because the city needs them.

The town, however, is central to so much of Indian Country — a centuries old meeting place for all of us to come together, and it's beautiful — surrounded with mountains and the best food in the world.

Have you always been a writer? What has the reaction been to the book?

Fiction allows me to include actual experiences as well as completely made up situations, and I don't have to tell anyone which is which. That allows for some real freedom. I have written sparsely throughout my life. I've never really been a journal keeper, but I've written a few screenplays and a ton of grants. But I think I chose film to tell stories because, to be honest, I don't like to write. I'm good at writing and I'm blessed to have that superpower, but it is something I have to talk myself into. I'm certainly not eager to sit in front of a sheet of blank paper when I can pick up my camera and start building a story with the push of a button.

It has been a smooth and pleasant transition into the publishing world from the film world. I've found so much support in the last year, far more than I've ever had in 25 years of making films, so I am so grateful for "Shutter" fans, for my publisher, my editor and everyone else who never gave up on me.

Your documentary film work, like "The Mayors of Shiprock," doesn't follow a typical Native narrative — what you've described as "poverty porn." Is it hard to create Native films that aren't formulaic or stereotypical in terms of Native identity?

That is the issue with documentaries. I think funders have a real preconceived notion of how they see Native stories in film and how they want or need you to tell the story. Funders need drama, they need the narrative arc, and they need you to follow a formula that they have developed that tells them this is what a successful documentary film looks like. I say we should dictate our own portraits of our own communities the way we see fit. Indigenous communities have earned the right to tell our own stories the way we



Ramona Emerson

Author and filmmaker Ramona Emerson.

want to tell them. Our narratives shouldn't be told the way the standard bearers dictate. Our histories are passed down the way we want our children to remember it and it pains me to see outsiders dictating our stories, or worse, telling our stories for us and calling it Native film.

What's next for you?

I have three films and a four-part docuseries currently in various stages of production and I need to finish them in the next two years or so. I am also writing the sequel to "Shutter" and there will be a third and final installment as well. So I have a lot to do in the next few years. I'm blessed to be able to do the work.



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RICHARD CASTILLO
FLORIDA CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEY
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Health



Charles Cypress: guardianship program success

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Charles “Catfish” Cypress said he is sober and living a healthy lifestyle thanks to the Seminole Tribe’s Advocacy and Guardianship Department.

Tribal members may be entered into the program, which is part of the Health and Human Services Department, for various reasons including substance abuse, financial instability or cognitive issues like dementia. Tribal Court oversees the guardianship cases.

Cypress, 61, said he was incarcerated for four years, but that since 2019 he has been thriving in the program. He is a member of the Center for Behavioral Health’s We Do Recover program, which helps people in recovery stay sober and productive by doing community service work.

“It keeps me busy,” Cypress said. “I want to keep doing something for other people. Helping them helps me too, it keeps me going. Alcohol and drugs are in my past and I’m very happy.”

The Advocacy and Guardianship Department also helped Cypress learn how to manage his money. He has a savings account, just purchased a new truck and is trying to start his own lawn care business. After 39 years without one, Cypress recently obtained his driver’s license.



Charles Cypress

Beverly Bidney

“Sobriety helped me get it,” he said. “We Do Recover is like a family, I’m thankful they let me work with them. Now I have my own natural high. I praise the Creator and even go to church sometimes.”



Early morning stroll

Walkers start their day in a healthy way by participating in a New Year’s Eve walk/run on Dec. 31, 2022, on the Hollywood Reservation.

Calvin Tiger

VA plans to waive medical copays for Native American vets

FROM MILITARY TIMES

Veterans Affairs officials soon will waive most copayments related to medical care for American Indian and Alaska Native veterans in an effort to encourage more of them to use VA health services.

Officials detailed the effort in a proposed rule released in the Federal Register on Jan. 10. They have not yet released a timeline for exactly when the copayments will be ended, but the final rule is expected to be approved in coming months.

The department has already pledged to reimburse all eligible veterans for any copayments made between Jan. 5, 2022, and the date of that final approval.

“American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans have played a vital role in the defense of the United States as members of the Armed Forces for more than 200 years,” VA Secretary Denis McDonough said in a statement accompanying the announcement.

“This rule makes health care more accessible and allows us to better deliver to these veterans the care and health benefits that they have earned through their courageous service.”

VA estimates about 150,000 American Indian and Alaska Native veterans are living in the country today, and Defense Department officials have estimated that roughly 24,000 active duty service members belong to the same groups.

Veterans Affairs officials said they do not have a reliable estimate on how many of those veterans are currently using department health care services.

The move to eliminate the copayments for the group was mandated by Congress in 2021, as part of a package of initiatives to improve benefits for Native American veterans.

Individuals who already receive medical care through the Department of Health and Human Services’ Indian Health Service do not have to pay any fees related to health care appointments. Lawmakers said extending that to VA services as well provides parity and fairness in federal benefits.

The move also pairs with current VA efforts to encourage veterans to enroll in department health care services, allowing department specialists to track common problems among former military members and offer faster response to potential medical issues.

Copays for VA services can cost more than \$50 for specialty visits, but many veterans with service-connected disabilities already have those fees waived.

Under the new plan, Native veterans would have their first three copayments related to community-based urgent care covered, but additional emergency visits would trigger a fee. Follow-up care performed by VA physicians would be exempt from copayments.

Officials said they are finalizing requirements to determine which veterans will be eligible for the benefit and how veterans will be able to file for repayment of those past fees.

More information on benefits for Native American veterans is available through the VA’s website.

Three questions with HHS’ Kiswani-Barley

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The executive director of the Seminole Tribe’s Health and Human Services (HHS) Department – Dr. Vandhana Kiswani-Barley – says she and her staff have hit the ground running in 2023.

The Tribune took a moment to ask her three questions Jan. 30 to get a sense of what’s on her mind as we enter the second month of the year.

Are there any tribal health threats that are new, are spiking, or are at levels that concern you?

At this time we currently are monitoring Covid-19, the flu and RSV. We have not seen anything alarming. (RSV is the respiratory syncytial virus).

What’s the status of the pharmacy expansion on the Big Cypress Reservation?

It is being expanded to fit all staff and pharmaceuticals. When the pharmacy was built it was not the appropriate dimensions for the services we currently provide. We are working with Tribal Community Development on a timeline for completion.

What health topics concern you the most right now?

It’s important for tribal members to get wellness exams and come in for routine visits to monitor chronic medical conditions.

For more information, call the HHS hotline at (833) 786-3458.

Diabetes program includes funds for Seminole Tribe

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, through the Indian Health Service, is investing \$139 million in funding for the fiscal year 2023 Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) to provide diabetes prevention and treatment services for American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

Funding awards have been made to 302 tribal, urban, and IHS sites in 35 states under a new, five-year grant cycle that began Jan. 1. According to IHS, the funds for tribes in Florida include \$349,578 for the Seminole

Tribe and \$137,402 for the Miccosukee Tribe.

“HHS is committed to eliminating health disparities in communities across the country,” HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said in a statement. “American Indian and Alaska Native communities have historically had disproportionately higher rates of diabetes than other populations. Through education and outreach programs like the Special Diabetes Program for Indians, we are successfully implementing evidence-based and community-driven strategies to prevent and treat diabetes in tribal and urban Indian communities.”

Choctaw woman named to national dietary committee

STAFF REPORT

Valarie Blue Bird Jernigan (Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma) was among 20 scientists appointed Jan. 19 to serve on the 2025 Dietary Guidelines advisory committee.

“This is a historic step and provides an Indigenous perspective on a highly influential committee,” Heather Dawn Thompson, director of U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of Tribal Relations, said in a newsletter.

The committee, which was appointed by the federal Health and Human Services and Agriculture departments, is “tasked with reviewing the current body of nutrition science and developing a scientific report that includes its independent, science-based advice for HHS and USDA to consider,”

according to the departments.

Jernigan is director of the Center for Indigenous Health Research and Policy, an endowed research arm of Oklahoma State University’s Center for Health Sciences.

She earned a Ph.D. in Public Health from the University of California, Berkeley. She also completed a postdoctoral fellowship in cardiovascular disease prevention at Stanford University.



Valarie Blue Bird Jernigan

OSU

NIHB to hold health summit

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The National Indian Health Board’s 2023 National Tribal Health Conference and Public Health Summit will be held from May 1 to May 5 in Anchorage, Alaska. Programming topics include tribal listening

and consultation sessions, hands-on training, and workshops covering topics such as funding for Indian health, the business of medicine, tribal public health, behavioral health, environmental health and climate change.

For more information visit nihb.org.

TPHC conference in April

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The 15th annual Tribal Public Health Conference will be held from April 11 to April 13 at Choctaw Casino & Resort in Durant, Oklahoma.

For more information visit tphconference.org.

Think teeth.

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SEMINOLE SCENES



Calvin Tiger

GOODBYE '22, HELLO '23: Team Hollywood got an early start toward a healthy new year by hosting a New Year's Eve walk/run Dec. 31 at Seminole Estates. It was also preparation for the following week's Rez Rally.



Kevin Johnson

TAPE TIME: Bull rider Josiah Johns tapes his wrist in preparation for his ride Jan. 21 at the Betty Mae Jumper Memorial Rodeo in Hollywood.



Courtesy photo

CHAMPION: Ashton Garza won the grand champion prize in the hog category at the Collier County 4-H Livestock Show on Jan. 19 at Roberts Ranch. He also earned second place in showmanship.



Kevin Johnson

WINNER, WINNER: With the Guitar Hotel in the background, a silhouetted Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola raises the championship trophy after Team Hollywood won the Rez Rally on Jan. 7 at Seminole Estates.



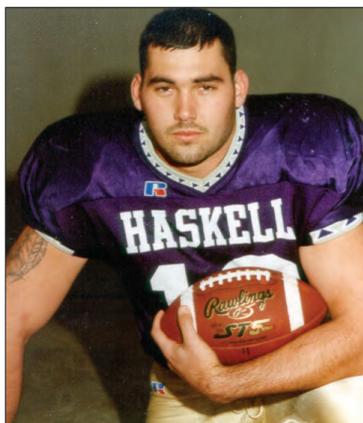
Hard Rock Rockford via Facebook

LET ME SLEEP ON IT: In January, Hard Rock Rockford in Illinois donated more than 80 pillows to the Rockford Rescue Mission and MELD at YSN, both of which provide shelter and services to homeless people in the area.

20 years ago: MVP honors for Pete Hahn

File photo

After the 2002 college football season, the Seminole Tribe's Pete Hahn was named most valuable offensive player for the Haskell Indian Nations University team. It was the second year in a row Hahn, a sophomore, won the award. He was the team's starting quarterback and punter.



Beverly Bidney

LUNCH CROWD: This flock of wood storks and a great egret, far left, gather across the street from the Ahfachkee School in Big Cypress on Jan. 20.

NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

NASA astronaut becomes first Native American woman to conduct spacewalk

Nicole Mann became the first Native American woman to complete a spacewalk.

Mann conducted the spacewalk with Japanese astronaut Koichi Wakata on Jan 20. They spent more than seven hours working on a platform where solar arrays will be installed later this year, NASA said.

"The installation is part of a series of spacewalks to augment the International Space Station's power channels with new iROSAs," NASA stated. "Four iROSAs have been installed so far, and two more will be mounted to the platforms installed during this spacewalk in the future."

Mann arrived at the International Space Station in October. She is expected to spend six months in space working aboard the microgravity lab.

Mann is a member of the Wailacki of the Round Valley Indian Tribes.

- Scripps News

Menominee Nation signs agreement with state for educating, not assimilating, Native youth

When Ron Corn Sr. graduated high school in 1977, he said he was among the last generation of Indigenous children Wisconsin schools actively tried to assimilate into non-Native culture.

"I was probably at the end of assimilation, where they tried to take that part of us that are Menominee," he said. "It's so gratifying and enlightening that our elders maintained our ways, for a lot of them under great distress."

Now, as chairman of the Menominee Nation in Wisconsin, Corn this month signed an agreement with the state to ensure not only that there will not be assimilation attempts again, but that there will be support to teach Native culture in schools.

He and Dr. Jill Underly, executive director of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, signed a memorandum of understanding Jan. 23 in Keshena.

"It is not just a memorandum of understanding, it's also support," Underly said. "Support only comes after understanding."

The agreement ensures that consultations and regular meetings will take place between state education officials and the Menominee Nation, which operates its own school district on the reservation.

The agreement also stipulates that DPI will support the tribe in cultural awareness education and trauma-informed care through mental health services and in financial help.

The cultural awareness education also includes the state supporting the tribe in its Menominee language revitalization efforts.

The tribe started a language immersion classroom at its daycare center in 2017, and for this school year, which started last fall, the Menominee Indian School District created a pre-K and kindergarten charter school.

Marc Grignon, the Menominee Nation's language and culture coordinator, said 28 children there speak only the Menominee language all day long.

"The language education for the last five or six years has been amazing," he said. "Our people have jumped leaps and bounds."

Corn said it was important to get this agreement in writing with the state.

"It memorializes what we agreed to in the event there's a change in leadership," he said.

The memorandum of understanding agreement is the sixth signed between the DPI and a tribe of Wisconsin.

The DPI started formalizing these agreements in 2018 and the previous tribes that have signed are Oneida, Bad River Ojibwe, Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe, Lac du Flambeau Ojibwe and Red Cliff Ojibwe.

Corn said the Menominee Nation would have signed it earlier, but the pandemic had delayed the in-person signing ceremony.

The purpose of the agreements is for state educators to "seek to establish critical relationships with American Indian Nations."

Officials from the neighboring school districts in Gresham and Shawano also attended the ceremony, which included students providing "snow snake" demonstrations, which are javelins used in competitions and for sending messages across the ice.

- Green Bay (Wisconsin) Press Gazette

In unprecedented move, Rincon withdraws from California tribal gaming compact

A 500-member tribe in northern San Diego County has become the first in California to opt out of state oversight of its gambling operations in favor of federal supervision.

The move by the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians ends nearly two decades of legal wrangling rooted in the way California assesses regulatory costs.

It could also herald the beginning of the end of the state's hold on some tribal gaming operations, which last year paid nearly \$67 million into a state fund to regulate tribal gaming. That money funds staff at the California Gambling Control Commission, Bureau of Gambling Control, Office of the Attorney General and Office of Problem Gambling.

Rincon Chairman Bo Mazzetti said the transfer of regulatory duties is less about the funding dispute and more about moving toward increased tribal sovereignty for Rincon and other tribes throughout the state.

"We're the first to go through the full process and help develop the process where the state has agreed to opt out from regulatory oversight of our gaming operations," he said. "Basically, making it simple, the middleman is being taken out."

The change grants the tribe a greater ability to self-govern, allowing it to operate gaming through a direct relationship with the federal government on a nation-to-nation basis, rather than submitting to California as a subsidiary of the United States.

Tribal gaming compacts are agreements negotiated between individual tribes and states that are then approved by the federal government allowing Class III gaming — slot machines, house-banked games like blackjack and electronic games of chance — on tribal lands.

Tribes can operate Class II gaming — Bingo and non-banked games — without a state compact directly under National Indian Gaming Commission oversight.

While tribal gaming — mostly bingo — started at Rincon in the 1970s, it was a U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1987 that recognized a tribe's right to operate gambling operations. The tribe entered a gaming operations compact with the state in 1999.

Then, in 2004 — the same year Rincon opened its casino, Harrah's Resort Southern California near Valley Center — the tribe filed a lawsuit against then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger claiming that his negotiations with tribes were unconstitutional and unfair.

In 2011, the lawsuit advanced to the U.S. Supreme Court, which let stand a lower court ruling that California violated federal tribal gaming law by demanding casinos make payments into the Indian Gaming Special Distribution Fund in exchange for the ability to add more slot machines.

With California and the tribe unable to reach agreement in the years since, Mazzetti said Rincon entered into an interim arrangement known as a secretarial procedure that allowed it to operate its casino under federal approval instead of state approval.

On Nov. 21, the state and tribe agreed the regulatory role would permanently shift to the NIGC and the tribe would no longer need to reimburse California for regulatory costs, a spokesperson for Gov. Gavin Newsom said in an email. The agreement with the NIGC was signed Jan. 3, said a spokesperson with the federal agency.

Elizabeth L. Homer, a tribal gaming attorney in Washington D.C. and former NIGC vice chair, said that moving away from a state gaming compact can increase sovereignty and self-governance. In California, she said, tribal gaming compacts often include stipulations related to child support enforcement or environmental policies.

"Compacts are really only supposed to govern the conduct of Class III gaming and are not intended as a mechanism for the state to start pressing its policies onto tribal governments," Homer said.

Although the tribe will no longer be under the state's gaming regulation, that doesn't mean there won't be an abundance of regulatory oversight.

All gaming on Indigenous land in the United States operates under a tribal gaming commission, which Homer said is on the casino floor daily making sure that cash handling, staff licensing, surveillance and other processes comply with the tribe's regulations.

"Does this mean that there is less oversight, or is this going to be a more poorly regulated facility because the state isn't performing that function? I would say, not really. I think there's going to be robust regulation regardless," she said.

Instead of the state performing its annual inspections, it will be the duty of the NIGC to conduct site visits, monitor operations and enforce compliance, according to the agreement between Rincon and the federal agency provided to The San Diego Union-Tribune.

The shift of power for Rincon's gaming operations follows a report from the state auditor's office last summer that found California had not effectively managed the Indian Gaming Special Distribution Fund.

The fund's balance was found to have an excessive reserve last June with a balance of \$127 million — enough to pay for four years of expenditures related to regulating tribal gaming. California collected \$34 million more in distribution fund fees than the cost of regulation in 2021.

The report also states the Public Health's Office of Problem Gambling hasn't effectively monitored its treatment and prevention programs, which the fund also covers.

Although the tribe will no longer be paying the state for regulation — it will instead pay the NIGC — Rincon will continue to pay \$1.3 million each year into the state's revenue sharing trust fund. Money from that fund is distributed to tribes that lack gaming operations, often because they're located in remote areas that make the success of a casino less feasible.

The tribe's casino is also covered by its own oversight through the Rincon Tribal Gaming Commission, which monitors all casino activities to make sure staff receive proper background checks, and that all transactions adhere to federal, state and tribal gaming laws.

"We had all three of them before — our tribal gaming commission, the state of California and the National Gaming Commission," Mazzetti said. "Basically, now we've just moved the state out, and the national gaming commission is going to provide the oversight that the state used to provide."

It may be too early to tell whether many other tribes will follow suit, said George

Forman, a tribal gaming lawyer in Northern California.

To make a similar move, a tribe would need to be in the position to renegotiate its compact upon approaching its expiration date. After being unable to come to an agreement, a tribe would need to then sue the state for failing to negotiate the compact in good faith and win its case.

"Tribes cannot simply opt out. These compacts — the more recent ones — are 25-year agreements," Forman said.

But Forman said about 28 tribes — those among the first to enter into state compacts in 1999 — have agreements that will expire at the end of the year.

Some other tribes — Forman said there's 16 throughout the state — have already won cases against California over bad faith gaming negotiations.

Last summer, five tribes — Hopland Band of Pomo Indians, Chicken Ranch Rancheria, Robinson Rancheria, the Chemehuevi Indian Tribe, and Blue Lake Rancheria — won a suit in the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, according to Casetext. The ruling states that California has problematically "demanded that the Tribes agree to compact provisions relating to family law, environmental regulation, and tort law" unrelated to gaming operations, which isn't allowed under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

Forman said tribes that have already won their lawsuits, including four he represents, will enter into post-judgment negotiations that will determine the future of their gaming operations.

"It's going to depend on whether tribes entering into new compacts are able to reach agreement with the state on new compacts, in which case, the state will continue to exercise the regulatory authority conferred on them by the compacts," he said.

The La Jolla Tribal Council — which operates the La Jolla Trading Post-Casino about 10 miles away from Harrah's — said in a statement they were pleased Rincon and the state had agreed the tribe could regulate their gaming operations without the state's oversight. The tribe did not say whether it too would consider working directly with the federal agency for gaming regulation.

- San Diego (Calif.) Union-Tribune

Tribe's name to be restored to Connecticut river under proposed bill

A state representative wants to restore a piece of Connecticut's pre-colonial history to one of its major rivers.

State Rep. Anthony Nolan introduced a bill [in January] in the state that would restore the Thames River to the Pequot River, named after the tribe that lived on the land for thousands of years.

Nolan told ABC News that his bill came as a request from constituents who were seeking more ways to honor the history of the state's Indigenous population in a bold way.

"It think it's a big step forward. It's an opportunity to see a visual of what they had," Nolan told ABC News. "It will be on our signs [and] in our literature instead of things you have to seek out."

The 15-mile river runs through several towns in eastern Connecticut, including New London and Groton.

European colonists renamed the river in the 17th century, during a time when the Pequot tribe was being forced out of their lands.

"It wasn't right," Nolan said of the colonial name change. "And this is what I'm fighting for with them in mind."

- ABC News

Monterey Park victims fund receives \$100K donation from Pechanga Tribe

Victims of the Monterey Park deadly mass shooting received a sizeable donation from a Southern California tribe.

The Pechanga Band of Indians announced Jan. 25 it would be contributing \$100,000 to the Monterey Park Lunar New Year Victims Fund.

The donation drive is hosted on GoFundMe. The fundraiser's listed goal was \$750,000 at the time of the donation, but following the tribe's gift, the total had eclipsed that goal at \$807,000. The fundraising goal has since been increased to \$900,000.

"The city and community of Monterey Park opened its arms to Pechanga more than a decade ago to partake and contribute to the excitement of its Lunar New Year Festival. As we mourn the victims of Saturday night's tragedy, Pechanga's commitment to the community remains unwavering," the Tribe wrote in a news release.

Mark Macarro, chairman of the Pechanga Tribe, said the tribe has made "great friends and acquaintances through the city's Lunar New Year Festival."

"Like so many throughout California, we are deeply saddened by this tragedy and extend our deepest condolences and support for the victims," Macarro said.

- KTLA (Los Angeles, Calif.)

Harvard completes repatriation of Native remains to Wampanoag tribes

Harvard University's Peabody Museum and Warren Anatomical Museum recently completed the legal process for repatriating the remains of 313 Native people from eastern Massachusetts to Wampanoag communities in Mashpee and Aquinnah.

Harvard and other institutions are working on returning the remains of Native individuals from western and central Massachusetts.

An investigation by ProPublica has found that a handful of institutions, including Harvard, still holds thousands of remains of Native American ancestors.

After the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation became federal law in 1990, many museums took the first steps to comply — including reporting the number of human remains in their collections and which state and county they came from.

Jim Peters, a member of the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe and the executive director of the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs, said he worked with Harvard for the past couple of years on this recent repatriation.

"I think they've done the best they can," Peters said about the Harvard museums. "It's been a mountainous job that they may not have paid attention to in the past eras... They have come a long way."

Peters said the next step is for the Wampanoag tribal communities to find final resting places to rebury the remains of those who died.

In an emailed statement Harvard University said it plans to start consultations on remains from other parts of the state.

"The Peabody Museum plans to reach out to invite consultation on the 25 ancestors from Central, Western and unknown locations in MA by the end of January. This includes the ancestors from Worcester, Hampshire and Franklin Counties and the ancestor from Franklin County from the Warren Anatomical Museum."

Some other museums with the remains of people from central and western Massachusetts have either begun or plan to begin the process of repatriation.

Berkshire Museum is in the midst of the repatriation process for the remains of two individuals from Hampden County.

The Worcester Historical Museum, which has the remains of two individuals, plans to seek funding to hire someone to guide them through the repatriation process.

"My biggest concern with the whole process is ensuring that everything is done correctly," said Shelley Cathcart, the Worcester Historical Museum's curator.

According to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation database, the American Museum of Natural History in New York City has the remains of five individuals from Franklin County and one from Hampden County.

In an emailed statement the museum said it has "not received any inquiries or claims for these six individuals."

The museum did not say whether it had invited native groups to consult, "but welcomes engagement with any interested native communities regarding these individuals."

- New England Public Media/WBUR (Boston, Mass.)

Dogs attack and kill boy, injure mother on tribal land in Idaho, authorities say

A young boy was killed and his mother injured after the pair was attacked by four dogs in Fort Hall, Idaho, according to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes.

In a statement on Facebook, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes said the Fort Hall Police Department (FHPD) responded to a call of a dog attack on Jan. 21.

The Fort Hall Police Department patrols the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation across 544,000 acres of land encompassing four counties, according to its website. The land is near Pocatello in eastern Idaho.

Police found two non-tribal victims — a mother and son — who were both taken to a local hospital. The boy died, authorities said.

"The four dogs involved in the attack were two rottweilers and two mixed breeds — all were put down by tribal authorities," police said.

The owners of the dogs — who are also non-tribal members — own the property where the attacks occurred, police said.

They "were cited for 15 violations of the Tribes' Animal Ordinance including Vicious Animal Attack, Rabies Vaccination, and Over the Limit of Canine or Feline Pets," the statement said.

The investigation into the attack continues together with the FBI and Idaho Fish and Game. "This case will be submitted to the United States Attorney to review for potential federal charge," FHPD said.

- CNN

'Native American' novelist accused of being a 'Pretendian'

Colorado writer Erika Wurth has earned accolades from the New York Times and Good Morning America for her new novel based on her native American heritage — but it's a past, her detractors say, that she has made up.

Wurth, who teaches creative writing at Regis University in Denver, claims Chickasaw, Apache and Cherokee heritage on her mother's side. The background informs her latest novel, "White Horse," which was released to capitalize on Native American Indian Heritage Month in November 2022.

But according to Native activists and researchers, Wurth, 47, is one of dozens of "Pretendians," and featured on AncestorStealing, a blog that exposes white people who pose as "fake Indians."

"Her story is completely unverifiable," said Jacqueline Keeler, a Portland, Oregon, journalist who consulted public records

going back more than 100 years to investigate Wurth's claims. "Her story just doesn't add up. She has zero Native ancestry."

Last year, Keeler, who is of Dine/Dakota heritage, made international headlines when she unmasked Sacheen Littlefeather, the Native American activist and actor who famously declined Marlon Brando's best actor Oscar in 1973 over Hollywood's portrayal of Native Americans. According to Keeler, Sacheen Littlefeather, who died last year, was not Native. Keeler's statement was backed up by Littlefeather's family, who has Mexican-American roots.

Keeler, who has been accused of conducting "witch hunts" to expose fake Native Americans, told The Post she met Wurth a few years ago when the novelist publicly accused Native American writer Sherman Alexie of sexually assaulting her when she was a 22-year-old aspiring writer. Alexie vigorously denied the allegations of sexual misconduct leveled against him by Wurth and two other women.

Keeler said she began investigating Wurth's background because the novelist's family story seemed fanciful.

My grandmother, Margarite Temple, came from a long line of urban Indians (of Apache, Chickasaw, and Cherokee descent) and suffered much," Wurth wrote in a 2022 essay for CrimeReads.com. "Without the finances to realize her dream of becoming a blues singer in New York, Annie James, the Chickasaw whorehouse owner grandmother who raised her, arranged a marriage with a much older man. Margarite was 14. He beat her, gave her syphilis, walked up the steps of their house drunk, and kicked her while she was pregnant."

According to Wurth, James exacted revenge by killing her own husband. "She had stripped a bullet, melted it, and poured it into his ear while he was sleeping, which killed him," Wurth said in a 2017 blog post.

Keeler said a team of researchers and Native American genealogists were unable to verify Wurth's Indigenous roots or the story about the murder.

- New York Post

Report looks to curb overincarceration of Native Americans/Alaska Natives

The MacArthur Foundation has released a report showing that Native Americans are sentenced more harshly than white, Black or Hispanic offenders.

The report, "Over-Incarceration of Native Americans: Roots, Inequities, and Solutions," says Native Americans and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) are "disproportionately represented" in state and federal criminal justice systems. But it notes that collecting accurate data is challenging: Often, prosecutors lump offenders into an "other" racial category; states and counties may not track race at all or may lack access to justice databases.

"Despite unclear and incomplete data, information suggests that once Native people enter the justice system, it becomes much more difficult for them to get out," the report states.

Researchers point to a system that could help reduce disparities: Holistic defense, a system that defenders in the Bronx, New York, designed in 1997. This method looks at what drives offenders into the criminal justice system and "fits well with traditional, tribal principles."

- Voice of America

Muscogee Nation and Georgia officials will cooperate on restoring the sacred to the tribe

Hundreds of Indigenous people disinterred by archaeologists at the historic Etowah Mounds in Northwest Georgia will be returned to their descendants with the cooperation of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Etowah is one of the most well known of the so-called Mississippian mound cities in the Southeast which thrived in the centuries leading up to European colonization. Those sites include Cahokia in Illinois, which is a UNESCO world heritage site. In Georgia, the Ocmulgee Mounds are now a National Historic Park. There are still about 100 major Mississippian sites.

Since the 1960s, displays of what was taken from the funeral mound have been the real draw to the state-run museum at Etowah in Bartow County about 45 miles north of Atlanta. Two marble statues of human figures are probably the best-known Etowah objects, but displays also included art, jewelry and, at one time, human remains.

"You know, these are very special items," said Raelynn Butler, Historic and Cultural Preservation Manager for the Muscogee Nation, "but they're also funerary. And they were buried with ancestors."

That, says Butler and others, like Emman Spain, makes what came from the funeral mound sacred.

Spain is the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act coordinator at the Muscogee Nation. NAGPRA is the federal law under which tribes recover what was taken from them by archaeologists and museums and it's the law under which the Georgia DNR is returning its Etowah collection to the Muscogee Nation.

Spain said NAGPRA is ultimately about human rights, not objects.

"Every human being has a right to be buried along with their property except for Native Americans for some reason," Spain said. "I mean, you don't see that with Black communities. You don't see that with white communities."

- Georgia Public Broadcasting

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AND THE E STREET
BAND



FEB 9
KEVIN JAMES



FEB 11
ANITA BAKER



FEB 13 & 14
ROD STEWART



FEB 15
JIMMY BUFFETT



FEB 16
GLADYS KNIGHT



FEB 17
DANCING WITH THE
STARS



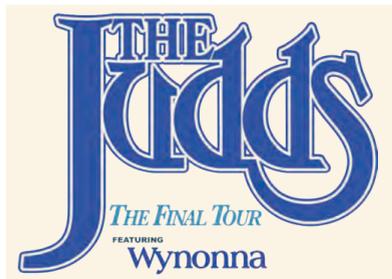
FEB 18
JAY WHEELER



FEB 20
ROGER DALTREY



FEB 24
KC AND THE
SUNSHINE BAND



FEB 25
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HOLLYWOOD, FL

Education

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Education roundup: workshops, spring SWEPE, new library supervisor

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The Seminole Tribe's K-12 students are about halfway through the school year, and those in higher education are in the spring semester.

Education Department director Michael Giacchino said there are about 172 tribal members currently enrolled in higher education and about 1,109 tribal members in K-12 programs — students who are in the department's system.

"This time of year we are actively reaching out to families with seniors who are not in partnership with us so they can get recognition [at graduation]," Giacchino said.

Giacchino said he wants to make sure the tribe is ready in advance to recognize those who intend to take part in tribal graduation events.

New workshops, presentations

The Education Department has organized a new series of workshops and presentations that begin in February and run through July. There are five computer literacy workshops and three Seminole history presentations — funded by a recurring \$10,000 grant.

The topics in computer literacy cover an introduction to Microsoft Office, an introduction to Excel, managing digital photographs, creating presentations with PowerPoint and understanding how to navigate the internet. Tribal Professional Development (TPD) staff will host the workshops, which are geared toward adults.

Marisa Schnirman, the Education Department's assistant director, said the Seminole history presentations are being planned in conjunction with Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum director Gordon "Ollie" Wareham. Topics include a historical review of Seminole patchwork, Seminoles in the trading post era, and an overview of the Seminole Wars.

The workshops and presentations are scheduled to take place at the tribe's libraries beginning Feb. 1. Schnirman said each workshop or presentation would be held twice at two libraries. Space is limited. For more information, contact Schnirman at (954) 989-6840, ext. 10551, or marisaschnirman@seminoletribe.com.

Spring SWEPE teed up

TPD is taking applications for the spring version of its Student Work Experience Program (SWEPE) through Feb. 10. The program is open to enrolled students from 14-to-24 years old. Students are required to complete an application. The spring SWEPE runs during each students' respective spring break, which is typically between March 13 to April 14.

Work experience positions are paid and hours range from 20 to 40 hours a week, depending on the department and program. Other programs administered by TPD include the Work Experience Program (WEP) and the Emerging Leaders Program (ELP).

Giacchino said TPD is also seeking high school students who need community service hours to assist at the Tribal Fair & Pow Wow Feb. 10-12. He said students don't have to attend the entire event, but could work for an afternoon, for example.

Questions about SWEPE or community service can be directed to Kajir "Kai" Harriott, the Education Department's student and professional development success coach, at (954) 993-6445.

New library supervisor

Padmini Dukharan has been named the Education Department's new library supervisor. She started in the position Jan. 9.

Giacchino said she comes to the tribe from the Miami-Dade Public Library System and has more than 20 years of library experience.

Dukharan succeeds David M. Blackard, the longtime Seminole Tribe employee and library supervisor, who died last summer from complications of cancer at age 69. Blackard had been the tribe's library supervisor since 2007.

For more, go to seminoleeducation.com.

PECS sixth graders dig for history

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — An annual tradition at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School is the sixth grade archaeological expedition on the Brighton Reservation, where the students learn what it means to unravel history by finding and examining old items left in the dirt by residents about a century ago.

On Dec. 21, 2022, the students and Tribal Historic Preservation Office employees went to the pasture of THPO cultural resources supervisor Jack Chalfant to see what they could learn about Seminole history. It was the first archeological field trip since 2019 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"We hope they learn a little about the history of the reservation and the people who lived there before it became a reservation," said sixth grade teacher Mindy Wells. "And learn about archeology."

Similar to previous years, students explored the site which was a homestead in the 1920s. They learned from THPO staff about soil levels, brick mapping and how to weigh, measure and classify the artifacts they found.

Students dug in pits, searching for pottery, glass, bones and other items. Discussions with staff members followed their discoveries and students speculated what purpose the items might have served.

Another objective of the dig was to teach the students the usefulness of science. For example, archeologists use science to analyze soil levels, map the site by noting where bricks are found and document dimensions of artifacts.

"Sixth graders aren't overly enthusiastic about much, but some of them liked getting into the dirt and digging for things," Wells said. "I think it's good for the students to get outside and get them thinking about the history in their own pastures. That's the ultimate goal."



PECS students Stella King, left, and Azariah Washington, center, are engaged in learning about archeology during an archaeological dig Dec. 21, 2022.

Philip Baer named Ahfachkee School principal

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — After six years as its assistant principal, Philip Baer was named principal of the Ahfachkee School on the Big Cypress Reservation in December 2022.

"I love working with the students. They are amazing. You can really make a difference in their lives," Baer said.

Baer, who was assistant principal under former principal Dorothy Cain, said he enjoys interacting with students every day and his goal is to offer them the best education. He also aims to strengthen relations with the Big Cypress community and tribal departments and explore the possibility of opening a vocational school on the campus where students could learn trades.

"Not all students will go to college and we could teach them things that could be useful in Big Cypress," said Baer, a veteran educator with more than two decades of experience. "But we do have more students being accepted to college, especially art programs."

Baer said the relationships he forged with students and their families as assistant principal have been helpful in the transition. Baer also praised the school's employees for their caring attitudes toward the students.

"Since we came back from [virtual school during the pandemic], the climate in the school has changed. It's a calmer and happier environment," Baer said. "The students are more open and have come out of their shells. The older students will sit and talk to you."

As principal, Baer has been involved with the construction of Ahfachkee's new building for elementary school students and a gymnasium, which are scheduled to be completed by the end of the year. The building next door for middle and high school students opened in 2019.

Prior to joining Ahfachkee, Baer spent 20 years working in Broward County schools in a variety of capacities, including coach, physical education teacher, technology teacher, fifth grade teacher and assistant principal. He said he always knew he wanted to be in an administrative leadership role and feels fortunate to do so at Ahfachkee.

"I love every minute of it here," Baer said. "You will never have an opportunity to work in a place that has such a unique culture. It's an amazing experience."



Ahfachkee School principal Philip Baer talks to students in January. He became principal in December 2022 after several years as assistant principal.



Amber Midthunder to speak at UNITY conference

STAFF REPORT

Actress Amber Midthunder (Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux) and producer Jhane Myers (Comanche/Blackfeet) will be guest speakers at the United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY) midyear conference Feb. 23-26 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Phoenix-Tempe in Arizona.

Midthunder starred in the 2022 science fiction action film "Prey," which Myers co-produced. The film has received several nominations, including a Critics Choice Award nomination for Midthunder for best

actress in a limited series or movie made for television.

"Native Americans are gaining prominence and earning acclaim in the entertainment industry now more than ever," Mary Kim Titla, UNITY executive director, said in a statement. "People like Amber Midthunder and Jhane Myers are working to increase representation, and we are proud to add them to our midyear speaker lineup."

The conference will feature workshops, breakout sessions and cultural sharing.

Go to unityinc.org for more information.



Matt Winkelmeier/Getty Image (left), courtesy photo (right)

Amber Midthunder, left, and Jhane Myers.

Winter camp fun

Big Cypress Recreation winter camp took kids to Sky Zone trampoline park in Fort Myers on Jan. 3.



Beverly Bidney (2)

Kye Covarrubias, left, and Ollie Balentine show off their high-flying moves as they jump on a trampoline at Sky Zone during the Big Cypress winter camp field trip.



Beverly Bidney

From left to right, Jason Billie, an unidentified boy, Lakota Correa and Shawnee Correa balance on swinging platforms over a foam filled pit at Sky Zone in Fort Myers. The boy in the white shirt wasn't with the camp group, but enjoyed playing on the swings as well.



Beverly Bidney

Campers and counselors attending the Big Cypress winter camp field trip to Sky Zone enjoy a lunch of pizza and chicken nuggets as they take a break from the fun.

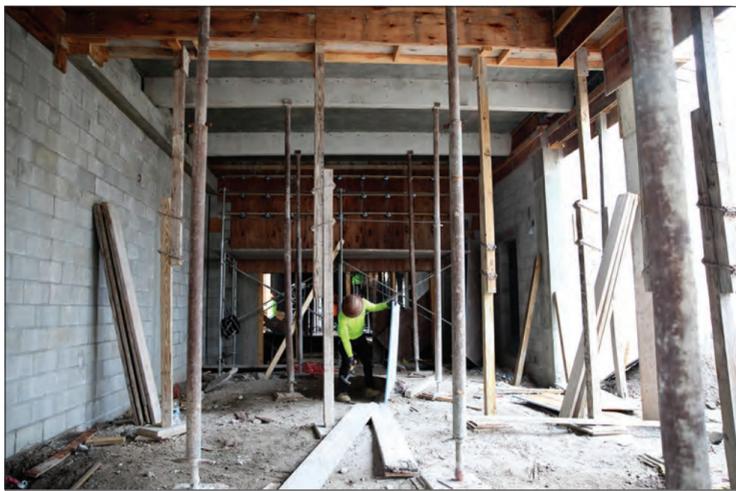
Construction continues at Ahfachkee

STAFF REPORT

Construction continued in January on the Ahfachkee School campus for a new elementary school building and gymnasium. The 34,000-square-foot elementary school building will include 22 classrooms, a main office, staff offices and storage. The 15,800-square foot gym will feature a basketball/volleyball court, locker rooms, a weight room and coaches offices. Depending

on how long it will take to furnish and finish the interiors, students could be in the building in early-to-mid 2024.

The old elementary school building was demolished in February 2020. A dozen new portable classrooms currently house the elementary school students. In August 2019, Ahfachkee opened a two-story, 30,000-square-foot building for its middle and high school students.



Beverly Bidney

A construction worker plies his trade in the new elementary school building Jan. 20.



Beverly Bidney

From left to right, Ahfachkee School guidance counselor Chip Osborn, instructional coach Nuria Suarez, principal Philip Baer and construction site supervisor Harry Wing stand in what will be the main office of the Ahfachkee elementary school building.



Beverly Bidney

The Ahfachkee School's new elementary building is being built adjacent to the existing middle and high school building.



Beverly Bidney

Construction workers build the new elementary school building at the Ahfachkee School in Big Cypress, which is located across the street from the Herman Osceola gym, seen here in the background.



Jeff Hutchens for Showtime

MMIW cases in Big Horn County have gotten increased attention recently.

‘Murder in Big Horn’ looks At Montana’s MMIW

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

Big Horn County in Montana is known as a U.S. hotbed for missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW) – the subject of a new, three-episode documentary series “Murder in Big Horn” premiering Feb. 3 on Showtime.

The documentary investigates the disappearances and possible murders of young women and girls from the Crow and Northern Cheyenne reservations who have gone missing from Big Horn County and its surrounding areas. Some are found dead while others remain missing.

“Murder in Big Horn” looks closely at the cases of Henny Scott, 14, in 2018; Shaciaah Harding, 20, also in 2018; Kaysara Stops Pretty Places, 18, in 2019; and Selena Not Afraid, 16, in 2020. Each young woman’s disappearance fits a similar pattern, which the filmmakers explore in detail.

Hypothermia is blamed when Scott is discovered, while the cause of Stops Pretty Places’ death is “undetermined.” But when Not Afraid goes missing, the local and national reaction is unprecedented.

The creation of an MMIW documentary by a major media company (CBS Corp. owns Showtime) is itself notable. The MMIW movement hasn’t traditionally received much attention from Hollywood, the national media, by law enforcement or by lawmakers, however there’s been some progress in recent years. More focus has come at the federal level through Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo), who helms the Department of Interior. Her office launched a series of MMIW initiatives with the help of the Department of Justice and other agencies. Some state governments across the U.S. have also taken steps to address the issue.

The cases in “Murder in Big Horn” are examined through the perspective of the

girls’ families, local Native journalist Luella Brien (Crow), local law enforcement and others.

“What emerges is a powerful portrait of tribal members and their community battling an epidemic of murdered and missing Indigenous women that was set in motion almost 200 years ago,” the filmmakers said in a recent news release.

But as the filmmakers note, arrests are rare in MMIW cases and convictions are rarer still.

“When grieving Native families press law enforcement for answers, they are met with either indifference or silence,” the release said. “Elsewhere in America, these crimes would have shocked a community and the nation. But outside of the Crow and Northern Cheyenne reservations, it barely registers, leaving a bereft circle of family, friends and activists on their own, fighting for justice.”

“Murder in Big Horn” doesn’t flinch from placing responsibility for the problem on the media, law enforcement, the courts, the cumulative trauma of colonization and Indian boarding schools, and sometimes on Natives themselves.

The journalist, Brien, is familiar with all the cases and investigates the circumstances of what happened to Stops Pretty Places.

“Pre-colonization, violence against Native women was not tolerated,” Brien says in the documentary. “Our communities, our tribes, held perpetrators accountable and in the very few instances when it did happen, it was addressed. Because women are the backbone of our communities, their safety forms the foundation for the safety of our communities.”

“Murder in Big Horn” is directed by Razelle Benally (Oglala Lakota/Diné) and Matthew Galkin. More information is available at sho.com/murder-in-big-horn and at the National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center at niwrc.org.

Everett Osceola talks gators on ‘Native America Calling’

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

The Seminole Tribe and other Southeastern tribes hold a special place in their cultures for the alligator. The tribe’s cultural ambassador, Everett Osceola, discussed his experience with alligators Jan. 20 on “Native America Calling,” a show on the Native American Radio Network.

Other guests on the show were Principal Chief Lora Ann Chaisson and tribal citizen RJ Molinere, both of the United Houma Nation in Louisiana. The show’s host, Shawn Spruce (Laguna Pueblo) asked the guests to explain the significance of alligators to their tribes.

“I’m a third-generation alligator wrestler,” Osceola said. “I learned from my uncle, Paul Bowers, who learned from his father.”

Osceola said the origins of alligator wrestling in the tribe came from Seminoles being pushed deep into the Everglades. It was hard to leave the camps, go hunt food and come back without exposing where they lived, he said.

“So we used what was available to us and that was the alligator,” he said. “We used every part; the tail for meat, the hide for covering our food to protect it from weather and insects. We also used the back for protection, or armor, during the Seminole

wars and the bottom of the jaw as a war club during those times. We used it as a way of survival and in some of our ceremonies.”

With the construction of Tamiami Trail in the early 1900s, alligators became a good source of revenue. By then, the tribe was trading alligator hides and eggs with general stores, including the Stranahan House in Fort Lauderdale, the store at Chokoloskee and the Brown store in the Everglades.

Osceola said once the road was built, tourists used it to travel between the east and west coasts and saw tribal members capture alligators and put them in dugout canoes to bring back to their camps. The tourists thought they were wrestling the alligators and threw money at them.

Between about 1900 and the 1920s, ecotourism venues opened, including Musa Isle run by Seminole Willie Willie, Tropical Hobbyland and the Jungle Queen boat which traveled up the New River in Fort Lauderdale and the Miami River.

“They all had alligator wrestling shows,” Osceola said. “A man from Louisiana helped the Seminole people turn the shows into showmanship shows. That’s when you started having bulldogging, the Florida smile and other moves like flipping them on their backs. They even had synchronized shows where two people wrestled at the same time using the same moves. It brought a lot of prosperity the Seminole people back then.”

Osceola started handling alligators early. His aunt ran Native Village, down the street from Okalee Village on U.S. 441 in Hollywood. His uncle traveled to shows at festivals throughout Florida and Osceola helped him get the alligators on and off the truck. His mother didn’t want him wrestling the animals, so he handled them instead. In his late 20s, Osceola started wrestling them.

Spruce, the host, asked if he had ever been injured or bitten by an alligator.

“I haven’t been bit, but I’ve had close calls,” Osceola said. “One almost got hold of my arm, another one almost grabbed part of my cheek. You have to be really quick. One of the rules — what people always say — is it’s not if you’re going to get bit, it’s when you’re going to get bit. [You should be OK] as long as you have respect for the animal and aren’t showboating or showing off. We have a protocol, or ceremony, before we start wrestling.”

The United Houma Nation’s experience with alligators in the Louisiana bayou country is a little different than the Seminoles. The tribe hunts the gators for food, jewelry and for sale.

“I have alligators in my front yard,” said Principal Chief Chaisson. “I used to hunt them, clean them and cook them. Now I just make jewelry from them, but I still eat them.”

Carbon neutral fuel sources for vehicles worth a look

BY CALVIN TIGER
Reporter/Intern

As electrification in the automotive industry becomes a mainstream standard for most manufacturers, alternative fuel sources for internal combustion engines has received little attention. Carbon neutral fuel, commonly referred to as biofuel, is a fuel source that produces lower emissions versus fossil fuels that are a pollutant to the environment. Carbon neutral fuel can be created through vegetation, forestry, wheat, corn, sugar, carbon dioxide and hydrogen. The different fuels that can be used include green hydrogen, bioethanol, biodiesel, methanol and e-fuels.

These alternative fuel sources for combustion engines can help alleviate the stress of the societal push for mainstream electric vehicle (EV) adoption, as it is at this time unrealistic due to several factors. According to the Internal Energy Agency (IEA), the world could face lithium shortages by 2025. California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed an executive order in 2020 requiring sales of all new passenger vehicles to be zero emission by 2035.

Lithium mining can be harmful to the environment if it contaminates local water supplies. The World Economic Forum stated “lithium extraction requires very high volumes of water, and this is leading to

problems around water stress – a situation where a region’s water resources are not enough to meet its needs.” This greatly affects drought-stricken areas such as South America and Australia. The IEA said more of half of today’s lithium production is in areas with high water stress. The IEA also added that areas such as Australia, China, and Africa are also subject to extreme heat or flooding which will pose a threat to having a stable supply chain of raw lithium materials that are needed.

Porsche is among the early automotive manufacturers to become heavily involved with carbon neutral fuel technology aside from creating EVs for its customers. Porsche said in a December 2022 article on CNBC “that a pilot plant in Chile started production of the alternative fuel, as it aims to produce millions of gallons by mid-decade.” Porsche has a goal to sell this biofuel to major oil companies that would trickle down to the general consumer.

Recycling lithium batteries eventually could significantly help reduce lithium supply chain shortages. Recycling lithium batteries can help supply requirements by about a tenth by 2040, according to the IEA.

In 2020, Porsche invested \$24 million in a Chilean plant for biofuel development. Porsche stated that e-fuels will act like gasoline in a combustion engine and can use the same existing fueling infrastructure

that is currently in place at this time versus creating more charging stations for EVs.

Michael Steiner, Porsche’s director of research and development, claimed that e-fuels have great potential for the future, and that e-fuels offer the owners of current gas powered vehicles an easy transition to a cleaner technology by switching the fuel source.

Not everyone agrees that the transition would be easy.

According to the Department of Energy, “Entirely replacing traditional fossil fuels with e-fuels would be difficult and extremely costly. In 2021, about 134.83 billion gallons of finished motor gasoline were consumed in the U.S., an average of about 369 million gallons per day.”

If the production of these different fuel sources that are cleaner than ever before gets into the mainstream market, consumers would have a wide range of vehicles with different power sources to choose from besides EVs.

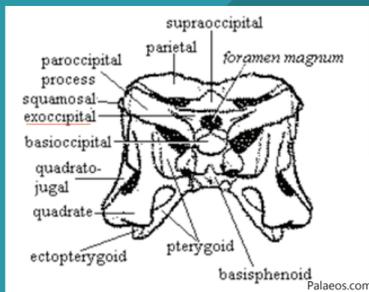
Tribal member Calvin Tiger is in the Education Department’s Emerging Leaders Program. He specializes in writing about the automotive industry and anything vehicle related. Contact him at calvintiger@semtribe.com or (954) 966-6300, ext. 10739.

ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

FEBRUARY 2023

More often than not, when people think of the American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) they think of the reptile’s teeth and the armor-like scutes that are found on the top of its body. For the most part, the archaeology crew usually only finds those elements and sometimes some of the vertebrae. Excitingly enough, this month’s artifact features a new Alligator bone that we have yet to see in the Collections space. The exoccipital bone (right middle, bottom in red circle) sits at the back of the Alligator’s head (bottom). It connects with a bone called the basioccipital and helps form the canal through which the alligator’s spinal cord connects to its brain.

The exoccipital bone is seen as far back in the evolutionary record as Archosaurs which end up being split into two clades; Ornithosuchia for reptiles that are more closely related to birds and dinosaurs and Pseudosuchia the clade which is made up of reptiles that are closely related to crocodylians (The Great Archosaur Lineage). Evidence of the Saurosuchus, an Archosaur that lived during the Late Triassic period (251-201 million years ago), was found in South America in a geological formation that indicated it lived in areas where rivers were dominant and the rainfall was seasonal, which sounds pretty similar to the environment of Florida (Dinoanimals.com). As you can see in the diagram of the Saurosuchus skull at the top, the exoccipital bone is labeled (Palaeos.com).



The bottom picture is of one part of the Alligator skull the Collections team has in its comparative collection. The collection is often used to assist the team in the identification of faunal remains and was vital in helping the team identify the exoccipital. Other species within the comparative collection are: rabbit, eastern diamondback rattlesnake, hog, raccoon, and fox. The team is always looking to add more!



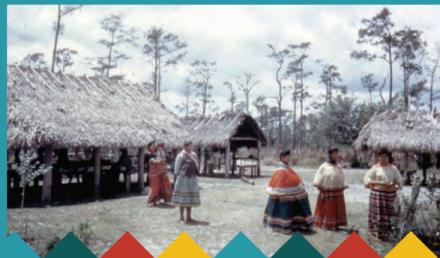
SEMINOLE HISTORY STORIES - FEBRUARY 2023

TEACHERS OF TRADITION: LEE BILLIE & CHARLIE CYPRESS

Lee Billie (Panther Clan) and Charlie Cypress (Otter Clan) were a married couple who worked diligently to help the Seminole Tribe of Florida maintain their culture through the challenges of the 20th century. Both were leaders and educators with the community. Lee passed down traditional skills and crafts including cooking, sewing, and basket weaving to the younger generations. Charlie was a traditional leader and performed the ceremony that designated Lee as the family matriarch. He was a renowned canoe carver, and ensured that this art was passed down and carried on.

Charlie Cypress was part of a group in the 1930’s that asked the Secretary of the Interior to grant them land in multiple counties spanning the Everglades, Cow Creek, and the Fort Drum Swamp. While working on this project that would align with the modern #LandBack campaign, they also made sure to ask for assistance with full time Indigenous nursing to provide healthcare for their Tribe. As the reservation expanded, so did their camp. Lee and Charlie’s daughter Willie Mae Cypress and her husband took over the camp and preserved their family home while maintaining their traditional lifestyle. Their son Stanley Cypress expanded the perimeter of family camp and raised an American-style wooden structure but also included traditional chickees as found in his parents’ camp to keep tradition alive while also modernizing his home.

Lee and Bille did incredible work to preserve traditional Seminole culture during a time of intense change and transition. While they each have their own accomplishments that deserve to be celebrated, their partnership helped the continuation of traditional customs, values, and the expansion of the land on which the Tribe continues to thrive today.



If you’re interested in more Seminole History, The new STOF Tribal Historic Preservation Office website is coming online Feb 10 with more stories, articles, and historic resources. STOFTHPO.com



Riverview park Seminole sculpture to feature Jessica Osceola-designed patchwork

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

A bronze statue of a Seminole woman slated to be installed in a Riverview, Florida, park will feature patchwork designs created by Seminole artist Jessica Osceola.

The sculpture, titled "Sovereign," shows a Seminole woman in a patchwork skirt, cape and beads. The three patchwork designs depicted on the skirt and cape represent trees, generations of Seminole women and a river.

Artists Alan and Nicole Milligan, who created the sculpture, reached out to Osceola after looking for Seminole artists on Google. Nicole found Osceola's website and liked what she saw.

"They wanted a design that would fit into the park setting of a river and trees," Osceola said. "I used a color palette and designs that would be the right fit for the park."

Osceola, of Naples, created three designs based on what the Milligans were trying to convey. "Trees," which honors the Council



Artist Nicole Milligan creates the glass version of Jessica Osceola's patchwork "The River Alive." The glass patchwork will be part of the sign near the "Sovereign" sculpture, which will be near the Alafia River.



Artist Alan Milligan in his St. Paul, Minnesota, studio with the nearly completed clay sculpture, which was ultimately cast in bronze.



A close-up of the head of "Sovereign" as it was being created in clay by artist Alan Milligan.

Oak and the documents signed under it when the tribe received federal recognition, is the shape of a "T" alternately right side up and upside down. "Grandmother and I" honors generations of strong Seminole women and "The River Alive" honors the spirit of the Alafia River.

"The T looks like a tree but could also stand for a turban," Osceola explained. "The river design looks like the moving water of the river."

"The statue is about the strength of Seminole women," artist Nicole Milligan said. "She is in a moment of determination looking toward the future with her feet planted firmly on the ground."

The sculpture will be located in Pebble Park on the Alafia River southeast of Tampa. The patchwork will be on the bronze statue and in glass on the steel sign describing the piece in English and Elaponke.

The Milligans, who live in St. Paul,

Minnesota, hired an expert in hurricane standards to ensure the six-foot, six-inch statue, its six-foot base and the sign remain secure. The base is sunk into the ground to increase its stability. Nicole Milligan used the fabric patchwork from Osceola to create the patterns in thick, architectural glass on the sign that should withstand the elements.

"We wanted to make sure Jessica's patterns and message of the tribe are always there," said Milligan, who grew up in Tampa.



The original fabric patchwork, "Grandmother and I," representing generations of Seminole women created by Jessica Osceola, was interpreted in glass by artist Nicole Milligan.



The original fabric patchwork created by Jessica Osceola, "The River Alive," representing the movement of the Alafia River was made into glass for the sign identifying the "Sovereign" sculpture.



An early version of the "Grandmother and I" patchwork created by Seminole artist Jessica Osceola made into glass. The glass patchwork will adorn a sign adjacent to the "Sovereign" sculpture in Pebble Park in Riverview, Florida.

Milligan reached out to Marcella Billie, assistant director of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, to help translate the text for the sign into Elaponke. Billie worked with Elders on the translation of the text, which gives the facts of when the tribe created its government and constitution, which was the same year the U.S. government officially recognized it as a sovereign nation.

Milligan has always felt a connection to Native Americans. She believes her stepfather's ex-wife was a Seminole woman but she was only 8 years old when he and her mother separated, so her memories from that time are few. She does remember traveling to the reservation with her family to see her stepfather, who taught her to ride horses and how to bead.

"I wanted to honor the tribe, my stepfather and the spirit of my sister and women of the tribe," Milligan said. "It's important to honor and respect that."

To create the sculpture, Alan Milligan sculpted it in clay on a strong metal frame. When that was complete, he made a mold of the sculpture out of silicon, wax and plaster. After working on the details of the piece in

each of the molds, the bronze was poured. "A bronze sculpture is made, destroyed, made, destroyed, made again, destroyed again. From clay to silicon to wax to plaster then bronze. Each stage is a leap of faith. When the bronze is finally poured, beauty is set in place for all time," reads a passage on the Milligan's website that describes the creation of the statue.

While many modern bronze pieces are done with the help of machines, Alan Milligan is welding all the individual bronze pieces by hand.

"Everything has the maker's touch," Nicole Milligan said. "It's quite a feat, there are so many shortcuts he could have taken. When you hand rub the patina into the bronze, it's such a work of love."

Bronze is a metal alloy that has been around for more than 5,000 years. It is known for its strength and durability compared to other metals of the ancient world.

"Bronze is forever," Milligan said. When the statue is complete it will weigh about 700 pounds, not including the base. The statue is scheduled to be installed in Pebble Park in February.

College Fund receives \$39M grant to strengthen TCUs

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Lilly Endowment has approved a \$38,775,000 grant to the American Indian College Fund to support efforts that strengthen tribal colleges and universities and improve the educational attainment of American Indian and Alaska Native students.

The grant, which was announced in December 2022, is funding "Culture at the Heart: An Indigenous Approach to Enrollment and Retention," a program to be implemented over five years to increase American Indian and Alaska Native student

enrollment, retention, and graduation rates at 25 tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) serving Native communities.

The program's goal is give Native students the critical and culturally based skills and experiences they need to graduate and serve their communities in the fields of health care, environmental science, business, law, education, and more. Lilly Endowment's grant is the largest gift the College Fund has received in its 33-year history.

The College Fund's mission is to provide American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN)

students with scholarships and TCUs, located on or near Indian reservations, with the financial and program support they need.

"Tribal colleges and universities provide education that is woven with Tribal knowledge and the cultures of the students and communities they serve. Lilly Endowment supports transformative community-based work and, as a long-time ally of tribal higher education, recognizes the alignment of their mission with ours. We are deeply grateful," Cheryl Crazy Bull, president and CEO of the American Indian College Fund, said in a statement.

NEIA to hold Hill Week

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The National Indian Education Association will hold its Hill Week from March 7 to March 9 in Washington, D.C. Participants will engage with Congressional partners to take stock of the current landscape of Native education while considering

congressional priorities. NIEA will invite federal, tribal, and organizational partners to the table to discuss educational issues impacting Native nations.

The agenda includes keynote speakers, panels and training. The slate features a full day of Congressional meetings on March 9.

For more information visit neia.org

'Adventures in Outdoor Painting'

BY ELGIN JUMPER

Author's note: "Adventures in Outdoor Painting" is my first post-apocalyptic sci-fi story. I had been threatening to write one for years, and had made a good number of starts. I was even on the verge of starting and finishing one in 2019, just before the start of the pandemic. Well, having read my fair share of post-apocalyptic sci-fi, I knew well enough that pandemics were often the causes of them, that is, in combination with other factors. So I held off, I put my ideas aside for the time being. Fortunately, things are different now, as we all know, so, I decided to venture forth into the sci-fi genre, once again. And so, here we go, I imagined, I saw and heard, I wrote about it."

"Be who you are, not who the world wants you to be."

- William Shakespeare

We were somewhere in Hollywood, FLA. I didn't know exactly when this took place, as I had long since ceased to keep track. All I can say is that a devastating war had pounced sometime back, and I had been one of the survivors. And then, there's Brin.

Brin, another survivor, was on her BMX bike, like the kind my brother and I used to race on at BMX tracks around the country. She had a survivor's look, not a fashion choice, mind you, but she did have black high-top Cons and a colorful hockey helmet, among other accoutrements, to ward off the dreadful dust thrown up by the howling winds. We'd been scouting the areas more inland and creating art when we could, around the cities, or what passed for cities these days. I'd been checking around behind a destroyed shopping-center, when I saw Brin standing, looking on at an art store in ruins. Then she was salvaging art supplies, paints, brushes, canvas's, and other odds and ends, loading them into her backpack and wagon we usually had along, which we would usually take turns pulling. Well, I had nothing against that, none at all, a painter after my own heart, I say. Well done, Brin, that's the style!

"Hun-Ta-Mo?" I said, throwing around an ancient, "How are you?"

"Huh?" Brin responded, a pretty good haul in her arms.

Oh, sorry," I laughed.

"Are you serious, Jeb?"

Brin's expression quick changed quick to something resembling a question mark.

"Just being friendly, is all."

Now, she was a painter, like me. And I was pleasantly surprised when we met years earlier, and she informed me that she was.

After the war and the collapse of civilization, we would on occasion, rescue art supplies from wrecked art stores. Birds of a feather, right. We'd quarreled over canvas, all that stuff. Oh, and if we remembered, we'd even liberate food and water, too. What, just because we were in an aftermath-type post-apocalyptic situation, didn't mean we couldn't bring light to it. But please, let me not digress.

At night, the bad element roamed the wastelands, formally known as cities, you see. So we had to keep constant track of the red sun. It was day and the area was calm now, no one else in sight, leaving us to peacefully secure our provisions. Torn and abandoned houses indicated where the neighborhoods once stretched for miles and miles, but now, not so much of a stretch.

A short time later, we'd moved and were standing atop the shell of a former Publix, watching a group of other survivors, 15 or so, moving from the hulls and husks of houses across an erstwhile community, to who knew where. We observed other groups of BMXers out there, as well. Packs of em. We reasoned these riders were up to no good, though. We knew enough not to get involved so we watched them till they became moving dots and then finally fading away altogether. Then it occurred to me that if we wanted to we could well paint en plein air (outdoor painting) before we had to start heading back. Yippy!

"Maybe two, three hours, at most," I advised, motioning towards the almighty sun. "That's all we have."

"Okay," Brin replied, nodding once or twice. "So maximum effort, sonnyboy!"

So we set up our easels, brushes, paints, canvas, and went to work! Of course, we had our bottled water and container, for to

thin the paint, make it workable. We used milk crates as makeshift tables. I'm always amazed at how Brin works, the economy of her brushwork, how she could make her brushstrokes speak volumes, with well-placed dabs, dashes, and strokes. And she wasn't slinging the paint, either, no, far from it, she was in the midst of a formidable exercise of line, shape, and color. And quick! I was trying my best and we were neck and neck a good ways throughout. Intermittently, she would step back away from the canvas, to study her handiwork. Then she'd return for the coup de grace, the finishing touches. I'd usually finish mine a little after that. All in all, a pretty good haul for us both, I'd say.

With that, we descended from on high, loaded up our BMX bikes, secured our paintings, hitched our wagon, and bamm, we were gone, outta there! We'd set course for "The Fortress," our fortified place for survival and defense. And yet, before we got there, we had a running battle with a pack of deranged marauders. We outrode them, though, of course, doling out to them immense chagrin and discomfort. Brin was riding wild and performing maneuvers that baffled them all, the dear. We both had a passion for getting outside, riding BMX bikes, painting in the outdoors, and for Art in general. We'd already visited dang near all the artstores within close proximity, salvaging art supplies. And we were planning to recon other sectors in the near future, as well. All we had was ourselves, what with the ailing world after the war, and all the other components of catastrophe, being on their best behaviors, so we nurtured a bond like no other, because we knew, at the end of

friends, we figured. For once joined, they set about to hugging and jumping and hooting marvelous-like! They exchanged food and water and whatnot. Oh, the jubilant gestures all around! But just then an obviously wise survivor got them all to repair to safer quarters. It was so good for us to witness something like that, because it made us believe in a better tomorrow, if only for a moment. Hope was a precious commodity, so we had to place a high premium on it. We allowed ourselves to smile, and take the moment to heart.

"Awesome," I acknowledged.

"Gorgeous," Brin added.

And yet, we barely made it back that evening. Raiders, you see, with questionable characters, no doubt, tried some new tricks for once. Oh, it was real growth on their parts, let me tell you. We were on that last stretch just before getting to The Fortress, rounding a corner near a ravaged gas station, and dammed if they weren't waiting to bushwhack us! Popping up from prepared trenches! Bamm! But it was a close call and a wake up call, to boot. In the end, we fought our way out of it, only just. Once back in The Fortress, we broke bread, and played a game or two of Chess. And dressed our wounds. What did we take away from the evening? - Have fun, yes, but use vigilance, always. Be ever vigilant, no matter what.

That night I dreamed it was back before the war. We were on a BMX track, practicing, jumping, riding wild. It was a hot Florida day, like most Florida days, truth to tell. I lost my leather racing gloves, I think. Our parents were in the crowds, cheering us on! We were performing X Game type scenarios. We were young and strong, after all, adorned in racing gear of warm colors. "Bring it on home!" I heard someone yell. Suddenly, I saw Brin take flight from a daunting dirt hill! In cross up mode without a flaw! "Whoohoo!" I shouted to her. I waited to meet her at the finish line, listening to reverberations of the spectators. Strangely enough, I saw my brother far ahead on the track. He was negotiating a tall perilous berm, moving on into a haze. Then I got caught up in the adrenaline charge of the challenging course! I could see Brin, just clearing a large mudhole. She smiled and sped in for the finish! Every so often, I'd have dreams like that. Why? It was beyond me.

The next day Brin was up early, preparing our backpacks for another day of outdoor painting and exploring. Before we headed out we enjoyed a breakfast that she put together, whatever morning meal we could avail ourselves of, that is, and out from the fortifications we rode. Thus riding, we talked about our early days: loitering about on the rez, riding our bikes to the movie theaters. Brin pointed out some wonderful places to paint, I mean eventually. In time, we came across a kaleidoscope of colorful butterflies. We were struck with awe and wonder! They were incredible! This certainly meant something. We had never figured on seeing anything like that. As we came upon the ruins of a drawbridge, Brin pointed to the contaminated waters below, and shook her head in disapproval. Such devastation had been visited upon Mother Earth. I pondered the marine life that had once existed there.

Well, we found our way across on a footbridge. Brin was riding ahead, scouting, popping wheelies for I don't know how long. And then, while still in wheelie-mode, she began pointing up at a leafless tree, the only one around. I rode faster, and caught up. Brin was so excited! She set the front wheel down, ever-so-gently, and got off the bike, and leaned it against a white picket fence, or what remained of it, anyways. She lowered her Scott Goggles facemask. I saw she was smiling from ear to ear. It was afternoon and though it wasn't quite sunset yet, the skies had an art exhibition on, with warm colors, yellows, oranges, and reds, a momentary show, perhaps, which went spilling through an otherwise featureless terrain. We both stood, peering up into the bare tree, for perched there on a branch was a lone white dove! Miraculous scene, too! This restored our hopes immensely. We truly believed in the life to come, in our outdoor painting expeditions, and in our adventures with Bicycle Moto-cross. Exhilarating.

And so, as the white dove took flight for the heavens, Brin, in a soft voice, remarked, "So very beautiful."

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



Elgin Jumper's "Adventures in Outdoor Painting."

the day, it was literally going to be us against the world. Especially when marauders were trying day in and day out to end our periodic explorations to the decaying cities. And so, after every foray, indeed, we'd spend a good amount of time improving our fortifications.

A lot of times we'd go out and salvage, and have a looksy, while other times we'd paint at places we could still find beauty in. Even though the hazes would alternate between purples and magentas, orange hues merged with yellows and reds. The Creator was certainly providing for us, art-wise. And we'd gather up the provisions. Often I'd hear Brin singing long ago songs to herself, and I pledged to keep those radiant memories with me for all times sake. Now and again Brin would say she felt bad for those survivors now turned bad, how they became marauders and preyed on others. I could understand what she was saying, but I knew, too, not to ever let our guards down, inasmuch as survival was concerned. She tried not to let this whole survival bit overwhelm her. I think she used the vibrant colors on her palette to cover up whatever darkness there may've been. Clearly, the world had changed. Even so, we knew we had some kind of chance at pulling through.

But let me tell you of a time when we were out, carrying out a reconnaissance around the beach areas. A group of survivors - we watched this all unseen from a distance - encountered another group, who appeared to be familiar with each other. Family or

the land is conducted in an appropriate and respectful manner."

Meanwhile, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said during the conference that it is planning to construct a reservoir north of Lake Okeechobee to provide more water storage.

Jennifer Reynolds, with the South Florida Water Management District, said the Corps is focused on all aspects of water storage - from storing water on farmlands to building aquifer storage and recovery plants.

"That means they're planning for a reservoir north of the lake," Reynolds told an

audience at the conference Jan. 27. "The funding is there, the commitment is there. How do we work with (non-governmental organizations), the tribes and the public?"

The Everglades Coalition is an alliance of almost 60 local, state and national conservation and environmental organizations dedicated to the greater Everglades ecosystem. This year's conference - "A Watershed Moment for America's Everglades" - ran from Jan. 26-28 at the Fort Lauderdale Marriott Coral Springs Hotel & Convention Center. More is at evergladescoalition.org.

Sitting Bull portrait to be auctioned

STAFF REPORT

A portrait of the 19th century Lakota chief Sitting Bull, painted by New York artist Caroline Weldon around 1890, is scheduled to be auctioned March 18 by Blackwell Auctions in Clearwater.

Sitting Bull (1831-1890) was the military, spiritual and political leader who led the Sioux to victory over U.S. Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer and the 7th Cavalry in the battle of Little Big Horn in 1876.

The oil on canvas is one of only four paintings Weldon made of the Native American leader while she served as his personal secretary and confidante from 1889-1890. Two of the paintings are in the North Dakota Historical Society in Bismarck and the Historic Arkansas Museum in Little Rock. A third painting remains lost, but this one is owned by a descendant of its original owner, a railroad construction engineer from Minnesota.

"The cultural significance of this piece can hardly be overstated," Edwin Bailey, of Blackwell Auctions, said in a statement. "The painting represents at once the poignant intersection of two marginalized groups - the Indigenous peoples of America and women artists."

The March auction, titled The American Sale, will also feature a collection of historical documents from 1650 to the mid-20th century. Pieces include items signed by Abraham Lincoln, William Henry Harrison,



Blackwell Auctions

A painting of Lakota chief Sitting Bull that will be auctioned March 18 by Blackwell Auctions. The portrait was painted by artist Caroline Weldon around 1890.

Mark Twain, Robert. E. Lee, Charles Lindbergh and more than 50 other significant military and political figures.

For more information visit blackwellauctions.com.

Everglades City building receives federal funds

STAFF REPORT

The historic Bank of Everglades building - in the heart of Everglades City - received welcome news in December 2022.

Three million dollars in federal funding to help rehabilitate the building was approved by Congress and signed by President Joe Biden as part of the \$1.7 trillion fiscal year 2023 Omnibus Appropriations Bill.

According to the Everglades Society for Historic Preservation, the funding will be used for stabilizing the building and its foundation. The building opened as the Bank of Everglades in 1927. After the bank relocated in 1962, the building was used as a rooming house, a newspaper office and a bed and breakfast. It has been vacant since 2017. The building's first floor is slated

to become the permanent home for the Everglades Area Visitor Center and Trail Town headquarters in southern Collier County. Everglades City, which is known as the gateway to the Ten Thousand Islands and home to several paddling trails, was designated a "Florida Trail Town" by the Florida Greenways and Trails Council in 2019.

Preservation officials praised U.S. Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart for helping secure the funding, which came from Transportation, Housing and Urban Development for community and economic development.

"We cannot thank Congressman Diaz-Balart enough for his direction, guidance and support of our important project," Patty Huff, ESHP president, said in a news release.



Everglades Society for Historic Preservation

The Bank of Everglades building, circa 1927.



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Sports



The Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School girls basketball team shows who is No. 1 after winning the Around the Lake tournament championship Jan. 14 in Brighton. Front row, left to right, are Zoie Foster-Snow, Elaine Fonseca, Adreaonna Gore, Eriyana McQueen, Melaine Bonilla, Kulipa Julian, Cherrish Micco and Ila Trueblood. In the back row, left to right, are assistant coach Amanda Julian, Dyani Kayda, Ciani Smith, Eleanor Osceola, Azariah Washington, Annaleise Gore, Jalene Smith, Charisma Micco and head coach Jovanny Torres.

PECS girls conclude season with championship win

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

BRIGHTON — When Jovanny Torres was a head coach at Okeechobee High School, his girls basketball teams — which had plenty of success — were known for their tough defense.

Nothing changed when Torres became head coach at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School, where he is also the athletic director. “I preach defense,” he said. “Anybody can score, but not a lot of teams can play defense.”

Not a lot of teams could play defense the way PECS did in the championship game of the Around the Lake conference tournament.

Playing on its former home court — the Brighton Recreation gym — PECS stifled LaBelle from start to finish on its way to winning the title, 21-13, on Jan. 14.

Hoisting the championship trophy marked the end to a memorable season for PECS, which didn’t have a team the past two years due to the pandemic.

“We’ve only been playing together for two months and it’s all come together. I’m super proud of them. They did a super job,” Torres said.

PECS came as close to perfection as possible. A one-point loss to LaBelle in the regular season was the lone blemish in a 13-1 record.

At the Around the Lake, PECS won all three of its games in the three-team

double elimination tournament that included LaBelle and Sebastian Charter. Charisma Micco led PECS with eight points in the title game (LaBelle would have had to beat PECS twice to win the title). Melaine Bonilla (five points) and Azariah Washington (four points) were the team’s other top scorers.

Micco, an 8th grader, was a standout at both ends of the court in the tournament. “She’s a tremendous athlete and she’s the most humble kid you’ll ever meet. Very respectful. She’s been a pleasure to coach,” Torres said.

Bonilla came off the bench and hit a pivotal 3-pointer when neither teams’ offenses were clicking.

“She’s probably the best shooter on our team. She hit that 3 and that was huge for us,” Torres said.

In the tournament opener, PECS defeated LaBelle 26-17. Micco had nine points followed by Washington with six points and Ila Trueblood with five points.

Trueblood, an 8th grader, was a force on defense throughout the tournament, forcing turnovers and bad shots by opponents. Offensively, she made several drives to the hoop that often resulted in points or drawing fouls.

“Ila Trueblood is also an amazing athlete. She’s everywhere on offense and defense,” Torres said.

In its second game, PECS defeated Sebastian, 31-23. Cherrish Micco was the team’s top scorer with eight points. Charisma Micco had seven points and Washington had five points.

After winning the conference championships in volleyball and basketball, PECS will seek the trifecta in softball with many of the same players. Torres said he expects it will be another championship season.



PECS players enjoy getting their hands on the Around the Lake championship trophy Jan. 14 in Brighton.



Kevin Johnson

PECS’s defense frustrated LaBelle all game with plays like this from Ila Trueblood, who prevents a pass by a LaBelle player.

Strong defense from Kulipa Julian, left, and Melaine Bonilla, right, played a big role in PECS’ championship win.



Kevin Johnson

Chobee strikes gold

STAFF REPORT

The Chobee Volleyball Academy 15’s girls volleyball team made the most out of a trip to Broward County.

In its first tournament of the season in January, Chobee won gold in the 15’s division at the Winter Warm Up Super Regional in Deerfield Beach. The victory earned them an automatic bid for the upcoming AAU National Championship in Orlando.

Members of the team include Seminoles’ Preslynn Baker and Alyssa Madrigal.



Courtesy photo

Alyssa Madrigal, back row, far left, and the Chobee 15’s volleyball team with the championship plaque. (Preslynn Baker did not play).

NSU to play near Lakeland, Tampa reservations

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

The Nova Southeastern University women’s basketball team, which features three Native Americans (Skyla Osceola - Seminole Tribe of Florida and twin sisters Kyarah and Kyannah Grant - Navajo/Choctaw) has upcoming away games in areas close to the Seminole Tribe’s Lakeland and Tampa reservations:

Feb. 11 at St. Leo University (St. Leo) 3:30 p.m. (St. Leo is about 30 miles from the Lakeland and Tampa reservations).

Feb. 18 at University of Tampa (Tampa) 2 p.m.

Feb. 22 at Eckerd College (St. Petersburg) 5:30 p.m.

NSU’s remaining regular season home games in Davie, a few miles from the Hollywood Reservation, are:

Feb. 1 vs Palm Beach Atlantic University 5:30 p.m.

Feb. 15 vs Barry University 5:30 p.m.

Feb. 25 vs Embry-Riddle University 2 p.m.

NSU has an 18-3 overall record as of Jan. 31. The Sharks are 10-3 in the Sunshine State Conference, good enough for third place behind Tampa and Eckerd.

Kyannah Grant is averaging 6.8 points per game. Kyannah Grant is averaging 6.2 points per game. Both are among the team’s top rebounders. Kyannah is second with 92 total rebounds, including a team-high 37 offensive boards. Kyarah is third in total rebounds with 57. The twins also rank in the top four on the team in both assists and steals.

Osceola is averaging 2.4 points per game. She is third on the team in free throw percentage.

Osceola tied her season high for points with nine in a 78-77 home loss to Tampa on Jan. 11. NSU trailed by 10 with four minutes left. Osceola hit a 3-pointer with 35 seconds remaining to trim the deficit to two, but Tampa held on for the one-point win.

Betty Mae Jumper Memorial Rodeo starts EIRA season

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

HOLLYWOOD — The Eastern Indian Rodeo Association is back in full swing.

A full season of rodeos on Seminole Tribe reservations is on the EIRA slate for the first time since 2019.

At least nine rodeos have been scheduled. The season kicked off Jan. 21 with the annual Betty Mae Jumper Memorial Rodeo at the Hollywood Rodeo Arena. The rodeo is held in remembrance of the first and only chairwoman of the Seminole Tribe.

This year marks the 100 year anniversary of Betty Mae Jumper's birth, which was in April 1923 in Indiantown.

In addition to her role in government, Betty Mae Jumper was a leader in several other areas inside and outside the tribe including education, health, cattle and journalism. She was cofounder of what is now the Seminole Tribune. She was also a founder of the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET).

The rodeo arena is located a short walk from the reservation's Betty Mae Jumper Medical Center.

The Jumper family was well represented at the kids rodeo in the morning and the adult rodeo in the evening. Betty Mae's grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great grandchildren were among the participants. Her grandchild Naha Jumper won team roping with Jobe Johns.

Betty Mae's son, Moses Jumper Jr., who watched the adult rodeo from a small platform, told the audience that his mother would have been happy to see everyone who came out to watch the rodeo.

"She was in the cattle business, too," Moses told the Tribune. "She had a herd of cattle in Big Cypress."

Plenty of "no times" occurred in the adult rodeo as the animals proved to be tough challenges for the cowboys and cowgirls. In addition to Naha Jumper-Jobe Johns winning team roping, other winners were LeAnna Billie (breakaway roping), Kalgary Johns (barrel racing) and Justin Gopher (calf roping).

There was no steer wrestling and only two bull riders — Josiah Johns and Riley McKetrick — who were both bucked off before eight seconds.

Betty Mae Jumper Memorial Rodeo
Jan. 21 at Hollywood Rodeo Arena

Breakaway Roping
1. LeAnna Billie 12.09

- Barrel Racing**
1. Kalgary Johns 18.401
2. Madisyn Osceola 18.850
3. Boogie Johns 18.858
4. Jaylee Wilcox 18.940



With the Guitar Hotel in the background, Taylor Johns carries the U.S. flag at the start of the Betty Mae Jumper Memorial Rodeo on Jan. 14 at the Hollywood Rodeo Arena.



A fast start for Jaylee Wilcox and her horse in breakaway roping.

- Calf Roping**
1. Justin Gopher 12.78
2. Ivan Bruised Head 16.64
- Team Roping**
1. Jobe Johns/Naha Jumper 8.44
2. JD Bacon/Justin Gopher 23.44

2023 EIRA tentative remaining schedule

Feb. 4: Junior Cypress Memorial All Indian Rodeo at Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena, Big Cypress Reservation.

Feb. 10-11: Bill Osceola Memorial INFR Qualifier Rodeo at Hollywood Rodeo Arena.

Feb. 14: Brighton Field Day Rodeo INFR Qualifier Rodeo at Fred Smith Rodeo Arena, Brighton Reservation.

March 25: Junior Cypress Memorial All Indian Rodeo at Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena, Big Cypress Reservation.

April 15: All Indian Rodeo at Fred Smith Rodeo Arena, Brighton Reservation.

May 6: Cinco de Mayo All Indian Rodeo at John Jimmie Rodeo Arena, Immokalee Reservation.

July 1: Josiah Johns Memorial All Indian Rodeo at Fred Smith Rodeo Arena, Brighton Reservation.

TBA: Regional Finals Rodeo at Fred Smith Rodeo Arena, Brighton Reservation.



LeAnna Billie in action in breakaway roping, which she won.



Boogie Johns and her horse get ready to make the turn in barrels.



Josh Jumper, a grandchild of Betty Mae Jumper, attempts to reel in a calf during team roping.



All eyes are on the bull rider chute.

Fast time for Silas Madrigal, North Park relay team

STAFF REPORT

The Seminole Tribe's Silas Madrigal is in his junior season on the North Park University men's track and field team in Chicago, Illinois.

On Jan. 21, Madrigal was part of the team's 4x400 relay that finished third out of eight teams in the I-55 Invitational, an indoor meet at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Illinois. The team of Madrigal, Jereme Ombogo, Jalen Rios and Olva Gissinger sped around the track in 3:30.88, which was the third fastest time in school history.

Madrigal also ran in the 800 meter run. He finished seventh in 2:08.84.

On Jan. 14, Madrigal notched another top eight finish in the Firebird First Invitational at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin. He finished sixth in the 800 with a time of 2:10.03.

Season ends for 'humble' PECS

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

BRIGHTON — The victories didn't come as often as Preston Baker would have liked, but the Pemaeytv Emahavk Charter School boys basketball coach said it was a pleasure to coach the team.

"Really good kids. They're humble," Baker said after PECS' season ended with a 35-26 loss to Moore Haven Middle School in the first round of the Around the Lake conference tournament Jan. 14 at PECS.

The six team, one day, single-elimination tournament for middle schools also featured Sebastian Charter, LaBelle, Osceola and Yearling. LaBelle won the championship.

Power forward Greg James led PECS with 10 points against Moore Haven.

James is one of six 8th graders that PECS will lose.

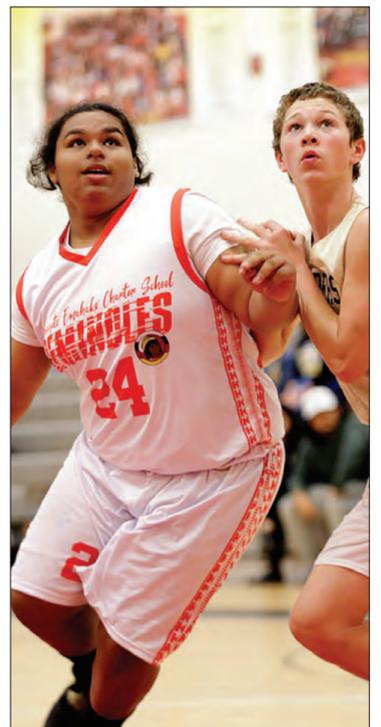
"A new beginning next year," said Baker, whose team finished with a 5-9 record. PECS, which didn't field a team the past two years due to the pandemic, returned this season with a mixture of experience and newness. Baker said some players were brand new to basketball. He was pleased at their improvement during the season.

"They improved a lot. I was really proud of them," he said. Ditto for the rest of the squad, too. "I'm proud of them. They did good.



PECS' Walt Fortner is double-teamed by Moore Haven in the Around the Lake tournament Jan. 14.

They're a good group of kids," he said.



PECS' Etanis Torres battles for position against Moore Haven in the boys tournament.



Tahnia Billie, left, and Preslynn Baker, right, are among the young players Moore Haven High School hopes to build around.

Kevin Johnson

With a pair of Seminoles, Moore Haven hopes for future growth

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

WEST PALM BEACH — With six freshmen and only two seniors on her roster, Darcel Kelly realizes the best days for the Moore Haven High School girls basketball team could be in the coming years.

The young core includes the only two Seminoles on the team: sophomore Preslynn Baker and freshman Tahnia Billie. Kelly said both players have made an impact on the team that finished the regular season with a 4-6 record.

Baker, a guard, is one of the team's two captains.

"Preslynn is one of the leaders on the team," said Kelly following a loss at Berean Christian School on Jan. 9 in West Palm Beach. "She helps us throughout the game. She's shown great leadership. Very positive attitude."

Baker is a three-sport athlete (volleyball, basketball, softball) whose top games in the regular season were 13 points in a win against East Lee County and a 10-point night in a loss against Glades Day. She's also twice made three 3-pointers in a game.

Kelly said she is comfortable with putting Baker anywhere on the court.

"She's a young player and she has a great knowledge of the game," Kelly said.

Billie, a forward, scored a season-high six points in a loss against Lehigh Acres on Jan. 19.

"Tahnia is very young," Kelly said. "She's learning the game. She's has



Preslynn Baker leads a fast break in a game against Berean Christian School on Jan. 9.

Kevin Johnson

tremendously improved this year; I'm just trying to get her to be more aggressive.

Moore Haven's four wins could be a sign of better things to come as the young

core continues to grow.

"I told them 'the future is your hands and that I see great things for you guys,'" Kelly said.

Xavier Osceola becomes key part of University's success

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

DAVIE — NSU University School boys basketball coach Ron Oliver described Xavier Osceola's ascension from a junior varsity player a year ago to a key component on this year's varsity squad as "a perfect transition."

Osceola, a 6-foot, 160-pound junior guard from the Hollywood Reservation, described the shift as seamless.

Just a small sample of how last year's JV starting point guard has made his presence felt as varsity's sixth man came in a critical stretch of University's 68-62 win at cross-street rival Nova on Jan. 24 in Davie.

University built a comfortable first half lead, but with Osceola on the bench in the third quarter Nova clawed its way to within four points. With four minutes left in the quarter, Osceola came in and made an immediate impact that helped halt Nova's rally. Not only did he score four points in the final few minutes of the quarter on a pair of layups off perfect passes from Kohl Rosario, but he also held Nova's top scorer pointless during that stretch and even drew a charge.

By the end of the quarter, University had regained its mojo and led by 12 points.

University's hard-fought win included surviving another Nova rally that tied the game in the final minute. Osceola, who is averaging nearly seven points a game, finished with 11 points. It was his second straight game — and fifth of the season — in double figures. He had a dozen points



Kevin Johnson

NSU University School's Xavier Osceola launches a 3-point shot in the team's 68-62 win against Nova on Jan. 24 in Davie.

three days earlier in a win against Somerset Academy.

Oliver said Osceola could have been a varsity player last year, but the coaches decided a year playing big minutes on JV would be more beneficial than sparse time on varsity.

"One of the reasons we started him on JV is not because he wasn't a varsity player, but because we wanted to get him in a dominant role. He could have played varsity, but he would have been in a limited role," Oliver said.

"Last year was more like a learning process, learning how to be a leader and all that," Osceola said.

The plan paid off as Osceola has emerged as a valuable player at both ends of the court.

"He's a huge reason why we're 15-2 now," Oliver said.

Some key wins have come against Gulliver, North Broward Prep and Madisonville-North Hopkins in Kentucky. University was ranked No. 11 in Class 3A as of Jan. 23.

"We expected to be a good team this year. It's been a good season so far," Osceola said.



Kevin Johnson

Xavier Osceola looks for an open teammate during a game against Nova.

Learning, showing, selling: Seminole 4-H'ers compete at fair

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

WEST PALM BEACH — In addition to all the rides, games, music and food at the South Florida Fair, there was livestock to be shown and sold.

The Seminole 4-H program was well represented in the swine and steer showings Jan. 12 at the fair that ran for two weeks in West Palm Beach.

Elakaih Collins, Okalani Collins, Amariah Lavatta and Timothy Urbina showed their hogs in the morning; in the evening it was Aaryn King, Bobby Johns Osceola, Harmany Urbina, Karlyne Urbina and Ka'Shyra Urbina in the steer show.

The following day all of the Seminole animals were purchased at the sale, marking the culmination of months of hard work by the kids to raise those animals.

"We are extremely proud of our Seminole Tribe families and 4-H members for taking the opportunity to raise, show and sell animals at the South Florida Fair," Sheri Trent, the extension agent for the tribe's 4-H program, said in an email to the Tribune. "This shows their dedication to agriculture and pride in representing the Seminole Tribe. They showed very well, and we are thrilled of their success."

From start to finish, the raising, caring, showing and selling of the animals is a learning process for the kids.

"During the process of choosing, raising, training and daily care of an animal for the fair, the kids learn a great deal," Trent said. "They learn responsibility by caring for their animal, feeding it, cleaning its pen and spending time with it. They learn animal nutrition and health through deciding which feeds to use, when and how to deworm, working through any health problems and also in the process of choosing the animal."

The disciplines absorbed in the raising process carry over to the show, where the animals — and handlers — vie to be good enough to earn a nod from a judge. There's also the component of showing in front of a large audience. At the fair, sets of bleachers on two sides of the ring were packed with spectators.

"Kids learn leadership and self-confidence through training and showing the animal," Trent said. "Showmanship of swine and cattle is an extremely demanding feat. It takes months of training and practice to teach the animal to listen to commands and respond correctly. The practice and actual showmanship class teaches them great self-confidence of a job well done."

Trent said the entire process can benefit the kids in whatever paths they take in their lives.



Kevin Johnson

Timothy Urbina is in the back pens getting ready to show his hog Jan. 14 at the South Florida Fair in West Palm Beach.



Kevin Johnson

Amariah Lavatta finishes showing her hog in the ring at the fair.



Kevin Johnson

Okalani Collins, right, competes in the swine show at the fair.

"Selling the animal teaches the kids life skills of our food cycle," Trent said. "Throughout the project, these kids learn agricultural processes, sciences, health and numerous life skills. Also, they are exposed

to many opportunities to develop job skills, explore collegiate options and plan for their future."



Kevin Johnson

Ka'Shyra Urbina, left, and Karlyne Urbina walk with their steers before showing them later that night at the fair.

◆ REZ RALLY From page 1A

Paul Buster provided the invocation. He mentioned the importance of being active and setting healthy examples for kids.

The event featured a vast range of ages – from Elders to babies in strollers. Harley Roberts, who lives in Big Cypress, has crossed plenty of finish lines in Rez Rally's history. He said he's participated in every one. After finishing this year's race, he said focusing on healthy choices has meant "no sugar [problems] and no high blood pressure" as he nears age 74.

Prior to the start of the awards presentation a video by Seminole Media Productions' Broadcasting manager

Sunshine Frank was shown on two large screens. The video focused on Frank's own journey to better health through exercise and nutrition, serving as encouragement for those in the audience to follow suit.

Holding the race at the start of the new year provides an opportunity for resolutions to be put into action.

"It's good to start at this time of the year," Councilman Osceola said. "No. 1 it's not 110 degrees. No. 2 everybody usually wants to start the year off on a healthy right foot. Everybody has new year's resolutions and everybody wants to lose weight and exercise more, so it's a good time to start this. The trick is to carry it on the rest of the year."



Kevin Johnson

Ralph Briggs Sr. and his son, Ralph Jr., 1, from Tampa, get ready to enjoy the Rez Rally.



Kevin Johnson

Brighton Board Rep. Helene Buster gives a friendly wave on her way to a first place finish.



Kevin Johnson (2)

Runners sprint Jan. 7 at the start of the 23rd Rez Rally on the Hollywood Reservation.



Kevin Johnson

Charlie Julian, 9, an age group winner, receives congratulations from Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola.



Kevin Johnson

Hollywood Recreation's Courtney Osceola gets participants ready for the race with warm-up exercises.

2023 Rez Rally results

Tribal Youth 6-11 Male

1. Charles Julian
2. Captain Osceola
3. Isaac Osceola

Tribal Youth 12-17 Male

1. Zaiden Frank
2. Louis Billie
3. Brandon Posada

Tribal Run 18-36 Male

1. Brandtley Osceola
2. Elijah Osceola
3. Peter Foret

Tribal Run 37-54 Male

1. Pete Osceola
2. Elton Shore
3. Blake Osceola

Tribal Run 55-68 Male

1. Patrick Doctor

Tribal Run 69+ Male

None

Tribal Run 6-11 Female

1. Kaliyanita Hodge
2. McKenna Macias
3. Jamelynn Anderson

Tribal Youth 12-17 Female

1. Mary-Sally Osceola
2. Daveny Osceola-Hahn
3. Amalia Estrada

Tribal Run 18-36 Female

1. Krystle Bowers
2. Tasha Osceola
3. Abigail Tigertail

Tribal Run 37-54 Female

1. Lorraine Posada
2. Priscilla Sigurani
3. Rochelle Osceola

Tribal Run 55-68 Female

1. Deloris Alvarez

Tribal Run 69+ Female

1. Patty Waldron
2. Mary Tigertail

Tribal Walk 18-36 Male

1. Bryan Arledge
2. Charles Osceola Jr.
3. Griffin Billie

Tribal Walk 37-54 Male

1. Todd Johns
2. Pete Hahn
3. Mahokin Tiger

Tribal Walk 55-68 Male

1. Sandy Billie
2. Tamecia Motlow
3. Charlie Tiger

Tribal Walk 69+ Male

1. Mitchell Cypress

Tribal Walk 18-36 Female

1. Samantha Hisler
2. Maleah Issac
3. Tyra Baker

Tribal Walk 37-54 Female

1. Jennifer Osceola
2. Cecilia Pequeno
3. Amy Yzaguirre

Tribal Walk 55-68 Female

1. Rose Tiger
2. Almira Billie
3. Shirley Clay

Tribal Walk 69+ Female

1. Edna Bowers

Senior 1-Mile Male

1. Johnnie Jones
2. Jonah Cypress
3. Dan Osceola Jr.

Stroller Male

1. Issiah Billie

General Youth 6-11

1. Samuel Hunter
2. Gia Garcia
3. Macayden Sardina

General Run 18-54 Male

1. Derrick Little
2. Guillermo Cortez
3. Idael Perez

General Run 55+ Male

1. James Jackson
2. Jeffrey Maslan
3. Harley Roberts

General Walk 18-54 Male

1. Jacob Lucio
2. Vitin Santiago
3. Jonathan Aquino

General Walk 55+ Male

1. Kenneth Doney
2. Ganpapersad Rambarath
3. Newton Muir

Senior 1-Mile Female

1. Helene Buster
2. Rebecca Martinez
3. Bobbie Billie

Stroller Female

1. Isabel Garza
2. Shelli Tigertail
3. Sierra Briggs

General Youth 12-17

1. Antonia Tosca
2. Alexa Tosca
3. Terrance Osceola

General Run 18-54 Female

1. Virginia Belliard
2. Denorah Johns
3. Jolee Metcalf

General Run 55+ Female

1. Faye Frank
2. Georgia Mahabeer
3. Vonda Allen

General Walk 18-54 Female

1. Perla Ruiz
2. Mae Osceola
3. Anupa Rahaman

General Walk 55+ Female

1. Gaylene Jacobs
2. Georgette Smith
3. Lisa Motlow

Wheelchair

- Lawanna Osceola-Niles/ Joe Kippenberger
Diane Buster/Barbara Billie
Betty Billie/Ms. Sanchez
Maxine Tucker/Mark Jock
Yvette Jumper
Leslie Osceola

Most Participants Overall:

Hollywood

Most Tribal Participation:

Hollywood



Kevin Johnson

Patrick Doctor crosses the finish line in first place in the tribal run 55-68 male age group.



Kevin Johnson

From left to right, Joel Frank Sr., Connie Whidden and Edna McDuffie participate in Rez Rally.



Kevin Johnson

Thumbs up from Edith Osceola after she finished the race.



Kevin Johnson

Sandy Billie Jr. receives a bottle of water after he crossed the finish line.



Kevin Johnson

Members of Team Immokalee are a happy group after finishing the race.

PECS names baseball, softball rosters

STAFF REPORT

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School's baseball and softball teams are set for the upcoming season.

The coaches are Harry Tewksbury (baseball) and Mary Huff (softball).

Rosters for both teams were announced in January following tryouts.

2023 PECS baseball team

Liam Berry
Landon French
Logan French
Jace Johns
Ross Jones
Gus Jumper
Devon Mitchell
Kowi-Chito Osceola
Case Prescott
Karter Puente
Brody Riley
Etanis Torres
Jeremy Urbina
Timothy Urbina

2023 PECS softball team

Serenity Billie
Melaine Bonilla
Amalia Estrada
Kulipa Julian
Dyani Kayda
Charisma Micco
Cherrish Micco
Daliah Nunez
Joleyne Nunez
Tehya Nunez
Hannah Platt
Jalene Smith
Kiera Snell
Ila Trueblood
Azariah Washington

Lexi Foreman scores 10 points in UCO win

STAFF REPORT

The Seminole Tribe's Lexi Foreman began the new year on a high note. The University of Central Oklahoma sophomore guard scored 10 points and made five steals – both season highs – in a 66-57 win Jan. 2 against Emporia State in Edmond, Oklahoma.

Foreman started the game and played 35 minutes. She was 4-of-8 from the field, including one 3-pointer.

She entered February averaging 3.4 points and 2.9 rebounds per game. She started all eight of the team's games in January.



Varsity Brahman Award winner Giselle Micco with varsity head coach Jerry Veloz and assistant coach Amanda Julian.



JV Brahman Award winner Alyssa Madrigal with JV assistant coach Carrie Heineman.

Seminoles earn OHS volleyball awards

STAFF REPORT

Three Seminoles won big awards at the Okeechobee High School volleyball awards banquet Dec. 15.

Giselle Micco was named the varsity's team Brahman Award winner; Alyssa Madrigal won the Brahman award on the JV

team. The character-based award is given to the student-athlete who, among other criteria, excels in how they represent their team on and off the court.

Tiyanni Anderson was named the JV's most valuable player.

Both teams had strong seasons last fall. Varsity, which also included tribal member Nena Youngblood, finished with

a 13-9 record. Highlights included being district runner-up and notching a first round regional playoff win on the road against American Heritage-Plantation.

Micco, a senior, led the squad in assists as the main setter.

With three Seminoles on its roster, the JV team produced a remarkable 18-1 record with its only loss coming in the second to

last game. Madrigal, a freshman, showed plenty of versatility by playing a variety of positions, including outside hitter. Anderson, a sophomore, played outside hitter and right side. Freshman and tribal member Yani Smith also saw plenty of action on JV and established her presence at the net as a blocker and hitter.



Junior varsity MVP winner Tiyanni Anderson with varsity assistant coach Amanda Julian.



Yani Smith, who received a participation award, with JV assistant coach Carrie Heineman.



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Tennis legends coming to Hard Rock for pickleball event

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

HOLLYWOOD — Four former tennis greats will be at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood, but not to play tennis.

The inaugural Pickleball Slam is scheduled to be held April 2 at Hard Rock Live. The Slam will feature tennis legends and Grand Slam winners Andre Agassi, Michael Chang, John McEnroe and Andy Roddick.

The event is to be broadcast live on ESPN at 12 p.m. Eastern time.

Singles matches will pit Roddick against Chang followed by McEnroe versus Agassi. The final match will be a doubles match with McEnroe and Chang competing against Roddick and Agassi. The final match will determine the split of a \$1 million purse.

An amateur challenge with 96 teams will be played March 31 and April 1. It is a first-come-first-in basis with a \$10,000 team prize and a chance to compete against two of the tennis legends prior to the televised event April 2. The weekend also includes a Saturday night banquet featuring a Q&A session with the tennis legends.

“Hard Rock Live has become synonymous with big events, and to have four of the biggest names in American tennis battling for the largest purse in pickleball history on a national live broadcast will only serve to bolster this reputation,” Keith Sheldon, president of entertainment for Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming, said in a statement.

Pickleball has been around since the 1960s, however the sport’s popularity has



Courtesy International Tennis Hall of Fame
John McEnroe

only recently begun to soar. It is played with paddles and a plastic ball on courts – or set-ups – that are smaller than tennis courts.

According to the USA Pickleball organization, its membership reached 50,000 in 2021, representing a 43% increase from the previous year.

For more information and to register for the amateur challenge visit thepickleballslam.com. Tickets for the Slam go on sale Feb. 10. Horizon Sports & Experiences is the Slam organizer.

FSU men wear N7 uniforms in Sunrise

STAFF REPORT

The Florida State University men’s basketball team continued its recent tradition of wearing special uniforms in honor of Native American heritage at the Orange Bowl Classic, the team’s closest game to the Seminole Tribe’s Hollywood Reservation.

FSU donned its turquoise Nike N7 uniforms in a 93-79 loss to St. John’s University on Jan. 17 at FLA Live Arena in Sunrise, 15 miles from the tribe’s headquarters. It marked the second time this season and 23rd overall that FSU wore the special uniforms.

This is the 10th consecutive season FSU has worn the turquoise uniforms as part of the Nike N7 program aimed at bringing sport and physical activity to Native American and Aboriginal youth.

“The Seminole Tribe of Florida approached us about this program and we are honored and excited to wear these unique uniforms,” FSU head coach Leonard Hamilton said in the team’s pregame media notes.

FSU is now 18-5 when wearing the special uniforms, which includes an 81-72 win against Mercer earlier this season.

The Seminoles will return to South Florida on Feb. 25 to face Miami in Coral Gables. Tip is 2 p.m.

FSU entered February with a 7-15 record.



Jeff Romance
FSU guard Matthew Cleveland wears the team’s turquoise uniform during a game Jan. 17 in Sunrise.



The medals for the 2023 North American Indigenous Games were unveiled Jan. 17 at Millbrook First Nations in Nova Scotia, Canada.

NAIG unveils medals for 2023 Games

FROM PRESS RELEASE

MILLBROOK, Nova Scotia, Canada — The 2023 North American Indigenous Games Host Society officially unveiled the medal designs of the 2023 Games on Jan. 17 in Millbrook First Nation, Nova Scotia, Canada, one of the sites in the Halifax area where the Games will be held this summer.

The medals, initially designed by Hardwoodlands youth Ella Scothorn and finalized by Mi’kmaq artist Tayla Fern Paul, were revealed at an event that featured Indigenous artists and dancers that recognized the six-month mark to the Games. More than 100 design submissions were received in an open design competition. Nearly 3,000 gold, silver and bronze medals will be awarded during the Games.

The medals, which will be produced by The Pin People, showcase Mi’kmaq art including a traditional eight pointed star and highlights the vibrant colours of NAIG 2023. The design of the medals incorporate several Mi’kmaq symbols:

- An eight pointed star inspired by Mi’kmaq petroglyphs found in Bedford, N.S. represents the territory where all will gather
- A symbol that represents the world “L’nu”. The term the Mi’kmaq use to describe themselves as Indigenous people. It

means “the people.”

• The curved designs are common in Mi’kmaq cultural drawings and etchings and are meant to represent the things that grow and transpire when you follow your dreams.

• The ribbon features the NAIG 2023 logo and “Kjipuktuk,” meaning “Great Harbour”

“We have reached 2023, the year of the Games and we are now officially six months out from the start of the Games. We’re proud of these young artists for designing these medals that will be awarded to the winning athletes in July,” George “Tex” Marshall, president of the 2023 NAIG Host Society, said in a news release. “The design truly captures the spirit of the Games and Mi’kma’ki as a whole.”

“It makes me feel really proud and excited to see my designs come to life,” designer Ella Scothorn, who created the initial design in 6th grade and is now in 9th grade, said in the release. “I was inspired by the Mi’kmaq star and its significance within Indigenous culture.”

“The medals on display today make us so proud of our community, our youth and our athletes,” Millbrook Chief Bob Gloade said in the release. “Our community is proud to play a part in the hosting of NAIG and we know it will be a historic event that will shape the future of Indigenous youth and



A NAIG medal on display.

athletes in Mi’kma’ki forever.”

The 2023 North American Indigenous Games will be the largest multi-sport event held in Nova Scotia since contact. From July 15 to 23 more than 5,250 athletes, coaches and officials from over 750 Nations from across Turtle Island are expected to participate in more than 16 sports, attracting thousands of visitors, VIPs, officials and media.

‘Perfect’ cruise with the Dolphins

FROM PRESS RELEASE

MIAMI GARDENS — Miami Dolphins fans can celebrate the 50th anniversary of the team’s perfect season at sea.

The team and First Class Cruises will host the inaugural Miami Dolphins Fan Cruise from April 2 to April 9.

The seven-night Caribbean excursion aboard the new MSC Cruise ship “The Seascape” is scheduled to depart Miami and stop at several Caribbean cities including, Ocean Cay, Nassau, San Juan, and Puerto Plata.

The cruise will feature Dolphins-

themed events and activities, parties, meet-and-greets, photo opportunities alongside the company of Dolphins alumni throughout the decades and members from the 1972 undefeated team.

Former players scheduled to attend include Larry Csonka, Larry Little, Dwight Stephenson, Dan Marino, Mark Clayton, Mark Duper, Nat Moore, Ronnie Brown and others.

“In partnering with First Class Cruises, we worked to design a unique experience for Miami Dolphins fans that truly celebrated the tradition and legacy of this team,” said Nat Moore, senior vice president of alumni relations and special projects. “The Miami Dolphins Fan Cruise offers fans a once-on-a-

lifetime opportunity to connect with Dolphins legends including members of the 1972 Perfect Season Team, Hall of Famers and alumni throughout the decades, while visiting beautiful destinations on a brand-new ship.”

For tickets and more information visit DolphinsFanCruise.com.



Miami Dolphins
Larry Csonka

SAVE THE DATES!

2023 SEMINOLE TRIBE 4-H

COUNTRY FAIR LIVESTOCK SHOW & SALE

MARCH 8-10

PEEWEE & SWINE SHOWS
Wednesday, March 8th - 7PM

CATTLE SHOW
Thursday, March 9th - 7PM

LIVESTOCK SALE
Friday, March 10th - 7PM

Big Cypress Reservation
Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena
36500 Rodeo Cir
Clewiston, FL 33440

For questions, contact the 4-H Office:
863-763-4128 Ext. 15211

FOR SALE							
LAST SIX OF VIN#	YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILEAGE/ HRS	CONDITION	STARTING BID PRICE	
A56143	2007	FORD BLUEBIRD SCHOOL BUS	E-450 CHASSIS - 29 PASS DIESEL (RWD)	89,471	Poor	\$2,296.00	
706915	2013	DODGE SEDAN	CHARGER POLICE (RWD)	80,732	Poor	\$949.00	
A28277	2002	FORD PICKUP TRUCK	F550 REG CAB FLATBED DISESEL (4X4)	96,035	Poor	\$490.00	
014240	N/A	TRADEWINDS GENERATOR	TJ65-II, 65KW, WITH FUEL TANK	N/A	Poor	\$535.00	
823533	2014	FORD SUV	ESCAPE SE (4WD)	128,860	Fair	\$5,389.00	
053383	2003	HAULMARK ENCLOSED TRAILER	ET85X24WT4 - 8.5' X 24'	N/A	Poor	\$834.00	
226732	2012	DODGE SEDAN	CHARGER POLICE (RWD)	75,732	Poor	\$1,042.00	
230254	2012	DODGE SEDAN	CHARGER POLICE (RWD)	118,864	Poor	\$907.00	
226728	2012	DODGE SEDAN	CHARGER POLICE (RWD)	45,336	Poor	\$968.00	
519806	2010	KAWASAKI UTV	KAF400BAF MULE 600	3,136	Poor	\$112.00	
000795	2005	GENIE LIGHT TOWER	TML - 4000N (ID# F1190)	N/A	Poor	\$522.00	
000828	2004	GENIE LIGHT TOWER	TML - 4000N (ID# F1091)	N/A	Poor	\$522.00	
000743	2005	GENIE LIGHT TOWER	TML - 4000N (ID# F1180)	N/A	Poor	\$431.00	
230270	2012	DODGE SEDAN	CHARGER POLICE (RWD)	79,064	Poor	\$1,096.00	
706919	2013	DODGE SEDAN	CHARGER POLICE (RWD)	110,042	Poor	\$1,094.00	
364658	2006	EZ-GO GOLF CART	TXT GAS	N/A	Poor	\$712.00	
945795	N/A	CLUB CAR GOLF CART	DS-E MOD#EMV-600	N/A	Poor	\$1,279.00	
082160	N/A	KUBOTA RTV	RTV 900G6H 4X4 DIESEL	N/A	Poor	\$723.00	

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