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‘Seeing Red’ exhibition focuses on MMIP

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — The missing or murdered Indigenous women (MMIW) movement has seen increased visibility in recent years from the public, government officials, the media and in Hollywood productions. Advocates have also cast a wide net to include not only women, but any Indigenous person — sometimes referred to as missing or murdered Indigenous persons movement, or MMIP.

MMIP is the focus of a new exhibition at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on the Big Cypress Reservation that opened May 5 — “Seeing Red.” The date coincided with Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day — a national day of awareness for what advocates say is an epidemic of underreported crimes that most often impact Native women, girls and LGBTQI+ people (often referred to in Native communities as two-spirit).

Lorelei Tommie conceptualized and co-curated the exhibition and opening event with museum staff. She originally had an idea to create one 3D art piece to help represent the issue.

♦ See MMIP on page 8A

Ahfachkee celebrates class of 2023

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Resplendent in white caps, gowns and patchwork, eight Ahfachkee School graduates proudly accepted their high school diplomas at the school’s graduation ceremony May 22.

“I’m proud to stand before the class of 2023,” said Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie. “You are our future leaders. Remember the opportunity to achieve greatness is always in your grasp. You are the descendants of warriors.”

“I hope today is the first of many graduations for you,” said Big Cypress Board Rep. Nadine Bowers. “Your hard work has paid off.”

The Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium was filled with the graduates’ families and friends. Principal Philip Baer and keynote speaker Lee Zepeda, executive director of Administration and a former Ahfachkee teacher and principal, provided graduates some inspirational words to live by.

“You have worked hard, persevered through challenges and demonstrated remarkable dedication to your studies,” Baer said. “Today we celebrate your achievements and look ahead to the bright futures that



Beverly Bidney

The Ahfachkee School graduating class of 2023 poses together May 22. From left to right are Billie Cypress, Maggie May Jimmie, Akira Cabral, Cyiah Avila, Maria Villarreal, Kassim Stockton Jr., Rosalinda Jimmie and Anthony Wells.

await each and every one of you.”

Baer stressed the importance of embracing Seminole culture as the graduates continue their life’s journey.

“You are the future leaders of the Seminole Tribe and your education has prepared you to take on the responsibilities that come with that role,” he said. “I

encourage you to use the skills you have acquired to serve your community with integrity, compassion and a commitment to justice and equality.”

Zepeda noted that this is a happy time of year, but also one of transition for the graduates.

“Students, you need to be recognized

for the work you put in,” Zepeda said. “You made it past obstacles and kept your eye on the goal. Keep your dreams alive, never stop being curious, never stop learning and keep moving forward.”

♦ See AHFACHKEE on page 3B

Seminole woman statue installed near Tampa

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

A bronze sculpture of a Seminole woman, complete with patchwork designed by tribal member Jessica Osceola, was installed April 28 not far from the Alafia River in Riverview’s Pebble Park, about 14 miles southeast of downtown Tampa.

“Sovereign,” a 700-pound, six-foot sculpture that stands on a six-foot tall base, is wearing a traditional patchwork skirt, cape and beads.

The husband-wife team of artists Alan



Courtesy Nicole Milligan

The “Sovereign” statue, which depicts a Seminole woman in traditional patchwork clothing, is part of the landscape at Riverview’s Pebble Park near the Alafia River, southeast of Tampa.

and Nicole Milligan created the sculpture. They reached out to Osceola for her patchwork designs and to the tribe’s Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum for the text for the plaque.

The three patchwork designs are “The River Alive,” which depicts water and the river; “Trees, Turbans and Treaties,” which honors the tribe’s Council Oak and the documents signed beneath its boughs; and

“Grandmother and I,” a tribute to generations of strong Seminole women.

“I’m glad they included the Seminole designs [on the sculpture],” Osceola said. “It was real collaboration and I’m glad Nicole reached out to me. It encourages other artists to do that, too.”

♦ See STATUE on page 5A

OB Osceola III commits to Florida State baseball

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

NAPLES — The Seminole Tribe’s OB Osceola III couldn’t say no to the phone call, even though it came in the middle of his game.

He also couldn’t say no to the offer that came on the other end of the call.

It was from Florida State University assistant baseball coach and recruiting coordinator Rich Wallace, who made an offer to Osceola to become an FSU Seminole.

“My first sentence was ‘Hey coach, I couldn’t be more thankful to be a Seminole.’ I told him how much I want it and how much I want to work for it,” Osceola said.

Osceola’s verbal commitment to FSU means that he, if all goes according to plan, will be the first Seminole to play baseball for FSU. He would be following in the footsteps of Justin Motlow, who in 2015 became the first from the tribe to play football for FSU.

“It means a lot with the heritage,” said Osceola, a 6-foot-1, 170-pound left-handed pitcher. “Especially me as a Seminole, I try my best to symbolize some type of warrior out there on the mound.”

Osceola, 16, recently completed his freshman season on the Community School of Naples team, so it will be a few years before he suits up for FSU.

“I can’t wait to get to Florida State,” he said.

The earliest he can sign with FSU will be when he is a junior.

The phone call from Wallace, which was scheduled ahead of time, came while Osceola was playing centerfield in CSN’s game at Palmetto Ridge on April 25. With three generations of the Osceola family in the park, he briefly stepped away from the game and stepped into Seminole Tribe history with his verbal commitment.

“It was a very proud moment for him, for myself, for our family and probably for the tribe,” said OB’s father, OB Osceola Jr., who was in attendance along with his dad, OB Sr.

OB III described his family as “die-hard” FSU fans. He and his dad attended a football game last season in Tallahassee. Osceola said he was impressed with all the sights and sounds in the stadium, including the Osceola-Renegade team — an homage to the tribe’s war leader from the 1800s — that revs up the crowd and the ‘war chant.’

“It’s incredible. You can see videos, but



Kevin Johnson

OB Osceola III

when you’re in person you feel the crowd,” he said.

Osceola recalled as a youngster watching FSU football games on TV with his dad and Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola.

“[Chris] is like a second father to me. Him and my dad are basically like brothers,” Osceola said.

Osceola said he’s grateful for everything the tribe and his family have done for him.

“I have a lot of people behind me, supporting me with the tribe. The councilman, the chairman, my father. The whole community is very good. They’re all backing me well and I couldn’t appreciate and thank them more,” Osceola said.

CSN finished with a 12-14 record. Osceola was 3-3 on the mound while averaging more than one strikeout per inning. He fanned 55 in 36 innings, according to stats on MaxPreps.com.

“For a freshman, he’s done really well. He’s got a good fastball for a ninth grader. He’s got good control over his curveball and changeup,” said CSN coach Chad Ott.

In April, the team went overseas and played a couple games in Italy. Ott said Osceola was pitching “lights out” against an Italian team until a blister sidelined him.

♦ See FSU on page 3C

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

Editorial

Preserving the site of the Wounded Knee Massacre

• Dusty Johnson

In the late 1880s, a movement called the Ghost Dance swept across the nation. Indians believed that this dance would give stolen land back to them, bringing about a renewal of Native society. Indians would join together to dance for this renewal at the protest of the federal government.

On December 29th, 1890, a group of Lakota Indians led by Chief Spotted Elk made camp near Wounded Knee Creek on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. There, U.S. Army 7th Calvary troops were sent to disarm the Lakota. A struggle occurred between the U.S. Army and some of Chief Spotted Elk's band – a majority of which consisted of women and children. A shot rang out, and the U.S. Army opened fire on the largely unarmed group, tragically massacring an estimated 350-375 Lakota Indians.

The land where this massacre occurred had been held under private ownership for decades until September 2022, when both the Oglala Sioux Tribe and Cheyenne River

Sioux Tribe jointly purchased the land. One month later, the tribes signed a covenant to ensure the land remains a memorial and sacred site without development.

The Wounded Knee Massacre is a dark stain on our nation's history. After working with both tribes for the last six months, I introduced the Wounded Knee Massacre Memorial and Sacred Site Act to honor and remember the lives lost. The bill would place the land purchased by the tribes into restricted fee status, similar to a trust, so both tribes can continue to hold ownership, prevent the land from being taxed, and protect it from development for generations to come. Once given restricted fee status, the land would not be able to be sold without consent of both tribes and Congress.

The section of land is forty acres located on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. My bill will make sure the tribes have the opportunity to protect the land as sacred and retain the sovereignty to maintain the land. It was and always is an honor to work with the tribes, striving to being a more perfect union.

Dusty Johnson is a U.S. congressman from South Dakota.

A message from Honor the Earth's new executive director

• Krystal Two Bulls

I came to Honor The Earth in December, 2022 as the organization began its 30th year, in preparation for a leadership transition to the next chapter of its work.

[In April], Honor the Earth founder Winona LaDuke announced her departure from the organization after 30 years of leadership dedicated to uplifting Indigenous voices and protecting the land and water.

While I am deeply excited about the next phase of Honor's work, I need to share with you the difficult context of her departure, which was an act of accountability after a substantial court ruling against the organization in an employment lawsuit, stemming from a sexual harassment claim dating back to 2015.

As the new executive director, I am navigating my team through this tough moment by grounding ourselves in our commitment to each other, our People, Mother Earth—and to ending cycles of oppression that impact our communities. I am committed to making sure that I, our teams, and this organization embody, in our relationships with each other, the values of accountability and justice that we fight for on the frontlines of the struggle for climate justice. I have spent the last two weeks in deep conversation with Indigenous leaders, particularly women, across the so-called United States, and with Honor staff, Board members and supporters. I am listening and focused on repairing and rebuilding relationships to ensure Honor is even more impactful than we have been the last three decades. We are not shying away from the lessons we need to learn, but are instead using them as the foundation of new efforts to create lasting change within our organization and better empower members of the communities where we work.

As a beginning, Honor the Earth is implementing a stronger internal infrastructure to enforce our zero-tolerance sexual harassment policy: The Honor

the Earth board of directors has updated and strengthened these policies and will require all staff, contractors and leaders to commit to these standards in writing. Staff and board members will participate in a sexual harassment prevention course led by Indigenous advocates. And Honor has contracted with an outside legal expert to evaluate any future claims of harm or abuse raised in the workplace.

As I wrote the day I accepted this position, I want nothing more than to make Honor's practices a positive example for other organizations about the deep work our communities, organizations, collectives, and movement spaces still have to do around sexual harassment.

I came to Honor because I deeply believe in the power of Indigenous people, our communities and our spirituality. I believe in the urgency of dismantling the fossil fuel industry and creating and investing in the alternatives that allow us to address the climate crisis in a way that creates a good life for everyone.

Honor will continue lifting up the voices that protect Indigenous sovereignty. We know that investing in our communities, creating the change we need for survival, is crucial in this historic moment.

As a Native-led, multi-racial organization, Honor will be at its best when we show up for the many struggles that intersect with environmental justice and work across movements to build a world that is just, equitable and inhabitable.

As I welcome the chance to guide this organization into the next 30 years, I'm here to listen: Please share your thoughts with me here. I am excited to hear from supporters about what you hope to see as Honor heads into the next 30 years of supporting Indigenous leadership for environmental and climate justice.

Néa'êšë,

Krystal Two Bulls (Oglala Lakota/Northern Cheyenne) is executive director of Honor the Earth.

Registration starts for Python Challenge

FROM PRESS RELEASE

TALLAHASSEE — Gov. Ron DeSantis announced May 24 that registration for the 2023 Florida Python Challenge has opened. Participants this year will have the chance to win a share of more than \$30,000 in prizes while removing invasive Burmese pythons from the wild. T

hose interested in participating in the challenge must complete online training to compete in the 10-day competition which

runs Aug. 4-13. The competition is open to professional and novice participants.

"There is nowhere in the world like America's Everglades, and we need to continue to protect and restore this national treasure. Removing invasive pythons from across the greater Everglades ecosystem is absolutely critical, and we must do everything we can to combat this invasive species, Ron Bergeron, a member of the South Florida Water Management District Governing Board, said in a statement.

To register visit flpythonchallenge.org.

Randee Solano starts new position at Executive Administrative Office

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Tribal member Randee Solano started a new job May 1 as a technology project manager in the Seminole Tribe's Executive Administrative Office (EAO). Solano was offered the position after she graduated from the Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) – part of the Education Department's Tribal Professional Development (TPD) arm.

ELP is a leadership development program for tribal members who are seeking full time employment with the tribe. An associate degree is required and participants typically enter the program after they've spent up to two years in TPD's Work Experience Program (WEP).

Solano said she'd recommend ELP to other tribal members.

"Especially if you have an idea, or know of something you think the tribe needs, or if you see a gap somewhere," she said. "I came in kind of knowing what I wanted to do and made my proposal."

Solano said her idea was a position that functions as a liaison between the Information Technology Department (IT) and the programs that fall under EAO.

"I see myself as a giant buffer – I'm filling in the gap between the two departments," she said. "I understand enough IT lingo to translate it to the departments in a way that's understood, and I understand the best route for anything they want to get done."

When a department needs new technology, or is working with existing technology, Solano is there to assist. For example, the Ahfachkee School recently implemented Google Chromebooks (computers) for students and staff to use, and Solano helps to smooth out any rough spots that might arise in using its various features. The Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School could end up doing the same, she said.

Solano has education-based tech projects on the horizon at the Boys and Girls Clubs and with the tribe's Language



Damon Scott

Randee Solano stands outside of the tribal headquarters building in Hollywood on May 18.

Program, too. One of her most recent projects was assisting the Ahfachkee School with the music software Ableton Live that allows composing, recording, arranging and mixing audio.

Solano is available to work with EAO's other programs including Traditional Preservation, Community Culture, Traditional History/Language, the Recreation Department and the tribe's preschools.

"When Randee joined the Education team [in ELP], she brought with her a concise outline of the things she wished to implement for the betterment of the tribal community. Her focus was evident and the things she accomplished far exceeded the hefty plans she set forth for herself," Michael Giacchino, the Education Department's director, said in an email to the Tribune. "It is bittersweet that she is moving on; however, we know that our partnership shall continue as we all celebrate her new role. Randee will

definitely play a role in the next generation of tribal leadership."

Solano, 32, who grew up on the Big Cypress Reservation, has worked for the tribe at various times since she was 18. She said her first job was doing beadwork at the Okalee Village when it was located on the Hard Rock Hollywood grounds. She previously worked at the Ahfachkee School for three years as a K-12 special education teacher, and has worked at the Children's Center for Diagnostics & Therapy at the Center for Behavioral Health. She also worked for a brief time in the President's office.

Solano has a degree in special education from Florida Gulf Coast University. The mother of four (three toddlers and a 16-year-old stepdaughter) is in the process of earning a master's degree in educational leadership from Nova Southeastern University. Her husband is Bello Solano, who is an IT education systems administrator for the tribe.

Partnership: Remember boarding school survivors

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

Preserving the oral histories of Native American boarding school survivors recently got a boost of federal funds.

The Department of Interior (DOI) announced a partnership April 26 with the National Endowment for the Humanities to help ensure that oral histories aren't forgotten. The partnership includes \$4 million to pay for research and educational programming to share and preserve the stories of boarding school abuse victims.

DOI Secretary Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo), who has advocated for boarding school survivors throughout her tenure, said the goal of the partnership is also to rebuild bonds between Native communities and the federal government and lay a foundation for future generations to learn about the boarding school era.

Haaland launched a "Road to Healing" tour in the summer of 2022 as part of an ongoing federal Indian boarding school initiative that began in the summer of 2021. The ongoing tour stops at various U.S. locations and allows survivors to share their stories, access trauma-support resources, and record an oral history.

"[Haaland has] made a point of taking time to go and hold community forums to listen to people who were in those boarding schools," Arlouine Kingman (Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe), the executive director of the Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Association, said in the announcement. "I happened to go to the one at [the Rosebud Indian Reservation], and I tell you, I was crying with some of these people who told their stories."

Kingman said the forums have helped to alleviate some of the trauma survivors experienced.

"The main thing is when they were raised in the boarding school, it took their

culture, their values from them – so they did not grow up in a family where they were taught to share with one another or to take care of one another," Kingman said. "They grew up without those family virtues we all instill in our children as they grow up, and that's the great harm."

From 1819 through the 1970s, the U.S. implemented policies that established and supported Indian boarding schools across the country. By 1926, according to DOI, 60,889, or nearly 83% of school-age Indian children attended boarding schools. The purpose was cultural assimilation by forcibly removing the children from their families, communities, languages, religions and cultural beliefs. Many endured physical and emotional abuse and in some cases died.

An initial DOI investigation found that from 1819 to 1969, the federal Indian boarding school system consisted of 408 federal schools across 37 states or (then) territories, including 21 in Alaska and seven in Hawaii. Churches ran more than 150

schools – about half each by Catholic and Protestant groups, according to the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition. The DOI investigation also identified marked or unmarked burial sites at 53 different schools across the system – a number it expects to increase.

A DOI-led inventory of the schools – that includes profiles and maps – has Florida connections. It notes the St. Augustine Day School for Apache Children at Fort Marion, dating to 1886 and 1887. The DOI information states that while Fort Marion was used to incarcerate members of various tribes, including Seminoles, the crowded conditions prompted officials to visit the site and assess whether some of the young men and teenagers would make good pupils for boarding schools. Florida is also referenced in connection with a Mississippi school from 1820 to 1830.

More information is at doi.gov and boardingschoolhealing.org.



Yakima Valley Museum

Children stand on the grounds of the Indian boarding school at Fort Simcoe, Washington, around 1900.

Speakers announced for UNITY conference

FROM PRESS RELEASE

United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY) will feature several guest speakers at its national conference June 30-July 4 at the Washington Hilton in Washington, D.C.

Scheduled speakers include documentarian and New York Times bestseller author Matika Wilbur, Grammy Award-winning fashion designer Norma Baker-Flying Horse, youth writers Kinsale Drake and Lily Painter of the NDN Girls Book Club, and entrepreneur Victoria

Vasques.

There will also be a panel featuring the official DJ of the Oklahoma City Thunder Marcus "Emcee One" Guinn and Shawn "DJ Tribal Touch" Martinez, senior director of live presentation for the Phoenix Suns and Phoenix Mercury.

"Our past speakers have inspired attendees to pursue different paths to success, and these individuals promise to do the same," Mary Kim Titla, UNITY executive director, said in a statement.

The conference is designed to engage Native youth from across the country through

workshops, breakout sessions and cultural sharing.

For more information, including registration, visit unityinc.org.



UNITY

Matika Wilbur

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Community

Big Cypress hosts ceremony to mark Memorial Day

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Big Cypress Health and Human Services Department staff organized a ceremony May 25 to mark Memorial Day for the Seminole Tribe. About 30 tribal members, tribal employees, and others met at the Seminole Veterans Memorial Fitness Trail for a walk that included six stops along the way to honor those who served in the military and in other capacities.

"I'm glad you all are here. We wanted to do the remembrance walk and also the prayer walk, which we haven't done in awhile in this community," Edna McDuffie, the Big Cypress health outreach coordinator, said. Big Cypress health educator Jamie Diersing then led the group in some fun warm-up exercises.

The stops were designated to recognize first responders, churches and spiritual

wellbeing, communities, tribal and national leaders and youth. The final stop at the trail's memorial wall was to honor military veterans.

Pastor Arlen Payne, of the Big Cypress New Testament Baptist Church; Pastor Salaw Hummingbird, of Big Cypress First Baptist Church; and Van Samuels, an Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum educator, led the group in prayers.

"I appreciate you all coming this morning and want to encourage you that as we walk and as we pray that we do with a heart of gratitude and gratefulness," Payne said.

At the communities stop, Hummingbird said that everyone "plays a vital part" in community health.

"It's each and every one of us. One thing that's for sure is that whenever we come together as a community, there is that one love that bonds us all together, that we do care for one another," Hummingbird said.

"That's what's so important about these prayer walks and us gathering up together."

A handful of military veterans were on hand, including Paul Bowers Sr., who served as a corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps; President Mitchell Cypress, who is a U.S. Army veteran; and U.S. Army veteran Paul Downing (Passamaquoddy Tribe of Indian Township), who is the Emergency Management director for the tribe, among others. Some, like Sunny Frank, participated to recognize family members who served. Frank was there to pay tribute to his father, Joel Frank Sr., who served in the U.S. Marine Corps.

The last stop was at the site's memorial wall, which includes the engraved names of Seminole military veterans who have died.

"Today is the day we honor some of the troops that went overseas and never made it back. That is the reason why we have freedom," President Cypress said.

President Cypress recognized Bowers



Damon Scott

From left to right at the Memorial Day walk May 25 are Paul Bowers Sr., Big Cypress Board Rep. Nadine Bowers, Paul Downing, Salaw Hummingbird and President Mitchell Cypress.

Sr. and said he was a hero.

Payne recalled that the first funeral he did on the Big Cypress Reservation was at the memorial wall.

"I knew a lot of these guys," he said with tears in his eyes. "I'm thankful for

them. They volunteered to go and serve their country. We must remember what Memorial Day is all about."

Memorial Day is observed each year on the last Monday in May.



Damon Scott

The last stop on the walk was at the memorial wall.



Damon Scott

The walk was organized to recognize those who served in the military and in other capacities.

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Damon Scott

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum director Gordon “Ollie” Wareham talks about the tribe’s trading post era in the Dorothy S. Osceola Memorial Library on the Hollywood Reservation on May 24.

Seminole business savvy traced to trading post era

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Entrepreneurship within the Seminole Tribe didn’t start when it officially acquired Hard Rock International in 2007, it began more than 100 years before that during what’s known as the trading post era. Not only that, said Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum director Gordon “Ollie” Wareham, but the tribe’s resilience helped to develop what are now flourishing cities across Florida by sparking business and tourism.

Wareham gave a presentation on the significance of Seminole trade and tourism in the late 1800s and early 1900s on May 24 at the Dorothy S. Osceola Memorial Library on the Hollywood Reservation. It was part of a series of workshops and presentations by the Education Department that has been funded by a recurring grant award.

Wareham said Seminole men hunted to collect animal skins and bird feathers to trade for goods like tea, coffee, gunpowder, beans, pots and pans – anything they needed back home.

Trading posts were located in Naples, Everglades City, Fort Pierce, West Palm Beach, Jupiter, Miami, and at places like the Stranahan House along the New River in Fort Lauderdale, which was one of the Seminoles main trading sites.

“If you look at all these places that had trading posts – they are now tourism spots

and major hubs where Seminoles went to do their trades,” Wareham said. “We kind of take credit for that – we helped make those cities grow.”

Trading turned into tourism and showcased the Seminoles strong ability to adapt to the times. Wareham used the emergence of alligator wrestling as an example. Seminole men caught alligators on the shoreline, and tourists would stop on the side of the road to watch. The tourists mistook what was happening as alligator wrestling, instead of a Seminole catching food for dinner. They’d throw money on the ground as a way of appreciating the entertainment of it.

Wareham said eventually a white man saw what was happening and had the idea to create a show that featured the techniques Seminoles would use on the alligator – termed alligator wrestling.

“Coins turn into dollars,” Wareham said. “You could take the gator home for your meal and have some extra money in your pocket too. They adapted for what the audience wanted to see.”

Wareham said it wasn’t only alligator wrestling the tourists wanted to see, but Seminoles themselves, and their patchwork designs. He said the long shirts Seminole men first wore were considered mostly practical for the environment. But as tourists began to notice the unique patterns and symbols, and after sewing machines became available, Seminole women made elaborate

and colorful designs that brought more customers and higher prices.

“The store owners started to realize that the longer the Seminoles were in the [trading posts], it would bring more people in the doors,” Wareham said. “Better deals were afforded to the Seminole traders and patchwork makers and tourists would come more often.”

Seminoles would eventually operate their own trading posts as well, especially in the Fort Lauderdale and Miami areas. They’d also learn enough English to communicate effectively with the tourists. Wareham said it’s an early example of the business acumen Seminoles achieved.

Charlie Tigertail operated a trading post at Rock Creek in the lower Everglades and Charlie Willie and his son Willie Willie operated one west of Miami. There were others, and the tribe would open its own Oaklee Village in Hollywood in the 1960s.

“You go from coming out of the Everglades, to knowing people want to see you and know about you, and adapting to the times,” Wareham said. “The acquisition of the Hard Rock is just a part of that story. Trading posts, becoming [federally] established in 1957, being independent, adapting your clothing and showing your culture, but still retaining that part of you – Seminole history and culture shows that you can almost accomplish anything.”

Emergency Management creates FEMA synergy

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The Seminole Tribe’s Emergency Management Department continues to build on its status as a model for others across Indian Country. One of the strategies has been to build relationships with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

FEMA is the agency responsible for leading the nation’s efforts to prepare for and respond to the impacts of natural disasters (like hurricanes, flooding and wildfires), in addition to manmade incidents or terrorist events.

Emergency Management, which is under the tribe’s Public Safety umbrella, has recently interacted with FEMA in some key ways.

Earlier this year, Emergency Management coordinators Sunny Frank and Jonathan Urtecho attended and graduated from FEMA’s National Emergency Management Basic Academy (NEMBA). Frank was the first Seminole tribal member to graduate from the NEMBA program, or any other professional program offered by FEMA.

More recently, the department hosted a group of 21 attendees who completed FEMA’s “Emergency Management Institute Tribal Train the Trainer” course April 24-28 at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood. Tribes represented in the group included the Oglala Lakota, Oneida Nation, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Navajo Nation, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Cherokee Nation, and the Tulalip Tribes.

The Seminole Tribe’s Emergency Management director Paul Downing (Passamaquoddy Tribe of Indian Township) taught the course with Mary Reeves (Blackfeet Nation), FEMA’s Emergency Management Institute tribal training curriculum manager. Downing’s staff of five Emergency Management coordinators completed the course. Of the five, two are tribal members – Frank and Rollie Gilliam. The others are Urtecho, Erik Hartl and Christina Ordiales.

Downing said the tribe is now the first in the country to have a multiperson emergency management staff with certified FEMA instructors. He said Frank and Gilliam also join a small number of Native Americans who are certified to teach any FEMA course.

The trainees learned how to teach FEMA’s four tribal curriculum courses: emergency management operations for tribal government, emergency operations for tribal government, emergency mitigation for the next seven generations, and emergency management for tribal leaders.

“It’s a service to Indian Country that we’re all instructors now,” Downing said. “You want people in the tribal community teaching others in the tribal community – emergency management from a tribal perspective. We can now be deployed with FEMA, with the blessing of the tribal government, to train across Indian Country.”

‘Building a track record’

Downing said FEMA is a bit of a mystery agency for many tribes. Part of the reason stems from the lack of emergency

management programs. He said of the 574 federally recognized tribes in the U.S., there are about 80 that have a program, and of those, about 20 would be considered robust like the Seminole Tribe’s.

“When the pandemic erupted, that was an opportunity for FEMA to kind of open their eyes and [recognize that] we have 574 tribes,” Downing said. “There are only four tribes in the nation that went through the major disaster declaration process with FEMA during the pandemic.”

Downing said most tribes didn’t have the necessary knowledge or infrastructure to interact with FEMA during the pandemic, and instead would usually opt to go through their respective states for assistance.

“We’re building a track record with FEMA without having to go through the state, which often has funding advantages,” he said.

On the last day of the training, the tribe hosted a farewell breakfast for the group and a trip to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on the Big Cypress Reservation.

“It was historical. It’s the first time something like this has happened,” Gilliam said. “Having the training at the Hard Rock made it a lot more comfortable for our guests. A tribal curriculum being taught by tribal members of other nations and bands – it’s very fulfilling because the conversation is different and we’re able to teach some of the non-Natives in the room as well.”

Downing said the next big focus for his department is Florida’s hurricane season, which officially begins June 1.

Voters keep incumbents on board, council

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — Six incumbents, including four on the Tribal Council, retained their seats in the Seminole Tribe’s general election May 8.

At about 9:40 p.m., tribal secretary LaVonne Rose emerged from tribal headquarters and read the results outside the building in front of about two dozen people.

Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr., Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, Brighton Councilman Larry Howard and Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola were re-elected.

In the Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. board of directors election, Big Cypress

Board Rep. Nadine Bowers and Hollywood Board Rep. Christine McCall won reelection. Newcomers on the board will be James Holt II, who won the president’s race, and Bryan Arledge, who won the Brighton board seat.

The president’s seat was previously held by Mitchell Cypress, who ran for chairman; the Brighton seat was previously held by Helene Buster, who ran for president.

In the government structure, the chairman serves as vice-president of the board, and the president serves as vice-chairman of the council.

The inauguration is scheduled to be held June 5 at the Classic Oak Tree in Hollywood.

2023 General Election Results

Tribal Council		Board of Directors	
Chairman		President	
Marcellus W. Osceola Jr.	372	James Holt II	310
Mitchell Cypress	301	Holly Tiger	291
James E. Billie	272	Helene Buster	264
Pete Osceola III	129	Moses B. Osceola	191
Charles A. Osceola	100	Tony Sanchez Jr.	101
Milo Osceola	17	Alfonso Tigertail	39
Martha Tommie	7		
Big Cypress		Big Cypress	
Mariann Billie	193	Nadine Bowers	162
David R. Cypress	101	Pauletta Bowers	127
Brighton		Brighton	
Larry L. Howard	147	Bryan Arledge	131
Derrick Smith	83	Norman Eric Johns	88
Lewis Gopher	32	Reina Micco	53
Justin Gopher	12		
Hollywood		Hollywood	
Christopher Osceola	199	Christine McCall	144
Francine Osceola	107	Mitchell B. Osceola	122
Krystle Young	31	Kyla Billie	78
Raymond Stewart Jr.	18	Jason Don Billie	11

Tribe praises Michelle Ford as longtime preschool manager retires

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

IMMOKALEE — Former Immokalee Preschool Center manager Michelle Ford’s retirement party filled the Immokalee Reservation’s gym with family, friends and colleagues May 11.

“I’ve known Michelle for 26 years,” said Thommy Doud, the tribe’s preschool director. “She was there to tell me what was needed in Immokalee. She has overseen 31 preschool graduations and some of those graduates are now parents at our preschool.”

The bleachers and recreation equipment were nowhere to be found in the elegantly decorated gym, which featured floor to ceiling curtains and floral centerpieces on every table. A slide show of Ford’s nearly 32-year career played on a loop. The first time Ford saw it she was brought to tears.

“We appreciate your commitment and dedication to our precious gifts, our children,” said Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie. “What you have done with our children is priceless.”

“You practically helped us raise our kids and grandkids,” said Immokalee Council Liaison Raymond Garza Sr. “I like seeing you send the graduates off to the next level.



Beverly Bidney

Michelle Ford with Thommy Doud, left, the tribe’s preschool director, and Lee Zepeda, executive director of Administration, at Ford’s retirement party.

You did a beautiful job and left a good footprint there.”

“Michelle has watched a few of my kids. She was their teacher,” said Immokalee Board Liaison Rafael Sanchez. “For three decades you laid a foundation on this reservation. Now go out and see the world.”

Ford plans to do just that. Her first trip will be on a cruise to the Bahamas.



Beverly Bidney

Michelle Ford, center, enjoys a laugh with Shirley Clay, left, and Ford’s daughter, Chelsey, at the retirement party May 11 in Immokalee.



Beverly Bidney

Michele Ford is surrounded by the Immokalee Preschool staff at her retirement party.



Courtesy photo

The FEMA training group at Hard Rock included tribal members from across the country.



Artist Wilson Bowers uses a macro lens attachment on his cell phone camera to catch super close up photos of bees at work in the Big Cypress garden.

Art, garden come together in Big Cypress

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Demonstrating that a bountiful garden can be as beautiful as a work of art, the Seminole Tribe's Native Connections, Climate Resiliency and Integrative Health programs held an “Art in the Garden” event May 11 at the Big Cypress community garden.

In the “Let’s Be Trees” garden, busy bees gathered nectar in the beds amid blooming wildflowers and ripening tomatoes on vines.

Under the chickee, tables were set up with canvasses, easels and paints for participants to learn how to create a painting from artist Elgin Jumper. Artist and photographer Wilson Bowers showed how to make artistic photos in the garden.

“The life that I create is the masterpiece I live by,” said Native Connections volunteer Marty Bowers, who came up with the idea for the garden. “It’s as expressive as anything we create on canvas.”

Jumper demonstrated how he creates landscape paintings while kids from the Big Cypress Boys & Girls Club created their own. He also gave a brief history of landscape painting.

“Painting in gardens goes back hundreds of years,” Jumper said. “When you paint outdoors you have to paint fast and think quickly because the shadows are always moving. Take a picture on your phone so it will save those shadows.”

Jumper gave examples of outdoor painters from the past. Spanish painter Diego Velasquez had to make his own paints in the 1600s, Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, J.M.W. Turner and John Constable battled the elements in the 1700s and 1800s and French Impressionists Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro and Pierre-Auguste Renoir were famous for their outdoor paintings in the late 1800s.

“Painting and gardening are healing,” said Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie. “There are a lot of forms of de-stressing and they are all good for your

physical and mental health. It’s good to have these events here.”

“We wanted community involvement and this is encouraging,” said Big Cypress Board Rep. Nadine Bowers.

The garden is a partnership between Native Connections — a division of the Center for Behavioral Health — and the Climate Resiliency Program.

Climate Resiliency officer Jill Horwitz sees the garden as a place where people can come together, relax and learn to use their creative energy to help address life challenges, including issues like climate change

The Integrative Health table featured a colorful salad and a poster of a man made completely of vegetables.

“Plants and vegetables are fuel for our bodies,” said Integrative Health director Suzanne Davis. “They keep us strong.”

“Salad can be so much more than iceberg, tomatoes and ranch dressing,” said Hollywood health clinic nutrition coordinator Karen Two Shoes. “We can experiment with vegetables in a salad. You want lots of colors and types of vegetables. Like any piece of art, you want to work with it. You are putting art in a bowl that’s really going to taste good in your mouth.”

Big Cypress health nutritionist and dietician Marianna Nikiforov made a rainbow coleslaw with shredded green and red cabbage, jicama, parsley, shredded carrots and arugula tossed with a quick and easy homemade vinaigrette. Attendees were encouraged to take samples and some went back for more.

Every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. members of Native Connections provide upkeep on the garden. Community members are encouraged to volunteer.

“We do whatever needs to be done,” Marty Bowers said. “We do the watering, weeding, give nutrients to the plants and anything else. Everyone is welcome to come by.”



Beverly Bidney (2)
At left, Integrative Health's Marianna Nikiforov works at the Arts in Garden event May 11. At right, Boys & Girls Club member Akira Tommie tries her hand at painting during the event.



◆ STATUE From page 1A

The installation took most of the day and went off without a hitch, according to Nicole Milligan.

“The sculpture looks like it has always been there,” Milligan said. “It has a presence. It belongs there and sets a welcoming tone to the park. It was so important to us to work with Jessica and the tribe.”

The patchwork on the sculpture was also created in glass on an adjacent plaque that contains a description about the tribe’s history in Elaponke and English. Marcella Billie, assistant director of the museum, worked with tribal elders to translate it into Elaponke. Here’s the text in Elaponke as it appears on the plaque:

Elahonlaachek
Lak Haa chek 1957, Seminole Tribe
Ayom ka thot
A ha kon chao lek she la maa she ket to
no baa cho mek to wa
Lak haa che en hayo ka len
Yak ne choo be ka e ma ha ke om ma thot
Na Ken Cho Kan Chao Lek Cho Ko Le
Cho Mek to wa



Courtesy Nicole Milligan

'Sovereign'

In English it reads:
Sovereign

In 1957, the Seminole Tribe created its government and constitution to ensure sustainability and prosperity.

That same year, the U.S. Congress officially recognized the sovereign nation.

Tribe hosts Take Your Child to Work Day



Calvin Tiger

The Seminole Tribe participated in the national Take Your Child to Work Day on April 27. The tribe hosted more than 100 children of tribal employees, the most ever for the event. They were treated to a variety of work experience demonstrations at tribal headquarters in Hollywood. Fourteen tribal departments participated in a presenting role. Above, alligator wrestler Justin Igalada makes the audience gasp as he balances his chin on the open mouth of a gator, which was brought to the grounds by staff from Okalee Village.



Calvin Tiger

Fire Rescue firefighter/paramedic Giovanni Cobielles explains how to use a fire hose in firefighting.



Calvin Tiger

Hollywood Culture's William Cypress, standing, Deidra Walker and Gregory Osceola show the kids items, including wood carving, beadwork and dolls.



Calvin Tiger

Fire Rescue Lt. Joshua Furman (kneeling) provides instruction to kids about how to perform CPR.

Mother's Day celebrations held tribalwide



Mothers pose for a Mother's Day photo in the Immokalee Reservation gym May 4.

Beverly Bidney



Calvin Tiger

Jessica Buster and her children celebrate at the Hollywood's Mother's Day brunch May 6 at Hard Rock.



Beverly Bidney

Demi Garza displays her new T-shirt, courtesy of the Immokalee Mother's Day event May 4.



Damon Scott

Leoda Tommie, left, and her granddaughter Eri'mya McQueen at the Mother's Day luncheon May 18 in Brighton.



Calvin Tiger

Phyllis Osceola and her daughter arrive at Hollywood's Mother's Day brunch at Hard Rock.



Damon Scott

Lunch is served at the Brighton Mother's Day event May 12.



Calvin Tiger

Clea Correa, left, and Marie Phillips enjoy the Big Cypress Mother's Day event at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium.



Damon Scott

Kaylynn Pewo, left, and Angelie Melton, in Brighton.



Calvin Tiger

Kaylee Jumper, left, and Yvonne Jumper are ready for bingo at the Big Cypress Mother's Day lunch.



Beverly Bidney

Lorraine Posada, center, stands between her daughters Lauren, left, and Lindsey at the Immokalee Mother's Day event.



Damon Scott

Vicky Huff, left, and Jarred Beecham, in Brighton.



Calvin Tiger

Abby Tigertail, left, joins Canaan Jumper and Canaan's mom Andrea Jumper at the Big Cypress Mother's Day lunch.



Damon Scott

Brighton Council Office manager Robin LaClair, seated, Brighton Council Office executive assistant Jo Johns, center, and Brighton Councilman Larry Howard at the Brighton Mother's Day event.



Beverly Bidney

Priscilla Alvarado celebrates motherhood by holding her baby Khaleesi at the Immokalee Mother's Day event.



Calvin Tiger

The Hollywood Council Office was represented at the Mother's Day brunch by, from left to right, Barbara Osceola, Mercedes Osceola, Mary Umholtz, Councilman Chris Osceola, Thomasine Motlow and Blake Osceola.



Rocksino is located in Deadwood, South Dakota.

Hard Rock

Rocksino to open this summer in Deadwood

STAFF REPORT

A unique Hard Rock offering is scheduled to come to the small city of Deadwood, South Dakota, this summer – the Rocksino by Hard Rock Deadwood.

Hard Rock said in a May 12 news release that Hard Rock Deadwood would be the only one of its kind among its vast and growing portfolio.

Deadwood is a historic city located in the heart of the Black Hills National Forest and is known for its gold rush history. The city of Deadwood is designated as a National Historic Landmark and is listed on both the National and South Dakota Registers of Historic Places. Its population is about 1,200.

Hard Rock Deadwood is a combination boutique hotel and casino experience, and is expected to include touches that will be familiar to fans of the Hard Rock brand – but on a smaller scale than most of its properties.

The property is to feature 86 slot machines, a Rock Shop retail store, and a restaurant and bar with “a delicious new menu that will include everyone’s most loved pizza in Deadwood, which will be prepared in our brand-new state-of-the-art kitchen,” the release said.

Officials said renovated luxury guest rooms are also scheduled to open later this year.

“Hard Rock prides itself on being

able to provide authentic and memorable experiences for our guests embodied by music and rich cultural history,” Jon Lucas, chief operating officer for Hard Rock International, said in the release. “We are thrilled to become a part of one of the most celebrated historic places in the U.S. and provide an economic stimulus to the city of Deadwood.”

Officials said a grand opening is scheduled for Aug. 8, with a traditional “guitar smash” ceremony at Outlaw Square. Music act Sublime with Rome is scheduled to perform. In addition, officials said the property is seeking to fill several positions, including hospitality manager, executive chef, and other supervisory and entry-level positions.

“As a community notorious for entertaining guests since 1876, Deadwood is excited to welcome Rocksino by Hard Rock as our newest, can’t miss property,” Deadwood Mayor David Ruth, said in the release. “Our rich, Old West history, combined with the Hard Rock brand, will enhance the Deadwood experience that we are known for. The Rocksino by Hard Rock is sure to be an additional gem luring visitors to our amazing community.”

The Seminole Tribe is the parent entity of Hard Rock International. For more, go to rocksino.hardrock.com/deadwood.

Seminole Hard Rock named ‘best managed’ for third year

STAFF REPORT

Deloitte Private and The Wall Street Journal have recognized Seminole Gaming and Hard Rock International (Seminole Hard Rock) for the third consecutive year as a “best managed” company.

Hard Rock made the announcement in a May 8 news release.

The 2023 list consists of 56 privately held companies across the country. Seminole Hard Rock was one of three companies in Florida to earn the recognition. The other two were Coca-Cola Beverages Florida in Tampa and Unified Women’s Healthcare in Boca Raton. In 2021, Seminole Gaming was the first privately owned gaming company to make the list.

According to organizers, the program “honors and recognizes outstanding private

companies around the globe and the achievements of their management teams on an annual basis.” Each company goes through a process that evaluates four criteria in its management skills and practices: strategy, execution, culture and governance/financials.

“We are honored to be recognized three years in a row,” Jim Allen, Hard Rock International chairman and Seminole Gaming CEO, said in the release. “We to provide the best working environment for all of our team members, which leads to exceptional experiences for all our guests.”

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

To access the full list of companies, go to usbestmanagedcompanies.com.



Salvation Army in Indiana receives Hard Rock donation

Salvation Army/Facebook

Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana made a \$25,000 donation to the Salvation Gary-Merrillville Corps Community Center in May. “We love and appreciate our friends at Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana,” the Salvation Army posted on Facebook. “They continually invest in the community in so many ways, and we are grateful to be one of the recipients of their generosity! Looking forward to using this money to help even more of our neighbors.”



Marjory's Garden/Facebook

Lending a hand in Parkland

Members of Seminole Gaming/Hard Rock’s Women in Leadership Team volunteered May 12 in Marjory’s Garden at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland. The team helped with a variety of gardening duties, including creating flower beds, planting and cleaning. The garden is for the school and the community. Seminole Hard Rock is among the donors who have helped pay for the garden’s electricity and water.

Hard Rock Hollywood nominated for music award

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — The Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood has been nominated for an Academy of Country Music award. The nomination is for an industry award in the casino of the year-theater category – presented to an “outstanding theater or showroom within a casino.”

Hard Rock made the announcement in a news release April 26.

Hard Rock Hollywood is home to the \$100 million Hard Rock Live venue, which opened in 2019 as part of a \$1.5 billion property expansion that includes the 450-foot Guitar Hotel.

Hard Rock Live has hosted many big name acts since, such as the Rolling Stones, Bruce Springsteen, Elton John, Billy Joel, Chris Rock and Metallica. The venue has also seen a slew of country music acts on its stage, like Brantley Gilbert, The Judds, Jason Aldean, Kane Brown, Old Dominion, Randy Houser, Elle King and Dustin Lynch.

“We are thrilled to be nominated for this prestigious award,” Keith Sheldon, president

of entertainment for Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming, said in the release. “As we continue to place emphasis on diversifying Hard Rock’s entertainment offerings, we could not be prouder that our efforts to immerse the brand into today’s vibrant country music scene have been recognized.”

The other nominees in the category are the Deadwood Mountain Grand (South Dakota), Golden Nugget (Louisiana), Resorts World Theater (Las Vegas) and the Soaring Eagle (Michigan).

The Academy of Country Music, and its nearly 5,000 members, votes on the awards. The organization was established in 1964 and is headquartered in Nashville. Organizers said it is the longest-running country music awards show.

The academy’s honors event, which includes the industry awards, is scheduled to be held Aug. 23 at Ryman Auditorium in Nashville.

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

AGA: Commercial gaming hits \$16.6B in Q1

STAFF REPORT

U.S. commercial gaming revenue reached \$16.6 billion in Q1 2023, marking the industry’s eighth straight record-breaking quarter, according to the American Gaming Association’s (AGA) commercial gaming revenue tracker. The quarter also included the industry’s highest-grossing month – \$5.9 billion in March.

The AGA released the data in a news release May 16.

Commercial gaming revenue – which includes traditional casino games, sports betting and iGaming – had already enjoyed year-over-year revenue increases, which were reported Feb. 16. Revenues reached \$60.4 billion in 2022, a 13.9% increase over 2021 and a 38.5% increase over the pre-pandemic year of 2019. 2020 was one of the worst years for the industry, after the pandemic caused casino lockdowns across the country.

Revenue from the Seminole Tribe’s six Florida casinos are not represented in the latest AGA data, however Hard Rock casinos

outside the state are included. The Hard Rock Northern Indiana and the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City were both listed among the top 20 commercial casinos outside of Nevada in the report.

The Seminole Tribe is the parent entity of Hard Rock International. Jim Allen, Seminole Gaming CEO and Hard Rock International chairman, is AGA’s chairman.

The AGA, which advocates for gaming industry priorities, also released its annual “State of the States” report May 16, which provides its state-by-state economic and regulatory analysis of U.S. commercial gaming for policymakers, gaming stakeholders and industry observers.

“After two full years of successive growth post-Covid, the U.S. gaming industry has never been stronger,” AGA president and CEO Bill Miller, said in the release. “With record growth across every gaming vertical – from brick-and-mortar casinos to mobile gaming – American adults continue to choose gaming as one of their top entertainment options.” The AGA reports can be accessed at americangaming.org.

Hard Rock event raises \$750K for Ukraine

STAFF REPORT

The Hard Rock Heals Foundation has raised \$750,000 for those who have faced challenges due to the war in Ukraine, according to a May 4 news release.

About 1,000 people attended a gala dinner and auction April 22 at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood to raise the funds. Organizers said the amount raised was the largest ever raised at a charity event by the foundation, which is the nonprofit arm of Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming.

“[Thank you] from the bottom of my heart for all of you joining us for just a remarkable cause,” Seminole Gaming’s chief operating officer David Hoenemeyer said to attendees.

Hollywood, Florida, resident and former Ukrainian heavyweight boxer Wladimir Klitschko hosted the event, which also featured entertainment.

“Thank you for all the feelings and the empathy that you are giving us in Ukraine,” Klitschko said to attendees. “All the funds that are raised are going to help us in Ukraine to overcome these challenging times.”

Items auctioned at the event included a pair of track shoes donated by eight-time Olympic gold medalist Usain Bolt, and a pair of boxing gloves donated and signed by

former heavyweight champion boxer Evander Holyfield. Holyfield, who was at the event, also donated a one-hour boxing lesson as part as part of an auction package.

American punk rock band Gogol Bordello and its front man, Eugene Hutz, performed their signature “gypsy punk” music. Hutz was born in Ukraine and grew up on the outskirts of its capital, Kyiv, before immigrating with his parents to the U.S. when he was 16 years old. Organizers said he is an outspoken supporter of Ukraine and has organized fundraising events with his band.

The Seminole Tribe is the parent entity of Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming. For



Tom Craig

Host Wladimir Klitschko, middle, talks with Ukrainian soldiers Artem Moroz, left, and Serhii Andriyshyn, right, at the event.

more information, go to hardrock.com and theseminolecasinos.com.



Hard Rock

Celebrity places 1st bet

Rick Nielsen, a founder of the band Cheap Trick, was the first person to place a bet at Hard Rock’s Rockford Casino blackjack table as the Illinois casino opened live table games in April. Cheap Trick was formed in the early 1970s in Rockford, which is Nielsen’s hometown.

Comedian to play in Tampa

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Comedian Gabriel Iglesias, star of a Netflix series, will perform at 8 p.m.

on Aug. 17 at Hard Rock Event Center in Tampa. Go to ticketmaster.com for tickets.

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SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA

AH-TAH-THI-KI

MUSEUM

A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

Historic newspapers make Indian removal seem beneficial to Indigenous People

BY TARA BACKHOUSE
Collections Manager
and
JOSEPH GILBERT
Research Coordinator

BIG CYPRESS — A project at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum has been revealing colonial propaganda and the dehumanization of Native people during the 19th century. Between 1816 and 1858, Seminoles and their allies were the victims of a cruel and

devastating war and removal campaign that continues to have effects on people today. The Seminole War was not only conducted on the ground by the U.S. Army’s invasion of Florida, but it was also carried out in print, by the newspapers that were printed in major population centers of the U.S. at the time. The newspapers not only spun the news to make the U.S. government look good, they also used their platforms to enact genocidal strategies against the Indigenous People fighting for their lives. Most people don’t think about the part that newspapers

played at the time. This is why the museum is researching the historic newspapers in the archival collection. We think that exposing the propaganda, racism and dehumanizing tactics can help people see the similar things that are happening today. We can’t fight these things if we don’t see they are there.

By 1837, the Seminole War had already severely disrupted Indigenous life in Florida. Seminole camps and families had been decimated and irrevocably changed by their experiences. They had successfully fought a stronger invading force, yet the force remained determined to exterminate them. When the U.S. Army failed to kill all Seminoles in Florida, they changed their tactics. They began to force people to leave their homes. They rounded people up and forced them to leave Florida, or tricked them into being removed. During the summer of 1837, newspapers such as the July 27, 1837, issue of Philadelphia’s “The Evening Star” began to report on the next stage of the colonial conquest of Florida. The United States had a firmer control of the northern part of Florida after starving, killing, and shipping the Indigenous population out of the state. The next step in the colonialists’ playbook was to settle the land and produce commercial goods that would be transported to the rest of the country. The United States had successfully stolen part of Florida from its Indigenous keepers and this article shows how they intended to start to reshaping it to fulfill their colonial needs.

Similar things were going on in the rest of the new United States. As colonial aggression forced many tribes into relocation to western lands, terrible removal campaigns were run by the U.S. Army. But the U.S. government didn’t want its citizens to know the truth. In August of 1837, New York’s The Evening Star did its best to put a positive spin on some of the most genocidal stories in this country’s history. For many, these forced marches would become known as the Trail of Tears. One article described a march as the first stop of a journey to the West that many people would make. Another article described the Creek people being removed as good looking, in good health, and traveling with well-made tents and supplies. All this is very unlikely. Another article claimed there was no sign of alcoholism, as if the forced marches were helping people overcome the evils of liquor. The same article claimed that all the people being removed were mounted on horses. This would have been more humane, but it was not the case for the



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

This map shows the route that Seminole people and their allies were forced to take during the Indian removal period.

majority of people who were being marched. The newspapers made up facts and wrote about people having to leave their home under the threat of violence in a positive way. Newspapers and the government would publish these positive reports to distract from the horrors that the trail would bring. Thousands would die on the journeys to the inhospitable areas that the government had earmarked for Indigenous life.

But why hide the awful truth? This has happened during genocidal campaigns all over the world throughout history. A government that knowingly commits genocide will hide the truth from its people as much as possible, leading to a collective denial shared by a government and its people. Knowledge and empathy are the enemies of genocide. That’s why the museum is doing this project with newspapers, to fight against the injustices of the past and present.

If you want to learn more, come visit us in the library near the back door of the museum. Email museum@seminoletribe.com or call (863) 902-1113 to make sure we’re there to help when you want to come. Thank you and keep fighting!



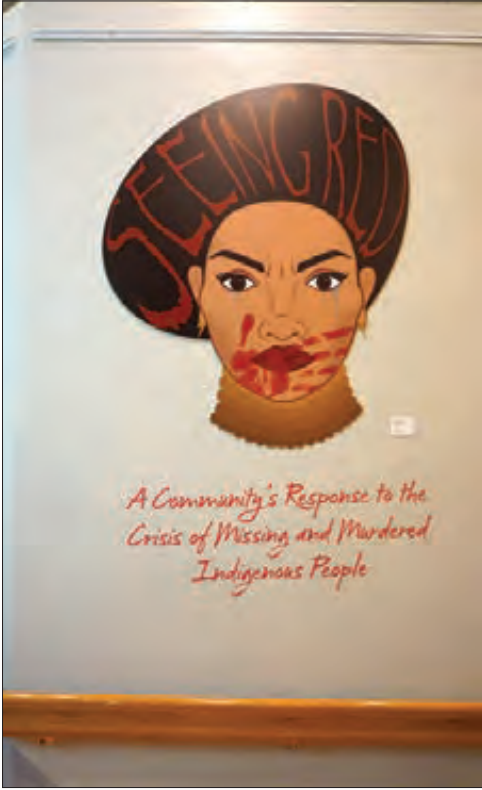
Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

The Evening Star reported news of the Seminole War and Indian Removal out of Philadelphia in 1837.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

The Heritage and Environmental Resources Office often leads community trips to Egmont Key, an island off the coast of Tampa where many Seminole citizens were imprisoned and sent away from Florida on boats in the mid-1800’s.



Damon Scott

The “Seeing Red” exhibition is scheduled to run through November.



Gordon “Ollie” Wareham

Lorelei Tommie conceptualized and co-curated the exhibition and opening event with museum staff.

MMIP

From page 1A

“Then I realized it needed to be more than one piece or one voice because it affects all of us,” Tommie said. “I did a social media blast and asked for people to submit artwork. The idea blossomed from there.”

Tommie, who is the daughter of artist Samuel Tommie, said part of her inspiration is tied to the case of Owachige Osceola, a tribal member who was found dead in her apartment in Norman, Oklahoma, almost 10 years ago. The Norman Police Department and Osceola’s family say she was murdered, but no one has ever been charged. She was 27 years old.

Tommie said she hopes the exhibition will spark more conversation and activism among tribal members.

“After the [May 5] event, a lot of people came up to me and had stories, it’s out there,” Tommie said. “Our community is very private. Many people don’t want to talk about it. For the people who are ready to talk about it, it’s for them.”

Durante Blais-Billie worked with Tommie on the project. She did research and gave feedback on how to approach the topic. Blais-Billie works in advocacy for Indigenous rights and with Hard Rock International on programs that help to prevent human trafficking.

“This topic is direly important for our tribe. Not only does knowledge about the crisis allow us to support other tribal communities affected by violence like kidnappings and human trafficking, but it opens our eyes that the crisis of MMIP impacts all communities,” Blais-Billie said.



Damon Scott

As part of the May 5 event, a MMIP memorial mound was set up in the sculpture garden for those who wanted to leave an item



Gordon “Ollie” Wareham

Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie places her red-painted hand on a board to symbolize the epidemic of missing or murdered Indigenous persons.



Gordon “Ollie” Wareham

The event brought out tribal members, tribal employees and others to the grounds of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.

“Domestic violence, child and elder abuse, and non-trafficking forms of exploitation are all still a part of the MMIP crisis.”

‘It was emotional’

Dozens of people, including tribal members, tribal employees and others came to the exhibition’s opening. Tommie led a presentation in the museum’s theater and later a candlelight vigil took place in the sculpture garden. Some tribal members shared their thoughts on the MMIP issue.

“It was emotional to say the least,” Tommie said. “This is not a new issue, this is historical. We all grew up with these stories.”

The exhibit features information and resources, where to donate money, and provides toolkits for communities and families to use if someone goes missing.

“There is so much work to be done to end violence within our own communities here in the Southeast,” Blais-Billie said. “A huge step is teaching our youth about healthy relationships and familiarizing them with the services that can help them get out

of dangerous situations. I hope this exhibit inspires our communities to take these steps and many others in preventing abuse and exploitation.”

Tommie said she’s seeking community input to organize a tribal group that would support those with court costs in MMIP cases. She can be contacted at loreleipiercingeyes@gmail.com.

The exhibition runs through November. Tommie said she expects it to return in 2024.

Health

Q&A: Tony Bullington, CBH tackle tribe’s fentanyl cases

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The rate of fentanyl overdose deaths across Indian Country has skyrocketed in recent years. Health officials say the cheap and potent opioid has largely replaced heroin and oxycodone as the most significant addiction threat. The Center for Behavioral Health (CBH) – part of the Health and Human Services Department (HHS) – has issued warnings about the drug, as the Seminole Tribe’s members have also been affected by its use.

The Tribune asked CBH director Tony Bullington about the fentanyl problem and what can be done about it. Bullington has experience in psychology, mental health counseling, family preservation services and clinical supervision. He has worked for the tribe since 1998 at HHS and the Education Department. Bullington earned a doctorate in counseling in 2017 and has been CBH director since August 2022. Answers have been edited for length and clarity.

Tribune: HHS had a video produced that describes fentanyl as the ‘single deadliest drug threat’ the tribe has ever faced.

Bullington: Fentanyl has surpassed the recent opioid crisis because of its potential lethality. It is a powerful pain killer – 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin – and is also used as an anesthetic. A very small amount can result in respiratory or heart failure. Drug dealers are using fentanyl to lace other substances, including cannabis, to enhance the effects. The extreme danger for the user is the increased risk of overdose resulting from just a little too much fentanyl being added.

Tribune: How has it affected the tribe?

Bullington: We have seen several tribal members that overdosed from fentanyl be revived by the administration of Narcan* by EMS (Emergency Medical Services) and SPD (Seminole Police Department) officers. Tragically, we have also had to work with families who lost loved ones to fentanyl overdose. Over the years I have heard people from communities outside of the tribe make statements about the enormous problem of alcohol and substance use in the tribe. According to referrals, staff caseloads, and general knowledge, it appears that the issue in the tribe affects around 10% of the population. I think the problem looks bigger sometimes because the tribe is relatively a small population.

Tribune: Narcan has become much more significant?

Bullington: Yes, Narcan is very effective to revive people from fentanyl overdose if administered soon enough. We have worked with EMS, SPD, health clinics and community members regarding the availability of Narcan and educating the tribal communities. The recent videos have been well received and we hope to continue expanding community awareness.

Tribune: There are treatment/recovery options?

Bullington: I have instructed our staff to have open, frank conversations with members seeking treatment. One of the dangers for chronic abusers when they do go into treatment and successfully complete it is the possibility of relapse. When people have achieved several months of sobriety and living drug free, their systems revert back to pre-usage functioning. The temptation with relapse will be for them to think that they need to return to the usage level prior to coming into treatment. When this happens, it will often result in an accidental overdose and possibly have a fatal result. I stress to our staff to begin at the outset of treatment to establish a strong relapse prevention plan with the member.

Tribune: You’ve recently started a new initiative?

Bullington: To assist in helping members to stay in recovery, we established a new initiative in January 2022 where we appointed staff as a continuum of care team. They visit members upon admission to residential treatment, emergency detox admissions, psychiatric admissions or those under the Marchman Act.** The goal is to build relationships and to help develop discharge plans that will have the member involved in follow-up services.

The past few years, the field of addiction treatment has moved from the long held position of an abstinence goal model to include a harm-reduction model. It is unrealistic to try to motivate everyone to abstinence. Harm-reduction is a safer alternative. There are approved Medication Assisted Treatments (MATs) that are available for both drug users and those who abuse alcohol. I would also encourage all members not to buy any substance from the streets. The chances of it being laced with fentanyl or other substances are exponential.

Tribune: CBH also hosts education groups on the reservations?

Bullington:

Yes, we have groups that focus on life skills and educational topics to address member interests and aftercare for those in recovery. We offer in-person and virtual participation in the groups, and we are exploring ways to offer more opportunities, including some for the youth.

Tribune: Any other advice you’d like to give on this subject?

Bullington: I would encourage any members who are struggling with addiction or issues with alcohol abuse to speak with family members, clan members, or staff in the tribe’s Culture Department about seeking cultural help via Indian medicine or other remedies. They are also welcome to come into the nearest CBH office and meet with staff to discuss possible treatment options. I would encourage family members to offer cultural interventions via Indian medicine, and if they refuse help, to seek support from the nearest CBH office. We can provide support for the family and explain the Marchman Act process. I look at the Marchman Act as a last resort to possibly save the members’ life after other alternatives have been exhausted.

CBH’s contact numbers during normal business hours are Brighton (863) 763-7700; Hollywood: (954) 965-1314; Big Cypress: (863) 902-3206; Immokalee: (239) 867-3480; and Tampa: (813) 620-2865. Bullington said calls after normal business hours should be directed to the Seminole Police Department at (954) 967-8900. SPD will direct the tribal member to on-call CBH staff, if needed.

**Narcan is a medicine that typically comes in a nasal spray or injectable form that is used to treat a known or suspected opioid overdose emergency.*

***In Florida, the Marchman Act was passed to help get people the addiction treatment they need when they refuse to get it themselves. Through the Act, a loved one can be put on a hold for up to 72 hours as they go through an evaluation.*



Tony Bullington

Tribe participates in Child Abuse Awareness Month

STAFF REPORT

Tribal members and tribal employees participated in a number of events across the reservations to mark Child Abuse Awareness Month in April. The Advocacy & Guardianship Department hosted a series of community events to mark the occasion.

Participants were encouraged to wear blue, a favorite sports team jersey or shirt, their favorite superhero apparel, and to “put a cap” on child abuse by wearing a favorite hat, among other themes.

A week’s worth of events usually culminates with the “Child Abuse Awareness Community Walk” and ice cream social in Hollywood, Big Cypress, Brighton and Immokalee. However those events, the first since the pandemic, and what would have been the first-ever walk in Lakeland, were cancelled due to inclement weather.

For “be a hero” day, the Advocacy program visited the tribe’s preschools while wearing superhero outfits. They read books and sang songs with the children. In addition, the Advocacy program visited the children housed in the youth home on the Big Cypress Reservation.



Courtesy Winstera Young

Health and Human Services Department employees for the Tampa Reservation are, from left to right, Chris Nicely, Deona Rodriguez, Auna McCagh and Korin Deitch.



Courtesy Winstera Young

Hollywood Advocacy & Guardianship employees are, from left to right, Kayla Weatherspoon, Winstera Young, Debra Ray and Vanessa Golaub-Turner.



Courtesy Winstera Young

Brighton Reservation nursing staff donned their superhero apparel. From left to right are Tawnya Massey, Michelle Hazellief, Niki Brown, Tara McKenna and Lindsay Bullard.



Courtesy Winstera Young

Advocacy & Guardianship staff together on the Big Cypress Reservation.

Native American Connections names new CEO

FROM PRESS RELEASE

PHOENIX — Native American Connections (NAC) announced May 22 the hiring of Trula Ann Breuninger as its new CEO. Breuninger has more than 20 years of experience in the healthcare and social services industry, working with private enterprises and tribal governments in Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oregon, and Massachusetts.

Founded in 1972, NAC is an organization that aims to heal individuals, change lives and strengthen communities. Breuninger earned a Master of Public

Health from the University of California, Berkeley School of Public Health, and a Master of Business Administration from Arizona State University. She served as a tribal administrator. Breuninger also held positions such as CEO, CFO, and COO for a number of tribal health programs and community health centers.



NAC

Trula Ann Breuninger

Summit scholarships available for youth

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The National Indian Health Board is accepting applications to support travel to the 2023 National Native Harm Reduction Summit in Mahnommen, Minnesota, from July 12-13. NIHB is offering a limited number of scholarships specifically for Native youth and early career professionals who are between the ages of 18-24 to attend and participate in this year's summit. Applications are due by June 16. Email clockclear@nihb.org for information.



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

SEMINOLE SCENES



Staff photos (3)

MEMORIAL DAY: Memorial Day, observed on the last Monday of May, honors the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. The Seminole Tribe's Herman L. Osceola was 23 years old when he was among the 18 U.S. Marines who died in a helicopter crash during a training exercise March 24, 1984, in South Korea. Eleven military personnel from South Korea also died in the crash. A sculpture and plaque in memory of Lance Cpl. Osceola are located at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium on the Big Cypress Reservation. Portraits of him are on the walls inside the gym.



Beverly Bidney (2)
GYM CLASS FUN: At left, running past a lawn sprinkler, these Ahfachkee School second graders race around a field during physical education class May 11. At right, Indigo Jumper enjoys the challenge of hula hoops during the class.



Facebook

MISS INDIAN WORLD: Cheyenne Kippenberger, right, a former Miss Florida Seminole and Miss Indian World, joins Tori McConnell (Yurok and Karuk tribes in California), who was crowned the new Miss Indian World in April during the Gathering of Nations in New Mexico. "I ask that y'all keep her in your prayers as she takes on her year as MIW. She's shown passion for her people's ways and will represent us all beautifully," Kippenberger posted on Facebook.



Kevin Johnson

GRADUATION DISPLAY: Table displays in the form of chickees, including plastic flames, added to the ambience of the Immokalee Preschool graduation May 3. The displays were on each table where families of the graduates sat. They were made by Deidra Hall.



GLI/Facebook

DONATION: The Seminole Tribe's Kyle Doney, far right, was on hand for a \$50,000 check presentation in March by Gaming Laboratories International to UNITY Inc., an organization that promotes leadership and personal development among Native youth. Doney serves on UNITY's board of trustees. The money will be used for scholarships to help more young people attend UNITY's annual national conference. "Our conference is youth-led, meaning they serve as emcees, moderators, and presenters, providing a hands-on experience in leadership development. With the support of GLI, we will be able to broaden our impact to reach even more Native youth leaders who may not necessarily have access to funds to attend," Mary Kim Titla, UNITY executive director, said in a press release.



T. Dean Images & Music Entertainment

ROCKIN' IN 'BAMA: The Osceola Brothers band performed May 6 at Chestnut Station bar and grill in Gadsden, Alabama. The brothers, from left to right, Tyson, Sheldon and Cameron, grew up on the Hollywood Reservation. They opened for Them Dirty Roses.



Beverly Bidney

SHOPPING DAY: Lauren Posada shops to her heart's delight at Virginia Osceola's booth at the To-Pee-Kee-Ke Yak-Ne Community Center in Big Cypress on May 17.

NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

Lumbree Tribe wins NC lawmakers' support for federal recognition

The North Carolina House [in late April] passed a resolution calling for full federal recognition of the Lumbree Tribe, based in Robeson County.

The tribe achieved partial recognition from Congress in 1956 but was barred from receiving federal services or benefits for American Indians, leaving members in what tribal leaders call a “legal limbo.”

The resolution approved means the Lumbees now have bi-partisan support from state lawmakers for full federal recognition.

Also supporting the effort are North Carolina's two Republican senators, Thom Tillis and Ted Budd, as well as Republican Rep. David Rouzer, who've introduced federal legislation calling for recognition.

- WFAE (Charlotte, N.C.)

Lawmakers to consider new tribal casino bill

A bill from a Portland lawmaker is holding the door open for Native American tribes in Maine to pursue casino gambling, keeping alive the decades-long political debate that has consistently come down on the wrong side for the state's Indigenous peoples.

Rep. Ben Collings, a four-term Democrat who has worked as a tribal consultant, introduced the bill as a placeholder intended to keep a tribal gambling proposal in the wings, ready to go, after state lawmakers act on a tribal sovereignty bill expected to come out in the next few weeks.

“Every session, I put in a tribal gaming bill, and it's up to the tribes to decide what to do with it,” he said. “Gaming could be very positive for the tribes and the surrounding area, and go a long way toward fixing things for Maine tribes, but sovereignty is the number one priority. Sovereignty first.”

The Legislature adjourned last year without taking action on a bill to recognize the sovereignty of Maine's tribes. Gov. Janet Mills had released a letter asking tribal leaders and lawmakers to stand down from their efforts so she wouldn't have to veto it, saying it could lead to increased litigation.

This session's version of Collings' tribal gaming bill, L.D. 1944, would require the state to negotiate for a casino license with a federally recognized tribe or any combination of tribes in Maine that wish to own and operate a casino on tribal lands.

In addition, the state could negotiate with all federally recognized Indian tribes in Maine for a license to operate a casino on non-tribal land, so long as it is not in Penobscot or Oxford counties, which is where Maine's two privately operated, state-licensed casinos are located.

The Maine tribes have exclusive rights to what is predicted to become a lucrative online sports-betting market, but the state gambling commission is still drafting the rules that will apply. On May 3, the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, the Aroostook Band of Mi'kmaq and Penobscot Nation announced they would be partnering with Caesars Digital to conduct online sports betting.

“We are now waiting for Maine's gambling control board to finalize the regulations for online sports betting and determine the date at which we will go live,” said Penobscot Nation Chief Kirk E. Francis in a letter to tribal members. “Our agreement with Caesars provides that the Tribes will receive annual mandatory minimum payments once we begin operations.”

A spokesman for the Wabanaki Alliance said May 16 that the tribes did not have anything to say about tribal gambling for publication. At the start of the current legislative session, at an event in Augusta held by the alliance, tribal chiefs told lawmakers that sovereignty was their top legislative priority.

- Portland (Maine) Press Herald

Indigenous leaders in Canada hope to renew relationship with Crown after meeting King Charles

National Indigenous leaders say their historic meeting with King Charles on May 4, two days before his coronation, marks the beginning of a new chapter in the relationship between the Crown and Indigenous Peoples.

This was the first time a British monarch sat down with First Nations, Inuit and Métis representatives together. It also was the only audience the King granted to Canadians during the run-up to his coronation.

The meeting at Buckingham Palace was arranged by Gov. Gen. Mary Simon, the first Indigenous person to serve as the King's representative in Canada. She also attended the meeting.

In an interview with CBC's Renee Filippone at Canada House afterwards, the leaders of the Assembly of First Nations, Métis National Council and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami called the discussion “positive” and “productive.” They were scheduled to speak for 45 minutes but the conversation lasted almost an hour.

“This is a very significant day and we hope that it leads to further formal work, but also a further positive relationship between the King and representatives of Indigenous Peoples in Canada,” Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) President Natan Obed said.

All three leaders were given the space to talk individually about who they are as First Nations, Inuit and Métis people, share their priorities, hear the King's views and chart a path forward, said Métis National Council President Cassidy Caron.

“When speaking with the King today, I

mentioned something from one of my elders, who said that relationships are built over 100 cups of tea,” Caron said.

“Today, we had our first cup of tea, to build that relationship, to identify our common and shared priorities moving forward, to find ways of working together that will create real, tangible change in our communities.”

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief RoseAnne Archibald said she opened the meeting with a prayer written by one of her special advisers. She said the prayer was about the seven generations to come and was meant to focus the meeting on making positive changes for the future.

She said the leaders invited Charles III to visit their communities on his next trip to Canada.

“We really have to come full circle with the Crown, to come back to that place of deep respect and gratitude,” Archibald said.

“This is the beginning of that movement and, yeah, it's going to take some time.”

- CBC News

Federal government approves more than \$30M for Warm Springs, Burns Paiute tribes

The state's two U.S. senators visited the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs reservation in central Oregon on May 22 to celebrate a \$28 million federal grant for a new water treatment facility.

Hundreds of tribal members have faced successive boil water notices and a temporary shutdown last March due to a fire at the plant, which was built in 1981. The Indian Health Service has promised about \$13.6 million for a new plant, and the Environmental Protection agency has earmarked nearly \$10.3 million. U.S. Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley obtained another \$5 million through the latest government funding package that President Joe Biden signed into law, a release said.

Wyden said the reservation, home to about 4,000 members, has waited a long time for the money.

“Today's news takes a significant step forward to reversing that shameful and shambolic legacy of burst pipes and boil water notices for tribal families and small businesses,” Wyden said.

Merkley concurred: “I've been amazed by the Warm Springs' grit and ingenuity to overcome the outdated system and continue to provide water to the community.”

The plant is in the design phase, and it could take up to five years to be finished. It will be located next to the current plant and treat water from the Deschutes River, providing the reservation with safe, high-quality water, the release said.

- Oregon Capital Chronicle

Tribal coalition makes case to Haaland for new Grand Canyon national monument

A push to establish a new national monument near the Grand Canyon gained steam recently with the visit of U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland. For years, tribes and environmentalists have advocated for added protections in the area.

Haaland met with leaders of the Havasupai, Hopi, Hualapai and other members of the Grand Canyon Tribal Coalition. They're urging President Joe Biden to declare the Baaj Nwaavjio I'tah Kukveni Grand Canyon National Monument. The meeting highlighted the tribes' connections to the area and their efforts to protect more than a million acres adjacent to the national park from future uranium and other hardrock mining.

“This attempt to declare the Grand Canyon a national monument is very historical because all the tribes once again have come together to unite in one voice and one mission,” says former Havasupai Council member and coalition spokesperson Carletta Tilousi.

Tribes and conservation groups say uranium mining threatens the Grand Canyon's environment as well as many sacred sites and tribal water resources. A 20-year federal moratorium paused new claims in 2012, but a monument designation would make the mining ban permanent. Previous attempts have failed in Congress since 2008, but the current push is being driven by tribes and is aimed at a presidential proclamation through the Antiquities Act.

- Arizona Public Radio

Yurok Tribe declares emergency in response to surge in fentanyl overdoses

The Yurok Tribal Council in May issued an emergency declaration in response to the fentanyl and xylazine crisis unfolding on and near the Yurok Reservation.

“The Yurok Tribal Council is sounding the alarm and taking action to address this exigent risk to our community,” said Joseph, L. James, the Chairman of the Yurok Tribe. “Too many of our families have lost loved ones to fentanyl. Now, we are seeing fentanyl mixed with xylazine, which is even more dangerous.”

In the last 12 months, the lives of multiple Yurok citizens have been cut short due to fentanyl poisoning. Passed via a resolution, the State of Emergency declaration directs the Yurok Tribal Court and Yurok Public Health Department to oversee the Tribe's response to the crisis. The Yurok Tribal Council also made it mandatory for all tribal government staff to be trained in the administration of naloxone

(Narcan), a medication that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. The Yurok Tribal Court has provided Narcan nasal spray kits and training to 266 tribal staff and community members in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties over the last two years.

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- Yurok Tribe

Volunteer restoration effort underway for oldest Native American Baptist church

AQUINNAH, Mass. — Much needed repairs to Aquinnah's historic Community Baptist Church took place [in May] in the first of a multi-phase restoration project.

The church's new pastor Michael Gilman, an Aquinnah community member for more than 50 years, helmed the project alongside Gerry Locklear of the North Carolina-based Native Ministry, who enlisted a group of volunteer construction workers to repair the church.

Some volunteers traveled from as far away as Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Oklahoma, all paying their own way to support the mission.

Established in 1693, the Community Baptist Church is even older than the town of Aquinnah. “Gay Head” having been incorporated as a town in 1870, and the name then changed to Aquinnah in 1997.

The Community Baptist Church of Gay Head, as the sign still reads, is the oldest continuously operating Native American Baptist church in the US. While there may be older churches in the country dating back to the early 1600s, Aquinnah's is specifically the oldest Native American Baptist church.

The church was originally located further down Aquinnah's Church Street, but was relocated by horse and buggy closer to the main road. Gilman said that was likely in the late 1800s. Due to its historic nature, the church received funding from the local Community Preservation Committee for the latest round of restoration.

Locklear's Native Ministry, a service mission made up of volunteers, worked repair the historic church's exterior. Volunteers were provided free room and board at the former Totem Pole Inn located just down the road from the church grounds. The owners are members of the church and pitched in to support the project.

Locklear and his Native Ministry have traveled all over the US to help Native American churches, from Alaska, Idaho, Arizona, North Carolina, and now Massachusetts.

“We want the folks here to realize they are not alone in the struggles of Native missions,” said Locklear.

For 20 years Locklear and his wife Sheril have done mission work with Native American Mission Fund Ministries. The work ranges from traveling with volunteer mission groups to build or repair baptist churches, both on and off reservation land, to setting up vacation bible schools, to helping support Native churches in the ways they can.

“We financially support 13 missionaries monthly, we send out Christmas shoeboxes to reservations because a lot of the time the kids will not receive any gifts at Christmas, so we want to be a blessing to them. We raise money to buy bibles to be able to give out to people at no charge,” Gilman told the Times. “So, we stay pretty busy.”

- Martha's Vineyard (Mass.) Times

Berkeley professor apologizes for falsely identifying as Indigenous, admits she's “a white person”

An anthropology professor at the University of California, Berkeley, whose identity as Native American had been questioned for years apologized [in May] for falsely identifying as Indigenous, saying she is “a white person” who lived an identity based on family lore.

Elizabeth Hoover, associate professor of environmental science, policy and management, said in an apology posted May 8 on her website that she claimed an identity as a woman of Mohawk and Mi'kmaq descent but never confirmed that identity with those communities or researched her ancestry until recently.

“I caused harm,” Hoover wrote. “I hurt Native people who have been my friends, colleagues, students, and family, both directly through fractured trust and through activating historical harms. This hurt has also interrupted student and faculty life and careers. I acknowledge that I could have prevented all of this hurt by investigating and confirming my family stories sooner. For this, I am deeply sorry.”

Hoover's alleged Indigenous roots came into question in 2021 after her name appeared on an “Alleged Pretendian List.” The list compiled by Jacqueline Keeler, a Native American writer and activist, includes more than 200 names of people Keeler says are falsely claiming Native heritage.

Hoover first addressed doubts about her ethnic identity last year when she said in an

October post on her website that she had conducted genealogical research and found “no records of tribal citizenship for any of my family members in the tribal databases that were accessed.”

Her statement caused an uproar, and some of her former students authored a letter in November demanding her resignation. The letter was signed by hundreds of students and scholars from UC Berkeley and other universities along with members of Native American communities. It also called for her to apologize, stop identifying as Indigenous and acknowledge she had caused harm, among other demands.

“As scholars embedded in the kinship networks of our communities, we find Hoover's repeated attempts to differentiate herself from settlers with similar stories and her claims of having lived experience as an Indigenous person by dancing at powwows absolutely appalling,” the letter reads.

Janet Gilmore, a UC Berkeley spokesperson, said in a statement she couldn't comment on whether Hoover faces disciplinary action, saying discussing it would violate “personnel matters and/or violate privacy rights, both of which are protected by law.”

“However, we are aware of and support ongoing efforts to achieve restorative justice in a way that acknowledges and addresses the extent to which this matter has caused harm and upset among members of our community,” Gilmore added.

- CBS News

Border Patrol agents shoot tribal member dead in southern Arizona

AJO, Ariz. — The FBI and Tohono O'odham Nation police are investigating the fatal shooting of a tribal member by U.S. Border Patrol agents in southern Arizona.

Customs and Border Protection officials said agents from the Ajo Border Patrol Station were involved in a fatal shooting on the Tohono O'odham reservation near Ajo around 10 p.m. May 18.

They said the incident is under review by Customs and Border Protection's Office of Professional Responsibility. But they haven't released any additional information.

Tribal chairman Ned Norris Jr. said in a statement Sunday that the shooting occurred in the Meneger's Dam community of the Tohono O'odham Nation and identified the victim.

“Nation member Raymond Mattia lost his life in the incident. Our hearts go out to his family and all those impacted during this difficult time,” Norris said. “As the investigation proceeds, the Nation expects full consideration of all related facts of the incident and an appropriate and expeditious response from relevant public safety agencies. Because the investigation is ongoing, we will refrain from making further comment at this time.”

Tucson TV station KVOA reported that Mattia had called Border Patrol because there were multiple migrants who had trespassed into his yard and he wanted assistance getting them off his property.

KVOA says Mattia's family members told the station he went outside when he saw the agents and he was shot multiple times for an unknown reason, only two feet from his front door.

According to KVOA, the family is demanding answers about what happened and why.

Meneger's Dam is a few miles from the U.S.-Mexico border.

- CBS News

Tribe, state, federal partners join to return endangered salmon to historic habitat

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife, NOAA Fisheries and the Winnemem Wintu Tribe have signed agreements to restore Chinook salmon to the mountains north of Redding, California.

The agreements support a joint effort to return Chinook salmon to their original spawning areas in cold mountain rivers now blocked by Shasta Reservoir in northern California. The goal is ecological and cultural restoration which will one day renew fishing opportunities for the tribe that depended on the once-plentiful salmon for food and much more.

“By working together to share our knowledge and expertise, we can expand and accelerate our efforts to restore and recover Chinook salmon,” said Cathy Marcinkevage, Assistant Regional Administrator for NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region. “This species is in crisis, and I am confident that we can together drive solutions that will truly make a difference.”

The tribe signed a co-management agreement with CDFW and a co-stewardship agreement with NOAA Fisheries, reflecting the way the two agencies describe accords with tribes. This three-way collaboration is a historic achievement that advances our common goals.

The agreements call for the agencies to include the Tribe in decisions for salmon that have great meaning for the Winnemem Wintu. Three years of drought have taken a toll on endangered winter-run Chinook salmon, which migrate and spawn in the lower Sacramento River. The river can warm to temperatures that are lethal to their eggs.

During the summer of 2022, the tribe joined state and federal agencies in pursuing urgent measures to improve the odds for winter-run Chinook salmon. This included transporting 40,000 fertilized eggs to the cold McCloud River above Shasta Reservoir. Many hatched, swimming down the river for the first time since Shasta Dam was completed in the early 1940s. The tribe

joined agency staff in collecting the juvenile fish before they reached the reservoir, which is populated with predators. Biologists then moved them downstream around the reservoir to continue to the ocean.

“This is an historic agreement that moves us one step closer to our goal of returning wild salmon from New Zealand and creating a volitional passage around Shasta Dam,” said Winnemem Wintu Chief Caleen Sisk. “It's incredible that we can now share this vision with CDFW and NOAA. We have a long way to go, but there are now more good people working on it.”

- NOAA

Tribes ramp up pressure on WA over gas prices as climate laws' effects take hold

LUMMI RESERVATION — Leaders from at least a dozen Washington tribes may soon meet with Gov. Jay Inslee's administration to raise concerns and ask questions about the effects of the state's new carbon-cap system on gas prices and tribal sovereignty.

Some say they're taken aback by how much the system seems to be driving up gas prices, despite Inslee's assurances that increases would be marginal.

Henry Cagey, a longtime council member from Lummi Nation who's been working on the issue, said at least 12 tribes want to take part in the meeting about the Clean Fuel Standard and Climate Commitment Act, which were adopted in 2021 and took effect at the start of this year.

The laws require major polluters like fuel suppliers to pay to release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and to reduce their emissions over time. They're designed to combat climate change by making the state mostly carbon free by 2050. But fuel suppliers are passing their new expenses down the line to distributors and customers, including Native American tribes, which are sovereign nations that shouldn't have to pay, Cagey said.

State officials say the new charges are fees related to “compliance obligations,” rather than revenue-generating taxes. Either way, tribal members are now paying more for gas than they would otherwise, Cagey said, noting that lawmakers carved exemptions for other groups, including the aviation industry, fuel exporters, boats headed out of state and farmers.

- Seattle (Wash.) Times

Influential Native American artist dies at 78

Known as the “Picasso of Native American art,” esteemed Oklahoma City artist Benjamin Harjo Jr. died May 20. He was 77.

“Within the ... community of Native artists, he has been an absolute cornerstone for Oklahoma,” said First Americans Museum Director of Curatorial Affairs Heather Ahtone, who is Choctaw and Chickasaw. “He has left behind a legacy of kindness and generosity and razor-sharp wit. And he's definitely going to be missed.”

One of the country's preeminent Native American artists, Harjo was Absentee Shawnee from his mother's side of his family and Seminole from his father's side.

Growing up near Byng, Harjo said he always knew he wanted to be an artist.

“That's all I ever really wanted to do (and) be, an artist. Even when I hit hard times and thought ‘Well I need to do something to make a living,’ art has always been in my soul. So I pursued it and continued,” Harjo told The Oklahoman in a 2007 interview.

Harjo created uniquely contemporary work rooted in Native heritage

Harjo started his formal arts education at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts from Oklahoma State University in 1974.

“He came out of the Institute of American Indian Arts at a time when contemporary Native art was being redefined. And I think he contributed to that redefinition,” Ahtone said.

“He didn't follow a path that was laid before him. He really forged something that was new, drew upon the palette of his Seminole cultural aesthetics but really danced with a line across the page and allowed that line to bring joy to all of us who have seen his work and appreciated it.”

Over his half-century career, Harjo created art that was both contemporary and rooted in his Native heritage.

“The images really are as modern as anything you'll see made made by a Native artist two dimensionally, yet he used layers of color and texture and built that surface up into something that was rich and playful. He had every bit an Indigenous voice that was very uniquely his,” Ahtone said.

In a 2022 interview at the First Americans Museum, where he received the Special Award for Artistic Leadership at the FAM Tribal Nations Gala, Harjo said a fellow artist dubbed him the “Picasso of Native American art.”

“I don't think of my art as Cubism as much as I think of it as use of color and design and flowing line work,” he said.

Harjo earned many awards over the course of his lengthy career, including the 1987 Red Earth Grand Award, 1993 Heard Museum (in Phoenix, Arizona) 34th Annual Featured Artist and the Gold Medal Award at the 1990 American Indian Cowboy Artists Wichita (Kansas) Show.

- The Oklahoman (Oklahoma City, Okla.)

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Education

B

Haskell names new president

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Francis Arpan, a citizen of the Yankton Sioux Tribe, will serve as the new president of Haskell Indian Nations University, the Bureau of Indian Education announced May 23.

“We look forward to seeing him lead Haskell into the next era, build partnerships in Indian Country, and be a role model for our students, staff, and faculty,” Brittany Hall, president of the Haskell’s board of regents, said in a news release.



Francis Arpan, Haskell’s new president.

Arpan joined the faculty at Haskell in May 2022 as the vice president of academics. He previously served as the dean of academics at Sisseton Wahpeton College. He also gained professorial experience at the University of South Dakota, South Dakota State University, Aims Community College, and Southern New Hampshire University.

According to the release, Arpan plans to focus his vision for Haskell on expanding opportunities for tribal students across the country and creating a student-centered environment where all can develop professionally and personally.

“My career in higher education is rooted in a foundation of increasing resources and opportunities for all,” Arpan said. “Higher education and educational attainment directly affect individuals’ life opportunities. As an academic and now Haskell president, I am excited to broaden our university’s role in actively working with Indigenous communities,” Arpan added.

PECS welcomes back 2023 graduates

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Members of the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School eighth grade class of 2019 returned triumphant as high school graduates May 19 for the school’s annual grad walk.

The 19 alumni walked through the same breezeways they did earlier in their academic lives. They were greeted by the school’s current students and teachers, who shared high fives, hugs and proud smiles.

The grad walk has been a tradition at PECS since 2016. It is meant to be an inspiration for current students and demonstrate the success of reaching graduation. PECS is a pre-K through eighth grade school.

Before the walk, the group gathered in the gym for a slide show from their eighth grade end-of-the-year ceremony, which evoked laughter. They also enjoyed snacks and time to mingle together.

PECS principal Tracy Downing congratulated the graduates on their accomplishment.

“Now is the time to take what you learned and apply it to the real world,” Downing said. “You will face challenges,



Juanita Billie hugs a PECS teacher as she makes her way through PECS during the grad walk.



Beverly Bidney

High school graduates from the class of 2023 return to their former school – Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School – for a grad walk May 19. From left to right are Bryce Ward, Leviticus Billie, Charlie Armstrong, Wyatt Hines and Winnie Gopher.

setbacks and uncertainties along the way, but remember that these are opportunities for growth and learning.”

She told the students not to be afraid to take risks, try new things and step outside of their comfort zone.

“It’s through these experiences that you will discover your passions and develop your skills,” Downing said. “Be true to yourself and you will lead a much happier life.”

Brian Greseth, former PECS principal and current director of administrative

services and deputy superintendent at Glades County School District, also spoke to the students. He told them to continue their education even if they don’t know what they want to do in life. He said most students change their majors three times and going to school is where they can figure things out.

♦ See WALK on page 3B



Beverly Bidney

Jace Brown hugs a PECS teacher as he makes his way through the breezeways of the school.

ROTC helped Jess Harmon find career and more

FROM THE NAU REVIEW

Editor’s note: This article about the Seminole Tribe’s Jess Harmon is from The NAU Review, a publication by Northern Arizona University Communications.

Jess Harmon grew up with certain ideas in her mind of what she, as a Native American woman, could do and be.

Somewhere in her college years, instead of trying to outrun that narrative, she decided to throw it away altogether and write her own story. Although the end of that story remains unwritten, this particular chapter—returning to Flagstaff, enrolling at Northern Arizona University, joining the ROTC—has a happy ending; she graduates this week with a degree in biology, after which she will be commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army.

“When I left Flagstaff to attend other universities, I think I was looking for a place to escape that wouldn’t come with any expectations of my outcome and the life I could have,” Harmon said. “After spending time in both Virginia and Hawai’i, I came to realize that negative biases and limiting expectations that society sets for women of color are impossible to escape, but rather

than running from them, it is far more impactful to change the narrative and prove to both yourself and the world that you can be successful.”

She has been examining the world around her long before she entered a biology lab. Harmon, who is a member of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, spent her early years in Tuba City and then moved to Flagstaff, which both have sizable Native American populations. That gave her a community, but she also experienced racial bias, including expectations about her potential and capability. When she looked around her, at doctors and teachers and police officers, she didn’t see people who looked like her, and as a result, she didn’t see herself in those positions.

Harmon’s journey

When it came time to go to college, Harmon decided to leave her hometown. She enrolled in a majority-white institution in Virginia, never felt comfortable and dropped out in her first semester. Then she enrolled in a university in Hawai’i, confident that she would find the role models and inclusive environment that she sought.



Courtesy photo

Jess Harmon with her ‘Cadet of the Year’ award and her mom, Donna.

Then came March 2020, and the whole world changed. It made the most sense for Harmon to return home to Flagstaff and enroll at NAU. This time, it was like coming home; she found a support system she’d been missing at other universities; she felt safe pushing herself to take on leadership roles, take chances academically and physically; and found women of color, especially Native



Courtesy photo

Jess Harmon, May 2023 commissioning photo.

women, as role models—women who were graduating with degrees in STEM fields and taking on leadership roles throughout campus. She joined ROTC and found teachers who pushed her toward success. And she found success—not without failure, but because at NAU and with her family, ROTC and professors, she felt safe enough to try, fail and keep going.

ROTC played a big role in Harmon’s time at NAU. She knew going in that she wanted to make a positive difference for the greater global community but felt powerless as one person to do much. She needed a team working toward the same goal.

“This led me to the Armed Forces, whose mission set expands beyond warfare and is one of the greatest contributors to humanitarian relief efforts, scientific research, peacekeeping and progress,” she said. “All of those things are greatly appealing and a great way to be of service to

more communities than just my own.”

Research into the different job opportunities in the military led her to the realization that officers serve as facilitators and managers—they are the decision-makers, the change-makers in the organization. She chose the field of explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) because it was a small, tight-knit community. In this role, she will lead a platoon of seven to 12 soldiers, which will allow her to build relationships with and support each individual in her command. All of that appeals to her, though so does the other part of the job.

“It also doesn’t hurt that I’ll get to blow things up!”

During her time in ROTC, she was embedded with three different operational detachments of Green Berets, completed the U.S. Army Air Assault School and Cadet Troop Leader Training. Harmon received the Gen. George C. Marshall Award in Ethical Leadership, the Top Senior Cadet Award and the Hero of the Battle Award in both 2021 and 2022, which is given to the cadet who is most influential to the success of the mission at the semester’s field training exercise.

Major Michael Britz, who worked with Harmon throughout her three years in the ROTC, said she was level-headed, mature and had the responsibility and work ethic of a much older leader. All of those skills became clear when Harmon was selected to lead a top-tier special forces unit during a tactical training exercise that was designed to certify that unit to deploy.

“She led this team of seasoned warfighters to assault multiple objectives, during the day and in complete darkness, to infiltrate an enemy perimeter via helicopter, accomplish their assignment mission and successfully return to base without casualties,” Britz said. “The commander of that unit had such great faith and confidence in her abilities that he entrusted his unit to her lead while only a cadet. She has already accomplished more as a cadet than most will accomplish in their first four years of service.”

Of course, her NAU experience wasn’t all ROTC. She did a Seamaster with the Global Expeditions Group, earning college credits in nautical science and leadership studies (and her scuba license) while doing research and study on a boat. Harmon

helped with flood and fire cleanup last year in Doney Park and was a peer mentor for students from her tribe.

Even though Harmon ended up at the right college for her, that didn’t make college itself easy. She struggled with time management; she joined clubs, played intramural sports, was going to school now with her best friend and fiancé, was in a leadership fraternity and was in a difficult major. For a self-proclaimed perfectionist, balancing all of these needs was challenging; she often was overwhelmed as she struggled to develop the habits and work-life balance she needed, certainly in college but also as a platoon leader in the Army. She sought out advice and tool, but it was a skill she needed to master on her own.

Finding and becoming a role model

At NAU, Harmon finally felt like she had models of what her life could look like. But the role model that was most significant to her was one she’d unknowingly been looking up to all her life.

“My mother is a 1999 graduate of the NAU nursing program, and as I thought about how no one looked like me and that I was looking for a role model, I realized that no one looks more like me than my mother,” she said. “She entered the world of higher education through community colleges off of the reservation and worked tirelessly to make it into a 4-year university to earn her degree. Today, my mother is a great example of shattering expectations for Native American women, pursuing a master’s degree as a family nurse practitioner.”

Finding a role model was an important first step. Now she’s working to make sure she is creating the path that other women of color can follow. Working both with her tribe and the local ROTC program, she has volunteered with JROTC programs in high schools throughout the state to talk to them about her journey, about the challenges and the victories—she is graduating at the top of her ROTC class with no debt and with a job—and tells girls that they too can shatter the expectations that society has placed on them. If I can do it, her message is, you can too, and there’s a community waiting to help you.

“I am hoping that young Native women in our community can see that you don’t need to run off to some faraway land to defeat the expectations set for you and create a life you can be proud of,” Harmon said. “The only thing I was given prior to starting college was the knowledge that I could do it and knowing that there were ways to achieve what I wanted despite having no head start—the success I’ve found is of my own making, and it is possible.”

Tribe celebrates its youngest graduates

Editor's note: Graduation season began in full force for the tribe with ceremonies held in May at its preschools. Coverage in this issue features Hollywood and Immokalee. Brighton graduations in the June 30 issue. See coverage of Big Cypress and

Hollywood Preschool

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD

The Hollywood Preschool graduation for the class of 2023 took place in the clubhouse at Seminole Estates on May 24. Seventeen students walked across the stage to get their diplomas and move on to kindergarten. Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. and Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola were among the dignitaries on hand to congratulate each graduate.

The ceremony featured a world traveler theme, complete with a backdrop that included iconic places to visit, such as the Eiffel Tower, Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Egyptian pyramids and the Statue of Liberty. Some staff dressed as pilots. The themes were meant to symbolize that the graduates have the potential to soar in life and travel the world.

The class of 2023 consists of Kaidence Alvarez, Axel Billie, Paula Clark, Zion Delgado, Amariahna Jimenez, Natalia Lang, Lehsy Leon, Marina Macias, Blayne Marks, Aleshance Osceola, Aurora Osceola, Mileah Osceola, Nevaeh Osceola, Ahmarti Sirota, Karter Stewart-Primeaux, Santino Tiger and Ja'Nae Williams.



Natalia Lang, left, and Marina Macias lead a portion of the program at the Hollywood Preschool graduation.



Hollywood Preschool's class of 2023 enters the Seminole Estates clubhouse for the graduation ceremony.



Calvin Tiger
Karter Stewart-Primeaux proudly holds his diploma after receiving congratulations from Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr.



With diploma in hand, Mileah Osceola is congratulated by Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr., right, and Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola during the Hollywood Preschool graduation May 24 at the Seminole Estates clubhouse.



Ready to soar. The Hollywood Preschool graduates celebrate at their ceremony.

Immokalee Preschool

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

IMMOKALEE — It was a colorful sendoff for the 10 graduates of the Immokalee Preschool on May 3. The mid-morning program in front of parents and tribal officials at the Immokalee Community Center featured a hula dance performance by the graduates complete with Hawaiian-themed skirts. The boys wore brown and the girls wore green or pink. The graduates also wore flower leis around their necks and some had similar adornments on their head.

Soon after, they had diplomas in their hands and plenty of praise to go

along with them. "This was a very successful year for all of our students..." Thommy Doud, the tribe's preschool director, said to the audience. He noted the challenges that the pandemic presented starting in 2020, and thanked everyone in the room for helping the kids get through to the next phase of their academic journey. "These children are ready to go to kindergarten. They are going to do so well. It was a long, hard journey, but here we go."

Doud also praised Michelle Ford, the Immokalee Preschool Center's manager who retired two days after the ceremony following nearly 32 years of work for the tribe.

"We know you put your heart and

soul into this program," said Doud, who worked with Ford for most of those years.

While addressing the graduates and audience, Ford briefly became emotional when she mentioned this would be her final graduating class. "I have watched many children grow up to be outstanding young men and women and most have become parents who have brought their own children to our preschool programs," she said. "Some of you sitting here today were my students when I was a Head Start teacher back in the early '90s. I have many wonderful, fond memories of you being little children in my classroom, and I have many wonderful memories of your children to carry on with me when I leave."

Ford's final class consisted of Jacoree Callins, Stanley Cypress, Marhz Edwards, Emiliano Garcia, Manuel Gonzalez, Judessah Gustave, River Hernandez, Zarra James, Arianna Osceola and Mordecai Yzaguirre.



Manuel Gonzalez receives congratulations from Big Cypress Board Rep. assistant Brian Billie, center, along with Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, right, and Immokalee Council Liaison Raymond Garza Sr. during the Immokalee Preschool graduation May 3.



Marhz Edwards, left, and Judessah Gustave show their excitement after earning their diplomas at the Immokalee Preschool graduation.



The 10 graduates entertained the audience with a colorful hula dance before receiving their diplomas.

◆ **AHFACHKEE**
From page 1A

After the speeches, the graduates left the stage to present gratitude gifts to those family and friends who are important to them. Gratitude gifts are a longstanding and heartfelt tradition at Ahfachkee that usually results in hugs and a few tears.

The Warrior Award, which is given to the graduate who best demonstrated characteristics of being a warrior, was presented to Akira Cabral.

Salutarian Kassim Stockton Jr. was bestowed with an honor cord by assistant principal Nuria Suarez. Valedictorian Maggie May Jimmie addressed her classmates. She said she had been bullied as a young girl in another school, which impacted her over the years.

“I stand here today fully aware of my worth, reconnected with my culture and grateful to still be standing,” Jimmie said. “I am so thankful for being able to embrace my identity and build my self-confidence. You did that, Ahfachkee.”

Jimmie told the class that they are not only celebrating graduation, but also the strength, formidability and resoluteness that got them to the finish line.

“We are individuals who are now ready to step out in the world,” she said. “A world where we can be change agents who will impact the lives of others. There is a saying: ‘be the change you want to see.’ My fellow classmates, are you ready for the challenge? I know I am.”

After receiving their diplomas, the students celebrated with family and friends as they let the impact of graduation sink in.



Beverly Bidney

Rosalinda Jimmie enjoys the moment at graduation.



Beverly Bidney

Valedictorian Maggie May Jimmie addresses her classmates and the audience.



Beverly Bidney

Kassim Stockton Jr. smiles with “23” in lights behind him.



Beverly Bidney

Cyiah Avila receives congratulations from Lee Zepeda, executive director of Administration.



Beverly Bidney

It's time to turn the tassels for the Ahfachkee class of 2023.

◆ **WALK**
From page 1B

“Stay in touch with each other,” Greseth said. “I am 62 years old and every year I still get together with my middle school classmates.”

A sampling of what immediately lies ahead for the graduates includes college, trade school, the Marines or “just figure things out on the fly.”



Beverly Bidney

PECS alumnus Chayton Billie receives applause as he walks the breezeways of PECS during the grad walk.



Beverly Bidney

From left to right, Shylynn Testerman, Mariana Mora-Lara and Cheyenne Lara accept the recognition and applause of young PECS students and teachers during the school's annual grad walk.



Beverly Bidney

PECS alumni and newly minted high school graduates from the class of 2023 gather in front of the playground they frolicked on as PECS students.

STAFF REPORT

Navajo Tech first to offer doctoral program

Navajo Technical University (NTU) has established a doctorate degree in philosophy in Diné culture and language sustainability, beginning in the fall 2023 semester. The degree is a first among the three-dozen U.S.-based tribal colleges and universities (TCUs)

— as an accredited Ph.D. program has never been offered.

Diné is the Navajo word meaning “the people” and is commonly what tribal members call themselves. The Navajo Nation is the country’s largest — it occupies portions of northeastern Arizona, northwestern New Mexico and southeastern Utah — and it is the

most populous, with 340,000 tribal members.

NTU officials said the goal of the program is to bolster language preservation and produce scholars who can help tackle issues specific to the Navajo Nation. Officials also hope the program will serve as a model for other TCUs that want to increase their levels of educational attainment and provide

culturally specific curriculum to help tribal members.

Eighth graders say goodbye to PECS

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Pemayetv Emahaky Charter School eighth graders bid farewell to the school that nurtured and taught them for most of their lives with one last parade through the school’s breezeways May 26.

Before the parade, the students and parents gathered in the gym for speeches and awards.

“This was an unusual year because of the new state standards and assessments,” PECS principal Tracy Downing said. “You adapted to that so well, you are to be commended. We are so proud of how resilient you are. Thank you parents for your support; I always say you are our educational partners.”

Culture teacher Suraiya Smith announced the culture awards, middle school teacher Quenten Pritchard announced academic awards and the awards named for three founding mothers of PECS were presented.

“I’ve had you as students during your

fourth and fifth grade years and seventh and eighth grades,” Smith said. “You are great kids. Stay in touch with each other and come back and visit.”

Smith congratulated the students for earning high school language credits by completing their Creek classes.

The awards for three founding mothers of PECS were announced. Jennie Shore, Lorene Gopher and Louise Gopher were all essential to the creation of the school in 2007.

Criteria for the Jennie Shore educational award include attending PECS for a minimum of three consecutive years, maintaining a 3.0 GPA overall, hardworking individual who strives for excellence in both standard academics and Seminole Creek language studies, shows enthusiasm and a willingness to learn more about Seminole history and culture and exemplifies Seminole virtues: to be humble, to be loving, to be truthful, to be meek and to be respectful.

Smith announced the Jennie Shore award.

“Jennie Shore was my teacher,” Smith

said. “She taught me how to do beadwork and the loom. She told me I had to learn it all by myself and if I did, she would get me my own loom. I did it and got my loom. She believes in us and wants us all to learn because she loves her culture.”

The award was presented to Sally Osceola.

Criteria for the Lorene Gopher educational award include attending PECS for a minimum of three consecutive years, maintaining a 3.0 GPA in Seminole Creek language classes, are active and knowledgeable in Seminole culture, shows enthusiasm and a willingness to learn more about Seminole history and culture, displays leadership qualities in school and the community and believes culture should be present everywhere, not just the classroom.

Gopher’s grandson Lewis Gopher Jr. announced the award.

“My grandmother always told me it was important to understand your culture and your academics so we will be able to demonstrate all aspects of the Seminole people to the outside world,” Gopher Jr. said. “I see that happening already. The culture we have is very strong and the community we live in is very caring.”

The award was presented to Ila Trueblood.

Criteria for the Louise Gopher educational award include attending PECS for a minimum of three consecutive years, maintaining a 3.5 GPA in overall academics, exhibits positive moral attributes, takes pride in their studies while striving to achieve excellence, shows engagement and enthusiasm for academic material and perseveres even when tasks may seem difficult to master.

Louise Gopher’s daughters Rita Gopher and Carla Gopher announced the award.

“My mother passed away in 2016,” Rita Gopher said. “I fear kids won’t know who she was, what she stood for, what kind of life she lived and what she represented.”

♦ See 8TH GRADERS on page 5B



Eighth graders walk through the school's breezeways during the traditional eighth grade final walk where the student body applauds their success.



Jennie Shore presents her award to PECS eighth grader Sally Osceola during the school's eighth grade program and final walk May 26.



Lewis Gopher Jr., the grandson of Lorene Gopher, presents the Lorene Gopher award to Ila Trueblood.



The daughters of Louise Gopher – Rita Gopher, left, and Carla Gopher, right, – present the Louise Gopher award to her granddaughter, Ila Trueblood, at PECS’ eighth grade program and final walk.

Ahfachkee celebrates topping off

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Ahfachkee School students, teachers and staff watched as the final steel beam was positioned into place during the topping off ceremony for the school’s new elementary school building May 11. A traditional topping off ceremony is a milestone that signifies the structural

completion of a building.

Before the beam was lifted into place, students, teachers, community members and tribal dignitaries left their mark by signing it. As it was hoisted over the entrance of the new building, principal Philip Baer led the students in a chant, “Lift that beam!”

“The students didn’t understand what the beam was for,” Baer said. “I told them their signature will be part of the school and tribal history. Then they understood it.”

The 49,835 square-foot building is scheduled for completion in mid-December and the students should move into the new facility in January 2024.

The building features 21 new classrooms, a music lab, computer lab, multipurpose spaces, a wellness center, locker rooms and gymnasium complete with a stage and a full size competition-quality wood floor.

After the ceremony, construction workers, executives and tribal dignitaries

gathered for lunch in the unfinished gymnasium.

“Thank you for your dedication and commitment to come out here and build this for our kids,” said Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie. “Thank you to the past administrations, too. This was a group effort.”

Executive director of Administration Lee Zepeda was once a teacher and then principal of the school. He addressed the

construction workers.

“I know the drive isn’t easy, so I appreciate what you do,” Zepeda said. “Big Cypress has needed this for a very long time.”

“You guys have done a phenomenal job,” said Tribal Community Development executive director Derek Koger. “We appreciate you working with us to get the right project for the community.”



Workers guide the final construction beam as its lifted during a topping off ceremony May 11.



Ahfachkee students gather for the topping off ceremony for the school's new elementary school building on the Big Cypress Reservation.



Dignitaries gather near the signed beam, now in place in the under-construction school building. From left to right are Tribal Community Development senior director of administration Luis Rioseco, Executive Administrative Office senior director of administration Bryan Granie, Tribal Community Development executive director Derek Koger, Ahfachkee principal Philip Baer, Ahfachkee assistant principal Nuria Suarez, Executive director of Administration Lee Zepeda, Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie and contractor Wharton-Smith Inc. project executive Paul Fulks.



From left to right, Ahfachkee School culture teacher Jeanette Cypress, assistant principal Nuria Suarez, and principal Philip Baer sign the final beam before it is added to the structure of the new building on the Big Cypress Reservation.



Joyce Jumper, left, with her son Corey Jumper.

Joyce Jumper earns high school diploma with son

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

Joyce Jumper grew up on the Brighton Reservation and started working when she was 15. Life circumstances pushed her to leave high school, so she thought she'd try to earn a GED certificate. It didn't happen, and time marched on, with work, family and many other life responsibilities.

Now 59, Jumper is a participant in the Education Department's Work Experience Program (WEP), and recently earned her high school diploma from Penn Foster – an online high school that's designed for non-traditional students.

Through WEP, Jumper has been a receptionist in the Brighton Education office since August 2022. She helps K-12 and higher education students with educational support and services.

"I just kept seeing these people walking in and talking about furthering their education and getting their diplomas," Jumper said. "I said, there's something wrong with this picture."

Jumper said she went to Martha Santibanez, the K-12 adviser for Brighton and Fort Pierce, to talk about how she could earn her diploma.

"I had previously worked with Joyce

when it came to her son Corey, providing him educational services. But it wasn't until after she started working in our office that I got to see how amazing she is," Santibanez said. "I understand it was kind of scary going back to school after all those years, but she was motivated to show her son that it could be done."

Corey Jumper, 18, also recently earned his high school diploma through Penn Foster. "We kind of made a deal," Jumper said. "I started a couple months before him, but we finished at the same time. It was like a friendly competition – we laughed about it."

Jumper said anytime she had a free moment, she'd log on to her computer and work toward completing the required courses.

"You're never too old, you just have to set your mind to it," she said.

Jumper said her son is now working with Robert Weekly, a higher education academic and career adviser, to plot out his next steps in an education or career path.

Mother and son are scheduled to be recognized at a graduation ceremony in Brighton on June 1 at the Florida Seminole Veterans Building.

"I am so happy that she had trust in us and that not once did she think about giving up. She is amazing," Santibanez said.

◆ 8TH GRADERS From page 4B

A video of Louise Gopher's life was shown. Highlights included her being the first tribal woman to earn a bachelor's degree in 1970 from Florida Atlantic University. In 2007, she also received the James D. Westcott Distinguished Service Medal from Florida State University and in 2014 she she received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from FSU, the Presidential Service Medallion from FAU and was inducted into the Florida Women's Hall of Fame.

The award was presented to Ila Trueblood, Louise Gopher's granddaughter.

After the ceremony, the two sisters talked about the fact that Trueblood, Carla's daughter, earned the award.

"I have so many emotions right now," Carla Gopher said. "Ila generally strives to do well in school. She always tries to remember everything that her grandmother did."



An excited group of students make their final walk as eighth graders through the hallways of the school May 26.

'With the Warriors of the Past'

BY ELGIN JUMPER

Author's note: "With the Warriors of the Past" explores three genres that I've long been interested in, those are, Historical Fiction, Time Travel, and Portal Fantasy, a sub-genre of Sci-fi/Fantasy. During the writing process, I researched something like ten major historical works, while endeavoring to retain the Seminole perspective throughout. While there is no written record by the Seminole people, I have heard stories from my parents and grandparents as well as other seniors, concerning the Seminole Wars of the 1800s. And yet, I cannot recall an account of this kind before.

My name is John Red-Tail Hawk, I'm Seminole. I was twenty-seven years old, (with wife and young son, and freshly back from active military deployments abroad, where I had been serving as a field/combat medic), when the events I now describe occurred. Distilled even further, this is how, in present-day Florida, I was teleported back in time, incredibly, to one of the first battles of The Second Seminole War, 1835-1842, within the Florida Territory.

Okay, okay, I know what you're thinking: "Teleported?" you may inquire. Fair enough. Upon completion of reading this extraordinary account, decide for yourself as to its validity. Yet always keep in heart and mind, Shakespeare's eduring words from Hamlet, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamed of your philosophy."

And so, here goes:

Present-day, I had an hour to spare, so I was at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, a museum of Seminole history and culture, located on the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation. I love rich history, all kinds, and so, I'd just raided the lively museum gift shop for history books. They do have a formidable book selection, among other things.

Now I was exploring the various exhibit galleries with Seminole artifacts, clothing, and the foremost works of art on loan by Seminole artists. There was the life-like Seminole stomp dancers, suspended in the very midst of ceremonial activity. Let's see, their research library is notable, incomparable, exemplary. Strangely, no one was around at the time I was exploring. So I explored on. There were interactive exhibits and native-inspired audio to transport the moment to another place, and I must say, it was a colorful gathering, indeed!

And then I saw it!, an Art Installation! That is, a work of art that's site-specific, designed to transform the perception of a space, I was a big fan. This one was shaped like a small Seminole chickee hut with plywood walls surrounding it. It was approximately 8 ft X 12 ft, rectangular and painted in a neutral grey, a 5 on the grey scale, I reasoned. No windows, but it had sienna-colored palm fronds secured to the roof, to sorta make up for the window deficiency.

I heard what sounded like birds of prey and swamp critters in the watery wilderness. I went in by way of a door with a sign that read: "Entrance"

Once inside, I was put through a sensory bombardment that was beyond belief! For wasn't that the sound of a canoe paddling

on a river? The images flashed upon the screens of my mind's eye, and in swift succession, too. Were they not the aromas of a Seminole feast underneath a cooking chickee? Wasn't that the glow of an orange-red Florida sunrise? Announcing a new day? And wasn't that the feel of multi-colored patchwork designs, newly-created? The entire experience was wonderful!

I stood mesmerized by the imagery: There were numerous historic Seminole photographs, black and white, an impressive collection of documented history and culture. One set of images caught my eye. They were the groups with Seminole warriors in traditional clothing and regalia, plumes and sashes. I studied them, leaning in closely, trying to decipher the character in the expressions and in the eyes.

Then, as I gazed into a warrior's features, scarred by adversity and travails and hardships innumerable, I felt a powerful feeling coming over me. It was strange and eerie, as if a magic spell had been cast upon me, and yet, I so wanted it to persist, to continue to draw me in and further enchant.

It was all happening quickly, whatever it was that was occurring. I felt Time itself was running in reverse! And that I was traveling through the wirings and threads of space, a deep blue ascent, it seemed, now warm, now cold, and so on.

Noise, as though passing through a threshold of a storm. And then, no noise at all, only the sound of howling winds, and the feel of cold weather. It was sometime in the morning. My eyes opened and I sat up and abruptly realized I was within a Seminole village of the past. It was no surprise on my part, mind you, I just knew that I'd been wondrously teleported to the back, somehow, someway.

The village was situated within a clearing, and there was an urgency transpiring already! My sudden appearance merely added to the exigent. Women and children were being evacuated. Warriors loaded their muskets and Spanish rifles, obtained through trade, I conjectured. The cries from the women and children mixed grimly with the shouts of warriors preparing for battle!

I must have appeared quite the contrast with these dismayed villagers, what with my modern attire and their traditional clothing. Just then, a group of warriors, donning colorful fineries, topped off by turbans and plumes, appeared.

"Why are you dressed in this manner?" one long-haired warrior inquired. "Are you from one of the towns to the north?"

"M-My name is John, I'm a friend," I answered, becoming more and more aware of what was going on here. "I want to help. There's strength in numbers. I can be of good use. We are of the same people, after all."

"We will see." He nodded once and indicated I'd soon be provided with musket and ammunition.

I later learned his name was Long Hair, that he sometimes spoke English, along with a traditional language, as did other warriors, and also that he was an exceptionally courageous warrior, proficient, much-respected for his battlefield prowess.

When the all the women and children had been escorted to safer ground, deeper into the forests and swamps, Long Hair approached me again.

"The blue soldiers draw near," Long



Elgin Jumper's "Colorful Warrior"

Hair explained. "Our scouts have been shadowing them for three days. Baggage train with them. A large man on a white horse leads them. They march to wipe out our villages here in the cove. Osceola, Alligator, and a lot of us see it another way."

"I understand," I remarked. "What do can I do to help?"

He glanced upwards for a moment, at the surrounding cypress trees with swaying spanish moss, and then, he sighed. "The War Leader, Osceola knows what to do. You will follow us to a hammock by a clearing near the river. That's all you will need to know for now."

It was cold, I noted, but the sun had evaded the white-grey clouds, and was shining brightly. I was with other warriors lying in wait, in a dense thicket near a horseshoe-shaped clearing, and in close proximity to what I later discovered was the Withlacoochee River. We were in the cove of said river.

Numerous sky-blue uniformed soldiers had already crossed from the north bank of the river - by way of carefully-planted canoe - to the south bank, and yet, amazingly, they had stacked their arms - as did the white force on the north side of the river - and were thus reclining in the open! In the open! I couldn't believe it!

Was this not war?

Suddenly, a signal was given by Osceola! I could see him in the distance. Through the battle fog. He was in the forefront of the hottest action. He was urging the Seminoles on! I looked around in the area I had been placed and immediately saw warriors who'd been wounded. I began to render aid to them, with what crude implements, and bandages I could manage.

But the soldiers were fighting back and I could see the general afar off on the white horse. He had his sword in hand and was holding steady until his horse was shot out from under him. Then the war-cries rang out! Word spread that Osceola had been wounded in the arm, but was still ever-active in the battle.

◆ See WARRIORS on page 6C

Xaydrien Billie Bowers recognized with 'Star Student' Award

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

MIAMI — The Seminole Tribe's Xaydrien Billie Bowers was recognized with a 2022-2023 ISSF "Star Student" award at a luncheon April 26 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Miami Airport & Convention Center. About 600 students and family members attended the event.

Billie Bowers is a seventh grader at Highpoint Academy's Coral Way campus in Miami, a pre-K through eighth grade private school that is a member of the Independent Schools of South Florida (ISSF). He's attended the school since kindergarten.

"Xaydrien is an outstanding seventh grader who sets an example for others to follow," his congratulatory letter from Coral Way campus director Jiliann De Villiers, read. "He has demonstrated excellence in school and always has a positive attitude."

"I was surprised, I wasn't expecting it," Billie Bowers said of receiving the award. "I thought it was going to go to my friend."

Billie Bowers said art is his favorite school subject. He likes to do drawings of angels and demons.

"I got a little teary. I was really happy for him, because it's something big and new," Big Cypress Board Rep. Nadine Bowers, his grandmother, said. "He's got such a good mom."

Rep. Bowers said he's one of nine grandchildren, eight boys and one girl. Billie Bowers' mother, Kayla Bowers; his father, Tony Billie; and his grandmother, Monica Cypress, were also at the luncheon to show support and congratulate their "Star Student."

"These children are shining stars and they always will be. They are our luminaries that light the way and show the path," ISSF board secretary Barbara Picazo, said prior to the students walking across a stage to receive award medals. "We appreciate in this day of, kind of self centeredness, to celebrate students who are doing something that reach other people and who are looking to give their school, their family and their community a good name."



Xaydrien Billie Bowers, second from right, stands on stage with four other awardees from Highpoint Academy.



From left to right are Monica Cypress, Tony Billie, Xaydrien Billie Bowers, Kayla Bowers, and Big Cypress Board Rep. Nadine Bowers. Jarrell Tiger-Bowers is in the stroller.

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Sports



Highlands County Charger Makai Newkirk, far right, earned a Pro Bowl selection in the U10 division for being a standout in the Youth Spring Football League.



Greg James holds the third place trophy that he and his Highlands County Chargers 14U team won in Kissimmee.

‘Zae’ Thomas receives first FBS offer

STAFF REPORT

The Seminole Tribe’s Greg “Zae” Thomas has received his first offer from a Football Bowl Subdivision college football program (formerly known as Division I-A). Thomas, a safety for American Heritage School in Plantation, received the offer from Western Kentucky University.

“First and Foremost, Thanking God for receiving my first offer from Western Kentucky University,” Thomas posted May 9 on Twitter.

WKU plays in Conference USA, which includes Florida Atlantic and Florida International. The Hilltoppers’ 2023 schedule includes a game at Ohio State.

Thomas will be entering his junior season at Heritage this summer. He was recently ranked among South Florida’s top 10 defensive backs in the class of 2025 by Rising Stars, a social media outlet that covers South Florida high school football.

Track season includes district title, trip to states

Thomas recently concluded his track and field season for Heritage.

He helped Heritage’s 4x400 relay team win the Class 3A-District 15 title in April.

A week later, Heritage qualified for the state meet with a sixth place finish at the 3A-Region 4 meet at Traz Powell Stadium in Miami. Their time was 3:22.32.

On May 19, Thomas and his three relay teammates competed at the Class 3A state championship at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville. Heritage’s time of 3:24.66 was good enough for 11th place out of 18 teams.



Courtesy photo

Greg ‘Zae’ Thomas was a part of American Heritage’s boys 4x400 relay that won a district championship in April.

NAIG items now available



NAIG

Merchandise for the upcoming North American Indigenous Games is available at naig2023.com. The games are scheduled to run July 15-23 in Nova Scotia, Canada.

Tribe well represented at youth football state championships

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

KISSIMMEE — Hundreds of youth football players – including Seminole tribal members Maddox Newkirk, Makai Newkirk, Greg James and Esteban Santibanez Jr. and descendant Elakiah Collins – filled the fields at the Austin Tindall Sports Complex in Kissimmee on April 29 and April 30. Age groups from 6U to 14U vied for championships in the Youth Spring Football League, whose games are 8-on-8.

Not everyone went home a champion, but Maddox Newkirk did. He helped his team – the Highlands County Chargers – win the 8U Division 3 championship game.

What did Maddox, who is a third grader at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School, think about winning the championship?

“Amazing,” he said.

Maddox was a key part of Highlands County’s “amazing” defense, which paved the way to a 13-6 victory.

Maddox wasn’t the only winner for Highlands County. In fact, he wasn’t the only winner in his own home. His older brother, Makai, was named a Pro Bowl selection in 10U Division 2. He was one of only two players on his team who earned the honor.

Makai is a fourth grader at PECS. He started playing football at age 3. He cheers for Florida State and his favorite NFL player is Derrick Henry.

The 10Us won the third place game and brought home a trophy.

“We have good defense. We barely get scored on,” Makai said.

Marvin Newkirk – the father of Maddox and Makai – is the 10U’s coach. He said the team only practiced once a week, but the kids were always focused.

“The energy that these kids bring to practice; the intensity they bring to games; it’s amazing,” coach Newkirk said.

Highlands County’s oldest team – the 14Us – features Greg James, who is an eighth grader at PECS. The team ended its spring on a high note by winning the third place game in Division 3.

At 6-foot-2, 250 pounds, James will bring some welcomed size as a freshman in the Moore Haven High School football program this fall, but first he wrapped up his first season with the Chargers. James said he was glad he joined Highlands County.

“My first practice I was nervous, but then I made some friends real quick,” he said.

In fact, James fit in so well with the team that when the third place trophy was awarded, it was he and a teammate who proudly hoisted the prize before anyone else.

James showed plenty of versatility this season by playing several positions, including defensive end, defensive tackle, guard and tight end.

In addition to football, he said he might do track and field at Moore Haven.

Overall, the Highlands County organization was well-represented with five of its six teams playing in final fours.

“This is our first year doing spring. We would normally let the kids rest, let their bodies rest, but they wanted to do it,” said Ivory Williams, Chargers president. “We got them involved and it’s been nothing but success.”

In addition to the tribal players from Brighton and Okeechobee, the organization features players from the Highlands towns,



Kevin Johnson

Maddox Newkirk, to the immediate right of No. 55, celebrates with his Highlands County Chargers team which won the Youth Spring Football League’s 8U Division 3 championship April 30 in Kissimmee.

including Avon Park, Lake Placid and Sebring, and even draws a few from Arcadia, Port Charlotte and Punta Gorda.

of life. We try to make it work.”

Lil Brahman reach final four

Okeechobee’s Lil Brahman’s 8U team produced a memorable regional championship win against the Palm Beach Rams to punch their ticket to Kissimmee.

◆ See FOOTBALL on page 4C



Kevin Johnson

The Lil Brahman 8U team is fired up before its state playoff game in Kissimmee. Esteban Santibanez Jr. is wearing No. 20 and Elakiah Collins is wearing No. 21.



The Evangelical Christian School softball team holds the state runner-up trophy after a 3-2 loss to University Christian-Jacksonville on May 24 in Clermont. The tribe's Angelina Yzaguirre, far left, and Hadyn Billie-Alvarado, second from left, were freshmen on the team this season. At right, Yzaguirre, left, and Billie-Alvarado in Clermont.



ECS softball finishes season as state runner-up

STAFF REPORT

The Evangelical Christian School softball team, which includes tribal members Hadyn Billie-Alvarado and Angelina Yzaguirre, played in the Class 2A state championship game on May 24 at Legends

Way Ball Fields in Clermont. Out of the seven state softball championship games, only two were decided by one run, including the 2A final in which ECS fell to University Christian-Jacksonville, 3-2. University led 2-0 after one inning. ECS knotted it up at 2-2 in the fourth before

University scored the go-ahead run in the fifth. Two days earlier, ECS reached the championship with a 10-0 win against Oxbidge Academy-West Palm Beach in the semifinals. Billie-Alvarado and Yzaguirre are freshmen. According to stats on MaxPreps.

com, Billie-Alvarado appeared in 13 games and had two walks and one RBI. Yzaguirre played in 12 games and had four hits, four RBIs and scored six runs. ECS, from Fort Myers, finished the season with a 22-6-1 record. Before the loss to University, ECS was on a 14-game winning streak and had allowed only six

runs in its last 12 games. Expect ECS to be strong again next season; the team won't lose anyone to graduation from this year's roster.

Seminole teams finish second in debut of NAYO volleyball

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

Seminole Tribe teams had a strong showing with two runner-up finishes at the first-ever NAYO volleyball tournament. NAYO, which is comprised of the Seminole Tribe and tribes in Mississippi, North Carolina and New York, has long featured annual basketball, baseball and softball tournaments, but not volleyball. The inaugural volleyball event was held May 19-20 at the Peaches Squirrel Sports and Recreation Complex and the Cherokee Fitness Complex in Cherokee, N.C. The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians was the host. The tournament featured two divisions: 14U girls, which drew five teams, and 17U girls, which had nine teams. In 14U, STOF's Rik Rak Attack was coached by Dallas Nunez and Cheyenne Nunez. Comprised mostly of players from Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School, Rik Rak Attack earned the runner-up prize thanks to a 2-2 record. Both wins came against the Sparks team from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Both of Rik Rak Attack's losses came against the hometown team Tsalagi (EBCI), which won the championship. STOF's 14U Unconquered team finished with a 1-2 record. In 17U, a fast start for the tribe's Unconquered team propelled it into the

championship. Unconquered won its first three matches against Serv-vivors (MBCI), Haudenosaunee Smashers (New York) and TNT (EBCI). In the championship, Unconquered fell to TNT following a lengthy wait. "We were undefeated and sitting in the championship game waiting five hours to play again; that definitely played a factor in the loss," Unconquered coach Mona Baker said. Some of the players on the team were Baker's daughter Preslynn and Miley Jimmie, both of whom play for Moore Haven High School, as well as the Osceola sisters – MarySally and Xiya—who play for University School in Davie, and Giselle Micco, who previously played for Okeechobee High School before she transferred to Gateway Charter in Fort Myers. Overall, Baker said she was pleased with her team's performance. "I can't wait until next year," she said. **NAYO 14u volleyball** Champions: Tsalagi (EBCI) 2nd Place: Rik Rak Attack (STOF) 3rd Place: Sparks (MBCI) **NAYO 17u volleyball** Champions: TNT (EBCI) 2nd Place: Unconquered (STOF) 3rd Place: Choctaw Elite (MBCI)



The NAYO 14U runner-up Rik Rak Attack volleyball team includes, back row, from left to right, coach Dallas Nunez, Ila Trueblood, Jojo Nunez, Marley Jimmie, Kelsey Jackson, Kuli Julian and coach Cheyenne Nunez. In the front row, from left to right, are Amalia Estrada, Melaine Bonilla, Hannah Platt and Tehya Nunez.



The NAYO 17U runner-up Unconquered team. From left to right are Giselle Micco, Janine "RaeRae" Gentry, Alyssa Bowers, Preslynn Baker, Miley Jimmie, MarySally Osceola and Xiya Osceola.



Unconquered's 14U team. From left to right, back row, are Eriyana McQueen, Serene King, Bekkah Tigertail, Halley Balentine, Tahnia Billie and Anna Tigertail. In the front row, from left to right, are Jaelle Wienmann and Jaelee Wienmann.

Tyler Hiatt earns conference athlete of the year honor

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

The University of Sioux Falls’ Tyler Hiatt capped off an impressive outdoor track and field season by being named the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference’s outdoor field athlete of the year. NSIC is a NCAA Division II conference with schools from Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Hiatt is the son of Seminole Tribe of Florida tribal member and USF Athletics hall of famer Stephanie Hiatt. He is the grandson of the late Seminole veterans’ leader Stephen Bowers.

“Tyler’s performance this season is a

product of hard work and perseverance,” USF throws coach Alissa Rausch said in a news release. “He works hard day in and day out to accomplish his goals, all while being a great teammate.”

Hiatt also earned NSIC all-conference honors.

In May, Hiatt, a sophomore from Sioux Falls, earned high point scorer honors with 26 total points at the NSIC outdoor championships in St. Paul, Minn. His performance included first place in the shot put and second place in the discus and hammer throws. His hammer toss of 174’11” was a career best. He holds two school records in the shot put and discus throws and sits second in the hammer throw



Xavier Blackwell

Tyler Hiatt competes in the hammer throw for the University of Sioux Falls in South Dakota.

◆ FLORIDA STATE From page 1A

Baseball is a year-round sport for Osceola, who has played travel ball for

several years, including presently with the CBU program.

In social media posts after making his commitment, he thanked current and past coaches as well as his future coaches in Tallahassee.



Courtesy CSN

OB Osceola III delivers a pitch for Community School of Naples.



Kevin Johnson

OB Osceola III takes a lead off of second base in CSN's game against Evangelical Christian School on May 1 in Naples.



Kevin Johnson

The Okeechobee High School softball team, including Lexi Thomas, second from left, and Alyssa Madrigal, far right, line up prior to facing Bayside in a Class 5A-Region 4 quarterfinal May 11 in Palm Bay.

Hot bat, strong glove help Lexi Thomas shine for OHS

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

PALM BAY — The value of Lexi Thomas to the Okeechobee High School softball team was on display often in the Brahman final game of the season.

In a 4-3 eight-inning loss to Bayside on May 11, Thomas, from the Brighton Reservation, was among the standouts for OHS in the field and at the plate as the Brahman season ended in a Class 5A-Region 4 quarterfinal in Palm Bay.

Thomas reached on an error with two outs in the third. She was left stranded, but two innings later, after OHS fell behind 3-0, she came through in the clutch with a two-out single to left field. The hit kept OHS alive in the inning and set the stage for the next batter — Mallory Collier — to smash a line drive three-run home run to center that tied the game 3-3.

In the bottom of the inning, Thomas made one of the game’s top defensive plays with a diving, backhanded catch in left field.

Thomas finished the season among

the team’s top three in several categories. She was first in hits (27), second in batting average (.450) and doubles (six), and third in runs scored (16). Another telling stat that shows she’s a tough out: she struck out only five times in 63 plate appearances.

“Lexi had a great year at the plate. I was always confident in her abilities this season and was never worried about her getting the job done at the plate,” said Okeechobee coach Kelci Breaux.

Thomas, a junior, batted in the No. 3 slot against Bayside, although she spent much of the season batting second. It was a breakout year for her as her batting average improved by more than 100 percentage points compared to her sophomore season.

“I think overall, I saw a lot of growth and maturity from her throughout the season,” Breaux said. “She has a tremendous amount of athletic ability. I also feel like she gained more confidence in her abilities throughout the season.”

Thomas is one of two Seminoles on the team. Freshman Alyssa Madrigal saw some varsity action this season, including as a courtesy runner against Bayside. She pitched

in two games, but played most of the season on the JV squad.

Breaux said the program had an eye on building up its pitching staff for the future because star pitcher Laci Prescott was a senior. Madrigal was among a handful of freshmen who briefly pitched for varsity.

“The goal for her was to get some experience and just grow in her pitching throughout the season,” Breaux said. “We were able to get her some experience throughout the season and in that we were able to get a better idea of how she can keep learning and growing. One of her strengths is that she has a lot of movement on the ball.”

Breaux said she liked the growth she saw from Madrigal in pitching and hitting.

“She did a great job in the JV games,” Breaux said. “She was able to get some time and experience in a position other than pitching and she was able to get several at bats with which she did very well in.”

The varsity ended with a 10-7 record, which included five shutouts and an impressive win against Jensen Beach late in the regular season.



Kevin Johnson

Lexi Thomas delivers a single in the fifth inning against Bayside.



Kevin Johnson

Alyssa Madrigal takes a lead at first in a courtesy runner role in the Class 5A-Region 4 quarterfinal.

Fitness, wellness event focuses on living healthy lives

BY CALVIN TIGER
Reporter/Intern

HOLLYWOOD — The Iso-Ten Fitness Challenge & Wellness Fair took place April 21 at Seminole Estates on the Hollywood Reservation. Sunshine Frank organized the event with a goal of stressing the importance of physical health to the tribal community.

The fitness challenge portion of the event contained three workout stations named “Poseidon’s Wrath,” “Atlas Run” and “Mount Olympus.”

Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola stressed the importance of physical health and cheered on the participants during the challenges. He also participated.

“It’s good to take care of your body and live a healthy lifestyle,” Councilman Osceola said. He said diabetes is a high risk to Native Americans due to poor health.

The fair portion included raffle prizes, health screenings from the tribe’s health department and alternative medicine vendors.

Frank, who is the broadcasting manager for Seminole Media Productions, said she wanted participants to have a sense of community and family by coming together for fitness and wellness.

“I wanted to make sure they walked away with a sense of pride and accomplishment,” Frank said.

She also said that she wanted tribal



Jessica Osceola participates in the “Atlas Run” station in the Iso-Ten Fitness Challenge on April 21.

members to get an educational experience out of the event, something they could utilize to live a healthier life.



Above, Anna Ruidaz, and at left, Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, participate in the “Mount Olympus” station at the Iso-Ten Fitness Challenge.

♦ FOOTBALL From page 1C

“We fought real hard in the regional final. We won 13-12,” said Brahmans coach Chuck Powell, who was thrilled with how his team played this season. “We did really good. We finished the season at 9-1-1. These boys have only played together for two seasons. We are a very young squad. We will be

something to be reckon with in the future.”

That includes Esteban Santibanez Jr. and Elakiah Collins

“[Esteban] has got a lot of potential. He has progressed a lot this year,” Powell said.

He shared similar sentiments about Collins.

“He’s come on to become a very good defensive player. He is not afraid of anything,” he said.



Kevin Johnson
Makai Newkirk with his dad and coach Marvin Newkirk.



Kevin Johnson
Highlands County Chargers’ Greg James (77) battles an opponent in the third place game.



Kevin Johnson
The Lil’ Brahmans offensive line includes Esteban Santibanez Jr. (No. 20) and Elakiah Collins (No. 21).

Practice time in BC



Beverly Bidney
Zih'nellie Burney, from the Big Cypress Recreation Department's Diamondbacks T-ball team, fields a ground ball during a practice May 10. The team worked on hitting and fielding.



Beverly Bidney
Harvey Billie



Beverly Bidney (2)
Austin Billie, left, and Neka Cortez.

Stanley Cup final features Indigenous players

STAFF REPORT

The Stanley Cup final between the Florida Panthers and Vegas Golden Knights will feature Indigenous players from Canada on both teams.

Florida defenseman Brandon Mountour (Mohawk) grew up in a Six Nations village in Ontario. The Six Nations consist of Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora.

The play of Mountour, 29, has been one of the pivotal factors in Florida’s success. Mountour is in the midst of his best season as a pro. He had 16 goals and 53 assists in 80 games during the regular season. The 73 points are his highest total, far surpassing his previous high of 37. He’s continued to produce offensively in the playoffs, notching

six goals and three assists in 16 games.

Vegas defenseman Zach Whitecloud (First Nations descent) grew up in the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation in Manitoba.

Whitecloud, 26, played in 59 regular season games and had five goals and seven assists. He has played in 17 playoff games this season.

The Panthers will host games 3, 4, and, if necessary, 6. All game times are 8 p.m. EST.

June 3: Florida at Vegas
June 5: Florida at Vegas
June 8: Vegas at Florida
June 10: Vegas at Florida
*June 13: Florida at Vegas
*June 16: Vegas at Florida
*June 19: Florida at Vegas
(* if necessary)

ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

JUNE 2023

The opossum (*uh-pass-sm*), is a creature whose name most people have trouble pronouncing. Do you include the "o" at the beginning, or do you call this animal "possum"? Different from a rodent, this marsupial, once born, is held inside of a pouch, allowing for more growth and development to happen after birth. Their "milk-teeth" are re-absorbed into their skulls just a few months after birth and all 50 of their adult teeth come through by six months of age. With a similar variety of teeth to humans, the opossum is an omnivore, eating anything from insects to snakes to smaller animals. Even with all these teeth and its sharp bite, the opossum is most known for feigning death (below) when they come across a predator. While 'playing dead' the opossum draws its gums away from its teeth, exposing its full set and readying itself for defense if needed.



Krause and Krause, 2006



THPO

This month's post is a little different from the others. The Collections team is choosing to highlight several vertebral opossum bones (bottom left) that come from different projects and were cataloged at different times. Since most of the material the Tribal Archaeology Section (TAS) collects from the field is highly fragmentary, it's very rare for the Collections team to catalog a complete bone, especially for this small nocturnal animal. Even more rare is to come across the vertebrae that shape this animal's hairless and rat-like body part: its tail. Used as a fifth limb for climbing (bottom right) and carrying leaves and sticks, the tail is made up of an average of 27 caudal vertebrae, ranging in size depending on its location within the tail (top).



THPO



Krause and Krause, 2006

Krause, William and Krause, Winifred. (2006). The Opossum: Its Amazing Story. Department of Pathology and Anatomical Sciences School of Medicine. University of Missouri. Columbia, Missouri. chrome-extension://efaidnbmninnibpcapjclcfndmkaj/https://mospace.umsystem.edu/xmliu/bitstream/handle/10355/15130/OpossumItsAmazingStory.pdf?sequence=1



SEMINOLE HISTORY STORIES - JUNE 2023

THE BIG MAN OF THE CATTLE PROGRAM: MORGAN SMITH



The first thing most people noticed about Morgan Smith (Bird Clan) was his size. According to Billy Bowlegs III, Morgan Smith was the largest Seminole alive, and one reporter referred to him as "a gargantuan man," standing around six and a half feet tall and "weighing as much as the horse he rode."

Morgan Smith was there for the first transfer of government owned cattle to Seminole Tribal ownership as one of heads of the Seminole cattle program. A career cattleworker, he worked with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to transfer the cattle from federal ownership to the Seminole, not as a gift, but as a loan that would be paid back by an increasingly successful business. He was elected the Chairman of the Cattle Board, and was instrumental in the development of the program on the Big Cypress Reservation.

He made his main home near the Big Cypress Red Barn, the center of the cattle program and most activity on the reservation, but later established another camp near the Kissimmee Billie Slough, to watch over his herd. In an unprecedented move, he bought a pre-made home from a catalogue and had it shipped out to the reservation and then brought out into the slough, the first non-traditional home in Big Cypress.

Morgan Smith was a forward thinker, and helped bring veterinary science, new ranching techniques, and business sense to the newly rebuilt Seminole cattle program. Today the cattle offices in Big Cypress are named after him. His hard work ensured the future of both the program, and the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

TO LEARN MORE

Cowkeeper's Legacy, the second Seminole Story Book, covers the history of the Seminole cattle tradition, from Ancestral times to the modern day. It is coming soon and will be available both in physical format and on the STOTHPO.com website. Visit the Tribal Historic Preservation Office website at stothpo.com or use the QR code For more Seminole history resources.



Bench, Bradford inducted into American Indian Athletic Hall

FROM KXII (TEXAS)

The American Indian Athletic Hall of Fame celebrated its 50th anniversary by honoring Oklahoma natives Johnny Bench (Choctaw) and Sam Bradford (Cherokee) during its induction ceremony in April.

According to a press release from First Americans Museum, every athlete honored by induction is selected based on an outstanding, colorful, exciting and action punctuated record of performance.

Bench was born in Oklahoma City and grew up in Binger. He is a citizen of the Choctaw Nation.

Bench played his entire career with the Cincinnati Reds, beginning in 1968. He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1989 and considered by many experts to be the greatest catcher ever. His honors include National League Rookie of the Year (1968), National League Most Valuable Player (1970 & 1972), World Series MVP (1976), 14-time All-Star, with 10 Gold Gloves. In 1980, Bench set an endurance record by catching 100 or more games for 13 consecutive seasons, according to the release.

Bradford was born and raised in Oklahoma City. He is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation.

Bradford received a football scholarship from the University of Oklahoma. He was an All American and Heisman Trophy winning quarterback while at OU. He enjoyed a nine-year career in the NFL after being selected #1 in the 2010 NFL Draft and being named Rookie of the Year. Along the way he set several NCAA and NFL passing records, according to the release.



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66TH ANNUAL SEMINOLE PRINCESS PAGEANT

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Ownership of new MLS team includes California tribe

FROM PRESS RELEASE

SAN DIEGO — San Diego has been awarded Major League Soccer’s 30th team, MLS Commissioner Don Garber announced May 18. San Diego will begin competing as an expansion club in 2025 at Snapdragon Stadium – a 35,000-seat venue.

The club is owned by Mohamed Mansour – a distinguished entrepreneur, investor and philanthropist with deep, global ties in the soccer world – and the Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation. The Sycuan Tribe becomes the first Native American tribe to have an ownership stake in professional soccer in the United States.

As an essential partner with Mansour and RTD, the Sycuan Tribe brings a distinctive community connection and understanding to the area’s MLS expansion club, with the tribe residing in and around San Diego for

more than 12,000 years.

One of 12 Kumeyaay tribes in San Diego County, Sycuan has been a long-term partner with countless major institutions in the community, including the San Diego Padres, San Diego Symphony, Children’s Hospital and hundreds of local non-profits.

“What a proud moment this is for the city and the Sycuan Tribe to bring MLS to San Diego,” said Sycuan tribal chairman Cody Martinez. “Sycuan has deep roots to the San Diego community and found an incredible partner in Mohamed Mansour and the soccer expertise that he brings with Right to Dream.

“Sycuan continues to demonstrate its strong commitment to the San Diego region and our MLS team will provide us with a great opportunity to bring together many different segments of the community through their passion for the game.”

Ariana Drehsler
From left to right, San Diego Padres Manny Machado, MLS Commissioner Don Garber, Mohamed Mansour and Sycuan Tribe Chairman Cody Martinez at Snapdragon Stadium on May 18.



WARRIORS From page 5B

The firing from the woods continued, unabated. I moved about, tending to the wounded, observing the battle when I could.

I could see how fierce the action was turning after the general sent soldiers into the hammock, brandishing bayonets at us. The battle noise was horrendous! The sulfurous smell of gunpowder was thick in the air! We pushed them back at long last and forced the soldiers from the woods, all the way back to the river-crossing point, where in time they constructed a bridge, and achieved a recrossing of the river. The army withdrew northwards. Seminoles held the field.

As the day faded away to darkness, I tended to the wounded, doing all I could for them with what I had. And then, I walked alone to a clump of pine, and sat down. I gazed out across the woods to the clearing where most of the fighting had taken place. I remembered my family, my wife and son, and the good times that lived on in golden memories.

I thought: So this is the Florida of 180 years ago? More or less. This day . . . so incredible. But I know it happened. “This is history,” I whispered. The impact of this day was immeasurable, I could see that, quite clearly. The War Leader waited for

just the right moment to spring the trap, then the heated fray, the uproar, the bayonet charges of the blue troops, the Seminoles turning the tables. I knew right then this inconceivable ordeal would stay with me for the remainder of my days.

But I had to get back home to my family. I sensed an impending rain, sure enough, in the growing darkness, it rained. I didn’t quite understand what had happened or what was about to happen. Some kind of magic was at work. Groups of Seminoles came to me, expressing gratitude.

The sky was dark, deep blue, with glistening stars blinking gracefully from afar. Then I closed my eyes, and was teleported back into the Art Installation in The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, on the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation, returned at last, having traversed the circuitries of Space and Time, but on this occasion, as an altered man to the present-day.

So that’s how it happened. Now you’ll have to form your own conclusions and opinions as to what I’ve memorialized here. On certain nights, I still struggle with it, and sleep is so difficult for me to find. And on other nights, when sleep does come, I still dream of the battle at the river.

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

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JUNE 12TH
TO
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2023 SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

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Checkout books & pick up a summer reading activity log

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More details contact STOF Libraries

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FOR SALE

LAST SIX OF VIN#	YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILEAGE/ HRS	CONDITION	STARTING BID PRICE
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A54914	2010	FORD PICKUP TRUCK	F150 XLT CREW CAB (4WD)	101,775	Poor	\$8,683.00
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Note - Previously advertised items are not reflected on this advertisement, only new listings. For more information contact Fixed Assets Dept.
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Tribal Members Only website: <http://seminoletribe.com/FixedAssets>. (Registration required)



LEGAL NOTICE

IF YOU, A CHILD IN YOUR CARE, OR ANOTHER LOVED ONE WERE HARMED BY ENDO OR A RELATED COMPANY, INCLUDING PAR OR AMS, OR THEIR PRODUCTS INCLUDING OPIOIDS, RANITIDINE, OR TRANSVAGINAL MESH, YOUR RIGHTS MAY BE AFFECTED BY DEADLINES IN THE ENDO BANKRUPTCY.

The deadline to file a claim in the bankruptcy is July 7, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time).
The deadline to object to Endo’s sale is July 7, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time).

WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?

On August 16, 2022, Endo International plc and certain of its affiliates filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York. Certain Endo affiliates manufactured and/or sold, among other things, branded opioid medications (including but not limited to OPANA® (oxymorphone hydrochloride), OPANA® ER (oxymorphone hydrochloride extended release), and PERCOCET® (oxycodone and acetaminophen tablets)), generic opioid medications, generic ranitidine medications, and transvaginal mesh. **This notice is intended to inform you of your rights in this bankruptcy regarding the bar date and proof of claim process and Endo’s proposed sale of substantially all of its assets.**

WHAT IS A CLAIM?

A “claim” means a right to seek payment or other compensation. If you, a child in your care, or another loved one were harmed by Endo or a related company, including Par or American Medical Systems (AMS), or their products, including opioids, ranitidine, or transvaginal mesh, you may have a claim against one or more of these entities. To make a claim, you will need to submit a proof of claim in the bankruptcy case. You may file a claim on behalf of yourself, a child in your care (including a child exposed to opioids in the womb), or a deceased or disabled relative. Examples of claims that may be filed in the Endo bankruptcy include but are not limited to:

- > **Opioid Claims:** Claims for death, addiction or dependence, lost wages, loss of consortium, or neonatal abstinence syndrome (sometimes referred to as “NAS”), among others.
- > **Ranitidine claims:** Claims for cancer, including bladder, esophageal, pancreatic, stomach, and liver cancer, among others.
- > **Transvaginal mesh claims:** Claims for pelvic pain, infection, bleeding, among others.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE BAR DATE AND PROOF OF CLAIM PROCESS?

The deadline to submit your proof of claim is called a bar date. The bar date, or the deadline to submit your proof of claim, is July 7, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time). If you do not submit a proof of claim by the deadline, you will lose any rights you may have had to seek payment or compensation. You must file a proof of claim form so that it is actually received by the bar date. A proof of claim form can be filed by you, a legal guardian, survivors, or relatives of people who have died or are disabled. You do not need an attorney to file a proof of claim for you.

For a more complete list of relevant companies and products manufactured and/or sold by Endo and its related companies, including full prescribing information and BOXED WARNINGS for OPANA® (oxymorphone hydrochloride), OPANA® ER (oxymorphone hydrochloride extended release), and PERCOCET® (oxycodone and acetaminophen tablets), and for more complete details about the bar date and instructions on how to file a confidential personal injury claim, visit **EndoClaims.com** or call **877.542.1878 (Toll-Free)** or **929.284.1688 (International)**.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE SALE?

Endo intends to sell substantially all of its assets in an auction and sale process in the bankruptcy case and subject to approval by the bankruptcy court. **Endo is seeking relief that the sale will be free and clear of all claims, liens, and encumbrances.**

If you disagree with the proposed sale, you must object to the sale in writing, so that your objection is received on or before **July 7, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time)**. **Any party in interest who fails to properly file and serve its objection by the objection deadline may lose its claim against Endo’s assets if the sale is approved.** Objections not filed and served properly may not be considered by the bankruptcy court.

Complete details about the proposed sale, including any auction for Endo’s assets, the date of the hearing to consider the sale, and instructions on how to file an objection, are available at **EndoClaims.com** or by calling **877.542.1878 (Toll-Free)** or **929.284.1688 (International)**.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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