



The Seminole Tribune

Voice of the Unconquered

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Hard Rock, Seminole Gaming partner with cruise giant

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — With venues in more than 70 countries, Hard Rock International's presence stretches across the globe. Now, thanks to a partnership with Royal Caribbean Group, that presence will be known on the seas, too.

HRI and Seminole Gaming announced April 26 that they are teaming up with the Miami-based cruise giant — whose brands include Royal Caribbean International and Celebrity Cruises — with shared benefit packages for guests and team employees.

"Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming are thrilled to help our valued guests and team members bring their love of entertainment, traveling, dining and gaming to the high seas through this incredible 'no limits' partnership with our South Florida neighbors at Royal Caribbean International and Celebrity Cruises," Jeff Hook, executive vice president and chief marketing officer of Seminole Hard Rock Support Services, said in a statement.

The partnership includes vacation discounts for Unity by Hard Rock loyalty members, who can also receive invite-only cruise giveaways. An annual complimentary cruise on select ships and itineraries will be offered to top-tier loyalty members.

◆ See PARTNERSHIP on page 5A



A newly unveiled monument at Camp Pendleton in California honors the 18 U.S. Marines, including Lance Cpl. Herman L. Osceola, and 11 Republic of Korea Marines who died in a helicopter crash during a military exercise in 1984.



Courtesy photos

Camp Pendleton monument honors Lance Cpl. Herman L. Osceola, fellow Marines

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

Forty years have passed since a military helicopter crash claimed the life of U.S. Marines Corp. Lance Cpl. Herman L. Osceola from the Seminole Tribe's Big Cypress Reservation.

The reservation's recreation gymnasium and an annual basketball tournament — both named in his memory — serve as reminders of Osceola's service and sacrifice for his tribe and the United States.

More than 2,600 miles away — in a military memorial garden park on one of the country's largest Marine Corps bases —

another remembrance was unveiled.

A ceremony was held March 8 at Camp Pendleton in Southern California for a new monument that honors the 18 U.S. Marines and 11 Republic of Korea Marines who were killed in the crash March 24, 1984, during joint exercises known as Team Spirit '84 in Korea.

On one side of the monument, the names of the 29 victims are etched in two columns under the title "In Memory." In the left column, nine names from the top is "LCPL Herman L. Osceola."

◆ See MONUMENT on page 5A

Tribe hosts Take Your Child to Work Day

BY CALVIN TIGER
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The Seminole Tribe's Take Your Child to Work Day event drew dozens of kids to tribal headquarters in Hollywood on April 25.

Organized by the Human Resources Department, the event offered a vast array of workstations from participating departments such as Education, Advocacy & Guardianship, Housing, Recreation, Fire Rescue, Police, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum/Seminole Okalee Indian Village, Public Works, Health, Information Technology and Culture.

The kids began their day with a breakfast hosted by Education followed by a presentation from Human Resources in the auditorium. The presentation covered the important functions performed by Human Resources for the tribe and its employees.

The kids then observed and participated in activities designed to provide them with a



Seminole Tribe Fire Rescue firefighter Adel Diaz shows Liam Sotomayor how to use a firehose, which they sprayed on a target.



Calvin Tiger

Animal presenter Nick Font shows a snapping turtle to children and parents at the Take Your Child to Work Day on April 25 at tribal headquarters in Hollywood. The animal program was organized by the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum and Seminole Okalee Indian Village.

glimpse of how the tribe operates inside and outside of offices.

Storytelling and flute playing was performed by Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum Director Gordon Wareham followed by an animal experience on headquarters' grounds where parents and children received close-up views of wildlife, including bearded dragon, blue tongue skink, tortoise, Burmese python, snapping turtle and a spectacle owl. The tribe's museum and Okalee Village assisted in organizing the animal experience. A human knot activity in the auditorium

lobby was organized by Advocacy & Guardianship.

The Seminole Police Department and Seminole Tribe Fire Rescue held activities and photo opportunities for the parents and children, including hose cone knockdown, CPR education and demonstration, and Fire Rescue unit displays and demonstrations.

In the afternoon, Public Works gave a presentation and overview of what the department does for the tribe. The presentation consisted of information about water plants, wastewater plants, solid waste

and distribution systems. The presentation also highlighted the different jobs within the department.

In a presentation from Information Technology, the parents and children learned about the basics of Geographic Information System (GIS) and its importance of that system to tribe.

Health had a lung gunk activity, blender bikes and DIY body scrub in which the parents and children could partake. Meanwhile, Culture displayed a variety of cultural demonstrations consisting of

woodwork, baskets, dolls, and instruments. The cultural demonstrations were performed by Hali Garcia and William Cypress.

"Each year, we are happy to host the kids and give them a little insight into what we do and show how great it is to work for the Seminole Tribe of Florida, especially when we are able to incorporate the tribe's history into our events. Our attendance doubled this year and we love to see the event grow year after year," said Timika Reid, Human Resources director.

◆ See more photos on page 2B

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Editorial

Becoming the first Native American Appropriations Committee chairman

• Rep. Tom Cole

On April 10th, I was ratified by the House Republican Conference as the new Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee - but not only did I just become the new Chairman, I also became the first Native American to ever Chair this Committee.

As an enrolled member of the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma, my tribal heritage is something I am very proud of, and I was very fortunate to witness this culture firsthand while growing up. My great, great grandfather served as the clerk for the Chickasaw Nation Supreme Court, my great grandfather was the Treasurer of Chickasaw Nation, my great aunt, Te Ata Fisher, was a famous actress and storyteller who performed Native American stories all over the world, and my late mother and inspiration, Helen Cole, was the first Native American woman elected to the Oklahoma State Senate.

My family members truly made it a priority of theirs to preserve tribal culture, and, as one of only five Native Americans and Alaska Natives in Congress and the first Native American House Appropriations Committee Chair, it is a top priority of mine to protect our tribes as well.

It is important to remember that Native Americans are the First Americans. They are sovereign nations who governed themselves long before settlers arrived, and they continue to do so today. Through legally binding agreements, such as the federal trust

responsibility, the United States is obligated to provide services and federal resources to tribes — a responsibility I have been and will continue to work to ensure is met.

It is critical tribes and the federal government have mutual respect. States and the federal government must work with Native Americans to maintain the integrity of their heritage, culture, and rights. At the same time, the federal government must uphold its constitutional oath to tribes to provide basic resources such as healthcare, education, infrastructure, and law enforcement, among many others, in Indian Country. Tribes do not receive state assistance and cannot tax their own citizens, which is why expanding and promoting economic development within tribal communities and committing these federal resources is so important.

This is why, during my tenure as Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, I fought to secure historic gains for traditionally underfunded Native American housing and transportation programs. Specifically, I was able to obtain \$1.34 billion for Native American housing programs and \$150 million in discretionary appropriations for Tribal Transportation programs in the Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations package. Over the years, I have also fought to secure advanced appropriations funding for the Indian Health Service, ensuring that tribal communities are never at risk of losing healthcare access in the case of a government shutdown.

I have long been, and always will be, an advocate for expanding self-governance

wherever possible and ensuring tribes receive the resources they need to take care of their communities because, at the end of the day, tribes are the best at taking care of their people. As Chairman of the full House Appropriations Committee, I will continue to work to set these increases as the standard for this necessary funding in the future.

Lastly, it is important that my fellow members of Congress are informed about the very unique issues concerning Native Americans, the sovereign rights of tribes, and their relationship with the federal government. As the Republican Co-Chair of the bipartisan Congressional Native American Caucus, this is exactly what I strive to do. Tribal issues span to every single House Committee, so it is important to keep Native American issues top of mind as members take up legislation.

In conclusion, tribes have played a very important role in American history. They have greatly influenced this nation and the land on which we live, even before the United States truly came to be. As the longest serving Native American in the House of Representatives, I know that it is an honor and a privilege to be a voice for tribes in Congress, and will continue to ensure that we, as a body, are protecting their autonomy and culture.

Congressman Tom Cole (R) represents the 4th district of Oklahoma in the U.S. House of Representatives. He is serving his 10th term.

Tribal community gathers as partial solar eclipse passes over reservations

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — A partial solar eclipse, about 50% coverage, was visible over the Seminole Tribe's reservations throughout Florida on April 8, and the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum and Ahfachkee School made the most of the rare event. For the Big Cypress Reservation, the eclipse was at its peak at 3 p.m.

Tribal members and tribal employees protected their eyes with eclipse glasses to view the event, along with millions of other North Americans as the eclipse moved from the Pacific coast of Mexico to the northeast coast of Canada in just one hour and 40 minutes.

At Ahfachkee, about 150 students and teachers gathered on a lawn to view the shadow of the moon cover the sun. Science teacher Alix Johnston taught middle school students about eclipses to prepare them for the event. They compared solar and lunar eclipses, watched NASA videos, created chalk models and studied total eclipses.

"This happens in the moon's shadow," said Nolan Grasshopper, 14. "A total eclipse is a rare thing," added Christopher Smith, 13.

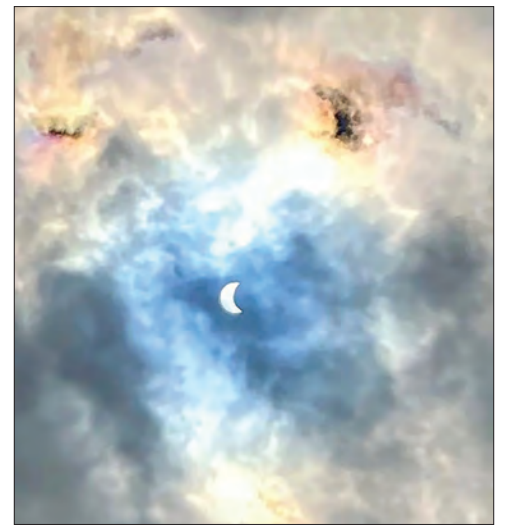
The museum held an event at its ceremonial grounds off the boardwalk, complete with sun, moon and star-themed snacks including Starburst, Sunkist gummies, Moon Pies, Sun Chips, Little Debbie's Star Crunch, and cupcakes with star and moon sprinkles.

Daleen Osceola has always been interested in the moon, stars and sun.

"One of my uncles said as long as it makes me happy, I can indulge in it," Osceola said. "So, I've been learning about them."

"It's so interesting," added Aujua Williams. "Growing up, I was told not to be interested in that stuff, but it piques my interest."

Museum director and storyteller Gordon Wareham played a flute and shared eclipse



The eclipse at its peak coverage over Big Cypress at 3 p.m. on April 8.

stories and legends about Indigenous people, including Seminoles. He said the Mayan knew when eclipses would occur and marked them on their calendars.

"To them, an eclipse was the death and renewal of the sun," Wareham said. "Other tribes have different stories. Seminoles told the story of the toad, which was a very hungry creature that ate everything. One day the toad went to eat the sun, but the sun devoured it."

Wareham said people would try to scare the toad off with pots and pans or bows and arrows. At the end of the eclipse, they had successfully saved the sun.

"Another traditional belief is to go inside to pray and reflect on your life," Wareham said. "An eclipse is also a time of reflection and remembrance. A Christian belief is the eclipse is a blessing from the Creator and a time to remember how brief and precious life is."

◆ See ECLIPSE on page 3A

A historic wrong finally righted for the Prairie Band Potawatomi

• Chicago Tribune
Editorial Board

We note with pleasure that Illinois finally now has the first federally recognized tribal land in the Prairie State.

The U.S. Department of the Interior announced Friday that portions of Shab-eh-nay Reservation land, located in DeKalb County, are being placed into trust for the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, thus giving the tribal nation sovereignty over that acreage adjacent to Shabbona Lake State Park.

The decision redresses a clear wrong, dating back more than 175 years.

Simply put, in 1833, the Potawatomi were pressured into signing the Treaty of Chicago in which they gave up nearly all their land along the western shore of Lake Michigan — all except the roughly 2 square miles of Illinois land reserved for them by the Treaty of Prairie du Chien. Most of the Prairie Band Potawatomi moved to the Kansas territory, where they used the money they'd been given to buy a small reservation near Topeka. But Chief Shab-eh-nay ("Built

like a bear") stayed put, as did a couple of a dozen other members of his family, living until 1845 in DeKalb County.

Alas for all of them, Shab-eh-nay made a trip west of the Mississippi to visit relatives (not a quick jaunt in those days) and when he came back he discovered the U.S. had declared the land "forfeited" and had sold off its 128 acres to settlers. Those who have lost property in tax sales may sympathize, but Shab-eh-nay owed no money. He'd simply gone off on a trip. Some settlers eventually gave Shab-eh-nay and his family land upon which to live near Morris, but the injustice remained, as did Shab-eh-nay's understandable anger at the government-sanctioned theft.

In July, we published an Opinion piece by Joseph Zeke Rupnick, the great-grandson of Chief Shab-eh-nay, arguing for the return of this land. "Despite our land being illegally taken from us, we're still here, living and contributing to life in Illinois, while practicing our traditions and serving our country," he wrote on these pages. "Our reservation land may not yet be back in the hands of our tribe, but we have the truth and increasing acknowledgment that our cause is

just." Indeed, the basic history of ownership (and theft) is not, as far as we know, under any serious dispute.

On Friday, a wrong was mostly righted when an enlightened compromise was achieved. The tribe now gets to govern 130 new (or not so new) acres, located adjacent to Shabbona Lake State Park, with associated federal benefits and protections. The state may well add to the total in the future if a deal can be reached on how that land is used.

Casino watchers already have been wondering if this could be the site of yet another future Illinois casino, given that the Potawatomi already run successful gambling operations in Milwaukee and Kansas. If they so chose, the tribe could operate so-called "Class II gaming" (bingo and "nonbanked card games") under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act without the state's permission. But anything like the Four Winds Casino in Michigan would require some negotiation.

That's a matter for another day. The Potawatomi, the proper owners of this land, rightfully will make the call.

Deb Haaland to speak at Harvard Law School

FROM HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

Deb Haaland, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, will be this year's speaker for Class Day ceremonies at Harvard Law School. Class Day will take place May 22 on the Harvard Law School campus.

Throughout her career in public service, Haaland has broken barriers and opened the doors of opportunity for future generations. As an enrolled member of the Pueblo of Laguna tribe, she was sworn in by Vice President Kamala Harris on March 18, 2021, as the first Native American to serve as a cabinet secretary.

From 2019 to 2021, Haaland served as U.S. representative for New Mexico's 1st congressional district. One of the first Native American women elected to Congress, she was vice chair of the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources and chair of its Subcommittee on Federal Lands. She also led the passage of the Not Invisible Act, the first bill in history introduced and passed by four congressional members enrolled in federally recognized tribes.

A 35th generation New Mexican, Haaland earned her Bachelor of Arts degree

in English from the University of New Mexico and her J.D. from University of New Mexico School of Law. She grew up in a military family. Her father was a 30-year combat Marine who was awarded the Silver Star Medal for saving six lives in Vietnam. Her mother was a Navy veteran who served as a federal employee for 25 years at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. As a military child, she attended 13 public schools before graduating from Highland High School in Albuquerque.



Deb Haaland

National Indian housing conference to be held at Hard Rock

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — The National American Indian Housing Council's (NAIHC) annual convention and tradeshow will be held June 24-27 at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.

The conference will include training sessions that provide up-to-date information on issues that impact tribal housing programs, and directly relate to administration of programs under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA). The primary audience for the convention is tribal housing professionals, community development stakeholders, and attorneys/partners that support their work. Past attendees have also included tribal leaders and non-profit partners.

Topics include innovations in housing, construction cost impact, preparing citizens for homeownership success and aligning housing with community needs.

For more information visit naihc.net.



Ahfachkee students view the eclipse from the school's yard near the playground.

Beverly Bidney



Aujua Williams, left, and Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie use their eclipse glasses over the lens of their cell phones to capture the moment of the partial eclipse's highest coverage.

Beverly Bidney



Rylin Billie-Osceola positions the eclipse glasses over the lens of her phone's camera to get a photo of the eclipse.

Beverly Bidney

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Senior Editor: Kevin Johnson, ext. 10715
KevinJohnson@semtribe.com

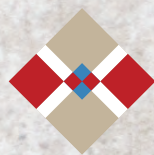
Staff Reporter: Beverly Bidney, ext. 16466
BeverlyBidney@semtribe.com

Staff Reporter: Calvin Tiger, ext. 10739
CalvinTiger@semtribe.com

Advertising: Donna Mason, ext. 10733
DonnaMason@semtribe.com

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Community



Gold Star families memorial rally visits Brighton

BY CALVIN TIGER
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — The Flags of Honor Escorts group organized a Gold Star families memorial ceremony and wreath placing at the Seminole Florida Veterans Building on the Big Cypress Reservation on April 15. Seminole veterans Sallie Josh, Curtis Motlow and Andrew J. Bowers Jr. participated in the ceremony.

The Flags of Honor Escorts consists of veterans and non-veterans that hold motorcycle rides throughout the United States honoring Gold Star families from all military branches. The 10-day Florida ride began April 12 in Pensacola.

Gold Star families have an immediate family member “who died as a result of active-duty military service,” according to the organization America’s Gold Star

Families.

The group’s rally on the day it visited Brighton started in Port St. Lucie at the American Legion Post 318 and the Port St. Lucie Gold Star Families Memorial Monument. The group made multiple stops.

“What a wonderful surprise when the Flags of Honor Escorts motorcade pulled up to the Seminole Veterans building. It’s a day I will never forget,” said Darlene Evans, a Gold Star Daughter who works in the building as the station manager for WTIR, the tribe’s radio station. When she was a child, Evans’ father died in the Vietnam War while serving in the U.S. Air Force.

Bowers, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps, and Carroll “Spider” Trantham, from Flags of Honor Escorts, placed a wreath made with Seminole colors in the plaza at the front of the veterans building.

“I was truly touched by the Gold Star Escort organization, their mission, stories and future goals. It was a true honor to meet and visit with them all. I look forward to their visits in the future,” said Josh, who served in the U.S. Navy Reserve as a hospital corpsman.

“Any recognition of veterans and their families are always appreciated,” said Motlow, who served in the U.S. Navy.

After leaving Brighton, the Flags of Honor Escorts’ ride headed to its next stop, American Legion Post 268 in Riviera Beach, where the group posted on Facebook that a wreath was placed by a woman in memory of her father, who was a prisoner of war in Germany during World War II. Those types of ceremonies and visits continued for the next six days as the group made its way to the west coast with stops in Naples, Fort Myers, Sarasota, Tampa and locations further north before the ride concluded April 21.



Calvin Tiger

A ceremony is held April 15 featuring Flags of Honor Escorts’ Gold Star Families Memorial Ride participants, Seminole veterans and others at the Florida Seminole Veterans Building in Brighton.



Calvin Tiger

Carroll “Spider” Trantham, from the Flags of Honor Escorts’ Gold Star Families Memorial Ride, left, shakes hands with Seminole veteran Andrew J. Bowers Jr. after the placing of a wreath.



Calvin Tiger

Seminole veteran Sallie Josh, left, and Gold Star Daughter and tribal employee Darlene Evans, second from right, join members of the Flags of Honor Escorts group during the national anthem.



Calvin Tiger

From left to right, Seminole veterans Curtis Motlow, Sallie Josh and Andrew J. Bowers Jr.



Calvin Tiger

Tribal veterans, tribal employees and members of the Flags of Honor Escorts’ Gold Star Families Memorial Ride gather at the Florida Seminole Veterans Building.

◆ ECLIPSE From page 2A

Wareham told another eclipse legend about birds who saw the moon overtaking the sun and tried to move it away. First a blue jay tried, but couldn’t fly high enough. Then a buzzard, who could fly higher, got close enough to move it a little, but it caught on fire.

“That’s why the buzzard has no feathers on his head and neck, and his feathers were all burned to black,” Wareham said. “Then the wood stork, a white bird with a golden plume, went up to the sun. He was able to stretch his neck to move the sun, but lost the feathers on his neck and head. He kept the white feathers on his body, but the tips of his wings were burned black. The story is about sacrificing

for the good of everyone.”

Wareham acknowledged there are many other beliefs and customs surrounding eclipses, and the museum gathering at the ceremonial ground was meant to honor and celebrate them all.

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Aloha spirit welcomes seniors during Hawaii trip

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

A group of 84 seniors, staff and chaperones from the Seminole Tribe donned fragrant flower leis and embraced the Aloha spirit during a 10-day trip to Hawaii in March.

The group started on the island of Kauai and participated in a cultural exchange where they toured a botanical garden, learned about lei making, luau lessons and the Hawaiian language. The seniors presented a patchwork skirt, beaded necklaces and tribal cups to the Hawaiian hosts. Department of Elder Services director Joe Kippenberger was presented with a Hawaiian basket in return.

After traveling to Honolulu, the group toured the Dole Plantation and the Kualoa Ranch movie sites and enjoyed a luau at Paradise Cove. A second cultural exchange was held at the Polynesian Cultural Center where Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. presented the hosts with a sweetgrass basket and other tribal members gave them a patchwork skirt, vest, carvings and two tribal dolls made by Mary Lou Alvarado.

Virginia Mitchell gifted the skirt and vest she made from material she purchased in Maui a few years ago during her first trip to Hawaii.



Courtesy photo

The Seminole group gathers for a Hawaiian luau at Paradise Cove in Kapolei, Hawaii, on the island of Oahu.



Courtesy photo

Touring the islands.



Jake Corriveau

Plenty of smiles as members of the Seminole group soak in the Hawaii sun.



Jake Corriveau

Members of the Seminole group venture out onto the water in Hawaii.



Jake Corriveau

The group receives entertainment from a ukulele player and others.

Family, tribal programs put David Osceola on sober, happy, grateful path

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

HOLLYWOOD — After years and years of addiction problems, David Osceola has his life back on the right track thanks to his family and a group of support services in the Seminole Tribe, led by the Guardianship Department.

(This article has been edited for brevity and clarity).

Tribune: Why did you seek assistance from the tribe's Guardianship Department?

David Osceola: Back [when] it was Family Services and on multiple times I was one of those that had gone in and failed, gone in and failed, and I got to the point in my life...there's a saying 'I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired.' Luckily, I have two fabulous daughters who are adults now. They started to get concerned for my life because I have health problems, also. They took it upon themselves, with advice from my sister, to do what they call a Marchman Act, which means that they had the assistance of [Seminole Police Department] and the Seminole courts, and they had me put into treatment, detox, and from there I went before a judge and then they put me in a facility for 90 days and from there I went into another program for a month. From there, I transitioned back into my home with the assistance of Guardianship overseeing every step of my life, which has been fabulous... If it wasn't for [my daughters] and the love they have for me, I may at this time probably be dead...I could never give enough praise

to my daughters for having the courage to do what they did.

Tribune: What was required of you to enter the program?

David Osceola: I went in through Marchman Act, so my requirements were whatever the Guardianship, Family Services, and my family deemed, and the judge is ultimately the one that decided that this person needs more help.

Tribune: What did the Guardianship program do for you?

David Osceola: They did everything for me. I'm going on 60 years old this August. I've raised kids, I've had life, I've had my own businesses, I've done everything, but once you get into that drug-infested, alcohol-dependent life where you are dependent on a thing, your senses go out the window. [Guardianship] helped me start making good decisions on my own. Sometimes when you're in that drug-filled world and alcohol and addiction, your decisions are based on that addictive world. [Guardianship] helped me manage my feelings, going to meetings. Also, We Do Recover was a big help. Charlie, Kenny, those were guys that stepped up and helped me and guided me to meetings around here. They have our own meetings on the reservation and they got me involved. Guardianship, with the help of Millie [Mildred Ibarra], was a big help... They helped me make decisions and guide me to the next steps to where I am finally today. I have my own bank accounts, I have



Kevin Johnson

David Osceola

money, I have my family, I have my kids, my grandkids. Everything that I always hoped for and wished for is all back. Now I can turn to...Family Services, a psychiatrist, Guardianship, We Do Recover, I've got people who are willing to help out. It's a whole support system. If I didn't have them, it would be just me again. Relying on that old way of thinking has always steered me in the wrong way. I'm kind of addicted to this new way of life, you might say...I just took my kids and grandkids to DisneyWorld and

spent everything on my grandkids and had the greatest time in the world.

Tribune: And without this program, you might not have had that week?

David Osceola: I know I wouldn't have. This program right now is helping me squash all my loans. I'm paying all them off. When you're in that world and being Seminole, we're readily available to getting loans, to getting money here and there, which I got caught in that trap. Now, I'm able to pay them all off. I'm about to be 60. I have to think of my future.

Tribune: Would it be accurate to say you are clean and sober?

David Osceola: Absolutely, and I'm very proud of it.

Tribune: In what ways has the Guardianship program helped you?

David Osceola: With the help of Millie, who is my advocate through Guardianship, I can't put enough praise on her and that whole department...They taught me patience and they kept sticking by me, saying 'just give it a little more time; we need you to stay sober.' It taught me that I don't need immediate gratification. I can just live life today and enjoy it and I know tomorrow is going to be a better day. Next thing I know, I have a vehicle, I have money in the bank. Guardianship has control of my money. They give you cards for shopping, groceries and very little money for [other] spending. I've

graduated each level of that to where now I have a pile of money in my bank account and I'm saving money...I can see how people can fail in this, but I can also see how somebody who has that feeling of 'I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired,' waking up to the same thing every day, to where I can say if I put a little effort into this I may have a chance for something happening and changing in my life.

Tribune: What advice would you give tribal members who are dealing with bad issues?

David Osceola: There are people here with the tribe who are willing to help. I had to put down my defenses. My belief system was protect me, don't let anyone get too close. When I got sick and tired enough, I allowed to open that door and for people to help. My daughters did that Marchman Act with me; it allowed me to believe that somebody loved me more than me. It gave me the courage to say I can break down the wall and allow people to come in. My kids, I got more out of it than I invested. I get so much more coming back to me, my kids, my grandkids. That, by itself, is the greatest gift of my life right now.

Tribune: Anything else?

David Osceola: I'd also like to thank our [tribal council], because if it wasn't for them sticking up for these programs, we wouldn't have these programs...If it wasn't for these programs, a lot of us wouldn't have a chance. I surely wouldn't have a chance.

◆ **MONUMENT**
From page 1A

The other side features three emblems: one for Lima Co. 3rd battalion, 5th Marines; another for Flying Tigers, HMH 361 (Marine Heavy Military Helicopter squadron) and one for the Republic of Korea Marines.

Below the emblems reads: "Lima Co, 3/5 Team Spirit, CH-53 Crash, 24 March 1984. They are part of us, and we are a part of them."

About 180 people attended the approximately 45-minute ceremony. A chaplain at the base gave one of the invocations. Gen. John Paxton, a retired four-star general who served as assistant commandant of the U.S. Marines Corps, was among the speakers.

An active-duty staff sergeant read all 29 names, including Lance Cpl. Herman L. Osceola.

Four Gold Star families — those with immediate family members who died in the crash — attended the ceremony.

Veldina Osceola, sister of Herman Osceola, said her family knew about the ceremony, but was unable to attend.

"[The monument] sounds great, but it makes me sad that I couldn't be there," she said.

The monument is believed to be one of only two in the world dedicated to the crash victims; the other is located in the Republic of Korea.

Veldina Osceola was 14 at the time of the crash. She said someday she would like to visit the crash area.

"One of my biggest dreams is to go out there and see that place, make some peace with it," she said.

As a youngster, she remembers her brother getting a job at the gym which is now named for him.

"When this gym was starting to get built, he applied for a job. He worked as an employee. He told my mom and dad that he was going to work at the gym. He was one of the first ones to work at the gym," she said. She also recalled a lot of people in the tribe thought Herman might go into the Army, but instead he opted to become a Marine, following in the footsteps of his dad, Roy Nash Osceola.

The idea for the monument at Camp Pendleton came during a reunion in Phoenix of a group of 1982-1985 Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment. A conversation between the group's Bert Thielen and James Rogers sparked the project. Soon after, Mike Merkin, who was a lance corporal in Lima Co. 3/5 during Team Spirit '84 in Korea, joined the effort. A monument committee was formed.

"It became a really big effort to put this together," said Merkin, who organized and oversaw all the suppliers and vendors on the project.



A portrait of Lance Cpl. Herman L. Osceola hangs on a wall in the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium on the Big Cypress Reservation.

Kevin Johnson

The basic outline and design was done by Thielen.

The result was a granite memorial monument that sits in the northern part of Camp Pendleton, close to the town of San Clemente and the Pacific Ocean.

Twelve members of the Camp Pendleton-based Lima Co. 3/5 died in the crash. Osceola was not part of 3/5.

"He was part of an attachment, but we considered him to be part of our unit. He actually trained and worked with us," Merkin said.

Merkin said the Team Spirit '84 operation was an intense military exercise.

"This was very dangerous what we were doing, flying along the DMZ between North and South Korea on this exercise," he said.

Merkin said everything went well at the monument ceremony, which included some who were part of the Team Spirit '84 exercise and its recovery "to bring our fallen brothers home."

Merkin credits the Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group, a charitable organization that helps Marines and their families in several ways, with great support for the monument project. The group also maintains and cares for the memorial garden grounds.

The 1982-1985 Lima Co. 3/5 group held its first reunion in 2019 and again in 2022 in Phoenix. The day after the monument ceremony another reunion was held. The next reunion is being planned for 2026 in Washington, D.C.

"It's always such an emotional event," Merkin said.

At each reunion, the names of the crash victims are read aloud.

"We want to get that point across that we never forgot Herman or anybody that perished during the time they served," Merkin said.



Bailey Marie Osceola Latchford sings the national anthem at Florida State University's baseball game against the University of Miami on April 12 in Tallahassee. Attendance was 6,700. FSU won the game, 11-7.

Florida State Athletics

A perfect pitch as Bailey Marie Osceola Latchford sings national anthem at FSU game

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

As a freshman double major at Florida State University, Bailey Marie Osceola Latchford doesn't have a lot of free time as she studies for degrees in criminology and social work.

But when she was asked to sing the national anthem at an FSU baseball game, Latchford was more than happy to find time, especially considering it was for the team's Seminole Heritage game.

"It was a really great feeling that I was considered and asked to do this," she wrote in an email to the Tribune after singing the anthem at FSU's game against the University of Miami on April 12 at Dick Howser Stadium on the Tallahassee campus. "Not only was it something I've grown up with, but being able to strongly and proudly represent my tribe is always something I will make time to do. I'm very proud being a Seminole and will never be silent when it comes to my culture, so being chosen to sing at the Seminole Heritage game was truly an honor. Even if this game wasn't the Heritage Game, I'd still be proud nonetheless and honored to represent at my school."

Latchford is no stranger to singing. She's sung in various groups since she was a youngster and continued throughout middle school and high school at NSU University School. As for performing the anthem, she's done it at Davie Fire Department's awards ceremony and at high school events.

Despite her experience, understandably there were reasons why nerves might have

crept in. After all, she was singing in front of 6,700 spectators on a Friday night, and in front of her school's baseball team which was ranked No. 10 in the nation at the time, not to mention it was a game against rival Miami.

"I was definitely nervous as I haven't performed in a little bit. Before I went on the field, I was shaking like a leaf," Latchford said.

Latchford set aside those nerves and performed the anthem a few feet in front of home plate with no errors.

"Everything ran very smoothly. I received many compliments and rounds of applause when I went back into the stands to watch the game," she said.

Latchford's father, Will, watched the performance in person while her mom, Amy, saw it via FaceTime.

To make the night even more satisfying, FSU scored at least one run in each of the first seven innings on the way to an 11-7 victory. After the game, the team welcomed a photo opportunity with the Seminole singer.

"They're a great and talented group of young men and I was grateful for them to take a photo with me, especially after such a big win," Latchford said.

Latchford said she is very appreciative of how everything came together for a memorable evening.

"I am very grateful to everyone involved, be it my family, friends, staff, and the people who work behind the scenes to make this happen and for being so supportive. It was truly an honor," she said.

As for future performances of the

anthem, Latchford said it is a goal of hers to sing at an FSU basketball or football game.

"With tribal members being in attendance at big FSU football games, it would be amazing to represent there, too," she said. "I'm able to be proud to be a Seminole both academically and culturally which is something not many people can say."



Bailey Marie Osceola Latchford with her dad, Will, at the FSU game.

Courtesy photo



A ceremony was held March 8 for the dedication of the monument with several members of the group of 1982-85 Lima Company 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment.

Courtesy photo



After beating Miami, the FSU baseball team joins Bailey Marie Osceola Latchford for a photo.

Courtesy photo

President Biden nominates Montana's 1st Native American federal judge

FROM NBCMONTANA

HELENA, Mont. — President Joe Biden nominated Danna Jackson on April 24 to serve as a federal judge in the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana.

Jackson is currently the tribal attorney for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

If the Senate confirms her nomination, she would be the first American Indian to serve as a federal judge in Montana.

Montana U.S. Sens. Steve Daines and Jon Tester issued statements following the nomination.

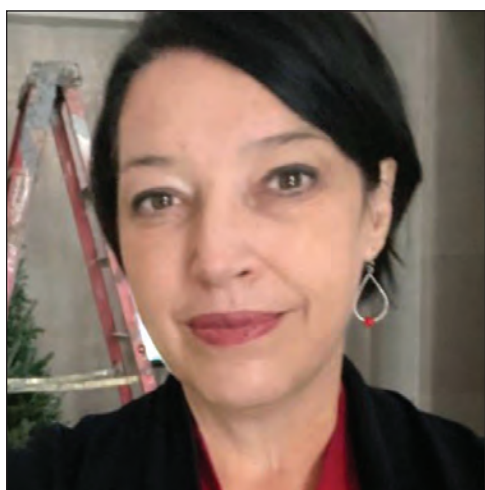
Tester supported the decision saying Jackson has been consistently fair.

"Danna Jackson has a proven track record of applying the law with fairness and integrity throughout her legal career, and I have no doubt that she'll bring these

high standards to the federal judiciary and District of Montana. As a born-and-raised Montanan, her extensive experience at every level of Montana's legal system makes her well qualified to serve our state and I'm looking forward to getting her nomination across the finish line with bipartisan support in the Senate," Tester said.

Daines says he plans to look into her background to see if she's the right fit.

"Federal judges in Montana are crushing our way of life because they legislate from the bench. Montanans want judges who will bring balance to our courts and uphold the Constitution. Unfortunately, President Biden failed to seriously consult with me prior to making this nomination. This is inexcusable and a missed opportunity. I look forward to reviewing Ms. Jackson's background and record to evaluate if this nomination is the right fit for Montana."



Danna Jackson

Courtesy photo

◆ **PARTNERSHIP**
From page 1A

Jacksons to play at Immokalee casino

FROM PRESS RELEASE

IMMOKALEE — Legendary musical group The Jacksons will perform at Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee on June 12 at 8 p.m. Advance tickets are \$85. For tickets visit ticketmaster.com or moreinparadise.com. Attendees must be 21 years of age.

The Jacksons have celebrated 50 years as one of the most successful groups in music history. Jackie, Tito, Jermaine, Marlon, and Michael, five brothers from Gary, Indiana, known originally as The Jackson 5 and later The Jacksons, rose to fame for their combination of extraordinary musical talent and spectacular choreography.

They earned the status of pop royalty in the music world, providing the launching pad for what would become Michael Jackson's legendary solo career. The group found international success at Motown in 1969 with their first single "I Want You Back."

For the cruises' rewards program members, the partnership provides exclusive discounts and perks at participating Hard Rock locations, including annual complimentary trips at certain Hard Rock hotels and casinos.

"Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming are the perfect partners for Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruises. This partnership expands the ways our guests can enjoy their vacations and experience entertainment, dining and gaming from ship to shore," Jesse Hopfinger, a senior vice president for Royal Caribbean International, said in a statement.

The partnership also includes discounts for employees of the companies at participating Hard Rock and Seminole casinos and select Royal Caribbean and Celebrity vacations.

Seminole Tribe celebrates Earth Day the Native way

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — The Seminole Tribe observed Earth Day on April 16 at Seminole Okalee Indian Village in Hollywood and April 18 at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum festival grounds in Big Cypress.

Nearly 1,300 people attended the museum-hosted events, which welcomed students from local schools and featured Indigenous performances by Aztec and Hula dancers, educational workshops, Seminole arts and crafts, Seminole fry bread and additional tribal vendors. In Big Cypress, gardening by Ahfachkee School students and teachers was displayed under a tent and nature tours were offered on the museum's boardwalk.

The first Earth Day was held April 22, 1970, and marked the start of the environmental movement. Since then, more than 1 billion people in 192 countries celebrate Earth Day to raise awareness of the need to protect the planet.

"We are celebrating the Earth and how we all connect to it," said museum director Gordon Wareham. "As Seminoles, this is how we celebrate together as a family."

In the Ahfachkee School's tent, students and teachers taught visitors all about sustainable agriculture as they showcased the school's culture garden and its methods. The displays included how to grow plants

from cuttings, using repurposed items used as planters and how to make compost with worms.

Visitors were shown how to reuse unwanted containers such as plastic yogurt cups, jars and other vessels by decorating them and cutting them to size. They were told to put drainage holes in the bottom of the containers and use them for starting plants or for larger ones.

Students Aiyana Crespo and Gerard Osceola helped visitors make their own compost using worms.

"They eat the food waste and make the soil richer," Crespo said. "They are natural fertilizer and are better than using chemicals."

Students from the Fidelis Academy in Fort Lauderdale took notes as they learned about the gardening techniques. Their assignment was to write a report about what they learned about Seminole culture when they got back to school.

Tree Amigos Nursery held plant workshops and brought an abundance of plants including banana, citrus, pumpkin, hibiscus, pineapple, mulberry and purple fig. Nursery owner Jason Long answered questions and gave advice for plant care.

Other activities were presentations from NASA, a drone obstacle course, rock painting and information about hiking trails throughout the state.



Jessica Billie, left, adds some nutrients to her new banana tree with some help from Jasmine Arroyo, of Tree Amigos nursery in Davie at the Earth Day event April 18 on the festival grounds of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum in Big Cypress. The banana tree is in a biodegradable container that will be planted along with it in Billie's yard.



Cypress Billie performs in the main tent during the Earth Day celebration in Big Cypress.



From left to right, Ahfachkee school third grade students Zhan Carter, Ineigo Jumper and Anthony Valdez make compost with soil and worms in the Ahfachkee tent. Worms eat the composting food and fertilize the soil.



An Aztec dancer raises a goblet with smoking embers to start the performance of the Conchero dance at the Earth Day celebration in Big Cypress on April 18.



Hollywood Board Rep. Christine McCall, left, is handed a traditional bead necklace from Judy Baker, who sold Seminole jewelry at the Seminole Okalee Indian Village Earth Day event on April 16 in Hollywood.



Antonnella Nunes, left, and Lizbeth Viera lead a dance with the audience at the Okalee Village Earth Day Event.



Aztec dancer Francisco Marin educates high school students from the area about Aztec culture and traditions during the event at Seminole Okalee Indian Village.



Lorelie Piercing Eyes gives a painted rock to a young girl at the Seminole Okalee Indian Village Earth Day event.



Above, from left to right, Dala Arnold and Yazzie Arnold participate in the tribe's Center for Behavioral Health activities that were put together by Kristen Breslin, Rosie Martinez and Richardson Benjamin in Hollywood. At right, from left to right, Ryder Frank-Bad Bear, Gunnar Frank-Bad Bear taste some honey at the Clewiston-based Alonso Apiaries honey booth in Big Cypress.





Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood

Kayla Scognamillo, from Make-A-Wish Southern Florida, speaks April 18 at the Larry Frank Memorial Charity Event, hosted by Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood and Charity Series of Poker.

Larry Frank memorial tournament benefits charity

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — A poker tournament and auction in memory of Seminole tribal member Larry Frank raised more than \$50,000 for Make-A-Wish Southern Florida on April 18.

Hosted by the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Hollywood and in partnership with Charity Series of Poker, the Larry Frank Memorial Charity Event drew more than 100 players who competed in a Texas Hold 'em format. Stewart Chantler, of Canada, won first place.

The charity tournament was held during

the Seminole Hard Rock Poker Showdown, which took place for most of April.

Frank played a key role in the development and growth of poker at Seminole casinos, having worked as general manager of poker operations and general manager of Seminole Classic Casino. In all, he worked for more than 25 years for Seminole Gaming and Seminole Hard Rock Support Services.

Frank earned a degree in business administration from the University of Oklahoma. He and his wife, Kathy, were married for 32 years.

Frank passed away in 2021 at age 68.



Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood (2)

Connie Gowen (left photo) and Kathy Frank (right photo) were among the family members of Larry Frank who attended the charity event.



Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood

Players compete in the charity event at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hotel.

Hard Rock Digital partners with Panthers

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — The Florida Panthers, who entered the NHL playoffs in April eyeing a return to the Stanley Cup Final, announced April 9 a multi-year partnership with Hard Rock Digital, whose Hard Rock Bet app is the only legal sportsbook in the state.

"We are thrilled to enter into an exciting new partnership with Hard Rock Bet," Florida Panthers chief revenue officer and former Panther player Shawn Thornton said in a news release. "Through this partnership, we will increase fan engagement and excitement around the game of hockey in South Florida and beyond by adding an entirely new element to the game."

According to the release, the partnership

began with the Panthers' game against the Ottawa Senators on April 9 at Amerant Bank Arena in Sunrise. The partnership includes dasher board and marquee signage and digital branding. More enhancements at the arena and online are scheduled for the 2024-25 season.

"We're excited to join Panthers Territory and partner with the club to bring hockey fans closer to the action," Nick Menas, Hard Rock Digital's managing director, corporate strategy, said in the release. "With thousands of bets available on sports from around the world and live streaming of NHL games nightly on the Hard Rock Bet app, we're thrilled to entertain hockey fans like no one else can."

For more information visit hardrock.bet.

Seminole Hard Rock Tampa chef earns honor



Hard Rock

Matthew Zappoli, a chef at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa, won the "Battle Truffle" contest at the Tampa Bay Wine & Food Festival in April. The truffle competition was one of seven categories. The winners were deemed as "representing the pinnacle of culinary excellence in their respective fields," according to a press release.

Indiana city receives boost from Hard Rock to spur economic development

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

Described by its mayor as a "catalytic donation" to "turn the page on blight," the city of Gary, Indiana, welcomed a \$3 million donation from Hard Rock Northern Indiana.

The March 27 announcement at Gary City Hall provided details on a donation aimed at stimulating economic growth in the city's downtown. Lake County, which includes Gary, had the highest unemployment rate of the state's 92 counties at 6% in February, according to Stacker, a news service site.

"With this \$3 million contribution, we are planting seeds of hope and growth for our downtown," Mayor Eddie Melton said in a news release.

The donation is being made in conjunction with a state grant program that will bring in \$3 million to the city in matching grant money for blight elimination thanks to Hard Rock's donation in the

same amount.

"Hard Rock is pleased to support Mayor Melton's mission to improve the economic development of the City of Gary by demolishing the blighted properties that currently stand in the way," Matt Schuffert, president of Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana, said in the release. "Our announcement today of Hard Rock's transfer of \$3 million dollars to help support the City's contributions to the Northwest Indiana RDA's blighted property demolition fund confirms our mission of 'All Is One', which has been Hard Rock's motto throughout local and global communities since 1971."

Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana opened in Gary in May 2021. Leaders from the Seminole Tribe and Hard Rock attended the grand opening, which included some brothers from the famed Jackson 5 band, whose members grew up in Gary.



Courtesy photo

Eddie Melton, left, mayor of Gary, Indiana, joins Matt Schuffert, president of Hard Rock Northern Indiana, at an announcement March 27 that Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana would donate \$3 million to the city of Gary to boost economic development throughout the downtown area.

Bevy of books donated by Hard Rock Bristol



Hard Rock Bristol

Team members at Hard Rock Bristol collected and donated more than 800 books for the Bristol, Tennessee City Schools' book bus program during a book drive in connection with National Donate a Book Day on April 14. The book drive included pre-K through middle school books. "Thank you, Hard Rock Hotel and Casino!" the school system posted on Facebook. The bus brings books and other literary items to neighborhoods in Bristol. Hard Rock Bristol is operating in a temporary casino while a new hotel and casino are built.

Wayne Newton coming to Immokalee casino

FROM PRESS RELEASE

IMMOKALEE — Legendary entertainment superstar Wayne Newton will perform at 8 p.m. on June 1 at Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee. For tickets visit moreinparadise.com or ticketmaster.com. Attendees must be 21.

Newton is known for his iconic signature song, "Danke Schoen" in addition to other top hit singles including, "Daddy, Don't You Walk So Fast," "Red Roses for a Blue Lady," "At This Moment," "The Letter," "Summer Wind" and "Years."

He has also appeared in dozens of movies and television shows.

Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee to host country music concert

FROM PRESS RELEASE

IMMOKALEE — Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee will host country music entertainer Billy Currington on May 31 at 8 p.m. For tickets visit moreinparadise.com or ticketmaster.com.

Currington won the "Hottest Video of the Year" honor at the fan-voted CMT Music Awards for "Must Be Doin' Somethin' Right" in 2006. The same year, he received an ACM nod for top new male vocalist. His hit duet with Shania Twain, "Party for Two," earned nominations from both the CMA and ACM.

JNF to hold fundraiser at Hard Rock Hollywood

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — The 12th annual Jorge Nation Foundation (JNF) for Wishes White Party fundraiser will be held May 18 from 7:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Hollywood. JNF for Wishes will raise funds for Make-A-Wish Southern Florida. The evening will include food, dancing, live entertainment and an auction. JNF's mission is to raise funds to send children stricken with a terminal or serious illness on an all inclusive "dream trip" to a destination of their choice. The foundation is named in honor of Jorge Brouwer. For more information visit jnfwishes.org.



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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.

RICHARD CASTILLO
FLORIDA CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEY
WWW.CASTILLOLAWOFFICES.COM

Recently received collection preserves 20th century Seminole history

BY ANTHONY ALVAREZ
Oral History Assistant

BIG CYPRESS — From the 1960s through the 1990s, the University of Florida's Samuel Proctor Oral History Program (SPOHP) engaged in a project to record interviews with the tribal members and associates of the United States' Southeastern tribes. Consequently, SPOHP has a large oral history collection featuring people from Seminole, Cherokee, Choctaw, Catawba, Creek, Lumbee, and Pamunkey tribes. This past October, SPOHP donated 254 Seminole oral histories in tapes and digital files to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.

As the museum's oral history assistant, it's been my responsibility to familiarize myself with this new collection and to accurately sort it within the museum's

catalog and vault. As a historian, I acknowledge the importance this collection will have in the future preservation of the tribe's history and culture. Inherently, the importance of this collection stems from the time spans the interviews were conducted. In the 1960s, some people born in the 19th century were alive and could share important information about the tribe's 19th century traditions, practices and values. Therefore, in the collection there are oral histories of Billie Bowlegs III, Josie Billie and others knowledgeable about 19th-century Seminole practices.

Furthermore, the STOF government had recently been created when the UFSPHP embarked on this project. As a result, there are interviews of Bill Osceola, Reginald "Rex" Quinn, Billy Osceola and others that helped form the tribe's government. In the

1970s and 1980s, the tribe transitioned into what it looks like today by diversifying its economy, building infrastructure, and homes with new kitchen appliances. Interviews with Aurilla Birrell, Howard Tommie and James Billie give insight into the tribe's renovations.

In the 1990s, the tribe began to have concerns regarding the effect technology, economic prosperity and the increasingly interconnected world would have on cultural preservation. For example, Lorene Gopher, Victor Billie and Joe Dan Osceola link ways in which modern technology and acculturation has affected the Miccosukee and Creek languages. However, in the 1990s, there was also an increasing interest in finding ways modern tools could enhance cultural preservation. Within the collection, there are interviews with STOF members and employees that talk about programs and institutions whose goal is to preserve Seminole culture. For instance, there are interviews with David Blackard, former director of the museum; Brian Billie, former Living Village manager at the museum; and Lorene Gopher, cultural program teacher at the Ahfachkee School.

Within this collection there are also interviews with important non-tribal teachers, lawyers and traders who've helped the tribe with legal and social challenges. For instance, Roy L. Struble was a lawyer hired to defend the STOF's claim to a federal reservation. Struble's interview goes over what a federal reservation is and how the STOF won its case.

Furthermore, this collection has an interview by Ivy Stranahan. The Stranahans traded with Seminoles and helped the tribe in other ways through their "Friends of the Seminoles" organization. Simply put, this collection has tremendous historical value and will play an impactful role in the tribe's cultural preservation.

These oral histories have preserved



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

The Seminole Tribe of Florida Constitution and Charter Committee in 1957. From left to right are Rex Quinn, Mike Osceola, Frank Billie, Jackie Willie, Bill Osceola, John Henry Gopher, Billy Osceola and Jimmy Osceola

SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA AH-TAH-THI-KI MUSEUM A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Billy Bowlegs III, right, on his 100th birthday in 1963. John Crow, deputy commissioner of Indian Affairs, is by his side.

the tribe's history, family history and the Seminole languages for future generations of Seminole tribal members. The museum's Research Department will make copies of these oral histories available to any tribal members interested. Please visit the

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on Big Cypress Reservation, or contact me, Anthony Alvarez (anthonyalvarez@semtribe.com), or William Locascio (williamlocascio@semtribe.com) for more information.

The first Indigenous woman in space never planned on becoming an astronaut

BY CRONKITE NEWS

Estrella Mountain Community College [in Avondale, Arizona] celebrated Women's History Month by hosting an event on March 27. Marine Col. Nicole Mann, a member of the Wailacki Tribe of the Round Valley Indian Tribes, was invited to speak at the event. She shared her unorthodox journey to becoming an astronaut.

Mann is the first female Indigenous astronaut and only the second Indigenous person to go to space.

Early on as a child, Mann said she knew she wanted to serve in the military but wasn't sure which path to take.

"The idea of being an astronaut hadn't even entered my mind at this point. I mean I had never met an astronaut before. I didn't know exactly what they did. It

seemed like something that other people did from somewhere else, right? But, it's not something for me," Mann said at the community college event.

At the U.S. Naval Academy, she knew early on that she wanted to be a Marine. According to her NASA profile, Mann earned her bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the Naval Academy in 1999 and was commissioned as a Marine second lieutenant that same year.

In 2001, Mann earned a master's in mechanical engineering with a specialization in fluid mechanics from Stanford University. Three years later, she began her flying career with the Thunderbolts of VMFA-251, a Marine fighter jet squadron. During this time, she flew combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Again, I came to a crossroads though. What am I going to do next?" Mann said.

She was looking at her next set of orders and she was doing an online search for words like "fighter pilots" and "engineering" when she came across results such as "test pilot school" and "astronauts." She then noticed bios of some current astronauts who were Marines, fighter pilots and had engineering degrees.

"And that is the first time it really dawned on me, 'Wow! I wonder if this is something that I can do?'" Mann said.

After researching the career in 2009, Mann said she began her three years as a test pilot on the F/A-18 where she would push the jet and its weapons at or past their designed limits.

During this time, Mann said she got married and pregnant with her son. It was while she was pregnant that Mann saw that NASA was accepting applicants for the next astronaut class.

"I have to be honest with you, at that time I thought, 'Well, I mean that would have been great years ago maybe, right? It was fun being a fighter pilot. It was fun being a test pilot. But now, I'm going to be a mom. It's time for me to move on, things need to change,'" Mann said.

Mann said she remembers coming home and telling her husband about NASA selecting applicants but she wasn't going to apply. She said her husband looked at her like she was crazy and he asked her why she shouldn't apply and she responded "because we're pregnant."

"He goes, 'Oh my God, you can never give up on this dream. If you don't apply, then you're never going to make it. You're going to discount yourself. And you're never going to know,'" Mann said.

Mann said she was doubting herself.

"I was thinking how can I be a mom and a professional, be a fighter pilot, or be an astronaut. How can I do both of these things together, at the same time?" Mann said.

Mann said she is grateful because she had her husband there to support her and tell her, "We're going to figure it out. We'll work it out."

In 2013, Mann was selected along with eight other members for the 21st NASA astronaut class, completing her training in 2015.

Mann launched to the International Space Station on Oct 5, 2022, as commander of NASA's SpaceX Crew-5 mission where she spent 157 days in orbit, conducting two spacewalks and supporting two spacewalks as a robotic arm operator.

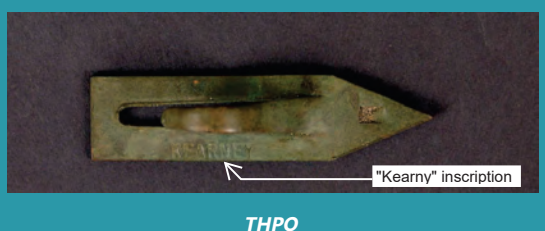
"My husband was right. You can be a mom and a professional and have a family at the same time," Mann said.

MAY 2024

ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

One of the most interesting aspects of archaeology is being able to come up with multiple interpretations for an artifact. Oftentimes, the events that led to the creation and deposition of an artifact happened so long ago, there's not enough information left behind to be absolutely certain of what an artifact is, what it was used for, and how it got there. In these cases, the most we can do is form interpretations based on educated observations of whatever little information we can find about that artifact. This month's artifact is an example of such a case.

This artifact (pictured below) is something of a mystery. It is a pointed metal plate less than 7 centimeters long with a raised tab in the center. The name "Kearney" is imprinted along the surface. There are different ideas as to what this object might be and what "Kearney" might be referring to. One idea is that this object could potentially be a surveying tool. It may have belonged to Major James Kearney, who was assigned to the Southern Division under Major General Andrew Jackson in 1816 (Beers, 1942), hence the inscription on the object bearing his last name.



THPO

Another idea is that this object could've possibly been used as a blade for a plane iron, a tool commonly used in woodworking. "Kearney" could just be the name of the manufacturer who produced this object. There is not enough evidence to substantiate any of these theories, however, so the questions of what this object is and what it was used for remain unanswered.



Paul Crumlish, hmbd.org (2012)

One question we can answer is where this object was found. It was recovered along the road to the Fort Basinger military trail. Located in Highlands County off the shore of the Kissimmee River, Fort Basinger was constructed by U.S. soldiers led by Colonel Zachary Taylor during the Second Seminole War. It was named after William E. Basinger, a U.S. army lieutenant who died during the Dade Massacre in 1835 (Lawton, 1961). The rich history behind the location where this object was found alludes to the fascinating but unknown truth behind this artifact.

To learn more about all the incredible artifacts within our collection, please visit the THPO website at www.stofthpo.com.

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SEMINOLE HISTORY STORIES - MAY 2024

BUILDING A HOME IN BRIGHTON

As Florida land was bought and developed in the mid-20th century, more and more Seminole families needed to move onto the Brighton Reservation, northwest of Lake Okeechobee. Most established traditional camps of multiple chickees, and took the opportunity to apply new technologies and techniques to the construction. Families laid cement foundations and ran electrical lines to supply power to their camps. Others took advantage of Bureau of Indian Affairs or Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs to fund the creation of American style homes.

In 1969 many tribal members took advantage of a new HUD program to fund the building of these new homes. Twenty houses were built through the HUD Self-Help Program. Instead of a traditional downpayment, this program required the prospective home owners to dedicate at least 600 hours of labor to the construction of their new home.

Each house followed a standard blueprint: a concrete block home with a large central room, a kitchen, three bedrooms, and one bathroom. The homes took roughly two years to build, and with many of the men employed off of the reservation, women provided much of the required labor. These new homes were often built alongside traditional chickees. When the houses were complete they were furnished with cots, chairs, and one chest of drawers each. Anything more would need to be provided by the family.

The transition into a new type of home could be a challenge. Alice Snow (Bird Clan), who had already made the change, helped other women learn how to maintain their new houses. Many of these houses still exist today, along the aptly named Village Street. While some (like the home pictured below) were converted into offices for the growing Tribal government, most remain homes to the families who built them.



To see more Seminole History Stories, please visit the THPO website at www.stofthpo.com

Visit the Tribal Historic Preservation Office website at stofthpo.com or use the QR code on the right for more Seminole history resources



Health



Native Americans have shorter life spans. Better health care isn't the only answer

BY ARIELLE ZIONTS
KFF Health News

HISLE, S.D. — Katherine Goodlow is only 20, but she has experienced enough to know that people around her are dying too young.

Goodlow, a member of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, said she's lost six friends and acquaintances to suicide, two to car crashes, and one to appendicitis. Four of her relatives died in their 30s or 40s, from causes such as liver failure and covid-19, she said. And she recently lost a 1-year-old nephew.

"Most Native American kids and young people lose their friends at a young age," said Goodlow, who is considering becoming a mental health therapist to help her community. "So, I'd say we're basically used to it, but it hurts worse every time we lose someone."

Native Americans tend to die much earlier than white Americans. Their median age at death was 14 years younger, according to an analysis of 2018-21 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The disparity is even greater in Goodlow's home state. Indigenous South Dakotans who died between 2017 and 2021 had a median age of 58 — 22 years younger than white South Dakotans, according to state data.

Donald Warne, a physician who is co-director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Indigenous Health and a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, can rattle off the most common medical conditions and accidents killing Native Americans.

But what's ultimately behind this low life expectancy, agree Warne and many other experts on Indigenous health, are social and economic forces. They argue that in addition to bolstering medical care and fully funding the Indian Health Service — which provides health care to Native Americans — there needs to be a greater investment in case management, parenting classes, and home visits.

"It's almost blasphemy for a physician to say," but "the answer to addressing these things is not hiring more doctors and nurses," Warne said. "The answer is having more community-based preventions."

The Indian Health Service funds several kinds of these programs, including community health worker initiatives, and efforts to increase access to fresh produce and traditional foods.

Private insurers and state Medicaid programs, including South Dakota's, are increasingly covering such services. But insurers don't pay for all the services and aren't reaching everyone who qualifies, according to Warne and the National Academy for State Health Policy.

Warne pointed to Family Spirit, a program developed by the Johns Hopkins center to improve health outcomes for Indigenous mothers and children.

Chelsea Randall, the director of maternal and child health at the Great Plains Tribal Leaders' Health Board, said community health workers educate Native pregnant women and connect them with resources during home visits.

"We can be with them throughout their pregnancy and be supportive and be the advocate for them," said Randall, whose organization runs Family Spirit programs across seven reservations in the Dakotas, and in Rapid City, South Dakota.

The community health workers help families until children turn 3, teaching parenting skills, family planning, drug abuse prevention, and stress management. They can also integrate the tribe's culture by, for example, using their language or birthing traditions.

The health board funds Family Spirit through a grant from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration, Randall said. Community health workers, she said, use some of that money to provide child car seats and to teach parents how to properly install them to counter high rates of fatal crashes.

Other causes of early Native American deaths include homicide, drug overdoses, and chronic diseases, such as diabetes, Warne said. Native Americans also suffer a disproportionate number of infant and maternal deaths.

The crisis is evident in the obituaries from the Sioux Funeral Home, which mostly serves Lakota people from the Pine Ridge Reservation and surrounding area. The funeral home's Facebook page posts obituaries for older adults, but also for many infants, toddlers, teenagers, young adults, and middle-aged residents.

Misty Merrival, who works at the funeral home, blames poor living conditions. Some community members struggle to find healthy food or afford heat in the winter, she said. They may live in homes with broken windows or that are crowded with extended family members. Some neighborhoods are strewn with trash, including intravenous needles and broken bottles.

Seeing all these premature deaths has inspired Merrival to keep herself and her teenage daughter healthy by abstaining from drugs and driving safely. They also talk every day about how they're feeling, as a suicide-prevention strategy.

"We've made a promise to each other that we wouldn't leave each other like that," Merrival said.

◆ See HEALTH on page 6C



Beverly Bidney

Ahfachkee School students make salads in jars using all healthy vegetables and chick peas.

Big Cypress health fair promotes healthy living

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — For nearly 30 years, health and wellness fairs have been held on Seminole reservations to bring awareness about tribal services and programs available to tribal members.

"We hold them every other year," said Integrative Health director Suzanne Davis. "We want people to look forward to them."

On April 11, the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium in Big Cypress was filled with tribal departments and vendors promoting a healthy lifestyle with information, samples and swag. In addition to tribal services, local companies offering hearing, eye care and insurance were on hand with information about their services.

"We want people to have fun and take home something for their health," said Big Cypress health educator Jamie Diersing. "We also want them to learn about dangerous things, such as smoking and drug use."

Organizers expected between 300 and 350 people to attend, including community members and Ahfachkee School students and staff.

Visitors perused 38 tables where they got a whiff of aromatherapy, made a fragrant sugar scrub, created a salad in a jar, made a healthy cream cheese and strawberry snack on graham crackers and sampled truffles made from chickpeas and coated with dark



Beverly Bidney

Scarlett Billie, 8, learns how to give CPR by Seminole Tribe Fire Rescue firefighter/medic Jesus Garcia at the BC Health and Wellness Fair on April 11.

chocolate.

In addition to tasty treats, visitors learned about fitness, CPR and the effects of smoking on the lungs. The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum had a few tables set up for information and activities for kids, including

one where they could smash a geode to find the crystalized minerals inside.

Immokalee's health fair was held in March and the next one will be June 18 in Hollywood.

Program seeks aspiring Native health care students

FROM PRESS RELEASE

WASHINGTON — The Association of American Indian Physicians will select American Indian/Alaska Native students, ages 18 to 20, to attend the National Native American Youth Initiative program from June 22-30 in Washington, D.C.

AI/AN students planning to enter health careers are eligible to apply but all student

applicants must be 18 years of age by June 1, 2024. Students are selected based on academic achievement, demonstrated interest in health sciences or biomedical research, leadership skills, and personal attributes. The NNAYI scholarship covers airfare, lodging, and most meals. The scholarship is awarded on a one-time basis only.

For more information visit aaip.org.

National health conference to be held in South Dakota

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The National Indian Health Board (NIHB) will hold its annual National Tribal Health Conference from May 20-23 at the Monument Civic and Convention Center in Rapid City, South Dakota. Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board is the host.

The conference serves American Indian and Alaska Native tribes in the space of health - behavioral and public health. The conference will showcase the

interconnectedness of policy, advocacy, and Indian health best practices.

Programming includes tribal listening and consultation sessions, hands-on training opportunities, plenary sessions, and workshops that cover timely topics such as funding for Indian health, the business of medicine, health equity, Indigenous determinants of health, tribal public health, behavioral health, culture, environmental health, and climate change.

The conference also includes focus

areas on Native youth, Tribal veterans, and elders, a fitness event, exhibit hall and marketplace, culture night, poster sessions, and Heroes in Health Awards Gala and Outstanding Service Awards.

For more information visit nihb.org.

Physical Fitness

Whether it's gardening, connecting to our land by walking, swimming, or powwow dancing, being active will make you feel better, give you more energy, improve your mood and even help you to sleep better.

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For fitness tips, visit: IHS.Gov/ForPatients/HealthTopics/PhysicalActivity



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SEMINOLE SCENES



Courtesy South Florida PBS

WATERSHED WOMEN: "Women of the Watershed," a documentary about women who are involved in Everglades watershed conservation, aired April 18 and April 20 on South Florida PBS stations. The documentary includes segments with about a dozen women, including Pauletta Bowers, above, president of the Florida Seminole Cattlewomen, and environmentalist Betty Osceola (Miccosukee). The documentary focuses on a journey by Florida International University student Chloe Barnett from Florida Bay, through the Everglades and Lake Okeechobee, and up through the Kissimmee River Basin to find the source of the Everglades headwaters and better understand the challenges of water management and pollution. Visit womenofthewatershed.com for more information.



FSU Photography

TALLAHASSEE TALK: Everett Osceola, cultural ambassador of the Seminole Tribe, participates in a panel discussion at Florida State University's Museum of Fine Arts in Tallahassee on March 28. The program, "Let All Languages Live: Celebrating Language Revitalization," focused on the preservation and revitalization of Indigenous languages. The panel also included Manchán Magan, a native Irish speaker, writer and documentary filmmaker; and Jennifer Johnson, a citizen of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma and co-founder of its Pumvhuak Immersion School. FSU's College of Fine Arts and Native and Indigenous Studies Center hosted the program.



Courtesy photo

CHEYENNE SHINES: Cheyenne Kippenberger, a former Miss Florida Seminole and Miss Indian World, served as master of ceremonies for the League of Women Voters of Miami Dade County's Women Who Shine program April 14 at the Rusty Pelican restaurant in Key Biscayne. The event honored five women, including Betty Osceola (Miccosukee), who have made outstanding contributions to their communities.



Beverly Bidney

LIBRARY MURAL: Ahfachkee School eighth grader Andy Ortega-Billie paints a mural April 23 depicting the folktale "The Lion and the Hare" in the school's media center. The mural was an art class project. The library sports a few other murals painted by students.



FSU Athletics

SEMINOLE SOFTBALL: The Seminole Tribe's Kyle Doney delivers a ceremonial first pitch at the Florida State Seminoles home softball game against Notre Dame on April 13. The pitch was part of the team's Seminole Heritage game, which FSU won, 7-3. Doney is a 2007 FSU graduate. He serves on the FSU Alumni Association National Board of Directors.



Calvin Tiger (2)

ST. PATTY'S PROGRAM: Above, James Toombs, from the Recreation Department, and, below, Donald Underwood, from the Boys & Girls Club, lead a group of kids in a St. Patrick's Day celebration March 15 at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium in Big Cypress. The program featured various St. Patrick's-related activities and food, including green snow cones, green sherbet and healthy green snacks.



Beverly Bidney

GARDEN GATHERING: Ahfachkee School seniors gather in the school's culture garden April 23 as they take a break from filming a video for their upcoming graduation ceremony. From left to right are Jaylee Jimmie, Lania Bert, Shaun Tommie, Colten Bert, Ronnie Jimmie, Dyami Koenes, Thomas Tigertail and Kadin Tommie.



Beverly Bidney

CENTER SCENE: Construction on the new Big Cypress Senior Center is well underway. This was the view at the site April 16. The center and a new preschool are being built on property that was once the home of the Big Cypress Bingo Hall, which has been torn down.

NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

Illinois now home to federally recognized tribal land

A Native tribe has received back a portion of its ancestral land in Illinois, marking the first federally recognized tribal land in the state.

The decision announced April 19 by the U.S. Department of the Interior places portions of Shab-eh-nay Reservation land, which is located in DeKalb County, into trust for the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, which gives the tribal nation sovereignty over the land.

The decision comes 175 years after the U.S. government illegally auctioned off 1,280 acres of land in northern Illinois owned by Prairie Band Potawatomi, according to the tribal nation.

The Shab-eh-nay Reservation land includes portions of Shabbona Lake State Park in DeKalb County, named after Chief Shab-eh-nay of Prairie Band Potawatomi.

"We have been asking for this recognition and for what is rightfully ours for nearly 200 years, and we are grateful to the U.S. Department of Interior for this significant step in the pursuit of justice for our people and ancestors," said Prairie Band Chairman Joseph Rupnick, the fourth generation great grandson of Chief Shab-eh-nay, in a news release.

The Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation said it will "carefully evaluate" potential uses for the land, but no immediate changes for usage have been decided.

All current homeowners will continue to retain title to their land and will live in their homes undisturbed, the tribal nation added.

The Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation originated in the Great Lakes region but was forcibly removed in the 19th century. The tribe is now headquartered in Kansas.

- WTTW (Chicago)

First NC medical marijuana dispensary opens doors

CHEROKEE, N.C. — North Carolina's first medical marijuana dispensary is officially open.

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians opened its doors in western North Carolina on Saturday morning for April 20 - also known as '4-20.'

The tribe voted to approve the adult use of marijuana on tribal land in the fall of 2023. Members converted an old bingo hall into what they are calling the world's largest marijuana dispensary.

All of the products are produced locally from marijuana grown near Cherokee.

Customers will need a medical card to buy anything.

- WSOC-TV (Charlotte, N.C.)

Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe celebrates legal victory over land in trust

On April 1, the U.S. Supreme Court announced that it would not hear an appeal by a group of Taunton, Massachusetts, residents who sought to reverse a lower court's ruling to keep Mashpee Wampanoag tribal lands in trust.

Now the tribe can continue discussions about what to do with the land, including whether to pursue a casino.

"Now that this is affirmed, I think that we'll be seeing a lot more announcements," said Tribal Chairman Brian Weeden. "We're seeing if there's still that appetite out there, which we have kind of gauged the community a little bit to see if we're still interested."

Weeden added that conversations about land use across the two parcels, totaling 321 acres in Falmouth and Taunton, will also be about building a tribal school to educate members on their language, culture, traditions, and more.

"This means that we can hold on to this place for the future generations. And we're supposed to look at the next seven generations, just like our ancestors did," he said. "That's why it's important for us to make sure that they have a place here to call home."

This was the final ruling of a case originally brought in 2015.

After the Department of Interior under the Obama administration put the land into trust for the tribe, a group of about two dozen Taunton residents challenged the move, saying the tribe did not fall under the federal government's definition of "Indian," and therefore land could not be put into trust on their behalf.

An attorney for the Taunton residents couldn't be reached on April 2.

Since 2015, the case has made its way through the courts, with the Taunton residents and the tribe each pressing its case.

Last February, a U.S. District Court judge ruled that the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe satisfies the federal definition of "Indian," and the Taunton residents filed the petition with the U.S. Supreme Court arguing that the lower court had wrongly dismissed their case.

Weeden, the Tribal Chairman, said he received word that the court denied the petition from his lawyers while in the Tribe's government center and sent the council members and employees home early to celebrate the news with their families.

"I think that we're all happy to see the courts affirm something that we've known from time immemorial," Weeden said. "And, you know, it's more important that we recognize our ancestors that paid the ultimate sacrifice for us to be here at this moment. This is just the beginning. So we're excited."

- WCAI (Woods Hole, Mass.)

Tribal leaders seeking solutions to cartel crime, say they mostly got talk

WASHINGTON — Lawmakers wanted to talk about the problems of foreign criminal cartels operating on Indigenous lands, but tribal leaders came to the House Natural Resources subcommittee hearing April 10 seeking solutions.

Instead, they said, they left the hearing afraid it was just another "check-a-box-off" exercise.

"Something that wasn't really talked about is where do we go from here?" said Tohono O'odham Chairman Verlon Jose. "I heard, 'Yes I want to go to your reservations,' 'Yes, I learned something.' But there was no real strong commitment on where do we go from here. That's what I want to hear."

Rep. Paul Gosar, R-Bullhead City, who chaired the hearing, acknowledged that solutions may not have been forthcoming April 10. But he said it was important to start the discussion and he hopes it was the first step in a longer process between Congress and the tribes.

The hearing in the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee was called to focus on "Biden's border crisis" and to look at the "increase in violence, crime, and drug overdoses that are ravaging communities across Indian country" at the hands of drug cartels, the hearing notice said.

Jose and other tribal leaders who testified at the hearing said the problems they face from the cartels are real.

"Our police force spends about half its time on border issues, including the investigation of immigrant deaths, illegal drug seizures, and human smuggling," said Jose, whose community straddles the U.S.-Mexico border. "Smugglers have held tribal families hostage, damaged and stolen property, and recruited tribal youth to engage in smuggling activity."

But they warned that solutions to those problems will take time, money, a recognition of tribal sovereignty and a level of cooperation that tribes have yet to see from Congress.

"Are we going to walk out these doors and be like, 'All right, what was this for?'" asked Bryce Kirk, a councilman for the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Reservation in Montana. "You know, how do we work together? That's the question that I didn't get from you guys, 'How are we going to work together?' Because right now, sitting here, it's still seems divided."

One of the main solutions pushed by Kirk, Jose and other witnesses was to give tribes more autonomy to fight these issues themselves.

"I wouldn't come in and rearrange your house for you," Jose said of the way tribes are often treated by the federal government. "I would work with you, or I would have you rearrange your house yourself."

"Who better to address the needs than the people themselves? When we have that consultation and that direct funding, we're able to really put the money where it works, because you (the federal government) can build something, but it was not designed to address the local community," Jose said.

Gosar agreed that there needs to be more respect for tribal sovereignty.

"Tribal entities are sovereign entities, and no one's talking to them about how they're being impacted by the mass implementation of foreign nationals," he said, referring back to the cartels.

"I think, from the standpoint of delegating water or assets and resources to them, holding them accountable, is a great way to set an example for the FBI and anybody else," Gosar said after the hearing.

Gosar said he's optimistic Congress will take action, telling leaders to "stay tuned." Despite the reassurances, Jose said he is still concerned, and plans to continue pushing for lawmakers to work with tribal leaders on solutions.

"We're not asking for a handout. We're asking for a hand-up so that we can play our role in society," Jose said. "How do we work together to address it? We really want to create the solutions; we really need to work together."

- Cronkite News (Phoenix)

Details scarce on how Canada's Indigenous loan program will work, says business group

The unveiling of a federal Indigenous loan guarantee program is a "positive commitment" toward helping First Nation communities invest in the natural resource sector, said the president of the Anishnawbe Business Professional Association (ABPA).

But Jason Rasevych said the \$5-billion National Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program has to be independent in its decision-making processes and free of political interference.

The federal government had promised in last year's fall economic statement that the long-called-for program would be included in the spring budget. But, as with last November's document, details still remain scarce on how the program will work.

In a news release, ABPA said more needs to be disclosed on who will be running it, how decisions will be made, and what will be the criteria on the prioritization of projects, factoring in the social impacts.

The program will help First Nation communities invest in energy, mining and forestry projects, and facilitate ownership in natural resource-related facilities and infrastructure. A loan guarantee helps entrepreneurs with access to capital and protects lenders from potential default as the federal government will pay the bill should the borrow default.

"Independence on the decision-making of the program will ensure that allocations for loan guarantees are not motivated by

a government or political agendas," said Rasevych in a statement.

"We need the loan guarantee program to enhance and support Indigenous communities looking to participate in various sectors at different financial thresholds of resource development and ownership of enabling infrastructure like corridors and facility ownership."

The program's ultimate success, the group said, will be in its rollout, execution and the "collaborative approach" it must take in working in partnership with First Nations and Indigenous financial institutions.

The association said First Nation leaders in Northern Ontario also want to see a program that ascribes to Indigenous-led values, the principles of Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action and acknowledge regional treaties.

Resource development and its economic spinoffs can go a long way toward reaching reconciliation with Indigenous people, the group said, but it's on industry and governments to better understand the "necessary and pivotal role" that First Nations play given their unique rights and land title.

- Timmins Today (Ontario, Canada)

Wisconsin tribe sues social media companies over suicide rates among Native youth

A Wisconsin tribe is one of the first tribal nations to sue social media companies, accusing them of contributing to higher suicide rates among Native American youth compared to their peers.

The Menominee Indian Tribe along with the Spirit Lake Tribe in North Dakota filed a lawsuit April 9 in a Los Angeles County court against companies that own social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and Google. The two are the first among nearly 575 federally recognized tribes to challenge companies like Meta, SNAP, Alphabet and ByteDance.

Surveys by the Pew Research Center have found the majority of teens use social media sites and around 9 in 10 teens use YouTube. The complaint states Native American teens are "equally gripped" by social media use, with around two-thirds of youth 15 to 24 years old using social media for three to seven hours each day.

Tribe say that's directly contributing to a youth mental health crisis, including for the Menominee Indian Tribe.

"Enough is enough. Endless scrolling is rewiring our teenagers' brains," Menominee Tribal Chair Gena Kakkak said in a statement. "We are demanding these social media corporations take responsibility for intentionally creating dangerous features that ramp up the compulsive use of social media by the youth on our Reservation."

The tribe's chair and its attorneys declined to comment further on the lawsuit.

The complaint states soaring suicide rates and mental illness are pushing underfunded programs to the brink, damaging the tribe's cultural preservation and limiting resources for education and job creation. The tribe stresses the mental health crisis is particularly dire in Wisconsin where American Indians were hospitalized for self-harm at more than double the rate of their white counterparts.

Suicide rates in the state are highest among American Indians and white residents, according to a 2020 report from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

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In a statement, Google spokesperson Jose Castaneda said the allegations in the complaints filed April 9 are false.

- Wisconsin Public Radio

Sioux Falls school name honors Native American woman who served in World War II

ST. LOUIS, S.D. — The name of a new elementary school in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, will honor Marcella LeBeau, a Native American woman who nursed the wounded from some of the greatest battles of World War II.

The decision was announced April 22 at the Sioux Falls School Board meeting. The school is under construction in the northwest corner of the city.

LeBeau, who passed away at age 102 in 2021 in Eagle Butte, was a long-time nurse who after earning a degree from St. Mary's Hospital in Pierre enlisted in the United States Army Nurse Corp in 1943 at the age of 23.

She served in France, England, and Belgium in the 76th General Hospital Unit. Among her duties were tending to service members during the Battle of the Bulge and the Normandy D-Day landings.

"It was the greatest honor of my life to serve," she said in her later years.

After her Army service, she went on to be a nurse for 31 years and was the mother of eight children.

She was a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in north-central South Dakota and served on the tribal council. She led many public health efforts on the

reservation.

"LeBeau's life story and achievements continue to inspire people within the Native American community and beyond. She has served as a role model for young Indigenous women, demonstrating the importance of education, service, and cultural pride," Assistant Superintendent Jamie Nold said. "Marcella LeBeau's legacy is one of courage, compassion, and resilience. Her dedication to serving others, promoting healthcare equity, and preserving Lakota culture has had a lasting impact on her community and serves as a shining example for future generations."

A committee of 25 students, teachers, community members, parents, administrators and board members made the selection that was kept a secret until April 22. The committee considered numerous names submitted by community residents.

The new \$22 million Marcella LeBeau school will open in the fall of 2025 and is currently under construction just southeast of George McGovern Middle School.

- Sioux Falls Live (South Dakota)

Grand Traverse Band could be first Michigan tribe to give nature legal standing

The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians could soon be the first tribal nation in Michigan to formally grant legal rights to nature.

If passed, the rights of nature resolution would give legal standing to non-human life, including water, land, plants and animals.

"We, amongst [the] council, have said, 'We can't believe that we hadn't done this before,'" said Tina Frankenberger, councilor for the Grand Traverse Band. "It's who we are and represents us as a people. I mean, you can see it in our treaty with the things that we negotiated and the way we thought about and spoke about nature."

It's part of a broader movement that seeks to offer the same legal protections to nature that individuals and corporations have.

Frankenberger says the resolution builds on tribal teachings, tribal science and treaty rights, and that passing it could help strengthen environmental protection arguments in court.

Thomas Peters Binesiwegizhig is part of a group of Grand Traverse Band tribal elders who helped draft and introduce the resolution.

"Our link with nature ... is a really strong link — a lot stronger than people seem to realize," he said. "We see the Creator within nature, and we are a part of the circle — we aren't at the center of the circle — of life."

He says the resolution would ensure the rights of ecosystems and species in a way that reflects Anishinaabe belief systems, culture and relationship to nature.

"We have an ability to be able to vocalize and articulate those needs for all of life, and that's what we're going to try to provide in this instance. That's why we're going after doing this within our community, within the Grand Traverse Band," he said.

A number of tribal nations across the United States have enshrined similar legal rights for nature, as have countries like Ecuador and New Zealand.

In a White Earth Nation tribal court case in Minnesota, manoomin, or wild rice, brought a case against the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. In the case, manoomin argued that a Line 3 water permit granted to Enbridge threatened its ability to flourish, preventing White Earth members from harvesting it.

The 2021 case was ultimately dismissed for lack of jurisdiction since the issue at hand dealt with non-tribal members and occurred outside of reservation boundaries.

But according to a legal analysis, "it [was] the first tribal court case to be brought on behalf of a natural resource and was only made possible because of the legal rights granted to manoomin."

Peters Binesiwegizhig says such legal precedent stands to benefit more than just tribal communities.

"No matter where you come from [or] what race you are, there needs to be some way to stand up so that we can have an environment," he said. "So we're looking for a voice that can do that and a movement that can do that."

Grand Traverse Band tribal members can offer comments, suggestions and questions on the current draft of the rights of nature resolution.

That 60-day comment period will end in mid-May, and councilor Tina Frankenberger says it's possible the tribal council could vote on the resolution at the end of May.

- Interlochen Public Radio (Traverse City, Mich.)

Paskenta Band of Namlaki Indians break ground on new project

CORNING, Calif. — The Paskenta Band of Namlaki Indians broke ground on a microgrid project on April 11 at the Rolling Hills Casino and Resort.

The Paskenta Band of Namlaki Indians broke ground on their \$32 million solar project. With hundreds in attendance, Tribal Chairman Andrew Alejandro took the podium to announce the solar and storage microgrid - that will help power the casino.

Alejandro said that this is a project that will help create a sustainable future.

"This is definitely going to allow us to be able to build out new projects, more economic development and businesses that will be located here on the property," Alejandro said. "Again, it's important for us to work on that infrastructure so that we could have the capacity in order to accomplish these goals."

Alejandro said that they would begin working on the project instantly. Action News Now spoke with the chairman of the California Energy Commission, David Hochschild, and he said that this is the largest grant the CES has given to a Native American tribe for a solar-micro grid.

So far, the California Energy Commission has funded micro-grids for nine different tribes.

- Action News Now (Chico, Calif.)

Tribe in Texas to open new casino

The Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas has revealed plans to build a new casino resort to complement the Naskila Gaming Center on its lands in Polk County.

"We are incredibly excited to embark on this new chapter," said Ricky Sylestine, Tribal Council Chairman, during April 15's announcement. "This new casino resort will not only provide significant economic benefits for those living and working in the region, but it will also become a vibrant destination for visitors."

The tribe is still finalizing details, but says the new casino resort may include amenities such as a state-of-the-art casino floor, hotel accommodations, and diverse dining/entertainment options.

The architectural firm FFKR will design the new resort.

The Alabama-Coushatta Tribe also plans an extensive remodeling of its existing convenience store and truck stop, including bingo machines.

- KFDM (Beaumont, Texas)

Tribes in Maine give more rights to prosecute crimes

AUGUSTA, Maine — Wabanaki tribes in Maine now have more rights to prosecute certain crimes that occur on tribal lands. That includes recognizing the exclusive jurisdiction of the tribal courts of the Wabanaki Nations over Class C, D and E crimes committed by adults on tribal lands.

Gov. Janet Mills on April 22 signed LD 2007, An Act Regarding the Criminal Jurisdiction of Tribal Courts and to Extend the Time for the Penobscot Nation to Certify Its Agreement to Public Law 2023, Chapter 369, into law.

In addition to expanding the authority of Tribal courts to prosecute certain crimes, it also allows the Penobscot Nation to regulate drinking water on Penobscot Tribal lands.

The bill includes many elements that were identified by a 2019-2020 task force assembled to look at changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act.

"The strengthening of tribal courts and restoration of criminal jurisdiction represents great progress in our efforts to restore the recognition of our inherent tribal sovereignty that we did not relinquish in 1980," said Penobscot Nation Tribal Ambassador and Wabanaki Alliance Board President Maulian Bryant.

- WMTW-TV (Portland, Maine)

Oregon State receives \$10 million grant to work with 13 Native American tribes on hemp economic development

CORVALLIS, Ore. — Oregon State University's Global Hemp Innovation Center has received a \$10 million grant to work with 13 Native American Tribes to spur economic development in the western United States by developing manufacturing capabilities for materials and products made from hemp.

The project, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, seeks to develop sustainable supply chains based on the needs identified by an intertribal business consortium that link regional hemp production, processing and manufacturing to create hemp products.

The project also focuses on creating educational and workforce development opportunities to equip Native American students and adults for jobs in the emergent biobased economy.

This work builds on a \$10 million USDA Sustainable Agricultural Systems grant the Global Hemp Innovation Center received in 2021 to begin defining economic opportunities for hemp grown in the western United States.

With this new grant, the Global Hemp Innovation Center has been designated by USDA as a Center of Excellence. Oregon State also worked with USDA to develop the Hemp Research Needs Roadmap, which was released in March and identifies the four areas of greatest need in the industry.

The decriminalization of hemp with the passage of the 2018 Farm Bill created a boom of interest in the potential of hemp. Initially, there was a surge in hemp planting, primarily driven by CBD (cannabidiol) demand. By 2020, hemp production had dropped off as quickly as it surged.

"There is still significant interest and potential in industrial uses of hemp," said Jeffrey Steiner, director of the Global Hemp Innovation Center. "But it's critical that investment decisions be based on sound science and business planning to build out and scale up economic development opportunities with hemp, particularly to benefit Tribal nations and other American rural communities."

- Oregon State University

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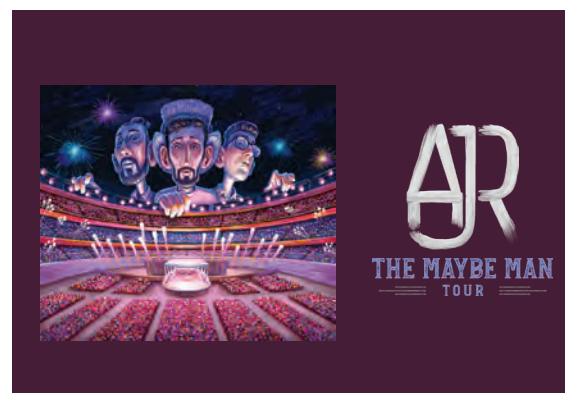
MAY 10
QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE



MAY 11
OLGA TAÑÓN



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Education



B



Seminole students carry flags as part of the opening of a USET meeting March 27 in Washington, D.C.

Courtesy photo



Felicia Buck, center, and Shyla Herrera talk to USET members about their project, which focused on the limited amount of housing on the Immokalee Reservation.

Courtesy photo

Seminole students receive 'close-up' experience in D.C.

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Thirty-two Seminole high school students from Big Cypress, Brighton, Hollywood and Immokalee participated in the Close Up Washington and United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) Impact Week Youth Summit from March 24-29.

Close Up's mission is to inform, inspire and empower young people to exercise the rights and accept the responsibilities as citizens in a democracy. Students spent the week in Washington, D.C., learning about federal Indian policy, federal government structure, current issues in Indian country, creating a sovereignty statement and a tribal action initiative.

Activities included visits to the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, the Franklin D. Roosevelt, Martin Luther King Jr., Jefferson, Lincoln and war memorials. The students also spent a day on Capitol Hill where they met with

the Senate Indian Affairs Committee and visited the U.S. Supreme Court and the Library of Congress.

When the students weren't touring, they were studying and working on their tribal action initiative presentation to USET at its March 27 meeting. Students chose issues they believed were the most important ones facing their tribes and outlined them on display boards.

The projects were displayed outside of the meeting room so members could read them and talk to the students about the action plans they described.

"They have a lot of good ideas," said Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, who attended the USET meeting. "It sounds like they are learning. They had projects on substance abuse, land management and housing. The project on housing discrepancies is something we could present to the Housing Department. As tribal youth, we should listen to them. They will be in this seat later and we should listen to them so when they get

here they won't be frustrated."

Students opened the meeting with the presentation of USET member flags.

"It was an honor to be there," said Shyla Herrera, 17, a junior at East Lee County High School in Lehigh Acres. "It was emotional to meet people from other tribes. It made me proud to be Seminole and bring awareness to our community. I also connected with people from my own tribe that I never met. Brighton is very far from where I live in Lehigh Acres, but we have love for each other because we are part of the same tribe, no matter what."

It was Herrera's first time at Close Up USET and she was glad she participated in the action initiative.

◆ See CLOSE UP on page 3A



Hollywood students present their project at the USET meeting.

Courtesy photo

Students immerse in the past during PECS culture camp

STAFF REPORT

BRIGHTON — Pema'yev Emahakv Charter School students received a taste of what it was like to live as their ancestors did during the school's annual culture camp March 20-22.

The school's daily culture classes include language, history and arts and crafts, but during culture camp days students spend the entire day immersed in Seminole culture.

On March 22, seventh and eighth graders learned how to butcher a pig, make fry bread and sofkee, carve wood and shoot archery. Activities were divided into traditional roles. The girls worked in the cooking chickee to make a traditional meal and the boys honed their skills at carving wood and shooting arrows.

PECS was founded with a purpose of revitalizing the language and keeping the culture strong in every generation.



Milo Osceola Jr. practices woodcarving at the PECS culture camp March 22.

Calvin Tiger



From left to right, Vpeyet Kylynn Lawrence, Hopanv Avani Smith, and Vtvsav Amariah Lavatta prepare traditional Seminole food.

Calvin Tiger



PECS students work together during culture camp.

Calvin Tiger



Eleanor Osceola sifts through grain to help prepare traditional Seminole foods.

Calvin Tiger

Calvin Tiger
Students learn how to properly hold a bow and arrow and shoot during an archery activity at culture camp.



Take Your Child to Work Day



Participants in the Seminole Tribe's Take Your Child to Work Day gather for a drone photo at tribal headquarters in Hollywood on April 25.

Jake Corriveau



Calvin Tiger

Kids are eager to answer questions by Andrea Jordan-Flores, from the Human Relations Department, during a presentation in the auditorium.



Calvin Tiger

Fire Rescue Division Chief Jorge Valdes instructs Jazmine Belizaire on how to properly administer CPR.



Calvin Tiger

Padmini Dukharan and her son, Bryan Dukharan, enjoy their visit with a Seminole Police Department motorcycle and Officer Joe Companion.



Calvin Tiger

Recreation fitness specialist Kenneth Bayon begins the Take Your Child to Work Day event with stretches to get the day of activities started.



Calvin Tiger

Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola extends his thanks to all the parents, children and departments that helped facilitate the event.



Jake Corriveau

Kids participate in one of the many activities at Take Your Child to Work Day.

Museum seeks help to learn more about donated bowls and Elizabeth Buster

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

FORT LAUDERDALE — A pair of tiny ceramic bowls — also referred to as vessels — are now in the hands of the Seminole Tribe.

The items were donated by the organization History Fort Lauderdale to the tribe's Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on April 4. The transfer took place at the History Museum in downtown Fort Lauderdale. Tara Chadwick and Ellery Andrews represented History Fort Lauderdale while Laura Dello Russo and Maria Dmitrieva represented Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki. Dello Russo is the collections manager; Dmitrieva is the conservator.

Little is known about the bowls and Elizabeth Buster, who is believed to have made them. Buster's name faintly appears on the bottom of one bowl.

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki is hoping tribal members or others who see the bowls and/or Elizabeth Buster's name might be able to provide more information.

"Do you recognize these bowls or do you have information that can help us figure which Elizabeth Buster this was?" Dello Russo said.

History Fort Lauderdale staff believe Buster made the bowls in the 1960s while attending a boarding school in Cherokee, North Carolina, perhaps as a teenager. They note that Betty Mae Jumper, a pioneer for the Seminole Tribe in many areas, also attended boarding school in Cherokee.

History Fort Lauderdale received the bowls several years ago as a donation from Nell Crocker.

Initially, History Fort Lauderdale planned on turning the bowls over to the tribe's Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) as items that fall under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation

Act, but Chadwick said the tribe told her the items did not meet the tribe's internal requirements to be considered NAGPRA items.

It was on to plan B, which led to the donation to Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki.



Kevin Johnson

Tiny bowls were donated to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on April 4.



Kevin Johnson

Maria Dmitrieva, left, gently handles one of the bowls with help from Tara Chadwick.

CLOSE UP From page 1B

"It was great to let [USET members] know the youth are here and we can speak

for ourselves," Herrera said. "It was a great opportunity, and I would do it again. It was a beautiful experience and I encourage other kids to go."

Ahfachkee School student Jaylee Jimmie said the highlights of the trip for her

were seeing the monuments in person and presenting their projects at USET.

"I really enjoyed talking to people from different tribes and nations," said Jimmie, 17. "It was really cool. [The program] helped me get out of my shell and meet new people."



Courtesy photo

The U.S. Capitol serves as a backdrop as a large group of Native students, including Seminoles, gather on steps nearby during the Close Up Washington and United South and Eastern Tribes Impact Week Youth Summit in March.



Courtesy photo

Seminole students learn while using workbooks in Washington, D.C.



Courtesy photo

Alice Jimmie, right, and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Tahnna Billie were among the Seminole students in the audience for a meeting at USET.



Courtesy photo

Seminole students visit the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C.



Courtesy photo

Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, second from right, attends a USET meeting with officials from other tribes.



Tai Cole

From left to right, Sonny Frank, Daniel Wildcat, Ellen Piekalkiewicz, Eren Erman Ozguven and Paul Downing at "Saving the Planet with Indigenous Knowledge" on April 12 in Tallahassee.

FSU hosts 'Saving the Planet with Indigenous Knowledge' workshop

BY ANNA PRENTISS
Florida State University News

TALLAHASSEE — Florida State University recently hosted "Saving the Planet with Indigenous Knowledge," a free workshop exploring the concept of adaptive resilience for the Florida Gulf's coastal communities, with a focus on the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge.

The event was part of a National Science Foundation Research Coordination Network (RCN) award project focused on resilient rural infrastructure. Its goal was to foster a new understanding of the complex interactions among key elements of community resilience in rural coastlines and inland areas to adapt to an ever-changing climate and potential natural disasters.

"This RCN project is about creating connections all over the United States, in addition to Florida, to develop disaster resilience actions, tools, strategies, plans and policies — with a focus specifically on our rural areas," said Eren Erman Ozguven, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering in the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering, director of the Resilient Infrastructure and Disaster Response (RIDER) Center and principal investigator on this project. "When you talk about rural areas, there are many different vulnerable populations that we need to consider."

In 2022, Ozguven held a workshop with a focus on Hurricane Michael's impact on rural areas in the Panhandle. Gathering leading community members, government, industry and researchers, this workshop provided insight on how to bridge the "resilience divides" these rural communities have been facing.

"We are now getting into the discussion with the Seminole Tribe of Florida and how Indigenous communities cope with disasters, learning from them, and we also hope to help them as well," he said. "They have a way of enduring these events — so it is a way to gather their knowledge into disaster planning."

"Saving the Planet with Indigenous Knowledge" brought together experts from across FSU, including the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering and its RIDER Center, the College of Social Work, the Stoops Center for Communities, Families, and Children and the Native American and Indigenous Studies Center.

Representatives from the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering faculty, FEMA, Florida A&M University Emergency Management and FSU Emergency Management were present as members of an emergency management professionals panel.

"This was an interesting opportunity to meet with other professionals from emergency management," said Paul Downing, director of the Office of Emergency Management for the Seminole Tribe of Florida and tribal citizen. "Listening to the diverse perspectives in academia and emergency management gives us a different perspective and allows us to showcase that we are not ignorant to what's going on, and how we are developing our own procedures

to respond to disasters."

Members of the public, researchers and professionals from across diverse professions were given a unique opportunity to network and form work groups to address the need for interdisciplinary, community-based collaboration to build the resilience and infrastructure of rural communities in the Florida Panhandle.

"Through this event, we learned how we can help collect data, not only from the emergency management side, but also from the health side, and how emergency management can forward that data to help with this study," said Sonny Frank, emergency management coordinator for the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

For Andrew Frank, director of the FSU Native American and Indigenous Studies Center, the most exciting aspect of the workshop was seeing the collective problem-solving from individuals across multiple colleges and disciplines.

"The success of the center is because of our great colleagues across campus that allow us to lead or contribute to ongoing projects," Frank said. "The more we realize that the folks in engineering and the folks in the humanities speak the same language and have a lot in common, the better we recognize our tremendous future."

Keynote speaker Daniel Wildcat, an accomplished author, speaker and scholar at the Haskell Indian Nations University and director of the American Indian studies program at Haskell Environmental Research Studies Center, shared Indigenous knowledge related to the interconnectedness between the environment, communities and policy.

"Dr. Wildcat explained how Indigenous worldview and most modern science might seem completely different, but they're tied by a commitment to accomplish ambitious solutions," Frank said.

Attendees were gifted a copy of Wildcat's book, "Red Alert! Saving the Planet Through Indigenous Knowledge."

"It was a great discussion of some of the Indigenous-informed challenges of emergency management," said Dean Michel, a doctoral candidate in the FSU Department of History and enrolled member of the Chemehuevi Indian Tribe. "I hope that it will be useful as people think about engaging with emergency preparedness and address the issues many tribal people face when working with government officials."

The College of Social Work and Stoops Center for Communities, Families and Children have been a conduit for interdisciplinary research and projects across Florida State's campus and across local and regional communities to promote collaboration targeting recovery and resilience, including several years of work with the College of Engineering and RIDER Center.

"Our college and center make it our mission to support the most vulnerable populations who need it most during times of crisis like natural disasters," said Ellen Piekalkiewicz, director of the Stoops Center. "We hope to continue connecting with our Indigenous and local communities to share our knowledge and be mutual means of support."

Cherokee woman named president, CEO of higher ed consortium

STAFF REPORT

Ahniwake Rose, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and of Muscogee (Creek) descent, has been named president and CEO of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC).

An April 19 news release from AIHEC described Rose as "a transformational leader with abundant experience in Tribal policy, state, national, and Tribal mission-driven nonprofit organizations."

Before accepting her new role, which is effective July 1, Rose served as AIHEC's vice president of Congressional/Federal Relations. Previously, she was executive director at the Oklahoma Policy Institute.

Rose lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with her two daughters and mother. She and her family will relocate to Washington, D.C., this summer, according to the release.



AIHEC

Ahniwake Rose



Calvin Tiger

Youngsters from the Hollywood Preschool hold a banner to start the reservation's Child Abuse Prevention walk that included dozens of walkers, including Hollywood Board Rep. Christine McCall, left.



Beverly Bidney

The Immokalee walk begins at the gym on the reservation April 10.

Tribe marks National Child Abuse Prevention Month with walks, activities

STAFF REPORT

Seminole Tribe departments, led by Advocacy and Guardianship, recognized National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April by hosting and/or participating

a variety of activities, highlighted by tribalwide community walks and ice cream socials April 10.

Participants were encouraged to wear blue as they walked in Big Cypress, Brighton, Hollywood, Immokalee and Lakeland to support child abuse prevention efforts.

Tribal departments were encouraged to participate in additional activities during "Blue Ribbon Week" which included days of wearing blue, crazy hats, favorite team sports team apparel and dressing as a super hero.



Calvin Tiger

Participants in the walk on the Hollywood Reservation gather at the airnasium.



Courtesy photo

Showing their support during National Child Abuse Prevention Month are Brighton Advocacy and Guardianship Department's, from left to right, Monya Oglesby, Eric Perez, Vidya Mangroo, who wear jerseys of their favorite sports teams.



Calvin Tiger

Walkers set out for their stroll around the streets of the Hollywood Reservation.



Courtesy photo

Hollywood Advocacy and Guardianship Department's "Crazy Hat Day" participants include, from left to right, back row, Kandance Sims and Shamika Beasley; left to right, middle row, LeAnna Sapp, Winstera Young, Debra Ray, Mildred Ibarra, Rebeca Parkhurst and Felicia Daniels; and left to right, front row, Cierra Innocent, Vanessa Golaub Turner and Shaquana Shotwell.



Calvin Tiger

Hollywood Advocacy and Guardianship Department employees at the walk are, from left to right, Felicia Daniels, Vanessa Golaub Turner, Shaquana Shotwell, Kandace Sims, Winstera Young, Kevin Smith, Shamika Beasley, Mildred Ibarra, Rebeca Parkhurst, Priscila Hernandez, LeAnna Sapp, Cierra Innocent and Reyuana Gardner.



Courtesy photo

Participants in "Crazy Hat Day" at Hollywood Preschool are, from left to right, Mr. Jaleel, Ms. Concepcion, Ms. Manaratha (Chi Chi), Ms. Tonya, Mrs. Lakisha and Mrs. Dorothy.



Beverly Bidney

Showing their support in the Immokalee walk are, from left to right, Delores Lopez, Joshua Ramirez and Gwen Garcia.



Beverly Bidney

From left to right, Gia Garcia, Avayah Martinez, Madison Martinez and Tito Martinez participate in the walk on the Immokalee Reservation.



Courtesy photo

Staff at the Big Cypress Health Clinic show their support on "Wear Blue Day." Back row, from left to right, Renee Tigertail, Indiana Perez Griffin, Keron Lee-Cameron, Arlet Villalobos, Tabatha Thomas-Henderson and Carol Cotton. Front row, from left to right, Jessica Lara, Monique Burkett, Sandra Gabriel and Anna Howard.



Courtesy photo

"Team Sports Day" participants are, from left to right, Martha Suta Ramirez, Vanessa Golaub Turner, Vidya Mangroo and Selamawit Testamariam.

See page C6 for more photos

BIA creates new division for connectivity, tech

FROM PRESS RELEASE

WASHINGTON — A new division within the Bureau of Indian Affairs has been created to assist federally recognized tribal nations with managing and expanding new technological and wireless services on their lands.

According to an April 22 news release, the Division of Indigenous Connectivity and Technology will support tribes and tribal entities in broadband infrastructure

development or expansion – including wireless, digital and technological projects – and seeking new electromagnetic spectrum leasing opportunities.

“The new Indigenous Connectivity and Technology division will modernize the way Tribal nations engage in technological opportunities and give them a long overdue seat at the national connectivity policy development table,” Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland said in the release.

The new division is led by Danae Wilson

(Nez Perce Tribe).

The division is expected to help new partnerships between tribes and the tech industry in a variety of areas, including “to advance tribal self-governance over finite spectrum resources, electric vehicles, light detection and ranging (LiDAR), and other new technological opportunities and digital services while expanding opportunities for Indigenous participation in data science, coding, and software engineering,” according to the release.

National Center doles out awards

FROM PRESS RELEASE

MESA, Ariz. —The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (The National Center) handed out its annual business awards at the Reservation Economic Summit 2024 in March.

The award winners were:
Native Woman Business Owner of the Year Award: Sharon Hamer,

Akiak Technology, LLC (Bethel, Alaska/Alexandria, Va.)

Tim Wapato Public Advocate of the Year Award: Fawn Sharp, Former president of the National Congress of American Indians and current vice president of the Quinault Indian Nation

American Indian Leadership Award: Austin Tsosie, CEO, Diné Development Corporation (Scottsdale, Ariz.)

American Indian Business of the Year: Alaska Native Renewable Industries

(Huslia, AK)

Corporate Advocate of the Year Award: JPMorgan Chase & Co.

Tribal Gaming Visionary Award: Michell Hicks, Principal Chief, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

Congressional Achievement Award: U.S. Representative Mary Peltola (D-Alaska).

Gaming conference to be held in Washington State

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The Indian Gaming Association’s Mid-Year Conference & Expo will be held from Sept. 16-18, at Tulalip Resort Casino in Tulalip, Washington. The venue is owned and operated by the Tulalip Tribes.

The conference and expo provide an opportunity for attendees to network and share ideas about gaming topics and the industry. A golf outing will also be held.

For more information visit indiangamingtradeshows.com.

Chickasaw Nation creates new private investment firm

FROM PRESS RELEASE

ADA, Okla. — The Chickasaw Nation announced March 13 the establishment of Pennington Creek Capital, a private capital investment firm with plans for a new investment office in Dallas, Texas.

Pennington is a wholly owned subsidiary of Sovereign Native Holdco.

“Through selective investments in established enterprises with solid leadership and strong values, Sovereign Native Holdco has driven economic expansion and growth

for companies while generating returns we can use to deliver quality programs and services for the betterment and advancement of our citizens and the communities we serve,” Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby said in a news release.

The creation of Pennington follows on the heels of the Chickasaw becoming a strategic partner in Good Springs Capital, a private investment firm established in 2023.

The Chickasaw Nation has more than 80,000 citizens and employs nearly 14,000 workers.

May calendar for Native Learning Center

BY NATIVE LEARNING CENTER

HOLLYWOOD — The Native Learning Center offers free training, technical assistance, and Kerretv online webinars to Native Americans and those working within Indian Country. The NLC’s housing-related training opportunities and resources focus on areas that are critical to the growth and improvement of tribal communities. Stay informed about the latest trainings, webinars, and podcast episodes.

Webinar: Setting Priorities and Delegating Duties to Your Tribal Department Staff 2

Instructor: Lisa Perez, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, Human Resources Consultant
Founder & CEO, HBL Resources, Inc.
Date: May 2, 2024
Time: 2–3:30 p.m. EST

Understanding the essential responsibilities and the practices to employ when selecting and managing priorities and task delegation are essential skills for any supervisor’s success. This session provides techniques for establishing priorities, developing clear goals, and getting results through others. It covers best practices for planning, monitoring, and following up on delegated responsibilities and goals to ensure supervisors and the employees they manage are successful.

Webinar: Surviving Your First Year of Business in Indian Country

Instructor: Russ Seagle, Executive Director
The Sequoyah Fund, Inc.
Date: May 9, 2024
Time: 2–3:30 p.m. EST

What happens after you open the doors to your new business? You may be surprised at what you will encounter in the first year. How will you take the information from your business plan and apply it to the actual operation of your business? Learn survival skills for that crucial first 12 months that you can use in future years while growing your business. Learn how to keep records for yourself and Uncle Sam, how to deal with local, state, and federal regulations, employees, customers, and more.

Webinar: Tribal Healthy Homes: What You Need to Know to Keep Your Families Safe

Instructor: Marie Bonville, Tribal Housing and Education Consultant
MPA, C2EX, ePro, REALTOR
Sunlight Armour Training, LLC
Date: May 15, 2024
Time: 2–3:30 p.m. EST

New and current homeowners in Tribal Communities face various healthy home concerns throughout their homeownership journey. In this webinar, we will delve into the outreach and educational opportunities that your Tribal Housing Department or TDHE (Tribally Designated Housing Entity) can explore. Tribal Healthy Homes outreach

can include many topics such as preventing mold and mildew, budgeting for pest control, protecting your family from poor air quality, securing your home against potential dangers for both children and seniors, and many more.

Webinar: Conducting the Separation Discussion for Your Tribal Department

Instructor: Lisa Perez, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, Human Resources Consultant
Founder & CEO, HBL Resources, Inc.
Date: May 16, 2024
Time: 2–3:30 p.m. EST

Handling a separation goes beyond just doing it in a legally defensive manner. Showing that the organization cares about exiting employees can take several different forms including: planning what you will and will not say, coordinating the logistics so that you’ll be able to give helpful information to the exiting employee during the separation meeting, and scheduling the separation meeting so the exiting employee has time to adjust to the job loss. When behind closed doors, always ensure the employee is seated closest to the exit door and avoid blocking their passage to the exit door. This ensures there is never a claim of their being held against their will or trapped in the meeting, situation, or conversation. Informing affected colleagues and/or company customers if appropriate. This session focuses on all that and more to ensure no matter who is conducting the separation discussion, everyone is prepared to do so legally, effectively, and compassionately.

Webinar: Keep Your Native Business Surviving and Thriving in a Seasonal Economy

Instructor: Russ Seagle, Executive Director
The Sequoyah Fund, Inc.
Date: May 21, 2024
Time: 2–3:30 p.m. EST

This webinar is for those businesses that operate in tourism-driven economies. Hotels, restaurants, retailers, attractions, and others who depend on seasonal tourists and must navigate the ups and downs of seasonality will benefit. Learn marketing tactics that can help extend your seasons, ways to smooth out your cash flow, how to manage a seasonal workforce, and more.

Webinar: CISA Priority Telecommunications Services: Learn How You Can Enhance Your Emergency Communications Capability

Instructor: Larry Clutts (CTR), Priority Telecommunications Area Representative (PAR)
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
Date: May 23, 2024
Time: 2–3:30 p.m. EST

Priority communications is crucial to continuity of operations during adverse

conditions such as weather events, mass gatherings, cyber-attacks, or human error. It is essential that personnel from executive leadership to field personnel within national security, emergency preparedness, or the 16 critical infrastructure sectors can communicate when networks are degraded or congested. To support this need, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) offers a suite of services that provide priority communication capabilities: Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS), Wireless Priority Service (WPS), and Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP).

Webinar: Closer Look: Tribal HUD-VASH and Addressing Homelessness Supportive Services for Native American Veterans

Instructor: Marie Bonville, Tribal Housing and Education Consultant
MPA, C2EX, ePro, REALTOR
Sunlight Armour Training, LLC
Date: May 29, 2024
Time: 2–3:30 p.m. EST

The Tribal HUD-VASH (Housing and Urban Development - Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) Program is a collaborative program that aims to provide housing assistance and supportive services to Native American and Alaska Native Veterans who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. Let’s take a closer look at the program and its wide range of support services found in Indian Country.

Webinar: Strategies for Navigating Change with Your Tribal Department Staff 1

Instructor: Lisa Perez, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, Human Resources Consultant
Founder & CEO, HBL Resources, Inc.
Date: May 30, 2024
Time: 2–3:30 p.m. EST

Change creates new demands and challenges for employees. Top performing organizations expect everyone at all levels to share in leadership responsibilities, to take the initiative, and to ride the waves of change necessary to improve performance. This session helps participants navigate the troubling challenges of dealing with uncertainties of change.

Follow the Native Learning Center on social media or visit www.nativelearningcenter.com to keep up-to-date. For technical assistance, feedback, or more information, please contact us through our website or call 954-985-2331. The Native Learning Center values your input and welcomes your questions. Let us know what courses you and your community would like to see offered or if there are insights and lessons you and your community would like to share with others through the Native Learning Center.

I was a teenage BMX racer

BY ELGIN JUMPER

Author’s note

“Around 9 years, after my brother, Joe, passed away, I wrote another personal essay regarding two Seminole brothers and BMX racing in Florida. But I think I somehow knew back then, that I wasn’t finished returning to the topic, which explains the current essay.

“It was definitely a memorable experience, all of it. I’m including more memories in my work-in-progress novel. It deals with my story as a rez kid in combination with a fictionalized story. Good times. BMX racing endures to the present-day. Google it, and you’ll see races all over Florida, the US, and the world. I even saw major races to be held soon in Paris, France. Granted, I wrote this personal essay in my later years, but, oh, to be young again, and racing . . .”

The first BMX races I ever participated in occurred at the South Florida Kartway, in 1978, in between Sheridan and Sterling and I-95, which thundered nearby. At the time, they had a BMX track behind the Go-cart track. Oakwood Plaza is located there today. I got a bike for my birthday, and so, that’s what me and my brother shared. I raced first because my particular class happened to take the track just before my brother’s class. I remember waiting anxiously for the races before mine to begin and creeping our way up yard by yard to the starting hill and thus lining up at the top, side by side.

I clearly felt a certain trepidation, mingled with the focus and seriousness of sheer competition, the riders psyching each other out with words and gestures, and intimidating, to be sure. But I must say, there were some established riders, who welcomed two long haired Seminole kids from the reservation into the BMX fold. There were cool breezes from the nearby ocean that blew up debris and dust, and blended the good vibes from that night into an experience that was quite exhilarating. I even saw some riders crossing themselves. The lights and excitement never failed to urge us on in every useful way.

After ascending the starting hill, a man stood at one end, holding the handle to a long plank that lay flat on the hill. It was all about focus. We didn’t have time to blink. When it was showtime, the man lifted the handle which of course lifted the long plankwood.

“Riders ready!” the man yelled out. “Pressure on the board!”—and then, drum roll, please—“Go!” The man invariably dropped the board and away we’d charge like mounted warriors into battle!

Truth to tell, I can’t recall what I placed that first night, but alas, oh alas, I do know it wasn’t first. And I’m okay with that. You have to start some place. When we were a couple of two, three years younger, we made do with inexpensive bikes that we found at the Thunderbird Swap Shop. We rode those things throughout the rez and surrounding neighborhoods, till the wheels fell off, literally. We always dreamed of jumping and racing. I think somehow we knew that one way or another, we’d take that plunge, and find our way to the BMX tracks. We stopped by South Florida Kartway many a time prior to that initial race, suffering, begging our father for bikes to race on, and the golden opportunity, to grasp the handle bars, make the most of it, and take it forward to far places.

In spite of the hazards, it was such a thrilling time back then. We raced through mud and mudholes, over giant turns shaped like a large bowl on one side. If you went to fast and went over the edge, and survived, you were out of bounds and had to return to the proper bounds of the track. We maneuvered across whoop-de-dos, that is, a stretch of smaller mounds in quick succession, over and beyond tabletop jumps, and all the while amidst the cacophony and commotion emanating from the gathering crowds. Oftentimes we’d dial it up a tad more with crossups and radicals. Ever the showmen. And then came the straightaway, the final stretch to the finish line, where an enlivened man with a checkered flag, signaled the end of the heats!

Indeed the track was no place for the faint of heart. For this was the place where the adventurous children congregated, girls and guys, every bit an expert born in BMX battles. And we were numerous, too, daring, passionate about it, and highly-competitive. Prior to races, we could be seen out walking the track, alone, focusing, pre-visualizing. We showed up, you see, we walked it, we raced it. Great training for the much-larger Race of Life. We’d find new ways to make the absolute most of opportunities and momentum. We’d even find ways to shave mere seconds off of rapidity, figuring the

swiftest trek, while staying within rules and boundaries. I absorbed it all, became one with it. In time it became an urgency, which we grew into, which we immersed ourselves in, doing what we’d always dreamed of.

The races were held mostly on Sundays. Sometimes in the daylight, sometimes in the evenings. We won ribbons at first, being novices. They had Novice, Intermediate, and Expert classifications, separated into age groups. Later we would go on to win trophies as Intermediate, and Expert riders. The experience of winning first place trophies in The Florida State Championships, in Bradenton, up near St. Petersburg, was unforgettable. It is etched ever-so-fondly upon my treasured memories. In the third and final heat, I recall a friend of the family, urging, “Bring it home, EG!” Well, I most certainly did. And yes, I am “EG.” I am Seminole. Interestingly enough, my Seminole name is EG. “To Race in Front of the Deer.” The letters are also my initials, Elgin Gregory Jumper. My mother always called me, EG, and it is a designation I shall hold dear, for always. My brother went on to win first place in his class, as well. Now, as for The National Championships, where we raced in the same class, they transpired the next year, and I placed 9th, while my brother placed 3rd. He was moving at something dang near the speed of light by then, you see. Those races took place at BMX 84 (qualifying heats) and The Orange Bowl (one heat, the top racers in the country).

When not racing, we popped wheelies for I don’t know how far down rez roads, we performed tabletop crossups, fishtails, radicals, and unfortunately “endoes” where the bike and rider would tumble end over end, to the hard ground. Yes, kids were injured, but we viewed it as just part of the territory. Some kids would cut their convalescence short, walk it off, and hurl themselves right back right back into races. A regular fixture at the tracks was a man known to all as, “5X5,” that’s what he called himself. He photographed the races, and practice trials. The following week he’d show up displaying the photos from his van. His display area was always crowded, and I often searched and often found myself in those photos, performing tricks over jumps, or hitting a big berm at top speed. It was exhilarating, and the experiences grasped were inscribed upon our young hearts.

My number, from the beginning to the end, was good ol’ double zero, “00” of which I regularly painted in eyeballs, for good measure. My brother’s number was “9” on every occasion. We’d buy the standard number plates that they sold at bike or motorcycle shops, and then, we’d create our own numbers with black contact paper that had an adhesive on the back. After securing them with tie-downs, we’d then selectively drill holes through the plates, making them more aerodynamic. Early on my dad was able to persuade the Seminole Okalee Indian Village into sponsoring us! This is when Okalee Village was still at the corner of Sterling and 441. And so, we were able to purchase the top racing bikes at the time, which were R&Rs, made of aluminum, so we could move like the wind, if propelled skillfully enough, of course. We had aluminum frames, aluminum handle bars and rims. Oh yes, we were definitely involved, immersed in the artistry and passion of it all. In the spirit of competition. So we proudly rode for Okalee Village for a time, and in a larger sense, we were riding for our tribe as well. When we first started out everyone was wearing hard plastic hockey helmets, however as time went on, we were all mandated to have and wear motorcycle helmets that we only enhanced with trusty Scott Goggles and full-face masks that attached right onto the goggles.

But that’s not all. We had little in terms of outside interests. For me, I somehow made time for new movies, new books, both with good stories. We went to the movies whenever we could. That year, 1978, Battlestar Galactica and the coolest Bruce Lee flicks. They were way cool beans, let me tell you. I attended Driftwood Elementary and Middle schools, but I drew on notebook paper more than I tended to my school lessons. We rode our bikes to and from school, and then the rest of the days were given over to BMX. We devoured all the racing magazines and dreamed of new adventures. Back then, most bike shops had their own racing teams, and so, in time, we joined up with “Pirkles Bike Shop” on 441 near Griffin. Today the building remains, but the bike shop proper has long since closed. We had known them for years so it just seemed only natural that we’d eventually join forces. They had some good riders and they welcomed us with open arms.

◆ See BMX on page 6C



Elgin Jumper’s “BMX Racer”

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Sports



Beverly Bidney

Former NBA player Mario Chalmers, who won two NBA championships with the Miami Heat, is surrounded by campers during the Celebrity Sports Academy spring break camp on the Big Cypress Reservation.

Basketball, cheer, NBA players come to Big Cypress Reservation for spring break camp

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

BIG CYPRESS — Celebrity Sports Academy's week-long visit to the Big Cypress Reservation for a spring break camp in March carried plenty of significance for the company — which had never been to a Native American reservation — but it was even more meaningful for one of its staff members.

When Shawna Lambert, from the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, was growing up in a rural area in South Dakota, youth basketball had to travel a long distance if they wanted to attend a camp.

Ever since she started working with Celebrity Sports Academy, it's been her goal to help bring a basketball camp to a reservation.

So when the camp showed up in Big Cypress, so did the emotions.

"This one is real meaningful to me because it's our first all-Native American academy," said Lambert, who is the company's director of logistics.

Celebrity Sports Academy is the former camp of retired NBA hall of famer Dwayne Wade; it is now run by his brothers and others. The camp lived up to its celebrity billing. On one day, campers welcomed 6-foot-9 Miami Heat star center Bam Adebayo, who averaged 19 points and 10 rebounds this season.

The next day more stars arrived as former Heat standout Mario Chalmers brought an NBA championship trophy for the kids to see. He won two NBA championships with the Heat. He was joined at the camp by Wade's 22-year old son, Zaire, who plays professional basketball in Asia. In high school, Zaire played for American Heritage in Plantation.

Growing up as the son of a famously successful basketball player, Wade fell in love with the sport.

"I was blessed to be in certain rooms and locker rooms," he said. "There was a lot of pressure, but I dealt with it. I learned you have to have a balance in life. My parents worked very hard, and I knew I should try to reciprocate."

Campers had photo and autograph opportunities with the players.

The camp was sponsored by the office of Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie.



Beverly Bidney

Mario Chalmers works with Wyatt BruisedHead during the basketball camp.

"Thank you to Councilwoman Billie because she has supported this entire spring break camp for the kids. It's been so good for the community," said Jessica McDaniel, a cofounder and COO of Celebrity Sports Academy.

The camp featured basketball and cheer, and was open tribalwide for kids ages 6 to 17. Participation numbers increased each day; the second to last day drew 58 kids. The camp took place during spring break week for some counties in the area, including

Hendry. Most of the kids came from Big Cypress and Immokalee and some from Hollywood.

"They were so excited," said Cathy Cypress, Big Cypress Recreation site manager.

Spring break in Brighton occurred a week earlier, otherwise the turnout would have been even higher. Academy personnel said they hope the camp can return to the reservation either this summer or next summer when all kids are out of school.



Kevin Johnson

Lorraine Jumper receives plenty of support in a cheerleading drill.

The camp featured several stations set up on the court at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium and the new Ahfachkee School gymnasium across the street.

The cheerleading portion was led by Plantation-based 5 Star Athletics. Owner Samantha Hearn and her staff taught a large group of girls the basics to cheer, including jumping, stunting and tumbling.

Hearn's company has worked with a few tribal members individually in the past, but this was the first trip to a reservation. She was impressed with how enthusiastic the girls were to listen and perform.

"The group we have is really eager to learn," she said.

At the end of the week, the cheer campers showed what they had learned and performed a routine.

♦ See CAMP on page 6C

NABI endorsed tournaments to be held in Arizona, Seattle

STAFF REPORT

Native American Basketball Invitational (NABI) announced April 10 that it is expanding its reach into tribal communities through official NABI-endorsed tournaments. NABI officials said in a press release that endorsements will help meet the rapid increase in demand for rez ball tournaments by allowing for the extension of the NABI brand and resources.

"This new NABI program will not only increase NABI's footprint across the country, but will allow NABI to pay it forward by using its 20-plus years of resources and experience to assist all-Native tournaments in their growth," GinaMarie Scarpa, NABI president, said in the release. "NABI will market each tournament through its vast database and assist organizers with merchandise branding to increase revenue and improve tournament sustainability."

The 2024 Official NABI Endorsed Tournament line-up includes the MarJon Beauchamp All-Native Tournament from June 28-30 in Seattle, Washington, and two others in Arizona. One will take place at Ak-Chin Indian Community, Maricopa, Arizona, from May 3-5, and the second at Navajo Nation, Window Rock, Arizona, from May 31-June 2. Team registration is now open for all three tournaments at NABINation.com.

Based on the number of inquiries already received from all-Native tournaments in the U.S and Canada, Scarpa said there will be many more to come in 2025. In addition, officially endorsed NABI holiday tournament winners will receive an automatic bye into the annual NABI tournament. This year, NABI had 225 teams apply to compete and will have a record breaking 196 teams participate, representing over 180 Tribal Nations. NABI will take place July 22-27 in Phoenix.

For more information about NABI visit NABINation.com.

NFL's Evan Neal to hold camp in Okeechobee

FROM PRESS RELEASE

OKEECHOBEE — Former Okeechobee High School football player Evan Neal, who plays for the New York Giants, will hold a free youth football camp at OHS on June 8 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Lunch and a T-shirt will be provided. Check in is at 8 a.m. Youth in grades 1 through 12 are eligible.

To register, go to eneal73.com. Before being drafted by the Giants with the seventh overall pick in the 2022 NFL Draft, the 6-foot-7, 340-pound Neal won a national championship as a starting offensive lineman for the University of Alabama.

Neal has played and started in 20 games for the Giants the past two seasons.



eneal73.com

Evan Neal



Kevin Johnson

Students in a classroom session raise their hands to answer a question.



Beverly Bidney

Professional basketball player Zaire Wade, son of retired NBA star Dwayne Wade, provides dribbling instruction to Cassius Billie, 7, during a drill.

PECS softball finishes undefeated; completes perfect year for girls teams

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

A lot was at stake for the Pemaetv Emahakv Charter School softball team in its final game of the season April 16.

It was eighth grade night for three players.

A perfect season was on the line.

A victory would seal a remarkable and undefeated sports season for girls teams at the school.

The Seminoles made sure nothing would be spoiled. They defeated visiting Clewiston Christian to wrap a perfect season with an 8-0 record. In doing so, they matched the accomplishments of the school's girls volleyball and girls basketball teams, which also produced undefeated seasons.

Prior to the game, the spotlight shined on the team's eighth graders: Melaine Bonilla, Dyani Kayda and Cordelia Snell, who were honored in a ceremony alongside family members. Each player received flowers and gift baskets.

2024 PECS undefeated softball team

Head coach: Elle Thomas
Asst. coach: Mallorie Thomas
Melaine Bonilla
Amalia Estrada
Naylahnie Hardy
Jalaaya Hunsinger
Rosalie Jones
Kulipa Julian
Dyani Kayda
Cassie Pearce
Caysie Platt
Mattie Platt
Cordelia Snell
Jalene Smith



Beverly Bidney

Family members join Pemaetv Emahakv Charter School's graduating eighth grade players during the eighth grade ceremony April 16 in Brighton. The players are, from left to right, Cordelia Snell, Dyani Kayda and Melaine Bonilla. Next to them is their coach Elle Thomas.



Beverly Bidney

Caysie Platt sprints to home plate with a run for PECS.



Beverly Bidney

Dyani Kayda tags out a runner at second base.



Beverly Bidney

Melaine Bonilla winds up for a pitch.



Beverly Bidney

Cordelia Snell slides safely into third base.

Cowboys, cowgirls compete in Junior Cypress rodeo

STAFF REPORT

BIG CYPRESS — On the night before the 26th annual Junior Cypress Cattle Drive was held, Seminole cowboys and cowgirls competed in the Junior Cypress Memorial All-Indian Rodeo at the Junior Cypress Arena in Big Cypress.

Not every event was filled for the March 15 performance under the arena lights, but there was plenty of action in jr. bareback, team roping, breakaway roping, calf roping, barrels and jr. bulls.

One of the top performances came from Calgary Johns (14.8 seconds), who

won barrels with a narrow victory over her mother, Boogie Johns (15.3). Two weeks later, both generated strong showings in a pro rodeo in Bartow and finished in the money. Calgary finished second; Boogie was fifth.

Other winners in the Junior Cypress Rodeo included Jace Johns (calf roping, 20.9) and Ahnie Jumper (breakaway roping, 4.3). LeAnna Billie also had a fast time in breakaway, but she was hit with a 10-second penalty.

Josh Jumper and Hilliard Gopher combined for the fastest time (8.2) in team roping.



Kevin Johnson

Despite going airborne, Talen Jumper holds onto a fierce bull.



Kevin Johnson

Ahnie Jumper takes first place in breakaway roping April 15 at the Junior Cypress Memorial All-Indian Rodeo in Big Cypress.



Kevin Johnson

After winning the men's division at the Herman L. Osceola Memorial Tournament on March 23, the Seminoles team joins Herman's mother, Ruby, on the court.

BC gym filled with youth, adult teams for Herman L. Osceola Memorial Tournament

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

BIG CYPRESS — New features were part of the annual Herman L. Osceola Memorial Basketball Tournament held March 22-23 at the gymnasium on the Big Cypress Reservation named in memory of the U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. who died in a helicopter crash in the Republic of Korea 40 years ago while serving his tribe and country.

This year marked the debut of an open tournament — non-Native teams were welcomed — and the addition of youth divisions. In her first year as the organizer, Herman's sister Veldina Osceola said she was thrilled that the tournament drew 10 youth teams with players coming from most of the tribe's reservations and Trail. She said the turnout of boys and girls players bodes well for the future of the tournament.

"I'm hoping these youth will keep coming back every year and when they become adults to keep coming back," she said. Osceola said she was especially glad to see how happy her mother, Ruby, was seeing the court and bleachers filled with so many kids. Osceola remembered how important working with kids was to Herman when he started working at the gym.

"He loved working with kids," she said. In addition to missing years due to the pandemic, the tournament hasn't been attracting as many adult teams as it once did. Making changes is one way Osceola hopes to regenerate interest.

"Way back when, there were a lot of teams from each reservation. They would



Mayli Tommie

The Florida Warriors, champions of the 14U division at the Herman L. Osceola Memorial Basketball Tournament.

play until 3 or 4 in the morning. There were some good turnouts," Osceola said.

This year there were four men's adult teams, but no legends and no women's teams. Thanks to the 14U and 17U divisions that featured teams comprised of both girls and boys, the gym was active throughout the tournament. Players received free meals complements of Herman's family.

On the court, the team named Seminoles received a big spark from Greg Carter (19 points), whose hard work down low and soft scoring touch helped his team pull

away from War Party, 93-71, in the men's championship.

The Seminoles' Ethan Cypress produced a sensational night of shooting as he poured in 30 points, including six 3-pointers.

War Party had reached the championship game thanks to winning the losers' bracket final behind several key 3-pointers from Leviticus Buster and Ricky Garza and a couple of monster dunks by David Lias.

In the youth division, the Florida Warriors teams were unstoppable. They won both the 14U and 17U titles.



Kevin Johnson

Ricky Garza lines up a 3-point shot during a men's division game.



Kevin Johnson

Greg Carter is triple-teamed as he tries to find an opening during a men's division game.



Kevin Johnson

Above, tournament T-shirts included two different colors with the same designs. The red shirt is the back of the youth shirt; the camoflage shirt is the front of the adult shirt. At right, the second place trophy features a Marine.



Esteban Santibanez Jr. helps Chobee Bulls win conference

STAFF REPORT

The Chobee Bulls 8U football team, which includes Seminole Esteban Santibanez Jr., wrapped up a successful season by winning its conference championship in the Elite Spring Youth Football League (ESYFL).

The Bulls stormed past Nature Coast, 33-6, in a Division 2 conference title game April 13 at Emery Hamilton Sports Complex in Orlando. ESYFL is an eight-player football league with teams in many parts of the state, including Jacksonville, Orlando and Tampa. Age categories range from 6U to 15U.

Chobee was scheduled to play in the Division 2 state championship game April 28 in Daytona Beach, however, the Bulls withdrew and did not play, according to ESYFL.

Santibanez is a third grader at Pemayetv Emahavk Charter School. He started playing football at age 5. This season he played on the offensive and defensive lines, including at center and defensive end. He is the son of Toby Gopher and Esteban Santibanez Sr.



Courtesy photo

Esteban Santibanez Jr.



Courtesy photo

Esteban Santibanez Jr., third from left, with his Chobee 8U football teammates and coach.

Kyarrah Grant wraps up injury-plagued season at NSU

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

DAVIE — A year after being one-third of a memorable trio of Native Americans on the Nova Southeastern University women's basketball team, Kyarrah Grant (Choctaw/Navajo) went solo this season.

Last year marked the final collegiate seasons for Grant's sister, Kyannah, and the Seminole Tribe's Skyla Osceola, who were housemates with Kyarrah in Osceola's home on the Hollywood Reservation. That left Kyarrah, a graduate student studying public health, as the lone Native player on the Sharks.

NSU was among the top NCAA Division II teams all season. The Sharks finished with a 25-6 record that included an 18-2 mark in the Sunshine State Conference and a 20-game winning streak.

The Sharks were upset by Florida Southern in the conference quarterfinals, however they rebounded to win two NCAA South Regional games before bowing out with a loss to Tampa in the regional final March 18.

After being a key contributor in 2022-23 (27 games started, seven points per game), an injury limited Grant's playing time and



NSU

Nova Southeastern University's Kyarrah Grant drives toward the basket in a 2023-24 game.

scoring this year. She appeared in only 14 games and started only one. She averaged 4.2 points per game and had 12 assists and five steals. Her season high 11 points came in a 54-43 win against Florida Southern in January.

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To-Pee-Kee-Ke Yak-Ne

Coach, 5 players representing tribe on OHS softball

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

It's been a rollercoaster season for the Okeechobee High School softball team.

Case in point came April 12 when the Brahms lost to Centennial, 12-2, in Port St. Lucie. It was a vastly different outcome when the teams met in February, which Okeechobee won, 7-6.

Gaining traction in the win column eluded the Brahms in the regular season (the team was scheduled to face Sebring in a district playoff opener April 30, after press deadline). The team's 7-12 record was filled with frequent stretches of a couple of wins in a row followed by two or three losses in a row.

"This has been a rough season, but we're figuring it out," said Mary Huff, a Seminole and Okeechobee's longtime coach who returned to the team this season after taking a couple of years off.

Huff said hitting has been the team's main strength. The proof can be found in reaching double digits in runs scored nine times.

"The offense has come alive this season. In the past seasons, it's been a struggle to get everybody on the same page as far as hitting. We've been having a lot of high scoring games and multiple home run games," Huff said.

Lexi Thomas, one of five Seminole players on the team, has been one of the bright spots at the plate. Thomas, one of only three seniors on the team, has had a strong glove in her four years in the outfield. This season, her bat has been one of the keys to the boom in the Brahms' offensive production. She had two hits each in wins against Moore Haven, Glades Day and Treasure Coast.

"Lexi has been doing well," Huff said. "Her bat has definitely come alive at the plate. She struggled a little bit at the beginning of the season. She was hitting last and now she's moved her way up in the lineup. She's smart at the plate. When she sees corners back and sees the opportunity, she can lay a bunt down or do whatever she has to do to get on base."

Although the team will lose Thomas to graduation after this season, it will still have plenty of representation from the tribe.

Adeline Garcia is a junior, Alyssa Madrigal is a sophomore, and Joleyne Nunez and Tehya Nunez are freshmen.

"They're all still really young. They have time," Huff said.

Garcia and Madrigal are two of the team's main four pitchers. Garcia helped the team win its first game of the season when



Seminole players on the Okeechobee High School softball team are, from left to right, Tehya Nunez, Adeline Garcia, coach Mary Huff, Lexi Thomas, Joleyne Nunez and Alyssa Madrigal.

Kevin Johnson

she struck out five batters in three innings against Glades Day on Feb. 22.

Madrigal went the distance in the February win against Centennial, allowing just two earned runs in the 7-6 victory. She's also had a strong season at the plate with three multiple hit games and she drove in four runs in a win against Port St. Lucie.

Tehya Nunez quickly established herself on the roster in the starting infield.

"Tehya has been starting a lot for me. She's had a huge impact on us at second base," Huff said.

Offensively, Nunez's highlights include a 2-for-4 game with two runs scored against

Vero Beach. Her 18 runs scored is third on the team.

Joleyne Nunez, sister of former Okeechobee High softball standout Cheyenne Nunez, is off to a strong start in her career as a Brahman. She has hit safely in five of the 10 games she's appeared. She finished the regular season with five hits and three RBIs in 14 at-bats for a .357 average.

Overall, Huff said the team has been trying to focus on doing the little things right, such as hustling, attitude and being a good teammate.



Tehya Nunez blasts the ball against Centennial.

Kevin Johnson



Lexi Thomas makes a catch in left field during the Brahms game against Centennial on April 12 in Port St. Lucie.

Kevin Johnson



Alyssa Madrigal delivers a pitch in Okeechobee's win against Centennial in the teams' first meeting of the season Feb. 26.

Misty Friend



Coach Mary Huff talks to her team after its game against Centennial.

Kevin Johnson



Lexi Thomas gets ready to make contact during an at-bat against Centennial.

Kevin Johnson

Minnesota tribe opens high-tech golf driving range

STAFF REPORT

A Native American tribe in Minnesota has partnered with LaunchPad Golf to open the company's first driving range in the United States.

The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC) announced the partnership in March for a two-story facility to encompass 25,000 square feet and a range that covers 160,000 square feet. It is located next to Mystic Lake Casino Hotel in Prior Lake.

The facility will be able to serve more than 500 people and will include 40 heated golf suites with technology, two bars and a full-service restaurant. The facility will be able to serve more than 500 people. According to a news release, construction is scheduled to begin as early as this spring

with an anticipated opening in mid-2025.

"We are excited to welcome LaunchPad Golf to the U.S. and expand our tribe's golf offerings," SMSC Chairman Cole Miller said in the release. "This year-round golf entertainment enterprise will provide an incredible experience for guests of all skill levels. It will be an excellent complement to our premium golf course, The Meadows at Mystic Lake."

In addition to golf practice, radar technology and virtual courses, LaunchPad Golf, which is a Canadian company, offers exclusive social games, including bay-versus-bay gaming.

"LaunchPad Golf is not your average driving range. We offer the most innovative technology to elevate your golf experience, plus a lively atmosphere and delicious food and drinks," LaunchPad Golf Owner and CEO Barry Ehlerst said in the release.

Lexi Foreman concludes third season with UCO

STAFF REPORT

The University of Central Oklahoma women's basketball team, which includes the Seminole Tribe's Lexi Foreman, finished its season on a high note with an 86-51 win against Newman University on March 2 in Edmond, Oklahoma.

Foreman, a 5-foot-9 junior guard from Anadarko, Oklahoma, had an active 14 minutes of playing time. She scored three points, grabbed a season-high five rebounds, dished out two assists and made one steal.

UCO ended with an 8-20 record, including a 7-15 mark in the Mid-America Intercollegiate Conference. UCO won three of its final five games, but the

team struggled throughout the season on the road, winning just three of 15 games away from home.

For the season, Foreman appeared in 28 games and averaged 13 playing minutes. She scored 47 points, including a season-high seven points in 75-73 loss to the University of Mary on Nov. 10, 2023. She also had 52 rebounds (seventh most on the team), 12 assists, 18 steals and eight blocks.

Through three seasons at UCO, Foreman has played in 59 games and scored 124 points and snagged 119 rebounds.

Prior to UCO, Foreman was an all-state player at Anadarko High School, where she scored 1,044 points.



University of Central Oklahoma guard Lexi Foreman

Bull riding series coming to Sunrise

FROM PRESS RELEASE

SUNRISE — The PBR Camping World Team Series will bring professional bull riding to Sunrise from Aug. 2 through Aug. 4 at Amerant Bank Arena.

The bull riding action begins at 7:45 p.m. on Aug. 2; at 6:45 p.m. on Aug. 3; and at 1:45 p.m. ET on Aug. 4. For ticket information go to seatgeek.com.

Launched in 2022, the PBR teams features 10 teams, including the Sunrise-based Florida Freedom. The Freedom's current line-up of riders includes Caden Bunch (Tahlequah, Oklahoma), Joao Lucas Campos (Porto Feliz, Brazil), Alex Cerqueira (Iguatemi, Brazil), Conner Halverson (Gordon, Nebraska), Elizmar Jeremias (Anapu, Brazil), Casey Roberts (Munford, Alabama) and Thiago Salgado (Navirai, Brazil).

Other PBR teams are based in Arizona, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas.

For more information go to pbr.com.

Aaron Cypress scheduled to fight May 7

STAFF REPORT

Aaron Cypress, from the Seminole Tribe, is scheduled for his third fight as a professional boxer May 7.

Cypress is slated to face Keshon Carr at the Texas Troubadour in Nashville, Tennessee, the same venue where Cypress won his pro debut Dec. 5, 2023.

Cypress has a 2-0 record with both victories coming against Shabios Lynch in technical knockouts (TKO). Their second battle was held Feb. 16 in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Cypress boxes in the cruiserweight division, which is between light heavyweight and heavyweight.

Native American baseball showcase to be held in Atlanta

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The Atlanta Braves will host the third-annual Native American All-Star Baseball Showcase at Truist Park from June 7 to June 9.

The showcase features 50 of the top high school baseball players of Native American descent from around the country. They will be selected to participate in a pro-style workout June 8, and a showcase game June 9.

The showcase highlights players who aspire to play the game at the next level. Professional scouts and collegiate coaches will be in attendance.

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◆ **CAMP**
From page 1C

On the basketball side, boys and girls were put in groups that rotated through active workouts and instruction at five stations each day, manned by different specific drill-related basketball academics. In addition to dribbling, passing, shooting and defense drills, the camp also focused on performance training at agility stations for speed, strength and explosiveness.

They also played in 5-on-5 games and competed in skill challenges.

In one of the classroom sessions in a new room at Ahfachkee, about 35 students sat at six circular desks and listened to Dwayne Wade's brothers – Lester McDaniel and Kodhamus Llongbey – and Jeremy Holmes from Treasureville Academy. They stressed the importance of education and getting prepared for careers and life whether basketball is a part of it or not.

When the camp started, Jessica McDaniel said the kids were a bit hesitant with the staff.

"We're strangers coming onto their reservation," she said. "They were like, 'We're iffy about you guys.'"

But in no time at all, the awkwardness evaporated.

"The difference in the kids from day one to day three has been so interesting to watch," McDaniel said. "They have opened up to us and really leaned into the training and building their relationship with the coaches; it's been remarkable to watch."

As the Crow Creek Sioux's Lambert



Kevin Johnson

Sienna Carter enjoys the jumping portion of a fun relay contest at the cheerleading portion of the camp.

watched the camp, she couldn't help think of how a camp in her tribe would impact the kids back home.

"My biggest dream is to take one of our camps to South Dakota. It's so desolate," she said. "You have to travel far to get these kind of experiences."



Kevin Johnson

Taylor Battiest shows strong dribbling skills as she goes around a cone during a drill at the camp. The drill took place in the new gymnasium at the Ahfachkee School.



Beverly Bidney

Zaire Wade, left, and Mario Chalmers, join Big Cypress Recreation site manager Cathy Bypress, second from left, and Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie at the camp.

◆ **CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION WEEK**
From page 4B



Courtesy photo

The Tampa/Lakeland Reservation Superhero Day participants are, from left to right, Korin Deitch, Deona Rodriguez and Auna McCagh.



Courtesy photo

The Immokalee Advocacy and Guardianship Department's "Superheroes Day" participants are Martha Suta Ramirez, left, and Liilth Sileika.



Courtesy photo

Big Cypress Advocacy and Guardianship Department's Angela Hardwick is decked out in Los Angeles Lakers apparel during "Favorite Sports Team Day."



Courtesy photo

Hollywood Public Works participates in the Wear Blue Day during National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. From left, Tamika Danford, Afqar Hafiz, Kimberly Malo, Staci Logan, Hector Garcia, Odet Diaz (with badge), Gaby Mujica-Melendez, Brianna Webster, Gregory Gooden and Pierre Marcellus.



Courtesy photo

The Integrative Health Department is decked out in all blue on "Wear Blue Day." From left to right are Abby Davy, Diana Pinto-Sanchez, Jasmine Tennie, Crystal McPartland, Suzanne Davis and Dale Lynn McCartney.



Courtesy photo

The Immokalee Health Department is a sea of blue on "Wear Blue Day." Front row, from left to right, are Mary Lou Alvarado, Alisha Mattern, Monique Williams and Claudia Carrillo. Middle row, from left to right, are Alejandra Francis, Alicia Townsend, Sandra Ramirez, Izaura Hernandez, Ulecia Green, and Andrea Kuzbyt. Back row, from left to right, Ramon Vasquez and Raul Garcia.

◆ **HEALTH**
From page 9A

Many Native Americans live in small towns or on poor, rural reservations. But rurality alone doesn't explain the gap in life expectancy. For example, white people in rural Montana live 17 years longer, on average, than Native Americans in the state, according to state data reported by Lee Enterprises newspapers.

Many Indigenous people also face racism or personal trauma from child or sexual abuse and exposure to drugs or violence, Warne said. Some also deal with generational trauma from government programs and policies that broke up families and tried to suppress Native American culture.

Even when programs are available, they're not always accessible.

Families without strong internet connections can't easily make video appointments. Some lack cars or gas money to travel to clinics, and public transportation options are limited.

Randall, the health board official, is pregnant and facing her own transportation struggles.

It's a three-hour round trip between her home in the town of Pine Ridge and her prenatal appointments in Rapid City. Randall has had to cancel several appointments when family members couldn't lend their cars.

Goodlow, the 20-year-old who has lost several loved ones, lives with seven other people in her mother's two-bedroom house along a gravel road. Their tiny community on the Pine Ridge Reservation has homes

and ranches but no stores.

Goodlow attended several suicide-prevention presentations in high school. But the programs haven't stopped the deaths. One friend recently killed herself after enduring the losses of her son, mother, best friend, and a niece and nephew.

A month later, another friend died from a burst appendix at age 17, Goodlow said. The next day, Goodlow woke up to find one of her grandmother's parakeets had died. That afternoon, she watched one of her dogs die after having seizures.

"I thought it was like some sign," Goodlow said. "I started crying and then I started thinking, 'Why is this happening to me?'"

Warne said the overall conditions on some reservations can create despair. But those same reservations, including Pine

Ridge, also contain flourishing art scenes and language and cultural revitalization programs. And not all Native American communities are poor.

Warne said federal, state, and tribal governments need to work together to improve life expectancy. He encourages tribes to negotiate contracts allowing them to manage their own health care facilities with federal dollars because that can open funding streams not available to the Indian Health Service.

Katrina Fuller is the health director at Sicangu Co, a nonprofit group on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. Fuller, a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, said the organization works toward "wicozani," or the good way of life, which encompasses the physical, emotional, cultural, and financial health of the community.

Sicangu Co programs include bison restoration, youth development, a Lakota language immersion school, financial education, and food sovereignty initiatives.

"Some people out here that are struggling, they have dreams, too. They just need the resources, the training, even the moral support," Fuller said. "I had one person in our health coaching class tell me they just really needed someone to believe in them, that they could do it."

KFF Health News is a national newsroom that produces in-depth journalism about health issues and is one of the core operating programs at KFF—an independent source of health policy research, polling, and journalism. Learn more about KFF.

◆ **BMX RACER**
From page 5B

Florida had some impressive tracks back then. They were well-designed and executed magnificently. But others weren't as well-thought out. For example, some tracks had been marked out on grass, and amidst trees and shrubbery. When all you want to do is race, you brush it off and roll with it. I remember we even raced Flat-Track, with no jumps or berms and what have you. It was a giant elipsis-shaped track, so we'd put a huge 52 toothed sprocket on the cranks and a

smaller 14 toothed sprocket on the rear axle. So similar to how a semi moves. You start off slow enough because of the big sprocket, but once it gets to moving, why, there's no stopping it. At warp speed we'd hit the turns with one foot sliding, kicking up dust clouds galore. Flat-Track attracted the crowds as well. But getting back to BMX, I remember Clewiston had a track, too. We raced there on a regular basis. Many times some our cousins from Big Cypress rez drove out to race with us. It was wonderful. We ate BMX, we slept BMX, and, without a doubt, we were mesmerized by the enduring spirit of

BMX.

The memories come back to from across time and space, loading our bikes onto the bed of our father's pick-up truck, the equipment checks, and the inevitable walks on the track before the races, the humidity and the smell of the ocean near Dania and Hollywood Beaches, the sounds of the BMX culture and environments. The imagery of those times harken back to me, like a close friend. I've returned many times. Even at a young age, I knew the memories would always be a part of me. The decades march upon me now. Today I pedal a

stationary bike, which all too often doubles as an ideal place for hanging shirts. But in my youth, I was a teenage BMX racer, moving forth in the warm golden light, from track to track like a whirlwind, at lightspeed. In my view, there are two types of the races: the races at the actual tracks, and races at the spiritual tracks, where the soul and the memories ride and reside. And they shall become one at the finish line, and lo, the wrong paths of life shall cease to be.

Now I view the tracks of my life, and my tears, in a whole new light. Unafraid, we plunged into childhood dreams and

aspirations. Long before Social Media and AI, Gamers and The Internet, and so on and so forth. Oftentimes I still see the faces of the racers, the parents, I still hear the shouts of encouragement from the crowds. Oh, let the dust of Florida be raised, and let the sun shine brightly for those who've pedaled on ahead. And when the final difficult jump is cleared, at long last, may all rejoice upon blessed paths.

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