



**Dobbs spreads his slam dunk message**

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**Continuing publication of recorded interviews of Choctaw elders from 2007**

This month – Joshua Pickens  
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**Rain barrel workshop**

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# BISKINIK

The Official Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

April 2012 Issue

**Choctaws ... growing with pride, hope and success**



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

## Hospital celebrates expansion at official ribboncutting

Assistant Chief Gary Batton and Health Services Executive Director Mickey Percy were joined by several tribal directors and executive directors, hospital staff and guests on March 6 in Talihina at the official ribboncutting. The ceremony was held to celebrate the

hospital's newest renovations, including a more patient-friendly emergency and obstetrics entrances, an expanded obstetrics wing, and an expanded Choctaw Referred Care (CRC) and registration areas.

### Tribal Council meets in regular March session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met in regular session March 10 at Tushka Homma. New business on the agenda included:

- Application for the Bus and Bus Facilities Livability Initiative: Solicitation of Project Proposals;
- Application for the Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation Comprehensive Tribal Victim Assistance Program;
- Application for the Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation COPS Hiring Grant and Tribal Resources Grant Equipment/Training;
- Disposal of surplus equipment;
- The Fiscal Year 2012 Child Care Development Fund budget, and
- A Memorandum of Agreement with the City of Coalgate. All were approved.

### Senior Day set for May 22

The Choctaw Nation is honoring its elders with the annual Senior Citizens Day on May 22 at the Expo Center in McAlester. The theme is "Never Too Old to Play." Activities begin at 10 a.m. and will include the always-fun hat contest for men and women, the district name tag contest and the Choctaw hymn singing contest.

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#### The Mission of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

To enhance the lives of all members through opportunities designed to develop healthy, successful and productive lifestyles.

## Giving wings to wounded warriors

*Choctaw Nation Flight Operations makes 24th volunteer flight by taking wounded service members to Bataan Memorial Death March*

By **LARISSA COPELAND**  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma has a philosophy of caring for military veterans, both Native and non-Native. This is accomplished in a variety of ways through numerous tribal departments by providing services and assistance, holding several annual events, giving out mementos to veterans and military members, and more. The list goes on.

More recently though, over the past two years the tribe's Flight Operations department, which consists of three pilots, Al Cherry, John Wesley and Quentin McLarry, and two aircraft, has stepped in to do its part too.

The team provides an invaluable service to wounded service members and veterans by providing free air transportation for medical or other compassionate purposes. This is done through the Veterans Air-lift Command, or VAC, which is a non-profit organization that arranges such flights through a network of volunteer pilots and aircraft.

"I read an article in an aviation magazine about the VAC," says Cherry, who is also director of flight ops at Choctaw Nation. "I thought it would be a good way for us to show



Choctaw Nation: LARISSA COPELAND

**Choctaw Nation pilots Al Cherry and John Wesley greet their passengers and the VAC flight coordinator before take off. Pictured, from left, are Spec. Terry Ligman, Tanya Boulgakova, Cherry, Sgt. 1st Class John Faulkenberry, Mark Parker, Wesley, and Maria Miles, the flight coordinator from VAC.**

our support for the troops."

His fellow pilots agreed and are proud to be a part of the program. "These men and women have sacrificed their lives for our country," says Wesley, "and have paid a heavy price with their injuries. Flying for the VAC is something we can do for them to let them know that we appreciate their service."

To date, the flight team has made

24 of these volunteer flights, with 116 flight hours and more than 36,000 miles covered in support of the VAC.

"In addition to our primary passenger on each flight," Cherry adds, "we have flown 36 additional passengers, most being family members riding with the veteran."

The latest trip they've flown  
**See FLIGHT Page 8**



### Choctaw Days to celebrate tribe's rich military history

The Choctaw Nation will be celebrating its rich military heritage during the 2012 Choctaw Days at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., June 20-23. Historical displays will feature information on the Choctaw Code Talkers and stickball – the "little brother of war."

This year's featured artists are compiling works to honor Choctaw warriors past and present. Theresa Morris is currently developing a series of paintings spotlighting the Code Talkers, D.G. Smalling is preparing special demonstrations and lectures, and the subject of many of Jane Semple Umsted's artwork depicts Choctaws in the military.

Southeastern Oklahoma State University's Theatre Department is creating vignettes with the theme, "To Us It Was Not a Code." The productions will be presented in NMAI's Rasmuson Theatre throughout the four-day festival.

### Kiowa named Choctaw Nation's 2012 JOM Exemplary School

The Oklahoma Johnson-O'Malley program named Kiowa Public School the Choctaw Nation's JOM Exemplary School for 2012. June Prator, right, presented the award to Councilman Anthony Dillard at the JOM Awards Banquet on March 6, 2012, in Norman. Anthony accepted the award on behalf of the school's administration, who was unable to attend.

Members of the Kiowa school administration are Michael Kellogg, superintendent; Pamela Montgomery, JOM coordinator; Terri McFarland, chairperson; Rhonda Calvert, vice-chairperson; Brandi Willis, secretary; Kristi Kelly, member; Jonna Zachary, member.

The Choctaw Nation JOM Program has 72 participating schools and 9,700 students enrolled. Each year JOM honors an Exemplary JOM Program from the Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw and Muscogee (Creek) Nations as well as the Bureau of Indian Education.



Choctaw Nation: BRET MOSS

■ See related articles throughout this issue

# Sharing our culture ensures Choctaw ways are not lost



From the Desk of Chief Gregory E. Pyle

Next month's Okla Chahta Gathering is going to be a special weekend. Choctaws from Oklahoma will travel to Bakersfield to once again join in the festivities, only this year we are bringing more of the tribal culture to share.

The awakening of interest in our heritage is increasing everywhere we go. The first Choctaw Days were held last year at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian and because of the overwhelming response of our tribal members and museum visitors, we decided to give others a chance to experience more of the Choctaw traditions.

A small group of our staff traveled to Denver last October to host a Choctaw Day for Colorado-area residents. Everyone who attended was thrilled to be able to see things like Choctaw pottery actually being made or exhibits of tools, weaponry and beadwork. Their pride in being Choctaw was evident as they marveled over Choctaw artifacts or listened enthralled as the language of their great-great-grandfathers or great-grandmothers was fluently used by storytellers or sang in hymns.

Because their excitement mirrored the reactions received in Washington, D.C., last June, we want to provide a similar occasion during our reunion with Choctaw friends and fam-

ily on the West Coast. Members of the Okla Chahta Board of Directors and the volunteers who work so hard during the year to plan the event have been collaborating with us here in Oklahoma to help make the gathering the best and most memorable of all. Instead of program information, there will be table after table of things representing our Choctaw tribal heritage.

There will be social dancing, stickball exhibitions, make-and-take projects, singing and the opportunity to learn more of the Choctaw culture through a variety of displays and activities. The make-and-take sessions are enjoyed by all ages and give everyone a chance to take home a hand-crafted Choctaw cornhusk doll, basket or beaded choker. Among the individuals scheduled to be in Bakersfield is Presley Byington of Idabel who will be demonstrating how he makes a rivercane flute. Presley can also play the flute as well as he makes them.

The gathering in Bakersfield is one of three Choctaw Day events we have on the calendar at this time. We will be in McAlester from 5 to 8 p.m. on April 24 at the Expo Center and are returning to D.C. for another four-day festival June 20-23 at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian.

If you live in or near one of these areas, we hope you are able to join us as we honor our ancestors in the best method we know how – teaching others so that the Choctaw ways are never lost.

## Chaplain's Corner

### Faith in our commitment

The first day of spring brought many memories of Jones Male Academy (1932-34). The frozen ponds were over with. The ponds were really frozen. We were permitted to take our shoes off and went barefooted. One of our commitments then was a cross-country race. We ran across the hill to Belle Star cave (hide-out). We were rearing and ready to start running at the beginning but along the route some runners begin to drop out before finishing the race.

The Bible teaches God's faithfulness to us in a race He has called us to run.

As we think on these things here is a verse in Philippians 1:6 that we should learn to keep in mind as we run this life of faith:

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:"

It is God's faithfulness to us that empowers our faithfulness to Him. But faithfulness to Jesus Christ and our service to Him is also important.

The Bible reminds us that it is required that those who have been given trust must prove faithful. And we know that true Biblical faithfulness is more than just showing up for work as Christians and performing our required duties.

Today we are going to look at four things that should characterize our faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

The first one is joy. Faithfulness without joy becomes difficult and exhausting.

We read in Psalms 51:12-13:

"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit.

"Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

Jesus said to His disciples in the gospel of John 15:11:

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

God wants us to have joy.

We read in the book of Nehemiah 8:10:

"... for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

The joy of the Lord produced by the Holy Spirit is a supernatural joy that He gives us. It helps us to endure. What a joy in serving our Lord Jesus Christ.

The second characteristic of a Christian is compassion. This means to suffer with another, it means that when another person is in pain or sorrow we feel that pain.

Throughout the gospels we read that Jesus was moved with compassion – compassion for the multitudes, for two blind men, for a leper, for a widow whose only son had died. He wept over the city of Jerusalem and at the grave of His friend Lazarus, and he told of a good Samaritan he had compassion for, a man who was stripped of his raiment, and wounded and left half dead.

It wasn't easy for the disciples to learn this type of compassion. While Jesus had compassion, then said in Luke 9:54:

"... Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elijah did?"

Jesus said in verse 56 of Luke 9: "For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them ..."

The place to learn compassion is here, right now. The Apostle Peter wrote in First Peter 3:8:

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."

The third characteristic is vision. There is much that can be said of a picture of God's work today.

Our focus as Native Americans among over 550 federally recognized tribes in North America is only 5 percent are affiliated with any Christian church. We do pray for all of our Native American people everywhere, they are scattered practically all over the world.

But there is something more important than a vision of our ministries and work, and that is maintaining a vision of the One, The Lord Jesus Christ we are serving.

The writer of the book of Hebrews writes in Hebrews 12:2:

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."



REV. BERTRAM BOBB  
Tribal Chaplain

Jesus was constantly trying to raise the vision of His disciples. He knew that difficult days were coming, and He knew what the disciples would have to go through.

Without a daily time for personal fellowship with Jesus Christ, it is likely that we will become a spiritual casualty.

Start the day with Christ. Let those first thoughts when you wake up be of Christ.

We need a vision, a vision of starving people around the world, a vision of terrible events – tornadoes, bombings. A vision of the judgment in Hell that awaits men and women who have rejected Jesus Christ, a vision of Heaven and the joys and glories there. But most of all, we need a vision of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The fourth characteristic of the Christian is commitment. In Mark 10:17 we read of Jesus' encounter with a man who had become known to us as the rich young ruler. Mark tells us that this man ran to Jesus and:

"... knelt to him, and asked him, 'Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?'"

Then Jesus recited in verse 19:

"Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and mother."

And we read of the rich young ruler in verse 20: "And he answered and said unto him, master, all these have I observed from my youth."

And we read in verses 21 and 22:

"Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, one thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

"And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions."

In the keeping of the commandments the rich young ruler was faithful, but he was not willing to commit himself to Jesus Christ unreservedly and accept God's will for his life and to follow Jesus.

You have to make a choice. For some of you it is between life and death, because you are not absolutely sure that you know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. You cannot say: "I know for sure that Jesus Christ is in my heart; that if I die, I will go to Heaven; that my sins are forgiven."

What do you have to do?

First, you need to repent of your sins. What does repent mean? It means to turn, to change, it means to make an about-face. It means to change your mind about God and about yourself, about what sin has done to you and about Christ who died for you on the cross. It means you need to change your way of living. You cannot repent by yourself. No person can repent himself. The Holy Spirit has to help you repent. And He will help you. Just say:

"Lord, here I am with all these doubts. I am not sure, not certain, Help me to repent and change my way of living."

He is calling you, even right now, to make a change.

After repentance you need to believe and have faith. That word "faith" means putting your all upon Jesus Christ; trusting in nothing else, not your own righteousness, not your good works, not your family, not your church, but totally in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ who hung on that cross and shed His blood for you.

Repent, believe, and then third, be willing to follow Him and to study the Bible, to pray, to be faithful to Him/ be willing.

What about you? Are you willing to serve Him wholeheartedly so that the gospel may be proclaimed in a way pleasing to Him. The Apostle Paul said in Acts 20:24:

"But none of these things move me, neither count my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Today, if you don't face seriously God's call for you, I want to tell you that is a terrible sin and tragedy.

The Bible tells us that the time is short. I believe it is very short.

Today you can trust Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior by faith. Will you do that now? Pray for USA.

## Choctaws have long been stewards of the land

From the Desk of Assistant Chief Gary Batton

It seems that every time I pick up the Biskinik, a local paper or turn on the TV, there is another story about the Choctaw Nation's efforts to sustain the environment. I like to think of it as our way of nurturing the land so that our grandchildren and their grandchildren will have as beautiful a place to live as we do.

I have had the opportunity to travel to many sections of the United States and have seen some of the most well-known sites in this country. The mountains, valleys, lakes and rivers of Southeastern Oklahoma are comparable to any of them.

I often drive across Sardis Lake and through Potato Hills where a growing family of eagles has been a familiar sight for the last several years. The Ouachita National Forest in McCurtain and LeFlore counties contains impressive views of mountains and streams, and acres upon acres of wilderness that provide a home to hundreds of species of wildlife. The Talimena Drive, stretching from Talihina to Mena, Ark., is a popular scenic byway attracting tourists to the area every fall.

These are only a few of the awe-inspiring wonders in this area. We've been fortunate to have received enough rain in the last six months to ease the drought conditions of 2011. We sometimes forget the devastating results of record-breaking heat and rainless days when faced with the new growth of the spring season.

The Choctaw Nation takes its role as caretakers of the land very seriously, with the objective of preserving our inheritance for generations to come. Preparing for the future is a necessary com-

ponent of stewardship and is evident in many of the endeavors we are undertaking to fulfill the tribe's 100-year vision of achieving healthy, successful, productive and self-sufficient lifestyles for a proud nation of Choctaws.

The tribe's Agriculture Department has lived by this code for decades, tending tribally owned ranches and partnering with forest services to protect and enhance our part of the state. The Choctaw people have long looked to the land to provide food, water, shelter and materials to create commonly used objects that are as important today as they were hundreds of years ago.

The Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations' efforts to ensure responsible decisions about the water in Oklahoma are continuous. Sufficient water is essential to conserving our way of life.

The Choctaw Nation's Going Green program and Recycling Center have implemented several initiatives, exhibiting a resourcefulness that rivals much-larger organizations.

Environmentally friendly materials are being used more in construction of new facilities and many of the staff have volunteered for projects to clean up highways and parks, plant trees and sow wildflower seeds.

As I look around from my favorite spot in the world – my home – I am thankful knowing there are many who realize the importance of conserving our environment and have the foresight to take strides toward a better future for us all.



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

Seven districts in the Choctaw Nation will be receiving new buses for transporting senior citizens. On hand to receive the delivery March 26 are Shannon McDaniel, Chief Gregory E. Pyle, Councilman Joe Coley, Assistant Chief Gary Batton, James Wallace, Melissa Kindred and Jim Hogan.

### Buses play a vital role in tribal districts

The Choctaw Nation received a special shipment on March 26. Seven new buses rolled onto the parking lot at Fleet headquarters on Enterprise Drive in Durant. The Ford E350 Super Duty vehicles can hold 15 passengers – 14 travelers plus a driver.

"The repairs on the seven old buses were becoming very costly so we decided to go ahead and replace them," said James Wallace, Fleet director.

The seats have been upgraded to include seat belts and once the Choctaw

Nation seal and the district's information is painted on each of the buses, they will be ready to roll.

Districts 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11 and 12 are receiving the E350s. Some of the older vans that are handicap-accessible were transferred to districts with a larger need for the special needs buses.

The vehicles play a vital role, transporting the senior citizens to their centers when needed and on trips they may not be able to take without the assistance.

# NOTES TO THE NATION



## Wild Onion Dinner a success

On Feb. 25, the OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance held its annual Wild Onion Dinner in the Oklahoma City area. The turnout for the event was tremendous. An estimated 384 dinners were sold. The Alliance would like to thank everyone who came out for the event. Many took their orders to go, but those who stayed enjoyed camaraderie with old friends and the atmosphere was festive. The Alliance holds up to 250, depending on the set up of tables and chairs. There were many compliments about how good the wild onions tasted. So many thanks to the cooks who prepared the meal. Once again, the volunteers are to be complimented on their efforts and without them, none of this would've been possible. They are too numerous to name one by one. It is great to see people working together to make the Wild Onion Dinner a rousing success.

Pictured above are Joyce Robinson, Mary Ann Allen and Donna Fulks anticipating the wonderful meal with smiles on their faces.

## Seeking family members and a thank you

First off, I would like to thank Chris, the camera man, and the beautiful lady in the gift shop for the blanket for Christmas, and thank you to the Choctaw Nation.

I am looking for tribal members that might know of Impson and the Hines lineage. Cleveland Clark "C.C." Hines passed away in 2006 and was 22 miles from me at my cousins' house in Gridley, Calif. He had eight siblings, and his mom and dad were original enrollees. My maternal great-grandmother, Lillie Impson, and Will Hines married in 1918. Lillie was on the Dawes Roll.

If anyone has any information on Impson, Hines, Roberson, Imogene Hines, or Bobby Wolfe, please contact me at 707-774-2224. A baby Impson should have been born 2 months or so ago, as well.

Orrin T. Hartt

## Thank you for thinking of troops

Thank you so much for the care package. You have figured out all of the "good stuff." The phone card is a blessing! Thank you! I appreciate that you are thinking of the troops.

Katie Latendresse

## Appreciative of care package

Dear Chief Pyle and the Choctaw Nation, I received your generous care package today. Thank you! I again shared it with my guys, they were extremely grateful. I don't know which was a bigger hit, the jerky or sunflower seeds. I especially enjoyed the Mentos and Starbursts. Thanks for lifting our spirits with goodies from home, and thank you for all you do for us.

SPC Mary E. Reifsteck

## Seeking information

I am seeking anyone knowing Benjamin Franklin Taylor, born Sept. 26, 1915, and passed on Feb. 22, 1952. My name is Roseanne McCloud. My mother, Barbara, is the daughter of Benjamin (of the Choctaw Nation) and June Teeman (Burns Piate), born on Aug. 3, 1946, at St. Vincents Hospital in Portland, Ore.

I would love the opportunity to see any photos. Any information is greatly appreciated. Please contact me at roxycloud210@aol.com, call me at 253-355-1020, or Facebook at Roxy McCloud.

Gregory E. Pyle  
Chief

Gary Batton  
Assistant Chief

The Official  
Monthly Publication  
of the

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

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If you are receiving more than one BISKINIK at your home or if your address needs changed, we would appreciate hearing from you.

The BISKINIK is a nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation.

Circulation is monthly. Article deadline is the 10th of the month for the following month's edition.

Editor's note: Views and opinions in reader-submitted articles are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Choctaw Nation.



BISKINIK' 2012

## Districts schedule annual Princess Pageants

### District 1

May 19 at 6:30 p.m. at the Choctaw Community Center in Idabel. Deadline for applications is May 14. For more information, please call 580-286-6116.

### District 2

May 4 at 6 p.m. at the Community Center in Broken Bow. Applications may be picked up at the McCurtain County Boys and Girls Club. Deadline for applications is 5 p.m. on April 27. For more information, please call 580-584-3636.

### District 3

May 29 at 6 p.m. at the Choctaw Community Center in Talihina. Deadline for applications is May 21. For more information, please call 918-567-2106.

### District 4

May 12 at 4 p.m. at the Choctaw Community Center in Poteau. Deadline for applications is May 1. For more information, please call 918-647-9324.

### District 5

May 9 at 12:30 p.m. at the Choctaw Community Center in Stigler. Deadline for applications is April 27. For more information, please call 918-967-2398.

### District 6

May 12 at 4 p.m. at the Choctaw Community Center in Wilburton. Deadline for applications is May 4. For more information, please call 918-465-2389.

### District 7

May 21 at 6 p.m. at the Choctaw Community Center in Wright City. Deadline for applications is 3 p.m. on May 11. For more information, please call 580-298-3856 or 580-981-7011.

### District 8

May 18 at 6 p.m. at the Choctaw Community Center in Hugo. Deadline for applications is May 11. For more information, please call 580-326-3528.

### District 9

June 1 at 5:30 p.m. at the Event Center in Durant. The pageant is in conjunction with the annual Magnolia Festival. For more information, please call 580-924-8280, Ext. 2504.

### District 10

May 1 at 7 p.m. at the Choctaw Community Center in Atoka. Deadline for applications is April 16. For more information, please call 580-889-6147.

### District 11

May 18 at 6:30 p.m. at the Choctaw Community Center in McAlester. Deadline for applications is April 20. For more information, please call 918-423-1016.

### District 12

May 25 at 6:30 p.m. at the Choctaw Community Center in Crowder. Deadline for applications is May 4. For more information, please call 918-334-5344.

## Importance of your tribal language

My friend always shares his copy of the Biskinik with me each month and I thoroughly enjoy the historical and cultural articles. My great-grandfather, Marion Sloan, fought for a Mississippi regiment during the Civil War and after the war, he found that his home and crops were all destroyed. He married a Choctaw woman from north of Jackson and moved to the Sherman, Texas, area to start farming there. My father told me that he has a memory of his Choctaw grandmother as one who smoked a clay pipe and raised her family of several children.

I was a teacher and school administrator with the Bureau of Indian Affairs from 1967 until my retirement in 1994. During that time, I worked mostly on the Navajo reservation in Utah, Arizona and New Mexico, but I was superintendent for education for the Mississippi Band in Philadelphia, Miss., for a period of time.

Several of the articles in your paper lament the loss of your native language by many tribal members, and I also think that this will be a regret by more Choctaws as years go by. I would urge tribal members to learn and use their native language for many reasons, but primarily to retain and strengthen the culture. Language is a major bearer of the culture, and many native speakers tell me that something is lost in the translation, because there are nuances and inflections that do not thoroughly convert from English to the native tongue. It now seems that the main emphasis of Indian culture is through pow wows, which are important, but only a small segment of a true culture.

When I first began teaching at a small boarding school on the Navajo reservation, I heard very little English spoken outside of the classroom because we did not make our students use only English. I returned to that same school 27 years later for their spring festival and while there, I heard no one use the Navajo language. I still have contact through Facebook with several of my former students and community members in that small southeastern Utah community on the reservation, and I have seen the progress many have made. I often scold them (the old teacher trait in me) for not teaching their children their native tongue and culture. Some of them do and I laud them for this. My three children were all fluent in the Navajo language and were thoroughly accepted by their classmates, and they still have lifelong friendships that developed through their interactions with not only other children, but with the elders who were impressed by those little "blonde" Navajos.

I would urge all to learn the language, crafts, ceremonies and rites of your tribe. This is an excellent and unique attribute that can impart pride and reverence for one's heritage.

Tom Sloan

## Comfort in time of need

Thank you for your helpfulness and kindness. This is to let the Choctaw Nation know how helpful and compassionate it is in a time of sorrow. Thank you to the Benefits Department, Clinton Rogers and Angie Stephens, and to the Language Department and Eleanor Caldwell. How wonderful for the tribal members to know that help is available in their time of need. The Language Department, with translations from English to Choctaw, showed great compassion by helping with the journey from this life to the next everlasting life and brought great comfort to our family. My husband, Robert Logan, passed away on Jan. 29.

Mary Logan, Green Valley, Ariz.

## Thankful for scholarships

I would like to say thank you to the people of the Choctaw Nation for the scholarships I received for graduate school. I graduated with a Master of Arts Degree Professional Counseling in December 2011 and started a private counseling practice. Thank you for your generosity.

Leondor Lawrence and family,  
grandson of Theodore and Edith Lawrence

## Thankful firefighter

I am writing to thank the Choctaw Nation for all of its help. I recently went through the Career Development program that the Nation offers. First of all, this organization was very helpful and professional. Robin Counce, my case worker, was always checking on me to see how things were going and I greatly appreciated that. I used the program to finally follow my dream and get my firefighter certification. With the financial help that the Choctaw Nation was so kind to give me, I was able to attend an online fire academy and still be able to work full-time and provide for my family. Without this assistance, I believe I would not have been able to obtain my goals. I am now a fully registered and licensed firefighter with the state of Texas and was able to obtain my national certification as well. Now that I have this certification, I am one step closer in obtaining my goal of becoming a career firefighter. So in closing, thank you so much for all of the help that was given to me. I am very thankful to be Choctaw and to have had access to such a wonderful program. Thank you, again.

Jeff Rush

## Events

### Hugo Wild Onion Dinner

District 8 is holding its annual Wild Onion Dinner at 6 p.m. April 12 at the Choctaw Community Center in Hugo.

### Community Dinner planned in Idabel

A District 1 Community Dinner is being held at 6 p.m. April 17 at the Choctaw Community Center in Idabel.

### Tulsa E200 Emerging Leaders Class

The SBA's Oklahoma District Office is seeking 20 Native American small business owners for its 2012 Tulsa E200 Emerging Leaders Class, which begins April 19 through October 2012. The class is free, and businesses need to be 3 years old and have \$300k in sales.

This is an intensive 26-week training initiative designed to accelerate high-potential small business growth. The comprehensive curriculum provides entrepreneurs with the tools to help catapult a company to the next level and help it emerge as a growing, self-sustaining business in the community. In addition to the SBA, the training is supported by a coalition of local economic champions and mentored by business advisors with invaluable insight and expertise.

To sign up, contact Cindi Anderson at 405-609-8018 or at cindi.anderson@sba.gov, or visit her at the Choctaw Career Expo in McAlester on April 4.

### The Gathering 2012

The Gathering 2012 All Nations Sacred Assembly will be held May 3 through May 6 next to the Broken Bow Investment Center at 210 Chahta Rd. in Broken Bow. All are invited to attend this iconic event where every First Nation tribe is asked to come together to this Sacred Assembly for a time of prayer and worship to our Heavenly Father.

Thursday service will begin at 6 p.m., Parade of Nations, and a meal following service; Friday a meal will be served at 5 p.m. and service at 7 p.m.; Saturday youth ministry will begin at 10 a.m. and again at 1:30 p.m., a meal at 12 p.m., youth service at 3 p.m., a meal at 5 p.m., and evening service at 7 p.m.; and Sunday service will begin at 10 a.m., a meal at 12 p.m., singing and preaching at 1:30 p.m., light meal during singing at 3 p.m., and evening service at 5 p.m. On Thursday it is encouraged that everyone wear traditional regalia.

All singers and groups are invited to join in for all-day singing and worship on Sunday after morning service. Free meals will be served daily during events.

For information or to donate, call Patricia Blagg at 580-579-2695 or Dan Huges at 580-873-9227.

### Samuel and Lucy Ann Frazier-Johnson family reunion

The Samuel and Lucy Ann Frazier-Johnson family reunion will be held May 5 at the Rock Creek Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Honobia, Okla., starting at 9 a.m. Please bring any information you have concerning the past descendants. Also please bring a covered dish for the 12 p.m. dinner. For more information contact Stacy Colbert at 580-314-5767, Phyllis Roberts at 580-236-1052 or Raymond Johnson at 580-244-7549.

### LeFlore High School alumni reunion

The 53rd annual LeFlore High School Alumni and former students' banquet will be held May 12 at the old high school gym in LeFlore. Registration begins at 5:30 p.m. and BBQ dinner will be served at 7 p.m. We invite each graduate and former student to come join us and renew old acquaintances. Classes celebrating milestone anniversaries since graduation are especially encouraged to attend. If you have any questions or need further information, contact Susan (Ward) Cantwell at 918-647-6327 or email at smcantwell2000@yahoo.com

### Noahubi, Columbus, Battiest family reunion

A family reunion for Noahubi, Columbus and Battiest family members will be held on May 12 at the Broken Bow City Park from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Everyone is asked to bring a covered dish. For more information, please contact Valera Tonihka at 580-286-3647 or 580-212-7693.

### Ritter Reunion

The Ritter Reunion will be held May 19 at Quarry Island in Wister. Please bring a covered dish and something to drink. Any donation to help on the reunion is deeply appreciated. If you need any information, you may contact Imogene (McCoy) Odell at 507 Chickasaw, Poteau, OK 74953 or call 918-647-3791 or 918-647-7596.

## NURSERY NEWS

# Museum Closing

The Choctaw Nation Museum in Tushka Homma is temporarily closed for construction.

Please call  
**918-569-4465**  
before you visit.

We apologize for any inconvenience.

### FOOD DISTRIBUTION

#### ANTLERS

Market open weekdays May 1-25  
**May 2:** Idabel 9-11 a.m.; Broken Bow 12-2 p.m. (market open)  
**May 9:** Bethel 9-10:30; Smithville 12-2 (market open)  
**Closed** May 26-31 for inventory  
**Cooking with Carmen:** May 1 & 14, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

#### DURANT

Market open weekdays: May 1-25, except for:  
**Closed** May 26-31 for inventory  
**Cooking with Carmen:** May 3 & 11, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

#### McALESTER

Market open weekdays May 1-25, except for:  
**Closed** May 26-31 for inventory  
**Cooking with Carmen:** May 7 & 18, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

#### POTEAU

Market open weekdays May 1-25, except for:  
**Closed** May 26-31 for inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** May 9 & 23, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

### CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Open 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Monday thru Friday.  
Staff will take lunch from 11:30 to 12 noon.

#### WAREHOUSES & MARKETS

**Antlers:** 306 S.W. "O" St., 580-298-6443  
**Durant:** 100 1/2 Waldron Dr., 580-924-7773  
**McAlester:** 1212 S. Main St., 918-420-5716  
**Poteau:** 100 Kerr, 918-649-0431

#### FOOD DISTRIBUTION SITES

**Bethel:** Choctaw Community Building  
**Broken Bow:** Choctaw Family Investment Center  
**Idabel:** Choctaw Community Center  
**Smithville:** Choctaw Community Center  
**Stigler:** Choctaw Community Center

In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication and Compliance, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call 800-795-3272 (voice) or 202-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

### Recipe of the Month

#### Fat-Free Vegetable Dip

A colorful and healthy snack

**Ingredients:**  
• 1 cup fat-free sour cream  
• 1 1/2 Tbsp. Mrs. Dash Salt-Free Onion and Herb Blend  
with sour cream  
2. Place dip in center of tray surrounded by colorful vegetables

**Directions:**  
1. Combine Mrs. Dash  
For more information you may contact: Erin Adams, RD, Choctaw Nation Diabetes Wellness Center, 800-349-7026, ext. 6959.

#### Joplynn Brewer

Salem Rae Brewer is proud to announce the birth of her baby sister, Joplynn Camille Brewer. Joplynn was born on Nov. 14, 2011, in Clovis, Calif. She weighed 7 pounds and 4 ounces and was 19 inches long. Proud parents are Vincent and Dawnette Brewer of Fresno, Calif. Paternal grandparents are Don Brewer of Big Timber, Mont., and Dodie Harris of Visalia, Calif. Grandparents are Gardiner and Francis Harris of Three Rivers, Calif. Maternal grandparents are Willard Sr. and Nancy V. Parkson of Raymond, Calif. Joplynn's great-grandmother Ethel Viola Willis was an original enrollee and her family is proud of their Choctaw heritage.



#### Logan Richards

Logan William Richards was born Feb. 7, 2012, at 5:33 p.m., to Matthew Richards and Ashley Heady of Hugo. He was 8 pounds and 5 ounces, and was 20 inches long.



#### Se-rv-sen Gentry

Se-rv-sen Lahmyle Daisy Gentry was born at 1:13 p.m. on Oct. 26, 2012, in Ada. She weighed 8 pounds 3.3 ounces, and measured 19 inches. Parents are Echoille Johnson and Teri Gentry. She is the granddaughter of Jimmy Johnson Jr. of Holdenville and the descendant of original enrollee Lena Mae Noah Johnson of Muse. She has many aunts and uncles.



#### Scott Morgan

Scott James Morgan was born on Jan. 23, 2012, weighing 7 pounds and 15 ounces, and measured 20.75 inches. His parents are Paul and Carrie Morgan of College Station, Texas.

Grandparents are Kim and David Morgan of Bryan, Texas, and Helen and Jay Garner of Inez, Texas. His siblings are Julie, Luke and Will Morgan.



#### Aria Paddock

Aria Michelle Paddock was born at 1:30 p.m. on March 21, 2012. She weighed 7 pounds and 15 ounces and measured 21 inches long. Her parents are Jeffery Dale Paddock and Tefany Paddock of Ardmore. Grandparents are Kevin D. and Tina M. Paddock of Ardmore; great-grandparents are Richard D. and Emily F. George of Caddo. Aria is the seventh great-grandchild born to Richard and Emily.



#### Xzaiver Martinez

We are proud to announce the arrival of Xzaiver Douglas Martinez, born Feb. 23, 2012, to Rique Martinez and Brandi Graham. Proud sister is Skylynn. Xzaiver is the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Graham of Idabel, and Misty McKee and Enrique Martinez, both of Ryan. He is the nephew of very proud uncle, Alex, of Ryan.



## Humor and medicine make a good team



April holds two very important issues that are close to my heart: National Cancer Control Month and National Humor Month. The word cancer alone brings fear, anxiety and anger. One way to combat these feelings that come with cancer is humor. "Yes, laughter is great medicine!" "Love, laughter and hope are communicated in every aspect of our unique programs" states Saranne Rothburg, founder of The ComedyCures Foundation. Saranne, a cancer survivor states, as an outgrowth of her personal experience with the healing power of a comic perspective, she and her daughter discovered that therapeutic comedy served as a great family coping strategy as they dealt with her early stage IV cancer diagnosis. Spending time with family and friends sharing funny lifetime events, taking in a comedy or just reading the funnies are some easy ways to bring on the healing power of laughter.

Laughter is not the only way to help prevent or improve illness. Another perspective reported from The American Cancer Society

is that, except for quitting smoking, some of the most important things you can do to help reduce your cancer risk are:

- Get to and stay at a healthy weight
- Be physically active on a regular basis.
- Make healthy food choices with a focus on plant-based foods.

According to the American Cancer Society more than 572,000 Americans die of cancer each year; about one-third of these deaths are linked to poor diet, physical inactivity, and carrying too much weight.

When looking at ways to help prevent and treat illnesses such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes try to follow some of these tips to build a healthy diet plan for yourself and your family:

- Choose foods and drinks in amounts that help you get to and maintain a healthy weight.
- Limit how much processed / red meat you eat.
- Eat at least 2 1/2 cups of vegetables / fruits each day.
- Choose whole grains, not refined grain products.



## 10 tips for affordable vegetables and fruits

It is possible to fit vegetables and fruits into any budget. Making nutritious choices does not have to hurt your wallet. Getting enough of these foods promotes health and can reduce your risk of certain diseases. There are many low-cost ways to meet your fruit and vegetable needs and here are 10.

#### 1. Celebrate the season.

Use fresh vegetables and fruits that are in season. They are easy to get, have more flavor, and are usually less expensive. Your local farmer's market is a great source of seasonal produce.

#### 2. Why pay full price?

Check the local newspaper, online, and at the store for sales, coupons, and specials that will cut food costs. Often, you can get more for less by visiting larger grocery stores (discount grocers if available).

#### 3. Stick to your list.

Plan out your meals ahead of time and make a grocery list. You will save money by buying only what you need. Don't shop when you're hungry. Shopping after eating will make it easier to pass on the tempting snack foods. You'll have more of your food budget for vegetables and fruits.

#### 4. Try canned or frozen.

Compare the price and the number of servings from fresh, canned, and frozen forms of the same veggie or fruit. Canned and frozen items may be less expensive than fresh. For canned items, choose fruit canned in 100 percent fruit juice and vegetables with "low sodium" or "no salt added" on the label.

#### 5. Buy small amounts frequently.

Some fresh vegetables and

## WIC

WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN

fruits don't last long. Buy small amounts more often to ensure you can eat the foods without throwing any away.

#### 6. Buy in bulk when items are on sale.

For fresh vegetables or fruits you use often, a large size bag is the better buy. Canned or frozen fruits or vegetables can be bought in large quantities when they are on sale, since they last much longer.

#### 7. Store brands = savings.

Opt for store brands when possible. You will get the same or similar product for a cheaper price. If your grocery store has a membership card, sign up for even more savings.

#### 8. Keep it simple.

Buy vegetables and fruits in their simplest form. Pre-cut, pre-washed, ready-to-eat, and processed foods are convenient, but often cost much more than when purchased in their basic forms.

#### 9. Plant your own.

Start a garden—in the yard or a pot on the deck—for fresh, inexpensive, flavorful additions to meals. Herbs, cucumbers, peppers or tomatoes are good options for beginners. Browse through a local library or online for more information on starting a garden.

#### 10. Plan and cook smart.

Prepare and freeze vegetable soups, stews or other dishes in advance. This saves time and money. Add leftover vegetables to casseroles or blend them to make soup. Overripe fruit is great for smoothies or baking.

## Choctaw Nation GED Classes

### McCurtain County

**Beginning date and time:**  
May 22, 2012  
**Tuesdays and Thursdays**  
1-4 p.m.  
Choctaw Nation Family Investment Center  
210 Chahta RD  
Broken Bow

### Pittsburg County

**Beginning date and time:**  
May 22, 2012  
**Tuesdays and Thursdays**  
6-9 p.m.  
Choctaw Community Center  
1632 South George  
Nigh Expressway  
McAlester

### Bryan County

**Beginning date and time:**  
May 22, 2012  
**Tuesdays and Thursdays**  
6-9 p.m.  
Choctaw Nation Tribal Complex, South building, downstairs  
Durant

### Haskell County

**Beginning date and time:**  
May 21, 2012  
**Mondays and Wednesdays**  
1-4 p.m.  
Choctaw Community Center  
2208 E. Main  
Stigler

The class will meet two days each week for approximately 13 weeks. Books, supplies and testing fees are provided. In addition, a \$10-per-day transportation stipend is paid to those who attend classes on a regular basis and attempt the GED test. If you have turned in an application with our Adult Education Program for GED classes and wish to attend the upcoming class, please contact our office. If you have not applied and wish to attend these or future classes, please contact Neal Hawkins or Kathy Springfield at the Durant office, 800-522-6170, ext. 2319. Also you may register at the first class. A Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) is required.

## Choctaw Nation WIC

WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN



SITE	PHONE	HOURS	DAYS
Antlers	580-298-3161	8:30-4:00	Every Tuesday
Atoka	580-889-5825	8:00-4:30	Every Mon., Wed., Thurs. & Fri.
Bethel	580-241-5458	8:30-4:00	1st Tuesday
Boswell	580-380-5264	8:30-4:00	Every Friday
Broken Bow	580-584-2746	8:00-4:30	Daily, except 1st Tues. & 2nd Thurs.
Coalgate	580-927-3641	8:00-4:30	Every Wednesday
Durant	580-924-8280 x 2257	8:00-4:30	Daily
Hugo	580-326-5404	8:00-4:30	Daily
Idabel	580-286-2510	8:00-4:30	Mon., Thurs. & Fri.
McAlester	918-423-6335	8:00-4:30	Daily
Poteau	918-647-4585	8:00-4:30	Daily
Smithville	580-244-3289	8:30-4:00	2nd Thursday
Spiro	918-962-3832	8:00-4:30	Every Wednesday - Friday
Stigler	918-967-4211	8:30-4:00	Every Monday - Wednesday
Talihina	918-567-7000 x 6792	8:00-4:30	Mon., Tues., Wed., & Fri.
Wilburton	918-465-5641	8:30-4:00	Every Thursday

# Setting the stage for a hit

*Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Choctaw Nation team up for theatrical debut at Smithsonian*

By **BRET MOSS**  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

The curtain is set to open this summer on the very first theatrical production featuring the dual efforts of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) and Theatre at Southeastern Oklahoma State University (SE). This tag-team effort will take place at the annual Choctaw Days event hosted by the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, June 20-23.

After the success of last year's Choctaw Days, CNO has been reaching out even further to bring exciting and immersive talents to this showcase of Choctaw heritage and culture. "Given their close ties with the Choctaw people, knowledge of the culture and exceptional talent, SE was an easy choice to bring Choctaw ways to life on the stage of the Rasmusen," said Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

Though not yet finalized, the working title of the production is "It Wasn't Code to Us," and will cover a great variety of Choctaw aspects, with an emphasis on the World War I Code Talkers who pioneered using a native language as military code. It is "an interesting look into the expanse of the Choctaw language," said Director Kathleen Hardgrove of SE's staff.

The production will also give glimpses into Choctaw issues such as stickball, basket making and many others as it follows a young Choctaw woman who learns about her heritage from an elder of the tribe. Her education will be the underlying plot tying the

wide spectrum of Choctaw culture together.

The performance will be in dual narrative featuring the truest form of the Choctaw language, and will be presented in an ambitious new style termed "theatrical collage." In this style of presentation, actors on the stage will be accompanied by sound tracks, videos, picture montages and will be acting opposite filmed actors who will be filmed on sets in Oklahoma.

"Obviously we can't play stickball on the stage, but we want to show a lot of visuals of iconic [scenes] of the nation," said Hardgrove as she explained how the video and picture aspects will work to immerse the audience further into the Choctaw experience. Hardgrove and her theatre crew have been perfecting this new style with other productions, most recently with the Greek play, *Antigone*.

While the style of the production may be a new technique, the content about the Choctaw people is well-rooted in American history. Professor Randy Prus of SE's English Department has taken the charge to write the content of the play.

Prus has been well-versed in the Choctaw culture and was an easy pick to write the content. "He is the expert on campus," mentioned Hardgrove as she reiterated his qualification. He has been in contact with various cultural experts within the Choctaw Nation to bring the most accurate and intriguing script to the stage.

"I saw this as an opportunity to learn more about the Choctaw people and culture, especially their history," said

Prus as he discussed his motivation for his work on the project. "I've never done anything quite like this before and welcomed the opportunity to learn new things, meet new people, and work on a collaborative effort. I hope people recognize some of the uniqueness of Oklahoma Choctaw, mostly I hope people enjoy it and it makes their lives a little bit sweeter," he continued.

CNO is very excited to have its heritage displayed yet again at the Smithsonian, especially through the medium of performing arts. With almost 30 percent of the student body being Native American, SE has not only the capability to bring that heritage to life, but the background and close ties with the culture.

There are over 500 Choctaw students at SE, lending the university to a heavy dose of Choctaw ways and history. SE has offered classes on the Choctaw language for years, and in the fall of 2011, an 18-hour minor in Choctaw became available.

With a venue as renown as the Rasmusen on their summer roster, no one has to explain the opportunity this production presents for the students of SE. "My students are extremely excited to be a part of this," stated Hardgrove as she told how her students anticipated the occasion and collaboration with CNO. "It's definitely something that is going on next year's recruitment brochures," she continued.

The upcoming trip to the Smithsonian is a summer plan that has the Theatre at SE crowd buzzing, but it is far from their first round with prestigious venues. SE has been conducting the Hamlet Tour recently, which is a small version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, written by the Chair of Art, Communication and Theatre at SE, Dell McLain, while on sabbatical in New

York working with professional actors.

They have taken the Hamlet Tour across Oklahoma and Arkansas to cities such as Tulsa and Eureka Springs. That performance has even been conducted at the Globe of the Great Southwest, the only standing replica of Shakespeare's globe in the United States, located in Odessa, Texas.

Along with their Hamlet Tour, SE has preformed in and hosted several festivals. They have also performed across the country in locations as far as the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and have plans on gracing the Stella Adler Theater in Los Angeles.

In addition to the many productions and festivals SE hosts and attends on a regular basis, they also host after-school plays for children, produce student films and demonstrate student written and directed plays annually.

The high level of both quality and quantity of work that pours out from Theatre at SE not only stems from a highly motivated and talented student body, but an exceptionally well-qualified staff. According to McClain, every theatre faculty member at SE currently works profession-



Photo provided

**Kathleen Hardgrove, bottom right, directs her cast as they prepare for the production of *Antigone: At War*. Rebecca Sparks is atop the stairs while Tanner Risner, left, and Dustin Curry listen at the bottom. Both Tanner and Dustin will be a part of the Smithsonian production.**

**“It's definitely something that is going on next year's recruiting brochures.”**

– Kathleen Hardgrove

ally in the industry.

Hardgrove, who is leading this production, graduated from SE and went on to work as a teacher, costume designer, actor and director in various places such as Los Angeles, Las Vegas and New York. Her time touring across the country has led her to theatre work in every state in the continental U.S.

She decided to bring her experiences and knowledge back to SE because she liked the way they trained and is now the theatre historian. She still travels nationally and internationally to attend

the most world-renown tours such as the Humana Festival to gather ideas, trends and techniques to deliver to the students of SE. These travels are prime examples of how SE is meeting its charge to "bring the world to

SE."

The cooperative effort between CNO and SE is sure to be a hit at Choctaw Days coming in June. SE has high hopes to bring to life the rich culture of the Choctaw people in a fun and immersive way. It is a chance for both organizations to shine in the national spotlight.

If you would like to know more about Theatre at SE, contact 580-745-2735 or visit [homepages.se.edu/theatre/](http://homepages.se.edu/theatre/). For more information on Choctaw Days, contact 800-522-6170, or visit [choctawnation.com](http://choctawnation.com).

# Depicting history with a pen and canvas

*Choctaw artist Theresa Morris to present at Smithsonian*

By **BRET MOSS**  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Putting pen to paper and paint to canvas to create images that please the eye and excite the psyche is a talent desired by many. For Choctaw artist Theresa Morris of Tahlequah, this is a gift she realized early and has put to work for herself and her tribe.

Morris will be one of the many talented artists featured at the Choctaw Days event at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in June. Her work, *Windstar*, is one of her many works that will be featured at the venue. This image was featured as the branding image of the Denver Choctaw Day event in 2011.

Morris spent her early childhood years at Oaks Indian Mission in Oaks, Okla. She had two strong influences in her youth who led her to know about her Choctaw

heritage. The first was her grandmother who had attended Wheelock Academy in Millerton.

Her mother became interested in the Choctaw culture when she began to write her book, "How Thunder and Lightning Came to be," which was based on Choctaw legend. After completion of this book, she began her second work, "Longwalkers Journey," which focused on her own family's history during the Trail of Tears. "It was then that I became fascinated and started learning more about my own people," stated Morris.

Along with a love for her heritage, her passion for art began at a young age. "Art runs through my veins," declared Morris. Ever since she entered and won her first art contest at Tulsa Indian Youth Camp, she was hooked. "After that art became my passion," she mentioned.

She took her inaugural first place prize the age of 10, and continued at winning ribbons, trophies and certificates ever since. She continued this activity into her college years where she earned an associate's degree in art from Tulsa Community College. She then enrolled at Montana State University – Northern where



Photo provided

**THERESA MORRIS**

she gained a bachelor's degree in graphic design with a minor in Native American Studies.

She put her education to work after college designing various items such as business cards and logos for companies. She has done many types of artwork ranging from portraits and landscapes to abstracts and animals.

She was one of the featured artists at NDN Custom Frame and Art Gallery in Tahlequah, and her art was used on the cover of the brochure for the Tahlequah Art Guide, 2011. Some of her work was also displayed at the Five Civilized Tribes Museum in Muskogee. Visitors to the Choctaw Nation gift shop in Tushka Homma will see her work on mugs, tiles and jewelry boxes.

While Morris enjoys all types of art, she has a slight preference for graphite and ink due to her love for the effects of black and white. She has also dabbled in carving, making miniature woodcarvings of peace pipes for Lyon's Indian store in Tulsa.

"I'm such a perfectionist so I truly get involved with whatever I'm doing," said Morris as she explained that no matter what type of artwork she has on her agenda, she is always

giving 100 percent. She puts such effort because she knows her craft has purpose.

She has hopes that the work she is doing for the Choctaw Nation will bring awareness about her culture to those who have limited knowledge on the subject. She recalls a graphite portrait of former Choctaw Chief Allen Wright, which brought about questions on Choctaw history while on display in Tahlequah.

She was able to educate curious onlookers on the fact that Chief Wright was the man who suggested the name "Oklahoma" as the name of the state and the Choctaw meanings to the word. Choctaw words "Okla," meaning people, and "humma" meaning red were combined to make "Oklahoma" which translates to "land of red people."

She is currently working on a series of portraits featuring the Choctaw Code Talkers of World War I. She hopes to find information on each Code Talker from that generation to generate a well-rounded work of art.

She has varied interests other than art. "I love older, classic, muscle cars and I know how to work on them. I've rebuilt a few engines and I've even done some bodywork," declared Morris. She went on to tell that she has worked at Rocky Mountain National Park as a park ranger, a job she greatly enjoyed.

She recently had a small acting part in the movie "The Cherokee Word For Water." It is a story about Wilma Mankiller's role in getting water to the Indian community of Bell, Okla. It was filmed in Tahlequah in October 2011 and is set to be released October of this year.

Morris is the mother of three sons and a daughter. She also has a website for her artwork, [www.theresamorris-design.com](http://www.theresamorris-design.com) where her art can be viewed. She hopes to start a business in the future, but is currently aspiring to finish her Code Talker series.

She is greatly anticipating her role at Choctaw Days, saying "I hope that kind of exposure opens up many opportunities for me. What I really want is to be successful at what I do and leave a

lasting impression." She continued by saying, "If I can make a living doing art and at the same time bring awareness about the history of the Choctaw and the contributions they have made then I will have succeeded."

Choctaw Days will be held June 20-23 at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. For more information about the event visit [choctawnation.com](http://choctawnation.com) or call 800-522-6170.

## ATTENTION Choctaw Artists

If you are interested in participating in a Juried and Judged Choctaw Indian Art Show, let us hear from you!

Please complete the following interest form in order to receive more information regarding the show which will be in Tvshka Homma, Oklahoma during the annual Labor Day Festivities. Included will be the following categories: Painting, Graphics, Cultural, Sculpture, Jewelry, Pottery, and Basketry. Please complete the form and return it to the address below. Art information packets will be mailed beginning in April.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Artistic Category: \_\_\_\_\_

You must be at least 17 years old and have a membership card issued by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma to participate.

Please return to:  
Shelley Garner  
Cultural Events  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma  
PO Box 1210  
Durant, OK 74702-1210

For more information, call Shelley Garner at 1-800-522-6170, ext. 2377.



Morris' "WindStar" design which incorporates many Choctaw designs from the Oklahoma and Mississippi Bands.

## PEOPLE YOU KNOW

### Happy anniversary

Congratulations to Bill and Louise Amos on their 63rd wedding anniversary. They married in DeQueen, Ark., on March 26, 1949. They have two children, Nancy Williams of Edmond and Mike Amos of Broken Bow; six grandchildren, Justin, Derrick and Zachary Williams of Edmond, and Dayla, Nikki and Andrew Amos of Broken Bow; and one great-granddaughter, Milena.



### Choctaw Nation Idabel pharmacy named pharmacy of the year

The Choctaw Nation Health Clinic Idabel Pharmacy was awarded the Pharmacy of the Year Award at the annual Oklahoma City Area Indian Health Service Pharmacy CE meeting in February. Shanna Rowan, pharmacy technician, was awarded the very first Kris Hunley Customer Service award. Pictured (front, left to right) are pharmacists Joey Smith, Song Lavalais and Cass Davis; (back, left to right) technicians Stacey Humphrey, Shanna Rowan, Kendra Jackson and Rochieda Tonihka.

### Hudson family purchases first home with help of CAB program

Congratulations to Choctaw Asset Building (CAB) client and new home owner Ashley Hudson and her family. With the help of CAB, the Hudson family recently purchased their first home. CAB helps clients with their money management and saving habits. Clients receive personal financial education and training that is specific to their asset choice. Ashley was so inspired by the Personal Financial Education workshop that she began by helping others by hosting budgeting and couponing workshops. "The Personal Financial Education class was extremely helpful. I walked away with the skills needed to run my home in a more practical way. My husband and I researched different budgeting scenarios until we found one just right for us and have stayed on track with the budgeting system. I also dug a bit deeper into the couponing world and cut my grocery bill by \$474 a month for our family of five. The savings from this went into an emergency fund and into the CAB savings account as well. Both the budgeting idea and the couponing idea came from the workshop," said Ashley.



CAB clients make monthly deposits to their CAB savings account for 6 to 36 months and can use their savings to purchase their first home, fund education, or start or expand a small business. CAB will match up to \$2,000 of their savings (\$3 to \$1 for home purchases or \$2 to \$1 to pay for education or entrepreneurship.) "I was so thrilled to be a part of the CAB program. If not for the CAB program, we would still be scraping to save money to purchase our home. The program gave me the skills needed in finance and the financial assistance to jump start our dream of owning a home. I was always encouraged by my CAB coach, Janie, with her monthly reminders on savings, and the statements we received in the mail showing our matched funds gave me the drive to save more," said Ashley.

Home ownership was an important goal for the Hudson family. "We consider our family 'home,' but needed a place for our family to grow some roots. We were ready to make the investment on a home of our own and were growing weary of throwing money at rent houses. Now we feel secure in our home investment and look forward to living and growing together as a family in a place we can call ours," said Ashley.

For information on how CAB can help you with your financial goals, go to [choctawcab.com](http://choctawcab.com) or contact CAB at 866-933-2260.

### Happy birthday wishes

Happy 85th birthday on April 27 to Wanda Lou (Burris) Witt from her daughter, Pam. May you live to be 100!

### Colt turns 5

Happy birthday to Colt! Colt Crader turned 5 years old on March 11. He celebrated with a Transformers party at home with family and friends, who all wish him the best year.



### Happy birthday, Huck

Happy birthday to Harold Burris, who recently celebrated his 21st Leap Year birthday at his home in Eufala. He was born on Feb. 29, 1928, and graduated Chillico High School in 1948. He served five years on the Army National Guard and retired from Sequoyah Boarding School.



### Happy birthday, Matthew

Happy 23rd birthday on March 23 to Sr. Airman Matthew J. Burnett. His family asks him to be safe in Afghanistan and wishes him a very happy birthday.



### Happy sweet 16

Kimberlee and Bob Cast Jr. of Panama, Okla., would like to wish their daughter, Shelbie Lee Cast, a happy 16th birthday on April 10. Shelbie is a sophomore at Panama High School. She is a member of the high school band, FCCLA, the Honor Roll Society, JOM, SAP, and last year's Miss Panama. The future holds wonderful things for her, and her family couldn't be more proud of her.



### Happy birthday, Ruby

Ruby L. Ferguson-Kirk celebrated her 100th birthday on March 11. She is the daughter of Mary L. Nail-Ferguson, an original enrollee, and Jeff D. Ferguson. Jeff and Mary married in 1908 in Hugo. They both lived at nearby Soper, and had four children, Joe Edgar, born 1909, Ruby in 1912, Cecil in 1914 and Richard in 1928.

Ruby's maternal grandparents were Joe Nail, an original enrollee, and Paralee Mullins-Nail. Her paternal grandparents were Albert Henry Ferguson and Maryann Thompson-Ferguson.

Ruby was married to the late Forrest Kirk. They have three children, eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Ruby was from Soper but lived at Frederick when she married.

Birthday cards can be sent to: Ruby Kirk at Tamarack A.L. Apt. 2 1224 E. Tamarack Rd. Altus, OK 73521.



### Happy birthday, Gabriel

Gabriel Louis will celebrate his 16th birthday on April 22. He is in the 10th grade and enjoys football, basketball, track, school and video games. He loves going to church and being with his family, friends and his dogs. Sending him birthday wishes are his mom and family.



### Congratulations, Heather

Congratulations to Red Oak student Heather Edington, a freshman, for earning Senior Showman at the Choctaw Nation Livestock Show in Wilburton. She also earned Senior Showman at the Red Oak local show and Intermediate Showman at the Latimer County Junior Livestock Show. Pictured with Heather is her brother, William Edington, who also goes to Red Oak. Heather is the vice president of FFA, she plays basketball for the Red Oak Lady Eagles and she has showed animals since she was 5 years old. She has received many awards since she has been a member of FFA and 4H.

### Hannah earns the crown

Congratulations to Hannah King of Broken Bow who was recently crowned Miss Oil Capital's Outstanding Teen. She will now compete for Miss Oklahoma's Outstanding Teen in Tulsa June 4-8. Her parents are Bruce and Leslie King.



### Happy birthday, Ronnie

Happy 14th birthday to Ronnie Smith Jr. on April 8. Wishing R.J. a happy birthday are his parents, Deloures and Ronnie Smith; sister, Danielle Smith; aunt, Anntee Johnson; grandmother, Evelyn Johnson of Ardmore; and grandmom, Effice Smith of Sherman, Texas.



### Madeleine crowned princess

Congratulations to Madeleine Freeman, who was recently crowned the new OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance Princess for 2012. The selection committee was headed by Perrin Deal. All the contestants performed the Lord's Prayer in Choctaw sign language, spoke on the significance of their regalia, along with many other aspects of our native culture and history. The choice was tough, but Madeleine stood above the crowd.



### Roberts inducted into Florida Sports Hall of Fame

Olympic bronze medalist and two-time world record holder Dave Roberts, M.D., a local physician practicing at The Orthopedic Institute, will join the 13-member 2012 Florida Sports Hall of Fame class for his exceptional pole vaulting career.

Roberts' first world record was set in Gainesville on March 28, 1975, soaring over 18 feet, 6.5 inches, and he added another world record on June 22, 1976, in Eugene, Ore., when he cleared 18 feet, 8.25 inches. He won U.S. National Championships in 1972 and 1974 and was the Pan American Games silver medalist in 1971 at Cali, Colombia.

He also won bronze at the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal and was the first man to win three straight NCAA titles outright in the pole vault. In 2006, Roberts was inducted into the USA Pole Vault Hall of Fame.

The Florida Sports Hall of Fame 2012 inductees were honored in Tampa before the Tampa Bay Lightning game on March 19 and enshrined the next day at Mainsail Conference Center. The Hall of Fame has 205 members; their memorabilia is displayed at the Lake Myrtle Sports Complex in Auburndale.

After Roberts' athletic career he went on to become an emergency physician. He graduated from the University of Florida College of Medicine and completed his nephrology fellowship there. Additionally he received general surgery training at Memorial Medical Center in Savannah, Ga.

For almost 30 years, Roberts practiced as an emergency physician in north and central Florida hospitals. Today he practices primary care orthopedics, the non-surgical evaluation and treatment of musculoskeletal conditions, at The Orthopedic Institute.

"Practicing primary care orthopedics allows me to utilize my education and medical experience as well as my background as an athlete," said Roberts. "I have trained intensely, and I understand firsthand the pain and heartbreak of a debilitating injury as well as the long road to recovery."

### Native Quest Cultural Center offers many activities

Native Quest is a Native American Cultural Center serving local and urban Native Americans, as well as non-Native Americans, by providing a friendly environment to investigate and experience Native American Cultures. The center provides the world's largest Native American bookstore with over 6,000 titles and over 80,000 books, including many out of print and rare titles. There is also a cafe featuring Native American meals; weekly talking and healing circles; a Native American art gallery featuring local traditional and contemporary artists; weekly education and entertainment featuring storytellers, musicians, craftspeople and authors as well as a local talent night every Saturday night that is open to the public; weekly craft classes; and First Saturday Indian Market where Native craftspeople sell their creations.

Native Quest is open to the general public and located near the Tacoma Dome in Tacoma, Wash., at 2354 Jefferson Ave. (at S. 25th St.).

### Artist's painting earns prestigious award

L.S. Eldridge's painting, "Werner at Crystal Bridges," has been awarded the Walser S. Greathouse Medal at the 145th Annual Exhibition of the American Watercolor Society. The AWS annual is one of the premiere watercolor exhibits in the world. The painting will be on exhibit from April 3 through the 22nd, 2012, at the Salmagundi Club at 47 Fifth Avenue in New York. In addition, the Jury of Awards has chosen Eldridge's piece for inclusion in the 145th American Watercolor Society Traveling Exhibition 2012-13. The work will go on a circuit of museums and galleries around the country in the year ahead. A list of paintings in the traveling exhibit and the itinerary will be included in the exhibition catalog.

To find out more about the American Watercolor Society, established in 1866, visit their website at [americanwatercolor.com](http://americanwatercolor.com). To find out more about the artist, visit the website, [lselldridge.com](http://lselldridge.com).



### Deloures says thanks

Pictured from left to right are Miss Choctaw Nation Amber Tehauno, Deloures Smith, Junior Miss Choctaw Nation Adriana Curnutt and Little Miss Choctaw Nation Summer Moffitt. Deloures is a member of the Johnson-O'Malley parent committee of Krebs Public Schools. The group was photographed at the 28th Annual Oklahoma Johnson-O'Malley Conference in Norman. Deloures would like to give a big thank you to the Choctaw Nation.

### Happy birthday, Lealon

Happy birthday to Lealon Everidge, who turned 23 on March 1. He is currently a student at the Santa Rosa Junior College in California, and he is interested in animal care and law enforcement. In his spare time he enjoys spending time with his family.



### Madonna celebrates her birthday

On April 10, Madonna Campbell (Hay) of Enid celebrated her 80th birthday. On April 7, her daughter-in-law had an open house for all friends and relatives. Madonna had a great birthday.

# EDUCATION

## Benton utilizes CAB program to reach educational goal

Allison Benton used the Choctaw Asset Building program to achieve her educational goals despite family and financial challenges. Allison's goal was to complete her MBA so that she could teach on the collegiate level. In November of 2010, she and her husband, Shawn, who is on active duty with the Air Force, found out that they were moving from Oklahoma City overseas to England. Allison found an MBA program at Southwestern College that she could complete online. She was worried, though, because the program was very expensive and would put a financial strain on her household. "There was a time when I thought about putting my MBA on hold because it is a very expensive program. But after I learned about the CAB program, I continued to go to school and am now graduating this May," said Allison. She found out about the program at the OKC Choctaw information fair in 2010.

CAB offers a matched savings account in which up to \$2,000 of participants' savings are matched \$2 to \$1 for education or a small business or \$3 to \$1 for a first time home purchase. "CAB is a great program that should be utilized by all Choctaws who qualify. The program is very useful and helps Choctaws build financial sustainability. It teaches good financial skills and will help you save for a business, house or education," explained Allison.

Planning was an important part of Allison completing her goal. She knew she was on a tight time line due to the upcoming move to England, so she went ahead and completed the required Personal Financial Education Workshop that was held in Oklahoma City in January 2011. Participants in CAB are required to take this class within six months of opening their CAB account. "The education class helped strengthen my financial skills and the most important thing I learned was how to improve my credit score," said Allison. She also knew that she would need her funds in August 2011 and that she would have to save for at least six months before she could withdraw her funds. She opened her CAB account in February 2011. Knowing that the move overseas was coming up, she set up her monthly CAB deposit on an automatic transfer from her checking account into her CAB account. This way she knew she wouldn't have to worry about mailing her deposit from overseas.

Allison and her husband moved to England in April 2011. "We were excited of the challenge but knew we would miss our family terribly. So far we are learning about new cultures and have had fun traveling," said Allison. By August 2011, she had saved \$2,000, which along with the matching funds from CAB gave her \$6,000 to help with her educational expenses.

Allison encourages all Choctaws to not let obstacles prevent them from reaching their goals. "The CAB program has had a tremendous effect on our household and financial burdens. Sometimes education seems too expensive or out of reach. There can be many things going on in your life during school; mine included difficult transition of moving overseas, but you can't let this stop you from achieving your goals. Be thankful and take advantage of the programs the Choctaw Nation has to offer, we really are a part of a supportive tribe that works hard to better our lives," she said.



## Battiest is salutatorian

Congratulations to Hallie Battiest of Wright City Junior High School for earning the title of salutatorian of her eighth grade class. Hallie is the 14-year-old daughter of Crystal Battiest and Garrett James of Wright City and Ricky and Myrna Taylor of Jay. She is the granddaughter of Presley Battiest Sr. and Serena Battiest of Wright City and Charles and Rita Holt of Wright City.



Hallie is a member of Wisdom Club, FCCLA, and was elected class favorite. She has recently participated in FCCLA competitive events, placing third for New Member Facts. She is athletic, participating in softball and basketball throughout the year. She also participates in church activities at Tohwali Methodist Church. She enjoys spending time with family, making bracelets, reading, playing cards, playing basketball, and playing fastpitch softball.

## Gann receives broadcasting scholarship

Southeastern Oklahoma State University senior Jessica Ann Gann is the recipient of a scholarship from the Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters (OAB).



Gann, a communication major (broadcasting emphasis) from Hugo, was one of six students to receive the award statewide. The OAB Education Foundation offers annual scholarships to students majoring in broadcasting at Oklahoma colleges and universities.

Gann received the \$2,000 Mark Rawlings Scholarship at the OAB and Oklahoma Broadcasting Education Association Student Competition Awards ceremony at the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City on March 8.

"I have been in radio for seven years," said Gann. "My plans are to still be involved with college radio stations across the state, radio seminars, become general manager of a radio station and still be a strong radio personality and voice talent producer."

"Even further than that, I would still want to be a radio producer in Nashville, Tenn."

March 8 was a huge day for Gann. Along with the awards program, it was also Student Career Day which provided a great opportunity for those interested in broadcasting.

As an added bonus that made the event more exciting, March 8 was also Gann's birthday.

Gann is pictured being interviewed by a local TV station.



Pictured are the children of the Chahta Villa Interlocal Preschool in Bethel, who were visited by CHR Darlene Noahubi as they were learning about community helpers.



## Spelling bee winners

The KEDDO Seven County Spelling Bee was held at the KEDDO board room on March 15. Pictured from left to right are Mary Harmon of Rattan, first place winner; Barbara Carter of Rattan, second place winner; and Leila Deal of Broken Bow, third place winner. In the back row is Bob Winters of Broken Bow, fourth place winner, and the spelling bee mascot, Samantha Humphreys, KEDDO Aging/Information and Assistance Specialist.

The first and second place winners will represent the KEDDO Area Agency on Aging at the Oklahoma State Spelling Bee Championship on May 15 in Norman at the Embassy Suites Hotel, in which lodging, meals and transportation (if needed) will be provided.

KEDDO would like to give a special thank you to lead judge Melody Culberson, KANP Outreach Coordinator of Panola; judge Afton Pope, KEDDO secretary of Wilburton; judge JoAnn Grippando, KANP executive board member of McAlester; and pronouncer Ellen Young, KANP registered dietician of Wright City.



## Nelson signs letter of intent

Choctaw High School senior (Choctaw, Okla.) Jerryd Nelson signed his letter of intent to play football at Haskell Indian Nations University at Lawrence, Kan. He will be playing defensive tackle for the "Fightin' Indians."

Jerryd has a 3.9 GPA, was a three-year starter for both offense and defense for the Choctaw High School Yellow Jackets, and he was Oklahoma 6A-1 All District Player for 2011.

Jerryd will be an environmental science major. He is a member of the Choctaw Nation and the great-great-grandson of original enrollee Louis Mackey.

Pictured are, sitting, Shelby Nelson (Jerryd's sister), Karrassa Nelson (Jerryd's mother), Jerryd, Paul Nelson (his father), and standing is Coach Tuberville of CHS.

## John inducted into NHS

Congratulations to John Troussel, who was inducted into the National Honor Society at McAlester High School on Feb. 21. John is a senior and is taking concurrent classes at Eastern Oklahoma State College. He works about 35 hours a week as a cook at a local Italian restaurant. He also does service learning through the school and plans to go through the C.O.P.S. program at Eastern after graduation.



## Hugo JOM committee donates iPads

Hugo Public Schools received new technology recently when 10 iPads were donated to them from the Johnson O'Malley Committee. Pictured are JOM Committee members Bekah Langley, Vice Chairman; Colton Langley, HES student; Cason Langley, future student; Natasha Hudson, Secretary; Karen Lyles, Superintendent of Hugo Schools; and Ronnie Thompson, Chairman. Committee member Nikki VanTrees was unavailable for the photo.

## To the Youth of the Nation

By: Lecie Murray  
Youth Advisory Board

### "Get some rest, kid"

In my opinion, one of the biggest problems affecting the youth of the nation is tiredness. Have you noticed? Kids wake up, go to school, and sleep during class. They aren't paying attention to what's being taught and they're causing themselves to fall behind in class. It's because they're staying up so late at night, doing whatever it is they feel is more important than a good night's rest: Jersey Shore, Modern Warfare, and dragging town. Now, don't get me wrong, some kids stay up late finishing homework or because they have a job after school. Those are some of the better reasons to lose sleep. If parents would step up and teach their children to be responsible for what they do, then I think that education would better impact the students in today's society. Logically, if the youth is sleeping in class, then it's impossible to learn. Sleep is essential to the development of youth. It improves your memory, spurs creativity, and sharpens your attention. So if you want to help the youth of the nation, what's some of the best advice you can give them? "Get some rest, kid."

## Olive excels in the classroom

Kenneth Olive of Bennington earned the title of "student of the month" in January at Bennington High School. He is a member of the high school academic team, which won the area contest in Kiowa. The team went to the state meet in El Reno in February. Mrs. Tonya Ferguson, the high school English teacher at Bennington, serves as the team's coach. They earned the runner-up at state.



## Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Calendar

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
MAY			1	2 Broken Bow 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Idabel by appt.	3	4 Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	5 <small>Cinco de Mayo</small>
	6	7 Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	8 Antlers by appt.	9 Tuskahoma 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Talihina by appt.	10	11 Wright City by appt.	12
2012	13 <small>Hobbs Day</small>	14 Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	15	16 McAlester 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Stigler by appt.	17	18 Broken Bow 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Idabel by appt.	19
	20	21 Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. <small>Victoria Day (Canada)</small>	22	23 Poteau 10 a.m.-2 p.m.	24	25 Crowder by appt.	26
	27 <small>Memorial Day (Federal)</small>	28	29	30 Wilburton 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.	31		

Durant - Mon., Wed. and Fri.; Broken Bow - Mon., Wed. and Fri.;  
Idabel by appointment  
Phone: 580-326-8304; Fax: 580-326-2410  
Email: ddavenport@choctawnation.com



Pictured is the graduating Choctaw language class from Jenks, taught by Barry Gibson (far left). Graduation was held Feb. 20.

# Expressing cultural, historical ideals through art

By **LARISSA COPELAND**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

To represent the tribe as a presenter at Choctaw Days at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) is a huge, humbling honor, says artist D.G. Smalling of Oklahoma City, an honor that helps to affirm the skills and ideals he has dedicated his life to representing.

"Number one, to be there with the tribe is a very important thing; it validates me as an artist. It validates, too, that the nation sees value in it. That is exciting to me, that I'll be there presenting with my peers," he says.

"Second, the Smithsonian is a big thing, huge. To just be there, to just be present for this, it means a lot. I grew up as a kid going to the Smithsonian and I always get excited about it," he adds.

Creating art has been a lifelong venture for Smalling, though he's only been at it professionally for nine years. Though his Choctaw roots are prevalent in his work, his methods are varied and his influences vast. Smalling is quick to point out that his style is such that he can't be boxed into any particular category.

"I'm an artist," he asserts, "not just a 'Native artist.' I'm Native, yes, but I am adamant about not being pigeonholed with who I am as an artist. I need the flexibility."

It was this diversity that has made different cultures seek out and appreciate his work. His first piece exhibited to the public was in a Cuban gallery in Miami, Fla., something that helped affirm to himself that he was being taken seriously in the field.

"The fact that it was a non-Native gallery that exhibited my art authenticated to me that I am an artist," he says. "It showed me that subject



Choctaw Nation: LARISSA COPELAND

Above, Smalling adds color detail to one of his "one line" sketches. The entire drawing is made with a single continuous line without interruption, pictured right in closer detail.



Choctaw Nation: LARISSA COPELAND

matter wasn't what was important. It was the skill of my technique that attracted them to my work."

Today, his pieces are displayed in museums, galleries, government buildings and homes in locations around the world. Smalling creates in many formats, from painting and drawing, to sculptures of steel and glass. "My art is proportionate, fluid."

Working with Choctaw hieroglyphs, one technique he often uses is a contemporary "one line" format, the drawing of a single, constant line without interruption to create intricately detailed sketches. "I use the old ways but keep it modern," he says. "That's exciting to me."

His methods are also simple and done with commonly used tools, such as Sharpie® markers and pens. "I want kids to be able to see what I do and what I use so they'll realize, 'hey, I can do that,' when they see that my tools are readily available," he says, crediting the diversity of exposure to other artists and situations throughout his life.

Smalling grew up in Idabel and Haworth, but then at age 8, he and his family packed up and left southeastern Oklahoma to do missionary work overseas. Together, they lived in Switzerland, Cameroon, and South Africa, where he was continually influenced both politically and artistically by his travels and exposure to other cultures.

After graduating high school in South Africa, while his parents continued their missionary work in numerous countries around the world, Smalling returned to the United States to at-



Choctaw Nation: LARISSA COPELAND

**Choctaw artist D.G. Smalling poses with a sculpture he created using glass and steel. The four-sided piece, which he says represents tribal, state, and federal judicial systems working together in unison and with necessary transparency, is prominently displayed in the Oklahoma Judicial Center's Supreme Court Reception Room in Oklahoma City.**

tend the University of Oklahoma where he earned his degree in political science. Today, while creating art feeds one passion, his full-time job in Oklahoma Supreme Court Justice Yvonne Kauger's Sovereignty Symposium office, fuels another passion for him – educating tribal members.

"I owe a debt to my tribe," he explains. "My great-grandmother, it would have been so easy for her to forget, to not carry on the language, the culture. We could have disappeared so easily. But she refused. My faith and my debt is so much that I have to continue it. It's a beautiful obligation.

"It is important for us to remember that someone far back in our families felt strongly enough that we need to be Choctaw, that in the face of everything that tried to submit it, to beat it out of them, they refused," he continued. "That's why I refuse. I celebrate it that we survived. That's why I say there is a debt. This is who I am and I'm proud of that."

Along with the responsibility of educating and empowering of tribal members, he believes strongly for tribes to encourage the output of quality art and Native-created items. "We fought long and hard to control our art," he says, referring to the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990. "It's important that we understand and respect that."

He says tribes can ensure that idea by developing an artist registry with quality artists who accurately reflect its history and views. "Outside people go to the registry when seeking out art from a particular tribe and registries are often their starting point. The registry reflects back on the tribe and is why the artists need to be vetted – to ensure the tribe is represented in the right way. The quality is just as important as who is making it."

Smalling plans to take that to heart when he presents at Choctaw Days at the NMAI in Washington, D.C. There, he will display his work and do demonstrations, along with lectures and presentations on the Choctaw Code Talkers. Smalling is a great-grandson of World War I Code Talker Calvin Wilson.

Choctaw Days will take place at the NMAI from June 20-23. The public is encouraged to visit the event and experience Smalling's artwork and knowledge, along with additional artists, dancers and others representing the tribe, and take part in a memorable, rich Choctaw cultural experience.

Additionally, Smalling can be heard every Saturday morning hosting a radio program on Oklahoma City station, The Spy FM. His hour-long show is dedicated to discussing pertinent topics and trends with leaders and friends in Indian country, and also showcasing the music of Native artists, giving them a platform to show their diversity and talent. Podcasts and apps to remotely listen to his show are available for download on [www.TheSpyFM.com/shows/ndn-country/](http://www.TheSpyFM.com/shows/ndn-country/).

## FLIGHT

*Tribe makes flights for wounded warriors*

Continued from Page 1

was made on March 23 to transport a group of wounded warriors from Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to Las Cruces, N.M., for the annual Bataan Memorial Death March.

A total of 17 wounded soldiers, physical therapists, case workers and support staff were flown by volunteer pilots, including Cherry and Wesley in this case, on four aircraft to take part in the 26.2-mile march honoring the military heroes who suffered through the 80-mile march on the Philippine Islands during World War II.

"This is our first time being part of something this big, with this many people and the other planes involved," said Cherry. "This one was significant, both in numbers and because of the event (the Bataan Memorial Death March)."

Passengers on the Choctaw flight were two of the wounded soldiers, Sgt. 1st Class John Faulkenberry and Spc. Terry Ligman, along with physical therapist Mark Parker and Tanya Boulgakova, a case manager at the Center for the Intrepid, or CFI.

All the soldiers making this particular voyage are receiving treatment for their injuries at CFI, a branch of the Brooks Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston. CFI provides rehabilitation to those who have sustained amputations, burns, or functional limb loss in combat during Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom. Both Faulkenberry and Ligman have undergone below-the-knee amputations and have been fitted with prosthetic limbs.

In 2007, Faulkenberry, a 29-year-old former Army Ranger from Midland, Texas, was on his third combat tour, having deployed twice to Iraq before going to Afghanistan. It was there, in Northern Afghanistan while his platoon was assisting fellow soldiers who were greatly outnumbered by enemy forces, that he was shot by machine gun fire several times in his right thigh during the fierce firefight.

Faulkenberry lost two friends in that battle.

"We'd been in country about three months when it happened," he says. "We got a call (on the radio) that another platoon had been ambushed and mine responded. I was shot in my upper leg and twice below the knee. I lost a lot of muscle in my thigh because of it, so, even though I have the same below-the-knee amputation as some guys, I don't have the same leg strength because I have less muscle mass here," he says, pointing to his right thigh.

After an unsuccessful three-year effort to salvage the limb, he ultimately chose to have the lower part of his leg amputated in 2010.

"I've gone on a VAC flight once before this to do research before I decided to have my amputation," says Faulkenberry, who had already undergone dozens of surgeries and would most likely have had ongoing pain and a limp for life had he not had the operation. "We tried for a long time on my 'limb salvage,' not quite as long as him though," he says, gesturing towards Ligman.



Choctaw Nation: LARISSA COPELAND

**Volunteer pilots, including those from Choctaw Nation, flew 17 wounded soldiers, physical therapists, case workers and support staff, from Fort Sam Houston, Texas, on four aircraft to Las Cruces, N.M., take part in the Bataan Memorial Death March. The flight was organized by Veterans Airlift Command and was the 24th volunteer flight made by the Choctaw Nation Flight Operations.**

"Four years," Ligman responded, referring to his long struggle to save his leg.

After an IED blast in Iraq, Ligman, a 28-year-old tanker originally from Fort Gibson, Okla., was left enduring a painful fight to save his seriously injured foot and leg.

"It was my first deployment in 2007," he says, "and we'd only been there for about a month when it happened. My tank hit a roadside bomb and my left foot got crushed in the explosion," he says.

He, like Faulkenberry, initially tried "limb salvage" by undergoing numerous surgeries, painful recovery and therapy over a span of years, but eventually he had his leg amputated below the knee in late 2011.

"I had a lot of pain," said Ligman, "not anymore though, since the amputation."

Both Faulkenberry and Ligman have chosen to medically retire from the military because of their injuries. "Mine was official on March 20th," says Faulkenberry. Ligman's medical retirement is still in the works.

Their injuries have not slowed them down though. This year's Bataan march was a first for both men, who prepared by doing weekly marches and walks with their physical therapists.

The march is a challenge that Parker says is an important step in the injured soldiers' rehabilitation.

"We want to help make things easier for them but not too easy because this is life," says Parker, a six-time "Bataan" participant. "Even with their injuries, these guys just keep pushing and pushing, and it's a huge morale boost for them to make it the entire 26.2 miles in the sand. They don't give up and there's no greater satisfaction seeing that."

According to Ligman, he knew it wouldn't be an easy task but he wasn't deterred. "I signed up for the challenge," he says, "to make it to the end."

Boulgakova, who was making the march for the first time, says that a special kinship is formed between the caseworkers and physical therapists and the wounded warriors by participating in the march with them. "A bond is created by going through this together," she says. "We want them all to finish and we're here to assist them as needed. We don't do this for our time on the march, we do it to support them."

Parker states that the flights like the one provided by the Choctaw Nation through the VAC make this undertaking – successfully completing the march – more attainable for these soldiers.

"The flights are such a huge convenience for us," says Parker. "It makes it easier for us all to get here and for these guys to accomplish their mission. They can focus on the march and not worry about the travel to get here. Being able to just walk out

and get on the plane and not have to go through all the normal security procedures is so very helpful. This is a luxury."

Security procedures at airports, though necessary and mostly just time-consuming to most travelers, prove to be an even more uncomfortable aspect of travel for those wearing prosthetics.

"This is much more convenient [than commercial travel] for us," adds Ligman, who was on his second VAC flight. "Going through security and having to take off your leg to go through the metal detectors. Or other times we have to go to a separate room to be wanded..." he said, trailing off. "I enjoyed this flight today. It was comfortable and just really nice."

Parker explains it further, having worked with many wounded warriors through the years, "These guys are dealing with a lot of emotional stuff during their recovery. Having to go through airport security, having to remove their prosthesis to go through the metal detectors and X-rays...it's not that they forget, but it throws it back into their faces that, 'hey, I've lost my leg,' or their arm or whatever the case may be. That (security) procedures at the airports) is just the way of the world today and we understand that. But by having these flights available, it's just so helpful and we're very grateful. It's all about taking care of our wounded veterans."

"It (the flight) is such a wonderful thing," adds Boulgakova, "so special and so appreciated. None of these warriors take it for granted."

"The support we get is amazing," says Faulkenberry. "I can't say enough about it."

And those being flown aren't the only ones who take something away from this flight program...the pilots are just as affected by the experience and feel it's just a small way to show gratitude for their special passengers' service.

"Seeing these soldiers and hearing their stories about the hassle and sometimes embarrassment they go through with airline travel makes me proud to be able to help them," says Wesley.

Cherry agrees with that point of view. "It is a very awe-inspiring time for me," he adds. "These young men and women have given so much of their time and effort, and it has cost them physically, mentally and emotionally; yet they still maintain a very positive attitude and many are still involved in helping others. I don't think we can do enough to show them how grateful and appreciative we are."

Cherry says Chief Pyle and Assistant Chief Batton are both very supportive of the flights, allowing the flight team freedom to schedule the trips when and where their schedule allows. Another wounded warrior flight is already on the books for this month, and according to Cherry, there's "more to come."



# Umsted exhibits great pride in tribe through art, utilizes family experiences as inspiration

By **CHRIS DILL**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Eager eyes and ears will be taking in Choctaw Days at the Smithsonian again this summer.

Artist Janie Umsted is very proud to have the opportunity to be one of the chosen few to show her Native American artwork at the National Museum of the American Indian.

"It is such a great honor for me to be chosen by the Choctaw Nation to be one of the Choctaw artists to travel to Washington, D.C., this summer," said Umsted; however, this will not be the first time Umsted will be visiting this particular museum. "I was so fortunate to be able to be with the Choctaw delegation at the grand opening of the museum several years ago," she said. "I thought my heart would burst with pride to be a part of such a beautiful display of pride in our heritage of the first Americans."

Umsted possesses a rich Choctaw family history, which she cherishes. "My great-great-grandfather was Peter Pitchlynn, chief during the Civil War," she said. "My great-uncle was William F. Semple, chief right after Oklahoma statehood in the early 1920s."

"My great-aunt, Dr. Anne Semple, was one of the earliest Choctaw women in Oklahoma to receive a PhD and was the only Choctaw woman to be named as Oklahoma Poet Laureate of Oklahoma," continued Umsted. "She also wrote the History of the Oklahoma Presbyterian College," which site now serves as the tribal headquarters of the Choctaw Nation.

Another family member of hers experienced the Trail of Tears

firsthand, she said. "This is a family history of which I am extremely proud."

Umsted said to have the opportunity to return to the Museum of the American Indian and share her art is unbelievable, and she plans to have a number of her paintings and perhaps some small sculptures on display during the event.

She gained her initial experience as an artist at the University of Oklahoma, graduating in 1969 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, and has been working professionally in art ever since.

Even before she was able to gain a formal education to further her artistic career, Umsted's family played a part in her growing talent. "I am from a very artistic Choctaw family and all of my art training started early in life," she stated.

She said her training was considered very traditional and academic in style and was very predictable as far as results. "By that, I mean that I was taught to draw and paint from a realistic point of view," she explained.

Today, Umsted practices a form of art entitled "Batik," which she calls a very unusual and unpredictable technique that she has been doing for over 40 years and is mostly self-taught. The



**JANIE UMSTED**

Batik process involves materials such as melted wax, brushes, dyes and fabric.

Umsted plans to feature pieces she has used Batik to create at her exhibit during Choctaw Days, as well as some works done using acrylic paint.

Overall, she plans to have artwork that reflects her theme of "A Military History of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma," which was inspired by men in her family who have served in the military.

"My father was a bomber pilot in World War II and received numerous medals, including the Distinguished Air Cross," she said proudly, adding that her brothers are both graduates of the Naval Academy. "They are proud of their Choctaw heritage and proud of their military service."

Along with Umsted's theme of the Choctaw Nation's involvement with our nation's military, she also plans to create for her display a piece that highlights the Choctaw game of stickball, a piece entitled "Little Brother of War," and pieces paying respect to the Choctaw Color Guard, the Code Talkers and the Veteran's Day Celebrations of the Choctaw Nation. "I will be incorporating both the Choctaw flag and the United States flag in much of my work," she added.

Umsted's exhibit is sure to demonstrate the great pride she has for her Choctaw tribe, and therefore show many museum visitors how tradition-oriented the great Choctaw Nation is and the respect its tribal members hold for its culture. "To have the opportunity to display my artwork at the Museum of the American Indian is one of the highlights of my career and my life," she said.

## How to: the art of Batik

Choctaw artist Janie Umsted's main form of art is "Batik," which she has been creating for over 40 years.

The materials Umsted uses for Batik are: melted wax, brushes, dyes and fabric.

First, she works out on paper the design or image she plans to create.

She then draws the composition onto the fabric, which is usually cotton and white in color.

The color scheme used in this process should be thought of ahead of time in preparation, said Umsted. Batik is a technique in which the artist needs to have in mind what their desired effect will be.

Once the drawing is complete, she carefully studies the colors she plans to use. She then focuses on the sections of the design that she wants to be the lightest in color, such as white.

At this point, Umsted melts the wax, which is a combination of paraffin wax and beeswax. She paints the hot wax onto the cloth in the areas of the design that she wants to remain the color of the cloth. The wax will then dry wherever it is applied and hold that area so it will not be dyed any other color.

Next, Umsted dyes the whole piece of fabric the next darkest color in her chosen color scheme, probably a light gray or blue, or perhaps a pale yellow, she said.

Often, she will pick up the fabric and take it outside to dry quickly. Once it is dry, she is ready to paint more hot wax on top of the light-colored areas that she wants to stay that color.

Next, she will dye the next darkest color. For example, if the color is light blue, she might dye the fabric a darker blue to get a tone-on-tone effect for shading, she said. Or she might dye a light green over the blue; or if the color is pale yellow, she may dye a light orange or a light green.

Step by step, Umsted's design becomes more complex in its overall appearance. All the while, she is working out in her mind the dark and light areas as well as the desired color scheme.

When she is about finished, she literally takes the whole piece and crumples it in her hands in order to make the wax crack.

One of the last steps in her Batik process, Umsted dyes the whole piece black, and the cracks in the wax are revealed in a totally unique all-over pattern that permeates the whole design, she explained.

When the piece is completely dry, she carefully places it between newsprint paper and irons the wax out, leaving the completed Batik.

### Choctaw Nation to aid with loans

The Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association offers small business, home, home improvement and agriculture loans.

To be eligible to apply, a person must reside within the 10-1/2 county service area of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and must possess a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) from a federally recognized tribe.

For more information, please contact Susan Edwards at 580-924-8280 or toll-free 800-522-6170.



Pictured are Wister KI BOIS Head Start staff, students who received Raising a Reader materials along with YAB students who assisted with the trivia night fund raiser, aimed at earning funds for the early literacy program, RAR.

## YAB members assist with trivia night to benefit Raising a Reader program

Do you know what year LeFlore County was founded? This question was asked at a Trivia Night, hosted by Smart Start Kiamichi Country (SSKC) and Choctaw Nation Youth Advisory Board (YAB).

Sandie Rutherford, Community Coordinator for SSKC, and Shonnie Hall, Community Outreach Specialist with Choctaw Nation Youth Empowerment, partnered together to provide an evening of fun while raising funds for Raising A Reader (RAR). RAR is an early literacy program that promotes daily "book cuddling" between children and their parents.

SSKC believes all children need to enter Kindergarten with the skills necessary for school/life success. These skills are developed through the interactions a child has before entering school. Many families face significant, sometimes

overwhelming, barriers to providing the kind of language and print-rich home experiences to develop these critical skills. As a result, significant numbers of children enter school lacking the skills needed for success. SSKC believes this issue is being addressed through RAR.

On Nov. 17, 2011, at the Choctaw Nation Community Center, three teams played a game of trivia in an effort to raise funds to purchase RAR materials for a classroom in LeFlore County. YAB members facilitated the trivia game, served refreshments and were instrumental in the success of the event.

KI BOIS Community Action Foundation, Inc. Representative Lockhart and Friends and McBee Law Firm were the businesses that sponsored teams of 10 players to play 10 rounds of trivia for \$150. Awards were given to the team with the highest score and to the team who best decorated their table.

YAB provided a special Too Much To Lose (2M2L) presentation during round 5, dedicated to underage drinking in Oklahoma. Sample question: (Fact or Myth?) It is a misdemeanor for a person under the age of 21 to misrepresent their age in order to obtain alcohol and may have their driver's license suspended for one year or until age 21, whichever is longer. Response: Fact. According to the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, tragic health, social and economic problems result from the use of alcohol by youth. Underage drinking is a casual factor in a host of serious problems, including homicide, suicide, traumatic injury, alcohol poisoning and need for treatment for alcohol abuse and dependence.

YAB also spoke about Social Host Laws and Ordinances along with their involvement in Compliance Checks in their community.

KI BOIS Head Start chil-

dren in Wister received two RAR kits on Feb. 16. RAR will serve approximately 42 children in two classrooms. Research indicates that a love of reading is linked to life success. If you are like most parents, you want your child to be well prepared for success in school.

SSKC would like to thank the following businesses and agencies for their contributions: KI BOIS Community Action, McBee Law Firm PLLC, Representative Lockhart, 2M2L, Green Country Trophy and Screen Printing, Walmart Poteau, Poteau Daily News, "Bargin Shack," Choctaw Nation Project Safe, Choctaw Nation Community Center, Choctaw Nation Youth Advisory Board and Shonnie Hall with Choctaw Nation Youth Empowerment.

For you trivia enthusiast, 1907 was the year LeFlore County was founded.



Submitted photo



Submitted photo



Submitted photo

YAB members at a tea party event held to honor breast cancer survivors.

## Cameron Schools raise funds in support of breast cancer awareness

All through the month of January into the beginning of February, Cameron Public Schools participated in "Pink Zone," in efforts to raise money for breast cancer awareness. In order to raise funds, high school students were allowed to wear a hat every Tuesday coupled with a \$1 donation, while teachers and faculty were allowed to wear jeans with a \$5 donation. The elementary students had a piggy banks for each class, and at the end of the month, whichever class had the largest donation, was rewarded with a party.

YAB members at Cameron High School hosted a pep rally at the end of the month. Members took up donations throughout January. Coach Dustin Hall got the most donations and got "all dolled-up" in pink and "played dress up" in front of the entire Cameron school population.

In addition, three of Cameron's high school students, Austin Standridge, Justin Cox and Ryan Carter, participated in "Scoring One Against Breast Cancer," a program in which the students get pledges for every three-point shot they make during the basketball season.

Cameron Schools also sold \$15 T-shirts supporting breast cancer awareness. All together, the school raised a total of over \$700 to be donated to the Kay Yow fund.

*Slam dunk success with a message,*

# Choctaw Kenny Dobbs inspiring youth on and off the court

By BRET MOSS

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

In the history of the Choctaw people, many have risen to success in their field of expertise, but one Choctaw in particular has leaped above the rest to success – a 48-inch vertical leap to be exact.

Phoenix native and slam dunk champion Kenny Dobbs spent some time in the Durant area recently to attend the Madness in March All-Indian Basketball tournament, bringing with him gravity-defying dunks and an encouraging testimony of his rise to success.

Searching “Kenny Dobbs” on Youtube or Google will quickly flood the screen with jaw-dropping slam-dunks. Kenny is a heavily decorated slam-dunk contest champion and dunk inventor with the title of 2010 Phoenix Sprite Slam Dunk Champion, 2011 Sprite LA Slam Dunk Champion and 2011 “Ball Up/ Streetball” Slam Dunk Champion as just a few bullet points on his résumé.

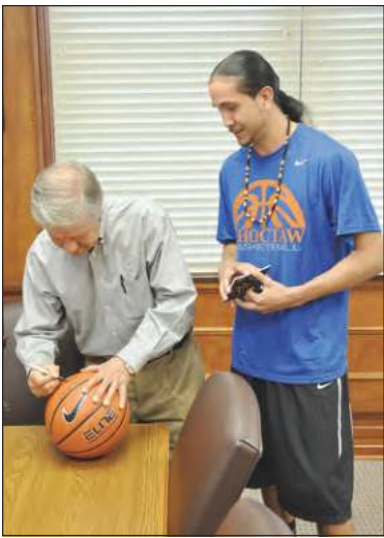
As a member of the Choctaw Nation, Kenny was delighted to spend time in the Choctaw Nation. He was able to meet with Chief Gregory E. Pyle and even get his basketball signed. Kenny was brought to Durant by Ivy Bridge College as a celebrity guest for the Madness in March event to serve as a motivation for the youth to create positive goals in their lives and pursue those goals with diligence.

Kenny was chosen to speak to the participants of Madness in March because his story was not always one of success. Kenny had to overcome tremendous odds to get where he is today, and at one point he could describe his life in one word: “hopeless.” His ability to find the drive to overcome a hopeless situation and his ability to dunk a basketball while jumping over four people was a combination that sparked interest in all ages.

Kenny grew up in a gang atmosphere, becoming involved in drugs and alcohol at a young age. He spent his time with a group of friends who kept his aspirations at bay and damaged his hopes of playing professional sports, a dream he had as a little boy.

He spent his time concerned with partying, which led him to be expelled from his home at the age of 15. His education suffered and he was not able to play high school sports, which severely lowered his chances to play anything past the street court.

All of his reckless activity came to a climax at the age of 17, when he and several friends were involved in a robbery. Those with him were caught while Kenny escaped. His accomplices reported him as the main culprit and divulged his location to law enforcement. Kenny was arrested and was told he would be tried as an adult.



Choctaw Nation: BRET MOSS

As he sat in jail awaiting trial he began to seriously consider the choices in his life. He began to realize he needed to make changes. “I cried out to God,” said Kenny as he told how he began asking God to help him out of this situation and promised Him that he would make those changes he knew he needed. “I went from being this hardcore thug little man, to being a scared little boy that just wanted his momma to hold him,” continued



Choctaw Nation: BRET MOSS

**Bottom:** Kenny was excited to meet Chief Pyle and spend time swapping stories. **Top:** After signing a photo of his award winning dunk, Kenny gets an autograph for himself.

his desperation.

When Kenny had his day in court, his prayers had been answered. Both the witness of the crime and police officer who was set to testify failed to show up in court that day, and the others involved owned up to their portion of the crime, granting Kenny only fines and no jail time.

“My attorney looked to me and he said, ‘It’s a miracle that you aren’t going to prison.’ And when he said that, it was a remembrance of the month before when I was sitting in the jail cell and crying out to God, making a promise,” exclaimed Kenny. From this point he knew he would have to make those changes he had promised to make.

His first goal was to finish high school. He had dropped out around the time he was kicked out of his home with only three credit hours. He had the option for a GED, but as one of the eldest in the generation of his family, he wanted to be an example and get his diploma. He now had the goal, but those influences which brought him down before were still holding him back.

One night while Kenny was out, his sister was sleeping in his bed and bullets began to fly through the window all around her. No one was injured, but as the next day dawned, he came home to over 30 shell casings and bullet holes covering the section of the house where he usually spent his time.

He looked over his room, seeing bullet holes in posters depicting violence and drug abuse and realized these influences and the associations with certain people were not only endangering his future and life, but his family as well. He then came to the conclusion that the first step in meeting his goal was to cleanse his life of those influences which brought him down.

Though he endured criticism for it, he made known his decision saying, “I have a plan and a purpose for my life and I am not going to waste it.” He cut out those people from his life and began to focus and work like he never had before. He needed 22 credits to graduate high school and did not want to spend three and a half years earning them, so he hit the books hard.

He enrolled in a program allowing him to attend school from 7:30 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. “When I got out of school, I would take home these great big books and have to read about five chapters, and then take a test online,” said Kenny as he remembered his studies. He would write the words “diploma” and “graduation” above his door, so when he woke up he would be reminded of his goal and keep himself motivated.

Each of his tests was worth a quarter of a credit, and after a year and a half of solid schooling without breaks or vacation, he had finished his high school education. He had completed his first major goal and tasted success. He then knew he could do anything and used this experience as the blueprint for all his future accomplishments.

His next goal was college. He attempted to get sport scholarships with several schools, but without a high school résumé and coaching, none would look at him. Eventually he got his shot while talking with Glendale Community College. It happened by chance they were doing a scrimmage while Kenny was visiting and they let him hit the court. He did not fail to impress and was signed soon after.

This was his first experience with a real team and actual coaching. It improved his knowledge of his body and abilities. He began to jump higher and gain a greater ability to dunk. He took these improvements to a local “Hoop It Up” dunk competition. He won this competition with ease.

Shaquille O’Neil’s cousin happened to be at that event and invited Kenny to compete in a dunk event in Los Angeles promoting Shaq’s new shoe, Dunkman. This was Kenny’s first time against major opposition.

As he stretched and readied himself for action he watched many opponents complete impressive dunks during the warm-up. He began to feel nervous and unconfident, dreading his turn on the court.

Inspiration came when the match began. He noticed the others were doing the exact same dunks in the main event they were doing in practice. He realized he had seen them at their best already and there was nothing else to expect from them while he still had many tricks up his sleeve.

After slamming down an off-the-backboard windmill dunk, “the crowd went crazy and these guys’ jaws dropped,” explained Kenny as he told how he won the event. “After that point, I realized, never doubt in myself again, never let somebody intimidate me to take me out of my game plan,” he continued.

As he emerged victorious, Kenny witnessed the excitement in the crowd, especially with the youth. He began to think about how he could impress and captivate audiences with his talents, and the potential he had with that attention. He thought of how dunking was the most attention-getting action in the game of basketball and explored the potential to intertwine his testimony with his talent.

While he was completing his high school education, he was also growing his faith in God by becoming involved in discipleship classes. This strengthened his faith, boosted his confidence and allowed him to begin spreading his words of encouragement to those who were currently in the negative situations he knew too well. At the age of 19 he became a youth pastor for Glory to the Lord Church.

He had continued working with troubled youth up to this point, steering them away from the kinds of ways he once knew and on to a path of success. He had done considerable work in the Phoenix area to forward his message, and as he won this particular completion, he realized the most effective medium he had to deliver it.

He resolved to become “the best slam dunk artist in the world.” With that title he would be able to travel many places, impress many people and most of all, spread his inspiration more than ever. With his next goal in mind, the climb to the top began.

Since that time Kenny has soared above the opposition, dedicated his body to training and his time to spreading his message of encouragement. He has sustained a considerable wrist injury that took months to heal, a leg injury from which some thought he would never completely recover, and a head injury he sustained from the rim during a competition which he went on to win; all experiences which he uses to illustrate how perseverance and hard work will overcome obstacles hindering progress.

He has played with teams overseas, performed in sold-out



Choctaw Nation: BRET MOSS

**Kenny kicks off his performance with a power two-handed slam dunk.**

arenas and won the armature slam-dunk contest at the NBA All Star Weekend. He had offers to play for big bucks internationally, sign contracts with sponsors, and offers to try out for professional basketball.

He has turned down these offers to be able to keep performing for youth so he can motivate them to stay in school and away from negative lifestyles. During the year of 2011 he devoted more time to Native American lands, attempting to help out those with a similar cultural background to his own.

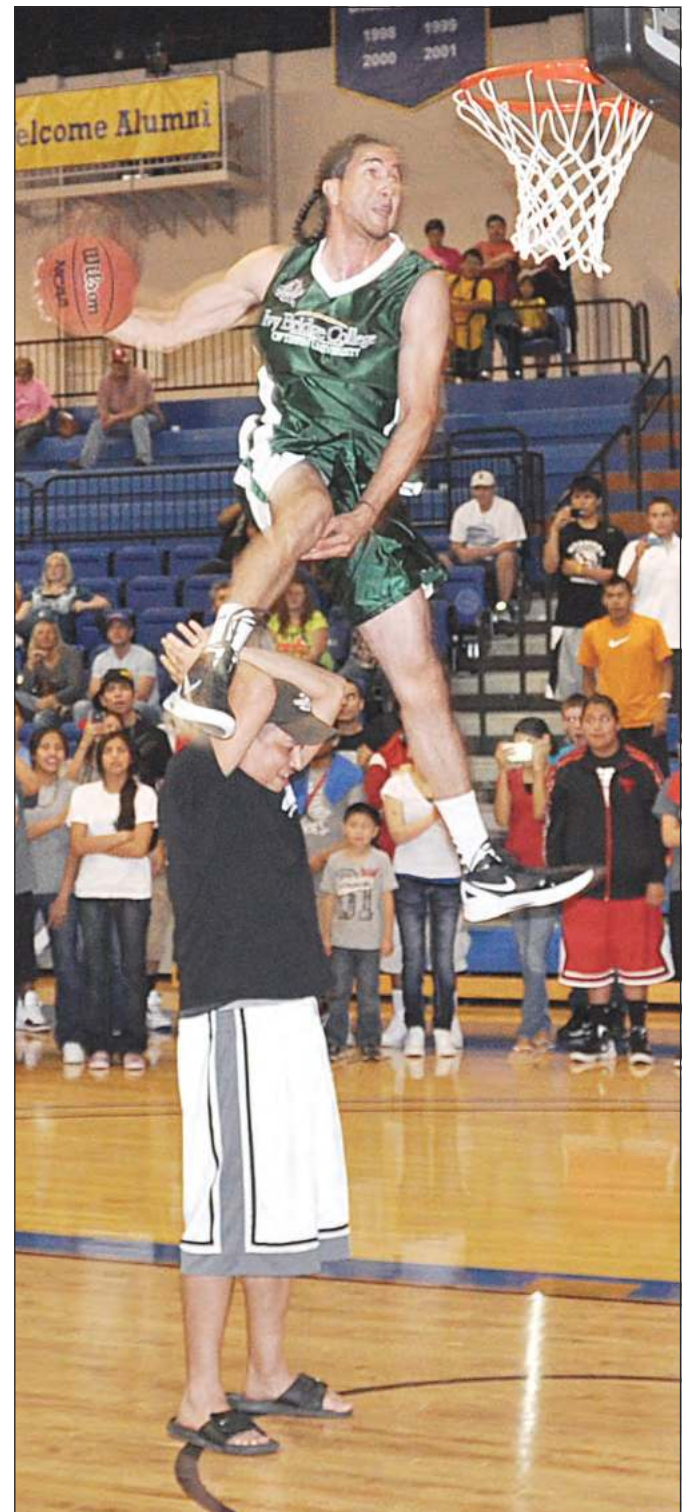
Now that he has been at this mission for some time, he is beginning to see his work pay off. The youth he has spoke to now contact him and let him know his influence helped their situation considerably.

“That is what keeps me passionate... no amount of money that I can get paid is going to be able to equal the sense of saving these young peoples’ lives and encouraging them,” said Dobbs “Hearing these stories is letting me know that I truly am having a huge impact in these young people’s lives and I wouldn’t trade that for anything,” he continued.

To pursue his goal of being the best basketball dunker, he postponed his college career for a time, but has recently enrolled with Ivy Bridge College and can take classes online anywhere he travels. He shares this fact to parents in the crowd at his shows, telling them it is never too late for education.

Kenny is a parent himself. He and his wife, Danae, are the proud parents of two daughters, Uriah, 6, and Audrina, 3. He takes delight in the fact that his daughters are showing promise in basketball much like he did during his youth.

Kenny hopes to finish his degree and become well versed in political sciences, noting that he is currently able to affect the youth by relating to them, steering them towards a positive path, but he desires to take on more responsibility in the policy aspect. He hopes with a better knowledge of the politics, he will be able to make situations like those of his youth less prominent among the youth of tomorrow.



Choctaw Nation: BRET MOSS

**Kenny makes the dunk after jumping over a fan and passing the ball between his legs.**

# Young Pickens' life splintered with heartache

## Choctaw overcame loss; enjoyed sports, rodeo and raising a family

Joshua Clyde Pickens, an elder of the Choctaw Nation, was born on Oct. 15, 1932, in the small town of Blanco, Okla., to Isaiah and Nora Carney Pickens. He was the eighth child in a family of nine.

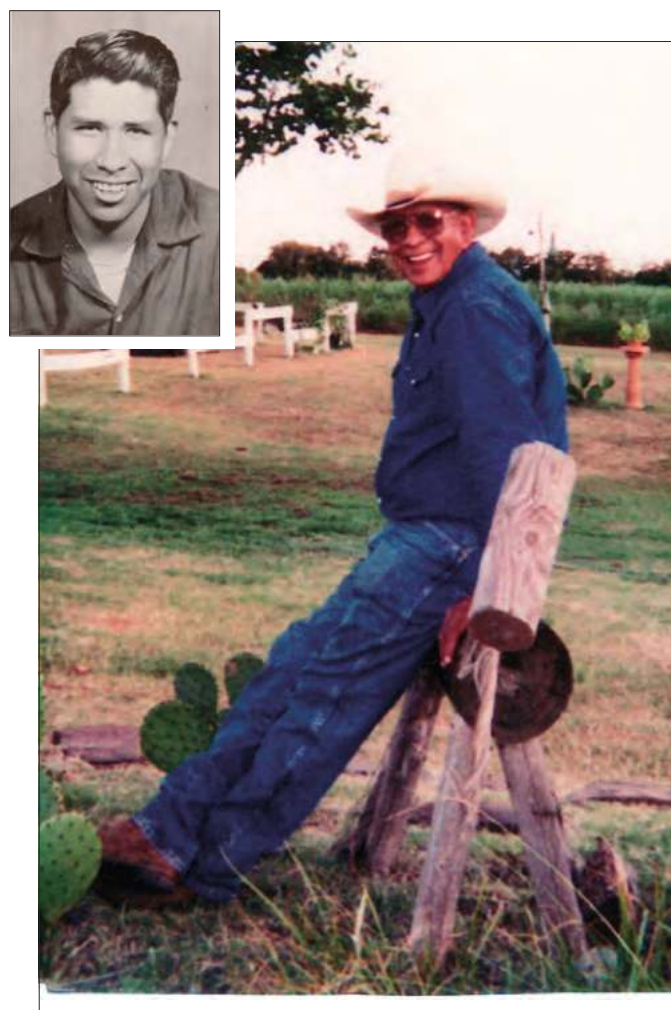
His young life was splintered with the heartache of family loss. Though he had many siblings, Joshua only knew three of his sisters, two of which passed away fairly young.

His mother left this life when he was 9 years old in the year of 1941. Joshua recalls that particular event with detail. He remembers hauling watermelons and his uncle, Edmond Fry, coming to get the ones of lower quality to feed his hogs.

Joshua and his younger sister, Murl, went to spend the night with him. Nora got sick that night, just a couple of hours before she passed away. Joshua remembers his father telling him his mother's last actions.

Isaiah told Joshua that she had washed clothes all day, and after they had both been asleep, she went for a drink of water in the night. When she got back to bed, Isaiah asked, "Are you sick?" He lit a coal oil lamp and she looked straight at him and said, "Tell the kids goodbye," and then she was gone.

It was about one or two in the morning when Joshua's neighbor, Melvin Isabel, came to his uncle Edmond's home and took them back to his parent's home. Melvin was the only one in the area with a car at this time. When they got home, people had come from all around in the



night to help out in any way.

When Joshua first began school, he attended Plainview in a one-room schoolhouse. He transferred to Jones Academy Boys School in Hartshorne after his time at Plainview.

At Jones Academy Joshua gained the nickname "Alligator" because he would wash his hands often and neglect to dry them well, resulting in chapped hands that looked like alligator hide.

Joshua and his friends enjoyed marble games while they were at school. They played the game "Cat's Eye" most of the time. Joshua describes this game by saying that the players would put marbles in a circle and whatever a player could knock out of a circle, he won.

He remembers that there might have been eight or 10 boys playing at one time, meaning that a skilled player could win a large amount. After some time, Joshua had a five-gallon bucket filled with marbles he had won.

At Jones Academy the students would go home on the more notable holidays and the summers. Joshua lived a little over 20 miles away and traveled by wagon back and forth from school for his summer travels.

During the holidays, the academy would take students on a truck to the Hartshorne bus station and those students whose parents lived close would be picked up by their mother and father.

Since Joshua was the only boy in his family, he was the only child to attend Jones Academy. He mentions that he might have been homesick if it were not for his good buddy, L.J. Brown, who was just a little older than he.

While at Jones Academy, Joshua stayed in the blue dorm. He remembers how it was three stories tall and that every floor sported a large room full of single beds. A lot of us could sleep in one of those rooms, said Joshua.

In the colder months, a boiler that set away from the

building heated the dorm. A large pipe ran from the boiler to the building that transferred the heat into the boys' rooms. Joshua recalls only getting "a little chilly."

Joshua was on the basketball team and played center because he was the tallest one. He did a lot of the shooting and rebounding for the team and was still called "Alligator" by his teammates.

He recalls that the basketball team was fairly good. They played teams from schools like McAlester, Wilburton College, Dow and Savannah.

Joshua said that they really had to hustle because there were boys on the bench better than the ones who started the games and they would have to work to stay on the court. He played a good amount of time in each game because he was tallest.

Not only did he play basketball, he also boxed while attending Jones Academy. There were about 15 or 20 boys on the boxing teams and Joshua was one of only two in the 135-pound class.

The team boxed at Hailyville, McAlester School and the McAlester Boys Club at the American Legion. Sometimes, while boxing at the Boys Club, they would have bouts with guys from the Oklahoma State Prison. "Some of those guys were men, not boys," but you box by weight, not age, said Joshua.

Joshua said he would get "pretty banged up" in some of his matches, but he never got knocked out. "I did that until I learned better, then I quit boxing," said Joshua as he recalled finishing his boxing days.

He spoke both the Choctaw language and English while at Jones Academy. His parents spoke both languages well and taught him to do the same.

Joshua left Jones Academy at the age of 13 and went back home to work on his family's farm in Plainview while also working various other farm-

ing operations.

On this farm, Joshua planted corn, cotton and high gear. He would use a team of two mules that his father owned to plow the fields. Sometimes the neighbors would hire Joshua and the team of mules to take care of their plowing needs as well.

His sisters, Mildred and Murl, were living at home during this time. They would attend school during the day while Joshua stayed home and attended the land. When the girls returned from their classes, they would help with the chores.

Along with the crops, there were hogs, milk cows and chickens from which the family got their eggs. He would work long days tending to these tasks and would often finish his work after the sun went down.

He would plow the field first, making the rows of corn go in the opposite direction of the high gear. He described high gear by saying that it comes in a pod like maize. "You can take the pods and hit them against a rock or each other and grain will scatter forth from them," he said.

Once the corn began to grow, he had to hoe between the rows and thin the corn. He could only plow a little between the rows, but the area near the plants needed to be hoed. Joshua remembers cockleburrs being high and the work being very hot at times.

As for the cotton, it was just Joshua in the field to pick it. "I picked the cotton out of the boles and more boles would grow back. Then I would pull the boles when they were just barely open," said Joshua.

He mentions that it was easier to pull the boles than to pick the cotton out of them. He could not wear gloves to pick the cotton and his fingers got stuck quite a bit, so his fingers grew tough from the work with cotton.

He farmed until he was 19 years old.

He would occasionally go

to Blanco, Okla., to attend party games. He recalls that many people would gather at a store or someone's house to play games. At these games would be a singer and all kinds of songs to which the people would dance.

These dances and party games would happen every Saturday night or after someone was married. There would be square dancing, jitterbugging and sometimes tap dancing, in which Joshua mentions that he had no part.

Joshua's future wife, Bertha Wilcox, attended these dances from time to time before the couple began their courtship. He had known her all his life since he met her at Shady Valley Church.

They were married in McAlester at the courthouse by a Justice of the Peace named Bailey. They did not tell anyone, but just went to town and got married.

After they became husband and wife, they went straight to work. They stayed at his father's house, who had become a preacher who worked at the Ammunitions Depot in Savannah during the week and preached on the weekends.

After about four years, they moved to the outskirts of Hartshorne and Joshua worked for Gene Sweet's Slaughter House in McAlester. His job was to skin the cattle. He was exceptional at this because his father had taught him these skills when he was younger.

He later went to work for Little Dixie Slaughter House, doing the same job but for better pay.

Joshua also enjoyed the rodeo throughout most of his younger life. When he was 15, he began riding broncos and bulls. He also roped an abundance of calves in those days. He did this until he was about 39 years old.

Joshua's rodeo skill rubbed off on his children and they are also well-trained to ride and rope. "We are a rodeo family," said Joshua describing his family.

## Annual walk to honor our ancestors

Chief Gregory E. Pyle, Assistant Chief Gary Batton and the Tribal Council would like to invite everyone to attend the 2012 Trail of Tears Walk to honor our ancestors who made the long journey from Mississippi over 180 years ago. Hundreds gather to pay tribute to the hardships suffered, the strength and endurance of the Choctaw who were removed from their homeland.

This year's commemorative walk will be at 10 a.m. on May 19 at the Tushka Homma

Capitol Grounds.

Please arrive early to park on the grounds. Buses will transport participants to the site of the beginning of the walk where there will be a short program before the Color Guard begins the walk.

The artwork on this year's T-shirt is adapted from the award-winning "Trail of Tears Night Journey" by Janie Semple Umsted.

A free lunch will be served to all who join us on this special day.

## Choctaw Day to be held in McAlester

"Choctaw Day" will be held 5-8 p.m. April 24 at the McAlester Expo Center. Everyone is invited to join the cultural celebration. Guest speakers will be Chief Gregory E. Pyle, Assistant Chief Gary Batton and Councilman Bob Pate. Activities include Choctaw hymns sung by the McAlester Seniors and Youth, traditional dancers, storytelling and flute-playing. Booth exhibits and demonstrations will be set up on pottery, language, beadwork, weaponry, the bookstore, museum, artwork, flute-making and stickball. Dinner will be served to all in attendance and the Kevin Priddle Band will close the evening's festivities.

## Wheelock Story

"The Wheelock Story," a 106-page book by Louis Coleman and Barbara Asbill Grant, is available for \$10 through the Wheelock Academy Gift Shop, 580-746-2139.

What we know today as Wheelock Academy was established as a mission station in 1832 by the Rev. Alfred and Harriet Wright.

The book begins with the Wrights' story and contains scores of photographs of students who once attended the girl's boarding school in McCurtain County. It also includes a roster of the graduates from 1941-1953 as well as rosters of employees.



## Code Talker information, photos needed

The Choctaw Nation is requesting information on the Choctaw Code Talkers of World War I and World War II. If anyone has any information or photographs they would like to share, please email to Lisa Reed in the Public Relations department at lisareed@choctawnation.com or mail to the Biskinik, Attn: Lisa Reed, P.O. Box 1210, Durant, OK 74702.

Photographs can be service-related or can be of the men at any stage of their life. They can also include their family. Information can include date and place of birth, date of death, schools attended, occupation, hobbies, descendants, any stories from their time served in the war, etc. Copies of obituaries would supply much of the needed information.

If mailing, please send copies of the original photographs or include address for photos to be returned. Digital photos need to be at least 300 dpi if possible. They can be jpg or tif format.

Information is also being updated on the family members. If you are a descendant of a Code Talker, we would appreciate having your contact information for our records.



### T-shirt Order Form

2012 T-shirts are white. Sizes available are:

Children - (2-4), (6-8), (10-12) and (14-16)

Adults - Small, Medium, Large, X-Large, 2X, and 3X

Item	Size	Quantity	Total Price
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T-shirt - \$10 ea.	_____	_____	_____
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Cap - \$10 ea.	_____	_____	_____
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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Price includes postage and handling. Limited supply of Children and 3X sizes.

To order, send payment (NO PERSONAL CHECKS) with completed form to:

**Trail of Tears Walk T-shirt**  
P.O. Box 1210, Durant, OK 74702-1210

## Wanted: Choctaw heirloom seeds

The Choctaw Nation will be hosting a traditional garden this year at Choctaws Days at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., June 20-23. We are trying to find heirloom seeds for Choctaw varieties of corn and beans to plant. If you have these seeds or know where we can find some, please contact the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department at 1-800-522-6170, ext. 2216.

# OBITUARIES

## Delia Taylor

Delia Janet Taylor, 77, passed away on Feb. 29, 2012, in Durant. She was born Feb. 10, 1935, in Little Cedar to Houston and Martha (Cole) Billy. Delia married Williston L. Taylor on March 24, 1957, in Antlers, and they remained married until his passing in 2005. Delia was of the Baptist faith and she loved spending time with her family and friends. She also enjoyed playing bingo, going to the casino, fishing, gardening and playing dominoes.



Delia was preceded in death by her husband, Williston L. Taylor; parents; brothers, Clarence Billy and James Ben; and sister Benita John.

She is survived by her children, Jay Taylor with wife Robin, and Regina Tedder with companion Randy Archey, all of Antlers; grandchildren, Robert Taylor, Timothy Taylor, Taylor Tedder, Jayden Tedder and Jacob Tedder; brothers, Harrison Billy of St. Louis, Mo., and Jimmy Jones with wife Paula of Tulsa; sisters, Sue Barnett with husband Clifford of Seminole, and Jean Middleton with husband David of Seagoville, Texas; as well as many other relatives and friends.

## Betty Crain

Betty Fay Griffin Crain, 78, of Hugo, passed away on March 4, 2012, in Dallas. She was born June 6, 1933, in Hugo, to Leon Griffin and Emma Ervin Griffin. She attended Hugo schools and started working at the new Hugo Hospital in the lab as a junior in high school. Betty was a member of the National Honor Society and graduated from Hugo High in 1951. After graduation she attended Gradwohl School of Laboratory Technique in St. Louis, Mo. Following graduation and certification, her first lab job was with Danforth Memorial Hospital in Texas City, Texas.



On Sept. 27, 1952, she married Arnold Crain in Freeport, Texas. She followed her husband to Roswell, N.M., where they began their family while Arnold served in the U.S. Air Force and Betty worked in a lab clinic. In 1956 they moved back to the Brazosport area where she worked as a registered lab tech at various labs and hospitals for many years. Betty enjoyed her time volunteering as den mother, classroom mom, Sunday school teacher, girl's softball coach and was awarded a lifetime membership in the Texas Parent-Teacher Association. After retirement in 1982 they returned to Choctaw County.

Betty began attending Wesley Methodist Church as an infant on the cradle roll. She later became a member of the William Anderson UMC-OIMC. She was active in the Choctaw County District and State Democratic Party, serving in many different positions. Betty was a proud member of the Choctaw Nation and volunteered for the Choctaw Seniors. In October 2011, she was nominated as outstanding Choctaw Elder for District 8. She had a love for researching her family's genealogy and authored a book titled, "The Roebuck and Spring Clans of Oklahoma."

She was preceded in death by her parents; her twin brother, Bill Griffin; her eldest brother, Edsell Griffin; and an infant granddaughter.

Betty is survived by her husband, Arnold Crain; three sons, Richard with wife Cheryl of Angleton, Texas, Wayne with wife Kelly of Cibolo, Texas, and Bill with wife Vickye of Richwood, Texas; grandchildren, Coy Crain of Houston, Callie Crain Hatcherson of San Marcos, Texas, Travis Crain of Marble Falls, Texas, Averi Fister-Crain, Colton Crain, and Haden Crain, all three of Cibolo; one great-grandson, Matthew Crain of Houston; sister Marie Klemme of Hugo; sister-in-law Sue Barnett of Hugo; numerous nieces, nephews and a host of other family and friends.

## JoAnna Taylor

JoAnna Taylor, 80, of Wright City, passed away on Feb. 28, 2012, at Select Specialty Hospital in Carrollton, Texas.



The daughter of Alexander and Agnes (Tims) Aaron, JoAnna was born June 10, 1931, in Fort Towson. JoAnna married Roberson Taylor Jan. 5, 1950, in Rufe. She was affiliated with the Chihowa I Chuka Assembly of God in Wright City. She loved to watch her kids play ball, read her Bible, go to gospel singings, work in her flower garden and spend special times with her family and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; son Herman Taylor; great-grandson, Kaden Cole Stafford; two sisters, Esther and Josephine; two brothers, Joel and Stephen.

JoAnna leaves to cherish her memory her husband, Roberson Taylor of Wright City; five children, Leon Taylor with wife Nora of Broken Bow, Ellis Taylor with wife Juanita, Bessie Nakishi with husband Alfred Jr., Rita Holt with husband Charles, all of Wright City, and Louella Crosby with husband Anthony of Philadelphia, Miss.; 23 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; and a host of nieces, nephews and friends.

## Allen Battiest

Allen Byron Battiest, 37, of Watson passed away on Oct. 26, 2011, at Heritage Gardens Healthcare in Carrollton, Texas. He was the son of Jimmy and Linda Lowman of Watson. He loved to listen to music, play basketball and spend time with his nephew L.J. and niece Layla when they came to visit. He also liked to hang out with his cousin Dewayne Lowman; two very special people he thought the world of were his aunt Shirley and uncle Jerry Lowman.



Allen's family are grateful to the people of the Choctaw Nation for all their help during Allen's time of need.

He is survived by his father, Haskell Battiest; brothers, Aaron Battiest of Oklahoma City, Jimbo Lowman of Midwest City, and Lyndon Lowman of Smithville; nieces, Chasity Aaron, Layla Denise Lowman and Jessamyn Aria Lowman; nephews, Channing Allen Battiest and Lyndon Andre Lowman; aunts, Jackie Lowman, Darlene Noahubi Barbara Battiest and Margaret Hernandez; uncles Leroy Lowman Jr. and Lewis Battiest; and several other family members and friends.

## Evelyn Shook

Evelyn Sophie Shook, 93, passed away on Sept. 3, 2011, in Sapulpa. She was born on March 24, 1918, to Davis Homer and Dora Folsom Homer in Keota. At the age of six she was sent to attend an Indian boarding school, which later caught fire and then she went to Sequoyah Indian Boarding School in Tahlequah, where she finished our her schooling. She moved to Tulsa and worked in childcare and house care for prominent Tulsa families. During World War II she worked at the McDonnell Douglas Aircraft Plant in Tulsa as a riveter. She also worked at Union Public Schools for some time where she was known for her humor among her co-workers. Evelyn married Truman School in 1948 and started a family of three sons and a daughter in Tulsa.



She was preceded in death by her parents; a brother, Jack Homer; and her husband.

She is survived by her sister, Irene Allen of Ada; sons, Wayne Shook with wife Judy of Pryor, Archie Shook with wife Denise of Tulsa, and Dan Shook with wife Joan of Cleveland, Okla.; daughter Kathy Blackler with husband Curtis of Tulsa; 13 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

## Brenda Skaggs

Brenda "Kay" Skaggs, 55, passed away on Feb. 29, 2012, in Ardmore. Kay was born May 8, 1956, to Billy Gentry and Rena (Lindsey) Gentry in Ardmore. Kay attended Ardmore schools and then went on to attend Ardmore Higher Ed. She worked at American National Bank drive-thru for nine years. She then moved to Texas and worked at the Day Resource Center for the homeless in Fort Worth for eight years. In 2006, she moved back to Ardmore to be close to her family. She loved to sew, was an avid reader and sports fan.



Kay was preceded in death by her father and one sister, Judy Diane Rowe.

She is survived by her mother, Rena Marsh, of Ardmore; daughter, Misty Lee of Ada; son Kelly Skaggs of Ardmore; grandchildren, Kayli Johnson and Hevan Skaggs, both of Ardmore; sister Theresa Gentry of Ardmore; brother Rick Gentry of Irving Texas; companion, Tim McLaughlin of the home; and her dog, BoBo.

## Vivian Hart

Vivian Hart, 79, passed away on Feb. 5, 2012, at the Kabul Nursing Home in Cabool, Mo. She was born on Feb. 6, 1932, in Mount Ida, Ark., to Willie and Myrtle (Parnell) Stickle. She grew up and attended school in Arkansas and Broken Bow. She later graduated from Cosmetology School. She was united in marriage to Wayne Hart on Aug. 31, 1979, in Flagstaff, Ariz. They moved to Mountain Grove, Mo., in 1982. Vivian enjoyed being outdoors, especially when gardening, helping out on their dairy farm and milking jersey cows. She was known as a good cook and made the best pecan pralines. She was a good seamstress. At the time of her passing, Vivian was a member of the Liberty Faith Church in Norwood, Mo. She enjoyed attending services as long as her health permitted.

She is survived by her loving husband, Wayne Hart of their home in Mountain Grove; brother Tommy Stickle with wife Brenda of Broken Bow; sisters, LaNora Wood of Broken Bow, and Sanartha Viars of Morton, Wash.; nieces, nephews, relatives, friends and church family who will truly miss her.

## Teresa Byington

Teresa Mae Byington, 61, passed away on Feb. 1, 2012, in Antlers. She was born to Lydia and James Byington on July 24, 1950, in Tahlihana. She was a licensed practical nurse receiving certificates from Kansas State Board of Nursing, Lawrence Memorial Hospital and Haskell Institute School of Practical Nursing.



She is survived by brother Jerome and Kwang Byington of Oklahoma City; nieces Annie Printers and Sue Lofie; nephews Jimmy Byington; cousins, Jerry, Wilma and Regina Walker of Albion, Pearlina McClure and son Steven with his daughter Marcy, Clara McClure and family, Kathleen McClure and family, Preston McClure and family, Christopher Martinzer and family, Patricia McClure of Lawrence, Kan., and Theresa Lewis (McClure); along with other relatives and friends.

## Johnny Frazier

Johnny L. Frazier, 70, passed away on Feb. 21, 2012, in Tahlihana. He was born May 6, 1941, in Finley to Isaac Frazier and Catherine (Walker) Austin. Johnny was a lifelong resident of the Antlers area. He had served his country in the U.S. Army in the 1960s. He also served his community as an officer for the Antlers Police Department, where he worked until his retirement. Johnny was a member of Old Cedar Methodist Church. He enjoyed fishing, hunting, gardening and spending time with his family and friends.



Johnny was preceded in death by his first wife, Margaret Johnson Frazier; second wife Vera Meshaya Frazier; parents, Isaac Frazier and Catherine Austin; stepfather Benjamin Austin; stepmother Anna Mae Frazier; stepdaughter Faye Jordan; granddaughter Miranda Johnson; brother Leon "Charlie" Edwin Austin; and a nephew, Dawson Primeaux.

He is survived by his brothers and sisters, Mary Dale Frazier, Ollie and Chuck Madbull, Tony Frazier, Donell and Elizabeth Frazier and Isaac Frazier Jr., all of Antlers, Eugenia and Custer Martinez, Dwight Austin, Rebecca Sapulpa, and Shelly and Cubby Greenwood, all of Finley, Oklahoma; his stepchildren, Howard and Lisa Johnson of LaVaca, Ark., Herman Johnson of Snow, Billy Joe and Ruth Ann Johnson of Hugo, Jerry Don and Shirley Johnson of Finley, Glenn Johnson and Marlene of Dallas, Robin Meshaya of the home, Stephanie Samuels of Muskogee, Kimberly Hoog of Muskogee, Tiffany Wilson of Antlers, Daniel Wilson of Soper, and Gayle and Scott Burr of Tahlihana; numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews; and many other relatives and friends.

## Lee Bench Jr.

Lee O. Bench Jr., 81, of Temple, Texas, passed away on Feb. 20, 2012, in his home, surrounded by family. He was born on Dec. 17, 1930, in Okmulgee. He was married Nov. 1, 1948, and remained married to his high-school sweetheart, Helen Ruth Casey, for over 63 years.



Lee attended Cherokee Junior High School in Turley and was a graduate of Tulsa Central High School. Lee retired for the first time in June of 1975, after serving 27 years in the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. He joined the Navy in December of 1947, serving as a Pharmacist Mate; however, twice during times of war, Korea and Vietnam, Lee wore a Marine uniform, bravely serving on the front lines as a corpsman (medic). He earned numerous honors, medals, and ribbons over the course of his highly decorated military career, including three Letters of Commendation and six Letters of Appreciation. Navy unit commendations with Star 2nd Award, Combat 1st Marine Division - Korea; Combat Action Ribbon with Marine FMF insignia, action 1953 with Marine Rifle Company - Korea; Navy Good Conduct Medal with one Silver Star and two Bronze Stars for 7th award; National Defense Service Medal with Star 2nd Award; Korean Service Medal with three stars and Marine FMF insignia; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal Cuba 1962 Surgical Team #17, 2nd Marine Division, on LST 1174; Vietnam Service Medal with two stars and Marine FMF insignia; Korea Presidential Unit Citation (PUC); Vietnam Presidential Unit Citation (PUC); Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation; Vietnam Civic Action Honor Medal Unit Citation First Class; United Nations Service Medal (Korea); Vietnam Campaign Medal with Device; and the Korean War Service Medal. After his years in the military, Lee worked another 20 years at Scott and White Memorial Hospital in Temple, Texas, retiring in February of 1996 as Supervisor of the Phlebotomy Section of the Clinical Pathology Department.

As a member of the Choctaw Nation, Lee was proud of his Indian lineage and honorably shared that heritage with his children and grandchildren.

Far and above any of these honors and accolades, Lee treasured most his relationship with his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He was a man of faith, a man who credited God alone for his safe return from dangerous times in foreign wars, and a man who desired above all else that his children and his children's children would know and walk with the Lord. He had a heart of generosity and a devotion to God's church. Lee served in a multitude of leadership positions, first at Western Hills Baptist Church in Temple, and later, after moving to Moody, Texas, at Liberty Hills Baptist Church, where he remained a member until he went home. Lee was an ordained Deacon (Oct. 18, 1987) and served in such roles as church treasurer, youth director, trustee, teacher, CEO, and chairman of many committees, including Deacons and Trustees. He often conducted church services in the pastor's absence.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Lee O. Bench Sr. and Nora Ollie (Collins) Bench; brother Marvin; and sisters, Neva and Mildred.

He is survived by his loving wife, Helen Ruth (Casey) Bench; sister Martha; brothers, Mervin and Kenneth; daughter, Brenda Ruth (Honeycutt) Bench with husband Bill; sons, Stephen Lee with wife Linda, Christopher Dean with wife Bonnie, and Paul Anthony with wife Jessica; nine grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; and three great-great-grandchildren.

## Lewis Moore

Lewis Daniel Moore, O.D., 59, of Lubbock, Texas, passed away peacefully at home on Dec. 25, 2011, surrounded by family and friends. He had been under hospice care for several weeks. He was born in Lubbock on Jan. 5, 1952, to Eunice Frances (Gardner) Moore and Webb Moore. He graduated from Monterey High School and Texas Tech University with a B.A. in chemistry. He was a drummer in the Bitter End band during his college years. He graduated from Southern California School of Optometry in 1978. He was licensed to practice optometry in California, Arizona and Texas.



He began his practice in Lubbock in 1978, and later opened a satellite office in Post. He conducted weekly clinics at the Lubbock State School for more than 30 years. In 1999, he joined other optometrists in successfully lobbying the Texas Legislature to amend the Optometry Act to create certifications in therapeutic optometry and glaucoma optometry. He became one of the first Texas optometrists to qualify as a therapeutic optometrist and as an optometric glaucoma specialist. He was the first optometric glaucoma specialist in the region to obtain a GDx scanning laser nerve fiber analyzer for the early detection of glaucoma. He was a member of the Texas Optometric Association. His patients voted him Best Optometrist in the Best of Lubbock survey.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

He is survived by sons, Daniel Webb Moore of Istanbul, Republic of Turkey, and Nicholas Allen Moore of Austin; stepdaughter Mary Elston Pressler with husband Nate, of Hurst; sister Carolyn Frances Moore with husband Ralph H. Brock of Lubbock; his business partner, Meredith M. Schneider, O.D., of Lubbock; and his good friends, Jim and Sue Childress of Ransom Canyon.

## Sina Stephens

Sina (Cole) Stephens, 85, passed away on Feb. 16, 2012. She was born on Nov. 24, 1926, in Antlers to Forbis and Sophina (German) Cole. She attended the Goodland Indian Boarding School until her senior year. She moved to Oklahoma City and graduated from Classen High School in June 1947. Sina married Robert Garland Lang of Oklahoma City in January of 1947. He passed away in January of 1957. She later married Elmer Ernest Stephens of Porum, and they moved to Arpelar from Oklahoma City in 1987. She was proud of her Choctaw heritage.



Sina is survived by four daughters; Laraine Dean with husband Robert of Arpelar, Anita Carson with husband Roger of Choctaw, Tammy Von Leue with husband Dean of Florida, and Candace Stephens of Texas; eight grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren.

# Madness in March

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma hosted the 9th Annual Madness in March All-Indian High School Basketball Tournament in Durant for the second year in a row. More than 600 Native American student-athletes participated in the tournament held at South-eastern Oklahoma State University's campus from March 21-25.



Photos by LISA REED and BRET MOSS  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Choctaw Nation: LARISSA COPELAND

## Choctaw Nation helps town of Calera 'go green'

Choctaw Nation Recycling has joined forces with the town of Calera to facilitate recycling among its residents. On March 22, 2012, a new recycling receptacle, or "roll off," was placed at the corner of 3rd Street and Ryan Avenue and is open to residents for dropping off recyclables. Pictured from left, Joey Scott, Calera police reserve; Justin Tillery and Cyndi Houser, Choctaw Nation Recycling; James Eaton, mayor of Calera; James Burnett, Calera board trustee; and Donnie Hyde, Calera police chief.

## Choctaw Nation teams up with Coca-Cola for rain barrel making workshop



Photos by BRET MOSS | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

All the rain barrel workshop participants pause for a photo.



A group from Bryan County Master Gardeners work together.



Melissa Robinson and Cyndi Johnson team up to complete a barrel.



Durant Mayor Jerry Tomlinson and Tracy Horst put the finishing touches on a barrel at the rain barrel making workshop.



Tracy Horst shows off her rain barrel.

## NRCS announces poster contest for 2012 American Indian Heritage Month

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recognizes and celebrates the many different cultures to which we have the opportunity to offer our services and programs to, including American Indians.

The month of November is designated by NRCS as American Indian Heritage Month. This provides an opportunity to make people aware of the history of American Indians and their contributions to the world.

One way NRCS celebrates on a national level is to sponsor a contest for American Indian artists, with the winning artwork being produced into a poster and distributed nationwide. This year, the South Central Region was selected to compete in the contest which includes Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. The winning entry will have his/her artwork and heritage recognized nationally.

Below is information for those who may be interested in submitting an entry. One piece of artwork will be selected and used for the 2012 NRCS American Indian Heritage Month poster.

Details are as follows:

- All Tribal residents within the South Central Region are invited to submit their artwork
- There is no age limit
- Submit one original artwork, size 18x24 inch, acrylic or oil on canvas, ready for reproduction
- The title for the artwork will be "Conservation: Our Past, Present, and Futures"
- The theme for the artwork will be "Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and I may not remember. Involve me and I'll understand"
- A story describing the artwork must accompany the poster
- Notification to enter contest must be received by May 25, 2012. Contact Dr. Carol Crouch: phone 405-527-3241 ext. 108 or email carol.crouch@ok.usda.gov

crouch@ok.usda.gov

• Artwork must be received by June 1, 2012. Submit to the attention of Tom Lucas:

USDA, NRCS State Office  
Office of Public Affairs  
100 USDA, Suite 213  
Stillwater, OK 74074  
Phone: 405-742-1244

• A selection committee will judge the artwork and select a winner no later than June 15

• NRCS will purchase the artwork from the winning artist for \$2,000, and have the right to reproduce and distribute copies of the artwork at its discretion

• NRCS and the selected artist will sign a contractual agreement to set forth the terms of procurement and rights of the two parties

This is a great public awareness opportunity for the artist and the Tribe. Copies of the poster will be distributed and displayed to all NRCS offices in the 50 states plus the Caribbean and Pacific Basin areas. For additional information, contact Dr. Carol Crouch at 405-527-3241, ext. 3 or carol.crouch@ok.usda.gov.

NRCS is an equal opportunity provider and employer. All programs and services of NRCS are provided in a nondiscriminatory manner. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

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# Making a Choctaw war arrow

Last month's edition of Iti Fabvssa described different types of Choctaw traditional arrows and their uses. Some of these arrows are beautiful in their own right, but to really appreciate them, one needs to know what was put into making them. This month's edition will describe how to make a Choctaw war arrow using stone tools. Arrow-making is both an art and a science, and the process highlights some important elements of traditional Choctaw knowledge. While this knowledge is too complex and interrelated to be fully represented in this article, we hope to provide readers with a glimpse.

For Choctaws, arrow-making was traditionally done by males. As mentioned last month, the shafts of Choctaw war arrows were made from either river cane or wood. Although both processes are similar, making a wooden arrow will be the focus here. Wood species commonly used by our ancestors for arrows include yaupon holly, swamp dogwood, sourwood, and sparkle berry. These woods make excellent arrow shafts because of their hardness, stiffness, and tendency to produce shoots that are relatively straight and free of branches. Generally, the straightest shoots are found in areas of thick plant growth, where young trees must grow straight up to the light. Wildfires will also encourage straight growth.

Shoots are selected based on their size and lack of large branches, which would produce knots inside the wood. Although small and gradual bends in the shoots are okay, shoots with sharp, hard bends should be avoided. It is best to cut material for arrow shafts in the winter, while the sap is down, so that the wood will cure faster and with less cracking. If the shoots are harvested in the summer, they are cut extra long to allow for cracking on the ends.

Our ancestors harvested shoots for arrow shafts using a small, sharp stone flake to cut a groove all the way around the base of the shoot. This created a weak place, which could be used to break the shoot off, rather than sawing all the way through. Usually, arrows were made in matching batches.

The shafts, while green, should be carefully straightened by hand. The arrow-maker sights down the shaft to find a crooked spot. He then uses his hands to apply firm, even pressure to bend the crooked spot straight. The arrow-maker continues straightening out crooked areas one at a time, until the whole shaft is straight. Although this green wood can be made directly into arrow shafts, dry, seasoned wood is better. The straightened green shoots can be tied into a tight bundle and set aside for several months to dry. Pressure from the other shafts in the bundle helps them to keep their straightness.

After the shoots have dried, they should be given a second straightening (Fig. 1). They can be coated in animal fat and then held over hot



Fig. 1

**Top to bottom: the process of straightening a sapling into an arrow shaft.**

coals. The grease from the fat keeps the wood from burning, and helps distribute the heat to the center of the wood. The heat makes the wood temporarily limber, so that it can be bent straight. After it cools, it will remain straight. One crooked spot is straightened at a time, until the arrow is straight like a dowel rod.

The straightened arrow shafts next need to have their bark removed, and to be thinned to the point that they have just the right stiffness to match the draw weight and draw length of a particular bow. This was traditionally done using a spokeshave, made from the sharp edge of a mussel shell, or from a flake of stone with a half circle chipped out of the edge. Some old Choctaw arrow shafts are barreled. This means that extra wood is removed from both ends of the shaft, while the middle is left thick. Having extra material at the center of the shaft conveys an important ballistic advantage, allowing an arrow to be both lightweight and stiff, helping it to fly farther and faster.

In the past, arrow shafts were rubbed between two blocks of sandstone (Fig. 2). The even pressure from the two stones will make the circumference of the shaft extremely circular and even. Once sanded and evened out, the shafts were sometimes also rubbed hard with a smooth stone or deer antler to compress the wood cells. This "burnishing" can create a smooth, almost mirror-like finish in the wood, improving arrow flight, and helping the arrow to comfortably glide over the archer's bow hand when he shoots.

Usually, the tip end of traditional arrows is



Fig. 2

**Arrow shaft with two sandstone blocks used to smooth it.**



## Iti Fabvssa

made from what was the top end of the sapling as it was growing. This is because the top of the plant is more likely to grow with bends in it than is the base. Over time, straightened sections of arrow-shafts can warp back towards the sapling's original form. If warp has to occur, it is better for it to occur near the tip where it can easily be straightened out again, rather than at the base, where it will be covered by the feathers and difficult to re-straighten.

Often, designs were painted on the shaft, so as to be under the feathers on the finished arrow. These painted designs helped identify which arrows belonged to which individuals during war, communal hunting, or archery contests. The paints were often made from crushed up colorful rocks, mixed with glue. Black and red seem to have been the most common colors.

The arrow point is "hafted" or attached to the arrow shaft through a process known as "achoshuli" in the Choctaw language (Byington 1915:10). Cutting a deep notch directly in a wooden arrow to receive either a stone arrowhead or the bowstring can be extremely time-consuming using stone tools. The end grains of the wood quickly break and dull the brittle edge of the stone. However, ancestral people developed an ingenious way to make a notch in an arrow shaft using only four shallow cuts and a special breaking technique (Fig. 3).

Stone arrow points were usually cemented into the notch in the arrow shaft using pitch glue made from tree sap mixed with charcoal and other materials, or using hide glue made by carefully rendering animal hide scrapings and tendons. Once cemented in the shaft, the point was firmly bound to the shaft using plant fibers or shredded animal tendon dipped in glue. Several inches of the shaft are also wrapped to reduce the risk of the arrow breaking on impact (Fig. 4).



Fig. 3

**Process for scoring and breaking out an arrow nock with stone tools.**



Fig. 4

**Hafting a copper arrowpoint (made with stone tools) to an arrow using deer tendon.**

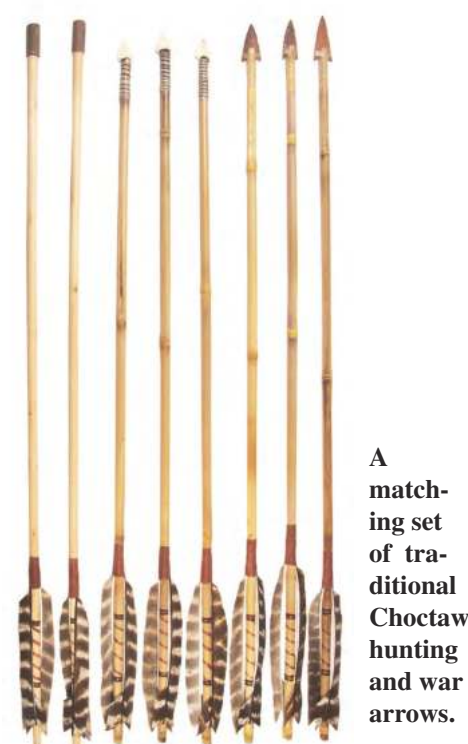


Fig. 5

**A matching set of traditional Choctaw hunting and war arrows.**

Putting feathers on the end of an arrow, a process known as "fletching" in English or "hotti" in Choctaw (Byington 1915:169), adds drag to the back end of the arrow. This keeps it from tumbling in flight. The curvature of the feathers also causes the arrow to spin, producing a gyroscopic motion that allows the arrow to travel in straight path over long distances.

Surviving early Choctaw arrows have several different fletching styles. One, is the typical "radial" fletching, where the halves of three feathers are spaced evenly around the arrow shaft, in such a way that one of them is perpendicular to the notch made in the arrow for the bow string. Turkey wing feathers seem to have been the most common choice. The feathers chosen must all be either from the left or right wing of the bird, so that they have the same curvature. Turkey wing feathers can either be split down the length of the quill, or stripped by a simple motion with the hands that detaches the vanes on one side of the feather with a thin strip of the quill. In either case, the ends of the feather pieces are trimmed so that they have a short tab of bare quill, which can be wrapped and glued down to the arrow shaft. For added durability, the quill can be glued to the shaft down the full length of the fletching.

Making a set of matching, well-balanced arrows is a difficult task, but well worth it. Today, there is nothing quite like putting a well-made traditional arrow on a bowstring and watching it smoothly blast into the sky, traveling so fast and arcing so high that you nearly lose sight of it. To our ancestors, the consistency and accuracy of these arrows was a major deciding factor in whether or not a man would be able to consistently put meat on the table, and protect his family from attack. Old surviving Choctaw arrows show that they did indeed put a lot of themselves into the art.

Note: This article is excerpted from Chahta Intikba Im Aikhvna (Learning from the Choctaw Ancestors) by Ian Thompson (2008)

## Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna

### ◆◆◆ Lesson of the Month ◆◆◆

We have question and answer sets this month. The epsilon character, represented with a "v" in these lessons, makes the "ah" sound as in "sofa." The Choctaw "a" sound, as in "katimma" sounds "a" as in father.

#### Katimma ish amiti?

Where are you from?

Word meanings:

**Katimma** – where  
**ish** – you  
**amiti** – from

The Choctaw language does not have a word to match the English word "are," however, we insert it for correct English translation. "Ish" is a pronoun for "you" and always precedes a verb.

**li** – I

"li" is a pronoun that always comes after a verb.

**amiti li** – I am from

Complete the Choctaw sentence by naming the town or city where you are from.

*Example:* Detroit amiti li. I am from Detroit.

Tvmaha chito amiti li. I am from the city.

Choctaw Nation amiti li. I am from Choctaw Nation.

#### Katimma ish vtta?

Where do you live?

Word meanings:

**Katimma** – where  
**ish** – you  
**vtta** – live, stay, reside

The pronoun "ish" always comes before a verb. The Choctaw language does not have a word to match the English word "do," however it is understood and inserted when translating to English.

**li** – I

The pronoun "li" always comes after a verb.

Ex. Tvmaha vtta li. I live in town.  
Hugo vtta li. I live in Hugo.

**vtta li** – I live at/in

Complete the sentence by naming the town or city where you live.

You can insert color/size of house, county, or street name.

*Example:* Chukka homma vtta li. I live in a red house.

Bryan County vtta li. I live in Bryan County.

Elm Street vtta li. I live on Elm Street.



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

The age 9-13 boys and girls groups take aim during the Choctaw Nation's first bow shoot of the 2012 season at Tushka Homma.

## Choctaw Nation Bow Shoot season opens

The Choctaw Nation held its first Bow Shoot of the season March 10 with 26 participants. Results of the competition are:

Age 5 & under: 1<sup>st</sup>, Calvin Palmer; 2<sup>nd</sup>, Shyla Hatcher; 3<sup>rd</sup>, Elden Palmer.

Age 6-8: 1<sup>st</sup>, Memree Hatcher; 2<sup>nd</sup>, Lorna Breshear.

Age 9-13 Boys: 1<sup>st</sup>, Jager Sokolosky; 2<sup>nd</sup>, Robert Breshear; 3<sup>rd</sup>, William Breshear.

Age 9-13 Girls: 1<sup>st</sup>, Madi MacDonald.

20 and Over Women: 1<sup>st</sup>, Feticity Hull; 2<sup>nd</sup>, Christine Waugh; 3<sup>rd</sup>, Holly Croghan.

20 and Over Men: 1<sup>st</sup>, Brad Hooker; 2<sup>nd</sup>, Tim Taylor; 3<sup>rd</sup>, David Bacon.

The Bow Shoot will be held on the second Saturday of each month on the capitol grounds at Tushka Homma. Registration begins at 10:30 a.m. with competition beginning at 11 a.m. A free lunch is provided.

Long bows, recurve bows, self bows, commercial or handmade, can be used. No compound bows are allowed.

Prizes for each age group will be awarded at the end of each shoot. A final prize will be awarded at the end of the year for the most points overall. The season ends with the last shoot on Nov. 10.

For more information, call Pam Waugh at 918-569-4552.



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

While at the bow shoot March 10 at Tushka Homma, Cathey Hooker helps her 1-year-old grandson, Wyatt Kinslow, get the feel of his bow and arrow made by grandpa Larry Hooker. Larry also made many of the adult ones used in the bow shoot.

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