

# Tribal employee attends State of the Union

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma has been chosen as an example of how the Recovery Act is working in America. Housing Authority employee Deborah Powell, whose position with the tribe is funded 100 percent by stimulus funds, was invited to sit in First Lady Michelle Obama’s box as the President of the United States gave his first State of the Union address on Jan. 27.

“We are very excited for Debbie and honored that one of our employees has been invited to attend such a prestigious event,” said Chief Gregory E. Pyle. “The National Congress for American Indians recognized our efforts to participate in the Recovery Act, to provide more jobs and to ultimately improve the economy in Southeastern Oklahoma.”

Chief Pyle attended the State of the Union as the guest of U.S. Congressman Tom Cole.

NCAI works hand-in-hand with federal programs and was able to provide the White House with the information on how the Recovery Act is succeeding in Indian Country.

The invitation was extended to Pow-



DEBORAH POWELL

ell because she is an example of how federal stimulus funds have retained and provided jobs in rural America. The Housing Authority has received two awards totaling over \$8 million through the Native American Housing Block Grants program. The grants are targeted primarily toward building additional Independent Living Homes for low-income Choctaw senior citizens. The construction plans were a perfect fit for Recovery Act allocations.

Dante Desiderio, NCAI Economic Development Policy Specialist for NCAI, spoke with Powell and her executive director, Russell Sossamon, on Jan. 26 at the NCAI building in Washington, D.C.

“The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma was chosen because of the cultural aspects and the fact that this project has been over 10 years in the making,” Desiderio said of the tribe’s project to build Independent Living communities for its elders. “It really affects three generations.”

As Development Specialist, Powell tracks how the stimulus funds are being spent. She tracks bids and advertisements for bids as well as following the contracts and their completion dates.

“I am so proud to be representing the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma,” said Powell. “Our program has helped reduce the unemployment rate in the area. It has made it possible to give our elders a safe community to live in. We are beginning construction in four sites across Southeastern Oklahoma – 19 additional homes in Poteau, 15 in Hugo, 12 in Talihina and nine in Idabel.

Bids open in February for 15 additional homes in Durant.”

“As a result of the Recovery Act, construction continues in the Choctaw Nation,” said Sossamon. “We are able to continue Chief Pyle’s vision of achieving self-sufficient lifestyles for Choctaw tribal members. We have two Independent Living communities located near schools, one at Jones Academy and one at Idabel where the elders live in an area behind the Choctaw Nation Child Development Center that houses a day care and head start. This provides many opportunities for the youth and elders to interact. It is good for our kids to see how we respect our elders.”

Moving to Oklahoma from her home state of Arizona, Debbie and her husband, Billy, live in Fort Towson. A former railroad dispatcher, she began working for the Housing Authority in 2007 but as funding ended for her position in Maintenance, Modernization and Rehabilitation (MMR), she had transferable skills and was able to move to the Development Program.

The Powells’ whirlwind trip to our Nation’s capitol will never be forgot-

ten.

Billy was allowed to accompany his wife as far as the White House on the night of the State of the Union. They attended a small reception before Debbie was whisked by motorcade amid blazing lights and sirens to the U.S. Capitol Building.

“It was so awesome,” she said. “I had my picture taken with President and Mrs. Obama. It was a very emotional moment for me. I never imagined that I would one day be standing in the White House.” Debbie said that the President and First Lady were very gracious, making their guests feel comfortable and welcome.

Billy was invited to stay in the theater at the White House with a small group who watched the State of the Union address on a large screen. He saw his wife standing behind Mrs. Obama, saw her shake the First Lady’s hand, and heard the President as he spoke of how important small businesses and jobs are to our country.

“We can put Americans to work today building the infrastructure of tomorrow,” said President Obama.

## Choctaw Nation offers aid to Haiti

During the week of Jan. 18-24, reaching out a hand to fuel your car at a Choctaw Nation travel plaza meant reaching out a hand to aid in Haiti relief efforts. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma responded to the need with pledges to donate one week of fuel profits from all of its Travel Plazas.

Each Travel Plaza was also a donation site for those who wished to give more.

“Many of our employees and our tribal members asked how to help,” said Chief Gregory E. Pyle. “The devastation is catastrophic. We’ve watched the news every day, wondering how the small, impoverished country of Haiti can ever recover from such a disaster.

“Choctaw people have big hearts. We want to reach out,” he said.

A total of \$11,230.76 was raised from the Choctaw Nation Travel Plazas located in Atoka, Broken Bow, Durant, Garvin, Heavener, Grant, Idabel, McAlester, Pocola, Poteau, Stringtown and Wilburton.

The Durant Resort also hosted a special Bingo game, bringing in \$1,250.40. The tribe matched the amount to give a total of \$2,500.80 to the relief efforts.

Resources report that most relief organizations are not seeking material items or volunteers at this time, but need monetary donations. The money received during these special fundraisers was donated to the Red Cross for Haiti. The Red Cross’ focus is feeding, sheltering and supplying basic needs for victims.

### ◆ What’s inside

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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.

# Choctaw Nation to participate in National Rulemaking Committee for No Child Left Behind

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma was recently honored when a Tribal representative was appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior to participate in the No Child Left Behind School Facilities and Construction Negotiated Rulemaking Committee. Joy Culbreath, Executive Education Director for the Choctaw Nation, has joined with 21 other tribal representatives who will work together for the next two years to prepare and submit reports regarding BIA-funded school facilities. When asked for comment, Mrs. Culbreath replied, “I am honored to serve on this committee and my hope is that we will develop policies that will positively impact the lives of American Indian children in all parts of the United States.”

“I would like to see every child have the same opportunity to learn,” she said.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 directed the Department of the Interior (DOI) to improve education in Indian country, review the process for prioritizing repair and replacement of Indian education facilities, and ensure that Indian people are involved in review of the DOI’s prioritizing process.

The committee has the task of preparing a catalog of BIA-funded school facilities and issuing a report concerning school replacement and new construction needs. The committee will develop a formula for the equitable distribution of funds to address those needs. They will also determine major and minor renovation needs.



Albuquerque served as the location for the first meetings, which began on Jan. 5, featuring introductions, committee rulemaking and organization, and initial information.

A graduate of Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Culbreath began her career in education at her Alma Mater in 1967. She worked with a variety of programs during her 27 years at Southeastern including several federal TRIO programs such as Upward Bound, in business education and as an advisor in the counseling center.

Culbreath retired from Southeastern but not from education. Soon after leaving Southeastern, she began building an adult education program for the Choctaw Nation. One of the most successful programs instituted by the tribe, it has grown from 19 students earning GEDs in 1993-94 to over 100 graduates annually. Culbreath was appointed executive director over all the Choctaw Nation’s educational programs in 1997.

“Joy is accepting this challenge in the same manner she has many other tasks, with a determination to ensure that no child is ever left behind,” said Chief Gregory E. Pyle. “She has spearheaded many of our greatest accomplishments such as constructing a state-of-the-art elementary school on the grounds of Jones Academy, developing an exemplary language program, and devising numerous top-quality programs to serve all ages, from early childhood through higher education and adult education.

“The committee is lucky to have Joy on board,” he said.

# What you need to know about the 2010 U.S. Census

The Census, an official count of the population of the United States, is required by federal law to be taken every 10 years. To get this count, the Census Bureau sends out questionnaires. Most forms will be mailed to your house, but sometimes a Census Bureau employee will visit your home to ask the Census questions. Your information is the key to an accurate count/census.

“Our tribal members need to be aware that to be counted as a Native American household, they must put the full name of the tribe – Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma,” said Chief Gregory E. Pyle. “If there is a Choctaw member and a non-Choctaw member, the Choctaw member needs to be listed as head of household for the family to be counted as Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.”

Every year, more than \$400 billion in federal and state funds will be allocated to tribes, states, and communities based on census data.

How and where that money is spent depends on census numbers. For example:

- Tribal, state, and local governments use census information to make decisions about Indian education, health care, and job training. Census information also helps determine locations for schools, roads, hospitals, child care and senior citizen centers, and more.

## Native American households

Each individual who responds to the census decides on his/her racial identity. Native Americans are also asked to provide the name of their principal or enrolled tribe. The full name of the tribe must be given, such as “Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.” If the full name does not fit in the space given, continue the name outside of the space, like this:

**CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA**

If the full name of the tribe is not given, the Census Bureau cannot give the correct tribe credit for that tribal member.

For the household to be considered a Native American household, the first person listed on the form must be Native American.

- Businesses use the numbers to decide where to locate factories, shopping centers, and banks.
  - These numbers are based on information about children, the elderly, underemployed, and unemployed.
  - The development of public transportation systems and traffic control are based on where people work and live.
  - The U.S. Congress uses the census totals to determine how many seats your state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- Census information is confidential and cannot be shared with any tribal officials, tribal police, tribal courts, local or federal government agencies including but not limited to the IRS, FBI, BIA, Welfare, or Immigration. *This is*

*the law. No one* can get this information.

Federal Law (Title 13, United States Code) mandates that no one outside the Census Bureau can ever be given any information that would enable them to connect your answers with your name and address. Violation of Title 13 will result in a fine of \$250,000 and/or a five-year prison term.

**What do you need to do?**

The most important thing you can do is to fill out and mail back the questionnaire.

Census questionnaires are mailed directly to housing units that have house numbers and street name addresses – in other words, housing units that receive regular postal delivery.

See CENSUS on Page 2

### How to identify a census taker

If a U.S. Census Bureau employee knocks on your door, here are some recognition tips to assure the validity of the employee:

- \* The census taker must present an ID badge that contains a Department of Commerce watermark and expiration date. The census taker may also be carrying a bag with a Census Bureau logo.
- \* The census taker will provide you with supervisor contact information and/or the Local Census Office phone number for verification, if asked.
- \* The census taker will ONLY ask you the questions that appear on the census form.

### What the 2010 Census DOES NOT Ask

- \* 2010 Census takers will not ask you for your social security number, bank account number, or credit card number.
- \* 2010 Census takers also never solicit for donations and will never contact you by e-mail.



Seeking info on old photo

We would like to have any information available on this picture – what year it was taken, where it was taken, and if any of the people can be identified. After the information is received the picture along with all of the information will be turned over to the Museum. Please contact Melissa Feters, 580-326-1501 or mfeters@choctawhousing.com. Thank you.



A beautiful heritage

**Dear Choctaw Nation,**  
I read the Iti Fabyssa article about pottery and really enjoyed it. My grandmother’s grandmother gave her a handmade “adobe” necklace of roses when she was nine years old, which would have been in the early 1900s. It is amazing after 100 years and five generations it is in such great condition. It is an heirloom to be treasured, made by my Choctaw Indian great-great-grandmother. I hope your pottery classes will encourage others to carry on this beautiful heritage.

**Reta Graham  
Lowell, Ark.**

Thank you for holiday donation

**Dear Choctaw Nation,**  
Happy New Year and Yakoke to Councilman Mike Amos for donation of the turkey and ham for the Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner sponsored by Abundant Life Center in Pickens, Okla. We are happy to report that it was a huge success. Praise the Lord and thank you very much! May God bless you and your family with an abundant and prosperous New Year!

**Joyce Baker**

Tribal member expresses gratitude

**Dear Choctaw Nation,**  
I would love to express my gratitude to the Choctaw Nation for all of the help I have received, especially to Tela from the Housing Authority, to Councilman Anthony Dillard, and to Tanya Bess. They have been so considerate and helpful. I am so proud to be a Choctaw. Thank you and God bless you.

**Toni and Tony Hyatt**



**Are you ready to purchase a new home?**  
The first step in the home-buying process is attending a  
**Homebuyer Education Class**

Come to one of our Homebuyer Classes nearest you to learn the important steps in the home-buying process. You will become more aware of the benefits and risks associated with owning your own home. We make the process fun and educational, so call us for an appointment today! To register, call Debbie Childers at 1-800-235-3087, ext. 297, for one of the following classes:

- |               |                                     |           |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| • February 9  | Antlers Choctaw Community Center    | 4:30 p.m. |
| • February 11 | Talihina Choctaw Community Center   | 4:30 p.m. |
| • February 16 | Coalgate Choctaw Community Center   | 4:30 p.m. |
| • February 18 | Broken Bow Family Investment Center | 4:30 p.m. |
| • March 4     | Durant Family Investment Center     | 4:30 p.m. |
| • March 9     | McAlester Choctaw Community Center  | 4:30 p.m. |
| • March 11    | Poteau Family Investment Center     | 4:30 p.m. |
| • March 17    | Wilburton Choctaw Community Center  | 4:30 p.m. |

*Gregory E. Pyle  
Chief*

*Gary Batton  
Assistant Chief*

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The BISHINIK is printed each month as a service to Tribal Members. The BISHINIK reserves the right to edit submitted material which it finds inaccurate, profane, offensive or morally unacceptable. Copy may be edited for proper grammar and punctuation. Copy will be accepted in any readable form, but where possible, it is requested that material be typewritten and double spaced. You must include an address or phone number where you may be reached. Due to space limitations and the quantity of article submissions, we are unable to include everything we receive.

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

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BISHINIK® 2010

A father’s thank you

**Dear Choctaw Nation,**  
Thank you for the support of our troops, and especially for the care packages sent to one rough, tough combat soldier – my son, SSG Mike D. Davis, US National Guard 1-221 CAV.

**Mike Davis Sr.**

Wheelchair is a blessing

**Dear Chief Pyle and the Choctaw Nation,**  
Thank you all so much for funding for our son’s new wheelchair. Jon is a seven-year-old with several severe disabilities, and this chair should be a tremendous blessing in his life. His mother and I are very appreciative for the wonderful gift of this new chair. Thanks again for the help you give to us and other Choctaws. We would like to give a special “thank you” to Julie Phillips and the Choctaw Nation EDH Program.

**Jim, Emily and Jon Roebuck  
Hooker, Okla.**

Sharing photo

**Dear Choctaw Nation,**  
We would like to share a photo of the granddaughters of original enrollee Edna McCann Patton, great-granddaughters of original enrollee Cornelius McCann Sr. – Julienne, born Jan. 12, 1943, and Barbara, born Feb. 8, 1942. Our family is very proud of its heritage and look forward to the BISHINIK each month so we can keep up on the news of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

**Julian Patton Jr.  
Sparks, Nev.**



Seeking information

**Dear Choctaw Nation,**  
I am writing to see if Ada Alice Logsdon Clark could have been a relative of mine. Ada’s name is on Page 11 of the April 2008 BISHINIK in the Virginia Lee Bond Grider obituary.  
My father, George Addison Logsdon, had a sister named Ada Logsdon. He was born in 1892 in Coalgate. His parents were Fannie Mae Mannsfield (or Mansfield) Wheeler and George Thomas Logsdon. Grandma Fannie Wheeler Logsdon was born in Jefferson County, Missouri, and Grandpa George Logsdon was born in Kentucky or possibly Missouri.  
If anyone has any information, please contact me. Thank you.

**Florence Hessen  
4204 S. 21st St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85040**

A world of difference

**Dear Choctaw Nation,**  
I would like to thank the children of the Choctaw Nation for their gifts to our troops! My son is not in that unit, but is in the Army and was in Iraq until recently. I can tell you that it makes the world of difference to our troops! God bless the children and all the people of the Choctaw Nation.

**Sally J. Plant**

When Turtle Grew Feathers

*A folk tale from  
The Choctaw Nation*  
By Tim Tingle  
Illustrated by Stacey Schuett  
**Price: \$17**



Please send check or money order to:

**Choctaw Nation Book Store**  
P.O. Box 1210, Durant, OK 74702

www.choctawschool.com  
www.choctawnation.com

For VISA or MasterCard orders call toll-free 888-932-9199

Book store hours are  
Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Shipping: Add \$4 for first book. Additional books add \$1.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Helping family at time of loss

**Dear Choctaw Nation,**  
On the 20th of December, I lost my daughter, Ruth Murray. Her heritage comes from her father’s side of the family. My grandchildren were at a loss at what to do, so they went to the Choctaw Nation for help. Thank you, thank you. You helped without hesitation, only with open arms. Never had I seen a smile until then. A relief of “I am not alone anymore” was with them, and they were not. May I add as the mother, that I have pride in her heritage and a deep respect for the Choctaw Nation. Again, thank you from all our hearts.

**The Quicks and the Murrays**

Letter of appreciation

**Dear Choctaw Nation,**  
Being a Native American Choctaw man from the Durant area where the Tribal Headquarters are located, I have seen such a vast, progressive movement take over the area. Everywhere you look in this area it is multiplying with industry, construction, employment and education opportunities, and more resources and programs to assist our Choctaw people. Our Great Seal of the Choctaw Nation represents us everywhere. It’s so apparant that Chief Greg Pyle is such a great leader and the future of our people is guaranteed success. I would respectfully like to acknowledge Charlene Grunstad for her commitment and dedication to serving our people with such understanding and personalization. I also want to thank Emma Prince for her assistance and determination to solve any problem for those who need help with medications. The Social Services Department is very fortunate to have Clinton Rogers. His dedication has to be recognized. And Robyn Counce for helping me make my education goals a reality. These employees have the heart to make a person feel more comfortable in asking for assistance. I am battling a cancer diagnosis and their assistance is of great appreciation. My respect goes to the tribe and the other employees of the Choctaw Nation.

**Kevin Guerue**

Schauer receives master’s degree

**Dear Chief Pyle and the Tribal Council,**  
Thank you ever so much for the financial help you’ve extended to my son, Eli Schauer, towards both his bachelor’s degree and his master’s degree. It was a great help and very much appreciated!  
Eli is the second great-grandson of original enrollee Thomas Jay McAlvain; great-grandson of the late Lois McAlvain Pugh of McAlester; grandson of Curtis and Janet Pugh of Bocsa, Romania. Having passed all of his exams, Eli graduated in December from Oklahoma State University.

**Ruthie McLellan  
Glasgow, Scotland**

CENSUS Bureau ready to help

Residents are asked to fill out questionnaires and mail them back to the Census Bureau. Mailout/mailback is between March 15 and April 15.  
Update leave, between March 1 and April 10, is an enumeration method primarily used in rural areas. It is a way of reaching households that do not have addresses with house numbers and street name addresses. Enumerators visit these households and leave questionnaires for residents to fill out and mail back to the Census Bureau.

The Census Bureau is ready to help. There are Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QAC) staffed to provide assistance to persons who may have questions about completing the census questionnaire, need special language assistance, have questions about the census, or did not receive a questionnaire.  
Be Counted sites provide an opportunity to be counted for people who may not have received a census questionnaire, are not living in a regular house on Census Day, and those individuals who believe they were not included on the questionnaire returned from their household.

UNCLAIMED FUNDS

The Accounting Department of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is trying to contact the individuals listed below. Choctaw Nation is in possession of unclaimed funds that may be due to these individuals. If your name is listed below, please contact:

**The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma  
P.O. Box 1210  
Durant, OK 74702  
Attn: Kristin Pate, Payroll Accounting Clerk  
or phone 580-924-8280, ext. 2269**

Margaret Allen  
William Andrews  
Patty Baker  
Amanda Beatty  
Leta Bellgard  
Gary Blackerby  
Jody Bush  
Modesty Butler  
Earvin Campbell  
Elizabeth Carter  
Becky Chandler  
Jonny Collum  
David Cook  
Kristopher Cooper  
Edna Courtois  
Marsha Covington  
Deborah Davis  
Laura Ann Dollar  
Bobby Faulkner  
Olin Wade Fenton  
Henrietta Garcia  
Nickolas Gray  
Cheryl J. Grosfield  
Beau Hall  
Britney Nicole Harrison  
Kayla Heskett  
Jennifer Nicole Hill  
Hollie Hodges  
Sierra Holcomb  
Shannon Nicole Jackson  
Kristi James

Raymond Jeffries  
Nichole Jenson  
Aimee Jones  
Kimberly Jones  
Jessika Lee Kearns  
Bonnie Kent  
Bonnie Kirks  
Thomas Lanier  
Thomas Lowry II  
Audra Manker  
Andrea Martinez  
Stormie Martinez  
Robin McCollom  
Delyssa Miller  
Heather Mize  
Trevor Morton  
Debbie Raper  
Cody Rich  
Richard Rivera Jr.  
Sandra Robbins  
Paul Samuels  
Ashley Shipman  
Julie Simeroth  
Linda Smith  
Stephanie Smith  
Cody Steidley  
Marinda Taylor  
Jessica Tenequer  
Kylee Trent  
Jonathan Ward  
Lisa Wood



# New program through Natural Resources



From the Desk of Chief Gregory E. Pyle

A growing concern of tribal members regarding mineral rights, including oil and gas, has been brought to my attention. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is starting a new outreach program through our Natural Resources Office. This program will assist individual Choctaw citizens with mineral interest related questions within the Choctaw jurisdictional area. The tribe plans to have four meetings during the upcoming year. The first meeting will be in March at the McAlester Community Center. The date and time for that and locations for other meetings will be announced in the near future.

Be sure and watch the BISHINIK and [www.choctawnation.com](http://www.choctawnation.com) for the dates and places if you are interested in attending these meetings. We hope you will join with us to share in the information that is available. Your cooperation and involvement will expedite the growth of this new Outreach Program to assist our Choctaw citizens.

For more information, you may call 800-522-6170, ext. 2263. We look forward to addressing your concerns.



## Keithley honored on birthday

Troy Keithley celebrated his 83rd birthday on Jan. 16 surrounded by family and friends. Choctaw Nation Color Guard Terry Loman and Alto Battiest presented Keithley with a medallion and jacket for his birthday. Keithley was presented a flag by Durant Mayor Jerry Tomlinson in honor of his service during World War II and the Korean War. Mayor Tomlinson also presented Keithley a proclamation that declared the day “Troy Keithley Day” in Durant.

## Essay winners are named



The top three essays have been named for the Choctaw Nation’s Youth Advisory Board Essay Contest. First place is Preston Wells, awarded \$250, pictured with Chief Gregory E. Pyle; second place, Amber Pool, awarded \$150, pictured far left; and third place Jessie Blackwell, awarded \$75, pictured with Chief Pyle. The essays on “Growing with pride, hope and success” will be featured in the March, April and May issues of the BISHINIK.



## Census count is very important to tribe

From the Desk of Assistant Chief Gary Batton

During the month of March, you will be hearing a lot about the U.S. Census Bureau. I strongly encourage you to be very thorough when filling out the section about RACE. Please make sure and claim your tribal heritage. It doesn’t matter if you are only a little bit of blood quantum, it is still great that you can claim your tribe on the Census form. If your tribe is Choctaw, YOU HAVE TO write Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for it to count. The Census will be completed in April.

If a Census worker comes to your door, they will have appropriate identification with them. Most of us will have the Census forms mailed to us. It should only take about 10 minutes to fill out the Census form, and it is a great benefit to the tribe, to the state and to all who



do grants, research and statistical gathering of information to have an accurate count. Please take the 10 minutes to fill out and return the Census form that will come to your home!

It is very important that you be counted as Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma! This issue of BISHINIK has additional information on the 2010 Census on Page 1.

## Learn the secret of daily victory

The Bible teaches that a life of inward rest and outward victory is a Christian’s birthright. Christianity was never meant to be something to make people miserable but rather something to make them happy.

Yet for many people the Christian life is not an entirely joyous affair. Someone has said, “You Christians seem to have a religion that makes you miserable. You are like a man with a headache. He does not want to get rid of his head, but it hurts him to keep it.”

Some of you remember the day you gave your heart to Jesus Christ. You were sure of victory then. How easy it seemed! You said as the apostle Paul said in Romans 8:37, “... in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

Yet how different has your real experience been? Victories have been few and defeats many. You have not lived as you believe children of God ought to live.

You may believe in Jesus Christ and even talk about Him, but He is not filling you with His presence hour by hour.

Many have taken Jesus Christ as their Savior from the penalty of sin, but have yet to experience His power from sin.

The joy of Christian experience is gone. In the depths of their hearts many believers know that such defeated living is an embarrassment to those who are engaged in Christian service.

We Christians preach and talk of the power of Jesus Christ, yet never really have that power to be a real testimony for Him.

It is written in the Bible that the early church was filled with the Holy Spirit in those days, without Bibles, without church buildings, or automobiles. Christians turned their world upside down for their Lord. They were powerful! They lived their

## Chaplain’s Corner



Rev. Bertram Bobb  
Tribal Chaplain

and yet you know that there are things in your soul that are not right. You attend church, you try to pray, but you are living in continuous defeat. You do not have the complete and constant victory that is promised in the Bible.

The unsundered Christian stands condemned for what he does not do more than for what he does. He is not concerned about the souls of men. This concern of his life marks the difference between himself and the consecrated Christian. He may be willing to fight and argue, but when it comes to faithfulness he is not there.

Instead of being understanding, many Christians are going about with magnifying glasses, looking to find a mote in somebody’s eye, not realizing that the beams in their own eyes are blinding them to their own spiritual condition. (Matthew 7:3-5)

May God have mercy upon us, forgive our sins and set us on fire for Him in this desperate time we are living.

Today, Jesus Christ is calling Christians to cleansing, to dedication, to consecration, to full surrender. Your response will make the difference between success and failure in your spiritual life. It will revolutionize your habits, your prayer life, your Bible reading, your giving, your testimony and your church relationship.

If you are a Christian and have been suffering defeat, or have been outside of the will of God, or do not know the power and the joy that Jesus Christ can bring, will you commit, yield every area of your life to Him? Give yourself wholly to God through Jesus Christ.

Discover what it is to walk in the way of Christ. It is true that many Christians need to know the secret of victory. But it is true that thousands have never committed their lives to Him.

Right now, today, by faith, you can accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and be born again into His family. “Jesus answered and said ... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3)

Remember to pray for Haiti: Rescue and Recovery. Pray for America and for our brave men and women in armed service.

lives daily for the glory of God. They gladly suffered persecution, and even death, for their faith in Jesus Christ.

Today’s Christians are not living up to the standards set by the early church. If we are to rise to the level God desires for our witness for Him, it will have to be done by a church whose individual members have yielded their lives completely and fully to Jesus Christ.

Unbelievers are confused as they see the strife within and between religious bodies. Instead of seeing a growing, powerful, Christ-centered church, they see divisions, jealousy and spiritual laziness.

The great need today is for Christians to learn the secret of daily victory over sin. Too many are burning up their energy in struggles within themselves.

Paul the apostle spoke of his struggles desiring to please God, but of not being able to do so.

The things he did not want to do he did, and the things that he wanted to do, he did not do. Nearly driven to despair, he cried out in Romans 7:24, “... who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

And he immediately records God’s answer to that important question in Romans 7:25 when he said, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord ...”

Jesus Christ is the answer and He is the Deliverer.

Today you may be thinking within yourself, “Why as a Christian do I do some of the things I find myself doing? Why do I as a Christian leave undone things that I ought to be doing?”

You claim to be a Christian,

**Bertram Bobb**  
**Bible Camp**  
**2010**  
**Spring**  
**Teenage Retreat**  
**March 12-14**  
**For information**  
**on this year's camp**  
**please call**  
**Travis Bankester**  
**Camp Director**  
**580-981-2647**

## YAB members attend Council meeting

There was standing room only as more than 100 members of the Youth Advisory Board attended the regular session of the Choctaw Nation Tribal Council in January. To be a member of YAB the students are required to attend a school board meeting, a city council meeting and a tribal council meeting. Schools represented included Antlers, Battiest, Bennington, Bethel, Boswell, Broken Bow, Clayton, Heavener, Hodgen, Howe, Hugo, Idabel, Soper and Talihina.

Council Speaker Delton Cox welcomed the students, praising the group for having an interest in tribal government. He encouraged them to read a copy of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma’s Constitution. A copy is available on the Web site [www.choctawnation.com](http://www.choctawnation.com).

New business addressed during the meeting included:

- Approval to develop a comprehensive, coordinated plan needed to assess the danger and impact of flooding, tornadoes, high winds, lightning, wildfire and other natural hazards. The tribe has been awarded a \$135,000 Hazard Mitigation



Sergeant-at-Arms Sylvester Moore directs Youth Advisory Board students to available seating or standing room in the Council Chambers on Jan. 9.

Grant Program planning grant to prepare a Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Choctaw Nation.

- An application to the U.S. Department of Justice for a Transitional grant which provides individuals who are fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or sexual assault with safe housing and support services such as transportation, counseling, child care, case management, employment counseling, and other assistance.

- An application to be made to the U.S. Department of Education for the Indian Children

Demonstration Grant – Project IKHVNA (to learn). This will assist the Choctaw Nation in its goal to increase the achievement levels of American Indian children through developing and testing of effective services and programs.

- An application to the U.S. Department of Justice for Tribal Courts Assistance Program.
- Funding for road improvement through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Redistribution Fund in conjunction with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Reservation Roads Program.

## A work of love

Mike Rose of Bureson, Texas, watched the interview of Chief Gregory E. Pyle after the Choctaw Nation was presented the country’s Freedom Award. He was proud and moved that his tribe was recognized for all that they do for veterans and he was reminded of all that veterans have done for us.

“I wanted to make something for others to see, to remind us that we should never forget the sacrifices of our veterans.”

Rose donated a beautiful beadwork veterans memorial headdress to the Choctaw Nation. He is pictured with Assistant Chief Gary Batton and Chief Pyle and the artwork that took him over 100 hours to create. It holds original military service medals from World War II, Vietnam, Korea and Iraq as well as a rare pin of the 108th Army Infantry Division of WWII who were “ready in war or peace.”





# Choctaw Nation Head Start now recruiting

The Head Start program of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is recruiting prospective students for the 2010-2011 school year. Although the program accepts applications year-round, each year, beginning in January, a concerted effort is made to identify children who might be eligible for the unique services provided by Head Start. Families of children who will be three, but not five, years old by Sept. 1, 2010, are eligible to apply.

This program serves children from three to five years of age. Our program serves children of all nationalities, although we do have a Native American preference policy. The Head Start program is directed primarily toward low-income families.

Families of children with special needs are encouraged to apply. The Head Start program assists families in obtaining needed support services for your special needs child.

Choctaw Nation Head Start provides families with assistance in their efforts to obtain educational, health and social services. The program provides a nutritionally sound breakfast and lunch each day.

For more information and to obtain an application, contact the Choctaw Nation Head Start centers in Antlers, Atoka, Bennington, Broken Bow, Coalgate, Durant, Hugo, Idabel, McAlester, Poteau, Stigler, Wilburton and Wright City.


You may also contact the Durant Administration office at 800-522-6170, ext. 2353.

# What your baby needs to thrive

You do not have to be a child development expert to give your child a great start. Here are seven simple steps to help your baby reach their full potential.

- Show your love. Evidence shows that love, attention and affection have a direct impact on a child’s physical, emotional and mental growth. You can show love by responding to your baby when he/she cries (this is not spoiling), hugging, smiling, touching, encouraging, listening and playing with them.
- Care for your child’s basic needs. This includes making sure they eat, get sleep, are changed regularly and are comfortable. This also includes making sure your baby goes to all well-baby checkups and is up to date on their immunizations.
- Talk and read to your child. Talking to them about what you’re doing (no baby talk) and reading will help build their vocabulary and language skills.

- Stimulate all their senses. Make sure your home is child safe, but allow them to explore safe things and stimulate all of their senses by letting them feel, see, hear, smell and taste things. They learn this way, but do not over stimulate them or they will become overwhelmed.
- Encourage new challenges. Let your baby problem solve and try things for themselves. If they cannot figure it out after a few tries, show them how and let them try again.
- Take care of yourself. If you are feeling drained and depressed, it will be harder for you to respond to your child’s needs. Therefore, seek advice if you feel depressed and help split up responsibilities with your partner or have a support system that will help you with various tasks.
- Find good child care. If you are working, make sure to find an experienced, caring and reputable child care that can do all these other things when you are not around.



**Choctaw Nation  
AFL Project**

The Choctaw Nation Adolescent Family Life (AFL) project is an innovative program focused on pregnant teens, their child, male partner and extended family members. The AFL program provides opportunities for a brighter future through integrated services within the Choctaw Nation and other agencies.

Participants will expand their knowledge through prenatal education, relationship enhancement programs, and parenting workshops. Striving for healthy outcomes in adolescent family lives is our program goal.

Services are provided through Choctaw Nation Outreach Services to pregnant Native American teens under 19 years of age or otherwise qualified through an eligible Native American.

For more information or questions about eligibility please call Angela Dancer Project Director at 877-285-6893

## The Green Life

Unless you’re switching to a more energy-efficient model, it’s usually better to repair a broken appliance than to replace it. But there’s a lot you can do to prevent breakdowns in the first place and extend your appliances’ life.

**Tip 1: Microwave maintenance**

Keeping your microwave clean by covering food can make it last significantly longer. The vapor released when the food cooks permeates the machine’s interior and can, over time, cause problems. Vapor also transfers grease and residue, resulting in rust and corrosion. As for bags of popcorn? Put them on an inverted bowl or plate. They contain foil strips that can warp the turntable.

**Tip 2: Dishwasher defense**

Wait until you have a full load of dishes before running the dishwasher; this will not only save you money on energy and water bills, but can also extend the life of your appliance too. Also, skip the pre-rinse. Most dishwashers today are powerful enough to get dishes clean without it.

**Tip 3: Freezer fix**

A freezer that contains too much frost cannot function at its best; whenever frost gets to be 1/4-inch thick in your freezer, it’s time to defrost. Also, fill it up! Help it consume less energy by keeping it full. It requires less energy to cool a full freezer than an empty one.



## NURSERY NEWS

**Brycen Tyler Shannon**

Heather Denise Shannon proudly announces the birth of her son, Brycen Tyler Shannon. He was born at 2:46 a.m. on Nov. 26, 2009, Thanksgiving Day, at the Choctaw Nation Health Care Center in Talihina. He weighed seven pounds six-and-a-half ounces and was 19 inches long.

His grandparents are Brad Shannon of Longtown and Jamie Kelly of McAlester. Paternal great-grandparents are Paul and Linda Shannon of Pittsburg. Maternal grandmother is Ruby Tomlinson of Holdenville and special aunt Jen Hilton of Shawnee.



**Nathan Reece Shutik Padilla**

Nathan Reece Shutik Padilla was born at 1:45 p.m. on Dec. 29, 2009, at the Carl Albert Indian Hospital in Ada. Nathan weighed seven pounds 15.6 ounces and was 19.5 inches long.

Proud parents are Sarah Davis and Joel Padilla. Proud brothers are André and Darian Davis and proud sister is Elizabeth Padilla, all of Ada.

Paternal grandparents are Maddy and Pipe Padilla of Levittown, Puerto Rico.

Maternal grandparents are Bernie and Mike Davis of Durant.





## 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., Thurs. & Fri. 1st, 3rd & 4th Wed. 1st Tuesday
Bethel	580-241-5458	8:30-4:00	1st & 2nd Friday
Boswell	580-380-2517	8:30-4:00	Mon., Wed., Thurs. & Fri. 2nd, 3rd & 4th Tuesday
Broken Bow	580-584-2746	8:00-4:30	2nd Wednesday
Coalgate	580-927-3641	8:30-4:00	Daily
Durant	580-924-8280 x 2255	8:00-4:30	Mon., Tues., Wed. & Thurs. 3rd & 4th Friday
Hugo	580-326-5404	8:00-4:30	Mon. & Fri., 1st & 3rd Thurs. 1st/2nd week - Mon., Tues. Wed., Fri.; 3rd/4th week - daily
Idabel	580-286-2510	8:00-4:30	Daily
McAlester	918-423-6335	8:00-4:30	2nd Thursday
Poteau	918-647-4585	8:00-4:30	Every Wed., Thurs. & Fri.
Smithville	580-244-3289	8:30-4:00	Every Monday & Tuesday
Spiro	918-962-5134	8:00-4:30	Every Tuesday & Wednesday
Stigler	918-967-4211	8:30-4:00	1st & 2nd Thursday
Talihina	918-567-7000 x 6792	8:00-4:30	
Wilburton	918-465-5641	8:30-4:00	

# Healthy eating - whole grain facts

## WIC

**How much whole grain is recommended?** Based upon the health benefits associated with whole grains, a minimum of three servings (one ounce equals one serving; one slice of bread is one serving) and a maximum of seven. The amount of servings depends on how active you are, and if you’re a child or an adult, male or female. Currently, only about seven percent of the population is reaching this goal.

**Identifying whole grains in the store.** Packaging and appearance can be deceiving when it comes to identifying whole grain products. Some tips are to look for the word “whole” or “whole grain” first on the ingredient list. Ingredients are listed in order of greatest to least quantity by weight of the product. Dark color is not a fail-safe indicator that the product is whole grain. Words such as “multi-grain” or “stoneground” are not indicators of a whole grain product. Also, watch for “natural” on the label. This does not necessarily mean that the product is whole grain.

**Tips to increase your whole grain intake:**

- Start your day with a whole grain breakfast cereal.
- Switch from white bread to whole grain bread.
- Use brown rice instead of white rice.
- When baking, substitute whole wheat flour for half of the white flour.
- For snacks, try popcorn, brown rice cakes or yogurt parfaits made with low-fat granola. (whole oats)
- Add rolled oats to homemade cookie batter.
- Add rolled oats to meatloaf instead of bread.

For more information on whole grains and health, visit the following website: <http://www.wholegrainscouncil.org/>

# February is teen-dating violence awareness month

February is teen-dating violence awareness month. In March 2006, Liz Claiborne Inc. conducted a survey on the issue of teen-dating violence to gauge the degree to which teens have been involved in abusive/controlling relationships and to understand youth perception regarding what is and is not acceptable behavior in a relationship. The findings were shocking! The results show that alarming numbers of teens experience and accept abusive behavior in dating relationships. Many teens feel physically and sexually threatened.

- One in five teens who have been in a serious relationship report being hit, slapped or pushed by a partner.
- One in three girls who have been in a serious relationship say they’ve been concerned about being physically hurt by their partner.
- One in four teens who have been in a serious relationship say their boyfriend or girlfriend has tried to prevent them from spending time with their family or friends.
- One in four teens who have been in a serious relationship have been pressured to only spend time with their partner.
- One in three girls between the ages of 16 and 18 say sex is expected for people their age if they’re in a relationship.

**Is this abuse?**

Do you sometimes wonder if the things happening in your relationship are normal? Does the way your boyfriend or girlfriend treats you bother you? These are some questions that may help you decide if your relationship is healthy or not.

Do you: ever feel guilty about having your own friends

and interests? Often feel pressured to spend time with your boyfriend or girlfriend when you’d rather do something else? Keep opinions or concerns to yourself to make things easier? Change your behavior to avoid fighting with your boyfriend or girlfriend?

Does your boyfriend or girlfriend: get jealous when you talk to friends of the opposite sex? Complain about or try to control what you wear? Call or text you excessively? Push you to do things you aren’t sure you want to (like sex, drugs)?

If you feel your relationship is not healthy or if you have questions regarding a healthy relationship please call the National Teen-Dating Abuse hot line at 866-331-9474.

*Choctaw Nation Project SAFE is “Striving for an Abuse-Free Environment!”*

Pictured from left, Jones Academy students Amelia Osife and Melanie Crutcher.

## Choctaw Nation GED Classes

Choctaw County	Pittsburg County	McCurtain County	Haskell County
March 1, 2010	March 1, 2010	March 2, 2010	March 2, 2010
Mondays and Wednesdays	Mondays and Wednesdays	Tuesdays and Thursdays	Tuesdays and Thursdays
1:30-4:30 p.m.	1-4 p.m.	1-4 p.m.	1-4 p.m.
Choctaw Nation Community Center	EOSC	Choctaw Nation Family Investment Center	Choctaw Nation Community Center
408 N. ‘M’ St. Hugo, Okla.	McAlester Campus 1802 E. College Ave. McAlester, Okla.	Broken Bow, Okla.	Hwy. 82 Stigler, Okla.

The classes will meet two days a week for approximately three months. 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 at 800-522-6170 or 580-924-8280 ext. 2319 or 2122. Also, you may register at the first class. A Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) is required.



# PEOPLE YOU KNOW

## Kingfisher robotics team advances to world competition

Hunter Bonham, a ninth grade Choctaw member and son of Virgil and Rhonda Bonham, is on his way to compete in a world competition with his Kingfisher High School First Tech Challenge/robotics team in April at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, Ga.

Hunter is a programmer/engineer and team leader for the robotics team for the school. He programmed the robot to move and perform tasks that allow the robot to score points. The Kingfisher team - RoboStingerZ - qualified for the trip by finishing first with their alliance and winning the Inspire Award, the highest award that all teams can win, giving them an automatic invitation.

The qualifying competition was held at the Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford and it was Kingfishers first time to compete. Seven countries will compete in their division and they are now looking for sponsors and raising the funds needed to make the trip to the FTC Hot Shot World Competition.



The Kingfisher High School FTC/robotics team

## Happy 90th birthday

Jim Freman Hearon celebrated his 90th birthday to on Jan. 22, 2010. His children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandson send him a happy birthday and the best birthday wishes.



## Happy birthday, Linda

Linda Stroder of Oklahoma City celebrated her birthday on Aug. 17. Wishing their “Nanny” a happy belated birthday are her great-grandson, Tyler Pitts, and granddaughter Shayna Stephens.



## Happy first birthday

Tyler Wayne Thomas Pitts of Newcastle celebrated his first birthday on Jan. 15. He is the son of Shayna Stephens, grandson of Wayne Stephens and great-grandson of Linda Stroder, Pat Stephens, Carl Bond and Doug Pickelsimer.



## Happy birthday, Shayna

Shayne Stephens of Newcastle celebrated her birthday on Aug. 26. Her father, Wayne Stephens, grandmother Pat Stephens and “Nanny” Linda Stephens wish her happy belated birthday.



## Gunner turns two

Gunner Paul Wilkins turned two on Jan. 21, 2010. He lives in Danville, Ark., with his parents Paul and Susan Camp-Wilkins and big brother Lawson. His grandfather is “Poppa” Joel Camp of Mead.



## Happy 11th birthday

Elicia Ray, daughter of Brianna Ray and Samuel Pawnee of Tulsa, celebrated her 11th birthday on Jan. 19. She is a fifth grader at MacArthur Elementary where she is on the Principal’s honor roll, is a newspaper reporter and a library assistant. Her Mimi and Papa Ray of Tulsa would like to wish her a happy birthday.



## Happy fifth birthday

Aneesa Ray, daughter of Brianna Ray and Samuel Pawnee of Tulsa, will celebrate her fifth birthday on Feb. 11. Aneesa is in Pre-K at Hoover Elementary. She received “Student of the Month” honors for the month of December. Way to go, Aneesa! Happy birthday from her Mimi and Papa Ray of Tulsa.



## Falconer to retire

Master Sgt. Michael S. Falconer, stationed at Luke Air Force Base in Phoenix, Ariz., is retiring Feb. 1 after 22 years of service. He is the son of Donald and Katherine Falconer of Moore.

During his career he was stationed in Korea twice and the Middle East four times. Stateside, he was stationed at Nellis AFB in Las Vegas, Nev., Cannon AFB in Clovis, N.M., and Luke AFB in Phoenix. He has held several job titles including Avionics Specialist on F-16 fighter jets, Quality Assurance Inspector, Field Detachment Training Instructor, Flight Chief in the 310th Fighter Squadron and is retiring as a Master Sgt. in the position of Production Superintendent at the 309th Fighter Squadron. Michael and his wife plan to move back to Oklahoma upon his retirement.



## Congratulations, Klayson

Klayson Smith of Ignacio, Colo., recently went on a seven day hunting trip to Africa with his cousin. A few of the locations he visited were Madrid, Spain, Pretoria and Johannesburg, South Africa. He travelled for 73 hours and a total of 10,120 miles.

He is the son of Sarah (Hudson) Russell and grandson of Dean Hudson, both of Ignacio. He is the great-grandson of the late Dixon and Sarah Hudson of Smithville.



## Congratulations, Alaina

Alaina Hudson killed a six-point, 182 pound buck during a youth hunt. She is the 11 year old daughter of Shane and Tina Hudson. Her great-grandparents are the late Dixon and Sarah Hudson.



## Family celebrates January birthdays

The Byington and Broke-shoulder families of McAlester would like to send happy birthday blessings to Ryan Byington on Jan. 1, Wanda Byington on Jan. 3, and Henry Byington on Jan. 29.



Wanda Byington and great-granddaughter Maddilyn Grace Byington



Ryan Byington



Lisa and Henry Byington

## Wafford children celebrate birthdays

Chance Ray Wafford turned 10 years old on Nov. 22, 2009. He celebrated his birthday with family and friends. He attends fourth grade at Fort Gibson Public Schools and Fort Gibson First Baptist Church. He is active in basketball and baseball.

Emma Rae Wafford turned eight on Jan. 15, 2010. She celebrated her birthday with family and friends. She is in the second grade at Fort Gibson Public Schools and Fort Gibson First Baptist Church. She is active in softball, gymnastics and basketball.

Miley Jo Wafford turned two on Dec. 26, 2009. She celebrated her birthday with family and friends. She attends Fort Gibson First Baptist Church. She loves to read books, play with toys, watch Dora and Barney and be entertained by her siblings and cousins. Sending birthday wishes are parents Scott and Katrina Wafford of Fort Gibson, grandparents Mike and Jo Ann Scantlen of Stigler, Martha Shipley of Fort Gibson, and Dan Wafford of Muskogee.



## Happy birthday, Jacquie

Happy birthday wife, mother and daughter, Jacquie (Harkins) Rechberg, of Jacksonville, Ore. She celebrates her birthday on Feb. 24.

She is the daughter of Joel D. Harkins and granddaughter of W. Joel Harkins, original Choctaw enrollee. Her great-great-great-grandfather was Chief of the Choctaw Tribe from 1850-1857. She is married to Mark Rechberg. She, her three children, Kiana, Kallen and Koral, and her father, Joel, are very proud of their Choctaw heritage.



## Wesley’s celebrate birthdays

Nathaniel and Ethan Wesley of Durant recently celebrated their birthdays. Nathaniel turned four on Jan. 31 and Ethan turned two on Dec. 15. Their parents are Tony and Sharon Wesley of Durant, grandparents are Nelson and Debra Wesley of Rattan, Johnny and Cheryl Byars Hugo, and great-grandparents are Nadine Billy of Rattan and the late Edwin Billy.



## Congratulations, Kathleen

Kathleen Hudson of Smillville was honored with a retirement party on April 9, 2009, at U.S. Motors in Mena, Ark., after 33 years of service with the company. She retired earlier than planned due to injuries she received in an automobile accident.

She celebrated her birthday on Nov. 14. Her family would like to wish her a happy belated birthday as well.

She is the daughter of the late Dixon and Sarah Hudson.



## Happy seventh birthday

Mackenzie Dorman will celebrate her seventh birthday on Feb. 18. Her family wishes her a very happy birthday.

She is the daughter of Randy and Lisa Dorman and sister of Mikala and Sierra Dorman, all of Stratford.



## Happy third birthday, Zackery

Zackery D. Miller celebrated his third birthday with a John Deere party, surrounded by all his family -- mother Melissa Poore of Durant, father Michael Miller of Lawton, “Nanny” Vera Butler, “Pops” Sanford Jackson, Ricky and Rhoda Butler of Durant, great-granny Frances Farrell, and great-grandfather the late Billy “Sonny” Russell, Tom and Laura Collins and David Miller, all of Bokchito



## Davis, Morrison to exchange vows

Tiffani Rochelle Davis and James Roy Morrison will unite in marriage at 2 p.m. on Feb. 14, 2010, at the Lakeside Christian Church Center, located at Fourth and Main Streets in Broken Bow.

A reception and pot luck dinner will be held in the banquet hall immediately following the ceremony. Family and friends are invited to share in their joy on their special day.



## Happy second birthday

Dakota Lee Thomas Hood celebrated his second birthday with family and friends on Nov. 3, 2009.

He is the son of Christie and Thomas Hood and the grandson of Lee and Linda Knight and Charles and Kathy Hood.



## Congratulations, Jonah

Congratulations on another great season of football!

Jonah Battiest is in the ninth grade at Stillwater Junior High and plays football for the Stillwater Pioneers.

His mother and father also want to wish their “Valentine’s baby” a very happy 15th birthday.



## Happy second birthday

Jamaal Hankins turns two years old on Feb. 14, Valentine’s Day. Wishing him a happy birthday are his proud parents, Patty and Oliver Hankins, grandmother Peggy Tushka, great-grandparents Nancy and Barnentine, uncles Mark and Eric and many more uncles and aunts.



## Mother and daughter share birthday

Happy birthday to mother and daughter, Holly and Madison Al-lensworth, who celebrate their birthdays together on Feb. 10. From Jeff and family and friends.



## Happy 22nd birthday

The family of Eric Lance Tushka of Broken Bow want to wish him a happy 22nd birthday on Feb. 17. Sending his birthday wishes are brother Mark, sister Patty, grandparents Barrentine and Nancy Tushka, mother Peggy Tushka and all his aunts, uncles and cousins.



## Sierra turns two

Happy second birthday, Sierra. She turned two years old on Dec. 23, 2009. She is the daughter of Randy and Lisa Dorman of Stratford. She has two older sisters, Mikala and Mackenzie. Her family wishes her a happy belated birthday.



## Carney celebrates 94th birthday

Laura Carney celebrated her 94th birthday on Dec. 26, 2009. Bill and Louise Amos visited Ms. Carney to celebrate her birthday with her. She is pictured showing the history afghan she received from Chief Pyle.



## The Revelators

invite you to join them in a birthday

**Gospel Singing for Bubba Johnson**

**Saturday, March 6**

at the new Choctaw Nation Senior Citizens Center

1209 Big Lots Pkwy., Durant

(located behind the Big Lots Distribution Center off South Ninth St.)



5:30 p.m. – Supper  
6:30 p.m. – Choctaw Hymn Singing  
7:00 p.m. – Convention Class Singing  
8:00 p.m. – Gospel Singing

All are welcome to attend ... for more info visit therevelators.net



# Chief signs ‘National Mentoring Month’ proclamation



On Jan. 11, Chief Gregory E. Pyle signed a proclamation declaring January 2010 as “National Mentoring Month” for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Earlier in January, President Barack Obama signed the National Mentoring Month Proclamation for the United States. The proclamation states that “the future of the Choctaw Nation rests on the hopes and dreams of its children and youth. Mentors offer valuable encouragement, motivation and hope for our youth by providing

a consistent role model. “Research has shown mentored youth are 52 percent less likely to skip a day of school, 46 percent less likely to start using drugs and 27 percent less likely to start drinking. Relationships with caring mentors offer youth valuable encouragement, motivation and support to guide them toward making positive choices. “Collaborative mentor programs that are supported by the entire community (i.e. the local chamber, local law enforcement, service clubs, local

media organizations, etc.) are more visible and therefore more successful. National Mentoring Month provides an opportunity to recognize and commend the efforts of these programs and raise community awareness of the importance of mentoring.” According to Chief Pyle, “The Choctaw Nation has several ongoing mentoring programs in place. At Jones Academy, we have the ‘Learn and Serve’ program that puts youth in leadership roles. They volunteer for ‘Adopt a Highway,’

as ‘Big Brothers-Big Sisters’ to the younger children. “We also offer peer advisors on campuses across the state to mentor Choctaw students as they adjust to life on college campus, said Chief Pyle. “Additionally, our Summer Youth Work Program assists in finding summer jobs and opportunities for youth aged 14-21.” By designating a specific month to highlight the need for mentors in the community, Chief Pyle hopes more adults will step forward to be a positive role model for a child.

## Jones Academy holds health fair for students



Chad Gaggans does teamwork exercise with Jones Academy students.

Jones Academy held its fall health fair for the elementary students on Dec. 8. Representatives from Choctaw Nation Health Services provided classroom activities and interactive demonstrations in an effort to promote healthy lifestyles. Representatives from McAlester Indian Dental Clinic, the CARES program, Behavioral Health and the Windhorse Recovery Center offered presentations on good dental hygiene practices, peer and social team building, and the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. Health fair organizer Raina Sparks, MS RD/LD, said the students really seemed to enjoy themselves as well as learn valuable lessons about healthy lifestyles.



Dental health specialist Jennifer Epps, above, interacts with students about the importance of dental hygiene. At right, Choctaw Nation Tribal Policeman Nathan Calloway speaks with Jones Academy students about the hazards of drug and alcohol abuse.



Jones Academy elementary student Jazlyn Bernal receives assistance from reading buddy Hayley With Horn.

## ‘Reading Buddies’

Jones Academy Alternative School students are helping the elementary students with their reading, writing and math skills through tutoring every day. These students are part of “Reading Buddies,” an effort of Jones Academy to teach community service as a way of life to high school students and to improve the younger students’ academic performance. The alternative students are learning to help and serve others. The elementary students receive the benefit of extra help in the classroom. Both groups enjoy the blessings of developing good friendships and healthy self-esteem.



## Nutrition classes

Registered and licensed dietitian Raina Sparks, MS, brought a festive and nutritious snack for the elementary students at Jones Academy in early December. As part of the nutrition classes offered, Ms. Sparks made cranberry dark chocolate oatmeal cookies and sparkling cranberry juice. The students enjoyed the snack and learned about foods that are good for you.

## To the youth of the Nation

*Are they really in love?*

By Sheibre Staley  
Choctaw Nation  
Youth Advisory Board

We see couples who appear really happy together and they think they’re in love, but are they really? Or is it just desire? People get love and desire mixed up with each other. Some people are really in love, but some just think they are. A lot of people, mostly teens, say “I love you” a lot to one another. Some really might, but there are some who just say it because it sounds good or they see it in movies. They think that they can fall in love just as fast or their relationships should be exactly the same. When you really love someone, that’s all you think about. You don’t want anyone else. If your relationship isn’t working out you want to try to make things the best you can. You have to communicate with one another and talk about everything. If you don’t have good communication or don’t talk, it probably won’t work and you probably don’t love each other. Getting love and desire mixed up is why most relationships don’t end up so great or last that long.



Resident Freda Semeski is surrounded by Araceli Ortiz (back/center), Enrique Guerrero (front/center), Dalton Babb, Mariella Chatkehoodle and Joseph Simpson during the students’ visit to Beare Manor Nursing Home.

## Students visit nursing home

Members of Jones Academy fifth grade class visited residents of the Bear Manor Nursing Home prior to the holidays. Students recited poetry and fellowshiped with the tenants at the facility. Both students and residents enjoyed the day.



Gracie Kyle is centered between Jones Academy fifth-graders Jacinda Butler, left, and Jennifer Yeager.

## Learning the language

Fifth-grade elementary students at Jones Academy took a Choctaw Language Class this fall semester as part of their curriculum. They were taught by Betty Ward from the School of Choctaw Language Department. The classes were taught via a two-way TV signal sent over the Internet. Students were able to receive instruction from Ms. Ward as well as interact with the teacher through cameras set up in the classrooms at Durant and at Jones Academy. At last report – all passed the class with flying colors!

### Choctaw Nation Distance Learning Technology GED Classes

**Beginning March 22, 2010**

**Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Choctaw Nation Community Centers in Bethel, Smithville and Wright City**

**Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Choctaw Nation Community Centers in Atoka, Coalgate and Tali hina**

Martha Childs gets ready to conduct Adult Education Classes over One-Net Distance Learning. Monitors have been set up in Choctaw Nation Community Centers in Atoka, Bethel, Coalgate, Smithville, Tali hina and Wright City so students in these rural areas will have an opportunity to take the classes and earn a GED.

Distance Learning GED classes are now available at the above locations to students in the Choctaw Nation. An experienced GED teacher will instruct you, using the One-Net Distance Learning Technology. Distance Learning allows students and teacher to see and hear each other on large monitors. You will be able to interact with the teacher as she helps you prepare to take the GED test. Books, supplies and testing fees are provided. The class will meet 3 days each week for approximately 9 weeks. A CDIB (Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood) is required. For more information please contact Neal Hawkins or Kathy Springfield, Choctaw Nation Adult Education, 800-522-6170 or 580-924-8280, ext. 2319 or 2122.



Brothers graduate

Congratulations to Joseph Kuziel, who graduated on Dec. 12, 2009, from the University of North Carolina in Wilmington with a B.A. in chemistry, and to James Kuziel, who graduated on May 23, 2009, from St. John's College in Sante Fe, N.M., with a master's in liberal arts.

Their parents are Frank and Elsie Kuziel of Sante Fe and grandparents are the late Willie and Mary Going of Broken Bow.



Bennett graduates college

Congratulations to Krystle Elaine Countz Bennett who graduated on Dec. 12, 2009, from East Central University in Ada. She earned her B. A. in criminal justice with concentration in special education and elementary education.



Knight is ordained

Donnie Knight of Shawnee was ordained into the Assembly of God on Nov. 3, 2009. He pastors at the Freedom Assembly of God Church in Shawnee.

His parents are Lee and Linda Knight of Hugo.



Public Safety names top officers of 2009

The Choctaw Nation Public Safety Department presented awards to its top officers of 2009. The Public Safety Department encompasses Tribal Police and Tribal Security. At the end of 2009, the Choctaw Nation had 31 police officers assigned throughout the 10½ counties and 312 security officers at seven casinos. One officer per division or site was nominated by his supervisor. Selection was based on number of reports, assists, accomplishments and overall professionalism.

Broken Bow Security, the site of the year, was selected for setting a record for the longest time without a turnover in the department, as well as overcoming the loss of their security manager.

Congratulations to all top Public Safety officers!



Broken Bow Security Department – Security Site of the Year 2009



Ryan Russell – Tribal Police Top Shooter 2009



Lawrence Carter – Tribal Security Top Shooter 2009



Terry Baker – Tribal Police Officer of the Year 2009



Beau Johns – Tribal Security Officer of the Year 2009

Recycle your prescription bottles, lids

Starting immediately at the complex in Durant and coming soon to all Choctaw Nation clinics and hospitals – we will begin recycling prescription medicine bottles and lids. There will be containers placed at each clinic and hospital pharmacies and in the lobby area at the North Building of the Tribal Complex in Durant for collection of these bottles.

It is required that before placing your bottles into the box that your name and any other patient health information be removed or scratched through so it no longer can be identified as to who owned the bottle before disposal.

Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority and the Going Green Team thank you for assisting us in our recycling efforts.

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation MARCH 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5 Durant 8:00-4:30	6
7	8 Antlers By Appt.	9	10 McAlester 10:00-2:00 Stigler By Appt.	11	12 Idabel 10:00-2:00	13
14	15 Talihina 10:00-2:00	16	17 Broken Bow 10:00-2:00	18	19	20
21	22	23 Poteau 11:30-1:00	24	25	26 Durant 8:00-4:30	27
28	29 Crowder By Appt. Wright City & Bethel By Appt.	30 Wilburton 10:30-2:00	31 Atoka 9:30-11:30 Coalgate 12:30-2:30			

A Vocational Rehab representative will be available at the locations listed. A representative is available Monday through Friday 8-4:30 except for holidays at the Hugo office.

Tribe offers free online college test preparation

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is offering selected college-bound students free online test preparation instruction from Kaplan, a national leader for test preparation services. High school freshman through senior students enrolled in the Choctaw Nation Scholarship Advisement Program (SAP) may begin using one of two Kaplan online test preparation products (either ACT or SAT) beginning March 2010. Enrollment in SAP is free to Choctaw students and parents.

"The evidence is clear that practice and preparation can improve college entrance exam test scores," says Chief Gregory E. Pyle. "Our agreement with Kaplan will help all college-bound Choctaw students improve their ACT or SAT test scores."

Improving a test score by 10 percent or more has positive

impact on both financial aid as well as college acceptance chances. Higher test scores are generally needed to attend the nation's best colleges. College entrance tests like the ACT and SAT can be taken as often as a student likes with only the highest score being counted. Students who take tests multiple times almost always show improvement. But students who also take test preparation courses score even higher according to Kaplan.

One example of how test preparation improves scores is Choctaw student Trent Tolbert, now a junior at Dartmouth University in Hanover, N.H. Tolbert boosted his ACT score from 26 to 30 by taking the test multiple times as well as by taking the Kaplan program. Tolbert says his higher ACT score helped him earn acceptance at the Ivy League school.

The Choctaw Nation's agreement begins March 1 for Kaplan's SAT and ACT Online products.

Kaplan's online courses are self-paced programs with lessons and practice materials. Courses allow students to study whenever they want – 24/7. Online email help is also included. Interactive online lessons are provided as is a custom lesson plan based on a student's diagnostic performance.

The Kaplan course structure includes:

- Diagnostic exam to gauge current strengths and weaknesses
- Targeted preparation with a customized plan of attack
- More than 30 interactive lessons
- Ability to practice on four full-length practice tests
- Lesson Book and flashcards

ment Program is offering the Kaplan program in order to boost scores for our students," says Program Director Jo McDaniel. "We want to give our college-bound scholars the best chance for opportunities and scholarships from the best possible schools. For most students, few things are more important than boosting an ACT or SAT test score," she says.

Choctaw students must be enrolled in the Scholarship Advisement Program in order to take advantage of the Kaplan online offer. Students not enrolled in SAP should contact the program offices at 800-522-6170 or visit SAP's Web site – www.choctawnation-sap.com. Some restrictions and requirements apply. Students are urged to apply early and to email SAP for more information at collegeprep@choctaw-nation.com.

Project SAFE

Striving for an Abuse-Free Environment

Project SAFE is a rural domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking prevention grant funded by the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. Project SAFE is pleased to announce the continued opportunity to educate and provide training to the community to bring awareness on these issues. The grant was initially awarded in 2006 which created Project SAFE (Striving for an Abuse-Free Environment). From success and more to accomplish, the grant was awarded again to Project SAFE with the same goal of supporting activities that are designed to address and prevent domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Project SAFE will continue to provide education on teen dating violence in schools to middle and high school students as well as offering this information to youth organizations outside of the schools. Project SAFE has successfully presented a teen-dating violence curriculum to at least 35 schools in the Choctaw Nation service area. Currently, Project SAFE is seeking schools to implement the SAFE DATES curriculum.

Also, this grant will allow for law enforcement to take advantage of free, CLEET training addressing sexual assault and domestic violence. Currently, Project SAFE has hosted three CLEET trainings in Durant with more to come in other areas. A focus for Project SAFE will be to provide training on the issues of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking to local service providers in an effort to strengthen our partnerships for safer communities and promote a stronger community response.

The need for public awareness and education of these issues is crucial.

- Native American women are 2.5 times more likely to be victims of sexual assault and twice as likely to be stalked as any other ethnic group.
- Oklahoma's rate of dating violence for ninth-graders is more than three times the national average.
- Domestic violence is the single largest cause of injury in the United States. Intimate partner violence occurs in one out of every six couples.
- Nationally, one in 12 women will be stalked in their lifetime.
- According to the Department of Justice, somewhere in America, a woman is sexually assaulted every two minutes. In Oklahoma, a woman is sexually assaulted every five hours, 53 minutes and 56 seconds.

If you are interested in more information on Project SAFE's initiatives to prevent these issues please contact:

Lari Ann Brister, Director  
580-924-8280, ext. 2635  
lbrister@choctawnation.com

Davania Rowell, Project SAFE Coordinator  
580-584-3150  
Drowell12@choctawnation.com

Karen Lyons, Project SAFE Coordinator  
918-567-4265  
klyons@choctawnation.com



3rd Annual Career Expo  
April 7, 2010  
10:00am to 2:00pm  
Southeast Expo Center • McAlester, OK



150+ Businesses & Training Facilities

Bring a resume and come dressed for success!

Motivational speakers & workshops

Presented by: Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma  
Career Development & Scholarship Advisement  
along with M.E.D.S. (866) 933-2260



Mr. Stan Clark  
Owner & President  
Eskimo Joes



Tribal Members....contact Career Development to sign up for transportation to the 2010 Career Expo!  
(866)933-2260  
Sign up by March 26, 2010 to reserve your spot!



Vocational Rehabilitation Program

The Vocational Rehabilitation program offers services that will assist disabled Native Americans to obtain their goal of vocational training and gainful employment. Persons with the most severe disabilities will be given priority and assisted first. Eligibility requirements for applicants include:

- 1. Must have CDIB card of a federally recognized tribe.
- 2. Must live within the 10 ½ counties of the Choctaw Nation.
- 3. Must have a documented physical or mental disability which results in a substantial impediment to employment.

Services include counseling and guidance, training, job coaching, placement in suitable employment, assistive devices and other goods and services that can be reasonably expected to benefit an individual with a disability in terms of employment.

For more information, call 580-326-8304 or 877-285-6893.



Community Health Representative

Since 1969, the Choctaw Nation has provided the Community Health Representative program for Indians residing within the tribal service area of the Choctaw Nation boundaries. This program is designed to assist Choctaws and other Indians maintain the health of themselves and their families. Services are provided to individuals who have a CDIB. There are no income guidelines for eligibility.

The CHR program can do many things to assist clients such as taking vitals, glucose monitoring for diabetes, hypertension and cholesterol diet education, patient education, maternal and child health, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, patient assessments, medical referral follow-up care, as well as the provision of many other health care services.

For more information, call 580-924-8280 or 800-522-6170.



Project EMPOWER

(Educating, Motivating, and Providing Opportunities for (Victims) Working to Enrich and Reclaim [their lives]).

Project EMPOWER’s goal is to provide a broad range of services that include:

- Transitional housing and support
- Safety and life planning
- Transportation
- Healing circle gatherings

Eligibility Requirements:

- 1. Victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking
- 2. In need of transitional housing as a result of fleeing domestic or dating violence, sexual assault and stalking
- 3. Member of a federally recognized tribe
- 4. Must be able to receive services in the 10 ½ counties of the Choctaw Nation

Counseling and Faith-Based Services for Crime Victims in Indian Country

This service provides faith-based counseling services to restore the balance and harmony in the lives of crime victims. Through the collaboration of spiritual leaders, victims service providers and community members, we work to overcome the violence and abuse within our native families who reside within the 10 ½ county service area of the Choctaw Nation.

Project EMPOWER 2: DREAM

The goal of Project EMPOWER 2: DREAM (Daring to Realize Education And More) is to provide higher education, financial assistance and legal assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.

Choctaw Nation

Outreach Services



Community Based Social Work Program

The Community Based Social Work program is a service benefiting Choctaw individuals and families. Being a community-based program, services are taken directly to the community and assistance is given there where families are more comfortable. The mission of the program is to help Choctaw families find permanent solutions to long-term problems by initiating change, setting goals, making a plan and following through. The program’s primary goal is to assist Choctaw families in locating resources to help meet immediate needs.

For more information, call 580-326-8304 or 877-285-6893.

Youth Outreach

The Choctaw Nation Youth Outreach program was established in 2005 to assist young Choctaw students in finding solutions for hardships that may occur throughout adolescent and teen years. This program also assists in goal setting, plan development and preparation for the future. The Youth Outreach program strives to provide services to the Choctaw youth who may need the support or guidance in their lives to become successful in life.

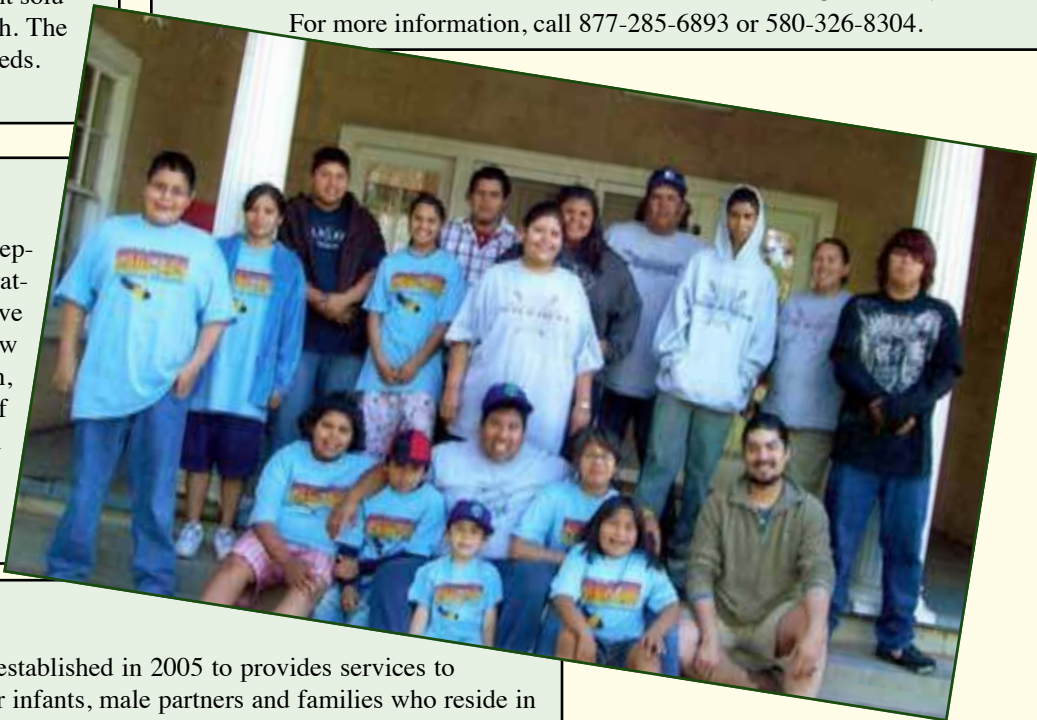
Youth Outreach’s range of services include:

- Mentoring
- Short and long term goal setting
- Locating resources
- Home and school visits to clients
- After school activities
- College preparation
- Provide support for Choctaw youth

Eligibility requirements:

- 1. Choctaw youth experiencing hardship circumstances
- 2. Tribal membership with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
- 3. In grades pre-K to 12th grade
- 4. Must be able to receive services in the 10 ½ counties of Choctaw Nation.

For more information, call 877-285-6893 or 580-326-8304.



Victim Assistance

Victim Assistance provides comprehensive services that incorporate all necessary victim support services, for Native American victims of crime residing within the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Services include court system advocacy, intervention services, accompaniment to hospitals for medical examinations, emergency food, clothing, transportation, shelter and other emergency services that will restore the victim’s sense of dignity and self-respect.

For more information, call 580-326-8304 or 877-285-6893.

Injury Prevention Program

The Injury Prevention program was established in September 2005. Its goal is to build capacity and initiate strategies to prevent or reduce preventable injuries for Native Americans residing in the 10 ½ counties of the Choctaw Nation, through education, community outreach, research, staff training and development, collection and analysis of injury data and raising awareness to the Choctaw Nation communities.

For more information, call 580-326-8304 or 877-285-6893.

Adolescent Family Life Project

The Adolescent Family Life Care Project (AFL) was established in 2005 to provides services to pregnant and parenting teens under 19 years of age, their infants, male partners and families who reside in the 10 ½ county service area of the Choctaw Nation. The project provides comprehensive and integrated services to reduce repeat pregnancies, improve health outcomes for mother and infant, increase healthy parenting skills, provide opportunities for education and job training, and increase healthy relationship skills.

To be eligible clients must:

- Be under 19 years of age
- Must be expecting a Native American infant
- Must reside in the Choctaw Nation 10 ½ county service area
- Receive prenatal care services through the Choctaw Nation Health Care

For more information, call 580-326-7758 or 877-285-6893.

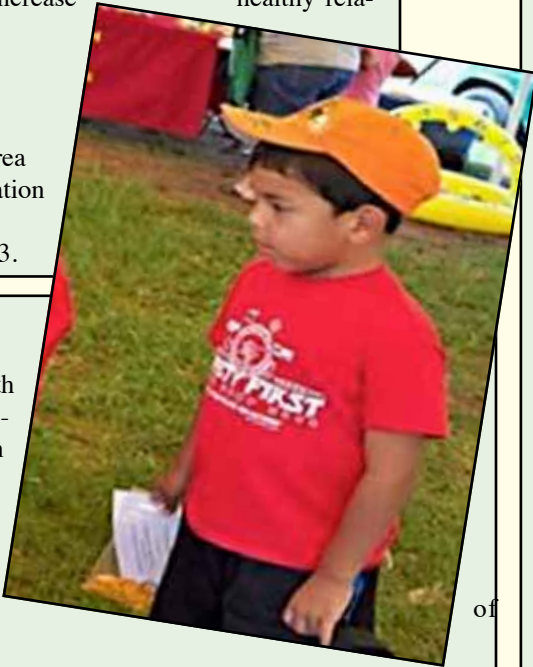
Choctaw Nation Transit

Choctaw Nation Transit provides or assists with transportation to and from non-emergency medical appointments. The goal of the Choctaw Nation Transit program is to develop and implement a comprehensive transportation strategy that will enable tribal members and all community members to have reliable transportation to Choctaw Nation Health Care Facilities, and to participate in other aspects community life.

To be eligible clients must:

- 1. Have a CDIB card from a federally recognized tribe.
- 2. Live within the 10 ½ counties of the Choctaw Nation.

For more information, call 580-326-8304 or 877-285-6893.



Elder Advocacy

The program provides community outreach, advocacy, training, preparation and distribution of information and joint intervention with Oklahoma Adult Protective Services. These services include court systems advocacy, intervention services and other support services.

To be eligible, clients must:

- Be an elder (any person over the age of 55) or a vulnerable adult (any person over the age of 18 who is an incapacitated person because of physical or mental disability which impairs their ability to provide adequate care of self or unable to manage their property and financial affairs effectively in order to protect themselves from being abused, neglected or exploited without assistance from others).
- Be a member of a federally recognized tribe.
- Live within the 10 ½ counties of the Choctaw Nation.

For a list of signs of abuse or more information on the program, please call 580-326-8304 or 877-285-6893.

Wheelock Academy

Wheelock Academy, a former mission and girl’s school located in Millerton, is open to the public Monday through Friday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. The site is on the list of “11 Most Endangered Historical Sites.” Historical buildings at Wheelock Academy include Pushmataha Hall, the Classroom Building and LeFlore Hall. A museum, gift shop and information stop are also located on the grounds. Renovations are in progress at this time to preserve this historical site.

For more information, call 580-746-2139.

Tribal Events

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Events department’s main focus is the organization of the many different tribal events that the Choctaw Nation host including but not limited to: Trail of Tears walks, Veterans special recognition ceremonies, appreciation dinners, organization of the annual Christmas for Needy Families, organization and set-up of the Employee Christmas and Thanksgiving ceremonies, assisting with Tribal Council events as needed and Outreach Youth camps including Safety Camp and the Outreach at the Beach.

For more information, call 800-522-6170.



# History and development of Choctaw food

By a special request from the Bishinik staff, February’s extended edition of Iti Fabvssa focuses on traditional Choctaw foods.

For millennia, Choctaw and ancestral Choctaw chefs have been perfecting cuisine to satisfy their families’ appetites and tastes. Today, as in the past, many Choctaws draw a part of our identity from cooking and eating old Choctaw family favorites such as **Tanchi Labbona** (“Pashofa” in the Chickasaw language), **Pvlvska Bynana** (Banaha bread), and **Walakshi** (fruit dump-lings). This article will take a brief glimpse at the history and development of traditional Choctaw foods, featuring a number of early Choctaw recipes along the way, and outlining the important influences that these foods have had on today’s American cuisine.

Like many things traditional, Choctaw foods have changed and developed over time. This is partially because our food sources, the plants and animals available to us, have themselves changed through time. What may be some of the earliest Choctaw oral traditions describe giant animals inhabiting the homeland, which were capable of tearing down trees. Within the last century, the western sciences of paleontology and archaeology have not only corroborated that such giant and powerful animals as the mastadon did live on Choctaw homeland (until perhaps 12,000 years ago), but also show that people used to hunt them. Although relatively few details are known about the food dishes that our ancestors ate at this very early date, their culinary repertoire included meat from giant and smaller animals, as well as plant foods collected in season. Some of the species they relied on for food have now been extinct for thousands of years.

**Nipi Shila**, (a Choctaw term that used to refer to “jerky”) must be one of the oldest ancestral Choctaw foods. The earliest recipe for Nipi Shila was simply to cut lean meat into thin, narrow strips and suspend them over a smoky fire. This preserved the meat by drying it and exposing it to creosote in the smoke.

Today, this technique can be seen first-hand in deer jerky-making demonstrations at the Choctaw Labor Day Festival. The same basic technique was surely used by our ancestors 14,000 years ago on the meat from now-extinct animals. Similar drying methods have also been used by Choctaws for thousands of years to preserve fish and fruit.

The plant and animal communities that today live in the Choctaw homeland, have existed here for about the past 10,000 years. Through much of this period, the diet developed by our ancestors represented a balance of wild plant foods and animal products that were eaten according to the seasons. In the spring, women collected leaves from young, succulent plants such as poke, dock and stinging nettles, providing the Vitamin A, calcium, and iron needed to supplement dried food rations that had been stored over winter. In the summer, they collected edible fruits like grapes and blackberries, grains like sumpweed seeds, and oily hickory nuts, while the men provided protein by fishing and hunting small game. In the fall, women gathered acorns, while the men hunted the larger animals that the acorns attracted, their meat and hides prime for the coming cold. In the winter, the community dug starchy tubers like greenbrier roots, and welcomed the Vitamin C provided by fresh persimmons.

Early on, ancestral Choctaw people had no pottery to cook in (it hadn’t been invented yet), but they cooked in the coals of fires, steamed foods in leaves, roasted or smoked foods on racks over the fire, boiled foods in containers made of animal hides, and buried foods in the earth and baked them. They probably also boiled foods in tight-weave baskets or wooden containers. Some of the foods prepared during this early time are still eaten by Choctaw people today. The following are summaries of early written recipes for traditional Choctaw foods, which, based on their ingredients and cooking techniques, have probably been made for thousands of years:

**Koshiba** “Poke Salad”: Pick small poke leaves in the spring when they are tender before they become bitter. Put young leaves in water and boil for a short time. Pour off water and boil again, with fat meat if desired. The same process may also be followed to prepare dock, stinging nettles. Leaves from the lambsquarter plant do not require par boiling and can be eaten all summer.

**Uksak Ulh-komo**, “Hickory Nut Oil” is a broth traditionally added to many Choctaw dishes. Hickory nuts have very hard shells. To make Uksak Ulh-komo, hickory nuts can be crushed and placed in a cloth sack that is boiled in stew and then removed, leaving behind the “hickory milk”. This technique avoids the work of picking the meat from the shells.

**Uksak Alhanta**, “literally mixed hickory nuts”: Crack open hickory nuts. Pick out meat. Discard shells. Pound meat into a paste. Put paste in boiling water and stir briskly. Serve as a porridge.

**Nusi Pvlvska**, “Acorn Bread”: Hull live oak acorns and pound them into a flour. Place acorn flour in a cane sieve near a creek. Dip water over the acorns until the bitterness leaves. Mix the acorn flour with water to make a thick paste. Wrap paste around a stick and hold over a fire until done. Similar bread can also be made from beechnuts, hazel nuts, and chinquapins. In times of scarcity, bread was sometimes made from flour created from boiled pine roots.

**Okshush**, “Acorn Pudding” is made by mixing acorn flour with water and boiling to make a mush.

**Ukof Honni**, “Persimmon Stew”: Gather persimmons in winter after a frost. If they are gathered too soon, they will be full of tannic acid and inedible. Some trees produce very sweet fruit, while others can have a bitter taste. To prepare, remove the skins and seeds from the fruit. Leave as chunks or mash into a pulp. Cut meat into bite-sized pieces and throw into boiling water. Add persimmon pulp or chunks. The stew may be thickened with hickory nut oil or acorn flour.



## Iti Fabussa

**Ahelusa**, “Black Potato,” is made from the roots of the trailing wildbean (*Strophostyles helvola*). These are dug up, cleaned, boiled in water, and then mashed.

**Lukekuk Ahe**, “Mud Potato,” is made from the root of the groundnut (*Apios americana*). The white-fleshed roots from the groundnut are dug up, collected, and washed. They are then boiled in water and served as Irish Potatoes are today. Alternatively, mud potatoes were sometimes cooked in the coals of a fire. Indigenous technological innovations brought changes to the Choctaw diet. Beginning around 4200 BC, Southeastern communities began to domesticate some of the native plants that they had been gathering for thousands of years. Some of these early agricultural crops included lambs quarter, gourds, sumpweed, and sunflower. Clay pottery first began to be produced in the Southeast around 2500 BC, although it took a few centuries to reach the Choctaw homeland. Pottery made boiled and fried dishes easier to cook.

**Kantak Pvlvska**, “Greenbrier Root Bread,” is made from the roots of a thorny vine, common in the Southeastern woods. The roots are dug up, collected, and washed. The outside of the root is then peeled off. While still in a moist state, the inner portions of the roots are pounded in a mortar to form a paste. The paste is made into cakes, which are fried in bear’s oil. Alternatively, the roots can be dried before pounding, and made into flour.

Ancestral Choctaw communities changed their diet significantly around AD 1050 by beginning to produce two new agricultural crops, corn and beans in massive amounts. According to one Choctaw oral tradition, corn was given to the Choctaw people by **Ohoyo-Osh Chisba** “Unknown Woman.” According to another Choctaw tradition, it physically originated in Mesoamerica. This location of origin has subsequently been confirmed by archaeology.

The importance of corn and beans (traditionally planted together) was so great to ancestral Choctaw people that many communities appear to have changed their ancient residence pattern and seasonal schedule to focus on growing these crops as efficiently as possible. Not coincidentally, the most important Choctaw social function and spiritual event, during this period, the “Green Corn Ceremony” was timed according to the ripening of the corn crop.

Many traditional Choctaw dishes incorporate corn and beans as ingredients. Some of these, such as **Oksak Bahpo** (a mush made from pounded hickory nuts, walnuts, and corn), combined older Choctaw foods with the new crops. Other dishes were made solely from the new foods. Based on their ingredients, the following Choctaw corn recipes likely date back before European contact, but are probably no older than 1000 years (recipe specifics vary by family):

**Pvlvska Bynaha**, “Banaha Bread”: Cornmeal is mixed with pea hull ash and water to form a dough. To this, may be added cooked beans if desired. The dough is formed into masses, wrapped into green corn husks, and tied. These are then boiled. A related dish, “**Oksak Atahap**,” can be made in the same manner, except with the addition of hickory nutmeat instead of peas or beans.

**Tafula**, “Hominy” (literally boiled corn): Boil corn kernels in a large pot. Lye (wood ash) is added and the boiling continued until the cornhusks begin to loosen. Afterward, the corn is washed in clean water and beaten in a mortar to remove its husks and break up the kernels. These cleaned kernels can be dried or put back in water and cooked until soft. Sour hominy, “**Tafula Hawushko**,” is made by keeping cooked hominy in a warm place until it has soured. Alternatively to the souring process, beans and/or hickory nut oil may be added to the hominy. If beans are added, the dish may be called “**Tafula Toni Ibulhtoh**.”

**Tanchi Labonna**, (literally stirred corn): The Tafula-making process is followed as described above, except instead of removing the corn husks in a mortar, they are taken off by rubbing in the hands. This leaves the kernels whole. To make Tachi Labonna, meat is added to this hominy, which is then boiled in a deep pot. Today, this meat is normally pork roast, but in the past, it could have been meat from a variety of native animals. This dish is often called “Pashofa”, its Chickasaw name.

**Tanchi Okchi**, “Sagamite”: happens to be the first Choctaw recipe known to be put down in writing (ca 1755). To make it, dried corn kernels are removed from the ears and ground in a mortar. The finest part of the resultant meal is collected and saved. The coarser meal is stirred into boiling water. Pumpkin and / or beans and bean leaves are added to the stew. When nearly done, the broth is thickened with the fine corn meal that was saved after grinding. The stew can be flavored with lye made from corn silk or bean pods.

**Bota Kapvssa** “Cold Cornmeal” was the food of Choctaw warriors in the field. It was made in the following way: Boil corn kernels in a pot over a fire until they begin to swell. Remove and partially dry. Place back into a dry, heated pot and stir continually until they become a parched brown color. Beat in a mortar and then sift in a fanner basket to remove the hulls. Return to mortar and beat until a fine meal is obtained. For consumption, the meal is mixed with water and allowed to sit, forming a thick, soup-like beverage.

**Walakshi** “Fruit Dumplings” are served as a sweat dish, and are a traditional Choctaw food for weddings. The oldest recipes included dumplings made from cornmeal. These were boiled in water with native fruits like grapes or blackberries.



Cakes frying in a griddle made from a broken clay pot.



Harvesting young poke leaves.

Many other very old traditional Choctaw corn and bean dishes were made in the past and continue to be favorite foods today: **Tanchi Lakchi** “corn grits”, **Ampi Hobi** “corn on the cob”, **Tanchi Vlwasha** “fried corn”, **Tanchi Apusha** “roasted corn”, **Pvlvska** “cornbread”, **Pvlvska Mihlofa** “grated bread”, **Pvlvska Hawuksho** “sour bread”, **Pvskalvwsha** “hot water bread”, **Pvlvska Holbi** “bread in the shucks”, **Bvla Okchi** “bean porridge”, and **Bvla Hobbi** “boiled beans”.

Europeans came to Choctaw country in waves: beginning with the Spanish, then French, then English then Americans. Each of these groups borrowed and shared foods with the Choctaws and other Southeastern Tribes, creating new blends and cooking styles.

When the Spanish arrived in Choctaw country in the mid 1500s, they brought **Shukha** “pigs”, **Wak** “cattle”, **Takkon** “peaches”, and **Shukshi**, watermelons”, which the Choctaw quickly incorporated into the diet. Traditional Choctaw foods such as **Shukha Nipi** “pork roast” and **Nipi Shila** (meaning “salted pork”) or any of the many traditional dishes that include pork roast, bacon, ham, beef, peaches, or watermelon, exist because of early interactions with the Spanish.

In return, the Choctaws and other Southeastern and Mesoamerican Tribes gave the Spanish the corn and bean varieties that native farmers had been selectively crossing and developing for generations. These were eventually given to the rest of the world. Today, corn is the third most important food crop world-wide.

In the early 1700s, when the French, with their African slaves, began establishing permanent settlements in the Choctaw homeland, the sharing and blending of ethnic foods lead to the creation of a whole new style of cuisine, known today as Cajun food. In the creation of Cajun cuisine, the French contributed their traditional stews and wheat flour. The Spanish contributed onions, garlic, tomatoes, and peppers. African chefs contributed okra and field peas. Choctaws contributed several essential elements, including an intimate knowledge of local fish, shell fish, and native plant and animal foods. Choctaw people gathered sassafras leaves and sold or traded them in towns to produce file’, a traditional Choctaw stew thickener, and a vital ingredient in Cajun gumbo.

Written records from this time period indicate that the Choctaw were the most productive agricultural producers in the Southeast. The Chickasaw, who often sent slaving raids against Choctaw villages, had to trade with Choctaw communities to get the corn they needed to survive. By the mid-1700s, Choctaw farmers had developed a knowledge of European vegetables and were growing crops of leeks, garlic, cabbage and other non-native plants for the purpose of exporting them to the French colonies for their food. Choctaws raised poultry and transported it 120 miles to market in Mobile.

With contact with the United States in the late 1700s, and the passage of more than two centuries, have come many changes in the diets of most Choctaw people. This has been brought about as a result of relocation through the Trail of Tears, boarding schools, commodity rations, changes in cooking technology (e.g. the microwave), and a shift to highly processed foods (e.g. microwave dinners). Native crops have also been altered. Hybrid and genetically modified seed varieties, easy to grow through mechanized agriculture but often relatively low in nutrition, have been selected in place of the old, more nutritious native seed varieties. Ironically, today some “traditional” Choctaw meals such as Indian Tacos, include not a single ingredient that was in our ancestors’ diets 400 years ago, not even the type of corn used to make the vegetable oil.

Unfortunately, the changes that have been made in the diet of most Choctaws have decreased the amount of nutrients, protein and fiber that we eat, and replaced them with increased amounts of saturated fat, processed sugar, and calories. Consider “Nipi Shila”. To our early ancestors “Nipi Shila” referred to jerky, a lean high-protein traditional food, whose recipe was given earlier in this column. Today, it means “salt pork”, a European food with tremendous levels of sodium and saturated fat.

Combined with a sedentary lifestyle, this diet shift has lead to an epidemic of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and stroke that significantly shortens lives and lowers the quality of life for many Choctaw people. This epidemic is being experienced by nearly all communities across the United States, but Native Americans are among the hardest hit.

In response, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma has started nutrition awareness programs, testing clinics, and wellness centers, to increase the health of our communities. Along with awareness, exercise, appropriate medical care, and technology, strong allies are also to be found in the wild edibles, traditional seed varieties, and minimally processed Choctaw dishes that have sustained the lives of our communities since time immemorial. The next time we’re craving an Extra Value Meal, or an ice cream cone, perhaps we could realistically consider the possibility of instead feasting upon more healthful traditional equivalents like Tanchi Okchi or Walakshi. Our taste buds, hearts, and loved ones will thank us.

Please contact the Bishinik for the references used to create this month’s column and a list of works cited.

## A call for old Choctaw recipes

Do you know the recipe for an old Choctaw dish not mentioned in the article? Are you willing to share it with other members of the Tribe? The Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Office is compiling a book of traditional Choctaw foods and recipes. Please call 580-775-0914 if you are willing to help, or for information.

## New Pottery Class locations

In addition to the regular classes, a Choctaw Pottery Class will be held at the Coalgate Field Office 580-927-3641 on March 2 from 6:30-9 p.m. Another class will be held at the Tushka Homma Council House Grounds on Feb. 13 from 1-5 p.m.



A traditional stew made from corn, beans, and corn dumplings being served in Choctaw clay eating bowls.



# OBITUARIES

## Mary M. (Coleman) Logan

Mary M. (Coleman) Logan, born March 19, 1929, in Gay. She was the daughter of William and Patsy (Nelson) Coleman. She passed away on Nov. 18, 2009, in McKinney, Texas at the age of 80. She had been a long-time resident of Hugo.

She attended school at Goodland Presbyterian Children’s Home where she played girl’s basketball. On Feb. 18, 1951, she wed Paul Calvin Logan Sr., at Cold Springs Presbyterian Church in Hugo. Her husband preceded her in death in 1968.

A graduate of Paris Junior College’s Vocational Nursing (LVN) program, Mary was a dedicated nurse for 28 years in the Intensive Care Unit at McCuistion Regional Medical Center in Paris. She made many friends during these years and spoke of them often to her family. A great fan of yard sales, Mary would often meet people she had cared for at McCuistion, and they would thank her for her kindness during their times of difficulty. Mary touched many people along the journey of her life – some she taught to quilt or sew, others how to make traditional Choctaw foods like Banaha and Pashofa, dishes which she served at every holiday meal.

She enjoyed visiting her spirited grandchildren, was of the Baptist faith and was a full-blood member of the Choctaw Nation.

Preceding her in death were her parents, brothers and sisters, Isaac Williams, Jonathan Coleman, Eli Williams Jr., Matthew Coleman, Jacob Coleman, David Coleman, Minnie Coleman, Martha Coleman and Neoma Coleman.

Survivors include son Paul Calvin Logan Jr. and wife Linda of Allen, Texas; daughters, Naomi Logan of McKinney and Pamela Logan of Hugo; sisters, Ruth Wilson of Hugo, Leah Scrivner of Denison, Texas, and Rebecca Moran of Hugo; uncle Ray Nelson of Hugo; and numerous friends and family.



## Jimmy Ray Johnson

Jimmy Ray Johnson, 65, of Ardmore passed away Dec. 28, 2009. He was born Feb. 1, 1944, in Hendrix to the late Mr. Ed Johnson and Mrs. Lillian (Sampson) Johnson.

Jimmy was raised in Dickson and graduated there in 1963. After graduating he attended Murray State College in Tishomingo for one year. He found employment at Mac’s Wholesale where he worked for many years until he went to work for The Daily Ardmoreite. He worked there as an Insert Operator until March of 2009 when his health required him to retire.

He and Brenda Bevill were married April 23, 2001, in Gainville, Texas. Jimmy loved the outdoors. He was an avid hunter and fisherman and he loved his Dallas Cowboy football team.

Preceding him in death are his parents, step-father Jess Taylor, four brothers, Thomas Johnson, James Johnson, Jessie Johnson and James Edward Johnson, sister Lillie Randolph and great-grandson Blade Marshall.

Survivors include his wife, Brenda Johnson, of the home, daughters Sylvia and Maria Johnson, step-daughter Diana Carter of Okmulgee, step-sons Jimmy Carter and wife Kimberly of Ardmore and Albert Carter of Lone Grove; four brothers, Billy Johnson and wife Frances of Tulsa, Eddie Johnson and wife Lillie Mae of Ardmore, Freddy Johnson of Madill and Harvey Taylor and wife Alice of Ardmore; two sisters, Evelyn Taylor of Madill and Lois Poor and husband Ty of Poteau; nine grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.



## Lucille Coleman

Lucille Coleman, 89, of Claremore passed away on Nov. 27, 2009. She was born in Antlers on Feb. 15, 1920, to Calvin Perry and Sarah (Nelson) Tims. With her mother’s passing when she was a young child, she was raised by her father and stepmother, Louisa. She was educated at St. Agnes in Antlers and Sequoyah in Tahlequah.

She married Jimmie Coleman on May 8, 1935, at Hampton Chapel, outside of Ft. Towson. Both were members of the Choctaw Nation. The couple first lived in Ft. Towson and moved to Claremore in 1947. Jimmie passed away Nov. 25, 1986.

In 1957, Lucille and her husband joined her cousin, Rev. Edgar Tims, as he founded Christ United Methodist Church. She was an active member in the church’s United Methodist Women’s group. Lucille loved God and served the church faithfully, holding many responsibilities and offices over the years, including Sunday School teacher and treasurer. She loved to sing, especially Choctaw hymns. She always cooked generously for church dinners. Family and friends will always remember her for her chicken and dumplings and cobblers. Her great-grandchildren, however, will always remember her best for pancakes.

Always an excellent seamstress, Lucille made beautiful quilts for her family. For years people urged her to enter them in quilt shows and finally, at the age of 84, she entered her first competition. She won a first place ribbon for her hand-pieced, hand-quilted quilt at the Rogers County Fair.

Lucille worked many years as a nurse aide at both Aunt Carrie’s and Wood Manor Nursing Homes. She retired when she was needed to care for her husband in his later years.

The generous and caring spirit of Lucille will live on through her beloved family. Those who survive are five of her six children, Rachel Coleman Ouellette and husband Dr. Robert Ouellette of Falls Church, Va., James Coleman of Seminole, Genevieve White and husband Clifford, Cheryl Sixkiller and Gwen Coleman Lester and her husband Rod, all of Claremore; seven grandchildren, Chris Ouellette of Falls Church, Dr. David Ouellette of Richmond, Va., Cindy Young and husband Clay, Anthony White and wife Tammy, Roger Collier, Mike Collier and Kevin Coleman, all of Claremore; 13 great grandchildren, Kasey Watson and husband Jonathan of Norman, Karey Young, Kristin Young, Kody Young, Dakota White, Brandon White, Derek Cooper and Dylan Collier, all of Claremore, Shawnda Collier of Norman, Myranda Trout of Owasso, Destiny Collier of Inola, Emily Coleman and Koltton Coleman, both of Claremore; two great-great-grandchildren, Preston Watson of Norman and Jared Young of Claremore. She was preceded by her parents, her husband and her daughter, Virginia Marie Coleman.



## Ruth Coleman Wilson

Ruth Coleman Wilson was born on Oct. 30, 1922, in Gay to William and Patsy (Nelson) Coleman. She departed this life on Dec. 4, 2009, in Hugo after a lengthy illness, at the age of 87.

A member of a large family, Ruth had many happy memories of her life in Hugo and in surrounding areas in Oklahoma. A life-long member of the community, Ruth was a full-blood member of the Choctaw Nation, and was also an active member of the First Assembly of God Church. She especially enjoyed purchasing and presenting the peanut brittle made by the ladies of the church as gifts at Christmas time. Popular as the kitchen supervisor for many years at Goodland Presbyterian Children’s Home, her nieces and nephew have remembrances of her overseeing the great meals served during the lunch hour at school.

Ruth married Jack Wilson on Aug. 9, 1965, in Gainesville, Texas, and together, they owned and operated the Wilson’s Grocery Store from 1971 to 1988. Located in the Gay community, many of the long-time residents still remember making trips to their store for cold Cokes and five cent candy bars.

Ruth enjoyed working in her yard, going to fellowship at her church, and playing with her dogs, especially Bark and Lucy. Limited in later years through the loss of her eye-sight, she continued her outreach to friends and loved ones, both near and far, by visiting on the phone.

Ruth was preceded in death by her husband, Jack, in 1982; brothers and sisters, Mary Coleman Logan, Jacob Coleman, Matthew Coleman, David Coleman, Eli Williams Jr., Isaac Williams, Jonathan Coleman, Minnie Coleman, Martha Coleman and Neoma Coleman.

Surviving family members include sisters Rebecca Moran of Hugo and Leah Scrivner of Denison, Texas, uncle Ray Nelson of Hugo and numerous nieces and nephews.



## Robert Dale Durant

Robert Dale Durant, 74, passed away peacefully at his home on Dec. 11, 2009, in Oklahoma City. Born on Nov. 22, 1935, to Bee and Missie Durant in Bennington, he was the third of three sons and was a very large 10 ½ pound baby at birth. His dad looked at him and immediately called him “Man” and the nickname stayed with him throughout his life.

He married Mary “Mickey” Ellen Rich, also from Bennington, and from this union two children were born. He worked as a bindery foreman in Dallas, Texas, before moving to Oklahoma City. There he was employed by Wesbanco for many years and finally retired from Globe Color Press.

He enjoyed listening to music sang by Floyd Cramer and the Cajun humorist Justin Wilson, watching the Dallas Cowboys, reading and he was quite knowledgeable about many subjects. He also liked bird watching, gardening, fishing and puttering around the cabin at Lake Eufaula with his beloved black lab, Bear. After retirement he developed an interest in woodworking, making anything from cars for children to clocks, small wooden boxes, cabinets and bookshelves for home. He even tried his hand at drawing and painting and framed his art for the grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He leaves behind his wife, Mickey, of the home, daughter Debbie Vaught and husband John of Moore, son Mitchell Durant of Oklahoma City; five granddaughters, Jennifer Nichols, Wendy Vaught and Shauna Vaught, all of Moore, Michelle Martin and husband Heath of Erick, and Morgan Durant of Oklahoma City; two great-grandchildren, Mason Heavner and Tyauna Blue of Moore.

He is preceded in death by his parents, brothers Wesley Durant and Olen “Doc” Durant and great-grandson Dalton Nichols.

He was a full-blooded Choctaw Indian and his family finds comfort that he has joined the biggest Pow-Wow in the sky.



## Eddie Vinson Edwards

Eddie Vinson Edwards I of Edmond, 79, passed away Oct. 29, 2009. He was born Oct. 7, 1930, to Wilson and Dolie Edwards in Kingfisher. He lived in several locations in Oklahoma while growing up.

After graduating from high school he went to work for OPUBCO. The Korean War began and Eddie and several of his friends enlisted in the Navy. He served from 1950–1954, and was on the U.S.S. A.A. Cunningham D.D. 752 in Korea. He was very proud of having fought for his country. Upon returning from the war, he went back to work at the Oklahoman. He then went to work as a highway design engineer with the Oklahoma Highway Department.

He received a Bachelor of Industrial Arts degree from Oklahoma City University on May 23, 1960. He loved learning and decided to go to law school. While working full time and raising a family, he earned his Juris Doctor from Oklahoma City University on May 17, 1969. He was admitted to the Oklahoma Bar Association in September of 1969. He worked for the Veterans Department in Muskogee and then practiced law for a Native American firm in Tahlequah. He then began a long work history with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, working in Horton, Kan., Sacramento and Palm Springs, Calif., and Washington, D.C. During his last two years with the BIA, he had an assignment to work on Indian Law at the Oklahoma City University School of Law. He ended his career while researching Indian Law in Washington, D.C. He retired from the federal government in January 1993. He was a proud member of the Choctaw Tribe of Oklahoma.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his only sister, Hibernia.

He is survived by his wife, Mary; son Eddie II; daughters Debra Alexander and husband Jackie of Sulphur, Carolyn Johnson and husband Harold of Edmond, Amy Stovall and husband Brian of Chandler, Ariz., Emily and son Chandler of Edmond; three stepchildren, many nieces, nephews, grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and brother James of Oklahoma City.

He was an amazing husband, father and granddad and will be missed dearly.



## Terry L. Conley

Terry L. Conley was born on Feb. 11, 1950, and passed away on Jan. 4, 2010, after a brief battle with lung and brain cancer.

Terry was preceded in death by his maternal grandmother, Viola May Boatright, an original enrollee of the Choctaw Nation, his parents, Jack Conley and Gladys Zumwalt Underwood, brother George Conley Sr., and nephew George Conley Jr.

He leaves behind his wife and best friend, Janey Conley; sister Lynda Franks of Fresno, Calif.; brother and sister-in-law Larry and June Conley of Sweetwater, Texas; children, Micheal and Lara Conley of Oregon and David and Erin Conley of Fresno; three grandchildren, Eric Sanders of Fresno and Haylie and Nathan Conley of Oregon. He also leaves cousins, nieces, nephews, friends and extended family, as well as his dogs, Max and Toby.

Terry served in the U.S. Navy from 1968-1972, a Vietnam era veteran. For more than 20 years, he was a heavy equipment operator for Twining Labs of Fresno. He was disabled in 2007.

Terry loved to talk. He also enjoyed road trips and playing with Max and Toby. He was a NASCAR fan, especially Tony Stewart. He loved to do crossword puzzles, cryptograms and more recently enjoyed playing games and Googling on the computer.



## Joe Neal Hicks Sr.

Joe N. Hicks Sr., 81, passed away on Jan. 3, 2010, in Geary. He was born May 10, 1928, to Jobe and Nova Belle (Swarm) Hicks in Idabel. He was a Choctaw who traced his roots back to 1830 when his ancestors were sent to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears.

Joe was knowledgeable about Indian history and when asked where he had learned so much he’d respond, “on the internet.” He spent a lot of time over the years talking to Indian elders in the local community.

Joe’s father was a captain in the Army in World War I. While serving in Europe, he was gassed and suffered severe lung damage. He died five years later due to the injury, three months before Joe was born. He was abandoned by his mother and taken in by his grandmother. His mother died when he was five years old.

Joe contracted tuberculosis as a child and was sent to Talihina Sanatorium where he stayed until he was 12 years old. When discharged, he lived with grandmother and a number of Indian boarding homes, but he repeatedly ran away. Finally, a juvenile judge told him he could not keep running away. A family friend of agreed to pay for him to go to the Oklahoma Military Academy for Boys. He stayed there for two years. Three days before his 16th birthday, he met a Navy recruiter in Idabel and convinced him that he was almost 18. He joined the Navy in 1943.

After basic training, he was assigned to a merchant marine ship as a gunner. On his first voyage, he went to Hawaii, Tasmania, Australia, Ceylon, Calcutta, Ceylon, Madagascar, South Africa, Brazil, and New York City. On his second trip, he sailed to the Persian Gulf through the Red Sea. On the way back while passing through the Straights of Gibraltar, his ship was torpedoed and had to pull into Algiers for repairs.

His uncle reported to the Navy that he was underage. They instructed his commanding officer to turn Joe in when they made port. Instead, Joe was repeatedly put on other ships headed out to sea. He never made port in the U.S. until the war was over.

Joe made many trips on the ships and was attacked many times by fighter planes. During the Normandy invasion, he was stationed off the beach in a tanker carrying thousands of gallons of fuel. After a week, his ship was brought in close to shore and the gasoline was off-loaded by hoses. He was honorably discharged in 1946 due to the fact that he had enlisted under fraudulent circumstances. He was one month short of serving a full tour.

He returned to Oklahoma and lived with a sister while he finished high school. After high school, he enrolled at Oklahoma State University. He said he just didn’t seem to fit in there so he didn’t stay long. He regretted that decision.

In 1947, Joe enlisted in the Army. He was assigned to a combat engineering unit which went to Korea before the war started. His unit, the 187th Combat Engineers, parachuted in and fought their way north to the Yellow River on the Chinese border. The Chinese then maneuvered behind Joe’s unit, cutting off their escape route. They had to fight their way out in hand-to-hand combat. Joe was wounded when bayoneted by a Chinese soldier, whom he shot and killed. He was hospitalized for six months. He was awarded both the Silver and Bronze Stars for his actions. He was not able to talk in detail about his combat experiences as it was too upsetting for him. Joe was also awarded two Purple Hearts.

After his recovery he received a medical discharge and he returned home. He was unhappy and reenlisted. This time he was assigned as a post-engineer, a position he held until 1959.

Joe was selected for a Special Forces position as a helicopter pilot. In 1960, he was sent to Viet Nam, where he flew for 18 months. While on a routine mission his aircraft was shot down by a missile. He was wounded but managed to land before passing out. Both ankles and knees were hit, necessitating 18 months of hospitalization. He received his medical discharge in 1964.

He then enrolled in a VA training program to become an electrician. While having a drink one night, he was approached by a man who was recruiting for electricians to work in Alaska. He was able to persuade the recruiter that he was qualified and soon he was in Alaska working as an electrician. He worked with the Civil Aeronautics Agency in Alaska until 1965. He returned home and worked in maintenance by a manufacturing company. Later, he worked with General Dynamics as a maintenance electrician until he suffered a heart attack in 1968.

In 1970, Joe married Valeria and eventually moved to Geary in 1982. As a father, Joe went to scout masters school and started the first cub scout pack in Geary, and later the first Boy Scout troop.

He served in a Bureau of Indian Affairs working with boys who were likely to drop out of school. In his spare time, he started the Little League in Geary and kept it going for ten years. He had to give it up in 1981 at the age of 73.

Survivors include his wife, Valeria Hicks of the home, children, Joe Neal Hicks Jr. of Geary, Cincie Hill of El Reno, Kenneth James Sr. of Weatherford, Thomas Hicks of Geary and Mareila Jo Mansfield of Altus, step-children, John Black and Patrick Black both of Geary, Daniel Black of Pensacola, Fla., adopted son Robert Brown II of Geary, 27 grandchildren, many great grandchildren, and sisters Ellen, Virginia, Mary, Fern, and Delores.

He was preceded in death by his parents, grandchildren Derek Hicks, Chrissa Hicks and Randy Black, son Leon Hicks, daughter Devora Hicks, sister Norma Hicks, brother Edward Hicks and one great-grandchild



# OBITUARIES

## Maude Lee Ward

Maude Lee Ward, 84, of Broken Bow passed away Jan. 8, 2010, at her home. She was born, March 16, 1925, to Tecumseh and Sophie (Jefferson) Anna. Known by her friends as “Maudie,” she was a member of Oka Achukma Presbyterian Church. She worked at dry cleaners and as a hotel housekeeper while in Oklahoma City. Upon moving back to Broken Bow, she worked at a few restaurants as a cook. She retired from Broken Bow Nursing Home as a housekeeper.



Maudie enjoyed cooking, especially around Thanksgiving and Christmas, where the family would gather together and laugh. She also enjoyed her flower garden; roses were her favorite.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Tecumseh and Sophie (Jefferson) Anna; her brothers, Jacob, Solomon, Cornelius and Ezra; her three sisters, Clarsey Anna, Naomi Lewis and Cordie Edleman; a step-grandson, Clifton Crow and a step-great-grandson, Casey Barkwell.

Maude leaves to cherish her memory, one sister, Marie Higgins of Broken Bow; one daughter and son-in-law, Patricia and E.G. Crow of Broken Bow; one son and daughter-in-law, Andy and Carrie Ward of Broken Bow; three grandsons and their family, Ryan and Stephanie of Idabel, Alan Ward of Broken Bow, Cody and Whitney of Broken Bow; two great-grandsons Colby and Zayne Ward; two step-grandchildren Nina Jodell of Savanna Georgia, Lyndon Crow and wife Alice of Sobol; six step-great-grandchildren; eight step-great-great-grandchildren; a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

## Danny Owen Tushka

Danny Owen Tushka, 54, of Broken Bow, passed away Jan. 7, 2010, at his residence. He was born Aug. 21, 1955, in DeQueen, Ark., the son of Andrew and Nora (Shomoh) Tushka.

Danny was a member of the Choctaw Baptist Church in Idabel. He enjoyed woodwork, carpentry, fishing and spending time with family and friends.

Danny is survived by his mother, Nora Shomoh Walker of Broken Bow; one son and daughter-in-law, Danny and Teressa Tushka Jr.; and three grandchildren, Shawan, April and Danielle Tushka of Seminole.

He is also survived by seven siblings, Audrey Vandygriff of Paris, Texas, Joyce Bailey, Elieen Shomoh, Donna Tushka, Andrew Tushka Jr., Sherrie Aldana and Michelle Tushka, all of Broken Bow; his companion, Martha Libel, of Broken Bow; several nieces, nephews, cousins and a host of friends.

## Solomon Julian Ott

Solomon Julian Ott, 88, died Dec. 24, 2009, at Guardian Care of Roanoke Rapids.

Mr. Ott was a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. He joined the Marines in 1940 as a Private First Class and worked up to 2nd Lieutenant. He flew SBD Dauntless Dive Bombers. After the service he settled in Detroit, Mich. and worked for the Federal Aviation Administration for 33 years.

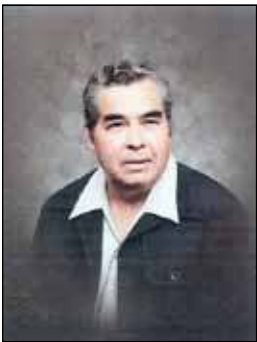
He then retired and moved to Spring Hill, Fla., where he lived for 25 years and was a member of Hernando Aero Modelers in Spring Hill.

He was born April 17, 1921, to the late Solomon J. Ott and Georgia Cox Ott. Also, preceding him in death was his wife, Bozica Ott.

He is survived by his son, Dewey Ott and wife Cindy of Roanoke Rapids; brother Bill Ott of Maryland; grandchildren, B. J. Ott and wife Eva, and Mikey Ott; great-grandchild Jillian Ott; nephew Sam Sonnett of New Jersey.

## Eugene Willis

The Rev. Eugene Willis of Pittsburg was born July 27, 1928, in Hartshorne, to Robert Edward and Mary Margaret Willis. He graduated from Pittsburg High School and then entered the United States Army/Air Force in 1946. He served until receiving his honorable discharge in 1949 at Denver, Colo.



He returned to Pittsburg and married Gloria Aileen Coulston on July 15, 1950, in McAlester. They moved to California where he worked for McDonald Douglas and then moved to Oklahoma City and then Norman while he worked for Tinker Air Force Base as a base shipping and supply inspector. During this time he made three trips overseas, one to Tripoli, Lybia; second to Tehran, Iran; and third to Saigon, Viet Nam.

He retired on Feb. 27, 1985, after 29 years of service and moved back to his hometown of Pittsburg. He had a love for the Lord and the missions field and labored for the Lord since 1961. He pioneered two new Indian Mission Churches and pastored the Pentecostal Church of God, Indian Mission Church in Oklahoma City. In 1994, he pastored the Pittsburg Pentecostal Church of God, Indian Mission, where he was still serving as senior pastor. For more than 30 years, he served as Presbyter over the entire Indian Mission Churches in Oklahoma. He and his wife started a gospel group called “The Midwest City Gospel Singers” with the Amos and Samuel families. Together, they carried the gospel by song to Indians at various Indian reservations from Florida, Mississippi, Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. They recorded three gospel albums with another group, the “Glory Bound Singers”, as well as “The Midwest City Gospel Singers.” He also authored several gospel songs and poems.

He and his first wife, Gloria, were married for 54 years, until her death. He later married Linda Coberly on April 21, 2006, in Fort Smith, Ark. He lived the remainder of his life in Pittsburg where he was very active in the church, still singing and playing gospel music until the time of his death. He was widely known among all gospel singers around about for his unique guitar playing. He very much loved his wife, his family, his friends and people in general. He was a very kind and compassionate man.

Survivors include his wife, Linda Willis, of the home; two sons and daughters-in-law, Robert Eugene and Neva Willis, of Moore, William Edward and Valdene Willis, of Norman; two daughters and a son-in-law, Gloria Diane and Rick Brakebill of Norman, Patsy Charlene Wise of Moore; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces, nephews and friends.

He was also preceded in death by his parents, Robert “Choc” and Mary Willis; a sister, Frances Willis, and a brother, Robert Edward Willis Jr.

## James A. Terry

James A. Terry died Jan. 4, 2010, in Hugo at the age of 79. He was born June 13, 1930, in Hugo, the son of Louie and Mary Kate (Melton) Terry.



He lived in the Hugo area all his life and enjoyed hunting and fishing. He was a Navy and Army veteran, serving in the Korean War. He worked at Campbell Soup factory and the glove factory for many years.

James is survived by son Randall Gene Terry of Hugo, daughter Deborah Greer and husband Bobby of Hugo, sister Mary Catherine Madrid of Grant, and numerous nephews and nieces.

## Glenda Kaye Wilson-Ferguson

Glenda Kaye Wilson-Ferguson of Texarkana, Texas, born April 10, 1950, in Durant, went to be with her Lord on Jan. 9, 2010. She passed away in Dallas, Texas surrounded by her loving family.



Glenda and Bill Ferguson married Sept. 3, 2000. She attended Henderson Metro Church, Henderson, Texas for seven years and while living in Texarkana attended the Church on the Rock. Glenda received her associate’s degree from Paris Junior College, Paris, Texas and went on to receive her Bachelor’s of Science in Nursing degree from the University of Oklahoma.

She enjoyed gardening, cooking, decorating and church functions. Family was most important to Glenda and she always looked forward to spending time with her family and friends.

She was preceded in death by her father, Grant Wilson; sister Tiajuana Morris; brother-in-law John Westbrook; her grandparents, Calvin and Cornelia Wilson, and Calvin and Lutie Preas.

She is survived by her husband, Bill Ferguson, of the home; her mother, Jean Wilson, of Bethel; four children and their spouses, Paula Allen of Texarkana, Billy Allen and wife Julie of Geronimo, Jamie Allen and wife Traci of Cooper, Texas, Katie McClenan and husband C. Jay of Henderson; five siblings, Janet Smalling of Lyon, France, Gary Wilson of Texarkana, Ellen Westbrook of Broken Arrow, Michael Wilson of Bethel, Stephanie McKinney of Branson, Mo.; 13 grandchildren, three great-grandchildren; several nieces, nephews, other relatives and a host of friends.

A special thank you to the friends and family that sat with Glenda at the hospital. She leaves us all with many treasured and happy memories. She is dearly loved and will be greatly missed. The family extends deep appreciation for all the love, prayers, and support received during her long and hard fought battle with cancer.

## LaRue Kirk

LaRue Kirk of Yuma, Ariz., died Jan. 2, 2010, in Casa Grande, Ariz. She was 75. LaRue was born Eathel LaRue Ditzler in McAlester March 5, 1934.

She spent her teenage years in San Francisco, where she met and married her first husband, Donald Jacobs, the father of her three children. They moved to Oregon where their two oldest children were born, then moved to Arroyo Grande, Calif., where they were proud owners of Standard Auto Parts in Santa Maria, Calif., and their youngest daughter was born. They moved to Yuma in 1970.

She was very proud of her Choctaw heritage and displayed a picture of herself with Chief Pyle in her home. She was an avid gardener and had the ability to make any space, inside or out, better than when she arrived. She had a love for animals and the outdoors, spending many afternoons in her beautiful garden. The center of her home was always her kitchen table. She taught those around her to appreciate God’s creation and to always help another in need.

She had a short illness with leukemia, for which she had been transferred to Tucson for treatment. She died at a stop-over hospice in Casa Grande on the way back to Yuma.

She is preceded in death by her mother, Sarah M. Navariz; her father, Johnny Ditzler; her late husband, Donald Jacobs; her second husband, Clay Kirk; two brothers, Joseph Ditzler and Maurice Banez; her niece, Elizabeth Ditzler; her nephew, Raymond Ditzler; and her two twin great-granddaughters, Cameron and Mallory Vrooman.

She is survived by her husband, Michael Cockle; her three children, Deborah Foxford, Mark Jacobs, and Samantha Fritcher; two step-daughters, Jennifer Schole and Alison Riccio; three brothers, Kenneth Ditzler, Phillip Navariz and Melino Navariz; five grandchildren, Shannon Jacobs, Melanie Jacobs, Andrea Vrooman, Tylor Fritcher, and Joshua Fritcher; several step-grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, Owen Jacobs, Hannah Jacobs, Nathan Jacobs, Ethan Jacobs, Jeremiah Vrooman, Jacob Vrooman, and John Vrooman, and numerous nieces and nephews.

## Cleon Wilbur ‘Lee’ Hines

Cleon Wilbur “Lee” Hines, retired Los Angeles County employee, native of Culver City, Calif., and a resident of Joshua Tree, Calif., died on Dec. 4, 2009, at the age of 74. He was a proud member of the Choctaw Nation. His Indian heritage came from his mother’s side, Clell (Fox) Hines, whose father, Clarence Cleon Fox, was signer #16 on the original Choctaw roll. He was a descendent of Chief Greenwood LeFlore.



Lee was born on June 13, 1935, to Wilbur Jesse Hines and Clell Beatrice Fox Hines.

He is survived by his third wife of seven years, Mercedes “Marcie” Hines, of Joshua Tree; sister Clell Hines Goldstein of Simi Valley; children from his previous marriage to JoAnn Hines, daughter LeeAnn Hines of Granada Hills, Calif., Lynda Cesaretti of Fortuna, Calif., son Marc Hines of Lake Elizabeth, Calif., and eldest son Mike Hines, who preceded him in death is this year. Also, daughters Janet Rose of Georgia and Deborah West of Oklahoma. He also had nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. He will be missed by all.

## Sadie Lee Martin Wise

Sadie Lee Martin Wise, born to Lilly Mae Davis Martin, an original Choctaw enrollee, and Thomas Martin in Roff on Dec. 12, 1909. She passed away Dec. 30, 2009, at the Live Oak Nursing Home in George West, Texas. She happily celebrated 100 years of life well lived, with family and staff at the Live Oak Center on Dec. 12. Sadie kept a 2007 photo of her son and Chief Pyle beside her bed and remained extremely proud of her Choctaw heritage to the end of her life.



Lillie Mae and Thomas had 10 children; Sadie was the oldest. As she and her siblings grew, the children staggered into the Great Depression and the family moved from town to town in Oklahoma and Texas. Two covered wagons or an old truck with solid rubber tires provided transportation while her father sold cattle, farmed or generally tried to scratch out a living for his large family. Sadie had fond memories of living in Kiowa when she was 12 and especially of her little horse, Blackie. She loved to tell her children and grandchildren stories from her colorful past. “They called me Indian because I loved to ride bareback as fast as Blackie could go, with black hair that had never been cut flying behind me.”

Sadie was a turn-of-the-century girl athlete. She loved sports, especially running and basketball. She played center on a winning basketball team because she could jump the highest.

Times were hard when she was a kid and everyone had to help out. She picked cotton in Odell, Texas, to help buy groceries. She said the experience made her strong. She told her children about attending a one-room school house in Weslaco, Texas, where the young teacher herself only had an eighth grade education. Her favorite subject was U.S. History. She was an excellent student and was able to work difficult math problems in her head. She had to quit school in the 10th grade to go to work. She made a vow to herself that if she ever had children she would work day and night to make sure they were able to finish high school and college. And so she did.

She married Homer Wise in Edcouch, Texas, on Sept. 17, 1928. They moved to Beeville, Texas, in December of 1929 because Homer heard there was an oil boom going on. They had no property -- only a truck, so with \$10 and a stalk of bananas given to them by a passing vendor, they began to sell produce from the back of their truck.

In 1947, they borrowed money from Mr. Yahr, a Beeville businessman, to buy property on Hefferman and St. Mary’s.

The first day their new building opened Mr. Yahr put his arms around the cash register and said a Jewish prayer for luck and prosperity. They served the Beeville customers there until 1962.

The well-known Wise generosity kept more that a few Beeville families from going under during the Depression and after WWII. Hungry men at their back door asking for food were never turned away. Produce was often given for credit; warm coats were shared and even college money made a difference in the lives of their customers. When the store closed, more that \$16,000 in outstanding credit remained. Payments trickled in over the next 20 years, many with notes expressing gratitude.

She enjoyed a host of devoted friends, through her church, as Worthy Matron of the Eastern Star and through the Wise businesses. She is remembered for her unfailing generosity, thoughtfulness and also for her useful health tips.

She is survived by her loving family; daughter Marjorie Lee Barker of Houston and son James E. Wise of Albuquerque, N.M.; five sisters, six grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

## Somis Baker Jr.

Somis Baker Jr. of Midland, Texas passed away Jan. 12, 2010, after a lengthy battle with liver cancer.

Jr. was born Aug. 15, 1948, to Somis Baker Sr. and Ida Wesley Baker in Battiest where he was raised and educated. After high school he was drafted into the U.S. Army and served his country in Viet Nam. Upon his return, Jr. worked for Weyerhauser Timber Company, skidding logs in McCurtain County. During this time he met the love of his life, Fay Nell Simpson, and married her Aug. 19, 1977. In the early 80s the family moved from Oklahoma to Lenorah, Texas, where Jr. began his career as a Hot Oil Operator for TST Paraffin Company and then began working for K.D.M. Hot Oil Services in Midland, where he retired after 25 years of dedicated service.

He was an avid hunter and fisherman, loved sports and will be remembered as an All-Star softball player. He was a proud Army veteran and attended many services that honored all veterans, and has instilled that same honor in his grandson Catlin.

The family would like to send a special thank you to the staff of Cheyrl Vallie, Certified Family Nurse Practitioner, the staff of Dr. David Watkins, the staff of Doll-Hollander Chiropractic of Midland, along with Hospice of Midland.

He is preceded in death by his wife, parents and three sisters, Ann Sims, Marie Baker and Pearlje Jefferson

Jr. leaves behind son Paul Bryan Weaver of Midland; daughter LaShawnda Thompson and husband Mark of Midland; his pride and joy, grandson, Catlin Tate, of Midland; along with grandchildren, Josh and Sarah Carey and daughter Amanda of Melissa, Texas; Trent Thompson, Cody Thompson, Britni Thompson, Kassie Thompson and Trey Thompson, all of Midland; three brothers, Gilbert Baker and wife Sharon of Branson, Mo.; Billy Paul Baker and wife Mary Lou of Bethel; Wendell Baker of Battiest.

## Elvis Billy

Elvis Billy, 42, of Battiest, passed away Dec. 30, 2009, at his home. He was born May 20, 1967, to Louis G. and Lucy (Watson) Billy.



Elvis was a member of the Community Baptist Church in Broken Bow. He was a dedicated Broken Bow Savage football fan. He enjoyed hunting armadillos, talking with his many friends on the phone and spending time with family.

He was preceded in death by his father, Louis G. Billy; three sisters, Linda, Alice Jean and Loretta; four brothers, David, James, Henry and Larry.

Elvis leaves to cherish his memory, mother Lucy Billy of the home; brother Kenneth Billy of Battiest; sister Alice Davis of Muldrow; special nephew Jimmy Dale Billy; special niece Kiamita Lopez; several nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews; close friends Janet Kizer, Bro. Chief and B.J. Phillips and a host of friends.



# Top Ten upgrades to ‘green’ your home

A green home is one that is eco-friendly and is at harmony with the environment. You can help the environment by making your home greener. Here are some tips to help you adopt a more energy-efficient and earth-friendly lifestyle:

1. Upgrade to greener appliances. Replace old appliances with energy efficient models that are Energy Star rated to reduce your energy bill. According to the Energy Star web site, use of energy efficient appliances in just one home in ten homes is equivalent to planting 1.7 million acres of trees.

2. Temperature control. More than 50% of a home’s energy bill is from heating and cooling. Moderating the thermostat according to the weather goes a long way in reducing energy consumption. Other energy saving methods include a high efficiency heating system, changing or cleaning the filter every month and the use of ceiling fans instead of air conditioning.

3. Saving water. There are many ways one can save water and reduce energy consumption. Fitting faucets with aerators and installing water efficient low flow toilets are two ways.

4. Clean with Green Products. Buy green household cleaners that are made of natural, non-toxic substances instead of toxic ones. Carpet and window cleaner containing grain alcohol, detergents made of coconut oil or other plant oils are bio-friendly.

5. Use recycled paper. Whenever you buy paper, get 100% post consumed recycled paper. These consume less virgin pulp and keep waste paper from ending up in landfills. You can also save more trees by opting out of junk mail list. Using unbleached paper is more eco-friendly as the bleached paper process results in the creation of harmful byproducts. Also take your own cloth bags with you for shopping.

6. Energy efficient lighting. Replace incandescent bulbs with Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs. Compact fluorescent bulbs uses 66% less energy and last 10 times longer.

7. Bamboo Floors. Bamboo floors are more environmental friendly than hardwood floors. Bamboo matures in 4 to 6 yrs while it takes 50 to 100 yrs for typical hardwoods.

8. Shun plastic. Plastics are not biodegradable. They produce harmful greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming when processed, burned, or dumped into landfills. Find a recycling facility for those that you do use.

9. Eco-paint. Use environmentally safe paints that are organic and solvent free to paint your home.

10. Green your garden. Avoid synthetic fertilizers and chemical pesticides. Instead use organic manure such as compost and non chemical pest control methods.

15th Annual

Okla Chahta Gathering


May 1-2 on the Practice Field of Bakersfield College  
in Bakersfield, California



Princess Pageant

Young ladies who would like to run for 2010-11 Okla Chahta Princess, please e-mail victoria@oklachakta.org. It is a great way to learn your heritage and the traditions of the Choctaw People





• Visiting with Chief Pyle, Assistant Chief Batton and Tribal Council

• Choctaw Storyteller Tim Tingle



Special plans include

• Basketmaking demo/class

• Tribal Membership/CDIB Program

• Variety of tribal programs

• Games • Make and Take for the kids

• Pottery demo/class • Social Dancing

• Stickball demonstration • Young Warriors Society

The Doubletree Bakersfield Hotel

3100 Camino Del Rio Court  
Bakersfield, CA 93308  
661-323-7111

A block of rooms has been reserved with a special room rate.

For more information, feel free to contact Okla Chahta Clan of CA  
PO Box 80862, Bakersfield, CA 93380 • 661-393-OKLA • choctaws@oklachakta.org

Pre-Register for the 15th Annual Gathering

Please pre-register for the FREE Saturday meal.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Are you a tribal member? \_\_\_\_\_

– Camping on grounds of gathering –

Sign up now – limited number of spaces – they go fast – request early for a space!

YOU MUST REGISTER & PAY IN ADVANCE

If you cancel you must do so 2 weeks prior to get a refund so we can open to someone else. I wish to register for camping:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

RV Camping (size and type) \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 – Friday or Saturday or \$15 for Friday and Saturday. Fee is per unit charge. All camping is dry – no electricity.

Please make checks payable to

Okla Chahta Clan of CA Inc. and mail to P.O. Box 80862, Bakersfield, CA 93380

All camping is for self-contained only. No hookups – No electricity.

Camping and other information can be found at [www.oklachakta.org](http://www.oklachakta.org)



Choctaw Nation and Pittsburg County Youth Advisory Boards donate to the Salvation Army Toys for Tots program. Pictured are DaNetta Wilkerson, leader Clint Cannon, Tasha Meashintubby, Austin Kennieutubbe, Capt. Ric Swartz of the Salvation Army, Karlita Lott, SWAT, and April Christian.



Pittsburg County YAB members make sandwiches for the Senior Citizens New Year’s Party – Austin Kenieutubbe, Adam Jones, Tasha Meashintubby, leader Clint Cannon and Brett Porter.



Pittsburg County YAB help with Choctaw Nation Christmas baskets – DaNetta Wilkerson and Cherish Wilkerson.

## Sign up for Grassland Reserve Program

The Bryan County Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are accepting applications for the 2010 Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP). FSA and NRCS jointly administer the GRP.

According to Kevin Dale, County Executive Director for the FSA & Paul May, District Conservationist for NRCS, GRP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to landowners and operators for the restoration and conservation of the nation’s grasslands. FSA and NRCS offices will accept GRP applications on a continuous basis for easements or rental agreements. Applications received prior to Feb. 19, 2010, will be evaluated for 2010 GRP funding; applications received after this date will be evaluated for future GRP years funding.

Application evaluation for acceptance in the 2010 GRP will be based on ranking criteria that will emphasize grazing operations; protection of grasslands, land that contains forbs, and shrub land at the greatest risk to be converted to uses other than grazing. The GRP permits common grazing practices, haying, mowing, or harvesting for seed production, subject to certain restrictions. All participants in GRP are required to implement a grazing management plan approved by NRCS. To sign up producers should visit the USDA Service Center in Durant or call the FSA or NRCS office at (580) 924-4131 for more information.

## Vocational Rehabilitation Program can help

People with disabilities face greater challenges while attending school or applying for a job than those without disabilities. The Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation program offers assistance to those with disabilities to train for a career and obtain employment.

Hearing impairment or deafness is one disability in particular that afflicts more than 28 million Americans, to varying degrees. Hearing impairment or deafness is defined as “a full or partial inability to detect or perceive at least some frequencies of sound relative to other members of a species that is equipped with a sense of hearing.”

There are four different types of hearing loss: conductive, sensorineural, mixed and a central hearing loss.

Bree Logan, a hearing impaired Choctaw member majoring in Architectural Engineering with a minor in Native American Studies at the University of Oklahoma, has experienced some of these challenges first hand.

“Some hearing people have the perception that because I’m deaf I’m not intelligent,” said Logan. “Also, because I use a different way of communicating, they think I can’t comprehend a concept. To overcome these issues, I use my determination and perseverance, knowing that I am deserving and capable as anyone.”

The Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Program is devoted to assisting American Indians who have a disability

that keeps them from working gain the skills necessary to obtain and maintain employment. They accomplish this by assisting with training at vocational schools, colleges and universities or by providing on the job training.

Services include counseling and guidance, training such as tuition, books, room and board, job coaching, and placement in suitable employment, assistive devices, and other goods and services that can be reasonably expected to benefit an individual

with a disability in terms of employment.

To be eligible for the Voc Rehab program applicants must:

1. Have a documented physical or mental impairment that keeps you from working.
2. Be a member of a federally recognized tribe
3. Live in the 10 ½ counties of the Choctaw Nation.

For more information or to make an appointment to meet with a counselor, please contact our office at toll free 877-285-6893 or 580-326-8304.

### 2010 HEALTH FAIRS AT COMMUNITY CENTERS

CENTER	COUNCIL MEMBER	DATE	START TIME	EAT
<b>DIABETES EDUCATORS:</b>				
Stigler	Charlotte Jackson	2-03-10	10:00	11:30
Atoka	Anthony Dillard	2-17-10	10:00	11:30
Coalgate	James Frazier	2-24-10	10:00	12:00
Hugo	Perry Thompson	3-10-10	10:00	12:00
Wright City	Jack Austin	3-24-10	10:00	12:00
Antlers	Jack Austin	4-07-10	10:00	11:30
Spiro	Charlotte & Delton	4-14-10	10:00	11:30
<b>COMMUNITY HEALTH NURSES:</b>				
Idabel	Hap Ward	5-19-10	10:00	12:00
Broken Bow	Mike Amos	6-09-10	10:00	12:00
Poteau	Delton Cox	7-07-10	10:00	12:00
Talihina	Kenny Bryant	7-21-10	10:00	11:30
Wilburton	Joe Coley	8-11-10	10:00	11:30
McAlester	Bob Pate	9-15-10	10:00	11:30
Bethel	Mike Amos	9-29-10	10:00	11:30
Crowder	James Fraizer	10-13-10	10:00	11:00

Chahta Words of the month		
English	Choctaw	pronunciation
town	tvmaha	ta-ma-ha
bed	topa	to-pa
yard	wahnuta	wah-no-ta
garden	osapushi	o-sa-po’ shi
desk	a holissochi	a: ho-lis-so’ chi
road	hina	hi-na

## FOOD DISTRIBUTION

**ANTLERS**

Market open weekdays March 1-26, except for:  
**March 3:** Idabel 9-11 a.m.; Broken Bow 12-2 p.m. (market closed).  
**March 10:** Bethel 9-10:30; Smithville 12-2 (market closed).  
**Closed** March 29, 30, 31 for inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** March 5 & 19, 10 a.m.-12 noon.

**DURANT**

Market open weekdays: March 1-26, except for:  
**Closed** March 29 30, 31 for inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** March 9 & 17, 10 a.m.-12 noon.

**McALESTER**

Market open weekdays March 1-26, except for:  
**Closed** March 29, 30, 31 for inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** March 3 & 15, 10 a.m.-12 noon.

**POTEAU**

Market open weekdays March 1-26, except for:  
**Closed** March 29, 31, 31 for inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** March 1 & 11, 10 a.m.-12 noon.

**CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION**  
Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday thru Friday. We 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

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