



The next several issues of the Biskinik will include recorded interviews of Choctaw elders from 2007.

This month – Rebecca McDonald, Bill Coleman, Truman Heron and Ernest Hooser – Pages 9-13.



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BISKINIK

The Official Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

February 2011 Issue

Serving 204,827 Choctaws Worldwide

Choctaws ... growing with pride, hope and success



Councilwoman remembered

By DOUG RUSSELL
News Editor, Stigler News Sentinel

A Haskell County fixture has faded, but her legacy is far from gone. Longtime Choctaw Nation Councilwoman Charlotte Jackson died Jan. 18 at the age of 70, after a long illness and an even longer life of giving to and serving others. Choctaw Chief Gregory E. Pyle said, “Our flags fly at half-mast in remembrance of her, and our hearts are with her loving family. “Charlotte served on the Choctaw Council since 1991, and many times was a guiding compass setting the direction of the legislative body,” Pyle said. “I have personally counted on her advice often and appreciated her wisdom, as well as her amazing sensibility and sense of humor. “I have never met anyone like Charlotte Jackson. We may fill her seat at the table but she will never be replaced. Her leadership and her friendship will be eternally missed.” Born Feb. 28, 1940, Jackson was always interested in helping others. That led to her becoming a licensed practical nurse and, eventually, to a seat on the tribal council of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. “She was just one of those people who always cared about others,” said Linda Colwell, a co-worker for more than 20 years. “Until Charlotte came along, the Choctaws in this area really didn’t have or see much. We were kind of drifting. But she got in there and really worked hard. She worked with the chief and assistant chief and did what she could for, not just the Choctaws, but for the entire community.” “She will definitely be missed,” said Marvin Ginn, a former mayor and current town council member for Quinton. “She was a great lady. I can’t think of anyone who could even come close to replacing her.” Not too many years ago many of Quinton’s streets were dirt and gravel. The town simply couldn’t afford to pave them, but Jackson worked with fellow tribal council member Joe Coley – portions of the community were located in each of

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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.

Hugo construction complete



A special ribboncutting ceremony is held Jan. 13 for the new Tribal Services facility and the new Wellness Center in Hugo.

New centers open for business

Tribal Services in Hugo have never been easier for tribal members to access. A ribboncutting on Jan. 13 marked the opening of the new 24,300-sq.-ft. Tribal Services facility and the new 10,000-sq.-ft. Wellness Center in Hugo. The two buildings were added near the Choctaw Community Center, Head Start and Clinic in Hugo. With new landscaping and a walking track around a picturesque pond with a water fountain, the Tribal Services campus is a beautiful area off Hwy. 70 on the west side of the city. The master plan is to eventually

See Ribboncuttings on Page 5



The Hugo Wellness Center is a state-of-the-art facility offers a variety of equipment and workout areas as well as innovative exercise programs and wellness events.

THE CHOCTAW NATION IN CHOCTAW COUNTY

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is the largest employer in Choctaw County with 574 employees in a variety of fields.

Facility	# of Employees
■ Gaming	310
■ Housing Authority	87
■ CMDC/Choctaw Defense	71
■ Outreach Services	43
■ Health Clinic	23
■ Environment Health	19
■ Head Start	11
■ Community Center	3
■ CNHSA Guest Services	2
■ Career Development	2
■ Choctaw Archiving	2
■ WIC	1

Culbreath added to Hall of Fame



JOY CULBREATH

Joy Culbreath, Executive Director of Education for the Choctaw Nation, is one of an elite group to be named to the Oklahoma Women’s Hall of Fame. This honor goes to women who are pioneers in their field, role models, and positive examples of the Oklahoma spirit. Helping others improve their own lives has always been the theme of Joy’s life. During the first stage of her professional career, she spent 27 years at Southeastern Oklahoma State University working in Trio Programs to provide opportunities for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds. After ‘retiring’ from the university, she began working (as the sole employee) to build an Adult Education program for the Choctaw Nation. She expected it to take about three years.

Eighteen years later, she is the Executive Director over all Education programs for the Choctaw Nation, overseeing fourteen programs and over 350 employees who serve thousands of Choctaw people. Some of her programs include: Jones Academy, Trio programs, early childhood services, high school and college services, and the School of Choctaw Language. Choctaw Chief Gregory E. Pyle gave Joy the task of building a Language program for the Choctaw Nation. “Under Joy’s leadership, this program has grown to the point that Choctaw language is state certified and taught in public schools, on college campuses for credit, and on the Internet,” said Chief Pyle, “saving this language from being lost to future generations.”

See Culbreath on Page 5

Tribal Council holds January 2011 session

Language instructors receive certification

Presentation of teacher certificates by the Choctaw School of Language kicked off new business during the Choctaw Tribal Council’s regular session Jan. 8 at Tushka Homma. Four new instructors have been added. Dayla Amos of Broken Bow, reigning Miss Indian Oklahoma, was unable to attend the council meeting. Her father, Councilman Mike Amos, accepted the certificate for her. Yannash Ushi Scott of Madill will be holding classes in Madill. Carol Harris will be teaching at her home town of Spiro. Lucille Harjo of Tulsa will be teaching language classes in Claremore. Community classes are currently being held in five states – Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, California and Alaska. Fifteen new teachers were added in 2010. Several members of the Youth Advisory Board were in attendance, representing chapters from Howe, Clayton, Heavener, Soper, McCurtain County and Hugo. The YAB students are required to attend a tribal council meeting, a school board meeting and a city council meeting every year.

See Council on Page 3



Council Speaker Delton Cox, Councilman Mike Amos accepting certificate for daughter Dayla Amos, Yannash Ushi Scott, Carol Harris, Assistant Chief Gary Batton, Lucille Harjo, Councilman Joe Coley and Roger Scott of the School of Language’s Community Program.

Okla Chahta Gathering to be held May 7 and 8 in Bakersfield

The 16th Annual Okla Chahta Gathering will be held May 7-8 on Bakersfield College's Practice Field in Bakersfield, Calif.

The two days are enjoyed by hundreds of Choctaws, family and friends who come together to visit with other West Coast Choctaws and all who attend from Oklahoma.

Chief Gregory E. Pyle, Assistant Chief Gary Batton, Councilmembers and Chaplain Bertram Bobb are among the special guests.

Choctaw author and storyteller Tim Tingle will be on hand, a favorite of everyone at the gathering.

Plans also include cultural classes on basketmaking, beading, pottery, traditional food and stickball.

Participants are encouraged to join in the dancing and stickball games. Among the special youth activities is the always-fun corn game. It's a battle of girls against the guys to see who can claim all of the

This year's hotel

**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.

corn.

The annual Okla Chahta Princess pageant will be held. For more information on the pageant or if you would like to enter, please e-mail Victoria Harrison at princessvixeypooh@sbcglobal.net or call 661-393-6552. It is a time-honored tradition and a wonderful opportunity for the young ladies to learn about the heritage of the Choctaw people.

Staff from the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Tribal Membership and CDIB office will be available for CDIB and tribal membership applica-

tions as well as taking photographs for the membership IDs. If applying for the Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB), please bring the long-form, state-issued birth certificate from Sacramento. Please do not bring one that has been issued by a county courthouse. The long-form, state-issued birth certificate is the one required by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

Several other tribal programs will be set up with information to share with area Choctaws.

A wide array of items will be for sale throughout the gathering. The Okla Chahta Store will have this year's T-shirt, books and other great items. If you are interested in a vendor space or would like more information, please call 661-323-7111. Or for more information about the gathering, call 661-393-6552 or e-mail choctaws@oklachahta.org. Check out the website at www.oklachahta.org.

Pre-Register for the 16th 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. No tent camping.

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.oklachahta.org, phone 661-393-6552 or e-mail choctaws@oklachahta.org.

Chihowa Okla United Methodist Church

The Chihowa Okla United Methodist Church in Durant is the latest chartered United Methodist Church of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (OIMC). Chihowa Okla means “God’s People” and is the first charter in 30 years within the OIMC Southeast District.

The OIMC has recognized the need for churches in cities where Native American people are moving for employment and education opportunities. As native people move from their home churches, many seldom return for weekly worship. OIMC had a vision to organize fellowships. Recognizing the growth of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the Choctaw people moving into the city of Durant, OIMC targeted this area as a possible site for a United Methodist Church to fulfill the spiritual needs.

In January 2006, the Durant Indian Fellowship was organized under the leadership of the Rev. Ronnie Tom and with the generous support of Tribal Councilman Ted Dosh. The fellowship began its Sunday and Wednesday evening worship in the Choctaw Nation Community Center.

In July 2010, the fellowship was chartered as Chihowa Okla United Methodist Church. Officiating the event was Bishop Robert Hayes of the Oklahoma Conference of United Methodist Churches and Rev. David Wilson of the OIMC. Currently the Chihowa Okla UMC has memberships of Choctaw families that were relocated to Durant from Atoka, McAlester, Wright City and Broken Bow, most without a church and few inactive members of a United Methodist Church.

Chihowa Okla worships at the Choctaw Community Center, 2750 Big Lots Parkway, with Sunday school and studies at 9:45 a.m. followed by 11 a.m. services. Wednesday evening service begins at 6 p.m. with food fellowship followed by 7 p.m. evening worship. The door is open to all people in need of spiritual reconnection or a place to worship on a weekly basis.

Chihowa Okla members are raising funds for a land base and a building for a permanent place to worship. The church is aware of the Native American students arriving to the city of Durant for education opportunities and has taken steps to organize a Native American Ministry to outreach to young adults attending Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

Chihowa Okla UMC contacts are Lee Watkins at 580-230-9053 or Oneida Winship at oneidaw@choctawnation.com or 580-931-7730. For more information on OIMC contact the Rev. David Wilson at dwilson@oimc.org.

Gregory E. Pyle
Chief

Gary Batton
Assistant Chief

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

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The BISKINIK is printed on recycled paper.

BISKINIK 2011

Thanks for the help

Thanks to the many Choctaws of the McCurtain County communities for their stories to help with my presentation and essay for the monthly newsletter for the USDA, The Beacon. Thanks also to the Investment Centers of Broken Bow, Idabel and Wright City for their assistance in obtaining information and history of the Choctaw tribe.

Thanks to Color Guard member Herbert Jesse of Haworth for his history in recognition and honoring Choctaw veterans. Thank you to the Choctaw Language Department for their translation of “We the People,” the first three words of the Preamble.

Dedication of the essay and poster to all Native Americans and fellow Americans during wartime and to the veterans who fought and lost their lives in combat.



Gerald Nehka

Appreciation for E-Recycle

I wanted to thank the Choctaw Nation for coordinating the E-Recycle event. I was a great outlet for us to drop off some of the things around the house. Thanks again.

Dennis Cullum

SURE assistance available for farmers

Farmers and ranchers throughout the Choctaw Nation who were adversely affected by natural disasters in 2009 can apply for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) starting Jan. 10, 2011. Eligible producers should apply at their County Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to receive financial relief, according to Kevin Dale, the FSA Outreach contact for the Choctaw Nation.

“SURE is one of five disaster related programs in the FSA portfolio,” Dale said. “This program provides a tremendous amount of assistance to producers who have suffered from natural disasters and is part of the “safety net” designed to assist farmers and ranchers who feed America and the world.”

The SURE program provides benefits for farm losses accrued in 2009 due to natural disasters. A producer is eligible for the program when a secretarial disaster designation has been made for their county and they have production losses of at least 10 percent, or when actual production is less than half of the normal established production.

Producers are eligible for payment when they have crop insurance and/or a Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy. Several groups of producers including socially disadvantaged, beginning farmers or ranchers and limited resource producers may be eligible without crop insurance or NAP. Choctaw members would qualify as a socially disadvantaged group.

The signup period for 2009 benefits is scheduled to close on July 29, 2011, and producers are encouraged to call the Durant FSA office at 580-924-4131, ext. 2, or another one of the FSA offices in the Choctaw Nation (Hugo at 580-326-3655, Idabel at 580-286-2574, Poteau at 918-647-2047, McAlester at 918-423-4073, or Atoka at 580-889-2554. You may also contact or visit online at www.fsa.usda.gov/ok for more information.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association

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

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

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

Grateful graduate

I would like to express my gratitude to Lauren English and the staff in the Choctaw Career Development Center for helping me to realize my dream of becoming a registered nurse. From when I was just inquiring about the program to my post graduation job hunt, the career development staff has been extremely encouraging and helpful. Even though I live out of state, they were always attentive and prompt. Their professionalism even earned them compliments from my school's business office. Without their help and the funding from the Choctaw Nation, I would not have realized my dream. Since graduating from Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Associate Degree Nursing program in December 2010, I am working as an RN at Memorial Hospital in Gulfport, Miss. Thank you so much for making a positive difference in the lives of Choctaw members.



Megan Dooly

Great Powwow

The Choctaw Powwow in Durant was a wonderful way to share with other Choctaw members the connections made and moments shared. My daughter, Gabby, is pictured with Assistant Chief Gary Batton. Thank you for the dance. I hope we can have another one next year.



David Nucosee

Searching for half-sister

I am searching for my half-sister who I have never met. Her name at birth was Alice Marie Bales. Alice was born in Stigler on March 14, 1938, to Arvilla Martin and Kenneth Bales, both Choctaw. Please contact me, Terry Bales, at 1367 Eaglefen Drive, Diamond Bar, Calif. 91765 or email at tkbales62479@yahoo.com.

Terry Bales

Energy-saving opportunity

Nearly 2.5 billion electrical products containing power supplies are currently in use in the United States, and about 400 to 500 million new power supplies, linear and switching, are sold in the U.S. each year. The total amount of electricity that flows through these power supplies is more than 207 billion kilowatts per hour (kWh) a year, or about 6 percent of the national electric bill. More efficient designs could save an expected 15 to 20 percent of that energy. Savings of 32 billion kWh a year would cut the annual national energy bill by \$2.5 billion, displace the power output of seven large power plants and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by more than 24 million tons per year.

Power supplies can be located within the devices they are intended to power (internal) or outside of the product in a separate housing (external). Typical applications that have an external power supply include cordless phones and answering machines, video games, computer speakers and cordless tools. These products are often referred to as “wall packs,” “bricks” or “transformers.” Most external power supplies are linear power supplies with efficiencies in the range of 30 to 40 percent.

Typical applications of internal power supplies are in personal computers, servers, televisions, monitors and a wide range of electronic appliances. Most internal power supplies currently in the market are switch-mode power supplies, which have efficiencies in the range of 65 to 70 percent.

The tremendous growth rate of electronic appliances suggests that power supplies will be pervasive all over the world, constituting a major load segment. Therefore, the efficiency of power supplies will be of critical importance in achieving a sustainable global growth of the digital economy with minimal environmental impact. As power electronics-controlled motor drives start proliferating in other appliances such as air conditioners, heat pumps, refrigerators, washing machines and dishwashers, the importance of a highly efficient AC-to-DC conversion process will become even more critical.

Choctaw festival at the Smithsonian



Choctaw heritage celebration to be held in June in Washington, D.C.

From the Desk of Chief Gregory E. Pyle

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is the first tribe to be asked to host a festival at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC. We will be celebrating Choctaw heritage June 22, 23, 24 and 25 at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) with song, dance, art and food.

Booths showcasing beadwork, pottery, Choctaw language, flutes, weapons and food are some of the highlights of the festival that is being planned for this summer. Choctaw dancers and Choctaw singers will be performing several times each of the four days, and renowned storytellers Tim Tingle and Greg Rodgers will also entertain the crowds.

The café at the National Museum of the American Indian will feature Choctaw food on the menu while we are hosting the festival, and their chef, assisted by our cooking experts, will demonstrate how the dishes are prepared.

Crafts will be held each afternoon in a “make-and-take” sec-

tion of the festival. Materials for the crafts will be provided. Visitors will also be able to handle a set of kabocca (stickball sticks), and see how baskets are woven. It is a great privilege to have prominent Choctaw artists such as Marcus Amerman and Gwen Coleman-Lester join us to set up displays and demonstrate their talent for the event.

A theater in the NMAI will be showing a short film on Choctaw Code Talkers produced by RedHorse Productions and a Trail of Tears documentary called “The Long Walk” produced by Arkansas Education Television Network. There is no charge for entrance to the museum or theater.

Opening day of the festival will include an evening reception for Choctaws and friends at the Smithsonian. The program will include Choctaw flute music and hymns in the Choctaw language.

This is going to be one of the most exciting events we have hosted and I hope to see many of the tribal members who live in the Washington, D.C., area attend!

Foundation of the Christian life

It is always a blessing to share God’s plan and purpose for us from His Word for our spiritual growth. God has given to us many promises to claim by faith. I appreciate your encouraging letters and personal words on the Chaplain’s Corner. May God continue to bless you.

In Paul’s letter to the Church at Corinth he writes about three different kinds of men. In chapters one and two of First Corinthians we read about the Spiritual man. In the latter part of the second chapter we learn some things about the unsaved man whom he calls the Natural man.

Chapter three tells us about the Carnal man – the person who is born again but who lets his life be controlled by the desires of the flesh and by the reasoning of men rather than by the Spirit of God.

In the first four verses of chapter three we learn that Paul could not teach the deep things of God to these people because of their carnality. He had to feed them spiritual milk (Hebrews 5:12-14) instead of spiritual meat. Paul said the marks of carnality are: envy, strife, divisions – factions, jealousies, and quarreling.

Having accused them of carnality because of their divisions, Paul presented another question. He asked, in verse 5: “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man.”

It seems as though Paul was saying, “God has used us as ministers, but who are we? We are mere servants to whom the Lord has given a ministry.”

Then he added in verse 6: “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.” Paul planted the seed and Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. Paul and Apollos were merely instruments in God’s hands.

Paul had planted the seed of spiritual truth in the hearts of these Corinthians. Apollos had watered that truth, but God caused the spiritual growth in the heart of each willing Christian. Weeds and thorns represent sin. (Matthew 13:24-30)

When weeds get into a field, the plants cannot grow properly. When sin gets into the life of a Christian, spiritual growth is hindered. God wants to use us, but He cannot do so until we allow Him to cultivate our lives and take away the sin.

When the weeds, thorns, and thistles of sin in our lives are removed, God can give growth to our spiritual lives. (Read I John 1:9)

In verse 8, the Apostle Paul said: “Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one...” This means that they have a unity of purpose. There should be no rivalry among Christians. They should have one purpose in heart and mind. God has called some to be evangelists, some to be missionaries, some to be pastors, some to be teachers. God calls different ones to different fields, and they should not be rivals. Each person has a particular calling to do; each one has his own place.

Some plant the seed of God’s Word, and others water it. Perhaps you have watered the seed that another has sown, or perhaps you have sown the seed, while others watered it and reaped the fruit. Whether or not God will allow us to reap the fruit is not important. The

Chaplain’s Corner



REV. BERTRAM BOBB
Tribal Chaplain

important thing is that God gave the increase. Even though there are different types of ministries, we have one purpose and one goal.

Paul first wrote of sowing the seed. He then introduced the subject of rewards for our labor in verse 8b: “... and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.”

Paul later stated this truth a little more clearly in II Corinthians 5:10: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

We are going to receive rewards for the things we have done while we were in the flesh. This truth is the key to a wider understanding of His Grace. In verse 9, Paul writes: “For we are laborers together with God...”

We are working together with Him. It is very important that we understand this truth. When we do, life will take on a new meaning. What a privilege to be laborers together with God! He has given us His work and the power and strength with which to do it. He gives us His Word, His love, His grace, and even Himself – all that we need to do His work. He is everything; we are merely instruments. Being a CO-laborer with God is more than a privilege; it is a responsibility. As CO-laborers, we are going to have to give an account of our work to God.

Paul wrote in verse 10: “... I have laid the foundation...” Paul was not the foundation; Jesus Christ was. Paul wrote in verse 11: “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ.”

Paul laid the foundation. He presented Christ to them and evangelized them. Evangelism is the laying of the foundation for men. Salvation is the foundation of the Christian life.

Salvation is based upon the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross, because it was complete; nothing can be added to it. We cannot add or subtract from this foundation of salvation. But when the foundation – Jesus Christ – is laid, we can build on that foundation. That is our labor for God.

There are some who try to live a Christian life without first laying the proper foundation. Perhaps you are one of them. Perhaps you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior – you have not been born again. Perhaps you are trying to live a Christian life in your own strength. You cannot do it, for you must have Jesus Christ in your heart, in your life – He is the foundation of the Christian life.

If you have never trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, will you make that decision, by faith, today?

Remember to pray for America and for our leaders. Pray for our brave men and women in service.



Library doors open for you

The Choctaw County Library was recipient of a \$10,000 donation from the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma on Jan. 13. The funds will be added to the general fund for the library itself, “to keep our doors open,” said Board President Miriam Costilow. Pictured are board members Bob Rabon and Martha Wettstain, Chief Gregory E. Pyle, Costilow, library patron Khyrie Wilis and Assistant Chief Gary Batton.

Thanking the Choctaw Nation for its assis-

tance, Costilow was eloquent in saying, “Hospitals are for when you are sick; healthy or ill those doors are open. Schools are for the young, but young or old those doors are open. Roads are for coming and going, but coming or going those doors are open. So for anyone, anytime, yako.” The Choctaw County Library is open six days a week from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., except for Wednesdays when it closes at 5 p.m. and Saturdays when it closes at 2 p.m.

Plans to ensure a great future

From the Desk of Assistant Chief Gary Batton

Chief Pyle and I listened together as President Obama delivered his State of the Union Address in January. As Obama expressed the importance of jobs and economic development, the significance of cooperation and the necessity of sharing responsibility and creating better lives for our children, we commented that these words echoed concerns expressed by our own Council and tribal members. Whether we are in Oklahoma, Washington, or anywhere else in the United States, Choctaw people have the same needs and concerns as other citizens across America.

The 100-year vision that the Chief, Council, and other leaders of the tribe are composing entail plans that provide services for tribal members and communities in Choctaw Nation for many years to come. It is vital that health, education and employment programs continue so that the tools for success are available so each person can have the most amazing future possible.

We are being extremely prudent in the planning process for programs for the next several generations – it is important to consider the financial implications of the economy as it relates



to the continued growth of each service. Each facility that is constructed, each business that is expanded or began and each new program that is initiated are all given cautious deliberation prior to action so that the best decision possible can be made on behalf of the Choctaw people. Nothing is done without appropriate research and consideration. We realize that we have the power to invent our own future and we want it to be a GREAT future!

Proposed water district information

A proposed new Water District, McCurtain County RWD # 6, is planned for portions of McCurtain and LeFlore counties. The district will be predominantly funded with stimulus funds through the USDA Rural Development Office and others, including the Choctaw Nation.

This proposed project will bring jobs, increased property values and potable water to the served area. The minimum number of homes re-

quired to begin this project is short, and the Choctaw Nation is encouraging all residences and businesses to sign up for a water meter that this project may proceed.

The meter fees for all qualified Native American homes will be paid for by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Please contact Debbie Price at 580-244-7561 if you would like to sign up for this worthy project.

Council Speaker encourages youth to read the the tribe’s constitution

Continued from Page 1

Council Speaker Delton Cox welcomed the youth to the first council meeting of 2011, remarking on the importance of witnessing the legislative body of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. He explained that the council met each month prior to the regular session meeting to discuss the council bills on the agenda, addressing any questions or concerns. He also encouraged everyone to read the tribe’s constitution. It can be found at choctawnation.com/history/documents or a copy can be mailed upon request by calling Brenda Wilson, Biskinik Administrative Assistant, 800-522-6170, Ext. 2138.

Other new business included:

- Application to the U.S. Department of Education for the Indian Children Demonstration Grant for Project Ikhvna (to learn). The grant program will assist the Choctaw Nation achieve its goal of increasing the achievement of American Indian students in its service area through developing and testing of effective services and programs.
- Application to the Association of American Indian Physicians for the Healthy, Active Native Communities Grant. Funds from the Association of American Indian Physicians will support the Choctaw Nation with innovative, culturally sensitive envi-

ronment and policy approaches to improve nutrition and physical activity.

- Application to the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Violence Against Women for the Legal Assistance for Victims Grant. The grant will help ensure quality representation for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.
- A budget modification to the FY 2011 General Fund to provide funds for the Chahta Foundation.
- Amendment of CB-136-10 granting easement for right of way in favor of OG&E on property owned by the Choctaw Nation in LeFlore County.

Choctaw Nation Health Care becomes AADE accredited



Bernice Williams (Right) Lee Ann Griffin (Middle) and Annette Choate (Left) represent the Diabetes Wellness Center by taking blood sugar reading and passing out information at the Heath Fair in Durant.

Choctaw Nation Health Care was recently named an accredited diabetes education program by the American Association of Diabetes Educators. This will allow residents in and around Choctaw Nation increased access to critical diabetes education services.

Diabetes education is a collaborative process through which people with or at risk for diabetes gain the knowledge and skills needed to modify behavior and successfully self-manage the disease and its related conditions. It is provided by diabetes educators.

Choctaw Nation Health Care clinics, located in, Talihina, McAlester, Poteau, Stigler, Idabel, Hugo, and Atoka, will be offering diabetes education. Currently, nine Certified Diabetes Educators work in the Choctaw Nation Clinics. In addition there are two Registered Dietitians and three RN nurse educators. Educators are available by appointment in each clinic.

Choctaw Nation Diabetes Wellness Center was established in 1997. In 2003 the DWC clinic was built on site in Talihina. The clinic provides diabetes care that includes an Endocrinologist, a PA, and FNP, podiatry, Registered Dietitian, exercise specialist and Diabetes Educators. Diabetes care expanded to the communities in 2001 and includes Diabetes educators and a Registered Dietitian. Choctaw Nation Health Care strive to provide education on management and prevention of Diabetes to improve quality of life to the people they serve.

“Trends show that diabetes education is moving out of the hospital and into the community, so AADE’s accreditation program was created, in part, to encourage diabetes education where the patient is seeking care,” said Leslie E. Kolb, RN, BSN, MBA, Director, Diabetes Education Accreditation Program. “Choctaw Nation Health Services is exactly the type of program we envisioned when we set up our accreditation program in 2009.”

Prevent Cancer this February with a healthier diet

Halito, February is National Cancer Prevention Month. The very thought of cancer terrifies most people, yet there are several approaches that can be taken to lower the risk of cancer; one such approach is to work toward a healthy weight. The American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) states “A large and growing body of research shows that what we eat and how physically active we are affect our risk of developing cancer, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and many other chronic health problems.” When making a choice to eat a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans we are helping our bodies by taking in foods that are rich in protective properties to help defend against many types of cancer. Not to mention that research shows by eating these types of foods can help manage weight due to these foods being naturally low in calories. The AICR reports that if everyone ate a healthy diet, was physically active every day and maintained a healthy weight, approximately 1/3 of the most common cancers could be prevented worldwide. One simple way to achieve these lifestyle changes is by making gradual changes to your meals. Start by just adding more vegetables to your plate then decrease portion size of red meats and then change from red meats to chicken and fish. Over time these changes can become lifestyles. The following are guidelines from the AICR for cancer prevention:

1. Choose mostly plant foods, limit red meat and avoid processed meat.
2. Be physically active every day in any way for 30 minutes or more.
3. Aim to be a healthy weight throughout life.
4. And always remember – Do not smoke or chew tobacco.

To help meet these guidelines you can try this recipe which includes vegetables, whole grain and lean chicken.

Pineapple Chicken Stir-Fry

Sauce:

- 1 1/2 Tbsp reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp unsweetened pineapple juice
- 1 Tbsp fat-free, reduced-sodium chicken or vegetable broth or water
- 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 1 tsp cornstarch

Stir-Fry:

- 8 oz. boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 tsp reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tsp seasoned rice vinegar
- 1/8 tsp ground ginger
- 1 Tbsp sesame oil, divided
- 1 small carrot, sliced into 1/4-in. pieces
- 1/2 medium green bell pepper, seeded and cut into ½-inch pieces
- 1/2 cup snow peas, cut in half lengthwise
- 1/3 cup chopped green onion, green part only
- 1/2 cup pineapple chunks, fresh or canned in unsweetened juice and drained

Preparation:

1. In small bowl, whisk together sauce ingredients, set aside.
2. In another small bowl, mix chicken with soy sauce, vinegar and ginger. Set aside to marinate.
3. In nonstick skillet, heat 1/2 Tbsp oil over medium-high heat. Add carrot and green pepper, stir-frying for 3 minutes. Add snow peas and stir-fry another 2 minutes. Remove vegetables from pan and set aside.
4. Add remaining oil to hot pan. Add marinated chicken. Stir-fry constantly until chicken is cooked through, about 3 minutes.
5. Return vegetables to pan. Add onion and stir-fry for 1 minute. Add pineapple. Stir sauce and pour over mixture. Stir-fry until sauce thickens, 1-2 minutes. Serve over brown rice.

Nutritional Information: 2 servings Per serving: 396 calories, 32g protein, 45 g carbohydrate, 9 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 6 g fiber, 709 mg sodium

NURSERY NEWS

Michael Kade Reed



This year the title of “First Baby of the New Year” goes to Michael Kade Reed, a 7 pound, 12 ounce, 20 inch long baby boy born at 1:16 p.m. on Jan. 3, 2011, in the Choctaw Nation Health Care Center, Talihina. Little Kade, as the parents will call him, is the first child of proud parents Sara and Mike Reed of Cameron, Okla. Little Kade was due to arrive on Jan. 13, so it was an unexpected surprise when mom went into labor around 11:30 a.m. on Jan. 2. Mom didn’t have much competition either as no other women were ready to deliver until the 4th of January.

Mom and Dad said the 13 hours of labor and delivery were a bit rough but mom and baby are doing very well. Kade is the new grandson of Tim and Sandra Reed and Greg and Sally McGowen. He is also the great grandson of Junior and Linda Lawrence and Sherilyn Colvard. The hospital congratulated the new parents with a basket full of gifts for having the New Year’s baby. Kim Erwin, OB unit manager, said there were 480 babies born at the hospital in 2010, with 39 births in December of 2010. The health care center averages 43 births per month, with 61 being the highest monthly total of births in September of 2008 and 534 total births that same year.

Lane Thomas Karnish



Layne Thomas Karnish was born at 4:29 p.m. Oct. 6, 2010, in Enid, Okla., at Integris Bass Hospital. He was 8 pounds 13 ounces and 21.25 inches long. Layne was born with HLHS and was mediflighted to Children’s Hospital in Dallas on Oct.11, 2010. He had surgery on his heart on Oct. 18. Layne underwent his first heart surgery which is the Norwood Procedure. His second surgery for corrections is scheduled Feb. 10, 2011. All the prayers for baby Layne have been appreciated. He will also have another correctional surgery when he is 2 to 3 years of age.

Layla Kay Gillham



Stephanie Akers Gillham and husband Thad Gillham are proud to announce the birth of their daughter, Layla Kay Gillham, born Nov. 16, in Towanda, Pa. Layla weighed 8 pounds 8 ounces and was 22.5 inches long. Paternal grandparents are Billy and Cindy Gillham of Wister and Cheri White of Denison, Texas. Maternal grandparents are Steve and Susan Akers of Poteau.

Enjoy the weather

Sinking into the sofa on a cold winter’s day can make anyone forget a New Year’s resolution to be more active. It’s easier to watch movies together as a family than consider physically active alternatives. Yet working up a sweat can do more than just leave you and your kids in better physical condition. Active fun can also turn into a common interest. Winter is a great time to have family fun indoors and outdoors.

WIC

WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN

Tips to enjoy winter with children

- Play Tag- When it snows, don’t stay cooped up in the house, bundle everyone up and go outside. Make paths in the snow and play snow tag!
- Be a Role Model – Children love to copy what their parents do, ask him or her to help you shovel snow off the sidewalk or sprinkle salt on the ice.
- Be a Snow Angel – Everyone loves to make snow angels, teach your child how to make one. Lay on your back, and move your arms up and down to create ‘wings’ in the snow.
- Build a Tent – On really cold or rainy days, let the children make tents in the living room. Drape blankets on chairs and other furniture, invite other children to come play too. Children are more active when playing with other children.

Many winter memories stem from family time together. By keeping your families active, there will be many more winter memories to cherish.

Remember...Family time creates happy, healthy memories that last a lifetime!

Recipe of the Month: Beef Veggie Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. lean beef roast, cut into small cubes
- 1 (16 oz.) package of frozen vegetables
- 1 (28 oz.) can of chopped tomatoes
- 2 (14.5 oz.) cans of beef broth
- 2 Tablespoons of dried basil or oregano

Preparations:

Cook beef cubes in a large saucepan until browned, about 5 to 10 minutes.

Season the meat with salt and pepper to taste

Add vegetables, tomatoes, beef broth and herbs to cooked meat

Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Serve hot with crackers or cornbread.

Idabel Community Center busy with activities

For Choctaw seniors looking for a way to stay active, the Idabel Community Center is the place to be every Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Senior fitness classes, led by Walker Davis for the past four years, are held there from 9 to 10 a.m. Lunch is also served after the class on Thursdays.

The fitness classes are open to all local Choctaw seniors. The current fitness group is made up of approximately 20 Choctaw seniors, ranging in age from 67 to 90, who meet for the classes as a way to stay active and improve health.

According to Davis, the high rate of diabetes among Native Americans was the main reason he wanted to begin teaching the classes. “Diabetes is a problem and we can beat it,” he told the class. “I want you all to live a healthy, wonderful life and we can do that with exercise.”

The class is currently wrapping up an eight-week program and classes will continue to be held every Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

Activities at the community center don’t end with the fitness classes. The center also holds a weekly senior meal every Wednesday at lunchtime. The free lunch is available to all Choctaw seniors residing in the area.

Additionally, a bingo game, sponsored by various local nursing homes and home health organizations, is held every other Wednesday immediately following the lunch. Also offered every other Tuesday is a pottery class taught by Tribal Archaeologist Dr. Ian Thompson. Thompson teaches traditional pottery-making techniques using hand-dug Oklahoma clays. The classes run from 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

A Choctaw language class is also hosted every Tuesday evening for those wishing to learn their native tongue. Raymond Davis teaches the class. The community center also houses several offices and five full-time employees for

tribal members seeking services. The offices at the center are the Community Health Representative, Children and Family Services, Domestic Violence, WIC, and the office of the District 1 Councilman, Thomas Williston.

Anyone with questions about any of the activities going on at the center or services offered can contact Councilman Williston or the field office representative, Matilda Paxton, at 580-286-6116.



Frances Pollard, left, and Dorothy Henson do partner-assisted stretches at the Idabel senior fitness class on Jan. 25 at the Idabel Community Center.



Idabel senior fitness class attendees: back row from left, Sam McGowen, Bill Amos, Simon Amos, Eual Kelly, Robert John, Charolette Davis and Sandra Holt; front row from left, Isabell Clampet, Louise Amos, Walker Davis, Dorothy Henson and Frances Pollard.

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

Councilwoman Charlotte Jackson remembered

Continued from Page 1

their districts – and before too long crews were laying asphalt.

“The Choctaws paved our streets and even built two bridges,” Ginn said. “They did quite a bit of stuff for us.

“Charlotte was a real nice person and a hard worker for everybody in the community. She’s going to really be missed. She was a great lady.”

Long before she was elected to the tribal council Jackson was helping people in another way, working as a community health representative, visiting people in their homes and providing a great deal of basic care. “In the old days, a CHR might even load someone in their car and take them to the doctor’s,” Colwell recalled. “She’d do that. She’d do whatever she could to help people.”

“She was a true Christian lady. Charlotte truly had the heart of a servant. She will be sorely missed,” said Gary Batton, assistant chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

During her 20 years on the council, Jackson was instrumental in the success or completion of a wide range of projects. The old Choctaw Community Center on South Highway 82 had been expanded several times over the years, but was still too small to meet the needs of the community, so Jackson set about getting a new one. She got it. The new center was dedicated in 2008.

She was also instrumental in getting the current Choctaw Child Development Center in Stigler, the Choctaw Health Clinic in Stigler, and a new community center in Spiro. She co-sponsored several Trail of Tears Walks in the Spiro and Skullyville area, and always went out of her way to support young people, whether that was through supporting schools, the Choctaw Princess program, area livestock events or educational programs.

“It didn’t matter who you were, if you needed help, she’d do her best to help you,” said David Howard. “If you needed help with a utility bill, whatever, and didn’t know where to turn, you could tell Charlotte and she’d try to help any way

she could.

“Any time, day or night, she was there for anyone in the community.”

“There’s really no telling how many programs and events she worked on,” Colwell said. “Charlotte was a real people person. She liked being around people and she really loved helping people.”

“I’ve sure seen the results of her hard work in Haskell County,” said District 1 Commissioner Kenny Short. “She worked hard for everybody in the county ... Her whole family is that way. They’re just good, good people.”

District 3 Commissioner Paul Storie recalled that Jackson helped him get the financing for the first bridge he ever built in Haskell County. “She was just like that,” he said. “She helped everybody, no matter who they were.

“She’s the only person I ever knew that, honest to goodness, I never heard anything bad said about.

“They won’t replace her.”

“She was the most dedicated legislator I’ve ever seen to her community,” Short said. “That’s out of all the legislators I’ve seen in my lifetime, including representatives and senators.”

“If her health would have held up, she would have run again,” Colwell said. “You couldn’t ask to work for or with anybody better. She was available to people any time, day or night.”

Carroll Huggins, executive director and CEO of KI BOIS Community Action, said, “She was a fine lady and a tremendous leader. She was a real mover and shaker in Haskell County.”

“Charlotte Jackson was one of the most wonderful people I have ever met and was a great leader for the Choctaw people of Haskell County and the Nation as a whole,” Batton said. “She was always positive, always upbeat, always looking out for others above herself.”

“She was there to help people,” Ginn said. “She was there for people.”

Wellness Center ribboncutting

Continued from Page 1

have all of the Choctaw Nation’s Hugo tribal operations situated in a central location, allowing easy accessibility and ample parking for the Choctaw people.

The facilities were funded by separate HUD Indian Community Development Block Grant funds in the amount of \$1.6 million each and tribal funds.

The two-story Tribal Services facility has 58 offices, housing staff of several programs including Guest Services, Social Services, Children and Family Services, Agriculture, WIC, Law Enforcement and Outreach’s Vocational Rehabilitation, Victims Assistance, Youth Outreach, Project Empower, Empower 2 Dream, Injury Prevention, Hokli Nitak, Chahta Inchukka, Transit, CHIPRA, Choctaw Support for Pregnant and Parenting Teens, Community-based Social Work, Elder Advocacy and Faith-based Counseling..

Offices are open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. For information, call 580-326-8304 or 877-285-6893.

The center provides some of the finest workout equipment in southeastern Oklahoma as well as a basketball court.

Wellness Center staff have activities scheduled Monday through Saturday with something for everyone including a wide array of exercise classes as well as classes in self-defense, senior nutrition and ballroom dancing. An after-school program is held four days a month with a different age group each day.

The Wellness Center is open 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. on Saturdays for Choctaw Nation tribal members and employees. For more information, call 580-326-9422.

Culbreath among an elite group of Oklahoma women

Continued from Page 1

Joy works tirelessly to improve the lives of people in so many ways, whether it be in her Tribe, her community, her family or her church. A typical day may involve five or six hours of driving time to attend meetings and various functions of her job, then rushing directly to her church where she does what she considers her most important work – ministering to children. Joy truly lives her beliefs. The love, acceptance, guidance and understanding she shows to others are made possible by her unshakeable

faith in God.

As a proven leader, Joy is sought out by people from every stage of life, from the downtrodden to the influential. She is widely recognized, not just within the Tribe and local community, but statewide and nationwide as an innovative, wise and ethical trailblazer. Recently, Joy received a presidential appointment to a national negotiated rulemaking committee. She has been able to build partnerships with individuals, universities, other tribes, and businesses simply by being who she is. She may

begin a meeting with people who are strangers, but they always leave knowing they have made a new friend. She makes the hard decisions and fights the difficult battles, not for her glory but for the betterment of others.

Joy is quick to praise the influences and people that have shaped her life. Education has been a recurring theme in her family background. Her grandfather graduated from Vanderbilt with a law degree and all three of her daughters have careers in some aspect of education. Her father taught her the importance

of working hard and doing a good job. Her mother set an example of kindness, acceptance and pride in her Indian heritage. Her early years were influenced by many people in her neighborhood and church.

When asked for comment about her selection to the Hall of Fame, she stated, “I am very honored to be included in this group of women who have made a difference in Oklahoma, but I feel that there are so many others who should be honored instead of me - people who have helped to mold my life into what it is today. These people were not

rich or famous but they gave me something more important – they cared about me.”

The Oklahoma Women’s Hall of Fame ceremonies will be April 7 at the Oklahoma History Center. The program will begin at 3 p.m. in the Chesapeake Event Center followed by a celebratory reception in the Devon Great Hall.

The other inductees are Dr. Laura Boyd (Norman); Chloe L. Brown (Tulsa); Marcia J. Mitchell (Tulsa); Ardina J. Moore (Miami); Dr. Cynthia S. Ross (Lawton); Kathryn L. Taylor (Tulsa); and Helen Harrod Thompson (Ardmore).



Chief Pyle, Assistant Chief Batton, Tribal Councilmembers, and a host of local dignities and employees brave the cold for a ribboncutting at the Idabel Casino on Jan. 13.

Idabel Casino unveils multi-million dollar renovation

Choctaw Casino in Idabel has completed a comprehensive multi-million dollar, 17,000-square-foot renovation and remodeling project. The casino has more than 400 slot machines, including progressives, high-stakes and penny slots.

Located at 1425 Southeast Washington Street, the design goal of the project was to create a unique cultural space that is indigenous to Idabel and inspired by the Choctaw tribe’s native origins, incorporating a rustic, Western mountain-forest theme. Highlights include both interior and exterior upgrades, such as the addition of an on-site bar and grill and entertainment venue, new lighting, new carpet, a new stage for entertainment, a totally redesigned casino floor layout, modernized gaming and lobby areas, displayed artwork from local artists that depict the local logging industry and the pioneers who first settled in Idabel, and newly planted Dogwood trees, which are native to the Idabel region of Oklahoma.

“There was a desire and need to provide a refreshed, quality environment for local gamers, which was a key consideration for the design of the newly remodeled facility. In addition, our goal was to provide a high quality food and beverage and entertainment experience,” said Janie Dillard, executive director of gaming for Choctaw Casinos. “We are certain the ‘new’ Choctaw Casino will keep our players coming back to Idabel for years to come.”

Project team members include Oklahoma City-based Benchmark Construction Services as the general contractor, as well as Heidi Wood, project director for Choctaw Casinos, Steven Loyd, operations director for Choctaw Casinos, and Amy Ward, general manager of Choctaw’s Idabel Casino. Additionally, the assistance of the entire Idabel employee team played a major role in the unveiling of the newly remodeled facility.

OK Choctaws elect new officers

At the General Meeting held on Jan. 17, the OK Choctaws elected a new slate of officers and three new board members. Della Eisel was elected president over incumbent Phyllis Been who was voted to take board position #3 vacated by Stella Long. Perrin Deal opted not to run for her secretary position and in her place, Tina Henbree-Enslinger was voted on by acclamation as the only other candidate.

For board position #1 that was vacant, the winner was Henry Harjo. For board position #3 with the incumbent stepping down was past president Phyllis Been. For board position #5 with the incumbent stepping down we now have Betty Arduine, and for position #7, the incumbent Mary Ann Allen won out.

Since Della Eisel was the current vice president, that position is now open and will be, or was as the case may be, voted on at the February general meeting.

Prior to the voting, Mary Jane Coffman from the American Red Cross talked to us about how they enjoyed the support we gave in allowing the Red Cross the use of our facility and briefly about other programs that the Red Cross is involved with.

The Alliance has several activities for our members that are ongoing. There is the Choctaw dancing, culture, ceremonies, and history each Tuesday at 6 p.m. followed by the Choctaw language classes at 7 p.m. On Thursdays from 7 to 9 p.m. there is the bead class where as of January they were working on the collar necklace. On Fridays there is the Senior Outing and Clothes Closet from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with lunch served at 12 noon. The Alliance holds their monthly taco sale the second Saturday each month from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. with the Choctaw Veterans meeting at 10 a.m. just prior to the sale. In February plans were for the Choctaw dress class to resume again on Wednesday evenings but call first to see if that occurred.

Upcoming special events are the pottery firing for those who attended the pottery class in December and a bow making class. The March meeting will be held March 14 at the Alliance building. Meetings are usually scheduled for the second Monday each month barring bad weather.

The Alliance is located at 5320 S. Youngs Blvd., in Oklahoma City, about five blocks north of SW 59th Street between May and Pennsylvania Avenues. For information about membership or activities, contact Della Eisel at 405-550-2823, or Stormy or Judith Bryant at 405-755-6983.

Healthy Volunteers Needed!

The Choctaw Nation Memory Clinic is looking for the following:

- **Ages 20-45**
- **American Indian volunteers w/CDIB Card**
- **High school graduate or GED**
- **Read and speak English fluently**
- **No history of brain injury, substance abuse, or severe mental illness**

If you are interested in participating in a study of computerized tests examining attention, memory, and reasoning, please call 918-448-6796.

Choctaw Nation Memory Clinic

Study PIs: C. Munro Cul-lum, Ph.D. and Myron F. Weiner, M.D. Contact PIs@ 214-648-4427

Participants will be compensated for their time upon completion of the study visit with a \$25 Walmart gift card.

VISTA program holds MLK Jr. presentations

Ms. McGee’s kindergarten class at Washington Irving Elementary School in Durant celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. Day with Connie Hudson as she read excerpts from MLK’s life in an age appropriate way (pictures, coloring pages).

Hudson is a representative of AmeriCorps VISTA and works through the program “National Society for American Indian Elders.” She is assigned to the Choctaw Nation Aging Services. The key note subject with the children was “What are you doing for others?” They had many questions and helpful answers.

Hudson also presented an informative program on Jan.



12 and Jan. 19 in Durant commemorating Martin Luther King Jr. She spoke with more than 90 seniors about the MLK legacy and of his dream of equality and freedom. MLK had a vision he called “Beloved Communities.” Hudson reminded the elders of their unique place

of being a “community within a community” and has created a project for them called “Elders helping Elders.” Volunteerism does not end with retirement if others in the community need help. The officers volunteer many hours and have great participation among their elders.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Photo Contest

Capture the Spirit of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and share your heritage with tribal members around the world.

Winning entries will be used in the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma’s 2012 Calendar.

PHOTOGRAPHY SPECIFICATIONS:

Digital images are preferred but not required.

High resolution 300 dpi RGB JPG files are preferred.

To be considered for a top inside calendar page images need to be at least 2 to 5 mb JPG files in horizontal format.

All photos must be received by July 1, 2011.

All photos must be accompanied by photographer’s contact information including name, address, phone number and e-mail address.

The subject(s) of the photos must be identified.

All photos will become the property of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Watch future Choctaw publications and web sites: Even if you don’t win this calendar contest, your image may be used in future publications!

A Grand Prize of \$150 will be awarded to the person submitting the cover photo.

Individual \$50 prizes will also be awarded each person whose photo is chosen for calendar pages.

E-mail entries to lisareed@choctawnation.com or mail to Lisa Reed, PO Box 1210, Durant, OK 74702

Three-year saga renews ancient spirit

By JIM STEPHENS

Three years ago, Oklahoma rancher Bryant Rickman was notified that his Blackjack Mountain grazing leases were being cancelled. In fact, eight other leases were also being cancelled on the timber lands in Pushmataha County. In a changing world, several large timber companies chose this course of action in order to concentrate on intensive forestry management.

Bryant's horses were caught up in this dilemma. Bryant and researcher Francine Locke Bray through allotment and land deed research have documented that the majority of these horses belonged to the Native Americans allotted tracts of land in Pushmataha County. The removal and census records of the 1800s, as well as individual writings, verify these horses were owned by families who came to this territory during the 1830s Trail of Tears.

In the 1950s, Gilbert Jones came to this area with a small group of western Spanish Mustangs in an effort to keep them safe in the isolated Blackjack Mountain of south-eastern Oklahoma. While caring for these horses on the open mountain range, Gilbert began to acquire the local and wild roaming Indian horses left there by a number of Choctaw families. Something about the spirit and uniqueness of these Indian horses nurtured a bond between Gilbert and the horses. Gilbert knew these horses were very

special and must be kept from becoming extinct. Over the years Gilbert went to extraordinary efforts to document the herds and prevent the bloodlines from being mixed with bigger and more popular breeds.

In 1980, Bryant started working with Gilbert and soon the spirit of these Indian horses called out to him. Bryant's childhood love of these little horses was rekindled; his first horse was an Indian pony. Bryant continued to work with Gilbert until Gilbert's death in 2000. Then, as Gilbert wished, Bryant continued to care for the horses in the mountains. Gilbert once told Bryant that a select group of these horses must always be allowed "to run wild and free" on Blackjack Mountain, "as a Spanish Mustang was meant to be". Bryant agreed and promised Gilbert he would see that this wish was carried out.

When Bryant was required to remove the horses from the mountains, this promise placed a heavy burden on his shoulders. The cattlemen also had to either sell their herds or find new range, this in the midst of one of the worst droughts recorded in Pushmataha County.

Bryant, knowing that there



were several hundred horses running in the mountains, started the tremendous task of catching, feeding, and finding them a new home. With the help of family and friends, Bryant was able to catch and remove from the mountain over 400 horses. In addition to those that Bryant has kept for breeding purposes, many of the horses have found homes with breeders and individuals interested in preserving this special

strain of Spanish Mustang. In Pushmataha County and elsewhere, several conservation preserves have been set aside for these horses. All of the horses removed from the timber company lands were Coggins tested by the State of Oklahoma and not one of them was diseased.

Bryant had only 274 acres at his homestead and leased another 600 or so nearby acres. With over 400 head of horses on these lands at one

time needing to be fed, all the available grass was quickly eaten. Bryant, with limited resources, faced a mountain most people would never dare to climb. However, most people are not like Bryant nor were they there to look into the eyes of those hungry horses. Bryant's struggles and sacrifices during those dark days are too great to limit to a few short paragraphs. The full story will soon be told by Francine Locke Bray in an upcoming book about the legend of Bryant and the Mustangs of Blackjack Mountain. We are all excited about her efforts in writing this history. The survival of these special horses has captivated interest from people all over the world.

During this time of need some special individuals, groups, and Native American Nations stepped forward to help and gave Bryant the spirit to carry on. In order to give a permanent home to the horses kept by Bryant, the last

three miles of fencing through a reserve in the mountains was built by Bryant, Harold Davis, Stanley Clark, and a few helpers. This fencing was completed in mid-December, in only eight days. They are now on range near the land of their ancestors and where they were born, within sight of Blackjack Mountain. Bryant has kept his promise to Gilbert Jones!

This new land will not be accessible to the public. Since these horses are so significant and a treasure to so many, especially those who understand and appreciate their spirit and the significant role they played in Native American history, Bryant hopes, in the future, to give interested parties the opportunity to come and share in the beauty and spirit of the Choctaw Horse.

Jim is owner of the Chahta Isuba Ranch and the Fossil River Horse Refuge.

PEOPLE YOU KNOW

Congratulations

Erica Marie Battiest married Sergio Jr. Andrade on Nov. 15 in Norwalk, Calif. Erica is the daughter of Sheryl Lynn Battiest and granddaughter of Marcus and the late Dorothy Battiest.



Hale/Heitt engagement

Robert Hale and Ramona Hale of Norman announce the Jan. 2, 2011, engagement of their daughter Kay Hale to Briton Heitt, son of Mr. Heitt of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Paige Martin of Norman. Kay is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma and is pursuing a Master's of Education Administration, Curriculum and Supervision, and plans on becoming a principal after building experience in the elementary classroom. Briton is attending the University of Oklahoma Community College and is pursuing a Bachelor's in Language Arts Education, and an eventual Master of Arts in Education. The wedding will be held on the beaches of Destin, Fla., in June 2011.



Happy birthday, Mady and Jayse

I would like to wish my two daughters a very happy birthday. Madysen Leigh Lucas turned 14 on Jan. 18, and Jayse Nikole Smith will turn two on March 9. Madysen, you're a great person, and Jayse you bring joy into our lives. You girls are the light of our lives. From Mom, Luc, Caymen, Nanny and Papa.



Happy birthday, Laura

Laura Carney of Smithville celebrated her 98th birthday on Dec. 26 with her family. Loved ones that shared Laura's special day with her were her son Elton, granddaughters Michelle and Heather, great-grandchildren Summer Carney, Brinley Butler, Damion Butler, Trenton Dees, Clarissa Bohanon and Kyle Finley and great-great-grandsons Kamden Finley, 3 years old, and Karson Finley, one month old.

Kayla crowned queen

Congratulations to Kayla Marie Meenoz who was crowned New Waverly High School 2011 Homecoming Queen. Kayla is the granddaughter of Clarence and Pertect.



Happy birthday, Jessica

Jessica Raylene Pitts celebrated her 14th birthday Jan. 23. Her parents are Johnny and Sheilla Pitts of Coalgate. Jessica is the granddaughter of Laverne Cadwill of Blanco, Okla., and great-granddaughter of Katie N. Strain of McAlester. Happy birthday, Jessica!



Congrats, Bruce

Congratulations to Bruce Hoyt of Gilbert, Ariz., who won a World Series of Poker (WSOP) event held in January at the Choctaw Casino in Durant. Bruce won the \$345 HORSE game, earning a cash jackpot and a WSOP circuit ring. He beat out a field of 147 players to take home the ring and the first place prize of \$11,477.

Bruce has 11 grandchildren and is a proud Choctaw member. The 59-year-old has been playing poker since 1968 and has a total of four cashes in the WSOP over his career, including three this year alone.



Anoli Dance Troupe

On Dec. 29, members of the Anoli Dance Troupe, who have performed at Choctaw Casino and Resort in Durant, traveled to Pasadena, Calif., to take part in the 122nd Annual Rose Bowl Parade on New Years Day. Anoli Dance Troupe members who attended were: Michael Roberts, Rebecca Roberts and T'ata Roberts. They were invited by Brule', a Native Rock Band, who is based in Branson as guest dancers to accompany the float "One Nation." The float won "Craftsman's Trophy" for dramatic impact and best showmanship. The One Nation float was sponsored by RFDTV. Thank you to the Choctaw Nation for supporting us in our performances and travels.

Major Pruitt graduates

On Dec. 10, 2010, Maj. Lisa M. Pruitt graduated from the United States Army Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth, Kan. This facility functions as a graduate school for the United States Armed Forces and foreign military leaders. As a graduate of the Intermediate Level Education, she was trained to operate in full spectrum Army, joint, interagency and multinational environments as a field grade commander and staff officer.

While attending this professional school, Maj. Pruitt also completed her Master's of Arts in International Relations. This study enables her to analyze the complexities and processes involved in world politics and international affairs. Her Master's of Art degree was obtained at the Fort Leavenworth campus of the Webster University in Saint Louis, Mo.

Maj. Pruitt is the daughter of Hugh and Donna Pruitt of Ardmore and great-granddaughter of original enrollee Fannie Elizabeth Buckholtz Zellner.



Brothers serve their country

Sgt. Howard Burns of the U.S. Air Force and BU3 Jonathan Burns of the U.S. Navy Seabees are proudly serving their country. Jonathan will be returning from a tour in Afghanistan this spring and his older brother Howard is scheduled to deploy this year. They are Choctaw members and the great-great-grandsons of Philip McCann, great-grandsons of Dixon McCann and the grandsons of Donald McCann of Purcell.



Turner retires

Sgt. 1st Class William "WT" Turner of Atoka retired Dec. 7 with over 37 years of military service.

Turner joined the Army National Guard in 1973 while attending Atoka High School and graduated from basic training at Fort Polk, La., in 1974. He then joined the Army in 1977 and was sent to Schweinfurt, Germany, for two years. He then went into the Army Reserve for the remainder of his service.

Turner just completed a two-year mobilization at Fort Sill in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, where he was an instructor for more than 60,000 soldiers. He received his retirement award from President Barack Obama, Gen. George W. Casey Jr., Lt. Gen. John C. Shultz, Command Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston and John McHugh, Secretary of the Army, giving their appreciation of military service. Turner also received a personal letter from President Obama and Michelle.

Turner is the son of the late Elmer and Ruth Turner of Atoka. He has two daughters, Michelle Turner of Janesville, Calif., and Sarah Turner of Atoka, and five grandchildren. He is employed as a manager at Choctaw Casino in Durant. He attributes his military career to God and his parents.



EDUCATION

Choctaw students join All Native American High School Academic Team

Two Choctaw students, Cassandra (Cassie) Morley of St. Paul, Minn., and Derek Littlejohn of Willamina, Ore., have been named to the American Indian Graduate Center (AIGC) All Native American High School Academic Team for the 2010-2011 academic year. Both Morley and Littlejohn are members of the Choctaw Nation's Scholarship Advisement Program.

Each year AIGC's All Native American High School Academic Team honors 10 American Indian and Alaska Native high school students. The key element, given most weight by the judges, is a student's outstanding original academic, artistic or leadership endeavor. Judging is also influenced by a student's ability to describe that outstanding endeavor in his or her own words. Teachers or community members must nominate applicants.

Derek Littlejohn graduated from Willamina High School where he was a member of the National Honor Society. He received many athletic awards in football and baseball. He has performed community service with D'Gadabouts Inc., where he chaperoned adults with special needs on weekends, week-long out-



ings or vacations. He has spent many hours volunteering for Little Guy Football, Youth Basketball and Little League Baseball as an umpire and referee. Derek will be attending Linfield College in Oregon where he will pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in physics and engineering. Derek's parents are Michael and Michelle Littlejohn.

Cassie Morley graduated from Convent of the Visitation School in Mendota Heights, Minn. She has been on the honor roll for four years and is a Choctaw Nation Honors Scholar. Some of her accomplishments include: taking Advance Placement courses for four years, being a National Merit Commended Scholar and recently receiving the President's Volunteer Service Award for completing over 100 hours of volun-



teer work. Cassie's community service hours have been with the Bush Children's Center, Vis Corps Service Club, Mano a Mano, Christmas Stocking Project and the Choctaw Nation Youth Outreach Coat Drive. Cassie and her twin sister, Christie, have both received scholarships to Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H. Cassie intends to pursue a degree in Native American Studies and/or International Relations. Both Cassie and Christie completed their 50-hour spring senior service project at the American Indian Magnet School in Dayton's Bluff in St Paul.

Cassie's mother, Teresa Morley, credits the Choctaw Scholarship Advisement Program's proprietary scholarship database for Cassie's AIGC High School Academic Team Award. "We found out

about it through the wonderful SAP database," she said. The Choctaw Nation Scholarship Database was custom designed for Choctaw students and contains thousands of opportunities compiled by national experts in identifying diversity funding sources.

The AIGC is a national organization headquartered in Albuquerque, N.M., providing educational assistance to American Indian and Alaska Native graduate students. Since its founding in 1969, AIGC has awarded more than 15,000 scholarships totaling over \$44 million to graduate students in all fields of study.

Though the center is well known for its graduate fellowships and scholarships, there are also many opportunities for undergraduate students to receive financial assistance. In 2001 AIGC Scholars was incorporated as the administrator of the Gates Millennium Scholar Program for the American Indian and Alaska Native population. With funding from the Gates Program, AIGC Scholars is able to award undergraduate scholarships annually to students who have demonstrated excellence in academics, leadership roles and community involvement.

Rosiere attends national conference

Former Jones Academy graduate of 2010 and Choctaw member Maranda Rosiere recently attended the National Collegiate Honors Council in Kansas City, Mo. She went as a representative of the honors program at Eastern Oklahoma State College. During the conference, held Oct. 20-24, 2010, Maranda was able to attend lectures and presentations pertaining to honors program issues and higher education. She also visited student exhibits and participated in round table discussions and break out sessions during the conference.

According to Maranda, she met people from all over the world, including honor students from Africa, Pakistan and China. She remarked that she was "in awe" to meet some of the "smartest people in the world." Maranda also expressed how grateful she was for the opportunity to attend the conference at the invitation of her professor and honors director, Ruth Brelsford.



Nutrition class contest at Jones

The sixth grade students at Jones Academy participated in a contest during nutrition class with Mrs. Sparks, Registered Dietitian with the Choctaw Nation Health Services, on developing a healthy breakfast menu. Each student was asked to create a healthy breakfast selection using the food guide pyramid and their knowledge of what they have learned in nutrition class. This year there were two winners: Mariella Chatkehoodle (right) and Felicity Leflore (left). Each student's breakfast recipe will be served to all staff and students on campus.



Jones Academy Super Students

Jones Academy has selected its second nine-weeks super students. Pictured in front are second grader Melina Tushka and first grader Melvin Birthmark. Behind are fifth grader Ashton Wise, junior Elisa Reyes, sixth grader Cody Clark, fifth grader McGavyne Lone Elk, fourth grader Desma Valdez, sixth grader Brittany Dixon and third grader Xynia Thlocco-Deere. These students are selected for being the best they can be in areas of academics, citizenship and conduct.

Congrats to mother and son

Loren G. Intolubbe-Chmil has successfully earned her PhD at the University of Virginia in Social Foundations of Education. She earned her master's degree at UVA and her bachelor's from Mary Baldwin College. She and husband John Chmil's son, Johnathon D. Intolubbe-Chmil, recently graduated with honors from the University of Colorado with a degree in Sociology in hopes to attend law school.



Raible receives Discus Award

Cabrina Raible of Lincoln High School in Lincoln, Ark., has been recognized as a 2010-2011 Discus Award winner for her achievements in the areas of Arts, Community Service and Other Achievements. The Discus Awards is a national program that provides recognition and scholarship opportunities to all-around high school students who excel in three of 10 key attributes. Cabrina is now eligible for 2010-2011 Discus Awards scholarships. Also, Cabrina created a multimedia profile highlighting her achievements, which may be viewed in the Discus Awards Winners Gallery at www.DiscusAwards.com/winners.

Cabrina is the daughter of Chris and Virginia Raible.

To the Youth of the Nation

Gotta Love FFA, by Kristi Adams

Think of your grandpa, your grandpa's grandpa, then his grandpa. Here at Howe High School, showing for the FFA show team is deep in our blood, veins, and heart. We are passionate about it. At the Summer County this year we dominated in every single class that we entered an animal in, which was ALL but one. Then at Arkansas/Oklahoma State Fair we did great considering for the amount of animals we had entered. All of this, and it is just the start of the 2010 school year. Between the months of August through November we have accomplished something that we have never accomplished before at Howe. Freshman, Nick Smallwood, competed in the Greenhand quiz against 5000 other students, finishing in the top 50, and went to state competition. Nick did an outstanding job and we are very proud to call him a Howe FFA member.

This is the start of our best year yet. We come with smiling faces, confident hearts, and we are just confident enough to win it all. The members of Howe FFA are all extremely motivated and excited about all we have done and anticipating upcoming events. Our members would like to extend our gratitude to Mr. Troy Dyer for all of his hard work and dedication to Howe FFA and its members. He makes all we do possible.

Choctaw Nation selected to join fight against head injury

The U.S. Department of Defense has selected the Choctaw Nation to help in the fight against head injury in military personnel.

Over the next two years, American Indians with CDIB cards will be asked to join in a study of computerized tests of attention, memory and reasoning that will be used to help detect brain injury in our service men and women. In order to be similar to military personnel, participants will need to be from 20-45 years of age, have a high school education or GED and have no history of brain injury, drug abuse or severe mental illness.

In the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, one of the worst injuries has been the effect of blast injury to the brain. Only a few years ago, soldiers who suffered severe blast injury did not live. Now, thanks to new and more effective medical treatments, these soldiers survive, but then must live with the long-term effects of their brain injuries. Many of these soldiers have physical signs, like weakness or paralysis. Others have damage that is not visible, such as confusion, poor judgment and inability to remember or to learn. This type of damage is frequently overlooked in the course of combat as more obvious physical injuries are treated first.

The DoD has selected as leaders of this project Drs. Munro Cullum and Myron Weiner, who have been involved with the Choctaw Nation Memory Clinic for the past 10 years. Testing will be done at the CNO Healthcare Center in Talihiina. It will involve one visit lasting about 90 to 120 minutes. A \$25 Wal-Mart gift card will be given after testing is completed. The study will be coordinated by native Oklahomans Angela Curran and Carey Fuller, who can be reached at 918-448-6796.

Coloring contest winner

All elementary students at Jones Academy were given the opportunity to participate in a coloring book contest facilitated by the McAlester Choctaw Nation Clinic (MCNC). Jennifer Epps, a dental hygienist with the MCNC, presented the winner, first grader Lastenia Lainez-Ortiz, with a \$10.00 gift card to Wal-Mart.



KTC Student of the Month

Shelly Ben has been selected by the Talihiina Kiamichi Technology Center Practical Nursing class as student of the month. Shelly, a wife and mother of three, is the associate director of the Clayton Food Pantry and is a member of the Clayton Chamber of Commerce. Congratulations, Shelly!

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APRIL 6, 2011

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MCALISTER, OK 74501

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Chief Pyle visits Crowder Center



Councilman James Frazier, World War veteran Martin Killingsworth and Chief Gregory E. Pyle pose for a picture.



Chief Pyle enjoys visiting with Doralene Smith and Christine Higgins.



Jerry and Thelma Fleck and Clarence Morris look at photographs as they wait for the finishing touches to be put on the meal.



Vanessa Allen and Walter Spears hold a beautiful quilt made by Dolly Horton that was presented to Chief Pyle from the senior citizens of Crowder.



Chief Pyle speaks to Crowder senior citizens.



Crowder seniors have been practicing a line dance.

Gen. Leroy Sisco nominated to NRA

Congratulations to Lt. Gen. Leroy Sisco, USA (Ret.), who has been nominated to the National Rifle Association (NRA) Board of Directors. The membership will receive ballots the end of February.

Sisco is currently retired from the military after completing a 42-year career. Prior to that he commanded the TXSG and he was deputy commander of the 49th Armored Division and also assistant adjutant General of Texas over the M-Day force. Born in McAlester, he moved at the age of 14 with his family to Abilene, Texas.

He has served in a variety of joint and combined assignments that included major staff positions with the 71st troop command. General Sisco served on the National Guard Association of Texas Board for six years and five of those years he served on the executive board. He held various offices during this time and was President in 1996. This organization has over 65,000 members.

He has received many awards for his support, performance and dedication. He has several business interests from Texas Trophy Hunters TV Show, Ranching, Military Warriors Support Foundation (helping our Wounded Heroes with homes, jobs, activities and scholarships) www.militarywarriors.org.

The Texas Legislature has honored him twice for his duty and dedication to the State of Texas and this Country. The State of Texas inducted him into the Texas Infantry OCS Hall of Fame. He serves on the board of the Code Talkers Association for the Choctaw Nation and on the Texas Military Forces Support Foundation Board. He is serving on one of the advisory boards for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Board. Additionally he is serving on an advisory board for the Texas Veterans Commission.

Gen. Sisco's awards include, Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Lone Star Distinguished Service Medal, Adjutant Generals Individual Award, Texas Outstanding Service Medal, Army Reserve Components Achievements Medal (4th Award), National Defense Medal, Reserve Components Achievement Medal (4th Award), Reserve Service Medal (2nd Award), Army Service Ribbons, and Engineer Regimental Affiliation Badge. The National Infantryman's Association has honored him with the Martyrdom of St. Maurice award at the highest level of Primicerius. The Adjutant General of Texas honored him with the Order of the Iron Cross Award. Governor Rick Perry honored him by commissioning him an Admiral in the Texas Navy.

General Sisco is married to the former Frances Wiseman. They have two sons, Brandon and Trevor, and a daughter Shae. They have five grandchildren Blake, Alexia, Ty, Jayden and Trenton.

General Sisco and his family reside outside of San Antonio, Texas, and are in their new home at Estancia in Boerne, Texas.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION

ANTLERS
Market open weekdays March 1-29 , except for:
March 2: Idabel 9-11 a.m.; Broken Bow 12-2 p.m. (market closed)
March 9: Bethel 9-10:30; Smithville 12-2 (market closed)
Closed March. 29-31 for inventory
Cooking with Carmen: March 7 & 14, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

DURANT
Market open weekdays: March 1-28, except for:
Closed March 29-31 for inventory
Cooking with Carmen: March 2 & 11, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

McALESTER
Market open weekdays March 1-28, except for:
Closed March 29-31 for inventory
Cooking with Carmen: March 4 & 16, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

POTEAU
Market open weekdays March 1-28, except for:
Closed March 29-31 for inventory.
Cooking with Carmen: March 9 & 18, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

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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The Alabama-Coushatta Tribe opens new food distribution center

The Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas has opened a food distribution program in Livingston, Texas. This program is available to Choctaws living in Polk County with one CDIB holder in the household. The household must meet USDA guidelines to be eligible for this program. Households interested in applying or have any questions about the program can contact the director, Peter Seahmer, with the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas located at 374 State Park Road 56, Livingston, Texas, or calling 936-563-1129.

Choctaw Head Start and Pre-School now recruiting

The Head Start Program of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is recruiting prospective students for the 2011-2012 school year. Applications are accepted all year, but a concerted effort is made beginning in January each year to identify children who might be eligible for the free child development services provided by Head Start. This program serves children who will be 3 but not yet 5 years of age by September 1st. We serve children of all nationalities, although we do have a Native American preference policy. The Head Start program is directed primarily toward low-income families and offers the possibility of free afternoon care for families who qualify, in addition to the child development services. Free transportation services for Head Start children are provided to families who meet transportation guidelines, as well. Families of children with special needs are strongly encouraged to apply. The Head Start program assists families in obtaining needed support services for children with special needs. Choctaw Nation Head Start provides families with assistance in their efforts to obtain educational, health, nutritional and social services. The program provides a nutritionally sound breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack each day. For more information and to obtain an application, contact the Choctaw Nation Head Start Center in your area. You may also contact the Durant Administration office at 1-800-522-6170, Ext. 2353.

Choctaw Nation Participates in the Recycling of:

Aluminum Cans – PLEASE EMPTY CANS

Plastic 1 PETE - Marked with recycling code 1 on or near the bottom of the container include: soft drink, water and sport drink bottles, edible oil and salad dressing bottles and household cleaner bottles (examples: Pine-Sol and dish soaps)
PLEASE RINSE AND EMPTY BOTTLES

Plastic 2 HDPE - Marked with recycling code 2 on or near the bottom of the container include milk jugs, shampoo/toiletry bottles, laundry detergent and household cleaners (Soft Scrub and Fantastik), and motor oil bottles
PLEASE RINSE AND EMPTY BOTTLES

Paper – Shredded and Non-shredded Office Paper, Newspaper, Magazines/Catalogs, Books, Phone Books

Cardboard – boxes flattened and free of food/Styrofoam/plastic contaminants

Other Items:
Prescription Bottles
Printer/Toner Cartridges
Steel Cans (Vegetable Cans)

Christmas Cards
Cell Phones

Items sorted, bagged, and tied assist in collecting material for better recycling.

Sustaining Our People, Our Traditions, Our Earth

For recycling locations and questions please contact:
Choctaw Nation Recycling Program
3108 Enterprise Blvd.
Durant, OK 74701
(580)924-8280 or 1-800-522-6170

Rebecca Ward Conrad McDonald shares memories of growing up Choctaw in the Spiro area



Choctaw elder Rebecca Ward Conrad McDonald was born on Feb. 25, 1918, to Mary Eunice Fox Ward and Sampson Sumler Ward. Mary gave birth to Rebecca in Sampson's mother's house, where they lived at the time, just south of Spiro. They called this their home until Rebecca was seven years old. Sampson's mother Lula Mae Bateman Ward, or "Granny Ward" as Rebecca called her, shared her home with Rebecca, her mother and father and Rebecca's Aunt Becky, Sampson's sister. Rebecca was the first born of Sampson and Mary.

Rebecca grew up listening to her great-granny speak only the Choctaw language. "Great-Granny (Ward)

couldn't speak English, they had to speak Choctaw to her," remembered Rebecca.

"She was raised as a Choctaw." Rebecca's Grandpa Ward was a full-blood Choctaw, making her father half and she a fourth. She didn't learn the Choctaw language as well as her great-granny, but she learned how to count to ten.

Rebecca's Aunt Becky took a special liking to her. She took her everywhere in her one-horse buggy, including

Rebecca was wearing a pink dress and bonnet her mother had made for her. A man on the train tried to purchase Rebecca from her mother offering her \$300. Mary held onto Rebecca tight the rest of the ride, worried the man might try to take her.

Rebecca attended school at Murry Spur School where she was taught by Mr. Chester Noblet. When she and her family moved into their own house and out of Granny Ward's, she would walk the

would know that's where dances happened, both square dances and round dances. Sam played the fiddle and Aunt Becky called the square dances. Rebecca still has her father's fiddle today.

Rebecca was 17 years old when she married Koots Farmer Conrad on Oct. 24, 1932. Koots was born in Mulberry, Ark. He had just come back from California. His first wife had died during childbirth, as well as the child. Rebecca met Koots in the road close to the Poteau River. She was going to her Uncle Bill's house and Koots was going the other way. He must have noticed her, because he came to her house soon after.

Rebecca and Koots made their home just down the road from her parents' house. Sam had 210 acres in his Choctaw allotment and had given Rebecca 10 when she got married, which she and Koots built a house on. Unfortunately, later this house burned down, but Rebecca still owns the 10 acres and she won't part with them. They're all that's left of her daddy's allotment.

By the time Rebecca was 21 she had three children: K.F., Sampson Sumler and Billy Kenneth. She then had a girl, Mary, and another son, Roger.

In 1957, when her youngest child Roger was five years old, Koots had a tractor accident and passed away.

The Draft Board called K.F. to come to serve, but Mr. Conn, Rebecca's banker



Rebecca and sister Anna.

five of Rebecca's children ended up graduating from Spiro.

Rebecca had lived next to Robert McDonald for years and their parents got acquainted. Robert would always bring Rebecca's mother a turkey, since they raised them, and the family would have him over for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner. Rebecca and Robert were married on June 7, 1965. She was 47 and Robert was 53. They had dated for two or three years and thought they would never get married, but

in Spiro, was able to make an exception since he was the oldest son at home.

On the third day of Roger's first week attending school, he ran back home. Rebecca was hanging clothes on the line when she saw his little blond head running up to the house. She stopped hanging her clothes, put him right back in the car, and drove him back to school. Mr. Noblet told her she might as well keep him at home, but she refused saying he can't grow up ignorant. All

one day, after a Sunday drive, they went to the Justice of the Peace and were married.

Their children have been successful. K.F. is a retired chemist of Pine Bluff Arsenal and schoolteacher at Spiro High School and Bigsby. Sampson worked at a scissor factory and retired from Reams. Kenneth worked at the school in Hodgen. Mary retired from Whirlpool in Ft Smith. Roger retired from the Air Force having worked for the 188th at Ft Smith.



Rebecca with her grandpa Fox and cousin Harvey Bittle.



Rebecca with Shannon, Soe and Roger represent four generations of her family.

to school. Rebecca's school was a two-room schoolhouse. "We played jacks a lot, and we played ball."

Aunt Becky was devoted to her family. She and her sister Laura were both engaged to be married when Laura developed crippling arthritis. They broke their engagements and Becky took care of Laura while living with Granny Ward.

Three years after Rebecca was born, her parents gave her a baby sister, Anna Geneva.

Rebecca and Anna's mother would take them to Ft Smith on the train. One trip,

mile and a half to two miles to school. She was able to enjoy the walk with several other kids. Her special friend at Murry Spur was Ruby King, who played jacks and softball with her.

Rebecca's father Sam was known around town for his dances he held at the Ward household. He had plenty of cousins, the Caseys, who always wanted to dance on Friday or Saturday nights. Sam would have them cut enough wood to burn in the fireplace and took the heater and bed down to have enough room to dance. If you mentioned the name "Sam Ward" people



Rebecca and husband Robert McDonald.

Choctaw Community Center of Spiro plays important role in community



Ethelyn Moore gets a blood pressure check at the weekly senior meeting.

The Choctaw Nation Community Center of Spiro is a hub for Choctaw activity in the northern portion of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

This center is a shared community center for districts four and five. The Choctaw Senior Citizens group is perhaps the most active organization of the center. This group meets every Wednesday to hold meetings and share a meeting together. In those meetings lunch is served, events are planned and health check-ups are provided.

John Casey, President of the Choctaw Senior Citizens of Spiro shed light on some

of the activities in which the seniors partake. From the annual events such as Christmas, Thanksgiving and Valentine's Day celebration, to more unique things as culturally rich trips to Philadelphia, Miss., and Vicksburg Cemetery, this group of elders is always up to something.

To raise money for their trips and activities, the seniors hold fundraisers, the most popular of which is the Indian taco sells. "They have a really big turn out for the taco dinners," said Mary Hunter, the Field Director of the Spiro Center.

The seniors already have big plans for 2011. A few

smaller trips are in the works to places such as an Oklahoma City trip to view the Chickasaw Cultural Center located there.

Further designations in discussion include South Dakota, Branson, San Antonio and even the Grand Canyon. No decision have been made yet, but the seniors are constantly working toward whatever goal they set for themselves.

When they are not working toward their travels, this group is involved in several other endeavors. They are involved in the recycling program and "everyone is doing their share," said Casey. He went on to mention that they "are looking into an exercise program."

During the weekly meetings this congregation of seniors celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and holidays together. They have Choctaw singings on occasion and participate in the Trail of Tears Walk together.

This particular center boasts several Outstanding Choctaw Elders such as Jane Ann Parent, Ronnie Parent and Wanda Stewart.

Aside from housing the Choctaw Senior Citizens the Spiro center houses the WIC office for that area and hosts several events for the Choctaw

members of that local. Veteran's Post Skullyville 4501 also conducts its business in the Spiro center.

Holiday parties are hosted for all Choctaw's in that area. Basket giveaways take place at the center, which the seniors assemble as a group. Children's Christmas parties are also hosted for the youth of Spiro.

The center also provides as Community Health Representative (CHR) for the area to aid the senior citizen's with their health. This particular (CHR), Carol Harris, is able to speak the Choctaw language and is deeply involved with the center and its happenings.



Rickey White poses for the camera after the senior gathering.



Mary Hunter, Field Office Director, and Carol Harris, CHR, take a break after the events of the afternoon come to an end and prepare for further endeavours.



Jane Parrent (left), treasurer of the Choctaw Senior Citizen's group, along with Brenda Lovejoy, chaplain, sign members into the meeting before the meal and business take place.



Gene and Teddi Sockey enjoy another Wednesday meeting with their fellow seniors.



Randy and Judy Size more prepare to discuss future plans of their senior group.



Pam Perry and Johnny Edwards prepare the lunch for the senior meeting at the Spiro Community Center.

A boy during the depression, a man defending his country

Billy Gene Coleman was born Sept. 27, 1926, in Boko- she at a time in history when the great depression was be- ginning to make its presence known. Three short years later the stock market crashed and threw the whole country into a full-blown depression that lasted until the beginning of World War II in 1941. The fifth of six sons born to Gus and Sybil Coleman, Bill grew up during those depression years.

Farm work wasn't plentiful but if a person was willing to work they could hire out to har- vest potatoes, cotton and other farm jobs available through the year. They could keep food on the family's table. His dad was a hard worker, Bill remembered, and they never missed a meal but sometimes their meals were a little on the short side. His parents taught their children to eat what they raised and the rest was har- vested from Mother Nature's garden – poke greens, wild onions, sassafras roots for tea and medicine, wild grapes, plums, wild sage, onions and any other wild herbs that were available. All the fruit and vegetables that were grown such as apples, peaches, pole beans, black-eyed peas and corn were processed and dried in the sun. Fresh corn on the cob was available in the early summer until it became hard to eat off the cob, then it was ground into grits and corn- meal.

They ate plenty of black- eyed peas. It seemed, Bill said, that his Dad had plenty of recipes for black-eyed peas. He even made sausage using black-eyed peas and they tasted great, not only for break- fast, but just about any time they were prepared.

The Colemans moved sev- eral times, sometimes twice in the same year.

In the fall of 1929, Gus Coleman moved the family to Peno, Okla., to pick cotton; to a small two-roomed log house that was furnished but in bad need of repair. The windows were without screens and they could count the chickens be- low through the cracks in the floors. The roof leaked like a sieve and after the sun set in the evening a horde of mos- quitoes occupied the premises until daybreak. Every evening a small fire was built to pro- duce smoke to help drive away the mosquitoes.

Gus often remarked that even though they didn't pay much per pound for picking cotton he could still make more money picking it than he could growing it. He made enough money to buy new shoes and coats for everyone and feed the family. Bill re- membered going to the cotton field with his mom and dad because there wasn't anyone to watch the smaller children. They would play along or in between two cotton rows as their parents picked cotton. After the kids tired of that they would go sit or lay beneath the big wagon that held the cotton after it was picked. There was always an older person at the wagon who weighed the cot- ton and kind of looked after the kids who came by to sleep or play.

Bill remembered that place well. The man who owned the cotton fields, Richard Smith, gave him his first dog, a little white Spitz he called Chum. Bill and Chum had a lot of fun together. They were constant companions for years.

In the summer of 1934, the government started what was to become known as the Civil Conservation Corps or CCC camps. Gus Coleman applied for and went to work near Wil- burton. In those days no poor folk owned a car so he walked a mile from where they lived back in Peno to the Poteau River bridge and as the Kansas City Southern freight slowed to cross the river bridge out of Ft. Smith, he hopped it and rode to Howe, Okla. The KCS generally stopped in Howe to switch freight for the Midland Valley and he had an easy hop to Wilburton. There a govern- ment truck took them to the work site.

He came home almost every weekend, but some weekends

he was required to stay at the work site for fire call. The government only paid once a month so his mother and the boys had a long and hungry month.

In 1931, the Midwestern and Southern plains states' crops died and the black blizzards began. Dust from their over- plowed and over-grazed farms began to blow away at an alarming rate. That's the year the drought began that would affect all the Great Plains states. By 1934-35, the great migration began that would swell California's population to almost twice its normal size. People left their homesteads in the drought and dust bowl- stricken states by the thou-



Bill Coleman's interview includes many memories from his childhood and the time he served in the U.S. Navy.

Space limitations prevent printing the entire interview. If you would like to read all of Mr. Coleman's interview, please call the Biskinik, 800-522-6170, ext. 2245, or e- mail biskinik@choctawnation.com and one can be sent either electronically or through the mail.



The USS Titania KA13

sands looking for work to put food on the table. Today, many of the migrant workers are owners of some of the richest agriculture land in the state of California. The drought hit the area where the Colemans lived in 1934.

In the summer of 1936, the government paid World War I veterans a bonus. Mr. Cole- man used his bonus to get back in the farming business. He bought a team of mules and farming equipment that kept him farming until after World War II. He became a milk producer a few years after the war, but as building material became plentiful after the war, there were a lot of new homes to be built. Bill's dad was a good carpenter, so he started building homes and worked as a carpenter until a stroke forced him to retire in 1959.

Those were the good years. Things were quiet and peace- ful, but not for long. Stories began appearing in the daily newspaper about Hitler and Togo. "The war in Europe intensified," Bill said. "The Japanese began to rattle her saber for the world to hear, and bang-o – Pearl Harbor – and the United States was at war."

After the United States joined the war in 1941, two of the Coleman brothers were al- ready in service, one stationed on Corregidor in the Philip- pine Islands and the other in Ft. Bliss, Texas. In 1942, two more of the brothers left for the Army Air Corps. At the time, Corregidor had fallen into Japanese hands and the oldest brother had been taken a prisoner by the Japanese. Bill remembered saying to his father in a joking way several times, "I had much rather face old Tojo than face our quarter- mile cotton rows." Bill never liked to work the cotton fields and hated to chop or pick cot- ton.

Bill stayed on the farm and helped his dad until late 1943. As he neared his 17th birthday he told his dad he wanted to enlist and help his other broth- ers fight the Japanese and free their oldest brother. He turned 17 on Sept. 27, 1943, and two weeks later on Oct. 11, he was sworn into the U.S. Navy in Little Rock, Ark. Talk about someone being out of their realm, he really was but he



was enjoying it. He was in an entirely different world. He had never traveled any farther west than the town of Stigler, Okla., and no farther east than Ft. Smith, Ark. He had a lot to learn and a lot to catch up on.

The morning Bill left home for the Navy wasn't sad or something he dreaded to do. It was something that had to be done and he felt he was ex- pected to do his part. His coun- try was at war and it needed all the help it could get to put that bunch of "gangsters" in their place and get the rest of the world back to normal.

Bill arose early on the morn- ing of Oct. 7, 1943, without having to be called – some- thing unusual for him. He shaved, something he usually didn't do during the week, just on weekends. He thought he had better get used to doing it because he would be shaving every morning in the Navy. He ate a breakfast of two fried eggs, bacon, homemade biscuits, jelly and coffee. He didn't have a suitcase so he packed his things in a brown paper bag – two pair of under- wear, two pair of socks, an ex- tra shirt and trousers, his shav- ing gear and some hankies.

Bill said goodbye to his pop, mom and his younger brother, walked down to the main road and hitched a ride on the milk truck driven by his next farm neighbor, Pershing Grey. Bill had to ride in the back of the pickup all the way to Ft. Smith in the cold. He left the milk truck at the corner of Garrison & Towson and walked west on Garrison Avenue, window shopping along the way to North Sixth Street then walked south to the recruiting office located in the U.S. Post Office on South Sixth Street across from the Sebastian County Court House. Another recruit arrived shortly after Bill did and the old chief petty officer didn't waste any time getting them to the bus station and on their way to Little Rock.

All the enlistees and draftees were housed at the YMCA in Little Rock. Most came with a group to enlist or be drafted and a lot of them were from the same hometown. Howev- er, after a weekend at the "Y" playing pool, swimming and eating at the same restaurant several friendships were made

that would last through the war years and longer. At first, Bill thought he was the only one who was "backward," but very shortly found out there were others who came from the same kind of environment. After getting acquainted they found out they were all from about the same economic en- vironment. One was a small- town schoolteacher. Others were from small farming com- munities or other rural areas.

Those going to San Diego were mustered (assembled) and loaded under blackout conditions onto buses and driven to the train station in Little Rock. They boarded and were assigned a sleeper and by 7 p.m. were on their way to the U.S. Naval Training Station in San Diego, Calif. They were headed for boot camp.

The recruits were taught fac- ing movements, close-order drill, hand salute, manual of arms and rifle salute. They marched at attention every- where they went, never any slouching along. In class- rooms, they were taught both enemy and friendly ship and aircraft recognition. They learned Morse code, how to use semaphore flags and signal lights to send and receive short messages, especially distress messages. They also learned to recognize friendly or en- emy ships at night. If anyone didn't know how to swim they were taught one hour at night in their off time. If they didn't learn by the time they were eligible for liberty they didn't get liberty.

They had a lot of fun while taking their training, but they saw at times how dangerous it could be. One morning while taking lifeboat training in a channel that ran into the Naval training station, they were all goofing off, watching harbor seals and the dogfights going on above them. The air was full of P38s, Hell Cats, A20 fighter-bombers, TBFs – you name it, and they were all there practicing. They were all watching almost directly above their heads when two P38s ran head on into each other. They watched as one pilot did a right wing over flip- ping his plane on its back and came out feet first. His para- chute opened almost imme- diately and he floated gently

toward the ground. However, the other pilot wasn't as lucky. As he attempted a left wing over the left wing of his plane pulled off and he came out of his craft as it tried to bank right. His chute did open but the severed wing struck the top of his chute causing it to stream. They all stood in hor- ror and watched the young man fall to his death just out- side the boundaries of the Na- val training station. For five minutes after the accident the whole company was quiet and no one said a word. Finally the company commander was the first to say anything and his remarks were that all training could be deadly if not done properly and under supervi- sion. Accidents will and do happen while taking training and some of the greatest loss of life has occurred during training exercises.

Bill believed the men of the company got something out of that little talk because every- one started helping each other during the training phase. Ev- eryone began to take a differ- ent attitude toward training.

The time at Camp Farra- gut was just about to run out. Some would be sent to schools stateside and the rest of the company would start am- phibious training at the new amphibious base being built on the south end of Coronado Island across the bay from San Diego.

Bill didn't know what hap- pened but they didn't go direct- ly to the old destroyer base and start training right away. They were sent to Balboa Park for a kind of rest and recreation. All they did for about two weeks was eat, sleep and do close-or- der drill and physical training. It was a good break from such a rigorous schedule and every- one was rested up and ready for the tough training that lay ahead. After two weeks, they were moved over to the old destroyer base and started am- phibious training.

On the last day of January 1944, Bill's company was told to make everything shipshape and seagoing and to be ready for muster at 0800 hrs the next morning. After muster they were given a sack lunch, load- ed onto buses and moved out, leaving San Diego behind. It was a foul day, rainy, foggy and a little bit cold. They knew they were going north but didn't know where they were going. Everyone thought they were headed to the port in San Francisco but soon realized they were headed inland. Bill didn't know how fast the bus- es were driving but they didn't stop anywhere and traveled far into the night. Sometime that night they were off-loaded, they didn't know where, but they had a place to sleep and were told muster would be at 0800 hrs the next morning. The next morning they found out they were at a replacement depot at Camp Shoemaker, Calif. That didn't mean a lot because no one knew where Shoemaker was located. They found out there wasn't much to do around there but sleep, eat and keep the place policed up and wait.

When they arrived at the port in San Francisco, boy did they get a surprise. The bus stopped alongside one of the largest ships anyone had ever seen. They were introduced to the compartment commander and he welcomed them to the USS West Point, one of the fastest transports in the Ameri- can transport fleet. Before her commission into service for the Navy she was the famous luxury liner, SS America. None of the Arkies and Okies had ever heard of the famous ship so everything he told them was news to them. He stated he would be our eyes and ears all the way to their destination, Noumea, New Caledonia.

They were off-loaded onto a lighter and ferried to the dock, then trucked to their destina- tion up in the hills southwest of the city. Back to living in Quonset huts

About seven days after he arrived at Noumea, Bill board- ed a ship headed toward Gua- dalcanal. They were aboard the ship overnight and landed the next morning. Most of

the company boarded a tank lighter and crossed Sea Lark Channel to Tulagi where Bill stayed from March 16, 1944, until April 15, 1944.

Operation Watchtower kicked off Aug. 7, 1942. This was the battle for Guadalca- nal. At the same time, troops of the 1st Marine Division landed on the south shore of Tulagi and swept across the island's ridge, which lay the length of the island. The Ma- rines' advance was steady but casualties were frequent. By nightfall, the Marines had advanced to the north shore overlooking Tulagi Harbor. By the afternoon of Aug. 8, the mop-up was completed and the battle for Tulagi and the Japanese Sea Plane base at Purvis Bay was finished.

Bill said the time he spent on Tulagi wasn't bad. Most of their days were spent anchor- ing sawed palm tree logs into the soil making foundations to support Quonset huts for other troops who were to come after their group left. They cleaned up the little island of Gavuta where one of the most violent and cruel battles took place during World War II.

After arriving at Turner City, they were given Sundays off to attend church services or whatever. On Bill's first day off, he decided to do a little exploring. He walked into the jungle close to their tent area and started looking at the flora and fauna. He found his first fauna in just a few min- utes when a big monitor lizard climbed up the side of a giant jungle tree. The largest lizard the Oklahoma boy had ever seen was a mountain boomer and they weren't close to the size of that lizard.

The monitor lizard averaged three to four feet in length with white spots on a kind of greenish-grey body. Later on, that type of lizard would play a big part in some entertaining pranks they played on others.

They knew their time was getting short on Tulagi and they would be shipping out to the fleet any day. The men knew something big was brewing because rations were cut to two meals a day and work schedules were cut in half. Breakfast was served at 0800 hrs and lunch at 1400 hrs. Work hours were over at 2 in the afternoon. This was the time of the big buildup in the South Pacific. Everyone was getting anxious for an assign- ment to the fleet.

"I guess we sometimes thought the war was passing us by," Bill said, "but little did we know our time was com- ing."

Bill received his orders for the fleet on April 8, 1944, for the USS Titania AKA13, an attack cargo vessel. He went aboard her in Purvis Bay, Tu- lagi, just across the jungle from Turner City. Before the invasion of Guadalcanal, the Japanese had used Purvis Bay as a seaplane base. Their first trip out was April 18, 1944, to Guadalcanal just 20 miles south across Sea Lark Chan- nel from Tulagi. They arrived there that day and started tak- ing aboard Army troops and equipment. They left two days later, bound for Cape Gloucester, New Britain, just southeast of New Guinea. Although the invasion of Cape Gloucester had taken place Dec. 26, 1943, there was still a lot of mopping up to do which required fresh troops.

Titania brought fresh troops and supplies. They arrived there April 22, 1944, and im- mediately began unloading Army troops and equipment and took on board battle-worn Marine troops who had made the initial invasion back in De- cember 1943. They departed Cape Gloucester on the 28th of April and immediately started taking on more Army troops and equipment bound for Cape Gloucester. They left Guadal- canal on May 1, bound for the Cape and arrived at the Cape on the 3rd of May, unloaded the Army troops and as soon as they off-loaded, started tak- ing on Marines bound for the Russells. They left the Cape on May 5 and arrived in the Russells on May 6, off-loaded Marines and their equipment

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Coleman remembers World War II's Pacific Theater of Operations

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for two days and sat in port for an extra day. Bill didn't know why they stayed there an extra day until they were underway for the canal. A half a day out, the convoy came under attack by submarines. No ships were hit but a couple had close calls. The big 2100 Destroyer escorts and F4 U Corsairs Combat Air Patrol (CAP) took care of them. In about 20 minutes they had an all-clear. Some time before they had left for this last trip to the cape, the gunnery department had an opening for a gunners mate striker. Bill applied for it. One day during the trip to the cape, the chief gunners mate casually asked Bill if he was ready to come work for him.

Before arrival at the canal, Bill was no longer a deck ape. Bill started his duties as a gunners mate and was assigned two 3-inch .50 antiaircraft guns located on the bow of the ship. They arrived at Guadalcanal on May 8, loaded with Marines and took on small stores (ships exchange) and rations. They started getting the ship ready for aerial gunnery practices and left Guadalcanal the morning of May 11, 1944, bound for Tulagi. They spent the next two weeks getting the old ship ready for some extended time at sea. Decks were chipped fore and aft, removing any rust spots from the ship's sides above the waterline. This was physical work and all hands (turn-to, a Navy term meaning everybody works).

On May 31, 1944, they made a trip to Guadalcanal and back to Tulagi in the same day and that afternoon were back at the canal. Guadalcanal didn't have any docking facilities so the ship anchored just off its north shore. That afternoon, a fleet tanker came alongside and they fueled up. Later, a supply ship came alongside and replenished supplies.

The next morning, it seemed as if everyone was getting the idea that something big was about to happen. As they watched and talked, Bill remembered, a huge armada appeared on the horizon. As it came closer, the men began to pick out the battleship and cruisers. Several big 2100 tin cans were running screen for the convoy, which was made up of three battle ships, four cruisers and several big destroyers, along with mind sweeps and other ships. All moved into the anchorage of Guadalcanal. While they were there, Bill and the others came under a submarine alert, which interrupted their troop loading. The next morning they were all gone and the men started taking troops. By the evening of June 3, they were loaded and ready to go.

Late that evening, several loaded troop transports arrived. The morning of the 4th, the Titania was underway with a large convoy headed for Kwajalein, Marshalls Islands. They arrived at Kwajalein on June 8, 1944, for the purpose of making a joint invasion of Saipan and Guam after the initial assault on Saipan. Titania and other troop-loaded vessels destined for the invasion of Guam were held in reserve and circled Saipan for three days. On the second day, as they circled Saipan, a lone Japanese torpedo plane found the convoy and made a run on an APD transport directly on their stern. It couldn't get through the intense antiaircraft fire and was shot down. They returned to Kwajalein fully loaded with 14th Defense Battalion and remnants of the 3rd Marine Division, Medical Battalion, Dog Battalion and others to await the initial invasion of Guam. The Marines stayed aboard from June 3 until the invasion of Guam on July 21, 1944.

They left their rendezvous with Saipan and made their way to the harbor of Eniwetok on the Marshall Island. They arrived there on June 28, 1944, fully loaded and sat waiting until July 17. While they were in the harbor, the ship was under condition 2A; watches were the same as if at sea. Almost every day they went to battle station two or three times a day. It seemed the Navy fliers kept shooting the Japanese out

of the skies before they could reach the loaded ships at Eniwetok. There were gas alerts because the Japanese were expected to try anything.

On the morning of July 17, the convoy moved out of the harbor at Eniwetok, headed for the evasion of Guam. They were at battle stations every night as the Japanese dropped flares trying to locate the convoy. During the day, the carrier pilots took care of any Japanese aircraft that cared to venture out. On July 21, breakfast was at 0400 hrs.; troops were fed steak and eggs. They



always had a good breakfast before hitting the beach. The Infantrymen from the Marine Corps hit the beaches at daybreak. By midday, the hospital ship was beginning to fill up and most of the troop ships were taking the overflow of casualties.

Before his 18th birthday, Bill had his first close-up look at what war really produced – severely wounded and mangled young men. As all deck personnel were used for off-loading during invasion someone was needed to help with casualties. Bill was one of those detailed to go down into the ramp boats and hook stretchers to the yard and stay (a type of boom hook up for fast loading and unloading) to bring casualties aboard.

Human blood and the smell of death generally made the faint at heart a little queasy; however, Bill didn't get sick but, "I probably looked a little green around the gills because our old Warrant Boatswain told the deck petty officer to replace me in the boat with someone older," he said. "It is an experience I haven't forgotten over the past 62 years and it will probably stay with me until the day I die."

Although Guam is above the equator it was tremendously hot during the invasion and the troops who landed on the beach suffered more than the shipboard personnel did. The deck force unloaded in five days and they left Guam the night of July 26, 1944. They arrived back at Eniwetok on July 31. They departed Eniwetok the next day bound for the New Hebrides Islands. En route the ship ran into a massive typhoon and suffered some damage, losing four LCP ramp boats. The cooks weren't able to cook, so everyone ate canned corn beef sandwiches for about three days. They did have coffee to drink; however, everyone was glad when that storm departed their neck of the woods. They arrived in New Hebrides on Aug. 6, 1944, and had to wait a day or two for the boat replacements to arrive.

They did get some time off. The ship had a party on the beach. The cooks made up for their time off during the storm by cooking up some pretty good steaks. At the same time, a big USO show was performing every day on the beach. Bob Hope, Francis Langford, Martha Ray and several other well-known stars were there.

Bill saw some of his friends who were on Tulagi with him. They were serving on the three presidents troop ships – The Adams, Jackson and Hayes. They traveled in convoy with them almost all the time they were in the Pacific Theater of operations.

Well, all good things have to come to an end, Bill said. They said goodbye to the New Hebrides Islands on the 14th day of August bound for Guadalcanal, arriving at the canal on the 16th day of August, replenishing their supplies and picking spare parts for the engine room. While they were there, they had a change of command. Commander Burger, USNR, was replaced by Malcolm W. Callahan, Commander U.S. Navy (retired). They

departed the next day bound for Tulagi to pick up new replacements. Some of the older crewmembers were due for rotation back to the states. The gunnery department got three new men; all their names started with a T – Thompson, Turvey and Trumpold – all fresh out of gunnery school. In their homeport area of the South Pacific with a new skipper and a full complement of ships crew, they were faced with the difficult task of training troops in preparation for the upcoming invasion of the Philippine Island.

They departed Tulagi around noon on the 17th of August, arriving in Bougainville late in the afternoon on the 18th. The next morning, they started taking on Army troops bound for Finsch'hafen on the 21st. The harbor was very deep and to anchor the ship they had to anchor on a narrow ledge. The ship hit the spot but during the night a storm moved in and they were set adrift. The engine room was secured on a 10-minute notice and they kept the ship from drifting into another ship or out of the harbor. They anchored again the next morning and got a good solid hook, then started off-loading the troops. They left Finsch'hafen that afternoon bound for Hollandia, New Guinea, which was about halfway up the east coast. They arrived on Aug. 24, anchored in Humboldt Bay and started taking aboard Army troops. They departed Hollandia for Aitape, New Guinea, with a full load of troops and equipment, arriving there on the 29th. They had a mock invasion of Aitape and hung around until Sept. 12 practicing mock invasions.

They left Aitape on the 12th for Milne Bay, arrived there on the 14th and unloaded for another mock invasion of Milne Bay. After two or three mock invasions they left Milne Bay on Sept. 26, 1944, headed for Finsch'hafen.

The next day out of Milne Bay, Bill celebrated his 18th birthday. They arrived on Sept. 28 and left on the same day, headed for Hollandia in Humboldt Bay. The men spent the next week taking on fuel, ammunition and food and filling tanks with fresh water. They started taking on the 24th Infantry Division equipment, getting ready for the invasion of Leyte, Philippines Islands.

After the extensive routine of mock invasions, most of the deck force was pretty well at the breaking point. They were worn out and needed a break. All the heavy equipment was loaded and the skipper said that half of those who wanted to go ashore to visit the Army's PX could go that evening. Not everyone wanted to go ashore; they had much rather just take the afternoon off and stay aboard. However, there's always the few who were just dying to get ashore.

They left the ship that afternoon with a ramp boat full of personnel and most were back on the ship before dark. Some were missing, though, and that didn't present a big problem. They could have easily missed the boat and all they had to do was to contact the beach master and say they needed a ride home.

Well, the call did come, but it was around 0100 hrs in the morning. Of the three men who were missing, one was in custody, one was in the hospital in serious condition and the third was dead. They had been drinking and stole an Army duck. They decided they wanted to visit the hospital and find some nurses. They found the hospital and at the same time found the Army MPs. They immediately started back down the mountain with the MPs in hot pursuit and at about

the first curve the driver lost control and flipped the duck, killing one and seriously injuring himself. Well, as it always seems one comes through an accident unharmed and in this case, one did, and everyone aboard liked the one who was killed.

The next few days everyone was getting edgy about the upcoming invasion and were told they could expect just about anything to happen. The enemy stronghold on the islands had been occupied back in early 1942 and they were well entrenched with plenty of air support. Bill remembers they left Hollandia on Oct. 1, 1944, slowly making their way toward the Island of Leyte. A convoy can only travel as fast as its slowest ship. They were harassed continually, night and day. After the third day out the fleet aircraft kept most of the Japanese planes at bay most of the time, but some mine-laying aircraft got by and dumped mines in their path. All the transports triggered rigged paravanes and kept them out until the night before they entered into Leyte Gulf. The Japanese looked for them every night by dropping flares. Some of the destroyers had radar fire control and they kept up a barrage, using flashless powder when the Japanese showed up. Bill and the others hit the Gulf just before daylight and started to make their way toward the landing beaches. One lone Japanese seaplane made a run down the middle of the convoy, drawing a lot of AA fire. It looked as if a person could walk on the tracers that were fired at him. He was finally shot down further on up the line from their ship.

In the days that followed, Japan launched mass kamikaze attacks to deter the formidable invasion force. On Jan. 6, 1945, combat air patrol (CAP) planes shot down a Japanese plane just 1,000 yards from Titania's port bow. Air activity picked up two days later as the convoy's CAP downed

four planes. A "Val" appeared from Titania's port quarter, crossed her stern, and dropped one bomb 100 yards from the ship's port quarter and another only 50 yards off her starboard



bow. Titania and other members of the convoy had taken the plane under fire and finally splashed it only 100 yards off the Titania's starboard bow.

After traveling the last 48 hours through enemy water and being attacked by enemy aircraft, Bill said they hoped the landing at Lingayen Gulf would be a quiet one. On the morning of Jan. 9 Titania dropped anchor off Crimson Beach and attempted to unload her cargo. However, unloading became very difficult due to cross swells. It not only slowed Titania down, but the APAs had more difficulty getting the infantry ashore without dumping them in deep water. Also, at night, suicide boats and swimmers attacked them. They had to deploy armed LCP boats to circle the ship at night. Titania didn't take a hit but the USS Mohawk, which lay at anchor 100 yards off Titania's starboard beam took a few hits from swimmers but was quickly rescued by one of the destroyers, which sunk two suicide boats before they could reach Mohawk's side. While the Titania was there, late in the evening, the destroyers and rescue boats began laying down smoke screens to protect the convoys from night and early morning air attacks.

They did try to find ships in the mornings by just dropping bombs as they flew across the convoy anchored in the Gulf.

"And how well I remember the early morning bomb runs," said Bill. "My friend, Cliff Trumpold, a fellow gunners mate, and I always slept by our anti-aircraft gun at night, located on the bow of the ship. We had an early wakeup call one morning by two 500-pound-

ers being dropped just off our bow. Something like that will get your attention real quick."

Despite the heavy cross swells, suicide swimmers and boats, Titania began discharging her cargo of tanks, trucks, ammunition and gasoline, as well as personnel. On Jan. 12, Titania departed Lingayen Gulf for Leyte Gulf, arriving there on Jan. 15. In Leyte, one half of the ship's company spent an afternoon in Tocloban and everyone enjoyed the time off, had a few beers and did some shopping, buying fresh eggs, potatoes and onions. For the next couple of days, outriggers brought merchants from the beach and they were able to purchase the same produce without going back to town.

However, all good things must come to an end. On the 18th of January, they were underway again headed for Morotai in the Halmahera Island, part of the Dutch East Indies, which lay just off the northern tip of New Guinea, a really hot place only about 3 degrees north of the equator. They arrived on the 21st of January and were informed they would be attached to Task Group 78.1 as a unit of the 7th Fleet. They stayed in the harbor there from the 21st until Feb. 3, 1945.

Morotai was a pretty secure place at that time; however, old "washing machine Charlie" would interrupt their on-deck movies almost every night. No one ever fired a shot at him but the Australian and U.S. armies would put him under a big search light for all to see. Sometimes he would drop a bomb but it was always wild and as soon as he made his flyover they were able to finish their movie. That's the place everyone got introduced to Australian beer and, "Boy, it was good beer," Bill remembered. "It cost 3 bucks a liter. The Australians kept us supplied as they were allowed to have beer aboard ship and the Americans were not."

After getting some badly needed rest and repairs, in early June the old veteran attack transport was underway again, this time loaded with elements of the 9th Australian Division of the Australian I Corps headed for Brunei Bay, Borneo. On June 10, the Titania arrived off the "Oboe Six" assault area and began unloading cargo. Despite a surprise attack by a Japanese "Nick" which dove out of low clouds and dropped a bomb which exploded some 300 yards off her port beam, they continued unloading and on the morning of May 11 were completely unloaded and departed for Morotai.

After spending almost a month at anchor in Morotai, Titania got underway on the 30th of July and visited San Pedro Bay, Leyte and Ulithi. Finally, after 33 months in the Pacific Theater of Operation, the longest length of time for any ship of her kind to remain out of the United States, they raised their going-home pennant and made their way toward Pearl Harbor.

The air was full of news of a possible surrender of Japan any day. Everyone aboard was very hopeful the news would come soon. That would be the best homecoming they could receive. Then, on Aug. 6, 1945, a news bulletin was published on ship stating the U.S. Air Force had dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima in Japan. No one aboard had ever heard of an atomic bomb and what destruction it could do. Then, on Aug. 9, another bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Nagasaki, destroying nearly one-half of the city's 142,784 population.

"After we learned what an atomic bomb was and how much destruction it could do," Bill said, "we knew the war was close to being over."

On Aug. 15 the official word came that Japan had accepted

the unconditional surrender and the war was over.

"We were five days out of Pearl Harbor and what a happy day that was."

The Titania arrived in Pearl on Aug. 20, 1945. They embarked personnel and loaded LTVs (landing track vehicles) that were originally on their way to the Pacific Theater of Operation and were returned to the United States. Some personnel got liberty in Pearl, but Bill declined because, "I wanted to be one of the first to receive leave home when we arrived in Bremerton Navy yard."

They departed Pearl on the 22nd of August and arrived in Bremerton on Aug. 30, 1945. Bill awoke early that morning and made his way up to the Flying Bridge, sat down on an ammunition ready box and as they entered Puget Sound, it was one of the most beautiful sites he believes he had ever seen.



Bill and Ruth Coleman in Ft. Sill on the day of his retirement from the U.S. Army., Nov. 1, 1969.

"The salt air mixed with the smell of pine and fir trees untouched by the death and destruction on the Pacific Islands was an experience I will never forget," he said.

The Tilting Tilly (KA13) was scheduled for a complete overhaul and the first thing they started doing was making the ship ready for dry dock. The gunnery division was responsible for removing all ammunition and explosives from the ship and securing all unintended weapons left aboard. As they began removing 5-inch projectiles and powder bags from the aft magazines, they got quite a scare. They had filled the small hoist with 5-inch projectiles and as it reached the halfway mark up, the cable broke. If the hoist had been working properly the counter balance and stopping pawls would have stopped it. However, they were not and the frayed ends of the cable came down the shaft in a circular motion flowed by a blaze of sparks. The 5-inch powder room was open and filled with highly flammable ether fumes. My friend, Clifford Trumpold, and I were the only two in the magazine.

"The one thing I could think of," Bill remembered, "was to jump into the powder room and dog the door down from the inside which we did and I believed that saved our lives that day."

The gunnery division completed their tasks aboard the Titania on Aug. 31, 1945, and when evening came everyone was ready to head for the big city of Seattle.

Bill left for home on Monday, Sept. 3, 1945, Labor Day. The train traveled across parts of the United States Bill never dreamed of being able to see. He spent his waking hours glued to the window, afraid he would miss seeing something. Moving across eastern Washington and western Montana, the areas seemed to have plenty of wildlife, deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, big horn sheep, and occasionally if he looked high enough up a mountain slope, he would glimpse the white spot of a Rocky Mountain goat.

Bill remembers Missoula, Mont., well because of its giant railroad center. The big cab-forward steam engines boosted the other trains through the tunnels and over the Rocky Mountain. Butte, Mont., was another place that was a wonder for Bill – to see Berkeley's giant open pit copper mine – an enormous pit where all the ore was mined to be smelted into copper that fed the defense plants manufacturing war materials of World War II.

Ernest Hooser - Elder, Educator, Influence

Ernest Hooser was born on Oct. 8, 1917, along with his twin sister Ernestine on his big brother Hickman's birthday, just two days before his mother's birthday. Ernest's mother didn't know she was going to have twins so she didn't have names picked out. Down the road from their home was a man who had a team of mules named Ernest and Ernestine, which is where they got their names.

Following the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, Indians were being sent to Oklahoma. There were about 17,000 to 20,000 Choctaws in Mississippi. It was decided that one-third of the Choctaws will be sent in 1831, the next third in 1832 and the final third in 1833. Ernest Hooser's great-grandfather was a member of the first one-third Choctaws sent to Oklahoma.

Ernest's great-grandfather and his wife traveled from Bywya, close to where Philadelphia, Miss., is today, to Memphis leaving about Oct. 15. They had children with them, the oldest being four years old.

When they arrived at Memphis, they were put on a boat that was sent down the Mississippi River to where the Arkansas River empties into the Mississippi.

As they came up the Arkan-

sas, their boat ran aground, but they weren't at their desired location. The weather was severely cold and most of the Indians were barefoot and without coats. It's said there were about 250 people and only 100 blankets. Ernest's great-grandfather's wife died here and they had just enough time to bury her on the bank.

Along this boat ride, the food supply ran out and some starved to death. It was so cold that some froze to death. Eventually, they made it to Fort Smith.

They walked from Fort Smith, having very few wagons. Ernest's great-grandfather, along with the children, walked to DeQueen, then Arkansas, then onto Oklahoma near Eagletown.

After making it to Oklahoma, he met up with his wife's sisters, named Ahobotema and Pisatema. Ahobotema later became his wife and helped him take care of the children. They had three children, one of them being Ernest's grandfather Peter J. Hudson.

Peter was born at Stockbridge, a missionary site near Eagletown. He was fortunate enough to attend school at Stockbridge, later at Bohanan then at a boarding school northwest of Fort Towson. He then went onto attend Drury Academy in Springfield, Mo., in 1869 and stayed there for 18 years.

Peter became a preacher after he received his degree at Drury, spending three years at Hartford, Conn. He later became a missionary for Choctaws, visiting two churches: Mt. Zion and Big Lick.

In 1892, a school was being built in Tuskahoma. Peter was elected to be first superintendent, where he stayed a number of years, until around 1898.



Ernest Hooser is a retired educator, a father and loves telling his stories.

Peter was married to Amanda Bohanan, Ernest's grandmother, for 66 years. She passed away at the age of 89. While at Tuskahoma, Peter and Amanda had a baby girl named Helen Hudson, Ernest's mother. Their other children, Preston, Irene and Nathan came soon after.

After leaving Tuskahoma, Peter and Amanda moved to a little community called Buffalo where Amanda's father (Ernest's great-grandfather) was a preacher of a small church called Cupco. Peter began teaching school here.

Peter and Amanda had a fifth child in about 1899, but she only lived about two days. They buried her just outside the Cupco churchyard, which today is a cemetery. This is also where Ernest's great-grandparents are buried.

Peter later became an officer in the Choctaw government, the auditor of the tribe. Around 1907 through 1911, he was appointed by the chief to delegate to the President of the United States and he was interested in legislation.

Peter and Amanda came to Oklahoma in 1911. In 1916, Peter went to Washington. In

the 1920s, he worked for the Oklahoma Historical Society, assigned to write the history of the Choctaws. He also worked for a United States judge.

Ernest's mother Helen attended Tuskahoma Female Academy until she was in eighth grade. She married Ernest's father in 1911. Along with Ernest, they ended up having six children.

Ernest and Ernestine were born in their home located just a half a mile over the hill from the Clayton Cemetery. In 1919, they moved into a box house where Ernest's brother John still lives today.

There were six children in the Hooser family. From the time Ernest was young, he knew he would go to college. Five out of six Hooser children went to college, three received degrees and two worked beyond a master's degree. Ernest was working on his doctorate degree when he stopped to focus on his career. He lived 240 miles from the university and had to take Tuesday night and Saturday classes, so he couldn't afford to take that time off work.

Ernest was supposed to go to school at Prairie View, but several schools consolidated including Tuskahoma, Dry Creek and Buffalo. He walked a mile to catch the bus to go to school at the new school. Ernest's school bus was a Model T Ford truck that had a body put on the back. There were no individual windows, just heavy screen wire. When the weather was bad, they rolled a tarp and tied it down. The bus just had three long benches, and it was used for about six years until the school purchased a bus made by a manufacturer.

Ernest and his sister enrolled in the first grade at Tuskahoma. It wasn't very large and the first grade shared a room with the second grade.

In high school, Ernest took basic algebra, geometry and English. He was also taught penmanship nearly every year so he would be able to write eligibly.

During high school, only the superintendent and the coach had cars. Some students would come to school on horseback, feeding and watering their horses at lunchtime.

The children took their lunches to school with them. Ernest's lunches consisted of two biscuits, usually having sausage, ham or bacon. He carried them to school in his hip pocket. The school didn't have a lunchroom. During the depression, the school would serve soup and crackers when it could afford it.

The Hooser children didn't always know they didn't have a lot of money because they had always been raised that way. They ate well, especially at breakfast. They had biscuits, gravy, sausage, bacon, oatmeal, sorghum molasses, butter and milk.

When the kids came home from school in the evenings, their mother would serve them supper then they'd work in the field gathering crops. They had a wood-cook stove

and two fireplaces. Someone had to get wood and kindling and someone had to build the fires in the morning. Ernest's mother cooked in this stove all his life. Only until after he was out of college did she get a gas range stove.

Ernest graduated from Tuskahoma in May of 1936. He went on to study at Murray State College in Tishomingo. From Murray he went to Oklahoma A&M College in Stillwater, which will later be called Oklahoma State, and earned his bachelor's and master's degrees. Ernest studied education and majored in math and science.

While attending Oklahoma A&M, Ernest met his wife Helen, a home economics major from Tishomingo. After Ernest graduated in 1940, he and Helen got married. They had their first child, Patricia Ann, in 1941 and a boy in 1942 named Carl Ernest.

Upon graduation, Ernest began teaching science and a little math at Stigler High School, where he stayed for three years. From Stigler he went to become principal at Tuskahoma High School, where he also taught math and science.

In 1944 Ernest and his family moved to Antlers where he became principal of the senior high school. He kept this position until 1955. Ernest enjoyed his years at Antlers and was able to teach some classes while he was principal there.

The children at Antlers enjoyed Ernest as their principal as well. They had a nickname for him, calling him "Possum." They didn't realize Ernest knew this was the nickname he was given by them; much less he thought it was a fun thing.

Ernest encountered some troublemakers during his days as an educator, but he had a lot of fun with his students. One time, he had a couple of boys try to flush a firecracker down a commode in the bathroom on the third floor of the school, and no one ever confessed. Years later, at a class reunion, the boy asked Ernest if he remembered the incident and said, "I'm the one," and he thought about it all the time.

Ernest was a great influence on his students as well. One day, a student was sent to Ernest's principal's office for calling a teacher a bad name. The student ended up quitting school, but the basketball coach was able to bring him back after talking to him. After returning, he received his punishment from Ernest with a paddling. Years later, he visited Ernest at his home and handed him a piece of paper saying, "That's your copy." This was the student's doctor's dissertation. He told Ernest, "I needed an attitude adjustment and you gave it to me."

From Antlers, the Hooser family moved to Eagletown and Ernest became superintendent. Eagletown was a small school and consisted of a white school and a black school, the campuses located about a mile apart. When Ernest experienced heart problems that came with the stress of being the superintendent, he went back to teaching in the classroom.

Ernest's last year in Eagletown was 1959, and Patricia and Carl graduated. Ernest received a job at Durant junior high school, which he preferred to high school.

His first year at Durant Jr. High Ernest taught two seventh-grade math classes, two eighth-grade math classes and two ninth-grade math classes, teaching six periods a day. Eventually, Ernest began teaching first and second year

algebra.

In 1966, Durant Public Schools installed a television station. Ernest knew that if Durant hired a teacher to direct this station, he would want to be the one to do so. So he began working with no pay for KXII Channel 12 in Denison to gain experience.

Ernest worked for KXII from Monday to Wednesday with no pay when they offered him a part-time job on Wednesday with pay, and he accepted. Ernest decided he needed formal education on television, so he enrolled at East Texas in Commerce, which had two full television stations, for Saturday classes and began training.

Ernest competed his formal training at East Texas so he was able to begin directing the educational television station at Durant Schools. The station began by recording art, music and science for first through third grades. They soon organized the station to allow the high school to participate at noon each day and had four televisions in the lunchroom for the students to watch. The students worked on the microphones, operated cameras, the soundboard and videos.

Ernest's instruction in the station influenced many students. One girl went on to make her career in television. One boy would always bring his Bible to the station with him. He once wrote a script called "How to Witness for the Lord Jesus Christ," which was broadcasted. A few years later, Ernest found the student working as a pastor in south Oklahoma City. He informed Ernest that his television class prepared him more for his work more than anything he's ever done, besides his Bible studying, and what helped him most was being on the microphone. He didn't like being



Ernest Hooser and late wife, Helen.

on the microphone, but Ernest knew it was good for him, and it paid off.

One day, while Ernest was unloading rolls of tape, he hurt his back and was in bed for a month. During this time, the administration assigned a high school student to take over the station. He now runs a church television studio. Ernest expresses great pride in his successful students.

After the television station in Durant Schools was closed, Ernest began teaching photography classes. He taught in public schools as well as Southeastern Oklahoma State University. At SOSU, he instructed a photography class that took place at night and all the students were adults.

Ernest retired from teaching in 1980. He was an educator for 40 years.

In 2004 Ernest's beloved wife Helen passed away. They were married 64 years.

Today, Ernest enjoys telling his grandchildren and great-grandchildren stories of his past and Choctaw culture. He occasionally goes to Durant Public Schools and speaks with the students about Choctaw heritage. He even teaches them to sing in the Choctaw language.

Ernest tells students he visits that they each have their own story yet to be told. His great-grandchildren will often sit on the floor and listen to his stories that he wants them to hear, because they have a heritage to be proud of.



Ernest with his children, Patricia and Carl.



School

of Choctaw Language

Community Classes

Community classes are held in various locations in Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas and California. For more information, call Richard Adams at 1-800-522-6170.

Internet Classes

Language classes are available on the Internet and will continue to expand to meet the needs of those who are interested in enrolling. The Chahta Anumpa Internet Course is taught by Lillie Roberts.

High School & College Courses

With One-Net Distance Learning Technology, Choctaw Language courses are taught in approximately 35 high schools within the Choctaw Nation and in two colleges, Carl Albert State College in Poteau and Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton.

University Classes

Instructors from the School of Choctaw Language also teach a course at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. In addition to learning to read and write in Choctaw, the students also learn the history and culture of the tribe.

Materials for classes can be purchased at

Chahta Holisso Akanchi

Choctaw Bookstore

Carolyn Cross, Manager

888-932-9199 • 580-920-3148

800-522-6170, ext. 5148 • 580-924-8280, ext. 5148

www.choctawschool.com

Durant Choctaw Seniors stay active in the community

The Choctaw Community Center in Durant holds many activities to keep Choctaw senior citizens entertained, energized and happy. Lately, their membership has increased significantly, and more and more people are participating.

“Our seniors are very, very active,” said Choctaw Seniors President Marilynn Mitchell.

Every Wednesday, the center holds a meal and meeting for the Choctaw seniors of District 9. They say the Pledge of Allegiance and eat a meal cooked a great chef.

At their Wednesday meetings, seniors participate in exercises instructed by “sergeant-at-arms” Willie Walley, who’s over 80 years old. They also learn Choctaw songs taught by Gaylia Green and make their weekly announcements.

The number of seniors in attendance at the weekly meetings has increased to around 100 seniors at one time. “We’re delighted,” said Marilynn about the number present. “In the past there were much less.”

These Choctaw seniors are very dedicated. When bad



2008 Outstanding Choctaw Elder Lorene Blaine investigates a booth at the health fair in Durant on Jan. 26.

weather hit the community, Marilynn came to the center for “fried pie prep” and found that 23 seniors were present and ready to lend a helping hand. “Our people are tough!” she said.

The Choctaw Seniors of Durant participate in a number of activities and fundraisers. Usually every month, they conduct an Indian Taco sale.

They are learning a new activity, line dancing, which they practice every week. Dominoes are also a frequent occurrence at the center.

A bake sale, which is a regularly occurring activity for the seniors, took place on Jan. 21. The seniors made fried pies to sell as a fundraiser to earn money for general funds to use for trips and other events planned.

The seniors are getting dirt under their fingernails by growing a “Going Green Garden.” The Going Green Garden committee is hard at work and they currently have manure coming in so they can start planting.

When their garden vegetables are in season, the seniors are able to put them on their salad bar at lunchtime so their work can pay off as part of a good meal. Last year, they grew watermelons and had a tasty summer treat.

The Choctaw Head Start is just right across from the community center, and the seniors love to participate in activities with the Choctaw children. The youngsters helped the seniors with their vegetable garden last year by planting seeds and cleaning up the area of grass in front of the center. The Outstanding Elders of the center have made a “symbolic walk” over

to the head start to demonstrate the passing of knowledge of the Choctaw heritage to the younger generation.

The seniors plan to continue their friendship with the head start children with a cook out in the future. “The kids love to see the seniors’ Choctaw dresses and outfits,” said Marilynn. “We all just love the children.”

On Jan. 26, a health fair took place in the center just before the lunch meeting. The health fair featured several departments from all over the Choctaw Nation, and many services and information were provided for the seniors.

With the money earned from their fundraising events, the seniors are able to make trips to interesting and entertaining places. They just got back from Branson on Dec. 6, and they were able to visit the Texas State Fair in September.

The Choctaw Seniors are in high spirits and are always having a great time. “We always have lots of activity,” said Marilynn. “Councilman Ted Dosh is very supportive and does good things for us. We always give him credit.”



Shirley Barboan and Jo Selby take a break from their pie making duties to pose for the camera.



Registered nurses Loyce Wright, Kelly Adams, Clara Battice, Brandi Burris and community health representative Robin Green operate their booth at the health fair.



The Choctaw Seniors “Dream Team” hard at work making fried pies. Pictured (in no particular order) are Shirley Barboan, Frances Chandler, Kenneth Chandler, Jo Selby, Stella Mullins, Francis Speers, Margie Sutton, Jim Browder, Geneva Shults, Diana White, Shirley McClain, Gaylia Green, June Sidles, Thelma Loftis, Gene Loftis, Nita Kicinski, Sharisse Ladd, Marilyn Mitchell, Jimmie Browder and Phillis Knight.



Buddies Oscar Sutton (right) and Ollie Wilson (left) enjoy some coffee and company before the weekly senior lunch.

Tales of a Choctaw Air Force pilot: Truman Heron



Truman Randolph Heron as the Outstanding Choctaw Elder for Distric 9 in 2005.

Truman Randolph Heron was born Aug. 3, 1923 in Scopio Okla., a town just northwest of McAlester near the South Canadian River. His great aunt, ascting as midwife, delivered him into this world. He was the oldest child of Della and Charles Heron.

Truman’s grandmother was a full blood Choctaw and his mother was a half. He is listed as an eighth Choctaw and an eighth Chickasaw.

He began his education at school in Ardmore, but only stayed there for six months. Upon leaving Ardmore, he continued his early years of education at North Mount Homa School, a one-room

schoolhouse northwest of McAlester.

I rode a horse to school, a big old horse. One day a strong wind blew some paper in front of my horse, he half reared and I fell off. My boot hung and I was dragged a ways. Because of that I never became a cowboy, said Heron as he recalls mishaps from his youth.

He ended his schooling there in 1934 at the age of 12. At that time he moved to his mother’s allotment of land in Grant, Okla. His mother received this land in 1935 and was one of the last to be given land.

While living in Grant, Truman and his family raised corn and cotton. At the beginning my father didn’t have a tractor. He used mules to plow the land. We had a cow at home for milk, said Truman as he described his early farming days.

When he reached high school, he attended Grant High and was involved in sports. He was the quarterback in six-man football, played basketball and ran track.

He graduated from Grant in 1942 and enlisted in the Cadet Program of the Air Force later that year after spending a half

semester at the University of Oklahoma.

I have a love for flying. I first got interested in aviation because of a guy in Scipio who had an airplane and took me riding, said Truman as he tells why he chose the Air Force over other options.

After completing cadet school, earning his wings and

marry, but his title as a military officer allowed him to bypass that restraint. Truman and Mary Jo were wed at her home on April 20, 1944.

Truman was called into active duty in January of 1943. He went for training in many places, beginning in Wichita Falls. He graduated at Moore Field in McAllen, Texas and



Truman takes pride in this aircraft, “The Merry Heron II.”

obtaining the rank of Second Lieutenant he married Mary Jo Dickson, who he had met as a child and dated in high school.

At the age of 20, Truman was too young to legally

then went to fighter training in Strother Field in Arkansas. During his time there, he learned to pilot P-47 fighter planes and gained the nickname “Chief,” because of his Native American heritage.

Leaving Arkansas, Truman traveled to Galveston Air Force Base to attend gunnery school and then he began his time overseas in Italy. While in Europe, he flew 100 combat missions.

Truman remembers that the job of fighter pilot was not a safe one. He stated that planes were shot down regularly and the mortality rate ran 50%

for being shot down, dead or captured.

In one instance his plane was smoking as he neared the runway to land at the base. As he slowed down it caught fire and he had to land the plane with fire in the cockpit. Once the plane has slowed down enough for Truman to escape, he evacuated the aircraft and it burned on the runway.

He was overseas for one year and then came back home. He was stationed at Perrin Air Force Base in Sherman, Texas. From there he moved to Randolph Field in San Antonio and then on to Good Fellow Air Force Base in San Angelo, Texas. His first daughter, Linda Jo, was born in San Angelo.

He then left for the South Pacific and stayed there for a year and a half. While he was away, his second daughter, Janet Sue was born. He did not get to see her until Mary Jo and the children flew out to Honolulu to meet him. The girls stayed with him for a year on the Kwajalein Island.

Following his time in the South Pacific, Truman came to Westover Air Force Base in Massachusetts and stayed there about a year. He also went to school for piloting C-97 planes, which are large four-engine transport planes.

Later, he went to Tokyo to learn to pilot C-54s. He was there for over three years and his family got to be with him the majority of his time there.

He came back to the United States and learned to fly C-118 planes at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey. He flew this class of aircraft until he retired.

He was a Squadron Adjutant in a number of different places at the Military Air Transport Service (MATS)



Mary Jo and Truman Heron, 1954.

Headquarters. He became the Controller at the MATS Control Center and earned a four-engine commercial license, but never used it.

For his service as a pilot, Truman was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and five Air Metals, the last being an Air Force Commendation Medal.

Upon retiring from the Air Force, Truman came back to Oklahoma and went to school at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. While receiving his education he was also running a farm and ranch on his mother’s allotted land south of Grant.

He earned a degree in education in 1967 and commenced his teaching career at Washington Irving School in Durant where he taught fifth grade.

He went on to gain a Master’s of Education and is credited for 24 years of teaching. He retired in 1986 and began a rich retirement filled with golf and traveling.

Mary Jo and Truman have traveled all over the country. They have been to every state and capital in the United States.

While Truman was in the MATS he traveled all over the world. From the Philippines and Saudi Arabia to most of Europe, Truman has seen a great deal of this planet.



Truman (upper center) and his fighter pilot buddies all geared up for action in 1944 Italy.

OBITUARIES

Lillie Mae ‘Judy’ Pezzolo

Lillie Mae “Judy” Pezzolo, 82, of Carson City, Nev., passed away Feb. 22, 2008, surrounded by family at her bedside. She was born March 25, 1925, in Graham, Okla., to Jessie and Rose Stidham.

Judy lived most of her life in the bay area and moved to Carson City to be near her family. Being three parts American Indian, Judy was a proud member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Judy was the founder the National Organization for Mentally Impaired Children (NOMIC), an organization to help children with disabilities. Over the years Judy blossomed into a woman of great courage and strength, holding her love for her children closest in her heart.

She is survived by her daughters, Joanne Cluff and Christal Saint Denis; son George Pezzolo; four grandchildren, Victoria Stone, Erica Stone, Chelsea Cluff, and Tyler Cluff; one great granddaughter, Sienna Stone; two stepdaughters, Deborah Fowler and Angel Varnell; numerous nieces and nephews; and her devoted canine companions, Benji and Cookie.



Shawn Jameson

Shawn Jameson of Shawnee passed away on Dec. 30, 2010. He was 41. Shawn was born Jan. 31, 1971, at 10:28 p.m. at South Bay Hospital in Redondo Beach, Calif. Shawn was a professional hair stylist. He moved to Oklahoma in 2007 to begin a new chapter in his life. Shawn was a loving father. He had recently become certified as an A+ Certified Computer Technician. He was a proud member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. He was preceded in passing by his grandmother, Sylvia. Shawn is survived by parents, Kenneth and Trudi Root; siblings, Valerie, Bill, Bobby, Richard and Cheryl; daughters, Bridgette and Isabelle Jameson; and 14 nieces and nephews. Shawn was deeply cared for and passed inauspiciously. We will miss his special spirit. We pray for peace for our sadness in his loss.



Betty Givens

Betty Gene Givens passed away Dec. 13, 2010. She was retired from SBC (ATT) in Tulsa. She was a wife, mother and grandmother who cared deeply for her family.

She is survived by her husband, Richard J. Givens of the home; five children, Kelli Moore of Norman, Sherill Callison of Hugo, Cary Callison of Chicago, Johnna Callison of Sacramento, Shawn and Annabell Callison of Lone Grove; nine grandchildren; two stepchildren; seven step grandchildren; three step great-grandchildren. Her cousins include Jack and Donna Sharp of Prump Nev., Carol Sharp of McAlester, Lynn Sharp of Dallas, Bill Sharp of McAlester and Barbra Sharp of McAlester. She will be greatly missed by her family and they will always cherish the memories of her.



Michael Ponder

Michael K. Ponder of Hoyt passed away Jan. 16, 2011, in Fort Smith, Ark., at the age of 68. He was born Nov. 24, 1942, in Hoyt to Carl H. and Florene Gretchen (Harrison) Ponder.

Michael is preceded in death by his parents and two brothers, Carl Ponder Jr. and Timothy H. Ponder.

He is survived by his wife, Charlotte of the home; daughters, Carolyn Gletz of Tulsa and Ellen Kay Starkey of Claremore; son David Ponder and wife Ronnette of Chelsea; sisters, Patricia Harrison Ponder of Hoyt and Gwendolyn Gaye (Ponder) Partney and husband Leon, of Tulsa; 10 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; four nephews; and two nieces.



Cletus Dobbs

Cletus Dobbs, of Tulia, Texas, passed away on Dec. 28, 2010, at the age of 74.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Benjamin Washington Dobbs and Dovie Mae Guie and two brothers, Joe Dobbs and Carl Hall.

Surviving him is his wife, Rita Dobbs, of Tulia; two daughters, Melba Simons-Brown of Aurora, Ill., and Karen McBride of Paradise, Texas; one brother, George Dobbs of Moore; three sisters, Margaret LeBlanc of Carthage, Texas, Grace Marlow of Bokchito, and Inez Schaffer of Midwest City, eight grandchildren, Daniel McBride, Angela McBride, Luke McBride, Justin McBride, Meredith Simons, Bethany Simons, Hope Brown, and Matt Brown; two great grandchildren, Matthew McBride and Liam McBride.



Alex Joe Locke

Alex Joe Locke passed away Dec. 23, 2010. He was born in Tyler, Texas, on July 28, 1954. He lived in Irving, Texas, until he was 9 years old. His family then moved to Bethany. Alex resided in Bethany until his death.

Alex was a kind caring and giving man, who had great love for friends and family. Alex never met a stranger and would offer a helping hand to anyone. He adored his mother and spent as much time as possible with her. He looked forward to talks with his mother and sisters.

He took great pride and pleasure working with his uncle Bob, throughout the Oklahoma City area as an exterminator. He was an avid fisherman and one of University of Oklahoma's greatest fans.

Alex was survived by his mother, Lynn Locke; sisters, Donna Locke Oiler and family, Patricia Locke McClelland and family of Pasadena and Houston, and Early Sue Locke and family of Oklahoma; aunt Betty and uncle Richard of Paris, Texas; uncle Bob and aunt Tam of Oklahoma City; uncle Bill and aunt Doris of Fort Worth, Texas; and all of his grandchildren, great-grand-children, a number of nieces, nephews and cousins.

Lawrence Shoemaker

Lawrence “Chili” Shoemaker, 65, passed away on Jan. 7, 2011, in Lone Grove.

Lawrence was born on June 6, 1945, in Ardmore to and Ella Mae (Shoemaker) Willmond.

Lawrence attended school at Overbrook and Greenville schools and graduated from Plainview High School in 1964. He went to Haskell Institute of Welding and graduated. He moved to Oakland, Calif., to pursue his welding career. This is where he met and married his first wife, Geri Vavalis.

He enlisted in the U.S. Army where he served his country in Germany and Korea. After his discharge he moved to Juneau, Alaska, to be with his wife and daughter. In 1970, he moved to Dallas where he took up the trade of surveyor and in 1977 moved to Ardmore where he worked in the oilfield and in 1979 his marriage ended. He later met Shirley and the couple joined. He was a member of the McAlister Baptist Church where he accepted the Lord. He enjoyed gardening, working with horses, baseball, golf and pool.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Ella Mae Willmond; brothers, Ronnie Willmond and Ray Willmond; and great-nephew Kylien Anh Willmond-Nguyen.

Lawrence is survived by his wife, Shirley, of the home; daughter Keri Shoemaker-Combs of Juneau, Alaska; three grandsons, Cody and Austin Shoemaker, both of Juneau and Richie Combs Jr. of Yakima, Wash.; brother Marcus Willmond of Ardmore; sister Melissa Mose of Ardmore; uncle, Erie Shoemaker of Ardmore; and aunt Sylvania Padilla of Dallas.



Thomas Lyle Jones Sr.

Thomas Lyle Jones Sr. passed away on Nov. 28, 2010. He was born in Coalgate on Oct. 25, 1937, to Jack and Emma Jones. He grew up in Oklahoma City and attended Columbus Elementary, Jackson Jr. High and Capitol Hill High School. He was proud of his Choctaw heritage and often shared many of his childhood memories with his family. He was an honest and trustworthy man, respected by all who knew him. He married the love of his life, Judi Jones, in 1961, and raised three children. Tom worked with his brothers sheet rocking for many years, then became a member of Teamsters, working for Leeway, Transcon, BeMac, and eventually retiring from ABF in 1998. Judi preceded him in death in 1997 from ALS, after being tenderly cared for by Tom and her family. His parents and three brothers, Bill, James and Eddie, also preceded him in death.

Tom is survived by his children, Felicia Lucas and husband Marshall, Thomas Lyle Jones Jr. and wife Neva, Tonya Rogalsky and husband Delbert, and a special “adopted” son, Ali A.H. Jones; eight grandchildren, Nicole and Daniel Moghbelfar, Dr. Shari Jones, Gerald and Joseph McGuire, Josh Rogalsky, and Billy and Jennifer Jones; four great-grandchildren, Brian and Taylor Snyder, and Joseph and Jacob McGuire. He is also survived by his sister, Wanda McKinney; brothers, Jerry and Frank Jones; and numerous nieces, nephews and in-laws. He had many friends who mourn the passing of “good ole’ Tom Jones.”



Ruby Beams Henderson Johnson

Ruby Beams Henderson Johnson passed away on Jan. 1, 2011, at the Hillcrest Care Center in Tishomingo at the age of 100.

She was born on Nov. 24, 1910, in Kingston to James and Jettie Smith Beams.

As a small girl Ruby and her family lived on her father’s Indian allotment which was located around Shay. Her father was a deputy for the sheriff’s office in Marshall County. Around the age of 10, Ruby’s father moved the family to McClain County where Ruby attended school at Staley, located southwest of Purcell. At the age of 18, Ruby married Clyde Henderson and they had six children. In 1937, Ruby and her family moved to California where she picked



cotton, tomatoes and grapes and worked in a cannery. When World War II broke out, Ruby’s family moved back to Oklahoma where Clyde farmed and Ruby worked in Dallas at the defense plant. The Henderson family then moved to Garvin County where Ruby worked in restaurants at Lindsay as a cook. In 1959, she went to work for the State of Oklahoma as a cook at the State School in Pauls

Valley. Clyde passed away in 1970 and Ruby retired and moved to Purcell, where she became a caregiver for the elderly. In 1985, Ruby married James Johnson and moved to Tishomingo.

Ruby was preceded in death by her parents, two sisters and two brothers.

Mrs. Johnson is survived by her children, Kenneth Henderson of Tishomingo, Lonnie Henderson of Fort Worth, Cecil Henderson of Pauls Valley, Eva Lou Powell of Tishomingo, Dolores Ward of Belen, N.M., and Joan Abbott of Tishomingo; 20 grandchildren; 50 great-grandchildren and 30 great-great-grandchildren. Also, her special friend, Brenda Stacy of Carrollton, Ga.

Eugene Jones



Eugene Jones was born in Antlerson May 29, 1922, to Harrison and Ethel Jones. Life was a struggle for Gene as a youth although he always took everything in stride, just as he would in his later years. He went to Jones Academy Indian School as a young child and later to Chillico Indian School. He was in the CCC program in Basin, Wy., building reservoirs. Gene served in the Navy during World War II on the USS Mellette as a coxswain in the South Pacific and navigated an LST that dropped off Marines on the beaches of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Gene was in the Air Force Reserves during the Korean conflict and was called up again to serve in Texas.


Gene worked at Tinker Air Force Base for 28 years as an aircraft sheet metal me-



chanic. In 1967 he was part of the Tinker support team that worked on the Titan II and Minuteman missile. During the Vietnam War he made many trips to the base in Thailand to repair damaged planes. He retired in 1974, but continued to work in developing rental properties in Harrah and Midwest City. No job was too much for Gene to tackle and he took pride in the pretty two-bedroom house he built at Lake Eufaula. Gene spent many pleasant hours

in the last eight years at the Full Circle Senior Adult Day Center.


Gene is survived by his wife of 36 years, Nancy; children Bobbie Jones and wife Charlotte, Sandra Jones and Melvin Jones; stepchildren, Michelle Brockmeier and husband Tim, John Grassi and wife Norma Ting, sister Joyce Wright and husband Roy; grandchildren Bobbie Jones Jr. and wife Brenda, Toni Fox and husband Tim, Sean Yelle, Michael Grassi, Joseph Rangel, Melissa Morehead, Letitia Rangel; also many great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Gene was preceded in death by his parents, Ethel and Harrison Jones; daughter Tommy Lee Jones Swanson; siblings, Harrison Jones Jr., Dorothy Mead, Bob Jones, Jack Jones, and Richard Jones.



Reduce Reuse Recycle

Remember the 3 R's and Renew the Earth

A message from the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



OBITUARIES

Marie Stanley

Marie Stanley was born in McAlester on Jan. 13, 1924, to the late Oscar Dunn and Bertha Audrey (Pusley) Dunn. She died in Drumright on Oct. 18, 2010, at the age of 86 years, nine months and five days. She was raised and educated in McAlester and Bowlegs, attending the Chiocco school.

She married Finis Stanley in Stillwater on Dec. 24, 1943, and they had six children. They moved from Healdton to Drumright in 1944 and remained there the rest of their lives. Marie was a caregiver all of her life and had worked as an LPN at Saint Francis Hospital in Tulsa for more than 15 years until her retirement in the mid 1980s.

She loved her job and enjoyed crocheting, playing Bingo, cooking for everyone and telling stories.

She was preceded in death by her father Oscar Dunn, her mother Bertha Audrey Dunn-Hunter, her husband Finis Stanley in 1996, two sons Raymond Stanley and Jim Stanley, two grandchildren Tracy Stanley and Lisa Faye Stanley, two brothers Johnny Dunn and Tommy Dunn and a sister, Mary Jane Bishop.

Her remaining family includes her children Susie Stanley of McAlester, Jeanie Rigsby of Drumright, Brenda Vann of Olive, Rocky Stanley of Drumright, 15 grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren, four great-great-grandchildren and one brother, Jim Dunn of Colorado. Also several nieces, nephews, cousins, other relatives and loving friends.



Henry Herbert Whiteman

Henry Herbert Whiteman, 83, passed away on Jan. 2, 2011, in Beggs in his own home. He was born March 15, 1927, in Goodwater in the home of his grandfather, W.J. Whiteman, and his grandmother, Mattie J. Harriss Whiteman, the daughter of Choctaw judge Henry C. Harris.

Henry's parents were Choctaw enrollee Henry A. Whiteman and Nora Willis. He served in the arm in World War II from May 1945 to July 1946. He enjoyed going out to the county, rock collecting, reading, writing and family get-togethers. He married Celia M. Tovar in Mexico City, Mexico, on Aug. 10, 1958. He was a wonderful and unique man, husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He will be missed very much. He went to be with the Lord on worship Sunday.

Henry is survived by his wife, Celia Whiteman; four sons, Tommy V. Whiteman and his wife, Delphie of Fort Worth, Herbert A. Whiteman and his wife, Carol of Mounds, David R. Whiteman and his wife, Erica of McKinney, Roger D. Bracher and his wife, Linda of Blanchard; three daughters, Mary E. Skaggs and husband Steve of Beggs, Diane Willbrant and husband David of Oklahoma City, and Jeannie Hodgin and husband Les of Blanchard; grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



Janice Janette Tsosie

Janice Janette Tsosie, 55, of Wright City passed away on Jan. 12, 2011, at her residence. She was born Oct. 18, 1955, in Talihina.

Janice was a member of the Chihowa I Chuka Assembly of God. She enjoyed working at school with the young children in her church, and attending to her yard work. She especially enjoyed reading her Bible.

Janice was preceded in death by her parents, Jesse and Ennessie Davis; and her brother-in-law, Harold Gipson.

Janice leaves to cherish her memory her husband, Don of Wright City; two sons, Kevin of Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., Casey and his wife, Michelle of Byng; three brothers, David and his wife, Annie of Wright City, Mike and his wife, Bernie of Durant, Benjamin and his wife, Noreen of Springfield, Mo.; one sister, Sharon Gipson of Wright City; five grandchildren, Haydoekeyo, Mia, A.J., Kaycee and Keeli; along with numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and many friends.



Charles Garnett Simpson Sr.

Charles "Charlie" Garnett Simpson Sr. of McAlester passed away on Dec. 28, 2010, in McAlester at the age of 87. Charlie was born Jan. 1, 1923, in Boswell to Barnett and Germain (Phillips) Simpson. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II. Charlie married Gladys Carney Dec. 7, 1948, in McAlester. He retired from the McAlester Army Ammunition Plant where he worked as a truck driver for over 30 years. Charlie umpired baseball games in the area for many years. He enjoyed being outdoors, hunting, fishing and gardening.

He is survived by a son, Dan Simpson of Albuquerque, N.M.; grandson Michael Simpson of Bixby; great-granddaughter Alexis Simpson of Perry; daughter-in-law Vicki Steidley of McAlester; his dog, "Sweetie Pie," and his friends at Mitchell Manor.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Gladys Simpson in 2009; a son, Charles Simpson Jr.; and brother Robert Simpson.



Butch Sorrels

Longtime Kenai resident, Mr. O.H. "Butch" Sorrels, 66, passed away on Jan. 12, 2011, at Central Peninsula Hospital in Soldotna.

Mr. Sorrels was born March 11, 1944, to Othel Houston Sr. and Drucilla Pauline (Nelson) Sorrels in Los Angeles. He graduated from Farmington High School in Farmington, N.M. in 1962. Three years later he married Valerie on Jan. 21, 1965. He became a resident of Alaska, living in Kenai in October of 1978. O.H. worked for Band B Construction. He was a welder at Qwik Construction, an operator for Chevron, USA, and his latest employment was for BP working in Prudhoe Bay, Ala., as an operator until he retired in 2001. He was a member of the Star of The North Lutheran Church in Kenai.

He enjoyed hunting, fishing, collecting and shooting guns, dancing, reloading ammo, camping, riding his Yamaha Rhino watching western movies, especially John Wayne movies.

Butch had a great sense of humor and would do about anything for a laugh. He also loved to tell stories and was especially proud of his time spent working with the Sheriff's Department in Farmington. He was a proud member of the Choctaw Nation. He overcame many health challenges over the last 10 years, and had strength to be admired. Butch always said he was proud to be a Sorrel, where the men are good lookin', the women are strong and the children are all above average. Butch was very thankful for his many cherished friends.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Pauline Sorrels.

He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Gail Sorrels of Kenai; sons, Christopher Sorrels of Kasilof and Brandon Sorrels of Kenai with his wife, Trish Sorrels of Kenai; daughter, Shannon Schillings and her husband, David of Nikiski; father Othel H. Sorrels, Sr. of Farmington, N.M.; sisters, Paula Sorrels of Farmington, N.M. and Judy Jeter of Grand Junction, Colo.; brothers, Steph Sorrels and his wife, Monica of Bloomfield, N.M. and Joe Sorrels and his wife, Karen of Springtown, Texas; 11 grandchildren, Adam Myers, Alyssa Schwenke and her husband, Tav, Samuel Schilling, Kimberly Schilling of Nikiski, Mykel, Alexis Sorrels of Kasilof, Heather Sorrels of Paonia, Colo., Sierra, Mariah, Dakota and Chelsea Sorrels all of Kenai and numerous nieces, nephews, and many loved ones and friends.



Joan Regalado

Joan Kitty Franklin Regalado, 45, of Oklahoma City passed away on Jan. 5, 2011, in Oklahoma City. Joan was born on March 6, 1965, in Dallas, the daughter of Henry and Edith (Byington) Franklin. In 1981, Joan married Humberto Regalado. She was a homemaker.

Survivors include her sons, Humberto Franklin of Oklahoma City, Christopher Regalado and wife Tiffany of Oklahoma City and Jeremy Regalado also of Oklahoma City; her daughter, Jacinda K. Regalado of Oklahoma City; her brothers, Wilburn Franklin of Oklahoma City, Gilbert Franklin of Okemah and Lester Franklin of Colorado; her sisters, Wanda Pienda, Lena Franklin, Susan Morris, Henryietta Franklin and Betty Tsoodle all of Oklahoma City. Joan is also survived by nine grandchildren. She is preceded in death by her parents, a sister, Catherine and a brother Arbin.



Leonard West

Leonard "Wayne" West, 84, a resident of Colorado Springs, Colorado for 61 years, passed away on Oct. 3, 2010, at Emeritus of Broadmoor in Colorado Springs. Wayne was born in Francis, Okla., on April 23, 1926, son of Albert Harley and Rena Floy West.

Wayne was preceded in death by his parents; wife Lorenia; brother Al West; sisters, Louise Deaton, Wanda Price, Hazel McFadden; and grandson Jonathan West. He is survived by two sons, Clarence Harley West with wife Helen and Michael Lee West with wife Angie; four grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; sisters, LaVada Brown with husband Joe, Dixie Fields with husband Earl and Carolyn Gearhart; sister-in-law Barbara West; numerous nieces, nephew and countless friends.

Wayne was an honorably discharged Naval Veteran of World War II, proudly serving the United States aboard the USS President Adams, USS President Jackson and the USS President Monroe carriers.

Wayne worked as an electrician at the Broadmoor Hotel for 42 years and was a member of the Broadmoor Pioneer Club. He was a member of the Choctaw Nation and enjoyed making Native American jewelry.



Clinton Bailey Rymel

Clinton Bailey Rymel Sr. was born June 21, 1936, in Cloudy to Hal and Mabel (Spring) Rymel. He passed from this life Dec. 4, 2010, in Durant, at the age of 74.

Bailey lived in southern Oklahoma his entire life. He served his country during the early '60s in the U.S. Air Force. Bailey married Eula Cocke Nov. 22, 2002. He enjoyed dancing, hunting, and spending time with his family.

Bailey was preceded in death by his father, Hal Rymel; mother Mabel Nelson; first wife, Betty Lou Rymel; and a brother, Buddy Rymel.

He is survived by his wife, Eula Rymel of Sobol; children Lorraine Billy of Antlers, Clinton Rymel Jr. of Broken Arrow, Karla Sjurset of Geneva, Ill., Kolette Rymel of Soper, Hal Rymel of Carthage, Texas, Steve Rymel of Hugo, Billy Rymel of McAlester, Richard Rymel of McAlester, Teresa Satterfield of Rattan, Tracie Rymel of McAlester, Jody Irving of Bastrop, Texas, Raymond Martinka of Dallas, Lisa Pace of Los Molinos, Calif., Cindy Ferguson of El Campo, Texas, Mark Martinka of Alice, Texas, and Laura Russell of Bridgeport, Texas; brother, Sammy Joe Rymel of Finley; sister, Mary Ann Ward of Bogota, Texas; 52 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; as well as many other relatives and friends.



Audrey Mae Burleson

Audrey Mae (Isom) Burleson, 87, passed away on Jan. 4, 2011, in Daisy. She was born on May 10, 1923, to Charlie and Angienoria (Billy) Isom in Daisy. Audrey attended school at Goss in Daisy and was a homemaker. She married George Burleson in February 1939.

Audrey was one-half Choctaw and very proud of her Choctaw heritage. She was the sixth of 10 children. She lived her whole life in Daisy only leaving for a few months when her late husband George went to work in construction at the Silers Dairy in Macomb. She was a loving mother and grandmother (Nanny) who loved to garden and was a great cook. If anyone ever needed anything, they knew they could call Audrey and she would be there. She was saved at the Goss School House and later baptized at Clear Creek.

Audrey is survived by her children Ruth Kindred of Daisy, Jerry Burleson and wife LaDonn of Savanna and Johnnie Burleson and wife Freida of Daisy; siblings Virgie Stout of McAlester, Alice Hutson of Daisy and C.H. (Copus) Isom and wife Nadine of Daisy; sister-in-law Noreen Isom of Daisy; grandchildren Jody Kindred and wife Melissa of Daisy, Adam Burleson and wife Hollie of Daisy, Charlotte Kindred of Daisy, Kelli Eales of McAlester and Holly Ann Burleson; great-grandchildren Alissa and Kayelin Kindred of Daisy, Maggie Burleson of Daisy, Rachael and Kyle Bernardi of McAlester, Stormi McKay and Allison Eales of McAlester, Mackey Eales of McAlester and soon to arrive Mollie Burleson; great-great-grandchild Addison Bernardi of McAlester, along with numerous uncles, aunts, cousins and many other dear and loved relatives and friends.

Audrey was preceded in death by her parents Charlie and Angienoria (Billy) Isom; husband George Burleson; son Scotty Burleson; grandchild Dewayne McKay; and siblings Frank, Bob, Duggan, Joe, Jay and Opal Burleson.



Wilma Clark

Wilma L. Clark, 94, of Norman passed away July 29, 2010, after a short battle with cancer. She was born June 25, 1916, in Boswell to Isaac and Bertha LeFlore.

She was preceded in death by her husband L. H. "Tiny" Clark. She and Mr. Clark owned and retired from Clark's Greenhouse & Nursery of Norman. Mrs. Clark was a member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Norman and was a member of the Choctaw Nation.

She is survived by her sister, Helen Hays of Oklahoma City; nephew Harold (Giz) Hays and wife Pat of Norman; niece Rene Snelson and husband David of Oklahoma City; brother Howard LeFlore and wife Mable of Tulsa; nephew Mike LeFlore of California; sister Mary "Cricket" Ford, of Dallas who preceded her in death; niece Diann Ford of Dallas; niece, Jane Clark Smith of Purcell; nephew Gene Clark and wife Joy of Tecumseh; nieces Alice Clark Meerians of St. Petersburg, Norma Watson of Tulsa, and Maxine DiGrappa with husband Jerry of Texas.

Choctaw baskets

By a request from the editor, this month’s edition of Iti Fabvssa focuses on Choctaw river cane basketry. This important traditional artform combines native materials, intricate weaves, and attractive colors, drawing upon creative inspiration and a profoundly deep tradition, to form something that is Choctaw to its core. For centuries, basketry has been a visible, functional art in our communities, and today it is also prominently featured in museums and galleries across the nation and the globe. Cane basketry is the traditional artform for which Choctaw people are most widely recognized today, and is something in which we can and should take pride.



Choctaw double-weave trunk basket (three views) ca. 1830-1850.

Choctaw basketry has ancient roots. Some preserved pieces of basketry found in Florida date back 7,000 years, while another fragment found in Louisiana could be as much as 12,000 years old. Even the lesser 7,000 year date indicates that today’s Choctaw basket makers are descended from a line of no less than 350 generations of Native Southeastern basket-makers!

Each generation has made its own contributions to basketry, and the art has changed and developed through the centuries. Rare surviving 1000-year-old basketry fragments from the Southeast (Neuman 2006) show that the art was extremely advanced in terms of fineness, complexity, and design. One of the earliest written accounts (ca. 1720) specifically referring to Choctaw (and Chickasaw) baskets describes them as “masterpieces,” and indicates that many of them were so fine and well-made that they could hold water and were sometimes used as eating dishes (Catesby reproduced in Swanton 1946:604). Surviving Choctaw baskets from the 1800s, like those of today, have a more open weave, but still show a high level of artistry and technical proficiency.

A general Choctaw word for basketry is tapushik; specific Choctaw words exist for all of the different basket forms. Most Choctaw baskets are made from river cane, called “uski” in the Choctaw



Iti Fabussa

language, although palmetto “tala” has also been used by Choctaws living in the southern part of the homeland, particularly when cane is difficult to get.

Cane was an important resource to our ancestors, who developed many uses for it, including blowguns, arrow shafts, matting, construction material, shields, flutes, knives, and food. Basket makers located their favorite cane patches that produced cane with the qualities they desired.

Good cane for basketry was found on islands near the banks of rivers and creeks. In fact, one of the creeks located in what is now Noxubbe Co., Mississippi, was called “Oski ai almo”, meaning literally “cane there gathered” (Halbert n.d.). This was only one of many places that our ancestors collected their cane.

Sometimes, these cane patches were at a distance from where people lived, so basket makers set up cane-harvesting camps, usually during the cool season. An excellent description of an early-style camp has been provided by Tom Colvin (2006). The temporary houses in camp were essentially lean-tos, with a wooden framework and thatching, tied together with beargrass, which grows in the same area as the cane. The camp’s inhabitants went out and cut cane that was mature enough that it no longer had the sheaves in the stalks. Tall canes were preferred, with the greatest distance possible between the nodes. After a bundle of cane was cut and gathered, it was split lengthwise into pieces, a process known in Choctaw as “oskashiba” (Byington 1915:329). A knife made of river cane was used to strip away the underlying plant material from the outer skin of the split cane. It was this outer part from which the baskets were made. The stripped outer skin was then trimmed to have a consistent vertical width. These thin pieces were then rolled up into spools called “uski tpya afohli” (Byington 1915:566) and dried for storage. Cane debris was thrown unto the roofs of the camp structures, making them more rain-proof.

Some types of Choctaw baskets have colored patters, made by weaving different-

colored strips of cane into the basket. In addition to the natural cane, the colors on early Choctaw baskets include brown /black, yellow, and red. The brown and black probably came from the black walnut tree. Yellow dye was made by digging the roots of the dock plant in the fall, pounding them up with a mortar and pestle, and boiling them in water. The red dye was made dying cane with dock root, then burning equal parts of red oak bark and black gum bark into ash, mixing them with water to form a paste, and then putting the paste of the yellow-dyed can. Over time, the alkalinity of the ash would turn the yellow dye to red (Bushnell 1909:14). The dye absorbs darker into the interior side of the cane, and so this part is always faced outwards on baskets. Beginning around 1900, many Choctaw basket-makers began to use commercial dyes.

While men and boys sometimes help to harvest the cane, weaving it into baskets was and is primarily an art of women. These women have developed variations in twilling and diagonal plating techniques to form damp cane into a variety of basketry forms for a variety of uses:

One of the oldest is the “kishi,” or pack basket (unless noted, the following Choctaw basket names can be found in Byington 1915). This large, basket was carried on a woman’s back with the use of a securing strap that was worn on her forehead. This was used for gathering and transportation. This type of basket was also used to move the dirt to create the earthmounds.

Another early basket is the “ufko,” or fanner. This is a flat basket with one high end, it was used to winnow the husks from pounded corn kernels. The “ishshoha” (Bushnell 1909:8), is a flat basket with an open weave in the bottom. It was used as a sieve in the kitchen. Kishi, ufko, and ishshoha were intended for heavy work, and were not decorated with colored designs, only variations in the weave of the cane.

Tapa, and tvpishuk are square-shaped flat baskets of decreasing size, sometimes intended for utilitarian purposes, and sometimes decorated with beautiful colored designs. Topak is a handled square basket. Taposhake shakapa is an elbow-shaped basket, with a handle and two openings. Taposhake chufa is a basket that narrows from a wide rim down to a pointed base; usually, it has a handle



Oklahoma Choctaw women weaving cane basketry.

(Bushnell 1909:15). Some of the finest Choctaw baskets are “tapushik pothoma,” or double weaves. These have double walls, with different designs on the inside and outside of the basket.

Other types of Choctaw baskets have probably been developed more recently. One of these is the market basket, which has handles and can sometimes resemble a purse. Another form is the wall-hanging basket. Still others have lids and include: hampers, “sewing” baskets, and “but-ton” baskets (See Swanton 2001:41 for additional basket types and Choctaw names).

Choctaw basketry came to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears. Many families made utilitarian baskets for use and trade up into the 1950s. When Choctaw traditional foods and food-processing techniques that required baskets began to be given up in favor of “easier” Euro-American equivalents, the art of basketry began to be practiced by fewer and fewer Oklahoma Choctaws. Today, there are a couple of active Oklahoma Choctaw river cane basket-makers. Some other active Oklahoma Choctaw basket-makers use materials other than cane, while many other individuals have expressed in interest in working to revitalize the art. The Jena Band of Choctaw Indians in Louisiana currently has one active basket-maker. The situation is somewhat different in Mississippi, where although the demand for the old-style cooking and storage baskets has declined over the last 50 years, the market for colorful decorated baskets has expanded. Today, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indi-



An early Choctaw pointed basket, National Museum of the American Indian.

ans has approximately 30-40 basket-makers. Some of these families still go out to cane-harvesting camps in the cool season, and make baskets year-round for sale (Dr. Kenneth York, personal communication, 2011).

Choctaw basketry has always connected the people to the land. Today, basket-makers face a serious challenge, in that cane brakes have become a critically endangered ecosystem. 200 years ago, some canebrakes extended for miles, but today, it is rare to find a cane patch even 100 yards in extent. The reasons are many including the damaging effects of cattle grazing, plowing up cane habitat for farmland, fire suppression, and the channelization of streams. The loss of river cane is serious to everyone because the cane helps to filter and purify water, and provides habitat to a number of animals. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians is currently partnered with Mississippi State University to study the biology of river cane in an effort to help this important native plant to survive into the future (visit <http://www.rivercane.msstate.edu/>).

Today, as new generations of Choctaws learn basketry, as Choctaw people work to encourage the growth of new river cane patches, and as oth-

ers work to raise the awareness of and the demand for Choctaw basketry, the future of the art is very much in Choctaw hands. As basketry shows, these hands have proven pretty able over the last 7,000 years.

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Tenth annual ‘To Bridge a Gap’ conference planned

The 10th annual “To Bridge a Gap” conference will be conducted April 4-7 at the Riverwind Hotel in Norman.

The four-day conference is designed to strengthen government-to-government relationships between the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service and federally recognized tribal governments. The Chickasaw Nation, in collaboration with the National Forest Service Ozark-St. Francis and Ouachita National Forests, is hosting the conference.

The conference will include presentations and question-and-answer sessions including “Building a Co-operative Bridge,” “We are Distinctly Unique People and Culture,” “Building Awareness through Education” and many more.

The event will also include a banquet with keynote speaker Janie Hipp, Senior Advisor for Tribal Affairs to the Secretary of Agriculture Director Office of Tribal Relations, USDA.

This year’s conference is also supported by the Georgia Department of Transportation.

For more information or to register, please visit <http://www.chickasaw.net/tbagx/>.

About TBAG

To Bridge A Gap (TBAG) is a joint partnership between the National Forest Service and federally recognized tribal governments with an aim to protect and manage important cultural and natural resources. Each year, federal, state and tribal officials get together to learn, share and discuss tribal relations, preservation issues, managing archaeological, natural or cultural resources, use of forest products, restoration of ecosystems, fire management, sacred sites, and many more. The 2011 conference is adding the participation of several state historic preservation officers, who play an important role in the preservation process.

TBAG began as a local meeting in 2001 with National Forests in Oklahoma and Arkansas (Ouachita and Ozark-St. Francis National Forests) and the tribes. The meeting expanded to a conference in 2002 and was hosted by the Choctaw Nation in Durant.

The Caddo Nation, Choctaw Nation, Absentee-Shawnee Tribe, Muscogee Creek, Chickasaw Nation, and the Forest Service have co-hosted the 2003-2010 conferences.

More than 300 representatives from tribes in Oklahoma, California, South Dakota, Arizona, Idaho, Louisiana, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico and Texas, as well as National Forests across the nation, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Oklahoma Archaeological Survey, Oklahoma Historical Preservation Office, Ozark-St. Francis National Forests, Ouachita National Forest, and many more, attended the 2010 Conference in Tulsa.

The conference provides a forum for the tribes to meet directly with policy planners and project managers as well as serves as a gateway for more specific consultations about land and resource management practices.

Planning for the next year’s conference begins at the close of the current session, with tribal and Forest Service representatives working closely throughout the year. Conference topics and agenda are jointly decided by tribes and Forest Service.

Over the years, many federal, state, and local agencies as well as academic institutions and private firms have participated in the conference. Tribes have found this conference to be a central forum to meet directly with agencies that manage lands and care for those cultural and natural resources where their forebearers lived. This relationship provides important ways for the tribes, federal, state and private entities to work together to protect the past for future generations.

Choctaw Traditional Pottery Class

Durant
Feb. 20 & March 6 – 5-9 p.m.
Pottery Studio behind Cultural Events Building
4451 Choctaw Rd.

Poteau
Feb 21 & March 7 – 5-9:30 p.m.
Poteau Field Office, 208 B Street

Idabel
Feb. 22 & March 8 – 12:30-4:30 p.m.
Idabel Field Office, 2408 Lincoln Rd.

Antlers
Feb. 10, Feb. 24 & March 10 – 6 p.m.
Antlers Library & Community Building, 104 S.E. 2nd St.

Oklahoma City
Firing – Feb. 19 – 4-9 p.m.
OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance, 5320 S. Youngs Blvd.

Goodland
March 3 – 6-8 p.m.

