



Continuing publication  
of recorded interviews of  
Choctaw elders from 2007

This month – Rhoda Anderson  
and Julia McKinney

Pages 8



Durant  
Senior  
Dance  
Nite

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CHOCTAW NATION

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The Official Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

February 2012 Issue

Choctaws ... growing with pride, hope and success



**Tribe to host  
11th annual  
'To Bridge A Gap'  
conference**

*April 2-5 at Choctaw  
Casino Resort in Durant*

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma will be hosting the 11th annual "To Bridge A Gap" conference, in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service. This conference is designed to strengthen government-to-government relationships between federal and state agencies, and federally recognized tribes with interests in our forests. Dorothy Lippert from the Smithsonian Natural History Museum Repatriation Office will be the keynote speaker.

Topics for this year include:

- Preconference Tribal Meeting with FCC
- Regional Executive Session with Forest Leaders and Tribal Leaders
- Introductory GPS/GIS Pre-conference Hands-On Workshop
- NEPA and Section 106: Procedures and Issues
- Traditional Cultural Properties and Sacred Sites
- NAGPRA: Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
- Federal Collections Management and 36 CFR 79
- Tribal Relations Report
- National Historic Preservation Program: Updates and Application Process

Several federal and state agencies will be present including U.S. Forest Service from various regions, Army Corp. of Engineers, State Historic Preservation Offices, National Park Service, and National Resources Conservation Service.

The "To Bridge A Gap" conference is a wonderful opportunity to discuss tribal relations and cultural preservation issues, and participate with others who are dedicated to improving this relationship.

For more information please contact Dr. Ian Thompson, Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department, at 580-924-8280 ext. 2216, ithompson@choctawnation.com, or Johnnie Jacobs at 580-924-8280 ext. 2559, jjacobs@choctawnation.com.

Conference registration and hotel information can also be found on the Choctaw Nation Cultural Services website at [www.choctawnationculture.com/TBAG2012](http://www.choctawnationculture.com/TBAG2012).

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**The Mission  
of the Choctaw  
Nation of Oklahoma**

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



Choctaw Nation: KAREN JACOB

## New Wilburton Head Start celebrated at ribbon cutting

Choctaw Nation Chief Gregory E. Pyle, Assistant Chief Gary Batton and District 6 Councilman Joe Coley are proud to announce the recent grand opening of the tribe's newest Head Start facility in Wilburton. The new 6,900 sq.-ft. center is located a short distance from its previous location and includes more classroom and storage space and an expansive playground featuring upgraded equipment, covered play areas, a small basketball court and paved track for walking or tricycle riding. Helping to celebrate the occasion at the recent ribboncutting are, from left, District 2 Councilman Tony Messenger, District 5 Councilman Ronald Perry, District 9 Councilman Ted Dosh, District 10 Councilman Anthony Dillard, Executive Director of Education Joy Culbreath, District 1 Councilman Thomas Williston, Chief Pyle, Councilman Coley, Wilburton Head Start Center Supervisor Deanne Rowe, Assistant Chief Batton, District 4 Councilman Delton Cox and Choctaw Nation Head Start Director Rebecca Hawkins.

The Wilburton Head Start is one of 13 operated by the Choctaw Nation in Southeastern Oklahoma.

## CNHCC ready to reveal recent renovations

*Ribbon cutting to be held March 6*

By **LARISSA COPELAND**  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Changes in the sights and sounds are happening at the Choctaw Nation Health Care Center (CNHCC). No longer will the sounds of hammering and sawing be the norm as it has been for the past year in certain areas undergoing renovations and expansions. Also gone are the "Please excuse our dust" and "Hard Hat Area" signs, as well as caution tape and plastic sheeting that has marked off areas under construction. Instead, new, modern rooms and offices, updated equipment, and welcoming patient areas greet visitors and allow staff members to provide the best patient care possible.

The CNHCC will hold a ribbon cutting to celebrate these new renovations on March 6.

Improvements made at the CNHCC include a more patient-friendly emergency room and obstetrics entrances, an expanded obstetrics area, an expanded and updated Choctaw Referred Care (CRC) and registration areas, and the construction of a new provider house. Construction in these areas began in late 2010.

The expanded obstetrics wing provides a new triage unit and a total of

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## Indian athletes to converge in Durant for annual 'Madness in March' tourney

For the second year, countless numbers of Native American family, friends and avid basketball fans will gather in Durant to witness a showcase of hardwood skill and aerial talent of over 600 Native American student-athletes during the 9th Annual Madness in March All-Indian High School Basketball Tournament on March 21-25, taking place at both Bloomer Sullivan gym and arena on Southeastern's campus and Durant High School gym. Highlighting this year's event is NBA legend Darryl Dawkins and former NFL linebacker Kenyatta Wright. Both have made commitments to participate in the inaugural coaches/celebrity basketball game.

"Teams travel from as far as Pine Ridge, South Dakota, to Salt River Pima, Ariz., to Choctaw, Miss., to Sioux City, Iowa, and all the way from Okeechobee, Fla., to stake claim to being the best Native American High School team in the nation," said Victor Bear, 4LOTG vice-chairman. "With the talent level and competition increasing yearly, teams are traveling to Oklahoma to test the strength of their programs within their respected states, vying for the right to be crowned as the tribe with the best basketball talent."

The Choctaw Nation has once again extended its hospitality by hosting this year's event. "On behalf of Chief Greg Pyle, Assistant Chief Gary Batton and the great Choctaw Nation, we welcome the teams and look forward to hosting the 4 Love of the Game high school basketball tournament here in Durant, land of the Choctaw Nation," said Sue Folsom, Executive Director of Cultural Services. "I would like to commend the excellent work that the organizers, Dave Pascale and Victor Bear, who have put together a great program to showcase these outstanding native athletes from around the states. This is a great tournament you don't want to miss, come out and support our native athletes."

This event isn't all about basketball. The tournament will officially kick

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The Choctaw Nation Health Care system's mission is to "Provide the highest quality health care to the people we serve." To do this, it employs a wide variety of providers offering a vast range of services. In addition to the hospital in Talihina, the health care system includes seven outlying clinics to ensure quality care is available in all areas of the Choctaw Nation.

**CNHCC, Talihina**  
*One Choctaw Way*  
(918) 567-7000

- Built in 1999 by the Choctaw Nation, the first tribe to build and fully fund its own hospital
- Has 37 hospital beds for inpatient care and 52 exam rooms
- Houses dental, laboratory, X-Ray, CT and MRI scanning, mammography, ultrasound, pharmacy, primary medical, surgical, emergent care, physical and respiratory therapy, transportation, women's health, pediatrics, podiatry, telemedicine, ophthalmology and more
- Diabetic wellness facility with a fitness center located on campus
- Women's and men's substance abuse facilities located north of hospital

**Atoka Clinic**  
*Monday – Friday 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.*  
*1201 West Liberty Road*  
(580) 889-1981

- Built in 2008
- 20 member staff includes one physician, two nurse practitioners, a pharmacist and pharmacy technician
- Outpatient services comprised of general family medicine, audiology, laboratory services, radiology, nutritional counseling, diabetic education, women's health, Choctaw Referred Care and behavioral health counseling

**McAlester Clinic**  
*Monday – Friday 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.*  
*1127 S George Nigh Expy.*  
(918) 423-8440

- Opened in 2007
- Employs a staff of 70, including two family practice physicians, an internal medicine physician, two pediatricians, two psychiatrists, a nurse practitioner, two dentists and an optometrist
- Available services include physical therapy, behavioral health counseling, dental hygiene, podiatry, Choctaw Referred Care, dietician, diabetes wellness education, audiology, primary medical care, transportation assistance, WIC and women's health
- Clinical departments include pharmacy, laboratory, and radiology
- Radiology services include x-ray exams, mammography, and ultrasound
- Laboratory department provides same day results for all commonly ordered lab testing

**Hugo Clinic**  
*Monday – Friday 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.*  
*410 North "M" Street*  
(580) 326-7561

- Originally built in 1975, and completely renovated in 2010
- Is a small, rural Joint Commissioned accredited ambulatory health care center
- 25 member staff includes two physicians, two nurse practitioners, a dentist, a podiatrist, two pharmacists and a pharmacy technician
- Clinic provides outpatient services

in general family medicine, medical imaging, nutritional counseling, behavioral health, audiology, diabetic education, community health nursing, laboratory services, Choctaw Referred Care and transportation assistance

**Broken Bow Clinic**  
*Monday – Friday 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.*  
*1300 Martin Luther King Drive*  
(580) 584-2740

- New facility opened in 2007
- Is an extension of the Idabel facility
- Staff includes one mid-level provider position for walk-ins/urgent care
- Prescriptions filled at the Idabel Clinic
- Services include urgent care, behavioral health, community health nursing, audiology, primary medical, women's health and transportation assistance

**Poteau Clinic**  
*Monday – Friday 7 a.m.–5:30 p.m.*  
*109 Kerr Ave.*  
(918) 649-1100

- Services provided include behavioral health, Choctaw Referred Care, community health nursing, dental, dietician, diabetes wellness, audiology, laboratory, pediatrics, pharmacy, podiatry, primary care, radiology including ultrasound, WIC, women's health, and transportation assistance

**Stigler Clinic**  
*Monday – Friday 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.*  
*2204 E. Main St.*  
(918) 967-9200

- Services provided include behavioral health, Choctaw Referred Care, community health nursing, diabetes wellness, audiology, laboratory, optometry, pediatrics, pharmacy, primary care, women's health, and transportation assistance

**Idabel Clinic**  
*Monday – Friday 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.*  
*902 Lincoln Road*  
(580) 286-2600

- Opened in 2005
- One of the largest health clinics within the Choctaw Nation Services
- On-site clinics: medical, dental, optometry, physical therapy, pharmacy, laboratory, and radiology services including mammography and ultrasound
- Staff includes two family practice physicians, an internal medicine physician, a pediatrician, a podiatrist, a walk-in provider, a physical therapist and a physical therapy assistant, two dentists, two dental hygienists, four dental assistants, a behavioral health counselor, a dietician, an audiologist, three pharmacists and four pharmacy technicians
- Services include behavioral health, Choctaw Referred Care, community health nursing, dental, dietician, diabetes wellness, audiology, laboratory, optometry, pediatrics, pharmacy, podiatry, primary medical care, radiology, WIC, women's health, physical therapy, and transportation assistance

The emergency number, available 24 hours a day, is 800-349-7026.

# Vision for our tribe is important

From the Desk of  
Chief Gregory E. Pyle

Planning for the next 100 years is an important part of the job for me and the Choctaw Tribal Council. It is essential to provide tools for success for tribal members so they can become healthier and more self-sufficient through education, health and social programs. I also feel it is vital that the traditions of our great tribe be sustained, not just through the next century, but far beyond. Of course, the successful tribal businesses that the Choctaw Nation has been blessed with in the past few years have given us a great deal of strength in providing some of these important tools for success. The tribe has been able to grant education scholarships to Choctaws living all across the world. We have begun career training programs, academic recognition programs, improved services with health and housing, and added thousands of jobs within the tribe. Many of these new jobs are through the increased economic development ventures and improved services. I have spent the majority of my life in service to Choctaw people. I hope that future generations will be able to look back and say that my team and I planned well. We are working hard to train leaders within the Choctaw Nation to ensure the vision of the tribe is met – a healthy, productive, and self-sufficient lifestyle for a proud Nation of Choctaws.

The people I work with daily share my belief in servant leadership, commitment and strong work ethics. Continued diligence in sustaining our culture, our government and our economic independence has led to the ability to provide a tremendous array of services to tribal members. These services are now helping establish a generation of well-educated, trained and gainfully employed people who have been able to access the programs of the tribe. I am very proud of the members of the Choctaw Nation and very proud of the people who work here. As we continue planning for the next decades and the next century, have faith that we are considering your family members, no matter where they live, and regardless of their age, because we want our tribe to succeed for all our generations.



## Chaplain's Corner

### The good news of salvation

During the Christmas season we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. On Easter Sunday we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Today we are studying the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from Paul the Apostle's letter to the Corinthians in First Corinthians chapter 15.

First Corinthians 15:1-4 is also a definition of the gospel, the good news of salvation.

Paul was called to bring a message to Corinth. Corinth was a city known for producing new ways of sinning. This ought to have a message to us today.

Paul coming to Corinth wrote in First Corinthians 2:2:

"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

Paul knowing the Corinthians all had the idea that there is no bodily resurrection says in First Corinthians 15:12:

"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?"

Now Paul offers some of the proofs of the resurrection.

First is the gospel, faith in the gospel in First Corinthians 15:1-2:

"Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;"

"By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain.

We learn two things from this statement. We learn that the gospel is to be preached and the gospel is to be received.

Notice that there are three steps here. Paul said that you have received it in the past, you stand in it in the present, and it saves you in the future. That is the gospel he is talking about.

The important word in these verses is the word believed. What does it mean to receive Christ? The Scripture answers that in John 1:12: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

What does it mean to receive Christ? It means to believe in His name. And to believe means to believe the name of Christ, who He is and what He has done. That's what it means to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior.

Paul also makes the statement here, "unless you have believed in vain." What does Paul mean by that? That it is possible and it is not valid.

We are living in a day when so much is made of faith as if faith is works. You are not saved



REV. BERTRAM BOBB  
Tribal Chaplain

by works the Scripture says in Ephesians 2:8-10:

"For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.

"Not of works, lest any man should boast.

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Faith is that which goes and shares the gospel story and the important thing about faith is the object of faith. It is who you believe not what you believe. You can believe in vain. You can believe in the wrong thing. The important thing is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In verse three Paul said, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures."

Paul said, the gospel was given to me and I preached it. The Lord Jesus Christ lived and He died.

The second thing that he says here is, in verse four, "And that he was buried..." Do you know what that means? That means that it was a bodily resurrection. He was buried.

The third thing, He was raised again. We continue reading verse four. "... and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:" That means that Jesus is alive. He has been raised from the dead. This is the heart of the gospel.

Now the disciples were scattered at the death of Christ. They were filled with fear and took to cover. They went into hiding. On the first day of the week they came out and in 40 days these men were standing in Jerusalem and their enemies noticed their boldness in preaching.

What happened? Their lives have been transformed. What was it that transformed their lives? It was a resurrected Christ that had done it, and nothing but a resurrected Christ that brought about the transformation of their lives.

What about your life? When your life is transformed you will hate what you used to love (the worldly life) and you will love what you used to hate (the spiritual life).

John writes in First John 5:13: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

Will you realize that you are a sinner? There is nothing you can do for salvation, only trust Jesus Christ as your personal Savior by faith. Will you receive Jesus today?

Pray for America. Pray for our men and women in the armed services.

## Tribal economic development much more than gaming

From the Desk of  
Assistant Chief  
Gary Batton

Economic Development of the Choctaw Nation is much more than simply gaming. We have grown to be a diverse set of business units, which provide revenue to support the programs and services for Choctaw people. It is always exciting to tell of the different and unique businesses the tribe operates. While our gaming industry, which employs 3,000 people, is often highlighted because it does bring in the largest portion of the business income, tribal leaders are also thrilled with our other business opportunities.

One of the most exciting of the enterprises, Choctaw Defense, is the nation's leading Native American defense manufacturer. It has a superior track record, provides 230 jobs and designs and builds products for the U.S. government. One of the most recent contracts is for Camel II, water trailers that were engineered and are being constructed at the Choctaw Defense plant in McAlester for the military. Choctaw Defense adds to the tribe's prestige and is considered one of the best, and I am proud of the numerous awards they have won.

Another great business that many tribal members don't realize we own is Choctaw Global Staffing, which provides professional staffing services through contracts with several federal agencies. Through



Global Staffing, we have people in 49 states and 11 countries. We are proud of the wide array of healthcare staffing services we are able to provide our military. Additionally, we provide facility maintenance services to over 280 embassies and consulates across the globe. Other revenue producing businesses our tribe is fortunate to have at the forefront are the Travel Plazas, Texoma Print Services, Choctaw Nation Ranching and Choctaw Nation Shopping Center. These are all tremendous opportunities for employment and distinctive ways that revenue is produced so that the vision of the Choctaw Nation may come to fruition. "To achieve healthy, successful, productive and self-sufficient lifestyles for a proud nation of Choctaws." Please learn more about the Choctaw Nation at [www.choctawnation.com](http://www.choctawnation.com).

## Choctaw Tribal Council meets in regular January session

Choctaw Nation Election Board officials were re-appointed during the Tribal Council's regular session on Jan. 14 at Tushka Homma. Letters recommending the reappointment of Kaye Green, Jane Parent and Judy Ogle were submitted and approved unanimously by the Council members.

In other new business, council bills were approved for:

- Application for the Native American Career and Technical Education Program (NACTEP) Grant – the grant funds from the U.S. Department of Education will help the Nation to continue equipping its people with vital career and technical skills.
- Submission of a grant proposal to the Department of Health and Human Services for the Family Violence Prevention Program – the

program assisted over 400 Native American women and children in a violent domestic situation last year with assistance and shelter stays.

- A modification of the 20-year long-range transportation plan.
- Two grazing leases.

Also, a resolution was passed to urge the Postal Regulatory Commission to consider letting the Finley Post Office remain open. The small rural post office was established before statehood and still has many elderly tribal members who rely on its services. It is the only federal agency in a wide area and the postmaster assists residents with other day-to-day services such as filling out forms and reports.

The Tribal Council meets in regular session at 10 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month in the Council Chambers at Tushka Homma.

## Celebrate the Choctaw Heritage

### Okla Chahta Gathering

May 5-6, 2012

Bakersfield College Practice Field  
1801 Panorama Drive, Bakersfield, Calif.

Meet Chief Pyle, Assistant Chief Batton and the Tribal Council while learning more about Choctaw tradition through dance, storytelling, stickball, pottery class, basketmaking, beading, kids games and more!

### Pre-Register for the 17th Annual Gathering

Please pre-register for the FREE Saturday meal.



### 2012-13 Princess Pageant

If you are interested in running for Okla Chahta Princess please contact Victoria Harrison [victoria@oklachakta.org](mailto:victoria@oklachakta.org).



### This year's hotel The Doubletree Bakersfield Hotel

A block of rooms has been reserved with a special room rate. 3100 Camino Del Rio Court Bakersfield, CA 93308 661-323-7111



Camping and other information can be found at [www.oklachakta.org](http://www.oklachakta.org), phone 661-393-6552 or e-mail [choctaws@oklachakta.org](mailto:choctaws@oklachakta.org).

No dogs allowed.

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:

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

RV Camping (size and type) \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 – Friday or Saturday or \$15 for Friday and Saturday.  
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Please make checks payable to  
Okla Chahta Clan of CA Inc. and mail to P.O. Box 80862, Bakersfield, CA 93380  
or e-mail to [choctaws@oklachakta.org](mailto:choctaws@oklachakta.org)

# NOTES TO THE NATION



Assistant Chief Gary Batton addresses the OK Choctaw Christmas party in Oklahoma City.



OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance President Della Eisel addresses the over 400 in attendance.



(Left) Children sing Christmas hymns in the Choctaw language. (Right) Children perform the Lord's Prayer in sign language.

## OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance presents successful Christmas program

On Dec. 17, the OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance in Oklahoma City presented a Christmas program for the community and over 400 were in attendance. We were honored to have Assistant Chief Gary Batton and Shannon McDaniel in attendance from the Choctaw Nation.

Lunch was served with turkey, ham, homemade dressing and all the fixings along with all kinds of desserts. There was enough food for everyone. The program consisted of Christmas songs in the Choctaw language performed by the children who attend the Alliance language classes. They also performed the Lord's Prayer in sign language. There were other performers who made the occasion festive, and the turnout was awesome. Food baskets, door prizes, and gifts for all the children were provided by the generosity of the Choctaw Nation and OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance to ensure a joyful holiday to the children who might not have had one otherwise.

We just want everyone to know that you are welcome to come and join us next year. Thanks to all the volunteers who worked behind the scenes to make it all happen. We here in the Oklahoma City metro area want to represent all the good that the current administration in the Choctaw Nation is doing for all people.

## Events

### Conservation meeting and dinner

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC) and the Conservation districts in Haskell, Latimer and LeFlore counties are partnering to hold a conservation informational meeting. For those in attendance, packets will be available at a conservation booth with information pertaining to opportunities for participation in various Farm Bill programs and pertaining to services available through USDA agencies and conservation districts.

During the meeting, presentations will be made of the following agriculture topics: Managing Droughty Pastures for 2012 by Chris Rice, OSU Cooperative Extension Area Agronomist, and Year-Round Grazing Strategies by Brian Pugh, Haskell County OSU Cooperative Extension Service.

The meeting will be held on Feb. 23, 2012, at the Kiamichi Technology Center located at 1410 Military Road in Stigler in rooms A and B. The conservation meeting will begin at 6 p.m. and conclude around 8 p.m. For driving directions, call the Kiamichi Technology Center in Stigler at 918-967-2801 or visit okktc.org.

The conservation meeting is open to the public. A dinner will be provided for attendees by Nixon Family BBQ catering. Therefore, in order to prepare an adequate amount of food, we are requesting you RSVP before noon on Feb. 21 to one of the following: the Stigler NRCS office at 918-967-2488, the Poteau NRCS office at 918-647-4800 or the Wilburton NRCS office at 918-465-2181. You may also RSVP by emailing one of the following: John.neumeyer@ok.usda.gov, Donna.neumeyer@ok.usda.gov, Michael.Bryan@ok.usda.gov, or Carol.crouch@ok.usda.gov. Please feel free to invite your neighbor and bring your family. If you do not have the opportunity to RSVP, come anyway and share with those that do.

### Wild Onion Dinner

I was a teenager at the Talihina Indian Hospital tuberculosis section back in the days of the '50s. Most of us had been hospitalized for over a year and I was lonely and feeling as if we were castaways from the rest of society, but one spring day in the month of March, the elevator door from the kitchen downstairs opened and Cooper Folsom, Dorothy Tom and Guy Thompson rolled out the three large carts with trays of food for our dinner. They were a happy bunch and their greeting to us was always "Halito, Chahta," even to those of other tribes. It was nice to be in their company.

Suddenly, a voice from a patient from a room next to the elevator made it known what we were having for dinner that day by hollering out, "Of all things, wild onions with scrambled eggs!"

Like hound dogs, we picked up the scent of the special meal that was coming to us. Tillie said, "I can't believe it! No other hospital in the world would ever do this for us." The cooks had included all traditional foods.

Later I learned that members of an Indian church in Talihina had sacrificed their time and effort to go out into the woods to hunt, clean the onions and bring the greens to the hospital kitchen for Indian cooks to feed approximately 200 tuberculosis patients.

After that special day, I knew it was not only the staff and employees who cared for us, but also people outside of the hospital. The day of the onions was our best medicine.

The OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance in Oklahoma City at 5320 S. Youngs Boulevard will have its Wild Onion Dinner on the last Saturday of February 2012, starting at 11 a.m. For more information, please call 405-681-0869.

### Free Wills Clinics to be held in March

Oklahoma Indian Legal Services Inc. (OILS) will be holding a free Wills Clinic on March 9 at the Choctaw Community Center located at 2008 B Street in Poteau, where they will help you with preparing your will. A Wills Clinic will also be held on March 28 at the Choctaw Community Center located at 100 Rail Road in Talihina.

To register for the clinic, call 1-800-658-1497 or 580-272-0038. Registration is limited, so call as soon as possible. In case of inclement weather, the clinic will be rescheduled.

OILS is one of two civil legal service programs operating in Oklahoma funded principally by the Legal Services Corp. For additional information regarding other legal services, please call OILS at 1-800-658-1497.

### Johnico family reunion

The Johnico family reunion will be held April 28 at 1 p.m. at the Choctaw Nation Community Center in Talihina. If you need any more information, please call Josh Frazier at 918-413-3796 or 918-567-3205.

## National Choctaw Day of Prayer

To all who attended the National Choctaw Day of Prayer, and special thanks to Chief Pyle, Assistant Chief Batton and all the Tribal Councilmen: Thank you for all your involvement in making the first Choctaw Day of Prayer such a success and for your daily prayers lifted up for this nation. We look forward to seeing you on Sept. 2 at the Choctaw tribal grounds in Tushka Homma for the 2012 National Choctaw Day of Prayer.

### The Red Warrior Prayer Network

## Thank you for better holiday season

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to the Council members of Districts 5 and 4, Ron Perry and Delton Cox. Also, thank you to Social Services Director Clint Rogers and Chief Pyle for making my family's holiday season better for 2012.

Charles and Minco

## Thankful for scholarships

I wanted to say thank you to the Choctaw Nation for the scholarships I've received throughout my undergraduate and master's degrees at the University of Oklahoma. Because of the scholarships provided, I was able to obtain an education experience of which I am very grateful.

I am now an assistant director of the President's Association program at the University of Oklahoma, and that opportunity was made possible by the great Career Development guidance I received through the Choctaw Nation and my counselor, Renee Cox.

Again, I could not have made it without these scholarships, and I cannot tell you how much they were appreciated.

Kasey Hendrix

## Thank you for school supplies

I have recently moved back to the United States after living in Japan for the past 15 years. The earthquake, tsunami and continuing nuclear crisis helped make this decision for me. Moving home has been difficult, but many good things have occurred since arriving home. My children and I are now living with my parents. We are enjoying each other and all the joys family life can bring. It is a relief to feed my children a meal and not worry how much radiation they are receiving in each mouthful.

At this time, I am unemployed and looking for a job. I would like to say thank you for the help I have received from the Choctaw Nation. The school supplies I received from the school were deeply appreciated by me and my children. Thank you again for your generosity.

Chrystal (Payne) Yoshida

## Thankful for help with education

I would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for its support in helping me obtain my bachelor's degree at Southeastern University. Your contribution made it possible for me to continue my education and be the first in my family to obtain a degree. Thanks to the Higher Education Program for all its support and the funding that it gave me, and also a special thank you to the Career Development Program as well for its funding.

I would like to give a special thank you to Larry Amos in McAlester for all his hard work in making sure that I was aware of all the programs and for making sure I made deadline with my applications. He went above and beyond his job to help me with my education. Thanks again for making my education possible!

Kyle Wilkins

## Truck-driving school support

I would like to take this time to say many thanks for the Choctaw Nation's help in sending me to the Arbuckle Truck Driving School. It was extremely appreciated and was the best Christmas present that I could have received. If it weren't for the Choctaw Nation, I would not have been able to better myself in such a growing career like truck driving. Thanks again!



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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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BISKINIK 2012

# Enjoy your food, but eat less

Ten tips to enjoying your meal

You can enjoy your meals while making small adjustments to the amounts of food on your plate. Healthy meals start with more vegetables and fruits and smaller portions of protein and grains. And don't forget dairy - include fat-free or low-fat dairy products on your plate, or drink milk with your meal.

1. Get to know the foods you eat
- Use the *SuperTracker* at choosemyplate.gov to find out what kinds of foods and how much to eat and to get tips and support for making better food choices.
2. Take your time
- Be mindful to eat slowly, enjoy the taste and textures, and pay attention to how you feel. Use hunger and fullness cues to recognize when to eat and when you've had enough.
3. Use a smaller plate
- Use a smaller plate at meals to help with portion control. That way you can finish your entire plate and feel satisfied without overeating.
4. If you eat out, choose healthier options
- Check and compare nutrition information about the foods you are eating. Preparing food at home makes it easier to control what is in your meals.
5. Satisfy your sweet tooth in a healthy way
- Indulge in a naturally sweet dessert dish - fruit! Serve a fresh fruit cocktail or a fruit parfait made with yogurt. For a hot dessert, bake apples and top with cinnamon.
6. Choose to eat some foods more or less often
- Choose more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fat-free or 1 percent milk and dairy products. Cut back on foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and salt.
7. Find out what you need
- Get your personalized plan by using the *SuperTracker* to identify your food group targets. Compare the foods you eat to the foods you need to eat.
8. Sip smarter
- Drink water or other calorie-free beverages, 100 percent juice, or fat-free milk when you are thirsty. Soda and other sweet drinks contain a lot of sugar and are high in calories.
9. Compare foods
- Check out the *Food-A-Pedia* at choosemyplate.gov to look up and compare nutrition information for more than 8,000 foods.
10. Make treats into actual "treats," not everyday foods
- Treats are great once in a while. Just don't make treat foods an everyday choice. Limit sweet treats to special occasions.
- Information courtesy of choosemyplate.gov

## WIC

WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN

### Recipe of the Month

#### Blackened Fish with Strawberry Kiwi Salsa

Tip: Allow 1-2 hours before serving to let flavors blend

**Blackened Fish Ingredients:**

- Cooking spray
- 4 fish fillets (4 ounces each; flaky white fish like tilapia, flounder or sole, or red fish work well – look for something you like that's on sale)
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 2 teaspoons paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

**Directions**

- In a small bowl, mix dry ingredients (chili powder, garlic powder, cumin, paprika and salt)
- Generously coat fish with seasoning mixture on one side.
- Spray frying pan or skillet with cooking spray, heat over high heat. Place fish in pan, seasoning side down and cook for three minutes. While cooking generously coat the other side with seasoning mixture. Flip fish and cook for three minutes longer.

**Strawberry Kiwi Salsa Ingredients:**

- 1 1/2 cup diced strawberries (about ½ pound) (you can substitute cantaloupe melon or mango based on what is in season or on sale)
- 1 medium kiwi peeled and diced
- 1/2 medium cucumber peeled and diced
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1/4 cup red onion, thinly sliced (optional)
- 1/4 medium jalapeño, seeded and minced (optional)

**Directions**

Place all ingredients in a medium bowl and toss. Keep chilled until serving. Serve salsa over fish.

TIP: if time permits, make 1-2 hours before serving to allow juices and flavors to blend.

For more information you may contact: Erin Adams, RD, Choctaw Nation Diabetes Wellness Center, 800-349-7026 ext. 6959.

**Nutritional information per serving:**  
Makes 4 servings, Calories: 155, Total Fat: 2.5g, Sat. Fat: .5g, Trans. Fat 0g, Polyunsaturated Fat: .5g, Monounsaturated Fat: .5g, Cholesterol: 57mg, Sodium: 355mg, Carbohydrates: 10g, Fiber: 3g, Sugars: 5g, Protein: 24g.

## What is distracted driving?

Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. All distractions endanger driver, passenger, and bystander safety. These types of distractions include:

- Texting
- Using a cell phone or smart-phone
- Eating and drinking
- Talking to passengers
- Grooming
- Reading, including maps
- Using a navigation system
- Watching a video
- Adjusting a radio, CD player, or MP3 player

*\*Text messaging requires visual, manual, and cognitive attention from the driver, it is by far the most alarming distraction.*

The best way to end distracted driving is to educate all Americans about the danger it poses. On this page, you'll find facts and statistics that are powerfully persuasive. If you don't already think distracted driving is a safety problem, please take a moment to learn more. And, as with everything on Distracted.gov, please share these facts with others. Together, we can help save lives.

**Key Facts and Statistics**

- In 2009, 5,474 people were killed in crashes involving driver distraction, and an estimated 448,000 were injured. (NHTSA)
- 16 percent of fatal crashes in 2009 involved reports of distracted driving. (NHTSA)
- 20 percent of injury crashes in 2009 involved reports of distracted driving. (NHTSA)
- In the month of June 2011, more than 196 billion text messages were sent or received in the United States, up nearly 50

percent from June 2009. (CTIA)

- Teen drivers are more likely than other age groups to be involved in a fatal crash where distraction is reported. In 2009, 16 percent of teen drivers involved in a fatal crash were reported to have been distracted. (NHTSA)
- 40 percent of all American teens say they have been in a car when the driver used a cell phone in a way that put people in danger. (Pew)
- Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times more likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. (Monash University)
- Text messaging creates a crash risk 23 times worse than driving while not distracted. (VTTI)
- Sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent – at 55 mph – of driving the length of an entire football field, blind. (VTTI)
- Headset cell phone use is not substantially safer than hand-held use. (VTTI)
- Using a cell phone while driving – whether it's hand-held or hands-free – delays a driver's reactions as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent. (University of Utah)
- Driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37 percent. (Carnegie Mellon)

*Submitted by Carey Lester, Choctaw Nation Injury Prevention Coordinator, originally published on www.distracted.gov, references cited.*

## NURSERY NEWS

### Aisley Michelle Hasting

Aisley Michelle Hasting was born at 9:37 p.m. on Nov. 19, 2011. She weighed 6 pounds 14 ounces, and measured 20-1/4 inches.



### Austin James Fish

Austin James Fish (Nvni) was born on Nov. 3, 2011, to Tamara James Fish and Andrew Fish in Washington, D.C. Austin weighed 7 pounds and 5 ounces, and was 19-1/2 inches in length. Big sister Czarina was happy to welcome her brother home. Austin's grandparents are Reginald and Hope Primeaux. Great-grandparents are Harry and Carol James of Talihina, and the late Geneva Thompson Morgan.



## Energy saving tips: Attic ventilation

### Natural Attic Ventilation

At first it may seem odd to add insulation for warmth and then purposely allow cold air to enter the attic through vents, but this combination is the key to a durable and energy-efficient home. Here's why: in the winter, allowing a natural flow of outdoor air to ventilate the attic helps keep it cold, which reduces the potential for ice damming (snow that melts off a roof from an attic that is too warm and then re-freezes at the gutters, causing an ice dam that can damage the roof). Proper insulation and air sealing also keeps attics cold in winter by blocking the entry of heat and moist air from below. In the summer, natural air flow in a well-vented attic moves super-heated air out of the attic, protecting roof shingles and removing moisture. The insulation will resist heat transfer into the house. The most common mistake homeowners make when installing insulation is to block the flow of air at the eaves. NEVER COVER ATTIC SOFFIT VENTS WITH INSULATION – use rafter vents and soffit vents to maintain airflow.

### Attic Fan Ventilation

Attic fans are intended to cool hot attics by drawing in cooler outside air from attic vents (soffit and gable) and pushing hot air to the outside. However, if your attic has blocked soffit vents and is not well-sealed from the rest of the house, attic fans will suck cool conditioned air up out of the house and into the attic. This will use more energy and make your air conditioner work harder, which will increase your summer utility bill. You don't want your unfinished attic cooled by your air conditioner. To prevent this, follow the air sealing and insulation strategies in this guide and make sure the attic is well-ventilated using passive vents and natural air flow.

**Doing the Job**

Laying fiberglass rolls is easiest for a DIY job. If you have any type of insulation between the rafters, install the second layer over and

perpendicular to the first (again, the second layer of roll insulation should be unfaced – with no vapor retarder). This will help cover the tops of the joists and reduce heat loss or gain through the frame. Also, when laying down additional insulation, work from the perimeter toward the attic opening. Never lay insulation over recessed light fixtures or soffit vents. Keep all insulation at least 3 inches away from "can" lights, unless they are rated IC (Insulated Ceiling). If you are using loose fill insulation, use sheet metal to create barriers around the openings. If using fiberglass, wire mesh can be used to create a barrier.

### Installing Rafter Vents

To completely cover your attic floor with insulation out to the eaves you need to install rafter vents (also called insulation baffles). Complete coverage of the attic floor along with sealing air leaks will ensure you get the best performance from your insulation. Rafter vents ensure the soffit vents are clear and there is a channel for outside air to move into the attic at the soffits and out through the gable or ridge vent. To install the rafter vents, staple them directly to the roof decking. Rafter vents come in 4-foot lengths and 14-1/2 and 22-1/2 inch widths for different rafter spacing. Rafter vents should be placed in your attic ceiling in between the rafters at the point where your attic ceiling meets your attic floor.

Once they are in place, you can then place the batts or blankets, or blow insulation, right out to the very edge of the attic floor. Note: Blown insulation may require an additional block to prevent insulation from being blown into the soffit. A piece of rigid foam board placed on the outer edge of the top plate works very well for this.

### Place Rafter Vents

Place rafter vents in between the rafters where the ceiling meets the floor.

### Add Insulation

Add insulation around the rafter vent and out to the edge of the attic floor.

## Fight heart disease this February

It is National Heart Month and according to the American Heart Association cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of diabetes related death. People with diabetes are two to four times more likely to develop cardiovascular disease due to a variety of risk factors including:

- High blood pressure
- Lipid disorders
- High LDL and Triglycerides
- Low HDL
- Smoking and lack of physical activity
- Obesity
- Poor control of blood sugars

Yet by working with your

doctors, diabetes educators and dietitians you can gain control of these risk factors. When making changes for better quality of life, setting a few goals can help.

- Follow doctors orders: take all medication as written. Make taking your medication part of an existing habit such as brushing your teeth or reading the paper in the morning.
- Make diet changes to help control lipids and/or blood sugar: make two diet changes at a time, such as decreasing fried foods to once a week and drinking more water throughout the day.
- Join a smoking cessation

group to help kick the habit.

- Increase physical activity by walking with a friend who has the same goals so that you can support and encourage each other.

Another helpful resource is the American Heart Association. Enrolling in "The Heart of Diabetes" will provide free access to the "Reach Your Goals Guide." This will provide weekly e-mails for 12 weeks to help you take control of diabetes and heart disease. This also provides monthly newsletters with recipes, healthy tips, and more. Just go to www.heart.org and type in "enroll in the heart of diabetes" in the search bar.



## Choctaw Nation WIC

WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN

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



Choctaw Nation: BRET MOSS

Gathering in front of the new Public Safety office, the Choctaw Nation SWAT team is geared up for another intense day of training.

# To better protect and serve: Choctaw Nation Public Safety gets upgrades in the new year

By BRET MOSS

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Great strides have recently been made for the Choctaw Nation Public Safety Department. With new equipment, facilities and access to quicker information, Public Safety is better prepared than ever to serve and protect the people of the Choctaw Nation.

To kick off 2012, the administration of the Public Safety moved into the former Choctaw Nation community center building, which has been renovated to make excellent office space for those housed at the Tribal Headquarters.

“We are extremely excited,” declared Executive Director of Public Safety John Hobbs, whose office is in the new facility. The older space was cramped with not enough storage space, but now “we can feel comfortable and not have to share desks,” he continued.

The new offices are not the only aspect adding excitement to the new year, Tribal Police now have access to the Oklahoma Law Enforcement Telecommunication System (OLETS). This is a system that has, until now, been predominantly available to state agencies.

OLETS will allow officers to contact Choctaw Nation 24-hour dispatch who can quickly check information on vehicle tags, drivers licenses, warrants, check for stolen items and criminal histories, along with many facts that will be helpful to officers in the field.

“In the past, we had to rely on the local law enforcement agencies,” stated Hobbs as he recalled the process prior to OLETS. The Choctaw officers would have to dial the local dispatch via cell phone and have them search the OLETS data, putting extra work on the local law enforcement, and adding time to traffic stops.

With the system in place, the Choctaw Police can be reliant on the Choctaw dispatch, giving them more speed and safety in situations, as well as relieving the local dispatch from extra duties.

Choctaw Public Safety Dispatch has 12 certified operators who are the only personnel who may access OLETS. They are housed in the Casino and Resort in Durant and are supervised by the Choctaw Nation Security division of the Public Safety

Department led by Scott Harper.

With OLETS access in place, Hobbs and the rest of Public Safety have now set their sights on a radio system for officers out of range of the dispatch. Officers stationed outside radio range of dispatch still need to use cell phones to call for OLETS information.

From a safety standpoint, “If we have an officer wounded, it is easier for him to key a radio and call for help than to start trying to dial a number,” stated Hobbs as he discussed the benefits of a nationwide radio.

Officers within range of local law enforcement can already radio the closest department if they are in immediate need. When help is needed, a cross-deputization agreement allows local police to interact in Choctaw Nation affairs and vice-versa. “They are right there beside us to help us and back us up,” said Hobbs.

Even with local support on standby, the Choctaw Nation officers need to have a quick connection to other Choctaw police, and because of this, the Public Safety Department is working on an innovative way to get them connected.

Conventional radio requires many repeater towers to relay signals over large areas such as the 10-1/2 counties of the Choctaw Nation. This hardware would be physically and financially unfeasible. For this reason, the Public Safety is working to set up an IP radio system.

This system will broadcast over the Internet, which will allow signal to travel much further and be broadcast at the nearest repeater to the recipient. The radio system will first be in place in the hotspots, such as hospitals, casinos and schools.

Public Safety is not only improving its ability to protect and serve, but also helping others. One way is several public safety members’ participation in the Polar Plunge, held Feb. 4 at the Durant Casino Resort’s Oasis pool. The event is one where individuals jump into water during one of the coldest months of the year to raise money for Special Olympics.

The Choctaw Nation DARE officer is also increasing his impact with the Choctaw people by taking on more schools to finish out the year. Latimer County was without a DARE officer to finish the school year, but Tribal DARE officer Isaac James stepped in to make sure the children received their full education on such an important subject. He now covers Clayton,

Haileyville, Red Oak, Buffalo Valley, Wilburton and Panola.

Other notable facts about the Public Safety Department include the Bike Patrol at the Durant, Grant and Pocola casinos. These are security personnel who are certified by International Police Mountain Bike Association (IPMBA), an organization that trains bike police all over the world.

These security guards patrol the large parking lots of the casinos to make sure patrons are not only safe inside the building, but outside as well. “It’s not a second-rate course... it’s the exact same course any police officer goes to,” said Hobbs as he explained how the security officers receive the same training as the police.

IPMBA teaches how to use the bike as a defensive weapon, stop the bike without putting feet down, maneuver in extremely tight areas and even how to crash properly.

One of the most exciting, but little known aspects of Choctaw Nation Public Safety is the SWAT team. It is comprised of 10 men – four firearms instructors, two are defensive tactics instructors and two certified snipers.

Though they have not had to respond to a call to date, they stand prepared for any situation that has escalated beyond the equipment and training of a standard law enforcement agency. These men are 10 of the 31 tribal police officers, who are always ready to assemble in case of an emergency.

They received their basic SWAT training at Southern Methodist University in Dallas a little over a year ago and have been regularly training ever since. They are constantly being trained to use special equipment, weapons and tactics.

Hobbs acts not only as the executive director of the department, but the SWAT team commander. “I do everything they do,” said Hobbs as he spoke of the intense training the team undergoes. He has two team leaders under his command in case the team needs to split during a mission.

This team is relatively new, but is constantly bettering themselves. They are equipped with everything they need to deal with high-risk situations, such as thermal and night vision, gas masks and suppressed fully automatic weapons.

One of the greatest assets the team has is its knowledge of Choctaw Nation facilities. “They know our buildings, where outside agencies won’t,” added Harper. This will allow them to plan their moves in a quick and efficient manner.



Choctaw Nation: LARISSA COPELAND

The new registration area at the CNHCC is patient friendly and provides more privacy to guests.

## RENOVATIONS

Continued from Page 1

13 labor and delivery rooms, up from the six it had previously, with each designed for patient comfort and optimized care. A contemporary nurses’ station is centrally located within the wing and is outfitted with state-of-the-art monitoring equipment, allowing real-time readings of fetal and patient activities.

Also expanded were the CRC and registration areas. The larger, divided registration desks allow for increased patient care and privacy and the large, windowed waiting area has been aptly furnished to provide comfort for patients and guests. The increased CRC area created more offices, storage and community space to allow increased efficiency in processing patient referrals. The area also features a new CRC check-in desk.

Additionally, the Choctaw Nation Eye Clinic in Talihiina was relocated to a downtown site and a facilities maintenance storage building was constructed on the hospital grounds.

The 145,361-sq.-ft. CNHCC was built in 1999 in Talihiina to replace the old hospital, a 60-year-old facility just one-third its size. Indian Health Services operated the former hospital until 1985 when the Choctaw Nation was contracted to take over operations.

Today, the Choctaw Nation manages a complete health care system made up of the hospital in Talihiina and seven satellite clinics located throughout the tribal districts. The clinics are located in McAlester, Stigler, Poteau, Atoka, Broken Bow, Hugo and Idabel. The staff of the hospital and clinics, which includes 960 employees and 110 providers, take care of the approximately 56,000 active patients and more than 40,000 outpatient visits per month.

# Choctaw Casino Resort attains coveted Four Diamond rating from AAA

Only 4 percent of more than 31,000 properties achieve the prestigious Four Diamond Rating distinction

Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant has been honored by the American Automobile Association (AAA) with its prestigious Four Diamond rating, making it one of North America’s finest travel destinations. Only four percent of more than 31,000 properties approved by AAA achieve this coveted distinction.

AAA’s Diamond Rating System, the only rating system that covers all of North America, is renowned for its rigorous on-site evaluations. Each year, AAA’s field representatives conduct unannounced visits to evaluate accommodations throughout the Americas. The Four Diamond rating is reserved for properties that are truly exceptional in all areas of service. Four Diamond accommodations must be refined, stylish and reflect a meticulous attention to detail and quality. All Four Diamond properties must feature an extensive array of amenities, offer world-class food, hospitality and excellent service.

“The team at Choctaw Casino Resort is thrilled and honored to be awarded the AAA Four Diamond Rating,” said Janie Dillard, executive director of gaming for the Choctaw Nation. “We take great pride in consistently exceeding the expectations of our guests, and this award reflects all the hard work our staff puts in every day to

make Choctaw Casino Resort a truly exceptional experience for all who visit.”

When Choctaw Casino Resort underwent its \$300 million renovation/addition in 2010, its Grand Tower was constructed with an iconic design featuring many shapes and elements, including a dynamic diamond-shaped pattern that represents the western diamondback rattlesnake’s skin pattern – a sacred symbol to the Choctaw Nation. Many other aspects of the design pay homage to traditional Choctaw art. In addition, its exterior includes 27 LED lighting groups, making the structure visible for miles. Every facet of the lights are controlled and used to create wave patterns and other eye-catching effects.

Billed as Oklahoma’s newest premium destination, the 12-story Grand Tower is home to 330 well-appointed rooms and luxury suites complete with exclusive amenities, such as flat screen TVs, wireless internet, beautiful tile floors, granite countertops and spa-quality “rain” show-erheads. In addition, the casino is home to 110,000 square feet of gaming space, housing 4,100 slot machines, 30 poker tables and 38 table games including Blackjack, Three Card Poker, Let It Ride, Ultimate Texas Hold ‘em, Pai Gow Poker, Mini Baccarat and Roulette.



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

The 12-story Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant houses 110,00 sq.-ft. of gaming space, a full-service salon, 330 luxurious rooms and suites, and much more.



Photo provided

This queen suite is just one of several luxurious room options at the Choctaw Casino Resort.

If it’s not gaming guests are after, resort guests can relax in more than 204,000-sq.-ft. of hospitality space, consisting of multiple retail outlets, a state-of-the-art fitness/wellness center, the full-service Oka Spa, and multiple indoor and outdoor pools, including the Natatorium pool, which is two separate pools – one inside an atrium and one outside with an exposed lounge area – divided by a retracting wall of glass, and the outdoor Oasis Pool, which consists of four flowing pools featuring dramatic fountains, soothing

rivers and winding waterways converging to create a central swimming area for all to join in.

In addition, Choctaw Casino Resort offers multiple dining experiences, including a four-venue food court, a 400-seat buffet, the award-winning 1832 Steakhouse, and plenty more.

Lastly, Choctaw Casino Resort’s 20,000 square feet of premiere event space provides a state-of-the-art experience for conventions, meetings, weddings or other events.

# PEOPLE YOU KNOW



## Marie opens salon with help of CAB

Congratulations to new business owner, Marie Martin, of Broken Bow. Marie recently opened her own hair salon, Marie’s Family Cuts, east of Broken Bow.

Choctaw Career Development assisted Marie in earning her Cosmetology License. Marie also took advantage of the Choctaw Asset Building program to help her open her own salon. She joined CAB in September 2010. She attended a personal financial education workshop that taught her the importance of saving and of setting financial goals. Within 15 months, Marie had reached her goal of saving \$2,000. CAB matched her savings with an additional \$4,000, giving her \$6,000 to help purchase inventory, materials, equipment and furniture for her salon. Marie also worked with the Native American Business Resource Center to develop a business plan for her salon.

For more information about how CAB can help you with your financial goals, contact Dawn Hix or Janie Joplin at 800-522-6170 or go to [choctawcab.com](http://choctawcab.com).

## Happy birthday, Hannah

Happy birthday to Hannah Knight, who turned 4 years old on Jan. 25. She celebrated with family and friends. Her parents are Rickey and Stacey Knight, and her grandparents are Lee and Linda Knight. She is the big sister of twins Cierra and Kierra.



## Hoosers celebrate anniversary

On Dec. 28, 2011, John A. and Lucille Hooser celebrated their 67th wedding anniversary. They were married on that day in Antlers in 1944. John and Lucille are both retired teachers and very active in several social and civic organizations. They have three children, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. John is an Honored Elder of the Choctaw Nation.

Congratulations to John and Lucille – may you have many more years together.



## Happy birthday, Lawan

Lawan Beal Wood celebrated her 90th birthday on Nov. 22 with family and friends in Dallas, Texas. Lawan is the daughter of Wilson Jones Beal, an original enrollee, and Madge Smith Beal. She has two sons, Phillip Wood and his wife, Mattie, of Waxahachie, Texas, and Don Wood and his wife, Dawn, of Hugo, and one daughter, Jean Schobert, of Dallas with her husband, Don. Lawan also has six grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandson. Happy birthday, Lawan!

## Happy birthday, Caidyn

Katy Jo wishes her grand-baby, Caidyn Joan (Benn) Moreno a happy birthday. Caidyn turned 1 year old on Jan. 19. She is the great-great-granddaughter of the late Julia Tims of Smithville, the great-granddaughter of Dora Wilson of Haskell, the granddaughter of Cyndy Brannon of Glenpool and the daughter of Jacquelyn Benn of Glenpool.



## Birthday wishes for grandchildren

Janice Ward sends her grandchildren happy birthday wishes in February and March: Veronica Ward on Feb. 1, Deaven Ward on Feb. 22, Dakota Ward on March 25, Zachary Ward on March 6 and Kenneth Gilbert on March 8.

## Dakota turns 4

Happy belated birthday to Dakota Lee Thomas Hood, who turned 4 years old on Nov. 3. His parents are Thomas and Christie Hood. Makayla and Caleb are his siblings. His grandparents are Linda and Lee Knight and Kathy and Charles Hood. He celebrated with family and friends on Nov. 5.

## Five generations

Pictured are Lillian Slover, her daughter, Dixie Scott, granddaughter, Nancy Scott, great-granddaughter, D’Andra Austin, and great-great-granddaughter, Kenadie Austin. The family is happy to have their grandmother saying she is a blessing.



## Happy birthday, Susan

Happy birthday to Susan Bohanon of Tulsa, formally of Talihina, who turned 38 on Nov. 6. She celebrated with friends and family at Incredible Pizza, and she says hello to all her relatives.



## Happy birthday, Nadine

Her children, grandchildren, kinfolks and friends would like to wish a happy Valentine’s and happy birthday to Nadine McDonald on Feb. 16. Her children are Marilyn, Larry, Debra, Wanda, Matthew and Sherry. Pictured with Nadine is Jefferson McDonald.



## Good Guys program

Bennington Choctaw Nation Head Start’s Good Guys program invited all role models, male and female, to join them at the center for a fun-filled game night, where they played Wii games, enjoyed drinks, popcorn and cookies. This gave parents and significant role models the opportunity to interact with the children in a fun way.



## Happy birthday!

Birthdays in the Mendenhall family! Happy birthday to Franciel Mendenhall, who turns 90 on Feb. 26; Cody Mendenhall, who turned 14 on Jan. 6; and Taylor Mendenhall, who is turning 13 on Feb. 24.



## Happy anniversary

Congratulations to Mary and Poly Madrid on their 59th wedding anniversary, from the Madrid family.



## Happy birthday

Happy first birthday to twin-sisters Alexandria and Sophia on Dec. 8. They are the daughters of Dan McFarland.




## Happy birthday, Elicia

Elicia Ray celebrated her 13th birthday on Jan. 19. She is in the seventh grade at Carver Middle School in Tulsa. She loves to read books and play her viola. She is the daughter of Brianna Ray and the granddaughter of Myron and Cheri Ray, all of Tulsa.



### Choctaw Nation Distance Learning Technology GED Classes



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

**Beginning March 12, 2012**

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

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

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

## 2012 Career Expo



# April 4, 2012 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

**Southeast Expo Center 4500 W Hwy 270 McAlester, OK 74501**

## Get ahead in the career race!

Transportation available for tribal members in SE Oklahoma! Contact Deidre @ 866-933-2260. Deadline is March 23rd.

**Resumes and Applications will be accepted on site**

**Motivational Speakers**

**150+ Businesses & Training Facilities**

[www.choctawcareers.com](http://www.choctawcareers.com)





# EDUCATION



Submitted photo

The YAB members from the Boswell, Antlers and Hugo chapters came together this Christmas to help others in need. They are pictured giving out Christmas stockings at Families Feeding Families in Durant. The stockings were sewed, decorated and filled by the YAB kids. Pictured from left are, Madison Cress, Caleb Brown, Stacee Bacon, Brenna Poe, Courtney Patterson and Mark Harrison.

## Natalia named student of the month

Natalia Ray is 5 years old and attends Pre-K at Hoover Elementary in Tulsa. She was named the student of the month for October 2011. She is the daughter of Brianna Ray and the granddaughter of Cheri and Myron Ray, all of Tulsa.



Submitted photo

## Krebs JOM students attend pow wow

Johnson-O'Malley students, parents and parent committee members of Krebs Public Schools attended the 7th annual Choctaw Nation Pow Wow. They would also like to give a big thank you to the Choctaw Nation.

# Choctaw Language class graduates



Submitted photo

Participants in the Oklahoma City graduation on Jan. 27 at the OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance are pictured with, from left, community teachers Norris Samuels, Dr. Lee Hester and Kathrine Wade; Assistant Director of Language Richard Adams; community teacher and Adams' assistant Dora Wikson; and language teacher Nicholas Charleston.



Submitted photo

Congratulations to Rose Mary Wadlow for her Pauls Valley group graduating from the Choctaw language class. Rose Mary, center, and assistant to Assistant Language Director Richard Adams, Dora Wikson, far left, are pictured with the graduating class.



Submitted photo

Pictured is the graduating Choctaw language class at Ardmore. Deloris Vaughn, second from left, a full-blooded Choctaw, served as their community teacher.



Submitted photo

Congratulations to the recent graduates of the Choctaw Language community class in both the Sulphur and Hennepin areas. Roy Cooper taught the class in Hennepin while Rose Mary Wadlow taught in Sulphur. Both are native speakers.

## Janie graduates with double certification

Congratulations to Janie Brooks on her graduation from American Commercial College in Wichita Falls. Janie has graduated double-certified after completing the Administrative Assistant and Health Care Administrative Assistant programs. She graduated on Dec. 9 at the Howard Johnson. Janie is the daughter of Georgia Gallaher and Louis Hutchinson.



## Haley earns white coat

Haley Krebs was presented her white coat at the White Coat Ceremony held Sept. 27 at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City. She was accepted to the Health Science Center after completing two years at the University of Oklahoma in Norman.

Haley is a College of Allied Health junior sonography student pursuing a bachelor's degree in medical imaging and radiation sciences. She is a 2009 graduate of Howe High School and is the daughter of Lynn and Janet Krebs. Her grandparents are the late Ernest and Jewel Young and the late Kenneth and Ima Jean Krebs.

Haley and her family would like to say thank you to the Choctaw Nation for its continued financial support.



## Ashley to attend conference in Washington, D.C.

Ashley Anderson, a seventh-grader at Davis Middle School, will represent her school and the community at the Junior National Young Leaders Conference in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 4-9. Anderson was nominated by her teacher, Sandy Hetherington, based on her outstanding academic achievements and demonstrated leadership potential. The Junior NYLC is offered to a select group of students throughout the United States with the scholastic merit, maturity and strength of character to attend this unique leadership program for exceptional middle school students.

Ashley is the daughter of Gayle and Loyd Krien and is on the principal's honor roll, vice president of the student council, cheerleader, on the school's basketball team and Richie Hood's after-school basketball team, active member of the First United Methodist Church of Davis and works summers as a volunteer for the Arbuckle Veterinary Clinic in Sulphur. She plans to attend Oklahoma State University to become a veterinarian.

During the conference, Ashley will visit museums, memorials and be introduced to American leadership and history to further enhance the essential leadership skills she already possesses and learn to apply those skills upon her return home. She will be working diligently for support from local leaders in her attendance to the Junior NYLC.



## Tulsa has multiple wins at track meet

The University of Tulsa indoor track and field teams won five events at the KSU Invitational on Jan. 14 at Aheam Field House.

Junior transfer Done Vermaak took top honors in the 600-yard run with a mark of 1:23.97. Sophomore Lauren Collette was third in the same event at 1:30.23.

On the men's side, junior Julian Frazier won the 300-meter dash with a meet record time of 34.60. Senior Justin Smith finished third in the event in 35.53. Junior Kolton Taylor took home the 60-meter hurdles title with a mark of 8.59, which was his personal best and fifth-fastest mark in school history.

Junior Chris O'Hare won the 1,000 meters with a meet record of 2:24.80, which was just .20 off his personal best. Junior teammate Andrew Heyes finished third in 2:26.04, which was the second-fastest time in school history.

The men's mile went to the Golden Hurricane, as TU placed six runners in the top 10. Junior Sam Masters won the event in 4:10.46, while senior Bill Martin was second in 4:11.69. Sophomore Danny Thater (fifth) and freshmen Aaron Thornburg (sixth), Tim Rackers (eighth) and David Annett (10th) were all in the top 10.

Freshman Chase Sammons set two school records in his first collegiate event. He finished second in the shot put (15.51m, 50-10.75) and seventh in the weight throw (15m, 49-02.50).

Sophomore Brian Tabb finished second in the 600-yard run with a mark of 1:15.32.

"I was pleasantly surprised with how everyone performed in the first meet of the season," said Tulsa Head Track and Field Coach Steve Gully. "The sprinters ran well, and I was happy with how the throwers performed. We don't have a lot of depth in those areas, so we're expecting big things from those athletes this year."

"Also, Sam Masters did a great job winning the men's mile, and Done Vermaak ran extremely well in the 600 yards," he added.

Senior Racquell Powell finished second in the 300 meters (40.53), and sophomore transfer Audrey Jean-Baptiste was third in the 60-meter dash (7.92).

Freshman Natasha Cockram was second in the 1,000-meter run (3:07.26), while junior Erin Huddleston was second in the mile (5:06.41). Junior Jaclyn Rollins took fifth (5:13.94) in the same event.

Freshman Hartly Carlisle finished eighth in the shot put and her toss of 11.69m (38-04.25) was the fourth-best in school history.

Tulsa split up the following weekend for the Iowa State Open in Ames, Iowa, and the J.D. Martin Invitational in Norman. Both meets took place Jan. 21.

## Karlee excels academically

Congratulations to Karlee M. Lathan, 14 years old, for earning President's Honor Roll, Principal's Honor Roll, an academic letter for community service, National Junior Honor Roll Society's role of treasurer and having all A's for the year of 2011. Karlee is the daughter of Misty and Jeff Lathan and the great-granddaughter of John C. Dorsey and Lorene R. Dorsey.



## Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Calendar

		SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
MARCH						1	Broken Bow 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Idabel by appt.	3
	4	Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	5	Antlers by appt.	6	Talihina 9 a.m.-2 p.m.	8	Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
	11	Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	12		13	Poteau 10 a.m.-2 p.m.	15	16 Wright City by appt.
	18	Crowder by appt.	19		20	McAlester 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Stigler by appt.	22	23 Broken Bow 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Idabel by appt.
2012	25	Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	26	Atoka 9 a.m.-11 a.m. Coalgate 12:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m.	27	Wilburton 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.	29	30
								31

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

# Reminiscences of Julia McKinney

Julia Mae Billy McKinney, a full-blooded Choctaw, was born on April 14, 1940, southeast of Broken Bow to Isaac James and Gracie Billy. She grew up in her grandfather, Simon Wilmon Billy's house. He was a Presbyterian minister.

Julia's father was not in her life, but her grandfather and four uncles supported her in her younger years. Her grandfather had 160 acres that he farmed while Julia resided with him. He also spent a great deal of time studying scriptures.

Julia attended a school called South Ward, which was located in what is now a residential area of Broken Bow. She then moved on to another building, which stood where Bennett Elementary is located.

For her junior high and high school years, she attended Broken Bow. She wanted to go to an Indian school, but her uncle, Clelland Billy, would not allow it because he believed Broken Bow offered a quality education.

Clelland and Julia were close to the same age and they grew up together. They were raised as brother and sister and were very close.

When Julia first began



JULIA MCKINNEY

school, she did not know any language but Choctaw, and when her mother left her at church she was terribly afraid, but with some help from the school and friends she made it though.

After high school, Julia married John McKinney, who was from Idabel. The couple lived near Idabel in a location called Good Water. They met at church at Dixon Chapel in Byars in May of 1959. They were married on Oct. 3, 1959.

It was a small wedding with only about 20 people in attendance. It was held in Julia's church, which John later became a member of in 1969. They bought a wedding cake



Left, Julia as a third-grader at Broken Bow elementary.

Below, Julia and husband John.

for \$15 and flowers for \$35.

The couple lived in Idabel at first and then moved to Oklahoma City in 1961 where John found work at Fred Jones Ford doing body and fender work. He was known to be exceptional at the job.

In the late 60s, they moved back to Idabel because they missed their hometown. John went to work for a car dealership upon arriving in Idabel.

The couple had six children, Lyndon, Alan, Sandra, Ronald, Carla and Marissa.

Julia had not worked much before moving back home.

Her pastor found out that Oklahomans for Indian Opportunity (OIO) were opening a satellite office in Wright City and wanted to train two personnel to work for them. He asked Julia if she was in-



terested and she took the job.

Julia had to drive to work, which was not difficult for her. She had gotten her license in Broken Bow some time back. She passed the test on the first try.

She worked there until 1976 when her duties as a mother took precedence over her time-consuming job. She took some time off and then went to work for Broken Bow Nutrition Program, which was on the SETA Program.

In 1979 she became a social worker for the tribe and worked at that occupation for



Right, Julia teaches two of her granddaughters traditional Choctaw cooking.

about 17 years. She did office management and got resources for clients from the Food Stamp Program and DHS.

Following her work there, she began work for Choctaw Housing and worked there for about a decade. She helped with birth certificates, getting CDIBs and office management.

While she was working in the Investment Center in Broken Bow, her cousin, Curtis Billy, a counselor for Broken Bow Schools who had a dance program for Choctaw youth, wanted Julia to help make the dresses and shirts.

She did not have a pattern, so she had to meet with other women who showed her how to cut out the material. She learned how to make the dresses very well, so at work

she would have people come in asking for help. She helped during her spare time, but would have to stop if she was needed.

Julia went on to retire in December of 2005. She stopped making Choctaw dresses because of eye complications but was able to make one for her granddaughter, Reannon Frazier, who was in the Junior Princess Pageant.

She also helped Reannon learn Choctaw hymns, and she went on to win Junior Princess. She later became Senior Princess in 2000.

In her retirement, Julia has attended many church functions. She has done the traditional cooking of banaha and tanchi labona for the church.

She has also enjoyed the Choctaw Community Center Wednesday lunches over the years.

# Rhoda Anderson looks back on a lifetime of memories

Rhoda Miller Anderson was born on Oct. 31, 1932, in Caney, to Eliza Wilson Miller, a full-blooded Choctaw, and Sherman Thomas Miller, a Chickasaw. She was the second child in a family of seven.

Ever since she was a young girl, music has played a role in her life. Her grandmother, Mary Myer Wilson, was blind and played piano by ear and her father also played piano and sang gospel songs.

He taught Rhoda how to play the piano. Her brother, who played the guitar, taught her the guitar. She would play it while he played the fiddle. She remembers her family singing around the house often.

Rhoda began her education in Caney and then transferred to St. Agnes Boarding School in Antlers in her second grade year. She then went on to Carter Seminary in Ardmore and went to Haskell Institute later in her life.

The oldest three of the seven children in the family were the only ones to attend St. Agnes. Rhoda did not particularly enjoy being there. She and the one sister there with her were separated from their brother because the boys and girls were segregated at the school.

At St. Agnes they were not allowed to speak Choctaw, which their mother had taught them while they were home. They also learned Chickasaw from their father at home.

Rhoda went to Carter Seminary for the seventh grade and then went back to Caney for the eighth grade. She then went to Haskell Institute during her freshmen year.

She stayed there until the last semester of her senior year, then transferred back to Caney. She was a credit short of graduation at the end of her high school career and was not able to graduate, so she got her GED.

While at Caney she was in the rhythm band. "I wanted to play the drum so bad, so I bought my own drum and played," said Rhoda.

She did not study music in high school, but was in the choir. Because she loved the music a great deal, she majored in Music Educa-



Clockwise from top, Rhoda as a child riding her bicycle; Rhoda posing with friends while attending Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kan.; Rhoda and husband Thomas on their 25th wedding anniversary; an Anderson family photo, Rhoda, Thomas and their two sons.



tion when she attended the College of the Redwoods in Northern Calif.

When she was 14 years old, she met Thomas Anderson at a church camp. He lived a distance away in Atoka so they did not see each other much, but they did keep in touch. A few girls who were his neighbors went to school with her and encouraged her to write to him.

The first letter she sent was a postcard with scripture written on it and her brother teased her for this, saying, "Sis is going to marry a preacher and be poor. She will be eating out of pie tins and never have a swimming pool."

The couple got engaged prior to Thomas leaving to go overseas because of the Korean War. They were engaged for a year.

The couple was married on Dec. 5, 1952, in La Junta, Colo., at a Methodist Church. Rhoda was 20 years old at the time and the couple did not tell anyone about their marriage.

After they were married,



they lived on Main Street in Durant. Thomas worked at a nursery planting trees for 75 cents an hour and Rhoda worked as a carhop at K&N Root Beer Stand, where she earned 35 cents an hour.

In 1954, they had a son named Wayne. They did not yet have a car, so on Fridays, they would have an outing, where they walked to town. Sometimes they would go to see a movie and others they would get a cab to take them and the groceries they had bought back to their house.

After some time, they got into a relocation program and moved to Denver, Colo. Thomas got a job in Pueblo,

join him for some time.

When they arrived in Los Angeles, it was hard to find a place to rent. They eventually found one but only stayed a year because they had saved enough money to make a down payment on a house located in Dell, Calif.

While there, Rhoda got a job at the Singer Sewing Machine Credit Department. She thought she would earn a job as a machine operator, but accidentally got off on the wrong floor. When she asked the woman on that floor for directions, she told her they had an opening in that department and Rhoda began her job there.

She bought herself a sewing machine as well. It was a 99K Singer in a blonde cabinet. With it, she made her son's shirts, and even shirts with zippers.

Thomas and Rhoda's second son, Robert, was born in 1967, right before the couple was about to try for adoption. Over the next few years, Rhoda worked at a few different jobs and Thomas worked as a welder. The family also got their first car.

Thomas had also become heavily involved in the Christian Ministry. He would take off early on Wednesdays to prepare for the night's sermon. Rhoda went to many church events and came to know the Lord in those times.

She recalls watching television one night, which was not usual for her, and seeing Billy Graham speaking. "It was like he was talking to me," said Rhoda. Becoming a Christian changed her life in a significant way.

In 1964, the family started their own ministry. Thomas was a Southern Baptist and had good associations with all those in Los Angeles. They even began to host classes in their home.

The group of people they would have church with rotated home in which they would have classes. Eventually they saved enough money to rent church building.

The couple then established a church in San Diego with the Hupa Tribe on a reservation. They stayed there two years before moving to Hoopa, Calif., in 1975. In Hoopa, Rhoda attended the College of the Redwoods and majored in Music.

Following their stay in Hoopa, they traveled back to Oklahoma and lived in Shawnee. Rhoda continued her education at Oklahoma Baptist University. Thomas was a full-time pastor at Shawnee First Indian Baptist Church. Rhoda organized the music for that church.

After living in Shawnee, the family moved to Talihina. There, Thomas was the pastor of Green Hill Baptist Church and Robert played sports at the high school. Rhoda worked at the hospital doing various jobs while they re-

sided there.

Tom was called to a church in Houston, but they did not want to take their son out of his school. Tom went to Houston alone, but came back every two weeks. During the summers Robert would work for the Houston Lumber Company, and after he graduated, he went to work for them.

Wayne, their older son, graduated from Oklahoma Baptist University with Music/Missions degrees. He came to Houston and worked in the mission fields there.

By that time, Rhoda was in Houston. She and Thomas worked with the Alabama Coushatta people, whose reservation was in Livingston, Texas. They stayed in Houston for five years.

The couple then moved to Claremore, Okla. Rhoda worked two jobs there – one at PHS Hospital and the other as a security guard at a chemical plant. Thomas was the pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church.

After two years in Claremore, they moved to Montana on a Blackfeet Reservation in Browning, Mont. Rhoda particularly enjoyed her time there because of the wildlife and scenery.

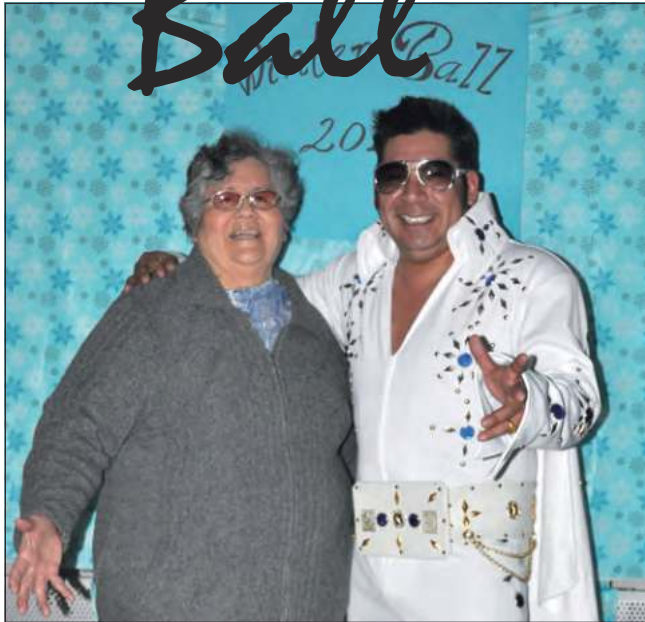
While in Montana, Rhoda went to community college and got a degree in Business Administration and graduated with a 4.0. She tutored for Microsoft and did taxes for the students for free.

The Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma asked Thomas to work in Southeastern Oklahoma. He prayed about it and found it good, so they moved to Haywood.

In Haywood, she has tutored people in English, given piano lessons and has been on the Dictionary Committee of the Choctaw Nation. She goes to the Choctaw Community Center on Wednesdays for the weekly gatherings and teaches a Choctaw Language Class prior to the gatherings.

She has also taught many children the Choctaw language through the JOM program. Rhoda tells that she will always have music and Choctaw in her heart and is proud of her Choctaw Nation heritage.

# Winter Ball



Frances Chandler poses with Mike Loman (Elvis) after his performance.



Stella Mullens dances with Willie Starnes at the Senior Winter Ball at the Durant Community Center.



Durant Senior's President Marilyn Mitchell enjoys her time on stage with "Indian Elvis," Mike Loman.



Ray and Carole Espenshade smile for the camera.



Spry seniors Carolyn Norman, Ernest Hooser, Stella Mullens and Frances Speers pose for a picture before heading off to enjoy the evening.

Photos by BRET MOSS | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

# Steven Judd, Renaissance Native

By Wilhelm Murg  
Indian Country Today

"The Last Full Blood Powwow," as it is tentatively titled, is the first book by Steven Judd, Kiowa/Choctaw. An unconventional work, it will be a collection of short stories by Native writers, tied together in one main narrative that Judd himself will compose.

Sounds pretty interesting. But "The Last Full Blood Powwow" is merely the latest in a series of endeavors by one of the busiest Native creative types you are ever likely to meet. Over the course of just a few years, Judd has been an actor, a respected painter, and a filmmaker. He has directed the music video for "The Storm," by Doc and Spencer Battiest, Seminole, and is working on a project with the band Godsmack.

As we said, he's busy. A native of Lawton, Okla., Judd studied at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan. His working life began with small acting parts, like a shooting victim on the TV show "America's Most Wanted." But he soon realized he wanted to make movies. So Judd and his high school friend Tvli Jacob – now his partner in other projects – wrote and shot a drama on video. Set in their native Oklahoma, "American Indian Graffiti" is a story about the intertwined lives of four Natives.

At that point, serendipity entered the picture. "Chris Eyre was traveling with his movie, 'Skins,' at the time he appeared at the University of Oklahoma," Judd recalls. "We just gave him a copy of 'American Indian Graffiti,' like 'Here, dude, we made a movie.' A couple of weeks later he called me up and said we had some talent. That was pretty much validation for us. Eyre is like the Native American Spike Lee. His film, 'Smoke Signals' was a big influence on me."

Judd acknowledges that at that stage, he still had a lot to learn. "American Indian Graffiti was my film school; that's where I learned what works and what doesn't work. But it has so many problems, I would never want to watch it now. That's something to pull out for a retrospective one day."

Judd and Jacob traveled around to festivals and screenings with the film for a while. But Judd's life changed when he heard about the Disney/ABC Writing Program, in which aspiring writers compete to become salaried television writers. Judd won with a script for the sitcom My Name Is Earl, and moved to Los Angeles to become a staff writer on Disney

Steven Judd is the son of the Rev. John and Julian Judd. His maternal grandfather, Henry Willis, is a co-author of the 'Choctaw Language & Culture: Chahta Anumpa.'

XD's Zeke and Luther.

"I went from working at a bingo hall one minute to working in a writers' room in L.A.," he recalls. "It was so surreal."

After Zeke and Luther ended, Judd and Jacob won a contest for their script "Search for the World's Best Indian Taco;" the short was made with money from a friend. It went on to win best narrative at the Santa Fe Indian Market and was named the North American Indigenous Image Award's 2011 outstanding short.

Judd premiered "Neil Discovers the Moon," a very different sort of short, at the imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival in October. The film is a one-minute claymation re-imagining of Neil Armstrong's moon landing; in Judd's version, Armstrong encounters a Native girl as he's making his famous statement about one giant leap for mankind. "I had a digital camera I bought off of Craigslist, and I wanted to see if I could make something in the living room," Judd recalls.

More than an experiment, the film was intended to educate. "I do a lot of workshops for kids, and I thought, What can I make right now without any money? ... I made it to show kids that you could make a movie with just a digital camera."

But Judd's biggest recent film project has been a feature; back in January 2010, he got a call from first-time director Korinna Sehlinger. "She had a script based on a play, and she asked if Tvli and I wanted to rewrite it and make it a Native family," he says. "So we did, and it started shooting by the end of April. It was super fast. The cast is like the 'Ocean's Twelve' of Native film: Tantoo Cardinal and Rodney Grant from 'Dances With Wolves'; Gil Birmingham and Chaske Spencer from 'The Twilight Saga'; and Q'orianka Kilcher from 'The New World.' It's about a writer from a reservation who goes to L.A. and writes a tell-all book about his family and it's a best-seller; 10 years later his mother gets sick and he has to come back home and repair his relationships."

The film, 'Shouting Secrets,' premiered

at the American Indian Film Festival in San Francisco in November, and won the award for best feature.

Judd has always loved film and television, he says, but with a proviso: He has always wanted to see more Indian people on the screen. "I was at Haskell when 'Pulp Fiction' came out, and we loved it – but I wish we could have had Indian people in that movie. They would have cool lines, and we would be repeating stuff they were saying."

"Pulp Fiction" and other Tarantino films – as well as the films that inspired Tarantino – are clear influences on Judd's latest film venture, "A Six Pack and Gas Money." The trailer, which can be seen at YouTube.com, depicts a tough guy in a suit cornered by a gang of thugs; after a few words to the Creator delivered in Pawnee, he shoots his way out, firing off so many bullets that the cases pile up on the floor.

"While I was in Oklahoma waiting for 'Shouting Secrets,' I remembered an early script that Tvli and I wrote because we wanted to do 'Pulp Fiction' for Indians," Judd says. "I didn't necessarily take a scene from the script; I just wanted to show the vibe of it." Aside from gas money to drive to a location, Judd only spent \$40 on the trailer. Already, he has received responses from Hollywood over the YouTube posting.

And then there is his painting: Judd's work blurs the line between the tradition of Fritz Scholder and pop art. His images include Native superheroes on authentic ledger paper and portraits of famous Indian chiefs on canvases made out of toast. His new series, "LEGO My Land," shows Indian figures in LEGO form.

Judd's artwork was in a recent exhibition honoring the Kiowa Five at the Muscarelle Museum of Art at the College of William & Mary; he was recently the featured artist at the Jacobson House, on the University of Oklahoma campus. It is a particular honor for a Kiowa artist because of the house's association with the Kiowa Five.

"Painting is relatively new for me, and it's definitely got some pop art influence in it – I'm like 'Andy Warrior-hol'," he jokes. "I never really started doing it heavily until the past two years. When I first started out I was thinking, This is very simple art. But it's about the ideas that you are coming up with – are they fresh ideas? Original ideas? That's more important than the technical side, and that spurred me on a little. You can't just sit down and make a movie, but you can sit down and make a piece of art real quick."



Jackie and Johnnie Garland meet with Chief Greg Pyle and Councilman Ron Perry after lunch at the Stigler Community Center.



Joe and Alice Wilson enjoy each other's company before lunch.

Photos by BRET MOSS | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Jennifer Woods, Ludie Robinson, Flora Young, Amelia Steen and Joann Scantlen prepare to serve lunch at the Stigler Community Center on Jan. 18.

# Choctaw Nation donates to sheriffs departments, drug courts

By LISA REED

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

The Choctaw Nation held a luncheon Jan. 24 in Durant for representatives from all of the sheriffs departments and district drug courts in southeast Oklahoma in appreciation of all that they do.

"I admire them for their hard work," Chief Gregory E. Pyle said. "What they face is so different from 20 or 30 years ago. Kids, especially, are having problems we never dreamed of when I was young. Our partnership with the county law enforcement and drug courts is longstanding and valuable in

making southeast Oklahoma a safer place to live."

The Choctaw Nation makes an annual donation of \$5,000 to each of the entities to assist in their efforts.

With the donation, the sheriffs departments are able to purchase additional equipment such as light bars or walkie talkies for the officers that can be very important in ensuring their safety while on the job.

Sheriffs departments benefiting include those in Bryan, Pittsburg, Pushmataha, McCurtain, LeFlore, Latimer, Hughes, Haskell, Atoka, Coal and Choctaw counties.

Drug courts in seven counties – Bryan, Pushmataha,

Atoka, Choctaw, Poteau and McCurtain – also received a donation. The help with supplemental funding allows many of them to purchase much-needed office equipment and has also made the difference in being able to hire personnel.

This is the first year the tribe has held a luncheon for the agents.

"It was an informative meeting," Chief Pyle said. "We had the opportunity to visit with several of the men and women, one-on-one, about issues in their county. They have a positive impact on our daily lives of which we are often unaware."



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

Chief Gregory E. Pyle presents a donation to Judge Farrell Hatch of the Bryan County Court during a luncheon Jan. 24. Also pictured are representatives of the Choctaw Tribal Council, the tribe's Public Safety Department, and sheriffs departments and drug courts.

# OBITUARIES

## Ward Wilson

Ward Everett Wilson, 81, passed away on Nov. 20, 2011. He retired from the U.S. Army after 23 years and he also retired from AT&T after 20 years.

Ward’s family says this about him: “Words cannot express the gratitude we feel for having Ward in our lives. He was first and foremost our touchstone, our Father. He was who we went to for comfort and advice. He was a provider and a gentle warrior. He was a proud Choctaw and shared that heritage with us. He had an outstanding sense of humor and loved us so very much. That love is not gone; it is within us and around us. We miss him madly.”

He was preceded in death by his parents, Tennessee and Harold; brother Jimmy; and his sister, Barbara.

He leaves behind to cherish his memories, his wife, Juliana Wilson; children, Carolina Hoover, Anna and Bill Mitchell, Kenneth Wilson; grandchildren, Chris Pallanck, Kathryn Mitchell and William T. Mitchell IV; great-grandchildren, Catarina Pallanck and Tristan Pallanck; brother Gene Wilson with Betty; and his extended family.



## Lonzo Baptiste

Lonzo Baptiste, 71, passed away on May 18, 2011, in Oklahoma City. Lonzo was born Oct. 5, 1939, in Ardmore to Robert Lee Baptiste Sr. and Luleda (Ned) Baptiste. He married Gloria Sue Ensharkey on Aug. 12, 1959. He was a member of Bowen Baptist Church in Tulsa for 40 years, where he was a deacon. He promoted Southern Gospel Music, traveling with his family music group for many years. In 1979, he was voted Most Outstanding Indian of the Year by All Oklahoma Tribes. He attended Murray State College in his youth. Lonzo and Gloria moved back home to Ardmore in 2005 and moved their church membership to Northeast Baptist Church.

He was preceded in death by his parents; son-in-law Pedro Garcia Garcia; two daughters; four brothers; and two sisters.

Lonzo is survived by his wife, Gloria, of the home; one son, William Victor Baptiste of Ardmore; three daughters, Luleda Rose West with husband Dana of Concho, Tracy Janine Garcia and Jo Anna Gail Cantley with husband Ambus, both of Ardmore; 11 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; one brother, Thomas Baptiste; and two sisters, Myrtle Ray Chotkey and Stella Baptiste.



## Hawaii Anoatubby

Hawaii Lois Davidson Anoatubby, 67, passed away on Nov. 25, 2011, in Ardmore. Hawaii was born on Dec. 1, 1943, in Talihina, to Jack Wilson and Lorene (Harris) Wilson.

Hawaii married David Davidson, who preceded her in death in Ardmore. On July 13, 2007, she married Russell Anoatubby in Ardmore.

She graduated from Sequoyah High School, married David Davidson and was married for 33 years. She retired from Crouzet Electronic in Dallas. After David’s death, she moved back to Ardmore where she was very active in the Sequoyah Alumni, Carter Seminary Alumni and the Women’s Missionary Union (WMU) at the Northeast Baptist Church. She was a member of the Northeast Baptist Church for many years. Lois loved to sew, do bead work, crafts and taking family pictures. She and David went on missionary trips when she was active in her church in Dallas. She was one of the founding members of the Indian Missionary Baptist Church in San Jose, Calif., under the pastorship of Pete Wall. When called upon by any churches, she gladly served.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband David Davidson; brothers, Woodrow Francis Minor, Jackie “Jinkie” Wilson, and Alphus Jim Jefferson.

She is survived by sons, David Davidson of the home and Mark Davidson of Ardmore; daughter Rebecca Davidson of Dallas; seven grandchildren, Joshua Davidson, Sebastian Davidson, Brooke Davidson, Michaela Thompson, Christina Ivy and Misty Ivy; two great-grandchildren, Skyy Toloa Davidson and Alicia Marie Padron; stepchildren, Loretta Anoatubby, Lou Taylor and Johna Anoatubby; five step-grandchildren, Brooklyn Anoatubby, Brayden Anoatubby, Brianna Anoatubby, Lou Piper Taylor and Eyren Taylor; sisters, Tia Juana John, Arnetta Higgins and Sandra Carrillo, all of Ardmore; brothers, Winston Jefferson and Mike Jefferson of Ardmore, and Malcolm Jefferson of Yah-Ta-Hey, N.M.; half-sisters, Sharon Poe of Connerville, Vicki Wilson of Tishomingo, and Cathy Wilson of South Dakota; half-brothers, Rusty Wilson of Tishomingo, Ricky Wilson of Ada, and Edward Foreman of Jay.



## Joseph Farve

Joseph “Indian Joe” Farve, 81, passed away on Dec 20, 2011, at his home in Ardmore. He was born July 27, 1930, in Marsden to Ernest and Katie Farve. He married June (Van Buskirk) Mehagan on Dec. 21, 1973, in Gainesville, Texas.

Joe graduated from Plainview High School in 1949, and was an avid fan throughout his life. In his youth he enjoyed playing on sandlot teams and refereeing basketball. He went to work for Uniroyal and retired 13 years later. Joe loved people and made friends with most people he would meet. He enjoyed visiting with his friends and drinking coffee at the local coffee shops. Joe was a loving husband, father and grandfather. He doted on his daughter until he turned his support to his grandchildren by attending any activity they were involved in. Joe was an avid OU football fan and supporter of Brett Favre. He has been a member of Country Tabernacle Church of Lone Grove for the past 12 years.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Albert, Emil, Willie and David; and one sister, Evelyn Gardner.

Joseph is survived by his wife of the home; daughter Sherri Taylor with husband Gaylon; grandchildren, Katelyn, Braylon and Kelsie Taylor, all of Lone Grove; stepchildren, Gregory Mehagan of Ardmore, Paul Mehagan of Tulsa and Loretta Hall of Oklahoma City; and one sister, Corene Falls of Oklahoma City.



## Carrie Wallace

Carrie Ann Wallace, 48, passed away on Nov. 24, 2011, in Ardmore. Carrie was born on July 25, 1963, in Talihina to Otis Roberts and Francis (Sampson) Roberts. She married Paul Wallace on April 12, 1996, in Gainesville, Texas. Carrie enjoyed living life the best that she could. Most of all, she enjoyed spending time with her grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sisters, Freda Roberts, Helen Shockley and Henrietta Roberts; grandchildren, Alison Ely and Raymond John Randall Palmer.

Carrie is survived by her husband, Paul of the home; daughters, Lacrissha John with husband Chris of Carthage, Miss., Melissa Roberts, Cara Goree with husband Jeremy of Gilmer, Texas, Tamara Ely of Lawton; son Isaac Palmer of Lawton; 12 grandchildren; sisters, Elizabeth Roberts of Lawton, Jodie Roberts of Oklahoma City, Charlotte Roberts of Phoenix, Ariz., and Bonnie Shockley of Ardmore; brother Randall Roberts; three aunts and three uncles; as well as a host of family and friends.



## James Humphreys

James “Jimmy” Charles Humphreys, 67, a Muse resident, passed away on Dec. 1, 2011, in Norman. He was born on Feb. 4, 1944, to Urias “Snooks” and Audrey Mae (Furgeson) Humphreys, in Talihina. He graduated from Whitesboro High School then attended Southeastern Oklahoma State University. Jimmy was retired form being the caretaker for the Choctaw Nation Tribal Grounds in Tuskahoma and was a member of the Valley Christian Church in Talihina. He enjoyed fishing, computers and collecting owls.

His parents preceded him in death.

He is survived by his siblings, June Young with husband Jim, Ed Humphreys, and Susie Fields with husband Larry, all of Buffalo Valley, along with Eileen Beasley and Phillip Humphreys, both of Whitesboro; brother-in-law Charles DeWeese of Antlers; along with numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, other relatives, and dear friends.



## Jonathan Chilton

Jonathan Stephen Chilton, 58, passed away on Dec. 2, 2011, in McKinney, Texas. He was born on March 23, 1953, in McKinney to Franklin Newton Chilton and Katherine (Spring) Chilton. After retirement from a long career in law enforcement in McKinney, where he served as district supervisor for several years, Jonathan went into business for himself in the field of home improvement. Because of his integrity – as he strongly believed the Bible verse, Micah 6:8 – Jonathan was well-known for the highest standards of workmanship in remodeling, repairs and construction. He was very proud of his Choctaw heritage and put his heart into learning about its culture, people and language.

He was preceded in death by his parents and sister, Priscilla Arey.

He is survived by his wife, Sandy Chilton; son Nicholas Chilton; stepson Ben Bruce with wife Veronica; grandchildren, Bo and Victoria; three sisters, Deborah Kelsey, Joanna Fulmer and Rachel Miller; along with families, relatives and friends.



## George Griswold

George Thomas Griswold, passed away on Dec. 10, 2011. Born on Aug. 22, 1927, he was a proud member of the Choctaw Nation and a resident of Discovery Bay. He was a beloved hero and one of a kind. You have won the race.

## Laura Carney

Laura Carney, 98, of Smithville passed away on Dec. 20, 2011, in Broken Bow.

She was born Dec. 26, 1912, in Beachton to the late Elias Cusher and the late Sina Wilson Cusher. She was united in marriage to the late Edmond Carney in 1937. She was a homemaker and of Presbyterian faith. She was a loving mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, great-great-grandmother and friend. Family would like to thank Choctaw Nation for the food.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Edmond Carney; daughter Leila Spradlin; son-in-law Vernon Spradlin Sr.; and a grandson, Vernon Spradlin Jr.; four sisters, Ora Wilson, Ara Nichols, Modene Williams and Irene Smith; and four brothers, Ed Cusher, Lee Cusher, Allen Cusher and Eugene Cusher.

She is survived by son, Eldon Carney with wife Rozetta of Smithville; eight grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, and nine great-great-grandchildren.



## Eleanor Wallace

Eleanor Sue Jacobs Wallace, 74, passed away on Jan. 1, 2012, in Paris, Texas. Eleanor was born March 11, 1937, in Broken Bow, the daughter of Robert Jacobs Sr. and Lecian (Crosby) Jacobs. She was raised in Broken Bow and married Benson Wallace Jr. on June 16, 1963, in Orange County, Calif. Together they lived in Texas, California, and Ada, before moving back to Hugo for the last 20 years. She was a member of the Friendship Baptist Church. Eleanor enjoyed arts and crafts, loved to cook, attend the Choctaw Nation events and activities, and spending time with her grandchildren. She also volunteered in local community services such as the food pantry and S.O.S.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Benson Wallace Jr. in 1985; one son, Kevin Wallace in 1997; two brothers, Robert Jacobs Jr. and Dan Jacobs; two half-sisters, Rena Noah and Aurelia Jacobs Emayabbi.

Eleanor is survived by two sons, Korey D. Wallace and Kenneth D. Wallace with wife Rebecca, both of Hugo; daughter Khristy D. Sellers with husband Roger of Hugo; four grandchildren, Lexi Wallace, Kylee Sellers, Lauren Sellers, and Kamryn Sellers.



## Zach Lee Pebsworth

Zach Lee Pebsworth, 13, of Boswell passed away on Nov. 4, 2011, in Dallas. He was born Dec. 1, 1997, in Durant, and had lived all of his life in Boswell; He was an eighth grade student at Boswell School and was active in 4-H Club and FFA, holding the office of treasurer in FFA. He also played on the baseball and basketball teams for the Boswell Scorpions.

Zach was full of life, very competitive and loved all sports. He enjoyed hunting for coon and deer, fishing, Boy Scouts and four-wheeler riding. He also enjoyed roping and was proud of the first buckle he won at the Boswell Rodeo Arena.

Zach was preceded in death by his grandmother, Dean Barker.

Survivors include his mother, Sharon (Barker) Pebsworth of Boswell; his father, Zane Pebsworth of Boswell; two brothers, Dusty Pebsworth and Jesse Pebsworth, both of Boswell; one sister, Britany Barker of Boswell with her fiancé, Justin Pollard of Haworth; his nephews, Kason Barker and Jaxon Pierce of Boswell; his grandparents, Hubert Barker, Brenda Pebsworth, and Jamie and Marilynn Pebsworth, all of Boswell; aunts and uncles, Shawn Ramos with husband Mark, Jeff Barker and Bobby Shumake, all of Boswell; Wesley Pebsworth with wife Kristen of Jenks, Marila Miller with husband Monte of Hugo, Mike Shumake with wife Chris of Moore, and Wayne Barker with wife Anne of Durant; a host of great aunts and uncles; along with many other relatives and friends.



## Willie Jim

Willie Jim, 86, a McAlester resident, passed away on Nov. 9, 2011, at McAlester. He was born on June 18, 1925, to Egbert and Ethel (Jack) Jim. He attended Bentley School and Goodland Indian School, and then became a Warehouseman for Mayflower Movers. He then married Rena (Sexton). Willie was a member of the Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church in Bentley, he loved to cook, to beadwork, and sew.

He is survived by his son, Davis Jim with wife Dorothy of McAlester; grandchildren, Lori Daney with husband Gary of Calera, Sandra Bear, Virginia Jim, Melissa Jim, all of Stigler, Lealer Jim of San Antonio, and Tasha Jim of McAlester; sister-in-law Susan Jim of Atoka; 30 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife, Rena Jim; children, Joe Jim, Willie Jim Jr., Eliza Jim, Nancy Dodson, Rita Jim, Mary Jim, and Martha Jim; and siblings, Emmett Jim, Abbott Jim, and Mary Fulson.

## Mary Whitley

Mary Williams Whitley, 89, passed away on Dec. 15, 2011. She was born on July 29, 1922, in Durant. She attended Goodland Orphanage, where she went to the Presbyterian Church on the grounds of the orphanage. She enjoyed dancing and was the life of the party. She worked in home care and food services, and then became a homemaker. She had a wonderful life and loved everyone, especially Native Americans. She lived in San Francisco and then moved to Roseville, Calif., to be with her sister.

She was preceded in death by her sister, Georgia Williamson; father George Williams; and mother Iba Williams.

She is survived by husband Bill Whitley; sons, Big Dave, Little Dave and Sam Arnold with Susanne; granddaughters, Alisha and Jamie; two great-granddaughters; niece Wanda; and two great-nephews, Gary and Darren.



## Dora Dowell

Dora Earlene Dowell, 61, passed away on Dec. 29, 2011, in Talihina. She was born Aug. 16, 1950, in Talihina to Paulene (Billy) Fish. Earlene married William Charles Dowell on Feb. 14, 2006. She was a member of the King’s House of McAlester. Earlene enjoyed spending time with her family and friends and helping others.

She is survived by her husband of five years, Bill Dowell of McAlester; children, Jimmy Noah with wife Donna of Oklahoma City, Paul Noah with wife Joyce of Edmond, and Angela Oliver with husband Paul of Yukon; brothers, Bobby Nichols with wife Becky of Hartshorne, Ronald Nichols with wife Peggy of Antlers, and Darrell Nichols with wife Tammy of Antlers; sister Debbie Watson; mother Paulene Fish of Blanco; grandchildren, Devon and Lexey Noah of Edmond, Tanee Noah of Oklahoma City, Leslie and Gregory Oliver of Yukon; as well as many other relatives and friends.

## Stephanie Taylor

Stephanie Joyce Taylor, 36, passed away on Dec. 7, 2011, in Oklahoma City, surrounded by loved ones. Born in Tulsa to Brenda Joyce Taylor on Nov. 3, 1975, she was the oldest of three siblings.

Stephanie enjoyed listening to music, especially Kenny Chesney. Even though she was always on the move, she enjoyed spending time with her family when she could and always expressed the love for her daughters. She worked for Hilton Garden Inn in Norman as a housekeeper. She accepted Christ in March of 1999 and was baptized and became a member of Victory Baptist Church in Oklahoma City.

She was preceded in death by her mother Brenda Samuels; grandparents, Howard Taylor and Joann Jim; uncles, Clifton Taylor and Clyde Taylor; and cousin Kerry Voice-Jim.

Stephanie is survived by daughters Veronica Marie Roberts of Noble, and Courtney Paige Taylor of McAlester; sister Lisa Mitchell with husband Jakie of Oklahoma City; brother Joel Samuels with wife Corey of Oklahoma City; stepfather Norris Samuels of Oklahoma City; stepsister Carol Sulphur with husband Saweke of Shawnee; stepbrother Arden “Sonny” Samuels of Midwest City; nephews, Braeden Samuels of Oklahoma City, David and Asa Samuels of Shawnee; nieces, Shoshana, Faith and Lyric Mitchell of Oklahoma City, Rainey Sulphur of Shawnee; and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

The family wishes to express their sincere gratitude for the many acts of kindness shown during this time of bereavement. Family wants to send a special thank you to the ICU nurses and doctors at S.W. Medical Center for Stephanie’s care.



# OBITUARIES

## Hazel Boren

Hazel Florence Boren, 99, passed away on Nov. 17, 2011. She had recently enjoyed a series of galas thrown by family and friends to celebrate her 99th birthday.

Hazel was born in 1912, the second of 10 children born on a farm in Florence Chapel, a community founded by her grandfather, pioneer rancher Jack Florence and his Choctaw wife Jane Gardner. She received her teaching certificate from East Central College in Ada, and taught in Randolph's one-room schoolhouse before marrying Robert L. "Mid" Boren. Together they raised two daughters, Kaye Boren of San Mateo, Calif., and Barbara Tartre of San Diego. After the girls were gone, Mid's civilian career with the U.S. Air Force took them around the U.S. and Germany. They retired to Rancho Bernardo in 1973. They were married for 56 years, until his death in 1989.

Hazel was petite but determined, a proud farm girl whose green thumb brought forth a flourishing garden she tended vigorously almost to the end. She had a lively temperament, a playful, irreverent sense of humor, and a love of beauty, dancing and family. She passed on with love and dignity, her daughters and "baby sister" Mayme Jo by her side, as well as her wonderful caregiver Mila.

Hazel is survived by her daughters; sisters, Mayme Jo Guest of Oklahoma City, and Nadean Thrasher of Kingston; brother Eugene Florence of Houston; four grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.



## Margaret Rodgers

Margaret L. Rodgers, 80, passed away on Dec. 11, 2011, in Durant. She was born on Sept. 12, 1931, in Bokchito to Irby G. and Lennie (Brackett) Metcalf. Margaret married Bill Rodgers on Dec. 28, 1973, in Celina, Texas. She considered herself a proud member of the Choctaw Tribe. She owned and operated Margo's Beauty Salon for many years. Margaret loved to dance, go dancing with Bill, shop, go to garage sales and flea markets, and participate in chili cook-offs. She had a great sense of humor and loved to laugh. Margaret loved her dogs, Sampson and Little Girl, but most of all she loved her family and they believed she was a special person and mother.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers, Irby Metcalf and Alva Metcalf; and sister, Thelma Marshall.

She is survived by her husband, Bill Rodgers of the home; daughters, Laquita Cobb and Christy Hill with husband David, both of Durant; son Anthony Kinnett with wife Della of Frisco; brother Bob Metcalf with wife Helen of Durant; grandchildren, Jason Cobb with wife Gail, Shawn Cobb, Lori Hines with husband Michael, all of Durant, and Stephanie Trout with husband Nathan of Kingston; great-grandchildren, Jake Ashley, Megan, Camron, Tyler, Dylan, Shawn, Jordan, Bryson, Amanda, Jessica, Holly, Ericka, Krista, Nicky, Josh, Sarah and a recently born baby girl; as well as numerous nieces and nephews.



## Buck Clay

Buck Clay, 80, passed away on Dec. 21, 2011, in Las Vegas. He was born on March 15, 1931, in Bailey to Elmer and Ruth Clay. He lived most of his life in Texas and moved to Las Vegas in 1999. After working a variety of jobs including picking cotton and driving a bus, he began driving long-haul trucks for Kenosha Auto Transport in 1960. He retired in 1995 as a vice president for the parent company, Jupiter Transport.

He cherished his family and friends and enjoyed family reunions, trips to Texas to see his kids and frequent visits to local pubs with his sister, Dorothy. He was an avid Dallas Cowboys fan. He was also particularly proud of his Choctaw heritage, being a descendant of Chief Mushulatubbee. He was a gentle, loving man with a quick wit and extraordinary ability to make people laugh. He will be greatly missed.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Roy and Joe Clay, and Sam Anderson; and daughter Trisha Paroski.

Buck is survived by his wife, Bonnie; his son, Dennis Clay with wife Sharon; twin daughters, Brenda Romine and Linda Collins with husband Alan; daughters, Tonya Chapman with husband Tom, Barbara Stubs and Carie Goodrich with husband Greg; grandchildren, Tim Eisenbrandt, Jacque Wise, Carla Haggmark, Tamara Armitage, Susie Farr, Tobey Clay, Ashley Clay, Tanner Stubs, Savannah Chapman, Jordan Stubs and Lillian Goodrich; numerous great-grandchildren; sister Dorothy Johnson with partner Tom Dixon; brothers, Don Clay with wife Phyllis, and Don Anderson with partner Nevada; and previous wives Una Clay and Becky Keele.



## Neil King

Neil Dalton King, 66, passed away on Dec. 23, 2011, in the comfort of his home. He was born March 3, 1945, in Albany, Calif., the second of three children of Chester and Louem Mangrum King, and grandson of original enrollee Minerva Anderson and her husband, Arch Ray Mangrum.

Neil grew up in Humboldt County Calif., and graduated from Fortuna High School. After high school he worked in the construction industry for 33 years throughout California and Oregon, and was proud to be a "powder monkey" (certified demolition). He experienced many things and made many lifelong friends throughout his journey. He was a man of many interests. Neil loved collecting and restoring antiques, painting, fishing, abalone diving, bottle digging, deer hunting and spending time with his family. One of his favorite places to be was near the Pacific Ocean in Fort Bragg, if he wasn't already in it. Neil was a proud member of the Choctaw Nation. His warm and quiet personality easily drew people to him. He had a kind and generous heart and loved deeply. He will be missed.

He is survived by his wife, Kay; his children, Jeff, Greg, Kristen with Jason Ward and Chris; stepchildren, Douglas with Linda Atkins and Cary King; siblings, Linda with Elvis Bartleson of Fortuna and Wendell with Diane of Redding; many nieces and nephews; 17 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and his beloved dogs, Frank, Maggie and Bass.



## Rufus Amos

Rufus Thomas Amos passed away on Dec. 7, 2011, after serving the Lord with his wife of 10 years, Bertha. He was proud of his baptism certificate he received from Baptist Fellowship Church in Oklahoma City on Oct. 2, 2011.

He enjoyed fishing, camping, T-bone steaks and catfish. He was very proud to be a member of the Choctaw Nation and loved going to Tuskahoma for the Labor Day Festival. He attended Goodland Indian Boarding School and Central High School and later went to serve our country with the Army's 45th Infantry. He earned an honorary discharge from the Army. When Rufus would get sick he would often say, "I am going to join mom and dad at the table." His family is certain he is there now enjoying banana and fry bread. His wife, sisters, brother and family would like to sincerely thank everyone for prayers and gifts of food, as well as attending his service.

Rufus was preceded in death by his parents Josiah and Annie May Amos of Oklahoma City.

He had one son, Rufus Thomas Amos Jr., known as Tommy, whom he loved very much. Tommy's wife is Elizabeth, and his sons are Nathan and Trey, who are from Oklahoma City. Rufus is also survived by a stepdaughter, Juanetta Amos of Oklahoma City; three sisters, Dorothy Fish with Pete of Pawhuska, Louise Walker with special friend Bob of Norman, and Naomi Pacheco of Tulsa; brother Truman Anthony with wife Monetta Amos of Oklahoma City; an Indian grandson, Checota Powell, with whom he enjoyed fishing and watching TV; niece and nephew, Tracy Cannady of Norman and Jackie Ballard of Sante Fe, N.M.; cousins Kendall and Cody (Buffalo); and good friends Ray Thompson and the late David Stansberry.



## Louis White

Louis Thomas (Luke) White, 84, formerly of Wilburton, passed away on Dec. 12, 2011.

Louis was born July 24, 1927, in Wilburton, on the Yourman Ranch to Jake and Annie (Surratt) White. He attended Gaines Creek School. He joined the U.S. Army in 1944 and served during World War II. On Nov. 25, 1946, he married Virgie Baxter. He moved to California and worked for the Pacific Gas and Electric Co. as a supervisor in the construction department for over 40 years. He retired in 1995 as a "relocated Okie" and moved to Eufaula, for his retirement years where he became active in the Choctaw Nation. He moved back to play farmer and enjoy his boat and fishing. However his greatest joy was his two grandsons and two great-granddaughters.

Louis was preceded in death by his parents, Jake and Annie White; brothers, Howard White and Manuel White; sisters, Bette Hudson and Helen White; and nephew David White.

He is survived by his wife, Virgie White; son Steven White with wife Anna of Merced, Calif; daughter Sharon McDougall with husband Earl of Salinas, Calif; brothers, Ray White with wife Billie of Wilburton, and Bob White of Wilburton; sisters, Mary Ann Woods of Wilburton, and Sybil Foster of Pleasanton, Calif; two grandchildren, Ryan McDougall with wife Kelli of Gilroy, Calif, and Marshall White of Merced, Calif; two great-grandchildren, Ava and Grace McDougall; brother-in-law Donald Garriott of Wilburton; nieces, Donna Woolsey, Judy Jack, Debbie Baxter and Barbara Christie, all of Wilburton, Terri Boatwright and Lisa Effinger, both of McAlester, and Christie Hudson of Redding, Calif; nephews, Roy Dale Baxter with wife Pam of McAlester, and Buddy Sadler; and many other family and friends.



## Bailey Sanner

Bailey Sanner, 92, a father, husband, grandfather, friend, businessman and cowboy, passed away on Nov. 17, 2011, in Peoria, Ariz. Bailey was born on May 8, 1919, in Duncan to Etta Boyles Sanner and W.D. "Jack" Sanner.

Bailey was an extraordinary man. Ask anyone who knew him. His accomplishments are too numerous to list. He rose from selling five-cent newspapers in downtown Phoenix at the age of four to one of the top three Phoenix-owned general contractors in the valley of the sun during his career. It was Bailey's love of life, work and family that drove him to be the best he could be. He did not know how to quit until his job was complete. His love of life and work was not only passed on to his family, but also to any one who wanted or was lucky enough to be in his company, and if Bailey had just met you, he wanted know who you were, where you came from, and what were your interests. Bailey Sanner just plain knew how to love his fellow man.

He is survived by his wife, Darlene, and her daughter Cynthia; Margie Denton, Marty "Elaine" Sanner, Maurie Hall, Marcie Geisser; many grandchildren and many more great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.



## Earl Givens Jr.

Earl James "Jimmy" Givens Jr., 77, of Washington, passed away on Dec. 16, 2011, at his home. He was born on Jan. 7, 1934, in Washington, Okla. His parents were Earl James Givens Sr. and Viola Mae (McAlister) Givens. Jimmy grew up in Washington and attended Washington Schools, graduating with the class of 1952. Jimmy married Delores Lakey in November of 1961 and together they raised two children. In his earlier years he worked in the oil field, then in 1963 he started his own business called Givens Trucking and Backhoe Service. When his children were growing up and for nearly 20 years, Jimmy and his family did hay hauling during the summer months. During that time he also became involved in opening graves for cemeteries in the surrounding counties. Jimmy eventually became the designated gravedigger for Dibble, Washington and Blanchard Cemeteries. He retired in 2004 after nearly 35 years of faithful service to these communities.

For his enjoyment, on the weekends Jimmy liked to spend time visiting the Purcell Sale Barn, going to garage sales and attending estate sales. After he retired he enjoyed going to the Washington Senior Citizens Center and visiting with friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister, Valda Yent; brother Joe Givens; and infant sister.

He is survived by a son, Jamie Givens of Dallas; daughter Lourinda with husband Brad; sister Earlene Re of California; two grandsons, Garret and Greyson Givens

## Alex Battiest

Alex "Chief" Battiest, 19, the beloved son of Kenneth and Kimberly Battiest, passed away on Jan. 4, 2012.

Alex was born to Kenneth and Kimberly on Sept. 20, 1992, in Ada. He had lived all of his life in Broken Bow and captured the hearts of many in his community. Not only was Alex a model student of Broken Bow Schools, he was very involved with many school activities. He was a member of the Skeet Shooting Club, Welding Team, Key Club, AILYC and a previous member of the Livestock Judging Team. Alex was also a member of the Broken Bow Savages Football Team starting as center for two seasons. The Savages played a total of five playoff games in that stretch.

He also played in the Native All-Star Football Team over the summer. The Broken Bow FFA is the organization that Alex gave 150 percent, and he held the positions of president and secretary while a member of the chapter. On May 4, Alex was awarded the State FFA degree at the Ford Center in Oklahoma City and had been accepted to OSU where he was going to pursue a degree in Agricultural Science. Alex was also an honor student at Broken Bow and was awarded Lions Club Senior of the Month for April. When not involved in school activities, he enjoyed spending time with friends, going to the lake, hunting, fishing and making memories with his family.

He was preceded in death by his paternal grandfather, Thomas Battiest; one sister, Stormi-Gayle Battiest; two aunts and one uncle, Ethel McKinney, Wilburn and Nila Jones.

Alex leaves to cherish his life, his parents, Kenneth and Kimberly Battiest, of the home; four siblings, Lucas Battiest, Autumn Battiest, Kalli Battiest, all of the home, and Girlie Battiest of Durant; grandparents, Charlene Battiest of Broken Bow, and Floyd and Nancy Peters of Antlers; aunts and uncles, Laura and Keith Monday of Palmer, Alaska, Kriss and Raymond Brandy Jr., Ricky and Mary Lewis, Willie Battiest, Lawrence Battiest, Leon Battiest, Lee Battiest, Cecil and Corina Lewis, all of Broken Bow, Lisa Peters of Antlers, Lorelei and Matt Sullivan of Durant; favorite cousin, Dominiq Jones; honorary family, Dusty Weeks, Dekota Weeks, Cleveland Ramsey, Ben Trevino, Heather Trevino, Lauren Trevino, Lane Trevino, Broken Bow Savage Football Team and Broken Bow FFA Showteam; a host of other cousins; and many friends.



## Ronald West

Ronald Ray West, 74, resident of Oakhurst for 25 years, passed away on Oct. 3, 2011. He was born on July 30, 1937, in West Los Angeles. He served in the U.S. Army.

He was preceded in death by his son, Jim Brent.

He is survived by his wife, Lori West of Oakhurst; mother Nettie Mae West of Oakhurst; children Tana Barks of Los Vegas, Kelli West of Colorado, and Teri Jorgensen of California; grandchildren John Brent of Kentucky, Lindsey West of Colorado, Danielle Jorgensen of California, and Michael Jorgensen of California; great-granddaughter Lilya of Colorado; and siblings, Barbara Gaal and Vicki Glazener, both of Oakhurst.



## Clovis Bacon

Clovis Bacon, 73, of Boswell, passed away on Jan. 19, 2012, in Hugo. Clovis Edrye (Dill) Bacon was born March 11, 1938, in Boswell, the daughter of James Dill and Era Mable (Moore) Dill and had lived most of her life in Boswell. She married David Earnest Bacon on April 30, 1957. He preceded her in death on Nov. 4, 2005. Clovis was a member of the Boswell First Assembly of God. She worked at Wells-Lamont Glove Factory and had also owned and operated the Dixie Café in Boswell for over 10 years. Clovis enjoyed taking care of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She loved her family and her church. Clovis was a foster parent of 23 foster children and always had an open door to the children of the Boswell community.

She was also preceded in death by her parents; one sister, Josephine Hayes; and five brothers, Larry Dill, Dewey Dill, Calvin Dill, J.B. Dill and James Calvin Dill Jr.

She is survived by one daughter, Lisa Ann Bacon with husband Bruce of Durant; seven sons, Davy Bacon with wife Lisa of Tom, Ernie Bacon with wife Rindy of Ada, Keith Bacon with friend Connie Wilson of Coleman, Kent Bacon, Doyle Bacon with wife Wendy, Mike Bacon and Kevin Bacon, all of Boswell; three sisters, Clementine Barker of Bowie, Texas, Clara Hammonds of Andrews, Texas, and Odessa Easterwood of Boswell; two brothers, Haskell "Sonny" Dill and Gwen Dill, both of Boswell; 18 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren; special niece and nephew, Lana Dill of Calera and Barry Dill of Boswell; along with many other relatives and friends.



## Raymond Pistubbee

Raymond Pistubbee, 85, of Boswell, passed away on Dec. 29, 2011, in Boswell. Raymond was born on June 1, 1926, in Boswell, the son of Stinnis Pistubbee and Lizzie (Tonubbee) Pistubbee. He married Edith Claydean Durant in Boswell, who preceded him in death. Raymond loved to garden his vegetables for as long as he was able. He enjoyed cutting wood and working with his hands. He will be truly missed by all who knew him.

Raymond was also preceded in death by his parents; son Raydean Pistubbee; brother Calvin Pistubbee; and grandson Terry Westmoreland.

He is survived by his sons, Darrell K. Pistubbee with wife Sandy of Soper, Arnold Pistubbee of Boswell, and Joe Pistubbee of Grant; four daughters, Sherrie Gibb with husband Jerry of Boswell, Teresa Westmoreland with husband Jack of Boswell, Priscilla Acuna with husband Sammy of Elk City, and Doretha Barrett with husband Jimmy of Boswell; three siblings, Rena Six of Arlington, Texas, Hattie James of Boswell, and Inell Bailey of Hugo; 18 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; along with many other family and friends.

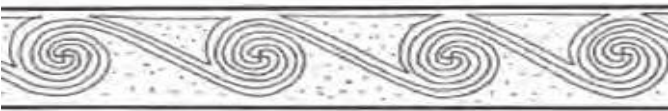


# Ancient Choctaw burial practice

**Question:**  
My name is Skylar and I am a seventh-grader in Texas. I am also a member of the Choctaw Nation. I have a list of questions that I am doing for a project about the Choctaw funeral rite of passage and bone picking.

- Here are my questions:
1. Do any Choctaw people still practice the bone picking ritual?
  2. How did the Choctaw practice this ritual during the Trail of Tears?
  3. What was the gender of the bone pickers?
  4. What did the bone pickers do with the bones after they were done with their job?
  5. How does the Festival of Morning of the Dead compare to bone picking?
  6. How was this an important rite of passage?
  7. What is a Choctaw funeral like today?
  9. Do you see any similarities between funerals today and funerals of long ago?
- Thank you! I appreciate any help you can give!!!!

**Dear Skylar,**  
You have brought up some good questions about an important part of Choctaw traditional culture, or for that matter, of any culture; how to say “goodbye” to loved ones when they pass away. For some, talking about death and burial is uncomfortable, but death is a part of life, and helps define us as mortal people.  
In traditional Choctaw thought, a living person has “shilombish,” or spirit, and a “shilup” or shadow. When a person dreams at night, it is because his shilombish has left his body, and traveled to the place he was “dreaming” of, returning before he awakes. When a person dies, both the shilup and shilombish leave the body. The shilup may haunt the earth as a ghost for a very long period of time, while the shilombish remains on earth for a few days or months before making a long westward journey to Land of Ghosts (see Wright 1828; although his definitions of shilup and shilombish are



## Iti Fabussa

exactly the opposite of how Choctaws use the words today). In the distant past, when a person died, relatives burned a fire at the spot of death, or in front of the deceased person’s house for four days. This was for the comfort of the shilombish while it was still on earth, in hopes of keeping it from being angry (Folsom in Cushman 1899:363-364). It also served as a focused time for the close family members who sat up day and night tending the fire to begin the psychological process of dealing with their loss.  
Bone-picking was just part of an elaborate burial and mourning process that was followed by most Choctaw communities in the 1700s, and by some ancestors at a much earlier date (Galloway 1995:300-305). There appears to have been some variation in the details of how different Choctaw groups did it, but the basic practice was similar. After a person’s death, female relatives washed the body and dressed it in the person’s best clothes. Male relatives began erecting a scaffold roughly 30 feet in front of the deceased person’s home. The scaffold was like a small bark cabin, which at least sometimes had walls and a roof. It was supported on four to six forked posts that lifted it at least 6 feet off of the ground. The body was placed up on this scaffold to keep it up out of the reach of animals. A fence was built around the base of the scaffold to keep children from coming near. Items that the person used in life were placed with them on the scaffold, the belief being that they would be able to use them in the next world; a bow and arrows were common for a man, clay pots and jewelry for a woman. A bear skin or blanket was laid on top, and the body and items left there.  
Wooden benches were built

at the foot of the scaffold, on the east side, for mourners to use. Close family would come sit on the benches several times a day and cry and mourn for the deceased. If people visited the family, they too would come mourn. Even when away from the scaffold, close relatives of the deceased would keep a silent, reverent attitude. They would not participate in dances or stickball, and they would not wear jewelry or anything else to brighten their appearance. The period of mourning often lasted for four months, and often longer for highly respected people.  
In at least some communities, the “bone pickers” were called “na foni aiowa” in the Choctaw language, meaning literally “bone-gatherers” (Halbert n.d.). Mostly men filled this respected role, although some women did as well (Anonymous 1918[1755?]:252). These individuals had special tattoos that made them recognizable, and they grew the nails long on their thumb, forefinger, and middle finger. When the bone pickers determined that the mourning period had been long enough, they set a date for the “big cry”, on which friends and family of the deceased would gather at the scaffold. Here they had one last wail and remembrance of the deceased person. Then, the bone picker would climb the scaffold and use his or her fingernails to strip off the remaining flesh from the bones, fully cleaning them. While this process may sound strange or disgusting to some readers, it is arguably no more strange or disgusting than the details of modern mortician work; it is just different. The work of the bone picker was accompanied by the appropriate songs and religious rites. Lastly, the skull would then be painted red, and the

bones packed in a box that would be given back to the family. Sometimes the removed flesh was buried in the ground; sometimes, it was left on the scaffold, which was then set on fire and burned (Milfort 1802; reproduced in Swanton 2001:174) along with the deceased’s possessions. Sometimes instead of burning the possessions, the family would give them away to the Euro-American traders (Adair 1775:129). Often a man’s horses or dogs were also killed, the belief being that they would accompany him into the next life.  
After the bones were cleaned and placed in the box, a huge feast was held by and for those who knew the deceased. The bone picker served the food. After the feast, the family and mourners would take them to the family’s charnel house, known in Choctaw as “hatak illi foni aiasha” (Byington 1915:139). The charnel house was a rectangular structure, raised up on poles about 6 feet above the ground. It had a roof, but was open at its two long ends (Adair 1775:183). The box of bones would be deposited here, to sit alongside other boxes containing the bones of previously deceased family members. At this point, the family ceased mourning, letting go of their deceased loved one psychologically and spiritually and beginning to move on with their own lives. Thereafter, the deceased was considered to no-longer be a part of this world, and his name was never spoken again, except sometimes by children, who were quickly hushed.  
When a charnel house became filled with boxes of bones, the family would return and remove them. Men from the iksa or “moiety” opposite from the family, would pile these boxes up (Israel Folsom in Cushman, 1889:367), and cover them with earth, forming small, conical earth mounds. In the 1700s, some Choctaw communities had a Celebration of the Dead every year in November (Bossu 1768:96),

or perhaps bi-annually (Byington 1829:350). This was a time when families went to the charnel houses, remembering and mourning the loss of those who came before.  
Choctaw burial practice has changed and developed through the years. In most Choctaw communities, bone-picking stopped sometime shortly after 1800. However, one account (Claiborne 1880:493) maintains that some Choctaw families were still following the practice in the 1830s at the beginning of the Trail of Tears. According to it, families whose deceased were on scaffolds at the time their neighbors left on the Trail of Tears, elected to temporarily stay behind in Mississippi to finish the mourning process.  
In the early 1800s, a few Choctaw families began burying their loved ones in exactly the same way as their Anglo-American neighbors. Others began practicing a new form of burial, “Fabyssa Halat Akkachi,” or “the Pull-Pulling Ceremony” (Cushman 1899:228). Although bone-picking was not a part of it, the new ceremonies were led by the same people who had formerly been bone pickers. They were now called “Hattak Illi Chohpa,” which refers to their role in serving the funeral feast. Instead of placing a deceased person on a scaffold, as had been done previously, they buried him or her in the ground in a sitting position. Six red-painted poles were stuck vertically in the ground around the grave. One of these was taller than the others and had a white flag tied to the top. Family members came to the graveside daily to mourn. When a sufficient time had passed, the poles were pulled out of the ground and placed in the woods. As in earlier times, a large feast was held, after which the family ceased to mourn. Pull-pulling was practiced by some Oklahoma Choctaw into at least the 1840s (Benson 1860:294-295), and by some Choctaw communities in Mississippi into the 1880s.  
In Oklahoma Choctaw

communities, by the late 1800s, it was common for a family to prepare the body of a loved one and lay it in state in a church, or in the person’s house for four days. Different branches of the person’s family took turns sitting up with the body each night. Afterwards, the body was buried in a marked cemetery, with a preaching service and Choctaw hymns. The person’s eating dishes were taken to the cemetery and broken over the grave, so that no one else would use them. Some believed that a person’s spirit would stay on earth for a year after their death to make sure that their family was going to be okay, before they passed on into the next world. A small house was built over the grave to keep the spirit warm and dry during this year. For a year, all of the possessions of the deceased person were kept in the house of his family, just as they were during his lifetime. After the year passed, and the spirit moved on, all of that person’s possessions would be given away, with everyone taking something as a remembrance of that person. Thereafter, the mourning period ceased (LeRoy Seally, personal communication 2011).  
Today, some Choctaw families still hold a wake when a loved one passes away, and many believe that a deceased person’s spirit returns to say goodbye to loved ones before it makes its journey into the next world. A few families, particularly in Mississippi, still practice the centuries-old tradition of burning a fire for a few days after a loved one’s passing. Most Choctaw funerals are held in a church with services similar to the services held by other Americans, except that some of the songs and preaching may be in the Choctaw language. Often the service is followed by a large meal, with traditional Choctaw foods.  
If you have any questions concerning Choctaw history or culture, please mail to Iti Fabussa c/o BISKINIK, P.O. Box 1210, Durant, OK 74702, or e-mail to biskinik@choctawnation.com with “Iti Fabussa” in the subject line.

## 2012 Bow Shoot Schedule

### Tushka Homma Capital Grounds

Registration: 10:30 a.m.  
Competition: 11:00 a.m.

Long bows, recurve bows, self bows, commercial or handmade. No compound bows allowed. Prizes for each age group will be awarded at the end of each shoot. A final prize will be awarded at the end of the year for overall points.

Dates:	Age groups:
March 10	5 and under Co-Ed
April 14	6-8 Co-Ed
May 19 3D shoot (adult)	9-13 Co-Ed
June 9	14-16 Co-Ed
July 14	17-19 Co-Ed
August 11	20 and over, women and men
September 2 (8 a.m. during the Labor Day Festival at the village)	
October 13	For more information, call Pam Waugh or Les Williston at 918-569-4552
October TBA (Cornstalk shoot)	
November 10	

## TOURNAMENT

### Choctaw Nation to host annual ‘Madness in March’ all-Indian basketball tournament

Continued from Page 1

off with a College Prep Day, which is geared toward informing student-athletes about financial aid and the rigors of college life. Over 300 students attended last year’s event.  
“Our main goal has always been for our kids to know the importance of a college education,” said Bear. “Receiving a degree and going back to your respected community and making a difference in the life of someone else is the success story we want to hear.”  
Following the College Prep Day, all teams will begin pool play on Thursday morning and will end on Friday afternoon. Teams will play three pool games, vying for the top seeds in the single elimination tournament that begins on Saturday morning. All teams will be seeded into the tournament.  
“It’s not too often you get this many great athletes from so many different states and tribes coming together to compete in one place, and we’re glad we are able to host this event in Choctaw country,” said Brad Clay, Youth Events Coordinator. “It allows us to share our Choctaw culture and facilities with other tribes and also brings revenue to

the city of Durant. We hope the tournament continues to get bigger and better each year.”  
The highlight of the week, as it is every year, will be the All-Star Jam. The All-Star Jam will feature a coaches/celebrity game, three-point contest, slam dunk contest and fan appreciation events. Also, the Dash 4 Cash challenge will be held during the night for fans in attendance.  
Saturday morning will begin play of the single-elimination tournament, College-March-Madness style. The winner goes on, the loser goes home and prepares for next year. Sunday morning will bring about the Final Four and Championship games.  
“It is always a great tournament with talented Native American athletes from all over the United States,” said Kevin Gwin, Director, Choctaw Nation Youth Activities. “If you have not had the opportunity to attend this tournament in the past, I suggest you come and watch to see the talent these teams bring to the court.”  
Pascale has extended an invitation to all Native American High School and Junior High students to come out and compete in what is becoming the largest Native American High School basketball tournament in the nation. “There will be teams from many different tribes and states traveling to Oklahoma, and it’s a great opportunity for Native American athletes to compete against each other and share history and culture,” he said.  
“We’d like to thank the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the city of Durant for their hospitality in hosting this event, and we look for it to continue to grow each and every year,” said Pascale.  
To enter a team or for more information on the tournament, contact 4 Love of the Game at 918-759-0880 or visit [www.4loveofthegame.org](http://www.4loveofthegame.org).



# CHOCTAW NATION CULTURAL SERVICES

Seeking more information on your Choctaw heritage?  
Wondering what cultural events are happening in your tribe?

**For these questions and more, Choctaw Nation's cultural services website has answers!**

Historic Preservation Department • Tribal Archaeology • Cemetery Restoration • NAGPRA/Repatriation

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