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CHOCTAW NATION

# BISKINIK

The Official Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

June 2011 Issue      Serving 206,710 Choctaws Worldwide      Choctaws ... growing with pride, hope and success



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

## Chief Pyle unopposed three terms in a row

Chief Gregory E. Pyle is unopposed in this year's election, according to Choctaw Nation Election Board officials. This is the third term in a row that Chief Pyle has been the only one to file, something that has never happened in the history of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Also, unopposed in the 2011 election are Councilman Kenny Bryant, District 3; Councilman Perry Thompson, District 8; and Councilman Thomas Williston, District 1.

Several candidates have filed in District 5, the seat to be filled after the death of Councilperson Charlotte Jackson in January. They are Michael B. Jordan, Leland L. Sockey, Carolyn Thompson Harris, Ronald Perry, Norma Nunn Anderson and Louisa Terrell Gonzalez.

Five have filed in District 2: Incumbent Mike Amos, Ivan Battiest, Jeffery Jefferson, Tony Messenger and Austin Battiest.

Incumbent Bob Pate and Daniel E. McFarland have filed for the District 11 seat.

Election day is July 9. Polls will be open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

District 2 voting precincts are the Choctaw Community Center, Broken Bow, and the Choctaw Community Center, Bethel.

District 5 voting precincts are the Choctaw Community Center, Stigler; the Kinta Community Center, Kinta; the County Barn, Keota, and the Choctaw Community Center, Spiro.

District 11 voting precincts include the Choctaw Nation Health Center, McAlester; City Hall, Hartshorne, and Kiowa High School, Kiowa.

Runoff elections, if needed, will be July 30.

*Choctaw Nation Color Guard leads the way at the annual commemorative Trail of Tears Walk on May 21. Hundreds of walkers of all ages gathered to pay tribute to the long, historic walk made by our ancestors more than 180 years ago. This year's walk began in Millerton and ended at the historic Wheelock Academy.*

More Walk photos on Page 12



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

## Choctaw Defense awarded major U.S. Army contract

Tribe's military manufacturer to design, build the Camel II water trailer in multi-year, multi-million dollar deal

By BRET MOSS  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) excels in many facets of the business world. From gaming and agriculture, to convenience stations and medical facilities, CNO has made great strides becoming a major name in many areas.

Over the past decade, the Choctaw Nation has become a well-known name in the field of military manufacturing. Choctaw Defense, with locations in McAlester, Hugo and Antlers, constantly churns out necessary military equipment for the support of America's armed forces.

The name of Choctaw Defense is well respected and trusted in the business of military manufacturing, with a newly acquired three-year, \$20 million contract proving the point.

The U.S. Army has just recently awarded Choctaw Defense the performance standard contract to design and manufacture the Camel II potable water trailer system. This will be a highly mobile water trailer that will provide troops, no matter the location and atmosphere in which they are located, clean and temperature controlled drinking water within 10 degrees of a set standard.

The fact that this contract is a "performance standard" contract means that Choctaw Defense will



Image provided

Computer generated concept image of the mobile Camel II potable water trailer system.

not only be charged with making the parts and assembling them, they will also produce the design from the ground up.

In a performance standard contract, the military provides a set list of capabilities the finished product must have, and the designers and engineers must create a working product to those specifications. Choctaw Defense has a team of about a dozen designers, mechanical engineers and computer design engineers to complete such a task.

With about 230 employees in all three manufacturing locations, Choctaw Defense also has enough manpower to turn the design to a real working product. The capabilities and equipment of the facilities

are much more advanced than one would find in a local machine shop, and the meticulous attention to detail that must be demonstrated is of utmost priority in all facilities.

The employees and equipment of such an operation must produce such products that are of much higher standards and strict specification than commercial grade manufacturing. Every single detail must be given close attention and documented. Not one aspect, even the design of the seemingly random camouflage paint, escapes the inspection of the facility.

In a walk-through of the McAlester facility one would find a clean, efficient operation with employees diligently completing their assigned tasks. "It is one big orchestra," mentions CEO Steve Benefield.

The product of such an orchestra is a considerable amount of new business and recognition from high places in the military. The current commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps., Gen. James Amos, recently commended Choctaw Defense publicly by stating how Choctaw Defense partners with the Marines in meeting it's changing goals are, "how it should be done," according

to Benefield.

Reasons for Amos holding Choctaw Defense in such regards might include the remodeling of the trailer for the Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement (MTVR). The MTVR, which is manufactured by Oshkosh Defense, will go at impressive speeds over the roughest of terrain.

Some time ago, Choctaw Defense was asked to create a trailer that would be able to keep up with such a vehicle. Once the trailer was designed and several were produced, a decision was made that required the trailer to meet new, even more impressive specifications.

The team at Choctaw Defense has reworked the design to create a new trailer, one that is 20 percent lighter with increased capabilities. The already produced units will be retrofitted with the new materials to meet the upgraded specification and Choctaw Defense will deliver the finished product seamlessly.

It was a game-changing decision that posed a problem, but the personnel at Choctaw Defense were capable of providing a solution for such a problem, and these kinds of capabilities are the reasons they earn awards and commendations. "This is the most capable trailer across all the military," stated Benefield as he reflected on the product of the company.

Currently, Choctaw Defense can

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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.



The BISKINIK  
is printed on  
recycled paper.

## Tribal Council meets in regular May session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met in regular session on May 14 at Tushka Homma. Councilmembers addressed several items of new business, approving Council Bills:

- to dispose of surplus equipment;
- to donate a 1986 Ford Econoline ambulance to the City of Hartshorne;
- to apply for grant continuation for Tribal Victim Assistance, and
- to modify the 20-year, long-range transportation plan.



Choctaw Nation: LARISSA COPELAND

## Recycle Center holds official ribbon-cutting

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma held a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 17 for its recently opened Recycling Center in Durant. The 30,350-sq.-ft. facility on 3108 Enterprise Dr. is another example of partnering with city, county, state and federal officials. The recycling center has collected more than 100 tons of recyclable material since opening in December, including more than 14 tons in last month alone.

The facility receives newspaper, office paper, shredded paper, magazines, catalogs, plastics #1, 2 and 5, aluminum cans, steel cans, cell phones, printer cartridges, batteries, e-waste, and cardboard for recycling.

The center is open to the public for dropping off items from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.



# NOTES TO THE NATION

## Thank you

I would like to express my thanks and gratitude for the assistance that I was provided by the Choctaw Nation during my learning process at Tulsa Welding School. I attended this school for eight months, and during that time I learned various welding skills. If it weren't for Choctaw Nation, I would not have been able to have that opportunity.

I graduated April 5, 2011, and I'm currently looking for a full-time welding job. I am very excited to be seeking employment within my field of study; this will enable me to seek numerous types of opportunities for employment and in the near future, become an excellent provider. Once again, I can find no other way to express my gratitude other than to say thank you.

Zachary Collier

## To the Youth Advisory Hugo Chapter

The article published entitled "Fear of Death" in March meant a lot to me. I will be 71 this December and when I was 12 or 13, my father said the phrase mentioned in the article, people cry when a baby is born and laugh when someone dies. He never explained the phrase to me, so I was always confused by it, but I had my three sons later in life and I love them very much. Thank you so much for publishing that letter in the Biskinik.

Nettie F. Taylor

## Assistance in Tushka

In the wake of the Tushka/Atoka County tornado, we couldn't be more proud to call the Choctaw Nation our home. The response of the nation with disaster relief was immediate and well executed. Councilman Anthony Dillard was at ground zero for days and hours on-end making sure needs were being met. The volunteers who prepared meals for victims and relief workers and the medical bus were a God-send. Your construction crews cleared debris and tarped what little belongings people had left. Olin Williams, Skyler Robinson and Dr. Ian Thompson from the historical cemetery program cleaned up the Tushka cemetery giving peace of mind to those with family buried there. Thank you for your long-standing record of being community minded and generous.

Lynn and Cindy Wallis



## Thankful for tornado relief

On behalf of all of us at Voca Baptist Church, I would like to express my utmost appreciation for your loving donations and sacrificial service to the victims of the recent tornados in Tushka. Our community must unite to serve those who have been affected. I am grateful to say that Choctaw Nation has demonstrated the highest level of support during this time.

Through the food, beverages and packaging supplies donated by CN, the numbers of Voca Baptist Church and the Caney community have been able to prepare between 500 to 1,000 sack lunches every day for the victims and relief crews in the Tushka area. We have met critical needs without which families and workers would go without.

CN has been instrumental in supplying the victims with clothing, hygiene items and children's toys through donations made to the clothing and supplies ministries of Voca Baptist. Our church and community is blessing those who have experienced great loss during this time.

More could be said about the proactive involvement, the countless cooperation and the thoughtful provisions of the CN. We look forward to working with you through the days ahead to provide the highest level of support and love to those who have experienced loss during this time.

Danny Kirkpatrick, Pastor

Gregory E. Pyle  
Chief

Gary Batton  
Assistant Chief

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

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The BISKINIK E-News is a digital version of your monthly Biskinik. It is delivered to your e-mail inbox twice monthly and contains articles from the most recent BISKINIK newspaper as well as links to the current BISKINIK and archives. Sign up today on choctawnation.com.



BISKINIK 2011



## Graduate thankful for donations

I would like to say thank you for supporting me with my show projects the past 10 years. I've had the honor of winning Bryan County Grand Champion four times with my swine projects, three of them back to back, and Grand Champion Steer three times. I have also been very successful at the Oklahoma Youth Expo. None of this would have been possible without generous donors like the Choctaw Nation.

It is hard to believe my high school show days are over. I have made many lifelong friends and great memories on my journey and learned many life lessons. Being a member of the great programs FFA and 4H has truly been a blessing in my life. I have a great passion for showing livestock, and being a part of these great organizations has allowed me to do so.

Again, I would like to say thank you from the bottom of my heart. Your support and generosity will never be forgotten. May God bless the Choctaw Nation always!

Ashton Thompson

## Thank you from Edith

I would like to take the opportunity to express my deepest appreciation for your support over the years. At the age of 94, I can say that I have never seen such a consistently caring tribe/organization as the Choctaw Nation.

Over the years, the tribe has provided support to me and my family, giving me an opportunity as a widow to work diligently to purchase a home through financing assistance, supporting my children as they pursued their educations and had families of their own and now supporting my great-grandchildren through terrific scholarships.

It is obvious to me that the Choctaw Nation cares for its members, tribe and loved ones. No words can express how grateful and lucky I am to be a part of this wonderful tribe. Thanks again for all the support throughout the years.

Edith Carney

## Thankful for emergency services

I just want to let Chief Pyle know how thankful I am to have the help from the Choctaw Nation. I will never forget it. The ladies in Emergency Services are angels, and I feel you should know they give 100 percent. Heather Linson, Kenni Elrod and their boss as well as the entire department treated me really well. They went above and beyond and have professional attitudes with heartstrings attached. They really listened and cared. These ladies' enthusiasm and helpfulness made me proud to be Choctaw, and I was in great hand. I left with tears in my eyes and a million pounds of pressure off my shoulders. I thank them from the bottom of my heart. May the Lord bless all of you at the Choctaw Nation.

Pam Byers

## Thank you for assistance

I would like to thank the Choctaw Nation, Chief Pyle and Councilman Pate for their assistance and encouragement on my being accepted to attend the National Youth Leadership Forum on Law and Crime Scene Investigation in Washington, D.C. this summer. This is a wonderful opportunity for me, as I am interested in pursuing a career in law enforcement. Again, thank you for all your assistance.

John Troussel

## Very thankful

To the Choctaw Nation, you have honored me as a tribal member. I truly have a Choctaw heart.

Without my Lord Jesus, I would not be receiving my degree, my ministerial license and my ordination papers. God has done great things for me.

Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love. Thank you.

Sanine Holt

## Seeking information

I am seeking information on any living family of Willis E. Armstrong, born in Atoka. I am his daughter, Cynthia L. Armstrong Jones. Please send any information to P.O. Box 7424 Texarkana, TX 75505 or call 903-306-8743. Thank you.

## Requesting prayers

Mario Morales is a sergeant in the U.S. Army and was deployed to Afghanistan on May 6. The family would like to request prayers for his safe return.

## Seeking family members

Orrin Hartt is seeking information about his family members. He is searching for relatives of Sally Impson and the Hines family. His grandfather was Charles Cleveland Hines, who passed away three years ago, and was three-fourths Choctaw. Orrin is the son of the late Sonja Hines. If you have any information regarding these family members of Orrin, please contact him at 707-774-2224.

## Seeking siblings

I am seeking my half-brother and half-sister. Their names are Kenneth and Nioka, and their mother is Gladys Helen Ive-Prado, whose last known residence is Las Vegas. Their grandparents are Ben Ive and Delilah Lucinda Bell; aunts are Eva Perkins, whose last known residence is Bakersfield, Calif., and Ruth Thrill Kill, last known residence in Arizona; uncle is Doyle Ive.

Kenneth and Nioka were born in the early 1950s in either Texas or Oklahoma and are approximately 55-61 years old today. If anyone has any knowledge of my described siblings, please contact me at 505-258-4147 or by email at layingit-downlv@yahoo.com. Thank you.

## Events

### Rosenthal reunion

A Rosenthal family reunion will be held at Hugo Lake on June 18. A potluck luncheon is being planned for that day at 12:30 p.m. for a reunion of the Rosenthal and related families as well as to honor the recent passing of Mary Rosenthal Durham on April 18 in Mt. Juliet, Tenn. A separate memorial service for our mother will be held the same day as the reunion at 10 a.m. at the Rattan Cemetery and all are welcome to attend. Following the memorial service the Durham, Newland and Perry families would like to welcome all Rosenthal and other related family members to join them at the Hospitality House at Hugo Lake for the luncheon and potentially other reunion events. Meat and drinks for the party will be provided and it's requested that anyone attending bring a food dish or dessert. For directions to the Hospitality House or more information about the reunion, please contact Diane Newland at 435-640-8224.

### Father's Day singing

The 13th annual Father's Day singing will be held June 19 at Black Jack Church, 11 miles east of Rattan. Supper will be served at 5:30 p.m. and singing will start at 7 p.m. Concessions will also be provided. All singers are welcome. Truman Jefferson will serve as emcee.

### Meely reunion

The Meely family reunion will be held June 25 starting at 10 a.m. at the Chickasaw Community Center located at 401 East Oklahoma Ave. in Sulphur. Each family is asked to bring a cake, pie or cookies to be used as prizes. They also are asked to bring chicken or a side dish to share. An auction will be held to raise funds, so bring an item to be auctioned. There will also be family trees from each family that will be auctioned. Activities such as Bingo, a cakewalk, storytelling and music/TV trivia will take place. For more information contact Rosemary Wadlow at 580-247-0336, Donna Smith at 580-993-0085, Lovella Allison at 405-485-3654 or George Mouse at 405-694-8833 or Halito01@yahoo.com.

### Battiest reunion

The second annual family reunion for the descendants of Colbert and Ennette Battiest will be held June 25 at the Native American Bible Camp in Ringold. Accommodations are available for those who wish to come early or stay late. Those attending are asked to bring a covered dish for lunch and photos. Come join us in reconnecting our family ties. Registration for door prizes starts at 10 a.m. Lunch will be served at 12 p.m. For more information, contact Ivan Battiest at 580-236-1524, Shelly Marlow at 580-306-7788, Austin Battiest at 580-306-2386 or Nettie Battiest Caldwell at 580-212-1787.

### Gospel singing

The 41st annual gospel singing will be held at Bethel Hill Indian Methodist Church near Battiest, where Rev. Edgel Samuel serves as pastor. This singing-filled evening is a community service sponsored by Bethel Hill Church held on the fourth Saturday night of June each year. This year the singing will be held on June 25. It begins at 7:30 p.m. and is free to the public. In addition to the featured group, the Forgiven Quartet of Bartlesville, several groups will perform as well as others who are attending and would like to perform. Because the Forgiven Quartet has a southern-style sound, much like the nationally-known former Cathedral Quartet, it is a treat to hear the group sing cathedral songs as tribute.



## CHOCTAW TRADITIONAL POTTERY CLASS

### Durant:

- Date: June 20th, July 11th,
- Time: 5-9 p.m.
- Location: Pottery Studio behind the Cultural Events Building, 4451 Choctaw Rd.



### Antlers:

- Date: June 23rd, July 7th
- Time: 6-9:30 Pp.m.
- Location: Antlers Library and Community Building, 104 S.E. 2nd Street

## ATTENTION CHOCTAW ARTISTS

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

The annual Choctaw Indian Art Show will be at Tushka Homma during the Annual Choctaw Labor Day Festival. Included will be following categories: Painting, Graphics, Cultural, Sculpture, Jewelry, Pottery and Basketry.

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

## Choctaw Nation Distance Learning Technology GED Classes

Beginning  
August 8, 2011

**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.



# Walking the trail is awesome experience

From the Desk  
of Chief Gregory E. Pyle

Walking the Commemorative Trail of Tears at Wheelock with hundreds of tribal members from across the nation was one of the most awesome experiences of this year! The road was wet and muddy, and mosquitoes buzzed us occasionally, but those slight discomforts only served as tiny hints of what our ancestors dealt with on the long, sad march from Mississippi in the early 1830s. Many people are surprised to learn that the Choctaw tribe was the first to be forcibly removed from the homeland to Indian Territory. The term “trail of tears” was a phrase that was attached to that first removal of Choctaw Indians in 1831 by an Arkansas newspaper because it was such a harsh winter and the conditions were

so terrible on the men, women and children who were making the over 500-mile trip. Fortunately, our ancestors did not dwell on the negative, but entered into the new lands with hope for the future. Accompanied by missionaries, churches and schools were soon established (Wheelock being the site of the first ones) and our tribe began to grow in population. Hard work, perseverance and education helped individuals succeed across the districts, and now Choctaw members live all across the world – more than 200,000 of us! I am so thankful for my ancestors who survived that long road – and although it is sobering to think of the misery with which they traveled and lived, it is their strength that has been passed on to all of us which has made it possible to be the tribe we are today! Yakoke!



Choctaw Nation: JUDY ALLEN

## Stickball is great fun to watch

From the Desk of Assistant Chief Gary Batton

I enjoyed watching the stickball game in front of Pushmataha Hall at the Trail of Tears Walk. Sometimes called “Little Brother of War,” because the game used to settle disputes instead of going to war, these guys can get pretty rough! It looked a little like “war” out there on the field at times! They all seemed to be having fun and the crowd watching the game were all cheering them on. Playing on the lawn of such an historic site as the old academy boarding school was especially touching and I appreciate all the people who stayed the afternoon to participate. These same players put on an exhibition game during the Red Earth Festival at Oklahoma City the first Saturday in June prior to the Grand Entry of the Pow Wow, and they are also set to compete in the World Series in Mississippi in July! There has been a recent revival in the interest of stickball as a sport for men and women! There will be a short film at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian on stickball during Choctaw Days June 22-25 that shows highlights from



the games at the 2010 Labor Day Festival. If you get a chance, I encourage you to either watch a live game, or at least see the film to become familiar with this exciting activity.

## Chaplain’s Corner

### The struggle to do right

May you have a happy and safe summer. We pray for the activities the Choctaw Nation has scheduled. Pray for the Lord’s guidance in the election of the leadership of our Choctaw Nation. As a Christian, you have struggles in your life. There will be victories and there will be defeats in your life. As long as we are still in the flesh this struggle will continue in our lives. This struggle to do right, to obey God, and to do wrong, to disobey God. This struggle between the flesh and the Spirit will end only when Jesus Christ returns and takes us up to be with Himself. (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). I want to encourage you though. You don’t have to live a defeated life. Satan can hold out against every power known, except one, the power of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Jesus Christ has delivered us from the penalty of sin, which is death, at the cross. And as we study His Word, letting Him control our lives we can have power over sin now. Then when He comes back for His own in the clouds we shall be delivered from even the presence of sin. We thank God and praise Him for His only begotten Son who has conquered Satan. You will notice some particular sin will be kind of a fascination upon the people. As soon as they begin thinking about it, the power of that sin will spread through their personalities; the more they try to muster up the will to fight it, the stronger this evil influence becomes. Repeated failures fill the sinner with the conviction that it is useless to struggle. Since the struggle is torment to him, he yields to his sin to escape it only to invite a worse torment. Many of us want the power to win victory over sin, but we are not prepared to pay the price. “What’s the price for getting prepared?”, you might ask. First, it is wholehearted repentance, a complete turnaround, turning away from sin. There is no use seeking the joys of spiritual life and at the same time holding in our minds thoughts of the pleasures of sin. The sinful imagination will always beat us, the imagination being much stronger than the will. If we are wholehearted in wanting God to remove from us the domination of our old evil nature, He can do it, but it requires first the act of the will of repentance on our part. There are many people who say, “I am going to get rid of my bad habits first. They don’t seem to realize that if they could get rid of the problems themselves they would not need to come to God for power. The New Testament makes it plain that Jesus Christ does not expect us to come to Him because we are worthy, rather He calls us to come to Him, “just as we are.” And He has promised, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” Jesus Christ insists that we turn our backs on the evil past and follow Him. None of us can compromise with evil and get away with it. Look at what happened to Samson in the Book of Judges. Samson tried to compromise with evil and get away with it. From the time Samson was a baby, the strong young man had been dedicated by his parents to a holy life. You would think Samson would at least have married a girl of his own religion, but instead he fell in love with a heathen Philistine woman. In spite of the heartbroken protests of his parents, he persisted in his plans to marry her. At their wedding feast, Samson put forth his famous, “Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.” (Judges 14:14) Unable to solve the riddle, the Philistines prevailed on the bride to learn the answer from her husband. Samson was physically strong but was like putty in the hands of a tearful woman. Having given away his secret, he lost his temper, and the final result was murder and a wrecked marriage. Samson now had a double reason for keeping away from the Philistines. They were after his blood because he had killed so many of their people, and their women had proved unfaithful. But some strange fascination drew him back and he allowed himself to fall in love with another Philistine girl – this time, the notorious Delilah. The Philistines were seeking to destroy Samson. But they were unable to do so because of his great strength. They prevailed on Delilah to coax Samson to reveal his secret. Once more this strong man was like clay in the hands of a beautiful woman, and Samson fell again. He confided in her that his strength lay in his hair, which had never been cut from the day of his birth. Delilah caught him when he was asleep, and with the help of a Philistine, cut off his flowing locks. When he awoke he was as other men. The Philistine captured him and put out his eyes, making him a prisoner and a slave. No man can compromise with evil and get away with it. If we really want the victory we must turn our backs completely on whatever may have caused our downfall in the past. It is highly dangerous to toy with evil. God’s power is found without any question in His Words, the Bible. Perhaps you have trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior but He does not have complete control of your life. You can let Him take over your life today. You can trust Him and be born again into God’s family and begin to live this victorious Christian life. Pray for America and for our leaders. Pray for our brave men and women in service.



REV. BERTRAM BOBB  
Tribal Chaplain



Choctaw Nation: GARY BLACKERBY

Assistant Chief Gary Batton, Susie McEntire Luchsinger, Alice McEntire Foran, Tushka Mayor Brickie Griffin, Councilman Anthony Dillard, Blake Shelton and Reba McEntire.

## Neighbors rally to help tornado victims

Word spread fast about the tornado in Atoka County on April 14. The damage to the small town of Tushka was heartbreaking but the response was wholehearted. The news of the devastation spread quickly but what people are still talking about is the outpouring of love and assistance from everyone. Fellow Okies Reba McEntire and Blake Shelton donated their time for a benefit concert and when it sold out in only a few hours, the Country music superstars offered another night! The two concerts held in the Event Center in Durant brought in \$500,000 to help with the relief efforts. The day after the tornado, students and faculty of several Pittsburg County schools agreed to hold a penny drive to help with the rebuilding of Tushka School. Students from Krebs, Savanna, Pittsburg, Frink Chambers, Indianola, Haywood, Crowder, Kiowa, Harts-horne and Lakewood Christian gathered a whopping \$13,876.14! Choctaw Nation Travel Plazas



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

Assistant Chief Gary Batton, Savanna Superintendent Chad Graham, Pingleton, Krebs Principal Patrick Turner, Tushka High School Principal Matt Simpson, District 10 Councilman Anthony Dillard and Choctaw Travel Plaza Executive Director Brian McClain.

committed in the beginning to match up to \$10,000. A check was presented to Tushka School Superintendent Bill Pingleton this morning for \$23,876.14, a great example of neighbors helping neighbors.

## Helping to meet members’ spiritual needs

District 9 Councilman Ted Dosh, left, and the Rev. David Wilson, Conference Superintendent of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (OIMC), display the deed to land donated by the Choctaw Nation to the Chihowa Okla United Methodist Church. Though the physical church structure has yet to be built at the two-and-a-half acre tract of land located at 3210 North First St. in Durant, its members have already gathered there as a church body. On May 25, they joined together for a blessing of the land the church is to be built on and to honor the leaders of the church and the tribe. A presentation of gifts was made to Councilman Dosh for Chief Pyle, Assistant Chief Batton, and the members of the Tribal Council by the children of the church. The blessing prayer, led by OIMC District Superintendent July Tecumseh, closed the ceremony. Church leaders say they hope to have the new church built by this time next year and they are incredibly grateful to the Choctaw Nation for its continued support in meeting the spiritual needs of the people of District 9.



Choctaw Nation: LARISSA COPELAND



# Sam Scroggin’s success story

Sam Scroggins has lived in McCurtain County all of his life. He grew up in the Broken Bow area and graduated from Broken Bow High School. Graduating from a high school was a great accomplishment for Sam because he was the first one in his immediate family to graduate. That also included many of his extended family members.

While attending high school Sam worked at McDonald’s and was on an after-school program where he helped clean the sport complex. At the time, he did not realize the determination that was inside of him. Sam said in the back of his mind he had always thought about the nursing profession because during his high school years he helped take care of his grandfather who was bed bound.

After graduation, Sam got married, continued in the workforce and began a family of two children. He worked at Kwik Kar for seven years in the Idabel area. Later, while going through a divorce, he decided to pursue the medical field.

He contacted Choctaw Nation Career Development, and was able to get assistance for Certified Nurse Assistance (CNA) training. He went through the training and became licensed. He started working as a CNA on weekends at Hill’s Nursing Home and during the week he continued with his regular job. He really enjoyed working as a CNA, so he decided to pursue a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) degree.

He once again contacted Penny James with Career Development for assistance. He did not realize how much more Career Development could help him in other areas. He thought that helping him financially was as far as they would go. However, they provided weekly nurse-prep workshops that helped with the nurse application process, as well as provide tutoring sessions, mock interviews and much more.

It was a great support system for him and he took every advantage of those workshops that he could. During an interview, he said that he owed so much to Penny James and Gena Fowler, who are two of the counselors for



Career Development. “Both went as far as meeting me at a local clothes store to personally help me with my interview clothes for the LPN Program. They treated me like family,” he said.

The first time he did a mock interview with Penny and Gena, he froze. He could not think or say a word. With practice he felt somewhat at ease when he had a real interview with the Kiamichi Technology Center (KTC). Sam was accepted into the LPN Program at the Idabel KTC. It was a struggle for 11 months. Luckily he also received other financial assistance from the Choctaw Nation because he had to quit his job in order to concentrate solely on his classes.

While going through the program Sam received tutoring from Career Development. “Penny and Gena were with me every step of the way. They treated me just like a son. There were days I dreaded going to class when I wasn’t doing well because I knew they would be waiting for me at the door. They would scold me and then turn around and tell me that they knew I could do it,” said Sam.

On the lighter side, Sam said that Penny and Gena would tell him that it was his fault they couldn’t diet, because he kept them stressed out throughout the 11 months. Sam has since married and both he and his wife are working as LPNs.

He is hoping his determination has helped break the cycle in his family concerning the importance of an education and he knows that all this would not have been possible without the support of Career Development and Choctaw Nation.

## Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Photo Contest

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

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

PHOTOGRAPHY SPECIFICATIONS:

- Digital images are preferred but not required.
- High resolution 300 dpi RGB JPG files are preferred.
- To be considered for a top inside calendar page images need to be at least 2 to 5 mb JPG files in horizontal format.

All photos must be received by **July 1, 2011**.

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

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

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma reserves the right to use submitted photos in other publications.

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

A Grand Prize of \$150 will be awarded to the person submitting the cover photo. Individual \$50 prizes will also be awarded each person whose photo is chosen for calendar pages.

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

## The wisdom of water

### WIC WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN

I’m thirsty! What should my child drink?  
Water, milk, juice?  
Make water your first choice of drink. Offer water between meals and snacks. Serve milk at meals; this is an easy way for your child to get enough calcium and it’s a healthy habit to learn. Juice is part of a healthy diet and could be served with breakfast; only 4 to 6 ounces should be offered a day.

**Five easy tips to make WATER your child’s first choice**


- Be a role model: Drink water with your child; he/she will want to drink what you drink.
- Make it “cool” to drink: Serve water in a special cup with a colorful straw or offer it in a sports bottle.
- Add a splash of flavor: Add a slice of fresh lemon or freeze blended fruit in ice trays to add to your water.
- Keep cold water in the fridge: Store water in a pitcher or large bottle for quick access.
- Serve water as the dinner drink: Serve a pitcher of water with fresh lemon slices or fresh orange slices for your evening meal.

It’s important to remember that what your child drinks is as important as what he/she eats. Offering and serving water, milk and juice promotes healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

## WIC recipe of the month Refreshing Lemon and Cucumber Water

**Ingredients:**  
1 gallon of cold water  
2-3 slices of fresh lemon  
2-3 slices of fresh cucumber

**Preparations:**  
Place all ingredients in a pitcher and serve!  
For a stronger taste, let the mixed ingredients set in the refrigerator for an hour prior to serving.






## Choctaw Nation to aid with loans

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

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

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

## 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

## NURSERY NEWS

### Zaiden McFadden

Zaiden Gaige McFadden was born at 6:35 p.m. on April 19, 2011, at Paris Regional Medical Center, in Paris, Texas, to Brad McFadden and Trinity Perry.

Grandparents are Donny and Linda Perry of Paris, Dana McFadden of Blossom and Bill McFadden of Paris. Great-grandparents are Toby and Katy Wilson of Pattonville, Texas.



## Chili-Citrus Marinated Chicken

Makes: 4 servings

**Ingredients:**

- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves (1 to 1 ¼ lbs. total)
- 1/3 cup orange juice
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon snipped fresh cilantro or parsley
- 2 teaspoons snipped fresh mint or ½ teaspoon dried mint, crushed
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ teaspoon salt

**Directions:**

Chili-Citrus Marinade: In a small bowl, combine the orange juice, lemon juice, snipped fresh cilantro or parsley, mint, chili powder, garlic, and salt.

1. Place chicken in a resealable plastic bag set in a shallow dish. Pour marinade into bag with chicken; seal bag. Marinate in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours or up to 4 hours. Turning bag occasionally. Drain chicken, reserving marinade.

2. Place chicken on the rack of an uncovered grill directly over medium coals. Grill for 15 to 18 minutes or until chicken is no longer pink (170 degrees F), turning once and brushing with reserved marinade once halfway through grilling. Discard leftover marinade.

**Nutrition facts:**

Amount per serving, Calories - 134, Total Carbs - 2g, Total fat - 1g, Cholesterol - 66mg, Protein - 26g, Sat fat - 2g, Sodium - 139mg.

Serve with a mixed green salad adorned with sectioned oranges, sliced strawberries and pecans. For a colorful dessert serve cups of mixed berries layered with a light lemon yogurt. A crowd pleaser for all ages!

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

## FOOD DISTRIBUTION

**ANTLERS**  
Market open weekdays July 5-26 , except for:  
**July 6 :** Idabel 9-11 a.m.; Broken Bow 12-2 p.m. (market closed)  
**July 13:** Bethel 9-10:30; Smithville 12-2 (market closed)  
**Closed** July 27-29 for inventory  
**Cooking with Carmen:** July 11 & 20, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

**DURANT**  
Market open weekdays: July 5-26, except for:  
**Closed** July 27-29 for inventory  
**Cooking with Carmen:** July 7 & 25, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

**McALESTER**  
Market open weekdays July 5-26, except for:  
**Closed** July 27-29 for inventory  
**Cooking with Carmen:** July 5 & 18, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

**POTEAU**  
Market open weekdays July 5-26, except for:  
**Closed** July 27-29 for inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** July 13 & 22, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

## CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday thru Friday. We will take lunch from 11:30 to 12 noon

**WAREHOUSES & MARKETS**

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

**FOOD DISTRIBUTION SITES**

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

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# Okla Chahta Gathering

May 7-8 in Bakersfield, California



Choctaw social dancing demonstrations are held throughout the two-day gathering in Bakersfield.



Chief Gregory E. Pyle and Assistant Chief Batton present gifts of appreciation to Okla Chahta Board members Bill Harrison, Mike Bryant, Brenda DeHarrera, Aaron Wilkins, Victoria Harrison and Theresa Harrison. Not pictured, Nancy Long and Pam Reeder.



Chief Pyle and Chyann and Joshua Garland.



Congratulations to his year's Okla Chahta Princesses – Sr. Miss Sarah DeHerrera, Jr. Miss Taylor Archuleta and Little Miss Nizhoni Felihkatub-bee. They are pictured with Assistant Chief Gary Batton, 2010-11 Sr. Miss Lindsay Reeder and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.



Councilmen attending from Oklahoma – Mike Amos, Anthony Dillard, Ted Dosh, Joe Coley, Bob Pate, James Frazier, Delton Cox and Thomas Williston.



The Okla Chahta Clan honors Storyteller Tim Tingle for his years of dedication in preserving Choctaw culture.



Learning the language.



Ladies learn to weave baskets.



Kanda Jackson hands a rose to Maurise Sharton of Bakersfield. The flowers were passed out to all mothers at the Okla Chahta Gathering in honor of Mother's Day.



Chief Pyle visits with Kent Davis, Brandon Davis and Brandon Davis II.



Players demonstrate stickball for the West Coast Choctaws.



The Color Guard and veterans march into the circle to begin the festivities.



Joe Kobierowski presents an eagle feather, tobacco and cedar to Chief Pyle. Also pictured are his wife, Marcie, and their daughter, Allie.



Rabbit and Fox arrive for kids' language lesson.

## Tribal member battles 'Swamp Wars'

Miami is a vacationer's paradise with its beautiful beaches, myriad of outdoor activities and sizzling nightlife. Yet, the city is situated in the center of a giant swamp making it a Garden of Eden for snakes and other overgrown reptiles – many not native to the area. Snakes are everywhere, and the potential for a snake to strike is at an all-time high. One hundred percent of backyards in Miami and throughout South Florida have snakes; you just can't always see them. Not to mention, dangerous alligators, aggressive iguanas and Africanized bees. Beginning at 8 p.m. (CT) on June 12, Animal Planet takes to the front lines of this daily combat in "Swamp Wars," introducing the only team with the fearlessness and knowledge to battle these vicious and often venomous creatures – Venom One. The Venom One team is an elite group of specially trained fire fighter/paramedics within Miami-Dade Fire Rescue. It's the only emergency response team of its kind, and it currently holds the largest and only anti-venom bank available for public use in the United States. "Swamp Wars" follows the intensity and urgency of their daily clash with nature as this courageous team takes down killer snakes, rushes against the clock to deliver anti-venoms and ultimately saves lives.

In each hour of this six episode docu-drama, the Venom One team – led by Chief Al Cruz – fights to capture the most dangerous animals that come out of the Everglades and into suburbia; native species such as the Eastern diamondback rattlesnake, which carries five to seven times the amount of venom it takes to kill a human, as well as invasive species like the Burmese python. The Venom One team hunts down many of these deadly constrictors including a gi-

ant 14-foot python slithering its way down the streets of Miami. A teenage boy's jubilation over a new pet snake, he believes to be a python, turns to terror when he learns it is in fact a venomous cottonmouth water snake after being bitten. The team must race to get him the anti-venom he needs before the venom attacking his body does irreparable harm. Unafraid of humans, cottonmouths can turn up anywhere, and a Florida woman finds this out when one jumps out of her toilet one night and strikes her. In another episode, carnivorous Tegus lizards living on the edge of a Florida City trailer park are taking over. The team must remove these highly aggressive, non-native reptiles before a child loses a finger or a family pet becomes a meal.

"Swamp Wars" shadows the Venom One team, which consists of Chief Al Cruz, Captain Charles "Chuck" Seifert (a.k.a. Big Country), Captain Jeff Fobb (a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma), Lieutenant Scott Mullin, and Lieutenant Lisa Wood, the lone woman on the squad. The team's passion for reptiles and other exotic creatures extends into their personal lives too. In their spare time, each team member takes a bit of their work life home with them and in some cases it's a family affair. Many of them own collections of snakes and other reptiles, go python hunting on the weekends or volunteer with local animal groups.

"Swamp Wars" is produced for Animal Planet by 2CMedia Inc. For 2CMedia Inc., Chris Sloan and Carla Kaufman Sloan are the executive producers and Calvin Simons is co-executive producer. Erin Wanner is the executive producer for Animal Planet. Marc Et-kind is the vice president for development for Animal Planet.

## Livestock disaster assistance available for drought

The USDA's Farm Service Agency has announced that producers who have suffered livestock grazing losses due to qualifying drought may apply for assistance under the provisions of the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP). This permanent disaster program is authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill. The Livestock Forage Disaster Program will help those producers who have suffered as a result of drought.

There are provisions under which the drought must qualify in order for the producers to be eligible for assistance. For drought, the losses must have occurred on land that is native or improved pastureland with permanent vegetative cover or a crop planted specifically for grazing for covered livestock due to a qualifying drought during the normal grazing period for the specific type of grazing land in the county.

Eligible livestock under LFP include beef cattle, alpacas, buffalo, beefalo, dairy cattle, deer, elk, emus, equine, goats, llamas, poultry, reindeer, sheep and swine. For losses due to drought, qualifying drought ratings are determined using the U.S. Drought

Monitor located at [www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html](http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html).

To be eligible for assistance under the LFP producers must:

- Have timely applied for and obtained either Crop insurance; or
- Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance (NAP) coverage on the pasture or grazing land which suffered an eligible loss.
- Be an owner, cash or share lessee, or contract grower of covered livestock that provides pastureland or grazing land for the livestock;
- Provide pastureland or grazing land that is physically located in a county affected by drought or fire on federally managed land.

*Note:* Eligible farmers and ranchers who meet the definition of "Socially Disadvantaged," "Limited Resource," or "Beginning Farmer or Rancher," does not have to meet the crop insurance requirement. Livestock producers who are members of the Choctaw Nation would qualify for the LFP under the Socially Disadvantaged exception, which is defined as, "a farmer or rancher who is a member of a group whose members have been subject to

racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities."

Listed below are the eligible counties and contact numbers for each FSA office. To make an appointment for signing up please contact the local FSA office in your county. These offices and numbers are listed below.

Atoka County: 580-889-2554, Monica White FSA Director  
Bryan County: 580-924-4131, Kevin Dale FSA Director  
Coal County: 580-889-2554, Monica White FSA Director  
Choctaw County: 580-326-3655, Earl Reed FSA Director  
Haskell County: 918-647-2047, Monte Anderson FSA Director  
Johnston County: 580-371-3219, Monica White FSA Director  
Leflore County: 918-647-2047, Monte Anderson FSA Director  
McCurain County: 580-286-2574, Jerry Robinson FSA Director  
Pittsburg County: 918-423-4073, Carl Patterson FSA Director

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# PEOPLE YOU KNOW



## Hartshorne Choctaw language class holds May 12 graduation

The Choctaw Community Language Class in Hartshorne had their graduation on May 12. The class completed phase IV of the language program. They sung Choctaw hymns and demonstrated their knowledge of the Choctaw language. Richard Adams, Assistant Director of the Choctaw Language Program; Roger Scott, Administrative Assistant; and Nicholas Charelston, Language Instructor from Durant all came to help present certificates and had words of encouragement for the students. Later, everyone enjoyed a potluck meal. Pictured from left to right are Nicholas Charelston, Roger Scott, Ann Tobey (teacher), Tammy Shaw, Steven Parish, Laura McCullar, Katherine Watson, Pat Warden, Rev. David Warden, Ray Tobey and Richard Adams.



## Head Start watches royal wedding

The Choctaw Nation Head Start children were invited to attend the royal wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton on April 29 via Smart Board. Each child received their personal invitation with their name on it. On April 29, as each child arrived at school they signed their own name in the guest book. A group picture was then taken of both classrooms.

The address to Buckingham Palace was obtained, and the virtual field trip was a lot of fun. A wedding card was bought, thanking the royal couple for inviting the Head Start and sharing their special day with the children and staff. Both guest books were wrapped up and decorated with child-friendly princess crowns to add to their attractiveness and mailed to the couple. The postmaster said, “It was the most exciting piece of mail to ever leave Antlers, America!”



## Goforth family

Alfred Allen Goforth, son of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Goforth of Sulphur, poses with his eight of nine sisters after returning home from spending 32 months as a POW in Korea. He passed away at the age of 70 in 1999. Today, five of his sisters are alive.

Pictured from left to right are Helen Goforth, Jean Goforth, Alfred Allen Goforth, Virginia Goforth Batson, Norma June Goforth Kirk, Ellen Goforth Green, Frankie Goforth Church, Sylvia Goforth Chronister and last is Alfred’s mother, Celia Goforth.

## Happy birthday, Makayla

Happy seventh birthday to Makayla Hood on March 8. Her parents are Christie and Thomas Hood, grandparents are Linda and Lee Knight and Charles and Kathy Hood. She celebrated with a princess party and family and friends. Also happy birthday to her Papa Lee on March 9.



## Happy birthday, Neecey

Neecey Nicole Taylor will turn 4 years old on June 27. Wishing her a happy birthday is her mother, father, Sharina, Tate and Justin Taylor.



## Happy birthday, Aleikae

A happy birthday to Aleikae Ray Thies of Durant who turned 1 year old on April Fools Day. Aleikae was able to celebrate his birthday with friends and family.



## Happy birthday

Happy birthday to Leroy Wilson and Silvena Bush of Smithville. Leroy turned 74 and Silvena turned 73 in May.



## Quay graduates

Congratulations to Quay Mahkila Cobb, grandson of the late Goodwin and Mary Cobb II of Lawrence, Kan., and son of the late Goodwin Keener Cobb III of Newark, Del., who graduated with an agriculture and natural resources degree from the University of Delaware.

## Happy birthday, Kyra

Happy birthday to Kyra Wilson of Durant! Kyra turned 9 years old on May 31. She participated in the Trail of Tears Commemorative Walk on May 21 at Wheelock with her family.



## Happy 20th, Sharena

Happy 20th birthday to Sharena Ward on March 24. Her parents are Ruth Ward and Donnie and Jacque Knight, and her grandparents are Lee and Linda Knight and Loyd and Mary Ward.

## Happy anniversary

Congratulations to Edward and Linda Mitchell of Arkoma, who celebrated their 30th anniversary on May 18.



## Happy birthday, Hannah

A big happy third birthday to Hannah Knight on Jan. 25. Her parents are Ricky and Stacey Knight and grandparents are Linda and Lee Knight. Hannah celebrated with a fairy princess party and family and friends.

## Happy birthday, Taylor

Happy birthday to Taylor Mae “Snowbird” Zurmuhlen, who just turned 6 years old, from a proud mommy, daddy and Buster.



## Happy birthday, Emma

Emma Ray Nita Ulla recently celebrated her birthday on March 12. Emma enjoys learning Choctaw, playing T-ball, trying to text and dancing to pow wow music. Hashki, Micha and Pokni are very proud of her. She is the daughter of Heather Baker.



## Happy birthday, Joseph and Joe’al

Cousins Joseph Scott Cunningham and Joe’al Cunningham will celebrate birthdays in June. Joseph, son of Steve and Debbie Cunningham of Texas, will be 20 years old, and Joe’al, son of Cody and Stacy Cunningham of Oklahoma, will be 4 years old. Joe’al’s big sister, Caylee, celebrated her ninth birthday on Jan. 10. They are descended from three original enrollees: Matilda Elizabeth LeFlore Manning, Angie Manning and Ethel Matilda Manning.

## Congrats, Cheyenne

Cheyenne Keith, an eighth-grader at Greenville Middle School, placed second in the middle-school girls division of the National Archery in the Schools Program Nationals in Louisville, Ky., on May 13-14. With this runner-up finish, Cheyenne qualified herself for the world competition in Orlando, Fla., in October. According to Greenville archery coach Beverly Stevens, no Greenville student has ever qualified for the world competition.

Cheyenne finished just one point behind the first place seventh-grader, but she earned \$2,000 in scholarship money after winning a shoot off with another archer. She scored a 292 with 22 perfect 10 shots. The competition includes 30 scoring arrows, making 300 a perfect overall score. In her third year at nationals and archery overall, Cheyenne was one of only three middle school archers to place in the top 10 overall individual scores. She also placed fifth in the state among female competitors in the middle school division as a sixth grader.

Cheyenne is also the valedictorian of her class at Greenville, having a 4.0 average. She also was named the #1 Okla Archer Champion in 2010. She is the granddaughter of Kenneth and Bette Shelton and Lucille and Carlton Keith. Her great-grandfather is original enrollee Sam Postoak, and she is the great-great-granddaughter of original enrollee Lizzie Lewis Boston.



## Annie turns 79

Happy birthday to Annie Betsey of Durant who turned 79 on May 12. Annie is employed at the Choctaw Casino. On May 14 her family celebrated her birthday and Mother’s Day.

## Zacharia graduates

Zacharia Richard Wilkinson graduated from Denver Seminary College on May 14, earning a master’s degree in theology. Zacharia is the lead pastor at Rever Church in Longmont, Colo. You can find him in Facebook, Twitter or listen to his podcasts at rever.ag.

## Caleb turns 1

Happy birthday to Caleb Hood on March 26, who celebrated his first birthday. His parents are Christie and Thomas Hood, and his grandparents are Lee and Linda Knight and Charles and Kathy Hood. He celebrated with his friends and family.



## 50th anniversary

Dr. James Errol and Lola Louise Isaac of Beach, N.D., will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary.

James was born in Ardmore. He is the only Native American pastor in the North American continent with two doctorate degrees. He has been a pastor for over 30 years, along side of his wife. They were married June 10, 1961, in Helmet, Calif. They have four children, Roy, Bill, Darrol and Debra; 12 grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. They will celebrate on the coast of Oregon with their family.



## Bennett-Jones engagement

Forrest and Dana Bennett of West, Texas, along with Ronnie and Debbie Jones of Lacey Lakeview, Texas, are happy to announce the engagement of their children, Melissa Jade Bennett and Stephen Kyle Jones.

Melissa is a 2007 graduate of West High and a 2011 graduate of Vogue Cosmetology School. She is currently employed at Shirley’s Salon in West.

Stephen is a 2004 graduate of Connally High and a 2007 graduate of TSTC with an Associate of Applied Science degree in environmental health and safety technology. He is now employed with Fluor Daniels.

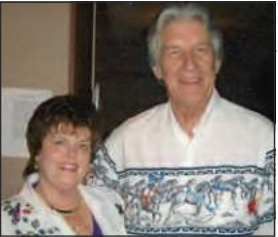


Melissa is the granddaughter of Jim and Earline Wortman of Holdenville, Margaret Bennett of Waco and Ancil Bennett of McAlester. Stephen is the grandson of Donald and Gloria Jones of Lacey Lakeview and Joan and the late Ronald A. Coleman of Elm Mott, Texas.

The couple will be exchanging vows in West this month.

## Happy anniversary

Geno and Ouida Whatley were married June 24, 1961. They have four sons: John, Dan, Mike and Gene. They have also been blessed with 15 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. Geno and Ouida live in the San Diego area near many of their children and grandchildren.



## Porum Landing Fire Department

Volunteers led by Choctaw member Mike Blake along with Luke Rhodes, George Wright and Dean Wilburn have reengineered an Army surplus truck obtained from the Forestry Department and converted them into fire-fighting trucks.



## Happy birthday, Brooke and Mikey

Meme and Papa want to wish a happy birthday to Brooke Delao, who will turn 2 years old on June 29, and Mikey Delao who will be 4 years old on Aug. 28. Meme and Papa will also be celebrating birthdays in June, on the 28th and 19th.



## Congrats, Will

William Anthony Fisher V of McKinney earned his Eagle Scout rank from the Boy Scouts of America on May 4. Will is one of the youngest scouts in the nation to earn the rank of Eagle. He was only 13 at the time of his Eagle Board of Review, and he earned his title with Troop 2150 from McKinney, which is in Circle 10 Council for the Boy Scouts of Oklahoma.

Will’s Eagle Project was repairing the WWII Sherman Tank that is at VFW Lone Star Post 2150 in McKinney. This post is also the chartered organization for Troop 2150. His project involved scraping and sanding the tank, primer and painting.

William hopes to someday serve his country in one of the armed services after college.



## Michael earns high rank

Michael Wayne Kraman, 18, earned the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest rank in the Boy Scouts of America, by completing a community service project for the Heritage Farmstead Historical Museum in Plano. He led a crew of other scouts in building period-style shelving so artifacts can be displayed at the historical museum.

Michael is a member of Troop 288 in Plano where he has served as senior patrol leader, bugler and historian. He is a freshman at the University of Texas where he is majoring in mechanical engineering. He is the son of Tammy and Mike Kraman of Plano. His grandmother is Betty Heard Watson and great-grandmother is original enrollee Irene Heard.



## Congrats, Bruce

Congratulations to Bruce Jacob, from all his family and friends. Bruce is one of the first graduates, and also the first Native American, to receive a certificate for completion of training with Christian Men’s Job Corps. This is the first training in the state of Oklahoma by the Southern Baptist Convention. Bruce is the son of Juanita Johnson of Oklahoma City and he’s a member of Victory Baptist Church in Oklahoma City.

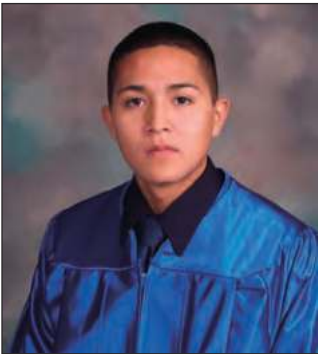




# Jones Academy students receive diplomas



DANIELLE CRUZ



KOTY DURAN



DAKOTA ESTRADA



KAYLA JOHN



DESTINY MATHIS



JAREN RICHARDS

## Eleven among Hartshorne High School’s graduating class

### Danielle Bobbie-Michelle Cruz

Danielle, the 17-year-old daughter of John and Angela Cruz of San Juan Pueblo, N.M., is a member of the Oh-kay Owingeh Tribe.

Danielle was on the Principal’s Honor Roll this year and a member of the high school softball team. She is interested in pursuing a career in cosmetology.

### Koty Collin Duran

Koty is the 18-year-old son of Tina Gasper of Zuni, N.M., and the late Aaron Duran. He is the grandson of Madeline Lowsayatee of Zuni and the late Anson Gasper, Shirley Duran of Tesuque, N.M., and the late Joseph Duran. Koty is a member of the Pueblo of Tesuque Tribe.

He has enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps.

### Dakota Miguel Estrada

A member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Dakota is the 17-year-old son of Pamela Estrada of Pickens and Jesus Estrada of Houston, Texas. He is the grandson of Patricia and Floyd Choate of Pickens.

Dakota was a member of the varsity football and power lifting teams. He also was active in yearbook and the Upward Bound Program. After graduation, he will attend classes at Southeastern Okla-



homa State University for two years and then transfer to the University of Oklahoma to finish a degree in engineering.

### Kayla Denise John

Kayla is the 18-year-old daughter of Alan John from Conehatta, Miss., and a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. She is the granddaughter of Evelyn John of Mississippi.

She has attended Hartshorne High School for two years and has been active in girls’ varsity basketball and track. Kayla made the All-Tournament Team at Tushka and the Black Diamond All-Conference First Team in 2011.

Kayla plans to attend classes in the fall at Haskell Indian Nations University.

### Destiny Elaine Mathis

Destiny, 18, is the daughter of Cynthia Adams of Poteau and Randall Mathis of Talihina. She is the granddaughter of Linda Watson of Talihina and Daniel and Rotha Mathis of LeFlore.

Destiny is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Okla-

ma. She has attended Hartshorne Public Schools for four years. She is enrolled at Seminole State College where she will attend classes this fall.

### Jaren Trae Richards

Jaren is the 18-year-old grandson of Elaine Gibson of Antlers. He is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and has attended Hartshorne Public Schools for six and one-half years. Jaren was a member of the varsity football, track and power lifting teams.

He is scheduled to attend classes in the fall at Southeastern Oklahoma State University and major in criminal justice.

Jaren was the co-recipient of the Robert Woods Scholarship Award for 2011.

### Gavin Keith Smith

Eighteen-year-old Gavin Smith is the son of Teresa Daniel of Wewoka and David Daniel of Woodland, Texas. He is the grandson of Violet Louise Daniel and David Daniel of Idabel and Edward and Grace Smith of Seminole. Gavin is a member of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma.

He has attended Hartshorne Public Schools for seven years. He was an active member of the high school band for three years and also part of the JA Writers and the Jones Academy newsletter staff. He



GAVIN SMITH



JACONA THLOCCO-DEERE



TRACEY TIGER

is enrolled at Seminole State College where he will be a full-time student this fall.

### Jacona Thlocco-Deere

Jacona is the 17-year-old son of Autumn Thlocco and George Deere of Oklahoma City.

His grandparents are Bryant and Constance Thlocco of Kansas City, Mo. He is a member of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma. After graduation, Jacona plans to be gainfully employed.

### Tracey Cierra Tiger

Tracey is the 18-year-old daughter of the late Diane Tiger of McAlester and the late Gary Tiger of Shawnee. She is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and has attended Hartshorne Public Schools for eight years.

Tracey has been active in student council and varsity basketball. She made the Principal’s Honor Roll. Tracey’s honors also include making the Basketball All-Tournament Team twice and All-Conference player her junior year.

She would like to pursue a career as a court room stenographer.



SHAYLIN PEDRO-WHITE BUFFALO



DE-JAY WYLY

### Shaylin Pedro-White Buffalo

Shaylin, 17, is the daughter of Melissa Pedro and Derwin Lime of El Reno. She is the granddaughter of Phyllis and Ed Naranjo of Ibapan, Utah, and Virgil Pedro of El Reno. Special recognition goes to Melvin Roman Nose of El Reno who has encouraged Shaylin throughout her life and educational endeavors. He has been a mentor and “grandpa” to her.

Shaylin was a member of the Hartshorne High School yearbook staff and the Learn and Serve Program at Jones Academy. She is an enrolled member of Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. She plans to attend Southwestern Oklahoma State University and pur-

sue a career in nursing. Shaylin was a co-recipient of the Robert Woods Scholarship Award for 2011.

### De-Jay Wyly

Seventeen-year-old De-Jay Wyly is the son of Mary and Alfred Wyly of Kansas, Okla. He is a member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. He has been a resident of Jones Academy and attended Hartshorne Public Schools for seven years.

De-Jay was a member of the Gifted and Talented Program and graduated fifth in his senior class. He also participated in Family, Career and Community Leaders of America.

De-Jay has enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps.

## COME JOIN US THIS FALL!



## Enroll Now @ Jones Academy!

We are accepting applications for the 2011 Fall Semester. We have openings in specific grades 1-12. **Tour our elementary school facilities and dorms.** Come Join Us! Be a Part of the Future! Take advantage of the residential program benefits:

- Tutorial Assistance for All Grades (1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>)
- Rewards for Academic Achievement
- High School Graduation Expenses Paid/Scholarships
- Career Counseling/College and Post- Secondary Preparation
- Voc-Tech Training
- Summer Youth Work Program
- Medical and Counseling Services Provided
- Alternative Education Program
- Traditional/Cultural Activities
- Recreational Activities & Educational Trips
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Please call for a tour or an application, toll-free at 888-767-2518 or access [www.jonesacademy.org](http://www.jonesacademy.org), or write to:  
Jones Academy  
HCR 74 Box 102-5  
Hartshorne, OK 74547



Junior Miss Indian Oklahoma Megan Larney and Senior Miss Dayla Amos pose with Jones Academy students Lakota Dixon and Tasina Lone Elk.

### Miss Indian Oklahoma visits Jones

Senior Miss Indian Oklahoma Dayla Amos and Junior Miss Indian Oklahoma Megan Larney visited the Jones Academy campus on April 6. The Indian pageant representatives spoke to the students about their platforms and the areas of interest that affected their communities. During the assembly, Miss Amos addressed the issue of diabetes and the impact on American Indian people. Miss Larney encouraged the students to be leaders in their respective Native American communities.

Miss Amos discussed how she grew up in a family that was affected by diabetes and described how she watched members of her family take medication or shots for their diabetes. Initially, she thought it was fun until she realized the severity of the problem. She also became aware of the effect that the disease was having on the Native American population and the high rate of diagnoses among tribal members. Throughout her presentation, Miss Amos advised students about preventative measures they could take in an effort to avert the disease. She encouraged them to practice healthy lifestyles such as eating a diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables. Instead of drinking pop, she suggested that students drink nutritious juices and/or water. Miss Amos added that students need to increase their physical activity and get plenty of rest. She said these basic life changes would improve their health and increase their longevity of life.

Miss Larney discussed the importance of taking leadership roles and the impact that good leaders can have on a community and future generations. She encouraged students to start taking steps now toward positions of responsibility and representation in order to be positive influences in their tribal communities. She challenged students on their comfort level and speaking up. She admitted that she was scared to speak up at times but realized that she must be willing to do this in an effort to be a role model in the community and lead by example. She admonished students not to be afraid and be willing to step up into leadership or representative roles. According to Miss Larney, by practicing these qualities in an athletic setting, a classroom or in life, students are preparing to become leaders of tomorrow and future generations. She revealed to students that one day it was possible they could be representatives in tribal government or chiefs of their sovereign nations.



# EDUCATION

## Donor with strong tribal roots supports Jones Academy’s library system

Jones Academy’s library system is thriving and growing. A certified librarian is now on staff and many new books line the shelves thanks to the generosity of Ruth Lynn Hooper, Ph.D., accomplished military leader, teacher, biologist and friend of Jones Academy. Due to her continuing support, Jones was able to hire Elaine Garvin to run the libraries. Elaine joined the Jones staff in January of 2010. Previously she taught at Clayton Public Schools then became their librarian. She also helped to establish libraries at Tuskahoma and Nashoba.

Dr. Hooper’s family has a rich history with the Choctaw Nation, especially in the field of education. Her great-grandfather served as superintendent of Wheelock Academy and was also the last elected secretary of the Choctaw Nation before Oklahoma statehood, when tribal government was abolished. Other relatives include a superintendent of public instruction for the Choctaw Nation and a Code Talker.

One of her great-aunts earned a master’s degree in mathematics, a rare accomplishment at that time, and taught at Goodland Indian Orphanage. Edward Lewis Wilson, Ruth Lynn’s grandfather, was born while his parents were at Wheelock Academy and was the only one of his nine siblings to stay on the allotted land in the Valliant/Fort Towson area. In 1924 the family moved to Dallas where Edward worked as an accountant. The family also had an extensive history of education outside the Choctaw Nation, with scientists, teachers, medical doctors, accountants and engineers.

The military also played a prominent part in Hooper’s life. Her father was a full colonel at the age of 27, being one of the youngest ever, and she followed in his footsteps by becoming the first female officer to make full colonel in the Medical Ser-



Photo Submitted

Nina Jane Wilson Hooper, learned to be strong, resourceful and resilient. She also took great pride in her Indian heritage and enjoyed supporting Jones Academy and other Choctaw youth, a cause her daughter has now taken as her own.

Hooper takes a personal interest in the children of Jones Academy. Not only is she generous monetarily, she gives herself and her time. She personally visits the school and brings books she has hand selected for the children. While on campus she reads with the children.

Since the students at Jones Academy come from diverse tribes and geographic areas, she has brought globes and atlas books for the libraries and dorms the students can use to find and show others where their homes are. She also provides books about different tribes, fiction written by Native Americans, field guides on insects and other animals and books given to her as a child by her grandmother.

The philosophy of reading helps to open new avenues for lifelong learning is one in which Hooper strongly believes. She often shares her pride in how eagerly the children use the books she brings and how much they have learned and achieved.

The Choctaw Nation greatly appreciates Dr. Ruth Lynn Hooper for being so generous and gracious to the children of Jones Academy. Most of all, it thanks her for the time, love and encouragement she shows to these young people.

vice Corps.

Prior to joining the Army, Hooper earned a master’s in biology and a Doctor of Philosophy in Entomology. She served in many different assignments, primarily in leadership capacities. She was also the first woman to command a deployable Preventive Medicine Unit.

As an Army wife, Hooper’s mother,

## Youth Advisory Board holds 2011 Kick Butts Day

The Youth Advisory Board mission is to promote healthier lifestyles among the youth in the 10 1/2 counties of the Choctaw Nation by investing in and utilizing them as valuable assets through education and communication. The McCurtain County chapter of the YAB consists of teens from grade eight to grade 12 who attend some of the local county schools.

The YAB members shown in the picture from left to right are Whitney Aaron, Erika Snead, Ariel Anna, Adolfo Martinez, Kristi Adams, Kendall Adams and Ethan Adams celebrating Kick Butts Day 2011 by displaying signs and giving away frisbees and bouncy balls to the younger generation in front of Pruett’s in Broken Bow. Their signs displayed several disturbing facts about the causes of using tobacco products.

The theme of the YAB’s Kick Butts Day demonstration was



Photo Submitted

the number 1,200. Approximately 1,200 Americans die every day because of tobacco-related illnesses. Americans that smoke also put their family and friends at risk of tobacco-related illnesses because of second-hand smoke. 53,800 people die every year from second-hand smoke exposure. Over time, this number has increasingly targeted the younger generation. When asked if the tobacco market targets the younger generation, an unknown tobacco ad executive stated: “If they have lips, we want them.”

We had three seniors give a quote on the project. Erika Snead said “Kickety kickety butts! The world needs more positive influences and a drug-free atmosphere. Who said using tobacco was ‘in’?” Ariel urges young people to “kick butts! Please, why not save a life or two? Be the bigger person and stand up for what’s right.” Ariel and Erika of Wright City High School said, “Be above the crowd!” Adolfo of Broken Bow High School stated, “Life’s a garden, dig it. Don’t mess it up by using tobacco.”

The YAB Hugo/McCurtain County Chapter is under the direction of Community Outreach Specialist Kristi Adams. For more information concerning the use of tobacco and stopping it, contact the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW. Thank you so much for your concern and attention. Thank you to all the supporters that helped in promoting Kick Butts Day 2011.

This article was written by Erika Snead and Ariel Anna of Wright City High School/McCurtain County CNYAB.

## Jones students receive STAR awards

Jones Academy students were recognized for their academic achievements by the Choctaw Nation STAR Program for the fall 2010 school semester. Success Through Academic Recognition (STAR) honors Choctaw students for classroom excellence and perfect attendance. Students were rewarded with Wal-Mart gift cards valued from \$10 and \$25. Students receiving these awards are enrolled in the Hartshorne public schools.



Photo Submitted

**Jaren Richards and Tracey Tiger, Cheyenne Neal (10th-grader), Alisha Picone (ninth-grader), Shelby Tushka (fifth-grader), Billie Jo Nunn (ninth-grader), Kendale Willie (seventh-grader) and STAR representative Jason Campbell.**



Photo Submitted

## Outstanding Youth Leadership Achievement Award

Choctaw Nation Youth Advisory Board Hugo/McCurtain County Chapter traveled to Oklahoma City on March 23 to attend the Youth Speak on Bullying at the capitol before attending the Second Annual Prevention Award Banquet, held by the Oklahoma Department Of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, where they received the 2010 Outstanding Youth Leadership Achievement Award for dedication and professional services. In addition, 19 YAB students from Hugo/McCurtain County were there to accept the award. The students also did a performance of the Turn

Around Skit at the banquet after accepting the award. The students who performed the skit were Preston Wells, Micah Green, Luke Green, Josh Hyland, Jacob Wallace, Jennifer Williams, Adolfo Martinez, Chris (CJ) Scott, Donyale Shanklin, Daniele Karr, Ariel Anna, Haleigh Owen, Courtney Patterson, Bethany Webster, Mahli Webster, Morgan Moffitt, Deedee Adamson, Blake Pillars, Alexis Siler, Adult Sponsor for the Hugo/McCurtain YAB/ Youth Empowerment, Kristi Adams, and Assistant Director of Youth Empowerment, Melissa Cress.

## To the Youth of the Nation

**By: Kamber Vasquez  
Youth Advisory Board**



The Nashoba Youth Foundation was founded by Lisa Fabian and Renee Farmer in an effort to combat obesity, diabetes and substance abuse among our Native American youth. Fabian found that bringing skate parks to Native America would help serve this purpose by getting the kids up and active while doing something they enjoyed.

Recently the NYF solicited drawings from members of the Youth Advisory Board students from Heavener and Howe schools. The designs were to contain specific criteria, which consisted of incorporating Native America and skateboarding. Among the students chosen were Kamber Vasquez, Sarah Swarts and Viddy Zamora. Judging was done on a scoring scale. According to the judges, the drawing that they chose was “beautifully done using Native American scenery on a skateboard which appears to be in the clutches of an eagle.”

“When I was told that I had won first place I could hardly believe it,” said Kamber. “I have been skateboarding since I was 11 years old. My first skateboard was a cheap \$15 board that I got from my dad. In my eyes that board was going to get me to the X Games and I would meet Tony Hawk who is my lifelong idol. As the years passed I kept skateboarding, but my dream of ever meeting Tony Hawk or going to the X Games began slipping away, even though each time I heard something about Tony Hawk I was all over it.

“When Mrs. Farmer held a meeting for Mrs. Fabian about the ‘Tony Hawk Skate Park Grant,’ I was so excited. They called everyone who they thought skateboarded or would like to skateboard including Shonnie Hall who is over the YAB here in our area. We were asked to think of a design that included skateboarding and Native American culture. Right then, an idea popped into my head: what if I could tie in a hawk, representing the grant Tony Hawk may give us, as well as Native America? The hawk could be holding a skateboard that has some images depicting a Native region with mountains and a wolf howling at the moon.

“This park has been named ‘The Nashoba Skate Park.’ I have moved to many places including Nashoba Valley, so I knew immediately that Nashoba is wolf in Choctaw. I was happy to be able to contribute a design to help generate more excitement among the community as well as helping to get the kids more upbeat about the idea that we are actually going to get a skate park.

“Most of the time skaters get looked at as if they are thugs, and this is not at all true. I am glad to know that our community and our YAB leader have educated themselves about skate parks and that they are behind the project 100 percent. They want to provide us a place where we can go that is safe and we can enjoy one of our favorite pastimes. I have learned a lot about our community from my YAB group, and I am so glad to be a part of such a great project.”

## Congrats, Terrence

Congratulations to Terrence Isom Jr. who graduated from Savanna High School on May 13. Eighteen-year-old Terrence plans to continue his education at East Central University in the fall.



## Kyle graduates

Kyle White Buffalo graduated from Heritage College in Oklahoma City on May 13 with an associate degree in the personal trainer program. He is the son of Rochelle White Buffalo Jr. and June White Buffalo and is the brother to Shana White Buffalo. His grandparents are Rochelle Sr. and Joy White Buffalo of Stratford and the late Gaston Hickman and Anna Belle Hickman Alberson of Roff.

Kyle has many aunts, uncles and cousins that are very proud of his accomplishments.



## Emily: Stanford graduate

Emily Clara Deffner, daughter of Jacqueline Ree Deffner, great-granddaughter of original enrollee Edmond Ree Cleveland, is graduating from Stanford University on June 12 with a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies and a minor in creative writing. While attending Stanford, Emily was very active in her sorority Kappa Kappa Gamma, where she was President 2010-2011. Emily was also on the Stanford co-ed cheer squad and was a member of the Stanford Women’s Club Lacrosse Team. Emily participated in numerous philanthropy events throughout her four years. She looks forward to her future success with her Stanford degree in hand.



## Choctaw student selects OU

As a four-year starter at quarterback, Choctaw member and Talihina High School alumna Jordana Eagle Road amassed over 100 rushing touchdowns, numerous accolades and a senior season for the record books, which accounted for 40 touchdowns, over 2,000 yards of offense and an average of over 10 yards per carry. His pass completion percentages also stood above the 50 percent mark. On defense he had seven interceptions and led his team to nine shutouts in the season. They ended their season with a 12-1 mark. He also helped add a state basketball championship to the trophy case at Talihina this March.

Jordan chose the University of Oklahoma over full-ride offers from Northeastern State University and Bacone College. Coach Stoops is proud to have him as a member of his fall 2011 recruiting class. Assistant Coach Bruce Kittle remarked via email, “He seems like a great athlete and even more importantly a great young man.” Jordan is the son of Bill and Teresa Eagle Road. For further information please see the May issue of the Native American Times monthly magazine.



## Congrats, Jordan

Jordan Daniel Hanslovan has received his Doctor of Jurisprudence from Williamette University College of Law. His family would like to say congratulations.

Jordan and his family would also like to thank the Choctaw Nation. Jordan has received scholarships from the Nation for the past seven years and they appreciate the support.



## Appreciates support

Jenifer Empson recently received her bachelor’s degree in interdisciplinary health services: occupational therapy and graduated summa cum laude.

She would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for the scholarship money to help her continue her education.



## Moving onward

Greetings brother and sister Choctaws. I wanted to write a quick note to thank you all for your kind support while I have been in undergraduate school. I graduated May 14 from the University of Minnesota, Morris, with a bachelor’s degree in theatre arts. In addition, I have been accepted to the graduate school at the University of North Dakota. My education would have been much harder to finance without the generous contributions of the tribe throughout my undergraduate schooling. I am looking forward to the day when I am in a position to give back to the Choctaw family that has given me such support. Thank you very much. – **Anthony J. Albright**



## Rance graduates

Congratulations to graduate Rance Christian Gilliam of Coalgate High School. Rance is the son of Jeff and Angie Gilliam and the grandson of the late Rev. Raymond Carney and Paula Carney and Bear and Cleo Gilliam. He attended Coalgate Schools for six years and was involved with sports. He played football and basketball for four years and golf for two years. He was active in 4H, National Honor Society, president of the Art Club, member of the drama club and student council representative for his senior class. He was also selected to attend Boys State this past summer. Rance has one older sister, Karnie. He likes to hang out with his friends and family and loves to watch Sooner sports. His future plans include attending East Central University and pursuing a degree in civil engineering from the University of Oklahoma.



## Lyles selected for national internship

Choctaw member Kayla Lyles of Hugo has been selected to join students from across the nation and around the world working for Project Vote Smart in Montana for the summer. She has also been awarded the National Barry Goldwater Scholarship. Project Vote Smart is a program that provides a unique lesson in the study of American politics. Students from across the nation and around the world come to the high-tech research center in the Montana Rockies for 10 weeks to help American citizens educate themselves about elected officials and candidates. Kayla’s goal is to help citizens better defend themselves from the political hype and misrepresentation characteristic of present day political campaigns. Kayla is the daughter of Karla Peel and the granddaughter of Karen and Paul Lyles of Hugo. She is a fifth-year student at the University of Central Oklahoma majoring in political science/public administration. She is a representative of the Choctaw Nation in the University’s Native American Student Association. Kayla has also had the honor of interning for Gov. Brad Henry, U.S. Congressman Dan Boren, Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs and Oklahoma’s Legislative Report at the state capitol. Kayla is very proud of where she comes from. She is a strong advocate for tribal preservation and rural areas. She is a strong leader and dedicated public servant to her state, community and tribe. After graduation, Kayla plans to move to D.C. to pursue her career in public service while representing the people of the Choctaw Nation and Southeastern Oklahoma. Kayla said: “I think my most favorite thing about where I come from is that there is a different standard of living down here. It is such a great place to grow up with proud, friendly, down-to-earth people. I believe it’s something you can’t understand unless you’re from the area. I have seen success and I have seen struggle. I want to become a better public servant so that I can give back to the community that has had a huge impact in my life. This community has so much hospitality and love. I am just a little nobody from a very small area and I am humbly honored and surprised to have had these opportunities. I hope that I can make my community proud.”



## Very thankful graduate

My name is Lucas Freeman, a man who has one semester left before gaining the most valuable achievement he has ever experienced. This achievement would not be possible without the help that has been graciously given to me by the Choctaw Nation. I grew up being told that college is the best way to get a job within our society and to be able to live comfortably, but I noticed a problem as I began to look at tuition prices. I asked myself, “How can people afford this?” I was honestly worried that I would be one of the many who could not afford a college education until I found out that I was eligible for a scholarship through the Higher Education Department of the Choctaw Nation. Later I found myself not only being eligible for the scholarship but a recipient of the scholarship, which then allowed me the luxury of entering Southeastern Oklahoma State University to gain my degree. It’s now four years later and I’m about to graduate. It’s been a long and hard road but I’ve made it. There have been ups and downs during these four years, and there have been times when I didn’t know if I was going to be able to make it, but the Choctaw Nation came to my rescue. Throughout these years the Choctaw Nation has provided me with food, clothing and even a computer without asking for anything in return except that I do well in college. I would like to say that this achievement of graduating is one that I worked to gain by myself but I’d be lying. Without the moral support of my family and friends, the constant motivation given to me by my loving parents and the financial help that the Choctaw Nation has allotted me, I would not be where I am today. For all of this, I thank those mentioned.

## Fishing trip for Jones students

Fifth-grade Jones Academy students took a trip to Hartshorne Lake on May 16 and were successful, catching 28 fish.



## Choctaw Nation honored at reception

The American Indian Graduate Center (AIGC) partnered with the Gathering of Nations for a reception, “Celebrating Education and Tribe,” at the Isotopes Ball Park in Albuquerque on April 30. During this event, AIGC recognized and honored two alumni, an outstanding tribe that generously supports higher education and a corporate organization, all making a difference in Indian country. The Choctaw Nation was the tribe selected and was recognized and honored during the event. This selection was not only based on the Scholarship Advisement Program and its commitment to promoting the importance of higher education and adequately preparing students for college, but also for its regular and generous philanthropic support of organization and programs that focus on educating youth and generally improving communities. To learn more about AIGC, visit the website aigc.org, and to learn more about the Scholarship Advisement Program and the services they offer, visit their website at choctawnation-sap.com.

## Congrats, Michael

Michael John Byrne graduated with honors from Union High School in Camas, Wash., on June 9. He is a member of the Choctaw Nation Scholarship Program and is attending Barrett Honors College at Arizona State University this fall on a large academic scholarship. Michael and his family want to thank the SAP for all their support. Congratulations and good luck, Michael!



## Congrats, Damien

Congratulations to Damien Christopher Hamilton who just graduated from Coalgate High School. Damien is the son of Amick and Taloa Birdshead and the grandson of Joseph and Joann Birdshead of Billings, Mont., Rev. Gary and Cheryl Weeden of Coalgate and Leland Hamilton of Duncan. Damien has attended Coalgate Schools for eight years. He’s been a member of the Wildcat football team for four years, basketball team for three years and ran track for four years. He was also a member of FFA for two years. His is the older brother to Tvli and Warren of Coalgate and Samantha and Dakota of Duncan. Damien enjoys spending time with his friends and family, including his church family at Grace Christian Fellowship. He is all heart and loves to fish. He plans to attend East Central University in the fall and go wherever the Lord leads him from there.



## Congrats, Jordan

Jordan MaRae Billy was recently honored by the Oklahoma Federation of Indian Women at a banquet at the Choctaw Nation Community Center in McAlester. Jordan was the recipient of the Achievement Award for Outstanding American Indian Female Student. Jordan’s application and biography was chosen over many other applicants, and she is honored to have the opportunity to represent her Choctaw heritage. Jordan is an eighth grade student at Rattan Junior High School. She has always excelled academically in her class and is actively involved in organizations such as the honor roll, Academic Awards Program, Choctaw Nation Youth Advisory Board, A.W.A.N.A.S. Church Program Group Leader, Oklahoma S.W.A.T., the junior high softball team and junior high basketball. Within these organizations, Jordan has demonstrated excellent leadership abilities and often inspires others to accomplish their goals. She shares her compassion for education and community service to lead others to achieve more in life. Jordan’s future plans are to graduate high school with honors and to attend college. She is considering a career in the medical field. She also wants to continue her support in the community and her Choctaw tribal heritage.



**Pictured left to right with speaker Sam Glenn’s artwork are Joshua Sam, Brandon Anderson, Gavin Smith and Elisa Reyes.**

## 2011 Career Expo – Map Your Future

“Courage, courage to step out, courage to step out and achieve what you set out to accomplish.” These were some of the words of Sam Glenn addressing an audience of 1,500 high school students at the fourth annual Choctaw Nation Career Expo on April 6. The event was held at the Southeast Expo Center in McAlester. Glenn, also known as the “attitude guy,” is a nationally acclaimed corporate speaker and author of “A Kick in the Attitude.” His book is an account of his own journey to success with instructions about remaining positive while moving toward one’s own success. His motivational speech included a creative blend of humor, inspiration and an art demonstration. He used a cloth canvas to create a landscape with valleys, mountain peaks and a winding path. He then applied the composition to illustrate a person’s successes and failures in life and the hard choices one has to make at times. After the presentation students were able to attend sessions and meet with over 150 vendors representing businesses, colleges, vocational schools, human services specialists, military recruiters and prospective employers. Students were encouraged to pick up information from the various displays as well as visit with the vendors and ask questions. Each student received a free tote bag from the Choctaw Nation for the items they collected at each booth, such as brochures, employment applications, pencils, pens, key chains, stress relievers and more. There were also door prizes, which included a 19-inch television, an Ipad, T-shirts and other assorted gifts. The career expo was sponsored by both the Choctaw Nation Career Development and the Scholarship Advisement Program. About 25 Jones Academy students attended the fair and collected valuable information to assist them in making important decisions about their future. The students also left with the knowledge that it will take courage to step out and achieve what they set out to accomplish.

## Shambre advances her education

The Choctaw Nation Student School and Activity Fund Program afforded Shambre Marie Westbrooks, daughter of Angela Guess Westbrooks, the opportunity to participate in the Running Start Program at Clark College in Vancouver, Wash., where she completed nine college courses in addition to her high school courses. She is grateful for the Choctaw Nation’s financial support and her Choctaw heritage. Shambre will graduate from Prairie High School in Vancouver on June 17 and will continue her education at Clark College.



# Unclaimed Funds

The Accounting Department of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is trying to contact the individuals listed. Choctaw Nation is in possession of unclaimed funds that may be due to these individuals. If your name is listed below, please contact the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma at P.O. Box 1210 Durant, OK 74702 Attn: Kellie Young, Payroll Accountant or by phone at 580-924-8280 ext. 2408.

Aldridge, Kimberly	Kenyon, Cory
Ayala, Maria	Leyendecker, Christopher
Babcock, Ramona	Marlatt, April
Bagsby, Adreena	McClary, Hunter
Belcher, Tony	McElroy, David
Bittle, Kenneth	McGee, Brandi
Blaylock, Courtney	Meeh, Kaycee
Bond, Kevin	Mitchell, Shane
Burns, Dillon	Mofield, Beverly
Callahan, Benjy	Moore, Christopher
Campuzano, Yrna	Morris, Micah
Christian, Ashley	Newby Pigeon, Kayla
Cook, John	Nottingham, Kristy
Cross, Christopher	Periman, David
Davis, Logan	Phelan, James
Davis, Phyllis	Ply, Jessie
Day, Linda	Russ, Billy
Druby, Danny	Samples, David
Duboc, Barbara	Sawyer, Jennifer
Duncan, Kayla	Scarbrough, Tammie
Elliott, Cass	Shearwood, Colton
Elliott, Kelly	Shearwood, Joseph
Elliott, Tommy	Slawson, Colten
Emmert, Lacey	Smelser, David
Forwoodson, Ashton	Smithart, Jerry
Foster, Cory	St. Clair, Jimmy
Frederick, Johnny	Steve, Samuel
Futrell, Edward	Stevenson, Pamela
Garrett, Lisa	Stimac, Stepheney
Gwin, Tanner	Truett, Nasha
Hall, Sharawn	Vickers, Lauren
Haney, Ashley	Wade, Nalani
Hankins, Kaci	Ward, Henry
Helt, Jennifer	Waugh, William
Himes, Kristi	Whitebuffalo, Angela
Hodge, Lauren	Whitehead, Cheri
Hodge, Melba	Williams, Curtis
Holland, Rachel Yvette	Williams, Randi
Holt, Terry	Williams, Shauna
Hunt, Casey	Williams, Tyson
Jackson, Jeremy	Willis, Robert
Jones, Billy	Wilson, Riley
Junell, Keri	Womack Jr, Melvin
Kemp, April	



# Teaching today with stories of ancestors’ yesterdays

By **LARISSA COPELAND**  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

“My goal is to educate our people, our youth,” says Choctaw craftsman and cultural expert Les Williston of Tushka Homma. “I do demonstrations for our people to hopefully foster and build on the pride in being Choctaw people.”

He gives cultural presentations regularly to youth groups using displays and demonstrations and oral historical accounts. He gives the presentations at the Choctaw Labor Day festival, culture camps, schools, churches, various Boy Scouts and JOM groups, and other youth gatherings.

He grew up in Broken Bow, where making things with his hands was a way of life. “My grandfather carved wood and my uncles made things,” he explains. “I grew up in the country where if you wanted something you made it.”

Over the years he’s become a well-skilled craftsman, most of his methods being self-taught. “I’ve also picked up on skills from many other craftsmen along the way, whether it’s theory, philosophy or technique.”

Much of his craftwork involves Choctaw weaponry made with his hands, which includes bows, arrows, arrowheads, blow guns, darts, tomahawks, lances and atlatls (spear throwing aid), to name a few. He uses the same traditional techniques as his ancestors as much as possible and without the use of any electricity. All his pieces are functional tools or weaponry meant for use, not just set on a shelf on display. “I don’t make it if it can’t be used,” he states. “These are lethal weapons our ancestors used to defend our people or feed our families, not trinkets or decorations.”

He gathers the material for his crafts himself, cutting his own cane and bois d’arc, hunting animals, and searching out just the right rocks. He’ll also barter and trade for the things he needs, just as his ancestors did.

Along with making these Choctaw pieces, he also teaches others how to create them, using his crafts as a tool to educate. “I demonstrate to the kids how to make the arrowheads, how to tie blowgun darts, sometimes I shave on a stave to show how I work on wood to make a bow.”

He uses his demonstrations as a way to connect with the youth. “I focus on the youth because it just might give them direction in their lives. A lot of the kids get in trouble because they don’t have any direction. Getting involved with their culture is important – it puts pride in who they are and their tribe. Making this stuff and telling stories about it builds that pride,” he says.

“In the presentations, I talk about traditional Native life,

pre-European contact, go into the craft work, how to make Choctaw weaponry and use them,” he states. “I also talk about ancient religion, village life, social structure, political structure and hierarchy, everyday living basically. I put out a lot of information so I always try to have a question and answer session for anyone who has questions about Choctaw culture.”

“If the kids have a question, I always try to give a good, thorough, full answer, sometimes more than they want to hear,” he states. “But if I don’t know I tell them, ‘we’ll find out together.’ I would like everyone to want to learn more.”

Understanding the importance of what he says to the children, Williston chooses his words carefully. “What you say to them is very important,” he explains. “It’s going to stick with some of them forever. You watch what you tell them and make sure it’s something that’s going to carry them through the next few years, maybe into adulthood,” he says.

“When I’m doing this and talking to children, I see those little eyes looking up at me, inquisitively,” he continues. “Their brains are like little sponges, soaking it all in. One little story could spark something in them and they’ll hold on to it. The words and phrases I use, the way I look at them with honesty all leaves an impression. You have to be honest with them because they’ll pick up on it if you’re not sincere.”

He hopes his messages and demonstrations stay with the children, evoking a desire in them to create and continue learning. “When they get big enough to start making these (the weapons and tools), maybe they will,” he says. “Maybe they’ll come look me up and say, ‘Can you show me how to do that?’ And I will.”

Along with the demonstration aspect of his presentations, he also delves into the past of the Choctaw, explaining to his audience the path taken by the tribe throughout history.

“I try to teach all the kids about their culture and history. I’ll usually start with the Doctrine of Discovery and the papal bull from 1455.” (Note: Romanus Pontifex is a papal bull written in 1455 by Pope Nicholas V to King Afonso V of Portugal. Catholic nations of Europe used this document to claim authority over “discovered lands” during the Age of Discovery, supposedly “sanctifying” the seizure of non-Christian lands. Native Americans were deemed pagans by Catholic priests for the sake of sequestering their lands.) “It’s very important to me to share my belief the relationship to Creator is no less sacred than the Christians’ relationship to God. In fact, I believe we are praying to the same Spirit.”

He goes on to say, “The papal bull is the root of how Europeans would interact with Native people on this continent, a justification handed down by God that this earth and its abundance was meant for them only. Inherently stating that indigenous peoples, wherever found, could not own the land on which they lived and could be placed in perpetual slavery.”

He then moves to the time when the Choctaws encountered Spanish conquistador Hernando de Soto and his men in the 1540s as they came into the southeast looking for women and riches. He recounts reading about when de Soto came up on other early tribes with his big horses and armor, and the tribesmen would just scatter and run. But not the Choctaw, he says. “When de Soto and his men came upon one of our leaders, he didn’t move,” continued Williston. “He just stared at him and stood his ground.”

“He met up with the Choctaws and we attacked,” he says. “We had bows and arrows but they had gunpowder and horses.” (Note: In October 1540, after the capture of Choctaw Chief Tuscaloosa, the Choctaw ambushed de Soto’s army in Mabila, a town near present-day Montgomery, Ala. De Soto’s army burned the city and retreated to the north.)

“It was a successful resistance,” Williston continues. “It was a full hundred years before they (Europeans) came back into the south. This time though, they came wanting to talk and trade.”

His lessons continue with later Choctaw historical accounts, explaining their role in the War of 1812 at the Battle of New Orleans as the Choctaw fought alongside Andrew Jackson and American soldiers to push back the invading British forces.

Darker times are also told, including broken treaties and the forced removal of the tribe on the long, heartbreaking walk from their homeland to Indian Territory on the Trail of Tears. “I tell young Choctaws never to forget this complex history, not only because it makes our people who we are, but also because history can repeat itself at any time. Remember, our seal shows an unstrung bow, but the string is not removed, only loosened.”

He further describes very early references before the tribe was even called Choctaw. According to Williston, they were called “pashi falaya” or long haired. In the southeast, he says, the Choctaw were one of the only tribes where the men wore their hair this way. “I thought it was cool and one of the earliest references to us was when we were called pashi falaya,” he says, explaining his own long hair.

The name Choctaw, he says, possibly came from a neighboring tribe, the Creeks.

“A specific color of red is sacred to Choctaw people,” he says. “The Creek word for red is ‘catē’ (pronounced ch•ah•tee) and that may be where the name Choctaw came from,” said Williston.

“Choctaws have an extensive, interesting history and I’ve been reading about it for a long time,” says Williston.

To learn about the culture, he’s taken humanities classes and reads often about the culture, including journals, anthropology and archaeology books. “I like reading the old books and journals that were sent back to Europe from the people who wrote them while they were here on those expeditions. They sent letters, journals and things back to Europe. I just put it all together.

“You can read them all but you can’t take it at face value,” he warns. “You’ve got to know your culture because they’re writing from a European point of view. They don’t know the names of the things they’re writing about exactly, or the customs they are witnessing, but they note descriptions. You have to read between the lines, under the lines, over the lines.”

Though this is time consuming, Williston is more than happy to put in the work to get an accurate look at Choctaw life throughout history. “It’s just something that has always intrigued me,” he explains. “I’d find a subject or a trail that I was interested in and I’d go find out. I’d dig through the books just knowing a key word or names. It’s very lengthy and tedious, but I’m very interested in it so it’s not tedious to me. You just have to make the time to do the research and learn it. If I want to know something I find out. I learn all I can and then I tell the story.”

In addition to creating Choctaw crafts and weaponry and educating groups on the culture, Williston also partakes in the sacred dances that are exclusive to southeastern tribes – stomp dances. At these ceremonial dance gatherings, he draws from his childhood experiences dancing with the Okla Homma Chahta Hilha dance group.

“I was part of the group the Rev. Gene Wilson started in the ‘70s,” he divulges. “It was a major factor in influencing me about our culture. It’s why I do the stomp dances now. The ceremonial dances I learned from that dance group, we now perform at our stomp dances. It’s a sacred setting and that’s where they (the dances) belong because that’s where they came from. Other tribes remember us taking part in stomp dances with them, especially during diplomatic meetings among neighboring tribes, and it is well documented in BIA papers that Choctaws stomp danced. But so few of our old ones are alive who remember it, so it has faded some from

our collective memory. Sadly, there are even those who deny Choctaws ever stomp danced at all. But the ancient Choctaws were taught to pray this way, around our sacred fire - this is our covenant with the Creator, a gift we were given to help us live close to God,” according to Williston.

He further explains, the last Choctaw ceremonial ground shut down in 1937. He and his wife, Sarah, or “Beloved” as she’s also known, started up the first one since that time, now holding the dances in Tushka Homma. They are in their fifth year of putting on the dances, which draws in members from several other tribes. “We plan to hold several this summer, eventually going to once a month,” says Williston. “Once we get a council established, we’ll go to once a month in the next year or two.”

Additionally, Williston performs historical re-enactments including the Trail of Tears drama at Tahlequah for seven years playing a confederate soldier and villager, also serving as the weapons technician for several years, a villager in a movie shot in Dripping Springs, Texas, and a documentary last winter at Chalmette in Louisiana in the role of a Choctaw warrior in the War of 1812. He also works as a villager every year at Tushka Homma during the Labor Day festival. He can be found building and maintaining the Choctaw Village as it grows year by year.

He speaks Choctaw and is working to become more fluent, along with teaching his children. “I have taken the Choctaw language classes taught by Abe Frazier and have three certificates,” he says. “I feel it’s important that we get our language back. The Choctaw Nation is doing a really good job with this. I see a lot of young kids come up to my table and start naming off the stuff in Choctaw. I’m really impressed with that. I’m thinking, ‘All right!’”

Pride in his Native heritage is something that he’s carried with him for as long as he can remember. However, it was around the age of 10 when Williston first realized it was this heritage that set him apart from others in his community. Listening to his family, his uncles in particular, during that time is what shaped him and his ideas about his identity.

“Around that time, the Siege of Wounded Knee was on the news,” he said. “My family was talking about this and how we’re Natives of this land. ‘We’re Indian,’ they’d say. That’s when I first started hearing those words and phrases.

“When I was growing up, I saw full bloods all the time,” he continued. “On hog killing day, there’d be a whole



LES WILLISON

yard filled with full bloods. We were all the same color so I never thought much about it. But when Wounded Knee came about, I began to see a difference. I became aware of the hatred, and that’s when I found out about prejudice.”

(Note: Beginning on Feb. 27, 1973, the town of Wounded Knee, S.D., was occupied by American Indian Movement activists for 71 days in protest of governmental corruption and atrocities towards Native Americans. Federal officials, including U.S. Marshals and the National Guard, were sent in, and during several ensuing gunfights, two Indians are killed and several people are injured.)

“It was during those years when Native pride – pride in your blood, your people and who we are – was being held up and showed to us,” he explained. “Before then, things were a whole lot quieter. When the ‘60s and ‘70s came along, Native youth were starting to say, ‘Hey, we’re still here!’ I heard that as a kid and just thought, ‘Yeah, that’s who I am.’ And I’m proud.”

It’s that pride that drives him to continue teaching the younger generations about the Choctaw culture and the steps and missteps throughout history that have brought the thriving Nation to where it is today. He jumps at any opportunity to share the stories and crafts with those eager to learn. One opportunity in particular is the Choctaw Days festival in Washington, D.C., this month where he will be giving his cultural presentations to visitors of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian.

He will hold daily cultural presentations using displays, demonstrations and oral historical accounts, hoping to reach not only those unfamiliar with the tribe and its traditions, but to also further educate his own people.

He hopes visitors take from his work and from the festival as a whole that Natives are not what is portrayed in movies. “Choctaws have a beautiful, vibrant, living culture,” he said. “I think it (Choctaw Days at NMAI) is a good opportunity to share that culture.”

## DEFENSE

### Tribe awarded major military contract

Continued from Page 1

create two MTRV trailers a day, which is impressive considering all the rigorous inspections and scrutiny they must be held up against. This impressive statistic is made possible by a process called “Lean Manufacturing,” which, according to Benefield is waste elimination and constant improvement.

As a part of the Lean Manufacturing system, Choctaw Defense has had to assess its operation and eliminate waste. It has stopped the traditional methods of manufacturing, which consists of mass creating all the components of a product, storing them and finally making a finished unit.

In contrast, they make ev-

ery part only on an as-needed basis. This way, they can create products faster and more efficiently by removing the mass storage aspect and not overproducing certain parts that will become waste if not used.

“We never have more than a two-day supply,” said Benefield as he talked about keeping the on-hand parts at a minimum to deflect overproduction.

Lean Manufacturing is a concept that has been implemented in many locations across the globe. Choctaw Defense has done a notable job in employing the concept, winning the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance Governor’s Award for Top Lean Manufacturing and being nominated as one of eight finalists for Innovation in Manufacturing by the National Institute of Science and Technology.

Using the Lean Manufacturing techniques has allowed Choctaw Defense to produce

other materials at impressive speeds. A recently acquired order of 365,000 105mm ammo crates will soon be completed with one unit being assembled every 55 seconds.

Choctaw Defense is also involved in the mass production of the Battle Damage Assessment Repair (BDAR) Kit, which is a type of first aid for vehicles in combat zones. The BDAR kit holds essential articles that, if a vehicle is disabled with a quickly fixable error, it can be repaired just enough to get troops out of danger and back to a repair shop.

Choctaw Defense also makes a considerable amount of climate controlling units that control the temperature of tents and other small quarters. These units have been sent all over the world to make conditions the best they can be for American troops.

The tail section of the Paveway Smart Bomb is also a no-

table item produced by Choctaw Defense. The Paveway is a bomb that can be guided via computer and camera in the front end. The portion Choctaw Defense produces takes commands from the front computer and carries out the maneuvers, enabling the bomb to hit in the optimal location of a target.

Churning out so many military articles is a very serious business. According to Benefield, one third of the American budget is defense. There are businesses constantly vying for the contracts that Choctaw Defense earns on a regular basis, and with defense budget cuts pending, the competition will only stiffen.

Choctaw Defense is anticipating these upcoming budget cuts and challenges, and the plan is to position itself as one of the best. “Remaining at the top of the game like we are now,” said Benefield as he reviewed his plan to

keep Choctaw Defense in the realm of success.

Benefield, who has been with Choctaw Defense for 13 years, knows that the keys to the success in this business

are quality, being on time, and having the right price; keys that the crew at Choctaw Defense has not neglected, which is depicted though its paramount success.

**Help Wanted**

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Apply in person at Choctaw Casino Human Resource Office, 4216 Hwy 69/75, Durant, OK.



# Choctaw vocal talent to perform at National Museum of the American Indian

By **BRET MOSS**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

With the much-anticipated event, Choctaw Days, a celebration of the Choctaw people and culture at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., fast approaching, the Choctaw Nation is gathering experts in all facets of Choctaw heritage.

Vocalist and musician Brad L. Joe, employee of Choctaw Nation Archiving Enterprise and Dickson resident is one of the honored individuals to be selected for his expertise and exceptional attributes to represent the Choctaw Nation this June in D.C.

Joe will be singing the Choctaw hymns 11, 35 and 41, which he describes as songs of hope and joy. They are songs to celebrate the Choctaw Nation and will display the culture to the guests of the museum.

Joe began his musical endeavors at a considerably young age. He was born a twin and the youngest child to Donald and Ruby Joe in the city of Ardmore. His family was involved with the Durwood Indian Baptist Church, located 13 miles east of Ardmore, and this is the stage where his abilities experienced their genesis.

Joe, initially shy and unsure of his talents, received a much-needed push from his father, who played guitar for the church. Joe had been weary of performing solo, but one night, during an anniversary event, his father, seeing his potential, pushed Joe to give it a try and step up to the mic.

“There I was, nervous as I don’t know what,” said Joe as

he spoke of his anxiety. He pushed through the nervous feeling and did an excellent job singing “Just A Closer Walk With Thee,” and an upbeat song titled “Glory Glory.” “After I sang, it was a whole different feeling,” continued Joe.

This was in 1991, right after Joe graduated from Dickson High School. From that night on, there were many individuals requesting that Joe travel to their churches to sing for events and special occasions.

Once Joe gained confidence in his abilities, he longed for his own personal style, so he sought aid from his cousin, Cecil Taylor, who taught him to play the piano, an instrument that Joe plays for Durwood Baptist currently. Cecil had a soft jazzy/blues feel to his music, which Joe greatly admired and made his own. He began writing his own songs and creating his personal music.

Cecil also taught Joe to control his voice and widen his range. “I was scared to reach the high notes,” said Joe as he described the days before learning the width of this vocal range.

Much like Joe’s father, Cecil also pushed Joe to become better. During a singing, Cecil decided to play in a higher key; forcing Joe to elevate his voice. He had no choice but to give into his cousin’s request that he attempt a higher range. From then on, Joe had a much easier time with his range.

Through Cecil, Joe met several musicians, which increased his network and led



BRAD L. JOE

him to perform at a variety of locals. This, combined with meeting the Johnson family, who will also be featured at the Choctaw Days event, in 1994 led to his traveling routines.

The Johnsons, consisting of siblings Moses, Sigus “Bubba” and Lena, with Joe formed a group called the Revelators. “With that we traveled all over the nation, from Florida to New Mexico, to California,” stated Joe.

The group received its gigs by word of mouth describes Joe. They would perform at one location; someone would become impressed and ask them to perform at other events, and their reputation would disperse with the people leaving their venues.

Most of the events where they were requested to sing were church functions such as singings and revivals. Some of the more notable performances were several occasions at the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival in

Tushka Homma, where they have encountered packed crowds of about 3,000 people.

Joe has also been privileged with touring around Anaheim, Calif., and singing at the Ryman Auditorium, the former stage of the Grand Ole Opry. He has been to many non-Indian churches to present the Choctaw songs to them to fill their curiosity about the native culture.

Joe’s time spent with the Revelators was dictated by life occurrences with the members of the group. As time went on the members gain more responsibilities, forcing their traveling to slow.

Even after the split with the Revelators, Joe would still travel and do solo performances. He also took up photography in his spare time, and gets a considerable amount of requests for his photography skills.

In a time when he was not utilizing his musical gift, his father decided to spark his interest once again and convinced him to audition for “Ardmore Live,” a musical variety show held at the Washington Theater in Ardmore. He auditioned with “I Cross My Heart,” a single by George Strait and was selected to the showcase.

Over a period of time and events in Ardmore and Denison, Texas, Joe was selected to compete in a talent contest with the showcase. He made his way to the top of the completion, and the top three were given a spot on KXII, the local television station,

to perform and allow viewers to vote for their favorite. Joe was not chosen as the winner, but gained plenty of publicity through his on-air performance and becoming a finalist out of many showcases.

Over the years, Joe has been perfecting his vocal talent, singing in a variety of different settings for multitudes of diverse audiences. For the particular singing that he will be doing at the Smithsonian and for many of his performances, Joe must sing in the Choctaw language, which he is still learning. “I am still in a learning process,” mentions Joe. Growing up, many of the ones around him spoke in Choctaw, granting Joe a better understanding.

The three hymns he will be presenting in D.C. are pure Choctaw, meaning that they have their own tune and are completely in the Choctaw language. This will force him to “start from scratch.” Because the songs are new to Joe, he began practicing them as soon as he received word that he was invited to perform at the event.

He immediately went to his mother, who is full blood Choctaw, and the members of his church to get advice on the right tune and pronunciation. Every Sunday he makes a point to sing them in church to get a feel from performing them to an audience. He has also recorded them to a CD and sings along on his 40-minute commute to work.

Joe describes his opportunity to sing his music and display his heritage at the National Museum of the American Indian as “once in a lifetime,” and went on to say, “I’ve always heard of the Smithsonian, but I never

dreamed I would be singing there.” He feels that it is important to pass along the ways for singing Choctaw to future generations and plans to deliver his talents into the hands of his family.

He hopes to pass along his musical gifts to his nieces, who have shown interest in the type of performing Joe has come to love. He mentions that he may have to take the road as his father and cousin, pushing them to become more than they think they are, but they will be better for it.

Joe’s music is not only rich in culture and pleasant to the ears, but it’s very meaningful to many people. Although he has been known to sing country music, his talents are dominantly in gospel music, a genre that can have great meaning to those listening. Combined with spiritual lessons, his words can be quite powerful. “People have been moved to tears, including myself,” describes Joe.

He explains that through his singing, some people have been compelled to accept Christ, and the fact that he is able to help them along their journey towards salvation is his number one reason for doing what he does.

Joe mentions that his favorite part of performing is “when someone comes up to me and says I moved them or touched their heart, and mostly being appreciated.” Joe gives credit to his parents for their constant support and prayers. Brad L. Joe looks forward to bringing his expertise along with many other Choctaw cultural experts to Washington, D.C., this summer, and maybe experience that quality appreciation.

# Family trio proud to represent the Choctaw Nation in Washington, D.C.

By **BRET MOSS**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Within the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, there are not only talented individuals representing the Choctaw people, but entire families making this native culture shine.

The Johnson family brothers Sigus “Bubba” and Moses, along with sister Lena Scott have been filling the ears of those around them with melodies adorned with the Choctaw language since a very young age. With only four years separating Lena, the eldest, from the youngest, Moses, the siblings have grown and learned together.

The trio were all born in the Dallas area to the late Sigus and Della Johnson, but soon moved near Achille at a young age to be with a church family and were raised in Oklahoma.

Near the age of 3, each of the three children along with their sisters, Rhonda and Robin, all learned to sing Choctaw hymns. They learned this skill, “before we were able to read,” explains Lena.

Sigus and Della were both qualified for musical performances and had taught their children to be the same. As a result, they began to travel as a family to churches throughout Oklahoma to perform as the Johnson Family.

As the children grew, they went about doing their own thing, lightly involved in singing, until Bubba made an impression as he sang at a church event. Some of the audience realized that they could benefit from his accompaniment, and invited him to join the New Vision Quartet.

This was in the early ’90s and Bubba was still young. He had a love for quartet music, but still had to think over his decision. “I prayed to see if that is what the Lord wanted me to do,” said Bubba, and after some careful thoughts and prayers, he decided to join.

With New Vision, Bubba



Choctaw Nation:LARISSA COPELAND

THE JOHNSON FAMILY: SIGUS “BUBBA,” LENA AND MOSES.

traveled and performed at various locations. Over time, Bubba’s love for quartet music rubbed off on Moses. “After hearing that, I just always had the desire and love to sing,” explains Moses as he talks about how he truly began his personal journey into the music world.

Eventually, New Vision disbanded, leaving Bubba, along with another group member, Brad Joe, available to recruit new talent for a fresh crew. The asked Moses to sing tenor and a local friend to play the piano in a group called The Revelators. This particular group traveled all over the states of Oklahoma and Texas.

They traveled and performed for various churches as The Revelators for a time. Moses left the group eventually and the remaining Revelators requested Lena to sing tenor. “They were needing a tenor, and I did miss it,” mentioned Lena as she told of how she became reacquainted with the musical field after spending some time away.

As The Revelators with Moses, they made an album at a recording studio in Sun-

rise, Fla., because they had a cousin who lived in the area who wanted them to record their work. That album, titled “Introducing The Revelators,” consisted of a composition of English hymns, which they sold in a Christian bookstore in Oklahoma City as well as at their performance venue.

Throughout the lifespan of the group, The Revelators were known to make treks to Florida, California, North Carolina, Missouri and New Mexico to sing for revivals and all-night singings. One of the biggest events was the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival in Tushka Hommaa.

When Lena took over for Moses, the traveling routine remained unchanged, but the band did not. Around that time, a drummer and bass guitarist were added to the group. As the group grew, they decided to create another album, this one titled “Heading for Glory” which contained a Choctaw version of “Amazing Grace.”

Besides doing this, “The Revelators were in and out,” describes Lena. “It wasn’t like a constant, every week-

end thing, it was just whenever they were needed,” she continued. They would sing at events as needed for a time, but eventually the drummer and bass guitarist departed from the group, along with the pianist to pursue other interests.

The Revelators, consisting of just Brad, Bubba and Moses also gained some competition clout by placing third out of 72 groups in Springdale, Ark., for the Albert E. Brumbly All-Night Singing. The three men also released another album simply called “Revelators.” Lena had left to sing with a trio in Tahlequah named Crossroads. Her group placed first in the Seminole Gospel Singing.

In 2010, Brad decided to go solo, leaving just Bubba and Moses. When Brad left, the group became inactive for a time, with only Bubba still performing at various churches. After discussion among the family trio, Bubba, Moses and Lena made their first appearance as The Johnsons in November of 2010 in Wilburton, performing at the Choctaw Nation GED Graduation.

As the Johnsons, the family

trio has a central goal, which is, “to see souls saved,” as stated by Moses. Though they enjoy the privilege of performing for crowds, the thing they long for the most is for their music to speak to people on a spiritual level and aid them in coming closer to the Lord.

They acknowledge that music can be powerful and speak to people in ways that normal diction cannot, and they plan to travel “wherever the Lord leads,” declared Moses, to aid in that cause.

They knew, even when the other groups dissolved over time, they were still to stick together and bring music with a message to the people. “I just feel like God was leading us to do something as a family,” elaborated Lena.

When The Johnsons travel with Choctaw Nation’s most culturally experienced individuals this June, they will not be able to sing usual praise and worship songs in the facilities due to federal regulations, but they will be able to bring Choctaw hymns to the public of that area.

Though they cannot use that venue to publicly per-

form spiritual songs, they do plan to present themselves as personal witnesses. They also hope to teach those of the area about their ways of life as Choctaws. They are hoping to get the language out to the public as well as demonstrate how they grew up in the Choctaw Nation.

They feel exceptionally honored to be asked to travel with the tribe on this monumental occasion. “We will do our best to make our tribe proud,” explains Lena.

Aside from their vocal talents, the Johnsons have a considerable amount going on in their lives as well. Lena is married to Mike Scott and has two daughters, Kristin and Michaela, who keep both Mike and Lena busy with sports. She is a 2009 graduate of Southeastern Oklahoma State University with a major in psychology and a minor in sociology and Native American studies. She has been employed with the Choctaw Nation for 11 years where she is pleased to serve her fellow Choctaws. Lena also enjoys volleyball herself and enjoys playing with her family.

Bubba is the father of Sigus Jr. and Elizabeth and cherishes his time with his children as loving fathers do. Like Lena, he enjoys volleyball as well as other sports. He is an employee of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Moses is a fan of karaoke events and enjoys showing up the competition from time to time and enjoys the fact that he has only failed to claim first place on one occasion. He has a wife, Karen, and lives in the Durant area where he works for Love’s.

The Johnsons are a close family and a very talented one as well. They enjoy their singing abilities and hope to spread their gospel message far and wide. Even though it is seldom for all siblings to agree on one fact, they all can declare the best part about it is, “we are doing what we love.”



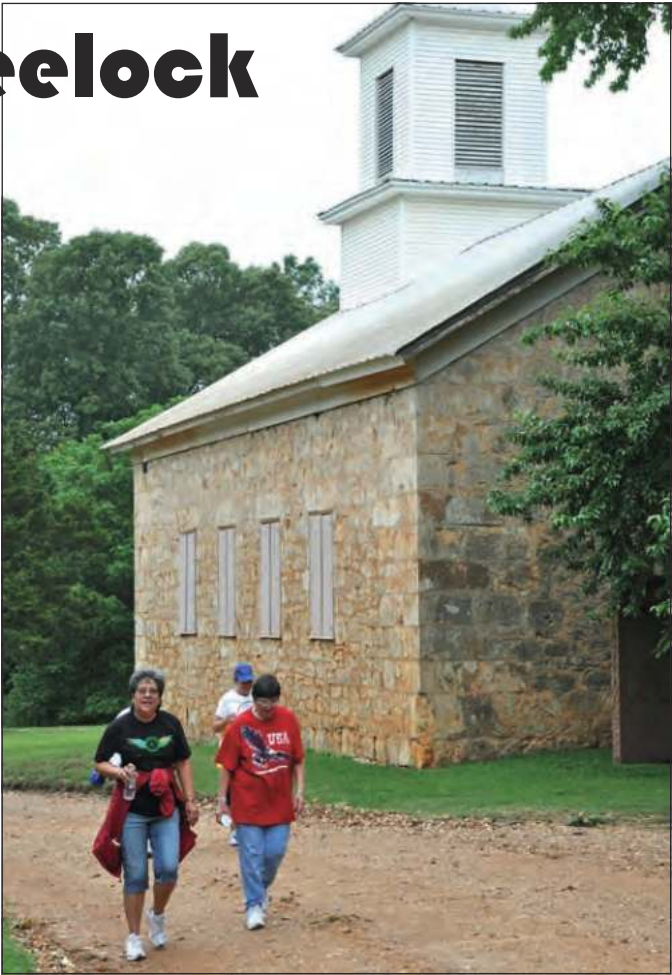
# The Walk at Wheelock



Chief Gregory E. Pyle greets Steven Baker and Norris Samuels, both of Oklahoma City, after the walk.

## Honoring our ancestors

Wheelock Academy is one of the favorite sites to hold the Choctaw Nation’s Commemorative Trail of Tears Walk. The peaceful rolling hills, old stone church and historic campus are located in the area of one of the first settlements of Choctaws in Indian Territory. Hundreds attended this year to walk in the footsteps of the ancestors, honoring them for the hardships they bore and for the example of courage and resilience they set for us.



Choctaw Nation Photos: Judy Allen, Lisa Reed, Vonna Shults, Karen Jacob



Assistant Chief Gary Batton joins the dancers.



Choctaw royalty.



Ready for the walk – Linda Wilson, Kenzie Wilson, Kevin Wilson, Kashis Wilson, Kyra Wilson and Emerson Wilson.



Twila Lemons of Ruidoso, N.M., presents Chief Pyle with a copy of her children’s book, “The Legend of Prairie Rose.” Also pictured are her grandson Logan Lemons, and her son, Denver Lemons, of Lockheart, Texas, and son Ryder Lemons of Mound, Texas.



Assistant Chief Batton visits with the Atchley family from Missouri – Judy Atchley Rottger, Pat and Wes Eberhart, Charlie Atchley, Russell Atchley and Gerald “Smokey” Atchley.



Anna Frazier Stephan of Idabel.



A smile for the camera.



Alma Hibbert of Wylie, Texas.



Joanna Taylor of Wright City.



Topsy Williams of Stigler and Linda Maxwell of Poteau.



It’s stickball time!



A group from Durant rode a bus to Wheelock.



Ramerez Willis.



Monica Billy and Assistant Chief Batton.



Attending the walk is a tradition for Williston Wesley. Pictured with Mr. Wesley are family members Kelman Wesley, Ethan Columbus, Charlene Wesley, Shareece Columbus, Bobby and Kyreece Wesley, Charlotte Poindexter, Kayla Wesley, Jimmy Wesley and Bennie Wesley.



Ernest Hooser of Durant.



# Choctaw employee James a tremendous asset

By **CHRISSY DILL**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Choctaw Nation employee Latoya James has been an asset to the tribe for 10 years. She has contributed much effort in supplying employees as well as tribal members with services they deserve. She is honored to be called a Choctaw Nation employee, and she plans to continue her valuable services within the tribe.

Latoya became associated with the Choctaw Nation when she was just 14 years old through the Workforce Investment Act, where she worked with several organizations including Choctaw Nation Finance and Bryan County youth. “I loved Summer Youth,” said Latoya with a smile. “It was a very valuable experience.”

According to Latoya, WIA provided her with skills she would utilize the rest of her professional life.

**“Summer Youth allows you to develop skills you need for the world.”**  
– Latoya James

“They looked at me as a co-worker, not a child, and they made me a more responsible employee.”

Latoya gained valuable assets through Summer Youth. “I looked forward to each summer,” she said. “The people were great and offered me guidance and leadership.”

Latoya was given the opportunity to expand her education beyond the classroom through this Choctaw Nation program. “Summer Youth allows you to develop skills you need for the world,” she said. “I was responsible for my actions and learned the value of hard work.”

When she graduated high school, Latoya was able to earn an interview for employment within the Choctaw Nation. “I still remember the day, July 16, 2001, I began working for the tribe full time,” said a satisfied Latoya, “and I’ve been here ever since.”

Latoya contributed the Summer Youth Program as one of the main reasons she is employed with the Nation today. “It’s one of the things I love most about Choctaw Nation,” she said.

Latoya plays her part in advancing Choctaw Nation services with the title of Substance Abuse Coordinator for Choctaw Nation Employee Health. “I will be working with substance abuse individuals and provide services for them with no cost,” she described. She continued saying the individual doesn’t have to

be a tribal member, just employed by the Choctaw Nation.

Before she came to Employee Health, Latoya was employed with several organizations within the tribe, including the travel plaza, the casino, human resources and on to Rapid Results, the latter leading to her position in substance abuse prevention. “Going through Rapid Results, I saw that there is a need to help the individuals that come through,” she said.

This circumstance Latoya was in also led to her decision to make a change to her educational goals. In 2007 she earned her bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from Southeastern Oklahoma State University and had the desire to attend law school. Now she is working to attain her master’s degree in human relations from the University of Oklahoma.

“I first met Latoya when she was working through the Summer Youth Program in human resources.”

said Choctaw Nation employee Shelia Kirven, a close acquaintance of Latoya. “I truly don’t think I’ve known anyone who loved learning so much.”

After officially earning her master’s in December, Latoya plans to attain her Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) from OU as well and become a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor. “This will allow me to expand my scope of services in order to expand into mental illness rather than only substance abuse,” she explained.

“I still have criminal justice roots; that is still in me,” said Latoya. Though she plans to continue employment with the Choctaw Nation, ultimately she’d like to work with a prison re-entry program providing incarcerated individuals with life skills, training, job searching techniques and helping them further their education.

“Some people ask me why I’d want to rehabilitate them,” said Latoya. “They will get out one day, and they could be my neighbor.”

According to Latoya, teaching them these social skills and providing them with ways to contribute to their community will enhance their lives outside of prison. “This will help society as a whole, help my neighbors and myself, not just the prisoners,” she added.

She also expressed the need for this type of service for a

juvenile population as well.

Latoya has proved to be a beneficial employee of the Choctaw Nation, and she has plans to better Employee Health services. “We’re in the process of putting together a substance abuse counseling program for employees,” she said.

This substance abuse program is “in the works,” as Latoya described. “We will offer counseling services, sessions, education and referrals for employees,” she added.

In the past Rapid Results was a public program, but now services are offered only to Choctaw Nation employees and tribal members. According to Latoya, an employee must pass a return to duty test in order to continue work for the Choctaw Nation.

“The individual can come in voluntarily,” explained Latoya. “An evaluation will be conducted, then we’ll go from there with either education or counseling sessions.”

Not only is Latoya educated in drug abuse prevention and education, she is learning about tobacco and alcohol abuse, which she said she will utilize eventually.

Latoya has provided services for the tribe in her various roles she has been allowed to play, in human resources and in health care. She has shown dedication and determination during her time as a Choctaw Nation employee.

“I’ve managed to reach goals I’ve set for myself so far,” she said. “They may seem small to other people, but they really mean a lot to me.” Some of these goals include Latoya’s graduation from high school with honors and maintaining a full-time employment status while attending school.

“I’m one of the youngest people here,” she continued. She expressed pride in the fact that she was at a young age to have received a position with such longevity.

“I’ve seen Latoya grow into a tremendous asset to the Choctaw Nation,” said Shelia. “She’s an outstanding employee, and it has been an extreme joy to see her grow and advance within the Choctaw Nation.”

“There are so many people I’d like to thank,” said Latoya, smiling, but there were a select few she remembered from when she “was a little girl.” Among others, Kay Jackson, Shelia Kirven, Margaret Jackson and “definitely Brian McClain” were a great help to Latoya. She also thanked all of her co-workers, Chris Ribbera and Wanda Vanderveen, her summer youth counselor. “There are so many people that have made an impact on my life,” she said.



**Pictured are S.T.A.R. students - front row, left to right, Ashlynn Moody, Jaxon Culwell, Jett Pitchford, Gunnar Thompson, Laney Tiffie, Shaylee Cripps; second row, Cornelio Hernandez, Drew Maxwell, Journey Perdue, Destiny McGee, Cody Drury, Weston Cox; third row, Isaac Dehart, Kelsey Bottoms, Andrew West, Trace McDaniel, Hunter Woodral, Gannon Cheek, Carson Cheek; back row, Shannon Minnis, Josa Wiles, Harley Duncan, Megan Mathews, Rhiannon Morton, Jace Hamner.**



**Emaline Wiles poses with her certificate for being an excellent S.T.A.R. student.**

## S.T.A.R. recognizes successful students

The Choctaw Nation S.T.A.R. Program along with Heavener Schools recently recognized the Johnson O’Malley Indian students for their academic achievements. The S.T.A.R. Program encourages academic success of Choctaw students by providing them with certificates and gift cards.



**Shae Singleterry and Laney May receive their S.T.A.R. certificates.**



**Pictured are S.T.A.R. students – front row, Dillion May, Gunner Sanders, Jessica Drury, Taylor Martin, Kennedi Cooper, Lily Friedl, Makenzie Wilson, Makaylee Wilson, Emily Yandell, Macy Maxwell and Dawson Adrean; middle row, Shayleigh McDaniel, Jordan Terry, Tyler Singleterry, Lexi Moody, Parker Olive, Delaney Farmer and Devon Mathews; back row, Hunter Tiffie, Garison Thompson, Abbi Moody, Cheyanne Dehart, Malory Lynch, Cheyanne Cranfield, Shaylie Sanders and Haley Cripps; not pictured, Michael Owens and Luke McGee.**

# WIA provides experience, responsibility for Choctaw teens

The Workforce Investment Act gives youth of the Choctaw Nation the opportunity to gain experience in a field of their choosing while teaching them the value of holding a full-time job.

“The Summer Youth Program introduces kids into the workforce,” said WIA director Patty Mink, “and it puts a little money in their pockets.”

WIA is a five-week-long summer program that allows students ages 14-21 to obtain a job at various worksites within the 10 ½ counties of the Choctaw Nation.

The number of students participating in this program is impressive. Last summer, there were a total of 1,403 individuals, all able to work up to 40 hours a week and were paid by the Choctaw Nation for their work efforts.

This year, the number of participants has increased to a total of 1,504.

Once the participant

chooses their place for employment, a school counselor, or sometimes a helpful individual appointed by the Choctaw Nation, will approve the choice and guide the student through the process of gaining full employment.

“The program has grown tremendously,” said Mink, who has held the title of WIA director since July 1998.

Not only has the program grown over the years, a few changes have been made as well. “Participants are able to work at government or non-profit businesses now,” said Mink. In the past students were only able to be employed by profit organizations. “Lots of kids are picked up for em-



Choctaw Nation: BRET MOSS

ployment after the program; it opens more doors for them,” commented Mink.

Mink discussed the impact WIA has on its participants, serving as motivation to seek employment and maintain jobs. “The program really improves their self-esteem,” she explained. “They have to go out and find their own job in the field they are interested in; it’s a big motivator.”

If you are interested in participating in WIA next summer, all paperwork must be completed by April 15.

# MSPI employee Hearn provides loyal service to Choctaw Nation

## ‘Summer Youth probably one of the best programs in Choctaw Nation’

By **CHRISSY DILL**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Choctaw Nation employee Amber Hearn has contributed her services for several years, working in a variety of departments and providing her skills for tribal members and employees.

She gives the Nation credit for her motivation to further her education, gain valuable experience and learn the importance of taking responsibility.

Amber began work with the Choctaw Nation when she was just 14 years old through the Summer Youth Program, where she was employed with Upward Bound, the Head Start and the Child Care As-

sistance Program.

According to Amber, “Summer Youth is probably one of the best programs at Choctaw Nation.” She continued saying the program teaches teenagers work ethic and responsibility at an early age.

Amber said the Summer Youth Program helps students attain their goals in and out of the classroom. “It helps with responsibility in the classroom as well as the real world after school,” she explained. “The program taught me the importance of respecting others, and it helps students see what they want to do in their future.”

Amber continued employment with Child Care Assistance until 2003 when she

began working in Choctaw Nation’s accounts payable department. In 2004 she worked with the imaging department, where “we just started to go online,” she described.

Amber continued employment with the tribe in the government department of finance in 2006.

Today she is an employee of the Methamphetamine and Suicide Prevention Initiative (MSPI), a grant given to the Choctaw Nation by Indian Health Services. “The Nation is one of 126 tribes across the United States to receive this grant,” said Amber.

Amber’s duties at MSPI include “going out into the community to raise awareness regarding methamphetamine and its effect on the Choctaw Nation area,” she explained.

Amber also informs individuals about suicide pre-

vention, telling them it is prevalent and it’s the most preventable cause of death.

When Amber became aware of MSPI seeking employees, she jumped at the opportunity since the work was related to her interest, having her bachelor’s degree in psychology.

At this time she was employed with the accounts receivable department under the direction of Tracy Sikes. “Tracy did a lot for me,” said Amber.

Amber worked for the Choctaw Nation all through college and when she started pursuing her master’s. Tracy worked with her and her class schedule. “She made sure I had time for school and a job,” said Amber.

Since she was employed with a finance department and had a psychology degree, Amber said she felt a bit lost.

“Tracy was supportive of me going to work for MSPI,” she said. “She knew it was in the field I was interested in.”

Tracy also helped Amber to utilize the Career Development Program, which introduced her to a 75-hour hypnosis course. “There’s a therapeutic side and a fun side to hypnosis,” explained Amber, having an official hypnosis certificate and conducting it on the side.

“I can help people with everyday habits like nail-biting, weight loss and smoking.”

“The Choctaw Nation really pushes you to further your education and they’ll help you,” said Amber. “If it wasn’t for their support, providing scholarships and the Summer Youth Program, I feel like I wouldn’t have my degree or hypnosis certification.”

Amber continued by saying

she wouldn’t be where she is today in serving the Choctaw community if it weren’t for the tribal employees and their services.

“I want to give back to Choctaw Nation as much as I can,” she said.

Amber holds a desire and passion for working with Choctaw youth, showing them how to experience their own culture while seeing what is available career-wise in their future, and she hopes to benefit the Choctaw Nation through her work. “I want them to know there is a place for them after school,” she said.

Amber said she has gained valuable experience as a Choctaw Nation employee. “I’ve worked for lots of different departments for Choctaw Nation,” she said. “I feel like I’ve gained a lot of experience.”



# Choctaw Senior Citizens gather for annual event



The Bethel and Broken Bow seniors join to sing a Choctaw hymn.

## Choctaw gospel singing contest

1st place: Bethel/Broken Bow  
2nd place: Poteau  
3rd place: Wright City



The Poteau seniors entertain the crowd with their singing.



Seniors from Wright City sing a Choctaw hymn.



Mary Watson was named the Choctaw Nation Outstanding Elder of the Year.

## Hat contest winners



James Frazier (1st place, not pictured); Jim Fry, left, (3rd place, Spiro); and Walker Davis (2nd place, Idabel).



Eva Lanning, left, (1st place, McAlester); Jane Parent, center, (2nd place, Spiro); and Jonell Fields (3rd place, Wright City).



District 12 Councilman James Frazier and Chief Gregory E. Pyle visit and enjoy lunch at the annual event.



District 9 Councilman Ted Dosh and Marilyn Mitchell of Durant pose for a photo.



Dorothy and A.R. Kirkpatrick are having a great time.



Louise and Bill Amos of Idabel show off their traditional dress.



Windal Muse, left, and James Green enjoy the afternoon.



Carolyn Jackson and mother Alma Josset of Atoka are proud of their fancy hats.

Choctaw Nation Photos:  
LARISSA COPELAND and BRET MOSS



Assistant Chief Gary Batton greets Rick and Barbara Plotner at the Event Center.



Jim Lloyd is all smiles both in front of and behind the camera.

# Roger Amerman exhibits Choctaw beadwork

By **CHRISSY DILL**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Roger Amerman has been selected to display his Choctaw-style beadwork, described as active and high-energy as well as exhibiting vibrancy, color and complexity, at the Choctaw Days event taking place this summer at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.

“Beadwork is the one medium I like, I’m able to excel at and is appreciated by others” said Roger.

He began this type of art early in life. “I originally started beading when I was 11 years old,” he said, as he took an interest in Choctaw fancy dancing and wanted to participate in pow wows. “At first, beading was peripheral to my first passion of fancy dancing, but I found out that I really enjoyed beading. It was somewhat therapeutic, and eventually people started noticing my work and would even pay me for it.”

Roger is known for his Plateau pictorial-style beadwork and depicting the icons, motif and heritage of the Choctaw/Southeast tribal people through his finished product. The result of embracing and investing himself in these two artistic Choctaw traditions is masterful creations exhibiting endless creativity and exciting designs, beadwork in motion with a rich visual vocabulary.

Roger’s designs also include “lane” and “contour” style beadwork using an overlay stitch.



Photo Provided

ROGER AMERMAN

“Beadwork seems to ground me,” he said. “It’s a way I can connect with contemporary Indian people and my Choctaw ancestors.”

He is a proud member of the Choctaw Nation, his heritage and family history playing a significant role in his inspiration for designs. “My Choctaw kin originally come from Atoka and Stephens Counties,” he explained.

Roger’s great-grandfather is the late Redmond Bond, born in Indian Territory at the end of the Civil War, and his grandparents are the late Andrew Wright and Alice Bond Wright.

Throughout his time as a Choctaw artist Roger has earned many awards through exhibitions and various competitions. He received “Best of Show” in Sept. 2004 at the

first annual Choctaw Nation Art Show in Tushka Homa and received the same title in the 2006 show.

Though he’s had success in local Choctaw art shows, Roger has broadened the display of his talent to varying venues across the United States. These national accomplishments, along with his best of show award at the first annual Choctaw Art Show, are which he is most proud.

He received best of show in May 2000 at the Indian Art Show Northwest in Portland, Ore., and in 2008 received “Best of Classification” at the Heard Museum Indian Fair and Market in Phoenix, Ariz.

He was the recipient of the prestigious Southwestern Association for Indian Arts (SWAIA) Fellowship Award in 2007 as well.

People seem to enjoy Roger’s work year after year, last year gaining him a “People’s Choice” award at the Northwest American Indian Art Show and Auction in Post Falls, Idaho.

Along with his awards, Roger has also conducted special presentations and received several honors and recognitions. He has held the role of guest lecturer and instructor, showing his care in spreading the Choctaw heritage through teaching beadwork. He has also been the focus of articles in publications.

“I am motivated to tap into the vast richness of Choctaw and southeast art heritage and couple it with my technical beadwork skills and knowledge,” said Roger. “I want to help bring it to the forefront of native artistic traditions in North America.”

Roger served as an instructor for a Native American Beading Workshop, “Bead-ing Excitement,” sponsored by the Burke Museum at the University of Washington in 2003.

In 1996, he conducted a lecture and slide presentations on two separate occasions: “Tribal Natural Resource Ethics, Landscapes and Family Art” was sponsored by the Department of Landscape Design at Utah State University and was presented for the annual international conference for the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture in Spokane, Wash.

Roger was featured in the Yakima Herald-Republic in 2006 in an article entitled “Bead-by-Bead: Roger

Amerman of Yakima intricately stitches a link to his heritage and, for others, to the American Indian culture.” He was also written about in The Wenatchee World in Oct. 2000, describing him releasing a powerful vision.

In 2006, Roger visited Toppenish, Wash., to serve as a lecturer and conducted his presentation “A review of southeast tribal beadwork and its ties to the artistic traditions of the ancient southeast mound builder complexes of eastern North America,” sponsored by the National Park Service at the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Visitor Center at Yakama Nation Cultural Heritage Center.

Roger sincerely cares about the traditions of the Choctaw tribe being spread throughout the community, and he makes a personal effort to do so. He served as a planning committee member for the premiere exhibit, “Choctaw People, Choctaw Arts,” organized by the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) Museum in New Mexico in the spring of 2008. He was also a planning committee member for “Our Land/Ourselves: American Indian Contemporary Artists” at the Museum of Art at Washington State University Fine Arts Center in 1995.

At Choctaw Days, Roger is planning to exhibit his full length, full buckskin and partially beaded, highly ornate southeast Choctaw cut front jacket. “This coat is by far my largest project to date, and I have never shown it to the public,” he said. “I call it the Sistine Chapel of my bead-

work efforts.”

Future beadwork from Roger includes a full, matching traditional Choctaw male regalia, which contains over five pieces. “All items will include Choctaw and mound builder designs and motifs,” he explained.

Throughout his educational career, Roger was interested in the environment and has worked toward keeping it a clean place, much like the environment his Choctaw ancestors lived in.

“At a young age, I was fascinated and intrigued by the rich geology of Utah and Arizona, mountain systems, dinosaur fossils and the ancient people that once inhabited the canyons and plateaus,” he explained.

After graduating high school, he attended college at the University of Oregon, earning his bachelor’s degree in geology.

He went on to earn his master’s in geology from Colorado School of Mines and his master’s in natural resource science from Washington State University.

Roger has held several positions in his career field throughout the years, such as a plant ecologist, an exploration geologist and his current title as a soil conservationist.

Roger and wife Carolyn Jackson Amerman have four sons, Douglas Jackson, Darren, Dawson and Preston. Darren and Dawson are currently attending college in Washington and Idaho, and Carolyn, Preston and Roger live on the Nez Perce Reservation in Idaho.





Ralph Adcock, Marvin Ginn and DeAnn Rowe take a minute for a picture and then finish speaking with Chief Gregory E. Pyle.



Councilmen Jack Austin, Delton Cox and Ted Dosh wait with Michelle Shoemake, Delores Cox, Mary Coley and Faye Self for the festivities to begin.



At the end of the dinner, Councilman Coley relaxes and speaks briefly with JoAnna Baker, Wilhemina Baker, Marissa Martinez and Samantha Queravin.



Assistant Chief Gary Batton welcomes Rosie Mae Ludlow and Gwendolyn Parish Bart to the Wilburton dinner.



## Wilburton center hosts appreciation dinner



Councilman Joe Coley enjoys visiting with people from his area during the Appreciation Dinner on May 16. Pictured, far left, Ralph Adcock; above left, Betty Hall; above right, C.J. Adcock; and, far right, Steve Smith, president of Eastern Oklahoma State University.



Councilman Coley thanks Clyde and Brayden Spears for attending the Appreciation dinner.



Choctaw Nation Photos: KAREN JACOB

## The early life of District 6's Juanita West Noah

Juanita West Noah was born on Oct. 30, 1931, in a small LeFlore County community called Rosedale to Ted and Lotta Thomas West.

She lived in a large green house that her parents rented. It had wide porches and many rooms with notable décor. She remembers enjoying that house very much as a child.

She attended a Methodist church in Rosedale that was inside the school her sister attended.

Early in her life, her parents split. Her father took her to stay with an aunt and uncle while he went to California to find work. Once he found it, he had intended to come back for her, but Lotta found out where she was located and came to take her.

Her parents eventually reunited and they moved to the McCurtain area when Juanita was four. This was in 1936 and Juanita remembers terrible conditions of the dust bowl. She remembers the water drying up and having to take the milk cow down to the creek because they had to save all the well water close to the house.

She remembers her mother washing her and her sister's hair in the yard, a whirlwind of dust blowing though the yard and both of them becoming covered in mud. The girls enjoyed the whirlwinds, but Lotta was not so pleased and had to wash their hair again.

This was the year she began attending school at McCurtain.



This was also the time her twin sisters were born. She remembers that after the twins were born her father gave her more responsibilities because he had to take care of them.

Shortly after the birth of the twins, the family moved to Juanita's grandmother's Indian allotment. It was into an old wooden house that was in need of repair. The night of the move-in, there was an ice storm that produced ice that did not thaw for three weeks.

During the ice, Juanita started school at the community of Boggy. She had to walk across fields of ice and snow to get to school. That particular school went to the eighth grade and Juanita completed that school. Shortly after she completed her education at Boggy, a tornado destroyed the school and it was consolidated with other schools.

Juanita then took the bus to Red Oak school and finished four years there. She graduated in 1949. Juanita was a tall girl and wanted to play basketball, but her parents would not let her.

During high school she had a man in her life, J.C. Noah, that she liked. He was in the service during World War II and they could not be together. Once Juanita turned 18 and he left the service, he came up to her home in a taxicab and took her away.

The two left for Fort Smith Ark., and were married. The taxi driver was the only witness to the marriage. They lived with his parents for a time and then rented a place at Boggy Center. Her husband worked in various places around the area. He worked at the Naval Ammunition Depot in McAlester and eventually at the Circle F Ranch.

Juanita's mother did not approve of the marriage at first, but after a few years of J.C. treating her right, Lotta came around



to J.C. and the two got along. J.C. was happy to know she approved and mentioned that it was a long time coming.

The couple had four children during their 39-year marriage. J.C. passed away on June 2, 1989, from a heart attack. He had some earlier in life, but he kept working hard through his days, which may have attributed to the fatal attack.

During the marriage Juanita obtained her nursing license. She went to the Poteau Vocational Technical School and

got her LPN. She went to work for Latimer County General Hospital.

One day she got a call from the Choctaw Nation about the CHR program. A man who Juanita was acquainted with offered her a job with the Choctaw Nation and she took it. She greatly enjoyed it as she traveled all around the Choctaw Nation.

She worked for Choctaw Nation until she retired at 72 years old. She was deeply sad to leave her job because she enjoyed it so much.

In her retirement years, Juanita attends the Wilburton Senior Citizen's Program every Wednesday. She also goes to the Church of Christ in Red Oak and sings in Choctaw at the Lodi Church and the Cedars Indian Baptist Church.

She enjoys arts, crafts and painting. She painted pictures for around her home and has painted a sign that goes outside her home.

## Ola Maye Billy Draper shares her memories

Ola Maye Billy Draper was born on Aug. 20, 1921, in the town of Howe, Okla. Her father, Watson Benton Billy, was three-fourth Choctaw blood and her mother, Sophia Moore Billy was full blooded. Ola is listed as having three-quarters Choctaw blood, though she has more.

Ola was the fourth of five children in her family. She lived and began school in Howe until she was nine years old. At this age she was forced by illness to reside at the sanitarium in Talihina. Her doctor thought she had developed TB due to bouts of pneumonia that had damaged her lungs.

Before leaving for Talihina, Watson passed away in 1928. She remembers that before he even knew how to drive, he had purchased a new Model-T Ford, which a friend later showed him how to operate. He was the Methodist minister of Spring Hill Church in Howe.

She spent a year in Talihina. There, the occupants of the sanitarium had classes after their lunch. If they chose, they could take part in crochet classes, learn to work with leather or embroider. Ola spent her time learning to crochet and made bedspreads, tablecloths, afghans and doilies.

She also learned to do beadwork. She made many bracelets, a belt, necklaces and some key holders, which she gave as gifts. After spending a year in Talihina, Ola was well enough to return to her home.

Upon her arrival, the family moved to Higgins, located in the country outside of Hartshorne on a trail that was known as the Choctaw Trail. The move was due to her mother getting remarried. The school she attended in Higgins, which no longer exists, went to the eighth grade.

She began her fourth grade year there, but quickly had a recurrence of her TB. She was moved to Shawnee to another Indian TB sanitarium, where she stayed another year. At the



sanitarium, she was given cod liver oil to help her condition, which is why she will not eat fish to this day. She recalls that even moving her arms and legs was sometimes hard.

While she was in Shawnee she did much reading and crocheting while she got better. Her favorite book was Little Women. She loved to read each night when things were quiet all around her.

On Saturdays, the sanitarium staff would take the residents to downtown Shawnee for shopping and a movie. Once a month, there was a party for them as well. At the parties the girls would get dressed up, which was a rare

occasion, and enjoyed food and games with their friends. Ola would sometime not be in good enough health and have to miss the party, which she remembers being very disappointing.

When Ola was nearing the age of 16 she was able to return home from Shawnee. It was July when she was released. Her mother did not have a phone at the time, so when she was able to go home, she called her mother's lawyer who relayed the message.

Aside from her time spent in the sanitarium, Ola remembers certain other aspects of her childhood. She vaguely remembers her sister, who passed away in 1945. She was about 15 years older than Ola and suffered from kidney problems. Her other sibling also passed away at various times from differing causes.

She remembers her mother working hard around their land during hard economic times. Her stepfather passed away in 1933, meaning her mother had to take on the bulk of the work. She would raise the cattle, hogs, geese, chickens and guineas all while growing an annual garden. "She worked!" exclaimed Ola.

She remembers always having enough food during hard

times because of her mother's hard work. The family had a hard time getting clothes because they had little money, and the money they did have, they used to buy flour.

Ola's mother also enjoyed cooking often. Ola did not learn to cook like her mother, but would help in other ways around the kitchen such as peeling potatoes and cleaning. As a result of the cooking, the family would have guests over often.

Around 1940, her mother sold that place and moved to Wilburton and lived on a reservation, which is now Eastern Oklahoma State College. Ola says that some people claim there was never a reservation there, but Ola knows better.

Ola lived on this reservation until 1940 when she married Edward Draper, who was a member of the Army. She met him before 1940, while at a dance. They danced with each other and felt a spark.

After the dance, they did not see each other for some time. Edward was stationed in Texas, Missouri and California until he was discharged in 1940. After his discharge, the two traveled to a Justice of the Peace in Poteau and were wed.

Once they were married, the couple moved to an apartment in Wilburton. Ola's mother came down with an illness and stayed with them until she recovered. They then moved to a house on the reservation.

While living there, Ola learned how to drive a car. The car she learned on was a little car called a "bread wagon," which had a standard transmission. She did not care for it, so Edward purchased a '47 Chevy and later a '50 Ford.

In the late 1950s, Edward and Ola moved into her current home, which they rented at the time, but now own. They decided to settle down there because her mother could live with them and his parents lived nearby at Cravens.

During the marriage, Edward worked construction in Wilburton until he made the decision to work at the ammunition plant. Ola's health improved and she began to have children. She has three sons, Calvin Davis Draper, Leonard Edward Draper and Billy Hugh Draper.



# OBITUARIES

## James Nelson

James “Hondi” Eli Nelson Jr., 46, a longtime Lane area resident passed away on March 26, 2011, at Fort Smith, Ark. He was born on July 17, 1964, in Atoka to James Nelson Sr. and Esther (Peters) Nelson. He graduated in 1982 from Atoka High School. James was a brick and rock mason and worked in the construction field. He attended the Church of the Rock in Lane. He enjoyed playing his flute and working for the Choctaw Nation as a Community Health Representative.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Esther (Peters) Nelson; nephew Wayne Bailey; and grandparents, T.R. and Carrie Nelson and William and Tracy Peters.

He is survived by his son, Matthew of Lane; father James Nelson Sr. of Lane; siblings, Jackie Lyles and Lucy Nelson, both of Lane, Carla Hayes with husband Robert of Fittstown, Shelley Cromer of Durant, Jennifer Manuelito with husband Brandon of Phoenix, and Willie Nelson of Calera; along with numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, other relatives and many dear friends.



## Brandon Winship

Brandon Ray “Gator” Winship, 24, passed away on May 2, 2011, in Rattan. He was born May 5, 1986, in Ada to Jackie Leroy and Sherry Rae (Winship) Cook.

Gator grew up in Bonham, Texas, and had lived in the Rattan area for the past seven years. He was of the Baptist faith, and he enjoyed riding horses, hunting and helping Nana in the kennel. Most of all, Gator loved spending time with his family and friends.

Gator was preceded in death by his papa, Jimmy Winship; great-grandfather, Anderson Winship; great-grandmothers, Ada Winship and Alma Fuller; and an uncle, Harold Winship.

He is survived by his mother, Sherry Cook of Rattan; father, Jackie Cook of Bennington; brothers, Kike Cook of Rattan and Edward Johnson of Hugo; nana, Linda Winship of Rattan; uncle, Terry Don Winship of Rattan; cousins, Lyndsi Winship, Kayli Winship, Easton Winship, Loghann Winship and Kelbi Winship; many other aunts, uncles and cousins, as well as many other relatives and friends.



## Jewel Meely

Jewel D. Meely, 53, of Oklahoma City passed away on Dec. 29, 2010, in Oklahoma City. He was born on Dec. 19, 1957, in Oklahoma City to Charley and Virginia Mae (Williamson) Meely. He grew up in Oklahoma City before moving to Sulphur and attended school in Sulphur before joining the Army. He enjoyed music and baseball.

He was preceded in death by his parents, three brothers and one sister.

He is survived by his son, Christopher Meely of New Orleans, La.; two brothers, David Byars of Sulphur and Charles Meely of Ardmore; two sisters, Tawana Colungo, Sulphur, and Ramona Macias of St. Louis, Mo.



## Pearlie Deatley

Pearlie May Sampson-Deatley, 58, of Wright City, passed away on March 9, 2011, in Paris, Texas. She was born Aug. 10, 1952, in Roxton, Texas, the daughter of Jacob Sampson and Marie (Elapshabbie) Sampson. Pearlie was a hardworking woman and had worked as a dietitian and cook for at least 20 years for numerous nursing facilities in Paris. She loved to spend time with the family, loved her cats and enjoyed listening to music. She was a member of Goodwater Methodist Church.

Her parents preceded her in death. She was also preceded in death by a brother, Eldon “Red” Sampson, and nieces, Jaqueline Sampson and Audrey Sampson.

She is survived by her husband, Rodney Deatley; two sons, Charlie Sampson with wife Libby and Joe Sampson with wife Brittany, both of Paris; two sisters, Ruthie Fleming and Sarah Sampson, both of Paris; two brothers, Albert Sampson of Ada, and Johnny Sampson of Paris; grandchildren, C.J. Sampson, Brittany Sampson, Joseph Sampson Jr., Eric Sampson, Stormy Dunken and Sierra Sampson; niece Mary Sampson of Paris, and nephews, Walter and Kevin Sampson of Paris; along with numerous other nieces and nephews and a host of family and friends.



## Thelma Day

Thelma “Lucille” Day, 87, passed away peacefully on March 22, 2011. She was a resident of Garden Grove, Calif., for the last 52 years.

Born Aug. 19, 1923, in Hugo to Arthur and Eliza (Lewis) Fulton, she was raised by her paternal grandmother, Susan (Hayes) Fulton in Hugo. Lucille attended Goodland Academy and graduated from Wheelock Academy. She relocated to Southern California and married James Jackson Day in 1948. He preceded her in death in 1971. Lucille retired at age 72 from Kaiser Permanente in Huntington Beach, Calif.

Home caregiver “CeCe” greatly enriched her last years. Lucille enjoyed being a homebody, family gatherings, and the occasional trip to Las Vegas. She found special joy in her pets, most recently her cat, Piper.

Lucille is survived by her only daughter, Susan Walden (Fritz); granddaughters, Erin Brown (Craig) and Lauren Saunders (Kevin); great-grandchildren Jacob and Alexis La Scala, Erika Marquez (Mike), Brenden Brown and Graham Saunders; cousin Linda Manning; and other extended family and friends.



## Sherry Hobb

Sherry Lambert Montgomery Hobb, 64, passed away on Feb. 18, 2011, in Spokane, Wash. She was born on July 2, 1946, in Ada to Marie Breco and Robert Huntington. The family moved to Germany in 1947 where he was a pilot in the Army. They moved back to the states six months later. In 1953, Marie re-married and Jim Lambert adopted Sherry at the age of 8 in Spokane. She remained in Spokane to raise her two children, Kim and Jim. Sherry went to college in San Francisco in the ’60s, studied fashion and design and became an accomplished seamstress. In the ’70s she worked at the Bon Marche, now known as Macy’s, in Spokane as a department manager in the women’s department. In the ’80s she became very diverse detailing and undercoating new vehicles. In the mid ’90s she worked at Bumpers Fun Center as a general manager dealing with marketing, recruiting, etc. with her daughter and son. She retired in 2000 and in the last 10 years she used her creativity styling greeting cards, purses, and dabbling in interior design. Sherry loved to dance and had a great sense of humor. She also had a great love for Jesus and his teachings.

She is survived by her two children, Kim and Jim; sister Kathy; father Jim Lambert; and husband Ed Hobbs.



## Jim Rose

Dr. Jim E. Rose, 55, of Ringling passed away on March 2, 2011, in Ardmore. He was born on Sept. 3, 1955, in Ardmore to McClain and Margarette (Bogle) Rose. Dr. Rose graduated from Ringling High School in 1973, from Cameron University in 1978 and received his Doctorate of Veterinarian Medicine from the College of Veterinary Medicine at Oklahoma State University in 1982.

In 1982, he moved to Poteau to practice veterinary medicine at Poteau Valley Veterinary Hospital with Dr. Phil Chitwood. In 1992, he returned home to Ringling to start his own mobile veterinary practice, “Ramblin’ Rose Veterinary Services.” He and the former Cindy Carol Chapman were united in marriage on Dec. 28, 1973, in Ringling. They had just celebrated 37 years of marriage in December. Jim loved working with animals, being outdoors, traveling, being with his family and riding the four-wheeler with his granddaughter, Justice. He was her “Doc.” He was a proud member of the Choctaw Nation and was pleased to pass on his heritage to his children and granddaughter.

Preceding Jim in death were his father on Feb. 2, 1974; mother on Dec. 27, 2006; and mother-in-law Carol Chapman on Aug. 10, 2008.

Survivors include his wife, Cindy, of the home; daughter Kimmie Carol Rose Wilson with husband Bo’don of Sanger, Texas; son Cody James Rose of Norman; granddaughter Justice Nycole Wilson; sister Janice Willis of Corinth, Texas; brother McClain Rose with wife Laura of Oklahoma City; father-in-law L.J. Chapman of Courtney; brother-in-law Larry Chapman of Courtney; sisters-in-law, Tammy Holder with husband Dennis of Chickasha and Shelly Milson with husband Larry of Oil City; numerous nieces, nephews, family and friends.



## Laymon Kennedy

Laymon E. Kennedy, 82, of Tulsa passed away on Sept. 19, 2010 in Tulsa. He was born on March 28, 1928, in Hoyt to H.R. and Lela (Green) Kennedy. He moved to Tulsa in 1950 and worked for Tulsa Public Schools foe 27 ½ years, then retired from Union Public School in 1987. He was a member of the Masonic Delta Lodge #425 in Tulsa.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and his brother, Bunny Ray Kennedy.

He is survived by two daughters, Lanora Kennedy of Coweta and Dianna Easley of Broken Arrow; two stepdaughters, Kelly Jack of Sapulpa and Michelle Schwartz of Owasso; three sisters, Elrenah Lawrence, Norma Lee Brignon and Betty Sue Maxwell, all of Oklahoma City; brother Jerry Kennedy of Oklahoma City; five grandchildren, Brandon Fountain, Lisa McAlester, Travis Sims, Josh Hicks and Jeremy Hicks; and several great-grandchildren.



## Harry Denison

Harry Lafayette Denison, 79, passed away on May 6, 2011, surrounded by his family.

He was born Jan. 23, 1932, and raised in Idabel. He attended Austin College and Baylor College of Medicine. He then did general practice in Hardtner, Kan., until he returned to school for additional training in urology at the University of Oklahoma. He practiced urology for over 30 years, caring for people in north Texas and southern Oklahoma.

Harry married his high school sweetheart, Phyllis Jane Hardin, and they raised three children, Mark Denison of Euless, Texas, Lea Freemyer of Boerne, Texas, and Steve Denison of St. Petersburg, Fla. They shared 50 years as a married couple and had five grandchildren.

Harry spent the last several years living half time with Lea and her husband, Bryon, along with their children, Joy, Benjamin and Nathan. They all enjoyed the time they spent together. Steve and his wife Dee have two children named Caitlin and Daniel.

Harry and Phyllis shared many happy times together traveling, C and W dancing, watching OU football and playing bridge. He also loved the outdoors, spending many happy years bird hunting, fishing and mushroom hunting.

He overcame many obstacles in his life. He started his work career at the age of 10, working in Humpy and Amy’s Restaurant in Idabel. He worked summers on the wheat harvest and highway construction to help pay for his education.

He was very proud of his Native American roots and his family ties to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. He collected arrowheads and studied the Choctaw language.



## Geneva Anderson

Geneva Anderson, 95, of Amarillo passed away on Feb. 22, 2011. She was born on Jan 3, 1916, in Durant to Albert and Cena Harkins. She was raised in Tupelo and Erick. Her father was an original enrollee of the Choctaw Nation.

She married Rod Anderson on Aug. 9, 1931, in Delhi, which is located in Beckham County. He preceded her in death in 2002. They lived in Snyder for several years before moving to Amarillo in 1996.

Mrs. Anderson was a homemaker and enjoyed cooking, sewing, crocheting and gardening. She was eagerly awaiting the birth of her first great-great-grandchild to join her legacy in April.

The family would like to give a special thanks to the staff of Bivins Memorial Nursing Home and to Patsy Hubbard and Jerry Pickens for all their care.

She was preceded in death by her parents; a son, Lewis Edward Anderson in 1935; a granddaughter, Pam Porter in 2010; three brothers; and two sisters.

Survivors include two daughters, Helen Porter with husband BeBe of Olathe, Kan., and Janice Hughes and special friend Jerry Pickens of Amarillo; a brother, Charles Harkins of Turlock, Calif.; a sister, Melba Polk of Tupelo; three grandchildren, Rod Porter of Kansas City, Mo., Dana Higgs with husband Kal of Amarillo, and Tim Smallwood with wife Kelly; and four great-grandchildren, Kallie McBride with husband Mitch, Kyle Higgs with wife Bianca, Saira Smallwood and Yvette Smallwood, all of Amarillo.



## Bernice Long

Bernice Long, 82, of Wilburton, passed away on April 29, 2011, in Poteau.

Bernice was born Nov. 27, 1928, to John and Lorene (Jack) Burnett in Red Oak. She grew up in Leflore and Red Oak. She married Chester Long. Bernice enjoyed traveling with her friends on the Choctaw senior trips. She was a member of the Thessalonian Baptist Church.

Bernice is preceded in death by her parents, John and Lorene Burnett; husband Chester Long; son Sam Colbert; sisters, Wanda Johnson, Mae Hatcher and Carolyn Littlejohn; and brother, Dear Jack “Hambone” Burnett.

She is survived by her sons, Jerry Colbert with wife Darlene of Gallatin, Tenn., Tommy Colbert of Poteau and Steve Long with wife Barbara of Hackett, Ark.; sister Jo Graves with husband Dennis of Amarillo, Texas; 12 grandchildren, Tina, Christy, Tammy, Tommy, Timmy, Torry, Teddy, Heather, Jeremy, Chris, Tony and John; numerous great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins and other family and friends.



## Daniel Hudson

Daniel Hudson, 86, passed away on April 17, 2011, in Antlers. He was born on Feb. 14, 1925, to Isham Hudson and Phoebe (Bohanan) Hudson in Eagletown. Both parents were full-blood Choctaws.

Daniel was fluent in the Choctaw language. He loved to sing Choctaw hymns and read the Choctaw Bible.

He was preceded in death by both parents; two sisters, Velma Battiest and Pauline Hampton; half-sister Daisy Wilmon; two brothers, John Beaver Hudson and Edwin Hudson.

He is survived by brother James Hudson of Speers; a host of relatives of Hudson, Bohanan, Amos and Tonihka descent; and a host of nieces and nephews to the third generation.

## Frances Jones

Frances M. Jones, 90, homemaker, passed from this life on April 23, 2011, in Tulsa. She was born on April 25, 1920, to Joe and Magdolene (Frazier) Allen in Sardis.

Frances married Odis Lowell Jones who preceded her in death.

Frances was preceded in death by her husband, Odis Lowell Jones; parents, Joe and Magdolene Allen; step-mother Eunice Cain Allen; great-grandchild: Brooke Nicole Olmstead; sister Maggie Bales; and brothers, Earlwayne Allen and Dale Cain.

She is survived by her children, Nancy Trompler, Lynna Edmondson with her husband Gerald, Larry Jones with his wife Shauna; grandchildren, Alaine Brand with her husband Kenneth, David Trompler with his wife Brandi, Pastor J. Cole Weston with his wife Ambre, Matt Jones with his wife Lisa, Jennifer Olmstead with her husband Nick; great-grandchildren, Harrison Jones, Peyton Olmstead, Randy Olmstead, Susan Brand, Nicholas Brand, Joshua Brand, Alex Trompler, Eva Trompler, Adam Trompler, Audrey Weston, Caroline Weston; sister Clara Kesner.



## Nadine Parker

Nadine S. Parker, 83, passed away on Nov. 29, 2010. She was born on Nov. 3, 1927, in Caddo to Eulin G. and Jewell L. (Dillard) Stevens. She graduated from Phillips High School in 1944 and continued her education at Freed-Hardeman College in Hendersonville, Tenn. She worked most of her life as a nurse until her retirement. She moved to Bryan County in April of 2005 from Amarillo. She was a member of the Northwest Church of Christ and the Choctaw Seniors and she enjoyed reading, crossword puzzles, crocheting, arts and crafts, gardening and cooking, but her greatest joy in life was her family. Nadine will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Nadine was preceded in death by her parents; brothers, Jim, Bill, Dow, Grover, John and Garland Stevens.

She is survived by her daughter, Judy Coley with husband Jim of Colorado Springs, Co.; son Thomas R. Parker with wife Cheryl of Houston; sister Mary Ellen Evans with husband Don of Amarillo; three grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; and many other relatives and a host of dear and loved friends.





# OBITUARIES

## Cecilia Wetwiska

Cecilia Marie Wetwiska, 47, of Lexington, Texas, passed away on April 25, 2011, at Scott and White Memorial Hospital, in Temple, Texas.

Wetwiska was born in Houston on May 4, 1963, the daughter of Jesse and Betty (Anderson) Wetwiska of Lexington.

She was an exceptional athlete who held a track record. She was a state champion in volleyball, softball and bowling. She was always a very friendly, cheerful and generous person, who loved people. She loved to sing and was active in her church. She is a born-again Christian filled with the Holy Spirit. She was a loyal caretaker and always cared for her parents. She did volunteer work with dogs and also worked as a technical engineer.

She was preceded in death by maternal grandparents, L.E. and Marie Anderson; also paternal grandparents John and Mary Wetwiska.

She is survived by her parents and sister Kay Wetwiska of Houston.

## Jim Folsom

Jim Folsom passed away on April 24, 2011, in the Veteran's Center of Ardmore. He was born Dec. 31, 1947, in Greenville, the son of Rudolph Stanton and Helen Fisher Folsom.

A resident of Love County most of his life, Mr. Folsom was a surveyor for more than 30 years, owning and operating Folsom Surveying Company. He served four years with the U.S. Air Force, 1966 to 1970, and was a veteran of the Vietnam Conflict. His hobbies included deer hunting and playing bluegrass music, especially the mandolin.

Mr. Folsom was preceded in death by his parents; and a brother, Terry Folsom.

He is survived by two daughters and son-in-law, Nellie Folsom of Nashville, Tenn., and Jennifer with Aaron Rudd of Spring Hill, Tenn.; brother and sister-in-law, Charles T. with Olga Folsom of San Benito, Texas; three sisters, Peggy Folsom and Mona Bland of Lewisville, Texas and Beverlee Thomas of Krum, Texas; three grandchildren, Ethan, Ava and Miles; several nieces and nephews and a host of friends.

## Irby Lee Ward

Irby Lee Ward, 90, passed away on March 7, 2011, at the Midland Hospice House in Topeka, Kan.

Lee was born on May 20, 1920, in Murray Spur, the son of Willis and Myrtle Allen Ward. He graduated from eighth grade at Old Town Grade School in Murray Spur and received his GED certificate later from Emporia Teachers College.

He enlisted in the U.S. Army on Aug. 29, 1938, and was discharged on June 23, 1954. He served in World War II and the Korean War.

Lee worked for the State of Kansas as a road and bridge superintendent for Northern Lyon County and also farmed. He was a member of the Miller United Methodist Church. He was also a 50-year member of Masonic Lodge #3335, AF&AM at Allen, a member of Moreland, Edmunds, Clayton, Thompson, Post #389 at Admire and the VFW in Emporia.

He married Edith Lynch on July 5, 1947, in Lawton. She passed away on Oct. 8, 2002. He was also preceded in death by his parents; sister Inez Fimpel; brother Christopher Columbus Ward; and a nephew Joe Ward.

Survivors include seven nieces and nephews and numerous grand-nieces and grand-nephews.



## Glen Bertis

Glen Dale Bertis, 45, passed away on April 30, 2011, in Lane. He was born on Jan. 20, 1966, in Mescalero, N.M.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Richard and Naomi Bertis; sister Deloris Fay Bertis; and brother Richard Bertis Jr.

He is survived by his daughter, Tasha Bertis of Oklahoma City; brothers, Dennis Bertis with wife Sherrie of Tulsa, Randy Bertis of Oklahoma City, and Dwayne Hamill of Calera; sisters, Roberta Bertis of Soper, Sandra Campos with husband Jorge of Bentley, Wanda Bertis of Los Angeles, Anita Cooper of Lane; along with several nieces, nephews and many friends.



## Malcolm Jones

Malcolm E. "Mack" Jones, 98, of McAlester passed away on April 19, 2011, at a local nursing home.

Born to James and Beulah (Mackey) Jones, Oct. 4, 1912, in C-Tree Community, Savanna, he married Vera Riddle in 1934 at Muskogee.

He joined the Arpelar Nazarene Church in 1944, and served as Sunday School superintendent for more than 50 years. He worked as a farmer and rancher most of his life and was a deputy sheriff for Pittsburg County for more than 11 years.

He was an avid baseball fan and most of his grandchildren knew him as "Cowboy Mack."

He was preceded in death by parents James and Beulah Jones; wife Vera Jones in 2001; sister Marcella Wilkins; and brothers, Oscar Jones and Raphael Jones.

Survivors include his sons, Glenn Jones with wife Carol of Arpelar, Harold Buck Jones with wife Frances, of Arpelar, Jim Jones with wife Ann, of McAlester, Charles Jones with wife Barbara of Fort Worth, Texas; grandchildren, Randy Jones, Rodney Jones, Robin Galloway with husband Doug, Curtis Ellison with wife Kristin, Dale Ellison, Pam West with husband Eric, Greg Jones with wife Jennifer, Shelly Larson with husband Dave, Davy Roberts, Chris Jones with wife Denise, Cory Jones with wife Beth Ann, Chad Jones with wife Marti; 30 great-grandchildren; eight great-great-grandchildren; sisters, Melanie Shuman of McAlester, and Aurilla Hazelwood with husband Vestal of McAlester; and numerous nieces, nephews and other family members and friends.



## Mary Durham

Mary (Rosenthal) Durham, 89, a resident of Mt. Juliet, Tenn., passed away on April 18, 2011. She was born Jan. 12, 1922, in Rattan. She was the third of 12 children born to Parker and Eva Mae (Boyett) Rosenthal and was of German and Choctaw descent. She was the granddaughter of George Rosenthal and Mary (Willis) Rosenthal. Her Choctaw ancestry came from the Willis side of her paternal grandmother, Mary.

She was raised in both Cloudy and Rattan and attended Rattan High School in the mid- to late 1930's. She was a valued member of the girls' basketball team at Rattan High School. During high school she also contracted Typhoid Fever, along with a younger sister, and spent several months recuperating.

After high school and before her marriage to her husband, James H. Durham, she worked as a high school teacher and as a farm worker. During WWII, she worked in an Oklahoma City factory building fighter planes for the war effort before heading to California for her marriage in September 1943. Her first child was born in 1944, while her husband was stationed in England. Other children followed in 1946, 1950 and 1962.

After the war, while her husband completed his education, she raised their children and became her sons' Cub Scout/Boy Scout den mother. She was also active in the church as a Sunday School teacher. The family moved to California in 1955. In California, she worked for 20 years in retail sales at The Broadway as a salesperson, assistant manager and department manager of various departments. After retirement, she enjoyed working in her yard, gardening, visiting family and friends, and spending time with her five grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. She and her husband also enjoyed a memorable trip to Europe. In 1995, she and her husband moved to Mt. Juliet, Tenn., where she lived until her death. Her beloved husband, Jimmie, passed away in June of 2007 after almost 64 years of marriage.

She is survived by her children, James H. Durham, John P. (Susie) Durham, Diane Durham (Bill) Newland, and Sherry L. Perry; her siblings, Frank (Monalla) Rosenthal, Ernestine Krohn, Isabel (Harley) Murray and Tommie Scott; her grandchildren, Adrienne Durham, Amy McCartney, Ashley Grguric, Nathan Durham, and James Perry; her eight great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews. She was 89 years old and lived a long, happy and interesting life. She will be dearly missed.



## Daniel Seeley

Daniel Dewitt "Renegade" Seeley, 65, of Beaumont passed away on April 28, 2011, at his residence.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Rev. Velma Baker; stepdad Rev. Ralph Baker; grandmother Igney Wesley Seeley; brothers, Harry and Donald Seeley; and son Daniel Dewitt Seeley Jr.

He is survived by his wife, Marquitta Janet Baker Seeley of Beaumont; son, Daniel Dewitt Seeley II of Beaumont; daughters, Diana Ruth Ann Seeley Cooper of Krebs, Tracy Lynn Seeley of Beaumont, Lavelma Kay Seeley Mizelle of New Augusta, and Katelyn Danielle Seeley of Beaumont; sisters, Karen Logan of Valliant; Sharon Logan Allen of Idabel, and Nancy Kay Ebahotubbi of Oklahoma City; brother, Harris Logan of Valliant; grandson, Corey Daniel Ray Seeley of Krebs; granddaughters, Montanna Christine Seeley and Haley Justine Storm Seeley of Krebs.

## Charles Battiest

Charles R. Battiest, 87, passed away on Feb. 11, 2011. He was born Nov. 15, 1923, in Boswell, the son of Stephen J Battiest and Cassie Lela (Binger) Battiest.

Charles was a World War II Army veteran and he retired from the Kansas City Star. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, gardening and took great pride in his cabin property near the lake.

Charles was preceded in death by his daughter, Sandra Battiest; his son, Michael Ray Battiest; his parents; two brothers, Alto and S J Battiest; and two sisters, Beulah Milam and LaVonne Keener.

Survivors include his wife, Geardean Battiest; children, Dane Battiest with wife Kathy, Ginny Irminger, Darlene Sherman with husband David, Lorraine Klein with husband Rupert, Karen Battiest, Donnie Lansdown, Dale Lansdown and Trina Hammer; 15 grandchildren, including Adam Battiest, Christopher Battiest, Angela Wright, Jeremy Sherman, Sara Irminger, Laura Irminger, Rupert Klein, Alysia Battiest, Tyler Klein, Megan Klein, Dustin Klein and Abby Klein; and six great-grandchildren.



## Jimmie Payton

Jimmie Lawrence Payton, 58, or Faulkner, Kan., passed away March 29, 2010, following a long illness at the Mercer/Lovelady homestead where he and long-time close platonic friend and caretaker of nearly 30 years, Terry Mercer.

Jimmie, better known as his stage name, Crazy Ed Carington, was born Oct. 1, 1951, in Lubbock, Texas, to Lonzo and Betty (Stewart) Payton.

Jimmie worked concrete construction for many years and was very proud of his Choctaw and Cherokee heritage and often would pull out his CDIB card to show people who questioned him. He was baptized and was of the Baptist faith.

Jimmie was also an avid guitar player and had played semi-professional in numerous states. He was willing to teach anyone how to play guitar for nothing. He recently saw that one of his best friends got his Les Paul guitar.

He was an avid cyclist and was very proud of his ability to jump on his bicycle and ride across country. When asked how far he had rode in a single day, he would smile and proudly say, "122 miles."

He was preceded in death by his father, a sister and a niece. He is survived by his children, Charles and Jennifer Payton of Fort Worth; mother Betty Payton of Antlers; Billy and Don Payton of Antlers; Dale Payton of Tecumseh; sister Twila Allen of McCloud; and a close friend, Terry Mercer of the home.

## Norris Meashintubby

Norris Wayne Meashintubby, 28, passed away on April 30, 2011, at Talihina Indian Hospital. He was born June 17, 1982, at Talihina Indian Hospital. He lived in Talihina all his life and graduated from Talihina High School. He also loved to play sports and enjoyed playing with his son, nieces, and nephews. He also enjoyed going fishing.

He was preceded in death by his father, Archie Meashintubby; grandmothers, Lena Meashintubby and Reba Meashintubby; stepbrother Roger James; and nephew Mark Meashintubby.

He is survived by wife Austrina; son Norris Jr.; mother Mary Lou Meashintubby of Talihina; four brothers, Norval with wife Delissa Meashintubby of Eugene, Ore., Nathan with wife Annette Meashintubby of Fort Smith, Ark., Neville with wife Alicia Meashintubby, and Archie Meashintubby Jr. of Talihina; two sisters, Sherry with Isidro Balderas, of Fort Smith, Ark., and Shirley Trejo from Talihina; four stepbrothers, George James, Delbert James, Eddie James, all of Talihina, and Bobby James, of Oklahoma City; three stepsisters, Marilyn James, Lisa Rodriguez and Renee Ludlow, all of Broken Bow; stepmom Christina Meashintubby from Talihina; five nephews, Kyle, Nakoma, Brandon, Neville Jr. and Nehemiah; seven nieces, Jalonda, Dedra, Davita, Dalita, Melanie, Annisia, and Alyssa; great-niece, Neela Meashintubby; three great-nephews, Kamron, Isiah, Joshua; also numerous family and friends.

## Sarah Belvin

Sarah Belvin, 97, passed away on May 6, 2011, at her home in Boswell. She was born March 3, 1914, in Boswell, the daughter of Solomon Belvin and Virgie (Frazier) Belvin and was a lifelong resident of Boswell. Sarah was a loving mother and grandmother. She loved cooking and gardening (pulling weeds while in a wheelchair). Sarah had lots of pride and always kept her family fed. Being one of the "Golden Girls," she was very social and loved to go.

Preceding her in death were her parents; her husband, Henry Belvin (1-14-1974); sons, Henry Belvin Jr., and Baby Belvin; daughter, Jimmie Lou Hunt; sisters, Lillie Pierce and Sissy Belvin; and brothers, Simon Belvin, Stephen Belvin and Jonas Belvin.

Survivors include: seven sons, Virgil "Buddy" Belvin of Valliant, Vernon Lee Belvin of Midwest City, Dante Belvin of Boswell, John Robert Belvin of Boswell, Richard Mark Belvin of Boswell, Solomon James Belvin of Shawnee and Jerry Paul Belvin of Boswell; three daughters, Lavada Duke of Atoka, Sarah Virginia "Weaver" Rutledge of Millerton and Debra Bacon of Boswell; 38 grandchildren; 67 great-grandchildren; 40 great-great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild and numerous other family members and friends.

## Mary McKnight

Mary B. McKnight, 87, passed away on Jan. 15, 2011, at her home. She was born Mary B. Addison on Oct. 16, 1923, in Wister, and was raised in west Texas near Olney. She had lived in the Fort Worth area for over 60 years. Mary married Bobbie Kenneth McKnight on April 4, 1958, in Weatherford. They enjoyed traveling and spending time with family.

Mary was preceded in death by her parents, Edward and Blanche Addison, and a sister, Lucille Langham.

Survivors include husband of 52 years, Bobbie K. McKnight; children, Sandra L. Kutej of Fort Worth, Kenneth C. McKnight of Granbury, Larry D. McKnight of Fort Worth, Kathryn K. Cheney and Ricki D. McKnight, both of Granbury; 13 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; and three great-great-grandchildren.



## Thomas P. Burrows

Thomas P. Burrows, 79, of McAlester passed away on May 9, 2011, at McAlester Regional Health Center. Born April 4, 1932, near Centerpoint in Atoka County to Terrance and Vinnie (James) Burrows, he grew up in the Atoka area and had lived in McAlester since 1958.

As a youngster, he worked in the family-owned sawmills until he moved to Fort Worth, Texas, and worked at Swifts Packing Co. After he moved to McAlester in 1958, he worked at Holsom Bakery then at Sims-Moore Lumber Co. He later worked in bridge construction for Muskogee Bridge Co. In his spare time, he enjoyed the outdoors, hunting and fishing.

He married Betty Wright in 1954, in Atoka, and she preceded him in death in 1999. He was also preceded in death by his parents and eight siblings.

Survivors include two sons, Steve Burrows with wife Debbie of McAlester, and Johnnie Burrows with wife Gaye, of McAlester; two daughters, Bonnie Burrows, of McAlester, and Sherrie Handley with husband Dale of McAlester; seven grandchildren, Ryan Burrows with wife Alice of New Mexico, Brett Burrows of McAlester, Jacalyn Burrows of Norman, Jonathan Pedigo of Shawnee, Rachelle Pedigo of Ada, Fordie Glenn of Bugtussle, and Rebecca Smith with husband, Rhys of McAlester; six great-grandchildren; one brother, Henry Burrows with wife Viola of California; and several nieces and nephews.

## Wanda Camp

Wanda June (Tucker) Camp, 85, of Poteau, passed away on April 14, 2011, in Spiro. Wanda was born Sept. 5, 1925, in Fairview to Homer McCurtain and Pearl Ida (Butler) Tucker. Wanda was a beautician. She loved her Sunday School Class and spending time with her family. She was proud of her Choctaw heritage. She was a member of the DAV Auxiliary.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Charles Camp Sr.; sisters, Mary Lou Jerome, Doris Graves; and her parents.

Survivors include son and daughter-in-law, Charles H. Jr. and Carol Camp of Poteau; daughters and sons-in-law, Judy and Bob Womack of Keota, Karen and Enie Tobler of Spiro; grandsons, Bob Womack of Keota, Danny and Liz Womack of Bixby, Chris and Michelle Tobler of Wylie, Texas; great-grandchildren, Hayley Womack, Hayden Womack, Scarlett Tobler, Colin and Tara Womack, Cassie Womack; sisters, Nancy Mendenhall of Tulsa, Cordelia Newnam of Broken Arrow; other relatives, loved ones and many beloved friends.





# The role of Choctaw fathers and uncles

May’s edition of Iti Fabvssa honored Choctaw mothers. With June being the month of Father’s Day, this edition is dedicated to honoring Choctaw fathers and maternal uncles. We will do this by presenting a little bit of what is known about the daily lives, roles, and personal character of early Choctaw men.

Traditional Choctaw society places a special emphasis on balance. The vital and sacred roles of women in 18th Century Choctaw society, which we described last month, were offset and balanced by the roles of men. While women were considered the givers and nurturers of life, men were considered the takers of life. For example: while women gave birth to children, men killed the enemies who threatened the future of Choctaw communities; similarly, while women grew gardens, men supplemented their family’s diet with meat from animals that they hunted. Choctaw folklore likens women unto hилоha, the rolling thunder, men are likened unto malvtha, the powerful lightning that can split trees.

Choctaw girls grew into women through the sacred power innate in their bodies. Conversely, boys could become men only through years of hard physical, mental and spiritual training in order to be able to prove their worth through success in hunting, stickball, oration/debate, and most importantly, battle. Without proven success, a male would never be considered a man, regardless of how old he became. The path to manhood was a hard one; some didn’t make it; some perished in the attempt, and some become hobak. Those who did become men would be recognized as persons worthy of respect; their advice would be valued in tribal council meetings; they would be sought after by young women looking for a good husband, and they would become fathers. Continued success in masculine pursuits through life might take a man all the way up to the office of chief.

Let’s take a little closer look at the path of Choctaw men in the 18th Century. At birth, or shortly thereafter, baby boys would be given a name that often reflected a particular occurrence in their early lives, or referred to a distinguishing quality or characteristic. Young boys’ beds were cov-

ered in bear or panther skins, the belief being that this would help transfer the bravery and powerful quality of these animals onto the boy as he slept. At the age of three or four, a boy would be given a bow and arrows and encouraged to practice. Boys of a little more maturity would assemble early in the morning to learn tribal history, battle strategy, and lessons in morals and spirituality from respected elder men. They were trained to be honest, generous, and to keep their emotions from controlling them. Boys were given a great deal of freedom, and often spent the day running races, wrestling, having shooting contests, hunting small animals, playing physically demanding games like stickball and achapi, and playing games of intuition, like naki luma (hide the bullet). These activities were fun, but they also developed the set of skills, physical abilities, and competency in the woods that would all be essential for the boys to one day take on the roles of men. In the evening, the boys would again assemble for stories from the elder men. As the boys grew in age, the men would begin taking them out on hunts. On these forays, boys were given a great deal of silent teaching and encouragement. As boys matured physically, they became known as “Hattak Himitta”, or “young men”. Theirs was the lowest of four “gradations” for Choctaw males.

War had always been a part of Choctaw life, but when European colonial powers arrived in the Southeast, they worked hard to increase dissention and war between the tribes. Beginning in the late 1600s, English-sponsored slaving and scalping raids were waged almost constantly against Choctaw communities. Choctaw society became militarized in order to survive. At least in some communities, young men were whipped with canes to teach train them not to fear pain or physical hardship. Some, of their own accord, had contests to see who could stand next to stirred-up hornet nests the longest. In their mid teens, boys might begin traveling with the Tvshka Chimpota, small defensive patrols that searched for raiding war parties within Choctaw country. With proven ability, youth might be asked to go on an occasional war party into enemy country to avenge the deaths of clan rela-



## Iti Fabussa



Photo Provided

tives, although most Choctaw battles were defensive ones.

Success in war would bring about a transformational change in a male’s life.

After showing some feat of prowess against an enemy, a male became a Tvshka, or warrior, the gradation rank for Choctaw males. It was at this point that he was really recognized as a man in Choctaw society. He would likely be tattooed, and given a new, warrior name, by which even strangers would recognize him as a man worthy of respect. Many of these war names describe what the warrior did in battle, and end in the word “vbi” (generally spelled ubbee in English), meaning, “to beat” or “kill.” Thus, we have “Musholatubbee,” meaning “extinguishes and kills; Eyachubbe, meaning “goes and kills,” and Nowabbi, meaning “walks and kills.” Many Choctaw families still carry these names today, handed down from distinguished combat veteran grandfathers several generations ago. In 18th century Choctaw society, Tvshka were respected as protectors of the community, and their opinions mattered at Tribal Council.

With continued success in war, a man’s prestige would continue to grow. He would be able to raise followers for his own military expeditions, and possibly earn a new war name

or title, possibly going through a succession of several. The titles of such highly successful warriors often incorporated the word “humma,” meaning “red” in the Choctaw language. In traditional Choctaw thought, this color was associated with warfare and military success. Thus, we have Shulshumma, “Red Shoes,” and “Tvshkahumma,” “Red Warrior.”

Although military success was important, men were not gauged on this factor alone. With some military success, demonstrated speaking ability, intelligence, leadership, and generosity could pull a man up through the ranks respect and social power. For example, some highly honorable Choctaw titles end in the phrase “imalhtaha,” meaning “it is finished to him.” The name Hopaii Imalhtaha, implies that this special person had reached the height of being a profit. Such a man might have been part of the third gradation in Choctaw society, a “Hattak Holitopa,” a beloved man, respected for his wisdom and spiritual power. He would be welcomed towards the inner circle of the Choctaw council.

Success in war and leadership, and proven wisdom could bring a Choctaw man all the way to the fourth and highest male gradation in Choctaw society, miko, or “chief.”

Choctaw society had a variety of chiefly positions, including assistant community chiefs, local community chiefs, and district chiefs. While having important family connections could certainly help a man’s prestige, and climb through the different gradations, positions were maintained through merit. A slip-up could demote a Miko down to a Tvshka. Chief Pushmataha, who apparently had few living family members, is the perfect example of a Choctaw male raising through the ranks of Choctaw society solely on his own merit.

Although protecting the community was a man’s most important job, to which he might be called at any instant, men actually spent the great majority of their time away from the battlefield. As before mentioned, honored men taught and trained the boys of the community. Within the family, training and discipline of the children, particularly boys, was the duty of their mother’s brother. Unlike the children’s father, he was of their same iksa and clan.

Men also hunted meat for their families, and perhaps others in their iksa who had no one to hunt for them. The meat they provided was essential to the plant-rich Choctaw diet, and the hides, tendons, hooves and antlers were important raw materials. Although men enjoyed these hunts, they were not leisurely affairs by today’s standards. Men often traveled many miles on foot over difficult terrain attempting to find game, and then had to stalk close enough to shoot it. Sometimes the hunts involved dangerous animals such as panther and black bear, and there was always a chance of encountering an enemy war party while one was out far from home and alone.

As alluded to above, another important male role was playing stickball. Although the game could sometimes serve as a simple pastime, contests with other villages or other Tribes could be very serious affairs, which were used in the place of warfare to work out disputes. Even without weapons, these games were hotly contested and it was not uncommon for one or several players to loose their lives before the outcome was reached.

Choctaw men made a variety of essential tools and implements for their communities. In addition to their own

weapons and the paraphernalia for the stickball game, they made canoes and did wood-carving.

Before European contact, men probably chipped most or all of the stone cutting tools. They were probably also the ones who laboriously fashioned ground stone axes and made shell jewelry. At least in certain times and places, men tanned the hides that they obtained on the hunt. Choctaw men did some of the heavier jobs around the village as well, such as clearing the agricultural fields before planting, helping to set the large posts of houses, or of defensive walls around villages, and helping to harvest the fields when the crops ripened.

Some men also had specialized roles in Choctaw society, in addition to the various offices of chief. Many of the Hopaii, or prophets were men, as were many of the Alikchi. Some Choctaw men were noted and respected orators. Some of the same were entertaining story tellers and comedians.

Despite the their many roles, Choctaw men of the 18th century, like women had a great deal of time for leisure, far more than most Americans do today. They spent free time playing active games and games of chance, laughing, joking, and smoking with friends, sharing time with their families, and surely some time just lounging around. They were far being the stoic, monosyllabic, dim-witted warriors we often see pictured by Hollywood.

We owe our Choctaw father and uncles, past and present a very great deal: our very existence. The path that they have followed has not been an easy one. They mentored the upcoming generations, they represented the community, and they sacrificed of themselves, sometimes their very lives, to ensure that the Choctaw people would survive to this very day.

This Father’s Day, lets remember our fathers, uncles, and grandfathers, past and present for all that they mean in our lives.

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.

# Stickball team preparing for World Series

## Coach Josh Willis shares his love of the game

By LISA REED

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Growing up in Philadelphia, Miss., Josh Willis says he started playing stickball about the same time he started walking. He remembers his grandfather, Arch Mingo, telling him the early history of “ishtaboli” or “kabucha toli.”

Commonly called “little brother of war,” stickball was “sort of a practice for a war,” he said, “a way of honing the skills that were required in war. It is believed that the preparations for the game were much the same as the preparations for war.”

Stickball has been around since the early 1700s. When disputes would arise between tribes or communities, stickball provided a peaceful way to settle the issue. The games were very physical, hard-fought contests involving up to 300 players.

When the Mississippi Band of Choctaw began holding its fair in 1949, stickball was an important event but few teams took part. Today, a single elimination tournament, the World Series of Stickball, is held. There are 31 teams signed up for the tournament this year in three brackets – Men’s, Men’s 35+ and Women’s.

Willis, who moved to Oklahoma three years ago, is in his second year of coaching the OK Choctaw stick-



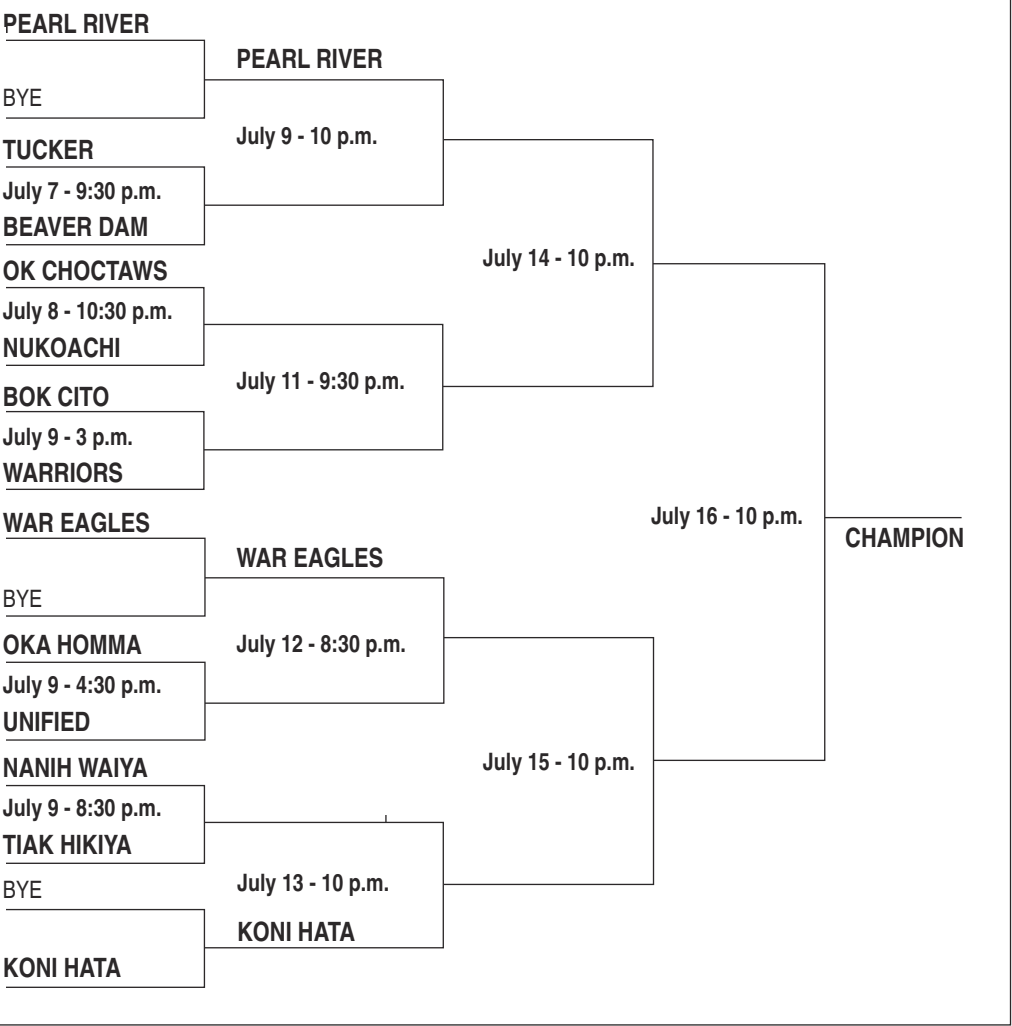
Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

**Josh Willis is in his second year of coaching the OK Choctaw stickball team. The men will be participating in the World Series of Stickball next month.**

ball team. The team played their first game in the World Series last year and are preparing to go back to Choctaw, Miss., again this year.

He makes a lot of the sticks as well. The defense stick with a wider, wavier cup, is made to pick up the ball easier, he explains. The shooter is

## World Series of Stickball – Men’s Bracket July 7-16, 2011 62nd Annual Choctaw Indian Fair, Choctaw, Mississippi



lighter with a wavy cup so the player will have more speed to throw the ball quicker. The center’s stick has a little wave to the cup.

“We have been practicing every Sunday,” Willis said. “We need to be more aggressive, keep everything in motion. They get pretty physical

back home.”

Seventy-one players have signed up to play with the OK Choctaw. They come from all over Oklahoma, two from Dallas and some live in Mississippi.

A drummer leads each team onto the field, the rhythmic beat of the

drum getting the players pumped up. They yell out, letting the other team know they’re ready for the battle.

“The whole community comes out to the high school football field to watch the games,” Willis said. “There are about 1,000 people. You are going to hear the love of the game.”