

Choctaw wisdom
by Nellie Hunter:
"Love anybody"



Page 5

Trail of Tears
Commemorative
Walk to Wheelock



Pages 14-15

Okla Chahta
in Bakersfield
Photos



Page 16

BISKINIK
P.O. Box 1210
Durant OK 74702

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

PRESORT STD
AUTO
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
CHOCTAW NATION

BISKINIK

The Official Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

June 2014 Issue

Tribal Council holds June Session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met for regular session May 10 at Tvshka Homma.

- Council members voted on:
- Authorization to place property in LeFlore County in Trust status with the United States.
 - Approval of the NAHAS-DA 2015 Indian Housing Plan (IHP).
 - Application for the Tribal Homeland Security Grant.
 - Vendor permitting for Choctaw Tribal land in Pushmataha County.
 - Approval of additional funding to Storm Shelter Program.

The Tribal Council meets at 10 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month in the Council Chambers on the capitol grounds in Tvshka Homma.

Over 18 years old?

Don't forget to update your membership card

If you have recently turned 18 or will be turning 18 within the next 60 days and have not yet obtained your Adult Membership card please complete a new Tribal Membership application and return to the Choctaw Nation Tribal Membership Department. The application can be found online at www.choctawnation.com or by contacting the Tribal Membership office at 1-800-522-6170 or 580-924-8280.

What's inside

Columns	2
Notes to the Nation.....	3
Events.....	3
People You Know	6
Education.....	7
Nursery News.....	8
Food Distribution	8
Iti Fabvssa.....	9
Obituaries	10-11

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.

Get your digital copy!

Scan this code with your smartphone to go online for this issue and archived copies of the BISKINIK!
<http://www.choctawnation.com/newsroom/biskinik-newspaper-archive/>



Remembering in numbers



Choctaw Nation: ZACH MAXWELL

Walking as one

Paying respect to the ancestors who blazed the trail

By **STEPHENIE OCHOA**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Photos on Pages 14-15

Spectacular weather and great spirits helped to gather hundreds at Millerton to commemorate the Trail of Tears walk this year. While thoughts about the difficult journey of ancestral Choctaws saddens many, the march to remember is a celebrated event of a united people who survived and now thrive with confidence and strength more than 180 years after the harsh 500-mile trek to "Indian Territory."

Participants began the day by

meeting in Millerton to receive the blessing of fellowship and inspiring words of tribute, strength, and leadership from Chief Gary Batton.

After prayer from Tribal Chaplain Rev. Bertram Bobb and inspirational words from Chief Batton, walkers lined up behind the Choctaw Color Guard, Choctaw Princesses, Chief Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. and Tribal Council members. Hundreds walked together over 3 miles to the historical

Wheelock Academy. Along the journey of paying homage there were tears of pride for how far a people have come, shows of personal perseverance as many walked with aides, Choctaw hymns and lots of smiles and laughs.

Of those who participated in this year's walk were many that traveled numerous miles to participate as a family including sisters Nannette Easter, Normette Moore, and Lucinda Barr from the Houston and Lake Jackson area of Texas.

Isha Martin traveled from Kansas City to meet and walk with her father Aaron Martin from Woodward.

Chief Batton reminded visitors the purpose of the commemorative walk by stating, "It's the story of the Choctaw people, keeping our language, our culture, our history; that resilience and strong belief in God and values, that's what it's all about: You, our people. So I just want to thank you all for coming out today and paying respect to the people who have gone before us and blazed the trail so that we have a beautiful day like we have today." Visitors shared a picnic lunch, stickball games, singing and fellowship on the lush grounds – celebrating as one.



Choctaw Nation: DEIDRE ELROD

The Choctaw Nation Recycling Center in Poteau officially celebrates its opening May 28. Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., council members and facility representatives were on hand for the cutting of the symbolically recycled newspaper-made ribbon.

Choctaw Nation celebrates going green in Poteau

The Choctaw Nation Poteau recycling center held a ribbon cutting ceremony May 28 with Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Jack Austin Jr. as well as tribal councilmen and facility staff. Although the facility actually opened in January, due to the influx of recycling from community members and businesses, the event was postponed until the end of May, but did so with a ribbon made of newspapers.

The Poteau recycling facility was made possible by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Native Americans Social

and Economic Development Strategies (SEDS). The center will help many individuals and organizations that wish to participate in greener disposal have access to facilities due to the centralized location and previous lack of recycling options.

For additional information about recycling services or bulk capabilities at the new facility, please visit the center at 304 Kerr Avenue in Poteau, call 918-649-0343 or 580-920-0488, or check out the Choctaw Nation Going Green Facebook page.

FAITH, FAMILY AND CULTURE

Returning to grassroots

Inspiring time spent with Choctaw people during front porch visits

Choctaw people inspire me. I have been honored to talk with several recently at their homes and at community events.

In the first days after becoming Chief, I said I wanted to get to a "grassroots level" and "do things like front porch visits" so I could hear directly from Choctaws. Of course, with 200,000 Choctaws across the globe, there are a limited number of front porches I am able to stop by, but I have been blessed to see a lot of people in the past few weeks! I have taken notice of the vast amount of wise advice the elders have shared with me, and have been impressed with the strength of the values ingrained in their very being.

After many talks on the front porches, a number of memories keep returning to front and center of my mind. I spoke with a woman who has been caregiver of her son, a cancer survivor. This Choctaw lady has a positive outlook on life, a smile and generous attitude that we should all emulate! I appreciate Fay Cox for sharing her story with me! Talking with 82-year-old Wrightman Thomas of Antlers, I learned he not only mows his own lawn, he also takes care of 10 other lawns! That is a tremendous work ethic. One elder in Talihina (Carlos McIntosh) had a sign on his porch that stated "Waiting for Chief Batton." Assistant Chief Austin and I thought that was a great

invitation and made our way quickly across town one day to see him. What a great sense of humor! We enjoyed our visit immensely and Carlos even allowed us to take a photo with him (and his sign).

Conversing with others who epitomize the tremendous values that our Choctaw ancestors have taught us – integrity, honor, humor and respect – has been a great experience for me during May and June. Going to the home of a local minister and his wife, I listened to their many concerns and was uplifted by the fact that as they spoke about the adversity they had faced, they were still so positive about life they made others feel awesome about who they were as Choctaw people because of those deep-rooted values.

In Broken Bow, we walked down a street filled with Choctaw homes and found some people who were interested in talking about their health, their education, their houses and their future. Listening to people on their porches, in their living rooms, in the community centers and in the small towns scattered across the Choctaw Nation, I am hearing ideas that can be put into action, and more than that, I am hearing the heart of our Nation! It is humbling to see the needs that exist and it is good to be able to set steps in motion to provide assistance.

Whenever someone is



From the Desk of Chief Gary Batton

"Whenever someone is down, it seems the best thing to do is to look up. We can help others look up!"

down, it seems the best thing to do is to look up. We can help others look up! Visiting towns around Choctaw Nation I have met tremendous individuals and families. Most of us would see some of them as having great needs, but these people were more concerned with helping others. This characterizes the servant heart that Choctaws everywhere are known for.

God bless everyone who has welcomed Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. and me over the past few weeks as we made our way around Choctaw Nation! I have learned so much and feel richly blessed to be a part of your lives.
Yakoke!

Wisdom of our elders very important during first days in new role

One of the most important things the Chief and I have been doing together is spending time in our communities with the Choctaw people.

I have gotten to see a lot of people I haven't seen in a while and talked about things I haven't thought of in a while. It's been wonderful. I greatly appreciate the welcome I have received and most of all, the advice from our elders.

As they described events in their life, the obstacles they overcame or the blessings they had received, it was clear to me that no matter how old or experienced we think we may be, we can always learn more. Every experience shared has the potential to be a lesson learned.

My generation and older remember the days we gathered together as

communities and had singings or dinners under the brush arbors. We would listen to stories for hours after dinner was over. Everyone knew everyone else, and the sense of family was strong.

The grassroots approach was the norm growing up. It was having friends or neighbors stop by and visit on the front porch. Families pitched in to help when a neighbor needed a hand.

Times are a lot different now but our communities are still close and the people remain dear to our hearts.

The beautiful community centers in all of our districts are a hub of activities for seniors and their families. Many children come to lunch with their grandparents or great-grandparents, especially during the



From the Desk of Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

summer. It's good to see them in such close relationships with their elders. Someday they will realize how precious this time has been and they, too, will remember the words of knowledge and instruction.

I am enjoying my time in the communities immensely and look forward to more visits, more chances to share my day with people who may not think of themselves as exceptional but in our eyes, they are Choctaw; they are remarkable folks with many life lessons to share.

Chaplain's Corner

God's Word will be fulfilled

We are living in a generation in which people are trying to forget death. Yet everybody is dying; from the time we are born we begin to die.

The Bible teaches, "... it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27) But we think of it happening only to other people. We don't like to grow old and we don't like to die. If we can understand death, it will help us to live.

In the Bible, we learn that death is an enemy of man and God. It takes away people in the prime of life, when they are still needed by their family. It leaves behind the sorrowing widow, widower and children.

God never meant that men should die.

There was no death in the Garden of Eden, no pain, no tears, no suffering. Man was perfect but man had a will of his own, and he rebelled against God. That rebellion is called sin. Because of sin death came, and death has come upon the whole human race. It is a judgment upon man of death. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) "For the wages of sin is death ..." (Romans 6:23) We get old because of sin.

The Bible also teaches that the enemy, death, will one day be destroyed forever. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Corinthians 15:26) The day is coming when Jesus Christ will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

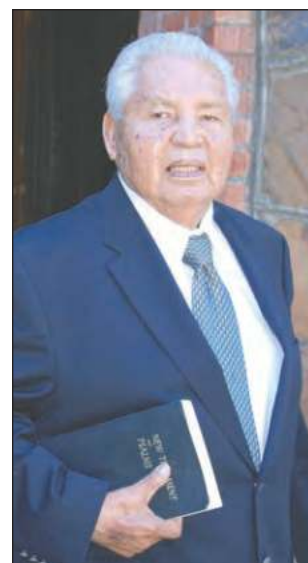
Those who are in Jesus Christ will be caught up in the resurrection, at His Second Coming.

They will be given new bodies. These bodies will be glorious, powerful, spiritual, and immortal. We will have bodies like the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible teaches that this enemy, death, has already been defeated.

Death was conquered at the Cross and at the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The final destruction of death lies in the future, and the fight with death continues at this present time.

The defeat of death



REV. BERTRAM BOBB
Tribal Chaplain

belongs in the past, at the Cross and Resurrection. Today death doesn't seem to be defeated.

People die everyday, they suddenly are no longer with us. Paul says death is like a poisonous insect whose sting has been withdrawn. We read in 1 Corinthians 15:55: "O death, where is thy sting? ..."

One of the reasons we fear death is that the Bible teaches that after death comes judgment. We are afraid of that judgment because we have a sense of guilt. We know we come short of the glory of God, we have sinned against Him.

The Bible teaches that "... without shedding of blood is no remission." (Hebrews 9:22) There is no forgiveness of sin. This is the reason Jesus died on the cross. Apart from the death and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ there is no victory over death. Jesus had to die so that we could live; and He removed the sting of death by taking away the fear of judgment.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1)

What happens to Christians when they die?

The Bible teaches, when a Believer in Jesus Christ dies, they go immediately into the presence of Jesus Christ, into a new world that is free from sin, pain and sickness.

Death brings permanent freedom from evil.

For those who have experienced the blessings of God's righteousness there is a longing to be totally pure.

They long to live in a society that is holy, in which there is no lying, cheating, hatred or crime. This is just a part of what death brings to the Christian. As long as we live on this earth, you cannot build a perfect society on the sinful foundation of human nature.

It also means that the Christian will be like Jesus. Death brings a final perfection of the believer that is begun on earth.

The Apostle Paul writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing?"

Crowned with righteousness! We have only tasted it here. We shall be like Jesus Christ in love. So much of self is involved in what we do here on earth, but one day in Christ, we will have perfect love. What a glorious time it will be when we get to heaven! A new heaven and a new earth.

This is the reason we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians in First Corinthians 15:3-4:

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. And that He was buried, and He rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

Jesus Has Risen! He Is Alive! In Him we have Life. God the Father was pleased with the substitutionary death of our Lord Jesus Christ. His only begotten Son, and raised Him up on the third day.

Will you make sure that Jesus is in your heart and that you are ready to face the last enemy – death?

Pray for America. Pray for our Native American people. Pray for our men and women serving our country.



Choctaw Nation : ZACH MAXWELL

Salvation Army "Doing the Most Good" Award recipients included Choctaw Nation, represented by Emergency Manager Jeff Hansen and Choctaw Nation Emissary Jerry Tomlinson, shown with Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin and Salvation Army Celebration of Hope emcee Linda Cavanaugh.

Choctaw Nation recognized for 2013 storm response

Salvation Army presents awards on anniversary of Moore tornado

By ZACH MAXWELL

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

NICHOLS HILLS – The Choctaw Nation was among six groups recognized for their efforts to deliver aid after a devastating tornado struck Moore a year ago.

The Salvation Army made the presentation on May 20 – one year after the tornado killed two dozen people and stretched emergency response efforts to the limit.

The Choctaw Nation donated proceeds from fuel sales to the response effort, which helped The Salvation Army and other groups deliver "meals and support to thousands of Oklahomans and countless volunteers," ac-

ording to Celebration of Hope emcee Linda Cavanaugh.

"I appreciate everyone who had a part in the relief effort," said Chief Gary Batton. "The people of Moore and other areas have shown tremendous courage as they regrouped and rebuilt their lives."

Others recognized with the "Doing the Most Good" awards were the Chickasaw Nation, Gov. Mary Fallin, Oklahoma Natural Gas, Oklahoma Gas & Electric (OG&E) and the Oklahoma City Thunder.

"Time and time again I see all of these organizations step up to help the charities and the people of our state," said Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin. "This is a time of remembrance. It is also a celebration of hope and a time to look forward."

Memorial events were held in Moore on the morning of the one-year anniversary of the tornado. The luncheon was held at Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club and sponsored by the Chickasaw Nation.

NOTES TO THE NATION

Thank you for shelter

Thank you so very much for helping us get a storm shelter. It gives us great peace of mind knowing we have shelter in the bad weather. May God bless you all in your efforts helping our people.

Carroll & Effie Stewart

Family expresses appreciation

Thank you to the Choctaw Nation, Chief Pyle, Chief Batton, and Councilman Anthony Dillard for the support during difficult times. Recently our family experienced a crisis and needed the support of our community, and it was there. We appreciate all you do and have done for the Choctaw members!

Kendice Weeks, Pittsburg

Thanks for support



We would like to thank the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for their generosity in scholarships and clothing allowance for our son Dallas Wayne Boehm. We appreciate the help along the way towards his graduation May 17 from Texas A&M Corpus Christi from the College of Liberal Arts with a Bachelor of English. It meant the world to us and was instrumental in Dallas reaching this goal!

**Thank you again,
Carla and Teddy Boehm**

YAB congratulates stellar speller

The Choctaw Youth Advisory Board would like to congratulate and thank Nicholas Stark for all of his hard work and dedication to others. Nicholas Stark is a spelling sensation that recently won the privilege of traveling to Washington, D.C., to represent the state of Oklahoma in the National Scripps Spelling Bee. This will be his second shot at the national title. Nicholas has represented Howe School in the state competitions in Muskogee over the past five years, taking the state title his second year and this, his final year. He won second place his third and fourth year. This will be his last year to qualify, so he is definitely going out with a bang.

Nicholas also competes with the Howe academic team and was named one of two valedictorians of his class. Nicholas is a member of the local Youth Advisory Board (YAB) volunteering for various community events and mentoring to younger kids and to thank him for all he has done.

Thankful for educational support

Thank you for AP help.

I am very grateful for the Choctaw Nation's assistance in paying the AP test fees for my son, Jesse Gibson from Norman High School. This year, he took AP tests in psychology, U.S. history and Spanish.

I'm sure that the rigor of the AP courses will help as he is applying to colleges this fall and the opportunity to earn college credit is also a wonderful benefit.

**Thank You,
Karen Gibson**

Gary Batton
Chief

Jack Austin Jr.
Assistant Chief

The Official
Monthly Publication
of the
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Judy Allen, Senior Executive Officer
Lisa Reed, Executive Director
Vonna Shults, Media Director
Melissa Stevens, Circulation Director
Payton Guthrie, Social Media Coordinator
Stephanie Ochoa, Assistant Editor
Deidre Elrod, Reporter/Photographer
Zach Maxwell, Reporter/Photographer

P.O. Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702
(580) 924-8280 • (800) 522-6170
Fax (580) 924-4148
www.choctawnation.com
e-mail: biskinik@choctawnation.com

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

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

The BISKINIK is a nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation.

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

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



Thank you for the scholarship

I would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for the scholarship I was given for college. The support I was given went a long way in allowing me to gain my Bachelors and Masters degrees at Marshall University and I am forever grateful. Again, thank you all for your generosity!

Tyson Gale

Successful student says thank you



I would like to thank the Choctaw Nation and Chief Pyle for the support in accomplishing my Bachelors of Science & Health Professions in Speech-Language Pathology. Graduating Magna Cum Laude, at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, I will begin pursuing my Masters of Speech-Language Pathology at Northeastern State University in June. Again, I am so thankful for the Great Choctaw Nation and our new Chief Batton and look forward to the next journey to my career of helping others.

Mckenzi Baldwin

Thankful for educational assistance



Thanks for all that you have done in helping me to obtain my degree after many years. I recently graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science from the University of Central Oklahoma.

Vernon Tilly Jr.

Proud to represent Choctaw Nation

I would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for your donation thus allowing me to visit Washington D.C. with my school, Greenwood High School. During this visit, I was proud to represent the Choctaw Nation and did so in a respectful manner. While visiting some of the museums, I learned many things about our country's history and Native American heritage. Again, thank you for the donation which allowed me this once in a lifetime opportunity.



Nikala Bacon

Proud to be a member

I am so proud of the Choctaw Nation and proud to be a member. I wanted to say what an awesome job the Biskinik staff is doing and I look forward to the paper every month.

Deborah Moore

Thankful for encouragement

In regards to the retirement of Chief Gregory Pyle, I wish to express my eternal gratitude to a truly inspiring leader who exemplifies all the qualities that should make all Choctaws proud of their heritage, their future possibilities for personal and collective greatness.

In 2008 my 7-year-old son Connor was diagnosed with leukemia. There are no words to express the fear, sadness, and pain that accompanied that experience. I can remember all the help I received from family, coworkers at the casino and friends. Chief Pyle took the time to send me money and a very encouraging letter that I have kept.

His words of support and encouragement were a source of light during a very dark time in my life. My son underwent many painful trials and medical procedures that saved his life, at any time this illness can return. Overall he currently is a healthy 12 year old, and the experience I've had with his illness has made my family stronger with better priorities.

I can't thank Chief Pyle enough for his help, he is a great man who has been a great leader of the Choctaw Nation and should be an inspiration to any leader of any people. Those who follow in his footsteps will have big shoes to fill. I wish him the best and hope his future is full of laughter, family, and happiness.

Dustin Urchison

Thanks for the assistance

I am writing this to give a sincere thank you to the Choctaw Nation which has provided scholarship and grant assistance to me since my freshman year of college. I am a 2012 graduate of Oklahoma State University and, as of May 2014, I am a graduate of the University of Oklahoma, receiving my Master's in Public Administration. I am currently working as a Community Planner in the Tulsa area and I know I wouldn't be here without your support. I am truly blessed to have Choctaw heritage and I hope to support the nation's college students in the future.

Austin Chapman

Trail of Tears bike team says thank you

The Choctaw Nation Trail of Tears bike team would like to give thanks to all of the people who helped us make the 2014 Trail of Tears bike ride. The last Trail of Tears bike team: Lisa Bohanan, CJ Norvell, Mary Ayn and Eli Tullier. Mary and Greg Barrs, Teresa, Billy III, Nikki and Billy Eagle Road Jr., Donna Tawkokty, Tony Stoltzfus, and Tina James.

We would also like to thank the following: Choctaw Nation Hospital, Administration - Todd Hallmark, Janet Sharp, Material Management - Artis Potts, Housekeeping - Larry Baxter, Going Lean - Tammy Cannady, Dietary - Trish Walker, Maintenance - Mary Means, Bryce Segotta, and Tribal Police - Security. Special appreciation goes to Tribal Councilmen Jack Austin Sr., and Tony Messenger for their support. We are grateful for the Donation Committee and Darlene with The Spiro State Bank.

**Thank you,
Teresa Eagleroad**

EVENTS

Johnico family reunion

The Johnico family reunion will be held at the Talimena State Park in Talihina on June 28 starting at 1 p.m. For additional information please contact Joshua Frazier at 918-413-3796.

Church to hold monthly gospel singing

A monthly gospel singing will be held at 7 p.m. July 4 and repeat monthly on the first Friday of each month, at the Cornerstone Full Gospel Church, 316 N. Main, in Caddo. It is free admission and all singers and listeners are welcome. Concessions will be available. For more information, contact Bonnie Horn at 580-760-6127.

Expungement clinic

Oklahoma Indian Legal Services, Inc. (OILS) will hold a specialized clinic for the expungement of records. The clinic will include OILS staff attorneys able to assist individuals with assessing qualifications for expungement. The clinic will be held at the Choctaw Nation Community Center, 2408 E. Lincoln Road, Idabel, OK 74745 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday July 17. To register for the clinic, call 1-800-658-1497. Registration is limited!

Free will clinic

Oklahoma Indian Legal Services, Inc. (OILS) will be holding a free will clinic July 18 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Representatives will be at the Choctaw Nation Community Center, 2408 E. Lincoln Road, Idabel, OK 74745 to help prepare wills on location. Please note that registration is limited so register as soon as possible by calling 1-800-658-1497.

Cody Blaine memorial singing

There will be a Cody Blaine memorial singing held at the Sulphur Springs UMC, in Bennington July 19. Dinner will begin at 5:30 p.m. and singing will begin at 6:30 p.m. All singing groups are welcome and The Jerry Tims Band will be featured. Come join us for dinner, singing, and fellowship as we celebrate the life of Cody Blaine.

Baker family reunion

All descendants of Noel S. and Roxie (Loman) Baker are welcomed to the Baker Family Reunion to be held August 8-9 at the Choctaw Nation Community Center in Durant.

Address to the center is 2750 Big Lots Parkway, located behind the Big Lots Warehouse off Enterprise Road. For additional information or questions, please contact Toni Bowers at 903-892-4513, Cora Stewart at 918-812-8839 or Mary D. Frazier at 580-982-8100.

— Youth of the Nation —

By Ivan Baker, YAB member

My name is Ivan Baker. I'm in the 9th grade and I attend school in Rattan High School. I am Choctaw and very proud of the things the Choctaw Nation has offered for the youth of my community.

This past year I became a part of the YAB (Choctaw Nation Youth Advisory Board) and for the first time I am playing Stickball. Being in YAB has taught me how to be a leader by serving others and to speak up when no one else will. In YAB, I am able to help out in the communities with many things. Two highlights were serving at the Pregnancy Banquet in Hugo and going to Durant to serve food at the Families Feeding Families. I always feel so good about the events that serve someone less fortunate than me.

I have also started helping with Falvmmichi (Mentoring Program against Bullies). I get to help second graders know it is okay to stand up for someone that is being picked on. We also teach them it is never okay to hit or be ugly to another person. I have had the honor of becoming someone that the second graders look to for guidance. That feels really amazing.

Our Advisor Angie Smith aka Anglia is an amazing woman. She loves us like we are her own kids. She always goes the extra mile. We show her our love and we appreciate her very, very much.

Playing Stickball was a very good Native American sport that I really have enjoyed playing. I played with the Hugo Team. We were called Neshoba Homma and in English that means Red Wolves. Playing Stickball has taught me more about my heritage. Our team got second place in the tournament.

Stickball and YAB are two things for youth to join in and grow in so many ways. I highly recommend YAB and Stickball for all youth.

Thank you Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for the things you do for the youth. We need you more than you know.

Legacy Soaps at the Choctaw Store

By **STEPHENIE OCHOA**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

To the Nation, artisans are the torchbearers for the culture, teaching and sharing with others the spirit of a people who came before, with the spirit of talent and passion for contemporary additions of today. The Choctaw Welcome Center store, located in Colbert, houses such arts and crafts from many of these Choctaw contributors in an effort to encourage others to experience tribal influenced goods and crafts. Of such torchbearers is artist Allison Crawford whose traditional homemade essential oil, goat's milk handmade soaps will now be carried in the Choctaw store.

Crawford is a proud member of the Choctaw Nation who has dedicated her life to helping others in a very holistic and historical way, yet with contemporary additions. Legacy Soaps, the name of Crawford's business, was born out of the need to help a unique portion of society that she felt needed extra love and care, pediatric critical care patients.

As a pediatric nurse, she began to research and use goat's milk to specially design holistic products that could remedy various skin problems. As each bar was developed, Crawford helped many special cases as well as their family members never considering her soaps might be what helped her the most.

Allison originally planned for soap making to be a pastime, however, when an accident

left her unable to carry on as a nurse, these healing soaps allowed her to continue on with her dream of caring for others and also provided for her financially. Legacy Soaps became this artist's full-time job and grew in size causing her to include her family members. Fourteen years later, Legacy Soaps are shipped throughout the United States and abroad and with 10 different bars and custom creations available as well.

As an artist and a caregiver, Crawford says she is fulfilled because, "doing what you love is freedom and loving what you do is happiness." Yet, when asked what her next goal is, Crawford says, "I always ask myself, how can I help or whom can I help next?"

One final note about this artist and her business Legacy Soaps is that all of her line of soaps are made in traditional Native American methods passed down from other Native soap makers and all ingredients are harvested from goats born and raised on her farm. She breeds, rears and milks her own goats then mixes, molds and cuts the soaps all by hand adding specially researched and tested oils and emollients for specific issues. A few of the conditions Legacy Soaps help with, she says, are anti-fungal needs, acne, dry skin, eczema, depression, muscle soreness, tension, anti-septics and other skin irritants.

For additional information about legacy soaps, visit <https://www.facebook.com/legacy-goatmilksoap> or visit the Choctaw Nation Store in Calera!



Choctaw Nation: **STEPHENIE OCHOA**

Allison Crawford explains the different types of soaps she offers to a customer at the Choctaw Welcome Center in Colbert.



As of January 1, 2014 every U.S. Citizen must have health insurance or risk facing a new health tax penalty (also referred to as the "shared responsibility payment") when filing income taxes. If you or your family does not have health insurance benefits, the Affordable Care Act law could affect you. In an effort to keep you from having to pay additional income taxes, if you are an uninsured Native American you may need to take immediate action.

You will not have to do anything today IF:

- You are not going to file a federal income tax return because your income is below the filing threshold, or,
- If you currently have health insurance coverage such as Medicaid, Medicare, VA, employer-sponsored insurance or insurance through a Marketplace plan.

If you do not meet one of the exceptions above, you will need to apply for a Native American/Alaska Native Exemption to prevent the IRS from deducting the new health tax penalty from any federal tax refund you might be expecting. This health tax penalty will apply to everyone in the tax household that is uninsured. For 2014 the penalty per uninsured person is \$95.00 or 1% of the annual income (whichever is greater). This penalty amount will be increasing each year.

The Application for Exemption for American Indians and Alaska Natives form can be downloaded from the Marketplace Web site at:

<http://marketplace.cms.gov/getofficialresources/publications-and-articles/tribal-exemption.pdf>

If you do not have internet access, you can visit any one of

the Choctaw Nation health care facilities and pick up a copy of this form.

You may also want to visit with a Benefit Coordinator or Certified Application Counselor (CAC) (located at any Choctaw Nation health care facility) to see if you or your family could qualify for "free health care" through SoonerCare or purchase affordable health care through one of the many Marketplace insurance plans. Choctaw Nation staff has helped several Tribal members enroll in the new Marketplace insurance and have seen some family's get an immediate tax credit that lowered the insurance premiums to \$1.12 a month!

What do I do if I chose to remain without insurance?

- Complete the Exemption form as soon as possible so you and/or your family can be considered exempt.
- You only need one application for a tax household, but you will need to make additional copies of Step 2 to include any additional individuals in the home. As an example, an individual filing single would complete one application form. A married couple with two minor children would complete one application for the tax household PLUS make additional copies of the Step 2 section and complete this page for any uninsured Native American in the household. Complete Step two for the father, the mother and one for each of the two children.
- After completing the application, sign and date it and mail along with your supporting documents to the address provided in Step 4.

Health Insurance Marketplace – Exemption Processing

465 Industrial Blvd.
London, KY 40741

- You will need to make copies of your supporting documentation to send with the application. **DO NOT SEND YOUR ORIGINALS.** If you are a Native American and a member of a federally recognized tribe you will need to send in a copy of your Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) card and a copy of your tribal membership card.
- After you have submitted the exemption form, you will receive an Exemption letter in the mail that will include an Exemption ID number. This number will be used when filing your federal income tax return, letting the IRS know you are exempt from the health tax penalty (shared responsibility payment). The exemption will be good for future years, and another application will not have to be submitted. Make sure to keep this letter with your other important documents, the ID number will be needed for future tax filing purposes.

Some Native Americans may not have a CDIB or tribal membership. If so, you may need to file for a hardship exemption which can be done by using the same application. The supporting documentation will be different, depending on each individual's circumstances. Supporting documents for the hardship exemption might include (not all-inclusive): birth certificate, descent letter, tribal document acknowledging membership, CDIB card, adoption papers, letter on facility letterhead with an official signature from the Indian Health Service, tribal or urban Indian health care provider verifying eligibility for services, proof of pregnancy from non-Native American that is eligible to be seen in an Indian Health Service, tribal or urban Indian health care facility.

Don't wait! If you are uninsured, take a minute to complete the exemption form for you or your family so you will not be hit with additional taxes when filing your federal tax return. If you have questions or need assistance you can visit with a Benefit Coordinator or Certified Application Counselor (CAC) at any one of the health care facilities OR you may call (800) 349-7026.



Book Signing
June 21, 2014
11:00-5:00 pm

Sarah Elisabeth Sawyer

"I write Christian fiction with a focus on my Choctaw heritage. Speaking, teaching creative writing, unexpected surprises, family and friends fill in all the little spaces of my life."



ChoctawStore.com
1882 HWY 69/75 Colbert, OK. 74733 • Phone: 580-296-2672

Choctaw Nation GED Classes

<p>Choctaw County Beginning date and time July 22, 2014 Tuesday and Thursday 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. Choctaw Nation Community Center 408 N. "M" St. in Hugo</p> <p>Bryan County Beginning date and time July 22, 2014 Tuesday and Thursday 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. Choctaw Nation Tribal Complex 529 N. 16th in Durant</p>	<p>Latimer County Beginning date and time July 22, 2014 Tuesday and Thursday 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Choctaw Nation Community Center 515 Center Point Rd. in Wilburton</p> <p>Choctaw County Beginning date and time July 21, 2014 Monday and Wednesday 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Choctaw Nation Community Center 2208 E. Main in Stigler</p>
--	---

The class will meet 2 days each week for approximately 13 weeks. Books, supplies and testing fees are provided. In addition, a \$10 (per day) transportation stipend is paid to those who attend classes on a regular basis and attempt the GED test. If you turned in an application with our Adult Education Program for GED classes and wish to attend the upcoming class, please contact our office. If you have not applied and wish to attend these or future classes, please contact Kathy Bench at the Durant office, 800-522-6170 or 580-924-8280, ext. 2122. Also, you may register at the first class. A Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) is required.



JOB CONNECT



Have you wanted to talk to someone about opportunities to take advantage of a better education? Needs for career planning? What jobs does the Choctaw Nation have now?

These questions and more can be answered at the Job Connect event. Representatives from Educational Services, Career Planning, WIA and Human Resources will be ready to talk about your future.

Join us at any of the following Community Centers for these Job Connect events. Each event is scheduled for 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

COMMUNITY CENTER	JOB CONNECT EVENT DATES	
Antlers	Tuesday, 06/17	Monday, 06/30
Atoka	Thursday, 06/19	Monday, 07/07
Coalgate	Friday, 06/20	Monday, 07/14
Idabel	Tuesday, 06/24	Thursday, 07/24
Wright City	Thursday, 6/26	Thursday, 07/31
Broken Bow	Friday, 06/27	Thursday, 07/31
Wilburton	Tuesday, 07/01	Monday, 07/21
Crowder	Thursday, 07/03	Friday, 07/18
McAlester	Tuesday, 07/08	Monday, 07/21
Talihina	Thursday, 07/10	Monday, 07/28
Bethel	Friday, 07/11	Tuesday, 07/22
Spiro	Tuesday, 07/15	Friday, 07/25
Stigler	Thursday, 07/3	Thursday, 07/17
Smithville	Friday, 07/11	Tuesday, 07/22
Hugo	Tuesday, 06/24	Thursday, 07/24
Poteau	Tuesday, 07/15	Friday, 07/25
Durant	Monday, 06/23	Tuesday, 07/29

580-924-8280 ext. 2766 <http://careers.choctawnation.com>

Nellie Hunter advises, love anybody

By **STEPHENIE OCHOA**
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Whether it is a nation or a family, it takes wisdom, intelligence and compassion to grow something great, and as the adage goes, "it takes a village to raise a child," it is comforting to know the Great Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma recognizes those elders who have helped to shape the nation and its people. By freely giving to the communal-cultural pool of advice, knowledge, and education, as a Nation, we learn how to build more than better tomorrows, we learn how to build the best tomorrows.

Nellie Hunter, 75 of Tupelo opened her heart to provide the Nation with doses of love and experience hoping to help any and all who might benefit from where she has been and what she has done. A great-grandmother to 10, grandmother to 22 and mother to seven, a member of the Choctaw Veterans Association, Women's Veteran Association and Choctaw Nation Color Guard, Hunter devoted much of her life to serving others beginning with serving in the US Army and traveling abroad to Okinawa. The height of

SPOTLIGHT ON ELDERS

segregation, Hunter's travels forced her to witness and experience much, yet, she stayed true to her helping spirit. As a caring individual, Nellie would always choose to stay with her fellow comrades because she felt it was the right thing to do.

Upon leaving the service, Nellie began her family and traveled until finally settling in the Oklahoma City area as a worker at VA hospitals. She felt the VA hospitals were a great fit for her nurturing spirit and she continued to work there until she could do so no longer but began helping disabled children often until they were adults. Putting herself second to others placed Hunter's dream of finishing her college degree off until May of this year. She graduated with a Bachelors degree in Organizational Leadership and plans to help as many others as she can with her additional education. Hunter also aspires to run for Mayor of Tupelo. She hopes that this move will allow her to give back locally to her community.

When asked why she helps so many

throughout her life, Hunter said it is her belief that God gave her a "caring nature" and as long as she can, she will continue to devote her time to the benefit of others.

Nellie Hunter wishes for others to know that her biggest influences were The Choctaw Nation, Chiefs Gregory Pyle and Gary Batton, "They were here for me always and offered me support throughout my life."

Hunter would like to leave the following advice for the Nation, "with God and confidence you can do anything". Also, for the Nation, Nellie believes it's important to help older children such as those leaving high school and entering college. "They don't have as much support as they need to carry through with healthy lives" and she encourages all to know the dangers of addiction and how it can destroy lives. Nellie also expresses the importance that you should "love anybody." According to her, it doesn't matter if you know a person or not, everybody needs to be loved.



Tribal elder, Nellie Hunter in her home at Tupelo.

Four new Wellness Centers opening across Choctaw Nation

By **ZACH MAXWELL AND BRANDON FRYE**
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Choctaw Nation citizens and associates have four new facilities where they can "spring into action" for healthier, more active lives.

Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. and members of the Tribal Council cut the ribbon on four new Choctaw Nation Wellness Centers this spring. This brings the total number of Wellness Centers in the Choctaw Nation to six, including Hugo and Durant.

In May, Atoka was the first facility to open then Crowder, Idabel and Broken Bow followed. The centers provide basketball courts, indoor walking space, exercise equipment and weights as part of a growing health movement within the Choctaw Nation.

"One thing the Council did say is that we want to improve the lives of tribal members. We want to help them live longer and better lives. This is part of our initiative to keep people healthy," said Chief Gary Batton. "We have better opportunities, a better path to the future for our children and grandchildren. It's all about doing it for you, our Choctaw people."

Walker Davis, leader of the Idabel Senior Citizens Fitness Group, said the group works for better flexibility, movement, balance and posture.

"If we can keep older people doing this, they'll live a long and healthy life," Davis said. "They can open the jars they need to, or reach up in the cabinets."

Members of the Idabel Senior Citizens Fitness Group sampled the elliptical machines once the doors were opened in Idabel.

"A lot of us walk around the hospital tracks and work out at home," Norma Carter, Idabel resident and member of the senior citizen fitness group, said. "Now we have new machines, access to activities, and when the weather is bad we still have a place to walk."

"A facility like this is important because prevention is key," Cari Corley, the newly appointed Facility Supervisor of the center in Idabel, said. "It is never too late to start, everyone can work out at some level."

Mandy Steele, Senior Miss Choctaw for

District 1, stood in her traditional Choctaw dress during the ceremony and could be found running on a treadmill in the just-opened Idabel wellness center. A Haworth High School athlete, Steele also shot one of the first free throws on the new basketball court.

"I was on the cross country and track team, but had to stop because my asthma got bad, but I've been working my way up again," she said. "I think this wellness center will be a good thing for Idabel, because it will help more people get into fitness or at least get active."

Tribal citizens, CDIB holders, Choctaw Nation employees as well as local police and emergency responders are welcome to use the Wellness Centers. A one-time fee of \$10 will establish an account and access card for new members. Hours vary at each location but include late night and early morning access at some locations with the key card.

Information about Choctaw Nation Wellness Centers:

ATOKA: 1203 W. Liberty Rd., call (580) 889-1981 for information.

BROKEN BOW: Adjacent to McCurtain

County Boys & Girls Club on Chahta Drive. 580-584-2740 ext. 33031

CROWDER: 707 Boyd St., call (918) 334-5666 for information.

DURANT: Located at the rear of the Choctaw Event Center with access from Enterprise Blvd.; call (580) 931-8643 for information.

HUGO: Located in the Tribal Services Center on West Jackson Street; call (580) 326-9422 for information.

IDABEL: 2412 E. Lincoln Rd., call (580) 286-7381 for information.



Atoka Wellness Center ribbon cutting.



Crowder Wellness Center ribbon cutting.



Broken Bow Wellness Center ribbon cutting. Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. and the Tribal Council were joined by Choctaw Nation associates and local officials at the event.



Idabel Wellness Center ribbon cutting. Chief Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. and the Tribal Council were joined by State Senator Jerry Ellis (far right), other officials and Choctaw Nation associates at the ribbon cutting.

First season of the Choctaw Youth Stickball League awards



Chief Gary Batton and Chief Gregory E. Pyle greet players and pose for photos.



Over 100 awards presented to youth.



By **ZACH MAXWELL**
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Choctaw Nation presented awards to more than 100 youths and their coaches at the first Youth Stickball Awards on April 26 at Tvshka Homma.

The event officially wrapped the first season of the Choctaw Youth Stickball League, which included teams from Broken Bow, Hugo, Talihiina and Durant.

Pendleton blankets were presented to coaches Brandy Sigler (Nashoba Homma or Red Wolf team), Mike Melton (Koi Iskitini

or Little Panther team), Jared Tom (Osi Heli or Flying Eagle team) and Stanley Shomo (Hiloha Osi or Little Thunder team).

Each participating youth was presented a medal, kabocha stick bag and touched sticks with then-Assistant Chief Gary Batton and Chief Gregory E. Pyle. The event was Pyle's last event as Chief and Batton's last as Assistant Chief.

The stickball program will now host youth stickball workshops on June 26-27 at Tvshka Homma. Adult teams are scheduled to participate in the World Series of Stickball at the Mississippi Choctaw Indian Fair in early July.



Pendleton blankets were presented to coaches Brandy Sigler, Mike Melton, Jared Tom and Stanley Shomo.

PEOPLE YOU KNOW

Brothers achieve success

Chris Blymyer, 18, of Bartlett, Tenn., worked hard at Bolton High School to compete in the SkillsUSA in Chattanooga for State and won third place for Engine Performance. He was awarded \$1500 in scholarships. He had already won first place in regionals to be able to go to state. SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. SkillsUSA helps each student excel. SkillsUSA's mission is to empower its members to become world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens.



Jacob Johnson, 9, of Bartlett, Tenn., worked hard all year in 4th grade at Bartlett Elementary to be a part of the 100 point reading club in the Accelerated Reading club. He read lots of books and took a test on each one that he had to pass with 90 or above! Accelerated Reading is a motivational reading program designed to support students as they choose and read books.



Congratulations to our boys for working so hard during this school year. We are so proud of not only how well you are doing in school, but of the fine, caring young men you are becoming. We know only good things await you in the future. We are truly blessed to be your parents!

Proud parents are Amelia Christine Johnson and Carl Matthew Johnson.

Erika Snead earns position in AIIP Summer Enrichment Program

Erika Snead, member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and senior at Southeastern Oklahoma State University studying psychology, has earned a position in the American Indians Into Psychology (AIIP) Summer Enrichment Program at Oklahoma State University. During the six-week program, Snead will be able to experience the application of psychology through hands-on activities and immersion into the field.



"It's a competitive program," stated Dr. Charla Hall, professor of Psychology at Southeastern, as she mentioned that Snead was one of only six accepted to the program – the only student from Southeastern.

Hosted in Stillwater, AIIP is meant to enrich the study of psychology through close work with faculty and graduate students in various aspects of the study. Students will also be able to shadow professionals in real-world scenarios as well as gain exposure to various Native cultures.

During the program, Snead looks to get the edge she needs for graduate school. She mentioned that being able to see the application of the science from professionals and tips to applying for grad school will sharpen the skills needed to reach her goals.

Snead is working toward becoming a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) working in Marriage and Family Counseling. With her study targeted toward Native American populations, she will be in a prime position to assist her tribe. "It is going to be awesome to see and learn my culture," stated Snead as she spoke of the Native aspects of AIIP.

Upon her return to Southeastern in the fall, Snead will be asked to present her work and findings during the program. As she demonstrates the impact of the program in her education, it will help build awareness of opportunities through AIIP among Southeastern students, according to Dr. Hall.



Lane Michael Newcomb, 19, joined the Army on March 3 and graduated from basic training at Fort Jackson in Columbia, S.C. on May 15. He is currently at Fort Rucker, Ala. for advanced individual training.

While attending Borger High School, Lane played varsity football as a senior, 4 years on the cross-country team and 4 years on the varsity soccer team. He attended Coffeyville Community College on a soccer scholarship before joining the Army.

While at Fort Jackson during his basic training, Lane had many accomplishments. He achieved medals for marksmanship and hand grenades. He was a squad leader, leader in the battalion run, leader in the company run and on his last PT test ran a 10:07 in the two-mile run.

Heitt graduates with a Masters

Ramona Kay Heitt (Hale) earned a Master of Education in Educational Administration, Curriculum, and Supervision from the University of Oklahoma. She graduated with a cumulative grade-point-average of 4.0. A native of Norman, Kay is the daughter of Ms. Ramona Hale and the late Mr. Robert Hale. Kay plans to gain more teaching experience before pursuing a principal position in the OKC metro area.



Sims goes to boot camp at Fort Benning

Taylor Sims graduated from Newcastle High School. He is the son of Barbara and Andy Sims and brother of James Link, Jr of Oklahoma City, Destinee Elledge of Colorado Springs, Colo. and Lane Sims also of Newcastle. After high school he is going to boot camp at Fort Benning in Georgia. His parents, family and many friends are very proud of all the hard work he has done and his courageous decision to protect our country. We love you Taylor!



Students travel to Sonoran Desert

Michelle Synhorst and other students from the University of Virginia School of Law participated in an alternative spring break trip on the border of Mexico. The group spent several days in the Sonoran Desert, a few miles north of the Mexico border, and performed humanitarian aid work. With the guidance of long-term volunteers, they hiked trails frequently used by migrants in order to be a presence for anyone suffering from dehydration or injury. In addition, the group attended a proceeding in the federal court in Tucson.



Michelle is a student at the University of Virginia School of Law. She is the granddaughter of Charles McClure of Dallas, Texas and the great-granddaughter of the late original enrollee Ruby Marx McClure.

Davidson places third in Research Day competition

Twenty-five undergraduate student researchers from 19 Oklahoma colleges and universities gathered at the State Capitol recently for the 19th annual Research Day at the Capitol.

Representing Southeastern Oklahoma State University was Kent Davidson from Grant, Okla. He earned third place honors in the Regional University & Community College Category for Posters. His topic was Cancer Cell Metabolism.



Student participants were selected by their institutions to present scientific research posters during the prestigious event, which is designed to showcase the outstanding research being conducted on Oklahoma college campuses and to make legislators and the public aware of how the research can positively impact our state.

Students' posters were competitively judged by an independent panel that selected the top seven research presentations in three categories—overall winner, regional universities and research-intensive institutions. The students received awards at the conclusion of the event, during an award ceremony hosted by Glen D. Johnson, chancellor of the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education.

Dr. Nancy Paiva, Associate Professor of Chemistry at Southeastern, served as Davidson's advisor for the event. Research Day at the Capitol is sponsored by the Oklahoma Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR), the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the National Science Foundation.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Stormey Lorraine Williston recently celebrated her first birthday. Stormey is the daughter of Sunny Williston of Dallas, Texas and the granddaughter of Bettie Deere and the late B.J. Williston. Happy Birthday from Auntie, Uncle Tom and the rest of the family!



Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation July 2014

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

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

Choctaw News Snapshot

Want your Choctaw News Snapshot?
Sign up to receive news flashes through email by calling 800-522-6170, ext. 2116.

UNCLAIMED FUNDS

The Accounting Department of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is trying to contact the individuals listed below. Choctaw Nation is in possession of unclaimed funds (uncashed payroll checks) that may be due to these individuals. If you are an employee or former employee of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and your name is listed below, please contact:

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
P.O. Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702
Attn: Angie Ansel, Payroll and Employee Services Accountant
Or Phone 580-924-8280 ext. 2467

Clark, Mia D
Kirksey, Lexi N
Miller, Landon Scott
Murray, Cheyenne S
Pattin, Dennis V
Patterson, Austin I
Reynolds, Kristal
Rose, Ross C
Williams, Curtis M

EDUCATION

Students rewarded at Choctaw Language Finale



Choctaw Nation: PAYTON GUTHRIE

Delanie Lime was the winner of a 32-inch TV monitor at the Choctaw Language Finale.



Tyler Olive won a movie basket during the Choctaw Language finale, one of several gift baskets put together by staff at the School of Choctaw Language. Olive is shown with language instructor Joshua Riley.



Casey Price was winner of an RCA home theater system at the Choctaw Language Finale held in Durant in April.

Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna 2014 Ittafama Chito

The School of Choctaw Language held its finale event on April 29 at the Choctaw Event Center in Durant. Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. joined Executive Director Joy Culbreath and the staff at the School of Choctaw Language to honor and reward this year's students.

Door prizes were awarded to 22 lucky participants. Prizes included a 32-inch TV, Galaxy Tab 2, RCA home theater system, headphones, earbuds, Blu-Ray players, gift baskets and gift cards.

Many of the participants were high school students from across the Choctaw Nation where the Choctaw language is offered as an elective language via distance (IETV) learning.

In addition to classes offered at high schools and higher learning institutions such as Southeastern, EOSC and OU, community classes are offered throughout eastern Oklahoma, OKC and in California.

For more information about the Choctaw language, visit www.choctawschool.com.

Ardmore Community Class Graduation



Congratulations to the Ardmore Community Language Class! Under the instruction of Ms. Lillian Vaughn, the following students were recognized at a graduation ceremony at the Ardmore Public Library: Lucretia Dickson, Donald Dickson, Vonya Lang, McClain Lang, Tawana Watterson, Kathy Eye, Leona Johnson, Norma Higgenbotham, Carrie Williamson, Luther Wooley and Henry Marris, Jr.

Mannsville students take Code Talker display to state history contest

Seventh grade students from Mannsville School recently returned from a competition at Oklahoma History Day in which they presented a skit and story board about Choctaw Code Talker, Joseph Oklahombi.

Miss Twanda Hill's class spent countless hours on the project, highlighting the military feats of Oklahombi and the fact that he was never awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

The story board was entitled "Tushka" and included information about the World War I Code Talkers as well as a 20-minute video about the Choctaw warriors. The short skit performed by Mannsville students was called "Bravest of the Brave."

The package won the regional History Day competition in March at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. The students competed at the state level on May 7 and were among the finalists.

Participating students included Trevor Carroll, Alion Morgan, Bradley Phillips, Cassandra Harwell, Gus Peoples, Shylea Eberhart, Moises Ibarra and Phillip Brown.



Mannsville students Trevor Carroll, Cassandra Harwell, Alion Morgan, Gus Peoples and Bradley Phillips pose in front of their storyboard about Choctaw Code Talker Joseph Oklahombi.



Mannsville students Moises Ibarra, Shylea Eberhart and Phillip Brown pose with their teacher, Miss Twanda Hill, after a performance titled "Bravest of the Brave." The short skit focused on Choctaw veteran Joseph Oklahombi and was part of the schools' Oklahoma History Day participation.

Youth Advisory Board 2013-14



Choctaw Nation: ZACH MAXWELL

The Youth Advisory Board of the Choctaw Nation Youth Empowerment program attended a year-end banquet in April at Tvshka Homma. Chief Gary Batton spoke at the event as well as Stacy Shepherd, director of the Chahta Foundation.

Chahta Foundation awards four scholars

By ZACH MAXWELL
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

The Chahta Foundation presented scholarships totaling \$72,000 to four post-graduate students at a luncheon in their honor on May 28.

One Master's Degree student and three doctoral candidates were honored at the event, which was attended by Chahta Foundation staff and board members, family of the honorees as well as incoming Southeastern Okla. State Univ. President Sean Burrage.

Doctoral candidates receiving \$20,000 were Jordan Dennis of Oklahoma City, who is studying law at the University of Oklahoma; Naomi Hixson of Tempe, Ariz., a speech-language pathologist studying at Arizona State Univ.; and Tamara Bolding of Los Angeles, a psychology major at Pacifica Graduate Institute.

Susan Wyant of Purcell, Okla., received \$12,000 toward a Master's Degree in Education at Southwest Oklahoma State University. She is studying the field of psychometry.

"I hope that, with my degree, I can give back to our Choctaw family and to Oklahoma," Wyant told the gathering. "I couldn't do it without you."

Golding began her short speech by saying "yakoke," ("Thank you" in Choctaw) and said "It's been a very incredible journey."

"Success is so much sweeter when we use it to have meaning in our lives and the lives of others," said Stacy Shepherd, director of the Chahta Foundation and Senior Executive Officer of Tribal Member Services for the Choctaw Nation. "Somewhere down the road, I know each one of you is going to help someone in need."

Jon Marshall, chairman of the Chahta Foundation Board of Directors, echoed those sentiments.

"It's an honor for us to have an opportunity to invest in future leaders," Marshall said. "One of the predicates of these people receiving an award has been each one's commitment to humanity. They're all doing things in terms of



Chahta Foundation scholarship recipients for 2014 were recently honored at a banquet in Durant. Honorees included Tamara Bolding, Jordan Dennis, Naomi Hixson and Susan Wyant.

helping people."

The Chahta Foundation was formed in 2000 and began awarding educational scholarships in 2013. The foundation has given \$174,000 in scholarships in two years.

The foundation's triumvirate mission includes "creating scholarships for Choctaws, preserving a rich heritage and sharing it with all people and promoting a healthy approach to living."

For more information, visit online at www.chahtafoundation.com.

Summertime is the time for grilling

Did someone say "It's Summer"? Well, we all know what that means...time to grill. Be it meat, poultry, fish, vegetables and yes, even hot dogs, taking steps to ensure healthy tasty foods can be done. When looking at the potential cancer risks associated with grilling the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) state there isn't enough evidence to show that grilled meat specifically increases risk for cancers. However, AICR goes on to state that cooking meat at a high temperature like grilling creates cancer causing substances, called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and heterocyclic amines (HCAs). It is reported these carcinogens can cause the changes in the DNA that may lead to cancer. So, when deciding what to grill and how to prep for grilling using some or all of these steps may help to decrease the these carcinogens.

- Limit red and processed meats (hot dogs, bologna, etc.) to 18oz per week. Studies have concluded diets high in red and processed meats are a contributing factor of increased risk of colorectal cancer.
- Chose lean cuts and trim any excess fat off the meat. This will help to lessen drippings of fat which cause flare-ups and charring of the meat.
- Turn meat often using a spatula or tongs. Avoid using anything that will pierce the meat causing juices to drip leading to flare ups.
- When grilling larger cuts of meat partially pre-cook the meat in the oven or on the stove then immediately transfer the meat to the preheat grill. This will decrease the time the meat is in contact with the higher temperatures on the grill and excessive exposure to the flames.
- Meats are not the only foods to cook on the grill, vegetables and fruits have a wonderful flavor from grilling. Vegetables and fruits do not produce HCAs and vegetables and fruits are also known for lowering the risk of cancer.
- Grilling shish kabobs is a fun way to grill meats, vegetables and fruits together. By cutting the meats, vegetables and fruits into smaller somewhat uniform portions can decrease cooking times.
- Marinades! The AICR reports studies have suggested marinating meats prior to grilling can decrease the formation of HCAs.

So, talking about marinades, the AICR has listed several marinade recipes. These can be found on the AICR website at www.aicr.org. Until you can get to this site you may want to try this marinade for your next cook out.

Recipe of the Month



Citrus Marinade

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 cup orange juice
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- ¼ cup lime juice
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 1 tsp. lemon-pepper seasoning

Directions:

1. Mix all ingredients together in large, wide and shallow non-metal casserole dish or mixing bowl. Add food to be grilled and turn to coat all sides. Cover and refrigerate for 1-6 hours. When ready to grill, remove meat and discard marinade.

Nutrition Facts:

Amount per serving: Calories 19, Total fat 0g, Carbohydrates 5g, Protein 0g, Sodium 0mg

I hope you all enjoy this recipe and are able to visit The AICR website for further information and recipes. For further information you may contact: Erin Adams, RD, LD Choctaw Nation Diabetes Wellness Center 800-349-7026 ext.: 6959

Breastfeeding assistance is just a phone call away. 1-800-522-6170 ext 2507

Choctaw Nation WIC welcomes breastfeeding questions and also offers breastfeeding classes in 6 locations.

NURSERY NEWS

Chloe & Kyle Cantwell



Michael and Stephanie Cantwell of Rock Island are pleased to announce the arrival of twins, Chloe Michaela and Kyle James Cantwell, born on Feb. 27 at OU Children's Medical Center in Oklahoma City. Chloe was born at 10 p.m. weighing 6 pounds and 9 ounces and Kyle was born at 10:07 p.m. weighing 6 pounds and 1 ounce. Grandparents are James Alan and Susan Cantwell of Poteau and Lonnie and Karen Taylor of Red Oak. Great-grandmother is Edith Ward of LeFlore and great-great-grandmother is Mary Tiner of Wilson. Big sister is Amara.

Cara Mae Lewis



Freddie and Leandra Lewis are happy to announce the birth of their daughter, Cara Mae Lewis. She was born Feb. 28 at 8:56 am at OU Medical Center in Oklahoma City. She weighed 6 pounds 14 ounces and was 19 inches long.

Paternal grandparents are Noah and Pearl Lewis of Oklahoma City. Maternal grandparents are John and Becky Thompson of Tulsa.

Lydia Anne Hogan



Ben and Elizabeth Hogan proudly announce the birth of their daughter, Lydia Anne. She was born on her due date of May 19 at 1:42 a.m. at Conway Regional Hospital in Conway, Ark. She weighed 7 pounds 12 ounces and was 20.5 inches long.

Grandparents are David and Judy (Sockey) Hogan of Fort Smith, Ark and Bob and Jo Anne Virden of Clarksville, Ark. Great-grandparents are Charles and Charlotte Virden of Sebring, Fla. Lydia is the great-great-granddaughter of original Choctaw enrollee, the late Richard A. Sockey, Sr. of Panama.

CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

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

WAREHOUSES & MARKETS

- Antlers:** 306 S.W. "O" St., 580-298-6443
- Durant:** 2352 Big Lots Pkwy, 580-924-7773
- McAlester:** 1212 S. Main St., 918-420-5716
- Poteau:** 100 Kerr Ave, 918-649-0431

FOOD DISTRIBUTION SITES

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

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

ANTLERS
Market open weekdays July 1-29, except for:
July 2: Idabel 9-11:30 a.m.; Broken Bow 12:30-3 p.m. (market open)
July 9: Bethel 9-10:30; Smithville 12-2 (market open)
Closed: July 4 for tribal holiday and July 30-31 for inventory.
Cooking with Carmen: July 18

DURANT
Market open weekdays July 1-29, except for:
Closed: July 4 for tribal holiday and July 30-31 for inventory.
Cooking with Carmen: July 2

McALESTER
Market open weekdays July 1-29, except for:
Closed: July 4 for tribal holiday and July 30-31 for inventory.
Cooking with Carmen: July 9

POTEAU
Market open weekdays July 1-29, except for:
Closed: July 4 for tribal holiday and July 30-31 for inventory.
Cooking with Carmen: July 7

Choctaw Nation WIC

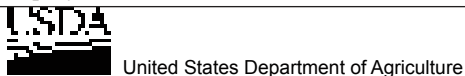


WOMEN, INFANTS and CHILDREN

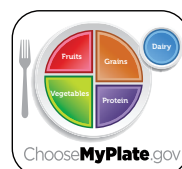
SITE	HOURS	DAYS
Antlers (580-298-3161)	8:30-4:00	Every Tuesday
Atoka (580-889-5825)	8:00-4:30	Every Mon., Wed., Thurs. & Fri.
Bethel (580-241-5458)	8:30-4:00	1st Tuesday
Boswell (580-380-5264)	8:30-4:00	Every Friday
Broken Bow (580-584-2746)	8:00-4:30	Daily, except 1st Tues. & 2nd Thurs.
Coalgate (580-927-3641)	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 Wed. - Fri.
Stigler (918-967-4211)	8:30-4:00	Every Mon. - Wed.
Talihina (918-567-7000 x 6792)	8:00-4:30	Mon., Tues., Wed., & Fri.
Wilburton (918-465-5641)	8:30-4:00	Every Thursday

Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline
Free help 1 800 QUIT NOW
784-8669 OKhelpline.com

Choctaw Nation Health Services Presents
BOOM in The Valley 9th Annual
July 3, 2014 Talihina, OK
Fireworks, Entertainment & 5K Rocket Run
4:00pm - 5:45pm 5K Rocket Run Registration
5:00pm Concessions & Inflatables Open
6:30pm Live Music by Straight Shot
7:00pm 5K Rocket Run Begins
Luksi' (Turtle) Races
Fireworks begin at Dark
Bring your lawn chair or blanket. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on hospital grounds. Parking permitted in designated areas only. Shuttles are available for designated off-site parking areas. For more information, please call (800) 349-7026 ext. 7131.



10 tips Nutrition Education Series save more at the grocery store



10 MyPlate tips to stretch your food dollar

Using coupons and looking for the best price are great ways to save money at the grocery store. Knowing how to find them is the first step to cutting costs on food. Use the MyPlate coupon tips to stretch your budget.

- 1 find deals right under your nose**
Look for coupons with your receipt, as peel-offs on items, and on signs along aisle shelves.
- 2 search for coupons**
Many stores still send ads and coupons for promotion, so don't overlook that so-called "junk mail." You can also do a Web search for "coupons." Go through your coupons at least once a month and toss out any expired ones.
- 3 look for savings in the newspaper**
Brand name coupons are found as inserts in the paper every Sunday—except on holiday weekends. Some stores will double the value of brand name coupons on certain days.
- 4 join your store's loyalty program**
Signup is usually free and you can receive savings and electronic coupons when you provide your email address.
- 5 buy when foods are on sale**
Maximize your savings by using coupons on sale items. You may find huge deals such as "buy one get one free."
- 6 find out if the store will match competitors' coupons**
Many stores will accept coupons, as long as they are for the same item. Check with the customer service desk for further details.
- 7 stay organized so coupons are easy to find**
Sort your coupons either by item or in alphabetical order. Develop a system that's easiest for you and make finding coupons quick and hassle-free. Ideas for coupon storage include 3-ring binders, accordion-style organizers, or plain envelopes.
- 8 find a coupon buddy**
Swap coupons you won't use with a friend. You can get rid of clutter and discover additional discounts.
- 9 compare brands**
Store brands can be less expensive than some of the name brand foods. Compare the items to find better prices.
- 10 stick to the list**
Make a shopping list for all the items you need. Keep a running list on your phone, on the refrigerator, or in a wallet. When you're in the store, do your best to buy only the items on your list.

Choctaw resistance to removal from ancient homeland

In May 2014, hundreds of Choctaw people met at Wheelock Academy to commemorate the sacrifices made by ancestors who, many generations ago, came to what is now Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears. Removing from an ancient homeland that literally was (and continues to be) an important part of Choctaw culture and identity was not an easy thing for these ancestors to do, nor was surviving the Trail of Tears itself. While walking the Trail of Tears commemorative walk, and placing oneself in the footsteps of those who walked the original Trail of Tears, it would be difficult to not reflect on the thoughts, motivations, and feelings that were carried by those people 180 years ago. As the miles wore on, one may wonder things like: Did any Choctaw people come to Oklahoma willingly? How much coercion was involved? Did any Choctaw people resist removal, and if so, how did they?

The answers to all of these questions are complex and almost as varied as the different personalities of the families and individuals who found themselves living in the very challenging and uncertain time of Removal. A few individuals came to Oklahoma willingly; many faced the hardships of the Trail of Tears because they saw no other option for the future of the Choctaw people, and a few Choctaw individuals profited off of the Removal of their friends and families. Most Choctaw individuals did resist Removal on some level, but the level varied from words, to passive resistance, to taking up arms and fighting to the death. Over the next four installments, Iti Fabvssa will explore four different ways in which Choctaw individuals and communities resisted Removal and the Trail of Tears.

Armed Resistance

Choctaw people are not widely known to have used force to oppose removal. In speeches to American representatives in the 1820s Choctaw Chiefs often emphasized that the Tribe had never taken up arms against the United States. While the tribe as a whole never faced the United States on a battlefield some groups of Choctaw people actually did exactly that in hopes of preventing removal. In the fall of 1811, Shawnee leader Tecum-

seh toured Choctaw villages, encouraging the Choctaw people to join with the Shawnee and other Native American Tribes in fighting against the newly established United States. Choctaw leaders, particularly Pushmataha, debated Tecumseh at each speech, and led the Choctaw people away from war. After leaving Choctaw country, Tecumseh traveled to Muscogee towns, where his message received a more welcome reception.

In the summer of 1813, principle Choctaw leaders met in council for several days with Muscogee leaders, who represented the Red Sticks, on the issue of whether or not to go to war with the United States. The council ended with the Muscogee Red Sticks firmly in favor of war and the Choctaw leaders fully against it (Halbert n.d.).

Later that year when the Creek War began, Choctaw leaders imposed a death penalty on any Choctaw person who joined the Red Sticks in their attacks against American citizens. Hundreds of Choctaw warriors joined with the Americans fighting against the Muscogee Red Sticks in the Creek War and in battles of the broader War of 1812. However, some Choctaw families went against their leaders wishes, and risked their lives by joining the Red Sticks in their fight against the Americans. Among them were 30 Choctaw warriors from the Yannubbe town who followed Talan Bola, a Muscogee Red Stick Chief. Later Choctaw warriors from the town of Patchelchovoka also joined the Red Sticks (Halbert n.d.). Based in the Black Warrior River valley, these small Choctaw forces raided local American frontier settlements.

The motivation of these Choctaw people to join the Red Sticks and fight against other Choctaws has not been recorded. However, based on Tecumseh's recorded speeches at Choctaw villages, it would seem that they took up arms to proactively face a foe that was steadily pushing Native American groups out of their homelands. The feelings of these Choctaw individuals were strong enough that they were willing to go against their own leaders in taking up arms against

Iti Fabvssa

the United States. It was an early and very direct form of resistance against Removal.

Pro-American Choctaw forces entered the Black Warrior area, and cleared it of Red Sticks, both Muscogee and Choctaw. Ultimately, the Americans were victorious in both the Creek War and in the War of 1812. However, for some Choctaw families, the war against the United States did not end with these defeats.

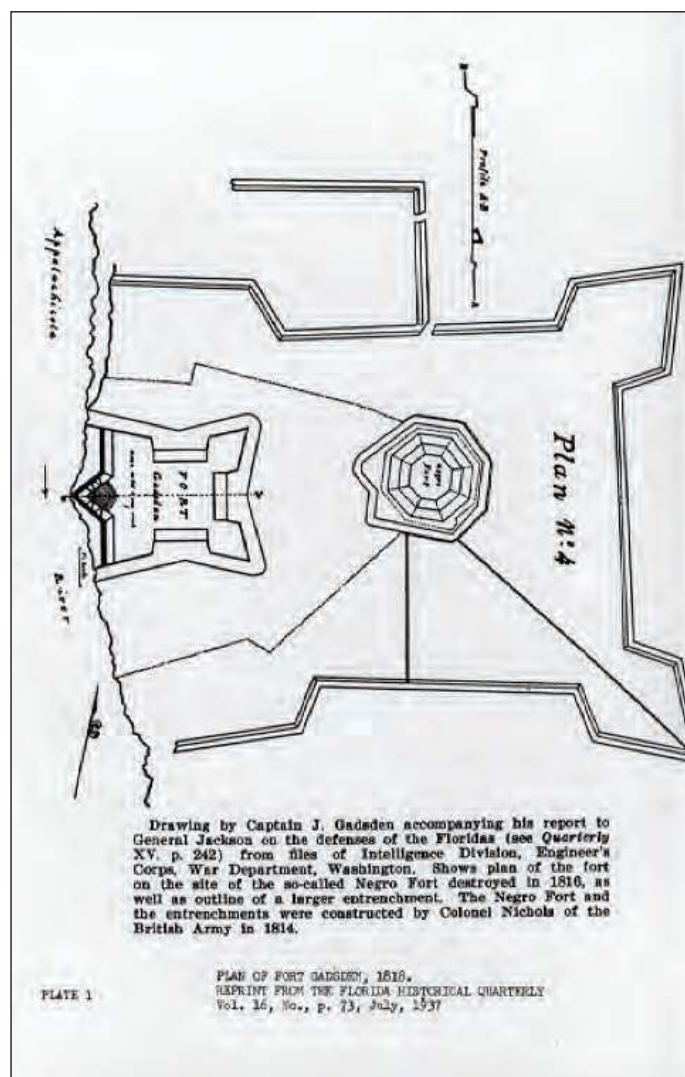
Late in the war, Lt. Col. Edward Nicholls of the British Royal Marines and Muscogee allies built a fort at Prospect Bluff along the waters of the Apalachicola River, in Spanish territory, in what is now the state of Florida. In 1815, Nicholls transferred the fort and its arms to a local resistance group of black militiamen and a few Seminole warriors (Forbes 1821:200-205). During this time an unnamed Choctaw Chief and 25 of his warriors came to live at the Fort. It is likely that they were some of the Choctaw people who had fought on the side of the Red Sticks during the recent Creek War.

In the spring of 1816, Col. Andrew Jackson was ordered to destroy the Fort at Prospect Bluff, even though it was on Spanish soil. Jackson corresponded with the Spanish Governor in Pensacola asking for permission to attack the Fort, but the Governor stalled the talks fearing the possible counter attacks from the Seminoles.

Jackson instead devised a plan to have his Lt. Col. Duncan Lamont Clinch take a supply convoy by the fort in hopes that it would be fired upon, giving a cause for the United States to destroy it. That plan was successful. As American forces moved into the area, they came upon a pro-American Muscogee force of 150 warriors, lead by Chief McIntosh, Captain Isaacs, and Koteha-haigo. Chief McIntosh had been tasked by Jackson, prior to these events, to raid the fort. In exchange McIntosh would be rewarded \$50 per slave captured, and would be given the fort's armaments and supplies. The Chiefs met with Clinch that night and agreed to help Clinch in his efforts against the Fort (Heidler 1996:74).

In the prelude to battle, the Americans sent five men on a reconnaissance to find drinking water. In an ambush the Choctaw warriors, 40 black militia, and several Seminole warriors killed four of the men (Forbes 1821:201, Heidler 1996:71).

Clinch, unaware of these events, ordered McIntosh, Captain Isaacs, and Koteha-haigo and their warriors to surround the Fort and wait. As the Muscogee surrounded the fort on three sides the Fort's defenders shot back, but without effect; they did not have the training to properly aim and fire the



cannons that lined the fort. Clinch sent McIntosh to demand the surrender. The fort's leaders refused and hoisted a red flag with an English jack on it, indicating that they would die rather than surrender. The next morning, soon after artillery fire began, America forces fired a round of heated shot over the wall and hit the Fort's magazine. The magazine exploded destroying most of the fort and killing 270 of the inhabitants (Forbes 1821:200-205, Heidler 1996:74). The leader of the black militia the Choctaw chief somehow survived, but was soon captured. They were both tortured and executed by the Muscogee warriors (Heidler 1996:74)

This battle is said to be one of the main catalyst events that led up to what would be called the Seminole Wars. The Choctaws that fought in this battle did so as an act of resistance to policy of removal of their people under the American banner of manifest destiny. Later documents indicate that some of them did survive the battle, but their ultimate fate is unknown.

Works Cited

- Forbes, James Grant
1821 Sketches, Historical and Topographical, of the Floridas. Electronic document
<https://ia600300.us.archive.org/18/items/sketcheshistorico1forb/sketcheshistorico1forb.pdf>
Halbert, Henry S.
1902 Story of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit. Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society vol. 6 pp. 373-402
n.d Unpublished Manuscript on file at the Alabama State Archives
Heidler, David Stephen & Jeanne T. Heidler.
1996 Old Hickory's War: Andrew Jackson and the Quest for Empire. Electronic document.

Chahta Anumpa Aikhvna

◆◆◆ Lesson of the Month ◆◆◆

Conversational Dialogue

Speaker 1:

Katim ma hvsh ia?

Pronounced:

Ka-tihm-ma hahsh e-ya?

Where are you all going?

Speaker 2:

Aimpa chukka il ia chi.

Pronounced:

Eye-empa chohk-ka il e-ya chi(n).

We are going to the restaurant.

Speaker 1:

Nanta ish vpachi?

Pronounced:

Nahn-ta ish ah-pah chi(n)? (Con conversationally, you can say 'ishpa' for 'ish vpa')

What are you going to eat?

Speaker 2:

Wak nipi micha ahe vpa sv bvna.

Pronounced:

Wahk ni-pi mi-cha ah-he ah-pah sah bahn-na.

I want to eat steak and potatoes.

Chishnato?

Pronounced:

Chish-nah-toh?

And you?

Speaker 1:

Anato, akak alwasha sv bvna.

Pronounced:

Ah-nah-toh ah-kahnk ahl-wa-sha sah bahn-na.

As for me, I want fried chicken.

Speaker 2:

Mvt cham pola chi!

Pronounced:

Maht chahm-po-la chi(n)!

That will taste good!

Speaker 1:

Ahlika, tushpat impat kil ia!

Pronounced:

A(n)-thi-ka, to(n)sh-paht em-paht kil e-ya!

That is true, let's hurry and go eat!

www.choctawschool.com

Choctaw language community teachers workshop

The Choctaw School of Language May 22-23 held workshops for community teachers. The immersion-type training included language specialists such as Dr. Freddie Bowles, Dr. Linda Henshell Wilson and Dr. Brad Montgomery-Anderson to help teachers with some of the difficult challenges of teaching a new language.

Methods for engaging language learners, language acquisition and the brain, as well as, how to make language learning exciting were discussions throughout the workshop.

The Choctaw Nation Language Program offers 15 state certified teachers, eight first language speakers and seven second language speakers with a reach of about 10,000 language students served each week.

Students are from public schools, universities, the Internet, Head Start programs, area communities and employees of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Various class opportunities are available on site and offsite utilizing technology for live remote-fed instruction.

The goal of the School of Choctaw Language is to revitalize and perpetuate the language by utilizing a sequential curriculum and making it accessible to anyone



Students listen to the speaker while at the workshop.



Students gather during the workshop.

desiring to learn the language.

For additional information about classes or programs at the Choctaw School of Language please call toll free 1-800-522-6170.

OBITUARIES

Howard LeFlore

Howard LeFlore, 90, of Tulsa, passed away on Dec. 1, 2013, after fighting a valiant battle with Parkinson's disease.

Howard was born in Boswell, to Isaac and Bertha Nance LeFlore on June 16, 1923.

He graduated from Purcell High School in 1941. He began attending the University of Oklahoma in 1941, and subsequently served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He was with the Second Army Division during the invasion of Normandy, and earned a Purple Heart, One Silver Star and a Good Conduct Medal for his service to our country.

After his service, he returned to the University of Oklahoma, earning a degree in Accounting. On Feb. 19, 1954, he married Mable Edith Young of Oklahoma City, and they were married 59 years. He was an accountant at Amoco and retired after 35 years. He loved travel, photography and golf. He was a member of Parkview Baptist Church.

Howard is preceded in death by his parents; and sisters Wilma Clark and Mary Ford.

He is survived by his wife, Mable of the home; son Michael LeFlore of Manhattan Beach, Calif.; his sister, Helen Hayes, of Oklahoma City; his nephew, Harold (Giz) and Pat Hayes of Broken Arrow; niece, Diane Ford of Dallas; niece, Rene Snelson with her husband David of Oklahoma City.

Military graveside services were held at Memorial Park Cemetery in Tulsa.



Samuel Rayford Merryman

Samuel Rayford Merryman, 85, a longtime Ventura resident, Navy veteran, distinguished Elk, and retired union painter and trade union executive, passed away peacefully at home in Ventura, Calif., on March 28, after a long illness, surrounded by family.

Sam was born Aug. 31, 1928, in LeFlore County to Choctaw Original Enrollees Ezra R. and Naomi Whistler Merryman. His family moved to Ventura in 1945, where he graduated from Ventura High School. Sam enlisted in the Navy and served as a baker on the cruiser Los Angeles (CA-135) during the Korean War.

Sam became a union painter in 1954 and remained in the Painters and Tapers Local 52 until his death. From 1977 to 1984, he was the business manager for the union's District Council 52 of the Tri-Counties. He also was chairman of the Tri-Counties Building and Construction Trades Council and served on the board of directors of the Ventura County Economic Development Assn. in the late 1970s, where he was described recently by a VCEDA colleague as a "true visionary" in labor-business relations.

He was a proud and longtime member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks and held numerous offices at Lodge 1430 in Ventura, including Exalted Ruler, Leading Knight, Loyal Knight and Esquire. Sam also was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Odd Fellows and Korean War Veterans Assn. An avid golfer, Sam was past president of the Ventura Men's Golf Club. Sam had a marvelous singing voice and enjoyed serenading family and his countless friends.

Sam was preceded in death by parents, Ezra and Naomi Whistler; brothers, Ezra and Paul Merryman; and sister, Norma Pittman.

Sam is survived by his loving and devoted wife of 35 years, Audrea Devol Merryman; daughters, Margaret Merryman with husband Richard Roach of Kauai, Hawaii, and Rosie Grubb of Las Vegas, Nev.; stepson, Steven Devol of Los Angeles; sister, Hazel Merryman of Ventura, Calif.; nieces and nephews, Blake Merryman, Karen Merryman, Sheryl Holloway and Jeri Morger, all of Ventura, Calif., Richard Merryman of Michigan, David Merryman of Texas, Samuel Clifton of San Diego, Cathy Whitehead of Washington state, Cindy Ledbetter and Sheri Davis, both of South Carolina; and grandson, Joseph Rivera of Alexandria, Va.



Kevin Billy

Kevin Billy, 50, was born April 4, 1964, in Talihina to Edwin and Nadine (Samuel) Billy. He passed from this life April 16 in Fort Smith, Ark.

Kevin had lived in the Rattan area for the past 43 years. He was a 1982 graduate of Rattan High School where he was an all state pitcher and centerfielder. Kevin later graduated from Murray State College and majored in electronics.

Kevin also attended Oklahoma Christian College in Edmond on a baseball scholarship. He was a member of the Goodwater United Methodist Church in Sobol and loved fishing, playing baseball in his younger days, taking care of his animals and spending time with his daughter, Teona.

Kevin was preceded in death by his father, Edwin Billy; aunt and uncles, Delores Taylor, David Junior Billy and Solomon Billy.

He is survived by his mother, Nadine Billy of Fort Towson; daughter, Teona Billy of Canadian; brother, Don Billy of Sobol; sister, Debra Wesley with husband Nelson of Rufe; nieces and nephews, Tony Wesley, Derek Wesley, Crystal Beller and Sheldon Wesley; great-nieces and great-nephews, Kalin Beller, Kaira Beller, Nathaniel Wesley, Ethan Wesley, Peyton Wesley and Lucas Wesley; as well as many other relatives and friends.

Burial was in the Goodwater Cemetery in the Goodwater community.



Rhonda Celia Andrews Hamilton

Rhonda Celia Andrews Hamilton came into this world on Oct. 7, 1950 and went to be with The Lord on Feb. 3, surrounded by her family.

She married Charlie W. Hamilton Sr., her high school sweetheart in 1967 and he went to be with The Lord in March 2001.

She was preceded in death by her dad, James Thomas Andrews and her mom Rachel Celia Bohanon Andrews; her brothers Tom Andrews, Tony Andrews and Sydney Andrews; and a sister Toby Carter.

She is survived by two sisters, Teresa Eisenhower of Collinsville and Meredith Patten of Poteau.

She leaves behind three children, Rachel Beaty of Pilot Point, Texas; Charlie Jr and daughter-in-law Helen Hamilton and Becky Hamilton Graham of Durant; seven grandchildren, Kaitlyn and Kiley Beaty of Pilot Point, Texas, Charlie Hamilton III of Durant and Carissa and Hunter Hamilton of the home in Colbert, Alexis Mosley and Lauren Graham of Durant; one beautiful great-granddaughter Kensli Beaty of Pilot Point; and numerous nieces and nephews.



Norma Lee Nelson

A longtime resident of Creswell, Ore., Norma Lee Nelson entered Heaven's gates on Feb. 16. She passed away at Riverbend Hospital in Springfield, Ore. after enduring a long and protracted battle with cancer.

Norma was born to Edith Ellen and Ernest Andrew Hallcom in Salinas, Calif. on Aug. 15, 1939. She was the first of four children. She attended Mark Keppel High School and later studied at Pepperdine University. She met her future husband Robert while working part time with the telephone company in Los Angeles. Together they lived in southern California until relocating to Josephine County, Ore. in 1984, where for several years they served as counselors for the homeless. A consummate reader of literature, Norma enjoyed researching challenging topics and immersing herself in new areas of learning. She studied the works of Carl Jung, Emanuel Swedenborg, and C.S. Lewis, and most notably the Bible. She continued to research personal interests throughout her life. Norma maintained an unwavering faith in God, relying heavily upon this relationship while fighting her illness. She was a longtime member and advocate of the Episcopal Order of the Holy Cross and the Sisterhood of the Holy Nativity. Norma enthusiastically embraced her Native American heritage.

Norma was preceded by her mother, Edith Ellen Wilson; and her youngest sister, Carol Ann Fortiere.

She is survived by her husband of 52 years, Robert Nelson; her younger sister, Shirley Cunningham, along with Shirley's spouse Robert; and her brother, Kenneth Hallcom with his wife Anne; niece, Julie Hamilton along with her husband Michael; great niece and nephew Ella and Evan; and her youngest niece Jeanine Kernen and her husband Jeff.

Norma's remains were interred at Hawthorne Memorial Gardens in Grants Pass, Ore. next to her sister Carol and adjacent to her mother's burial site.

Willodyne Smith

Willodyne Smith, 80, of Hugo, went to heaven peacefully on April 30 at Carrus Specialty Hospital in Sherman, Texas. She was surrounded by family at the time of her passing.

Willodyne was born July 11, 1933 to George and Florence Oaks Dodson in Hugo. She is a 1951 graduate of Hugo High School. She was an active member of the Church of the Nazarene of Hugo and the Choctaw County Election Board. Her devotion to God, family, and friends were unconditional and knew no bounds being displayed through calls, cards and letters to countless friends, classmates, family and her church family.

She was preceded in death by her parents, George and Florence Dodson; husband, Ernest Wayne Smith; son, Neal Wayne Smith; sister and brother-in-law, Margaret and Marvin Frey.

She is survived by her daughter, Brenda Gray and husband Mitch of Sherman, Texas; son, Brian Smith of Poteau; grandchildren, Raechel Sims of Plano, Texas, Kourtnie Smith of Oceanside, Calif., Kaleb Smith and wife Elizabeth of Poteau, and Kamren Smith of Sikeston, Mo.; great-granddaughter, Kambreigh Smith; and nephew, Gary Frey and wife Christa of Sugar Land, Texas; she also leaves behind a host of relatives and friends.

Burial was held in Mount Olivet Cemetery in Hugo.



Raymond 'Red' Charles Mackey

Raymond "Red" Charles Mackey, 67, of Wister, passed away Feb. 10 at Sparks Hospital in Fort Smith, Ark.

Raymond was born March 11, 1946 in Santa Rosa, Calif. to Raymond Sr. and Frances (Sam) Mackey. He married Christine Bonaparte on June 21, 1963 in Greenville, Texas. Raymond worked as a truck driver for over 45 years and was affectionately called "Wild Indian." He later worked for PTIKCS railroad and was nicknamed "Chief-Drives-A-Lot." He was a Baptist and a member of Thessalonian Baptist Church.

Raymond was preceded in death by his parents, Raymond Sr. and Frances Mackey; sisters, Sue Adams and Ruth Carshall; and brothers, Talton Mackey and Arthur "Boy" Mackey.

He is survived by his wife, Christine of the home; sons, Haskell Bonaparte and wife Dora of Sand Springs, Raymond Charles Mackey III and Michael Ray Mackey of Wister; nine grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; sisters, Rotha Adams and husband Daniel of Le Flore, Mary Coley and husband Joe of Wilburton and Martha Watson and husband Jearl of Talihina; and other friends and family.

Interment was at the Thessalonian Church Cemetery in Salonia Community.

Franklin B. Hamlin

Franklin B. Hamlin, 81, of Milan, N.M., passed away on March 30, at home following a lengthy illness. He was born Dec. 5, 1932 in Talihina, to William and Ora Hamlin.

He had five daughters with Bernice (Jackson) Hamlin, Charlotte Knoll, Janice Knoll, Deborah Simpson, Linda Cassidy and Linette Moody; his only living sister is Evelyn Francis of Grants, N.M.; he had 10 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandson.



Juanita Ann (Nale) Whitfield Lance

Juanita Ann (Nale) Whitfield Lance, 81, of McAlester, passed away April 16 at New Hope Nursing Center.

Born Sept. 11, 1932, in Indianola, she was the daughter of James F. and Lessie Mae (White) Nale. She grew up in Indianola and received her education there.

She lived in California for several years where she worked as a drug store clerk. Upon returning to Indianola, she worked as a telephone operator, guard at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary and also as secretary for a contracting company responsible for building Indian housing.

She was proud of her Choctaw heritage. She enjoyed bowling and travel, especially Choctaw trips. She married Bob Lance on Feb. 18, 1984.

She was a marksman and lifetime member of the NRA. She was also a member of Eastern Star and American Legion Auxiliary.

She was preceded in death by her parents, James F. Nale and Lessie Mae (White) Wise; stepfather, William Wise; father of her children, Tootsie Whitfield; her husband, Bob Lance; son, Duane Whitfield; grandson, Roy Whitfield; sisters, Gail McAdoo and Bonnie Harold; brother, Johnny Nale, and brothers-in-law, Cleburn Hopper, Everett Harrel and V.C. McAdoo.

Survivors include sons, Kevin Whitfield and wife, Lourdes of Duncan, and Dennis Whitfield and wife, JoAnn of Coweta; grandchildren, Jed Whitfield and wife, Holle of McAlester, Bill Whitfield of McAlester, Kari Whitfield of Coweta, Kyle Whitfield and wife, Missy of Nowata, Jennifer Hinsley and husband, Ryan of Duncan, Miguel Campos of Ojeda, Venezuela, Keilynn Whitfield of Ojeda, Venezuela, Kevin Whitfield of Ojeda, Venezuela, and Maria Campos of Ojeda, Venezuela; great-grandchildren, Jordyn Campbell of Duncan, Mason Hinsley of Duncan, Skyler Whitfield of McAlester, Zane Whitfield of McAlester, Allen Everly of McAlester, Angela Everly of McAlester, Jeremy Whitfield of Doylestown, Pa., and Hayes Whitfield of Nowata; sisters, Wanda Hopper of Gardena, Calif., Wynema Mussyal and husband, Noel of Indianola, and Fran Stiers and husband, James of Tuttle; and brother-in-law, Jay McAdoo of Holdenville.

Burial was at Indianola Cemetery.



Michael Ray 'Mike' Atwood

Michael Ray "Mike" Atwood, 62, of Durant, passed away on April 18 in Durant. He was born Jan. 5, 1952 in Silverlake, Kansas to Jack Ray & Delima Rose (Marcil) Atwood.

Mr. Atwood was preceded in death by his father, Jack Ray Atwood; sister, Sandra M. Jones; and numerous aunts and uncles.

He is survived by his son, Aaron Atwood of Arizona; mother, Delima Rose Postoak of Texas; sisters, Diane Stedman of Texas and Barbara Deneault of Nebraska; brothers, Ron Atwood of Texas and Larry Atwood of Texas; half-sister, Tonya Griener of Kansas.



Wild Onion Dinners

Hugo Dinner



Little Miss Savanna Hearndon with her grandparents Buck and Jane Davenport and Evelin James at the Hugo Wild Onion dinner.



Chief Gary Batton with a 4-month-old, Max Roberts at the dinner in Hugo.



Councilman Perry Thompson with Fran Fragola and Rick Plotner.



Adeline Hudson visits with others at the dinner in Hugo.



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. talks with Edgar E. Stevens while at the Wild Onion dinner in Hugo.



At left, Chief Gary Batton at the podium joined by District 8 Tribal Councilman Perry Thompson and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.



At right, JD Carter, Trudy Caraway and Judy and Larry Chaney visit together while waiting for the dinner to start in Hugo.

Photos by DEIDRE ELROD | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



At left, Jessica Allred serves dinner to guest at the Hugo Wild Onion Dinner.

Wilburton Dinner



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., Tribal Judge Mitch Mullin, Tribal Councilman Joe Coley and Chief Gary Batton.



Wilburton seniors singing Choctaw hymns during the wild onion appreciation dinner in Wilburton as Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., District 1 Tribal Councilman Thomas Williston and Chief Gary Batton join in from the head table.



At the Appreciation Dinner in Wilburton, Tribal Councilman Joe Coley and District 6 Senior President Polly McCord presented gifts to Chief Gary Batton (left) and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.



District 6 Tribal Councilman Joe Coley (standing) with Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., District 1 Tribal Councilman Thomas Williston, District 6 Little Miss Choctaw Nation Briana Evans and Chief Gary Batton.



The cooks who prepared a dinner of wild onions with eggs, pork, pinto beans, fried potatoes, cornbread and cobbler pose at the Randle Durant Community Center in Wilburton.



Chief Gary Batton takes a plate of wild onions, beans and pork from Jennifer Woods and Janet Sam at the Wilburton Appreciation Dinner.

Photos by ZACH MAXWELL | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



The group is shown with Laura Mackey, the Choctaw Nation Elder of the Year.



Joe Coley with Wilburton Travel Plaza employees Janet Sam, Lane Isabell and Cendy Chronister.



Chief Gary Batton holding six-day-old Kade Prock, infant son of Katrina Prock.

2014 SENIOR Day



District 10 - Atoka, winners of the Most Participation in the Traditional Fashion contest were presented with their award.

Groups from all districts come together for annual day of fun

By DEIDRE ELROD

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Senior Day was held at the McAlester Expo Center on May 21. Approximately 700 seniors were bused in from all 10.5 counties of the Choctaw Nation.

Each district competed in four different categories while attending. Every district made name badges that represented Choctaw Nation in different ways, competed in a traditional fashion show, singing contest and most participation in traditional fashion.

The winners of the traditional fashion show were first place, Lorene Blaine of District 9, second place was Louise O'Banion and third place was Ronald Scott of District 10.

The singing was a tough decision for the judges as all districts did a great job. First place went to the Coalgate/Crowder group, second place went to the Antlers group and third place was a tie between Idabel and Tahihina/Smithville.

The 1st place winners for the name badge competition went to Atoka, second place went to McAlester and third place went to Spiro.

Councilman Anthony Dillard's District 10 won most participation in traditional fashion.



Chief Gary Batton with Alice Huston from District 10.



District 12 first place winners of the singing contest receive their award during the 2014 Senior Day.



Ron and Concetta Gragg with Lucille Jameson from District 12 enjoy their time at the Senior Day.



Mary Nell talks with Emanuel Sexton about healthy lifestyles.



Judy Allen with Juanita Cox.

Photos by DEIDRE ELROD | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



The name tag winners are announced at Senior Day.



District 10 third place winner, Ron Scott, in the Traditional Fashion Show.



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. with Mary Coley from Wilburton.

Oklahoma Indian Student Honor Society

Choctaw students from Oklahoma were inducted into the Oklahoma Indian Student Honor Society (OISHS) hosted by the Oklahoma Council for Indian Education (OCIE).

Jason Campbell of the Choctaw Nation S.T.A.R. program attended the event on behalf of the Nation and stated, "It was a humbling and inspiring experience to be in the presence of so many distinguished students."

Chief Gary Batton remarked, "I'm extremely proud of all the Choctaw students who earned the much-deserved recognition from OISHS." He went on to say, "The Choctaw Nation has a bright future based on the substantial investments our tribal members are making in their education."

The Choctaw Nation Department of Education would like to congratulate all the students recognized at the ceremony. Also, the department encourages all Oklahoma high school students to download and submit an OISHS scholarship application.

To read more about eligibility requirements, please visit the website for the Oklahoma Council for Indian Education (OCIE) at <http://oklahoma-ocie.org/index.html>.

The Choctaw students honored at the induction ceremony are as follows:

- Anadarko:** Cheyenne Bradshaw, Ashley Jones*, Dakota Kappelle
- Beggs:** Leslie Markes, Mackenzie Ross, Lindsy Spring*
- Bristow:** Morgan Conn
- Broken Bow:** Whitney Aaron
- Byng:** DeAnna Blackburn, Andrew Daniel, Brady Sorrels

- Calera:** Rebecca Cheek
 - Choctaw:** Alanah Hosford
 - Claremore:** Truman Burrage, Matthew Dalton, Bryanna Hayes
 - Coalgate:** Shelby Martindale, David Mowdy, Robert Penney
 - Colbert:** Haylie McGowan, Maddison Poteet
 - Collinsville:** Ashley Lankford, Bailey Stamper
 - Dickson:** Hannah Hale, Savanna Mann, Karlee Marshall, Kaylee Marshall, Abby McLaughlin, Levi Pittman
 - Durant:** Logan Hibbs, Gabriel Louis, Hannah Robinson, Jatelyn Wallace
 - Edmond - Memorial:** Ashley Hartman, Grace Reeder*, Davis Thomas*
 - Edmond - North:** Rylee Tucker, Sarah Yandell
 - Gore:** Abby Byrd, Frannie Pool*, Lucy Pool
 - Lexington:** Noah Cole, Jeron Hamm
 - Lindsay:** Hannah Barnes, Riley Griffin, Mackenzie Smith
 - Moore - Southmoore:** Nicolette Walker*
 - Norman:** Jacob Askey, Monica Gracey, Jordan Nicks*
 - Norman - North:** Winter Fryar, Alayna Jackson, Zac Robbins, Christian Williams, Brock Wright
 - Owasso:** Alannah Mayes*, Haley McFarland, Kacie McFarland, Allyson Mills, Riley Vancuren, Emily Wall*
 - Pauls Valley:** Whittni Huckabaa*
 - Ringling:** Tyler Grace, Britann McGahey, Ramsey Phelps
 - Roland:** Arizona Heins
 - Sequoyah - Claremore:** Rocckelle Mallory
 - Sequoyah - Tahlequah:** Sierra Carter
 - Silo:** Forrest Ludrick
 - Stratford:** Savannah Harrison
 - Tulsa - Memorial:** Victoria Carney-Peters
- * Denotes attendance at OISHS induction ceremony

2nd annual Senior Fitness Challenge

By ZACH MAXWELL

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Nearly 100 senior citizens from across the 10.5-county Choctaw Nation area participated in the second annual Senior Fitness Challenge this spring.

This event was presented by the Choctaw Nation Healthy Aging program. Participants walked two laps around the Elephant Walk Trail in Hugo in a friendly but spirited competition.

The Choctaw Nation Senior Center group from Crowder won the overall Senior Fitness Challenge for the second year in a row.

Individual winners in the men's 70-plus group were Boyce Harrison, Eual Kelly and Sammie McGowan. Men's 55-69 group winners were Ricky White, Emerson Wilson and Walter Phelps.

Winners in the women's 70-plus group were Rebecca Moran, Priscilla Coleman and Jannette Taylor. Women's 55-69 winners were Linda Wilson, Peggy Wiser and Juanita Johnson.

Healthy Aging program presented 87 pairs of Nike Lunar Glide walking shoes to participants in this year's event.

For more information about Choctaw Nation Healthy Aging, call (800) 522-6170.



Chase Henson, Healthy Aging Coordinator, presents the Senior Challenge trophy to Juanita Barker, representing Crowder.



Walk honors the Trail of Tears



Junior Miss Choctaw Nation Kayleigh Powell signs the Lord's Prayer before lunch near Wheelock lake.

Recognition of ancestors is important

On the grounds of the historic Wheelock Academy, Council Speaker Delton Cox reminds participants in the 2014 Trail of Tears Walk that as a Nation, Choctaws are here because of others and that in everything, recognition of ancestors is important.

Cox states, "We need to keep in mind the reason we do this is to remember those who went before us. We need to recognize, in whatever we're doing, that we are standing on the shoulders of those thousands of people who went before. Keep in mind our ancestors we are honoring today."

Nestled in McCurtain County, the Wheelock Academy for Native American girls opened in 1833 and was officially closed in 1955. Although the building is an endangered historical site, the grounds and buildings remain a significant part of Choctaw history and a National Historic Landmark.

The nearby Wheelock Rock Church is the oldest church in Oklahoma still in use.

Visitors strolled the campus and enjoyed the rich history and cultural activities. Many Wheelock alumni were on hand for the event, sharing memories of their days at the school.



CNHSAs's Apelachi staff from Idabel – Glenda Crosby, Melissa Bryant and Pam Crook.



Eleanor Caldwell, above, attended Wheelock Academy in 1946 and '47. Above right, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., Councilman Thomas Williston and Chief Gary Batton are pictured with 2014-15 District 1 Little Miss Aryza Impson. And, lower right, a stickball demonstration takes place on the lawn.



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. with Tribal Councilman Thomas Williston, Choctaw Little Miss Princess Aryza Impson.



Karl and Janis McKinney are among the walkers rounding the curve by the Rock Church.



Visitors play stickball after the walk on the picnic grounds.

Trail of Tears Bike Team rides the route of Choctaw removal



Photos provided

Choctaw Nation Trail of Tears Bike Team: Lisa Bohanon, Mary Ayn Tullier, Eli Tullier, C.J. Norvell, Teresa EagleRoad, Billy EagleRoad, Nikki EagleRoad, Mary Barrs, Greg Barrs, Donna Wilson.



The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Trail of Tears Bike Team for the third year rode the path from Mississippi to Oklahoma honoring The Trail of Tears. The 2014 team consisted of 13 riders and support staff. Some members were Choctaw; some were Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma employees, while others chose to participate because of the rich history to be experienced.

"This year we will begin the ride from Kosciusko, along the Natchez Trace to Yazoo City," MaryAyn Tullier, a longtime bike team member, said before the event. "We'll ride 400 miles back home to Talihina, Oklahoma, experiencing the history along the Trail of Tears."

Each team member was responsible for researching a portion of the history for points of interest along the route and shared what they learned with their team members each morning before the ride commenced.

Mary Barrs has participated with the team in each year's pilgrimage. "It's sobering to travel along the route, one of three that the Choctaw people traveled during the removals of the early 1830s," she said. "When you think about the hardship, the heartache, it's amazing to think of where the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is today – strong, growing and an advocate for Oklahoma both nationally, and internationally."

C. J. Norvell said it was important for the group to make this an experience to learn more about what the Trail of Tears meant. "There were signs along the way designating the path as a Trail of Tears historical route," she said. "I just thought, these people live along the route and they probably don't very often give a lot of thought to it. Just like we do here in Talihina, Tuskahoma, wherever we live in the Choctaw Nation. There is history all around us, and we don't think about it very often, if at all."

"When you think about the hardship, the heartache, it's amazing to think of where the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is today – strong, growing and an advocate for Oklahoma both nationally, and internationally."

– Mary Barrs

Team member Teresa EagleRoad, who had been involved in past Trail of Tears rides, brought her family into the experience. Her husband aided the team from a support vehicle and two of her adult children biked alongside her. "My family loves to do things together," she said. "We love to be active, we love to see new places, and the Choctaw culture is important to us. This ride lets us combine each of these things."

EagleRoad said they were just trying to honor family and Choctaw ancestors. "I don't know how our ancestors did it, but they had to walk through ice, snow, rain, floods, with disease," she said. "With biking, we had our scrapes and bruises. But when they walked it, it had to be a harder trail than I could imagine."

Teresa EagleRoad's son Billy EagleRoad said the perspective he gained from riding the Trail of Tears route is very valuable to him. "It was a great bonding experience for my family and gave us all a glimpse of what our ancestors endured to make sure our people and culture would survive," he said.

The team travelled from Oklahoma to Kosciusko, Miss. on Sunday, May 25 to set up for the ride. Each day tasked the team with a new destination, more miles, and further historical lessons.

On May 26, the team biked 80 miles to Yazoo City, Miss. passing Doak's Stand. The next day, May 27, they made it 74 miles to Greenville, Miss. Monticello, Ark. was the next destination for May 28, leading the team to cross the Mississippi river. The team rode to Hope, Ark. on May 29, which took 118 miles. The final day of riding, May 30, had the team leaving Poteau, Okla. to ride back into Talihina, escorted by tribal police into the entrance of the Choctaw Nation Healthcare Center where they were received.



Choctaw Nation Royalty, Junior Miss Kayleigh Powell, Little Miss Isabelle Cox and Miss Choctaw Nation Callie Curnutt, are pictured with Councilmen Joe Coley, Jack Austin, Ted Dosh, Ron Perry, Kenny Bryant, James Frazier, Delton Cox and Anthony Dillard.



Stickball players preparing to play in front of Pushmataha Hall on the Wheelock grounds.



Chief Batton rings the historic bell on the Wheelock grounds. Chief Batton reads the inscription to visitors with a brief history lesson about the restoration of the bell – “Defend the Poor and Fatherless - Psalms 82:3.”



Choctaw Royalty walking behind the Choctaw Color Guard leading participants along the path of remembrance and unity.



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., and Chief Gary Batton, thank Rev. Betram Bobb for the blessing before the commemorative walk.



The Johnson Family sing hymns for the group.

Choctaw Nation photos by
Judy Allen, Lisa Reed, Vonna Shults, Stephanie Ochoa, Zach Maxwell



Norma Carter, Manda Brown and Charolette Davis of District 1.



Chief Batton and Assistant Chief Austin follow the Color Guard.



Among the walkers were tribal members, employees, stickball players and local community members paying respects to the Choctaw people.



Loretta Snyder and Chief Gary Batton.



A group from Goodwater Church gathers to walk the road between the park and Wheelock Academy, upper left.

Above, Koda Hudson and Logen Vantrees relax in a tree in the park before the walk begins.

At left, Chief Batton visits with the Hickman Family.

Folsom named VP of National Trail of Tears Association

Sue Folsom, Executive Director of the Division of Cultural Resource and Services of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma has been nominated to serve as Vice President of the National Trail of Tears Association (TOTA) as a representative of the Choctaw Nation.



Twelve years ago Folsom was appointed by the Secretary of the Interior of the United States of America to serve and later that year she was elected to serve on the Executive Board.

This new position will assist in overseeing the Executive Board, comprised of 30 members made up of university professors, historical researchers, tribal representatives from the states that have know Trail of Tears passageways.

The Trail of Tears Association is a non-profit membership organization formed in 1993 to support the creation, development, and interpretation of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.

Okla Chahta gather in Bakersfield



Congratulations to the 2014-15 Okla Chahta Royalty, above – Little Miss Kaili Harrison, Jr., Miss Haley Scott, and Sr. Miss Rosetta Colley, pictured with Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr., and Chief Gary Batton. At right, Chief Batton crowns the Little Miss as Assistant Chief Austin waits to give Kaili her sash.



Veterans hold a flag ceremony in the circle Saturday morning to open the 19th annual gathering May 3-4.



Olin Williams officiates the Choctaw wedding of Tiona Bostick and Mark Lim. They are having the wedding to commemorate their 15th anniversary.



Rosetta Colley performs the Lord's Prayer in sign language.

Photos by LISA REED | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Oklahoma and California Choctaw demonstrate the snake dance as the Okla Chahta Gathering begins with Social Dancing on May 3 at Bakersfield.



Chief Gary Batton and the Holman Family gather for the festival on the Bakersfield College practice field.



The princesses protect their pile of corn during the corn game.



Debra Root, great-granddaughter of Choctaw Code Talker Albert Billy, and her grandchildren, Evan and Alex Anderson, share some history with Chief Batton.



Originally from Pocola, Frankie Ervin says hello to District 4 Councilman Delton Cox, his wife Deloris, and granddaughter, Isabelle, Little Miss Choctaw Nation.



Pebbles Robinson, Dee Wilson and seated, Ida Wilson, are happy to see their new Chief, Gary Batton, and Councilman Kenny Bryant.



Time for some youth stickball.



Royalty perform the Four Directions ceremony.



Councilman Jack Austin, Sr., is pictured with Tiffany Price, Patsy Price, Dania Leyva, Jaden Harris, Norman Benton Price, Patricia Leyva and Carmen Price.



Councilman Thomas Williston greets a visitor.



Kiya Lopez, Melissa Lopez and Keith Ginn visit with Councilman Bob Pate.