



This issue of the Biskinik continues publication of recorded interviews of Choctaw elders from 2007.

This month – Rebecca Cole and Lorena Cooper  
Page 8



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CHOCTAW NATION

# BISKINIK

The Official Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

March 2011 Issue

Serving 204,871 Choctaws Worldwide

Choctaws ... growing with pride, hope and success

## Tribal Council holds regular February session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met Feb. 12 in regular session at Tushka Homma.

New business addressed included approval of:

- granting a limited waiver of sovereign immunity to certain equipment leases;
- a resolution recognizing tribal officials to conduct business with the Office of Trust Funds Management;
- three grazing leases;
- application to the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women for the Grants to Indian Tribal Government Program: Project EMPOWER, a step in keeping Native American women safe and improving services.
- application to the U.S. Department of Justice for the Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation to assist the tribe in its goal to reduce and prevent crime and victimization in communities.
- accept all NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) Grants for 2011;
- disposal of surplus equipment;
- approved election filing dates and tribal election dates for 2011 during its February regular session. Elections will be held for Chief and for District 1, 2, 3, 5, 8 and 11 council seats. Filing dates have been set for May 9, 10 and 11 at the Election Board office, 529 N. 16th Ave., Durant. All candidates must file in person. The office will be open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The election will be July 8. If a runoff is needed, it will be held July 30.

- modification #1 FY 2011 Capital Projects Budget, adding funds for an additional 140 parking spaces at the Poteau Travel Plaza and providing for improvements to be made at Tushka Homma.

Tribal Councilmembers meet in regular session at 10 a.m. on the second Saturday of every month at Tushka Homma.

### ◆ What's inside

Notes to the Nation.....	2
Columns .....	3
Nursery News.....	4
Food Distribution .....	4
People You Know .....	6
Education.....	7
Obituaries .....	13
Iti Fabvssa .....	14

### The Mission of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

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

The BISKINIK is printed on recycled paper.

## Choctaw Nation to repatriate ancestors' remains

By BRET MOSS

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) will be repatriating 124 of its ancestors' remains this coming spring. This is a great success on more ways than one, and for more tribes than just the Choctaw Nation.

The remains of ancestors are sacred to many Native American tribes, and the Choctaw tribe is no exception. These 124 remains are believed to be around 500 years old, based on cultural material and records from the past, and hold great significance to members of several tribes from the Southeastern United States.

According to Choctaw tribal archaeologist Dr. Ian Thompson, the people of the Choctaw Nation have long believed that the deceased will become one with the earth. "It is a traditional Choctaw belief that when people die, their spirits take a journey to the Land of Souls, and part of that is their body going back into the ground," explains Thompson.

These remains were taken from their place of burial decades ago during two separate excavations, one in the 1950s and the other in the 1960s. This was a time when archaeologists were looking to amass large quantities of Native American



Choctaw Nation: LARISSA COPELAND  
Chief Gregory E. Pyle and Natchez Trace Parkway Superintendent Cameron H. Sholly each sign a Repatriation agreement on Feb. 23. The documents officially transfer custody of 124 remains to the Choctaw Nation.

remains for their collections. These remains were taken without the consultation of the tribes to which they belong. Most consider this desecration a tragedy of the severest kind.

Now that the Choctaw Nation has reacquired its ancestors' remains, they plan to rebury them. This is done out of respect to the individuals who have passed away, as well as

the family that originally laid them to rest in the earth centuries ago, said Thompson.

See REPATRIATE on Page 5

## New recycling center helping to reduce environmental impact

By LARISSA COPELAND

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma proudly celebrates its recently opened recycling center in Durant, taking another step towards green living and being good stewards of the land and environment.

The recycling center, designed to save energy and help offset the amount of waste accumulating in landfills each year, was funded through an Energy Efficiency Com-

munity Block Grant from the Department of Energy.

The 30,350-sq.-ft. facility has four full-time employees and receives newspaper, office paper, shredded paper, magazines, catalogs, plastics numbered one and two, aluminum cans, steel cans, cell phones, printer cartridges and cardboard for recycling.

Since opening for business on Dec. 1, the Choctaw Nation has collected more than 700 printer cartridges, 2,700 pounds of aluminum cans, and

nearly 135,000 pounds of plastic bottles, various paper and cardboard to be recycled. At an E-Waste event held in January, the Choctaw Nation collected almost 37,000 pounds of electronic material waste.

Chief Gregory E. Pyle is proud of the facility given that, prior to its opening, there was no public facility within the 10-1/2 county area that allowed for businesses and individuals to drop off items to be recycled.

"The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is a large entity and it is encour-

aging to know that we have employees who care about our environment. They have devoted many hours to finding solutions, from handing out 'green' cups to reduce the use of styrofoam to opening this fantastic facility," said Chief Pyle. "It fulfills a need in the Durant area, giving everyone an opportunity to recycle."

The facility, located at 3108 Enterprise Drive in Durant, is open to the public for dropping off items from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.



Choctaw Nation: JUDY ALLEN  
PVIA Chairman of the Board of Trustees Ken Hammond, left, receives a \$60,000 check from Chief Gregory E. Pyle and Tribal Council Speaker Delton Cox.

## Choctaw Nation partners with Poteau Valley Improvement Authority

By JUDY ALLEN

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

The Choctaw Nation presented a \$60,000 check to the Poteau Valley Improvement Authority (PVIA), the first of four donations in this amount to be given over the next several years. As Chief Gregory E. Pyle handed the first installment of the monetary assistance to Ken Hammond, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the PVIA, a smile was on both men's faces. "This is an important project to help share the cost of studying the water in Lake Wister," said Chief Pyle.

The four-year monitoring of the rivers coming into the lake and the lake itself is vital in getting scientific information on the quality of the water.

Last spring, to celebrate Earth Day, the Choctaw Nation, PVIA, area youth and officials from the Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Geological Survey planted native bullrushes on floating rafts to absorb nutrients from the water in Lake Wister. This resulted in better, cleaner water for the people and wildlife. Monitoring the water over the next few years is the next step in improving the lake.

The PVIA serves 80 percent of the residents of LeFlore County.

### YOU'RE READING AN AWARD-WINNING NEWSPAPER



### 2010 OKLAHOMA PRESS ASSOCIATION BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST WINNER

This newspaper was recently named one of the state's best by a panel of judges. As a winner, this newspaper is entitled to proudly display this 2010 award-winning emblem, which signifies continued excellence and service to the community.





# NOTES TO THE NATION

## Thank you for help during accident

I'm writing to say thank you to two wonderful men, Assistant Chief Gary Batton and Brian McClain. They helped us on Jan. 20 as we were traveling to Charlotte Jackson's funeral and we were in a car accident. We are fine, and again thank you. From Dondi Coley, Bydia Carney, Paul Carney and Elizabeth Terrell.

## Praise for BISKINIK

Well done! The Biskinik's Feb. 2011 issue is an outstanding edition, kudos should go to all involved. The interviews with the Choctaw elders are grand human-interest pieces. The segments on Blackjack Mountain ponies and Choctaw baskets provide historical perspective and a glimpse into the life and ways of our ancestors. It would be nice to see more articles of this type. Keep up the good work!

RD Fink, Oklahoma City

## Antlers 911 service needs info

The City of Antlers officials are asking for help as they update information for the city 911 service. According to 911 Director Robert Bowman, the city is in the process of updating the 911 computer program in an effort to keep pace with the population within the 298 exchange who lives outside the city limits. Bowman is asking anyone who has moved to a new location or are newly moved to the area within the 298 exchange, but outside the Antlers city limits, to contact his department with current phone numbers or cell phone numbers, address and driving directions to their home. Armed with this information, Bowman will be able to determine GPS coordinates of each home, enabling emergency services personnel to find addresses more easily. Contact Robert at his office at 580-298-0288 or his cell at 580-271-0233 or email at rbowman151@hotmail.com. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

## Congrats, Jeffrey

Jeffrey Scott would like to say thank you for the recognition of his hard work on getting straight A's. Pictured with Jeffrey is his teacher at Lambs Elementary, Mrs. Wilson. His parents are Kathryn Scott and Donald Scott of Charleston Air Force base, S.C.



## Seeking contact information

I have documents that I would like to return to the family of Adelaide Risener, or I'd like to discuss other options. My name is Darren Barton. If you have any information regarding Adelaide, contact me at 480-464-1707 or 480-244-4273. My address is 605 E. McKellips Mesa, AZ 85203. Feel free to call anytime, hope to hear from you.

## Fraizer Memorial Gospel Singing

The Frazier Memorial Gospel Singing will be held March 25 at the Choctaw Community Center located at 707 Bond Street in Crowder. The singing will begin at 7 p.m. Curtis Kinney will serve as the master of ceremony, and concession will be available. Everyone is welcome to attend.

**Gregory E. Pyle**  
*Chief*

**Gary Batton**  
*Assistant Chief*

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

The BISKINIK is a nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation.

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

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BISKINIK' 2011

**15th Annual  
AILYC Spring Pow Wow  
American Indian Leadership Youth  
Council of Broken Bow Public Schools**

**April 2, 2011**

**McCurtain County Sports Complex  
Broken Bow, Okla.**

*Head Staff*  
**MC: Kelly Anquoe, Tahlequah**  
**Head Man Dancer: Kevin Connywerdy, Norman**  
**Head Lady Dancer: Leslie Deer, Holdenville**  
**Head Gourd Dancer: Joe Bohanon, Muskogee**  
**Arena Director: Bill Takeshorse, Colbert**  
**Host Singer: Pat Oyebe, Stillwell**  
**Host Northern Drum: Blackbird, Shawnee**  
**Host Color Guard: Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma**  
**AILYC Sr. Princess: Alexandria Wade**  
**AILYC Jr. Princess: Taylor McKinney**

*Honorary Staff*  
**Head Man Dancer: Adolfo Martinez**  
**Head Lady Dancer: Girlie Battiest**  
**Jr. Head Man Dancer: Dallas Bohanan**  
**Jr. Head Lady Dancer: Taylor McKinney**

*Schedule*  
**Stickball Game - 11 a.m.**  
**Gourd Dancing - 1 p.m.**  
**Supper - 5:30 p.m.**  
**Grand Entry - 6:30 p.m.**

*Contests*  
**Men and teen boys' categories include fancy/grass and straight/traditional. Women and teen girls' categories include southern cloth/buckskin and fancy/jingle. Junior boys and girls will dance combined.**

All dancers must register and be in grand entry to compete. All stickball players are welcome, and arts and crafts spaces are available. For arts and crafts vendor information call Kim Battiest at 580-236-1305. For more information please contact Kim Battiest, Monica Billy at 580-584-3365 ex. 4069 or Katrina Anderson at 580-236-1280.

## Thanks from Tonya

Congratulations to Tonya Wilson, daughter of Barbara Wilson-Holmes and Garry Wilson, for completing the LPN program in Oklahoma City. Tonya would like to thank the Choctaw Nation and the staff of Career Development for all their help and encouragement. Now that she's passed her NCLEX and she's an LPN, she would like to give back and work for an Indian family. Tonya sends out a special thanks to Karen Thomas of Career Development, who has been "wonderful."



## McAlvain Reunioin

The 2011 Polk McAlvain Family Reunion will be held in Wister at the Community/Activity building on the north side of Lake Wister at noon on Saturday, June 4. Lunch will be potluck, and the meat portion of the meal will be provided. Each family is encouraged to bring a sidedish, drinks, an auction item for both adults and children and lawn chairs. We will also be gathering at the Kennady/McAlvain Cemetery in Wister at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, June 5. For information please contact Val (McAlvain) Templin at 918-429-9925 or email at outbackkok@gmail.com. For Wister Lake State Park cabins, RV, camping information or directions call 918-655-7212 or 800-654-8240.

## Sign-up for Conservation Reserve Program soon

Beginning March 14, farmers will have an opportunity to sign-up for the popular Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). For over 25 years, millions of acres of highly erodible crop land and environmentally sensitive land have been established in grasses and other permanent covers, and enrolled in the CRP. Producers have received annual rental payments while at the same type reducing erosion and improving wildlife habitat throughout the United States.

The enrollment process is a competitive bid type process. Producers who are approved will receive an annual rental payment that is based upon the soil type of the land and the bid rate. Rental rates range from \$25 to \$50 per acre in most areas. The land must established to grasses and/or trees and may not be hayed or grazed except under certain circumstances.

To qualify for enrollment in the upcoming CRP signup 41, you must be an agriculture producer with land that meets the following criteria.

- 1 – Land you have owned for 12 months or more.
- 2 – Land that is currently in CRP or land with an erodibility index of eight or greater.
- 3 – Land that you farmed in an annual crop four out of six years from 2002 until 2007 or land in CRP four of the six years from 2002 until 2007 that is still in the CRP cover. Note: General pasture/hay land that has been in established grasses for haying and grazing during the period 2002-2007 is not eligible for this program

Anyone interested in enrolling in CRP should contact a local FSA office: Atoka – 580-889-2554 ext. 2; Durant – 580-924-4131 ext. 2; Hugo – 580-326-3655 ext. 2; Idabel – 580-286-2574 ext. 2; McAlester – 918-423-4073 ext 2; Poteau – 918-647-2047. The signup period will run through April 15, 2011.

**42nd Annual Talihina Indian  
Festival Pow Wow**

**April 9, 2011**

**Talihina High School Gymnasium  
On Highway 1 and 271**

*Head Staff*  
**MC: Tim Tallchief, Jones**  
**Head Singer: Al Santos Sr., Apache**  
**Head Man Dancer: John Keel, Grant**  
**Head Lady Dancer: Kandance Folsom, Dallas**  
**Head Gourd Dancer: Michael James, Hulbert**  
**Arena Dancer: Bill Takes Horse, Colbert**  
**Little Miss Club Princess: Haylee Himes**  
**Club Princess: Landry James**  
**The Choctaw Nation Honor Guard**

*Schedule*  
**Gourd Dance - 2 p.m.**  
**Supper - 5 p.m.**  
**Gourd Dance - 6 p.m.**  
**Grand Entry, Inter-Tribals, Contests - 7-10 p.m.**

**Participants must be 16 years or older to compete in dance contests. Men's categories include fancy/grass or straight/traditional. Women's categories include southern cloth/buckskin or fancy shawl/jingle. First place will receive \$300, second will receive \$175 and third will get \$75.**

The public is welcome. There will be a cakewalk, Indian-made arts and crafts, food concessions and raffles. Admission is free. Bring your own pow wow chairs. All princesses, clubs and drums are welcome.

For more information or A&C Booth space, contact Harry or Carol James at 918-567-2539. A booth space is \$30. Tables and chairs are not provided.

This event is sponsored by the Talihina Indian Club with assistance of The Oklahoma Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

## Thank you Higher Education

I wanted to personally address this letter in response to the great work and opportunity provided to me by the Higher Education staff over the past six years. This department provides such a wonderful service to all our fellow Choctaw brothers and sister across the world.

As the grandson of former Chief C. David Gardner, I have decided to follow in his great footsteps. This would require great determination, perseverance and a little luck as he accomplished a vast amount of great things during his life. The key to accomplishing my personal goals lies within education and assisting the people of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

I began my collegiate career in the heart of Chickasaw country at East Central University in Ada. As a student, I strived to become the best representative of the Choctaw Nation on ECU's campus. My junior years I was voted as the Vice-President of our Native American Student Association. The following year, I was unanimously chosen for the office of president. During my time in office, I was chosen to be the guest speaker at Chickasaw Governor Bill Anoatubby's induction into East Central University's Hall of Governors, hosted countless cultural events and served as the moderator for ECU's Spring Lecture Series for the Advancement of Minorities in Math and Science.

As a business student, I was honored to serve as the student representative on the university's Campus Expansion Committee, as well as interviewing candidates for the office for the Dean for the School of Business. My graduating semester, I was chosen as the School of Business's Outstanding Business Management Student of the Year.

After I graduated with Academic Achievement in my Bachelor's of Science in Business Administration degree, I was given the opportunity by the university to continue my service to Native American students at East Central. I took the position as First-Year Experience Coordinator for the Department of Education's Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions grant. I was chosen to be a panelist in the 2010 American Indian Learners Conference as a guest presenter at the Oklahoma Association of Registrars and Admissions Officers Conference. I also ran a student worker program to help 40 other Native and low-income students finance their education. While working as a full-time staff member, I continued my education and graduated with a perfect 4.0 GPA while receiving my Master's of Science in Human Resource Administration degree. For my practicum, I ran a learning community for students interesting in Native American cultures. Once again I hosted events and took students to cultural conferences to enhance their understanding of all tribal cultures.

I have since been promoted to a new position on campus and could not be more satisfied with my education. It is because of the services that the Higher Education office provided me that I was able to accomplish so many goals and experience countless fulfilling activities as a student. As an academic advisor, I personally assist other students attain their educational goals. I frequently meet with fellow Choctaws and can see just how big of a difference this office makes in their collegiate experience. I have no doubt that Choctaw financial assistance is the determining factor that keeps these students striving to complete their degree(s). I know that was true in my case. As a testament to that, I can tell you that in all my years in the heart of Chickasaw country, in every year but one, there were more Choctaw students than Chickasaw students working to complete their degree at ECU.

It is my wish that along with this letter, this represents to your office just what can be accomplished by a Choctaw student through the Higher Education office's dedication and to act as a "Thank You" of sorts, for what your administration has given me in the past. Please continue all your hard work in helping Choctaw students world-wide, in attaining their higher education.

Sincerely,  
**Kyle W. Gardner**  
Academic Advisor  
East Central Univeristy



# Photography/history book on Choctaws

## Choctaw people to be featured in book set for publication next year

From the Desk of Chief Gregory E. Pyle

The Choctaw Nation is working on a beautiful book of photographs and compilation of history that is planned for publication next year. Renowned photographer David Fitzgerald and his photography assistant, Rainette Rowland (who is a Choctaw tribal member), have been traveling all over Oklahoma to capture images of our citizens for this wonderful hardback tome. It is very exciting to use current photographs as illustration to the rest of the world what Choctaw Nation is like. Combined with information about our heritage, I think this book will be an excellent archive of present and past that we will share with many generations to come.

In reviewing the list of people David and Rainette have found to photograph, I am amazed at the wide scope of Choctaws that are represented so far. There are many wonderful elders who have taught us so much of the important lessons we live by today. It was nice to see about a half-dozen names that are Choctaws representing us at the Oklahoma State Capitol this year as Representatives and Senators. Portraits of men and women of faith include pastors of country churches and a Bishop in Oklahoma City. Cultural leaders, artists, soldiers and veterans are just a sampling of what this collection will offer.

Please welcome this photography team to your community and your home as they continue their travels through the Choctaw Nation, capturing images on their cameras.



# Historic Preservation work shows perseverance and dedication

From the Desk of Assistant Chief Gary Batton

News was both sobering and exciting that the tribe was being allowed to repatriate over 120 remains from a burial site from the Natchez Trace, which is a National Parkway that covers parts of Mississippi, Tennessee and Alabama. After much consultation and collaboration with the federal entity and other tribes who could have possible connections to the remains, paperwork was signed between leaders of the National Park Service and the Choctaw Nation so that the funerary items and remains could be properly repatriated.

The Choctaw Nation has been active in NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) since it was legislated in 1990. In the late '90s we opened a Historic Preservation office, now led by Director Terry Cole and Archaeologist Ian Thompson, along with a fine staff of other dedicated personnel. They have consulted with museums and agencies across the United States to identify remains and when appropriate, repatriate and rebury those remains. This recent action is a great example of some of the work that they have done over the years. I appreciate them very much for their commitment and perseverance.



## Attention Firefighters!

*Choctaw Nation Forestry will be having a wildland firefighter physical fitness test at 9:30 a.m. on April 11, 2011, at the Talihina High School track.*

*For more information call Raymond Ludlow at Choctaw Nation Forestry 918-567-2321.*

# Born again into a living hope

## Chaplain's Corner

It is a privilege to share with you a little of the Good News of God's Plan of Salvation from the Bible. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, in the Gospel of John, Chapter 3, Verse 3: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He said again in Verse 6: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Why does the Lord Jesus Christ describe birth as the picture of Salvation? Birth is a universal experience. Birth involves life. Birth involves two parents. In our case, as Christians, it would be the Word of God and the Spirit of God. And birth determines nature and it involves travail – there has to be travail. Travail means painful work, exertion, agony or labor. The mother still has to cooperate with the way God made things in order to give birth to the child.

Our Lord Jesus Christ had to travail on the cross that we might be able to experience the New Birth. The Prophet Isaiah says in Isaiah 53:22: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied..." Just as the mother enters into travail to give birth to the child, so our Lord Jesus Christ gave His Life for us on the cross. Jesus talked about it in John 3:14: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." The words "lifted up" means crucified. Nicodemus knew that was what Jesus was talking about. The Lord Jesus Christ would have to be nailed to a cross and lifted up between Heaven and Earth.

For Jesus Christ to be able to give Life to us He had to give His Life for us. And we know the reason why: "... the wages of sin is death ..." (Romans 6:23). And God had to deal with sin before He can impart this New Nature to us. So birth involves travail, we must never take the New Birth for granted, we must never look at it as some cheap thing, it is not cheap. The New Birth is expensive: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, ..." (John 3:16a).

There is such a thing as the travail of the heart of the sinner. There is such a thing as conviction. Each person who is born again has to realize his need for a Savior. He has to realize that he is a sinner deserving eternal death, and this ought to bring some travail. There ought to be some travail. There ought to be some conviction. Our Lord makes it very clear that "... whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16b). Salvation is "...by grace ... through faith, ..." (Ephesians 2:8a). I think too that there ought to be a travail on the part of the Church. As you and I travail in prayer for the lost, they then will come under conviction and they will travail in conviction and then they can find the Savior Who travailed for them on the cross.

In Galatians 4:19, Paul talks about being in travail again for those Galatians, some of whom were being led astray by false religion. When they were saved initially, it was because of Paul's travail, as the evangelist, as the missionary. God used the Word that Paul preached, and they came to know Christ as their Savior. And so it is that birth involves travail. Let me request or suggest this to you –



REV. BERTRAM BOBB  
Tribal Chaplain

PRAY for the lost souls. We're suppose to pray for all men and this includes the lost. Isaiah said in Isaiah 66:8: "... as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." I don't sense today on the part of the Church a burden to pray for lost souls.

There is another reason why birth is a picture of Salvation. Birth involves a future. There are two places where you will not find a policeman waiting to arrest somebody. One is a cemetery. You cannot arrest a dead person. And the other is at the nursery at the hospital.

You cannot arrest a baby. Why? A baby has done neither good nor evil, a baby comes into this world having only a future. Now this is true of us as Christians.

The Apostle Peter wrote in his First Epistle: "Praise be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (I Peter 1:3 NIV).

When I was born the first time, I wasn't born to a living hope, I was born to a living death. When I was born the first time, I was born into a sinful world with a sinful nature and there was no real hope for me. When I was born again through faith in Jesus Christ, I discovered that I was born unto a living hope. You see God has planned for His children a marvelous future, not just in Heaven, that's true, we have a home prepared for us in Heaven. In fact, Peter describes that in that same chapter, First Peter 1:4-5: "To an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

We are a part of a glorious future. There is no living hope here on Earth. But we have a living hope. Our living hope keeps growing, a living hope has roots to it, it gets bigger and more beautiful and more wonderful. That's the kind of hope we have, it's an inheritance incorruptible.

But there is more to it than that. You see when you are born again into a living hope, it doesn't mean just blessing in heaven, it also means blessing here on earth until you get to heaven. That means when the person is born again into the family of God, God has a perfect plan already laid out for him. Never be afraid of the Will of God.

When you are born again, that birth involves a future and that future includes today and tomorrow and next week until that time when God calls you home or Jesus Christ comes to take us home. That's why we don't have to be afraid of any day. A Christian can wake up any morning and say: "This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalms 118:24).

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

# CCYA volunteers for 'Operation Gratitude'

On Dec. 11, 2010, members of the California Choctaw Youth Association (CCYA) spent the day as volunteers for "Operation Gratitude." This organization sends care packages to our service men and women who are currently deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq. The CCYA spent the day doing various tasks which included packing and moving many of the 600,000 care packages to be shipped in time for Christmas.



Submitted photo

CCYA is dedicated to the preservation of culture, tradition through education, participation and representation. The youth group is open to all Choctaw youth and their friends ages 11-23. The group participates in Native American Cultural Activities through out California to share Choctaw culture and traditions with others. CCYA is organized by the Okla Chata Clan of California. For more information contact Brenda.deherrera@oklachahta.org.

# Pre-register for 16th Annual Okla Chahta Gathering

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

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

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

If you are interested in a vendor space or would like more information, please call 661-323-7111. Or for more information about the gathering, call 661-393-6552 or e-mail choctaws@oklachahta.org. Check out the website at [www.oklachahta.org](http://www.oklachahta.org).

Use the form below to pre-register for the free Saturday meal and/or a camping space.

## Pre-Register for the 16th Annual Gathering

Please pre-register for the FREE Saturday meal.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone # \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Are you a tribal member? \_\_\_\_\_

### – Camping on grounds of gathering –

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

### YOU MUST REGISTER & PAY IN ADVANCE

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Please make checks payable to  
Okla Chahta Clan of CA Inc. and mail to P.O. Box 80862, Bakersfield, CA 93380  
All camping is for self-contained only. No hookups – No electricity.**

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



FOOD DISTRIBUTION

ANTLERS

Market open weekdays April 1-26 , except for:  
**April 6 :** Idabel 9-11 a.m.; Broken Bow 12-2 p.m. (market closed)  
**April 13:** Bethel 9-10:30; Smithville 12-2 (market closed)  
**Closed** April 22 & 25 for holiday and April 27-29 for inventory  
**Cooking with Carmen:** April 4 & 14, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

DURANT

Market open weekdays: April 1-26, except for:  
**Closed** April 22 & 25 for holiday and April 27-29 for inventory  
**Cooking with Carmen:** April 1 & 12, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

McALESTER

Market open weekdays April 4-26, except for:  
**Closed** April 22 & 25 for holiday and April 27-29 for inventory  
**Cooking with Carmen:** April 6 & 18, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

POTEAU

Market open weekdays April 1-26, except for:  
**Closed** April 22 & 25 for holiday and April 27-29 for inventory  
**Cooking with Carmen:** April 8 & 20, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

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

WAREHOUSES & MARKETS

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

FOOD DISTRIBUTION SITES

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

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Tips to a better diet

March is National Nutrition Month, and the theme for 2011 is “Eat Right with Color”. Healthy eating is for everyone of all age groups and ethnicities. The food and physical activity choices we make today and everyday affect our health and how we feel today and in the future. Eating right and being physically active are keys to a healthy lifestyle.

Tips to Eat Right With Color:

- Make smart choices from everyday food groups- Give your body the balanced nutrition it needs by eating a variety of nutrient-packed foods every day.
- Get the most nutrition out of your calories- Choose the most nutritionally rich foods you can from each food group each day- those packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients but lower in calories.
- Find your balance between food and physical activity– Regular physical activity is important for your overall health and fitness- plus it helps control body weight, promotes feeling of well-being and reduces the risk of chronic diseases.
- Play it safe with foods- Prepare, handle and store foods properly to keep you and your family safe.

Eating Right with Color refers to eating a variety of colors of fruits and vegetables and eating all the colors of the food pyramid. Making your diet colorful is a great way to make your meal times fun and exciting and helps prevent burnout on certain types of foods.

Remember, eating right with color creates happy, healthy habits that last a lifetime!

Recipe of the Month: Ham Roll-Ups

Ingredients:

6 Broccoli spears, cooked  
6 Slices of ham  
½ Cup of cheese sauce

Preparations:

1) Place 1 broccoli spear on a slice of ham and roll up.  
2) Roll the rest of ham slices around broccoli spears.  
3) Place ham roll ups in a baking dish.  
4) Pour cheese sauce over roll ups.  
5) Cover and bake in oven for seven minutes at 350°

Grilled Chicken Paillards, Mango Mint Salsa Recipe

By Kathleen M. Zelman, MPH, RD, LD

WebMD Recipe from the WebMD Weight Loss Clinic

Ingredients:

- Chicken
  - o 1 fresh lemon, squeezed
  - o 1 fresh lime, squeezed
  - o 1 shallot, minced
  - o 1-2 cloves garlic, minced
  - o 1 teaspoon olive oil
  - o 1/4 teaspoon fresh ground pepper
  - o 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, pounded thinly
- Salsa
  - o 2 mangoes, peeled and chopped (about 2 cups)
  - o 1 large red bell pepper, chopped (about 1 cup)
  - o 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped
  - o 1-2 tablespoons minced red onion
  - o 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
  - o 1 teaspoon lime zest
  - o 2 teaspoons olive oil
  - o 1/4 cup fresh mint, chopped (can substitute cilantro or parsley)

Preparation:

1. Combine juices, shallot, garlic, oil and pepper in a large bag, add chicken and marinate at least 30 minutes in refrigerator.
2. To make salsa, combine all ingredients, toss and refrigerate. Prepare grill on high heat. Remove chicken from marinade, pat dry, and grill on both sides 3-4 minutes or until brown and cooked.
3. Place paillard of chicken on plate, top with mango salsa.

Yield: 4 servings.

Nutritional Information per serving: 254 calories, 28 g protein, 21 g carbohydrate, 7 g fat, 1.4 g saturated fat, 73 mg cholesterol, 3.4 g fiber, 67 mg sodium, 24% calories from fat. I hope you enjoy this recipe!

For further information you may contact:

Erin Adams, RD, LD

Choctaw Nation Diabetes Wellness Center 800-349-7026 ext: 6959

## A colorful guide to a healthier lifestyle

Halito, Let color be your guide to nutritious meals and eat right with color during National Nutrition Month.

While the trees may be bare in March, there are still plenty of colorful and nutritious foods to fill your plate. During the 2011 National Nutrition Month®, the American Dietetic Association encourages everyone to add color and nutrients to their meals through this year’s theme: “Eat Right with Color.”

“Adding a splash of colorful seasonal foods to your plate makes for more than just a festive meal. A rainbow of foods creates a palette of nutrients, each with a different bundle of potential benefits for a healthful eating plan,” says registered dietitian and ADA Spokesperson Karen Ansel.

“Healthy eating includes more than counting calories alone. In fact, most children don’t get enough of all the essential nutrients critical to normal growth and development,” says Ansel.

“Food variety supplies different nutrients, so to maximize the nutritional value of your meal, include healthful choices in a variety of colors.”

Ansel offers ways to brighten up your plate in every season with this quick color guide.

Green produce indicates antioxidant potential and may help promote healthy vision and reduce cancer risks.

- Fruits: avocado, apples, grapes, honeydew, kiwi and lime
- Vegetables: artichoke, asparagus, broccoli, green beans, green peppers and

leafy greens such as spinach

Orange and deep yellow fruits and vegetables contain nutrients that promote healthy vision and immunity, and reduce the risk of some cancers.

- Fruits: apricot, cantaloupe, grapefruit, mango, papaya, peach and pineapple
- Vegetables: carrots, yellow pepper, yellow corn and sweet potatoes

Purple and blue options may have antioxidant and anti-aging benefits and may help with memory, urinary tract health and reduced cancer risks.

- Fruits: blackberries, blueberries, plums, raisins
- Vegetables: eggplant, purple cabbage, purple-fleshed potato

Red indicates produce that

may help maintain a healthy heart, vision, immunity and may reduce cancer risks.

- Fruits: cherries, cranberries, pomegranate, red/pink grape fruit, red grapes and watermelon
- Vegetables: beets, red onions, red peppers, red potatoes, rhubarb and tomatoes

White, tan and brown foods sometimes contain nutrients that may promote heart health and reduce cancer risks.

- Fruits: banana, brown pear, dates and white peaches
- Vegetables: cauliflower, mushrooms, onions, parsnips, turnips, white-fleshed potato and white corn

Ansel recommends choosing a variety of colors when shopping for seasonal fruits and vegetables. “And for ad-

ditional options in the color palette, choose frozen or dried fruits and vegetables available throughout the year,” she says.

“Instead of grilled chicken and mashed potatoes, consider painting a more colorful plate, such as grilled chicken topped with salsa, mashed sweet potato, asparagus and spinach salad with orange slices. A colorful meal is not only visually appealing, but it also contains a variety of nutrients and is quite flavorful,” Ansel says.

For more information on how to “Eat Right with Color,” visit ADA’s National Nutrition Month website for a variety of helpful tips, fun games, promotional tools and nutrition education resources.

NURSERY NEWS

Christian Andrade



Christian Sergio Battiest Andrade was born at Kaiser Permanente in Downey, Calif., on Nov. 27 to Sergio Jr. and Erica Andrade. Proud grandparents are Sheryl Lynn Battiest, Sergio Sr. and Laura Andrade. Great-grandparents are Marcus Ray and the late Dorothy Jean Battiest, all of Downey.

Parker Rogenmoser




Parker Ann Rogenmoser was born Aug. 28, 2010, at 11:30 p.m. at St. Frances Cabrini Hospital in Alexandria, La., weighing 7 pounds 8.5 ounces and was 20.5 inches long.

His parents are Justin and Sarah Rogenmoser of Natchitoches, La. Grandparents are Robby and Barbara Rogenmoser of Boyce, La., and Bernie and Valerie Bond of Hot Springs, Ark. Great-grandparents are Bob and Wanda Rogenmoser of Boyce, La. Aunt Caitlin Rogenmoser, uncle David Rogenmoser and uncle Ryan Rogenmoser also welcome baby Parker into this world.

Parker Burns



Parker Colton Burns was born on Jan. 4, 2011. He weighed 8 pounds 4 ounces and was 19 inches long. He is the son of Howie and Elise Burns of Wichita, Kan. Howie is the grandson of Donald Dwain McCann of Purcell.




Choctaw Nation WIC

WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN

SITE	PHONE	HOURS	DAYS
Antlers	580-298-3161	8:30-4:00	Every Tuesday
Atoka	580-889-5825	8:00-4:30	Every Mon., Thurs. & Fri. 1st, 3rd & 4th Wed.
Bethel	580-241-5458	8:30-4:00	1st Tuesday
Boswell	580-380-2517	8:30-4:00	1st & 2nd Friday
Broken Bow	580-584-2746	8:00-4:30	Mon., Wed., Thurs. & Fri. 2nd, 3rd & 4th Tuesday
Coalgate	580-927-3641	8:30-4:00	2nd Wednesday
Durant	580-924-8280 x 2255	8:00-4:30	Daily
Hugo	580-326-5404	8:00-4:30	Mon., Tues., Wed. & Thurs. 3rd & 4th Friday
Idabel	580-286-2510	8:00-4:30	Mon. & Fri., 1st & 3rd Thurs.
McAlester	918-423-6335	8:00-4:30	Daily
Poteau	918-647-4585	8:00-4:30	Daily
Smithville	580-244-3289	8:30-4:00	2nd Thursday
Spiro	918-962-5134	8:00-4:30	Every Wed., Thurs. & Fri.
Stigler	918-967-4211	8:30-4:00	Every Monday & Tuesday
Talihina	918-567-7000 x 6792	8:00-4:30	Mon., Tues., Wed., & Fri.
Wilburton	918-465-5641	8:30-4:00	Every Thursday

Foster parents are heroes.

Are you ready to be one?



The Foster Care program is seeking Choctaw families to provide a temporary home to our foster children in the 10.5 counties. A foster family is part of a team that works toward reunifying a child with their family. They play an important role in maintaining the child's social and cultural heritage while serving as a temporary parent to the child and providing for their basic needs. Today, there are many Choctaw children that need strong, Choctaw families to help them during their time of need. If you are interested in becoming a temporary foster family for a child or have questions regarding the program, please contact Larry Behrens, Choctaw Foster Care Program @ 580-924-8280 Ext. 2331.



# Lester dedicated to keeping Choctaw art in public eye

By **LARISSA COPELAND**  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Portraying Choctaws correctly and uniquely in her artwork is important to Gwen Coleman Lester.

“I want people to see Choctaws as an individual tribe,” she said. “We have our own history and heritage. Sometimes I show our history and where we’ve been and sometimes I show where we are today. We’re not all history. We are a living, growing tribe,” she continued.

Lester, a resident of Claremore, Okla., began creating art as a hobby when she was young but it turned full time as she grew older. As a child, she was always doodling and drawing. The love of art was always there but it was in her late teen and early adulthood when she began to take it more serious.

Lester received her degree in commercial art from Southwest Oklahoma State University and worked as a commercial artist until 2000. It was then that she took up creating art full time.

Today, she paints in watercolor and acrylics, and oil



Courtesy ROD LESTER

**Gwen Coleman Lester paints a Choctaw stickball scene. Creating Choctaw art is important to Lester because she feels Choctaws are often under represented in the public market.**

paint on occasion. She also does colored pencil illustrations and pastels.

Her subjects include mostly Choctaw subjects and culture

such as family life, dances, and stickball games, but occasionally she’ll paint intertribal scenes, wildlife, cultural still life and food. Choctaw

scenes, though, are her passion.

“I felt like we needed more Choctaw art representation in the market place,” she said

explaining her drive to create Choctaw art. “So many Choctaws are such talented artists but their work isn’t on public display. My grandmother, for example, was a wonderful Choctaw quilter but she would make them and give them away to friends and family. People need to see the Choctaw art.”

“When I was in high school my parents took me to an Indian art exhibit,” she continued. “On each piece, the artist was identified along with their tribe. I remember walking around to all the pieces and there were no Choctaw paintings. That really stuck with me. I felt the need to make Choctaw art.”

Keeping Choctaws as her focus has paid off for Lester. She has won numerous awards over the years at art shows and exhibitions.

Additionally, in 2003, Lester was commissioned by the Choctaw Nation to paint the Trail of Tears mural at the museum at Tushka Homma. It’s the largest mural she’s painted to date, something she says she’s very proud to have done.

The time it takes to create

a unique piece of Choctaw art varies depending on the method she uses and the details that go into it. Some pieces can be started and completed within a day, while others may take up to six weeks to finish.

The colored pencil drawings are realistic and detailed, while her acrylic paintings flow freely across the canvas.

She enjoys creating colored pencil drawings most but they seem to take the most time to create.

“They’re the most detailed,” she said. “Once I get started, it’s like they take on a life of their own.”

Lester is the daughter of two Choctaws. Her full-blooded Choctaw father Jimmy Coleman was from Hugo and her mother, Lucille Tims Coleman, who was one-half Choctaw, was from Antlers. She is proud of her Choctaw heritage and is happy to let it show through her work.

She and her husband, Rod, produce her limited edition prints through their company, Native Traditions Artworks, which they sell online and at Native American art festivals and museum exhibitions throughout the year.

# Amerman creates unique beading by combining influences

By **LARISSA COPELAND**  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Multi-faceted and award-winning Choctaw artist Marcus Amerman of Santa Fe, N.M., is recognized for his photo-realistic beading images. Though best known for this intricate beading technique, Amerman also works with glass and ceramics and is a painter, a performance artist, a multimedia artist, and a fashion designer. As a full time artist, creating is a way of life for him.

He has lived in many artistically diverse and culture-rich regions of the country, which is evident in his pieces. “A variety of people, places and art forms influenced where I am as an artist,” he said. Born in Phoenix, Ariz., but growing up mostly in the Pacific Northwest, Amerman was exposed to a wide variety of cultures and tribes including the Nez Perce in Washington, the Hopi in Arizona and the Choctaw in Oklahoma.

Born with a love of art in his blood, Amerman grew up in a creative environment. “Everyone in the family made art,” he said. Together,



Choctaw Nation: LARISSA COPELAND

**A beaded bracelet made by Amerman is on display at the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.**

his family would go to pow wows, make their own regalia, do the bead work, the feather work, everything they needed, he says.

He attended Whitman College in Walla Walla, Wash., where he obtained his Bachelor of Fine Arts. Along with his life experiences, educa-

tional influences have also had an impact on his art.

The types of art he creates are beaded jewelry, clothing, framed canvas pieces, paintings, feather works, and performance and various other forms. He’s currently working on a series of capotes, a “mountain man” style of hooded blanket. He also does ceramic glasswork, where his Choctaw influences really show. “Choctaw methods, especially those from Moundville, lend itself to translate well into glass form,” he said, becoming familiar with Choctaw ceramics after a residency with the Smithsonian.

Where he really stands out, though, is with his beading. He uses both traditional and modern methods of beading but with a twist. He combined the figurative and pictorial techniques he learned in Washington and the multicolored, gradient beading he picked up in Oklahoma to create his own type of beading. Using a 13 point cut bead, a size he says

is “just right,” he stitches the beads down one by one to create a colorful, photo-realistic image.

The subjects of his beading are everything from Choctaw and traditional Native American/historic subjects to movie star and rock star subjects. “I go through phases,” he said, explaining the varied subject matter of his art. “Whatever phase I’m going through is what I make. I also can make anything that I’m commissioned to create such as family member photos, dogs, anything that person wants.”

**“A variety of people, places and art forms influenced where I am as an artist.”**

– Marcus Amerman

Most of his work is commissioned pieces, however, he does occasionally sell to a gallery or enter into an art show or museum exhibition. The two shows that he enters regularly are the annual Santa Fe Indian Market and the Heard Museum Guild’s Indian Show and Market in

Phoenix.

Pieces of Amerman’s art are part of the permanent collections of museums such as the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, the Portland Art Museum, and the American Museum of Natural History, among many others. His work has also been featured in many publications including the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, American Indian Art Magazine, Southwest Art Magazine, among numerous others. His work is also part of the private art collections of numerous celebrities and entertainers including John Travolta, Elton John, Sylvester Stallone and Val Kilmer.

Amerman is also a live performing artist and gives lectures and workshops at locations across the United States. Amerman has one son, 16-year-old Sirius. They are proud descendants of Redmond Bond, a Choctaw circuit preacher who established many churches in Choctaw territory.

## REPATRIATE:

**Choctaw Nation signs Repatriation Agreement to claim ancestors’ remains**

Continued from Page 1

Other than sheer respect for the departed, the Choctaw belief is that “where they were buried, the soil around them is part of them,” mentions Terry Cole, tribal historic preservation officer.

Cole went on to explain that when a body starts to deteriorate the physical body is absorbed into the ground around the grave. This makes the area around the grave sacred.

The remains are not only important to the Choctaw people, but are significant to numerous other tribes. The remains are believed to be those of the Taensa tribe, who lived in the area at that time. They are identified as such by the material culture, location, early written records and the way that the burials were put in the ground, said Thompson.

“They are one of tribes who lived near the Choctaw, and

for a time they lived among the Choctaw and they intermixed,” therefore some of today’s Choctaw people have Taensa lineage, continued Thompson.

The Taensa also lived near and intermixed with the Alabama and the Chitimacha at different times, therefore, those same tribes of today can also trace their lineage back to the group being repatriated. Today, several tribes have affiliation with these remains, such as the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians, the Alabama-Coushatta and several others. This reburial act of respect is for more than just the Choctaw Nation, but is a great success for multiple tribes.

The return of these remains is a significant and spiritual event for Choctaw Nation that has been guided by an advisory board, made up of distinguished Choctaw people from various walks of life.

Similarly, the reburial is a very spiritual process and will be handled with great care by all involved. The reburial will be directed by several Choctaw spiritual and religious advisors and out of respect for the departed, no large equip-

ment will be used to put the remains back into the ground.

Individuals working on the reburial will hand dig every grave with a shovel in order to keep the process as respectful and traditional as possible. The remains will be placed in the most precise way as can be determined to match how they originally came from the earth.

This may seem like a great deal of work, but to those involved, it is worth every bit of work. “It is not something great that we do, it is something great that we are allowed to do. Its a privilege to get to honor the ancestors,” said Thompson as he described his feelings toward the repatriation. Cole followed by mentioning that the ancestors have handed down responsibilities to the generation of today and one of those responsibilities is to take care of those who have passed away. “It is our responsibility and our job.”

This great honor is not just for the Choctaw Nation, but for all the tribes to which the remains are affiliated. The Choctaw Nation Department of Historic Preservation has invited those certain tribes to partake in this event as well.

The process of obtaining the remains was not completed by just a dedicated few, but by a dedicated many. The Coalition of Southeast Tribes, which includes a number of Native tribes, has been working to improve the process that tribes must use to obtain remains.

This process is dictated by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which is a federal law passed in 1990.

The road that led to this particular reburial began when the tribe was first consulted in 2002 when a federal institution in Mississippi, the Natchez Trace Parkway, under requirements of NAGPRA, went through their collection of human remains and found that particular remains could be traced to the Choctaw Nation.

Since then, the research compiled about these remains lead to the conclusion that they are of Choctaw affiliation. The Choctaw Nation filed a Repatriation Claim in 2009 and in turn, the institution published an Intent to Repatriate to a national publication, the Federal Register.

In working with the Natchez Trace Parkway, the

Choctaw Nation requested a ground penetrating radar survey of the original burial site to better understand how the remains were buried and subsequently removed from their burials.

The Natchez Trace Parkway then took a thorough inventory of their collection and found that some of the collection had been dispersed to other locations. The Choctaw Nation had them assemble the collection as a whole.

Natchez Trace Parkway representatives Cameron H. Sholly, superintendent, and Dr. Christina Smith, cultural resource manager, have been working very closely with the Choctaw Nation through the repatriation process. They joined Chief Gregory E. Pyle and Choctaw Historic Preservation department representatives, Cole and Thompson, at the tribal headquarters on Feb. 23 to sign the Repatriation Agreement. This document officially transferred the custody of the remains to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. More than 100 people were in attendance to witness the historic event.

Within Choctaw Nation, this work is of such a sensi-

tive and important nature, a NAGPRA Advisory Board has been assembled within the tribe to give the Historic Preservation Department direction on how to proceed with repatriations and reburials. This ten member group includes tribal elders, traditional people and tribal council members.

A great deal of effort has been poured into this endeavor; individuals throughout the Choctaw Nation and many others who have handled various aspects of the repatriation. Through this work, the Historic Preservation department has made progress that will help with future repatriation.

“Through this, we are building positive relations with the National Park Service in the Southeast, and those relationships will make it much easier to repatriate other ancestors who need to be brought back to their homes,” said Thompson.

Thompson went on to tell that in times past burial sites like this have been subject to grave looters and other malicious activity. He stressed that to disturb the reburial site, and those like it, would be to commit a federal offense.



# PEOPLE YOU KNOW

## Happy first birthday

Paityn Aly’cia Grace Battiest of Broken Bow celebrated her first birthday on March 9 with family and friends. She is the daughter of Tia Renee Battiest. Proud grandparents are Reggie and Katie Baker of Broken Bow. Great-grandparents are Lena Battiest and the late Esau Battiest of Broken Bow and Lavada Baker and the late Madison Baker of Wright City. Great-great-grandparents are Helen Battiest and the late Isaac Battiest Sr. of Broken Bow.

Paityn would like to wish her Papa Reggie, grandmother Lavada and Auntie Krystal a happy birthday this month.



## Family birthdays

Happy birthday wishes to Hunter Daniel James who turns three years old on March 11 and his Papa Darrell James on March 15. Hunter is the son of Derek James of Duncanville and Megan Williamson of Irving. He is the grandson of Darrell and Carol James of Duncanville and Ken and Kathy Williamson of Irving. He celebrated with family and friends, and he also wishes a happy birthday to his cousin Mallory of Louisiana who turned 5 on March 10. She is the daughter of Lila and Roger Graham and the granddaughter of Bobby and Janice Morris of Alabama. Happy birthday to all!



## Happy birthday, Nadine

Nadine McDonald’s family helped her celebrated her birthday on Feb. 16 at their home in Sulphur. They are very happy to have their wonderful and beautiful mom with them this year. God blessed them with the miracle of her total recovery and plenty more years to come, for which they are so grateful.



## Caldwell elected as board president

Dr. Sandy Caldwell, pictured center, was recently elected as the board president of the Wyoming Women’s Foundation. Dr. Caldwell is the granddaughter of original enrollee Wilson Jones Beal. She and her husband, Jeromy, are both graduates of Hugo High School, and she and her family moved to Wyoming in 2005 for her to serve as the Associate Vice President of Western Wyoming Community College in Rock Springs.

The Wyoming Women’s Foundation and the Oklahoma Women’s Foundation were started by the same person, Merle Chambers, who served as one of the only women CEOs in the oil and gas industry. The two women’s foundations met together in Denver last year at the Women’s Funding Network annual convention.

## Red Eagle performs at Columbia

Choctaw hip-hop singer and song writer Jesse Robbins, or “Red Eagle,” has been asked to perform during the plenary session at this year’s prestigious Cross-Cultural Winter Roundtable Conference at Columbia University in New York City, on Feb. 25. This year’s theme is “Indigenous Voices,” and Jesse intends to sing songs that give voices to Choctaws and other tribal people’s concerns. He has gained notoriety from his appearances as a rap concert act and during the countless poetry readings he has staged across Oklahoma and Texas as well as from the airplay he has garnered from various radio stations.

The Roundtable Conference selected Robbins based on what they described as his “strong tribal and community connection, voice of political protest and spiritual insight.” It would have been appropriate to add something about Jesse’s Indian sense of humor, which lightens up his often intense lyrics. Some of the songs he intends to sing are protest songs, “Seventh Generation,” “Ain’t Your Mascot,” “Here Come the Skins” and the tender ballad about an 11-year-old Choctaw boy, “Do You Have A Choctaw Name?” Jesse currently lives in Oklahoma City and attends Oklahoma City Community College.



## Happy birthday, Councilman Dosh

Willa Caudill would like to wish Councilman Ted Dosh a happy birthday. Happy birthday, Ted!

## Drake is five

Drake Logan Stubbs’ grandmother would like to wish him a happy fifth birthday on March 1. Drake celebrated his birthday with lots of friends and family. He is in kindergarten at Swink. His parents are Cody and Amber Ward of Swink and J.D. Stubbs of Boswell. Drake has one brother, Xanden Ward, of the home. His grandparents are Becky Peters of Hugo and John and Rhoda Stubbs of Boswell. Great-grandparents are Betty Shawhart of Fort Towson, John and Georgia Stubbs and the late Mary Wall, all of Boswell. Also wishing Drake a happy birthday are his uncles Cody Peters and Canyon Taylor and his aunts and cousins.



## Carly Davis serves as page

Carly Davis, a senior at Maysville High School and a Choctaw member, recently served as a page for State Representative Lisa J. Billy at the Oklahoma House of Representatives. She joined Chief Gregory E. Pyle and Representative Billy on the floor of the House chambers following the historic State of the State address given by Oklahoma’s first female governor, Mary Fallin. Carly is the daughter of Larry and Joyce Davis of Wayne.



## Congrats, Sonja

Congratulations from her mother and father, Corin and Shea to Sonja Starr Nieto, for wining Reserve Grand Champion with her Duroc hog, Jimmie Dean, at the 2011 Arizona National Livestock Show. Sonja is 14 years old and from Casa Grande, Ariz.

## Happy birthday, Ozeda

Ozeda Bushers, oldest daughter of now deceased Josiah and Venia Webster of the Cisco Community, was recently given a surprise 80th birthday party at her home. Those in attendance included Ozeda’s sister, Shirley and her husband, Bill Johnson of Claremore; her sister, Nan with her husband, Phil Berglan of Humble, Texas; son Charles Bushers and his wife, Phyllis of Longview, Texas; son Joe Bushers of Cisco Community; niece Penny Barbee of Tulsa; and niece Kim Roberts and her husband and daughter, Danny and Victoria of Splendora, Texas.

Ozeda was presented a beautiful arrangement of colorful flowers and gifts from members of the group. Cake and ice cream was served, and afterwards the group enjoyed dinner at Beard’s Catfish Restaurant. Everyone had a good time.

Ozeda is the granddaughter of Daniel Webster, who served as a councilman on the last Choctaw Council before Oklahoma became a state.



## The Hegler boys

Twenty-one-year-old Pvt. Johnathan L. Hegler graduated from basic training from the U.S. Army on Jan. 26. He did his training at Ft. Leonard Wood, in Missouri. He received special recognition for expert marksman and maintained a PT Level 5 throughout training. He is currently stationed at Ft. Gordon in Georgia for his AIT schooling for Signal Support Systems Specialist.

Navy sailor Harold L. Hegler III, age 18, has graduated from basic training at the Great Lakes Training Faulty in Chicago on Sept. 10. He is currently in Lemore, Calif. completing his B School for Aviation Machinist Mate. He will then be sent to Fallon, Nev., for his final duty base.

Johnathan is a 2007 graduate, and Harold is a 2010 graduate, both of Daingerfield High School. They are the sons of Troy and Candace Hegler of Daingerfield, Texas, and the grandsons of Harold and Erma Hegler, also of Daingerfield.



## Brigadier General John Owen

Brig. Gen. John D. Owen is the Air National Guard Assistant to the Command Surgeon, Air Mobility Command. He also serves as a medical doctor who is the advisor on Air National Guard issues such as aeromedical evacuation, worldwide airlift and refueling missions. He maintains a private practice in Missouri.

Owen’s maternal grandmother, Myrtle Susan Anderson Stafford, was an original enrollee and born in 1898 in Indian Territory. His grandmother’s grandfather was Capt. John Anderson. He was one of the two men who led the Choctaws into the Talihina area, as chronicled in the Talihina First Presbyterian Church history book.

Owen advises the Air National Guard Air Surgeon and the Air National Guard Assistant to the Air Force Command Surgeon on representing and developing policy for the entire Air National Guard medical mission. He was commissioned in 1978 through the Health Professional Scholarship Program at the University of Missouri School of Medicine in Kansas City. Prior to his current assignment, he was the Chief of Staff, Missouri Air National Guard.

Gen. Owen served as advisor to the Adjutant General on matter pertaining to the Missouri Air National Guard. He directed and coordinated headquarters staff activities in support of 2,700 personnel in a C-130 airlift wing, an F-15 fighter wing, an air operations group, a bombing range and four specialized squadrons and flights.

In 1978, Owen received his Bachelor of Science, Biology, from the University of Missouri in Kansas City. In 1981, he attained his Bachelor of Arts/Medical Degree from Missouri. Three years later, he received his Family Practice Residency from the University of Oklahoma, and in 2004 he attended Air War College by correspondence.

Owen has received many awards and decorations. These awards include: a Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal (with two Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters), Aerial Achievement Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal (with one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster), Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (with one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster), Air Force Organizational Excellence Award (with three Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters), National Defense Service Medal (with one Bronze Service Star), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon (with one Silver Oak Leaf Cluster and one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster), Armed Forces Reserve Medal (with Gold Hourglass), Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon (Pistol), Air Force Training Ribbon, Missouri National Meritorious Service Medal, Missouri National Guard Recruiting and Retention Ribbon (with two Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters), Missouri National Guard Five Year Long Service Ribbon, Kansas National Guard Meritorious Service Ribbon and Kansas Nation Guard Service Medal (with one Bronze Sunflower). In 2007, he was named Surgeon General’s Air National Guard State Air Surgeon of the Year.

Owen is a practicing physician at the Liberty Clinic in Liberty, Mo. He’s always been proud of his Choctaw heritage and adored his grandmother, Myrtle Stafford.



## Lt. Foster found after 66 years

Second Lt. Dewey W. Foster of the U.S. Army Air Forces will be coming home after being lost in Papua New Guinea in 1944. Lt. Foster was on an escort mission when his P-47D Thunderbolt developed engine trouble and was forced back to base. In route back to his base his plane lost power and crashed. Lt. Foster’s plane remained undiscovered for 66 years.

In Aug. 2010 the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command sent in a team to excavate a crash site in a remote area of New Guinea, and Lt. Foster was found. The crash site was so remote that the plane and remains had been untouched since the crash in 1944.

Lt. Foster’s father Dewey Franklin Foster and his grandfather E.A. Foster are original Choctaw enrollees on the Indian Rolls in Washington. Both Dewey F. and E.A. were members of the Choctaw Nation.

Lt. Foster was a sophomore at Oklahoma University when World War II broke out and he enlisted in the Army Air Corps. His only surviving relative, his sister Mary Flowers, is also a member of the Choctaw Nation. Mary lives in San Antonio, and Lt. Foster was buried with full military honors at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery on Feb. 22.



Volunteers worked in neighborhoods recently distributing fire prevention and safety education tips.



## OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance, Red Cross team up for fire safety

During the month of January, OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance members and President Phyllis Been participated in the American Red Cross “Volunteers Commemorate Dr. King by Providing Lifesaving Fire Safety Information.” Volunteers canvassed the neighborhoods of the OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance distributing fire prevention and safety tips. The American Red Cross of Central Oklahoma website mentioned the OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance as a supporter.

Been recently finished a successful four-year term as president of the OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance and will continue on as board member. The OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance thanks Been for all her dedicated service!



EDUCATION



Submitted photo

Pictured left to right are Arlie Marris; Bob Pate, tribal councilmember; Robert Smith and Delton Cox, both tribal councilmembers.

Jones Academy Staff Members Recognized

Eleven staff members from Jones Academy were recognized with service awards this year. These individuals were acknowledged for their contributions and faithful service to the students at Jones Academy and the Choctaw Nation. Robert Smith and Arlie Marris received awards for 25 years of service. Smith is currently the student dorm manager for the facility. He is a former student who attended Jones Academy for five years

until his graduation in 1963. In October of that year, he started working in the maintenance department when the school was under the auspices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The BIA then handed the daily operations over to the Choctaw Nation in 1985. In all, Smith has worked for Jones Academy for 47 years. Arlie Marris is currently the assistant dorm director. He has served Jones Academy students for a total of 37

years. He also worked for the school when it was directed by the BIA. Marris is a Vietnam veteran. Other staff receiving service awards were as follows: Five-Year Awards: Rita Hammers, Fred Jones, Mary Kuykendall and Morris Sam; Ten-Year Awards: Charles Thomason and Homer Tobey; Fifteen-Year Awards: Rhonda Faulkner, Robert Ray and Brad Spears..

Students invited to Native American language fair

Students of Native American languages from preschool to high school are encouraged to enter the ninth annual Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair, scheduled for Monday and Tuesday, Apr. 4-5, at the Sam Noble Museum in Norman. Participants in grades pre-K through 12 may demonstrate their language skills as groups or individuals in the spoken language and language in song categories. Other competition categories include poster art and book, open to grades three through 12; language with PowerPoint presentation and film/video, both open to sixth through 12th graders; a language advocacy essay, open to students in grades nine through 12; and a language masters performance for ninth through 12th graders, designed to showcase the language skills of students who have grown up speaking a Native American language.

The deadline for registration is March 9. The competition draws more than 600 participants from across Oklahoma as well as neighboring states who compete in as many as 27 Native American languages. Pre-K through fifth-grade competitions will take place on Apr. 4, and sixth through 12th-grade competitions on Apr. 5. The top three award winners in each age group and category will receive a trophy that can be displayed at their school or tribal center. Every student who participates will receive a medal and language fair T-shirt. A panel of elders and teachers from several different tribes will judge the spoken language and language in song competitions. Native artists will judge the posters based on creativity and use of this year's theme, "Elder Voices, Youth Choices." In addition, Native authors will judge the book competition.

Registration forms and additional information are available online at [snomnh.ou.edu/languagefair](http://snomnh.ou.edu/languagefair). Deadline for registration is Wednesday, March 9. PowerPoint presentations, films, books and poster entries also must be received by this date. No late entries will be accepted. To have forms sent by mail, or for additional information, participants may contact the museum's Native American Languages department at 405-325-7588 or by email at [ONAYLF@sauk.snomnh.ou.edu](mailto:ONAYLF@sauk.snomnh.ou.edu). The 2011 Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair is made possible in part by the Boeing Company and the Columbus Foundation. The Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History is located on the OU Norman campus at Timberdell Road and Chautauqua Avenue. Additional information about the museum is available by calling 405-325-4712 or at [snomnh.ou.edu](http://snomnh.ou.edu).

Exciting summer awaits youth attending Choctaw camps

Choctaw youth have another exciting summer ahead. The Choctaw Nation's Cultural Events Department is holding cultural and sports camps at several locations in Southeastern Oklahoma. Cultural Enrichment camps will be held May 31-June 1 at Tushka Homma for youth 8 to 18 years of age from Districts 1, 2, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Youth from Districts 3, 4, 5, 6, 11 and 12 are scheduled for June 2-3 at Tushka Homma. The Cultural Enrichment camp is a great opportunity to learn more about the Choctaw heritage and culture. Focus will be on stickball, archery, arts and crafts, storytelling and the Choctaw language. Deadline for application is April 21.



Choctaw Nation: BRET MOSS

Sports camps will give the Choctaw boys and girls a chance to improve skills in golf, softball, baseball, basketball and football. The Golf Camp is open to students ages 10 to 18 and will be held at two different courses this year, splitting the north and south districts of the Choctaw Nation. The north camp will be held June 6-7 at Arrowhead Golf Course in Canadian for participants from Districts 3, 4, 5, 6, 11 and 12. The south camp – for Districts 1, 2, 7, 8, 9 and 10 – will be held at Silverado Golf Course, Durant. The camps will be instructed by ESPN Golf Schools Director of Instruction Ed Bowe. Deadline for entries is April 1. The Softball Camp, also conducted in two locations, is open to girls ages 8 to 18. This year the camp will be conducted by the former Division I players from the Big XII and ACC Conferences and top Oklahoma high school coaches. Emphasis will be placed on giving each camper the proper instruction to help improve their level of

play and decrease their potential for injury. South camp is scheduled for June 13-14 at Tushka Homma for girls from Districts 1, 2, 7, 8, 9 and 10. North camp is June 16-17 at Tushka Homma for girls from Districts 3, 4, 5, 6, 11 and 12. Deadline for entry is April 21. Leading high school coaches from Southeastern Oklahoma will be instructing this year's Baseball Camp for boys 8 to 18 years of age. They will focus on hitting, pitching and fielding with emphasis on helping the students improve their level of play and decrease potential for injury. South camp will be June 20-21 at Tushka Homma for Districts 1, 2, 7, 8, 9 and 10. North camp will be June 23-24 at Tushka Homma for Districts 3, 4, 5, 6, 11 and 12. Deadline for entry is April 21. Basketball Camp focuses on learning the fundamental skills of the sport to use throughout school with the ultimate goal of playing college-level basketball. This is a two-day camp for students ages 8 to 18 at 12 sites. Deadline for application is April

21. Football Camp will be an exciting opportunity for male students 8 to 18 years of age. The camp will feature Josh Heupel, OU's assistant coach and quarterback coach, as well as former Big XII players and former NFL coaches. Campers will receive instruction in areas of offensive drills, defensive drills and Sooner ball. The Football Camp is a 2-day camp June 5-6 at Paul Laird Field on the campus of Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant. Deadline for application is April 1. All camps are day camps with lunch and drinks provided. Bus transportation is available on designated bus routes. For more information or to receive an application, log on to [www.choctawnation.com](http://www.choctawnation.com) and follow the link for Youth Summer Camp Applications or call the Cultural Events Department at 580-924-8280 or 800-522-6170. New applicants must send copies of their Choctaw Membership and CDIB.

Ashmore attends research program

Stephen C Ashmore was one of 10 students selected to attend a National Science Foundation research program at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas, this past summer. Stephen's research project, "An Intelligent, Mobile, Middleware Solution for Secure Automatic Reconfiguration of Applications," was one of only 135 selected for publication and will be presented at the 2011 International Association for Computing Machinery Conference (ICUIMC) held in Seoul, South Korea.



To the Youth of the Nation  
Courtney Patterson, Youth Advisory Hugo Chapter

From where I'm standing, you eat or get eaten. From what I'm seeing, friends aren't really friends and families aren't acting like families. For some odd reason, people just aren't being people. Why, you ask? Maybe because of shame, rage, envy, fear, love, pity, take your pick, the list goes on. It's always something with somebody, no one is ever satisfied. We all want to play the victim in our own cases, when honestly we're all the culprits of our own crimes. Every time I turn around someone is bleeding from back stabbings or heartbreaks. We brought that on ourselves but not just by ourselves; we were blinded by some type influence. The way I see it, nobody can just let something go, they have to have revenge. For what, though? What will that solve? It's like a never-ending battle of tag. Yes you want to play all day, but sooner or later you're going to get tired and someone has got to call quits and be the bigger person. Drama is like a sickness, and it's always going to be around. Most times its curable, sometimes it's not, but the only way it will happen is if you sit around and don't get help. Basically, negativity can be avoided, but it's up to us to dodge the hit.

Choctaw Nation to aid with loans

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

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

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

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Calendar

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
A P R I L						1 Broken Bow 8-4:30 Idabel by appt. <small>April Fools' Day</small>	2
	3	4 Broken Bow 8-4:30 Idabel by appt.	5	6	7	8 Broken Bow 8-4:30 Idabel by appt.	9
	10	11 Talihina 10-2 Durant 8-4:30	12 Antlers by appt.	13 Broken Bow 8-4:30 Idabel by appt.	14	15 Poteau 11:30-1	16
	17 <small>Palm Sunday</small>	18 Crowder by appt. Durant 8-4:30	19 <small>First Day of Passover</small>	20 McAlester 10-2 Stigler by appt.	21	22 Holiday <small>Good Friday</small>	23
	24 <small>Easter</small>	25 Holiday	26 Wright City by appt.	27 Atoka 9:30-11 Coalgate 12:30-2:30	28	29 Wilburton 10:30-2	30

Durant-Mondays • Broken Bow-Mon., Wed. and Fri. • Idabel-By appointment

Phone: 580-326-8304; Fax: 580-326-2410  
Email: [ddavenport@choctawnation.com](mailto:ddavenport@choctawnation.com)



# District 10 ladies share their memories

## Lorena Mae Scott Cooper

Lane, Okla.

Lorena Mae Scott was born at home on March 10, 1923, in Boswell. Her mother was Margaret Crowder Scott and her father was Sampson Scott, both full-blood Choctaw. Her daddy said his father came from Mississippi and settled in Boswell. She was small and didn't remember her grandparents. She lived in the country close to Antlers.

Her daddy had a hotel on his allotted land in Boswell. He was a preacher and Lorena has been going to church all of her life. She goes to Coal Creek Presbyterian Church, just over the hill.

The next to the youngest child, Lorena had two brothers and one sister, Jesse Scott, Jasper Scott and Naomi Scott Johnson.

She went to school at Long Pine, walking close to a mile toward Crystal to the school. There were 24 children in the first grade and 42 in the second grade.

Lorena's daddy passed away when she was 5 years old. Her mother helped by doing washing and cleaning jobs to support her children. Lorena was too little to help, but remembers watching her using a washboard. When she grew up, Lorena knew how to do those things because she had watched her mother.

The kids used to play with a doll. They played church and would sing. They also made mud bread and pretended it was banaha.

Lorena attended St. Agnes Catholic School, a boarding school for Indian children in Antlers. They attended there for two years, staying at school even during holidays and the summer because they had no place to go.

Their mother stayed with a woman in the country near Antlers. She was working for the woman and would visit them at school sometimes.

Lorena didn't talk at all until she was 5 years old. The she spoke nothing but Choctaw and was allowed to speak Choctaw at school. When the teachers taught in English, Lorena couldn't understand them. Her sister and two brothers could understand and were the ones who taught Lorena.

All of the girls slept in the same room at



Lorena Scott Cooper

school and all the boys slept in a different room. Lorena washed dishes at the school.

In the summer, Jasper and Jesse worked at the church and did the communion. Jasper became a preacher for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

When Lorena got out of the Catholic School, they joined the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Jesse was an elder at Coal Creek Church in Atoka County.

She was 8 or 9 when she left the Catholic School and went to live with her mom in a little shed with a dirt floor somewhere close to Antlers. They lived there until they were grown, then they moved out. Jasper went to war, but Jesse didn't. Naomi stayed with their mom until she got married.

Lorena got married first, then her sister. Lorena was 16 years old when she married Hester Robinson. He was close to 40 when she met him in Atoka. He lived in Kiowa so they moved there and lived in town.

They had one child born in 1945, Tony Robinson. Hester and Lorena were married seven years when Lorena got a divorce.

She and Tony moved back in with her mama who was living in Crystal. She was getting old and not working any more. Lorena never held a job outside the home.

The second time she married, she was 28 years old. She married Mose Sampson Cooper of Hugo. He was 27.

She met Mose at an Indian church halfway from Crystal and Sun Kissed Store.

Mose moved in with Lorena's mama, Lorena and Tony. He worked at a sawmill at Crystal. They stayed with her mom for two years and



then moved to Unger. Tony moved with them; he was about 5 years old.

Mose and Lorena had nine children and all of them are still living – Roland Lee Cooper, Nelson Cooper, Raymond Cooper, Mary Lou Cooper Dillard, Moses I. Cooper, Linda Cooper, Franklin Lee Cooper, Johnny Lee Cooper and Sampson Lee Cooper. Lorena named Sampson after her daddy.

Rowland and Sampson can speak Choctaw and the other children can understand it.

Lorena never learned to drive. She wishes now that she had.

Mose, Lorena and their family moved to Stringtown and Mose worked at the Fugate Sawmill. Lorena was young and used to do farm work, picking beans and cotton before she had her kids. Raymond worked at the sawmill after he got married.

In 1975, Mose had a house built. He was tired of moving around. Lorena has lived there ever since.

Mose quit the sawmill and went to work for the county driving a dump truck. He was 68 when he died and still working for the county. He died on Nov. 8, 1992.

Linda and Raymond live in Stringtown. Mary lives on Wapanucka Road. Moses lives in Crystal. Tony lives in Dallas, Rowland in Coalgate, and Johnny lives with Lorena. Nelson lives in Oklahoma City, Sampson in Eu-  
faula and Franklin in Broken Bow.

Lorena has 24 grandchildren and 47 great-grandchildren. When they get together, they fill up the church house.

Lorena goes to the Choctaw nutrition site ev-



Lorena and Mose Cooper

ery Wednesday and goes on all the trips. She went to see "Bad Company" in Durant. She just likes to get out of the house.

She sings with the group at the site. They sing in Choctaw, #21 in the Choctaw Hymn Book.

Lorena can cook banaha. She uses ground cornmeal, soda, a teaspoon of flour and boiling water. She wraps it all in corn shucks and ties them. She cooks a pot of beans with the banaha. You can use the beans or not but her kids like banaha with beans.

She tells them, "You better learn to cook banaha yourselves."

They like fry bread, too. Lorena taught her grandchildren to make it.

Lorena goes to the Choctaw festival every year. The bus takes her every day for four days. She also went to the Trail of Tears Walk and walked about a mile. Lorena says she wanted to keep walking, but a friend made her quit and get on the van.

Lorena has tried beading, but with 10 kids and cooking three times a day, she had to quit. She used to quilt. Her mom taught her, but she can't now because of her eyes.

## Rebecca Louise Peters Cole

Stringtown, Okla.

Rebecca Louise Peters was born March 12, 1927, at her parents' home in Lane. Her father, William Lewis Peters, and mother, Tracy Taylor Peters, were both full-blood Choctaws.

Rebecca was the third of her parents' seven children. The oldest was Edna Mae Peters Jackson; next was Lorene Pe-

ters Lombness. Then Rebecca was born. After Rebecca were Betty Jean Peters Gibson, Sam Lee Peters, Esther Vera Peters Nelson, and Lizzie Lou Peters LeFlore.

Rebecca started to school at Lane. The school went from first through eighth grades. She walked a short distance to school. In the third grade, the family moved to Harmony where she went to the fifth grade. Then the family moved to Lane. This was her 's allotted land – 160 acres. He sold part of it and just kept 20 acres. Rebecca has one acre from him. The house they lived in was just a little distance from where she lives.

When Rebecca was 13, a government man came looking for Choctaw people. He wanted them to go to a Choctaw school. Betty Jean and Rebecca went to Goodland. A government man took them; their daddy hired someone to pick them up when school was out.

Rebecca stayed upstairs at Goodland in one big room with a lot of beds. She had her friends and Betty Jean had her friends. None of the other family members went to Goodland.

At Goodland, they didn't allow the girls to talk the Choctaw language. Their parents spoke both Choctaw and English, so Rebecca did, too. She never got in trouble, though, for talking in Choctaw during her two terms at Goodland – the fifth and sixth grades. She didn't participate in any activities while there, just attended her classes.

After two years, Rebecca and Betty Jean left Goodland and went to Mayor's Chapel, about half a mile from Lane. There was a school there and that's where they finished the eighth grade. They walked to school in the rain, snow and cold.

After school, they stayed home. Whatever their parents were doing, they had to help them. Their daddy was a farmer who grew corn, sweet potatoes and watermelon. He only had gardening tools and borrowed a horse and plow when needed. They did everything else by hand.

Their daddy also had pigs later on and their Mama had a few chickens and one cow for milk. The family was self-sufficient. When they needed anything, they went to Lane Store or Black Jack Store where they bought flour,



Rebecca Cole at age 30 and more recently at a Senior Day hat contest.



Rebecca enjoys a pow wow.

coffee, sugar and salt.

Their daddy worked with the WPA building roads. He walked to work between 3:30 and 4 a.m. He would go anywhere they asked him to.

Their mama quilted and showed them how to put up a quilt from the ceiling.

Rebecca was the last child at home with her parents. She was 28 years old when she married.

She met Benjamin Cole, a full-blood Choctaw, when he was in Lane working on a sawmill. He lived in Durant and Bokchito. He attended their church, Double Spring Cumberland Presbyterian, north of Lane. The building is still there, but no services are held.

The couple was married on April 14, 1955, at the courthouse in Atoka by a justice of the peace. A friend drove them there and Esther went along, too.

They didn't tell anyone they were getting married. Rebecca left the house and went to stay with her sister, Lorene. From there, Rebecca and Benjamin went on to Atoka. Her parents were surprised, but didn't get mad or say anything about it.

Rebecca and Benjamin lived at Lane. Benjamin got into some trouble and had to go to the penitentiary in McAlester. Rebecca found a house in Lane.

They had three children. Their first child, Shirley Yvonne Cole, was born on Oct. 23, 1955. Stella Louise Cole Johnson was born on Oct. 23, 1957. Lloyd Aaron Cole was born on

Aug. 29, 1964.

They would walk out to Rebecca's mom's on Friday afternoons after school and stay the weekend. They would go to church on Sunday and then stay in Lane. The family walked four and one-half miles to Double Spring Church, but it seemed like 20 miles. They walked because they didn't have a wagon or a horse. Her parents never owned a car, and she hasn't either.

They have a family tradition of going to church. Their daddy was a church elder and a candidate preacher who was making a step towards being a minister.

Rebecca used to play the piano and loved to play for church and church singings. They would call her out of the crowd to play.

She remembers her daddy sending for music books from the Stamps Quartet in Dallas. Rebecca could play anything in that book, but it was loaned to someone who never returned it.

She learned to play while watching her daddy – how he did his fingers. She asked him what he was playing and that's how it started. Her daddy had a piano, and he could play without a book. Only Betty, Sam and Rebecca learned how to

play.

She started playing while she was in her teens and was a regular player for church. Lane First Baptist didn't have a player so Rebecca helped them out, too.

Her mama would camp and feed dinner to people coming to a church rally. They had to haul water for that. Mama cooked hog meat, beans, potatoes, tanche labona and banaha. They camped at the church from Friday night until Sunday night, using kerosene lamps.

There were two camp houses. Mama brought quilts, and people slept on the church house floor. They stayed in the camp house and Mama cooked three meals a day for church, and sometimes for an all-night singing.

Their daddy would walk to their house in Lane carrying watermelons or a tow sack of corn for them. He carried it on his shoulder all that way.

Her mom's father, Charley Taylor, came to visit them in Lane. Rebecca never knew her grandma who had passed away. Her grandpa lived in Wilburton where he had an allotment. Her uncle's children still have his allotment.

Rebecca never knew her father's parents who had some allotment land around there, but sold it.

Rebecca sewed a lot for her kids, even her boy. She made graduation gowns, dresses and western shirts. She filled out a card she received in the mail, sent it in and won a Dressmaker's Zigzag Sewing Machine. She still has it and it still works. Before the new machine,

she sewed in a treadle machine.

Benjamin was in prison in McAlester for three years. Rebecca and the children still lived in Lane but Benjamin was on the go. Rebecca stayed home and quilted for people to make a living for her children. She made quilts for herself, too.

She never drove and didn't have anyone to teach her to drive. She walked to jobs. One of which was doing laundry and housekeeping at the Atoka hospital in 1971. Then, she worked at a nursing home in Atoka from 1976-1985. In 1985, she had to quit because she had to walk two and one-half miles from home to the highway and catch a ride to work. At 58, she couldn't walk it anymore, just barely making it to the highway.

On March 28, 1980, they moved to the house she has now. Benjamin only lived a year after that. He had been living in Oklahoma City. He died on Sept. 30, 1981. Rebecca's children lived with her and her son still lives with her.

Her daddy died in August of 1980. He had a stroke and was in a nursing home. It was hard to understand him talking, but he could hear them. Rebecca asked him if she could have an acre of his allotment, saying, "I want that piece of land right there on the corner." He just shook his head yes.

Her mom lived there until 1986 when she died. Rebecca's siblings are all deceased, except for Lizzie who lives in Atoka.

Rebecca's oldest sister's daughter has an acre out there, too. All Indian homes call for an acre of land.

Rebecca cooks some of the Choctaw dishes. She still gathers wild onions down on the creek and cooks them with scrambled eggs. She also makes tanche labona. Her kids don't eat it, and she says, "Y'all must not be Indian."

She goes to the Choctaw center every Wednesday. Her niece, Norene Crow, is the president of the Senior Citizens Group.

The seniors take some trips out of town on the Choctaw bus. We go to see the Christmas lights at Chickasha, and they go to concerts in Durant. They have fundraisers to get money for the trips including pie sales on the second Wednesday each month. They attend the festival every year, going on Friday and Saturday to stay for the singing.

Rebecca has had diabetes since 1992. Her sisters, Betty Jean, Lizzie and Esther, also had diabetes but Rebecca doesn't remember her parents having it.

When Rebecca was at home, she spoke Choctaw. At Lane, they spoke Choctaw. All three of her children can speak Choctaw. They went to Lane school to the eighth grade and to high school in Atoka. Her son went to school with Lane Frost at Atoka.

She has five grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Rebecca worked hard for her children, and still does. They all come over on Sunday to eat when she fixes meatloaf and cabbage.



# Choctaw basket weaver Eveline Steele creates impressive Choctaw art

By **CHRISSEY DILL**  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Eveline Steele of Broken Bow has a passion for traditional Choctaw basket weaving. Being the daughter and granddaughter of master artists Elsie Williams Battiest and Fannie Battiest Williams, she grew up with this art playing a prominent part in her life, and she continues to contribute her great work to Choctaws and the community today, provided with great inspiration from her family. The art can be traced through at least five generations now that her son Corey is beginning to make baskets.

Recently, Eveline has been invited by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma to display her work at one of the largest museums in the world, The Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. She will present her baskets at the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Festival at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in June.

Eveline started basket weaving in 1990. "That's the year I really got into it," she said. Her mother was the reason she took up the art of basket weaving and serves as her inspiration.

She began by participating in a year-long apprenticeship with her mother, Elsie Bat-

tiest, through the Oklahoma Indian Arts Council in Oklahoma City. Eveline made baskets under her mother's supervision, and she taught her many designs and the difference in commercial and natural dyes.

"I've seen it all my life," said Eveline about her reason for basket weaving. "It's been a part of my family for generations." Her grandmother, Fannie Wesley, provides more inspiration for Eveline, being without her sight and able to make baskets. "She had mastered it," said Eveline. "I grew up watching them work with cane baskets."

Eveline said she remembers what her mother and grandmother have taught her about basket weaving. "I remember what they said, how they processed and prepared the strands of cane fibers, and it helps me," she said. "As I grow older, I appreciate the art even more." She recognizes the value of traditional baskets.

Traditionally, the Choctaw baskets are made with strands of split river cane fibers with certain patterns and designs interwoven with basic colors of black, red or yellowish tint mixed with natural cane, according to Eveline. "The finished rim of a traditional Choctaw basket is also unique," she explained. It's similar to the artistic patterns



**Eveline harvests some cane to make her traditional Choctaw baskets.**

of other tribes; it varies.

On occasion it's poor etiquette to "borrow" designs attributed to a particular tribe, explained Eveline. Incorporating designs or using purchased reeds instead of reeds grown yourself makes for good practice and learning, but the finished product is a non-traditional basket.

The process of making a traditional Choctaw basket consists of several steps. According to Eveline, first you must locate good cane, and carefully select, harvest and prepare it. Remove branches and smooth poles, wash each pole with water and a sponge, leaving one side abrasive and the other soft. Making these strands of processed cane fiber is the most important aspect

of basket weaving.

"You need to learn how to harvest and get your own cane fiber," she explained. "You have to do it from the ground up." This is important because you aren't able to purchase this type of cane used to create a traditional Choctaw basket, you must harvest it yourself. Since river cane grows along river beds and damp, swampy areas, Eveline and her husband Dale usually travel a 60-80-mile round trip to harvest her cane.

When you have harvested properly cleaned your cane, you then must split it into quarters or sixths. "This depends on the size of your cane," said Eveline. Next you must remove and smooth the sharp inner joints, or it will be rough on your hands, she explained.

Next you must peel each section for strand of cane fiber and scrape the strands, this is what you will be use to make your basket. Dry your processed fiber daily as you work the remaining poles.

After about two weeks of processing the fibers, the

dying process follows. Eveline uses mostly black, dark brown, reddish and a yellowish tint, the shades you get from natural dyes. The use of natural dyes increases the value of a basket.

"While commercial dyes are used almost exclusively today," said Eveline. "It is important to know the natural dyes and dye method," which is another process of its own, knowing when and what to harvest, including the availability of roots, bark, nuts, berries and flowers.

You must take the design your basket into consideration. A traditional Choctaw basket can include or not include a handle. Some baskets are made from the bottom up and some are made from the backside forward. "Some you just start interweaving from original fibers you've started off with," said Eveline. "You just have to know what kind of basket you want to make before you start weaving."

"The number of natural fibers used with dyed fibers makes them different and varies the sizes and patterns," added Eveline. Some baskets are woven or plaited with two and five counts of fiber or three and five counts; the number varies. There are many varieties of patterns that can be used.

A design that holds a place in Eveline's heart is her "bull

nose" basket, the basket she and her mother were making the week she passed away. A basket made with this type of design has a "nice curve at the bottom," as Eveline described. Held sideways it resembles a bull's nose, she said. For using as a decorative wall display, she prefers to add a hook to the basket, because it "works better than a long handle."

In addition to her upcoming exhibit at The Smithsonian, Eveline has displayed her work at various events. Her most recent display took place at the Synod four-state-regional Presbyterian Women's Conference in Oklahoma City.

She has demonstrated her artistic work several times at the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival, and has put them on display at a basket conference at the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians in Natchez, Miss., and in Louisiana. "I just go where the invitation comes from," she said.

Eveline plans to bring several of her Choctaw designs to The Smithsonian this summer, including two or three of her pattern baskets created in the past as well as new baskets she will construct. One will be a storage basket with no handle and the other will include a handle. She will also bring her most-loved design, the bull nose.

# Smithville appreciation dinner leads to good food and great fellowship



**Assistant Chief Gary Batton leans in to chat with Anna Carlile and Mary Lou Meashintubby before dinner is served.**



**Darryl and Logan Williams visit with Kenny Bryant prior to taking the stage for musical entertainment.**



**Assistant Chief Batton can't hold back a smile as he spends time with the future of the Choctaw Nation people.**



**Chief Pyle is happy to lend a helping hand in the kitchen at the Smithville dinner.**



**Lodean Starr shows Assistant Chief Batton some affection at the Smithville appreciation dinner.**



Smithville photos by **JUDY ALLEN**  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

**Photo right: Flora Cusher, Arlene Wilson and Virginia Grant pose for the camera.**

**Photo left: Sandra Glover and Dee Tidwell enjoy a visit with Chief Pyle.**





# Tim Tingle conveys Choctaw history through narratives

By **BRET MOSS**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Choctaw history can be found in many places. One might look into a history book, watch a documentary or travel to a local known for its historical relevance, but the most intimate knowledge about the heritage of a people is found in the people themselves.

From there is where Choctaw storyteller Tim Tingle absorbs his unique talent. Tingle is an accomplished author and storyteller that, while he entertains, educates.

Tingle has authored six books himself and co-authored three books. He has won a multitude of awards for his works including the “Oklahoma Book Award for Best Children’s Book” in 2007 for Crossing Bok Chitto.

Most Choctaws know Tingle as the storyteller who precedes Chief Greg E. Pyle’s Annual State of the Nation Address. He has also performed in Ontario, Canada, and made ten trips to Germany speaking on military bases for the U.S. department of Defense. He will be a featured presenter at the upcoming Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Festival at the Smithsonian, an event this summer in Washington D.C.

Tingle’s affiliation with the art of storytelling is rooted in the actions of his family. He was born in 1948, in the Houston, Texas area. He was raised in a very close knit family and enjoyed much time with his relatives.

These close ties with his family would be the catalyst that would spark his interest in Choctaw history and the act of orally passing it on to younger generations.

His grandmother, a full blood Choctaw, moved to Pasadena with his grandfather who had a farm there. In this area, many family gatherings were held and stories were shared. The family would hunt, fish and fellowship with each other.



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

Every summer, the uncles would take the cousins on a trip to the remote Big Thicket of East Texas. He remembers that they would walk for days and make camp at night. “Everything we ate was either fished for or hunted,” commented Tingle. “At night my dad and uncles would tell us Choctaw family stories around the campfire.

“It was a conscious effort on the part of the family to teach us,” continued Tingle. His family used these trips to educate the younger members on what it meant to be

attended school at Tushkahoma and being punished for speaking the Choctaw language. They were told stories of their ancestor’s on the Trail of Tears. “My uncles realized the importance of passing down these stories orally, to be believed and passed on,” stated Tingle.

He remembers the stories he was told in his youth with great fondness. His love and talent for telling stories stem from this time in his life. “I was a brilliant strategy to teach us about being Choctaw,” said Tingle. “I always go back there.”

As he grew up and attended the University of Texas, he encountered difficulty discovering information on his Choctaw heritage. He loved to learn the facts behind the narratives he had heard, but had trouble uncovering them.

When his son was in elementary school and Tingle found out that he was not being taught any history that included Choctaws, he decided

to conduct his own research.

He joined a Toastmasters Club in Austin, and when it was his turn to speak, he shared the Choctaw narratives he had been taught. Tingle soon realized that it was his calling to assemble Choctaw history and legend and put it into stories to be passed through the generations.

In the early 1990’s, Tingle met an older man named Charley Jones at the first reenactment of the Trail of Tears. Charley was the official Storyteller for the Choctaw Nation, and a Council member. During this event, a large number of people began a 30-mile walk to remember the hardships of their elders during their rough journey. Not many people finished the event, but

not be filled with physical bodies, those who have gone on before him fill the audience.

“Sometimes, in my mind, I actually imagine who from my family might be there,” explained Tingle. Jones strengthened Tingle’s skills considerably though his guidance. “He was the most important mentor of my life,” continued Tingle.

In the spirit of bettering his knowledge and storytelling ability, Tingle attended the University of Oklahoma from 1998-2003. He attained his M.A. Degree and studied American Indian Literature.

During his studies at OU, he was taught Choctaw writing and accessed a much grand array of resources and databases that, over time, gave his stories more impact and power. “I spend several years of emersion into that world,” said Tingle. As a result, he could not only convey the Choctaw stories, but he

both fiction and nonfiction with an echoing of history.

“I like the fact that sometimes the bookstores don’t know how to categorize my books,” said Tingle as he expressed his pleasure in the uniqueness of his stories.

In the mid 2000’s Tingle and his associates began an annual event called Choctaw Storytelling Festival. In its first year, held in Crowder, Okla., it was a three-day event in which people with stories would come and share their own narratives.

There were tables set up in themes. For instance, if the story were about a hog slaughter, the storytelling area would be set up as if the audience was at a hog slaughter. Other tables might be talking about “boarding school,” or “ghosts I saw,” or “Choctaw foods.”

Tingle recorded a great deal of stories from these events, and uses that information to tell new stories and to add

authenticity to the ones he currently performs.

Tingle holds the stories he tells and the work he does in very high esteem.

It is more than just retell-

ing words. “My life’s work is to take these stories and broaden the audience,” said Tingle.

He doesn’t want these stories to merely stay in the inner circles of a family or pass away with the one that knew it best, but he wants all of them to spread and to be retold among many people of all cultures.

He believes this is important because these are not just stories of hardship, but they are stories of triumph and the perseverance of the human spirit, Choctaw or not.

It is his hope is that “most Americans will someday recognize the strength and the goodness of we Choctaws.”

**“My life’s work is to take these stories and broaden the audience.”**

– Tim Tingle

Tingle and Jones spent 15 miles walking together as Charley told him story after story, many of which later became books.

Jones was a man familiar with the art of storytelling and tutored Tingle in this art. Jones taught Tingle many aspects that aid him in his storytelling on a regular basis.

One of the most important things he learned from Jones was how to not be discouraged when there are a number of empty seats in the audience. Jones taught Tingle that he is not only speaking to those present, but also to the ones who the narratives are about. Though the seats may

had the historical evidence to enforce what he was telling to his audience.

After his time at OU, Tingle began gathering hours of recorded interviews with Choctaw elders whose stories, though valuable now, will be priceless in days to come.

He traveled all over Oklahoma and other places in the country, learning stories from elders. These stories would be filled with imagination, history, folklore and legends.

He released his first book in 2003 titled Walking the Choctaw Road, which is a collection of Choctaw stories. The stories that filled this book fell into a hard to define area of book categories. They were

# Greg Rodgers wields the right words to perk listeners’ ears

By **BRET MOSS**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Choctaw storyteller Greg Rodgers is set to be one of the featured presenters at the upcoming Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Festival at the Smithsonian, an event held in Washington, D.C. in cooperation with the Smithsonian in an effort to educate a national audience about the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO).

Under the mentorship of renowned storyteller, Tim Tingle, Rodgers has begun a very promising career in the art of the spoken word. Rodgers was a featured regional teller at the Spirit of Oklahoma Storytelling Festival. He has also performed during the Native American Concert at the Texas Storytelling Festival.

Rodgers is the published author of the book, The Ghost of Mingo Creek and the upcoming One Dark Night in Oklahoma. He has served as a board member for both the Oklahoma Choctaw Tribal Alliance and Territory Tellers, the Oklahoma state storytelling organization. He is also a regional vice-president for the Folsom Family Association.

Rodgers was born in 1968 and grew up in the Oklahoma City area. “I was always attracted to the Choctaw Nation,” said Rodgers. In the summers he would head to Southeast Oklahoma to the Choctaw Nation to spend time with his family.

His great-grandfather, Jack Folsom, an original enrollee, who had a log cabin in Mead, Okla., inspired in him

a great pride for his Choctaw heritage. His mother, Sharon Folsom Rodgers continued the efforts and made it a point that Rodgers knew about the early Choctaw history.

Aside from hearing history from his great-grandfather, Rodgers also enjoyed long talks with his family. “During dinnertime, the TV was off and we would sit and talk,” described Rodgers. He soaked up the stories that his family members would tell him. As a child, “I always had a real strong connection to the power of stories,” he continued.

The education of his great-grandfather, combined with his love for swapping stories gave Rodgers a curiosity that led him to Native American Studies at the University of Oklahoma. The education he was receiving allowed him to thing historically and scholarly about the stories he had heard and studied.

In 2005, Rodger’s family hosted a family reunion. Greg wanted there to be a strong element of their Choctaw heritage during this reunion. He invited Tim Tingle to come to the event to share his stories

acy and the stories that keep it alive. Tingle saw a promise in Rodgers through the writing and research he was doing at OU, as well as his enthusiasm for the subject. Tingle had also attended OU, which gave the two an added sense of common ground.

Tingle began to take Rodgers under his wing. Rodgers would practice telling stories to Tingle to hone his narrative abilities. This training combined with his education at the university was transforming Rodgers in to not just a man with knowledge and speaking ability, but a medium by which Choctaw legacy could be expressed.

It was not only Tingle who helped Rodger’s storytelling abilities, take flight; but he also acknowledges lessons learned from other great Choctaw storytellers like Stella Long, Adeline Hudson, Buck Wade, and many others.

In the genesis of his story telling career, Rodgers was reluctant to partake in public speaking. Tingle soon reminded him that it was his duty to pass along these stories and experiences. He charged him to do his part in



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

Rodgers would be making the presentation that day. Rodgers knew he had two choices; throw a fit and back down, or step up and show his skill. He chose the latter and broke the ice to his newfound talent.

When Rodgers spoke he witness the kids become attentive and engaged in his words. He realized that he could do what Tingle had been teaching him. Over time he became more adept in the art of public speaking. He learned that “it really has a lot more to do with the audience than with the teller,” explained Rodgers.

As Rodgers began telling stories on his own, he began to feel a great since of connection to his ancestors through the stories he told. A prime example of this was during a Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) conference in Moundville Ala.

**“It is all about connecting words with images... it is about emotional truth”**

– Greg Rodgers

about the Choctaw people and help the family connect to their Choctaw roots.

After Tingle was done sharing his stories with the family, Rodgers began to talk with Tingle about the Choctaw leg-

the preservation of the Choctaw memories.

Rodgers traveled with Tingle to Sapulpa, Okla., to tell stories to the junior high student. Much to his surprise, Tingle told the children that



# McAlester senior citizen luncheon



Photo left, Eugene Sweet, Councilman Bob Pate and Jack Haynes pose for a photo in McAlester.



At right, William Johnson, James Green and Betty Thomas work hard in the kitchen preparing lunch for the McAlester crowd.



A.R. Kirkpatrick and L.J. Compton play a game of bingo at the McAlester senior luncheon.



Charleen Samuels and Sylvia Compton enjoy the bingo and each others company at the McAlester center.



Chief Pyle visits with Thelma Thompson at the McAlester luncheon.

McAlester photos by JUDY ALLEN  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

# Crowder seniors show their gratitude



A beautiful quilt made by Dolly Horton of Idianola was presented to Chief Pyle from the Crowder Senior Citizens. Vanessa Allen and Walter Spears help hold it for view.

Councilman James Frazier and Chief Pyle pose for a photo with World War II veteran Martin Killingsworth at the Crowder community center.



Crowder seniors practice a line dance.



Chief Pyle visits with Doralene Smith and Christie Higgins at the Crowder luncheon.

Jerry and Thelma Fleck, left, and Clarence Morris enjoy the entertainment at the Crowder appreciation lunch.



Crowder photos by JUDY ALLEN  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

# Durant seniors keep center abound with activities



Marilynn Mitchell, Durant Choctaw senior group president, swears in the newly appointed officers. First vice-President Jo Selby, Second Vice-President Sharon McGee, Secretary Margie Sutton, Treasurer Bob Green, and Assistant Treasurer Tim Sexton.

Durant photos by BRET MOSS  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



The senior officers of the Durant community center, accompanied by Councilman Ted Dosh and others, proudly stand in front of this year's freshly tilled community garden.



# Senate sings praises of ‘Swing Low, Sweet Chariot’ as Oklahoma state gospel song

The Oklahoma Senate has supported legislation to make “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” the state’s official gospel song.

Sen. Judy Eason McIntyre is the author of Senate Bill 73 recognizing the song written and composed by Wallis Willis, a Choctaw freedman in the old Indian Territory, sometime before 1862.

“What a treasure Wallis Willis has been for not only our state, but the world. This beautiful song has comforted millions as a favorite at church and funeral services. It’s also been used in films, on TV, and has been redone by many famous artists over the years,” said Eason McIntyre, D-Tulsa.

“Swing Low, Sweet Chariot is a song that is deeply woven into the fabric of our culture. It’s a song that we can all relate to; and I am so proud and humbled to be a part of ensuring that this beautiful

spiritual not only stays in our hearts forever, but in our state’s history.”

Willis received his name from his owner, Britt Willis, probably in Mississippi, the ancestral home of the Choctaws. Britt Willis was a prominent citizen of the Choctaw Nation who moved to Indian Territory prior to the Civil War and had a large plantation near Doaksville in what is now Choctaw County.

Willis lived his life out in Choctaw and Atoka Counties. It is believed that he died in Atoka County, as that is where his unmarked grave is located.

Prior to the Civil War, Willis and his wife, Minerva, were sent by their owner to work at the Spencer Academy, a Choctaw boarding school located about ten miles northwest of Fort Towson just west of the current town of Spencerville, where the superintendent, Reverend

Alexander Reid, heard them singing. In 1871, Reid was at a performance of the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, and thought the Willis’ songs were better than those of the Jubilee Singers.

He transcribed the songs and passed them along to the group which introduced them to the world, performing them around the United States and Europe.

Willis supposedly received inspiration for “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” from the Red River, which reminded him of the Jordan River and of the Prophet Elijah being taken to heaven by a chariot. At that time, the Red River divided Indian Territory from Texas, which belonged to Mexico.

In the last century, the spiritual has continued to grow in popularity. The tune has been recorded by such greats as Benny Goodman, Fats Waller, Tommy Dorsey,

Glenn Miller, Gene Autry, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Johnny Cash, Stevie Wonder, Elvis Presley and Eric Clapton. The spiritual has also been a theme song for English Rugby players and fans for several decades.

Willis had many other famous spirituals including Steal Away to Jesus, The Angels are Coming, I’m a Rolling, and Roll Jordan Roll among others.

He was inducted into the Jazz Hall of Fame in November 2010.

Assistant Secretary of the Oklahoma State Senate Currie Ballard is a descendent of Wallis and Minerva Willis. Ballard’s ancestors were Choctaw Freedmen in Oklahoma.

His grandmother, aunt and mother all grew up in the state.

His was the first generation of their family that grew up outside of Oklahoma. Ballard

said he was touched by the support from the Senate and others around the state to make the beautiful spiritual the state’s official gospel song.

“As a historian, I’ve found that so many Oklahomans and others around the world and country have sang this spiritual all their lives and never realized it came from Oklahoma so my heart rejoices that this will bring positive light to our state and wonderful citizens like Wallis,” said Ballard. “Personally, my family is so touched and thrilled that Wallis’ song will forever be a permanent part of Oklahoma history. Unfortunately, all of my older family has passed away and won’t get to witness this. I do have a cousin that grew up with my mother in Muskogee that will be floating on a cloud, and I know there are angels that will be celebrating in heaven when this becomes official.”

## Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

*Chorus:*  
*Swing low, sweet chariot,  
Comin’ for to carry me home;  
Swing low, sweet chariot,  
Comin’ for to carry me home.*

*I looked over Jordan,  
And WHAT did I see,  
Comin’ for to carry me home,  
A band of angels comin’ after me,  
Comin’ for to carry me home.*

### Repeat chorus:

*If you get there before I do,  
Comin’ for to carry me home,  
Tell all my friends I’m comin’ too,  
Comin’ for to carry me home.*

## Choctaw student athletes sign letters of intent with Bacone College

On Feb. 23, Choctaw High School’s Jasmine Sievert and Putnam City High School’s Chaney Porter, with numerous family members and respective high school staff and students in attendance, committed to Bacone College in Muskogee, where they will be competing with both the track and basketball programs while pursuing their bachelor’s degrees.

“We are extremely excited to have someone with Jasmine’s athletic, as well as academic caliber, signing with our school. We believe as a true freshman she will make an immediate impact on our programs,” remarked Bacone head track coach Shawn Venable. “Chaney will also have a great amount of positives to bring to us not only athletically, but also due to her academic strength.”

Athletic recruiter Cedric Sunray went on to say, “As a 6A state champion in discuss, a basketball player who averaged nearly a double-double this season, and more importantly, an exemplary student carrying a 4.0 GPA, we could not be happier to be welcoming Jasmine to our campus,” he said. “We appreciate the work of her coaches and family, especially her aunt, Jennifer Jones, who have all been involved in this process. There is no question in the future that she will be an National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Division I All-American in both the athletic and academic arena.”

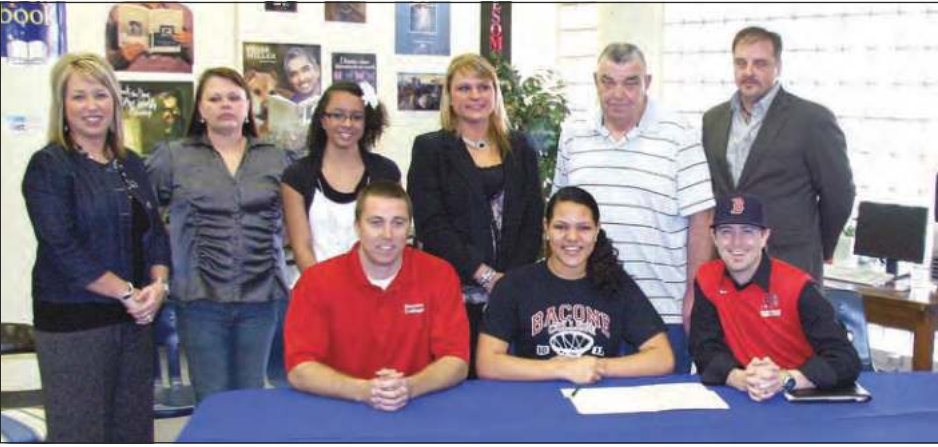
Sunray continued, “Chaney will undoubtedly be a great success for us as well,” he said. “She is carrying a 3.6 GPA and has all the intangibles that a college program and coach are looking for. Her pride in her Indian heritage is evident through her participation in her school’s Indian Cultural Club and other venues.

These young women are fine examples for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and we are excited about their involvement here,” concluded Sunray.



Courtesy PUTNAM CITY HIGH SCHOOL

Back row from left, Putnam City High School head coach Courtney Pennington, Jacobi Porter, Tanya Cooper, Tajinee Porter, Putnam City High School head track coach Mike Hardesty, and assistant track coach Cheryl Bowhay. Front row from left, Bacone College Athletic recruiter Cedric Sunray, Chaney Porter, and Bacone College head track coach Shawn Venable.



Courtesy RYAN HORTON

Back row from left, Choctaw High School girl’s basketball coach Dandy Peeler, Mary Kast, Allyssa Sievert, Niki Grubbs, Bob Grubbs, and Choctaw High School head track coach Jay Reaves. Front row from left, Bacone College Athletic Recruiter Cedric Sunray, Jasmine Sievert, head Bacone College track coach Shawn Venable.



## RECYCLE

**Choctaw Nation Participates in the Recycling of:**

**Aluminum Cans – PLEASE EMPTY CANS**

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

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

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

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

**Other Items:**

**Prescription Bottles**

**Printer/Toner Cartridges**

**Steel Cans (Vegetable Cans)**

**Christmas Cards**

**Cell Phones**

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

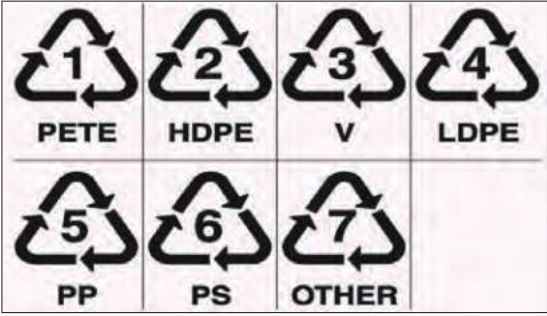
*Sustaining Our People, Our Traditions, Our Earth*

For recycling locations and questions please contact:  
Choctaw Nation Recycling Program  
3138 Enterprise Blvd.  
Durant, OK 74701  
(580)924-9280 or 1-800-522-6170

## Choctaw Nation’s plastic recycling

As we continue to add recycling items for collection we want to teach everyone what each is, how to identify them and what they may be used for in the future.

On the bottom of each plastic container there is usually a small symbol that is the three arrows with a number in the middle of it similar to the ones shown. The Choctaw Nation’s recycling facility currently accepts numbers one and two.



Number one plastics: PET or PETE (polyethylene terephthalate)

Found in: Soft drink, water and beer bottles, mouthwash bottles, peanut butter containers, salad dressing and vegetable oil containers, and oven-able food trays.

Recycling: Picked up through most curbside recycling programs.

Recycled into: Polar fleece, fiber, tote bags, furniture, carpet, paneling, straps, (occasionally) new containers.

PET plastic is the most common for single-use bottled beverages because it is inexpensive, lightweight and easy to recycle. It poses low risk of leaching breakdown products. Recycling rates remain relatively low (around 20 percent), though the material is in high demand by remanufacturers.

.....

Check back each month for more information on the Choctaw Nation recycling program and more ways we’re going green!

## HAVE YOU EVER WANTED TO BE A TABLE GAMES DEALER?

*Blackjack, Roulette, Pai-Gow, Mini Baccarat and Craps*

**NOW COULD BE YOUR CHANCE...**

The Durant Casino Resort offers exciting careers to hundreds of professional dealers and the expansion of our Table Games Department has created a demand for qualified dealers. Our dealers now average over \$20 an hour with tip rate. *Tips not guaranteed.*

**FREE DEALER SCHOOL...**

We are offering you the opportunity to attend our dealer school at NO COST to you. *(This is a free training, no compensation will be given for attending as training does not constitute employment).* These classes will be available at a variety of times in order to allow you to continue current employment and attend our dealer school. Upon completion of the dealer training school you must pass a live audition to be eligible for employment with Choctaw Casino.

**INTERESTED APPLICANTS...**

Please complete a “Choctaw Casino Application” and submit it to the Durant Casino HR Office by April 1, 2011. You will be contacted for an initial interview to pass the criteria listed below.

**YOU MUST BE...**

- At least 18 years of age
- Able to apply basic written & oral math skills
- Highly guest focused
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Pass a criminal background check in order to hold a Key Gaming License

Choctaw Casino Resort  
HR Department  
4216 HWY 69/75  
Durant, OK  
Phone: 1.580.920.0160 X 1108  
Fax: 1.580.931.2740

**CHOCTAW CASINO RESORT**

Management reserves all rights. Gambling problem? Call 1.800.522.4700



# OBITUARIES

## Wanda Mae Byington

Wanda Mae (Wade) Byington, 71, of McAlester passed away on Feb. 6, 2011, at McAlester Regional Health Center.

Wanda was born Jan. 3, 1940, in Ulan. She was the daughter of Anna Wade and granddaughter of Esiah and Jane (Pusley) Wade. She attended Carter Seminary and Haskell Indian University of Lawrence, Kan. She went to Los Angeles after graduating and was employed as a dispatcher/teletype operator with California Highway Patrol for seven years.

While in California, she met Houston Henry Byington. They returned together and married in 1964 in the San Bois Community. In 1975 she was employed with Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and served as a recording secretary for the Choctaw Nation Health Board and the Choctaw Nation Enterprise Inc. She served as president of the local county organization for years and also served as a representative for the drafting of the present Choctaw Constitution. She worked several years with the Indian Education Program at the McAlester school system. She was very dedicated to the Indian people having worked 19 years for Choctaw Nation. She later retired from the Choctaw Nation for health reasons. Years later she provided home bound "Meals on Wheels" for the City of McAlester.

She was a member of the District 11 Choctaw senior citizens and a member of the First Indian Baptist Church of McAlester. There she was involved with the W.M.U. as the activities director. She enjoyed pow wows and was an avid volleyball and softball player. She enjoyed watching her kids and grandkids in sports and school activities. She was an avid reader and enjoyed spending the majority of her time with her family and friends.

Wanda is survived by her children, Houston Byington of McAlester, Wynoka and Leonard Brokesholder of McAlester, Henry and Lisa Byington of McAlester, Wynona "Nonie" Byington of the home and Tawanna Byington of the home; brother and sisters, Jane Bear of Bell Gardens, Calif., Howard John and Sarah Kenieutubbe of Las Vegas, Regina Kenieutubbe of Anadarko; seven grandchildren, one great-grandchild, numerous nieces and nephews and a host of friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Houston Henry Byington; mother Anna M. Wade; sister Oleta Kenieutubbe; brothers, Osborne "Boy" Kenieutubbe and Dwight Kenieutubbe; nephews, Kevin Shields and Baby Kenieutubbe.



## Gary Wilson

Gary Wilson, 57, passed away on Feb. 8, 2011 in Bennington. He was born on Oct. 5, 1953, in Pittsburgh, Okla., to Woodrow W. and Evelyn (Dyer) Wilson.

Gary was a construction manager for the Choctaw Nation. He enjoyed the outdoors, hunting, fishing and gardening. Gary married Sonya Henson on Oct. 23, 2004, in Soper.

Gary is survived by his wife, Sonya Wilson of the home; daughters, Terra Wilson of Dallas and Tasha Wilson of Grapevine, Texas; son Brandon Wilson of Frisco; stepdaughters, Tara Moffatt and Taylor Russey of Bennington; sisters, Annette Terrell and husband Johnny of Bennington, Theda Robinson and husband Gary of Bennington, and Laquita Wilson and friend Rick of Bennington; brothers, Steve Wilson and wife Jamie of Hugo, Randy Wilson and wife Brenda of Durant, and Donald Wilson of Las Vegas; mother Evelyn Wilson of Bennington, and five grandchildren.

Mr. Wilson was preceded in death by his father, Woodrow W. Wilson.



## Frederick Goins

Frederick Gary Goins, 71, of Whitefield, was born July 31, 1939, in Havana, to Taze and Willie "Bill" Elizabeth (Cox) Goins. He passed away on Nov. 5, 2010, in Whitefield.

He is survived by wife Darlene Goins of the home; two daughters, Beth Bray and husband Johnny of Whitefield, Traci LeMond and husband Mark of Muskogee; son David Goins and wife Carey of Loganville, Ga.; two sisters, Susy Adcock of Stigler and Mary Gardner of Ramona; 11 grandchildren, Kent Bray, Brooke Burdick and husband Jake, Candice Bray, Kelsey Anthony, Mark Lemond, John Lemond, Lacey Bangle and husband Josh, Dow Goins, Dalton Goins, Braden Goins, Sam Goins; and great-grandson Bret Burdick.

Gary was preceded in death by his parents, Taze and Bill Goins; one brother, Boyd Goins; and one sister, Martha Apple. He married Darlene Webster on July 31, 1961. They were married 49 years and had three children. Gary retired from the Union Pacific Railroad in 1994 after 27 years of service. He enjoyed crappie fishing with his father-in-law, Sib Webster for many years. In his later years he enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren and mowing the grass. He was a member of the Whitefield Baptist Church.



## Leon Derron Stowers

Leon Derron Stowers, 77, of Madill, passed away on Dec. 15, 2010, at an Ardmore hospital. He was born Nov. 4, 1933, to the late Loyd Monroe Stowers and Oleta Bernice Jarman Stowers.

Derron attended Tyler Elementary School before moving to California at the age of eight. He also lived in Oregon before moving to Monahans, Texas, where he graduated in 1951. He attended Odessa Jr. College and classes at Eastern New Mexico University.

He married Ruth Ann Maddin on Dec. 22, 1956. He later married Guy Eva Hallmark on Nov. 10, 1994.

He served 15 years in the National Guard and was honorably discharged. Derron later worked in the oil fields at Lovington, N.M., and Monahans. He later became lineman and foreman for Lee County Electric at Lovington. In 1972 he moved to Cloudcroft, N.M., and was supervisor and later operation manager until 1999 when he retired and moved to Madill. He was proud of his Choctaw heritage and he enjoyed fishing, hunting, golfing and he was an active member at the Mannsville Assembly of God Church of Mannsville.

Derron is survived by his wife, Guy Eva Stowers of Madill; child Kirk Lee Stowers and wife Dianne of Tupelo; sister Ethel Caudill and husband L.G. of Lovington, N.M.; two grandchildren, Afton Dodgen and Brandon of Tupelo, and Hannah Stowers of Tupelo; one great-grandchild, Aslan Dodgen; stepson Kent Hallmark and wife Pam of Madill; three stepgrandchildren, Courtney Housholder and husband Josh of Madill, Tracy Vanderwork and husband Lee of Woodward, and Jason Branch and wife Kendra of Lone Grove; two foster children, Angela King and husband Larry of Dickson, and Sharon Giles of Madill; 10 foster grandchildren, Tyler, Josh, Jake, Talaya, Colton, Jade, Brooke, Luke, Lexie and Tate; two nieces, Sandy and James Fort of Madill, and Lesly and Kent Jameson of Lovington, N.M., and their children, Kenda and Kellen Fort, and Bradley, Jesika and Jacob Jameson.



## Ruby Mae Layne

Ruby Mae Anderson Layne passed away peacefully on Jan. 11, 2011, at The Memorial Medical Center, Modesto, Calif.

Ruby was the eldest child of original enrollee Osborne B. Anderson and Iva Pearl Weathers Anderson. She had seven siblings, Osborne, Otis, Ben, Rosetta, Ruth, Rowena and Rosemary.

Ruby was born in Weathers, and grew up in Pittsburg, where she went to school. She was active in girls basketball in high school and served as a pianist at the Baptist Church in Pittsburg. She attended Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kan., for a short period of time.

She married Giles H. Layne in 1932 at the First Christian Church. Afterwards, they lived above the Banner Store (coal mine affiliated) in Pittsburg. That union produced four children: Harold, Gerald, Danny and Linda. Ruby and Giles loved to dance, especially to the music of Bob Wills and his band.

When jobs were scarce they packed up and moved to Hawthorne, Calif., with their two youngsters. At the start of World War II, she worked for North American Aviation Company in El Segundo, Calif. Giles worked across the street at Douglas Aviation.

In 1942 they moved to Pleasant Hill, Calif., where Giles worked at the Mare Island Naval Base. In 1943 they returned to Hawthorne where they opened a diner on Prairie Avenue, across from Northrop Aviation Co. At the end of World War II they moved to Ceres, Calif., where they successively owned two restaurants. Ruby stayed in the food service business until she retired. Giles worked in construction until he died in 1980.

They have six grandchildren, David, Sharon, Bobby, Michael, Donna and Tami, and 10 great-grandchildren.



## Bennie Melvin John

Bennie Melvin John, 81, passed away on Jan. 28, 2011, at a Sherman, Texas, hospital. He was born March 29, 1929, at Ardmore to Alex and MaryAnn Simpson John. He was married to Gladys Tone and she preceded him in death May 12, 2006, in Oklahoma City. Mr. John was a gunnery sergeant for the U.S. Marine Corps during the Korean conflict. He received a Purple Heart. He was employed at the Denver Zoo until his retirement.

Survivors include five sons, Eldon John, Bennett M. John and wife Sheila, Monroe John, Bennie M. John Jr. and Vernon John; one daughter, Juanita John; grandchildren, Corinna A. Linton and husband Russell, Erica V. Eppler, Kristina F. John, and Jessica D. John; three great-grandchildren, Joseph and Rebecca Jefferson and Stryder Lee Eppler; and many other relatives and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Gladys John; two sisters, Vivian and Sally John; brother Andy John; nephew Jimmy Lee John; and a grandson-in-law, Matthew Eppler.



## Richard Don Allen Englebright

Richard Don Allen Englebright, 54, passed away on Nov. 3, 2010, in Peggs, at the age of 54. He was born Jan. 27, 1956, in Tahlequah, to Albert Henry and Helen Martha (Byington) Englebright.

Richard is preceded in death by his parents; son Richard David Allen Englebright; three brothers, Talbert, Thomas and Kenneth; and sister Janet Englebright.

Left to cherish his memory are his five children, Shelly Drywater and husband Mike of Pryor, Rachel Englebright of Wagoner, Bobby Englebright of Glenpool, Joshua Englebright and wife Lisa of Glenpool and Kristy Englebright and husband Jason of Middletown, Ohio. He is also survived by five brothers, Ronnie, Johnny, Delbert Englebright, Joe Englebright and wife Carol of Peggs, and Loyd Englebright and wife Rozella of Locust Grove; five sisters, Mary McKim of Chouteau, Jackie List of Rockford, Ill., Kay Jenkins and husband Joe of Foyil, Faye Butler and husband Larry of Peggs, and Sherry Martin of Peggs; as well as 10 grandchildren. Richard will be greatly missed by all that knew him.



## Racheal Riddle

Racheal N. Riddle, 25, of Cleveland, Tenn., passed away on Jan. 18, 2011.

She attended Valley View Baptist Church. She graduated from Bradley Central High School in 2004. She was a gifted artist and cared deeply for her family.

She was preceded in death by her father, Phillip Lee Riddle.

Survivors include her mother, Angie Riddle of Cleveland; maternal grandmother, Mae Dyer of Cleveland; paternal grandmother, Carolyn Riddle of Georgetown; fiancé, C.J. Maples, of Cleveland; two sisters: Ramanda Riddle and Reanna Riddle, both of Cleveland; one brother, Randon Riddle of Cleveland; and several aunts, uncles and cousins.



## Lillie Mae Pezzolo

Lillie Mae (Judy) Pezzolo, 82, of Carson City, Nev., passed away Feb. 22, 2008, surrounded by family at her bedside. She was born March 25, 1925, in Graham, to Jessie and Rose Stidham. Judy lived most of her life in the bay area and moved to Carson City to be near her family. Being three parts American Indian, Judy was a proud member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Judy was the founder of the National Organization for Mentally Impaired Children (NOMIC), an organization to help children with disabilities. Over the years Judy blossomed into a woman of great courage and strength, holding her love for her children closest in her heart.

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



## Joseph Marion Lawrence

Joseph Marion Lawrence Sr., 93, passed away on Jan. 10, 2011, at Kindred Hospital in Oklahoma City. He was born on Nov. 23, 1917 in Lindsay, to Harry Edwin Lawrence and Selina (Betts) Lawrence. Joe married Christine (Parr) Ferguson on Oct. 23, 1991, in Arkansas.

Joe was born and raised in Lindsay and graduated from Lindsay High School. He began working as a printer at the Lindsay News. From Lindsay, he moved to Shawnee to work and eventually relocated to Maryland where he enjoyed a long career as a printer for the U.S. Government in Washington, D.C. Upon his retirement, he moved back to Oklahoma and settled in Moore.

Joe served his country during World War II in the U.S. Army Air Corps. He was affiliated with the Lindsay Methodist Church and was a member of the Lindsay Masonic Lodge. Joe was an avid coin collector and Washington Redskins fan.

Mr. Lawrence is survived by his wife, Christine Ferguson Lawrence; his son, Joseph Marion Lawrence Jr.; his stepsons, Larry K. Marks and B.T. Ferguson; his younger sister, BenaVee Lawrence Garrett; nine grandchildren, Brent Marks, Leigh Lawrence O'Brien, Todd Marks, Lynn Lawrence, Dustin Marks, Kristopher Ferguson, Ali Ferguson, Colby Ferguson and Adrienne Ferguson Jacobs; 11 great-grandchildren, Kyle Patrick O'Brien, Chase Ferguson, Mickinzi Ferguson, Leyton Jacobs, Arizona Ferguson, Jacob Marks, Treavor Marks, Ryan Marks, Terran Marks, Dylan Marks, and Greyson Marks.

Mr. Lawrence was preceded in death by his parents, Harry and Selina Lawrence; siblings, Azelle Martin Watkins, Olan Martin, Mildred Ilene Lawrence and Maxine Lawrence Clymer; and stepson, Don Ferguson.

## Billie Ruth Strickland

Billie Ruth Strickland, 68, passed away on Jan. 30, 2011, at her home in Antlers. She was born March 25, 1942 in Talihina, the daughter of Preston Lee Lawrence and Mary Francis (Billy) Lawrence and had lived in Antlers since 1975. Her parents preceded her in death. She was also preceded in death by her husband, Curtis Strickland; her brother, Preston Lawrence; and her grandson, Van Linn Jr.

Billie enjoyed music and spending time with her family and friends. She was of the Assembly of God faith.

Survivors include one daughter, Brenda Linn of Antlers; four sons, Van Linn of Hugo, John Linn of Antlers, Larry Linn of Soper and Robert Linn of Hugo; four sisters, Barbara McKee of Hugo, Linda Taylor of Soper, Sharon Davis of Soper and Lenora Jackson of Hugo; four brothers, Raymond Tom of Hugo, Michael Tom of Fort Smith, Ark., Larry Tom of Bennington, and Wayland Tom of Kennett, Mo.; 17 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, 22 nieces and nephews, and many other relatives and friends.



## Ott Younger Ladner

Ott Younger Ladner, 77, of Jimtown, passed away on Jan. 28, 2011, at the family home in Jimtown. Mr. Lander was born Aug. 20, 1933, in Jimtown, the son of Sylvester "Choc" and Audry May Chambers Ladner.

A resident of Jimtown all of his life, he attended Jimtown Grade School and graduated from Leon High School in 1952. Mr. Ladner served in the U.S. Army from 1955 to 1957, and was stationed in Germany. He and Laquitta Holt were married in Marietta on Aug. 28, 1959.

As a farmer/rancher, Mr. Ladner served 40 years as a USDA FSA (ASCS) community and county committeeman and as minority advisor. He was currently serving on the Love County Soil Conservation Board of Directors, the Jimtown Volunteer Fire Department Board and on the board of the Ouida Johnstone Trust. In addition he was a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the Love County Historical Society. Mr. Ladner had previously served on the Wilson Co-op Board for many years. He was also very involved in the upkeep of the Oswalt Cemetery and the Jimtown Cemetery.

As a young man Mr. Ladner enjoyed fishing and hunting, especially hunting coyotes with Walker Hounds. Most recently he liked to play dominoes and watch old westerns. His lifetime pastime was the pecan bottom, keeping it cleared and the brush burned. Mr. Ladner was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Preceding him in death were his parents; five brothers, Wester Ladner, Charlie Ladner, Vester "Buck" Ladner, Andrew "Bay" Ladner and Richard Ladner; and four sisters, Emme Ladner, Epsy Harris, Ruby Mapp and Azaline Hays.

He is survived by his wife, Laquitta Ladner of the home; son Brian Ladner and wife Melissa of Jimtown; daughter Rhidonah Ladner-Neal and husband Curtis Neal of Monroe, Wash.; four sisters, Sue Taliaferro of Marietta, Poline Monkres of DeSoto, Texas, Grace Graham of Duncanville, Texas and Frances Foster of Tilden, Texas; and three grandchildren, Brian Ladner II, Burk Jones and Audrey Ladner.





# Revitalizing Choctaw Moccasins

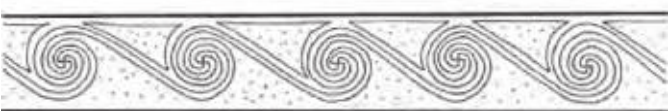
Along with feather bonnets, dream-catchers, and tipis, moccasins are something that the mass media widely associates with Native American people. Unlike these other objects, however, moccasins really are a part of Choctaw traditional culture. Today, a wide variety of moccasins are made, including mass-produced moccasins that come in boxes with marked shoes sizes, mail order moccasins that involve sending in a tracing of your foot to the maker, and custom moccasins made by Indian grandmothers directly to the feet of their families. In most parts of the country, mass-produced and Plains Indian-style moccasins dominate the original traditional Tribal styles. There really is such as thing as Choctaw-style moccasins, but at the time of this writing, you would be hard-pressed to find very many Choctaw feet wearing them. The loss of Choctaw moccasins is sad. The shoes worn by our ancestors are beautiful and comfortable in their own right, are not particularly difficult to make, and look much more in place with a Choctaw shirt or dress than any store-bought moccasin ever could. A number of Tribal members have expressed an interest in learning how to make Choctaw-style moccasins. To meet this request, the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department is beginning to offer classes around southeastern Oklahoma on making them. Who knows, but in a few months, Choctaw moccasins might even start to become a popular indigenous fashion again!

As regular readers of Iti Fabvssa know, Choctaw traditional culture changes and develops over time. In this regard, certain places, such as dry caves, have the ability to preserve objects made from perishable materials for a very long time, and give



Choctaw women’s moccasins, made by Ian Thompson

us look at how some things, such as shoe styles, have changed. Several caves in the central and eastern part



## Iti Fabussa



“Tulope, A Choctaw Man”, by Karl Bodmer

of the country have preserved an impressive series of Native American shoes that goes back more than 8,000 years (e.g. Knutruff et. al. 1998). What immediately surprising is that leather moccasins do not appear until the end of the sequence. Instead, the early shoes are different varieties of slippers, made from plant fiber. Today’s closest equivalent would be a pair of crocheted houseshoes. Based upon what is found in these caves, in appears that leather moccasins may have began to be common in much of the eastern U.S. about 1000 years ago.

Moccasins can be constructed in several basic ways, and each region and Tribe has its own traditional variety(s). Today, we have three excellent sources for learning about Choctaw moccasins: written descriptions, drawings, and a few pieces surviving in family or museum collections.

The following description of Choctaw moccasins was written just before the Trail of Tears:

Their shoes or moccasins are made of deer-skin, deprived of the hair, and exposed to the smoke of a wood fire, till it attains a deep brown color. The moccasin is formed of a single piece of this leather, with one seam behind, and another from the instep to the toe. A flap of about two inches is left round the place where the foot enters, and this flap, together with the seam, is fancifully decorated with beads and porcupine quills dyed blue and red. If worn by a man, it is edged with scarlet hair, - if intended for a woman, it reaches to near the calf of the leg, and is ornamented with red binding or ferret; a moccasin of plain leather is worn in common. (Young 1830:14).

To this description, we can add several period pictures. In 1834, Swiss artist Karl Bodmer traveled to Mississippi and did a series of paintings of the Choctaw people he met. Five of paintings show details of Choctaw moccasins. Each of these matches what Young wrote: the moccasins are made of dark brown leather, they have a seam running on top of the foot from the instep to the toe, and a flap that rolls down and the opening of the moccasin. We also see that these moccasins are pucker-toed, meaning that in construction, the material is gathered up around the toe in such a manner that a number of small creases are created on top of the moccasin. Pucker-toe was once the main style in the Southeast, and variants were made by the Chickasaw, Muscogee Creek, Seminole, and Cherokee.

Several early Choctaw moccasins still survive. Two pairs of adult moccasins and



Early-style Choctaw moccasins, NMAI # 136067.000 (flaps up)

a single child’s moccasin are housed at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. Wavy edges on these shoes indicate that they were made without the use of scissors, and they and they are sewn up with thin leather thongs. They represent an early form, and are identical to Young’s description and Bodmer’s paintings. The agreement of these three independent sources suggests that this type of moccasin was once pretty common in many if not all Choctaw communities.

Choctaw moccasins in two other collections in Oklahoma tell us about changing styles in more recent years. Although made of traditional braidtain leather, these pairs were constructed using scissors, metal needles, glass beads, and store-bought thread. These moccasins have a seam running up the top of the foot, like the pucker-toe, but careful trimming and fine stitches have been used to remove all of the wrinkles at the toe.



Choctaw moccasins, Museum of the Red River, Idabel (flaps up)

Also, the flap is cut shorter so that it doesn’t extend forward beyond the ankle. One such pair of Choctaw moccasins in the Museum of the Red River in Idabel, is decorated with green and purple beads and probably dates to the late 1800s. A single Choctaw moccasin in the Confederate Memorial Museum in Atoka, may be a generation or two later. Beadwork hides the seam on its instep entirely, and Choctaw ribbon work decorates the flaps.

Unfortunately, to the best of the authors’ knowledge, no surviving pictures or examples of the early-style high-

top Choctaw women’s moccasin, mentioned by Young, still exist. However, some of the surviving moccasins made by nearby Tribes are very similar, and give us a great starting point for making the old-style Choctaw women’s moccasins (see photo).

Similarly, we can use documented evidence from other Tribes, to suggest that Choctaws also may have applied sticky tree sap to the soles, almost like today’s Shoe Goo TM in order to make them more durable.

In the past, our ancestors did not wear their moccasins constantly the same way that we live in our shoes today. Moccasins were worn in cold weather to keep the feet warm, and when traveling through thorns or rough terrain to keep the feet from getting scratched. Around home, they often simply went barefoot (c.f. du Pratz 2006:371 [1758]).

So, what about actually wearing a pair of Choctaw moccasins? They are warm, soft, very light weight, breathe well, are extremely quiet, and fit like gloves. Although they are not waterproof and do not afford sensitive feet the same cushion as a thick rubber sole, they will probably be the most comfortable shoes you have ever put on.

For more information about Choctaw moccasins, and to make a pair of your own, please come to one of the classes hosted by the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department. These will be held at a different location around Choctaw country each month. Enrollment is free, but please bring a pair of scissors if you intend to make moccasins. Hides may be purchased at the time of class for \$50. Please call 1-800-522-6170 ext. 2216 to reserve a spot.



Later-style Choctaw moccasin, Atoka Confederate Memorial Museum

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Knutruff, Jenna, S. Gail DeHart, Michael J. O’Brien 1998 7500 Years of Prehistoric Footwear from Arnold Research Cave, Missouri. Science 281(5373):72-75

Young, F.B. 1830 Natives of the Choktah Tribe of North American Indians. Edinburgh Journal of Natural and Geographical Science 2:13-17.

## Choctaw Moccasin Classes

Times and Locations:

### Poteau

March 7 at 5 p.m.

Location:

Poteau Field Office, 208 B Street

### Atoka

April 14 at 6 p.m.

Location:

Atoka Field Office, 1410 S. Gin Rd.

### Oklahoma City

May 27 at 5 p.m.

Location:

OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance, 5230 S. Youngs. Blvd.

Please mail your questions to Iti Fabussa c/o BISKINIK, P.O. Box 1210, Durant, OK 74702, or email biskinik@choctawnation.com with “Iti Fabussa” in the subject line.

Editor’s note: Due to the volume of the responses we get for this column our writers will prioritize the questions according to topics and space availability. We will publish as many as possible in future issues of the newspaper.

## Services and cultural activities keep Atoka Field Office busy

The Choctaw Nation field office in Atoka is an eventful place to be during the month with activities going on regularly for those wishing to learn more about the culture, those seeking services or those just wishing to socialize with fellow Choctaws.

Senior luncheons are held every Wednesday afternoons at the center. The lunch is open to all Choctaw seniors in the area and those who attend always enjoy a good meal and fellowship.

For those seeking to learn their Native language, Choctaw classes are held every Monday and Tuesday night from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and are open to the public.

Tribal arts and craft classes take place every other Thursday evening from 6 to 9 p.m. The classes include beading, basket making, dressmaking, moccasin making, and other forms of tribal art. Various subject matter experts in the crafts teach the classes, which are also open to the public.

GED classes are also held at the Atoka center from 1 to 4 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. For more information on Choctaw GED services, contact the Adult Education program at 800-522-6170.

Additionally, several local organizations, including the Atoka Youth Advisory Board and Atoka County Upward Bound groups, hold monthly meetings at the center.

The field office also has applications for many tribal

services offered for those seeking assistance. Offices at the center include Community Health Representative, Community Based Social Worker, Tribal Police, Indian Child Welfare/Family Preservation and District 10 Councilman, Anthony Dillard. In total, the center has 13 employees.

Anyone with questions about services offered or activities at the center can contact the Atoka field office representative, Twilia Pittman, at 580-889-6147.

## Choctaw Traditional Pottery Class

### Durant

March 20, April 10 & April 24 – 5-9 p.m.  
Pottery Studio behind Cultural Events Building  
4451 Choctaw Rd.

### Poteau

March 21 (Class ending) – 5-9:30 p.m.  
Poteau Field Office, 208 B Street

### Idabel

March 22 (Class ending) – 12:30-4:30 p.m.  
Idabel Field Office, 2408 Lincoln Rd.

### Antlers

March 24, April 7, April 21 – 6-9 p.m.  
Antlers Library & Community Building, 104 S.E. 2nd St.

**Note: Regular pottery classes will be ending in Poteau and Idabel in April. Regular classes will continue in Durant and Antlers.**

## Assistance for ranchers affected by winter weather

The USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA), recently issued a reminder to livestock producers that FSA programs may be available to assist them. Many are dealing with harsh winter weather, which is causing serious harm to livestock and forage due to heavy snow, ice and extremely cold temperatures.

Kevin Dale, the Bryan County FSA Director who also serves as the Choctaw Nation local FSA contact, has this to say about the weather and the programs offered by FSA “This is turning out to be a tough winter for many farmers and ranchers in Oklahoma and learning about our FSA programs is an important step for producers to take,” said Mr. Dale. “We need producers to document the number and kind of livestock that have died as a direct result of these winter storms and timely

notify the local FSA office of these losses. There may be situations where producers are transporting feed to their livestock. Producers should document these additional costs.”

FSA administers several programs that help producers recover from livestock deaths that are beyond normal mortality rates, losses of purchased and/or harvested forage, and with the additional costs of providing or transporting feed. Among the key programs are the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP). For livestock death losses to be eligible under LIP, producers must file a notice of loss with the local FSA office within 30 calendar days from when the loss is apparent to the producer.

Dale also encouraged producers to use Hay Net on the FSA website (http://www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet), an online service that allows producers with hay and those who need hay to post ads so they can make connections. Hay Net is a popular site for farmers and ranchers who have an emergency need, such as the one caused by the current wintry conditions. Individual ads can be posted free of charge by producers who complete a simple online registration form the first time they use the site.

For more information about these FSA programs visit at www.fsa.usda.gov/ok or one of the following FSA offices located in the Choctaw Nation: Atoka – 580-889-2554; Durant – 580-924-4131; Hugo – 580-326-3655; Idabel – 580-286-2574; McAlester – 918-423-4073; or Poteau – 918-647-2047.