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The Official Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

March 2013 Issue



Trail of Tears Walk to be held in Spiro

The Choctaw Nation will be honoring ancestors who made the long journey from Mississippi with a commemorative Trail of Tears Walk on Saturday, May 18, at Spiro. An opening ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. at the historic Skullyville Cemetery and the approximately 3.5-mile walk will end at the Choctaw Community Center at 19400 Aes Road off Highway 9 in Spiro.

Please park at the community center where buses will be available to transport participants to the cemetery. Drivers will begin taking passengers at 9 a.m. Lunch will also be shared with everyone following the walk. The Choctaw Nation invites everyone to join in on this special day.

T-shirt order form on Page 2

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The Mission of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

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

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Partnership to benefit Native veterans

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and Department of Veterans Affairs enter Reimbursement Agreement

American Indian veterans will soon have increased access to health care services closer to home following a recent Choctaw Nation and Department of Veterans Affairs joint agreement.

"Native Americans have served in the military at a proportionately high rate compared to other groups," said Chief Greg Pyle. "The Choctaw Nation is committed to improving access to care for our Native veterans, as earned by their service to our country."

As a result of the agreement entered on March 1, the VA is now able to reimburse the Choctaw Nation for direct care services provided to eligible American Indian veterans seen at Choctaw health centers and at its hospital. VA co-payments do not apply to direct care services provided by the Nation to eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans under this agreement.

"The Choctaw Nation and the VA have worked for many months to come to an equitable agreement that would ensure access to quality health care would be made available to our veterans living in our communities,



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

Choctaw Nation Health Services Executive Director Mickey Peercy, left, and James Floyd, medical center director of the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center in Muskogee, sign a historic agreement on March 1 that allows for improved access to medical treatment for eligible Native American veterans.

particularly in rural areas," said Mickey Peercy, Choctaw Nation Health Services executive director.

This agreement implements a critical provision in the recently reauthorized Indian Health Care Improvement Act, passed as part of the Affordable Care Act, allowing this partnership for reimbursement.

Perspective on the issue...
Native American veterans are more likely to lack health insurance and to have a disability, service connected or otherwise, than veterans of other races, according to a 2012 VA special report.

YAB leading the way

By BRET MOSS
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

It is an ongoing effort, supporting and encouraging the youth of a society, to rise from childhood and become productive members and leaders within their communities. The Choctaw Nation Youth Advisory Board (YAB) Program is an invaluable asset in that ongoing quest from adolescence to adulthood.

"I've learned a lot about leadership," says Alice Stephens, a junior at Howe High School and four-year member of YAB. She, along with hundreds of junior high and high school students across the Choctaw Nation, has access to a program that can utilize current leadership talents as well as encourage and facilitate the development of new skills.

"Our goal for YAB'sters is to help them find the leader in themselves, reach their full potential and teach them how important it is to be a servant leader," states Choctaw Nation Youth Empowerment Director Martina Hawkins.

This goal is reached by hosting community outreach events such as fun runs and coat drives, as well as working with national charities and non-profits such as Salvation Army and Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT). The students are placed in roles in which they can lead such events to success, all while under the guidance of Choctaw Nation outreach specialists.

Through the YAB program, communities across the Choctaw Nation are benefiting from the efforts of the motivated youth. From elementary students learning that violence is not the answer with project Falvmmichi, to the environment seeing improvements through recycling efforts, the YAB program has made a positive impact on communities throughout Choctaw Nation.

The true merit found in YAB is not only the benefit the community receives from the work of the youth, but also the advantages the youth receive from their work with each other.

"It brought me out of my comfort zone," states Alice, who says she use to be shy, but has since learn to be outgoing and involved. Alice is the secretary of her YAB chapter, and as such has acquired the duty of keeping the chapter organized. She keeps the minutes at monthly meetings, plans dates from various events and attends meetings outside her chapter, including Choctaw Nation's Tribal Council meeting.

Alice is particularly proud of her contribution to the Pink Zone project, where her YAB group cooperated with Howe and Cameron schools to host a breast cancer awareness fundraiser. As secretary, she took responsibility for accumulating T-shirt orders from students, fans and athletes, and assuring the merchandise was ordered in the correct amount.

Her time in YAB began in the eighth grade, when both her big brother and her YAB sponsor, Shonnie Hall, encouraged her to jump into the action. She was reluctant in the beginning, but after participating in her first event, a Halloween trail of treats, she was hooked.

She has grown to be a source of encouragement and a social butterfly during her time in YAB. "She is very much an uplifter," Shonnie states, speaking highly of Alice's



Choctaw Nation: BRET MOSS

Morgan Moffit and other YAB members make sure the seniors stay safe and hydrated during a senior citizen walk-a-thon.

ability to make everyone feel included and encourage new members to be active.

Though only her senior year remains as a YAB student, Alice plans to continue her service to YAB after graduation, helping in any way she can. "I don't want it all to stop," she exclaims. "When I think of YAB, I think of happy memories and fun," she continues.

One such memory she holds in high regard is the annual YAB retreat in Grapevine, Texas. "It was hands on... a really great time for all of us," says Alice.

Attending the same conference was four-year YAB member and Stigler High School senior, Jana Fagg, who also remembers the event well, speaking of how she enjoyed meeting YAB students from many places.

Just like Alice, Jana has been active in many YAB events, hosting a senior citizens dance and working hard with the Falvmmichi program. In the Falvmmichi program, she works with second-graders teaching them about non-violent ways to deal with conflict. "They get really excited," she says as she tells of how the children enjoyed the visits from the YAB students.

Jana is also the secretary of her YAB chapter and is known as someone on which the group can depend. "I try to volunteer at everything I can," mentions Jana, expressing how she is always sure to keep things running smoothly, ensuring that if something needs done, there is someone to do it or she is there to complete the task herself.

Jana made note of how much YAB has got her involved with her peers and community, stating before YAB she did

See YAB, Page 8

Tribal Council meets in regular February session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met in regular session on Feb. 9 in Tvshka Homma. Council members voted to:

- Approve application for the Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation Comprehensive Tribal Victim Assistance Program
 - Approve application for the Native American Basic Grant
 - Approve application for the Coordinated Tribal assistance Solicitation Comprehensive Tribal Justice Systems Strategic Planning.
 - Approved application for the Connecting Kids to Coverage Outreach and Enrollment (Cycle III) Grant
 - Approved application for the Native Youth and Culture Fund
 - Approve application for the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
 - Approve application for the Demonstration grants for the Indian Children Program
 - Approve application and proposed acquisition and Holding of Title to Parcel in Trust by the United States for the Benefit of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (Antlers, Heavener and McCurtain County)
 - Approve funds and budget for Assets for Independence Grant Program (CAB2)
 - Approve the articles of incorporation and by-laws of Choctaw Defense Services Inc.
 - Approve the Choctaw Defense Services Inc. to authorize the submission of an application for certification as an SBA 8(a) Business Development Program participant
- The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council holds its regular session at 10 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month in the Council Chambers at Tvshka Homma.



Making investments in our people

*From the Desk of
Chief Gregory E. Pyle*

The Choctaw Nation continues to grow with pride, hope and success. The most important growth is shown by the investment we are making in our #1 resource - our people.

We want to continue to create employment opportunities for as many tribal members as possible. Some of these opportunities are through business development and expansions at Choctaw Nation, and some opportunities are career growths made possible through education and vocational training programs.

The many education services offered by the Choctaw Nation provide citizens of the tribe with tools for success.

Head Start classes, higher education scholarships, and career development certifications are just a few of the ways we are investing in the future of tribal citizens.

Heritage and culture of the Choctaw Nation are of optimal

importance. With the help of the School of Choctaw Language, we are making sure tribal staff are all learning some basic words in our Native tongue. On a regular basis, the school issues a "word of the day" with an audio link so we can hear the word or phrase as well as see the written word. Choctaw words are available on choctawnation.com!

The next time you call into the headquarters or visit one of our offices, expect to be greeted with "Halito!"

Pride in heritage is obvious when I see several generations teaching each other the art of basket weaving, pottery and beadwork. A recent public cultural awareness meeting had rapt attention for storytelling and Choctaw dance. Stickball games have had a tremendous comeback in recent years. People are participating in events at cultural meetings in record numbers, wearing their traditional dress. I am thankful to see people of all ages proudly proclaiming their Choctaw heritage!

Our Nation now is over 200,000 Choctaws strong, and our future looks bright! Chahta Sia Hoke!

The life and power of the Gospel

Easter is the commemoration of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

My favorite Choctaw Hymn on Easter is Choctaw Hymn No. 47. It is entitled, "Christ Bled for Me." This hymn describes the Gospel. I translate only the first verse of three verses: "Jesus, my Savior Who gives life, was nailed to the Cross, He suffered as He hung there, He shed His Blood, He died in my place."

This Hymn is precious for those who know Jesus Christ as their Savior from sin.

The Bible is a Book of Blood. We soon learn that as we read the Bible. And it is only the Blood that gives life to our teaching and power to the Word of God. The Blood is the life and power of the Gospel. The Gospel is Good News described in Paul's letter in First Corinthians 15:1-4.

The Bible claims for itself it is a "Living" Book, and the only living Book in the world, and is able to give life to those who will believe with their hearts what it teaches. We read in Hebrews 4:12:

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The word translated from the Greek word "quick" in this verse, is "living" or "alive." The Word of God is a Living Word, wholly distinct from all other books for just one reason, that is, it contains blood circulating through every page and in every verse. Without the blood in the Bible it would be like any other book, for the Bible plainly teaches that the life is in the Blood. This truth is given to us in Leviticus 17:11:

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

Life, God said, is in the blood of the flesh, so that there can be no life without the blood. No man ever dies until his blood stops circulating.

All this is true of a physical body and it points to a greater spiritual truth. The Church of Jesus Christ is called His body, and born again believers "are members of His body" and members one of another.

In this body Jesus Christ is the head and all believers are the members. These members are related by the blood of Jesus Christ. The life of each member depends on His blood and is dependent for life, nourishment, cleansing and growth upon the blood of the Lamb of God for "the Life is in the Blood." These members may be separated in the body like the hands and feet.

So it is with the body of Christ the Church. They may differ in other ways but all who have trusted Jesus Christ, the head of the body, are brothers by blood - the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Chaplain's Corner



REV. BERTRAM BOBB
Tribal Chaplain

When Adam ate of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, he sinned, he died. He died spiritually and eventually he died physically. Since life is in the blood, when man sinned, something happened to the blood. Sin affected the blood of man.

For this reason sin is not in the flesh, but in the blood. And flesh can only be called "sinful flesh" because it is nourished and fed and sustained by sinful blood. And sin is transmitted through the blood to all of Adam's descendants. "For in that one sinned all have sinned."

You remember how Adam and Eve after their sin had tried to make fig leaf aprons to cover their shame. That is the history of man, instead of realizing that sin needs not covering but to be taken away, man has ever after been trying to save himself by the work of his own hands.

Adam and Eve failed and man will always fail when they try to save themselves by the work of their own hands. After Adam and Eve's sin and failure to cover their sin by

their own works God came to them and we read in Genesis 3:21: "Unto Adam also and unto his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

In this first record of sacrifice, we have the whole story of the blood. Notice three things about this act of God which was a preview of His Plan of Salvation.

First, it must be God's work and not man's. God made the coat of skins. Salvation must be all of the Lord.

Second, salvation must be by death of an innocent substitute. Since these coats were made of skins an animal had to die to provide the covering a substitute.

Third, it must be the shedding of blood, for the animal must be killed to give its skin and in this sacrifice the blood must be shed. Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.

The teaching of blood shed in this first sacrifice runs like a scarlet line all through the Bible. Today we see on the Cross God's perfect Lamb of which all the other lambs sacrificed were a picture and a type and we see the One who met the three conditions of the Father.

Have you seen the uselessness of saving yourself by your own efforts, your own good works?

In closing, I ask, "Have you been washed in the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ?" Repent means to turn around, change your mind and receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. You can pray, "Lord, I realize I am a sinner. I trust Jesus Christ as my Savior." Will you do that?

Thank you for your prayers. Pray for our Nations and for its leaders. Pray for our brave men and women in our Armed Forces.

Growth in tribe leads to economic success

*From the Desk of
Assistant Chief Gary Batton*

Commerce development projects are vital to the Choctaw Nation for many reasons. Businesses provide jobs, and also provide revenue to fund services for citizens. Successful economic development ventures of the Choctaw Nation, such as the gaming operations, travel plazas, print services, manufacturing, global staffing contract services and shopping center, also provide revenue that helps construct new facilities.

Growth you will see in the near future includes several new wellness centers in districts across the tribal boundaries, to help with the goal of a healthier lifestyle for our citizens. Plans are also on tap for additional Independent Elderly Homes to alleviate the need to housing for our senior citizens. They are living longer, healthier lives, and we want them to be in an affordable, nice home they can enjoy.

The Choctaw Nation leadership is



working hard to ensure continuation of services to Choctaw people regardless of the federal sequestration. Being self-reliant through business revenue is vital to continue meeting the needs of citizens of the Choctaw Nation. The leaders of our tribe take honor in being fiscally responsible for this generation and generations to come. We have an ongoing hope that our tribe will continue to grow and prosper. We are growing with pride, hope and success!

Salt pork and the pursuit of sweet tea

*Vonna Shults
Guest Columnist*

Bacon. Bacon is everywhere. We see bacon on our breakfast plates, on our cheeseburger at lunch, wrapped around a filet mignon for dinner, and we may enjoy bacon-flavored ice cream for dessert. Folks love the flavor of bacon, have their preference for the wood used to smoke it, and have a favorite brand.

Chahta people love to gather together with friends and family to socialize with each other and more often than not, food is shared. One of the most popular Choctaw foods can easily be described as "bacon on steroids" and we call it salt pork.

My first experience with salt pork came many years ago in the heart of Jayhawk country in Lawrence, Kan. I had traveled there with a group of fellow Choctaw Nation employees to attend a community meeting with nearby Choctaw families.

While we were there, a local Choctaw group invited us to eat a traditional meal at their church. I was so excited because I never had the pleasure of enjoying a traditional Choctaw dinner before.

As I watched them prepare the food, I noticed one gentleman carefully watching over a Dutch oven and ever so often he would very carefully remove some sort of fried food. I was not close enough to tell exactly what he was preparing, so I assumed by the size of the portion and the hot grease that he was preparing fried catfish for all of us to enjoy. I love to eat catfish, as most Oklahomans do, and I was thrilled to enjoy one of my favorite foods for dinner.

Finally, we were called over to eat. We were instructed to go through the line to fix ourselves a plate. I stacked plenty of this "catfish" on my plate.

As I took the first bite, I noticed right away that it was very salty and tasted a lot like bacon! I made the comment to my co-worker about how my "catfish" tasted and she immediately burst into laughter at my ignorance. She quickly let me know that I was not eating catfish, but salt pork.

I felt like a fool, but I was a happy fool because in my mistake I had gotten plenty of this delicious creation for myself. I ate and savored every morsel.

After our dinner, we then greeted all of the guests that had traveled to come



to the meeting. My responsibility at the meeting was to take photos of anyone who wanted a photo with Chief Pyle. We would then print the photo out for you to take home that evening.

It was at the beginning of the photo session when I realized my mistake in eating so much salt pork - it makes you very thirsty.

Desperately, I searched to see if I had any sweet tea left to drink. It was empty. I then searched to see if my co-worker had any tea remaining. Her glass was also empty. At this point I am desperate. My thirst had made my mouth feel as dry as C-3PO's joints as he crossed the Tatooine desert.

I wondered why my fellow co-workers had not warned me as they sat next to me at dinner about the perils of eating too much salt pork. I made a mental note to question them thoroughly, but right now finding something to drink was my number one priority.

I turned to check on my waiting guests, the thirsty part of me hoping for a small line of people who were willing to wait their turn with Chief. No such luck, the line is out the door of the church.

Finally, the last photo is taken and printed. I sprint from the sanctuary of the church and used their kitchen faucet as a drinking fountain. Never has there been a time that tap water tasted as good as what I was drinking directly from the faucet, using my hand as a cup. Did I even bother to wash my hands? I do not know, nor did I care.

As I was leaving the meeting, I felt much better. As we walked out of the church, I thanked the elders for the meal they had worked so hard to provide for us and told them next time I would only eat two small slices of salt pork.

I told them what had happened to me earlier and how much salt pork I had eaten. They were very gracious and did their best not to laugh out loud at me. We then bid each other "chi pisa la chike."

I knew after that evening that salt pork, in small portions, was a very delicious addition to a meal. It is a true delicacy of the Chahta people.

Only now I needed to learn how to prepare it for my family...

Watch the Biskinik for Vonna Shults' next column on how to cook salt pork.



Trail of Tears Walk T-shirt Order Form

2013 T-shirts are blue.
Sizes available are:
Children - (2-4), (6-8), (10-12) and (14-16)
Adults - Small, Medium, Large,
X-Large, 2X, and 3X

Item	Size	Quantity	Total Price
T-shirt - \$10 ea.	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
Cap - \$10 ea.	_____	_____	_____

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Phone Number _____
E-Mail _____

Price includes postage and handling. Limited supply of Children and 3X sizes.
To order, send payment (NO PERSONAL CHECKS) with completed form to:

**Trail of Tears Walk T-shirt
P.O. Box 1210, Durant, OK 74702-1210**

PEOPLE YOU KNOW

Pierce celebrates 30 years as Choctaw Nation employee

For Choctaw Nation Purchasing Director Donna Pierce, celebrating her 30th anniversary of being a tribal employee on Jan. 31 was a proud moment in her career.

When Donna, who resides in Boswell, initially came to work for the Choctaw Nation, she began as an employee of the Higher Education department and from there moved to the position of secretary for the assistant chief. She has since been a part of the purchasing department for about 27 years.

As purchasing director, Donna holds several responsibilities and helps the department maintain its productivity. "I oversee 12

employees," she explained, "purchasing agents, the assistant purchasing director and shipping and receiving."

Donna said the Purchasing department plays an important role in how the Choctaw Nation functions. "Employees have a central location to place orders and they always know where their supplies are coming from," she explained.

Donna continued, saying the tribe actually saves money by utilizing the Purchasing department. The team of purchasing employees are well informed on where to get the best-quality supplies for Choctaw Nation employees at the best price. "That's



DONNA PIERCE

our job, to save the programs money," said Donna.

Donna said she has the opportunity to learn something

new every day, which is her favorite part of her job. "It's a different thing every day, and it's anything," she said. "You learn a lot in Purchasing that I think, in any other department, you wouldn't have the opportunity to know."

Not only does Donna have great opportunities presented to her while working for the Purchasing department, being a Choctaw Nation tribal employee has brought her much joy in her life, she said. Donna enjoys being a service to the people and being involved in community projects. "I love meeting people inside and outside of the office," she continued.

Donna also said that be-

ing able to witness how fast the Choctaw Nation has grown as a whole for the past 30 years of her employment has been a blessing.

"I feel very proud to have worked for the tribe for all of these years," said Donna. "I have a very good staff, Chief and Assistant Chief. It's always been a pleasure to get up and come to work here."

Since Donna has enjoyed her time as a tribal employee for 30 years, she said she encourages people who are interested in working for the Choctaw Nation to fulfill their wish. "There are so many areas you can get into, not just office work," she said.

"There are lots of opportunities in different areas."

Another positive aspect of her job, Donna said, are her fellow co-workers. "In all my years here, I've never met anyone with whom I couldn't work."

In her spare time outside of the office, Donna said she enjoys gardening and spending time with her grandkids.

When asked about retirement, she said she is still throwing around the idea. "I haven't made my mind up about retirement," she said, "but even if I do, I plan on staying involved with the Choctaw community centers. I won't be totally saying goodbye to the tribe."



The McAlester senior citizens have elected a new slate of officers. Pictured left to right are Treasurer Buck Durant, Secretary Mary Wilket, Vice President Eva Lanning and President Johnnie Kemp.

President Kemp has designated the first Wednesday of each month as Cultural Day. The seniors are encouraged to wear Native American dresses, shirts, moccasins, beadwork, etc. They will be learning the Choctaw language, the Lord's Prayer in sign language and see demonstrations on making Choctaw dress.

Happy birthday, D'shayla

D'shayla Marie Bohanan celebrated her ninth birthday on March 9 along with her cousin, Hailey Cusler. Their family would like to wish them both a happy birthday.

D'shayla's mother is also proud of her for making all A's and B's this semester.



Happy birthday, Nadine

Happy Valentine's Day and happy birthday to Nadine on Feb. 16 from her children, Marilyn Taylor, Larry, Debra, Matthew, Jefferson and Sherry McDonald, who all thank God for her. Her family and friends wish her a happy birthday as well.



Coalgate 'royalty'

Maggie Anderson, 88, and Otis Moore, 95, were crowned queen and king for District 12 in Coalgate at their senior lunch, held on Feb. 13.



Happy birthday, Mason

Happy 18th birthday to Mason Moran on April 16. Mason is an excellent student and will graduate from Southmoore High School this year and enter college this fall. He enjoys golf, hiking and life. Happy birthday, from his family, grandparents, John and Donna Moran, parents, Mike and Lisa Moran, and sister, Bailey Moran.



Malia takes home the gold

We would like to acknowledge a small warrior in our midst. Malia Cardle competed Feb. 2 at the Sooner State Games Judo competition in Moore. She brought herself, her immediate family and her Choctaw community great honor by winning the gold medal.

At 47 pounds, she's quite the handful. She won both of her matches in 6 seconds. Malia says all the hard training and running that her coach, two-time Olympian Patrick Burris, makes them do makes the team stronger and faster. Malia turned 7 years old on March 9. Good job, Malia!



Happy birthday, Goodfellow sisters

Happy birthday to the Goodfellow twins. Melody and Skylar Goodfellow will turn 9 years old on March 29. Their grandmothers, Dottie Goodfellow and Grandma "Bo Bo" Long, as well as their mom and dad wish them a very happy birthday.



Tamaka receives Jefferson Award

Congratulations to Tamaka Bailey, son of Dorothy Durant, who received the Jefferson Award. Tamaka is pictured with the co-founder of the award, Sam Beard, at the Jefferson Award Ceremony, which honored those who volunteer their time and effort for their communities. Tamaka received the award for his fundraising productions for the veterans in California, his Native American productions and teaching the Choctaw language, which he also puts into his productions.

Tamaka hopes to eventually be able to bring his productions into the Choctaw Nation casinos, community centers and the Labor Day Festival for the kids. If he is able, he would like to do fundraising shows for the Choctaw Nation veterans as well.



Tiffany and Christopher wed

Congratulations to Tiffany Elizabeth Sue Goade, daughter of Helen Elizabeth Alexander and Richard D. Goade, and Christopher Andrew Stone, who were married on Feb. 14 at the Cleveland County Courthouse. The formal ceremony is set for 1 p.m. April 20 at the historic Fort Reno Wedding Chapel in El Reno, reception to follow at same location.

Happy birthday, Imaiya

Imaiya Kyle'e Clark turned 1 year old on Jan. 11. She celebrated her birthday at her home in McAlester with her family. She is the youngest daughter of Bryan and Kogee Clark of McAlester. She is the maternal granddaughter of Danny Clark of Farmersville, Texas, and Becky Hallford of McAlester. Her maternal grandparents are Joyce Kogee Noon of Wetumka and the late Louis Morgan of Okmulgee. Imaiya is Choctaw and Creek. She is the paternal great-granddaughter of Walter and Sarah Amos of McAlester and the maternal great-granddaughter of Lee Anna and Nathan Noon of Wetumka. Happy birthday, "Bum Bum," from mommy and daddy!



Drake turns 7

Drake Stubbs turned 7 years old on March 1. He celebrated at the family fun center in Paris, Texas, with family and friends. Drake, your family is so proud of you and you are a blessing from God.

Drake is the son of Cody and Amber Ward of Swink and Jo Stubbs of Boswell. He has a brother, Xanden, and a sister, Dravon. Paternal grandparents are John and Rhoda Stubbs of Sunkist. Great-grandparents are John and Georgia Stubbs of Boswell and the late Clem Shawhart and Betty Shawhart of Fort Towson. Maternal grandparents are Becky Peters of Hugo and the late Terry Ward and Brenda Ward of Sawyer.



Cherish teaches Lord's Prayer

Cherish Wilkerson, granddaughter of Dennis and Dena Cantrell, took time out of her day to teach the McAlester Choctaw senior citizens The Lord's Prayer in sign language.

Cherish is a full-time student at Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton. She is the reigning Pittsburg County Senior Princess and visits the senior center every Wednesday to teach the Lord's Prayer.



Teena succeeds in chili cook-off

Teena Jayne Friedel of Irving, Texas, was named the 2012 reserve champion in the one-person show category at the Terlingua International Chili Championship. Last year, the Chili Appreciation Society International sanctioned over 500 chili cook-offs throughout the United States, Canada and the Virgin Islands and contributed over \$1.2 million to charity. Each November, those who qualify by winning throughout the year are invited to participate in the international championship held in Terlingua, Texas.

Teena Jayne, also known as Dream Catcher, is the 2011 international show champion and has been competing since 2006.

For more information on cooking chili for charity, visit chili.org.



Seneca turns 2

Seneca Sage Clark celebrated her second birthday on Sept. 11 at her home in McAlester with her family. She is the oldest child of Bryan and Kogee Clark. Seneca is both Choctaw and Creek. She is the paternal granddaughter of Becky Hallford of McAlester and Danny Clark of Farmersville, Texas. She is the maternal granddaughter of Joyce Noon-Voice of Wetumka and the late William Morgan of Okmulgee. She is the paternal great-granddaughter of Walter and Sarah Amos of McAlester and the maternal great-granddaughter of the late Lee Anna and Nathan Noon of Wetumka. Her mom and dad would like to wish her the happiest of birthdays.



On Feb. 14, Justine (Anderson) Starr celebrated her 90th birthday with family in Phoenix, Ariz. Pictured are four generations of the Starr family. Justine with several of her great-grandchildren and great-grandchildren. In all, Justine has four children, eight grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren.

Atoka Health Fair provides services, information to tribal members



Jennifer Wagoner and Norene Crow visit with Gary Jackson of Choctaw Nation Patient Relations at the Atoka Health Fair on Feb. 13.



Choctaw Nation: KAREN JACOB
Choctaw Nation community health nurse Lois Wright takes Bob Vickey's blood pressure.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The BISKINIK is changing its policy on birthday, anniversary and education announcements. Beginning with the May 2013 BISKINIK, we will accept milestone birthday greetings for ages 1, 13, 16, 21, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80 and above. Couples may send in announcements of their silver wedding anniversary at 25 years of marriage, golden anniversary at 50 years or 60+ anniversaries. News from graduates of higher education only and sports submissions will be accepted as space allows. We apologize for any inconvenience. This is a necessary adjustment due to rising production and mailing expenses. Please feel free to post all of your family's special events on the Choctaw Nation's Facebook and Twitter pages.

2013 Durant Stock Show

- Bovine -



Lane Stewart wins Market Steer Grand Champion .



Colby Jones wins Market Steer Reserve Grand Champion.

Grand Market Steer: Lane Stewart, Healdton
Reserve Grand Steer: Colby Jones, Coalgate
Bronze Medallion Steer: Ashlyn Kellam, Silo
Grand Supreme Heifer: Abbee Schoolfield, Kingston
Reserve Grand Heifer: Kes Reeves, Kingston
Bronze Medallion Heifer: Merideth Behrens
Junior Beef Showmanship: Ashlyn Kellam, Silo
Senior Beef Showmanship: Kody Silas, Tecumseh

Heifer, English Division

Class I: 1. Kody Silas, Tecumseh; 2. Hunter Pierce, Caddo; 3. Hunter Simco, Gunter
Class II: 1. Lane Stewart, Healdton; 2. Will Shelby, Madill; 3. Zachary Nichols, Achille
Class III: 1. Merideth Behrens, Colbert; 2. Hunter Pierce, Caddo; 3. Samuel Fields, Wright City
Class IV: 1. Ashlyn Kellam, Silo; 2. Tea Elliott-Fox, Tishomingo; 3. Hunter Simco, Gunter
 Breed Champion: Kody Silas
 Reserve Breed Champ: Ashlyn Kellam

Heifer, Continental Division

Class I: 1. Brooke Gibson, Morris; 2. Austin Gibson, Morris; 3. Merideth Behrens, Colbert
Class II: 1. Abbee Schoolfield, Kingston; 2. Ashlyn Kellam, Silo
Class III: 1. Jessica Williams, Ryan; 2. Landree Eaves, Harmony
Class IV: 1. Merideth Behrens, Colbert; 2. Will Shelby, Madill; 3. Garrett Addington, Clayton
 Breed Champion: Abbee Schoolfield
 Reserve Breed Champ: Merideth Behrens

Heifer, Brahman Division

Breed Champ: Dustin Cochran, Tushka
 Reserve Breed Champ: Dustin Cochran, Tushka

Heifer, AOB Division

Class I: 1. Whitney Jackson, Silo; 2. Kara Stanglin, Colbert; 3. Kaleb Brown, Lindsay
Class II: 1. Lydia Fish, Kingston; 2. Kara Stanglin, Colbert; 3. Kell Brown, Lindsay
Class III: 1. Kes Reeves, Kingston; 2. Taylor Mobbs, Tushka; 3. Parker Mobbs, Tushka
 Breed Champion: Kes Reeves
 Reserve Breed: Lydia Fish

Steer English Division

Class I: 1. Dakota Robinson, Caddo; 2. Judge Hartin, Madill; 3. Harmony Lee, Durant
 Breed Champion: Dakota Robinson
 Reserve Breed: Judge Hartin

Steer Continental Division

Class I: 1. Ashlyn Kellam, Silo; 2. Lane House, Tishomingo; 3. Taylor Dancer, Bennington
Class II: 1. Lane Stewart, Healdton; 2. Colby Jones, Coalgate
Class III: 1. Dakota Robinson, Caddo; 2. Jacob Hartin, Madill
 Breed Champion: Lane Stewart
 Reserve Breed Champ: Colby Jones

Steer AOB Division

Class I: 1. Ridge Stephens, Tushka; 2. Kaci Trentham, Coalgate
 Breed Champion: Ridge Stephens
 Reserve Breed Champ: Kaci Trentham

- Swine -



Holden Bell of Madill wins Swine Grand Champion

Grand Market Swine: Holden Bell, Madill
Reserve Grand Market Swine: Payne Baylor, Durant
Bronze Medallion Swine: Ashlyn Kellam, Broken Bow
Junior Swine Showmanship: Colt Conner, Tuttle
Senior Swine Showmanship: CJ Conner, Tuttle



Baylor Jestis of Durant wins Swine Reserve Grand Champion.

Berkshire Breed

Class I: 1. Julie Fielder, Maysville; 2. Rowdy Wood, Coalgate; 3. Jeremiah Weeden, Coalgate
Class II: 1. Sara Sneed, Broken Bow; 2. Makayla Crawford, Moss; 3. Chelsea Coker, Tuttle
 Breed Champion: Sara Sneed
 Reserve Breed Champion: Makayla Crawford

Chester Breed

Class I: 1. Justin Graham, Rock Creek; 2. Ethan Bean, Lukfata; 3. Hank Bradley, Silo
 Breed Champion: Justin Graham
 Reserve Breed Champion: Ethan Bean

Duroc Breed

Class I: 1. Macey Ross, Caddo; 2. Devin Emert, Bennington; 3. Ivana Hensley, Stringtown
Class II: 1. Payne Reavis, Broken Bow; 2. Laney Sparks, Caddo; 3. Holden Bell, Madill
 Breed Champion: Payne Reavis
 Reserve Breed Champion: Macey Ross

Hampshire Breed

Class I: 1. Baylor Jestis, Durant; 2. Kaitlin Fryer, Caddo; 3. Makayla Crawford, Moss
Class II: 1. Paden Stanley, Coalgate; 2. Taylor Pratt, Broken Bow; 3. Wyatt Williams, Idabel
Class III: 1. Colt Conner, Tuttle; 2. Blaine Ake, Tupelo; 3. Justin Graham, Rock Creek
Class IV: 1. CJ Conner, Tuttle; 2. Jase Collins, Wapanucka; 3. Laney Sparks, Caddo
Class V: 1. Holli Hembree, Antlers; 2. Denton Comer, Durant; 3. Marlie Leathers, Rattan
 Breed Champion: Baylor Jestis
 Reserve Breed Champion: CJ Conner

Poland Breed

Class I: 1. Kalli Battiest, Broken Bow; 2. Keona Mason, Tishomingo
 Breed Champion: Kalli Battiest
 Reserve Breed Champion: Keona Mason

Spot Breed

Class I: 1. Sara Sneed, Broken Bow; 2. Payne Reavis, Broken Bow; 3. Taylor Pratt, Broken Bow
Class II: 1. Tad Bradley, Silo; 2. Summer Gamble, Broken Bow; 3. Stephanie Cusey, Coalgate
 Breed Champion: Sara Sneed
 Reserve Breed Champion: Tad Bradley

Yorkshire Breed

Class I: 1. Baylor Jestis, Durant; 2. Wyatt Williams, Idabel; 3. Dillon Bowen, Silo
Class II: 1. Payne Reavis, Broken Bow; 2. Tyler Boyett, Rattan
Class III: 1. Lillabeth Whitlow, Grant-Goodland
 Breed Champion: Baylor Jestis
 Reserve Breed Champion: Wyatt Williams

Cross Breed

Class I: 1. Madelynn Phillips, Boswell; 2. Corby Ake, Tupelo
Class II: 1. Baylor Jestis, Durant; 2. Cole Broughton, Tushka; 3. Jady Will, Kiowa
Class III: 1. Holden Bell, Madill; 2. Kaylea Bailey, Antlers; 3. Jaysa Northcutt, Tishomingo
Class IV: 1. Wyatt Williams, Idabel; 2. Trevor Bonds, Soper; 3. Tori Stephens, Tushka
Class V: 1. CJ Conner, Tuttle; 2. Makayla Crawford, Moss; 3. Chelsea Coker, Tuttle
Class VI: 1. JB Bell, Madill; 2. Tad Bradley, Silo; 3. Dillon Bowen, Silo
 Breed Champion: Holden Bell
 Reserve Breed Champion: Baylor Jestis

- Goats -



Peyton Mobbs of Tushka wins Meat Goat Grand Champion

Grand Meat Goat: Peyton Mobbs, Tushka
Reserve Grand Meat Goat: Jaycee Watkins, Calera
Bronze Medallion Goat: Hunter Mann, Sulphur
Junior Goat Showmanship: Jaycee Watkins, Calera
Senior Goat Showmanship: Colton Mize, Springer



Jaycee Watkins of Calera wins Meat Goat Reserve Grand Champ and Junior Showman Champion

Division 1

Class I: 1. Blaklyn Barber, Silo; 2. Morgan Veneble, Moss; 3. Mason Nichols, Achille
Class II: 1. Peyton Mobbs, Tushka; 2. Colton Mize, Springer; 3. Hunter Mann, Sulphur
Class III: 1. Jaycee Watkins, Calera; 2. Taylor Hedgecock, Durant; 3. Braden Allen, Silo
 Division 1 Champion: Peyton Mobbs
 Division 1 Res Champion: Jaycee Watkins

Division 2

Class I: 1. Bailee Allen, Silo; 2. Braden Allen, Silo; 3. Kason Barker, Boswell
Class II: 1. Hunter Mann, Sulphur; 2. Tucker McCoy, OK Co. 4H; 3. Mason Phillips, Durant
 Division 2 Champion: Hunter Mann
 Division 2 Res Champion: Bailee Allen

Division 3

Class I: 1. Colton Mize, Springer; 2. Hunter Mann, Sulphur; 3. Jaycee Watkins, Calera
Class II: 1. Aaron Purkins, Caddo; 2. Carly Moore, Madill
 Division 3 Champion: Colton Mize
 Division 3 Reserve Champion: Hunter Mann

- Sheep -



Savannah Lantz of Holdenville wins Market Lamb Grand Champion



Hadley Bryan of Mulhall wins Market Lamb Reserve Grand Champion

Grand Market Lamb: Savannah Lantz, Holdenville
Reserve Grand Lamb: Hadley Bryan, Mulhall-Orlando
Bronze Medallion Lamb: Savannah Lantz, Holdenville
Junior Showmanship: Taylor Chambers, Tushka
Senior Showmanship: Hadley Bryan, Mulhall-Orlando

Division 1

Class I: 1. Brooke Roebuck, Kiowa; 2. Ethan Bean, Lukfata; 3. Tyna McKee, Soper
Class II: 1. Bonnie Jone, Thackerville; 2. Julie Fielder, Maysville; 3. Daytona Trammell, Savanna
Class III: 1. Taylor Chambers, Tushka; 2. Hadley Bryan, Mulhall-Orlando; 3. Alyson Chapman, Coalgate
 Division 1 Champion: Taylor Chambers
 Division 1 Reserve Champion: Hadley Bryan

Division 2

Class I: 1. Savannah Lantz, Holdenville; 2. Shelby Newton, Tolar; 3. Bonnie Jones, Thackerville
Class II: 1. Hadley Bryan, Mulhall-Orlando; 2. Zachary Nichols, Achille; 3. Mercedes Brown, Velma-Alma
 Division 2 Champion: Hadley Bryan
 Division 2 Reserve Champion: Savannah Lantz

Division 3

Class I: 1. Savannah Lantz, Holdenville; 2. Mercedes Brown, Velma-Alma; 3. Daytona Trammell, Savanna
Class II: 1. Savannah Lantz, Holdenville; 2. Julie Fielder, Maysville; 3. Jaely Parsons, Soper
 Division 3 Champion: Savannah Lantz
 Division 3 Reserve Champion: Savannah Lantz

Division 4

Class I: 1. Brooke Roebuck, Kiowa; 2. Chace McCoy, OK Co. 4H; 3. Alex Hackler, Kiowa
Class II: 1. Hadley Bryan, Mulhall-Orlando; 2. Hunter Mann, Sulphur; 3. Tucker McCoy, OK Co. 4H
 Division 4 Champion: Hadley Bryan
 Division 4 Reserve Champion: Brooke Roebuck

EDUCATION

Apply now for Chahta Foundation scholarships!



The Chahta Foundation will continue offering the Apela Ima scholarship for the upcoming 2013-14 school year as well as introducing five new scholarships. This means over \$55,000 in donated funds is going directly to support Choctaw tribal members. These scholarships are for students ranging from graduating high school seniors in the 10-1/2 county tribal service area (deadline: April 12, 2013) to undergraduate, graduate and doctorate level students nationwide (deadline: March 31, 2013).

Please call the Chahta Foundation with your scholarship questions at 800-522-6170, ext. 2546. Scott Wesley, scholarship specialist, or any Chahta staff member, is eager to assist you. For information and applications visit chahtafoundation.com/education or email the foundation at scholarship@chahtafoundation.com. All eligible applicants are encouraged to apply!

Collins signs letter of intent

Congratulations to Jake Collins, who has signed a letter of intent to play baseball at Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton. Jake is a senior at Latta High School and was recently named Oklahoma Baseball Coaches Association "Player of the Year."

Jake is the grandson of Kenneth Battles and his wife, Royce Battles, of Antlers. He is pictured with his parents, Ed and Tammy Collins, and head coach Craig Price, standing.



YAB

Learning leadership from YAB experiences

Continued from Page 1 not volunteer much, but now she has fun lending her time to worthy causes. "I have made a lot of friends with people I wouldn't usually talk to," says Jana as she spoke about all the benefits to her volunteer work.

"YAB helps us to become better people and come out of our shell," continued Jana. She holds her time in YAB in high regard, saying that it is a great way to have fun and help the community at the same time.

YAB was founded in 2004 with only 13 members in its ranks. It has grown to 415 members and graduates around 60 seniors a year. There are 17 YAB chapters with locations in McAlester, Hartshorne, Panola, Stigler, Poteau, Howe, Battiest, Idabel, Clayton, Talihina, Antlers, Hugo, Soper, Boswell, Durant, Atoka and Coalgate.

More events facilitated by YAB students include Toys for Tots, food drives, nursing home activities, adopt-a-grandparent, awareness campaigns, trash-off days, after prom lock-ins, and coat drives. YAB also partners with other Choctaw Nation programs to provide services such as child care for the foster/adoption families with Choctaw Nation Children and Family Services, assist recycling projects with Choctaw Nation Recycling Program, and participate in teen dating violence awareness projects with Choctaw Nation Project SAFE.

To join YAB, students must live within the 10 1/2 county service area of the Choctaw Nation, be in the 8th-12th grade, a U.S. citizen or on a student visa and have a heart to serve their community.

"YAB is an amazing opportunity for every age group to do what they thought they couldn't," says Alice, who mentions that anyone who is able to be a part of YAB, should.



Congratulations to John Troussel, who has been named to the Dean's Honor Roll for the fall 2012 semester at Eastern Oklahoma State College. John is the son of Chris and Kim Troussel of McAlester.

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.

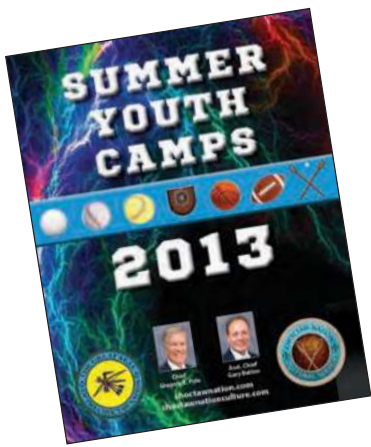
For more information, please contact Susan Edwards at 580-924-8280 or toll-free 800-522-6170.

If you are interested in applying for a loan from the SOICA or the Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund, there will be a representative from the Choctaw Nation Credit Department at the:

Choctaw Nation Investment Center in Poteau

March 25 from 9:30-11 a.m. and 12-1:30 p.m.

Choctaw Nation Summer Youth Camps 2013



The 2013 Summer Camp booklet is now available online and at the Choctaw community centers.

For more information, call the Summer Youth Camp Program at 1-800-522-6170.

Registration forms are available online at choctawnation.com or choctawnationculture.com.

Deadlines for each camp are as follows:
Golf Camp- **March 29**
Baseball, Softball, Stickball,
Cultural Enrichment, Basketball and Football- **April 19**

New applicants **must** send copies of their Choctaw Membership Card and CDIB.

Board creates new office to preserve American Indian heritage

On Jan. 23 the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors approved a new program with the sole mission of reaching out to American Indian tribes, associations, and families to preserve cultural artifacts, archival documents, oral histories, and historic sites. "American Indian cultural preservation has been a major part of OHS programs since 1907," said Dr. Bob L. Blackburn, executive director of the Society, "but we have never had a specific working unit dedicated to that task. The creation of the OHS Office of American Indian Cultural Preservation gives us that opportunity." The

director of the office will be William D. Welge, longtime director of the OHS Research Division and Indian archivist since 1982. "For more than 35 years, I have collected, preserved, and shared American Indian history as part of my duties at the Historical Society," said Welge. "The creation of this new office will allow me to spend all of my time and use all of my contacts to build new bridges of communication and collaboration in Indian country." According to Welge, the central mission of the office is to create a two-way exchange of assistance. The OHS will offer experience in archival

management, museum exhibit development, and oral history best practices. Tribal officials and elders will offer an understanding of their own heritage. "We need to know how Indian people want to record and share their own history," said Blackburn. "We will work with them no matter where the collections are located and stored. The critical task is collecting and preserving those collections so they can be shared today and in the future." Among the services offered by the OHS office will be training sessions, assistance with grant requests, on-site consultation, and cooperative agreements.

SUMMER CAMP AT JONES ACADEMY

July 10-12, 2013

AGES ELIGIBLE: 8-12 YEARS OLD

* Registration will be made available soon.*

Campers will be required to stay the night at this camp.

Transportation will be provided. Participants must live within the Choctaw Nation's 10 1/2 counties.

What to expect: - TEAM BUILDING - HEALTHY HABITS - CULTURAL ACTIVITIES - AND MUCH MORE!

QUESTIONS?

Raina Sparks at 918-423-8440 ext. 31071 or Tammie Cannady at 918-567-7121.

Transportation available to tribal members in Southeast OK! Register by March 22nd at 866-933-2260!

Pathways to Success... A Choctaw Tradition Career Expo 2013

April 3rd
10:00am to 2:00pm

Southeast Expo Center
4500 W Hwy 270
McAlester, OK 74501

Guest Speaker
Mr. Grant Baldwin

866-933-2260 • choctawcareers.com

Choctaw Nation GED Classes

CHOCTAW COUNTY

Beginning: March 19, 2013
Tuesdays and Thursdays
4 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Choctaw Nation Community Center
408 N. "M" St. - Hugo

LeFLORE COUNTY

Beginning: March 25, 2013
Mondays and Wednesdays
9 a.m. - Noon

Choctaw Nation Family Investment Center
208 "B" St. - Poteau

LATIMER COUNTY

Beginning: March 26, 2013
Tuesdays and Thursdays
9 a.m. - Noon

Choctaw Nation Community Center
515 Center Point Rd. - Wilburton

BRYAN COUNTY

Beginning: March 26, 2013
Tuesdays and Thursdays
1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Choctaw Nation Tribal Complex
529 N. 16th, South Building - Durant

The class will meet for approximately three months. Books, supplies and testing fees are provided. In addition, a \$10 per day transportation stipend is paid to those who attend classes on a regular basis and attempt the GED test. If you have turned in an application with our Adult Education Program for GED classes and wish to attend the upcoming class, please contact our office. If you have not applied and wish to attend these or future classes, please contact Neal Hawkins or Kathy Springfield at the Durant office, 800-522-6170 or 580-924-8280 ext. 2319 or 2122. Also, you may register at the first class. A Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) is required.

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Calendar

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
A P R I L		1	2	3	4	5	6
		April Fools' Day	Antlers by appt.			Broken Bow 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Idabel by appt.	
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
		Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	Crowder by appt.	Talihina 10 a.m.-2 p.m.		Broken Bow 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Idabel by appt.	
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
		Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.		McAlester 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Stigler by appt.		Atoka by appt. Coalgate by appt.	
	2 0 1 3	21	22	23	24	25	26
		Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.		Poteau 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.		Wright City by appt.	
28		29	30				
	Wilburton 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.						

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

A trip with Papa

By FOLSOM WHITE

Sidney Johnston White was born to John Walker and Pauline McCurtain White, Oct. 22, 1889, in San Bois, Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory. I have to point out as Daddy always did, Paulina is pronounced with a long "I" sound.

Daddy was the middle of three children, older brother Hiram Edmund "Bud" and baby sister Lizzie. They grew up in the area around present-day Whitefield, Kinta and Stigler.

This is a story Daddy used to tell me of his early childhood.

He came with his father into Kinta, which was something of an adventure to travel with "Papa" without the rest of the family. After all he was only 8 years old. After Papa had conducted business and the wagon was loaded with supplies, he received a special treat. He was allowed to select a few pieces of hard candy for brother, sister and himself. Papa said he could have one now but save the rest until they were home. As they walked towards the wagon, he fumbled with the small bag of candy trying to make up his mind which piece to enjoy on the trip home. Suddenly his concentration was shattered by the crash of gunfire. Papa grabbed him and shoved him into the tight space between two buildings and told him to stay there until he returned for him. After some time and things had quieted, Papa returned to find Daddy crying.

Papa thought the tears were from fear of what had just occurred. There was at least one man shot and bleeding in the street. However they weren't tears of fear, but tears of heart-break, for during the excitement and jostling about he had dropped the small bag of candy into the dirt and all were lost. He was also afraid of the scolding he was sure to receive from Papa because money was too hard to come by to be lost in the dirt, even a few pennies. But, Papa didn't scold. They returned to the store for another bag of candy.



A painting of Sidney White by Cathy Rutledge hangs in the Choctaw Nation Museum.

By LISA REED

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

"Sidney White sticks" – It's a term synonymous with perfection to most who play stickball.

Born in 1889, Sidney White lived a long and active life and is well-known for his expertise in many things, but especially for the strong, distinctive sticks he made for stickball players. There aren't many of Sidney's sticks around any more. Those in possession of them know what a treasure they have.

A pair of Sidney's sticks hangs in the Choctaw Nation Capitol Museum. "Daddy never made a pair of sticks he didn't intend to be played with," said Folsom White of Clayton, remembering the care his father put into creating each one. Folsom and his mother, Mary, recently sat in the living room of her home in Tuskahoma and shared memories of working alongside Sidney. Their main contribution was to cut hickory trees and split the wood.

"We didn't have chainsaws," Folsom explained about this time as a young boy in the '60s and '70s. "We used crosscut saws, wedges, sledge hammers. Me and Mama would use the crosscut saws to cut down the trees."

Mary chimed in with a laugh and said she was always scared of the falling trees. Folsom and Mary did what they could to help, though.

Once the tree had been split and Sidney had rasped a piece down to the thickness he wanted, he rubbed used motor oil on the wood.

Sidney would build a fire, heat the stick then rub the motor oil deep into the grain, heat then rub. He started bending one end a little at a time to form the cup, adding just the right bit of flare to make the stick better at handling the ball.

"The prettiest sticks Daddy made were when he used heat and oil," Folsom described. The oil would seep deep into the wood and as the sticks aged, the oil would become dark-ribboned patterns.

"He would go to boot shops and different places to get good scrap leather," Folsom said. "He had a little knife about that long," his fingers drawing a 3- to 4-inch half-of-a-heart-shaped blade in the air. "Daddy would tie the leather around a tree or something stationary, hold that knife straight out in front of him and walk backwards – 100 to 200 feet if he had room. That's how he cut the strips of leather."

The leather is used to make a lacing inside the cup and for holding down the end of the stick as it loops around.

Every one of Sidney's sticks took on a unique shape. He didn't make them in pairs. He would finish one and set it aside. When he was ready – sometimes two, three or four weeks later – he would make a stick to pair with another.

"When he made sticks that were a good pair, you could set your hand down on that thumb," Folsom's left hand met his right thumb as he held two sticks up, "and the cups would fit together, with one about 3/4 inch longer."

Sidney's knowledge of the game was ingrained in his very being as deeply as the texture weaving through the hickory he used. He wrote two publications about the game, "Stickball" and "Tolih."

A descriptive excerpt from "Stickball" reads: "In my time an Indian ball game was equal to a county picnic. A lemonade stand or two were set up. A watermelon farmer would bring a wagonload of melons and sell out during the game. A hard-fought or well-matched game would often last a whole afternoon."

"The people would travel in wagons, buggies and on horseback and pitch two separate campgrounds near springs or on the banks of two clearwater streams in order to have good camp water."

"Small personal articles were bet on a game of tolih. A man rode at high speed on a good horse from camp to camp to collect the bets. Horses were bet and guns of all styles and calibers. Then all articles were put in a bounty wagon near the middle ground..."

Folsom said there wasn't a lot of interest in playing stickball when he was young, but his dad would gather up some of the boys and try

to get them to play. Sidney would have been about 80 years old at that time.

It was a team sport, but more about one-on-one competition back then, utilizing each player's individual skills. Sidney would line the kids up and let them know who was responsible for defending another player.

Sidney taught them how to throw, how to pick up the ball with the sticks while on the run. He taught them to play hard but wouldn't tolerate intentionally hurting other players.

"When (David) Gardner was elected chief, Cleland Billy and a teacher from Jones also got involved," Folsom said. "Once other adults were involved, a stickball team was put together. During warm months we would meet at the Council House."

Folsom was among a small group invited to play stickball during the United States' Bicentennial Celebration on July 4, 1976, in Washington, D.C.

"For a young country kid, it was something else," Folsom said, still feeling the excitement of being a 17-year-old on a trip across the country to the nation's capitol. "It was a good experience. All of the Civilized Tribes had a team there."

The stickball teams took turns in round-robin play where each team competed against each other once, demonstrating the game of their ancestors beside the Reflecting Pool on the National Mall.

"We had some good games," Folsom remembered, "and the Creek team gave us some competition," he added with a laugh.

"We started showing off a bit and would get set up with someone on the other team. We would knock each other into the pool. We also broke the goal down once. We had a great time!"

A difference noted in the game then compared to today's way of playing is that no one blocked the goal. It remained open. Sidney would tell the players that hitting the goal was part of the skill they wanted to show each other and the public. To make a score or "kill the ball" it should strike the pole on the facing side and fall to the ground in the inner court. Teams now have goalies.

Also in Sidney's time, players could throw the sticks and the ball up against the goal to score which isn't allowed today.

Choctaw historian Olin Williams said change comes with every generation. "Anything that's alive grows and changes," Williams explained. "After stickball became looked at more as a sport, changes began taking place. Each generation adds something they see of value."

Sidney White added more than his share to stickball during his lifetime. He contributed to the history of the tribe's ancestral game both in the ways he taught and in the beautifully crafted sticks, testament to his deep understanding of what it means to play.

SIDNEY'S STICKS



Sidney White's knowledge of the game of stickball was ingrained in his very being as deeply as the texture weaving through the hickory he molded



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

Sidney White's son, Folsom, talks about his father's skill. The sticks he holds, he says, aren't his dad's best but are among the few pair left in existence.



Mary White



Folsom White is among a group of young men asked to represent Indian tribes during the 1976 Bicentennial Celebration on July 4 in Washington, D.C. Pictured above are Able Frazier, Gary Gardner, Roy Jefferson, White, Cleland Billy and Glen Billy. Below, the boys play stickball on the lawn by the Reflecting Pool.



Photos provided



Contact us to participate in running for our Okla Chahta Princess

18TH ANNUAL OKLA CHAHTA Choctaw Gathering

at Bakersfield College in Bakersfield, California

Saturday, May 4

- Visit with Chief Pyle & Assistant Chief Batton
- History & Culture ♦ Heritage Booth ♦ Traditional Items on Display
- Join in Traditional Dance ♦ Learn about Traditional Weaponry

Make-and-Take Classes on Traditional Dressmaking, Lace Collar Necklace, Basket Making, Pottery and more

Also on Saturday – A Traditional Wedding and Stickball and Tribal Membership/CDIB will have a booth available.

Sunday, May 5

Church Services

For more information:

661-368-2067 or choctaws@oklachahta.org



May 4th & 5th in Bakersfield

Our choice hotel:

Double Tree Hotel
3100 Camino Del Rio Ct., Bakersfield, CA
661-323-7111

Make your reservations early!
Hotel only holding rate of \$86 until April 1.
Ask for Choctaw rate.

Shell Gorgets

Beautiful works stand as a testament to high level attained in early Choctaw art



Figure 1. Pickett-style gorget made by author

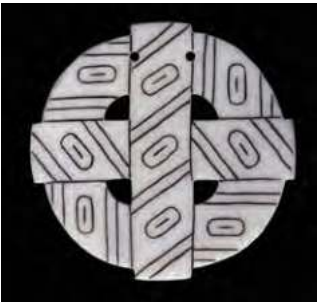


Figure 2. Oktibbeha-style gorget made by author



Figure 3. Three views of a Busycon shell



Figure 4. Left: Busycon shell with a cut being made in it; Center and Right: the shell with the whorl removed



Culture
History
Health
Education



Choctaw Films
ChoctawCinema.com

Every Labor Day, Choctaw artists display their work in the annual Choctaw art show at Tvshka Homma. Even a casual visit to this event makes it clear that our Tribe has many creative and artistic people. These abilities have not arisen overnight, but have come out of a very deep tradition. Choctaw people who lived before European arrival made many beautiful, intricate, and highly skilled pieces of artwork. Today, it is rare to see these early pieces, because most of them have returned to the earth from which their raw materials came. One exception are beautifully executed shell gorgets. Made from durable material, some of these ancient pieces still survive. Today, these beautiful works stand as a testament to the high level attained in early Choctaw art.

Known as "shaha" in the Choctaw language (Byington 1915:324), these gorgets were carved from large, flat pieces of shell, with holes drilled through them so that they could be strung and worn



Iti Fabvssa



Figure 5. Stone saw being used to cut mussel shell

from the neck as a pendant. Some gorgets are as simple as a plain disk of shell, but others are highly embellished with delicate cutouts and engraved designs. To look at one of these masterworks of art is to appreciate it, however this appreciation is deepened in considering the ingenuity and patience that the artisans employed to make these objects from tough materials without the use of power tools or even metal tools.

Shell gorgets have been made for several thousand years in the American southeast, but the art came into full flower during the two centuries before European arrival (Brain and Phillips 1996:1-2). Many of the gorgets were made according to regional styles. Although quite a bit of variability existed between different regional styles, the gorgets within each specific style are very similar to each other. Three different gorget styles were made in the Choctaw homeland right before European arrival.

Scholars have labeled these the Pickett style (Fig. 1), the Oktibbeha style (Fig. 2), and the Tibbee Creek style (ibid. 26-27, 32-33). After European contact, plain undecorated gorgets became the most common style in Choctaw country. However, Choctaws also continued to make a few engraved shell gorgets. One example with an engraved stylized owl design dating to around 1900 is in the collection of the National Museum of the American Indian. Owl designs are not very common on gorgets, and this piece probably belonged to a Choctaw alikchi.

Ancestral Choctaw artisans utilized both freshwater mussel shells from local rivers (see Iti Fabvssa I/13) and marine shells from the ocean as raw materials for making gorgets. The most commonly used marine shells came from the whelk, specifically from the genus Busycon (Fig. 3). Choctaw artisans probably referred to these Busycon shells as "shaha toba" (Byington

1915:324, also see Thompson 2008:458). The Busycon species used for gorgets produce light-colored spiraling shells as great as 18 inches in length. This material was so highly prized that Native communities traded it all the way from the west coast of Florida,

where it was obtained, up to the Canadian provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan (e.g. Montgomery 1908:38-39), a distance of roughly 1700 miles!

Making a shell gorget is not a task to be undertaken lightly. Busycon shell is extremely hard, tough, and is even somewhat resistant to heat. One hundred thirty years ago, an anthropologist wryly marveled:

Let anyone who thinks lightly of such a work undertake, without machinery or well-adapted appliances, to cut a groove or notch even, in a moderately compact specimen of Busycon, and he will probably increase his good opinion of the skill and patience of the ancient workman if he does nothing else (Holmes 1883:286).

Gorgets were made from the outer part, or whorl of the Busycon shell. This part is removed from the rest of the shell by hitting it very hard but very carefully with a tough, round rock. Each blow removes a small chip of shell. If the blows are aligned sequentially, they can be used to cut the whorl away from the rest of the shell (Fig. 4).

After the removal of the whorl, both Busycon and freshwater mussel shell were worked with basically similar processes and tools. First, the shells had to be made into a roughly even shape. This was often done by dipping a flake of tough stone in wet sand, and sliding it back and forth over the surface of the shell (Fig. 5). Each stroke ground away a small amount of material. When the sand fell off, more was added. Making major cuts with this technique took hours of patient work. After the general shape of the gorget had been roughed out by cutting (Fig. 6), its edges were finely shaped by grinding on a sandstone slab. Plain-style gorgets were made by grinding the shell into a smooth, circular or oval shape and then drilling two holes for stringing it on a necklace (Fig. 7). Some of the more fancy gorgets had fenestrations, or cutouts made into them. This was done by first drilling round holes in the shell (Fig. 8) and then shaping the holes by using a rough-edged flake of stone to saw back and forth within the holes to make them the desired shape. Engraving was done using the same tool, carefully sawing it back and forth over the slick, interior surface of the shell to cut in the designs (Fig. 9). The engraved designs show up better if they are painted (Fig. 10).

Today, the meaning that some of the ancient gorgets had to their makers and owners is not fully known. While interpretations exist for many of the symbols incorporated into the gorget designs, they will not be discussed here. Together, the symbols on some gorgets may tell stories from early oral

history, or symbolize the accomplishments of their owners or the tasks that they were responsible for doing. Beyond whatever other meanings they had, these gorgets were also highly valued items of personal adornment and expression. In the early 1700s, one shell gorget was worth four tanned deer hides in trade (Lawson 1714).

Today, some gorget artists from other southeastern Tribes are well known and highly respected for their work. Several Choctaw people are experimenting with shell carving and making a few gorgets. With the inherent beauty of the shell, the deep tradition of gorget making among Choctaw artisans, and the possibility of making some amazing new traditional works of art, the ancient art of gorget-making is just waiting to take off again in the Choctaw community.

Archived editions of Iti Fabvssa can be found at <http://www.choctawnationculture.com/choctaw-culture/iti-fabvssa>. If you have a question about Choctaw history or culture, please email to biskinik@choctawnation.com.

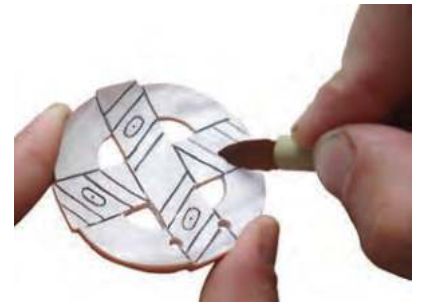


Figure 9. Engraving a design with a stone-tipped tool



Figure 6. Mussel shell after cuts are complete

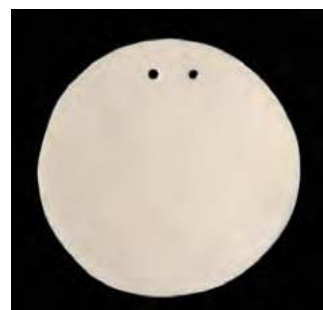


Figure 7. Plain-style Busycon shell gorget, made by the author with only stone tools

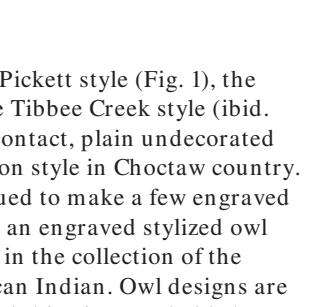


Figure 8. Drilling holes with a stone-tipped drill with a river cane shaft



Figure 9. Engraving a design with a stone-tipped tool

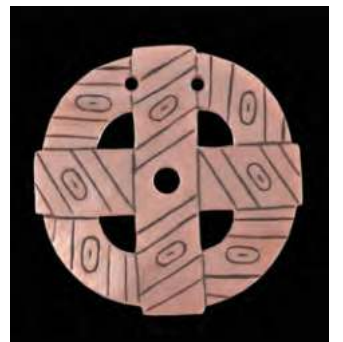


Figure 10. Oktibbeha-style gorget made by the author with only stone tools

Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna Lesson of the Month

Impa chi bvna ho?

Pronounced:
Im-pah chi bahn-nah ho?

Do you want to eat?

Word Meaning:
impa – eat/ to eat chi – you
bvna – want/need ho – question marker

Question markers *o, ho, yo*, come at the end of a question and the vowel "o" is underlined to show it has a nasalized sound.

Rules to follow for correct usage of question markers.

1. *o* – follows a word that ends in a consonant
2. *ho* – follows a verb
3. *yo* – follows descriptive words/adjectives, numbers, etc.

In previous lessons, we learned the Choctaw word for "I" is "li" and is preceded by a verb.

The use of "chi" also means "you" and is in the second person singular form. This usage shows how "you - chi" is affected by an action or adjective.

Ex. *Ofi yāt chi haklo tuk.* The dog heard you.
Chi chaha. You are tall.

In response to the previous question:

Do you want to eat?

A, impa sv bvna.
Yes, I want to eat.

Pronounced:
Anh, im-pah sah-bahn-na.

Keyu, impa sv bvna kiyo.
No, I do not want to eat.

Pronounced:
Ke-yoh, im-pah, sah bahn-na ke-yoh.

Word Meaning:
A - yes sv - I bvna – want or need
impa – eat /to eat keyu – no kiyo – not (negator)

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<p>DOCTORATE</p> <p>\$20,000 Scholarship \$10,000 for both Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 1 applicant will be selected Deadline: March 31, 2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States Resident • Accepted into Doctoral Program of Choice • Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Tribal Member 	<p>GRADUATE</p> <p>\$12,000 Scholarship \$6000 for both Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 2 applicants will be selected Deadline: March 31, 2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States Resident • Accepted into Masters Program of Choice • Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Tribal Member
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Choctaw Nation spreads culture

San Diego and Phoenix cultural community meetings

By **BRET MOSS**
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Choctaw Nation traveled west in February to visit tribal members in San Diego, Calif., and Phoenix, Ariz., all in an effort to bring members of the tribe together and revive the ways of the traditional Choctaw.

Many Choctaws gathered from both locations to meet with Chief Gregory E. Pyle, Assistant Chief Gary Batton and cultural experts from among the tribe. Patrons who had signed up in advance were able to attend a bead working class facilitated by members of the Cultural Services Department.

"It's fun, I think I have a new hobby," said Kimberly Kogler of Oceanside, Calif., as she concentrated on her beading project. Kimberly attended the event with her mother to satisfy their yearning to learn more about their heritage. "We always look for the Southern California Choctaw events so we can go," continued Kimberly.

"I have always seen these [type] earrings and wondered how they are made," said Leilani Hernandez of Phoenix, who came with her good friend, Summer Alahdali. Both girls were excited to learn a new skill, stating, "This might inspire me to do more beading."

Larry Lambert, a Phoenix resident and new member of the Choctaw Nation, was also in attendance for the beading class. "It is an art and people that do that have lots of patience," he stated.

"I couldn't make it to Oklahoma, so I am glad you came here," said Larry, who had looked forward to the meeting and learning about many different aspects of his Choctaw heritage. He mentioned that he had been reading a copy of the Choctaw dictionary, studying the language of his tribe, and was excited to speak with language experts.

"If you are lucky enough to have ancestors who are Native Americans, take advantage of it," said Larry as he discussed how proud he was of his lineage, and the rich background that comes with a family tree with native roots.

Along with the revived traditions and knowledge brought by the Choctaw Nation to the west, another benefit for patrons of these meetings was the gathering of locals with similar heritage. As the meetings hit their attendance peak, hundreds of Choctaws accumulated, displaying just how large a portion of the local population shares the same background.

Two guests of the meeting with a distinguished history, Anna Hennessy and Barbara Weaver, attribute their friendship to a Choctaw connection. Nearly two years ago, Anna placed a note on Barbara's car window telling her that she was Choctaw and left contact info. The two met up and have been friends ever since, attending Choctaw functions together.

"I was parked at a shopping mall parking lot, and when I came out I found a note on the window that said, 'I am Choctaw also,'" stated Barbara. Anna knew of Barbara's connection to the Choctaw Nation because of a Choctaw vanity plate. "I got out of my car, was walking across the parking lot, and right there, 'Choctaw,'" exclaimed Anna. "I could not pass that up," she continued.

Local Choctaw artist George Willis was able to demonstrate his talents to those in attendance of the San Diego meeting. George resides in Carlsbad, Calif., and is a craftsman who makes jewelry and small sculptures from an array of raw materials.

"I work in a lot of different ways," George stated. Many techniques are used in his pieces, including what he calls, "pierce and apply," which he utilizes when creating his pictorial artwork from multiple sheets of metal. He cuts the scene from one piece of metal and then carefully applies it to another with a strong form of solder, then adds the details and texture by hand.

When making scenic pieces, George always includes a piece of gold in a tiny detail in his work. He

is also very precise in how he depicts his scenes. "I have more research time than bench time," he stated as he explained that a great deal of time goes into finding out how to correctly depict his subjects. George elaborated on a particular piece, which included Choctaw Code Talkers, saying he had to pay attention to every detail, from the guns used to the hats worn in the set.

George is also quite skilled with buffalo horn. He is able to transform a rugged and harsh horn into a beautiful piece of jewelry. Precise cutting and sanding are involved in this work, which he mentioned could create quite a stench. George laughed as he told about the smell, but admitted the end product was well worth the toil.

The meetings also featured an opening prayer, presented in both English and Choctaw, a language lesson from Choctaw language instructor Lillie Roberts, dances from the Choctaw traditional dancers and musical entertainment provided by chanter and bead artist Brad Joe and Miss Choctaw Nation Cheyenne Murray.

"It was really fun," mentioned San Diego resident Sara Shelden, who was "stolen" during the Stealing Partners dance and tested her speed in the Snake dance. Sara was one of many audience members who were able to actively participate during the demonstration of the age-old ways.

In the midst of the occasion, Chief Pyle and Assistant Chief Batton spoke to their fellow Choctaws, telling them of the many strides the Choctaw Nation is making, not only in keeping its culture alive, but flourishing in present customs. Chief Pyle spoke of the Choctaw businesses' ability to turn a profit during a recession and the programs that were made possible by the success of Choctaw endeavors.

He made mention of programs such as the STAR Program that encourages Choctaw students everywhere to participate and try their best in school, leading to brighter futures for the youth of the nation. He spoke of opportunities provided by programs and what it means in the lives of the Choctaw people.

Among all the activities provided, a favorite of the crowd was getting to speak and take a picture with Chief Pyle and Assistant Chief Batton. Guests were able to meet and visit with both before and after the meeting, sharing stories of their families, histories, as well as compliments and concerns for the tribe.

"It is always good to get a perspective from our members who are not here in Oklahoma. They are a big part of the tribe and we want to reach out to them as well," stated Chief Pyle as he spoke about his trip west. "It was a great trip. I'm glad we are able to bring our culture across the United States," he concluded.



Photos by LISA REED and BRET MOSS | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Leilani Hernandez of Phoenix, Ariz., tries her hand at creating a pair of Choctaw earrings.



Choctaw artist George Willis reads his display for the San Diego Cultural gathering. George exhibited breastplates, earrings and many types of Native American jewelry.



Vedis Noah Murillo of Phoenix tells Chief Pyle she was from Pickens, Okla., and her mom, Siney Noah, attended the Bethel center.



The Cordova family – mom Julie, twins Anovk and Isolde, and big brother Paikea – are happy to see Chief Pyle in La Jolla, Calif.



Anna Hennessy, Assistant Chief Batton and Barbara Weaver visit during the cultural meeting Feb. 17 in Mesa.



The hat of George Willis boasts over 700 hours of craftsmanship adorning its brim.



Jennifer Graff and her daughter, Cambria, participate in the Stealing Partners Dance.



Kanda Jackson lends her expertise to novice bead workers.



Larry Lambert of Phoenix shows off the beginning of his beadwork project.



Young women of the Okla Chahta clan help Miss Choctaw Nation Cheyenne Murray fill the room with color.