

Men 'Walk a Mile in Her Shoes'

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Continuing publication of recorded interviews of Choctaw elders from 2007

This month – Laura Jameson
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The Official Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

May 2011 Issue

Serving 205,930 Choctaws Worldwide

Choctaws ... growing with pride, hope and success

Choctaw Days in Washington, D.C.

Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian hosting four-day Choctaw festival in June

By LISA REED

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Thousands of people from around the world will soon have the opportunity to absorb the sights, sounds and culture of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) and the Choctaw Nation are working together to provide a memorable experience for visitors and those who live in the Washington, D.C. area. The Choctaw Days event will be held June 22-25 during NMAI's height of the tourist season when an average of 1,500 visitors come to the museum every day.

"We are honored to be the first American Indian tribe from Oklahoma to have a festival of this kind at the National Museum of the American Indian," said Chief Gregory E. Pyle. "I remember when the museum opened on the National Mall almost seven years ago and I have visited NMAI numerous times since. It is a remarkable place, showcasing hundreds of tribes from South, Central and North America.

"We have assembled several of our best artists, dancers, singers and cultural experts. We know that we will have a different audience than we are accustomed to and want to ensure that they all understand just how special our tribe is," he said.



Photo provided: DANA WALDON

Marcus Amerman works on beadwork creation.



Choctaw Nation: LARISSA COPELAND

Flute maker Presley Byington.



Choctaw Nation: LARISSA COPELAND

Shirley Barboan and Vonna Shults create Choctaw menu items.

Related articles on Pages 11 and 13

Choctaw Days will begin each morning with the melodic chanting of Ron McKinney and the fluid movements of the Choctaw Youth Dancers in front of the museum's east entrance. The boys and girls, in colorful traditional shirts and dresses, will perform the jump dance, the quick steps and shouts of the fast war dance, and the stealing partners dance with audience interaction. The snake dance will end outside but more singing, dancing, fluteplaying and storytelling will

be featured every hour.

NMAI Executive Chef Richard Hetzler is working with Vonna Shults and Shirley Barboan to provide 10 Choctaw-related dishes in the Mitsitam Native Foods Café. The top-notch restaurant, located on the first floor of the museum, features authentic Native foods found throughout the Western Hemisphere. During the week of Choctaw Days, the menu will include fried salt pork, pinto beans, tanchi labona, fried rabbit, rabbit gumbo, braised venison, banaha Indian bread, grape dumplings, wild onions

See CHOCTAW DAYS Page 16

Providing aid to Tushka tornado victims

Tribe pledges up to \$10,000 match in students' penny drive for Tushka Schools

By LARISSA COPELAND

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Though the April 14 tornado in Tushka lasted only minutes, the effects of the devastation felt by the residents will be long lasting. The storm, which the National Weather Service rated an EF3 on the Enhanced Fujita scale, tragically killed two people and left 43 injured. It also affected 237 homes in the small town in southeastern Oklahoma. Of the homes affected, 33 will need repairs, 47 will need major repairs before they will be livable, and truly heartbreaking, 149 were completely destroyed. Of these homes, only 42 percent were covered by insurance, leaving many families in Tushka wondering what to do next.

Almost before the storm cleared, an outpouring of family, friends, churches, and numerous non-profit and governmental relief organiza-

tions were pulling into town to provide aid to their neighbors in need. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is proud to be one of those to answer the call as well, providing aid to storm victims by offering resources for food, water, supplies and services.

The Choctaw Nation is committed to helping the entire community during this time of need. It has joined forces with nine school districts in southeastern Oklahoma to help the Tushka School. The school was reduced to rubble when the tornado ripped through the town and students and faculty from neighboring schools have organized a penny drive to help them rebuild. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma has pledged to match up to \$10,000 brought in by the students in the fundraiser.

The schools that are participating
See TUSHKA Page 12



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

An aerial look at some of the devastation in Tushka. The tornado affected 237 homes in the small community, completely destroying 149. Choctaw Nation provided much needed aid in the aftermath, such as the tarps pictured covering the roofs of the homes left standing.

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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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Culbreath a 2011 Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame inductee

By JUDY ALLEN

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

The Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame has recognized a Choctaw legend – a Joy in both name and attitude. Longtime Executive Director of Education for the tribe, Joy Culbreath has been inducted into the Hall of Fame, honored as a pioneer in her field who has made significant contributions to the state of Oklahoma.

The Choctaw Nation has always known that Joy was a jewel, creating a successful adult education program, a remarkable school of Choctaw language, and growing multiple other education programs and services that provide opportunities for people across the United States.

Her talents and passion have been noticed nationally – President

Obama appointed her last year to serve on the No Child Left Behind Negotiated Rulemaking Committee.

When asked what the most important work she has accomplished, Joy will reply that her activity in her church and at home with her family has been the most important job she has ever fulfilled.

Governor Mary Fallin and Secretary of Veterans Affairs Maj. Gen. Rita Aragon (Ret.) of the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women were joined by Chief Gregory E. Pyle at the Induction Ceremony for Joy and the seven other honorees for the 2011 event.

Inductees in the 2011 Women's Hall of Fame are Dr. Laura Boyd, Minister Chloe Brown, Joy Culbreath, Marcia Mitchell, Ardina Moore, Dr. Cindy Ross, Kathy Taylor and Helen Thompson.



Choctaw Nation: JUDY ALLEN

Chief Gregory E. Pyle and Joy Culbreath, executive director of education, pose for a photo at the 2011 Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame induction ceremony. Joy and seven other honorees were recognized for their significant contributions made to the state of Oklahoma in their specific fields.

NOTES TO THE NATION

Thanks from Goodland Academy

Chief Pyle, thank you very much for the assistance. Sometimes we never know how far reaching our spheres of influence can be. I received a call from a pastor at The Potter's House Church in Dallas, a mega church whose pastor, Bishop T.D. Jakes, is on national TV frequently. Pastor Wesley, from the church, called us seeking to bring work groups and help support our program. He informed me that he was related to two of our day students that started last fall. He told me that the positive transformation that has occurred in their lives has been astonishing and that he wanted to be a part of the amazing things that are happening here at Goodland Academy. Your support has made our motto, "Striving for Excellence," a reality! We want each of you to know when you give to Goodland, you become a part of our success stories.

David L. Dearinger

Thank you for donation

I want to sincerely thank Chief Pyle and the Choctaw Nation for your donation of baby wipes for our soldiers in Afghanistan. We are mailing them little by little, as postage is quite high. Once again, please accept our deepest thanks for your generosity.

Cara Dominick, Hugo High School

Seeking information on cousin

I am looking for information on my cousin, Darlene Bohanan Fields, who I lost contact with a few years ago. I am also searching for any of the Bohanan relatives. My grandmother was Lillian Dee Bohanan. Her siblings were Choice, Faye, Metta Juan, Daphanee and Ailene.

Any information or pictures would be greatly appreciated. My name is Tammy Vargas, and my number is 817-692-6307.

Thank you for support

Jennifer Empron recently received her bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary health services: occupational therapy and graduated summa cum laude. She would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for the scholarship money to help her continue her education.



Thank you for blessings


Shirley Picklesimer is grateful for the blessings she has received from the Choctaw Nation. In recent times Shirley has earned over 10 certificates qualifying her for work in the culinary arts and plans to pursue even more. Bakery Assistant Certification and Cook's Assistant Certification are a couple of the many credentials she has accrued that will make her successful in her life.

Shirley would like to thank God first and foremost for all the people and provisions he has placed in her life that have been of great assistance. "I would like to thank each and everyone who has been involved in my education," says Shirley.

She extends great thanks to the Choctaw Nation Vocational Development Department led by Rita Workman and her staff. She also is grateful for Sabrina Ralls, who is the director of the Poteau Choctaw Community Center, and all those involved with the center for their assistance and encouragement.

Councilman Delton Cox has also earned a special "Thank You" for his continued aid with her future.



<p>Gregory E. Pyle Chief</p>	<p>Gary Batton Assistant Chief</p>
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Thankful for disaster relief

State Representative Paul Roan would like to tell Chief Pyle, Assistant Chief Batton and the Tribal Council members how much he appreciates what the Choctaw Nation is doing for constituents in Tushka.

Thank you

Thank you to Chief Pyle and the Choctaw Nation for the birthday cards, the newspaper and the precious Christmas ornaments, which really add beauty to my tree. A letter about education from my younger brother was in the paper once and a picture of two of my children was in another issue of the paper.

I've lived in Missouri over 60 years, but I'm an Oklahoma Choctaw at heart. I'm glad you are making Oklahoma a better place to live.

Billie F. Kelley

Thank you from Byington family

The family of Wanda Byington wish to express their appreciation to Brother Daniel Wind for his message and Chief Pyle, Assistant Chief Batton and District 11 Councilman Bob Pate for their kind words spoken of their mother. They wish to thank their friends and family who sang and The Choctaw Singers with Jeremy Scott.

Thanks to Presley Byington, who played his native flute; it meant so much to them. To all the volunteers, co-workers and friends of Choctaw Nation who prepared food and dropped it off or called, thank you. Their support truly touched the family's heart. May God bless all of them. Also, a special thank you to Chaney-Harkins Funeral Home.

Thanks to Career Development

I wanted to express how incredibly thankful my son, Alex, and I are to Ken English and Bettye Bolen of the Career Development Program. My son is trying desperately to obtain an education for the field he wishes to work in, and the Choctaw Nation has helped him overcome difficulties every step of the way. Alex was diagnosed with a severe form of optic neuritis and lost a great amount of his vision. Following that, my husband, Robert, passed away.

Ken English and Bettye Bolen stepped into our lives and changed everything. They have helped us above and beyond the call of duty. Because of them, Alex will be able to complete his education and begin work in his chosen field. They are incredibly quiet about it, too, just stating matter-of-factly "That's what we do here," but what they have done, and what the Choctaw tribe has done, is a miracle. Alex has a renewed sense of purpose and his drive and energy are now endless with enthusiasm. He has always been a strong young man and a hard worker but now he is even more so.

All we ever hear as a society is bad news. The good news is that there are people out there that care, and there is help for people like us who don't normally ask for help. My life and Alex's life are like other people's lives, filled with adversity. Ken and Bettye have made me realize that there is much goodness and kindness. We are blessed to be Choctaws.

Luann Wooley Hays

Seeking photo

I am trying to get a picture of my great-great-grandfather James Darneal. I have been told he was a Light Horsemen sheriff for Judges Isaac Parker. Years ago I saw a photo, gun and badge at Kerr Museum in Poteau. I went back a few years later and the museum had been robbed, leaving no trace of those articles. None of my family has a photo and it is real important that I find one of him of any kind. If you have any information, please contact G. Swift at 918-962-3955.

Thank you

I would like to offer my sincere thank you to the Choctaw Nation for its great ability and dedication in providing excellent health care as well as financial assistance.

In October 2010, I was diagnosed with cancer. Because of the Choctaw Nation's many available assistance programs, several of my personal needs were met quickly and graciously.

I would also like to give a great thank you to my Councilman, Joe Coley of District 6. Councilman Coley is a hard-working councilman who sees to the needs of the people he serves and the Choctaw Nation. The Choctaw Nation administration, the Choctaw Health Care and Councilman Coley are all highly regarded by my family and me.

Sheila Isabell

Buck succeeds at premium sale

Bailey Buck of Madill FFA is pictured with Mr. Spears of the Choctaw Nation at the 2011 Oklahoma Youth Expo Premium Sale. She would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for its continued support.



Thank you for help in time of need

My name is Patricia Clarke Tom and I would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for coming through for us at Christmas time when we were in financial stress. My kids were able to have a good Christmas.

I also wanted to share the good news that my husband was able to get a motorized chair for himself. I am still trying to gain financial help with a van and medical equipment and attachments on the van so I can transport my husband to his necessary doctor appointments, since he is having his above-the-knee amputation soon. We have had to move several times since Christmas to locate a doctor who will do his procedure and have finally moved to California. We have found a home and are just waiting for surgery date. Thank you again to all the ladies who helped me through my time of need, and thank you Choctaw Nation for taking care of one of your own.

Birthday gospel singing

A birthday gospel singing for Joseph Wolf will be held at 7 p.m. May 28 at the Choctaw Community Center on Big Lots Road in Durant. Special groups in attendance include New Creations, The Gastineaus and many more. Bring your groups, and admission is free of charge. Supper will be served at 11 p.m. and concessions are available. For more information, call 580-775-2065.

LeFlore High School reunion

The LeFlore High School Annual Alumni and Former Students' Association Banquet will be held May 7 at the old LeFlore High School gym. Registration begins at 5:30 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. If you are a former student or graduate of LeFlore High School, make plans to come and get reacquainted with your old classmates. For more information, contact Susan Cantwell at 918-647-6327 or email smcantwell2000@yahoo.com.

Casey/Ward reunion

The Casey and Ward reunion will be held at noon June 25 at the Choctaw Community building in Spiro. If you have any questions, please contact John Casey at 918-962-2316 or 918-774-4940. Thank you.

Beal reunion

The Charlie and Minnie Beal family reunion will be held June 11 at Central Church, located at 4949 hwy 7 West between Davis and Sulphur. The family will be staying at Turner Falls Inn from June 10 through June 11. For more info, please contact David Deal at 806-676-6633, or Debbie Green at 806-676-6096.

McAlvain reunion

The 2011 Polk/McAlvain family reunion will be held in Wister at the community/activity building on the north side of Lake Wister on June 4 at noon. There will be a potluck lunch, and the meat portion of the meal will be provided. Each family is encouraged to bring a side dish, drinks, an auction item for both adults and children and lawn chairs.

Families are also gathering at the Kennady/McAlvain Cemetery in Wister on June 5 at 9:30 a.m. For further information, contact Val (McAlvain) Templin at 918-429-9925 or email at outbackok@gmail.com. For Wister Lake State Park cabins, RV, camping information or directions call 918-655-7212 or 800-654-8240.

Nail/Henington reunion

The late Dock Nail and Henington reunion will be held June 28 through July 4 at Cardinal Point. The family invites relatives to camp out with them or come and go. All relatives of the late Dock Nail and Lewis Henington are welcome. For more information call Lillie Nail Henington at 918-429-3382, Benjamin Henington at 918-470-5885 or Pat Henington at 918-470-3997.

Choctaw seniors stay fit

The Choctaw Senior Citizen exercise class in McAlester invites seniors to join them Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 10 for fun, exercise and a salad lunch. They enjoy doing chair exercises, walking, using treadmills, cycling, using exercise DVDs and using ellipticals.

Pictured in the front from left to right are instructor Neatha Smith-Quinn and coordinator Jay Tisho, and in the back are Helen Key, Joan Hogan, Mary Ann Fabry, Sue Davis and Johnny Cudd.

The positive benefits of exercising are weight loss, reduction of blood sugar, decreased risk of stroke and cardiac disease. For more information, call Neatha Smith-Quinn at 918-423-6965 or 918-423-1016.

Seeking address to send quilt pattern

On March 26 I visited with a lady at the McAlester Expo Center who gave me her address on a napkin so I could send her a Sunbonnet Sue quilt pattern; however, the napkin was left in my jeans pocket and was washed and ruined. I know the woman was from McAlester, and if she could, please contact Debbie Damron at 1-800-522-6170 ext. 2309 and I will mail the pattern. Thank you.

Thankful

My family would like to sincerely thank the Choctaw Nation and the Biskinik staff for making sure we get our monthly edition of the newspaper. We also appreciate the calendar and the wonderful gift we received at Christmas time. It was a great way to explain to my son some of the culture of our tribe.

I am also very thankful to have received a grant from the Department of Higher Education, which is helping me achieve my goal of becoming a college graduate. May God bless our nation and tribe,

Seth S. Tom

Seeking family information

I am currently seeking my McClure family line. My maternal great-grandmother was Narcissa McClure, who was half Choctaw and married George Mifflin Bond. Narcissa died about 1894. Her parents were Isaac McClure, a full-blood Choctaw, and Sarah Schemerhorn McClure. Family oral history has it that Isaac came to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears and was taken in and adopted by the McClure family. Please e-mail any information to smeltzerd@live.com. Thank you!

Dave Smeltzer

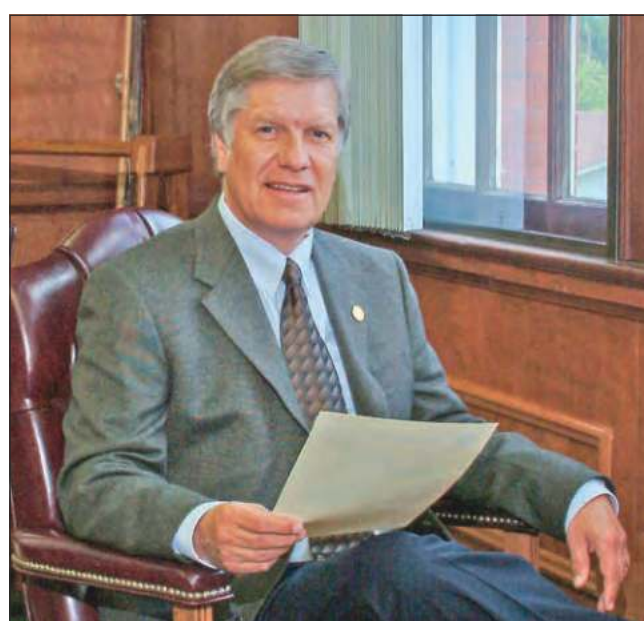
Disasters affect tribe and tribal members

From the Desk of Chief Gregory E. Pyle

The entire nation has been riveted to the broadcasts of the heart-wrenching images of the devastation left behind from the April tornadoes that have repeatedly swept from Oklahoma and Texas to the east coast. Just a few miles from the headquarters in Durant, in the hometown of some of our employees, one of the first super-storms of Spring spawned a multi-vortex system of tornadoes that ripped apart the school in Tushka, completely destroyed 149 homes and damaged about 90 other homes.

Tushka is the Choctaw word for "warrior," and I want to pass along to the rest of the world that the fighting spirit in this small town is strong! Minutes after the doors to the storm shelters were opened, residents began the search and rescue for friends and relatives. Because of the advance forecasts and warning systems, the Choctaw Nation and other agencies were prepared with teams quickly in place to provide assistance. Two precious lives were lost, but when viewing the miles of disaster the churning tornado had appeared to chew up and spit back out, it seems a miracle that more people were not killed.

The tribe set up a cooking area adjacent to the incident command center to provide 1,200 hot meals each day, as well as donating bottled water, toiletries, food items, cleanup and emer-



gency assistance. Partnering with the local churches, volunteers, American Red Cross, and other agencies, many residents were reached within hours to get help.

As I walked through the areas hit by the storm, I was able to talk with residents who not only survived the storm, but were still able to smile and talk about their future plans in the rebuilding of their homes - building back on the same site, in Tushka, their home. Their stories of the night of the storm were inspiring, with their values of God and family uppermost in the recounting of events. Each person I talked to was thankful their family was safe, was thankful to God, and was busy cleaning up their property with a true Choctaw "warrior" spirit that not even a tornado can chase away.

The sad situation in Tuscaloosa (Choctaw word for "black warrior") also affects the Choctaw Nation. We have tribal members all over the world, including Alabama, and we are anxiously awaiting word if any Choctaws were lost in this storm. Just down the road from Tuscaloosa is Moundville, a historic site of our ancestors probably used for politics and ceremonies between the 11th and 16th centuries that includes 32 amazing earthen mounds, and now has a museum open for the public. We have been notified that the tornado was visible from Moundville but did not damage them.

The prayers of my family, the Council, the employees and myself go out for all those who have been victims of storms and other disasters this year.

Youth Activity Camps offer opportunities for development

From the Desk of Assistant Chief Gary Batton

The Choctaw Nation has a series of youth camps during the summer months that offer unique opportunities for youth ages 8 - 18. Beginning the first of June, over 500 youth are registered to take part in two days of Cultural Enrichment camps at Tushka Homma. They will be enthralled to learn the rules of stickball, how to use the ball sticks (kapucha) to throw and catch the ball (towa) and actually compete in a stickball game.

The Cultural Enrichment camps also teach archery with a long bow, Choctaw pottery-making, basketry, bead-working and tribal language.

Sports camps are offered in golf, football, baseball and softball. These are free of charge, giving a tremendous advantage to the students so they can get great instruction in sports of their choice. Multiple incentives for attending these camps includes keeping in shape, staying involved in sports that are enjoyable and being introduced to new sports. Students will also be shown how setting goals and self-discipline not only helps their playing ability, but also helps in their life off the field.

The instructor for the Golf Camp is Ed Bove, the ESPN Golf Schools Director of Instruction. The staff and instructors are motivated to teach each participant whether it be a first time or an advanced golfer. Each new golf participant gets a set of clubs to encourage them to continue the sport. The softball and baseball participants are being gifted gloves this year. Alternate years, bats are given. Coaches explain that as the stu-



dents grow, the gloves and bats need to grow in size with the players. Basketball and football campers are given balls at the end of their instruction.

The tribe provided the bus ride when the camps are at locations far from home. Lunches and plenty of Gatorade and water are available at all the camps. This has been a great opportunity for the youth of the Choctaw Nation, and the Chief and Council have been proud that so many young people have been able to attend over the past few years. We all hope that hundreds more will be at the camps this summer for a wonderful experience!

Chaplain's Corner

Preparing for eternity

Again it is my privilege to share with you something from the Word of God. I am reminded much of our Choctaw-speaking preachers saying, "Achukmalit illa nukfilla shke." ("Let's meditate or think on these things.")

The Bible indicates that this life we are living is only for a brief period - preparing us for eternity. There are many who are living only for today with little thought about the future life. The Bible has a great deal to say about the future, one is the subject of hell.

In the record of the rich man in Luke 16, we have an example of a man who chose to disregard God's law and lived to regret it in a place that Jesus called hell. Jesus was trying to picture what would happen if you left God out of your plans. Because He will bring judgment in the life to come.

In Luke 16:22 we see that this man was rich, "...the rich man also died, and was buried." God does not condemn men because they are rich, nor does He justify a man because he is poor. Poverty is not a virtue nor are riches in themselves sin.

The altar of God is where the rich and the poor meet. There are no rich nor poor in heaven and with one voice they say, "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling." Some of the finest Christians are men of means, but their bank accounts, like their lives, are consecrated wholly to God. But the rich man of whom Jesus spoke, lived selfishly.

This rich man eventually found himself forsaken by the God he had ignored and by his friends whom he had neglected. Money with all its advantages cannot buy everything. This rich man died and all of wealth could not buy one more precious hour of life.

Think of the things that cannot be bought with money. It cannot buy health, friends, love, or peace of heart and mind. It cannot buy peace of soul. We come to the conclusion then, that money in itself is not worthy of the importance most people place upon it.

This man's sin was his selfish use of money. He placed it ahead of God and because of that, his heart was conditioned for hell instead of heaven.

Notice in verse 23 of Luke 16 the place to which the rich man was condemned, "And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."

I find no pleasure in the knowledge of the fact of hell, but it is my duty to remind you that the same book, the Bible, that proclaims the wonders of heaven also describes the terrors of an eternal separation from God in hell.

The rich man carried all of his faculties with him when he went to hell. He saw, he felt, he heard, he remembered and he cried.

A million years from today, for eternity, you will still be living somewhere. The immaterial part of man, your memory, your hearing, your feeling, your sight, your taste, will be living somewhere forever according to the teaching of the Bible.

It is reasonable to believe that God the Father would not send His only Begotten Son to leave heaven, to come to this earth, to become man, to be mocked by an insane mob, to be spit upon by the rude rebels, to be nailed to the cross and to die shamefully upon the cross, if there were no danger of your soul being lost and going to hell.

There are many people who feel that sermons on hell are intended to frighten the lost into accepting Jesus Christ. This is not my motive. This is what the Bible teaches, if our Lord Jesus Christ mentioned it over and over again it is important enough for me to mention.

Notice how the rich man was punished in Luke 16:23, "And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, ..." It took the torments of hell to turn this rich man's thoughts toward others. What will people endure in the service of Satan and sin? See him descending down the social ladder in spite of the prayers of friends and loved ones and the faithful convicting plea of the Holy Spirit.

The rich man had the torment of memory. Abraham said in Luke 16:25, "...remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

I imagine also that this man had an opportunity to turn to God, but refused or neglected it and now he had the memory of those neglected opportunities.

You remember the times that you drove by the church. You are going to remember the times that you saw the Bible and neglected to read it. You are going to remember the times the Spirit of God spoke to you in the quietness of your heart, but you didn't turn to God. You are going to remember throughout eternity and that alone will be a torment that will drive you deeper into hell. This man squandered his opportunity.

Notice, the rich man had the torment of thirst. We read in Luke 16:24 "... he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." Is there literal fire in hell? I answer, by reminding you again that these are the words of Jesus. Jesus said, "in this flame."

This brings us to the last torment. The torment of separation in Luke 16:26, "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

Sin separates God from man. It was man's sin in the beginning which created a gulf of separation between God and man.

But Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in the supreme act of atonement fashioned a bridge over the impassable gulf of separation, and reconciled God and man. This bridge was in the form of a cross and every man who comes to God must come by the way of the cross. Will you trust Jesus Christ as your Savior today? You do this by faith.

Remember to pray for America. Pray for our leaders. May is Memorial month, pray for our Service men and women.

Tribal Council meets in regular April session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met April 9 in regular session at Tushka Homma.

New business addressed included approval of:

- Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA) 2011 Indian Housing Plan to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- The funds and budget for the 2010 Environmental Protection Agency for the Climate Showcase Communities Grant Program where the federal government has awarded a grant of \$189,817 to assist the Choctaw Nation in the enhancement of environmental, economic, public health and social conditions for the community.
- The Choctaw Nation Faith-based counseling for Crimes Victims in Indian Country Grant where the federal contribution is \$54,148, which is added to \$6,016 in tribal cash from the General Fund for a total of \$60,164.

• Kiamichi Economic Development District of Oklahoma (KEDDO) Outreach Budget, a grant that provides services to low income and economically disadvantaged older persons.

- A 90-acre grazing lease in Latimer County.
- The disposition of assets from the Choctaw Nation Housing Authority in accordance to existing policies.
- Donation of excess land in Bryan County to Chihowa Okla "God's People" United Methodist Church to be used to meet the spiritual needs of the people of the area.

A sanctuary and fellowship hall are to be built on the land and ownership shall default back to Choctaw Nation if the property ever ceases to be a church.

- A Right To Work provision, which limits certain requirements of employees to the Choctaw Nation.

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

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Photo Contest

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

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

PHOTOGRAPHY SPECIFICATIONS:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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.

Gardens: a great way to get physical

As spring rolls in, now is a wonderful time to consider planting a family garden. Depending on the amount of space you have, you could grow just a couple of fruits or vegetables or a lot. A family garden not only provides you with delicious, homegrown produce, it also offers a great opportunity to be physically active.



Tips for a Family Garden:

- *Walk to the local nursery or store to select you seeds, plants and supplies.
 - *Spend family time designing the layout of the garden.
 - *Assign each family member one of the fruits or vegetables to tend.
 - *Take turns watering all the plants; remember there is a variety of exercise that can be done in the garden such as raking, weeding, pruning and digging.
 - *Once your garden is ready to pick, research healthy recipes that you can cook using your homegrown produce.
- Having a family garden or visiting the local Farmer's Market allows us to eat a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables and helps us to eat 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 fresh fruits and vegetables creates happy, healthy habits that last a lifetime!

Shaking that sodium sensation

Warmer weather is on its way and we all know what that means...grilling! Yet with grilling sometimes salt and sodium can find its way into and on our foods. Most Americans take in more salt than they actually need in a day. The current recommendation for sodium intake is less than 2,400mg a day. This is the equivalent to 1 teaspoon of salt in a day. This is to include the salt that is already in the foods we eat. Furthermore, the salt and sodium we are watching for is not just table salt, which includes Kosher salt and sea salt as well. According to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) for someone with high blood pressure, recent research has shown that people consuming diets of 1,500mg of sodium had even better blood pressure lowering benefits and can help blood pressure medicines to work better. May is National High Blood Pressure Education Month and since one of the ways we can keep blood pressure from rising is to reduce salt and sodium in the diet, let's take a look at ways to flavor our grilling selections without salt:

- Beef - Bay leaf, marjoram, nutmeg, onion, pepper, sage, and thyme
- Lamb - Curry powder, garlic, rosemary, and mint
- Pork - Garlic, onion, sage, pepper, and oregano
- Chicken - Ginger, marjoram, oregano, paprika, rosemary, sage, tarragon, and thyme
- Fish - Curry powder, dill, dry mustard, lemon juice, marjoram, paprika, and pepper
- Carrots - Cinnamon, cloves, marjoram, nutmeg, rosemary, and sage
- Corn - Cumin, curry powder, onion, paprika, and parsley
- Greens - Onion and pepper
- Peas - Ginger, marjoram, onion, parsley, and sage
- Potatoes - Dill, garlic, onion, paprika, parsley, and sage
- Tomatoes - Basil, bay leaf, dill, marjoram, onion, oregano, parsley, and pepper
- Squash - Cloves, cinnamon, curry powder, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, onion, rosemary, and sage
- Green beans- -Dill, curry powder, lemon juice, marjoram, oregano, tarragon, thyme

Recipe - Butternut Squash Kabobs

Makes: 8 servings, Prep: 30 minutes, Roast: 20 minutes

- Ingredients:**
- 1 2-lb butternut squash
 - 3 Tablespoons butter melted or canola oil
 - 1 tsp curry powder
 - salt

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Cut squash in half lengthwise and remove seeds. Peel squash. Cut squash halves in 1 to 1 1/2-inch pieces. Place in a 3-quart rectangular baking dish. In a small bowl combine canola oil and curry powder. Drizzle over squash, tossing to coat.
 2. Roast squash, uncovered, for 20-25 minutes or until tender and lightly browned, stirring once or twice. Serve immediately or let cool to tote. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator up to two days.
 3. Serve squash at room temperature threaded on eight 8-inch skewers. Season to taste with a pinch of salt.
- To reheat kabobs, grill on a gas or charcoal grill directly over medium coals (or preheat gas grill to medium) about 10 minutes or until heated through, turning kabobs occasionally.

Nutrition facts
Amount per serving
Calories - 69, Total Carbs - 7g, Total fat - 5g, Cholesterol - 12mg, Fiber - 1g, Sat fat - 2g, Protein - 1g, Sug-



ars - 2g, Unsat. fat - 2g, Sodium - 36mg.
For further information you may contact Erin Adams, RD, LD of Choctaw Nation Diabetes Wellness Center 800-349-7026 ext: 6959

NURSERY NEWS

Joy Love Hall

Joy Love Hall was born on Aug. 18, 2010. Her parents are Jamie and Amy Hall of Edinburg, Texas. Grandparents are Ron and Mary Sieger of Marietta and grandma Pricilla. Great-grandparents are the late James and Melvina Polk, and Leon and Delsie Dove of Edinburg.



Tatum Choate

Tatum Kay Lushoma Choate was born at 5:52 p.m. on Oct. 16, 2010, and weighed 7 pounds 14 ounces. Her parents are Nashoma Choate and Amber Tiger of Tulsa. Grandmother is Lavon Choate, great-grandparents are Ron and Mary Sieger of Marietta and Frank Choate and great-great-grandparents are the late James and Melvina Polk.



Kelsey Lee Springs

Kelsey Lee Springs was born on Jan. 27, 2011, to Patrick and Delia Springs of Artesia, Calif.



Grayson Prewitt

Grayson Alexander Prewitt was born at Northside Hospital in Atlanta, Ga., at 5:09 p.m. on Aug. 29, 2010, weighing 7 pounds 3 ounces and measuring 20.25 inches.



His proud parents are Lindsey (Shurley) and Mark Prewitt of Acworth, Ga.

Grayson's maternal grandmother is USAF Lt. Colonel Rebecca (Lowrance-Shurley) Gober stationed at San Antonio, Texas. His maternal great-grandparents are the late James Alex and Mabel (Russell) Lowrance of Soper. Grayson's maternal great-great-grandmothers, both Choctaw, are the late Dora (Edwards) Lowrance-Boyd of Soper and the late Isabel (Best) Russell of Rattan.

Cierra and Kierra

Twin sisters Cierra Diane and Kierra Marie Knight were born Sept. 25 at the Choctaw Nation Hospital in Talihina. Cierra weighed 4 pounds, 15 ounces, and Kierra weighed 5 pounds 7 ounces. They both were 18 inches long. Proud parents are Ricky and Stacey Knight. Grandparents are Linda and Lee Knight. They have a big sister, Hannah.

Kennedy Williams

Kennedy Olivia-Reese Williams was born on Jan. 5, 2011, at Duke University Hospital in Durham, N.C. She weighed 6 pounds 9.6 ounces and was 19 inches long. Proud parents are Kia and Maurice Williams. She is welcomed with love by her grandfather, James M. Williams, her great-grandmother, Kity Mae Williams and a host of family members, all of Oklahoma City.



Megan Moore

Megan Alexis Moore was born at 8:10 p.m. on Jan. 12, 2011, at Palomar Medical Center in Escondido, Calif. to proud parents Darrin and Valerie Moore of San Marcos, Calif. She weighed 7 pounds 1 ounce and was 20.25 inches long. Grandparents are Cecil and Betty Moore of Lancaster, Calif., and Kristina Pofahl of Escondido. Great-grandparents are Joe and Jessie Dick of San Jose, Calif., and the late Charles and Marian Case of Riverside, Calif. Aunts Deborah Clipper and Theresa Moore also welcome Megan into this world.



Maycie Twitty

Omar and Shanda Twitty are proud to announce the birth of their daughter, Maycie Alyse Twitty. She was born on Dec. 7, 2010, at 8:58 p.m., at the Healthplex Hospital in Norman. She weighed 8 pounds 1 ounce and was 18.25 inches long. She joins proud big sister Tayshia Ry'Ann Smith. She is the granddaughter of Barbara Roebuck Smith of Norman, Lanier and Cynthia Parker of Norman, Lorine Twitty of Paris, Texas and the late Albert James Smith of Roanoke, Va. She is the great-granddaughter of the late John "Jack" and Peggy Roebuck of Coalgate, Lanier Sr. and the late Sylvia Parker of Hugo, and Mary McDonald of Hugo.



Lucas Hill

Lucas Minko Hill was born at 7:46 a.m. on July 21, 2010 to Stephanie Hill of McAlester. Lucas was 8 pounds 13 ounces, measuring 21.25 inches long. His family includes his grandmother, Barbara Hill; great aunt Wilda Taliaferro; cousins, Eric and Rachel Taliaferro; great uncle Dennis Hill; his Durant family, Christy, Paula and Betty Stark; and Alan Williams family.



Elliot Banks

The Banks family is very proud to announce the arrival of their newest addition, Elliot Lee Banks. Elliot was born March 15, 2011, at Nellis Air Force Base, Las Vegas, home of the USAF Thunderbirds. She weighed 9 pounds 6 ounces and was 21.75 inches long. She is the daughter of Tech Sgt. Joel Banks and Christi Banks, granddaughter of Dave Banks, and great-granddaughter of Bobby and Betty Banks.



Tristin Limon

David and Beatrice Bohanan of Houston would like to announce the birth of their first grandson, Tristin Jaden Lee Limon. Tristin was born at 9:21 p.m. on March 11, 2011. His weight was 8 pounds 1.5 ounces, with a length of 20 inches. He was born to the proud parents Joseph Limon and Jadira Betancourt of Houston, and proud great-grandparents, Hack and Ella Bohanan of Bethel. Tristin was welcomed home by his aunt Tala Lynn and uncle Robert of Houston. Tristin would like to say "halito!" to his great-uncles Bobby, Stevie, Dana, Daniel Bohanan of Bethel, and his great-aunts, Angela and Debbie.



Recipe of the Month: Stove Top Popcorn

- Ingredients:** 2 Tbs. vegetable oil, 1/2 cup of popcorn kernels
- Preparations:**
- Place 2 Tbs. of vegetable oil in a heavy saucepan with a cover.
 - Add 1/2 cup popcorn kernels to cover the bottom of the pan in a single layer.
 - Put the lid on the pot.
- Turn the stove to medium high heat.
- Listen for the first popcorn kernel to pop.
 - Start shaking the pan on top of the stove.
 - Continue shaking the pan until the kernels stop popping.
 - Remove the pan from the stove.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION

ANTLERS

Market open weekdays June 1-28, except for:
June 1 : Idabel 9-11 a.m.; Broken Bow 12-2 p.m. (market closed)
June 8: Bethel 9-10:30; Smithville 12-2 (market closed)
Closed June 29-30 for inventory
Cooking with Carmen: None held this month

DURANT

Market open weekdays: June 1-28, except for:
Closed June 29-30 for inventory
Cooking with Carmen: None held this month

McALESTER

Market open weekdays June 1-28, except for:
Closed June 29-30 for inventory
Cooking with Carmen: None held this month

POTEAU

Market open weekdays June 1-28, except for:
Closed June 29-30 for inventory.
Cooking with Carmen: None held this month

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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Choctaw Nation WIC WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN



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



The Choctaw Nation Head Start in Wright City held its annual Trike-A-Thon for St. Jude's Children Research Hospital

Since 2002 the Head Start students have been participating in raising funds for the hospital while learning empathy and caring for others. Tribal Councilman Jack Austin helped out by purchasing trike helmets for all the students to wear in order to promote safety.

Center Supervisor Deborah Dailey would like to encourage anyone who would like to donate to St. Jude's Hospital to please drop your donations off at the Wright City Head Start on 10th & Main St. or call the Head Start at 580-981-2634.



Submitted photos

Men of the Choctaw Nation walk a mile in 'her' shoes

Teams of Choctaw men put on a pair of high heels and joined the "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" event to support local rape crisis services

and domestic violence shelters. For a decade, men in the community have been taking a stand against sexualized violence.

Tens of thousands of men have worn heels to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for this cause. "Walk a Mile" events occurred at noon on

April 9 at Market Square in Durant and at 10 a.m. on April 30 in Idabel with the walk starting at 12:30 from the Courthouse.



Choctaw Nation: KAREN JACOB



Choctaw Nation: KAREN JACOB

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma was presented with the trophy for the largest team to "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes." Team Members were Larry Behrens, Billy Stephens, James Wallace, Shannon McDaniel, Shane Haddock, Bennie Robison, Daniel Marcy and John Hobbs.

Shane Haddock and Billy Stephens, employees of ICW, are walking the walk in their red pumps.

Balloon release to remember child abuse awareness

Youth and adults from across the Durant area gathered to release 100 blue balloons in an effort to raise awareness about child abuse, its detrimental impact on young lives and prevention methods that can be employed to help reduce the number of child abuse cases across the Choctaw Nation.

Assistant Chief Gary Batton spoke inspirational words just before the crowd released the mass of balloons.



Choctaw Nation: BRET MOSS



May is National Foster Care Month

Each May, National Foster Care Month provides an opportunity to shine a light on the experiences of children and youth in the foster care system. The campaign raises awareness about the urgent needs of these young people and encourages citizens from every walk of life to get involved – as foster or adoptive parents, volunteers, mentors, employers or in other ways.

With the help of dedicated people, many formerly abused or neglected children and teens will either reunite safely with their parents, be cared for by relatives or be adopted by loving families.

Currently we have approximately 150 Choctaw children placed out of the home in relative and foster homes in the 10 ½ counties of the Choctaw Nation.

Thanks to the many advocates, OKDHS workers and Indian Child Welfare staff, we are trying to reduce that number. Even with reducing the numbers, we still need more Choctaw foster homes for our Choctaw children. Our Choctaw children need – and deserve – caring adults who love and support them.

We call on all Choctaws to join us in helping to change a life of a child or youth in foster care. No matter who you are or how much time you have to give, you can help create permanent, lifelong connections for these children and youth.

All children — including Choctaw children and youth in foster care — deserve a safe, happy life and an opportunity to stay connected to their Choctaw culture. Young people in foster care especially need nurturing adults on their side because their own families are in crisis and unable to care for them.

For more information about foster care contact:
Larry Behrens, Adoption/Foster Care
580-924-8280, ext 2331
lbehrens@choctawnation.com

Choctaw member to appear on Food Network's new show

By BRET MOSS

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

David "Famous Dave" Anderson is just what his name implies, famous, especially if you are privy to the art of barbeque. Anderson, a member of the Choctaw Nation, is a notable character to the barbeque game.

He is the owner of the publically traded company, Famous Dave's of America, which went public in 1996. The company stemmed from his restaurant endeavors, which stemmed from his first location, Famous Dave's BBQ Shack located in Hayward, Wis. With over 180 locations stretching across the United States, Anderson's chain of restaurants has earned him considerable clout in the field of barbeque.

With this clout, Anderson was easy to recognize by the producers of the Food Network's upcoming reality show, "Best In Smoke," which pits some of the best barbeque cooks in the nation against each other in a competition for \$50,000 and the title of "Best In Smoke."

The program premiered on the Food Network at 9 p.m. on May 8 and features six of the best barbeque masters in the nation as they attempt to avoid elimination.

Though competition will be stiff for Anderson and his partner, Charlie Torgerson, who is a Culinary Institute of America graduate and today is Executive Chef and Director of Culinary at Famous Dave's of America Inc., they have a lot of experience and credentials under their belts.

Anderson has spent over 40 years perfecting his now award-winning famous recipes that have captured over 500 Blue Ribbons, Best of Class, and First Place Trophies, including being awarded "Hottest Concept in America!" by Nation's Restaurant News. Dave's barbeque sauce Rich and Sassy won Best Sauce in America in Kansas City at the prestigious American Royal Barbeque Contest and Dave's cookbook won Best Barbeque/Grill Cookbook in America by the National Barbecue Association.

Even though he grew up in Chicago, Anderson has deep connections with the south and the southern style of cooking that comes with it. His father, an Idabel native, instilled the importance of southern style eats in his son and passed on his passion for such cuisine.

His father, James, taught him the importance of using only the best and most fresh ingredients in his culinary creations. James would often travel south to get the specific ingredients needed for his creations, displaying to Anderson the importance of staying true to the recipe.

"I have lived my whole life devoted to the blending of Southern spices and discovering all the secrets of Real Pit Barbecue," said Anderson as he described the passion his father passed on to him at a young age. "My dad taught me how important it was to make everything from scratch using only the best and freshest ingredients," he continued.

His mother, who ran a fry bread booth at pow wows taught Anderson how to cook and work the business. With the skills he learned working with his mother, he was able to not only make some of what is considered the best barbeque in America, but was able to turn it into a lucrative success.

Anderson is not only a successful businessman in the restaurant game, but a man of many accomplishments in various areas of life. Among his numerous successful endeavors in life include,



Photo provided

"FAMOUS DAVE" ANDERSON

founding Famous Dave's of America, a restaurant chain of over 180 locations, being an Olympic Torch bearer in the 2002 Winter Olympics and founding the LifeSkills Center for Leadership.

According to Anderson's website, he has appeared on major networks NBC, CBS, ABC including: Regis and Kathy Lee, CNBC's The Next Big Idea with Donny Deutsch, the Discovery Channel, the Food Network, FOX Morning Show, and The Travel Channel. NASDAQ honored Famous Dave's of America for the 15th year anniversary by ringing the NASDAQ Bell and featured Famous Dave's on The World's Largest 10-Story TV on Times Square!

Dave's life story was featured on a special Oprah Winfrey Show honoring six individuals who made a special difference in the lives of others. Dave received Oprah's Angel Award for his leadership work with at-risk youth.

Dave has received a prestigious presidential appointment, which required a full Senate confirmation serving as Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of Interior in Washington, D.C. Anderson has served several governors in advisory positions regarding community economic development and small business. Dave has also provided key testimony that has been used in Congress and several U.S. Senate Select Committees.

He has earned his Master's Degree from Harvard University without an undergraduate degree and has received an Honorary Doctorate Degree for his life's work.

His success story has been featured in many books, including "Chicken Soup for the Entrepreneur's Soul." He has authored his own books as well, and takes his success story to the public through motivational speeches and seminars.

Though he has many reasons to be boastful, Anderson still says that, "Being asked to participate on this Food Network Show is definitely a highlight of my career."

Anderson was not able to disclose much about the show before it aired, but is able to tell that it was a grueling and rigorous experience. "We all started at 5 a.m., which means we had to be picked up at 4:30 each morning and we had to start filming at 5:30, but the real kicker was that we didn't get back to the hotel until midnight which meant it was hard to get to sleep after being on your feet all day," described Anderson.

Though Anderson and his partner were the oldest team in the competition, he mentioned that he was able to hold his own against a younger crowd using his wisdom that he had acquired over his years in the business.

"Whether I win or not... just being chosen means that I am already regarded as being one of the best barbeque cooks in America," said Anderson. Whether he wins or not, the Choctaw Nation is proud to claim such an inspiring individual.



Choctaw Nation: LARISSA COPELAND

Honoring Earth Day one seed at a time

In honor of Earth Day, Durant Choctaw Head Start students joined the Durant seniors to plant tomato plants in the community garden at the Choctaw Community Center. Pictured are Head Start students Hunter Wingfield, front left, and Ethan Factor.



PEOPLE YOU KNOW

Happy birthday, Aire

Aire Sequoyah Thorne turns 16 years old on April 14. She is a sophomore at Moore High School where she plays tennis.

Her parents John and Marie and sisters Melody and Trinity wish her a happy birthday as well as her grandparents, Gene and LaHoma Murphy Cranthers of Oklahoma City. Aire is the great-granddaughter of the late William and Ella Murphy of Idabel.



Kiera and Teagan meet Chief Pyle

California Choctaws Kiera and Teagan Sidles enjoyed meeting Chief Gregory E. Pyle. They were in Durant during their recent spring break visiting their grandparents, Dick and June Sidles. They live in Clovis, Calif., along with their parents, Damon and Aimee Sidles. Their great-grandfather, Turner Silmon, was an original enrollee.



Wanda James of Poteau, who is half-Choctaw, recently had all of her granddaughters and great-granddaughters pose in their original Choctaw dresses. Wanda made the dresses as well as their jewelry. Pictured from left to right are great-great granddaughter Kjyia Kinsey; granddaughters Carla Stacy, Ericka Vineyard, Deana Vineyard and Chelsea Brown; and great-granddaughter Ally Vineyard.

Skye turns 2

Celestial Skye Maxwell, Choctaw/Mississippi member, celebrated her second birthday on Feb. 24. She is the daughter of Zach Maxwell of Sawyer. Her siblings include Kalan and Miko Maxwell of Sawyer and Anoli Maxwell of Nassau Bay, Texas. She celebrated her birthday in early March with dad and brother Miko in Philadelphia, Miss.



Keylons celebrate 50th

Congratulations to M.H. and Aileen Keylon who celebrated their 50th anniversary on March 15 with a trip to Maui.



M.H. and Aileen are both graduates of Hugo High School, M.H. from the class of 1959 and Aileen the class of 1960. They were married by the Rev. Alton Webb at the First Baptist Church in Hugo.

Aileen is the granddaughter of original enrollee Leta Thorpe. M.H. and Aileen have three daughters, five granddaughters, one great-granddaughter and three great-grandsons. M.H. has worked as an industrial maintenance engineer for over 45 years before he had to retire for health reasons, and Aileen retired from the University of North Texas where she was a payroll accountant for over 20 years.

Since their retirement, they enjoy traveling and attending car shows with their classic 1950 Mercury, just like the one M.H. had on their first date in 1957.

News from the OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance

Halito! We have been busy here at the OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance this past month. We placed an entry in the Oklahoma City St. Patrick's Day Parade and won first place in the float category, receiving a very nice trophy. Congratulations to all those who participated in this event.

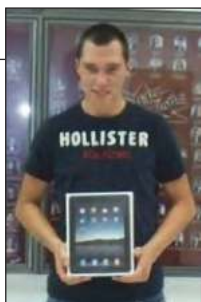


Our wild onion dinner and monthly taco sales were a great success, thank you for your support. Please join us for our next taco sale on the second Saturday of the month. We'd also like to invite you to the Senior Outing/Luncheon held Fridays from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. We have been discussing Choctaw history with a bit of teaching of the Choctaw language in a unique form that combines both topics. The seniors really seem to enjoy the venue. We had a total of 55 attending on April 1. We had fried chicken, fried potatoes, salads and desserts. Curtis Stewart, the Alliance minister, has been teaching this part of the program with Norris Samuels.

Storytelling is also on the agenda with Stella Long leading the way. We are having a great time rediscovering our roots. The depth of the Choctaw language is so rich, we are just covering the surface of it but we are having fun doing it. Come join us and leave full of both food and knowledge! We are located at 5320 S. Youngs Blvd. in Oklahoma City. Yakoke!

Congrats, Justin

Congratulations to Justin Bull, student at Colbert High School, for winning an iPad at the 2011 Career Expo in McAlester. Colbert High School was one of the 25 high schools that attended the annual event.



Congrats, Johnathin

Congratulations to Johnathin Illapottubee for his graduation from Moyers High School. His family is very proud of him, from Aunt Jamie and cousins Jeraid, Rocky, Annie, Jessica and baby Cruz.

Happy first birthday, Adler

Adler Theodore Graff is the son of Adam and Jennifer Graff of Albuquerque, N.M. Adler was born on May 4, 2010, at Lovelace Hospital in Albuquerque. He has an older sister named Cambria. He is the grandson of Wes and Judy Dunlap of Scottsdale, Ariz., and Tom and Jan Graff of Wichita, Kan. Adler's maternal great-grandmother is Oteka N. Lund and his great-great-grandmother is Lorma V. Montgomery of Lawton, who is listed on the Dawes Roll for the Choctaw tribe. Lorma died at age 98 and lived in Oklahoma all of her life.



Happy birthday, Terry

Wishing a happy birthday to Terry Donahue of Hobbs, N.M., who turned 60 years old on May 24. Terry is a Vietnam veteran formerly of Virginia and now resides in Florida.



Lawson turns 8

Lawson Paul Wilkins celebrated his eighth birthday on May 7. He loves hunting, fishing and sports. Lawson is an honor student at S.C. Tucker Elementary in his hometown of Danville, Ark. His proud family is Paul, Susan and Gunner Wilkins. His grandparents are Joel Camp of Mead, Kathy Hanson and the late Roy Wilkins and Tyke Wilkins of Blue Ball, Ark. Lawson is proud to be a Choctaw.



Happy 15th!

Kelsey Shea Preston of Paris, Texas, turned 15 on April 18. She excels in school and is very involved in debate, choir and cheer. She is the daughter of Donald and Julie Preston and the granddaughter of Don and Ruth Wear. Her great-great-grandmother was Mary Irene Brashear Wyers. Happy birthday, Kelsey, from mom, dad, Donovan and Annie.



Parks barrel races

Ashley Parks is pictured as she slingshots her horse through the first barrel Saturday morning, Feb. 19, and finished with a time of 15.371, the best time of the day. Cowboys and girls competed in the slack portion of the Florida High School Rodeo. They competed in various events, including goat roping, team roping, breakaway, barrel racing and tie down at the Southeastern Livestock Pavilion in Ocala.



Week of the Young Child

The Choctaw Nation Child Development in Durant kicked off the "Week of the Young Child," with a balloon release on April 11.



The "Week of the Young Child," now in its 40th year, is an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The purpose of the "Week of the Young Child," is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

Other activities that will be enjoyed by the children and their parents are a teddy bear parade, family picnic, personal expression day (let the children pick out their own clothes) and parent appreciation.

Congrats, Alyssa

Congratulations to Alyssa Derby for her eighth grade graduation from Moyers High School, from her best friend Jessica Renteria.

Congrats, Seth and Melissa

Seth Sterling Tom and Melissa Ann Smith were wed on July 8, 2010, in Wayne County, N.C. Pictured are Seth and Melissa and two sons, Elijah Tom and Jeffery Clark.



Congrats to the Loves

Congratulations to David Allen Love and Jessica Marie Andre Love, who were married on St. Patrick's Day.

David is the son of Mickey Robbins Love and Joe and Cheryl Love, all of Wichita, Kan. He is the brother of Marcy Love and Nick Love; the grandson of Karen Robbins Holden and Coe; and the nephew of Tammy Robbins, all of Wichita.

David and Jessica are the parents of two little girls, Izzy and Leah Love, and they make their home Wichita.

Congrats, Kaylee

Kaylee Ann Daugherty just turned 16 years old and has been accepted to attend Cottey College for a one-week program for careers in science, and she received a \$300 scholarship to help her go. Kaylee wishes are to be in medicine, and she's very excited to attend this program and have the chance to see this college up close. Cottey is an all-girls college in Nevada, Mo., run under P.E.O. Sisterhood for women, by women. This will be a great experience for her.



Happy first birthday!

Ja'koiya S.L. Hankins turned a year old on April 26. Wishing her a happy birthday are proud parents Oliver and Patty Hankins; brothers Marquette and Jamaal Hankins; and grandmother Peggy Tushka.



Congrats, great-grandfather

Congratulations to Morris W. Amos Jr. for becoming a first-time great-grandfather. He is pictured with his great-grandchildren Jaydyn Meeks-Hagle (left), born March 8, and McKinzee Grogan Crowder, born March 1.



Happy birthday, Lauryne

Happy eighth birthday on April 21 to Lauryne Dunsworth "Sissy," and happy 10th birthday on April 22 to Devyn Dunsworth. Lauryne and Devyn are the children of Marcy Love and Justin Dunsworth of Kansas; grandchildren of Mickey Robbins Love and Joe and Cheryl Love of Wichita; and great-grandchildren of Karen Robbins Holden and Coe of Wichita. They are the niece and nephew of Nick Love and David and Jessica Love, also of Wichita.

Lauryne and Devyn celebrated their birthdays with family and friends. The babies and grandbabies would also like to wish a belated happy birthday to "Grammie" Mickey Robbins Love.

Happy birthday, Cephus

Happy birthday to Cephus John who turned 70 years old on April 18. He was born in Golden, and he says it is wonderful to be 70. He's very proud to be Choctaw, and says, "God bless," to his friends in Broken Bow, Idabel, Golden and Goodland Church.



Happy birthday, Danielle

Happy 17th birthday on May 20 to Danielle R. Smith, an 11th-grader at McAlester High School. From mom and dad; Ronnie Smith Jr.; grandparents Evelyn Johnson and the late Eulus Johnson of McAlester.



Happy birthday, Elijah

Elijah Kentley Roberts turned 1 year old on May 10. He is the son of Tiffany Roberts of Durant and the grandson of Willard and Betty Crosby, also of Durant. Happy birthday, Elijah, from mom, grandma, grandpa, all your uncles and aunts and from your cousin Anberlin.



Congrats, Mario and Karolee

Congratulations to Mario Morales and his soon-to-be bride Karolee. They took their first step towards happily ever after on April 23.



Happy birthday, Marcus

Happy birthday to Marcus Burton, from his mom, father and family. Marcus will be 8 years old on May 19.



Madysen

Pictured is Madysen McKinney. This photo was taken by her grandmother, Linda Womack. Her grandfather is Melvin Womack.



EDUCATION

Jackson receives two top scholarships

Oklahoma State University junior Blake Jackson of Hartshorne has received two of America's top scholarships, capturing both the Harry S. Truman Scholarship and the Morris K. Udall Scholarship. He is the first OSU student to receive both awards in the same year.

"I feel extremely blessed to be the recipient of both these awards," said Jackson, an agribusiness major. "I truly did not know what to expect when applying for them. I always told myself that I had grown a lot through the process and that regardless of the outcome, just applying was worthwhile because I had the chance to interact with a lot of people I wouldn't have met otherwise."

After graduating from OSU, Jackson said he plans to attend law school and con-



centrate his studies in environmental and Native American law. For students who are considering applying for either of these scholarships, Jackson said he would advise them to go for it.

The Udall scholarship provides \$5,000 for educational expenses to outstanding sophomores and juniors who are studying environment-related fields or who are of Native American decent and pursuing fields related to health

care or tribal public policy. Only 80 students nationwide are selected for this award each year, and Jackson is the 13th OSU student to earn it.

OSU was named Oklahoma's inaugural Truman Honor Institution because of its production of Truman scholars. The Truman Scholarship provides up to \$30,000 in funding to college juniors with exceptional leadership potential who are committed to careers in government, the nonprofit or advocacy sectors or education. Jackson was the 16th OSU student selected for this honor.

Jackson will attend Truman Scholar Leadership Week in Liberty, Mo., this month to introduce him to the Truman community. He will officially receive his Udall award at the orientation weekend in Tucson, Ariz., this August.



The Krebs Johnson O'Malley students, parents and guardians with Indian Education committee members took an educational and fun field trip to the Chickasaw Cultural Center in Sulphur on Saturday, April 9.



Congratulations to Ideal Home Care! Winner of the Choctaw Nation 2011 Best of Show Award



Pictured: Kelli Osman, Marketing Coordinator for Choctaw Nation Career Development (left) and Jimmy Tynes of Ideal Home Care (right)

Ideal Home Care
Family is one of the most precious gifts on Earth, and at Ideal Home Care family has been embraced as the cornerstone of their business. They are committed to helping families stay involved in the care of the ones they love. Operating under the principle that patients should be able to maintain happy, healthy lives in the comfort and privacy of their own homes, they create a partnership for the well being of everyone involved.

Since 2004, Ideal Home Care has been devoted to providing the highest standard of patient care. The company has always been RN owned and operated, and this extensive experience has contributed to their continued success. Built upon two guiding principles, compassionate patient care and employee satisfaction, they are able to establish trust and treat patients as extended family members.

The Ideal Home Care staff is an invaluable resource and is dedicated to upholding the standards of the company. Working together with patients and their families they are able to reduce stress and eliminate worry as they strive to assist their patients in reestablishing personal freedom with their health care issues. The ultimate goal is to contribute to a better life for the Ideal Home Care patient. Contact Jimmy Tynes for more information at (580)224-7542.

www.choctawcareers.com

House named OSU Graduate of Distinction

Years of agriculture leadership recognized

Jody House is known around the tribe as "The Voice of Choctaw Nation" because he is the voice heard over the loudspeaker at the Event Center at all concerts and special activities.

He earned a degree in Agricultural Education, Communications and Leadership several years ago from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, and just recently, the university honored him by

naming him the 2011 Graduate of Distinction in Agricultural Leadership.

Each year, the department faculty members recognize alumni who have distinguished themselves professionally in the community, state and nation. Robert Terry, department head of Agricultural Education at OSU said, "We are thrilled that Jody has been selected for the award of recognition."



Choctaw Nation: JUDY ALLEN

Dr. Bill G. Weeks, OSU agriculture education professor, presents Jody House with the 2011 Graduate of Distinction in Agricultural Leadership award.



Photo Submitted

First-grader Zander Thomas, left, Mrs. Garvin, and second-graders Madison Cheek, Melina Tushka and Lastenia Lainez-Ortiz.

National Library Week at Jones

Jones Academy elementary school students celebrated National Library Awareness through the week of April 14. Students participated in several activities in an effort to observe the contributions libraries make to our communities.

The first and second grade elementary students did an arts and crafts project and learned about bears and turtles during National Library Week. Elaine Garvin, Jones

Academy librarian, has done various activities with the students throughout the year including storytelling, coloring contests, design a library theme T-shirt and motto, reasoning games and library skills. This year, the elementary students have learned the Dewey decimal system and practiced their sign language skills. Mrs. Garvin has endeavored to teach the students that learning and reading can be great fun.



Photo Submitted

Mrs. Garvin helps first grader Melvin Birthmark with his turtle.

Lansdell graduates with honors

Tawnya Lansdell is the granddaughter of the late Lee Cusher Sr. and Ennie (Tonika) Cusher of Broken Bow and the daughter of Charles and Georgie Griffin of Horatio, Ark. Tawnya is an honor graduate of the Texas A&M Corpus Christi campus Family Nurse Practitioner Program and will walk in graduation ceremonies on May 14. She will be receiving her Master's of Science degree in Nursing and will be inducted through superior academic excellence into Sigma Theta Tau, the National Honor Society for Nurses.

Tawnya joined the staff at the Idabel Clinic as a registered nurse in 2006. While working at the clinic, she found her devotion to nursing and the needs of the Choctaw people as motivation to continue her education. In 2008 she completed a Bachelor in Nursing degree, became a certified Diabetes Educator in 2009 and completed the Master of Science in Nursing in 2011. Tawnya gives credit for her success to God, family and the Choctaw people.

"The Choctaw Nation has provided the financial and education assistance that made my endeavors successful, and I have a deep appreciation for our Choctaw leaders who have the foresight to fund all of the wonderful educational assistance programs that are available," she says.

"Being a Nurse Practitioner, I can now fulfill my lifelong goal of helping people in the best possible way. I plan to use my success as an example of the opportunities available for those with the aptitude and motivation to make their community thrive, healthier and stronger," she continued.



Conner to begin residency at OU

Andrew Conner, M.D., 2011 graduate of Indiana University School of Medicine is set to begin Neurosurgical Residency at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City.

Conner received a Bachelor of Science degree in Physiology from Oklahoma State University in 2007 and graduated from Seminole High School in 2004. He is the son of Rick and Tammy Conner, grandson of Ronald and Glenda Conner, Orville S. and Ima Russell and the late June Russell. He is the great-grandson of Essie J. Turner, all of Seminole.

The department of neurological surgery at OUHSC accepts one physician per year to pursue a seven-year period of intensive training in the surgical treatment of brain, spine and peripheral nerve disease.

While pursuing his Doctorate of Medicine at Indiana University School of Medicine, Conner was awarded the American Association of Neurological Surgeons Research Fellowship as well as the Indiana University School of Medicine Research Scholarship. His research dealt with stem cell therapy as a treatment modality for spinal cord injuries. Further, Conner co-authored a chapter in the Encyclopedia of Intensive Care Medicine entitled "Quadriplegia." It is due to be published in 2012.

Conner would specifically like to extend his utmost gratitude to the Choctaw Nation Department of Higher Education for their financial support through his undergraduate and medical training.



Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Calendar

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
JUNE				Broken Bow 1 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Idabel by appt.	2	Broken Bow 3 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Idabel by appt.	4
	5	Durant 6 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	Antlers by appt. 7	Broken Bow 8 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Idabel by appt.	9	10	11
	12	Durant 13 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	Talihina 14 10 a.m.-2 p.m.	McAlester 15 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Stigler by appt.	16	Crowder by appt. 17	18
	19	Durant 20 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	Wilburton 21 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.	Poteau 22 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.	23	Wright City by appt. 24	25
	26	Durant 27 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	Atoka 28 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Coalgate 12:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m.	Broken Bow 29 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Idabel by appt.	30		

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

Phone: 580-326-8304; Fax: 580-326-2410
Email: ddavenport@choctawnation.com

Congrats, Andrew

Andrew Foster Shi graduated May 14 from the University of Oklahoma College of Law with his Juris Doctor and Price College of Business with a Master of Business. Andrew was on the Dean's honor roll for four semesters and represented the university on the American Bar Association National Appellate Advocacy Competition in Turkey and Cord, Ireland and Boston. He was recipient of a Speaker Award and Best Brief Award his first year, as well as the Am-Jur Award (Supreme Court Decision-Making and Int'l Human Rights). He was selected as vice president of his third year class, was on the Dean's Council for Mentoring to the first-year law class, section leader and Mentorship Program for Int'l Students chair. Andrew received the Choctaw Nation Membership Grant for Higher Education, the 2010-2011 Joseph F. Rarick Native American Student Award.

Andrew is the son of Dr. A.H. Shi and Carol Carter Shi of Seminole. He is the grandson of the late Clyde E. Carter Sr., member of the Choctaw Nation, and Esther Blalack Carter Naylor; and the great-grandson of original enrollee Erma Eva Lillian Battle Carter and Bessie Jackson Shi, Choctaw member.



Choctaw Nation awarded over \$180,000 in Climate Showcase Communities Grant

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced today the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is receiving \$189,817 in Climate Showcase Communities grant funding to improve the energy efficiency of its health facilities through technology and behavioral change. This clear and effective strategy will serve as a much needed model for small and rural communities across the United States.

The Choctaw Nation grant is a part of \$8.3 million in funding to 22 communities across the country, including three Indian Tribes, to pilot innovative local strategies to combat climate change. These new grantees join 25 communities awarded funding in 2010. These projects will target every aspect of a community's carbon footprint, including energy use in homes, businesses, vehicles, waste management practices, energy production, and land use management.

Grantees estimate that by 2014 these projects will reduce about 167,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually – equivalent to the emissions from more than 33,000 passenger vehicles or 14,000 homes – and save over \$13 million per year in energy costs. The projects will also improve people's health and quality of life by improving indoor and outdoor air quality, increasing walkability, and reducing household energy bills.

Red Eagle inspiring youth to soar above negative influences

By LARISSA COPELAND
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

"When the police kicked in my door I thought they had the wrong house," tells Jesse "Red Eagle" Robbins, a 25-year-old Choctaw from Oklahoma City. That wasn't the case though and it was in fact Robbins that the police were after.

He was 20 years old at the time and had been on the wrong path for several years prior to that. "I got a felony drug charge, my first criminal charge ever, for dealing drugs," said Robbins. "I was given five years of probation and 100 hours of community service. But by the time I got busted I'd already 'woken up' and finding my Choctaw culture is what saved me."

The charge was for something old that he had done (at age of 18) but it didn't matter in the eyes of the law. "I still got it and I'm going to use it for good," said Robbins.

He does this by reaching out to the youth who may be on the same negative, confused path he went down as a young teen. "I travel to middle schools around south Oklahoma City to speak to the kids about anti-gang and anti-drug activity," he says. "I speak to them from experience. When I was their age, I was so lost. I try to get to them in middle school. You have to catch them young or it'll be too late."

Robbins knows this firsthand. He began to go down the wrong path around the age of 15. "I've never drank alcohol and I've never smoked or done drugs in my life because I've seen what it's done to our people. I didn't want that. What I did though was get in-



JESSE "RED EAGLE" ROBBINS

involved in gang activity.

"I was confused about what a warrior was," he said, explaining the attraction he felt. "Gangs provide a false sense of belonging for kids. But they don't protect - they destroy. They provide a false sense of identity. I thought I was being different but I was conforming. Gangs take you outside your culture. I'm Choctaw but I was with mostly Hispanics. They were my clan. I was striving for a tribe, an identity, a warrior role. A gang provided that, or so I thought."

It was around the same age when Robbins was looking to gangs for acceptance, he was also turning to a more creative outlet for his thoughts - writing poetry.

"When I first started visiting the schools I'd read my poetry but the kids couldn't really relate to that so I turned to music," he says, "and I can't sing or play guitar...so I guess you could say hip-hop chose me."

Robbins has had much success spreading his message and connecting to the kids through his music. "I represent a bridge," he says. "I do music to connect generations.

I take the elders' message and put it in a form the youth relate to and understand. They don't speak the same 'language' anymore. I get to play coyote, be a trickster. The Choctaw culture is so dope (cool). When kids hear it in the music, they hear how cool the culture is."

He thinks that it's someone like himself who is best suited for reaching this group of kids too. "They want to hear me say it, not some 50-year-old they can't relate to."

Another thing he tries to impress upon the youth he visits with is the power of an education, as his father did to him. His father, Dr. Rocky Robbins, is an associate professor at the University of Oklahoma in the educational psychology department. His focus is in multicultural counseling and according to Robbins, he has always instilled in him the importance of education. "Education is a ladder. My dad taught me that early on," he says. "I tell that to the kids too. I say to them 'go to college.' Some kids never hear that word at home."

This is something Robbins took to heart himself. After graduating from Little Axe High School in 2004, he enrolled in Oklahoma City Community College. He plans to transfer to OU in Norman in Fall 2011.

Beyond setting the groundwork for his culture and education, his father has been at his side during his hard times. "I'm lucky because my dad stands by me," said Robbins. "But I did come from a broken home. I think that's another reason the kids can connect to me. Not all these kids have a great home life either. I get that. I want my music to be a positive message in the ears of those kids with their headphones on, their heads bobbing up and down, while their parents might be in the other room fighting."

Robbins never had a relationship with his mother. He was born in Durant but soon moved to the Kickapoo Reservation in Kansas where his father was a teacher at

the time. He lived there until he was about five years old, and even spent a short period of time in foster care, until coming back to live with his father. He considers Oklahoma City and Norman home. His siblings are Tiffany York, Seth Fairchild and Cheyenne Murray; two of these three he didn't even know until he reached adulthood.

"My family life was part of where my rebellion started," he admits, "but my culture is what set me straight."

He considers himself fortunate for being raised by a father who immersed him in the tribal-cultural ways of the Choctaw at an early age. And those roots stayed strong. His Choctaw name, "Onse Homma" or "Red Eagle" was given to him during an old Choctaw traditional naming ceremony; a ceremony that Robbins fears is being lost through the generations. "My grandfather gave it to me when I was five years old," he said. "He walked out into the woods and when he came back he told me that was my name."

From the time he was a young child the ways of the Choctaw always had deep meaning to him. Though he took a slight detour from these ways during his late teen years, he soon realized the greatest limiting factor to his connection to his tribe was himself. "Now, I do what I can to keep our old ways and our ceremonies alive. I want our people to speak our language. I speak Choctaw, play stickball, go to the stomp dances."

Robbins was also part of the Choctaw Nation stickball team that played in the 2010 Stickball World Series in Mississippi.

Today, Robbins considers himself an advocate for Native Americans everywhere and he uses his music to get his point across. "Native Americans need a voice," he explains. "I've been backed into a corner. I am a warrior and I will fight for our culture. Peace and love scare people but a warrior is peaceful. Music is a form of protest and I use it to be an activist for the tribe."

Robbins considers himself a modern day storyteller. "Music is breath to me," he says. "This is more than a hobby. Every song is catered



Choctaw Nation: JUDY ALLEN

Robbins, far left, walks on to the field at the 2010 Stickball World Series in Mississippi.

to Native Americans. It's an opportunity for me to reach kids, to tell them you can get through hard times, to turn to the old ways. It's my opportunity to give the youth a voice, to just lend a hand to this generation and help revive a youth appreciation of our culture," he says.

In addition to visiting middle schools and visiting with youth, his music has created many other unique opportunities for him. Most recently and according to Robbins, one of the most interesting, was being invited in February to present in New York City at Columbia University's prestigious 28th Annual Cross-Cultural Winter psychology roundtable, themed "Privileging Indigenous Voices."

A Native American professor at Columbia heard his music and enjoyed the message it sent, leading to his invitation to the university. He led the youth plenary session, opening the meeting by leading the group with a Choctaw snake dance. He then performed half his presentation by reading his poetry and half by performing his hip-hop music. A large photo slide show was projected on the wall behind him during his presentation, displaying numerous images of Choctaw people during various stages of history. He received a standing ovation from the students and faculty in the audience.

In addition to radio airplay on numerous radio stations, Robbins performs his music live whenever possible. He was also honored to have been offered a position to play at the Gathering of Nations Pow Wow in Albuquerque, N.M., in April but was unable to attend this year. His next live performance will be

on May 14 at Jones Academy where he'll be joined by fellow Choctaw hip-hop artist Chris Taylor and Anthony "DJ Pyro" Mnic'opa, a Dakota/Seminole. Together they will be performing as the group "Native Nation."

Robbins has put out several mix tapes over the years. He recently released a mix tape in New York entitled *1491* and is currently in the final stages of another album. He's also in the beginning phase of producing a poetry album. His music can be heard on his Youtube page, onsehomma21, or his Facebook page, www.facebook.com/JesseRobbins405.

Just a few of his Native American themed songs include "Seventh Generation," "We got that Swag," "Women," "Ain't Your Mascot," among many, many more.

As heard in the lyrics to "Seventh Generation," it's easy to know he walks the talk when he says his music encourages his people to stay connected to who they are:

*"Keep the shells
Keep the songs
Keep on stomping all night long
Keep the dance
Keep the drum
Keep the language on your tongue"*

He takes that to heart and lives it. By being someone the kids can relate to, Robbins plans to continue using his music to inspire and encourage the youth to soar above negative influences.

But he doesn't want people to think that because his subject matter is serious that his music is all somber and solemn though. "Humor is a huge part of my music," he says, "and it just might make you dance!"



Photo Provided

Robbins, far right, leads a group of students and faculty in the Choctaw snake dance at Columbia University in New York City.



Photos by LARISSA COPELAND | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Karen Thomas, right, explains the Career Development Program to Anthony Turpin of Quinton.



Tracy Horst is proud to show off the Choctaw Nation Go Green display.



Lisa Byington, right, and expo guests open plastic eggs to see the prize they'd won.



Andrew Massey, left, of McAlester visits with Kenny Tolbert at the Scholarship Advisement Program booth.



Jackson Willhite of Poteau spins the wheel for a prize at the Choctaw Casino booth as Kim Maxwell from the Durant Casino Resort Human Resources department looks on.



The Choctaw Public Safety team greets visitors to the expo.



Dawn Hix, right, explains the Choctaw Asset Building (CAD) Program to Ralph Adcock of Quinton.



Jake Dolezel facilitates the breakout sessions.

The lyrics of an earlier age

Former Wheelock students talk about their days at the Choctaw Nation boarding school

By LISA REED
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

“Wheelock, Wheelock, we love you. We long shall remember and honor you, too! We’ll work for you, live for you, sing for you all through the years. Wheelock, we love you.”



Photo provided

Wanda Bohanan, Delores Johnico Dye, Wylene Wadley, Mary Edna Jacob Watson, Johnnie Marks McDaniel, Leona Marks Marshall, Paula Wilson Carney, Lois Pitts Brown, Eleanor “Lena” Cooper Caldwell and Laura Stephens Lewis are pictured in front of the old Pushmataha Hall on the Wheelock Academy campus.



Wylene Nicholas Wadley loved music hour where she learned to sing and play the piano.



Paula Wilson Carney of Coalgate was introduced to Christianity at Wheelock.

Wheelock student, Theda Carnes, who has become blind. Wylene lives with Theda and they are facing the struggle together.

Paula Wilson Carney also learned to play the piano during their music hours. She has sung and played the piano all of her life and credits her classes at Wheelock.

Paula’s fondest memory of her days at Wheelock, though, is of one of her teachers. Paula was playing in the yard and heard, for the first time, the lady praying. “She was calling out to God,” Paula said. “I was probably in the third grade and had never heard anyone praying like that before. That was my first introduction to Christianity.”

Humorous tales were plenty during the special day at Wright City. Almost sheepishly, Paula recalls an incident that can be laughed at now but was a bit unnerving at the time.

Pierced ears were becoming popular with the girls. Without the fancy salons of today, they had to improvise. “When someone wanted their ears pierced, we would all take turns holding the earlobe real tight to numb it,” she said while demonstrating the technique. When one of the girls’ arms got tired, another girl would step in to hold the earlobe in a tight grip with her fingers. This would go on until the ear was numb, then a threaded needle would be used to pierce the lobe.

“We would pull the needle through, cut the thread and tie it off, then put Vicks on the ear and turn and turn and turn,” Paula laughed. “They decided I was good at it so they were always asking me to pierce their ears.

“One day, a girl stopped me in the middle of the stairway. She had everything we needed. I squeezed and squeezed on her ear. Well, about the time I got the needle pushed halfway through, she fainted! She fell backwards

and just laid on the stairway with the needle sticking in her ear.”

Paula’s voice rose as she described the funny, but scary experience.

“I tried to revive her and finally ran to get a cold wash cloth. She woke up and wanted me to finish the other one,” she said, still marveling over the escapade.



Leona Marks Marsh



Johnnie Marks Daniel



Virginia Peters Jefferson

with her words how slow her sister ate. Often, one of the other girls would take her food before she finished it. “She was there when the others got there and sometimes still there when they left. She was the youngest one in the school.”

The sisters and their friend, Virginia Peters Jefferson, recall how they would go back to the barn after their day of classes to ride horses. Someone gave them a Red Flyer wagon to play with. They played with paper dolls, rode bicycles and played soccer, softball or basketball.

“Someone donated roller skates to the school once,” said Leona. “We would take turns skating up and down.”

Their memories also include having their hair cut when they were brought to the school. All of the girls’ long hair was cut and fashioned into a Dutch boy style. None of them were allowed to speak their native language. Listed right up there with the not-so-fond memories the girls have of Wheelock was the time they were made to take ballet lessons, a bit much for the tomboyish group.

Wheelock’s heritage goes years beyond the boarding



Sisters Maxine Wilson McCrary and Ilene Wilson Sparks attended Wheelock because the route to regular school near their home was blocked by a river.

The events that happened during their boarding school years stand out for many reasons.

There is one day Maxine Wilson McCrary will never forget. All of the girls were called into the auditorium. They stood solemnly around the tall radio and listened quietly to President Roosevelt declare war on Germany. She said she didn’t understand at first the implication of the announcement or the impact it would have on our country.

Maxine and her three sisters were sent to Wheelock because there was a river between their home in the Ringold area and regular school. Their brothers went to Jones Academy. The girls loved it at Wheelock, she said, and always tried to participate in activities. She and sister Ilene Wilson Sparks enjoyed Sundays when a minister would come. They would have a different traveling minister from different denominations stop in to deliver sermons every Sunday.

Sisters Leona Marks Marsh and Johnnie Marks McDaniel attended Wheelock in the early ’50s. Johnnie was just 4 years old. Leona remembers Johnnie being brought in to the cafeteria 30 minutes early to start eating.

“She was a slow eater who would take one little bite at a time,” Leona said, stressing

school days. Lois Pitts Brown, who attended the luncheon with her son, Johnny Brown, and her granddaughter, Karen Brown Main, tells of an early impact in her family. Lois’ mother was brought to Wheelock orphanage before it was turned into a boarding school. Lois’ mother was only 2 months old when her mother died and her father thought it was the best thing for his infant daughter. When he remarried he took her home. Lois said her grandfather was remarried in the Wheelock church.

Born in 1918, Lois attended Wheelock from 1927 to 1929, along with a younger sister. She took “homemaking” classes and learned to cook and to sew using a pedal sewing machine. “Whatever you cooked you had to eat,” she said. Many of the girls would get up early to help cook breakfast in the kitchen.

The lessons and skills learned there have served them well for the past 60 to 70 years. The ages of the girls when they were brought to Wheelock varied, some as young as Johnnie, some as old as 14 or 15 when they entered the boarding school. They came from different backgrounds, different locations, but became one large family. The bonds made in youth have never been broken. The notes ring clear – “Wheelock ... we long shall remember.”

Wheelock Academy is open to the public 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. There is a museum and information/gift shop on the grounds. For more information or to set up a tour, please call 580-746-2139.



Assistant Chief Gary Batton says hello to the oldest in attendance at the Wheelock alumni luncheon at Wright City. Lois Brown of Hennessy turns 93 years young on June 28.



Eleanor “Lena” Cooper Caldwell attended Wheelock in 1946 and 1947. She was 14 when she started.



Wanda Bohanan started school at Wheelock when she was 6 years old. She was there until the school closed in 1956.



Mary Edna Jacob Watson arrived on her seventh birthday. She stayed through the seventh grade.



Assistant Chief Gary Batton listens to Theda Carnes during the Wheelock Alumni Luncheon in Wright City.



Laura Stephens Lewis, Christine Thomas Ludlow, Viola Obe and Delores Johnico Dye.

Choctaw Nation Photos: LISA REED



Choctaw Nation Photos: LISA REED

Assistant Chief Gary Batton, Keith Holman, the owner of the white 1959 Cadillac, Councilman James Frazier and Chief Gregory E. Pyle are in the mood for Crowder Fun Days on March 23.

Crowder senior citizens are keen on keeping active

The District 12 group makes having fun a requirement

By LISA REED
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Today's fuel prices have curtailed some activities, but the senior citizens of the Choctaw Community Center in Crowder pack as much into their Wednesdays as they can.

They held a special bash on March 23 – Crowder Fun Days, when sunglasses, rolled-up jeans, leather jackets and poodle skirts were brought out for a 1950s theme. A band played old rock 'n' roll and the dance floor was boppin'.

A special drag race between Chief Gregory E. Pyle in a 1951 Ford and Assistant Chief Gary Batton in a 1959 Cadillac highlighted the afternoon. Councilman James Frazier told them to start their engines, waved them on and got out of the way.

On normal Wednesdays, the seniors meet at 10 a.m. to exercise. This doesn't mean just a few leg lifts or arm waves. The group enjoys walking in the neighborhood and line dancing is popular with the ladies.

They like to decorate for holidays and held an Easter egg hunt in April. Everyone brought a prize and corresponding numbers were placed in the "prize" eggs.

Raffles are held every Wednesday, a project that helps fund their trips. They also hold events such as fish fries to get money for their excursions.

"We've been to the Smoky Mountains, Branson and Nashville," said Walter Phelps, president of the senior group. "The fuel prices have hampered our plans for a long trip this year but we take little trips. We go to concerts in Durant whenever there is one scheduled."

The group hopped on the bus for a recent jaunt to Muskogee where they visited the 5 Tribes Museum and the Azalea Festival, as well as eating out and doing a bit of shopping.

They are also talking about taking a short trip to Van Buren, Ark., for a train tour.

Once a month, they meet for breakfast so that the senior citizens who aren't able to enjoy the bus trips can have a special outing.

"We try to have something for everyone," Walter said.



Chief Pyle gives Troy and Pat Smith his "Fonzie" smile.



The Crowder ladies demonstrate their line dancing skills.



Martin and Frances Killingsworth take the dance floor while the band plays old rock 'n' roll hits.



Assistant Chief Batton says hello to Margaret Yocco. He brought out his Clayton High School jacket for the occasion.



Leon and Shirley Cloud will celebrate their 56th wedding anniversary on May 14.

Laura Lucille Hancock Jameson shares her life story

Laura Lucille Hancock Jameson was born on July 26, 1921, to Annie Ensharkey Hancock and Jefferson Lee Hancock near Featherston, Okla.

Her grandmother, Susan Kincaid Hancock Moore, a full-blooded Choctaw, took her to the church in which she grew up and was baptized. This was the Bascom Methodist Church.

Her father attended Jones Academy for education. He also taught himself how to read by subscribing to the McAlester newspaper.

Laura's mother was an orphan whose parents were both original enrollees of the tribe. She was part of an orphanage at Bacone College in Muskogee.

Early in her life, Laura and her family moved to Buffalo Mountain near Krebs to her grandmother's allotment. They were the only Native Americans in the new location.

The children attended Rock School House, a one-room schoolhouse that Laura and her brother, Solomon, had to walk a great distance across a pasture and creek to get to.

Annie would make chicken and biscuits and stick them in a syrup bucket for the children to take to school for lunch. She would also make their clothes by sewing together flour sacks.

Laura's grandmother was a very big part of her early life. She could speak both English and Choctaw. Laura remembers one instance when her grandmother took her to the bank, told Laura what she wanted in Choctaw, and in turn Laura conveyed the message to the teller in English. Laura knew that her grandmother could have done it herself, but she wanted Laura to learn something.

When she was a teenager, the Indian Department of McAlester decided to send her to a government school at Eufaula. She and a girl named Lucy Wade traveled to the school together. There, she made friends with a Creek girl who helped her with the Creek language.

She lived in a dormitory, which had 15 cots per room. It had three stories and an attic which was used for parties. There was a matron who Laura didn't care much for, but she did enjoy the company of the school cook.

The children at the school were assigned different duties, and when it was time to change duties, the cook, Mrs. Calhoun, would always request Laura to come help her work.

While in the kitchen, Laura would work with dairy products, skimming cream and making butter. She would also use the large bread makers the school had, as well as potato peelers.

She would stay at the school for nine months and come home for the summer. She went to the Eufaula Boarding School through the eighth grade. After she left, she attended a public



school in town.

Eufaula public school had a band, and the bandmaster asked Laura to join, but she needed an instrument. Her father sent her a flute, which she eventually learned to play and made it in the band.

The principal decided the school should have an orchestra, and they would travel to Jones Academy to perform. The orchestra was called the Eufaula White Socks. They wore all white, shoes and all.

After her time with the public school, she went to Haskell Institute. While she was there the

bandmaster, who was a full-blooded Native American of a northern tribe, told her, "If you can play the flute, you can play the piccolo." She played that instrument from then on at football games and other events, where her skills were complimented on various occasions.

She stayed at Haskell until she was about 18 years old. After her education there, she met Carl Jameson.

She and her friends were always talking about boyfriends. Her buddy told her that she would marry a white man, but Laura always said she would marry an Indian.

To her irony, she met Carl, who was white, not long after their conversation. Once they met, they decided that they were good for each other, and eventually Carl decided to make Laura his wife.

He came up to her one day, and said, "Let's get married." "When?" replied Laura. He answered with, "Now. I've already got the marriage license." He then gave her some money and said, "Go get a wedding dress."

She went down to a department store in McAlester and got a dress. It was light brown with checks. She was very happy with her choice. The couple went down to the courthouse and got married with two witnesses, which were the courthouse workers.

After they were wed, they lived in Carl's apartment in McAlester for a while. Carl worked as a ranch hand for a man named Freddie Brown, who had land at Jack Fork and also around Blocker and Quinton.

Carl and Laura moved into a furnished house on the ranch. At the house they had a cow, chickens and a garden. They lived there off and on for several years and over the years had five children.

During their years together, Carl and Laura enjoyed going to the old time square dances. They enjoyed swing dancing with each other as well.

When World War II began to affect the country, a need for emergency war teachers came to her attention. The community asked if Laura would teach through the eighth grade, and she accepted.

She taught at Courts School on Ash Creek Road, which later became Buffalo Mountain Road. The school is no longer there.

She had eight boys in her class, from the first though the eighth grade. At recess time, a local mother would come and help watch the children.

She used a horse for her transportation to and from the school. On most occasions, it was Carl's horse named Tony. She also rode another horse, a grey mare.

One particular day, she was bringing some needles and dresses to sew with her to the school. The horse bucked and the needles were thrust into her knee. She then had to have an operation on her knee.

She only taught for about a year because she got pregnant. After her pregnancy, there were always people needing help or a place to stay, so Carl and Laura would help them out. Laura helped raise many children during this time.

She later went to work at a prison as a matron guard. She did very well in the pistol training and was placed in the women's ward, which was out in a pasture. She described it as similar to working in a nursing home.

During her time at the prison, she was involved in a riot in which the National Guard was called in for aid.

She then went on to work at Jones Academy as a guard. She worked there until 1984 doing split shifts so she could take care of grandchildren in between.

In her more recent years, Laura has attended many pow wows and Red Earth Festivals. One year, when land was being dedicated around the state capitol at the Oklahoma City Tribal Flag Plaza, Laura was honored to carry the Choctaw flag, while her brother, Walter Amos, danced.

She has taught the Choctaw language at Crowder schools to the kindergarten through third grade levels. Her lessons were taped and have been used after she left that job.

She was the president of the Choctaw Senior Citizens' Group at Arrowhead Lodge before Choctaw Nation sold it. She later went on to the Crowder and McAlester centers, where she enjoys all of the activities.



Couple to display their love and talents at Choctaw Days

By LARISSA COPELAND
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

A small, tossed pebble was where it started.

The young Choctaw man would toss a small rock to get the attention of the maiden to whom he was attracted. She would respond positively or negatively, thus setting in motion the prelude to nuptials.

Two hundred years ago, when a Choctaw couple decided to marry, the way they went about their courtship and wedding ceremony differed greatly from how it would typically happen today. For some couples, integrating those cultural traditions into their own relationships and ceremonies remains significant today. One of those couples is Ian and Amy Thompson.

Ian, Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department assistant director, and his wife, Amy, Choctaw Nation Language Department administrative assistant, were married April 10, 2010. Their own wedding consisted of a mix of traditional Choctaw and western elements – from the singing of hymns and reading of scripture in both English and Choctaw, to the serving of traditional and modern food side-by-side at the reception, the “old” and “new” blended flawlessly.

This summer they’ll again be performing a wedding ceremony together, however, this time they will be performing a re-enactment of an “old” Choctaw wedding, from the courtship phase up to the actual ceremony. The re-enactment will be performed in play format at the Choctaw Days this summer in Washington, D.C., in the theater at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, with well-known Choctaw storyteller Tim Tingle narrating.

At the re-enactment, Ian and Amy will be leaving behind the western aspects from their own wedding, taking just the traditional components to give the audience an in-depth look at how their Choctaw ancestors might have carried out the ceremony.

Where the re-enactment



Choctaw Nation: LARISSA COPELAND

Ian and Amy Thompson display the traditional clothing they’ll be wearing at the re-enactment this summer.

will differ from their original wedding, according to Ian, is, “I’ll chase the bride, we’ll do Choctaw dances, all will be wearing Choctaw clothing, and the service will be performed completely in the Choctaw language. Of course, it’ll be different because we’ll have a narrator explaining everything to the audience.”

One aspect remaining unchanged from their wedding to the re-enactment is the minister officiating, Olin Williams, who is both their friend and Ian’s co-worker in the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department. “A lot of credit goes to Olin for revitalizing the traditional Choctaw wedding ceremony in Oklahoma,” said Ian.

The re-enactment will tell the story beyond just the wedding ceremony.

“It’ll start from the point of the courter tossing a pebble at the person he’s interested in and it’ll pick up at the wedding,” said Amy. “So it’ll show the whole courtship...”

“...all in about three minutes,” interjected Ian, laughing.

The real life courtship of Ian and Amy would take much longer to tell than just three minutes though. With just over a year of marriage, they still have a newlywed glow about them as they tell how their relationship began. Amy grew up in Ravia, Okla.; Ian in Independence, Mo. Though the distance may seem far, it was their employment at the Choctaw Nation that would bring them together.



Choctaw Nation: LARISSA COPELAND

The Thompsons on their wedding day, April 10, 2010, pictured in their formal wear at the ceremony.

Amy began working for the Choctaw Nation in the Language Department in August 2008. It was that next month, at the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival, that she met her future husband. Having done traditional arts almost his entire life, Ian worked part-time at the Choctaw Nation, teaching at the Culture Camps and in the Village teaching those arts to guests of the festival.

The Choctaw Language Department managed a bookstore on the grounds at Tushka Homma during the festival. It was here that Ian and Amy first crossed paths. “I saw Amy when she was working at the Language Book Store,” explained Ian, with a smile. “I just kept coming by, buying books from her.”

“He’d ask about a particular book and our conversations kept going on and on,” Amy continued, also grinning.

Even though the attraction was clear, they didn’t exchange contact information with each other and after the festival ended, they both went their separate ways.

“It was funny though, about two weeks after the festival he came by the Language Department to be certified as a Community Language Teacher,” said Amy.

“It completely surprised me,” said Ian. “I was waiting to be seen and she came walking through the room. I didn’t know I’d ever see her again after the Labor Day Festival because I was still living in Missouri at the time.”

They struck up a conversation that day but they took it slow at first. They didn’t begin dating until about six months later. But it didn’t take long before Ian knew that Amy was “the one.” Seven months into their relationship, he proposed.

“He threw his pebble, I guess you could say,” said Amy.

And in April 2010, they became husband and wife. An interesting facet to the re-enactment they’re set to perform this summer came with the rehearsal. They practiced for the wedding re-enactment nearly one year to the day from their actual wedding.

The fact that they get to experience this re-enactment together has special meaning to the Thompsons.

“I’m feeling a whole mixture of emotions,” said Amy. “I’m excited and I feel honored.”

“I’m excited about it too,” said Ian. “It’s a special event for us to do as a married couple. We’re honored to get to represent the Choctaw Nation to a wider community there at the museum. We’re proud to get to show the beauty of the Choctaw wedding.”

In addition to the wedding re-enactment, Ian and Amy will also be holding Choctaw pottery demonstrations during the four-day Choctaw Days festival.

Pottery is a craft Ian has been working to perfect since he was a small boy. His uncle

instilled in him an interest in the traditional arts in his youth and Ian’s passion for the art has grown exponentially over time.

“From the time I was seven or eight I can remember making clay pots and trying to fire them in bond fires outside and they’d blow up because I had no idea what I was doing,” said Ian. “I just stuck with it and kept experimenting with it on my own. I got into college and met people who could teach me how to really do it.”

“I took what they taught me, studied the ancestral Choctaw pottery, interviewed elders and looked at written accounts from different time periods as part of my dissertation research. After I graduated, I started working full-time for Choctaw Nation and got a National Parks Service Heritage Preservation grant and set up classes to help revitalize Choctaw pottery,” he continued, explaining his experience and knowledge of pottery.

Though Amy’s experience may not be as long as Ian’s, her passion runs just as deep. She’s only been working with pottery for about three years now. In fact, it was Ian that taught her the art. Her interest peaked after a visit to Ian’s home where she saw many of his handcrafted pieces lining his walls. “The pieces were beautiful,” she said. “I just thought, ‘What a beautiful art!’”

He taught her all she needed to know, literally from the ground up. “We went out and hand-dug the clay and he had me to grind up my own mussel shell just to start,” explained Amy. “He’s showed me everything up to the point of where I am now, making pots and teaching others.”

“She’s a very, very patient woman,” said Ian, with both of them laughing.

When it comes to Choctaw pottery, it’s not something a person can just pick up overnight. The process is long and, according to Ian, learning it from scratch is somewhat difficult. “When I was learning Choctaw pottery, I had 300 hours of work and a huge pile of broken pottery because

there are so many variables that go with the clays, things you add to it, the way it’s shaped and the way it’s fired. It’s hard. What I’d recommend to someone wanting to learn is to try to come to one of our pottery classes and talk with the other students.”

The pottery classes he’s referring to are the ones started under the National Parks Service Heritage Preservation grant the Choctaw Nation received last year for the classes. However, once the grant ran out, the classes continued in four locations with tribal funding and with many, many hours from dedicated volunteers. Ian and Amy are co-instructors of the classes, along with Brian Moreland and Karen Denham-Downen. The classes continue to be taught regularly in Durant, and Antlers, and at other locations upon request.

Ian and Amy will take their skills as teachers of the art of Choctaw pottery when they travel to Washington, D.C., this summer. They will be giving demonstrations to visitors on the Choctaw art using old, pre-European-contact tools and hand-dug Oklahoma clays. They will also have a “make-and-take” section for children who want to get a hands-on feel for creating a piece of Choctaw art.

The Choctaw Days festival will be held in Washington, D.C., at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian from June 22-25. The festival will be four days of food, workshops, and performances. Along with Ian and Amy’s Choctaw wedding re-enactment and pottery demonstrations, the festival will also feature stickball games, Choctaw dancers, singers and storytellers, and booths showcasing beadwork, flutes, the Choctaw language, and tribal cooking.

Something Ian hopes people are able to take away from the festival is the distinctiveness of the tribe. “We want people to see how the Choctaw people and Choctaw society really are, to have people get away from the stereotypes, and for them to see that we really are unique,” he stated.

It’s a birthday bash!

Choctaws of District 11 host joint birthday celebration for Chief Greg Pyle and Councilman Bob Pate



Presley Byington plays the flute.



Choctaw Nation Jr. Princess Nikki Amos sings in Choctaw at the birthday bash.



The birthday guests of honor – Chief Greg Pyle and District 11 Councilman Bob Pate. Chief Pyle’s birthday was on April 25 and Councilman Pate’s was on April 22.



The Idabel Seniors were invited to lead the Choctaw dancing at the party and they had a great time.

Photos by BRET MOSS | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Bob Pate is happy about his birthday present.



Jeffery Sam plays the guitar at the birthday bash.



Chief Pyle shows off a birthday gift.



Chief Pyle, Chickasaw Governor Bill Anoatubby, and guests enjoy a dance at the party.

TUSHKA

Tribe aids victims of April 14 tornado

Continued from Page 1

in the penny drive are Krebs, Hartshorne, Pittsburg, Savannah, Kiowa, Lakewood, Indianola, Crowder, and Canadian. The penny drive ran through May 4.

The Choctaw Nation also offered immediate assistance to the entire community following the tornado at the Incident Command Center, located first at the Tushka Fire Department, then at the Tushka Baptist Church. A few of the services offered there were free meals, free water, assistance with clearing drives and roadways, as well as support with other vital needs of the community.

With 2,700 people left without electricity in the days following the storm and no way to cook a hot meal, the Choctaw Nation took to feeding families and volunteers in Tushka. Choctaw Nation employees grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, even delivering the warm meals to families, when needed. In the first 24 hours alone, the Choctaw Nation served more than 1,000 meals. Volunteers were giving out approximately 1,200 hamburgers and hotdogs each day the week after the storm.

While the Choctaw Nation is providing support to resi-

dents where it can, it found it could also make a large impact by helping the aid organizations that were there to help as well. It fulfilled requests from the Red Cross, churches and other organizations on the ground by providing \$3,000 in large tarps and eight generators to meet medical needs. The tribe delivered eight pallets of water immediately following the storm and another 10 pallets were delivered the following week, along with diapers, baby wipes, toothbrushes, toothpaste and various other hygiene items. It also made a donation to the Voca Baptist Church for enough lunch sacks, sandwich bags, and chips to make 4,000 sack meals. The church gave out approximately 800 sack lunches per day.

The community center in Atoka was also turned into a temporary shelter over the weekend after the tornado, providing a place to stay for many displaced families. The tribe also held a clothing drive to help those who lost everything in the storm. The clothing drive was a huge success, meeting the immediate needs of those impacted by the storm. The tribal clinic in Atoka stayed open late in the week following the storm to assist tribal members. Choctaw Nation Health Services also provided services to the entire community by setting up a mobile command unit.

"The minor things the tribe could help with like bottled water and food – we were



Choctaw Nation: BRET MOSS

Durant Casino Resort employee Shawn Lyday, right, delivers hot meals to two Tushka residents affected by the April 14 tornado.

happy to provide to everyone affected by the storm – Indian or non-Indian," said Chief Gregory E. Pyle, referring to the community assistance the Choctaw Nation offered the victims of the storm disaster. The debris removal, free meals, ice, tarps, and immediate aid provided with boarding up windows and doorways blown out by the tornado are only part of the help mentioned by the Chief that the Choctaw staff was able to provide.

At the current time, the tribe is moving out of the response phase in Tushka and moving into the recovery phase. Employees continue to volunteer so that the clean-up process will persist. Though the residents are now able to apply for assistance through FEMA, their entire losses may not be covered in some cases, making monetary donations vital to help fill the void. For those wanting to help out, officials

say these donations will make the biggest impact, which is where the Choctaw Nation will turn its focus. Along with contributing to the student's penny drive, the Choctaw Nation has set up tornado relief fund for those who would like to help out. Donations can be made by calling Mandy Lawson at 580-271-1758, or in person at the tribal complex at 529 N. 16th in Durant.

In addition to the aid being provided locally, the White House approved Gov. Mary Fallin's request for federal disaster assistance related to the tornado, meaning individuals and business owners impacted by the tornado may now qualify for assistance with repairs or temporary housing. Victims of the storm can request assistance from FEMA by calling 1-800-621-FEMA or 1-800-426-7585 for hearing impaired, or by registering online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov.

Idabel Appreciation Dinner

Photos by BRET MOSS | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Penny Jones, left, and Gena Fowler display their excitement at the Idabel appreciation dinner.



County Sheriff Johnny Tadlock, center, John Martin, Idabel Police Capitan and Chief Pyle pose for a picture after dinner.



Harvey Allen and Dorothy Cunningham are pleased to attend along with many other proud Choctaws.



Whitney Griffith is excited to share a moment with Chief Pyle and Assistant Chief Batton.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma recycling center locations

District	County	Name of facility	Address	Hours of Operation
District 9	Bryan	Choctaw Recycling Center	3108 Enterprise Blvd., Durant	manned 8:00-4:30 M-F (roll off unmanned 24 hr.)
Roll Off Bins:				
District 1	McCurtain	Idabel Field Office	2408 E. Lincoln Road, Idabel	unmanned 24 hr
District 2	McCurtain	Idabel Shopping Center	1421 E. Washington Idabel	unmanned 24 hr.
District 2	McCurtain	Broken Bow Field Office	210 Choctaw Road Broken Bow	unmanned 24hr.
District 3	Le Flore	Choctaw Hospital	One Choctaw Way Talihina	unmanned 24 hr.
District 4	Le Flore	Poteau Health Clinic	109 Kerr Ave. Poteau	unmanned 24 hr.
District 5	Haskell	Stigler Field Office	120 N. Broadway Stigler	unmanned 24 hr.
District 6	Latimer	Wilburton Field Office	515 Center Point Road Wilburton	unmanned 24 hr.
District 7	Pushmataha	Antlers Field Office	4001/2 SW St. Antlers	unmanned 24hr.
District 7	Tuskahoma	Choctaw Capital Grounds	Tuskahoma	unmanned 24 hr.
District 8	Choctaw	Choctaw Tribal Services	304 Chahta Circle Hugo	unmanned 24 hr.
District 8	Choctaw	Choctaw Gaming Center-Grant	Rt. 1, Box 17-1 Grant	unmanned 24 hr.
District 10	Atoka	Choctaw Gaming Center	895 Hwy 69/75 N Stringtown	unmanned 24 hr.
District 10	Atoka	Atoka Field Office	1410 S. Gin Road, Atoka	unmanned 24 hr.
District 11	Pittsburg	McAlester Field Office	1632 George Nigh Expway	unmanned 24 hr.
District 12	Hughes	Crowder Field Office	707 Bond St. Crowder	unmanned 24 hr.
Trailers:				
District 4/5	LeFlore	Spiro field Office	19400 AES Road Spiro	unmanned 24 hr.
District 7	McCurtain	Wright City Field Office	HC 74 Box 1760 Wright City	unmanned 24 hr.
District 9	Bryan	Travel Plaza East	4015 Choctaw Road Durant	unmanned 24 hr. (cardboard only)
District 9	Bryan	Food Distribution	100 Waldron Dr. Durant	unmanned 24 hr. (cardboard only)



T-shirt Order Form

2011 T-shirts are white. 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

Chilocco reunion to be held at Choctaw Casino Resort

The Choctaw Nation will serve as host for the 117th annual reunion of the Chilocco Indian School National Alumni Association at the Choctaw Casino Resort, June 9-11. Planning with the resort marketing staff is completed and everyone is looking forward to this eventful weekend. Chilocco closed as an off-reservation boarding school in 1980 after 96 years of operation. During this tenure 5,542 Indian high school students from 124 different tribes received a high school diploma. Of this number, 609 were members of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

The surviving members of the alumni have continued the tradition of an annual reunion and continue to draw from 200-275 attendees each year. The reunion has traditionally been in a metropolitan setting. Now the reunion coming to Durant will enjoy a country and tribal atmosphere. According to Jim Baker, this reunion will not continue much longer as the youngest alumni is now 49 years old.

The reunion begins Thursday, June 9, with a reception for members arriving early. On Friday, a golf scramble will be held at the Silverado Golf Club. Any Indian senior age 55 plus is welcome to participate and may call Charley Johnson at 918-607-5022. A pow wow will be the feature event on Friday, with the Gourd dance and specials in the afternoon and the intertribal dance and adult dance contests in the evening session, all to be held at the Choctaw Event Center. This pow wow is free admission and everyone is welcome to participate. The Choctaw Tribal Color Guard has been invited to lead the Grand Entry at 7 p.m.

The primary activity of the reunion is the annual Business Meeting and the Banquet, both held on Saturday. The day closes with the dance immediately after the banquet.

This year there will be no Chilocco Hall of Fame induction ceremony as no nominations were submitted. A memorabilia room will be set up with Chilocco pictures, yearbooks and various items donated by former staff and students for display. This will be in the Yannish Room of the Choctaw Inn. The reunion will close on Sunday with a worship service.

Choctaw Moccasin Class

– Oklahoma City –
 May 21st at 5 p.m. at the OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance, 5230 S. Youngs. Blvd.
Enrollment Limited

Choctaw Traditional Pottery Class

– Durant –
 May 16th, June 6th, June 20th – 5-9 p.m.
 Pottery Studio behind Cultural Events Building, 4451 Choctaw Rd.
 – Antlers –
 May 19th, June 9th, June 30th – 6-9:30 p.m.
 Antlers Library and Community Building, 104 S.E. 2nd Street

Dills earns astounding Gates scholarship

By **CHRISSEY DILL**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

On April 15, Durant High School senior Mackenzie Dills received a much-anticipated letter in the mail, and what she read gave her assurance that her years of dedication to advance her education did not come without a reward.

Dills has been selected as one of the 1,000 Gates Millennium Scholars. This scholarship provides her with funding for her education through the master's and doctoral levels and allows her to attend any U.S. accredited college or university of her choice.

This scholarship Dills has earned is especially notable in context of the more than 23,000 students who applied, making this year the largest and most competitive group of candidates in the program's history, according to Dills' acceptance letter.

"This is wonderful news, Mackenzie and her family should be very proud," commented Chief Gregory E. Pyle. "This could only happen after years of study and hard work," he added.

"I put all that hard work into it," said Dills, describing her surprise to receive this

great financial award. "We had to wait three weeks after we found out I was a finalist. It was about 1,000 pounds of relief when we got it!"

Dills, a Choctaw member, explained the criteria the GMS Program searches for in its inductees. "They only help minorities," she said. "They pay anything that the school doesn't, all the way up to graduate school."

The application process for the Gates Millennium Scholarship proved to be demanding for Dills, consisting of about 15 essay questions examining her strengths and weaknesses, involvement and what has made her stronger throughout the years of her schooling. "They look at community service, leadership and academic achievement – those are the three main things they look at," Dills explained.

"They kind of wanted to know your life story and how being Native American has affected your life," she continued.

Dills has had experience with many organizations during her time at Durant High and has contributed a positive influence in her community. She is a member of the Choctaw Youth Advisory Board



MACKENZIE DILLS

(YAB) and Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) as well as Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) and 2 Much 2 Lose (2M2L), a student organization that promotes underage drinking prevention and where Dills served on the state youth council.

During high school, Dills was also busy getting a jumpstart with college courses being a concurrent student at Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

Currently, Dills is employed with the Choctaw Nation Scholarship Advisement Program, working closely with her Gates scholarship nominator and fellow SAP employee

Stephanie Hodge-Gardner. "With a resumé of community service and leadership activities like Mackenzie's, writing a recommendation was an easy task," said Stephanie. "But her resumé is more than a list of good deeds, it's a clear reflection of her dedication to serving others."

Dills was also recommended for the scholarship by her YAB sponsor Leslie Raines, who had to complete about six essay questions addressing Dills' participation and community involvement, according to Dills.

Dills plans to attend Oklahoma Baptist University in the fall, where she will focus on her studies and participate in a learning committee. "I look forward to the new atmosphere and meeting new people," she said. "I'm ready for the change and a new spot."

In this learning committee meant for incoming freshmen at OBU, she will spend time with several other first-time college students. "We will meet and discuss do campus events together," she explained.

Dills will also share class time with these new students, all being enrolled in OBU's required courses Philosophy,

Success 101, Faith Seeking Understanding and study of the New Testament.

"I love the Christian side to OBU," said Dills, "and learning with the Bible as an influence." On a visit to the university, Dills witnessed scripture as being a start to the OBU student's day. "Education is important to me, but my Christian faith is more important," she stated.

"I'll probably major in education or psychology," said Dills. She continued by saying the two will blend together well with what she wants to do in her future.

"I've always wanted to teach," she said, "but I love psychology and child development."

Dills plans to work with child development and fundamentals in her future. "I love kids," she said. "Being with a child and inspiring them to try different things has been a passion of mine for years."

Dills also stated that she may continue her education with a Master's of Education or gain a doctoral to become a teacher.

In her spare time, Dills likes to experiment with photography and practice her scrapbooking. She also enjoys play-

ing golf and swimming.

However, of all her hobbies she enjoys bettering the community around her the most. "Helping the community and participating in my student organizations are my hobbies, that's just what I've always done."

Without the accomplishment of earning the Gates scholarship, gaining her desired education would be significantly more difficult for Dills. "It would have been a lot harder and I probably wouldn't be able to get my master's," she said. "Now I won't have to worry about working to support my schooling."

Dills would like to thank her family for their support and for being there for her through her educational career and this scholarship process. She is also grateful for Stephanie and Leslie for their prompt and praising recommendations.

"Mackenzie is an outstanding student with a heart for fellow Choctaw people and I know this opportunity will allow her to reach her highest potential," commented Stephanie. "This program will change her life, and I am eager to see all that she accomplishes because of it."

King contributes Choctaw artwork

By **CHRISSEY DILL**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

"I'm thankful to the Choctaw Nation for bringing us all together with pottery, arts and basket weaving," said Paul King, chosen to display his work at Choctaw Days at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., this summer with many other talented Choctaw artists.

"I've been creating my art for a while," said Paul, though it wasn't until 2004 that he began creating Choctaw artwork. He entered his first Choctaw piece entitled "Champions" in the Choctaw Nation Art Show, for which he received third place.

Some of Paul's awards received at the Choctaw Nation Art Shows include: first place with "Skilled" in 2005, second place with "Generations" in 2006 and first place with "CHAHTA" in 2008. "I always strive to do better with my work," he stated.

Though Paul has earned many honors throughout his time as an artist, he does not create his pieces for the glory. "I do it to reclaim some of my heritage," he explained. Paul wasn't able to participate in many Choctaw activities when he was young, so completion of his Choctaw-influenced artwork brings him

closer to Choctaw tradition.

Paul creates his artwork using a variety of techniques, including pen and ink, acrylic on canvas, ink wash on illustration board and even acrylic on leather baseball. "I like it all," commented Paul, "but my favorite right now is my work with pencils, colored and graphite."

If you were to examine his portfolio of artwork, you would see many impressive works by Paul, created by using many different methods. "There's not much medium I don't like," he said. "I really like acrylic but it requires more time than pencils."

According to Paul, working with pencils and graphite is less difficult because he is able to set down his tools and come back to work on his piece at a later time, unlike acrylic paints.

Paul utilizes his photography as a tool in his painting and drawing process, photos being a "key part of his research for his work," he said. "My ideas are all in my head," he described. "It goes through transformations before I complete it."

Paul is currently work-



PAUL KING

ing on a graphite and colored pencil piece, describing his process with the first step taking a photo through the fence at the Choctaw village in Tushka Homma. He will use colored pencils to draw the background

through the fence and graphite pencils for the foreground, "symbolizing the old and new," he explained.

Paul also enjoys combining type and illustration in his work, he described. "I always try to put a Choctaw word into my pieces," he added, which can be seen in his work, "Skilled," which has been chosen as a branding or identity piece for Choctaw



"Buffalo Tribute" earned King a Choctaw Heritage Award in 2009.

Days, being put on many T-shirts and posters.

"Whatever piece I'm working on at the moment is my favorite," said Paul, but his work, "Buffalo Tribute," is particularly special to him, having earned him a Choctaw Heritage Award in 2009.

Paul has held several positions throughout his life that require his creativity as an artist. In 1974 to 1975, he was employed by the Oklahoma Publishing Company in Oklahoma City as an illustrator, editorial and advertising artist. This position included illustrations for The Daily Oklahoman, and Paul designed and created client-based advertising in addition to color separations of a full-color comics page, at that time the only one in the nation.

Not only does Paul create his works of art to retain some of his heritage and out of pure enjoyment, he has contributed his skills as a teacher as well. "I'm an educator by choice," he said. From 1975 to 2000 he taught graphic design courses at two institutions, Charles Page High School in Sand Springs and Tulsa Tech.

Paul challenged his students so they'd gain experience and explore their creativity through a variety of mediums and artistic techniques. He is proud to say



King's work, "Skilled," has been chosen as an identity piece for Choctaw Days at the National Museum of the American Indian this summer.

that many of his former students continue to work in the graphic design industry. Because of his dedication as an educator, Paul received a national award as Advisor of the Year in 1998 and Tulsa Tech Teacher of the Year in 1996.

Today, Paul is employed as a Career Advisor at Tulsa Technology Center, his responsibilities including high school recruitment, events and tours. He also trains a team of recruiters to make presentations on behalf of Tulsa Tech to schools, businesses, and he participates in various events within Tulsa County.

Paul has gained much inspiration and encouragement from his family members. He remembers watching his uncle draw when he was young. "I was fascinated by it," he said. His sister is interested in Choctaw genealogy and gives him ideas for his pieces. "She

is a good resource," he said.

He was also surrounded by artistic influences when he was growing up, his sister participating in dance and drawing and his brother a singer. "I've always appreciated the encouragement I've received from my family," said Paul.

Paul gives credit to his parents as well for their help throughout his life in pursuit of becoming a successful artist. "They always encouraged me to do what I wanted to do," he said.

"To display my art at The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian is an honor," said Paul. "I am overwhelmed and thrilled with the opportunity." Paul plans to display over 12 of his pieces in Washington, D.C. "As an artist, you gain that feeling of accomplishment when your work is displayed," he said happily.

French woman looking for family of Oklahoman killed in World War II

By **BRYAN DEAN**

The Oklahoman
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Catherine Meunier visits the grave of Wilburn R. Harkins every Memorial Day. She is looking to find out more about Harkins, who grew up in southeast Oklahoma before joining the U.S. Army before World War II.

Wilburn R. Harkins was a member of the Choctaw Nation who was born in the tiny town of Swink and worked at a peanut plant in Hugo before he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He died in July 1944 during the Allied invasion of Normandy and is buried along with 10,000 others at the Normandy American Cemetery at Colleville-sur-Mer, France.

Meunier places flowers on Harkins' grave, along with that of another American soldier, every Memorial Day as

a tribute to the men who gave their lives to liberate France. As her annual ritual to honor Harkins approaches, Meunier is trying to find any living relatives who can tell her about the man she has come to regard as part of her family.

Honoring soldiers

Meunier is part of an effort by a French group whose name translates to "Flowers of Memory."

"The history of those soldiers, who all left their country and families to fight in a country that they did not know, for our freedom, should not be forgotten," Meunier said through an interpreter. "I knew of Flowers of Memory and that their purpose was to honor these soldiers by putting flowers on their graves each year. It was a gesture of thanks."

Meunier said she wants to know more about the two men whose graves she visits each year. All she knows is what was printed on the white crosses that mark their graves. Harkins' cross shows his rank, tech sergeant; his unit, 23rd Infantry 2nd Division; his home state, Oklahoma; and his date of death, July 26, 1944.

"It would be nice to put a face to these two soldiers, and to get to know what their lives were like before they were lost. I find myself asking 'Who was this man and what did he look like?'" she said.

Robert Stuard is trying to help. Stuard is president of the Lacey-Davis Foundation, an American organization that works with the fami-



WILLIAM R. HARKINS

lies of American soldiers killed in World War II.

The group's primary goal is to help family members attend memorial services in Europe for loved ones killed in the war. But Stuard also works closely with like-minded French groups, including Flowers of Memory.

Stuard volunteered to help Meunier try to find out more about Harkins and the other soldier whose grave she visits, George Kashula.

"George Kashula has no living family," Stuard said. "Let's hope that Harkins does."

A few words

Meunier isn't asking for much. Just a photo and a few words explaining what he

was like before he died.

Little information on Harkins is available. His death was reported in the Aug. 20, 1944, edition of The Oklahoman. He is listed as the son of Silas G. Harkins, of Hugo. He attended Soper School and worked at the factory before enlisting in 1940.

A newspaper clipping from the Oklahoma Historical Society's archives includes a photo of Wilburn Harkins and mentions that his wife, Edith, lived in Dallas.

Wilburn Harkins is listed on the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's website on a page honoring Choctaw warriors who died in World War II.

Meunier said she would love to know more about the man behind the name on the cross where she places flowers each year.

Contributing: Linda Lynn, The Oklahoman News Research Editor



WILBURN HARKINS: Cathrine Meunier is a French woman who has been putting flowers on the grave of an American soldier every Memorial Day for the past 18 years. Meunier is looking for more information about the soldier, Tech Sgt. Wilburn R. Harkins, who is from Oklahoma. Harkins was killed July 26, 1944, and is buried at the Normandy American Cemetery at Colleville-sur-Mer, France. Meunier would like to see a photo of Harkins and learn a little about what he was like before he died. ORG XMIT: KOD

OBITUARIES

Nancy Huddleston

Nancy LouAnn Huddleston, 58, of Talihina passed away on Feb. 7, 2001, in Talihina.

Nancy was born Aug. 2, 1952, in Edmond to Dennis and Billie Huddleston. She attended Poteau Public Schools and worked for the Choctaw Nation Health Care Center for the past 17 years in the Dietary Department.

She loved "spoiling" her only granddaughter, Kylee to whom she was known as "Nana." Nancy never met a stranger and was a friend to everyone. She was one who would help in any way if need be. She was an avid OU Sooner fan and was Neal McCoy's biggest fan. She enjoyed spending time with her family and friends. Nancy will be truly missed.

She was preceded in death by her grandparents, Ben and Gladys Huddleston and Jock and Minnie Standefer; and her father, Dennis Huddleston.

She is survived by her mother, Billie Huddleston; daughter Staci and Travis Anderson; granddaughter Kylee Anderson; sister Freita Shockley; nephews, David and Sancier Bandy and Rodney and Lisa Bandy; niece Tammie and Cameron Swearingen; great nephews Arvil and Lane; great nieces Cristin, April and Sheleigh; numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and a host of friends.



Juanita Jefferson

Juanita June Jefferson, 84, of Talihina, passed away on March 30, 2011, at her residence. Mrs. Jefferson was born in Whitefield on June 21, 1926, the daughter of the late Davis Benton and Annie (Jackson) Folsom. She lived in Whitefield from 1926 to 1940 when she moved to Tuskahoma where she lived for four years. She then moved to Talihina.

She completed elementary school in Whitefield, high school in Tuskahoma and Draughan's School of Business. She then entered the workforce in a competitive culture. She learned to speak English in school and taught her non-English speaking family and lived comfortably in both worlds.

She married a full blood Choctaw, Norman Jefferson, and they had two daughters, Linda Kay and Nancy Ann. Juanita worked for Indian Health Services for 30 years from registration clerk to hospital administrator. She then moved to the Choctaw Nation Judicial Branch where she served as a judge for 22 and a half years. She served as president of Choctaw Nation Health Service Authority for 14 years.

After retirement she was a storyteller for the Choctaw Tribe at churches, schools and elder centers. She also volunteered with the Talihina Public Library, Talihina Elementary School and District 3 Choctaw Community Center and was a teacher of conversational Choctaw Language. She was past president of Talihina Business and Professional Women. Juanita authored a book, "Chatah, Remembering Our Roots" on the making of ceremonial dresses and shirts. She had accepted Christ as her savior and was a longtime member of St. Paul's UMC-OIMC which was founded by the General Commission on Race and Religion where she served as a director and teacher, coordinated and directed singing Choctaw hymns and held various offices.

She is survived by a daughter, Nancy Jefferson of the home; grandchildren Lilly Geesling and children Jacob and Cassandra, Amy with husband Santiago Portillo and son Justin, Jennifer Bigpond and daughter Mariah Clarke, Norma Bigpond and son Xander; and numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Davis B. and Annie M. Folsom; husband Norman; brother and sister-in-law Cooper and Lucille Folsom; two sisters in infancy, Geneva and Flora; nephew Harry Folsom and daughter Linda Jefferson Bigpond.



Vivian Blalack

Vivian Louise Scroggins Blalack, 95, passed away on Dec. 28, 2010, in Longview, Texas.

She was the daughter of Freddie Baxter Scroggins and Christopher Scroggins. Her father was an original Choctaw enrollee in the Dawes Choctaw Enrollment of 1896. She was born on July 3, 1915, on her father's 1903 Choctaw allotment, consisting of 160 acres at the Cedar Grove settlement near Francis.

In 1930, she joined her brothers, Ernest Lee Scroggins and Edgar Scroggins, as a student at the Chilocco Indian School. She was proud of her younger brother Ernest, who was valedictorian of the graduating class of 1930. Also in the Chilocco 1930 graduating class was her older brother, Edgar, who remained at Chilocco and became its plant/building superintendent from 1932-1957.

At his passing in 1965, he was honored by numerous tribal councils for his service and dedication to the welfare of thousands of Indian students attending Chilocco over a 35-year period.

At Chilocco, Vivian formed a lifelong friendship with her roommate, Vera Whitby, which friendship continued until Vera's death in 2009.

While residing in Home Three, Vivian was a home mate with the two daughters of the famous Indian athlete Jim Thorpe. She would speak of the times Mr. Thorpe would come to visit his daughters and take all the girls in Home Three for ice cream, while the boy students would gather at a distance to observe Mr. Thorpe.

Vivian was also proud that several of her ancestors served the Confederacy during the War Between the States by enlisting with the 1st Chickasaw-Choctaw Mounted Rifles, C.S.A., which was the last Confederate land unit to surrender to Union forces in July of 1865.

Vivian's strong ties to her Chickasaw-Choctaw heritage was evidenced when her son, Joe Ray Blalack, was a candidate in the 1975 Choctaw election in which David Gardner was elected principal chief.

In 1931, Vivian married Hoe C. Blalack of Wilburton, who died in 1966.

She is survived by her two children, Joe Ray Blalack and Janet Blalack Johnson, and four grandchildren.



Jim O'Kelley

Jim H. O'Kelley, 70, of Hartshorne passed away on Feb. 23, 2011, at his home.

Born Aug. 18, 1940, in Hartshorne, he was the son of James Henry and Dorothy (Reed) O'Kelley. He grew up in Hartshorne and graduated from Hartshorne High School.

He married Roena Barnes on Nov. 25, 1960, in Poteau. They lived in Dallas for a short time where he was a construction supervisor until they returned to Hartshorne in 1964.

He was a police officer for the McAlester Police Department, and then served as chief of police for the City of Hartshorne. He had been working as a security guard for the Choctaw Nation at Jones Academy for the past 19 years.

He was also a well-respected horse trainer, helping not only his kids, but others training their horses and teaching them how to ride specific rodeo events. He thoroughly enjoyed going to rodeos. He was of the Baptist faith.

He was preceded in death by his parents; two nieces, Melinda O'Kelley and Stacey O'Kelley; and a nephew, John Adams.

Survivors include his wife, Roena O'Kelley; one daughter, Rejeani Wilson with husband Gary; two sons, Buddy O'Kelley with wife Janell, and Michael O'Kelley with wife Lana; grandchildren, Amber Armstrong and Robert, Lindsey O'Kelley, Eric O'Kelley, Lori Lorene Martin and Ty, Scarlett Wilson, Hunter Wilson, Dusty Willson and Sarah, Austin Willson and Sammie, Michael O'Kelley and John O'Kelley; one great-granddaughter, Eelyn Bell Martin; four great-grandsons, Hunter and Gage Eastman and Cameron and Logen Willson; seven siblings, Frances Mordecai, Ann Rich, Mary Lou Clunn, Patricia Smith, June O'Kelley, Bobby O'Kelley and Tommy O'Kelley; sisters-in-law and brother-in-law, Louise Brown and Jeanie and Ed Wright; and numerous nieces and nephews.



Velma Toole

Velma Toole, 90, passed away at her home in McAlester on March 4, 2011. She was born on Jan. 16, 1921 in Savanna, to Samuel William and Priscilla (Pitchlyn) Lowry.

She graduated from East Central University in Ada with a bachelor's degree and worked as a social worker for Oklahoma Department of Human Services. She was a member of the First United Methodist Church.

She was preceded in death by her parents and 12 siblings. She is survived by her children, Jack Toole, Van Toole, Joe Toole, Sue Walker with husband Kenneth, Sonja Rodgers, Sammie Johnson, all of McAlester, and John Toole with wife Kathy of Oklahoma City; grandchildren, Misty Lalli, Jeremy Rogers, Kenneth Walker Jr., Robb Walker, Joedie Walker, Candice Toole, Damien Toole, Marketta Johnson, Mandy Johnson, Samantha Toole, Tara Toole, Britt Toole, along with numerous great-grandchildren and other family members and friends.

Shirley Reinhardt

Shirley Gene Choate Reinhardt passed away on Feb 1, 2010. She was born on Feb. 13, 1937, in McAlester. At the age of three she moved to Redlands, Calif.

She spent her first year of high school in Fairbanks, Alaska. Her last three years she spent in San Diego, where she graduated with honors from Lowell High School in June of 1955.

On Oct. 29, 1955, she married William Charles Reinhardt. After the birth of her first child, Pamela Jean, they moved to French Morocco in Africa where they lived for two years. They moved back to Oakland, Calif., in 1958. They had two more daughters named Rebecca Kathleen and Brenda Lee.

She is survived by her husband, William; daughters, Pamela Patton with husband Al of California, Rebecca Howell with husband Shayne of Florida, and Brenda Riley with husband David of Georgia; grandchildren, Cathryn Riley, Kevin Riley, Bethany Howell, Nathan Howell and Kimberly Riley.



Cassie Whitener

Cassie Renee Whitener, 41, passed away on Dec. 18, 2010, in Fort Worth. She was born on Oct. 21, 1969, in Ardmore.

She grew up in Ardmore and attended Ardmore High School, where she graduated in 1987. She played the saxophone in the band and was involved with the gifted and talented program. Her senior year, she entered the Air Force and was stationed in San Antonio for basic training. She received an honorable discharge in October of 1997 after sustaining injuries to her ankles. She was very proud of her service and was a patriotic woman.

Cassie was a very beautiful, talented and kind person. She enjoyed singing and writing stories, especially Big Foot related ones. She was a fabulous cook and had an admiration for nature. She loved collecting butterflies and was touched when she discovered the symbol for cervical cancer is the teal colored butterfly. It became something of beauty to her as well as a reminder to her of the battle she was in for her life.

She collected people too. She had friends everywhere. Cassie had a heart for misplaced kids; taking them under her wings and helping them get back on track. Cassie was active in church. She was the assistant to the pastor and the church secretary.

She was a Choctaw and very proud of her heritage. She was a descendant of William Durant, for whose family the city of Durant was named.

Cassie worked for Kort Water in Weatherford for 10 years then went to work for American Pipe and Steel in Weatherford. She worked there until her health no longer permitted.

She was preceded in death by grandparents, Perry N. and Ovella Phillips Whitener, and Dock Monroe and Lojuana Hartman Loving.

She is survived by father David Jack Whitener of Pine Bluff, Ark.; mother Betty Lee Loving Owens of Gainesville, Texas; brothers, Lowel Keith Grimes, Tyson Whitener, David Vowell and Brian Vowell; sisters, Sheri Vowell Sautler and Lacy Whitener; special cousins, Carla Payne and Lojuana Slovack.



Imogene Welch

Imogene Welch, 90, of the Reichert community passed from this life to her eternal Heavenly home on March 20, 2011, surrounded by many family members. She was born June 28, 1920, in Monroe to Robert and Belle (White) Owens. She married Claud Welch on Oct. 7, 1938. She was a member of Pilgrim's Rest Baptist Church. She spent her life as a housewife and mother to their four daughters. She enjoyed teaching her children and grandchildren the hobbies she enjoyed which consisted of ceramics on Monday at Tookies' and quilting on Thursdays at the "center." Cooking and sewing were some of her favorites. She was a charter member of the Reichert quilting club. She enjoyed traveling with the Choctaw Seniors of District 4 in Poteau and was proud of her Choctaw heritage. She was named outstanding Choctaw elder in October 2007.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 50 years, Claud Welch; one grandson, John Alan Ward; one great-granddaughter, Tayia O'Neal; son-in-law, Johnny Ward; and siblings, Hester Cogburn and R.L., Johnny, Paul, and Ben Owens.

She is survived by four daughters, Shirley and Bill Ward of Leflore, Edith Ward of Leflore, Claudette Hamner of Reichert, and Brenda and Jackie Sweeten of Cameron; nine grandchildren, Teresa and Dave Gadlage of Louisville, Ky., Kelly and Tim Thornburg of Wister, Shelley and Chris Kelley of Jonesboro, Ark., Susan and James Cantwell of Poteau, Keith and Deanne O'Neal of Summerfield, Anthony Ward of Kyle, Texas, Shelia Hollan of Panama, Kendall and Vanessa O'Neal of Hartford, Ark., and Larindi Sweeten of Cameron; and 19 great-grandchildren. She was a fifth generation grandmother to 12 great-great-grandchildren. She is also survived by one sister, Wanda Dell of Spiro; and one brother, H.B. Hayes of Spiro; stepsister Anna Bell Osburn of Bluejacket; and stepbrother Boyd Hayes of Pocola; several nieces, nephews, and other beloved relatives.

Wanda Dell

Wanda Stewart Dell, 78, of Spiro, passed away March 28, 2011, in Spiro. She was born Feb. 6, 1933, in Summerfield to Dommis Goforth and Nancy Bell (White) Hayes.

She was a member of the Choctaw Senior Citizens and the First Assembly of God Faith. She enjoyed church and blue grass gospel singing, and she loved to travel. God and family were her number one priorities. Her mission on Earth was to invite everyone to church, attending church, and like she so often did, "take someone to church with you."

She is preceded in death by her parents; two husbands, William Stewart and Pete Dell, one son, Phillip Stewart; one grandson, John Rogers; two sisters, Imogene Welch and Hester Cogburn; four brothers, Johnny, Ben, Paul, and R.L. Owens.

She is survived by three daughters, Wythina Lovell with husband Steve of Spiro, Marsha Sharp with husband Freddie of Muldrow and Starla Sober with husband Bryant of Spiro; daughter-in-law Sharon Stewart of Spiro; six grandchildren, Brent Lovell, Brad Lovell, Jeff Clark with wife Dana, Michelle Graham, Ashley Jackson with husband Justin, and Frank Stewart; three great-grandchildren, Caroline Clark, Kyle Jackson and Cole Jackson; brother HB Hayes of Spiro; stepsister Anna Bell Osburn of Blue Jacket; and stepbrother JB Hayes of Pocola.



Osa Charles Judy Jr.

Osa Charles Judy Jr., 86, of Wister, passed away on Nov. 26, 2010 at his home.

He was born on April 11, 1924, in Wister to Osa Charles Judy and Ruth Anne (McDaniel) Judy. He was simply known as "O.C." to his family and friends. The Judy family was early residents of Wister where they operated a farming and cattle operation as well as a general dry goods store and pharmacy for many years. The pharmacy, known as Judy Drug became a landmark in Wister and O.C. was involved in the business until it closed after the death of his parents.

O.C. was actively involved in support of the Choctaw Nation and he was very proud of his Choctaw heritage. He is the great-grandson of the Rev. Willis Folsom, a famous Methodist circuit rider pastor in Choctaw history. He was also the first cousin of "Wahoo" McDaniel, a notable professional football player and wrestler who passed away earlier. His mother was an original enrollee of the Dawes Commission Rolls as were his grandparents, Mary Folsom McDaniel and Ed McDaniel who served several terms on the Choctaw Tribal Council.

O.C. was also preceded in death by one sister, Ruth Anne Judy.

He is survived by Roy Lane and Adam Morris of the home, along with many cousins and relatives.



Shreta Williams

Shreta Lorene Williams, 71, a Muskogee resident, passed away on March 23, 2010, in Muskogee. She was born March 24, 1938, in Grady to Irid and Dorothy Riley Hanks.

Shreta grew up in Grady where she received her education, later moving to California with her family at the age of 16, where they settled in Hemet. After school she became a waitress. She met, fell in love and later married Boyd Williams on Dec. 24, 1965, in Las Vegas. They moved to Arizona where she became a homemaker. After their retirement they moved to the Checotah area where they lived before moving to Muskogee. She enjoyed spending time with her husband, fishing and dancing and was known to always read a good book. She loved raising flowers, especially roses. Shreta attended the Baptist Church. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

She was preceded in death by her parents; a step-son, Frankie Williams; and one great-granddaughter, Layni Williams.

She is survived by her husband, Boyd of the home; daughter Shelia Hathaway with husband Donnie of Richardson; a son, Keith Williams with wife Jami of Austin; two stepchildren, Jacque Sallow with husband Wayne and Jerry Williams with wife Lally, all of Muskogee; three grandchildren, Samantha Hathaway, Kellie Williams and Logan Williams; eight step-grandchildren, Bryan Lawson, Mark Lawson, Mallori Williams, Shelbi Williams, Kati Williams, Maddi Williams, Jennifer Hamzy and Casey Hamzy; seven great-grandchildren; three brothers, Leo Hanks with wife Sharon, Roland Hanks with wife Sharon and Cletus Hanks with wife Gina; many nieces, nephews, other extended family and a host of friends.

OBITUARIES

B. Dale James

B. Dale James, 82, of Shady Point, passed away on March 28, 2011, in Shady Point. Dale was born Feb. 25, 1929, in Calhoun to Cornelius and Ella M. (Priest) James. He worked in the oil field. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army.

Dale was preceded in death by his parents; grandson, Travis Reed; great grandson, Jordan Martin; and brother, Hampton James.

Survivors include his wife, Betty Ruth James of the home; daughters, Patricia with husband Neil Donathan of Shady Point, Mona with husband Kirk Reed of Mountainburg, Ark., Ruth with husband Steve Burrows of Edmond; one son, Robert James with wife Linda of Shady Point; eight grandchildren, David Donathan, Shannon Lee, Ashley Goff, Robbin Stockton, Chris James, Stephanie Martin, Stacy Christopher, Joshua Burrows; 13 great-grandchildren, Steven Lee, Alyssa Lee, Courtney Lee, Joseph Lee, Nickolas Donathan, Kenedi Ross, Izac Goff, Loudon Stockton, Kagan Stockton, Dakota James, Jaxon James, Savannah Martin, Aiden Martin; brother Robert Kennedy with wife Sue of Roland; sister-in-law Betty Jo James of Shady Point; six special nieces and nephews, Beverly and Harry Killian, Gary James, Nancy James, Debbie and Wayne McDonald, Janie and Kevin Sims, Bryan James; other relatives and loved ones; and many beloved friends.



Virginia Blansett

Virginia Marie Wallis "Ginny" Blansett passed away at her home on Feb. 11, 2011, her family by her side until the end. She was born June 5, 1943, in Bristow.

She was preceded in death by both parents; a daughter, Rhonda Blansett; another daughter, Elizabeth Blansett; and a granddaughter, Amanda Ames.

Her surviving family includes husband Douglas Blansett; daughters Jada Henley and Nona Colegrove; grandchildren Joshua Colegrove, Allen Scott Mooreland, Mellisa Colegrove, Cassie Colegrove, Justin Renolds and Elizabeth Colegrove; and great-grandchildren, Autumn Colegrove, Nick Colegrove, Kaleb Ames, Allen Mooreland, Conner Colegrove, Wyatt Colegrove, Aron Mooreland and Gracie Renolds.

Kyle Rule

Kyle Martin Rule of Henryetta went to be with the Lord on Dec. 7, 2010, after a battle with leukemia. He entered this world Aug. 30, 1972, in Oklahoma City.

Kyle was a member of The General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn. He graduated from Graham School in 1990 and later attended Tulsa Welding School graduating in 2009. Kyle enjoyed playing his guitars with friends or alone, trying out new tunes or playing the old ones gave him pleasure in his music. He also enjoyed cooking and was very particular on how it was done; you just didn't serve a dish that wasn't perfect.

Kyle's greatest passion in life was fishing. He was always ready to be at the water's edge no matter what. You just knew that if he wasn't at home he was most likely fishing at the lake or a pond nearby. It gave Kyle great joy to supply his family and friends with plenty of fish for all the fish fries. Once he even supplied fish for a benefit for a person that had the same illness he had. Kyle kept his life simple but the most cherished legacy he left us all was his faith in God. He never got mad nor asked "why me?" He spoke to his sons telling them to read in their Bible and keep reading to learn and understand God. While in the hospital he wrote a prayer thanking God for his illness to help him humble himself to God.

He was preceded in death by grandparents James and Goldie Rule and nephew Nahman White.

Kyle is survived by his sons, Jordan Rule of the home and Aaron Parker of Grandville, N.Y.; parents, Tom and Patty Rule of Henryetta; one sister, April with husband Jason White of Urbana, Mo.; grandparents, George and Rose McKinney of Midwest City; one niece, Makenzie White; nephew Jaxson White; and many aunts, uncles and cousins.



Ethel Hill

Ethel Mae Hill, 84, homemaker, passed away on March 16, 2011.

She was preceded in death by husband Barton. Survivors include children, Jolene (Ed) Snyder, Patricia (Richard) McCluney and Gerald (Dorthea) Hill; brother, Mack Barker; sister, Mildred Brazzell; grandchildren, Morgan, Emile, Shane, Megan, Matthew; and great-granddaughter Emma.



Billy Newkirk

Billy Lee "Skully" Newkirk, 72, an Atoka area resident passed, away on April 2, 2011, in Durant. He was born on Feb. 7, 1939, in Daisy to Joseph and Josephine (Clay) Newkirk. He attended Redden and Stringtown Schools and went on to be a truck driver after serving in the military, where he was stationed in Korea. He married Janice (Latham) on June 3, 1966, in McKinny. He was of the Baptist faith.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Janice Newkirk; Aunt Sophia Impson; and grandson Seth Davis.

He is survived by his children, James Van Newkirk with wife Debbie of Weatherford, Texas, Emily Newkirk of Atoka; Stetson Newkirk of Atoka, Chip Davis with wife Linsey of Weatherford, Texas, Chandra Newkirk of White Settlement, Texas, Tiffany Coates with husband Matt of Tushka, J.J. Newkirk with wife Emanda of Oahu, Hawaii; great-grandchildren, C.J. Davis, Justin Davis, Toby Davis, all of Weatherford, Texas, Ketch Coates of Tushka, Kollin Coates of Tushka, Colten Newkirk of White Settlement, Texas, and Lila Newkirk of Oahu, Hawaii; cousins, Carl Clay of Atoka and Fred Clay of Missouri; along with other relatives, friends, and McGee Valley Baptist Church family.



Shelva Moore

Shelva Sue Moore, 73, passed away on March 12, 2011, in Hugo. She was born May 16, 1937, in Hugo, the daughter of Fred and Mary (Locke) Parker. She was raised in the area and then moved to Ashdown, Ark., where she lived about 25 years before moving back to the Messer area in 1999. Shelva was kind, generous, and loved by all who knew her. She was a wonderful cook and enjoyed cooking for friends and family. Shelva's proudest accomplishments were her six children in whom she instilled her strong work ethic and love of family. Shelva was a lifelong member of the Church of Christ as well as a proud member of the Choctaw Nation.

She was preceded in death by parents; husband Judson Nipp; one sister, Maleace Hill; one brother, Dwight Parker; one great-granddaughter, Kailey Montgomery.

Shelva is survived by six children, Susan Turner with husband Fred of Orlando, Rebecca Miller with husband Johnny of Ashdown, Ark., Terry Nipp with wife Kiandra of Chidester, Ark., Kelly Nipp with wife Brenda of Stillwater, Bobbie Lynn Smith of Ashdown, Ark., Tammy Embry with husband Alan of Crossett, Ark.; 15 grandchildren, Kristina Turner Waggoner, Nikkole Turner Montgomery, Jeremy Miller, Shaine Miller, Jennifer Miller Scarborough, Cortney Miller Jaggears, T.J. Nipp, Aria Nipp, Logan Nipp, Ashley Nipp, Katharine Nipp, Joshua Smith, Kymberly Smith, Zackary Smith, Lexie Embry; eight great-grandchildren, Tyler Waggoner, Bayley Montgomery, Addysen Montgomery, Michala Scarborough, Peyton Scarborough, Chloe Jaggears, Mackenzie Smith, Mataya Smith; other survivors include three brothers, Adrain Parker of Slaten, Texas, Jim Parker, of Hugo, and Caral Parker of Sawyer; one sister, Ann Shannon of Hugo; as well as numerous nieces and nephews.



Elvin Jaquess

Elvin Virgle Jaquess, 80, of Pickett, passed away on March 22, 2011, at his home. He was born June 2, 1930, in Earth, Texas, to Leo Haskell and Frances Joella Barte Jaquess. Elvin's maternal grandparents were Andrew Pearce Barte and Mary Cordelia Stowers Barte of Madill, who received an original land allotment with the Choctaw Tribe. Paternal grandparents were Lansdon Wilburn Jaquess and Emma Agnes Cowan Jaquess.

Elvin and his family moved five miles west of Ada where he attended Pickett Grade School and graduated from Ada High School. After graduation, he married his childhood sweetheart, Sue Norville on Dec. 26, 1950. He graduated from East Central State College with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Industrial Arts. Following a two-year stint as a teacher in Union Valley High School (south of Waurika), he returned to Pickett and joined Jaquess Brothers Construction Company which was instrumental in developing the Pickett area.

Elvin was a long-time member of the Diamond "K" Kiwanis Club and served as its president for one year. As a Kiwanis member, he loved driving the train and merry-go-round at Wintersmith Park and delivering Meals-On-Wheels.

Elvin and Sue were members of the Ada Hereford Whirlers Square Dance Club for over 20 years. He was active in the Pickett Methodist Church where they were married over 60 years ago. They later joined the First United Methodist Church in Ada. He was a member of the Fellowship Sunday School Class.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his younger sister, Oneta June Jaquess.

Survivors include his wife, Sue Jaquess, of the home; his two daughters, Janelle McKnight with husband Wayne of Eufaula and Sharon Butler with her husband Charles of Englewood, Colo.; two grandchildren, Bonnie Parker with husband Jon of Aurora, Colo., and Allie Murphy with husband Michael of Tuscaloosa, Ala.; two great-grandchildren, Noah and Eli Parker of Aurora, Colo.; two sisters, JoAnn Prince with husband James of Pickett and Linda Brown of Norman.



Wanda Harrison

Wanda Marie (Ritter) Harrison, 83, of Bokoshe, passed away on March 28, 2011. She was born March 22, 1928, to Jim and Mattie (Belt) Ritter. Wanda was a factory worker for many years.

She was preceded in death by her parents; son Lewis Lawson; brothers, Charles, Don, Son and Roy Ritter; sister, Evonna Kelley; and great-granddaughter Kristy Thompson.

She is survived by her sisters, Betty with husband Jack Brewer of Bokoshe, Yvonne with husband Marlin Forrester of Spiro; brother James Ritter of Spiro; her grandchildren, Melissa Harris of Roland, Melinda Thompson of Panama, and Presley Lawson of Spiro; five great-grandchildren; several nieces, nephews, other relatives and loved ones; and many beloved friends.



Ralph Nail

Ralph G. Nail, 75, of Hampton, Ga., passed away on Feb. 25, 2011. He was born in Durant to the late Edward Leslie and Oreta Margaret Gibson Nail. He was also preceded in death by his daughter, Ruth Ann Nail.

Mr. Nail was a member of Way Of The Cross Baptist Church where he also served as a deacon and taught Sunday School. Ralph was ordained as a deacon in 1962 and has taught Sunday School for over 50 years. Mr. Nail retired from the Federal Aviation Administration after 33 years. Ralph was an avid outdoorsman who loved to hunt and was a jack of all trades and known as a prankster. Mr. Nail was a veteran serving in the U.S. Marine Corps. Most important to him was his church and family. He was a loving husband, father, and grandfather.

Mr. Nail is survived by wife Betty Joyce Nail of Hampton, Ga.; son Steve with wife Elaine Nail of Hampton; daughter, Joyce with husband Chris Cannon of Hampton; grandchildren, Grant Nail, Ashley Richter and Craig Scott; great grandchildren, Shelby Nail, Hunter Ralph Nail, Cade Richter, Laina Richter, Allie Richter, Ashtyn Richter and Lauren Scott.



Harold McAlvain

Sgt. Maj. Ret. Harold "Mac" McAlvain passed away on March 1, 2011, in Nocona, Texas. Mac was born Dec. 15, 1932 in Oologah, to Sarah "Louise" Woodside and William "Polk" McAlvain.

Mac graduated from Oologah High School in 1950 and then joined the service and served his country in both the U.S. Air Force and then the U.S. Army. He retired after 33 years of service at the rank of Sergeant Major. He was active in the VFW Bowie Post, the DAV, and the American Legion Post 252 of Bowie, where he served as commander. He was a faithful member of Jean's Men's Bible Class in Nocona, Texas, and enjoyed the social coffee hour. Mac was very active in the Nocona Cemetery Association and a proud member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Mac was preceded in death by his parents Polk and Louise McAlvain; brother James McAlvain with his wife Helen Womack McAlvain in 1999.

Survivors include children, Richard McAlvain, Patricia London with husband Bill, Kevin McAlvain with wife Tammy, all of Oklahoma City, Carrie Haslacker with husband Steven of Clarksville, Texas; stepchildren, Sherry King with husband Dale of Bridgeport, Texas; Tony Martin with wife Lisa of Sanger, Texas; Leslie Martin with wife Charlene of Wynnewood; 11 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren; brother Edward L. McAlvain of Wichita Falls, Texas; and sister-in-law Jackie McAlvain of Seminole.



Eva Parish

Eva Felihkatubbee Parish, 79, of Riverside, Calif., passed away peacefully on Feb. 17, 2011, with her family at her side, on a beautiful afternoon in a place she loved to be, Forest Lake, Ariz.

Eva attended Center Point Elementary School in Atoka County and attended Chilocco Indian School. She met and married Coleman Ray Felihkatubbee in Antlers. They were relocated to Southern California in 1955. She lived most of her adult life in Southern California close to the Pacific, which she loved to be near. Mom was known for her shopping and she enjoyed travelling back and forth to Oklahoma where she liked to gather wild onions with Betty Lou. She also liked spending time with her daughter, Roberta and her family on the Navajo Reservation in Pinon, Ariz. She liked to sing in English and Choctaw, go to her daughter Eva Jean's house to eat with family and friends, and just enjoy life to the fullest. Mom worked and retired in June 2010 from Sherman Indian High School in Riverside, Calif. One of her most enjoyable times was working with the students at SIHS and was known to them as "Grandma." Her last wish was to go to the Navajo Reservation in Arizona where she spent much of her time. She always had an adventurous side to her and anytime we'd ask her to go somewhere, she was ready to go! She was a very spiritual and religious woman who prayed and read her Bible daily. Even with humble beginnings, she was a very strong woman who stood with integrity and honor and yet was a very compassionate and thoughtful. She liked to write poems and short stories and everyone remembers her as a storyteller. When we were little we didn't have a lot of books and mom always made up her own stories, which were always one of a kind. She touched the lives of many people throughout her life.

Eva was born Feb. 18, 1931, in Darwin and she is preceded in death by her grandparents, Elias Parish and Melissa Parish; her father, Faulker Austin of Valliant; mother Zarina Parish of Darwin; brother Irvine Austin; sons Coleman Ray Felihkatubbee Jr., Luke Felihkatubbee; and grandson Loman Felihkatubbee of Carson, Calif.; uncles Sham, Noah, Samson and Elijah Parish of Darwin; and sister Bertha Wilson of Sacramento, Calif.

Eva is survived by her brother, Buddy Austin with wife Betty of Valliant; brother Benny Austin with wife Queenie of Valliant; aunt Elizabeth McKenzie of McAlester; daughter Eva Jean Felihkatubbee with husband Scott Roebuck of Corona, Calif.; son Rodney Felihkatubbee with wife Glenna of Lake Elsinore, Calif.; daughter Roberta Ashiking with husband Alan of Forest Lake, Ariz.; son Robert Felihkatubbee with wife Dinah of Moreno Valley, Calif.; grandchildren, Toshia Felihkatubbee, LaTisha Felihkatubbee and children, Milyssa Chino and son Mark Chino, Albert Ashiking, Jennifer Felihkatubbee and children, Daniel Felihkatubbee, David Felihkatubbee, Abraham Felihkatubbee, Brandon Felihkatubbee, Jason, Joshua, and Carey Felihkatubbee; niece, Linda Wilson of Sacramento, Calif.; nephews, Tony Wilson of Durant, Chiefie Wilson of Pacifica, Calif., and Jonathan Wilson of Texas; cousins, Rosie Gilmore of Durant, Lillie Roberts of Durant, Ruth Ann Trump of San Diego, Calif., Betty Lou Thomas of MacAlester, Lillie Mae Leja of MacAlester, Dena Marris of Durant, Loretta Cuper of Antlers, Tom Parish of Darwin, Steve Parish of Ada, Jennifer Barnett of Ada, Linda Parish of Durant of Helen May Parish of Korea, Samuel Parish and numerous other cousins and friends.



Quay Myers

Quay Gibson Myers, 71, of Wright City passed away on March 25, 2011, at Paris Regional Medical Center. The daughter of Boyd and Fannie (Jacob) Gibson, Quay was born April 29, 1939, in Wright City.

Quay was a member of the Worldwide Church of God and loved the Lord. She enjoyed fishing, gardening, animals, especially her two cats, Nakita and Tushka Lusa, crossword puzzles, gathering wild onions, traveling and reading. She was proud to be Chahta.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, William Myers Sr.; a sister, Faye Gibson; and an infant son, Baby Boy Myers.

She leaves to cherish her memory, four sons, Orlando Gibson of Ringold, Audie Gibson with wife Lucy of Wright City, Dorsey Myers of Oklahoma City and William Myers Jr. of Durant; two daughters, Greta Myers-Solis with husband Paul of Idabel, Dawn with husband Desmond Walls of Idabel; a brother, Berie with wife Rena Gibson of Tulsa; three sisters, Dorothy Gibson-Van Horn with husband Ron of Lawton, Eleanor Gibson-Caldwell of Wright City and Terry with husband Curtis Billy of Durant; 13 grandchildren, including two of the home, Sarah Williston and Matevier Thompson; 13 great-grandchildren; several nieces, nephews other relatives and friends.



Women – The givers and supporters of life

May is the month of Mothers' Day, and it is fitting for Iti Fabvssa to honor our Choctaw mothers for their love, talents, and their quiet, capable work that has supported generations of Choctaw families, making the very existence of the Nation possible to this very day. We will do this by presenting a little bit of what is known about the daily lives, roles, and personal character of early Choctaw women.

Before colonization, women held positions of great respect, esteem, and power in Choctaw society. Women were recognized as the givers and supporters of life. We can get some idea of the sacredness in which this role was viewed, through the Choctaw word "hollo," which refers to the feminine essence. From this term, stem other Choctaw words such as "ihollo," meaning to love, "hullochi," to sanctify, and "holitopa," beloved or holy. In the traditional Choctaw way of thinking, women in general and mothers in particular, were likened onto the earth, which makes life possible by providing gifts of sustenance, shelter, and even the physical bodies we live in. Women did the same for their families. A common name for Nvnihi Waiya, the most sacred place on the landscape for early Choctaws was "Holitopa Ishki," or "Beloved Mother." Clearly Choctaw women were beloved.

Some of the virtues that Choctaw society valued highly in women and mothers are evident in common names that Choctaw women carried. A number of these names contain the word "ima" meaning "to give." For example, Hotima means, "she who looks for and gives," Pisatima means "she who sees and gives," Chumpatima, "she who buys and gives." Other common Choctaw women's names end with "ona," meaning, "to arrive here." An example is Ho-



Iti Fabvssa



Photo Provided

Choctaw women continue to love and support their families. Melissa Reich, above, reads to son Jace.

tona, which means "she who seeks and arrives." These and other names show us that early Choctaw women were respected for demonstrating the virtues of generosity, industry, and perseverance.

Just as today, early Choctaw women fulfilled many vital roles for their communities, families, and tribe. Central to all of these roles was that of life-giver. Expectant women were revered. Husbands fasted for them, and children who dared to poke fun at an expectant mother's growing belly stood the risk of being reprimanded severely by elders. Women secluded themselves at the time of delivery. This was considered the height of the female power, and men were not allowed in the vicinity for fear of harm coming to them and to the baby.

In traditional Choctaw society, family lines followed the female rather than the male side, exactly the opposite from Euro-American society. Choctaw individuals inherited their Ikxa and clan from their mother. During tribal functions, the children sat at the fire of their mother's family, while the father sat at a separate fire with his own siblings, and the children of his sisters. The family house and most of what was inside it was considered to be the property of the women. If a couple chose to break up, the man would take his weapons and move into the house of his own family, and the children would go with the mother. If a wife died, the property went to her children and biological family, not to her husband. Similarly in the event of a mother's death, the children

that is truly inspiring. Women were the primary creators and custodians of the Choctaw arts of basketry, textiles, and pottery. Choctaw girls practiced these arts so that they would be able to have their pick of young men for a husband when they came of age.

Women often went with their men on diplomatic missions to other tribes and to Euro-American groups. Some European commentators believed that it was a mark of savagery for Choctaw men to bring women with them, rather than leaving them at home where they would be protected. However, from a Choctaw perspective, this was simply a sign of the importance that women had in Choctaw society, and of the confidence that was placed in these women. Sometimes in order to establish friendly relationships with other groups at these meetings, a ceremony was conducted in which Choctaw women adopted individuals from the other group into their own clans, making them family. This not only necessitated the presence of women at such meetings, but also meant that they had a real say in what was taking place. Similarly, it was women who made the choice of whether or not to adopt war captives into their families, and ultimately into the Choctaw tribe.

Choctaw women often served as motivators for their families and communities, and did whatever was necessary to support them. Some women served as Alikchi, or doctors. Sometimes, Choctaw women temporarily accepted the role of chief when their husbands died; hereditary power is said to have been passed to girls when there were no male heirs.

Although it was the man's role to protect the community, fight, and if necessary, kill, there are records of Choctaw women carrying weapons to protect their families, tracking

fleeing enemies, and carrying their husband's quiver of arrows and shouting encouragement to him on the battlefield. In 1541, at a place called Mabila, a battle was fought between the ancestors of today's Choctaw people and an army of Spanish Conquistadors led by Hernando De Soto. The Spanish chroniclers record that after most of the Choctaw warriors had fallen, the women picked up their fallen husband's and father's weapons and fought the Spanish to the last woman rather than give up their liberty and honor. To this day, the Choctaw war dance, unlike those of many other tribes, involves women as well as men.

With colonization, European ideas and ways of doing things were forced on the Choctaw people. During the 1800s, many segments of Euro-American society believed that women were intellectually inferior to men, undeserving of formal education, and unworthy of a formal vote in community decisions. The derogatory term "squaw" also came into use. Some pretty determined attempts were made to push these Euro-American views about women onto Choctaw society. It is amazing, from the vantage point of 100 years later how far things have come towards full circle, with women earning some of the rights and respect in Euro-American society, that Choctaw women have always possessed.

Our Choctaw mothers are descended from a beloved and honorable line of forebearers. Today, just as they always have, Choctaw mothers continue to love and support their families, and make vital contributions to their communities, country, nation, and the world. They are the roots that keep Choctaw society on solid ground and nurture it to help it fulfill its future potential. Holitopa hachiahoke!

Choctaw Days

June 22-25 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian Washington, D.C.

Daily Activities

► 10:45 a.m. traditional dancing begins in front of the museum with the Jump Dance, Fast War Dance, Stealing Partners Dance and the Snake Dance

Singing, dancing, fluteplaying, storytelling, pottery, basketweaving and more are featured every hour.

Make & Take

Classes will be held on the third floor. All ages are invited to create a basket, clay pot or piece of beadwork.
10 a.m.-12 p.m.
2 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

Rasmuson Theater

Films shown throughout Wednesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday

► *Choctaw Code Talkers*
► *The Long Walk*

Join us at 1:30 p.m. Saturday for a re-enactment of a Choctaw Wedding in the Rasmuson Theater on the first floor.



For more information call the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma 800.522.6170, ext. 2249, or National Museum of the American Indian 202.633.1000

Thousands of visitors expected at NMAI

Continued from Page 1 and eggs, and pumpkin soup. Chef Richard will also bring a portable station out among visitors to cook samples of the dishes at 11:30 a.m. on both Wednesday and Saturday.

Booths will be set up in and around the Potomac circle just inside the museum's front doors where visitors can view the intricacies of basket weaving by Eveline Steele, modern and traditional bead working by Marcus Amerman and Roger Amerman, flute making by Presley Byington, and pottery making by Ian and Amy Thompson.

Cultural exhibits by Regina Green, director of the Choctaw Nation Museum in Tushka Homma, and traditionalist Les Williston will explain the craftsmanship and skills our ancestors displayed in everyday life with such items as tools, weaponry, clothing, basketry and pottery.

Two of the Choctaw Nation's many exceptional artists will have their work showcased at this festival. Paul King, whose award-winning work is featured as the branding image of Choctaw Days 2011, will have several pieces on hand. Gwen Coleman Lester, another exemplary award-winning Choctaw artist, will have several paintings, prints and hand-painted gourd Christmas ornaments on display.

The Choctaw Nation Cultural Events Department will be holding make-and-take sessions on the third floor of the museum. All ages are invited to create a basket, clay pot or piece of beadwork. The daily sessions will be held 10 a.m.-12 p.m. session and 2



David Fitzgerald Photo

Regina Green shows museum items to be on display.

p.m.-4:30 p.m.

"It is a great chance for the whole family to do something together," said Cultural Events Executive Director Sue Folsom, "and they will have a small sample of Choctaw culture to take home with them."

The "Choctaw Code Talkers" and "The Long Walk" films will loop continuously in the Rasmuson Theater on the first floor of the museum. At 1:30 p.m. Saturday, the videos will be turned off for a theatrical re-enactment of a Choctaw wedding. From the first glance shared between the couple to the wrapping of the blanket around their shoulders and the wedding dance, visitors will have the opportunity to watch the centuries-old symbolic actions of a traditional Choctaw wedding.

"The revival of the Choctaw culture and language is something we are proud of," said Chief Pyle. "Online language instructor Lillie Roberts will have a table with information on the different types of Choctaw language classes that are

available.

"There will also be a computer set up so that visitors can have the opportunity to interact with a language instructor in Oklahoma, similar to our One-Net classes held in schools throughout Southeastern Oklahoma," he said.

A favorite of any festival is its storytellers and two of Choctaw Nation's finest have agreed to be at Choctaw Days. Tim Tingle and Greg Rodgers are not only recognized for their unique tales, personal appearances and books. They have been instrumental in sharing both the history and recent accomplishments of the tribe with school children throughout the United States.

Choctaw Days at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian is a celebration of the strength and perseverance of an exceptional people, combining the old and the new so that all will leave with an enlightened perspective of a tribe who continues to grow with pride, hope and success.

Featured during Choctaw Days

Choctaw Royalty
Miss Choctaw Nation
Kristie McGuire,
Jr. Miss Nikki Amos and
Little Miss Mahala Battiest



Choctaw Youth Dancers
with chanter
Ron McKinney



Flutemaker, flutist
Presley Byington



Artists Gwen
Coleman Lester
and Paul King



Modern and traditional
beadwork by
Marcus Amerman and
Roger Amerman



Items on display from the
Choctaw Nation Museum
by Regina Green



Language instructor
Lillie Roberts



Storytellers
Tim Tingle and
Greg Rodgers



Basketweaver Eveline Steele



Potters Dr. Ian and
Amy Thompson



Cultural experts
Les Williston
and Olin Williams



Choctaw Singers
The Johnsons
and
Brad Joe