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The Official Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

May 2012 Issue

Choctaws ... growing with pride, hope and success



ESIAS J. "E.J." JOHNSON

Former Councilman E.J. Johnson passes away

Former Tribal Councilman Esias J. "E.J." Johnson of Atoka, who proudly served the people of District 10 for 18 years before leaving office in 2005, passed away April 24, 2012, at Atoka County Medical Center. He was 89 years old.

E.J. was born April 12, 1923, in Bohler, Okla., to Daniel and Maulsey (Tully) Johnson.

E.J. married Marie Lefflore on Oct. 9, 1951, in Antlers. She preceded him in death on March 4, 1996.

In addition to his service to the Choctaw Nation, E.J. also served his country in the military during World War II. He was also employed by the Oklahoma State Department of Transportation.

E.J. is survived by four sons, Kenneth R. Johnson and wife Darlene of Achille, Richard D. Johnson and wife Pat of Atoka, Bobby Dean Johnson and wife Sara of Atoka, and Richard Guitierrez; three daughters, Cle-ta F. Billy of Atoka, Anita K. Jones of Coalgate, and Deborah A. Williams and husband John of Mead; 17 grandchildren, 34 great-grandchildren, and several nieces, nephews, and a host of friends.

E.J. was preceded in death by his parents, wife, brother McDonald Johnson, sisters Anna Mae Parrish and Christine Greenwood, daughter Anna, and three sons, Ed Johnson, Jerry LeFlore, and Alvin Johnson.

He was interred at Butler Cemetery in Atoka. The Rev. Bertram Bobb officiated his memorial service and Jason Leonard, Justin Strange, Jim Micheles, Ricky Robinson, Josh Rorick, Doug Staits, and Eugene Taylor served as pallbearers.

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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.

Choctaw Defense awarded \$24 million military trailer contract

By BRIAN BRUS
Journal Record

McAlester-based Choctaw Manufacturing Defense Contractors has been awarded a \$24.4 million delivery order to supply more than 500 U.S. military trailers, Chief Executive Stephen Benefield confirmed.

When first asked about the contract, Benefield needed a moment to consider the scale of the job.

"Now that you mention it, it is a pretty large order," he said. "I guess

success makes you jaded. Just a few years ago I would have fainted but now this sort of deal has become almost routine.

"We just lay low, out in the middle of nowhere. We're not in Oklahoma City or Tulsa; we're not on the East Coast or West Coast. So I guess nobody ever hears about us."

The company, which was founded in 1988, is now the largest supplier of military shipping and storage containers, with satellite production facilities in Hugo and Antlers.

It has about 240 full-time employees and makes about \$50 million in annual revenue.

Products range from wooden crates for gun ammunition to aluminum containers for missiles – "because you don't put a \$900,000 cruise missile in a cardboard box," he said.

In addition, CMDC produces space heaters, helicopter parts



The Choctaw Defense plant in McAlester

Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

and vehicle trailers that are used for hauling drinkable water to military forces nearly anywhere in the world. The company is quickly establishing a niche for itself with the latter, he said, as it replaces the older so-called Water Buffalo model at a capacity of 400 gallons with its new Camel model at 800 gallons. The Camel is temperature-controlled so that water is immediately ready to consume whether troops are in a desert or an arctic environment.

The first few Camel trailers out of an order of 300 recently were sent to the military for final testing; high-volume production in Oklahoma

is expected to begin later this year. The order for 500 Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement trailer chassis is currently the company's largest contract, a continuation of an original contract. He said the U.S. Army intends to buy about 6,200 trailers over several years.

"This is good, ongoing business for us. It keeps our operations robust," Benefield said.

The company has also recently won a metrology-related award from a federal government agency for the precision of its manufacturing processes, officials confirmed. The award will be revealed in May.



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

Choctaw Defense employees work on a section of the trailers the plant has been contracted to build for the U.S. Army.



Photo provided

Oklahoma Choctaw potters in attendance at the pottery gathering are, front row from left, Vangie Robinson, Mary Frazier, Debbie Damron, Teresa Prough, and Ed Perkins; back row from left, Dan Bernier, Ian Thompson, Linda Burton, and Sandra Moore-Riley.

Choctaw potters return to ancestral ground, to ancestral clay in Alabama

By IAN THOMPSON
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

A group of nine traditional potters from the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma have recently returned from the "Fusing Red Earth Pottery Gathering," hosted at Moundville Archaeological Park in Alabama, March 28-31. This event brought together potters from the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Cherokee Nation, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, other potters who work in traditional Southeastern Native

American styles, and archaeologists who specialize in Southeastern Native American ceramics.

For the Choctaw potters, the event was a special opportunity to learn more about ancestral ceramic forms and processes, to share techniques with other artists, to study hundreds of ancient pieces of pottery, to literally walk in the footsteps of ancestors at Moundville, and to dig clay in some of the same places used by ancestral Choctaw potters centuries ago. There was so much to do and so much information available that Choctaw potter, Theresa Prough,

See POTTERS Page 12

Grandmother's wisdom helps Williams choose a positive path

By LISA REED
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

The 1960s were synonymous with change. It was a time period when the Choctaws who stayed behind in Mississippi had been scattered out and were venturing back to their original home. The Mississippi Choctaws were still reuniting after being recognized by the federal government as a tribe in 1945 – many with memories of the old ways, all looking at an uncertain future.

"The old ways had been disbanded for a moment," says Olin Williams, who was a young boy during the '60s. "Choctaws were coming back to their home land and trying to resume life, but things had changed. Martin Luther King Jr. was preaching about injustice in the neighboring state of Alabama. All this was going on and we were still trying to practice the matrilineal way of life."

His grandmother was the matriarch of their clan, a position understood by the whole family. People respected her and she was chosen from the heart, no written documents, no "title." Williams was raised in his grandmother's home. He didn't have a father fig-

ure to teach him the ways of life. He watched the other men, what they did, and even at that time the boys or young men had to do some kind of accomplishment to earn the title of warrior.

"Of course, before that time period, if you went to war you were a warrior," Williams said. "When I was 9 or 10, it was a different era so they had to find another rite of passage. If you could provide food for the family it was the manly thing to do. You became a man if you provided food for the clan."

"Grandma had to decide when it was the right time. No one knew except her and the lead hunter that my first rabbit hunt was a rite of passage day. She knew I would be in need of authority and it should be done then or I would select the wrong role models."

His grandmother's wisdom helped Williams to choose a positive direction for his life.

She conveyed her wishes, her concerns, all with body signals and facial expressions as was her way, to the clan's lead hunter. Williams was included on a hunt as the lead hunter's apprentice.

The young boy was proud to be among men, carrying his rabbit stick
See WILLIAMS Page 7

OU students research water's impact on Choctaw culture, past and present

By BRET MOSS
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

It's no secret that water is a precious resource to Oklahoma, one that is in the forefront of Choctaw Nation's preservation efforts. The water in southeast Oklahoma affects much more than just the drinking habits of the people – it has strong ties to the past, present and future of the Choctaw people.

Recently, a handful of University of Oklahoma students traveled to the capitol grounds of the Choctaw Nation in Tushka Homma to learn just

how deep the water runs in the culture of the Choctaw people.

The students, who are enrolled in an applied climatology class, were invited to the capitol because they are partnering with the Choctaw Nation in developing its sustainable water plan and drought planning process.

These students have been charged with the task of gathering data on factors that influence the climate in the area. The group requested a visit to Choctaw Nation to get a better feel for the area they were to be
See STUDENTS Page 5



Choctaw Nation: BRET MOSS

Brian McClain, left, takes the group to the edge of the Kiamichi river to explain how quickly the water passes through the area.

We are a greatly blessed nation



From the Desk of
Chief Gregory E. Pyle

The Choctaw tribe has grown by leaps and bounds over the past 30 years and it is exciting to see this positive growth as I drive to meetings in all of the districts across the Choctaw Nation.

I have a grateful heart for the community centers, clinics, housing additions, child development centers, and food distribution stores that have opened in recent years.

Our tribe has been greatly blessed.

The employees of the Choctaw Nation work diligently to ensure the needs of the Choctaw people are taken care of and I am extremely thankful that the staff are willing to “go the extra mile.”

As the tribe continues to progress and grow, it is important that the vision of the tribe be a goal that we can all strive toward – “To achieve healthy, successful, productive, and self-sufficient lifestyles for a proud nation of Choctaws.”

The Assistant Chief, Tribal Council and I have discussed the significance of having a plan for the tribe over the next 100 years that will cover the economics, culture, services and growth management of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

The leadership of our tribe has been developing short-term and long-term plans to help accomplish this vision so that our tribe will continue to be successful for the benefit of Choctaw generations for many years in the future.

Tribal Council meets in regular April session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met in regular session on April 14 in Tushka Homma.

Council members approved:

- applications for a FTA Clean Fuels Grant Program, Tribal Transit Program Grant and Residential Energy Assistance Challenge Grant
- the disposal of surplus equipment by the Fixed Assets Department and approved budget for relocations of the Idabel Travel Plaza and construction of the Stigler Casino.
- the Jena Band of Louisiana Choctaws’ request of use to said “Choctaw Casino” trademark to be confined to and only used with other words identifying the Jena Band of Choctaws as not the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

The Choctaw Nations Tribal Council holds its regular session at 10 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month in the Council Chambers at Tushka Homma.

Tribe growing stronger during its spring season



From the Desk of
Assistant Chief Gary Batton

I see the result of the seasons changing. Everything is now coming into bloom and it seems that life is really kicking off again after the cold winter. The tribe is in the same spring season. We have so many things to be thankful for with all of the programs we now have for our tribal members. One example is our School of Choctaw Language.

The department held a celebration April 26 in Durant with over 500 kids traveling from 39 schools to join in the finale. Those 500 young people now know more of the Choctaw language and there will be more students enrolling next year. This keeps our culture and heritage alive and strong!

Not all of the students were able to attend because of scheduling conflicts. School of Choctaw Language Director Jim Parish tells me that there are approximately 700 high school students enrolled in Choctaw I and Choctaw II. What impressed us most at the finale is the way they all responded to the emcee for the day, Theresa Billy. Mrs. Billy greeted the group with “Halito! Chim achukma?”, and received a resounding response from the students. They not only told her how they were, they

asked how she was in return. This shows great promise for the tribe’s future.

Our ancestors endured a harsh winter on the Trail of Tears. Chief Pyle and I want to invest in our tribal members and our businesses so that type of winter does not happen to the Choctaw people again. We want them to be proud, self-sufficient people who are able to stand on their own two feet and take the path or journey they choose to take. We want what is best for our tribal members just like we want what is best for our families. We want them to keep the values that have made them the great individuals they are and to have the ability to succeed in whatever they choose.

I am very proud of everyone who participated in April’s Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon. One employee relay team won first place in the Masters MX Division. That is a great accomplishment. Each person who gave their time to join in the annual event gave a part of themselves as a tribute to the victims of the devastating bombing in 1995.

It’s encouraging to see so many of our tribal members and employees taking the steps to become healthier, stronger and able to run marathons. Healthier individuals mean healthier families and that equals a stronger nation.

Chaplain’s Corner

Preparing for eternity

We pray for another year of celebration with our Chah-tas and friends in Bakersfield, Ca. Thanks to Bill and Teresa in their efforts and guidance in helping our Choctaws and friends. God bless you.

Where can I find the truth about life? Where can I find guidance and direction for how to act at work, home and school? Where can I find comfort in a time of need? To the Christians the answer is obvious. It has been repeated in the Bible, the Word of God.

The Bible is God’s Word. We read in the Book of Hebrews 4:12:

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



REV. BERTRAM BOBB
Tribal Chaplain

Whatever your profession or vocation, get to know the Bible, get a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. There are many people who have not committed themselves to God in faith, they are just waiting for a wind to come along to blow them in any direction. Will you today commit your life to Jesus Christ? Let Him have complete control of your life, let Him be the Lord of your life. Serve Him with love and a committed heart.

Jesus said in Luke 14:27-30:

“And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him.

Saying, this man began to build, and was not able to finish.”

What Jesus is saying is: “If you’re going to follow me, sit down and count the cost.”

There are three problems we face when we come to the Word of God:

First, there is a mind problem. We must decide who Jesus Christ is. Was he the Son of the Living God, the Way, the Truth, and the Life? (John 14:6) Was He all Truth as He claimed? That’s a decision that we have to make about Jesus Christ, a mind decision.

This is what Jesus has to say about the mind in Matthew 22:37: “...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”

And we read in Phillipians 2:5: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

The mind is important. But remember that the mind has been affected by sin. You cannot come to Jesus Christ by the mind alone. That step has to be taken by faith. Jesus is God, He left Heaven to come to this earth to become man to pay the penalty for sin, which is death, in our place. And this is what we believe by faith to be born again into God’s family. The second problem that face in coming to Jesus Christ is a moral problem, meeting the high standards of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ demands first place in everything. You come to Jesus realizing that you will have to pay the price. You can’t drag those dirty sins with you.

You will have to quit lying, you will have to quit sleeping with that woman or man who is not your spouse. You will have to quit cheating at school or at work. You will have to take time to study the Word of God. Paul said to Timothy in II Timothy 2:15:

“study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed,...”

All these things are costly. Are you willing to pay the price?

You can’t live a clean life today, except one way – with Jesus Christ in your heart. The Apostle Paul said in Galatians 2:20:

“I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Paul writes in his letter to the Romans in Romans 6:14:

“...sin shall not have dominion over you.”

There was a time when sin ruled in your life. But when you come to Jesus, sin no longer rules. And He can help you meet the high standards that He sets in moral living.

Now, coming to Christ isn’t going to make you perfect. Suppose you accept Christ and you slip and fall. What happens? You need to say, “Oh, Lord, I am sorry. Forgive me. I turn from that sin. I don’t ever want to commit it again.”

You confess it, He is faithful and just to forgive you your sin. If you have sinned, go to Him and say, “Lord, I have sinned, I am sorry”

The third problem in coming to Christ is an emotional problem, because, we are made of mind and will and emotion. God wants Lordship over your life, your marriage, your friendships, your morals. He wants everything surrendered to Him. You can’t look at that cross and realize its deep significance without being emotionally moved that God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to shed His blood, and die for you so that you may have forgiveness of sin and eternal life.

Now God makes three calls to you.

First, He calls you to the Person of Jesus Christ:

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” (Isaiah 1:18)

Though your sins be as scarlet they can be made as white as snow because of the cross. He calls you to Christ. It’s a call to a Person, the Person of Jesus Christ.

Second, God calls you to consecration. The word “consecration” means to “set apart.”

We can do the dedicating, only God can consecrate:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” (Romans 12:1)

In response to God’s call to consecration, for a mother or a father it means that you give your baby to Christ. For a businessman it means that you give God your business, in anything you do. In your education, future marriage, let Him be Lord. The Bible tells us in Colossians 2:6:

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.”

Third, God calls you to serve. God needs you. He needs nurses and doctors and businessmen and politicians, Christian leaders who are ready to pay the price and step out and serve Christ.

But you will have to make that first step, take that first step. You will have to say, “Yes, by faith I receive you, Lord, into my heart. I want to follow you, no matter what the cost. I am willing to pay the price.”

Today, will you make this choice to follow Jesus Christ?

Remember to pray for America. Pray for our men and women in our armed services.



Photo provided

Choctaw Nation’s Going Lean Program sponsored 40 runners in various races during the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon on April 29. Congratulations to the employee team who took first place in the Masters MX Division with a relay time of 3 hours and 48 minutes. Team members include Billy Stephens, Angie Stephens, Terry Stephens, Shannon McDaniel and Dean Phillips. There were a total of 27,000 runners in the marathon, held each year in memory of the victims and survivors of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building and their family members.



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NOTES TO THE NATION

Thank you to Energy Emergency Assistance

I would like to express my appreciation for the Choctaw Tribal Energy Emergency Assistance program. They helped me with my electric bill. Since they no longer have assistance with wood, I could only buy half cords of wood and had to use an electric heater to off-set my wood. I live in extreme northern California, 50 miles from the Oregon border. We are still having bad snowstorms, which I still have to worry about. It's too bad the wood program was stopped.

Being on fixed income, choosing between gas for the trip to the doctor's office, food, and bills, it leaves very little for full cords of wood. I express my deepest thank you to the tribe for its help with my electric bill.

Paula Florendo

Appreciative detective

I would like to express my gratitude to the Choctaw Nation for all its assistance in getting to where I am today. The tribe gave me my start in law enforcement and I credit the advancements I've made over the past 20 years back to that opportunity. I was employed by the Choctaw Nation as a bingo clerk in 1992 and then transferred to tribal security in 1994. In 1998 I was promoted to Tribal Police, where I worked proudly for almost four years. It was during that time that the tribe sent me to CLEET training, helping to pave the road for my career in law enforcement. In 2002 I went to work for the Bryan County Sheriff's Office, where I currently work as a detective. I am proud to maintain a connection to the tribe through my cross-commissioning with the Choctaw Nation Tribal Police.

As a tribal member, I see firsthand the Choctaw Nation's influence and contribution to the community, and I'm glad to be able to raise my two sons, Jacob and Harrison, here in Durant. Again, thank you, Choctaw Nation, for all the opportunities and assistance provided to my family and me over the years.

Johnny Bates

Thank you for kindness in difficult time

Thank you to the Choctaw Nation for all of your support and gifts of food during the loss of our loved one, Betty Crain. Thank you to Brenda James and Pat Ensey for assisting in serving the family meal. A special thanks to Perry and Gail Thompson and also to Bob Pate and the Choctaw Nation Tribal Police. We want to thank the many others for their kind thoughts and prayers. "Thank you" is not adequate enough to show our love and appreciation for all that the Choctaw Nation has done for us during this difficult time. Your kind expression of sympathy is deeply appreciated and gratefully acknowledged.

The family of Betty Crain

Seeking Jones Academy classmates

I am a 1966 graduate of Hartshorne High School, where many of our classmates were residents of Jones Academy. We began searching for our classmates about six years ago with every hope of finding all of them. At this point, we have located all but three girls, two of whom we are pretty sure are of Choctaw heritage.

The Biskinik ran a note for us three years ago, through which we located one who was previously "missing" from us. She got in touch and came to our reunion in the summer of 2009. As we prepare for another reunion on June 30, we are in search for the rest of our classmates. Any help anyone can give us in getting our desire to contact them passed on to them would be greatly appreciated.

The following maiden names, dates of birth, and places of birth are all the information we have been able to locate: Edna Jean Francis, March 26, 1946, Eufaula; Clara A. McClure, Oct. 3, 1946, Idabel; and Claire A. Taylor, Aug. 31, 1947, Talihina.

We are so close to finding all the classmates, but without these three we will never be complete. If you have any information on these ladies, please contact Kay Isbell Day at 6819 S. 217th E. Ave. Broken Arrow, OK 74014, or 918-355-4049 or at bday967768@yahoo.com.

Gregory E. Pyle
Chief

Gary Batton
Assistant Chief

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Judy Allen, Executive Director
Lisa Reed, Director/Editor
Melissa Stevens, Circulation Director
Larissa Copeland, Assistant Editor
Karen Jacob, Purchasing Coordinator
Bret Moss, Copy/Production Assistant
Chrissy Dill, Journalism Intern

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

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

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



BISKINIK 2012

Events

Weekend praise/worship event in Rufe

A weekend praise/worship event will be held at St. John Presbyterian Church in Rufe, Okla., on May 19 through May 20. The event begins at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, a weekend full of praise and worship, preaching and testimonies. Various speakers and guests coming from Oklahoma and Texas will be in attendance. A potluck lunch will be served on Saturday at 12:30 p.m., so bring your favorite dish. For further information, contact Tina Ward-Crader at tina.ward-crader@tklaw.com.

Miss Choctaw Owa-Chito Princess Pageant

All girls of Choctaw heritage between the ages of 8 and 18 are invited to be a contestant in the Miss Choctaw Owa-Chito Princess Pageant to be held June 15 at 3 p.m. at Group Camp Number 1 in Beavers Bend Resort Park, north of Broken Bow. No entry fee required.

There will be three divisions in which the contestants must wear traditional Choctaw dress: Little Miss, 8-10 years; Junior Miss, 11-13 years; and Senior Miss, 14-18 years. The winner of each division will represent their proud heritage, the Kiamichi Owa-Chito, throughout the festival.

Applications and guidelines can be picked up at the Choctaw Nation Family Investment Center in Broken Bow or mailed to you. Please call 580-584-6372 for more information. You may also call Audrey Mills, pageant director, at 580-584-3636. Application deadline is June 1.

King family reunion

The 16th annual King family reunion will be held June 9 at the Talihina Senior Citizens Center on Rail Road Street in Talihina. If you are a descendent of Judy (King) Potts (#14157), Robert King (#14045), Ada (King) Spring (#5525), William King (#6372), or Lillie (King) McGee (#5748), you are encouraged to attend. Bring your favorite covered dish, family pictures and family tree, and a good story. Starting time is 10 a.m. with registration and mixing and mingling. Lunch will be served at approximately 11:45 a.m. A short business meeting will be held at approximately 1 p.m.

Meely family reunion

The Meely family reunion will be held June 30 at the Chickasaw Nutrition Center, 401 E. Oklahoma, starting about 10 a.m. The family says they have relatives from many other states. Games and pictures will be played and looked at and lots of visiting. The family asks attendees bring a covered dish and come enjoy themselves. If you have pictures, bring them.

If you have any questions, please contact any of the following: George Mouse at 405-694-8833, Lovella (Goins) Alison at 405-485-3654, Donna (Crews) Smith at 580-618-2429, or Rosemary (Smith) Wallow at 580-247-0336.

Thank you for scholarship

Thank you to the people of the Choctaw Nation for the scholarship I received to complete my Bachelor of Business Administration degree. I graduated May 6, 2012, from the University of Alaska and have begun my MBA graduate program this spring. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

I am the great-grandson of Ida Norman, an original enrollee.

Brendon Moran

Thank you

I want to thank Chief Pyle and Shannon McDaniel for taking time out of their busy schedules and preserving our heritage regarding my wolf dispute with the city of Broken Arrow. Thank you both very much. I appreciate all of your help and concerns.

James P. Parker Jr.

Thanks from Durant Fire Dept.

I want to thank Chief Pyle and the Choctaw Nation for their generosity and support to the Durant Fire Department. After meeting with you a few months ago, plans were put into place to help us fund a High Rise Training class and to purchase some equipment for this use. Our class was a success and our new equipment was used. Thanks again to the Choctaw Nation. Your staff is always great to work with.

Roger Joines, Fire Chief

Thank you from Dorothy

I really needed to take the time and thank the Choctaw Nation for all it has done for me since I moved to this state in 2008. I could never have made it as far as I have without you. God bless you all!

Dorothy L. Logan

Thank you

I would like to thank three people of the Choctaw Nation: Laura Durant of the Talihina office, Mary Coley of the Wilburton field office, and last but not least, District 6 Councilman Joe Coley. They helped my family when we needed it most. Their help means a lot to my family. To us, they exemplify the spirit of the Choctaw Nation. Once again, I would like to thank you all.

Shiloh Perrotte and family

Seeking relative

My name is Vidal Colungo Pruneda. I am trying to get in touch with Steven Colungo. My address is P.O. Box 156, Union, WA 98592. My phone number is 360-898-6799. If you have any information, please contact me. Thank you.

Thankful for educational help

I would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for its ongoing support of me in my goal towards obtaining a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism. Without the education grants, none of the accolades I have accomplished would be possible.

Seth S. Tom

Anderson family reunion

The Anderson family reunion will be June 9 at the Choctaw Community Center in Talihina, and a potluck lunch will be served. If you have any questions, contact Jerry Anderson at 817-473-4533 or 408 S. 2nd Ave. Mansfield, TX 76063.

Hokit family reunion

The Hokit family reunion will be held June 9 at the Belle Starr Lodge at Robbers Cave State Park in Wilburton. Family and friends of the late Ruth Anderson Hokit of Yanush, Okla., are welcome. The reunion will begin around 10 a.m. and a potluck will be held. For more information, contact Bobbie at 918-297-7055.

Jim Thorpe 5K Run

The 5th Annual Jim Thorpe 5K Race, which serves as the Native American 5K National Championship, a Community 5K Run, and N.M. USATF 5K Road State Championship, will be held June 16 at the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute located at 9169 Coors Rd. NW in Albuquerque, N.M. (southeast of Paseo del Norte and Coors Blvd.) All divisions of 5K races begin at 8:30 a.m., the 1K Kids race (under 12 years old) begins at 9:30 a.m., the 1 and 2 mile fitness walks begin at 8 a.m., and the 300 meter toddler dash begins at 9:45 a.m.

The Native American 5K National Championship is open to all American Indian/Alaska Natives and First Nations people of Canada. The N.M. 5K Road State Championship is open to all New Mexico USATF registered participants. The Community 5K Run is open to all with no restrictions. The 5K course is a two-loop paved flat course designed for extremely fast altitude times. All divisions of the 5K run are eligible for state age group records.

All former runners who competed for SIPI in Cross Country, Track and Marathon are encouraged to attend a reunion and homecoming. For more information visit sportswarriorstc.com, email SportsWarriorsTC@aol.com, or call 505-710-3323.

Ward family reunion

There will be a Ward family reunion for any and all descendants of Abraham Parsons, Joseph Henry, William Giles, and Charles Allen. It will be held June 9 at the senior center in Stephenville, Texas, starting at 9 a.m. Everyone is asked to bring a covered dish. For more information, please contact Giles Ward at 940-745-1067 or email at lynnglover565@yahoo.com.

Ward, Casey reunion

The Ward and Casey cousin reunion will meet June 9 in the Choctaw building in Spiro at noon for a pot luck lunch. For more information, please call John Casey at 918-962-2316 or 918-774-4940 or Anna Denny at 405-348-8686.

Thank you for help with college

I would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for the grants and scholarships I received for college. They helped me immensely. I can't wait to graduate next year and give back to the community.

Antonia Ruston

Thank you for care package

Recently my son, Quinton, received a care package from a representative from the Choctaw Nation. We want to thank you for reaching out to him, as he is recovering from injuries sustained in an IED blast in Afghanistan last November. He is doing well but will be scheduled for more surgery. He is adjusting to life as a double-amputee and is looking forward to the day he can walk again with the use of prosthesis. We understand the gentleman who fitted him for his right leg also works for the Choctaw Nation.

Quinton wishes to tell you thank you, he appreciates the box of goodies he received.

The Picone family

ATTENTION Choctaw Artists

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

Please complete the following interest form in order to receive more information regarding the show which will be in Tvshka Homma, Oklahoma during the annual Labor Day Festivities. Included will be the following categories: Painting, Graphics, Cultural, Sculpture, Jewelry, Pottery, and Basketry. Please complete the form and return it to the address below. Art information packets will be mailed beginning in April.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
E-Mail: _____
Artistic Category: _____

You must be at least 17 years old and
have a membership card issued
by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma to participate.
Please return to:
Shelley Garner
Cultural Events
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
PO Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702-1210

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



Tammie Cannady and Doris Winlock attend a luncheon to receive the award for Choctaw Nation Health Services.

CNO Health Services named ‘Certified Healthy Business’


On March 1, Choctaw Nation Health Services was recognized as one of 76 businesses in Oklahoma who received the Certified Healthy Business certificate of excellence award. Gov. Mary Fallin was the guest speaker at a luncheon, held at the Cox Convention Center, to honor their achievements. Choctaw Nation joined businesses from all across the state for recognition.

The initiative by the Oklahoma Academy for State Goals, Oklahoma Turning Point Council, State Chamber of Oklahoma, and the Oklahoma State Department of Health seeks to recognize businesses working to improve Oklahoma health status by providing health and wellness opportunities for their employees, families and communities.

Healthy Business Certification is based on availability of health screenings, education, physical activity, tobacco use prevention, nutrition, management support, community involvement and wellness policies.

There are various programs and levels of certification. Choctaw Nation Health Services received the certificate of excellence in the large workplace category. Additional program categories are Certified Healthy Campus, Community, Restaurant, and Schools. Each program has three levels of certification: Basic, Merit and Excellence.

For more information on becoming a Certified Healthy Business you may review criteria at www.okturningpoint.org or contact Teresa Davis at 918-567-7000 ext 6044.

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

A new way to combat startling obesity statistics


The end of the school year is drawing near, and we ask; “what to do with the kids?” According to Karen Donato the coordinator of Overweight and Obesity Research Applications in the Division of the Application of Research Discoveries at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), over the past 30 years, prevalence of childhood obesity has more than doubled among children ages 2-5; it’s tripled among youth ages 6-11, and has more than tripled among adolescents and teens ages 12-19. In addition the current data show that 17 percent of children ages 2-19 years are obese. As distressing as these statistics are, the story does in fact get worse. Children who are overweight or obese are at higher risk for becoming obese adults. This in turn places these children at increased risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and cancers.

So, what to do? The NHLBI has developed “We Can!” (Ways to Enhance Children’s Activity and Nutrition). This is a national movement designed to give parents, caregivers and entire communities a way to help children 8-13 years old stay at a healthy weight. “We Can!” has a wide variety of resources to help encourage a healthy lifestyle. For more information on We Can!, call toll-free 1-866-35-WECAN (93226) or go to www.nhlbi.gov.

In the meantime see this month’s recipe for a cool and refreshing treat this summer!

NURSERY NEWS


Jaxie Jones



Jaxie Fay Jones was born on Feb. 3, 2012, in Talihina, weighing 5 pounds and measuring 18 inches long.

Her parents are Shavannah Short and Eric Jones. Great-great-grandparents are Lee and Billie Pitt, Curtis and Pat Stafford, and Juanita Short; great-grandparents are Jimmy and Bonna McClendon, Vada Short and the late Emerson Short; and grandparents are Rodney and Johnna Short. She is the niece of Jeremy, Trent and Tristan Short.

Peter Hudson V



Peter Wayland Hudson V was born Feb. 19, 2012, in Winter Park, Fla., weighing 8 pounds 5 ounces and measuring 20.5 inches long. His proud parents are Jane and Peter W. Hudson IV of Sanford, Fla.; grandparents are Peter W. Hudson III and Molly of Columbia, Md., Joyce (Fitzgerald) Mehl and TJ of Sorrento, Fla., and Jan Harris of Sanford.

Liven up your meals

10 tips to improve your meals with fruits and vegetables

Discover the many benefits of adding vegetables and fruits to your meals. They are low in fat and calories, while providing fiber and other key nutrients. Most Americans should eat more than 3 cups – and for some, up to 6 cups – of vegetables and fruits each day.

Vegetables and fruits don’t just add nutrition to meals. They can also add color, flavor, and texture. Explore these creative ways to bring healthy foods to your table.

1. Fire up the grill.
Use the grill to cook vegetables and fruits. Try grilling mushrooms, carrots, peppers, or potatoes on a kabob skewer. Brush with oil to keep them from drying out. Grilled fruits like peaches, pineapple, or mangos add great flavor to a cookout.

2. Expand the flavor of your casseroles.
Mix vegetables such as sautéed onions, peas, pinto beans, or tomatoes into your favorite dish for that extra flavor.

3. Planning something Italian?
Add extra vegetables to your pasta dish. Slip some peppers, spinach, red beans, onions, or cherry tomatoes into your traditional tomato sauce. Vegetables provide texture and low-calorie bulk that satisfies.

4. Get creative with your salad.
Toss in shredded carrots, strawberries, spinach, watercress, orange segments, or sweet peas for a flavorful, fun salad.

5. Salad bars aren’t just for salads.
Try eating sliced fruit from

WIC

WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN

the salad bar as your dessert when dining out. This will help you avoid any baked desserts that are high in calories.

6. Get in on the stir-frying fun.
Try something new! Stir-fry your veggies—like broccoli, carrots, sugar snap peas, mushrooms, or green beans—for a quick-and-easy addition to any meal.

7. Add them to your sandwiches.
Whether it is a sandwich or wrap, vegetables make great additions to both.


8. Be creative with your baked goods.
Add apples, bananas, blueberries, or pears to your favorite muffin recipe for a treat.

9. Make a tasty fruit smoothie.
For dessert, blend strawberries, blueberries, or raspberries with frozen bananas and 100 percent fruit juice for a delicious frozen fruit smoothie.

10. Liven up an omelet.
Boost the color and flavor of your morning omelet with vegetables. Simply chop, sauté, and add them to the egg as it cooks. Try combining different vegetables, such as mushrooms, spinach, onions, or bell peppers.

Visit choosemyplate.gov for more information.


Daniel Beaver III



Daniel Richard Beaver III was born March 6, 2012, in Rockwall, Texas, to Daniel Beaver Jr. and Alexandra Minter Beaver. He weighed 10 pounds 3 ounces and measured 21 inches. Daniel’s maternal grandparents are Mike and Angela Minter of Helotes, Texas.

His paternal grandparents are the late Danny Beaver and Brenda Tonubbee Beaver of Mesquite, Texas. His maternal great-grandparents are Leonard and Audeen Huffman, Oteka and Nick Beasley, and the late Joseph Minter, all of Madill. His paternal great-grandparents are Frances Burton of Mesquite, Bob and Barbara Shelton of Mesquite, and the late Francis Murphy Tonubbee of Dallas.


Lillyen Marcangeli



Lillyen Kaye Marcangeli was born at 12:13 p.m., on Jan. 14, 2012, weighing 3 pounds 4 ounces and measuring 17.5 inches long.


Her proud parents are Jerrod and Genia Marcangeli of Jenks; grandparents are Larry and Brenda Harris of Red Oak, and George and Scheryl Mercangeli of McAlester.

Katori Jones




Katori Faith Jones entered this world at 6:47 p.m., on April 2, 2012, weighing 8 pounds and .5 ounces and measured 20.5 inches long. Parents are Peggy Sue and Travis Wade Jones of Stuart. Maternal grandparents are Cathy and the late Isaac Byington of Krebs, and pratalernal grandparents are Willie and Glenda Jones of Wilburton.

Terance Johnson



Terance Mitchel Johnson was born at 1:18 p.m., on Feb 25, 2012. He weighed 6 pounds 12.3 ounces and measured 19 inches. His parent is Tracey Johnson of Durant. He is the grandson of Debbie Johnson of Durant, as well as Bill Bowdre of Texas. He is also the great-grandson of Jarvis Johnson and Shiela Johnson of Durant.

Paxton Hickson



Erica Debo and Dontra Hickson of Weatherford would like to announce the birth of their son, Paxton Sean Hickson. He was born at 9:44 a.m., on Oct. 25, 2011, in Yukon. He weighed 5 pounds 12 ounces, and measured 18 inches long. Maternal grandparents are Charlotte and Randy Debo of Hugo. Maternal great-grandparents are Norman and Charles James of Hugo and the late Jackie Debo of Seagoville, Texas. Paternal grandparents are Patsy and Wesley Guess of Paris, Texas, and Demetric Burns, also of Paris. Paternal great-grandparents are the late Aline Mathis and Ruby Burns, both of Paris.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION	
ANTLERS Market open weekdays June 1-26 June 6 : Idabel 9-11 a.m.; Broken Bow 12-2 p.m. (market open) June 13: Bethel 9-10:30; Smithville 12-2 (market open) Closed June 27-29 for inventory Cooking with Carmen: No Cooking with Carmen this month	
DURANT Market open weekdays: June 4-26 Closed June 27-29 for inventory Cooking with Carmen: No Cooking with Carmen this month	
McALESTER Market open weekdays June 4-26 Closed June 27-29 for inventory Cooking with Carmen: No Cooking with Carmen this month	
POTEAU Market open weekdays June 4-26 Closed June 27-29 for inventory. Cooking with Carmen: No Cooking with Carmen this month	

CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION
Open 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Monday thru Friday.
Staff 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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STUDENTS

OU students learn water resources' vital impact on tribal culture

Continued from Page 1

researching, and see first-hand the water's influence on the environment.. Several cultural experts on differing aspects gathered to accommodate this request, assuring a well-rounded glimpse into the Choctaw Nation for the students.

Choctaw baskets, weapons and pottery were displayed to demonstrate how water affects many staples of Choctaw culture. River cane and cattails grow only in the specific conditions created by water in the Southeastern region of the United States, and these are the resources used to create many Choctaw items.

The availability of these objects and other substances such as clay for traditional Choctaw pottery are afforded by the water conditions in the Choctaw Nation. The students were able to get a hands-on feel for the products of the conditions they are currently investigating.

The work being done by the climatology class is part of a project constructed by Director of Research for South Central Climate Science Center, Renee McPherson, Ph. D., to enable the students to make serious contributions in their field of study.

Choctaw Nation is part of a league of government and academic entities which helped create the new South-Central Climate Research Center that will, according to OU's website, "address the topics of climate variability and change." Other members in this consortium are Texas Tech University, Louisiana State University, The Chickasaw Nation, Oklahoma State University, and NOAA's Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory.

The efforts of this climate research center and those of the class which traveled to the Choctaw capitol will provide Choctaw Nation with valuable information to help construct a water plan that is beneficial to everyone in Oklahoma as well as sustainable for future generations.



Meagan Rowlison learns a little bit about Choctaw basket weaving from Kay Jackson.



Todd Baughman shows off clean drinking water from a natural spring near the Choctaw capitol which used to provided water for the early Choctaw government.



Photos by BRET MOSS | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

The visitors from OU are welcomed to the Choctaw capitol grounds by Regina Green, who gives them a lesson on Choctaw history and culture in the capitol building while in traditional dress.



Left: Ryan Spring showing the visitors a bucket of clay used to make Choctaw pottery. He tells about mussel shells, which were a key ingredient to Choctaw pottery. He mentions that 297 species of freshwater mussels are native to the Southeastern United States. Of these, 35 species have gone extinct, 70 species are endangered or threatened, and 180 species are considered critically impaired. The Kiamichi River is one of the best remaining habitats for freshwater mussels in the United States.



Brian McLain takes the group to a bridge over the Kiamichi river to explain the flow of the water supply.



Jeff Bodell, Parker Brown and other students investigate Choctaw items.



Above: BJ McDaniel gets a lesson on the Choctaw blow dart from Pam Waugh as he accompanies the visitors in Tushka Homma.



Left: Pam Waugh gives a demonstration, showing flutes, arrowheads, and what she holds in her hands, cattails. She tells how they were used for various purposes by the Choctaw people.

Choctaws enjoy a wild onion dinner with Chief Pyle in Hugo

Photos by BRET MOSS | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Above: Perry Thompson enjoys the company of Evelyn James.

Right: Peyton Wesley with his great grandmother, Betty Baker, take time for a picture after the wild onion dinner.



Chad and Regina Arnold, employees of the wellness center join the festivities at the community center.



Councilman Perry Thompson stands with Judy and Larry Chaney, Trudy Caraway and JD Carter before the dinner begins.

Right: Assistant Chief Batton visits with Alice Bishop and Lisa Kitchings at the dinner on April 12.

Left: Chief Pyle poses for the camera with Dot Glenn and DJ Battiest before the wild onion dinner.



PEOPLE YOU KNOW

Happy birthday, Grandpa Sweet

Harvey Sweet of Muskogee was born in Hartshorne and spent his youth in the Goodland Indian School before joining the Hugo Brothers Circus, where he performed as a clown and an animal trainer. During his youth, he was a boxer as well as a rodeo bull and bronco rider. He later served in the United States Air Force, where he was deployed to Vietnam and eventually retired at the rank of Major. The next 20 years he spent working for the Veterans Administration.

Harvey celebrated his 80th birthday by skydiving for the first time. He is a passionate golfer as well. At 83 years old, he has not slowed down much.

Harvey Sweet is a loved father and grandfather to his family, who would like to wish him a happy 83rd birthday in April.



Congratulations, Nick

Wishing a congratulations and a happy birthday to Nick Wendling of Arlington Heights, Ill. His 19th birthday was on May 11. His graduation from Prospect High School in Mount Prospect, Ill., will be held June 3. After graduation, Nick will be attending Loyola University in Chicago in the fall.

Nick is the grandson of Curtis and Lily Baker of McAlester and the son of Rhonda (Baker) and Joe Wendling of Arlington Heights.



The birthday boys

Happy birthday to twins Jacob and Isaiah Perrault, who turned 1 year old on April 29. They are the children of Raymond and Angel Perrault of Durant and the grandchildren of Margie Slate of Calera and Ernestine Kuc of Ketchikan, Alaska. They are the great-grandchildren of the late Richard and Thelma Slate of Visalia, Calif., and the late Don and Mae Tracy of Maple Valley, Wash. They are the nephews of Shannon and April Tompkins of Durant, Christian Kuc of North Carolina, and William Kuc of New York.

Jacob and Isaiah enjoy being outdoors and spending time with each other.



Hicks, Milligan to exchange vows

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Hicks of Hugo announce the engagement and wedding of their daughter, Erin Michelle Hicks, to Travis Leathaniel Milligan, son of Mr. and Mrs. Terry Milligan of Van, Texas.

Erin is the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Wallace and the late Mr. and Mrs. Billy Jack Hicks, both of Hugo. Travis is the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Orgel Milligan of Caddo and the late Mr. and Mrs. Thurman Stanley of Folsom.

The couple will exchange vows on May 26, 2012, at 4 p.m. at the 4th and Jackson Church of Christ in Hugo. Guests will be received at a reception immediately following the ceremony at the Hicks' home. All friends and family are invited to attend.



The big 18

Happy birthday to Danielle R. Smith on May 20. Danielle is the daughter of Deloures and Ronnie Smith, the sister of Ronnie Jr., the niece of Annett Johnson, and the granddaughter of Evelyn Johnson of Ardmore and Effie Smith of Sherman.



Native Writers' Circle of the Americas recognizes Howe with Lifetime Achievement Award

LeAnne Howe, author of fiction, poetry, screenplays, creative non-fiction, plays, and scholarly articles, is the winner of the 2012 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers' Circle of the Americas.

A well-respected and honored author, Howe's books include "Shell Shaker" (2001), winner of an American Book Award in 2002 from the Before Columbus Foundation; Equinoxes Rouge, the French translation of "Shell Shaker," a 2004 finalist for Prix Medici Estranger, (one of France's top literary awards); "Evidence of Red" (2005), winner of an Oklahoma Book Award in poetry and Wordcraft Circle Award in 2006; and her most recent novel, the acclaimed "Miko Kings: An Indian Baseball Story" (2007), was the 2009-2010 Read-In-Selection at Hampton University in Hampton, Va.

Howe is a screenwriter and on-camera narrator for the 90-minute PBS documentary, "Indian Country Diaries: Spiral of Fire" (2006). She

is also writer/coproducer of "Playing Pastime: American Indian Fast-Pitch Softball" and "Survival," both documentaries with James Fortier, a three-time Emmy award winner and filmmaker.

Her scholarly work has appeared in "Clearing a Path: Theorizing the Past in Native American Studies" (2001), "Pre-removal Choctaw History: Exploring New Paths" (2008), and "Reasoning Together: Native Critics Collective" (2008), for which How is listed as a coauthor. "Reasoning Together" was named one of the most influential Native texts of the first decade of the 21st century.

In 2010-11, Howe was a J. William Fullbright Scholar at the University of Jordan, Amman, where she taught in the graduate program as well as conducted research for a new novel.

In March 2011 she was awarded the Tulsa Library Trust's "American Indian Author Award" in Tulsa. The Maynard Institute for Journalism Education named her

Choctaw fish story

Pictured are two Choctaw tribal elders who reside near Talihiina, Imogene Maxine Bacon Davis Owens and her son, Floyd Gene David, who took the liberty of removing a 20-pound or more catfish from an undisclosed location within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Choctaw Nation. This location is being withheld because they plan to catch the brother/sister catfish. Imogene is the daughter of Roosevelt T. Bacon and Josie Lou Woods Bacon, who are original enrollees. According to R.T.B., which has been verified by Kenneth D. Davis, "the trick in catching fish is how you hold your mouth." Not pictured is tribal elder David D. Davis, who took the photo and was sworn to secrecy.



Happy birthday and thank you

Janice Ward would like to wish happy birthday to some of her family members: Misty in May, and Johnny, Amanda, Winter, Todd, Cey, and Honey in June. Happy birthday, from Janice!

She would also like to thank the Choctaw Nation for all it has done for "our nation and families."

Anoli named Little Miss Indian OKC

Anoli Billy, daughter of Phillip and Lisa J. Billy, was recently titled "Little Miss Indian Oklahoma City." The annual competition was held March 23. Anoli will travel the state performing native sign language and representing the committee with various tribal dances. She is in the fourth grade at Purcell Intermediate School. She is the granddaughter of Ed and the late Cynthia Billy of Broken Bow.



Kyler turns 2

On April 24, Kyler celebrated his second birthday in Watonga. Helping him celebrate were numerous family and friends with a cookout, cake, and playtime.

Kyler is the son of SaVanna James, grandson of Gerald and Patty James of Watonga, great-grandson of Pat Gonzales of Watonga, Daniel Gonzales of Clinton, Jacob James of Broken Bow, and the late Mary Alice Ebahotubbi of Hochatown.



Happy birthday, Mikael

The Ward, Smith and Ham family wishes Mikael a happy 30th birthday on May 29. Pictured left is Mikael Ham, grandmother Agnes Ward, daughter Ryen Ham, and above is mother Lisa Ward.



Happy birthday, Izzac

Happy first birthday to Izzac McKendrick of McAlester. He celebrated his birthday on April 12. Sending him birthday wishes are his dad, Michael McKendrick, grandmother "Mimi" Monta Johnson, and great-grandmother Christine Johnson.



Happy birthday, Rod

I would like to wish my dad, Rod Cannady, a happy birthday on April 24, from your son, Cody, and mom.



Happy birthday, Bob

Louise Walker would like to wish Bob, who is very special to her, a happy birthday on May 18.



Happy birthday, Amos family

Happy birthday to Bill Amos on May 3, who turned 89 years old, and Louise Amos on May 6, who turned 85. They would also like to wish happy birthday to their grandsons. Justin Williams turned 27 on April 23, and Andrew Amos turned 11 on April 27.



Happy 17th, Aire

Aire Sequoyah Thorne turned 17 years old on April 14. She's the daughter of John and Marie Thorne of Moore, where she attends Moore High School as a junior.

Aire participates in tennis, works at Outback Steakhouse in Norman, and has been selected to travel with the People to People Organization in July. Countries to be traveled are France, England, and Italy. She is also in the Choctaw Nation STAR program.

Aire's grandparents are Gene and LaHoma Murphy Crauthers of Oklahoma City. Her great-grandparents are the late William and Ella Murphy of Idabel.



Happy birthday, Breanna

Happy birthday to Breanna on May 17, from Grandma Black, Grandpa Joe Wright, and Amber and Derek Stonebarger.



On April 11, District 12 Choctaw Senior Citizens elected their new officers for this year. Pictured from left, are Secretary/Treasurer Sybel Cometti, President Vickie McClure, Vice President Shirley Morgan and Activities Director Pat Ralls.

Harkins selected as Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellow

The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation is pleased to announce the selection of 21 Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellows for 2012. Among them is Robert Harkins, an enrolled tribal member of the Choctaw Nation.

Harkins is a doctoral candidate in modern world history at the University of California, Berkeley. His dissertation, "The Politics of Persecution: Religious Conformity and Republican Obedience in England, 1553-1603," examines the political and social legacies of religious violence in early modern England.

The Newcombe Fellowship is the nation's largest and most prestigious such award for Ph.D. candidates in the humanities and social sciences addressing questions of ethical and religious values. Each 2012 Newcombe Fellow will receive a 12-month award of \$25,000.

The foundation is delighted and privileged to be able to recognize Harkins with this award. If you are interested in this program, contact Susan Billmaier, program officer, at billmaier@woodrow.org or 609-452-7007 ext. 310 or Beverly Sanford, vice president for communication, at sanford@woodrow.org or 609-452-7007 ext. 181.

Happy birthday, Cephus

Happy birthday to Cephus John, who turned 71 on April 18. Cephus would like to say hello to all his Choctaw friends in Idabel, Broken Bow, and Golden. He also says God bless to his church, Goodland Methodist.



WILLIAMS

Following
God’s
current

Continued from Page 1

and being a part of the endeavor to supply the family with food. He remembers following everything and knowing that the more rabbits you have the better warrior you are. He tells that when it was his turn he had one chance and missed the rabbit.

“Everything was through an exchange of body language, a transfer of emotion,” Williams explained. “Nobody asked me how I felt, they sensed it. As we got on the road going back to the house, I was looking at everyone with rabbits hanging on their belts and I felt like a failure. I had practiced at home but on the real hunt I failed. Growing up without a father, I had always felt kind of neglected. I was hoping to bring a rabbit home, to feel important.

“I was walking, dragging along, and the lead hunter turns around without a word and comes toward me. He places one of his rabbits on my belt. He didn’t tell the others what to do but they came forward and put one of their rabbits on my belt. This meant that they accepted me, they understood what I was going through.”

From that day, Williams began to search for the reason why people couldn’t do this for one another – offer affirmation of worth. He sees parallels in Christianity, reminding that God in his sovereignty did that.

“We fail,” Williams says, “but He did this for us. We have a passage to heaven. I use this in church a lot, a rabbit story as an act of God, a rite of passage to heaven.”

A minister for most of his life, Williams believes God may have been calling him at an early age.

He began to read human body language, coming to understand that a person can lie to you but you can read them. It’s the body language that tells everything.

As a result of the hunt, he went from feeling like a failure to feeling accepted and being looked at as an achiever, someone who could be one of the leaders of the family. People showed admiration and he knew there was a greater mind, his grandmother, directing it because she knew it was the right time. It was something understood in the clan. It was a time when Williams needed something to feel better.

“It’s kind of like the seasons,” Williams explains. “She used that particular hunt. Other boys may have used other experiences. She knew I really wanted to go on a rabbit hunt. She had been watching me throw that rabbit stick, practicing and practicing. That’s what a good parent does, they watch their child. They see the heart of the child. They choose a time, just like God. He watches and watches, using an experience to go from one level to another.

“I call myself the ‘last of the Mohicans,’” Williams says with a laugh. “I haven’t done that (hunt with a rabbit stick) anymore because we went from there to WalMart where we could buy guns for hunting.”

Following the hunt, after everything had been cooked, the family sat down to eat rabbit, cornbread, and enough of their other favorite dishes to feel like a feast. Everyone talked about the hunt. The lead hunter named Williams as one of the hunters who brought the food, never saying they gave him the rabbits. No one ever knew.

Using the rabbit stick to hunt was one of the last of the old ways used by the Choctaw, the last of the Choctaw society experiences and ex-



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

Olin Williams tells how important the gift of a rabbit stick was in his life.

clusive to Williams’ clan. There aren’t any more feasts to celebrate a hunt. Families rarely visit each other anymore.

“Progress – is it good or is it bad?” asks Williams. “We don’t have to hunt with sticks, but families are breaking up. We are losing more than just the way we hunted the rabbit. “The rabbit made a change in my life. Because of what the men did I was determined to become a better hunter – how to find the rabbit, how to track. Because of the affirmation, I wanted to learn more.”

Williams compares the hunter’s act to good leadership. No one noticed him as a boy, but on that day the lead hunter gave Williams his best; the others did what he did. If we give our best, others will follow, reflecting the servant style of leadership. A characteristic of Choctaw people is humility and the leader humbled himself, sacrificing something of his own to help someone else.

“I found out later from the other hunters about how they had also failed and someone helped them the way they helped me,” Williams said. “The act was passed on. It was from the leader on down. That was my lesson when I became a Christian. That is exactly what I learned and am still doing it today. I just give my stories. I don’t do them for profit, I do them for somebody. The lead hunter could have had more glory but he gave me his rabbit.

“I learned in the quiet Choctaw way. Sometimes men, if they would listen as we did to my Grandma, would learn that women can have wisdom that will help the whole family. Men need to humble themselves. It seems like the whole hunt was for me. They knew it was important for me, they had to all be humble, but the leader had to take the initiative.

“Not only that but we had dinner!”

Williams learned later on that a good leader has realized there is a purpose for everything.

“I had a child’s little stick,” Williams noted “It probably wouldn’t kill a rabbit. I didn’t know that. They wanted me to just have something so I could I actually think I was part of the hunt. The other men had sticks that were heavier. From experience they knew the heavier stick would do the job. My little stick would have probably just annoyed the rabbit.

“In scripture,” Williams continued, “it tells us to not let a novice hold a big responsible position – we have little sticks.”

All of his Choctaw stories are done in the old traditional way, to do somebody good. If it does the person telling the story more good then it’s not what is intended. Choctaw stories teach.

Williams often sees a les-

son in nature and relates it to others. New experiences bring new stories such as his recent encounter with an eagle.

He was driving on a winding road around Sardis Lake and saw a bald eagle sitting on a dead tree, its branches falling down, a few sticking out. There were green trees all around but the eagle was sitting on the dead tree. Williams stopped, turned his car around and because the sun was glaring in his face, he got out and walked at an angle, crossing a fence to see him better. Behind the eagle was the lake and Flagpole Mountain.

It was a bit foggy, but as Williams eased his way toward him, the eagle looked at him for a while, spread his wings, and started flying straight away from him. He had no problem, just a confident flight toward the mountain, up and up and up until he disappeared.

Williams relates this to the Choctaw people.

“We may have sat on a dead tree at one time but we took our flight. We had waters to cross, mountains to cross, but we did it with confidence,” he said. “The eagle never changed course, just headed for that mountain, courageous, going somewhere. They tried to remove the Choctaw to a land less fertile but we took a dead land and took flight.



Illustration by Ruby Bolding

“It can also relate to a person not saved – sitting on a dead tree – but if we can learn to fly across obstacles, we can fly with confidence with the wide wingspan God gave us. It’s not really the wings but the wind pushing us up.”

Williams teaches the old Choctaw stories, but at the same time, has the heart of a Choctaw elder in seeing the story in the eagle and knowing it is still as good a way to reach young people as it was then. Stories are not just for the past but the future.

“I’ve taught a lot on eagles. The eagle learns the current system,” Williams explained. “That’s why he was sitting there. He was waiting on a wind current from the lake. He wasn’t afraid of me. He was waiting on the right current. When it hit him he started going up.

“Most of us don’t have that wisdom,” he pointed out. “We flap our wings against the current, work too hard and get stressed, but the eagle knows God sends us the right current at the right time. Like Grandma knew – it was the right time.”

The Rabbit Hunt

A young boy’s rite of passage

By LISA REED

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Thwaa! Thwaaapp! The sound of wood against wood echoed again and again as the young boy took aim and threw his rabbit stick at an old oak tree. He fetched it and looked it over, a piece of hickory about 12 inches long with one end smoothly whittled down about 3/4 of an inch in diameter for 2/3 of its length and the other end about 1 1/2 inches in diameter. He grasped the slender end one more time, a handle in his sturdy hand, and carefully sighted on a bucket. Not putting quite as much force in it this time, he tossed the stick through the air and killed the bucket.

Tiak Osi had been practicing for months. He wanted his Grandma, the family’s matriarch, to be proud of him. He had never been on a hunt but he wanted to show the man who had given him the rabbit stick that he would be a worthy hunter someday. Rabbit meat was a staple in his family’s diet and they had always depended on others to supply what was needed.

He didn’t realize life in Mississippi in 1960 might have been harder than in other parts of the country. At 10 years old, he just knew things were different for him because he lived with his grandmother, mother and sisters. He was growing up without a father. He watched the other men, watched how they did things for their families and taught their sons to hunt. There had not been anyone to teach him what a man needs to know.

Tiak Osi stuck the rabbit stick in the back pocket of his pants and headed for home. He walked quickly. The sun was getting lower; he had some chores he still needed to do before going to bed.

He awoke early the next morning, hungry as usual, and was ready for the big breakfast Grandma had ready for him. It was a big breakfast, he thought, bigger than normal, but he wasn’t complaining one little bit.

A short knock on the door brought his head up. Who could it be this early?

His big dark-brown eyes grew even larger when he saw the man known to everyone as the best hunter in the clan step inside the kitchen. Grandma didn’t say anything to him, just nodded, and the man motioned for the boy to come with him.

“We’re going to hunt rabbits! Get your stick,” he said.

Was this really happening? Tiak Osi jumped up and ran for his stick. He was finding it hard to keep from shouting and waking his sisters. Besides, what would the lead hunter think of him if he acted so childishly. He tried to walk back to the man waiting in the doorway but his steps became a trot then a full-out run through the house. “I’m going hunting!” he thought to himself. “I am going hunting.”

“Where are we going?” he asked as they walked toward the road.

“Who’s going with us?” Tiak Osi’s heart was beating double-time, his eagerness growing as he wondered which direction they would go to hunt and who would be joining them.

A short way from Tiak Osi’s home, they met seven other men who fell into step with the older man and boy.

The weight of the rabbit stick in his hand had never felt this way before. It felt bigger. Heavier. Important.

He knew he needed to control his excitement. Tiak Osi matched his steps to those of the men and he listened as the lead hunter told him how to find the rabbit.

“Don’t look for its fur,” he said. “Look for its eyes.”

Big eyes.

The rabbit can try to hide, its brown fur blending in with the different shades of plants surrounding it. Its eyes, though, reflect light and shine through the camouflage.

Tiak Osi was mimicking the movements of the men around him and thought he was doing pretty good. They had been so quiet, stepping so softly. He was examining every clump of grass, every bush and stump. He knew the best hunter would be the first

one to see a rabbit and he was right.

The tall, lean man in front suddenly stopped, and as instructed in the beginning, the others stopped to wait for the lead hunter to throw. He skillfully tossed his stick with a lightning flash of his arm, a flick of his wrist. The group watched as he swiftly crossed the 20 feet to pick up the first rabbit of the day and fasten it to his belt.

No one said anything. They all met the eyes of the hunter with brief, congratulatory flicks of their heads and got back to business.

Toward the end of the day, all of the men had rabbits filling their belts and it was Tiak Osi’s turn.

He understood how important it was to bring back enough to feed the clan and had patiently waited for the moment when each man had plenty for their families. He remembered the first time he had spotted a rabbit that day, too. He saw the eyes, just like the lead hunter said he would. The

next time they were a little easier to spot, even easier the next time, and the next. Now, when he saw the round eyes of the cotton-tail he could throw *his* stick. Put the rabbit on *his* belt.

He didn’t have long to wait. There! The tall grass on his left rustled. He stopped. He stared and there they were. Two of the biggest, roundest, brightest eyes

he had ever seen staring back. Tiak Osi was fast. The months of practice had made him quick.

Just not quick enough.

Tiak Osi’s rabbit stick crashed into the thick grass but the rabbit had been two shakes of a tail ahead of it.

He couldn’t believe it. He had failed. He felt numb as he went to retrieve his stick. The lead hunter turned back toward home and Tiak Osi once again fell into step behind the men. This time, though, there wasn’t any excitement. He wasn’t bringing Grandma a rabbit to cook for supper.

“A failure,” Tiak Osi thought, his spirit low, his feet dragging.

He watched as the lead hunter turned toward him. “Oh,” Tiak Osi thought, “what is he going to say to me?” Without a word the man walked up to Tiak Osi, unhooked one of the rabbits lining his belt and placed it on Tiak Osi’s belt. He met Tiak Osi’s gaze, one Choctaw man to another, and turned back to continue the trek home. Tiak Osi didn’t move. He couldn’t. One of the other hunters turned to him and placed one of his rabbits beside the other on Tiak Osi’s belt. One after another the rest of the men did the same.

Tiak Osi felt taller. He stood taller. The men in the hunting group accepted him. He realized that they knew how important the hunt was to him. They understood what he had been going through as a fatherless young boy. There was an unspoken code among the hunters and he was now one of them. They were letting him know that because he had hunted with them, he was as successful as they were.

He took his first steps as a man among men, the weight of the rabbits pulling the pants on his boy-size legs down as he walked home. He watched as each hunter threw down their rabbits for everyone to see, a time-honored ritual in the clan celebrating the success of the hunt and the beginning of a feast.

Tiak Osi felt he couldn’t wait until it was his turn. At last he was able to take the rabbits given to him in honor and throw them down. He looked around and saw the admiration of the other boys and he heard the girls whispering, “He’s going to be a good hunter!”

He glanced at his Grandma and saw her looking at the man who had made such a difference in her boy’s life that day. She raised an eyebrow just a bit, a question for the lead hunter. The man nodded in return, affirmation that the act was finished and Tiak Osi was an honored one in the family. The rite of passage was complete.

Editor’s Note: Tiak Osi’s story is a fictional account based on Olin Williams’ experience as a young boy. His name, Tiak Osi, is Little Pine.

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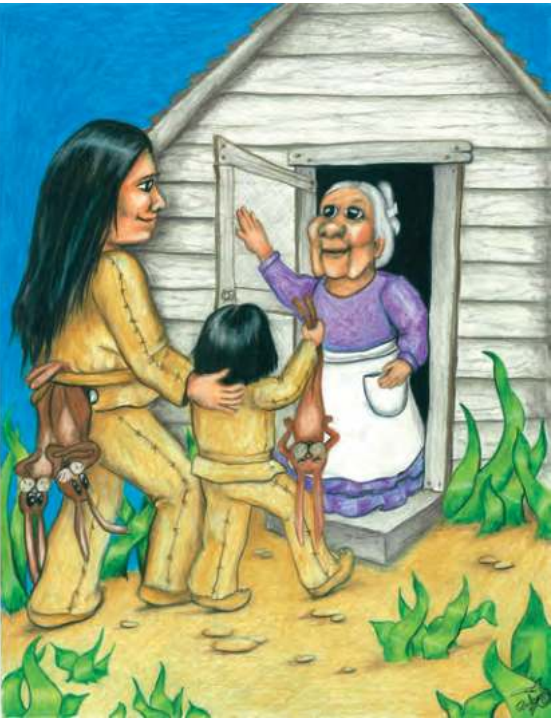


Illustration by Ruby Bolding

EDUCATION



Michelle participates in service project, alternative spring break

Michelle Synhorst went on a service project to Lafayette, La., with a group of volunteers from Rice University, where they worked with youth. The trip was part of Rice University’s Alternative Spring Break program where students volunteer all over the country.

Last fall, Michelle studied abroad at the University of Seville (Universidad de Sevilla) in Sevilla, Spain.

Michelle is a member of Rice University’s Native American Student Organization and recently organized Rice University’s 13th annual pow wow at Rice University in Houston, Texas.

Michelle is the granddaughter of Charles McClure of Dallas and is a great-granddaughter of deceased original enrollee Ruby Marx McClure. She is pictured in the back row, third from the left.

Deon graduates

His aunt would like to wish Deon Larson Jones congratulations on his graduation from Tulsa McLain High School on May 23. Deon is the son of Deanza Mims and Lorenzo Jones, Jr.



Caressa honored as youth delegate

Caressa M. James of Oklahoma City, daughter of Gerald and Patricia James and granddaughter of Pat Gonzales of Watonga, Jacob James of Broken Bow, and the late Mary Alice Battiest of Hochtatown, recently served as a delegate in the 56th United Nations Commission on the Status of Women’s “Empowerment of Rural Women and their Role in Poverty and Hunger Eradication, Development and Current Challenges” event at the United Nations headquarters in New York City.

This was Caressa’s second year to attend and first year as an appointed delegate. She was one of six Native American/Indigenous women chosen nationwide to represent Indigenous and Native American issues to the World Council of Churches and the UNCSW. She was appointed by the National Anglican Council of Women and also the Indigenous Ministries office of the national Episcopal Diocese as well as the office of Global Partnerships.

As a delegate, Caressa was one of the six presenters to host an event at the UN headquarters concerning the “Exposing of the Doctrine of Discovery: A Call to Healing and Hope.” The importance of this event was to work with the World Council of Churches and the United Nations on repudiating and renouncement of the Doctrine of Discovery. Caressa and the other five women also engaged in the advocacy process of rural women’s rights with the NGO’s (non-governmental organization) will hopefully be partnering soon with Mother’s Union in Africa and Australia. Attendees were Sarah EagleHeart (Oglala Sioux/National Episcopal Native Missioner), Denyse Bergie (Eastern Shoshone Band/Diocese of Wyoming), Elsie Dennis (Diocese of Olympia, Wash./Shuswap tribe), Nellie Adkins (Chickahominy tribe/Diocese of Virginia), Jasmine Bostock (Native Hawaiian/Diocese of Hawaii), and Caressa James (Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma/Diocese of Oklahoma/Whirlwind Mission).

Caressa’s younger sister, Jessi James, was a 2011 attendee and will hopefully become a future delegate in the near future.



Chance excels in mathematics

Middle school students from 27 counties throughout Oklahoma were recognized for their math skills and achievements during the 10th annual Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics Middle School Math Test held in February on the school’s Oklahoma City campus.

Round one was held at the local level with two highest scoring students from each grade level advancing to round two held in Oklahoma City.

Chance Wafford was one of two students who qualified to represent the sixth grade for Fort Gibson Middle School. He is also active in basketball, baseball, track and is a member of the First Baptist Church. He is the son of Scott and Katrina Wafford of Fort Gibson and the grandson of Mike and JoAnn Scantlen of Stigler, Martha Shipley of Fort Gibson and Dan Wafford.



Garison places in archery competition

Moss Public Schools’ students recently competed in the Oklahoma National Archery competition. Elementary, middle and high school teams competed in the regional competition.

The competition was held on Feb. 29 at the McAlester Expo Center. All three teams placed second in the regional competition, and all three teams advanced to the state meet held on March 28 at the state fairgrounds.

Garison Bible and Garrett Cartwright represented the high school team. Garison placed third and Garrett placed fifth. There were teams from 12 other schools, 93 contestants in all.

Garison is a descendant of Emery Goodwin Howard, an original enrollee.



Heavener STAR students

Choctaw Nation recently presented STAR awards to Choctaw students from Heavener Schools. The program rewards those students who have made all A’s, A’s and B’s, and/or perfect attendance with Walmart gift cards. Congratulations to these great students.



Pictured from left, front row are Destiny McGee, Gracyn Thompson, Cody Drury, Weston Cox, Sean Miller; middle row, Kensley Yandell, Chace Callahan, Dylan Hamner, Luke Adrean, Lesly Yanez, Josa Wiles, Joey Heavener; back row, Kelsey Bottoms, Ashlyn Moody, Trace McDaniel, Journey Perdue, Haylee Benefield, Cornelio Hernandez, and Gracie Summers.



Pictured (above) are Heavener STAR students Laney May and Gracie Pate.



Pictured is Dawson Adrean with his STAR award.



Pictured from left, front row are Lillian Yanez, Makaylee Wilson, Megan Mathews, Alyssa Collins, Carson Cheek, Jett Pitchford, Makenzie Wilson; middle row, Emily Yandell, Shaylee Cripps, Emaline Wiles, Gunner Sanders, Laney Tiffie, Shayleigh McDaniel, Cheyanne Cranfield; back row, Abbi Moody, Gunnar Thompson, Parker Olive, Garison Thompson, Tyler Singleterry, Haley Cripps, Shae Singleterry, and Bailey Olive. Not pictured is Dawson Adrean.

Garrison signs with OU

With echoes of “Boomer!” through the historic Tommy Weast Gymnasium, where Comanche’s storied wrestling program has produced champions of the sport, another part of the sport’s history was added. CHS Wrestling Coach Jason Miller introduced two-time Comanche State Wrestler Garrison McCauley as one of the University of Oklahoma’s newest wrestling team members. The exciting letter of intent signing event was attended by classmates, family, and friends.

“Not very many people in Comanche’s history have had the opportunity to go to a Division 1 school in sports, only a handful. And we haven’t had a Division 1 wrestler in quite a while,” Coach Miller said. “So this is a very big deal for me, his parents, his coaches, and the wrestling team.

“Garrison broke five school records this year. I have every record Comanche has since they started wrestling in the late ’70s, so he broke some records that go way back,” said



Miller. “He is an outstanding wrestler, but one of the things that gets him to OU is that he is a 4.0 student and has a very high ACT score. That is a very big part of it. He takes care of business in the classroom and he takes care of business on the mat.

“We know he will do well because of his work ethic and we know Garrison is going to go up there and make us proud,” said Miller.

Pictured with Garrison (sitting center) are his mom seated at left, Jeri Donn McCauley, dad at right, Rodney McCauley, and (standing left to right) sister Madison McCauley Watson, Coach Jason Miller, sister Whitney McCauley, and Assistant Coach Keith Hare.



Congratulations to the recent graduates of Joyce Cooper’s Choctaw language class, located in Duncan. The class includes Reda Harrell, Stephanie Christman, Linda Stringfellow, Jean Boyd, Fran Gray, Josephine Shaw, Teresa Roberts and Michael Cooper.

Durant and Atoka Youth Advisory Board members participate in various events



Carissa, Brittney and Destiny having fun at Ivy League and Friends.



Lance, Lecie and Jessica help out at the Atoka Fun-2Run event.



Cole, Brittney, Jazmine and Destiny happily load the trunk with stockings they filled for foster children.



Marissa Yargee speaks with an onlooker at the Tushka carnival.

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Calendar

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
JUNE						1 Broken Bow 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Idabel by appt.	2
	3	4 Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	5 Antlers by appt.	6 Poteau 10 a.m.-2 p.m.	7	8	9
	10	11 Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	12 Wright City by appt.	13 Tuskahoma 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Talihina by appt.	14 Flag Day	15 Broken Bow 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Idabel by appt.	16
	17 Father's Day	18 Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	19	20 McAlester 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Stigler by appt. <small>Servers: Gertie Adkins</small>	21	22 Crowder by appt.	23
2012	24	25 Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	26	27 Wilburton 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.	28	29 Atoka by appt. Coalgate by appt.	30

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

2012 YAB Senior Class



YAB hosts annual senior banquet at Tushka Homma

Members of the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) from across the Choctaw Nation, accompanied by parents and sponsors, gathered April 18 to celebrate the accomplishments of this year's graduating YAB class.

Dozens of seniors were honored as they received certificates of their accomplishments and shared their plans for the future. Choctaw Nation Assistant Chief Gary Batton and Executive Director of Health Services Mickey Peercy shared words of encouragement and advice.

The younger YAB students honored the seniors by serving food and helping the banquet run smooth. It was a pleasurable occasion filled with proud parents and excitement for what the future holds for the up-and-coming youth of the tribe.

This year's graduates are Peyton Baker, Jennie Williams, Paden Wood, Michael Noah, Adrian Martinez, Macy Bohanan, Viridiana Zamora, Rachel Armstrong, Rogelio Zamora, Chasity Sanders, Tyler Rowe, Tyler Lauderdale, Carrie Clem, Shane Orr, Elizabeth Jernigan, Gabrielle Williams, Jessica Palmer, Kira Moore, Stephani Arroyo, Thomas Olive, Thomas Owens, Trevor Johnico, Easton Crow, Haley Watson, James Moore, Lecie Murray, Danielle Hobbs, Samantha Goad, Moriah Robertson, Sydney Underwood, Heather Wright, Emily Wolfe, Erika Taylor, Tamren Smith, Freddie Curiel, Kaeley Standridge, Chelsea Bishop, Donyale Shanklin, Tori Blankenship, Kelsey Songer, Katie Wolfenbarger, Morgan Rice, Chelsi Mason, Dusty Linn, Tanner Lester, Tanja Messer, Maranda Tramble, Whitney Kos, Dakota Branton, Taylor Springfield, Heather Finch, Joshua Sam, Mariss Smith and Cherish Wilkerson.



Carrie Clem receives her certificate from Assistant Chief Gary Batton and Executive Director of Health Services, Mickey Peercy.

Michael Noah receives his certificate from Assistant Chief Gary Batton and Executive Director of Health Services, Mickey Peercy.



Juniors Stacey Bacon, Michael Christman, Madison Cress and Mariah Noah serve the seniors.

At right, Tracy Brown, Hunter Mitchell and Jana Fagg make sure things go smoothly.



Choctaw Nation Public Safety Officers will again join up with its Southeastern Oklahoma Traffic Safety Coalition (SOTSC) partners for the seat belt enforcement campaign, "Click It or Ticket." The operation kicked off with a press event on May 14 at the Atoka High School, and the main push runs from May 21-June 3. The officers will be out both day and night patrolling and running checkpoints to crack down on violators of the state's seat belt laws.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, seat belts are the most effective vehicle safety feature ever invented, yet so many of those hitting the road still fail to buckle up regularly. The goal for this year's "Click It or Ticket" blitz is to increase the seat belt use percentage of Oklahoma motorists and occupants from 89.5 to at least 90 percent.

* The multi-agency organization SOTSC is made up of tribal, federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies united for one purpose – to make driving Oklahoma roads safer.

Photos by BRET MOSS | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Courtney Patterson, YAB Chair, reads the bios of the graduating class as the slide show plays and they receive their certificates.

Choctaw Nation hosts career fair at McAlester Expo Center

Job seekers come from near and far to find what opportunities await



Sherlynn Kennedy with the STAR Program and Kelly Brame with Career Development welcome guests at the front door of the career expo on April 3.

Photos by BRET MOSS | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Tribal DARE officer Isaac James and Jordan Scott pose next to the DARE Camero.



Tracy Horst dispenses some useful recycling tips to Debbie Clark and Ashely McDaniel.



Jamie Hamil gives David and Jeannie John useful information at the Choctaw Nation Career Development booth at the Career Expo in McAlester.



Right, Seth Fairchild explains the Chahta Foundation to Stringtown principal, Rick Heard.



Larry Wade and Lela Rodriguez discuss Higher Education with Helen Geddes.

Free 'Green Jobs' training planned in Ada, McAlester, Idabel and Atoka

Free training to qualify for "green jobs" in building thermography and photovoltaic system design will be held between May 21 and June 21 at East Central University in Ada and the Kiamichi Technology Centers in McAlester, Idabel and Atoka.

ECU will provide free day care on its campus for the children of parents enrolled in the Ada classes. Parents should reserve spaces for their children at least three days before their class begins.

The university also will award certificates for all participants who complete a class.

The classes start May 21 and 22 in Ada with Building Thermography. The deadline to enroll in the class is 5 p.m. May 18. Thermography is the science of visualizing infrared energy (heat) patterns. It has applications in a number of industries and in determining environmental conditions.

The class will be held from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and will teach scientific principles of thermography, thermography applications, operation of infrared cameras and the use of thermography software to analyze infrared camera data and generate thermography reports.

Building Thermography also will be offered at the three Kiamichi Technology Centers. The dates of the class, followed by the registration deadlines in parentheses, are June 12 and 13 in McAlester (June 8); June 18 and 19 in Atoka (June 15); and June 20 and 21 (June 18) in Idabel. All classes will be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The one-day Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) class will be held only at ECU in Ada and the Kiamichi Technology Center in McAlester. It will be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on May 23 in Ada, with registration ending on May 22, and on June 7 in McAlester, with registration ending on June 6.

The LEED class will offer na-

tional certification to become a LEED Green Associate. It will teach principles of building design, construction and operation in order to achieve greater efficiency, improved health and comfort in indoor environments and promote sustainability. It includes printed materials and an online course and learning tools to prepare participants for the National LEED Green Associate professional credential.

The Photovoltaic System Design and Installation Class will be taught from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. beginning May 24-25 at ECU in Ada. Registration will end at 5 p.m. May 23. Other classes will be held at the Kiamichi Technology Centers. Dates and locations are June 5-6 (June 1) in McAlester, June 18-19 (June 15) in Idabel and June 20-21 (June 18) in Atoka.

Photovoltaic systems are renewable energy systems capable of generating electricity from sunlight for residential, public and commercial buildings. The course will include system design, solar resource and site assessment tools, component selection, system sizing calculations and basics of system installation. After completing the course, participants will receive a certificate.

To enroll or for more information, call Irina Campbell at 580-559-5632.

Eligible participants must be U.S. citizens or legal aliens and at least 18 years old. They can be either employed or unemployed workers, veterans and spouses of veterans, workers impacted by the National Energy and Environmental Policy, or individuals in need of updated training related to the energy efficiency and renewable energy industries.

The courses are sponsored by the Southern Oklahoma Green Jobs Consortium Grant of ECU and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce.

Easter Egg Hunt - Choctaw Nation Head Start, Durant



Photos by CHRISSY DILL | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Gerra graduates

Congratulations to Gerra D’awn James, who will graduate from Watonga High School in May. Gerra is the daughter of Gerald and Patty James of Watonga and the granddaughter of Pat Gonzales of Watongs, Daniel Gonzales of Clinton, Jacob James of Broken Bow, and the late Mary Alice Battiest of Hochatown.

Gerra has been involved in cross country, FCCLA, FFA, HOSA, Indian Club, and Band during her time in high school. She has received several honors, including receiving the HOSA Leadership Committee role as chairperson, Indian Club president, and voted class favorite. Her favorite school memory is going to high school with her sister and hanging out with her friends.

Gerra plans to attend Redlands Community College after graduation then transfer to Southwestern Oklahoma State University to get her business degree.



Birthday girl graduates

Happy birthday and congratulations to Steffanee Ogg, who celebrated her birthday on April 21 and will be graduating from Durant High School in May.

Birthday wishes and congrats from her mom, Leon, mom and dad number two (Bill and Angie), brother, Hannah, Lilly, Tiger, Cami, Collier, Noah, J.T., and Max.



Congratulations, Kayla

The nursing faculty and sophomore nursing students of Murray State College are pleased to announce the graduation of Kayla Sierra Oliver Farmer, Associate of Applied Science in Nursing, graduating Phi Theta Kappa.

Kayla is the wife of Quaid Farmer, daughter of Deborah Oliver, sister of Caitlin and Kyle Oliver, and granddaughter of Ellie Oliver.



CORRECTION

The photo of McCayla Taylor was mistakenly labeled as Kaylee Ann Beams on the April page of the Choctaw Nation 2012 Calendar. McCayla, in the Choctaw dress, is the daughter of Meggan Taylor and the granddaughter of Ruby Taylor. Kaylee Ann Beams is the daughter of Calvin Lee Beams, the grandchild of Richard Lee Beams, and the great-granddaughter of Calvin T. Beams. We apologize for the error.



Pictured are the children of the Choctaw Nation Head Start located in Broken Bow. They had fun at the Easter egg hunt where 700 eggs were found.

Nelson receives Miss. Outstanding Volunteer Award

Mississippi First Lady Deborah Bryant, Honorary Chair of the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service Board of Commissioners, presented the 2012 Governor’s Initiative for Volunteer Excellence (GIVE) Award to Cheryl Rose “Rosie” Nelson to celebrate her voluntary service to the people of the state of Mississippi during Volunteer Week from April 15-21.

The First Lady noted that Oxford’s Rosie Nelson is one of Mississippi’s treasured volunteers and presented the inaugural award for Outstanding Service by a National Service Participant at the GIVE Awards luncheon on April 16 at the Mississippi Museum of Art.

“Rosie serves with compassion and intelligence,” said Stephen Monroe, assistant dean of the College of Liberal Arts and director of the North Mississippi VISTA Project. “VISTAs are dy-



namic and highly motivated people, and Rosie is a wonderful example. We’re proud of her service and of this accomplishment.”

Rosie Nelson, a tribally enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation, is one of 11 AmeriCorps VISTA members fighting poverty through education with the North Mississippi VISTA Project at the University of Mississippi.

Serving from the University of Mississippi School of Engineering, Rosie helps to develop service-related ini-

tiatives and provides support to faculty developing service-learning coursework. She has served over 800 hours as a VISTA member, working with faculty, staff, and students, as well as a small grant program that provides students with startup funds of up to \$500 to create science and technology-related service projects within the local community.

Her work in this capacity has unlimited potential for positively affecting Lafayette County, Oxford, and the University of Mississippi communities. Rosie has revived the university’s chapter of Alpha Phi Omega, a national co-ed service fraternity, and serves as the chapter advisor. She assists other chapters throughout Mississippi

and nearby states in developing their service programming. In addition to VISTA and Alpha Phi Omega, Rosie currently volunteers with the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Lafayette County 4-H.

Rosie has served as an AmeriCorps NCCC member, where she participated in several projects along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. In honor of her amazing work as an NCCC member, she was awarded the Gold Level President’s Volunteer Service Award, as well as the Congressional Award Bronze Medal. She was a volunteer in multiple groups as an undergraduate at the University of California-Berkeley and as an employee of the Walt Disney Company.

The GIVE Award celebrates ordinary people in Mississippi doing extraordinary things to improve lives and communities across the state.

To the Youth of the Nation

By: Courtney Patterson
Youth Advisory Board
“A grape and a raisin”

Older people are fountains of wisdom. They overflow with millions of water droplets containing clever methods, remarkable studies, incredible secrets, and unbelievable tales. You would think the younger generation would take the opportunity to bring a cup to these marvelous fountains and take what they have to offer; you would think, but unfortunately, not all of them do.

You see, in life we get cups, and what we put in our cups is all up to us. Several complain their cups aren’t functional, they have holes or cracks, and there’s no way they can hold onto the rich water. But those same people that say that are the ones who take those same cups to parties and fill them with alcohol. These people that do this possess a cup half full with their night lives and drunken wishes, and half empty of their dreams and true potential. Now, is your cup half full or half empty?

A cup can be mended. Regardless if it’s glass, plastic or Styrofoam. Sometimes when people get ready to fill their cups with the good stuff fountains have to give, they forget to check their condition, and leave the fountain dripping in hope. Don’t waste what people have to give you, it’s stupid. Putting a lid on your cup is stupid. Don’t close off your mind for knowledge the world has to bring you. True, some things the world has to bring aren’t pleasant, but that, you just have to deal with. A bitter taste in your cup won’t kill you, but a dry hollow cup of stupidity might. There’s also something you don’t need in your cup, and for that I say this: read the label. It’s simple, you can read, I know you can, you’re reading this. If you read the ingredients, you’ll know what’s good and what’s bad, but at the same time, don’t be fooled. A lot of sugar in something doesn’t make it good, it makes it sweet, and sweet might taste good, but that doesn’t mean it’s good for you. Cranberry juice is bitter to many, and just because it’s bitter doesn’t mean it’s bad. Cranberry juice is really good for you. In almost every cranberry juice is a little water, and that goes for sodas, too, but the amount of water that’s in these two drinks doesn’t compare to the water of a fountain.

What I’m getting at is, you can’t live without water. Some might argue you can, but actually you can’t. Knowledge from the people before you does benefit the people after. No matter if it’s good or bad, somebody’s going to learn, some way or another. Knowledge from the people around you helps better every day, and the knowledge from people before you will better another day more. The longer a person’s lived, the more days they’ll affect. It’s crazy that people don’t want to better themselves by stopping to listen to what older people have to say; it proves to be quite beneficial. So as soon as you get the time to stop, I encourage you to take your cup on a little trip, and while you’re at it, you may even try the clean filters while you’re there. I’m more than sure they won’t mind.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Youth Advisory Board

SCHOLARSHIP FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Requirements:
(ALL INCOMPLETE APPLICATION WILL NOT BE REVIEWED)

- Must have typed, double-spaced essay of 250-500 words describing your future educational plans/goals
- Must be a Choctaw Tribal Member living in the 10½ county area **ONLY**
- Must attach copy of CDIB and Membership cards
- Must attach Letter of Admission from post secondary education facility
- All applications must be postmarked by June 30, 2012
- Attach list of activities you have been involved in
- Provide- GPA: _____ Class Rank: _____ ACT/SAT score: _____
- Winning applicants will be notified by July 15, 2012

1st Place-\$500 2nd Place-\$250 3rd Place-\$150

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name of Current High School: _____

Name of Post Secondary Education Facility you plan to attend: _____

[Please mail your application and essay to:](#)
Choctaw Nation Youth Empowerment
P.O. Box 57
Clayton, Oklahoma 74536

Choctaw Nation to aid with loans

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

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

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

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

**Choctaw Community Center
in Smithville**
May 23 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

and the

**Tribal Services Building
in Hugo**
May 25 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Safety Camp at Wheelock Academy a big hit with youth

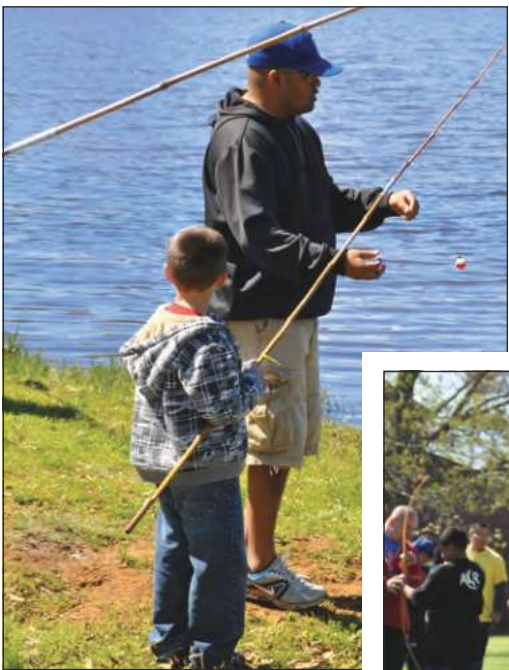


Above: DARE Officer Isaac James share facts about drug abuse and how to avoid questionable situations involving those substances.

Right: Firefighters volunteer their time to teach the youth proper ways to put out fires and educate them on the duties of a firefighter.



Photos by BRET MOSS | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Above: Outreach employees spend some time teaching Choctaw youth simple things, like how to bait a hook and cast a line.



Above: Employees use modified go-carts to simulate drunk driving, which gives students a feel of how little control they have while under the influence.



Above: Youth practice how to help out one another when in hazardous situations like a house fire.

Left: Choctaw weapons expert Les Williston demonstrates how to shoot a bow and arrow.

Choctaws excel at 10th Annual Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair in Norman

Several Oklahoma students received honors at the 10th annual Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair, held April 2 and 3 at the Sam Noble Museum in Norman.

The competition drew more than 650 participants in grades Pre-K through 12 from across Oklahoma and other states. Students competed in spoken language, language with song, poetry, poster art, book, language advocacy essay and multimedia categories.

The museum prepared special gifts in celebration of 10 successful years of the Native American Youth Language Fair. Language kits were handed out to participants and attendees, to encourage participants to continue learning native languages.

Each person, team or school also received a 2012-2013 calendar commemorating celebrating 10 years of Language Fair Poster Art. The museum displayed “A Decade of Posters” in the Directors Gallery through April. These posters are from past winners of the Poster Art competition. Panels of Native American elders, teachers, artists and authors from many different tribes judged the competitions. At this year’s event, students competed in 38 different Native American languages, an all-time high for the fair.

The Presenting Sponsors for the 2012 Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair were the Boeing Company, the Cyril Fund and the Sam Noble Museum. Additional support was provided by University Silkscreen.

Application materials and information for the 2013 Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair will be available through the museum’s Native American Languages department in January.



The 1st Place 9th - 12th Large Group Spoken Language from Broken Bow.



The Choctaw Language class from Coalgate takes a photo with councilman James Frazier.

Haileyville students take book awards at fair

The Choctaw I and Choctaw II language classes from Haileyville High School are proud to announce that both classes placed first and third in the Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Festival at the University of Oklahoma. This was the tenth year for the annual event. Haileyville entered in the book division. The annual event draws many Native American Language Programs and schools state wide.

Choctaw I’s book was about farm animals (nanalhpoa) playing stickball(kvpucha) against the wild animals (nanalhpoa nukshopa). It was a funny book (holisso yopula). It placed first with a blue ribbon. Choctaw II’s book was about the animals’ watering creek drying up (bokushishila). The animals went to the Chief Bear and he told them to see the Rain Goddess and find out what to do. She told them to dance and pray. They did and rain was delivered to the creek and it never dried up again. Choctaw II’s book took the third place and received a white ribbon.

Virginia Espinoza was the esteemed teacher (nan ikhvnanchi holiitopa). She broadcasts her classes daily from Durant. Brian Weaver is Choctaw I’s facilitator and Louise Mitchell’s Choctaw II’s facilitator (ikhvnanchi apela). Students in Choctaw I are: Cylena Cooper – Ohoyo Hvshi Napakanli, Spencer Blocks- Hattak Towa Washoha, Sara Alverson – Ohoyo Yvnvsh Oka, Alyssa Young – Ohoyo Hvnhvchhaba Okchamali, Sam Morgan – Ohoyo Nvni Kabak, Brian Gibson – Hattak Nvnish wana, Jed Dutton-Hattak Nita Lusakbi, Jason Mayo-Hattak Nvni Hakli, Stevie Johnson – Hattak Kalaki Chito, and Brian Weaver-Hattak Issi Chito. Students in Choctaw II are: Destiny Campbell – Ohoyo Kowasha, Payton Crawford – Itibi Aialhi, James Hart – Hiloha, Dallas Herring – Malvta, Joseph Needham – Nashoba Tohbi Chito, Lisa Nichols- Lesa, Joy Picotte – Nayukpa, Ben Ragsdale- Nashoba Chito vba, Klanyca Tiner – Fichik Homakabi, Blue Burns-Ochakko, and Mrs. Louise Mitchell- Ohoyo Sipokni.



Choctaw II (top) and Choctaw I (bottom) books with their ribbons.



1st Place 9th - 12th Individual Masters. Terri Ann Jim of Riverside Indian School.



2nd Place 9th - 12th Individual Masters. Tia Dixon of Riverside Indian School.



2nd Place 9th - 12 Grade Small Group Song.



The 3rd Place 3rd - 5th Grade Large Group Spoken Language from Antlers.



The 2nd Place 9th - 12 Grade Large Group Song from the Oklahoma City Chahta Vlla Alheha.



The 1st Place 6th - 8th Grade Small Group Spoken Language from Broken Bow.

Photos provided

Dora Hampton shares her childhood memories

Dora Jean Collins Hampton, Choctaw elder, was born on Nov. 6, 1937, at her home in Bentley, Atoka County. Her mother was Maggie Williams Collins and her father was Edmond Collins.

Maggie was a full-blooded Choctaw from Mississippi and Edmond was one-half Choctaw.

When Dora was five years old, she started her education at St. Agnes Catholic School in Antlers. She was baptized as a Catholic at St. Agnes, and she and her sister stayed there until 1945 when a tornado destroyed the building. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

Dora didn't speak English at that time, and no one ever told her not to speak Choctaw. After the tornado, she and her sister were sent to a Catholic school in Purcell, St. Elizabeth. They were there until it closed in 1948.

They attended a public school in Bentley and then a boarding school at Wheelock Academy in Millerton, when Dora was about 12 years old.

Dora was at Wheelock until she graduated. Her sister graduated first and then Dora the next year. They both went to Chilocco from Wheelock Academy, where Dora stayed for about three years. She was 16 years old when she left Chilocco.

While at boarding school, Dora had plenty of jobs to do, working in the kitchen and dining room. If working

Dora's Hampton's story continues our publication of recorded interviews of Choctaw elders from 2007

in the kitchen, she helped to get food ready for breakfast or dinner. In the dining room she swept the floors and cleaned the tables, getting ready for the next meal.

After her chores were finished, she went to class. At Chilocco, Dora did chores in the morning and attended school in the afternoon. Sometimes she would work in the laundry room or hospital.

There were a large number of children at Chilocco, so it took nearly all morning to finish her jobs. There were children from tribes in New Mexico and Arizona as well.

Dora enjoyed working in the laundry room because she was able to use the pressers, pressing the boys' pants and shirts. They washed clothes in big washers and dryers, and ironed them with the pressers.

Dora attended some home economics classes at Wheelock and Chilocco. She made her own graduation dress; everyone had the same material but different colors. Dora's was a pink-dotted Swiss dress. The dresses had long sleeves and had to have belts, so Dora made hers out of pink ribbon. She wore white shoes and socks.

Dora enjoyed her time at boarding school because she learned a lot through her classes. She also learned cleanliness and personal hygiene.

When Dora was growing up, she did quite a bit of work around the house. Her family had a kiti, which is a hollowed-out stump or log. After it dries, it's a good container for corn. Once the corn is put in, Dora would use a big pole to beat the corn, which would make it crack to make tanchi labona or banana. Banana is cornmeal, flour and soda.

Dora's mother, Maggie, would mix it up and add a little water. She then would wash out corn shucks and wrap them around the corn mixture, then drop them into boiling water to cook in the wood stove outside of their home. In the winter, she would cook in the house, also making pashofa.

When Dora was young, she picked possum grapes with her sister. Possum grapes are wild and small, and it seemed to Dora the best ones were at the top. Her sister would climb the tree, bring them down and put them in the tub.

In those days, Dora's family had access to lots of creeks with running water. That's

where they'd wash the grapes before they went home. When they got home, Maggie would wash them again and again. She'd put them in a big pot of boiling water to get their juice, afterward canning the juice. In the winter, Dora would have grape dumplings made with Maggie's grape juice and sugar.

Dora has showed her granddaughter possum grapes. She tells her grandchildren of her growing up with lots of fruit available at her home. In different seasons, they had different fruit, lots of possum grapes, wild plums and berries. Dora would pick the fruit and Maggie would can it.

In the fall, they grew persimmons. Maggie didn't can these, because Dora had them eaten before she got the chance.

Maggie had a large garden where she planted Indian peaches and pears. There were many peach trees. Dora and her sister would peel and seed the peaches and their mother would can them, providing them with lots of canned fruit in the winter-time.

Dora's father, Edmond, provided the family with meat. He'd kill a calf and dry the meat. They had what Maggie called a wagon sheet, which she'd set salted meat on top of and put on the roof of the house to dry. Dora had to watch the meat to keep

the flies off. Edmond built a meat box and loaded it with meat and plenty of salt. They would also go fishing and Maggie cooked the fish.

In the winter, Dora and her sister would collect hickory nuts and walnuts. Maggie liked to use them in cakes and cookies.

Edmond had a pasture he subleased to a man who planted peanuts. Dora and her sister would gather the peanuts left behind from the thrasher. Maggie would take a gallon of peanuts, put them in a pan and stick them in the oven to roast.

Dora and her family had plenty to eat, and most of it was from the land. They raised vegetables, and everything they ate was boiled, not fried. They had a milk cow, chickens and hogs.

Very seldom did Dora's family purchase things at the store. Edmond went to the store in Bentley about six miles from their home and bought mustard to eat with their fried pork ribs. Dora still eats her ribs this way today.

Edmond would also purchase apple butter, flour and sugar. At that time, flour came in 25 or 50-pound sacks, people thinking if you bought a 50-pound sack of flour you were rich. The flour sacks were made of pretty cloth in print, floral or gingham designs. Maggie would hand-make the girls' blouses, skirts

or dresses from the sacks. Dora remembers women wearing long dresses and aprons. Dora's mother didn't buy material at the store often, but when she did purchase clothes they went to Atoka. They would buy high-top shoes and long stockings when they were young and saddle oxfords when they were older.

At her home, Dora's family only spoke in Choctaw. Edmond could speak English fluently, but Maggie didn't converse in English unless someone asked her a question. Dora enjoys telling her grandchildren stories of when she was growing up. She used to walk around in the pasture with one of her granddaughters, telling her about possum grapes and teaching her names of trees they came across. They'd also pick wild berries and onions.

Today, Dora can make pashofa and dumplings made from sand plums' juice. She also used to fix jelly from berries grown in her garden, which she'd give as gifts to her family.

Dora likes to sing in Choctaw and speak Choctaw with her brothers when they visit her. She attends the Choctaw Community Center in Hugo weekly and visits with her friends. She was able to make a trip with the center and Choctaw seniors to Mississippi and meet many Choctaws who speak the language.



Photo provided

A few of the Choctaw potters chat over the Alabama clay they dug, from left, Mary Frazier, Vangie Robinson, Teresa Prough.

POTTERS

Continued from Page 1

likened the event to drinking from a fire hose.

After the 600-mile trip to Alabama, the road-weary Choctaw Nation potters, rounded a final bend in the road, and were suddenly greeted by a spectacular array of green, grass-covered earth mounds as they entered Moundville Archaeological Park. Located on the eastern bank of the Black Warrior River, Moundville was an immense town 800 years ago, and is today recognized as a World Heritage site. The people who built the town are the ancestors of today's Choctaw people and some of the other Southeastern Tribes. Among other things, Moundville's early inhabitants are recognized for the technically advanced and beautiful pottery that they developed before European arrival.

On their first day in this historic place, the Choctaw potters toured the University of Alabama Office of Archaeological Research, and viewed hundreds of exquisite pieces of ancestral pottery in the special collections room at the Erskine Ramsey Archaeological Repository, located on site. Afterwards, Chip Wenthe took the potters on a fieldtrip to a natural source of silky smooth, grey and red mottled clay. The potters hand-dug several hundred pounds of this precious resource to take back to Oklahoma for use in Choctaw traditional pottery classes. That afternoon, the potters visited the newly renovated Jones Archaeological Museum, learning more about the history of Moundville, and seeing dozens more of the most breath-taking pieces of ancestral pottery.

The following day, the group from Choctaw Nation participated in a conference on Southeastern Native American pottery. They listened to presentations given by other Tribes about the revitalization of traditional pottery in their communities, as well as presentations on the meanings behind the designs put onto ancient pottery in the Southeast. Ian Thompson, of the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department, gave a presentation on the revitalization of traditional Choctaw pottery that has been ongoing at Choctaw Nation over the last 3 years.

The following day, traditional potters from different Tribes and areas taught classes on their own styles of pottery and personal techniques. The Choctaw potters learned new skills from a variety of nationally renowned artists, while Thompson taught potters from other areas about making Oklahoma Choctaw eating bowls. That evening, the group attended a reception at the University of Alabama Department of Anthropology.

On the final day of the event, the potters set out their work for the public, and spent the day demonstrating, learning, and teaching. That evening, a closing reception was held at the Kentuck Arts Center in Tuscaloosa, featuring master works in traditional pottery, produced by participants in the event, including Ed Perkins of Choctaw Nation.

The knowledge and inspiration gained at this event will not only advance these Choctaw potters in their own work, but will also better enable them to teach others here in Oklahoma. They are excited to do so and to help continue the revitalization of this ancient Choctaw art. Visit the Choctaw Cultural Services website at www.choctawnationculture.com for more information about classes in Choctaw traditional pottery.



Photo provided

Choctaw U students attend 'Day at the State Capitol'

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and Chief Gregory E. Pyle are pleased to announce the receipt of a generous gift provided by John Sullivan of the Sullivan Insurance Agency in Ardmore.

The gift was specifically designated for Choctaw University (Choctaw U) and included a trip for 10 Choctaw U students to a "Day at the Oklahoma State Capitol" in March.

The 10 students who visited the Capitol included Kyle Burch of Spiro, Jason Campbell of Calera, Jo Ann Compton of Hugo, Angela Dancer of Soper, Jack Hedrick of Durant, Robbie Hobgood of Paris, Texas, Lisa Howie of Fort Smith, Ark., Kelli Ostman of Durant, Tana Sanders of Durant and Joey Tom of Wright City.

The gift included a limo ride to and from Durant, a meeting with State Representatives and Senators, a tour of the Capitol, and lunch.

According to Susan Stockton, executive director of Human Resources for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, "This was a great opportunity for Choctaw U participants to learn the importance of building strong state and tribal relationships and to gain a better understanding of how the State of Oklahoma's legislative system works."

After arriving at the Capitol, the group met with Representative Pat Ownbey, Representative Tommy Hardin, Senator Frank Simpson, and Senator Josh Brecheen. Next, the group was given a tour of the Capitol which included time in both the House and Senate while they were in session. This afforded the group the opportunity to see two bills reach final approval. The participants were also able to visit the Supreme Court.

After the tour, the group was provided a catered lunch and a visit with Senator Josh Brecheen from District 6. When lunch was over, the group was given free time to look around before returning to Durant.

"We were grateful to be given the opportunity to send our Junior and Senior class participants to see our State's Legislature in person. It was a great learning experience to see some of our state leaders in action," says Tana Sanders, director of Learning and Development.

Choctaw U is designed to help build upon Chief Greg Pyle's long-term vision of growing and sustaining the tribe. The purpose of Choctaw U is to grow knowledge and skills of tribal associates by instilling a deeper understanding of their purpose within the organization.



Photos by LISA REED | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Chief Pyle celebrates birthday with Durant seniors

Below: Chief Pyle has some fun with his cake as he celebrates his birthday with the seniors of the Durant Community Center.

Durant swears in new officers

Chief Pyle swears in District 9 senior officers, from left, Marilynn Mitchell, President, Jo Selby, 1st VP, Sharon Zondor, 2nd VP, Bob Green, Treasurer, Jim Cox, Asst. Treasurer and Margie Sutton, Secretary.



Choctaw heritage celebrated in McAlester

April 24 event brings tribal members together



Councilman Bob Pate holds his grandson, Braden Pate.



Assistant Chief Gary Batton stops by to talk with Laura Lucille Jamison.



Carolyn Adams and Marvin Ginn enjoy the cultural events, fellowship and dinner.



Award-winning artist Teresa Renegar displays her jewelry.



Photos by LISA REED | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Students from the McAlester Head Start show the audience how to do the Snake Dance.



Rhoda Anderson, Councilman Bob Pate and Janeice and Leo Jack visit as the event winds down.



Teresa Prough creates a pair of moccasins.



Young Jon Sutherland watches the craftsmanship of woodworker Jack Haynes.



Brad Joe sings The Lord's Prayer in Choctaw while the princesses perform the prayer in sign language. The words to The Lord's Prayer were translated by the Choctaw Nation's School of Language staff.

Travelers from around the world visit the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

By **CHRISSY DILL**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's headquarters, located in Durant, is no stranger to visitors, who come from all parts of the United States to meet Chief Gregory E. Pyle and see firsthand the tribal offices that work to provide them with helpful services. Recently a family who lives a little further than the usual visitors visited the headquarters, coming from the Siraya Indigenous community in Taiwan.

The three Taiwanese visitors included Rev. Li Hautiong, pastor at the Khau-pi Presbyterian Church in the Siraya community; Uma Talavan, head of the Siraya Culture Association and works for the Tainan city government in Siraya and Indigenous Affairs; and Edgar Macapili, Uma's husband, who composes music and has helped write the textbook for teaching the Siraya language.

Li, Uma and Edgar came to know of the Choctaw Nation during their visit to Austin College in Sherman, Texas, during the college's annual "Asia Week," organized by Associate Professor/Chair of Political Science Donald Rodgers, whose primary area of



Choctaw Nation: KAREN JACOB

Language instructor Theresa Billy, the Rev. Li Hautiong, Edgar Macapili, Uma Talavan and School of Choctaw Language Director Jim Parrish.

research is Taiwanese politics with an emphasis on identity politics. Austin College has an Asian Studies Program, and Rodgers said Asia Week is intended to bring awareness of Asia to the campus and the broader community.

"The focus changes from year to year with topics including politics, culture and history and attention given to different regions or countries of Asia," explained Rodgers.

When planning Asia Week for 2012, Rodgers initiated the emphasis on the Siraya indigenous community. "I believe that there is great significance to the work they are doing," he said, and he had already met several members of the

community.

Rodgers met Rev. Li, Edgar, and Uma in 2010 when he was invited to speak in Tainan, Taiwan, at a conference and the three individuals came to talk to him about the Siraya. "I wanted to bring them here to introduce them to the campus community and to the local Presbyterian churches so they could have an opportunity to inform people about the work the Siraya are doing in cultural revitalization and to build a more lasting relationship between them and the school," said Rodgers.

The work the Siraya community Rodgers is referring to involves issues they are confronting in Taiwan. "They

have struggles with official government recognition, with language and culture preservation, and with other community social issues, like aging and unemployment that they are addressing," he explained.

The three, with the accompaniment of Rodgers, were able to participate in many activities within their time in the United States, including visiting the Belden Montessori School in Sherman, where they did a music and culture session for the children. They also had a lunch with local Presbyterian ministers and gave several presentation and visited several classes at Austin College. They visited the Dallas Taiwanese-American Community and Dr. Li delivered the Easter Sunday service at the Taiwanese Presbyterian Church of Dallas as well.

The trip for Uma, Edgar and Li was sponsored by Austin College and a grant provided by the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy.

It was Rodgers who suggested the Taiwanese citizens visit the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. "The visit to the Choctaw Nation was clearly one of the highlights of their visit," he said. "I thought it would be beneficial for them

to connect with a local indigenous group to be able to learn more about similarities and differences of experience."

Rodgers mentioned to Li, Edgar and Uma the School of the Choctaw Language, and "they were extremely excited about the visit and the things they could share with and learn from our friends at the Choctaw School," he said. Director of the School of the Choctaw Language, Jim Parrish, was instrumental in helping them arrange the visit, he added.

According to Rodgers, he and his friends from Taiwan were treated very well when visiting the Choctaw Nation headquarters and left with much satisfaction regarding the tribe. "The learned a great deal about the history of the Choctaw and were very impressed by the work the Nation is doing in community development and in cultural preservation and language education," he said.

The knowledge and kindness of tribal employees the visitors came into contact with seemed to leave an impact. "They were overwhelmed by the passion and sincerity of the people working in the Choctaw School and by the progress made in the language

program," Rodgers explained. "Everybody at the headquarters greeted them so warmly and shared so much information. I could tell that a sincere bond was built."

Li seemed to enjoy his visit to Choctaw facilities as well. "I was inspired and encouraged by Choctaw's effort on the revitalization on language and culture," he said. "I would like to go and learn more from the Choctaw Nation if there is a chance."

Uma and Edgar commented on the Choctaw Nation language: "We enjoyed and appreciated your gracious hospitality and considered it very beneficial to learn about your Choctaw language learning program," said Edgar.

"The most significant thing we've learned from the Choctaw Nation is that we have similar aspiration, that is, a sustainable tribal community, to revitalize our language and our culture and to foster among our people the pride of our own identity."

The Choctaw Nation is happy to have taught Uma, Edgar, and Li about the culture and traditions of the tribe and hopes to continue to do the same for all tribal members and the surrounding community.



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

The Billingsly family recently visited Choctaw Nation Chief Gregory E. Pyle. Pictured are Donald and Kimie Billingsly of Okinawa, Japan, with their 5-month-old daughter, Sakura; Chief Pyle, Suzanne Billingsly, Maria Billingsly, Christina Billingsly and Chaz Billingsly, all of Cameron, Ark. Suzanne, who is Donald, Maria and Chaz's mother, has lived in Okinawa for the past 12 years.

The STAR Program staff would like to remind all parents with students in second through 12th grade that the deadline to have documents submitted is fast approaching. The deadline for children to be awarded for the spring semester is October 1. Required STAR forms are listed below:

- **STAR online application (one-time application)**
- **Grade and attendance verification form (to be completed and returned once per semester)**
- **Copy of the spring semester report card**

For more information about the STAR Program, please visit star.choctawnation.com or call 800-522-6170 ext. 2787.



OBITUARIES

Juanita Wilmouth

Juanita Elaine Wilmouth, a Hugo resident, passed away on March 12, 2012. She was the daughter of Col-berson Ishcomer and Edna (Sherfield) Ishcomer. She was born in Garvin and had lived in Hugo since 1965. Juanita was of the Presbyterian faith and was an avid supporter and song leader of the Albion Presbyterian Church. She was a member of several organizations and charities through the years. Juanita was also a bookkeeper and licensed practical nurse. She enjoyed sewing, canning, gardening, fishing, garage sales, history conversations and talking with friends. She loved her family and friends.



She was preceded in death by her parents; stepfather Eli Harrington; and sister Geneva Hale.

She is survived by her husband Donald Wilmouth, who she married on Dec. 29, 1982; three sons, Alvin Pyle of Cold-spring, Texas, Chief Gregory Pyle with wife Patti of Durant, and Shaun Pyle with wife Christy of Powderly, Texas; daughter Sharon Fleming with husband Bruce of Kelso, Wash.; brother Larry Harrington with wife Barbara of Richardson, Texas; sis-ter Imogene Hollingsworth of Willows, Calif.; 16 grandchil-dren; 14 great-grandchildren; and many other relatives and friends.

Ernest Lynn

Ernest Lynn, 48, passed away on March 13, 2012, in Ardmore. He was born on Oct. 2, 1963, in Fres-no, Calif., to Elza and Lucille (Wal-lace) Lynn. Ernest worked in the oil fields and drove farm machinery in California. He moved to Ardmore in 1996 to help care for his mother in her failing health. While living here he worked in Lone Grove for Tran-sco Tire Shop until his health forced him to retire. He enjoyed hunting, fishing and riding motorcycles through the mountains.



He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Danny, Dewayne and James Lynn; and daughter Shawna Lynn.

Ernest is survived by his fiancé, Sheila Grayson, of the home; son Ernest “TJ” Lynn of Tennessee; two grandchildren; brothers, Tommy Lynn of Squall County, Calif., and Jimmy Lynn of Ardmore; aunt Lucille Wallace; and cousins, Paul Wal-lace, Paula Thomas, Wanell Perry with husband Ronney, Jerry Wallace, David Wallace, Jeremy Wallace, Cheyenne Perry and Wyoming Perry, all of Ardmore.

Michael Spear

Michael Douglas “Doug” Spear, 59, of Pittsburg, Okla., passed away on April 18, 2012, at his home. Mi-chael was born November 3, 1952, at the Indian Hospital in Talihina. His parents were James Ross Spear and Virginia Evelyn (Ward) Spear. He graduated from Pittsburg High School and moved to Sherman, Tex-as, where he worked for more than 25 years in maintenance, later moving to Ardmore and worked for Akin’s Concrete Construction. He was of the Baptist faith and proud of his Choctaw heritage.



He was preceded in death by his parents and brothers, Wayne Akins and Charles Ross Spear.

He is survived by his son Mike Spear with wife Sheryle of Pittsburg; siblings, Harold Akins with wife Helen of Ardmore, Carol Rice with husband Jimmy of Pittsburg, Joyce Church with husband Cecil of Kiowa, Ron Spear of Ben Franklin, Texas, Nancy Hailey with husband Mike of Shawnee, and Stan Moore of Pittsburg; stepfather Jerry Moore of Pittsburg; and numerous nieces, nephews and friends.

Betty Wiedemann

Betty Ruth Wiedemann, 75, of Ke-ota, passed away on April 26, 2012, in Talihina. She was born Feb. 14, 1937, in Keota to Martha Wesley. She was a life-long member of New Hope Baptist Church. Betty will be greatly missed.



Betty was preceded in death by her husband, C.H. Wiedemann; her parents; son Robert Lynn Perry; and sister Charlotte Jackson.

She will be missed by her family, which includes Betty Sue Owens and Kim Romig with husband Jim, both of Iola, Kan., Robert Perry in Heaven, Mike Perry with wife Vickie of Keota, Paul Wiedemann with wife Tonie of Tulsa, Ron Wiedemann with wife Heather of Poteau, Mark Wiedemann with wife Tra-cy of Stigler, Lindsey Perry with wife Jennifer of Keota; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and special family which includes Pat and Darrell Jones, and Bill Johnnie, all of Keota, Kevin and Tammy Jackson, and Ina Jackson, all of Stig-ler, and Lena Sweeney of Duncan.

Norma Cobb

Norma Jean Cobb, 78, of Oska-loosa, Kan., passed away on April 6, 2012, at her home. She was born on Jan. 12, 1934 in Seminole, to Hu-bert Earl “H.E.” and Violet L. Hayes. She graduated from Chickasha High School in Chickasha. She then at-tended the Chickasha College for women where she received her home economics and elementary teaching degree in 1956. She married Richard Andrew Cobb on June 10, 1956, in Chickasha. He preceded her in death on March 10, 2008. She was a member of the Oskaloosa Church of Christ.



She was preceded in death by her husband and a grand-daughter, Amber Lea Cobb.

She is survived by her sons, Brent and Johanna, Brad Cobb, both of Oskaloosa, Rick and Donna Cobb of Columbia, Mo., and Ed and Jan Cobb of Medford, Ore.; daughter Brenda and Ron Bertles of Nortonville, Kan.; sisters, Donna Spurling of Orville, Calif., and Ruth Russell of Denton, Texas; 14 grand-children; and eight great-grandchildren.

Mitchell Durant

Mitchell Ray Durant, 69, of Bo-swell passed away on April 18, 2012, in Durant. He was born Dec. 21, 1942, in Farris, the son of Emeizah Durant and Elency (Wesley) Durant and had lived most of his life in Bo-swell. He married Dorothy Samis on May 15, 1965, in Honey Grove, Texas. Mitchell enjoyed fishing, hunting, working in the garden and working around the house.



He was preceded in death by his parents; son Cory Durant, sisters, Edith Pistubbee and Doretha Herra; brothers, Dan Du-rant and Terry Durant..

He is survived by his wife Dorothy Durant; daughters, Kim-berly Dancer with husband Shane of Durant, Lorinda Durant of Boswell, and Janice Durant-White of Durant; brothers, Jim-my Wesley of Hugo, and Johnny Durant of Boswell; sisters, Gina Samis of Paris, Texas, Erma Hargrow of Bonham, Texas, and Molly Billy of Rockwall, Texas; and five grandchildren.

Joey Taylor

Joey Allen Taylor, 29, passed away on April 14, 2012. He was born Jan. 26, 1983, in Talihina. Joey enjoyed volunteering for the youth at Tus-kahoma, fishing, hunting, playing stickball and other outdoor activi-ties. Joey loved spending time with his family and friends.



He was preceded in death by his grandfather, Milton Taylor and un-cle, Jeff Taylor.

Joey is survived by his wife, Candi Taylor of Holly Creek; grandparents, Don and Louise Roberts; mother Connie Taylor of Broken Bow; father-figure, Frankie Natt; children, Ashton Taylor, Alexa Taylor and Shawn Bacorn; sisters, Michelle Tay-lor of Poteau, and Susan Natt of Broken Bow; special uncle, Michael Taylor; aunts, Kathy Taylor and Teresa (Taylor) Long-oria with husband Mike; cousins, Joe Michael Taylor, Lisa Marie, Alex and Cameron Farrell, Frencho, Chris and Hope Garcia; and a host of other family and friends.

Jesse Gardner

Jesse Greenwood “Joe” Gardner, 89, passed away on April 10, 2012, at the VA Center in Norman. He was born to Leroy and Hazel Nickles Gardner in Durant. Joe served in the military in World War II, and was an expert marksman. After his dis-charge, Joe lived in San Diego, for a few years and then settled in Okla-homa City, where he operated an ap-pliance sales and repair business. After the sale of his business, Joe worked in the oil and gas business as a lease broker.



He was preceded in death by his parents and a brother, John Gardner.

He is survived by his caring granddaughter, Sharon L. Fran-cis; sisters, Joan Held, Marie Wong and Nancy Kegley; broth-ers, Col. M. L. Gardner, Charles Gardner and Samuel Gardner; many nieces, nephews and numerous friends.

Thomas Houston

Thomas Ward Houston, 87, of Wichita Falls, passed away on Feb. 18, 2012. A son of the late Alice G.(Tannehill) and Cletus Houston, Mr. Houston was born on Oct. 7, 1924, in McAlester. He worked as a medical illustrator for Medical School at Shep-pard Air Force Base.

Mr. Houston is survived by his wife, Elsie Houston, of Wich-ita Falls.

Bessie Kirby

Bessie Mae (Smith) Kirby, 71, of McAlester, passed away on April 23, 2012, in McAlester. She was born to Robert and Edna (Nail) Smith on De-cember 2, 1940, in Blanco. She married Odell E. Kirby in McAlester in 1976. Bessie was a homemaker and enjoyed crocheting, doll collecting, music, gar-dening and her family and friends.



She was preceded in death by her parents; husband in 2006; and sister Lola Mae Perkins.

She is survived by daughters, Cora Lambert with husband, Dan of Savanna, Sue Neace with husband, E.J., and Connie Joiner, both of McAlester, and Kay Peters with husband, John of Haileyville; companion, Gene Carr of the home; son Mike Carr of the home; grandchildren, Catasha Sadler with husband Trevor, Shelby Ketchum, Karena Green, Stephanie Higgs, Crystal Flaherty with husband Christopher, Noramae Sasnett, Tonya Lewis, Robin Flores with husband Victor, Issac Lopez and Orlanda Wilson with husband Mike; 17 great-grandchil-dren; sister Brenda Capeheart of Pittsburg; brother Joe Ander-son of Blanco; and numerous stepbrothers, stepsisters, nieces, nephews and other family members and friends.

Joe Blalack

Joe Ray Blalack passed away on Jan. 4, 2012, in Humble, Texas, and interred next to his father. He was born on April 23, 1936. He graduated from Kemper Military Academy in 1954 and then attended and received an undergraduate degree from the University of Texas. He then graduated from the Houston Law School and was admitted to the Texas State Bar in 1960. His successful law practice in Houston and Austin was in the field of oil and gas. He was an extensive traveler and loved the study of history. He was an avid researcher of the Civil War and was a member of the Sons of the Confederacy. He was proud that several of his Indian ancestors had served with the Confederacy with the 1st Chickasaw/Choctaw Mounted Rifles. He loved his Choctaw heritage and was proud that his mother, Vivian Scroggins and his uncles, Edgar and Ernest Scroggins, attended Chilocco Indian School.

He is survived by longtime companion Bonnie Richardson; sons, Joe Michael and Jeffery; three grandchildren, all of Hus-ton; and sister Janet Johnston of Daphne, Ala.

Mary LeFlore

Mary Ann LeFlore, 74, an Atoka resident passed away on April 8, 2012 in Atoka. She was born on April 4, 1938, to Herbert and Gladys (Con-rad) Patterson, in Jefferson City, Mo. She graduated high school in Jeffer-son City, and became a credit union manager. She married Ted LeFlore on Sept. 23, 1992 at Cane Hill. She attended Cane Hill United Methodist Church and enjoyed quilting, gardening and reading.



She was preceded in death by his parents and son, Thomas Shelton.

She is survived by her husband, Ted LeFlore of Atoka; chil-dren, Steve Shelton with wife Mary of Dallas, Amy Mapel with husbwith Dan of Newnan, Ga., Mike Shelton of Atoka, Nancy Lilly of Mesquite, Texas, and Elaine Morris with hus-band Blaine of Garland, Texas; siblings, Dave Patterson with wife Vicki of Westphalia, Mo., Jerry Patterson with wife Carol of Jefferson City, Mo., Carolyn Irvin with husband Lonnie of Linn Creek, Mo.; grandchildren, Drake Mapel and Falyn Ma-pel, both of Newnan, Ga., Anthony Lilly and Rachel Lilly, both of Plano, Texas., Mason Morris and Alyssa Morris, both of Garland, Texas; along with numerous nieces, nephews, other relatives and many friends.

Vera McIntosh

Vera Alene (Burnett) McIntosh, 68, of Fort Gibson, passed into eter-nity on April 25, 2012. She was born Sept. 28, 1943, in Stockton, Calif., to Vere and Myrtle Burnett.



Vera married Alvin McIntosh on Feb. 7, 1960, in Talihina. They resid-ed in several locations before making their permanent home in Fort Gibson in 1968. She worked at Optronics for 26 years as well as making a home for Alvin and their children.

Vera was preceded in death by one son, Tracey McIntosh, and her parents.

She is survived by her husband, Alvin of the home; sons, Louis McIntosh of the home, James McIntosh of Fort Gibson, and Kenneth McIntosh with wife Sandi of Hichita; daughter Alma Pickle with husband Charlie of Muskogee; grandchil-dren, Cory McIntosh, Bailey McIntosh, Kenny McIntosh and Jesi Pickle; sisters, Iza Holt with husband Joe, Armenda Pear-son with husband Danny, and Sally Burnett; brothers, James Burnett with wife Dot, Verlon Burnett, and Mikel Burnett with wife Rose.

Linda Mitchell

Linda Sue Mitchell, 67, of Ar-koma, passed away on April 23, 2012, in Fort



Smith, Ark. She was born January 5, 1945, in McCurtain, to Marlin and Josephine (Carney) Billy.

Linda was preceded in death by her parents; brother Marlin Billy Jr.; and sister Ruby Terrell.

Linda is survived by her husband, Edward Mitchell of the home; daughter Sharon Squire with husband Kenneth of Sapulpa; sons, Matthew Rocha with wife Melissa of McCurtain, and Kelly Billy with wife Debbie of Howe; sisters, Imogene Terrell of Kinta, and Ramona Baker of McCurtain; 26 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren

Ken Begay

Ken Begay, 44, of Plano, Texas passed away on March 12, 2012, in Plano. Ken was born March 2, 1968, in Dallas. He was of the Baptist Faith, a proud and loving father who loved the outdoors and was an artist.

He was preceded in death by one brother, Wendell Begay; and his grandmother, Laura May Willie.

Ken leaves to cherish his memory, his father Freddy Begay of Sanger, Texas; mother Juraline Begay of Plano; son Tyler Be-gay of Plano; two brothers, Michael Begay with wife Claudine and their children, Jack, Jacob and Carson, all of Plano, and Andy Begay of Sanger; and a host of other family and friends.

Mary Anderson

Mary Ashby Anderson passed away on April 28, 2012. She was born June 29, 1927, in Octavia, to Ben F. and Elizabeth Davenport Ashby.



Mrs. Anderson married Thomas C. Anderson on April 16, 1952. They spent over 55 years together. It was a sad time for her when he passed away in 2008. She was a graduate of South-eastern Oklahoma State University with BS and MT degrees. While attending Southeastern she lived at Oklahoma Presbyterian College – a place she loved and credited with having a tremendous influence for good in her life. The career she chose to devote her life to was educa-tion.

She served for 21 years as a teacher, principal, and coach in the following schools: Octavia, Hatfield (Arkansas), Nashoba, Russett, Mulhall, Wanette and Putnam City. In addition, she worked for the Oklahoma State Department of Education for 18 years as coordinator of business education, as well as assist-ing in other areas of the department when needed. As a teacher, she worked tirelessly to meet the needs of her students. As a coordinator, she provided leadership, dedication and service to the business educators with the ultimate goal of benefiting the students. A note written to her by one of the teachers when she retired described her well, “May all the good you have done be returned to you a hundred fold and more” “Never in my years of knowing you have I ever seen you give less than your very best.”

She was preceded in death by her parents; grandparents, H.S.P. (Stump) and Amanda E. Wray Ashby, and George and Elizabeth Yakambe Davenport; sister Amanda “Bess” Ashby Bracken; and brothers, Neal F. Ashby and Harrison H. Ashby.

She is survived by her sister-in-law Annie Ashby; nieces and nephews, Susan Amanda Ashby Parker and Don Parker, David H., John P. Ashby, Ben F. and Theresa Ashby, Toby and Daquiri Ashby; as well as other family members and friends.

OBITUARIES

Robert Shelton

Robert Dewayne “Big Rob” Shelton, 54, passed away on Feb. 23, 2012, in Ardmore. Robert was born on Aug. 2, 1957, in Talihina, to Ode Shelton and Rosa Lee (Willmond) Mooneyham. Robert enjoyed surrounding himself with his nieces and nephews. He also enjoyed being an old movie buff, listening to classic country and western music, and playing dominoes and chess.

Robert was preceded in death by his parents; brothers; Guy Shelton and Bryant Shelton; and niece Linda Renae Stephens.

He is survived by his siblings; Kenneth Shelton with wife Bette of Marietta, Lou Ann Hardy of Sparks, Linda Stroder of Oklahoma City, Della Blackwood, Richard Shelton, Leo Shelton, Sherry Shelton, and Leesa Willis with husband Eddie, all of Ardmore; nieces and nephews; Brett Crawford with wife Sylvia of Ardmore, Bill Beesley of Norman, Tiffany Lasiter with husband DeRon of Ardmore, Michelle Jenkins with husband Josh of Sherman, Texas, Casey Allen with wife Krista of Dickson, Terra Norton with husband Jonathan, Kendra Balderama and Carlos, Joshua Paul, Emily Royal, Craig Shelton with wife Lindsey, Natosha Shelton, all of Ardmore, Kim Martinez and Robert of Meeker, Kennette Freeman with husband Lee of Sulphur, and Barbette Shelton of Marietta; special great-nephews, Brett “Buster” Lewis and Adrian Bond, both of Ardmore; numerous great-nieces, great-nephews and great-great-nieces and nephews.



Smiley Echols

Smiley Echols, 91, passed away on March 31, 2012. Smiley was born to Blanche and Doy Echols in Stigler, on June 1, 1920. After growing up in Braggs, Smiley began a career in the Air Force that took him to Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Alabama, Minnesota, and Michigan, with offshore assignments in Guam, Kwajalein, Hawaii, Thailand, Japan, England and Vietnam. He was a veteran of World War II and Vietnam.

He was predeced in death by his wives, Virginia Louise Biggs Echols and Mary Kay Strecker Sabrosky Echols; his parents; and his brothers, Doy Echols Junior, Chester Echols, Frank Leon Echols, Quinton Echols, and Calvin Echols.

Smiley is survived by his children, Jim Echols (Cindy) and Donna Edgell (Butch); his stepsons, Kirk Sabrosky (Kim), Kevin Sabrosky (Jennifer), and C.J. Sabrosky; sister Betty Echols Ogdon; five grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; and three step great-grandchildren.



Kelly Carnes

Kelly Joe Carnes passed away on April 11, 2012, after months of illness he is now free. Kelly was born May 10, 1971, in Coalgate. He was a long time member of Covenant Church in Carrollton, Texas.

He leaves behind his mother, Martha Carnes – Bennett; stepfather Kevin Bennett; sister Cynthia Carnes; and niece Taylor Williams, all of Carrollton; father Ellis Carnes of Coalgate; grandmother Catherine Willmond of California; grandparents, Buster and Vivian Bennett of Dallas; and a whole host of cousins, aunts, uncles and many friends.



Kenard Rickey

Kenard “Kenny” Earl Ray Rickey, 32 of Joplin, passed away on March 17, 2012, due to injuries received in a pedestrian versus automobile accident.

He was born Sept. 25, 1979, in Joplin. He was very proud of his Choctaw heritage and thankful for his tribe’s help with his education. He received his training as a class A CDL driver and heavy equipment operator from ATC in Wisconsin and worked as a heavy equipment operator in the oil fields in Bakersfield, Calif.

Kenny participated in all sports in Carl Junction and Joplin while growing up. He was a member of Central Christian Center.

Kenny was preceded in death by his father, Kenny Rickey; grandfather, Bill Tallant;

grandparents, Dorothy and Freddie Rickey; and step grandfather, Carl Walker.

Survivors include his mother, Joyce Tallant and stepfather, Dave Anderson of Joplin; son Levi of Joplin; sister Dezirai Witt with husband Bill of Joplin; brother Tim Rickey with wife Teresa of Sullivan, Mo.; grandmothers, Janice Walker of Joplin, Ann Tallant of Bakersfield; nephew Jack Daniels of Joplin; nieces, Ocean and Cheyann Rickey, both of Sullivan.



Albert Jones

Albert J. “Jack” Jones, 66, of Norman, passed away on Nov. 29, 2011 in Norman.

He was born on Aug. 28, 1945, in Stringtown, to John and Lillie Jones. Albert enjoyed bead working and working on his cars. He also enjoyed traveling to southeast Oklahoma and Las Vegas and going to the casinos. His first love was his family.

He is preceded in death by his parents; siblings, Odette Jones, Odell Smith, Odessa Ray, Opaline Hobbs, Viola Jones, Wesline Jones, Alma Hames, Raymond Jones, Jasper Jones and Almond Jones.

He is survived by his daughter, Beverly Schultz; son Jonathan Jones with wife Heather; four grandchildren, Nekasha, Christian and Katerina Schultz and Edward “Dalton” Jones; brother Alfred Jones with wife Vivian; and a host of nieces, nephews and other loving family members.



Dorotha Reed

Dorotha “Dot” Mae (Grubbs) Reed passed away on March 13, 2012. She was born on June 5, 1921, in Ashland, to John D. and Lillie Grubbs. She attended school in Ashland and, consistent with her future in education, received numerous awards and certificates including one for “being neither absent nor tardy.”

Continuing her love for education, Dot received a Bachelor’s of Science in Education from East Central State College, a Master’s of Religious Education from Oklahoma Baptist Theological Seminary, and a Master’s of Arts in History from Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical University, now Oklahoma State University. Dot began her teaching career in rural Oklahoma.

It was at OSU that Dot met Forrest “Frosty” Reed. She and Frosty married on May 26, 1951, and started their life together in Wichita, Kansas, where all four of their children were born. In 1958, they moved to Kent and then to Maple Valley, Wash. Dot taught school in the Tahoma School District until her retirement in June of 1981.

Dot was an Okie at heart and was proud of her Oklahoma and Choctaw heritage. In 1989, Dot and Frosty decided to return to Oklahoma and lived in Stillwater until returning to Lakewood, Wash., in June of 2002, to be closer to their children.

Dot was an active volunteer for many organizations throughout her life. She taught Sunday School and Vacation Bible School, taking many classes to ensure she was the best teacher she could be. She volunteered at the Stillwater hospital delivering flowers to patients rooms and visiting with the patients and their families. She volunteered at the Stillwater senior center with the “old folks”. Even though Dot was 90 when he passed away, she never quite put herself in that category – old was always for someone else.

Her legacy will live on in the hearts and minds of her children, Raymond (Fay) Reed, Wendell (Ann) Reed, Noland (Kathy) Reed, and Karla (Preston) Shugart; her grandchildren, Stephen, Ramye, Cissy, Joey, Katie, Rochelle, Richard, Angelia, Melisa, Shalise, Earl, Ian, Tricia, Stefanie, Breanne, and Jessica; and numerous great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.



Elmer Wells

Elmer Wells, 79, passed away on Feb. 4, 2012. He was living amongst the Redwood Trees in Northern California that he loved so much. Elmer was a staunch promoter of environmental causes and later in life took a more traditional approach to his heritage and culture. Elmer also enjoyed carving canes and rattles; each unique in its own form, just like Elmer. At the last Choctaw Gathering he attended in Bakersfield, Calif., he was honored by Charlie Jones to give him his Choctaw name and he was proud of it. He loved the Choctaw people.

He was the last son born to Elma Willis, Choctaw of Mississippi, and Charles Lee Well of Texas, Calif.

He is survived by his wife of 20 years, Lynn Walker-Wells, daughter Chenoa Hanlon; four beautiful grandchildren, Heather, Ian, Julius and Nicholas; and sisters, Bernice Clara West, of Los Angeles, and Willis Jeanne Brewer of Yorba Linda, Calif.

Timothy James

Timothy Darrell James, 39, of Idabel, passed away on March 18, 2012, in Clayton. He was born Nov. 15, 1972, in Talihina. Timothy enjoyed fishing, hunting, working cattle and spending time with family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his grandmother, Mary Alice Battiest; uncle Bradley Oneal James, brother, Harold Gene James, and foster dad, Gabe Paxton.

Those Timothy leaves to cherish his memory include his grandfather, Jacob James of Broken Bow; companion Sonia Dwight of Idabel; mother Margie Hernandez with husband Heriberto of Nashville, Ark.; sons, Timothy Darrell James Jr. of Talihina, and John Baca of Broken Bow; daughters, Whitney and Kayla Dwight of Idabel and Chaunet Baca of Broken Bow; brothers, Solomon Dewayne Anna with wife Teather of Idabel, Christopher Anna of Broken Bow, and Jonathan James of Talihina; sisters, Shannon Yanez of Nashville, Ark. and Kristi Aranda with husband David of Hope, Ark.; along with several nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.



George Bohanon

George Roberts Bohanon “Indian Bob,” 61, of Wichita Falls, Texas, passed away on March 20, 2012. He was born on Oct. 2, 1950, in Sardis to Robert Lee and Myrtle (Nichols) Bohanon. He was proud to be a member of the Choctaw Nation. George’s childhood was spent growing up in Fittstown. In his teenage years he attended Southeast High school in Oklahoma City. George was a wonderful chef and cooked at many restaurants. He was loved so much by his son George Jr., who stayed by his side for the last days of his life. George was known for telling jokes and making everyone laugh. To his nieces and nephews he was known as “Uncle George.” Some of the best memories were Uncle George cooking donuts for his nieces Little Darlene while he babysat her. He also walked door to door with his nieces Elisabeth for her first Halloween. She would say, “Just one more George.” He was a childhood playmate to his little sister Darlene and big brother Sammy. He was a drifter and moved from place to place but wherever George went he had a special charm that made everyone love him.

He was preceded in death by both his parents.

He is survived by sons, George Robert Jr. with wife Lacreteria, and Judson Fanning; grandchildren, Cheyenne, Christian, Nicholas and Abby; former wife Stella Stevens; brother Sammy Lee Bohanon with wife Joyce; sister Alice Darlene Seebek with husband Lynn; sister-in-law Danuta Bohanon; aunt Ellen Nichols; cousins, Clione Ranos, Fayrene Freeman and many Nichols cousins; nieces and nephews, Elisabeth Bohanon, Darlene Bohanon Fields, Katherine Austin, David Huff, Curtis Smith, Sandra Smith and Sammy Smith; numerous great nieces and nephews; a great-great nephew; a soon to be great-great niece; and other relatives, loved ones and friends including Julie Clayborn and Gayle. George and his family are especially thankful to Michelle Chastain for all the support during his time of need. George called her his guardian angel and the family is grateful.

Loreta Eoff

Loreta Eoff, 84, of Deming, passed away peacefully on Feb. 4, 2012, in Bellingham surrounded by family and friends.

She was born Loreta Mae Cleveland on Oct. 27, 1927, in Oklahoma City. She graduated from high school in El Monte, Calif., and moved to Washington State with her husband and children in 1955. Loreta will be remembered for her passion for gardening, her pride in her Native American heritage and her love for her family.

She is survived by her husband of 66 years, Fred; sons, Fred Jr. and wife Elaine, Warren and wife De Lee; daughter Winona, adopted daughter Diane; sister Peggy, many grandchildren and great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.



Vester Queen

Vester Queen, 88, of Heavener, passed away on Jan. 24, 2012, at his home. He was born on Aug. 26, 1923, to his parents, A.V. and Pearl (Kirksey) Queen. He has lived in this area about 20 years.

He worked as a heavy equipment operator. He married Ruth Lila Posey on March 2, 1944, in Chandler, Ark. His hobbies were working on his cars and fishing.

Vester was preceded in death by his parents; wife, Ruth Queen; and two brothers, Clifford and Jimmy.

He is survived by sister Emma Ruth Carnes of Watsonville, Calif.; nieces, Barbara Young of Glendale, JoAnn Lott of Howe, Shirley Norton of Norman, and Shirley and Ann of Arkansas; nephew David Posey of Arkansas; and several other relatives and friends.

Trevor Thornton-Payne

Trever Thornton-Payne, 14 months, passed away on March 14, 2012 in Antlers. He was born Jan. 12, 2011, in Talihina, to John Rousseau and Julie Ann Payne.

Trever was a precious little boy. He loved horses, especially Blaze and Jax, his Blue Heeler that always kept him out of trouble. He was truly loved and will be missed by everyone who knew him.

He is survived by his parents; sisters, Jessica Payne and Rebekah R. of Moyers; brother Payton Neal of Moyers; many cousins, friends, and other relatives.



Debbie Bowen

Debbie DeAnn Bowen, 41, of Heavener, passed awa on March 31, 2012, in Fort Smith, Ark. She was born on Sept. 27, 1970 in Medesto, Calif., to Donald and Gilda (McCurtain) Watkins. She was a member of the Forrester Baptist Church.

She was preceded in death by her mother, and paternal grandfather, Clyde McCurtain.

She is survived by her husband, Jesse Bowen; sons, Tyler Wayne Bowen of Heavener and Aaron Travis Bowen of the home; father Donald Watkins of Hollis; sister Tammy Welch with husband Richard of Hodgen; brother Randy Watkins with wife Carrie of Hodgen; sisters-in-law, Kelly Bowen of Mena, Ark., and Kaycee Morrison of Heavener; brother-in-law Shawn McDonald of Hodgen; maternal grandmother, Juanita McCurtain of Heavener; father-in-law and mother-in-law, Tommy and Betty Diedrich of Heavener; grandfather Charles Diedrich; six nieces; seven nephews; numerous relatives and a host of friends.

Gene Taylor

Gene Ricardo ‘Geno’ Taylor, 47 of Ardmore, passed away on Nov. 13, 2011. Interment was at Durwood Cemetery. Geno was born on April 14, 1964, to Amos Taylor Sr. and Agnes (Tubee) Taylor in Sherman, Texas. He graduated from Sherman High School in 1982 and moved to Ardmore in 1984 to be closer to his father. He was a member of Grace Indian Baptist Church in Calera. He was an avid Texas fan, always supporting his favorite teams. He was a movie buff and enjoyed playing video games. He loved having his family over and grilling out and visiting with his relatives.

He was preceded in death by his mother Agnes Taylor; brother Harold Taylor; and niece Robin Wallace.

Geno is survived by his father Amos Taylor Sr. of Ardmore; brothers, Amos Taylor Jr. with wife Edna of Sherman, Jerry Taylor with wife Margaret of Ohkey, N.M., Johnny Taylor with wife Mildred of Thisomingo, and Randy Taylor with wife Marilyn of Calera, Daryl Taylor with wife Sherry of Zuni, N.M.; sisters Nancy Wallace with husband Lonzo of Sherman, and Barbara Morgan of Red oak; four aunts; one unnce; 20 nieces and nephews; 19 great-nieces and nephews; 3 great-great nieces and nephews; and a host of family and friends.

Hazel Kindred

Hazel Ruth Kindred, 65, of Daisy, passed away on March 9, 2012, in Daisy. She was born on Nov. 24, 1946, to George and Audrey (Isom) Burleson, in Talihina. She graduated from Clayton High School and attended beauty college. She retired from Ethan Allen in Atoka. She was a member of the McGee Valley Baptist Church. Ruth loved canning, gardening and spending time with her grandchildren.

She is preceded in death by her parents; former husband Arville Kindred; brother Scotty Burleson; nephew Dewayne McKay; niece Hollie Ann Burleson; sister-in-law Shearie King; and mother-in-law Marie Kindred Lewis.

She is survived by children, Jody Kindred with wife Melissa, and Charlotte Kindred, both of Daisy; grandchildren, Alissa Kindred and Kayelin Kindred, both of Daisy, siblings, Jerry Burleson with wife Ladonn of Savanah, and John Burleson with wife Freida of Daisy, sisters-in-law Jeweldean Adair of Caddo, and Alice Caldwell with husband Brian of Wilburton; brother-in-law Ray Kindred with wife Kathy of Dunbar; along with numerous nieces, nephews, other relatives, and many friends.



OBITUARIES

Edith Slaton

Edith Irene Thompson Slaton, 72, passed away on April 12, 2012, in Durant.

Edith was born on Dec. 27, 1939, in Hugo, to Simon and Francis Thompson. She loved her family very much and enjoyed spending time with them. She was especially proud of her Choctaw Indian Heritage.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Bert Jones; brothers, Leonard and Junior Thompson; and sisters, Ethel Hamill and Norma Homer.

She is survived by her husband, Cleatus Williams of the home; son Jeff Jones and daughter-in-law Melissa of Hugo; daughters, Benethia Johnson and son-in-law Danny of Blackwell, and Margaret Heady and son-in-law Clifford of Hugo; son Dwayne Taylor of Hugo; grandchildren, Candice Tanner, Christin Glass, Chase Stinnett, Trevor Herrin, Amber Henslee, Jeffery, John, and Jennifer Jones; brother Bernie Thompson with wife Diane of Grant; and numerous great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and cousins.



Rebecca Samuels

Rebecca Samuels, 65, passed away on April 11, 2012, in Hugo.

Rebecca June Samuels was born August 2, 1946, in Corrine, the daughter of Victor and Ida (Morris) Tims. She had lived in this area all of her life. She married Paul Samuels on March 26, 1966, in Valliant. Rebecca had worked for 17 years as an LPN for the local hospitals and nursing homes. She was a member of Hampton Chapel Methodist Church where she served the Lord in music. She loved reading her bible, praying, gospel music and teaching children how to sing. Rebecca was just the type of person that really cared for all people.

She was preceded in death by her parents and one sister, Ethel Tims.

Rebecca is survived by her husband, Paul Samuels of the home; sons, Emanuel Samuels with wife Ruth of Claremore, Vandall Samuels of Miami, Fla., and Matt Samuels Sr. of Muskogee; brothers, Lester Tims of Ada, and Silas Tims of Broken Bow; sister Lena Battiest of Broken Bow; five grandchildren, Matt Samuels Jr., Tamra Samuels, Brandon Samuels, Kirsten Samuels and Jasmine Samuels; three step-grandchildren, Matt West, Ashlyn West and Mitchell West; along with many nieces, nephews, other relatives, and a host of friends.



Ruth James

Ruth James, 83, of Colbert, formerly of Talihina, passed away on Feb. 29, 2012, at her daughter's home. She was born in Oklahoma City on Sept. 9, 1928, to William S. and Tillian (Tickness) James.

Ruth married Cecil James in Stigler on Dec 21, 1947. She received her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Southeastern State College and her master's degree in Education and Psychology from Northeastern Oklahoma State University.

She was very proud of her Choctaw heritage. She enjoyed singing at church and tribal and civic events. She was a member of the Talihina Baptist Church, and was choir director for several years. She was known as the Choctaw Nightingale, a name bestowed upon her by former Chief Jimmy Belvin. She was as past Choctaw Elder of the year for District #2, Oklahoma Federation of Indian Woman's Indian of the year. She taught at the Lone Star, New Weathers, Mount Washington, Talihina and Whitesboro schools and was a counselor at Bacione College for 20 years. Many will remember her singing the Lord's Prayer with one of her daughters accompanying her in the Indian Sign Language.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband; sisters, Florence Stevenson and Mary James; brothers, Edwin James, Leroy James and Woodrow James.

She is survived by two daughters, Gwen and William Takes Horse of Colbert, Sharon James-Schmidt, M.D. and Joe Schmidt of Tahlequah; son Mark S. James, M.D. of Oklahoma City; grandchildren, Adam and Kathy Takes Horse, Tana and Vincent Cleamons Jr., Jacob Schmidt, Aaron Schmidt and Kara Schmidt; great-grandson, Vincent "Tre" Cleamons III; sister Esther Caesar of Disney; sister-in-law Ramona and Henry Hartgers of Tulsa; brother-in-law Joe Gibbs of Sherman, Texas; two nieces; 12 nephews; and other relatives and friends.

Lillian Slover

Lillian Slover passed away on Jan. 6, 2012, at her residence. She was born on Dec. 8, 1915, to Alfred and Dora Anderson Reed in Scipio. She attended Scipio and Byington Schools. She married John W. "Bill" Slover and resided in the Tannehill Community. She worked at Seamprufe-Komar until retirement in the late 70's. She was half American Indian of the Choctaw/Chickasaw Nation and a life-long member of the Tannehill "Church Beside the Road." She enjoyed her life and she loved spending time with her daughter, grandchildren, other family members and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband; brothers, Edward, Harlon, Bob, David and Hugh Reed; and sisters, Mae Shipley, Helen Hefley and Jean Perez.

She is survived by her daughter Dixie L. Scott of the home; sisters, Marie Henderson of Tannehill, Hazel Martin of Scipio; grandchildren, Penny Lewis with husband Jimmy of Sayre, David Scott with wife Patti of Hartshorne, Larry Scott with wife Shelley of Nickerson, Kan., Nancy Scott and Terry Pugh of Oklahoma City; great-grandchildren, Adrienne Lewis of Malibu, Calif., SFC Zachary Lewis with wife Nicky of Hartshorne, Josie Pettit with husband Willis of McAlester, Amancha Wood with husband Brent of High Hill, C.W. Scott with wife Tani of Hartshorne, Lacey Scott and A.J. Andrews of Hutchinson, Kan., Levi Scott of Hutchinson, Kan., Christopher Kos and Elizabeth Wright of McAlester, D'Andra and Kevin Austin of McAlester, and Jessica Sparks of Arpelar; great-great grandchildren, Kaylie and Ace Lewis, Lindsey McKee and Maddie Pettit, Dalton, Jett, Trinity and Brentlee Wood, Talon and Clareese Scott, Autymn Givens-Scott and Lillian Holeman, Lyndzi Scott, Kenadie Austin and Isabel Kos; along with numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and other family members and friends.

Viola McCurtain

Viola Mae Durant McCurtain passed away on Feb. 5, 2011. She was born Jan. 29, 1920, and lived a long good life. She enjoyed many things and had many talents that many knew little of, but her work and dedication in serving the Lord through the women's mission endeavors through the United Methodist Church, Indian Mission Conf. was the greatest joy of her life. Her wishes and hope was that the younger women would carry on what the elder women had begun. The family wishes a belated thanks to Choctaw Nation, Kenny Bryant, her church, St. Paul United Methodist Church Pastor, David Warden and members; also everyone else, neighbors and friends who were so thoughtful during her passing and throughout the years that she was a part of the Talihina community. The list of names would be to long but we say thank you and may the Lord bless you and keep you and make His face to shine upon you.

Her memory will continue through her daughter; Harriet Tehauno; foster daughter Iola Beaver; grandchildren, Rueben, Tamara, Trisha, Michael; and four great-grandchildren, Elijah, Jordan, Angel and Mahaiya.

Lula Berryhill

Lula Jean Berryhill passed away on March 13, 2012. She was born Feb. 20, 1942, in Talihina, and moved to Oklahoma City in 1954. In 1999 she moved to El Reno.

Lula had two men in her life that were important to her in different ways, Julius Samuels of Washington and the late Mose Berryhill. She loved all her children very much and did her best to raise them right with little to no help. She was always a very strong and independent woman.

Lula always had a strong belief and faith in God and said many times she knew that God was always with her throughout her life.

Some of Lula's fondest memories were the years she spent at Goodland Boarding School in Hugo. She was an excellent student. She loved challenging the boys at her school to see who could get the better grade in all subjects and most of the time, she won those challenges. Her love of reading made it easy for her to excel as a student and throughout her life. While at Goodland, she got to work in the kitchen and loved it because she was able to eat anything she wanted. Lula left Goodland in her late high school years and moved to Oklahoma City where she graduated from Central High School in 1960.

As an adult Lula continued learning and educating herself and had many interests. After high school she worked at Paseo Laundry and she put herself through business school while raising her family. Soon after, she got a job with Coca-Cola. Her hard work and eagerness to learn new jobs over the years enabled her to work her way up to the computer operator job that she retired from after over 20 years due to complications with diabetes. Lula was loved by her co-workers and bosses at Coca-Cola. They always knew they could call her up no matter what state they were in or what issue they were having with a machine and she would be able to walk them through their problem. She would have things fixed in no time. Lula was heartbroken when she had to retire and missed her job and friends dearly.

She really enjoyed gospel singing and would go all over the metro and Eastern Oklahoma to listen to all night gospel singing. One of her favorite groups was the Berryhill Quartet.

Lula said she always wanted to learn how to play the piano, and in 2009, despite her failing eyesight, she signed up for piano lessons and fulfilled her dream of playing. It gave her a sense of pride and enjoyment when she played. She practiced every day. Her debut performance was her recital the winter of 2011. She performed in front of an audience of family and strangers, and brought tears to all eyes that watched her play. At the end of her recital, her piano teacher gave a special recognition to Lula and pointed out that it's never too late to follow your dreams, and there is no obstacle, health or otherwise, too big to keep you from your dream. Lula had a green thumb and could keep any plant alive. She had a year round flower bed that would make any gardener jealous. A person could find her out in her yard any time, day or night, working away.

In her later years she loved spending time with her family and watching her grandchildren and great-grandchildren play. She also loved going out to Lucky Star Casino and like everywhere else, made friends there and got "special" treatment when they saw her. Throughout her life she always loved traveling, whether it was a long trip or just a nice Sunday drive, she loved to fly, drive, just get out and loaf around.

Lula was a very special person and dear to so many. She will be greatly missed, but we were blessed for the time we had her with us and so thankful for her love and the memories we have with her. So for now we don't say good-bye, we say we love you and we'll see you later.

Lula is preceded in death by her parents Carrie and Tommie Williams; three brothers, Wilson Belvin, Tommie Jr and James Williams Sr; and two children, Clifford Williams and LaDonna Sweis.

Lula's surviving immediate family consists of sisters, Lorene Arrow, Patricia Sinnett, Rozina Mann, Wilma Morrow and Linda Draper, all of Oklahoma City, children, Victoria Samuels with husband Gerald, Mosella Berryhill with husband Joe, and Jamie Berryhill with husband Michael, 13 grandchildren, Terrell, Clifford Jr, Albert, Jean, Jennifer, Derrick, Kimberly, Angela, Ashley, Tiffany, Marina, Miles and Marlee; 29 great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Linda Mitchell

Linda Sue Mitchell, 67, of Arkoma, passed away on April 23, 2012, in Fort Smith, Ark. She was born Jan. 5, 1945, in McCurtain, to Marlin and Josephine (Carney) Billy.

Linda was preceded in death by her parents; brother Marlin Billy Jr.; and sister Ruby Terrell.

Linda is survived by her husband, Edward Mitchell of the home; daughter Sharon Squire with husband Kenneth of Sapulpa; sons, Matthew Rocha with wife Melissa of McCurtain, and Kelly Billy with wife Debbie of Howe; sisters, Imogene Terrell of Kinta, and Ramona Baker of McCurtain; 26 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren



Julia Knight

Julia Maurine Knight passed away on April 5, 2012. He was born in Checotah on Dec. 29, 1912. She was the daughter of Joe and Abby Semple Doxsee. Julia married Amos Knight in 1930. With her husband Amos, she owned and managed the Pay and Take It grocery store. Julia was an artist who worked avidly in ceramics and in painting. She mentored many other Durant citizens in these skills in her studio behind her house. Julia was an active member of the First Methodist Church. She was a Charter member of the Durant Medical Auxiliary. She was on the Board of Directors for the Historical Museum for the Choctaw Nation. She was honored to be named Business Woman of the year by the Business and Professional Women's Association in Durant. She was again honored when she received the Choctaw Woman of the Year for two years. She gave abundantly of her time and resources. She loved ardently and gave generously.

She was preceded in death by her husband; her son, James Donald Knight; and her brothers, Johnny Doxsee and Eugene (Buddy) Doxsee.

Julia is survived by her daughter, Julia Anne Koerner and six grandchildren, Pat Koerner Alexander, Karen Koerner Dean, Dean Knight, Jerry Knight, David Knight, and Bill Knight; her daughter-in-law, Linda Page Knight Shroyer; sisters, Josephene Doxsee Salmon and Elizabeth Anne Doxsee Finley Glenn; great grandchildren, Abby Alexander Thralls, Kira Dean Frisby, Ragyn Alexander, David Dean, Max Knight, J.D. Knight, R.T. Knight, Declan Knight, Kassi Knight and Trevor Sheff; five great-great grandchildren; and her nieces and nephews are many in number, including Sharon Salmon George, Judy Doxsee Jones Foo, Debby Doxsee Fisher, Jody Doxsee Williams, Fran Doxsee Henderson, Beth Doxsee Morris, Charlie Doxsee, David Doxsee, and Martha Finley Popiel.



Thelma Pelton

Thelma Kay Bennett-Pelton passed away on March 27, 2012, in Dallas with her family by her side. She was born Nov. 26, 1943, in Hugo. She was the oldest child of Lester C.D. Bennett and Julia Ermine Deffeyes.

Her family left Oklahoma to farm in California during the last years of the Oklahoma Dust Bowl. They moved back to Oklahoma briefly during her childhood, and eventually settled in North Texas.

Thelma first attended high school in Garland, Texas. When her family moved to Royce City, Texas, she finished her senior year at Rockwall High School, class of 1961. After high school, Thelma met Thurl Ray Pelton from Wylie, Texas, at the Stetson Resistol factory, where they both worked. They were married on June 29, 1963, in Durant.

Thelma was a working mother until after her third child was born, returning to work fulltime after her first open heart surgery in 1979. She usually worked as a machinist or in electronic products testing. In her lifetime, Thelma worked as a traveling saleswoman, a school employee, a waitress, a screen printer, a cable reeling operator, and finally as a toll attendant on the North Dallas Tollway. She moved back to Durant after she retired in 2010.

Thelma was born on the Friday after Thanksgiving. From the old children's poem, she was truly "Friday's child...loving and kind." She was known for hospitality, her stubbornness, her willingness to help strangers, her legendary dislike of house cleaning and her talent for making life-long friends. Her loves included her children and her friends, her dog Pookie, her garden and any board or card game. She was also a talented painter and she sang (she thought) beautifully. She was known for serenading innocent bystanders!

Thelma survived the loss of her mother in 1978 to congestive heart failure, her father in 1996 to prostate cancer, and her husband, Thurl, in 1999, to complications of diabetes. They were married over 36 years.

Thelma was survived by her two siblings, Ms. Vicky Lou Faughtenberry, of Waitsburg, Wash., and Mr. Charles Bennett of Dallas; her three children, Ms. Carolyn Lou King of Dallas, Mrs. Thurla June Salas of Princeton, Texas, and Ronald Hermann "Ronny" Pelton of Rowlett, Texas; her five grandchildren, Angela Heather Salas, Jessica Catherine Salas, Kimberly Nicole King, Sarah Elaine Pelton and Randy Lee Pelton; great-granddaughter, Angelina Marie Torres; and extended family and friends.



Garen Marris

Garen "Rooster" Wayne Marris, 60, of Ardmore, went to be with his Creator on April 24, 2012, at his home. Garen was born Dec. 25, 1951, at the Hardy Sanitarium in Ardmore to Christian Marris and Imogene (Baptiste) Marris. He married Evelyn Gayle Crowder on April 16, 1982.

Rooster joined the Oklahoma National Guard Reserves where he served several years. He worked for Stockdale Plumbing as a journeyman plumber for several years. He later became a driver for the SORTS bus and later a security guard for Big 5. He enjoyed spending time with his church family and going to any gospel singing. His favorite fun time was spending time with his children and grandchildren always having game night every Friday night. Rooster was a member of the Southwest Baptist Church.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Michael "Moshe" Marris and Billy Eugene Marris; sister Maxine Marris; brother-in-law Sam Thompson; son Emmett Ray Battiest; grandson Raymond Neddy; granddaughter Alison Neddy; and three uncles, Ralph Marris, Leonard Marris and Bennett Marris.

He is survived by his wife, Evelyn of the home; children, Mira Battiest and Jackie Matthews, both of Carthage, Miss., Christina Marris, Lucinda Marris, Conrad Neddy Jr., and Michelle Marris-Knight with husband Patrick, all of Ardmore; sister Norma Marris of Ardmore; three aunts, Lula Parker, Lela Cooper and Ali Johnson with husband James "Jay"; 18 grandchildren; three nieces; three great-nieces; four great-nephews; and a host of family and friends.



Idabel Community Center hosts special dinner for area Choctaws



Assistant Chief Gary Batton welcomes 6-month-old Li-lah Battiest and Katie Baker to Idabel’s Wild Onion Dinner on April 17.



Councilman Thomas Williston says hello to Flo Spalding as the Wild Onion Dinner gets under way at the Choctaw Community Center in Idabel.



Josephine Baker and Lorene Lajeunsse are two of the great cooks responsible for the dinner enjoyed by everyone.



District 1 Jr. Miss Choctaw Nation Mandy Steele, Atticus Steele and Shanna Steele.



Isabel Clampet and daughter Sandra Holt. Isabel and Flo Spalding, pictured above, are sisters.



Employees served plates of wild onions, pork, beans, fried potatoes, banaha, pashofa and fry bread.

Broken Bow holds annual spring pow wow events



A stickball game started early Saturday, April 7, at the McCurtain County Sports Complex in Broken Bow. It was followed by gourd dancing, social dancing and a pow wow in the gym, hosted by the American Indian Leadership Youth Council of Broken Bow Public Schools.



Dancers chase each other through the “cornstalks” during the raccoon dance.



Choctaw Nation Color Guard leads the Pow Wow Grand Entry.



Royalty enters the circle.

A Fighting 74 Hellcat Pilot

Article by Sparky Barnes Sargent
Flight Journal
Winter 2012

In 1944, 22-year-old Lt.(jg) C. Paul Ratliff, a native Oklahoman of Choctaw descent, was a Hellcat pilot with the Fighting Squadron VF-74 aboard the USS Kasaan Bay (CVE-69). He was Lt. Cmdr. H.B. Bass’ wingman when Bass went down in France. Ratliff personally related some of his experiences in the European Theatre to the author, as follows:

“When the fleet left Oran, Algeria (North Africa), and we flew out to the carriers to land, I was the first one to come aboard USS Kasaan Bay. The landing signal officer was my roommate, and he gave me a ‘roger’ all the way around, until the last minute – then he gave me a wave off. And I landed in the catwalk! Guess what? The two 250-pound bombs and the rockets under my wings tore loose, and just went bouncing down that flight deck. None of them were armed, and none of them exploded. Every day for two weeks after that, when Commander Bass and I were in the ready room, he kept asking, ‘Ratliff, are you all right?’ He was worried about me, because I was so young. But I didn’t realize until years later it was his mistake; he had authorized the landing. The other airplanes were all loaded just like mine, but after my landing, they all went upstairs and dropped all that in the Mediterranean. You weren’t supposed to come aboard with rockets and bombs strapped to your airplane! It took them a while to repair my whole airplane; it had a lot of damage. But Commander Bass was a dandy; he was the best.

During the invasion of Southern France, everything was just exactly like the Navy intelligence said it was – that’s how good the intelligence was. On the first mission that we made, I was flying behind Bass, and we saw this train going in to a tunnel. Bass said, ‘Get ready – we’re going to close the tunnel.’ I was right behind him, and boy, he just dropped his bombs right in the neck of that tunnel, and it closed up. I



Photo provided

Lt.(jg) Paul Ratliff, far left.

had already armed my bombs, and was ready to drop them. Bass asked me how he did, and I told him he closed it up. He said, ‘Let’s go around.’ We pulled up, and were looking back down at the railroad tracks running into a little town there. There was a bunch of German tanks right at the edge of that town. Bass said, ‘Get ready to fire rockets, we’re going to take those tanks out.’ Well, old dummy here forgot to unarm his bomb, and as we were swinging over [toward the tanks], I dropped my bomb in a cornfield, and I like to rode him out of the sky plus me! Bass turned around, and he saw what had happened. He said, ‘Who’s the idiot that dropped the bomb in that cornfield?’ I shook my fist and he kept his mouth shut. We still got some tanks, but when we got back to the carrier, there was no denying who did that. We all laughed about that a long time – there was one big hole out in that corn patch!

Every day, we kept giving ground support to the troops and we were getting further and further toward Paris, moving up the Rhone River. On one occasion, another pilot and I saw a German convoy of about 10 trucks traveling up the highway, not too far from the

river. We evidently kind of caught them by surprise, and it didn’t take us long to take them out.

It’s kind of hard for me to talk about it, because we lost men over there, including my skipper – Commander Bass – who I thought the world of. To me, he was a perfect Commander; he excelled in everything. We would come back from our missions flying low coverage for the tanks and troops, and about two feet back from my cockpit would be holes from .30 caliber rounds – that wasn’t uncommon. I was Bass’ wingman when he was shot down; he got picked off by a guy with a rifle. Bass was so eager to take on the enemy that he’d make us stay up and cover for him while he went after them. He was really a fine man.

One of the things I remember most about the Germans was their accuracy. I mean, they always had your altitude – it didn’t make any difference where you flew; when they fired up their anti-aircraft guns, it was always right at your altitude. During one of the last trips we made, some of those anti-aircraft guns had blood-red powder explosions. That thing just popped blood-red, right out in front of you – jiminy, that really got to you.”

Mississippi Choctaw dancing group shares knowledge

A group of Mississippi Choctaw recently traveled to Oklahoma to share their knowledge of Choctaw dancing routines with the local tribal members. By spreading knowledge of heritage between Oklahoma and Mississippi, the culture of the Choctaw people is sure to thrive.



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

Traditional Choctaw agriculture (Part I)

May was a busy month for Choctaw people 300 years ago. The height of spring would find communities working together to get their crops planted in the warm soil, anticipating bountiful harvests later in the summer and fall. As the crops ripened, there would be feasts of fresh vegetables. Later, the majority of the harvest would be dried in the sun and placed in storage bins or hung on strings from the rafters of houses, where it would remain until it was taken down and cooked sometime during the next year. Food grown in agricultural fields has long been the backbone of the Choctaw diet.

Choctaw people have been recognized as the best agriculturalists of all of the Southeastern Tribes (Romans 1770). However, our earliest ancestors were not agricultural people, but rather hunter-gatherers who lived by collecting edible wild plants and by hunting. The transition to an agricultural society was a slow and gradual one.

Choctaw agriculture’s earliest roots lie in very ancient land-management practices. Our earliest ancestors were not passive in obtaining edible wild plants. Ten-thousand years ago and more, the people in what is now the Southeast regularly set fire to the woods and prairies to create a more open, biologically diverse environment, increasing the amount of edible plants that could thrive there and creating better habitat for the animals they hunted. The regularity of these fires and their effects on the local environment increased through the millennia (Fowler and Konopik 2007).

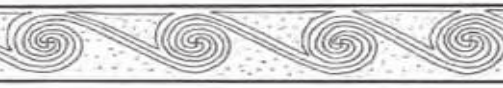
Through the regular use of fire, our earliest ancestors were able to shape and maintain wild plant communities in the state that they wanted them to be in. Although this type of interaction can be a forerunner of agriculture, it is not agriculture. An agricultural society is one that relies on domesticated plants or animals. Domestication is said to occur when people selectively manipulate the reproduction of a group of plants or animals over generations, changing their genetic makeup from that of their wild ancestors. This does not happen easily.

On this planet, there are only 10 spots where

ancient people are known to have independently developed agriculture. One of these spots comprises parts of the present states of Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, and Illinois. The Native American communities living here, who had been gathering wild plant foods for thousands of years, began to select plants with the most desirable qualities, save their seeds, and then plant them. Eventually, this human selection genetically changed the plants, creating new domesticated varieties with characteristics that made them better foods. Wild gourd was domesticated in this area by 3000 BC, eventually becoming today’s summer squash. Sunflower was domesticated by 2800 BC, marsh elder by 1900 BC, and chenopod by 1700 BC (Smith 2006).

Our Choctaw ancestors were on the periphery of the agricultural revolution occurring to their north. They had long collected and eaten the wild varieties of these same plants and were certainly aware of their domestication. Still, they would not start growing these plants themselves until centuries later, and they would never rely on them as much as did the more northern groups (Fritz 2008:334). The reason our ancestors didn’t adopt agriculture early on may be that they already produced plenty of food for their communities by using fire and other tools to manage wild acorn and nut-producing trees such as oak, hickory, and pecan. Such a form of permaculture would have required a lot less work than having to replant domesticated crops every year.

Bottle gourd appears to be the first domesticated plant grown in any abundance within the Choctaw homeland. This gourd, used to make containers, rather than being eaten as food, has a fascinating and mysterious past. The bottle gourd originated in Africa. However, recent studies of bottle gourd DNA have shown that the variety of bottle gourd that was brought to the Americas came from Africa by way of Asia (Erikson et al 2005). Once in the Americas, the bottle gourd was spread by human communi-



Iti Fabussa

2,500 years ago (Fritz 2008: 330). The spread of this ancient domesticated plant is clearly tied in with early human population movements and contacts across the globe, which are today poorly understood.

Fifteen-hundred years ago, many of our ancestors were collecting large amounts of wild plant foods and nuts, as well as growing bottle gourd, and small amounts of the plants domesticated thousands of years earlier by their northern neighbors, including sunflower, squash, goosefoot, sumpweed, little barley, knotweed, and maygrass (e.g. Scarry 2003).

According to both Choctaw oral tradition, and archaeological research, corn was domesticated in Mexico, and then brought northward. It was grown as a minor crop in what is now eastern North America as early as AD 1. However, around AD 1000 a major shift occurred, whereby corn agriculture became by far the most important source of food for Native American communities in the Southeast, including the ancestors of today’s Choctaw. At this time, many communities abandoned old settlements and moved to fertile floodplains that would make the best corn fields. They also changed their village layout to make best use of these fertile soils.

Over the next 800 years, ancestral Choctaw corn farmers developed four Choctaw varieties of corn. “Tanchushi”, was variety of corn that matured in just six weeks. “Tanchi himishko” was a yellow flint corn used to make hominy. “Tanchi tohbi” was a white corn used in making bread. “Tanchi bokañli,” was a popcorn, used in entertaining visitors (Halbert n.d.)

Beans, another domesticated food from Mexico, arrived in the Choctaw homeland about a century after corn became popular. Choctaws seem to have developed several types of beans. “Bvla”, was a large-sized variety (Byington 1915:87). The Choctaw terms

“tohbi abelha”, meaning “pole bean” and “tobi hikiny vni”, meaning “bush bean”, hint that varieties of both of these general forms of beans may have been grown in Choctaw communities (see Byington 1915:366). According to Henry Halbert, Choctaw beans were a type of butter bean.

Pumpkins came to the Choctaw homeland from Mexico, via Native American groups living in the Southwestern United States about that time as beans (Scarry 2008:395).

Beginning in the 1500s, contact with European colonizers brought a number of new domesticated crops and animals into the Choctaw homeland. One of the earliest was watermelons, brought be the Spanish in the 1500s, it was quickly incorporated into Native agriculture. Through the years, the Spanish also brought onions, garlic, tomatoes, peppers horses, cattle, and hogs. African people, brought to Choctaw country by the French and Spanish, carried okra and field peas with them. By the late 1700s, in addition to the older Native crops, Choctaw farmers were successfully raising leeks, garlic, cabbage, hogs, chicken, and ducks (Romans 1770:84), all of which are of European origin. They exported the produce back to their Anglo-American neighbors. Choctaws began raising cattle perhaps as early as the 1730s, and by the 1770s many Choctaws left their old towns and spread out onto previously unsettled land in order to better graze their livestock. By the start of the Trail of Tears in 1830, the Choctaw cattle herd numbered about 43,000 head, with Choctaws raising more cattle per person than their Anglo-American neighbors (Carso 2005).

Today, traditional food dishes like tanchi labonna and holhponi are an important part of Choctaw life and culture. These foods that are made up of different ingredients adopted by Choctaw people at different times and from different sources, are both a tasty reflection of Choctaw history, and a testament to the skill and adaptability of the Choctaw farmer.

Stay tuned for next month’s edition of Iti Fabvssa, which will focus on the way Choctaw farmers of 300 years ago planted, tended, and harvested their crops.

A list of the works cited in this article can be obtained from the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department 800-522-6170, ext. 2216.

Cultural Services hosts Choctaw stickball stick making class



Desiree Baker of Moore and Debbie Lloyd of Sumnerfield work together on their stickball sticks.



Jared Tom and Ramsey Williston get started on making their sticks at the stickball stick making class on March 31.



Joyce Gilmore concentrates during the class behind the Cultural Services office.



Steve Jacob chops away on a piece of wood to make his stickball stick.



Levi Hart of Marietta is in the early phases of creating a stickball stick, shaving off the bark.



Sonny Ratliff takes a close-up photo of the stickball sticks at the class in Durant.



Instructor Joey Tom shows Billy Eagle techniques to create a stickball stick.

Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna

◆◆◆ *Lesson of the Month* ◆◆◆

Katimma ish atoksvli?

Where do you work?

Word Meaning:
***Katimma/Katomma** – where
ish – you
atoksvli – workplace
li – I
“Ish” and “li” are pronouns that are always attached to a verb. “Ish” comes before a verb and “li” follows a verb.
Choctaw does not have a word to match the English word “do,” however, it is understood and inserted when translating to English. In the Choctaw word order, the verb is usually placed at the end of the sentence.
*Dialect preference

atoksvli li – I work at
Complete the sentence by naming your workplace.
Example: Choctaw Nation atoksvli li.
Wilburton HeadStart atoksvli li.
Broken Bow Casino atoksvli li.

Ome
Pronounced: Choctaw sound ‘O-meh’
Word Meaning: Very well! (expressing a ready assent, agreement or acknowledgement)

Yakoke
Pronounced: Yah-koh-ke
Word Meaning: Thanks! Thank you!
Note: ‘Ome’, cannot be used to answer a question in the affirmative. To answer a question we respond with “A, sv hohchifo yvt Bob.”- “Yes, my name is Bob.” ‘Ome’ is used to respond in agreement or acknowledgement to a statement, conversation, or leave-taking expression.

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