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CHOCTAW NATION

The Official Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

November 2015 Issue

## Tribal Council holds regular session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met in regular session Oct. 10 at Tvshka Homma. Committees from the following departments reported: Broken Bow Head Start, Outreach Services, Housing Authority, Genealogy, POSSE program, Ranches, WIC, Farmers Market, Pocola Casino, and OEH.

The following council bills were unanimously approved:

- Revisit tabled Letter of Appointment of Rebecca Cryer as Tribal Special District Judge to Choctaw Nation
  - Letter of Appointment of Richard Branam as Tribal District Judge to the Choctaw Nation Criminal Court
  - Budget for Choctaw Nation Environmental Office EPA Clean Air Act Section 103 Grant FY 2016
  - Budget for Choctaw Nation Environmental Office Performance Partnership Grant funded by EPA FY 2016
  - Dispose of surplus equipment
  - Approve the transfer of assets
  - Funds and Budget for Rural Business Development Grants-Opportunity Grant
  - Funds and Budget for Injury Prevention Program
  - Funds and Budget for Tribal Management Grant Program
  - Funds and Budget for Climate Change Adaptation Grant Program
  - Funds and Budget for COPS Tribal Resources Equipment/Training grant
  - Approve Right of Way No. T-148 (Renewal of Right of Way No. M-1124) on Land USA in Trust for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma with Enable Midstream Partners, LP in Latimer County, Oklahoma
  - Approve Business Lease NO. G09-1870 on Land USA in Trust for the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations with the city of McAlester in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma
  - Authorize Chief to place property in Pushmataha County in trust status with the United States of America
  - Approve balance of funds application for the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership grant
- For detailed meeting information on these resolutions and council bills, go to <http://www.choctawnation.com/government/tribal-council-bills/2015-council-bills>. Tribal Council meets at 10 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month in the Council Chambers at Tvshka Homma.



Photo by Brandy Griffin

See more stories and elder photos on pages 6 and 7.

The Outstanding Elders of 2015 are pictured immediately following the Outstanding Elders banquet on Oct. 13, at the Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant with Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. Thirty-two elders were honored from the 10 1/2 county area inside the Choctaw Nation.

## 2015 Outstanding Choctaw Elders honored at banquet

By RONNI PIERCE  
Choctaw Nation

Linda Watson from District 3 was named the outstanding female elder and Walter Phelps from District 12 was named the outstanding male elder at the 2015 Outstanding Elders banquet on Oct. 13, at the Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant. In addition to the two overall selections, each district named its own outstanding elders.

The honored elders and their families were in attendance. Also at the annual event were Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., District Councilmen, and Tribal Chaplain Rev. Bertram Bobb.

Watson works part time at the Choctaw Nation Hospital. She helps with fund raisers to furnish water and fruit and to treat the children to a meal after the day is over. She is currently serving as the President of the Talihina Seniors.

Phelps was raised in Wilburton and served in the U.S. Air Force. He has been married to his wife Betty for 46 years. Together they have raised three children, a daughter and two sons. He and his wife are pleased to work with the Crowder Seniors helping in the kitchen and preparing meals.

The Choctaw Nation first officially started honoring its elders in 1999 when the first Outstanding Elders banquet was held. A male and female are nominated from each community center, either by fellow elders or their councilman. The biographies are then submitted to the Senior Nutrition Department which makes the final choice. The male and female winners, all the nominees, and the past Outstanding Elders winners since 1999 are honored with a banquet.

The winners are given a plaque and a framed picture of themselves with their Councilman and Chief Gary Batton.



Photo by Charles Clark

Farhad Asghar, of the CollegeBoard, New York, New York, addresses a meeting of public and private sector participants with ConnectHome in Hugo last month.

## Wiring the Choctaw Nation

By CHARLES CLARK  
Choctaw Nation

When President Obama visited the Choctaw Nation July 15, he announced the launch of a new project—the ConnectHome initiative. ConnectHome is a sequel to ConnectED, which seeks to have 99 percent of K-12 students acquire high-speed Internet in their classrooms and libraries by 2018.

ConnectHome has a similar reach of bringing high-speed, broadband Internet to residences in rural America that are not currently served. It is a commitment by the federal government with communities and the private sector. The pilot program is launching in twenty-seven cities and one tribal entity—the Choctaw Nation—and will initially reach over 275,000 low-income households—and some 200,000 children—with the ability to access the Internet at home.

The intensions are simple: Where computers had not been before, students will be able to do their homework at home, parents can search and apply for jobs, and everyone can be better informed.

cont'd on page 5



Photos by Deidre Elrod

Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., Choctaw Nation Councilmen, Antlers city dignitaries, and Choctaw Nation employees gather for the Travel Plaza ribbon cutting.

## Choctaw Nation holds two ribbon cutting ceremonies

By LISA REED  
Choctaw Nation

The Choctaw Nation celebrated a grand opening and ribbon cutting for its new Travel Plaza and Casino Too on Oct. 23 in Antlers.

"It is great to have a facility like this," said Chief Gary Batton, speaking of the economic development in Pushmataha County and the opportunities it has created for tribal members. "One of the things the Tribal Council has wanted us to focus on is lifting up our communities and creating jobs."

This is the first Travel Plaza and Casino Too to be built in Pushmataha County and it will create 39 new jobs.

It features a Choctaw Country Welcome Center and a history line along a wall dedicated to the Choctaw ponies. Customers will also have the opportunity to purchase Choctaw art and products made by local Choctaw artists.

The new 10,254-sq.-ft. facility offers gasoline, diesel, red dye diesel, dining amenities, and games in the Casino Too.

Antlers Mayor Mike Burrage said he is thankful for the jobs brought to the area and the infrastructure developed through capital improvements and the beautiful Travel Plaza. "I'm excited for Antlers and for the meaningful partnership with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma."



A rainy day greeted Choctaw Nation and Antlers city officials during the Ethel Road dedication.

Following the grand opening of the Travel Plaza, Choctaw Nation officials joined Pushmataha County Commissioner Mike Brittingham for a second ribbon cutting to celebrate the dedication of a 1.5-mile section of Ethel Road. The Choctaw Nation invested \$450,000 for the improvement on the county road.

### What's inside

Columns .....	2
Outstanding Elders .....	6
Health & Nursery News .....	8
Food Distribution .....	8
Notes to the Nation .....	9
Obituaries .....	10
Sports .....	15
Ili Fabvssa .....	16

### The Mission of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

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

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# FAITH, FAMILY AND CULTURE



## Veterans Day, we honor those who serve

We hold a ceremony every year to honor our Choctaw Veterans and we are thankful every day for the sacrifices given by the brave men and women who have protected our Nation and continue to protect our freedom.

Veterans from World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the War on Terrorism travel to the Tvshka Homma Capitol grounds to participate in the ceremony held on Veterans Day. It's an opportunity for us to show our honor and respect with a handshake, pat on the back, or a big hug. The

Veterans receive a new jacket as a gift of appreciation and they wear it proudly.

I am always moved when the Color Guard posts the colors of the United States and the Choctaw Nation. It is especially significant to see the salutes of the Choctaw Veterans with the Capitol standing tall behind them.

The statue guarding the Capitol was named Tvshka Homma or Red Warrior, a tribute to centuries of Choctaw warriors. The trees shade monuments honoring Veterans who



Photo by Brandon Frye

The Choctaw Nation Color Guard led the way during the Trail of Tears walk at the Capitol Grounds last May. The Color Guard consists of Choctaw volunteers of different ages, all veterans having served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

gave the ultimate sacrifice, losing their life in action during war times. Their names are etched on the granite monuments, and we can see our reflections as we read the them—a reminder that these men died for us. One of the ways we can honor those who have died for our country is to remember and serve those who are alive.

The soldiers who are stationed now in active war zones receive a care package from the Nation every three months. Our Veterans Advocacy department also assists Veterans with VA claim applications.

Veterans aren't always fighting in a foreign war. There are many who are stationed in the states and our National Guardsmen provide disaster relief support and protection. They all deserve our appreciation. We hope they all know they are in our thoughts and prayers.

It's important to learn about the Veterans in your family and listen to their

stories. The Choctaw Code Talkers were instrumental to ending World War I. They loved their homeland and were brave, creative men who used the wonderful Choctaw language to change the outcome of the war.

We need to share our Veterans' stories with our children and teach them about how thankful we should be for the service of our soldiers.

There are many ways we can honor our Veterans. One of the most simple and heartfelt is to say "Yakoke," thank you for your service.



## Autumn is a time for family and reflection

November has arrived. And if you are like me, it is hard to believe this year is going by so quickly, and soon we will be in 2016.

Personally, I spend a lot of time in my vehicle commuting from my home in Pushmataha County to the tribal offices in Durant. What would seem a tedious routine to most, is actually a great opportunity to prepare myself for each day. This time allows me to see beautiful sunrises, make phone calls, or just spend time in prayer before beginning a busy day.



Photo by Deidre Elrod

The sun rises through the trees at Cedar Lake, found 12 miles south of Heavener in Choctaw Country. A similar view accompanies Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., as he commutes to the tribal offices in Durant from his home in Pushmataha County.

Oklahoma is known for its beautiful landscapes and I often reflect on how it must have been for our ancestors when they were new to what was then Indian Territory. They must have been thankful for the abundant wildlife, water and timber which were needed resources to provide for those ancestral families in southeastern Oklahoma.

I am so proud that protection of our natural resources is still a priority for the tribe. The successes of the Choctaw Nation today would be unfathomable to those who had everything taken from them. What a resilient people we are to start with very little and build ourselves back to the third largest tribe. That resiliency has also kept our rich culture and traditions alive and drives us forward to a successful future for generations to come.

This month is also an opportunity to honor our Choctaw Veterans. As a veteran myself, attending the annual Veterans Ceremony is always a highlight of the year. Many people do not fully understand that our American freedom was won because of the selfless duty of these distinguished individuals.

If you want to receive a blessing, I challenge you to shake the hand of a Choctaw Veteran and look into the face of a real hero. It is an experience you will not soon forget.

Most people associate November with the beginning of the holiday season and Thanksgiving is festively celebrated in each of our communities with a meal and time of fellowship. Chief Batton and I attend as many of the community dinners as possible and I can attest that the meals are delicious.

The cooks in the centers take great pride in preparing traditional Thanksgiving food but often some traditional Choctaw dishes are served as well. There is no better treat than tanchi labona and grape dumplings made the way Choctaws do it. We often tease that "Choctaws know how to eat" but it is more because Choctaws really know how to cook!

I hope that this month you have the opportunity to reflect and be thankful for the blessings around you. Be thankful for the beautiful colors of the fall foliage, the time spent with family and friends at deer camp, a wonderful family, or simply being given another day to live.

Being thankful is a choice—choose to be thankful. God bless you all.

## Chaplain's Corner

### The Gift of Salvation



Rev. Bertram Bobb  
Tribal Chaplain

We are thankful for this Special Day, Thanksgiving Day. A day declared by our forefathers to thank God for His bountiful blessings.

We thank God the Father who sent His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty for our sins, which is death, on the cross.

Paul the Apostle wrote in his letter to the Corinthians that Christ died, He was buried, and that He rose again on the third day. This is the Gospel, the good news of salvation. (I Corinthians 15:1-4).

It was by His Love, by His Mercy, and by His Grace (Ephesians 2:8) He has given to us this free Gift of Salvation.

Have you accepted this Gift? Paul reminds us to remember the Gospel with the partaking of the Lord's Supper. We read in I Corinthians 11:26: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

"Till He Come." Yes, Jesus is coming back. He Himself said He will return. We read in Luke 21:28:28. "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

Also, will you read in Luke 24:25-27: There are many other passages of Scripture that tell us of His soon return.

That first message our Lord Jesus Christ sent from heaven back to earth is a blessing to me. It is recorded in Acts 1:9-11:

9. And when He had

spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel:

11. Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven.

To believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, His return is an encouragement, there is no fear, but at the same time there is a burden for unbelievers to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Jesus came the first time as our Savior, to forgive our sins when we agree with Him that we are sinners and receive Him. (Read Romans 3:23 and Romans 6:23).

Jesus Christ will come the second time as our Judge.

Judge what or who? He will judge those who have rebelled against Him and have rejected Him. He will set things right.

The Bible teaches the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and this will be a visible, bodily return of Christ to this earth.

We know there is no event more certain than the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. We read these words in I Corinthians 15:51-52:51. Behold, I show you a mystery; I shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

52: In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

When the Lord Jesus comes, there will be a company of believers who shall never taste death, for they shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. This is called in the Bible "That Blessed Hope."

This glorious event, when Jesus Christ comes again to raise all the believing dead, change all the living believers, and

catch them all up to Himself may occur anytime.

Jesus said in the Gospel of John 14:2-3:2. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

We are nearer that event than we have ever been and one of these days it will happen, and we read in I Thessalonians 4:16-18:

16. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. When this event happens, it will be sudden, so secret, that the unsaved who remain will be utterly confused, by the unexplainable, sudden, disappearance of millions and millions of believers without leaving a clue as to the destination of their sudden departure.

Only those who have been born again will hear the shout when it occurs. Only the saved will respond and understand the shout, and rise to meet the Lord in the air.

The Lord Jesus Christ is coming again. Jesus will bring our loved ones, those who have been born again, with Him, and we shall be reunited with them, never to part again.

Are you ready to meet the Lord Jesus Christ? If you are not ready or not sure, you can get ready by praying this prayer, "Oh Lord, I realize I am a sinner, I trust Jesus Christ as my Savior."

May God bless you. Pray for America and our leaders. Pray for our spiritual leaders. Pray for our men and women in the armed services and pray for our veterans.

## Senior Citizens Dinners & Kids Parties



Antlers Kids	12/6	2 p.m.
Antlers Seniors	12/16	Noon
Atoka Kids	12/3	5 p.m.
Atoka Seniors	12/16	Noon
Bethel	12/21	6 p.m.
Broken Bow	12/18	6 p.m.
Buffalo Valley Kids	12/1	6 p.m.
Coalgate Kids	12/4	6 p.m.
Coalgate Seniors	12/9	Noon
Crowder Kids	12/12	1 p.m.
Crowder Seniors	12/16	11:30 a.m.
Durant Kids	12/4	6 p.m.
Durant Seniors	12/16	11:30 a.m.
Hugo Kids*	12/11	6 p.m.
*(Event Center in Grant)		
Hugo Seniors	12/17	11:30 a.m.
Idabel Kids	12/14	6 p.m.
Idabel Seniors	12/17	6 p.m.
McAlester Kids	12/12	1 p.m.
McAlester Seniors	12/16	11:30 a.m.
Poteau Kids	12/12	4 p.m.
Poteau Community	12/16	11:30 a.m.
Smithville Kids	12/8	7 p.m.
Smithville Seniors	12/16	Noon
Spiro Kids	12/14	4 p.m.
Spiro Seniors	12/17	11:30 a.m.
Stigler Community	12/9	11:30 a.m.
Stigler Kids	12/10	4:30 p.m.
Summerfield Kids	12/13	4 p.m.
Tvshka homma Kids	12/5	2 p.m.
Wilburton Kids	12/5	2 p.m.
Wilburton Seniors	12/9	Noon
Quinton Kids	12/3	6 p.m.
Wright City Kids	12/13	2 p.m.
Wright City Seniors	12/17	Noon

(for a list of Thanksgiving dinners, see page 3.)



*Choctaw Nation Youth Outreach's Annual*

## Chahta angel Program

Each year we have over 100 deserving Choctaw children in our program. We hope to help ensure they all have a gift to open for Christmas.

If you are interested in adopting a Chahta Angel or have any questions please contact:

Youth Outreach  
877-285-6893  
Brandy Sigler bsigler@choctawnation.com  
Heather Tehauno htehauno@choctawnation.com

*Yakoke!*

# #CNIdabel



Tina Parker and her mom Carolyn Bohanan of Wright City show off the necklaces they made during the make-and-take jewelry classes at the Idabel Community Meeting on Oct. 27.



Traditional craftsman Les Williston mans his table of handmade bows, arrows, tomahawks, and spears while the audience listens to Chief Gary Batton address the crowd of nearly 350 at the Idabel Community Meeting.



Betty Tom with her beadwork and (from front left) granddaughters Audrina and Raynie and daughters Gennavie and Margo. Raynie (right) chases her partner during the Raccoon Dance.



Chief Gary Batton and District 1 Councilman Thomas Williston pose with (left to right) District 1 Senior Miss Mandy Steele, District 1 Little Miss Baylee Byington, and District 1 Junior Miss Aryza Impson.



Jasney Wade (center) from Bethel poses with her Choctaw clan of daughters and grandchildren before taking their seats at the Idabel meeting.

## Thanksgiving Dinners

LOCATION	DATE	TIME
Antlers (Seniors)	11/18	Noon
Atoka	11/18	Noon
Bethel	11/18	6 p.m.
Bokenlow	11/18	Noon
Coalgate	11/15	6 p.m.
Crowder	11/2	1 p.m.
Idabel	11/18	Noon
M. Alester	11/2	1 p.m.
Poteau	11/18	11:30 a.m.
Smithville	11/18	Noon
Spiro	11/19	11:30 a.m.
Stigler	11/18	11:30 a.m.
Talihina	11/19	11:30 a.m.
Wilburton	11/18	Noon
Wright City	11/19	Noon

All dinners are held at the community centers unless otherwise noted.



Photos by  
Payton Guthrie  
&  
Ronni Pierce



Danielle Santillano arrives at the Idabel meeting with her daughters (left to right) Phimaria, Topanga, and Santilla Smith, all from Idabel.

## Chahta Anumpa Aiihvna

◆◆◆ Lesson of the Month ◆◆◆

**Vocabulary:** *chishno akosh* – you, the one who...initiates an action with 'ish' – you.

- Chishno akosh ish taloa tuk o?**  
Con conversationally: *Chishnakosh ish taloa tuk o?*  
Are you the one who was singing?
- Chishno akosh ish anumpula chi.**  
Con conversationally: *Chishnakosh ish anumpula chi.*  
You are the one who will speak.
- Chishno akosh issuba ish qbinila chi.**  
Con conversationally: *Chishnakosh issuba ish qbinila chi.*  
You are the one who will ride the horse.
- Chishno akosh Miko ish afama chi.**  
Con conversationally: *Chishnakosh Miko ish afama chi.*  
You are the one who will meet the chief.

**Vocabulary:** *chishno akq* – you the one whom....an action directed toward you with 'chi'.

- Chishno akq e chi hoyo.**  
Con conversationally: *Chishnakq e chi hoyo.*  
You are the one we are looking for.
- Chishno akq chim anola chi.**  
Con conversationally: *Chishnakq chim anola chi.*  
You are the one whom he will tell.
- Chishno akq okla chi holitobla chi.**  
Con conversationally: *Chishnakq okla chi holitobla chi.*  
You are the one whom they will honor.
- Chishno akq illimpa okla chim isht vla tuk.**  
Con conversationally: *Chishnakq illimpa okla chim isht vla tuk.*  
You are the one to whom they brought food.

**Word Meaning:**

*chishno akosh* (chihsh-noh-ah-kohsh) - you, the one who  
con conversationally: *chishnakosh* (chihsh-nah-kohsh)  
*chishno akq* (chihsh-noh-ah-kohn) - you the one whom  
con conversationally: *chishnakq* (chihsh-nah-kohn)  
*ish* (esh) - you  
*taloa* (tah-loh-wah) – sing  
*afama* (ah-fah-ma) – to meet  
*qbinila* (o(n)-bi-ni-lah – will sit on or ride  
*anumpula* (ah-nohm-poh-lah) - speak/talk  
*chi* (chehn) - future tense marker  
*chi* (che) - you  
*chim* (chehm) - to or for you  
*okla* (ohk-la) – they  
*isht vla* (esht ah-la) - bring  
*issuba* (es-soh-ba) - horse  
*Miko* (Mi(n)-koh) – chief  
*holitobli* – honor  
*tuk* (tohk) - past tense marker  
*o* (ohn) - question marker  
*e* (e) - we  
*hoyo* (hoh-yoh) - search/look for  
*anola* (anola) - tell  
*illimpa* (ehl-lem-pah)- food

www.choctawschool.com

## Mark Your Calendars!

Youth Work Program  
Applications will be Available  
Friday, January 1, 2016

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# BUSINESS

## Cain can't stop growing new successful businesses



Photo by Brandon Frye

Ellis Cain, left, and Kelsey Cain in the entry way of their Ada business headquarters. From this location, the two run a drug testing business, a bail bonds business, and oversee new offices in Duncan and Davis.

### A Choctaw from California plants seeds of business and entertainment from coast-to-coast

By BRANDON FRYE

Choctaw Nation

Kelsey Cain, 46-year-old Choctaw business owner and lifelong entrepreneur, has been experiencing one of the busiest years of his life.

A busy life and blooming business are nothing new to Kelsey, the owner and operator of the Ada-based drug and alcohol testing facility called Midwest Drug Test, LLC. His admitted inability to sit still, his knack for building successful businesses, and tendency to pursue his passions have always kept him busy.

After moving to Oklahoma from California in his youth, he quickly built up his first business as a teen.

"I started Kelsey's You-Bake Pizza when I was 19, here in Ada," he said. "You took

it home to bake. It was popular in California when I was growing up, but it didn't go over so well here, because it was too hot in the summer!"

This began a pattern in Kelsey's entrepreneurial endeavors, moving and starting new businesses—only as an adult, these businesses found more success.

He started Midwest Drug Test with his mother, Patricia Donwen, in 1989. The two found a need for a drug testing service in the area after a supervisor for the Santa Fe Railroad Company approached them needing to test employees. In response, the first mobile drug testing service in Oklahoma opened its doors, with Kelsey and his mother at the helm.

After helping his mother launch the family business, looking to live in a big-

ger city, Kelsey left Ada and moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1991. There, he started a new drug testing facility as part of the Midwest Drug Test Company. This new business also found success, and supported Kelsey while he pursued his artistic passions.

During his eight years in New Mexico, Kelsey became well known for his work with acting and modeling. He also dove into theater, and recalls landing the male lead in almost every show.

Theater started as a side gig but quickly grew into his main passion. So much so, he saw the need to move to an even bigger city in 1999 to continue to grow his performance career. So, he sold his New Mexico business and moved.

"I went off to become an actor and model in New York City," Kelsey said. "My first modeling gig in New York City was on the cover of a romance novel. It was fun, a farm boy going off to New York City to get into modeling."

Again, Kelsey started a new branch of the Midwest Drug Test Company, only this time in New York. And again, the business took off, supporting him while he chased his entertainment interests.

He recalls his time in New York as a flurry of entertainment jobs, starring in docudramas, designing photo shoots for pop figures like Beyoncé, putting on art shows, and modeling.

Kelsey moved back to Ada at the end of 2011 to be with family, selling off his company in New York. In January of 2013 he took command of the home office for Midwest Drug Test.

Hitting the ground running, he quickly began work to raise his family business to new heights.

"It was my goal to bring it up to what it should be," Kelsey said. "I interacted closely with new companies, and also got back in contact with the companies we had lost touch with. I have doubled sales over the last two and a half years."

With business back and booming, Kelsey and his business partner Ellis Cain pushed for an expansion of business,

recently opening two satellite offices for Midwest Drug Test in Duncan and Davis.

The two also started a completely new bail bonds business called 2 Cains Bail Bonds.

"We started 2 Cains Bail Bonds in January of 2015, so it's pretty much still in its infancy stage," Ellis said. "But it's doing really well."

The businesses are all enrolled as preferred suppliers with the Choctaw Nation.

Above and beyond offering help to businesses and individuals with drug problems at a work force level, both Kelsey and Ellis are dedicated to helping before legal issues arise, at a social level.

"We do have a social responsibility on both sides of our businesses," Kelsey said. "We offer community services, to bring a recovery side to all of this. I provide talks with organizations, communities, and individuals. I offer solutions for where to go, what to do, so when someone has an issue there is a seed there just in case it's needed."

Kelsey said many people are affected by drugs and alcohol today. In some way, he added, he would rather these problems be prevented, than let them continue on and get worse. He speaks from a place of understanding, having had alcohol problems himself.

As for his continued success as an entrepreneur, Kelsey chalks it up to more than just his passion and a need to keep moving.

"Fight! Fight for what you feel is right," Kelsey said. "It takes a lot of work, perseverance and patience. Believe in yourself, your service, and your product."

The headquarters for Midwest Drug Test is at 1120 N. Mississippi Ave. in Ada. Kelsey and Ellis can be reached at 580-421-9000.

The Duncan office can be reached at 580-786-4455, Davis 580-369-5000.

**Tribal members interested in getting involved with the Preferred Supplier Program are welcome to contact Boyd Miller at 800-522-6170, extension 2889.**

## Choctaw entrepreneur has a hot hand with an Ace in the Bowl

By KENDRA GERMANY

Choctaw Nation

Susan Witt, founder and CEO of Unique Foods, LLC, has been spicing things up for over 20 years now.

Her original mild salsa recipe was first a hit with her friends and family. One day, after bringing her salsa to a party, a friend asked her if she ever thought about going commercial with her salsa.

Witt laughed off the question. At the time she was busy with her family's dry cleaning business and being a mom.

Four years ago the same friend told others that his biggest regret was not convincing her to market her salsa.



**Ace in the Bowl Salsa is made in Oklahoma and comes in flavors mild, medium and hot.**

She then decided that it was time to take a chance on her spicy mixture.

With the help of Oklahoma State University's Robert M. Kerr Food and Agricul-

tural Product Center, she learned the process of commercializing her product.

From that encounter Unique Foods, LLC, and Ace in the Bowl Salsa was born.

In October 2012, Ace in the Bowl was in jars and ready to go on shelves.

"Last summer, I went to the Fancy Food Show in New York City," said Witt. "The product was well received and was named one of the best new products of 2015 by the Specialty Food Association."

Ace in the Bowl is a Made in Oklahoma (MIO) product and is bottled in Mustang.

She also became a member of the MIO Coalition in June.

According to Witt, while MIO covers everything from salsa to soap, the MIO Coalition is food only.

"The Coalition is governed by the major food companies in Oklahoma. They let a few small companies join. I was elected into the coalition in June," said Witt.

Ace in the Bowl is an all-natural, olive oil-based salsa with ingredients not found in other off-the-shelf salsas. It is also a sugar and gluten free product.

Currently, the salsa comes in three flavors, mild, medium, and hot.

According to Witt, the mild has no heat and is good for children and people with digestive issues. The medium has jalapenos and varies in heat. "Medium varies, because jalapenos vary. It always has the same amount of jalapenos, but some are just hotter than others," said Witt.

And the hot packs a lot of heat and has jalapenos, habaneros, and crushed red peppers.

There are no artificial preservatives in Ace in the Bowl Salsa. "The only preservative in this is vinegar," she said.

Her original recipe only included what she had in her kitchen.

"I got lucky, because people liked it," she laughed.

Ace in the Bowl is available for purchase on the Ace

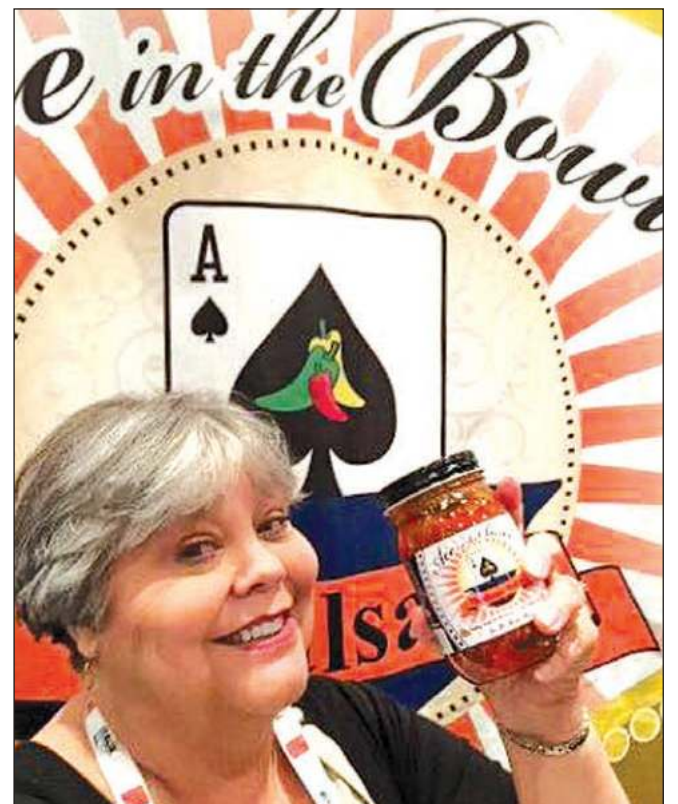


Photo Provided

**Susan Witt, CEO and founder of Unique Foods, LLC, and Ace in the Bowl Salsa poses with her product during the Fancy Food Show event held in New York.**

in the Bowl website. It is also available for purchase at various grocery stores in the Oklahoma City and Tulsa areas, as well as several gift shop locations. Witt hopes to soon have her products in retail locations in southeastern Oklahoma as well. A full list of those retail locations is also available on the Ace in the Bowl website.

The salsa is also featured in a few salsa of the month clubs.

"One out of Pennsylvania has placed an order and another out of Austin Texas, will be placing an order," said Witt.

Witt was also just approved to be on Amazon and redesigned her website and packaging label. "Our website is now on our label, so people know where to contact us."

Witt is also working towards making packaging for a three jar pack gift set.

"Those will be great for mailing gifts. If you want to send a gift to someone in California, call me up and we will send it out," said Witt.

Ace in the Bowl also has a fund raising program splitting the proceeds with them 50/50. "We have a

three pack for 20 dollars. The group collects 20 dollars and gives me 10," said Witt. "I don't get to keep the 10, I use it for shipping and other costs. I don't really make a profit off of the fund raising. It is a way for me to give back to the community."

Witt hopes to someday add other products to the Ace in the Bowl lineup. She is working on adding an Italian salsa. She also hopes to eventually have dry mixes for dips and soups.

Witt is a proud member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Her grandfather Silas Anderson King and great-grandparents were on the original Dawes Rolls. "It is really important to me the legacy of the Choctaws continues in my family. I am proud because I know how proud my grandpa was," says Witt.

"Oklahoma is very fortunate to have many really good MIO products. But I can say, I'm one of the few producers who is Choctaw."

**For more information about Ace in the Bowl, including prices, locations and recipes, visit [aceinthebowl.com](http://aceinthebowl.com).**



The CSBDS provides business assistance to Choctaw tribal entrepreneurs that want to start or expand their business.

Choctaw Tribal members that utilize the services will receive specialized technical assistance through one-on-one business counseling, training workshops, an extensive network of business assistance programs and educational networking opportunities. Assistance offered includes, but is not limited to:

- Business Planning
- Business Counseling
- Business Registration
- Access to Financing
- 8(a) Certification Assistance
- Minority Business Registration
- Marketing
- Business Taxes
- Bid Assistance

#### December Events Calendar:

(Please contact CSBDS for more details and to register)

- Dec 3rd Idabel: Comprehensive QuickBooks 8:30 – 4:00
- Dec 8th Tahihina: Business Planning 10:00 – 12:00
- Dec 10th McAlester: Business Planning 10:00 – 12:00
- Dec 17th Durant: Business Tax Workshop 9:00 – 11:30

Contact Small Business Development Services today!

[bhamilton@choctawnation.com](mailto:bhamilton@choctawnation.com) or 580-924-8280 ext.2901

# Young Choctaw in print



Photo Provided

**Elissa Hamil is the daughter of Jamie and Kevin Hamil, who both work for the Choctaw Nation.**

By **KENDRA GERMANY**  
Choctaw Nation

A Choctaw woman is making a name for herself in the world of publishing.

Elissa Hamil, 19, of Durant recently had a short story published in the book, "The High School Truth."

"The High School Truth" is a collaboration of 34 contributing authors representing all regions of the United States, and various ethnic, religious, and racial groups.

The book coins itself as being the "ultimate guidebook to American high school life." Each story answers the question, "What do you wish you had known on your first day of freshman year?"

According to Hamil, co-authors and book organizers Martin Rather and Lila Rimalovski, specifically wanted someone of Choctaw de-

cent to contribute to the project.

"They called me and asked me questions about myself, and about Oklahoma," said Hamil. "They thought we all lived on reservations."

Elissa's story explains to students that it is okay to be afraid of high school.

"I thought about my first day of high school, when we had this fire drill," said Hamil. "I had no clue what was going on, but then I realized that it was okay because no one else knew what was going on either."

"The High School Truth" is available for purchase on Amazon.com, in both hard copy and e-book form.

She graduated high school with honors, and is currently seeking a Bachelor of Science degree in biology at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. Elissa works in the Office of Academic Affairs at SE. Her goal is to become an optometrist.

Hamil says she is thankful for the opportunity to have her work published. "When I graduate I hope to give back to the Choctaw people."

Elissa was also recently given the chance to sing the National Anthem for the President of the United States on his July 15th visit to Durant.

Hamil credits her Choctaw heritage for allowing her to be a part of many of her recent opportunities. "I am proud to be Choctaw. God has blessed me with many wonderful opportunities as well as great friends and family who have supported me in everything that I do."

# ConnectHome brings broadband to rural areas

cont'd from page 1

Thanks to the Choctaw Nation's positive results with the federal Promise Zone grant and other spotlight-grabbing success stories, the Choctaw Nation was selected as one of the pioneer sites for the initiative. As a result, Choctaws living in rural HUD housing will be among the first in the nation to receive this help. The Choctaw Nation's service area of 10 1/2 counties in southeastern Oklahoma fits the target description sought by the Obama administration.

A White House release states, "Since the President took office, the private and public sectors have invested over \$260 billion into new broadband infrastructure, and three in four Americans now use broadband at home."

But the gap widens considerably in low-income homes.

At the time of the President's visit, Chief Gary Batton said, "The ConnectHome Initiative will link our homes to a world beyond southeastern Oklahoma, and tie our lives to greater opportunities."

President Obama noted that the initiative is a step beyond the Promise Zone, of which the Choctaw Nation was one of five designated across the country. It also is, he said, to be a private-public partnership—a variety of businesses and community agencies working together.

Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Durant, and Durant Public Schools were on board from the get-go to offer facilities and instructors to train all ages in digital literacy for free.

Speaking a few weeks after

President Obama's announcement in Durant, Sean Burrage, president of Southeastern Oklahoma State University, said, a committee has already been formed with representatives from local educational institutions, utility companies, and the Choctaw Nation. The group, Burrage said, is working to make the idea a reality.

According to Burrage, the biggest obstacle at this time is the lack of infrastructure.

These rural areas are not wired to receive the Internet. "So there is not much point in training or even handing them a laptop if they take it home and still can't get a connection," he said. So the cable has to be laid first.

On Oct. 22, after a Choctaw Nation ConnectHome Convening meeting in Hugo, Charlie Hembree of Vyve Broadband, a Shawnee-based company, said, "We just got through laying cable through the towns of Quinton and Red Oak. That was for another project to get to another area, so these communities just lucked out."

Upon further questioning, Hembree explained that while the cable runs through the towns, it still does not reach individual residences.

"They will still have to come into town to use their computers at school or the library," Hembree said, adding that he knew of no plans to wire private homes in the extreme rural areas.

"And Wi-Fi," he said, "is pointless in these mountains and valleys. You'd have to have a tower at the top of each hill and that's not going to happen."

Scott Grosfield, Regional Director of Rental Property Services and ConnectHome for the Choctaw Nation, was on his way to a meeting Nov. 2 in McAlester when he called. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development office was holding a two-day workshop on Southeast Oklahoma and Promise Zone that he was to speak at, but also hoped to learn a few things.

"The Choctaw Nation Housing Authority will receive \$52,700 this year for ConnectHome," he said. The funds should be received within a few months from USDA. The application for continued funding is uncertain, he added.

These funds will be used for "service costs and router fees" to living facilities in the affordable homes program "in Wright City, Talihina, and Durant," he said.

In addition to the trainings by SE and other educational groups, Grosfield said, "Best Buy will be furnishing instructors on how to use devices" (laptops, etc.) and "OETA has a mobile learning unit that will teach how to use tablets and other devices."

He had thoughts too on what's to be overcome. "The biggest obstacle," Grosfield said, "is obtaining the devices."

These will have to be donated, Grosfield said.

**For information, contact: Scott Grosfield, Regional Director of ConnectHome for the Choctaw Nation, 580-743-5360, sgrosfield@choctawhousing.com or Sean Burrage, SE President, 580-745-2500, sburrage@SE.edu.**



Photo by Brandon Frye

**When President Barack Obama stopped by Choctaw Nation in July, Elissa Hamil opened the day's event by singing the National Anthem.**

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation						
December 2015						
Durant - Monday, Wednesday and Friday		Broken Bow - Monday, Wednesday and Friday		Idabel by appointment		
Phone: 580-326-8304; Fax: 580-326-0115		Email: ddavenport@choctawnation.com				
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Antlers by appt.	3	4	5
6	7 Durant 8:00-4:30	8 Talihina 10:00-2:00 Broken Bow & Idabel by appt.	9 Crowder by appt.	10	11 Atoka by appt. Coalgate by appt.	12
13	14 Durant 8:00-4:30	15	16 McAlester 10:00-2:00 Stigler by appt.	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 Wilburton By appt.	29 Poteau 11:30-1:00	30 Wright City by appt.	31		

## APPLYING FOR A JOB? NEED HELP?

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is offering assistance to individuals who would like to submit an application for employment and need assistance with the process or any of the following:

- Creating a user profile
- Applying for Choctaw Nation jobs
- Resume building/reviewing
- Interviewing tips and skills

FREE!

10am-3pm

For additional information or questions please contact:

**Stephanie Burton**  
sburton@choctawnation.com  
580 924 8280 ext.2771

**Craig Northcutt**  
cnorthcutt@choctawnation.com  
580 924 8280 ext.2582

ANTLERS	November 9, 2015	Field Office
ATOKA	October 20, 2015	Field Office
BETHAL	December 1, 2015	Field Office
BROKEN BOW	December 2, 2015	Field Office
COALGATE	November 12, 2015	Field Office
CROWDER	October 13, 2015	Field Office
DURANT	October 15, 2015	Field Office
HUGO	October 14, 2015	Field Office
IDABEL	December 9, 2015	Field Office
MCALESTER	October 22, 2015	Field Office
POTEAU	October 29, 2015	Field Office
SMITHVILLE	December 3, 2015	Field Office
SPIRO	October 28, 2015	Field Office
STIGLER	October 27, 2015	Field Office
TALIHINA	December 29, 2015	Field Office
WILBURTON	December 30, 2015	Field Office
WRIGHT CITY	December 8, 2015	Field Office

*You are cordially invited to attend...*

### The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's Legal Assistance Events

Samantha Guinn, a licensed attorney, will be available to provide assistance with simple legal documents. This service is **free** to all Choctaw members. Examples of matters she may be able to assist with are:

- Family law (adoption, divorces, custody, child support)
- Contracts and leases
- Guardianships and modifications

**Community Center Schedule**  
November

- 11/12 Atoka
- 11/17 Coalgate

9 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m.

*Please contact the community center to confirm she will be there before traveling. Currently we are not providing representation in court or assisting in criminal matters.*

## 2016 RV Space Reservation

In order to reserve an RV site with electric and water hookups for the 2016 Labor Day Festival, please mail the reservation request form at below **no earlier than January 2, 2016**. RV sites will be reserved on a **lottery-style** basis. **Please include a copy of your CDIB card**. Also, include the year, make, model, and length of your RV or camper and the number of slide outs.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY AT THIS TIME.

All reservations will be drawn randomly for the RV sites. If your name is drawn, you will be notified by mail. At that time you will send in your cashier's check or money in the amount of \$75 and you will receive your confirmation and rules for RV camping at the Labor Day Festival.

No phone reservations will be accepted.

Please only include one reservation per application. We will do our best to respect the requests for preferred RV pads; however, we cannot guarantee you will get the pad number requested. Please watch the Biskinik newspaper and ChoctawNation.com for future articles or changes in parking, tent camping, and tribal preferences for the 2016 Labor Day Festival.

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**Only one (1) reservation per application**  
**No reservations will be accepted prior to January 2, 2016**

Please return to  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma  
Attn: Janita Jeffreys  
RV Reservations  
2101 West Arkansas Street  
Durant, OK 74701

# 2015 OUTSTANDING ELDER

## District nominees honored at annual family banquet

Wisdom and accomplishment were noted as the Choctaw Nation honored its Outstanding Elders on Oct. 13 with a banquet. The annual event was organized by the Senior Nutrition Program staff and attended by tribal leaders and families of the honorees.

The dinner and ceremony were held at the Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant.

Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. served as Master of Ceremonies with Rev. Bertram Bobb, tribal chaplain, offering prayers to open and close the banquet. Bobb was an

honoree in the year 2000.

The Lord's Prayer was offered in sign language by Choctaw Nation princesses Ariana Byington, Little Miss Choctaw Nation; Loren Crosby, Junior Miss Choctaw Nation; and Neiatha Hardy, Miss Choctaw Nation.

After dinner, Chief Gary Batton offered the keynote speech as he commended the elders for their lifetime of contributions. Outstanding Elders for each district were presented, then Walter Phelps, of District 12, and Linda Watson, of District 3, were named Outstanding Elders of the Choctaw Nation.

**District 3: Curtis Watson Sr., Talihina, and for Smithville, Julia Lewis Watson and Norman Eugene Going** will represent District 3.

Curtis Watson Sr. lives in Talihina and has three children and six grandchildren. He worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and later Greyhills Academy High School as a maintenance and utility operator. He was also a volunteer fireman, a Little League Baseball coach, and a basketball coach for a number of years. After he retired, he moved back to Talihina. Watson feels the Choctaw Nation has really great programs for the senior citizens.

Julia Lewis Watson was born on July 7, 1945, to Mark and Rhoda Lewis and was raised around the Smithville and Watson area. She attends the Buffalo Presbyterian Church, where she participates in the Presbyterian Women's Gathering. She has six children, 17 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. She enjoys word find puzzles, sewing, going to gospel singings, and spending time with the family. She thanks her great-grandmother and mother for teaching her to speak the Choctaw language.

Going was born on Nov. 17, 1948. No other information is available.

No photos available.



**District 4: Bruce Curnutt and Peggy Wiser, of Poteau, and Norma Anderson and Gene Sockey, of Spiro** take top honors in the district.

Curnutt was born on Feb. 22, 1956. He has been married to Francine Blevins Curnutt for 22 years and has two daughters. He has spent 23 years in law enforcement. His hobbies are hunting deer and turkey, spending time with his family and attending stickball games.

Wiser was raised in Lawton and graduated from Lawton High School. She worked for Duncan Public Schools for 17 years. She has lived in Summerfield for eight years where she is active in the church and community. She has been married to Jerry Wiser for 41 years. They have two children and four wonderful grandchildren. She is a member of the Poteau Choctaw Beaders and is a registered Choctaw Artisan. She is very proud of her Choctaw heritage.

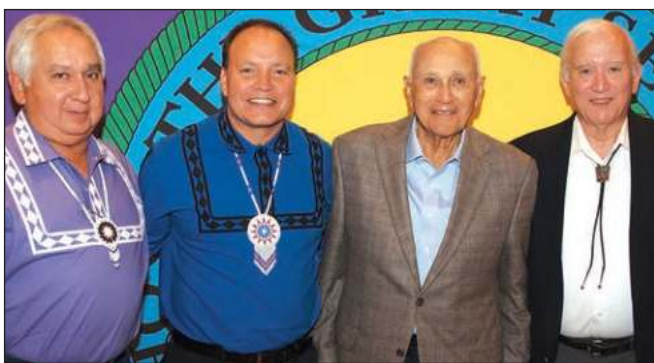
Anderson lives in Spiro but was born and raised in McCurtain. She is married with two children and three grandchildren. Her mother is Josephine Baker and her grandfather is Elum Baker. Both were born in the Red Oak-Lodi area. She worked at Trane in Fort Smith, Ark. for almost 20 years, and ran for Tribal Council in 2011. Her hobbies are growing and painting gourds.

Sockey was born in Bokoshe in 1925 and raised in nearby Buck Creek. At the age of 17, he joined the Marine Corps. After basic training, he was deployed to the Pacific in 1944 where he fought in three major campaigns including Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima. He and Teddi became members of the First Baptist Church. Sadly, Teddi passed away in 2014. He remains a faithful follower of his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

*Pictured above, from left: Chief Gary Batton, Bruce Curnutt, Peggy Wiser and Councilman Delton Cox.*

*Pictured below, from left: Councilman Ronald Perry, Chief Gary Batton, Norma Anderson and Councilman Delton Cox.*

*Pictured at bottom, from left: Councilman Ronald Perry, Chief Gary Batton, Gene Sockey and Councilman Delton Cox.*



**District 1: Lorenza Crosby Brandy and Gerald O. Johnson** will carry the title of Outstanding Elder of District 1, Idabel, of the Choctaw Nation for the coming year.

Lorenza Crosby was born on March 12, 1945, in Broken Bow. She is an active member of the Methodist faith. In 1964, she married Raymond Brandy. In 2003, she received her certification as a Certified Nursing Assistant. At the age of 55, her mom encouraged her to start attending the Idabel Community Center and get involved. Brandy has been helping ever since with fundraisers and making fry bread.

Johnson was born on Feb. 2, 1954, in Hugo. He began working for the Department of Human Services in 1978 and retired in 2010 with 34 years of service. In 1998, Johnson received the state of Oklahoma's Outstanding Volunteer Award for services going above and beyond to area children and custody youth. He now enjoys working outdoors, landscaping jobs and gardening, and helping others. He also volunteers his time at the Idabel Community Center by helping with fundraisers, loom making, bead work, bingo, and concert trips.

*Pictured above, from left: Chief Gary Batton, Lorenza Crosby Brandy and Councilman Thomas Williston.*



**District 5: Danny Hoyt and Cyndi Hoyt** will each carry the title of Outstanding Elder of District 5, Stigler, in the coming year.

Danny is a father of two and a grandfather of three. He is a retired high school history, geography, and political science teacher. Prior to teaching, he served his country for six years in the U.S. Air Force. Since his retirement, he stays active with the District 5 senior citizens. He serves on two senior committees and is an active volunteer in fund raising and projects. He is also a very active member of his church at Shiloh Assembly of God in Enterprise.

Cyndi is a mother of two and a grandmother of three. She waited until her children were in high school to pursue her college degrees. Instead of suffering from "empty nest syndrome," she completed her associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees with the help of the Choctaw Nation Higher Education Program. She served as secretary of District 5 seniors from 2010 to 2014. She continues to be an active member of the senior citizens group by serving on committees and volunteering whenever and wherever she is needed.

*Pictured above, from left: Chief Gary Batton, Cyndi Hoyt and Councilman Ronald Perry.*

*Pictured below, from left: Chief Gary Batton, Danny Hoyt and Councilman Ronald Perry.*



**District 7, Nancy Virginia Peters and Allen David Greenwood, representing Antlers, and Jimmy Wesley and Mary Johnson, representing Wright City,** each garnered the title of Outstanding Elder of District 7.

Peters was raised in the community of Divide. She attended Clayton Schools for six years. Later, she attended Sequoyah Indian School and graduated in 1969. Nancy and her husband Floyd have been married for 45 years. They have three children and eight grandchildren. She is very active at her church, Big Lick, and loves helping people in need.

Greenwood graduated in 1972 and worked construction until he was injured. He attends Bobb Meyers Church in Antlers, where he helps with church functions and attends all community functions, as well. He transports people to and from doctors' appointments, and helps with mowing and cleaning. He loves to help people and does not charge anything, as he does it from his heart—something he was taught by his parents.

Wesley graduated from Wright City High School and Okmulgee Tech with a body shop certification. He has two children. His hobbies are hunting, fishing, and caring for his dogs. He enjoys eating at the Community Center on Wednesdays and listening to "Jack Holabi" by the other elders.

Johnson is an outgoing person who has lived in and around Rufe. She has four children. She has worked for Weyerhaeuser, Poulan, and the Choctaw Casino. Her hobbies are attending singings, yard sales, concerts, and spending time with her grandchildren and family. She is a member of the Choctaw Academy Church in Rufe.

No information available for Nancy Virginia Peters.

*Pictured right, with Chief Gary Batton and Councilman Jack Austin Sr. are Nancy Virginia Peters (top), Jimmy Wesley (center) and Mary Johnson (bottom). No photo available for Allen David Greenwood.*



**District 2: Priscilla Jones Coleman and Ivan Battiest** of Broken Bow, and **Marietha Bond and Larry Bond** of Bethel are Outstanding Elders of District 2.

Coleman was born in Hodgen in 1942 to Helen McCurtain Jones (Taylor). She married and became the mother of five children. She is a member of the Tohwali Methodist Church. She worked at the Logan Youth Shelter, Kiamichi Youth Services and Shelter, and taught at Eagletown Schools where she finally retired. She has been in charge of the Wellness program at the Broken Bow Community Center since 2010. She feels that her greatest accomplishment and blessing is that she is a cancer survivor.

Battiest has lived in District 2 for 32 years. His hometown is Bethel. He speaks Choctaw fluently. He has served as chairperson for four years for the Senior Citizens. Ivan has also participated for two years with the Chamber of Commerce. He has emceed at Tuskahoma for the gospel singing for the past 12 years. He enjoys meeting and greeting people, young and old. He attends the Bible Baptist Church in Wright City. His hobbies include singing, playing bass guitar and the piano.

Larry likes visiting with other seniors. He speaks Choctaw fluently and can relate to the other elders by speaking with them in Choctaw.

Marietha resides in Bethel. She enjoys meeting with seniors on Wednesdays at the Bethel Community Center and enjoys attending concerts in Durant. She is helpful to all people.

*Pictured above, from left: Chief Gary Batton, Ivan Battiest, Priscilla Coleman, and Councilman Tony Ward.*

*Pictured below, from left: Chief Gary Batton, Larry Bond, Marietha Bond and Councilman Tony Ward.*



**District 6: Mary Kay Francis** was named Outstanding Elder of District 6, Wilburton.

Francis was born on March 31, 1950. Mary attended school at Lutie and Panola. She was recognized as the Masonic Teacher of Today twice before retiring in May of 2013. She has been married 41 years to Melvin Francis. They have two sons and one granddaughter. Mary enjoys attending church, reading, gardening, and going to the Wilburton Community Center. She is proud of her Choctaw Heritage.

*Pictured above, from left: Chief Gary Batton and Mary Kay Francis and Councilman Joe Coley.*



# 2015 OUTSTANDING ELDERERS



**District 8: Lyndell Finch and Kitty Halcomb** will carry the title of Outstanding Elder of District 8, Hugo. Finch likes to work in the garden, fish, hunt, play dominos, visit with other people, and play with the grand kids. Halcomb and her husband have been married for 40 years. They have three children and fabulous grand kids. She retired from a teaching career at Boswell Schools after 26 years. She volunteers in the kitchen at the senior citizen center, and loves visiting with the seniors and hearing their stories. She believes in positive attitudes and smiles.

*Pictured above, from left: Councilman Perry Thompson, Lyndell Finch and Chief Gary Batton.*  
*Pictured below, from left: Councilman Perry Thompson, Kitty Halcomb and Chief Gary Batton.*



**District 9: Shirley Williams Barboan and James "Jim" William Cox** have been named Outstanding Elders of District 9, Durant. Shirley Williams was born in 1939 on a farm south of Bennington. She attended Smith-Lee Elementary in Bennington. She met and married Daniel Barboan in 1964. They have three children and four grandchildren. Her hobbies include reading her Bible, self-help and mystery books, when not sewing and beading. A quote from Barboan is "I'm proud to have grown up as a farmer's daughter and in a Christian family. Mostly, I'm proud to be a full blood Choctaw and thank God for all the things I have accomplished because without God, I could do nothing." Cox was born Aug. 12, 1937 in Durant. He was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1961 and served his tour from 1961 to 1963. In 1963, he married Carol and they had two children. Sadly after 26 years of marriage, Carol passed away. In 1994 Jim met Ann, and they married in 1995. Together, they have six children, 11 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. He is an active member of the First Baptist Church of Bennington. Christian ethics and a friendly personality make him a man to be admired as a Choctaw, a veteran, a Christian, and a leader.

*Pictured above, from left: Chief Gary Batton, Shirley Williams Barboan, James "Jim" William Cox and Councilman Ted Dosh.*

Photos by  
Vonna Shults



**District 12: Nellie Hunter and Sandra Dugan** will each carry the title of Outstanding Elder of District 12, Coalgate. Hunter was born in Clayton. She is a mother of eight, a grandmother of 22, and a great-grandmother of 17. She is a disabled veteran, who joined the Women's Army Corps (WACs) when she graduated from high school in 1957. She served three years. She is also a member of the Choctaw Code Talkers Association and Oklahoma Women Veterans Association. Dugan was born Dec. 14, 1952. She has lived in

## Spotlight on Elders

with  
**Linda Watson & Walter Phelps**



**Outstanding Male and Female Elders of the Choctaw Nation:** While the nominees this year were such strong contenders it made the selection difficult, two had to be named as the Choctaw Nation's Outstanding Elders. Topping the list for 2015 were **Linda Watson** from District 3, who was named Outstanding Female Elder, and **Walter Phelps** from District 12, who was named Outstanding Male Elder. Watson is 71 years old and lives in Talihina. She has four children, 15 grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren. She worked at the Choctaw Nation Hospital for 23 years, until her retirement. She continues to work parttime at the Choctaw Nation Hospital. She helps with fundraisers to furnish water and fruit and to treat the children to a meal after the day is over. She said that it is very rewarding to see children enjoying themselves at the events. She is currently serving as the



President of the Talihina Seniors. Phelps was raised in Wilburton. He served in the U.S. Air Force before becoming disabled. He has been married to his wife Betty for 46 years. Together they have raised three children, a daughter and two sons. He and his wife are pleased to work with the Crowder Seniors helping in the kitchen and preparing meals. Walter has lived his life in such a way that helping others has become a blessing to his family and himself. He hopes and prays that when he is no longer able to help people, that he has instilled in others of his family to carry on with his work.

*Pictured above left, from left: Chief Gary Batton and Linda Watson.*  
*Pictured above right, from left: Chief Gary Batton, Walter Phelps and Councilman James Frazier.*



**District 10: Sherley Zaicek and Johnnie Burleson** are the Outstanding Elders representing District 10, Atoka. Zaicek is 72 years of age. She holds to her old ways and traditions in teaching her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren the ways of the old ones. She has very high regards for elders and their knowledge of the past life. She hopes to give back at least a small portion of what has been given to her in knowledge, compassion, and understanding during her years living within the Choctaw Nation. Burleson served his country in the U.S. Army from 1971 to 1991. He enlisted into the Army on May 26, 1971 and gave 20 years of service. After retiring from the Army, John worked several different jobs including one with the Choctaw Nation. He is a member of the McGee Valley Baptist Church, the American Legion, Oklahoma Masonic Lodge, Shriners, and the Daisy volunteer fire department. He has one son and two granddaughters.

*Pictured above, from left: Chief Gary Batton, Sherley Zaicek and Councilman Anthony Dillard.*  
*Pictured below, from left: Chief Gary Batton, Johnnie Burleson and Councilman Anthony Dillard.*



**District 11: Walter Amos and Sue Davis** were named as the Outstanding Elders of District 11, McAlester. Amos served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He has worn his Choctaw regalia with his headdress and performed the Lord's Prayer all over Oklahoma, Alabama, Georgia and Texas, in addition to being in parades. He was seen as a "Good Will Ambassador" for the Choctaw Nation. He was cast in the play "Trail of Tears" at Arrowhead Lodge in 1987, and has performed with the Pittsburg Choctaws in Oklahoma City. He modeled his Choctaw regalia along with other tribal seniors at the Oproy Land Hotel in 1980. Davis has always kept the home a place where family and friends could visit, or stay if needed. While working at The McAlester Regional, Sue makes the office familiar and homey by feeding her co-workers, sharing recipes, and helping them. Now, she volunteers her time by helping the Choctaw Nation with wrapping Toys for Tots at Christmas, cutting coupons for soldiers and teaching others how to bead.

*Pictured above, from left: Chief Gary Batton and Walter Amos.*  
*Pictured below, from left: Chief Gary Batton and Sue Davis.*



Pittsburg County all her life and attended Quinton schools. She married Loyd Dugan in 1974. She and her husband have four children, 10 grandchildren, and three great grandchildren. Sandra is an active member of the Crowder Choctaw Seniors, of which she serves as vice-president.

*Pictured above left, from left: Chief Gary Batton, Nellie Hunter and Councilman James Frazier.*  
*Pictured above right, from left: Chief Gary Batton, Sandra Dugan and Councilman James Frazier.*

CHRISTMAS  
IN THE PARK

Tushka Honma Grounds

Fridays: December 4, 11, and 18  
Saturdays: December 5, 12, and 19  
6-9 pm

Drive Through  
Holiday Light Display  
Free and Open to  
the Public...

For more information contact:  
Cultural Services at  
1-800-522-6170, Ext. 2377 or 2517

# HEALTH

## November means health and heritage month

By ERIN ADAMS

Choctaw Nation  
Halito,

November marks Native American Heritage Month, American Diabetes Month, and a time of Thanks Giving—all so very important and all connected.

Looking back to those who walked before us, we can learn so much, honoring all that is provided for health and well being and balancing every aspect of life so as not to take in excess or to leave waste.

In today's world this can be difficult, especially when we can buy in bulk and hear continuously how bigger and more is better. Unfortunately this has led many Americans to an unhealthy way of life. One of the many consequences of this is

type 2 diabetes.

According to the American Diabetes Association, those of Native American origin have a greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes. This article from the American Diabetes Association in October 2013 provides further information on type 2 diabetes.

### The Risks of Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is marked by both insulin resistance (the body is resistant to the insulin it produces) and insulin deficiency (the body produces some insulin, but not enough to overcome insulin resistance). Since insulin is unable to transport sugar (glucose) to the body's cells for use as energy, glucose levels in the blood become elevated. Over time, high blood glucose can lead to

serious complications of diabetes like retinopathy, neuropathy, and heart disease.

There is no cure for diabetes, but complications can be prevented or delayed thanks to treatment focused on controlling blood glucose levels with a healthy diet, regular exercise, oral medications, and insulin when required. People with type 2 diabetes are also at an elevated risk for cardiovascular disease. For this reason, adequate treatment for elevated blood pressure and cholesterol levels—both of which increase a person's risk for heart attack and stroke—is essential.

Unlike type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes typically occurs in middle-aged and older adults, although an alarmingly high percentage of new cases are seen in adolescents and young adults.

Many people who develop type 2 diabetes are overweight or obese. A family history, especially in first-degree relatives, also increases the risk for developing type 2 diabetes. In the United States, it is estimated that 23.6 million people have diabetes, and about 20 percent of those remain undiagnosed. Type 2 diabetes represents about 90 to 95 percent of cases of diagnosed diabetes. People of African American, Hispanic, or Native American origin have a greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes than whites. Some symptoms of type 2 diabetes are excess thirst, frequent urination, blurry vision, fatigue, and recurrent skin and urinary tract infections.

To determine if you are at risk, take the prediabetes screening test to the left. Prediabetes means your blood glucose levels are higher than normal.

#### If your score is 3-8 points:

Low Risk - Lose weight, be active, don't use tobacco. If you have high cholesterol or high blood pressure, talk to your health care provider.

#### If your score is 9 or more:

High Risk - Make an appointment with your health care provider to determine the best course of action for your health.

## NURSERY NEWS

### Hayden Allen Deela

Hayden Allen Deela was born on January 4, 2015, at 7:01 p.m. in Talihina. He weighed 8 pounds 2 ounces and was 20 3/4 inches long.

Proud parents are Murrell and Julie Deela of Wilburton. Grandparents are Allen and Reba Hunicutt of Wilburton and Glenn and SueAnn Deela of Wilburton.



### Olivia Jean Ryan

Olivia Jean Ryan was born July 27, 2015, at 10:02 a.m. at Clear Lake Regional Medical Center in Webster, Texas. She was 8 pounds 5 ounces and 20 inches long. Her parents are Patrick and Melissa Ryan of Dickinson, Texas. Her grandmother is Mary Anderson Ryan Pierce, great-grandmother is Mary Anderson Ryan Pierce, great-grandmother is Ruth Imogene Anderson, great-great-grandmother is Mary Verene Coates, great-great-grandmother is Hattie Bourne.



### Emma Grace Vaughn

Emma Grace Vaughn was born July 28, 2015, at the Norman Healthplex. She weighed 7 pounds 15 ounces and was 20 inches long.

Her parents are Sidney Leigh Gardner and Jimmy Vaughn of Norman.

Maternal grandparents are Clark Buck Gardner Jr. and Karen Kozik of Norman and Kelly and Jeff Dickerson of Pooleville. Paternal grandparents are Karen and Jerry Wright of Chickasha. Great-grandparents are Barbara Townsend and the late Charles Townsend of Wayne; Maxine Gardner and the late Clark Buck Gardner of Norman; Vera Coburn of Purcell; and Clarence and Wanda Wright of Maysville.



**CDC Prediabetes Screening Test**

**COULD YOU HAVE PREDIABETES?**  
Prediabetes means your blood glucose (sugar) is higher than normal, but not yet diabetes. Diabetes is a serious disease that can cause heart attack, stroke, blindness, kidney failure, or loss of feet or legs. Type 2 diabetes can be delayed or prevented in people with prediabetes through effective lifestyle programs. Take the first step. Find out your risk for prediabetes.

**TAKE THE TEST—KNOW YOUR SCORE!**  
Answer these seven simple questions. For each "Yes" answer, add the number of points listed. All "No" answers are 0 points.

Yes	No
1	0
1	0
1	0
5	0
5	0
5	0
9	0

**AT-RISK WEIGHT CHART**

Height	Weight	Height	Weight
4'10"	129	5'7"	172
4'11"	133	5'8"	177
5'0"	138	5'9"	182
5'1"	143	5'10"	188
5'2"	147	5'11"	193
5'3"	152	6'0"	199
5'4"	157	6'1"	204
5'5"	162	6'2"	210
5'6"	167	6'3"	216
		6'4"	221

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion  
Division of Diabetes Translation

### Recipe of the Month Squash and Lentil Soup Recipe from Diabetic Living

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup dry brown lentils
- 1 pound butternut squash, halved, seeded, peeled, and cut into 3/4-inch pieces
- 2 1/2 cups vegetable broth
- 2 1/2 cups water
- 2 medium carrots, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, sliced
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon garam masala (spice found in spice aisle of store)

#### Instructions

Rinse and drain lentils. In a 3 1/2- or 4-quart slow cooker, combine lentils, squash, broth, water, carrots, celery, onion, garlic, and garam masala. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for eight to nine hours or on high-heat setting for 4 to 4 1/2 hours.

#### Tip

For easy clean up, line your slow cooker with a disposable slow cooker liner. Add ingredients as directed in recipe. Once your dish is finished cooking, spoon the food out of your slow cooker and simply dispose of the liner. Do not lift or transport the disposable liner with food inside.

SERVINGS: 5 SERVING SIZE: 1 1/3 cup PREP TIME: 25 mins

**PROTECT YOUR VISION FROM DIABETES**

Have a dilated eye exam every year, and follow these steps to keep your health on TRACK.

**T** Take your medications as prescribed by your doctor.

**R** Reach and maintain a healthy weight.

**A** Add more physical activity to your daily routine.

**C** Control your A1C (A1C level, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels).

**A** Kick the smoking habit.

NIH | NIDDK | NEHP

#### Nutrition Facts

Per Serving: cal. (kcal) 206, Fat, total (g) 1, chol. (mg) 0, sat. fat (g) 0, carb. (g) 40, Monounsaturated fat (g) 0, Polyunsaturated fat (g) 0, fiber (g) 15, sugar (g) 6, pro. (g) 11, vit. A (IU) 136.54, vit. C (mg) 23.62, Thiamin (mg) 0.44, Riboflavin (mg) 0.14, Niacin (mg) 2.37, Pyridoxine (Vit. B6) (mg) 0.43, Folate (µg) 221.75, Cobalamin (Vit. B12) (µg) 0, sodium (mg) 510, Potassium (mg) 837, calcium (mg) 90.87, iron (mg) 3.96, Vegetables (g) 0.5, Starch (g) 2.5, Carb Choice (g) 2.5, Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet

I hope you enjoy this recipe! For further information you may contact Erin Adams, RD, LD Choctaw Nation Diabetes Wellness Center (800) 349-7026 ext. 6959.

**OFFICE SITES:**

- Durant (580) 924-7773
- Antlers (580) 298-6443
- McAlester (918) 420-5716
- Poteau (918) 649-0431
- Broken Bow (580) 584-3832

**Mission:** To assist Tribal Members reach the next step of self-sustainability through supplemental food vouchers, financial fitness and healthy living.

**Eligibility Requirements:** One Choctaw Tribal Member in Household, Reside in Choctaw Nation Service Area, Must be a Working Household (Wages or Social Security or Disability), Over Income for Food Distribution.

One of the latest programs introduced to the Choctaw Nation is the Next Step Initiative. The Next Step Initiative provides tribal members the opportunity to achieve the next step of financial independence. This is achieved through supplemental food vouchers, financial training, and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Social workers are located at each Food Distribution site to assist tribal members in achieving their goals. Call one of the Next Step social workers for more information regarding eligibility.

- Antlers (580) 298-6443
- Broken Bow (580) 584-3832
- Durant (580) 924-7773
- McAlester (918) 420-5716
- Poteau (918) 649-0431

As the holidays approach here are some tips to promote not only a healthy meal but a healthy wallet.

It's important to actually have an idea of what you are willing to spend during the holiday instead of blindly going out on various shopping trips. Make a list of the people you are buying for. Keep in mind what your budget is. Put a cap on the gifts you're buying for people. This is a way you can stay on top of your holiday spending budget. If the end amount doesn't add up to the budget you set for yourself, go back and adjust until you're comfortable. Remember your monthly bills will still come due; don't put yourself or your family in debt because of over spending.

Preparing the holiday meal doesn't have to be stressful if you are willing to follow a few healthy strategies. Grocery stores often sell holiday meats as loss leaders, so look at weekly ads for low prices on turkey, ham, roast, or other holiday main courses. You can buy these several weeks ahead and freeze them until the week of the meal. Couponing is another great way to save big on your holiday meal. Also you can buy independent brands instead of name brands. Last, but not least, arrange a pot-luck. If your budget is tight, one way to make it work is just cook the main dishes and ask guests to bring a covered dish. This is a great way to share recipes and get more family involved in the holiday meal. After all, the holidays are for spending time with loved ones not going into debt!

Happy Holidays,  
Next Step Initiative

## CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

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

### FOOD DISTRIBUTION SITES

**Bethel:** Choctaw Community Center  
**Broken Bow:** Choctaw Community Center  
**Idabel:** Choctaw Community Center  
**Smithville:** Choctaw Community Center

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; Fax: (202) 690-7442, or Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

**\*\*\* HOURS \*\*\***  
 Open 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday;  
 10:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Thursday

### ANTLERS

Market open weekdays December 1-31, except for:  
**December 4:** Idabel 9-11:30 a.m.; Broken Bow 1-3:30 p.m. (market open)  
**December 18:** Bethel 9-10:30; Smithville 12-2 (market open)  
**Closed:** December 15, 24, 25, 30, and 31 for holidays and inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** December 3, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

### DURANT

Market open weekdays December 1-31, except for:  
**Closed:** December 15, 24, 25, 30, and 31 for holidays and inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** December 1, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

### MCALESTER

Market open weekdays December 1-31, except for:  
**Closed:** December 15, 24, 25, 30, and 31 for holidays and inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** December 14, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

### POTEAU

Market open weekdays December 1-31, except for:  
**Closed:** December 15, 24, 25, 30, and 31 for holidays and inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** December 17, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

## Choctaw Nation WIC

**WOMEN, INFANTS and CHILDREN**

Site	Hours	Days
Antlers (580) 298-3161	8:30-4:00	Every Tues.
Atoka (580) 889-5825	8:00-4:30	Every Mon., Wed., Thur., & Fri.
Bethel (580) 241-5458	8:30-4:00	1st Tues.
Boswell (580) 380-5264	8:30-4:00	Every Fri.
Broken Bow (580) 584-2746	8:00-4:30	Daily, except 1st Tues. & 2nd Thurs
Coalgate (580) 927-3641	8:00-4:30	Every Wed.
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., Thur., & 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 Thur.
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 Thur.



# NOTES TO THE NATION

## — Youth of the Nation —

By Mahli Webster, Hugo Chapter  
of the Choctaw Nation Youth Advisory Board

I have been an active member of the Choctaw Nation Youth Advisory Board for five years. I have learned many things in YAB, and I have gained many wonderful experiences and memories from the organization. I know that being in YAB will have many positive effects in my life and in my future for as long as I live.

The moment my mother found out about YAB, she begged me to join. It became an everyday occurrence, and it honestly began to annoy me. I had no idea what YAB was. But when some of my friends joined and told me how great it was, I just couldn't resist.

When I first joined YAB, I was so shy that I could barely introduce myself to new people without having an internal breakdown. If you know me now, you probably think I'm lying about that, but I remember it clearly because after I joined YAB, I was never the same again. In addition to learning how to feel comfortable around new people, I also learned im-

portant life lessons about who I am, the effects of my actions, and how to treat those around me.

I don't think anybody truly learns the significance of lessons like that until you are older and facing them.

**In addition to learning how to feel comfortable around new people, I also learned important life lessons about who I am, the effects of my actions, and how to treat those around me.**

It's so much more than lessons and community service hours to put on a resume.

I will never forget my first YAB meeting, or my first event, or my first conference. There's no way I could.

YAB is a place of safety and acceptance for kids who feel like they don't belong and like they can't do anything. YAB is a place for kids like me, who mess up all of the time and need a team to tell me that it's okay.

The Choctaw Nation Youth Advisory Board will follow me throughout my life, guiding me, teaching me, and helping me to be the person that I should be.

That's the thing about servant leadership: once you get a taste of helping others, you can't help but drink from that glass for the rest of your life.

## Help a Student at Riverside

Believing in Native Generations (BLiNG) is recruiting sponsors to help Native American youth attending Riverside Indian School.

Each year, about 25% of the American Indian students entering Riverside Indian School are technically homeless. Riverside Indian School is a residential boarding school that serves about 450 students annually from more than 70 tribes across the U.S.

Many students come to the school because of harsh conditions in their home communities. Others are in foster care, or are wards of their tribe or state. Without the support of family, students are dependent upon the school for all their basic needs. These resources are stretched and often students do without the little things that make life a little easier.

For the past three years, BLiNG has helped these students by recruiting financial sponsors willing to send \$25 a month to a student during the academic year. This year, there are still 30 students on the waiting list. The money goes to the student to buy those things the school can't provide.

If you would like to sponsor a Native student, please visit [www.bling562.org](http://www.bling562.org) to make a PayPal donation, or send funds to Riverside Indian School, attention K. Subieta, 101 Riverside Drive, Anadarko OK 73005.

For details, contact Deborah Scott, 281-773 9677 or [dscott@bling562.org](mailto:dscott@bling562.org) or [www.bling562.org](http://www.bling562.org).

BLiNG is a 501 c3.

**Gary Batton**  
Chief

**Jack Austin Jr.**  
Assistant Chief

The Official  
Monthly Publication  
of the

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

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

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

The BISKINIK is a nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation.

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

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



## Letters of Thanks



Photo Provided

In Stonewall's Ken Lance Memorial Rodeo Parade, Parade Marshal Ruth Lance Wester is driven by car owner Sherry Bonnema and Choctaw tribal member Jackie Mayo.

Last summer the little town of Stonewall, Oklahoma held its Heritage Day Celebration with a Ken Lance Memorial Rodeo Parade down Main Street. Leading the parade were the Chickasaw and Choctaw Color Guards. Following them in a custom golf cart was the Parade Marshal, Ruth Lance Wester rode in the back seat. Driver and owner of the car was Sherry Bonnema assisted by Choctaw tribal member Jackie Mayo.

On behalf of the rodeo committee, we want to thank the Choctaw Color Guard for participating in our parade. I also want to thank the Choctaw Nation for being a sponsor for the rodeo which is a fundraiser for the Three Crosses Ken Lance Arena Youth Camp.

**Jackie Mayo and Ruth Lance Wester**

To the Choctaw People,

I wish to thank you from the bottom of my heart, for all kindness and help your people, the Choctaw Nation, have given to the Irish People in the Great Famine.

You, who had so little, reached out from across the waters to help us in our time of need. Though many of my ancestors died in the famine, and some left Eire, it is because of you that my family lives in Ireland today. It was the help from your families that kept my family alive, and they were able to live in this small country, and so our generation continued.

Though the Famine Graveyard in West Cork holds many of my family, it would have held a lot more if it wasn't for your kindness. I think about you a lot and pray for your People, and tell young people about the Choctaw, as it is an important part of our history.

If I'm ever lucky enough to visit the Choctaw I will thank you in person. The Choctaw will be forever be in my thoughts and prayers,

Sla'n Leat,

**Lorraine Fleming**  
**Monkstown, Cork, Eire (Ireland)**

I would like to thank the Choctaw Nation and Chief Gary Batton for my safe room. I am so proud of it. I am so thankful for my Choctaw blood. My blood line comes from my grandmother Ida May Kincaid Walker and great-grandfather Robert Kincaid.

I also would like any information on where Robert Kincaid is buried. Thank you.

**Connie Harris**  
**Panama, OK**

I just want to say thank you to Chief Batton and the Choctaw Nation for my storm shelter. My wife and I feel more secure during the storm season, when we know our shelter is just a few steps way.

**Johnnie & Faye Brown**  
**Enid, OK**

I want to express our deep appreciation to Chief Batton, Assistant Chief Austin and Councilman Jack Austin for their caring and assistance during the loss of my husband. Thank you Chief Batton, for honoring Jay's memory in your reading of the eulogy. My children and I are deeply grateful to the Choctaw Nation for the food and supplies. And a big thank you to the employees who assisted in serving the dinner. Thank you again and God bless.

**The family of Jay Watson**

To Whom It May Concern,

I, Helen Metcalf, would like to thank Choctaw Nation for all the food, etc. that was brought to Kenefic Baptist Church on July 11, 2015 in memory of my husband Bobby Dale Metcalf.

Thanks isn't enough, God bless you all in your works for the people. Thanks again.

**The Metcalf Family**

The family of John Battles would like to offer our sincerest thanks for the food brought to the house, the food provided for the family meal and for the help with the memorial expenses. John was always so proud of his Choctaw heritage and would be so proud of the way that the Choctaw Nation provided for his family in our time of needs. Sincerely,

**Georganna Battles**

To Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., and the Choctaw Tribal Council,

May God bless the Choctaw Nation! I want to compliment the staff of the Choctaw Nation Dental Clinic in Stigler—the dentist Dr. Bailey and the hygienist Toni. I had a good visit. Everything about the dental exam, x-rays, cleaning was professional, caring, kind. Sincerely!

**Danny Boyd**  
**McAlester, OK**

Thank you for all the kindness and support shown to us after the loss of my 16-year-old granddaughter. Racheal Jean Wiest of Irving, TX was laid to rest Monday June 1, 2015. A special thanks goes to the Choctaw Nation and Senior Princess December Pittman.

**Sherley Zaicek and the Billy Wiest family**  
**Boswell, OK**

I would like to thank the Choctaw Nation, Council member Joe Coley, and the Wilburton Community Center workers Lori Pugh and Mary Coley for their help with some problems I had last month.

Keep up the good work.

**Victor Glen Wilcox**

## EVENTS

### Birthday Gospel Singing Invitational

For Russell Horn & Cadence Wolf  
Hosted by the Horn Family  
Featuring: The Gastineaus, The Goodins, Heavenly Places  
Flo Wise, The Johnsons & more  
Nov. 28, 2015  
Doors open at 6 p.m. Program 6:30 p.m.-Midnight  
The Nazarene Church of Caddo, Gymnasium,  
203 N. Arkansas, Caddo, OK

Free admission

Concessions available

**Happy Thanksgiving**

You are invited to a  
**Thanksgiving Fellowship Supper and Gospel Singing**

**Saturday, November 21, 2015**  
**First Indian Baptist Church**  
**608 West Tyler**  
**McAlester, Okla.**  
**Class singing starts at 3:00 p.m.**  
**Joe Coley – Director**  
**Supper at 5:00 p.m.**  
**Specials at 6:30 p.m.**  
**Emcee – Joe Coley**

Everyone Welcome!

## Household Hazardous WASTE COLLECTION

Saturday Nov. 14, 2015  
10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
400 SW O Street, Antlers, OK

Drop off old house paint, pesticides, oil, cleaning fluids, photo chemicals, batteries, pool chemicals and other hazardous waste from around your home. Leftover household products that contain corrosive, toxic, ignitable or reactive ingredients are considered to be household hazardous wastes. These include products that may be safe to use, but require special care when you dispose of them, such as items that cannot be poured down the drain or on the ground.

Additional items being accepted are gently used home furnishings, appliances and clothing for reuse. Old medications, light bulbs and electronics may be dropped off. Also wanted for recycling are ammunition, vehicle tires (but no rims), and old rugs and blankets for animal shelters.

Sponsored by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's  
Going Green Team  
Information: 580-920-0488

## Housing Authority Announcement

The Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma owes money to the following people:

- Mona Salinas
- Jessica Jumper
- Sherrill Compere

Please contact our office at (580) 208-2241 or (580) 579-6799.

DECEMBER 17TH

**AUTISM**

**COMING TOGETHER**  
**SUMMIT**

CHOCTAW GRAND EVENT CENTER / DURANT, OK

TICKETS ON SALE / TICKETMASTER.COM  
/ RSVP Early - NATIONALLY RENOWNED SPEAKERS

## Choctaw Country Ag Elections

For USDA Farm Service Agency County Committees

Durant – The Oklahoma Farm Service Agency has accepted nomination applications for eligible candidates to serve on local FSA County Committees throughout Oklahoma. The nomination period was June 15 – Aug. 3, 2015. Candidates are those participating or associated with agricultural land and who are of legal voting age. Tribal members are considered landowners if their tribe has an agricultural interest in the Local Administrative Area and they live within the LAA.

Voting takes place Nov. 9 and Dec. 7, 2015.

For information about the election or to obtain an election map, contact your local FSA office in Atoka, Holdenville, Hugo, Idabel, McAlester or Poteau.

You also can contact the Bryan County FSA office in Durant, 580-924-4131, Ext. 2, which serves as the local FSA contact office for the Choctaw Nation.

# OBITUARIES

## Gene Clyde Zack

Gene Clyde Zack of La Pine, Oregon, born July 2, 1955, passed away in his home Oct. 2, 2015, surrounded by family. Gene was born in Caruthers, California, to Norman E. Zack Sr. and Euthene Compelube Zack. There was a celebration of life for Gene at the family residence on Oct. 24, 2015.

Gene graduated high school in 1974 from Caruthers High School where he lived. After high school he began to develop his passion for muscle cars, especially his passion for Mopar cars. He also developed his pride in his Choctaw heritage.

Gene was a giver. He was always there for those who needed him. Gene lived in Caruthers for the first 40 years of his life. He moved to Prineville, Oregon, in the 1980s to be near his mother and grandmother. Gene cared for his mother until her death in 2001 and then cared for his grandmother until her death in 2005.

Gene is survived by his brother, Norman E. Zack Jr. and his wife Dolly of Santa Nella, California; his sister, Margaret A. Zack DeGarlais and husband Oscar (Ozzie) of La Pine; he is also survived by several aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews who loved him dearly.

Gene was preceded in death by his father, Norman E. Zack Sr. and his mother, Euthene Compelube Zack. The family has entrusted Prineville Funeral Homes with his care.



## Cecilia Kathleen Rhoades Filson

Cecilia Kathleen "Katie" Rhoades Filson of Wewoka, passed away Sept. 27, 2015, in Boerne, Texas. She was born Feb. 20, 1921, to A.H. (Ackalee) Rhoades and Iva Brashears Rhoades, in Dolberg, near Roff.

She attended small country schools near Sasakwa, before graduating from Wewoka High School in 1938. Katie was married to M.L. "Moe" Filson Jan. 25, 1942, in El Reno. Moe and Katie were married 54 years before his passing in 1995.

Katie's life was changed for herself and all that came to know her in 1938 when she gave her life to Christ at Wewoka First Baptist Church. The First Baptist Church was her place of worship and service, for over 77 years. She served her church as choir member, WMU member, Sunday school teacher, chairman of The Benevolence Committee, leader of after school youth activities, Fall's Creek Church Camp sponsor and cook for fifteen years. For a number of years she lodged in her own home, unmarried Wewoka First Baptist music directors, while they directed church musical productions and searched for wives, both with Katie's enthusiastic encouragement.

She served her community as member of The Garden Club, PEO member, 31 Club, "E" In Education, Seminole Nation Museum volunteer, Chairman of the Cemetery Committee, proud member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and avid supporter of all Wewoka Tiger athletic and musical activities. She was First Deputy to the County Treasurer at the Seminole County Courthouse for 36 years before retiring in 1986.

Katie's house was a "second home," to dozens of Wewoka Tigers youth and athletes over the years. She was a most personal friend, mother often, to all that came through her door, and fed her guests until the food ran out.

She was preceded in death by her husband; both parents; brother, Kenneth Rhoades; sister-in-law Francis Rhoades, and brother-in-law Clifford Ligon.

Katie is survived by two daughters, Pam Vollertsen (Conrad) of Sand Springs, and Kay Hutchison (Joe) of Fair Oaks, Texas; sister, Jean Ligon Young of Earlsboro; grandchildren Ryan Hutchison (Tammy) of Boerne, Texas; Holly Sawyer (Tim) of Comfort, Texas; Sarah Vollertsen Jordan (Tyner) of Sand Springs; Rode Vollertsen of Holdenville, eight great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Stout-Phillips Funeral Home in Wewoka. Interment was at Oakwood Cemetery in Wewoka.



## Bryan O'Neil James

Bryan O'Neil James, 23, passed away on Oct. 14, 2015. He was born on Nov. 13, 1991, to Tony James and Brenda Bohanan James in Talihina.

Bryan graduated from Hugo High School in 2010, joining the army soon after. He finished basic training in Ft. Benning, Georgia. After basic training, he was stationed at Ft. Drum, New York. Coming out of the army, he was ranked as a private E3. Bryan returned home in December 2014.

Bryan's favorite hobby was hunting. During the summer, he loved to fish and noodle.

Bryan proposed to Jessica Perez in August 2015. The two were inseparable. Bryan was such a family man. Family was always number one, especially his nephews. They were loved and adored by him.

Teasing and pranking were his specialty, and he was always a good time. Bryan always knew what he wanted, and always did it. His family now has a guardian angel watching over them. Bryan will truly be missed by those who loved him.

Bryan is survived by his fiancé, Jessica Perez of Boswell; his parents; three brothers, Leslie James and wife, Berenice of Boswell; Corey James and wife, Kelsey of Messer; Watta James of Hugo; two sisters, Sarah Jackson and husband, Courtland of Speer, and Heather James of Hugo; grandmothers, Mary James of Hugo and Melissa Bohanan of Bethel; four nephews, Jon Robert, Hunter, Trevor and Christian James; along with many relatives and friends.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Miller & Miller Funeral Home. Interment was at Goodland Cemetery.



## Michael Lynn Williams

Michael Lynn Williams, 53, passed away on Oct. 9, 2015, in Denison, Texas. He was born on Jan. 1, 1962, to Mildred Williams in Coalgate.

Michael was a resident of Atoka, and had previously lived in Dallas. He graduated from Sunset High School in Dallas. Michael worked as a radio D.J. He was a member of the Cane Hill Methodist Church.

He grew up in the Boggy Depot State Park, where his grandfather was the park ranger. He enjoyed music, electronics, talking and yard sales.

He was preceded in death by his mother; grandparents, Harriet and Mose B. Williams; and aunts, Virginia Williams and Marie Parker.

Michael is survived by nephews; Robert Sefcik and wife Tammy of Atoka, Felix Sefcik and wife Alisha of Atoka; aunt, Geraldine White of Norman; cousins, Pam Sefcik of Atoka, Larry Parker and wife Winona of Atoka, Connie, Terri, Debbie, Kay, and Sandy (White) of Norman; along with other relatives and many dear and loved friends.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Brown's Funeral Home in Atoka. Interment was at Cane Hill Cemetery in Bentley.



## Marian Faye (Brown) Olsen

Marian Faye (Brown) Olsen, 83, passed away on Oct. 16, 2015 in Atoka. She was born on Oct. 06, 1932, to Emmett and Grace (Jordan) Brown in Buckeye, Arizona.

Faye attended school in Arizona. Faye was a homemaker and rancher. She also worked as a Census Taker for many years. Faye enjoyed working in the Atoka County Assessor's Office and was Precinct Election Official at Lane.

She married Willard Wayne Olsen on Oct. 31, 1948 in Reno, Nevada.

Faye was a longtime member of the Blackjack Baptist Church. She loved caring for her family and friends.

She was preceded in death by husband, Willard; both parents; sister, Mary Bishop; brothers, Glen Brown, Eugene Brown, Robert "Bob" Brown, Charles Brown and Joe Brown.

Faye is survived by daughters, Paula Olsen of Atoka, Brenda Olsen of Atoka, Joye Reeder and husband Lynn of McConnellsburg, Pennsylvania, and Sara Beth Loke and husband John of Edmond; grandchildren, Chad Downard and wife Martina of Winston Salem, North Carolina, Pam Lake and husband Brian of Needmore, Pennsylvania, Jessica Garner and husband Jacob of Kingston, Pennsylvania, Jennifer Faye Benadum of Edmond, and Heather Aduddell and husband Russell of Guthrie; great-grandchildren, Jordan, Molly, Reagan, Melanie, Lochlan, Isla, Declan, John, Scarlett and Samuel; nephew, Robert "Bobby Lee" Brown and wife Denise of Wewoka; along with numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, other relatives and many dear friends.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Brown's Funeral Home in Atoka. Interment was at Butler Cemetery in Lane.



## Jodie Darin

Jodie Darin, 69, of Idabel, passed away on July 8, 2015 at McCurtain Memorial Hospital in Idabel. She was born June 1, 1946, to John Diaz and Josephine (Phillips) Carrey.

Jodie enjoyed reading her Bible, watching religious shows and DIY programs on television, decorating homes, yard work, taking care of her flowers and making her home beautiful from the outside.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sister, Louise Benedict; son Wesley Beam.

Jodie is survived by her children, David Beam and Jackie Harris Wright; brothers, John Carrey and wife, Teresa of Durant, Julian Phillip Carrey of Houston, Texas; numerous nieces, nephews and friends

Arrangements were made under the direction of Brumley Funeral Home in Idabel. Interment was at the Redland Cemetery, in Redland.



## Rev. Leroy Dailey

Rev. Leroy Dailey, 84, passed away on Sept. 29, 2015. He was born on Jan. 6, 1931, to Jim and Ella (Jones) Dailey in Blanco.

Leroy was a resident of Colbert. He married Bobbie Ann Cummins in McAlester on June 2, 1956.

He dedicated his life to serving his Lord and Savior as a minister and pastor to God's people before he retired. Leroy worked for the Allied Agra Paper Company in Denison, Texas for many years before retiring from there.

Leroy loved to play his guitar and the French harp. He enjoyed going to new places and always looked forward to having his family around him. He considered them his greatest blessing.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sisters, Laura and Josephine; brothers, James Gilbert and Edmond Frasier.

Leroy is survived by his wife Bobbie of the home; daughters, Joann Andrews and husband Glen of McAlester, Karen Taylor and Hubert McDaniel of Eagletown, and Marilyn Arnold and husband Jerry of Colbert; sons, Leroy Dailey Jr. and wife Sandra of Denison; grandchildren, Felicia Arnold, Natosha Freeman, Kenneth and David Dugger, and Jenny, Rachel and Michael Taylor; sister, Margaret Carney; brother, Edwin Dailey; and numerous great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Holmes-Coffey-Murray Funeral Home in Durant. Interment was at Brushy Cemetery in Blanco.



## Patsy May Dean

Patsy May Dean, 68, passed away on Oct. 14, 2015, in Oklahoma City. She was born on Dec. 1, 1946 to Albert Andrew and Nellie Faye (Allen) Dean, in Pittsburg.

Patsy attended at Harpers Valley. She worked as a home health aid and attended the Assembly of God Church.

Patsy enjoyed gardening, cooking, sewing, researching family history and being the weather reporter.

She was preceded in death by both parents; daughter, Tina Marie Covey; grandson; Robert Haskell Wilson; great-grandsons, Marcus and Stephen Paul; brothers, Bennie Lee, Roy Dee, Billy Ray Dean; and special aunt and uncle; Lou and Mack Williams.

Patsy is survived by daughters, Lisia Wilson and Robert Prentise of Kempner, Texas, Lanetta Thorpe and husband Michael of Ore City, Texas; grandchildren Anita Dawn Paul and husband Shawn of Hamilton, Texas; Blake "Okie" Bracewell of Dublin, Georgia; great-grandchildren, Nathaniel Prentice Wilson of Kempner, Jeremiah Jay Wilson of Kempner, Zachery Patrick Paul of Hamilton, and Matalyn Leigh Paul of Hamilton; brothers, Edwin Dean, Donald Dean and wife Wanda of Wasilla, Alaska; sisters, Barbara Hood of Kiowa, Ruby Kennedy and husband Dennis of Indio, California; Along with many nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Brown's Funeral Home in Atoka. Interment was at Wesley Cemetery.



## Otis Wayne Stringer

Otis Wayne Stringer, 80, passed away on Oct. 3, 2015, at New Hope Retirement and Care Center in McAlester. He was born on March 16, 1935 in VanBuren, Arkansas, to Marvin and Edna Stringer.

He came to Hartshorne as a small child and was raised there by his mother and stepfather, Edna Mae and Paul Templeton. After graduating from Hartshorne High School, Otis began a career as a truck driver for over 40 years. He had also worked as a policeman for both Hartshorne and Haileyville. Otis also worked security for the Choctaw Nation and worked at Triad Transport. He attended the Assembly of God Churches in Hartshorne and Haileyville.

He was preceded in death by his mother and stepfather, Edna and Paul Templeton; sister, Betty June Stringer; and father, Marvin Stringer.

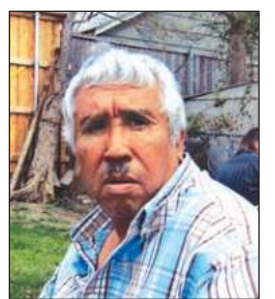
Survivors include two children, Paula Isbell and husband Marty, and Steve Stringer; grandchildren, Eden Stringer, Bobby Stringer, Amanda Stringer and Spencer Stringer; five stepchildren, Christie Turpin, Ricky Holt, Ramona Key, Edie Holt and Will Holt.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Brumley-Mills Funeral Home in Hartshorne. Interment was at Wilburton City Cemetery.

### Obituary Policy

Obituary submissions are for Choctaw tribal members and are free of charge. The Biskinik will only accept obituary notices from funeral homes or other official sources. Family members/individuals may still submit funeral notices as long as the notice is from the funeral home or printed in their local newspapers through a funeral home service. Full-length handwritten notices will not be accepted. The Biskinik strives to serve all Choctaws, therefore, any handwritten notices received will be searched online for official funeral home notices. If none are found, efforts will be made to contact the family and make arrangements for an official notice. Notices may be edited for space limitations.

Send official obituary notices to:  
Biskinik  
PO Box 1210  
Durant OK 74702  
email: biskinik@choctawnation.com



## Edwin 'Leon' Leflore

Edwin "Leon" Leflore, 59, passed away on Oct. 19, 2015. He was born on Feb. 3, 1956, to Abraham and Lizzie (Peters) Leflore in Talihina.

Leon was a resident of Atoka. He attended grade school in Lane and later attended Atoka High School. He was a maintenance man for rental properties. Leon also served in the National Guard.

Leon married Anita Kay Barcus on Oct. 30, 1999, in Atoka.

He was a member of the Emmanuel Baptist Church in Wapanucka. He enjoyed working on and tinkering with lawn mowers. He loved the Lord and never met a stranger.

He was preceded in death by his father; grandson, Johnny Tyler; nephews, Gerald Leflore, Kevin Gibson, Christian Sanders; and grandparents William and Tracy Peters, and Herman and Mary Leflore.

Leon is survived by wife Anita; mother Lizzie; sons, Edwin Dale Leflore and wife Debra of Shawnee, Stacy Craig Leflore and wife Tina of Atoka, Edwin Leon Leflore Jr. and wife Amber of Tushka, Terry Ray Cooper "Sonny Boy" and wife Anita of Atoka, and Travis Dale Leflore and wife Candace of Atoka; daughter, Christina Renay Leflore of Caney; grandchildren, Iesha, Harley, Hope, and Bo Leflore of Shawnee, Klanyca and Shyanne Tiner of Atoka, Lesli Duncan-Castillio, Tyler Leflore, Alexis Leflore and LeAnn Whitmire all of Atoka; sisters, Diane Gibson of Atoka and Stephanie Leflore of Atoka; brother, Calvin Leflore and wife Deborah of Cleaveland; stepsons, Ricky Leal and spouse Lisa, and Michael Barcus and wife Stacey; special nieces, Carissa Merritt, Victoria Leflore and Miranda Hightower; nephews, Andrew Gibson and Jayson Moody of Atoka, Patrick Leflore and wife Sheila of Daisy, and Gregory Leflore of Rosharon, Texas; step-grandchildren, Seth and Tyler Leal, Kristopher, Bryanna, and Sidney Rose Barcus; great-grandchildren, Mesha Lanem Aniya Stough and Kachina Holleman; along with many other nieces, nephews, relatives and dear loved friends.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Brown's Funeral Home in Atoka. Interment was at Double Springs Cemetery in Lane.

# OBITUARIES

## James Aaron Selders

James Aaron Selders passed away on Aug. 13, 2015 natural causes due to cardiac arrest. He was born on June 1, 1959 to James L. and Connie James Selders.



James was a 1977 graduate of Edmond Memorial High School, where he played his best loved sport, basketball. He also attended Oklahoma State University and the University of Central Oklahoma. He obtained the rank of Staff Sergeant in USAR to include duty in Honduras. He loved his family and worked as manager with CID Resources Inc. in Coppell, Texas.

James is survived by his seven children, James Aaron II, Ms. Brianna Selders Johnson (Kyle), Chessa, Alexandra, Matthew, Brisa and Grace Selders with former wife, Anneliese Rivera; father-in-law, Reuben Rivera; parents James L. and Connie James Selders; siblings, Todd Selders and Torree Selders Lein (Chris Lein); nephews, Jackson Lein and Dakota Folga (Mike Folga); fiancée, Stephanie Garcia Pineda; along with many nieces, nephews and cousins and friends he adored.

Donations can be made in James's name to the American Heart Association or Children's Medical Center in Dallas.

Arrangements were made under the direction of North Dallas Funeral Home. Interment was at Ridgeview West Memorial Park/Bethel Cemetery in Frisco, Texas.

## Michael Antah Jacob

Michael Antah Jacob, 50, of Oklahoma City, passed away Aug. 21, 2015. He was born on Jan. 2, 1965, to Simeon and Juanita Jacob in Ft. Belvoir, Virginia.



Michael loved reading and singing karaoke. He was an artist, who loved drawing, artwork and beadwork. Most of all he enjoyed spending time with his family.

He is preceded in death by his father, Simeon Jacob; and infant sister, Wyoma Jacob.

He is survived by his mother, Juanita Jacob; daughter, Serria Jacob; son, Antah Ezra Jacob; three brothers, Chaplain Bruce Jacob, Mark Jacob, and Jonas Jacob; and sister, Gina Jacob.

Arrangements were made under the direction of John M. Ireland Funeral Home, in Moore. Interment was at Riverside Garden Cemetery in Oklahoma City.

## Harlis Wayne Merryman

Harlis Wayne Merryman, 84, passed away on Oct. 8, 2015 in Talihina. He was born to Gabe Harlis and Eva Jane (McGee) Merryman on Aug. 15, 1931 in Bengal.



Wayne was their fourth child.

He was 11 months old when his mother passed away. When Wayne was four years old his dad married Zoa Jane (Pat) Justice, she was the only mother Wayne ever knew and they loved each other very much.

Wayne graduated from Leflore High School in 1949. He enlisted in the Army in 1951 and served in Korea, earning numerous medals and an honorable discharge in 1953. Using the GI Bill he enrolled at Eastern Oklahoma College, and graduated from the University of Central Oklahoma with Bachelor's and Master's Degrees. Wayne did his postgraduate studies at the University of Oklahoma.

On Jan. 29, 1954, Wayne married Edith Kathryn Gregory in McAlester. They had three children together.

Wayne was a legendary high school basketball coach, coaching both boys and girls teams. He was National Coach of the year in 1984 and Oklahoma Coach of the Year for both girls and boys high school basketball. He was inducted into the Oklahoma Basketball Hall of Fame for both boys and girls and the National Basketball Hall of Fame. When he retired in 1990 Wayne had the most victories of any high school basketball coach in the nation.

Wayne served as High School Principal and basketball coach for 34 years; 1 year at Panola, 3 years at Whitesboro, and 30 years at Colbert. He was always an educator first, and a coach second.

Wayne was preceded in death by his parents; second mother Pat; son Mark Gabe; sister Oleta; brothers, Denver, Jimmy, Charlie, Harold, Myron; grandson Gabe Levi; as well as numerous other uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews and cousins.

He is survived by sons, Mitchell Wayne and Matthew Gregory; grandchildren, Rebecca Anne Renfrow and husband Eric, Rachel Jane Merryman and husband Charles Kasper; Jessica Rose, Meghan Leigh, Kathryn Tess, Gabe Colahan, Milo Gabe, and Echo Marie; great-grandchildren, Makayla Merryman, Jaegan Levi, Dexton Liam Kasper, Gavin Luke, and Gage Andrew Renfrow; as well as numerous aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Burkhart Funeral Service of Talihina. Interment was at the family cemetery on their farm in Bengal.

## Jay Loren Watson

Jay Loren Watson, 52, of Antlers passed away on Sept. 18, 2015 at his home while in the presence of family. He was born on April 2, 1963 to Joe Simon and Laura (Frazier) Watson, in Talihina.



Jay received a Bachelors Degree in psychology, and worked as a social worker in child welfare. He spent most of his life helping the youth in the area. He married Sheila Watson June 25, 1994.

Jay was a very outgoing person and easy to get along with, he loved making people smile. He coached softball, loved music and was the announcer at Moyers basketball games and loved staying connected with people on Facebook. Jay was a member of A.A., Indian youth of America and the Choctaw Nation Election Reform Committee and the First Baptist Church of Antlers.

He was preceded in death by father, Joe Simon Watson and grandmother, Agnes Morris.

Jay is survived by wife Sheila of the home; children, Rachel Johnson, Christian Watson, Trevor Watson and fiancé Christina Wilson all of Antlers; grandchild, Te'Ata Lorenn Johnson of Antlers; mother, Laura Watson of Ada; sister, Denise (Watson) Young and husband Jerry of Carrollton, Texas; as well as numerous other relatives, and a host of friends.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Burkhart Funeral Services of Antlers. Interment was at the Finley Cemetery.

## Stella Delois (Frazier) Walker

Stella Delois (Frazier) Walker, 59, of McAlester, passed away on July 22, 2015, at OU Medical Center in Oklahoma City. She was born on Aug. 28, 1955, to Gilbert and Alice (King) Frazier in Talihina.



Stella worked at Choctaw Travel Plaza for many years. She loved gospel singing with the Cornerstone Group and was a member of First Indian Baptist Church in McAlester. She also loved University of Oklahoma.

She was preceded in death by her son, Dakota; father, the Rev. Gilbert Frazier; brother, Aaron Frazier, and grandparents, Lena and Isaac King.

Stella is survived by her mother; three sisters and a brother-in-law, Lisa Frazier, Janice and Deswood Bitsoi, and Shelli Dailey; nieces and nephews, Jordy Frazier, Jayde Frazier and Jrue Frazier; great-nieces and great-nephews, Truth Frazier, Adrian Frazier and Trinity Frazier; special cousins, Vanessa Allen, Bryan Frazier and Sonny Frazier, and numerous other cousins.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Brumley-Mills Funeral Home of McAlester. Interment was at Isaac King Cemetery.

## Willie Robinson

Willie Jim Robinson, 65, passed away on Oct. 6, 2015. He was born on Aug. 25, 1950, to Willie and Alice (Jacob) Robinson in Boswell.

Willie attended Soper High School. He lived most of his life in Hugo. Willie enjoyed playing guitar and was an avid reader of westerns.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Earl Wallace; four sisters, Cathy (LeFlore) Nelson, Pauline Tom, Elizabeth Smithart and Bertha Jacob.

Willie is survived by brother, Don LeFlore of Antlers; sister; Josephine Gallant of Hugo; along with numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Miller & Miller Funeral Home in Boswell. Interment was at Soper Cemetery.

## Leona Rita Vaughn

Leona Rita Vaughn, 87, passed away on Oct. 29, 2015 in Hugo. She was born on Jan. 16, 1928 to Gus and Emma (Jacobs) Phillips in Pittsburg County.

Leona lived all of her life in the Hugo area. Leona was a full blood member of the Choctaw Nation. She was a homemaker that loved cooking and taking care of her children and family. She enjoyed watching "Walker, Texas Ranger" on television.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Robert Vaughn; three children, Carl Vantrees, Dianne Vantrees and Maxine Vantrees; two brothers, Anthony Phillips and Roger Phillips; and one sister, Marshalene Lawson.

Leona is survived by three sons, Leon Vantrees and wife, Robin of Hugo, Eddie Vantrees of Hugo, and Leonard Vantrees of Oklahoma City; daughter, June Vantrees of Paris, Texas; brother Eugene Phillips of Unger; two sisters, Christine James of Boswell, and Janet Phillips of Goodland; six grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren; along with many other relatives and friends.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Miller & Miller Funeral Home in Hugo. Interment was at Wade Cemetery in Unger.

## Hilda June Cherry

Hilda June Cherry, 91, passed away on July 9, 2015. She was born on June 1, 1924, to William and Elsie Barnett in Civet.



Hilda's family was the center of her life. She was loved and cherished by all of her family and friends.

Hilda was a proud American. She celebrated her Choctaw and Oklahoman ancestry. She was a proud member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and loved her elder blanket.

Her many years of living in California brought unforgettable experiences including an active church ministry with young people, family outings at their cherry red cabin in Jenness Park, fishing and camping at Richmond Park at Clear Lake, and most recently the enjoyable weeks at Cassini Ranch on the beautiful coast of California.

Hilda found her peace in her relationship with her Lord, and happiness in her love for her family. She was surrounded by people that loved her deeply, that were greatly impacted by her love and generosity. Her life and contributions will not be forgotten or lessened by her passing.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Ouimet Bros. Concord Funeral Chapel in Concord, California. A Celebration of Life ceremony was held at The Gardens at Heather Farm.

## David Lewis John

David Lewis John, 61, passed away on Oct. 25, 2015, in Ardmore. He was born on March 14, 1954 to Victor Lee John and Benita Elizabeth Jones John in Talihina.



He and Cecelia Satoe were married in Ardmore on Nov. 4, 1974. David was an avid Oklahoma State University fan until his son went to The University of Oklahoma.

Then his home became a house divided, between OU and OSU. He loved to listen to and play music.

He was preceded in death by both parents; grandmother Martha Billy; uncles, Clarence Billy and James Ben; aunt, Janet Taylor and her husband Williston; and nephew Wesley Jones.

David is survived by his wife Cecelia Ann and son Eric; brother, Jimmy Jones and wife Paula, Johnny John and wife Linda; sister, Lawanna Johnson; nieces, Cheryl Walker and Lori Johnson; nephews, Darren Johnson and Chris Jones; aunts and uncles, Jean Middleton and husband David, Sue Barnett and husband Clifford, Odetha Billy, Harrison Billy; four great-nephews, two great-nieces, two great-great-nephews; along with numerous cousins, friends and his constant companion Champeen.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Craddock Funeral Home in Ardmore. A military memorial service was held on Oct. 30.

## Carl William Jackson

Carl William Jackson, 85, of Greenville, Texas passed away on Sept. 14, 2015 surrounded by his family. He was born on June 5, 1930 to James and Margaret Jackson, in Tuttle.

Carl graduated from Tuttle High School. He was an Elder at South Side Church of Christ. Carl proudly served in the United States Army during the Korean War.

He first worked as an electrician for Tinker Air Force Base after leaving the Army for 11 years, then worked for NASA at North American Rockwell and went on to be the Chief of Quality Control for DCASPRO with E-Systems in Greenville retiring in 1985.

Carl was preceded in death by his parents and nine siblings.

Carl is survived by his wife of 61 years, Betty Jackson; son, Benny Jackson and wife Terri of Greenville; daughters, Donna Goss and husband Larry of Greenville, Sherri Kizziar of Greenville; grandchildren, Nathan and Kellie Jones, Kristen and Carlos Kee, Melissa and Kevin Sullivan, Kyle Kizziar, TJ, Allen and Chris Goss; great-grandchildren, Bryanna and Sarah Jones, Kaylee Landrum, Maddison Kizziar, Kayla, Emma, Bella and Teddy Goss; niece, Jill Fogle and many other loving relatives and friends.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Lynch Funeral Service in Greenville. Interment was at Memoryland Memorial Park.

## Choctaw Hymnal Project

The Choctaw Hymnal Project asks any and all Choctaws to please submit photos of Choctaw churches which were founded from the 1830s to the present. Please submit the following information:

Send to:

**email:** hbattiest@choctawnation.com  
**address:** Choctaw Language Department  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma  
P.O. Box 1210  
Durant, Ok. 74702

- Name of the church
- Location
- Year founded
- A brief paragraph about the church

\*Please do not send original photographs. Due to the limited space in the hymnal, all photos may not be selected. The goal is to showcase the historical representation of Choctaw churches throughout Choctaw Nation.

# Nation hosts autism summit, aids affected families



Photo by Brandon Frye

Eustacia Cutler, mother of well-known autism advocate Temple Grandin, addresses a crowd of individuals interested in or impacted by autism at the Choctaw Grand Theater in Durant on Oct. 15. She offered insight into what autism is, and spoke of first-hand experiences raising Grandin.

## The Choctaw Nation and its education programs join the voices speaking up for autism awareness

By **BRANDON FRYE**  
Choctaw Nation

A new Muppet named Julia, a hyper-intelligent theoretical physicist named Sheldon, and a professor of animal science named Temple Grandin, what do they have in common? They all play a role in the social wave of autism awareness and education currently sweeping across the U.S.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) joined this movement with a new initiative and an autism conference called the Coming Together Summit.

The conference, held on Oct. 15 at the Choctaw Grand Event Center in Durant, brought nationally renowned speaker Eustacia Cutler in to share her story and answer questions from attendees. Booths also populated the event floor, offering resources and information.

Many in attendance were individuals impacted by the neurodevelopmental disorder: family, caretakers, teachers, and those falling on the autism spectrum themselves.

"I think it gave parents, guardians, brothers, sisters, all comfort to know they aren't alone. They don't have to walk this journey by themselves," Rebecca Hawkins, Education Director for CNO and conference coordinator said.

Hawkins brought Cutler in to speak, knowing she raised a child with autism herself. She spoke from a place of understanding, having raised daughter Temple Grandin at a time when autism was even less understood.

The importance of a net-

work for support was a topic Cutler touched on while addressing the crowd in the Choctaw Grand Theater.

"I was passed from one person to another. I was only 20 when Temple was born," Cutler said. "I had to fumble along, and am very grateful to these people" she said, mentioning the friends, teachers, and doctors who supported her.

And according to Hawkins, playing a role of support is exactly what CNO and its education programs aim to do, and are doing.

"We were seeing more children coming into our programs who have characteristics of the autism spectrum," Hawkins said. "We are collaborating with our schools, collaborating with our families, bringing it all together for the betterment of the child."

She said the Choctaw education programs cannot be the only support made available, but they are willing to pull all the appropriate resources together for these families, and prepare caretakers working for the tribe to best interact with and teach children falling on the spectrum.

But, the issue is larger than one interaction. Both Hawkins and Cutler explained autism impacts families, schools, and entire communities. The more people who understand autism, the better off we all are. This is where autism education and awareness become necessary.

"The most important thing is we are trying to do is create awareness," Choctaw Chief Gary Batton said.

He said since becoming chief, he has received

calls, emails, and has been stopped out in the communities prompting him to wonder: just how big of an issue is this for us?

According to Hawkins, in regards to our native communities, the answer is pretty big.

"One of the things we found was there are very few resources [tribal or otherwise] available to our families," she said, pointing out how distanced families in the Choctaw Nation are from major research and treatment centers for autism—resources found mostly in big cities like Dallas or Tulsa.

"There are very few studies on minorities as a whole, and we are not finding any research on Native Americans," Hawkins added. "Hopefully we can get some kind of research or studies done, so we have information to work with."

The hurdles become clear, for families with autistic members living inside of the Choctaw Nation or other tribes in more rural areas: Autism is not well understood for our people, and help is not close enough to the people who need it.

But there is hope. Cutler spoke words of encouragement for caretakers. "There are no precise answers to any of this. There are only choices. You will change them and you will be changed by them. You will get better with choices as you go along," she said.

And leaders within the Choctaw Nation are dedicated to raising awareness and taking action, while finding practical solutions to the problems at hand.

"I don't claim to have all

the answers," Hawkins said. "But I do know one thing, there is nothing being done and something's got to be done, and that's just the bottom line."

For CNO, getting something done in regards to autism began back in 2012, when Angela Dancer, Sr. Director of Home Visitation and Disability Services with the Outreach Department got the ball rolling. She played a vital role in initiating the Choctaw Nation Tribal Early Learning Initiative, or TELI.

TELI brought in a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to help develop collaboration between early childhood programs within CNO. These programs included Head Start, Early Head Start, Child Care Assistance, and Tribal Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting.

As a group, these programs decided to dedicate attention to better serving children with special needs. And after noticing the prevalence of autism diagnoses with the children they worked with, their attention moved to autism awareness and education.

This led to a widespread effort by the CNO head start centers in each of the districts to teach their communities about autism, during Autism Awareness Month last April.

Some of the head starts and daycares worked together, some reached out to the community, and some got the local public schools involved. There were balloon releases, public speakers, and stories on local media. Each center decided what would spread the word best for their area.

Ultimately, the TELI initiative also made the "Coming Together Summit" on autism possible. It will be what makes the upcoming event, bringing in Grandin to speak on Dec. 17, available to the public. Grandin, a professor and author, is a well-known advocate of autism education and animal rights in the livestock industry. In 2010, a movie starring Claire Danes was made about her life.

At the ground level of the issue, CNO employees like Hawkins are in the planning stages of aiding families directly, uncovering ways to bring assistance to them inside of Choctaw Country.

"Here in southeastern Oklahoma, one of the things I am doing with this initiative is trying to find the resources we can bring down to our area," Hawkins said. She explained, these resources might be bringing professionals and counselors into



Autism is a neurodevelopmental condition characterized by impaired social interaction, impaired verbal and nonverbal communication, and restricted and repetitive behavior.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders changed its definition of autism in 2013.

The most notable change was the movement away from separate, distinct disorders, toward an understanding of autism as being on a spectrum. Diagnosed individuals are considered to have an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), having varying degrees of difficulties, showing a varying number of symptoms.

A document published by the American Psychiatric Association states, "The revised diagnosis [for autism] represents a new, more accurate, and medically and scientifically useful way of diagnosing individuals with autism-related disorders."

ASD has gone through many changes in its medical and scholarly understanding over time.

In the 1950s, Freudian psychoanalysis led professionals to believe ASD was caused by detached mothers or uncaring and frightening home environments. Children were believed to have withdrawn from social interactions, faced inwards and focused on themselves in reaction to unwanted things happening around them. These views were heavily based in the understanding of psychology at the time, and would later be discredited.

With further research into the causes of ASD, aided by advancements in technology, the disorder eventually became understood as being rooted in the nervous system. Autism is now seen as being a result of differences in the physical nervous systems between "neurotypical" individuals and those with ASD.

According to Temple Grandin, autism advocate, individuals with ASD understand the world differently, think differently. Grandin, who has four times the typical number of connections in a brain area that controls the visual system, claims to think in pictures.

When speaking in advocacy of those with autism, Grandin often explains children with ASD, if offered the right guidance, should be working in places like Silicon Valley. This belief stems from the tendency of those with ASD to possess specialties of intelligence; where Grandin thinks in pictures, some might think in mathematical patterns, for example.

For mothers and fathers on the lookout for ASD with their children, there are early signals caretakers and professionals have noticed over time. According to the organization Autism Speaks, the following traits are common:

- Difficulty engaging in everyday interactions
- By 8 to 10 months, a failure to respond to their name, reduced interest in people
- By toddlerhood, difficulty playing social games, lack of imitation of others, a preference to play alone
- Significant delays in reaching spoken language milestones
- A tendency to repeat unusual behaviors

In the past, popular thought misconceived autism as being a condition in need of being cured. Today, it is more appropriately seen as a difference to be understood and accepted.

Still, there can be hurdles to overcome for individuals on the spectrum and their families. Help and guidance are available. The advocacy organization Autism Speaks, found at [www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org), offers resource guides specific to location.

The Choctaw Nation is still developing an infrastructure to fully assist families, but for now, Kelli Brown, Family Engagement Coordinator, can assist families by connecting them with local resources. She can be reached at 800-522-6170 ext. 4618.

Choctaw communities. It might be utilizing the connection to animals some children with autism seem to have.

"We have just begun," Hawkins said. "We don't have all of the answers. We just know there aren't a lot of resources in this area. So it comes back down to educating, making aware, that's

what this whole effort is. It is opening the door for us to start asking questions, start getting answers."

To get tickets for the upcoming summit where Temple Grandin will speak, visit [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com). Additionally, schools and large groups can contact Kelli Brown at 800-522-6170 ext. 4618.

# Teaching a lesson in telling the Choctaw story

By **SHELIA KIRVEN**  
Choctaw Nation

Choctaw author, editor and storyteller, Sarah Elisabeth Sawyer, recently held a day-long Creative Writing Workshop entitled Choctaw Culture and History Preservation at the Choctaw Nation Community Center in Poteau. Choctaw writers of various skill levels were invited to register for the free workshop and attendees came from all across the Choctaw Nation. The workshop delved into subjects including research, capturing culture and history, and the publication process.

Sawyer advised workshop attendees on the value of gathering information through family stories, journals, letters, memoirs, and interviews to get started in the writing process. She said that literally millions of records are still out there in the world that have not been digitized and that many times one has to actually go to where the documents are located to do fact finding.

Visiting local museums, libraries, universities, national parks, historical societies, and tribal offices and asking what documents are vaulted and may not be online is an important tool to remember. Consulting with the experts is still a great way to get your facts. Also, reading newspapers, catalogs, magazines, and literature of the time period is a great tool to use in your writing, she noted. By getting a feel of what was going on in the era that you write in helps tremendously.

She reminded the group, "Do your own research and do as much as you can to be accurate." She went over the importance of making sure that the writer documents his or her sources and gives credit where it is



Attendees of the Creative Writing Workshop "Choctaw Culture and History Preservation" were Audrey Jacob, Carolyn Hall, Dianna Street, Lynda Kay Sawyer, Candace Dees, instructor, Choctaw author, editor and storyteller, Sarah Elisabeth Sawyer, Shonnie Hall, Colin Kelley, Rebecca Good, and Shelia Kirven.

due, making sure to "guard against assumptions." She reminded the group that just because you think you know something to be true, exercise due diligence and do your homework to make absolutely sure before you write it down.

Emphasizing the importance of getting works published for preservation reasons, Sawyer noted, sometimes can be as easy as publishing an annual family Christmas letter and distributing it among family and friends. She stressed getting the stories on paper and getting them out for others to read and enjoy.

Workshop attendees were each given a copy of "Touch My Tears," a compilation of Trail of Tears stories that

Sawyer had previously edited and published.

Feedback from those attending the workshop was very positive:

"Everything was great. I would love more of these in our area. I especially enjoyed hearing everyone's writing."

"Enjoyed the lessons and opportunity! Yakoke."

"All good info. Well worth the day."

"This will help me get a jump start on my new adventures. Thank you for offering this opportunity to the Choctaw people. This was exactly what I have been looking for. Please offer more soon."

Sawyer said, "With a small group of Choctaw writers and storytellers, we were able to cover a broad spectrum of how to preserve Choctaw culture and history through the written word. From an illustrator to a master storyteller, we saw connections made and bonds form. I hope each one in the workshop can take what they learned and apply it to their projects."

*Sarah Elisabeth Sawyer is an award-winning author and Choctaw storyteller of traditional and fictional tales based on the lives of her people. The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian has honored her as a literary artist through their Artist Leadership Program for her work in preserving Trail of Tears stories. In 2015, First Peoples Fund awarded her an Artist in Business Leadership Fellowship. She writes from her hometown in East Texas, partnering with her mom, Lynda Kay Sawyer, in continued research for future novels. Learn more about their work in preserving Choctaw history at [ChoctawSpirit.com](http://ChoctawSpirit.com).*

# PEOPLE YOU KNOW

## Porras leads Christian women's event



Deb Porras led a "Something Worthwhile" women's Christian gathering, serving as inspirational speaker, at Epworth United Methodist Church in Chickasha on Nov. 3.

Porras is a graduate of Chickasha High School, and has earned a bachelor's degree and Master of Business degree from Oklahoma State University.

In the past, Porras has taught vacation Bible school, Sunday School, and

has led Bible studies both in home and at church. She has served as Lay Director for the Great Plains Emmaus Community of southwest Oklahoma, and has participated in several foreign mission opportunities.

## Wood celebrates 85 years of life



The family of Violet Wood wished her a happy birthday on Nov. 14 when she turned 85.

Wood's family consists of children Jerry Wood, Chery Wood, Gary Wood, and Karman Wood; grandchildren Jerry Wood Jr., Valerie and Danny Harris, Hollie Wood, Meka Wood, Kathan Wood, Christ Wood, Tara Wood, and Mary Ellis; brother-in-law Dale Ellis.

## Noahnee Tiger turns 84 years of age



Revennie M. Noahnee Tiger, of Battiest, celebrated her 84th birthday on Oct. 6.

Earlier in life, she attended school at Wheelock Academy for four years. She also attended the Sequoyah Indian Orphanage for four more years.

She said she learned weaving and bead work at Sequoyah.

## Easley pursues nursing to help others



Katrina Marie Easley graduated from the Great Plains Technology Center, having studied practical nursing.

"I am so blessed to be a part of the Choctaw Nation," Easley said. "I am very grateful for the educational support and kindness they have given me."

She said nursing has always been her dream career from the time she was small. She always wanted to help people.

With the aid of the Nation, Easley plans on continuing her education to become a registered nurse working in pediatrics.

Easley is the great, great, great, great, great granddaughter of Elsie Beams Roebuck Walker, original enrollee.



## Five generations of Choctaws gather

Mildred (Bench) Green, 95-year-old Ada resident, received a visit from her family recently. As a result, five generations of Choctaws met in one place.

Green's son Austin Rogers, 74, is pictured to the top left. His son Thomas Rogers, 44, is to the right. Thomas' daughter Cecile Nicole Rogers, 19, is at bottom left.

Green is pictured at center holding Cecile's daughter, 8-week-old great-great-granddaughter Rayleigh Hope Timmerrick.

Mildred Green is the grandchild of Christopher Henry Bench, original enrollee. Her father is the late John Bench.

## Washington retires from post office



Ruth Washington retired from her position with the U.S. Post Office recently after more than 35 years of service.

Now, she plans on enjoying time with her husband, grandchildren, and other family.

Her sister Pauline Wilson said Washington is a beautiful and sweet person, and deserves all God has in store for her.



(From left) Ira Brinlee, Hartshorne FFA Advisor, Braylon Spears, Kade Spears, Railey Spears, Keli Spears (mother), Brandon Spears (father), Kane Causemaker (judge).



(From left) Brandon Spears (father), Braylon Spears, Ira Brinlee (FFA Advisor).

## Spears siblings show first place hogs at Arkansas-Oklahoma State Fair

Braylon and Railey Spears of Hartshorne recently competed at the Arkansas-Oklahoma State Fair held in Ft. Smith, Arkansas on September 25-28.

Railey Spears, a sixth-grader at Hartshorne middle school, exhibited the first place class II and class VII crossbred. Railey's class VII crossbred winner 'Enga' was selected as breed champion crossbred and went on to capture Reserve Grand Champion overall honors.

Braylon Spears, an eighth-grader at Hartshorne middle school, exhibited the first place class III and class V Crossbred. Braylon was selected for premium sale honors with his class V crossbred winner.

Only 15 swine are selected for the premium sale. Together, the Spears siblings won four of the seven crossbred weight classes at the state fair. Braylon and Railey's show pigs were raised on their family's farm located in Latimer County. Braylon and Railey are proud members of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

## Coker completes Multicultural Advertising Internship Program in Boston



Kendal Coker completed the Multicultural Advertising Internship Program (MAIP), a 21-week program put in place by the American Association of Advertising Agencies to train multicultural strategic communications college students and diversify the advertising industry.

She was fortunate to be accepted as a finalist in February of 2015.

Kendal Coker is a senior at the University of Oklahoma with an advertising major and a sociology minor.

She is the daughter of David and Wani Coker of Ft. Worth, Texas, and the granddaughter of Ron and Delores Marshall of Durant. Coker's great-great-grandfather was Choctaw Code Talker Benjamin Hampton.

Applicants from all over the U.S. apply in the fall by submitting a rigorous set of application materials: four essays, a transcript, proof of heritage, resume, and 2-3 minute video.

Coker's discipline is art direction, so she also had to submit a creative campaign and online portfolio.

MAIP offers internships within many other disciplines including copywriting, account management, production, media, public relations, strategy, project management, social and digital.

After she was accepted as a semi-finalist, she was interviewed by an agency professional via Skype. Then two weeks later she was informed she had made the cut.

About 160 students were chosen as finalists, but no one knows which advertising agency they will be placed in until the draft day. Agencies from all over the country who have signed up to host MAIP interns (fellows) have a week or so to review all the finalists and make their picks.

Then at noon on the draft day in February they all signed on and had to request their chosen interns quickly before they were swooped up by other agencies. MAIP finalists get one offer and one offer only. So once that first agency picks you, it's take it or leave it.

"I was sitting in my office at the University of Oklahoma and within the first two minutes I got the email requesting me to be an art direction intern at Arnold WW in Boston," Coker said. "Most interns get chosen within the first 10 minutes because all the agencies are rushing to get the people they want. I was ecstatic and accepted immediately."

Arnold WW is a worldwide integrated advertising agency headquartered in Boston. They are most known for their work for Progressive, New Balance, Jack Daniel's and Carnival.

The first 10 weeks of MAIP are preliminary training sessions via conference call. The second 10 weeks fellows spend at their host agency and the last week MAIP flies all the interns to New York City for a weeklong event called the Face of Talent.

"I arrived in Boston at the beginning of June and stayed with the nine other Boston interns in the same apartment building. Ten strangers, united by a love of advertising—it was a blast! We were spread between many different Boston agencies, but three of us were at Arnold," Coker said.

While for Arnold, Coker helped manage social content for Santander Bank US, a prominent Northeastern bank. She also worked as the Art Director's right-hand woman on a new business pitch for Primark US, a European clothing company moving into the U.S., where she did brand experience mock-ups and helped on a video shoot. Additionally, she worked an intern project for CenturyLink, a telecom company.

MAIP also provided the fellows mentors within their same disciplines and put them into cross-region intern groups for the MAIP project for Nike Women's Basketball.

"Overall, it was the most influential experience of my college career. I gained experience, network connections, portfolio pieces, confidence and life-long friends," Coker said. "Creativity cannot be fostered well without differences of perception and culture, so minority influence in the advertising world is essential. There were plenty of African American, Asian American and Hispanic American MAIPers, but I was happy to represent Choctaw."

## Wikes celebrates first birthday



Ella Lee Marley Wikes celebrated her first birthday at Life Indian United Methodist Church in Muskogee with friends and family.

She was born Oct. 1, 2014, in Muskogee.

Her parents are Rhett Wikes and Catherine Moses. Paternal grandparents are Vince and Candy Wikes, maternal grandparents are Jonathan and Carolyn Moses, all of Muskogee. Her paternal

great-grandparents are Roland and BoDene Moses, late maternal great-grand-parents are James and Annie Borrows, late great-great-grandparents are Fred and Mary Daisy Cricklin, original enrollees of the Choctaw Nation.



Mia Ann Acosta saw her year-old twin sister Destiny Rainie Acosta with a fever and soothed her, rubbing her head. They are descendants of original enrollees Thomas and Mary Ashford of Soper.

## Santrach sets off as Coast Guardsman



Betty-Rose Santrach graduated with honors and a Bachelor of Science in electrical engineering from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy on May 20.

President Barack Obama delivered the keynote address during the U.S. Coast Guard Academy's 134th Commencement Exercises.

Presidents traditionally address the graduating class at one of the federal service academies on a rotating basis.

The President thanked the Coast Guardsmen cadets for embarking on a life of dedication to service, achievement, and purpose.

Santrach said, "It was a tremendous honor for the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States to present me with my Commission as an Ensign in the United States Coast Guard."

As one of the smallest of the five federal service academies, the U.S. Coast Guard Academy offers a quality higher education experience that emphasizes leadership, physical fitness and professional development.

Cadets devote themselves to an honor concept and go directly into positions of leadership in service.

Ensign Santrach currently serves on the USCG Cutter Boutwell, a high endurance cutter based out of San Diego, California.

Betty-Rose is the daughter of Jon Paul and Rayda Santrach. She would like to thank her family and the Choctaw Nation for their support of her educational and life goal to serve in the United States Coast Guard.

# EDUCATION



## Antlers Head Start visits fire station

The Antlers Head Start students and teachers recently visited the Antlers Fire Department and had fun with Sparky the mascot on Oct. 12. The outing was part of a series of monthly field trips aimed at teaching the students about community helpers like police officers, fire fighters, and paramedics. For this learning experience, the students explored a fire truck, interacted with Sparky and fire fighters, and sprayed a firehose. Head Start teachers Ginger McClain and Tina Jackson planned and organized the trips for the children.



## Spurlock spotlighted at SOSU in Durant

The Office of Freshman Programs at Southeastern Oklahoma State University (SOSU) in Durant named Choctaw student Morgan Spurlock as one of their Top 10 Freshmen.

A committee consisting of representatives from faculty, student government and university administration selected Spurlock, along with the nine other student honorees.

To earn the title, first-year students must maintain a collective 3.85 grade point average, while being active in numerous activities across campus.

Spurlock is a double major in psychology and communication from Antlers. She was named an O.J. Harvey Scholar and a Regional University Baccalaureate Scholar. Active in the Sigma Sigma Sigma sorority, she has volunteered at Families Feeding

Families and the Durant Area Boys and Girls Club.

She is actively involved with the Native American Student Association and was recently selected as Miss Indian Southeastern Oklahoma State University. Morgan has been elected to the Student Government Association, elected vice president of Panhellenic Council, and selected to serve on the Oklahoma State Attorney General's Student Advisory Council.

Morgan is the daughter of John Spurlock, and the granddaughter of Preston and Ellen Meshaya. She is also the niece of Shane Meshaya and great-granddaughter of John and Dovie Underwood.



## Frazee earns master's, works as historical interpreter

Jennifer Frazee graduated with a Master's of Arts in American Studies in December 2014.

Since then, Frazee has worked with the Oklahoma Historical Society(OHS)—specifically at the Murrell Home in Tablequah as a historical interpreter.

Frazee is the daughter of David and Deena Wood, from Ft. Gibson. She is the granddaughter of the late Joe Lee Thomas of Durwood, and of Carrol Wallace from Ardmore.

She and her husband, Nick Frazee, have three children: Mikaela, Daniel, and Alek. They live in Muskogee.

Frazee is proud of her Choctaw heritage and credits the Nation for their financial assistance and her Master's mentor Dr. Bill Corbett who guided her through her historical journey.

The OHS recognized Frazee as the 2014 recipient of the Outstanding Thesis on Oklahoma History during a ceremony in April 2015 at Sulphur. Her thesis was titled "A Mansion at the Athens of Indian Territory: Hunter's Home 1845-1991."



## McCarthy nabs diploma, studies to become X-ray technician

Jasmine McCarthy graduated and earned her diploma from Los Angeles Southwest Middle College High School last spring.

Her family and friends attended the ceremony, including mother Cynthia, grandmother Pollie, uncle Victor, and niece Tey Tey.

This fall McCarthy began studying at California Community College, in efforts to become an X-ray technician.

Her family and friends would like to express congratulations for her past success and wish her luck in her future endeavors.



Photo Provided

**Front Row: Teachers and Assistants, Demetria Hallford Smith, Camillia Battiest, Kelsie Pole, Kaylee Tonihka, and Melissa Taylor McClatchey. Meals, Cleve Ramsey. Back Row: Family Service Worker, Jeremiah Tom. Teachers and Assistants, Rhonda Ramsey, Britiany Meddock, Evangeline Cubit, Donna Rodriguez, and Alice Faye Anna. Director, Joyce K Meddock and Assistant Director, Sandy K McGowen. (Not pictured) Assistant Teacher, Sara Litchford.**

## Early Head Start teams with Kids' Ranch

By STEPHANIE MAKKE

Contributing Writer

The Choctaw Nation Early Head Start (EHS)—Child Care Partnership—launched its first site at Kids' Ranch, Inc. in Broken Bow on Aug. 10, serving 36 children up to age three.

Kids' Ranch is a child care center which accepts up to 150 students at a time, with ages ranging from first-year and up.

Joyce K. Meddock, Owner/Director, said "We are excited about this program because of the benefits it provides to our children and families, as well as the additional quality training the staff is receiving."

Early Head Start is a federally funded community-based program for eligible families with infants and toddlers up to age three. EHS is a prequel to Head Start providing support to families, school

readiness for children and a self-sufficient future. Children served in Early Head Start have the opportunity to transition into Head Start at age three, providing a continuum of care through school age. Early Head Start offers assistance to families with their child's needs, such as family services, health, mental health, nutrition and education. The program is focused on low-income families and is Choctaw-preference, but the service is open to all families living near Early Head Start locations.

To apply, parents must fill out a three-page application and provide income verification, proof of residency and birth certificate. There is currently a wait list for this location, but applications will be accepted. Contact Elysia Oldham at 800-522-6170, ext. 2644, to apply or learn more about the program.



## Officer teaches Stigler Head Start children about safety

The students of the Choctaw Nation Head Start in Stigler recently received a visit from Isaac James, Choctaw Nation Tribal Police Officer.

After safety lessons, James led the staff and students outside to check out the Choctaw Nation D.A.R.E. car.

Safety laws and rules are taught in head start classrooms on a daily basis, and officers like James reinforce these lessons.



## Wester and Mayo initiate scholarship

Ruth Lance Wester and Jackie Mayo, of Denison, commemorated a new scholarship on October 6 at the campus of Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

The university held a celebration, a highlight of which was the unveiling of a portrait depicting both West and Mayo, in honor of their efforts to support academics.

Friends of Wester and Mayo came to celebrate the Native American Scholarship at the Welcome Center on campus.

Their \$15,000 endowment produced an art, math, and education scholarship, named after the two, which will support Native American students.





## HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Our Hugo Area Office is now open!

Come say Halito to our Branch Manager, Lela Rodriguez.

Located at the Choctaw Career Development Center  
1206 W. Clayton St., Hugo, OK  
1-580-326-8304 x 6079



## High School Student Services

A Choctaw Nation Education Program

*The Choctaw Nation High School Student Services Program serves students in grades 9-12 who are tribal members. The goal of the program is to assist our students with academic information to promote education and/or career path beyond high school.*

<b>Requirements for eligibility:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choctaw Tribal Member</li> <li>• Have a Parent Permission Form on file</li> <li>• High school students in grades 9th thru 12th</li> </ul>	<b>Available services:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACT test fee reimbursement</li> <li>• ACT workshops</li> <li>• College prep study guides</li> <li>• Parent-Teacher Conferences</li> <li>• College Fairs</li> <li>• Tribal education information</li> </ul>
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(580) 924-8280, ext. 4105

## SPORTS

# Choctaw football player kicks stigma of diabetes, finds success

By RONNI PIERCE

Choctaw Nation

Josh Lambert's list of accomplishments since being diagnosed with diabetes at the age of 10 is no mean feat.

An award-winning, two-year starter at kicker for the Big 12 West Virginia Mountaineers football team, 2014 accolades include:

- Finalist for the Lou Groza Award
- All-American second team
- All-Big 12 Conference first team selection by the AP and second team by the coaches,
- Holds the NCAA record for most field goals made at 40 yards or more in a season (16)
- Tied the NCAA season record for most contests with multiple field goals made in a game (10)
- No. 2 kicker in the nation in scoring (135)
- Made the most field goals nationally in 2014 (30)
- No. 1 in the Big 12 and No. 1 nationally in field goals made per game (2.31)
- Led team in scoring with 135 points, which was a WVU record for kick scoring in a season
- Four straight games (Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas Tech, Baylor) with a field goal of more than 50 yards
- Was 4-for-5 on field goals of 50 or more yards in 2014
- His 54-yard field goal vs. Baylor gave him four field goals of 50 yards or more for the season and five overall, which

tied him with Paul Woodside for the most in school history

- His then career long 54-yard field goal against No. 4 Oklahoma was second-longest in school history
- Two-year starter at Garland, Texas, high school and named All-District 10-5A first team kicker as a senior

Described as a quiet, private young man by his grandfather Butch Lambert, he is also a long-time patient of the Choctaw Diabetes Wellness Clinic. "Whether it's dentist appointments, eye appointments, anytime I need to see an endocrinologist, they have been nothing but accommodating," Lambert said about the Nation's health services group. He continued, "I can't say enough good things about what Choctaw Nation has done for me."

Lambert was actually playing soccer at the time when he was first diagnosed and didn't really understand the implications of the disease on his health or any potential sports activities. With type 1 diabetes the body doesn't make insulin and, unchecked, the disease can lead to heart and kidney disease, nerve damage, and any number of other complications.

However, there is a long list of athletes who have found success in their respective sports after getting the disease under control. Golfer Scott Verplank, the Chicago Bears' Jay Cutler, the Arizona Cardinals' Patrick Peterson, and the Texas Rangers' Mark Lowe are



Photos by Payton Guthrie

Josh Lambert, an award-winning kicker for the West Virginia Mountaineers, is seen here warming up on the sidelines during the OU-West Virginia game on Oct. 3 in Norman.

just a few successful athletes living with type 1 diabetes.

Team Novo Nordisk is a global all-diabetes sports team of cyclists, triathletes, and runners who compete to dispel the fatalistic myths surrounding the disease. The team's stated mission is "to inspire, educate, and empower people affected by diabetes."

"Pretty early on I knew if I took care of business, it's not going to slow me down," said Lambert. "Don't let it affect you—you have to be the boss of it."

With his genealogy, he also knows the high rate of the disease in Native Americans.

His Choctaw heritage is traced down from the maternal side back to the Magees and Monatubbees in Mississippi.

His grandfather Butch

Chief Gary Batton meets with Choctaw tribal member Josh Lambert in the locker room after the game in Owen Field. Lambert discussed his lengthy relationship with Choctaw Nation Health Services, his initial diagnosis with type 1 diabetes when he was 10-years-old, and his steps to a positive attitude—take charge of the illness, don't let it slow you down, and be the boss.



Kendra Coleman



Tara Hawkins

## Choctaw Junior College Academic All-American Athletes

The Carl Albert State College women's athletic programs recently received word that two of their players have garnered Superior Academic All-American awards. Lady Vikings basketball player Tara Hawkins of Talihina and softball player Kendra Coleman of Red Oak were named Superior Academic All-Americans for having GPAs between 3.8 and 3.99.

The Lady Vikings softball team was among those junior colleges in the country named as Academic Teams of the Year for having a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above.

Tara plans to continue her education at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant, and Kendra will continue her softball career while studying at the University of Arkansas at Monticello.



## Young excels with many sports

Destiny Young, 15-year-old ninth-grader from Redding, California, gathered a long list of athletic accolades during her years playing for a number of teams.

She spent two years active with Shasta Lake Youth Soccer, four seasons with Redding Recreation Basketball, nine seasons with Redding Recreation Softball, two years with Buckeye Basketball, and one year playing varsity softball.

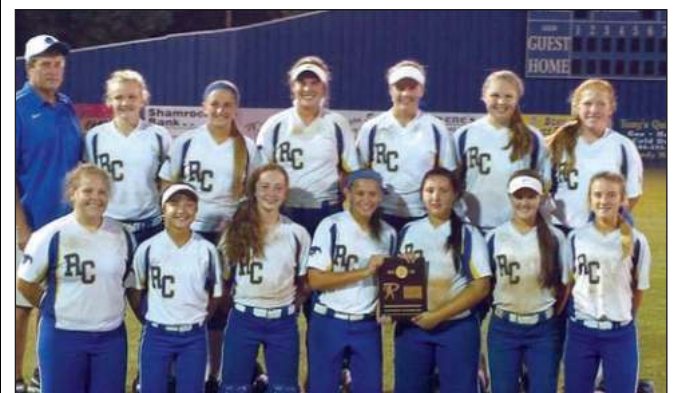
In this time, she made honor roll at Gateway School for her full seventh- and eighth-grade years, earned two basketball MVP awards, and was ranked the best catcher in the Redding Recreation Softball League.

## Bryant wins first cross country medal

Gracie Rose Bryant, six-year-old, first-grader, won her first medal at the Plainview Public School cross country meet.

She came in ninth place in the first- and second-grade girls division, and fourth place out of all the first grade girls. Her time was nine minutes and 10 seconds for a mile on the Plainview Indians cross country track.

Father Thomas Bryant said, "I couldn't have been more excited and proud of watching her win her first medal where I competed and attended K-12. So Proud she is my beautiful athletic Choctaw cross country little runner!"



**The Choctaw Nation Diabetes Wellness Clinic is located in Talihina, 800-349-7026 ext. 6942 or 6959. It not only treats the illness but also focuses on prevention in the public schools promoting healthy lifestyle choices through diet and exercise.**

## Angello sisters help win championship

Choctaws Riley Angello (front row, second from left) and Jacey Angello (front row, third from left) helped their fast pitch softball team, the Rockcreek Lady Mustangs, bring home a district championship title.

## Late Chief's grandson continues legacy of success

Maverick Clark Gardner, 7, is the great grandson of the late Chief Clark David Gardner. He has played baseball on teams eight and under since he was five.

This year his dad, Jarrett Clark Gardner, decided to form a team of seven year olds, coach them, and see if they could compete with the top teams in the state of Oklahoma.

The challenge of picking skilled youngsters along with committed parents is that it often ends up in an expensive season for the families to travel to all the tournaments. And if you meld together and start winning like the Extra Effort Cardinals did this year, you find yourself playing in state tournaments and two World Series tournaments.

This year the EE Cardinals won the 7U AA Coach Pitch USSSA World Series in Sulphur, Louisiana. Then they backed that impressive win up with a USSSA Global World Series in Bixby.

Jarrett and Maverick are very proud Choctaw multiple National Champions.

Dad Jarrett won his first World Series when he was 9-years-old in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and went on to an impressive professional baseball career with the Boston Red Sox, the San Diego Padres, and the Lincoln Saltdogs, where he retired from professional pitching and coaching. Now he manages his own baseball facility in Moore. Maverick has two younger sisters, Lyra and Eliza, who excel in softball.



## Are you a Choctaw Champion?

The Choctaw Nation would like to honor students who have excelled in their chosen **sports** or **academic** field. Guidelines: Must have qualified for a team or individual competition at the state level in high school or have earned a collegiate scholarship for athletics. (Other scholarship winners will be honored in People You Know section.) Any collegiate competitions will be accepted, and submissions for kids below the high school level will also be considered.

If your child is a Choctaw Champion, please send a photo, contact information, and brief description of their accomplishments to:

biskinik@choctawnation.com

or

Choctaw Nation  
Attn: Biskinik, Choctaw Champions  
P.O. Box 1210  
Durant, OK 74702

## 2015 Bow Shoot Schedule

TVSHKA HOMMA CAPITOL GROUNDS

Turkey Shoot, Nov. 14

Registration, 10:30 ♦ Competition, 11:00

SELF BOWS|HANDMADE BOWS|NO COMPOUND BOWS

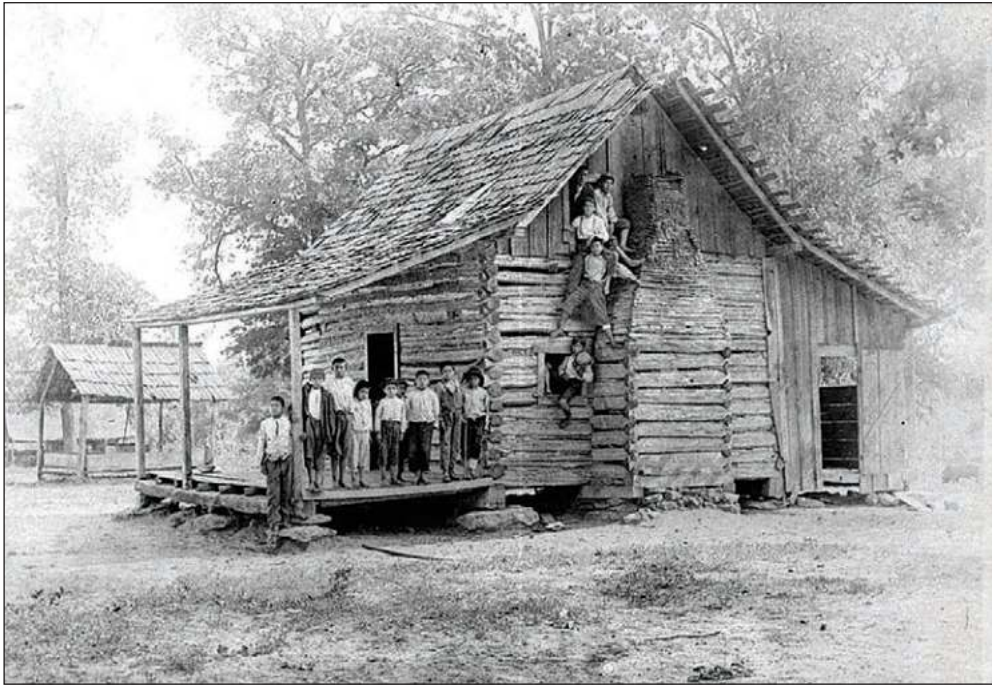
CO-ED AGE GROUPS: 5 & under; 6-8; 9-13; 14-16; 17-19; 20 & over

Prizes for each age group at the end of each shoot. Final prize awarded at end of year for overall points.

Information, please call

Sue Folsom (800) 522.6170x2134 or Pam Waugh (580) 775.7862

## Iti Fabussa



An 1830's-40's cabin at Goodland Academy with a mudcat chimney, Choctaw County, built by Henry Leavenworth Gooding and Choctaw workers. Image courtesy of Goodland Academy.

### The log cabin

No building style is more iconic of Americana than the log cabin. In many regions, including Choctaw Nation, log cabins are the oldest standing buildings. There is just something special about the way that an old log cabin combines nostalgia with skilled hand craftsmanship, and about how its construction from local, natural materials makes a cabin seem to literally be a part of the land itself. This month, we will take a look at this classic American icon, from a Choctaw perspective.

From what we see and hear, it would be easy to think that log cabins are a uniquely American invention, built by the first European settlers in what is now the United States, but actually, neither of these notions is correct. The first Euro-American houses of the Spanish in Florida (late 1500s), and by the English in New England (first decade of the 1600s) were of a timber frame construction, following the building traditions of those two ethnic groups. The log cabin, however, originated in Scandinavia and was brought to the English Colonies by Scandinavian settlers before 1640. Beautiful, strong, and made from large logs, which were then plentiful in America's old growth forests, the log cabin quickly caught on in what is now the United States in frontier areas where sawn lumber was difficult to come by.

For Choctaws, home construction with logs was nothing new. Choctaw ancestors had used small-diameter logs, set vertically in a trench to form the core of the walls of winter houses for centuries, while giant logs were used as roof supports (see Iti Fabussa 4/11/15). However, the rectangular log cabin with horizontal logs seems to have come to the Choctaw homeland after the area passed from the colonial claims of Spain, France, and England, to the United States, shortly after the American Revolutionary War. Choctaws would have first seen these log cabins as ever-increasing numbers of Euro-Americans pushed into the area and began settling along the Tombigbee River and Mississippi River. Choctaws called these log cabins "Chuka Itabana" (Byington 1915:110). This name, which literally means "house fit together" in the Choctaw language, refers to the intricate way that the ends of the logs were notched and assembled to create the main part of the house.

In the early 1800s, log cabins moved from the peripheries of Choctaw country into the center as

Euro-Americans began building log churches, schools, and governmental buildings in and amongst Choctaw settlements. Choctaws began building and living in these log cabins too, as they moved out of the ancient villages in order to practice Euro-American-style farming, or to set up inns along major routes of transportation, like the Robinson Road. By the time of the Trail of Tears, few or none of the ancient, circular Choctaw winter houses were being built, instead, it was the rectangular log cabin. Henry Halbert (n.d.) describes a type of cabin that was used by some Choctaws in Mississippi around this time. It was rectangular in shape, and its logs were round, notched at their ends to fit together. Its roof was made of logs,

longer a log is, the heavier and more difficult it is to move, these homes averaged about 16 feet by 16 feet. Often, they had dirt floors, with storage pits dug into them. Split pieces of wood, moss, or rocks were wedged into the spaces between the logs of the walls and coated with a clay chinking called "chuka isht vlhplosa" in the Choctaw language (Byington 1915:110). Doors were made of split pieces of wood, or even deer hide. Windows, if they existed, were cut into the log walls. They had no screens and maybe no glass, but wooden shutters were made to close them off when needed. Many of these cabins had a loft, where the children slept under roofs ("chuka isht holmo" in the Choctaw language [ibid]) made of pole

these builders may or may not have had the use of animal power.

Over the first year or two, the green logs of these cabins would dry and shrink, creating gaps in the chinking and roofs. In the winter time, these houses could be cold, drafty, and dark. Although they were really temporary structures, some families were content or were forced by circumstances to keep living in them until the buildings finally caught fire within their mudcat chimneys, or rotted from the bottom up as a result of not having a foundation.

Families would often build the temporary log cabins while they took their time building a more substantial and comfortable log home. This type of structure is represented by most of the log cabins from the early days that still survive into the present, such as the Thomas LeFlore Cabin, which was built in Choctaw County in 1834, under contract by the United States government as a stipulation of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek. Rather than being made from round logs, this type of home is made from hewn logs. These logs came from large-diameter trees that were felled in the late fall, when the sap was low. In southeastern Oklahoma, pine and oak were favorite woods for cabins, but other types were used when convenient. During the winter months, while the felled trees were still green and relatively soft, workers would use a broad axe to remove material on two opposite faces of the

of heartwood), and more even in their dimensions (McRaven 2005). Both of these characteristics made for houses that were less prone to drafts, stronger, and more comfortable.

If possible, once the green logs were hewn, they would have been stacked and allowed to cure for approximately a year before being assembled into a cabin. In the meantime, a foundation made of pier stones ("chuka aiontva", [Byington 1915:110]) would be stacked up to support the corners of the house, the porch, and at certain places along the sill logs. Sheet metal, if available, would be placed between the pier stones and the bottom log, or "sill," to act as a barrier to termites and moisture. Mortises would be cut into the sill logs to hold flooring joists, up off

the two pens in a dog trot was floored and roofed, but left without front or back walls in order to form a breezeway (passive air-conditioning). In nice weather, the breezeway is where the family would eat. It was common to build a one or two story porch on the front and additional rooms onto the back of the home. The Choctaw homestead usually has other buildings besides just the house, including a smoke house, barn, and cellar. These were often, although not always constructed from round logs.

Hewn log homes were built in southeastern Oklahoma until at least the first decade of the 1900s (c.f. Bays 2014). These houses were not only made to last 200 years or more, but to adapt as family needs changed through time. If

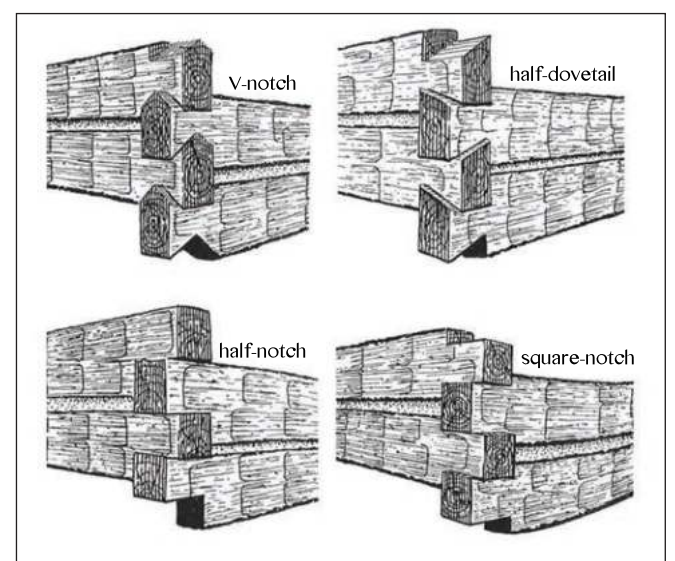


Figure 3: Hewn log notching styles commonly used in the Choctaw Nation (after McRaven 2005).

the ground and away from rot. Floors made of thick-sawn lumber, would be built on top of these. The ends of the hewn wall logs would be expertly notched by a skilled craftsman to fit together snugly to form the shell of the house. Some Choctaw log home builders used the half dovetail and the V-notch, which were the best techniques, while others used the simpler but weaker square notch or half notch (Figure 3). Just as in constructing the temporary houses, the logs for the permanent houses would be set in place by work crews, in a day or perhaps more of community activity and fun. As the walls grew in height, ramps would be set up to help men and animals pull the logs up to the top of the walls. These more permanent cabins often had a second story or half story above the first. The most common method for building a large house from logs of a finite length was to construct two square log pens and connect them together, creating a type of cabin known as a "dog-trot". The space in between

a family living in a single pen home grew, they could build a second pen and make it into a dog trot, build another story, or add on more rooms elsewhere. Logs were replaced, recycled, and given second life in new structures including barns. As time passed and styles changed, many of the old log homes were eventually sided over.

Today, log homes still have an appeal to many Americans including many Native Americans. Kits with milled round lumber are popular, but somehow they seem to fall short of what our great-grandparents achieved: simple houses, made from local materials, crafted with skill and put together by the hands of the community. Their old log homes that still stand are a testament to them and to the self-reliant way of life that they knew.

**The Historic Preservation Department is currently trying to locate and document early log buildings within the Choctaw Nation. If you have one, please give us a call at 1-800-522-6170 ext. 2236.**

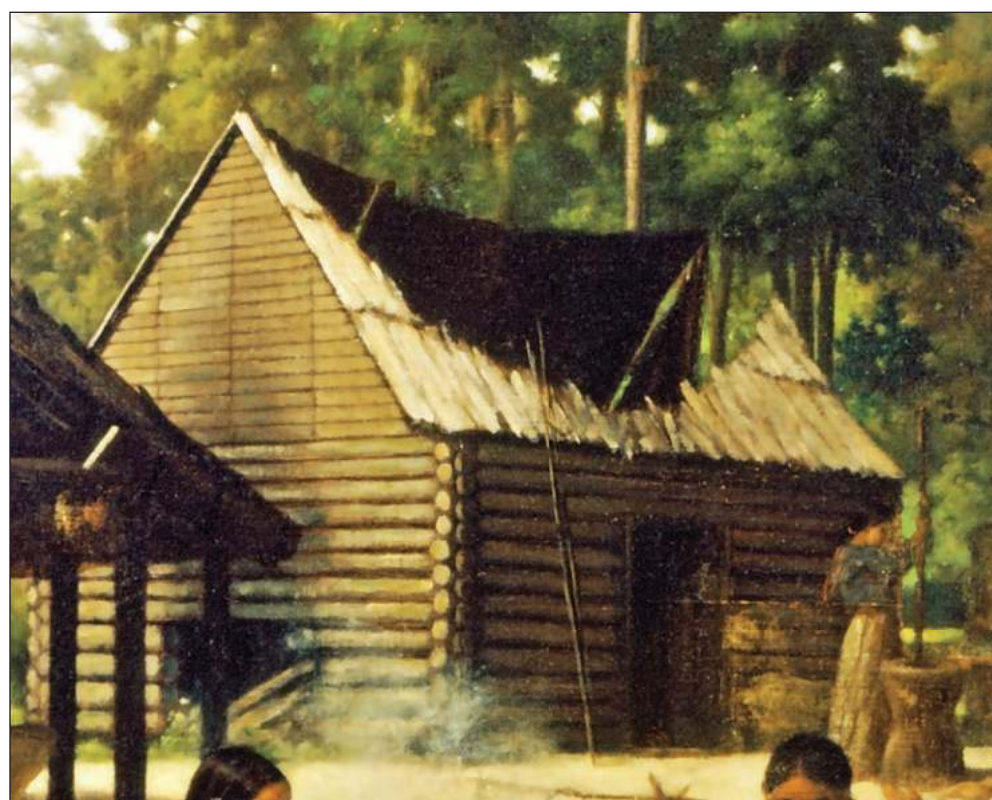


Figure 1: A temporary Choctaw log cabin, Louisiana 1869, painting by Francois Bernard.

oriented with the long axis of the cabin, with the top log serving as a ridge pole for the roof. The spaces between the logs in the roof and walls were mortared. Long boards were scored at their centers and bent over the ridge of the roof with enough hanging over the sides to create eaves. For warmth, a fire was made of dry wood in the middle of the dirt floor. This cabin style (Figure 1) was used by some Choctaws in Mississippi until the 1850s.

When many Choctaw people arrived in what is now Oklahoma on the initial wave of the Trail of Tears, nearly all of them constructed log cabins as their first homes. Initially, most of these cabins were not fancy, but built quickly as immediate shelter for families arriving in a new place. These quick structures were made from relatively small diameter, round logs, cut green, and notched near their ends so that they could be stacked up to form a square pen. Due to the fact that the

rafters and covered with split wood shingles (Figure 2). Some of these houses had fireplaces lined with

logs, leaving the logs with two thin, round, natural sides, and two flat-hewn sides. Hewing logs was an



Figure 2: Upstairs in the Choate Cabin, Pittsburg County 1867.

stones, and "mudcat" chimneys that were made of a log framework, plastered with clay. These houses were put up in a short time with the aid of family members, friends, and congregation members, through an event known as a cabin raising or "chuka itabvnni" in the Choctaw language (ibid., also see Iti Fabussa 12/13/14). Construction tools were very simple, and

important skill for many Choctaw men, doubly so when the railroads, which required large numbers of hewn timbers for cross-ties, began to enter Choctaw Nation in the 1860s. For homes, the hewn logs were worth the extra work. Compared to round logs, the hewn logs made homes that were more resistant to rot (because of their shape and greater percentage

**Native American Heritage Month**

**Nov. 8-15**  
"Rock Your Mocs Week"  
Wear your moccasins all week and participate in this nationwide event.

**Nov. 9**  
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Heritage events at Choctaw Nation Headquarters in Durant.  
5:30 p.m. Traditional beading class at Choctaw Nation Cultural Events Department.

**Nov. 16**  
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Heritage Events at Choctaw Nation Headquarters in Durant

**Nov. 23**  
5:30 p.m. Traditional beading class at Choctaw Nation Cultural Events Department.

The Choctaw Nation Cultural Events Department is located at  
4881 Choctaw Road, Durant, OK