

The Seminole Tribune

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Gaming revenues soared in 2019, but there's no celebration

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

It was a banner year for Indian gaming revenues in 2019, but any end of year celebrating has been muted by the Covid-19 pandemic and its effect on the industry.

The National Indian Gaming Commission recently reported a record \$34.6 billion in gross gaming revenues for the industry in fiscal year 2019 – a 2.5% increase over 2018. It is the highest reported revenue in the 32 years since the federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act was enacted, the NIGC said.

All but one of NIGC's eight regions experienced growth. The Oklahoma City region saw the largest increase at 7.7%. The Washington, D.C., region, which includes Florida and six other states, saw a 2% decrease from 2018 to 2019.

The Seminole Tribe operates six casinos in Florida under Seminole Gaming, including its flagship Hard Rock properties in Tampa and Hollywood.

"Healthy tribal economies are important to promoting the tribal self-sufficiency envisioned in the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, NIGC Chairman E. Sequoyah Simermyer said in a statement. "The growth reflected in the 2019 gaming revenue demonstrates the strength of tribal economies in recent years."

♦ See **HARD ROCK** on page 6A

Persistence pays off as tribe's Veterans Building lands Army helicopter from Vietnam War

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — A U.S. Army helicopter whose service ranged from missions in the Vietnam War to a role in "The Walking Dead" TV series, is now stationed on the Brighton Reservation.

The retired Bell UH-1 Iroquois helicopter – more commonly known as a "Huey" – has a new home in front of the Florida Seminole Veterans Building. The helicopter, which was placed near the entrance in the fall, serves as a lasting legacy of Seminole veteran Stephen Bowers, a patriot who served his tribe and his country in the war and then worked tirelessly for veterans' causes right up until his passing on June 1, 2020, at age 71.

In May 1969, Bowers joined the U.S. Army's 503rd Infantry 173rd Airborne Brigade in Vietnam. After a stint stateside, he was discharged in 1971. But his tour of duty in Vietnam stayed with him throughout the remainder of his life. In 2010, he began a campaign to have a statue placed at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. to commemorate Native Americans' service in the military. Although his specific plan didn't quite pan out, his efforts led to the creation of the Native American Veterans Memorial, which opened on Veterans Day this year at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.

The idea to add a helicopter on the campus of the Brighton veterans building started about 10 years ago. Seminole veterans decided to search for a suitable



A helicopter that served in the Vietnam War has a new home in front of the Florida Seminole Veterans Building on the Brighton Reservation.

piece of military equipment to display outside the newly completed building. Since Huey helicopters played such a large role in the war, Bowers started looking for a non-working one to display. The search lasted years.

The single-engine Huey was a workhorse in Vietnam. It was first developed in 1952 as a medical evacuation and utility helicopter, but Vietnam was the first time it was used in combat roles; about 7,000 were deployed.

"Hueys were a lifesaver for soldiers

who served as boots on the ground," said Elizabeth Bowers, Stephen's widow. "They heard the sound of the 'woo woo woo' and knew someone was coming to rescue them. The whoosh of the blades is what I heard about most from Stephen and others in combat. It's a sound they never forget."

Attendees at a 2018 Veterans Day event in Brighton heard first-hand about the important role Hueys played in Vietnam. Guest speaker John Glenn, a friend of Stephen Bowers, spoke about his experience as a medic on a Huey medevac helicopter

from 1969-71. Also known as "Dustoffs" for the amount of dust they blew around on landing and takeoff, they were unarmed per Geneva Convention rules. They flew in any weather and at any time of day or night to retrieve wounded troops.

The communist-led Viet Cong army in South Vietnam placed a high priority on all helicopters and used the iconic red cross painted on the nose as a target.

♦ See **HELICOPTER** on page 4A

Biden picks Haaland to lead Department of Interior

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

The significance of President-elect Joe Biden's pick to lead the Department of Interior is hard to overstate for Indian Country.

Consider that for 245 years only non-Natives (and mostly males) have served as the top official over Native American affairs. That streak will be broken if Rep. Deb Haaland, a Democrat from New Mexico, is confirmed by the Senate as Biden's Cabinet secretary for the department. It would also be the first time a Native American has held any Cabinet position.

Biden made the choice official Dec. 17 after weeks of speculation and amid a growing chorus who wanted Haaland at the helm.

Haaland acknowledged in a statement soon after the announcement that "a voice like hers" had never been elevated this way.

"Growing up in my mother's Pueblo household made me fierce. I'll be fierce for all of us, our planet, and all of our protected land. I am honored and ready to serve," she said.

Many Native American leaders said the development was evidence of a positive shift – a new start – in an often fraught relationship between Indian Country and the federal government.

"This is an historic moment for Indian Country and represents significant progress in the evolution of our nation-to-nation relationship with the United States," the United South & Eastern Tribes, which includes the Seminole Tribe, said in a statement. "The nomination of Congresswoman Haaland sends a powerful message to Tribal Nations and Native people – one of regard, honor, affirmation, and visibility."

The vast Interior Department is involved in the conservation and management of 500 million acres of federal lands and natural resources. It oversees a broad group of agencies such as the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Education and the Bureau of Indian Affairs – the latter includes law enforcement on reservations and Native American trust land and trust asset issues.

Haaland, 60, is from the Pueblo of Laguna. In 2018, she was one of two Native American women to be the first elected to



Rep. Deb Haaland, D-NM, was nominated Dec. 17 by President-elect Joe Biden to be the next Secretary of the Interior.

Congress – the other was Sharice Davids, a Democrat from Kansas. Both were reelected to the House on Nov. 3.

Haaland first ran for higher office in 2014 as lieutenant governor on the Democratic ticket in New Mexico with Gary King. The pair didn't win, but she would go on to be chair of the Democratic Party of New Mexico prior to her run for Congress.

Before politics, the single mother supported her daughter and was known for her strong will and entrepreneurship. Haaland started a salsa business out of her kitchen and earned a degree in Native American law from the University of New Mexico while taking her daughter to her classes.

New tone?

In 2017, the Interior Department under the Trump administration faced scrutiny for stating that up to 30% of its 70,000 employees weren't "loyal to the [American] flag."

That same year, the administration drew the ire of many Native American tribes and conservation groups when it reduced the land size of two national monuments in Utah

– Bears Ears and Grand Staircase.

President Trump's nomination in 2019 of former oil and gas lobbyist David Bernhardt as secretary also raised eyebrows. Bernhardt replaced Ryan Zinke, who resigned after a series of scandals.

Ken Salazar, who was interior secretary under the Obama administration from 2009 to 2013, told NBC News that Haaland is a "terrific choice" for the position. He said the Senate should confirm her quickly.

"This is a hard job," Salazar said, and added that Sen. Daniel Inouye of Hawaii once told him that of all the Cabinet positions, "the Interior is the most important because you are the custodian of America's natural resources and custodian of America's heritage."

During her short time in Congress, Haaland became known among progressives as a strong advocate for the climate and Indigenous rights. She had previously joined the protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline project.

Boosting Haaland's resume further for Cabinet consideration was her service in Congress as the chair of the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands and vice-chair of the

Committee on Natural Resources. She also led the subcommittee on Indigenous Peoples of the U.S.

The variety of issues Haaland will face if confirmed include making sure tribal and urban Native communities have access to federal funding, protecting wildlife areas from oil and gas interests and investigations of missing and murdered Indigenous women – a problem on the rise in Indian Country.

Crystal Echo Hawk, executive director of IllumiNative, a Native American advocacy group, told NBC News she recalled seeing Haaland at a February 2020 meeting of the National Congress of American Indians in Washington, D.C.

She remembered Haaland being surrounded by people – something that often happens because of her standing among Native Americans.

"As Native people, we grow up constantly being erased and minimized and dehumanized. That to be successful, you have to leave your Native identity behind," Echo Hawk said. "But when young Native people come up to Deb in throngs, that's not the case. They feel hope."

Tribe makes key hire in climate change battle

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The threat of climate change is not out of sight or out of mind for the Seminole Tribe or for those living in Florida.

The range of dangers and problems has already arrived. What usually comes to mind for Floridians is sea level rise, increased flooding and more frequent and powerful hurricanes – but there are many more and the consequences can be devastating.

Tribal leadership has made climate change a priority over the years. It has many departments involved in the fight, whether through the work of the Heritage and Environment Resources Office (HERO), the Environmental Resource Management Department (ERMD) or Seminole Heritage Services (SHS). In recent years, the tribe has hosted a yearly Renewable Energy & Sustainability Conference that brings stakeholders from across Indian Country to Hollywood.

The tribe has now made a key hire to help execute its ongoing efforts. Jill Horwitz is the tribe's first climate resiliency officer. She started in the job Dec. 7 and will juggle a number of responsibilities, from engaging with government officials and agencies to outreach and education. The position falls under HERO, but the work is tribalwide.



Jill Horwitz is the Seminole Tribe's first climate resiliency officer.

♦ See **CLIMATE** on page 7A

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Editorial

Haaland to the Department of Interior: It's history

• The Santa Fe New Mexican Editorial Board

Deb Haaland isn't through making history. One of the first Native women elected to Congress, the Laguna Pueblo member and U.S. representative from Albuquerque broke another barrier (Dec. 17) when President-elect Joe Biden nominated her to serve as secretary of the Department of the Interior. If confirmed, she will be the first Native in the Cabinet, charged with running the Department of the Interior, founded in 1849. It manages vast stretches of the West, including the many places where tribal people once lived and still do. Under the department's umbrella is the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the agency that has been the point of contact with Native people and 574 federally recognized tribes. It is impossible to put into words just how significant an appointment this is for Native people. Tribes from across the country had supported Haaland's nomination. Yes, she brings representation to the Cabinet that shatters barriers, making our government reflect varied experiences and backgrounds, just as Biden promised. But she also is someone whose fellow House members — the people who work closest with her — supported her for the

job, including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Backing came from Democrats and even some Republicans. That's a recognition of skills, knowledge and an ability to work with others — all characteristics that will serve her well on the Cabinet. U.S. Rep. Raúl Grijalva of Arizona, chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, took himself out of contention for the post. Of Haaland, he said: "She's real. She's authentic. She's legitimate. And she should have it." U.S. Rep. Tom Cole, a Republican from Oklahoma, knows Haaland from co-chairing the Congressional Native Caucus with her. His thoughts? "While we belong to different parties, I consider Congresswoman Deb Haaland a valued colleague and a good friend," he said. Several Biden advisers appeared skeptical of Haaland, just as some were when Kamala Harris was being vetted for vice president. Haaland lacked experience to run the sprawling bureaucracy. She didn't have the policy chops they wanted. She supported the Green New Deal, a potential roadblock to confirmation. They were soundly beaten back. Even a last-minute attempt to keep Haaland in the House — it might compromise the slim Democratic majority — ended after Pelosi endorsed her, noting Haaland "is one of the most respected and one of the best members of Congress I have served with." Her experience in Congress matters, of course, but her lived experience is essential.

That includes cooking for hundreds at a feast day, raising a daughter as a single mother, selling homemade salsa to pay for law school, working the cornfields at Laguna Pueblo, supervising tribal enterprises and running the New Mexico Democratic Party. She has been active helping New Mexicans protect sacred sites from overly aggressive oil and gas drilling, been a leader in seeking justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women, and understands public lands are more than a profit base. She is eager to help transform U.S. reliance on fossil fuels, furthering Biden's goal of slowing global warming. The Department of the Interior is critical in that effort because it manages roughly a fifth of the land in the United States. Like the other New Mexicans in the running for the post — including retiring U.S. Sen. Tom Udall, another excellent candidate — Haaland has a connection with the land and people of the interior West, where the federal government balanced competing interests in protecting our shared heritage. As she puts it, she's a "35th generation" New Mexican. Once confirmed, we expect Haaland to be a voice for people too long ignored, to clean up the mess left by Trump appointees and to direct policy that puts the planet and people first. She was and remains a trailblazer, making New Mexico and the nation proud. This editorial was posted Dec. 17 at santafenewmexican.com.

Haaland knows the issues at Interior; can she find a balance?

• Albuquerque Journal Editorial Board

"I'll be fierce for all of us, our planet, and all of our protected land." - Rep. Deb Haaland on her nomination to run the U.S. Interior Department

The U.S. Department of the Interior is a sprawling agency that oversees more than 500 million acres of land and 422 national park sites, as well as national monuments and wildlife refuges. It is responsible for everything from the National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and U.S. Geological Survey. Its 70,000-plus employees are tasked with a balancing act that promotes energy security while enhancing conservation stewardship, that increases access to outdoor recreation while protecting more than 1,000 endangered species and their habitats, all the while honoring our nation's commitments to our sovereign communities.

And U.S. Rep. Deb Haaland, just elected to her second term representing the state's 1st Congressional District, is the Biden administration's pick to be the 54th person to run the whole shebang. It's not the first time a New Mexican will be entrusted with the big job: New Mexicans Albert Fall was Interior Secretary from 1921-23 and Manuel Lujan from 1980-1993.

Indian Country issues

If confirmed by the Senate, Haaland will make history as the first-ever Native American Cabinet secretary. There was much lobbying on her behalf, including from Native American groups and more than 100 female tribal members, activists and Hollywood A-listers from Cher to Gloria Steinem who signed a letter to President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris saying in part "We believe it is critical at this time for the first Native American to serve in the President's Cabinet, so we can begin to shift the focus back to caring for future generations and returning to a value system that honors Mother Earth."

As pointed out by The Washington Post, "A member of Pueblo of Laguna, the

60-year-old Haaland would become the first descendant of the original people to populate North America to run the Interior Department. It marks a turning point for a 171-year-old institution that has often had a fraught relationship with 574 federally recognized tribes."

After one term in Congress, Haaland already has a strong record in this area. She is a member of the subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States. She is co-chair of the Native American Caucus, vice chair of the Equality Caucus, and a member or leader of many other caucuses dedicated to ensuring the underrepresented are heard. She helped ensure \$8 billion of the coronavirus CARES Act went to tribal nations. She played a key role in getting passage of the "Not Invisible Act" and the "Justice for Native Survivors of Sexual Violence Act" — both address the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women. And she has advocated for protecting sacred lands.

There is no question Haaland knows the challenges tribal and pueblo members face. She was born in Navajo country to a Native American mother, and is not only a member of Laguna Pueblo but also has Jemez Pueblo heritage and was a tribal administrator for San Felipe Pueblo. She has lived the inequities the coronavirus pandemic has laid bare, spending summers with her grandparents in Mesita in their home that lacked running water. And so she is an advocate for a federal infrastructure bill as she understands the promise to Build Back Better includes what many take for granted and too many, especially in New Mexico, do without — "Everybody should have water and broadband," she told the Journal Editorial Board during her reelection campaign.

Public land issues

Again, Haaland has been doing the front-line work in this area. She is vice chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, which oversees the Department of the Interior. She is chairwoman of the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forest and Public Lands. She co-sponsored the landmark Great American Outdoors Act that finally fully funds the nation's parks, monuments and open spaces via the Land Water Conservation Fund.

And with four House colleagues who also represent communities at the forefront

of the climate crisis, she has put forth an ambitious 30x30 goal for conserving 30% of U.S. lands and ocean by 2030 — which according to her website "scientists say is the minimum step needed to pull us back from the tipping point that nature and our climate have reached."

Oil and gas issues

The Journal has often disagreed with Haaland in this area, and we backed her opponent in the general election this fall, stating Haaland "brought valuable diversity to Congress as a member of Laguna Pueblo but has tied herself too closely to extreme far-left legislation, including co-sponsoring the Green New Deal."

That co-sponsorship, along with her openness to a fracking ban, have put Haaland at odds with the state's most visible industry. On Dec. 17, New Mexico Oil & Gas Association President Ryan Flynn said in a news release that "more than 134,000 New Mexicans depend on the oil and gas industry as the foundation of our economy, creators of jobs, and the largest source of funding for our state budget and public schools. ... We hope Rep. Haaland will employ a balanced approach that considers the needs of all who depend on public lands, including the thousands of men and women and families whose livelihoods depend on access to public lands for resource development."

Haaland has been an unapologetic advocate for combating climate change and forcing the oil and gas industry "to clean up their mess." She recently told NPR "climate change is the challenge of our lifetime, and it's imperative that we invest in an equitable, renewable energy economy." But she also told The Washington Post "I come from New Mexico. It's a big gas and oil state. And I care about every single job."

As we go into a new year we have to be cautiously optimistic Haaland will honor her word and help the Biden administration find an equitable bridge to clean energy and renewables that preserves reliable power, reliable incomes and energy independence for New Mexico and the nation.

◆ See HAALAND on page 3A

NPS announces prescribed fires for Big Cypress National Preserve

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

The National Park Service (NPS) announced in December its 2021 prescribed fire notification for the Big Cypress National Preserve. Burn areas include land adjacent to the Seminole Tribe's Big Cypress Reservation and the Miccosukee Tribe Reservation.

While there are no specific dates yet, the fires will likely commence after the first of the year. As in years past, the Seminole Tribe's wildland fire department will be there to help.

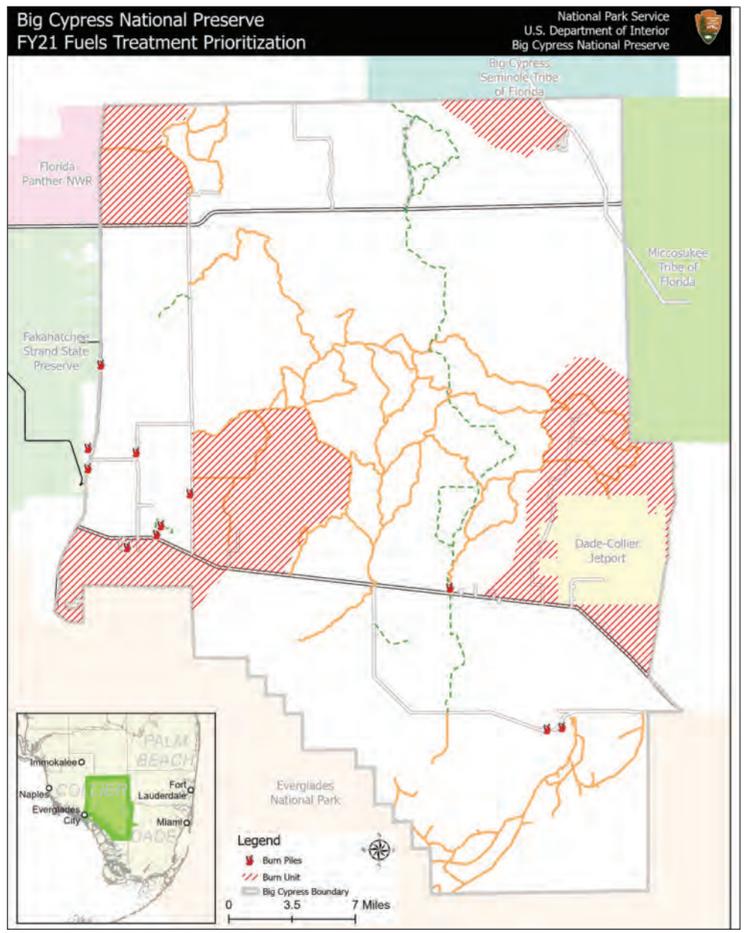
"Anything that's adjacent with our property line, we help out and are there to assist," said Chris Kemp, fire rescue assistant fire management officer. "We've already been doing burns on our side of the fence. In my opinion, they could be burning right now."

The Big Cypress National Preserve has one of the most active fire management programs in the NPS. Fire is an essential component of the ecosystem and is used to help reduce the risk of wildfires in

communities and developed areas. "We have been burning the pine around the cypress," Kemp said. "Pine is a good receptive fuel for a wildfire, which will run through and cause havoc for us. That's not saying we won't get a wildfire again, but we will be able to put it out quickly because there is nothing on the ground to burn."

Prescribed burns are safer and more efficient than wildfire management, the notification said. The long term effect of the scheduled burns benefits the ecosystem in numerous ways including to reduce highly flammable vegetation, maintain healthy and resilient fire adapted ecosystems, improve nutritional quality of soil, maintain habitat for plants and animals, increase habitat diversity, maintain biodiversity by promoting flowering and fruiting plants, restore fire to landscapes that don't experience the natural historic flow of fire due to habitat fragmentation and help manage exotic invasive plant populations.

Since the burns depend on weather conditions, NPS will send notifications prior to when a burn is to be implemented.



The National Park Service's Big Cypress National Preserve FY2021 fuels treatment map shows burn units, or burn areas, in red. Some areas border the Big Cypress Reservation and the Miccosukee Tribe Reservation in the northeast corner of the map.

Biden lays out Indian Country policy

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

As a candidate — before he was elected as the 46th President of the United States — Joseph R. Biden announced his policy for interacting and cooperating with tribal nations.

The plan begins by admitting the U.S. has a history with broken promises.

"The United States of America was founded on the notion of equality for all. We've always strived to meet that ideal, but never fully lived up to it. Throughout our history, this promise has been denied to Native Americans who have lived on this land since time immemorial," the plan states.

The Biden administration says it is committed to upholding the country's trust responsibility to Tribal Nations, strengthening the nation-to-nation relationship between the U.S. and tribes and working to empower tribal nations to govern their own communities and make their own decisions.

The devil is in the details and they are laid out at great length in the Biden policy.

"Biden will build on the efforts of the Obama-Biden administration, which were instrumental in rebuilding trust, good faith, and respect for the tribal-federal relationship. Biden will ensure tribes have a seat at the table at the highest levels of the

federal government and a voice throughout the government," according to the policy.

The Biden policy would reinstate the annual White House Tribal Nations Conference created by the Obama-Biden administration, nominate judges who understand federal Indian law, respect tribal sovereignty and uphold treaties.

The inequity of quality health care for Native Americans has been exacerbated during the coronavirus pandemic. Native Americans are 3.3 times more likely to die of Covid-19 than white Americans, so the Biden administration will lead a decisive public health response to the virus. He will partner with tribal nations, elevate the voices of tribal public health experts, ensure wide availability of free testing and eliminate barriers to preventative care and treatment for Covid-19 and ensure Native Americans are not left behind.

Biden plans to make it easier to place land into trust, restore tribal lands, protect natural and cultural resources and respect the role of tribal governments in protecting those resources.

Another key point addressed in the plan is ending violence against women and children. To break the cycle of violence, Biden plans to take a comprehensive approach and make sure tribal leaders are part of the solution.

◆ See BIDEN on page 5A

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Community



Dozens of vehicles line up for the Hollywood Reservation's drive thru Christmas gathering Dec. 17.

Martin Ebenhack

Hollywood holds Christmas celebration

Martin Ebenhack

Hollywood Board Rep. Gordon Wareham distributes holiday items to community members during the reservation's Christmas celebration Dec. 17 at Seminole Estates. Guests drove through areas of holiday decorations and picked up gifts without having to get out of their vehicles.



Martin Ebenhack (2)

Above, Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola helps with gift distributions during the Christmas celebration. Below, Santa Claus wishes the Hollywood community "Merry Christmas" during the drive thru event.



HAALAND From page 2A

American issues

That optimism is based on several factors. According to govtrack.us, in her first term on Capitol Hill, Haaland ranked No. 1 in the House for getting bicameral support on her bills and No. 1 among freshmen for getting influential co-sponsors and bipartisan co-sponsors, for co-sponsoring bills, for being a leader and for holding the most committee positions.

And it also is predicated on the trust professed in that letter from 100 women: "Rep. Haaland will be a strong steward of our precious natural resources and will return to the practice of science-based decision-making. Additionally, she will work to honor the treaties between the federal government and Tribal Nations. This is an historic opportunity to appoint a Native woman of integrity, vision and of true public service."

This editorial first appeared in the Albuquerque Journal. It was written by members of the editorial board and is unsigned as it represents the opinion of the newspaper rather than the writers.

Hard Rock International launches Hard Rock Digital joint venture with gaming industry veteran leaders

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — Hard Rock International (HRI) announced Dec. 14 the launch of Hard Rock Digital as part of its ongoing commitment to innovation and diversification of its portfolio in high-growth markets. Hard Rock Digital is a joint venture with gaming industry veterans, and will be the exclusive Hard Rock and Seminole Gaming (SGA) vehicle for interactive gaming and sports betting, globally.

Hard Rock Digital will leverage HRI and SGA's extensive database of more than 130 million customers and footprint of nearly 250 land-based venues across 76 countries to provide an omni-channel offering for interactive gaming and sports betting. Hard Rock Digital will be fully capitalized by SGA, HRI and its partners, providing full financial support and backing for this new joint venture. SGA maintains an investment-grade rating from both S&P Global Ratings and Fitch Ratings.

"With the launch of Hard Rock Digital, we are broadening our digital business which enhances consumer experiences and offerings across our interactive gaming and sportsbook offerings," said Jim Allen, Chairman of HRI. "Hard Rock Digital also intends to pursue strategic branding and distribution opportunities both within the U.S. and globally. In the U.S. alone, the potential future market size is estimated at \$7 billion for sports betting and \$14 billion for online gaming*."

Hard Rock Digital will be managed by

gaming industry leaders Rafi Ashkenazi, Executive Managing Director and Executive Chair, Marlon Goldstein, Executive Managing Director and CEO and Matt Primeaux, Executive Managing Director and President. Ashkenazi will join Hard Rock Digital in 2021 following a garden leave period.

Prior to the formation of Hard Rock Digital, the executives were part of the leadership team that facilitated the growth and transformation of several technology and interactive gaming businesses, including Playtech, The Stars Group, and FOX Bet. The management team will report to a newly formed, independent Board of Directors for Hard Rock Digital, which will be chaired by Allen. Hard Rock Digital will be based in Hollywood.

"We are honored to join forces with Hard Rock International on this new venture," said Marlon Goldstein, Executive Managing Director and CEO for Hard Rock Digital. "Hard Rock International is consistently at the forefront of innovation and vision in the gaming industry and the 'Hard Rock' gaming, hospitality and entertainment venues are iconic worldwide. We look forward to providing an authentic, digital experience for Hard Rock's global fan base within a comprehensive, omni-channel offering."

To learn more about Hard Rock Digital visit hardrockdigital.com. To learn more about the Hard Rock brand, visit hardrock.com.

*Numbers reflect predicted market size by 2025 via Morgan Stanley



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The interior of the 'Huey' helicopter on the Brighton Reservation.

Courtesy photo

◆ HELICOPTER From page 1A

"This was the most rewarding service I ever did," Glenn said. "We picked up troops and took them right to surgery usually within 30 minutes. About 97 percent of those on the Dustoffs lived because we got them to the hospital fast. That gave the troops on the ground a lot of moral encouragement because they knew we would be there to pick them up if they were wounded."

Finding a Huey to display without an engine and other working parts proved to be a challenge for Bowers, as was finding one that fit the budget.

"He was looking for just the shell, rotor and tail rotor," said Cydney Reynolds, the Seminole Tribe's Veterans Affairs administrative assistant, who worked with Bowers for about seven years. "They are hard to find because they are popular for static display."

The search finally found success with an assist from Charles Herlihy, manager of the tribe's radio station, which is operated from the veterans building. Herlihy found a Huey on eBay, and on Feb. 27, 2017, Bowers put down a deposit to hold the helicopter sight unseen. He and Elizabeth flew to Atlanta to see it the next day. They purchased it right away for the tribe, and just in time.

"A few seconds after we hit buy on eBay, we found out there was someone else who wanted it," Elizabeth Bowers said. "So we were happy. He worked on it a long time."

The helicopter is full of history. David B. Vance, of the 101st Airborne division of the U.S. Army, was a young man full of courage and energy while he was in Vietnam. He would fly for up to 10 hours at a time when someone needed fire support. He was also the last combat pilot of the

helicopter.

Vance crash-landed it in Phu Bai, Vietnam, on Jan. 19, 1969, with three fellow soldiers aboard. The helicopter was armed with two door-mounted machine guns and 38 rockets, 19 on each side.

"It was a gunshot; we didn't save people, we shot them," recalled Vance, a retiree who lives in Colorado. "We were on our way to enemy territory when the engine malfunctioned. We were called to help some soldiers in trouble, but when I took off I could barely keep it in the air. I flew for about an hour to burn off some gasoline. I tried to land it like an airplane on a runway, but it didn't have enough power and I crashed it hard. No one was hurt, but the helicopter was a total wreck."

Vance was first introduced to the helicopter in Atlanta, where his unit picked it up and took it to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for eight months of training. Then it was shipped to California and Vietnam, where the unit was assigned to the helicopter again. The crash took place just one month later.

After the crash, Vance walked away and never saw it again. It was the Huey's last flight in Vietnam. It was shipped back to the U.S. and rebuilt, where it was used for the National Guard and the Reserves.

Sometime around 2007 the helicopter wound up at Cole Motorsports (CMI) in Atlanta. Owners Dianna and Harold Cole acquired it from the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence at Fort Rucker, Alabama. CMI's core business is trucking – it hauls a lot of equipment for the military – so it was a natural for the company to start collecting tanks, trucks and helicopters which they rented to the film industry as props.

"Movies started getting real big in Georgia and we could do both jobs," Dianna Cole said. "The helicopter was in several movies and TV shows."

In fact, the Brighton Huey had a

featured role in the first episode of the TV series "The Walking Dead" in 2010, Cole said. For those familiar with the series, when Sheriff's Deputy Rick Grimes hobbled out of a hospital amid the ruins of lives and property caused by the zombie apocalypse, he came upon an abandoned Huey helicopter at the top of a hill. The helicopter was filmed from various angles and had a good amount of screen time for a non-actor.

Cole, who met Stephen and Elizabeth Bowers when they came to Atlanta, said the purchase was an ideal fit.

"He was very excited to find one in the condition it was in," Cole said. "I think it's great that it is on an Indian reservation. It's a wonderful piece of history. That it will be displayed and preserved is awesome."

CMI held the aircraft until the tribe was ready to receive it. It was delivered to the aviation hanger in Big Cypress in August 2017, where it was stored until late 2019 when the forestry department delivered it to a paint shop in Okeechobee.

Like everything else in 2020, the paint job was impacted by the pandemic. After a delay, the job was finally completed in July and delivered in parts to the Brighton veterans building, where the bottom portion of the aircraft was bolted to the pad.

On Oct. 28, a large crane delivered a 48-foot long rotor blade, the last piece of the chopper, the final piece to the 57-foot long Huey. The installation came a few months after Bowers' passing, but Elizabeth knew it made a big impression on Stephen the first time he saw it on the trip to Atlanta.

"When (Stephen) saw the helicopter for the first time, it was an emotional experience just walking around it," Elizabeth Bowers said. "He was just quiet, but I knew something was happening."

A ceremony for the helicopter's installation will be held at a later date.

Princesses deliver holiday greetings

STAFF REPORT

Through a video message, the Seminole princesses provided best wishes for a happy holiday season to the tribe.

"My family and I celebrate Christmas, so this year we'll be spending it by watching our favorite holiday movies and drinking lots of hot chocolate," said Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie. "I hope you were all able to stay safe through this year and can continue to stay safe through the holiday season. May the new year bring you many blessings."

"You know with everything going on in our world right now, staying safe and being there for one another is something we should

implement into our daily lives, especially through these difficult times," said Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Aubee Billie.

In normal times, the princesses would be busy during the holidays making in-person appearances at Christmas celebrations on the reservations and other events, such as toy drives. The pandemic forced cancellations of many events, but the princesses still reached out to spread holiday joy, including to youngsters at the Big Cypress Youth Home.

The princesses set up an Amazon online gift donation drive, encouraging people to donate gifts to benefit children at the home.

Blais-Billie and Billie are serving second terms as the tribe's royalty after the Princess Pageant was canceled in 2020.



SMP screenshots (2)

Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie, above, and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Aubee Billie, below, deliver their tribalwide holiday greetings on video.



A crane was used to lower the helicopter's rotor into place in October.

Courtesy photos (2)



Teens, young adults financial program offered through Native Learning Center

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — A five-day interactive training program offered through the Native Learning Center will highlight financial education training techniques, activities and resources tailored for youth.

"Building Native Communities: Financial Empowerment for Teens & Young Adults" will be held online Jan. 25-29, 2021.

Participants will learn about financial education with an emphasis on educating children on how to become financially fit. Agenda topics include building thriving native communities; money in Native

cultures; banking 101 – check it out; credit journey – thriving, not surviving; credits and loans – understanding, applying and managing; financial milestones; college readiness and understanding student loans; and managing per capita and lump sum payments.

The trainers are expected to be Stephanie Cote and Lanalle Smith, both from Oweesta Corp.

In order to obtain a certification, participants must participate in 90% of the training and have a working webcam.

Registration is free. For more information, go to nativelearningcenter.com.

Live music returns to Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee

FROM PRESS RELEASE

IMMOKALEE — Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee will resume live performances at Zig Zag Lounge beginning New Year's Eve with "Safe + Sound" guidelines in place. The "Safe + Sound" program mandates the proper use of required masks or face coverings, social distancing, crowd control and remaining stationary while eating or drinking. Guests must adhere to "Safe + Sound" program requirements or be asked to leave the property. For a full list of safety protocols, and the most up-to-date information, visit <https://www.seminoleimmokaleecasino.com/good-clean-fun.htm>.

- Dec. 31 The Hip Squad 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.
- Jan. 1 Wonderama 8 p.m. to 12 a.m.
- Jan. 2 Fusion 8 p.m. to 12 a.m.
- Jan. 3 The Magnifikats 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Jan. 8 Fusion 8 p.m. to 12 a.m.
- Jan. 9 Vintage 8 p.m. to 12 a.m.
- Jan. 10 Tat-2 Trio 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Jan. 15 Phase 1 Live 8 p.m. to 12 a.m.
- Jan. 16 Phase 1 Live 8 p.m. to 12 a.m.
- Jan. 17 Tat-2 Trio 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Jan. 22 Unique 8 p.m. to 12 a.m.
- Jan. 23 Unique 8 p.m. to 12 a.m.
- Jan. 24 The Magnifikats 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Jan. 29 N. Fusion 8 p.m. to 12 a.m.
- Jan. 30 N. Fusion 8 p.m. to 12 a.m.
- Jan. 31 The Hip Squad 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Big Cypress welcomes community at drive thru Christmas



Beverly Bidney

Vehicles line up for their turn to enter the hanger as Pastor Salaw Hummingbird shares thoughts about the season on the big screen. The Big Cypress Christmas drive thru event on Dec. 22 was prepared for about 400 people to come through for the socially distanced Christmas celebration.



Beverly Bidney

Santa and Big Cypress Councilman David Cypress enjoy the celebration at the BC Christmas drive thru event.



Beverly Bidney

Courtney Ervin, from President Mitchell Cypress's staff, helps distribute gifts during the event.



Beverly Bidney

These kids practice their waves in anticipation of seeing Santa at the end of the BC Christmas drive thru.



Beverly Bidney

Santa keeps his distance as he waves to a couple of youngsters in the back of a truck loaded with Christmas treats and gifts.



Beverly Bidney

Big Cypress's airplane hanger serves as the "North Pole" with a flurry of activity for the celebration.

◆ BIDEN From page 2A

Nearly one in four Native Americans live in poverty, nearly twice the national average. The plan calls for the expansion of economic

opportunity in Indian Country in a variety of ways including investing in infrastructure, clean energy, small businesses, communities and agriculture.

The Biden administration plans to invest \$20 billion in rural broadband infrastructure and work with the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) to offer subsidies needed to access high-speed internet.

Education inequality is a reality for Native American students, who have lower graduation rates than any other ethnic or racial group in the country and are less likely to enroll in and graduate from college. The problem has increased during the pandemic as many Native students do not have access to broadband and online school.

The Biden policy calls for an increased

collaboration between the Department of Education and the Department of the Interior, the implementation of more meaningful consultation with tribes, and the encouragement of more states and local school boards to work collaboratively with tribes.

Native Americans serve in the military at higher rates than any other demographic

group. The administration would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish a tribal advisory council to increase coordination between the federal government and Tribal Nations. It also plans to expand the Native American direct loan program which allows veterans to apply their VA home loan guarantee to trust land, thus facilitating home ownership.



RICHARD CASTILLO

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The hiring of an attorney is an important decision that should not be based solely upon advertisement. Castillo worked as a Public Defender in Broward County from 1990-1996 and has been in private practice since 1996. In 1995, he was voted the Trial Attorney of the year. He graduated from Capital University in 1989 and was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1990, Federal Bar in 1992, and the Federal Trial Bar in 1994.

RICHARD CASTILLO
FLORIDA CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEY
WWW.CASTILLOLAWOFFICES.COM

**Do you have a health goal?
Why not set one for 2021?**

Now is the perfect time to try something new and exciting to make your health a priority.

Contact your local Indian health care provider for more information, visit [Healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov), or call 1-800-318-2596.

Tribal Fair and Pow Wow postponed; some contests to be held online

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The 2021 Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow, scheduled for Feb. 12-14 in Hollywood, has been postponed until further notice, but that doesn't mean the fun stops entirely.

Instead of dancing, drumming, vendors and live entertainment, virtual contests will be held for fine arts and arts and crafts.

"It will be like it was for Indian Day," said Bobby Frank, Hollywood community culture center manager. "But Indian Day was just for the community; this is tribalwide and for those living off reservations. It was a learning experience for all of us. This is a new way of operating due to the circumstances of the current situation. We're enthusiastic about the event and expect a good turnout."

All entries will be posted online. Entries for both contests must be delivered to the community culture center in Big Cypress, Brighton, Hollywood or Immokalee by Friday, Jan. 15, 2021 at 3 p.m. No late entries will be accepted.

The arts and crafts contest rules state all entries must have been made in the last six months, have no store-bought items embellished or decorated and must be Seminole made. The limit is one entry per category.

Age divisions are 10 to 17, 18 to 32, 33 to 45, 46 to 59 and 60 and up.

Female-only categories are Seminole dolls with four-inch height minimum, and body and head must be made of palmetto fiber; and baskets, whose opening must be

a minimum of four-inches, no minimum height required.

The sole male-only category is woodcarving. The rest of the categories are open to males and females.

Seminole patchwork design: must be a minimum of four-yards.

Beadwork: adult entries, no single strand necklaces, and loom bracelets must be at least five beads wide. No medallions are allowed.

Seminole clothing with patchwork: Must be self-made, which means the entry must have been sewn from start to finish by person entering contest. The entry must be new and never worn.

Entries entered into Tribal Fair arts and crafts contest cannot be used in any other 2021 Tribal Fair events and/or contests.

The fine arts rules state entries must reflect the Florida Seminole theme, must have been made in the last six months, no store-bought items embellished or decorated and must be Seminole made. All entries must be matted, framed and ready for hanging to ensure proper display. The limit is one entry per category.

Age divisions and categories:
Ages 6 to 9, participation only – Pencil, mixed media.

Ages 10 to 17 – Watercolor, pencil or pen and ink, mixed media, photography.

Ages 18 and up – Oil, acrylic, watercolor, pencil or pen and ink, mixed media, photography.

Ages 60 and up – Oil, acrylic, watercolor, pencil or pen and ink, mixed media, photography, ceramics.

For more information visit semtribefair.com.

SEMINOLE TRIBAL FAIR AND POW WOW

Tribe purchases NC luxury apartment complex

STAFF REPORT

The Seminole Tribe recently purchased the Alexan Optimist Park apartment complex in Charlotte, North Carolina. The 238-unit

complex is easily accessible to the city's economic hub, which attracts high-income young professionals.

The property was purchased through the tribe's sovereign wealth fund, whose aim is to ensure the future well-being of tribal

members through diversifying holdings.

More details about the purchase will be in the Jan. 29 issue of the Tribune.



Courtesy photos (2)
The Seminole Tribe recently purchased the Alexan Optimist Park apartment complex in Charlotte, North Carolina.



Hard Rock's first Reverb Hotel opens in Atlanta

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

The new Hard Rock hotel concept – Reverb – opened its first location in downtown Atlanta in December.

The hotel was originally expected to open earlier this year.

Reverb Downtown Atlanta is adjacent to Mercedes-Benz Stadium, where the National

Football League's Atlanta Falcons play.

While the hotel will look a bit different from other Hard Rock properties, there's an undeniable link to music, as well as some familiar amenities.

"Through our extensive research we understand the modern traveler is hungry for opportunities to connect with new people and encounter a melting pot of cultures and experiences," Jim Allen, the chairman of Hard Rock International and CEO of

Seminole Gaming, said in a statement. "To meet those aspirations, we crafted a unique hotel brand that is the ultimate sanctuary for the dynamic needs of today's travelers, but also has a clear Hard Rock feel to it through music."

The Seminole Tribe is the parent entity of Hard Rock International.

Reverb is 11 stories high and has 195 rooms. There are workspaces, common areas and a rooftop bar. The customary Constant



Hard Rock

The new Reverb Downtown Atlanta is 11 stories high with 195 rooms.

Grind Coffee & Bar is onsite – a café by day and a bar at night offering beer, wine and spirits.

The hotel has a dedicated performance area for live music featuring local talent and, like other Hard Rock hotels, Reverb has a Body Rock Fitness Center.

The hotel and its rooms are heavy on tech-amenities. Guests can use an in-room Amazon Alexa to access a city guide with the voices of famous musicians who recommend local hot spots where hometown music acts are performing. At Atlanta's Reverb, you'll hear musicians like Big Boi, CeeLo Green, Larkin Poe and Microwave offer suggestions.

The Alexa is also customized for guests to control lighting, playlists, entertainment options, and other smart room controls like requesting fresh towels and hotel information.

Rooms are available with king or double queen beds and the "Roadie Bunk Room"

has a set of three queen bunk beds, two private baths, a karaoke machine and smart TVs. Rooms start at \$99 a night.

"Reverb Radio" is playing throughout the hotel's public areas. Hard Rock officials said the special areas are a take on the classic boardroom, but designed to resemble a radio station.

In addition there are co-working spaces and private "Sound Booth" areas, which are soundproof rooms that are equipped with a Fender guitar for personal jam sessions or a quiet space to make a phone call.

A second Reverb location in the Sonoma County, California, city of Cotati is still scheduled to debut sometime in 2021, after an original opening date of summer 2020. The property is near vineyards and wineries and is expected to have 150-rooms.

Reverb Downtown Atlanta is located at 89 Centennial Olympic Park Drive NW. For more information and to make a reservation, go to reverb.hardrockhotels.com.



Hard Rock

Guests at the new Reverb Downtown Atlanta hotel can see Mercedes-Benz Stadium from Reverb's rooftop bar in Atlanta.

♦ GAMING From page 1A

The reporting period for 2019s fiscal year ended before the pandemic hit and forced at least the temporary closure of every tribal gaming operation in the country beginning in March. Experts say the full effect on the industry won't be known for some time, as many Indian gaming operations still remain closed or are operating at a reduced capacity.

However, the NIGC expects to have an idea of the pandemic's impact when the fiscal year 2020 gaming revenue report is released in late 2021.

"While we welcome this positive report, we know that the current reality is dramatically different," NIGC Vice Chair Kathryn Isom-Clause said in the statement. "Future reports will reflect the effects of the pandemic on the industry. Despite these current hardships, Indian gaming, like the tribal nations it benefits, has proved its resiliency over the years."

The 2019 figure is calculated from 522 independently audited financial statements submitted to the NIGC by 245 federally recognized tribes across 29 states. An operation's gross gaming revenue is the total amount of money wagered less any amounts paid out as prizes and before deducting operating expenses.

The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act created the NIGC to support tribal self-sufficiency and the integrity of Indian gaming. NIGC oversees the regulation of 527 gaming establishments operated by 247 tribes across 29 states.

More information is at nigc.gov.

Country music organization honors Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tulsa venue

STAFF REPORT

TULSA, Okla. — Hard Rock Live in Tulsa, Oklahoma, earned national recognition in the country music industry Dec. 8. The venue at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tulsa won the Casino Award of the Year honor in the theater category from the Academy of Country Music in the industry awards segment. Officially, the award winner was The Joint: Tulsa, which became Hard Rock Live earlier this year. Country singer Riley Green made the announcement during an online awards program.

The award is presented to "an outstanding theater or showroom within a casino," according to ACM. A panel of judges made the selection. The criteria is that the theater or showroom must have bought or promoted at least five country concerts or dates, maintain good standing with all agents and promote country music ticket sales.

Hard Rock Live beat out The Colosseum at Caesars Palace and the Venetian Resort Hotel Casino, both in Las Vegas, Soaring Eagle Casino Resort in Michigan and WinStar Global Event Center in Oklahoma.

"This is a huge honor for our fans and our staff – they are the ones that truly



make us world-class," Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Tulsa posted Dec. 11 on Facebook.

The eligibility period for the 2020 awards was Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2019. The academy works to promote new artists, artists on the rise and established superstars.

Electronics retailer opens at Seminole Hard Rock

STAFF REPORT

Marshall Retail Group announced Dec. 22 the opening of new InMotion travel retail stores inside Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood in Florida and Salt Lake City International Airport's terminal B in Utah.

Marshall Retail Group is a leading travel retailer in airports, casinos and resorts. Michael Wilkins, CEO of MRG, said in a statement that the company is "thrilled to

provide visitors with two more incredible shopping experiences in Salt Lake City and Hollywood."

InMotion, the largest airport-based electronics retailer in the country, offers noise-canceling and wireless headphones, speakers, tablets, digital video cameras, fitness bands and mobile accessories. It carries brands such as Apple, Beats by Dr. Dre, BOSE, GoPro, Jaybird, JBL, Moshi, MyTagAlongs, Samsung and Skullcandy.



Marshall Retail Group

InMotion, an electronics retail store, is open in Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.

Gestures take place across the country for Indigenous land acknowledgements

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

A land acknowledgement is a way to show respect to Indigenous peoples by recognizing them as the original stewards of the land, on which they may or may not currently reside.

Land acknowledgements have been increasing in recent months throughout the country with statements or actions from corporate, educational and cultural institutions. According to Marty Bowers, most people don't know much about Indigenous history.

"We are a forgotten people," said Bowers, education coordinator at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on the Big Cypress Reservation. "A land acknowledgement lays the foundation for a larger conversation to take place."

One function of his job is to take part in a newly formed community review group that reviews and edits land acknowledgement statements sent by various groups, organizations and companies to make sure Indigenous people are properly represented within the text. Many statements don't go into the history of those who once lived on and took care of the land.

"Part of my mission is to continue to raise the collective Indigenous voice," Bowers said. "These acknowledgements are part of a holistic movement that is gaining momentum. Being part of that is a great thing."

On Dec. 14, Bowers participated in the National Endowment for the Arts' Gainesville Creative Forces Summit. The summit was part of the NEA's partnership with the U.S. Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs to help improve the health, wellness and quality of life for military and veteran populations, who were exposed to trauma, and their families.

Bill O'Brien, project director for Creative Forces, read the land acknowledgement edited by Bowers. The opening paragraph acknowledges the Gainesville area as the ancestral home of the Apalachee Nation, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians and the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

"To begin this convening in a respectful and honest way, we pay respect to these Nations, Tribes and communities including their Elders past and present, to their descendants living, working and contributing in current times, to the generations to come and to all Indigenous people who came from this land," O'Brien read.

The statement continued by expressing gratitude for the ongoing relationships Indigenous people maintain with the land. The statement ended with the recognition of Bowers' participation in the summit.

"Today we are fortunate enough to have present Marty Bowers, a Wind Clan member of the Seminole Tribe of Florida who was born and raised on the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation, and is the education coordinator of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, available to receive this acknowledgement. We know that by merely recognizing that we are on your ancestral lands is not enough to remedy the pain, hurt and genocide that has happened to Indigenous peoples throughout this country, but we do hope that it is the beginning of a longer series of conversations and education that we should join to really heal the injustices of our shared histories," O'Brien read.

"This one [land acknowledgment] is out of character from most of them; it is much longer," Bowers said. "Most are one or two paragraphs, but the last sentence is what land acknowledgements are all about."

Bowers wasn't always on board with land acknowledgments and thought people were just doing them to feel good about themselves.

"We talk about our similarities in our experiences, which are an important part of land acknowledgements," he said. "Now I see them as an opportunity to begin a dialogue. I embrace it."

Trauma is another significant component of land acknowledgements.

Rev. Houston Cypress, of the Miccosukee Tribe, leads workshops for organizations on how to create a land acknowledgement and ceremony. He first saw them being done in Canada and New Zealand as part of a truth and reconciliation process.

"They are owning up to the hurt and trauma they made to Native people," Cypress said. "They are apologizing and making amends, which are baby steps to heal the trauma."

Cypress believes the statements should also do something to correct the erasure of Indigenous people from history and should acknowledge that they still live here today.

"They should also be actionable," he said. "They should include a better understanding of Indigenous priorities and a way to act on them. The statement needs to mean something and not just be words."

Canada, New Zealand and Australia all publicly apologized to their Indigenous populations. The U.S. apologized in 2009 through an act of Congress, but Cypress is disappointed that it isn't widely known.

Senate Joint Resolution 14 and its companion House Joint Resolution 46, passed and was signed into law by President



Bill O'Brien, left, project director of Creative Forces, and Marty Bowers, education coordinator for the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, participate in the National Endowment for the Arts' Gainesville Creative Forces Summit on Dec. 14.

Obama on Dec. 19, 2009. The opening of the resolution reads:

"To acknowledge a long history of official depredations and ill-conceived policies by the Federal Government regarding Indian tribes and offer an apology to all Native peoples on behalf of the United States."

The details of the bill include incidents over time beginning with the arrival of Europeans to the continent.

Cypress believes public ceremonies will increase the awareness of land acknowledgements and is a trend he supports.

"We probably aren't going to get federal leadership anytime soon, so I'm encouraging people to do it themselves," Cypress said. "This is something that should be led by people, communities and organizations. We shouldn't wait for the government to lead on it. The government is for and by the people, so we should do it ourselves. Let the people lead."

Land acknowledgement ceremonies

to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to their descendants, to the generations yet unborn, and to all Indigenous people.

"We recognize that this land remains scarred by the histories and ongoing legacies of settler colonial violence, dispossession, and removal. In spite of all of this, and with tremendous resilience, these Indigenous nations have remained deeply connected to this territory, to their families, to their communities, and to their cultural ways of life. We recognize the ongoing relationships of care that these Indigenous Nations maintain with this land and extend our gratitude as we live and work as humble and respectful guests upon their territory. We encourage you to learn about and amplify the contemporary work of the Indigenous nations whose land you are on and to endeavor to support Indigenous sovereignty in all the ways that you can."

"We encourage everyone in this space to engage in learning more about these tribes, reflecting on the ways in which we occupy land not ours, seeking out Indigenous literature to enhance our understanding and increase our knowledge," Luis Porto Hernandez, president of the Hispanic Graduate Student Association, said in an FSU News story.

Michigan State University's college of Agriculture and Natural Resources created its land acknowledgement statement to spread awareness of the history of the land on which it is situated, as well as the Native people who still reside there and their ancestors.

It states, "Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional and contemporary lands of the Anishinaabeg — Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi peoples. The university resides on land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw."

"Land acknowledgements are centered on learning about and reflecting on Indigenous histories and relationships to land. The learning process encompasses honoring the history of the land, treaties, tribes, communities and Indigenous knowledge and languages," Christie Poitra, a descendant of Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians and interim director of the MSU Native American Institute, said in an interview with MSU Today.

Educators at the University of Iowa began the process of writing a land acknowledgement statement years ago. It was finally completed and released in November.

Institutionalizing a statement can encourage professors to incorporate acknowledgments into their curriculum, inspire the inclusion of more historical perspectives and drive efforts to recruit and retain Native American students.

The University of Iowa's land acknowledgement recognizes the many tribes who lived and continue to thrive in the state. In part it states, "As an academic institution, it is our responsibility to acknowledge the sovereignty and the traditional territories of these tribal nations, and the treaties that were used to remove these tribal nations, and the histories of dispossession that have allowed for the growth of this institution since 1847. Consistent with the University's commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, understanding the historical and current experiences of Native peoples will help inform the work we do; collectively as a university to engage in building relationships through academic scholarship, collaborative partnerships, community service, enrollment and retention efforts acknowledging our past, our present and future Native Nations."

Bowers encourages people to learn about the modern Indigenous experience, which is different than what is typically presented in museums. He believes individuals should know about the unhealed wounds Native people carry with them.

"The most important aspect of land acknowledgements is to be aware of and educate people about the trauma and acknowledge it," Bowers said. "This is the only way my grandchildren and great grandchildren have a chance for a peaceful life. This is the journey of healing."

Red Ribbon drive-thru comes to Hollywood

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Red Ribbon Week is typically a busy time across the tribe in October with parades, dinners, art contests and other events.

The week is designed as an alcohol, tobacco, drug and violence prevention awareness campaign. It is organized by the Seminole Tribe's Center for Behavioral Health.

This year was greatly toned down — from a week to a few hours on one day — because of the pandemic.

In Hollywood, Bernard Colman, the CBH tribalwide aftercare/prevention administrator, handed out Red Ribbon-themed bags filled with goodies for those who drove their cars by the west entrance of the Betty Mae Jumper Medical Center at 111 W. Coral Way.

Inside one of the cars that came through on Dec. 2 were Anna Doctor and Patrick Doctor Sr. Other vehicles with both residents and employees drove by to pick up bags



Bernard Colman, the CBH tribalwide aftercare/prevention administrator, hands out Red Ribbon-themed bags in Hollywood on Dec. 2

from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on a sunny day.

The national Red Ribbon Campaign is sponsored by the National Family Partnership and is observed across the country. It began in 1985 as a tribute to fallen Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) special agent Enrique Camerona.



Anna Doctor and Patrick Doctor Sr. pick up Red Ribbon-themed items in Hollywood on Dec. 2.



From left, Jay Holata, Joseph Hughes and Charlie Tiger of CBH's "We Do Recover" program show their support for the Red Ribbon program in Hollywood.

CLIMATE From page 1A

"There are a number of efforts already underway and I'm looking forward to pulling them all together to put the tribe in a good position," Horwitz said.

She said areas of the tribe that are affected by climate change include tribal assets, cultural resources and energy independence.

"Climate change touches all of us and we each have a role," Horwitz said.

Challenges ahead

Horwitz said there are multiple risks to be aware of, and for the tribe to be positioned to respond to, including the aforementioned sea level rise but also changes in rainfall and precipitation, extended periods of drought, groundwater level increases and salt water intrusion, coastal erosion, habitat shifts, water and surface to air temperature changes, and extreme heat.

"For folks moving forward there are economic challenges as the world changes and there are more pressures," she said. "When we're building resilience into the community, it's focusing on our strengths, like education, health, economics and the environment."

Andrew Bowers, the tribe's Executive Director of Operations, reinforced the issue's urgency in a tribalwide announcement of Horwitz' hire.

"As a result of the threats posed by climate change, the Tribe is facing growing environmental instability," Bowers said. "The effects are already being observed here in South Florida and pose a threat to tribal communities, businesses and operations."

Bowers said one of Horwitz' first tasks will be to develop a "resiliency assessment" to help tribal leadership and the tribal community make informed decisions regarding climate change "challenges and opportunities."

"We look forward to keeping everyone updated with this critically important initiative," he said.

Record of collaboration

Horwitz is known for her ability to bring stakeholders together to work on community planning — convening experts in many fields to share and compare knowledge on the issues.

"I expect Jill's excellent track record of community based engagement to be particularly useful in her new position serving the Seminole Tribe," Paul N. Backhouse, the HERO senior director, said.

Horwitz previously created the peer network "Sustainability Stewards of Broward" — a group of 500 professionals who facilitate workshops and discussion groups. She wrote the climate change section of the Broward County Comprehensive Plan.

Her credentials go further.

She's worked for 15 years on environmental advocacy issues like ecosystem protection, community health and climate resilience planning. Horwitz earned a degree in environmental science from the University of Florida and a master's degree in urban and regional planning with a focus on climate change from Florida Atlantic University.

"I fell in love with this idea of looking at ecosystem protection and how does human development interact with it and how do we plan for it?" she said.

'Very excited'

Horwitz, 44, is from Miami and grew up in South Florida. She lives with her husband and two young daughters in Hollywood.

She's started to introduce herself to tribal leadership, tribal members and stakeholders outside the tribe — something that's more difficult during a time of social distancing and other restrictions.

"I'm very excited to join the tribe. I encourage members to reach out to me," Horwitz said. "I want to hear from people: What do they worry about? What are they excited about? What good can we do as we create a new vision?"

When she's not on the job, Horwitz said she enjoys gardening and camping with her family, including lots of cooking and canoeing.

Contact Horwitz via email at jillhorwitz@semtribe.com.

SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA

AH-TAH-THI-KI

M U S E U M

A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

Clewiston donations bring unique photos to Seminole community

BY TARA BACKHOUSE
Collections Manager, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

BIG CYPRESS — The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum cares for a collection of over 150,000 historic photographs. They span from the early 1900s to the present time. The photographs have come from many sources, and most of them were donations.

For example, we have more than 400

photographic images from the 1940s. During this decade, there were two main sources for photographs of Seminole people and places. One was William D. Boehmer, a teacher on the Brighton Reservation who took over 2,000 photographs of people and events during the first half of the 20th century. The other source was an anthropologist who spent nearly a decade on the Big Cypress Reservation, Ethel Cutler Freeman. Both of those individuals, or their families, later

donated their photograph collections to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki.

The museum is also lucky to have an enormous number of late 20th century photographs. This is because The Seminole Tribune was active from the 1970s to early 2000s, taking thousands of photographs and documenting the lives and news of Seminole communities near and far.

A similar donation of a few hundred photographs in 2018 brought us some nostalgic and surprising images from the early 1960s and 1970s. In 2018, the Clewiston Museum had to make some changes and they contacted us about transferring a collection that nurse Claudia Wilson had donated to them. Claudia was a local nurse who worked for the Seminole Tribe of Florida during the 1960s and 1970s. Her photographs show a time when prices were unbelievably low, before high rises and bumper-to-bumper traffic, and when simple pleasures were still appreciated. This was also a time of great transition for the tribe. Claudia and other professionals brought a white man's world of education and health care, sometimes for better and sometimes for worse. As you peruse the pictures you can judge for yourselves.

Whatever you decide, the importance of pictures like this cannot be overstated. If you remember those days, then the pictures bring back a flood of memories. If you've only heard your parents and grandparents talk about the early days of the tribe's federal recognition, then you might not have a visual reference for them. Either way,



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Four men and a young boy stand in a line and pose for a picture while demonstrating traditional clothing, circa 1960s.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

The pink Bel-Air car is used as a convenient place to eat and hang out with friends and family in this photo, circa 1960s-1970s.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

A group of people share a meal together on the grass. How many people have good memories of picnic-style dining like this with their family?



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Children enjoy ice cream at a lunch counter in front of a wall that includes a sign for a breakfast special, "Home of the Famous 2 for 98 cents meals," circa 1960s.

the museum is here to bring these memories to you.

Do you recognize any of these people or locations? The photographs didn't come with much information, so we could use your help. And while we're closed, you can still see our photo collection through on the

museum's website. Or if you want my help, email me at tarabackhouse@seminoletribe.com and I'd be happy to search our collection in order to find exactly what you're looking for. Thank you and happy holidays from the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum!

Hank Adams, the 'most important Indian,' dies at 77

BY JACLYN DIAZ
NPR

Native American civil rights advocate Hank Adams died at the age of 77 on Dec. 21.

Once referred to as the "most important Indian" by Native American rights advocate and author Vine Deloria Jr., Adams was central to the fight to uphold tribal treaty rights during the 1960s and 1970s.

"An indispensable leader, and essential follower and a brilliant strategist, he shaped more Native American civil, human and treaty rights policies than most people even know are important or why," the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission said in its announcement of Adams' death.

Adams was an Assiniboine-Sioux and a member of the Franks Landing Indian Community. He died at St. Peter's hospital in Olympia, Wash.

Fight over treaty rights

According to the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Adams was born on the Fort Peck Reservation in Montana and raised on the Quinault Reservation in Washington State.

In 1963, Adams joined the National Indian Youth Council and began focusing on tribal treaty rights—just as the issue was sparking conflicts between Native American communities and local governments.

In the mid-1800's, the U.S. entered into a series of treaties with tribes in what is now the state of Washington. Those treaties contained language reserving the tribes' right to fish "in common with the citizens of the Territory."

Native American communities believed those fishing rights gave tribes the ability to supersede any state regulation. But sports fisherman, local governments, and some state courts argued their fishing rules should apply to the Native American community.

In the 1960s, Northwest tribes called on the federal government to recognize their tribal fishing rights as the treaties dictated.

Adams is most well-known for his work protesting state fishing regulations throughout the 1960s and 1970s. During the Pacific Northwest Fish Wars, Adams was shot and landed in jail several times for protesting. He also served as a close advisor to several tribal leaders in the Northwest during that struggle.

The battle of treaty rights and tribal sovereignty eventually reached a federal district court in Washington state. It was ultimately decided by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals with the case, U.S. v. Washington. Adams directly represented tribal fishing people during the trial in 1974.

In a win for tribal communities, the federal appeals court affirmed in its opinion called the Boldt Decision that Native Americans generally retained hunting and fishing rights in their historic territories according to previously negotiated treaties.

Other progressive acts

Adams was active in the American Indian Movement, a grassroots movement focused on addressing systemic issues of poverty and inequality for Native Americans. He joined the group's Trail of Broken Treaties march across the country in 1972. The protest ended with participants occupying the Bureau of Indian Affairs offices in Washington, D.C. He helped resolve that occupation as well as one involving hundreds of people at Wounded Knee a year later.

During negotiations over the occupation at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Adams drafted the "20 Points," a statement viewed as essential in the history of treaty rights, according to the Museum of the American Indian.

Until his death, he continued to advocate for Native young people's education on treaty rights and for their participation in their community's affairs.

Native American Agriculture Fund distributes \$1M to 25 organizations serving Native youth

PRESS RELEASE

FAYETVILLE, Ark. — The Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF) has awarded \$1 million to 25 grantees to invest in Indian Country's agriculture future. This wide array of grants provides direct funding to organizations serving Native American youth.

The investment will benefit youth from 83 tribal nations in 12 states serving more than 4,000 youth. Youth projects ranged from agricultural equity grants and technical assistance in the Rocky Mountain region to fostering berry harvesting traditions in the Northeast region.

"This distribution of one million dollars is not just an investment in today's youth but in tomorrow's agricultural future," said Jim Laducer (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa), Chair of the Native American Agriculture Fund Board of Trustees. "NAAF is committed to ensuring that our youth have the opportunities they need to carry Native agriculture into the future."

"The Native American Agriculture Fund recognizes the importance of investing in our youth," said Janie Hipp (Chickasaw), CEO of the Native American Agriculture Fund. "When we invest in our youth, we not only invest in programs to support our young people's continued engagement in agriculture, we invest in their roles as leaders within our communities."

Tlingit artist from Juneau designs stamp for US Postal Service

BY HENRY LEASIA
KHNS - Alaska Public Media

The artwork of a Tlingit artist from Juneau will be featured on a new postage stamp set for distribution next year.

Rico Lanáat' Worl is the founder of Trickster Company, a design shop based in Juneau that incorporates traditional Northwest Coast Art into everything from T-shirts and stickers, to skateboard decks and basketballs.

He said that an art director with the United States Postal Service named Antonio Alcalá called him up one day.

"He had apparently discovered some of Trickster Company's artwork at the National Museum of the American Indian's giftshop in D.C. That's sort of where our discussion began about making this design happen," Worl said.

Worl decided to go with a scene from the traditional story of Raven setting free the sun, moon and stars for his design. He said he kept a national audience in mind.

"You know, there are so many depictions of Raven and the box of daylight story," Worl said. "It almost felt a little bit silly to do it again, but I felt like it was an important story that gives a gateway for people to learn

about Tlingit culture."

His design depicts Raven escaping through the chimney as he is transforming back into human form. It's an exciting and chaotic scene. There are stars stuck in his feathers and the sun is in his mouth.

Worl said he believes that the decision to include his artwork on a stamp is part of a wider movement for better representation of Native stories.

"I think the USPS is sort of in line with everyone else trying to figure out how to enable Indigenous people to tell their own stories. It's just an honor to be able to be a part of that and to represent," Worl said.



USPS

Rico Worl's design for a USPS stamp.

Health



Covid-19 relief package directs \$3.3B to tribes

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

Another contentious Congress is coming to an end in Washington, D.C., and with it hard fought spending bills and provisions that affect practically every corner of Indian Country.

Congress passed the \$900 billion Covid-19 stimulus bill Dec. 20. President Trump signed it Dec. 27. It includes \$3.3 billion in funds for tribes, including for vaccine distribution.

The package in its current form reauthorizes \$284 billion in loans under the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP); \$300 in weekly unemployment insurance for jobless

workers through March 14, 2021; and \$600 stimulus checks for every adult making up to \$75,000 (\$150,000 for couples), including \$600 per child.

The Covid-19 relief is attached to a massive \$1.4 trillion end of year funding package which includes funding for the Indian Health Service (IHS). There are additional funds in the fiscal year 2021 package for a broad variety of Indian Country programs and services.

SDPI, CARES Act extensions

For 15 months the Special Diabetes Program for Indians, or SDPI, has gone through six short-term extensions that have threatened its stability and effectiveness.

The crucial diabetes program, which

the Seminole Tribe takes part in, has found a long-term extension in the funding package for three years – through the end of fiscal year 2023.

While it's a win for Indian Country, the reauthorization did not include an increase in funding that had been sought by tribes and the National Indian Health Board. The annual funding remains at \$150 million – the same level it's seen since 2004.

News of another win came soon after the funding was passed. Sen. Tom Udall, D-NM, and vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, announced that the relief package also extends the deadline for tribes to spend CARES Act funds – until Dec. 31, 2021.

The CARES Act was the first massive stimulus package of \$2.2 trillion that was

passed in March. It included \$8 billion for tribes, however many haven't seen their full distributions and \$300 million is tied up in litigation.

Udall said the funds from the second stimulus package are expected to see greater flexibility in distribution to tribes.

"Native Americans across the country continue to demonstrate incredible strength and resilience in the face of a pandemic that is disproportionately hurting their communities," Udall said in a statement. "Tribal governments are doing everything in their power to protect their communities and elders from this pandemic. The federal government must step up to support these efforts and live up to its trust and treaty obligations."

Udall pushed to have other Indian

Country programs funded in the bill, including Native languages and culture initiatives and funds to help combat the plight of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Other initiatives that are funded in the bill for Indian Country include broadband, public health, mental health services, telehealth, behavioral health, preventative care, housing assistance, education, education construction, child care, Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), Department of the Interior tribal programs, public safety, Indian arts and crafts enforcement and many more.

'Gather' connects food sovereignty to Native survival

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

Food sovereignty is a subject that might seem a bit boring to some, but its importance comes to life in a powerful way in the sweeping documentary film "Gather."

Since the film's premiere in June, it quickly gained a following and picked up rave reviews from critics across the country.

The film explores the collapse of Indigenous food systems and the implications for addiction, disease and the survival of Native culture itself.

Viewers follow a cast of characters from tribes across the country that share personal struggles and ultimately a message of hope today's tribes and future generations.

The film's opening features Twila Cassadore of the San Carlos Apache Nation in Arizona. She's a master forager and harvester who introduces Native youth and reintroduces adults to the land, food and traditional ways of healing.

"For me it's about reconnecting people to who they are and it starts off small, like planting that little seed," she says.

Cassadore argues that the reconnection with nature – and thus unplugging from modern life and technology even for a short time – has a host of benefits.

"You open a whole part of your mind to something else," she said.

It helped her to find the courage to speak out and heal after living with a long-held secret of sexual abuse from the boyfriend of a babysitter when she was very young, followed by addiction.

Colonized food system

Food sovereignty's embrace of culture and tradition is the way Nephi Craig of the White Mountain Apache Nation in Arizona was able to turn his life around after addiction and incarceration.

He's not only an accomplished chef, but also a historian and activist who educates people about the effects of colonialism and the importance of Native food.

"If you want to attack a people and wipe them out – attack their food," Craig says to a room of young farmers. "Our food system has been colonized."

As acres upon acres of land were taken, the relationship with traditional foods became more and more diminished.

"Colonial violence has never gone away," Craig says. "So when you see



Twila Cassadore explains traditional foraging methods to her niece.

Gather/Facebook

statistics on alcoholism, diabetes, homicides and suicides on reservations – those are the physical manifestations of colonialism."

He's hopeful that a recovery from the historical trauma can be achieved through supporting Indigenous healing and self-determination through food sovereignty.

'Buffalo were everything'

At the Cheyenne River on the Lakota Nation in South Dakota, filmmakers introduce Fred DuBray and his daughter Elsie.

DuBray is trying to bring buffalo back and he's having some success. He says it has implications for the health of the land and

the culture.

DuBray's ranch has 400 buffalo while the tribe has 800. In contrast, tens of millions used to roam the Plains states.

"We had a self sufficient economy and it was all centered around the buffalo herd. The buffalo were everything," DuBray says, from teepees made from hides to its use as a primary food source.

"The government recognized that and that's why they decided – if we can destroy the buffalo we can bring these people to their knees. And so that's what they set out to do," DuBray says.

More than 60 million American buffalo were slaughtered in order to starve out the Plains Indians into submission.

The commodity food that would come from the government was unhealthy and lacked nutrition – canned chicken, dried milk and so on. It was a precursor to a scourge of nutrition related diseases in Indian Country.

"The physical realities were hard, but the mental and spiritual part is even worse," DuBray said. "Buffalo are basically in the same spot we are. We were almost wiped out too."

Salmon people

Samuel Gensaw III of the Yurok Nation in Northern California fishes for salmon with his friends on the Klamath River, just as his ancestors have done for thousands of years.

Life revolves around the relationship with salmon.

"We believe that once these salmon disappear, our people follow," Gensaw says.

The salmon are endangered from years of environmental degradation and from dams. Problems began in the 1840s when settlers traveled to California looking for gold. They ignored treaties, took what they wanted and shot Indians on site.

The Yurok people have tried to have the dams removed. A bad salmon run, Gensaw

says, is directly connected to increases in drug abuse and suicides.

"When you come home empty handed there's a sadness that starts to set in," he says. "It's depression."

Gensaw now directs the group Ancestral Guard – an organization that advocates for the health of rivers in Northern California and across the globe.

More hope

Craig is in a partnership with farmer Clayton Harvey who runs, Ndeé Bikiyaa, The People's Farm.

The two grow and use Native vegetables in dishes at Craig's Café Gozhóó, the Apache word for beauty, harmony, love and happiness.

The café is located in a former gas station on the reservation – one that contributed to problems with diabetes and other health issues for the tribe as people were often forced to shop for food there.

"When you have food sovereignty you're free to be self-reliant, to grow your own food, to choose the foods you want to eat, choose the foods you want to put in school systems," Craig says.

He says reservations across the country are still far away from being food sovereign, but he's proof of progress.

Meanwhile, DuBray's daughter Elsie is an aspiring scientist who has embraced her tribe's traditions. She set out to prove that eating grass-fed buffalo is healthier than eating grain-fed beef. She's proving the effectiveness of Indigenous traditions with modern day science.

The project earned her a first place finish in her high school's science fair. She currently attends Stanford University.

More information about the Indigenous food sovereignty movement is at nativefoodsystems.org. Go to gather.film for ways to view the documentary.



Jamul Indian Village chairwoman named chair of health council

PRESS RELEASE

JAMUL, Calif. — On Nov. 30, Erica Pinto, chairwoman of the Jamul Indian Village of California (JIV), was elected chair of the Southern Indian Health Council, Inc. The SIHC, founded in 1982, is a Native American organization which aims to protect and improve the physical, mental, and spiritual health of the Native American community. Having intermittently served on the 14-member SIHC board since 2004, Pinto will begin her two-year term as chair in January. Pinto was honored in October with the American Indian Chamber of Commerce of California's highest honor, the Warrior Award.

Based in Alpine, California, SIHC provides a range of wellness, professional health care,

dental, and social services. SIHC serves a seven-member tribal consortium, including Barona, Campo, Ewiiapaayp, Jamul, La Posta, Manzanita, and Viejas, as well as other tribal and non-tribal members. The organization is supported by federal, state, and local funds.



Jamul Indian Village Chairwoman Erica Pinto

Courtesy photo

Pinto has been involved with the JIV Tribal Council since 1997. In 2015, she was the first woman elected chairwoman of the JIV, and has led the tribe in significant economic progress on its path to self-reliance. Under Pinto's leadership, the JIV oversaw the groundbreaking of a gaming facility on its reservation in February 2014. In October 2016, Jamul Casino opened, creating nearly 1,000 permanent jobs.

Pinto is also co-founder of the Acorns to Oaks Tribal program, which organizes activities designed to help prevent drug and alcohol abuse and teen pregnancy, and promote education. She chairs the health and safety task force for the tribal government, casino and gaming commission, which was created at the onset of the Covid pandemic in the spring of 2020.

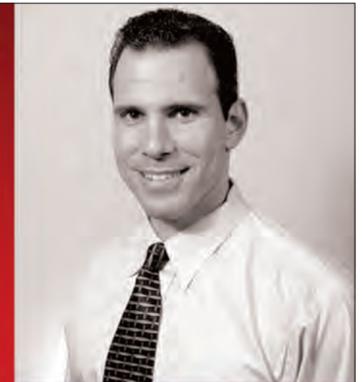
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SEMINOLE SCENES



HOLIDAY HEADQUARTERS: The Seminole Tribe headquarters entrance (above) and lobby (right) are decked with festive and colorful holiday decorations.

Kevin Johnson (2)



SMP (2)

TIME OF THANKS: Tribal leaders, including Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola (above) and Brighton Councilman Larry Howard (right), provided video messages to STOF employees in December, thanking them for their service to the tribe throughout the pandemic of 2020 and wishing them a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. "It's been tough on all of us, and we could not have gotten through it without you," Councilman Osceola said. "This year has definitely been a hard year for us all, but by the grace of God we're here today to celebrate this holiday that is before us," Councilman Howard said.



Elgin Jumper (2)

ON DISPLAY: Paintings by Seminole artist Elgin Jumper will be on display throughout January at Blick Art Materials, located at 2384 N. Federal Highway in Fort Lauderdale.



Hard Rock Tulsa

TASTY TULSA: The guests at Hard Rock Casino & Hotel Tulsa in Oklahoma were greeted by a giant gingerbread display during the holidays. In a Facebook post, Hard Rock Tulsa described the display as "the shining light of our holiday season." Additionally, it said "We're giving a special thanks to our food/beverage and facilities crews! They bring the Hard Rock Christmas magic all season long and we love every minute."



Miami Dolphins

MOVIE NIGHT AT HARD ROCK STADIUM: The Miami Dolphins, in partnership with the Dairy Council of Florida, hosted a movie night at the outdoor theater at Hard Rock Stadium for the students and parents of Norwood Elementary School on Dec. 15. The Dolphins selected Norwood as the recipient of a \$10,000 grant which will be allocated toward the purchase of new cafeteria equipment. This is the seventh year the organization has partnered with the Dairy Council of Florida through the Hometown Grants program to improve youth health and wellness in South Florida.

NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

Casino cancels indoor New Year's Eve party with 4,000 guests

A casino on Native American land in Sonoma County (California) that was planning a massive indoor New Year's Eve party despite public health orders banning such gatherings, canceled the event Dec. 24, according to casino officials.

Graton Resort and Casino outside Rohnert Park had planned to host the private party with 4,000 guests, county officials said during a virtual news conference Dec. 23.

A representative with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, which owns the casino, said in a social media message Thursday that the casino will close at 5 p.m. Dec. 31 for all activities, and "all parties and gatherings on New Year's Eve have been canceled."

No reason was given for the cancellation.

The tribe is a sovereign nation and not subject to county or state public health orders, Sonoma County Health Officer Dr. Sundari Mase said during the Wednesday news conference.

Mase added the casino has been open for several months during the pandemic, and the operator has taken steps to reduce the risk of casino guests contracting the coronavirus. She also said bars at the casino are closed, and walk-up alcohol service ends at 9 p.m.

On Dec. 24, just before 1 p.m., Graton's website said the casino would become a "private venue" and close to the public from 5 p.m. Dec. 31 until 4 a.m. Jan. 1. That message was no longer up later in the afternoon.

- NBC Bay Area

Report calls for equity changes for Native students

A new report compiled by a coalition of tribal education leaders, experts and advocates is calling for a "dramatic change" in New Mexico's public education system to close an equity gap for Native American students.

The Tribal Education Alliance argues in the report, released last week, that the cumulative effect of New Mexico's education policies, from early childhood through college, produces disparate outcomes for students, which are threatening the future of both Native students and tribal communities.

The report, "Pathways to Education Sovereignty: Taking a Stand for Native Children," champions the landmark lawsuit *Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico* as a step toward correcting inequities. But, the report says, the issues cited in the suit must be addressed through legislation that transforms the education system.

It notes a lack of tribal control of schools and a dearth of Indigenous teachers.

"There has been a lot of lack of political will," said Regis Pecos, co-director of the Santa Fe Indian School's Leadership Institute, which contributed to the report. "We have hope that we are now at a point to really be confronted, collectively speaking, with whether we are willing to do the right thing."

The report comes on the heels of a motion filed by plaintiffs in the *Yazzie/Martinez* suit that asks the state's First Judicial District Court to order public school districts and charter schools to provide at-risk students with computers and adequate internet access. The motion claims the state has failed to ensure children — especially those in districts serving predominantly Native American students — have the tools necessary for remote learning during the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Public Education Secretary Ryan Stewart said his department had not yet reviewed the report.

"We are working with tribal partners to better direct resources and supports to meet the needs of Native American students," Stewart said.

The report outlines solutions to the equity gap: increased tribal control over education in districts serving Native children; community-based education created by and centered on tribal communities; and development of a balanced yet culturally and linguistically relevant education.

Gabe Aguilar, president of the Mescalero Apache Nation, said in the report, "The strength of our people and our sovereign nation is dependent upon the education of our children in carrying forward the knowledge of our ancestors' gift to us and at the same time acquiring the skills necessary to protect our lands, our way of life, our people, all that defines who we are."

"Education sovereignty is the right to fulfill that vision without compromise," he added.

Pecos said another important issue many schools face is the lack of Native American instructors in the classroom.

Only 2.5 percent of teachers in the state are Native, according to the *Yazzie/Martinez* lawsuit.

The report recommends developing programs to help build a Native teacher pipeline, including tuition waivers for college students and a guarantee of equal pay for Native language teachers.

"The reality is that, for people like myself, I never saw a Native teacher in all of my educational experiences in public schools," Pecos said.

"That reality exists today that a majority of our children will not see a Native teacher in their classroom."

- Santa Fe New Mexican

Nevada man charged with murder in slaying of Native American woman on reservation

A man is accused of killing a Native American woman on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribes' Reservation, the US Attorney's Office in Nevada said Dec. 18.

Michael Joshua Burciaga, 33, is charged with second-degree murder within Indian Country, the US Attorney's Office said.

Pyramid Lake tribal police went to a house in Nixon shortly after midnight on December 15 after receiving a call about a stabbing and found the woman face down in the master bathroom, according to criminal complaint filed in the US District Court of Nevada on Tuesday. Shortly after, medics on the scene pronounced the woman dead, the complaint said.

The victim, a registered member of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, is identified in court documents only by the initials A.D., according to a news release from the US Attorney's Office.

Officers spoke to Burciaga outside the house and observed a laceration on his hand, the criminal complaint said. As first aid was being administered, Burciaga "stated in sum and substance, 'I already know what happened, and I know what I did, which is why I slit my wrist,'" the complaint said.

While in transit to a medical center for treatment, Burciaga asked about the victim's condition and told officers she was pregnant with his child, according to the complaint.

Burciaga is accused of stabbing the victim with "multiple knives," according to the news release.

Burciaga's public defender, Kate Berry, declined to comment on the case when contacted by CNN.

Magistrate Judge William G. Cobb ordered Burciaga held without bond and scheduled a trial for Feb. 22, 2021. If convicted, Burciaga faces a maximum life sentence.

- CNN

With one of their own in the Statehouse, Native Americans in California win new rights

As James Ramos, the first member of a California Native American tribe to serve in the state legislature, authored a trio of new laws bolstering the rights of Native Americans in the state.

The measures, signed into law by Gov. Gavin Newsom in September, will go into effect on Jan. 1. One such law will make it easier for tribes in the state to reclaim sacred artifacts and the remains of their ancestors that have been held by museums and other institutions for decades.

"When you look at cities like Los Angeles and San Francisco, there's no federally recognized tribe there but yet we know that there's ancestral remains of Indian people in those areas," Ramos, a Democrat, said in an interview with All Things Considered on Wednesday.

"When tribal elders are in disagreement with museum directors over what should be repatriated back to the Californian people, up until this point, all of the weight of that knowledge lies with the museum director. So this bill now strengthens the tribal elders, their voice, to make sure that they have the last say."

In June, a state audit of three campuses within the University of California system found that the universities held close to 500,000 artifacts and remains that had yet to be returned to the respective tribes, a requirement guaranteed under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990.

"Those are the remains that we need to get back into the hands of the proper people, the proper tribes to be able to do a proper reburial so then we can start to move forward with the healing," Ramos said.

The assembly member, who's from the Serrano/Cahuilla tribe and lives on the San Manuel Reservation in San Bernardino County, has gone through the tedious repatriation process and spoke about what it took to get back a medicine basketry mortar from a museum in Chicago.

"It took a lot of resources," he said, but many tribes throughout the country "don't have the wherewithal, the resources to be able to provide those resources and those documents that are there."

Ramos' second bill requires the secretary of state to assemble a task force to come up with recommendations on how to increase voter participation among indigenous groups in the state — including ways to recruit Native American poll workers and to improve the accessibility of voter information like registration and election materials.

Native Americans, whose voting rights weren't recognized by every state until 1962, have been dogged by decades of voter disenfranchisement.

The third law authorizes the California Department of Justice to assist local law enforcement in criminal investigations in Native American communities — namely, to reduce the rates of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

Since Ramos was elected in 2018, it took him two years to push through legislation that addresses issues that have burdened indigenous Californians for decades. He said the reason such protections have only recently begun to gain traction "comes down to being engaged in the political system."

"For once, we do have someone in the legislature that understands the issues and the plight of the California Indian people."

- NPR

North Dakota study dispels the myth that Indians don't pay taxes

The North Dakota Association of Tribal Colleges recently announced results of a 2020 study estimating tribal member tax payments to the state of North Dakota. Titled "Native American Tax Contributions in North Dakota," the estimate of 2019 state personal income taxes paid by Native Americans totals more than \$49.4 million or \$908 for every man, woman and child.

In addition to personal income tax, the study estimates sales and use tax, motor fuels tax, corporate tax and property tax, as well as oil extraction and production taxes. The current statewide Native American population includes 54,400 enrolled members of the Lakota, Dakota, Chippewa, Mandan, Arikara and Hidatsa Tribes. About 28,845 live on the reservations, and 25,555 live off of tribal lands.

Per capita income lags far behind the statewide average, and most Native Americans live well below the poverty line. An estimated 80 percent of salaries and wages is consumed by purchases made off the reservations, resulting in generation of both state and local sales taxes.

"North Dakota tribal colleges want to dispel the stereotype that Indians don't pay taxes," said Cynthia Lindquist, Ph.D., president of Cankdeska Cikana Community College and chair of the North Dakota Association of Tribal Colleges.

"Indians don't get checks from the federal government each month, and we do not have free education or health care," Lindquist said. "We're not all getting rich from oil money or the casinos. In fact, the casinos also have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. The general rule of thumb is that tribes are tax-exempt, and individual Native Americans are not."

"We want people to understand that we, too, are contributors to the state's economy, and, through this lens, we want North Dakotans to realize that — like all higher education — an investment in our tribal colleges provides a significant return on investment," she said.

Native Americans enjoy tri-citizenship; they are citizens of the United States, their respective tribal nation and the state of North Dakota. In addition to paying taxes, they vote in national, tribal and statewide elections.

Established in 1994, the North Dakota Association of Tribal Colleges is led by the five tribal college presidents. The association provides a structure for collaboration, improved governance and planning toward economic progress for the tribal communities in North Dakota.

- The Williston (N.D.) Herald

Tsartlip First Nation territory doubles in size after traditional land returned by B.C. government

A large chunk of farmland on southern Vancouver Island has been returned to the Tsartlip First Nation after a historic agreement with the British Columbia, Canada, government.

On Dec. 16, the Tsartlip took possession of the former Woodwynn Farm, a 78-hectare property on the Saanich Peninsula once used by the nation for gathering medicines, hunting and ceremonial practices. It is immediately adjacent to Tsartlip First Nation's only reserve and significantly expands the size of its territory.

"It's really a doubling," said Chief Don Tom in an interview on CBC's On The Island.

Tsartlip now has over 1,000 members and the community has run out of space to address the housing, recreational and cultural needs of what Tom says is the fastest growing First Nation in the southern Vancouver Island area.

According to Tom, the reserve is about 196 acres and the additional lands will add about 193 acres, including a creek he said nation members hope to rehabilitate for fishing purposes.

"Our membership are excited, they are elated that we are expanding our land base," said Tom.

According to a government release, Tsartlip First Nation was able to purchase the farm from B.C. Housing through a \$7.77-million grant from the province.

Since purchasing the farm in July 2018, B.C. Housing has leased the property to a local farmer, who is actively farming hay, grain and produce. Tsartlip First Nation has extended the lease through to Sept. 2021.

Tom said between now and next fall, the nation will use the time to engage with members and the District of Central Saanich on how best to use the land.

Tsartlip Councillor Joe Seward said in a statement that the land at Woodwynn Farm, also known as Mawuec, used to be hunting territory and a cedar forest where Elders and ancestors would harvest medicines.

"Our people were kicked off that land and settlers cut down the cedar trees... We want to reawaken the land, heal the land and bring the sacredness back," said Seward.

The nation now owns the land, which is part of the Agricultural Land Reserve, as private property.

In a written statement, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Murray Rankin called the move a tremendous step forward to advance reconciliation between the provincial government and Tsartlip First Nation.

- CBC News

Recently revived Mattakeeset Tribe now claims rights to Taunton casino land

A rift is widening between Native American groups over who has claim to scores of acres in Taunton, Massachusetts, where one tribe has been trying for years to build a \$1 billion casino.

The recently revived Mattakeeset Massachusetts Tribe argues it's the rightful heir to the land in Taunton set aside by the federal government for the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, which is planning to build a hotel, casino and entertainment complex.

The Mattakeesets want the Mashpees and state and local authorities to recognize their land claim, which they base on colonial-era documents.

"They blatantly fooled the whole entire country about this land belonging to them," said Larry Fisher, who has been working to revive the tribe since becoming its chief sachem in 2014, of the Mashpees. "We just want the truth to be told. It belongs to us. The Mattakeesets."

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, which famously traces its ancestry to the Native Americans who shared a fall harvest with the Pilgrims 400 years ago, counter that Fisher's group is just a smaller band within the broader Wampanoag people who have inhabited Massachusetts for thousands of years.

The Mattakeeset Tribe currently has a few hundred members, according to Fisher, but does not have federal recognition or a land base like the Mashpee Tribe, which was federally recognized in 2007 and has roughly 3,000-members.

"Larry is well-meaning but very confused," said Steven Peters, the Mashpee Tribe's spokesman. "The Mattakeesets and the Massachusetts are Wampanoags."

The dustup is the latest wrinkle in the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe's tortured, years-long quest for federally protected land — and the lucrative rights to build a tax-exempt casino on it.

The Cape Cod-based tribe was granted a more than 300-acre reservation in the waning months of the Obama administration in 2016, but the Trump administration moved to revoke the reservation in what the tribe and its supporters complained was a dangerous precedent. A federal judge in June halted the move; the Interior Department has appealed.

Meanwhile, the tribe's prominent, longtime chairman was arrested last month on federal bribery charges in connection with the casino project. Cedric Cromwell has denied the allegations, but has been ousted as chairman by tribe leaders.

Fisher, a 33-year-old Boston-area substance abuse counselor, said his tribe has no quarrel with the half of the tribe's roughly 300-acre reservation that's located in the town of Mashpee on Cape Cod, where the tribe has operated a government center and other tribe services for years.

But he contends the Taunton-area half, located some 50 miles (80 kilometers) from Mashpee, was never part of the rival tribe's historic territory.

Fisher points to a book published last month by Jeremy Bangs, founder of the Leiden American Pilgrim Museum in the Netherlands, which argues that a 1664 deed designated the lands as the "Titicut Reserve" and specifically set it aside for the Mattakeesets in perpetuity. Fisher says the deeded lands encompass all of what is today Taunton, Middleborough and Bridgewater, as well as parts of Duxbury.

Complaints that the Mashpees are inflating their ancestral territory at the expense of other Native Americans aren't new. At least two members of other Massachusetts tribes have raised the issue in recent years, and local casino opponents have made similar arguments in their long-running federal court challenge.

The state Commission on Indian Affairs hasn't officially waded into the debate, but John Peters, the agency's executive director and a member of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, was skeptical of the rival tribe's claim. "To give credibility to a self-proclaimed chief of a tribe that hasn't been heard of in several hundred years demeans the integrity of our culture," he said.

Bangs said he wrote the book, which expands on his previous published works on New England's Native American tribes and European colonists, to shed light on a part of local history he believes has become blurred over the years.

"Some of the Wampanoags have tried to pretend the Massachusetts never existed, and that goes against hundreds of years of history," he said. "They don't call the state Massachusetts for nothing."

Bangs, a former chief curator at Plimoth Patuxet, a Massachusetts museum that recreates the historic English colony with period actors, stressed his work wasn't funded by the Mattakeesets or other interests.

The historical evidence, he added, is in plain sight: the colonial documents cited in his book are housed at the county registry of deeds in Plymouth.

Peters, the spokesman for the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe, said he and other tribe scholars haven't reviewed Bangs' book.

He said the tribe has invited Fisher for a sit down to review the Mashpee Tribe's land claim evidence, which he said is detailed in more than 14,000 pages the tribe submitted for its federal land in trust application.

Fisher counters that no such olive branch has been offered, despite his attempts to meet with Mashpee leaders over the years.

He said his tribe is instead focused on asserting its jurisdiction on its ancestral lands, which includes hosting ceremonies and other recent gatherings at Camp Titicut, a 25-acre park in Bridgewater with a Native American burial ground, without seeking

town permits.

Fisher said the tribe has also raised its concerns to the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Tribal Justice, which didn't respond to a request for comment this week.

And while it supports legislation creating a state tribal recognition process in Massachusetts, he said the tribe isn't pursuing federal recognition. That special status acknowledges a tribe's sovereignty and provides access to federal funding and other benefits, so long as the tribe can show it's a distinct community that's been in existence since 1900 with some form of governance.

"At this time, we are looking to move on all efforts of sustainable and cultural development on our tribal lands," Fisher said. "With or without state or federal support."

- Taunton (Mass.) Daily Gazette

Native American Studies for the next generation

There is a proposal for the upcoming Connecticut legislative session to require Native American Studies in school. Right now, it is not required despite the rich history of several recognized tribes.

Rodney Butler, the Tribal Chair of the Mashantucket Pequot, says "Connecticut itself is an historical name, it's the long tidal river its an Algonquin name from my ancestors."

Butler says Connecticut's five Native American tribes have a long and at times disturbing history that every student should be taught.

"The Treaty of Hartford essentially said Pequot could no longer exist, your language can no longer be spoken and remaining Pequot are now going to be slaves," added Butler.

Senator Cathy Osten is the bill's sponsor.

Democratic Senator Cathy Osten, from Sprague, says, "What we should be teaching to the next generation so they understand and are not thinking that Native Americans are associated with mascots at sports games, or John Wayne movies."

Lawmakers are receptive — the state's largest teachers union the Connecticut Education Association is too.

For Chairman Butler it's about understanding not only the history of his Pequot, but of all tribes.

Their strength as a people and willingness to allow the state to survive.

With all of the movements to tear down statutes, Butler was in agreement that there are a few missing from the State Capitol Complex in Hartford.

"Certainly, there should be some representation of the native American History of Connecticut, the native roots of Connecticut on the capitol building," said Butler.

Ironically, etched on the front of the state Capitol is a depiction of the bloody, massacre of The Mashantucket Pequot by colonialist commander John Mason.

Proponents of the bill say if it's important enough to put it on the building, it's important enough to teach it in the classroom.

- WTNH

DC Congresswoman introduces bill to recognize that Native Americans originally inhabited U.S.

Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton introduced a bill Dec. 20 that would formally recognize that Native Americans were the original inhabitants of the country.

The legislation would "call on state and local governments to encourage formal land acknowledgments before public or ceremonial events."

Norton said she is the first member of Congress to introduce this kind of resolution.

"It's past time for Congress to acknowledge that the land comprising our country was originally inhabited by Indigenous peoples known as Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Alaska Natives," Norton said. "This formal statement recognizes that Indigenous peoples are the original and traditional stewards of a given geographic area, and I hope to convey honor and respect for their connection to their ancestral lands."

The article specifically refers to Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Alaska Natives as the original inhabitants of the U.S.

- WMAL

After evacuating twice over tainted water, Neskantaga residents plan their return home

Members of a First Nation that has been under a boil-water advisory for longer than any other in Canada are hoping to return home before Christmas to clean running water for the first time in 25 years.

Neskantaga, accessible only by air and an ice road in winter, sits about 450 km north of Thunder Bay, Ontario — where nearly 300 of its members have been living in a hotel since an oily sheen in the reserve's reservoir on Oct. 19 triggered their evacuation.

Now, final tests are taking place to determine whether Neskantaga's water is safe enough for the community to use, weeks after members originally were scheduled to fly back and two years after the reserve's water treatment plant was supposed to start producing clean drinking water.

The federal government is finalizing plans for the community to fly back.

- CBC

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Education

B

FSU President John Thrasher gives final state of the university address

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Florida State University's annual State of the University address is a time-honored tradition, one that President John Thrasher has adhered to for six years. On Dec. 2, he delivered his final address to a small, socially distanced group during a meeting of the Faculty Senate.

Thrasher, a former state legislator, was named FSU's 15th president in 2014. He announced in September that he will retire in 2021. His contract expired in November, but he agreed to stay on until a replacement is hired. The FSU board of trustees is conducting a search for a new president, which could take up to six months.

In his address, Thrasher, 76, said he never imagined he would finish his term as president during a pandemic, but noted the university is strong, tenacious and resilient.

"It's amazing what we have achieved and how far this university has come," said Thrasher. "The past prepared us to respond to this pandemic. We are a family and when push comes to shove, we all pull in the same direction. We have all made sacrifices to safeguard the health of others."

In the pandemic's early days, the faculty changed from face-to-face classes to remote learning. In the fall, the school moved to a hybrid model and will do so again for the spring semester. However, between the start of the semester on Jan. 6 until Jan. 15, all classes will be taught remotely.

"Our faculty are some of the most creative, hardworking and dedicated people," Thrasher said. "For them to convert 10,000 classes to remote in just two weeks was an amazing accomplishment. Because of you, we have been able to continue to deliver a world-class education to our 43,000 students."

The faculty explored opening a lab to process Covid-19 tests, but the nationwide shortage of supplies hindered the program. Instead, the FSU Innovation Hub stepped in and used its 3-D printers to create plastic face shields from a design that was reviewed by the National Institutes of Health.

"When health care workers in our community faced a shortage of supplies, we developed a prototype for 3D printers to produce face shields," Thrasher reported. "We made and delivered 2,400 of them."

Thrasher said the country was also dealing with another pandemic, that of systemic racism. Prompted by the George Floyd murder, FSU created the President's Task Force on Anti-Racism, Equity and Inclusion in July to identify racial disparities on campus. The task force includes the Seminole Tribe's Kyle Doney, who serves on the FSU Alumni Association's National Board of Directors.

"We must continue to listen, learn, evolve and take action," Thrasher said. "As an institute of higher education, we can be leaders in that. This is a place where every person can feel safe and have dignity."

To address other national issues, FSU launched the Institute of Politics, a nonpartisan entity with the goal of teaching students about civic engagement, research and the role of politics in the lives of Americans. The nonpartisan organization was created by faculty, staff and political officials.

"It was established by the legislature last year to improve and encourage more civic involvement," Thrasher said. "As we see more partisan politics across the nation, in times of change we are fortunate to have the steady influence of professors, some who have spent their entire careers here."

For the second year in a row, FSU has been ranked in the top 20 public universities in the country by U.S. News & World Report.

"We have surpassed some of the finest universities in America," Thrasher said. "It reflects our values and focuses on what we do best; help students succeed and prepare for 21st century careers. We have some of the best graduation rates in the country and 95% of freshmen return for a second year."

Thrasher touted some of the university's other accomplishments: graduate student enrollment is at an all-time high, the "Raise the Torch" campaign raised more than \$1 billion to fund scholarships and additional professors, opened a Black student union, created the Jim Moran School of Entrepreneurship and raised a record \$250 million in research funding.

"Every success we have had is a result of obstacles we have overcome," he said. "I truly believe the state of the university is stronger than it has ever been. Our next president will guide our way forward, but we have established a strong foundation on which to build."

Thrasher was the first in his family to graduate high school. He attended FSU and graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1965 and a law degree in 1972.

"I have given FSU my allegiance since I stepped foot here as a freshman in 1961," Thrasher said. "It has been my distinct honor to serve as its 15th president."

Everett Osceola provides Seminole insight during Stranahan House online event

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

To commemorate National Native American Heritage month in November, the Stranahan House Museum in Fort Lauderdale celebrated Seminole life – past and present – during a Facebook Live presentation Nov. 30.

Everett Osceola, the Seminole Tribe's cultural ambassador and Stranahan House board member, fielded questions from online viewers. Stranahan House historian Jonathan Axler moderated the event and showed old Seminole artifacts from the museum, including patchwork and dolls.

Osceola's introduction to the Stranahan House came a few years ago when he covered a concert there by former chairman James Billie for Seminole Media Productions. The museum piqued Osceola's interest, so he learned all he could through history books, museum recordings and stories from tribal Elders.

"Some of the Elders remembered sitting down with Ivy [Stranahan] as she read to them," Osceola said.

The history of the Seminoles and the Stranahans goes back to the early 1900s, when Seminoles traveled by dugout canoe from the Everglades to Fort Lauderdale to trade at Frank and Ivy's trading post. Alligator skins were the most popular commodities but they also traded pelts, baskets and dolls for food staples such as sugar and lard, beads and material.

"When they started trading, they were getting ripped off," Osceola said. "Stranahan told them what their goods were really worth. They helped get the Dania reservation and got the kids proper shoes and wardrobe so they could go to school."

The Stranahan's place on the New River had ample room for tribal members to stay for days at a time. Former schoolteacher Ivy taught them English, how to read and founded Friends of the Seminoles, which she led for 50 years.

Frank Stranahan introduced tribal members to hand-cranked sewing machines, which helped the evolution of Seminole patchwork. In the early 1900s the patchwork was very basic, but when they got the sewing machines more intricate designs were possible. New and more intricate patchwork designs are still being made.

"Fire is my favorite patchwork because it can also mean passion or rage," Osceola said. "My grandmother used to do patchwork and I used to lay in her sewing machine room and fall asleep to the sound of it. Now if I see a movie with a sewing machine, I get sleepy."



Examples of patchwork were discussed during the program. Everett Osceola's favorite, fire, is at the top left of the image.



Everett Osceola, left, talks about different aspects of Seminole life and culture with Stranahan House Museum historian Jonathan Axler during a Facebook Live program from the museum Nov. 30.

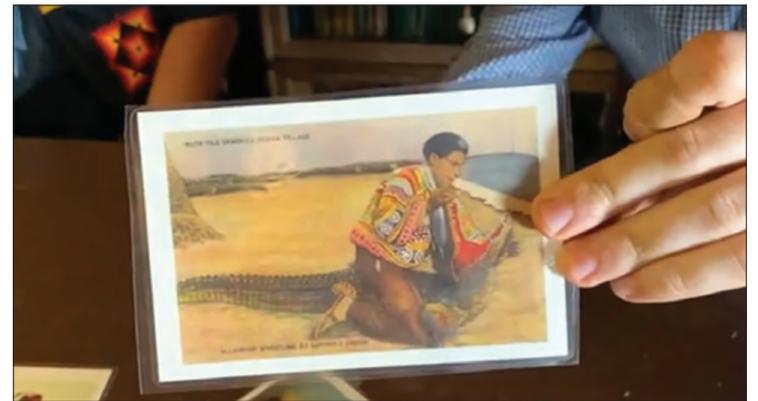
One viewer asked Osceola about men's clothing. Osceola explained the longshirts were meant to protect their arms from mosquitos and other insects, but also keep them cool.

"Turbans are mostly decorative today, but back then they used it as a sleeping bag," he said. "They slept on the fabric and rolled it into a turban in the morning. It also kept sweat out of their faces. Everything had a practical purpose."

When explaining Seminole language to a viewer, Osceola said his mother's side of the family speaks Creek, his father's side speaks Elaponke and he had to learn a third language – English. Another viewer wanted to know the difference between the Miccosukee and Seminole tribes.

"There isn't much difference," Osceola said. "We share the same stories, customs, culture and language. The main difference is they are federally recognized as a different tribe. It's more of a political difference, but we always look out for each other. When Hurricane Andrew hit in 1992, we helped them out with food using swamp buggies and airboats."

In the old days, dugout canoes were the best way to travel in South Florida and were made from large cypress trees. Now it's difficult to find large trees here. A few years ago Osceola and Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum village crafter Pedro Zepeda got



Alligator wrestling, depicted here in an old postcard, was among the topics in the program.

some submerged trees from the swamps of Louisiana where they grow much larger.

A question about Black Seminoles led to an answer of runaway slaves being welcomed into the tribe during the Seminole Wars.

"They came to us for refuge," Osceola said. "We had separate camps but after a while we shared our ways and they shared theirs. Some are in my family today. The Fort Pierce reservation is mostly descendants of Black Seminoles and most speak Creek. Aaron, Shummy and Marlon Tommie are my cousins, we are all family."

A viewer asked about the purpose of clans. The eight clans are Bird, Panther, Deer, Otter, Wind, Big Town, Bear and Snake.

"During the Seminole wars we had over 60 clans," Osceola said. "They help with family and bloodline, but most importantly it is a way for us to retrace our history. We don't always write our history and language down, but we have our clan system to trace it. My aunt can trace our heritage back 200 years through the clans. It's almost like patchwork; it's an intricate pattern that is more than just your family tree."

Inevitably a question about alligator wrestling came up, but the questioner wanted to know if alligator wrestlers also wrestle crocodiles. Florida is the only place where both alligators and crocodiles live together. Osceola said crocodiles are more aggressive than the more docile alligators and he never dealt with one.

Alligator wrestling began as a search for food. Men would capture the gators and use them for food, hides to trade and they even kept bugs away. Outsiders saw Seminoles take on the gators and gave them money for their effort. Osceola said the money accumulated and they realized showmanship was more valuable than hides. Okalee Village was started as a venue for alligator wrestling, tribal fairs and other gatherings.

"Back when I had a waistline and two good knees, I used to wrestle alligators," Osceola said. "I started by helping and spotting for my uncles who wrestled. We would keep our eyes on the gators when the wrestler talked to the crowd."

Osceola revealed how to determine the length of an alligator. Measure the length from the tip of its nose to the eyes. If it is six inches, then the gator is six feet long from tip of the nose to the end of the tail.

Osceola was asked if he was related to Chief Osceola from the Seminole war era. He is not, but he is a descendant of Polly Parker. He suggested people look up other significant Seminole leaders including Sam Jones (Abiaka) and Coacoochee (Wild Cat).

"Native Americans contribute a lot to what America is today," Osceola said. "If it wasn't for Ivy Stranahan we wouldn't have our reservation in Hollywood, which has made us the most prominent tribe because of gaming."

PECS 5th graders learn about explorers, rights to treasures

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Michelle Pritchard's fifth-grade class from Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School finished up 2020 with an ethical problem to solve.

It was the end of the Exploring Unit, during which the class studied Spanish explorers and their search for "gold, God and glory" in the 1400s and Portuguese explorers Ferdinand Magellan and Vasco da Gama in the 1500s.

The class also delved into the Columbian exchange, the widespread transfer of plants, animals, culture, human populations and diseases between the Americas, Africa and the Old World. The practice was named for Christopher Columbus after his voyage to the New World in 1492.

The November issue of Scholastic News magazine had a story about space exploration, so Pritchard took her students from the 1500s to modern times with a discussion on the similarities and differences of the different eras of exploration.

The students' pursuit of knowledge – an exploration in itself – was helped along with another article in the December issue of Scholastic News. This one prompted students

to think about ethics and morals. The article was about deep sea treasure hunters.

The students had to put themselves into the role of treasure hunter and decide whether they would return any treasure they found to the country the ships originally came from or keep it for themselves.

The assignment was to use facts from the article to support their answers.

Here's the story: Robert Pritchett and his crew searched the Atlantic Ocean off Cape Canaveral for more than three years for the shipwreck of the La Trinite. The ship was sent from France to protect a French colony, but sank in a storm in 1565.

For 451 years the ship and its artifacts were lost. But by using high-tech equipment, Pritchett and the crew found the shipwreck in May 2016. Three bronze cannons and dozens of other artifacts were found in the wreckage, but they didn't get to keep them. By law, sunken ships belong to the country that sent them, even centuries later.

A Florida court ruled the ship and its contents belonged to France, not Pritchett. The ruling sparked an old debate about whether treasure hunters should keep what they discover.

The students read and digested the information about that debate and made their choices whether to keep the loot or return it

to the home country.

Here are the students' responses: "I think they should get paid or keep something. These people spend parts of their lives finding parts of human history and using their time to find this stuff. They spend millions on tools and people to help find this stuff so they should get at least something back. Also if they can't sell it they should at least be able to keep it as a prize to show in their collections. Those are my reasons that we should keep artifacts from our history," wrote Braylen.

Eleanor wrote, "My opinion on treasure hunting is that I think it's important to find keys to our past to discover more about our history. I also think it's important that we preserve the lost treasure we find. Like the text states, 'Many experts argue that any artifacts recovered from sunken ships belong in museums, not in the collections of treasure hunters.' I agree with this opinion because I would like to go to a museum one day and learn about these important pieces of history."

"In my opinion, people who find treasure should be able to keep it or do what they want with it. Firstly, these people spend lots of money for the expeditions by buying tools and being able to go to the places where they search for it. Also, salvors spend lots of

time looking for ships, it could take years. Including that if the person's artifacts get taken away and they just waste money, they won't want to find artifacts anymore and there are still lots to be discovered. Lastly, they can just earn money by selling what they found to scientists or museums instead of having it taken away once they find it. I think that treasure hunters should be able to do as they wish with what they found," wrote Marley.

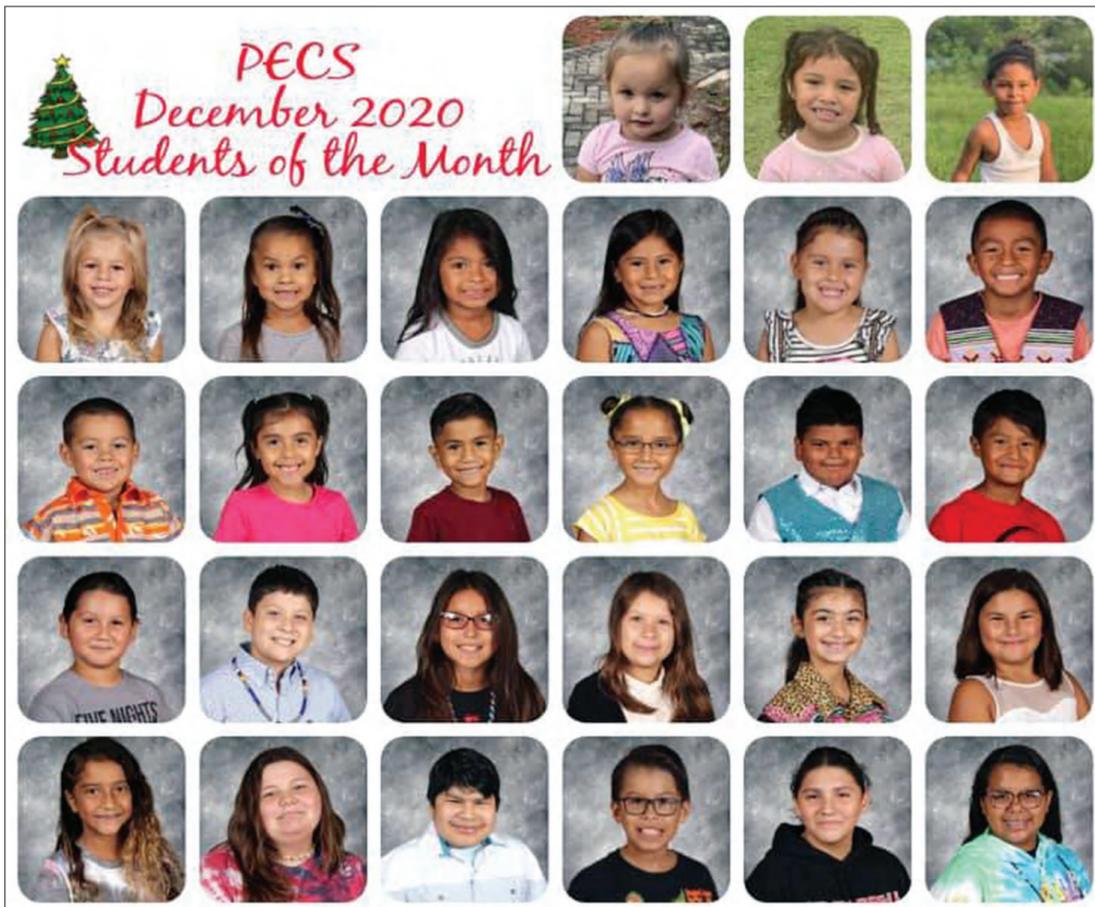
Bobbi wrote, "No, I do not agree with treasure hunters keeping the treasure. I do not agree because it is part of history. So it should go in a museum. If the hunters kept the treasure, we would never have artifacts. We would never learn about history."

"I agree the treasure hunters should be able to keep what they find. According to the article, Pritchett says, 'he spent four million dollars searching for La Trinite.' They spent all this money so they should be able to keep what they find. If they're not able to keep the treasure, then they wasted a lot of their own money. These are the reasons why treasure hunters should keep what they find," wrote Dali.

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students of the month - November 2020



Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students of the month - December 2020



◆ PECS From page 1B

Layda wrote, "I think that if you find buried treasure, you should at least turn it in to a museum. Because some artifacts can help scientists understand history. The artifacts can be very valuable. You can learn so much about history just through studying

an object. Besides, in a museum the artifacts can be preserved, so they won't get damaged or broken. The passage states, 'After all, such items hold priceless information that can help us understand history, says archeologist James Delgado.' If important relics get into the wrong hands, maybe some people would think that the artifacts weren't valuable enough and just toss them away."

Pritchard was impressed with the students' work.

"The kids did a great job on supporting their opinion and some really did a great job with adding in their text evidence," Pritchard wrote in a Facebook post. "I love it when we can incorporate our reading, writing and social studies standards all into a unit."

Navajo Technical University receives \$12M from MacKenzie Scott's giving campaign

KNAU PUBLIC RADIO

Navajo Technical University in Crownpoint, New Mexico, has received 12 million dollars from the philanthropist MacKenzie Scott as part of her multi-billion-dollar giving campaign this year.

According to the philanthropist and author, the funds are meant to benefit "education for historically marginalized and underserved people."

NTU President Elmer J. Guy says he's grateful and humbled to be included, and the university will hold a hearing before committing the money to specific projects.

"This donation affirms the work we've been doing in educating our students while positively impacting the communities we serve. We're grateful for the gracious gift,

which will be felt by communities throughout the Four Corners region," Guy said in a press release.

NTU is among five tribal colleges and universities to receive a donation from Scott this year. It's one of two higher education institutions on the Navajo Nation and focuses on science, technology, engineering and math.

Scott, the former wife of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, has given away about \$6 billion this year. Much of the money is aimed at reversing what she says are systemic inequities that have been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In all, 384 organizations across the country were recipients of funds. They include civil rights groups, debt relief organizations and employment training as well as emergency funds that assist those

hard hit by the economic fallout of the pandemic.



MacKenzie Scott

Courtesy photo

National UNITY Council's top 10 issues facing Native youth

PRESS RELEASE

Each year during its national conference, the National UNITY Council (NUC) gathers to vote on the top 10 issues facing Native youth across the country. Youth representatives from the 325-plus Youth Councils who make up the national network discuss their regional priorities.

With each youth council working together across the nation, youth are empowered knowing they are not facing these issues alone.

The NUC voted on these issues at the Virtual National Conference for Youth Councils to address during 2020-2021:

1. Drug/Alcohol abuse
2. Suicide/Self harm
3. School Dropout/Education Disparities
4. Cultural Identity/Blood Quantum
5. Bullying/lateral violence
6. Unhealthy home environment
7. Human Trafficking/Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
8. Lack of Positive Role Models
9. Poverty/Unemployment/Lack of Resources
10. Juvenile/adult incarceration/generational impacts of imprisonment

What can Youth Councils do to address these issues?

1. Youth Councils are encouraged to share prevention messages addressing drug and alcohol abuse.
2. Youth Councils should share warning signs of suicidal thoughts and resources for persons with thoughts of suicide regularly.
3. Youth Councils can encourage

educational opportunities and encourage academic achievement.

4. Youth Councils are encouraged to make efforts to creating belonging for all members, promote inclusion of mixed blood Natives in your events and host events that teach and strengthen cultural identity.

5. Youth Councils can have community conversations addressing lateral violence and focus on building positive mental health and self esteem for Native youth.

6. Youth Councils should help raise awareness on creating healthy relationships and resources for safe places to seek help.

7. Youth Councils can share information on how to know the signs of human trafficking, raise awareness on MMIWG and how to keep safe.

8. Youth Councils should strive to be role models for younger generations and have guest speakers who Native youth can look up to.

9. Youth can share creative ways Native youth have overcome community challenges such as poverty and host workshops on financial literacy and entrepreneurship.

10. Youth can openly discuss the impacts on generational incarceration. The youth can also work with UNITY peer guides to host town halls on how to develop a personalized plan to create a safer communities.

If your local Youth Council is currently addressing one of these top 10 issues, email la.buford@unityinc.org and nucec@unityinc.org. UNITY would like to share your community event with others to empower Native youth to be change agents.

UNITY leaders embark on good deeds in their communities

PRESS RELEASE

Here are a few holiday activities that UNITY youth leaders, including the Seminole Tribe's Cheyenne Kippenger, have performed as they make a difference in their communities, homes and personal lives.

Robert "Scottie" Miller, Male Co-President, National UNITY Council Executive Committee: "For the holidays, I donated food to my community's blessing box, which is a box for anyone in our community who needs food can stop by and grab it."

Colby Whitethunder - Southern Plains Representative, National UNITY Council Executive Committee: "In December, I returned home from college and donated coffee and baked goods to our tribal police department."

Kaiden McGhee - Southeastern Representative, National UNITY Council

Executive Committee: "We found a way to do our New Year's (annual Thanksgiving) powwow online and had a pretty good turnout."

Cheyenne Kippenger, Miss Indian World, UNITY Peer Guide, Healing Indigenous Lives Initiative: "I organized and hosted a virtual Christmas cake decorating contest nationwide. Check out our Facebook page and vote for your favorite to see who the next Great NDN Baker will be."

Dr. Leslie Locklear - UNITY Peer Guide Trainer, Healing Indigenous Lives Initiative: "North Carolina Native American Youth Organization donated over 200 toys to the Southeastern Family Violence Center."

Brook Thompson - UNITY 25 Under 25 Awardee: "I made dinner mats in my language so that me and my partner can learn to only speak Yurok (my language) during meals."

Graduating HINU student elected tribal president

BY KAYLA BOINTY The Indian Leader

The Indian Leader is celebrating Haskell Indian Nations University students and recent alumni who are taking their education and skillsets and applying them to their Tribal communities. One such student is Michael King, who graduates this semester, and has just been elected president of the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe.

Please give your name, tribe(s), and community

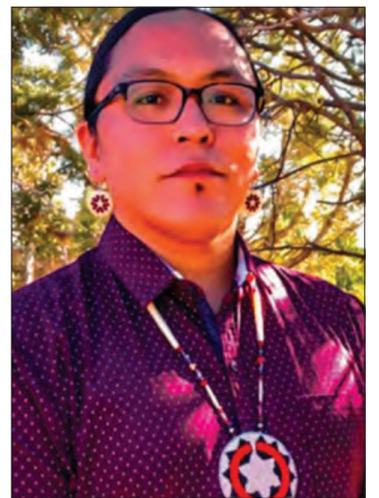
My name is Michael Nick King. I am an enrolled member of the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe. I also am Diné (Navajo) and Southern Ute. I come from a small community called Navajo Mountain, Utah.

What inspired you to run for such a position?

I wanted to run for my tribal council because as students, we have always been taught that we are the leaders and that we should return to our homes and contribute to our tribal communities after receiving a degree in our special fields. I have always wanted to help contribute to my community, but I wanted to be sure I had the knowledge and credentials to be qualified for the position. I've always wanted to help better my tribal community and my people. We always want to see opportunities and successes come to our people; And rather than hope and want these things, I put my aspirations for the tribe to action and decided that if there is to be change for the better, that I would have to step up and be that change.

What are your thoughts on young educated Indigenous professionals stepping up and taking active roles in their tribal councils and/or tribal communities?

I have seen many educated Native professionals encouraged to continue onwards in higher education. We are showered with messages of encouragement in obtaining a university degree and seek higher education. Young Indigenous professionals and graduates return home to help their respective communities only to be discouraged and turned away. That is the reality but those who have the strength will persevere. Despite the discouragement



Indian Leader

Michael King was recently elected president of the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe.

from some, I overlooked it because I saw the overall picture of what I can strive to do to help my tribal community as a whole. I commend every Indigenous student out there, because it is our education that is a valuable asset that will help us to achieve greater things for our tribal communities when we put that knowledge along with our aspirations into action. It is so reassuring to see educated Indigenous taking active roles in their tribal communities. It reassures to our communities the wellbeing and status of tribes for the future generations to come.

Any words of advice for current students looking to go into a similar career path?

Some advice, I would say keep going! If you have the will and the passion to want to achieve or do something, I say do it. It's up to you. It starts with you. You have more control and power than you realize to make a difference for the better.

This article is from The Indian Leader. It was posted on Dec. 9 at theindianleader.com.

Celebrated WWII unit included 1,500 Native Americans

'The Liberator'
animated miniseries
now on Netflix

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

One of the U.S. Army's most successful fighting units in World War II was also one of its most racially integrated.

The 45th Infantry Division had three regiments that consisted of Mexican Americans, Southwestern cowboys and at least 1,500 Native Americans from 50 tribes. Historians say most of the young men were from Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Oklahoma.

The division would be known as the Thunderbirds because they went into battle with the image on the shoulder of their uniform. The thunderbird was considered a supernatural entity that protected humans from evil spirits and exacted vengeance on enemies.

Gen. George S. Patton took note of the Thunderbirds, calling them "one of the



The animated miniseries "The Liberator" is streaming on Netflix.

Netflix screenshot

best, if not the best division in the history of American arms."

Patton took note because they endured

500-plus days of combat in less than two years – from Italy to France to the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp.

Historians say they went through some of the most grueling battles of the war. They'd become one of the most decorated American combat units of World War II.

The Thunderbirds are the subject of a four-part adult animated miniseries on Netflix called "The Liberator." It premiered on Veterans Day – Nov. 11, 2020. The cast includes Native American actors.

The miniseries follows the division through battles across Sicily, Italy, France and into Germany. It is based on the book by author Alex Kershaw.

A Smithsonian Magazine review describes it as a cross between "Band of Brothers" and "A Scanner Darkly."

"The miniseries uses animation to tell the real-life story of Felix Sparks, a company commander who eventually rose through the division ranks, and the experiences of the fictional Sgt. Samuel Coldfoot and Cpl. Able Gomez, two composite stand-ins for the Indigenous and Mexican American soldiers, respectively, who made up the bulk of the

Thunderbird Division," the review said.

Kershaw said "The Liberator" adds a different racial dimension to World War II, because "when you watch it, a lot of the time you're looking at a Native American and a Mexican American."

One real life Native American that Kershaw writes about in his book is a Choctaw sergeant named Van Barfoot.

In May 1944, Barfoot singlehandedly took out three machine gun nests and captured 17 German soldiers. He turned back a counterattack of three Nazi Tiger tanks by destroying a lead vehicle with a bazooka. He would later be given the Congressional Medal of Honor and was commissioned as a second lieutenant for his service.

Kershaw said the Thunderbirds broke through the Siegfried Line and entered Germany in 1945. They fought in the battles of Aschaffenburg and Nuremberg, and were ordered to march to Berchtesgaden to capture Nazi leader Adolf Hitler at his alpine retreat. But they would be ordered instead to go to Dachau.

For more, go to netflix.com and search "The Liberator."



An image from a scene in "The Liberator."

Netflix screenshot

Wes Studi named one of the 25 greatest actors of the century by The New York Times

FROM NATIVE NEWS ONLINE

Wes Studi (Cherokee) was named on Sunday to The New York Times' prestigious "25 Greatest Actors of the 21st Century (So Far)" list.

Studi comes in at number 19 on the list. The Times writes about the award-winning actor:

"Wes Studi has one of the screen's most arresting faces — jutting and creased and anchored with the kind of penetrating eyes that insist you match their gaze. Lesser directors like to use his face as a blunt symbol of the Native American experience, as a mask of nobility, of suffering, of pain that's unknowable only because no one has asked the man wearing it. In the right movie, though, Studi doesn't just play with a character's facade; he peels its layers. A master of expressive opacity, he shows you the mask and what lies beneath, both the thinking and the feeling."

Studi, who grew up in Tahlequah, Okla., is known for his portrayal of Native Americans in a way that forever shattered age-old stereotypes in the movie industry. Breaking new ground, he brought fully developed Native American characters to the screen, and then took it a step further by



Wes Studi gives his acceptance speech after receiving an Honorary Oscar on Oct. 27, 2019, at the Governors Awards in Hollywood, California.

A.M.P.A.S.

highlighting the success of Native Americans in non-traditional roles.

Throughout his 30-plus-year career he's won numerous awards, including several

First Americans in the Arts awards and the 2009 Santa Fe Film Festival Lifetime Achievement Award.

In October 2019, Studi became the

first American Indian actor to receive an Academy Honorary Award at the annual Governors Awards in Los Angeles.

"I'd simply like to say, it's about time," Studi said upon receiving the Oscar. "It's been a wild and wonderful ride, and I'm really proud to be here tonight as the first Indigenous Native American to receive an Academy Award. It's a humbling honour to receive an award for something I love to do."

He became only the second Indigenous person ever to receive an Oscar. Singer/songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie shared an Oscar for best original song for "Up Where We Belong" for 1982's "An Officer and a Gentleman".

In February 2018, Studi, a Vietnam vet, was invited to present at the 90th Academy Awards, where he introduced a video montage of military movies as a tribute to U.S. veterans. He is a passionate advocate for American Indian issues and a leader in promoting and preserving Indigenous languages.

Studi's credits include 1990's "Dances with Wolves," 1992's "The Last of the Mohicans," 1993's "Geronimo: An American Legend," 2005's "The New World," 2009's "Avatar" and 2017's "Hostiles."

Native American Media Alliance partners with Netflix for relief grants

BY SHARAREH DRURY
The Hollywood Reporter

The Native American Media Alliance has partnered with Netflix to establish the Native Americans in the Entertainment Industry COVID-19 Relief Fund, which will provide over 200 grants in the amount of \$2,000 to eligible Native people in above the line and below the line positions who apply.

The fund intends to assist Native

Americans working in film and television who have lost jobs and income due to halted production and other challenges in the industry as a result of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

"Native Americans in entertainment have been hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. A lot of productions have been shut down and are slowly beginning to open, but that comes with challenges as many jobs are still not available. Many Native American crew members, assistants, and other workers, who

have been living paycheck to paycheck, are struggling to maintain basic living standards and are not able to find work," Ian Skorodin, director of strategy for the Native American Media Alliance, said in a statement. "This new program will help our community by providing some relief for those in need."

Native Americans interested in requesting funds can go to nama.media/covid-19-relief-fund for instructions on how to apply.

Netflix has previously announced a

\$150 million relief fund for out-of-work production professionals, including the hundreds of thousands of crew and cast without jobs. Separately, Netflix CEO Reed Hastings and his wife Patty Quillin have donated \$30 million to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, a nonprofit organization started by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that is working on life-saving immunization programs to fight COVID-19.

EBCI purchases Caesars Southern Indiana

FROM LOUISVILLE BUSINESS FIRST

ELIZABETH, Ind. — Caesars Southern Indiana, located in Elizabeth, Indiana, will be under new management in 2021.

Caesars Entertainment Inc., the casino's parent company, announced in a news release Dec. 24 it would sell the facility to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians for \$250 million.

The release continues: In addition, at

the closing of the transaction, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians will enter into a new lease with year one annual rent payments of \$32.5 million with VICI Properties Inc., who maintains ownership of the real estate of the property. As a result of this transaction, Caesars annual payments to VICI Properties under the Regional Master Lease will decline by \$32.5 million upon closing of the transaction.

Tom Reeg, CEO of Caesars Entertainment Inc., said in the release that expanding the company's relationship with

the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians was an exciting development since the two entities first came together as partners in 1996.

"We have admired their growth and the success of their properties, we look forward to increasing our relationship by extending the Caesars brand and Caesars Rewards loyalty program to them at Caesars Southern Indiana," Reeg said in a news release.

Richard Sneed, principal chief of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, which is based in Cherokee, North Carolina, said the

purchase of Caesars Southern Indiana marks the beginning of an exciting new future.

"We are pleased to build upon our longstanding partnership with Caesars as we look to advance our interests in commercial gaming in the coming years," Sneed said in the release.

New Marvel heroes battle low representation of Native Americans in comics

BY JOHNNY MESSIHA AND
MCKENZIE ALLEN-CHARMLEY
Cronkite News (Arizona)

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — Asgard, Wakanda, Xandar and other intergalactic empires are well-known to comic book fans, but a new comic is hoping to bring readers back to Earth to learn about Indigenous heroes.

Penned by Native American artists and writers, "Marvel's Voices: Indigenous Voices #1" was released Nov. 18, to the delight of Native Americans who feel underrepresented in the comic book universe.

The new release features several new Indigenous heroes and address their involvement in X-Men stories.

Keith Jim, a Navajo comic book artist who became interested in comics at an early age, is proud to see Native Americans breaking through into the superhero world.

"Sometimes I feel like we're forgotten. We are still here, so it's important to stand up," said Jim, who drew the comic book episode "The Heroes" in 2018.

Jim said Native American comic book characters usually are depicted in stereotypical ways, as they are reduced to complementary or side roles and are shown in feathers and loin cloths.

Anthony Thibodeau, a curator at the Museum of Northern Arizona who specializes in Indian arts and culture, said this misrepresentation of Native Americans is evident in mainstream popular culture.

"Any character that was a non-white character, they were usually represented in a very stereotypical way," Thibodeau said. "Either through their clothing, a lot of times how they talk or through their accent."

To eliminate these stereotypes, he said, it's important that the Marvel comics are created by Native Americans.

"I think it is a good step," Thibodeau said. "Especially having these writers and artists interpret these characters to bring a better sense of representation into mainstream pop culture than there has been."

Thibodeau and Jim hope that the new Marvel comic book heroes, including Echo, Mirage and Silver Fox, will help tear down the misrepresentation of Indigenous people.

"I can't wait for it to come out just to see how it should've been from the start, how Native Americans should have been represented from the start," Jim said.

Cory Bushnell owns Cab Comics, the closest comic book store to the Navajo Nation, where the new Marvel comic will be sold.

"It's something that we're excited to have in the store and excited to help encourage people to know about," Bushnell said. "It's encouraging people to learn more."

Bushnell and Jim both said that these new heroes will help Native Americans feel inspired. Kyle Charles, an Indigenous illustrator for "Marvel's Voices: Indigenous Voices," already received support from Indigenous women for his depictions of the Marvel hero "Dani" Moonstar, a member of the Cheyenne Nation who was introduced in 1982.

"I hope they (women) get inspired or they feel empowered. I hope they get whatever they need out of it, even if it's just to escape," Charles said in an interview with the Canadian Press. "The most important thing to me is them seeing this and saying, 'That's me, I am that character.'"



Marvel

Marvel released "Marvel's Voices: Indigenous Voices #1" in November.

‘Nightfall, The Novel’

Editor’s note: Seminole artist and writer Elgin Jumper is working on a novel. Here is an excerpt from chapter one, which includes a poem.

BY ELGIN JUMPER

A Prose Poem Before the Regaling(s)

My uncle and I were wagoners, in that we journeyed in a Wagoner, yep, that’s how we rolled, and this is the chronicle of that great wandering, an unfolding of the heart, if you will, and yet, very-much an enlightening trek as we ascended the Florida peninsula. Furthermore, we rode too the orange tail of a shooting star, glittering gold. O’er the night, you might say. At times it seemed we could’ve rode with the mounted Seminole warriors of old, in dreams and visions, visions and dreams, galloping into the storms of life. And we could imagine an ancient Florida too, sans Turnpikes, Interstate Highways, and all manner of modern civilization, if need be. We could imagine spirits swimming like playful otters in Florida waters, and fiery lightning flashing forth from mystical eyes in our mythologies. We were reservationers, as well, since we lived our lives on reservations. There are many reservations in this country, as you know. We were emissaries from the Seminole people. Such histories. Such stories. And yet, distilled even further, I was compelled at this time to find a better road of dreams by a past of wrong paths, which I had danced across in one or another, with all kinds of dancers, on the way to ruin. I spoke in a monstrous little voice of poetry, too, with hope, with faith, crying, “Unconquered! Unconquered! Grandfather of All Things! Dost thou help me to understand? Dost thou take me to the rivers? Dost

thou take me to the historic places of the people?” Yes, we were Wagoners, in that we were on a quest in a Wagoner, my uncles. It was a light seinna-colored ride, tricked-out, “Seminole Style,” heartily, with sounds and speakers n’er before seen on any reservation. And it was to have been a mere matter of days, two at most, for that was the plan, but it went beyond that into uncharted waters, into uncharted lands of the imagination and creativity. But we could see the approaching future and history, all at once. We could feel unmistakable change and sense it, as a brace of heatwaves upon the oncoming roads, no mirages, only visions and dreams, dreams and visions, and stories leading us on like a roadmap, from the reservation homes and streets of our hearts and minds, all the way to Saint Augustine, where the tire meets the road. So I regaled my uncle with stories of the modern-day Everglades, tis strange, a picture of indigenous outlaws, like light rain here and there, word pictures, birds of a feather in any kind of weather - Together, you see. And everything focused on the one point in the future when we would pray in the luminosity of bygone days. Oh ply me with music in later days, riding into the orange-red sunset someday, just prior to Nightfall. Even so, the road trip was quite conducive to personal growth, as you shall see, for there were many questions. “How shall I proceed?” a voice cried out from the wilderness. It’s Philosophy. Struggles. Ultimately it’s the philosophy of the machinery that becomes it’s own poetry, it’s own truth. And still, the sun arises amidst a rainy dawn. And yet, I

like it like this, that time in the morning, when you’re questioning, utilizing the Socratic Method, perhaps. When poems appear as prose. When white doves flutter forth from the Native American churches of nature, after the long years of grief, long after the sorrows of Seminole Wars, and the hideous crash, on into creative passions.

— John Night

CHAPTER ONE Native Poems

My name is John Night, Seminole, and in the mid-1960s I was born over to a hospital in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and was brought home in an old Indian car, dented, nary a floorboard for the most part, the make and model which quite eludes me at present, and as an adolescent later on I was much-inclined to reading, writing and drawing, attended public schools right down the road from the res along with everyone else, which is where I derived a working knowledge of the American-English lingo, and even held discourse in the Miccosukee terminologies, taking after my parents, you see.

However, much to my bewilderment, I had my freedom taken from me for a time, as an adult, yes, all due to alcohol, of which I am never proud, surviving county jails, and even “the big house” though I’ve had many a harrowing adventure and fearful frolic while commencing it. Oh, it’s quite a story, as you will see, and, of course, I’ll paint in more color, and background for you, as we go, among other things, so never you worry, hear, because I gotcha.

I was back a couple of days from, ohh, let’s just say from “state service” shall we, when I went over to the new rez and asked Uncle Wilbur to drive me up to Saint Augustine, as I had been powerful compelled to fulfill a promise I’d made while still inside. I had been away for two-years, unfortunately, only seeing my family, and friends every now and again out on the visiting park. Such sadness.

But don’t cha know while inside, I’d been reading and writing and studying up, working on myself, gathering my thoughts and researching Seminole history, so I wouldn’t be forced to repeat it. And, oh yeah, having the most profoundest of visions and dreams direct from Seminole history, and being born again as a Native American, which I’m not afeared to say, had made a deep and lasting impact upon me, more so than any monochromatic tattoo ever could.

I had a little money saved up, so that part was okay. And the way I was feeling was there really wasn’t anything that could’ve held me back. No, I didn’t see it as such. There was a prayer that had to be said, though, and so, I had to find a ride to make it to Saint Augustine. Uncle Wilbur had written regularly, and he knew about my plight, my preoccupation with the American Indian Movement, but he didn’t know I was steppin’ to him for help.

“Uncle,” I said, “I really need to get to Saint Augustine, to the old fort there, just something I have to do.”

“John,” Uncle Wilbur said. He had been previously undergoing a sunny disposition. “Hey, hey, hey, you’re catching me way off guard - I hear you, but I can’t drop everything, and measure out a couple of days to take you up. It’s not that easy.”

“Come on, you said when you were young there was all them things you wished you’d followed through with. How you regretted not doing certain things.”



Paintings by Seminole artist and writer Elgin Jumper.

Elgin Jumper (2)

He sighed and groaned. “I just got the Wagoner back from outta the shop, and now I can’t see us driving all those miles it’s going to take. To Saint Augustine?”

“It’s what I haveta do,” I said, “I’m pretty sure we could just borrow an old Indian car with the parts falling off by the wayside, them wheels screaming for mercy. Someone must have one. What do you say? It can even look like a tired old horse what rode in with the Conquistadors. But getting to Saint Augustine, that’s the main idea.”

He frowned. “It’s a hard question what you’re asking of me, nephew. And I know what we talked about, what I said. Them stories we shared. It’s still a hard question. How do I deliver?”

“You can deliver by delivering me to Saint Augustine.”

My uncle sighed and groaned again. I said, “Haven’t you ever wanted to follow through on something? And felt real bad about not doing so?”

“There’s an art to it, kid, to that kind of stuff, and I’m not a young man, anymore.” He smiled slightly. Then my uncle hung his head, grimaced, and exhaled, finally relenting. “Okay,” he said softly. “Okay. We’re family.”

“Please, just give me a chance,” I said. “I have to go there. It’s important.”

“Okay, let’s take a road trip, John,” he urged. “Go home, pack a bag, if you haven’t already. Just remember, you have to change or go back. Be creative. Get serious.”

Whew! So that was one obstacle down, a major one. Thank the Maker of Breath. But who else could I have asked? Who else could’ve taken me? I thanked him, and went home to where mom was cooking dinner. The smell was amazing. I called to mom that I was home and dipped into my room and started putting clothes and other items into a red duffel bag. I made sure to include my notebook, sketchpads, pens, pencils, notepads, small plastic containers for mementos, favorite cds, and my copy of Black Elk Speaks, stories from a venerated holy man.

My mind was racing across a gazillion subjects. I was going over things, over some unexpected concerns, processing. While still inside and since I was ten or something, I had written poems, plays, short stories, essays, etc, trying different things. While inside I kept it on a grand scale, just to get

me through. And so, one miraculous day in the prison library, I discovered a book of Native American Prayers, so that was quite memorable. What would Russell Means do? A blitzkrieg of thoughts.

Back in the day, when I was twelve-years old I read this story to a close school friend: “So there’s this young man, and a young woman, but from different tribes, and these tribes are at war. The young man has momentous questions and dilemmas. But it’s this war that has brought them together, that’s swept them up into this epic adventure.

“On some mornings, even though they’re constantly on the move, she tells him her people’s Creation Myths, and he earnestly loves to listen to them. They are so illuminated by their love, regardless of the conflict raging around them, the devastating battles, the sad losses, the hair-breadth escapes, the chaos.

“Everyday I thank the Great Spirit for you,” he says to her one morning.

“Nothing shall keep us apart,” she responds. “Nothing.”

They embrace.

Well, more of an outline, if you want to get technical here, but yeah, I wrote that one back when I was a little guy imbued with dreams and aspirations, so that I would hide myself away on most days, and become what I’d always been, a writer, to think up and write stories as if obtained from the ancients what had been here long ago.

“I like that one,” my school friend had said. “Thank you.”

Meanwhile, I was constantly thinking I had to get to Saint Augustine, the historic fortress, a heartfelt prayer, ancestors. Armies of thought. Yet how to achieve it? What’s the plan? I knew I had to make the trip right after that series of visions and dreams. And I knew another series that I wasn’t going to be the same again afterwards. I didn’t know how, I didn’t what the future held, but somehow, with hope, I would be changed. It had been a long time coming. And if I tarried, utter disaster, and the return of the vicious cycle of the vicious circle.

Pulled abruptly from my thoughts, I heard my mom calling me for dinner, so I quick cleaned up, splashing water like an ol’ river otter, and went out and sat down with her at the dining-room table. My mother took my hand and I prayed:
Dear Maker of Breath,

We are grateful for families. Let us work ever-hard in our endeavors, for we know then that they shall be more appreciated afterwards. Let us persevere in goals and dreams. Let us keep close. Light our souls with your Love, so that we may see and follow our true paths. Sho-na-bi-sha.

AMEN

In between bites and sips of Seminole cuisine and dinner conversation, I said, “So I’m figuring we’ll be gone for like a couple two, three days, mom.”

“Oh okay. So there’s no changing your mind about it, huh?” she said. “I urge you - pursue art, pursue writing.”

“Yes. It’s been on my heart and mind for so long now. There has to be a better way. I have to start.”

“Good,” she said. She smiled, and it was mixed with love and concern. “Your art, your poetry, take it further.”

She had figured out I was set on the trip, whereas at first she had cautioned against making the road trip at all, especially so soon after my release back into the free world, what with the parole an all. Yes, parole. But thereupon she soon recognized the situation and relented, soon as I came up with the story that I had managed to clear it with the authorities. So the road trip was set, and so, it had to be made.

“It took some convincing for Uncle Wilbur to finally say okay,” I revealed. “He says we’re going in his old Wagoner, which apparently he’s just had tricked out, you know, souped up?”

“Oh okay,” my mother said.
“It’s either that or nope, na-da, zilch, so ...”

“Yes, yes, a fine car. Powerful magic. You’re in for a real treat.” My mother giggled playfully.

Thus I finished my meal, gave mom a hug, and retired to my room, where I soon picked up a framed photograph of dear mom and examined the image. I was thinking of the time when she took me fishing in Big Cypress. It was just her and me, because my parents had split up again for some months. And we didn’t know a thing about rods and reels, but she had borrowed them all the same from grampa, and so, we spent a memorable day filled with merriment at a little pond in Big Cypress.

Christmas traditions in Indian Country

BY DENNIS ZOTIGH

The introduction of Christianity to the original peoples of the Americas can be controversial in Native circles. Europeans brought Christianity to this half of the world and imposed it on Native communities, knowingly replacing existing spiritual beliefs with the beliefs taught in the Bible. Cruelty and brutality often accompanied the indoctrination of Native peoples. Yet it is also true that some tribes, families, and individuals accepted the Bible and Jesus’ teachings voluntarily.

Music played an important part in converting Native people, establishing their practice of worship, and teaching them how to celebrate the Christmas season. Perhaps the earliest North American Christmas carol was written in the Wyandot language of the Huron-Wendat people. Jesus Ahatonnia (“Jesus, He is born”)—popularly known as Noël huron or the Huron Carol—is said by oral tradition to have been written in 1643 by the Jesuit priest Jean de Brébeuf. The earliest known transcription was made in the Huron-Wendat settlement at Lorette, Quebec, in the 1700s.

During the 1920s, the Canadian choir director J. E. Middleton rewrote the carol in English, using images from the Eastern Woodlands to tell the Christmas story: A lodge of broken bark replaces the manger, the baby Jesus is wrapped in rabbit skin, hunters take the place of the shepherds, and chiefs bring gifts of fox and beaver furs. A much more accurate translation by the linguist John Steckley, an adopted member of the Huron-Wendat Nation of Loretteville, makes clear that the carol was written not only to teach early Catholic converts within the Huron Confederacy the story of Jesus’ birth, but also to explain its significance and to overturn earlier Native beliefs.

Here are the first verses of the carol in Wyandot and Steckley’s complete English translation:



“Hogan in the Snow,” ca. 1985. Painted by Robert Draper (Diné [Navajo], 1938–2000). Chinle, Navajo Nation, Arizona.

Estenniayon de tsonwe Iesous ahatonnia om’ awatewa nd’ oki n’ onyouandaskwaentak ennonchien eskwatrihotat n’onyouandiyonrachatha Iesous ahatonnia, ahatonnia. Iesous ahatonnia.

Ayoki onkiennhache eronhiayeronnon iontonk ontatiande ndio sen tsatonnharonnion Warie om’ awakweton ndio sen tsatonnharonnion Iesous ahatonnia, ahatonnia. Iesous ahatonnia.

Have courage, you who are humans; Jesus, he is born
Behold, the spirit who had us as prisoners has fled
Do not listen to it, as it corrupts the spirits of our minds
Jesus, he is born

They are spirits, sky people, coming with a message for us
They are coming to say, Rejoice (Be on top of life)
Marie, she has just given birth. Rejoice
Jesus, he is born

Jesus, he is born.

All throughout Indian Country, Native people have gathered in churches, missions, and temples to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ by singing carols and hymns in their Native languages. In some churches, the story of Jesus’ birth is recited in Native languages. Some Native churches host nativity plays using Native settings and actors to re-enact the birth of Jesus Christ. Among Catholics, Christmas Eve Mass traditionally begins in Indian communities at midnight and extends into the early hours of Christmas Day. In tipis, hogans, and houses, Native American Church members also hold Christmas services, ceremonies that begin on Christmas Eve and go on all night until Christmas morning.

In contemporary times, traditional powwow singing groups have rearranged Christmas songs to appeal to Native audiences. A humorous example is Warscout’s NDN 12 Days of Christmas, from their album Red Christmas. Native solo artists also perform Christmas classics in Native languages. Rhonda Head (Cree), for example, has recorded Oh Holy Night, and Jana Mashpee (Lumbee and Tuscarora) Winter Wonderland sung in Ojibwe.

Native communities host traditional tribal dances and powwows on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Among the Pueblo Indians of the Southwest special dances take place, such as buffalo, eagle, antelope, turtle, and harvest dances. The Eight Northern Pueblos perform Los Matachines—a special dance-drama mixing North African Moorish, Spanish, and Pueblo cultures—takes place on Christmas Eve, along with a pine-torch procession.

For Native artisans, this is traditionally the busy season as they prepare special Christmas gift items. Artists and craftsmen and women across the country create beadwork, woodwork, jewelry, clothing, basketry, pottery, sculpture, paintings, leatherwork, and feather work for special Christmas sales and art markets that are open to the public. For the 15 years before

2020, the National Museum of the American Indian held its annual Native Art Market in New York and Washington a few weeks before Christmas. This year, the in-person event was replaced by an online program of interviews with artists from earlier Art Markets, Healing through Native Creativity.

In many communities and homes, Christian customs are interwoven with Native culture as a means of expressing Christmas in a uniquely Native way. The importance of giving is a cultural tradition among most tribes. Even in times of famine and destitution, Native people have made sure their families, the old, and orphans were taken care of. This mindset prevails into the present. Gift-giving is appropriate whenever a tribal social or ceremonial gathering takes place.

In the same way, traditional Native foods are prepared for this special occasion. Salmon, walleye, shellfish, moose, venison, elk, mutton, geese, rabbit, wild rice, collards, squash, pine nuts, red and green chile stews, pueblo bread, piki bread, and bannock (fry bread) are just a few of the things that come to mind.

According to the Urban Indian Health Commission, nearly seven out of every ten American Indians and Alaska Natives—2.8 million people—live in or near cities, and that number is growing. During the Christmas holidays, many urban Natives travel back to their families, reservations, and communities to reconnect and reaffirm tribal bonds. They open presents and have big family meals like other American Christians.

Dennis W. Zotigh (Kiowa/San Juan Pueblo/Santee Dakota Indian) is a member of the Kiowa Gourd Clan and San Juan Pueblo Winter Clan and a descendant of Sitting Bear and No Retreat, both principal war chiefs of the Kiowas. He works as a writer and cultural specialist at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. A longer version of this article is at the Smithsonian Magazine website: smithsonianmag.com.

Sports



Seminoles help spark fast start for Moore Haven Middle School basketball

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

CLEWISTON — It didn't take long for Seminole players to make an impact on the Moore Haven Middle School basketball teams.

Seminole players helped pave the way to victory as both the boys and girls teams started the season 2-0 with wins against LaBelle and Clewiston.

On the boys side, Randall Billie is off to a fast start on a squad that also includes Kingston Billie, Keenan Jones and Noah Osceola. Randall Billie, an eighth grader, poured in a team-high 12 points in the opener against LaBelle on Dec. 7.

Two days later Billie again proved to be tough for opponents to contain with his speed, scoring touch and strong rebounding. He scored a team-high 10 points, including all six of the team's points in the first half, which ended with Clewiston ahead 14-6.

Billie sparked a second half surge. He scored a couple baskets after snagging offensive rebounds to knot the game at 14-14.

Moore Haven seized the lead for good when Billie blocked a shot on defense and then assisted on a 3-pointer from sixth grader Kingston Billie, whose hot hand in the fourth quarter stamped an exclamation point on the win. All seven of his points came in the final quarter as Moore Haven emerged with a 30-22 win.

In the LaBelle game, Kingston Billie, a forward, also had an outstanding game at both ends of the court with a team-high six rebounds and a 3-pointer. Keenan Jones, an eight-grade forward, was also a force on offense and defense as he grabbed five boards and scored five points.

The Moore Haven girls' perfect start was due in big part from eighth graders Preslynn Baker and Willo James. Baker, a guard, began the season with a huge game against LaBelle. She scored a team-high 14 points,



Moore Haven Middle School's Willo James (35) battles for a rebound in the Lady Terriers' victory against Clewiston Middle on Dec. 9 in Clewiston.

grabbed six rebounds, dished out nine assists and made four steals. Meanwhile, James, a center, also produced a memorable opener as she notched a double-double with 13 points and 14 rebounds.

Both players also shined in a 30-22 win against Clewiston. Baker led the team with 10 points while James contributed eight points and five rebounds.

Baker and James are among six Seminole players on the squad, which includes Aaliyah Billie, Tahniah Billie, Jayleigh Braswell and Sally Osceola.

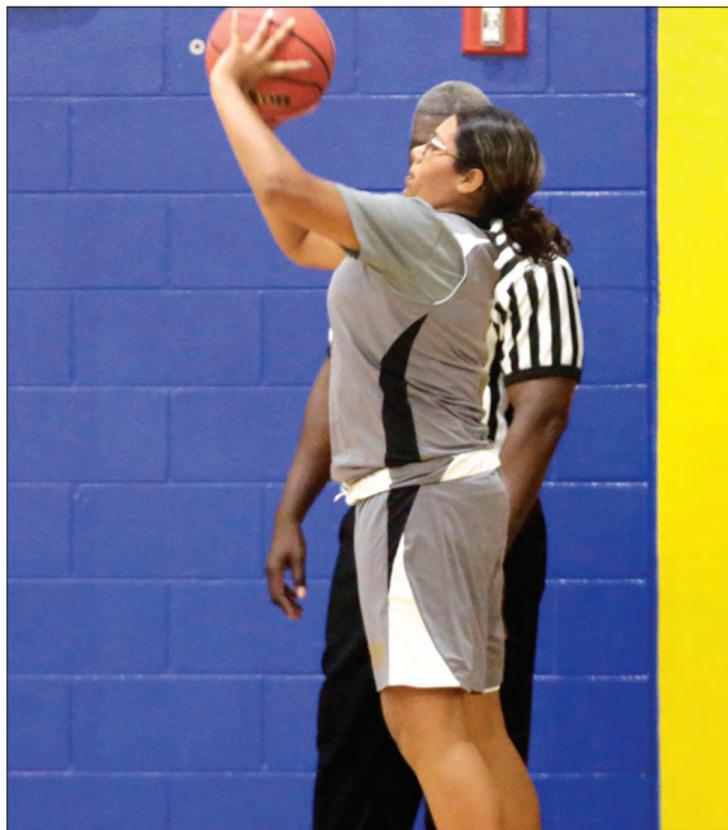
Moore Haven's season for both the boys and girls will be brief; only six games are on the schedule. Some players attend Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School, which is not offering sports at this time as classes are conducted virtually.



Moore Haven Middle School's Kingston Billie (15) and Keenan Jones provide solid defense against Clewiston on Dec. 9 at Clewiston Middle School.



Moore Haven Middle School's Kingston Billie makes a 3-pointer against Clewiston.



Moore Haven Middle School's Preslynn Baker lines up a 3-point shot in the Lady Terriers' victory against Clewiston Middle School on Dec. 9 in Clewiston.



Moore Haven Middle School's Randall Billie dribbles past a Clewiston defender.

Tiger Youngman makes lasting impression with LPHS football

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

Ask Carl White about standout lineman Tiger Youngman and the first words from the Lake Placid High School football coach is that he wished Youngman could play for the Dragons for another year or two.

"I wish I could have him longer," White said.

Lake Placid concluded its 2020 season in mid-November with a playoff loss to Lemon Bay that left the Dragons with a 2-7 record. The wins came against Evangelical Christian-Fort Myers and St. John Neumann-Naples.

Youngman, the only Seminole on the squad, no doubt could be categorized as a late bloomer considering how he stepped up his game as a senior and made an immediate impact right from the start of the season.

"He was a phenomenal force for us," White said. "It didn't take long for him to become the heartbeat of our team. He came ready to go every single day."

◆ See YOUNGMAN on page 6B

Pandemic halts plenty of college sports

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

The challenges to play sports for some colleges continue to persist during the ongoing pandemic.

While some conferences, especially those with lucrative broadcasting contracts, have played football, basketball and other sports to some degree of normalcy, other institutions have yet to give the green light for games to resume.

Here's an update as of mid-December on programs that include Seminole athletes or others with connections to the tribe:

Nova Southeastern University women's basketball: Skyla Osceola (Hollywood Reservation)

No games played. NSU belongs to the Sunshine State Conference, which announced Dec. 10 that basketball would be postponed until at least Feb. 15, 2021. NSU's last game was March 3, 2020. This season's team also includes recent transfer Kyarah Grant (Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians).

Hillsborough Community College women's basketball: Tiana Stubbs (Hollywood Reservation)

No games played.

Florida SouthWestern State College women's basketball: Alena Stockton (Big Cypress Reservation, former Ahfachkee School student)

FSW went 5-0 in scrimmages against Keiser, Florida College, Southeastern, St. Petersburg and Miami-Dade in October and November. FSW is slated to open its regular season Jan. 16 against Florida State College at Jacksonville in Orlando. Home opener in Fort Myers is Jan. 29 against 2019 national junior college champion Gulf Coast State.

North Park University men's basketball: Silas Madrigal (Brighton Reservation/Okeechobee, former Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School student)

The team has been practicing, but no games played.

Oklahoma City University men's basketball: Curtis Osceola (Oklahoma)

No games played. The school's athletics are scheduled to start practices and competitions Jan. 15, 2021.

Florida Gulf Coast University softball: Ahnie Jumper (Big Cypress Reservation)

The Eagles' fall ball season was reduced to practices and an intrasquad game. The regular season is scheduled to start March 13 against Stetson in DeLand.

Florida Southern College women's volleyball: Raeley Matthews (Former Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School student)

No games played. The Sunshine State Conference cancelled all conference matches and championships for fall sports, including volleyball.



Adryauna Baker, who leads the Okeechobee High School girls basketball team in several categories, drives toward the basket in the Brahms game against Lincoln Park Academy on Dec. 17 in Okeechobee.

Ontario Human Rights Commission to look at anti-Indigenous racism in lacrosse

BY JOHN CHIDLEY-HILL
The Canadian Press

The Ontario (Canada) Human Rights Commission says it plans to address the issue of anti-Indigenous racism in lacrosse.

The commission announced Dec. 1 that it will meet with Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation, the Ontario Lacrosse Association, and the Canadian Lacrosse Association in the coming months to discuss how to address systemic racism against Indigenous lacrosse players.

"Lacrosse has long been a way for Indigenous communities to connect with each other in a spirit of trust, respect and honour," said OHRC interim chief commissioner Ena Chadha. "But connections with non-Indigenous communities are quickly broken and trust is destroyed when they are fraught with harassment and abuse."

"Our goal is to build relationships that unite and uphold reconciliation, and encourage all to proactively address racism."

The commission said it hopes the meetings can happen in the late winter or early spring in order to honour a request by Six Nations of the Grand River to hold them in person.

Lacrosse was played by Indigenous

people for hundreds of years before Europeans arrived in North America.

The sport holds a central role in the culture of the Haudenosaunee people, who are called the Iroquois in French or the Six Nations in English.

Mark Hill, elected chief of Six Nations of the Grand River, said that lacrosse is a "Haudenosaunee life essence."

"A gift from the Creator, lacrosse is the bridge that is meant to be shared with the world, in friendship, peace and unity," said Hill. "Our hope is that every man, woman and child that chooses to and wants to freely experience the thrill of playing the Creator's game can do so in a healthy environment."

The commission said Six Nations of the Grand River, the most heavily populated First Nation in Canada, wants the meetings to be in person so there can be full community representation, including elders.

The OHRC also said it will retain an expert Indigenous facilitator to support these discussions. The talks will start with concerns raised by members of the Six Nations lacrosse community as the first step in the important process of rebuilding trust, fostering accountability and promoting reconciliation.

Okeechobee High girls reach holiday break with near-perfect record

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

OKEECHOBEE — Besides trying to stay safe from the pandemic, the Okeechobee High School girls basketball players had plenty of things to work on during the summer.

Defense, cardio and team chemistry topped the Brahms' agenda. Their hard work has paid off. Through the first nine games of this season, the Brahms were undefeated.

A commitment to defense resulted in keeping opponents to 30 or fewer points in six of the first nine games.

Coach Jovanny Torres, now in his third year at the helm, said the team has far exceeded his expectations.

"We've locked in on defense. I don't know where it's coming from, but I love it. Our whole goal this summer was to play better defense," Torres said.

The team has received strong performances from a trio of Seminoles — junior Adryauna Baker and senior sisters Caylie and Haylie Huff — who each bring different strengths to the squad.

Baker, a starting guard who often leads the team's fast breaks, has picked up where she left off after an outstanding sophomore season. She plays travel ball for Chobee Nation and said her shooting improved during the summer, but she's also quick to point out that as a team, Okeechobee's defense is better than a year ago.

"That's what helped us get such a lead in our games," she said.

The chemistry factor has helped, too. It's a tighter team than in previous years.

"We're really a family; we're a bunch of sisters and we really trust each other with



The Seminole trio of, from left, Caylie Huff, Adryauna Baker and Haylie Huff, has helped the Okeechobee High School girls basketball team to a 9-1 record.

everything — defense and offense," Baker said.

In several games, Baker has been matched up against an opponent's top player, but it hasn't hampered her production. She has scored in double digits in six straight games, including a pair of 20-plus nights.

"She's leading the team in steals, assists, points and is second in rebounds. She's doing everything right now. I couldn't be more proud of her," Torres said.

He has similar sentiments about the Huffs.

As the only seniors this season, Caylie and Haylie had the senior night spotlight all to themselves. Senior nights are usually held at the end of regular seasons, but Okeechobee opted to honor the Huffs in the first game just to be on the safe side in case the season were to be shut down due to the pandemic.

A pregame ceremony with family and flowers marked their tributes.

After taking a couple years off from basketball, Haylie returned this season and has stepped up her game coming off the bench. She scored a season-high eight points in a win against Central-Fort Pierce.

"She's doing great for a girl who took two years off from basketball," Torres said. "She's working on her post moves. We're a small team and she's not so tall, but she definitely knows how to use her body and we definitely need that against a lot of teams."

Torres said box scores don't begin to tell the value in Haylie's game. Her strength doesn't come in numbers.

"If you look at it on paper, it doesn't look like she does much, but she's the one creating the space for them to rebound... she's making really good post moves and getting some of these bigger girls that we play into foul trouble, which helps us a lot," Torres said.

Caylie also is a valuable non-starter with a soft shooting touch.

"Caylie knows her role," Torres said. "It's kind of hard as a senior to come off the bench, but she's embraced that role. She comes in and she does her job. She shoots her 3s."

With a season abbreviated to 14 regular season games, Okeechobee won't be able to match its 20-win season from a year ago, but they're doing just about everything else to make sure it's a memorable season.

"We went to overtime in the first game, but since that game, they've been on a rampage," Torres said. "We're playing off our defense. We're getting steals and layups. It's finally all starting to come together. As a coach, I couldn't be more proud of them."

Any thoughts of an undefeated season ended Dec. 17 when undefeated state powerhouse Lincoln Park Academy-Fort Pierce dealt Okeechobee its first loss, 66-50, in the Brahms' final game before the holiday break.

Okeechobee's JV team, which is also enjoying a strong season, defeated Lincoln Park before the varsity game. The JV squad includes the tribe's Giselle Micco, who has played a couple varsity games, and Jana Johnson.



Okeechobee High's Caylie Huff defends a Lincoln Park player Dec. 17. In the background is a tribute to Caylie and her sister Haylie, the only seniors on the team.



The Okeechobee JV team, which includes Giselle Micco, left, and Jana Johnson, above, won its game against Lincoln Park Academy on Dec. 17.

After a year in Florida, Milan Schimmel settles into Division I action with Cincinnati

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

After averaging nearly 15 points per game last season for Eastern Florida State College in Melbourne, Milan Schimmel has moved up to NCAA Division I this season with the University of Cincinnati.

As of Dec. 22, Schimmel (Umatilla) has started five of the Bearcats' six games. She's averaging nearly 30 minutes per game, which is third highest on the squad.

She's averaging 4.8 points and 3.2 rebounds on a squad that relies on Lmar'l Thomas for much of its scoring. Thomas is averaging 28 points; the next closest player is averaging 8 points.

Schimmel scored eight points in her debut, a 73-67 win against Northern Kentucky. Since then, the Bearcats have

dropped five in a row.

Schimmel, a guard, had seven points against Marquette and a team-high four assists against East Carolina.

Cincinnati plays in the American Conference. The team will be in Florida twice in January. First, the Bearcats will face the University of Central Florida on Jan. 17 in Orlando. On Jan. 30, the Bearcats will be in Tampa to square off against the University of South Florida in Tampa.

Schimmel, from Oregon, is with her third team in as many years. She began her collegiate career at Hutchinson Community College in Kansas before transferring to Eastern Florida. She has two years of eligibility remaining.

She is the younger sister of former University of Louisville standouts Shoni and Jude Schimmel, who drew a huge following in Indian Country during their careers.



Milan Schimmel has moved up to NCAA Division I this season with the University of Cincinnati.

◆ YOUNGMAN From page 5B

Youngman's toughness was never in doubt. Despite playing part of the season with a shoulder injury, Youngman never wavered and never complained, White said.

"Tougher than nails," is how White describes the 5-10, 250-pound Youngman.

Youngman compiled impressive numbers with about 60 tackles and was among the team leaders in sacks.

"He made a name for himself," said White, who added that some colleges are interested in signing him. "Rightfully so. For

us, he was a fantastic defensive lineman."

Youngman also saw action on offense at fullback. He was used primarily as the lead blocker out the backfield. A highlight reel on the MaxPreps website shows Youngman consistently opening holes by outmuscling opponents. He also caught some passes and turned short receptions into big gains.

Youngman, son of Rita and Frank Youngman, not only made a good impression on the field, but off it as well.

"He was always great to be around. Very polite and well-mannered," White said.

Youngman's athletics career at LPHS isn't over yet. He's a first baseman and pitcher on the baseball team.

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