Brandon Bourassa strives to protect both humans and wildlife through his work. (Photo provided)

Bourassa the reptile wrangler

While most avoid run-ins with rattlesnakes and other venomous reptiles, Citizen Potawatomi Nation tribal member Brandon Bourassa seeks out animals many are too scared to approach. He, along with his wife Gwyn, owns and operates Bourassa Wildlife Consulting in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The couple serves as animal consultants on TV and movie sets across the state, ensuring the well-being of cast, crew and animals alike. The business provides income while they complete their undergraduate degrees in geography and biochemistry at the University of New Mexico.

“New Mexico is home to many incredible filming locations, but those locations pose some important considerations for productions to consider,” Bourassa Wildlife Consulting’s website noted. “The most important consideration for any film project is the safety of the cast and crew. . . . All venomous snakes are handled using the safest methods for both people and animals.”

Some of the major projects that Bourassa’s business contracted with include The Kid starring Chris Pratt, Paramount Network’s miniseries Waco, Netflix’s Chambers and more.

“I’ve always been a reptile nerd — that was from the beginning,” Bourassa said then laughed. He began handling wildlife in his youth and enjoyed opportunities to explore on his grandfather’s land in southern Portawatomi County.

“My grandpa, he’s always been interested in reptiles, too,” he said. “He’d take us out looking for rattlesnakes as a kid. He hunts them, which is a little different than what I do.”

Before he was old enough to work, Bourassa volunteered at the Bob Jenni Nature Center in Edmond, Oklahoma. He accepted his first job after high school at the Oklahoma City Zoo as a keeper in the children’s zoo. But for the past three years, he has traveled from set to set across New Mexico while juggling his undergraduate studies.

“In New Mexico, pretty much every production that’s shooting outside hires one of us because they’re shooting out there where there’s rattlesnakes, and most of those people are from (Los Angeles). And they’re very concerned about wildlife,” he explained.

Process

One of Bourassa Wildlife Consulting’s main goals includes ensuring that each film set is safe from potentially harmful animals.

“I usually look at the script and see where they’re going to be moving for the next scene, and that’s where I’ll go check for snakes,” he said. When he captures venomous snakes, he places them in a safe holding container to release back into the wild once production ends.

“Sometimes, if it’s a really impressive animal, I’ll keep it and use it for films,” he added. For example, Bourassa was able to provide a live rattlesnake for the recent filming of Netflix’s drama mystery Rattlesnake. Bourassa also takes steps to protect nature from potential human threats. According to the Bourassa Wildlife Consulting website, “In addition to temporarily removing venomous snakes from a location, we will also take measures to protect other wildlife from potential threats like vehicle and foot traffic.”

Balance

His job also offers an opportunity to educate others on the important roles animals like snakes and other predators play in overall environmental health.

“You can talk to them about the importance of the ecology and why we’re protecting them and not just killing them on-site,” Bourassa said. “I appreciate that about the film industry. Even though it can be pretty destructive in some situations and not so great for the environment, they at least hire us to protect some of these animals.”

Rattlesnakes help control small mammal populations like mice and rats.

“You don’t want to let rodents get out of control, especially where I am living in New Mexico, where we have a lot of viruses — the bubonic plague — so you want to be careful with killing predators,” he explained.

Through his work, Bourassa hopes more people and communities will think about the ecological impact all animals of prey have.

“The problem really is exaggerated. You always hear stories — they’re killing my cattle, but cattle are smart enough to walk away when they hear the rattles,” Bourassa said. “Maybe every now and then there’s an accident, but really, it is people that are dumb enough to mess with them.”

He noted some communities that once hosted rattlesnake roundups, which encourage the wholesale slaughter of rattlesnakes, have switched to celebrating the species.

“I think that’s the model for the future. You can still have your rattlesnake festivals and contribute to your economy, but you get the family together and enjoy the animals,” Bourassa said.

Future

The CPN tribal scholarship helps support Bourassa as he pursues a geography degree, which he plans to complete later this year.

“The scholarship has been extremely helpful,” Bourassa said. “I definitely wouldn’t be able to pay for college without it.”

He chose to study geography for the vast opportunities and fields of study under its umbrella.

“It’s anything from a spatial perspective,” he explained. “Lots of people go into urban geography or meteorology — those are all subfields of geography — but my interest is in wildlife conservation, and that’s definitely within the realm of geography and environmental studies also.”

After graduation, Bourassa hopes to continue working with animals, mainly crocodilians, and to have a more regular work schedule. However, his film industry interest may encourage Bourassa Wildlife Consulting to continue its operations.

“I got a lot of good stories out of it — getting to meet all these celebrities,” he said. “Which I’ve never really been super excited about celebrities, but it’s fun whenever you’re watching TV and you can say, ‘I worked with that guy!’”

Learn more about Bourassa Wildlife Consulting at bourassawildlife.com.
Language connections through the web

People from all Potawatomi tribes often use the Potawatomi Language (Bodewadmimwen) Facebook group as a space to ask questions about translations, references and lyrics. They also use it to discover and relearn their ancestors’ Potawatomi names. Assimilation into Western culture caused many Nishnabét names to disappear and naming ceremonies have become less frequent. As Tribal members return to their Indigenous roots, more seek out these links to their family history.

Here are a few stories of Potawatomi citizens connecting with each other and filling in gaps using social media.

**Fae Myers**

Growing up on the East Coast, Fae Myers’ connection to her Native heritage lacked the strength that comes with physical proximity. Toward the end of high school, she started to trace her DeGraff and Navarre family lineage back to Pierre Fanchette Navarre and Angélique Navarre, a French fur trader and his Potawatomi wife. Angélique’s Potawatomi name was Kishamakwe (Afternoon Woman).

“Learning the Potawatomi names of my family and ancestors as well as other history about my family allowed me to feel a lot more grounded in my roots,” Myers said.

While naming skipped a few generations in her family, the last four women on her maternal side have names, including herself. Her great-grandmother, also named Kishamakwe (Afternoon Woman); grandmother, Nadamegwe (Helping Woman); her mother, Miko-gikwe (Red Sky); and herself, Gise (Sun). She learned the names of a few other relatives through asking questions in the group.

“I got to see my great-grand a few times before she passed when I was 16, but between being 1,000 miles out and being a child when she was elderly, I never got a chance to truly know her,” Myers said.

“Learning their Potawatomi names not only placed them solidly in a Potawatomi context, but I guess what feels like a much more meaningful name. These are names that I feel describe their personhood, rather than a set of names picked at birth by chance. In a sense, it almost feels like they’re still here. Just the change in name makes me feel ever so slightly more connected to them,” Victoria Tshohl

Victoria Tshohl began researching her father’s side of the family, wanting to know more about the ancestors she never knew. She is a registered descendant of the Hannahville Indian Community in Michigan. Tshohl considers the Potawatomi language a large part of the culture, and online language resources provided a way to learn out of state. Living in Idaho, the Facebook group put her in touch with other Potawatomi with the same goals.

“As a physically disabled and chronically ill Potawatomi far from any physical tribal resources and people, I’m extremely appreciative for the online community and the help I was provided,” she said. “It means the world to me to still have a way to communicate with fellow Potawatomi about our language and history.”

Looking through public records and talking to family, she found the Potawatomi names of several of her relatives, beginning at her great-grandmother and continuing back. Tshohl asked the group about translating a few of the names. She wanted a more accurate spelling in particular, as the ones she already knew came directly from the census. Palebomuew, Wabaashegoqua and Ogemahgoshegoqua.

“It was great to get the translations and also see the bit of variation in them. And I will definitely return to those names and their translations as I learn more about our language, so I can learn how they break down,” Tshohl said. “And I’ll have a personal connection with which to affiliate the language, which is the best way to learn languages.”

With the new translations, she learned her great-great-grandparents were known as Pabamse (Chief Walks Here and There) and Waegisgoquv (First Rays of the Morning Sky Woman); and her great-grandmother’s name was Ogemahgoshegoqua (Chief Sky Woman).

“It was exhilarating to finally understand the Native names I had found in the Indian census records, but I haven’t gotten to do much beyond that since learning that information because life got busy,” Tshohl said. “It did make me feel more connected and inspired me to start reading some material from fellow Potawatomi authors, however.”

**Sandi Bolt Dailey**

Sandi Bolt Dailey grew up in Hominy, Oklahoma. As a Bruno, Vieux, DeLonais and Rhodd family descendant, Dailey knew she was Potawatomi. Throughout her life, she worked for the Osage Nation and attended Native events.

Dailey started researching her lineage in depth along with younger relatives throughout the last decade. Her aunt Ethel Bruno Shopwetuck named several family members, including Dailey’s mother, Flortine Victoria DeLonais Bolt. Bolt knew Shopwetuck wrote their names down, and Bolt kept them and her other cultural knowledge to herself.

“I didn’t have this for my kids, and I would have been more involved in it when they were growing up. … Now, I’m trying to play catch-up,” Dailey said.

Veta Bruno named Dailey Car-a-ta-Kie, Warm Wind Blowing Woman, during a family naming ceremony. Relatives she met while attending events and reconnecting told Dailey her mother’s name was Black Snake Woman. They said her paternal great-grandmother’s, Mary Shopwetuck DeLonais, Potawatomi name was the same. However, Bolt never knew she was named after her grandmother.

“(My mom) was the oldest granddaughter, and I know that’s why they named her that. And it just made me start crying,” Dailey said. “It still makes me cry, and I know she didn’t know that.”

Dailey reached out on the Bodewadmimwen Facebook group to find a proper spelling of it in Potawatomi in August 2019. She learned “Mihcikwee (Black Snake Woman)” from Justin Neely, the group’s administrator. She believes the name fits her mother.

“My mom (Bolt) was quiet and kind and never talked bad about anybody,” Dailey said. “Family members described Bolt’s grandmother, Mary Vieux Bruno, as kind and quiet as well. However, Dailey described other Bruno women as outspoken.

Dailey uncovered truths about her mother that Bolt did not know about herself. The ability to translate her mother’s name into Potawatomi warms Dailey’s heart.

“It just really makes me feel so much more connected,” she said.

Join the Potawatomi Language (Bodewadmimwen) Facebook group at cpn.new/langhpb.
Alex Kietzman’s research aims to detect vision impairment through photos

CPN member Alex Kietzman joined Dr. Bryan Shaw’s bioanalytical lab in 2018 as a sophomore at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. It matched his interest in the digital future of health care and allowed him to explore options for specializations in medical school. As an undergraduate researcher in the lab, Kietzman worked on the development of one of Shaw’s biggest projects as an associate professor, the ComputeR Assisted Detector of Leukocoria – or CRADLE – algorithm used for the “white eye detector” smartphone application available in both Android and Apple app stores.

A descendant of the Hughe and Lorraine families, Kietzman double majors in biochemistry and philosophy with a minor in biology. His aspirations include medical school. As part of the team continuing to develop and improve CRADLE, he worked on scientific research that turned into his first published study, Autonomous early detection of eye disease in childhood photographs appeared in the October 2019 edition of the publication Science Advances, and at that time, more than 10,000 devices had downloaded the app.

“The vast majority of people who are conducting research and writing papers are graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, or people who are currently just working with their Ph.D.,” Kietzman said. “It’s really exciting to be introduced to this sort of published community at a younger age.”

Kietzman also discussed the application and its updates in front of peers and professionals at the National Collegiate Research Conference at Harvard University in January 2019 — his first presentation of its kind. Despite his nervousness, he appreciated and learned from the eye-opening experience.

“People always consider Boston or Ivy League areas as a step up, intellectually. It’s sort of humbling to recognize how much greater than myself.” Kietzman explained. After downloading CRADLE White Eye Detector, the user grants it access to their device’s photos. Then, it uses both facial recognition and a hue saturation value scale aligned with instances of leukocoria in photography to detect possible instances that may warrant further testing.

As part of Dr. Shaw’s lab, Kietzman assisted with “the first large-scale, longitudinal testing of its accuracy, sensitivity and specificity” of the software. While the project previously focused on the iPhone, Kietzman’s addition encouraged an expansion into Androids as the owner of a Google Pixel.

“I was over at (Dr. Shaw’s) house with a friend of mine, who was also in the lab, working on the project, and I pull out my phone. He saw my phone, and he goes, ‘What type of phone is that?’ and then I start telling him about my phone and how at the time, it was never seen before. On top of a distinct geography, I repeatedly came across some of the most intelligent minds in the country. For a weekend it was normal to have conversations with famous professors like Steven Pinker, Nobel Laureate Oliver Hart, Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, or (former) Editor-in-Chief of Cell, a top biology journal, Emily Marcus.”

CRADLE

As medical software, CRADLE helps detect leukocoria, or “white eye,” which sometimes can be seen in photographs. Leukocoria is often a symptom of more pressing ocular issues, including cataracts, Coats’ disease, and retinoblastoma, a type of eye cancer usually found in young children. The reflexion of light off certain ocular surfaces created by these diseases results in the white pupil. Alleviating these issues depends on early detection and treatment.

“The goal of the app is to use casual photography that parents take of their kids on a daily basis and sort of sum it all together in some aggregate way as a single test to view the pupil and see if there are any abnormalities like leukocoria,” Kietzman explained. In an attempt to make CRADLE universal, availability on every device seemed logical and necessary. Android functionality also increases its potential presence in developing nations as those models and models become most popular in those markets.

“The goal is just to have as many people as possible download it and be using it whenever they need. … It’s the most important (there) because the density of doctors and pediatricians is far lower than that of the United States,” Kietzman said. “And an awful disease like retinoblastoma, the cancer of the retina, is curable, if caught early enough.”

Due in part to his contributions, the lab’s team is currently assessing approximately 100,000 images to build its training set and improve its accuracy.

Virtual health care and the future

Kietzman finds CRADLE exciting as a part of telemedicine. He hopes to be on the fringe of technology as medical appointments via video call and self-assessment with the help of digital applications become more common.

“I think telemedicine is a really, really important thing, and that’s where I imagine very much of or maybe even the majority of medicine in the future going,” he said. “And CRADLE is, I think, just another way, another example of how telemedicine is expanding in nature. … It’s just great to be a part of some movement to expand health care or medicine beyond the clinician’s office.”

Kietzman, a junior in his undergraduate program, keeps his career options open. His declared majors and minors incorporate varied schools of thought and subjects that overlap one another, particularly in this branch of health care.

“It’s definitely something that even if it wasn’t a trend, I think that I would still be drawn to approaching medicine that way, and it’s clearly a beneficial thing to have those sorts of cogs already moving in my mind,” he said.

“It’s humbling to be a part of something that’s so much greater than myself.”

The opportunities to shadow and gain perspective on different medical fields ranging from pediatrics to primary care excite Kietzman as well. He calls those future decisions “up in the air, in a good way.”

The study’s lead author has been accepted to the College of Medicine at Stanford University.

Read the Science Advances’ publication of Autonomous early detection of eye disease in childhood photographs at cnnp.news/cradle. CRADLE is available free on the Apple’s app store and Google Play. It is also on Facebook @white.eye.detector and on Instagram @cradle_white_eye_detector. Dr. Shaw’s bioanalytical lab is currently requesting childhood photographs for analysis to increase their work’s accuracy. Email Shaw Research Labs at bryan_shaw@baylor.edu for further information on contributing. Visit the lab online at shawlabresearch.com.
Sengo Zibiwes Ngemojek find the rhythms of the past and future

Gathering for practice on a cold Friday afternoon in December, the Sengo Zibiwes Ngemojek (Squirrel Creek Singers) catch up on each other’s lives around the drum and chuckle. They meet twice a week at the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center, learning the traditions of drumming as well as lyrics in Potawatomi.

“What’s nice about this group of guys is, I think we’re comfortable enough with each other that we don’t mind giving it a whirl, trying it out, trying to lead now and then because you don’t want it always to be the one guy,” said Justin Neely, Sengo Zibiwes Ngemojek organized and CPN Language Department director.

Before they begin, they all lower their heads and say a prayer to Creator in Potawatomi over the drum. Jason Hawk, a new member and Cherokee Nation citizen, learned to give the instrument reverence during the last six months.

“It’s a sacred item, in a way. We call it our grandfather. … We treat it like our grandfather. So, we wouldn’t disrespect it in any type of way,” Hawk said, which includes making indecent jokes in front of the drum and laying things on top of it.

The group started meeting in 2008. They named themselves Sengo Zibiwes Ngemojek, or Squirrel Creek Singers, after the creek that runs on Tribal land where “it’s just what we do, so it’s feeling like it,” DeLonais family descendant and Nishnabé and history of the people.

“Before this experience, DeerInWater had never focused on developing any musical skill. In fact, not many of the Sengo Zibiwes Ngemojek have. While a couple of them briefly picked up percussion, piano or saxophone in their youth, their time with the men’s drum group remains their greatest effort toward developing a new member and Cherokee Nation citizen, learned to give the instrument reverence during the last six months.

“Being someone who wasn’t raised in the community. The chapter includes more than 75 members organized into four central committees that focus on supporting different aspects of our local and national STEM community. The chapter also hosted an event during the 2019 Family Reunion Festival where participants got a chance to work with computer coding or medicinal plants. One portion focused on a tutorial in robotics coding with Bluetooth-enabled SPHERO robots, and the other centered on using native Oklahoma plants as healing teas.

In 2020, Shkodedeajek plans to host more events with local schools, send a delegation of leaders to the annual AISES Leadership Summit and National Conference, and start a mentorship program for students. This chapter is open to any Citizen Potawatomi, regardless of geographic location, as well as any Native person who resides within CPN’s jurisdiction that spans over five counties. If you are interested in joining, please email me at k.deerinwater@potawatomi.com or visit aises.org/membership.
There are five primary love languages that Chapman refers to: words of affirmation, acts of service, quality time, physical touch, and gifts. Each year, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation holds elections for positions on the Block Family Reunion Festival. In-person voting takes place at Tribal headquarters near Shawnee, Oklahoma, on June 27, 2020. Polling is open at 7 a.m. and close at 2 p.m. Tribal citizens must show their CPN ID to receive a ballot. Absentee ballot request forms will be mailed to CPN members’ last known address on March 1, 2020. Absentee ballots will be mailed to members’ last known address on May 1, 2020. The CPN Election Committee must receive absentee ballots by 10 a.m. on June 27, 2020, in order to be accepted. Absentee ballot requests may be made in writing by sending the voter’s name, address, Tribal identification number, and date of birth to the CPN Election Committee, P.O. Box 310, Tecumseh, OK, 74873. Absentee ballot request forms must be postmarked by June 6, 2020. Citizen Potawatomis are encouraged to contact Tribal Rolls to ensure their address information is up to date at 800-880-9880.
Anishinabe Design Inc. revitalizes and constructs tribal spaces across Oklahoma

By Sherry Byers, CNP Housing Department Program Manager

The One Time Grant has now been in operation for more than 21 years and has evolved and improved throughout this time. It has assisted hundreds of Citizen Potawatomi Nation tribal members with funds for their down payment or closing costs associated with the purchase, building or refinancing of a home.

In addition to assisting individual tribal members with this program, we would also like to see the CNP’s First National Bank & Trust Co. begin by originating the mortgage loans. FNB is able to offer most loan programs offered by other lending institutions, except loan types affiliated with predatory lenders.

It is interesting to know that there are still many uninform.120ed CNP members out there when it comes to information regarding this program and the Tribal bank. Our office receives calls daily from citizens that never knew of this grant or that the Tribe owns its own bank.

All Citizen Potawatomi members are eligible for this grant one time only. The maximum amount is $2,125 and does not have to be repaid.

Program criteria:
- The grant cannot be used for any type of mobile home
- Convicted felons or other tribal members felons are ineligible
- The home being purchased must be their primary residence
- The Tribal member’s name must be on the loan

The application must be completed thoroughly with the following submitted:
- Copy of borrower’s CNP membership card
- Copy of Social Security cards for household member without Tribal cards
- Copy of the “Loan Estimate” from lender
- Income verification for all household members (last three to four pay stubs, or if same employer for years, the last two years of tax returns — first page and signature page only)
- Name of the closing entity (Title Co., Escrow Co., Attorney, etc.)
- Completed W-9 form
- Copy of appraisal

The application and support information is required in our office at least three weeks prior to the closing date. This gives our office enough time to get the paperwork processed and the check mailed back to the Tribal member by the specified date.

To request the application and/or general information regarding the One Time Grant, please contact Sherry Byers, homeownership manager at 405-273-2833 or sbyers@potawatomi.org. This grant may also be done after closing. The required paperwork must be in our office at least 30 days from the loan closing date. Please contact our office when applying following closing.

For information regarding loan products and lending requirements at First National Bank & Trust Co., please contact Jeff Scroggins, mortgage loan officer at 405-275-8830 or 800-227-8362.

One Time Grant program open for housing opportunities

Barrett Williamson and Cheryl Lockstone own two architectural design firms located out of Norman, Oklahoma. (Photo by Stelvan Williams)

ICDBGs outline what services the structure provides to the tribal community. Anishinabe Design has designed cultural heritage centers, cultural learning labs, food distribution centers, law enforcement centers and roundhouse rehabilitations.

“It’s the tribe helping their people, and they help them in a way that doesn’t make them feel like they’re being helped or put down,” Lockstone said. “It’s like lifting people up, and so most of the tribal projects that we do, I feel like we are lifting people up.”

Currently, they are working on an expansion of an Indian Health Services clinic near El Reno, Oklahoma, with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. With primary construction set for completion in fall 2021, the new facility expands provider services and offers radiology, pharmacy, dentistry and more in 16,000 square feet — significantly larger than the one destroyed by a tornado in spring 2013.

“It’s just going to be a much better facility. So, whenever you look that we’re able to help the U.S. government fulfill treaties with tribal governments in place to make sure Native populations have access to health care, it’s very gratifying to me that we are able to give back in that sort of way by building really nice facilities,” Lockstone said.

Anishinabe Design also conceptualized single-family homes for the CNP Housing Department’s new lease purchase home ownership program. Participants sign a three-year lease agreement with the possibility of homeownership by meeting a series of criteria. For more information, visit cnp.news/homeward or cnpnews.org.

Throughout the last decade, working with tribes across Oklahoma and learning their customs taught Lockstone how to engage uniquely with them and made her more appreciative of her own.

“I just encourage everyone that is a tribal member or whatever tribe you belong to just be a part of your cultural heritage,” she said.

Knowing the signs of carbon monoxide poisoning can save lives

By Lenzy Krehbiel-Burton

Keeping warm or maintaining a lawn does not need to be fatal.

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that is emitted in fumes from burning fuel, including gasoline, kerosene, charcoal and wood. If allowed to build up in the body, it can be fatal to both people and animals.

According to data published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 400 Americans die annually from carbon monoxide poisoning, with an additional 4,000 hospitalized from it.

Often described as flu-like, carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms include dizziness, confusion, a dull headache, blurred vision, chest pain, shortness of breath and nausea. It can also lead to a loss of consciousness, making it possible for people to die from carbon monoxide poisoning before showing any noticeable symptoms.

The exact timetable for symptoms to start appearing hinges on several factors, including a person’s size and activity level as well as the concentration levels of carbon monoxide in an area.

For example, an average healthy adult would not experience any symptoms after eight hours of exposure to carbon monoxide levels at 50 parts per million. That same adult would start developing a mild headache after two or three hours in a room with carbon monoxide levels at 200 parts per million. After an hour or two in a room with carbon monoxide levels at 400 parts per million, that adult would most likely start getting nauseous.

Infants, elders and people with heart disease, anemia or chronic breathing problems are generally more susceptible to getting sick from extended exposure to carbon monoxide.

Stephanie Harris is the director of the Oklahoma City Indian Clinic’s public health department.

Although carbon monoxide poisoning is a more common occurrence indoors, particularly in poorly ventilated areas, Harris pointed out that it is still possible to occur outside. “You don’t think about it with a generator going outside, but it is recommended to have gas powered machines going at least 20 feet away from the building to help prevent carbon monoxide buildup,” she said.

In addition to installing and regularly maintaining a carbon monoxide detector, carbon monoxide poisoning can be avoided through several basic proactive measures.

For example, chimneys, heating systems and coal burning appliances need to be inspected yearly and cleaned as needed. Never leave a car or truck engine running in an enclosed garage, particularly if that garage is attached to the house. Gas powered tools, such as leaf blowers and chainsaws, must be used in a well-ventilated area.

Additionally, in the event of a power outage, do not use a gas oven, gas range or camp stove as a heat source or sleep in a room with an unvented kerosene space heater.

“When you’re cold and just trying to get warm, sometimes you forget common sense,” Harris said.

Citizen Potawatomi Nation Adult Protective Services looks out for elders

When considering programs such as Indian Child Welfare and family services, one group often left out of the conversation is elders. Adult protective service programs do not always receive adequate funding and are far from universal throughout the country.

However, the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime recently awarded Citizen Potawatomi Nation a grant to fund the Tribe’s new Adult Protective Services Department for the next three years. With more than a quarter of a million dollars available beginning in January 2020, the Tribe laid the groundwork for a growing staff and set of resources specifically devoted to the investigation of elder abuse and welfare.

As the only tribe in Oklahoma with a grant to fund the Tribe’s new Adult Protective Services Department for the next three years, with more than a quarter of a million dollars available beginning in January 2020, the Tribe laid the groundwork for a growing staff and set of resources specifically devoted to the investigation of elder abuse and welfare.

The CPN program is amongst the first of its kind for a tribe in the U.S.

APS Department Director Janet Draper oversaw CPN’s Indian Child Welfare Department prior to her new position. During that time, the accepted cases of elder abuse and performed welfare checks.

“I just felt over the years that something more needed to be done,” she said.

“With this new program, we are going to be able to go to each of those Tribal members and/or their spouses and/or any other Natives that are living in … housing that the Tribe has to offer for elders and be able to focus on them and check on them and be another set of eyes.”

APS Case Manager Brian Moore began working for the Tribe in September 2019 to assist with the beginning of the department and help with the cases he and Draper have already started. He worked for the State of Oklahoma in the same field. During his short time with CPN, he already appreciates the streamlined nature of its services and resources as well as the ability to focus on individuals.

“With the State of Oklahoma, you’re really just stuck working with neglect, exploitation and abuse. Here, we’re able to provide all sorts of assistance to our elders, not just investigating those particular crimes, but we can also just provide assistance to them when they’re just needed,” Moore said. “It’s just a phenomenal program that we have here.”

The grant covers staff and procedural costs for 50 cases a year, each one averaging more than 80 work hours to close. Their complex nature stems from the addition of several factors not present in child welfare, including property, debt, Social Security and medication theft by family members.

“It’s embarrassing for them to say, ‘Hey, I’ve been swindled out of thousands of dollars,’ or ‘My grandchild has taken my money. I don’t have money now for food or medication.’ And it’s sad, and it goes on every day,” Draper said. “And unfortunately, it happens within the Citizen Potawatomi Nation community. And I want our elders to know that there is someone they can call that they can trust to help them solve this problem.”

The grant will allow a portion of the allocated funds to purchase a van compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines dedicated to the elders. Draper said it returns a sense of independence through transportation.

“We’re going to be able to transport them to doctor’s appointments or to visit someone or to go shopping. And although the Potawatomi have a transit department, sometimes they’re booked. We want to be able to provide that service to the ones that can just pick up the phone and say, ‘I want to go to Walmart,’” she said.

Already, CPN APS has nearly 15 cases as the new year begins. Although the program is in its infancy, talks remain focused on teamwork and possibilities. As the only tribe in Oklahoma with an APS staff, Draper and Moore hope to set an example for their colleagues as they grow into uncharted territory.

“It shows that the Potawatomi Nation is concerned for all of its citizens and the realization that this problem exists in our own backyard,” Draper said. “But the Potawatomi Nation is going to step up as always and take care of the problems within their community so that everybody is proud and excited for these type of programs to start.”

For more community services from Citizen Potawatomi Nation, visit cpn.news/services.
Traditional craftwork provides connection to Nishnabé culture

Growing up in Oklahoma, Kristy Phillips has held close ties to her Nishnabé roots since youth. Today she serves as a secondary educator at the Hannahville Indian School — Nah Tah Wahs (Swarming Eagle). There she teaches Nenishkunwexw (Potawatomi language) and Indigenous kenomokewen (science), incorporating tribal traditions and lifeways into her lessons. Outside of work, Phillips creates beautiful pieces of artwork, jewelry and more using traditional materials and methods through Nenishkunwexw run by her and her sister Kateri Phillips, who currently serves as the 2019 Miss Potawatomi. A limited number of Nenishkunwexw creations are on sale now at Potawatomi Gifts.

“The gift we have as Nishnabé people is to create, and I think that anybody is capable of doing, especially Nishnabé people. It’s just practice,” Phillips said.

Phillips’ interest in Potawatomi art forms began at an early age. She learned a variety of skills and methods while making powwow regalia with her grandmother. This experience inspired her to create a beading business for a high school project, helping spur her entrepreneurial spirit.

“My business was beaded keychains, and my group made a lot of money that year because my grandma donated beads,” she said. “I just got some dowel rods. I beaded so many keychains. When that was a success, my sister and I put our heads together, and we were like, ‘Man, we should really see if we can sell these to the gift shop.’ So, I have had things in the gift shop since I was a younger child.”

Returning home

Before obtaining her degree in cellular and molecular biology, Phillips studied and taught Potawatomi under the CPN Language Department as a language aid. Then in 2011, Hannahville Indian Community extended a job opportunity to her. Phillips’ move to Michigan connects her to her Potawatomi ancestral homelands, fulfilling a lifelong dream.

“I kind of made up my mind at a young age that if I was ever given the opportunity to move back north and be back home where we were before the Trail of Death, I would take that opportunity and try to bring back a lot of knowledge to my people in Oklahoma and Kansas,” she said.

As a teacher, she has an opportunity to integrate the Potawatomi language and traditions into the classroom. One way she does this is through world language inquiry by giving students Potawatomi language to investigate and incorporate into assignments.

“It’s basically them researching and inquiring about their language and how to take what they’re given and put into these projects,” she said.

Techniques

Phillips entwines mindfulness into every step of her creative process, including her favorite part: hand-harvesting supplies.

“Bead work is fun, but you go to the store and you buy a lot of that stuff,” she explained. “Then, it’s like a whole other level when you can actually out and harvest that by hand and put those things together. And then they’re all things you found out there.”

To learn the proper ways to collect natural materials, she relies on others’ guidance.

“I never go out unless I know specifically what I’m doing and how I ought to do it.”

Continued on page 12

Ways to support foster parents

By Kendra Lowden, Foster Care/Adoption Manager

Caring for children involved in the child welfare system can be challenging due to the trauma they have faced. There are ample support options available for foster children, but not as many for the foster parents who are caring and advocating for some of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

Being a foster parent is much more than loving children. Often, the day-to-day hardships and complexities of working with multiple agencies are the biggest challenges. Although not everyone is able to foster, most people offer a kind gesture. Here are some simple ways you can help:

Communicate

Reach out via phone, email or social media. Offering words of encouragement is helpful for everyone, especially for a foster parent who is juggling all the responsibilities that come with caring for children involved in the complex child welfare system. Even one kind word makes a difference.

Run errands

Save a foster parent a trip to the store by picking up groceries. You can also order items for delivery through websites like FireLake Discount Foods, Walmart or Amazon. Committing to helping a foster family with simple actions like this can make such a difference when someone is struggling and can help them find the balance they need to be their best selves for their family.

Donate

Children in care are not always able to bring all of their belongings into foster homes. Sharing new or gently used items for children is very helpful. You can donate clothing, toys, sports equipment, diapers, bottles and anything children in your own life would need to feel safe and comfortable.

Remember all children in the home

Biological and adopted children in the foster home still need the same love and attention as foster children. Offer to take them out for a movie night or to an activity. Do not worry about being “fair.” We can trust foster parents to navigate that topic with each child. It is okay to show children attention at separate times.

Reserve judgment

Hold back negative comments about biological parents. Do not assume every child who has been abused or neglected is damaged, unloved or needs to be adopted. Avoid asking questions about any trauma the children may have experienced or about the situation with their biological parents. That is private information. Remember that all behavior has meaning, and a struggling child may be expressing their emotions in the only way they know how to at that moment. There are no “bad” children, only bad experiences.

For more information, contact FireLodge Children & Family Services at 405-878-4831.
Citizen Potawatomi Nation member Nathalie Lee’s classroom looked a little different as the school year began in August 2019. Maps of Oklahoma outlining cultural markers and history paired nicely with new games depicting frontier life and books about Native Americans’ time on the land that became the 46th state.

As a third grade teacher at Union Public Schools district in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Lee focuses on social studies, in particular, Oklahoma history. Earlier in 2019, the Bertrand and Higbee family descendant received a Fund for Teachers grant from the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence. She used it to strengthen curriculum and obtain accompanying classroom resources.

“I’ve always been really proud to be an Oklahoman and really proud to be a Tribal member,” Lee said. “And I’ve always been interested in learning about Oklahoma history, which is why my teaching partner and I decided to write this grant and why it really, really affected me deeply.”

The Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence’s mission “is to recognize and encourage academic excellence in Oklahoma’s public schools.” Through a partnership with the national nonprofit Fund for Teachers, the Tulsa Community Foundation and the Oklahoma Tribal Alliance, the organization receives bridge funding to administer the type of professional development Lee experienced to educators across the state.

“All the more we give that opportunity to teachers, the better job they can do,” said OFF Executive Director Emily Stratton. “They’re encouraging student academic achievement — academic excellence. So we feel like it’s a perfect fit.”

Last year, OFE sought to expand its reach and built relationships with tribes in Oklahoma. CFP donated $10,000, and OFE awarded between 25 and 30 grants in total. The organization encouraged Indigenous educators to apply, and Communications and Program Outreach Specialist Sara Wilson also saw the partnership as an opportunity to increase its rural presence.

“This is a statewide opportunity,” she said. “It’s not just for central Oklahoma or the Tulsa area, and we’re trying to find ways to reach other parts of the state and let them know that this is available to all Oklahoma teachers.”

Lee studies Oklahoma

Many of the grants awarded outline trips to Africa, Australia or the T ulsa area, and we’re trying to do what Wilson calls a “broader ripple effect to the community.” One way Lee aims to have a lasting impact on her students’ thought process is including Native Americans more prominently in social studies lessons.

During their travels, “I feel like I learned a lot that I wish I would have retained when I was a public school child in Oklahoma,” she said.

They visited the Cherokee Heritage Center near Tahlequah and considered ways to improve inclusion and representation of Native Americans in their coursework.

“We tried to balance out our Native Americans, which we found easy to research and find a lot of information about, with the cowboy life and pioneer life. We also learned how Native Americans played a part in the government roles of building Oklahoma,” Lee said.

Their students will learn to use a Cherokee language syllabary and put together full presentations on different Oklahoma tribes using the resources Lee and DeMarco gathered. Lee also feels the “ripple effect” when what she learned sparks ideas for geography, literature or mathematics lessons.

“It’s changed my worldview. … It’s amazing when I’m teaching other things how it will come back around to something that I learned this summer about our home state and about the people of our state. It ties in seamlessly with a lot of the things that we do,” she said.

Talking with grant recipients before and after their experiences, Wilson believes keeping educators inspired is one of the most important and tangible outcomes of Fund for Teachers.

“It’s very empowering to them to be able to go out and learn what they need to do, and then they experience more than they ever anticipated,” she said. “And it just renews a passion for them, and once you see a passionate teacher, it’s so much easier for a student to engage and learn believe that teacher and trust that teacher.”

For more information about Fund for Teachers, visit fundforteachers.org.

Lee (left) and her Fund for Teachers partner Janet DeMarco pick up necessities for their first time, they knew they wanted to learn more about Native Americans, which we found one of the most important and tangible outcomes of Fund for Teachers.

Lee and DeMarco traveled for 12 days last summer and spent the following weeks writing lesson plans and laying out their classrooms. Some of their favorite destinations included the Pioneer Woman Museum in Ponca City, Great Salt Plains State Park in northwestern Oklahoma and Woolaroc Museum and Wildlife Preserve in Bartlesville.

“We wanted to go visit landmarks and places in Oklahoma museums. We wanted to talk to people and educate ourselves and find artifacts to bring back into the classrooms so that our students could have hands-on experiences while learning about the history of our state,” Lee said.

Books, toys, maps, games, arrows, videos and photos were only a few of those artifacts. They focused on picking things made by Native Americans or people from Oklahoma as opposed to mass-produced items in the hopes of adding authenticity to the classroom.

“Our kids can utilize (them) to see what kind of games children played at the beginning of the state of Oklahoma and how it’s different from how they play games today. … they had marbles and rag dolls and bonnets and just a completely different aspect of child play,” DeMarco said.

The “ripple effect”

As a major component of a proposal, applicants often think about how their professional development will turn into what Wilson calls a “broader ripple effect to the community.” One way Lee aims to have a lasting impact on her students’ thought process is including Native Americans more prominently in social studies lessons.

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Regenerative agriculture techniques improve Tribal land for generations to come

Just like a building needs a strong, stable foundation to last, soil also requires a solid base to grow the plants necessary to feed and clothe the world’s population. Indigenous agriculture techniques have understood this principle since time immemorial, but now modern agriculture is catching up.

“We as Potawatomi people, our traditional beliefs and our teachings — original teachings and original instructions — are as people to take care of all of our relatives. And that’s not just human relatives,” said Citizen Potawatomi Nation Community Garden Assistant Kaya DeerInWater. “We knew that growing monocultures perpetually was not going to work out long term. Our ancestors knew that, and that’s why we came up with a polyculture, multi-cropping system. We figured that our long, long, long before even got to say in the Great Lakes.”

Employing regenerative agriculture methods improves land quality by encouraging plant and organism diversification while decreasing land disturbance and increasing biodiversity and organic material. Planting cover crops offers producers an opportunity to incorporate those approaches. Because of this, CPN co-hosted a Cool Season Cover Crop Field Day on Dec. 6 at the CPN Cultural Heritage Center to educate farmers from across the region on restorative methods that sequester carbon and rebuild the soil.

“As soon as we went down, saw what could happen, and saw the differences (cover crops) can make in your soil, and all the good that it can do, it immediately became something that CPN was interested in,” said Tonya Kitchens, CPN Real Estate Services Agriculture Program manager. As a CPN tribal member and employee, Kitchens believes in the importance of mindful land management.

“It’s forward-thinking. It is working now for something that our children and great-grandchildren will benefit from,” she explained during the workshop. “If we don’t take care of the future of agriculture, no one else is going to.”

According to the Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, five basic principles help maintain and improve soil health. These include ensuring year-round ground coverage and plant growth, no-tillage practices, and diversified production including implementing rotations and sowing cover crops during non-cash crop growing seasons.

“It’s a big focus, especially with the legacy of the Dust Bowl that sadly Oklahoma is still trying to recover from,” DeerInWater explained. During the 1920s and 30s, approximately 350 million tons of soil blew away from Kansas, Oklahoma and other portions of the Great Plains because of agricultural practices like soil burning that removed native plants and root systems. Cover crops serve as an opportunity to reverse the Dust Bowl’s impact across the region.

Tribal land management

The Nation currently has several agricultural endeavors including a community garden, 2,000 acres of land set aside for row crops, 1,100 acres for hay production, 354 acres for soil and 3,200 acres in land leases. Lance Coker of Circle C Farms in Portawatomi County, leases 132 acres of land from CPN.

“I’ve always been reading about these cover crops, and in the past, I’ve just always done traditional agricultural practices. And I mean, I made money at it, but I knew there was a better way,” Coker said. “I’ve read about this stuff and I thought, ‘Man, I don’t want to use up all my water for my crops.’”

During a hunting trip to southwest Oklahoma, Coker learned about remediation techniques Russ Jackson uses on his family farm. After meeting Jackson, he began looking for ways to utilize the same production methods.

On 45 acres of CPN land near state Highway 177, Coker recently began incorporating no-till practices and in fall 2019, planted a blend of cool-season cover crops including wheat, rye, vetch, Austrian winter peas, alfalfa, and brassicas like daikon radishes and turnips.

As Coker has experienced firsthand, sowing cover crops can result in greater yields. For example, according to Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program’s 2017 Cover Crop Survey, corn farmers were able to harvest 2.3 additional bushels per acre.

“On one of my corn crops, I cut my nitrogen back a third and made 20 more bushels an acre than what I did on my conventional till,” Coker said.

Nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium are the ‘Big Three’ primary macronutrients producers use to fertilize. Regenerative agriculture techniques seek opportunities to naturally restore key nutrient levels, decreasing the need to add synthetic chemicals to achieve adequate growing conditions.

“A lot of soil health can be like a car,” said Shawn Fleming, NRCS resource conservationist, during the Dec. 6 workshop. “The main thing is, just don’t keep it parked in the garage.”

The concept is relatively simple: reduce the input. Rather than going to the local co-op or seed store to purchase inorganic nitrogen, regenerative agriculture seeks opportunities to use and increase the overall levels of organic nitrogen. This method also increases the number of living organisms under the earth by creating an environment that is more conducive to their needs.

According to a NRCS fact sheet, “An incredible diversity of bacteria, protozoa, arthropods, nematodes, fungi and earthworms create a hidden food web in the soil that affects how crops grow, how soil nutrients are cycled and whether rainfall is quickly absorbed into the soil and stays where crop roots can access the moisture.”

Since DeerInWater began overseeing Bodewadmi Widoktadwen Gtegan (CPN Community Garden) in 2018, he has incorporated techniques to improve soil quality and influence overall garden health.

“When you use regenerative agricultural practices, the land is more resilient. It’s basically just mimicking nature in a way,” DeerInWater explained. “It’s using principals, but it’s not exactly like nature.”

Like most gardens, Bodewadmi Widoktadwen Gtegan produces during the warm season. To ensure year-round ground cover, staff and volunteers have planted a mixture of cool season cover crops the past two years.

“We wanted to keep live plants in the soil to keep the beneficial soil biota happy and active,” DeerInWater said.

Drought and flood management

Conventional agriculture utilizes tillage, which removes underground root systems and decreases the ground’s ability to absorb water.

“One of the big things that I’ve been trying to do on my farm was maximize rainfall capture,” said Russ Jackson, farmer from Mountain View, Oklahoma, during the Dec. 6 workshop.

“When you’re doing a tillage system like we’ve done for 130 years, it’s always too wet or it’s always too dry,” Jackson said.

Jackson farms in southwest and western Oklahoma, and the region tends to be one of the driest in the state with only an average of 32 inches of rain per year compared to Portawatomi County’s average of 41. Western Oklahoma’s precipitation often falls in large amounts over a very short period of time, and it is not uncommon to go more than 100 days with less than a quarter inch of rain.

Cover crops and regenerative agriculture techniques keep the root systems intact, loosening the soil, which results in greater water retention. Planting mixtures mimics the natural and diverse plants that once grew.

“You increase the soil health, you increase the water holding capacity, which decreases runoff and erosion. With the water holding capacity, if you ever had a drought, your lands — using those practices — are more able to withstand dry periods for longer because of that healthy soil structure and because of the healthy plant community,” DeerInWater said.

Plant variety ensures the earth has root systems at different levels and offers the microbial organisms living below ground more opportunities to thrive. By incorporating these techniques, the Jacksons increased absorption rate on one plot of land from 6/10 an inch of rain per hour to 2.7 inches. The Nation hopes to have similar results.

“Using those practices that take care of the land and take care of the soil and take care of the animals and the birds and the pollinators is culturally congruent with our teachings,” DeerInWater said. “With all of our success, we are able to have the luxury to rethink about the way that we’re doing things and to re-gain our cultural practices so that our values as a Nation are aligned with our management practices.”

Learn more about CPN’s garden programming and workshops at potawatomi.org/events.
Kevin Roberts — Kaki ogski (Grizzly Bear) — breathes new life into timber that others may only see useful as firewood, not as end tables, benches or art. But Roberts looks at wood through a different lens for his furniture and décor company, Migwetch Mtek Designs.

“I’ve always had an admiration and a really sincere appreciation for nature,” Roberts said.

Hunting, fishing and exploring the spring-fed creeks and rivers in Missouri were his favorite youth pastimes. However, Roberts’s career and other obligations made it difficult to spend time enjoying the outdoors as an adult. Now retired, Migwetch Mtek offers him the opportunity to reconnect with Mother Nature through creating one-of-a-kind pieces of art.

“I’m saving and using the wood for a useful purpose, and I feel like I am bringing nature’s natural beauty and serenity indoors,” Roberts said. “And people can use it and enjoy it in whatever capacity they want to use it as opposed to the wood just being turned into mulch, firewood or letting it be destroyed otherwise.”

Uncovering new branches

Roberts is a Bertrand family descendant, and although his mother did not know much about their Potawatomi heritage, she made it a priority to inform her children from an early age about their ancestry. “When we were little, and (mom) would put us to bed, she’d always make a peace sign gesture with her hand. And she’d say, ‘That’s what the Potawatomi would say.’ We’d always chuckle, but she’d go, ‘Well, that’s all I know. You’re part Potawatomi.’ And it was something I always thought about — why didn’t she know any more about our Potawatomi heritage?” he asked.

While living in Kansas, Roberts stopped by the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation to learn more about the history of Potawatomi in the area and for potential clues to his heritage. During that trip, he became aware of his family’s association and enrollment with the Citizen Potawatomi Nation.

“That’s really what started my excitement about my heritage and hunger to learn more. I started researching my grandparents, then of course, the family ancestry,” he said.

Roberts met another CPN member residing in Kansas, Gladys Moeller, who had done extensive research on many Potawatomi families, including the Bertrands, which helped him create a detailed family tree.

“She had numerous filing cabinets in her house full of research on various families and information she had compiled over the years, all tied to the Potawatomi,” Roberts explained.

“She helped me find pictures of relatives that my mom hadn’t even seen.”

Although his mother was not able to share much about their Potawatomi roots, Roberts now ensures future generations of his family know their heritage and incorporates traditions into family gatherings.

“I have three adult children, and I keep encouraging them to find time in their busy schedules to read the information I share with them and access the CPN online resources.” Roberts said. “I summarize information from the lessons and insights that Justin (Neely) publishes. And with the online dictionary and all the resources we have now on the CPN’s website, it’s really helpful and exciting to learn about our people, culture, and our language.”

Beginnings

Roberts’s desire to learn more about his Potawatomi culture and the language inspired the name of his design company: Migwetch Mtek (Thank You Tree).

“In one lesson, the word tree — mtek — was included, and I thought, ‘That’s what I am going to use.’ I added Migwetch, the word for ‘thank you,’ and it seemed like the perfect fit for what I do in my work. I routed it around to my children and said, ‘What about this?’ and it stuck,” he said.

While his children were in college, his youngest daughter asked him about using extra logs from the neighbor’s tree they had to cut down to create end tables for her apartment.

“It just caught on where friends of theirs would say, Can you make me some of those? And then the parents would see them when the kids would come home. I didn’t have enough wood,” he said and laughed. “I had to go out and find it.”

Process

Word of mouth continues to help business. Roberts made connections with farmers and companies across the Midwest to obtain material he reclaims into benches, charcuterie boards, end tables and more. Although he lives in Illinois, he drives as far as Colorado and frequents the area where he grew up in central Missouri to search through sawmill scrap piles.

“They’ve been there probably 100 years because when I was a little boy, that’s where my parents would take us to pick up firewood,” he said. “But I’ll go and spend a day or so, digging through their wood pile to find these imperfections in discarded wood scraps that I turn into decorative art.”

He often hears customers comment on how he highlights the wood’s beauty through nature’s flaws. After finding the perfect pieces of reclaimed timber, he sands and polishes each piece before using oil or a wax sealer as the finishing touch.

“Nature makes it. There’s no man-made element of creating or crafting the natural beauty of my products,” he explained. “It’s nature’s defects and imperfections I am leveraging. It’s normal decay, weathering and exposure — an exposed beauty of my products.”

When marketing his creations, Roberts takes every opportunity to share our Potawatomi culture with others.

“I enjoy and am able to engage in dialog around the Potawatomi, sharing information about our heritage and culture. Of course, you get the proverbial, ‘What’s a Potawatomi?’ Because some people have heard about our people and some haven’t,” he said. “I usually respond initially with, ‘Well, you are looking at one.’”

Roberts’s organic approach to his business reflects traditional, fundamental worldviews of the Potawatomi people and humanity’s role in protecting ogekwe’ (Mother Earth) for generations to come.

“I have a better appreciation for life and purpose,” he said. “I feel like I am connected to nature and really kind of being a good steward and taking care of what’s afforded to us as a people — a people entrusted to care for it as opposed to destroying it.”

Potawatomi Gifts currently has a small, limited number of Migwetch Mtek charcuterie boards for sale. Check them out at potawatomigifts.com and follow Migwetch Mtek on Facebook at Facebook.com/migwetchmtek and Instagram at Instagram.com/migwetchmtek.
Tribal citizenship and participation in CPN democracy

By Marisa Mohi

Many Tribal members know about the services the Citizen Potawatomi Nation offers. From the tag agency to health care to scholarships to housing to career services, the Tribe truly serves its members. But these services don’t simply exist as a prerogative of the Tribe. Elected Tribal members serve in the CPN government in order to ensure members have access to these services. Currently, there are two legislative seats up for election on June 27, 2020, at the Family Reunion Festival, the District 9 seat, currently held by Paul Wesselhoff, and the District 12 seat, currently held by Paul Schmidkofler. Both seats represent districts in the state of Oklahoma and can be voted on by CPN members in the state.

In addition to the election, all Tribal members will also have the opportunity to vote on the budget that manages the Nation’s trust earnings. For a few months now, I have been writing about building a connection with my heritage and learning what it means to be a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. While I can’t say that I’ve come to any major conclusions, I have learned a lot about the history of the Tribe and the history of my not-too-distant ancestors. There is so much more to know and to experience, and it’s something that I feel called to do because now I have the freedom to do so.

We aren’t very far removed from a time when speaking Potawatomi or practicing Tribal customs wasn’t allowed. The Native American Languages Act, a law that stated Native American tribes were entitled to speak their own languages, wasn’t even passed until 1990. As someone who has used the Tribal services in the past and plans to continue to use them in the future, I know it’s my duty to participate in the decisions that shape those services.

Admittedly, I haven’t always been interested in Tribal government, and I had no idea how any of it worked. Even though CPN is very transparent and most questions I have about something with the Tribe work are answered by perusing the website, I felt like the Tribal government was something that was above me, in more ways than one. The Tribe itself doesn’t look the way it did 100 years ago, so it doesn’t make sense for anyone to judge their connection to the Tribe by past standards. And though I haven’t voted in the past, it’s something I will be doing this year. It’s one small way I can participate actively as a member of the Tribe. So, while I can’t go back in time and experience what the Citizen Potawatomi Nation was like in the past, I can actively shape the future.

I struggle with feeling like my voice matters. Am I really a Tribal member? Do we have a reason to vote? I struggle with feeling like my voice matters. Am I really a Tribal member? Do we have a reason to vote? It’s probably a larger piece of the puzzle that we didn’t see,” she explained.

Generational connections

Learning about these benefits, Phillips’ younger sister Kateri and co-operator of Nezhnabkwewak, realized that Nishnabé ancestors may have created this art form as a way to harvest the medicinal benefits of birch.

“My sister was really interested in knowing that we have traditional ecological knowledge, as well as animal populations that the Potawatomi and other Great Lakes tribes have relied on for thousands of years. Understanding this decline, Phillips employs conservative efforts to help ensure future generations also have access to culturally-relevant plants and animals.

“Tribal history and how the Citizen Potawatomi Nation isn’t a thing of the past. It’s thriving and something I am connected to today. While this perfect Tribal member may or may not exist, I do know this. My disconnection with the past is a function of many things but mostly a function of time. Culture, customs — we typically use these words when we discuss the past. But the Citizen Potawatomi Nation isn’t a thing of the past. It’s thriving and something I am connected to today."

I’ve got them etching winnowing baskets right now, and they don’t see it; they don’t see the pieces yet. They’re like, ‘Oh, it’s just a piece of wood.’

So, I am excited to see them when they put it all together because it’s just going to blow their minds,” she said. Overall, she is thankful that her work connects herself and others to the earth.

“I think that’s what the joy of is for me is that there are more people showing that we have traditional ecological knowledge, and we are wearing to show and prove that we know exactly where this comes from,” she said. “And we’re not trying to form it and change it into something that’s disconnected from the earth."

Learn more about Nezhnabkwewak by following on Facebook at cpn.news, or Instagram @neshnabkwe. Shop Nezhnabkwewak in-store at Potawatomi Gifts located inside the CPN Cultural Heritage Center or online at potawatomigift.com.

2020 POTAWATOMI GATHERING BUS TRIP

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation will provide free bus travel to the annual Potawatomi Gathering for Tribal members and their immediate families. A chartered bus will leave the Citizen Potawatomi Nation headquarters, 1601 Gordon Cooper Drive in Shawnee, at 6:30 a.m. on Tuesday, June 22, 2020, and the bus will leave to return home on Sunday, August 2, 2020. The bus will arrive back in Shawnee on Monday, August 3, 2020.

A $50 per passenger refundable deposit is required. Tribal members who attend the Gathering will be responsible for obtaining their own food, lodging and incidental expenses. To reserve a seat on the bus and obtain more information about the hotel room blocks, please call Brandon Oswald at 405-275-3312 or 800-880-9880. You may also send an email to travel@potawatomi.org.

There is limited seating available. The deadline for reservations is 5 p.m. on Wednesday, June 24, 2020.

Hannnahville Indian Community at Wilson, MI will be hosting the gathering this year.
Veterans report

Did you know that you can request copies of your military records, replace lost medals and awards, research military records, and browse WWII photos? Visit the Online Veterans and Military Archives website at cpn.news/vetarchives.

Most of their holdings are not online; however, varieties of military records, from photos to documents to searchable databases, are available. Here are some online collections of special interest to veterans, their families and researchers:

• Records of Military Personnel
• Records of Repatriated Korean War Prisoners of War
• Casualty Records for World War II:
  • Honor List of Dead and Missing Military Personnel
  • casualty List for Military Personnel
  • Records List of Prisoners of War
  • Enrollment and Draft Records
  • Photos
  • Research and Selected Finding Aids

There are also research records for World War I, the Spanish-American War era, the Civil War era, and the American Revolutionary War era. Additional online records may be found by searching the National Archives Catalog and Access to Archival Databases “AAD” systems.

You are welcome.

Remember the CPN Veterans Organization meets every month on the fourth Tuesday at 6 p.m. (or as soon as you can get there) in the North Reunion Hall on the Potawatomi Powwow Grounds. All CPN and spouse veterans and their families are welcome. A meal is provided.

Migwetch (Thank you),
Daryl Talbot, Commander
talbotok@sbcglobal.net
405-275-1054

CPN VA Representative:
Andrew Whitham

CPN Office Hours: 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month
8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
918-397-2566

Calling all 2020 graduates

Graduating from high school, college, a technical institution or any other program is an outstanding accomplishment, and the Citizen Potawatomi Nation wants to celebrate that achievement during the Graduation Celebration Banquet starting at noon on April 25 at the CPN Cultural Heritage Center in Shawnee, Oklahoma.

The second-annual Graduation Celebration Banquet, hosted by the CPN Department of Education, is free for any enrolled Citizen Potawatomi graduate and one guest. Graduates must provide proof that they have graduated or will graduate in the 2019-2020 academic year to be eligible. This academic year includes summer 2019, fall 2019 and spring 2020 graduates. Additional guests will need to purchase a ticket at the door for $10. We will serve lunch, present a gift to each student and have a short presentation.

To attend this event, you must RSVP. Please go to portal.potawatomi.org and register under “celebration.” We have a limited number of spaces for this event, so make sure to register and submit your proof of graduation to save your spot.

College leadership program applications open Feb. 1

By Teisa Zientek, Department of Education Director

The 2020 Potawatomi Leadership Program application opens on Feb. 1 at 8 a.m. CST and closes on April 1 at 5 p.m. CST. Every summer, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation brings 8-10 Tribal members ages 18-20 years old to learn about the Tribe’s government, economic development and culture as part of the PLP.

In 2003, the program began to address a need to prepare future Citizen Potawatomi leaders. Tribal leaders understood that a critical aspect of leadership involves understanding the inner workings of CPN. They invited students to spend six weeks in Shawnee, Oklahoma, to participate in cultural events, meet directors of government programs and commercial enterprises, and take an active part in their Nation’s government processes.

Since then, over 100 students from all over the world have participated in this Harvard Honoring Nations Award-winning program.

Now in its 18th year, the experience has been life-changing for many participants. For most, the relationships and information learned have been invaluable. Liani Winson from Spokane, Washington, stated, “In PLP we have visited almost every major aspect of the Tribe. From the courts, police, self-governance, casinos and more, we were kept extremely busy and learned so much. One of my main takeaways is that the Tribe is doing an amazing amount of work to help its people and community.”

Maria Hrenchir, a 2019 PLP class member from Archison, Kansas, expressed that her newfound knowledge built confidence in her identity. She shared, “After this program, I feel much more comfortable saying I am Potawatomi because I know so much more.”

This year’s program will take place from Friday, June 12, through Saturday, July 25. To be eligible for the PLP, students must have at least a 3.0 GPA, be 18-20 years old by the program’s start date, and not have completed more than one year of college. Travel expenses, housing, food and a weekly payment are all provided.

Students can learn more and apply online at plp.potawatomi.org. For any questions, please contact the CPN Department of Education at college@potawatomi.org or 405-695-6028.
Thribal Chairman – John “Rocky” Barrett

"Nothing in this section shall be interpreted as conferring upon a State or any of its political subdivisions authority to impose any tax, fee, charge, or other assessment upon an Indian tribe or upon any other person or entity authorized by an Indian tribe to engage in a class III activity. No State may refuse to enter into the negotiations described in paragraph (3)(A) based upon the lack of authority in such State, or its political subdivisions, to impose such a tax, fee, charge, or other assessment."

Tribal Chairman – John “Rocky” Barrett

The week of Jan. 3, one new flu-related death was reported in Oklahoma, bringing the total to six so far for the season. During that week, there were 286 Oklahomans hospitalized from the flu. The numbers increase rather rapidly as the flu season progresses. As I write this article, there are 431 flu-related hospitalizations noted in the state.

Porter Township County did not see flu-related hospitalizations until December, but that figure has jumped from three to nine. In addition, there are now eight flu-related deaths in Oklahoma. According to the Oklahoma State Department of Health’s OK Flu View, the eight Oklahomans who died of flu-related causes were spread out across the state. Over half of the victims were reported to be older than 65 years of age.

Outside of the flu being a concern for many people across the country, there is a rhyme to my reason for writing about this topic. This is my opportunity to applaud the CPN Health Services for ‘stepping up to the plate’ in trying to contain the spread of the flu throughout the CPN workforce and Porter Township County. Saturday, Oct. 26, from 8 a.m. to noon, our health services sponsored a drive-thru free flu shot campaign. Keep in mind, the free means no cost to the participant, but CPN Health Services paid the approximately $17 per flu shot cost.

Cars were lined up in the hour before the drive officially opened. My deep appreciation goes to the nurses and other workers from our health services that gave of their time to administer the vaccines that day. At the end of the allotted time, there were 900 flu shots given to both Natives and non-Natives. Before that date and even after the date, there was a widespread drive for CPN employees to obtain free flu shots. Between the drive-thru effort, shots given to employees, and shots given by our Public Health Department, approximately 5,000 vaccines were given.

Please don’t misunderstand; there were other efforts throughout the community to administer flu shots, but I don’t think any were as gallant as that of the CPN Health Services. Hopefully, because of the community efforts to contain the flu, the low occurrences of flu-related hospitalized patients in Porter Township County is a positive result.

Thanks goes out to Dr. Vascelaro, Dr. Roselius and Chris Skillings for their guidance and direction in this huge undertaking. I appreciate you reading my heart-felt views on the importance of CPN in the community.

Migwetch
(Thank you),
John ‘Rocky’ Barrett
Vice-Chairman
(He Leads Them Home)
Tribal Chairman

Vice-Chairman – Linda Capps

In recent years, CPN Health Services’ Flu Shot drives have been widely used by county residents.

Please don’t misunderstand; there were other efforts throughout the community to administer flu shots, but I don’t think any were as gallant as that of the CPN Health Services. Hopefully, because of the community efforts to contain the flu, the low occurrences of flu-related hospitalized patients in Porter Township County is a positive result.

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Migwetch
(Thank you),
Linda Capps
Vice-Chairman
(Black Bird Woman)
Vice-Chairman
405-275-3121 work
405-650-1238 cell
lcapps@potawatomi.org
There is another factor that has favorable as well as unfavorable consequences for specific states. Let me start with what has been happening over the last 10 years with interstate migration. For example, California lost 205,000 of their population between 2018 and 2019. Over the last 10 years, California as well as Alabama, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and West Virginia have had a large number of their citizens leave and relocate to Arizona, Colorado and/or Texas. As a result, after the U.S. Census is tallied, each of these states is expected to lose one federal representative in the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C.

The following states because of now increased populations are expected to gain one additional representative in the U.S. House of Representatives: Arizona, Colorado, Montana, North Carolina and Oregon. At the same time, Florida is expected to gain two more representatives, and Texas is expected to gain three more representatives in the House of Representatives. This means that there will be some redistricting in each state impacted by this change. Since theseanganese 10 representatives are elected in the U.S. House of Representatives. In some cases, a state district may be eliminated or new ones created. In order for all of this to take place, it is very important that you get yourself counted by the U.S. Census. In some cases where there is only a seat difference in parties in the U.S. House of Representatives, the loss of a seat in one state whose political party is now in the majority could result in the other party now having the majority due to the new seat gaining a new representative in the other political party.

In some ways, the U.S. Census may indirectly impact how votes turn out by our representatives on the federal level in the future. This change will also impact the makeup of the federal Electoral College by giving some of the smaller states a slightly larger role and taking some power from one or more larger states in the federal elections for president. Any change here however, will not take place until after the 2020 election. The Electoral College was designed by our forefathers to ensure that a very high concentration of population in a few states — that could be large enough to include over 50 percent of the population — were prevented from having complete control of the outcome of our federal elections for U.S. president. As a point of information, s four years ago, I had a small business interest in both Argentina and Chile. Argentina at the time had a government similar to ours. They had an Electoral College, and the voters allowed it to be voted out. Their representatives have been elected based solely on the popular vote.

Shortly thereafter, Argentina went through a devaluation of the peso. At that time, I cancelled my business interest since the peso and dollar were no longer equal. Since then, the elected representatives basically passed laws that do more for the very populated areas, mainly Buenos Aires, and there is little left for the rural communities. Moreover, taxes have become so high that a number of firms have gone out of business or moved to other countries. When Argentina had the Electoral College, the laws passed were generally in the interest of all areas and taxes were lower. Basically, the Electoral College ensures the smaller states are not left out and lose their importance, and in reality, ensure representation for their interests by those they elect. In summary, please be sure you register with the U.S. Cen-
District 4 – Jon Boursaw

Upcoming events:

Rossville District 4 meeting at the CPN Community Center will start at 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 28, 2020, with a catered lunch at noon. The meeting agenda will be posted in the March Hownikan.

Wichita District 4 meeting at the Mid-America All-Indian Center, 650 N. Seneca St. in Wichita. The meeting will start with a catered lunch at 1 p.m., Sunday, March 29, 2020. The meeting agenda will be posted in the March Hownikan.

2020 CPN Family Reunion Festival will be held in Shawnee, Oklahoma, on June 26-28. This year’s honored families included the Bruno, Darling, Hardin, Hibge, Lewis, Nadeau, Slavin and Smith.

2020 Potawatomi Gathering will be hosted by the Hannahville Indian Community of Potawatomi located in the south-central section of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Tentative dates are Wednesday, July 29, to Saturday, Aug. 1, 2020.

The February Elders Potluck at the CPN Community Center in Rossville is scheduled for noon on Friday, Feb. 14. (For those of your husbands in the need of a reminder, this is Valentine’s Day.) The menu will be chicken pot pie. Come join us, and bring your favorite side dish or dessert. Please RSVP to Tracy or Sharon at 785-584-6171 if you plan to attend.

The March Elders Potluck will be held on Friday, March 13.

Kansas historical research material

I was recently given a tremendous amount of material dealing with the history of Kansas, including the following:

• A bound set of Kansas Historical Quarterly covering the period from 1931 to 1977
• Several books pertaining to events, places and life in early Kansas
• Numerous Kansas maps and other miscellaneous items

This material is available to be viewed and researched only in the CPN Community Center in Shawnee. We are discussing how to possibly make this material available on a checkout basis. Feel free to stop by and scan this material. I venture to say you won’t leave without learning something new. Tell the students in your family about it, as it would be a great resource for preparing a history report or making a presentation.

CPN member is new president of the Shawnee County Historical Society Board of Trustees

Tim Henschir, a descendant of the Juseau family, was recently elected president of the 15-member SCHS Board of Trustees. The Society has slightly more than 200 organizational members. Tim has been a staff reporter/writer for the Topeka Capital Journal since 1980. However, for the past few years, he has been better known as “The History Guy” as each week he produces a short video and article about a historical, sometimes forgotten, person or event associated with Topeka or Shawnee Country history. Joining Tim in the accompanying photo is his wife, Catheryn.

2020 U.S. Census

If you haven’t, I highly recommend you read the section in Bob Whistler’s column in the January Hownikan along with this piece in this very edition on the need to properly report your tribal affiliation on the census form during the upcoming U.S. Census this spring. It is vital that you properly identify yourself as a Native American and a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. If you do not have the January Hownikan, you can go online at cpn-news@potawatomi.org or 817-282-0868 office 817-545-1507 home cpn3legislator@yahoo.com.
Greetings to everyone!

I hope the new year has treated each and every one of you well so far. My prediction is that 2020 will be the best year ever. Let’s put everything in its place and make it so. It all starts with us.

So what if you stumble? Just keep on “walkin’.” It’s ok! The month of February is all about love. This can be the love you have for your children, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins or just good friends.

We have the unconditional love we enjoy every day from our pets. Maybe it is about the love you share with your Native people and our ways (Citizen Potawatomi Nation). Let’s not forget about the love you have for yourself as it is important to know and love yourself before you can love others.

In mythology, Cupid is responsible for choosing arrows to make people fall in love and want to marry. This is an important one too. Best if you don’t forget! I believe this is the love St. Valentine addressed centuries ago.

We call this Valentine’s Day. The idea was established knowing it is the beginning and end of all things. It was getting lost in the big picture. How can we live in today. In all actuality, this day acknowledging love in its many forms should be practiced on a daily basis. We assume they know we love them! Don’t we all need to hear it from time to time?

By the way, if you are too far away to visit and talk to your special people. Please don’t send a text or email, which would be acceptable only as a follow up.

That just says, “I am really too busy for you.”

We have the love our Creator gave us unconditionally.

The Greatest Commandment

The First Commandment;
Matthew 22:34 to 40 and Mark 12:31; taken from the King James Version and American Standard Version.

“Having Jesus that had silenced the Sadducees, The Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Now I don’t know about you, but I have been working on the second commandment as I truly do love the Lord, and I know the same spirit lives in us all if we are here on earth today.

If God decides your neighbor has the right to be here, then I have to accept that and learn to get along. Right? Right! So as a child here, we go as we continue to learn, even if it is a neighbor.

We all have different priorities along with varying mental and emotional capabilities.

If you have not reached a place in your world to love your neighbor, perhaps just learning to be kind would be an excellent start. Maybe your neighbor needs your love and understanding more than anyone. (I think they may be working on me right now.)

The short “Good mornings,” when you cross each other’s paths or “How are you today?” can take you far. If they do not respond or are perhaps a little stubborn, just keep on as they will have to break down eventually.

You never know the cross each person bears or the overwelmed existence they live in.

Maybe you are the one overwelmed and just don’t have a place for them in your thought. Regardless of the “who is responsible,” someone has to take the lead to break the ice so you can begin to communicate.

Find the smallest of things to agree on and go from there. They are undoubtly just as uncomfortble with the elephant in the room as are you. You don’t have to do this for them, rather for yourself. They will benefit, but the true benefit is yours.

I have had people say after the fact how much they appreciated the little compliment (sincere compliment) or how it brightened their day to have acknowledged them when they were feeling lost.

We never know when we say hello with a smile to a passing stranger how it will affect their day. Caring about these things and acknowledging the spirit that lives in every neighbor (which is the same as yours) is the beginning of learning how to love your neighbor.

I am sure you have had similar days when a kind word lifted your spirits and helped you through a depressing day or work project. Acceptance and acknowledgement is important for everyone. No one wants to be where they are not wanted or appreciated. The lack of either would be devastating.

Respect is another form of love and caring. Some consider this a lost art. I have heard people say, “They have to earn my respect.” Not! They are here in front of you; therefore, you owe them respect as another human being. While their concerns may differ from yours, that doesn’t mean they are wrong and you are right. It simply means we are all different.

Without respect, there can be no love, and without love, there is no point on the human or spiritual level. Leave that judgment to the Creator.

God is love, love is God, and God is good!

Everything said here is something you know well. A gentle reminder in today’s world of change and upheaval can help us keep our focus on issues of importance.

The heart

Practice and enjoy February, the month of all kinds of love.

So, I end with saying love others as you would want them to love you. Be there for them, as you would seek their assistance in life. No one makes it all alone. Thank you all for being there for me. Hopefully I can be there for you. I love you! Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Your legislator, Eunice Imogene Lambert
Butterfly Woman Representative, District 5 270 E Hunt Highway, Ste 229 San Tan Valley, AZ 85143 480-228-6560 eunice.lambert@gmail.com

Hownikan

February 2020

17

Legislators are not able to retrieve your contact information from Tribal Rolls. Please contact your legislator and update your contact details so that you can receive important information.
District 7 – Mark Johnson

Once she left office and was replaced by Gov. Kevin Stitt, Indian nations were hopeful that the relationship she had established would get back on a fresh footing and level playing field. Unfortunately, that hasn’t been the case. Gov. Stitt is taking the same position that the gaming compacts between the Indian nations and the state have expired. The Indian nations interpreted the gaming compact correctly as does everybody else in the state of Oklahoma: that the agreement automatically extended itself after Jan. 1, 2020. Because the required conditions were met and in place on that date. The governor has told the tribes that the 4 to 10 percent of revenues currently paid to the state are not enough and that Indian nations in Oklahoma are getting off too easy. He said that other states’ compacts require that Indian nations pay up to 50 percent — this is ridiculous. No Indian nation would survive in the gaming business if they paid 50 percent to the state that they had a compact with. The governor has also made the hollow threat to allow commercial gaming companies into Oklahoma to set up business. In a state of less than 4 million people and 140 current casinos, no commercial company would want the enormous amount of money to set up in the state of Oklahoma to compete with the Indian nations. This is a fight that none of the Indian nations wanted, but one that we must all band together and fight, and we have. All of our nations depend on gaming revenues to support our people. It is critically important that the Citizens Potawatomi Nation maintain its gaming revenues; those are what pay for the health services, the scholarships for our students and many other programs that our tribal leaders desire. Unfortunately for the governor, virtually no one in Oklahoma stands on his side, including those who wrote the compacts. The Indian nations are in a strong position, and hopefully one of these days, the State of Oklahoma will become a good partner instead of looking at Indian nations as just one more way to boost revenues. Maybe they should focus on taking the resources they have and making the best use out of them.

Attending the Family Reunion Festival is a great way to reconnect with your history. If you haven’t been before or it has been awhile, start planning now and join us June 26-28 in Shawnee. I am always available to talk and love visiting with our members at the Festival. There is no better way to spend your summer vacation.

After the ceremony, we shared a feast of east Indian butter chicken and Native American squash cooked by Laura and served on colorful Christmas linens since it was the day after the holiday. If you have received your Potawatomi name and would like to name family members, I’ll be happy to assist you any way I can. All names are vetted and checked through CPIN’s Language Department and Director, Justin Neely, who is gracious and generous with his knowledge.

As always, it is my pleasure to represent you. Please feel free to contact me at dcarney@potawatomi.org.

Mark Johnson, Wiik Ahid (Strong as a Tree)
Representative, District 7
1565 Shaw Ave., Suite 202
Clovis, CA 93611
559-351-0078 cell
mark.johnson@potawatomi.org

District 8 – Dave Carney

During the holidays, we had lots of festivities with family and friends, and amidst the Christmas activities, we took time to celebrate Laura Carney’s accomplishments with her Potawatomi name. Laura has two children, Susanna and Adam, who both participated in the Potawatomi Leadership Program in Oklahoma after their respective senior years in high school. During those summer experiences, both children received their Potawatomi names. So, it seemed natural that Laura would give her to-bacco, asking her daughter to name her when the two of them spent Christmas vacation in Washington State with me. Laura was flanked by others. Laura was flanked by others. Laura was flanked by others. Laura was flanked by others. Laura was flanked by others.

Susanna is a gentle soul and an impressive young lady. She is several years into an MD-Ph.D. program at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. During her time in the Potawatomi Leadership Program, she had the pleasure of interacting with Margaret Zientek, who — among other things — manages the living situation of participants. She commissioned Margaret to design and sew Laura’s regalia, which is very beautiful and well made! Our sister, Eva Marie, was not present; however, she contributed the eagle feather used in the naming and provided to Laura with her name.

A fire was made, cedar was spread and a prayer circle was created under an outdoor gazebo built for the Pacific Northwest rain. Family members were smudged using an eagle fan adorned with portraits of Solomon and Jestee Juneau — some of our earliest ancestors affiliated with the Citizens Potawatomi Nation. After sharing Potawatomi history and Potawatomi stories, Susanna named Laura. Her name is Kyennonata Yatowan (The one who holds stories for others). Laura was flanked by Luke and Sophia, her nephew and niece who were her sponsors.

Left to right, Dave Carney, wife, Nicole, Luke Carney, Sophia Carney, Laura Carney, Susanna Bassappa and Nick Carney.

According to the National Institute of Justice, 97 percent of Native American women who have experienced violence were victimized by non-Native American perpetrators. There is some work in Congress along bipartisan lines to craft law that would require the Justice Department to create specific guidelines in responding to such cases. The legislation — called Savana’s Act — is on the Senate calendar for the year and should be voted on.

Migwetch (Thank you),
Dave Carney
Kiskateve (Raven)
Representative, District 8
520 Lilly Road, Building 1
Olympia, WA 98506
360-259-4027
dcarney@potawatomi.org

District 9 – Paul Wesselhöft

President Trump said in signing an executive order, “My administration has heard the ongoing and serious concerns of tribal governments regarding missing and murdered members of American Indian and Alaska Native communities, particularly women and girls.”

The Department of Justice is hiring missing and murdered Indigenous persons coordinators in Oklahoma and 10 other states. It is a good sign that the federal government is taking Indigenous issues seriously. It behooves all tribes to encourage and support Native American candidates to run for local and national offices. It is important to increase our representation across all levels of state and national government.

An article by Grace Segers of CBS News provided more context to the concrete actions being taken. “The order created an interagency task force which will be led by the Department of Justice and Department of the Interior. “(Attorney General William) Barr announced the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Initiative during a visit with tribal leaders and law enforcement officials on the Flathead Reservation in Montana. The initiative will invest $1.5 million in hiring specialized coordinators in the offices of 11 U.S. attorneys who will be responsible for coming up with protocols for a more coordinated response to violence against indigenous people.”

“The plan also allows tribal or local law enforcement to seek help from the FBI, and the Justice Department is committing to conducting an in-depth review of federal databases to determine best practices for collecting data on missing indigenous persons.”

Violence against Native American women is not just a problem for our neighbors on reservations. According to the article, “A report by the Urban Indian Health Institute found that there have been 506 cases of missing and murdered Native women, girls and women and girls in 71 cities across the US since 2010. However, this data is almost certainly an undercount — U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs currently paid to the state of Oklahoma: that the required conditions were met and in place on that date. The governor has told the tribes that the 4 to 10 percent of revenues currently paid to the state are not enough and that Indian nations in Oklahoma are getting off too easy. He said that other states’ compacts require that Indian nations pay up to 50 percent — this is ridiculous. No Indian nation would survive in the gaming business if they paid 50 percent to the state that they had a compact with. The governor has also made the hollow threat to allow commercial gaming companies into Oklahoma to set up business. In a state of less than 4 million people and 140 current casinos, no commercial company would want the enormous amount of money to set up in the state of Oklahoma to compete with the Indian nations. This is a fight that none of the Indian nations wanted, but one that we must all band together and fight, and we have. All of our nations depend on gaming revenues to support our people. It is critically important that the Citizens Potawatomi Nation maintain its gaming revenues; those are what pay for the health services, the scholarships for our students and many other programs that our tribal leaders desire. Unfortunately for the governor, virtually no one in Oklahoma stands on his side, including those who wrote the compacts. The Indian nations are in a strong position, and hopefully one of these days, the State of Oklahoma will become a good partner instead of looking at Indian nations as just one more way to boost revenues. Maybe they should focus on taking the resources they have and making the best use out of them.

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Migwetch (Thank you),
Paul Wesselhöft
Nigwani (Leader)
Representative, District 9
pwesselhoft@potawatomi.org
Memorial Mass for Marjorie Jean (Nadeau) Holzmeister, 80, and Lawrence Nadeau, was held July 23, 2019, at Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Lawrence. Inurnment is at the Catholic Cemeteries Columbarium & Prayer Garden. Jean passed away July 16, 2019, at Lawrence Memorial Hospital after a long battle with cancer.

Jean was born May 8, 1939, in Silver Lake, Kansas, the daughter of Paul Edward and Rosie Marjorie (Mitchell) Nadeau. She was enrolled as a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, where she was aptly named Wishkose (Walking Strong), a name that exemplified her strong-willed personality throughout her life and her strength in battling her illness.

Jean was a homeeaker, a faithful and loving wife, and a proud mother and grandmother whose devotion to her family was unmatched. She showed her support for her loved ones whenever the opportunity arose. She was a loyal supporter of the Kansas City Royals supporter and devoted Royals fan. She considered herself a true devoted fan and never missed a high school or college football or basketball game.

Jean attended St. Mary's High School and Washburn University where she was a member of Zeta Tau Alpha sorority. She married Richard James Holzmeister on Oct. 8, 1960, in Topeka, Kansas.

Marjorie Jean Holzmeister

Jean was very proud of her contribution to the creation of a new set of her hand-sewn pajamas and a unique tree ornament she had selected for each of them.

In addition to the love and adoration grandkids shared forward, Jean exemplified the meaning of unconditional love and respect throughout her 59 years of blissful marriage to her husband, Dick. During the many happy years they shared together, she was a wonderful and important example of a true partnership and a loving relationship for her children and grandchildren to aspire to. This environment of warmth and love she created and lived by was shared with her loved ones for generations to come. Jean will be greatly missed.

Other survivors include her daughter Jill (Steve) Patton, Lawrence; three sons, Jeffery (Lea Ann) Holzmeister, Tempe, Arizona; Scott (Deborah) Holzmeister, Gilbert, Arizona, and Jon (Michelle) Holzmeister, Overland Park, Kansas; 15 grandchildren; three sisters, Jeanette Lister, Edmond, Oklahoma, Carole Van Cervaile, San Mateo, California, and Susan Nadeau, Shawnee, Kansas; and three brothers Michael Nadeau, Silver Lake, Kansas, David Nadeau, Rossville, Kansas, and Dennis Nadeau, Rossville.

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Other survivors include her daughter Jill (Steve) Patton, Lawrence; three sons, Jeffery (Lea Ann) Holzmeister, Tempe, Arizona; Scott (Deborah) Holzmeister, Gilbert, Arizona, and Jon (Michelle) Holzmeister, Overland Park, Kansas; 15 grandchildren; three sisters, Jeanette Lister, Edmond, Oklahoma, Carole Van Cervaile, San Mateo, California, and Susan Nadeau, Shawnee, Kansas; and three brothers Michael Nadeau, Silver Lake, Kansas, David Nadeau, Rossville, Kansas, and Dennis Nadeau, Rossville.

Marjorie Jean Holzmeister

Memorial contributions may be made in her name to Corpus Christi Catholic School and may be sent in care of Warren-McElwain Mortuary, 120 W. 11th Street, Lawrence, KS 66044.

Pauline House Weingard

Pauline House Weingard was born Aug. 15, 1945, in DeQueen, Arkansas, to Robert “Pete” Pittman and Patsy Petifer Pittman. Pete passed away on April 7, 2019, from complications from a stroke he suffered in July 2016. Being a Navy brat, Pete moved often as a child, from Arkansas to Newport, Rhode Island, Penaccola, Florida, Norfolk, Virginia, and Bladensburg, Maryland. As a teenager, he decided that he was nowhere he wanted to be more than Murrefreesboro, Arkansas, so he went to live with his great-grandparents, Pat and Viola Petifer.

Pete enrolled in Murfreesboro High School in 1963, he worked for a time, then enlisted in the U.S. Navy in May 1964. He served as an aviation ordnance gunnery technician with the U.S. Sargatoga (CVN 60). His tour of duty was complete in June 1968, he returned to Arkansas and settled in El Dorado where he was employed by Teris and later Clean Harbors for 50-plus years until his retirement.

Pete was a proud member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation (Pettifer descendant). He spent his last years living in Shawnee, working part-time for the CPN at the FireLake Mini-Put. Known for his nature and generous spirit, Pete was loved by everyone. He was preceded in death by his maternal grandparents, Pat and Victor Pettifer, a maternal grandmother, Verseh Wheat; his father, Robert Pittman; and sisters, Priscilla "Penny" Weaver and Doris Ruth. He is survived by his mother, Pany Watver, of San Diego, California; his sisters, Phyllis Hurlock (Jim) and Peggy Hurlock (Gary) of Richardsville, Virginia, and Jane Hoyle (David) of San Diego, California; his niece, Sissy Cokee, of Gilbert, Arizona, and nephews, Amy Pittman, Jv Voghtzny, Gary Hurlock and Joshua Hurlock.

William Robert Pierson

William Robert Pierson went to heaven to be with Jesus and his beloved Margie on Nov. 30, 2019. He was known by some as “Bill” and others as “Robby.” He was born in Bakersfield (Olddale), California, on Oct. 1, 1925, where he lived until moving to Arroyo Grande in 1955. His parents were P.E. (Frank) and Laura Pierson.

He served in the U.S. Navy from 1943-1946. He married Marjorie Karth on Valentine’s Day 1945. He retired from Pacific Telephone Company after 35 years of service in Bakersfield, San Luis Obispo, San Francisco, and San Diego. He was also a faithful member of the Arroyo Christian Church in Bakersfield. He is survived by three daughters; food and travel. He was an active member of the Arroyo Grande Lobos Club for as long as his health allowed. He was Past Master Masonic Lodge No. 274 F&AM. He was also a faithful member of the Arroyo Grande First United Methodist Church. He attended Standard Elementary School in Olddale, Kern County Union High School (now known as Bakersfield High School) in Bakersfield, Princeton University and College of Pacific. He is survived by three daughters; Lynn (George) Stewart of Arroyo Grande, Barbara (Thomas) Ralph of Arroyo Grande, and Rebecca (Roy) Gibson, Georgette Woodman, Josephine Woodman, Vince Aragon and Jake Aragon; four great-grandchildren, Matthew Williams, Aramis Davis, Liam Davis and Mason Bayhayan; an assortment of nieces and nephews; and two sisters-in-law. He was preceded in death by his parents; sister, Norma Thompson; brother, Dr. James Pierson, wife, Marjorie; and grandson, Matthew Stewart.

A memorial service was held Dec. 12, at the First United Methodist Church in Arroyo Grande.

Travis Michael Coulter

Travis Michael Coulter, 41, of Little Rock, Arkansas, passed away Dec. 15, 2017. He was the son of Wayman Coulter, deceased, and is survived by his mother, Tracy Schroepfer; his uncle, Terry Coulter; and niece, Teresa Schroepfer (Teresa); his cousins, Matt, Chris, Tim, Tiffany and Tori; and many loving friends.

Travis was a gifted young man, both professionally and personally. He was the proud owner of his own successful business, Tailor Made Promotions. He loved the hands-on work the business required as well as the interactions with his customers and workers. Travis was very intelligent and sought to absorb as much information about anything and everything. He loved technology; he was a voracious reader of books, new foods and traveling. Most importantly, though, Travis was generous, kind, caring and loyal to those around him. He was gifted at building and maintaining relationships, as evidenced by the many lifelong friendships he had. He always looked out for others, particularly when he knew they were struggling. Travis loved his mother deeply and that love was returned a hundredfold. For the many, many people who loved him, the pain will be a sacrifice too great to bear.

A memorial service was held Dec. 26, 2019, at the Little Rock Funeral Home. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Arthura Foundation of America.
WALKING ON

Mary Darlene Cossey Dayton, 78, passed away, Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2019, in Shawnee, Oklahoma. She was born Nov. 7, 1941, in Shawnee, daughter of Roy "Tommy" and Helen Camp Cossey. Although she was an only child, she was very close to extended family and friends she met throughout her life.

She attended St Benedict's Catholic School and Shawnee High School until her senior year, which she spent in Fresno, California. Darlene moved back to Oklahoma and worked as a nurse's aide at Shawnee Hospital following graduation. She soon attended nursing school at Mission Hill Hospital in Shawnee, and obtained her LPN in 1969. Darlene said one of her proudest years together on Nov. 10, 2019. Darlene married Jerry Dayton and they raised four children.

Darlene was a proud member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and very grateful for all of the Tribe’s support.

Maureen T. (Pearl) Harris, 90, walked into her creator on Monday, Dec. 23, 2019, at Aldergate Village in Topeka, Kansas. She was born Dec. 28, 1928, on a farm in the Sandy Hook community of Rossville, Kansas, the daughter of Thomas M. and Florence G. (Doyle) Pearl. Maureen graduated from high school in St. Marys, Kansas, and in 1950, attained a nursing degree from the College of St. Teresa, School of Nursing in Kansas City, Missouri.

After graduation, Maureen worked as an RN in St. Louis, Missouri, where she met Richard J. Howe. They were married, and she relocated to his family’s area near Boston, Massachusetts, where they raised four children.

Her home there had hollyhocks and a large pears tree, reminding her of her home growing up in Kansas. She lived in Boston for 23 years, where she loved and enjoyed her family. Richard preceded her in death in 1986. Maureen moved back to Kansas and worked as an RN and as a private duty nurse until retirement. In retirement, she enjoyed seniors’ programs, gardening, her friends and family. Her church community was very much a part of her life. She was a member of the Daughters of Isabella Little Flower Circle and the Holy Name Catholic Church in Topeka, Kansas.

Maureen was proud to be a member of the Slavin family and of her Irish roots and name, heritage and culture. In 1999, she married Charles W. Harris at Council Grove, Kansas. Maureen and Charlie spent time attending veterans programs, travelling and playing bingo. She loved planting and attending to the flowers around their home each year. Charlie preceded her in death in 2009. Maureen was also preceded in death by her parents; a brother, James B. (JBJ) Pearl; a sister, Marjorie Guerich; and sons, Kevin and Michael Howes.

John C. Benak, Jr., 80, of Topeka, Kansas, passed peacefully at his home on Dec. 10, 2019. He was born in Corpus Christi, Texas, to Betty Martin Gibson and William Gibson. In 1983, he met the love of his life, Cheryl Baker, and married in 1987. Dennis built the house that the couple farmed on and lived in, which continues to be a gathering place for family and friends. He attended Topeka High School before receiving his vocational training. Dennis was a proud member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and Carpenters Local 1445, where he received his journeyman certificate. He was a descendant of the Navarre family and grandson of Edith Burns Martin.

Dennis excelled at every task he took on and could repair anything. He was a master carpenter, painter, handyman, gardener and cook in addition to an excellent gitar and harmonica player. Above all, Dennis devoted his life to those he loved. He was one of the very few people who loved not just his family and friends but everyone ever he met.

He thrilled in the outdoors and took numerous hunting and fishing trips throughout the country. On these adventures, Dennis always managed to bring his cooking gear to ensure no one went hungry or had to prepare any food. He enjoyed smoking varieties of meat for family gatherings at his home, and his talents were on display at various barbecues competition along with his uncle Jim and cousin Doug Lambotte. Dennis loved to prepare homemade meals and watch cooking shows. He always made sure no one left his home without trying his delicious cooking.

Throughout his illness, he possessed a strong and courageous attitude. His bravery and spirit were a testament to all. Even in his final days, Dennis inspired those around him.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Betty Gibson and William Gibson. Dennis is survived by his wife, Cheryl Gibson; three brothers, Gary Gibson (Livermore, California), Randy Gibson (Austin, California) and Charles Gibson (San Diego, California); and three sisters, Debra Sepulveda (Castro Valley, California), Judy Kohler and Denise Counts, both of Topeka; numerous nieces and nephews, many family members, and countless friends.

Receiving of the rosary will begin at 7 p.m. on Friday, April 24, 2020, at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 105 N. Washburn St., Topeka, Kansas, at 1 p.m. A barbecue will follow, and side dishes would be appreciated. Memorial donations may be made to the Topeka Hospice Foundation, 1602 SW Financial Center Drive, Topeka, Kansas 66604.

Raymond Gene Lambotte, age 78, of Chicago, Illinois, was born on May 6, 1941, and passed away on Dec. 26, 2019. Raymond was a husband of over 53 years to Pamela Lambotte, neé Hutchinson; a beloved father to Jennifer (Peter) Negoski and Marc Lambotte; and a cherished grandfather to Ryan (fiancée, Bethany), Alexander, Noah and Joshua.

The $2,000 CPN Burial Assistance Fund is automatically available to all enrolled CPN members. You may fill out a burial assistance form if you would like for us to keep it on file in case of any change in resolutions.

To submit an obituary, please send a word document with no more than 300 words, a 300dpi photo and a contact phone number to howlaman@potawatomi.org.