

HOWNIKAN

Zisbakwtoké Gizes | March 2026



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CPNHS Epic team receives award

CPN Health Services Epic team received the Good Install award, presented to facilities that meet certain install standards. CPNHS's Epic team accomplished 64.5 out of 65 items in the Good Install checklist. The implementation was a nine-month process, with seven months dedicated to processing the 11,584 tasks related to build.

Epic's Good Install program is Epic's comprehensive framework for launching its EMR (Electronic Medical Record) in a way that delivers long-term success from day one. It establishes detailed best-practice standards for every stage of implementation, including data migration, clinical workflow redesign, system configuration and validation to ensure the software aligns with real clinical and operational needs. A major emphasis is placed on preparing analysts through structured training and certification so they can build, customize and support the system effectively before go-live, which helps reduce post-launch issues and ensures the system reflects intended workflows.

The program also incorporates measurable quality benchmarks — such as training completion rates, workflow accuracy and reduced help-desk demand — to track preparedness and qualify organizations for financial credits that lower future Epic costs.

Alongside these internal goals, Good Install stresses interoperability and data integration, encouraging organizations to connect departments and external systems through tools like Care Everywhere to improve coordination and continuity of care.

By combining structured preparation, strong analyst readiness, and incentives tied to execution quality, the program lowers implementation risks, accelerates adoption, stabilizes operations more quickly after launch and ultimately contributes to improved clinical decision-making and patient outcomes. 🌱

Interested in going to the Potawatomi Gathering?

Contact our travel department at travel@potawatomi.org or 405-275-3121

Bruno Family History

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation's Cultural Heritage Center provides resources to keep the Tribe's history safe and accessible for generations to come. One key way the Nation does this is through the CHC's archives and video interviews. To highlight some of the archive's holdings, the *Hownikan* is featuring photographs and family history of every founding Citizen Potawatomi family. If interested in assisting preservation efforts by providing copies of Citizen Potawatomi family photographs, documents and more, or to schedule family interviews, please contact the CHC at 405-878-5830.

Family beginnings

Like many Potawatomi, the origins of the Bruno family stretch back to the fur trading and trapping industry. French-Canadian settlers in the Great Lakes region frequently married into prominent Potawatomi families.

Anthony Bruneau (Bruno) was one of these early settlers. His son, John Baptiste, married Mary Rhodd, the daughter of Charles H. Rhodd.

Mary's father, Charles, grew up in the Saginaw area of Michigan, northwest of present-day Detroit. Charles was an ally of Ojibwa chief *Naw-Qwa-Chic-A-Ming*. Charles accompanied a contingent of Ojibway to Washington, D.C., serving as an interpreter during land sale negotiations in 1830. His name appears on several treaties, including the 1837 Treaty with the Chippewa signed on Jan. 14, 1837.

In 1840, Charles married a Potawatomi woman named *Was-cho-win*. She was born in Illinois and was among the Potawatomi forcibly removed to present-day Iowa as a child.

While living near Council Bluffs, Iowa, Charles and Mary had David (born in 1841) and Alexander (born in 1843). After the Treaty of 1848 and removal to Kansas, they had Mary, Charles Richard and Elizabeth.

David married Julia Guilet in 1863. They were the parents of Rolly, Henry, Edward, Josephine, Israel and Charles.

Alexander married Mary Vieux and they had Ellen, Tom and Mary Ann. Later, Alexander married Zoa Bourbonnais and they had Peter Albert, Inez, Elizabeth, John and Enos.

Mary Rhodd married John Baptiste Bruno on June 20, 1864. Together, they had eight children: Samuel William, John Anthony, Julia, Joseph Oliver, Mose, Josephine, Bella and David. Mary's younger sister, Elizabeth, would later come to live with her sister's family following the deaths of *Was-cho-win* and Charles.

Charles Richard, the youngest son, married Helen Acton. They had seven children: Viola



John Bruno, Mary Ann Vieux Bruno, John Anthony Bruno Jr., Ethel Bruno Shopwetuck, Mary Bruno Webb, Osie Bruno DeLonais, Nora Bruno Kemohal Woodring and Evelyn Cecilia Bruno Cody (Unknown Order)

Alice, Ida Florence, Noah J., David C., Unice Mae Margaret, Thomas and Charles Daniel.

The youngest daughter, Elizabeth, would later marry Thomas Hardin. The couple had no children.

The Bruno/Rhodd family

John Baptiste drove mules for the U.S. Army and served as a member of the Citizen Potawatomi business committee in 1891.

John and Mary's son, John Anthony, married Mary Ann Vieux in 1891. They were the parents of Ethel, Jessie, Mary, Ozie, Nora, Johnny and Eveline.

Their daughter Julia married Peter Wano. The couple had Isaac, Frank, Stell and Benjamin.

Joseph Oliver married Ellen Vieux in 1895. They were the parents of Jacob, Charlotte, Elizabeth, Willy, Luther, Lewis, Julia, Joseph Charles and August James.

Josephine married Henry Tarter in 1900. They were the parents of George Lawrence, John Ivy, Emily and Vernie.

Belle married George Lehman in 1900. Their children were: George Jr., Grace Catherine and William Edgar.

Mose married Francis Shopwetuck in 1901. Their children were: Mose Jr., Johnnie Baptiste, Mike, Robert, Zoa, Beatrice, Markie, Patrick and Celeste.

Due to space limitations, it is not possible to list the names of every descendant in the family histories. More comprehensive information is available on Ancestors.

If interested in assisting preservation efforts by providing copies of Citizen Potawatomi family photographs, documents and more, or to schedule family interviews, please contact the CHC at 405-878-5830. Schedule interviews online at portal.potawatomi.org. Learn more about the Family Reunion Festival at cpn.news/festival, and find research resources online at potawatomiheritage.com. 🍷

Tribal member wins first place in 4-H fabrics contest



Addison Bristow holds her first place certificate alongside her strawberry patterned ribbon skirt

CPN Tribal member Addison Bristow won first place in the Pottawatomie County 4-H Fabrics and Fashion Contest for her ribbon skirt. 4-H is a youth development organization focused on hands-on learning. The 11-year-old designed and sewed the pink ribbon skirt, featuring a strawberry pattern accented

with red, white and black ribbon, with guidance from her mother and grandmother.

The project was more than a contest for Bristow. She attached a piece of paper to the skirt explaining the cultural meaning behind her design:

“The fabric that I chose has a special meaning. In my Tribe’s culture, the strawberry, also known as the heart berry, is an important fruit. Potawatomi ancestors believed they were a gift from the Creator. The strawberry represents womanhood and becoming a caretaker.”

Bristow, a Toupin family descendant, said she was inspired to make her own ribbon skirt after learning about different regalia during a Native American Student Association (NASA) meeting.

“My favorite part about making the ribbon skirt was picking out the fabric,” she said.

With support from her family, Bristow learned new sewing skills throughout the process.

“From my grandmother, I learned how to hem my skirt, make a gather and create a skirt without a pattern,” she said. “From my mother, I learned how to pin and sew ribbon onto my skirt.”

Bristow was one of six contest participants in the intermediate level.

A contest judge noted, “She did a nice job placing and keeping her ribbon straight and pucker free, and good placement on her skirt. Waistband used a more advanced technique being set in case elastic band. Then she added her personal touch with ribbon on the waistband. Her seams were of correct width and with a zigzag finish. Total garment was properly pressed.”

Upon learning she won first place, Bristow said she felt “excited and proud.”

Her grandmother, Patricia Heer, was honored when Bristow wanted guidance on learning how to sew.

“As a non-Native mother and grandmother, I have made it my mission to learn as much as I can about my husband’s CPN Tribal culture,” said Heer. “I have used this knowledge to encourage my children and grandchildren to be proud of their culture and to participate. I am beyond proud of Addison.”

Guiding Addison through the project was also meaningful for her mother, Lauren Bristow.

“Not only did this project focus on building a skillset (sewing), it also provided the opportunity to connect to culture,” she said. “She was very mindful of every detail, from selecting a fabric with a meaningful Potawatomi image to coordinating the ribbon.”

Lauren said she feels a responsibility to “teach, sustain and foster” Potawatomi culture for her children just as her parents did for her.

“As a people, we have endured many attempts to strip us of our identities, culture and way of life. It is important that we teach our next generation,” she said.

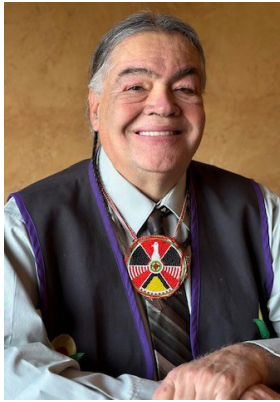


The strawberry patterned ribbon skirt designed and sewn by Addison Bristow

Sewing has been passed down through generations in Bristow’s family. As the great-granddaughter of Francis “Bernard” Heer, an early member of the CPN Business Committee, Addison is the fourth generation to sew and hopes to continue creating cultural items in the future. 🍓

Vice-Chairman election candidates Q&A

Editor's note: Responses from candidates appear exactly as they were submitted without editing for content or style.



Charles Scott

Potawatomi Name and family: *Wenbisa, Viuex/Peltier/Ogee.*

Residence: Norman, OK.

Education and/or other achievements: Graduated Preston High School, Bachelor of Arts Degree St. Gregory's University. Graduate of the first *Mdamen* class. Veteran of the U.S. Army and Navy.

Employment: Retired.

General Statement: I am running for Vice Chairman to serve and represent our people. I am actively involved in our communities and tribal affairs, mentor our youth, and work to preserve our culture through language, traditional songs, drumming, and ceremony. I have a deep love for our people, our tribe, and our government. I offer a fresh perspective and hope to introduce new ideas to increase services for both our in-state and out-of-state members. For more information, visit "Charles Scott for CPN Vice Chairman" on FaceBook or contact via email at cdscott66@gmail.com or text/call at 918-650-8631. *Migwetch.*



Jason Smalley

Potawatomi Name and family: I come from the Peltier family. My grandfather was Nev Walter Peltier, the son of John Baptiste Peltier, Jr., and the grandson of John Baptiste Peltier, Sr., who was married to Ellen Vioux. I am proud of this lineage and the responsibility it carries, and I strive to honor it through service, leadership, and respect for

our Nation's traditions and people.

Residence: I reside in Stroud, Oklahoma, where I live with my wife, C'Anne, of 24 years, and our three children: Gideon (15), August (10), and Lincoln (9). My wife has served as a public-school teacher in Stroud for 15 years. Our family is deeply rooted in the community, and we are actively involved in local schools, activities, and civic life.

Education and/or other achievements: I graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 2010 with a bachelor's degree in social science after serving six years in the

U.S. Marine Corps, including deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Following my military service, I served in the Oklahoma House of Representatives (2012–2014) and Oklahoma State Senate (2014–2020). I held leadership roles including Caucus Chair and Chair of Health and Human Services, and I currently serve as a trustee of the Seminole State College Educational Foundation.

Employment: I currently serve as Director of Government Affairs for Motorola Solutions, working with policymakers across multiple states to support public safety through mission-critical communications for first responders. Previously, I served as Senior Account Manager for Oklahoma, overseeing statewide operations and growth. I have also served the Citizen Potawatomi Nation as an advisor to both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, helping guide political and governmental relations with the State of Oklahoma and advocating for the protection of tribal sovereignty and economic stability which I resigned from in 2025 to be eligible to run for tribal office.

General Statement: I seek this position out of a deep respect for service and a belief that leadership requires responsibility, stewardship, and listening. The Citizen Potawatomi Nation has experienced meaningful growth under our current leadership, and I believe our duty is to build on that success while preparing for future challenges. Drawing on my experience in public service and government relations, my goal is to help protect tribal sovereignty, expand opportunity, and serve our citizens with humility and collaboration. I respectfully ask for your vote.



Martha Kimberly Nootbaar

Potawatomi Name and family: *Niganbekwe ndezhnekas*, which means "woman who sits in the lead." Linda Capps gave me my native name in 2016. I am a Burnett family member. My Great Great Grandfather was Abram Burnett, the last Chief of the Potawatomi. His son, Joseph, was the father of my Great

Grandmother Birdie Josephine Burnett Martin. I was privileged to know her as a young child. She was proud to be Potawatomi and instilled in me to be proud of our heritage as well. I am also a Thunder Clan member.

Residence: I grew up in Tecumseh Oklahoma and am back in my family home. I have lived in many states, including Missouri, Texas, Minnesota, Arizona,

California and Colorado. I loved meeting all the people that I have encountered in each different location and learning about their different needs and wants.

Education and/or other achievements:

Graduated from Tecumseh High School

Graduated from Cottey College with an Associate of Arts Degree with an emphasis in Science, Deans List

Graduated from Oklahoma State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree

Achievements: From the University of Toyota, I received the Presidents Award for 10 years and the Management Excellence Award for 10 years; I received the first ACE Award from VanTuyl Group; I was the youngest Manager to triple sales for the company I was working for at the time; I received a nomination for Woman of the Year and numerous volunteer acknowledgments of merit; I was selected to participate in the Citizen Potawatomi Nation second Mdamen program.

Employment: I worked as a Store Manager for Margos La Mode and Jean Nicole; I was an

Employment Recruiter for a small independent company; I worked for Arthur Young and Company as an Analyst; I was a Management Assistant and Personnel Recruiter for General Dynamics; For Toyota I was in Sales, the Customer Relations Manager and Customer Service Sales Trainer; and I worked for the Citizen Potawatomi Nation in the Optometry Department as a Technician assisting the Doctors.

General Statement: I would like to represent all of you as Vice Chairman. Linda Capps has done an amazing job these past years and she has decided to rest. I would love the opportunity to take our tribe into the future! I have 6 children, 8 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. I have a variety of work experiences and many volunteer projects that gives me the background to be successful in this position. All of my endeavors have involved bringing people together working for the betterment of each organization. I have managed, organized, gathered data, and written manuals. My experience has led me to where I am today. I look forward to working on your behalf for the best future for all of us. 🍀

Legislative election candidates Q&A

Editor's note: Responses from candidates appear exactly as they were submitted without editing for content or style.

District 5



James Newberry

Potawatomi name and family: Ogee

Residence: Tijeras, New Mexico
I Lived in a small rv trailer and built an Earthship. (google: Earthships in Taos) payday by payday over the course of 3 yrs with only friends and family's help. If it hadn't been for the big Alaskan malamute dogs in the rv with us, I think we would have

frozen those two winters. We moved in, with no mortgage. Which allowed me to focus on a bad habit I have. I am by nature, a Climber. I have spent a ridiculous amount of time and money playing on the mountains worldwide.

Education and/or other achievements: High School, U.S. Army, Member 'War Sheild Gourd Society, Certified Personal Trainer, Certified running coach specializing, long distance, Marathons, Quadrathlons'. Certified bicycle coach, Amateur radio Operator kd5goj

Employment: Before the Army, I was expected to work in oil or cows. FYI, I was born and raised in the Texas panhandle. I drove semi-trucks, worked the oil fields

in Oklahoma, and spent time working on the Santa Fe railroad. After the army 1985 I went to work for the High Plains Food Bank in Amarillo, Tx I became the warehouse manager/volunteer coordinator. Which started my path in the Volunteer/nonprofit sector. I've sat on the board of directors for several agencies= D.o.v.i.a. (directors of volunteers in agency's), Homeless coalition of the Texas panhandle, Susan G. Komen breast cancer foundation "Race for the cure", Albuquerque Indian Center, My proudest position was President and publicity chair for the Texas Inter-tribal Indian organization in Amarillo. Where we put on pow-wows and started a scholarship for young natives Amarillo college. I joined the New Mexico Mountain Club, which lead me to search and rescue. I became a SAR volunteer for 5 years with 'Cibola search and rescue.' In 2003, I was the luckiest person in the world. I was hired as the New Mexico State Police Director-Search and Rescue program. I managed approximately (the number varied thru the years) 64 nonprofit teams, and 2500 volunteers positioned around the state. I was involved over 4400 Sar missions. I retired from the State Police became bored and went to work parttime for Trek Bicycle of albq. During my time at trek, I raced bicycles around NM, Colorado and Texas at charity events and local races, Senior Olympics in Cleveland Ohio. Now, I'm retired again and looking for somewhere to put my energy , the reason I'm running for District 5 legislator.

Continued on the next page

General statement: Megwetch to Gene Lambert. After the time you did as our community representative and d-5 legislator, there's no way myself or anyone else will ever be able to truly replace you or fill your moccasins.

I'll I'll make two promises to you.

I will do everything I can for you as I consider every one of you, my cousin.

I will not waste your time.



Lorrie Underwood

Potawatomi name and family:

I am a member of the La Reau / Higbee / Bertrand / Bourassa families.

Residence: I live in Colorado.

Education and/or other achievements:

I have a Bachelor's in Technical Communication and worked in that field for seventeen years.

Employment: I have owned and operated a successful candle manufacturing business since 2014.

General statement: I am committed to helping people and I feel that this is the right time for me to serve as your District 5 Legislator. I hope I can earn your vote.

migwetch, Pètëgizhgokwé



Ryan Hubble

Potawatomi name and family:

My Potawatomi name is *MSKO MTEK*, meaning, "Redwood Tree" and I belong to the Peltier family. I am also married to my wife Renee and have four wonderful and wild boys (ages 5 through 12).

Residence: I'm originally from Cushing, Oklahoma, but currently

reside in Littleton, Colorado.

Education and/or other achievements: I received my Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Brigham Young University and my Master's in Accountancy from Gonzaga University. I am also a Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

Employment: I work as a Controller for an oil and gas company that ships crude oil through the state of California. My job entails preparing financial statements and presenting this information to our Board of

Directors to help them make the best decisions for our company. Before my current company, I worked for one of the Big 4 public accounting firms, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). This company is one of the largest professional service firms in the world. While I was with PwC, I worked on multiple billion-dollar companies ensuring their financials were accurate and appropriate for the public and their shareholders.

General statement: I grew up going to the Family Reunion Festival each year and have been lucky enough to take my family in recent years. This tribe means a lot to me and my family. What better way is there to contribute back to this tribe, who give so much to us, than to serve as a District 5 representative. With my financial background, I feel I can help our tribe continue to grow in a fiscally responsible way. I'll look at the budget with a different set of eyes and ensure we can continue to advance the various programs our tribe has to offer (i.e. education, tribal heritage, language, arts, and culture). I also recognize how hard it is for people outside of Oklahoma to attend the annual reunion. My goal is to have district meetings where the activities and learnings from the festival can be brought to those meetings. That way our people from all different states can learn and feel the spirit of our tribe.

District 7



Mark Johnson Incumbent

Potawatomi name and family:

Wisk Mtek (Strong as a Tree) is my Potawatomi name, and I am a member of the Vieux and Johnson families. My Potawatomi heritage is on my father's side; Louis Vieux is my great – great grandfather.

Residence: Prather, California.

Education and/or other achievements: California State University in Fresno, Agricultural Science; Fresno City College, Fire Science; University of Arizona, Native Nation Building certificate course; National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland, chief fire officer training. In 2022, I was honored by The County of Fresno, with the 2022 Frontline Hero Award – Public Safety Hero, for my actions during the 2020 Creek Fire in Fresno County, at the time, the single largest wildland fire in California history.

Employment: Retired, I retired as Chief of the Fresno-Kings Unit of CAL FIRE and Chief of the Fresno County Fire Protection District in December of 2020, after a 41-year career having worked my way through all the ranks from seasonal firefighter to chief. This lifetime career in public service not only shaped who I am as a person but gave me the skills

I have needed to be an effective advocate for our members in District 7, and for our Tribal nation.

General statement: I was honored and humbled to first be elected in 2010 and then re-elected three times since to represent and serve our members. I am running for re-election again this year to continue the good work we have done as a Legislature on behalf of the members. When I originally ran, I promised to protect and grow the financial base of the Nation and protect and expand the benefits that so many of our members depend on. During that time, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation has faced unprecedented challenges and amazing opportunities. As your Representative, I have fought to expand benefits for our members outside of Oklahoma, and I am especially proud of the CPN Care program that has been launched this year to provide our members and their families with 24/7/365 access to quality health care, over the phone or online. I have also fought to protect our cultural heritage, resources and language. Our Nation now has a world class Cultural Heritage Center, Language Department and Tribal Archives, much of which can be accessed via the internet. I hope that I have earned your trust and your vote. *Migwetch.*



Katie Bowie
Challenger

Potawatomi name and family: Navarre/Degraff nmezodanek, Jejak ndodem. (Navarre/Degraff are my family, I am Crane clan.)

Residence: I live in Humboldt County which is located in the true upper region of Northern California, almost to the Oregon border. My home is located on my husband's

tribe's reservation called Bear River Band Tish-non village in Loleta California, where I live with my husband & our three children; Jimmy 6, Autumn 16, and Trinity 20.

Education and/or other achievements: I graduated from St. Bernards Academy in 2001 & completed two years of general education at the College of the Redwoods, then took an academic break to focus on raising my family. In the last decade I have obtained numerous certificates and trainings to increase my expertise in working with youth which are too many to list here, but some of my most proud include: Addition 101 & the brain, addressing cultural identity SUD among AI/AN, Indigenized knowledge systems, QPR & mental health first aid, Naloxone administration trainer certified, Meeting behavior needs of transitional aged youth, & Decolonization in everyday life.

Employment: I am a Youth Development Specialist/Mentor at a local non profit organization called Two Feathers Native American Family Services. I work

closely with Native American high school teenagers to help provide them with a balance of leadership opportunity, life skills, cultural knowledge, wellness & individualized support, substance use prevention, etc. All while employing them in year long cohorts that help to transition them to independence after graduation. I also volunteer on the local cultural committees in my area to ensure appropriate and equal cultural opportunities are available Native people in my community.

General statement: *Bozho Jayek,* I'm very excited to introduce myself and be considered for district 7 legislator, which is a great opportunity to be able to contribute to my tribe and help bring other members in my district together. I have worked in tribal communities my entire adult life and have experience organizing events and cultural activities with NorCal tribes. With our districts being so spread out, I am hoping to be able to take advantage or technology to be able to reach other members through social media, zoom, and more frequent gatherings that are located more central to district 7 residents. 🍏



HAVE A VOICE

**in our Tribe's future,
cast your vote in June!**

CAN'T MAKE IT TO FESTIVAL?

Request an absentee ballot!

CPN.NEWS/ABALLOT

Alychia Wooton,
Laura Hewuse and
Anna Johnson wear
their strap dresses
at the Potawatomi
Gathering.



Tribal members hope to revive pre-contact fashion

At a 2019 TEDx event, Siobhan Marks greeted the crowd in her Ojibwe language and told the story of what she calls “Our Grandmothers Dress,” or the strap dress. The strap dress is believed to be the dress worn by Woodland tribes before contact with Europeans. Much knowledge about the dress has been lost through removal and colonization, but Marks is hoping to bring the dress back.

CPN tribal members Alychia Wooton, Anna Johnson and Laura Hewuse are hoping to be part of that effort, and the three collaborated to create their own strap dresses.

Hewuse found information from Marks and called Johnson and Wooton to ask if they would like to help her with the strap dress movement. Once all three decided to take the project on, they spent several months planning and creating the dresses.

One challenge in making the dresses is the lack of a pattern.

“It was pre-contact,” Hewuse explained. “The Native women started wearing the dresses they saw the

French women wearing ... and our original strap dresses slowly dwindled away, and there’s not a pattern for them. They have not found a pattern.”

All the three had to reference while designing the dresses were pictures and also dolls that had been found wearing strap dresses.

“I have always been drawn to fascinating pieces of history, and I actually minored in history in college,” Johnson said. When dolls were found wearing strap dresses, she continued, “I thought it was one of the most clever ways to pass down our culture — hidden in plain sight and passed down through play during a period in time when Natives were treated less than.”

With those photos and dolls as a guide, Hewuse, Johnson, Wooton and others are hoping to bring back the old style of dresses.

Wooton said designing and sewing the dresses with no pattern to work from was a challenge, but a fulfilling one.

"It's definitely a labor of love, and I'm hoping that I can help others create the strap dress that represents them and their story," Wooton said.

Creating their own versions

"I've made the contemporary style strap dress, which is combining the leather dress with the wool cape," Hewuse said.

For her dress, she also incorporated silver, cowrie shells, old trade beads, ermine tails, and beadwork from a pattern created by her late father, Jerry Lee Maisch Sr. Because her family is Bear Clan, she used bear claws she had gifted to her father on her straps. She also loomed the belt for him, adding claws on the belt, and honored him with beadwork down the sides of the dress. The cape, she added, was made from a Pendleton blanket that had been gifted to her by Cathy Wamego when Hewuse's second husband walked on.

Johnson's strap dress was inspired by a photo of Ellen and Charlotte Vieux, where Charlotte wore regalia with ribbon work in the Vieux family pattern. She also wore earrings she had made with sweetgrass wrapped around them, red white-heart beads she had been gifted from her father, an eagle feather in a fan from her *Mdamen* class, and a necklace she tried to replicate from her great-great-grandmother's regalia.

"I tried to go more 'old-style' traditional with mine; stitching with sinew, using trade beads and even finding fabric that looks like an 1800s reproduction. I was intent to craft a strap dress that resembled my great-great-grandmother's regalia in her honor, but with some modern tweaks," Johnson said, adding that she also added a pocket because utility and resourcefulness is important.

For Wooton's dress, she made sure she had shells from the area Potawatomi people originally came from, leaves to represent the Potawatomi people, a fire keeper on each side, an eagle and eagle feathers, and drops to represent her clan, the Bear Clan.

The three also assisted each other through the process. Hewuse and her husband designed the beadwork on Wooton's dress, as well as helping Johnson design the strap for her bandelier bag. And Wooton, in turn, helped collaborate on designing the dresses too.

"It was a coordination between all three of us, and we spent many hours of chatting back and forth and visiting," Hewuse said. "We really worked hard to get our dresses."

Dancing at Gathering

The three women wore their strap dresses for the first time at the Potawatomi Gathering in Michigan in 2025.

"I'll wear it again down in Oklahoma when I go, because it's hot in Oklahoma," Hewuse said. "That's the purpose of these dresses. They're summer and winter. You can wear them in summertime without the cape, and then in winter you put the cape on. That's what makes them unique."

"These strap dresses are supposed to be for utility and are constructed for everyday wear. The cape provides warmth in cooler weather, and protects our arms and shoulders from the sun, wind and everyday work; but when it gets too warm, we can remove the cape and

continue on with our day. The cape provides modesty during ceremony and can later be removed when we're working and when it's hot. I just love the fact that it's very versatile and it's making a resurgence," Johnson said.

Wooton and Johnson both said it was a unique experience dancing at Gathering, because there is no dance style associated with strap dresses.

"Alychia and I were having a whole heck of a lot of fun dancing at Gathering," Johnson said. "Neither of us knew what category we would fall under, and our best guess was Women's Traditional. However, we didn't carry our shawls or use traditional steps, because we were in strap dresses. It was the first time I danced without sleeves, just the straps, and it was wonderful. I was able to do storytelling with my dance, and it felt so good. I was a little fearful of negative comments or 'side-eyes,' but that didn't happen. I think because even though it was sleeveless, it was still modest."

Wooton echoed those thoughts.

"The thing that is nice is that we get to start from the beginning, so there's nobody really going to tell you if you decide to wear a strap dress that you're dancing those steps wrong. There are no steps for it," she said. "We were gatherers, we were water bearers when we wore those. We were hunters. So you can dance how you feel."

To learn more about strap dresses, there is an "Our Grandmothers Dress" group on Facebook. You can also listen to Siobhan Marks speak about the strap dress at cpn.news/strapdresses. 🔥

“It’s definitely a labor of love, and I’m hoping that I can help others create the strap dress that represents them and their story.”

Alychia Wooton



A tax time tip

By Bobby “Trae” Trousdale

In reflecting on American politics, I’m reminded of an old joke my grandfather, Bob Trousdale, delivered: “the left wing and the right wing are part of the same bird ... and that bird is full of it.” While it brings a chuckle and centers the sovereignty of our Nation outside of petty partisanship, it also allows us to rejoice in agreement and value collaboration rooted in empathy and progress. Rarely is that modeled today, so we must elevate cases when community care wins.

2025’s One Big Beautiful Bill Act brought large changes that directly affect you, your family and our shared financial futures. Buried in this extensive bill was a bipartisan initiative that has been in the works since even before the pandemic: Children’s Investment Accounts. More commonly known as *Trump Accounts*, these 530A accounts are a tool to catalyze birthrates and ensure the American Dream isn’t a thing of the past. These accounts are a one-time \$1,000 investment for ALL children born between 2025–2028. These tax-deferred accounts are initiated with a federal contribution, grow in capital markets, and can be converted to a traditional IRA once a child turns 18. These are the latest early wealth building tools, complementing 529 Savings Accounts and Baby Bonds.

Financial institutions, philanthropists and countless others are working to ensure this innovative model is a success and grows alongside each child once claimed. The Council of Economic Advisers projects that the governmental seed funding alone grows to \$5,800 at a participant’s 18th birthday. Families, and their employers, can also contribute up to \$5,000 per child annually. Maxing out contributions each year throughout childhood skyrockets projections over \$2 million before most participants graduate high school. If young beneficiaries convert the account to an IRA at 18, funds can continue to grow and be utilized for education, homeownership or starting a small business subject to traditional rules and penalties.

530A Accounts are public-private partnership embodied. States, cities and nonprofits may contribute additional



funds that are not counted in the family contribution. Texas already has a matching \$1,000 Little Texan Savings Fund for participating residents. These accounts have also secured the largest private donation to children in U.S. history, \$6.25 billion from Michael and Susan Dell. Their OneDell Foundation will secure 25 million additional accounts (for children between 2-10 years old living

in zip codes with less than a \$150,000 median household income) with a gift of \$250, which will grow exponentially thanks to compounding interest. A Funder Briefing I recently attended shared program diversity is already booming and only expected to grow. 530A Accounts will not hit the market until July 2026 but have already been claimed by over 1 million children.

Two things in life are certain: death and taxes. For most, this means that sitting with an accountant or financial expert is on our calendar soon. Submit your 4547 (cpn.news/TrumpAccountElection) alongside your taxes. If you’ve already filed, the form can be submitted independently to the IRS for enrollment. A formal .gov website is also coming near the end of 2026. Consider this in your family planning. The pilot program runs until Dec. 31, 2028. Take advantage of this program when/ if it applies to your life and goals. This is an exciting time for wealth management and economic development futures! If you know a young family, or are a young family, be a good relative and mention *Trump Accounts*. Ensure enrollment. Investigate matching programs at the city, state and nonprofit level. Advocate your employer to allow contributions as part of benefits package. Be annoying, be repetitive and lobby with love. These are dollars everyone has access to and we must ensure our community is not forgotten or excluded from this historic investment. 🍀



Project, grant bring updates to elder housing

Elders living in the original units in Father Joe Murphy Elder Housing are seeing some updates to their homes as a renovation project is underway.

The three-phase project, made possible by an Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG), involves renovating 25 of the units over the course of a year.

The units expected to receive updates were built in the 1980s, with the rest of the houses in Father Joe Murphy added in 2005 and 2010.

CPN Director of Housing Scott George said the project kicked off in December 2025, and the seven units in the first phase were completed and ready for elders to move back in by the end of February. The second phase started in March.

All of the 25 units will receive updates, some more than others, according to need.

One of the first units received new flooring, cabinets and appliances, but it also needed significant changes to the layout. The original 1980s design had a small kitchen with walls dividing it from a breakfast nook and the living room. Those walls were taken out to open the space up and make it more handicap accessible. The bathtub was also replaced by a shower with a built-in shower chair.

Most of the units will be demoed down to the studs so spray foam insulation can be put in. Crews will then put in new sheet rock and fresh paint. Units 22-25 already received spray foam insulation updates in 2010, but they will still receive cosmetic updates to flooring, cabinets, appliances and the bathrooms.

Housing is also working with the University of Oklahoma through another grant to put geothermal heating and cooling in the units.

Vacant units are made available to residents while their homes are being renovated. The grant also allocated funds for moving expenses, both to move elders' items into alternate units temporarily and then to move them back into their original units once the updates are complete. CPN's Workforce & Social Services and housekeeping teams also helped elders with tasks such as packing.

If there are still funds leftover once the original 25 units are updated, George said they will also make some updates to the units built in 2005.

George said this is a "feather in the cap" for CPN, because receiving an ICDBG grant makes it easier to receive subsequent ICDBG grants. 🔥



Tribal member creates special effects for Oscar-nominated film

CPN Tribal member Andrew Arrasmith is a special effects artist for Legacy Effects near Los Angeles, California. He served as a crew member for *Alien: Romulus*, which earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Visual Effects in 2025.

Arrasmith's love for makeup effects began at a young age.

"Having some close cousins who were into the same monster movies that I was fascinated with definitely fueled that love," said Arrasmith.

He was especially drawn to the special effects used to create characters and creatures in the films he watched as a child.

"When I was a little kid, my dad took me to a movie exhibition, and I saw the creature puppet from *Aliens*," said Arrasmith. "It was scary and horrifying, but it was also impressive and beautiful. I guess it struck me with a very real kind of awe. It looked literally alive, like you could see its breath. That exhibition was definitely a creative primer during my formative years."

When asked what his role looked like on the film, Arrasmith said, "Molding, casting and making the Alien's skin, or exoskeleton for the nerds like me. I came home many a night covered in black goo."

Creating effects for a major production like *Alien: Romulus* takes a lot of time. Multiple effects shops worked on the film simultaneously, with Arrasmith and his team handling prominent features of the creature, including puppets and suits.

"It's not just a normal eight-hour job all the time with effects, or any kind of movie work really," said Arrasmith. "You never know what's going to happen during the production of a film like *Alien: Romulus*. It helps if you're naturally a night owl like me, I suppose."

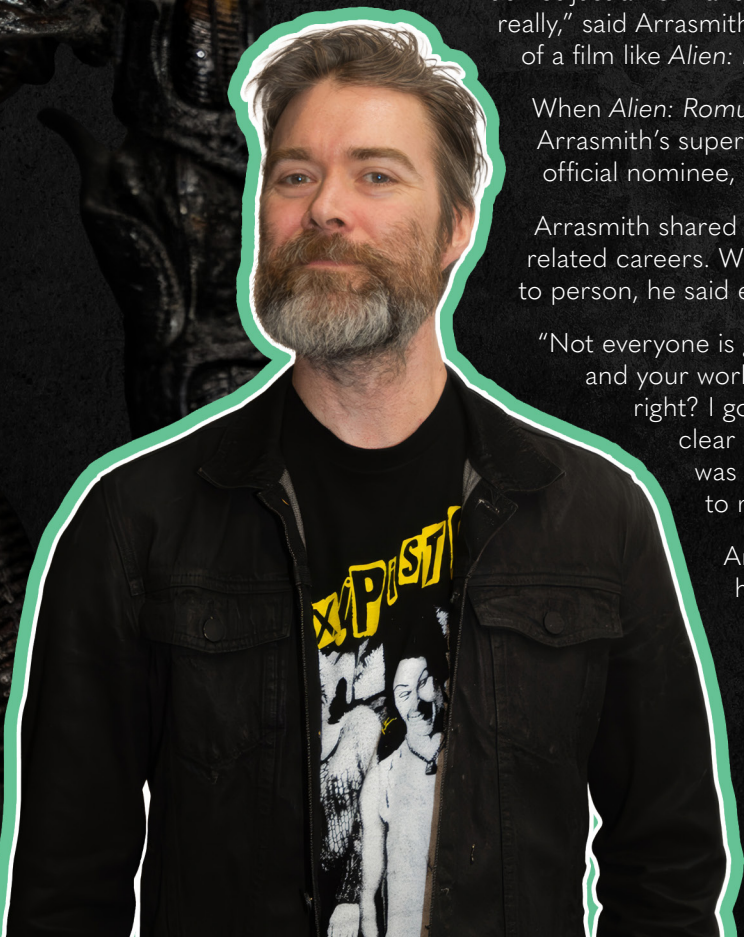
When *Alien: Romulus* received its Academy Award nomination, Arrasmith's supervisor, Shane Mahan, attended the ceremony as the official nominee, representing the special effects team's work.

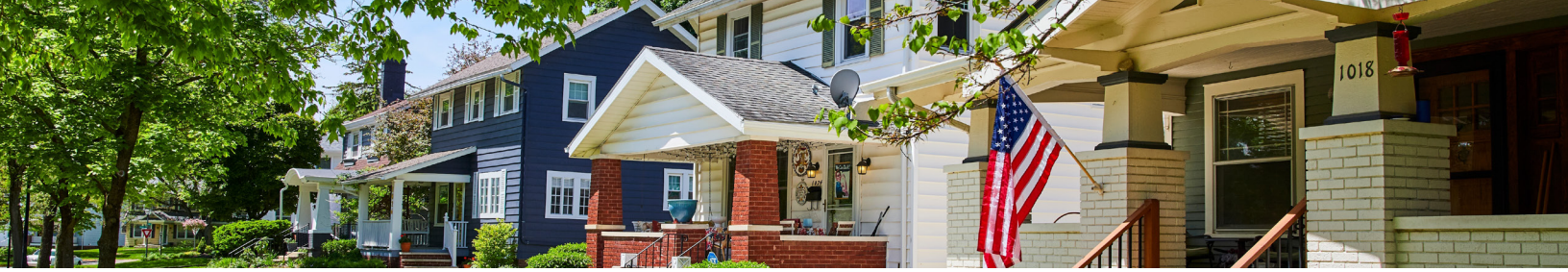
Arrasmith shared advice for Tribal members interested in pursuing film-related careers. While each path into the industry looks different from person to person, he said education and networking can be "tremendously helpful."

"Not everyone is going to ask to see your college credentials; they want to know you and your work," he said. "Film jobs are highly competitive, but so is everything, right? I got where I am by just being myself, and it wasn't all sunshine and clear paths. I had a really rough time with school and just fitting in when I was younger, but if you've got that creative spark and the perseverance to really pursue it, just start doing it if you haven't already."

Arrasmith, a descendant of the Bostick family, spent much of his childhood moving due to his father's service in the U.S. Marines. Despite relocating frequently, his family maintains ties to relatives in Tecumseh, Oklahoma, and some family members remain closely connected to their Tribal heritage.

Arrasmith continues pursuing his passion and is grateful to build a career doing what he loves. 🔥





Homeownership opportunities assist CPN members

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation, a federally recognized tribe, having a government-to-government relationship with the United States, receives funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development through the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA).

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation Housing Department oversees a wide variety of responsibilities in its mission to provide Native Americans living in the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Tribal jurisdiction with decent, safe and sanitary housing. Staff under Director Scott George operate low-income housing properties while also managing programs that provide either down payment/closing cost assistance and/or Home Purchase Mortgage Buy-Down for eligible members that meet all eligibility requirements.

Lease with the Option to Purchase

The CPN Housing Department has two homeownership programs aimed at putting eligible Citizen Potawatomi on the path to owning a new home. The first program is the Lease with the Option to Purchase program with a strict three-year leasehold and will get the applicant into a house sooner so they can experience all the accompanying responsibilities.

The Lease with the Option to Purchase Program is designed to help teach the skills of owning a new home by making the tenants meet a series of responsibilities over the course of the three-year agreement. Income proof and ongoing financial education courses are two main program requirements, while residents will largely be responsible for the day-to-day upkeep of their properties.

Some Eligibility Requirements

Program entrance will be determined by:

- Tribal enrollment
- Income eligibility
- Credit, bankruptcy and rental history
- Provable employment security
- First-time homebuyers only

Income and credit evaluation

CPN Housing Department will run a credit report to evaluate the applicant's readiness to enter the program. The applicants will be informed of their immediate status and eligibility for the program.

We are currently building a waiting list for future housing units.

Home Purchase Mortgage Buy-Down Program

In addition, we offer the Home Purchase Mortgage Buy-Down Program for Tribal members ready to purchase immediately. This program requires you to mortgage your home loan with the Tribally-owned Sovereign Bank. This is a 10-year soft second mortgage on said home that is paid in time of occupancy not money. Because this program is government funded there are several requirements that must be adhered to for eligibility.

Some Eligibility Requirements

Program entrance will be determined by:

- Tribal citizenship
- Income eligibility
- Credit, bankruptcy and rental history, must be credit worthy
- Provable employment security
- Must not have used our New Construction, Acquisition, Lease with Option to Purchase, or Home Purchase Mortgage Buy-Down Programs before
- Home must be in the CPN jurisdiction and meet all environmental criteria

Additional resources

Furthermore, our department is also offering financial, budgeting and credit education, and referrals for those that are interested in or need this assistance and/or direction to attain their homeownership goals.

We are very pleased to introduce HUD Certified Housing Counselor Kaua Puaoi. If you would like any assistance with your financial goal setting, please contact her. We hope that you take full advantage of Kaua's knowledge and direction as she will prove to be one of your most valuable resources. Kaua can be reached at 405-273-2833 or by email at kauanoepuaoi@potawatomi.org.

For more information on either of the two above mentioned homeownership programs, please feel free to contact Sherry Byers, homeownership manager, at 405-273-2833, or you can email her at sbyers@potawatomi.org. 🍷



CITIZEN POTAWATOMI NATION

Tribal members have access to valuable benefits

The following is a list of benefits available to Tribal members. For a more comprehensive list, go to cpn.news/districtbenefits. For more information about these benefits and programs, visit potawatomi.org or call 800-880-9880.

Burial

- Enrolled members are eligible for a \$2,000 burial policy. Find more information or a form at potawatomi.org.
- CPN has a columbarium for Tribal members and their spouses. Find information at potawatomi.org or by calling 405-275-3121.

Childcare

- For Tribal members in Pottawatomie, Oklahoma and Cleveland counties in Oklahoma, the Child Care Development Fund offers a voucher program for parents/guardians to help with childcare providers, childcare centers, family childcare and relative care. Learn more at portal.potawatomi.org.
- There are also two CPN childcare facilities and an afterschool program.

Education

A scholarship is available for Tribal members through the Department of Education. For college and post-high school vocational training, full-time students can receive up to \$2,000 and part-time students up to \$750. Apply or find more information at potawatomi.org, then click on the Services tab followed by the Education tab.

Business

The CPN Community Development Corporation (CPCDC) offers access to capital and business development services to Native Americans to help small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs. Call 405-878-4697 for more information.

Banking

Sovereign Bank, the largest tribally-owned bank in the nation, has several branches in Oklahoma and offers many in-person and online banking services,

including checking, mortgages and personal and well as business loans. Learn more at banksovereign.com.

Tag Agency

Tribal members living in Oklahoma may purchase Tribal tags for vehicles at the CPN Tag Agency. For more information, visit potawatomi.org or call 405-273-1009.

Court

Tribal members may use the CPN court for adoptions and marriages. Call 405-878-4844 for more information.

Indian Child Welfare

The Indian Child Welfare Program monitors adoptions and tribal and state court cases, as well as providing home-based services, foster care, prevention services, counseling, parenting skills, respite care and crisis interventions. Contact ICW at 800-880-9880 or 405-878-4831.

Domestic Violence Prevention

CPN's House of Hope offers assistance to individuals and families experiencing violence, sexual assault and stalking. Call 405-275-3176 for more information.

CPN culture

- CPN's Eagle Aviary is home to many eagles, which the Potawatomi people consider sacred. The Aviary is also able to provide some feathers to Tribal members for uses such as ceremonies or the making of regalia. Find more information at potawatomiheritage.com.
- The Cultural Heritage Center offers a variety of services, including tours of the museum and veteran memorial in person or virtually; access to research on genealogy, family history, historical allotments, and Tribal archives; family and veteran interviews; community language classes; crafting workshops and scholarly events, many with virtual options. Find more information at potawatomiheritage.com.
- The CHC gift shop offers a variety of CPN and culturally-inspired apparel and gifts, including supplies

such as beads, jewelry and more for regalia. Visit the gift shop online at potawatomigifts.com.

- The six-week Potawatomi Leadership Program brings 8-10 young Tribal members to Shawnee to learn about the government, culture, and economic development of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. For more information, go to plp.potawatomi.org.
- The *Mdamen* Leadership Program allows Tribal members to virtually learn about the government, culture, and economic development of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. Enrolled citizens 18 or older with reliable access to a computer and the internet may apply. Submit applications on portal.potawatomi.org on the education link.

Veterans

All CPN veterans and servicemembers are invited to join the CPN Veterans Organization, with monthly meetings held at the CHC on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Meetings are available in-person and virtually. Find more information at potawatomheritage.com/veterans.

Health

- Tribal members can receive medical, dental, pharmacy, audiology, contract health, behavioral health, diabetic counseling and services, physical therapy, x-ray and imaging, eye care, chiropractic, diet and nutrition services at CPN clinics. Call 405-273-5236 for more information.
- For Tribal members born before 1980, health aids are available through a Health Aid Foundation Application at potawatomi.org. The benefit is for prosthetics, tooth/teeth crowns, bridgework, hearing aids, partials, dentures, eye glasses, contacts, prescription sunglasses, CPAP machine, wheelchair, mobile chair, chair lift or ramp for a vehicle.
- CPNHS offers a mail order pharmacy to provide formulary medications for eligible CPN elders and totally disabled Tribal members.
- Tribal members and their spouses are eligible to use CPN Care, where they receive free virtual visits to help with medical conditions including allergies, cold, flu, sinus problems, ear infections, urinary tract infections, respiratory infections, skin problems and other issues. It offers access to Call a Doctor Plus, where U.S. board-certified doctors are available at any time of day through phone, video or a mobile app. Enroll at cpn.news/cadrplus.
- Citizen Potawatomi Nation Women, Infants, and Children program (WIC) provides supplemental nutritious foods, health and nutrition education, referrals, and nutrition and breastfeeding counseling. Learn more by calling 405-273-3216.

Housing

- The CPN Housing Department offers down payment and closing cost assistance for eligible

Tribal members, who can receive a one-time \$2,125 grant when purchasing a home or refinancing an existing mortgage. For more information, contact the housing department at 405-273-2833.

- Tribal members might be able to receive assistance with construction costs for homes on land they already own in certain locations within CPN jurisdiction.
- Affordable rent units may be available to Tribal members in Father Joe Murphy and Citizen Place North housing developments.

Sanitation and Sewage

The Office of Environmental Health offers sanitation and sewage facilities to Tribal members living in Pottawatomie, Lincoln, Oklahoma, Logan or Cleveland counties in Oklahoma.

Nutrition

For Native Americans age 55 and over who live in Shawnee, Oklahoma, or the surrounding area, Title VI provides nutritious meals (on-site or delivered) and social activities.

Transportation

Native Americans and Tribal employees may call 405-878-4833 to schedule transportation within Shawnee, Oklahoma, and surrounding areas.

Workforce and Social Services

- Native Americans living in Pottawatomie, Lincoln, Payne, Cleveland, Seminole and Oklahoma counties may be eligible for grant funded employment, training and related services. Assigned counselors can help develop individual self-sufficiency action plans. Some available services are obtaining, maintaining, or advancing employments; youth services; re-entry/diversionary services for justice involved individuals; utility assistance; education assistance with unmet needs; community related services to alleviate the effects of poverty; broadband subsidy; GED studies/testing preparation; and other services available through grant funding. Find more information at portal.potawatomi.org.
- CPN Tribal members throughout the U.S. may apply for a one-time program that provides financial help with past due mortgage, homeowner's insurance, property taxes or HOA fees. Apply online through the portal, by emailing cpncares@potawatomi.org or by calling 833-481-0638.
- For hardship needs such as utilities, rent or similar issues, Tribal members can contact Malisha Robertson at malisha.robertson@potawatomi.org or Denise Wiley at denise.wiley@potawatomi.org, or call 405-878-3854 to request an application. This is for short-term relief and could include one-time payments, not ongoing assistance. 🔥

Language update

By Justin Neely, CPN Language Department Director

Bozho, jayek (Hello, everyone),

We just wrapped up our annual winter story telling event. We had an incredible attendance: 85 in person and 50-100 online (folks online would come and go, so it was harder to gauge). We also record and place it on our YouTube channel. I appreciate all the hard work from my staff who made the whole event possible. We were also honored by several members of the community telling stories. Our Thursday afternoon language class did a skit with props of why the porcupine has quills. Paul Schmidkofer did the story of why the owl can turn his head around. Finally, my daughters played characters and wearing masks in the story of why there is daylight today. *Igwien* (Thank you) to everyone who came out and joined us. If you get a chance to hear some of these winter stories, share them with your family but remember that they are to be shared in the winter time. We traditionally believe that in the winter the earth and the spirits are asleep.

We have a number of classes coming up for those who would like to join an in-person or online real time class. We have a number of online class options at learning.potawatomi.org and 7000.org.

Shelly will also have a Beginner 2 class from 5-7 p.m. April 2 at the Cultural Heritage Center. Josey Wood will have a Beginner class from 5:30-6:30 p.m. every Tuesday from March 24 to April 14. I will have an Intermediate course from 5:30-6:30 p.m. every Wednesday from April 1 to May 6 at the Cultural Heritage Center. All of these classes are available in person or online.



Attendees listen to winter stories.



About 85 people attend the winter story telling event, with more joining online.

This summer we have immersion courses available: a two-week beginner course from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. May 11-22; a two-week intermediate course from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. June 1-11; and a youth culture and language camp for ages 6-13 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. July 6-10. For more information, email language@potawatomi.org.

For *Neshnabe* people, our new year is the arrival of the first thunders and the arrival of spring. Often, those thunders will try and come back early as the following story tells.

“Why the Thunders Go South”

Once when the earth was still young, the Creator told all the animals to come to a meeting to choose who would be the leader. Many animals thought they would be the leader. Some said turtle, some said the wolf, some said the white giant who lived in the north and some said Thunder.

Lots of animals argued. Finally, only the white giant and thunder were still fighting, so the Creator decided to teach them humility.

The Creator told them they could both be leader. But they would have to learn to be leaders. The white giant would continue to live in the north and have strength over the snow, and Thunder would walk before the rains and live in the west.

When the snows come, the white giant leads them and the Thunder has to go south. To this day, Thunder is still mad he isn't the only leader, so he rumbles and shakes the ground.

Every year, Thunder has to leave the north and travel south, and he comes back after the snow has fallen, thundering so everyone knows he has returned. 🌩️

Building and protecting muscle while using weight-loss medications and as we age

By Dr. Braden Parmer, Medical Director

Over the past few years, medications such as Ozempic, Wegovy and similar drugs have become increasingly common tools in helping people manage diabetes and achieve meaningful weight loss. For many individuals, these medications have been life-changing in a positive way. As their use has expanded, questions have also emerged, particularly around whether weight loss from these medications may include loss of muscle and not just fat. This is an important and reasonable concern, and fortunately it is one we can address with good information and practical steps. We prefer to lose fat and keep the muscle, not the reverse!

Research shows that when people lose weight, whether through medication, surgery or diet alone, some degree of muscle loss can occur. This is not unique to any single drug. When the body is in a calorie deficit, it draws energy from both fat and lean tissue unless deliberate steps are taken to preserve muscle. With medications like semaglutide or tirzepatide, the majority of weight lost is fat, but a smaller percentage may be lean mass. The key point is that muscle loss is not inevitable and is often preventable with the right approach to nutrition and activity. Ozempic won't sneak in and suddenly erase your biceps.

Aging itself also plays a role. Beginning in our 30s and 40s, most adults gradually lose muscle mass, a process known as sarcopenia. This becomes more noticeable in our 50s and beyond if we are not actively engaging our muscles through resistance exercise and adequate protein intake. Because of this natural trend, muscle loss seen during weight reduction may be partly related to age rather than the medication alone. In many cases, the medication simply brings attention to a process that was already underway. The encouraging news is that muscle is one of the most responsive tissues in the human body. At almost any age, it can be strengthened.

Starting a strength routine later in life does not require lifting heavy weights or joining an intense gym environment filled with people who appear to have been born doing push-ups. In fact, the safest and most sustainable approach is often the simplest. Body-weight exercises such as squats to a chair, wall push-ups, or gentle lunges can be very effective. Resistance bands provide adjustable tension without placing excess stress on joints. Light free weights, often five to ten pounds, can be used with slow and controlled movements. Two to three short sessions per week, with rest days in between, are typically sufficient to begin seeing progress. Listening to your body is essential. Mild soreness is expected. Sharp pain is not. Individuals with heart conditions, joint disease, or chronic illnesses



Dr. Braden Parmer, MD

should speak with their physician before beginning a new exercise routine. A physical therapist or a trainer experienced with older adults can also provide helpful guidance. Consistency matters far more than intensity. Ten to fifteen minutes performed regularly will usually provide more benefit than one heroic workout that requires a week of recovery and several apologies to your knees.

Exercise alone is only half of the equation. Muscle maintenance depends heavily on adequate nutrition, particularly protein intake. Prioritizing protein at each meal is one of the most practical steps a person can take. Lean meats, fish, eggs, beans, lentils, Greek yogurt and cottage cheese are excellent sources. Balanced meals are more beneficial than extreme dieting, as very low-calorie diets increase the risk of muscle loss. Staying hydrated supports energy levels and physical performance. Vitamin D and calcium are also important, especially for older adults, because bone and muscle health are closely connected. Many adults over the age of 50 benefit from aiming for roughly 20 to 30 grams of protein per meal, although individual needs can vary. Anyone with kidney disease or other chronic medical conditions should seek personalized advice from their healthcare provider. Muscles appreciate a grilled chicken breast more than they appreciate another sleeve of cookies!

Weight-loss medications can be valuable tools when used appropriately and under medical supervision. They are not shortcuts, and they are not replacements for healthy habits. They tend to work best when paired with strength training, balanced nutrition and regular follow-up with a healthcare provider. Muscle is more than appearance. It supports balance, protects joints, improves metabolism and reduces fall risk. Preserving muscle is one of the most impactful steps we can take for long-term health and independence. Whether someone is considering a weight-loss medication or simply thinking about staying strong as the years pass, the message remains the same. Move your body, nourish it well and work with your healthcare team. Small, steady efforts often lead to meaningful and lasting results. 🍏

Mnotagwzékwé with Nēmkiis



By Bree Dunham and Jennifer Randell,
CPN Eagle Aviary Managers

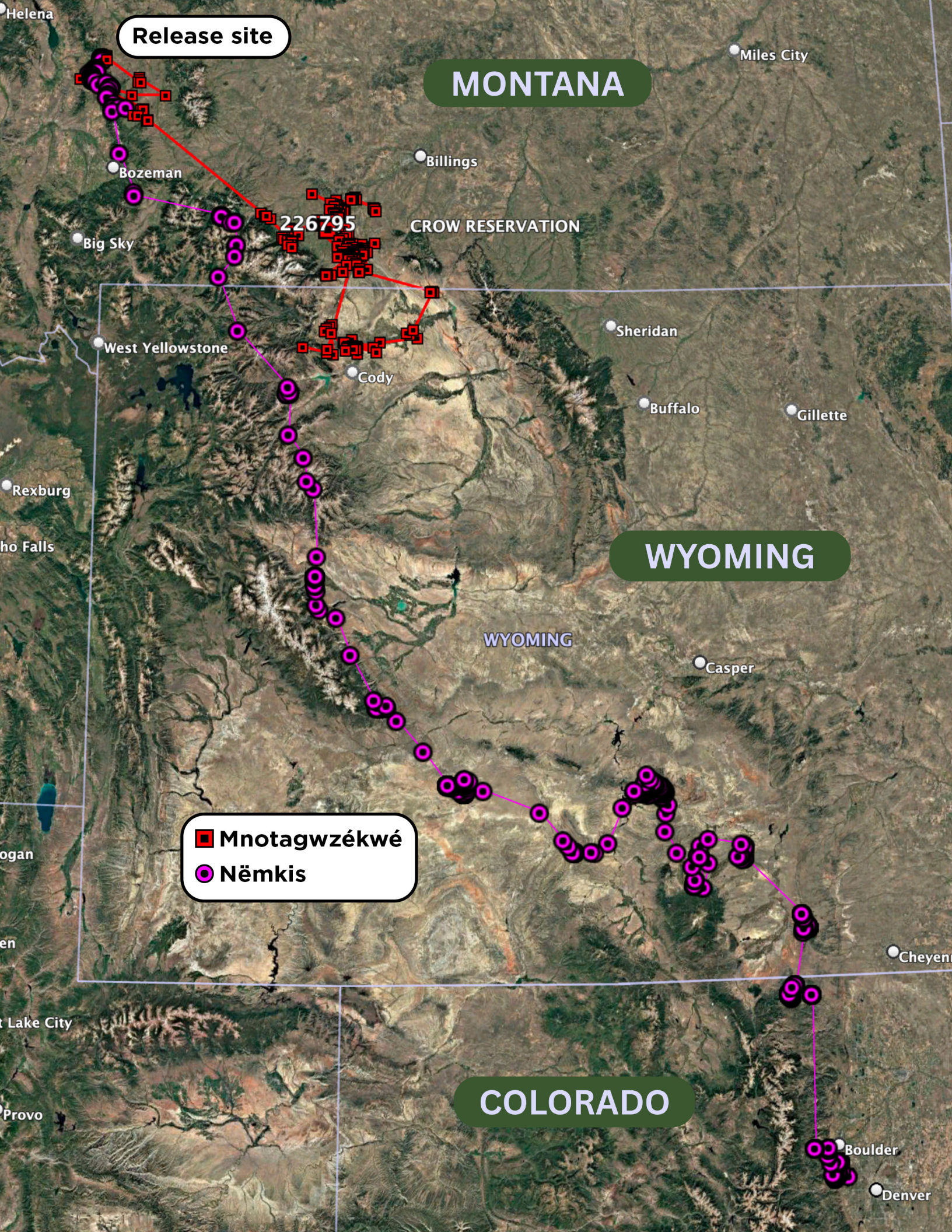
For the Aviary, the release of the two young golden eagles, *Mnotagwzékwé* (She Brings the Good News) and *Nēmkiis* (Little Thunder), this past October was monumental. Becoming the first Native American Aviary to hatch and release both bald and golden eagles was an amazing achievement for the program, but for the eagles, this release is the final step to permanently amending the aviary permit to allow the release of any eagles hatched here in the future. According to the teachings our ancestors have passed down to us through countless generations, these young eagles now have an integral role in our society. Our oral traditions tell us that it was *Kno* (Eagle) who saved mankind from being destroyed by the Creator through the act of carrying our prayers to *Mamogoshan*. He fought for us, he advocated for us, and he believed that we were worthy of saving. *Kno* (Eagle) continues to do this for us today; they are warriors and messengers for the *Neshnabe* people. We are compelled by that to release them whenever we can and in doing so, we continue to respect and honor *Kno* in that spirit of reciprocity.

Looking back at photos of the release, it is hard to convey the enormity of that brief moment. How incredible it was to watch them take in the expanse of the Montana countryside and fly off the mountain doing exactly what the Creator intended them to do.

Through frozen binoculars, we watched as long as we could see the outline of an eagle against the landscape. With precipitation coming, we made our way off the

mountain, down to the base cabin where the two were banded and parted ways with our banding group. The rest of the CPN team flew home that evening and we made our way to Bozeman for the night. Since we only get telemetry every three days, we planned to stay in the area just in case there were sightings or any signs of trouble. The following morning, we returned to Helena National Forest to see if we could catch a glimpse of the two in the area. With no word and no sightings, we decided to pick a migratory path of our own home. Looking at telemetry studies in the Absaroka Range of the Rockies, it seemed that our best chance to see other goldens was to head down through the Tetons or through Yellowstone. We opted to follow the Yellowstone River into Wyoming. We stopped at sunset along the river to put down *sema* and thank the Creator before stopping for the night at Mammoth Springs. The next morning, we got a message from Bryan Bedrosian from Teton Raptor Center. He said the group of students they were working with to trap and band golden eagles in the same area caught a juvenile golden. To their surprise, when they got to the trap, they saw the telemetry. They had caught *Nēmkiis*. He had spotted their pigeon in the trap and made a somewhat awkward but successful catch of his prey. They double-checked the fit of his telemetry and fed him for his troubles before sending him on his way. We reminded Bryan that *Dokmeté*, *Nēmkiis*'s dad, had actually come in from Wyoming and was treated at Teton Raptor Center. After looking back at their clinic's records, the student on the mountain that day who had caught *Nēmkiis* was actually

Continued on page 14





Randell and Dunham offer thanks to Creator at the Yellowstone River

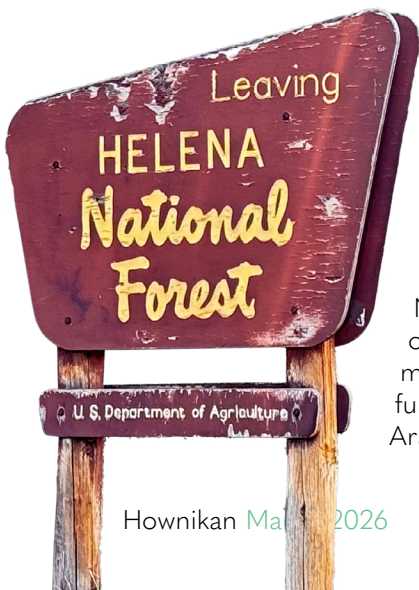
working at the center when *Dokmeté* was there. What a full circle moment to be a part of both of their stories. A day later they spotted *Mnotagwzékwe* further up the mountain near the release site. They left food in the area but didn't know for sure whether she took advantage of the free meal. Their banding season had come to an end and from that point forward we would have to rely on telemetry.

As we made our way through Yellowstone, we marveled at the breathtaking landscape that surrounded us and imagined what it must be like to take this all in from the sky. The wide open, untouched spaces are prime golden eagle habitat.

But with one parent found in Wyoming and one from South Dakota, where would they go?

Once back home we began to download telemetry and settled into that three-day routine. Impatiently waiting, worrying, holding our breath and checking telemetry, breathing a sigh of relief, celebrating, studying maps and starting the whole rollercoaster process all over again.

Studying the telemetry, we were surprised that the day of the release is the last time the two were together. In the first 10 days, *Nēmki* had already made his way into Wyoming. He cut through the center of the Custer Gallatin National Forest and took a path through Yellowstone, nearly coming in the same north entrance we had just days earlier. He continued south through the Shoshone National Forest and across the Wind River Reservation before turning east, where he spent the better part of November near Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest. The first of December he was on the move again. He continued further south down into the Arapaho National Forest



outside Boulder, Colorado. By the end of December, he had flown well over 800 miles since he was released.

Mnotagwzékwe has spent significantly more time in Montana. She stayed near the release site until the end of October before heading southeast along the eastern side of the Custer Gallatin National Forest. Mid-November she was just a little more than 150 miles from the release site. She seems to be spending most of her time in the valleys along the edges of the mountain areas, working her way around an area called Elk Basin between the town of Red Lodge and Custer National Forest to the east near the Crow Reservation. By the end of the year, she crossed into Wyoming, stopping north of Cody for the better part of January before heading back to the Elk Basin valley area in Montana. There's roughly 80 square miles of area along the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River she seems to be settled into for now.



Return journey following the release of Nēmki and Mnotagwzékwe

Rob Domenench from Raptorview Research Institute told us he would consider two weeks in the wild a success. Making it for two weeks on their own proved they could hunt. But this past winter brought extreme challenges with one of the worst winter storms on record for much of the nation. Surviving days with temperatures well below zero in blizzard conditions proved they were consistently finding food and thriving. Spring is a little further out on the horizon for them in the north, but it is coming.

We are excited to learn all we can from the telemetry data and reevaluate our release plans for the eaglets we hope to come. We will continue to update you on *Mnotagwzékwe* and *Nēmki*'s progress. As always, we encourage you to keep your eyes out for any banded eagles because you never know. Share your encounters with eagles or raptors at aviary@potawatomi.org. For more information about CPN's Eagle Aviary, please visit potawatomiheritage.com. 🌱

Gaa Mnokmet Ked: The Spring Wisdom Teachings

By Minisa Crumbo Halsey

WE ARE THE FARMERS, HUNTERS, COOKS,
FISHERMEN, TAPPERS, STORYTELLERS, GATHERERS ...
OF OUR LIVES.

And not, it is the sunrise of the world, called SPRING — the eastern, mental and yellow direction of the Medicine Wheel. It is the sunrise or dawn of the year. The stronger Gizes (Father Sky Sun) is pushing back the winter dark while warming and awakening *Sekmekwe* (Mother Earth) to yet another season of sprouting, rooting and growth. Just as the night of winter protects all things, it makes visible our star relatives *Withik Negos* ... the Constellation of Ursa Major the Big Dipper. The hibernating *kche mko*, Big Bear, emerges, as do we two-leggeds, from the root homes of the *mkowango* (den), bringing new life, vigor and vision of plant medicine. Now, soon, comes the selection of back yard raised bed garden, windowsill or larger field, prayers to the long history of chosen seed beings are offered to our Mother Earth, in gratitude, with planning thoughts, song, drum (*de-weben*), and perhaps a pinch of *asemma* (tobacco), cornmeal or fat. Now, we are purifying and humming to our highest and most sacred frequencies ... preparing ourselves to initiate the digging, plowing, the mindful dropping of seed and first watering ... as FARMERS OF OUR LIVES we continue to connect and fuse ourselves with all living things and with the heart of the sky and the heart of the earth. AHO!

These things we do to honor all new and emerging life, the inner lives and outer lives of all animate and inanimate beings. Now, we begin to prepare for the many ceremonies of the renewal that may be recalled, heard, told and created afresh with song, dance, painting or craft, by other works, prayer and feasting ... for this new year ... indeed for the young of seven generations ahead ... do we offer these works to all of us ... of the eighth fire prophesy.

Each of us, the long hairs, the newborn among us, the children and the elders, teens, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, grandparents, husbands and wives and all of our relations ... we are each and every one of us drawing and receiving our first conscious breaths and remembering that we are "breathed alive by the Creator-*Mamogosnan*" into a living world of heartbeat, breath, movement and blood memory. This being so, we have a sacred charge to reach out, participate in and to support ourselves and our people ... and to not forget who we are and what we have ... through enduring connection to *Mamogosnan* and all of the others ... heal us God, by the WAYS OF THE AIR ... By these and other seasonal ways do we recognize ourselves as "farmers of our lives." The GAA MNOKMET KED demonstrate the flowering mystery in our deepest recesses. These and many other things are learned as we set our moc-sin (moccasin) feet to walk yet another year upon and with, the renewed sacred path of SPRING – MNOKMET ... one of the most beautiful and enduring gifts from the Creator that we might know life "in a good way, now and forever more." 🍀

Ngi-wénabjéjé
**STICKER
DESIGN
Contest**

*Your design
here*



- Open to all Tribal members
- Design should reflect Potawatomi culture
- Include the phrase *Ngi-wénabjéjé* and 2026
- Design should be a 3"x3" square or 3" circle

Cash prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place
winners in each age group

12 & under

13 to 18

18 & up

Winning designs will be printed
and distributed to voters at
2026 Family Reunion Festival

Designs are due at
cpn.news/stickercontest
by April 30, 2026



“Let’s keep building — together.”

My family roots run deep in the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. I come from the Peltier family, and I’m proud of the responsibility that lineage carries. I’m currently awaiting the receipt of my Potawatomi name, and I don’t take that lightly. To me, heritage isn’t just history — it’s a responsibility to serve with integrity and respect.

I live in Stroud, Oklahoma, with my wife of 24 years, C’Anne, and our three boys — Gideon, August, and Lincoln. My wife has spent the last 15 years teaching in public schools right here in our community. Like many of you, we’re raising our kids with strong values, a love of community, and a belief in service.

Service has shaped my life. I served six years in the United States Marine Corps, deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan. After returning home and finishing my degree at the University of Oklahoma, I felt called to continue serving — first in the Oklahoma House of Representatives, then in the State Senate. I spent eight years working across party lines, leading committees, and advocating for education, workforce development, and responsible government.

Today, I serve as Director of Government Affairs for Motorola Solutions, working with leaders across the country to support public safety and first responders. I’ve also had the honor of advising both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation on government relations and political strategy — especially as tribal sovereignty continues to face challenges at the state level.

I’m running because I believe leadership is about listening, stewardship, and building on what’s already working. The Citizen Potawatomi Nation has made incredible progress, and I believe we can continue that momentum — protecting our sovereignty, strengthening opportunity, and preparing the next generation.

I’d appreciate the chance to earn your trust, have real conversations, and continue serving our Nation together. I respectfully ask for your vote and look forward to meeting many of you along the way.

J. N. Smalley 



CONTACT & CONVERSATION

Have a concern, an idea, or feel like the Nation isn’t meeting your needs? I want to hear from you.

Communication is key — and how we communicate matters just as much. Real progress starts with real conversations.

 **Call or text: 918-808-1669**
 **Email: smalleyjasonn@gmail.com**

I welcome your thoughts, questions, and perspective because strong leadership starts with listening.

Respectfully,
Jason N. Smalley

J. N. Smalley

— Candidate for Vice-Chairman

Paid for by Jason N. Smalley



VOTE CHARLES SCOTT

VICE CHAIRMAN

Transparency | Term Limits | Inclusive | Community

Paid for by Charles Scott



Burnett Family

Thunder Clan

Vote
Martha Kimberly (Kim) Nootbaar
Niganbekwe
for
Vice Chairman

I would like the opportunity to represent all of you in this position.

Taking our nation into the future!

nootbaar@aol.com

469-867-6724

Facebook: Kim Martin Nootbaar

M Kimberly Nootbaar for CPN Vice Chairman



RE-ELECT MARK JOHNSON

For District 7 Legislator

EXPERIENCE MATTERS

It has been my honor to serve you as the District 7 Legislator since 2010. I am proud of my strong voting record and the work I've done on behalf of our members. I am asking for your continued trust and your vote in the upcoming election. Standing together, we are strong. Our Nation now has almost 40,000 members. Through hard work, we have maintained a strong financial position and protected and expanded benefits for our members outside of Oklahoma. I hope to continue this work on behalf of the members I represent.

PLEASE EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE!

HONOR, INTEGRITY AND COOPERATION

Paid for by Mark Johnson

EXPERIENCE MATTERS

RE-ELECT MARK JOHNSON

For District 7 Legislator

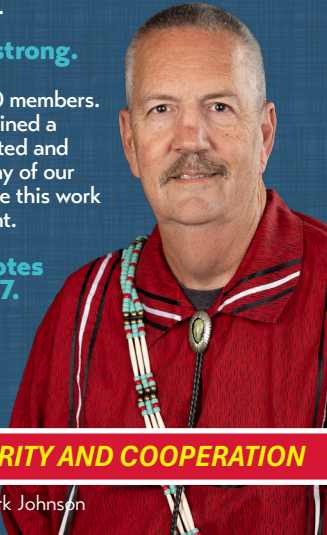
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Standing together, we are strong.

Our Nation now has almost 40,000 members. Through hard work, we have maintained a strong financial position and protected and expanded benefits on which so many of our members depend. I hope to continue this work on behalf of the members I represent.

I can only do so with the votes of the members of District 7.

PLEASE EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE!



HONOR, INTEGRITY AND COOPERATION

Paid for by Mark Johnson

Wenabmeshen
VOTE

KATIE BOWIE
DISTRICT 7

EXPERIENCE MATTERS

RE-ELECT MARK JOHNSON

For District 7 Legislator

A member of the Vieux and Johnson Families

mark.johnson@potawatomi.org

559-351-0078



As a professional firefighter for 40+ years, I have always lived by three guiding principles: HONOR, INTEGRITY AND COOPERATION

Paid for by Mark Johnson



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shop in-store & online at POTAWATOMIGIFTS.COM

LOCATED INSIDE THE CULTURAL HERITAGE CENTER | POTAWATOMIGIFTS | (405) 275-3119



VOTE JAMES NEWBERRY



Distict 5 Legislative Representative

**I consider every Potawatomi my cousin. I'll work
Hard for you as my family.**

I'll never waste your time.

**I'll never do anything to embarrass you or our
great Citizen Potawatomi Nation**



Lorrie Underwood for District 5 Legislator

VOTE!!

District 5

Stand Up.
Be Heard.
Every Vote Matters!

- ★ Grow our Culture & Traditions
- ★ Transparent and Accountable Leadership
- ★ Clear Communication with every Citizen
- ★ Keep our Community Informed



Graduation Celebration

APRIL
25
12-2PM

**CPN
CULTURAL
HERITAGE
CENTER**

1899 S. GORDON COOPER DR.
SHAWNEE, OK

**TO SIGN UP,
VISIT PORTAL.POTAWATOMI.ORG**

If you are unable to attend the in-person event, please still sign up to be featured in the video and receive a limited edition print from a Potawatomi artist!

**QUESTIONS?
EMAIL EDUCATION@POTAWATOMI.ORG**

From the executives



John “Rocky” Barrett Tribal Chairman

Bozho, nikan, (Hello, my friend),

Most of you will have received your “Request For Ballot” form from the Tribal Election Committee by now. PLEASE FILL IT OUT AND SEND IT BACK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! Fewer people are voting in our elections each year. We have worked too hard to create what we have and have too much to lose to not care who our leaders are. Your parents and grandparents sacrificed for a hugely valuable earning asset that you own a part of and that will always be there for you: your TRIBE.

We are not sure why voting is declining, but we intend to find out. We believe scheduling regular Tribal meetings around the state will help generate participation and interest in family histories, stories of our forced relocations and how we overcame hard times to grow as a Nation. We also want to initiate a two-way dialog with our membership in Oklahoma — internet works, but face-to-face makes us kin.

One of the candidates for Vice-Chairman, Jason Smalley, suggested we take a Smart Screen (like we use for our Legislative meetings) to our in-state meetings so those who could not attend could ask questions. The meetings will be to inform CPN members about the benefits that are available to them, the way our government works, and what opportunities we have for members looking to work for the Tribe or move closer to headquarters. We also plan to have cultural activities to teach about Citizen Potawatomi ceremony, dance, singing, language, heritage, history and some of our ancestors’ religious practices.

I envision these Oklahoma town meetings as a sharing and exchange of Tribal, family and personal history and current ideas from both old and young, men and women. The long-range objective is to increase our sense of community and thereby increase the level of participation and VOTING.

Please notice that I distinguished these meetings would feature “Citizen Potawatomi” cultural activities. There is a difference between our ceremonial and cultural activities in Oklahoma and those of the other six Potawatomi tribes. We have been separated from the Prairie Potawatomi People in Mayetta, Kansas, for 158 years and from the Potawatomi of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Indiana for over 180 years. All of us should know the reasons for the separation, the effect that separation had on us, and what our lives have been like since we moved to different parts of the country. We need to know what we share and what was different. This kind of sharing is for the betterment of each Potawatomi Nation with which we engage.

In history, each Potawatomi Tribal Nation developed its own territory, forming new governments customs. All of us suffered hardships, tragedies, wars, losses and gains. It made us unique, but still Potawatomi. In our Tribe’s case, our people faced four relocations and had to leave their homelands, culture and traditions. There was a great diaspora of CPN from the Dust Bowl Days through the Great Depression and war years of the 1940s. Imagine the loss of family cultural contact and knowledge they suffered when they were relocated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs’ Urban Relocation Program after our move to Oklahoma. With each move, our culture and traditions underwent changes unique to each generation. They may not have been the same as those of our sister Potawatomi Tribes. We can learn things of great value from them and need to know about their struggles and losses. We worked to keep many of the old ways and learned some from the generosity of our distant cousins. We need to pass on this old, life-guiding knowledge that is invaluable to our unique identity as a people. We share blood but not current histories — our common history is only the years before 1867. The recent organization of a Potawatomi Confederation gives us renewed hope for future exchanges of knowledge and reciprocal business and commerce.

As Tribal Chairman since 1985, and active in CPN government affairs since 1973, I feel the need to tell what Tribal history I was a part of, where we achieved success and where we failed, and why. We are losing a huge body of tribal knowledge with the retirement of Vice-Chairman Linda Capps. She is a true treasure. She will, hopefully, have time to participate in some of these new meetings here in Oklahoma.

Here at home, we have grown so large and have had such an important impact on the local and state economies. It is vital that all of us, who own these assets, have an understanding of how we grew, how we operate, and what our collective goals are.

We did not grow to over 40,000 Citizen Potawatomi Citizens, with over \$3 billion in assets; 2,400 employees; a \$750,000,000 budget; 33 separate federal contracts, compacts, and programs; 10 large commercial business establishments; an award-winning modern health system with multiple locations; and the largest tribally-owned bank in this country without ***expertise and experience***. Our success is the product of those who are employed and who lead the government and manage our business. We need to meet those who are willing to work for your people, to know what your abilities are and what goals you hope to accomplish that could help CPN. We are a great opportunity for you.

To do this, you have to make the following minimum effort: 1) make sure Tribal Rolls and the *Hownikan* has your current address, especially members who have moved; 2) VOTE, make sure your family VOTES, and

be sure you are voting for the kind of candidate you would trust to manage YOUR tribe's money, businesses, and institutions — vote for someone with sufficient education and experience who has demonstrated through their accomplishments that they are qualified and of good character. BUT AT ALL COSTS – **VOTE**.

Thank you for the honor of serving as your Tribal Chairman these past 40 years. It is the greatest honor of my life.

Migwetch (Thank you),

John "Rocky" Barrett | Keweoge (He Leads Them Home) | Tribal Chairman



Linda Capps Vice-Chairman

Bozho (Hello),

The first day of spring is March 20, and the people of Oklahoma are in high hopes of getting some much-needed rain to offset the dry winter. We have just finished the warmest February on record. Many of the 77 counties of Oklahoma are under an official burn ban, including Pottawatomie County.

Last month, I indicated to my readers that I want to share some of the highlights of my tenure during the 36 years I spent as Vice-Chairman.

One major

accomplishment during those years was CPN's purchase of Rural Water District 3, which serves over 60 percent of Pottawatomie County's geographic area, including the communities of Asher, Wanette and Dale. The district is the only tribally-owned enterprise that is a public utility. Rural Water District 3 began serving the region in 1997, but the district was in dire economic straits when the Citizen Potawatomi Nation took over in October of 2007. Since then, the district's water treatment plants have ramped up production by twice the original output. Rural Water District 3 provides water to residential customers as well as schools, churches and businesses.



From left, Vice-Chairman Linda Capps, Chairman John "Rocky" Barrett, John Robinson and Ann Laird sign papers to finalize CPN's purchase of Rural Water District 3.

The district has installed over 2,300 meters, but that number is misleading compared to the number of people being served water. Some of the meters serve a few hundred people instead of a family. As an example, several schools are being provided with water by the district. The water distribution system is a huge undertaking, not only for Rural Water District 3 but for the entire Tribe, with an abundance of responsibility to customers and the public. I am proud to say that CPN has overcome huge obstacles to provide water to so many homes and other entities. The Tribe took over some infrastructure that was outdated and in poor repair. The work to bring the system up to par was tedious and laborious, but CPN had employees in place that were determined to make necessary repairs and replacements.

The water district has two water plants. The original plant in Macomb, Oklahoma, has received a complete overhaul within the last few years. Six acres of land adjacent to the plant were purchased to provide necessary expansion. The water source for the plant comes from the Atoka water line from Lake Atoka Reservoir, approximately four miles north of Atoka, Oklahoma. The Atoka water line also feeds water to Oklahoma City, and that line is tapped by the Macomb Water Plant. The other water plant near the Grand Casino is not only served by Atoka water, but also by five additional water wells near the former North Canadian River (renamed the Oklahoma River).

CPN has received much recognition and numerous visits by other tribes to assess what it takes to start a water district. The monetary investment is extensive, and the sweat equity is massive, but the rewards of having safe, sanitary, sufficient water for the future outweigh the financial burden. I am so pleased that I had the opportunity to play a small part in the procurement, implementation and daily administration of Rural Water District 3. It thrills my heart to see so many people (including Tribal members) enjoying the quality water that they deserve. Hats off to all the CPN elected officials and employees that were in the trenches and in the details of making this great public service program work for the good of CPN and the public. They are the true heroes, whether they are an elected official, director, supervisor, foreman, equipment operator, electrician, mechanic, office worker, meter technician, truck driver or other participant, their contribution is acknowledged and greatly appreciated.

Migwetch (Thank you),

Linda Capps | Segenakwe (Black Bird Woman) | Vice-Chairman
Work: 405-275-3121 | Cell: 405-650-1238 | lcapps@potawatomi.org

From the legislature



Steve Livingston District 1

Bozho (Hello),

In February, the City of Maumee, Ohio, hosted a screening of “Sugarcane,” a film that examines the abuse and lasting trauma caused by Indian boarding schools. I attended expecting to watch the film as a local resident, but through a series of conversations, I was asked to participate in a post-screening discussion and share my perspective as a Potawatomi citizen.

The film is difficult to watch. Like many stories shared by our elders, it reveals painful truths: forced separation, abuse and efforts to strip Indigenous children of their identity. While much of the public conversation around boarding schools focuses on physical and emotional harm, I spoke about another lasting impact that is often overlooked: the loss of language.

Language carries more than words. It holds a worldview, values, humor and identity. Boarding schools understood this, which is why children were punished for speaking their languages and given new names. Today, across all Potawatomi communities, less than a handful of first-language speakers remain. That reality is not accidental, and it is the direct result of historical policy.

I shared how these policies shaped my family. With each generation, removals, boarding schools and economic hardship caused connections to language and community to weaken. Reclaiming our language later in life, with the help of elders and mentors, most especially that of my good friend Thomas Loftis, helped me to live more intentionally and rebuild a relationship with something greater than myself.

What struck me most during the event was how little many attendees knew — not just about boarding schools, but about our continued presence as Native people today. Our history is often overshadowed by monuments and place names tied to colonization, while Indigenous stories remain absent. It was a reminder of the work we all share in educating our neighbors.

I shared that despite centuries of loss and hardship, our people continue to come together — to speak our language, to share our stories and to restore what was nearly erased. Every powwow dance, every language class, every bead sewn into regalia and every prayer lifted to the Creator is more than tradition; it is survival, resilience and healing.

Speaking of coming together in community, I had a conversation with District 1 Tribal citizen Tyler Spencer, who is participating in the *Mdamen* Program. *Mdamen* is a nine-week virtual program designed to help Tribal citizens connect and explore their heritage. Tyler shared how impactful the experience has been and how eager he is to build relationships with other Potawatomi in his area.

Our conversation turned to the challenge of connection across a district that spans 16 states, from Missouri to Maine. Distance can make it difficult to feel informed or connected, and no single meeting or location can reach everyone.

Community shows up in many ways — from the Potawatomi Gathering in Crandon, Wisconsin, this summer, to February’s virtual finger weaving with Anna Johnson, to locally organized gatherings like Kevin Roberts’ event at the Illinois State Museum.

Community is not built by elected officials alone; it grows through the actions of individuals. Small gatherings, shared meals, cultural teachings and local meetups matter deeply. If you are interested in hosting something in your area, I want to help support and connect you with others.

Please visit cpndistrict1.com and sign up for the newsletter. I can only send updates to those who request them, and just 127 citizens are signed up. You can also visit cpndistrict1.com/events for the most up-to-date information on virtual and in-person gatherings.

My goal is for District 1 citizens to feel informed, connected and supported. It is truly an honor to serve you

Steve Livingston | Legislator, District 1 | steve.livingston@potawatomi.org



Eva Marie Carney District 2

Bozho, nikanek (Hello, friends),

District 2 Meetings

The Crystal Bridges Museum in Bentonville, Arkansas, recently unveiled its new "Visions of America" galleries. I will be looking into a tour of the museum for a future District 2 get together. The museum has reimagined its galleries to reflect recent collecting priorities in craft and Indigenous art, including commissions by two Potawatomi artists, Jeri Redcorn and Kelly Church. I will report back on plans (a fall 2026 gathering, if I can make it happen) if and when they come together.

Our next meeting will take place just outside Tampa, Florida, on March 14 at Hillsborough River State Park. All

the details are in the postcard and on my website calendar page, evamariocarney.com/calendar. If interested, you can canoe, kayak, camp (each by reservation) before or after the 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. meeting. I hope to see as many area folks there as is possible. Please RSVP.

Tips for Using Your Tribal ID for U.S. travel

I travelled to Indiana in late January to attend the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi and its Four Winds Casinos' Community Investment Check Presentation Ceremony in South Bend on behalf of The Kwek Society (kweksociety.org). During that trip I was also able to attend Sharon Hoogstraten's presentation about her work that is on exhibit at MoonTree Studios (cpn.news/MoonTreeStudios) in Plymouth, Indiana. (MoonTree was showing some of Sharon's beautiful modern regalia photographs, including the photograph of Sister Virginia Pearl, CSJ (Slavin family), included here.)

I was able to use my Tribal ID at our airport, with only a slight delay to confirm that I was authorized to use it. Some tips for successful Tribal ID use are to tell the TSA agent, when presenting the ID, that what you are handing the agent is a Tribal ID that does not scan. After that, it's helpful to say, "This is what I want to use," when asked if you have another ID. You may be asked to wait while a supervisor is called to confirm that your ID will be accepted. (Occasionally, an experienced agent will look at the ID and wave you through.) The ID verification process typically takes less than 10 minutes and, in my experience, ends with the agent saying something like "I haven't seen one of these before; that's cool." That is when I like to respond, "That is why I like to use it, so you see what a Tribal ID looks like and because I want folks to know that Native people are still here."



Eva Marie Carney poses next to Sharon Hoogstraten's photos of Sister Virginia Pearl, CSJ (Slavin family), a dear friend who walked on in October 2024. (Photo by Sharon Hoogstraten)

District 2 Meeting

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Saturday, March 14, 2026</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">11AM - 2:30PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pavillion 12 (Smokehouse) Hillsborough River State Park</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">5402 US 301 North, Thonotosassa, FL 33592 (minutes northeast of downtown Tampa)</p>
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Come visit with your family and friends, learn and share local and CPN family history, and enjoy lunch and conversation. Canoeing and kayaking available before or after the meeting (by reservation) and camping is offered, as well. The Park is open from 8 am to sundown each day.

All park details are here: <https://flivbez.com/park-info>.

*RSVP
by March 6* at evamariocarney@gmail.com or call 1-888-849-1484. Please include names of attendees and ages if under 12.

Red Nation Television Network

Recently I learned about Red Nation TV, a Native Indigenous-owned and operated streaming service. The network reports it is the first and longest-running Native and Indigenous content provider, dedicated exclusively to Native American and World Indigenous storytelling. You can visit rednationtv.com to learn more and buy a plan. I would love to hear your thoughts about the network if you are a subscriber.

Family Interview Opportunity

Did you know that you can schedule and take part in a video interview with CPN's Cultural Heritage Center staff from the comfort of your home? If you are a CPN citizen, you

can share your family's story by scheduling an interview through the form at cpn.news/heritageinterview. And through the Potawatomi Portal (portal.potawatomi.org), you can search for and view video recordings made by others.

Request to Share Family News

Do you have family news to share? Please send me a note as I would love to include it in a future column.

Migwetch (Thank you),

Eva Marie Carney | Ojindiskwe (Bluebird Woman) | ecarney@potawatomi.org | evamariecarney@gmail.com
evamariecarney.com | PO Box 5595 | Arlington, VA 22205 | Toll Free: 888-849-1484 (voicemail)



Brenda Trevino District 3

Bozho jayek (Hello, everyone)!

The meet-and-greet in Corpus Christi will always be special because it was my first. It was a little chilly outside, but warm and inviting inside at the YMCA. Invitations went out to households in over 30 counties, with the hope of attracting as many as could come. Over a dozen responded with RSVPs and six attended. The time spent was engaging and allowed us to get to know each other. The majority expressed an interest in being named in the near future as well. The overall goal of the meet-and-greet was achieved

by learning and listening to each other, sharing our family's stories and strengthening our connections.

The photograph was taken to include the wisest (Linda Teal), the youngest (Diana Pena) and the one who traveled the farthest to attend (Bill Easley) as well as Rebecca Johnson, Rick Attebery and Chrissy Thompson. The Woodlands meet-and-greet will be reported next month. It is scheduled for Feb. 2 (after the cut-off date for this newsletter issue).

Each meeting includes information from our executives, a special topic of the day and a cultural message. The Corpus meeting reviewed the available information on our potawatomi.org website and the Portal. The Woodlands meeting will review offerings from our Education Department. The March 7 meeting in Georgetown,



Pictured from left are Linda Teal, Brenda Trevino, Rick Attebery, Diana Pena, Chrissy Thompson, Bill Easley and Rebecca Johnson at the Corpus Christi meet-and-greet.



CPN District 3 Regional Meeting

Come for the family. Stay for the fun!

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2026
10:30AM-1:30PM

DEWEY COMMUNITY CENTER
925 N. 9th St, Waco, Texas 76707

District meetings are for members, their spouses and immediate family.
Bring your tribal IDs to sign in.

RSVP by April 14, 2026
to brenda.trevino@potawatomi.org or call 281-466-7427

Finally, please send me your email address and any other contact information you consent to provide so you can receive communication directly from me.

Texas, will include information from our Language Department and availability of classes for all ages.

Our next opportunity to gather with District 3 relatives will be in Waco on April 18. Postcards will be sent to targeted counties near the meeting, but as with any of our gatherings, all District 3 members are welcome. Don't forget, RSVP for Waco's meeting by April 4 (two weeks ahead) so plenty of food and resources are available. And if it slips your mind, even a week ahead I can add you to the list.

This is also a very important liturgical time for Christians as well as our ancestral teachings. A time to remember the sacrifice of Christ, the importance of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit given to our ancestors by the

Creator through all creatures/nature on Mother Earth. We live in an uncertain time, but with belief in God as his children and the part we play in overall creation, we can respond to the situations around us in the recognition of that spirit, with grace and with mercy. May the peace of our God and Creator be with you always. Aho!

Migwetch (Thank you) for allowing me to serve each of you! Please reach out if I can be of assistance.

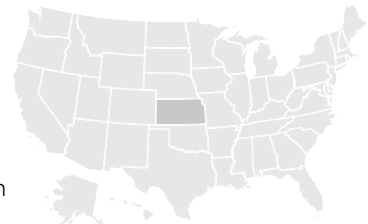
Brenda Trevino | Mkedewankwetkwe (Black Cloud Woman) brenda.trevino@potawatomi.org | 281-466-7427



Jon Boursaw District 4

Who was Mary L. Nadeau?

Until recently, all I knew about Mary L. Nadeau was that she was the mother of Mary E. Bourassa, the third wife of Joseph Napoleon Bourassa, my great-great-grandfather and that she died in 1867 and is thought to be buried in the Uniontown Cemetery. For those who may not know the location of that cemetery, it is about a mile east of Willard, Kansas, and directly south across the Kansas River from Rossville, Kansas. Her tombstone is located in what is called the Bourassa burial site, which is a stone walled area within the cemetery. The site only has tombstones for deceased members of the Bourassa family. But we have recently discovered, after numerous sophisticated surveys, that there are no remains associated with these tombstones and markers. That is another story.



A few weeks ago, I received the first in a series of emails from Ryan Williams, a descendant of Peter Alexander Nadeau, whose mother has been identified as Mary Rousseau. That is where this story begins. In Ryan's research, he has found that Mary's real name, while married to Pierre Nadeau, was Mary Therese LaVigne. In addition, he discovered Mary was born in 1808, the daughter of Anishinaabe parents Marie LeFevre LaVigne and *Kougawma* LaVigne, an Odawa medicine man. Following *Kougawma's* death, her mother married Joseph Bailly, a fur trader, and they lived on Mackinac Island, Michigan.

Mary and the Bailly family eventually moved to a trading post along the St. Joseph River near the Indiana border on an area which later became Bertrand, Michigan, named after John Bertrand and his Potawatomi wife, Madeline Bourassa Bertrand. This was also the location of the St. Joseph River Band of Potawatomi led by Chief *Topinabee*, which later became the Pokagons Band.

Beginning in 1822, Mary's stepfather built the Bailly Homestead along the Little Calumet River at the southern tip of Lake Michigan. Mary's mother, called Monee, was known for her refined graciousness in receiving Native Americans, travelers and new settlers to the Homestead. Monee is the namesake for the town of Monee, Illinois, which recently unveiled a sculpture in Monee's honor.

During the 1820s, Mary attended school at the Carey Mission in Niles, Michigan, possibly at the same time as Joseph N. Bourassa. Mary married Pierre Nadeau in 1829. They had four children together, Peter Alexander, Eli Gilbert, Mary Elizabeth (b. 1833) and Catherine Alexandrine.

In 1837, Father Benjamin Petit was sent to the mission St. Mary du Lac in South Bend, Illinois, while also serving the Potawatomi Band at Twin Lakes, Illinois. He is on record for having baptized Catherine Alexandrine. The mission at St. Mary du Lac would later become Notre Dame University. Pierre died in 1838 and in 1840, Mary appears to have joined the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi during their forced migration to Kansas. She arrived there with her four children and started a new life. Mary died in 1867 at age 59 and was laid to rest in the Uniontown Cemetery. Her daughter, Mary E. Bourassa, died in 1872 during childbirth and is also buried in the Uniontown Cemetery.



*Bourassa
burial site at
Uniontown
Cemetery*



I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to Ryan for providing this information, and I hope he accepts my apology for omitting a lot of his information due to space limitations.

Upcoming CPN Elders' Potlucks

Date for the Elder Potlucks held in Rossville at noon are:

April 10 Ham RSVP by the 7th

Bring your favorite side dish or dessert. Please RSVP to Tracy at 785-584-6171.

Migwetch (Thank you),

Jon Boursaw | *Wetase Mkoh* (Brave Bear) | jboursaw@potawatomi.org | 785-608-1982

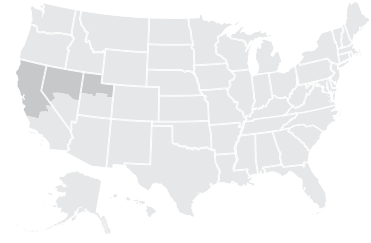
2007 SW Gage Blvd. | Topeka, KS 66604 | Office Hours: Tuesday 9-11 a.m. | Thursdays 3-5 p.m. | Other times as requested



Mark Johnson District 7

Bozho nikanek (Hello friends),

I received a call from a member who had recently moved and was out of their medication while waiting for the mail order pharmacy to catch up with them. CPN Care could have been a great resource to help them out with a prescription for non-controlled medications for a few days until they got their normal prescription, but unfortunately, they had not signed up for the service. Please sign up now for CPN Care; this benefit is available to you and your family, including non-Native children under 18 years old and non-Native spouses. It will take two to three days for your account to become active, so sign up now, before you need it at 2 a.m. It is at no cost to you and your family to join. Besides being able to talk to a doctor 24/7/365 for general telemedicine,



CPN Care includes life assistance and pharmacy discount services. Sign up at potawatomi.org/cpn-care. Even if you have good insurance, it may come in handy in the middle of the night when your regular doctor is not available.

The CPN Health Aid Program application is available through the Tribal portal at portal.potawatomi.org and helps Tribal members purchase glasses, hearing aids, dentures and other medical devices. All Tribal members born on or before Dec. 31, 1980, are eligible for the CPN Health Aid Program. Program monies are used to purchase prosthetic devices, glasses, hearing aids, dentures, partials, crowns, wheelchairs, mobile chairs, CPAP machines, prescription sunglasses, contacts, and mobile chair lifts and ramps for vehicles. Please remember the health aid program pays 75 percent up to \$750, except for eyewear. Eyewear is covered up to \$250. There is a limit of \$750 per year. If you have questions, please call 405-964-4025.

Election season will also be coming up before you know it. If you have recently moved, please update your mailing address with Tribal Rolls; this can also be done at portal.potawatomi.org. It is your duty as a Tribal member to participate in your Nation. One great way is through voting when our Tribe has elections. With only about 8% or so of our eligible members voting each year, it is vital that you exercise your right to vote. Pay attention to the issues on the ballot, and vote for who you feel will best represent those values, not just now but into the future.

Again, as a reminder, attending the Family Reunion Festival is a great way to reconnect with your history. If you haven't been before, or it has been a while, start planning now and join us June 26 to June 28 in Shawnee. I am always available to talk, and I love visiting with our members at the Festival. There is no better way to spend your summer vacation. The honored families in 2026 will be: Acton, Bergeron, Bruno, Curley, DeLonais, Greemore and Slavin. Please join us!

Once again, I would like to say what an honor it is to serve you as your District 7 representative. As always, give me a call and I will be happy to work with you on any questions you may have or provide you with additional information you may need to access Tribal benefits that are available to you. Please also take the time to give me a call or send me an email with your contact information so that I can keep you informed of the happenings within the Nation and district.

Migwetch (Thank you),

Mark Johnson | *Wisk Mtek* (Strong as a Tree) | 559-351-0078 | mark.johnson@potawatomi.org



Dave Carney District 8

Bozho, nikan (Hello, friends),

In January, I filed an application with the election board to continue my work as your District 8 legislator. I learned recently that I am unopposed and will continue for another four years. I am excited for the opportunity to serve and would like to say *migwetch* (thank you) for your support.

Another candidate that is unopposed is D. Wayne Trousdale, who will continue as the Nation's Secretary/Treasurer. He has been in this role since 2002, and we are very fortunate that he is willing to serve another term. His resume is impressive, being both an outstanding businessman and community leader. He is a steady hand on the steering wheel of the Nation's finances.

Though some of us will be continuing in

our offices, this will be a transition year — most significantly since Vice-Chairman Capps did not file to run. There are three candidates in that race: Jason Smalley, Charles Scott and Martha Kimberly Nootbar. I don't really know any of these candidates, so I will be looking at their online presence, work history (experience that may be applicable to the position) and the information they share in the upcoming editions of the *Hownikan*. I suggest looking for qualities that showcase BOTH business and cultural focus. As much as the Chairman has forged the direction of the Nation, the role of Vice-Chairman had been extremely significant also. I suggest we all have a heightened interest in this important race — and vote!

As we are drawn in by national and international conflicts of news making headlines, the quiet business of our lives as Citizen Potawatomi continues. Our citizens continue to have babies, educate

our children, practice some of the "old ways" and bury/cremate our family members that walk on. I am proud of the programs that CPN has in place to assist our citizens, who now number almost 40,000. I'm always happy to receive inquiries about these programs from folks residing in District 8 and will always do my best to help you.

In June 2026, my daughter Sophia will be graduating from a master's program in accounting from the Foster School of Business at the University of Washington. This is our last child of four to finish their education with the much appreciated help of the Tribe. I'd like to not only acknowledge the Tribe, but also the Nation's education department. They have been truly excellent.

For those planning summer travel — the Family Reunion Festival this year in Oklahoma will be June 26-28, 2026. Honored families are Acton, Bergeron, Bruno, Curley, DeLonais, Greenmore and Slavin. **I would like to challenge my founding family, the Juneaus, to start planning now for 2028. The last time our family was honored, we had a very small group.**

I am looking forward to being able to meet in person with District 8 members. I am already in the planning stages of the Fall Feast. The date has been set for Oct. 24, for a mid-day meal and gathering held at the Great Spirit Methodist Church in Portland, Oregon.

If you are a subject expert on anything to do with the Citizen Potawatomi Nation's history, culture or issues impacting Indian country and would like to make a presentation at this district event, I would like to hear from you. One of the things that has made our Fall Feasts so rich and diverse has been speakers from our district.

It is my honor to serve as your Legislator,

Dave Carney | *Kagashgi* (Raven) | dcarney@potawatomi.org | 360-259-4027



Dave Carney with his daughter Sophia



Paul Wesselhöft District 9

Bozho, nikan (Hello, friend),

Ashes to Ashes

— Paul Chrisstarlon Wesselhöft

The American Corporal said,
“The reign of terror, horror, is over.
We defeated the fascists.
Sir, let me help you onto the truck.
You are liberated. You are free.”
The pale, frail, man replied,

“May I have one last moment, please.”

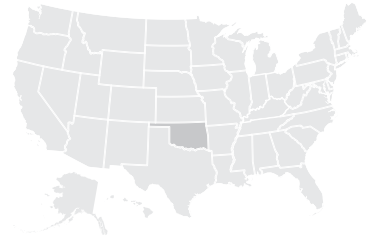
He slowly went down to the ground on bended knees,
Scooped up some ashes.

“My wife, Yakira, and daughter, Adira, are there, somewhere.
And now they are with me.”

(Native Americans, African Americans and Jews have suffered at the hands of the dominant, ruling class more than any people throughout our history.)

Migwetch (Thank you),

Paul Wesselhöft | *Naganit* (Leader) | reppaul@gmail.com | pwesselhoft@potawatomi.org



Andrew Walters District 11

Bozho (Hello),

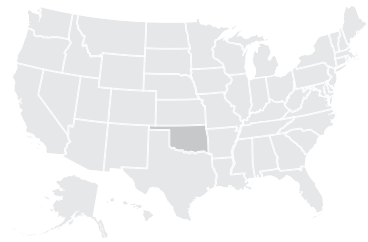
The other day, I received an email from the Tribe announcing those folks that are running in the next election. Some of the names were new, some old. Some were running unopposed, some with contenders. Some names were uplifting, folks I know from my past as having true caring for the Tribe. Some were names of those who, for whatever reason, have conflict with the administration either real or imagined. Some super intelligent. Some who couldn't pour pee out of a boot with instructions on the heel.

I was saddened. It wasn't the list that bothered me. It wasn't who was "running" that caused my emotional recoil. After all, every year we go through this process. Every year WE, or should I say, "some of us," decide who we should vote for...whether that decision is educated or the result of past grievances from old injuries not personally suffered but rather learned through angry myth and legend. Ugly things are said. Feathers are ruffled, feelings hurt and butts stuck up in the air. That's unfortunately the process. But it wasn't any of that. I was saddened by what was missing...a name. The name that over the years has become so important to us all. A name that symbolizes generational leadership. That name is Linda Capps.

It would be easier to just say that I don't know when I first met Linda, when I first knew who she was. I don't remember that spark striking, that flash of incite, when I first realized her quiddity. I realized how important she was not only to the Tribe, but to all of us as individuals. It was years ago, but through stories from my Tribal family and friends, she has a refreshed presence.

I will proudly and unashamedly say, I love Linda Capps. I love her as the Vice-Chairman, the balance and grace she brings. I love her for the philanthropy she shows. I love her for caring for the Tribe and the greater community. I love her for the deep commitment I know she has for each and every one of us. I love her for her family, all staunch upstanding citizens in our community. And, I love Linda as a friend...no...a big sister, a member of my family.

I have seen Linda "at work." Her disarming charm and grace open doors for the Tribe. Her history and knowledge of the Tribe is priceless. I have seen her pull out her rapier intellect and cut those



who underestimate her down to size, smiling coyly as she does it. I have seen her face soften at the sight of a child, and I have felt her sympathy when she thought Cora and I needed help.

I know there are some rotten old corpses out there. People who, in their vile, hateful minds rejoice over Linda leaving her office. Rotten corpses, broken shells, whose only outlet is to sit at a keyboard and spew hatred and dissent. May they be less than forgotten in our future. Their spirit is a poison. It was Linda who was the antidote. A vast majority of this Tribe feels the same as I do. We love you, Linda.

Each burden, no matter large or small, must, at some point, be put down. Linda has carried the burden of leadership for years. I hope for Linda a time where she can sit under the cool shade of friends and family, remembering her extraordinary service filled life and be untethered to the burden that we have placed on her for so long.

"Los tiempos van cambiando" (The times are changing)

We love you guys; Cora says hi!!!

Andrew Walters | andrew.walters@potawatomi.org | nibwemko@gmail.com

Are you dually enrolled?

To remain an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, you are not allowed to be enrolled in any other Indigenous tribe. If you are dually enrolled, or if you think you might be, please contact Tribal Rolls at 405-878-5835 or tribalrolls@potawatomi.org.



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Walking On

Nevels Doyle Vandagriff Burnett/Beaubien Family



Nevels Doyle Vandagriff joined his wife in Heaven in the early hours of Feb. 5, 2026. He was 94.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Nevels and Rilda Vandagriff, and his wife of 64 years, Karma Vandagriff. His surviving family includes his sister, Maurita Summers, of Purcell, Oklahoma; daughter, Becky Smith and husband Sidney Smith; daughter, Cindy Brackett; grandchildren, Brian Brackett, Nathan

Brackett and wife Amber Taylor, Dana Isbill and husband Jason Isbill, David Brackett and wife Rebeca Brackett, Hannah Brackett and husband Andrew Williams; and great-grandchildren, JuliAnn Brackett, Allison Brackett, Luke Brackett, Tiffany Isbill, Konner Isbill, Axel Isbill, Piper Williams, Finn Brackett and Samuel Brackett.

Born in Purcell, Oklahoma, as a member of the Burnett/Beaubien Family of the Potawatomi Nation, Doyle graduated from Oklahoma State University. He was drafted into the Army Signal Corps in 1954 and served during the Korean Conflict. After his military service, he taught high school chemistry, physics and marine biology for 25 years. Among his many hobbies and skills were woodworking, carpentry and scuba diving. His passion for learning and sharing knowledge was contagious, and he improved the lives of everyone lucky enough to know him. He will be missed by all his family and countless former students.

Clara Edmon Bourbonnais/Tescier Family



Clara Ann Edmon, a cherished member of the Tescier family, passed from this life on Feb. 4, 2026, at the age of 83. Born on Nov. 12, 1942, she lived a life grounded in faith, creativity and quiet compassion. Clara loved the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and she carried deep pride in her Potawatomi heritage.

An accomplished artist, Clara's work appeared in several issues of *OU Blood and Thunder*, and she was a featured cover artist for *The Bulletin*, published by

the Oklahoma County Medical Society, and for *Behavioral Health Management* magazine. She was also a multiple-time winner of Citizen Potawatomi Nation art contests. Her talent was matched only by her humility; she created not for recognition, but because art lived naturally within her.

Clara was a kind and modest woman whose heart extended to every living creature. She was known in her neighborhood for feeding stray dogs and cats, offering them the same gentle care she gave to everyone in her life. Her hobbies included painting, sewing and reading, and in the 1970s she majored in art at Oklahoma City Community College. She loved *The Carol Burnett Show*, and her favorite singer was Anne Murray – small joys that brought her great comfort.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her sister, Charlene; her brother-in-law, David; and her beloved dogs Fluffy, Baby, Coconut and her cherished poodle, Champagne.

Clara is survived by her husband of 59 years, Bobby; her daughters, Tammy, Nanette and Yvette; her brother, Charles, and sister-in-law Wanda; her nephews, David Jr. (and Akemi) and Ronnie; and her cat, Babette.

A devoted homemaker, Clara received her greatest wish in life: to be the mother of three daughters. Her legacy lives on in the love she poured into her family, the beauty she created through her art, and the gentle spirit she shared with the world.

Emmett Lee Ables Wilmette/Vieux Family



Emmett Lee Ables, 83, died Jan. 24, 2026, at his home in Topeka, Kansas.

A lifelong resident of Topeka, he was born on May 28, 1942, to Ernest E. and Fleta L. (Stackhouse) Ables. He was the fifth of seven sons. He graduated Seaman High School in 1961.

He was married to Margaret Susan "Peggy Sue" (Edelblute) from 1962 to 1978. They had one daughter in 1966, Letitia Lee.

Emmett married Janice K. (Mosher) Raber in 1979. Janice passed in 2022 after battling a long illness with Emmett by her side.

An expert heavy equipment operator, he started working for Midwest Foundations in the late 1970s as a large drill rig operator. He traveled for work throughout the Midwest until his retirement from the company in 2019.

Quick with a comment, and generous of nature, he always brought smiles and laughs to others.

Emmett was a proud member of the CPN. His third great-grandpa, Paul Vieux, and third great uncles, James and Louis Vieux (French and Potawatomi descent), along with their Potawatomi wives, moved from the Wisconsin area to the Vermillion River near Wamego, Kansas, in the 1840s. They provided river crossings for Ft. Riley soldiers and pioneers on the Oregon Trail. Louis was an interpreter, businessman and signer of the Treaty of 1861, ensuring the rights for Potawatomi to attain U.S. citizenship and to acquire land allotments.

Survivors include his daughter, Letti (Scott) Lister; grandchildren, Christopher Lister, Spearfish, South Dakota, and Madiera (Jesse) Lister Sacrison, Salt Lake City, Utah; bonus daughters, Linda (Jeff) Rahmeier, Topeka; two grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren; Lisa (Rich) Tarwater, Topeka; three grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife Janice, his parents, and brothers Elmer, Ernest, Earl, Charles and infant, Edwin Ables.

Memorial contributions may be made to CPN Cultural Heritage Center, Shawnee, Oklahoma.

Ola Ray Mitchell
Melott/Bergeron Family



Ola Ray Mitchell, age 81, passed away on Feb. 4, 2026, in Clackamas, Oregon.

Ola was born in Vinita, Oklahoma, to Ola Wayne Mitchell and Theresia Cardila Mitchell (Melott). He was raised primarily in Commerce, Oklahoma, where he developed a strong work ethic and pride in presentation that followed him throughout his life. As a young man, he worked diligently to purchase his first car

— a black Chevy Bel-Air with red interior — and enjoyed spending weekends cruising Main Street.

Ola served honorably in the United States Army from 1966 to 1987, retiring as an E-7 Motorpool Sergeant. His military service included assignments at Fort Polk, Louisiana; Fort Bliss, Texas; Germany; Vietnam (1970–1971); Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Campbell, Kentucky; Panama; and Portland, Oregon. He carried himself with discipline and pride, values that defined both his service and his daily life.

Following his military retirement, Ola worked as a TriMet Bus Operator until 2003. He earned numerous awards of excellence and was featured in Rose Festival promotional materials. His riders appreciated his professionalism, reliability and good humor. Whether

in uniform or in everyday life, Ola was known for his neatly pressed clothing and polished shoes.

Ola found joy in simple, meaningful pursuits. He loved grilling for others, spending hours landscaping his yard, woodworking in retirement, and caring for his dogs throughout his life. He enjoyed classic television programs, took pride in his appearance, and appreciated time spent outdoors. He and his wife served as campground hosts at Oregon State Parks, welcoming visitors and caring for the grounds. In retirement, he also enjoyed traveling, including cruises to the Caribbean and Mexico and a visit to Hawaii.

Ola was an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and of Dutch descent. He proudly wore his Native Veteran ball cap and remained deeply connected to his identity and service.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his sister, Nellie Grace Mitchell, who died in childhood; his brother, Jerry Wayne Mitchell; and his grandsons, Jaycob (1994) and Owen (2016).

Ola is survived by his wife, Mary Helen Mitchell (Lucas); his daughters, Jaqueline Nieves and Natalie Mitchell; his grandchildren, Alejandra, Rhandon, Jeremiah and George; his sister, Joyce Naomi Courtney; his beloved nephew, Isaac Lucas; and many extended family members and friends.

Services will be private.



Hau ndenwémagnek

Ho my relatives

Ébyé yak shote gnom

We have come here today

Éwi nesh myé yak ode wdenwéma

To lay our brother to rest

Ngom she épam sét ode

Today he walks

Ga wje zhyé wat gi gambojek

Among those who have passed on

I yé i ébgednoyak ode ngemwen

That is why we offer this song

Émno shketot wa je zhyat ibe shpemsegok

That his journey will go well where he goes above

Iw énaj moyan

That's all I have to say

A Potawatomi prayer for a specific loved one who has walked on.

By Don Perrot

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HOWNIKAN

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