

HOWNIKAN

Gtegangises | May 2025



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Walking On

Disclaimer - This month's edition of the Hownikan features political advertising. These ads are created and provided by the candidates and their supporters in accordance with the statutes of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and the Hownikan election guidelines.



Oklahoma has a stalking and domestic violence crisis

By Kayla Woody,
CPN House of Hope Prevention Specialist

Stalking and domestic violence are about power and control. In Oklahoma, both issues continue to run rampant, with 51% of women and 46% of men likely to experience domestic violence or stalking, which is an extension of abuse.

These statistics are alarming, as are the misconceptions surrounding domestic violence and stalking. How can we shift the conversation?

The first step is understanding the extent of domestic violence. Many believe abuse is solely physical, but emotional, psychological and financial abuse can be just as damaging. This type of abuse may also include constant belittling, gaslighting, isolation from loved ones or controlling finances to trap a partner. Often, these forms of abuse occur before physical violence begins, making warning signs harder to recognize.

Stalking is also misunderstood. Many assume it involves a stranger lurking in the shadows, but most victims know their stalker — whether it be an ex-partner, coworker or even a family member. Stalking can take the form of unwanted gifts, persistent messages or digital tracking, often escalating after a relationship ends. With technology, abusers have more ways than ever to monitor their victims.

For those experiencing stalking or domestic violence, it's important to understand they are not at fault. There are several key steps that can be taken, though, to ensure their safety.

First, planning is essential. Survivors should document incidents meticulously, noting dates, times and interactions to establish a record in case legal action is needed. Additionally, switching up daily routines, driving different routes to work and turning off location services on digital devices can help minimize risk.

Most importantly, it's crucial for victims to connect with organizations that can provide protective resources and emergency shelter. Leaving an abusive situation is challenging for many reasons, and having access to professional guidance makes a difference.

Domestic violence and stalking also impact victims' loved ones. While these situations are distressing, you can help victims by encouraging safety planning and reminding them what healthy relationships look like. Providing resources ensures they have options when they're ready to leave.

Education is key to breaking the cycle of abuse. Teaching people about healthy relationships and early warning signs can help prevent future violence. We must listen, offer support without judgment and advocate for change. 🔥

Language update

By Justin Neely, CPN Language Department Director

Bozho, jayek (Hello, everyone),

Ni je na ginwa? (How are you all doing?)

We have been busy in the Language Department. We recently held a new, six-week beginner class at the Cultural Heritage Center from 5 to 7 p.m. every Thursday from April 3 to May 8. Our first class had a good turnout; we had 11 people in person and another 18 households join us online. Shelly Watson did an excellent job facilitating this class. Shelly is one of the newest members of our team but has really stepped up and is doing an excellent job. Shelly has also been doing a great job teaching a Wednesday elders class along with her coworker Josey Wood. I appreciate their hard work and dedication to our language. They are planning on teaching a class at the upcoming Potawatomi Language Conference at Gun Lake Potawatomi in the fall.

April 14, we held a quarterly lunch and learn class for staff at the Tribe. We also hosted a community game night April 29 at the Cultural Heritage Center. We

plan on doing these quarterly if folks enjoy them. The first event we provided food but welcomed others to bring a dish or side to share. We played dice and bowl, an old, traditional Potawatomi game. We had prizes, and a good time was had by all. Make sure to come out for our next community game night.

We have a conversational class dedicated to speaking the language every Wednesday from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. online. It's our hope that more people will get a chance to start speaking and using the words they are learning so that we can breathe life into our language.

Thursday afternoons from 3 to 4:30 we have an ongoing intermediate course which has about seven regular students. We are planning on trying to make this online as well. Currently, this course has been done only on site.

Peyton Neely recently competed in the OU Language Fair in the modern songs 3rd-5th grade category, taking first place for her singing of "Bye Bye Bye" by NSYNC. The video is online at the Tribe's YouTube

Continued on next page

Skeeter honored as inaugural recipient of the Firekeeper Award

Indian Health Care Resource Center of Tulsa (IHCRC) honored its Chief Executive Officer Carmelita Wamego Skeeter as the first recipient of the Firekeeper Award.

A Citizen Potawatomi Nation member and one of IHCRC's first four employees when it opened in 1976, Mrs. Skeeter has dedicated nearly 50 years to advancing health and wellness in the American Indian community. Her leadership reflects both the values of the Firekeeper Award and the enduring spirit of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, known as the "People of the Place of Fire."

The Firekeeper Award honors individuals whose extraordinary support and dedication have fueled IHCRC's mission and growth. Mrs. Skeeter's unwavering commitment exemplifies the legacy of generosity and devotion the award seeks to celebrate. Moving forward, the Firekeeper Award will continue to recognize those who have made a lasting impact on IHCRC through steadfast support and service.

This honor comes at a milestone moment for IHCRC, as the organization nears completion of a 62,000-square-foot expansion set to open later this year. This will allow IHCRC to offer occupational, physical and speech therapy services, as well as expanded health and wellness, dentistry, optometry and pharmacy services.

Carmelita Wamego Skeeter's unwavering support and contributions have left an indelible mark on the American Indian community, and through this award, IHCRC will continue to recognize her legacy.



Carmelita Wamego Skeeter

The next Firekeeper Award winner will be honored during 2026's Dance of the Two Moons, which will coincide with IHCRC's 50th anniversary. 🔥

Language continued...

channel, which you can find if you search *Hownikan*. She also received an honorable mention for her video submission of a skit between Peyton and her cousin Addison. I am also extremely proud of the 1st grade students from Will Rogers Elementary, who competed and did an excellent job singing the Benson Boone song, "Beautiful Things," in Potawatomi. My wife Serena Neely did a great job working with her class.

May 19, we will be starting our eight-week summer master apprentice immersion course. We have had several folks contact us who would like to join us for a week or two, depending on their schedules.

We welcome folks joining us. Just let us know ahead of time so that we can plan accordingly.

If you haven't before, make sure to check out our various online resources. We had a couple of courses on Memrise in the past that have been moved to a community site on Memrise, which are now available again until the end of 2025. They are called Conversational Potawatomi and Potawatomi A Day in the Life. We also have a couple of different courses at learning.potawatomi.org: a beginner course, one for middle school aged kids, a children's course and a course more based on grammar learning. We also have our online dictionary at potawatomidictionary.com, which has over 10,000 words with sound that can be downloaded and printed out as well. 🔥



Lady A

Live in Concert

FRIDAY, JUNE 20

GRAND CASINO HOTEL & RESORT

LADYAMUSIC.COM | GRANDBOXOFFICE.COM

I-40 EXIT 178 | SHAWNEE, OK | 405-964-7263



Graphic artist works with big names

When Kendrick Lamar took the stage at halftime of Super Bowl LIX, one Citizen Potawatomi Nation Tribal member reflected on how much the Grammy-winning musician had accomplished.

Zac Schwiet is a graphic designer who was part of the team that created the art for Lamar's first major label album release, called "good kid, m.A.A.d city." The album became the longest-charting hip hop studio album in Billboard 200 history and Rolling Stone named it the greatest concept album of all time.

Today, Schwiet and his wife own their own design studio in the Pacific Northwest, Wasaki Studio, where they work with some of the biggest names in the music business and the corporate world.

Schwiet had always been interested in graphic design and film production. He studied visual communication in Seattle and later received two internships in the music industry.

"Those two internships really set the foundation for my career. One of them turned into a job that I had for four years. So that (graphics) studio is actually the studio that did the Kendrick Lamar album," he said. "It was the summer after I graduated from college, and at the time we didn't realize it was going to be as big as it was."

Schwiet's boss and Art Director, Don Clark of Invisible Creature, at the time had designed albums for over a decade and had a large portfolio of work, including artists like Nirvana, Chris Cornell and Foo Fighters.

"At that time, it was a small team; there were just three of us. From the beginning, I was included in the process and I remember the calls that we had with Kendrick's crew vividly," he said.

Lamar's creative team reached out to the studio for the album's graphic design and packaging, including the cover, booklet and vinyl.

"Kendrick had a really specific vision. With that, Don established the design system with the graphic treatment of the photos and set up the type system, and then I did the rest of the production design and photo retouching. That was one of the first albums that I was given more responsibility to carry the design across all of the elements of the packaging," Schwiet said.

Usually, the design process involves diving into the album to determine what the artist hopes to convey, but Lamar's team shared that "good kid, m.A.A.d city" would be a narrative about Lamar's childhood in the Compton neighborhood of Los Angeles, California.

"I remember finding (Lamar's) SoundCloud and listening to the album he had previously put out. We were brainstorming ideas based on the information about the album and then pitched ideas for it," Schwiet said. "The photo-film aesthetic was one of the pitches that Don made, applying a visual treatment to the photo, to put it in that Polaroid frame."

Lamar had family photos in mind that he wanted to use. One of Lamar sitting with his uncles and grandfather, the other of a minivan, both with the Polaroid frames, were used on both the original release and on the album's deluxe version. Kendrick wanted everyone's eyes obscured in the original album photo, except for his, signifying the innocence of a child in a difficult environment.

Album's impact

Schwiet is grateful for the opportunity he had to contribute to an album that so many people have connected with these past 12 years.

"Any project like this has so many hands touching it. I just feel grateful that I got to be one of the many," he said.

Schwiet and his son recently saw the album cover at a local store.

"They had that album front and center on one of the displays. I told my son, 'Hey, you know your dad worked on that.' And he said, 'Whoa, you worked on that?' At first I wondered why he was reacting this way because he doesn't know who (Lamar) is. Then he said, 'You worked on something that's in Walmart?' That gave me a pretty good laugh."

"Out of everything that I do, there's something special about print projects. Digital projects that I do, they just live on the internet and maybe they're seen one time. I love print projects because then there's something physical that I can hold and connect with."



Schwiet said it's hard to comprehend how many millions of people have seen his work, even had it tattooed on themselves or displayed it in their homes.

In his work mentoring youth, this project has helped open doors of communication and connection, bridging generations through the music.

The design credits on the album's liner notes credit the studio, not individual designers, but Schwiet remains grateful for the experience he gained during his time there. He has advice for those pursuing graphic design work or a similar field.

"There're two important factors for breaking into this industry. One of them is someone giving you a shot, and that's hard because that's not something you can control," he said. "It comes down to someone trusting you with the project. So if someone has to open the door for you, do everything you can to be in front of that door knocking."

"Also, putting in the hard work and then not being afraid of asking for opportunities and being told no. The studio that I worked at, I had emailed them a few times as a college student, saying, 'I'd be willing to sweep the floor if I could work there and learn from you,'" Schwiet said.

Melot family member

Schwiet, a member of the Melot family, grew up in Washington state, attended school in Seattle and began his career there. He currently lives on the Olympic peninsula and is raising a family in the home where he grew up.

He and his wife have two sons, ages 8 and 7. In a nod to his CPN roots, the family dog is named Shawnee.

"I would love to be closer to Oklahoma, but I am grateful for the Tribe's work to keep us all informed and educated with many of us spread out around the country. However, I would love to use my skillset more for the Tribe in the future" he said.

Schwiet hopes to raise his children with a strong connection to their Potawatomi heritage. Both are enrolled Tribal members, and the family attends the Family Reunion Festival when they are able.

Schwiet and his wife have their own design studio. They serve a large variety of corporate clients, including Amazon, Microsoft, Walmart, Target, Chipotle, LEGO, Facebook and many more.

Schwiet also stays connected to the music side, both in graphic design and in video production for different music artists. He has worked with U2, Jelly Roll, Twenty One Pilots, Lecrae, Andy Mineo, Young the Giant, Kings Kaleidoscope, Citizens, Kutless, Aaron Gillespie and more.

To learn more about Schwiet's work, visit the Wasaki Studio website, wasaki.studio. 🔥



RE-ELECT A PROVEN LEADER

FROM ELDERS TO YOUTH,
WE INVEST IN EVERY GENERATION.
THAT'S HOW A NATION STAYS STRONG

JOHN "ROCKY" BARRETT

Paid for by John "Rocky" Barrett



"MNO GIZHGET
BODWEWADMI EYAWYAN!"

CHARLES DWIGHT SCOTT

FOR TRIBAL CHAIRMAN OF THE
CITIZEN POTAWATOMI NATION



I'm voting for Dwight

- Leadership with Integrity: A chairman who will govern with love, kindness, humility, and respect, staying active within our tribe and accessible to our people.
- Financial Transparency: A chairman who will ensure open communication about tribal funding, budgets, assets, and spending, giving our people a voice in how funds are allocated.
- Economic Opportunity: A chairman committed to creating jobs for our people by prioritizing the hiring of qualified tribal members within our businesses and projects.
- Cultural Preservation: A chairman who values our people and culture above all, allocating funding for language and cultural programs while establishing an Elders Council, Youth Council, and Veterans Council to guide leadership in restoring and preserving our heritage.



June 28, 2025



It's A Good Day To Be Potawatomi

Paid for by Julie Nawgishgok Jackson



Migwetch Chairman Barrett for all you have done for the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. You have built the foundation on which we will stand for generations to come. May your vision, wisdom, and dedication continue to lead us home.

Paid for by Rande Payne and Mark Johnson

RE-ELECT A PROVEN LEADER




PROGRESS YOU CAN SEE
LEADERSHIP YOU CAN TRUST

JOHN "ROCKY" BARRETT


Paid for by John "Rocky" Barrett





Charles Scott for Tribal Chairman:
Reclaiming Our Culture, Shaping Our Future

CHARLES SCOTT



VS

ROCKY BARRETT

No Current Picture

RESPECTS TRADITION

Charles Scott honors our **drum, traditional stories, and sacred medicine.**

ENGAGES WITH OUR PEOPLE

Charles Scott attends Veterans' meetings, **teaches** our language, **mentors** our youth, and **supports** affordable housing.

INVESTS IN OUR PEOPLE

Charles Scott will hire **tribal members**, invest in **culture**, and work for **sovereignty.**

GENERATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Charles Scott believes in **term limits** and passing **leadership** to the next **generation.**

OUTSOURCES OUR CULTURE

Rocky Barrett hires **outside drummers**, **rehashes** old stories, and **destroyed** our garden.

CHOOSES BANKS OVER PEOPLE

Rocky Barrett **prioritizes** banks, **talks** money, and wants **condos** instead of **homes.**

INVESTS IN CORPORATIONS, NOT COMMUNITY

Rocky Barrett hires **non-Natives**, invests in **banks**, and keeps us **dependent** on **Federal grants.**

TREATS LEADERSHIP LIKE A THRONE

Rocky Barrett has **controlled** the tribe for **30 years**, with no intention of leaving.

The choice is clear. Vote for a future of culture, community, and true sovereignty. Vote for Charles Scott.

Paid for by Charles Scott



**JUSTICE ON THE SECOND COURT
OF APPEALS OF TEXAS**

AND

SMALL BUSINESS OWNER

PREVIOUSLY

**FIRST JAG IN AIR FORCE HISTORY TO SERVE
AS A DRILL INSTRUCTOR AT THE U.S. AIR
FORCE OFFICER TRAINING SCHOOL**

**WHILE STILL UNDER 40, VOTED "LAWYER
ON THE RISE" BY TEXAS LAWYER MAGAZINE
(TOP 2 ATTORNEYS IN PRIVATE PRACTICE IN
TEXAS AT THAT TIME)**



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT JUDGE WALKER'S OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS AND
EXPERIENCE, VISIT WWW.VOTEFORWALKER.COM**

POL. AD. PAID FOR BY JUDGE BRIAN WALKER



Vote for Brenda Trevino (Ogee) District 3

- **Unparalleled availability.**
 - ✓ I retired from my engineering/management career in May 2024. The other challengers for the position have demanding jobs that will compete for their time and energy.
 - ✓ I can commit to traveling throughout the District to bring the programming and culture you want directly to you, by planning meetings closer to you on a more frequent basis.
- **Expanding the knowledge of our customs and ceremonies.**
 - ✓ I will work with the Executive team and Legislators to develop and distribute training for those interested in learning our naming ceremony (and others).
 - ✓ I plan to survey the District so I can focus on what you want from your Legislator/Tribe.
- **Improved Connectivity.**
 - ✓ I will work on ways to improve our connectivity online and in person by working through the issues that prevent group emails from being sent from the Legislator in each District.
 - ✓ I have a phone, tablet and email already purchased to manage Tribal business.

I would be honored to work for you! Every voice is important. Send in your ballot as soon as you can. Migwetch!
 Paid for by Brenda Trevino brendatrevino924@gmail.com / 281-466-7437

VOTE

Jennifer Bertelsen

Kno Migwenkwe “Eagle Feather Woman”
 for District 3 Legislator

Supporting the continued growth of our Nation while
 strengthening the connection with District 3 members.

- Committed to accessible, responsive representation
- Advocating for economic sustainability and cultural preservation
- Focused on transparency and long-term stewardship
- Supporting programs that honor and serve our elders
- Engaging youth and inspiring future leaders

Your voice matters. Your vote matters.

Ad paid for by Jennifer Bertelsen Knomigwenkwe@yahoo.com



Anna is a Vieux descendant and can trace the family back to France in the 1600s. Her Potawatomi family includes Chief Wassato's daughter Chieftess Mas-Saw, who was on the 1838 Trail of death, and Chief Topinibe. She is **striving to incorporate the customs and traditions** of all sides into her own family and **will willingly help you** do the same.

Susan Campbell, Vieux Descendant



Anna Johnson has **my vote for District 1!**

Danny Ferris District 1



Anna Johnson is **for our people**, and she deserves the support of our people!

Madison Waters District 1



Anna is a Kwe who is working on learning her Potawatomi heritage and she wants to share her new knowledge with **our whole Nishnabe Nation**

Jeannie Wamego-Van Veen Oklahoma



Let's meet in person! Register for the 2025 Gathering of Nations here!



Anna's **commitment to our people** and enthusiasm for **cultural revitalization** is just what we should hope to see in our tribe's next generation of leaders.

Kathryn Thomasson-Javins District 2



I promise to be available and present within the nation and not sit passively behind the scenes.

It's beneficial & comforting to know that we have a younger generation asking questions and stepping up to make an impact within our tribe. **I applaud Anna for dedicating her time, knowledge and efforts to the future of our culture**

Clarissa Johnson District 6



Anna's **dedication to our culture** is a blessing to the future of our people!

Brandy Schmitt District 1



I'm voting Anna Johnson for D1 legislator 2025!

Anna is a natural leader and great example of listening to and connecting Potawatomi relatives across the district. She manages family and holds a torch for others to rise up and join in our heritage. Now is the time to join Anna in expanding culture across the district!

Holly Lebeck District 1



Paid for by Anna Johnson for District 1



I'm Anna Johnson & I'm running for District 1. I am committed to representing the district's needs and culture. I want to hear directly from you! Your concerns, ideas, and hopes for the future of our tribe.

candidate.ajohnson-cpn-district1.com
annadjohnsond1@gmail.com
Scan the QR code below

Tribal Sovereignty is vital. Upholding our constitution and reigniting our cultural flame are steps in the right direction.



Paid for by Anna Johnson

If I already have your vote, igwiyen (heartfelt thanks)
If I haven't earned it yet, how can I change that?



Vote for Brenda Trevino (Ogee) District #3 Legislator

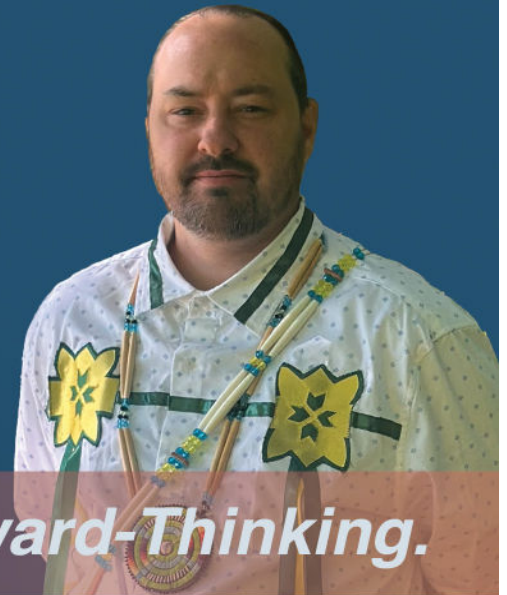
Much appreciation to those who attended the D3 'Meet the Candidate' meeting on April 5th at Ft Worth. **It was a pleasure to meet you.** Keys to my platform are centered around connections, culture and the continued sovereignty of our tribe. I am retired and will serve you like it is a full-time job.

Paid for by Brenda Trevino
brendatrevino924@gmail.com
281-466-7427

STEVE LIVINGSTON

Citizen Potawatomi Nation District 1

Anderson / Hardin Family



Rooted. Values-Driven. Forward-Thinking.

Traditions, Language, & Community

Our traditions, our language, and our sense of community must be the foundation of every policy, budget, and program. We need to create more spaces to gather, speak, share, and pass on knowledge - not just to honor the past, but to live authentically as bodwéwadmik into the future. It's time for our government to lead with our values at the center.

Transparency in Government

Transparency builds trust - and trust is the foundation of a strong community. Our tribal government must operate in full view of the people it serves. Citizens deserve to know how decisions are made, where money is spent, and what outcomes are achieved. We need open meetings, accessible records, clear communication, and leaders who speak plainly and truthfully.

Citizen Engagement & Participation

Community engagement is how we stay a people, not just a government. In the old ways, decisions were made in council - with the people present and heard. We must create real pathways for citizens to speak, serve, and shape the future of our community.



Vote Steve Livingston - Carrying Our Traditions into Every Vote

<https://www.cpdistrict1.com>

Paid for by Steve Livingston



Vice-Chairman Linda Capps and Secretary-Treasurer D. Wayne Trousdale wish to express their gratitude to Chairman John “Rocky” Barrett for his continued dedicated service to CPN.

With his leadership, CPN will experience another four years of successful programs, enterprises, and quality service to our Tribal members.

VOTE FOR CHAIRMAN “ROCKY” BARRETT

Paid for by Linda Capps and D. Wayne Trousdale

Paid for by Anna Johnson

Let's meet in person! Register for the 2025 Gathering of Nations here!



Anna's strong desire is to help all of D1 connect with the ways of our ancestors.

With her unequalled passion & level head, she has a **legislative plan highlighting that D1 needs more tribal programs, inclusion & opportunities for Tribal Members** outside of Shawnee & Potawatomi county. She is who D1 needs. I'm proud to support this Kwe!

Ann Cobb, District 1



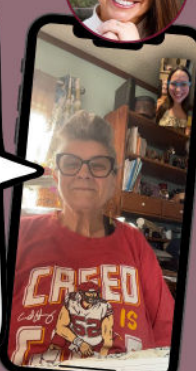
Anna's positive, inquisitive and “go get 'em” attitude are inspiring attributes that will certainly benefit our Bodewadmi people for future generations to come. Send in your ballot request and **make your vote count** when you choose **Anna Johnson for District 1!**

Carrie Rey, District 1



We need a **focal point and someone to be the center of District 1.** Someone to stand up for the people and be our “go-to” for everything (culture, naming, language, history, help, grievances, etc.) I believe **Anna will serve as the face and voice of District 1.**

Laura Hewuse, District 1



Striving to pick up right where Alan Melot left off within the community with communication and culture.

MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT

Have a voice in our Tribe's future, cast your vote in June!

Chairman election candidates Q&A

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

John "Rocky" Barrett



Incumbent

What do you feel is the Tribe's most pressing issue right now?

Like the rest of the country, Citizen Potawatomi Nation is dealing with misinformation, bullying, and false narratives online. These tactics damage reputations, divide communities, and erode trust. During elections, false claims—especially from anonymous social

media pages—spread quickly and are hard to correct.

Some sites misuse the Nation's name and seal to appear official but don't allow open dialogue or fact-checking. Recently, one falsely claimed we were laying off employees at Sovereign Pipe Technologies. That's simply untrue—we are hiring every day. When candidates spread lies that hurt the Tribe's reputation just to attack an opponent, they show they're not ready to lead.

How can CPN better serve and engage its Tribal members?

Citizen Potawatomi Nation has one of the most innovative, inclusive governments in Indian Country. Every member can vote and elect a legislator who represents their district—something no other tribe offers in the same way.

Our challenge is voter participation. Many only engage when they're upset, not when things are running smoothly. But elections matter. Tribal members should ask: Does this candidate have the skills to run a \$600 million operation with 2,300 employees? Do they have experience in business, governance, or service?

We should use our existing teleconferencing systems—just like our Legislature does—to connect during campaigns and help members make informed choices.

Describe what in your life has made you appreciate your Potawatomi heritage.

When I first took office in 1973, we had no powwow, no drum, no ceremonies—no visible cultural activity. In 1976, we held our first intertribal powwow in decades, inviting other Nations because we had no songs or dancers of our own.

Years later, after hosting large intertribal events with no CPN participation in the contest dances, I announced a

shift: we would hold a Citizen Potawatomi-only gathering. Some resisted, but most welcomed the change.

On the first night, over 500 of our people danced in regalia. It wasn't polished—but it was powerful. Since then, our Family Reunion Festival has grown every year. We've reclaimed our songs, traditions, and community. That's what heritage means to me.

What kind of future do you envision for the Nation?

Many CPN members left Oklahoma due to poor job opportunities and lack of housing. That's changing. With approval from our Legislature, we're launching the largest home-building effort in our history—on our own trust land, using our own bank.

Mortgages will be available with up to 97% financing and no income restrictions. We'll waive land costs, lower home prices, and create a community with no property taxes.

This will allow more families to live, work, and thrive in our tribal community—keeping our economy and culture strong for generations.

What do you think is the most difficult thing for CPN members who may live in Oklahoma but feel disconnected from the Tribe? How can you, as Chairman, help with that?

The most harmful thing the federal government did to tribal identity was invent "blood quantum." It's a tool designed to eliminate tribes over time by creating false divisions. The original degrees were assigned arbitrarily in 1861—often based on skin tone.

This led many to believe they weren't "Potawatomi enough" to participate. That's not true. If you descend from one of the original families who endured the forced removals from Indiana to Kansas to Oklahoma—you are Potawatomi.

Your place in this Nation is earned through your family's survival. Don't let misinformation or shame keep you away. Come home. Claim what's yours.



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

Charles Scott



Challenger

What do you feel is the Tribe's most pressing issue right now?

Loss of Tribal Identity, Loss of Language and Culture which has led to Apathy and Non-Participation. For 30 years our Tribe has been run like a Business entity, we are a Tribe not a Corporation. While we have been investing in Banks, Basketball Teams and

Locomotives, we have spent very little preserving or investing in our Language and Culture. We have no sense of Community. If we refocus to the idea that our Businesses exist to fund our Language, Culture and Community, we can solve these issues rather quickly. It will take a change in Leadership to resolve these issues. We want a Community and we will have a community.

How can CPN better serve and engage its Tribal members?

Honestly, Change our Leadership. The Chairman has spent 30 years focusing on businesses, reinvesting, remodeling, building, rebuilding. It is what he knows, it is how he thinks our tribe needs to be ran, Like a Corporation. Only a change in Leadership will result in

better serving and engaging Tribal Members. I will give members their voice, I will trust and listen to members.

Describe what in your life has made you appreciate your Potawatomi heritage.

There has been no single event. I have always known who I am, I have lived the values taught by my mother, grandmother and ancestors. I know my Clan, I know our history, I know where we came from, I know our culture. I was raised in Oklahoma around and living like most Indians. I have always been grateful; I've always had pride and I've always been thankful for my heritage.

What kind of future do you envision for the Nation?

Challenging, LOL, we need a change in Leadership. Most of our elected leaders are well past retirement age. We are in danger of losing a generation of leaders of both older and younger leadership. Our Chairman is in his 80's, a few others are as well, most are in their 70's, a couple in their 60's. We need to get younger; we need to allow the next generation to lead and direct our Tribe into our collective future. We need Generational change in Leadership.

What do you think is the most difficult thing for CPN members who may live in Oklahoma but feel disconnected from the Tribe? How can you, as Chairman, help with that?

Again, it's about changing leadership and lack of Community. Our current legislators have been around 20+ years, nothing will change without change. As Chairman, we will involve our members, we will communicate, we will build a Community. It will be Lead, Follow or Get out of the way. Our Community is coming. 🔥

FAMILY REUNION FESTIVAL

JUNE 27-29

Legislature election candidates Q&A

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

District 1 candidates

Steve Livingston



Challenger

What do you feel is the Tribe's most pressing issue it currently faces?

Our most pressing issue is citizen disengagement - disconnection from culture, our bodwéwadmí community, and tribal governance. This isn't just a social concern; it's a sovereignty concern. When citizens are uninformed or uninvolved, we become more vulnerable to state

and federal overreach and lose strength in defending our rights. We see it in low voter turnout, limited awareness of tribal operations, and the rise of online connections over real-world relationships. Generations of diaspora have scattered us, but now is the time to foster stronger relationships, expand opportunities for participation and knowledge-sharing, and give citizens a real sense of ownership in shaping the future of our community.

How can CPN better serve and engage its Tribal members?

We need to create more ways for citizens to participate meaningfully in our tribal government and the life of our community. Community advisory boards could give citizens a real voice on vital issues like land use, food sovereignty, language, healthcare, and education. We should offer more opportunities to gather, both in-person and virtually, as a community: beading, sewing, language, and ceremony. I want to help create meaningful opportunities for our people to feel belonging, build knowledge, and create space for all citizens to shape the future of our tribal community, no matter where they live.

Describe what in your life has made you appreciate your CPN heritage.

What's made me appreciate my CPN heritage most are the relationships I've built in all of our bodwéwadmik communities - people who've welcomed me, taught me, and helped me along my own reconnection journey. Learning our language truly changed my life. It opened my heart, changed how I see the world, and helped guide me toward sobriety and a deeper commitment to family and community. I come from a line of strong, resilient people who survived removal

and extreme poverty. Some of my ancestors were early leaders within CPN, and I carry their strength with me as I work to help lead and serve our people.

What kind of future do you envision for the Nation?

I envision a tribal community where every citizen feels seen, heard, and valued - where they know they have a voice and use it to vote, share ideas, and help guide our future. I see us building stronger relationships, where elders and knowledge keepers are respected, known, and surrounded by learners. I see community gatherings, in-person and virtual, where we bead, feast, and speak our language with each other. I envision a transparent, inclusive government that invites participation, honors our traditions, and empowers every citizen to help shape the future of our community.

What do you think is the most difficult thing for CPN members who may live in Oklahoma but may feel disconnected from the Tribe? How can you, as legislators, help with that?

Disconnection isn't just a distance issue - even in Oklahoma, many citizens feel unsure of how to get involved or where they belong. It can be hard to know who to turn to, what resources exist, or how to participate in the community. As your legislator, I hope to make that engagement easier and more personal. That means more local and virtual gatherings rooted in culture and tradition, and creating space for citizens to help shape policy through community advisory boards. I want everyone to feel they're part of something bigger - that they have a voice and a place in our community.

Anna Johnson



Challenger

What do you feel is the Tribe's most pressing issue it currently faces?

The threat of losing our fire, our passion and our community. The question is now, how can we reignite the fire within us? The 7th fire prophecy foretells the revival of our culture, language, teachings and traditions; yet our people

are starved for connection and culture. Reconnecting is hard. Finding who to ask or "just showing up" is even harder when you already feel so isolated. While most don't even know where to start, I hope to frequently meet with members in all 16 states and demonstrate how easy it can be to realize what it means to be Potawatomi.

How can CPN better serve and engage its Tribal members?

Many members outside of jurisdiction have grown apathetic from the perceived lack of benefits, information, and communication and have lost their voice. We NEED avenues that allow members to contribute and participate in a meaningful way. We could utilize message boards or "Town Hall's" to openly discuss Tribal Sovereignty issues like language, our Constitution, food security, healthcare, and other current U.S. events. We also need cultural classes, teachings (regalia making, medicines, Tribal History, food preservation, etc.), and more changes to gather together - in person and virtually. We once did everything together as a community, distance shouldn't keep us isolated.

Describe what in your life has made you appreciate your CPN heritage.

Growing up I never knew what it meant to be Potawatomi. My grandmother was the Potawatomi link and when she divorced my grandfather, it left my family disconnected. Throughout my life, I was ashamed at how little I knew and didn't know how to remedy it; until the 2023 Gathering. For the first time I attended workshops; got to laugh, visit, and learn.

Those small conversations reignited my fire

I found my missing piece - like I was home. Like so many, I crave connection. I have forged a reconnection path and feel called to walk with others on theirs.

What kind of future do you envision for the Nation?

A Thriving Nation. One where we can share ideas and discuss frustrations in a productive way to make all members feel valued, seen and heard. Where all members know the power of their voice (and vote), and know who to ask for teachings and guidance. I see trust in our leadership - that members truly know legislators advocate in their best interests while also holding space for respectful criticism to help usher change where needed. I see legislators having a presence in every state in their districts, leading to more member engagement and overall a more connected people.

What do you think is the most difficult thing for CPN members who may live in Oklahoma but may feel disconnected from the Tribe? How can you, as legislators, help with that?

Isolation and disconnection is way more common than some think. Just because one is close in proximity, doesn't mean they don't struggle to find their place or where they belong. The judgement of "Not being Native enough" is very real and shameful and felt across the nation - even in Oklahoma. Reconnecting at any stage is difficult, and as your legislator I would walk those paths with you - share the connections I have made and be your "go-to" for any and all questions that need answers. Will I always know the answer? No. But let's find out together.

candidate.ajohnson-cpn-district1.com

District 3 candidates

Brian Walker



Challenger

What do you feel is the Tribe's most pressing issue it currently faces?

I say this with absolute respect: *aging leadership*. I believe it is a good thing to have elderly leaders in places of power. We need earned wisdom in leadership, but we also need to simultaneously focus on "raising up" the next generation of tribal leaders.

Our tribe has been reliant on the status quo for so long, that I fear that we are not thinking about the inevitable. I pray for longevity for our senior-leaders, but I also pray that a new generation emerges that will eventually take our tribe successfully into the future.

How can CPN better serve and engage its Tribal members?

In this technological era, there must be ways in which tribal headquarters can enable tribal legislators to access the contact information of their respective constituents without violating their members' personal privacy. If that ever happened, it would greatly enhance better communication.

If elected, I will not only hold in-person meetings in the major regions of Texas - I will also hold virtual meetings regularly (via Zoom) to keep my constituents engaged and informed.

Describe what in your life has made you appreciate your CPN heritage.

My Grandmother, the books she gave me, the stories she told me, the tribal family that I have interacted with throughout the years. In other words - those who came before me, who had a love for our tribal heritage, are the ones who made the greatest impact on me in this regard.

What kind of future do you envision for the Nation?

An evolving one. The one thing that has been certain through our more recent tribal history is *change* - and I believe that it will continue to change in drastic ways due to technological innovation, population growth, membership expansion, and growing fiscal demands. Change can be a bad thing, or it can be a good thing. My hope is that I'll have a significant part in directing the Nation towards the latter.

What do you think is the most difficult thing for CPN members who may live in Oklahoma but may feel disconnected from the Tribe? How can you, as legislators, help with that?

I do not have a lot of personal experience with this directly. I am a life-long Texan so I would only be

speculating about the disconnection of our tribal members in Oklahoma. Nonetheless, if elected, I would examine this, I would attempt to figure out the root cause if this is a serious issue, and I would do my part in crafting a reasonable solution. And, although the question isn't posed specifically, I would do the things I mentioned above (in #2) to help those who live *outside* of Oklahoma (in District 3) feel more connected to the tribe.

Brenda Trevino



Challenger

What do you feel is the Tribe's most pressing issue it currently faces?

Sovereignty of our Tribal culture and our lands is of utmost importance. Until CPN is self-sufficient, the most pressing issue the tribe currently faces is preserving our services and grants received and supported by the federal

government in the current political climate. Each day has seen its share of surprises. We need to be prepared for how we might respond if any of these funding programs is taken away or if our lands are in jeopardy.

How can CPN better serve and engage its Tribal members?

In D3, I would like to see a potluck, art session, history lesson/book review or benefit awareness meeting each month. Each meeting would be held in a different location and would allow time for open discussion.

Publishing a CPN 20-yr Business Plan that relays the Tribe vision to our Tribal members and measures our progress toward the vision. This serves the entire tribe and is a constant reminder of our direction.

Legislators need the ability to send District news to all members in their District. Allowing Tribal Rolls to keep contact information private but allowing Legislators to send out email notices via a group email for the district they serve.

Describe what in your life has made you appreciate your CPN heritage.

The educational funds for me, my daughter and son were very appreciated. This assistance was received during a period when our family was recovering from a flood and dealing with my husband's failing health issues.

I am appreciative of the closing cost assistance for our home, the elders e-scripts and the many programs in Oklahoma that my mom, aunt and sister enjoy.

We are our ancestors and our descendants. Knowing my ancestors and the decisions they made so I can have the opportunities I have today makes me very appreciative. May I consider my descendants with each decision I make.

What kind of future do you envision for the Nation?

My great grandfather felt it was necessary to place his family on the rolls in the early days. He was proud of his heritage and had a vision of a bright future for the tribe. He was right.

Our future is very bright. We have developed business opportunities that will serve us well in the future. However, we shouldn't be complacent or rest on the past. Our eyes should remain above the horizon searching for whatever is next. Hiring and electing the best and brightest of us in key positions to keep this vision alive is essential.

What do you think is the most difficult thing for CPN members who may live in Oklahoma but may feel disconnected from the Tribe? How can you, as legislators, help with that?

Once a person feels connected to a small group or individual, they feel more a part of the whole. I learned recently from a group of high school students that adopted seniors in an assisted living facility. The youth wrote letters to the seniors and received responses back, like pen pals. All those involved gained a perspective they didn't previously see. They feel connected.

Personally, I could share ideas that have worked well outside Oklahoma. I can also attend as many tribal events as possible in Oklahoma, to connect with those in Oklahoma.

Jennifer Bertelsen



Challenger

What do you feel is the Tribe's most pressing issue it currently faces?

I believe one of the greatest challenges facing our Nation today is apathy. And I don't say this as a criticism — I say it because I care deeply about addressing it. Apathy isn't frustration or disagreement — it's disconnection. It happens when people stop showing

up — not because they don't care, but because they no longer feel their voice matters. We see this in our voter turnout. When only a very small percentage of our Tribal members cast a ballot, that's not just a statistic — it's a signal. It tells us people feel disconnected. As leaders,

we cannot mistake silence for satisfaction. Silence is a warning that the connection has been lost. To overcome apathy, we must lead in a way that pulls people back in — by listening, communicating, and building relationships. But connection also requires resources. To serve our growing membership, we must continue expanding our businesses and building financial strength, because connection and sustainability go hand in hand.

How can CPN better serve and engage its Tribal members?

We have to lead with purpose and operate with strategy. You can't serve people well if you don't take the time to know them, and the same is true for our Nation.

Every Tribal member should feel known, valued, and included, no matter where they live. That starts with listening. It grows through relationships. We must be intentional about how we reach our people, using every tool available: technology, storytelling, outreach, and community events, but always staying rooted in who we are as Potawatomi people: a community built on connection, family, and shared responsibility. If a member feels disconnected, it should never be because we didn't try hard enough. Leadership means opening the door, calling people in by name, and reminding them they belong here.

Describe what in your life has made you appreciate your CPN heritage.

I didn't grow up knowing anything about my Potawatomi heritage or culture. It wasn't part of my daily life. While many grow up immersed in their Tribal traditions, my journey was different — I had to seek that connection for myself. But when I did, when I started learning, listening, and leaning into who I am as a Citizen Potawatomi woman — it changed everything. It gave me a deeper sense of belonging, a stronger sense of responsibility, and a clearer understanding of what it means to carry this name, this history, and this future forward. The more I learned, the more I realized how much was waiting for me: language, ceremony, family stories, and the strength of a people who endured so much so that I could stand here today. That experience is why I care so deeply about connection in our Tribe. Because I know what it feels like to be searching for it. And I know the pride and healing that comes when you find it.

What kind of future do you envision for the Nation?

I envision a future where our culture is alive in everyday life, not just in ceremony, but in how we raise our children, care for our elders, and make decisions as a Nation. A future where being Potawatomi isn't something we remember occasionally — we live every day. But I'm also a realist — and a businesswoman. We cannot fund dreams without resources. As our population grows, so does our responsibility to provide healthcare, education, housing, and cultural programs that reach all our members.

That's why we must continue growing our businesses and enterprises to fuel the services our people rely on. Economic sovereignty protects cultural sovereignty. I believe the future belongs to leaders bold enough to expand our footprint, diversify our revenue, and invest in long-term sustainability while staying rooted in who we are. For me, the future of our Nation looks like this: strong in culture, wise in business, united in purpose, and always planning for the next seven generations.

What do you think is the most difficult thing for CPN members who may live in Oklahoma but may feel disconnected from the Tribe? How can you, as legislators, help with that?

I've seen it in business and community life — proximity doesn't guarantee connection. Just because you live near Tribal headquarters doesn't mean you automatically feel like part of the community. For some members, the hardest thing is not knowing where they fit. They may not know how to get involved. Or they may feel like their voice doesn't matter — like the Tribe will move forward with or without them.

While this question concerns members in Oklahoma, the challenge is even greater in District 3 and beyond, where distance creates an even bigger barrier.

Our members may live hundreds of miles from Tribal headquarters — but that doesn't make them any less Potawatomi. It means we must lead more creatively and connect more intentionally. Every member matters. Every voice matters.

The more connected our people feel, the stronger we become as a Nation. 🔥



District 3 candidates Jennifer Bertelsen, left, Brenda Trevino, middle, and Brian Walker spoke to voters at a district meeting at the Texas Motor Speedway.



D3 candidates speak at Fort Worth meeting

As the Citizen Potawatomi Nation approaches the June election, Tribal members will decide the outcome of three races: Chairman, District 1 and District 3.

District 3 Legislator Bob Whistler had originally planned to run for another term but later determined he would not be able to continue to serve in that office. Filing for that race were candidates Jennifer Bertelsen, Brenda Trevino and Judge Brian Walker.

To give District 3 residents a chance to meet the candidates, CPN hosted a meeting April 5 at the Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth, Texas.

Each candidate gave a 5-minute opening statement, followed by each answering questions posed by meeting attendees.

Bertelsen, a member of the Bourbonnais family who lives in Sanger, Texas, started off the introductions.

"I grew up knowing I was Citizen Potawatomi, but due to life circumstances as a child, I didn't have access to traditions, language or a deeper understanding of what

that meant," she said. "That began to change during the visit with my grandfather about 12 years ago."

Bertelsen said her Potawatomi grandmother had passed away by that time, but that her 90-year-old grandfather was so proud of his wife's heritage and shared photos, letters and more. That experience "lit a spark" for her and began her journey into her Tribe's culture, from enrolling in *Mdamen*, to attending Family Reunion Festival, to receiving her Potawatomi name and seeing that her children also received their names.

A regional vice president of a logistics company, Bertelsen said she has spent years traveling the world, leading teams, developing business strategies, navigating high-pressure environments, negotiating across cultures, and learning to work through economic and political challenges, all of which she believes would make her a good leader for her Tribe.

She added that she decided to run to be involved, give back to her community, and to help other Tribal members feel connected and supported. She mentioned her desire

for Tribal members, especially those in Texas, to have information about the resources available to them.

"My journey is ongoing. I'm still learning. I don't know everything. I'm still listening. I'm still growing, and I know I'm not alone. Many of us are finding our way back to traditions that were out of reach for too long," she said. "I'm not here to stand above anyone. I'm here to walk beside you as a fellow member, a neighbor, and someone who loves this community with her whole heart."

Trevino is an Ogee family member who lives in Shenandoah, Texas.

Born in Shawnee, Trevino graduated from Oklahoma State University with a degree in civil engineering, then earned her MBA in Texas in 2014.

"I've been in Texas since 1981, with the exception of one little sidestep in 1986 to Florida for one year," she said. "So, Texas has really been home for a very long time."

Trevino said she retired in May of 2024. She has also been an empty nester for 10 years and is widowed. With Whistler stepping down, she felt the "stars had aligned" and now would be a good time for her to offer her experience to the Tribe. She also added that she loves a good road trip, something she believes would be a big part of serving as a legislator for District 3.

"I want to bring our district to you. I want to be able to travel to you, have more small meetings and more localized settings, as well as having some of the longer meetings like we generally do," she said.

Trevino added that she has already invested in a new phone, tablet and email for Tribal business. She attended legislative meetings online, as well as going to one in person in Shawnee, and toured several of the facilities in Shawnee.

She also brought a box with her for comments.

"I just want to connect with you. I want to be able to talk, to find out what's important to you, what you're concerned about," she said.

Walker is a Hetzell and Vieux descendant who lives in Fort Worth.

Walker is a justice on the Second Court of Appeals in Texas. Before that, he worked as an attorney for 17 years, including as a Judge Advocate General (JAG) for nine years. He also taught as an adjunct professor for four years.

Walker said he ran for the District 3 seat when it was first created, losing to Whistler by two votes in a runoff election. He praised Whistler for his work the past 16 years.

After a November meeting, Walker started to think of running again and called the director of the Texas Commission on Judicial Conduct to ask if he would

be allowed to serve as a judge and also as a legislator for his Tribe. After researching, she let him know he could, and Walker began to consider pursuing another run for office in about eight years, when he assumed Whistler would retire. Soon after, Whistler announced that he would not be running after all.

"I just felt like that was God's way of saying, 'You need to do this,'" Walker said.

Walker said he would use his experience to help create sound policy for the Tribe, to ensure Tribal members are getting benefits available to them, and to protect the sovereignty and sustainability of the Nation.

Walker also said that he has many connections with Texas' 38 members of congress, including 25 within his political party.

"As your Tribal legislator, I will do what I can to network with those people," he said, to make sure CPN is "doing everything we can in our relations with the federal government to help and further the ends of the Tribe."

Question 1: How can you protect and preserve the Tribe's culture?

Walker explained that he, like others, did not have easy access to facets of the culture. He said he is passionate about it and also impressed with the work that has been done to bring knowledge to the next generation.

"From a policy perspective in the legislature, I would do everything if elected to further those ends and to help in any way that we could from the legislature's perspective," he said. "But, at the end of the day, that's something traditionally that the executive is going to do."

Trevino said she is impressed with CPN's language program and how much it has grown, but also that she started to follow Native news sites and sites online that focus on things like beading and artwork.

"I think the more the community knows the more we're able to do these things on our own," she said. "It's important. It's also important for us to pass it down."

She suggested sharing information through meetings with other districts, such as District 5 in west Texas, as Whistler has done in the past.

Bertelsen said there are many Tribal members who practice crafts such as beading, and that it will help to connect people with a desire to learn with people who have a desire to teach. She said the question is how to bring that knowledge to District 3.

"Maybe during district meetings providing a craft hour for people who want to learn beading and those types of things," she said. "We have a lot of

Continued on page 23

What you need to know about voting

Each year, CPN's Tribal election takes place on the last Saturday in June at the Family Reunion Festival. Here are some things you might need to know about this year's election.

What's on the ballot?

This year, the office of CPN Tribal Chairman is up for election, with candidates including current Tribal Chairman John "Rocky" Barrett and challengers Steve Castaneda and Charles Scott.

Legislative seats are also on the ballot. District 2's Eva Carney and District 4's Jon Boursaw drew no other candidates to run against them, therefore winning their races unopposed.

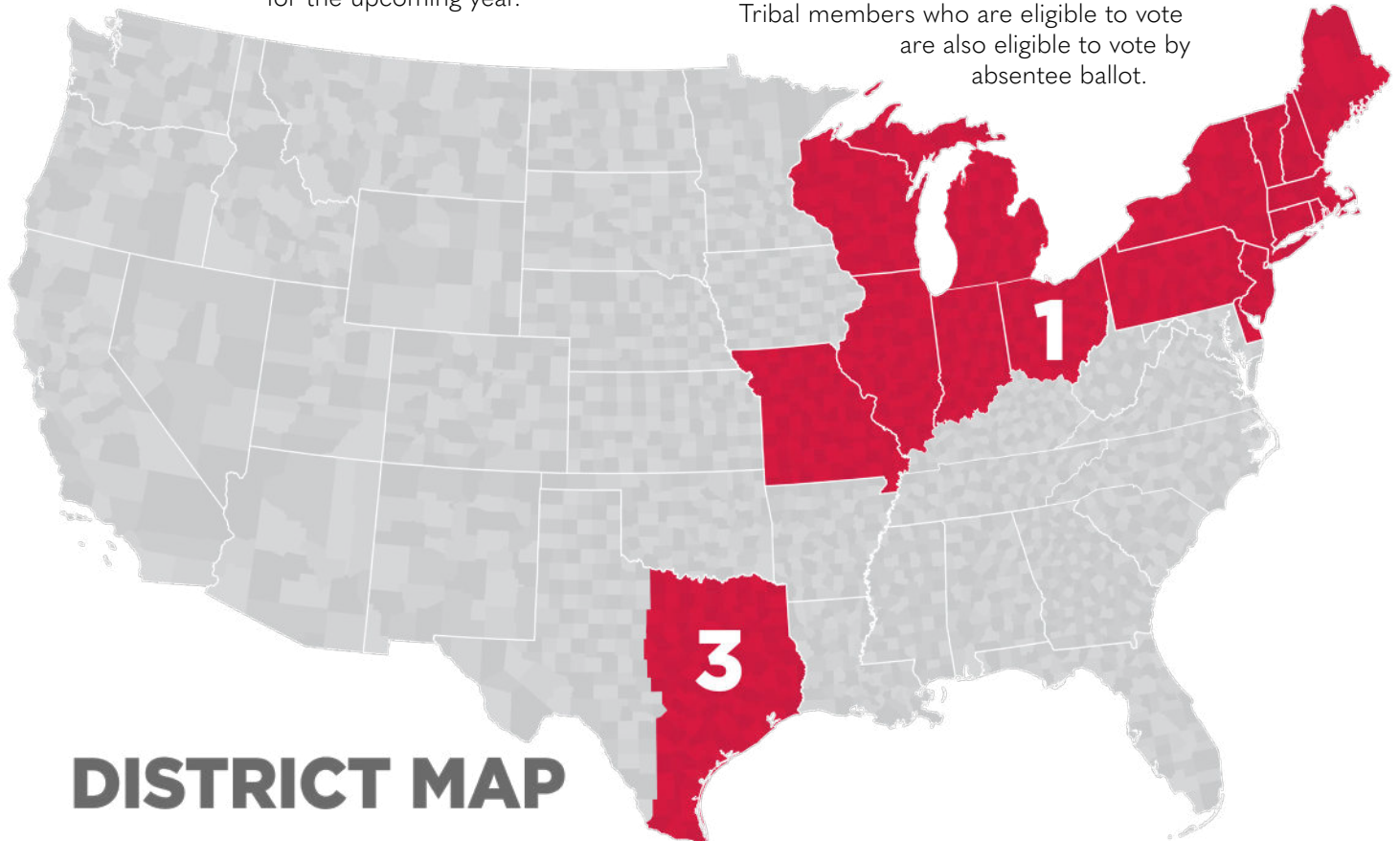
However, District 3 and District 1 are both losing the incumbent legislators that have occupied those seats, with Bob Whistler retiring in District 3 and Alan Melot deciding not to pursue another term in District 1.

District 1 candidates include Anna Johnson and Steve Livingston.

District 3 candidates include Jennifer Bertelsen, Brenda Trevino and Brian Walker.

See the map included with the story if you have questions about which district you live in.

Also on the ballot will be approval of CPN's budget for the upcoming year.



Who is eligible to vote in the election?

Every member of Citizen Potawatomi Nation who is 18 years of age or older is eligible to vote in the election.

How does voting work in person?

The election takes place each year on the last Saturday in June during the Family Reunion Festival.

All Tribal members who are of age may vote in person at Tribal Headquarters, located at 1601 S. Gordon Cooper Dr., Shawnee, Oklahoma. Voting instructions will be provided at the polling location.

Polls will open at 7 a.m., Saturday, June 28, and will close at 2 p.m. Anyone in line to vote by 2 p.m. will be allowed to cast their vote.

To vote in person, you must bring your Tribal ID to confirm that you are an enrolled member of Citizen Potawatomi Nation. (If you have an old Tribal ID that does not include a photo, you will also need to provide a second form of ID that includes a photo, such as a driver's license.)

If you are physically unable to vote and need assistance, you may contact the Election Committee for assistance.

How do I vote if I can't travel to Oklahoma?

If you aren't able to vote in person, you may cast your vote by mailing in an absentee ballot. All

Tribal members who are eligible to vote are also eligible to vote by absentee ballot.

If you did not receive a postcard to receive your ballot, you can go to cpn.news/ballotrequest to do so.

When you send your ballot request, it must be postmarked by no later than June 8.

Your ballot will be mailed out after May 1 and not later than June 20.

Once you receive your ballot, follow the provided directions to cast your vote. Absentee ballots must be mailed in time for the election committee to receive them by 10 a.m., Saturday, June 28.

If you do not send your ballot in time or forget to mail it, you can bring it with you to in-person voting to cast your vote at Family Reunion Festival on election day.

What happens after voting?

Results of the election will be announced the same day as in-person voting, Saturday, June 28, at General Council, held in FireLake Arena. The election results will also be published in the July edition of the *Hownikan*.

Fort Worth meeting continued...

resources currently with the Tribe. It's just connecting those resources to the people who desire it."

Question 2: How will you foster participation among Tribal members?

Walker mentioned a list of about 500 email addresses that Whistler has gathered during his tenure as a legislator, which he has also said he plans to share with his successor.

"I would probably do a monthly blast for a few months," he said, "to get people to get their email addresses to us so we can ... grow that email list."

He also mentioned social media as a possible avenue for engagement but explained that there is a lot of vitriol that makes it tenuous to navigate. Ultimately, he concluded that he plans to be "as open and available as possible."

Trevino explained that access to Tribal members' emails is a privacy issue, so they are only able to work with information gathered in lists such as the one Whistler has created.

"It is important to build on what he started," she said.

She hopes she has the opportunity to expand on what's been started and that, despite the challenges, she wants to meet with more people and have more people come to meetings.

Bertelsen echoed those comments, pointing out that the small number of attendees at the meeting, despite postcards going out to all of District 3's 2,500 residents. She also mentioned that other districts are seeing similar outcomes.

The winning candidates will be sworn in at General Council and take office immediately.

To win the election, a candidate must receive a majority of votes. If none of the candidates receives a majority, the two candidates with the highest number of votes will go to a run-off election, which will be held within 60 days of the June election. If there are three and the bottom two tie, then all three will be put on run-off ballot.

Why does your vote matter?

In the last Tribal election, fewer than 10% of Tribal members voted.

Voting is a civic duty, but also how citizens are able to have their voices heard.

What matters to you? Is it culture or language? Growth? Stability? Tribal sovereignty? By voting for the candidate or candidates you believe will help lead the Tribe, you play a part in shaping the future of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. 🔥

"We'll continue to use all avenues as legislators. We'll continue to reach out, be available on phone, email, social media," she said. "I think our question to general members is, how do we get you engaged?"

Question 4: The Federalist Society

Chairman Barrett directed the last question at Walker.

"You have a membership in a group called the Federalist Society," Barrett said, adding that the stated policy of that society is that the Indian Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution does not grant tribes sovereignty.

Walker explained that he is a member of several organizations as part of his profession. Typically, he said, the Federalist Society does not make statements on public policy, and he has not yet paid his dues for the year until he can find out if they have taken a stance on tribal sovereignty.

"Nonetheless, if they are taking that public policy position, I absolutely disagree with it. I think it's ridiculous. We are sovereign because we are sovereign by virtue of our existence in this country before this nation existed," Walker said.

Walker researched the issue after the meeting. He referred the *Hownikan* to the society's FAQ page, which includes this statement: "Beyond our statement of purpose the Federalist Society takes no public policy positions and does not participate in activism of any kind."

To see more about these candidates as well as the candidates for the District 1 and Chairman races, read the Candidate Q&As in the March, April and May issues.

For more information on voting, see the What to Know About Voting article to the left. 🔥

Navarre 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, and to schedule family interviews, please contact the CHC at 405-878-5830.

Roots in Indiana

The roots of the Navarre family reach back to an 1834 wedding in *Pokagon's* village in Indiana. *Kis-naw-kwe*, a daughter of Potawatomi chief *Wabaunsee* (Break of Day), married French fur trader Pierre Navarre. Pierre had moved to Indiana in 1820 from Monroe, Michigan.

Wabaunsee, born *Naksēs* (Shining Sun), had earned a reputation as a powerful and influential leader among the Potawatomi, Odawa and Ojibwe of Illinois and Indiana. He was opposed to American expansion but recognized the need to maintain peace for the protection of his people. *Wabaunsee* later became a respected spiritual leader in the *Midewiwin*, the Grand Medicine Society.

Potawatomi leader Bourassa wrote of *Wabaunsee*, "These qualities made him a first-rate diplomatist in treaty making. There never were sufficient barriers in his way to thwart him from executing any projects he might have in view."

With his people in mind, *Wabaunsee* made many visits to Washington, D.C. to discuss potential treaties. As he was returning to Iowa in 1845, his stagecoach crashed.

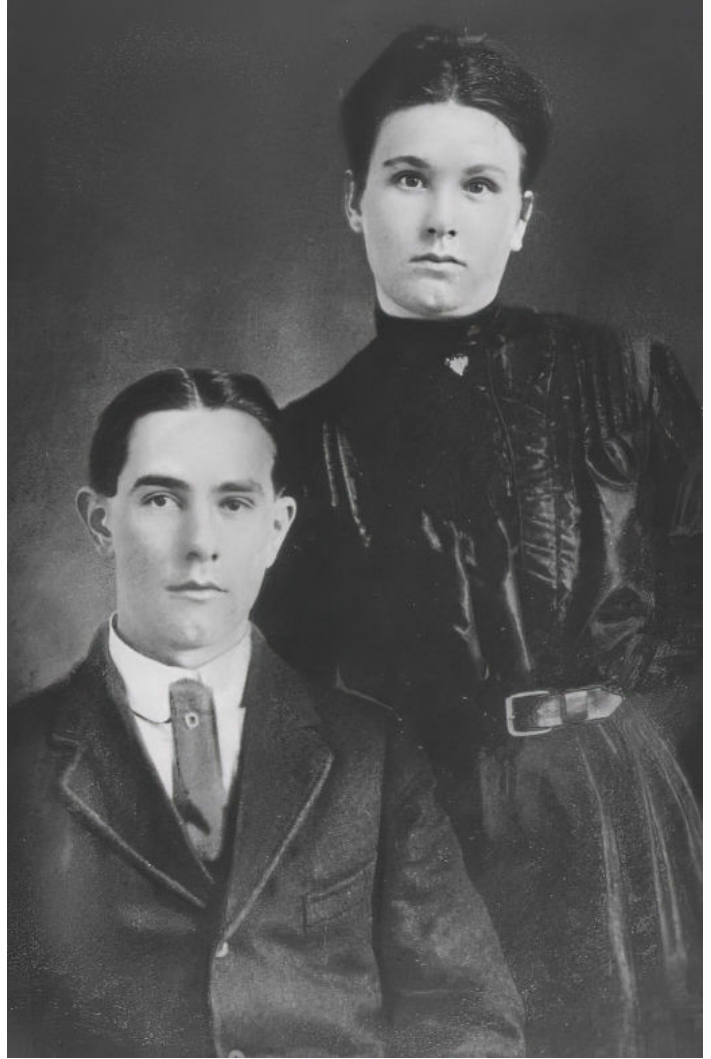


Lena Navarre

He suffered serious injuries that ultimately caused his death.

Kis-naw-kwe was baptized and took the name Angelique. Pierre had worked with the American Fur Company. Later, he established his own trading post, and his marriage to *Kis-naw-kwe* and alliance with the Potawatomi contributed to his business success.

The couple had: Peter,



Clarence Patton Navarre (Ellen) and Jenny Love

Marianne, Judith, twins Anthony and Joseph, Monica, John, Catherine, Isador, Theresa, and Frances.

In 1838, caving to pressure from settlers eyeing the Potawatomi's ancestral lands, the federal government began to forcibly remove the Potawatomi west. Pierre joined his family and the rest of the Tribe during one of the removals, eventually winding up in Kansas. He stayed in Kansas until Angelique walked on, then returned to the Great Lakes region around 1850. Pierre sent the younger children to live with relatives in Michigan. Older sons Anthony and Peter later attended Choctaw Academy, an Indian school in Kentucky.

Seeking stability, generations thrive

Frances married John DeGraff and lived in Monroe, Michigan. The couple had Mary Frances, John, Ellen, Joseph, William, Edward, Isidore and George. Pierre Navarre walked on in 1864 while staying with Frances. Two years later, Frances and her family moved to Kansas.

Anthony first married *Sow-na-we-qua* and later married Annie May. His children were Joseph, Catherine, Isidore, John M. and Theresa. Anthony was a schoolteacher at South Bend, Indiana, and later became an advocate for Tribal interests in Washington, D.C. He lobbied for an amendatory treaty in 1866, which granted quarter

sections of land to all adult Potawatomi, regardless of gender. This was a significant step forward for women, who now had the same property ownership rights as men.

Rossville, Kansas, would later be built on land that had belonged to Anthony Navarre.

Theresa married Claude Milot. The Milot children were Alexander, Emily (Holloway), Mary Ann (Vieux), Joseph, William and Louise (Weddel).

Judith married Clement Bourdon. Their children were Mary, Adelaide, Catherine, Peter, Anthony, Alexandrine and Margarita.

Peter married Ellen Page. The couple had Peter, Jerome, Frank, Louis, Gregory, Francis and Julia.

Marianne married Edward Maines. In some records, the name appears as Maynes. The other Navarre siblings either never married, or information on their marriages did not appear in available records.

Differing viewpoints

During the 1860s, the Potawatomi were faced with a significant decision. Under pressure from settlers and railroad companies, the U.S. government offered citizenship and individual allotments to the Potawatomi in Kansas in order to obtain the land.

The group that accepted U.S. citizenship and individual allotments in Indian Territory became known as the Citizen Band. The group that preferred to live communally in Kansas became known as the Prairie Band. Some members of the Navarre family continued to live in Kansas while others made the move to Indian Territory.

Gregory Navarre and his wife, Mary, were the parents of Henry, Jerome, Mary, Emily, William, Robert Jr., Peter Jr.,

Edith, Maggie, Alice and Joseph. Sadly, only Jerome, Peter Jr., Edith, Maggie, Alice and Joseph lived to adulthood.

Gregory was postmaster at Rossville from 1867 to 1871. Gregory's son, Pete Navarre, was the first graduate of the printing shop in 1901 from Haskell Indian Nations University, Lawrence, Kansas. Pete owned and published the Rossville Reporter for 40 years. A building built in 1972 at Haskell was named Navarre Hall in honor of Pete.

Louis and his wife, Julia, had Mamie, Fay, Viola, Lena, Mary, Robert and Edward (Edwin).

Harrah, Oklahoma, was established thanks to Louis Navarre. The land for the original site of Harrah was donated by Louis, who was first to arrive at his allotment in the 1870s. While a plaque outside the city's history museum mentions Navarre's contributions, the town was later named in 1898 for Frank Harrah. However, Navarre Street is prominently located near the center of town.

Edward (Edwin) had two children named Emery and Jessie. Jessie would later become the mother of future CPN Vice-Chairman Linda Capps. Capps has been a CPN elected official since 1987. In June of 1990, she was elected vice-chairman of the Nation, a position she still holds today. A career educator, she has always emphasized the importance of education. Drawing inspiration from her ancestors, Capps works for the betterment of her community, volunteering her time on numerous local boards and leadership organizations.

If interested in assisting preservation efforts by providing copies of Citizen Potawatomi family photographs, documents and more, and 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. 🔥



May is National Foster Care Month

Bozho, everyone, and Happy May! My name is DeAnna Voeks, and I am the Foster Care and Adoption Specialist for FireLodge Children & Family Services at Citizen Potawatomi Nation. For the past three years, I have found great joy in supporting Potawatomi children and families in this role. With National Foster Care Month upon us, I would like to share an overview of how our Foster Care Program operates and how we assist our foster children and families.

National Foster Care Month is particularly important for those of us involved in child welfare. While we celebrate children daily in our department, this month allows us to acknowledge the children and youth in foster care, their family members, foster parents and siblings, volunteers and mentors, child welfare professionals and tribal nations that help children find permanent homes and connections. You might have seen billboards around the Shawnee area or our social media posts highlighting the urgent need for more Potawatomi foster homes. I felt it was the right moment to reach out more broadly and explain the importance of our collective efforts.

What is ICW, and what do they do?

ICW stands for Indian Child Welfare. In all child welfare cases, we play an active role as a tribe, meaning whenever a child is removed from their home, regardless of the state, we get involved to advocate for our Potawatomi children from the very beginning until the case is resolved. At FireLodge Children & Family Services, our primary goal is to reunite children with their parents or family members when it is safe to do so. Our Foster Care program works closely with FireLodge case managers, case manager supervisor, and the director to ensure that every child entering a tribal home is safe, healthy and well cared for.

For our children, maintaining a connection to their culture, Tribe, and community is essential for understanding their identity. When a child is removed from their home, ICW sends out a cultural box designed to strengthen their ties to the Tribe. This box typically includes books about Potawatomi history, language, a tribal coloring book, information about the Seven Grandfathers' Teachings, information on cultural traditions, crafts and a letter detailing the historical families of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. These boxes have become extremely popular with the families who receive them, especially among those who may not have extensive knowledge of their Potawatomi heritage.

Tell me more about the foster home licensing process...

We encourage you to think about the wonderful opportunity of fostering children, no matter where you live. If you're located outside of Oklahoma, we invite you to connect with a local licensing agency (whether public

or private) that can conduct a home study and open your home in whatever area you reside. You can then share that home study with us, and we will add your name to a list of homes we would contact if a Potawatomi child needs care in your area or state. Once licensed in your state, as long as you remain a member of a federally recognized tribe, you would be classified as an ICWA-compliant (Indian Child Welfare Act) home and could foster Native children under the custody of your state or possibly even another tribal agency. Every state in the nation is in need of more tribal home availability; without it, children risk being placed in homes with non-Natives.

If you reside in Oklahoma and are interested in becoming a foster parent with us, please contact us, and we would be happy to send you a packet.

Some requirements to qualify as a CPN tribal home include:

- Be at least 21 years old
- Have a verifiable source of income
- Possess the financial capacity to care for a child without relying solely on a foster care payment
- Ensuring appropriate sleeping arrangements based on age and gender
- Have no criminal or child welfare history
- Be willing to foster a positive relationship between the biological parents and the child in care when appropriate

All prospective foster parents must undergo background checks and fingerprinting. These requirements apply to anyone living in the household who is 18 and older. After the background forms are processed, a home study will be scheduled. We will visit your home to meet your family, speak with everyone individually and do a home assessment. Medical exams will then be requested, and foster parent training will be required. The home study then goes for final approval from the director. Although the home study process can be lengthy, it helps us understand your entire family dynamic. Typically, a home can be approved within 6-8 weeks. Once we receive that approval and when a child enters custody, we will contact the homes that we believe will best support the child's needs. We will consider several factors, including gender, age, behaviors, foster home location, disabilities, allergies and sleeping arrangements. Each foster home is assigned two workers: one for the child and one for the foster parents. The child's needs will be addressed with their case manager, and the foster care worker will assist families in signing up for daycare, resolving issues with foster care payments, answering any questions about medical coverage and completing your annual home reassessment. Children in Tribal custody will receive regular visits from their assigned case manager throughout the case.

Let's talk about the different types of homes we need...

We are hopeful of opening not only more Tribal foster homes but also homes that would be available to provide respite for other families who may just need a date night, time to attend foster care training, take a vacation, do some grocery shopping or attend an appointment. We also need homes capable of emergency placement for Potawatomi children. Emergency placement is a temporary commitment (usually of a few days or a weekend) that allows child welfare time to reach out to prospective family members and do emergency background checks or to find other Tribal homes that may be interested in taking placement of a child.

Let's talk about kinship care too, because it's super important to recognize that we strive to keep children who enter custody with a relative whenever possible. ICW will reach out to relatives to inquire about placement since they are our top preference, which can reduce or limit trauma to children when they are placed with family.

How does CPN celebrate and support its foster families?

Every year, FireLodge Children and Family Services hosts a Christmas banquet for Potawatomi children in custody and their foster families. Our dedicated employees consistently demonstrate their generosity by supporting the ICW Angel Tree, ensuring that these children enjoy a joyful holiday season. In May, we launched a pledge website on the CPN intranet, encouraging employees to advocate for Potawatomi children, highlighting the urgent need for CPN foster homes and urging them to report any instances of abuse they may witness. Additionally, we organize giveaways for employees who sign the pledge and giveaways on our Facebook page for those who help promote our mission.

In support of our families for National Foster Care Month, our foster families receive a specially curated box filled with items they can enjoy together. Each year

features a different theme that typically aligns with the custom T-shirts included in the box. This year's theme is "Making a difference, one child at a time." The inspiration stems from a story about a boy walking along a beach covered with starfish. As he tossed them back into the ocean, a man passing by questioned his actions, claiming that what he was doing wouldn't make a difference.

The boy replied by throwing another starfish back, saying, "I made a difference for that one!" This story illustrates that impacting a child's life doesn't require grand gestures as simple actions can make a significant difference. Even if you can't help everyone, you can still positively change one person's life. That's what our foster homes are doing for children, and we are immensely grateful for the wonderful homes we have.

What's next?

With all of this in mind, fostering is not for the faint of heart; it requires considerable dedication, patience and emotional commitment. The many different

phases of a case can sometimes feel overwhelming

and draining, but providing these children with a safe and nurturing environment is crucial to their well-being. They will seek reassurance that they are secure and protected in your home. Remember that each child separated from their family carries their own trauma, which may manifest differently each day. Although children are remarkably resilient, they will still question their removal and why they can't be with their parents, regardless of the circumstances surrounding their separation. Employing a trauma-informed approach will significantly support their healing journey in a constructive manner. FireLodge can assist with referrals to resources and training to help each family in their foster care journey. If you have more questions, reach out to me. I can be reached at 405-878-4831 or via email at deanna.voeks@potawatomi.org.

If you will be attending the Family Reunion Festival next month, FireLodge will have a table in one of the reunion halls. Come see me for more information — I look forward to speaking with you!

Migwetch, DeAnna Voeks 🍷



Foster families strengthen Tribal bonds

Tribal member Justin Byler and his wife, Brooke, always felt drawn to foster care. As busy, working parents to their biological son, they hoped to foster but wondered how they could find time. At a Family Reunion Festival, they ran into staff from FireLodge Children's Services, who encouraged them to apply.

"We always had it in our hearts to do this and to connect with the Tribe. We knew that Tribal homes were needed, but it never felt like there was a right time. About four years ago, we finally decided we were going to go through the approval process," Brooke said.

Meeting a need

The couple did not have prior experience with foster care and adoption but were aware that Tribal foster homes were needed.

"That was always the way that we wanted to stay connected to Justin's heritage and to hopefully provide a home for children that were Potawatomi or even another tribe that wanted to stay connected to their Native American heritage. We made the decision after we had our son, and when he was about three and a half, we were ready to open up our home," Brooke said.

After they were approved, they quickly had their first placement in late fall. The twin siblings stayed with the family for six months. Currently, the Bylers are caring for Potawatomi children from another state.

"That does show that there is a need, even if there aren't kids in Oklahoma, there are Tribal children all over the United States that need to be placed with a Tribal family," Brooke said.

Under an interstate agreement, the Bylers care for the children while the home state manages the case. Case workers travel to Oklahoma to perform visits while the Bylers focus on providing a safe and healthy environment while keeping the children connected to their Potawatomi heritage.

Support from FireLodge

FireLodge staff have been a valuable resource to the Bylers along the way.

"I've reached out to (them) several times to say, 'We're not sure what to do.' And they're always eager to help, provide advice, stop by to check on the kids. There's so many things from their team that can help," Brooke said. "Even if you don't think you have the time, you do get support from the Tribe, whether that be daycare or other resources. I think people are more capable of doing it than they realize."

Prospective foster parents don't need special skills, just a willingness to open their homes.



"We thought, 'We're going to have to go through so much training, we're going to have to learn all of these different skills.' The training is important, but they said they already saw we had a loving home, and that's exactly what they need," Brooke said. "If your heart is open to it and you're willing to just love the children and to work with them and take it a day at a time, I really think anybody can do it."

Justin said the support from FireLodge staff is there even when the placement might not be the best fit.

"If you receive a placement and it's just not the right fit, it's okay to acknowledge that. It's about getting the children out of a tough spot and being what they need you to be in that moment," he said. "If it builds into forever, fantastic. And if not, you were what they needed in the time that they needed you the most."

Celebrating culture, cherishing moments

Justin and Brooke are eager to help children establish or strengthen their cultural ties to the Nation. When Justin was in middle school, he began connecting to his Potawatomi heritage. "We started going to Family Festival every summer and going to the museum. I think it's so important. I made sure our son was enrolled and I'm excited to do his naming. I just want to make sure that my kids have that opportunity and know who they are, their story and their heritage," Justin said.

The couple enjoy seeing the children thrive. One child in their care benefited from additional educational support to help her catch up in the classroom.

"The way that she has grown in the last year, even her teachers have said, she has learned to interact with her friends. Seeing her learn and turn into the little person that she is today has been extremely rewarding. Watching her change and grow and feel confident in herself has been such an amazing thing to witness," Justin said.

The rewards are not limited to Justin and Brooke but also extend to their biological son.

"Watching (children) bond with our son has been wonderful, too. Some people might be nervous if they have biological children. They're not sure how it will go if they foster children. It has been a joy watching him bond with (foster siblings). He's all in and he loves them so much and they love him. I know that no matter how this journey ends, they will have a bond that will last a lifetime," Brooke said. "He's understanding what they're going through in their transition, and he really does have great compassion. It's been a really good growing experience for him too."

Encouraging families

Justin encourages families to think about fostering.

"It is one of the most rewarding things you could do. It is hard, but it is so fulfilling, not only for us, but for the children as well. If you're blessed enough to be in a position to even consider doing it, you just have to dive in. It is challenging, but the outcome of those challenges is beautiful, and you get to see these children really blossom."

Brooke agreed.

"I think a lot of people are nervous to open up their hearts because they don't want to be heartbroken. You get so attached, but being able to love these kids in the season that they're in, whether that's just for now or forever, is so rewarding and it's so valuable to the kids.

"Sometimes in foster care you're going to be the bridge for those kids, the bridge to get them where they need to go. And sometimes in the foster care, you might end up being the anchor where they stay forever," Brooke said.

"Really just being able to set these kids up to be the most successful they can be, is really what we want to provide for them," Justin said.

For more information about FireLodge Children and Family Services, call 405-275-3121 or visit cpn.news/firelodge or facebook.com/cpnfirelodge. 🔥

Veterans Report

Bozho (Hello),

This year has started off with a few changes for our Citizen Potawatomi Veterans Organization. We are now holding our meetings and special events in the Citizen Potawatomi Nation's Cultural Heritage Center in the Veterans' Hall. In the new location, there is more room and memories of our veteran brothers, past and present. It's a very fitting venue for our functions. Our meetings are still at the same time, 6 p.m. (or as soon as you can get there) on the fourth Tuesday of each month. This month, it will be on May 27. We hope to see you there. Families are welcome, and you don't have to be a member of the organization to attend, just come and check us out. There is fellowship and pizza.

Our Color Guard has been very busy with presenting the colors at various functions in the area. It keeps the public reminded of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation's interest in our community. We are working on obtaining an Eagle Staff for CPN Veterans Organization and we are learning the traditional way of creating this sacred symbol. All input is welcome.

Remember our meetings are being held at the CPN Cultural Heritage Center now in the Veterans Hall. See you there at 6 p.m., Tuesday, May 27.

Migwetch (Thank you),



Daryl Talbot, Commander, 405-275-1054

Daniel Castaneda, Vice Commander/Event Contact
209-207-2317

David Barrett, Treasurer, 405-613-7313

Bill Wano, Secretary, 405-670-1200 🔥

CPN WIC van gets a facelift

By Mio Dykstra, CPN Public Information Intern

CPN Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) van has undergone updates to its appearance and improvements in comfort.

The van had its windows tinted last summer, followed by receiving a fresh exterior wrap with images of nutritious foods like fruits and vegetables along with the current CPN WIC card.

Nutrition and Breastfeeding Coordinator Cheryl Richardson explained why it was time for the WIC van to finally get a makeover.

“The wrap was cracking, because it sat during COVID, and it was done in 2015. It’s old, so we’re just doing an update on it — a facelift, per se,” Richardson said.

In addition to rewrapping the van, they also installed a new generator and a unit to cool the vehicle.

“We had an older gas generator that was very loud and shook the whole van. We wanted to get one on top [of the van] that’s run on propane, so it’s very quiet, very user friendly and not stinky,” said Richardson. “We have a portable heater and A/C, but they just don’t do the job when it’s really hot or cold. It’s just not keeping the back cool, and that’s where we weigh, measure and do hemoglobin for the kids and babies.”

They also added outlets to the van that run off the new generator so they can plug in computers and other electronics they use.

The renovations to the van were complete early this year.

“It’s like a little clinic inside the van, and we’re trying to make it more comfortable,” she said.



CPN’s WIC van is pictured before updates, with the wrap cracking from exposure to the elements throughout the years.



The updated CPN WIC van

The beginnings of the WIC van

During 2013 or 2014 in a meeting with WIC’s branch chief, Richardson was asked what she needed to have a successful organization. She jokingly made a comment about how a mobile unit would be beneficial. The branch chief loved the idea and suggested Richardson use a high-roof, extended van and equip the inside to turn it into a mobile unit — all with a \$50,000 budget.

Throughout that time, WIC services were having difficulty with the clinics they were traveling to due to rent prices increasing and partner organizations closing and moving to different locations. Most mobile units during that time cost close to a quarter of a million dollars because they were similar to RVs. With the van, Richardson was still able to find a solution to the problem that was also affordable.

She said the creation of CPN’s WIC van has inspired others to follow their lead. In Texas, CPN’s specs were used to create a fleet of WIC vans, and other tribal WIC organizations have also added mobile units to use in smaller clinics or remote areas.

“Our van was the start of many other agencies creating their own mobile units,” she said.

The WIC van travels about three days a week to different communities in the service area, which include stops in Shawnee, north Oklahoma City, south Oklahoma City, McLoud, Perkins and Seminole. The CPN WIC program covers seven counties in Oklahoma.

About CPN’s WIC program

Women, Infants, and Children is a nutrition program funded by the United States Department of Agriculture’s

Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS). Within CPN's program eligibility requirements, individuals must qualify by living within CPN's service areas or receiving care at specific tribal health clinics. Another requirement is based on income eligibility and may be met by showing the correct documentation for individuals who are recipients of food assistance programs. Pregnant women who receive Medicaid will also qualify for CPN's WIC program. Once clients meet the requirements for the program,

they can receive nutrition education, food packages, and referrals to doctors or other beneficial programs.

In the state of Oklahoma, there are 10 WIC programs: one administered by the state and the other nine by various tribal governments, including CPN's program. CPN's program predominantly serves tribal members but will serve anyone who meets the requirements.

For more information, visit cpn.news/wic. 🔥

PLP alumni encourage voting, leadership

Two Potawatomi Leadership Program alumni are hoping their idea will inspire more CPN to participate in elections.

Ella Carbrej and Megan Cavallaro both participated in PLP in 2024, staying in Shawnee, Oklahoma, for six weeks and learning about CPN culture and government. As part of the program, PLP make a presentation before Tribal administrators, recommending new programs or services they would like to see implemented.

Carbrej and Cavallaro created an initiative to hold an art contest they hoped would encourage more Tribal members to vote. Tribal members could submit a Potawatomi-inspired design for a sticker featuring the words "Ngi-wénabjegé/I voted."

In April, the contest was announced on CPN social media channels. Winners will be selected by committee for each of three age group categories: 12 & under, 13-18, and 18+. First, second and third place winners will receive a cash prize. The winning design in each category will be printed for distribution to voters at this year's Family Reunion Festival.

Entries were due by May 16, 2025.

PLP experience was inspiring

While attending the Shawnee area Juneteenth celebration during their PLP experience, Carbrej and Cavallaro were inspired by the event's art contest. They knew that many Potawatomi connect to their heritage through art and wondered how art could play a role in voter engagement.

"(Voting) is not just about just the people who are doing that now, but the people will be doing that in the future," Carbrej said.

"Art is really important to us. In our culture, we do a lot of beading, we dance, make the regalia we wear, and seeing that it's so important to our culture, we thought it would just be a great idea to get engagement," Cavallaro said.

They were both happy to see their idea becoming a reality.

"I'm so excited about it. We had our PLP counselor's brother make a little sticker for us to use in our (PLP) presentation. We spent six weeks working on this project



and we really did think it was a good idea. So, it's awesome to see that CPN is using that," Cavallaro said. "I can't wait to see the art and all the different places they come from."

"The PLP was the first exposure to so many parts of the Tribe for me, so I think it would have been really cool as a kid to see the Potawatomi word for voter," said Carbrej. "I think it's a real testament to what the PLP means to the Tribe. We came (to Shawnee) and have all these ideas and they're actually being implemented. I think it's awesome."

They hope the stickers start a conversation about the priorities that matter most to Tribal members and encourage voting.

"Our hope was that a lot of kids would be doing this. It's one thing for the adults to vote on the budget or candidates but it's another to involve the kids so I think that's going to be fun and drive cultural engagement as well," said Cavallaro.

"I hope it introduces people to new aspects of the Tribe, whatever that means for them. I

Continued on next page

PLP alumni continued...

hope it gets conversations going in the homes of whoever receives the sticker," said Carbrey.

Voter priorities

Life can be hectic, whether through work or school obligations. For those unable to attend and vote in person, Tribal members may request an absentee ballot and mail it in.

"Tribal elections are really a chance to make your voice heard. When you compare it to other elections you participate in, it really is an opportunity to directly affect what is going on because it's a smaller group of people. (Voting) directly affects the way the Tribe is going to carry itself into the future. Your vote may have more of an impact than you think. No matter where you live, the impact of that vote can be really clear, which is a cool process to be a part of," said Carbrey.

Cavallaro said she voted in person for the first time in 2024 and described the process as easy.

"With how streamlined it is, it's not that big of an effort, but it's up to you to decide it matters. Ultimately, you're going to be the one carving out the time to the things that are important to you. Remember that we have a lot of culture here and there's a lot to be found and you have to open yourself up to learning these things. Being involved is the first step of that," Cavallaro said.

"I'm just very excited to see what the sticker's going to be. Hopefully it becomes sort of a tradition of the Tribe with each year to have this as part of the voting process. We can have things that are unique to our Tribe and unique to our Indigeneity," Carbrey said.

Future leaders

They had a shared goal to draw more Potawatomi together, making the vast CPN community feel closer.

"Both of us live hundreds of miles away from Shawnee but art is so versatile and can come from so many different age groups and locations. We thought that that would be something to draw more people as well," Cavallaro said.

"I think this could be an early connection to the Tribe for young Tribal members who might not know what their parents are voting for or might not have ever been to Shawnee or had much exposure to the Tribe," Carbrey said. "Seeing the Potawatomi language or art made by a Tribal member is a good way to introduce more people to their heritage."

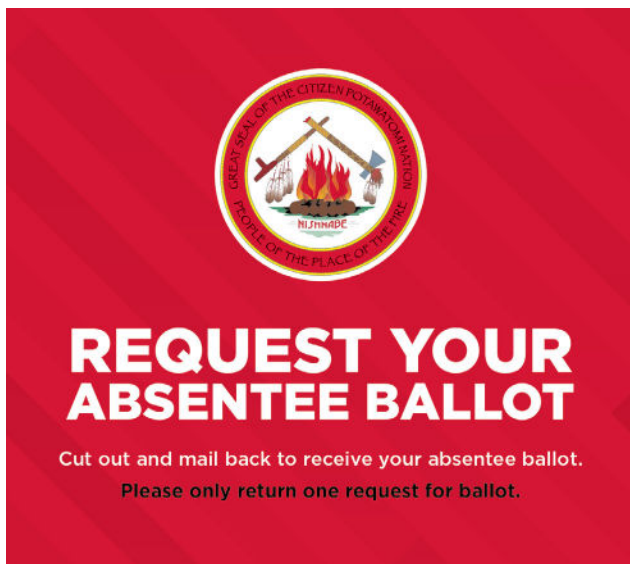
They are both eager to see more Tribal members of their generation learn from elders and prepare to lead the Nation themselves in the future.

"Some advice I would give personally is to do the PLP if you can. It was so much fun, and it introduced me to so much of the culture. If you can't do the PLP, do Mdamen. I would like to see more bridging of the generations. We have our elders and they're super important, especially with teaching us cultural things. But I think this project might help kind of get younger kids interested in learning more," Cavallaro said.

"It's important to listen to the voices of the younger generation, too. Get involved as much as you can. In many ways I wish I got involved more with the Tribe sooner, but I'm really glad I did when I did," Carbrey said.

Carbrey is a Vieux/Johnson descendant from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and attends the University of Vermont. She is a psychological science major who hopes to eventually work in clinical psychology, helping young people who have survived childhood adversity.

Cavallaro is an Anderson descendant from Reno, Nevada. She is attending the University of Nevada and majoring in philosophy and psychology. She is also interning at her state legislature and hopes to eventually work as a lawyer or in government.



Citizen Potawatomi Nation • Request for Ballot • 2025 Election

Name _____ please print

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I reside within the boundaries of CPN Legislative District No. _____ (Oklahoma residents should write Oklahoma in the blank above)

Under penalty of perjury, I hereby declare this to be my legal signature and Citizen Potawatomi Nation tribal roll number.

Signature _____ Tribal Roll # _____ (If you do not know your roll number, call 800-880-9880 and ask for Tribal Rolls)

Must be postmarked no later than June 8, 2025

Mail to Citizen Potawatomi Nation Election Committee P.O. Box 310, Tecumseh, OK 74873-9900





CPN's Child Development Center students placed at this year's Native American Youth Language Fair.



After school children place at language fair

When the University of Oklahoma hosted its Native American Youth Language Fair this year, children from Citizen Potawatomi Nation's after school program were among those to place.

Pre-K students placed first in the large group skit category, and after school's 5 and 6-year-olds placed second in the video submission Pre-K through second grade category.

"Over 50 students participated across the Potawatomi Nation; to my knowledge, this was the first year we included students beyond Pre-K," CPN Interdepartmental Potawatomi Language Lead Robert Collins said.

The group of students who placed first performed greetings in Potawatomi and counting to a "Bama Mine" song using puppets. The group that placed second performed the poem "Ke Penojéyek Ndawmen" (Children of the Land).

Collins said the children prepared for about a month and a half before the fair, with the Pre-K group having even more time with some of the material.

"We had integrated key elements such as greeting rituals, basic counting skills and the lively song 'Bama Mine'

into our curriculum throughout the year," Collins said. "This consistent exposure allowed them to engage with the material more confidently and enthusiastically."

Also participating in the fair were 7 and 8-year-olds who submitted art pieces and 9 and 12-year-olds who submitted art pieces that were displayed during the fair.

Theresa Talbot also made skirts and vests with a turtle design for the Pre-K students to wear for the fair.

"The performance was phenomenal," Collins said. "It was clear that the children relished the opportunity to showcase their hard work. Each moment exuded confidence, leaving no doubt about their commitment to succeed."

Collins also added that many people play vital roles in teaching children the language, from leadership who support the efforts, to teachers at the Child Development Center, to the parents who actively participate.

"Your involvement is invaluable as we foster a love for our language and traditions," Collins said. 🔥

From the executives



John "Rocky" Barrett Tribal Chairman

Bozho, nikan, (Hello, my friend),

Today was a great day! The Nation has a regular quarterly meeting to recognize our employees on their 5th, 10th, 15th and 20th anniversary of going to work for the Nation. They are the secret of our success. Nothing can beat experience and loyalty! Being able to work in an environment that cherishes the personal relationships we have with co-workers and recognizing their professional performance makes it a true pleasure to get up and go to the Nation each day.

By surprise, I was recognized by this great group for having served 40 years this year as Tribal Chairman.

My tenure as Tribal Chairman has been very enlightening, extremely rewarding, and has provided me with a strong sense of pride in our people, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. As I go around the country meeting with our people, I am constantly amazed at the depth of creativity, entrepreneurial zeal, and Tribal loyalty they exhibit.

While they may be thousands of miles from our Tribal home here in Oklahoma, at every opportunity they will remind one of their roots. Citizen Potawatomi were not just born, they were "Forged" by their family courage and resourcefulness. No other tribal people in U.S. history survived five forced relocations with complete loss of everything they had — and emerged stronger! It is a story that will amaze you, and one you should pass on to the next generation. Please come here to the Nation and learn about your people.

If you are a Citizen Potawatomi and have not taken the opportunity to participate in your Tribe's celebrations, its successes, its benefits and its familyhood, then you are losing a precious opportunity to enlarge and enrich your life. This Nation belongs to you! After over 1,000 years of organized union as a people, what we now have is a treasure! Please take part in it. Please let your children enjoy the richness of their inherited culture, language and history. They will consider it a gift for the rest of their lives.

Thank you for the privilege of serving as your Tribal Chairman.

Migwetch (Thank you),

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

CONTROL IS NOT REAL LOVE



CITIZEN POTAWATOMI NATION
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM

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Linda Capps Vice-Chairman

Bozho (Hello),

This will be our last *Hownikan* before voting time. I hope everyone is either voting by absentee ballot or plans to vote in person. As a tribal entity, we need to conscientiously be more aware of getting out the vote. Hopefully, this will be our year to turn the tide and see an uptick in CPN voting. There have been a lot of comments regarding voting on social media and in the *Hownikan*; therefore, I am feeling more positive about this year's vote.

Part of my positive feeling comes from the expectations of a record Festival attendance. We have a great Festival planned so it is a good

year to host our people. I have talked with Tribal members all over the United States that plan to travel to CPN. A good reason to have so many guests is the list of Honored Potawatomi Families: Bourassa, Burnett, Melot, Navarre, Peltier, Wamego, Wilmette and Vieux. These are some of the larger families regarding size. I am looking forward to seeing all these family members inside the dancing arena during the pow wow.

The CPN Graduation Celebration for Tribal graduates was held Saturday, April 26, at the CPN Cultural Heritage Center. Unfortunately, the weather did not cooperate since we experienced a torrential downpour prior to the start of the program at noon. It rained hard most of the morning and the night before, which caused the threat of flooding around the state. Despite the poor weather, the program was delightful for those graduates and their families in attendance.



Rachel Watson, left, and Charles Lee unveil the winner of this year's art contest.



The women's drum group performs at the CPN graduation celebration.

Each participant received several nice gifts from the CPN Education Department. The prize gift this year is an art piece by Christina Foster, a CPN member from Shawnee, Oklahoma. Christina won the nationwide art competition that coincides with graduation to select the top prize. There were approximately 75 graduates that received a print of the beautiful artwork. The prints were mailed out to those graduates who could not attend in person.

CPN graduation has occurred since 2017, skipping 2020 during the pandemic. Graduates range from high school to advanced doctoral degrees. After the ceremony, there is a picture opportunity for all graduates. This year's program included a delicious luncheon, a presentation by the Women's Drum Group, and a graduation address by Chairman John Barrett. The entire program is sponsored by the CPN Education Department, with Director Rachel Watson and Assistant Director Charles Lee.

Thank you for letting me share my thoughts and experience with you for these two very important topics, Tribal voting and CPN graduation.

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



Alan Melot District 1

Bozho, jayek (Hello, everyone),

As I come to the close of my time as a legislator for District 1, I want to offer my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you. Serving our Nation has been a great honor. It has deepened my connection to our people, our history, and the responsibilities we carry forward on behalf of generations past and future.

When I chose not to seek reelection, it was with trust in our community and confidence that new leaders would rise to meet the moment. We are a resilient, brilliant and compassionate Nation, and I believe strongly that leadership is not about holding a title — it's about creating space for others, listening with humility and acting in service of our collective good.

Over the past few years, I've worked to connect our people with one another, to strengthen relationships with our relatives across the Potawatomi diaspora, and to promote values rooted in #landback, growth and sovereignty. We've taken meaningful steps together — building partnerships, honoring our ancestors, and amplifying the voices of youth, elders and everyone in between. While I am proud of what we've accomplished, I also recognize that the journey is ongoing. One milestone I had hoped to see completed during my term was our Nation formally joining the Potawatomi Confederacy. Though this work remains unfinished, I continue to believe in it deeply and trust that the seeds we've planted will grow in their own time.

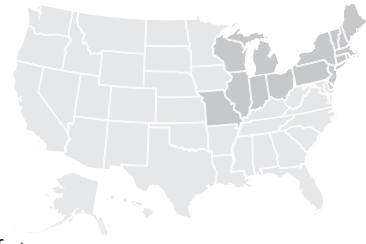
Serving you has shaped me in ways I never imagined. It's made me a better listener, a more thoughtful advocate and a more grounded human being. I am grateful beyond words for the support, the conversations and the shared sense of purpose that have guided my work.

Even as I step away from elected office, I remain fully committed to our Nation's future. My fire is still burning, and I'll continue to be here to walk beside you in whatever ways I can. I look forward to seeing each of you and supporting my successor.

As always, keep me in your prayers as I keep you in mine. May God bless you all. I love you all.

Bama mine (Later),

Alan Melot | Legislator, District 1 | alan.melot@potawatomi.org | 608 S. Sergeant | Joplin, MO 64801 | 417-312-3307



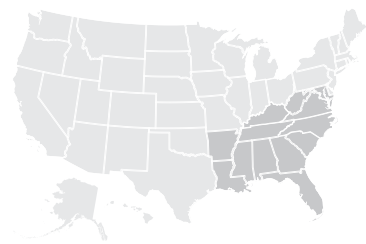
Eva Marie Carney District 2

Bozho, nikanek (Hello, friends),

Graduation Announcement/Congratulations

CPN citizen and Native journalist Paige Willett is graduating this month with a master's degree in journalism from the New York University! In 2023 Paige received a full-tuition scholarship from NYU's Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute to pursue journalism graduate studies. Many of us know Paige from her work for our CPN Public Information office, her writing for the *Hownikan* and her hosting/production of the *Hownikan* podcast. For some years it has been my pleasure to work with Paige in support of The Kwek Society, the non-profit I started in 2018 that is dedicated to ending period poverty for Indigenous students and their peers across the United States. Paige currently

serves as the vice president of our board of directors and writes for and serves as our newsletter editor. I am excited to see where Paige's next steps and future career lead her. Congratulations to an amazing kwe (woman).





Patsy Vawter (front row, third from left) with her honor blanket, CPN D2 Fall Feast 2025, Arlington, Virginia

Fort Lewis College Expects to be led by a Native Woman

I just saw news coverage that Heather Shotton (Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, Kiowa and Cheyenne descent), has been appointed president for Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado cpn.news/presidentialsearch. (The Kwek Society supports Fort Lewis students with their period care needs and I'm always alert to news of our school

partners.) The piece reported that her selection comes at a critical time as Fort Lewis College continues to reconcile with its past as a former Indian boarding school. Ms. Shotton has more than 20 years of experience in higher education and currently serves the college as vice president for Diversity Affairs and acting dean of students.

Condolences to Tescier and Pettifer descendants of A. Lenore Dusold and Patsy Ruth Vawter

When I called for family news in my last column, I did not imagine that I would receive news that several of our wisest *kwe'k* (women) just walked on. A. Lenore Dusold, 97, of Wyomissing, Pennsylvania (Tescier Family), passed in March 2025, as did Patsy Ruth Vawter/*Naganbekwe*, 96, of Richardsville, Virginia (Pettifer family). May memories of each of these dear *kwe'k* be a blessing forever.

I first met Lenore during a CPN District 1 meeting in Parsippany, New Jersey, in 2011. I cannot help but smile when I think of Lenore's graciousness when my aunt Agnes Wood Barron/*Demen* "bested" Lenore by less than a year as the wisest meeting attendee. And I was so tickled to see the resulting photo (shared here) when Lenore mischievously poked her head out behind my aunt when District 1's Roy Slavin and I posed for a photo after awarding Agnes her honor blanket.

Last summer I witnessed Patsy receiving her Potawatomi name during a lovely family naming ceremony hosted by Patsy Vawter's daughter, Phyllis Hurlock/*Wabnokwe*, at her home in Richardsville. Phyllis named Patsy as well as several other family members, as did Phyllis's sister Peggy Hurlock/*Msko Gises* and Phyllis's son J.J. Vogltanz/*Ashbek bmeptot*. For several years, Patsy has been the wisest attendee at District 2 Fall Feasts. She is front and center in the photo of our 2024 meeting. We will miss her quiet presence this year and in years to come.

I am sending heartfelt condolences to all family members and friends of these two lovely and strong *kwe'k*.

Making New Memories and Collecting Family News

I cannot wait to make new memories and meet new and old friends this summer. We again will have a District 2 Hand games team on Friday, June 27, as part of the Family Festival weekend. Please let me know if you are interested in playing on our team, and please share your family news as you have it!

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)



Eva Marie Carney, Roy Slavin, Agnes Barron and Lenore Tescier (left to right), CPN Dist. 1 Parsippany, NJ Meeting, 2011

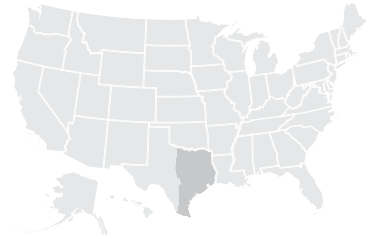


Bob Whistler District 3

Bozho ginwa (Hello everyone),

MMIW-TX Rematriate

I attended the March 29 meeting where we covered which cultural and heritage areas may be discussed publicly without offending others, along with how we handle ceremonial items. The group held meetings on April 12 and 28, which I attended. For May, the meeting dates were May 3 (by Zoom) and on May 17 and May 28. Times and location not yet determined. If anyone is interested in attending, contact me and I will forward the time and location when they come available.



District 3 Meet the Candidates

On April 5, we held a District 3 meeting at Texas Motor Speedway in Ft. Worth. We have three candidates running for District 3 office: Jennifer Bertelsen, Brenda Trevino and Brian Walker. Each candidate was given five minutes to address our membership. After all three had spoken, the meeting was open for questions from the attendees. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman were both in attendance. Each of them addressed our membership. The Chairman covered the buildings under construction, bank expansion, the pipe factory and how we must continue as a business focused on sovereignty in order to continue to provide the various benefits and services offered to our Tribal members. Vice-Chairman Capps also spoke on our benefits and services and why you might want to move to Shawnee, especially as a senior, since services may include housing at very reasonable rates. We recognized the eldest, Dr. Don Shelton, with a blanket; the youngest, Kaylee Almanol, with a blanket; and who drove the furthest, John Trevino, with a backpack. Directly following this, Dr. Shelton presented the Chairman and Vice-Chairman with a copy of *Indians and a Changing Frontier: The Art of George Winter*. Lunch was provided. Ms. Capps brought a camera and took several members' pictures to use on new Tribal ID cards. Generally, Tribal Rolls asks that you submit a passport type/size photo for a Tribal ID.



Tribal Chairman John "Rocky" Barrett, Vice-Chairman Linda Capps, eldest Dr. Don Shelton, youngest Kaylee Almanol, travelled farthest John Trevino and Bob Whistler

Texas State Board of Education (SBOE)

I have mentioned in earlier articles that for the last five years, a group of around 18 from various nations, educators, myself, and descendants of the early European settlers in an AI/NS (American Indian/Native Studies) course. It would be an elective in high-school grades 10-12. I have addressed the SBOE four times to get the course put on their agenda for consideration for a first reading. We have been unsuccessful so far. Presently, we have the course being used in several school districts as a pilot program, but that is due to expire this year. So, on April 10, I addressed the SBOE to allow this course to continue as an innovative pilot program. Then on April 11, several others in our group addressed the board to get the course on their agenda for their next meeting for a first reading. This course tells the truth about our culture and why we are where we are today due to the European settler impact. Our current history taught in the schools has too many errors and, in some cases, downright lies!

My current term serving you will end as soon as an elected replacement is determined. However, if I may help you in the future for namings and/or answer questions, I would be happy to! My email address, rwhistler@potawatomi.org, will be deleted when my successor replaces me. My new email address to use for this is: redmaniam@yahoo.com.

Nagech (Later),

Bob Whistler | *Bmashi* (He Soars) | rwhistler@potawatomi.org | cpn3legislator@yahoo.com
1516 Wimberly Ct. | Bedford, TX 76021 | 817-229-6271 | cpndistrict3.com



Jon Boursaw District 4

Honoring Topeka USD 501 Native American Seniors

In a ceremony on April 30, it was my pleasure and honor to present seven Native American students from the three Topeka high schools with an Eagle feather in recognition of their graduation. This included CPN member Natalyne Mathews from Highland Park High School.

The brief ceremony also included the Eagle prayer and instructions on the care and protection of their Eagle feather.

Upcoming CPN Elders' Potlucks

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

June 13 Hot Dogs and Hamburgers RSVP: Tuesday, June 10

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

Renovations are underway in the Rossville Duplexes

The renovation project in the Rossville duplexes is underway. This project includes the installation of walk-in showers, new sinks and vanities, new high-rise toilets, new floor tile and replacement of the water heaters. The contract was awarded to Richie Crest, a CPN member who resides in nearby Wamego, Kansas. This project was made possible by a grant award from the Federal Home Loan Bank.

Five More Timeless Native American Proverbs for Modern Living

Here are the five proverbs that didn't make the April edition of the *Hownikan*:

Actions Speak Louder Than Words: "It is better to have less thunder in the mouth and more lightning in the hand."

The message of this striking metaphor is clear: act instead of brag. Loud words often carry little substance, while meaningful actions leave a powerful impression. The metaphor encourages us to focus on what we do, letting our deeds shape how others see us.

Strength In Kindness: "Walk softly, but carry a big heart."

In this saying, courage and humility coexist. It encourages us to approach life gently while leading with compassion. Strength is most powerful when paired with kindness, making the world better one step at a time.

The Equality of All Lives: "All who have died are equal."

In death, all distinctions fade. It is a humbling reminder encouraging us to treat others fairly and respectfully, as life's ultimate equality transcends status, wealth, or power. It's a reminder to prioritize our shared humanity over what divides us.

Preserve What Sustains Us: "The frog does not drink up the pond in which he lives."

Through this metaphor for harmony, we are urged to preserve. Overusing resources destroys what sustains us. Living with care, like the frog, ensures our ecosystems thrive and support future generations. Greed only leads to ruin.

Honoring Growth and Beginnings: "No river can return to its source, yet all rivers must have a beginning."

This reflects on life's forward flow. We can't return to where we started, but our origins shape us. Growth and change are inevitable, and honoring the past gives meaning to where we're headed.

CPN Mail Order Pharmacy

Remember this NO COST program is now available to CPN members 62 years of age and older and CPN members on Social Security disability. Both Tracy and I have the registration packets, including the formulary. The registration packet is also available online at cpn.news/health. You can also contact Dakota Paxson, DPH, Pharmacist in Charge, at 866-900-5236 for more information. Tracy can be reached at 785-584-6171.

Megwetch (Thank you),

Jon Boursaw | Wetase Mkoh (Brave Bear) | jon.boursaw@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



Gene Lambert District 5

Bozho (Hello),

As the old saying goes, MAY brings in the spring and flowers of brilliant colors. A time for the new growth and willingly leaving behind the winter.

That being said, this works for people and new cycles of life in addition.

We pass through stages in life as father time catches up with us.

Knowing this, I regretfully announce the end of my tenure as the Legislator for District 5.

It has been my honor and pleasure to serve you, first as regional director and second as a Legislator covering a 27-year span.

I have had the opportunity to learn much from all of you.

The time we reference has not gone without mistakes or dropping the ball from time to time. My shortcomings are many and you have been very tolerant.

Hopefully, I have likewise assisted you and your families over the years in some form or fashion.

The position of Legislator for District 5 requires travel to a five-state region, and the travel has become difficult in my mature years.

I would also like to comment on the growth of the Nation in that time and under the leadership it presently supports.

Watching Chairman John Barrett, Vice-Chairman Linda Capps and Secretary D. Wayne Trousdale fight the battles bringing us from poverty to the success it is today has been an inspiration to observe.

We as a Nation could not have stronger or better leadership and I know the difference from observing other Native communities in the USA.

Keep them as long as they are willing to serve as their thoughts and prayers are truly for the betterment of all, not a chosen few.

Unfortunately, that is not always the case for those who promise you a bigger or better turning wheel.



My life in politics gave me a glimpse of underhanded and deceitful leadership. We are in good hands with what we have today, and talk from others can be deceiving. Perhaps their agenda is hidden.

Obviously, I am still a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and still want the best for everyone.

Please feel free to contact me or just visit with any questions you may have. I am not going anywhere, just retiring.

I meant every word as I share, "I love you all," and that will never leave my heart as I take you with me.

Signing off with my last article of 2025. Take care of each other, and if there is ever anything I can do for you (that doesn't require travel), let me know.

Retired Legislator District 5,

Gene Lambert | Butterfly Woman | 480-228-6569 | 672 E Press Road | San Tan Valley, AZ 85140



Rande K. Payne District 6

Bozho nikanek (Hello friends),

As we navigate the complexities of the 21st century, it is crucial to remember and preserve our cultural heritage. Our traditions, stories and customs are the threads that weave the fabric of who we are as modern-day Potawatomi, providing us with a sense of identity and belonging.

Until recently, I've never thought of voting in our Tribal elections as something that creates connection between Tribal government and Tribal members. I'm not ready to say that my tombstone should be engraved with "He Voted" but voting is important. And my sense of duty toward voting isn't specific to the Tribe.

Since the November 2024 election, I have had other opportunities to vote. Where I live in Tulare County, I am in a white zone. White Zones are areas where there is no access to surface water for crop irrigation. All the water I use at my house and irrigate my walnuts and citrus trees with is well water pumped from underground. Because surface water from storage reservoirs isn't an option, white zones are the areas with the most over pumping. There was a recent attempt to form a water district in my area. Because I didn't understand much about it, my first inclination was not to vote. My second thought was that it would mean an assessment for being in the district so I should vote no. But I couldn't bring myself to vote on such a serious matter without being informed. So, I called a neighbor who I knew would have a much greater stake than me. I assumed that the water district was going to put pipelines and canals in to provide surface water for irrigation. He explained that if it passed, the water district would be able to buy nearby river water when it was available and channel it into ponding basins for groundwater recharge to replenish what was being pumped. He said it would benefit everyone in the area, even people on well water who weren't farming. I was so glad I took the time to vote!

This week, I voted on the California Walnut Board of directors. It's been a busy week, and I was tempted to sit this one out. My vote wasn't going to change the outcome. But then I thought, what if everyone did that? So, I made the time to vote.

I know that's the long way to get to my point of encouraging you to vote. Not just because I do. Not just because I'm hoping for a certain outcome. But simply because I think you will be glad you did. Even if it doesn't go the way you voted. Being part of the process creates connection.

If you don't plan to vote at Festival, there is still time to vote absentee. If you don't have your Request for Absentee Ballot postcard, no problem. Go to cpn.news/ballotrequest to request your ballot. Print it out. Fill it out. Mail it in. You only have until June 8 to send it in, so don't delay. As soon as you get your ballot, fill it out and mail it in. It must be received by the Elections Committee by 2 p.m., Saturday, June 28. You will be glad you did!

Wisdom from the Word: "Choose for yourselves wise, understanding, experienced, and respected men from your tribes, and I will appoint them as heads (leaders) over you." Deuteronomy 1:13

Jagenagenan, migwetch (All my relations, thank you),

Nagetech (Later),

Rande K. Payne | *Mnedo Gabo* | rande.payne@potawatomi.org | 31150 Road 180 | Visalia, CA 93292-9585 | 559-999-5411



Mark Johnson District 7

Bozho nikanek (Hello friends),

Remember, the Family Reunion Festival is coming up in Shawnee, Oklahoma; this year's dates are from June 27 through June 29, 2025. The Honored Families in 2025 are Bourassa, Burnett, Melot, Navarre, Peltier, Wamego, Willmet and Vieux. Rooms may be getting hard to find, so try calling quickly if you're planning to attend. Come join the family and participate in our heritage. If you want to vote in person, bring along that absentee ballot that you forgot to mail back, and you can vote in person. Attend the General Council meeting and learn about your Tribe. Bring your regalia and dance with us on Saturday evening to honor our Tribe. Once you attend, you will return. Remember that the arena has a dress code. Women should keep their legs and shoulders covered by wearing ankle-length skirts and a shirt that conceals the

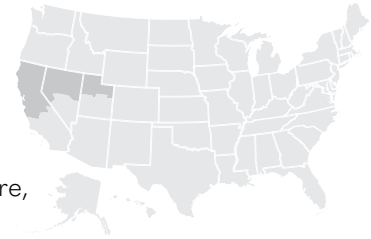
shoulders as well as carry a shawl, and men should wear slacks and a ribbon shirt. Everyone should wear moccasins or closed-toed shoes and move clockwise around the arena. Many classes, presentations and cultural events occur throughout the Festival. More information can be found on the Tribal website at cpn.news/festival.

One of the traits I got from my parents was how to be a good citizen, of both this country and our Tribe. If you are of voting age, you have a responsibility to both, to be an active participant. Vote, and vote every year, in our Tribal elections. Make it a habit to return your Tribal absentee ballot request form, and when you get your ballot, cast your vote and return it immediately. Don't wait for the last minute; it can be too easy to put off. VOTE! These days, it is easy to have a jaded view of the world, and as you can see, a very divided world. A lot of people just tune out what is happening on a day-to-day basis and don't put any faith in our elected leaders. I would like to make one very important point. Our Tribe has thrived under a stable government for many years, and it is very easy to get complacent and not feel the need to participate in our Tribal elections, but your participation in that election will guarantee that stability continues. For those of us in Tribal government, it is our responsibility to ensure that our Tribe continues to thrive, grow and diversify, so that we can maintain and expand services to our members that make sense when we can. Less than 10% of our eligible voters participate in our Tribal elections, that is almost unbelievable. Please vote!

Once again, I would like to say what an honor it is to serve you as your District 7 Legislator. 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

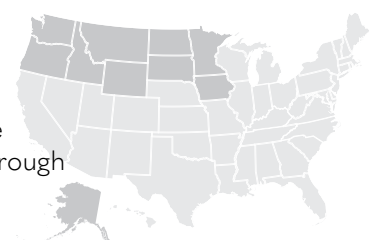


Dave Carney District 8

Bozho, jayek (Hello, everyone),

Summer is fast approaching and travel plans are being made! The Citizen Potawatomi Family Reunion Festival is hosted June 27 through 29 in Oklahoma. Please make your travel plans — especially around accommodations — just as soon as possible if you haven't already. Please make sure to mention that you are Citizen Potawatomi.

I probably answer at least one inquiry a week about which families will be honored this year. They will be: Bourassa, Burnett, Melot, Navarre, Peltier, Wamego, Wilmet and Vieux. Folks belonging to these families are encouraged to speak to the Cultural Heritage Center staff about being interviewed to add to the oral history of our Tribe, dance as an honored group at the Saturday night pow wow, and meet and socialize in the round house under family name banners made for the Festival.

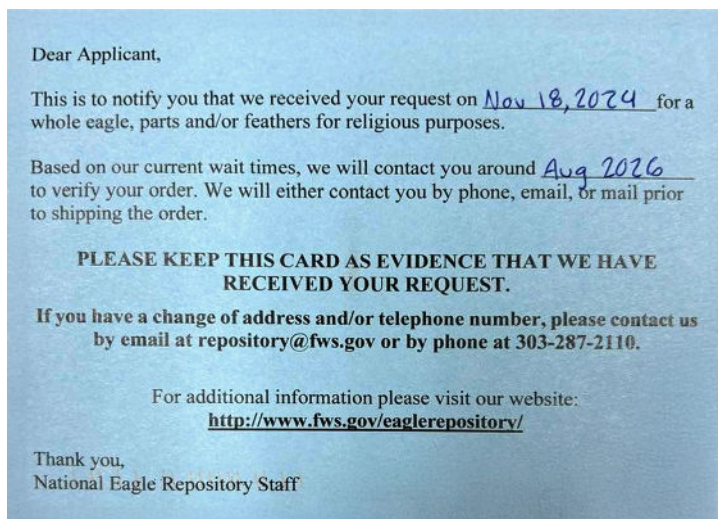


VISIT US ONLINE / POTAWATOMI.ORG

If you do not plan to attend the Family Festival and will not be able to vote in person, it is still important to vote. Please request your absentee ballot. If you did not receive a postcard to return for your ballot, please go cpn.news/ballotrequest. This request must be postmarked by June 8.

I am planning to host two Potawatomi events in Alaska in August. We will be having a meeting at the Sealaska Heritage Institute in downtown Juneau from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, August 9. There will be presentations and prizes, and lunch will be provided. To my knowledge, this will be the first CPN event in Juneau.

On Sunday, Aug. 10, we will gather at Lake Lucile Park (Pavillion B) in Wasilla from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for presentations, prizes and a Potawatomi art contest. Lunch will also be provided. There will be a private Naming at the home of one of our Wasilla elders that morning. If you are planning on attending the Wasilla event and are interested in receiving your Potawatomi name, please reach out to me at dncarney@gmail.com.



Alaska residents will receive a postcard with more details and an RSVP deadline, however, if you'd like to contact me earlier, please feel free to reach out. Also, if you are a subject expert on a particular CPN related topic and would like to make a presentation, I'd love to hear from you.

If you've ever attended a district meeting I've organized, you know that you'll receive lots of printed handouts. One of them is a request for an eagle permit and order form for feathers from the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife. These forms must be filled out by the requesting Tribal member and sent to the Nation to be certified by a Tribal representative, sent back to the applicant, and then sent in to the federal government. Here is the link to get the process started: cpn.news/featherrequest.

The process can take well over a year, and you can only have one

order in at a time. Therefore, as soon as an order arrives, I generally place another order.

Though it is far off, please be sure to mark your calendars for our annual Fall Feast on Oct. 11 at the Duwamish Longhouse in Seattle.

As always, it is my pleasure to serve as your legislator,

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



Paul Wesselhöft District 9

Bozho, nikan (Hello, friend),

Potawatomi artists

Artists and art lovers, you may want to join Potawatomi Artists on Facebook.

We are 5,293 members strong and increasing every day. Potawatomi Artists is a private group where members display or enjoy: Art, photography, music, drama, poetry, short stories, crafts, jewelry, regalia, Potawatomi history, culture and language.

The group is for Potawatomi members and their family from the various American and Canadian tribes. Creative works don't necessarily have to be Potawatomi themed, and members don't have to be artists themselves.

The group is not a forum for arguments, controversy, politics, campaigning, selling non-creative works or evangelizing. Advertisements and promotions of creative works for sale are welcome. Please consider joining us.

Migwetch (Thank you),

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



Walking On

Gilbert Lewis

Lewis Family

Gilbert Lewis, aged 63, passed away peacefully on June 11, 2024, in the comfort of his home in Towanda, Kansas. Gil was a man known for his patriotic spirit, infectious humor, boundless kindness and remarkable creativity.

Gil is survived by his beloved wife, Alae Al-Sabban; children, Brandon Lewis, Ashton Lewis, Sierra Roosevelt and Gabriel Lewis; siblings, Frances Lewis, Glen Lewis and John Divine; and mother, Sharon Lewis. He was preceded in death by his eldest son, Clayton Lewis; brother, Jesse Lewis; and father, Clifford Marion Lewis.

A service to celebrate Gil's life was held on Aug. 24, 2024, at Word of Life Church, 915 East 53rd Street North, Wichita, KS 67219.

Harold Wade Logsdon

Pappan Family



Harold Wade Logsdon, 87, of Del City, Oklahoma, passed away peacefully in his home surrounded by family on Feb. 22, 2025.

Harold was born Sept. 28, 1937, to Robert Wade Logsdon and Ada Lee Logsdon in Webb City, Oklahoma. He graduated from Del City High School and then enlisted in the United States Air Force in April of 1959 and retired in April 1980, with 21 years, 7 months and 11 days.

He received AF commendation medal with device, AF good conduct medal with 6 devices, Army Good Conduct Medal, AF Longevity Service Ribbon with 4 devices, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with 3 devices, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with device, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with 3 devices.

Harold was preceded in death by his parents, Robert and Ada Logsdon, and his siblings, Coann, David, Linda and Rue. He is survived by his wife, Wondee; sister, Bobby Rempe; daughters, Suda, Pom, Misty and Kowana; and 11 grandkids and 13 great-grandkids.

Harold met his wife of 53 years, Wondee, while serving in the military in Thailand. They fell in love and got married on Sept. 6, 1971, and Harold adopted her two daughters and brought them to America for a better life and started their family. They soon had two more

beautiful daughters and raised their family in their house when they moved to Oklahoma and settled in Del City. They took many trips together back and forth to Thailand to visit family and friends, some from his military days — he enjoyed the food and the weather.

After he retired from the Air Force, he managed 7-Eleven for 20-plus years. Harold baked his famous banana nut bread and pumpkin bread to fundraise for Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Foundation.

Funeral services were held at The Candlewood Chapel, 315 S Sooner Rd, on Saturday, March 1, 2025.

Bobby Lee Bressman

Wilmette/Darling Family



Bobby Lee Bressman, 93, passed from this life on Feb. 24, 2025, in Lawton, Oklahoma. Bob was born on Jan. 31, 1932, in Hinton, Oklahoma, to Daniel Oliver and Jimmie Lou (Moore) Bressman. He attended grade school in Franklin and Medicine Park before graduating from Elgin High School with the class of 1950.

In 1952, Bob entered the U.S. Army, proudly serving his country in combat during the Korean War. He completed two years of service in Korea as a staff sergeant and was honorably discharged in December 1954.

On Dec. 14, 1954, he married Clara Glennelle (Hilliary) Bressman, and they recently celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. Together, they raised two children.

Bob moved to Artesia, California, where he became a partner in Jack Brooks Contracting. In 1966 he returned to Oklahoma and began working in Civil Service at Fort Sill, where he served as supervisor in the Paint and Sign Shop. He dedicated 32 years to his career before retiring.

He was a proud member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation (Darling family).

Bob was a devoted member of the Church of Christ. He found joy in fishing and taking family vacations to Colorado. He spent countless hours helping his children and grandchildren with home improvements, painting, and various projects.

Bob is survived by his loving wife, Clara, of the home; his son, Robert Paul Bressman; his daughter, Brenda Callahan and husband Robin, all of Paradise Valley,

Arizona; two granddaughters, Stacie Graves and husband Michael of Norman, Oklahoma, and Dara McBee and husband Lewan of Newcastle, Oklahoma; three great-grandsons, Gavin Graves, Keegan Graves and Mason McBee; and sister-in-law, Jo Ann Bressman.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his sister, Doris McIntosh; and four brothers, Daniel, Louis, Lawrence and Billy Joe.

Bob's legacy of love, hard work, and dedication to his family will be cherished forever.

Deborah (Debbie) Sue Slater (Richard)

Bourassa Family



Deborah (Debbie) Sue Slater (Richard), 66, ascended into Heaven on Saturday, March 1, 2025, surrounded by loved ones.

Debbie was born on Nov. 7, 1958, in Spokane, Washington, to Margaret Wurth and Henry Richard, Sr.

Debbie married her husband, Al, in 1986. They enjoyed 38 years together before he passed away in January 2025. Debbie leaves behind three children: Andrew, Cassandra and Kimberly. She devoted her whole life to loving and raising them. She meticulously recorded everything from their lives in the most thorough baby books ever seen by man. The many photo albums of their lives are a tribute to her love for them. Debbie loved talking to her children every day and spending time with them.

Debbie was known by loved ones for her selflessness, compassion, work ethic, creativity, positivity, cooking and baking skills (especially lasagna, Christmas cookies and pumpkin bread), companionship, and love. All those who crossed her path were blessed by her presence.

Debbie took great pride in being "Grammy" to six adorable grandchildren. Walking into her house, you would be greeted by dozens of photos of each grandchild. She loved spoiling them and had a daycare's worth of toys for them to play with. She was one of their favorite people and leaves them with a plethora of memories and traditions.

Debbie enjoyed putting together puzzles, shopping with her kids, watching TLC, Reba, reruns of "Little House on the Prairie" and Hallmark movies, going on road trips with her family, reading, playing board games, and being with family.

She leaves behind a legacy of art and creativity. Her sewn clothes, blankets and burp rags will be a pleasant reminder of her love to those who received them. Debbie will be profoundly missed. She loved deeply and was deeply loved by so many.

Jerry W. Wano

Wano Family



Jerry W. Wano passed away peacefully at his home in Lansing, Kansas, on March 5, 2025, surrounded by his wife and children. He was 59 years old.

Jerry was born in Atchison, Kansas, on Dec. 8, 1965, to William Wano and Carol (Anderson) Wano. He later moved with his family to 615 Pawnee in Leavenworth, Kansas, the home of many legendary get-togethers. It was there that he met his wife, Kimber Finney, in 1993.

They married on Aug. 7, 2004. They have three children: Jeremy (Dani) Finney, Kansas City, Missouri; Autumn Wano and Javen Wano, Lansing. Family was the most important thing in his life, but he was also known for his incredible talent as a guitarist, playing in many bands during his lifetime and continuing in the entertainment business as a mobile deejay with Kimber for almost 30 years. He passed down his love of music to his children who are also very talented musicians.

Following in his father's footsteps, Jerry had a passion for motorcycles and was a motorcycle and ATV mechanic for 47 years. He was an avid Chiefs fan, and his greatest joy was watching the games with his family and grilling steaks. Later in life, he also found a passion for collecting coins.

He was a very selfless man. There's nothing he wouldn't have done or sacrificed for his family, his brother or his friends. He also took great pride as a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation.

He was preceded in death by his parents, William Wano and Carol Waters.

He is survived by his wife and children; brother, Bill (Tabatha) Wano, Gladstone, Missouri; mother-in-law, Sarah Harrington, Lansing; father-in-law, Bob (Gail) Harrington, Coldwater, Kansas; and many aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews. He will be greatly missed by those who loved him.

The CPN Burial Assistance Fund is available to all enrolled CPN members. Notify Tribal Rolls office of member's passing to receive \$2,000 aid. Burial process information and instructions sent to next of kin. Contact Tribal Rolls at tribalrolls@potawatomi.org or 405-878-5835.

Submit obituaries (300 words, 300dpi photo) and contact information to hownikan@potawatomi.org.

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Hownikan

1601 S Gordon Cooper Dr.
Shawnee, OK 74801

hownikan@potawatomi.org or 800-880-9880

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