Then and now: 50 years of Festival

This month, thousands of Citizen Potawatomi will gather on Tribal grounds just south of Shawnee, Oklahoma, to connect with relatives, participate in festivities and games, vote on Tribal business, and engage in cultural learning through language classes, dance lessons, and arts and crafts. The annual Family Reunion Festival is part of a 50-year history of celebrations held at CPN grounds — but the Festival of today looks much different than when it began in 1972.

**Powwow**
Before the Family Reunion Festival, the Nation held the Potawatomi Intertribal Powwow each year following the CPN General Council. What began as a celebration of Native culture swiftly rose to preeminence among powwows in the United States. The event boasted large prize offerings and attendance between 5,000-6,000 people a night, with Natives from across the country travelling to participate in the festivities and dance in the competitions.

However, the popularity of the Intertribal Powwow also proved its shortcoming as a means of connecting Potawatomi with each other and with their culture. It required a significant number of resources but with relatively little benefit to Citizen Potawatomi tribal members. Few Citizen Potawatomi participated in the dance competitions, with only one placing in more than 18 categories in 1998.

Vice-Chairman Linda Capps told the *Hownikan* in 2013, “Our Tribe didn’t have a lot of dancers like others who were coming to compete here. This kind of reinforced itself, resulting in our people not wanting to dance in the competitions.”

Tribal members also reported having difficulty identifying and connecting with other Citizen Potawatomi at the event.

The Business Committee grew concerned that, in all its years, the event had not succeeded in its mission to connect Potawatomi with their culture. Tribal leaders made necessary changes so that the annual festivity could better serve the Nation’s members.

**Festival**
On the Friday night of the 1998 Intertribal Powwow, CPN held an all-Potawatomi powwow. The event was popular with Tribal members, and the following year, CPN announced an entirely new format. The “Nation’s first Heritage Festival,” now called Family Reunion Festival, would “replace the Intertribal Powwow” in June 1999, the *Hownikan* reported.

Open specifically to CPN tribal members and their families, the new Festival focused on cultivating Potawatomi connections, culture and tradition. Chairman John “Rocky” Barrett addressed the change in his column in the April 1999 edition of the *Hownikan*:

“I was on the Business Committee when we had our first intertribal powwow back in 1972. The thought at the time was … to get us started in our own traditions — since we had no drums, no singers and no dancers. We were supposed to learn our own ways, after we learned from other tribes, and then teach our own people… Here we are 27 years later, and we have yet to have more than five Citizen Potawatomi competition dancers enter a contest at our own powwow.”

Today, the Saturday evening powwow remains the centerpiece of the event, now with hundreds of Potawatomi dancing. Cultural demonstrations and lessons have also been built up as a core part of the Festival to teach CPN members about their heritage. Classes on ribbon shirt making, beading, language, dancing and more are offered throughout the weekend. General Council also continues as a cornerstone of Festival, where members address important decisions for the benefit of the Tribe.

The first Citizen Potawatomi Heritage Festival received an overwhelming response, with an estimated 2,500-3,000 Tribal members in attendance — more than had ever previously travelled to the Nation’s headquarters.

**Family**
Honoring several founding families each year with the help of staff from Tribal Rolls and the Cultural Heritage Center remains another key element of the redesigned Family Reunion Festival.

Cultivating familial ties has been central for Tribal leadership from the beginning.

In discussing the inaugural all-Potawatomi Festival, Vice-Chairman Capps noted that “the orientation of the Potawatomi Festival is multi-generational.” Activities and learning opportunities for young Tribal members help to pass Potawatomi traditions on to the next generation.

Chairman Barrett wrote before the 2000 Festival, “the essence of tribe is family. A tribe is a group of interrelated families that share a common language, art, culture, history and territory who grow as an independent community until the need for a government became necessary. The families that make up the modern Citizen Potawatomi Nation share a common destiny as unique as their dual citizenship. Their history and their blood give them their Tribe; their Tribe works for their future security and prosperity. As long as the families survive, the Tribe survives.”

**This year**
This year, the Tribe gathers together in person for the first time since 2019. Instead of the regular schedule of honored families, Family Reunion Festival will be held in remembrance of all those relatives who have walked on due to COVID-19. Find more information about this year’s Family Reunion Festival at *cpn.news/festival*.
Strawberry Moon signals heart health

Nishnabé referred to June as the Dé'men Gion (Strawberry Moon). It also signified that strawberries were an important fruit for us,” he said. “The importance that it has goes back to our clan animals like bears. I think it is that visual cue that everything’s alive again and something is growing, and abundance is everywhere and that the Creator’s providing,” she said.

“Strawberries, in particular, ripen a little bit later in the Great Lakes region than they do here in Oklahoma,” said Citizen Potawatomi Nation’s Cultural Heritage Center Director Dr. Kelli Mosteller. “Recognizing June, the height of berry season, is nice because it’s a time where they’re everywhere. By June, you have strawberries all over.”

Citizen Potawatomi Language Department Director Justin Neely pointed out Potawatomi ancestors chose dé’men to represent strawberries for a reason. “Obviously, they were an important enough item to our diets or to our lives to where people were like, ‘Hey, that’s the month that we do that.’ … The strawberry has always been an important fruit for us,” he said.

The strawberry has always been an important fruit for us,” he said. “The importance that it has goes back to some of our clan animals like bears. I think it is that visual cue that everything’s alive again and something is growing, and abundance is everywhere and that the Creator’s providing,” she said.

Dr. Eric Rimm led a study about the health effects of strawberries for the Harvard School of Public Health. He told Harvard Health Publishing in 2013 that the research showed, “The sooner people start the type of diet that includes a higher intake of blueberries and strawberries, the better.”

Nishnabé members eat strawberries in high regard, and Badoowadmimwen (Potawatomi language) expresses it. Dé’men translates to “heart berry.”

“The summertime was when we would get together and have a lot of feasts … between different clans and different groups of people. And I’m sure it was a central part of those dishes that we would eat when we met with different folks from different areas,” he said.

Wellness

Nishnabé people are several types of berries because they knew their positive health effects. Harvard Medical School professor Dr. Eric Rimm led a study about the health effects of strawberries for the Harvard School of Public Health. He told Harvard Health Publishing in 2013 that the research showed, “The sooner people start the type of diet that includes a higher intake of blueberries and strawberries, the better.”

Nishnabé people have been eating them for those benefits for centuries. Neely notes they played an essential role in a much more rounded and healthy diet Potawatomi ate in the Great Lakes, comprised of fruits, nuts, fish, vegetables and wild game.

“(Strawberries) are filled with good nutrients and things like that. I think the more fruits and natural game and nuts and things that we can add to our diet, I think the better off we are to get away from some of that processed food,” Neely said.

Dé’men not only show the shape of the human heart, but they hold nutrients essential to the organ itself. Dr. Rimm’s research followed nearly 95,000 women ages 25 to 42 and their various food intakes for 18 years. As a low-risk segment of the population for heart attacks, they made an ideal sample set.

In the end, “women who ate the fewest blueberries and strawberries were at increased risk of heart attack. Those who ate the most were 34% less likely to have suffered a heart attack than those who ate the least of these fruits,” Harvard Health reported.

In 2011, the United States Department of Agriculture database noted strawberries’ heightened levels of vitamins, mineral and phytochemicals, or plant compounds good for the human body. That includes a group of metabolites called flavonoids, according to Harvard Health.

“These berries are particularly rich in chemical compounds called anthocyanins,” the journal reported. “Research suggests that anthocyanins have several effects on the body. They lower blood pressure, and they make blood vessels more elastic.”

While Johns Hopkins Medicine also agrees with the health benefits of strawberries, they point out the importance of ingesting them at a reasonable level as part of a rounded diet — about 2 to 3 cups a week. Fresh is always better.

Registered dietician Kathleen Johnson, M.A., R.D., L.D.N., told Johns Hopkins Medicine, “Antioxidants work everywhere in the body, including the heart. … They’re best consumed in real, whole foods — not supplements — especially colorful fruits and vegetables.”

To maintain a healthy lifestyle, the Nishnabé people “ate the rainbow,” including strawberries.

“I definitely think that dé’men are a tribute to that mooknademewon — that good life, that good health that our people would have had pre-contact,” Neely said.

Explore the Cultural Heritage Center’s online encyclopedia at cph.novc/en/encyclopedia

Activities abound for youngest Tribal members

The youngest Citizen Potawatomi tribal members will have numerous activities to choose from as the 2022 Family Reunion Festival gets underway in Shawnee, Oklahoma. First time attendees may not be aware of the variety of activities offered, said CPN Child Development Center Director Donnette Littlehead.

Friday

Friday kicks off with arts and crafts at the South Reunion Hall from 9-11:30 a.m.

“We’ll have painted necklaces, God’s eyes, dream catchers,” Littlehead said. “We make it age appropriate so even the littlest ones can do it.”

If any parents or grandparents feel like joining in, Littlehead encourages family participation.

“Anybody’s welcome to come,” she said. “We even have the elders that come and like to make the arts and crafts themselves. So, it’s for everybody.”

Swimmers will be able to cool off at the pool, located at the Child Development Center, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. CPN employees as well as lifeguards will be on hand to watch over the swimmers.

“We would like all the younger children to use the swimming pool at the powwow grounds. We’d like the older children to use the (larger pool at the) daycare because it’s 9 feet deep,” she said.

New this year is a splash pad, located on the powwow grounds, something Littlehead believes will be popular among both the young and young-at-heart.

After a lunch break from noon to 1 p.m., arts and crafts re-open from 1-4 p.m. at the South Reunion Hall.

The South Reunion Hall will host chess and checkers tournaments at 1 p.m.

The coloring contest gets underway at the same time. Registration for the coloring contest closes at 2 p.m.

Participants 16 years and up can enter the pool tournament, which starts at 1 p.m. Registration is located south of FireLake Discount Foods, and ends at 12:30 p.m.

The all-ages Dance Under the Stars event also features a dance contest from 7-11 p.m. Registration is located south of FireLake Discount Foods.

Saturday

Saturday features arts and crafts at the South Reunion Hall from 9 a.m. to noon.

The pool located at the Child Development Center is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

After a lunch break from noon to 1 p.m., arts and crafts re-open from 1-4 p.m. at the South Reunion Hall.

The 3-on-3 basketball tournament tips off at 9 a.m. at the Child Development Center. Both boys and girls aged from 7 to 14 years may compete.

Sunday

As the final day of the 2022 Festival begins, arts and crafts will be open from 9-11:30 a.m. at the South Reunion Hall.

Littlehead and her employees are excited to welcome Tribal members home. They’ve missed catching up with familiar faces and meeting new people these past two years.

“I tell you, my employees and myself, we all love it,” she said. “We love to just enjoy the festival with the children that come from all over. We meet so many people, and it’s just so wonderful. We enjoy it so much. We really do.”

Schedule subject to change. A complete schedule of activities, as well as registration packet, will be included in the Festival registration packet.
Extend your stay for Family Reunion Festival!

Extending a trip to Citizen Potawatomi Nation’s Family Reunion Festival presents the perfect opportunity to explore the greater Oklahoma City metro area, and CPN is close to it all.

Museums

First Americans Museum – Oklahoma City

The First Americans Museum opened in September 2021, featuring two floors of museum space and interactive exhibits along with a restaurant, theater, family activities and gift shop. Everything from the architecture to the restaurant menu holds significance in Indigenous culture and highlights the lifeways of the 39 tribes in Oklahoma. Visit famok.org for more information.

Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art – Shawnee

Located on the Oklahoma Baptist University Green Campus, the Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art displays art and objects that cover 6,000 years of history. It is one of Oklahoma’s oldest museums and houses the state’s only Egyptian mummies. The collection of Native American art includes regalia and objects that satisfy almost any curiosity or interest. The Mabee-Gerrer Museum offers a wide variety of artifacts, historical objects and art that satisfy almost any curiosity or interest.

Potawatomi County Museum – Shawnee

The Potawatomi County Historical Society reopened the Potawatomi County Museum inside the Milburn Center in 2021. On the same property as the Santa Fe Depot and Beard Cabin, it explores the area’s history with an emphasis on railroad development and local tribes, including Citizen Potawatomi Nation. Visit the museum’s website at pottcountymuseum.org.

Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History – Norman

The family-friendly Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History includes life-size dioramas, Native American artifacts, prehistoric bugs, a Discovery Room for kids and most importantly — dinosaurs. It displays a Guinness World Record-holding Pentaceratops skull, Jurassic-era giants that once roamed the plains and much more. See more at samnoblemuseum.ou.edu.

Outdoors

Six Flags Hurricane Harbor – Oklahoma City

June is hot, and Six Flags Hurricane Harbor right off I-40 provides 25 acres of pools, water slides and soaking rides as the perfect place to cool down. Relax and stay at Castaway Creek or chill on the need for a thrill on the Big Kahuna, a 542-foot flume side. Hurricane Harbor features 17 total attractions and dining options throughout the park. Buy tickets at sixflags.com/hurricaneharbor.

Scissortail Park – Oklahoma City

Scissortail Park in downtown Oklahoma City features 36 acres of walking trails, native plants, outdoor event space, a dog park, playgrounds and more. Cool off at the splash pad, rent skates at the outdoor roller rink, paddleboat around the lake and walk across the Skydance Bridge that passes over I-40. The park is only one great stop along the Oklahoma City Streetcar route. Find out more at scissortailpark.org.

Lake Thunderbird State Park – Norman

Summer means time at the lake in Oklahoma, and Shawnee’s closest state park is only a short drive away. Lake Thunderbird is perfect for camping, featuring 200 RV sites and plenty of tent spots. Enjoy Calypso Cove and Little River Marina with boat ramps and beaches as well as playgrounds, picnic areas, an archery range, hiking trails, mountain biking and the Discovery Cove Nature Center.

Family Fun

Route 66 – Across the state

Many Festival attendees come from out of state, and Route 66 has plenty of stops along the way. The Oklahoma Route 66 Museum in Clinton, Pop’s giant soda bottle and diner in Arcadia, Blue Whale in Canton and Admiral Twin Drive-In in Tulsas are only a few of its iconic attractions along with plenty of delicious food. Check out a map and plan a trip at travelok.com/route_66.

Adventure District – Oklahoma City

Northeast Oklahoma City’s Adventure District offers a wide array of museums, outdoor attractions and dining options. Trip Advisor lists Science Museum Oklahoma as one of the best in the state, while Attractions of America listed the OKC Zoo and Botanical Gardens as one of the 30 best zoos in the country to visit in 2022. Read about the area’s history museums and golf course at okcattractions.com.

Downtown Shawnee – Shawnee

Find great local restaurants and plenty of family-friendly activities in downtown Shawnee. Try a new activity at Lumberjack Johnson’s Axe Throwing, Nerfed Shawnee or Coffee N’ Crafts before eating at the original Van’s Big Stand, 96-year-old Hamburger King or Comma coffee shop. Other antique retailers, comic books stores and specialty boutiques line the streets. Read more at visitshawnee.com.

Brickopolis – Oklahoma City

Located along the Bricktown Canal in downtown OKC, Brickopolis boasts three stories of attractions and dining, Play laser tag, mini golf and arcade games as well as mine for gemstones, rock wall climb and take on the bungee trampoline — all in one spot. The first floor bar and grill includes an extensive menu with something to satisfy any craving. Check out menus and activity prices at brickopolis.com.

Downtown Shawnee showcases some of the best restaurants and shops the city has to offer.
Powwow etiquette refresher

As the main event of Citizen Potawatomi Nation's Family Reunion Festival each June, the Saturday evening powwow brings everyone together for traditional dancing, music and more.

With Tribal enrollment expanding, some will honor their ancestry and relatives at the powwow for the first time. Now is a good opportunity for a refresher on powwow etiquette. Rules regarding clothing, personal space and dancing make participating comfortable and fun.

Clothing
Tribal members are encouraged to wear regalia. Flip-flops, tank tops and shorts are not permitted in the arena; keeping legs and shoulders covered shows respect for tradition in the sacred space. Those not following the dress code should remain in the stands and not enter the arena.

Women should dress in a long skirt that reaches down to the ankles and a top that covers the shoulders as well as carry a shawl. Men should wear slacks and a ribbon shirt that covers the shoulders. Purchasing a button-up shirt and sewing the ribbons onto it is acceptable. Everyone should wear close-toed shoes at all times.

Boundaries
Those staying in the stands should not cross the boundary line on the outer edge of the dance circle. There is a walkway behind the row of benches for the dancers. Move around the outside of the seating, and respect others’ personal space. Parents should watch their children during the powwow to ensure they do not overstep important boundaries, including the drum circle, dance arena and more.

Dancers often mark their spots on the benches with a blanket or piece of cloth. Move past these areas, and find a section that remains untouched. They also often place pieces of regalia not currently in use at their seat. Do not handle another Tribal member’s regalia unless invited to do so; it is highly disrespectful.

Families pass many pieces down between generations, especially ones that hold family legacy and special meaning.

Dogs should remain outside the arena borders at all times. No eating, drinking or smoking in the arena.

Cell phones
Obtain permission to photograph and video dancers and those inside the arena, including posting those images to social media. If someone declines a photo request, respect their wishes. Listen to the event emcee for times to put phones away.

Do not step down into the arena to video others or livestream the event. Those seated in the stands should remain there for any photographs or videos. Respect others’ privacy.

The dance arena is a sacred space, and dancers often equate powwow participation with praying. Do not disrupt the momentum of the dance circle to capture photos or videos, and be mindful of personal space. Allow others the chance to connect and reflect. It is also frowned upon to take photographs of dancers preparing for competition.

Dancing
Grand Entry begins at 8 p.m. Be present and prepared at that time. Keep in mind that it requires a significant number of people to coordinate Grand Entry; please be patient and flexible as well.

Those arriving after dancing has started should wait for their chance to join. Do not push or work past others to join a particular group; wait for an intertribal song if necessary.

First-time dancers should watch head dancers or others in regalia to learn the steps and get in the rhythm of Grand Entry. An individual’s family song is also an ideal spot to begin.

After stepping into the dance arena, always move clockwise in a circular motion, even if it is the long way around. When dancing in groups, women precede men.

Everyone stands during the opening songs to honor traditions and ancestors together. The emcee provides instructions throughout the entire event, especially during unforeseen circumstances. Look for an up-to-date schedule for powwow dance demonstrations at the arena.

Questions regarding protocol are always welcome. An information booth will be located near the arena, and other Tribal members who have attended and danced before will gladly provide instructions or suggestions.

Read more about Family Reunion Festival at cpn.news/festival.

Competitions open for every skill set

When people visit the Citizen Potawatomi Nation headquarters for the 2022 Annual Family Reunion Festival, friendly competition is part of the tradition. All contests are open to Tribal members and their spouses, and whether they compete in modern games like softball or traditional handgames, opportunities are everywhere.

The premier competition is the annual art contest, including youth and adult divisions. Previous submissions have included paintings, photography, beadwork, moccasins and sculpture.

Children’s art contests

Tribal members age 15 and younger may compete in the art contest by entering up to three pieces in one of four age groups: age 5 and younger, ages 6-9, 10-12 and 13-15. Art may be submitted starting at 9 a.m. Saturday in the youth tent, located just south of the FireLake water tower. All submissions must have been created before Festival and within the past three years. First, second and third place will be recognized.

Adult art contest

The adult art contest has professional and amateur divisions for Tribal members and their spouses, age 16 and up. Submissions do not have to include Indigenous themes, and the contest includes all types and styles of art. Registration begins at 9 a.m. Saturday inside the FireLake Arena lobby.

The professional division is for artists who previously have been paid for the same type of work they have submitted. One overall prize is awarded, with the winner chosen by a vote of the Potawatomi people taking place inside the foyer of FireLake Arena.

The amateur division is for artists not paid for the piece or for other pieces made in the same medium. The winners are decided by a judge, and three places will be awarded in the categories of photography/painting and other mediums.

Other competitions

The weekend also includes opportunities to showcase prowess in athletics as well as games of skill and chance. Traditional handgames, softball, golf, chess, 3-on-3 basketball, archery and horseshoes are just a few of the events scheduled.

A full schedule of contests will be printed in the Festival registration packet. Learn more about Festival and traditional handgames at cpn.news/handgames.
Health screenings offered during Festival

Citizen Potawatomi Nation Health Services will be offering health screenings and other services on Friday, June 24 and Saturday, June 25 during the 2022 Family Reunion Festival.

Carotid artery screenings, blood pressure checks, behavioral health information, and diabetes nutrition and prevention are available on Friday and Saturday. Check the schedule included in each registration packet for details.

The Tribe’s Behavioral Health Department also plans to hold a mental health session on navigating life after the pandemic.

“Ours is a very excited,” said CPNHS Director Dr. Adam Vascellaro. “We’re all ready to participate in Festival again and get to the community and only come to CPNHS during Festival.”

In addition to the health screenings, health services staff welcomes attendees to attend a course on CPR, automatic external defibrillators and naloxone, a medication to reverse opioid overdoses, at Mission Hill. The course meets Friday from 9-11 a.m., 1-3 p.m. and 5-7 p.m., and Saturday from 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. Each session is limited to the first eight participants.

While Tribal members attend Festival, four first aid tents will be available from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. to assist with any minor medical emergency. One mobile business tent will be stationed at the main first aid tent to assist with any other medical emergencies.

Tribal members may also schedule an appointment at the health clinic during their visit to Shawnee. Federal statistics still require CPNHS to minimize any potential COVID-19 transmission within its health system, and door screenings and masks are necessary when visiting the clinic. Only parents, guardians and spouses will be allowed in with the patient. Unfortunately, clinic tours will not take place this year, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Free coronavirus vaccines will be available to anyone eligible.

“If Tribal members are planning on making an appointment during Festival, they should bring any list of medical history and medications,” Dr. Vascellaro said. “It would be helpful to bring their up-to-date immunization record as well.”

To schedule an appointment, call 405-878-4693.  

HOWNIKAN

Summer Potawatomi traditions

The official start of summer — niben (time of plenty) — begins Tuesday, June 21. Before the invention of grocery stores, it was key time to harvest and procure food as well as celebrate. During niben, Potawatomi continue age-old traditions of the season that strengthen cultural and personal connections.

“When the crops came, it was a time of plenty to come together and feast and hang out with one another and have dances, things like that,” said Citizen Potawatomi Language Director Justin Neely.

Each clan lived in separate villages across the same region, and the bitter winters around the Great Lakes made visiting neighboring villages more difficult. As the cold began to fade, Potawatomi moved camp, settling near water sources, and warm summers served as a great time for travel and fellowship.

“You don’t want to deplete the resources in one area,” Neely explained. “In fact, the style of the wigwam that we had in the summer were different. They were oftentimes reed or cattail mats where you could actually roll up the corners and let the wind flow through versus the birch bark ones, which are a little sturdier and better for the harsh winter conditions.”

Growing and securing

In Potawatomi culture, each moon indicates important events and activities. Summer meant having fun as well as procuring food for the long, harsh winters. Some of the moons recognized across Potawatomi communities during niben, include dëmmengês (strawberry moon), abënhejngëyis (midsummer moon), missiéjësis (blueberry picking moon) and the beginning of mmunémkiségis (icing moon) or xawbogyages (leaves turn yellow moon).

Potawatomi gardens included the Three Sisters: corn, beans and squash, among other traditional crops. Today, many continue the companion planting growing technique as well as use heirloom Potawatomi seeds. While women tended to the gardens and harvested food before colonization, men hunted game like venison, duck, fish and more.

“There’s evidence that sturgeon was a really important fish to our people. They used to grow quite large, and they’re still a pretty good-sized fish,” Neely said.

You could kill a sturgeon, and it could feed your family for a week or so.”

Dehydrating meat keeps it fresh for months to come. Summer is also the only time harvesting some key medicines can occur.

“You want to stockpile the medicines that you have and dry them out and have them available when winter comes and you really need them,” Neely said.

Citizen Potawatomi traditions today

After the Potawatomi were forcibly removed from the Great Lakes region westward, the Tribe had to become acclimated to shorter winters and hotter summers.

“I can imagine that was pretty brutal on some of our people, especially the older people that lived their whole lives where it was cold,” Neely said.

While many of the plants found west of the Mississippi River varied from those in the Great Lakes region, the Potawatomi have adapted. Today, many celebrate finding crops local to them, like the dewberries and sand plums found in Oklahoma.

During the summer, Citizen Potawatomi attend the Nation’s annual Family Reunion Festival as well as continue upholding ties with other Potawatomi across Turtle Island through the Potawatomi Gathering.

“Our powwow or Festival in June is a nice way to celebrate and come together as a people and give thanks for who we are,” Neely said. “There’s something nice about knowing that you’re at an event, you’re learning your language and culture, things like that.”

Squirrel Creek Singers lead dancers with Nation’s heartbeat

The 2022 Citizen Potawatomi Nation Family Reunion Festival powwow marks the first time it includes drumming by an all-Potawatomi men’s group in its 30-year history. CPN Language Department Director and drum group leader Justin Neely saw it as a goal since the group began in 2007.

“It’s kind of evolved over the years, and eventually, we got to that point where we were good enough and knew enough songs, where we did the hand games,” the Navarre and DeGraff family descendant said. “And that was just a chance to really sing. And we’ve been doing those for the last four or five years. But we’ve always been kind of pushing towards that eventual shift into doing (the powwow).”

The Sengo Zhibiwas Ngemож (Squirrel Creek Singers) welcome men of all ages to sit at the drum and learn songs. A group of four to six gather on Monday and Thursday afternoons at the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center. They each hold a different level of skill and reason for attending.

Peltier and Vieux family descendant Dwight Scott began practicing with the group more than a year ago in preparation for this opportunity.

“When I found out that it wasn’t Potawatomi men drumming all the time (at Festival), it broke my heart,” he said. “I know it’s not up to me, by myself, but I want to see 10 Potawatomi men on this drum, singing their heart out.”

New drummer and CHC employee Chris Lengenhager first came to practice in March after Neely invited him as they passed in the hall. He is a descendant of the Weldelf family. “(Justin) said, ‘Your people need you.’ And I said, ‘Okay, I’m here,’” Lengenhager said.

I’m pretty happy with trying not to mess up too much. I’m learning words and trying to stay with the beat. And not mess up everyone else.”

Cole Rattan, a 28-year-old Marine veteran, looks forward to playing the Tribe’s flag song and warrior’s honor songs at Grand Entry someday. The Wilmette family descendant has been attending practice off and on almost his entire life.

“I’ve always kind of had a yearning and a desire to learn more. I feel like I’m still learning, and I don’t know enough yet. I just want to keep learning, and I love singing and playing the drum. It’s definitely something to be proud about, especially with my other Nicobahb and Potawatomi family,” Rattan said.

Neely encourages Tribal members to participate or learn songs in any way possible. The group now streams its practices for those who want to join across the country. Drummers have rotated in and out throughout the years, whether they moved or worked for the Tribe.

“If you’re a descendant of the Weldelf family — I respect them — I thank them for coming and helping us — but now it’s time for us to step up and take our turn and do it,” he said.

Neely anticipates the group’s growth continuing in the future, with more elementary and middle school-aged Tribal members also beginning to attend practice.

“My hope is that we’ll have to sit sideways because there will be so many people around the drum,” he said.

Learn more about Potawatomi language, traditions and culture at potawatomiheritage.com.

The Sengo Zhibiwas Ngemож (Squirrel Creek Singers) perform at many Tribal gatherings and celebrations throughout the year.
Language department introduces children’s books among Festival gifts

This year, Family Reunion Festival attendees will find something new in their gift bags they’ve never before — a set of four children’s books from the Citizen Potawatomi Language Department. The staff worked on them after receiving a $200,000 grant from the United States Department of the Interior’s Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development as part of its Living Languages Grant Program in 2021.

The chance to offer a learning tool to parents and children excites Language Department Director Justin Neely.

“The way our legends and stories were passed on was through stories. So I think storytelling is just a natural part of being Potawatomi, if you will, and the fact that we now have some stories that kids can listen to and hear in the language, maybe about people that they might be able to relate to a little more, I think is important,” he said.

Language aid and Tribal member Ragan Marsee worked on a Potawatomi telling of the classic fable, *Chicken Little*, included in the bag. She brought the language into the story and hand-crafted the book’s artwork. She holds her responsibility to Tribal members close to her heart.

“I couldn’t tell you how excited I would have been to have something that had the language in it that I could keep on the shelf and have throughout my life,” Marsee said.

The Language Department has also produced a Potawatomi version of *The Red Raincoat* (*Miigwekawagen*) by Kiran Kasturia and translated by Neely. *Wini je o nami edit*. — I am fine.

Each book teaches the readers vocabulary applied to cultural values, animals, weather and other subjects.

“It’s nice to have your own cultural aspects put into books, seeing things from none of a traditional perspective, more of a Potawatomi perspective,” Neely said.

“We have characters like Bgii Newe, the Bugfoot, in one of them. Another story talks about how we offer tobacco and things like that. So, I think being able to incorporate some of our views into the books is nice.”

Neely and the department worked to provide an interactive way to spread the vocabulary and stories through generations and plant seeds to make Bodéwadmimwen something more Tribal members use all the time.

“Potawatomi doesn’t just equal dancing. It doesn’t just equal ceremony. It doesn’t just equal talking about medicine. The language talks about everything. It talks about day-to-day life. Talks about having a raincoat, the weather. It talks about dance, but it also talks about hanging out with your friends at a tree house. … The language can talk about all those concepts because our language is very descriptive in nature,” Neely said.

He wanted to serve a wide age range and ability level with the books, and the grant provided the department’s first opportunity to create something like them for children. However, any adults beginning to learn Bodéwadmimwen can memorize the vocabulary along with their kids as they read together.

The nice thing about a lot of these stories is we’ve kind of kept it clean by putting the Potawatomi only on the pages. But then, the back will have the pages with the actual English on them so that people can make sure they understand what’s going on with each page,” Neely said.

Each book includes a QR code on the back, allowing the reader to use their phone and access an audio file of a department staff member reading the entire book in Potawatomi. Marsee hopes it all comes together and lights a fire in the next generation to learn the language.

She remembers receiving a bag full of gifts as one of the best parts of Festival. The coloring pages with Bodéwadmimwen on them inspired her to learn the language, and she hopes the books do the same for others.

“I just hope that this book brings a spark to the young people — or to any of the people who read it — to begin a knowledge journey in the language. Because this language brings so much healing, and it brings our people home,” she said.

Neely agreed.

“I think it’s just going to be a nice, enjoyable thing that I foresee hopefully making a lot more books as we go forward,” he said.

After the 2022 Family Reunion Festival, the CPN Language Department plans to make the books available to all Tribal members. Information on how to order the books will be published online and in the *Hownikan*. Find more language resources at cpn.news/language.

Language update

By Justin Neely, CPN Language Department Director

Bacho Jayok (Hello everyone).

As we move into June, we will have a number of events and opportunities for learning the language at Festival. Friday at 10 a.m. Festival weekend, we will have an update on various language tools at the Cultural Heritage Center preliminarily planned for the library. Friday at 5 p.m. in the North Reunion Hall, we will be doing Potawatomi bingo. Then we will be having another bingo session Saturday at noon. Saturday at 11 a.m. will be a beginner Potawatomi class. Sometimes new we are doing this year is putting QR codes on all our signs in Potawatomi. In years past, we had signs like store, directions, and maps in the language. This year, there will also be a QR code on the signs that will allow you to listen to how the sign is pronounced. We also plan on having some additional QR code signs set up along the nature walk. This year in your Festival bag, we plan on having four children’s books in the language. On the back of each book will also be a QR code that will read the book to your child. We also plan on doing our scavenger hunt in the language. This will be done on site but could be even done for those who don’t travel home for the Festival. The questions will be in Potawatomi, so you will have to translate the question and then answer it. For example, if it said, “What year did the Potawatomi arrive in Oklahoma?” You could translate this, then travel to the Cultural Heritage Center and discover the answer, use the Cultural Heritage Center’s virtual tour or simply search Google.

As for tools for learning the language, there are quite a few. Our online dictionary at potawatomidictionary.com is very popular and has over 10,000 words, with audio recordings for close to 80 percent of the words. There are also example sentences as well as links to cultural information and, occasionally, videos. You can download an app version of the dictionary on the app store. We are currently offering the language in five high schools in Oklahoma where the course counts toward a world language credit required for graduation. So instead of taking two years of Spanish or French, a student can take two years of Potawatomi. The language is certified anywhere in Oklahoma. All it requires is a district showing interest and getting in contact with us — there is no cost to the district. The only requirement is that kids have devices for getting on the internet and also a teacher who can sit in the classroom to make sure the students are on task. The high schools that currently offer the Potawatomi language are Tecumseh, Wannette, Shawnee, Maud and Seminole. We started a 9-week exploratory middle school course at the request of Shawnee Middle School. We are currently working with the CPN Department of Education to get the language into several colleges where there are large numbers of Potawatomi students.

We currently have a couple of courses on Memrise at memrise.com. We also will soon be making available a new course using the same platform as our high school courses. We look to have a beginner course up some time in early summer. Finally, I would like to share some language that could be used at Festival. I will also place a QR code on this so that folks will be able to listen to the words and practice.

Bacho — Hello
Bacho Jayok — Hello everyone
Ni je na? — How are you?
Anwe she shehna. — I am fine.
Ni pi je ezhyawen? — Where are you going?
Cho ngoyo — Nowhere
Wegis je waa zhéckheýen ngom? — What are you going to do today?
Nawi-moshwe ke. — I am going to make a shawl.
Gihate ngote. — It’s hot.
Mun gihote. — It’s nice! beautiful day.
Wegis je eumiyesen? — What are you eating?
Zakwookteh kwedawen mim jezh u teuwem — I am eating fry bread and a hot dog.
Gubkhabndareng ne? — Are you thirsty?
Ehe ubaagbndareng. — Yes, I am thirsty.
Ni je ezh ne kaseg? — What is your name?
Justin nezulemeka. — My name is Justin.
Ni je wach la ngom? — Where are you from?
Gyegyekne na eje tek i nizgeegbi? — Do you know where the bathroom is?
Ngo mi-gegomi. — I arrived yesterday.
Ngom mi-gegomi. — I arrived today.
Wabek ne wu giwe? — Are you going home tomorrow?
Ni jeto dwekah? — What time is it?
Wijweshen — Come with me
Bama pi — Later on
Migwetch — Thank you
Abow — Ok (can be used as a reply to thank you)
John sheknar. — His name is John.
Nnehombayaw. — He is my grandfather.
End
House of Hope helps children manage emotion and communicate

By Kayla Woody, House of Hope Prevention Specialist

The CPN House of Hope had the opportunity during the month of April to talk to children of the local community about how to respond in a healthy manner to big emotions. Staff introduced some great book titles to the students of Shawnee Early Childhood Center and read to them about how words are not for hurting and also about not responding in a physical way to anger and frustration. Students learned different ways to respond to big emotions like breathing techniques and using their words well.

Too often, children are witnesses to domestic violence in the home or victims themselves of child abuse and neglect. It is important that these children are receiving information on how to communicate and handle situations in a non-violent way. This can help break the intergenerational cycle of trauma that follows victims of abuse.

In a 2018 article from Psychology Today, professor and psychotherapist Teresa Gil said, “Patterns of communicating and relating can be passed down across generations horizontally and vertically from one generation to the next. Some of these patterns are positive such as having the ability to form strong bonds with other people, other patterns can be toxic and continue to cause harm in our lives and the lives of the people we are close to.”

The House of Hope offers many ways to bring awareness about domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking to communities. To set up a book reading for your classroom or youth program, please reach out to our prevention specialist, Kayla Woody; at 405-275-3176 or by email at kayla.woody@potawatomi.org. This is a free service that can provide education and resources to your students.

If you or someone you know is experiencing stalking, intimate partner violence, and/or sexual assault and would like more information, please contact the House of Hope at 405-275-3176 or visit us online at facebook.com/cpnhouseofhope.

During the 2022 Citizen Potawatomi Nation Family Reunion Festival, the Tribe’s Cultural Heritage Center hopes to collect many family heritage interviews during the celebration. The process to schedule family heritage interviews has changed slightly but remains quick and convenient.

In prior years, the honored families had a pre-scheduled time to participate in interviews. This year, all families may use the Festival Interview link on the Potawatomi portal to schedule an interview time.

“We had to think about how we could still encourage people to come up and make sure that we’re capturing interviews. In the last year, especially with the pandemic, the IT department has developed the portal system,” said CHC Director Dr. Kelli Mosteller. Tribal members may already be familiar with the portal as the one-stop location for managing everything from scholarship applications to address changes.

“I think a lot of our Tribal members know the portal is the place where they signed up for their CARES (Act) and ARPA money and the same place they go to enroll a new child,” Dr. Mosteller said. “It’s sort of the hub of everything.”

She said a new section of the portal allows Tribal members to log in and select a 30-minute time slot for an interview.

“You can do an individual interview, or if you want to, get your grandma and aunts and uncles and all go to a big family interview,” she said.

Dr. Mosteller and the CHC staff envision the online scheduling as an annual Festival feature, with its ease, convenience and ability to schedule interviews around various Festival activities.

“No matter what time people select, preparation for the family history interviews is easy, she said.

“After they sign up, we will reach out to them via email, giving them a questionnaire,” Dr. Mosteller said. “These are not the only questions that will be asked, but I think it helps people have conversations among their family ahead of time to talk about family history.”

CHC staff encourages Tribal members to bring family heirlooms and include those during the interview as well.

Scheduling through the portal also reduces the wait time usually associated with the interview process. Participants can complete the paperwork ahead of time, allowing CHC staff to jump right into interviews.

“You’ll already be familiar with the kinds of questions we’re going to ask,” Dr. Mosteller said. “We start with those core questions that we use to spur people’s memories and get them talking. Then the interview sort of takes on a life of its own.”

After the interview is complete, Tribal members then decide how the information is maintained.

“They will be able to access a copy if they so choose. It will also be stored at the Heritage Center where they get to choose whether or not it is (publicly) viewable,” Dr. Mosteller said. “They will have full control over what level of access other people have.”

Mosteller said the CHC staff understands not all families want their information widely shared and are prepared to observe any privacy restrictions.

To schedule your family interview, visit the portal at portal.potawatomi.org. For more information, call the CHC at 405-878-5830. •

RE-ELECT MARK JOHNSON
A MEMBER OF THE VIEUX AND JOHNSON FAMILY
ENDORSED BY JOHN “ROCKY” BARRETT AND LINDA CAPPS

Paid for by Mark Johnson

“IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, BROWNING HAS KEPT ME CONNECTED TO WHAT WAS HAPPENING NOT ONLY WITHIN CPN BUT OTHER NATIVE COMMUNITIES AS WELL.” – DAWNIELL BLACK (POTAWATOMI FAMILY NAME: PAPPAW)

VOTE BROWNING NEDDEAU FOR CITIZEN POTAWATOMI NATION DISTRICT 7

PAID FOR BY BROWNING NEDDEAU
Veterans report

Beauh
(Hello).

With these trying times many people are wanting to enter employment or change occupations. That usually means facing interviews. Interviews can be rather scary for most people, even if it’s not your first time. The questions they ask you do have a purpose and are designed to evaluate your suitability for the position available. There are three main questions you may be asked and here are some examples and how to answer them:

1. What is your biggest weakness?
   This question is asked to show the interviewer that you are honest and aware of your limitations and are committed to improving.

2. Tell me about yourself.
   This will give you the opportunity to show your personality. Your answers should be professional. Go beyond the information you gave in your application or resume. Highlight things you feel are important, talk about your past and your plans for the future.

3. Why do you want to work here?
   This will tell them what you bring to the job you are applying for and can show your interest in the company.

Think about what the interviewer is really asking you and what they may need to know that would benefit the position you are applying for and the company. Good luck.

At the June CPN Family Reunion Festival, the CPN Veterans Organization will have an all-veterans meeting at a place and time to be announced.

Remember, our monthly Citizen Potawatomi Nation Veterans Organization meetings are on the 4th Tuesday of each month. In July, it will be on the 26th in the North Reunion Hall on CPN Powwow Grounds in Shawnee, Oklahoma, at 6 p.m. (or as soon as you can get there). All CPN Veterans and spouses and their families are welcome. You don’t have to be a member to attend. Come check us out and visit.

Migwetch
(Thank you),

Daryl Talbot, Commander
daryl.talbot75@outlook.com
405-275-1054

You don’t have to be a member to attend. Come check us out and visit.

Veterans organization ready to welcome new members

Once part of a brotherhood on the battlefield, members of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Veterans Organization remain a source of support and pride for each other and the community.

The group is excited about the 2022 Citizen Potawatomi Annual Family Reunion Festival’s return to an in-person event as well as the chance to reconnect with current members and welcome new ones into the fold, said Commander Daryl Talbot.

Their most visible role is during Saturday’s powwow Grand Entry, where they lead the procession with the Nation’s eagle staff, CPN flag and the U.S. flag.

“We invite all veterans, whether they’re members or of our group or not, to join in the Grand Entry,” Talbot said. “We veterans have a brotherhood. If you’re a veteran, you know you’re one of our kin, and we all share similar experiences.”

That sense of brotherhood brings group members together on the fourth Tuesday of each month to share food and fellowship. Group members are also there to provide understanding when its needed.

“Especially those of us who’ve been through similar experiences,” the Marine veteran said. “And we don’t (force people to) share their experiences, although we like to hear them. It’s a part of the healing.”

Talbot said that shared understanding remains the best benefit he has received since becoming active with the organization.

The coronavirus pandemic curtailed some of the group’s monthly meetings, and Talbot said they are eager to make up for lost time, starting at the Family Reunion Festival. Talbot hopes younger vets will take the initiative to join. Veterans of all branches of service are welcome. Talbot himself has served in four branches of the U.S. military: the Marines, Navy, Air Force and Army.

“Just start by attending our meetings, and from there, find out if it’s something that they would like to be a part of,” Talbot said. “It was originally formed as a social organization.”

During Festival, all veterans are encouraged to stop by the organization’s booth to receive their red ribbon designating them as a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Talbot is looking forward to meeting new people and participating in the Festival archery competition, something he’s missed for the last two years.

The group does not perform any fundraising or collect membership dues. They are often asked to present the U.S. flag at community events or gatherings, or to honor a CPN veteran who has walked on. The active part that we do is our color guard and our honor guard. We represent the Tribe at various functions across the state,” Talbot said.

Anyone interested in attending may contact Talbot at daryl.talbot@outlook.com or 405-275-1054.
CPN Eagle Aviary celebrates 10-year anniversary

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation Eagle Aviary received its U.S. Fish and Wildlife permit and opened its doors one decade ago this June. Aviary managers Jennifer Randell and Bev Dunham are excited and honored to celebrate the milestone in the company of family and friends at this year’s Family Reunion Festival, just as they did in 2012.

The Festival remains the highlight of the year for Randell and Dunham, and connecting Tribal members with the living eagle is a central part of their mission. The sisters sat down with the Hownikan to reflect on the last decade of caring for these sacred animals and what the next 10 years may bring.

Following the eagles

Randell and Dunham came by their current role quite personally. Their mother walked on suddenly and unexpectedly in 2008, and the loss devastated them. In their grief, they set out on a series of eagle watches across the U.S., inspired by the eagle feather the Tribe presented to their family in honor of their mother.

“It was a very healing time to be outside,” Randell said. “And we had some experiences with eagles and things I don’t think I can explain.”

During the course of their travels following the eagles, Randell and Dunham attended a presentation about Native American eagle aviaries at Kaw Lake Eagle Watch by Iowa tribal veteran Gary Siftar. He told the group that eagles were losing their lives due to a lack of placements for injured and non-releasable birds.

Randell and Dunham knew immediately they needed to get CPN involved in helping to protect these birds’ lives. Their grandmother, former CPN Secretary-Treasurer Beverly Hughes, set up a meeting for them with Chairman John “Rocky” Barrett, and he tasked them with finding out the requisites for opening a Tribal aviary.

The next two years were filled with research and training. Construction on the two enclosures and indoor viewing area began in 2010, funded by a U.S. Fish and Wildlife grant with matching investment from the Tribe.

The CPN Aviary officially opened during Family Reunion Festival in 2012, providing a home to eight eagles. The Aviary and its staff revolve entirely around the schedule and needs of the birds. Though they try to keep consistent routines, different seasons have different requirements, and the nature of work in wildlife care means that Dunham and Randell rarely live the same day twice.

In the summertime especially, the routines around the aviary shift to accommodate the Oklahoma heat, which the birds show less tolerance for than the cold in the wintertime. Randell and Dunham rise at dawn to feed the eagles and clean the enclosures, then wait until the heat breaks in the evening to return to any remaining tasks that might cause the birds’ body temperature to rise.

“We’ve learned how to live in seasons here,” Randell told the Hownikan. “And every season is a little different here with these eagles. It took me a couple of years to get out of that 9-to-5 rhythm. … But it’s all about what (the birds) need.”

Milestones

Beyond day-to-day operations, the eagles also guide Randell and Dunham with their remarkable stories and personalities.

“Honestly, I would have to say the biggest thing for me is an overall sense of getting out of our way and letting these eagles, letting that energy and that connectedness kind of just do its own thing,” Dunham reflected. “There are just so many instances where I can tell you the healing aspect of these birds is just really incredible, and we can’t take credit for that.”

Wadasé Zhabwé

One of the first eagles to come to the CPN Aviary was the widely known and beloved Wadasé Zhabwé (Brave Breakthrough), who, after recovering from a wingtip fracture, was the first to be released from the CPN Eagle Aviary in 2013 — and the first among all Native American aviaries to be released outfitted with telemetry technology.

The CPN Aviary was not initially permitted to rehabilitate and release birds, but as the team got to know Wadasé, it became clear that this was the right path for her.

“She basically rehabbed herself,” said Randell. “She was doing figure eights in the enclosure one morning and she never quit. … So, after some conversation with (the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), … we did receive special permission to release her back to the wild.”

The type of telemetry backpack on Wadasé Zhabwé usually stays on about six months before the fabric breaks down, as it is designed to do. Wadasé, however, continued to forge her own path, transmitting seven and a half years’ worth of data. She’s been all over Oklahoma and visits the CPN Aviary almost every September now that she is firmly established in the wild. Wadasé did not return to CPN last fall, and Randell and Dunham believe that she most likely nested in an area she frequents just northwest of Chickasha, Oklahoma — near where the sisters themselves used to live.

Foster family

Another remarkable phenomenon that continues to capture the attention of aviary staff and community members alike is the nesting pair currently residing at CPN, Kyla and Charlie.

They make quite the couple, with Kyla being the largest eagle on the property at 14 pounds, and little 5-pound Charlie also known around the Aviary as “nervous man” because of his anxiety — that is, until Kyla arrived just a few months after him in September 2012. He followed her around from day one, and the pair made their first nest that winter, a rarity among birds in captivity.

Due to each bird’s injuries, the aviary staff did not expect any fertilized eggs. But Kyla became depressed and agitated when, for the fourth year, her eggs did not hatch.

Randell and Dunham knew that Kyla needed to be a mother if she was going to live a healthy and thriving life. They partnered with the Comanche Nation aviary, which had a tawny eagle chick whose parents had rejected it, and brought the tawny chick to Kyla and Charlie as a foster. The pair took to their new roles as parents perfectly, and for the first time in known history, bald eagles raised a tawny eagle chick, which are native to the African continent. The chick grew strong and was sent to Natural Encounters in Florida with hopes his future offspring will return to the wild in Africa.

Mko Kno

In 2017, Randell and Dunham prepared to bring in another chick for Kyla and Charlie to foster. However, on the very day they planned to pack it up, one of Kyla’s eggs hatched. Tiny and deemed unlikely to survive the night, Mko Kno (Bear Eagle) not only survived but surpassed his dad in size at just 9 weeks old. After again receiving special permission from Fish and Wildlife, Randell and Dunham prepared the chick for release. He, too, was fitted with a telemetry device but shed it after just five and a half months. He is believed to be doing well, with data showing travels to Nebraska, Missouri and Kansas.

Connection

Beyond providing the best care for eagles and other wildlife that may

Continued on next page
Aviary continued...

need it, the Aviary staff are committed to and motivated by connecting with their community, both in the surrounding areas in Oklahoma and with Tribal members across the world. Randell said the outpouring of support from the community has been far beyond anything she could have imagined when the Aviary first opened.

“I am so happy with our Tribe’s progression, and we have incredible enterprises,” she said. “But to be able to kind of sit down with people and let them sit in front of an eagle and share our cultural ways, it really has been eye-opening for people. You see almost their whole body language change.”

One way that the Aviary helps connect Tribal members with the eagle is through feather requests. The CPN Eagle Aviary provides Tribal members with feathers for religious and ceremonial purposes from those naturally molted by the eagles in their care. The waiting list for feather requests is only about a year at CPN, compared to a 4 to 6 year period for requests to the National Eagle Repository. Additionally, the Aviary is in a unique position to connect Tribal members with eagles who are still living.

Randell and Dunham take the process of filling feather requests seriously and personally, allowing the feathers to speak to them and matching them carefully with Tribal members.

“When we are able to hand over these naturally molted feathers to Tribal members, it’s super important because that feather changed our entire lives,” said Randell. “It truly is a blessing to be able to give back, and to be able to give that to our Tribal members.”

Looking ahead

Since its opening 10 years ago, the Aviary has undergone many changes and improvements. Dunham and Randell no longer live in a Federal Emergency Management Agency trailer next to the enclosure, but in a house up on the hill; bridge repairs provide improved access to what is now named Aviary Lane; and the staff just hired their third employee, the first besides Randell and Dunham.

Sixteen birds currently call the CPN Aviary home, including 12 bald eagles, two golden eagles, one Harri's hawk and an augur buzzard. With the help of the CPN Department of Environmental Protections, flood waters have been diverted, and a conservation area full of diverse wildlife is burgeoning on the property.

As they look forward, Randell and Dunham point to a new, permanent entrance currently under construction and dream of a pond with fish for the birds in the distant future. They would also like to develop the Aviary into a site for rehabilitation and release over the next 10 to 15 years. For the Potawatomi, releasing eagles when possible is incredibly important.

“We have the story that Eagle helped save mankind,” Randell told the Hownikan. “And so, we would always want to release our eagles because they’re our messengers. The Zuni tribe would never release an eagle because of how they do ceremonies. So it’s nothing right or wrong; it’s just that we’re all a little different in our cultural ways.”

Each release so far, while incredible, has been under special dispensation from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Believing that CPN is uniquely situated to provide such care, Dunham hopes to invest in the expansions, training and permits necessary to regularly rehabilitate and release birds.

Whether caring for birds that will not be released or advocating for those who can and should be released, Randell and Dunham feel honored to hold such a special role.

“You know, he (Eagle) intervened for us, and I think it’s important that we intervene on their behalf when they’re injured,” Dunham said. “They’re like our veterans coming home, and it’s time for us to take care of them. And so, for us to have the opportunity to do that is really so much more than what I thought we would be doing when we were sitting in that eagle watch. It’s so much more.”

Festival 2022

As the story of the CPN Eagle Aviary comes full circle this June, Randell and Dunham look forward to marking the exciting occasion with family and friends during this year’s Family Reunion Festival.

“What better way to celebrate than to have all of our Tribal members here? We really love that,” Randell said.

Tours of the Aviary will be available during this year’s Festival. Tribal members should sign up at the Cultural Heritage Center full circle this June, Randell and Dunham look forward to marking the exciting occasion with family and friends during this year’s Family Reunion Festival.

In the afternoons, the Aviary staff hopes to bring, Nikan, the friendly and comic augur buzzard, to the Cultural Heritage Center for Tribal members who want to meet him and ask questions about the Aviary.

Tribal members near Shawnee, Oklahoma, may find it easier to come to the Aviary at other times of year due to the volume of visitors during Festival weekend. Reserve tours for Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at potawatomiheritage.com/aviary.

Vote for and support Mark Johnson

The Hownikan is published by the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and is mailed free to enrolled Tribal members. Subscriptions for nonmembers are $10 a year in the United States and $12 in foreign countries. The Hownikan is a member of the Native American Journalists Association. Reprint permission is granted with publication credit to the Hownikan. Editorials/letters are subject to editing and must contain a traceable address. All correspondence should be directed to Hownikan, 1601 S. Gordon Cooper Drive, Shawnee, OK 74801

Address changes should be sent to Tribal Rolls, 1601 S. Gordon Cooper Drive, Shawnee, OK 74801

Questions: hownikan@potawatomi.org or 800-880-9880

Paid for by Cora and Andrew Walters

Hownikan

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Over the years, Mark Johnson has been a trusted leader, and shaper of our culture and Tribe. His Legislative leadership and abilities have helped us through hard times. Now with the way clear for great things to happen, Mark stands ready to serve the people of District 7.
It has been my honor to serve as the District 7 Legislator since 2010. I am proud of my voting record and the work I’ve done on behalf of our members. I am asking for your continued trust and your vote in the upcoming election. Standing together, we are strong. Our Nation now has more than 37,000 members and through hard work, we have maintained a strong financial position and protected and expanded benefits that so many of our members depend on. I hope to continue this work on behalf of the members I represent in District 7.
HONOR OUR ANCESTORS

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HOWNIKAN

Honoring the arena: proper regalia for Grand Entry, powwow

Tribal member Coby Lehman serves as Arena Director for CPN Family Reunion Festival Grand Entry and powwow with assistance from Daniel LeClaire.

Lehman began serving in this capacity after many years of high-level competition both at CPN, frequently winning the men’s contest, and at powwows across Turtle Island. His job involves constant communication with the drummers, dancers and emcees alike to orchestrate the flow of the evening; he also oversees Grand Entry.

CPN’s powwow is different from most other powwows, Lehman explained, as participants are all Citizen Potawatomi. In the late 1990s, Tribal leadership decided to exchange the prominent Intertribal Powwow for a Festival focused specifically on preserving and teaching Potawatomi heritage to Potawatomi people.

Lehman believes dancing is a critical way culture, tradition and Tribal sovereignty are exercised and passed down for generations to come. He grew up dancing and is encouraged to see young people at Family Reunion Festival learning the ways of their Tribe and keeping traditions alive and thriving.

He takes seriously his role in helping to pass on knowledge of Potawatomi ways.

Legacy colors, patterns and motifs also hold great significance.

“In the old days, you could tell what tribe someone belongs to by the pattern of their regalia,” Lehman explained. As tribal styles have influenced each other, it’s harder to identify someone’s tribal affiliation based on design alone in the present day. Nevertheless, the woodland floral design remains a hallmark of Potawatomi regalia.

Colors also used to be more distinctly associated with particular tribes, but today, colors are one way that Tribal members reflect their individual personality in their regalia.

As Tribal members look forward to this year’s Festival and powwow, Lehman reminds them that the dancing, the songs and the structure of the event reflect hundreds of years of traditions and hundreds of years of survival. The requirement for proper attire within the arena is out of respect for this important heritage — and essential to carrying that heritage forward into the future.

The Nation’s Cultural Heritage Center will host classes on Friday and Saturday of Family Reunion Festival for making ribbon shirts, applique skirts, shawls, mocassins and more. Participants should register for the classes ahead of time at the CHC. Classes fill up quickly and some require a charge to cover the cost of supplies.

Festival attendees may also purchase regalia from the Cultural Heritage Center gift shop, either in person during the Festival or online ahead of time. Tribal members also set up booths on Festival grounds to sell regalia and other items.

Staff recommend those attending Family Reunion Festival make arrangements early to ensure that they have all the proper attire for Saturday’s Grand Entry and powwow.

Heritage Center ready for crafting classroom to return

Artisans of all skill levels are welcome to attend the crafts classes at the Cultural Heritage Center during the 2022 Annual Family Reunion Festival. This year, in-person instruction returns to the CHC and will be offered for: bandolier making; beaded Tribal pins and bolo ties; hand drum making; shawl applique and fringe; beaded lanyards; moccasin making; chokers; and beaded bracelets.

Seats are limited, so attendance is on a first-come, first-served basis. For the classes on making hand drums, moccasins and shawls, individuals who purchase the kits at the CHC are guaranteed a seat.

“Tribal people across Turtle Island, their culture and traditions, and the old ceremony traditions. We’ve got to keep them alive. For us to be considered a sovereign nation ... we must carry on these teachings and traditions,” Proper attire honors the sacred space of the dance arena, ancestors, tradition and fellow Tribal members. As such, it is mandatory for entering the arena.

Women should wear a long skirt that reaches the ankles and a top that covers the shoulders and carry a shawl. Men should wear slacks and a ribbon shirt that covers the shoulders. Purchasing a button-up shirt and sewing the ribbons onto it is acceptable.

Everyone should wear closed-toe shoes at all times. Flip flops, tank tops and shorts are not permitted in the arena. Those not following the dress code will be asked by Lehman and LeClaire to remain in the stands and not enter the arena to dance.

Just as dancing takes a devoted regimen of training built on discipline, so does the entire process of preparing regalia, which requires great attention and care.

“Everything’s handmade. ... Everything we make is very spiritual to us. It has a meaning,” Lehman said. Northern Traditional, the style that Lehman dances in, is a northern plains war dance, and the regalia worn for it has particular significance in that context.

“In the past, the warriors would dress in their best before they would go to battle or before they would go on a hunt, because if they were to die that day, they would want to go to the heavens or to the Creator looking their best,” Lehman told the Hownik. ”And it’s the same way with a lot of other dances.”

Regalia colors, patterns and motifs also hold great significance.

“In the old days, you could tell what tribe someone belongs to by the pattern of their regalia,” Lehman explained. As tribal styles have influenced each other, it’s harder to identify someone’s tribal affiliation based on design alone in the present day. Nevertheless, the woodland floral design remains a hallmark of Potawatomi regalia.

Colors also used to be more distinctly associated with particular tribes, but today, colors are one way that Tribal members reflect their individual personality in their regalia.

As Tribal members look forward to this year’s Festival and powwow, Lehman reminds them that the dancing, the songs and the structure of the event reflect hundreds of years of traditions and hundreds of years of survival. The requirement for proper attire within the arena is out of respect for this important heritage — and essential to carrying that heritage forward into the future.

The Nation’s Cultural Heritage Center will host classes on Friday and Saturday of Family Reunion Festival for making ribbon shirts, applique skirts, shawls, mocassins and more. Participants should register for the classes ahead of time at the CHC. Classes fill up quickly and some require a charge to cover the cost of supplies.

Festival attendees may also purchase regalia from the Cultural Heritage Center gift shop, either in person during the Festival or online ahead of time. Tribal members also set up booths on Festival grounds to sell regalia and other items.

Staff recommend those attending Family Reunion Festival make arrangements early to ensure that they have all the proper attire for Saturday’s Grand Entry and powwow.
Tribe Chairman – John “Rocky” Barrett

We provide more than $6 million in scholarships each year. This is nearly double the number of scholarships we had in 2007. Those scholarships are available to students no matter where they live or go to school.

Banking
Our banking operation continues to grow. With the most recent acquisition we are now the largest Tribally owned bank in United States. Banking accounts are available for all Tribal citizens and the bank will be rolling out more Tribal banking options over the next year.

Jobs
We are the largest employer in Potawatomi County. In fact, we’ve created 70 percent of the new jobs locally for more than a decade. As we expand our services and enterprises, we hope that more Tribal members will choose to work for the Nation.

For those who are going to make it to Shawnee for the Family Reunion Festival, I encourage you to attend as many events and classes as possible. We won’t have our traditional Family Reunion Festival, I encourage you to attend as many events and classes as possible. We won’t have our traditional Family Reunion Festival, I encourage you to attend as many events and classes as possible. We won’t have our traditional Family Reunion Festival, I encourage you to attend as many events and classes as possible. We won’t have our traditional Family Reunion Festival, I encourage you to attend as many events and classes as possible. We won’t have our traditional Family Reunion Festival, I encourage you to attend as many events and classes as possible.

Vice-Chairman – Linda Capps

Chairman John Barrett (He Leads Them Home) and I had the honor of being invited to the Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron FOUR Change of Command on May 5, 2022, at Tinker Air Force Base. The event was Commander Christopher M. Seguine being relieved by Commander Brooke H. Desrochers. Commander Desrochers is our own Citizen Potawatomi Nation Tribal member, daughter of Craig and Kim Anderson of Allen, Texas, and granddaughter of Johnny Vin and Jo Laverne Anderson, of Crescent, Oklahoma. The distinguished Change of Command Ceremony agenda contained an array of actions including: Arrival of Honors; Parade the Colors; National Anthem; Invocation; Introduction of Guest Speaker, Commander Christopher M. Seguine, United States Navy; Change of Command Address, Lieutenant General Stephen L. Davis, United States Air Force; Award Presentations and Remarks, Captain Cedrick L. Jessup, United States Navy; Remarks and Reading of Orders, Commander Christopher M. Seguine, United States Navy; Reading of Orders and Remarks, Commander Brooke H. Desrochers, United States Navy; and the Benediction. In all, over 200 officers took part in the ceremony.

Friends and family members of those participating in the ceremony were excited to attend the event, yet the numbers were somewhat limited due to the protocol for attending events at Tinker Air Force Base. Several of Brooke’s family were there; including her husband, Max Desrochers, and their three young children, David, Avery and Elliot Grace. Brooke and Max have a lovely family. They met at the Naval Academy, and the rest is history. Max, too, remains in the Navy. He is a Commander for Deputy Readiness and Assessments. He also is stationed at Tinker Air Force Base. Both the Chairman and I are very proud of Brooke. We have known Brooke’s parents, grandparents, and many of her relatives for years.

On September 27, 2014, I had the honor of naming Brooke, her children, her sisters, her father, and nieces and nephews. In fact, we had a huge naming ceremony on that Saturday at the CPN Sharp property in which the 58 Citizen Potawatomi were honored. The Chairman named the lion’s share of those present that day, and I named Craig Anderson, his daughters, and grandchildren. We had a wonderful day of visiting, conducting the naming ceremony and sharing a meal together. It is a day that I shall never forget.

Brooke’s Potawatomi name is Mwo Mkwak Kwe, Good Path Woman. It is a name that is fitting for the lovely Brooke. She has been an inspiration to many. She has honored her family, her Tribe and her country in being the accomplished Commander Brooke H. Desrochers, Commanding Officer of Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron FOUR. Commander Desrochers has accumulated over 2,200 flight hours in the E-6B Mercury aircraft. Her awards include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Strike/Flight Air Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Navy/ Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and various other unit and personal awards.

There is one other thing I want to mention about Brooke. You always see her name as Brooke H. Desrochers, but mostly only family members know what the H. stands for in her middle name. Just over 40 years ago when Brooke was born, Craig and Kim Anderson chose the name Honor for Brooke’s middle name. I marvel at how she has lived up to that name! What a blessing she has been to her family and all who know her. A salute is certainly in order for Brooke Honor Anderson Desrochers.

As the Vice-Chairman of the Tribe, I appreciate the opportunity to share special news about our Potawatomi Tribal members. Thank you for allowing me to do so.

My best to each of you,
Linda Capps
Vice-Chairman
405-275-3121 work
405-650-1238 cell
lcapps@potawatomi.org
District 1 – Alan Melot

about this, CPN, for example, has always been predominantly Christian, whether Catholic or Protestant. Previous to the CPN becoming a distinct entity, our Potawatomi ancestors had close relationships with Catholic leaders, and prior to our removal from the Great Lakes woodlands, our Potawatomi ancestors had unique spiritual beliefs of systems which are mostly lost to history. What we are now largely individualized with CPN citizens falling into every imaginable system of belief from Pan-Indian to atheism to devout adherents of the world’s major faiths. Whatever you believe, you are Potawatomi. I choose to be Christian and would like to tell you why.

The Melot family has a rich history of adherence to Christianity. To my knowledge, the first Catholic Mass held in our CPN territory was held at Joe Melot’s cabin, and much of our family has been involved in the Christian community ever since. I was introduced to church as a child, and my dad, Jerry Melot, was my pastor throughout most of my growing-up years. On one side or another, my family has been involved in ministry for as many generations as I know about. None of these are the reason I am a Christian.

Native Americans have long put a lot of stock in visions, and I am no different. What I am sharing now is the most treasured experience of my life and one I have never shared publicly.

I was about 4 years old and lived with my family in the Oklahoma City area. Life was good. My sister Cheryl is a few years older than me and had already started school, so it was my mom and I alone most of the time. Mom would sew while Dad went to work and Cheryl was at school, and I would play around the house doing things that 4-year-old boys did back then. Tonka trucks, record players and dirt were my favorites. One morning, I was playing in my room and felt drawn to our living room, which was down a short connecting hall. I remember putting my toys down and getting up to walk down the hall and having the distinct feeling of time slowing down. As I got to the end of the hall, I could tell that the living room was very bright. It felt warm and comforting, drawing me in, and as I entered the room, I was bathed in brilliant white light that was coming from a man standing at the front of the room. I knew immediately and instinctively who it was. For reasons I cannot explain and do not understand, Jesus Christ was waiting for me in my living room. He looked at me and I at Him. There we were… me and Jesus checking each other out.

I remember Him standing on that brown carpet just a few feet away, and I remember soaking Him in. The room was warm and full, with light filling out all of the space and leaving no room for shadows. The light was brilliant but not blinding, bright but not overwhelming. His clothes were loose cloth and white as new snow. His eyes were kind and full of love.

Then He was gone. I walked back to my room and carried on with my toys with the simple acceptance that only a child can have. I have been a Christian, a follower of Christ, ever since. I am not perfect and have had my share of mistakes and failures. I have learned to ask forgiveness from God and man. I have relentlessly pursued God since that day, though, and am spending my life learning all I can about following The One who came to me on that one good morning when I was just a little boy. I am devoutly Christian and truly struggle to be the best that I can be as I serve others and represent God.

When we meet, I hope that you will express to me why you are of the Christian faith. I am not perfect and have had my share of mistakes and failures. I have learned to ask forgiveness from God and man. I have relentlessly pursued God since that day, though, and am spending my life learning all I can about following The One who came to me on that one good morning when I was just a little boy. I am devoutly Christian and truly struggle to be the best that I can be as I serve others and represent God. When we meet, I hope that you will express to me why you are of the Christian faith. I am not perfect and have had my share of mistakes and failures. I have learned to ask forgiveness from God and man. I have relentlessly pursued God since that day, though, and am spending my life learning all I can about following The One who came to me on that one good morning when I was just a little boy. I am devoutly Christian and truly struggle to be the best that I can be as I serve others and represent God. When we meet, I hope that you will express to me why you are of the Christian faith.

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Florida, was able to join us with his wife — this was their first Potawatomi gathering outside his homeland.

• The wildlife, trails, roving peacocks and playground got the attention of many of our youngest attendees.

Our next meeting

We will meet Saturday, July 9 in Little Rock, Arkansas. All details are in the postcard invitation. You don’t need to receive a mailed postcard to attend, but please do RSVP to me by the deadline so we are able to have food for all. I am looking forward to seeing relatives in person!

Communication

Please keep in touch. My 800 number currently is not operational (CPN is working on that), but email and mail still works! I look forward to hearing from you and to helping you, as needed, and celebrating with you, whenever possible.

Migwetch (thank you) for the honor of representing you.

Eva Marie Carnes
Ojibudah (Blue Bird Woman)
Legislator, District 2
5877 Washington Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22205
888-849-1484 toll-free
evaecarnes@potawatomi.org
evamaryecarnes.com
as well as numerous other Indigenous tribal nations in Mexico are also Native Americans since they are a part of the North American continent. I was very pleased to hear that comment being made.

The third day was short and involved holding a prayer service with each member encouraged to pray in their own tribal language with a personal tribal prayer. Due to the distance to drive and short powwow period planned, I didn't attend the third day.

The decision to move this annual powwow from Carrollton to Cleburne is planned to continue, and in 2023, it will be held at the same location about two years from now. I will send out an email announcement at that time.

**Artwork unveiling**

On April 11, I had the fortune of attending an artwork unveiling at Texas Christian University. Approximately two years ago, TCU administration made the decision to purchase some Native American artwork. This college has a very active student Native American club, and I have attended several meetings held there. Once the decision was made for a purchase, meetings were held with some of TCU's Native American employees and alumni. The Chancellor of the University asked me to chair the committee with three artwork options. Research was initiated by Sarah Tomenah, a Comanche/Kiowa, who at the time was working at TCU in the Theatre Department and had a background in art. Three options were found and provided to the Chancellor, and he selected the work of J. NCole Hatfield, who is a self-taught contemporary painter. Two of her works were purchased, *Based on Mrs. Jack Treen*—Standing Rock 1908 and *Based on Quanah Parker*, which is a photo of the 2018 Native American monument at TCU. It acknowledges the past and the appropriate situations/uses for land acknowledgement, which you can see at cpn.news/SAI.

As part of their acknowledgement, theyrecommended supporting Native American businesses and provided information on other areas where support could be provided.

**Land acknowledgement**

After our April 27 meeting to create a high school Native American history class for the state of Texas, our facilitator, lanette Aguero from the Great Prairie School District, asked us our thoughts on Native American land acknowledgments. Lanette was looking for comments on ways non-Natives can create/practice respectful/authentic land acknowledgments and the appropriate situations/uses for them. She received some very good replies from several in this group. It so happened that one of the members mentioned that the Stem Advisory Institute had issued a very nice virtual presentation of the Caddo Nation and other nations in the region. The TUA site of recognition will be in the roundhouse area, which will be enhanced with native plants and signage. This school has a very active student Native American club, and they hold their own powwows on school property each year. I have attended their powwows over the years. This year, it will be held on June 25, which unfortunately I will miss since we will be in Shawnee.

For my comment about TCU on this area, I only had to recall that several months ago I viewed a photo of the 2018 Native American monument at TCU. It is a large boulder with a bronze plate measuring possibly 24 inches in diameter that contains their land acknowledgement. It acknowledges the past and the Dallas-Fort Worth communities fostered by relocation and also the contributions of current Native students, staff, faculty and alumni. It recognizes the presence of the Caddo Nation and other nations in the region. The TUA site of recognition will be in the roundhouse area, which will be enhanced with native plants and signage. This school has a very active student Native American business and provided information on other areas where support could be provided.

The next person to reply was Professor David Steel, a professor at the University of Texas in Arlington. He forwarded the PDF file on the land acknowledgement TUA created, and a picture of the round house built in 1927 for the school. Their land acknowledgement states that the land they sit upon had been taken from the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes. The UTA statement is a living document. It acknowledges the past and the Dallas-Fort Worth communities fostered by relocation and also the contributions of current Native students, staff, faculty and alumni. It recognizes the presence of the Caddo Nation and other nations in the region. The TUA site of recognition will be in the roundhouse area, which will be enhanced with native plants and signage. This school has a very active student Native American club, and they hold their own powwows on school property each year. I have attended their powwows over the years. This year, it will be held on June 25, which unfortunately I will miss since we will be in Shawnee.
(Hello friends),

Citizen Potawatomi Nation

Do it now; it’s not too late. haven’t already returned it.

Kelly. “I congratulate those Kansas Army National Guard members are the backbone of our Kansas communities.”

Decker has received recognition and commitment. Our service

salute them for their service to the US Army National Guard. Nickolas is the son of Bryce and Tricia

The Best Warrior is a four-day competition including fitness tests, weapon assembly races, marksmanship challenges and exercises to test medical knowledge and navigation skills. This is the second time Decker has received recognition for his military performance. In November 2019 upon completion of boot training, he received the Distinguished Honor Graduate Award out of over 200 soldiers.

the major schools in Kansas receiving CPN scholarships:

Kansas State University: 79
Haskel Indian Nations University: 17
University of Kansas: 61
Pittsburg State University: 13
Ft. Hays State University: 37
Emporia State University: 10
Wichita State University: 28
Washburn Institute of Technology: 4
Washburn University: 20

For more information about the CPN scholarship program, contact the CPN Department of Education by email at college@potawatomi.org or by phone at 785-608-6028 or 1-800-880-9880.

2022 CPN Family Reunion Festival

Plans are well underway to hold the Family Reunion Festival as scheduled. The dates are Friday, June 24 to Sunday, June 26. A COVID-19 test has been made not to recognize honored families this year, but rather to recognize those Tribal members who were lost as victims of COVID.

Upcoming CPN Elders’ Potlucks

The dates for the next two Elders Potlucks held in CPN Community Center in Rossville are:

• July 8: Goulash (RSVP by 5 July)

Come join us and bring your favorite side dish or dessert. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Tracy or Brenda at 785-584-6171.

Visit to the St. Marys (KS) Historical Museum and Potawatomi Pay Station

On April 26 my brother, Lyman, and I joined a group of about 25 men and women from the Wamego United Methodist Church for a tour of the St. Marys Historical Museum and Potawatomi Pay Station. Prior to touring the museum, we received a very nice introductory presentation recapping how the Potawatomi from Indiana ended up in Kansas and eventually the region.

Don’t miss this incredible opportunity to see where our ancestors came from and the rich history of this important location.

For more information so that I can keep

It is an honor to serve you as your district legislator. I appreciate hearing from CPN members in Kansas, whether in the form of a letter, email, phone call or visit in my office. Please let me know how I can be of assistance to you. If you are not receiving emails from me, it is because I do not have your current email address or what I have is incorrect. All you need to do is send me your email address and I will enter you into my District 4 information file. My contact information is listed below.

Migwetch (Thank you),

Jon Bouzau, Representative, District 4
2007 SW Gage Blvd.
Topeka, KS 66604
785-861-7272 office
785-608-1982 cell
jon.bouzau@potawatomi.org

Other times: please call 9-11 a.m. Tuesdays 3-5 p.m. Thursdays

Top of the News

Marys appropriately named for his military performance.

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Upcoming CPN Elders’ Potlucks

The dates for the next two Elders Potlucks held in CPN Community Center in Rossville are:

• June 10: BBQ Burgers and Hot Dogs (RSVP by June 7)

Join us and bring your favorite side dish or dessert. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Tracy or Brenda at 785-584-6171.

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District 8 – Dave Carney

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation has enjoyed a long tradition of celebrating the oldest Tribal member at a gathering with a “Wisest” award of a Pendleton blanket. It makes sense that a person does indeed get wiser as their experience base becomes larger and they have seen more of this life — both the good and bad. I can say that I have seen this become true in many cases; however, I’ve also seen the opposite. People obsessed with silly pursuits as a young or middle-aged person sometimes just carry that through to old age and beyond. In my work as a realtor, I meet a lot of older clients hoping to effect a change in their lifestyle. Those I respect the most are the realtors. Shredding curious cases of Hummed ceramic figures and reducing the number of stairs and maintenance chores definitely seems like the correct path to take. One of my favorite sayings is “I’ve never seen a bear toss a U-Haul.” In other words, you can’t take it with you.

What is an elder? Of course, we all have our own ideas. The Webster Dictionary says that it is both an adjective (she was his older sister) and a noun (one living in an earlier period, one who is senior or an aged person). Of course, blurriness of the specific age making someone an elder is the idea of being 60 in the new 40, 80 being the new 60, etc., etc.

According to a 2020 Hownikan article: “The Citizen Potawatomi Nation serves Native American elders through numerous departments and programs, including Title VI, Workforce & Social Services and the CPN Housing Department.” Some of the programs that serve elders throughout the United States are the mail order pharmacy and the health aid programs.

On the softer side of the elder question, there is a quote from our Language Director Justin Neely: “A lot of times, the elders tend to be the fabric that holds the family together.” That is very true. In my own Potawatomi family history, there are stories about my great-grandmother, Josette Juneau Schawartz, meticulously documenting/re-typing lineage and allurement records and writing letters ensuring that her family would continue to be part of the larger Citizen Potawatomi family.

In Oklahoma, the Nation has an Elder Center near Tribal headquarters that serves as a gathering place, provides a daily meal, and a place to craft, watch TV or use a computer. Other programs accessed by our local elders are the Wellness Center and diabetes program.

In many circumstances, the benchmark for becoming an elder is either 55 or 60 years of age. At all gatherings throughout District 8 over the years, we have recognized our elders and treated them with deference — generally providing the best seat in the house and always making sure they are fed first. If you are fortunate enough to have elders in your life, please continue to check on them as we pull through the end of the pandemic.

As always, it is my pleasure to serve you as your legislator, Dave Carney, Kepagé (Raven) Legislator, District 8 520 Lilly Road, Building 1 Olympia, WA 98506 360-259-4027 dcarney@potawatomi.org

District 9 – Paul Wesselhöft

I didn’t post a May article for the Hownikan, for those that noticed. Actually, I did write one. And no, the dog didn’t eat it. I turned it in dutifully on time. After I turned it in, Cora saw it. Normally she reads my articles and gives me her opinion. Cora knows how I am and can nudge me and prod me in the right direction most of the time. I tease her about being my “emotional support animal.” So Cora read the article, I think several times, and said, “Boy… You sounded really mad.”

I don’t know if mad was a good description. Ticked, upset, backed off, pdl, scornful perhaps. But mad, yeah, that’ll work. She told me that I was being hateful and ugly toward some of the folks who are critical of everything the Tribe does. She thought that was the wrong tack to take. I have learned many lessons in my life, but the most important one is... listen to your wife.

I admit it had been critical of the folks who always, no matter what, denigrate the efforts of Tribal leaders, make waves when the seas should be calm, and post stupid stuff on Facebook. I was upset that folks want all kinds of things from the Tribe, mostly money, but they don’t want to participate. It’s like an entitlement instead of a responsibility. Unless, of course, you consider unfounded innuendo, snarky comments, quotes from old Native American chiefs, and gossip participation. Last election only 7.5 percent of the Tribe voted. Now, the argument I hear to that is, “Not all the members are old enough to vote.” Well, touched. You’re right. So let’s suppose that 50 percent of the Tribe is underage. That’s still only 15 percent that voted. That means 85 percent of the members didn’t care enough to send in their absentee ballot or vote in person. But as the old joke goes… “That’s not what made me mad.”

What upset me was the fact that 96 percent of the members participated for CARES money and got it.

If I see a Potawatomi license plate I try to stop and talk with the folks, give them a card and explain some about the Tribe. I stopped two weeks ago at a Valero station to gas up my luaujuous 1987 Suzuki Samurai (Samurai means “sometimes it won’t start!”) I spied a Potawatomi plate, grabbed a business card, and like a born again 1960s Jesus freak, went forth to spread the good word about the Tribe. I approached the car with some trepidation as I was wearing shorts, a grey t-shirt, and sandals, which it seems in Oklahoma is probable cause to use deadly force, but fortunately knocks and one must answer. I introduced myself to the two young folks in the car, explained who I was, and apologized for not dressing better. After listening to me briefly, the young lady asked, “What’s a legislator?” Surprised, but undaunted, I explained the government structure and where Legislators were on the food chain. Her response… “I didn’t know that.” I asked what family they were part of, and they didn’t know that either. So in parting, I asked, “Did you get the college money?” Both smiled… yes, they had.

I heard it once called “Feeding the Bears.” Once they get fed, they always want more.

So, with that explanation, you can see where Cora was right. I got it out of my system. I kicked back, downed some brews, and I’m good again. But, let me ask. Let me solicit. Let me request. It’s June again. The election is at the end of the month. Please, please, please, vote. Participate as much as you can. You don’t have to live in a wigwam, hunt for buffalo Bill alone killed over four thousand in a year. In train cars, men fired rifles from roofs and windows. From horseback the bison were shot, if not killed, they were wounded to death. Bloody bison were left on the prairie to rot in the hot sun. Their fowl stench filled the air. Their spoiled meat fed flies, vultures. Only a few hundred survived the onslaught. Bison were not sacred to the white man.

Migwetch (Thank you),

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District 11 – Andrew Walters

I didn’t post a May article for the Hownikan, for those that noticed. Actually, I did write one. And no, the dog didn’t eat it. I turned it in dutifully on time. After I turned it in, Cora saw it. Normally she reads my articles and gives me her opinion. Cora knows how I am and can nudge me and prod me in the right direction most of the time. I tease her about being my “emotional support animal.” So Cora read the article, I think several times, and said, “Boy… You sounded really mad.”

I don’t know if mad was a good description. Ticked, upset, backed off, pdl, scornful perhaps. But mad, yeah, that’ll work. She told me that I was being hateful and ugly toward some of the folks who are critical of everything the Tribe does. She thought that was the wrong tack to take. I have learned many lessons in my life, but the most important one is... listen to your wife.

I admit it had been critical of the folks who always, no matter what, denigrate the efforts of Tribal leaders, make waves when the seas should be calm, and post stupid stuff on Facebook. I was upset that folks want all kinds of things from the Tribe, mostly money, but they don’t want to participate. It’s like an entitlement instead of a responsibility. Unless, of course, you consider unfounded innuendo, snarky comments, quotes from old Native American chiefs, and gossip participation. Last election only 7.5 percent of the Tribe voted. Now, the argument I hear to that is, “Not all the members are old enough to vote.” Well, touched. You’re right. So let’s suppose that 50 percent of the Tribe is underage. That’s still only 15 percent that voted. That means 85 percent of the members didn’t care enough to send in their absentee ballot or vote in person. But as the old joke goes… “That’s not what made me mad.”

What upset me was the fact that 96 percent of the members participated for CARES money and got it.

If I see a Potawatomi license plate I try to stop and talk with the folks, give them a card and explain some about the Tribe. I stopped two weeks ago at a Valero station to gas up my luaujuous 1987 Suzuki Samurai (Samurai means “sometimes it won’t start!”) I spied a Potawatomi plate, grabbed a business card, and like a born again 1960s Jesus freak, went forth to spread the good word about the Tribe. I approached the car with some trepidation as I was wearing shorts, a grey t-shirt, and sandals, which it seems in Oklahoma is probable cause to use deadly force, but fortunately knocks and one must answer. I introduced myself to the two young folks in the car, explained who I was, and apologized for not dressing better. After listening to me briefly, the young lady asked, “What’s a legislator?” Surprised, but undaunted, I explained the government structure and where Legislators were on the food chain. Her response… “I didn’t know that.” I asked what family they were part of, and they didn’t know that either. So in parting, I asked, “Did you get the college money?” Both smiled… yes, they had.

I heard it once called “Feeding the Bears.” Once they get fed, they always want more.

So, with that explanation, you can see where Cora was right. I got it out of my system. I kicked back, downed some brews, and I’m good again. But, let me ask. Let me solicit. Let me request. It’s June again. The election is at the end of the month. Please, please, please, vote. Participate as much as you can. You don’t have to live in a wigwam, hunt for buffalo Bill alone killed over four thousand in a year. In train cars, men fired rifles from roofs and windows. From horseback the bison were shot, if not killed, they were wounded to death. Bloody bison were left on the prairie to rot in the hot sun. Their fowl stench filled the air. Their spoiled meat fed flies, vultures. Only a few hundred survived the onslaught. Bison were not sacred to the white man.

Migwetch (Thank you),

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