COVID pandemic more than a health concern

As Citizen Potawatomi Nation continues to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, the crises poses a threat to more than just the health of Tribal members and CPN employees. Tribes, and the states, have been fighting for tribal development, must endure the threat to economic activity as well.

Grand Casino Hotel & Resort, FireLake Casino, and FireLake Arena all closed in March and remained closed through April. Across the United States, 2,466 tribal nations have closed more than 500 gaming facilities in 29 states.

Meister Economic Consulting estimated that closing tribal casinos for two weeks resulted in more than $4 billion in lost economic activity, including more than 728,000 people out of work, $369 million in lost wages, and $631 million in lost taxes and revenue usually received by federal, state and local governments.

“As you are aware, unlike state or local governments, the CPN tribal government is not permitted to create a tax base as a primary source of revenue,” Tribal Chairman John “Rocky” Barrett wrote in a letter to the U.S. Department of the Interior and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. “Instead, the CPN relies on tribally owned businesses to generate the revenue necessary to provide services and programs in our community, to Indians and non-Indians alike.”

Representatives from the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development wrote to Mnuchin to comment on the impact of COVID-19 to tribal communities.

In the letter, economists noted that states and regions risk the loss of more than $127 billion in annual spending on goods and services, more than 1.1 million jobs, and more than $49.5 billion in wages and benefits for workers. The largest share of jobs lost, at approximately 70 percent, would be those of non-Indians.

CPN and other tribal governments in Oklahoma continue to pay gaming employees while they voluntarily suspend operations. For CPN, gaming makes up the largest revenue stream for services such as education, health, housing, government operations and more.

In the series of legislative actions at the height of the global shutdown, Congress drafted the CARES Act as a way to inject capital and funding to broad swaths of the American economy. Tribal nations, given their unique legal status, worked closely with their Congressional delegations to ensure they and their employees would have access to the funds.

“A key part of the relief package was the tribal government stabilization fund,” said Representative Tom Cole, Oklahoma. “This fund would be used by tribal governments to offset the dramatic losses they are facing at this time. This funding would be used to help them continue to do the right thing and keep their employees on the job — paid, and supported — as our nation responds to, and recovers from the pandemic.”

Congress asked the U.S. Department of the Treasury to provide funds to tribes by April 26, 2020; however, by mid-April, the Treasury had not determined the method for distributing funds or how much each tribe would receive. As of the last week of April, the Treasury had not distributed any funds.

In a letter to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, Oklahoma’s Congressional delegation reiterated the intent of the CARES Act, and stated that “The federal government has a unique trust and treaty obligation to tribes, and we urge the administration to release the funds allocated to tribes and tribal governments as soon as possible to equip them with the tools and resources to combat the effects COVID-19 has unleashed onto all our communities.”

Tribes met an additional hurdle attempting to access funds from the Paycheck Protection Program. Despite repeated guidance from Congress, the U.S. Small Business Administration and U.S. Department of the Treasury continue to disregard the terms of the CARES Act and imposed an internal agency interpretation, banning funding for entities involved in gaming. Employees across the country working in the sector have been left out in the cold due to a narrow reading of regulations combined with bureaucratic intransigence. Nevada Congressman Mark Amodei expressed his frustration with the Small Business Administration for withholding funding from gaming facilities, which states that a 25-year-old SBA internal regulation replaces the congressional intent of the CARES Act relating to participation in the Paycheck Protection Program.

“Never again should people in need of rescue during any crisis be refused the relief enacted by Congress by an agency bureaucrat,” Amodei said.

Another hitch tribes are facing through the CARES Act is a provision allowing single locations to submit applications as individual entities despite being part of a larger holding. This resulted in several publicly-traded corporations to access funds. However, no provisions were specifically made for tribal government-owned businesses, allowing lenders not wishing to do business with tribes an opportunity to decline processing their applications. The wider interpretation of SBA rules for non-tribal enterprises provides a simpler avenue of securing funds by private lenders, who appear to be prioritizing those clients instead.

As of April 16, 2020, the Paycheck Protection Program had been depleted with zero allocated to tribal loans. However, on April 21, the Senate approved an additional $310 billion for the program that was later approved by the House of Representatives.

An email from the Native American Financial Officers Association stated, “It is clear SBA has picked winners and losers, they should have opened eligibility for all business concerns as intended. Now is the time to make sure Congress provides clarity and specificity for tribal entities, including gaming.”

Discussions with numerous federally-focused tribal advocacy groups noted that Congress — who understands the nuanced legal positions of American tribal governments — wrote the CARES Act language broadly to lessen the likelihood of the funds being held up.

Congressional support from Oklahoma’s federal delegation has been omnipresent, yet more will likely need to be accomplished in future legislative action. Tribal nations like CPN will advocate for specific, clear legal language providing them adequate federal support to keep their employees well in this time of economic and public health upheaval.
Talking real estate with First National Bank & Trust

For most people, buying a home is likely to be the biggest purchase of their lives. It can be both exciting and daunting for anyone — but for first-time buyers especially, navigating the real estate world can be downright terrifying.

That’s why it’s important to talk to First National Bank & Trust first. FNB’s mortgage loan team is there to alleviate any and all concerns and help make the home buying process as smooth and painless as possible.

Mortgage Loan Officer Jeff Scroggins and Mortgage Loan Processor Rachel Vallandingham came up with potential red flags, things to keep in mind and specific benefits for Citizen Potawatomi Nation tribal members.

Government program for Tribal members

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development offers a special program for tribal citizens called the Section 184 Indian Home Loan Guarantee Program. With Section 184 financing, borrowers can purchase a home and be guaranteed a low down payment and flexible underwriting. There’s no minimum credit score required to qualify; however, the HUD program is fairly strict on applicants’ credit history.

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation also offers a $20,000 second mortgage program for Oklahomans through their Housing Department. It has no monthly payments, and once you’ve lived in the house for 10 years, the Tribe will forgive that mortgage.

To learn more about this offer, call the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Housing Department at (405) 275-2833.

General things to take into consideration

Unlike buying a new home, when you purchase a home from someone else, you can generally have the seller pay for a good portion of closing costs. Every little bit makes a difference. Also, one of the biggest things people don’t realize is how little of a benefit a bigger down payment will have on monthly payments. An extra $5,000 down payment, for example, would only decrease a monthly payment by about $23. Most people would be better off using that $5,000 to pay off a credit card that could be costing them $100 a month in interest.

Knowing what you can afford

When you talk to FNB about buying a new home, we’ll ask for your monthly income and payment information to determine an appropriate loan amount. We’ll also take into consideration the level of house payment you’ll be most comfortable with financially. Fun fact: oftentimes a customer will have a specific payment in mind, but generally they can actually afford more.

The inside scoop on interest rates

Rates are changing constantly due to the current turmoil in the economy. If someone is planning to close on a house in the next 30 days, they typically won’t lock in their rate because they wait to see what the market does. But in today’s climate, you may be better off locking in quickly so you know what you’re going to get. However, even with the market turmoil, rates are better today than they were a year ago.

Why shopping around is important

When it comes to homeowner’s insurance, start with the company where you get your car insurance, but be sure to shop around. One of our loan officers recently shopped around, and he received rate quotes ranging from $1,700 to $3,600.

Every bank makes the same sort of home loan. If you shop around and one bank tells you something completely different, that should be a red flag.

Always review policy changes

Whenever you receive your yearly renewal notice, be sure to look it over for any changes. For example, a lot of companies will no longer help pay to replace your roof if it’s more than 10 years old, and they simply won’t tell you that. Another thing to pay close attention to is the deductible on wind and hail. We’ve seen many instances where the deductible for a roof claim has doubled and the monthly premium has increased, yet the homeowner had no idea. It’s your responsibility to be extra diligent.

When to refinance

If you’re contacted by a mortgage company to refinance your home, you should consider your goal. Are you interested in taking cash out for debt consolidation, or are you simply seeing if you can get a better rate? The average closing cost is about $5,500. You need to recover that expense within a couple of years to make refinancing worthwhile. The general guideline is you should be able to recover that money in one to three years. If you absolutely know you’ll be in your home for a while longer — say seven years or more — then you could stretch the recovery period out a little longer.

Talk to FNB, first

We enjoy walking our customers through the home buying process and making them feel relaxed. Buying a home is a big commitment, and we want to give them peace of mind every step of the way.

Plus, we’re committed to supporting local merchants by putting our earnings back into the community. First National Bank & Trust is the only locally-owned financial institution in Shawnee. There’s something to be said for doing business with your neighbors.

For information regarding loan products and lending requirements at First National Bank & Trust, please contact Mortgage Loan Officer Jeff Scroggins or Mortgage Loan Processor Rachel Vallandingham at 405-275-8330.
Citizen Potawatomi anesthesiologist combating COVID-19 in New Mexico

Tribal member Andy Pecore and Whitehead descendant works as an anesthesiologist at the Gallup Indian Medical Center in Gallup, New Mexico. Due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, Pecore and other hospital staff have developed and implemented strategic plans to mitigate the virus's impact on Native American patients.

The hospital serves mostly citizens of the Navajo Nation as well as members of other federally recognized tribes. Gallup Indian Medical Center sits a few blocks south of I-40, and the city is one of the last major stops in New Mexico before reaching Arizona. Cross-country travelers often stop in Gallup, which increases the region's exposure risk.

Native Americans are more likely to struggle with heart disease, diabetes and other respiratory diseases than their non-Native counterparts.

“And then you have all the co-morbidities of diabetics, very poorly controlled diabetics, bad obesity, and just a lack of great health standing in general,” Pecore said during a phone interview with the Hownikan. “That’s what puts this service area at such a large risk because we just have such an underprivileged population here.”

The virus could prove even more problematic on the Navajo Reservation due to its rural nature and shortage of infrastructure. The University of Arizona Office for Research, Innovation & Impact estimated that up to 35 percent of the Navajo — Diné as they are known in their language — who live on the reservation lack access to running water.

“Washing hands and hygiene is critical at preventing the spread of viral infections, and if you have a large percentage of your population who cannot cleanse themselves effectively, bacterial and viral infections can just be rampant throughout the population,” Pecore said.

The Navajo Nation and the Navajo Department of Health declared a state of emergency on March 11, 2020. By March 20, the Navajo Nation implemented a shelter-at-home order, and on March 29, extended it and implemented a curfew.

Part V of the Regulatory Authority by Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-003 stated, “In a short and rapid period of time, COVID-19 has arrived on the Navajo Nation and the number of cases continues to increase at an alarming rate. Contact with contagious individuals and the subsequent high degree of exposure is evident by cluster and community spread throughout the Navajo Nation constituting a major public health disaster.”

Background

Pecore almost finished a bachelor’s degree in international business and German when he realized he preferred a different path.

“I was going into my senior year, and I just kind of came to the realization that business was not of interest to me. I didn’t really find it rewarding, but I also didn’t find it meaningful for me. I wanted to do something that I could have more of an impact — something that I felt like would push me to work harder,” he said.

As someone involved with sports most of his life, Pecore decided to change his major to health and exercise science at the University of Oklahoma.

“I think that’s what everybody on board is that what’s the alternative? You don’t take any steps, and then you basically contributed to the spread. I would rather be overly cautious than not cautious enough,” Pecore said.

“I got a lot of critical care experience, and I was actually very interested in anesthesia while I was working there because we did so much work with ventilators, mechanical ventilators,” Pecore said.

Because of his experience in Kansas City, he applied for an anesthesia program in Minneapolis as well as the IHS Health Professions scholarship. After completing the program, he began looking for opportunities to use his knowledge and expertise across Indian Country, eventually settling on the Gallup Indian Medical Center.

“Changes

His first day at the Gallup Indian Medical Center was Oct. 27, 2019, and although he got into the swing of work fairly quickly, the COVID-19 pandemic created drastic changes in his day-to-day routine.

“Once you kind of feel like, ‘Yeah, I am just now comfortable with all of this,’ and then bam — that And then pretty much everything that I’ve dealt a routine around is now completely different overnight. So, that has been interesting,” Pecore said.

To help lesson COVID-19’s impact, the hospital employed measures like closing entrances and implemented new admissions protocol to decrease exposure.

“If they do feel sick and they’re having trouble breathing, they get processed through a different entrance, and they’re kept in negative pressure rooms so the airborne, viral contaminants cannot be expired out of their lungs and be able to float up and down the hallway into other rooms,” Pecore said.

COVID-19 patients with difficulty breathing are often put on medical ventilation to help them breathe. To decrease risk of spreading the virus through the air, only specific staff, such as Pecore who have received training, can connect patients to ventilation systems.

“We’re on call 24/7 for if they need that, and then we have to take precautions to protect ourselves when we go in to intubate these patients,” Pecore said. “We wear the N95 masks that are being used to help prevent airborne spread. We have to wear protection, gowns, gloves, just to try to limit exposure because if health care staff catch it, then we’re going room to room to help patients, and well, then you expose the hospital.”

Pecore is thankful for the trauma ward experience he received while working in Kansas City, which prepared him for stressful work environments.

“I feel like a trauma situation is definitely easy to panic in, so kind of learning how to cope with that still be able to make the correct, important decisions. So, that’s actually definitely helped me if this were to progress to be a massive problem,” he said.

Pecore hopes the Gallup Indian Medical Center implemented enough precautions to lessen the negative impact COVID-19 has within the Native American population it serves, including changing the hospital’s layout and preparations to expand outside the building with a negative pressurized tent.

“There’s a lot of structural changes that are in the works because we just don’t want to get to the point where we’re being reactionary instead of proactive,” he said.

“I think that’s what gets everybody on board is that what’s the alternative? You don’t take any steps, and then you basically contributed to the spread. I would rather be overly cautious than not cautious enough.”

Read more about the Navajo Nation’s response at ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19. For further information on COVID-19, visit the Centers Disease Control and Prevention website, cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov.
**Rise in domestic violence during pandemic**

By Kayla Woody, House of Hope Prevention Specialist

Though the nation is currently plagued by the COVID-19 pandemic, for many citizens the virus is the least of their worries. In the United States, as many as 1 in 4 women and 1 in 5 men are victims of domestic violence, and since it is underreported, the statistics likely do not reflect the true scale of the problem. One tactic used by abusers is to isolate the victim from friends and family to gain full power and control. With most states and cities issuing stay-at-home requirements to reduce the spread of the virus, unfortunately, these abusers are getting the control they want.

“We are asking these people to isolate themselves with their perpetrators, which cuts them off from any support system they have,” said Rachel Natoli, founder of an Australian-based charity that provides support for domestic violence survivors.

An alarming increase in domestic violence has been reported worldwide. The National Domestic Violence Hotline, which normally receives up to 2,000 calls per day, counted only 951 callers between March 10 and 24. This does not mean that help is not needed; it simply means these victims do not have an opportunity to contact anyone for help.

“We are hearing from survivors how COVID-19 is already being used by their abusive partners to further control and abuse, how COVID-19 is already impacting their ability to access support and services like accessing shelter, counseling, different things that they would typically look for, if you can think of it,” said Crystal Justice, the chief marketing and development officer at NDVH.

Most victims will wait until they are alone to reach out for help. They will either wait for their abuser to leave for work or they look for openings when they do not have childcare obligations. These opportunities are becoming obsolete since the perpetrator now has constant access to them with quarantine orders in place. Domestic violence shelters all over the nation are deemed “essential” and remain open to assist victims, but due to the virus, many are choosing to eliminate face-to-face interaction with clients.

In many countries like France, centers have been set up in grocery stores with secret passwords where victims can seek help in one of the few places they are still allowed to visit. To be able to protect American citizens from intimate partner violence, many organizations, along with the House of Hope, advise victims to have a “safety plan” or steps that can reduce the risk of harm in unsafe situations with an abuser. For the same reason schools rehearse fire drills for students, we advise our clients to plan a safe escape when violence arises in the home.

Some tips include:

• Locating the safest room in the home that has at least two exits and is free of any type of weapons.
• Plan code words and emergency numbers with children in the home.
• Prepare an emergency bag with medications, important documents and an extra pair of clothing.
• Create a buddy system with a neighbor or close friend. Provide them with a code word in case a situation arises that they can contact police for.
• Save the National Domestic Violence Hotline number (1-800-799-SAFE) in your phone under someone’s name that is recognizable.
• Change all account information: social media, cellphone, utilities and email.

As a community, it is important to pay attention to signs of abuse. If you have a suspicion that your neighbor is in a domestic violence situation, you must reach out when problems arise. Turning the other cheek and believing that “it is none of my business” will only allow the abuse to continue. Break the silence, and change the cycle.

If you or someone you know is experiencing intimate partner violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault and would like more information, please contact House of Hope at 405-878-4675, or visit us online at facebook.com/cphouseofhope.

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**CNP Health Services Responds to COVID-19 pandemic**

Though Oklahoma’s first COVID-19 case wasn’t identified until March 6, Citizen Potawatomi Nation Health Services (CPNHS) was already prepared.

On Feb. 28, CPN Chief Medical Officer George A. Vascellaro, D.O., formed a coronavirus task force led by Dr. Kassi Roselius, M.D., M.P.H. Dr. Roselius is a board-certified family physician, CPNHS medical professional director, public health coordinator and CPN tribal member. The team immediately established emergency management meetings with the CPN human resources and emergency management directors, along with Tribal Chairman John “Rocky” Barrett and Vice-Chairman Linda Capps.

“Even before a case was identified in Oklahoma, our team recognized the gravity of the situation and took swift action to help reduce the spread of COVID-19,” Vascellaro said. “Once the virus hit our state, CPNHS medical leadership began counseling other CPN enterprises, departments and community leaders on implementing CDC mitigation strategies to protect our community.”

The department has adopted a variety of preparedness measures, including:

• Limiting visitors and screening at all doors with temperature/symptom checks
• Placing COVID-19 triage tents outside the East and West clinics to separate potential cases from critical, acute and chronic care needs
• Collecting COVID-19 tests to send to reference labs
• Delivering medications curbside through the CPNHS pharmacy
• Implementing augmented patient care workflow for the safety of patients, healthcare employees and their families
• Developing infrastructure for telephone and telemedicine

Citizen Potawatomi Nation partnered with the Pottawatomie County Health Department to host a drive-thru testing site at the Citizen Potawatomi Community Development Corporation. Additionally, Tribal health services tested 100 patients on April 10, regardless of symptoms, to gauge what extent the virus is spreading asymptptomatically. CPNHS held more testing throughout the month of April.

Chairman Barrett said the Tribal health services have been ahead of the COVID-19 preparedness curve and will remain so in the months ahead.

“CPNHS leadership has done everything in its power to care for patients’ essential medical needs while guarding the safety of patients, employees, families and the community,” Barrett said. “We will continue to be vigilant and do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19. I am proud of the department’s efforts, and I applaud them for their great work.”

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**Healthy eating tips to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic**

By Magdelon Gilbert, MA, RD/LD

CNP Diabetes Program Dietitian

When we are forced out of our “normal” routine, it can be easy to throw our hands up in a panic. We have been encouraged to stay home, limit trips to the grocery store and implement social distancing. This can create feelings of fear, worry and anxiety. We’ve got to get out of our “routine,” and in turn, there are things in our life that might begin to suffer. These areas can include nutrition, activity, sleep and stress. The best way to encourage a sense of normalcy is to keep a schedule as best we can. Let’s talk specifically in terms of nutrition.

Try to get up and go to bed about the same time. Eat structured meals and snacks versus mindlessly eating throughout the day. Balanced meals are going to be the most satisfying and will hold you over until the next meal. What are balanced meals? Balanced meals include a protein, starch/grain, non-starchy vegetable and can include a healthy fat. Since certain things may be limited, think longer shelf life items such as canned, dried and frozen foods.

While we are encouraged to implement social distancing, I am currently seeing patients via virtual appointments. These tips are things we are utilizing to try to create normalcy and continue working toward a healthier lifestyle. You can find healthy recipes posted on the CPN social media outlets to help you be successful through the COVID-19 pandemic.
Second annual Community Baby Shower empowers families

More than 600 guests attended the second annual Community Baby Shower hosted by Citizen Potawatomi Nation’s Workforce & Social Services Department and the CPN Child Development Center on Wednesday, March 4, 2020. The event, held at the FireLake Arena, honored Native and non-Native pregnant mothers and families with infants and toddlers.

“That’s what we’re trying to do is get the information out to people, and not just Natives need childcare stuff,” said CPN Community Services Counselor and event organizer Bobbi Middleton.

Attendees enjoyed refreshments while learning about community resources, participated in educational sessions, and based upon the activities they completed, received tickets to win door prizes like cribs, toddler beds, high chairs and more.

“Some of these resources I didn’t know were in Shawnee, so it’s nice to have this information,” said new mom Alyssa Landes.

Landes attended the Community Baby Shower with her mother and 1-month-old son, and she appreciated the chance to become better acquainted with nearby organizations and services from more than 40 vendors.

Community Renewal, a local nonprofit that seeks to connect and restore communities through intentional relationships, attended the past two years.

“It’s an honor to be out here, and it’s an honor to have a conversation with parents about how important social capital is to their child’s development,” said Zoe Loeser, Community Renewal block leader coordinator.

Small classrooms at each corner of the arena housed 15-minute educational sessions covering CPR, safe sleep, post-partum depression, fire safety, helpful parenting, healthy cooking, offerings from the CPN Child Development Center and poison control.

“I think the best one for me was the post-partum class because a lot of mothers deal with post-partum depression and anxiety, and they think that they’re crazy or something is wrong with them. And it’s actually really normal,” said event attendee Shannon Bennett. “They talked about how normal it is and the statistics and also what can cause that, and it makes you feel not so bad … if you have it, and so I thought that was the best class.”

An event of this size required the Workforce & Social Services Department and others across the Nation to begin planning months in advance. Middleton attended coalition meetings across the Citizen Potawatomi service area to stay updated on emerging trends and needs across all communities.

“We started early because a lot of donations are from outside sources. We have to be able to request the donation in time for their grant periods and everything. A lot of it happened really early,” Middleton said.

The CPN Child Development Center donated the large prizes as well as food for the event.

“Low socio-economic status is a huge problem here to begin with, and now it’s likely causing our mortality rate for this virus to be higher than other places,” she said.

On top of flooding, New Orleans has a high percentage of citizens with conditions like diabetes and heart disease that put them in a high-risk category for COVID-19.

“Low socio-economic status is a huge problem here to begin with, and now it’s likely causing our mortality rate for this virus to be higher than other places,” she said.

While her work fighting the virus is important, she is thankful for those who are staying home and abiding by the guidelines set forth.

“Quite honestly, those people are the heroes where the rest of us are just doing our jobs,” Scott said. “I am lucky enough I still get to go to work every day, and I’m not going crazy. Everybody has a role to play in making this better, and all of it is very important.”

Find out more information about Tulane University’s efforts to combat COVID-19 at tulane.edu/covid-19.
Elections remain on schedule despite pandemic challenges

Amidst the coronavirus outbreak, Citizen Potawatomi Nation’s 2020 Tribal elections will continue as scheduled through absentee ballot. Due to the likelihood of continuing public health concerns from the COVID-19 outbreak, Festival 2020 and in-person voting are both cancelled.

Fortunately, CPN mailed members across the world absentee ballot request forms to their last known address at the end of March. At that time, the Election Committee estimated approximately 1,000 ballot requests had already been returned. If members did not receive a ballot request card, CPN Tribal Rolls may not have an updated address in its database. Due to privacy laws, addresses and contact information from other entities like CPN Health Services or pharmacy cannot be shared automatically with Tribal Rolls. The election committee uses the most up-to-date information in the database to send the cards.

If you did not receive an absentee ballot request card, you can still request one. A copy of the ballot request is included on this page, or you may download it at potawatomi.org/2020-ballot/. You may also request a ballot by mailing a letter. Absentee ballot requests must be postmarked no later than June 6, 2020. Enrolled members of voting age should send a signed letter to:

CPN Election Committee
PO Box 310
Tecumseh, OK 74873

The letter must state the following information:

- Full legal name
- CPN Tribal Roll number
- Address
- Legislative district they are casting a ballot for
- A signature at the bottom of the letter

Once the Election Committee gets the letter and confirms its validity, they will mail out an absentee ballot.

It must be returned and be in the hands of the election committee no later than June 27, 2020 at 10 a.m. Election results will be posted as soon as they can be verified on potawatomi.org and CPN social media accounts.

Because of the health concerns associated with processing physical ballots and request forms, the election committee is researching ways to process them.

On the ballot

Three votes take place this year, including the Nationwide vote on the annual Tribal budget. The budget, if approved, manages the Nation’s trust earnings. No principal from the fund is spent, but the budget pays for national service projects and the executive branch of the Tribe.

Secondly, Oklahoma members will vote to select at-large legislators for districts 9 and 12. These are Oklahoma-based seats that represent all Tribal members residing in the state. In District 9, incumbent Paul Weisselholtz and challenger Jay Laughlin are running, while in District 12, incumbent Paul Schmidtke is the only candidate.

All CPN voters regardless of location will be able to vote to reconfirm Justice Jennifer Lamirand for a six-year term on the CPN Supreme Court. She was nominated by Tribal Chairman John “Rocky” Barrett and confirmed by Tribal legislature at its February 2020 meeting.

Voting eligibility includes all CPN members who are at least 18 years old on Election Day.

Uniquely adaptable government

The Nation’s 2007 constitutional reform has, in hindsight, prepared the Tribal government for the situation now facing communities around the globe, specifically social distancing. While offices and governments learn the intricacies of online video conferencing, the CPN Legislature has used online teleconference meetings for more than a decade.

In 2002, discussions concerning a constitutional amendment began at the annual general council meeting. Tribal leaders later sent a questionnaire to more than 12,000 Citizen Potawatomi households concerning the need for reform. Following a plan developed by a technical working group, Tribal leaders spent 2003-2006 holding meetings in Oklahoma and around the United States to gain input on how to bring the Citizen Potawatomi government into the 21st century. Following countless hours of drafting and debate, the working group formed the new constitution and put it to a vote of the Citizen Potawatomi people. It passed overwhelmingly with 83 percent of the vote in August 2007.

The reformed constitution created a truly representative government. It allowed proportional representation for Citizen Potawatomi across the U.S. At-large seats for districts 9 through 13 represent Oklahomans, in addition to three seats held in the legislature by the chairman, vice-chairman and secretary-treasurer. Districts 1 through 8 cover jurisdictions outside Oklahoma, ranging from one to more than a dozen states.

“Obviously we knew we would not be efficient at running such a government if we could not meet face to face, but from one another,” said Vice-Chairman Linda Capps. “The video conferencing system allowed our legislature to meet by video and work through our steps in a forward-thinking way.”

Citizens are able to observe proceedings and witness discussions on specific resolutions, and find archived meetings on potawatomi.org. The Tribe’s smarter and ability to host video conference meetings remains unique in Indian Country. At the best of times and worst of times, it allows Citizen Potawatomi living far away from the Nation’s headquarters to have a direct and visible presence in the day-to-day business of governing Tribal affairs.

Early detection increases testicular cancer survival rate

By Lenzy Krehbiel-Burton

A single, awkward 15-second conversation can literally save a life. Just ask Mike Craycraft.

A founder of the Testicular Cancer Society, Craycraft discovered a ridge on his testicles during the aftermath of Hurricane Wilma. After putting it off for months out of fear, Craycraft made himself go to the doctor and get formally checked.

“The diagnosis: stage 1 testicular cancer. I wish I’d known it literally took three seconds to say. ‘Hey, there’s a lump on my left testicle,’ he said. ‘It took me seven months to work the courage up. If I’d known how easy it was, I would have gone in a lot sooner.”

Although it is the most common cancer diagnosis among men ages 20 to 35 years old, testicular cancer can appear at any age.

Symptoms include a lump, ridge or enlargement on either testicle, a feeling of heaviness in the scrotum, a dull ache in the abdomen or groin, a sudden collection of fluid in the scrotum and back pain.

Risk factors include a family history of testicular cancer, Klinefelter Syndrome or other genetic conditions that impede testis development and having an undescended testicle.

Relatively rare compared to other forms of cancer, about 9,500 individuals receive a testicular cancer diagnosis annually in the U.S. However, when detected in Stage 1 before it has a chance to spread, testicular cancer has a 5–year survival rate of 99 percent.

At 5.3 cases for every 100,000 men compared to 7 cases for every 100,000 women, the incidence rate among Indigenous men is lower than non-Hispanic whites. However, the fatality rate among American Indian and Alaska Native men is slightly higher than most of their non-Indigenous neighbors.

According to data compiled in 2019 by the National Center for Health Statistics, the fatality rate is 0.4 for every 100,000 American Indian and Alaska Native men, compared to 0.3 for Hispanic and non-Hispanic whites and 0.1 for Asian, Pacific Islander and black men.

In addition to self-examination, an ultrasound or a blood test can detect and confirm the disease. There are two forms of testicular cancer: seminoma and non-seminoma. The former is more common among older men and is generally less aggressive. The latter tends to appear at earlier ages and grow more quickly.

Depending on when the disease is caught, treatment options range from outpatient surgery to radiation to chemotherapy. The latter two can impact fertility, either on a temporary or permanent basis.

Meanwhile, Craycraft has been in remission for 14 years. In the interim, he has used his experience to provide support to other men who have been diagnosed with testicular cancer or suspect something may be wrong with their testicles.

To better reach men in their 20s and 30s who are more likely to be diagnosed, the Testicular Cancer Society has made a point to be active on multiple social media platforms, including Reddit, Twitter and WhatsApp.

“I would never have imagined that in order to help people, I’d be on Reddit,” Craycraft said. “It’s going to where the guys are. I learned a long time ago that if someone posts about testicular cancer on Twitter, it’s probably because they have it.”

Get the Hownikan via email!

If you would like your newspaper via email, please send your name and address to hownikan@potawatomi.org and let us know.
Bozho
(Hello),

I’m wearing a mask and rubber gloves while writing this month’s CPN Veterans Report to protect readers from the dreaded COVID-19 virus. But in all seriousness, this is a historical event that will be remembered and told for generations to come. Businesses closed, jobs lost, toilet paper shortages — I don’t really understand that one — and the numerous sick and the too many deaths as a result of this new pandemic virus. Every “expert” has their own prediction of what the future holds for our Tribe, our country and the world. The first responders and medical people have been frontline heroes of this health war. Many of our veterans know the fear of fighting an invisible enemy. We will prevail, but only if we take this pandemic fight as a real threat and follow the advice of the medical teams. Please take care.

CPN Veterans Organization meetings

Following the advice of our state and national leaders, the CPN Veterans Organization is suspending our monthly meetings until further notice as well as our Color Guard and Honor Guard functions. It was not any easy decision, but one we felt was in the best interest of CPN Veterans.

Bozho

(Thank you).

Daryl Talbot, Commander
talbotok@sbcglobal.net
405-275-1974

CPN VA Representative:
Andrew Whitham

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

Fifth generation Oklahoman
M.A. in Religion, M.Div. in Theology
 Married 44 years to Judy – son Justin and daughter Holly
Great-great-great grandson of Abraham Burnett
Native American Name: Negaazit, meaning Leader

Retired Chaplain, U.S. Army Major
Airborne Ranger, First Ranger Battalion
Served in Army during the Vietnam War era
Served in combat in the First Persian Gulf War

Elected 12 years to the Oklahoma House of Representatives
Chairman of the Joint House-Senate Committee on Tribal Relations
Organized the first committee/forum on Tribal Relations
Debated and voted on thousands of bills, authored many
Author of bill honoring Oklahoma’s Billy Walkabout, most decorated Indian soldier in the Vietnam War

Elected Oklahoma Representative in the Citizen Potawatomi Nation’s National Legislature, discussed and voted on hundreds of Resolutions
Elected Delegate to National Congress of American Indians, 65th Congress


“I’m legislatively experienced and committed to making our nation responsive to members, economically prosperous, and culturally great! I will represent you. Please vote for me.”

Paid for by Paul Wesselhöft

VOTE JAY LAUGHLIN

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 9
INTEGRITY | PROSPERITY | HOPE
JLAUGHLIN4CPN@GMAIL.COM
PAID FOR BY JAY LAUGHLIN
District 9 - Paul Wesselhøft (incumbent)

What would be the first two things you would set out to accomplish as a legislator, if elected?

“My highest priority has always been to increase the number and the dollar amount of member scholarships. Young people are our future! My second priority is to support the expansion of sound new enterprises. The more self-supportive we become, the less we must depend on federal government grants. I cherish our sovereignty and autonomy!”

Can you provide an example of a time you made a mistake and learned from it?

“I have known that I was an Indian from early age. My grandmother told me that I was a ‘blue-eyed Indian.’ However, I did not cherish our culture until later in life. When I realized that we were going to be governed under a new constitution and I read that constitution, I realized that our Tribe, of all tribes, would have the only true national legislature, I was filled with pride. Our Nation is unique with a true national legislature. All other Tribal nation legislators are elected in state.

How have you researched your Potawatomi heritage?

“I have researched my Potawatomi history historically within the state of Oklahoma, and the remaining, and now. Lesson learned!”

What makes Citizen Potawatomi Nation unique to you?

“I was a young officer and I should have confronted him first face to face. I felt bad about that then and now. Lesson learned!”

How do you plan to include Tribal constituents’ voices in decision-making?

“My phone is 405-517-7148. My Facebook page is public for all to reach me. Please do!”

What is a tribal or cultural issue you believe is lacking in current Citizen Potawatomi life?

“My lineage is traced back to Kesh-now-quah (Angelique [A- ternoon Woman), the daughter of Potawatomi medicine man and her grandmother Frances (Navarre) Milot is listed on the 1887 rolls.”

Do you have any ideas on how to increase voter participation in Tribal elections as a legislator?

“Most of my research has come from our cultural heritage center and connecting with those at our Family reunion festival. I still have a lot to learn.

What is a tribal or cultural issue you believe is lacking in current Citizen Potawatomi life?

“My research has come from our cultural heritage center and connecting with those at our Family reunion festival. I still have a lot to learn.

What makes Citizen Potawatomi Nation unique to you?

“Educating our citizens on current challenges and opportunities as well as making connections within our Tribe. It’s a challenge to those personal connections when you’re several miles away. We must leverage tech- nology, culture, communication, and offer incentives to promote these much-needed bonds.

How do you plan to include Tribal constituents’ voices in decision-making?

“I was a young officer and I should have confronted him first face to face. I felt bad about that then and now. Lesson learned!”

What is a tribal or cultural issue you believe is lacking in current Citizen Potawatomi life?

“I was a young officer and I should have confronted him first face to face. I felt bad about that then and now. Lesson learned!”

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How do you plan to include Tribal constituents’ voices in decision-making?
Tribal Candidate Q&As continued

By Leslie Cooper, Director of FireLake Wellness Center

Hi everyone,

We hope everyone is staying safe and active during this wild and crazy time. Even though FireLake Wellness Center closed on March 17 due to the COVID-19 crisis, we are still here working diligently to clean the facility from top to bottom. My staff and I take pride in keeping our wellness center clean for our patients and members, but this pandemic has made us re-evaluate and refocus on our efforts. We are sanitizing and deep cleaning every inch of the Wellness Center — from bathrooms to offices to ceiling vents to equipment. You name it, we are cleaning it.

Brandon, Coby, Jessie, and I have been working at the wellness center just cleaning away, and Sarah has been working down at FireLake Discount Foods as one of the personal online shoppers. We have also been making at-home/office workout videos with the Public Information Department and Cultural Heritage Center video productions for everyone to enjoy and use during their time off. Go to the CPN Facebook page and check out our videos. I want to give a big shout out to Jessica McQueen and Garett Fisbeck. Jessica and Garett have been taking their time to come down and shoot the videos and take pictures for us. They are both a pleasure to work, and they do a great job!

We miss you! We miss those smiling faces, so please take care of yourselves! It is crucial to be diligent in taking the proper precautions during this time. Practice social distancing. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds. Use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Our job is to keep you and our staff safe; therefore, we have been working hard to make sure the wellness center is ready to go when we get to open those doors and welcome you back “home.” Stay active and stay safe. Remember: motion is lotion, so get moving. I want to personally say “thank you” to my staff for their dedication and hard work. They are the best group of people to work with. Without them, the wellness center wouldn’t be what it is today. It is going to take all of us to get through this awkward time, and we will make it together. Keep smiling!

---

FireLake Wellness Center update

By Leslie Cooper, Director of FireLake Wellness Center

Hi everyone,

“During my time as a legislator and before that as a Business Committee Member, I have always been available through the Nation’s website via email. Additionally I have had a presence on social media formats for many years where members could contact me. I always listen to Tribal members and as much as is possible consider each one.”

What would be the first two things you would set out to accomplish as a legislator, if elected?

“As an incumbent, I will continue serving as I always have.”

Can you provide an example of a time you made a mistake and learned from it?

“No but I have not, but none come to mind.”

How do you plan to include Tribal constituents’ voices in decision-making?

“What makes Citizen Potawatomi Nation unique to you?”

“I do not know if unique is something I experience. My Tribe is part of me. I grew up knowing I was a member. I grew up living down the street from the Nation and experiencing what we have accomplished. I grew up living much of the life I have now knowing I was a member. It is just something I am.”

How have you researched your Potawatomi heritage?

“No but I have several relatives who have accomplished extensive research and have shared it with me. They have our family tree well beyond coming to Oklahoma. Like many, I am still finding relatives I did not know I had. This is mostly because so many ‘Okies left the state and scattered to the four winds during the Dust Bowl Era. We are in many cases just now reconnecting.”

Do you have any ideas on how to increase voter participation in Tribal elections as a legislator?

“For well over 20 years, others and I have struggled with different things we could do. It seems unless the Executive Branch members are up for election attendance is often down at the polls. I do not have any direct data but I would suggest the last time we saw a big increase was when we started having the Family Festival.”

What is a tribal or cultural issue you find important that you believe is lacking in current Citizen Potawatomi life?

“I believe our language department has made great progress in making our language available to every member of the Nation. I also know they are still looking at additional things they can do. I think some members still are looking for cultural specific learning. This is an area that maybe we can investigate.”

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THE Hownikan PODCAST

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Tribal Legislator and elder Roy Slavin walks on

On April 21, 2020, CPN District 1 Tribal Legislator Roy Slavin walked on. He will be truly missed by those he served in the legislature as well as those throughout the Nation in whose service he worked. In 2013, the Hownikan profiled him. That article is reprinted here alongside his obituary.

One of the eldest representatives on the Citizen Potawatomi Legislature, Kansas City, Missouri’s Roy Slavin has seen the vast changes Native Americans have gone through during the past century. Born in St. Joseph, Missouri, Slavin represented District 1 since the August 2007 CPN constitutional revision, which created the current legislature. Though he had long been affiliated with the Tribe and its activities, he saw running for office as a chance to continue his Potawatomi family’s legacy.

“We had scheduled our Slavin family reunions around the old Potawatomi powwow during the summers in Shawnee, so I had plenty of time to attend and see the Tribe grow over the years,” he said. “When they created the legislature, I saw it as an opportunity to serve despite my location in Kansas City.”

The Slavins are one of the largest CPN founding families, and his great-grandmother was a survivor of the Potawatomi Trail of Death. His uncle, Jim Slavin, was with the original settlers who set out from Kansas to establish what is today the Citizen Potawatomi Nation in Oklahoma.

“My father was always proud of his Potawatomi heritage,” Slavin recalled. “But it was during a time where we didn’t advertise it. As kids, we knew we were, but it wasn’t something we talked about a lot. Though grown up, I would on occasion tell people I was ‘half Catholic and Indian.’”

Entering the U.S. Army at the age of 17, Slavin narrowly missed serving in the Korean War. His orders were cut before the war began, and the Army Signal Corps member was sent to serve on the then-classified Operation Greenhouse.

Taking place on Enewetok Atoll in the Marshall Islands, Operation Greenhouse was the early 1950s program for thermonuclear testing. His presence during this operation gave Slavin a distinction that not many CPN members or humans can claim – an eyewitness to four thermonuclear explosions.

Slavin’s time in the Army also provided training that shaped his professional career later in life.

“Tribal Legislator Roy Slavin during his time in the U.S. Army. CPN finally won 2007 CPN constitutional revision, which created the current legislature. Though he had long been affiliated with the Tribe and its activities, he saw running for office as a chance to continue his Potawatomi family’s legacy. That article is reprinted here alongside his obituary.

District 1 Legislative Roy Slavin during his time in the U.S. Army.

“Tribal Legislator Roy Slavin during his time in the U.S. Army.”

Throughout his life and time representing CPN members in the country’s northeastern and Midwestern states, Slavin experienced both the positive and negative changes Native Americans have endured over the past half-century. “I’m glad to see my kids, grandchildren and great-grandkids involved with the Tribe in ways that those people my age just weren’t able to back then,” he said. “I look at my great-granddaughter, Mollyann, who never missed a CPN Family Reunion Festival, who knows how to dress in proper regalia for Grand Entry, and it makes me proud to see how far we’ve come.”

Slavin was a staple at many regional and Tribal gatherings, along with his longtime wife Julia. He will be missed greatly.

Language update

By Justin Neely, CPN Language Department Director

During this challenging time, it’s important to remember there are tools available to learn your language online. We have an online Moodle self-paced course with Beginner 1 with 20 chapters, Beginner 2 with 20 chapters, and an Intermediate course with seven chapters. We also have three different language courses through Memrise, and language staff have created study sets on quizlet.com.

Online self-paced courses

You will need to create a login, then allow us to confirm you, and remember to log in each time. It is designed to be used with phone or computer. The optimal browsing interface is Google Chrome. Find the courses at language.potawatomi.org.

Memrise

It is easiest to find by first going to memrise.com and enrolling in the different Potawatomi courses including, Potawatomi Language “A day in the life,” Potawatomi Phrases and Potawatomi TA verbs.

After first visiting the site from a computer, you can download an app version of these courses. Memrise is fun for many adults/teen learners as it has a leaderboard where you can compete with others for high scores for the week, month and all-time.

Quizlet

Our staff is constantly updating and upgrading various study sets. Quizlet is fun because it has different game interchanges you can play while learning the language. Learn more at quizlet.com.

Facebook

We have a Facebook group called Potawatomi language at cpn.new/language. In this forum, we share various new tools, update current projects, host live classes and answer questions. Once the live classes complete, they are then archived in the video section of the page. We have countless videos of previous classes you can watch. We have segments for adult learners and segments my staff has been doing for younger kids.

Dictionary and other resources

Another tool available to students is our online dictionary at potawatomidictionary.com. There is also an app version of this dictionary.

The Pokagon Potawatomi have a course on mangolanguages.com, which is another tool available for learning our language. They have an app on the Google Play store called Bodhiword, Memrise for learning basic Potawatomi words/phrases in categories.

For those of you with young folks at home, we have a kids YouTube channel with 128 videos, a children’s page where kids can explore, and a page of cultural teachings with about 20 different videos.

Children’s page: cpn.new/childlang

Cultural teachings: cpn.new/stories

YouTube: cpn.new/kidscourse

If you have not checked it out already, we also have Gulliver’s Travels, the hour-long cartoon version, that you can watch all in Potawatomi with subtitles on YouTube at cpn.new/grevel.

Nasena — Be careful

Mno bmadzen — Stay well

Roy Slavin, age 87, passed away April 21, 2020, after a lengthy battle with lung disease. He was born at Weatherby, Missouri, to Roy and Irene Slavin. Roy grew up in St. Joseph, Missouri. When he was young, he boxed in the Golden Gloves and spent many hours at the roller rink. In February 1950 at age 17, he joined the U.S. Army. His basic training was at Ft. Knox, Kentucky. After basic, he attended electronic school in Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. Upon finishing electronic school, he was awarded a Q Clearance by the Atomic Energy Commission for his tour of duty at Eniwetok in the Marshall Islands. This assignment was called Operation Greenhouse, which was the testing of the first hydrogen bomb.

When he returned to Fort Monmouth, he was honorably discharged in March 1953.

In May 1952, he married Julia, and they had three children, Rod, David and Verna. After his discharge and return home, he worked installing and repairing televisions. Roy was employed at Trans World Airline from January 1966 until his retirement in September 1994. He worked mostly in the avionic shops. In 1966, he worked at the Internal Revenue Service in the extraction department before retiring from the IRS in May 2008 to accept an elected position with the Citizen Potawatomi Nation as a legislator for District 1. He continued this position until his passing.

It was always a toss-up as to which job he enjoyed the most, TWA or Citizen Potawatomi Nation. CPN finally won out, as he was so honored to serve as a legislator for District 1 and spent many hours learning and teaching his family the culture. He was always proud to be Potawatomi even though the past was not favorable to Indians.

Roy was preceded in death by his mother and father, five brothers and one sister. Survivors include his wife of (67 years) Julia; sons, Rodney Slavin (wife Karen), of San Diego, California; David Slavin of Kansas City, Missouri; daughter, Verna Brooks (husband John) of Shawnee, Oklahoma; eight grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren; one sister, Patricia Myers of Liberty, Missouri; and many nieces and nephews.

Private services were held April 27, 2020, at Newcomer’s White Chapel Funeral Home, in Gladstone, Missouri, with burial at Leavenworth National Cemetery in Leavenworth, Kansas.
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PARA INFORMACIÓN EN ESPAÑOL, VISITE EL SITIO WEB.

WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?
If you think you’ve been hurt by Purdue Pharma L.P., a U.S. limited partnership, its general partner and its subsidiaries, including Imbrium Therapeutics L.P., Adlon Therapeutics L.P., Greenfield BioVentures L.P., Avrio Health L.P., Rhodes Technologies, and Rhodes Pharmaceuticals L.P. (“Purdue”), or Purdue prescription opioids, like OxyContin®, or other prescription opioids produced, marketed or sold by Purdue, you can file a claim for compensation in the Purdue bankruptcy proceeding. The deadline to file a claim is June 30, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

WHAT IS A CLAIM AND WHO CAN FILE?
A “claim” means a right to seek payment or other compensation. You must file a Proof of Claim Form so it is actually received by the deadline. It can be filed by you, by a legal guardian, by survivors, or by relatives of people who have died or are disabled. All Personal Injury Claimant Proof of Claim Forms and any supporting documentation submitted with those forms will be kept highly confidential and will not be made available to the public. You do not need an attorney to file a proof of claim for you. Additionally, partnerships, corporations, joint ventures, trusts, governmental units, and Native American Tribes may also file a proof of claim against Purdue. Go to PurduePharmaClaims.com to find a complete list of instructions on how to file a claim. You will also find a list of the opioids produced, marketed or sold by Purdue. If you do not file a claim by the deadline, you will lose the right to file a claim against Purdue, and you will lose any right to seek payment or compensation you may have had. Proof of Claim Forms, a list of opioids produced, marketed or sold by “Purdue,” and instructions for how to file a claim are online at PurduePharmaClaims.com. You can also request a claim form by mail, email or phone:

Purdue Pharma Claims Processing Center
c/o Prime Clerk LLC
850 Third Avenue, Ste. 412, Brooklyn, NY 11232
Email: purduepharmainfo@primeclerk.com - Phone: 1.844.217.0912

WHO DOES THIS AFFECT AND WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?
If you think you’ve suffered harm from Purdue or its prescription opioids, you have the right to file a claim even if you may also have received reimbursement from insurance. Examples of claims that may be filed in the Purdue bankruptcy include death, addiction or dependence, lost wages, loss of spousal relationship benefit for things like child-rearing, enjoyment of life, etc., or Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (sometimes referred to as “NAS”), among others. The deadline to file a claim is June 30, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. If you do not file a claim by the deadline, you will lose the right to file a claim against Purdue, and you will lose any right to seek payment or compensation you may have had. Proof of Claim Forms, a list of opioids produced, marketed or sold by “Purdue,” and instructions for how to file a claim are online at PurduePharmaClaims.com. You may file a Proof of Claim even if a settlement is contemplated in the Purdue bankruptcy so that your claim can be considered as part of any settlement.

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Lee family loves foster kids like their own

May is Foster Care Awareness Month, a time to celebrate the hard work and difficult decisions that come with fostering. Citizen Potawatomi Nation’s FireLodge Children & Family Services strives to place Native foster children in Native homes to kindle a connection to their heritage and culture.

Justin and Melissa Lee began fostering through the department in 2019. Justin is a citizen of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, and Melissa is a member of the Osage Nation. The Lees learned about FireLodge from a family they attend church with in Bethel Acres, Oklahoma, who had fostered through CPN. They told the Lees about their positive experience, and the Lees equally praised FireLodge in a recent interview with the Hownikan.

“They’re just very encouraging,” Melissa said. “You can tell they want what’s best for the child, and they want to be there to provide anything that we may possibly need. And we feel like that communication is open to where if we needed something, we could ask.”

Justin and Melissa Lee provide a home full of love, laughter and music for their biological son, Jadon, and the foster children placed with them. Both teach choral music for Shawnee Public Schools, and Justin is a worship leader at their church.

“It’s just what I enjoy doing. I actually started out as a chemical engineering major, but then quickly realized that just wasn’t what I was supposed to do. And I knew it wouldn’t make me happy. So, I changed to vocal music education,” Justin said.

“As teachers, they encounter youth in need of stability, a place to stay or food to eat. The Lees see the effects of struggles outside of the classroom have on students’ performance in school, and they view becoming a foster home as a way to circumvent those disruptions later on for the children in their care.

“If we needed something, we could ask. They felt they knew what to expect as teachers and foster parents Melissa and Justin Lee spend their lives caring for and supporting children in their local community.

Challenges and rewards

The Lees welcomed two children into their home with open arms since they began fostering in summer 2019. They liked the idea of helping the community and satisfying their yearning to care for an infant again.

“We just have love. We have a lot of love to give, and we wanted to continue to give love to children and potentially grow our family. And so, this just looks like a really great fit,” Melissa said.

As teachers, they encounter youth in need of stability, a place to stay or food to eat. The Lees see the effects of struggles outside of the classroom have on students’ performance in school, and they view becoming a foster home as a way to circumvent those disruptions later on for the children in their care.

“I think we see the greater need for foster parents because we see it every day … So, I think that played a big part also. And then, of course, with participating in the program.”

FireLodge staff always prioritize the child’s quality of life, and Melissa and Justin see evidence of that during routine check-ups and resource requests. They encourage anyone considering fostering to make a connection and ask for information.

“When you’re fostering through someone, especially through Citizen Potawatomi, they’re absolutely willing to help you, and if you need help, reach out and ask for that support. Whatever kind of support you need, I know they’ll provide it,” Melissa said.

For more information on regarding CPN foster care and FireLodge Children & Family Services, visit potawatomi.org/firelodge or facebook.com/CPNFireLodge.

Natives serving Natives

The Lees chose certification through FireLodge to help Native children stay in Native homes. As citizens of federally recognized tribes, assisting Indigenous families came naturally to them. Melissa became aware of her heritage as a teenager and learned more as she got older.

“I think it’s really great to see where you come from, to kind of know the history and just the importance of the culture,” she said. “And Native American culture is just full of so many great things that I think people that aren’t Native Americans should know what their culture is like and just kind of see that history and have that connection.”

The Lees believe in CPN’s foster care mission, and the department makes the process of becoming a foster home easy and thorough.

“It is not as daunting as many people would say it seems to be,” Melissa said. “If you just go for it and get it done, it really doesn’t take long. And it’s not painful by any means.”

“They’re really great people to work through,” Justin said. “It helps when you can tell they love their jobs, and it just makes it almost enjoyable and exciting going through that process.”

For more information on regarding CPN foster care and FireLodge Children & Family Services, visit potawatomi.org/firelodge or facebook.com/CPNFireLodge.
United States pandemic coverage has rarely mentioned the European country of Croatia. With a population of 4 million people, it sits on the eastern side of the Adriatic Sea across from Italy. Toward the end of April, Croatia reached 1,980 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 50 deaths. With a comparable population, Oklahoma’s total was roughly 2,800, with 164 deaths at that time.

Tribal member Tesha Spitzer and her husband, Igor, live in Zagreb, the nation’s capital. The Tescier family descendant moved to Croatia from California nearly 20 years ago. The first case of COVID-19 in the country came from a resident returning from Italy after attending a soccer match.

Living near one of the hardest-hit countries in the world, Tesha and Igor have followed the virus’s development and spread, both in Europe and America. Tesha’s sister lives in California and is part of the high-risk segment of the population, and her husband works at a hospital. Their safety remains one of Tesha’s main concerns.

“I just worry about him picking up something there,” she said. “They really do take a lot of precautions. He has all kinds of protective gear. But I know because of him working there, it is possible he brings it home.”

Quarantine

Tesha and Igor began their self-quarantine at the beginning of March. At the time of their Skype interview with the HowNikan, they had spent four weeks contained in their apartment.

“I’m normally an introverted person anyway, so I’m not going crazy or anything like that. It wouldn’t be so bad if they didn’t tell me I couldn’t do it. When they say, ‘You can’t go out!’ All of a sudden, I want to go out!” she said and laughed.

Tesha is a homemaker, and Igor works as a software engineer for his company with clients across Europe. His work frequently causes him to travel; he returned from Belgium at the beginning of March. To comply with the Croatian government’s strict quarantine rules, they separated from each other for two weeks for their health and safety. Many Croatians travel back and forth throughout the region for work, including Italy.

“At first, people were still coming and going across the borders. And then we got that first case from Italy… And it was a little bit scary, but they still let people in and out at the time. And then it started growing and growing,” Tesha said.

Then, the Croatian government set out rules regarding travel. Citizens are not allowed to leave the country or the town they occupy without special permission. Overall, Tesha and Igor expressed satisfaction with their government’s response to the World Health Organization-declared pandemic.

“They started taking precautions pretty quickly. Once they really realized it’s not going to just be in China. Whenever Italy started getting hit pretty bad, they realized it’s going to spread. They started taking precautions,” she said. “Some people are complaining it’s too strict.”

Trip to America

Last September, Tesha purchased tickets for the two of them to spend a month in the U.S. in spring 2020. At the beginning of March, she and Igor still planned to fly into California to see her sister before setting off on a cross-country road trip, ending at Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida. However, COVID-19 spread very quickly, and soon enough, they made the decision two weeks before their flight to stay home.

“Wow. What a disappointment because we were so excited,” Tesha said. “We had been planning that for like six months now, and then this happens. But that’s not something you could even possibly dream would happen.”

The trip would have been Igor’s first time visiting the United States. When he tried to apply for a visa in 2002, travel restrictions were harsh for entry due to 9/11. Igor was also a student, and Croatia denied him, anticipating he would not return after visiting America.

This time, Igor received his visa, but the U.S. implemented travel bans on March 14.

“If you don’t laugh about it, the other option is to just cry about it. So, which one do you want to do?” Tesha said. “We’re more ‘laugh at the irony’ type of people.”

Igor has still never traveled to America, and this spring’s trip was going to be Tesha’s first time to visit Oklahoma and the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center. They hope to try again next year.

Earthquake

Along with COVID-19, Croatians recently experienced a large, deadly earthquake. The rumbling forced Tesha awake at almost 6:30 a.m. on Sunday, March 22, also Igor’s birthday. It lasted a long 10 seconds. As a former resident of California, she has experienced them most of her life.

“This was definitely the strongest one I’ve been in. And it was not a rolling type of earthquake; this was a shaking, jarring, bouncing-up-and-down type of earthquake,” Tesha said. At one point, she worried their glass patio doors would shatter.

Since the pandemic’s onset, the Croatian government reminded self-quarantined residents to stay inside and away from others; however, when the earthquake hit, it quickly told everyone to move outdoors.

“The government’s saying, 'Go outside! Go outside!'” she said. “Everyone was like, ‘What do we do?’”

Falling rubble crushed cars on the street, and it caused one death and dozens of other injuries. It also took down a spire of one of the towers of the Zagreb Cathedral, the city’s tallest building constructed in 1217. It registered as a 5.4, the biggest earthquake in the region since a 6.5 magnitude struck the capital in 1880. Now the Croatian government must balance restructuring and repairing buildings along with pandemic safety plans.

The city felt aftershocks from the earthquake registering as high as a 3.7 for several days, and the effects of COVID-19 show no signs of slowing either.

Native American tribes are an integral part of Oklahoma, with roots that are deep and permanent. Tribal nations make a critical, positive difference across the entire state.

Join the conversation at unitedforoklahoma.com
Tribal Chairman – John “Rooky” Barrett

Dear friend,

Bozho nikan
(Hello, my friend),

Bozho windows must be rolled down or the service via loudspeakers. The designated station or listen to church service — that is until the movie was the next best place as a child and young adult. A attended many drive-in movies the 1950s through the 1970s.

In fact, there are about 335 businesses in many states. Though drive-ins are still viable in the U.S. in recent years, even though drive-ins are still viable times, and as a Tribal government, we have already closed in some parts of the U.S. in recent years, even though drive-ins are still viable businesses in many states. In fact, there are about 335 drive-in movies in the U.S., compared to over 4,000 during the 1950s through the 1970s. During the 1960s and 70s, I attended many drive-in movies as a child and young adult. A movie was the next best place to be, outside of a sport event.

Fast forward to the spring of 2020. I have never experienced such an anomaly as a drive-in church service — that is until Easter Sunday of 2020. The attendees park in the parking lot of the church and either tune in to the radio on a pre-designated station or listen to the service via loudspeakers. The loudspeakers mean that your windows must be rolled down or at least opened enough to hear. My experience on Easter Sunday was very pleasant considering our church has been closed for several weeks. Our members at least were able to see each other from a distance within their vehicles. It is not exactly the greeting that one desires, but it is the next best thing considering the circumstance.

The circumstance, of course, is COVID-19, which has changed our lives and redirected our purpose. Each day, we can readily find out how many people have gotten the disease, how many deaths have resulted and how many hospitalizations there are locally, statewide and nationally. It can be depressing, but it is a fact we must cope with in today’s environment. The task of viewing the gruesome statistics each day is unpleasant, but failure to see the stark could result in getting complacent in our daily routine. I believe that the people at CPN and the surrounding area have coped well. We wear masks in public and in close contact with other people. We practice social distancing and even eat our temperature on a regular basis. In addition, we wash our hands often for up to 20 seconds and are alert to a dry cough and shortness of breath. The lack of compliance could render us susceptible to the COVID virus. We must stay cognizant of our surroundings by focusing on where we go, what we touch and what we eat.

I can’t help but think of the senior students around the country. Whether they are high school students, college or graduate students, or perhaps they are graduating from trade school, I truly feel sad for them. A graduation ceremony for high school and college students is especially prized. It is highly valued by parents, grandparents, relatives and friends. Serious decisions will have to be made for spring and summer to tackle the graduation difficulties. Innovative ideas about parking lot graduations may not be the best measures, depending on numbers of students.

Our beloved Family Reunion Festival is cancelled for the end of June. This is unfortunate but necessary to safeguard our people from exposure to COVID since the Festival is symbolic of large numbers of people gathering in close proximity. My hope is that something special is being devised for the occasion in this time of advanced technology. I am optimistic that technical and inventive minds are working together to provide some type of telecommunication for Festival weekend. Although it is now just a thought, I hope it comes to fruition.

What is next? When does our “Tribe, the community, state, United States and the world get back on track?” We have often heard that patience is a virtue. The ability to wait for something without frustration is easier said than done. Waiting is very difficult, and trusting is even more so. In the end, we must place our trust in the fact that more tests will be available. The testing is vital so we can learn who had COVID in the past, who has it presently, and through strategic planning, how we go forward under strict health standards to find normality. I am with many others in stating that perhaps our own companies, entities and workforce should be doing the testing. Dr. Vascellaro and Dr. Roselius have led the charge in testing at many CPN clinic patients as possible. It is an excellent start, but more tests in Portawatomi County and the entire state of Oklahoma are still needed. Perhaps my column next month will have good news regarding the availability of test kits for this area.

Please be safe and take precautions while this virus is still on the rampage. I have confidence that these rough times will pass. I love the ancient phrase, “This, too, shall pass.” I just wish we knew when.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your vice-chairman.

Migwetch
(Thank you),

Linda Capps
(Black Bird Woman)
Vice-Chairman
405-275-3121 work
405-650-1238 cell
lcapps@potawatomi.org

Vice-Chairman – Linda Capps

Bozho nikan
(Hello, my friend),

These are unprecedented times, and as a Tribal government, we have already made many difficult and unprecedented decisions since the COVID-19 pandemic began. I draw input from our experts at the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Health Services, we believe that it’s in the best interest of our members and employees to cancel our 2020 Family Reunion Festival.

The past weeks have been tough for all of us, regardless of where in the world we find ourselves. We seem to be going through the same shared experience of distancing ourselves from family, friends and coworkers. This decision to cancel was not made lightly, and it pains us greatly as a Tribal government to do so.

Our Family Reunion Festival has long been the seminal event in our Nation’s calendar, allowing us to come together as Citizen Potawatomi and extended families. It’s a critical event for our Tribal government, allowing Citizen Potawatomi to gain new understanding of their government, vote on issues important to the Nation, select candidates to represent them and make decisions for the Tribal government.

We are working closely with the CPN Election Committee on how best to administer the elections for this year. Thankfully, when we changed our constitution in 2007 to better represent all Citizen Potawatomi, we developed a system for absentee voting. Many of you received absentee ballot request forms in early April. I encourage those who may have missed those forms or who planned to vote in person to submit a request to the election committee to receive an absentee ballot. See the article on page 6 of this newspaper for that information.

Like most things put on hold during this pandemic, we know this is only a temporary setback, however painful it may be. Our foundations as a Tribe are strong. Citizen Potawatomi have survived and thrived facing equally challenging circumstances. We shall overcome this and renew our “normal” activities in time.

Migwetch
(Thank you),

John ‘Rooky’ Barrett
(He Leads Them Home)
Tribal Chairman

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your vice-chairman.

Migwetch
(Thank you),

Linda Capps
(Black Bird Woman)
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District 2 – Eva Marie Carney

Adjusting to our current circumstances

Just re-read my April column, which I wrote in early March from the Milwaukee airport to meet the Hownikan submission deadline. Airport travel seems like ancient history right now, and I was writing about another place and time, it seems — discussing upcoming plans to tour museum exhibits and the like. Quarantine notwithstanding, though, museum hopping is possible. Travel & Leisure offers tours of the best museums from around the world to Seoul in the comfort of your own home, cpn.news/museum.

Another escape from anxiety, fear and loneliness — and, for some of us, from great loss — can come from movement and spiritual practices. I recently began two 15-minute/day activities that have allowed me to reflect, improve my outlook and boost my energy level. They might do the same for you.

First: Jan Bull, a friend who later in life studied acupuncture and Chinese medicine, has been offering 15-minute daily online qigong exercises throughout April. Qigong is an ancient Chinese system of coordinated physical postures, movement, breathing techniques and meditation that is designed to promote health, spirituality and physical fitness. The lung-clearing portion of Jan’s class has been useful to release stress — it promises also to clear the lungs and build lung health, which is also useful as we move into high pollen season. The teacher is kind and clear in her instruction and has Cree ancestry. Back in college at the University of San Francisco, I studied Tai Chi, another ancient Chinese practice, so it’s been an enjoyable and centering return to the path. Here is a link to a series of short exercise videos (no cost) Jan has posted to her website, cpn.news/avbull.

Second: I’ve been participating in an online Exercise exam every Friday afternoon. The Exam is a traditional method of prayerful awareness that is a bedrock in Ignatian spirituality and Jesuit education (back to my University of San Francisco, Jesuit-educated roots again). It’s a short (15-20 minutes), easy way to reflect on your day and become more mindful about where you are experiencing grace or goodness and where there is room in your actions and life for growth. For more information, search online for “Examen.”

On a more traditional note, I also have just completed a prayer circle in my backyard, using tree stumps from an oak that we had to cut down. It’s in a private area of the yard and should get good use! I haven’t done this yet but may join the Association on American Indian Affairs for 20 minutes in prayer, good thoughts and unity in spirit every Friday at 5 p.m. EDT, designated #ShareHealingFriday. You can learn more, and participate at cpn.news/sharing.

Education resources for parents with children at home

The National Indian Education Association has gathered a wide range of online materials for educators and parents. You can find them cpn.news/education.

One of my favorite links is to Storyline Online at cpn.news/storytours. They are produced by the Screen Actors Guild — American Federation of Television and Radio Artists’ Foundation as part of its children’s literacy program. The site streams videos featuring celebrated actors reading children’s books alongside creatively produced illustrations. Readers include Viola Davis, Chris Pine, Lily Tomlin, Kevin Coomer, Annette Benning, James Earl Jones and others. A top April pick turns out to be one of my personal favorite children’s books, all about a mother’s love, The Kissing Hand. Another reader is the incredible Betty White, reading Harry the Dirty Dog by Gene Zion, and pictures by Margaret Bloy Graham. If you watch her video to the end (found at cpn/news/harry/day), you will see her holding a rescue dog that is the spitting mini-image of our rescue dog Bubbles. Put on your pajamas, and I hope you check out NIEA’s page and — whether or not you have children to teach and entertain — enjoy a few of the Storyline Online stories.

Expert advice on finances, offered free during the pandemic

The Washington Post’s Michelle Singletary writes a highly-regarded column on finances, The Color of Money. This week, she featured a book by a team of 20 experts from the National Consumer Law Center: Surviving Debt: Expert Advice for Getting Out of Financial Trouble, which provides guidance on the most pressing financial concerns, including dealing with a possible eviction.

She noted, “Surviving Debt is a guide you’re going to want to read as you’re trying to make ends meet during this epic financial storm.” In a truly budget-friendly move, the NCLC offers free digital access to the book, which retails for $20. You can find it at cpn.news/niea to download, print or email.

Springtime and redbud blossoms and blooms

Spring has sprung in District 2, and this means redbud buds and blossoms. I know that Oklahoma has been aglow with redbuds, too, as have many other parts of the U.S. One of our fellow citizens, Jody Mattena Gehabatov, has a blog that includes good information about the many ways in which Native people use the redbud tree buds, blossoms and bark. She gave me permission to share the blog with you, which include some delicious-sounding redbud blossom recipes. Find the blog at cpn.news/redbud. I was late to the harvery this year, though, and could only collect a small number of buds and blossoms, which I used in my Easter garden. Next year, I hope to get out early enough to gather the two cups of buds and blossoms called for in Jody’s recipe for redbud jelly.

Kwe Society update

You may know that our relatives living on rural reservations have been particularly hard hit by COVID-19. We are busy purchasing and mailing period supplies and soliciting, collecting and distributing cloth masks for school children and distributing meals — along with our period supplies — to Navajo Nation students in New Mexico and Oglala Navajo students in South Dakota. These dedicated folks are working hard to meet student needs in the face of long-term school closures and bare grocery store shelves. I’ve included a photo of some of the Toháahí Community School (Newcomb, New Mexico) staff, and the school mascot, the cardinal, wearing our masks. We anticipate receiving a sizable donation of period supplies from U by Kotex in the next week or so (for 7,000 packs and 96,000 liners!), shipped directly to the Central Consolidated School District Warehouse in Kirtland, New Mexico. We support 15 schools in that school district. This donation comes through our recent alliance with the Alliance for Period Supplies, and will go far to address period supply needs among Navajo and other students in northwestern New Mexico. That will free us up to continue to add new school districts as partner sites and donor funds permit!

Please reach out

I offer you my best wishes and prayers for your and your family’s health and security in these unfathomable times. Please reach out to me if I can be helpful. It’s my privilege to represent you.

Eva Marie Carney
Ojibwe/Navajo (Blue Bird Woman)
Representative, District 2
2200 N. George Mason Drive
PO Box #7307
Arlington, VA 22207
866-361-6988 toll-free
ecarney@potawatomi.org
evamariecarney.com

District 3 – Bob Whistor

Guess that at this time, we are still involved in doing all we each can to either keep from contracting COVID-19, or if we think we may have contracted the virus, we’re self-quarantined to keep others safe and medicate.

It is very distressing to me that our states were not ready for this pandemic, though I know that those of us who are not familiar with my work background, prior to becoming a legislator, I worked for American Airlines. At one point in my career, I was a general manager and had the challenge of opening a new city for the company. During the month at the new location prior to our first airplane operation, we had to setup the station. My primary focus was on getting all of the information needed for any emergency procedure manual, specifically, whom do we call in the event of any emergency such as an aircraft accident. My plan had to include things like, where do I get plywood at 11:59 p.m. on New Year’s Eve? Where are there cranes large enough to lift and move a jet aircraft? Who do I need to notify? Where can I get buses? What kind of security must be put in place? The list went on and on and covered an entire set of things we would need and who to call for what. I had to put together three copies of the emergency procedure manual with a copy going to our systems operations control, another to my boss in the division office and a copy for my own station. As part of our regular routine, after the station was open, we ran self audits monthly as well as yearly. Annually, I reviewed and updated the manual and sent any revisions to the respective locations. I bring this up because it is part of what most businesses do in their planning. They may not need such an extensive emergency procedure manual, but they do need have procedures at hand for their future and hopefully for the unforeseen. I believe we should expect no less of our government, since in our area, they regulate and demand many safety procedures and practices to be completed by businesses. Your probably thinking, “Yes, but what is Bob’s point?”
16 MAY 2020

Well, currently there are 35 states, plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico that have a Certificate of Need law, and three others have a variation of the law. Arizona, Minnesota and Wisconsin. The following states do not have the CON program: California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, New Mexico, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Utah and Wyoming, which I believe is fortunate for the residents of those states.

In 1964, New York was the first state to create a CON program. In the following 10 years, 26 other states followed suit and enacted similar programs. The initial program created regulations for expenditures in excess of $100,000. Moreover, it was also meant to potentially eliminate duplication between hospitals in having similar equipment, which did not have a great need or potential highly regular use. It was also to act as a means of lowering hospital expense to patients. In 1972, additional states created their own plans. In 1974, Congress passed the National Health and Planning Resources Development Act, which more or less mandated all states to enact a CON similar to the federal model in order to receive federal funding. In 1987, the federal mandate was repealed, and a number of states then left the program and repealed their CON laws.

While the law may have sounded good, it didn’t work. It stifles competition and doesn’t reduce hospital expenses. In fact, in the states that have the CON law, some of the major hospitals lobby to keep competition out. We also have the fact that the states that still have the act require hospitals to justify their need for more equipment, etc. I recently read that in New York, just a couple of years ago, advised the state of a need for over 700 million dollars for additional hospital resources it needed and was turned down by their state government. But, the governor of New York then spent a similar amount of money on solar power! Now, he is saying that there is a shortage for their needs resulting from COVID-19 and is criticizing the federal government for not having enough stockpiled to provide New York state what is needed. The fact is, it was New York’s responsibility to allow their medical community the ability to provide for their needs for the future. Had they not had CON, things might be different.

Ironically, one of my very first jobs was to work in the receiving department of Mercy Hospital in San Diego, California. They had several sub-basements, and I used to see the storage of extra beds, etc. on those sub-basement floors. I know times have changed, and due to costs, having lots of storage space may not be affordable. But plans for emergencies such as this current pandemic should have been in place. Historically, we have had these type of infectious situations arise over and over. There was a great plague in Europe in 1665. That was well after The Black Death that goes back to the 14th century. More recently in 1918, we had the Spanish Flu right here in the U.S. So historically, the potential for a pandemic that comes with no warning is. It is a matter of being prepared so a pandemic does not materialize!

I have lived in both California as well as in Manhattan, New York. In Manhattan, I lived on the 23rd floor of a high-rise apartment building. Fortunately for California, the cities are spread out, and they do not have the high-rise buildings like New York. Some of the reason is that the earthquakes in California tend to result in building more single dwellings and less multi-story buildings. New York City, on the other hand, has a very dense population resulting from this housing density and skyscrapers.

So, this in concert with their limited reserve equipment etc., which will have been a result of their CON program, may have resulted in New York City having a greater negative COVID-19 impact than other states. Texas, California and a number of other states who have rescinded the CON program, and tend to be more spread out, may have been better prepared for COVID-19, which is why we see less impact.

Before leaving the COVID-19 subject, there are a number of links to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention website that can provide you with the most accurate, trusted and up-to-date information on the virus: cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019- ncov/index.html


cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019- ncov/symptoms.html

We will soon be facing elections in a few months, and we need to be looking at who represents us and find out where they stand on issues that may affect us. This current pandemic is a good example of looking at who the current elected officials in our state are doing and if they doing what is best for all of us!

In closing, I am proud to represent you and honored that you have placed your trust in me. Our staff has been on top of this pandemic and had good plans in place. I recently saw the advisory that went out to our college students receiving scholarships in planning for the summer term. Although we had to close the two casinos and The Grand Hotel, everyone is still on payroll through the end of May. Given that we don’t have unlimited resources, there may need to be some changes if our three primary sources revenue remains closed. For the moment, the grocery stores as well as some other enterprises are still able to function. We do have personnel who now work at home, and some of our facilities now have restrictions or limitations on access. If you have any questions about services or benefits where you think I can assist with an answer, please give me a call or send an email.

Stay safe and have a new broadcast (good life/health),

Bama pi (Late),

Bob Whistler
Chairman
Responsible, District 3
817-282-0661 office
817-229-6271 cell
817-545-1507 home
rwhistler@potawatomi.org

Correction:

A quick reminder to be included in the Hownikan high school and college graduation announcements, following the guidelines whether or not we are permitted to return to some level of normalcy that allows us to hold group meetings and programs.

My hope is to be able hold this one-day program on Thursday, July 23. This program is free and open to any enrolled CPN youth 10 years of age and up. There is no maximum age limit. The program is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with lunch provided. If we are allowed to conduct the program, enrollment forms will be available at the CPN Community Center, at my office or by contacting me by email or phone (see below). Our ultimate wish is to expand in the future into a two-day program by offering Native American dance, increasing the language portion and adding other related topics and activities. We should know by the end of May if the restrictions regarding meetings and gathering is lifted. The June Elders Potluck will be held on Friday, June 12, as soon as possible in the CPN Community Center in Rossville. I’ve heard that Tracy and Sharon have planned an outdoor cookout consisting of hamburgers and hot dogs for the main course. They have asked that you RSVP if you plan on attending. Their number is 785-584-6171. You are asked to bring a side dish or dessert.

As always, it is my pleasure to serve as your legislative representative.

Migwetch
(Thank you),

Jon Boursaw,
Weate Mkoob (Brave Bear) Representative, District 4
785-861-7272 office
785-608-1982 cell
jon.boursaw@potawatomi.org

Office hours:
9-11 a.m. Tuesday
5-7 p.m. Thursdays

Other times: please call 785-861-7272

Legislators are not able to retrieve your contact information from Tribal Rolls
Please contact your legislator and update your contact details so that you can receive important information.
District 5 – Gene Lambert

Things are changing so rapidly that this is the third re-write I have done to keep you informed. Hopefully they will be able to get this in the paper in time.

First, let’s talk about the necessity of continued prayer that seems necessary in today’s world.

We want all of you healthy, safe and comfortable in the fact that we have survived a lot more than the virus can dish out, and we are still here to talk about it. Nonetheless, these are emotional and uncertain times.

Listen to the doctors, scientists and people who are informed as to the dangers and proper protective procedures to keep you and your family safe.

We’ve all been affected in one way or another by the pandemic. But the one time a year when we should all be looking forward to traveling to Shawnee will not happen at the end of June. I cannot tell you how badly I feel that this event in “me,” when we should be focused on “we.” I know that eventually we will again be free to carry on with our lives; we will be free to visit our friends and families and visit our house of worship. I just pray we are all wise enough to learn the lesson that the Creator is giving us.

This past month, Chairman Barrett, under the advice of our Tribe’s medical experts, made one of the hardest decisions of his time as Tribal Chairman and cancelled the Family Reunion Festival due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The one time a year when we should all be looking forward to traveling to Shawnee will not happen at the end of June. I cannot tell you how badly I feel that this event will not happen as scheduled. So many of you made plans over a year ago to attend; this whole situation has been extremely hard on so many of our fellow Tribal members. It is hard to think of anything that we have experienced in the last 100 years that has impacted virtually everyone on the planet.

It is also not lost on me that maybe the Creator wishes to impart a lesson on us: to be kind to one another, to look after those who need a hand, to listen to the stories of our elders and heed their advice. It is very easy to get caught up in “me,” when we should be focused on “we.” I know that eventually we will again be free to carry on with our lives; we will be free to visit our friends and families and visit our house of worship. I just pray we are all wise enough to learn the lesson that the Creator is giving us.

Get the Hownikan via email!
If you would like your newspaper via email, please send your name and address to hownikan@potawatomi.org and let us know.

District 7 – Mark Johnson

I considered taking the month off from writing a column and wasn’t sure if the paper would be published this month due to the pandemic. But the folks that create the Hownikan are still working hard to get news and information to Tribal members. As I’m sure you all would agree, this is not the time for folks to stop communicating.

We’ve all been affected in one way or another by the coronavirus. Where I live in Olympia, we have had one death and about 40 cases as of Easter weekend. I don’t personally know of anyone in the area who has gotten the coronavirus, but my wife’s cousin in Berlin, Germany, has been hospitalized, and her family has received a positive test result and been quarantined in their home.

My children in high school and college are all home and taking online classes. In fact, I am driving across the state later in the week to retrieve my son’s furniture from his college apartment at Washington State University, which is finishing the year online.

As guidelines have been changing, we have just recently been encouraged to wear masks while out doing essential errands like going to the grocery or drug store. Much to my surprise, I just received a CPN inspired mask from Roy and Julia Slavin in the mail today. Migweh! (Thank you) for your thoughtfulness!

Family Reunion Festival

As you are aware by this time, the Family Festival has been cancelled this year for the first time in many years. One of the significant activities that weekend is the Nation’s elections, which may need to go to 100 percent absentee ballot. The head of the election committee, Gary Bourbonsais is still at work and is committed to the election process. If you have not received a postcard to request a ballot, please write to Gary Bourbonsais at: CPN Election Committee PO Box 310 Tecumseh, OK 74873

Please include your name, Tribal roll number, address and legislative district number, and sign the letter. If you prefer, please call Gary at 405-721-2523 or email him at gbourbonsais@potawatomi.org.

You can also go to potawatomi.org/2020-ballot/ to download a ballot request. I’d like to thank hard working employees of the Citizen Potawatomi keep everyone things rolling. The three Tribally owned grocery stores are serving the local population as are the medical workers, folks in transportation, maintenance and many other fields.

Lastly, I would like to encourage all members to participate in the U.S. Census. Please state that you and any Tribal members in your household are Native American and list your tribal affiliation as Citizen Potawatomi Nation.

As always, it is my honor to serve you.

Migweh! (Thank you),

Julia Slavin’s mask gifted to Dave Carney

District 8 – Dave Carney

Tribal roll number, address and legislative district number, and sign the letter. If you prefer, please call Gary at 405-721-2523 or email him at gbourbonsais@potawatomi.org.

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As always, it is my honor to serve you.

Migweh! (Thank you),

Dave Carney

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District 9 – Paul Wesselhöft

HISTORICALLY, AMERICAN INDIANS HAVE HAD DISPROPORTIONATELY PROPORTIONS TO MANY OF THE MOST DEADLY DISEASES LIKE THE 1918-19 SPANISH FLU EPIDEMIC. THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS SHARED MANY OF THE SAME CHARACTERISTICS. NATIVE AMERICANS ARE PROPORTIONATELY MORE SICK AND DEATHS COMPARED TO OTHER GROUPS. OTHER TRIBES, ESPECIALLY ON RESERVATIONS, SEEM TO BE EVEN MORE VULNERABLE THAN OUR NATION.

We must take serious measures to protect our Tribe, especially our elders. Older people also fall into that group of “underlying conditions.” Let us not be pessimistic or depressed. We have to cherish that scripture-like statement, “This too will pass!”

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation has shut down much of our successful enterprises. There will be a dramatic cost to our Nation in protecting our members. However, the cost of lives would have been more devastating had we not taken sound initiatives.

I hope by the time you read this article, we will have turned the corner on this terrible, deadly disease. However, our members will continue to suffer loss. If you have lost someone in your family to this plague, I grieve for you. Our legislature grieves for you. Our Nation grieves for you. May God heal your heart and lift your spirit. Please be safe! Continue mitigation!

District 10 – David Barrett

When you call in your “to go” lunches at the senior center, you will go to the clinic front door where you will be greeted by someone in protective gear. While waiting in our car in line for one hour, I took a picture of the line of cars since we were in line for one hour. Kudos to our Citizen Potawatomi Nation Health Services leadership for the safety they have shown to protect our people.

As a Christian, I’ve always had to rely on “Grace by Faith” for guidance in my life on serious matters, but we should always look to Him on all matters. Two scriptures always come to the forefront that comforts me, and I would like to share them at this time:

“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds everything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.” Phillipian 4: 6-7 NLT.

“But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40: 31 NLT.

Let’s all pray for fast recovery for CPN, our country and our world. It goes without saying, thank you for allowing me to represent you and our great Nation.

Migwetch (Thank you),

David Barrett

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District 11 – Lisa Kraft

As we prepare to celebrate this Easter with family and friends (or on Zoom, like mine will do) and reflect on our own faith and lives, I extend my prayers to Potawatomi all over the world. I pray you and your loved ones have not contracted this deadly virus. If you/they have, may it be a speedy recovery and return home. Those who have lost a loved one to coronavirus, my heart hurts for you. I’m so very sorry for your loss. Social distancing is a very unnatural way to say goodbye. I hope it does not become a new normal after this isolation period.

Just a few weeks ago, many of us attended an online funeral for a remarkable lady who passed away too soon but not from coronavirus, my friend, Bozho, who passed away recently moved to Portugal. We would have spent time in the Army Corps of Engineers Tulsa District and get weekly Oklahoma’s health update at 1601 S. Gordon Cooper Dr. Paul Schmidlkofer, 405-612-8068 pschmidlkofer@potawatomi.org

Lisa Kraft and her son, Conrad.

The last time I touched my life in friendship was not from a remarkable lady who passed away too soon but not from coronavirus, my friend, Bozho, who passed away recently moved to Portugal. We would have spent time in the Army Corps of Engineers Tulsa District and get weekly Oklahoma’s health update at 1601 S. Gordon Cooper Dr. Paul Schmidlkofer, 405-612-8068 pschmidlkofer@potawatomi.org

Lisa Kraft and her son, Conrad.

Those of our Potawatomi family who are volunteering in the community, providing health care to the sick, or companionship to the lonely; my gratitude goes out to you. I’m proud, too, for those Potawatomi serving in the armed forces and National Guard, helping to relieve healthcare workers and build hospitals across our country. Thank you to the countless Potawatomi who are helping keep us all fed, packages delivered, and our homes and cars running with your technical skills. I pray our Potawatomi scientists will do their part in helping the world test and find cures to end this virus and other plagues like cancer, heart disease, diabetes and depression.

My new normal is taking more walks, cooking more and watching the daily White House briefing in its entirety. I visit Oklahoma’s health update at coronavirus.health.ok.gov to see what is happening outside my neighborhood. I work a lot with the Army Corps of Engineers – Tulsa District and get weekly updates on what they are doing in Oklahoma. I also visit the World Health Organization’s website who.who.int to see the numbers of infections and deaths around the world.

My brother-in-law’s sister recently moved to Portugal. We were set to travel there in May to see her coastal home. We would have spent time in Paris, a week in Portugal, and then traveled to Spain and Morocco. For me, it would have been a trip of a lifetime and one that may take a lifetime to save back up for. My sister and niece were heading to Spain in June to move my niece into college for a semester abroad. I worked on nursing and to become fluent in Spanish.

I keep faith that everything happens for a reason and on a timeline I simply cannot understand. I have tried being angry at God when he has taken someone I love too soon, but that only hurt me from self-neglect and mentally withdrawing from those I love. It took me a while to let go, let God.”

I feel better when I surround myself with things that made my loved ones happy. My home has lots of wildlife and Indian art; I drive my classic ‘72 Chevy truck on the backroads to Walmart; I stay active in our Tribe; I get lost in an afternoon of antiquing; and I plant more frises each year. From my dad to my grandmothers, I find their absence more tolerable by enveloping myself with things that would make them happy.

With great loss, this pandemic has also shed a spotlight on something else I love: animals. I have a very tender spot in my heart for dogs, horses, great apes (chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans), elephants and whales. And for someone who enjoys eating deer meat more than beef, you would never guess that I was a fervent PETA supporter and vegetarian for 12 years. PETA stands for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

I can remember back to my 20s and early 30s when I would spend weekends handwriting letters to members of Congress, circuses, and zoos begging them to do something about the torture of live dogs in Chinese food markets, Russian dancing bears, and the forced performances of elephants and tigers in American circuses. Had I chosen a different path in life, I would have been a marine biologist and captained a ship for Whale Wars.

Fast-forward to my 50s, and these animal plights are still not resolved. This Easter season, I speak my prayers aloud in this column from those mentioned earlier to the urging of others to do their part to end animal cruelty. And for those who live outside of Oklahoma, please know that Joe Exotic does not represent the average Oklahoman. Most people, like myself, are truly disgusted by the characters depicted in the Netflix series Tiger King and by the exotic tigers trade in America. Surely in my lifetime, we can come up with a legal remedy here in the states to stop the sale of tigers and great apes and find a global solution to return these endangered animals to a protected wild.

We all have a purpose in this life and our lives make a difference to those around us — be it our family, our neighbors, our country, humanity, the animal kingdom and this planet. We are truly in this together. May the year of 2020 continue to ripple waves of compassion and kindness everywhere it is needed.

As always, I am thinking Potawatomi.

Lisa Kraft

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District 12 – Paul Schmidlkofer

How niwik (Hello friend),

Uncertain times, we are certainly living in them today. I would hope by the time this article reaches you things have drastically improved. Unfortunately, I am not certain they will have. The earth has witnessed similar times before. The Spanish Flu comes to mind. It is scary. I would just like to say we are doing all we can to protect the Nation and its presence. I hope and pray for a short cycle to this virus.

For other things we are concerned about like our health care facilities or other benefits, I would suggest keeping in contact with the Nation’s website and social media outlets. Typically, they will share important information there often. In addition, you may call the Nation directly and ask.

I have kept the Nation in my prayers. Much like our elders did, I have put down senna (tobacco) for us. I have played my drum and sang my songs for us. In closing, thank you once more for the trust placed in me. It is an honor to serve you.

Migweetch (Thank you),

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They started off with a full-fledged music acts, which included some spectacular Simmental cattle where the two leaders and joined the fair board. At that time, the 4-H fair had plans for Jesse Slavin were held Thursday, March 15, 2020. She was born to Myra (Lynn) Slavin; and a sister, Teresa Reed. Mary is preceded in death by her parents, Wayne and Glenda Hey; brother, Kyle Hey; nephews, Brendan Hey and Braylon Hey; as well as many uncles, aunts, cousins, loved ones and friends. She worked for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, volunteered as a team leader, and coach for the Special Olympics (her love) and taught for Poteau and Cameron Public Schools as a substitute. She was a proud member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and let everyone know it. She attended Oklahoma City schools, Douglas High School, Carl Albert Junior College in Poteau, and the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond. She was loved and will be greatly missed.