

# HOWNIKAN

Minkégises | August 2024





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# Long-awaited Tribal columbarium complete

Construction on the new Citizen Potawatomi Nation Tribal columbarium has been completed, giving Tribal members the option to choose Tribal grounds as their final resting place.

The announcement was made at the 2024 Family Reunion Festival during the Saturday General Council meeting by CPN Chairman John "Rocky" Barrett and Vice-Chairman Linda Capps.

A columbarium is an above-ground structure that holds the remains of individuals who have chosen cremation.

The structure was designed in the shape of a prayer circle and includes the colors of the four directions and invokes the blessings of the seven prayers, Barrett noted.

"We can accommodate traditional Potawatomi services, military services or Christian services. Memorial plaques can even be designed to denote military service," Barrett said.

Capps said the site includes 400 niches that can each hold up to two sets of ashes. It is located at 4 Dr. Leon Combs Drive, near Shawnee, Oklahoma.

The columbarium, or *jibéwgemek*, meaning place of spirits, is located next to the former Shawnee Friends Mission church building that was established in the 1870s by Quaker missionaries and is now used for Tribal services.

The current columbarium will likely be full within a short amount of time, Capps said. Experts predict U.S. cremation rates to reach nearly 80 percent by the year 2040.

"We are prepared to possibly add several more (structures) in the space. Many hometown cemeteries are filling up. The columbarium is expected to become more in demand in the future," Capps said.

Earlier this year, a laser cutting machine was purchased to engrave the granite faceplates of each niche. The faceplates are engraved with the name or names of those who are inurned in that location.

CPN Public Information Director Kent Bush and Senior Graphic Designer Trey DeLonais researched and selected the laser and associated software. DeLonais has been engraving the faceplates and assisting with installation.

"Trey has been such a blessing. He really stepped up to the plate," Capps told Tribal members at General Council.

Engraving the niches at CPN is more economical, Bush said. The laser is also used for other projects that involve



engraving or cutting designs, graphics and text on a wide range of items like granite, wood, fabric and paper.

Completing the engraving in-house will save CPN thousands of dollars annually, Bush added.

Funds for the columbarium's design and construction were approved in the 2023 Tribal budget. The American Rescue Plan Act was a significant source of funding, Capps said.

Barrett said the Nation will create a permanent fund for the columbarium's maintenance and upkeep.

## Guidelines for applications

A few guidelines have been established for those who wish to apply for a columbarium niche. The application is not intended to reserve a spot for future use but submitted only upon the death of a Tribal member or their loved one.

Completed applications should be submitted to CPN Tribal Rolls, which will verify enrollment. While each niche may hold the cremated remains of up to two urns, at least one applicant must be an enrolled member of CPN.

The niche location will be assigned as the cremated remains are received.

Once the confirmation process is completed, a copy of the application will be provided to CPN Public Information Department for engraving purposes. 🔥



# Negahnquet family history

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

## Family beginnings

The Negahnquet family endured the hardships of removal and established themselves as leaders both within the Potawatomi Tribe and the Roman Catholic Church.

Born in 1853 in Shawnee County, Kansas, Stephen *Ne-bah-qua* Negahnquet quickly rose to become a community fixture in Kansas. He was the son of *Ne-gahn-quet* and *Tchoksak*. After Stephen's mother *Tchoksak* died, his father married a widow named *No-dno-qua*. Stephen later said he was grateful for his stepmother's care and spoke of her with respect and love.

Stephen married Angeline *Ke-ten-no Wa-was-suq*, a daughter of Chief *Wa-was-suq*. Stephen and Angeline were the parents of Rosalie, Albert, Joseph, John, Mary Fannie (Stephanie), Mary Celeste, Katherine, Stephen W., Rosalie *Wawyoitch* and Thomas.

## Seeking stability

The U.S. government heavily pressured the Potawatomi in Kansas to accept allotments and become U.S. citizens. The government's purpose was twofold — to force Indigenous people to assimilate into mainstream society and to claim lands previously held by tribes. These lands were later sold to railroad companies or opened to settlement.

After consultation among their leaders, some Potawatomi decided to accept allotment. Their decision was likely based on their desire to find security and permanency on land that could not be taken away. Having repeatedly been removed from land they were assured was theirs, these Potawatomi hoped for a period of stability.

After the Treaty of 1867, Stephen removed with his family to Indian Territory and was allotted several sections of land.

While the Potawatomi received citizenship and land allotments through the Treaty of 1861, the U.S. government did not honor the treaty's terms. During removal, many Tribal members lost everything and had to make the move to Indian Territory with hardly any supplies. The Tribe

began planning to relocate south to Indian Territory. From 1872 to 1877, only a few hundred people made the move.

In 1883, Stephen Negahnquet and Thomas Negahnquet joined their fellow business committee members in directly petitioning the federal government that women of the Tribe should also receive allotments as heads of households. Previously, the government would allow non-Native husbands to receive allotment, but the Citizen Potawatomi believed Potawatomi women should control their own land holdings.

On the new Oklahoma reservation, Stephen was among the new leaders elected to the Citizen Potawatomi Business Committee. He was among the first Tribal members to approve the founding of Sacred Heart Mission. All his children would eventually attend the mission school.

## New generations flourish

Stephen and his family made the journey to Indian Territory in 1875. They were accompanied by their close friend, Joe Burnett, and his family.

Stephen learned that his non-Native neighbors had trouble remembering Potawatomi names. He decided to take his father's name as a last name. He first considered his grandfather's name, *Ne-wan-nee*, or his own name, *Ne-bah-quah*, meaning Twilight on the Forest, before finally taking his father's name of *Ne-gahn-quet*, which means Leading Cloud.

After becoming established in Indian Territory, the Citizen Potawatomi voted to provide the Catholic Church one-square mile for its facilities. CHC records reveal that many Citizen Potawatomi, among them Stephen Negahnquet, helped cut down trees, split logs and constructed church buildings alongside the Catholic monks.

Father Idisore Robot oversaw the mission's operations and established the boys' school in the late 1870s. A girls' school named St. Mary's Academy was added in 1880. Stephen believed that children should be taught religion alongside their academics.

Within the CHC archives, Katherine Negahnquet fondly recalled her days at St. Mary's Academy, especially the Irish nuns who served as her teachers. She said the hardest part about school was being separated from her parents and being confined to a limited space.

"The whole outdoors had been our playground and the rising and setting of the sun, controlled our activity," she said.

School breaks meant the children could return to their usual activities of fishing, hunting and spending days in the woods. They waded in the creek and picked ripe fruit from the peach and plum trees.





*From left to right, Aloysius Negahnquet, Joseph Nak-nash-kuk (William H. Goodwin), Albert Negahnquet (Fr. Dom Bede), Stephen Negahnquet (Ne-bah-quah) and Stephen Wa-wa-suk Negahnquet.*

But, when the school year began, Katherine said it was hard to adjust to schoolwork after vacation.

Stephen served as an interpreter for the Citizen Potawatomi for several years. He traveled to Washington, D.C., many times. Along with Antoine Navarre and John Anderson, they successfully lobbied the federal government for per capita payments in 1890, 1893 and 1895.

Katherine recalled that her siblings Joseph, John and Mary finished school at Haskell near Lawrence, Kansas. Thomas and Albert both served in World War I. Albert was overseas and celebrated Armistice Day with the French. Thomas also served in World War II.

Joseph later married Minnie Rebecca Couch. Their children were Joseph A., Anthony, Mary, James, Thelma, Maxine and Marie.

Albert was the first full-blood Native American ordained Roman Catholic priest in the United States. He wanted to share Bible teachings with the Potawatomi people in their own language. Albert completed his education and was

ordained in Rome. His Catholic clerical name was Father Dom Bede and he spoke Potawatomi, English and Italian.

After returning to Oklahoma, Albert became a fixture at Catholic missions throughout the state, serving in Muskogee, Antlers and Pawhuska. He even lived among and ministered to the Chippewa of White Earth, Minnesota. In 1925, Albert was named the assistant rector of St. Joseph's Cathedral in Oklahoma City. Albert died on Nov. 13, 1944, and was buried at Sacred Heart Cemetery.

Through perseverance and service to their Potawatomi people, the Negahnquet family established a legacy that their descendants have continued to uphold.

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





## Basketball takes Tribal member around the world

Sports like basketball are known for building character and teaching important life skills like working with a team. For Tribal member Tanner Hazelbaker, playing basketball has also helped him travel the world.

Hazelbaker lives in his hometown of Twin Falls, Idaho, during the basketball off season, but from about September to April, he plays for different teams and leagues around the world. In the past eight years,



*Neil Hazelbaker played for UOP in France, the same team his son Tanner played for a few decades later.*

he has played professional basketball in France, China, Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia.

“It’s a fast-paced sport. You have to work hard to get the skill, and if you become a good player, it’s really exciting to be able to make moves and score,” he said. “The special thing about basketball that’s different from other sports is every league around the world has professional basketball. You get the chance to travel and see different countries and play in front of different people, which is just a dream come true for me.”

Among the places he has traveled, he said China really stood out. While the change in culture was a big adjustment, he was able to live there for two and a half years, teaching and playing basketball, and he said it was an amazing experience.

The location that’s most special to him, however, is one with a personal connection.

In France, Hazelbaker played point guard and shooting guard for the Union Olympique De Pamiers (UOP). His father played professional basketball with the same team when he was a young man.

“He actually came out there, and he got to see me play a couple times. He hadn’t been back to France in like 30 years, so he got to see a bunch of old





Tanner Hazelbaker, left, is pictured with his father, Neil Hazelbaker.

friends and his old teammates," Hazelbaker said. "A couple of my teammates, their dads were my dad's teammates. So it's kind of a cool connection."

Now 37, he said he wants to play at least one more year in the leagues.

"It's hard to stop when I have a large network and people are always messaging me, 'Can you come to Thailand?' or 'Can you come to China and play?'" he said.

Once he does retire from professional basketball, he plans to work with his father in the insurance business, but he also wants to help train the next generation of basketball players through an academy he set up in Twin Falls.

"I have a basketball camp that meets out here, and I have 40 to 50 kids every month coming to my training," Hazelbaker said.

He first had the idea after gathering experience in China working with academies there.

"I learned how to put together basketball skills training, so I wanted to build my own back home to give back to the players there," he said.

He set up the first academy in Twin Falls about two years ago and said it was a huge hit, with about 60 to 70 kids who signed up.

"We don't have a lot of basketball training in Twin Falls, so it's something the community really wanted," he said.

Since then, he has run the basketball academies when he is home in Twin Falls between basketball seasons.

In addition, he also wrote a 47-page skills training book with photos and instructions to reinforce some of the skills he teaches in his training. He gives the book to players he meets.

For the younger generation just getting into the game, he advised putting in the work and not letting themselves get too distracted by things like their phones or social media.

"Find the drive in training to get in the gym, put in the work, work on dribbling and shooting," he said. "That's really important. I mention to my kids, don't be distracted."

Hazelbaker, a member of the Ziegler family, is also proud of his Potawatomi heritage and appreciates all the Citizen Potawatomi Nation has done for him. Not only did he receive assistance when he was in college, but he also had help during the COVID-19 pandemic when he was overseas.

"I was stuck out in Thailand for two years during COVID, and they helped me out financially in that situation," he said. "That was really nice. I'm always proud to be Potawatomi."

For more information about Hazelbaker's basketball academy, search for Attack Basketball Company on Instagram and Facebook. 🔥



# Strobel performs for his Tribe with CHC concerts

Tyler Strobel, a member of the Johnson family from New Jersey, started teaching himself to play the piano when he was 13. Four years later, shortly after turning 17, he traveled from his home in New Jersey to play for his Tribe at the Cultural Heritage Center.

Tyler's mother, Debbie Strobel, first contacted the CPN Education Department to seek information about applying for scholarships, and during the conversation she also mentioned that Tyler played the piano and would be happy to come to Oklahoma to play at CPN. A few months later, the department called Debbie back to set something up.

"(They) took such a chance, because I could have been that mother who said, 'My kid's really good,' but then you hear them play *Twinkle, Twinkle*," Debbie said.

With help from Workforce Development & Social Services, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Education Department was able to organize two concerts at the CHC — one for the CPN After School Program and JOM/Youth students and another for Tribal citizens and the community at large.

Workforce Development and Social Services Director Margaret Zientek provided the funding for the refreshments and the piano rental.

Tyler and his father, Mike Strobel, traveled to Oklahoma for the concerts July 10. After a practice at Oklahoma Baptist University's facilities in Shawnee, Oklahoma, Tyler performed first for CPN's After School Program students and then later that evening for an event open to the public.

He started the first concert with *The Carnival*, an original song he composed, and then moved into a selection of songs including classical music, Disney and hits by artists such as Taylor Swift and Olivia Rodrigo. The evening concert also included showtunes, including *Oklahoma!* and music from *Jersey Boys* to pay homage both to CPN's current headquarters and Tyler's home state.

"It was such a good experience, and everybody was so kind," Debbie said. "Eight years ago, we toured the CHC, and it was my first time at the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. What a full circle moment. Eight years ago, he was this little kid who had never touched a piano. We didn't even know he could play the piano. Coming back eight years later, and he played in the Cultural Heritage Center. It was touching, to say the least."

## Finding his voice

Tyler's resumé shows he's performed as a soloist, accompanist and with ensembles many times over the past two years. However, several years ago, his parents didn't even know he had an interest in music.



Tyler Strobel, a 17-year-old Tribal member, performs at the CHC for the After School Program.

"Tyler never showed an interest in any sort of music. Other than when we sang *Happy Birthday* to him, he would run out of the room screaming," Debbie said, adding that she now understands why. "Think about it. You've got a lot of people singing off key. It sounded like a freight train in Tyler's head."

When Tyler was young, his mother said she knew his brain worked differently, and at the age of 4, a physician referred them to neurodevelopmental pediatricians and psychiatrists to receive a formal diagnosis for autism spectrum disorder. They put him into an ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) program, and he learned in a one-to-one environment with a teacher.

"He was the top performing student in his ABA school, so it was time to move him into a more mainstream school where he could still get ABA therapy," Debbie said.

It was during the COVID-19 pandemic, when classrooms were virtual, that the Strobels discovered Tyler's talent for music.

In a sixth-grade elective music class, there was one day when Tyler was the only student to show up. While drawing a picture for an assignment and listening to Vivaldi's *Four Seasons: Spring Concerti*, Tyler said, "This is in E Major." His teacher then played several things on a keyboard, and Tyler was able to call out the chords as she played.

"She said, 'I have only seen this one other time,'" Debbie said. "She'd been teaching for 14 years at this point. She said, 'I think he has perfect pitch.'"



The Strobels then dug an old keyboard out of storage, and Tyler's teacher asked him to play certain chords, which Tyler did.

"That's how his musical career got started," his mother said.

## Doors opening up all over

Since then, Tyler has learned to play without any formal lessons, and he's been involved in university ensembles and had scholarships offered to him.

In April 2024, Tyler was selected by Stockton University's School of Arts & Humanities to be a featured soloist at the inauguration ceremony for the school's sixth president, Dr. Joseph Bertolino. Tyler was invited to play with the Stockton University Classical Ensemble. He even did a private concert for the owners of Jacobs Music, one of the largest Steinway distributors in the world.

In October 2023, he composed *The Carnival*, a rondo written in A major, which has now been copyrighted and published. Tyler said it took him about three hours to compose the piece.

At the concerts in Shawnee, Tyler played for two hours for the evening concert and for almost an hour for the afternoon concert — all from memory and without sheet music. He can read sheet music, and does when he's learning pieces, his mother said, but is able to play songs from memory.

The most difficult part of the concert was not the music, but the talking. They knew Tyler would have to give context and introduce the songs before he played them.

"I knew that was going to be the toughest part of these concerts, the scripts that Tyler had to memorize to get up and talking about each piece, getting him to talk naturally, not sounding like he memorized it," Debbie said. "But it really helped him. This has really helped him in his public speaking and developing his English skills."

Tyler starts this semester as a high school junior but is also enrolled as a college freshman at Stockton University. He said after high school, he hopes to attend a conservatory of music such as the Curtis Institute of Music, Julliard or the Cornish College of the Arts.

His mother said music has given Tyler so much, including a career path.

"They told me at one point that Tyler would need to be institutionalized," Debbie said, adding that she'd also been told he could work busing tables or as a dishwasher. "I said no. I'll have him sit at home playing on his iPad before I'm going to have him do that. And then this musical gift came out, and now he's going to have a real career."

Tyler has gone from the most restrictive learning environment possible, with one-to-one teaching,



*Tyler Strobels introduces the next song at his piano concert at the CHC.*

to excelling in a traditional school with a 4.125 GPA and being admitted into the National Honor Society. His mother credits a lot of that to the music.

"He has a sense of confidence. Music has just given him a voice," she said. "Tyler's talent is unlocking new things every day for him. He loves music so much, and music has given so much to him. We're just eternally grateful."

To listen to Tyler play, follow him on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok at @typlayspiano. 🔥



# *Kishko*

A close-up photograph of a young, fluffy white golden eagle chick sitting on a patch of green grass. The chick has a dark, pointed beak and dark eyes. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green field under bright, natural light.

*Aviary welcomes  
new golden eagle*



Family Reunion Festival came with a special surprise this year when Tribal members were the first to be introduced to the Aviary's recently hatched golden eagle, *Kishko*.

*Kishko* was one of two eaglets to hatch at the Aviary this spring after two of the Aviary's golden eagles paired.

"It's very rare," Aviary Manager Jennifer Randell said. "It's truly a blessing."

## Pairing and nesting

After the Aviary's glove-trained golden eagle, *Myanabe*, walked on in 2020, Randell and her sister, Aviary Assistant Bree Dunham, were not ready to take on another bird.

"It took us a couple years to get ready to think maybe we could have that relationship with an eagle," Randell said. "I can't really explain that relationship. It's a very special, honorable thing when an eagle has that trust in you."

However, after a couple years, the South Dakota Zoo had a male golden eagle that needed placement.

"And the paperwork does say male golden eagle," Randell said. "We went ahead and traveled to get this eagle, and when we saw inside the kennel, her feet are bigger than my hand. She's huge. We knew it was a female."

The eagle seemed to have a very calm personality, so they decided to glove train her and tethered her with another golden eagle that has been with the Aviary about six years.

"Golden eagles will learn from watching other golden eagles," Dunham said. "So we put them tethered together so she could watch the other golden, since he was used to being tethered."

That went really well for a few days, they said.

"And then for the first time ever, in 14 years of living on this property, we heard the most beautiful sound," Randell said. "They're at the end of their leashes, almost beak to beak, and they're singing to each other."

The sisters say they try to let the eagles run the show and evolve with what they need, and so they released both golden eagles from their tethers the day after the female laid the first egg of her life — though she was not yet mature, so they knew it wasn't fertile.

"The paperwork does still say 'he.' Clearly not a 'he,'" Randell said. "If we had any doubt, we knew then."

In the winter, the eagles began building a nest, which is highly unusual in captivity. Golden eagles in the wild live in remote areas, away from people and foot traffic.

Dunham and Randell expected the female to lay an egg in March or April, but nothing happened until the end of April, when she laid two eggs.



*Tribal Chairman John "Rocky" Barrett and Vice-Chairman Linda Capps with Kishko*

"Everyone said great news, but no way you'll have fertile eggs the first year they're together. They're injured. There's all kinds of challenges," Randell said.

"The eagles don't read the books or listen to the experts," Dunham added.

Despite how rare it is, even in the wild, for a first-year pair to have a successful nest, the first egg hatched after 41 days, and the second egg hatched after 44 days on May 24.

## Changing plans

When the eaglets first hatched, Dunham and Randell called Chairman John "Rocky" Barrett and Vice-Chairman Linda Capps right away. Both expressed a desire to release the eagles, if possible.

"Unfortunately, we had the worst-case scenario," Randell said, and release became impossible, with the larger, female chick hatching first and growing aggressive toward the younger eagle. "He was already three days behind her, plus he was a male."

Randell and Dunham also think the birds hatching late, when the weather was hotter, might have put stress on the babies and the first-year parents.

"It was pretty hard, because we didn't want to intervene. We were trying to let those parents have that experience and possibly release," Randell said. "But we also didn't want it to go too far where we were putting those chicks in jeopardy. This is a once-in-a-lifetime situation."

Randell and Dunham monitored the eagles via video, and on the third day, they noticed the smaller eaglet did not seem to be getting food. They consulted Bill Voelker with Sia: Comanche Eagle Center, who has raised hundreds of eagles over more than 40 years, and he advised them to go in and feed the eaglet.

After both chicks had been fed, everything seemed to go well at first, but on the third day, they noticed the older chick was aggressively pecking the younger chick.

"Our commute is about 3 minutes, and by the time we got down there, you couldn't see him," Randell said. "He was covered in nest material, and the parents were walking on him. So we really thought we were too late."

Since the bald eagles at the Aviary have fostered chicks and even hatched one of their own, they were experienced parents, and Randell and Dunham have never had to intervene before.

"I've never held a baby eagle in my life. I've never had to go in and get it," Randell said. "So here we have this baby eagle. He fits in the palm of my hand, and he was just lifeless. We were both in tears. We thought we'd let it go too far."

Fortunately, they were able to help him, and though the first couple days were touch and go, he did make it. However, putting him back in the nest with the parents was no longer an option.

"Once that sibling aggression starts, it doesn't usually stop, and goldens are worse than other birds of prey in that usually one chick survives out of the nest and no others do," Randell said. "The strongest survive."

The older chick is still with the parents, and they hope to be able to release her if all goes well. For the younger chick, who has been named *Kishko*, or Second Born, Randell and Dunham set up an incubator in their home and took on full-time care.

"It's a little bittersweet, because I feel like he should be out there flying free. But he also wouldn't have made it if we hadn't intervened. So we are more than honored to help raise him and give him a good life," Randell said.

## Meeting Kishko

*Kishko*, still covered in fluffy white feathers, made his debut at Family Reunion Festival, where Tribal members were able to see and interact with him at the Cultural Heritage Center.

"It's so exciting to be able to share with them, and we'll be able to share this with the community from now on. This bird will be able to go to ceremony and to help heal people," Randell said.

By mid-July, he had grown to about full size. When he was still growing, he was eating 12 mice and 16 quail per day, though that has tapered off as he's getting older.

"I feel like we blinked and he's grown," Dunham said.

Randell and Dunham estimate he will start to learn to fly



*Kishko begins anklet training at 12 weeks old.*





him, and most of the rest of the day working with him to create good habits.

Once it was clear *Kishko* couldn't return to the nest, it also became important to get him used to being around different people and environments, from sounds, to clothing, to machines like coffee makers, so he's not afraid.

"He thinks he's a person," Dunham said, explaining that *Kishko* is fully imprinted and doesn't like other birds. "He won't ever be with other birds, and that's why it's so important that he gets used to all of this, because that's his reality from now on. He has to be around people."

Once trained, they plan to have him present at Grand Entry, and the hope is to be able to let him fly in the arena at Festival, even if only from glove to glove.

"He has been hand-raised by people, and he got to meet a lot of our community and our people," Randell said. "He'll be with us for the rest of his life, so we want to give him the best life we possibly can."

To learn more about the Aviary and the eagles who live there, visit [cpn.news/aviary](http://cpn.news/aviary). 🔥

Above: *Kishko* at 6.5 weeks

Right: Aviary Managers Bree Dunham and Jennifer Randell with *Kishko* at three weeks old

around 10 weeks old and then be soaring around 14 to 16 weeks old. Once his adult feathers have grown in, somewhere between 12 and 14 weeks, they'll put anklets on him and begin training him on the glove. At that time, they estimate they'll spend three to four hours per day glove-training





# Fire bring home second consecutive TBL trophy

It is almost impossible to improve on a season that ends in a National Championship.

Almost.

But the Potawatomi Fire found a way.

After the 2023 season ended with the team winning a championship, the 2024 edition of the Fire reloaded and blazed to a perfect 28-0 record with no losses in the regular season or the playoffs.

The 2024 season ended with point guard Chuck Guy being named the Most Valuable Player in the TBL. Ricky Artis II was named the 6th Man of the Year, and former MVP Deshawn Munson was named the MVP for the Playoffs. K.D. Moore was also awarded a spot on the All Conference Team for the Central Conference.

Coach Mark Dannhoff was named the league's Coach of the Year for the second straight season, and the Potawatomi Fire Dancers were named the best dance team in the Central Conference for the third straight season.

General Manager David Qualls works tirelessly to bring in and support team members who are not only among the best in The Basketball League but also great teammates and members of the community.

Coach Dannhoff said he believes in every member of the Fire.

"We were talking all year about being 12-men deep. We had confidence in all 12. It was easy to get where we needed to when the time came," Dannhoff said. "We always believed in our depth. We faced a lot of adversity and battled through it because of depth. We felt comfortable going down to our 12th man."

The Fire not only swept through the regular season undefeated, they also won their conference title, swept Los Angeles to advance to the championship series and swept St. Louis in a rematch of the 2023 title series.

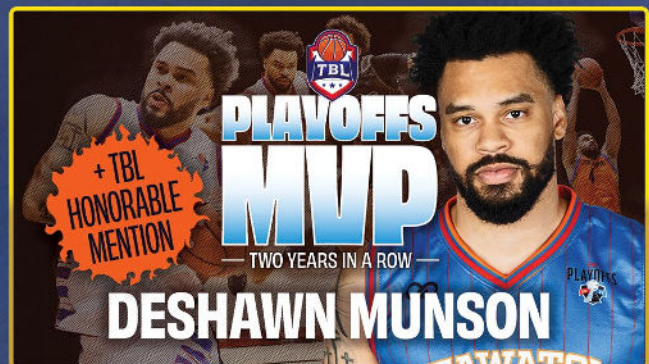
The Fire became the first team to win back-to-back championships and the only TBL team to ever complete an undefeated season.

The Potawatomi Fire are the first professional basketball team owned by a Native American tribe in Oklahoma. Along with winning the TBL championship in 2023 and 2024, the Fire organization was named the 2022 winner of the Jim Koch Award as TBL's Best Run Business. 🔥





# CELEBRATING A HISTORIC 2024 SEASON







The new FireLake casino and hotel



Six softball fields under construction

## Construction projects remain on schedule

Visitors to the Citizen Potawatomi Nation headquarters near Shawnee, Oklahoma, have probably noticed the progress of many construction projects.

The most noticeable is the new FireLake hotel and casino quickly taking shape at the corner of Gordon Cooper Drive and Hardesty Road.

“By the end of (July) the building will be completely dried in,” said Construction Department Director Jackie Gamble.

The new casino will be 49,000 plus square feet with more than 450 slot machines, a small kitchen and bar. The hotel will be three stories tall, more than 62,000 square feet with 126 guest rooms.

Gamble said only a few weather delays have impacted the casino/hotel project. Some weather delays are expected in Oklahoma, which can experience heavy rain and high winds, but the severe weather that did arrive did not put the overall project behind schedule.

Construction crews have already made up the time and were able to get the roof completed before more rain moved in.

Gamble said after the drywall has been completed, woodwork will be added. Then the facility will be ready for its finishing touches and installation of equipment and furniture.

“Right now, we’re on schedule for the casino and hotel to be complete by February of 2025,” Gamble said.

### Softball expansion

Some weather delays did impact the FireLake softball fields expansion project, he said. Delays were anticipated because other than the press box/concession and restroom facilities, most of the work is open to the elements.

The new softball complex will have artificial turf fields. The current complex has one quad, plus two additional fields which were demoed. When complete, the new FireLake Ball Fields will add another quad, with the possibility of a championship field. Seating will be available for 4,200 fans, a new press box and technical capabilities to broadcast some games.

“The plans are that fields nine and ten will be completed by the end of October this year,” Gamble said. “Then the other fields and the championship field will be done by May of next year.”



Work has started on the complex's parking lots.

## Administration building

The site for the new Tribal administration headquarters is adjacent to the current building. The current Tribal headquarters building was a former healthcare facility that was renovated and CPN administration began using it in 1998. The new facility will be a four-story structure of 82,000 plus square feet including a new court room for CPN Tribal Court proceedings.

Crews have installed 53 concrete piers. Next, footings will be dug for the building.

The estimated completion date for the project is July of 2026.

Gamble said all the progress would not be possible without the CPN construction department employees, CPN architects, other in-house departments and partners like Crossland Construction and Guernsey Architects.

"I'm really proud of my guys and their work ethic. They've been working overtime. We've been working weekends," he said.

CPN utilized funds from the American Rescue Plan Recovery Act, which was made available by the federal government during the coronavirus pandemic to help spur economic development. 🔥



Six softball fields under construction



The foundation of the new Tribal headquarters





Drinking First Nation  
Party Savat. ON 5000  
Citizen Potawatomi Nation  
Shawnee OK 860 Miles

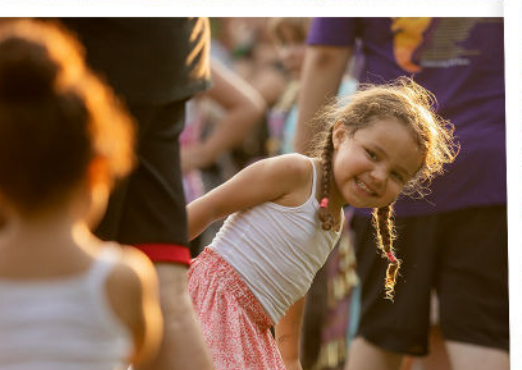
# 2024 POTAWATOMI GATHERING

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# 2024 POTAWATOMI GATHERING

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# House of Hope

By Kayla Woody, CPN House of Hope Prevention Specialist

As we enter the summer months, families are packing up for vacation, kids are finally escaping class and the weather is sure to change. But along with the rise in temps comes a rise in domestic violence cases for shelter advocates and hotlines.

Yes, you read that correctly. Summertime is not always fun and carefree for everyone.

According to a survey prepared by the U.S. Department of Justice "Seasonal Patterns in Criminal Victimization Trends," intimate partner violence increases by 12% in the summer months versus other seasons.

Some factors that come into play are:

- Increased stresses due to summer break for children
- Increased temperatures
- Lack of activities and increased idle time for teens
- Increase in alcohol and drug intake

While these factors do seem to increase abuse, they are certainly not the cause of domestic violence and are not to blame. In other words, intoxication doesn't cause abuse and sobriety doesn't stop it.

Iowa State University Professor Craig Anderson compares data about hot and not-as-hot states in his paper titled "Heat and Violence." He proposes a "heat hypothesis" that says hot temps can increase aggression by directly increasing feelings of hostility and indirectly increasing aggressive thoughts.

A major group that is affected by domestic violence during the summer is teens. With an increase in parties, drinking and idle time, teen dating violence becomes a horrible outcome for most. The Department of Justice also states those women, ages 16 to 24, are at the highest risk of becoming victims of domestic violence. Teen dating violence is any form of abuse that takes place in a relationship including physical, sexual, mental or

emotional abuse. These types of abuse can have serious effects on future relationships for developing teens.

For parents with teens, here are some tips on how to reduce the probability of your teen experiencing dating abuse:

- Monitor social media sites
- Communicate healthy relationships with your teen often
- Don't be afraid to ask questions and have an open dialogue with your teen

If communication with your teen is difficult there are always great resources to help. A list of popular books to offer your kiddos during their downtime may include, *In Love and In Danger: A Teen's Guide to Breaking Free of Abusive Relationships* by Barrie Levy, *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson, or even *Breathing Underwater* by Alex Finn.

With 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men finding themselves in domestic violence relationships, you or someone you care about may be one of these victims. In this case, there are steps to take that can remove you or that person from the situation into a safe environment. Many safety planning checklists instruct a person to do the following:

- Find a safe place to stay, which can include family, friends or a local shelter
- Pack a bag and hide in a safe place
- Call a local domestic violence hotline for assistance
- Keep important documents in a safe location
- Practice how to get out of a room or home safely
- Change or open new accounts
- Change locks

Even though you do not have control over your partner's violence, you do have a choice about how to respond and how to best escape an unsafe situation.

If you are experiencing intimate partner violence, sexual assault or stalking and have questions, please contact House of Hope's crisis line at 405-878-4673 or visit us online at [facebook.com/cpnhouseofhope](https://facebook.com/cpnhouseofhope). 🔥

The advertisement features a red background with the Sovereign Bank logo in the top left corner. The main text reads "MORTGAGES MADE EASY" in large white letters. Below this, it says "Contact Josh today!" and "Josh McClain, VP Mortgage Lending Apply at: [joshmclainloans.com](https://joshmclainloans.com) NMLS #1939558 | 405.673.0686 | [jmclain@banksovereign.com](mailto:jmclain@banksovereign.com)". On the right side, there is an image of a hand turning a door handle. In the bottom right corner, there is a small logo for "Member FDIC".

# Veterans Report

Bozho (Hello),

I hope everyone made it through July and Citizen Potawatomi Nation Festival 2024 without melting. It was quite a chore to stay cool and hydrated.

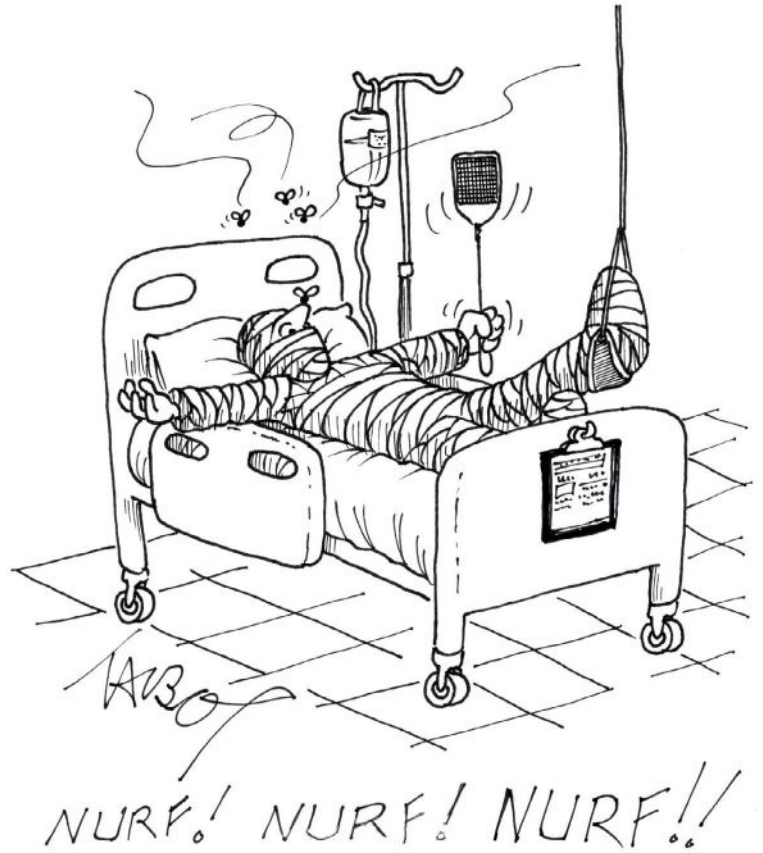
The Citizen Potawatomi Nation's Veterans Organization Honor Guard performed a flag folding service for two CPN veterans recently. The ashes of the two veterans were inurned in the Tribe's newly completed columbarium here in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Many people have been choosing to be cremated when their time comes, and as of June 10, 2024, the National Funeral Directors and Cemetery Administrators (NCA) began accepting applications for this new benefit ... a commemorative plaque or urn.

However, if families choose to commemorate their veteran with the commemorative plaque or urn, the VA will be prohibited from interring them in a VA national cemetery or providing a government headstone, marker or medallion for that veteran in any cemetery.

The VA will ship the commemorative plaque or urn without charge to the applicant and it becomes their property when received. The VA encourages careful consideration of the interment prohibitions before applying for a VA commemorative plaque or urn. Many veterans' families consider the interment and gravesite marking benefits which would be forfeited would be of greater value than the plaque and urn. So, consider carefully before applying for the plaque or urn.

For more information about veteran interment choices visit: [va.gov/burials-memorials](https://va.gov/burials-memorials). The VA is available to assist and answer any questions you may have.

Remember our monthly meeting of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Veterans Organization is the fourth Tuesday of each



month, Aug. 27 (unless otherwise notified due to weather or conflicting events) at 6 p.m. (or as soon as you can get there) in the North Reunion Hall on the CPN Powwow Grounds. All CPN veterans and spouses and their families are welcome. Membership in the veterans organization is not required; come and visit us and enjoy our socializing. For more information, you can contact Daryl Talbot.

Daryl Talbot, Commander  
[daryl.talbot75@outlook.com](mailto:daryl.talbot75@outlook.com)  
405-275-1054 🔥

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### OCTOBER

19 District 8 meeting in Portland, Oregon, will be the Annual Fall Feast.

### NOVEMBER

9 District 2 Fall Feast | 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Social Hall of Little Falls Presbyterian Church, 6025 Little Falls Road, Arlington, VA. To RSVP, email [evamariecarney@gmail.com](mailto:evamariecarney@gmail.com) or by call 888-849-1484.

### OPEN SEW CLASS

**Mondays:** Open Sew class for all levels from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Cultural Heritage Center

**Second and Fourth Thursdays:** Bead and Tea class for all levels from 1-4 p.m. at the Cultural Heritage Center





# Virtual Talking Circle

## Dgwaget (fall)



Join us on Zoom



# Language update

By Justin Neely, CPN Language Department Director

*Bozho Jayek*, (Hello everyone),

***Gi gshatemget mine gzhenamdek zhi Shishibeniyek mawjeshnowen.***

It was hot and humid there at the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Festival.

***Gi mdagwayemget mine mjésh bemadzejek gi byek.***

It was a good time and lots of people came.

***Gnebech yewagwén ngot wak bemadzejek zhi Bodewadmimwen Bingo zhenkadek mine wabmegwa manek bémadzejek echikemwat nech chikaswen.***

Perhaps 100 people were at Potawatomi bingo and I saw lots of people playing hand games.

***Shkwach gishget Master Apprentice zhenkadek zhi apte nibne gises nyanen.***

The last day of our master apprentice summer program was July 5.

***Nde-shpenmak jayek gode bemadzejek egi pabmadzewat shode mine dneswat nish gizsok epich bye-kkendemwat i zheshmowen.***

I am proud of the people who traveled here and hung around for two months while studying the language.

***Bgeji ngi-yekwes ga gish gishtamgek nesh je medagwendeman egi mbwach'egwa mjesh Shishibeniyek.***

I am a little tired but I enjoyed visiting with a bunch of Citizen Potawatomi people.

***Gaga she nwi-wzhitamen ewi pabmadzeyak wech ksenyak zhi bodewadmimwen mawjeshnowen mine Bodewadmj Mawjeshnowen.***

Soon we are going to be getting ready to travel north for the Potawatomi language conference and gathering.

***Nwi-wébtamen i shke kenomagewen zhi tasomkekosek. Shak dbegnék gme Ngot gishek nash Nyew Gishek.***

We started a new class online starting at 9 a.m. Central time every Monday-Thursday.

***Nwi-wzhetomen I meznatesek mzenegen Winnie Pooh zhenkadek.***

We are creating a video book of *Winnie the Pooh*.

***Winnie Pooh Mzodbéndemwen odew jo pi yawek.***

*Winnie the Pooh* is in the public domain now.

***Anet Niben kedwnen***

***Niben*** — Summer (nee-bin)

***Gshatemget*** — It is hot. (gshot damget)

***Skabimget I mbes*** — The lake is dried up. (skah beam get)

***Gi gmowen nago.*** — It rained yesterday. (geek mowin nahgo)

***Zamate ngom.*** — The sun is unbearably hot today. (zahmahtay ngome)

***Wabek nwi-basdeke.*** — I am going to lay out in the sun tomorrow.

***Gé-o-mbwachamen o gokmesnan ngom.*** — Let's go visit our grandmother. (Gae oh mbwach ah men oh gokemisnahn)

***Gbe-gishget Ngi-shemegok.*** — They fed us all day. (guh bay geesh get ngee shim eh goke)

***Abdek nwi-gishkzhegé gaga she.*** — I am going to have to mow soon. (Ahb duck nwee geeshk zheh gay gah gah sheh)

## Answers to our riddles part one

1. ***Nijetso dbegnék iw pi Wedapege jiptebdot i shkakwajgen?***

What time is it when an elephant sits on the fence? Time to fix it.

2. ***Nene bidek wde-ye o dabyan egi wabdek I zaw-shkwadém, shonyawabek-shkwadém mine mskwabek shkwadém. Ni je ye shkwadém nétem ga bakbdot?***

A man inside a car sees a yellow door, silver door and copper door. Which door does he open first? The car door.

3. ***Wégni je bokbdoyen bwamshe eyoyen?***

What do you break before you use it? Egg/glowstick

4. ***Nene gashkbazo mégwétsek gme-gishget nesh je megwa mishdonet. Ni je ezhewébzet?***

A man shaves several times every day but still has a beard. What's happening with him? He is a barber.

5. ***Gnwa epich wshkeyak mine dkwa epich géteyak. Wégni je eyawek?***

It's long when it's new and short when it's old. What is it? *Waskonénjegenatek*. A candlestick.

6. ***Wégni je nkwebdoyen nesh je bwa pegdoyen?***

What do you catch but don't throw? A cold.

7. ***Pene shena témget nigan igwan mine Cho wika shkwéyak. Wégni je eyawek?***

What is always in front of you and never behind? *Wje nigan ji igwan*. The future.

8. ***Nzewanek nde-ton mine nshtegwan nesh je bwa toyan niyow? Wégni je eyawek?***

What has a tail and a head but no body? What is it? Coins. *Shonyas*. 🔥



# From the executives



## John "Rocky" Barrett Tribal Chairman

*Bozho nikan, (Hello, my friend),*

Once again, it was a busy summer for Citizen Potawatomi Nation.

We hosted our annual Family Reunion Festival at the end of June, and despite high temperatures, saw a good turnout and many familiar faces.

This was followed at the end of July by the Potawatomi Gathering, which was hosted this year by the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians in Dowagiac, Michigan. Several of our employees and Tribal members attended. Next year, Gathering will return to Michigan, with the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians of Michigan hosting. If you've never been to a Gathering, I highly encourage you to attend one. It's a fulfilling experience to meet our Potawatomi cousins from across the U.S. and Canada and to celebrate our roots and traditions.

Shortly after returning from Gathering, CPN hosted its annual FireLake Fireflight Balloon Festival.

This is CPN's seventh year hosting the event, which is free and open to the public. The idea first came about as a way to give back to the community and provide a space for families to come together and make memories. It started in 2017, and with the exception of last year when weather kept the balloons from going up, the event has grown every year. It drew a record crowd of 50,000 people in 2022.

This year, we had 25 hot air balloons, vendors, concerts, a 5K and the Outdoor Nation Expo, but we also added camel rides, helicopter rides and a drone show.

If you've never made it out to the event before, you should consider adding it to your calendar next year. It's a great festival that brings a lot of visibility to our Tribe and highlights just one of the ways we are an asset to the area.

I'm proud of events such as these that show just how much our Tribe is growing and flourishing.

Thank you, again, for the chance to serve as your Tribal Chairman. I hope to do so for many years to come.

Migwetch (Thank you),

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



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## Linda Capps Vice-Chairman

*Bozho (Hello),*

The summer is quickly flying by, and “back to school” is a current theme all over the state. When I was growing up in Harrah, Oklahoma, classes began the Tuesday after Labor Day. I suppose that practice has vanished forever, at least in Oklahoma. I encountered the beginning of school each year to be an exciting time in my life. I always had butterflies in my stomach when I started back to school. The same was true in college, and even when I began teaching school. It was also that way for me when my own children began school each year. I think of it as a time of extreme excitement with just a touch of apprehension. The mixture must create butterflies.

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation has had a full year of events, and we are barely into August. The last four and a half months are sure to be equally productive. Looking over the year, Sovereign Bank became a billion-dollar bank in January. All four of our newest construction projects (hotel, casino, softball fields and administration building) got underway, either through planning or construction.

CPN has had three longevity luncheons since January to recognize employees with at least five years of service with the Tribe. The next luncheon will be in October. Several of our employees have over 30 years of service with CPN. Our administration is very proud of our employees for their dedicated years of service. On the 27th of April, there was a graduation recognition luncheon for students at all levels who wished to attend the event, which has been held annually for over six years now.

The CPN Annual Family Festival on the weekend of June 29 turned out great! Even though the heat was relentless, the pow wow was held in the arena, which was a blessing to all. The final attendance was 3,757 for the festival. That number includes 2,364 Tribal members and 1,393 guests. Although those numbers are down from previous years, one must take the heat into account. The Oklahoma weather had yielded days of near 100-degree weather prior to the festival.

August 9 and 10 is the date for the FireLake FireFlight Ballon Festival. Twenty-five balloons are scheduled to be at the seventh annual balloon festival.

According to the pictures in the brochure, the balloons are gorgeous. If you have never seen a hot-air balloon glow at night, you have missed a beautiful sight. Ten of the twenty-five balloons belong to pilots from Oklahoma. There are also pilots from California, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Texas and Iowa. The balloon meister is from Overland Park, Kansas. This year instead of a fireworks display on Friday night, there will be a drone show, which is something new to many of our people. We are looking forward to this new event. Entertainment, dining and shopping are part of the attractions for the festival. In addition, the Outdoor Nation Expo includes more than 100 vendors with all kinds of animal and fishing exhibits. The balloon festival is expected to attract about 60,000 thousand visitors for the two-day event. Approximately 200 CPN employees will be on hand to run the show.

This is an excellent opportunity to thank our wonderful employees for their work on the two major festivals. They work around the clock to make sure that everything runs smoothly while both our Tribal members and many guests come to enjoy what CPN has to offer during our summer festivals. It is such a joy to work with our dedicated employees. Thank you for allowing me to represent you as our Vice-Chairman.

*Migwetch (Thank you),*

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



*Robert Smith speaks at the longevity luncheon*



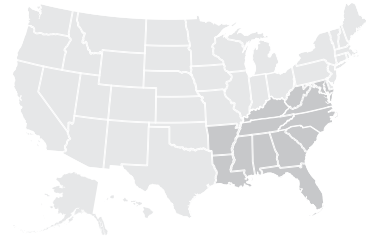
# From the legislature



## Eva Marie Carney District 2

*Bozho, nikanek* (Hello, friends),

**F**amily Naming in Richardsville, Virginia. In June I joined Pettifer family members for a family naming. Phyllis *Wabnokwe* Hurlock, our host, named her mother, the family matriarch, and her son, J.J. Vogltanz. J.J. then named his three children, Madison, Jameson and Jordan. Phyllis's sister Peggy *Msko Gises* Hurlock named her niece, Sassy Cooke, who in turn named her daughter, Skylar, and son, Dalton. Phyllis's husband, Jim, was our firekeeper. It was a perfect summer morning. *Migwetch* (thank you) to Justin Neely for his naming advice to the family.



**Family Festival weekend update; thank yous.** District 2 had this year's championship hand game team! The team consisted of father and daughter Dennis *Nawgishgok* Johnson and daughter Denise Beil (Clardy family), mother and daughter Jody *Gzhadawsot* Mattena and Kay *Kakendasot* Mattena (Navarre family), and siblings George Korzeniewski and Kim *Idwe Gishek* Pratt (Lewis family). Our seventh team member was "another" Eva, from Seminole, Oklahoma. The Squirrel Creek Singers' drumming and singing during the competition was terrific. *Migwetch* (thank you) to all for creating a delightful Friday evening.

The weekend was packed with other events and opportunities to visit with family and friends. Among the highlights was my visit to our Eagle Aviary, during which Jennifer Randell provided updates on the eagles and shared about the birth of two baby golden eagles! On the Monday after the Festival, Legislator Alan Melot and I were fortunate to have the opportunity to visit with *Kishko*, one of the babies.

Other highlights were tours of the new construction (small hotel, casino, new ballfields and new administration building); a visit to our new Columbarium, which is beautiful in its simplicity; and taking part in naming ceremonies for Brent Korzeniewski (*Mésko Mko*) and Jessica Kitchens (*Bojkwansikwe*). I even had my first ever trip to Sonic, at Alan Melot's urging (he paid!). Only had their lemonade, but it was good to celebrate the connection to Reservation Dogs ([cpn.news/sonicconnection](https://cpn.news/sonicconnection)).

I was not as diligent about taking photos this year as in past years; those I took are posted to my Facebook page, if you are interested. *Migwetch* (thank you) to everyone who worked to make this year's Festival so memorable.

I was not as diligent about taking photos this year as in past years; those I took are posted to my Facebook page, if you are interested. *Migwetch* (thank you) to everyone who worked to make this year's Festival so memorable.

**District 2 Fall Feast – please save the date.** On Saturday, Nov. 9, 2024, from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., we will gather in the social hall, Little Falls Presbyterian Church, 6025 Little Falls Road, Arlington, VA 22207 ([littlefallschurch.org](https://littlefallschurch.org)). Please bring your favorite dish (with a recipe if you would like) to share. I will provide meat and vegan main dishes, along with beverages. We will visit, begin work on bandolier bags and share a family meal. Children are welcome! The



Family Naming, Richardsville, Virginia, June 2024





Eva Marie Carney visiting with our baby golden eagle, July 2024

craft will be appropriate for children 10 and up with one-to-one adult supervision. Postcard invitations will be mailed to folks in surrounding parts of District 2, but you do not need to receive a postcard to attend; just RSVP to me, please. *Chi migwetch* (big thanks) in advance to the folks who have agreed to help with craft instruction – Bob Shaweno Richey and Karen Richey and George, Kathleen, and Brent Mésko Mko Korzeniewski. Brent made a bandolier bag during the Festival; he will be bringing us what he learned. Bob, Karen and Kathleen have been noodling on patterns and materials for some time already. I am so grateful that all are willing to share their expertise and patience with everyone who will take part in November.

Please contact me for any help you might need or to visit. Migwetch (thank you) for the honor of representing you.

Eva Marie Carney | Ojindiskwe (Bluebird Woman) | [ecarney@potawatomi.org](mailto:ecarney@potawatomi.org) | [evamariecarney@gmail.com](mailto:evamariecarney@gmail.com)  
[evamariecarney.com](http://evamariecarney.com) | PO Box 5595 | Arlington, VA 22205 | Toll Free: 866-961-6988

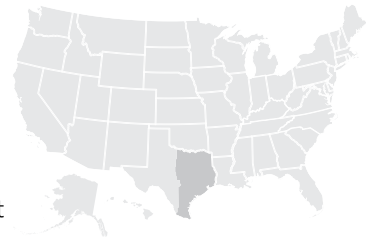
## Bob Whistler District 3

Bozho nikanek (Hello friends),

### Oklahoma

Living in Texas, I have the opportunity to travel to my birth state several times each year. My normal route is on Interstate 35. Just after passing over the Red River, I am greeted with the word LOVE and OKLAHOMA as I am returning home. You see, I am actually entering the state in Love County, and it lightens my day for what may lie ahead for me on this return trip.

Oklahoma has a number of things that are rather distinctive. Yes, it is referred to as Indian Territory, and there are 39 separate Native American nations residing in the state. Some of the crops grown are, of course, corn and soybeans. But also, in days past much wheat was grown and, so to speak, the discovery of oil mid-continent was made after we were forced to move to a land that was deemed all but unfit for the settlers who originally arrived from Europe.



we were forced to move to a land that was deemed all but unfit for the settlers who originally arrived from Europe.



Truss bridge display

As Oklahoma began growing in the 1820s, the need for travel resulted in many bridges being built to cross the rivers of the state. Prior to the bridges, ferries were used in many places. In 1907 there were seven railroads in Oklahoma that needed to cross the Red River into Texas. Because of the weight of the train engines, a steel “truss” bridge design was created. Each truss had a span length limit of about 100 feet, so many links were needed to cross

the river at some points. On State Highway 79 between Waurika, Oklahoma, and Byers, Texas, the span required 23 links for the 2255-foot distance needed to be crossed.

On my trip to the Family Reunion Festival this year on I-35, I stopped at the Oklahoma welcome center, which is located at the first exit right after the Chickasaw Windstar Casino you just passed on your right. As I returned to my car, I noticed what appeared to be a long steel structure about 15 to 20 feet high on the north side of the welcoming building. Out of curiosity, I decided to see what this new item was and found that it was part of a truss bridge that had

been restored and placed there in memory of another part of Oklahoma history. I am including photos of the various avenues and means of crossing the Oklahoma Red River over time, including one of the truss bridge display. I suggest the next time you travel on I-35 from Texas into Oklahoma, accept their LOVE and see their truss bridge display.

## Columbarium

At the legislative meeting following Family Reunion Festival we were advised that staff is working on the procedures regarding columbarium that our citizens desire to be used for their relatives remains. It is my understanding that Tribal Rolls will be the department which will be used to handle this benefit and they should be contacted for any questions.

## Namings

At Family Festival we estimated at the large prayer circle there were about 65 in attendance. Of that number, about 28 were given their Potawatomi names. I named one person, and others named from five to seven or eight. Chairman Barrett and Vice-Chairman Capps said they believe this is the largest group they have named at one time.

## Correction

Please know that in the July issue I made an error and listed the eldest as being Arron Benick when in actuality it was Rick Attebery, who turned 76 on the 19th and was given a saddle blanket for being the eldest. My sincere apologies to Rick.

*Migwetch* (Thank you) for letting me serve as your District 3 representative.

*Bami pi* (Later),

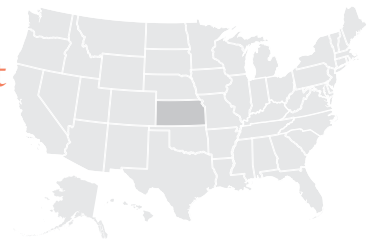
Bob Whistler | *Bmashi* (He Soars) | [rwhistler@potawatomi.org](mailto:rwhistler@potawatomi.org) | [cpn3legislator@yahoo.com](mailto:cpn3legislator@yahoo.com)  
1516 Wimberly Ct. | Bedford, TX 76021 | 817-229-6271 | [cpndistrict3.com](http://cpndistrict3.com)



## Jon Boursaw District 4

### Tracy Kinderknecht recognized with a shout-out

In early June, our very own Tracy Kinderknecht received a shout-out recognition for her service and job performance as a Community Health Representative (CHR) for CPN's Senior Support Network. She is a registered nurse and case manager in Rossville, Kansas. Tracy has been with us for over 10 years. She is an exemplary employee who provides excellent treatment and services to our elder Tribal residents in Rossville and the surrounding area. Recently, the Housing Department has been busy conducting interviews for a new Housing Manager and Maintenance Technician in Rossville, and Tracy jumped in and helped where needed. Director of Housing Scott George said, "Tracy wasn't asked to do these things, but she is the kind of person who steps in when she detects a need. Our Housing Department is deeply grateful."



I have had the pleasure of working with, and sometimes for, Tracy and I'm always impressed with her devotion and dedication in serving our Elders. Remember the Food Distribution program during COVID? We wouldn't have been able to serve the number of recipients we did without her planning and direction. I can't begin to count the number of monthly Elders Potlucks held in Rossville where she has always prepared the main course. Whether it is a home visit or in her office, Tracy provides the utmost in care and advise to our elders.

Why is there an RN in Rossville? We have been fortunate to have a Senior Support Network CHR RN since the CPN duplexes were first opened in 2007. In addition to serving the CPN members living in duplexes this position also serves the high concentration of CPN elders living within a 50-mile radius from Rossville, which spans from Manhattan to Lawrence, Kansas.

The shout-out program is hosted by the Employee Advocate staff and provides an opportunity for a CPN employee to nominate a fellow employee for their performance and dedication.

## Affordable Rental Housing in Rossville

The Tribe has 10 rental duplexes (20 units) in Rossville, Kansas, for enrolled CPN Elders and physically handicapped members. Eligibility for housing is extended to enrolled members of any federally recognized Native American tribe. At the time this article was written there were a few units available, but that could



have changed quickly. All units are two bedrooms with washer and dryer, stove and refrigerator included. For more information on availability or submission of an application contact the following:

CPN Rossville Housing Office: 785-584-6401  
Or the CPN Housing Office in Shawnee, OK: 405-273-2833

## Upcoming CPN Elders' Potluck

Date for the next Elder Potluck held in Rossville at noon is:

Sept. 13, 2024          Spaghetti & Meatballs          RSVP by Sept. 10

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

## Permanent art exhibit at the trail maker near Olathe, Kansas

Just a quick thank you to all of you who stopped by the art exhibit during the Festival and offered your opinion, and in many cases wrote comments, on what you liked. The committee was scheduled to meet in mid-July to review the opinions and make a recommendation to the Johnson County Commissioners for approval.

## Contact Information

If you are not receiving emails from me, it is because I do not have your current email address or what I have is incorrect. All you need to do is email me your email address.

Megwetch (Thank you),

Jon Boursaw | Wetase Mkoh (Brave Bear) | [jon.boursaw@potawatomi.org](mailto:jon.boursaw@potawatomi.org) | 785-608-1982  
2007 SW Gage Blvd. | Topeka, KS 66604 | Office Hours: Tuesday 9-11 a.m. | Thursdays 3-5 p.m. | Other times as requested



## Gene Lambert District 5

Bozho (Hello),

I know you have heard from everyone by now what an awesome Festival we had in 2024. We do write our articles a month in advance but hopefully you had the opportunity to attend this year. It was phenomenal.

There is so much to write about, so I wanted to focus on the Eagle Aviary and the special events occurring there over the weekend.

To start with, the birth of a baby golden eagle was the topic of discussion for everyone. People from all over the country are planning a visit to see one of the first baby golden eagles born in captivity.

The directed attention to the caretakers of our magnificent birds and the love they have for the honor at hand is my focus.

The facility is managed by Jennifer Randell and Bree Dunham and has been since we opened. As a matter of fact, I believe they had the original concept for the Aviary.

Focusing on them and their work is what brings up the subject of this article.

No one could love what they do more than those two. You can see the love and care they have for our eagles in their actions and words they choose.

When you are planning your next life experience you want to pay particular attention to what that is. I used to tell my students with a lost perception of what their dream job might be. I always asked, "When you could do anything and unsupervised as a young person, what kinds of things did you do?"

Create and/or develop a new beginning for yourself as they did. It was nonexistent when they began, but they believed in its worth and pursued until complete.

Sometimes our direction gets lost with age and we forget about the things we used to dream about. We are more focused on how to pay the bills and what you enjoy gets lost.





Introduction of Kishko to Tribal members at Family Reunion Festival

Now, Jennifer and Bree are obviously on their right path. They love what they do and it makes them feel purposeful. It shows! It appears it was a position created just for them.

There is undoubtedly a calling for you too. It is never too late to change that.

If you love what you do you never work a day in your life. That should be our goal instead of "how much money does it pay."

I have copied from the Aviary website why we have an Eagle Aviary and what their position requires.

What a wonderful contribution to

our people, gratitude to the process of nature and acknowledgement of the Creator's work.

Concentrate now on 24/25 to give life to your dream.

## Eagle Aviary

"The Citizen Potawatomi Nation Eagle Aviary offers a permanent home to eagles rescued from the wild that have been injured and cannot be rehabilitated and released. In Potawatomi culture, eagles are a sacred animal that fly so high they deliver prayers to the Creator. While only a handful of Native American aviaries exist in the U.S., this facility is the first of its kind to incorporate culturally significant elements into the facility design.

Aviary staff pride themselves on practicing sound husbandry to provide these birds permanent homes in an environment created with enrichment intended to replicate a portion of their wild habitat. They specialize in educating community members about eagles and other raptors, providing naturally molted feathers to tribal members and giving these birds their best lives."

Take care of each other and live your best life!

Love you all,

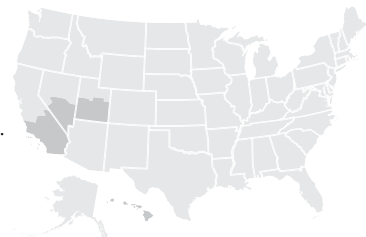
Gene Lambert (Eunice Imogene Lambert) | Butterfly Woman | [glambert@potawatomi.org](mailto:glambert@potawatomi.org)  
270 E Hunt Highway Ste 229 | San Tan Valley, AZ 85143 | Cell: 480-228-6569 | Office: 480-668-0509



## Rande K. Payne District 6

Bozho Nikanek (Hello friends),

The drive to the Family Reunion Festival proved to be challenging. As if three hours of road construction delays between Flagstaff, Arizona, and Amarillo, Texas, wasn't enough, there was a torrential downpour slowing traffic to 30 mph. Combine that with losing two hours due to the time change makes for a long day. Traveling with my 9-year-old and 12-year-old grandsons and my two sisters made driving affordable. Leaving California, the price of gas drops an average of \$1.20 per gallon. I opted for stopping in Flagstaff and Amarillo, but you could save money if you don't mind 12-hour days behind the wheel. Air travel has become so expensive. We traveled comfortably with our luggage in a minivan. Traveling by car made bringing family along much more affordable. I would encourage families contemplating attending a Festival in the future to consider this option.



It was great to see all the folks from District 6. I think this year had the most people from District 6 attending that I can remember. Many of you I had just seen in Temecula, California, earlier in the month.

We had three Tribal members from District 6 named at this year's Festival. Patty Sarratt and Shelley Grey were named by Vice-Chairman Linda Capps along with their sister Decinda Sarratt from District 3. The sisters are Ogee/Weld descendants. I had the honor of naming Loretta Gray. Loretta is a Negahnquet descendant. The Negahnquet family was one of the honored families this year.





*Naming of Loretta Gray. (Left to right) Gray Wolf Testan (grandson), Michael Testan (son-in-law), Loretta, myself and Kelly Testan (daughter).*



*Naming of Shelley Grey. (Left to right) Decinda Sarratt, Patty Sarratt, Linda Capps and Shelley Grey*

Jake Morell from District 6 in Hawaii was recognized as the Tribal member that traveled the farthest distance to attend Festival. Congratulations, Jake!

The Darling family was one of the honored families this year. I am a Darling descendant. I met the Curtis Huffmire family from District 6 who are also Darling descendants. I believe our great-grandmothers were sisters. It was nice meeting the Huffmire family, and I look forward to getting to know them better.

Construction projects abound on Tribal grounds. Jackie Gamble, our Construction Department Director, took members of the Legislature on a tour of all the projects currently in progress. Work on the new Tribal headquarters building is underway. We watched as 80-foot-deep holes for piers were being drilled and filled with concrete for the foundation of the multistory structure. Next stop was the new casino. Exterior finish work has started as interior work is at a fevered pitch. Ducting for the HVAC system is nearly complete. Fresh outside air is brought in and either heated or cooled and ducted to outlets in the floor. The dirty air is pulled into overhead ducts and exhausted outside the building. The smell of cigarette smoke will be virtually non-detectable. On to the new 126-room hotel. The exterior is mostly wrapped and close to completion. The interior is framed and most of the plumbing, electrical and drywall is complete. We should be open for business early next year. Then it was on to the new ball fields. The dugouts and snack bar structures are up. Work on lighting is underway. Grass has been replaced with artificial turf at the older fields. The lighting will be replaced with new LED energy efficient lights. When completed, our ball fields will be a draw for collegiate level softball play.

Wisdom from the Word: "So the people of Israel did everything as the Lord had commanded Moses. Each clan and family set up camp and marched under their banners exactly as the Lord had instructed them." Numbers 2:34

*Jagenagenan. Migwetch. Nagech (All our relations. Thank you. Later),*

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



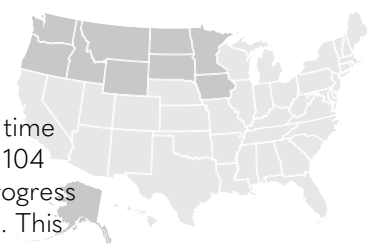
## Dave Carney District 8

*Bozho nikan, (Hello friend),*

The 2024 Citizen Potawatomi Family Reunion Festival was a good time for all who attended, despite the stifling heat (heat index of over 104 degrees). As usual, the highlights for me were seeing the Nation's progress as we diversify the financial base (enterprises) for future generations. This includes a new FireLake Casino facility to replace the 1980s facility, a new, family friendly hotel and expanded softball facilities that will allow for tournaments to be hosted. These investments in the Nation's future are funded by ARPA monies.

The columbarium is now receiving remains! Over the Festival weekend, some of our citizens' ashes were inurned. This is a beautiful and peaceful place, in the shape of a Native medicine wheel. There is currently one medicine wheel, and this can be scaled to as many as seven medicine wheels at this site.

Another highlight was, of course, the Eagle Aviary, where a 5-week-old Golden Eagle resides (very rare to have one born in captivity). It really is an amazing and special place for all Tribal members to be proud of.





Myself, Alan Melot and Eva Marie Carney

Friday night’s traditional hand games were very well attended with record participation; there were 18 teams – the most I’ve ever seen. District 8 was able to field a team comprised fully of Pacific Northwest citizens Bill Briton, Mark Briton, Tricia Briton, Tricia Briton, Lisa Allen, Kare Bairch, Rachel Maker and Selah Bellschiedt.

The powwow dancing and Grand Entry Saturday night were moved into the air-conditioned arena this year in response to five citizens being hospitalized last year due to heat-related illness.

If you couldn’t make it to Oklahoma, consider coming to a Northwest meeting!

Hopefully, you have received a postcard in the mail, an e-mail from me or seen the invite on Facebook.

The Tribal Rolls department is very protective of our citizens’ privacy. They do not provide legislators with names and addresses. I have occasionally received a “heat map” showing dots representing Potawatomi throughout my district. This is the logical basis for deciding on where to have district gatherings. If you do not receive e-mails from me, please reach out and let me know where you are from.

Also, I have asked this of District 8 citizens before – if I named you in the past, please send me a quick e-mail with your name, Tribal ID number and the Potawatomi name you received. I am cross checking with Tribal Rolls to make sure these are recorded. And, of course, if you named someone, please feel free to give me that info also so I can verify it with Tribal Rolls.

It is my honor to serve as your Legislator,

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



## Paul Wesselhöft District 9

*Bozho, nikan* (Hello, friend),

It is with gratitude and humility that I extend my appreciation to Oklahoma Potawatomi for trusting me as your representative. I thank you for your support and friendship through the years. In our national legislature, I take my governmental responsibility very seriously and your values and concerns are my own.

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation is destined to be the eighth largest tribal nation in America. Our nation is more than a billion-dollar tribe. We are not only financially prosperous, but we stand as an excellent governmental example to other tribal nations throughout America. We are probably the most stable and secure Native American nation. I am proud to tell people about our tribal achievements.

I believe the next several years will be some of the greatest years for our nation. My hope has always been that all our many enterprises will out earn our gaming operations. That’s my goal as a representative. And I have always championed more and higher value scholarships for our youth. I am here to represent you, and my personal email is [reppaul@gmail.com](mailto:reppaul@gmail.com). Please converse with me if you have any questions or issues. Again, I thank you for your trust in me.

*Migwetch* (Thank you),

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



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# Walking On

## Patricia Sue Jones Degraffe Family



Patricia Sue Jones, 85, passed away on Wednesday, June 5, 2024, peacefully surrounded by her family. She was born in Winslow, Arizona on March 17, 1939, to the late Stephen Mileham and Glorianna Davis.

Patricia was a member at Rainbow Baptist Church and enjoyed being a greeter there for 20 plus years. She was known for her passion for sewing clothes and baking biscuits,

activities that brought joy to those around her. Her demeanor, beautiful smile and unwavering generosity were some of the qualities that defined her. Patricia had a heart of gold and was always willing to help others, embodying the spirit of a true caregiver. Patricia enjoyed hobbies such as reading, walking, sewing, cooking and baking. These activities brought her immense joy.

Her presence will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her. May she rest in peace knowing that she touched the lives of many with her kindness and warmth.

Patricia is preceded in death by her parents, Stephen Mileham and Glorianna Davis; brother, Steve Mileham; husband, Charles Jones; sons, Bobby Jones, Johnny Jones, Larry Jones; and a daughter, Rosie Jones.

Patricia leaves behind a legacy of love and kindness that will be cherished by all who knew her. She is survived by her beloved daughter Frances Johns and husband James Hatcher; and sister, Charlaine Adkins. She also leaves behind her dear grandchildren, Robert Johns and wife Jami, Naomi Johns, Sonia Rivera and husband Manuel, Crystal Kimberlin and husband Tim, Stephanie Jones, Joshua Jones, Larry Jones Jr. and Tiffany Jones; numerous great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild.

A memorial service was held June 22, 2024, at Rainbow Baptist Church in Rye, Texas.

## Lillie (Diddie) Sullivan Greemore Family

Mrs. Lillie Doris (Diddie) Sullivan walked on to live her everlasting life with her Savior Jesus Christ in the early morning of March 20, 2024, at the age of 94. Ms. Lillie was proud to become a born again Christian July 1991 and was baptized by Pastor Mitch Mullen at Tuskahoma First Baptist Church. On her birthday Oct. 5, 1991, she married Johnny Sullivan. They lived out in the tater hills a few miles north of Tuskahoma on 50 acres until 2016,

when they moved 'to town' in Hartshorne, Oklahoma, and became members of Cornerstone Baptist Church.

Lillie is survived by three children and one stepson, seven grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren. She is preceded in death by her parents, 11 aunts and uncles, 15 siblings and her husband Johnny Sullivan, who passed away Feb. 1, 2023. Lillie and Johnny are buried at Sardis Cemetery along with many relatives descended from the Greemore Potawatomi family.

Lillie was born three miles west of downtown Sardis, Oklahoma, on Oct. 5, 1929, to Callie and Grover Norris. Her schooling included Borden in the summer and Lone Star in the winter through approximately the eighth grade. She left the farm at age 14 and got her first paying job at the TB Sanatorium in Talihina. She ended her working career after 18 years at Aerotornics when they shut down in Hartshorne. Her career was multifaceted as were her talents. She could ride a horse and camp with the best of them, hunt and process game, heck of a dancer and was known to sing the Star Spangled Banner at a rodeo or two. Her daddy called her 'Tom' and swore she could outwork two men anytime.

Lillie took immense pride in her Native American heritage, boasting a bloodline of 1/16th from the Citizen Potawatomi Nation from her mother's side of the family, the Greemores.

Ms. Lillie treasured her role as a devoted mother and sibling. She was the last sibling of her generation. She embodied unconditional love and support for her children and siblings throughout her life. Her family was a great source of joy and pride and she cherished every moment spent with them.

Diddie, you were a special woman and we will miss you until we meet again.

## Keith Rennie Smith Family



Keith Rennie, a devoted husband, beloved father and brother, and cherished grandfather, passed away on June 23, 2024, after a brief but valiant battle with cancer. He was 71 years old.

Keith was born on July 1, 1952, in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, and grew up on multiple reservations in New Mexico and Montana with a deep connection to his parents, Albert and Carmen (née Smith) and

four brothers, Rod, Ray, Tom and Doug (predeceased) and appreciation of culture. He pursued a career as an



attorney, then as an educator, becoming head of the business department at Salish Kootenai College, despite a self-proclaimed fear of public speaking. For him, fear was not a reason to forgo pursuit of a meaningful goal. Known for his sharp mind and easy-going demeanor, Keith positively impacted countless lives throughout his career.

Keith's greatest joy, however, came from his roles as husband to Carole, father to Brandon and Craig, and grandfather to Torrin and Solea. He exemplified the ideal father, always supportive, loving, and ready with a playful joke or wise advice. His grandchildren brought him immense happiness and brought out a particular playfulness familiar to his friends and family.

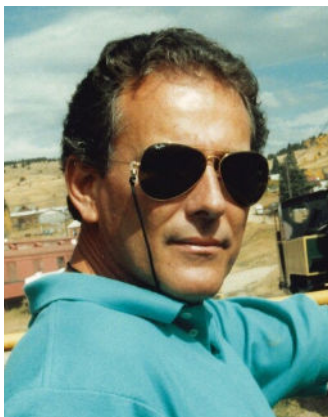
In his leisure time, Keith enjoyed fishing or a day on the lake; passions he eagerly shared with any and everyone. He enjoyed a practical joke and delighted in sharing laughter with those around him. Later in life, Keith indulged his musical proclivities whole-heartedly, reveling in new instruments and social bonds.

Keith leaves behind a legacy of humility, integrity, and intellectual curiosity. His confident speculations on a wide range of topics and his ability to engage others in lively discussions will be remembered fondly by all who knew him. His absence will be deeply felt by his family, friends, colleagues, and all whose lives he touched.

A memorial service to celebrate Keith's life was held on July 21, 2024, from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Red Poppy in Ronan, Montana. In lieu of flowers, Keith requested donating blood to the Red Cross or make a donation to the Western Montana Musicians Co-op, an organization that Keith helped to create and got immense joy out of participating in. Keith's memory will live on in the hearts of those who were fortunate enough to know him.

Messages of condolences may be shared with the family online at [lakefuneralhomeandcremation.com](https://lakefuneralhomeandcremation.com). Arrangements are under the care of The Lake Funeral Home and Crematory.

**Robert J. O'Connor**  
Peltier Family



Robert J. O'Connor, resident of Shawnee, Oklahoma, passed away on Thursday, July 11, 2024. He was 82 years old. Bob was born on April 15, 1942, in Shawnee, Oklahoma, to his parents, Patrick A. O'Connor and Ara Mae O'Bright O'Connor.

As a young man, Bob proudly served his country in the United States Air Force. After his honorable discharge from the military, he worked for General Motors, retiring after 25 years. Bob had a passion for

flying and started O'Connor Flying Service in Shawnee where he was a flight instructor for more than 40 years. He enjoyed traveling with his family, reading and learning history, and was a proud CPN member.

He was preceded in death by his mom and dad, Ara Mae O'Bright O'Connor and Patrick O'Connor; brother, Patrick O'Connor; sister-in-law, Phyllis O'Connor and brother-in-law, Jim VanWagner.

Those left to cherish his memory are his wife, Jeanette O'Connor of the home; son, Craig O'Connor and wife Debbie of Tulsa, Oklahoma; daughter, Carrie Kieffer and husband Jeff of Shawnee, Oklahoma; step-daughter, Trisha Barnes and husband Chris of Yukon, Oklahoma; granddaughters, Katie Evans and husband Rob of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Erin Wiggins and husband Michael of Texas, Grace Kieffer of Shawnee, and Tatym Barnes of Yukon, Oklahoma; grandsons, Mark O'Connor of Texas, Riley Kieffer of Shawnee, Oklahoma, Ayden Burns of Yukon, Oklahoma, and Christian Barnes of Yukon, Oklahoma; 7 great-grandchildren; brothers, Jerry O'Connor and wife Jackie and Donnie O'Connor and wife Becky; sister, Madeline VanWagner; sister-in-law, Cheryle O'Connor; mother-in-law, Naomi Kershner of Blue Springs, Missouri; and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Arrangements were under the direction of Walker Funeral and Cremation Service.

**Sheilla Jo Horton**  
Bourassa/Bertrand Family



Sheilla Horton, 64-year-old Woodward, Oklahoma, resident, passed away Monday, Feb. 5, 2024. Graveside services were held Friday, Feb. 9, 2024, in the Elmwood Cemetery in Woodward. Arrangements were under the direction of the Billings Funeral Home.

Sheilla Jo (Bourassa) Horton was born on March 18, 1959, in Oklahoma City to Dahl Bourassa and Jobyna (McAllister)

Bourassa. Sheilla grew up on the family farm north of Woodward in Harper County, Oklahoma. She graduated from Freedom High School and went on to attend and graduate from Southeastern Louisiana University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

She was united into marriage to Terry Griffith from Freedom, Oklahoma. They were blessed with two children, Joe and Denver. She later married Max Horton of Buffalo, Oklahoma. Sheilla worked as the director of nursing for Northwest Center for Behavioral Health for over 10 years. During that time, she was a positive influence on all those under her care. She later went to work for the prison in Sayre, Oklahoma, as the medical intake specialist.



Sheilla then worked as a nurse at Saint Francis Hospital in Enid, Oklahoma, in the psychiatric unit, after which she retired from nursing due to poor health. One of her favorite parts of being a nurse was teaching the psychiatric rotation for the nursing students at Northwestern OSU.

After her retirement, Sheilla really enjoyed her two dogs, Jolee and Toby, and loved being with her family. She was especially grateful for the opportunity to care for her mother for the past two years. She also enjoyed OU athletics, especially OU football, as well as the OKC Thunder and Dallas Cowboys.

Sheilla attended the 1000 Hills Ranch Church in Woodward. She was very strong in her Christian faith and had a genuine love for her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Sheilla is survived by one son, Joe Griffith of South Texas, and stepson, Jonathan Horton; her mother, Jobyna Bourassa; three siblings, Vicki Chandler, Dallas Bourassa and Derric Bourassa all of Woodward; and many loving cousins, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and friends.

She was preceded in death by her son, Denver Griffith, and father, Dahl Bourassa.

.....

**William "Willie" Monroe Byers Jr.**

Melott/Bergeron Family



William "Willie" Monroe Byers Jr. was born on Jan. 1, 1947, in San Diego, California, to Margaret Nadine Byers (Melott) and William Monroe Byers Sr., both from Shawnee, Oklahoma. He passed away on July 24, 2024, in Port Lavaca, Texas, at age 77. He was preceded in death by his parents and eldest son, William Monroe Byers III.

In life he enjoyed riding motorcycles, playing cards and backgammon. As a proud member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, he carried the name "Red Stone Man," which he fully embodied. He attended Native gatherings across the nation, learning the ways of our ancestors. He graduated with a degree in psychology in 2014 at the age of 67 and led a life of guidance to countless others, providing counseling and teachings in their time of need.

He is survived by his children, Daniel D. Byers of San Diego, California, Rebecca J. Johnson (husband John), of Rockport, Texas, Diana J. Peña (husband Joe) of Corpus Christi, Texas, Val Byers of California and Jeremiah J. Byers of Youngstown, Ohio, along with 10 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

A visitation was held on July 27, 2024, in Victoria, Texas, and a celebration of life is to be held in Shawnee, Oklahoma.



*Hau ndenwémagnek*

Ho my relatives

*Ébyé yak shote gnom*

We have come here today

*Éwi nesh myé yak ode wdenwéma*

To lay our brother to rest

*Ngom she épam sét ode*

Today he walks

*Ga wje zhyé wat gi gambojek*

Among those who have passed on

*I yé i ébgednoyak ode ngenwen*

That is why we offer this song

*Émno shketot wa je zhyat ibe shpemsegok*

That his journey will go well where he goes above

*Iw énaj moyan*

That's all I have to say

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

By Don Perrot

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

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



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# HOWNIKAN

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## Questions? Story ideas? Contact us!

**Hownikan**  
1601 S Gordon Cooper Dr.  
Shawnee, OK 74801  
[hownikan@potawatomi.org](mailto:hownikan@potawatomi.org) or 800-880-9880

## Address change?

Send to Tribal Rolls ([tribalrolls@potawatomi.org](mailto:tribalrolls@potawatomi.org))  
or log on to [portal.potawatomi.org](http://portal.potawatomi.org).

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Vol 1/Number 8 *Hownikan* (periodicals 25778)

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