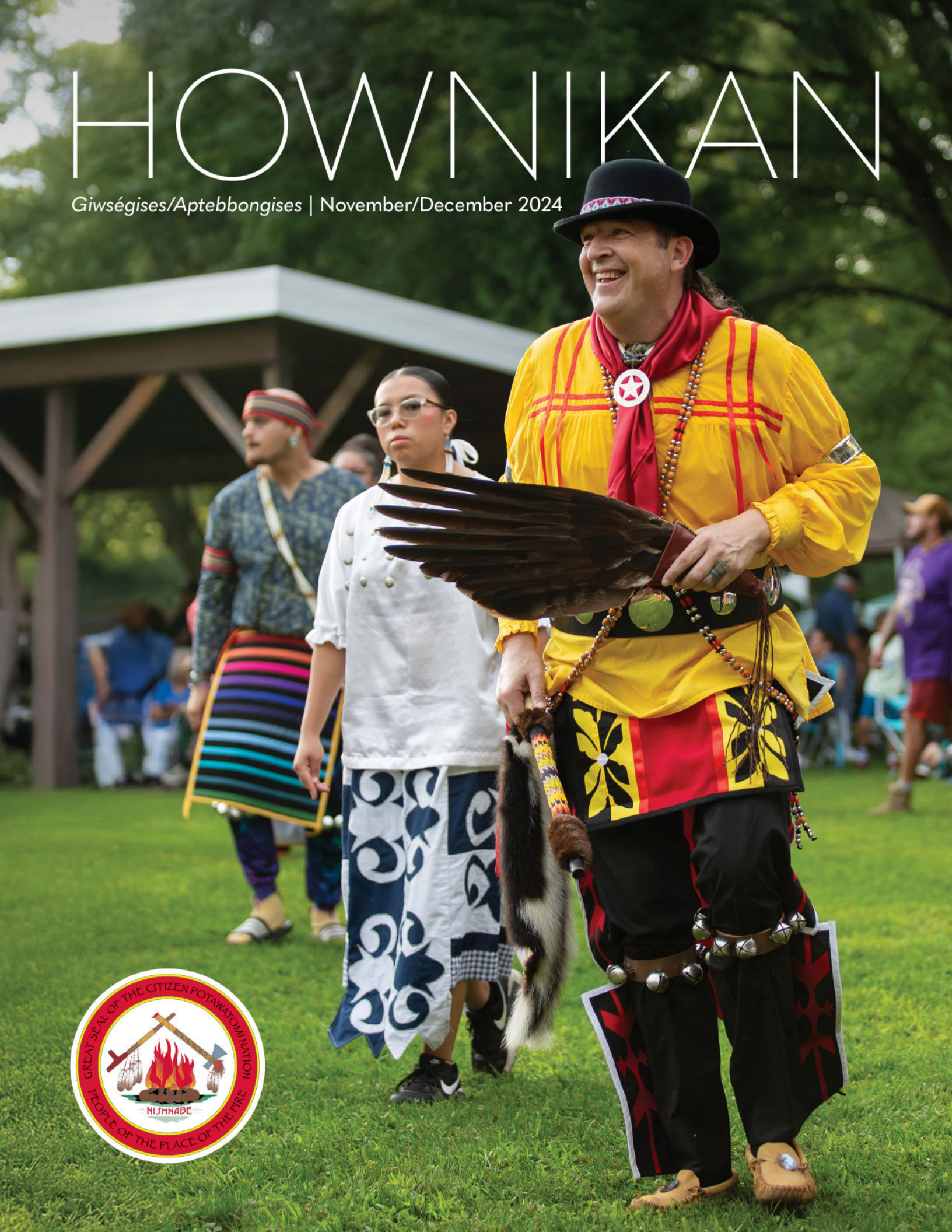


# HOWNIKAN

Giwségises/Aptebongises | November/December 2024





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## Sovereign Bank gets new signage at OKC location

Sovereign Bank proudly unveiled its new signage at 3030 NW Expressway in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, after changing its name from First National Bank & Trust Co. in April 2023. This strategic move reaffirms its rich heritage as the largest tribally-owned financial institution in America.

"This new name not only honors the bank's origins but also underscores its enduring commitment to empowering all communities and upholding the principles of sovereignty and self-determination," said Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Alicia Wade.

The rebranding to Sovereign Bank represents much more than a name change. The decision to adopt the name Sovereign Bank reflects the institution's dedication to their core values and its role as a pivotal player in the financial landscape.

"The name Sovereign Bank is a tribute to our roots and a reflection of our mission," said President and

Chief Executive Officer Bryan Cain. "Our name encapsulates our commitment to sovereignty, not just in name but in action. We are dedicated to supporting economic development, preserving cultural heritage and advancing financial opportunities for all our clients."

Sovereign Bank remains dedicated to its mission of fostering economic self-sufficiency and providing unparalleled financial services to its clients. The bank's name marks a significant milestone in its journey, reinforcing its position as a leading financial institution rooted in values and committed to creating lasting impact.

"Our new name is a powerful reminder of our heritage and our ongoing commitment to support the economic and financial aspirations of our communities," added Cain.

With a strong commitment to sovereignty and self-determination, Sovereign Bank continues to lead in delivering innovative and impactful financial services. 🌱



# Sovereign Bank offers services to help Tribal members become homeowners

Citizen Potawatomi Nation owned Sovereign Bank wants to let Tribal members know they have a resource to help them become homeowners.

According to an article in Forbes ([cpn.news/housingstats](https://www.forbes.com/cpn.news/housingstats)), a 2022 Housing and Financial Capability Survey found that only 52% of American Indian and Alaska Native adults own their own home, while the average for all races is 65%.

However, Tribal members do have avenues to help them become homeowners, both through the CPN Housing Department and Sovereign Bank.

"We are proud to be a bank that is 100% owned by CPN," Matt Brown, Sovereign Bank EVP and director of marketing, said. "We want all our Tribal members to know that we are a resource for them and that we can help them through the process."

Brown said in addition to services such as checking and savings accounts, Sovereign Bank also offers a variety of services that can assist Tribal members in their efforts to buy a home.

"We work to tailor a plan for each specific person based on where they are now and the goals they have for their family," Brown said.

For those who may not qualify to purchase a home right away, Brown said there are programs available to create step-by-step instructions on how to get them in a position where they will be able to buy a house.

He said he often hears customers say they will be able to buy a house after they've saved some money, but then are unsure of how much they need to save.

"The illustration I always use with people is that it's really hard to win a race when you don't know where the finish line is," he said. "We can look at a credit report and print them off a step-by-step guide on what to focus on, what




Matt Brown

not to focus on. We can put together a plan. When I speak with our Tribal members, often they are shocked at how easy the process can actually be."

They also have a variety of down payment assistance programs and can work with realtors to try to get closing costs paid. Sovereign Bank is also able to work with the CPN Housing Department and can match grants Housing provides.

Throughout the process, Sovereign Bank gives Tribal members direct access to the lender they are working with. The bank also has access to every major loan program and can originate loans in all 50 states, and Brown said they have customers who are Tribal members from all across the country.

"We really want them to have the understanding that we're here as a resource for Tribal members," Brown said. "If they don't think they can buy a home, give us a call. If they think they can, give us a call. We can help them from literally the very beginning all the way to acquiring a home. If we are ready to move forward today, that's great. But if not, we'll put a game plan together to make buying their dream home a reality."

Contact Brown at [mbrown@banksovereign.com](mailto:mbrown@banksovereign.com) or 405-778-6500, or learn more about Sovereign Bank and the programs it provides at [banksovereign.com](https://banksovereign.com). 



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# Language update

By Justin Neely, CPN Language Department Director

*Bozho Jayek (Hello everyone),*

It's been a busy fall for the Language Department. We have a new high school class we are working with this year at North Rock Creek. We are also offering the language at Shawnee High School and are planning on having some students at Tecumseh High School later in the year. This course is being offered and counts toward the graduation language requirement for students.

We have been teaching a family language class every Thursday at the 13th Street Housing office in an effort to specifically bring the language into the community. This class is being taught by Josey Wood assisted by other staff members. We have had a nice, dedicated group of families showing up. This class is for six weeks. The kids are engaged and really seem to be enjoying learning the language as well as the parents in attendance.

We are also offering a beginner language class every Tuesday being taught by Shelly Watson. Once again, we have a small but highly dedicated and driven group. They are covering some of the foundational pieces of the language.

We are also offering a Wednesday Elder's class, every Wednesday from 11:40 a.m. or so to noon. The elders and our staff are having a good time teaching this class. The elders have been learning common words and also singing songs.



*Josey Wood leads a family language lesson at the 13th Street Housing Office.*

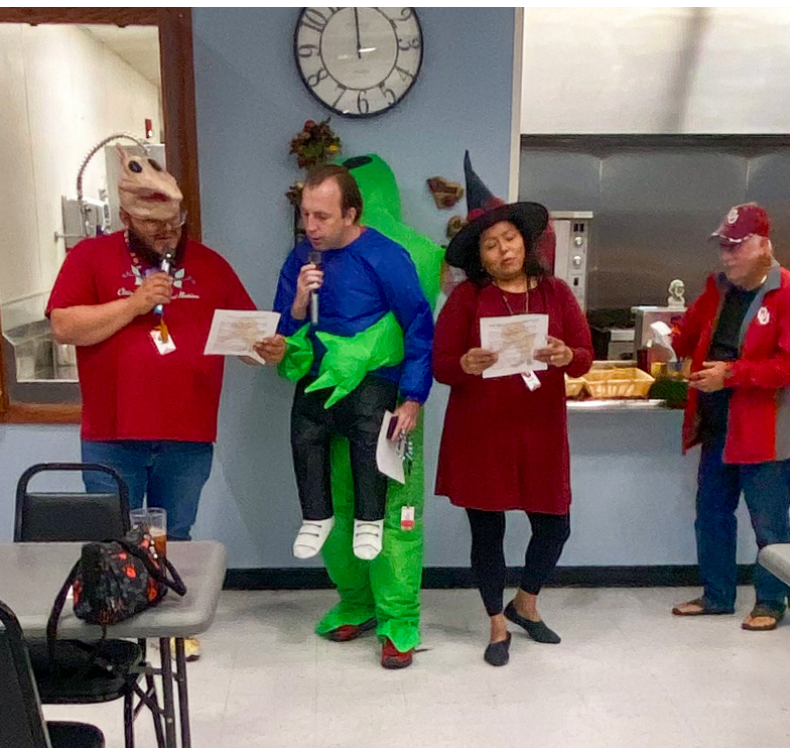
Thursday afternoons we have a pretty active group of about six people who come in around 2 p.m. and spend the afternoon working on the language. For those of you who are available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday and would like to join us for this class or even to have an individual class please let us know. We are more than happy to try and accommodate.

I am quite proud of the progress of our staff. They have each been working with the language for less than two years and are quite good in both their comprehension and ability to relay the language to our students. They can understand almost everything I say in the language and are pretty good at replying back as well.

Recently one of our staff, Cole Rattan, was honored at the Algonquian Language Conference for his amazing growth with our language. Cole has worked for the language department for only a year but has already taught two different 10-week courses and assisted other staff with teaching other courses. In just a year he has already mastered many of the most complicated elements of the language and is working hard to understand VTA verbs which are perhaps one of the most complex of the verbal patterns. We are proud of Cole and his accomplishment.

Before long, it will be time for our Annual Winter Story Telling event. We are planning on Feb. 5 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. central time at the Cultural Heritage Center in Shawnee, Oklahoma. We also plan on doing an online version as well. This is usually a well-attended event, and we look forward to hosting it once again. If you plan on attending in person, send us an email at [language@potawatomi.org](mailto:language@potawatomi.org) with a heading of Winter Story Telling event so we can plan accordingly.

Remember to access some of the many tools we offer to assist in your language learning journey. Or if you have a certain question don't hesitate to send an email to [language@potawatomi.org](mailto:language@potawatomi.org). Visit our online dictionary at [potawatomidictionary.com](http://potawatomidictionary.com), or access our online courses at [learning.potawatomi.org](http://learning.potawatomi.org). 🔥



*The CPN Language Department offers weekly classes at the Elders Center.*



# Tribal member joins Texas board

A CPN Tribal member will join the board of a Texas organization that offers Native Americans quality health care and a sense of community.

Peltier family descendant Blake Weaver has been named to the board of directors for Texas Native Health. According to their website, Texas Native Health provides accessible and culturally sensitive services to build a stronger, healthier future for their community. In addition to healthcare, TNH has services in education and workforce development.

Weaver's new role on the TNH board meets his goal of making a difference.

"It's all going back to my drive to do something that's vitally important to all of us and hopefully helpful to everyone as well," he said.

Weaver grew up in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area and still lives and works there. He is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and earned his master's in business administration from Southern Methodist University.

He currently works for UnitedHealth Group's strategic client engagement.

"I work with our client facing teams and aligning with our company goal of trying to make health care better for everyone," he said.

He has worked in different roles in health care, including analytics and consulting. His focus at UnitedHealth Group is on healthcare and hospital performance improvement.

Weaver believes his career found him.

"I earned an engineering degree thinking that I was going to work in the energy field but ended up in health care," he said. "I'm glad I did because it made me realize how much I want to contribute back to something that is so important to everyone."

## Supporting Native health and community

TNH not only provides health care for members of federally recognized tribes, but it also serves as a hub for the Native American community of Dallas, something important to urban Natives who may be living far from their tribal communities.

"TNH has an incredible leadership team," Weaver said. "(The board) is there to be their ally and provide expertise and our knowledge to ensure that Texas Native Health is providing the best."

Texas Native Health is more than 50 years old. The facility recently expanded from 7,000 square feet to 27,000 square feet. Weaver believes part of their long-



*Blake Weaver*

term success is because they are sensitive to the unique cultural needs of the Native American community.

"A big part of our community is being with each other," he said. "Having that place where you can come together, and you're surrounded by people that you identify with is pretty incredible. To have that and have it recently refreshed and new is really special."

Other members of the board include representatives from the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Apache, Seminole and Prairie Band Potawatomi Nations. Weaver is excited about further connecting with employees and leadership and spending time with the people TNH serves.

"It's still fairly new to be so involved with the organization, but I've been able to connect with the leadership and employees and see how important the services that TNH offers are," he said. "I've been able to see members of our own community who are thankful and happy to have a place like this that is accessible."

Weaver is aware that Native American populations often struggle to receive healthcare, either because of a lack of providers where they live or because urban transportation challenges make it difficult.

"A majority of the Native population in Texas is in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. It's so important that our community can have access to health care and that's why it's incredible that we can offer those services for free," he said. "You can get your eyes checked, your teeth checked, or basic physicals and even specialties like



podiatry or pediatrics. We want to make sure that folks are aware that these services are also available for them.”

His time on the board will also represent a new chapter in his professional career, one that he is embracing as he pursues new goals.

“My goal is to keep developing and learning from these many experiences that I’ve been lucky to have and hopefully be part of organizations that broaden access to health care, both in our Native American community and the general community, making the health care landscape easier to navigate,” Weaver said.

Seeing TNH’s Native American patients enjoy the sense of community has been personally rewarding.

“I see folks in the waiting room mostly talking to each other, which is pretty cool. When I’ve gone to other doctor’s offices it’s usually pretty quiet. But the (TNH) waiting room is welcoming and inclusive of Native Americans with art and historical items on the wall so people feel comfortable. We are all a part of that community,” Weaver said.

## A rewarding field

He encourages other young people to consider a career in healthcare. Students do not necessarily have to pursue a caregiving role such as a physician or nurse, just a desire to be involved and give back.

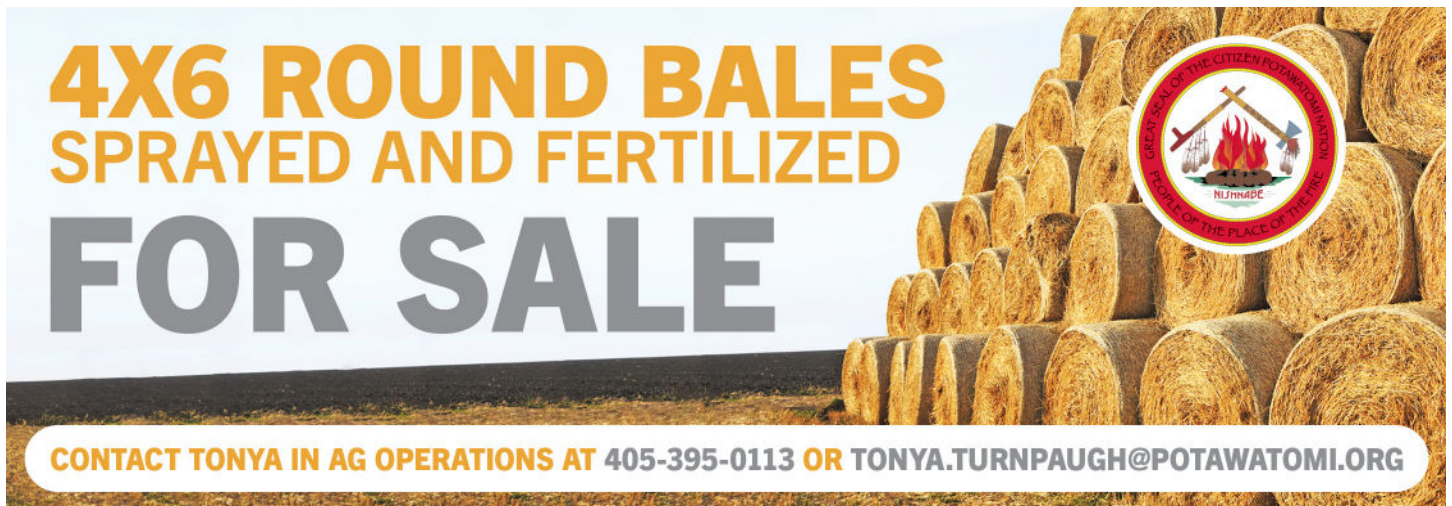
“There’s a place and an opportunity for so many different skill sets and different types of people that if you’re thinking about it, definitely harness that drive,” Weaver said. “There’s definitely a place for you somewhere in this space.”

Business, finance, strategy and social services are among the other areas that can be useful in health care.

“Just having a scientific background is not the end all be all to being a part of this space,” he said.

Weaver and his husband, Nicholas, have two French bulldogs. When they are not working in the yard, they enjoy tennis, pickleball and travel.

For more information about TNH, visit [texasnativehealth.org](https://texasnativehealth.org).



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## PUBLIC NOTICE

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation Housing Department (CPNHD) will hold a **public meeting** on **December 20, 2024**, at **10:00am** for our FY'2024 Annual Performance Report. Our office is located at **44007 Hardesty Road, Shawnee, OK 74801, 405-273-2833**.

Please **RSVP** by **December 6** to Tia Stewart at [tia.stewart@potawatomi.org](mailto:tia.stewart@potawatomi.org)



# Tribal member helps write *Unsettling Education*

When Tribal member Barbara Wall saw a call for abstracts for chapters for an upcoming publication, she submitted her work to the editorial team. Now she is one of the authors included in *Unsettling Education: Decolonizing and Indigenizing the Land*.



Barbara Wall

The description for *Unsettling Education*, which published in July 2024, says it “tackles ‘unsettling’ as an emerging field of study that calls for settlers to follow Indigenous leadership and relationality and work toward disrupting the colonial reality through their everyday lives.”

Wall wrote chapter seven of the book, “*Anishinaabeodziwin miinwaa Gikendasswin: Anishinaabe Ways of Knowing and Being through Relationality*,” and she said her chapter was one outcome of her Indigenous studies Ph.D. dissertation, *It Flows from the Heart: Bodwewaadmii Anishinaabekwewag Nibi Waawiindmowin*, which she completed in 2022.

Once her abstract was accepted, she began the writing process and submitted drafts, which were reviewed and revised by editors, then peer reviewed and copy edited.

“The writing process was challenging,” Wall said. “The challenge for this chapter was to keep within the word count. There’s so much I wanted to share.”

In addition, she said she always uses the Potawatomi/Anishinaabe language in her work, and including words in a way that is both meaningful and respectful can be complicated and needs explanation, which adds to the word count.

“It’s tricky to provide translations for the reader without disrupting the writing flow,” Wall said. “I also work to include what can sometimes be seen as unconventional capitalization, such as capitalizing Indigenous Knowledge or Ceremony. Anything unconventional needs to be explained.”

The book’s audience is Indigenous studies students and educators, professors and researchers.

“It’s an important book that highlights topics and themes in the disciplines of Indigenous Studies and education about Indigenous peoples. Both fields are changing rapidly

in this age of truth and reconciliation,” she said. “I hope the readers will take away ‘Indigenous brilliance’ and a better understanding of the power and richness of Indigenous knowledges and ways of being. Too often the writing about Indigenous peoples is focused on our historical trauma rather than our rich, deep knowledges and our accomplishments.”



## UNSETTLING EDUCATION

Decolonizing and Indigenizing the Land

Edited by  
Anna-Leah King, Kathleen O'Reilly, and Patrick J. Lewis

Wall has also contributed “*Nokmisag: Bemnigying*,” the closing chapter of the book *Grandmothers and Grandmothering*, as well as having written some academic journal articles. She is also working on editing an environmental sciences textbook with a colleague, as well as co-authoring multiple chapters.

“The focus of the textbook is the power of an ethical, equitable collaboration of Indigenous environmental science and mainstream or dominant science as applied to addressing current environmental issues and concerns,” she said, adding that all contributing authors are environmental practitioners and identify as Indigenous, or as women or people of color. Wall and her co-editor want to privilege and uplift Indigenous voices and the perspectives of women in this paradigm shifting work.

That project is expected to be published in March 2026.

Wall, a member of the Vieux family, lives in Ontario, Canada, and is an associate professor at Trent University, where she teaches in the Indigenous Environmental Studies and Sciences (IESS) program of the Chanie Wenjack School for Indigenous Studies.

The mother of two and grandmother of one has an interest in Potawatomi cultural resurgence, history, and Potawatomi ceremony and language, with hobbies including birchbark quill work, caribou hair tufting, Anishnaabe foodways, canoeing, kayaking, and growing traditional foods and medicines. ♡



# 2025 ELECTION NOTICE

## For Chairman, Supreme Court and Legislative Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4

### CHAIRMAN AND SUPREME COURT

Filing form and fee must be received by the Election Committee no later than 5 p.m. CST on Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2025. Candidates for Chairman and Supreme Court must be at least 35 years old upon being sworn in on June 28, 2025, and must have physically resided in Oklahoma continuously for at least six months prior to the election. Each successful candidate for an Executive Office in the Citizen Potawatomi Nation must submit a completed personal information form containing their personal financial information to the Comptroller of the Currency, as required under the Standard Change of Control application form for National Banks, no later than seven (7) days after election results are certified.

### LEGISLATOR

Filing form and fee must be received by the Election Committee no later than 5 p.m. CST on Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2025. Candidates for Legislator must be at least 18 years old upon being sworn in on June 28, 2025, and must have physically resided within the district they would represent continuously for at least six months prior to the election.

### APPLICATIONS

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# Kimmerer speaks at CHC

Robin Wall Kimmerer, author of *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants* and member of the Vieux and Johnson families, visited the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center Nov. 2 for a book signing event.

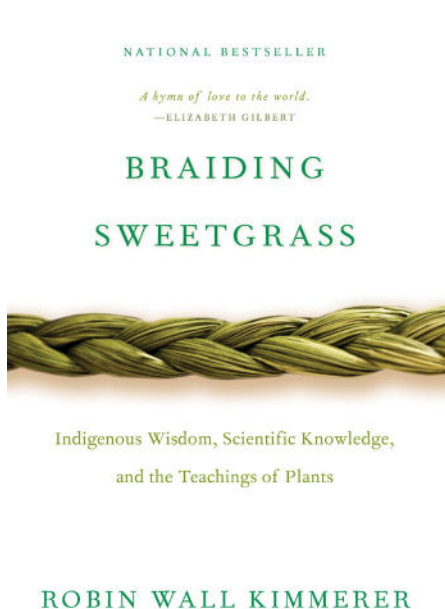
"I am so grateful to be back in Shawnee. It feels so good to walk in here and to be driving through the beautiful, oak woodlands," she said to attendees of the event. "It really is wonderful. It's just going to make me tear up to be here right now."

Kimmerer spoke about relatives who preceded her and honored the "sacred storytellers who connect us to our ways." She explained that she herself grew up outside of the community because her grandfather was sent to the Carlisle boarding school in Pennsylvania. Living in the northeast, she said it was stories that kept her connected to her Tribe.

Kimmerer is a botanist as well, and she said during the time she was growing up, she had many questions about her culture but not many elders to teach her. After wondering how her people knew the things they did, she realized that the world around them was their teacher.

"The plants taught them. The land taught them. The water taught them," she said. "So, I became an attentive student to the plants at that time, and so I'm grateful for the stories that they told me as well."

She told attendees that one of the greatest compliments for her is to hear someone say that *Braiding Sweetgrass* sounds like something a grandparent told them, because it includes Potawatomi stories and teachings.



When she published *Braiding Sweetgrass* in 2013, she said she thought her family would be the only readers. Since then, the book has sold more than two million copies and been translated into 21 languages.

"People around the world know our stories, and what an honor that is, and that our stories and our teachings can guide us in this perilous



Robin Wall Kimmerer, right, signs copies of her books for Tribal members at the CHC.

time that we live in," she said. "You probably heard your elders say that the reason that our people held onto our teachings through so many trials, it's a miracle. It's a miracle that our stories are still here, and that's because the whole world would need them."

Before concluding, Kimmerer requested she be able to plant a seed and brought up the ways the world is waking up to Indigenous teachings, such as the Biden Administration issuing a memorandum that Traditional Ecological Knowledge must be elevated in all land management and science decision making.

"I never thought I'd live long enough to see, to hear that," she said.

She spoke of her pride in the work CPN has done, from the Tribe's college program, to its care for citizens, to the creation of the Aviary. Kimmerer remembers her father telling her about the days when the CPN offices were in a trailer, and how impressed she is with how far the Nation has come.

Storytelling, she said, is sacred, and stories can be oral, written, sung and even told through art. However, she said stories are also written in the land.

"The story I want to tell, when people from the other side of the world ask me 'What are the Potawatomis



up to?’ I would love to be able to tell the story of how we are caring for our plant relatives,” she said. “Just as we are a leader in language revitalization, couldn’t we be a leader in plant knowledge revitalization as well?”

Plants have helped the Potawatomi people from the very beginning, Kimmerer explained, and she said it is now time for the Potawatomi people to help plants.

“When I think about the ways that Potawatomi, we are spread out like beads on a string from Shawnee to Ontario. That’s the direction of climate change, too,” Kimmerer said. “Couldn’t we collaborate, and indeed, lead the way with other Potawatomi nations to create ways to care for our plants, create ways for our plants to move north if they need to, create sanctuaries for them, create refuges, so that our people will always have our medicines and always have our foods? That’s a story that I can imagine us writing together.”

Kimmerer also attended a book signing hosted by Green Feather Book Company, Norman Cultural Connection, and CPN at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma. Registration for that event filled up to capacity within hours of being posted online.

Kimmerer is a scientist, writer and botanist who lives in upstate New York. In addition to *Braiding Sweetgrass*, she has also written *Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses* and *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World*, which hit bookstore shelves in November.

Learn more about Kimmerer and her books at [robinwallkimmerer.com](http://robinwallkimmerer.com). 🌱

Robin Wall Kimmerer, author of *Braiding Sweetgrass*, speaks at the CHC.





# Collins speaks on learning Potawatomi language

Robert Collins, Citizen Potawatomi Nation employee and member of the Delonais family and Thunder Clan, grew up hearing common *Bodéwadmimwen* words such as *bozho* (hello) or *migwéché* (thank you). However, he has spent the past several years fostering a deeper knowledge of the language and working to teach others, as well.

## Learning and building community

"I lived a lot of lives before coming to the language more seriously, but things changed for me in 2019," Collins said. "It was in that year that I decided to dedicate myself to learning our language. And for the last nearly half-decade, it's been nothing short of a rewarding journey."

A big part of the journey, for him, has been the help and community he found with other language learners, whether fellow Citizen Potawatomi Nation tribal members or members of other Potawatomi communities.

In 2020, Collins met CPN tribal member *Wkenodan Getgadekwen* and his mother, Laurel Coburn, a member of the Vieux family and Bear Clan. The three met regularly over the next two years to talk about the language and language learning resources. In the summer of 2022, Collins was able to sponsor *Wkenodan Getgadekwen* and his mother to work with him on language resources in Shawnee, and afterward, they attended their first Potawatomi Gathering Language Conference together in Hannahville, Michigan.

"It was there that I was able to see the whole Potawatomi Nation celebrate him for the incredible work he has done at such a young age. It has been an honor to know and learn from him," Collins said.

Collins also stays involved with many other classes and communities where the language is shared. He participates in a weekly study group hosted by Lindsay Marean on Monday evenings. On Tuesdays, he attends language sessions with Kyle Malott, a Pokagon Band of Potawatomi advanced language specialist who apprenticed for many years with Jim Thunder, a first-language speaker who walked on in 2022. On Thursdays, Collins participates in a session hosted by Mike Medawis, a member of the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, and taught by the other Pokagon Potawatomi Advanced Language Specialist, Carla Collins.

"This language is important to our people — to *who we are* as *Bodéwadmim*. And I take learning it as seriously as I take teaching it," he said.

Collins believes collaboration is an important part of the journey to learn the language, and he values the relationships he has made along the way.

He is also pursuing a bachelor's degree in Native American Studies at East Central University, with a heavy focus on Indigenous languages, and he expressed his gratitude to the CPN Department of Education for the support they have provided him.







"If you can't tell, I'm a lifelong student, and I'm passionate about learning *and* teaching our language to Tribal citizens," he said.

## Working to revitalize the language

As well as learning the language, Collins is also working to help others who want to learn it.

"Not only is language learning important — but language teaching, too," he said.

Collins is the Interdepartmental Potawatomi Language Lead for the Cultural Heritage Center. In his role, he develops and implements language-learning curricula for the Child Development Centers, online college courses and community classes. He also assists with the educational partnerships CPN has with six universities across the United States.

"This year has been particularly remarkable, as we welcomed our highest enrollment to date, with 25 enthusiastic students participating across three universities," he said.

Collins explained they use tailored instructional methods and immersive learning experiences to help teach skills to the next generation of language learners that will enable them to preserve and revitalize the language.

"Our program has seen significant success in just a short amount of time, and we've helped foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of our language and cultural heritage among these students," he said. "But it's taken years of work to get to this point."

One effort Collins is especially proud of is some of the young Potawatomi students from the Child Development Center who participated in and were recognized at the Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair. This year, Collins worked with the CDC's Pre-K all-day class to perform in the spoken poetry category, for which the



students received a first-place ribbon. Collins hopes to continue CPN representation at next year's fair as well.

Collins also teaches a *Bodéwadmimwen* Mechanics 101 class, a 52-week community course that is open to all Tribal citizens. The class meets two times each Saturday, with the first session focusing on grammar and the second on vocabulary. Collins draws upon what he has learned from his language teachers and his time at university to create other classes for Tribal members.

Collins talked about the growing interest across the CPN to learn Potawatomi. "I'm thankful for this work, because every day, I get to work for our people, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation," he said. "Every day that I can, I work on this language — learning it, speaking it, and teaching it. And every step of the way, I have had a community of language learners alongside me, which I am forever indebted to."

But for Collins, the work to learn and teach CPN tribal members never stops. As Collins says to anyone interested in learning more about language learning and available resources, "Just as my teachers have been there for me, I am here for you. If you have questions or wish to join one of our ongoing community classes, such as *Bodéwadmimwen* Mechanics 101, please reach out to me. Together, we'll pick up our language."

Collins encouraged anyone with questions or an interest in joining one of the ongoing community classes to reach out to him at [robert.collins@potawatomi.org](mailto:robert.collins@potawatomi.org). 🍏



# Public art project will soon take shape

Tribal members will be asked to contribute images to a public art project that commemorates the Potawatomi Trail of Death.

The Johnson County Park and Recreation District in Kansas, recently announced that “Fire Keepers Circle,” by artists Leah Yellowbird and Aaron Squadroni, was selected as the winning design from among three finalists.

“Fire Keepers Circle” is comprised of a panel that features four layers. The spiritual layer expresses the spirit of the fire keepers. The trail path shows the route from Indiana to Kansas. The ancestral layer represents the number of Potawatomi who made the journey in 1838. The contemporary layer will include submissions from Potawatomi tribal members that will be imprinted on the metal.

The piece will be fabricated over a period of five to six months and then installed in the park. An official ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony is tentatively scheduled for July of 2025.

The announcement follows months of research, planning and consultation with Citizen Potawatomi Nation tribal members. JCPRD officials appreciate CPN’s help to reach this important milestone.

“I’m just really grateful for all of the relationship building and the number of participants from Citizen Potawatomi Nation that just really helped guide the process and provided really great input. I think the product is going to be amazing, but the process has been really beautiful to have everybody engaged,” said Susan Mong, JCPRD superintendent of culture.

## Finalists carefully selected

Mong said the county recognized the unique nature of this public art project and knew they would need to consult Native American artists for this special work.

“With all of our public art projects, we typically will put an artist call out. In this case, it was across the nation. So, anybody across the United States that had an affiliation with a Native American tribe was invited to apply,” she said.

Three finalists were selected and received the goals of the project and a site visit. The finalists also received a stipend to develop a design.

“It’s always our practice to have or to



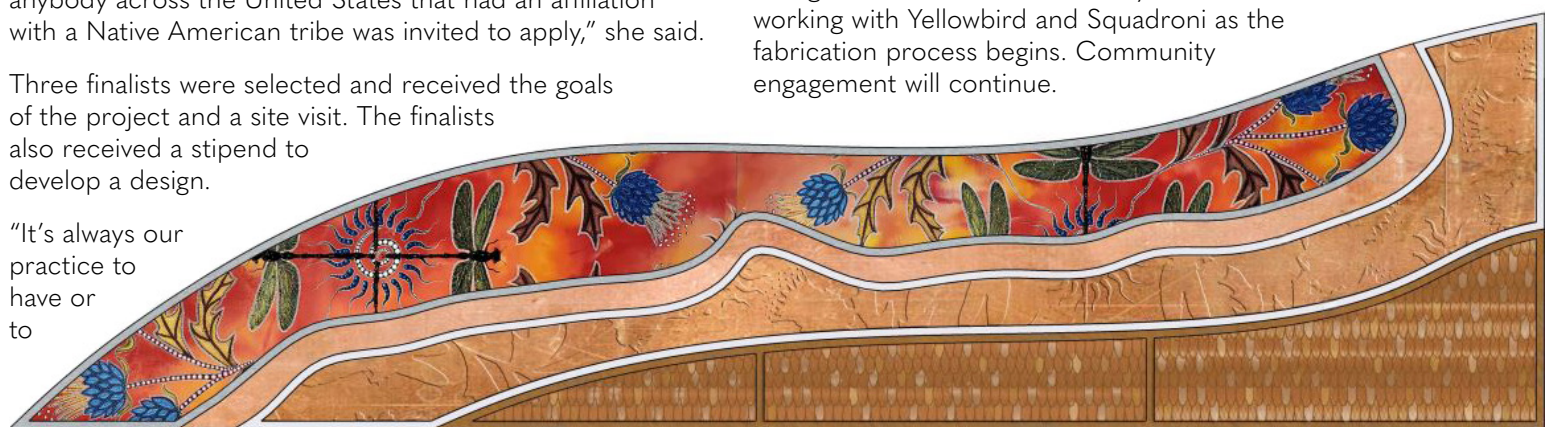
support three artists and pay them for their creativity to come up with those concepts. We had this wonderful opportunity to share those three proposed designs not only with the community here in Johnson County, but also to bring those three designs down to the Reunion (Festival),” Mong said. “That was really special to engage members of CPN from across the country around those designers and find out what emotions each of the three designs evoked in everybody. That’s so that we can get a sense of what people are gravitating towards.”

Considering the community input, the art selection committee then selected the winner.

“The community input coalesced around who we ended up selecting. There seemed to be a lot of energy around ‘Fire Keepers Circle,’” she said. “All three artists that were finalists were so heartfelt in the time and energy and emotion that they put into creating their proposal.”

## Next steps

Mong and other Johnson County officials are working with Yellowbird and Squadroni as the fabrication process begins. Community engagement will continue.







“The design of the piece includes three layers. One is a contemporary layer that has all of these metallic feathers that are meant to have a little movement that will flutter in the wind. The imprints on those feathers are going to be created by members of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation as a way to represent all of those lives and the beauty of the Tribe,” Mong said.

Tribal members will have an opportunity to create a design and submit it to artist Leah Yellowbird. The designs will be imprinted on the metallic feathers of the piece’s contemporary layer.

“That’s going to be a really neat way for people all over the country to make their mark on this piece through those individual feathers,” she said. “We’ll have also opportunities for people from all over the country to send a sentiment or a design or something that represents a loved one or something about their families.”

Installation is tentatively set for June 2025. A ribbon-cutting and celebration is planned for mid- to late July 2025. Mong is eager to welcome CPN visitors as well as Johnson County and other area residents.

## Gaining understanding

The park receives more than 800,000 visitors annually. JCPRD officials are also preparing for a large increase in visitors when the 2026 FIFA World Cup visits the region. Mong is hopeful this new art piece will help local and international visitors gain a greater understanding of some aspects of American history.

Mong said many tribal Nations have their own removal stories but not every story is acknowledged. Working on the public art project has helped her gain a greater understanding of history, an experience she hopes others will appreciate.

“It’s been a really great journey for me to just learn about what that next generation is doing to keep the memory, to keep the story and that pride of that connection alive. I’m interested to learn more because I know that this is really the tip of the iceberg of other events that have happened around me and places I grew up,” she said.

In addition to the art, Mong said the county is planning an interpretive panel near the art that will explore some of the history involved. CPN will be involved in the production of the panel as well, she said.

Mong said she’s deeply grateful for the chance to meet Tribal citizens at the 2024 Family Reunion Festival and to connect with the Cultural Heritage Center staff.

“Everyone who did offer feedback at the Family Reunion, each comment was read by our committee and was appreciated,” she said. “I just want to say thank you to the (CPN) community and the staff of the Cultural Center. And for everybody that took time during the Festival to provide that feedback, it was really important and really appreciated.”

To learn more about the Johnson County Heritage Park public art project, visit [cpn.news/heritagepark](https://cpn.news/heritagepark). 🌟



## ‘Fire Keepers Circle’

### Artist Leah Yellowbird shares inspiration

First Nations Algonquin-Métis and Anishinaabe artist Leah Yellowbird works in a variety of mediums, from paint to beads. She has a reverence for traditional imagery and methods, resulting in works that reflect the culture of Indigenous people.

Her inspiration resulted in “Fire Keepers Circle,” which will commemorate the Potawatomi Trail of Death in Johnson County, Kansas. The Johnson County, Kansas, Park and Recreation District recently announced “Fire Keepers Circle” was selected from among three finalists for a public art project.

Yellowbird and her creative partner, Aaron Squadroni, have collaborated on similar projects. With Yellowbird’s creative background and Squadroni’s architecture skills, they have found the perfect mix.

“Everything I am, he is the opposite. I’m high strung, he’s more calm,” she said. “It’s like this perfect union for me, this person who isn’t anything like me. I got lucky there.”

Squadroni first heard about the Trail of Death art project proposal and felt Yellowbird would have the necessary creative background. He previously worked for an architecture company that applied to work on large, public art projects.

#### A clear vision

Yellowbird said she carefully researched the Trail of Death. She understands how necessary the art project was.

“I’ve always said when stuff gets difficult for me that I have no right to complain because of the people that

came before me. I’m not walking on snow barefoot for hundreds of miles. I’m not watching my child fall and die and not being able to do anything about it. What do I have to complain about? Absolutely nothing,” she said.

After imagining herself in the place of the Potawatomi who fell and those who survived, she had a very clear vision of what she wanted the piece to look like.

“I knew right away exactly what I wanted the sculpture to look like and what I wanted to do. I want a place where you could sit and hear the wind go through those walls. It’s like it is the sound of my ancestors talking. So, I am very excited to do it,” Yellowbird said.

#### Including Tribal members

CPN Tribal members will be able to contribute to the project in a significant way. Yellowbird is assembling an informational packet that will help Tribal members add to part of the design that resembles a feather.

“We’re going to ask people to put a pattern on that feather, whether it’s a pattern that’s on your regalia that you wear, a pattern that your family uses on their regalia or it’s something you have in your house or something that you love, something that moves you,” Yellowbird said. “Draw the pattern on and then we’ll put it on the metal. And then they’ll be able to pick out their feather on the sculpture. I think it’s kind of cool to be a part of this memorial and say, ‘Here I am.’”

Yellowbird and Squadroni plan to begin their outreach to CPN Tribal members in January 2025.



She will keep everyone informed about the ribbon cutting ceremony for "Fire Keepers Circle."

"To me, it's like the community is part of it, too. I want to make sure that if anybody wants to attend, they can," she said.

### Reaching all visitors

She hopes non-Native visitors will not only appreciate the beauty of the art and the location, but also feel the weight of what took place. Plans are for the space to have a QR code that visitors can click on and hear narration about the exhibit.

"Everybody feels differently in different situations, but I'm hoping that anyone who sees it and knows what it's about, we can get that across because of how serious it was and the devotion of the people that walked behind their leaders, what they left behind and the people they left behind," she said.

She said portions of Native American history often go unacknowledged or are misunderstood.

"I often say to people who are non-Indian, when they start talking about residential schools. I tell them when the last residential schools were closed and they're always shocked. They thought it was in the 60s," she said. "I tell them, 'No, this was happening for a long time.'"



Leah Yellowbird

She is happy to be able to help Indigenous people tell their own stories.

"Nobody's going to understand it better than the person in it. My family didn't live on that reservation, but I can't stress enough that it still was so important to me to make sure that people knew who I am and what I'm about," she said.

Follow Leah Yellowbird Art on Facebook. 🔥

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

## CPN VETERANS AND FAMILIES!

You are all invited to our annual Christmas dinner

DECEMBER 10 | 6PM

North Reunion Hall  
1702 S. Gordon Cooper Dr.  
Shawnee, OK



# From the executives



## John "Rocky" Barrett Tribal Chairman

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

With Thanksgiving behind us and the Christmas season ahead, it is a good time to come together with loved ones to honor our traditions and tell our stories.

In Potawatomi culture, we view wintertime as a period of rest after the harvest season, but also as the time when we gather inside and tell the stories of our people and our ancestors. Many years ago, this was done from inside wigwams and longhouses. Today, our holiday gatherings offer an opportunity to carry on this tradition.

For young Tribal members, you can tell them the stories of our people, especially the stories that are traditionally only told in the winter months, such as "Why the Bear Has a Short Tail." For those who are not familiar with the stories, CPN Cultural Heritage Center and Language Department are good resources. You

can visit them at [potawatomiheritage.com](http://potawatomiheritage.com) or [cpn.news/stories](http://cpn.news/stories). Our CHC also hosts a winter storytelling event each year, and it will be available online for those who are not able to be here in person.

Winter and the holidays are a good time to tell the stories of our ancestors and the history of our people and where we came from. However, it is also a time to share family stories. Pass these stories on to the younger generations while you are able to. Hearing about your childhood, or about the memories you have of elders who have now walked on, will help the next generation as they walk their path in life. By telling these stories to them, they will then be able to pass them on someday. In this way, the stories of our ancestors will continue to be told to the next seven generations.

During the holiday season, I am also proud of all CPN accomplishes to help so many lives.

Each year, we have food drives to help assemble holiday baskets for both Thanksgiving and Christmas. Last year, we were able to give 350 baskets to area families for Thanksgiving, and another 350 for Christmas. The baskets included ham or turkey, ingredients for a holiday meal, and even enough food to provide a second meal and a breakfast.

Employees at the Grand Casino Hotel & Resort also plan a Christmas party where they raise money and donate toys to benefit non-profit organizations such as The Salvation Army and FireLodge Children and Family Services. Last year, those employees were able to collect \$2,699, plus many donated toys. I look forward to hearing what they do this year.

CPN FireLodge Children & Family Services also organized a virtual angel tree this year to help make Christmas a little happier for Potawatomi foster children. Each of the children represented in the list was a CPN Tribal member placed in foster care in Oklahoma. Individuals or departments were able to come together to provide gifts for these children to open on Christmas.

These are just some of the things CPN does to help our people and the communities where we have made our home.

Enjoy time with your families this Christmas, and remember to follow Tribal tradition by honoring elders. Allow them to be first getting drinks and meals, and ask them about your family stories.

As the year comes to a close, know that your Tribal government and Nation are continuing to thrive and grow in ways that allow us to help support our communities and our Tribal members. I am proud to serve as your Tribal Chairman, and I thank you all for allowing me that honor.

*Migwetch (Thank you),*

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





## Linda Capps Vice-Chairman

*Bozho (Hello),*

I was asked to speak at the 2024 Tribal Summit at East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma on Oct. 25. The focus of the summit was the four R's... Relationship, Respect, Reciprocity and Responsibility. I was, indeed, honored to be on the agenda with such an impressive list as Wendell Godwin, President of East Central University, Bill Anoatubby, Governor of the Chickasaw Nation, and Jack Austin, Jr., Assistant Chief of the Choctaw Nation.

My topic was Reciprocity, a term with which we all are familiar, but I was a little apprehensive about speaking on the topic for one hour. As I began to read about Native American Reciprocity, I thought about the close relationship to The Seven Grandfather Teachings that is now part of the curriculum of the Employment Engagement program at CPN. The objective of the program is to help CPN employees to understand and practice these seven teachings. Wisdom, to cherish knowledge is to know wisdom.

Love, to know love is to know peace. Respect, to honor all of the Creation is to have respect. Bravery, is to face the foe with integrity. Honesty, in facing a situation is to be brave. Humility, is to know yourself as a sacred part of the Creation. Truth, is to know all of these things. These are the principles of character that each Anishinaabe should live by. We should place our Trust in the Creator and never forget to be sincere in our actions, character and words.

So, what is Native American Reciprocity? CPN has a Tribal member that I consider an expert on the subject. Robin Wall Kimmerer has dedicated a good portion of her life to studying reciprocity in nature, based on an understanding of social, ecological and spiritual interconnectedness. Interconnection takes place in everyday life.... at home, at school, at work, and in the community. It occurs during sports, entertainment, traditional ceremony and at church. By caring for one another and other beings, humans are richly rewarded, both socially and materially.

Chairman Barrett has a motto at CPN. It is "Don't eat the seed corn." When you raise a crop of corn, save back enough to replant another crop. You can apply this motto to many different situations, from agriculture to finances. In 2006, when CPN built the Grand Casino, the upper floor was built with an iron railing encompassing an entire area upstairs looking onto the lower floor. This railing is decorated with cast iron corn stalks to remind tribal members, "Don't eat the seed corn." When the Creator has gifted you a crop, save back to start another crop for the future and the gift will be perpetual.

Harvesting pecan trees in Indian Country is very common, but the trees must be cared for to produce quality pecans. The tree gives up its fruit and in return you must prune the tree, water it, fertilize it and care for the ground to receive maximum quality production.

During a traditional ceremony as we Potawatomi Tribal members enter the prayer circle from the east, we stop before entering and dip up a wooden spoon full of water to pour back to the earth. The significance is thanking the Creator by giving back to the earth the water that is so vital for all of creation. Our women have a traditional water ceremony to show thanks to the Creator for life-sustaining water.

Breastfeeding is a perfect example of nature's reciprocity. Breastfeeding has health benefits for both babies and mothers. Breast milk provides a baby with ideal nutrition and supports growth and development. Breastfeeding can also help protect the baby and mom against certain illnesses and diseases. Plus, bonding is the supreme reward of breastfeeding.

A caring son takes care of his elder father when the father is ill. His father taught the son how to be compassionate for others, how to care for others, how to love one another. No doubt the son has passed these characteristics to his own children.

Reciprocity in the workplace is beneficial to your organization. When someone helps you out, offer to help them in return. Even small favors like holding the door can be reciprocated with a smile and a thank you. If a colleague gives you advice, offer to share your expertise with them in the future.

Studies show that generosity and reciprocity lead to people reporting happier, healthier and more creative and resilient lives; however, it comes with a warning. To be effective, authentic, balanced and thoughtful, reciprocity must be real. It must be sincere. It must come from the heart.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as vice chairman all of these years.

*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)

# From the legislature



## Alan Melot District 1

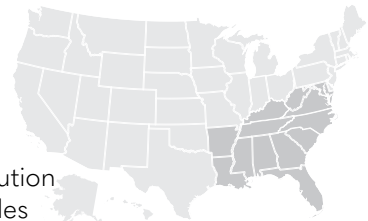


## Eva Marie Carney District 2

*Bozho, nikanek* (Hello, friends),

### Further *Bodéwadmí* Confederation Update

The Legislature in late September considered my proposed resolution authorizing Chairman Barrett to sign onto the *Bodéwadmí* Articles of Confederation. I was in the minority in advocating for the resolution — many of the legislators did not feel they had enough information to decide. Chairman Barrett agreed to provide, at a future meeting, our Tribal attorney’s legal analysis, and his own analysis of the pros and cons of joining the Confederation. He also offered to consult some of the other Tribal leaders whose Nations have joined and agreed to share with us what he learns. I remain hopeful that, soon, CPN will join the Confederation.



### Shout Out to Our Fall Feast Craft Planners

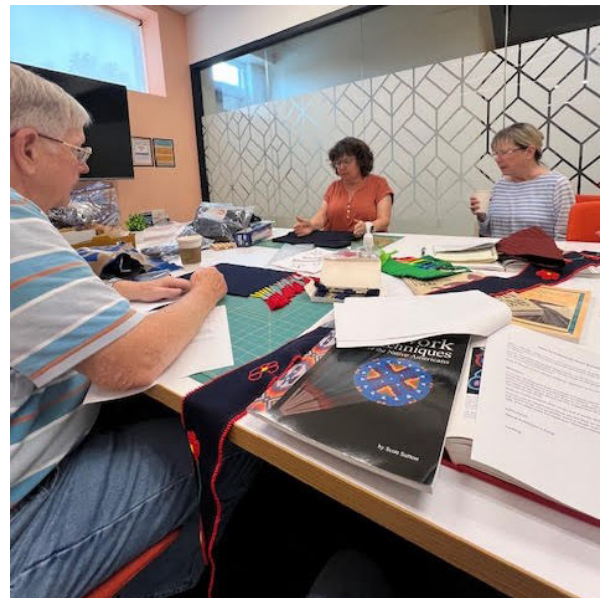
Bob/Shaweno and Karen Richey (VA) and Kathleen Korzeniewski (MD) have spent hours planning for the bandolier craft instruction offered during the District 2 Fall Feast (Nov. 9). They secured supplies, researched, cut out patterns and more. I am so grateful to them for their work and for sharing their knowledge. You can see Feast photos in future columns and on Facebook.

### Avian Flu’s Devastating Impact on Bald Eagles

I was shocked to learn about the impact of avian flu on our precious eagles. A recent Washington Post piece reports:


Nationwide, avian influenza has killed at least 606 bald eagles in 45 states, according to findings from the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, part of the Department of Agriculture. And those are just the eagles whose remains have been recovered and tested; experts believe they represent only a small fraction of the true toll.

This virus threatens to reverse decades of population recovery, and bald eagle conservation experts do not know why the avian



*Fall Feast Bandolier Crafting Team - Shaweno and Karen Richey and Kathleen Korzeniewski, September 2024*





**CPN DISTRICT 2  
MEETING & LUNCH**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21 | 10:30 TO 2 PM**

**Loveless Cafe, 8400 TN-100, Nashville, TN 37221**

**Come meet and visit with your Legislator and other relatives, enjoy a Southern buffet, and participate in our Art Contest | [lovelesscafe.com](http://lovelesscafe.com)**

**PLEASE RSVP BY DECEMBER 13  
to [evamariearney@gmail.com](mailto:evamariearney@gmail.com) or 888-849-1484**

influenza outbreak has taken such a toll. The Post article online at [cpn.news/avianflu](http://cpn.news/avianflu) includes photos of these beautiful birds that carry our messages to the Creator.

**Whiskey Tender**

The American Indian College Fund has showcased, through a virtual book club hosted by award-winning novelist Deborah Jackson Taffa and College Fund President Cheryl Crazy Bull that took place in late November, Taffa's National Book Award finalist memoir, "Whiskey Tender." Here is a summary of the book:

"Whiskey Tender" traces how a native girl born on the California Yuma reservation and raised in Navajo territory in New Mexico comes to her own interpretation of identity, despite

her parent's desires for her to transcend the class and "Indian" status of her birth through education, and despite the Quechan tribe's particular traditions and beliefs regarding oral and recorded histories. Taffa's childhood memories unspool into meditations on tribal identity, the rampant criminalization of Native men, governmental assimilation policies, the Red Power movement, and the negotiation between belonging and resisting systemic oppression. Pan-Indian, as well as specific tribal histories and myths, blend with stories of a 1970s and 1980s childhood spent on and off the reservation.

**District lunch and staying connected**

We will have a District 2 lunch meeting from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Dec. 21, at the Loveless Café in Nashville, Tennessee. Come and meet with your legislator and other relatives, enjoy a southern buffet and participate in our art contest. RSVP no later than Dec. 13 to [evamariearney@gmail.com](mailto:evamariearney@gmail.com) or 888-849-1484.

Our District 2 Facebook page (District #2 Citizens of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation) grows each month; we have just over 300 members currently. You are welcome to request admission if you are CPN and living in one of the states within District 2. If you are not on my email list, please write to me and I will add you to receive timely updates and announcements.

CPN citizen Bill Anderson asked me to help him find fellow CPN citizens who work for Home Depot. Bill is the Chair of Home Depot's Affinity Resource Group for Native personnel and wants to be in touch. You can reach him at through Slack: @Bill Anderson.

Migwetch (Thank you),

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

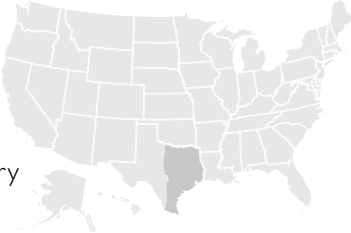


**Bob Whistler District 3**

Bozho, ginwa (Hello, everyone),

**Oct. 15 – Dec. 8**

For those of you on Medicare or one of the alternate supplementary plans you have until Feb. 28, 2025, to register for 2025 health care benefits. Your 2024 benefit coverage will end on Dec. 31, 2024. To ensure you have coverage starting on Jan. 1, 2025, you need to either renew your current plan or sign up for a new plan by Dec. 8, 2024. Urbana and Care N' Care will no longer offer this type of insurance. For regular Medicare you may call 1-800-MEDICARE, 24 hours a day, seven days a week to sign up for their coverage. You may call an insurance broker I use to have them look at the best plan that covers the doctors and prescription drugs. Contact Tai Chin in Arlington, Texas, at 817-946-7895. If you just call an insurance agent, they will only offer what their insurance company offers. A broker searches through many different insurance programs to find the best fit for you.





Ashley Melot Contreras, Bob Whistler and Kobin Contreras

## Sept. 15 Trip

I awoke in Bastrop, Texas, which is a very nice town on the Colorado River. I had been asked by Tribal citizen James Allen Risinger and his brother David Lee Risinger to come there and conduct a funeral ceremony that included scattering the ashes of their cremated mother, Rhonda Sue Risinger, in the Colorado River. I blessed my fan, the two men and the ashes with the smoke of sage accompanied with cedar and *sema*. While doing the blessing, I was able to play the Traveling Song sung by the CPN women’s drum group. They offer this ceremonial song at our columbarium when similar services are performed. Czarina Thompson from the group had provided an mp3 of the song. After that I sang the Walpole Island Ojibway hymn “Nearer My God To Thee” in their language. We then proceeded to the side of the river where Mrs. Risinger’s ashes were offered into the water. I then blessed the brothers again and left for another meeting.

Several months before, I had accepted the request from

Tribal citizen Ashley Melot Contreras to give Potawatomi names to her and her youngest son Kobin Contreras. After departing Bastrop, I drove the short distance to Livingston, Texas. There, I met the entire Melot family, including Ashley’s parents, her two sons, her sister, spouses and some friends. An open pit fire was burning next to a small pond which reminded me of the large naming ceremony area we use in Shawnee. I explained how to enter and exit the ceremonial area and then asked Ashley’s sister, Stephanie Valdez, to bless the perimeter of the naming area with cedar. I held the naming ceremony where I named Ashley and then had her name her son Kobin. A very nice enchilada, beans, salad and dessert was served. Attached are photos of Ashley, myself and Kobin in addition to a photo of the entire Melot family.



Melot family

## 2025 CPN election

As a side note, I will be running for the District 3 representative in 2025. It is my honor to represent District 3.

Nagech (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)

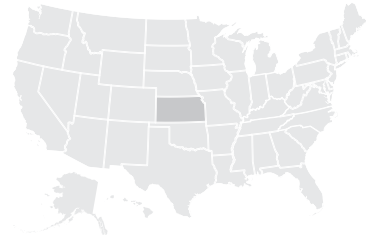
**SPRING SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE**

**FEB 15 AT 5 PM CT**  
Apply at [portal.potawatomi.org](http://portal.potawatomi.org)





## Jon Boursaw District 4



Peggy and I would like to sincerely wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We hope that your holiday season is safe and only filled with joy and happiness. I look forward to 2025 with great expectations and enthusiasm as I continue to foster awareness of the history and presence of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation in Kansas and my endeavor to connect with and serve CPN members across the state.

### Remembering veterans year round

Veterans Day 2024 has come and gone, but here are a few ideas of how you can show respect and appreciation to our veterans year-round:

1. Yes, saying “thank you for your service” has become the most frequent way for showing the appreciation. But it should be said with feeling while looking into the eyes of the individual. Offer a handshake. If it is convenient, offer to assist in carrying their bags, or maybe something as simple as offering to return their grocery cart to the return rack. It will make a difference.
2. Too many of our veterans, male and female, need basic items that we take for granted. If you can, donate used clothing to a VA hospital or a community service center. I have learned that in addition to clothing, shoes of all kinds are in high demand, as are common items such as towels and washcloths, even bedding.
3. Thousands of veterans across the country are in urgent need of lifesaving care and resources. Let them know they are not forgotten by making contributions to organizations such as the Disabled American Veterans, Wounded Warrior Project and the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Having served over 24 years on active duty I consider myself a proud Native American veteran, and I will always acknowledge the sacrifices by those who gave all in the service of their country, which includes several personal friends.

### Honoring a Tribal member during Native American Heritage Month

On Nov. 7, it was my pleasure to recognize Angela “Angie” Ketterman with the presentation of a Pendleton blanket for her distinguished and dedicated service in a wide variety of roles within the Topeka Unified School District 501. Angie has been a dedicated educator and coach in Topeka since 1995. She has coached basketball, softball and volleyball in several 501 schools. In 2016, Angie began teaching Adaptive Physical Education in the Topeka Public Schools, where she continues to make an impact. A passionate advocate for Native American students, Angie has also taught in the Title VI Indian Education summer program since 2013. The blanket presentation was made before the Topeka USD 501 Board of Education. Angie is a descendant of the Weldfelt, Ogee and Weld families.



Angie Ketterman and Jon Boursaw

### CPN Mail Order Pharmacy for Seniors

This NO COST program is available to CPN members over 63 years of age (62 effective Jan. 1, 2025) and CPN members on Social Security disability. Both Tracy, our RN in Rossville, and I have the registration packets, including the formulary. The registration packet is also available online at [cpn.news/health](http://cpn.news/health). You can also contact Dakota Paxon, DPH, Pharmacist in Charge, at 866-900-5236 for more information. Tracy can be reached at 785-584-6171.

### Upcoming CPN Elders’ Potlucks

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

- |               |                                 |                  |
|---------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Dec. 13, 2024 | Traditional Christmas Feast-Ham | RSVP by the 10th |
| Jan. 10, 2025 | Soups and Chili                 | RSVP by the 7th  |

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

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

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## Gene Lambert District 5

*Bozho* (Hello),

This is the month for giving and having gratitude while acknowledging all the creator has provided each of us. It is the everyday life things we sometimes take for granted.

I am grateful for each new day and especially since it has cooled off here in Arizona. It is certain all 800 members of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation who reside here with me feel the same. Wow! Glad that's over. Now for the extreme cold? We did hit freezing for one month last year.

As with the heat, it truly is a different cold, and I know the difference moving here from North Dakota.

As I have said so many times, if you have a roof over your head, food in your tummy and basic good health for you and your family, you are very wealthy indeed.

Google reports that over 72 million or 41% working age Americans have medical debt — up from 34% in 2005. Over 56%, including the elderly, have concerns regarding health, and 56% have some kind of chronic disease.

I had no idea. I have had health issues in the past and now am so grateful I am not one of these statistics at this stage. Of course, life can change without notice for every two legged out there.

So, this Thanksgiving be sure to appreciate family and friends. Are you fortunate enough to have them? Not everyone has.

Yes, I know. Aunt Sally said things you didn't like last year! That was last year, so create a new day and let Aunt Sally say whatever she wants. It doesn't matter in the grand scheme of things anyway. There will always be that one or two in a group that doesn't seem to belong to your tribe. They too teach us tolerance.

Never throw the baby out with the bath, so to speak.

In my opinion, the family in America is under such a threat and dissolving right before our eyes.

Physical distance and past hurts can create difficulties for sure. The middle class and the family are the backbone of our country and our Nation (CPN). The net is worth fighting for.

Do you realize? While you may hate your job, others are scrambling to find one. The house you live in is a mansion to the homeless. Your laughter is an angel's voice to the depressed. Your health is a blessing for those praying for just another day.

Things are not at their brightest today, I admit, but sometimes the abscess needs to break to have a healing.

Life seems to come in a series of ups and downs, and that teaches us about those things for which to be thankful.

I say "thank you, Lord" every morning while I have my coffee on the patio. Thank you. I feel good, have a home, my people, wonderful friends and the perfect sidekick Pretty (my dog). I honestly do this every day, not just "Thanksgiving." It just makes you feel good.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving, the best ever!

I love you all.

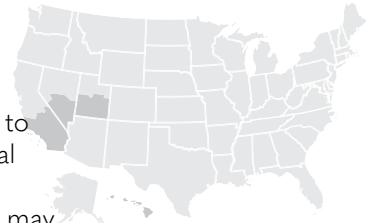
Gene Lambert (Eunice Imogene Lambert) | Butterfly Woman | [glambert@potawatomi.org](mailto:glambert@potawatomi.org)  
270 E Hunt Highway Ste 229 | San Tan Valley, AZ 85143 | Cell: 480-228-6569 | Office: 480-668-0509





## Rande K. Payne District 6

*Bozho Nikanek (Hello friends),*



In keeping with last month's theme of encouraging Tribal members to vote and vote wisely, I want to talk a little bit about next year's Tribal elections. We will be voting on the budget as well as seats for Tribal chairman, and representatives for Districts 1, 2,3 and 4. Some seats may run unopposed in which case there would not be a vote. We will know in January. We had roughly 1,400 ballots returned in the 2024 election cycle. To say we need to get out the vote is a huge understatement considering we are a Nation of nearly 40,000 citizens.

As you may have read in the September *Hownikan*, Alan Melot will not be seeking re-election in District 1. I've enjoyed working with Alan and I was surprised when he announced that he wasn't going to run again. I feel like I was just getting to know him. It struck me that we never know how much time we have and that we should make the most of the time we do have. I will miss working with him, wish him all the best, and I'm honored to call him friend.

The annual D6 and D7 Heritage Festival was blessed with great weather once again. I must apologize for invitations going out so late, and I'm grateful for those who were able to work it into their schedules. Most of our guests were first-time attendees, which was great to see so many new faces.



*2024 D6 and D7 Heritage Festival*

Many thanks to D3 Representative Jon Boursaw for sharing his Kansas history presentation with us. It was well received! Lucy's Tacos were well received also! Thank you, Mary Jo Sheppard, our wisest Potawatomi, and her husband Charles, for coming down from San Jose. Mary Jo is a Vieux/Melot descendant. Thank you, Sabrina Rodia and her husband Archie, for making the trip from Gardnerville, Nevada. They were the farthest traveled. Sabrina is a Bourassa descendant. The future of our tribe is Alyx Ransom. Alyx is a Toupin descendant and came from Lancaster with her grandmother Carol Dobson. It was a great time and I'm already looking forward to next year's event! Thank you, Scarlette Almero, for sharing with the group. Thank you to my sisters Sharon Welch and Karen Walker who so willingly helped with the set up and tear down and the beautiful center pieces. Thanks to Representative Mark Johnson as always for his part in making it an enjoyable event for everyone.

Tribal Scholarship applications period for the spring semester opened Nov. 15. The deadline for submitting is Feb. 15. Information is available on the CPN portal or by email at [education@potawatomi.org](mailto:education@potawatomi.org) or by calling 405-695-6028.

Every time I get an update on construction projects, I'm amazed at how quickly things are coming along. It will be nice to see the new hotel, casino and ball fields completed. The new Tribal headquarters building is long overdue and will be a welcome addition to the Tribal grounds.

As challenging as things can sometimes be, it's nice to be able to pause and give thanks for the blessings in our lives. I'm thankful for the opportunity you have given me to serve as your representative. I wish you a Merry Christmas and all God's best in the New Year!



*Mark Johnson, Alyx Ramson and Rande Payne*



Wisdom from the Word: "Along with their fellowship offering of thanksgiving they are to present an offering with thick loaves of bread made with yeast." Leviticus 7:13

Potawatomi Word of the Month: *bbon* – winter

*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

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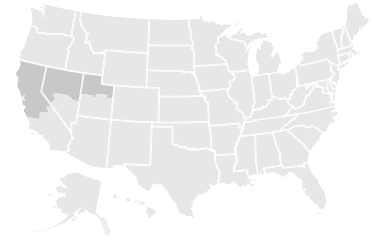
## Mark Johnson District 7

*Bozho nikanek* (Hello friends),

Each November, Native American Heritage Month is observed in the United States, offering a time to celebrate the rich cultures, traditions and histories of Indigenous peoples. It is also a time to acknowledge the unique struggles that Native people have faced for centuries, including forced removals, cultural assimilation, and ongoing fights for sovereignty and self-determination.

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation's history is one of both deep cultural roots and remarkable endurance. Originally located in the Great Lakes region, our Tribe's way of life was drastically altered

in the early 19th century. With the signing of the Indian Removal Act in 1830, the U.S. government initiated a policy of relocating Native tribes from their ancestral lands to make way for American expansion. The Potawatomi, along with other tribes, were forced to leave their homes in a tragic event known as the Potawatomi Trail of Death. This forced relocation in 1838 led to the deaths of untold numbers of Tribal members as they were marched from the Great Lakes region to what is now Kansas, and later settling in present-day Oklahoma. Despite these hardships, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation has managed to preserve our culture and rebuild our community over generations. Today, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation is one of the largest Native American tribes in the U.S., with over 39,000 enrolled members.



*Sabrina Rodia*



*Mary Jo Sheppard*

On Oct. 19, several District 7 members gathered at the fall Family Heritage Festival that was co-hosted by Rande Payne with District 6 members in Visalia, California. It was great to be in the company of our members and have a good lunch. I made a presentation on our Tribal History and Rande made a presentation on where our Tribe is today with our various enterprises and construction projects. A good question and answer session followed. As per our custom, blankets and a bag were presented, with the Wisest blanket going to Mary Jo Sheppard from San Jose, California, a Vieux/Melot descendant, and the Farthest Traveled to Sabrina Rodia from Gardnerville, Nevada.

The next District 7 meeting will be held in Elk Grove, California, on Saturday, Feb. 15, 2025, at The Pavillion in the Elk Grove Park. You can register to attend at ([cpn.news/d7gathering](https://cpn.news/d7gathering)).

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation today, through our exceptional leadership, has built a robust economy through various enterprises, including banking, real estate and tourism. Our Tribe operates two casinos, several health clinics, grocery stores, and several other enterprises providing employment opportunities and services for Tribal members and the broader community. These economic efforts allow the Citizen Potawatomi Nation to fund programs in education, health care, housing and social services, ensuring the well-being of our citizens, now and into the future.



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

Migwetch (Thank you),

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



## Dave Carney District 8

*Bozho nikan*, (Hello friend),

Fall is definitely in the air in District 8, and it's my hope that citizens throughout the district are healthy and doing well.

At the time I'm writing this column I am also preparing for the 2024 Fall Feast in Portland, Oregon. The caterer is hired, RSVPs are rolling in, presentations are being prepared and prizes are being purchased to award. We always do an art contest and generally do a craft of some kind at this event.

This year's craft was inspired by Czarina Thompson, Tribal member and staff at the Cultural Heritage Center. She had the idea for us to make hand game kits. Hand games are

a key event at the annual Citizen Potawatomi Family Festival. They are always conducted in the round house on Friday night and are a favorite of many attendees. If you aren't familiar with the game, think of the childhood game "button — button." There are "bones" or long beads to count the score, a bead or button to hide in the players' hands and a wooden stick to do the guessing. If this is all Greek to you, and you are interested in the game and the rules, please e-mail me and I will send you a copy of the official rules.

On Oct. 5 my wife and I attended the wedding of my nephew, Marshall Cohen, to his long-time sweetheart, Emily Diamond, in Sterling, Virginia. While in the Washington, D.C., area, I was able to do some significant sightseeing.



Potawatomi woman's blouse with silverwork

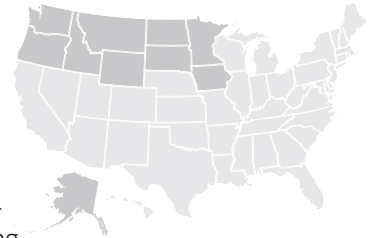
Along with the Lincoln Memorial, Ford's Theater, the Vietnam Memorial and other attractions, I was able to visit the National Museum of the American Indian. I can't say enough good things about the design of the building, the exterior landscaping and the overall "vibe" of the place. There are several displays of the flags of Native nations, including our Citizen Potawatomi flag.

There is currently an exhibition — Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations — which will run through Jan. 17, 2028. Potawatomi are highlighted here, with breakdowns of treaties, information about the negotiators and signers and the story of the Trail of Death. If you have an opportunity to go to this museum, I'd recommend it.

In addition to the museum itself, there is an amazing National Native Veterans' memorial on the property designed by Harvey Pratt (Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes). There are elements of the medicine wheel, the drum and eagle staffs incorporated in the circular sitting area, next to a natural marsh — very unique and thoughtful place to be.

It is my honor to serve as your Legislator,

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



Potawatomi Trail of Death Exhibit



## Paul Wesselhöft District 9

*Bozho, nikan* (Hello, friend),



### Baby Boomers' great failure

It's a time-honored tradition, a responsibility, for Potawatomis and all Native Americans to protect, defend and help care for their children and their children's children, to do less not only brings shame on the present generation, but dishonor to our ancestors. It's in this light that I feel compelled to write this essay of prediction and apology.

My generation is "The Baby Boomers" who are the mid-20th century offsprings of The Greatest Generation. We were born from 1946 to 1964. Along with The Greatest Generation, we have brought prosperity and the highest standard of living to our nation like no generation before or since. We may be the most fortunate generation in American history. We have

been blessed. My generation fought and won Civil Rights and stood against unjust wars. We achieved some great things. However, my generation has miserably failed the current and future generations.

My generation has failed to manage our national debt, which is currently \$35 trillion and dramatically rising every second, minute and hour of every day! One trillion dollars equals 1,000 billion dollars. A billion dollars equals 1,000 million dollars. Therefore, a trillion dollars is \$1,000,000,000,000.

Then there is the interest on our national debt. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects that interest payments will total \$892 billion in fiscal year 2024. Interest alone is projected to rise to \$1 trillion in 2025 and \$1.7 trillion in 2034. In total, net interest payments will total \$12.9 trillion over the next decade. That's just interest!

Someone will have to pay down the \$35 trillion dollar bill or face catastrophic repercussions, which are difficult to imagine. Baby Boomers, because of our advanced age, will probably not face the consequences of this unconscionable mismanagement, but our children and grandchildren will.

These are the generations who will pay the dire consequences of my generation's failure: Generation X, born 1965–1979; Millennials, born 1980–1994; Generation Z, born 1995–2012; and Gen Alpha, born 2013–2025. You will have to pay, not us Baby Boomers.

Some politicians give lip service to lowering the national debt, but they do nothing. They vote "no" on legislation addressing the national debt. Politicians spending your tax money is popular, not spending money on services you enjoy is unpopular. They desire our votes. Some consider this greed, and many politicians traffic in greed. Baby Boomers have failed to hold our national politicians accountable.

The United States has never defaulted on its obligations, but that dreaded day may very well come, and sooner than we want. How will future generations deal with such a day? Will it be another era like the Great Depression, or worse, or will it be something different? If the current trend of taxing and spending continues, something at some time will break and come crashing down.

Many in my generation have company retirements, unlike the current and future generation's self-invested retirements, which takes a lot of discipline and self-control. My generation, for the most part, has jobs and a living wage. Many have cost of living adjustments. My generation has Social Security and a safety net for those without retirements.

The next generation will lose many, if not most, jobs because of greater automation, Artificial Intelligence and quantum computing. The next generation will be woefully unprepared for a national financial disaster. They will face hyper-inflation and an even more devalued dollar.

Yes, Baby Boomers have committed a great failure. We failed to take good care of our children and grandchildren who will be forced to pay our bill or face desperate, critical consequences. I'm sorry.

*Migwetch* (Thank you),

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



# Walking On

## Joel James Francoeur Bourassa Family



Joel James Francoeur, beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend, passed away on May 24, 2024, at the age of 91. Joel was born in Adrian, Michigan, to Harry and Mary Jeanette (née Carey) Francoeur. He grew up in Anderson, Indiana, alongside his three siblings, all of whom are members of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation: Joan (Francoeur) Kaminski, Cleve (Dorothy) Francoeur, and Byron (Carol) Francoeur.

Joel attended St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Indiana. After graduation he worked at Delco Remy, Kaiser Aluminum, the Jones and Laughlin Steel Company and Jordan Engineering. He spent time living in Los Angeles, California, Chicago, Illinois, Milwaukee and Waukesha, Wisconsin.

When he moved to Milwaukee, Joel met his wife, Joan (née Miller), whom he married in 1969. They welcomed their daughter, Jocelyn, in 1971. In 2004, Jocelyn married her college sweetheart, Ryan Hedges, and in 2010 Joel's granddaughter, Amelia, was born. She became his life's delight, sharing in his love of Charlie Brown, silly jokes, painting and sweet desserts.

During the last 15 years of his life, Joel endured a series of health challenges, but none changed his essential qualities of warmth, wit and generosity. He is survived by his wife, daughter, son-in-law, granddaughter, siblings, as well as many other family members and friends.

## Joe Dan Coulter Frigon/Coulter Family



Joe Dan Coulter, 80, of Iowa City, Iowa, passed away Sept. 20, 2024, at the Colonial Manor of Amana, Iowa.

A celebration of life took place Nov. 21 at Wilson's Ciderhouse.

Joe was born on July 25, 1944, the son of Joseph Eloi and Vivian Vilda (Jensen) Coulter, in Victoria, Texas. Joe Dan's grandmother was Henrietta Frigon Coulter, a Citizen Potawatomi Nation

allottee who farmed, raised her family and taught music near Wanette, Oklahoma. Joe's family moved to Norman, Oklahoma. Joe graduated from University High School

in Norman, eventually earning his undergraduate and doctoral degrees from the University of Oklahoma.

Joe met his first wife Rosa in Oklahoma City, where sons Gavin and Daniel were born. Joe completed post-doctoral work in neurophysiology at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas, Università di Pisa in Italy, and the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, with his family in tow.

During a stint in the 1980s at the National Science Foundation in Washington, D.C., Joe met his second wife, Virginia. Their daughter, Danielle, was born in 1983.

In 1985, Joe was recruited to the University of Iowa, where he would spend the next three decades as anatomy department head, professor and associate provost. Joe established multiple programs to increase access among Native Americans to higher education, especially in scientific fields. He would "retire" in 2018 but continued to serve on boards, panels and committees dedicated to public health, with a focus on Native and Indigenous peoples.

Joe is survived by sons, Gavin and Daniel Coulter; daughter, Danielle (Robert) Merlino; grandchildren, Autumn (River) Jarman, Devan and Ashleigh Coulter, Robbie and Russell Merlino; and his siblings, Tim (Samantha) Coulter, Catherine (Bootzin) Coulter, and Jaime (Debra) Coulter.

Joe was preceded in death by his parents and his sister, Cindy Coulter.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to AISES for the advancement of Indigenous people in STEM, at [aises.org](https://www.aises.org).

Online condolences may be shared at [lensingfuneral.com](https://www.lensingfuneral.com).

## Ernest Lee Cherry Weddle/Milot Family



Ernest Lee Cherry lived in Amarillo, Texas, and was affectionately known as Sonny by his family and friends. Sonny went to be with the Lord on Aug. 17, 2024.

Sonny was born July 14, 1947, in Los Angeles, California, to Sylvia Verchell Weddle and Ernest Lee Cherry at Lincoln Hospital. He was a member of Citizen Potawatomi Nation. Sonny was adopted by J.R. Cherry and Ada Gay Cherry of Amarillo, Texas.

He graduated from Caprock High School in 1966. He later studied at Amarillo College and graduated in 1981.

He married Donna Cherry on Dec. 19, 1970, at Victory Baptist Church.

Sonny was a decorated war veteran who joined the Army and served honorably on a forward artillery base in the Vietnam War. He was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Bronze Star Medal and Army Commendation Medal.

Sonny worked for a time at Pantex. He became a USDA meat inspector and retired 37 years later from Tyson. Sonny liked to give back to his community and continued to work in retirement as a crossing guard for AISD.

Sonny's passion and mission was telling others about the good news of the gospel. For years, his calling was a truck stop ministry where he witnessed to many truck drivers and travelers. He liked to read the Bible and share with others what he learned. Sonny attended Temple Baptist Church.

He enjoyed working on cars and showing his cars in car shows. Sonny was filled with joy and shared it with his smile and uplifting spirit. He enjoyed watching westerns, war movies, Texas Longhorns and the Dallas Cowboys. Some are born with green thumbs, and Sonny enjoyed growing many things with his. Sonny spent a lot of time in the summer with his mom, dad and family on a ranch near Creede, Colorado. Sitting by a lake or, even better, in a boat with a pole in the water was one of Sonny's favorite pastimes. Sonny loved helping others and had a giving spirit.

Sonny was preceded in death by his wife, Donna Cherry; mother, Ada Gay Cherry; father, J.R. Cherry; and sister, Chel Barton.

He is survived by his two sons, Nathan Cherry and wife Amie Cherry, and John Cherry and wife Diangela Cherry; grandkids, Colby, Carter, Madeline and Sophia; brother, Jim Cherry; and sisters, Stella Brown and Glenda Allen, along with many nieces and nephews.

**Mary I. Hudson**  
Navarre Family



Mary I. Hudson, 90, passed away peacefully on Sunday, July 28, 2024, at Oakley Place Assisted Living Facility in Rossville, Kansas.

Mary Irene Hudson was born Christmas Day 1933 to Paul and Nellie Irene (Gibson) Martin in Rossville, Kansas. Mary was the oldest of 10 children.

She was a proud member of the Navarre family. Rainbow Woman was her Citizen Potawatomi Nation name,

a name that symbolized her bright and loving spirit.

Mary attended Rossville grade and high schools, graduating RHS in 1951. She later attended Kansas State University. Mary was a USPS rural mail carrier for 32

years, receiving the recognition of rural mail carrier of the year during her career. She retired in 1999.

Mary married Duane M. Hudson on Nov. 28, 1953, in Topeka, Kansas. They had two children, Kristie Lyn Hudson Bruncker and Kevin D. Hudson.

Mary enjoyed hosting and serving her guests' favorite dishes, especially during holidays and birthdays. She loved her kids, grandkids and great-grandkids unconditionally and always made time for them.

Survivors are son, Kevin D. (Lynette) Hudson, of Topeka, Kansas; grandchildren, Julie (Jon) Hellstern and Stephanie (Jeremy) Franz, of Overland Park, Kansas, and Andrew Hudson and Leah Hudson of Topeka, Kansas; great-grandchildren, Anna and Chloe Hellstern, Tucker, Remington and Madisyn Franz of Overland Park; son-in-law, Joe Bruncker, of Overland Park; siblings, Pauline Bickford, of Manhattan, Kansas, Henry (Carol) Martin, of Hesston, Kansas, and CD Martin, of McPherson, Kansas; sisters-in-law, Linda Hudson, of Burlington, Kansas, Karen Martin, of McPherson, and Deanne Martin, of Hutchinson, Kansas; and many cousins, nieces and nephews.

Preceding her in death are her parents, husband, Duane M. Hudson, daughter, Kristie Lyn (Hudson) Bruncker, and many siblings, in-laws and cousins.

Visitation and funeral service were held Aug. 5, 2024, at Rossville United Methodist Church in Rossville, Kansas. A lunch was held at the CPN building in Rossville. Burial followed at Rossville Cemetery.

**Michelle Lynn Harmon**  
Ogee/Beaubien Family



Michelle Lynn Harmon, 43, passed away on Oct. 11, 2024, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Born on April 11, 1981, Michelle was known for her vibrant and outgoing personality, always eager to lend a helping hand and brighten the lives of those around her.

Michelle attended Morris Elementary in California and graduated from Norman North High School in Norman,

Oklahoma. She furthered her education at Vatterott College. Professionally, Michelle held various positions throughout her life, which included roles in cosmetology and as a tour guide in California, as well as a substitute teacher in Norman, Oklahoma.

She had a passion for hobbies such as knitting, beading and collecting Disney memorabilia. Michelle also devoted much of her time to caring for her pets, who were a central part of her life.



Michelle is survived by her father, Michael Harmon; mother, Alice Rodriguez; brother, Michael Harmon; niece, Katana Rose Harmon; and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins. She was preceded in death by her uncle Terry Harmon; grandmother, Jo Ann Matson; grandfathers, Doyle Harmon and Pete Rodriguez; and grandmother, Albina Rodriguez.

Michelle's life was a testament to her generous spirit and love for her family and friends. She will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

.....  
**Phyllis Oletha Sweeten**  
Peltier Family



Phyllis Oletha Sweeten was born on Feb. 6, 1936, in Seminole, Oklahoma, to Charles and Ella (Peltier) Hankins. She passed away on Monday, Sept. 23, 2024, in Norman, Oklahoma, at the age of 88 years, seven months and 17 days. Phyllis moved to Sulphur, Oklahoma, at an early age and attended Sulphur Schools. She worked in several different jobs but mostly enjoyed being with family.

Phyllis was preceded in death by her parents, Charles and Ella Hankins; children, Vickie McDonald and Ray Sweeten. She is survived by two children, Sherry Osborn and Dale Sweeten; brother, Pete Hankins; three grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

Memorial services were Oct. 5, 2024, at Oaklawn Cemetery in Sulphur with Rev. Bill Leveridge officiating.

Arrangements were made under the direction and care of DeArman Funeral Home in Sulphur.

.....  
**Travis Martin Murray**  
Ogee Family



Travis Martin Murray, 33, returned to dwell with our Heavenly Father and brother Jesus Christ on Aug. 2, 2024. At his side were his parents, siblings and their spouses and significant others and a few close friends at McKay-Dee Hospital in Ogden, Utah.

Travis was born March 17, 1991, at St. Joseph's Hospital in Tacoma, Washington, to Dawn Alyse Martin and Blaine Scott Murray. He enjoyed playing little league

football, family time, shooting guns, driving his truck, riding his Harley, singing at the top of his lungs, dancing his uniquely Travis moves, fishing, cliff jumping, off-roading and campfires. He approached everything he did full throttle.

Travis was tough as nails, yet a gentle giant of a man. Even though he appeared rough on the outside, he cared deeply for everyone he knew. If you were hungry, Travis bought you a meal. If you needed help, Travis was the first to offer a hand. Travis' final act of generosity was being a multiple organ and tissue donor.

Travis had a tender, happy soul with an unbreakable spirit. He was loving, genuine, authentic, the fun uncle, the life of the party, unapologetically himself, fiercely loyal, generous, kind, optimistic, smart, curious, introspective, a deep thinker, unafraid to be himself and let his beautiful uniqueness shine and THE BEST big brother one could ask for.

Travis absolutely loved America, our military troops, our freedom to own and bear arms and his Potawatomi heritage.

The world was not worthy of Travis, so Heavenly Father took him home. Travis' passing has left a huge hole in his family's hearts that won't be filled until we are with him again.

Travis is survived by his mother Dawn, father Blaine (Lori), siblings Brooke (Whit), Tanner (Katie), Troy (Aubrey), Tucker and his honorary children, niece and nephews, Tate, Jace, Charlee and Hayes.

Travis was preceded in death by his grandparents Harold J. Martin (Ogee), Robert Preston Martin (Ogee), Martha Senee Arnold, Norma Gertrude Depencier, Ralph Lee Allen and Fern Allen.

Travis was laid to rest Aug. 12, 2024, in Logan, Utah.

.....  
**Teresa Marie Hamilton**  
Burnett Family



Teresa Marie Hamilton, 70, passed away on Aug. 3, 2024, while battling lung cancer. She is survived by her two children, Sarah Hamilton (spouse D. Particelli) and William Hamilton; and her granddaughter, Emma. *Yan Kob Cone-Zo'Quah*, her Indian name, was granted to her last year by her cousin Peggy Malone.

Teresa was born in Stillwater, Oklahoma on June 5, 1954. Her family moved to the

Chicago area in 1959 and she went to Queen of the Rosary Catholic grade school in Elk Grove Village, Illinois. She graduated from Elk Grove High School in 1972, and during her time there she was part of a sit-in to have a smoking area installed for the students. After she was 21, she started a petition gaining enough signatures to successfully keep her town from raising the drinking age from 19 to 21. She moved to Checotah, Oklahoma, in 2003 to be near her parents when they retired and moved. She worked for a title company until she retired last year.

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# HOWNIKAN

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