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STILWELD
Stilwell senior
Cainan Mink starts
his career path with
a welding program.
EDUCATION, 6

GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS

YSG GWY AŌP Official News Publication of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma March 2023



The 2022-23 Kenwood Indians pose with the silver ball, signifying that the team won second place in the Organization of Rural Elementary Schools state basketball tournament. COURTESY

STRONG FINISH

After a tough game in the Organization of Rural Elementary Schools state finals, Kenwood wins silver.

BY LANI HANSEN
Reporter

KENWOOD – Basketball season has come to end, in which the Kenwood Indians went all the way to the Organization of Rural Elementary Schools state basketball tournament in Shawnee but came up short in the championship game. The team, however, brought home the silver ball.

Kenwood Public Schools sits in a little community outside of Salina, serving more than 100 students in grades first through eighth, according to school's website. More than half of the students the school serves are Native American.

In the 2022-23 basketball season, the Kenwood Indians and Lady Indians, who are both coached by Dain Pippin, made it to their respective state tournaments. The Lady Indians was a young team and had made it to the first round before losing, said Pippin.

"The boys had a really good season. Their final record was 23-2," Pippin said. "Their only two losses were in the state final and against Maryetta in overtime. My girls team was super young, I only had two eighth graders."

This season the Kenwood boys team was filled with nine players, and seven of them were eighth graders who will be graduating in May.

Pippin said he had been watching this group of players for a while knowing it was going to be a good team. He said he has been coaching the Kenwood teams for five years and that in his first year at Kenwood the boys team got state runner-up.

In the state tournament, the Kenwood boys faced the Glover Cougars in the quarterfinals, Monroe in the semifinals and Justice Warriors in the finals.

"In the first game we had a rough game but came out on top. The last two games they

SEE ORES, PAGE 2

Indigenous artists show fashion skills

Three UKB members seek to further themselves in industry.

BY LANI HANSEN
Reporter

TAHLEQUAH – Three United Keetoowah Band members recently showcased their talents as clothing designers and a makeup artist in two local fashion shows – the Winter Solstice Fashion Show on Dec. 17 at Northeastern State University and the Red Dress Event Fashion Show on Feb. 11 at Bacone College.

Charlotte Kingfisher-Wolfe, a UKB member and 2022 UKB Tradition Keeper, was chosen to be one of seven Indigenous designers for the Winter Solstice Fashion Show that was held at NSU in Tahlequah. She said her talent as a seamstress comes from being raised by a single mother.

"Watching her as a single mother, she always instilled in us that you can either cry about it or you get up and

SEE SHOW, PAGE 2



Miss Keetoowah Kitana Foreman models for Nighthawk Down in the Red Dress Event Fashion Show. PHOTOS BY LANI HANSEN/REPORTER

Panther elected as UKB Delaware Dist. rep

Elmer Panther sits on the United Keetoowah Band's Council, serving the district's citizens for the next two years.

BY LANI HANSEN
Reporter

KANSAS, Okla. – The United Keetoowah Band Tribal Council seated one new district representative, Elmer Panther, while eight representatives returned for another term.

Delaware District Rep. Elmer Panther went through the election process and has taken the oath to serve on the Council for the next two years, 2023-25.

Panther resides in Kansas with his wife Nina. He has two children, Kyle and Kristin, and one grandson. He received his high school diploma from Oaks Mission School. He attended Northeastern State University for one year before entering the workforce.

"I found out college wasn't for me," Panther said. "Once my kids got older though, I thought I need something else to do so I joined the fire department in Kansas. It was just something to do."

Panther worked with the Kansas Fire Department as a first responder and captain before leaving several years ago.

One day someone had noticed Panther's passion for helping others and mentioned to him that he should run for UKB Council.

"I had questioned the statement of running for Council," Panther said. "Then I thought about the people I have helped out in my community. I thought about what more I could do for my people if I

"I thought about what more I could do for my people if I was on Council with a little more support."

Elmer Panther, UKB Delaware District representative



Elmer Panther

was on Council with a little more support."

Panther decided to run for Council in the 2020 election but was three days late to file. This past year he made sure he knew when the application deadline date would

be for 2022 election.

"I was surprised I won," Panther said. "One of my childhood friend's dad surprised me at the inauguration. He was like another father to me who watched us play football as kids, and we lost contact with each other so seeing him made me happy."

Panther continues to help people in his community, and now that he is on Council it has made him extra busy.

His first month of serving he has helped people with getting applications for firewood and other assistance.

"It's like when I worked with the fire department, I get calls at different hours in the night," he said.

Although Panther does get calls at different hours, he is always willing to help his people out.

He plans on having district meetings every fourth Friday of each month at the Jay Community Building at 6:30pm with a meal. Information will be posted on the UKB Facebook and Instagram pages. To reach Panther, call 918-226-1668.



A Northeastern State University Hawk Reach representative shares information with Native American students. PHOTOS BY LANI HANSEN/REPORTER



Cherokee and Indigenous Studies representative Jeromy Miller speaks to a student about Northeastern State University's Hawk Reach program.

NSU's Center for Tribal Studies hosts Native Strong

BY LANI HANSEN
Reporter

TAHLEQUAH – Northeastern State University's Center for Tribal Studies in January collaborated with the school's Office of Admissions, Recruitment and Scholarships for the Native Strong event.

NSU-CTS Director Sara Barnett said Native Strong began in January 2020.

"It was actually an idea that Sky Wildcat, one of our former staff members, came up with as a formal recruitment that was specifically for Native American students," she said.

According to NSU's website, Native Strong is an annual American Indian student recruitment event and offers a hands-on experience for high school and transfer students to learn about the NSU Native community. Students also learn more about navigating admissions, scholarships and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) processes.

The purpose of Native Strong is to tie in the recruitment and cultural components. With the hands-on experience attendees were able to

complete applications for admissions and scholarships.

"This last year we had an application station for students to complete their admissions application for free," Barnett said. "We also expanded this year to include transfer students, to make sure they had a place to learn about NSU and the American Indian support programs that we have here."

Barnett said she was satisfied with the outcome. She said this year they met their highest registration number with close to 270 students. There was separate sessions for parents and students. Along with the cultural components, students were able to make baskets and cornbead necklaces.

"It was a very successful event, and people had a good time," Barnett said. "This was the first time we haven't had any COVID restrictions. Melody Proctor was responsible in planning this, and she wanted to add the transfer students to our component, so we did."

Native Strong is held annually. For information, call 918-444-4350 or email tribalstudies@nsuok.edu.



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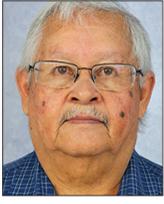
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Awaiting favorable trust-land ruling

Gi do wa go we la
Hello everyone, I spoke too soon about January being cold as February ranks up there, too. Everyone ready for the March Madness? On Groundhog Day, Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow which forecasts six more weeks of winter.

Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra announced to all tribal leaders, a 90-day renewal of the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency. In announcing this, Becerra also announced this will be the final renewal and end the Public Health Emergency effective May 11.

The 90-day notice will give ample time to transition. The decision is based on, since the peak of Omicron surge at the end of January 2022, the fact that daily Covid-19 reported cases are down 92%. Covid-19 deaths have declined by over 80% and new Covid-19 hospitalizations are down nearly 80%. While the results are favorable, I strongly recommend everyone to continue practicing safe measures to keep from becoming one of the infected.

In my January report to Council, I spoke briefly about the Department of Interior M-Opinion. In doing so, I have asked “where does it say, you have exclusive jurisdiction? I have read court reports, congressional records, treaties, nowhere in historical records does it say Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma has



Chief's Corner

JOE BUNCH
Principal Chief
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exclusive jurisdiction.” A favorable M-Opinion will enforce what Congress has said all along: there are two federally (one federally recognized, and one agency approved) recognized Cherokee tribes in northeastern Oklahoma and will settle much of our disputes over land in trust, federal funding and jurisdictional issues.

The DOI is waiting on this opinion to place land in trust for our 2.63-acre gaming operation, as well as the National Indian Gaming Commission approving our gaming application. Once we receive the opinion in our favor this will open the door for other federal program programs and services, as well as declaring us co-successor in interest to the historic Cherokee Nation. We pray for this opinion in our favor.

A historic meeting was held at Bacone College with Bureau of Indian Education Director Tony Dearman, the American Baptist Association, Rev. Dr. Jeff Haggray, Muskogee Creek Nation Councilor Joyce Deere and the Bacone board of directors.

I, along with Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoche, Kiowa Chairman Lawrence Spottedbird, Osage Nation Chief Jeff Standingbear, Bacone interim President Dr. Nikki Michaels and many others came together for this meeting.

This type of meeting hasn't taken place since Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs John Collier came to Bacone in the 1920s for a ceremony of opening the administration building at Bacone.

The purpose of the meeting was to clarify the application process of Bacone becoming a tribal college and the best avenue for Bacone in achieving its goals and direction.

It is an honor serving with tribal leaders in forging a bright path for our tribal students and future leaders of our tribes.

On a national level, Assistant Chief Wacoche and I attended the National Congress of American Indian Winter executive session in Washington, D.C. This was a meeting of tribal leaders from across Indian Country to hear issues affecting Indian Country and what's on the horizon.

In closing, Covid-19 is on the downside. I thank the Council for its work during this historic time of sickness and for resuming district meetings. Please pray for our tribe, our leaders and for a positive M-Opinion from the solicitor. Until we see again. Wado.

SHOW: One designer gets invited to Denver.

FROM PAGE 1

do something about it,” Wolfe said about her mother. “She sewed my dress for kindergarten graduation.”

Wolfe said once she became a mother she wanted to get back into the traditional teachings. She learned that buying clothes was getting too pricey so she turned to making clothes. Wolfe was taught by Lula Elk on how to make ribbon skirts.

Before Wolfe was invited to show her clothing line at NSU, she was cheering on her fellow Indigenous designers. She had heard from a designer and model how the fashion world can be ugly, but this fashion brought positivity to Tahlequah.

“Something happened with one designer for the show, and they were grasping for another designer,” Wolfe said. “Well, I was approached and next thing I knew I was a designer for the Winter Solstice Fashion Show.”

Wolfe, who owns the clothing line Nighthawk Down, had eight designs and eight models walk in the show. She had a “biker chick” outfit inspired by her father with her logo embroidered on the back of the jacket; a “deer woman” inspired outfit; a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women outfit with her model wearing a wrap skirt, red tear dress, ribbon skirt and two ribbon shirts; and an “eagle man” outfit that she said was her biggest hit.

After appearing in the Winter Solstice, Wolfe was asked to be in the Red Dress Event Fashion Show at Bacone College in Muskogee to spotlight Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Peoples. It was also to raise funds for Bacone College students, dorms and classrooms.



Alyssa Henson-Brackett served as the coordinator of the Red Dress Event Fashion Show on Feb. 11 in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

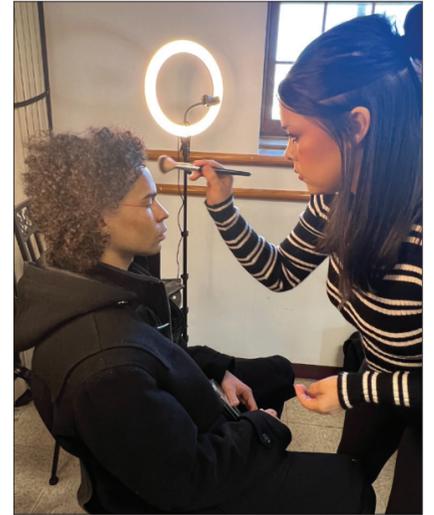
“They have been going through a crisis with mold situations in their buildings,” fashion show coordinator Alyssa Henson-Brackett said.

Henson-Brackett put on the show as well. She is the fashion designer and owner of a label known as Alynwonderland. The UKB member is married and has two children.

The show brought in seven designers, including Henson-Brackett, but only six designers showed their lines of clothing.

“All of the models, designers, hair and makeup team are Indigenous people and we really wanted to coordinate that together,” she said.

The lead makeup artist for this fashion show was UKB member Sasheen Brown.



Sasheen Brown of Sheensational works on a model's makeup during the Red Dress Event Fashion Show at Bacone College.

She is the owner of Sheensational and has been doing makeup for eight years. Brown is from Tahlequah, but resides in Oklahoma City. She grew up near a stomp dance ground, so culture is important to her, she said.

“This was my first show as lead makeup artist,” Brown said.

Henson-Brackett has also been invited to two other fashion shows as a designer in Denver in March and northwest Arkansas in June. She will be taking Brown and her makeup team to Denver.

For information visit the Facebook pages of Wolfe at Nighthawk Down, Henson-Brackett at Alyn-wonderland Studio and Sasheen Brown at Sheensational.

ORES: Coach thanks community for support.

FROM PAGE 1

played against Division I and II teams,” Pippin said. “In the last game, the boys played their hearts out and left it all out on the court. I was heartbroken for them after the last game. We came up short. They are some great kids, and I'm proud of them.”

Pippin said he appreciated the community of Kenwood coming together and supporting the team. The Kenwood Fire Department escorted the team when

it left for the state tournament and when it arrived home.

The UKB tribe is proud of each player who represents the Kenwood Indians. They are Deuce Panther, Jake Blossom, Brennon Dry (UKB tribal member), Josiah Sapp, Crayton Sapp, Joshua Nichols, Braylon Jumper, Lakota Cochran and Caleb Cubby Morris.

Pippin said his girls team for next year will be a team to watch. During his five years of coaching at Kenwood, Pippin said he has seen these players progress.

“It's been great,” he said. “I coached at Cleora before I came to Kenwood, and that has always been a part of the deal is watching them progress.”

In Pippin's second year the girls won the ORES state championship for the first time in school history.

“They turned out to be a great basketball team,” he said. “I have been coaching for 25 years, and they have got to be one of the top players I have got to coach.”

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Confronting drug overdose deaths

STATEPOINT – As America’s drug overdose and death epidemic continues to impact communities of every size in every corner of the country, new challenges have emerged.

In 2021, more than 107,000 people died from drug-related overdoses, according to the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, the bulk of which were from illicitly manufactured fentanyl, which shows up in fake pills, methamphetamine and cocaine.

Since its founding in 2014, the American Medical Association’s Substance Use and Pain Care Task Force has brought together medical societies and practicing physicians to develop and implement strategies that can help end this epidemic.

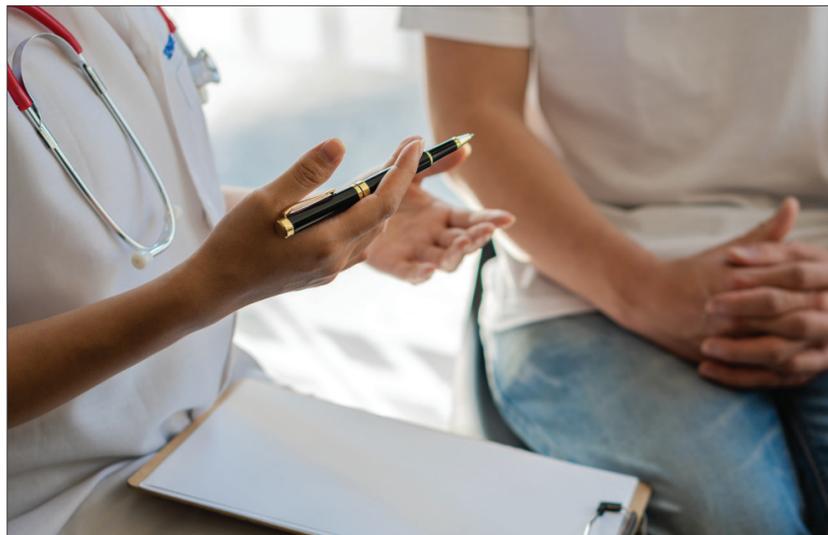
The task force’s recommendations include urging physicians to enhance their education as well as advocate for comprehensive care for patients in pain and for those with a substance use disorder.

The AMA also strongly urges states to update laws to make the opioid overdose reversal medication naloxone more readily available, decriminalize fentanyl test strips and take other harm reduction initiatives to save lives from overdose.

When it comes to helping patients with a substance use disorder (SUD) so they can lead satisfying, productive lives, the science shows what works: medication prescribed by a physician or dispensed at Opioid Treatment Programs, combined with behavioral counseling and other services.

Despite certain positive trends and clear science, of the 40.3 million people nationwide with a substance use disorder, 93% receive no treatment, according to federal officials.

A 2022 report from the U.S. Department of Labor found that health insurance companies regularly violate state and federal laws designed to provide coverage for substance use



In 2021, more than 107,000 people died from drug-related overdoses, according to the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, the bulk of which were from illicitly manufactured fentanyl, which shows up in fake pills, methamphetamine and cocaine. STATEPOINT MEDIA

disorders and mental illness.

Health insurance companies also continue to put up barriers to accessing medications for opioid use disorders (MOUD) and deny care to patients with pain – or make it so expensive that patients can’t access care.

“No community has been – or will be – spared the pain of this epidemic. The spiking mortality numbers – with young people and Black and Brown Americans dying at the fastest growing rates – add yet another urgent call to remove

health inequities from the health care system. We know policymakers have not exhausted all remedies. Until we have, we must keep advocating for humane, evidence-based responses,” Bobby Mukkamala, AMA Substance Use and Pain Care Task Force chairman, said.

The AMA stresses that while physicians are leading in areas where they can have an influence, they cannot end the epidemic alone.

To combat the issue at the state and national level, the organization

“The spiking mortality numbers – with young people and Black and Brown Americans dying at the fastest growing rates – add yet another urgent call to remove health inequities from the health care system.”

Bobby Mukkamala, AMA Substance Use and Pain Care Task Force chairman

has issued a national “roadmap” to policymakers and regulators focused on these specific actions:

- Remove barriers to evidence-based care for patients with an SUD. This includes removing prior authorization, step therapy and dosage caps for MOUDs, continuing federal flexibilities for take-home medication for opioid treatment programs, continuing audio-visual and audio-only telehealth options for patients to begin treatment and removing regulations that prevent most physicians from being able to prescribe MOUDs to their patients.

- Take immediate steps to protect families by focusing on increasing access to evidence-based care rather than using punishment and the threat of family separation for persons with an SUD who are pregnant, peripartum, postpartum and parenting.

- Enforce laws that require mental health benefits to be on par with other health benefits, thereby broadening access to treatment related to mental health and substance use disorders.

- Pharmacy chains, health insurance companies and pharmacy benefit managers should remove arbitrary barriers to opioid therapy as well as ensure patient access to affordable, accessible non-opioid pain care.

- Patients and physicians should have conversations about safe storage and disposal of opioids and all medications; and increase access to naloxone to patients at risk of overdose.

- Develop and implement systems to collect timely, adequate and standardized data to identify at-risk populations, fully understand polysubstance drug use and implement public health interventions that directly address removing structural and racial inequities.

To learn more about efforts to end the drug overdose and death epidemic, visit end-overdose-epidemic.org.

U.S. Ed Secretary talks Native students’ needs

BY STAFF REPORTS

OKLAHOMA CITY – On Jan. 25, U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona had a roundtable discussion with Native American parents in the Oklahoma City area to listen to their unique experiences in urban schools and learn more about ways his department can support Native American students regarding language preservation and revitalization.

Following the release of Cardona’s Raise the Bar: Lead the World initiative for academic excellence and pathways to global leadership, he stressed that authentic family engagement is critical to achieve those priorities.

“You are experts of your children. You have a very unique perspective. I’ve visited four Indian Nations. What an eye-opening experience it has been for me to learn the passion around ensuring cultural norms and language are still embedded in the next generation,” Cardona said. “You are your child’s best and most influential teachers. We as educators play their secondary role.”

During the roundtable, parents spoke candidly about the needs of their students, and the need to both encourage language preservation and revitalization and cultural learning while also offering additional mental health support that is culturally sensitive.

“We are losing our Native speakers. I

recently attended an Indian education summit. It was said we had 130 speakers prior to COVID, but now that’s down to 40. We are in a terrible race against time for language preservation and while we are all sitting around going how are we going to fix it, we are losing it. We don’t have time,” parent Courtney Yarholer said about the need for language preservation.

Parent Lucyann Harjo emphasized the need for more mental health support for students.

“Every school should have a social worker; they are very much needed. We need more mental health support in our community. In our Native community, we’ve had a lot of loss. The numbers of family members lost; our kids have lost so many loved ones,” she said. “The hurt is real, and I am burdened by how much loss we have.”

Cardona ended by saying, “You are saying what parents are feeling across the country. To this day, people are saying schools shouldn’t be dealing with mental health. Say that to a grieving mother. We owe it to our students to do better, to take advantage of the disruption of pandemic and make sure we aren’t building out schools to how they were in 2018. There is more money in education than ever before. How we use it will determine how successful our students are.”

Cobell scholarships applications now open

BY STAFF REPORTS

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. – Applications opened on Feb. 13 for the Cobell Scholarships consisting of the 2023-24 undergraduate and graduate scholarships, 2023 summer scholarships and 2022-23 vocational scholarships.

According to the Cobell Scholarship website, they are named after Elouise Cobell. In 1996, she led a class action suit demanding back payment and better accounting on Individual Indian Money Accounts managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Thirteen years later, the U.S. government settled for \$3.4 billion.

“Cobell Scholarship awards are disbursed according to US Federal Student Aid standards and the policies of the individual colleges and universities,” the website states. “The Cobell Scholarship is annual, non-renewable, and available to any post-secondary (after high school) student who is: an enrolled member of a US Federally-recognized Tribe, enrolled in or plans to enroll in full-time study and is degree-seeking while attending any nationally, regionally and industry accredited nonprofit, public and private, institution.”

The website states that Native education specialists review completed

applications. Merit-based offers are then made to carefully screened and selected applicants who then move to finalist status in early May:

- Finalists will accept (or decline) the offer, then submit completed recent transcripts and proof of course enrollment for the next term for which funding will be made available. This can be early in the process or late, depending on individual institutional policies. For this reason and to relieve stress on the finalists, the post-acceptance period remains open throughout the summer. It is important to understand that during this time, scholarship offers will not be lost; and,
- Staff work with tribal enrollment offices to verify citizenship; and,
- Staff work with financial aid offices to verify university attendance and financial aid eligibility.

Each year, a waitlist is established. Individuals on the list can see this status in OASIS on the website.

Offers to individuals on the waitlist can be made at any time during the academic year. Therefore, it is important that applicants keep their information updated in OASIS. (https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/access_oasis) For information, visit <https://cobellscholar.org> or email scholarships@cobellscholar.org.

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OBITUARIES

Larry Ellis Bird

Larry Ellis Bird, 62, of Muldrow, Oklahoma, was born on March 17, 1960, in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, to Emma (Jones) Bird and Charlie Bird and passed away on January 29, 2023, in Oklahoma City. He was married to Margaret (Sevenstar) Bird on November 18, 1984, in Muldrow. Larry was a proud father and grandfather and made sure everyone knew how proud he was of them. He always made everyone feel loved and welcomed and would give

you the shirt off his back. He was a man of few words, but when he spoke – you listened. Larry was an upholsterer by trade but had many talents such as making furniture and repairing vehicles and appliances. He was more than loyal to his family and a lending hand to his community. He spent many summers at the creek, the place he loved the most. He enjoyed fishing, being on Google and YouTube and making his grandchildren laugh all day long. Larry was truly a kind man with a heart of gold.

Survivors are wife, Margaret of

the home; two daughters, Crystal Bird and Robinelle Bird, both of Muldrow; two sons, Isaac L. Sevenstar and Connor Bird, both of Muldrow; 13 grandchildren, Ericka Jenkins, Mariah Jenkins, Ashlenn Jenkins, Krystan Soap, Stephanie Sevenstar, Avery Sevenstar, Cheyenne Sevenstar, Ava Sevenstar, Makayla Sevenstar, Greyson Sevenstar, Jordan Sevenstar, Jax Bird and Journey Bird; two great-grandchildren, Mydnight and Kiayah; two nieces and four nephews, Megan Pratt, Jerome Sevenstar, Britny



Coleman, Adam Coleman, Jalen Coleman and Kaden Coleman; three brothers-in-law, Martin Coleman; Bobby Sevenstar and Junior Lee Sevenstar; two sisters-in-law, Lisa Sevenstar and Jackie Sevenstar; and several cousins, other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Emma and Charlie Bird; and one sister, Angie Coleman. Active Pallbearers were Bill Soap, Adam Coleman, James Mathis, Bobby Sevenstar, Chad Pratt and Kendal Killer. Honorary Pallbearers were Connor Bird, Isaac Sevenstar, Jalen Coleman, Kaden Coleman, Martin Coleman, Quintin Watts, Junior Lee Sevenstar, Jerome Sevenstar and Jacob Sevenstar.

Billy Ray Budder

Billy Ray Budder was born November 2, 1957, in Claremore, Oklahoma, to Annabelle (Blossom) and Willie Budder, Sr. He departed this life on January 5, 2023, in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, at the age of 65 years, 2 months, and 3 days.

Billy Ray grew up in Kenwood and attended Jay High School. He also went through Army basic training at Fort Sill in Lawton, Oklahoma. He was a proud, full blood Cherokee that was fluent in his native language.

Billy Ray worked in construction mainly as a drywall installer. He loved to talk about all the places his jobs took him. He enjoyed being outdoors where he spent many days gardening, fishing, and hunting for squirrel, rabbit, and deer. Billy Ray was also very



good at gathering mushrooms, wild onions, crawdads, or whatever was in season. He was not a wasteful person and was known to collect many different items that he would use or

display for others to see. Billy Ray lived life to the fullest. He roamed here and there most of his life and never left a place without doing something in appreciation. Billy Ray loved everyone and was loved by many in return. No matter the time or place, there was always someone who knew him. He was known to everyone as "George Jones". Billy Ray never hesitated to help someone when he could. Through all of his years

of misbehaving, he always kept God close by. He read his bible as long as his vision allowed. He will remain in everyone's hearts that knew him.

Billy Ray is survived by: 1 daughter: Dana Greenlee and husband Tyrell of Dallas, Texas; 1 son: Ned Shawn Budder of Austin, Texas; 3 grandchildren: Dayja Bolden, William Perry, and John Bolden; 2 great grandchildren: Analisa Aguilero and Elissa Aguilero; 2 sisters: Betty Wickliffe of Tahlequah and Linda Budder of Kenwood, Oklahoma; 2 brothers: Daryle Budder of Grove, Oklahoma and Marvin Budder of Kansas, Oklahoma; 1 aunt: Carrie Lacy and husband Gerald of Locust Grove, Oklahoma; a special cousin: Sherri Henry who checked on him daily; nieces: Gayla, Megan, Anissa, Anjalissa, Natasha, Aisha, Eloise, Kaylor and McKinley; nephews: Travis, Trent,

Preston, Matt, Gabe, Ryder, William, Maddox, and Kamden; special great nephew Broly Budder; numerous other relatives and a multitude of friends.

He was preceded in death by paternal grandparents: Ned and Nellie (Scott) Budder; maternal grandparents: Osie and Sarah Blossom; his parents; 2 brothers: Willis Budder and Willie Budder, Jr.; aunts: Susie, Mina, Mary Lou, Agnes Budder, Rosanell Budder and Ella Mae Redbird; uncles: Charlie O'Field, Floyd Bark, Stanley, Sammy, Dave, John, and Louie Budder; 1 brother-in-law: Greg Wickliffe; and 1 great granddaughter: Juliana Aguilero.

Funeral services were held January 11, 2023, at Euwasha Baptist Church in Kenwood. Rev. Raymond Snell and Rev. Richard Budder officiated. Interment followed at Little Rock Indian Cemetery.

Geneva Chewie

Geneva Chewie, age 90, went home to be with her Lord and Savior on Friday, January 6, 2023, at her home with family by her side. Geneva was born on July 19, 1932, to James Lee O'Field, Sr. and Nellie Parchmeal-O'Field and began her journey being born in Sid near Dry Creek in Delaware County.

Geneva education began, by attending school in Kansas, OK and Landmark School, Shilocco Indian School. She attended 2 years of college at NSU. Geneva entered the work force in Tulsa, OK for a Cafeteria style restaurant (Michaels). She also worked as a nanny which gave her travel and

privileges and experiences in life. Geneva worked for Canning Factor in Kansas, OK, In the kitchen at West Siloam Springs Casino, Poultry for O'Brien's, and Home Health Care. She met and married her sweetheart Lewis Chewie. She led a busy and full life.

Geneva enjoyed gardening, sewing, cooking and being in the woods for whatever was growing during the seasons, onions, mushrooms, berries, watercress, and much more. Geneva was a kind and generous soul, that walked in faith. She always left you with a smile and a warm touch. She inspired her kids to love each other and take care of each other. Not asking much of this world, but just that! Family meant

everything to her along with her strong faith. She will be dearly missed by her family and friends.

Geneva is preceded in death by her parents James and Nellie O'Field; husband Lewis Chewie; 3 granddaughters Tara Dawn, Tamra Lashell and Phelicity; 2 brothers and 1 sister.

Geneva is survived by her children Lillie and husband David Hogshooter of Eucha, OK, Leila and husband Jimmy Buffington of Eucha, OK, Linda Chewie of Kenwood, OK, Geri and



husband Brian Belt of Watts, OK, Belinda Chewie-Hogshooter of Salina, OK, Michael Sharp of Salina, OK, Darrell Sharp and wife Angie of Jay, OK; 15 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren; numerous cousins, nieces, nephews, family, friends.

Geneva's Wake Service were on January 11 followed by her family visitation to greet friends at Lawson's Funeral Homes & Cremation Services in Jay, OK with Jess Williams officiating.

Geneva's Celebration of Life Funeral Service were January 12 at Tyjo Baptist Church of Colcord/Jay with Rev. Guy Soldier officiating. Followed by her funeral procession to O'Field Cemetery, Jay.

Shirley Marie (Bird) Fourkiller

Shirley Marie (Bird) Fourkiller was born on May 15, 1958, to John Bird and Betty (Smith) Bird in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. She departed this life on January 25, 2023, at the age of 64 in Tulsa, Oklahoma surrounded by those her loved her.

Shirley loved life and lived it to the fullest. She had a huge heart and would



help anyone in need. She was always laughing, smiling with everyone. She loved spending time with her family, but especially her daughter and granddaughter. Her

hobbies included playing games on her phone, puzzles, watching TV, listening to

gospel music, dancing and loved O.U. football.

She was an amazing mother, grandmother, sister, aunt and friend. Her life was loving the Lord and her family.

Shirley was preceded in death by her husband: Richard Fourkiller, her son: Richard Shannon Fourkiller, her parents: John and Betty Bird, sisters: Laura Bunch, Janie Grayson, Lila Gonzales, brothers: Johnny Bird, Ocie Bird,

Sammy Bird, Wesley Bird and Fabian Bird.

Those left to cherish Shirley's memory are her daughter: Stephanie Fourkiller, granddaughter: Aiyanna Fourkiller, sister: Charlene Locust, brothers: Terry Bird and wife Renee, Junior Bird and wife Marcella.

She is also survived by several nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

Manuel Joe Holmes

Manuel Joe Holmes was born on February 28, 1950, in Tahlequah, OK, the son of Henry and Allene (Glory) Holmes. He was raised with three brothers and four sisters, Richard "Bud", Henry, Tony, Joyce, Mildred, Evelyn, and Bonnie. Manuel finished his high school credit in Colorado and then later attended school at Northeastern State University for three years, specializing in Social Work. Manuel was always putting the needs of other people ahead of his own, and dedicated his life to helping individuals in AA, often conducting the meetings himself. On May 17, 1986, he married his best friend and the love of his life, Allene Beaver in Cookson, OK. They loved life in each other's company, and raised one son and six daughters, Gilbert, Stephanie, Savannah, Stacy, Kendra, Talia and Manuella. His family was the sweetest part of life. He loved

every cookout, holiday dinner, family gatherings and events he ever attended. He loved people and especially the young people. You knew he was at the event when you heard "what's up home girl/homeboy?" He worked his entire life at Greenleaf Nursery and got along well with all of his coworkers. When he wasn't working, he kept his yard in pristine shape, always mowing. He was of the Baptist faith and a member of First Indian Baptist Church of Tahlequah. He read his Bible often and never failed to thank God for his daily blessings. He had one of the warmest personalities and the best laughs. He loved life and it showed. His health began to fail and he passed from this life on December 29, 2022, in Tahlequah, OK, surrounded by those he loved. He was 72 years old and will be greatly missed.

He is preceded in death by his mother, father, one sister, Joyce James, one grandson, Curtis Glory and his canine

sidekick, Caesar "Ceda".

Those left to cherish his memory include his beloved wife, Allene Holmes and his children, Gilbert Holmes of Tahlequah, Stephanie Holmes of Bunch, Savannah Compton and husband Charles of Tulsa, Stacy Stayathome and companion Edward Bolin of Tahlequah, Kendra Chuculate and husband Rodney of Tahlequah, Talia Poafpybitty of Bunch, and Manuella Jo Sams of Tulsa. He leaves his brothers and sisters, Richard "Bud" Holmes and wife Linda Sue of Bunch, Henry Holmes Jr. of Tahlequah, Tony Jones and wife Anna of Stilwell, OK, Mildred Bolin and husband Dean of Bunch, Evelyn Holmes of Houston, TX, and Bonnie Jones of Tahlequah and Brother-in-law Pete James of Salina and



his stepmother, Becky Holmes. Manuel lives on in his 13 grandchildren, Jeremy Poafpybitty, Jory Poafpybitty, Dalton Poafpybitty, Shaylyn Holmes, Kyla Holmes, Robbie Holmes, Kristie Holmes, Chanenna Bolin, Contessa Scott and husband Stephen, Deon Bolin, Kierra Bolin and Treyton Chuculate, as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins and a host of friends and loved ones too numerous to mention.

Funeral services for Manuel Joe Holmes were on January 6 at Reed-Culver Chapel with Pastor Rodney Chuculate officiating. He was laid to rest at Barber Cemetery in the Barber Community. Pallbearers for Manuel included Trey Chuculate, Deon Bolin, Jeremy "Dipsy" Poafpybitty, Shannon "Short Man" Beaver, Josh "Hax" Holmes, and Little Chris Holmes. His honorary pallbearers included Dakota "Sokie" Buckhorn, Jerome Tsosie, and Louis "Bull" Sanders.

Athena Sue Lurks

Athena "Tina" Sue Lurks was born on September 22, 1973, in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, to Andy Drywater and Anita (Thirsty) Fields. Athena departed this life on January 5, 2023, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, at the age of 49 years, 3 months, and 14 days.

Tina grew up in Rocky Mountain, Oklahoma, before moving to Taft, Oklahoma. She graduated from Boynton



High School and shortly after became a CNA. Tina loved being around her family as well as her late husband's family, she also loved her dog: Sissy. Tina thought of Eugenia Osceola

better known as "Gino" as a sister. She also had a lot of love for her aunt Judy who has always been there for her and

never left her side until the end. Tina was of the Baptist faith.

She was preceded in death by her husband Josephus Lurks; her mother and stepfather: Anita and Clyde Fields; her father: Andy Drywater; maternal grandparents: William and Lillian Thirsty; and her aunt: Lolita Shannon.

Athena is survived by her 2 stepchildren: Jason Lurks and Lamonte Lurks both of Dallas, Texas; 8 grandchildren of Dallas; aunt: Judy

and Lyle Coiner of Stilwell, Oklahoma; uncles: Bill Thirsty and wife Sandy of Marble City, Oklahoma, Watie Thirsty of Rocky Mountain; and Jimmy Thirsty and wife Rolinda of Tahlequah; stepbrothers: Derek Smith, Clyde Fields III, and Nikki Fields all of Taft; bother-in-law: Airic Lurks and wife Juanita of Tyler, Texas; and sister-in-law: Lettie Lindsay of South Carolina. As well as numerous nieces, nephews, family, and friends.

BURIAL ASSISTANCE

The United Keetoowah Band wants to be a source of comfort during a family's most difficult time. The UKB's Burial Assistane program can assist members with up to \$3,000 for funeral services or cremation costs. Please call 918-871-2800 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday for a list of approved funeral homes we partner with and income guidelines for this program.

www.ukb-nsn.gov/human-services

info@ukb-nsn.gov

918-871-2800

OBITUARIES

Roger Dale Lyman

Roger was born on March 26, 1982 in Gravette, Arkansas, to Bob Adair and Esther Stopp. He left this earth way too soon on January 10, 2023, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, at the age of 40 years. Roger

was a very hard working man, he caught chickens for many years. He went to work for Gates in Siloam Springs, Arkansas.

Roger really enjoyed fishing, cooking out and grilling at home. He also enjoyed going to Car Shows and Cruise

Nights. He also liked to gripe at his siblings. Roger had one nephew that he raised like his own son, that was Jaxon Dale. They were always going out for a drive or going to the park. He loved Jaxon so much. At the age of 3, Kelsey Stopp stepped into his life and taught him so many things. He looked up to Kelsey as a hero.

Roger is survived by his mother, Esther Stopp of Watts, Oklahoma;

Sadie Lyman and boyfriend, Josiah Jumper of Watts; Veronica Stopp of Watts; and Daniel Lyman of Watts. He has numerous brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, cousins and friends that he will leave behind.

Roger is preceded in death by his father, Bob Adair and Kelsey Stopp, his grandpa Lester Lyman and Uncle Larry Lyman.

Roberta Navarro-Locust

Roberta (Pinky) Navarro-Locust was born on August 27, 1978, to Robert Locust and Lena Noisewater in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. She departed from this life on January 13, 2023.

Roberta spent her life loving her sons and family best by being a housewife and by providing for her five boys to the fullest extent. Roberta was an avid

Arkansas Razorback fan and loved being a member of her Chuculate church family. She was a fan of all the latest fashion and style trends and loved to travel any chance she got. She was known for her strength while fighting many health battles and winning. Roberta thoroughly enjoyed the company of friends and family, and tried to soak up every happy moment she could.

Those waiting on Roberta with open arms are her mom and dad, her three sons: Santana, Luz, and Samuel; and her maternal grandmother Katie Noisewater.

Those left to cherish Roberta's memory are her sons Alex and wife



Jessica of Tahlequah, Oklahoma; Juan and Jerika Leach of Stilwell, Oklahoma; granddaughters Santana and Kleotilde; dogs Tecca and Nuni; and Ninfa Gonzalez; as well as many other family members and friends.

Roberta wouldn't want anyone to be sad for too long, but to remember the love, laughter, and good times spent together.

Elsie Marie Rock

Elsie Marie Rock, age 89, of Tahlequah, Oklahoma, passed away on January 1, 2023. Elsie was born in Mayes County, Oklahoma. Elsie Marie Rock was born on January 23, 1933 in Mayes County, the daughter of Ketcher and Maggie (Stopp) Rock. She was raised with one brother, Blue and one sister, Lila. She attended school and then decided she wanted to raise her family. She was the proud mother of one daughter, Genora Rock and one son, Daniel Helvy. Elsie was the model mother and the hardest worker you



ever met. For 33 years, Elsie worked as a custodian for the Cherokee Nation. She was easy to get along with, enjoyed her job and her co-workers, and enjoyed seeing you smile.

She was one of the people that could talk to total strangers and make them feel like they had known her for their entire life. When she wasn't working, she was home cleaning the house and working in the yard and garden. Her gardens were beautiful and her green

thumb was evident in her roses.

Elsie loved going for long drives in the country and seeing family and friends. She had a wicked sense of humor and could make people laugh with her quick wit. She was the proud grandmother of two grandchildren, Lila Helvy and Patience Helvy. She loved keeping up with all of their activities and never missed a chance to spend time with them. A Christian by faith, Elsie walked closely with God. The Lord called this good and faithful servant home from her many labors on January 1, 2023, at the age of 89 years. She will be missed.

She is preceded in death by her

grandparents, her mother and father, her brother Blue Rock and her sister, Lila Rock.

Her memory will be kept alive by her children, daughter Genora Rock of Park Hill and son, Daniel Helvy and companion Samantha Hornett of Tahlequah. She will live on in her two granddaughters, Lila and Patience Helvy both of Tahlequah. There are also many cousins as well as friends and co-workers too numerous to mention.

A graveside service was January 10 at McClain Cemetery in Locust Grove, Oklahoma.

Larry Dean Soldier

Larry Dean Soldier, age 56, went home to be with his Lord and Savior on Thursday, February 9, 2023 at Grove Integris Hospital in Grove, OK. Larry was born on July 12, 1966 in Claremore, OK to Andy Soldier and Louise Jumper-Soldier.

Larry grew up in Eucha, OK area and attended Jay Schools, Jay, OK. He was a member of Hillside Baptist Church and would always sit by his mom during worship. Larry loved spending time with family and friends, especially his grandchildren. You could find Larry in his little blue truck at Yard Sales, Flea Markets or Thrift Stores. He was always buying things and giving them out to

his friends. Larry was a great man in the community. He took care of the local cemeteries, community center and he always made sure the elders were doing ok. He loved telling scary stories and talking about Bigfoot. Larry was always willing to talk about historical facts about Eucha and the surrounding areas. Larry also had a passion for rocks. He collected rocks of all sizes, colors and shapes. Many of his friends have rocks that he has given them over the years. He loved fixing up bikes for all the kids to ride. Larry and his best friend Kyle had many adventures together throughout their life. Larry was loved by many and will be greatly missed.

Larry is preceded in death his father Andy Soldier; brothers Randy Soldier

and Gene Soldier; special friend Alberta Weinberg; grandparents Esiah and Nancy Jumper-Whitaker and Maggie Soldier; his niece Cheyenne Dye.

Larry is survived by his mother Louise Soldier; daughter Jennifer Soldier of TX; grandchildren Isaiah Trujillo of TX, Abraham, Nolan and Anna Gonzales of Mexico; daughter Shasta Weinberg; son Lonnie Weinberg of TX; his siblings Troy Soldier and wife Marie of Grove, OK, Gary Soldier of the home, Sharon Dodson and husband Cody of Colcord, OK, Becky Buck and husband Cullus of



Eucha, OK; eight nieces and nephews; 14 great-nieces and nephews; cousins, extended family and friends.

Larry's Wake Service will be held on Thursday, February 16, 2023 at 6:00pm with Rev. Jess Williams officiating. Followed by his family visitation to greet friends until 8:00pm at Lawson's Funeral Homes & Cremations Services, 311 W. Gray St. Jay, OK 74346.

Larry's Celebration of Life Funeral Service will be held on Friday, 2:00pm, February 17, 2023 at Hillside Baptist Church, 6814 County Rd 373, Eucha, OK 74342, with Rev. Guy Soldier officiating. Followed by his funeral procession to Round Springs Cemetery, Eucha, OK. Larry's burial will be at Round Springs Cemetery.

Jacky Lee Tanner

Jacky Lee (Jack) Tanner, age 76, went home to be with his Lord and Savior on January 21, 2023, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with his family by his side. Jack was born on September 16, 1946 in Eucha, Oklahoma, to Clark Tanner and Della Mae Guess.

Jack loved to go fishing, crawdad hunting, crossword puzzles, collector of Coke items, play music and listen to music.

Jack was proud of his Indian heritage, he was a member of The United



Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians (UKB), he was a great storyteller and prankster.

He grew up in Jay, OK where he raised his family. Jack was a great father, grandfather, and his kids say he was a good cook too! He was a man of strong faith and read his bible every night. He will be dearly missed by his family and friends.

Jack is preceded in death by his

parents Clark Tanner and Della Mae Guess-Tanner; brother Lewis Tanner; step-sister Mary Summerfield and granddaughter Alyassa Tanner.

Jack is survived by his children Monica Potter of Oklahoma City; Santo Tanner of Florida; Jackson Tanner of Jay, Oklahoma; Alisha Hernandez of Siloam Springs, Arkansas; Wendell Tanner of Jay; Byron Tanner of Jay; and Ashley Borjes of Jay; his special friend Annie Black; brothers John Tanner and wife Ruby of Jay; Daniel Tanner of Tahlequah; Michael Tanner and wife Carol of Utah; sister Minnie Kaye and husband Dan

of Tulsa; Martha Tanner of Jay; Regina Fouse and husband Eldon Rhodes of Tulsa; numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family and friends.

Jack's Wake Service was January 26, followed by his family visitation to greet friends at Lawson's Funeral Homes & Cremation Services.

Jack's Celebration of Life Funeral Service was January 27 at Piney Baptist Church Jay, OK with Pastor Jess Jones officiating. Followed by his funeral procession to Round Springs Cemetery, Eucha, OK.

LUNCH MENU

The United Keetoowah Band's Title VI Lunch Menu for March 2023 in the Jim Proctor Community Center at 18419 W. Keetoowah Circle in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. For information, call 918-871-2800.

March 1
Chicken Strips/Gravy
Mashed Potatoes
Salad, Hot Roll
Fruit Cup

March 2
Baked Ham
Sweet Potato Casserole
Green Beans, Hot Roll
Pumpkin Pie

March 3
Biscuits & Gravy
Scrambled Eggs
Sausage, Hash Browns
Juice, Fruit Cup

March 6
BLT
Potato Chips
Pasta Salad
Fruit Cup

March 7
Tacos
Spanish Rice
Refried Beans
Pineapple Cake

March 8
Chicken/Dressing
w/Gravy
Corn, Salad
Hot Roll, Fruit Cup

March 9
Brown Beans & Ham
Fried Potatoes
Greens
Cornbread, Fruit Cup

March 10
Hot Dog on Bun
Fritos
Potato Salad
Fruit Cup

March 13
Goulash
Buttered Corn
Italian Green Beans
Garlic Toast, Fruit Cup

March 14
Sloppy Joe on Bun
Potato Chips
Pasta Salad
Fruit Cup

March 15
Hamburger Steak/Gravy
Mashed Potatoes
Sweet Peas/Carrots
Hot Roll, Fruit Cup

March 16
Chicken & Dumplings
Green Beans
Salad, Hot Roll
Fruit Cup

March 17
Smoked Sausage w/
Potato & Cabbage
Corn on Cob, Biscuit
Lime Sherbet

March 20
Chicken Fried Steak
Mashed Potato/Gravy
Greens Beans, Hot Roll
Fruit Cup

March 21
Chicken Tortilla Soup
Tortilla Chips
Mexican Corn
Fruit Cup

March 22
Pot Roast w/Gravy
Carrots & Potatoes
Salad, Hot Roll
Apple Cobbler

March 23
Catfish, French Fries
Coleslaw
Hushpuppies
Fruit Cup

March 24
BBQ Bologna
Potato Salad
Baked Beans
Texas Toast, Fruit Cup

March 27
Veggie-Hamburger Stew
Hominy
Cornbread
Fruit Cup

March 28
Lasagna
Italian Green Beans
Corn, Garlic Toast
Fruit Cup

March 29
Baked Potato
Garden Salad
Broccoli Salad
Texas Toast, Fruit Cup

March 30
Hamburger w/Fixings
French Fries
Cake
Ice Cream

March 31
Kitchen Closed
Cleaning Day



We have moved to a temporary building while our dining room is repaired. Park in the drive-thru so meals can be brought to you. Protect yourself by wearing a mask, staying 6 feet away from others, washing your hands and staying home if feeling sick. Meal service is from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Meals are free to Keetoowahs 55 and older, as well as their spouses. Members of other tribes and their spouses must show their CDIB cards and contribute to the cost of a meal. Guest meals are \$5, while meals for children 0-17 are \$3.

UKB Tribal Enrollment

18300 W. Keetoowah Circle Tahlequah, OK 74464
Open Monday-Friday | 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

As with other federally recognized tribes, the United Keetoowah Band has its unique process to determine membership. Visit ukb-nsn.gov/membership for Enrollment documents and a brief FAQ section of the most common questions about UKB membership. Find forms for Membership Applications, CDIB Instructions, Update Your Information and UKB Relinquishment.

For additional questions, or if you are a member who has lost your enrollment card, call the UKB Enrollment Office Registrar Amanda Stopp at 918-871-2797. Questions concerning history, cultural practices, clothing, language or ceremonies are better suited for our John Hair Cultural Center and Museum. Visit ukb-nsn.gov/john-hair-cultural-center-museum or call 918-871-2866.



Stilwell High School senior and United Keetoowah Band member Cainan Mink is a student in the welding program at Indian Capital Technology Center in Stilwell, Oklahoma. INDIAN CAPITAL TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Stilwell senior seeks his future in welding via ICTC

BY LANI HANSEN
Reporter

STILWELL – After calling signals as the quarterback for the Stilwell Indians football team, high school senior Cainan Mink is calling signals for his future as a student in the Indian Capital Technology Center’s welding program in Stilwell.

“Welding is just something I’ve always been interested in, so I thought I’d try it out and I fell in love with it,” said Mink.

Mink is in the first year of the two-year program taught by Levi Reasnor, who worked on pipelines for several years before becoming the lead instructor at Tulsa Welding School. He then began teaching at ICTC three years ago.

“At the end of the first year I try to get all the students certified on structural welding and the second year we want to get everyone certified on pipe welding,” said Reasnor. “When they leave, they’ll have a steam card from the Oklahoma Department of Labor making them certified welders. Taking the course here has the advantage of having an instructor with a lot of on-the-job experience and they can do it for free while they’re in high school. They can complete the program and jump right into the work force making good money.”

According to the ODL, a steam card is

common name for the Oklahoma Welders Certification.

Cainan said there are some similarities between playing quarterback and being a good welder.

“Watching my puddles in welding is like reading a defense in football. You’ve got to watch your puddles when you’re welding or if you don’t it’s going to mess everything up. Welding is a lot easier than playing quarterback though because you have more control over what happens,” said Mink, who enjoys spending his free time outdoors hunting or fishing.

For a first-year student, Cainan is doing well, according to Reasnor.

“Cainan is the farthest along out of my first-year students and he just seems to have a natural ability for it,” said Reasnor. “Here at ICTC we have all kinds of program that are all designed to make our graduates work-ready if that’s what they choose to do.”

Although he still has a way to go before he finishes, Cainan has his sights set for the future.

“I’d like to make a career out of welding and make a name for myself,” he said.

For information on careers or programs through ICTC visit, www.ictech.edu.

OPEN SUBMISSION

For eighth grade, high school, college, military and technical graduates profiles

If you would like to feature your graduate in the June edition, please send a high resolution picture, name, and bio (150 words or less) to media@ukb-nsn.gov.

Deadline at 5 p.m. 21 May, 2023

No late submissions will be accepted!



WOOD RECYCLING PROGRAM



The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians’ Wood Recycling Program offers a FREE and safe alternative for the removal of downed timber on your property. Tribal membership is NOT required. The timber will be ricked and donated as firewood for UKB elders and tribal members unable to harvest their own firewood for the winter season.

The Wood Recycling Program will under certain circumstances cut intrusive or unwanted trees down, but a special assessment and waiver will be required. For information or if interested in donating/need timber removed, contact the Office of Environmental Services.

918-871-2825 or 918-871-2800 • oes@ukb-nsn.gov • www.ukb-nsn.gov



UKB HOUSING DEPARTMENT Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF Program)



The United Keetoowah Band Housing Department is providing funding assistance for the following delinquent homeowner expenses:

- Mortgage Assistance
- Property Taxes
- Homeowner Insurance
- Homeowner Utility Expenses (Must have checked with Human Services Program for LIHEAP availability first.)

The Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF) Program was developed by the Department of the Treasury to assist homeowners who are experiencing financial hardships associated with the Coronavirus Pandemic after January 21, 2020.

For questions, please call Housing at 918-871-2773



United Keetoowah Band employees Toni Workman, left, and Michelle Downing, center, get instructions on basketmaking by UKB Tradition Keeper Cindy Hair. MARILYN CRAIG/UKB MUSEUM

UKB Museum opens ‘LOOK, LISTEN, and LEARN’ sessions

BY MARILYN CRAIG
UKB Museum Marketing Coordinator

TAHLEQUAH – The John Hair Cultural Center and Museum launched another monthly program to educate United Keetoowah Band employees about the history and culture of the tribe. “LOOK, LISTEN, and LEARN” consists of a guided tour of the Keetoowah museum, complete with the accompanying history lesson by Museum Director and Tradition Keeper Ernestine Berry.

The program will be presented on the second Tuesday of each month at 2 p.m. The first program was held Feb. 14. The class is limited to 10 employees per tour.

After completing the tour, UKB Title VI Nutrition Director Rebecca Dreadfulwater said she admired the Keetoowah ancestors for having the strength to migrate and carry on for two decades when they went west into Arkansas Territory, and then when they were forced to migrate into Indian Territory. She also said she had not heard about the Pins before.

According to “A Cherokee Encyclopedia” by Robert J. Conley, the Keetoowah Society was a secret society for the purpose of promoting a national feeling among full bloods. However, it was also intended to counteract the influence of the Southern Rights Party among Cherokees. Pins were identifying pins under the lapels of their coats. During the Civil War, the Pins were Union supporters, fought against Confederate Cherokees and were antislavery.

When asked what she liked best about the tour, Dreadfulwater said, “The room with all the Keetoowah chiefs and learning what each accomplished during their term for our tribe and Ernestine’s knowledge of our history.”

UKB employee Tishaleta

Guevara said, “What I am most proud of is how strong and resilient, but peaceful, our people are. Our people relied on U ne lv nv (God) for everything. No matter the opposition we faced, with the government and even from our own people (Cherokee) that went against us, we still remain strong and resilient. Our Keetoowah people took care of each other. To this day we still continue to care for our people.”

“All my life I seen what my families, both mother’s and father’s side, went thru,” she added. “Not once did I hear the word ‘struggle.’ We knew how to survive and live...we lived happy. I cannot ever remember doing without anything. We always had family, love, food and shelter...always had our needs met. Special occasions, family made sure the wants were met. I truly miss my grandparents and my family who have went on to be with our Savior. Life was so much simpler and better.”

Barbara Girty Foster, assistant museum director, said the new program provides an “excellent opportunity for all employees to learn about the trials, tribulations, successes and accomplishments of Keetoowah ancestors.”

“It gives employees the opportunity to know what the Keetoowah stands for and why they made the decision to migrate west over two decades before the Trail of Tears,” she added. “It tells about the Pin Indians and why the Keetoowah fought in support of the Union army in the Civil War. It gives us as employees the opportunity to know about the people that the Creator gave the name Kituwah to. And for employees that already know the story, it is an opportunity to gain experience how to tell others about the tribe.”

For information, call 918-871-2866.

Keetoowah Museum hosts basketmaking session

BY MARILYN CRAIG
UKB Museum Marketing Coordinator

TAHLEQUAH – The John Hair Cultural Center and Keetoowah Museum continued its monthly cultural series for UKB employees titled “Lunch and Learn” on Feb. 15.

The series is an opportunity for employees to learn about the Keetoowah culture and make craft projects during their lunch times.

Basketmaking was the skill focused on in the February class taught by UKB Tradition Keeper Cindy Hair.

The class was the fourth in the series, which has included gourd mask painting, cornhusk dolls and pinch pots. Upcoming classes in the “Lunch and Learn” series include flat reed weaving and stickball ball making.

Basketmaking was a skill that every Cherokee household needed to acquire because everyone needed baskets. They were used to carry food, medicine, babies and keep belongings. Although this class only included weaving baskets, there are plans for a gathering class.

“I have done a little bit of basket weaving, flat and round,” UKB employee and Tradition Keeper Michelle Downing said. “Would love to process my own material.”

She said she enjoyed the Feb. 15 class because she learned “how to make new things and how it ties into our history. I’m glad that we have the privilege to learn about the tribe and our culture. There’s not much taught about the UKB Cherokees.”

UKB Transportation Director Toni Workman said she enjoyed everything about the class.

“But having Ms. Hair teach us was a highlight for me,” she said. “Since the class size is kept small, we were able to seek guidance and ask her all the questions we wanted without feeling like we were hogging her attention. Plus, having Barbara (Girty Foster, assistant museum director) in there answering questions about what materials were culturally significant to us was interesting. And then just getting to know a little bit more about our coworkers in a more laid-back setting was fun.”

I am so excited that the museum is offering these opportunities to our tribal employees,” she added. “These are crafts that I’ve always heard about and seen but to be able to actually learn how to make them and to learn the significance behind them or the materials originally used is fascinating to me.”

Girty Foster said providing Keetoowah cultural classes is a way to honor our ancestors and revitalize interest in Keetoowah culture.

“It is also an employee enrichment and development program,” she said. “It brings employees closer to the culture of the people they serve. After participating in these classes, they may go on to teach these crafts to their children, families and in their communities.”

For more information on the museum’s activities and programs, visit www.ukb-nsn.gov or visit us on Facebook at the John Hair Cultural Center and Museum or call 918-871-2866.

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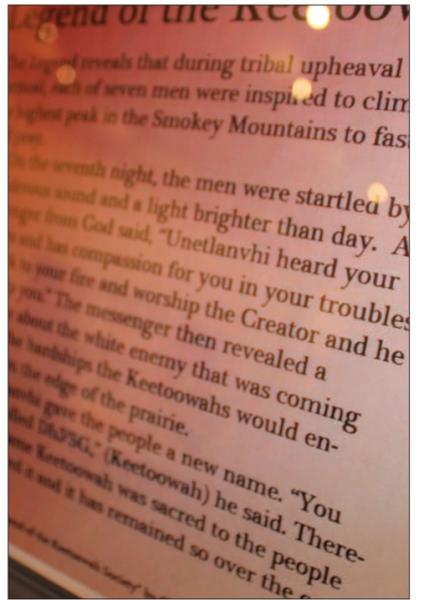
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A crew hangs a John Hair Cultural Center and Keetoowah Museum sign near the intersection of Highway 82 and W. Willis Road in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. The museum will be doing more programs, hosting more visitors, getting the name Keetoowah out to the public more often and providing more opportunity to Keetoowah artists and artisans in cultural heritage tourism. MARILYN CRAIG/UKB MUSEUM



The first plaque in the John Hair Cultural Center and Museum is about the Keetoowah origin story. Museum officials say the facility's staff is preparing to host schools, groups and cultural tourists. MARILYN CRAIG/UKB MUSEUM

UKB Museum preps for schools, groups

John Hair Cultural Center and Museum officials say the facility is set to grow cultural tourism.

BY MARILYN CRAIG
UKB Museum Marketing Coordinator

TAHLEQUAH – The John Hair Cultural Center and Keetoowah Museum staff is preparing to host several school groups this spring. For groups of 25 or more, the group price for admission is \$3 per person.

Students will be given a guided tour of the Keetoowah Museum and have the opportunity to do 30-minute cultural add-on activities such as an arrowhead hunt, blowgun shoot and storytelling.

Other activities that take an hour to complete include cornhusk dolls, basket weaving, mini gourd masks and pinch pots. These activities range from \$5 to \$10 per person.

The museum will also host bus tours and family vacationers throughout the year. To grow the cultural tourism program, the Keetoowah Museum has joined the Tahlequah Area Chamber of Commerce, Green Country Marketing

Association and the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association. Museum staff members attend the monthly Tahlequah Tourism Council meetings. Two museum staff members have also completed the professional certificate program in Cultural Heritage Tourism offered by American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association in conjunction with George Washington University International Institute for Tourism Studies.

The online program brings together industry experts who help students explore the importance of including authentic Native American cultural

experiences in their tourism planning.

The trend in travel right now involves experiential learning. People want to immerse themselves in the culture, food, music and activities of the places they visit. For example, a group might want to do a three-day stay in Tahlequah and want to experience making traditional items such as blowguns, baskets or pottery. They might want to learn Cherokee marbles, chunky or stickball. They might want to gather wild onion, mushrooms, poke salad, watercress, berries, pecans and walnuts. They may want to do a nature hike, go swimming, canoeing or go fishing and cook the fish at the side of creek – things we take for granted here in Oklahoma that would be a real novelty to an urban dweller or international guest.

“Increasing awareness of the Keetoowah museum on a statewide and national level will be good for Keetoowah artists and artisans, the tribe and Tahlequah as well,” Barbara Girty Foster, museum assistant director, said. “More visitors mean increased sales of tribal members’ arts and crafts in the museum store. Specially scheduled events will provide opportunities to book our tribal members as cultural demonstrators, presenters and cooks for traditional foods and meals.”

She added that the museum’s mission statement “is dedicated to bringing Keetoowah history, culture and traditions to the public through educational exhibits and cultural experiences that stimulate discovery, enjoyment and understanding of Keetoowah traditional lifeways. We have a rich culture that others would like to learn about, and our staff at the Keetoowah Museum is honored to be able to provide these experiences.”

The center and museum is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and on Saturdays by appointment. For information, call 918-871-2866.

“Increasing awareness of the Keetoowah museum on a statewide and national level will be good for Keetoowah artists and artisans, the tribe and Tahlequah as well.”

Barbara Girty Foster, museum as-sistant director

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