



JAN 1, 2023 | "RVFO CUSE" WINTER'S YOUNGER BROTHER MONTH | VOL. 51, ISSUE 1

# MVSKOKE NEWS

PRODUCED BY  MVSKOKE MEDIA

## HOW DO YOU SPEND THE HOLIDAYS?

CITIZENS SHARE HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
REPORTER

MUSCOGEE NATION, Oklahoma – Sleigh bells ringing, carolers singing, and citizens mingling are just some of the many sounds heard across the Muscogee (Creek) Nation during the holiday season. It's the time of year to draw near to family and unwind with holiday traditions. Christmas movies, game nights, dinners, church services, and light displays are just some of the many holiday traditions enjoyed across the reservation.

This holiday season saw many familiar traditions, such as the Christmas parades in Okmulgee, Tulsa, and Henryetta. Christmas light displays shone brightly at the Philbrook Museum in Tulsa, Rhema Bible Church in Broken Arrow, and the Garden of Lights in Muskogee.

The Creek Nation Council House in Okmulgee also brightened the streets of down-

town with its light display. Christmas markets were abundant. The MCN Christmas Carnival returned for the first time since 2019 due to the Covid Pandemic. Families across the nation enjoyed hot chocolate, Native craft vendors, and classic carnival games for children. Indian Santa Claus and a reindeer both appeared and posed for pictures.

MCN Acting Director of Marketing & Tourism Ryan Logan said he enjoys going out for Christmas every year. Logan is in charge of organizing the Christmas carnival. If you attended this year's carnival, you could tell it was organized by someone that enjoys Christmas.

"I always go to multiple light shows, but I think everybody does that," Logan said. "I'm always that person that knows when my Christmas decorations are done because it looks like Christmas is everywhere!"



The Creek Nation Council House is adorned with Christmas lights. The display was hard to miss in downtown Okmulgee. Cities across the Muscogee (Creek) Nation celebrated the holidays with light displays and parades. (Submission/Rhonda McCurdy)

Sisters Justina Kemp and Jaqueline Rolland (Mvskoke) shared a booth at the Christmas carnival. For them, the holidays are a time for preserving and passing down their cultural traditions.

"Now that we are the elders, we just have to keep on going,

keep carrying on our traditions, keep trying to carry on our Mvskoke language, our Mvskoke hymns," Kemp said.

Autumn Star Catering hosted its twelfth annual Native American Christmas markets in Tulsa and Glenpool. Patrons could do their Christ-

mas shopping locally with Native art and craft vendors. Autumn Star Catering owner Tricia Fields said her family still carries the traditions from her childhood.

"On our Pawnee/Chickasaw

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## ELDERS COME TOGETHER FOR HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

ELDERS CHRISTMAS EVENT BROUGHT TOGETHER COMMUNITIES FROM ACROSS MCN

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
REPORTER

TVLSE, Oklahoma – The holidays are a great time to spend with friends and family, and Muscogee culture is no different. Muscogee (Creek) Nation Elder Services hosted the Elder Holiday Luncheon at RiverSpirit Casino and Resort on Dec 15. The event featured food, entertainment, door prizes, and a photo booth. All Mvskoke elder citizens aged 55 and older from across the nation were invited to fellowship and enjoy the holiday festivities.

Like many other holiday events across the tribe, the Elder Luncheon was unable to be hosted within the past few years due to the Covid pandemic. According to MCN Elder Services Office Manager Christy Boone,



Muscogee Elders from the nation packed the ballroom at RiverSpirit Casino and Resort for the Elder Holiday Luncheon. The event allowed elders to mingle with friends and family from different communities. It featured live music, dancing, and a photo booth. Tulsa, OK. Dec 15, 2022. (Braden Harper/Reporter)

the number of attendants at this year's luncheon was over 500, a packed house.

Angella Fish is the MCN El-

der Services Director. She is tasked with ensuring the needs of

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Teddy bears were thrown on the basketball court at the Weleetka home basketball game to honor Cody Parrick. (Submission: Greta Richards)

## LOVE AND BASKETBALL AND TEDDY BEARS

TEDDY BEARS WERE DONATED TO HONOR LATE WELEETKA STUDENT CODY PARRICK

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

WELEETKA, Oklahoma – Two small-town community members came together to honor the late Cody Parrick during a rivalry basketball game on Weleetka's home turf on Dec. 13.

As the Weleetka V. Wilson boys' game was starting, the crowd had their teddy bears in hand and their eyes on the Outlaws' goal. As the home team made the first goal, teddy bears started coming from all sides of the court, even from the opposing teams' fans. Teddy bears covered the basketball floor and were gathered for a donation to Shriners' Children's Hospital.

According to Weleetka Public School Paraprofessional, Transitional Director, and mother to Parrick, Greta Richards, her motorcycle group Americas Guardians Motorcycle Club, was the one to gather the bears and take them to the hospital.

Superintendent Chris Carter suggested the event during last year's basketball season, making this the second year.

"It was really good to see everyone come together, you know they were going against each other in basketball, but they came together for just a moment to honor Cody," Richards said. "I loved it."

Over 150 bears were donated to honor Parrick. He had once been a patient at Shriners due to his diagnosis of cerebral palsy at a young age. The organization assisted her family in every way possible, which meant a lot to Richards as she had extended stays far from home at the hospital with her young son.

"You know you have your bills and financial things at home," Richards said. "They provide everything for the family while they are there."

The items collected are used for holidays and other times of needed comfort, including Christmas, Easter, birthdays,

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## THE 2ND ANNUAL MVSKOKE RIDERS TOY RUN RECEIVED TOY DONATIONS FOR VETERANS FAMILIES

THE MVSKOKE RIDERS, VASO AND TULSA CREEK INDIAN COMMUNITY CENTER PARTNERED TOGETHER FOR THE TOY RUN

by **KAYLEA BERRY**  
REPORTER

TVLSE, Oklahoma - The Tulsa Creek Indian Community center and Mvskoke Riders teamed up for the second annual Motorcycle Toy Run Saturday, Dec. 3. The toy run started at the TCIC and ended at the Veterans Affairs Services Office. Like Toys for Tots, the Mvskoke Riders' Toy Run is composed of veterans, or strong supporters of veterans, who come together to collect toys to give to children of veterans.

The community center opened its doors to the Riders and its members for a home-cooked lunch. A handful of volunteers from the center made



Donated toys sit under a Christmas tree ready to be picked up by Veterans' families at the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Veterans Affairs Services Office in Okmulgee, Okla. (Kaylea Berry/Reporter)

stew, chili, beans, and fry bread. Indian Santa also came by and took pictures with everyone.

Johna Gouge, Tulsa Creek

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TRADITIONS

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side, we have gotten together every year since I was born,” Fields said. “My grandma and our great-grandparents got together, and we always celebrated on Christmas Eve in my grandmother’s home. We would always have dinner, and my grandmother would decorate the tree nicely.”

The traditions Fields’ family did together even left a lasting impact on her friends in her community.

“We’d be caroling at my neighbor’s house, and the guys would be laughing and teasing me back at school,” Fields said. “They also treasure that, and bring that up and say, ‘I remember you coming to our grandma’s house or coming to our house.’”

Although Fields and her family no longer go door to door singing carols, they do still enjoy singing together at home.

New holiday attractions across the nation were seen as well. In Tulsa, Promenade Mall transformed its second floor into a Christmas Winter Wonderland. It included various holiday stations, including Santa’s workshop, a Christmas tree maze, and a snow room. A little ways southwest, Sapulpa opened a Route 66 Christmas Chute in the downtown area. The unique concept featured ten pavilions adorned with holiday-themed decorations that allowed pedestrians to walk through.

Some citizens gave back during the Holidays. Mvskoke Riders hosted the second annual Motorcycle Toy Run, an event where toys are collected for children of Mvskoke Veterans.

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all Muscogee Elders from across the reservation are met. The luncheon is one of the many ways her department serves the community.

“This is a very exciting event for our elders; they look forward to this event,” Fish said. “Just to come, to have a meal, fellowship with one another, and enjoy the entertainment.”

While most elder communities are active with their gatherings, the luncheon brought all communities and individuals together to enjoy the holiday-themed event. It acts as a way for the tribe to show how much they appreciate their elder communities. Fish’s favorite part of the event is seeing people relax and have fun.

“It’s just seeing our elders enjoy themselves and to be fed a really nice meal and to be treated special,” Fish said. “To see them enjoy the entertainment, all the visiting, all the camaraderie.”

Elders from the Okemah community hopped in a van and traveled north for the luncheon. Carol Tiger (Mvskoke) said they look forward to events like this every year because of the people they get to see.

“Every chance we get that the Creek Nation holds an event, we

ans.

“We gather here, and we bring our toys as riders,” Paul Bemore (Mvskoke/Seminole/Osage/Quapaw) said. “We ask the community to do likewise, and they can follow us, and we ride to our destination, which is Okmulgee.”

For the event, the riders began their ride at the Tulsa Indian Community Center and headed south down highway 75 to the MCN Veterans Affairs office at the tribal complex.

MCN Elder Services hosted the Holiday Elder Luncheon at the RiverSpirit Casino and Resort for the first time in the past few years. The event brought together elders from communities across the nation. Attendants at the event were eager to share their holiday traditions.

Katherine Powell (Mvskoke) of the Okemah Community said they always look for ways to ensure everyone is cared for during the holiday season.

“We do things for our nutrition program,” Powell said. “We try to do stuff for them like give them things, make sure they get a gift or something because they might not get one.”

Amy Hill (Mvskoke) has a lot to celebrate during the holidays. In addition to Christmas and New Year, her birthday also falls on New Year’s Day. She will be celebrating her 88th birthday with her family in 2023.

“They usually fix me a big dinner and invite a lot of people,” Hill said.

Although everyone has their own favorite holiday activities, one recurring tradition that many citizens shared was spending time with friends and family.

try to make sure we attend it,” Tiger said. “It’s a big get-together through all the other communities, and we know everyone from the other communities, like friends and relatives.”

For Muscogee Citizen Katherine Powell, she views the luncheon as a reunion with loved ones.

“Getting to see people you haven’t seen in a long time,” Powell said. “Seeing the other communities and family and friends.”

Lyle Wells (Mvskoke) said he is thankful to be a part of a tribe that seeks to service its elders.

“It lets me know as a Mvskoke Citizen that our tribe cares for the elders by putting on this event, and they have really good service,” Wells said. “We really appreciate that they have something like this for us.”

For Fish, she loves bringing people together.

“It gives them a sense of connection with our people in our tribe,” Fish said. “It gives them an opportunity to come, fellowship, meet old acquaintances, and meet new friends.”

MCN Elders Services also includes senior services. Fish said if elders have any questions about these services, they are welcome to visit their department or call them at (918) 732-7765.

MVSKOKE RIDERS

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Indian Community member, coordinated with the VASO and the center for the event. She thought this was a great way to give back to the veteran community as a military spouse.

“I always like giving back to the veterans because of how they treated me as a veteran’s wife,” said Gouge. “They’re dear to my heart, and I just wanted to give back to the veterans and the kids, so it’s important to me.”

According to the VASO, roughly 40 riders showed up for the event, and over 125 unwrapped gifts were donated to start the toy drive. The community center donated \$500 and some toys for the toy run.

“We have a warrior histo-

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ry even before serving in the armed forces, so it’s something that’s important to Native American communities,” said Paul Bemore, Mvksoke Riders Commander. “Just based on our history alone, it made a lot of sense to honor our veterans.”

“I don’t know of any other tribe that supports their veterans in this regard, in this manner, in this way, so I’m glad to be a part of it,” Bemore continued.

Many citizens came to participate and send off the riders. A few spoke encouraging words and shared their appreciation for veterans, including Chief David Hill, Representative Leonard Gouge, and TCIC chairman Roman Powell. Vietnam veteran Wotko Long conducted the opening and closing prayers.

LISTEN TO THE MUSCOGEE POD

A PODCAST THAT IS ALL ABOUT THE MUSCOGEE NATION AND ITS PEOPLE

by MORGAN TAYLOR  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – For those who don’t already know, there is a podcast about the Muscogee Nation called the Muscogee Pod hosted by Press Secretary Jason Salsman.

The Muscogee Pod invites a special guest to each episode to discuss different topics for an hour.

The first season was released mid-March, starring native celebrities, including the Reservation Dogs writer Sterlin Harjo. Others included Chief David Hill, Second Chief Dell Beaver, Actor Dallas Goldtooth, Cardinals pitcher Ryan Helsley, OKC Thunder guard Lindy Waters, twin group MikeBone and many more.

In its second season, the Muscogee Pod is releasing a storytelling series that talks about the history of the Nation. Discussing the formation of the constitution with former Chief Bill Fife, how Tvlse (Tulsa) became what it is today, and even spiritual discussions.

“We were discussing how we could do something both informational and entertaining,” Salsman said.

With the popularity of Podcast currently, it was no ques-

tion to Salsman the format to deliver these stories to the most people. “I always wanted to do a podcast.”

Anyone can listen to a podcast no matter the location, time, or activity they may be doing.

“Someone may be mowing the grass with headphones in and usually listening to a podcast.”

With Salsman’s experience in media and hosting the Mvskoke Media TV show with Jerrad Moore, he knew where he could

something had gone wrong. This was unlike the best friend pair, who everyone in the community loved.

Richards calls her son a socialite, and Baber was not much different. They were both proud to be Weleetka Outlaws.

The duo had been missing for two weeks before they were found submerged in Eufaula Lake in a vehicular accidental drowning near Onapa.

For Richards, these events help her cope and carry on her son’s legacy.

She carries many memories of her son; one, in particular, had stayed with her through years, a conversation between her and Parrick when he was just ten years old.

“We were on our way home,

“Muscogee veterans are required to appear in person with their MN citizenship card and a copy of their DD-214 (if we do not have a copy on file) to pick out a gift,” said Shawn Taryole, VASO Executive Officer. “Veterans, citizens, and the general public are welcomed and encouraged to donate to the toy drive.”

The Tulsa Creek Indian Community has already offered to be the Mvskoke Riders’ starting point and is looking forward to supporting the veterans and kids again next year.

The last day to donate toys is Dec. 16 at 5 p.m. The toy giveaway starts Dec. 15 and 16 at 8 a.m. and is open for all Mvskoke veterans. Toys can be dropped off at the VASO located on the complex east of Finance at 1006 Bear Lane, Okmulgee, Ok.



Check out the Muscogee Pod, hosted by Press Secretary Jason Salsman. (Submission)

take this modern form of information release.

“I thought, let’s take that and the need to communicate and the overall need for getting native people and native subject matter out there conversationally in a pop culture world.”

According to Salsman, the Podcast will cover all topics possible to reach the citizens and will continue as long as people listen.

Previous and upcoming episodes are available on Apple and Spotify.

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To submit a change of address or a letter to the editor, call: 918-732-7720 or email: [info@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:info@mvskokemedia.com).

# OKMULGEE COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY SEEKS HOMES FOR SHELTER ANIMALS

NONPROFIT FACES CHALLENGES DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
*REPORTER*

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – The furry four-legged inhabitants of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation’s capital, Okmulgee, need fostering and forever homes. The Okmulgee County Humane Society is currently seeking homes for stray dogs and cats to open spots at the shelter.

Although the Okmulgee County Humane Society office shares a building with the Okmulgee Animal Shelter, they are separate entities. The city runs the shelter. The humane society is a volunteer-based nonprofit. When an animal is brought into the shelter, it is the humane society’s goal to find them a new home as soon as possible. The shelter only has a 72-hour stray hold policy.

If an animal exceeds the stray hold in the shelter, the humane society will seek to adopt it out through its network of foster or adoption homes. The last resort is boarding.

Aimee Robinson is the Okmulgee County Humane Society board president. Like her colleagues, she seeks to reduce the homeless animal population of Okmulgee and the surrounding areas.

“We serve the City of Okmulgee as a whole. Our main mission is saving animals at risk from euthanasia,” Robinson said.

Babs Martin is the director of the Okmulgee County Humane Society. Martin said while they are grateful for anyone who can adopt or foster an animal, adoptions are more advantageous.

“The absolute best option is adoption,” Martin said. “It’s best for the animals because they get to be in their forever home.”

Until recently, the nonprofit offered community assistance programs for spay/neuter and trap-neuter cat services. They also provided veterinary services for pet owners that could not afford them. These services, however, have been temporarily halted due to budget cuts.

“That’s where our heart hurts is because we know those programs make a huge difference,” Robinson said. “Now we’ve had to temporarily suspend these programs to ensure that our fosters in our care and our boarding were able to make our ends meet.”

A nonprofit website statement reads, “While we cannot change an animal’s past, we can rewrite its future.” It goes on to state that they will not stop finding homes for animals until zero animals lose their life due to limited shelter capacity.

**Spay/neuter awareness**  
One issue contributing to the overpopulation of stray animals is loose spay/neuter laws within the state. According to Robinson, this issue is unique to the region. Stray animals from the south are even transported to the north, where there is a better chance of finding a home due to the regional demand.

Unwanted litters can leave a substantial impact on stray animal populations. According to Robinson, one litter of kittens can lead to 420,000 more cats in seven years. Likewise, one litter of dogs can lead to 50,000 more dogs in the same amount of time.

Martin said a solution to this issue is spreading awareness and providing information.

“I would say first and foremost education programs to teach people why it’s a good idea to spay and neuter,” Martin said. While the Humane Society has programs that help with spay and neuter awareness, those programs also become halted when the budget runs low.

The issue of homeless pets affects not only the pets themselves, but those who work tirelessly to find them good homes.

“Burnout is a real risk for those working in rescues,” Robinson said. “They are working day and night, trying their best to get these dogs and cats out of a shelter and out of the risk of euthanasia.”

The nonprofit Best Friends tracks stray animal rescue efforts by the state. Like the Okmulgee County Humane Society, they fight to end the homeless pet population issue. They report that in 2021 Oklahoma had a saving rate of 80.4%, and Okmulgee County had a 55% saving rate. According to Robinson, progress has been made to increase the Okmulgee County save rate, Okmulgee County’s data in November 2022 reported an over 88% save rate.



Poppy (Left) and Boone (Right) are rescue animals taken in by the Okmulgee Humane Society. Poppy is an adult female calico who is good in a home with dogs. Boone is an adult male shepherd-hound mix described as “friendly, affectionate, gentle, and loyal.” Both are house-trained and are up to date on their vaccinations. (Submission)

**Personal adoption/foster testimonies**  
Robinson’s family has adopted three dogs, one of which was initially fostered through the Humane Society. Martin has fostered as well.

Mvskoke Media reporter Kaylea Berry (Mvskoke) adopted her mother’s dog after she passed away in 2021. Her dog is more than just a canine companion.

“My dog’s name is Samson and he is a chocolate lab,” Berry said. “I spoil him, my brother treats him like a dog, but he’s not a dog he’s part of the family.”

For Berry, taking care of Samson fulfills her late mother’s caretaker and best friend role.

“My mom loved him. They did everything together,” Berry said. “They would go ride around in the car together. They’d ride the side-by-side.”

Adoption is beneficial for both owners and the shelters. There is no such thing as too much space for rescue animals.

“Whenever you are adopting from a rescue situation, it means that shelter or rescue has one more spot that can save another dog or cat at risk for euthanasia,” Robinson said.

Martin said meet and greets are a must for those interested in adopting. It allows potential pet owners to see whether the dog or cat will fit. Martin and Berry agree the rewards of caring for an animal are numerous.

“They have emotional needs, and it’s really rewarding to be able to service them, give them love, give them adequate food, give them adequate water, and see their personality emerge,” Martin said.

According to Robinson and Martin, efforts are currently being



The Okmulgee County Humane Society is auctioning abstract paintings created by rescue animals. The money from the auction will go toward fostering and adoption services. (Submission)

made to partner with municipal governments and other organizations to bring back community assistance programs.

The Okmulgee County Humane Society has launched a new campaign called “Painting Paws” to supplement funds. This fundraiser auctions off abstract art created by rescue pets.

The rescue animals currently

up for adoption and foster care can be found on the Humane Society’s website.

If you are interested in providing a forever home for a rescue dog or cat in need, contact the Okmulgee County Humane Society at (918) 759-2000. Pet adoption and foster care applications can be submitted at OkmulgeeHumane@gmail.com.

# BASKETBALL PROGRAM GOING STRONG

TWO COACHES STARTED THE OK DREAM CATCHERS BASKETBALL PROGRAM TO HELP YOUNG ATHLETES REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL IN 2018

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
*MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER*

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – The Rising Star Basketball League featured many teams, including the amateur basketball team, the Oklahoma Dream Catchers, coached by Adam Gibson, who co-started the basketball program with Coy Harjo in 2018.

Each Wednesday for five weeks, the teams battled to make it to the championship held at the Mvskoke Dome on Oct. 7.

Gibson’s third and fourth-grade team came in as runners-up in the finale against Eric Starr’s team, All Clans. Starr hosted the tournament with teams entering from the tri-county area.

The Dream Catchers’ fifth and sixth grades took home gold, with the Lil Ballerz coming in second. The age group also held a boys’ championship, with the Green Machines coming in first and Lil Rascals taking home silver.

Oklahoma Dream Catchers is an extra-curricular sports activity pro-

gram that participates in tournaments around the state and surrounding states year-round.

“It gives them a structured routine, getting used to having a schedule, going by the schedule, and taking responsibility for themselves while learning how to play the game, softball, and basketball,” Gibson said.

Over the last four years, the coaching duo has put countless hours into assisting young native athletes to be the best they can be in basketball and softball.

Gibson also works as a coach at Glenpool Public schools. “When I am not coaching Dream Catchers, I’m coaching school ball,” he said.

His life is basketball. “Basketball is where I want to be. This hardwood floor is where I want to be.”

Gibson had big hopes and dreams, “Just like any other kid, I wanted to make it to the NBA,” but being a young native had but a few barriers in his way, which led him to his position now.

He claims the reward is much greater than he imagined. “Seeing them succeed and progress and take

this on after they leave my program,” he said. “Seeing them build friendships with these girls, letting them see the atmosphere getting them out of their comfort zone, and Tulsa area to play ball letting them feel the atmosphere of it.”

In Gibson’s experience thus far, he has seen his players develop better attitudes while showing good sportsmanship on and off the court.

His program focuses on student-athletes hoping to build their skills and take them to the next level. In the program, academics are the priority. “Academics first, grades come first,” he said. “We say, ‘student-athlete,’ student comes before the athlete.”

A college student, Gibson officially obtained his Bachelor’s degree from Northeastern State University on Sat. Dec. 10.

He set an example for his three daughters and several other girls he coaches.

How did he manage it? He laughed and said, “it’s the Busiest thing you can do in life.”

He also helped support his wife as she graduated from NSU that same



The Oklahoma Dream Catchers competed in the Rising Star basketball league championship that was held at the Mvskoke Dome on Oct. 7. (Morgan Taylor/Multimedia Producer)

day.

Since the program is a private league outside of school, school ball limits practice time with Dream Catchers, but the group plays year-round.

Dream Catcher players participate in INBC League and various Tulsa Leagues while traveling to OKC, Missouri, and Arizona Native American Nationals, Gibson said.

The program currently has four teams that include all age groups and has no age limit or experience on which they may enter the program.

“Building the girl from the foun-

dation up is really what I like to see,” Gibson said. “Whether they played before or not doesn’t make a difference.”

He said as they find coaches, they will continue to grow.

The team is primarily native players, but that is not a program requirement. Gibson finds that most native players join their program on the Reservation in Glenpool. With many Muscogee players, he uses language to name his plays to keep culture tied in.

For more information, go like their Facebook Page, Oklahoma Dream Catchers.



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WEDNESDAYS @ 10AM CST

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A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Regular Session was held on Dec. 17 at the Mound Building in Okmulgee. (MM File)

## MCN UPDATES RADIO SYSTEM WITH \$2.56M APPROPRIATION

MLF RECEIVES A \$50K GRANT FOR CONTINUED SERVICES, AND TRIBAL BUDGET APPROVAL IS POSTPONED UNTIL AN EMERGENCY SESSION SCHEDULED

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
*REPORTER*

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Regular Session meeting was held in person and via teleconference on Dec. 17 at the Mound Building.

The National Council addressed the following legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills:

**TR 22-171**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute an agreement between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences on behalf of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Health. Representative Robert Hufft sponsored the bill, unanimously adopted 15-0.

The agreement requires National Council approval because it is a government-to-government agreement. Further agreements will not waive MCN’s sovereign immunity and must first be approved by the Office of the Attorney General.

**TR 22-172**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a contract with Toast Inc. for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Health. Rep. Hufft

sponsored the bill, which was adopted unanimously 15-0.

The contract will provide \$4,725.55 for management software and a recurring payment of \$240.00 by MCNDH. MCN’s sovereign immunity and tribal jurisdiction will be waived in favor of those of the State of Massachusetts.

**TR 22-173**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a contract with RLDataix, for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Health. Rep. Hufft sponsored the legislation, which was adopted unanimously 15-0.

The contract will provide \$22,563.00 in annual payments by MCNDH for contract management and compliance software.

**TR 22-174**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a contract agreement between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and legal aid services of Oklahoma, Inc. for the purpose of providing legal services for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Reintegration Program. Representative Anna Marshall sponsored the bill, which was adopted unanimously 15-0.

Legal aid will be provided for the MCN Reintegration Program participants. However, it requires National Council approval before outside counsel may be obtained.

**TR 22-175**  
Authorizing the Principal Chief to submit a grant application to the United States Department of Agriculture to benefit the food distribution program. Rep. Marshall sponsored the bill, which was unanimously adopted 15-0.

If the MCN receives the grant, the MCN will commit a leveraged resource match of \$4,375.000 through the tribal appropriation. The grant proposes \$17,500.00 for creating and disseminating culturally relevant nutrition education resources that encourage American Indians/Alaskan Natives to learn essential nutrition, food safety, meal planning, and healthy living.

**TR 22-176**

A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending TR 21-073 (A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to negotiate a real estate contract and related documents for the purchase of property in Okmulgee County, Oklahoma) Representative Joseph Hicks sponsored the bill, which was unanimously adopted 15-0.

The resolution amends the property purchase of 5,453.39 acres located in Okmulgee. It will no longer expand the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources programs for future commerce opportunities.

**TR 22-177**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a memorandum of understanding with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma for the shared use of courtrooms. Representative Sandra Golden sponsored the bill, unanimously adopted 15-0.

The additional courthouse space would enable the District Court to enhance and strengthen the timely and secure administration of justice to MCN citizens.

**TR 22-178**

Authorizing the execution of a sub-recipient contract for services - Micro Grant/Subaward containing a waiver of sovereign immunity with the National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C). Rep. Golden sponsored the bill, which was adopted unanimously 15-0.

The grant will award \$39,060.00 for purchasing four-

teen Panasonic Toughbooks for the benefit of the MCN Lighthouse Police Department. It will waive the Nation’s sovereign immunity in legal liabilities regarding NW3C and subject the Nation to the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**TR 22-179**

Confirming the nomination of Shannon Prescott to serve as the District Trial Court Judge for the Family Law Division (Including Child Support) of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Trial Court. The bill was sponsored by Representative Mark Randolph and failed to be adopted 8-6, with one vote abstaining.

Although there were more votes in favor than against adopting the legislation, for the bill to be adopted, it required two-thirds of the votes from the full council.

**TR 22-180**

Nominating Denette Mouser to serve as the District Trial Judge of the District Trial Court Civil Division of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Rep. Randolph sponsored the bill, which was adopted unanimously 15-0.

The bill was voted to be postponed until an emergency session can be scheduled.

**TR 22-181**

Amending TR 22-020 (a tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a real estate contract and related documents for the purchase of property in McIntosh County, Oklahoma). Representative Randall Hicks sponsored the bill, which was adopted unanimously 15-0.

The bill amends the real estate property purchase to be used for the continued use of residential use, not the construction of a new gaming facility as initially outlined.

**NCA 22-149**

A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing a budget modification above ten percent (10%) for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Office of Environmental Services for FY 2022. Rep. Joseph Hicks sponsored the bill, which was adopted unanimously 15-0.

A budget modification that exceeds ten percent requires the authorization of the National Council. MCN Environmental Services will use the change to reallocate certain excess funds

for other expenses.

**NCA 22-150**

A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the 2022 Native American Agricultural Fund Grant for the benefit of the Mvskoke Loan Fund. Rep. Randolph sponsored the bill unanimously adopted, 15-0.

The grant will award the MLF \$50,000.00. It will provide the capital necessary to provide services and resources essential for Native farmers and ranchers to improve access to credit and successfully grow their agribusiness.

**NCA 22-151**

A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the District Attorney’s Council 2022 JAG-LLE Grant Award for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthouse Police Department. Representative Thomasene Yahola Osborn sponsored the bill, unanimously adopted 15-0.

The grant will award the MCN Lighthouse Police Department \$5,744.00 to purchase five body cameras, five USB docks, and five batteries.

**NCA 22-152**

A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation appropriating funds to purchase radio equipment for various departments. The bill was sponsored by Speaker William Lowe and was co-sponsored by Rep. Golden. A substitution was unanimously adopted, 15-0.

The appropriation will provide \$2,562,816.41 for purchasing L3 Harris System radios, equipment, and license for MCN Lighthouse, Health, Transit, and the Nation’s 911 Call Center.

**NCA 22-153**

A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation approving the Comprehensive Annual Budget for the Fiscal Year 2023 and providing for appropriations. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the bill, which was postponed for an emergency session, 8-7.

The budget would provide appropriations and authorized expenditures for FY 2023. The National Council has conducted budget hearings for the Fiscal Year 2023 Comprehensive Annual Budget.

The meeting, agenda, and full legislation can be viewed at [www.mcnn.com](http://www.mcnn.com).

## MCN APPROPRIATES \$1.8M FOR UPDATED RADIO SYSTEM

MLF APPROVED FOR \$50K NATIVE AMERICAN AGRICULTURE GRANT

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
*REPORTER*

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Business, Finance, and Justice Committee meeting was held in person and via teleconference on Dec. 8 at the Mound Building. All legislation will go before the full Council during the next session.

BFJ addressed the following legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills:

**TR 22-177**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a memorandum of understanding with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma for the shared use of courtrooms. Representative Sandra Golden sponsored the bill, which was unanimously approved for do pass 4-0.

The additional courthouse space will enable the District Court to enhance and strengthen the timely and secure administration of justice to citizens. It will not transfer other rights, jurisdiction, responsibilities, or obligations to the Seminole Nation.

**TR 22-178**

Authorizing the execution of a sub-recipient contract for services - microgrant/subaward containing a waiver of sovereign immunity with the National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C). Rep. Golden sponsored the bill, which was unanimously approved for do pass 4-0.

The grant will award \$39,060.00 to be used for the purchase of 14 Panasonic Toughbooks.

**TR 22-179**

Confirming the nomination of Shannon Prescott to serve as the District Tribal Court Judge for the Family Law Division (including Child Support) District Trial Court of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Representative Mark Randolph sponsored the bill, which was approved for do pass with three votes in favor, zero against, and one abstained vote.

Prescott will serve a term as District Court Trial Judge for the Family Law Division (including Child Support) of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation until Dec. 31, 2026.

**TR 22-180**

Nominating Denette Mouser to serve as the District Trial Court Judge of the District Tribal Court Civil Division of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

Rep. Randolph sponsored the bill, which was approved for do pass with three votes in favor, zero against, and one abstained vote.

Mouser will serve as District Trial Court Judge of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Trial Court Civil Division until Dec. 31, 2026.

**NCA 22-150**

A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the 2022 Native American Agriculture Fund Grant for the benefit of the Mvskoke Loan Fund. Rep. Randolph sponsored the bill, which was unanimously approved for do pass 4-0.

The grant will award \$50,000 to be used for the Mvskoke Loan Fund to provide the necessary capital to continue providing services and resources essential for Native farmers and ranchers. It will allow for improved access to credit and successfully grow their agribusiness.

**NCA 22-151**

A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the District Attorney’s Council 2022 JAG-LLE Grant Award for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthouse Police Department. Representative Thomasene Yahola Osborn sponsored the bill,



A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Business, Finance, and Justice Committee meeting was held on Dec. 8 at the Mound Building in Okmulgee. (MM File)

which was unanimously approved for do pass 4-0.

The grant will award \$5,774.00 to purchase five body cameras and batteries.

**NCA 22-152**

A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation appropriating funds to purchase radio equipment for various departments. Speaker William Lowe sponsored the bill, which was unanimously approved for do pass 4-0.

The fund appropriation will allot \$1,892,417.35 to MCN Lighthouse, Health, Transit, and the nation’s 911 call center to purchase L3 Harris System radios, equipment, and license.

**NCA 22-153**

A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation approving the comprehensive annual budget for the fiscal year 2023 and providing for appropriations. The bill was sponsored by Representative Randall Hicks and was approved for do pass 3-1.

The Principal Chief proposed the annual budget for NC approval. The National Council conducted budget hearings for the Fiscal Year 2023 Comprehensive Annual Budget. All executive, legislative, and judicial budgets were approved in committee.

For video of committee meetings, visit [www.mcnn.com](http://www.mcnn.com).



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A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Health, Education and Welfare Committee meeting was held on December 7. (MM File)

## RIP SEEKS TO PROVIDE LEGAL SERVICES TO CITIZENS

APPROPRIATION FOR FOOD DISTRIBUTION

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Health, Education and Welfare Committee meeting was held on December 7 at the Mound Building.

All passed legislation is subject to full council approval during the regular session.

HEW addressed the following legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills:

**TR 22-171**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute an agreement between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences on behalf of the MCNDH. Representative Robert Hufft sponsored the resolution, which passed 4-0.

The current agreement needs to be renewed or extended with National Council Approval.

**TR 22-172**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a contract with Toast, Inc. for the benefit of the MCNDH. Rep. Hufft sponsored the resolution, which passed 4-0.

The contract will provide specific management software and a one-time payment of \$4,725.55

and \$200 monthly.

**TR 22-173**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a contract with RLDATIX for the benefit of the MCNDH. Representative Robert Hufft sponsored the resolution, which passed 4-0.

The contract will provide particular contract and compliance management software and an annual payment of \$22,563.

**TR 22-174**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a contract agreement between the MCN and Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma, Inc. To provide legal services for the MCN Reintegration program. Rep. Anna Marshall sponsors the resolution, which passed 4-0.

The RIP seeks to provide legal services to its program participants.

**TR 22-175**

Authorizing the Principal Chief to submit a grant application to the United States Department of Agriculture to benefit the Food Distribution Program. Rep. Marshall sponsored the resolution, which passed 4-0.

The appropriation of \$4,375 will be a leveraged resource for the Food program to use in the grant application process.

## THE FIRST ALABAMIANS: HONORING THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION

JEAN CHAUDHURI'S CAREER COMES TO LIFE THROUGH ARTIFACT COLLECTION

by **MEKKO GEORGE THOMPSON**

Muscogee (Creek) Nation's story in the Southeast is one of resiliency. Over the years, we've had our land seized by speculators, squatters, federal agents, and even the U.S. government itself. By the 1830s, the federal government went so far as to relocate us by force. And yet, today we stand as strong as ever.

Alabama Public Television recently aired a documentary with the participation of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians that touched on some of this story. The video highlighted the oppression and discrimination that is all too familiar to Native Americans everywhere. However, it also offered some statements and omissions that I feel must be clarified.

I serve as the Mekko (Chief) of the modern-day Hickory Ground Tribal Town, located in southeast Oklahoma. Prior to removal, Hickory Ground served as the last capital of the National Council of Creek Nation in what is now Wetumpka, Alabama. As Mekko, it is my job to protect and preserve Muscogee (Creek) lifeways and culture. Our culture values respect (vrakkueckv), integrity (fvctetv), responsibility (mecvlke), humility (eyasketv), wisdom (hoporenkv), and love (vnokeckv).

These virtues have carried us through countless wars, discriminatory assimilation policies, and the outright removal from our homelands. I was concerned as I watched the Poarch Band assume my nation's history in the documentary. While they claim descentance from The Muscogee (Creek) Nation, they have drifted so far away from our history and traditions over the years.

At one point, the video participants said they didn't know what kind of Indian they were, just that they were Indian. But this isn't because they were forgotten. The Muscogee (Creek) people have never forgotten those who renounced their citizenship in our

nation. We well remember those who joined with federal forces to fight against the Redsticks.

But the things that were omitted from the documentary are perhaps most distressing to me.

The Poarch Band never historically resided at Hickory Ground in Wetumpka. Nevertheless, after successfully convincing the federal government to acknowledge them as a tribe in 1984, the group acquired one of Muscogee Nation's most sacred sites, Hickory Ground Tribal Town, using federal preservation grant funds. In its application for the federal preservation funds, Poarch Band said it would "prevent development on the property" and preserve Hickory Ground "without excavation." It emphasized that the preservation funds were crucial to protecting Hickory Ground because it "is of major importance in the history of The Muscogee (Creek) Nation," who "will be pleased to know their home in Alabama is being preserved." Lamentably, however, the Poarch Band refused to honor its promise.

In our Muscogee culture, once a body is at rest, it is supposed to remain there forever, but the Poarch Band violated our age-old traditions and religious beliefs, exhuming over 57 human remains, our ancestors, at Hickory Ground to make way for a \$246 million Alabama casino that now sits astride our most holy site. To this day, many of our cultural remains are cast aside and continue to languish in a simple garden shed on the property.

We traveled to Alabama to see for ourselves whether what we heard could possibly be true. Our children wept at the sight of bulldozers and dirt piles where our ancestors once laid in peace. We were overwhelmed by a sense of irreparable loss and hopelessness. Our religion binds us to protect our ancestors and keep them at peace, and we felt unbearable anguish knowing that we had failed in this duty.

In the documentary, the Poarch Band was not transpar-

ent about its past transgressions against Muscogee (Creek) culture — transgressions that they have yet to apologize for or make any effort to rectify.

Ever since the Poarch Band engaged in this horrific desecration, a rift developed between us. We desire closure, but we also believe that reconciliation requires recompense. Telling the truth about Hickory Ground and apologizing would be a good place to start even as we hope and pray that we will one day be able to bring justice to our ancestors.

While the Poarch Band may have forgotten its duty to protect some of the most sacred spaces at the heart of Muscogee (Creek) religion and culture, local, state, and federal lawmakers cannot afford to make the same mistake.

Many members of the U.S. Congress have not lost sight of their responsibility to safeguard historical Native sites from desecration. In years' past, representatives have attempted to prevent the Poarch Band from desecrating Hickory Ground. More recently, Rep. Raúl Grijalva, D-AZ, the chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, and Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt. also re-introduced the Save Oak Flat Act — legislation to safeguard the Oak Flat area of the Tonto National Forest from the mining proposals that the DOJ recently approved.

While these efforts are commendable, they are merely Band-Aid solutions. To adequately fix this problem, local, state, and federal lawmakers need to pass comprehensive legislative frameworks that address not only individual land disputes but also their underlying root causes — the disproportionate leverage landholders currently have over tribes with legitimate ancestral land claims. Only then will those excavated at Hickory Ground receive the respect, care, and protections they need and deserve.

*George Thompson is the Mekko of the Hickory Ground Tribal Town, a lifetime position that he has held for over 50 years, and he currently serves as a Justice in the Muscogee (Creek) Supreme Court. He is a fluent speaker of the Muscogee (Creek) language and has been designated as a Living Legend within the Nation.*

## YARDEKA COMMUNITY CENTER HOLDS AN EVENT TO CALL FOR MEMBERS

THE LACK OF PARTICIPATION HELPED THE INTERIM CHAIR REALIZE THE CENTER NEEDS MORE MEMBERS FROM THE RESIDENTS IN THE AREA

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

HENRYETTA, Oklahoma – The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Behavioral Health Department held a community resource fair at Yardeka Community Center for the members and community residents.

Behavioral Health Care Coordinator Kim Morrison organized a series of events to reach out to each community possible.

Morrison grew up in the Yardeka community area but has since moved. She still has close family living in the area and feels she knows some of the needs.

A total of 13 departments were invited to participate, including College of Muscogee Nation, Reintegration, Lighthorse, Diabetes Prevention, Social Services, Social Security, Dept. of Education and Training, MAT, Senior Services, Contact Health, TANF, School Clothing along with Behavioral Health.

Unfortunately, the turnout did not go as expected, with just a few attending community members, "I tried to do my part by bringing the resources here, and I feel that's all I can do for now."

Morrison's Uncle, Michael Winap, serves as the center's interim Chair, and he was a bit disappointed at the participation. He reached out to several residents to come to see what the fair may have to offer.

Winap said Yardeka is newly re-established under the MCN Com-



Yardeka Community is seeking to grow its membership. (Morgan Taylor/Multimedia Producer)

munity Research and Development Department. He started holding meetings again just last May. Since then, membership has grown some.

"We have a lot of elders," he said. "I want to get the younger people more involved."

Located in McIntosh Co., the monthly meetings have attracted the National Council Representatives Galen Cloud and Darrell Proctor when they can attend.

He claims the center will hold elections next month to determine the official chairpersons and other positions.

In 2022, the center held its first Halloween celebration and Christmas.

"We provided everything free for the Halloween Party," Winap said. "We were overwhelmed with the turnout."

He and other member volunteers fed visitors hotdogs, nachos, Frito chili pies, drinks, sweets, and candy.

Yardeka provided gifts for over 20 kids of the center's community members. Two of the mothers volunteered their time to go and get the gifts and got each child something they wanted using the funds from CR&D.

According to Winap, the boundaries have recently been expanded for Yardeka. With two ceremonial grounds (Arbeka and Hickory Ground), Ryal Public School, and five churches within the Yardeka boundaries, Winap expects more will join as word get around the community.

The center holds meetings on the last Monday of each month that anyone in the community can attend.

To reach out about membership, please the Yardeka Community Center call 918-652-3822.

For more information about the Community Research and Development Program, please call 918-732-7963.



A joint Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Business, Finance, and Justice/Land, Natural Resource and Cultural Preservation Committee meeting was held in person and via teleconference on Dec. 13 at the Mound Building. (MM File)

## LAND IN MCINTOSH COUNTY'S INTENDED USE WILL CONTINUE AS RESIDENTIAL USE

THE ORIGINAL INTENT OF THE LAND UPON PURCHASE WAS FOR A NEW GAMING FACILITY

by **KAYLEA BERRY**  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - A joint Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Business, Finance, and Justice/Land, Natural Resource and Cultural Preservation Committee meeting was held in person and via teleconference on Dec. 13 at the Mound Building.

All legislation will go before the full council during the regular session.

BFJ/LNC addressed the following legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills:

**TR 22-181**

A MCN Tribal resolution amending TR 22-020 (an MCN Tribal resolution authorizing the

Principal Chief to execute a real estate contract and related documents for the purchase of property in McIntosh County, Okla.). Representative Randall Hicks sponsored the bill, which passed substitute 9-0.

The enactment of TR 22-020 authorized the execution of a real estate contract and related documents to purchase property in McIntosh County. There is a need to amend TR 22-020 to change the property's intended use.

**TR 22-181**

Will amend TR 22-020 to read The GOAB has been presented with an opportunity to purchase real estate property to continue to use the property for residential use.

For video of committee meetings, visit www.mcnnm.com.

## CHRISTMAS KICKS OFF AT THE DOME

### CARNIVAL OFFERS GAMES AND ART VENDORS

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
*REPORTER*

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – Families of all ages gathered for Christmas fun and shopping at the Mvskoke Dome on Dec. 2 for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Christmas Carnival. The free event featured small business craft vendors, carnival games, Indian Santa, and a reindeer. It provided inexpensive family fun and opportunities to shop at local Indigenous vendor booths.

This marked the first time in two years the event was able to occur due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Ryan Logan, MCN Acting Director of Marketing & Tourism, said the community warmly welcomed the carnival’s return.

“Everyone seemed to have a positive experience; our vendors said they did well on their retail

sales,” Logan said. “With the cost of living that has increased in the past couple of years, I think everything at our Christmas Carnival, keeping it very affordable and in a lot of areas free, really helped out in a year where inflation is still running hot.”

With so many components comprising the carnival, it was hard to choose a favorite part. Logan’s favorite part was split between the reindeer and the duck carnival game.

Logan’s favorite part about serving the community through the carnival is seeing its effect on children and their families.

“The joy on the different children’s faces, they just have such a good time,” Logan said. “It was a good time to let the kiddos have fun and shop for mom, dad, and extended family.”

For Justina Kemp (Mvskoke) and her sister, Jacqueline Rol-



Justina Kemp manages a booth at the Christmas Carnival. The booth was run by Kemp’s family, including her sister, Jacqueline Rolland. It featured handmade holiday items. Okmulgee, Okla. Dec. 2, 2022. (Braden Harper/Reporter)

land (Mvskoke), it was their first time setting up shop at the MCN Christmas Carnival. Their booth was covered in handmade holiday crafts, including decor, baked goods, and wreaths. The crafts were not exclusive to Christmas

items. They included fall and Halloween items.

“I love looking at all the stuff people have made, handmade,” Kemp said. “I’m excited to be here.”

Selling crafts at Christmas markets is one way the sisters

spend the holidays together. Now that Kemp and Rolland are the elders in their family, they have taken on the responsibility of keeping their family holiday traditions alive.

“We try to carry on, and we still get together. We get together at her house for Thanksgiving, my house for Christmas,” Kemp said.

According to Rolland, they completely sold out of their homemade banana nut bread.

On top of hosting the Christmas Carnival, Logan is a big fan of Christmas himself. For him, this time of the year is one to celebrate and reflect. One thing the carnival succeeded at was sharing the holiday spirit with others.

“I always go to multiple light shows,” Logan said. “I make sure to look back, and there’s a lot of sentimental ornaments and family ornaments that I have kept throughout the years.”

MCN Marketing and Tourism host other tribal events throughout the year, including the nation’s cultural festival in June.

## A NEW YEAR, SOME OF THE SAME OLD

### NATIVE NAMES STILL MANGLED, BALLERINA STATUTE BEING RESTORED, NEW HONORS FOR NATIVES

by **GARY FIFE**  
*RADIO COMMUNICATIONS*

Okmulgee, Oklahoma— We’re off and running on a New Year and we’ll probably see some old problems reappear or just won’t go away.

Kevin Stitt has been reelected as Governor and we’re likely to see a few familiar items pop up. On that list, the battle over gaming compacts will likely be renewed. Stitt said the old terms are now expired. Tribes and the Interior Department) say, nope, the existing ones are still valid. There are and will be other disputes to be sure.

A decision on the Freedmen legal dispute will be handed



down in April. Emotions will be high on that one.

Native News Online printed a story on another national news outfit airing racist comments on Native American culture, this time on Native family names. The offender NNO reported was CBS Sports. During coverage of a basketball game between Wichita State and Grand Canyon

University, CBS commentators made fun of Wichita State’s Isiah Poor Bear’s name. Poor Bear is Oglala Lakota. They insulted his name, saying it was “Pooh Bear”.

Poor Bear handled it gracefully and the broadcasters apologized publicly. No official word from CBS.

Native News Online has been busy. They also had a story reporting that seven U.S. Senators have sent a letter to President Joe Biden asking for clemency for imprisoned Native activist Leonard Peltier. He is serving a life sentence in federal prison in connection with the deaths of two FBI agents in 1975. The White House had not responded to the letter or an earlier request by the Democratic National Committee.

The stolen statue has been found and the Tulsa Historical Society is getting ready to put it back together.

The society will reinstall the statue of ballerina Marjorie Tallchief after it was stolen more than six months ago.

Tallchief was one of five Native American ballerinas who made themselves and Oklahoma famous worldwide for their outstanding talent. The historical society said the statue should be in place in 12 to 18 months, and they will celebrate that event. Reports say the thief was identified but no charges were filed since no crime could be proven.

Speaking of Oklahoma ballerinas, in February of last year, Grunge magazine published an extensive story of dancer Maria Tallchief. She was one of the Native dancers who became known as The Five Moons. They were Myra Yvonne Chouteau, Rosella

Hightower, Moscelyne Larkin, and sisters Maria Tallchief and Marjorie Tallchief.

More good news. “Reservation Dogs” has won the Best Ensemble and Best New Scripted awards from the 2022 Film Independent Spirit Awards. And... perhaps best of all...it has been renewed for another season, its third. Such a wonderful series. It will be interesting to see how the plot and characters develop after they have reached their first goals.

O.K., that’s all for me. This is the most demanding part of the year, trying to fill this column and the radio show. It’s the holidays.

So, Happy 2023 to Mvskokvle and our neighbors. Hvtvm Cerecares.

**Disclaimer: The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.**

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# OBITUARY

**Mindy Jo Hickman**  
Mindy Jo Hickman, a resident of Henryetta passed away Friday, December 2nd, 2022 in Henryetta at the age of 49. She was born November 5th, 1973 in Henryetta.

She married Hercel Lee Hickman July 24th, 2001 in Tulsa.

Her uncle, Lance Hammack, grandmother, Lucille Hammack, grandfather, Guy Hammack, her father, Barney Walker and her dad, Larry Stiver, precedes her in death.

She is survived by her husband, Hercel Hickman of the home; two daughters, Aden Ellis and Arminda Hickman both of the home; Two brothers, Jesse Stiver and Jared Ellis; Her mother, Terri (Hammack) Stiver of Dewar; Aunts and uncles, Diane & Larry Hester of Dewar; Beverly & Ledtkey McIntosh of Norman; also a very special friend, Marcy Moore of Henryetta and various cousins and other aunts and uncles, also by a host of friends.

The Thlopthlocco Tribal Town Business Committee has cancelled the upcoming January 28<sup>th</sup> 2023 Elections of their own offices. The reasoning just provided to Thlopthlocco Citizens is *“in order to review membership files for completeness & accuracy”*.

Thlopthlocco is a sovereign Nation of 1000 members with dual enrollment with Muscogee Creek Nation. Subsequently, after 15 years of active litigation and hundreds of thousands of dollars spent in attorney and court fees, the MCN DCJ recently dismissed all litigation which outlined enrollment infractions and leadership disputes with no resolve citing “Thlopthlocco is entitled sovereign immunity and orders case dismissed for lack of jurisdiction” in their latest order.



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