



MVSKOKE NEWS

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OKMULGEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS EMPLOYEE ACCUSED OF SPANKING MVSKOKE SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENT

SPECIAL NEEDS DEPARTMENT AT OPS DESCRIBED AS "DUMPING GROUND"



Okmulgee Public Schools has recently faced allegations of enacting corporal punishment on a special needs student. In the State of Oklahoma, by law state educators are not allowed to enact corporal punishment on students with special needs. (Braden Harper/MM)

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

Profanity Warning: The following story contains vulgar language referenced in a direct quote.

OKMULGEE, Okla. - An Okmulgee Public School District paraprofessional employee was accused of spanking a special

needs student at the primary school on the first day of school on Aug. 16. The employee, Jesse Johnson was accused by the student who disclosed the incident to his parents when he arrived home at the end of the day. Due to the fact that the student is a minor, their name will not be disclosed in this article. The student is a citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

The student's mother, Sally VanStraten (Mvskoke) claimed her son had been spanked when he arrived home on the first day of school, visibly upset.

"The first thing he (VanStraten's son) told me was 'spank,'" VanStraten said. "I asked what happened, he said 'Jesse called me 'fuck you' and 'bitch.'" VanStraten's son then proceeded to show his mother where he had been spanked, and reported that it made him cry.

Until that point, VanStraten was unaware Johnson was involved with the special needs classroom. From there, she called the school to lodge a complaint. VanStraten's daughter emailed the district's superintendent, Renee Dove over the incident. Dove responded that the matter was under investigation.

VanStraten and her husband provided statements for the investigation, and took down their son's account of what happened. According to VanStraten, she was told by school officials that the investigation found no wrongdoing on behalf of Johnson's part.

In the meantime, VanStraten

had refused to let her son return to school out of fear that Johnson would spank him again. In September she discovered that her son had been dropped out of the school district due to his extended absence.

When asked by VanStraten if Johnson was qualified to work with special needs students at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year, she was merely told incessantly by the school that, "we only follow protocol". She was not given a direct "yes", or "no" answer.

According to Oklahoma state law regarding corporal punishment on special needs students,

"As applied to students with disabilities entitled to special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the use of corporal punishment by employees or agents of an Oklahoma public school is prohibited beginning in the 2020-2021 school year."

The Okmulgee Primary School handbook does not explicitly list corporal punishment as a discipline method authorized for staff to perform on students.

Disability Diagnosis

VanStraten's son was diagnosed with autism at the age of three years old. At the time of his diagnosis he was nonverbal. When a child is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder, their abilities and behaviors are ranked on a scale of three levels of severity. VanStraten's son's diagnosis was classified as a severity level two, which is defined as "requiring substantial support".

In addition to autism, VanStraten's son was also diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). This makes it challenging for him to sit still and focus in a classroom setting. His diagnoses require the assistance of a certified paraprofessional.

VanStraten's son attends therapy at the Autism Comprehensive Educational Services (ACES) location in Bixby to help overcome learning challenges. Initially VanStraten and her son made the trip from Okmulgee to Bixby five times a week. Over time, VanS-

SPECIAL NEEDS
Continued on Page 2

GLENPOOL POLICE AND LPD SWAT RESPOND TO A HOSTAGE-TURNED-BARRICADE SITUATION

LIGHTHORSE POLICE SWAT TEAM ASSISTED LOCAL POLICE IN SECURING THE AREA



A Glenpool Neighborhood is now safe after a Mvskoke man was arrested by LPD Thursday Oct. 26 in Glenpool, Okla. (Courtesy Photo: MCN Principal Chief David Hill Facebook Page)

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

GLENPOOL, Okla. - Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthouse Police Department arrested a suspect barricading himself in his mothers' home after law enforcement safely removed her from the situation.

Neighbors made concerning calls to the Glenpool Police Department during the early hours of Thursday morning, claiming there was an armed adult male trashing his mother's house while also threatening her.

GPD responded to the call just after 4:00 a.m., which turned into a hostage situation. That's when the local police department called for LPD SWAT assistance.

MCN Press Secretary Jason Salsman said agencies from Jenks also responded to the scene.

Neighbors were evacuated from the area near 143rd and

Kendalwood. The street was blocked off for hours while police worked the scene.

Police located a window where the mother was able to communicate with officers, unbeknownst to the suspect. With police help, she was able to escape.

After talking with officers, she confirmed that the suspect was armed.

Salsman said it turned from a hostage situation to a barricade situation.

Officers made repeated attempts to communicate with the man, which were unsuccessful.

Salsman said the man responded by saying things like, "you are going to have to come in and shoot me" and "I am not going lightly".

Just before 9:00 a.m., the SWAT team safely removed the suspect from the home and arrested him.

According to Salsman, the suspect is a Muscogee (Creek) citizen.

"He is liable to be charged with the severity of his crimes in both Creek Nation and federal court."

He mentioned the suspect did have prior felony charges and should not have possessed a firearm.

"Its an unfortunate incident," Salsman said. "But we are really happy to see nothing bad happened, this didn't end in tragedy."

According to a post from Principal Chief David Hill, the peaceful resolution was a result of the partnership between agencies.

"This is why we have cross-deputization agreements," Hill said. "Excellent collaborative work between LHPD, SWAT and Glenpool Police Department showing how we're more when we combine our efforts." Chief Hill said. "This situation could have ended in tragedy, but thankfully we have a resolution."

HALLOWEEN EVENTS BRING TRICKS AND TREATS TO STUDENTS ACROSS THE NATION

NEW PROSPER STUDIOS HOSTED KICK-OR-TREAT, WHILE OIC HOSTED HEAD START TRICK-OR-TREAT



Mykalia Frank poses with one of the Head Start students that participated in the Kick or Treat event. (Photo Courtesy: Tevin Phillips)

by **SHAYLN PROCTOR**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla.- The Kick-or-Treat event was held at the newly-located New Prosper Studios on Oct. 28. Attendees enjoyed treats that were passed out along with hot dogs, chips and drinks. Due to inclement weather, the event was hosted at the studio instead of the original location, the Muscogee Nation Omniplex.

Prosper Studio owner and 400 Waves member Kayleb Brown (Mvskoke) and his girlfriend Mykalia Frank (Mvskoke) helped co-host the Kick-or-Treat event. Along with them were the entire New Prosper Studio family, Brown's brothers, and family. This was their second annual Halloween-themed event.

The event saw families and children from throughout the community dress up in costumes. Those in attendance appeared to enjoy themselves.

The turnout exceeded expectations due to the location change and downsizing where it could be hosted indoors. Overall the crew handed out somewhere between 300-350 bags of candy, and 160 hotdogs. According to Brown and Frank, while the event ran out of food and treats, that is not a bad thing as they hope to see the event grow bigger every year.

The event received donations from Walmart, New Music & New Artist, Sko Trim, Ausbrooks, John-

HALLOWEEN
Continued on Page 2

SPECIAL NEEDS

Continued from Page 1

traten's son would learn how to speak in spite of his disability. Although he can not speak at the same level as other students, he can still talk and communicate with others.

In light of these diagnoses, VanStraten claimed that OPS did not properly accommodate her son.

Enrollment

VanStraten is an OPS alumna. According to her, she did not want her son to attend her alma mater. When the time came to discuss education options, ACES officials recommended Morris Public Schools over OPS. When VanStraten applied to have her son transferred to MPS, their application was denied. The family's only option for their special needs student was OPS.



The OPS special needs department has been described as a "dumping ground" by former educators. (Shutterstock)

VanStraten's son experienced challenges in the classroom. According to VanStraten, during the 2022-2023 school year her son was kicked out for kicking and hitting a teacher. She also claimed that in lieu of teaching proper special needs curriculum, paraprofessionals allowed her son to sleep throughout the school day.

"They were overworked, over-

whelmed, underpaid and they needed help," VanStraten said.

VanStraten added that her son was required to attend summer school in order to catch up on the curriculum he missed because paraprofessionals allowed him to sleep during the past school year.

Lapse of State IEP standards

At the time VanStraten's son started school at OPS, the special needs department was under the direction of former OPS Special Needs Director and School Psychologist, Dr. Dalawna Brent. A native of Okmulgee, Dr. Brent spent years in graduate school learning about early education.

Dr. Brent holds a master's degree and a doctorate in educational psychology. She dedicated her educational career to education. Dr. Brent's resume would easily fit the needs of any district's special needs department, espe-

cially an underserved one like OPS.

Dr. Brent served over the special needs department at OPS for nearly three years. Coming into the position, she saw a lot of room for improvement within the department. However, this did not initially deter her from enacting change.

"There had been some inade-

quate leadership in the department that led to a lot of the troubles and deficiencies the department was experiencing," Dr. Brent said.

Unfortunately within six months or so, Dr. Brent would learn the issue was systemic. According to Dr. Brent, individualized education program (IEP) standards were not being met, thus the program's problems continued to persist.

"She's the only reason why we agreed to send our children here," VanStraten said. "She actually cares and knows special education."

Dr. Brent resigned from the district in May. She described her resignation as "inevitable". In spite of the fact she had spent three years at the district, she was unable to fix the issues she believed needed to be fixed. Dr. Brent made the decision to leave in order to preserve her reputation as a professional educator.

"At that point it put my professional liability and professional responsibility at risk," Dr. Brent said.

Special education is highly regulated at the state and federal level. Dr. Brent did not believe those standards were being met at OPS. When asked about how the district needs to improve, Dr. Brent did not mince words on how she described their approach to special needs education.

"The special education department appears to be the dumping ground," Dr. Brent said. "It seems to be where we send those students, the staff members, the equipment that is defective. We don't want to deal with it, but we can't get rid of it."

Moving Forward

Mvskoke Media reached out to the Okmulgee Public School District on the allegations of corporal punishment. The district provided the following statement, "Early in the current school

year, there was an allegation made that a district employee administered corporal punishment to a student. The allegation was thoroughly investigated, and no evidence was found to support this claim. School district staff members have not administered corporal punishment to any district student in approximately 10 years or more."

The district's statement would further go on to claim they currently have qualified special needs education staff members.

Although VanStraten's son had been dropped from the district in September, it did not stop her from attending the monthly school board meeting on Oct. 10. VanStraten confronted Dove and other school officials about who investigated the incident involv-

ing her son. This resulted in VanStraten being removed from the board meeting.

VanStraten remarked that she has been in contact with fellow special needs student parents at OPS. According to her, many have had similar experiences with a lackluster special needs education curriculum at OPS, prompting them to remove those students from the district. At this time, VanStraten is not pursuing legal action against OPS. It is her belief that legal action will not solve the problem for other families of special needs students within the district.

"These kids deserve an education just like the other kids do," VanStraten said. "I will stand up and fight for every single one of them."

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HALLOWEEN

Continued from Page 1

son's Stepping Stone Cafe as well as family members.

Both Brown and Frank enjoyed seeing the families that attended. They also enjoyed giving back to the community. Brown mentioned how grateful and happy he felt helping with the event, especially by giving away free food and treats at no cost. "A lot of people were happy and it made us happy," Brown said.

Everyone involved with the event wore a Kick-or-Treater sweater. Frank made the sweaters and came up with the design herself.

The Kick-or-Treat name came from Brown's brother who is a rapper. "We were at the house and my brother was talking about doing stuff in the community and what we could do, then he just came up with saying, 'what about kick-or-treat bub and sis?,' and it had a little ring to it so we just ran with it," Brown said.

Both Brown and Frank were glad to receive support from the community, different businesses, as well as family and friends. "I'm thankful for the community for helping out and look forward to doing it next year," Frank said.

The couple is exploring ideas on future community events. They both discussed doing something for children on the weekends or after school. "We have a big backyard out here and we would like to show movies or something," Frank said.

The studio welcomes new artists or anyone that wants to start making music of their own.

For further information about New Prosper Studios, they can be contacted at 918-777-6797. They can also be found on social media platforms under the handle, @NewProsperStudios.



Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief David Hill pins a lapel pin onto a student dressed up as the chief. (Photo Courtesy: MCN Principal Chief David Hill Facebook page)

Head Start Trick-or-Treat

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation held their annual Trick-or-Treat event for MCN Okmulgee Head Start students at the Okmulgee Indian Community Center on Oct. 31. Different MCN programs participated and dressed up in Halloween costumes to pass out candy to students.

Around 111 students attended this event, 23 departments and programs provided booths to hand out candy for students. Some of the MCN Departments included the Department of Education and Training, Finance, Reintegration, Transit, and the Mvskoke Language Department.

Students left the event with all sorts of treats. They were also able to show off their Halloween costumes. Students were seen smiling and laughing with their classmates. MCN Department members dressed up with their own Halloween costumes and decorated booths. Some of the parents even joined in with their students, and witnessed their excitement from what the event had to offer.

MCN Okmulgee Head Start Parent and Family Community Engagement Specialist Tina Ward stated that she would like

to express her gratitude to the different departments and programs that attended and passed out candy. She is appreciative of the hard work each department put in, and the engagement with students.

One of the most memorable moments for Ward was seeing a student dressed up as MCN Principal Chief David Hill. The real Chief Hill even offered the student his own MCN lapel pin.

Ward mentioned in a statement that she is also grateful for MCN Department of Education and Training Project Manager Elsa Lowe, who switched the

event's locale to the Okmulgee Indian Community Center due to inclement weather. Lowe also made flyers for the event.

"Community engagement is an important aspect of the Head Start program. Showing support for the children and families by coming together has the possibility of presenting opportunities for families to become more aware of the programs throughout the Muscogee Nation. Having support of these departments shows our children and families that they are valued," Ward said.



Muscogee (Creek) Nation Departments gathered at the Okmulgee Indian Community Center to set up booths and dress up in Halloween costumes to pass out candy to Head Start Students during the tribe's annual Trick-or-Treat event. (ShayIn Proctor/MM)

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HO-CHUNK ACTIVIST DRIVES FOR MURDERED AND MISSING INDIGENOUS WOMEN

ELIZABETH JOHNSON USES HER LIVELIHOOD TO SHARE A MESSAGE AND SPARK CONVERSATIONS



Elizabeth Johnson (Ho-Chunk) uses her semi trailer to raise awareness for Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women. (Courtesy: Elizabeth Johnson)

by **MEREDITH JOHNSON**
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION- For Elizabeth Johnson (Ho-Chunk) activism and livelihood are intertwined, and on the road. Johnson owns and operates Ho-Chunk Trucking and has used the original white sides of her trailer as a blank canvas to raise awareness for Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women (MMIW). On Oct 4, Johnson spoke with Mvskoke Media's Emvpanaya about her work and activism.

After a few years of driving for other people, Johnson purchased her own semi, a few years after that she purchased her own trailer. She knew when she got the plain trailer she wanted a custom wrap that somehow featured her culture. Gaining inspiration from friends and family, she had one custom made with images of Nebraska Ho-Chunk women in dance and pow wow regalia.

However, one woman is prominently placed, her face bearing the red handprint over her mouth that has become the symbol for the

MMIP movement. That's Johnson's niece, Jalisa (Winnebago) and one of the main inspirations for the truck. In addition to the images, the sides are emblazoned with the messages, "For 500 years, countless Native women have been murdered or gone missing. Stop killing our sisters," and "INVISIBLE NO MORE."

Johnson is driven in her desire to bring awareness to the harrowing realities of violence faced by Native women. Johnson shared, "The entire purpose of this semi is so that the entire world that I travel in knows that there are Native women out here missing and that the government or FBI is not really doing anything."

Encouragement and Conversations

Johnson has positive support on the road from the Native community. She shared that the kind of encouragement she receives is overwhelmingly supportive, "From Native people, it's a positive, you know, anything can happen from stopping, waving,

taking video of me, talking and telling me that they love it, they've never seen it, it's powerful... about time. All Natives have nothing but encouraging words to say to me as far as their appreciation to what it is I've chosen to do with my platform."

Reception from non-Native people has ranged from supportive and encouraging. She's received comments like "It's beautiful!" and "Keep spreading the word!" to the curious. She explained, "A lot of them are curious, they don't understand, they don't know, and they want to know. They even track you down and follow you into parking lots and ask about the trailer, 'What does it mean? Why does it have the red hand?' And then they're like 'Wow.'"

While the conversations and encounters have been supportive of Johnson's work and message, one encounter left her admittedly dumbfounded. Johnson relayed that during a rest stop in Shawnee, she parked in a lot at a Walmart off the interstate and noticed a couple looking at the images on the trailer and expected to have a conversation or exchange. She engaged them by stating, "It's beautiful, huh?"

When the woman replied, "it's scary," and promptly got back in their car, Johnson was at a loss and recognised the missed opportunity. "I was left kind of dumbfounded but inside I wanted to say. It is scary, the thought of another human being snatching up or murdering and assaulting Native women is scary... to be in a world that you're so unprotected that you are looked at as so unimportant and that you don't matter... that's what I wanted to say. That was probably the only negative experience"

The Numbers

According to a 2016 National Institute of Justice study, more than four in five American Indian

and Alaska Native women (84.3 percent) have experienced violence in their lifetime, including 56.1 percent who have experienced sexual violence.

While these numbers are startling, the situation is still much worse. According to the 2008 National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) conducted by the National Institute of Justice Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, less than half of violent victimizations against women are ever reported. The data is even more startling for Indigenous women.

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Report by the Urban Indian Health Institute of the Seattle Indian Health Board (UIHI) found several reasons for the lack of representative data on violence against Native women and girls. The study examined law enforcement records, state and national databases, media coverage, social media posts, and community and family accounts.

They found that racial misclassifications in race, poor relationships between law enforcement and Native communities, lack of record keeping, underreporting in the media, and an absence of relationships between journalists and Native communities coalesce in creating a void in representative data on Native women and girls.

For example, they found biases in media coverage not only show a lack of representation, but also perpetuate violence. In their study, they found that only 25% of cases of missing or murdered women and girls were covered by local, regional, or national media, and less than 7% were covered more than three times. They also found nearly 40% of coverage referred to drug or alcohol use and 31% referenced the victim's criminal history. It stated, "...media sources have used language that could be perceived as violent and victim-blaming in their coverage of

MMIW cases. This type of coverage can also perpetuate negative stereotypes of American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls."

Big Bertha and the Girls

These numbers reflect the social context in which Johnson drives her truck. They also represent her personal background. After a nine year marriage where she survived physical, emotional, and mental abuse, owning and operating her own trucking company was a lifeline.

Johnson explained, "I was broke and I went home and I heard this voice that said, look for a semi and it kept bothering me, so I gave in... I traded in a new Silverado for a semi because I knew the bank would have to take the truck back, but if I could get something I could make money with I could make the payments. They gave me a business loan, they didn't do those but I talked it into them and they did." That's how Johnson came to own "Big Bertha and the Girls", the semi and trailer that make up her solo trucking company.

Johnson has invested her life into spreading the message but times are currently hard for her. Post-Covid fuel rates have risen, the price of shipping has gone down, and truck repairs have eaten away at her credit. "I'm at a place here where I'm looking at possible bankruptcy, I'm not sure how much longer I can keep Big Bertha and the Girls on the road... I can't pay my bills, so I started a gofundme, as a last resort to try to keep my trailer moving on the road, and I don't know how that's gonna go. I can't get ahead here." Johnson said.

While she would like more business, the opportunity to get free from debt incurred from

MMIW TRAILER

Continued on Page 5

MCN SPONSORS ANNUAL PECAN FESTIVAL

THIS YEAR'S EVENT MOVED TO HARVEST SEASON



The Pecan Festival was held downtown Okmulgee, Okla. (Morgan Taylor/MM)

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Okla. – The Muscogee (Creek) Nation was the presenting sponsor of the annual Pecan Festival. The community event takes place in downtown Okmulgee, the capital city of the Muscogee (Creek) Reservation.

Hosted by the Okmulgee Chamber of Commerce and the Okmulgee Main Street organization, the festival is sponsored in part by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation along with the College of Muscogee Nation as a partner.

A \$4,000 contribution from the Nation was given to the hosts for the festival.

This year's festival was moved from the hot month of June to the pecan-flourishing month of October.

Famous pecan brittle was prepared and packaged by Chef Grady Perryman, the Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology Culinary Department, Okmulgee Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors, Melissa Parchman, and the staff from Magoon and Associates. The downtown square where

the historic Muscogee Council House sits, acted as the center of the festival, setting the foundation for vendors along the central hub.

Carnival rides kicked off the three-day event on the evening of Thursday, Oct. 26. It continued on Friday evening with additional events.

Saturday's agenda was full with events starting at 8 a.m., and lasting until 11 p.m.

Live entertainment included local favorites like the Lance Gouge Band on Friday and the Brent Giddens Band on Saturday. Both bands feature one or more Mvskoke people in them.

After last year's extreme summer heat put a damper on the festival, the chamber and partnering organizations thought the date change would be attractive to festival attendees.

After the festival's first announcement in May, feedback seemed positive. Unfortunately, the weekend's rainy weather put restraints on many of the outdoor events.

The Scare on the Square event hosted nearly 50 local businesses/ organizations handing out candy for the community to trick-or-treat, along the Council House Square. One Fire Casino was one of the 50 businesses.

Umbrella Alley

Sponsors and organizers want to bring positive attention to the downtown area. Another way the community is creating positivity is using an empty downtown alleyway. Okmulgee Main Street organization members were inspired after seeing the usage of unused alleys in a town called Pikeville, Kentucky. After nearly two years, the project was launched on Oct. 3.

"We can't thank everyone enough that chose to spend their Saturday transforming this alley and making dreams come to fruition," Okmulgee Main Street said in a Facebook post.

Clint and Megan Wilson (Mvskoke) and Rod Weimer



Sunlight beams through colorful umbrellas strung above the alley at 5th Street between Grand and Morton in Downtown Okmulgee. The project is called Umbrella Alley, and is inspired by similar projects found in other cities like Pikeville, Kentucky. (Morgan Taylor/MM)

allowed the organization to utilize the space in between their buildings for the project located at 5th Street between Grand and Morton.

For more information on the Annual Pecan Festival, visit the Okmulgee Main Street page on Facebook.

MVSKOKE CITIZEN JACK STAFFORD'S HANDCRAFTED CEDAR BOXES TO BE USED IN NATIONAL ARCHIVE

BOXES WILL BE USED AT THE PIPESTEM NATIONAL MONUMENT CONVERSATIONS

by MEREDITH JOHNSON
REPORTER



Jack Stafford stands in his workshop displaying cedar boxes made for the Pipestem National Monument. (Courtesy: Jack Stafford)

MVSKOKE RESERVATION-Mvskoke citizen Jack Stafford has found that hobbies can turn into something more. The former home builder has kept busy crafting cedar boxes since retirement, yet recently his woodworking skills have carved out an interesting niche. They will be used as storage boxes for the archival pipestem collections at Pipestone National Monument in Minnesota.

Stafford and his wife, Nanette, run Cedar Creations by Jack, an Etsy store where they sell a variety of cedar boxes and craftwork. It began when he made a box for

his wife's feather fan, once her friends saw it they wanted one too. Nanette recalled, "He made the first one for me. Most of my friends are Osage, and when they saw the box he made for me they all wanted one. And that's how it got started."

Jack believes that is how Pipestone found out about his work. "We got a call one day and it was this lady from Pipestone National Monument. She asked if we could make 100 cedar boxes."

Stafford's shop keeps a few stock boxes in different sizes at the ready. He can also create boxes to the customer's specifications,

but nothing like what the archive needed. They requested 100 boxes in sizes from 20 inches to three feet. The boxes were also to be made without nails or screws, the only hardware being latches and hinges. Stafford has finished up the first 50 boxes of the order. He and Nanette will be delivering them to the archive in person.

The soft red stone found at Pipestone National Monument has been quarried for over 3,000 years by Indigenous people for pipes. The site contains a still-used quarry, a grassland prairie, and a visitor's center and archive.

Stafford stated, "I am honored to have been chosen to make these cedar boxes that will be storing these ancestral ceremonial pipes for generations to come. There has been a lot of work and a lot of prayer placed into each box. I am excited to be able to deliver them to the Pipestone National Monument in Minnesota."

Stafford has also recently been working with the University of Tennessee and the Osage Nation on a repatriation burial project. He was contacted by the university to make boxes specifically for the repatriation of burial remains unearthed during archeological research.

The project is especially humbling for Stafford who designed the boxes to particular standards in consultation with the Osage Nation. "The cedar box was made without any hardware at all, including the hinges and latches, but needed to be able to be sealed once the remains were placed inside. I was able to make the lid fit into the top of the box with the use of wooden pegs. The Osage Nation had requested the box be made without the velvet on the flooring or without the protective oil on the outside."

Stafford shared, "I was honored to make the cedar box that would allow the ancestral remains to be returned to Osage Nation for reburial in the land from where

they were taken. The university and Osage Nation were pleased the box was made by an enrolled member of a tribal nation and by a veteran."

To shop for original boxes and other items made by Jack, visit the Stafford's online store at etsy.com/shop/CedarCreationsByJack.



Jack Stafford prepares cedar boxes for transport. (Courtesy: Jack Stafford)

UNOFFICIAL 2023 MCN GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation 2023 General Election 11/4/23 Unofficial Results Report					
National Council Seat A - Creek District					
Choice	Absentee Voting	Early Voting	Election Day Voting	Total	
Dode Barnett	1,210 52.98%	141 46.53%	531 40.15%	1,882	51.81%
Joseph Hicks	1,024 47.02%	162 53.47%	365 27.85%	1,551	48.63%
Cast Votes: 2,234 100.00%					
Undervotes: 24					
Overvotes: 0					
National Council Seat A - Okmulgee District					
Choice	Absentee Voting	Early Voting	Election Day Voting	Total	
Willem Linn	1,051 45.74%	165 54.50%	354 27.56%	1,570	47.75%
Robyn Whitecloud	1,247 54.26%	140 49.80%	342 28.44%	1,729	52.25%
Cast Votes: 2,298 100.00%					
Undervotes: 10					
Overvotes: 0					

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Election Board published the unofficial results of the general election on election day, Nov. 4. (Courtesy: MCN Election Board)

by BRADEN HARPER
MANAGING EDITOR

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Election Office has tallied up the votes, and have released the unofficial results of the General Election. Dode Barnett won 52% of the vote for Creek District Seat A. Robyn Whitecloud won 54% of the vote for Okmulgee District Seat A.

A total of 18 poll sites were

open on election day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Each poll site was located at a Creek Indian Community Center. Early voting was made available at select sites Nov. 1-2.

These are the unofficial results from early voting, absentee ballots and the election day itself. They are not official as of yet.

At the time of this publication, only the unofficial results were available. The official results were made available Nov. 10.

Secondhand Smoke Doesn't Stay Next Door

The smoke from one cigarette affects everyone in multiunit housing — especially kids. Exposure to secondhand smoke can lead to health issues, including:

- Asthma attacks & ear infections
- Absences from school & work
- Lung disease & multiple cancers
- Increased risk of addiction as adults

Learn more at

TOBACCO STOPS WITH ME.com



MMIW TRAILER

Continued from Page 3

mechanical services would go a long way in keeping her on the road and spreading awareness of MMIW. In addition to her Gofundme page, she is working on a tiered sponsorship pro-

case it's an Indigenous person. You know, human life. The color red is a powerful color of success or turmoil. In this case, the bloodshed of a missing Indigenous person and its being across her mouth is letting people know that we are not going to be quiet anymore.



Elizabeth Johnson's trailer reads "Invisible No More". Native American women are pictured in their traditional tribal regalia along with a woman with a red palm print across her face. (Courtesy: Elizabeth Johnson)

gram. Sponsors can get social media and reporting shout-outs, logos and branding on Big Bertha and the Girls, and a guest speaking engagement.

Even through the strained financial hardships, Johnson has remained tenacious in her commitment to spreading awareness of MMIW. "The hand itself is a symbol of humanity and in this

We're going to start speaking up, we're going to fight and be heard. Stop killing our women. Men go missing as well. Stop killing our people."

To visit Johnson's gofundme, type in "Ho-Chunk Trucking" on the site.

To learn more about Ho-Chunk Trucking, visit the official Facebook page.

FORMER MCN PROGRAM HEAD WINS ELDER PAGEANT

THE OKEMAH INDIAN COMMUNITY HOSTED AN ELDER PAGEANT AT FALL FESTIVAL



Mary Lee placed first at the Elders Pageant during the Okemah Fall Harvest Festival in Okemah, Okla. (Morgan Taylor/MM)

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Okla. — Displaying wisdom, poise and ageless beauty, a group of women elders left the pageant panel of judges with a hard decision to make at the Okemah Muscogee Nation Indian Community Annual Elders' Pageant on Oct. 13.

The ladies competed against each other in categories like traditional dress, traditional presentation, community/tribal contributions, and impromptu questions.

After some deliberation, the judges gave emcee, former Miss Muscogee Nation Claudia McHenry the official results, naming OMNIC member Mary Lee the contest winner.

According to Lee, she initially wasn't going to enter the pageant until some members of the community encouraged her to do so.

"I finally said, 'okay I'll do it,'" Lee said.

Family and friends believe it

was her motivation to lead programs like the MCN Vocational Rehab and her push for the Reintegration Program that helped her win the 2023 Elder's Pageant title.

Lee honored her friends who came in second place, Jeanie Sands and third place, Susan Dotey.

The Fall Harvest Festival is a

growing event in the community. It is hosted by the OMNIC and involves the City of Okemah and local businesses.

The event kicks off on a Friday evening with the pageant, followed by a Saturday full of events. This includes a parade that Lee and her competitors got to ride in through Okemah's business district.

The parade included the Este Cate Hoktve Suletawv (Mvskoke Women's Honor Guard), who also marched in the Veterans' Day Parade in Tulsa on Nov. 10.

The Hen House partnered with the OMNIC to host vendors from early Saturday morning until the evening.

A car show displayed classic hot rods along the sides of main street. They were judged in contests as well.

Other contests included a fudge contest, barbeque contest, chalk contest, street games, karaoke, and a kid's costume contest.

Kids were able to attend the kid's fest at the center in the afternoon for pumpkin painting, face painting and a photobooth.

A "to go" fall feast concluded the events for the day, per tradition.

For more information, visit the Okemah Muscogee Nation Indian Community Facebook page.

NATIONAL COUNCIL REP. SEEKS POSITION ON NCAI

GOLDEN TO SERVE ON THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



A Business, Finance and Justice Committee meeting was held at the Mound Building on Oct. 28 in Okmulgee, Okla. (MM File)

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held the monthly Business, Finance and Justice Committee session at the Mound Building on Oct. 28.

Passed legislation is subject to Full Council approval during the Regular Session.

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

TR 23-112 Supporting the nomination of Sandra Golden as the Recording Secretary of the

National Congress of American Indians Executive Committee. Representative Mark Randolph sponsored the legislation, which passed 2-0-1.

MCN believes Rep. Golden is qualified to serve on the NCAI Executive Committee.

NCA 23-148 Amending NCA 23-107 (Approving the comprehensive annual budget for fiscal year 2024 and providing for appropriations). Representative Thomasene Yahola-Osborn sponsored the legislation, which passed 3-0-1.

Section Two amended to expend tribal funds from a total of \$451,487,294, to \$451,687,294.

APEKV CEREMONIAL GROUND HELD THEIR HONKV BASH TOURNAMENT

THE HALLOWEEN-THEMED FUNDRAISER INCLUDED CARNIVAL GAMES, A COSTUME CONTEST AND MUSHBALL



Citizens watch and participate in the Halloween costume contest from last year at the Apekv's Ceremonial Ground. (Photo Courtesy: Corey King)

by **SHAYLN PROCTOR**
REPORTER

HENRYETTA, Okla.- Apekv Ceremonial Ground hosted their Honkv Bash Tournament along with other Halloween-themed activities. The event included carnival games, hayrides, costume contests for all ages, and a Mushball tournament. This event was held on Nov. 4, and was open to the public.

Apekv Ceremonial Ground Member Corey King (Mvskoke) has recently taken the role of hosting fundraisers for his ground. These different fundraisers will help with equipment and bills during the off season. They have a small committee that helps with

different ideas to help raise funds.

This specific fundraiser will benefit Apekv elders and children. This will allow them to participate in activities such as the Christmas Light and a trip to Incredible Pizza. According to King, the goal is to keep their community together during this season.

This year's event marked the first time attendees dressed up in Halloween costumes for the Honkv bash tournament. The tournament was open to anyone interested. King mentioned it had no age limit. "There's teams that do get competitive but this game is for anybody's ball game," King said.

Event hosts thought it would be a funny sight to see the players dress up and play mushball, since some of them have participated in softball tournaments in the past. Mushball is different compared to softball because players have to run clockwise around the dia-

mond, instead of counter-clockwise.

"They get confused when they trip or fall. It's just a comical event. We do Halloween and Thanksgiving stuff at the grounds but this year I think we are making it a little bit bigger and we are inviting everybody if they want to attend," King said.

Mushball tournament winners received T-shirts with softball logos. The shirts also had lettering which read "Apekv Honkv Bash" on the front and "Champions" on the back.

The various tournaments were featured throughout the day. Carnival games and hayrides began in the evening. Apekv members helped with event setup and meal preparation.

King enjoys seeing everyone coming together. He also enjoys the support received from citizens and other grounds.

"It's really special because you never know the support you got until you have stuff like this, But they show a lot of support. It's mainly ceremonial grounds helping other ceremonial grounds out just like what we do when we have our Stomp Dances during that season, we go and help them and they go help us," King said.

The event was not only open to other ceremonial ground members, but the public as well. King does ask that anyone who do attend events like these be respectful to ceremonial ground members and the ceremonial ground itself.

MCN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SEEKS FUNDS FOR A NEW PROJECT

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SAP PROJECT ESTIMATED TO COST \$25M



The MCN National Council held a Health, Education and Welfare/Land, Natural Resources and Cultural Preservation committee meeting Oct 24.

by **SHAYLN PROCTOR**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held a Health, Education and Welfare/Land, Natural Resources and Cultural Preservation committee meeting Oct 24.

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

TR 23-110 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Small Ambulatory Program (SAP) grant application for the MCN Department of Health. Representative Anna Marshall sponsored this legislation, which was postponed indefinitely 9-0.

The Nation's Department of Health estimated that \$25 million would be required for the new project. The SAP grant would provide \$3.5 million, MCN would provide \$21.5M for the remaining amount.

For more information visit, www.mcnn.com.



Winners are pictured from a previous tournament at the Apekv Ceremonial Ground. (Photo Courtesy: Corey King)

MCN ONLINE CODE TO BE UPDATED AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL FUNDING FOR POCKET CONSTITUTIONS AND HARDBOUND CODE ADOPTED AT QUARTERLY



The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held a quarterly session in person on Oct 28.

by **MEREDITH JOHNSON**
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION – The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held a regular session in person on Oct 28.

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

TR 23-101 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a legal services contract between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Reintegration Department and Cody Minyard, Attorney at Law, PLLC was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Representative Robert Hufft.

According to the bill, the MCN Reintegration Department has chosen Cody Minyard Attorney at Law, PLLC for the purpose of securing legal services at their office. In order for Minyard to provide these services, the Nation has prepared a contract within their terms.

TR 23-102 a tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a publishing agreement between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and Springer Nature for publication of author's contributions in a collected work provisionally titled "Covid-19 in Indian Country," was adopted with a vote of 9-6. Representatives Joyce Deer, Sandra Golden, Randall Hicks, Charles McHenry, Thomasine Yahola Osborn and Mark Randolph voted no. It was sponsored by Representative Galen Cloud.

As covered previously, this resolution involves the publishing of research conducted by the MCN Cultural Preservation Department. The publishing agreement entails a limited waiver of the MCN's sovereign immunity from suit by Springer Nature Publishing. Springer is an international publishing house based in Switzerland that focuses on research and science.

During discussion, Representative Golden commented that MCN Sovereignty should not be waived, stating, "I feel that if we are going to give them our story then they should be willing to accept our sovereign immunity."

Representative Mark Randolph stated, "If there's nothing in it for the nation, and they want us to... our sovereignty, then I can't support it either."

MCN National Council Attorney Kyle Haskins was asked to comment. He stated, "...there is just no circumstance that I can recommend to the National Council to waive sovereignty. Just don't do that. But what I think you can do in your analysis in deciding if you are going to do that is analyze risk. If we are going to end up in litigation are we willing to go to a different country to either defend litigation? It's a costly process. But as I recall from the original contract we control our content. We can't control whatever content anybody else puts in the book, but as for the chapter that we have, we're in absolute control of what goes in that document. So, that's one thing

to consider. Another thing to consider is if anything goes back to the Nation and I know the historian of the Nation was arguing very strongly and was very passionate about the fact that this was a way of preserving those stories for the future. But for all legal contexts... there is just no circumstance where I can look you all in the eye and tell you that we should waive sovereignty in any agreement but you have to weigh the possibility of litigation and it's very unlikely."

TR 23-103 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a separate memorandum of understanding with nine Oklahoma cities for the maintenance of roadways and associated rights-of-way constructed or improved by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Transportation Program was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Representative Joseph Hicks.

TR 23-104 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a separate memorandum of understanding with six Oklahoma counties for the maintenance of roadways and associated rights-of-way constructed or improved by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Transportation Program was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Rep. McHenry.

TR 23-105 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a separate memorandum of understanding with three Oklahoma schools for the maintenance of parking lots and associated rights-of-way constructed or improved by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Transportation Program was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Cloud.

TR 23-106 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation approving the update of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Long Range Transportation plan with the addition of the routes listed as Attachment "A" - MCN NTTF 2024 was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Rep. McHenry.

TR 23-107 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation supporting the addition of new routes, as identified in Attachment "A" - MCN NTTF 2024, to the Nation's existing National Tribal Transportation Facility Inventory and requesting the Bureau of Indian Affairs add these new routes to the Nation's National Tribal Transportation Facility Inventory was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Joseph Hicks.

TR 23-108 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a legal services contract between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and Kanji & Katzen P.L.L.C. was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Randall Hicks.

TR 23-109 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation

establishing tribal membership in the National Congress of American Indians was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Speaker William Lowe.

TR 23-111 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation approving and authorizing the MNGE Board of Directors to execute the Gaming Industry Tip Compliance Agreement with the Internal Revenue Service was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Randall Hicks.

TR 23-112 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation supporting the nomination of Sandra Golden to serve as the Recording Secretary of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Administrative Board was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Randolph.

NCA 23-116 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds in the amount of \$1,040,000 awarded from the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention, Strengthening Public Health Systems in Indian Country Grant was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Representative Mary Crawford.

NCA 23-117 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of FY 2023 grant funds in the amount of \$946,466. awarded from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime for the benefit of the Family Violence Prevention Program was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Rep Crawford.

NCA 23-118 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds in the amount of \$3,048,161 awarded from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime for the benefit of the Family Violence Prevention Program was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Crawford.

NCA 23-119 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded in the amount of \$3,114,662 from the Administration for Children and Families Office of Family Assistance for the benefit of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Crawford.

NCA 23-120 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded in the amount of \$836,020 from the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Education for the benefit of the Eufaula Dormitory was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Speaker Lowe.

NCA 23-121 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds in the amount of \$400,000 awarded from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the benefit of the Office of Environmental Services was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Cloud.

NCA 23-122 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded in the amount of \$997,662 from the United States Department of the Interior for the benefit of the Office of Environmental Services was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Joseph Hicks.

NCA 23-123 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 38, Chapter 3 entitled "Tribal Driveways Program" was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Cloud.

NCA 23-124 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the Department

of Justice, Office of Justice Programs Support for Adam Walsh Act Implementation Grant Program in the amount of \$372,528 for the benefit of the Lighthouse Police Department was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Randall Hicks.

NCA 23-125 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing a lawsuit to be filed in federal court in the name of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation seeking declaratory and injunctive relief against the City of Tulsa exercising unlawful jurisdiction within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Reservation and appropriating funds for this action in the amount of \$500,000 was adopted with a vote of 14-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Randall Hicks. Representative Osborn did not respond to the vote call.

During discussion, MCN Attorney General Wisner commented that the money would be used to pay and retain Kanji and Katsan to represent the nation in this lawsuit. She also commented that the lawsuit will be filed in federal court against the named individuals in the legislation as a result of the Hooper case involving the city of Tulsa. When asked what the MCN is trying to maintain she stated, "It's what we are trying to enforce...Tulsa continues to ignore the 10th Circuit's order."

NCA 23-126 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of funds in the amount of \$899,537 for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation's Lighthouse Police Department for the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services 2023 Cops Office Tribal Resources Grant Program – equipment and training was adopted with a vote of 14-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Randall Hicks. Rep. Osborn was absent from the vote.

NCA 23-127 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds in the amount of \$2,300 awarded from the Internal Revenue Service for the benefit of the Office of the Secretary of the Nation was adopted with a vote of 14-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Randall Hicks. Rep. Osborn did not respond to the vote call.

NCA 23-128 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds in the amount of \$15,000 awarded from the Internal Revenue Service Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program for the benefit of the Office of the Secretary of the Nation was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Randall Hicks.

NCA 23-129 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation appropriating funds in the amount of \$45,200 to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Office of the Attorney General (AG) to host the Justice on the Reservation Conference event was postponed indefinitely. It was sponsored by Rep. Joseph Hicks.

AG Wisner requested \$45,200 to host the event Feb. 26-27 at the River Spirit Casino and Resort in Tulsa, Okla. The conference would provide training to LHPD officers, investigators, cross-deputized agencies and prosecutors throughout the Mvskoke Reservation on best practices regarding child abuse and sexual assault cases.

Rep. Joseph Hicks made a motion to postpone indefinitely due to a new funding source. During discussion, MCN Secretary of the Nation Zachariah Harjo commented,

"This request is mostly easily fundable through self-governance appropriations. The Nation is in receipt of additional McGirt-related appropriations for this specific purpose of responding to McGirt. Because we received additional appropriations for our justice services, which I believe

wholly encompasses both the AG's offices, the courts, and Lighthouse, we have ample funding as is to be able to cover this type of request. My opinion would be a direct example that we can provide back to the DOJ and officials in Washington that this is the exact type of purpose that we need these funds and utilize them as a response to McGirt and in specificity related to the management of unique cases such as child-related incidents in our criminal justice system. For all those purposes I think the most fit funding source is self-governance and we already have legislative authority to appropriate and expend those funds."

NCA 23-131 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds in the amount of \$1,524,678 awarded from the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families for the benefit of the Center for Victim Services was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Representative Anna Marshall.

NCA 23-132 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation appropriating funds in the amount of \$110,000.00 to the Office of the Attorney General to be used for a comprehensive update to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Code Annotated Print and Electronic Version was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Randolph.

During discussion, AG Wisner commented that the electronic version will be online within six to nine months, 12 months after that, she anticipates the publication of the code. She stated:

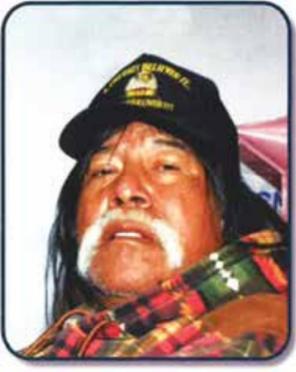
"...it is difficult to read and fully comprehend the Muscogee (Creek) Nation law and codes as they currently exist online on the Supreme Court website. The tribal code has been written, however any amendments or additions to our laws have been added on to each of our tribal titles but not fully integrated into the law as they should be. Not only that they have not fully been updated to reflect what it is, so it's difficult to do any legal research and find out what the current law is... So, our first step will be to integrate the amending additional laws and find out where they go. One of my other processes in this will be to make recommendations for our moving forward on addressing laws in addition to our tribal laws. With each new resolution that becomes law it needs to be determined at that time where it's going to go. We pass laws but we don't say specifically where it needs to go, whether it needs to be traffic code, or the criminal code or any other code and where specifically it needs to go... So, finding an appropriate process to name each of our additional laws as they passed and where they go at the time will alleviate the accumulated mass that we're having to deal with now. Our second step will be data processing... that is going to have to be retyped, a lot of it is. So, all of that will be all of the code, retyped to get it to a readable format to upload to the website. I am looking at places to publish our code in a hard-bound publication. In addition, what this will cover is we will publish pocket sized additions of our Muscogee (Creek) Nation Constitution... The pocket constitutions should be available outside of this building, outside the Chief's office, anywhere our tribal members gather. I want to make our constitution available to them, not everyone has access to the internet. So a pocket-sized copy of our Creek Nation constitution... probably 5 to 10,000 copies so our tribal members will be informed and be ready with our own laws..."

NCA 23-148 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 23-107 (a law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation approving the comprehensive annual budget for fiscal year 2024 and providing for appropriations) was adopted with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Rep Osborn.

To view the full agenda, visit: mncn.com.

OBITUARIES

CARL CLAY WEST SR.



ews; an aunt, Helen Holah... many cousins; mother and father-in-law, Newman and Lydia Taryole; brothers-in-law, Norman (Bungie) Taryole and Newman Taryole, Jr. and sister-in-law, Natalie (Taryole) Hogner and many friends.

Carl was baptized at an early age at Prairie Springs Church and rededicated his life to Pastor Wayne Harjo and Oscar Hicks in September of 2023. Carl went to Mason High School where he met Barbara Taryole. They were married on October 10, 1975 in Okemah, Oklahoma. Through the years, Carl worked in many occupations; he worked construction the most. He worked as a Bingo caller in Bristow and Tulsa. In his earlier years, he played baseball, softball and basketball. He also coached an AAU team. Later, he played Cornhole and enjoyed having tournaments. His favorite teams in football were the OSU Cowboys and the Dallas Cowboys, but he enjoyed watching the Kansas City Chiefs. He loved to go fishing but was unable to in later years. He also kept in contact with his brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews by phone. He also served as Vice-Chairman and Sergeant of Arms for the Okmulgee Indian Community and was Post Commander for the American Legion in Kiefer, Oklahoma.

Funeral services were held Oct. 18 at Buckeye Creek Baptist Church in IXL, Oklahoma. The service was officiated by Pastor Wayne Harjo and Reverend Oscar Hicks. Internment took place at the West-Anderson Cemetary in Okemah, Oklahoma.

Funeral services were in the care of Hutchins-Maples Matherly Funderal Home.

Carl Clay West was born on March 7, 1957 in Tahlequah, Oklahoma to Calvin Coolidge West and Agnes (Fixico) West. He passed away at home in Okmulgee on October 14, 2023 with family surrounding him. He was 66 years of age.

Carl will be reunited with his parents, Calvin and Agnes West; grandparents, George and Bessie (Anderson) West, Sarah Holah and Willie Fixico; son, Carl (C.J.) West Jr.; grand baby West, brother, David West, sisters, Wanda West and Kathleen West; nephew James West; niece, Sarah Beth West; and nephew, Eric Noon.

Those left to cherish memories of Carl (The Duke) West, wife, Barbara of the Okmulgee home; sons, Brandon West of Bristow and Michael West of the Okmulgee home; grandsons, Mason Jai West and Colby Coolidge West of Wagoner, Oklahoma; granddaughter Peyton Elise West of Ada, Oklahoma; brothers Parnell (Sonny) West and Mesulta of Davenport, Oklahoma, George Harvey West and Lucille of Spencer, Oklahoma; sisters, Nancy West Watson of Welty, Oklahoma, Katherine and Janell West of Okemah, Oklahoma; many nieces, neph-

CITIZEN FILES COMPLAINTS AGAINST TULSA SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES COMPLAINTS ALLEGE NONCOMPLIANCE WITH TITLE VI AND JOM

by JERRAD MOORE ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

TVLSE, Oklahoma - Mvskoke citizen Aaron Griffith filed complaints with the Oklahoma State Department of Education, alleging that the Tulsa School of Arts and Sciences (TSAS) is noncompliant with Title I Parents Right to Know disclosure requirements, as well as Title VI and Johnson O'Malley (JOM) parental involvement and tribal consultation requirements.

In late August, Griffith, whose son attends TSAS, attempted to connect with the Parent Teacher Association and the Foundation for Academic Excellence on the school's website. He was only able to find a page with a parent engage-

ment form, a contact email and a link to a document that outlines TSAS parental involvement policy, which makes no mention of JOM programs.

In addition to the OSDE, Griffith emailed his complaints to Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief David Hill, several MCN National Council Representatives and MCN Attorney General Geri Wisner.

Griffith stated he has not been contacted by the OSDE. According to Griffith,

"The statute says the State Department of Education General Counsel has 30 days from the date of the formal complaint being filed to respond. I expect to receive a response sometime within this timeframe. . . I am not an attorney. As a lay person, I believe I have

faithfully followed the process to the best of my understanding and ability. The process seems to have been followed pretty well, as far as I can tell from my limited experience as a novice first-time filer."

Griffith filed his complaints on Sept. 27. As of Oct. 31 he has not received a response from the OSDE.

Griffith has also filed a noncompliance complaint concerning Angela Vivar, a TSAS Governing Board Member. Griffith alleges that her position as Director of Hispanic Ministries at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church violates the prohibitions against sectarian affiliations in the provisions and policies of Tulsa Public Schools and the Oklahoma Charter School Act.

Mvskoke Media has contacted TSAS for comment on the issue, but has not received a response.

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LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE DISTRICT COURT IN AND FOR OKMULGEE COUNTY STATE OF OKLAHOMA. IN THE MARRIAGE OF: PAUL WEST ROBERTS : PETITIONER VS ALLYSON JAYE TWOBEARS : RESPONDENT. DECREE OF DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE. ON THE 2nd day of Oct 2023 the above-entitled cause comes on for an agreed hearing before the undersigned Judge of the District Court.

IN THE DISTRICT COURT IN AND FOR OKMULGEE COUNTY STATE OF OKLAHOMA. PAUL WEST ROBERTS: PETITIONER, VS ALLYSON JAYE TWOBEARS : RESPONDENT. PETITIONER FOR DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE. COMES NOW, the petitioner PAUL WEST ROBERTS and for the cause of action against the Respondent, alleges and states:

VERIFICATION. STATE OF OKLAHOMA COUNTY OF OKMULGEE Paul West Roberts, OF LAWFUL AGE, BEING DULY SWORN UPON OATH, DEPOSES AND STATES; THAT HE THE ABOVE NAMED, AND THAT HE HAS READ THE FORGOING PETITION FOR DIVORCE AND UNDERSTANDS THE SAME, AND THE FACTS SET FORTH ARE TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF HIS INFORMATION AND BELIEF.

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION OKMULGEE DISTRICT. IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION OF: M. D. O., DOB: 11/13/2020. A Minor Child. ALIAS ORDER AND NOTICE OF HEARING APPLICATION FOR ORDER DETERMINING CHILD TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR ADOPTION WITHOUT CONSENT OF NATURAL MOTHER AND UNKNOWN FATHER.

SUPPORT OF AND IN OPPOSITION TO THE GRANTING OF THE APPLICATION AT THE TIME AND PLACE SHOWN ABOVE, WHERE YOU WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PRESENT, HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD AT SAID TIME AND PLACE, AND HAVE THE RIGHT TO OBJECT TO THE APPLICATION FOR ADOPTION WITHOUT CONSENT.

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION OKMULGEE DISTRICT. IN THE MATTER OF: M.M.; DOB: 09/07/2023. Alleged Deprived Child(ren). JUVENILE SUMMONS. THE MUSCOGEE NATION to: UNKNOWN FATHER.

LEGAL NOTICES CONT.

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE
MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION STATE OF OKLAHOMA

DISTRICT COURT
FILED

LORRAINE BROWN,
Petitioner,

AND

JORDON MONDAY,
Respondent.

2023 OCT 19 P 2:48
MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION
CYTHIA FREEMAN
COURT CLERK

CV-2023-160

PUBLICATION NOTICE

THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA,
TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT, JORDAN MONDAY:

You will take notice that you have been sued in the above named court by the above named Petitioner, for Petition to Establish Paternity and that unless you answer the petition filed by this Petitioner in said court on or before the 5 day of Jan, 2023, said petition will be taken as true and judgment granting the Petitioner a decree of paternity with you and for other relief rendered according to the prayer thereof.

WITNESS my hand and the seal of said court this 19 day of October 2023.

Carl P. Funderburk
1503 S. Denver Ave
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74119
Attorney for Petitioner

Court Clerk
by: [Signature] Deputy



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HONKV STORYTELLING EVENTS PROVIDE SPOOKY TALES AND FUN SCARES

THE EUFAULA-CANADIAN TRIBAL TOWN HOSTED THEIR ANNUAL EVENT WHILE THE MCN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT HOSTED THEIR FIRST



Citizens gather around to enjoy their meal before the storytelling event. Eufaula, OK. (Photo Courtesy: Shayln Proctor/MM)

by **SHALYN PROCTOR**
REPORTER

EUFAULA, Okla.- The Eufaula-Canadian Tribal Town hosted their eighth annual An Evening of Storytelling event. These stories involved boarding schools, history, and different honkv creatures. The event was held at Jon Tiger's residence in Eufaula on Oct. 20.

The event's master of ceremonies was Chris Hill, who recently starred in the movie, "Killers of the Flower Moon". He helped Tiger with set up and co-hosting. Each citizen had the opportunity to tell their own personal accounts of witnessing honkvs (spirits) or sharing stories passed down from others.

Tiger has hosted this event every October before Oct 31, since it usually gets colder during the week of Halloween. The event provided s'mores, hotdogs, chips, desserts and drinks.

Children gathered around a fire to roast their s'mores, even adults joined in. Tiger also included a spooky trail and hayrides. One vendor had displays of bigfoot dolls, and paintings.

"It seems to grow larger and larger each year. Because people

are finding out about it, communities like Sapulpa, Wetumka, Holdenville and even the Choctaws from McAlester," Tiger said.

The length of the event varies, sometimes even lasting long hours into the night. The event's length depends on how many stories are told, and how long people mingle with one another afterward.

A Family Tradition

This annual event started when Tiger's late grandfather would gather all of his children and grandchildren to speak about his stories from the past.

Tiger's late brother had the idea to host a storytelling get together at their house because everyone within their family loved hearing them. The family gathering would expand where anyone that was interested in attending was welcome.

The location of this event took place at Tiger's grandfather's allotted land. "It's his land and he would really enjoy people coming out and getting together like this," Tiger said.

"Originally it started out as talking about the supernatural

beings in our area in the Canadian Valley in Eufaula, which we grew up knowing all of those stories and all of those stecates (Natives) along the Canadian Valley. They know and they hear about these things. A lot of them have passed on but we still have a few that can talk about things," Tiger said.

One of the citizens that attended had a great experience at the event. Muscogee (Creek) Nation Facilities Department Supervisor Mike Harjo (Mvskoke) has attended this event for seven years. He has heard many stories over the years, one of many reasons why he keeps coming back.

Harjo has told stories of his own in the past and even spoke about some during the event. He mentioned that he told every story he knew, however listeners would ask him to tell it again. This was due to the fact that audience members enjoyed listening to the stories, for some it was their first time listening to them.

Harjo has been involved with Eufaula-Canadian Tribal Town since he attended the Mvskoke Spelling Bee contest seven years ago. That is when he was introduced to the annual storytelling event.

Growing up Harjo would hear stories when he was child at the ceremonial grounds. "There's a lot of elders that come out here, mostly from Mvskoke tribes and Choctaws, I've seen some Florida Seminoles out here before, some Kiowa and so they get a little bit of different tribes out here but mostly it's Mvskoke Creek," Harjo said.

As a ceremonial ground member, Harjo enjoys seeing the ground come together. According to Harjo, it's events like these that help members remember who they are.

"I think it's good for other ceremonial members to come out here and support them. Because it's just like going to these other grounds, we visit, we go out and support them. Even though Eufaula is dormant, I think it's good that we



A honkv creature displayed at the Eufaula-Canadian story event. (Photo Courtesy: Shayln Proctor/MM)

come out here and still support them as a tribal town ceremonial ground. Because they were once a part of our ceremonial grounds that we have," Harjo said.

Every year Harjo attends he always receives a warm welcome from the community. "It's just good for socializing, joking and laughing around and good scary storytelling," Harjo said.

MCN Language Department "Honkv Onvkuce"

The MCN Language Department hosted their first "Honkv Onvkuce" ghost storytelling event. The outdoor event invited guests to come out with a lawn chair and blanket. A meal was provided for those that attended. This storytelling event took place at the newly-located MCN Historic and Cultural Preservation Department on Nov. 3.

MCN Language Department Project Specialist Jordan Squire (Mvskoke) came up with the idea for a storytelling event. One day while she was browsing the internet Squire found sound effects with little beats for a video. That is when she asked one of the language instructors if it would be a good idea to tell stories with those beats for a social media video.

In the beginning the event was only going to feature eleven instructors telling their own stories, but Squire had a thought of making it bigger. "I thought we could incorporate some of our

language terms with the storytelling event," Squire said.

Squire mentioned these stories did not necessarily have to be about ghosts or spirits, rather any supernatural creature. It was organized as an open mic for anyone wanting to tell their own story.

"I feel like everyone has to have one, like something that scared them at one point," Squire said. "It could be whatever terrified you at one point in your life and feel free to share it, we are excited to hear about people's stories."

A fluent Mvskoke speaker even called the department and said she had photos she wanted to show at the event.

During the storytelling portion, Squire mentioned that participants who told a story were asked if they could be recorded sharing it.

"We just really wanted the audio, not the actual video," Squire said. "We will create little social graphics of telling your story and make little cool videos of it."

At this event the MCN Language Department presented their new website, currently a work in progress. Squire, MCN Language Revitalization Project Manager Eli Rowland and their department's graphic designer created the website together. "It's something we are really proud of, I think one of the most important things is just the fact that we did it and no one could ever take it from the program and from the Nation," Squire said.

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Office of Environmental Services



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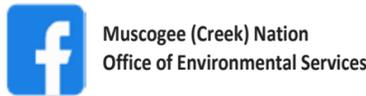
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