CCHS Hosts 2016 Graduation Ceremony

Choctaw Central High School (CCHS) hosted their commencement ceremony for the Class of 2016 on Tuesday, May 17 at the Silver Star Convention Center in Choctaw.

Hundreds were in attendance as 75 seniors received their diplomas as they successfully completed their high school education requirements and embark on a path of collegiate studies, military service or joining the work force.

CCHS Principal Fred Hickmon served as emcee of the ceremony. Seniors Kassie Cox and Samuel Wallace offered the invocation, followed by a special presentation of the Class of 2016 video yearbook.

Remarks were given by Director of Schools David Germany, Tribal Chief Phyliss J. Anderson and Tribal Council Pearl River representative and Education Committee Chair Lola Parkerson.

Top scholars for the Class of 2016 included Valedictorian Nicholas Raymark McMillian (son of Lee and Sunni McMillian of the Pearl River Community) and Salutatorian Emilee Ann Thames (daughter of Anthony and Sharon Thames of the Pearl River Community.)

McMillian, also the recipient of the STAR Student award, will be attending Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Hickmon presented the graduating class as CCHS sees GRADUATION, pg. 6

Offering remarks to the graduates included, from left, Director of Schools David Germany, Tribal Chief Phyliss J. Anderson and Tribal Council Pearl River representative and Education Committee Chair Lola Parkerson.

LEFT, Pictured (top) is 2016 CCHS Valedictorian Nicholas McMillian & (bottom) Salutatorian Emilee Thames. RIGHT, Members of the CCHS Class of 2016 toss their caps in the air.

USET Opening Fire Ceremony

Poarch Band of Creek Indians Tribal Council Chairwoman Stephanie Bryan, left, looks over the opening ceremony fire as Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians representative Rae Nell Vaughn mixes ashes & coals from the last USET meeting in Choctaw. Vaughn, Chief of Staff for MBCI Chief Phyliss J. Anderson, passed the USET fire to the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

In October, at the USET 2015 Annual Meeting held at Choctaw, Miss., the fire was passed from the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation. Over 300 Tribal Nations were at Poarch Band of Creek Indians near Amore, Ala., for the 2016 USET Semi-Annual Meeting May 16-18.
Halito!

As I write this letter, we have reached the end of another school year and the beginning of summer. I know our children are excited to have a break and gear up to play stickball and enjoy a number of activities such as State Games of Mississippi and the Choctaw Indian Fair.

As Choctaws, we have a unique story to share of our heritage, traditions and identity. Whether it’s through our traditional Choctaw social dancing, food, artistry or recreation, it is our unique life-ways that are on display and celebrated during this time of year. Many of our artisans are beading, basket weaving and stitching now in preparation for fair. Our stickball teams and dance groups are practicing and the fair committee planning is well underway. It’s going to be a great summer!

WORLD SERIES STICKBALL BRACKET DAY

On June 6th, the Choctaw Indian Fair Stickball Committee hosted Bracket Day at the Amphitheater to select teams and place in the stickball schedule. This is done by random drawing in front of a public audience to ensure fairness in the tournament.

The event was overseen by Stickball Commissioner Thomas Ben and assisted by the 2015-2016 Choctaw Indian Princess Emily LeAnn Shoemake.

This year we have 32 teams playing in the World Series Stickball (WSS) Tournament. WSS officially kicks off on July 5th with the adult league games – Men’s 35 & Over at 7 PM, Men’s at 8 PM, and Women’s at 9 PM.

You can view the 2016 WSS brackets and schedule of play on www.choctawindianfair.com or on the Choctaw Indian Fair social media sites: Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

STANDING PINE SPECIAL ELECTION

A special election was held in the Standing Pine Community on June 7th, to fill the seat of the late Councilman Harrison Ben.

Election results from the community are posted below in this edition of Choctaw Community News.

I congratulate newly elected Councilman Richard Sockey and I look forward to working with him on continued progress for our Tribe.

******OFFICIAL ELECTION RESULTS******

Standing Pine Community

Tribal Council Special Election

June 7, 2016

509 REGISTERED VOTERS

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I congratulate newly elected Councilman Richard Sockey and I look forward to working with him on continued progress for our Tribe.

******continued next page******
NEW BUSES FOR CHOCTAW TRIBAL SCHOOLS

On Monday, May 23, 2016, I was so proud to hand over the keys to ten brand-new full-sized school buses to Benson Lewis, Director of Transportation for Choctaw Tribal Schools. In addition, ten smaller buses are set to arrive in the next few months.

These new buses will greatly expand the Choctaw Tribal Schools’ fleet. The cost for the buses totals $1.5 million. We used available Tribal revenues in the purchase of these buses.

My administration is dedicated to building the resources for our Tribal school system and investing in our children.

STOCKING OF COMMUNITY PONDS

Just in time for the long Memorial Day weekend, we were happy to work with MBCI Wildlife and Fisheries personnel in the stocking of five community ponds: Bogue Chitto, Conehatta, Pearl River, Standing Pine and Tucker. The ponds are brimming with bass, bream and an addition of 300 pounds of catfish.

I know many families went out to enjoy the ponds and I enjoyed seeing your pictures on Facebook. It brings great pleasure to know our tribal members are getting out with their kids to enjoy our community ponds and spend quality time together. Those are memories in the making to cherish for a lifetime. Small things matter most!

MBCI WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

We have so many hard-working and capable staff members throughout our tribal government programs. I want to highlight the capable and dedicated staff of the MBCI Wildlife and Fisheries program under the direction of Mitzi Reed.

In addition to caring for our ponds, piers and habitats, they host numerous educational events and activities for our youth such as the annual Wildlife Jamboree and Choctaw Challenge at Lake Pushmataha and most recently a boat-safety class at the Lake. Many thanks to MBCI Wildlife and Fisheries for a great job!

MEMORIAL DAY

We recently celebrated Memorial Day, and I hope everyone enjoyed the long holiday weekend with their families and loved ones. But I also hope everyone took some special time to remember the reason we observe Memorial Day and that is to honor and pay tribute to the many brave men and women who have fought and paid the ultimate sacrifice with their lives for our freedoms.

It is really quite sobering to realize the true cost of liberty when you consider the number of lives lost in American Wars. In total more than 1.1 million soldiers have lost their lives and in the current war on terrorism there have been 6,852 casualties.

Let’s always remember our soldiers and their families in our thoughts and prayers and thank members of our military for the service they provide to us.

MBCI SUPPLEMENTAL INSURANCE BENEFITS

After a review of our existing supplemental insurance benefits, I am pleased we have been able to provide improved product offerings for tribal and resort employees.

Over the last few weeks a team of enrollers have been on the reservation to meet with each employee to discuss the new options and to sign them up if they so choose.

The new products being offered are: Accident Expense Insurance, Accident Indemnity Insurance, Cancer Insurance, Critical Illness Insurance, Short-term Disability, Term Life Insurance, Whole Life Insurance, and Hospital Indemnity Insurance.

I encourage all tribal and resort employees to take time to discuss and learn about the new options that are available.

CLOSING

In closing I want to express my gratitude to everyone who volunteered and came out to our Choctaw Community Field Days. It took a few months to visit all of the communities but it was a great time of gathering and I hope you received all the information and updates we provided in our brochure and presentation.

Our Tribe is headed in the right direction because of the hard work, dedication and support of our tribal members and employees. Yakoki!

Many Blessings,

Phyliss J. Anderson
Tribal Chief

LEFT. Eighth grade students from Red Water Elementary School invited Chief Anderson to their school as they surprised her with a plaque congratulating her on her recent appointment by Pres. Obama to the National Advisory Council on Indian Education.

On Wednesday, May 11, Tribal Chief Phyliss J. Anderson hosted a Breakfast of Champions with the CCHS Unified Basketball Team at the Bistro at Golden Moon Hotel & Casino in Choctaw. The team captured gold medals in the 5-on-5 basketball tournament as they represented Region 18 in the 2016 Spring State Games for Special Olympics Mississippi on Saturday, April 2. The games were held at the Mississippi Basketball and Athletics Center in Jackson as Choctaw Central Middle School and High School students participated in individual basketball skills, 3-on-3 traditional team and 5-on-5 unified competitions. Team members included Dorian Ben, Keyshana Beamon, Danta Cotton, Marina Davis, Darrel Mingo, Terrance Thomas, Gunnar Tubby, Allen Sockey, Nick Williams, Keyshawn Willis, Kaitlyn Wilson, & Trevor York. Serving as coach was Amanda Reed. Case Manager Gloria Echols was instrumental in connecting with Mississippi Special Olympics to ensure the project occurred at Choctaw Central.

The Tribe commemorated Memorial Day with a wreath laying ceremony at the Choctaw Veterans Memorial in Choctaw on Friday, May 27. Members of the Choctaw Veterans Color Guard, MBCI Chief of Staff Rae Nell Vaughn, Choctaw Indian Princess Emily Shoemake, and Choctaw Veterans Affairs Director Samantha Wilson observed a moment of silence after they placed the ceremonial wreath at the base of the memorial.

Ponds in the communities of Bogue Chitto, Conehatta, Pearl River, Standing Pine, and Tucker were recently stocked with bass, bream, and 300 lbs. of catfish.
The following ordinances and resolutions were submitted to the Choctaw Tribal Council for consideration. Listed below is a brief summary and action taken. Individuals wishing to request a resolution and/or its attachment must have a DOCUMENT REQUEST FORM completed and submitted to the Policy and Legislative Office. For more information, call 601-650-7486.

REGULAR CALL COUNCIL MEETING APRIL 12, 2016

Resolution CHO 16-030, approving the Execution, Delivery and Performance of the Term Sheet, Engagement Agreement, Fee Letter, with Trustmark National Bank, as Administrative Agent of a Proposed Replacement Facility, the Term Sheet, Engagement and Performance of approve the Execution, Directive Office. For more informed to the Policy and Legislation must have its attachment must have

Resolution CHO 16-031, approving Matthew Tyler of Yale University to Conduct Linguistic Research on the Choctaw Language by Conducting and Recording Interviews with MBCI Tribal Members, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-032, approving Dr. Shrinidhi Am-binakudige to Conduct a Study on Rivercane Ecosystem and Basketry on the Choctaw Indian Reservation, was ADOPTED ED 11 Yes; 3 No (T. Chickaway, H. Nickey, B. Steve); 1 Abstain (R. Henry); 1 Absent (K. Edwards).

Resolution CHO 16-033, amending the Criminal Code of the Choctaw Tribal Code to Correct an Error on Omission in Section 3-3-21, was AD- OPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry). Resolution CHO 16-034, amending Title XX of the Choctaw Tribal Code, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-035, amending the Criminal Code of the Choctaw Tribal Code to Amend or Add Certain Provi-sions, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-036, approving a Memorandum of Understanding Between the MBCI and the United States Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Mississippi, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-037, approving Amendments to Title XV of the Tribal Code and Enactment of Related Ordinances, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-038, authorizing a Distribution of Tribal Funds, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-039(B), Authorization of Pearl River Unit #47 Timber Sale, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-040(B), approving the Timber Use Policy Statement for Cutting and Removal of Forest Products from Lands of the MBCI, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-041(B), approving Land Lease of ½ acre to Toniayi Lay, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

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Resort Announces Promotions

Pearl River Resort announced the recent promotions of Tribal members Cheryl Steve as Executive Director of Information Technology (IT) and Rahka Brescia as Director of Operations Compliance.

Steve, who has been with the Resort for 20 years, most recently served as Director of IT Project Management. During her tenure, she has also held several managerial and technical positions within the IT department. She began her gaming career as a computer operator.

In her new role of Executive Director of Information Technology, Steve will be responsible for overseeing day-to-day IT operations which include the overall planning, organizing, and execution of all IT functions.

Most recently, Brescia served as Guest Services Manager. As Director of Operations Compliance, she will be responsible for monitoring the Resort’s reporting compliance with federal and tribal laws, codes, ordinances, regulations, rules and policy.

Brescia will work with each department to build and maintain a sustainable compliance structure for Pearl River Resort. Congratulations Cheryl and Rahka!

CCHS Seniors Receive Honors At Banquet

Choctaw Central High School hosted their Senior Awards Banquet on March 31 at the Golden Moon VIP Room in Choctaw.

The Class of 2016, along with parents, guests and school personnel, enjoyed an evening as they were honored for their scholastic achievement for the 2015-2016 school year.

East Central Community College (ECCC) representative Michael Alexander was in attendance to announce ECCC scholarship recipients.

Recipients of the Academic Achievement Scholarship included Kyree Alex-Ben, Skyler Bell, Forrest Billy, Kassie Cox, Hallie Denson, Nicholas Joe, Tiara Joe, Montel Jordan, Cecilia Ketcher, Tanesha Lewis, Garyton Lilly, Autumn McMillan, Andreae Morales, Coby Tubby, Hananiah Tubby, & Briana Wesley.

Academic Achievement Scholarship recipients included Kyree Alex-Ben, Skyler Bell, Forrest Billy, Kassie Cox, Hallie Denson, Nicholas Joe, Tiara Joe, Montel Jordan, Cecilia Ketcher, Tanesha Lewis, Garyton Lilly, Autumn McMillan, Andreae Morales, Coby Tubby, Hananiah Tubby, & Briana Wesley.

.............continued next page
Resolution CHO 16-042, authorizing the Sale or Disposal of Damaged Rental Program Mobile Homes, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (J. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-043, authorizing Grant Rights-of-Way for Jim Road (BIA Route No.2211) and Hospital Circle (BIA Route No.2226) in Pearl River Community, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (J. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-044, apply for and Receive a Subgrant from the Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana, Inc., for Workforce Innovation, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (J. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-045, approving a Memorandum of Agreement between the State of Mississippi, Department of Human Services and the MBCI, Division of Education, Department of Workforce Development, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (J. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-046, approving the 2016-2017 School Calendar, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-047, authorizing the MBCI Department of Schools to Request a Grant from the Association of American Indian Physicians, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-048, authorizing the MBCI Department of Schools to participate in a Research Study of the Farm-to-School Program to be conducted by Research & Evaluation Solutions, Inc., was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-049, authorizing the MBCI, Choctaw Department of Schools to Apply for the Administration for Native Americans Grant for Language Preservation and Maintenance, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-050, authorizing the MBCI Office of Public Health, Choctaw Health Center, to Apply for a Two Year Staff Resource Opportunity from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-051, approving a Pharmacy Education Affiliation Agreement between the University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy and the MBCI, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-052(B), approving Increase in Blood Degree for Previously Enrolled Tribal Members, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-053(B), approving a Blood Decrease for Previously Enrolled Tribal Member, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-054(B), approving Tribal Enrollments, was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-055(B), approving Publication Request by Abigail Farmer of Jackson State University on “Choctaw Tribal School Instructional Aides’ Perceptions of Preparedness for Implementing Choctaw Language Materials in Elementary Classrooms,” was ADOPTED 15 Yes; 0 No; 1 Abstain (R. Henry).

Resolution CHO 16-056, approving Amendments to the Administrative Personnel Policy & Procedures, was ADOPTED 9 Yes (R. Anderson, R. Bell, C. Ben, K. Edwards, W. McMillan, L. Parkerson, J. Wesley, S. Willis, & D. Wilson); 7 No (T. Chickaway, R. Henry, R. Isaac, S. Johnson, D. McClelland, H. Nickey, & B. Steve); & 0 Abstain (R. Henry).


ACT Scholarship recipients included Dylan Alex, Peyton Bell, Julian Billy, Jasmine Hickman, Breanna Isaac, Billy Johnson, Jr., Lattoriah Johnson, Harvey McMillan, Jr., Laraya McMillan, Dustin Mingo, Katie Mingo, Taysiaun Mingo, Coby Smith, and Emilee Thames.

ACT Scholarship recipients included Dylan Alex, Peyton Bell, Julian Billy, Jasmine Hickman, Breanna Isaac, Billy Johnson, Jr., Lattoriah Johnson, Harvey McMillan, Jr., Laraya McMillan, Dustin Mingo, Katie Mingo, Taysiaun Mingo, Coby Smith, and Emilee Thames.

Students Place at Region V Fair

The 2016 Region V Lower Science and Engineering Fair for grades K-5 was held at Mississippi State University in Starkville on April 7. The following students from the Choctaw Tribal Schools placed at the event.

Kindergarten
Ashton Stephens, 1st; Zachary Polk, 2nd; & Bryceton McMillan, 3rd.

First Grade
Biochemistry - Jacoby Willis, 2nd.

Chemistry - Nakota Willis, 3rd.

Earth, Space, and Environmental Sciences - Shastyn Lewis, 3rd; Tali King, 5th.

Zoology - Nuseka Dixon, 3rd.

Second Grade
Biochemistry - Aston Eades, 4th.

Botany - Carlisle Phillips, 4th.

Earth, Space, & Environmental Sciences - Ferris Tubby, 3rd; Jennalee McMillan, 5th.

Engineering, Computers, & Math - Makailah Moore, 1st; Nolynn Bell, 3rd; & Ansley Wallace, 4th.

Physics - Kodi Thomas, 4th.

Third Grade
Chemistry - Brylee Willis, 2nd.

Earth, Space, & Environmental Sciences - Nathanael Nickey, 6th.

Engineering, Computers, & Math - Callie Amos, 1st.

Medicine & Health - Almera Charlie, 6th.

Zoology - Kaegan Henry, 5th.

CLASS II
Fourth Grade
Biochemistry - Zavian Tubby, 5th.

Botany - Kailyn Steve, 4th.

Physics - Natusya Willis, 5th.

Fifth Grade
Medicine & Health - Lexie Love, 5th.

Physics - Tyra Billy, 4th.

Economics - Harvey McMillan.
Chemistry - Kassie Cox.
Physics - Cecilia Ketcher.

Forensics - Nicholas McMillan.
Algebra II - Kassie Cox.
Trigonometry - Coby Smith.

Advanced Algebra - Tiara Joe.

----------see SENIORS, pg. 6

CCHS Class of 2016 Top Ten were Peyton Bell, Kassie Cox, Hallie Denson, Tiara Joe, Cecilia Ketcher, Autumn McMillan, Harvey McMillan, Nicholas McMillan, Emilee Thames, & Robert York, Jr.
PreCalculus - Peyton Bell. 
Calculus - Emilee Thames. 
English IV - Adonis Willis. 
AP Literature & Composition - Nicholas McMillian.

Nicholas McMillian was named Valedictorian and Emilee Thames was named Salutatorian. McMillian was also named the 2016 Mississippi Economic Council STAR Student. Jamie Franklin was named STAR Teacher for the second consecutive year in a row.

The Class of 2016 Top Ten included Peyton Bell, Kassie Cox, Hallie Denson, Tiara Joe, Cecilia Ketcher, Autumn McMillan, Harvey McMillan, Nicholas McMillian, Emilee Thames, & Robert York, Jr.

On Saturday, April 30, twenty-three Choctaw Central High School students and one teacher recorded their narrative writing for Rural Voices Radio (RVR) for Mississippi’s Public Broadcasting (MPB). Writing for radio and recording a piece of writing is a unique opportunity for our students’ voices to be heard.

Choctaw Central students have been reading for RVR since 2008. CCHS teachers have made it their goal to encourage students to write in all subject areas. These writings chosen for RVR not only came from English classrooms, but from math, history, Choctaw culture, and science classes. Teachers, as well as students, are involved in writing. Those who recorded included coach Daniel Thomas, Jayna Ben, Lauren Ben, Jerrard Bollin, Teegan Clemmons, Hallie Denson, Jasmine Hickman, Pegan Jackson, Asa Jimmie, Matrikus Jimmie, Maleighia Joe, Eason John, Cecilia Ketcher, Autumn McMillan, Nicholas McMillian, Betty Mingo, Jayasri Mitch, Angelia Morales, Dylan Nicole, Hope Pesata, La Chrisha Williams, Mr-Lyn Jones

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**Parents Visit TES Science Class**

We had a special assignment for students at Tucker Elementary School for extra credit work. Their assignment was to find information pertaining to their favorite aspect of science and present what they learned to the class.

Students Spencer & Maggie Thompson decided to bring a pet to class, their three-year old guinea pig named Benjamin.

Parents Johnathan & LaRosa Thompson brought Benjamin to school so Spencer and Maggie can tell their classmates about Benjamin’s life expectancy, habitat, and nutrition.

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**Autism Walk Held At CCHS**

In observance of April as National Autism Month, the Choctaw Tribal Schools hosted an Autism Celebration Walk on April 22 at the Choctaw Central High School track in Choctaw. Autism is a complex mental condition and developmental disability, characterized by difficulties in the way a person communicates and interacts with other people. Autism can be present from birth or form during early childhood (typically within the first three years). Autism is a lifelong developmental disability with no single known cause. Pictured above are the walk participants.

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**GRADUATION continued from page one**

Students Record for Rural Voices Radio

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Students/teachers who had their writings chosen for RVR but will record at a later date include Sarah Allen, Peyton Bell, Terrell Bell, Tyler Bell, Frances Bigby, Forrest Billy, Isaiah Billy, Jacob Billy, Carlos Boler, Dana Briscoe, Beverly Combs, Keyana Denson, Jaylen Dixon, Madison Dixon, Sri Grant, Ricky Graves, Breanna Isaac, Lindy Jim, Summer John, Jennifer Jones, Renee Jones, Raina King, Cade Lilly, Ray Mathis, Cynthia McLeod, Harvey McMillan, Katarina McMillan, Tammy Morgan, Quentin Nanaeto, Neshoba Reed, Richard Rivers, Crystal Roach, Emily Shoemake, Emilee Thames, Linda Tingle, Gabriel Tubby, Kendall Vaughn, Tysus Whitecrow, and Aurelia Wilcher.

Since July 2003, MPB has aired pieces from the Mississippi Writing/Thinking Institute's Rural Voices Radio series. Students across the state can be heard on eight MPB stations each weekday at 3:28 p.m. Stations include Meridian 88.1, Oxford 90.3, Boonville 89.5, Mississippi State 89.9, Greenwood 90.0, Jackson 91.3, Bude 88.9, & Biloxi 90.3. To hear past shows, visit the RVR archives at www.mwti.msstate.edu/radio.

Members Meet Tribal Athletes

Members of the Boys & Girls Club Pearl River Teen Center attended collegiate games participated by Tribal members. TOP: Members attended the April 24 Ole Miss Rebels-Arkansas Razorbacks softball game in Oxford as freshman shortstop Hailey Lunderman (Mississippi Choctaw/Lakota) took the field for the Rebels.

BELOW: Freshman pitcher Brandon Kennedy (Mississippi Choctaw) talked to club members after his baseball game on April 25. Kennedy plays for the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Bulldogs in Perkinston. Teen Center members greatly appreciated Lunderman & Kennedy for meeting them after their games as they offered words of encouragement. We wish them best of luck in their collegiate careers.

CFS Observes Child Abuse Awareness Month

Children and Family Service (CFS) hosted several events during the month of April in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month.

CFS kicked off the month with a planting of a pin wheel garden at CFS office grounds on April 6. We were pleased to have several Head Start children assist us. We thank Division of Early Childhood Education Director Tina Routh and other staff members for making this day a memorable one.

We thank Department of Human Services Region IV North Director Iris Joiner who attended the event and spoke about the collaboration between the state of Mississippi and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

CFS also thanks Dan Isaac and the Southern Pine Drummers as they are always willing to perform at any CFS event.

Several CFS staff members attended a walk in the Bogue Homa community on April 20.

A poster contest was held as Seyonea Thomas was named the winner. CFS staff members traveled to the area Tribal schools and spoke to students about child abuse prevention and awareness.

The final event for the month was a child abuse awareness fun run, Color Me Blue, on April 30 at Lake Pushmataha in Choctaw.

A poster contest was held as Seyonea Thomas was named the winner. CFS staff members traveled to the area Tribal schools and spoke to students about child abuse prevention and awareness.

The final event for the month was a child abuse awareness fun run, Color Me Blue, on April 30 at Lake Pushmataha in Choctaw.

CFS would like to thank all the children who participated in the poster contest, which run in conjunction with area schools. In our eyes, you are all winners.

In Category K-2nd Grade - Jacoby Willis, first grader at Tucker Elementary School, placed first; Mahayla Tubby, second grader at Pearl River Elementary School, placed second.

In Category 3rd-5th Grade - Jeri-
2016 Spring Festivals

Spring Festivals are major community events as much work & effort is directed toward acquiring traditional Choctaw garments & accessories for young Choctaw boys & girls. It is believed that over 95 percent of students participating in Spring Festivals wear traditional Choctaw apparel.

The earliest Spring Festival memories go back to 1960 on the campus of Choctaw Central where all students in grades K-12 participated & danced by grades. At that time it was estimated that five percent of festival participants wore traditional Choctaw apparel.

During these Spring Festivals, it was customary for the final dance to feature tribal elders exclusively. Following their dance, a traditional feast was served.

Prior to 1968, all Choctaw schools gathered & celebrated a May Day Program at Choctaw Central on the football field. The girls wore black skirts & white blouses & the boys wore black pants & white shirts. Patriotic songs & dances were performed, followed by a picnic held under the pine trees.

In 1970, with a goal of increasing student participation & attendance by community residents, a decision was made for each community school to host their own Spring Festival.

This year’s Spring Festivals were held at Tucker Elementary School on March 17, Bogue Chitto Elementary School on March 18, Standing Pine Elementary School on April 1, Red Water Elementary School on April 8, Conehatta Elementary School on April 15, & Pearl River Elementary School on April 29.
April was observed as Sexual Assault Awareness Month as the Choctaw SANE-SART Program, in collaboration with the Choctaw Public Safety Program, hosted the Masala Chi 1 Hilha/Dance to Healing Pow Wow on Saturday, April 23 at the Pearl River Recreational Field.

The pow wow, held in support of victims of sexual assault, brought people together to start the healing process through music and dancing, which is known to have calming and soothing effects on people.

There was a very good turnout for the pow wow as organizers said it was a wonderful sight to see the children getting involved and dancing.

The sponsors thank all attendees, vendors, drummers, dancers, chanters, and cooks for making the event possible.

They also thank Kathleen Ferris of Family Violence and Victim’s Services, Juannina Mingo of Nittak Himmona Domestic Violence Shelter, Kelby Anderson of the Choctaw Public Safety Program, Evaline Davis, James Johnson and Leland Lewis for sharing their thoughts and knowledge of sexual assault with those in attendance.

Posters Winners

K-2nd Grade - (left) Jacoby Willis, TES, 1st place; (right) Mahayla Tubby, PRES, 2nd place.

3rd-5th Grade - (left) Jeriah Jimmie, Hayden Wofford, Alex Espinosa, & Patsden Williams, Boys & Girls Club, 1st place; (right) Kodin Mingo, CES, 2nd place.

6th-8th Grade - (left) Martina Willis, CCMS, 1st place; (right) Cody Roach, CCMS, 2nd place.

9th-12th Grade - (left) Treyton Ben, CCHS, 1st place; (right) Keyshawn Nickey, CCHS, 2nd place.
Dance to Healing Event
Held in Choctaw

On Saturday, April 23, the Family Violence and Victim’s Services (FVVS) participated in the Dance to Healing powwow hosted by the Choctaw SANE-SART Program, in collaboration with the Choctaw Public Safety Program.

At the conclusion of the event, FVVS staff members led a Take Back the Night walk in an effort to end all forms of sexual, relationship and domestic violence. We, as a community, need to focus on the victim and show them support. Be aware of ways your biases about sexual assault and victims may affect your ability to support and assist the victim. If you cannot be objective, refer the person to programmers that can offer services as they help the victim from being re-victimized.

We need to start holding the perpetrators accountable for their actions. We may feel that we don’t want to ruin their lives by having them convicted, but they have forever altered the lives of victims they have assaulted. As long as we continue to overlook what they are doing, they will continue to victimize others.

The Department of Family and Community Services has services to provide support for victims of sexual assault. For more information, contact the Family Violence and Victim’s Services Program (601-650-1774), Choctaw Children’s Advocacy Program (601-663-7790) or the Choctaw SANE-SART Program (601-663-7796).

FAQ's ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT

CAN I GET HELP AT FVVS?

FVVS works with men and women who are 18 and over. The Choctaw Children’s Advocacy Center (CCAC) helps victims who are 17 and under. We can help you if you are a victim or survivor of rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse or domestic violence or if someone in your family is a victim or survivor. Services at FVVS are free. We believe that money and insurance should never prevent people from getting the help they need.

IF I GO TO FVVS, WILL THEY TELL ANYONE?

Services at FVVS are confidential. That means that we cannot tell anyone anything without your written consent. Your privacy and comfort are very important to us. It is important to understand that there are exceptions to confidentiality. We are required to follow the Mandated Reporting laws, which require us to report any suspected cases of child abuse, neglect, and we are also required to report to law enforcement if you tell us you plan to hurt yourself or anyone else.

I WAS RAPED, BUT I DON’T WANT TO TALK TO THE POLICE. DO I HAVE TO REPORT IT?

It is completely up to you whether or not to report a rape or sexual assault. If you want the person who attacked you to go to jail, then you have to report the crime to the police - the sooner the better. You do not have to report to the police in order to get services through FVVS.

I HAVE HEARD THE MEDICAL EXAM IS SCARY. DO I HAVE TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL?

It is extremely important for you to get medical attention as soon as possible. You may have injuries that are not apparent. The doctor or nurse can give you emergency contraception to prevent pregnancy and medications to prevent HIV and AIDS. The hospital will call the police only if you want them to. You will also be offered an advocate from the FVVS office to be with you during the exam to answer any questions.

IF I DON’T REPORT THE ASSAULT, CAN I CHANGE MY MIND AND REPORT IT LATER?

You can always file a report with the police, but it is best to...
Tribal members participated in the round comb decorating class in Standing Pine.

Denson Attends CANAR Conference

Theron Denson, Work Adjustment Skills Trainer with the Choctaw Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program, attended the CANAR (Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation) mid-year training conference.

He represented the program by walking in the grand entry of programs and carrying the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians flag. He was recognized with a certificate of appreciation for his volunteerism at the conference in facilitating breakout sessions. He also submitted artwork that was included in the conference agenda booklet.

By attending training conferences, program staff are able to learn new techniques and best practices to bring back to their day-to-day work with Tribal members who have physical or mental conditions that impact their employment.

Program staff members strive to provide the highest quality services as possible. Continued training helps the staff understand Federal funding agency rules and expectations regarding service provisions and to learn from others striving to provide high quality services in their communities.

If you are a Tribal member who has a physical or mental condition and that condition is significantly impacting your employment, you may be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services. For more information, contact Billy Smith at 601-650-7343.
From left, participants Carolyn Willis, Pandora Sockey & Patricia Willis at the beading session in Standing Pine.

Larin Thomas, left, is heavily concentrating on his bead pattern.

Israel Willis (right) pounds corn in a mortar (kiti) using a pestle (tachi ishit litóli or boli) to loosen hulls from the kernels.

the workshop.

Sherrill Nickey, of the Chahta Immi Cultural Center, brought round combs for sale from the Choctaw Museum. Instructors for the sessions included McGeisey, Shayna McMillan, Trudy Jimmie, and Casey Bigpond.

“Living History”

“Living History,” an event hosted by the Madison County Canton Historical Society - Canton Redevelopment Authority, took place at the Madison County Historic Jail in Canton on Friday, April 15.

Several Tribal members were in attendance as they made cultural presentations to third to fifth grade students on the history and cultural aspect of the area they reside in.

Rosie Joe demonstrated her methods of basket weaving and Casey Bigpond gave an overview on Choctaw blow guns and darts.

Trudy Jimmie and May McGeisey gave a brief summary on preparing hominy the Choctaw way and how to cook it. Preparing hominy does not involve a whole lot, but they emphasized long hours and tiresome labor required to prepare the hominy.

The Mississippi Agricultural Museum also participated, making the event even more educational and interesting.

Collar Necklace Workshop

A collar necklace workshop, coordinated by Trudy Jimmie of CAP, was held in the Standing Pine Facility Building on Tuesday, April 19. Larry Thomas and Larin Thomas, Industrial Trainers from Vocational Rehabilitation, were also in attendance.

For beading workshops, CAP usually provides start-up supplies as the staff teaches participants the basic steps for beginners. In order to complete a collar necklace, a significant amount of beads and long hours are required.

Anita Winstead, of Fashions & Fabrics in Philadelphia, travels to the workshops for participants to purchase needed supplies. Winstead has a great deal of knowledge about the Choctaw culture and knows exactly what to bring. The staff and participants are very thankful and appreciative for her service in providing availability of items needed for the workshops.

VRS Training

Casey Bigpond, Trudy Jimmie and May McGeisey conducted a “How to Bead on a Loom” workshop for staff members of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) on Wednesday, April 27 at the Industrial Training Component.

The concept of the training was for the VRS staff to redirect their learning experiences to the trainees in hopes that they will be taught protocols to market the products to the general public and generate funds back into the program.

The CAP staff were excited and elated because the cultural education VRS received from their training will hopefully empower the trainees on their Choctaw culture and boost their income.

Preparing Hominy

DCI-CAP Cultural Researcher May McGeisey and DCI Special Project/Media Coordinator Eddie Johnson, in cooperation with the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, attended a very special cultural training activity at the Industrial Component site at the Choctaw Manpower Building on Thursday, April 20, as they recorded and photographed the process of preparing hominy by the training program volunteers.

The activity focused on documenting, promoting Choctaw ways and encouraging knowledge sharing utilizing traditional based methods to make hominy for future references, presentations and archival purposes.

Volunteers were under the coordination of VRS Industrial Trainer Larry Thomas.

Trainees who shared their information included Israel Willis, Gerald Denson, Carolyn Gibson, and Curtis Willis.

Cultural Workshops

The CAP will not offer cultural classes after the round comb workshop in the Pearl River community on Monday, June 6 due to upcoming preparations for the 67th Annual Choctaw Indian Fair on July 13-16.

Classes will resume on Monday, Aug. 1 in the Bogue Homa community for the round comb workshop. The remaining classes are listed below:

- Tuesday, Aug. 9 - Blow guns & dart making in Tucker;
- Friday, Aug. 12 - Medallion beading in Standing Pine;
- Tuesday, Aug. 16 - Headband making in Bogue Homa;
- Friday, Sept. 2 - Choctaw dress making in Conehatta;
- Monday, Sept. 5 - Round comb making in Conehatta;
- Tuesday, Sept. 13 - Pottery firing part 2 in Pearl River;
- Tuesday, Sept. 20 - Stickball apron making in Red Water.

Please make plans to attend!
IN MEMORIAM

RONIE MAE TUBBY

Funeral service for Ronie Mae Tubby, 61, was held on Sunday, May 1, 2016, from the Pearl River Community Center. Deacon Kendall Wallace & Rev. Doby Henry officiated. Burial was in the Isaac Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Tubby passed away on April 27 at Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian. She was a kitchen worker at the Pearl River Resort. She enjoyed spending time with her family, watching TV cooking shows & attending ball games. She was a fan of Warriors & attending ball games. She was preceded in death by her parents, John & Nellie Tubby. She was a kitchen worker at the Pearl River Resort. She was a fan of Warriors & attending ball games. She was preceded in death by her mother, Victoria Jeffers. She was a fan of Warriors & attending ball games.

Survivors include her father, Hubert Shoemake; daughters, Shelley Tubby, Lois Tubby & Makila Tubby; sons, William Scott Tubby, Sr. & Brandon Keith Tubby; brothers, Hubert Shoemake, Gerald Shoemake; 26 grandchildren; 7 great-grandchildren; & numerous nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

WILTON FARMER

Funeral service for Wilton Farmer, 82, was held on Wednesday, May 4, 2016, from the Bogue Homa Community Gymnasium. Father Mike Thornton officiated.

Burial was in the Bogue Homa Community Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Farmer passed away on April 1 at Baptist Medical Center in Jackson.

He enjoyed reading, playing & watching baseball, & being around family & friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, Howard & Rowie Farmer; wife, Edith Ray Farmer; a sister, Martha Jim; daughters, Mary Upshaw & Vena Solomon; & three grandchildren.

Survivors include his sisters, Lula Lewis & Louise Wallace; a daughter, Rose Marie Farmer; a son, Lee Farmer; 14 grandchildren; & a host of great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

PRCDC Thanks Supporters

The Pearl River Community Development Club officers (Austin Tubby, president; Michael Lozares, vice-president & Miranda Farve, secretary/treasurer) thank all who participated in club meetings and to the volunteers who helped during community events and tournaments.

The club also recognizes Pearl River Tribal Council representatives Stella Willis, Lola Parkerson & Cheriena Ben for their contributions.

The club hosted a dinner and bingo on American Indian Day and, more recently, two successful fundraiser volleyball tournaments. All proceeds went to the Pearl River community princess contestant and for additional upcoming community events.

The club appreciates all teams who participated in our tournaments.

Teams placing first in the March 19 tournament in Tuckerman included: (womens) Breena Chickaway’s team; (co-ed) Elter Wilson’s team.

Teams placing first in the April 16 tournament in Pearl River included: (womens) Priscilla Williams’ team; (co-ed) Elter Wilson’s team.

All Pearl River community residents are invited to regular meetings held on the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Justice Complex community meeting room.

LORIANNA LYNELL SHOEMAKE

Funeral service for Lorianna Lynell Shoemake, 31, was held on Wednesday, May 18, 2016, from the Bogue Homa Baptist Church. Bro. Lee Farmer & Rev. Leonard Ben officiated.

Burial was in the Bogue Homa Community Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Shoemake passed away on May 14 at Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian. She was employed as a greeter at the Silver Star Hotel & Casino. She enjoyed spending time with her family, fishing, texting, & dancing. She was a fan of Conehatta Stickball.

She is preceded in death by her parents, John & Nelda Shoemake; grandparents, & siblings.

.........continued next page
Newt & Leona Jefferson, Edmond & Berdie Shoemake; a sister, Evelyn Shoemake; a niece & an uncle.

Survivors include sisters, Barbarella Johnson, Christopher Flores & Lachristiana Shoemake; brothers, Gerald Isom, Sr., Jamion Shoemake, Manuel Shoemake, & Demanuel Shoemake; a special person, Davin Solomon; three aunts; three uncles; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**JIMMY LELAND MORRIS**

Funeral service for Jimmy Leland Morris, 64, was held on Thursday, May 19, 2016, from the Bogue Chitto Facility Building. Deacon Kendall Wallace & Rev. Doby Henry officiated.

Burial was in the Bogue Chitto Community Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Morris passed away on May 13 at his residence.

He was a Baptist by faith & a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps. He enjoyed watching TV game shows, doing crossword puzzles & watching his grandchildren play sports.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Joe & Winnie Morris; a daughter, Jamie Morris; brothers, RB Morris, Olen Morris, Marvin Morris, & Leo Morris; half-brothers, George Hickman, Snoop Hickman, Felix Hickman, Sam Hickman, & Willis Hickman, Sr.; half-sisters, Eula Thompson, Frances Aguilar, Onie Smith, Margie Charlie, & Martha Bell; two aunts & an uncle.

Survivors include his wife, Betty Morris; two daughters, Brenda Frazier & Brenda Ray; five grandchildren; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**PATSY SAM BUFFINGTON**

Funeral service for Patsy Sam Buffington, 73, was held on Monday, May 23, 2016, from the Holy Rosary Catholic Church. Father Bob Goodyear, S.T., officiated.

Burial was in the church cemetery. McClain-Hays Funeral Service was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Buffington passed away on May 18 at the University Medical Center in Jackson.

In 1955, she was crowned the first Choctaw Indian Princess at the Green Corn Festival at the age of 13. At Haskell Indian School in Lawrence, Kan., she was the homecoming queen & homecoming junior queen.

She owned the Village Co-op in Pearl River & also worked at Choctaw Housing Authority, Harold’s Short Stop & Pearl River Resort. She enjoyed spending time with her family.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Tom & Nellie Sam; a sister, Carol Henry; a granddaughter, & a nephew.

Survivors include her daughter, Christina Buffington; sons, Kevin Butler, Ken Butler, Karl Butler, & Kenny Johnson; 22 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; a niece, nephew & a host of relatives & friends.

**ADELAIDE HICKMAN JOHNSON**

Funeral service for Adelaide Hickman Johnson, 66, was held on Thursday, May 26, 2016, from the Memorial Park Funeral Home in Memphis, Tenn. Rev. Doby Henry officiated.

Burial was in the Memorial Park Cemetery. Memorial Park Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Johnson passed away on May 20 in Memphis.

She was employed at various printing companies, American Greetings, The Commercial Appeal, & Fed-Ex. She loved fishing, doing beadwork, sewing, playing softball, & playing pool.

She was preceded in death by two sons, Donald Hickman & Christopher Johnson; parents, Homer Sam Hickman & Nola Thompson Hickman; brothers, Robert Hickman & Dewayne Hickman; & a sister, Clara Hickman.

Survivors include two daughters, Brenda Frazier & Audrey Hickman; sisters, Reba Lewis & Vivian Ben; a brother, Cary Hickman; 12 grandchildren; & a host of relatives & friends.

**JIMMY JOE FRAZIER**

Funeral service for Jimmy Joe Frazier, 71, was held on Thursday, May 26, 2016, from the Bogue Chitto Baptist Church. Rev. Robert Paul Tubby, Sr., officiated.

Burial was in the Bogue Chitto Community Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Frazier passed away on May 22 at Circle of Life Hospice in Bentonville, Ark.

He enjoyed gospel singing, reading his Bible, praying, fishing, playing baseball, tossing horse shoes, bead work, & being at family gatherings.

He was preceded in death by his parents, John Joe & Bessie Frazier Morris; wife, Bettie L. Frazier; a son, Henry L. Frazier; sisters, Pauline Williams & Carolyn Nickey; & brothers, Quincy Morris, Randall Morris, Sr., & Burnice Morris.

Survivors include daughters, Phyllis Boldra & Claudine Riffle; sisters, Arlene Morris, Melba Cline & Mary Lou Morris; two brothers, Harris Morris & Larry Morris; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; an aunt, uncle & a host of relatives & friends.

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**IN MEMORY OF MARY LENE (BELL) SIMMONS**

Sunrise: June 21, 1941
Sunset: March 24, 2016

Mary went to be with the Lord on March 24, 2016. She passed away at the Oklahoma University Medical Center in Oklahoma City. A wake was held on March 28 at the First Baptist Indian Church in Shawnee.

Funeral service was held on Tuesday, March 29, with interment at Resthaven Memorial Park.

Mary was born on June 21, 1941, in Philadelphia, Miss., to Frank Keen Bell, Sr. & Ivenia Lewis Bell. She attended Pearl River Indian School in Philadelphia & graduated from Chilocco Indian School in 1960. She worked as a dental assistant with the Indian Health Services (IHS) in Tahlihna, Okla., & later became an IHS clinic supervisor in Ada, Okla. She retired after 36 years of service. In her spare time, she was a Mary Kay consultant.

Mary served as treasurer at First Baptist Indian Church & was in charge of the nursery & mission groups. Her mission work took her, her husband (Turner) & other church members to different churches. While visiting Mississippi in July 2015, Mary joined the Native Praise Group. The group, consisting of various tribal members singing each other’s songs in their native language, travel across the U.S. & other countries.

On July 18, they performed at a Native American mission work training at Macedonia Baptist Church in Petal, Miss. On July 19, they sang at the First Baptist Church in Philadelphia as Mary was thrilled to sing in her hometown. Prior to this visit, she sang with the group at Pearl River Baptist Church.

When Mary & her husband were not involved in church work, they enjoyed camping near the Tushkahoma festival site every September or watching their grandchildren play ball.

Mary is preceded in death by her parents, Frank Keen Bell, Sr. & Ivenia Bell; sisters, Judie Rae Bell-Billie & Ennie Ryan Bell-Billy; & grandparents, Thompson & Ellen Isaac Bell.

Mary was survived by her husband of 52 years, Turner Silmon, Jr.; a daughter, Lahoma Gayle Silmon-Roberts (Donyell); a son, Mark Allen Silmon; grandchildren, Danielle, Christine & Misty McGirt, Dakota & Zachary Silmon; great-grandchildren, Aurelius, Iunicius, Kenacius, Leonidas, Tiana, & Briseis McGirt; siblings, Frank Bell, Jr., Harlon Dwight Bell, Melba Smith (Roger), & Rose Cutler (Terry); & a host of nieces & nephews.
Happy Birthday to our amazing 2 year-old monster, Alice Roxanne Ferris! You have been this amazing blessing we have always hoped & prayed for. You make each day better than the last & keep us on our toes! We love you so much & pray for nothing but good things for you baby girl. Love Mama, Not the Mama, Alisha, & Grandma :)

Happy Birthday to our amazing 2 year-old monster, Alice Roxanne Ferris! You have been this amazing blessing we have always hoped & prayed for. You make each day better than the last & keep us on our toes! We love you so much & pray for nothing but good things for you baby girl. Love Mama, Not the Mama, Alisha, & Grandma :)

Happy Birthday to the “Greatest Mother & Grandmother” in the world, Mrs. Linda Carey! Love from Gene, T-Bear, Jr., McKiah, Eutan, Brandon, James, Tracy, Brett, Emily, Kaitie, Yo-Yo, Doreen, Chayton, Tehya, Callou, Mikey, Robin, & Bradon.

Happy Birthday to my brother, Antonial Thomas, Sr., on May 1. With love from your brothers Bridgeo Sr. & Marco Sr., your sister Chantele, kids, Mom, Dad, & the rest of the family.

Happy Birthday to our dad, Kenneth Phillips, on May 2. With love from your sons, baby girl & the grandkids. “Love you old man!”

Happy Birthday to my son, Bridgeo Jr., on May 8. With love from Daddy, Cy, Noah, Kyden, Isley, Cera, Grandma, Grandpa, & the rest of the family.

Happy Birthday & Mother’s Day to our mom, Sarah Willis, on May 30. With love from your sons, baby girl, grandkids, dad, & the rest of the family.

Happy Birthday to my brother, Antonial Thomas, Sr., on May 1. With love from your brothers Bridgeo Sr. & Marco Sr., your sister Chantele, kids, Mom, Dad, & the rest of the family.

Happy Birthday to our amazing 2 year-old monster, Alice Roxanne Ferris! You have been this amazing blessing we have always hoped & prayed for. You make each day better than the last & keep us on our toes! We love you so much & pray for nothing but good things for you baby girl. Love Mama, Not the Mama, Alisha, & Grandma :)

We congratulate Ms. Ashley Billie on her accomplishments at JSU. Although you ran into roadblocks, you stayed on the straight & narrow, didn’t give up & overcome obstacles with the Lord’s help thru prayers & determination. Not only did you receive your B.S. degree, you also excelled in Home Economics & received Cum Laude honors & we’re extremely proud of you. You’ve accomplished all you could for yourself & your babies, Connor & Nakota. They are very proud of you. In spirit, your grandma & grandpa (the late Raymond & Judie Billie) watched as you crossed the stage to receive your diploma. Know that they are so proud of you. Next stop, Masters! Love ya lots from Connor, Nakota, Mom & Ricky, Auntie Trish, Sonny, Cookie & baby Carly.

Team Wins Tourney

Congratulations to Team Choctaw for going undefeated & placing first in the 16th Annual WNSL March Madness basketball tournament in West Nashville, Tenn., on March 3-6. Team members include, pictured from left, Jayce Sam, Aven Joe, Colen Dixon, Peyton Mingo, Tra Isaac, Tyrece Mingo, Abram Isaac, & Alex Thompson. Not pictured are coaches Dwight Isaac, Maleah Isaac & Brant Isaac. BIG thanks to family & friends who came out & supported the team.

CONGRATULATIONS!
There is a new chapter with a new page in our lives; a new beginning with a new member to welcome & who will make our lives awesome. Ms. Carly Brooke Baker was born to Sonny Baker & Cookie Jim on March 18, 2016. She weighed 7 lbs., 7ozs & 21” long. Grandparents are Patricia Billie, Lenora Thomas & Vandel Jim. We all love you Ms. Carly Brooke!