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# NUMU TEKWAPUHA NOMNEEKATU NEWSLETTER

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May 2001

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The Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee

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*Editor: Barbara Goodin*

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## “From The President”

Ura, Fred and Kay Campbell. Your generosity and hospitality is so overwhelmingly unbelievable! With each visit to your place I feel so blessed by the experience and so thankful that our paths have crossed.

Ken and I are having a difficult time trying to separate the rock into equal parts. We get a lot of advice from the women but none of it has been successful. Oh, well, there is always the sledge hammer -- and the heck with equality!

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Soobesü nü paa narumuku numunaakatü. Ukitsi se nü Tu Sookwe?ka numunaakatü. Süsü?ana se nü okü Sookahni ku kahni mia?eyü, tuanoo paraibo tekwanü mia?eyü. Ukütsa huutu pütü taa mia?ena sumu sü utu Tusoho?okwe tu mia?ena. Nuse sihka sumu utu mia uku pia huunu tsa pasaru?a puni, piaraa hasu wumhinatü müa katii ma umaku. Ise pu?e utu Apa?tsi tu nümü petsu?etü tsaatü pu?e süsü?ana se nü suku Apa?tsi wunu?etü huba tumuru tuanoo nü haitsinü uku numunaakatü mai kahni mia?etü. Apa?tsi?a yu?anekwü se Cache creek?a posaaku se huunu osu tüpekaiyu?etü. Nuse wihnu sutu yuane petu sutu pohitu mia, wihnu okü Porter Hill ka pitü?etü. Uku nü pitü?ku se nü naroihumiaru wihnu tuasu huba tumuru?etü. Süsü?ana se nü Richard Spur ka wunaru ?etü. Süsumu nü namumunüi suku numunaakatüi puni?tui. Süsü?ana se nü ke u wunaru okü taa Comanche Complex ka wunu?etü uku paraibo tekwa?rui tuanoo okü naba kahniku wunüetü tuasu huba tumu?rui tuasu uku tsa naroi?tui. Süsü?ana se nü okü Sookahniku pitü?etü, suku tuasu huba tumuru?etü tuasu naroi?etü. Sookahni pitü?etü se nü tsihusua?etü piaraa haya tokwetü tabeni ma naha humiakü usü okü taa nümu tsuku kahniku mia?etü. Uruu ma tuku suku nü haitsinü isü

tuasu nanumunü mai na naramui suni se nü usu Sookahni mia?etü. Subetu.

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## OREGON TRIBAL ELDERS MAY BE TEACHERS

by Jessica Bujol  
from *The Associated Press*  
(March 2001)

Salem, Ore. — Tribal elders decked in traditional beaded clothing applauded Monday as the Oregon Senate unanimously approved a bill that would allow them to teach their native languages in schools using a special American Indian language teaching license.

The license wouldn't require years of training or a college degree like other teaching licenses. It would simply allow tribal elders to pass on the ancient languages of their people by teaching in public schools with the same rights as other teachers.

“It's opening doors for me. I can be free in the public schools to teach my language without someone looking over my shoulder to make sure I'm doing it right,” said Arlita Suppah, a member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

Suppah teaches one of three Warm Springs languages, Ichishkiin, to the tribe's children in public schools.

“They're learning fast,” she said.

The tribes are also working on creating an alphabet to transcribe their oral languages into written form before the languages die out with aging tribal elders, who are often the only ones capable of passing down the language.

Recognizing the value and wisdom of older American Indians will have a positive impact on the children they teach, said Myra Shawaway, director of the Warm Springs Culture and Heritage Department.

“This will tell them that the teachers of our language are just as important as regular teachers,” Shawaway said.

American Indian languages must be passed on if the tribes’ culture is to survive because the history of a tribe is often contained in its language, handed down through generations, Shawaway said.

Through the years, as tribes have adapted to American culture, they have lost their language and much of their culture. Shawaway said she hopes this measure will reverse that decline.

“The self-identity issue is one we’ve always struggled with because it was taken away,” she said. “Now we can go back to who we are.”

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## UNIVERSITY AND INDIAN TRIBE JOIN IN LANGUAGE PROJECT

*The Lawton Constitution*  
(April 26, 2001)

Oxford, Ohio — Miami University and the American Indian tribe for which the university is named are cooperating in a project to preserve and teach the tribal language.

Daryl Baldwin, a member of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, is to be on the southwest Ohio campus July 1 to begin the project, university spokeswoman Claire Wagner said Wednesday.

The government forced the Miami Indians to leave their Ohio home and march west in the 1800s. The tribe eventually wound up in Oklahoma.

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## NATIVE YOUTH LANGUAGE FAIR SEES 13 TRIBES REPRESENTED

by Richard Benke  
from *The Associated Press*

Santa Fe, NM — One tribe is left with only a dozen elders who speak their endangered language, and other American Indian nations are worried their children will forget — or never learn — their native tongues.

But American Indians celebrated a renewal of native language this week-end at Santa Fe Indian School, where 185 students, ranging up into adulthood, made presentations in 13 languages,

from Cherokee and Comanche to Oneida, Navajo, Apache, Keres and Tiwa.

Actor Wes Studi, a Cherokee who portrayed Apache rebel Geronimo on film, served as host of the Native Youth Language Fair for the third year.

“I think it’s important,” Studi, of Santa Fe, said during breaks between introducing young Indians. “I like doing it because it encourages youngsters to get involved with their languages.”

He said the fair, sponsored by the Santa Fe-based Indigenous Language Institute, is a “harvest time, where the participants get to show what they have learned and to celebrate.”

Tribe after tribe has seen native languages vanish, said Inee Yang Slaughter, who heads the 9-year-old Indigenous Language Institute. Of 300 or more indigenous languages, only 175 still exist, Slaughter said.

Of those 175, she said, only 20 are considered Class A, meaning they are spoken by all ages; 30 are Class B, spoken only by adults; 70 are Class C, spoken only by grandparents; and 55 are Class D, spoken only by those over age 70.

“We’re talking about the bulk being endangered,” she said.

Much blame goes to assimilation efforts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Indian children were taken from homes and thrust into boarding schools.

“They were forced to shed all identity as an Indian person,” Slaughter said. Indian children sometimes were beaten for speaking their native language.

Yet some survive. Studi grew up in the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma, originally speaking only Cherokee and learning English as a second language. At the festival, Studi conversed in Cherokee with a mother and daughter from the Eastern Band of Cherokees, in North Carolina. Eastern and Western Cherokees were separated in 1828 during the Trail of Tears, when Cherokees were rounded up and herded West like cattle.

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## COMANCHE LANGUAGE CD-ROM PRESENTATION MADE

Karen Buller, from the National Indian Telecommunications Institute (N.I.T.I.) in Santa Fe, gave an impressive presentation of the

Comanche Language CD-ROM on April 19<sup>th</sup> at the Tribal Complex conference room. We have all been anxious, as many of you are, to preview this groundbreaking event for native languages.

Karen and her staff are to be commended for the many hours they have spent working on this project. There have been numerous delays and glitches to be worked out — some things none of us could have foreseen — but with the determination we all have, we should have a completed project before Christmas this year. What a wonderful Christmas present that will be for all of us!

We began this project about a year ago, not knowing that Oklahoma wind, air conditioning, shyness, everyday city noises, and thieves would play such an important role in the development of the CD. Without going into the details, we've realized there is no quiet place in which one can video tape someone without outside noises interfering. What can I say? The older we get the more we learn.

Please stay tuned to this newsletter and our web site for the announcement of the availability of the CD-ROM.

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### **NEW COMANCHE DICTIONARY**

Work on the new Comanche Dictionary is progressing, but we are looking at a publication date of late summer or early fall.

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### **LESSON PLANS NEARING COMPLETION**

Our new and improved Lesson Plans will soon be ready for distribution. President Ron Red Elk is spearheading the project, with much help from our elder speakers. The Lesson Plans will feature a set of four lessons accompanied by cassette tapes. The lessons will start with greetings and leave-takings and proceed into Comanche stories with word lists. We feel it will give serious language students who live outside our immediate area a definite boost in their language learning. Those of us who live in Comanche country have the advantage of being around our elders who speak fluently. Those outside this area will soon

have a written example plus an audio tape of a speaker saying the words for them.

Again, we ask that you check our web site for the availability of this new language learning tool. **PLEASE DON'T E-MAIL US AND ASK US TO NOTIFY YOU** when a particular item will be available — we receive far too many e-mails to respond to individual requests such as this. That's why we ask you to check our web site from time to time.

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### **COMANCHE HYMN BOOK**

A few years ago we contacted Mrs. Elliot Canonge (now Frew) concerning the hymnal compiled by the late Elliot Canonge during his stay among the Comanches in the 1960s. She was pleased to hear from us and agreed to sell the last 125 copies of the hymnal that she possessed. In the interim we have sold all of them except for the last 5 copies or so.

We all realized the need to translate the hymns into our official spelling system, and through the ensuing years we have proceeded to do so. We now have all the hymns written in Comanche, and are proceeding to translate them both word for word and with a literal translation.

During the project we have also added more hymns, many of them from later years. Unfortunately, we have come to realize that some of the hymns in the original Conange booklet are no longer sung — because no one can recall how the song goes. How sad!

This is a perfect example of how our language can be lost, and one of the ways is in our songs. Not only Christian songs, but other traditional songs. We hear all the time how some songs can't be sung because no one knows them any more.

This makes our efforts even more urgent. We have already lost some of our traditions and culture, how much do we need to lose before each one of us realizes how important it is to preserve what we have left? As our president, Ron Red Elk, says, "Time is not on our side." Let's all hope we have the time to document our beautiful Comanche language through audio cassettes, video tapes, CDs, and the written word before it is too late.

## THERE ARE THREE KINDS OF PEOPLE

Those that make things happen.

Those that watch things happen.

Those that wonder what happened.

What kind are you?

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## COMANCHES JOURNEY TO SANTA ANNA

by Billie Kreger

On a cool and cloudy morning a group from the Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee met at the Museum of the Great Plains to depart for a trip to Santa Anna, TX.

We arrived at noon and went to the hotel/motel to check in, which was an old Texas Ranger Station that had been turned into the office space for the hotel, aptly called the Texas Ranger Hotel. The office had a lot of antiques and the building was made out of large stones. Maybe the stones were from the Santa Anna Peak?

We were told to meet our host, Montie Guthrie, at noon at Kitty's Restaurant downtown. After lunch we set out on our first adventure, to a site with a medicine wheel on it. Then we saw holes in rocks that had been made by the ancient ones. Perhaps they ground roots for food, who knows for sure? Upon looking around, Ken Goodin found some rocks that looked a little odd and he said he would like to pick a few of these. So we picked some, too, and showed them to Montie. He rubbed them together and put a large red mark on his face and said to see what color it was. Well, to my amazement, it was ekwipusah! We picked a few for the ladies to take home. I was pleased with that.

Next stop was a little further down the road, past a few cattle guards and a long, bumpy, rocky road. We stopped near a drop-off. I wondered what we were going to see. Then everyone got off and started disappearing into a large rock. At first I was hesitant about going down in that rock, but then I thought if I don't do this, I will miss out on what was down there.

So down I went, coming out on the side of another rock, walking a little bit through tall grass and back up underneath an overhang with a

clearing underneath. And on the wall was a picture of a man. It wasn't real clear. It had black soot on the top of it, an indication that this had once been inhabited at one time, perhaps by our relatives. Then we were on our way back to the hotel to rest up and get ready for supper.

We met again for supper at the Presbyterian Church where Montie attends. He was our host and guide, along with Linda Pelon, who has been with us before on our haunts into the Texas area. We've come to admire her for her interest in our culture and history.

We dined on barbecue brisket, cole slaw, potato salad, red beans and peach cobbler. Can it get any better?

I think we were all ready for a nice warm shower and some sleep. I was so exhausted, yet I was excited about the next day.

Ken Goodin woke everyone by 7:00 a.m., and we arrived at Kitty's for breakfast at 8:00 a.m. It was delicious. On the menu they had the history of Santa Anna, but I didn't get one. *Taruuka* -- that would have been one way to get the history!

We set out again to a place called Pecan Bayou, where the Penatuka once thrived in this place with large pecan trees around, and a large creek nearby. This would have been an ideal place to camp.

The ranchers were there to meet us and show us around. They were very hospitable — they built a fire for everyone to sit around and it was very cozy. They had a swing there that Penny couldn't keep off of!

They fed us lunch around the fire and we shared a few stories for them. Then we took a hike to look for more holes by the side of the river. We said our goodbyes and thanked them for showing us around an area that was once our home. Back again to the hotel to rest up for supper.

It was exciting and I hope we will be able to see more significant sites in the future.

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## THE REST OF THE STORY

by Kenneth Goodin

On that second evening our supper was at a banquet given by the Santa Anna Chamber of

Commerce. The meal was delicious and we were recognized by the community leaders. Later we returned to the hotel and discovered Penny wasn't with us (we were in three separate vehicles, and each thought she was with the others). A frantic Billie returned to the banquet site and discovered Penny helping clear away tables! Linda Pelon had offered to take Penny to the hotel, and Penny was upset Billie had come to get her. After we all knew Penny was back with our group, we retired for the night, looking forward to the next and final day of our trip.

I got everybody up again at 7 a.m. and we met at Kitty's for breakfast. We next traveled to Paint Rock, where we were welcomed at the Ranch of Kay and Fred Campbell. This is about the third time we've visited them, and they are always gracious hosts and make us feel right at home. After a short visit to catch up since our last visit, we sat down to a lunch fit for kings — or maybe in this case, fit for Chiefs.

Afterwards we made our usual trek to the riverbed, where the pictographs are located. Kay and Fred shared new information they've learned about the rocks, and we ended with a Comanche song.

After a brief visit at the ranch house, we were all reluctant to say good bye to our good friends, but we had a long drive ahead of us and many good memories to talk about on the way. Our trip passed quickly due to the fellowship and Comanche songs that were sung along the way. When we arrived back in Lawton it was late and our families were waiting to greet us. We were all tired so we didn't spend a lot of time, but gathered our belongings and headed towards our homes.

Ron and Frances didn't arrive at their home for two more days — but that's another story and you'll have to ask him about that one!

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## **2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL SHOSHONE NATIONS REUNION**

The dates for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Shoshone Nations Reunion is fast approaching, June 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.

Those from our group who have committed to go are getting anxious for the festivities. With a

smaller number going than last year (a total of 70 was present at the first reunion), plans have been made to fly to Salt Lake City, then rent vehicles to proceed on to Fort Hall, Idaho. Each person is responsible for purchasing their own airline ticket, and fund raisers are ongoing to provide funds for lodging and meals for the group once in Idaho. At present 14 people have confirmed they are going to Fort Hall, with one more seat still available.

The group will leave Thursday, June 14<sup>th</sup> out of Will Rogers International Airport in Oklahoma City, and return on Sunday, June 17<sup>th</sup>. The two hour plus flight will be straight-through from OKC to Salt Lake City.

Ron Red Elk recently attended a planning session for the reunion in Albuquerque NM on our behalf.

After the first reunion in 2000, plans were made to hold the third reunion here in Comanche country. We are all looking forward to that event.

Anyone wishing to help our elders with the trip to Fort Hall, can make donations specifically for that purpose and mail them to the address at the top of this newsletter. Ura.

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## **VISITORS FROM COALGATE**

In April, at one of our Dictionary Development meetings, we had the pleasure of having students from the gifted and talented class from Coalgate Schools (in eastern Oklahoma) perform a short play for us. They were from the eighth through twelfth grades and had written a play they were entering in state competition. The play centered around Cynthia Ann Parker, the white captive girl who became the mother of Comanche Chief Quannah Parker.

A student representative had contacted us to critique their play, and we were happy to do so. The students, along with two advisors, were anxious to learn all they could from our group, and spent about an hour visiting with everyone after their performance.

We hope they let us know how they did in the competition. Good luck to them all!

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## DOLLS, DOLLS, EVERYWHERE!

We received an order recently for Comanche dolls — 16 in all! Eight boys and eight girls. They will become part of the Lawton Public Schools Indian Education program, along with dictionaries, flash cards and other learning/teaching products they ordered.

As the dolls are made up individually when they are ordered, we began the process of putting together that many dolls all at once. We began by assembling a crew who volunteered to help with the doll project — most of whom are part of the group going to Fort Hall. After discussion, we decided this would be a good way to work and put the funds towards the trip next month.

We started an assembly line, with some working on stuffing and putting the body parts together until we had 16 complete dolls, naked and bald headed, no less! Next we began the process of dressing them, which was a lot of fun. The ladies enjoyed picking out fabrics and matching them up with ribbons, aprons, etc. By the end of the second day all dolls were fully dressed. As the week-end was upon us, we took a break and came back together on Monday. Over the week-end however, I painted the faces on the dolls, which made each one take on a different personality.

Monday we tackled the job of getting hair on all the dolls. Two of the ladies had worked diligently to get each skein of yarn ready to place on the heads, which was then sewn in place. All the boy's hair was braided with a scalp lock, and the girl's hair was both braided and unbraided. A fluffy white feather adorned the hair of each girl, and some were given tiny Comanche dolls to hold in their arms. Belts, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, scarves and conchos finished off the dolls and made each one unique.

It was an experience we will all remember, both working on such an important project and seeing it start from a scrap of material to a beautiful finished product, to the warm fellowship we shared each day. When some of the ladies began talking of naming the dolls, I knew they had grown attached to the "little ones" we had worked with. There was talk of getting together again and putting more dolls together — just in

case we got another big order! Personally, I think some of the ladies might be thinking of adoption!

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## Taa Nami

by Juanita Pahdopony

*A Comanche child who may have been interred as early as 1867 before being collected by a Benedictine Monk and later "housed" in a university collection in Shawnee, Oklahoma; the whereabouts of the entire body and cradleboard carrier, originally in the collection, are unknown. The translation of "taa nami" is Comanche for "our little sister." Although Taa Nami is soon-to-be repatriated for reburial in Comanche country, through the protection of the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act legislation, grave robbing and looting continues today.*

My heart cradles the  
image of a child's head  
...“discovered in 1933  
near Fort Sill, Oklahoma..80% intact.”...  
For 68 years the separated little head  
lay in an archival specimen collection  
in a faraway museum  
to be researched, dissected, tested, probed...

My heart prepares a sacred place for *taa nami*  
because my eyes can look  
but not see the  
exhibit  
described as  
...“specimen, collection, set...”

My heart sick with grief and despair...  
The sacred and the profane  
I turn away, unable to see the  
exhibit display  
in an archival specimen collection  
in a faraway museum...

Our hearts carry this precious burden  
silently because our mouths do not  
“speak of the dead”  
because *taa nami*  
can come home to the people waiting...  
Repatriated and returned to Comanche country

where she belongs.

©2001.pahdopony/Juanita Pahdopony-Mithlo  
(www.wordcraftcircle.org)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### May 2001

- 8<sup>th</sup> - Tuesday: Comanche Language Committee monthly business meeting (postponed from May 3<sup>rd</sup>), 6:30 p.m., 511 Monroe, Lawton.
- 12<sup>th</sup> - Saturday: Fund Raiser for Fort Hall Trip. Breakfast, Lunch and Rummage Sale, 7:00 a.m. to ?, Cahoma Building, Cache.
- 19<sup>th</sup> - Saturday: Graduation Pow-Wow for Megan Oberly, Walters Community Center. Gourd dance at 2 p.m., supper served at 5 p.m. by the Walters School's Native American Club, and War Dancing at 7 p.m. Megan invites everyone to come out and dance with her.
- 26<sup>th</sup> - Saturday: Dictionary Development Meeting, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Museum of the Great Plains. Covered dish meal at noon.

### June 2001

- 7<sup>th</sup> - Thursday: Comanche Language Committee monthly business meeting, 6:30 p.m., 511 Monroe, Lawton.
- 9<sup>th</sup> - Saturday: Dictionary Development Meeting, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Museum of the Great Plains. Covered dish meal at noon.
- 14<sup>th</sup> - Thursday: Group departs OKC International Airport at 8:55 a.m. for Shoshone Reunion in Fort Hall Idaho.
- 17<sup>th</sup> - Sunday: Group departs Salt Lake City, Utah, for return trip to OKC, arriving at 12:40 p.m.
- 23<sup>rd</sup> - Saturday: Dictionary Development Meeting, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Museum of the Great Plains. Covered dish meal at noon.

### July 2001

- 20<sup>th</sup>- 22<sup>nd</sup> - Friday through Sunday: Comanche Home-coming, Sultan Park, Walters.

### September 2001

- 28<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> - Comanche Nation Fair, Camp Eagle north of Cache.

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## TRADITIONS

“No eagle feathers are left in the coffin when a

Comanche is buried, although they may be placed in the coffin up until that time.”

Rosalie Attocknie

“New mothers are treated very good after the birth of a child, especially if the child is a boy.”

Billie Kreger

## PRODUCTS FOR SALE

**Item #1. Solid Royal Blue or Solid Red Tee-Shirts.** Language logo in full color on left chest. Numu Tekwapu in white on left sleeve. Children's sizes small through large, \$10 plus \$3.50 s&h; Adult sizes small through XL \$12 plus \$3.50 s&h; sizes 2X and 3X \$15 plus \$3.50 s&h.

**Item #2. Comanche Dictionary.** A 133 page soft bound dictionary prepared by Dr. Alice Anderton (1993) with Comanche speakers Lucille McClung and Albert Nahquaddy. \$22 plus \$3.50 s&h.

**Item #3. Bumper Stickers.** NUMU TEKWAPU in large letters, with Comanche Language Preservation on the second line. \$2 each includes s&h.

**Item #4. Authentic Handmade Comanche Dolls.\*** Beautiful 20" soft bodied dolls, dressed in traditional clothing. Both girl and boy dolls available. \$40 each plus \$3.50 s&h. (\*Special Orders Only, 6-8 weeks delivery)

**Item #5. Comanche Hymn Book.** Contains the words to 118 Comanche hymns, listed by title with composer's name. Compiled by Elliot Canonge (1960), 64 pages. \$12 includes s&h.

**Item #6. Picture Dictionary.** A 26 page booklet that is ideal for beginning learners. Has simple words and brief sentences. \$10 includes s&h.

**Item #7. Comanche Flash Cards.** A set of 48 cards showing pictures and words in Comanche. \$5 plus \$1 s&h.

**Item #8. Tote Bags.** Navy with red trim. 16"x12"x5" with back pocket. Front has the Comanche Language logo. \$12 plus \$3.50 s&h.

**Item #9. Ball Caps.** Men's are royal blue with red bill and Language logo on front. Ladies are solid royal blue with logo. \$10 plus \$3.50 s&h.

**Item #10. Collar/Hat Pins.** Language logo complete with feathers, 3/4" long. \$4 includes s&h.

**Item #11. Earrings.** Same design as collar/hat pins. \$8 includes s&h.

**Item #12. Buttons.** Two styles. #1: “N̄m̄ Tekw̄ap̄” and #2: “Ihka Niha, N̄m̄ Tekw̄ap̄. \$2 each includes s&h. Specify button number.

**Item #13. Lapel Pins.** 1 inch Cloisonne pin. \$5 includes s&h.

COMANCHE LANGUAGE AND  
CULTURAL PRESERVATION

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