
NUMU TEKWAḠUHA NOMNEEKATU NEWSLETTER

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The Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee

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“Letter From The President”

Marawekḡ Nḡmḡnḡḡ

Ika taa Nḡmḡrekwaḡ?ha tḡbitsi
nanḡsuyaketḡ.

Over the past several months I have attended the monthly Comanche Business Committee (CBC) meetings. Below are some of my impressions to that exposure of our government in action.

First Impression: Organized chaos. Whether that is by design is yet to be determined. This has lead to extremely long sessions: September session – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., October session – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., November session – 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Second impression: Probably the most disturbing is the lack of attention given to Resolutions passed at previously held General Councils. If an individual concerned about a particular passed Resolution is not in attendance at a CBC meeting and draws their (CBC) attention to that Resolution, there is a strong possibility that Resolution will be ignored. I have heard this phrase spoken by many Comanches – Supreme Governing Body – if this is a true statement, why does some of our leaders circumvent the dictates of the General Council?

Third Impression: Conflict within the CBC membership. Also conflict between some the CBC members and our Tribal Administrator has cause issues and problems that has to be detrimental to the operation of our tribal programs. Disrespect, Deceit and

Dishonesty is fertile soil for corruption. Nḡmḡnḡḡ: Respect, Honesty and Generosity are adjectives that should be required character traits of our leaders.

My opinion: The Tribal Administrator should be selected and hired by the CBC. This selection would be made after applications are reviewed and applicants interviewed. The CBC would select the best qualified applicant. As the procedure is now, the selection is made by as few as 150 people (the required quorum for a legal General Council), people with little or no knowledge of that person’s ability, or the compatibility of that person with the CBC.

On to another subject: the “Learning To Speak Comanche” project will begin in the very near future.

The first task is to select the Speaker consultants and the spelling consultants. A date for a meeting with speakers and spelling consultants interested will be set at our next monthly meeting (December meeting). Applications are currently being taken for any interested families. Selection of the 15 families will be made based on a priority list.

1. Families with infants 0 to 2 years old.
2. Families with children 3 to 6 year old
3. Families with children of any age
4. Families with a fluent speaker would go to the top of one of the above categories.

Meeku usḡ hḡḡḡ mḡmḡkḡa ika taa
Nḡmḡ tekwaḡ ḡ supanaḡa, tḡasḡ se
hḡḡḡ mḡmḡkḡa ika taa Nḡmḡ tekwaḡ
ke unetḡ nakḡtsḡ kema supanaḡa.

Itutsa taa Nümü tekwapu túbítsíku taa pitúkúna piaraa hasúkú eeka tai tureetu nu tureetu maruu tureeti tai tureeti maka tanu usu suabítai?tui suwaitu, usu siniku ma pitúkú bünü. Ususe ika taa Nümü tekwapu?ha kema supanaitu , tanu usu túbítsi taibo naahahutui. Tanu usu siniku kapúkatu tai kapúkatúkaku, usu maka usuni tai maki tai niwunuru usu tanu tai nümünainá. Usu tanu siniku se tanu usu ma suabítaihutui, unuse usu túbítsi nümü sube naahahutui, ma suabítáitsi unuse ika tai puhiwi marui unu usu himá?hutui.

Etuu se taa ahpu?nuu ,taa pia?nuu, isu tai kaku?nuu, taa toko?nuu usu pümüsuua ika taibo tekwapu pümüsuua suku usu situu pümüsuua suabítainá. Ususe tanu itii tai nanawapünii tamu maitii usu maka tsaa supanaitu, maka tsaa niwunúkú usu na hipe tami marii puakwakú usu suku tai Nümü tekwapu tanu usu kena usu suku suruu wunu?hutui tanusu usu sube túbítsi taibo?nuu naaha?hutui.

ANOTHER TREASURE LOST RAY NIEDO 1920 - 2005

The Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee – and indeed the Comanche Nation – has lost another Treasure. Ray Nieto died December 9, 2005, at his home in Indianola at the age of 85. He was an inspiration to all of us who knew him.

He was there in the beginning, with all his knowledge of our language and culture, and most importantly, his encouragement. He saw our group struggle for recognition, attain 501(c)3 tax-exempt status, become incorporated with the state of Oklahoma, adopt a spelling and writing system, and gain support of the Comanche people to warrant a yearly budget from tribal funds. Of course, actually getting those funds each year is a different story – but that’s a whole other story!

We sat with him through years of compiling our Comanche language Dictionary, and we grew together as an extended family. Many others who began work with us have now gone on, also. And it is always with a sad heart that we remember they are no longer with us. We have others who are not in good health, and we appreciate them for being with us when their health permits.

Ray always had a good word for us, and always had a sense of humor that carried us through lean times. We know his life was not always easy, but he never had anything but a positive outlook.

Many people attended both his prayer service and the funeral service. We came away knowing our friend even better than before. We only saw one facet of him, but there were many. His children shared their memories of him, and others shared the impact he had on their lives. We are all the better for having known him.

I have many good memories of Ray, but the one thing I will never forget is what he told us: “When we loose our language, then we’re just another Indian.”

PHRASELATOR

The C.L.C.P.C. is excited to announce we have purchased a Phraselator, a hand held language learning/teaching device. In October, Don Thornton of Thornton Media, Inc. (www.ndntv.com) conducted a workshop for us to learn more about the device and have the opportunity for a hands-on recording session. We recorded a short phrase list to see it actually operate, then proceeded to input a longer list of phrases and work with various speakers to record them. It was a worthwhile day, and I think everyone present was impressed with the capabilities of the Phraselator.

One might ask, “How can one Phraselator help teach the Comanche language to more than one person at a time?” That was the same question I asked.

Now I can tell you that once information is put into the device, it can be shared with others via a computer. That's all it takes – another computer, not another Phraselator – to teach the Comanche language.

Because the Phraselator works in conjunction with a laptop computer, it is easily transported to the speakers, where they can be recorded in the comfort of their own homes.

It will take some time for us to be at the point where we can start to share this information, as we are waiting on an update due out sometimes next Spring, but it is coming!

What I especially like is that each speaker will be listed under their own name, so as you listen to the phrases being spoken you will know who you are hearing. That is important because we all know there are variations of how words are spoken in the different areas of Comanche Country. The people in Walters may say something a little differently than the way it is said in the Cyril area, or the Cache area. This will allow us to hear all those variations. We contribute this to the fact that the different bands of Comanches settled in different areas, hence we have the differences in pronunciation of Comanche words.

We will keep you updated as work with the Phraselator continues.

(*Editor's Note: The Lawton Public Library Research Room has purchased seven new rolls of Indian microfilm. I recently had a chance to look through some of the rolls, and I wanted to share a few of the interesting items I found:

Roll KA 47, Kiowa Agency, Indian History, Culture and Acculturation (1861-1930)

The following report was made by E. L. Clark, dated May 18, 1881, when he was asked: Where do the Comanches place the origin of their people?

“The Yaparuka band of the Comanche came from the Rocky Mountains north of

the head waters of the Arkansas River about 150 or 200 (1681-1731) years ago which country they inhabited with the Snakes and Shoshone and are no doubt of the same origin with these two tribes. I have not been able to determine from the information thus far obtained from the Indians, the exact scope of country these tribes occupied at so remote a time excepting as before indicated and indefinitely mentioned as “North of the head waters of the Arkansas River.”

There are a few Snake Indians with the Yaparuka's enrolled as Comanche, and one very old man, a Shoshone, with the Kwaharu band.

Straight Feather, who is about 70 years old, says his father was a Snake Indian and his mother one half Pawnee and one half Penataka. He was born a short distance south of the Colorado River in Texas and is considered as belonging to the Penataka. As to what period the Penataka band of the Comanche separated themselves from the main body is not definitely known but evidently long (prior) to the migration of the main body southward, as there is well authenticated tradition that the Penataka wandered off a great distance, and were entirely lost to the other bands and that long afterwards they were discovered by the Yaparuka and Kwaharu bands of warriors, who went to Mexico on raiding expeditions at which time the Penataka and Nokoni bands were together occupying the same region of the country, but were distinct bands and both were large and formidable.

The Kwaharu occupied a region south of the Yaparuka but were still in the Rocky Mountain country.

The original name of that band was Kwahihuki meaning “Back Shade” because they inhabited the plains, or a country without timber or trees, and during hot weather they shaded their faces by turning their back to the sun. A small band of Comanches called Taninuu, or Liver, supposed to have derived their name from their fondness of liver, were also with the

Penatuka and Nokoni in Mexico, no doubt separated from the main body about the same time with the Penatuka and were also a separate and distinct band, but there are few now left and are merged with the other bands.

It is (a) generally accepted idea with all or most of the Comanches that they came from the northwest and it is highly probable that if the fact could be ascertained, which I have no doubt as a thorough research would establish, it would be shown that the Snakes, Shoshone, Comanche and Utes were formally one and the same people, a conclusion based upon the similarity of their language, habits, style of dress, and person or physical characteristics and upon the undisputed knowledge that these tribes, at no very remote period of time, occupied the same region of country in the Rocky Mountains.

The Comanches call the Snake Indians 'ah' meaning horn or horns.

There was another band of Comanche "Wit-ha-hon-ah" which means sew as with the needle. This band was originally with the Snakes and Shoshone but are now with and form a portion of the Yaparuka.

Tabenanaka and brothers are descendants of this band, but are known now altogether as Yaparuka.

A long time ago the Utes captured a number of women belonging to the "Tit-cha-ken-ah" who afterwards became a band of Utes called "Yap-pi Utes. This band is not as large as the "San-nah Utes known as the Rosin or Gum Utes.

The Kiowa say that they have been at war with the Utes from time immortal and never have had enough (interaction) with them to learn anything of their language, and cannot communicate with them excepting by signs and through the medium of the Comanche tongue.

One of the Comanches, a brother of Tabenanaka, says he once met a Ute on the prairie who spoke to him in Comanche and wished to make friends but while they were

having a friendly talk, the hostile bands of Utes and Comanches to which each belonged came in sight and commenced firing and put an end to their conversation. This Ute spoke good Comanche – not an uncommon or remarkable circumstance, when taking in consideration that the Comanche language is more or less spoken and understood by other southern tribes."

(*Editor: I took the liberty of changing the way they spelled Comanche words with the correct spelling – where I could understand what they were trying to say.)

Another item of interest on that roll of microfilm was the following:

A MESSAGE TO THE INDIAN PEOPLE
by Charles H. Burke, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, written 6-25-1926.

"What Every Indian Family Needs"

Every Indian family should have a garden to furnish vegetables, a few cows to supply the children with milk, a sufficient number of chickens to supply the family with eggs, and an orchard wherever fruit trees will grow.

These needs mean more work, but also better living and better health. Work is a pleasure when it is profitable and interesting. If you cannot supply all the needs in one year, begin with a garden or some one of the others and see how much it will contribute to the upkeep and well being of your family.

Remember that all children need milk to make them grow and keep them well. Keep a cow. The cow is one of the greatest blessings a family can have. The cow eats grass and coarse plants and converts them into the very best kind of food.

Where the cow is kept and cared for, civilization advances, lands grow richer, homes grow better, and debts grow fewer."

The Indian-Pioneer Histories collection of microfilm at the Lawton Library has several interviews with local Indians. Following is one I extracted from Volume 78, page 163, an

interview with **William Karty dated April 29, 1938:**

"I am the recreation manager for the COQ-ID(?) at Anadarko, and live at 221 ½ West Broadway, Anadarko. My father's name was Buffalo, he died in 1931. My mother, Tarsarer, was born about 1830 and is still living (in 1937). My grandmother, To-see, was born in Mexico in 1809; died in 19-4. I was born on West Cache Creek in September 1909. I am of Spanish and Comanche blood. My grandmother on my mother's side was a Spanish captive. She was captured in Mexico when she was only eight years old.

AMy father was a Comanche and a member of the Indian Police force at Fort Sill before the opening of the country (1907). As you see, my name is not like the name of my family. They used to never have family surnames. I will tell you how I got mine. One time when I was a very small boy Buffalo Bill (Bill Cody) came to the Fort to make a motion picture and I was in that picture with him. When he left he gave me his name but in going through the government offices it became Karty instead.

"The Comanche Tribe is of the Shoshone stock. Their languages are the same except the Shoshone Indians speak faster than the Comanches, who have more of the Mexican dialect. About three-fourths of the language are of Mexican words and are pronounced the same.

"My grandmother on my father's side is a descendant of the Bird Woman (Sacagawea). That is about all I know about her.

AMy grandmother on my mother's side was a twin. The two sisters were captured at the same time by the Kiowas and my grandmother was sold to the Comanches. The twins were only eight years old. The Little Chiefs of the Kiowas are the children and grandchildren of my grandmother's sister.

"My grandmother was a very fast foot racer. She was the fastest runner in the

Comanche Tribe. They used to have races and she would run against horses. She could beat all the horses. Of course, these races were not very long races. But the Indians were noted for their endurance.

She went with the warriors on a raid one time where there were several killed. She was buried for dead along with the others. In those days they buried the dead in caves and covered them up with brush or rocks. Also they buried all the personal possessions along with the body. She had a knife with her, in her clothes somewhere, and when she regained consciousness, with the aid of this knife, she came out of her "grave" and went back to camp. She had been gone three days and the Indians thought she was her own ghost.

She got a spear wound in a raid once that she carried for the rest of her life. My grandmother lived to the ripe old age of one hundred and fifteen years. She was known by the name of To-see."

COMANCHES HONORED IN OKC

by **Barbara Goodin**

On November 21, 2005, several of us traveled to the rotunda in the State Capitol Building in Oklahoma City to attend a Native American Heritage Celebration titled "Preserving Our Language, Building Bridges to the Future." The event was sponsored by the OK Department of Human Services and is an annual celebration.

This year tribal language preservationists were honored for their work throughout our state. Billie Kreger, vice president of our language group, and Geneva Navarro, language instructor at the Comanche Nation College, were both honored. In addition, Geneva received the OK Spirit Award, one of only two given this year.

It was good to see so many Indians fill the Capitol to see their tribal people honored. I was very disappointed that not one of our Comanche tribal officials was there. Although the Comanches had a fair

representation with about 25 of us attending, one tribe brought their casino bus FULL of tribal members. Where were the Comanches?

The program was excellent, with the Sequoyah Indian School and the Choctaw Social Dancers giving a wonderful exhibition. We all enjoyed seeing the young men and women dressed in all their finery, and the drums echoing throughout the capital as they went through their exhibition dances.

Downstairs booths were set up by many of the 39 tribes in Oklahoma, handing out literature telling about their tribe and their programs. There was a very good display of language learning material from some of the tribes, too. We saw that others are working as hard as we are to preserve our languages.

Others honored on that day included: George Blanchard, Absentee Shawnee; Charlene Wright, Caddo; Harry Oosahwee, Cherokee; Joyce Twins, Cheyenne; Israel R. Adams, Choctaw; Ted Isham and Linda Alexander, Creek; Richard Grounds, Euchee; Evans Ray Satepauhoodle, Kiowa; Harry Red Eagle Jr., Mary Bighorse and Kenneth Bighorse, Osage; Truman Black, Otoe-Missouria; Dorna Riding In, Pawnee; Sherri Clemons, Wyandotte; and Mary Ann Emarthla, Seminole, who is translating the Bible into Seminole.

It was an enjoyable day, and we were proud that out of the 15 people honored, two of them were Comanche. Next time you see Billie or Geneva, be sure and congratulate them on their honors.

COMANCHE LANGUAGE CONFERENCE

Our first Comanche Language Conference was held November 12th in the New Conference Room at the Comanche Complex, with over 50 people in attendance.

Dr. Reaves Nahwooks coordinated the event, which began with a welcome by CLCPC President Ron Red Elk. Presentations were given by various groups who actively incorporate our language into

their programs/curriculum. Dr. Kim Winkleman, president of the Comanche Nation College, and Dr. Cornel Pewewardy, Dean of the College, spoke on the language classes where students earn college credits.

Tomah Yeahquo, with the Tribe's Comanche Immersion Program, talked about the CD for infants and children. Also speaking was ---- with the Tribes' Onaa Program, who gave us insight into their efforts for language preservation. Morrison Tahmahkera from Indianoma spoke on the Post Oak Language Program, where he and Marjorie Kelly teach at Indianoma High School.

Jerome Tahhahwah and Rusty Wahkinney next spoke on the Petarsy Indian Church program to preserve the songs. They were assisted by Harold Pewewardy and Leatrice Jay, along with others who helped sing the songs.

Ronald Red Elk introduced Barbara Goodin who gave a short presentation on the Phraselator (see above article), and then his own perspective on the status of the Comanche language.

Lonnie Racehorse, fluent speaker of the Shoshone language from Fort Hall, Idaho, ended with a wrap-up and summary of the day.

Evaluation sheets were handed out to participants. We had many compliments, and several suggestions that could help make the next conference even better. We will incorporate all these ideas into our next conference, which we are planning for February or March.

NO MORE SQUAW CREEK !!

by Jan Woomavoyah

Finally the day has arrived! On a day in November 2005, the City of Lawton finally put up the N̄m̄ Creek sign!! NO MORE SQUAW CREEK!!!! The new sign can be seen throughout Lawton along the creek that runs north and south through the city. It is spelled in the taibo way (Numu) but we will get those supporting lines through the u's

yet! The big thing is that it is here. All the tourists will want to have their picture taken at Nʉmʉ Creek!

ʉra to the Comanche Nation Elders Council for pushing this issue, and a big ʉra to Nita Pahdopony-Mithlo, Annette Arkeketa-Rendon and Bill Shoemate for their efforts in helping to move this issue to reality.

ʉra to all those who supported us in your thoughts and words of support. We did it! Go by and give it a wave and honk real loud in celebration! Nʉmʉ Tekwapʉ (Talk Comanche). Use it or lose it! Support your language, speak it every day.

ʉra, Jan Woomavoyah
(jwoomavoyah@yahoo.com)

JOYFUL CHRISTMAS

I wanted to share one of my joys of Christmas this past December.

Our youngest son was working the midnight shift and our other son was with his wife's family, so my husband and I decided to spend Christmas Eve at the Petarsy Indian Church at Richards Spur, north of Lawton. What a joyous occasion! The church was decorated with a live cedar tree and all the trimmings – and as much tinsel as the kids could throw on!

Pastor Lucy Tonemah asked Comanche elder Elton Simmons (93 years young) to open the service with a prayer, which he spoke in Comanche. During the Christmas service, Comanche hymns were sung by the congregation – not one English hymn was heard. After the service Martina Minthorn's Sunday School class gave the Christmas Program, which was done entirely in Comanche! What a beautiful sight and sound. The children sang Silent Night, Joy To The World, Jingle Bells and Jesus Loves Me – all in Comanche. Two young ladies recited the Lord's Prayer in Comanche. The only English we heard was when adults were speaking. My heart felt so full as I sat there watching and listening. These children

are helping us take our beautiful Comanche language into the future. They ARE our future.

PRODUCTS FOR SALE

Comanche Dictionary. Compiled entirely by Comanche people, this dictionary contains over 6,000 Comanche words with Comanche to English and English to Comanche sections. \$34 incl. s&h.

Comanche Lessons, set #1. A set of four Comanche Lessons, complete with a word list for each lesson. Specify audio cassette or CD when ordering. \$25 includes s&h.

Picture Dictionary. Primer explains the Comanche alphabet and sound of each letter. \$15 includes s&h and your choice of audio cassette or CD.

Comanche Song Book. Collection of 116 songs written in Comanche with an English translation, plus set of 3 CDs of songs. \$30 plus \$5 s&h.

Comanche Flash Cards Set. Three sets of 48 flash cards each with simple Comanche words. \$15 includes s&h and your choice of audio cassette or CD.

Comanche Language Tee-Shirts. Comanche Language logo in full color on left chest. Available in solid red or royal blue. Children's sizes small (6-8), medium (10-12), and large (12-14), \$10; Adult sizes small through XL \$12; Adult sizes 2X and 3X \$15. Specify color and size when ordering & add \$4 per shirt s&h.

Authentic Handmade Comanche Dolls. Beautiful 20" soft bodied dolls, dressed in traditional clothing. Both girl and boy dolls available. \$40 each plus \$5 s&h. (Special Orders Only, allow 6-8 weeks delivery)

Tote Bags. Navy with red trim. 16"x12"x5" with back pocket. Front has the Comanche Language logo. \$12 plus \$4 s&h.

Ball Caps. Royal blue with red bill and Language Logo on front. \$10 plus \$4 s&h.

Lapel Pins. 1 inch Cloisonne pin with colorful C.L.C.P.C. logo and "Nʉmʉ Tekwapʉ" written in center. \$5 includes s&h.

**Please include your e-mail address when ordering in case we need to contact you. Contact us if ordering multiple items, as we can usually ship cheaper than quoted here (e-mail address at top of newsletter).*