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# NUMU TEKWARUHA NOMENEEKATU NEWSLETTER

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The Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee

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Editor: Barbara Goodin

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## “Letter From The President”

Maruaweku

Namunuu, tuasu na?namunuu, isu tuasu

Nu Ha?hairsi?nuu

Greetings Comanches, Relatives and Friends,

The interest in our language among Comanches seems to be on the rise, which is good! Our language is spoken so very rarely and it needs to be spoken at all occasions where ever Comanches gather, in the home, at church, at our CBC meetings, at the General Council, Everywhere.

There are many ways to accomplish our task (using our language again). Now having said that, let us take a look at how our parents and grandparents learned to speak English. They were forced to attend boarding schools, they were forced to learn to read and write English. With this knowledge they began to use English with the taibo?nuu. Slowly at first, they began to use English in the home with their children, so that now we have so very few Comanches with the knowledge of speaking our language. How are we going to use our language at all occasions?

Slowly at first! Then with the knowledge we gain through learning to read and write in Comanche, we can teach our family members, our friends, and others who desire to speak ta tekwaru taa Numu Tekwaru.

For instance, I attended a Museum Board meeting recently, where there was a prayer read in Comanche. All of

us can learn to read Comanche, and in the process we will begin to build our Comanche vocabulary so that we can begin to replace English words with Comanche. We have begun the process of learning to speak Comanche.

This process may not be for everyone, but it has proven to be successful in the instance mentioned above with our parents and grandparents learning to speak English. And now with the Learning to Speak Comanche Project, where 15 families have learned to read Comanche and are reading to their children. The families are also learning to hear the sounds of our language so that they can perfect their pronunciation of our language.

Soobesu Numunuu sumu oyetu Numu Niwanu?etu. Ukitsi nuuu tuasu Numu niwanuhutui. Ubuinitu tuasu Numu niwanuhutuinu.

Subetu

Ura

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## BELOVED TREASURE LOST

We lost another of our beloved Comanche Treasures in April. Lucille McClung passed away on April 9, 2007, at her home.

### “LUCILLE CABLE McCLUNG

Funeral for Lucille Cable McClung, 88, Cache, was held at 10 a.m. Wednesday, April 11, 2007, at the Comanche Nation Funeral Home Chapel with the Rev. Reaves Nahwooks, pastor, Rainy Mountain Kiowa

Indian Baptist Church, Mountain View OK, officiating.

A prayer service was held Tuesday, April 10 at Comanche Nation Funeral Home Chapel, Lawton.

Mrs. McClung died Monday, April 9, 2007, at her home.

Burial was in the West Cache Intertribal Cemetery west of Cache.

She was born July 12, 1918, at Lawton Indian Hospital, to Bert Tanisahi and Josie Namaquah Cable. She was raised in Lawton and attended Haskell Indian School in Lawrence, Kansas. She moved back home to help care for her parents.

Her grandfather, George Cable, gave her the name "Tupsipia," which means Dark Girl in Comanche.

Lucille worked for the OK State Extension Service and as a sales representative for Stanley's Home Products. She was a vocalist and sang with the Amos Komah Indian Church of the Nazarene Choir.

In her earlier years, she rode horses in the Comanche Nation Fair parades. She was a charter member of Cahoma Community Center in Cache, and was instrumental in community service for her Indian people. She served on the Oklahomans for Indian Opportunity (O.I.O.) Board for a number of years. She taught the Comanche language at the University of Oklahoma in 1991 and also for the Comanche pre-school program in Cache. She was a member of the Comanche Nation and Amos Komah Memorial Church of the Nazarene, Cache.

Survivors include two daughters and sons-in-law: Francene and Phil Monenerkit, Norman; and Patty and Thomas Fuchs, Noble; two sons: Larry McClung and Bert C. McClung, both of Cache; a sister, Betty Pete, Cache; a brother and sister-in-law, Vernon and Gloria Cable, Cache; 13 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; and many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

She was preceded in death by a sister, Theresa Saupitty; and three brothers; Bruner Cable, Bert Cable Jr. and Gayle Cable."

The Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee (CLCPC) will miss Lucille very much. She was an important part of our efforts to preserve our language, and was always willing to help. She was instrumental in the publication of a Comanche Language Dictionary published by Dr. Jean Carney in the early 1990s, and our own Comanche Dictionary compiled by the CLCPC.

What I personally will remember most about Lucille is that smile she always had for everyone, and the songs she carried in her heart. She would sing at the drop of a hat, and the stories she told always kept us laughing.

We have many fond memories of her, and she has left her legacy for children and grandchildren alike in the many recordings and tapes we have in our collection.

Ron Red Elk spoke on behalf of our organization at the prayer service and told of the influence she had on his life. His ending was most appropriate when he said, "Tupsipia, ʘ kamakʘtʘ nʘ."

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### **"LEARNING TO SPEAK COMANCHE" PROJECT FUNDED FOR A 2<sup>ND</sup> YEAR**

The "Learning To Speak Comanche" project that was so successful in its first year has been funded for a second year, thanks to the voters of the Comanche Nation. Thank you to each of you who have confidence in us that we can make a difference in preserving our language.

We now have fifteen more Comanche families (for a total of 70 family members) that can read, write and speak Comanche – not fluently by any means, but they have acquired the tools to set their goals and attain them.

For the second year we propose to work with another fifteen families and increase

the number of Comanches knowledgeable in our language. The families from the first year will serve as mentors for the second year families, which will keep the Comanche language in the forefront of their every day lives.

We are accepting applications for the second year families at this time. If you are interested in being a part of this project, e-mail us at [clcpc@comanchelanguage.org](mailto:clcpc@comanchelanguage.org). We will send you an application and the guidelines for participating. Families must have children under six years of age, and pregnant women with no other children will also be eligible.

This project will center around your individual schedules, be it work, school or other activities. It will be family-friendly for everyone. If you have other questions you would like addressed, please contact us at the e-mail address listed above.

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#### **TID BITS....**

From **Lois Kane, Shoshone Language & Culture Coordinator**: “At the last language conference I attended, they advised teachers (of native languages) to praise their student’s learning efforts. It is important for the students to realize all the things that they have learned since first coming to class – things they didn’t know before. It will make them feel good and encourage them to keep up the good work.”

If you have not visited the Comanche Nation’s official web site recently, take some time and go to [www.comanchenation.com](http://www.comanchenation.com) and scroll to the far right and click on “**Comanche Veterans.**” This section has a great deal of information that has taken years to compile. There is even a contact e-mail address if you have further questions.

And by the way...the **Comanche Nation web site** has a new look with even more information. For the recent tribal election

run-off there was a place where you could print out a request for an absentee ballot. Finally, the Comanche Nation is coming into the Twenty First Century! Kudos to the IT staff.

To see the latest report from the **Comanche Nation Constitution Review Project**, go to <http://cncrp.com/>.

From **George Ann Gregory, editor of Anumpa Achukma/Good News** online Language Newsletter : “When we speak our own languages, we have a power that says we are not conquered people. We still know who we are. We still greet each day in our own languages.”

**George Ann Gregory also offers the following Language Learning Tip**: “If you are trying to learn your ancestral language from tapes, listen to the tapes at least twice a week – just listen. Hearing the language is an aid to pronunciation and acquisition. If you can listen to the language every day, that is even better. Be patient, and keep listening.”

On the **Stoney-Nakoda First Nation Reserve in Canada**, “Preserving their language is also a celebration of their culture and an affirmation that they are survivors and that they are not, as once believed, mere charges of the government, but instead, in control of their future and their identity.” (\*From the Good News online newsletter.)

The **Truku of Taiwan** say “Culture and language are inseparable. The wisdom of our ancestors and our history are alive in the Truku language. Preserving the language is preserving our culture, our customs and our traditions.” (\*From the Good News online newsletter.)

The **Oneida Tribe** has a talking online dictionary that helps keep their language alive. They also held a world premiere in

April for a new animated short film that brings an ancient Oneida legend to the big screen. About a Raccoon and Crawfish, “the animation is wonderful and incredible, and it’s scored for an orchestra with American Indian flutes.” (\*From the Good News online newsletter.)

To receive your own Good News Newsletter, go to [holabitubbe@gmail.com](mailto:holabitubbe@gmail.com) and request that your e-mail address be added to their mailing list.

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*(\*Editor’s Note: Following is an article written for Indian Country Today on February 17, 2005, by Lance Morgan, a member of the Winnebago Tribe and CEO of Ho-Chunk, Inc. It is relevant to all of us as Indian people.)*

## **COLLECTIVE CULTURAL GUILT**

**by Lance Morgan**

I run Ho-Chunk, Inc., a 10 year old tribal development corporation, and when we first started we had discussions about being “too corporate” or “too white,” or losing our cultural identity. I spent time balancing this issue, but I have decided that it is a non-issue. It occurs to me that we (as Indian people) are stereotyping ourselves. We have an image of ourselves rooted in a culture based on an economic reality from a long-distant past. The vast majority of Indians are not living in the woods, hunting or growing their food and making their own clothes.

Rather than worry about being culturally appropriate, we should be focusing on our inner core values as a people. How we make a living shouldn’t define us – that is the white world. What should define us is how we view ourselves, how we view the world, how we treat each other, and how we treat our families. To me, being Indian isn’t about hunting and gathering. It is about something far more important.

There is no playbook on how to be a modern Indian in a corporate world, so we decided a few years ago to stop feeling guilty and to simply self-validate ourselves. Ho-Chunk, Inc. is owned by a tribe, has a board made up entirely of tribal members and is run by Indians. We decided that we wouldn’t be doing it if it weren’t okay. This self-validation is far easier to live under than constantly worrying or feeling strangely guilty about our own progress.

Cultural change isn’t a new concept. Culture has always followed economics. When Neanderthals hunted animals for a living, their religion and culture were based on animal spirits. When Mayans developed farming, their culture and religion revolved around farming. They developed a calendar to know when to plant their crops. They might have gotten a little carried away with the human sacrifice thing, but to each his own.

What we think of as traditional American Indian culture was also a product of the economic realities of 150 years ago. If you were going to be a hunter and gatherer, you sure better know an awful lot about nature and how to coexist in such an environment for the long term.

This nature-oriented coexistence is the stage we were at when we had contact with the “white man.” Our contact with them immediately changed our economic reality. We became traders supplying furs. The quest for more furs caused a number of Indian wars and resulted in several tribes having to move west. The arrival of the horse created an entire new economic environment for the Plains tribes and a new culture began to emerge. Horses became valuable. The more you had, the better.

My point is simple: culture is whatever it is right now. It is a living, breathing system that is constantly evolving and changing. What drives the evolution of culture is our internal human desire to lead a better life and provide for our families. I don’t think anyone should feel bad about being

successful. White people don't. We didn't used to. Individual wealth was respected and something to be shared with all of the members of the tribe. I bet if I were a Sioux 150 years ago, I would be bragging about how many horses I had and somebody would be jealous and probably try to steal them.

Even our modern traditional activities are based largely on economics. Would we really be making all this beadwork and art if we couldn't sell it? Would our modern pow wow system be the same if not for all the prize money? The answer is no. These activities are a form of pride and culture, but they also are a way to make a living. Unfortunately some of us can't dance, can't sing and can't paint.

I wonder if this idealized notion of ourselves developed because the life we were forced to lead by the "system" was so horrible. We didn't want to view ourselves as poor and unable to provide for ourselves and for our families, so we turned to the image based on past pride. This image was fed by the movies and popular mythology.

My mother has a theory that alcoholism hit our male population so badly because the "system" took away our men's pride and their opportunity to succeed and provide for their families. I think that our battle with alcoholism does center on pride and economics. If we can provide opportunities for our people to take a traditional function (provide for families) in a modern context (a good job), then we have a much better chance of dealing with our social problems.

We need to stop stereotyping ourselves. No one really wants to go back to the way we lived in the old days, but our self-image is so wrapped up in who we were that it is hard to balance it with who we are now.

Even worse, we often use culture and perceived cultural purity as a weapon to hurt each other and halt progress. I have witnessed several good projects or ideas killed by someone attacking the idea or person on cultural grounds. This form of

attack is very effective because we are so used to worrying about culture and our desire to hang on to it that it often gets in the way of helping improve our lives today. It also is a way to hurt people, especially young educated Indians who are vulnerable to this type of attack because they are constantly reminded that they have somehow changed.

I have always been proud to be a member of the Winnebago Tribe. It has always made me feel special. This strange internal pressure we place on ourselves to be a stereotyped figure from the past is not necessary. Being Indian is about our inner values, our spirituality, how we treat each other and how we view the world. It is not about whether the meat on your table was bought at the store or killed while on a hunt.

I do believe that the answers to our modern problems lie in the wisdom and traditional values of the past, but I believe our true challenge is to hang on to those values while weaving them into our modern life. I asked a friend and mentor of mine, "Famous" Dave Anderson, what he thought of this issue and he said it best: "Our culture has always just been about survival."

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(\*Editor's Note: Following is a reprint from *Christian Science Monitor*, Tuesday, March 22, 2005.)

**"CHEROKEE SPOKEN HERE"**

**by Diana West**

Lost City, OK. Proud first graders can now say, "Cherokee spoken here."

Their parents were mocked for speaking it. Their grandparents were punished. But for three classes at Lost City Elementary School in (northeastern) Oklahoma, Cherokee is the only language spoken in the classroom. Lost City is one of the first public schools in the United States to immerse students in an American Indian language.

The program started in fall 2003 with kindergarten and classes for 3-year-olds.

This year the program expanded to include first grade.

“We do what other classes do but it's all in Cherokee,” says Anna Christie who teaches a combined kindergarten and first grade class at the school. Ms. Christie talks to them in Cherokee, calling the children by their Indian names. At naptime, she tells Matthew Keener or “Yo-na” (Bear) not to put his mat too close to Lane Smith “A-wi” (Deer).

Cherokee songs play softly in the room. A Cherokee calendar hangs on the wall. Students practice writing words and numbers in Cherokee. First grader Casandra Copeland, “Ji-s-du” (Rabbit), counts aloud in Cherokee.

It's called an immersion class because the children speak nothing but Cherokee. The Cherokee Nation in nearby Tahlequah, Oklahoma creates the curriculum.

“The goal is to get them fluent,” says Harry Oosahwee, the tribe's language project supervisor. “If we don't do anything about it, [the language] is not going to be here for the next generation.”

It is estimated that presently fewer than 8,000 of 100,000 Cherokee people speak the language and most of them are over 45 years old.

Mr. Oosahwee, who grew up speaking Cherokee as his first language, says, “I feel fortunate that I was able to communicate with my grandparents and aunts and uncles.”

Now these children can talk to their parents and grandparents.

“I can talk to my grandpa,” says Matthew Keener. He is also teaching his mother to speak Cherokee.

Oosahwee says at first there was mixed feelings from the community about the program.

Some parents were excited while others were hesitant. “They didn't want the kids to experience negative reactions like they had.” He can identify with that because he was mocked and ridiculed as a child for speaking his native language at public school.

But since Lost City also started a night class to teach Cherokee to Grades 5-8, staff, and parents, he says interest has started to grow. An instructor volunteers his time, and use of the school facility is free, so there is no cost to the community for the night class.

About 65 of the 100 students enrolled in the Lost City Elementary School are Cherokee. Some non-Cherokee students have opted to learn a second language and belong to the immersion classes, although participation in the program is entirely voluntary.

All eight grades are exposed to Cherokee at a weekly “Rise and Shine” assembly where they begin by saying “o-si-yo” meaning hello. They discuss the Cherokee character word for the week. One week it was truthfulness or “du-yu-go-dv.”

Next year immersion classes will include second graders.

Kristen Smith, who teaches the 3-year-olds, was 5 when she learned the Cherokee language from her grandparents. Her son, Lane, who is in the first grade class, comes home every day with a new word or phrase. “Now Lane and I can talk in Cherokee,” she says.

Lane also teaches some Cherokee words to his 11-year-old brother, Kristian. “This is something the whole family can share,” their mother says.

Fonda Fisher, Lane's great aunt, says, “He automatically responds in Cherokee. He even sings Cherokee in the shower.”

She adds, “Lane is learning what it is to be Cherokee and to be proud.”

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#### COMANCHE LANGUAGE CONFERENCE

The Comanche Nation Language Department will hold a language conference on Monday, July 9<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with registration starting at 9:00 a.m. Tomah Yeahquo, director of the tribal department, will host the conference that will include presentations from all community language programs.

To pre-register, call 580-492-6089.

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### WHAT DO WE DO???

What do we do? That is probably the most asked question we get for the CLCPC. For those that reach us through our web site on the internet, they already know what we do because they have read our site. Everyone else is probably aware that there are several language programs here in Comanche Country – and each one serves its own purpose.

In existence since 1993, the CLCPC's first decade was spent gathering and compiling information to preserve our language and culture. The first part of this second decade was devoted to putting the information into a format that could be easily utilized by Comanches wanting to learn their language. Now it is time to get this information into the hands of the Comanche people.

Last year, 2006, at the Comanche Nation Fair we gave away 1279 items that included song books, picture dictionaries, flash cards, ink pens, dictionaries, bumper stickers, CDs and DVDs. We have given away hundreds of other items at other times during the year.

That is what WE do. We provide the language learning tools for Comanches that have an interest and make a commitment to learn the language of our ancestors – before it is too late.

We successfully administered the “Learning To Speak Comanche” project last year and will start year two this Fall. Our children are singing Comanche hymns. Our children are speaking Comanche words. Our children will carry our beautiful Comanche language into the future. That's what we do.

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“**Sam̄ Oyetā Tana Nananam̄n̄n̄**”

(We Are All Related)

Ronald Red Elk

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### 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. \$30 plus \$5 s&h.

**Comanche Lessons, set #1.** A set of four Comanche Lessons, complete with a word list for each lesson and a CD. \$20 plus \$5 s&h.

**Picture Dictionary.** 26 page Primer explains the Comanche alphabet and sound of each letter. Includes a CD. \$12 plus \$3 s&h.

**Comanche Song Book.** Collection of 116 songs written in Comanche with an English translation, plus a set of 3 CDs of the songs. \$20 plus \$5 s&h.

**Comanche Flash Cards Set.** Three sets of 48 Flash Cards using simple Comanche words, accompanied by a CD. \$12 plus \$3 s&h for all three sets.

**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 and add \$5 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 Order: 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 \$5 s&h.

**Ball Caps.** Royal blue with red bill and Language Logo on front. \$10 plus \$5 s&h.

**Lapel Pins.** 1 inch round Cloisonne pin with colorful C.L.C.P.C. logo and “**Nam̄ Tekwap̄**” in center. \$5 includes s&h.

**New Lapel Pin.** 1 1/8” Silk screened lapel pin with clear epoxy finish. Exact replica of our colorful CLCPC logo complete with feathers, on gold plating. \$5 includes s&h.

\*For faster service, please send orders with check or money order to: **CLCPC Attn: Barbara Goodin, 1375 N.E. Cline Road, Elgin OK 73538.** Orders will be shipped the following day, most by Priority Mail. Please include your e-mail address when ordering in case we need to contact you. If ordering multiple items contact us first at [www.comanchelanguage.org](http://www.comanchelanguage.org), as we can usually ship more items less than quoted here.

**Attention Tribal Members: Please contact us before sending in your order, as we give discounts to enrolled Comanches.**