
NUMU TEKWAPEHA NOMNEEKATU NEWSLETTER

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The Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee

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“Letter From The President”

NUMUNUU (The People),

In the 1870s, The People were fighting for their very way of life as they had known it. In 1918, the war in Germany rekindled that same warrior spirit to volunteer to fight for a government that didn't consider them worthy of citizenship.

In 1940, again, The People volunteered their services to fight for their homeland. This time they used the very language the federal government had tried to abolish since the late 1800s.

The Comanche Code Talkers became a unit known for a code that the Germans couldn't break. Today The People are fighting another battle! This battle is with an enemy within our own ranks! Ourselves!

We are not doing enough to remain known as The People. Complacency, Apathy and Indifference are the enemies. When will that warrior spirit be rekindled?

Namunuu, we have but a very little time left to remain The People. Once Taa Tekwapu dies, so goes our heritage. Get involved!

Nam Tekwa! Usa Tan Usuni Nam Niwani?hutui.

Ronald Red Elk

COMANCHE NATION FAIR

This year's 12th Annual Comanche Nation Fair was another busy and exciting time for everyone. It started off with a golf tournament on Saturday, September 20th, followed by an arts show and sale on the following Monday. Tuesday was the

dedication of the new Comanche Visitor's Center (the first Indian visitor's center in the nation!), and it was very well attended. When the sculpture in front of the building was unveiled, you could hear the oohs and aahs from the audience. It was designed by Barthell “Buddy” Littlechief of Cyril.

Wednesday was the Native American Church service, held at the Comanche Complex in one of the many teepees that sprung to life that week. The teepees were awesome! There must have been a total of 15 or more on the grounds, and they could be seen from I44 as travelers passed by. Other campsites were on the grounds, also, ranging from primitive tents to large motor homes. Right before our eyes, through the week we saw a Comanche village come to life – complete with dogs from the nearby houses, who came to check out all the activity and the smell of food cooking in the camps.

Thursday evening was a combination of Comanche hymn singing and gospel singing at the Gymnasium. A good sized crowd turned out to participate, tape record and take it all in.

Friday morning saw a frenzy of activity as everyone made last minute preparations for the actual kick-off of the Fair. The horse and dog racing took place in the buffalo pens, the carnival opened, and the Code Talker monument dedication started at 1:30 p.m., after a delay due to the arrival of Charles Chibitty, last surviving code talker, from Tulsa. Lanny Asepermy served as master of ceremonies and introduced several dignitaries, some of whom spoke. Finally,

the moment we had all been waiting for – the unveiling of the Code Talker monument! What a fitting memorial to the Comanche men who enlisted and served their country in such a critical capacity during World War II. Many of their family members were present for this historic occasion, and I hope they knew how much we all appreciated the honor their loved ones brought to the Comanche Nation by their heroic actions.

The rest of the day included a performance by the Kiowa-Apache Blackfeet Society, the Grand Entry, contests and the start of the hand game tournament.

Saturday started early with a Fun Run, more horse and dog racing, and the parade at 11:00 a.m. Wes Studi, Indian actor from Santa Fe, rode horseback, as did Comanche Tribal Chairman, Wallace Coffey, and first lady, Debbie Coffey. Jean Monetatchi and Geneva Navarro were among others who also rode horseback. A beautiful sight!

Our Comanche language float was filled with people from our group along with several guests. Frank Camacho, from Pampa, Texas, who played Quanah Parker in the summer production of “Texas Legacies” held in Palo Duro Canyon, rode our float along with some of his family members. Another guest was DeWayne Taylor from Oklahoma City, who later made his debut in the arena as a gourd dancer.

A hot dog lunch followed, along with an outdoor concert, brush dance, gourd dance, horse shoe tournament, car show, basketball tournament, Air Evac helicopter landing, teen dance, Grand Entry and more contests.

Sunday started early with a cedarizing ceremony at 7:00 a.m., followed by the Spirit Walk and Worship Services at 10:00 a.m. A brisket dinner with all the fixin’s was served at noon, and the Story Telling followed in the arena. Next came the Gourd Dancing and Grand Entry later, with more contests.

It was a long week, but we thoroughly enjoyed it all. Meeting all the different people who stopped by was interesting as

always. And meeting other people face to face for the first time was good, too.

Monday morning we went out to take down our Hospitality Tent and pack it away ‘till next year. Almost as quickly as the Comanche village sprung to life the week before, it disappeared again almost as quickly. No more stray dogs, no more children playing in the area, no more open cooking fires and the wonderful, familiar smells they emitted. Everyone went back to their offices after the cleanup, and back to their homes with electric and gas cook stoves, microwaves and personal computers. Back to the grind of every day life – life after the Comanche Nation Fair!

STORY TELLING CONTEST

The Story Telling Contest was held in the main arena at the Comanche Nation Fair this year. Ron Red Elk and Jan Woomavoyah coordinated the event. The first place winners stole the show – the ~~Namunna~~ Taretæ (Comanche Children) from the Early Childhood Development Center at the Comanche Housing Authority.

Second and Third Place winners were a tie between Charles Chibitty of Tulsa and Edith Kassanavoid Gordon of Indianahoma.

Serving as judges were: Nell Wahahrockah of Elgin; Julene Gutierraz Motah from New Mexico; and Rosalie Attocknie of Apache.

We thank all of those who registered to tell stories, and the individuals who served as judges. We hope to have even more participants next year.

CBC MEETING

In April 2003, Ron Red Elk spoke to the General Council at the annual Tribal Council Meeting, and asked for \$100,000 to fund a program to create a CD specifically aimed at infants for language learning. That proposal was voted on and received funding for the 2003-2004 fiscal year.

On Saturday, October 4th, Ron appeared before the monthly CBC meeting and gave the following speech:

“This office (language preservation) was created by the Comanche Business Committee back in 1994 or 1995. This office was never funded! It was my intended purpose to fund this office and have a full time person employed to carry on this very important work.

It is crucial for the success of this office to employ a person with the passion of seeing our language grow into everyday use by all Comanches. This person should have a wide variety of skills, some of which are: computer literate, self starter, college degree, basic knowledge of our language, good communication skills, and the ability to work with all members of our Comanche communities.

I also felt it was important to include in this office, the task to develop a Compact Disc (CD) with a lyric sheet and a booklet designed to guide a parent through their infant’s first two years of Comanche language development. The CD would surround the baby with Comanche sounds, phrases and sentences. Traditional Comanche children’s songs and rhymes would be included in this sound system. Children learn sound best in combination with music and poetry. The entire inventory of Comanche sounds would be presented throughout the CD. This project would bring the language into the home. The transfer of the language of our elders to the young would be accomplished by using our elder’s pool of knowledge in the development of the CD. From birth to 18 months, children go from being nonverbal to communicating effectively with words – often speaking in two to three word sentences.

Let’s give them the language input so that those first words are COMANCHE.”

COMANCHE SOUNDS WORKSHOPS

This year we are making it a priority to teach the Comanche sounds to everyone who would like to learn. We estimate 6 hours will provide a good working knowledge of the sounds of Comanche words, and 12 hours should enable one to be able to say the written Comanche word with relative accuracy.

The workshops are 90 minutes long and will be held once weekly in area communities over a period of four weeks. Once the holidays are over, we will give another series of workshops to complete the full 12 hours.

Workshops have been scheduled at the following sites:

ANADARKO: Anadarko High School, 6:00 p.m. Mondays, September 29th, October 6th, 13th and 20th. Ron Red Elk, teacher.

WALTERS: Comanche Community Center, 6:30 p.m., Tuesdays, September 30th, October 7th, 14th and 21st. Ron Red Elk, teacher.

FLETCHER: Little Washita Church northeast of Fletcher, 7:00 p.m., Wednesdays, October 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd. Ron Red Elk, teacher.

APACHE: Comanche Community Center, 6:00 p.m., Thursdays, October 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd. Richard Codopony, teacher.

INDIAHOMA: Post Oak Church, 7:00 p.m., Mondays, October 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th. Billie Kreger, teacher.

CACHE: Cahoma Building, 7:00 p.m., Thursdays, October 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th. Billie Kreger, teacher.

LAWTON: 402 S.E. F Avenue, 5:30 p.m., Mondays, November 10th, 17th, 24th and December 1st. Geneva Navarro, teacher.

RICHARD’S SPUR: Petarsy Church, 1:30 p.m, Sundays, October 12th, 19th, 26th and November 2nd. A pot luck lunch will be served right after services, and the language workshop will follow. Rita Coosewoon, teacher.

We are also giving workshops in the **DALLAS** area at the Intertribal Center on

Wednesday evenings. For more information contact the center at 214-941-1050. Workshops dates are October 1st, 15th, 29th and November 5th. Geneva Navarro, teacher.

If you would like more information on the Comanche Sounds Workshops, or would like a workshop given in your area, e-mail us at clcpc@comanchelanguage.org.

**COMANCHE MONUMENT
DEDICATED IN TEXAS**

On Saturday, October 4th, a historic event took place at Berend's Landing in Wichita Falls, Texas. Members of the Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee were asked to be a part of this occasion that took a decade in the making. Artist Jack Stevens brought to life a Comanche family in larger than life bronze, under the watchful eye of Roby Christie, chairman of the Wichita Falls Streams and Valley, Inc., the entity who commissioned the sculpture.

To quote from a hand-out:

The Wee-Chi-Tah Project

I hope that everyone who looks upon this sculpture will see a people who loved their own, the land, the horses, the things that The Great Creator gave, not to be sold or owned, but a way of life – free – free to enjoy, free to live. Jack Stevens.

A larger than life size sculpture honoring the early residents of Texoma will be placed adjacent to the original falls. The 19,000 pound bronze sculpture by Jack Stevens, a renowned local artist, will cover an area approximately one hundred and fifty feet long and seventy five feet wide. Each figure will be 1/8 larger than life size. It will be placed in a water garden environment depicting the original falls. A Native American dance circle is an integral part of the site. The Dance Circle and associated

land will provide a home for Native American Pow-Wows. In the shade of huge Cottonwood trees, the stories and legends of Native Americans will come alive in dance and music.

The sculpture symbolizes a legend passed down through generations. The woman is looking up to the top of the Falls, where two braves on horseback and her mare and colt stand. Water is rushing past the hooves of the horses cascading over the falls. Her son stand perched at the edge of the falls anxious to jump in.

The heart and soul of the sculpture shares the reality that Native Americans were people doing what people do today; enjoying each other as well as the natural beauty of the river.

Water was an important resource to all the tribes of the area. Just as today, the river was a practical and recreational resource. Visitors will learn about the culture of the Comanche, Kiowa and Wichita Tribes. Information plaques and displays will promote the importance of Indian cultures and revive the importance of their role in the history of Texoma.

Jack Stevens has provided an emotional look into the heart of the people he has cast in bronze. His work is moving and shows a sincere appreciation for the meeting of our cultures.

According to Mr. Christie, about \$1 million was raised for the project, and about one million pounds in boulders had to be moved for the enormous sculpture.

A gallery-size sculpture was presented to the Comanche Nation on Saturday. Chairman Wallace Coffey and Mrs. Coffey were present at the event, which saw a large crowd gathered to commemorate the occasion. A somber mood prevailed as Thomas Blackstar, Comanche elder, concluded the dedication with a traditional cedar ceremony of the sculpture itself, then

of anyone wishing to be cedared. A long line quickly formed.

Our group was able to secure a Comanche Nation Transit Bus for the trip, and we all enjoyed the fellowship on the trip traveling. Our bus driver was great! He was courteous with the elders and helped in every way he could. We all especially enjoyed passing the Red River Casino and seeing the parking lot full of cars. I heard the Lawton Casino parking lot was overflowing that same night due to the performance by the Temptations. Way to go!

! IMPORTANT NOTICE !

Comanche County has recently initiated an Enhanced 911 System that changed the addresses in the rural areas. Everyone was notified what their new address would be and it became effective in September. If your address changed and you have not notified us, you may get this newsletter, but you probably won't get any future ones. It costs us .37 cents to mail each newsletter, and when they are returned because they don't have a correct address, that stamp is wasted. Please, please help us to continue to mail this language newsletter free of charge to everyone. Send us your new address as soon as you can. Ƴra.

CLCPC MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monthly business meetings for the Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee are held the first Tuesday of the month in the small conference room of the Comanche Complex. At our August meeting we elected officers. They are:

Ronald Red Elk, president
Billie Kreger, vice-president
Charlene Tahdooahnippah, secretary
Barbara Goodin, treasurer

We invite you to come and be a part of the decisions that are made in language preservation. Be a part of the groundwork that is being laid for future generations. Be a part of our beautiful Comanche language.

PRODUCTS FOR SALE

New 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 includes 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. If we don't receive your preference, we will automatically send an audio cassette. \$25 includes s&h.

Picture Dictionary. A primer for learning the language explains the Comanche alphabet and the sound of each letter. \$10 includes s&h.

Comanche Song Book. Collection of 116 songs written in Comanche with an English translation for each song. \$10 plus \$3 s&h.

Comanche Flash Cards, set #1. A set of 48 cards showing a picture and the spelling of simple Comanche words. \$5 includes s&h.

Comanche Flash Cards, set #2. A complete new set of 48 different cards. \$5 includes s&h.

Comanche Flash Cards, set #3. Now available! \$5 includes s&h.

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 plus \$3.50 s&h; Adult sizes small through XL \$12 plus \$3.50 s&h; Adult sizes 2X and 3X \$15 plus \$3.50 s&h. Specify color and size when ordering.

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, 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 \$3.50 s&h.

Ball Caps. Three styles: Men's royal blue with red bill; Men's turquoise with southwest design on bill; and Lady's solid royal blue, all with Language Logo on front. \$10 plus \$3.50 s&h.

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

Note: If you are ordering multiple items, please e-mail us a list of items you will be ordering so we can give you a better price on shipping and handling. Our e-mail address is:

clcpc@comanchelanguage.org.

***Please include your e-mail address when ordering in case we need to contact you.**