

# NUMU TEKWAPUHA NOMNEEKATU NEWSLETTER

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The Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee

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*Editor: Barbara Goodin*

## “Letter From The President”

I want to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas, and a ~~Happy New Year!~~ ~~Happy Shoshone New Year!~~

**TSAA NUUSUKATU WAA HIMARU !!**

**(Merry Christmas!!)**

Billie Kreger

## BUSY SEASON FOR CLCPC

*by Barbara Goodin*

Since our last newsletter in September, we have all been busy with one event after another. It all began with the **COMANCHE NATION FAIR** held during the last week-end of September. If you didn't attend, you missed one of the best Fairs yet! All the tribal programs were on hand to give out information and lots of freebies to everyone who came by to visit. There were several activities that were held during the Fair, including a golf tournament, basketball tournament, horseshoe tournament, hand games and story telling contest, in addition to the pow-wow contests held in the arena. The parade on Saturday morning (although a long delay in the start-up) was the best one yet, with many new entries. I understand there will be even more categories and prizes for next year. The weather was absolutely beautiful, but warm.

The **Story Telling Contest** had more entries than past years, but we always encourage more participants to enter. The winners for the 2002 Story Telling Contest were:

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Margaret Poahway

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Beatrice Saupitty

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Edith Kassanavoid Gordon

We appreciate June Tahpay from Walters, Naomi Tehauno from Fletcher and Otto Tonips from Cyril for serving as judges for us. We know they had a difficult task.

The **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Shoshone Reunion** was a huge success, and exceeded all our expectations! Held October 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>,

we had more than 500 people sign in, with 140

It was non-stop activity from the moment our Shoshone relatives arrived, and capped off with a sharing of gifts and gourd dance and pow-wow on the last evening. We were all exhausted from the events, but it will be an experience I will always remember.

I have to commend the tribal employees for the outstanding job they did in preparation and maintenance, which was quite an awesome task for that many participants. The caterers were always a welcomed sight when meal time rolled around, and they did an outstanding job of keeping everyone satisfied. Our tribal administrator (and you know who you are!) was right out there emptying the trash cans when needed, and making sure everything ran smoothly. And it did, with the exception of a couple of glitches, which went unnoticed by all but a few of us. A big hats off to Michael Burgess, who stepping in to act as master of ceremonies when someone failed to show up. Mike, you did a superb job!

We've received some very positive feedback from those in attendance, and now it seems the next big decision is where to hold the 2003 Reunion!

Thank you (Ura) to each and every one of you who helped make this historic event such a huge success. We appreciate you all.

We are saddened to announce that Daisy St. Claire, who was a big part of the first two Shoshone Nations Reunions, passed away on October 26, 2002. She will be missed by all who came to know her from Comanche Country. Our sympathy goes out to her family.

The next event we participated in was the **Annual Native American celebration at Fort Sill** in November. We attended a luncheon at the Officer's Club, where the keynote address was given by Chadwick "Corntassel" Smith, the Principal Chief of the Cherokees. His interesting talk was followed by dance demonstrations by the Palmer family of Anadarko. It ended with a "two step" where the ladies asked the gentlemen to dance, and was a lot of fun for those trying to Indian dance for the first time! I encouraged some of our "eligible" ladies to grab a soldier and dance, but I guess they were too bashful!

Those who were able to attend were: Reaves and Clydia Nahwooks, Henry Nahwooks, Rosalie Attocknie, Betty Pete, Marie Parton, Gloria and Vernon Cable, Billie Kreger, Lucille McClung, Edith Gordon, Barbara and Kenneth Goodin, Zona Suminski (she was one of the bashful ones), Kathryn Lovejoy and Jan Woomavoyah.

The next event we attended was the **Governor's Award Ceremony** on November 19<sup>th</sup>, where **Ronald Red Elk** was recognized for his work in preserving the Comanche language.

Our group decided to make a day of it, since the awards were to be presented at 4:00 p.m. I had recently talked to Mary S. Linn, Assistant Curator of Native American Languages and Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Oklahoma, and she invited us for a visit. We took her up on it! Loaded into two cars, we left the Comanche Complex late that morning and journeyed to Norman, where we had lunch and then proceeded to Mary's office. She graciously showed us the facility that is just beginning to take shape under her direction, and made us feel right at home. We visited and shared stories and experiences until it was time for her to teach her next class, and we needed to make our way to the state capitol in Oklahoma City. We fought the afternoon traffic, and arrived shortly after 3:00 p.m., which I thought was a little early. Was I wrong! The rotunda of the capitol was filling up fast, and the 17

honorees were whisked away to another part of the area. We met Ron and part of his family as we arrived at the capitol steps, and proceeded inside. We found seats for ourselves (those traveling in the two vehicles were Billie Kreger, Gloria and Vernon Cable, Edith Gordon, Barbara and Kenneth Goodin, Betty Pete, Lucille McClung and Marie Parton), and others arriving were Zona Suminski (Ron's sister) and her granddaughter and great-granddaughter, and later Tribal Administrator Delphine Nelson and Chairman Johnny Wauqua. Charles Clark, editor of the Comanche Tribal Newspaper was also in attendance, along with more of Ron's family.

When the honorees for the 2002 Governor's Awards were escorted in, the audience broke out in applause. We heard some speeches, and saw some dancers and singers, but finally came the awards. Each honoree was introduced and a short summary of their achievements were read. Ron was the seventh one introduced. Charley and I were both vieing for good camera shots (I got a wonderful shot of Charley's back!), and as I took pictures I heard these wonderful lulus behind me! It made me feel so good, and I hope Ron had that same good feeling, knowing we were there cheering him on, and that all his hard work had not gone unnoticed. Zona had stationed herself on the balcony above, so she got some great video from there.

Afterwards we hurried down to the second floor reception and gave him our individual congratulations, drank some punch, grabbed a handful of cookies, and started on our way back home. It was beginning to get dark by then, and there was a beautiful sunset, a perfect ending to a wonderful day for all of us.

In our car on the way back we enjoyed good fellowship and brought back lots of old memories with "Do you remember...." Before long Lucille was saying, "Are we home already?" The ride home had gone by so fast. What is that old saying?... "Time flies when you're having fun." Well, good company has a lot to do with it, too.

The **Comanche Housing Authority** has been sponsoring hymn singings on the second Wednesday of the month. Different members of our group attend when possible (everyone is invited to come and sing, however), and they always enjoy themselves. The staff makes them feel welcomed and appreciated, and they treat them with snacks and refreshing drinks. I'm not sure how long the singing will continue, but I know our group will continue to be a part of it for the duration.

In between other activities, our group still meets to sing songs from the **Comanche Song Book**. We've just had more song books printed, and hope to have a CD and/or a cassette to accompany the song book soon.

Work continues on the **Comanche Dictionary**, getting it ready for publication. For those of you who are wondering, it is a very slow and tedious process. But we are progressing, and it will be a publication of which we can be proud.

#### **TRIBE'S CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR ELDERS**

Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup> will be the Comanche Tribe's Christmas Party for the Elders. This is the day everyone aged 62 and over will get a check for \$500, as mandated by a vote of the Comanche people at the Tribal Council. It is a day of recognition for our elders who have paved the way for those of us who follow. We will see many of their smiling faces at the luncheon that day, but some will be unable to attend due to health reasons, and others because they live far away. Keep all of them in your prayers this holiday season.

Our group will be there to sing Christmas songs in Comanche! We will have hand-out sheets to follow along, and hope more people will know the songs next year. We want to share those songs with you in this newsletter. Enjoy them! They were composed by elders who are no longer with us, but they left this legacy for us all.

#### **“Joy To The World”**

**by Deacon Topetchy**

Tsaa nūsukaa, Taa narūmi tsa kima.  
Oyetu tanu urarui. Tamu u kamakūna,  
U pihiku habituu. Nanūsuwūka?itu,  
Nanūsuwūka?itu, Nanūsuwūka?iku u tai kamakū  
tu.

#### **“Silent Night”**

**by Harry Wauahdooh**

Tsaa ta tukani, Puha tukani. Tatsinupi muyu  
nakwu.  
Tenanuu u wakatu kima.  
Taa narūmi?a nanūsutaiku.  
God ta tua tsa pitu?i. God ta tua tsa pitu?i.

#### **“O Come, All Ye Faithful”**

**by Harry Wauahdooh**

Oyetuka kima, Tsaatu tsa tai wūhpitu?i  
U nipana?ai tanu sūmu oyetu.  
Kimatsi u puni, God, ta tua tsa pitu?i.  
*Chorus:*  
U wakatuka kima, U wakatuka kima,

#### **“Jingle Bells”**

**by Velma Akoneto**

Wahima, wahima, Na okitu nūnu.  
Taa narūmi?a pahipuka tu na okitu nūnu.  
(*sing several times*)

#### **CHANGE IN NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION**

Some of you may have noticed we didn't have a publication in November, when it would have been our regular time to print. Well, we realized we were on the same print schedule as the Tribe's Newspaper, so we wanted to change our schedule and give you something different to read each month. Hence, with this publication we will print every other month starting in December.

#### **STORY TELLING TIME**

*(Editor's note: Winter is the traditional time for story telling. With that in mind, we bring you stories published in The Comanche and His Literature, (thesis) by Herwana Becker Barnard. The original story teller's name and the date told to author is included.)*

## **THE COMANCHE BOY WHO WAS CAPTURED**

**by Rachel Mow-wat (July 1940)**

Once, long ago, when the Comanches were out on the warpath, a boy became lost during a fight with the Osage. He was taken by the Osage as a captive, back to their country. There he was tied to the top of a "herkee" frame made of poles. His feet and palms were slashed.

At home, his mother, father and sister grieved for him. The sister's husband and two other warriors went out to search for him.

At last they sighted an Osage camp. Cautiously they remained in hiding until dark when they could approach with greater safety to look for the lost boy.

"You two stay here in ambush and watch the horses," said the brother-in-law after darkness had fallen. "I'll get him if I can find him."

The Osage, in the meantime, were making preparations for a great war dance, a ceremony celebrating their victory. The boy heard the Osage as they built a fire directly beneath his suspended body. Having had no food nor water during the long afternoon in the scorching sun, he now almost succumbed in his agony. He could hear the (drums) as they were beating out their dull rhythm nearby.

Stealthily creeping closer and closer to the fire, the brother-in-law suddenly heard groans above him. Looking up, he saw a body in the eerie light.

"Is that you?" he whispered hoarsely.

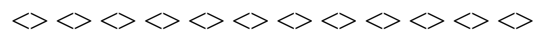
"Yes," came the weak answer, "But there's no use to try to get me and endanger your life. I can't live much longer." The boy could say no more.

"I'll go back to get my horse and then I shall take you home. I'll be back, do you hear?"

The faint answer, "Yes" came slowly.

Hurriedly, the brother-in-law secured his horse and one companion and returned. The big dance was now nearing its height, and the Osage, happily, had forgotten their captive. After cutting the ropes that bound the boy to the poles overhead, the men lowered him to the back of the horse, tied him there because he was too weak to sit, and started their journey home.

Not only the relatives, but the whole Comanche band welcomed the boy home and praised his rescuers. To show appreciation, the father gave the son-in-law one of his best horses as a reward.



## **BIG ARROW**

**by Randlett Parker (June 1940)**

Big Arrow was a great hunter, the best in the tribe. When others failed, it was he who came through with food for the hungry ones of the tribes. Big Arrow was a traveler as well as a great hunter. He decided one day to visit the tribes of the north. Knowing that he would be gone for quite some time, he called the hunters of the tribe and held a council to elect ones who were to carry on while he started out on his journey to the north. The tribe was well supplied with food for quite some time, but as the buffalo started their yearly drift southward, the young hunters found it increasingly difficult to find and kill game. Great skill was now required to stalk and kill the wary elk and the fleeting deer. As none of the young hunters were skilled in stalking the killing game, the tribe was without food for several days. What were they to do? If only Big Arrow would return!

Far to the north a figure sat in the council house with the Chiefs of the great tribes; it was Big Arrow listening to the leaders who spoke on behalf of their tribes. The slow beat of the drum must have lulled him to sleep for he saw himself standing on a strange mountain, and beside him stood a figure draped in a buffalo robe wearing a headdress of eagle feathers on which was fastened a pair of buffalo horns.

Turning to Big Arrow he said, "Be not afraid, come to the edge of this cliff for I have something to show you."

Big Arrow walked to the edge.

"Look," cried the voice. "Far out into the valley, what do you see, great hunter?"

What he saw was starving relatives and members of his tribe moving from one place to another searching for food. A rattling sound brought Big Arrow out of the dream. He looked up to see a Medicine Man dancing in front of him, chanting and shaking a rattle over his head. He was strangely familiar. Surely they had met before! Instantly Big Arrow knew; he was the figure on the mountain, the robe-clad Medicine Man of his dreams.

Morning found Big Arrow well on his way toward home. Familiar landmarks sped by as he headed southward. He arrived at the old camping grounds only to find that the tribe had moved on. Traveling west, he found them camped at the base of a great mountain. News spread that Big Arrow had returned. Good news it was, for now they would have food.

Big Arrow called all the hunters of the tribe together. Snares and traps were set out to catch rabbits and other small game. The hunters watched as Big Arrow walked to the edge of the forest and disappeared into the tall grass.

Later they saw what appeared to be a strange animal rear its head above the tall grass. They knew it was Big Arrow with his feet in the air, motionless and very still. Presently a deer appeared at the edge of the forest. Catching sight of the strange animal in the grass, the curious buck walked cautiously, sniffing the air as it went. As it neared him, Big Arrow, quick as a flash, picked up his bow and shot the deer. A yell went up among the hunters, who carried the deer into camp.

A big feast was held that night in honor of Big Arrow, the great hunter.

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### THE FEATHER HUNT

by Vida Tahchaw-wickah (January 1939)

Once there lived an Indian man, his wife and

two sons, who moved with other tribesmen from place to place, wherever the grass was good enough for their horses. The oldest son was married to a young and beautiful girl, the daughter of a well-known family of the village. Because the younger son was noted for his bravery and skill, he was admired by all, including the young bride. The older brother had long been jealous of him.

One day their parents, finding it necessary to be gone for a few days, left the three in care of the camp. The first day they were alone, the oldest son suggested that they go feather hunting. In their wandering they came to a river which was running full with water. Just on the bank was a tall tree at the top of which they could see a mother bird with two little ones near a nest.

"Hurry! Climb to the top and get them before they fly away," said the older brother. After the boy had started his climb, the brother directed his wife to chop down the tree.

"Surely you don't mean that!" she cried.

She pleaded, but when he threatened to kill her, she began weeping and chopping. Just as the boy gained the top and reached out to take the young birds, the tree began falling toward the water.

Realizing his plight, he moved to the side where he would be on top as it hit the water. Immediately afterwards he found himself floating downstream on the log in the rushing waters.

On the second day after that unfortunate event, his father and mother returned. Immediately they missed their favorite son. The older brother explained that the boy had gone hunting and had never returned. A search band was organized, but no where was the boy to be found.

On the third day, at dusk the log floated against a big stump near the bank. In the stillness at this spot the boy heard voices. Looking around, he saw people running toward him and realized he was by a friendly Indian village. The Indians welcomed him and listened

to his story. The daughter of the wealthy Chief of the tribe, taking an interest in the boy, volunteered to adopt him as a son. (Her) parents also were pleased with him.

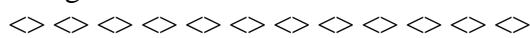
Six years later, showing himself worthy, he married a girl of the village. In the seventh year he told his family and foster mother that he had a longing to see his people again.

All the Chief's family made preparations for the journey. A week later, when they were near his parent's village, they made camp for the night. An Indian man from a neighboring tribe visiting them that night suddenly exclaimed, "Why, here is my long-long, dear friend. Do you know me?"

The two friends spent the evening recalling experiences of their youth. The next morning they arrived at the village, his own people ran out to greet them. Among the tribesmen he found his father and mother.

"But where is my brother?" the boy asked disappointedly. In his own heart he had forgiven him long ago.

"Upon hearing the news of your arrival," one old man volunteered, "he jumped upon his horse and galloped away at full speed through the village toward the hills."



### **THE HEALER AND THE HEALED**

**by Herman Asenap (June 1940)**

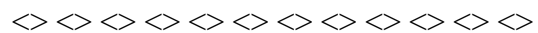
Once, long ago, a tribesman who wished to be a healer took a sick man with him to a lonely place on the top of a hill. Although he knew that sleep was necessary to produce a vision that would grant him the power, he spent the first night restless and anxious with no rest. He stayed another night with his patient. Becoming sleepy, he dozed off early. The vision came and a voice spoke clearly.

"Wake up at dawn. Go east below the hill. There you will find a creek with plenty of running water. Take a bath in that water and then make two dives toward the east and two dives toward the west. That will be four. When you come back the last time there will be an alligator there that will serve as a bridge for you

to cross over the stream."

Following directions, both men swam in the creek at the foot of the hill at dawn; they dived to the east and then to the west two times; and they found the alligator on the west side where they had been swimming. Uneasy and undecided, they stood there. Knowing they could receive no supernatural powers without obeying completely the voice of the Great Spirit, they walked across—and safely enough. On the other side they stopped to pray to the alligator and give thanks for guidance, mercy and kindness.

Suddenly the two men realized they had received the special powers they had sought: the sick man was made well, and the other became a Medicine Man.



### **EHKAP-TUH**

**by Rachel Mow-wat (June 1940)**

Once in the early days, Ehkap-tuh was out on a warpath with other warriors of his tribe. During a sudden and unexpected attack at the hide-out, many of his tribesmen were wounded or killed. Those who could get away scattered in all directions. Among the horses that were taken was Ehkap-tuh's fine war pony, and Ehkap-tuh soon found himself alone, hungry, tired and lost.

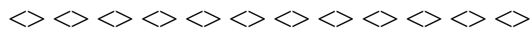
After sundown he seemed to feel someone following him. He turned around to look. There in the distance on the Plains behind him he saw a strange form in silhouette against the evening sky. He stopped and the form stopped, too. He walked on and the form again followed. Frightened and exhausted, when he came to the edge of the timber, he sat beside a tree to rest.

It wasn't long before weariness brought sleep and, with sleep, a dream in which the form of the phantom follower appeared. It spoke, "I have been following you, but because you were frightened and suspicious of me, I could not come close. I knew that you were in trouble, that you were hungry and tired and lost; and I wanted to help you." The Phantom paused.

"Tomorrow when you arise at dawn, go

straight east until you come to a creek. Refresh yourself in the waters of that stream. Then continue your journey eastward. Over the hill there are plenty of horses. Take one and ride it home.” The vision faded.

Early the next morning he did as he was told. Going toward the rising sun, he found the creek, took a bath, went over the hill, caught one of the horses that he found on the other side, and rode safely home.



### NU AH NUH

by Rachel Mow-wat (July 1940)

Long ago, Nuahnuh, a young Comanche woman, was camping with others of her tribe along a stream. The band suddenly found themselves surrounded by Osage. The scouts watching the camp had not been alert. Horses around the camp that had been tied and ready for a surprise attack and had been released and driven away. The Comanches ran for their lives on foot. In the rain of arrows from the enemy Nuahnuh was wounded. She fell to the ground and appeared to be dead. In the confusion the Osage ran over her body, killing others all around her. She had on a beautiful buckskin (dress) and moccasins, but no one stopped to notice them in the thick of the fight.

Some of the Comanches reached the mountains and the timber safely, but many,

many others lay wounded or dead. Nuahnuh feigned her lifeless appearance until all seemed quiet and safe after the enemy had gone. After dark she started moving a short distance at a time. Those that were alive came back to retrieve whatever possessions they could find. One woman who couldn't find her shoes saw the beaded moccasins on Nuahnuh, who she thought was dead.

“Well, my friend,” said the woman in Comanche. “You are dead and gone, but I'm still alive on this earth. I am sorry, but I need your shoes.”

Nuahnuh, recognizing the language of her own tribe, turned over and nearly frightened the woman out of her wits.

“I'll need my shoes. I'm not dead, I just appeared so because I thought you were the enemy. You can wear my shoes, friend, if you will see that I am carried safely to my people.”

Nuahnuh and many others who were found alive were carried to safety where a new camp was made.

### CLCPC MOTTO

“Soobesu Numannu samu oyetu Numa niwunnu?eta. Ukitsi nannu taasu Numa niwunnu hutui. Ubnitu taasu Numa niwunnu hutuine n.”

Carney Saupitty Sr.