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# NUMU TEKWAPUHA NOMNEEKATU NEWSLETTER

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The Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee

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Editor: Barbara Goodin

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## WASHINGTON D.C. TRIP

On May 8<sup>th</sup>, Rita Coosewoon and Geneva Woomavoyah Navarro traveled to Washington D.C. at the invitation of Senators Daniel Inouye and Ben Nighthorse Campbell to speak before a Senate Hearing on native languages.

I would like to present Ms. Navarro's written text, as she presented it to the panel of senators.

"Maruaweeka Nanunuma! Hello to you, my friends and relatives! Thank you for having the Comanches here. The beginning of the loss of our languages came from forced assimilation on our people and the Manifest Destiny policy. And it is still trying to be implemented through the English Only policies, which will leave ALL NATIVE AMERICAN CHILDREN BEHIND! We are losing our language. We have been trying everything to keep it from dying. Time is running out.

"My name is Geneva Woomavoyah Navarro of the Comanche Nation. I am 77 years old. Comanche was my first language. I have been teaching the Comanche language since 1990 to all who were interested. I am presently teaching the Comanche language at the new Comanche Nation College in Oklahoma.

"I am here today to urge your support for the S.575 bill to amend the Native American Languages Act that will provide support for the development of Native American language survival schools to assure the preservation and revitalization of Native American languages.

"Today I want to discuss four important main points, the first being the importance of the development of Native American

Language Survival Schools and Language Nests. Second, the support for Native American Language Survival School facilities and endowments, and third to encourage an amendment to S.575 that would exempt teachers of Native American languages in the public schools from having to obtain certification from outside their tribes. The fourth point I want to make is on the "No Child Left Behind" effect on Native languages.

"First, let's look at the importance of the language schools: The language Nests and the language survival schools are of great importance to revitalizing, continuing and preserving our languages.

"The language nests will teach the youngest, who will learn the quickest, retain it best and will continue it to fluency in order for our people to pass it on, leading to language survival schools.

"Next, I want to discuss the importance of your support for Native American Language Survival School facilities and endowments:

"Without your support and support from the society that has tried to kill our languages we will not be able to undo the damage that may lead to Native American language deaths.

"We need places (buildings) for these Nests and schools to nurture them. It is more than just physical work to develop these schools, it takes financial support that many Native American language programs do not have access to.

"Now I want to talk about teacher certification for native elder speakers:

"An amendment to S.575 would exempt teachers of Native American languages in

the public schools from having to obtain certification from outside their tribes.

“It’s urgent because our speakers are dying fast. We lost one of our best speakers a few months ago, and there are only a few fluent speakers who are elders that are able to teach. There are no fluent speakers under sixty years of age in our Comanche Nation.

“The fourth point I want to make is on the effects of the “No Child Left Behind” Act on Native languages:

“It will endanger our languages because the English Only act it is related to, is a racist policy that **only** acknowledges English. It doesn’t take into account our Native Languages that are endangered.

“We need an amendment to S.575 to assure that the English Only policy does not overpower Native languages, which will respect the fact that these very languages helped our country in WWI and WWII.

“In conclusion, I have discussed four points:

- The importance of Language Schools and Nests;
- The need for your support in amending S.575;
- Exemption of certification for native speakers who teach their language in public schools; and
- The “No Child Left Behind” Act will endanger all Native American children.

Soobesꞑ Nꞑmꞑnꞑ Sꞑmꞑoyetꞑ numu niwꞑnꞑ etꞑ. Ukitsi nꞑnꞑ tꞑasꞑ nꞑmꞑniwꞑnꞑ hutui. Ubꞑnitu tꞑasꞑ nꞑmꞑniwꞑnꞑ hutui nꞑnꞑ

(Translation: A long time ago we all spoke Comanche. Now we will all speak Comanche again. From now on we will speak Comanche forever.)”

(\*Editor’s Note: The Comanche Language Committee was elated that Ms. Coosewoon and Ms. Navarro were invited to Washington D.C. We knew they would represent the Comanche people well, and

that our voices would be heard through them. Many tribes were in attendance for the hearing, and we pray the senators will hear the plea of all native people and not let our beautiful native languages die.)

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### BOOK SIGNING

The book signing for Dr. William C. Meadows’ book, *Comanche Code Talkers of World War II*, was very successful. Many family members of the code talkers turned out and shared photos and other memorabilia with us. The family of Simmons Parker brought a hand made quilt that has the image of each code talker with his name embroidered on it. Beautiful! The daughters of Robert Holder were in attendance, along with a granddaughter who brought many items she’s gathered and probably has enough information of her own to write a book about his life. Rose Red Elk and Zona Suminski, daughter and sister, respectively, of Roderick “Dick” Red Elk, each brought photos and other mementos to share. His brother, Ronald was also in attendance.

We were very pleased to see Marion Kassaravoid (wife of Forrest) present, and the twin daughters of Willis Yackeschi, Patricia Bread and Berthina Yackeschi. On behalf of the (Wellington) Mihecoby family, Delores Wooth Karty was there to take pictures of all the activities. (If we overlooked any other family members, please forgive us – it was a hectic day.)

A welcome was given by Delphine Nelson, tribal administrator, and a proclamation read. It stated:

### PROCLAMATION

Declaration of Comanche Code Talker Day  
*Whereas*, the Comanche Nation has existed since time immemorial and long predates the existence of the Nation, established the inherent sovereign powers and rights of Comanche self-governments; and

*Whereas*, The Comanche Nation is dedicated to the progress and enhancement of the people of the Comanche Nation; and

*Whereas*, Comanche Code Talker Day will provide recognition that these men are true Comanche Warriors; and

*Whereas*, Comanche Code Talker Day will affect every aspect of life in the Comanche Community, educating our people about the day that our warriors fought for what we all have today, freedom; and

*Whereas*, the local community of tribal members will be encouraged to share in this celebration of Comanche Code Talker Day.

Therefore, I, Johnny Wauqua, Chairman of the Comanche Nation, do hereby declare May 16, 2003, as Comanche Code Talker Day, and urge the Comanche community to participate in, and to celebrate the bravery of our Comanche warriors for fighting the biggest battle of all, freedom.

Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the Comanche Nation of this 16<sup>th</sup> Day of May, 2003. Johnny Wauqua, Chairman.”

Ms. Nelson provided copies of the proclamation to family members. Officers of the Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation were introduced, family members present were recognized, and Dr. Meadows gave a short address. Everyone was invited to partake of the refreshment table and visit while Dr. Meadows signed copies of his book.

It was a time for the families of the men who had shared so much in their war time experiences to visit and get acquainted, and a time for the rest of us to let them know how much we appreciated what their loved one had done for our country.

Our thanks to the family members who were able to come and be a part of this wonderful day.

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CODE TALKER BOOK  
STILL AVAILABLE

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We still have copies of the *Comanche Code Talkers of World War II* book available. For your copy, send \$24.95 + \$4.50 s&h (Total \$29.45) to: C.L.C.P.C., P.O. Box 3610, Lawton OK 73502. If we run out of books before your check or money order reaches us, we will return your check or money order immediately. All books sent by Priority Mail (3 day delivery).

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### HONORING OUR ELDER SPEAKERS

On Sunday afternoon of May 25<sup>th</sup>, the Executive Board of the Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee assembled in the Gymnasium of the Comanche Complex. Our special invited guests were the Comanche speakers who had worked to compile the New Comanche Dictionary.

We began with a catered meal at 1:00 p.m. to allow those attending church time to travel to the Complex. Guests were told they could invite family members to come with them, but they were not told the exact reason they were there.

After the meal, a special program was planned and the general public was invited to attend. We had several more people arrive at that time.

Billie Kreger, president, and Ronald Elk, immediate past president, presented gifts to all the speakers who had helped with the dictionary. Some of the speakers had been with the dictionary project since it began in the mid 1990s, others joined during the last year or two as the project came to an end. We appreciated them all and wanted to show them how special they all are to the Comanche Language Committee. This project could not have been completed without their help and input.

Many pictures were taken by family members and others attending the honoring, and the look on our speaker's faces made it all worthwhile. Some had tears of joy and others expressed surprise that we had planned this event for them. Our

Comanche speakers are our TREASURES, and this was just a small way of letting them know how much they mean to all of us.

In alphabetical order, those honored were:

**Rosalie Attocknie**  
**Gloria Cable**  
**Vernon Cable**  
**Rita Coosewoon**  
**Edith Kassanavoid Gordon**  
**Marie Haumpy**  
**Lucille Mclung**  
**Reaves Nahwooks**  
**Geneva Navarro**  
**Ray Niedo**  
**Marie Parton**  
**Betty Pete**  
**Carney Saupitty Sr.**  
**Winfred (Bud) Yackeschi**

Urako to all of you!

(\* Dr. Nahwooks and Mr. Saupitty were absent on that day.)

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### FUND RAISERS

We've been holding fund raisers to help defray expense for the upcoming Shoshone Reunion, to be held in Fort Washakie, Wyoming.

Most recently we had a Bingo/Food Sale at the Comanche Elderly Center and a Pow-Wow at the Comanche Complex Gym. We want to thank everyone who came out to show their support.

The Comanche Tribe, through the Comanche Gaming Commission, provided funds for a chartered bus to go to Fort Washakie. We are very appreciative for that, as it allowed us to concentrate on other expenses that will be incurred by our elders during the trip.

Now, read on for more information about the Fort Washakie trip.

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### ANNUAL SHOSHONE REUNION

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Shoshone Nations Reunion will be held June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup> in Fort Washakie, Wyoming. With the Comanche Tribe providing transportation, there is no cost to ride the bus. However, there will be other costs involved: food and lodging.

If you are interested in going, here is some brief information for you:

1. It will be a two day trip, leaving at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 21<sup>st</sup> from the parking lot of the Comanche Complex.

2. The 1<sup>st</sup> night will be spent in Colorado Springs, where you will need to make room reservations. You will also need a room at the same place on the return trip on Wednesday, June 26<sup>th</sup>.

3. The bus will arrive in Lander, Wyoming, on Sunday evening, June 22<sup>nd</sup>. You will need to make room reservations for four nights there. Or, there is camping available on the pow-wow grounds where all activities will take place. Many will be camping.

4. The bus will leave the motel each morning at 6:30 a.m. to take everyone to the Reunion site at Fort Washakie, and will return to the motel each evening after 8:00 p.m.

5. ALL MEALS (breakfast, lunch and dinner) will be provided by the Wind River Reunion Organization during the three day event.

6. You will be required to provide for your own meals on the two day trip to Wyoming and the two day trip returning to Lawton. Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and small canned meats are just a couple of ideas. Hand wipes are a good idea, too.

7. There is ample room underneath the bus to store your suitcases, sleeping bags, etc.

8. The bus will leave to return home on Thursday morning, June 26<sup>th</sup>. Again, the first night of travel will be spent in Colorado Springs.

9. The bus will arrive back at the Comanche Complex at approximately 7:00 p.m. on Friday, June 27<sup>th</sup>.

If you are interested in going, you must get your registration sent in. We must know immediately in order for your seat to be reserved for you.

For registration forms, or information packets, please call Barbara Goodin at 580-353-3632 or Billie Kreger at 580-429-3866. At this time there are a few seats left on the bus, barring any cancellations.

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### **Tentative Schedule for Reunion**

Sunday afternoon – Visiting & booth set-up, Rocky Mountain Hall

#### **Day 1**

7:00 Prayer, cedaring, posting of flags, and registration.

8:00 Breakfast & booths open

9:00 Welcome/Greeting by Shoshone Business Council & Pledge of Allegiance by Fort Washakie School of Shoshone language class. (Daily)

9:30 Introduction of Shoshonean Bands & Tribal History Presentations (Daily)

12:00 Lunch

1:30 Tour of Fort Washakie area, Hot Springs, Day School, Block House, Episcopal Church, Greeves Gallery, BIA Compound and Cemeteries. Also workshops in teepees, old style singing and history, and history of Wind River Reservation.

3:00 Demonstrations of gourd dancing, basket weaving, inspirational singing and open style show.

5:00 Supper Break

7:00 Indian dancing, hand games, card games, round dance singing, and giveaways at pow-wow grounds.

#### **Day 2:**

7:00 through 12:00 – same as Day 1

1:00 Tour of the Crowheart Area, Winkleman Dome Oil Fields, Diverson Dam, Bull Lake, Crowheart Butte, Store, and School, and Big Wind Hall. Also, workshops of storytelling, language and a Sacajewea presentation.

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3:00 Demonstrations of cradle board making and teepee set up

5:00 through 7:00 Same as Day 1

#### **Day 3:**

7:00 through 9:00 – same as Day 1 & 2

9:30 Introduction of Bands, tribal history presentations, and Eastern Shoshone recognition ceremony.

12:00 Lunch

1:30 Indian game demonstrations and competitions, horse parade at pow-wow grounds.

5:00 Supper Break

7:00 Wind River Giveaway, Indian Dancing, Hand Games, Round Dance Singing, Card Games, all at the Pow-Wow Grounds.

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### **ITINERARY FOR C.L.C.P.C.**

#### **Saturday, June 21<sup>st</sup>:**

7:00 a.m. Depart from Comanche Complex

7:00 p.m. Arrive in Colorado Springs

#### **Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>:**

8:00 a.m. Depart Colorado Springs for WY

5:00 p.m. Arrive Lander, Wyoming

#### **Mon., June 23<sup>rd</sup> through Wed., June 25<sup>th</sup>:**

7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Shoshone Reunion

#### **Thursday, June 26<sup>th</sup>:**

8:00 a.m. Depart Lander, Wyoming

5:00 p.m. Arrive in Colorado Springs

#### **Friday, June 27<sup>th</sup>:**

7:00 a.m. Leave Colorado Springs

7:00 p.m. Arrive at the Comanche Complex

\*All times approximate & subject to change.

\*The bus will stop at mealtime.

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### **TAA NŪMŪ TEKWAŪ?HA**

### **TŪBOOPŪ**

### **(OUR COMANCHE DICTIONARY)**

### **IS NOW AVAILABLE**

After years of compiling, our new Comanche Dictionary, put together entirely by Comanche people, is now available.

It contains over 6,000 Comanche words, and including the English to Comanche section, that makes well over 12,000 entries.

It is a publication we can be proud of, and it is an ideal way to preserve our language.

It has an introduction that lists all the speakers, and others, who were involved in this huge project. Several of those speakers are now deceased.

There is a Comanche Sounds and Alphabet pronunciation guide to help the beginning learner.

To order a New Comanche Dictionary, send a check or money order for \$34 (includes shipping & handling) to: C.L.C.P.C., P.O. Box 3610, Lawton OK 73502, and your new dictionary will be sent the same day by Priority Mail. Please include your e-mail address in order for us to contact you in case there are any delays.

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 23<sup>rd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>: 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Shoshone Nations Reunion. Fort Washakie, Wyoming

July 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>: Comanche Homecoming, Sultan Park, Walters

September 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>: Comanche Nation Fair

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## 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 shipping & handling.

**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. Examples of many simple words and brief sentences. Includes worksheet/coloring pages and an English to Comanche vocabulary list. \$10 include s&h.

**Comanche Song Book.** Collection of 116 songs written in Comanche with an English translation for each song. \$10 plus \$3 s&h. \*(CD should be available by next newsletter.)

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

**Comanche Flash Cards, set #2.** A complete new set of 48 different cards. \$5 plus \$1 s&h.

**Comanche Flash Cards, set #3.** COMING IN OCTOBER !!

**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 "N#m# Tekwapu" written in center. \$5 includes s&h.

**Bumper Stickers.** NO LONGER AVAILABLE

**Collar/Hat Pins.** NO LONGER AVAILABLE

**Earrings.** NO LONGER AVAILABLE

**Buttons.** NO LONGER AVAILABLE

*\*When ordering, if you have an e-mail address, please include it in case we need to contact you.*