
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”

Maruaweka:

It’s been a good summer and I hope it stays that way.

Our group made a trip to Texas in June to visit our friend, Linda Pelon. She arranged a canoe trip down the Trinity River in the greater Dallas area. It was hot but it was fun, now that I can look back and recollect my thoughts about it. It really was interesting to see fish, turtles and snakes that live in the river, even though it looked like nothing could survive in that brown, murky water.

We visited a piap̄ nakutaba?i huupi. It was bent over like it might have been pointing to the river — maybe a place where you could cross safely to the other side.

The next day we visited a look-out that could have been a smoke signaling site. If you stood on the edge you could see about 30 miles away. While we were in that area we saw red cedar trees that grow quite abundantly. I had never seen cedars grow like that — they were about 50 feet tall. They could have been used for teepee poles. Haa, me.

A short distance from this site, there was a natural spring. The water just trickled by as we stood there looking at it. This site would have been a perfect place to set up camp, don’t you think?

I want to quote Linda Pelon’s description of the Story Telling Place we visited that evening:

“The Story Telling Place, located on a high ridge with a panoramic view of the forest and river valley, is located in the realm of the sacred from the point of view of a Comanche spiritual topography. It is above and apart from the nearby springs and creeks that define the preferred camping areas. The mixed hardwood forest and the prairie grass/wildflower meadows on the ridge provide habitat for wildlife associated with

spiritual power. Bear, hawks, coyotes, owls, fox, and bobcats are some of the animals known to roam this area and most are still present. These spiritually powerful animals are the main characters in many Comanche stories.

Finally, the physical characteristics of this natural feature make it uniquely functional as a place to tell stories. It is a bowl shaped indentation, a naturally occurring amphitheater in the white rock — that glows in the moonlight. On a recent visit to this site by members of the Comanche Language and Culture Preservation Committee it was noted that the facial expressions of storytellers could be clearly seen in the moonlight illuminating this geological feature. Many important Comanche stories have as the main character a Giant Owl who lives in the moon and comes down to earth and interacts with the animals of the forest. Stories told with a full moon above, and the surrounding forest populated with spiritually powerful animals, would have made a lasting impression on an audience.”

On Sunday we visited a nice older gentleman by the name of Mr. Briggs. He took us to his home where a very old red cedar grows. He told us the tree is about 300 years old. It was leaning to the east, I think. I’m not sure where it was pointing, but it was exciting to see the rings where it had been stobbed down to make it stay that way. Very interesting. I wish everyone could have seen it. Just think, our ancestors probably stobbed it down to tell others to go that way, or who knows?

Ura, Billie

BRIEFING ON A COMANCHE STORYTELLING PLACE

by *Jimmy Arterberry*
August 6, 2002

“A long time ago, it is said” (soobesu), begins all Comanche stories.¹

In the oral tradition of creation, migration and shared relationships, Comanche people identify the importance of time, place and social purpose.

Life for a child starts exactly as the ancestors did, by oral instruction and visual aid.

Comanche culture relies on the ability to identify the elements of a social structure and the understanding of those relationships.

Storytelling places are conducive to the psychological and physiological training of Comanche children, and considered primary to the overall well being of man and nature.

Consensus of the Comanche people, to the location of storytelling places, enters into sacred dimensions, which are to be discussed only by the Comanche people. The Trinity Forest storytelling place is located within the bounds of the required elemental characteristics for determining the location of a preferred campsite. Water supply, food sources, shelter, safety and access to forage for horses are required characteristics, for such a site.²

The Great Trinity Forests’ White Rock Heritage District has been established as a “Comanche Storytelling Place,” by proclamation of the Comanche people.³

Ethno historical research, archeological documentation, cartographic documentation and consultation between the Comanche Nation and the U.S. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers, emphatically demonstrates the necessary components for the selected audience, are found at this preferred location.⁴

Shared elemental components are expressed through idioms used in all stories of the Comanche people, emphasizing the importance of relationships between man and nature. The limestone component found at the Great Trinity Forest Storytelling Place, located on the ridgeline in Devon Anderson Park, within the White Rock Heritage District, determines the type and amount of information that is to be presented, and at what time of the day and year that information could and would be made available. There are many traditional ways, in making the determination as to where and when these lessons should and could

occur. Relationships between all of the elemental components, the receiving component included, would be defined and refined through the use of storytelling at the chose location.

The presence of Comanche people in the state of Texas and particularly in the Dallas area, in relation to this writing, has been illusive to the scientific communities in recent times, although descendants of the former inhabitants recognized by the aforementioned in their previous processes, continue to exercise inherent values described in relation to the geography.

Comanche people inherently conceive the importance of honoring the traditional values of the ancestors. Without defined relationships and traditional values, nature will not survive man, man will not survive nature and the results shall be exact, furthering the significance of identifying and protecting such a site, as the Dallas County, Texas, Comanche Storytelling Place, with all of its vital components.

¹ Comanche Texts, Elliot Canonge, University of Oklahoma, 1958

² The Comanches, Lords of the South Plains, Wallace & Hoebel, University of Oklahoma Press, 1952, pg. 14

³ Comanche Nation Proclamation, 2002

⁴ Native American territorial Ranges in the Central Region of Texas, A Report Prepared to Support NAGPRA Consultation, May 2001, Published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District.

COMANCHE NATION JUNIOR COLLEGE BEGINS CLASSES

by Barbara Goodin

The new Comanche Nation Junior College opened in late August with classes held in the Education Building at the Comanche Complex.

The CLCPC was asked by Ronnie Burgess, Director of the Comanche Nation Higher Education Program, to help set up the Comanche language classes that are being offered to students. We began by adopting a set of Teaching Standards. They are:

1. The teacher must be a fluent speaker,
2. have teaching experience,
3. demonstrate a desire to teach, and
4. demonstrate a willingness to use the Comanche

alphabet and official Comanche spelling system. 5. The above standards may be revised as circumstances warrant in the future.

Our next step was to develop a syllabus and to certify teachers who would qualify to teach Comanche language classes. Rita Coosewoon and Geneva Navarro were awarded Comanche language teaching certificates. Curriculum vitae were submitted for both ladies to Mr. Burgess, who in turn sent them to Dr. Lessley Price, Director of Distance Learning at Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

We then developed language learning books for students and teaching manuals for the teachers. We also utilized other teaching material in order to prepare our teachers for the task they were about to undertake.

We appreciate being given the opportunity to be a small part of the Comanche Nation College, which has been a dream of the Comanche people for some time. Teaching the Comanche language in all venues has been a dream of the CLCPC. We are happy to work in partnership to make this a reality for us all.

COMANCHES TRAVEL TO ELKHART, KANSAS

by **Deloris Karty**

Five Comanche elders made a trip to Elkhart, Kansas, with Jim Arterberry, the Comanche Nation's Repatriation Specialist, to rebury the remains of a small Comanche child in a remote area of the Cimarron National Grasslands.

The Comanche elders were Ava Doty, Margaret Thomas, Ray Niedo, Albert Clark and Deloris Wooth Karty. Three of the elders represented the Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee.

The group left the Comanche Complex around 10:00 a.m. on June 18th and traveled northwest toward the Panhandle of Oklahoma, for a trip that would cover about 650 miles in two days. All along the way we enjoyed the beautiful wheat fields and hills and creeks abundant with green foliage, and cattle grazing in the fields. We reflected on our mission to the Panhandle area and the early history of the Comanche people.

We sang Comanche hymns as we traveled and Ray sang a few other songs, including some cowboy songs!

We arrived in Elkhart around 5:30 p.m. and checked in at the El Rancho Motel, with wonderful and friendly proprietors. Our host, Mark Mitchell, a zone archeologist with the National Forest Service, with offices in Elkhart, met us later. He is knowledgeable of the early history of this area and was aware that this was considered Comanche Country (as well as most of Texas!). We met Mr. Joe Hartman, the District Ranger and Administrator of the Cimarron National Grassland, and his staff.

In the Forest Service Headquarters in Elkhart, we received the remains of the small Comanche child which were to be reburied. Bill Voelker, Margaret's nephew, met us at the headquarter's office and assisted in preparing the remains in the traditional Comanche manner, with smoking and prayers. Albert assisted Bill in the preparation. (An indoor preparation was necessary, due to a fire ban on the open Grasslands. Mr. Hartman had spent two weeks in Colorado, where the forest fires were raging and causing devastating damage to the forest and homes. Members of our group understood the necessity for the fire ban in the open area.)

The group then traveled north from Elkhart to a remote grassland location. At the location, we unloaded from the vehicles and walked a short distance to the open burial site. The wind was blowing very hard, making it rather difficult to stand still very long. The remains were removed from the container in which it was transported and placed into the open grave site. Margaret sang a special Comanche song, which she had composed for the burial of a child. Each member of the group placed a handful of soil over the remains. Ray led a closing prayer in Comanche and the grave was closed. Stones found in the area were placed on the top as a marker.

We then visited with the Forest Service personnel about the grasslands area and the vegetation and shrubs to determine if some might have been gathered for medicinal purposes by early Comanches. A search was also made for arrow heads, which was reported to be scattered

throughout the area. None were found, however. It was felt the Grassland's personnel appreciated the early history of these lands and respect the Comanche people's claims to the area.

Mark Mitchell has been instrumental in working to recognize the Comanche people's concerns about the proper handling of human remains and is to be commended for his efforts in this endeavor. He did a great job!

Jim Arterberry handled everything very well, including taking excellent care of our elders, and is to be commended for doing his job in an outstanding manner. He brought us back through the west side of the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, which was a beautiful experience after our long journey from the dry grasslands and panhandle area. Many thanks to the Comanche Nation's Food Distribution Program for the use of their van. We appreciate their generosity in making transportation available for the Comanche elders. It was a safe and comfortable journey. Many Uras.

Elkhart, Kansas, is located in the southwest corner of Kansas, just north of the Oklahoma Panhandle. It is a very dry part of the country, but huge wheat fields with irrigation and many oil wells can be seen across the flat horizon. Drought conditions seem to be a way of life in the area, but the farmers and business people seem to be thriving and doing very well. Wildlife seems to have been abundant in the early history of this area. Buffalo and antelope were plentiful, making the area a favorite hunting ground for the Comanche people. The Forest Service personnel told us there were quail, turkey, pheasant, lesser prairie chickens and deer in the area. We did see a beautiful pheasant and one lone antelope in the fields.

The District Ranger of the Grasslands, Joe Hartman, and his staff have invited the Comanche people to come back to visit the Comanche Grasslands. He said Comanche people would always be welcome. (Ava said she thought Joe was a Comanche descendant! He said he was part Indian!) He has written a paper entitled "The Cornerstone of Kansas," which provides historical information about the grasslands area.

A STORY ABOUT PRAIRIE CHICKENS

submitted by Deloris Karty

A long time ago, just before the coming of white civilization, there was an abundance of prairie chickens (pakaw koko) on the open plains. They were beautiful birds with brown, black and white plumage. The males became brilliant in color during the mating season, to attract the female birds.

The Numunuu living on the open plains would often hear the pakaw koko, when the air was still and quiet.

Early one morning, one of the elders woke up several of the young boys and told them to follow him to the open meadows to watch the pakaw koko. He instructed them to move slowly, as they approached the area. They didn't want to frighten the birds away. They could hear sounds like drums, beating at a steady beat, and the sounds of crowing — like "kaw, kaw," and the rustling in the brush. As they drew nearer the sound, they crawled very quietly and slowly until they came to a small clearing in the meadow.

There were many pakaw koko moving in a circle around a big clump of tall, blue colored prairie grass. The male bird's wings were extended out wide to the side with the wing tips pointing to the ground and they were shaking them as they pranced around. The brilliance of the colors of brown, black and white of their wings shown brightly in the early morning light. The females did not join in the male bird's movements, but scurried in and around all of the dancers. As the male birds moved around, they made a sound from deep within their throats, which resembled the sound of drums, beating at a steady pace. They were so regal looking as they showed off their plumage for the females.

As the people moved away from the pakaw koko, they talked among themselves about how the sounds of the bird's mating calls resembled the sounds made by the Apache Fire Dancers as they dance around the fire. The elder told the young men that the pakaw koko dance happens during the Fall season and only during the early morning hours.

The pakaw koko was once plentiful on the

open prairie, but with the coming of modern civilization, their number has decreased greatly and they can only be found in unpopulated areas.

**11th ANNUAL COMANCHE NATION FAIR
September 27-28-29, 2002**

**Comanche Nation Headquarters
7 miles North of Lawton, OK**

HONORING

**ALL COMANCHE NATION CHAIRMEN
“Preserving Our Heritage and Protecting Our Future”**

Tentative Schedule

Friday, September 27th :

- 5:00 p.m. Opening Reception
Cedaring Ceremony
- 6:00 p.m. Opening Ceremony
- 6:30 p.m. Grand Entry
Contest (Tiny Tots)

Saturday, September 28th :

- 8:00 a.m. Golf Tournament,
Chickasha Golf Course.
- 8:00 a.m. Fun Run
3 on 3 Basketball Tournaments
- 11:00 a.m. Parade
- 12:00 p.m. Concert
- 3:00 p.m. Gourd Dancing
- 7:00 p.m. Teen Dance
- 7:30 p.m. Grand Entry
Contests

Sunday, September 29th :

- 8:00 a.m. Spirit Walk
- 10:00 am Horseshoe Tournament
- 11:00 am Church Service on the grounds
- 12 Noon Dinner
- 1:00 pm Registration -Story Telling
Contest
- 1:30 pm Story Telling Contest
- 2:00 pm Gourd Dancing
Contests
- 5:00 pm Honorees

Pow-Wow Head Staff

Comanche Nation Princess . . . Randi Attocknie
Master of Ceremonies Wallace Coffey &
Thomas Chibitty
Head Gourd Dancer Butch Tahsequah
& The OK Gourd Club

Head Man Dancer Ben Norberto
Head Lady Dancer . . . Lanette Tahchawwickah
Host War Dance Singers . . . No Shame Singers
Host Gourd Dance Singers The Fabulous
Thunderbirds
Arena Directors Gary Bob Tenequer &
Freddie Banderas
Honor Guard C.I.V.A. & War Scouts
Co-Hosts All Comanche Organizations

Contests

Junior/Senior Division:
Buckskin / Cloth Traditional / Grass
Jingle / Fancy Shawl Straight / Fancy
and Tiny Tots

**STORY TELLING CONTEST
TO BE HELD**

by Barbara Goodin

The Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee will sponsor the Story Telling Contest to be held during the 10th Annual Comanche Nation Fair. Cash prizes will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners.

The event will be held at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 29, 2002, on the grounds of the Comanche Complex, north of Lawton. Registration will begin at 1:00 p.m.

Stories must be told in Comanche only — no English allowed! Keta taiboo tekwapu! Stories will be judged by a panel of judges. After all contestants have told their stories, while scores are being tabulated, the floor will open to anyone wishing to share a story, either in Comanche or English. The cash prizes will be awarded on the spot.

Last year’s contest had the largest number of contestants yet, but we hope to break that record this year. So get those stories ready! Video cameras and tape recorders will be welcome.

**2002 SHOSHONE REUNION
October 10th - 11th - 12th, 2002**

Thursday, October 10th :

6:00 p.m. Registration, Reception and
Get Acquainted Session

Friday, October 11th :

7:00 a.m. Sunrise Blessings
 8:00 a.m. Breakfast
 9:00 a.m. Welcome
 Introductions
 Purpose
 10:00 a.m. Keynote Address
 10:45 a.m. Panel Response
 12:00 p.m. LUNCH
 1:00 p.m. Workshops:
 ● Language Exchange
 ● Music
 ● Storytelling
 ● Religion
 4:00 p.m. Demonstrations:
 ● Horse Hair Braiding
 ● Buckskin Fringing
 ● Hide Tanning
 6:00 p.m. DINNER
 7:30 p.m. Games
 Dances
 DISPLAYS: Genealogy, History, etc.
 TOURS: 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 12th :

7:00 a.m. Sunrise Blessings
 8:00 a.m. Breakfast
 9:00 a.m. Welcome
 10:00 a.m. Keynote Address
 10:45 a.m. Panel Response
 12:00 p.m. LUNCH
 1:00 p.m. Workshops:
 *will vary from Friday
 4:00 p.m. Demonstrations:
 *will vary from Friday
 6:00 p.m. DINNER
 7:30 p.m. Games
 Dances
 DISPLAYS: Genealogy, History, etc.
 TOURS: 4:00 p.m.

**COMANCHE NATION TO CELEBRATE
 NATIVE AMERICAN MONTH**

Comanche Nation is gearing up for the 2nd Annual Native American month tours in November. They are now signing up schools for tours at the Comanche Nation Complex. Last year's tours were an overwhelming success with 29 schools and more than 1850 students participating.

This year's tours will run for one hour and 15 minutes each, divided into segments of 30 minutes for tribal history and traditional story telling, 30 minutes of touring the modern office complex of the Comanche Nation, and 15 minutes of sampling Native American foods.

Because of last years unexpected volume and interest, the 2002 Fall program has added guidelines which should make it an even better experience for all involved.

The tours will:

- be for students in the 5th through 12th grades,
- be limited to 50 people per tour group,
- take place Monday through Thursday, November 4th through 22nd, 2002,
- be scheduled for 8:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.; 9:45 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.; and 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and
- be arranged on a first come, first served basis until all slots are filled.

To schedule a tour or for additional information, call the Comanche Nation's Public Information Office at (580) 492-3752.

**PROPOSED COMANCHE
 CULTURAL CENTER/MUSEUM**

by Ronald Red Elk

I would like to tell you about a project that a group of Comanches have been planning. And also to seek your help in making this vision become a reality so all future Comanches can benefit in its usage.

The Project is a Comanche Tribal Cultural Center/Museum. The planning process has been very extensive and thoroughly done by a very knowledgeable and dedicated group of Comanches.

The key recommendations made by the group are:

- Mission and governance: Establish a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization to plan, implement and manage the Comanche Cultural Center/Museum.
- Purpose/Function of the Facility and Organization: Its primary purpose should be to serve the Comanche people as a meeting place, a place for community activities, a place for Comanche people to learn about themselves, their history, arts and culture

through exhibitions, public programs and archival resources.

- Scope of Facility (size, cost): The facility should be of sufficient size to accommodate all of the functions and purposes defined by the group. Approximately 50,000 square feet.
- Funding (Planning, Design, Construction, Start-up and Annual Operations): Establish a fund raising/grant writing office to seek major funding required for design, construction, start-up and annual operations costs.
- Location: Identify a location or site that is adjacent to Interstate 44 in the Lawton area.
- Organizational Policies and Procedures: Develop policies and procedures that address the Cultural Center/Museum issues regarding collections, exhibits, personnel, finances, board and advisory panel, public programs, operations, public relations and use of media.
- Collections: The collections, including archival collections, should focus on objects that are most available and most affordable. Generally, collections should focus on oral history documentation, family photograph collections, contemporary art and object donations.
- The Role of Art in the Facility and Program: The facility and program of the Cultural Center/Museum should include art as a basis for its architecture and programing.
- Staff Development and Training: Create a variety of learning opportunities to begin development of workers to fill the many roles that are required to operate the Cultural Center/Museum.
- Public Programs: The Cultural Center/Museum should develop a full range of public programs that address Comanche people's interests.

We ask for your support and invite any questions you may have. More information will be upcoming in the months to come.

(*Editor's Note: Ronald is a member of the Cultural Center/Museum ad hoc committee, which is chaired by Dr. Reaves Nahwooks.)

PRODUCTS FOR SALE

Comanche Lessons, set #1. A set of four Comanche

Lessons, complete with a word list for each lesson and an audio tape. \$25 includes s&h.

Comanche Dictionary. A 133 page soft bound dictionary begins with an introduction of the spelling system and the alphabet sounds. Offers a Comanche to English section, followed by an English to Comanche section. \$22 plus \$3.50 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. "Coming Soon! An audio tape to accompany song book!

Comanche Flash Cards. A set of 48 cards showing a picture and the spelling of simple Comanche words. \$5 plus \$1 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.

Bumper Stickers. NUMU TEKWAPU in large letters, with Comanche Language Preservation on the second line. \$2 each includes s&h.

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, 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.

Collar/Hat Pins. Language logo complete with feathers, 3/4" long. \$4 includes s&h.

Earrings. Same design as collar/hat pins. \$8 total

Lapel Pins. 1 inch Cloisonne pin. \$5 includes s&h.

Buttons. Two styles. #1: "Numu Tekwapu" and #2: "Ihka Niha, Numu Tekwapu. \$2 each includes s&h. Specify button style number.

**If you have an e-mail address, please include it in case we need to contact you about your order*