

NUMU TEKWAPUHA NOMNEEKATU NEWSLETTER

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The Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee

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“From The President”

Ronald Red Elk

Haa Maruweku Numunuu,

Ihka taa numu tekwapu?ha suabitai?kupu ?a ?suwaitu. Nami tuituakatii tuna tsa numunuu u kitsi taa tekwapu?ha suwaitu usu ma nani suwaitu. Namii ma tuitua mian, wihnu taa tekwapu? ha narauru?etu. Taa tekwapu tuku namai nihwunu mian hutu, suku tsa usu niwaitu. Ukitsi nuu nami tuitua mian. Nuka nami yu kwitu.

It is an exciting time for the renewal of our Comanche ways. We have been fortunate in having elder speakers willing to share their knowledge so that it will live on into the future. Numunuu, get involved in this very important work. Your rewards will be many.

Ihka taa tabeni tanu siku katukatu. Nunuse usu maruu kakunuu itii taa tureetii turanatsi. Maruu tureetii tanu usu siku taa numu tekwapu ?ha taa puniku?hutui. Tanu se usu maku maru u subitaitui. Usu tanu suwaitu, usu sihniku marii taa puniiku. Piaraa su ihka taa numu tekwapu?ha keta watsikutui tanu suwaitu. Usu sihniku maku maruu subitai?kupu?a suwaitu.

PRAYER FOR “GERONIMO”

*(*The following was developed by Albert Nahquaddy, and delivered by Thomas Chibitty at the premier of the movie “Geronimo” in Lawton in December of 1993.)*

Haatsu meeku nanisuwakaitu, usu nunu u tu nikwikutui nunu. (Listen to me, Father in Heaven, now we’re going to sing a song for you.)

Wihnuse itusu nunu atabitsi haitsi nunu ma nasutaikutu, ihka Esikwita. (And then we are

praying for this Indian friend of ours, this Apache, [Geronimo].)

RED ELK SPEECH

*(*Following is the speech read to the Comanche Business Committee by Ronald Red Elk during his presentation in support of the Resolution to Adopt An Official Comanche Alphabet in September 1993.)*

Nu hahaitsi nuu, kabuuni iniitu ma.

(My friends, look at it this way.)

Tamu numu tekwapuha siniiku poorui,

(This is how we’re going to write the Comanche language,)

tamu numu tekwapuha makwitso?aitui.

([and] save the Comanche language.)

Siniitu ma; tsaatu ma.

(This is the way it is; it’s good.)

Urako.

(Thank you very much.)

COMANCHE LANGUAGE CLASSES

Community classes continue in Comanche Country. Classes meet each Monday in the Cache-Indiahoma area, in Walters and at the Comanche Complex. The classes begin at 6:30 p.m.

In Cache-Indiahoma, the classes are held in the Cache Housing Authority’s meeting room, and Billie Kreger serves as the teacher.

In the Walters area, Bud Yackeschi serves as the teacher, with classes being held in the Comanche Community Center east of town.

Sandra Karty teaches the classes held in the old conference room of the Comanche Complex for the Lawton area.

Language classes are also held weekly in Santa Fe NM with Geneva Navarro teaching.

The classes are free and open to everyone, and participants are encouraged to bring their

tape recorders with them.

The classes will continue while funding is available.

COMANCHE SINGING CLASSES

Rusty Wahkinney of Cyril is serving as the teacher for Comanche songs, a project sponsored by the Comanche Language Committee with funding provided by the Oklahoma State Arts Council.

Singing classes began mid-November in the Walters area, and continued in the Apache area mid-December. Classes recessed during the holidays and will begin again on Sunday, January 7th and conclude in the Apache area on Sunday, January 14th. They are held in the Comanche Community Center in Apache.

The next session of singing classes will be held in the Cyril-Fletcher area. For more information contact Ronald Red Elk at 405-247-5749.

!! ATTENTION !!

We have a new web site address:

www.comanchelanguage.org

and a new e-mail address:

clcpc@comanchelanguage.org

LANGUAGE NEWSLETTER NEWS

The Comanche Language Newsletter is on the internet! All you need to do is go to our web site: (www.comanchelanguage.org) and click on Language Newsletter. You will need to download Acrobat Reader, which is a free program.

Go to:

www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html on the internet to download.

If you would like for us to automatically send you each new issue, send your e-mail address to: **jvickers@comanchelanguage.org**

Our newsletter mailing list has grown tremendously, and we realize there are some who do not have access to a computer to receive

the newsletter in that format. Please be assured that we will still mail out newsletters to those who need them mailed to their homes.

With our mailing list growing, and the cost of printing and mailing the newsletters increasing, we hope to cut our costs and still provide the newsletters to all who would like to receive them.

We hope that by providing our newsletter via the internet, we can continue to provide the newsletters free of charge, as we have done in the past.

OLD PHOTOGRAPHS

Members of the Comanche Language Committee spent several days during the month of December in the archives of the Fort Sill Museum looking through old photographs. Director Towana Spivey was very receptive to the idea of having our group come out and look through their collection, and the staff was very cordial to all of us.

We saw many old photographs of our ancestors, and were able to provide a better identification on several of them for the museum. Some were duplicates of photos we have seen in books, others were photographs from studio and family collections. We all appreciated the beautiful clothing we saw on our ancestors, and several remarked on the contrast of seeing a brave warrior dressed in his finest buckskin, sitting on a wicker chair! It was good to see the beautiful faces of our ancestors again. Ura (thank you) to the Museum staff.

*(*Wintertime is the traditional time for story telling. We have selected several for you to enjoy in this issue. With some we were able to provide the story teller's name, others we were not.)*

ORIGIN OF MAN

written by Nathaniel Woomavoyah, 1939
The Great Spirit in the days of long winters

and short summers, long ago, roamed this world all alone. He hunted the deer in the great forest alone; he ate, slept, and fished in the great forest alone.

One day he sat under a tall pine tree that swayed back and forth in the wind. As he sat under the tree he thought of the animals, of how they were never without a companion. He thought of the deer, the birds, the trees, and of all living things. They all had companions, all but him. The Great Spirit had no one to talk to, had no companions to hunt with in the forest. As he sat there under the tall tree, he felt the urge to make an animal with the image of himself.

He started making an animal out of colorless clay, making it in the shape of himself. He made the head, legs, arms, eyes, and all the physical parts of a human being. Leaving it out in the sun, he went hunting to allow the new animal time to dry. The Great Spirit came back and found that his new companion had dried, but, to his disappointment, it was white. Since he could not bear to destroy his work, he breathed life into the new companion.

He tried again, and this time the companion had a different color, black. A yellow man came next. Still the Great Spirit was not satisfied because the first man ...was white; the second man...was black; and the last man...was yellow. The Great Spirit began molding another figure, hoping that it would satisfy his want of a companion. He made it with great care--strong, straight and true. When the body dried, its color was red, and the Great Spirit was very pleased to find that the red man loved to hunt in the great forest and fish in the mountain streams.

The Great Spirit called all his companions together one day and said, "I must go and fix a place for you; when it is finished I will come again and take you with me to a greater place than this world, a beautiful place with a great forest, clear waters and cloudless skies, the Happy Hunting Grounds."

TWO BUFFALO THAT SPOKE

as told by Tehquakuh

Long years ago, when the Comanches lived north of what is now known as the North Canadian River, ten warriors were selected to go on a raid for horses. After traveling south for some distance, they stopped at a certain place to rest. They were soon aware of two buffalo approaching on a narrow trail, one jogging along behind the other.

The leader of the warrior group said to one of the braves, "Go over and kill one for food."

Usually every warrior among any group of Indians was an expert in some special field. The leader, knowing the ability of this brave as a buffalo hunter, chose wisely.

Going forward to meet his prey, the hunter went just so far along the side of the trail and then he remained in ambush; hidden from view, he crawled nearer the path, within shooting distance, to await the passing of the buffalo. While he sat, he heard a voice.

"Nooma-rah," the voice said. "What river are we nearing?" The sound seemed to be coming from the second buffalo.

"Don't you know this river?" the first and larger one asked.

"No, I don't know."

"This river is the North Canadian; there is a little creek, Peah Quasi Honovit, that runs into it from the North."

"Oh, yes, now I remember," said the smaller one.

The hunter thought it indeed strange that buffalo could speak his language. Puzzled, he ran back to his group.

The leader, Soko-wechki, unable to understand, asked, "Why did you leave without shooting one?"

"Something mysteriously wonderful has happened. Those buffalo talk our language; I overheard them. Then a strange power came over me, and I couldn't shoot."

Today those rivers are still recognized by the names that the Comanche learned from the buffalo that spoke.

TRICKSTER AND THE COYOTE

One day while Kaawos̱a (coyote) was walking along, he saw Trickster playing a game. He seemed to be having such a good time. He was singing and tossing something that looked like a ball into a tree — and it would return to him. Kaawos̱a went closer and watched for a while. Then he asked Trickster to let him play with him. He told Trickster he could really sing good and together they would be able to sing very good, while they played and had fun.

Trickster told him singing was only half the fun. “You will have to supply your own ball to play with if you want to play,” he said. Kaawos̱a was getting happy about playing, so he said that he could do that if Trickster would teach him how to play.

Trickster said, “Sure, and I’ll bet you can learn real fast. So watch me for a little while and then you try it.” Trickster would begin to sing and then it looked as if he plucked one of his eyes out and threw it into the tree and sang “Pui wa?ita, pui wa?ita,” and his eye would come back to him and he put it back into its place. Then he would open his eyes and look at Kaawos̱a.

Kaawos̱a was sure he could do it now, because he had watched Trickster very closely and had learned the song, too. So Trickster said, “All right, now you do it,” at which time Kaawos̱a plucked his eye out and threw it into the tree. He chanted, “Pui wa?ita, pui wa?ita,” but nothing happened. His eye was just stuck on the limb of the tree. Trickster said, “See there, I just knew you couldn’t catch on.” Kaawos̱a said, “Let me try it again. I can do it better this time, you just watch!” So he tried his other eye. He plucked it out and threw it at the tree and sang “Pui wa?ita, pui wa?ita,” and again nothing happened.

Kaawos̱a said to Trickster, “What happened? Didn’t I sing the song just like you did, and didn’t I pluck out my eyes and throw them to the tree, just like you did? Tell me what

happend so I can get my eyes back.”

Trickster just shook his head and could hardly keep a straight face so he could answer him. “Kaawos̱a, you just didn’t learn to sing the song like I sang it, and you didn’t act like you took out your eyes, just like I did, so you probably won’t get your eyes back either. You are always playing mean tricks on people. Now someone has pulled a good one on you.”

Trickster went away laughing about the trick he had played on poor Kaawos̱a. That’s why he is called Trickster. There’s one in every tribe.

COYOTE AND THE PRAIRIE DOGS

as told by Emily Riddles

Long ago, it is said, somewhere on the Big Prairie, the prairie dogs had a town. They gathered together and liked to dance. As they danced, Coyote arrived among them. He asked them, “You all are dancing?” “Yes,” they said. Coyote told the prairie dogs he would sing for them. “All of you, shut your houses tightly. We will dance.” “Yes,” answered the prairie dogs.

Coyote encouraged all the prairie dogs to join in. “All come and dance, hold hands with each other, and close your eyes tightly.”

Then as they began dancing, coyote takes a club and starts clubbing them. One of the prairie dogs peeped out of his closed eyes and saw what was happening. He told the other prairie dogs, “Everyone, run! He is clubbing us!” They all ran to their houses, but they were unable to open their tightly closed doors. Coyote clubbed many of them, then made a big fire and roasted his spoils. He ate good of his clubbings.

COYOTE AND TURTLE

as told by Emily Riddles

Long ago, it is said, a turtle built a fire and was roasting prairie dogs. As he was roasting, Coyote arrived. Coyote asked, "Little turtle, what are you roasting?" Turtle answered, "I am roasting prairie dogs. When they finish roasting, I will eat."

"Feed me, too" Coyote said. "I will not," answered Turtle.

"Well, we should run a race over it," said Coyote. "But I'm not able to run," answered Turtle. "Then I will tie a big rock on my leg," Coyote told him. Together the two found a big rock and tied it on Coyote's leg. "Come, now we two will run," he told Turtle.

The two lined up to run, and Turtle wondered how Coyote was going to cheat him. Then the race began. Turtle ran off and left him. Soon Coyote passed him. As Coyote ran ahead, he went out of sight over a hill. At this, Turtle turned and ran back. He arrived to his cooked prairie dogs, and pulled them out of the fire by their tails. When they were cooled, Turtle hurriedly ate and threw the bones into the lake. He left only their tails sticking out of the ashes.

Coyote comes into sight and is tired out. Turtle, hiding among the weeds, watches him. Coyote, sitting beside the fire, said "I am about to eat very good." Turtle is watching him and laughing.

Coyote reaches into the ashes and pulls only a tail from the fire. He ran to the lake and, with a stick, felt for the bones and ate them. Coyote said, "I can't be cheated! You, little Turtle, cheated me!" "You ran back and ate up your roasted meat," he continued. "You, little Turtle, cheated me, you beat me," and with that he ran off.

Turtle laughed loudly at him. "I did beat you by cheating," he said.

THE SPIRIT HORSE

Once upon a time, a long time ago, there was a very big Comanche camp near a mountainous wooded area. The people were very happy and lived harmoniously with one another. The children played games and ran on the open prairie.

One day, while several of the children were playing in the woods, the people of the camp moved away. When the children returned to the camp area, they found their people were gone. The children could see the travelers' trail, however, and so they set off to try to catch up with them. As they went along, several of the children wanted to go in a different direction, but one young boy and his little sister wanted to keep following the trail left by their people. They felt they couldn't be far behind them. So the young boy and his little sister went on by themselves, while the other children went off in a different direction.

The first night the two spent by themselves, they felt pretty secure that they were safe and would find the camp soon. The young boy sang songs and told his little sister a bedtime story, to keep up their spirits. It helped him, too, to talk about the happy times they had shared with their parents. However, by the second night, after having traveled all day without food, they were beginning to grow weary and became afraid of every little sound they heard. The little sister was tired and wanted to cry, because she missed her mother. The young boy held her until she went to sleep, but sleep would not come to him. He was beginning to wonder if they would ever find their people. He was very worried.

He must have dozed off just a bit, because he was suddenly aware of a big white horse standing by him. He jumped up and tried to be very brave. He spoke to the horse and asked him where he came from and what he wanted. The horse answered that he had been following them for a little while, but wanted them to rest before he bothered them. He told them not to be afraid — to get on his back and he would take them to where their people were camped.

Morning was just breaking and it was foggy

when they came to the top of a hill. He showed them their people were camped just below the hill. The young boy and his little sister were so happy and were looking down at the Comanche camp that was just beginning to stir with early risers. When they turned to thank the white horse for bringing them safely to their people, he was gone.

The moral of this story is - remember, you always have a Spirit watching over you.

A LEGEND OF LONG AGO

Once upon a time, during a time of drought and starvation of the Tribe, an old man told the young warriors and hunters of a Wise Man who lived far to the North, who had mystical powers to solve problems of those who could find him.

Three young warriors were sent to hunt for this mystery man. Each of them was chosen for their specific virtues of honesty, trustworthiness and goodness. They traveled for many days in search of the Wise Man. One morning as they were getting ready to resume their journey, another warrior appeared and asked where they were going. They explained the purpose of their journey and of their desire to find the mystery man in the North. He said his people also were short of food and asked if he could travel with them. All four of the warriors continued on for another three days and were making preparations to camp for the night, when they heard drumbeats. They took off toward the sound and came to the foot of a pia toya (big mountain). It seemed the drumbeats were coming from somewhere on the pia toya.

When the young warriors climbed to the top of the pia toya, they found the old man for whom they had been searching. He greeted them and told them he had been expecting them. He gave them food and told them to rest for the night, and they would talk the next morning. Early the next day, he awakened them, gave them more food and then waited for them to make their requests.

The first warrior said, "Oh, Wise One, I

come to you from my people far to the South. Because of a severe drought in our country, there is little food to be found for my people. I am a hunter, but animals are scarce and hard to find. Would you please help me?" The old man touched the warrior and said, "Young man, I know about you. You are a good hunter and have served your people well. When you return to your people, you will find food for them. You will continue to be a good hunter as long as you obey these rules. You must hunt and take only the food that you need to feed your people. You must respect all animals and care for them. You must never kill for pleasure."

The next young warrior stood and said, "Oh, Wise One, I am a warrior of my people. I have fought many battles for their protection, but I fear death and that I might not live long enough to protect my people. Can you please help me?" The old man touched his shoulder with his staff and said, "Young man, I know of you. You are a very brave young warrior. You, too, must obey the law that I tell you. Return to your people and always remember that you must never use the power that you have against weaker people. You must always respect the rights of others. You must always fight in defense of your people and never start a fight without cause or reason."

The next young warrior stood and said, "Oh, Wise One, I am both a hunter and a warrior. I do my best to look after my people. My problem is myself. I am very ugly as you can see. I want to marry and have a family of my own. Because of my ugliness, I cannot find a maiden who will have me. Can you please help me?" The old man replied, "I know about you. You are a good hunter and a good warrior. You have the respect of all who know you. I have a great-granddaughter who lives two villages to the North of you. You have visited her village several times. She has recognized your goodness and your being ugly does not bother her. Return to your people and on your next visit to her village, approach her and she will listen."

The next young warrior stood up. He was the one who joined them along the way. He addressed the old man and said, "Old man, I am both a good hunter and a good warrior, I provide food and protection for my people. I am handsome as you can see. I can have any maiden in my village when I want to." He said, "Old man, I like the life I am living. If you can do the things I have heard, I ask you to let me live forever." The old man looked at the young warrior and said to him, "I know of you. You speak with a forked tongue. You are not a good hunter and you are not a good warrior. None of the maidens in your village respect you. Some of the clothes you wear were stolen from your friends. Just let me think about your request."

The wise old man, after thinking for awhile, reached out and touched the young warrior on the shoulder with his staff. Suddenly, the young warrior began to get taller and larger. He grew to be ten feet tall — and then — he turned to stone.

He would live forever.

HOW FROG GOT HIS WARTS

an original story by Pahdopony

They used to tell us that at one time Frog was a very handsome athlete. He had the ability to run with Plains animals such as buffalo, rabbit and deer, although he had to run alongside them in their protective shade. His skin was far too delicate to be in the hot sun for any length of time. Frog had strong muscular legs and very smooth and beautiful green skin. He was delightful to look at; however, he had a reputation of being very rude. He often made fun of other animals by describing them as having "matted fur" or skin that was much too "rough and scaly." He called Rabbit "big ears" and he described Turtle as having a "broken shell."

After some time passed, they began to grow weary of Frog's constant teasing. On one hot day, Frog followed them out onto the prairie, far from any nearby water sites. The animals ran

off and left him. Frog called out for them, but they did not return. Frog was unable to follow them. He realized that he was thirsty, and his smooth green skin was beginning to dry out. He needed to get back to where he belonged, near the water hole. There were no animals to provide any shade for him on his return journey. Frog ran and walked in the blistering, red-hot sun. Finally he began to crawl across the prairie grasses, but the dry grasses offered very little protection to Frog's delicate skin. His entire back began to peel and blister. Frog was so tired and thirsty that all he could do was hop for short distances and only for short periods of time. That is how Frog got his warts.

CODE TALKERS VIDEO FOR SALE

"The Last Comanche Code Talker — Recollections of Charles Chibitty" can be purchased for \$39.95 in the gift shop of the Museum of the Great Plains, 601 NW Ferris Avenue, Lawton OK 73507. If you live out of the area, you can order the video by mail by sending a check or money order for \$39.95 plus \$3.95 shipping & handling (\$43.90 total) to the above address: Attention Celeste; or call Celeste at 580-581-3460 to order using a credit card.

NOTICE

Does anyone have the address or phone number of the Phoenix Indian School, or the name(s) of any of the descendants of **Hoke Denetsopie**, who attended school there? If so, please contact the editor at the address at the top of this newsletter.

PRODUCTS FOR SALE

Item #1. Royal Blue or Red Tee-Shirts. Language logo in full color on left chest. Children's sizes small through large, \$10 plus \$3.20 s&h; Adult sizes small through XL \$12 plus \$3.20 s&h; sizes 2X and 3X \$15 plus \$3.20 s&h.

Item #2. Comanche Dictionary. A 133 page soft bound dictionary prepared by Dr. Alice Anderton (1993) with Comanche speakers Lucille McClung and Albert Nahquaddy. \$22 plus \$3.20 s&h.

Item #3. Bumper Stickers. NUMU TEKWAPU in large letters, with Comanche Language Preservation on the second line. \$2 each includes s&h.

Item #4. Authentic Handmade Comanche Dolls.* Beautiful 20" soft bodied dolls, dressed in traditional clothing. Both girl and boy dolls available. \$40 each plus \$3.20 s&h. (*Special Orders Only, 6-8 weeks delivery)

Item #5. Comanche Hymn Book. Contains the words to 118 Comanche hymns, listed by title with composer's name. Compiled by Elliot Canonge (1960), 64 pages. \$10 plus \$2 s&h.

Item #6. Picture Dictionary. A 26 page booklet that is ideal for beginning learners. Has simple words and brief sentences. \$8 plus \$2 s&h.

Item #7. Comanche Flash Cards. A set of 48 cards showing pictures and words in Comanche. \$5 plus \$1 s&h.

Item #8. Tote Bags. Navy with red trim. 16"x12"x5" with back pocket. Front has the new Comanche Language logo. Strikingly beautiful! \$15 includes s&h.

Item #9. Ball Caps. Men's are royal blue with red bill and Language logo on front. Ladies are solid royal blue with logo. \$10 plus \$3 s&h.

Item #10. Collar/Hat Pins. Language logo complete with feathers, 3/4" long. \$3 plus \$1 s&h.

Item #11. Earrings. Same design as collar/hat pins. \$7 pair plus \$1 s&h.

Item #12. Buttons. Two styles. #1: "Numu Tekwapu" and #2: "Ihka Niha, Numu Tekwapu." \$1 each plus 50 cents shipping. Specify button #.

Item #13. Lapel Pins. 1 inch Cloisonne pin. \$5 includes s&h.