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The Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee

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*Editor: Barbara Goodin*

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## NOVEMBER — NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN MONTH

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### “Letter From The President”

Maruaweka Nanumunuu:

As we are approaching “PIA TABE TUKANU“, I was wondering what other way to say that phrase.

I called a few of our elders and they told me the way they remembered their nanumunuu saying it was “AHOTABENITU.” They told me, “I can remember being a child and we would go to church and eat together. There we had kuyunii. The elders were so happy to be sharing a meal with the missionaries as well as all their relatives.” What a good feeling that must have been.

Now, what holiday am I talking about? “THANKSGIVING!”

I would like to remind everyone about the “Project Teaching” sessions (see below) beginning this month. I would like to encourage all the speakers and others who would like to learn Comanche to take part in them. Just because your C.D.I.B. (Certified Degree of Indian Blood) card says you’re Comanche, does that make you a real Comanche?

Ura

Billie Kreger

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### “Project Teaching: 2001-2002”

“Project Teaching” is the theme selected for this year’s language and cultural classes to be sponsored by the CLCPC. Sessions will kick-off in November in recognition of National Native American month and will be held every other week in area communities.

A variety of subjects will be offered, in addition to the language. They include culture,

songs, prayers, history (both Comanche and individual), hymns, stories and traditions. Comanche Scholars will be brought in during the sessions to assist facilitators.

Following is a list of participating communities and starting dates:

- Walters: Bud Yackeschi, facilitator, Monday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m., Comanche Community Center east of Walters.
- Fletcher: Deloris Karty, facilitator, Tuesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m., dining hall at Little Washita Indian Church, northeast of Fletcher.
- Apache: Marie Parton, facilitator, Thursday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 p.m. in the Comanche Community Center southeast of Apache.
- Lawton: Sam DeVenney, facilitator, Thursday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m., 511 Monroe in Lawton.
- Cache: Billie Kreger, facilitator, Monday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m. in the Cache Housing Authority meeting room.
- Richard’s Spur: Lorene Pewewardy, facilitator, time and date has not yet been set.

If you are interested in learning more about Comanche culture, or if you have an area of expertise in Comanche culture and would like to share, please contact one of the facilitators.

All sessions are free and open to the public.

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### 2001 FALL ENCAMPMENT

The 2001 Fall Encampment was a huge success! Of course, we can always look back and

see where we need to improve for next year, but that happens with any big event.

Our presenters, or Comanche scholars as we are going to call them, were all outstanding. For those that missed the event, you missed out on some wonderful Comanche history and culture, plus hearing lots of language spoken.

We had Comanches from as far away as Washington state and Oregon, plus New Mexico and Texas. What a compliment to know they planned their vacations to be with us!

As the old saying goes -“the best laid plans-” we had to change locations about 10 days prior to the event. But that probably worked to our advantage as we were moved into the new conference room at the Comanche Complex. For the most part we had sufficient room and, of course, the setting was beautiful with all the old Comanche pictures on the walls and the huge buffalo hide with Chief Ten Bears’ speech inscribed on it. For me personally there were a lot of good feelings being on our own land for this significant Comanche event.

Miss Lawton, Terri Poahway (granddaughter of our own Margaret Poahway), opened the event Friday morning with her rendition of the hoop dance, followed by an Indian sign language demonstration. Ed Tahhahwah started the Honoring for Edgar Monetatchi with Edgar’s song, and was accompanied by those in the audience who also knew the song. Edgar has worked many years preserving our language and although bad health in recent years has prevented him from being a part of our group, we know his heart is still with us. We presented him with a beautiful Pendleton blanket in recognition of his dedication. Ura, Edgar.

The day started off rainy and chilly and a couple of our scholars were running late, so the tee-pee set up took place after lunch. After that we had a bow and arrow demonstration followed by a beadwork and shawls demonstration. We were then treated to a puppet show featuring two Comanche buffalo!

The ladies’ and mens’ talking circles were interesting in that whatever subjects the participants wanted to discuss were brought up. Fred Nahwooks from Oregon taped much of the

encampment and he was running back and forth from one group to the other trying to get as much in as he could. We are anxious to see his final results.

The meat cutting demonstration garnered much interest in that the finished product was to be our supper! The ladies cut the meat the traditional Comanche way, something many of us saw our mothers and grandmothers do, but had never attempted ourselves. The meat was then taken to an open grill and cooked! I hope this revives this tradition.

After we were all full from supper, the hand games began. We had some serious players there, and we all had fun! Some wanted to continue, but most of us had already had a long day, with another long day ahead of us. It was a great experience!

Saturday morning started off with eggs, bacon, sausage, gravy, biscuits, hash browns and plenty of hot coffee and juice. The lady who was to give the herb demonstration had illness in her family and was unable to attend, so we used the time to discuss different remedies that were practiced in each of our own homes. It was an informative time of sharing.

The Comanche History was presented on a buffalo skin rug that was painted, showing various drawings significant to Comanche people. Most impressive! We have such talented Comanche people! The Comanche Youth Dancers graced us with their presence and, as always, did an outstanding job. After their performance they stayed to have lunch with us.

If you went to school at Fort Sill Indian School you were treated to a complete history with an abundance of photographs as well. The fashion show featured not only Comanche dress, but the dress from other tribes around us. It was interesting to see the differences, and how some of the traditions are being inter-mingled with other tribes.

We next saw the day cradles and night cradles used by Comanche children, and heard about their differences. The men’s clothing demonstration was as excellent presentation, with many things being explained and it was good to hear these things. Hopefully, others got as much out of it as

I did.

Another group of youngsters (and one oldster!) from the Chibitty family gave a dance presentation. We always enjoy the kids and they stayed to have supper with us.

A pow-wow was scheduled next door at the gymnasium, so we decided to forego our mini pow-wow that evening. Instead most of us were able to call it an early evening, and go home to prepare for the third and final day. There were several that stayed to participate in the Native American Church services that evening.

Sunday morning found us refreshed and ready for our final day. We sang hymns and shared our thoughts and enjoyed good fellowship. After a delicious lunch of Mexican food we gathered our belongings and headed in all directions for home.

Soon we will start planning for the 2002 Fall Encampment. We hope it will be as successful as the 2001 Fall Encampment. We hope you will plan to join us and not miss out on any of the fun and learning experiences. Subeeta Ma.

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### COMANCHE DICTIONARY STATUS

We are almost finished! Our many months of hard work are finally coming to an end. We are within hours of reviewing the final words for inclusion in the first Comanche Dictionary put together by Comanche people. We expect to finish before Thanksgiving.

This doesn't mean all the work is done, however. There will still be proof-reading and final corrections to be made. Then we will look for a publisher. We want this to be a publication we can all be proud of.

We have a head start on funding with a generous contribution by our friend Rudy Torvich of California. Scott Zebisch of Texas has also contributed money for our endeavors, and we have a commitment from fellow Comanche, Carl Moore of Cyril, who is very supportive of our efforts. Lois Avrck of Florida and Jan Chalfant of Arkansas, both friends of Comanche language preservation, have committed to help with publishing costs, too.

We have all waited a long time for this day, and when the first Comanche Dictionary comes

off the press, we will all rejoice!

### COMANCHE SONGS BOOKS

The new Comanche Song Books are available! We have spent a lot of time translating the Canonge Hymnal into our official Comanche language spelling system and adding a much needed English translation. They were completed in time for the Comanche Nation Fair, and demand for the song book has been steady. We are preparing for another printing at this time. For more information, see "Products for Sale" in the back of this newsletter.

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### HALLOWEEN PARTY

We participated in the Tribe's Halloween Party this year and enjoyed all the fun. Tribal employees went all out to make this a safe and memorable event for all our Comanche children. We handed out treats on behalf of the CLCPC and asked for a Comanche word in return. Some children knew a word, others had to be prompted.

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*\*The following stories were originally presented in the Journal of American Folklore XXII, July-September, 1909, in a collection of "Shoshone and Comanche Tales," by H.H. St. Clair and R.H. Lowie. They were later reprinted in The Comanche and His Literature, a 1941 thesis by Herwana Becker Barnard.*

### REGULATION OF THE SEASONS; ORIGIN OF DEATH

Coyote called all the people together to decide how many winter months and how many summer months there ought to be. They set up a large council lodge. Coyote sat down in the center on the west side. He said, "Well, listen to me! We are to decide how many winter and summer months there are to be." One man said, "Well, let us have six cold months; let the seventh be cold in the first half, and the remainder warm." Coyote said, "Six cold months would be too much, we should suffer from the cold. Ten summer months would be good." Another man said, "If we had

ten summer months, our meat would spoil, we should suffer from heat." Then they debated. One little man sitting by the door, who was named Snow-Bird, said, "Well, let us have six cold months, with one month half cold and one half cool." Coyote was in favor of ten hot months, because he wished to play a trick on them. They were debating. The little man by the door got up and said, "Six cold months is plenty for us." Saying, "Six months," he went out. All the assembly rose and followed him, repeating "six months." Coyote bade them wait. "What makes you pay attention to that little man?" But the people did not listen to Coyote, who was thus unable to work his scheme on them. He went out last of all, saying, "We shall have six winter months." All the people laughed at him. "This is the first time you have failed to have your way." Coyote said, "Now we shall have six cold months. Now, then, let us have another council to name the months." When they had gathered, he announced, "The little man shall have just as many tongues as there are cold months." Then he named the months: "October, November, December, January, February, March, April." All agreed. "The little man will have seven tongues; every month one of his tongues will pass away until but one is left."

After the council was over, Coyote, said, "Now, all of you go over there! I shall join you, and we will decide whether our dead should return after the lapse of four days. Long ago that was our way. Today I object to our dead coming back." They met. He called them all to the edge of the water. He picked up a rock, held it in his hand, and spoke as follows: "Behold, our dead people shall do as this rock!" He cast it into the water. "This rock will not come back. Similarly, our people will not return. This earth is very large; but if the dead were to come back, it would be crowded. That is why I object to it." All the people agreed with him. Since then our dead have not returned.

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**THE SEVEN STARS**

A very long time ago there lived a family of seven. The parents got angry at their children, four of whom were boys, and the youngest a girl.

The father declared to them: "We are going to call a council to decide what all of you are to become. I am angry at you. All of you will go far off. Make up your minds as to what you wish to become." Then the oldest brother asked the other children to give their advice as to what they were to become. One of them said, "Our father is angry at us. Let us all become stars. Would that all of us might become stars! Whatever we choose, that we shall turn into. Let us wait for our father, and tell him as soon as he returns." When their father returned he consented to let them become stars. Then they left. That is how they became stars. That is why there are seven stars looking down upon us from above. The one in the rear is the youngest child, while the young men are in front.

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(\*From *The Comanche And His Literature*, a 1941 thesis by *Herwana Becker Barnard*.)

**HOW THE SPOTS ON THE MOON  
ORIGINATED**

*as told by Tehquakuh (1940)  
interpreted by Herman Asenap*

Once, many years ago, Indians were camping along a stream. A group of girls were playing in the woods a short distance from the camp. Playing here and there, they paid little heed to their wandering or to the passing of time.

In the meantime the band of Indians had found it necessary to break up their camp and move on. In their haste they forgot the little girls.

One of the children wandering toward the site of the village saw that all the teepees were gone and that the camp was completely cleared. Running back, she reported her discovery to the others. Believing her story impossible, the oldest girl sent another to see. She told the same story. Fearful of facing such a predicament, the oldest led the way back to the camp, hoping there to find the trail their parents took.

By this time the youngest child, becoming hungry and cross, began to whimper. Nothing that the girls could do seemed to quiet her, and her crying became louder.

Suddenly they heard a far-off voice calling them. They stopped to listen. This voice, that

seemed to come from the direction of the stream, spoke again and again.

“Come to me. I shall care for you. Come. Come, my child.”

Wistfully, not knowing what else to do, they followed the voice. It led them closer and closer to the stream.

“Here I am,” said the voice, affecting gentleness. There, before them, sat Pia Moopits.

“Come nearer; I will not harm you. I will quiet the child. Just leave her here near me where I can watch over her and care for her while you go on with your playing,” the great figure said.

Fearful of disobeying so monstrous a being, the girls obeyed and were soon farther down stream splashing and bathing in the water. When they returned, and while Pia Moopits was not looking, the child confided her frightening experiences with the giant, his abuses, his threats and his promises, to her older sister. While the group was gone, she related, he began telling her she was just the kind of little girl that he liked; good, beautiful and healthy.

“I think I shall keep you. Perhaps I shall keep you always,” he had said.

“No! No! Please let me go. I want to go back,” she pleaded.

“If you do not do as I command, I shall harm you. I shall eat you!” he threatened.

Then in the midst of her fright the group returned.

The girls were already worried lest they be unable to follow the trail of their parents, but they were now more concerned about their lives under the power of this terrible giant.

“We must think of a plan that will allow us to escape safely. But what can we do? He watches us constantly,” the sister whispered as she sought the advice of the oldest girl.

“We can’t run. He would overtake us, and then we should all perish,” she said excitedly.

“I have an idea. I shall persuade him to let us go a short distance down the stream to bathe the little girl and wash some clothes,” said the oldest after some thought.

Pia Moopits granted the girls permission to go as she suggested.

“But don’t go beyond calling distance. When

I call, you must answer and come back here,” he instructed them.

“We promise, faithfully, to do whatever you say if you will let us go,” said the girl, taking the smallest child by the hand.

Going down stream along the bank, the girls met a great green frog.

“Frog,” said the oldest, “we are in serious difficulty. We are lost from our people and want to find the trail that will lead to them, but a terrible giant has us in his power and will do us harm. We told him we would be here washing, but we want to find the trail before dark. Can you help us? He will soon call for us to return. Will you, kind frog, please answer for us? Just say, ‘we are still busy washing,’ and while you are answering him we will be able to run to safety.”

“I’ll do what I can for you, girls. Run along, I have a good strong voice that will sound so much like yours that he will not notice the difference,” said Frog.

Thankful, but not entirely relieved, the girls ran as fast as they could.

It wasn’t long before the giant called, “Girls, are you coming?”

“We are still busy, washing,” came the answer.

More time passed, and again the giant called, “Come back, girls, you are staying too long.”

“We are still busy, washing,” Frog faithfully answered.

The giant called again and again. He always heard the same answer. Becoming suspicious after the fourth call, the giant started toward the place where the voice was. As he neared the spot, he was still unable to see the girls.

“Where are you?” he commanded.

“We are still busy, washing,” Frog croaked and — plunk! — he jumped into the stream and was gone.

Too angry to say anything, the giant, with a loud roar, started down the trail the girls had followed.

The girls, in the meantime, had run until they were completely exhausted. They met Eka Kaara. “We are in great danger,” they cried; “the giant is chasing us and we can run no farther. Can you help us?”

"I'm not very big, but I shall do all in my power. Form a circle behind me while I face the enemy alone," said the baby buffalo.

By this time it had grown dark, but a bright moon was shining in the sky. They could see the great giant coming into the clearing over the hill. Nearer and nearer he came, growling in anger with every step. Another step and he would be upon them.

Suddenly the little buffalo made a well-time lunge forward, striking the giant right in the middle, and — oomph — the giant was thrown far up into the night sky. He never fell back to earth, but as the girls looked up into the heavens, the observed dark splotches appearing on the moon. Ever since that time when the girls were saved by Eka Kūra, we have had dark spots on the moon.

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### **THE DEER THAT ATE PEOPLE**

*as told by Rachel Mow-wat (1940)*

Many years ago deer ate human beings. For a long while a band of Indians suspected that the deer of the mountains where they camped were devouring members of the tribe who, from time to time, disappeared. Two Medicine Men who studied the situation concluded that the victims had been driven back into a large, secluded cave. The medicine men went to the large cave to talk to the chief guard who stood at the entrance.

"How are you this morning," one of them said as they approached. "You look fat and healthy; what do you eat?"

"We eat good; that's all," said the deer. "I'll show you what we have been eating."

Then the deer took one of the four sticks before him, knocked on the door, and, at the same time, called, "One fat buffalo." A buffalo came out.

He hit the door again and called for a buffalo calf. A buffalo calf came out.

"That is all I'll show you," said the deer.

The medicine men were not satisfied because they did not believe they had seen all that was in the cave.

"We must sneak up on him some way," said one.

"Let's change the sticks when he isn't

looking," said the other.

Their chance came soon, and they grabbed a stick, a different one.

"Two men," they yelled, as they pounded at the door. Two men came out.

"More men," they demanded.

After this last command, many came out of the cave — Indians and white men, too. All of them had bows and arrows. These men unitedly fought the deer that now seemed to come from all directions. When the battle had been won and most of the deer killed, one of the medicine men spoke to the remaining deer.

"Now that we have proved ourselves stronger, we will start eating YOU."

Since that time deer have not eaten people, but people have eaten deer.

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### **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

#### **November 2001**

3<sup>rd</sup> - Saturday: Dictionary Development Meeting, 1 to 4 p.m., Museum of the Great Plains.

6<sup>th</sup> - Tuesday: CLCPC Monthly Business Meeting, 6:30 p.m., 511 Monroe, Lawton.

10<sup>th</sup> - Saturday: Beginning Indian Genealogy Workshop, 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Anadarko Public Library. Sack lunch at noon.

10<sup>th</sup> - Saturday: Dictionary Development Meeting, 1 to 4 p.m., Museum of the Great Plains.

17<sup>th</sup> - Saturday: Dictionary Development Meeting, 1 to 4 p.m., Museum of the Great Plains. This meeting should conclude the reviewing of words for our first edition of the Comanche Dictionary.

19<sup>th</sup> - Beginning Indian Genealogy Program, 7:00 p.m., Lawton Public Library.

#### **December 2001**

4<sup>th</sup> - Tuesday: CLCPC Monthly Business Meeting, 6:30 p.m., 511 Monroe, Lawton.

#### **January 2002**

8<sup>th</sup> - Tuesday: CLCPC Monthly Business Meeting, 6:30 p.m., 511 Monroe, Lawton.

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### **PRODUCTS FOR SALE**

**COMANCHE LESSONS.** This first set contains Lessons #1 through #4, beginning with greetings and leave-taking, followed by two Comanche stories. The format followed is words/phrases written in Comanche, followed by an English translation. An audio cassette accompanies each set, so the student can actually hear the words spoken as they follow them on the written sheet. \$20 plus \$5 s&h.

**Item #1. Solid Royal Blue or Solid Red Tee-Shirts.** Language logo in full color on left chest. Numu Tekwapu in white on left sleeve. Children's sizes small through large, \$10 plus \$3.50 s&h; Adult sizes small through XL \$12 plus \$3.50 s&h; sizes 2X and 3X \$15 plus \$3.50 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 \$3.50 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 \$3.50 s&h. (\*Special Orders Only, 6-8 weeks delivery)

**Item #5. Comanche Song Book.** Collection of 116 songs written in Comanche with an English translation. \$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. \$10 includes 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 Comanche Language logo. \$12 plus \$3.50 s&h.

**Item #9. 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.

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

**Item #11. Earrings.** Same design as collar/hat pins. \$8 includes s&h.

**Item #12. Buttons.** Two styles. #1: "Numu Tekwapu" and #2: "Ihka Niha, Numu Tekwapu." \$2 each includes s&h. Specify button style number.

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

*\*If you have an e-mail address, please include it in case we need to contact you about your order. (\*Our next newsletter won't be published until after the Holidays, so we are including some Christmas songs which have been translated into Comanche. Enjoy them and have a safe and happy holiday!)*

### "Joy To The World"

by Deacon Topetchy

Tsaa nusukaa, taa narami tsa kima.

Oyetu tanu ura urarui.

Tamu u kamakuna, u pihiku habitu.

Nanysuwaka?itu, nanysuwaka?itu,

Nanysuwaka?iku u tai kamakutu.

()~()~()~()~()~()~()~()~()~()~()~()~()

### "Silent Night"

by Harry Wauahdooh

Tsaa ta tukani, Puha tukani.

Tatsinupi muyunakwu. Tenanu u wakatu kima.

Taa narami?a nanysutaike.

God ta tua tsa pitu?i. God ta tua tsa pitu?i.

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### "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

by Harry Wauahdooh

Oyetuka kima, tsaatu tsa tai wuhpitu?iu u nipana?ai tanu sumu oyetu.

Kimatsi u puni God, ta tua tsa putu?i.

*Chorus:*

U wakatuka kima, u wakatuka kima,

U wakatuka kimatsi tai makwitso?aitu.

()~()~()~()~()~()~()~()~()~()~()~()~()

### "Jingle Bells"

by Velma Akoneto

Waaḥima, waaḥima, na okitḥ nḥnḥ.  
Ṭaa naḥmi? a paḥiḥka ṭḥ na okitḥ nḥnḥ.  
(sing several times)

\* \* \* \* \*

**ṬSAA NḤSUKATḤ WAA HIMARU !!**  
**(Merry Christmas!!)**

**Comanche Language and Cultural  
Preservation Committee  
P.O. Box 3610  
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**N ḥ m ḥ  
Ṭekwarpḥ  
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