
NUMU TEKWAPUHA NOMNEEKATU NEWSLETTER

December 2004

Vol. 7 Issue 4

The Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee

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Editor: Barbara Goodin

“Letter From The President”

by Ronald Red Elk

Marawekta Numunuu,

2004 is going into the last month and still there has not been a solution found to get (Numunuu) to (Numu Niwanu?etuu).

I attended the November CBC meeting, and as I was sitting there observing the meeting, I thought if only there could be as much interest, enthusiasm and effort displayed for speaking our language, as was shown during the discussions of the meeting – especially in matters dealing with money. Our language would not be in its obsolescent state! Then I thought if money is such a motivator, Why not use it to generate that kind of interest in speaking Comanche? Something has to be done to get all Comanches communicating in (Taa Numu Tekwapu). When a language is obsolete (such as ours) the next stage is death. Do we, as proud (Numunuu) want that to happen? I hope not!

Let's set up a fund for speaking Comanche. Set some guidelines, some standards that would be worthy of compensation. These standards should include the second language learners.

The way I see this whole idea of Comanches speaking Comanche is the language has to be first spoken in the home. Then, with knowledge of the language, it can be taken to other Comanche gatherings. The whole concept of the (Onaa CD Project) is to begin using the language in the home with the parents and baby learning together. Whatever happened to that project? I'm very disappointed that those CDs have not found their way to those families by now.

Numunuu! Time is running out to do something! Anything, as long as it is in (Taa Numu Tekwapu).

Soobesu Numunuu sumu oyetu Numu niwanu?etuu. Ukitsi nuuu taasuu Numu niwanuhutui. Uyunitu taasuu Numu niwanuhutuineuu.

INDIAN LEADER HAS IT RIGHT

Back on September 6th, the Lawton Constitution ran an article in regards to the State of the Nation address given by Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chad Smith. I have heard Chief Smith before, and always liked what he had to say. Here are a few excerpts from his speech:

“We should not be in the business of helping people, but rather helping people to help themselves,” Smith said. He promised continued success will come with **focus on three areas: language, jobs and community.**

“**We must hang on to our language, and pass it on to our children,**” Smith said. “**It is the foundation of our culture.** We must also keep our people at home, and in order to do that, we must create jobs. When our people stay home, our communities thrive.”

Chief Smith got it right.

2004 COMANCHE NATION FAIR

Story Telling:

The Comanche Language Committee sponsors the Annual Story Telling event held each year during the Comanche Nation

Fair. This year we decided to conduct it in a way that honored each of the speakers who entered, rather than put them in competition with each other. We had five speakers who came out into the arena on Saturday afternoon and shared stories with all of us in Comanche.

Those participating were Beatrice Saupitty, Henry Tomahsah, Faith Martinez, Geneva Navarro and Edith Gordon. I understand many other speakers were asked to participate and declined. Each of our story tellers was presented with \$50 cash at the completion of the event. We hope to have more participants for next year.

Thank you (Ūra) to Jan Woomahvoyah for coordinating this event.

Food Baskets for the Elders:

Although we were not given credit for it, our organization provided five of the 50 food baskets that were given away to elders during the Comanche Nation Fair.

Language Learning Packets:

During the Fair we set up our display table to show some of the teaching tools we have developed for language learning. In addition to that, we provided packets to Comanche families with children that contained the following items:

- 1) Three sets of Flash cards;
- 2) Picture Dictionary Coloring Book;
- 3) Audio cassette pronouncing all the words in the Flash Card sets and Picture Dictionary;
- 4) Boxed crayons while they lasted;
- 5) A 12 Minute Children's Video;
- 6) CLCPC pens & pencils & brochure.

We enjoy meeting and visiting with all the people that come through during the Fair. For the most part people are very supportive of our efforts, but occasionally we find someone who doesn't feel like our language should be revitalized and preserved. But as our good friend Ray Niedo says, "When we lose our language,

then we're just another Indian." Well said, Ray.

2004 SHOSHONE NATIONS REUNION

by Kenneth Goodin

Everything went well on the flight from Oklahoma City to Salt Lake City, Utah, where we changed planes. There we had a layover, so we had breakfast. (We left OKC at 5:30 a.m.)

Upon arriving in Elko, we called the hotel and they sent their shuttle for us. At the hotel we got settled in and then the shuttle took us to the building where the 5th Annual Shoshone Reunion was taking place, on the Elko Colony Indian Reservation.

There were craft booths all on one half of the building and chairs on the other half, with a portable partition separating them. At the end of the building, in front of the chairs, different tribes were giving talks about their people or their language or culture. At one point they called on the "Oklahoma Comanches" to come up and Reaves Nahwooks gave a brief talk before we sang a few Comanche hymns.

We had a sack lunch and about 4:30 p.m. we loaded on two buses and several cars to go to Ruby Valley. This is a place significant because of a treaty signed there with the U.S. government. It's a nice place with the mountains all around. During several demonstrations, they showed how to prepare pine nuts, and we were all given samples later. The game of shinny was played, and a rough game it was. Only the ladies played. I don't think anyone got hurt, but I closed my eyes many times! It was there we had our evening meal, with plenty of food. Everyone got their fill. It started to get cold and we all went back to Elko.

Saturday after breakfast, there were several speakers and demonstrations. Carney Saupitty Sr. from Apache gave an interesting presentation and everyone gave him their full attention. Next there was a parade that honored veterans. There were

several floats, all Indian. After lunch we went to South Fork. There were guides on the buses that talked about things we were seeing on the way. At South Fork they did several different dances, the round dance, bear dance, snow dance, basket dance, chokecherry dance and other tribal dances. While the dances were going on, two ladies did the basket weaving. They made it look easy, but it takes a lot of practice. For dinner we had barbequed buffalo. It started raining so we went back to Elko.

Sunday started off like Saturday with a prayer and flag ceremony. Then the program began with tribal speakers and demonstrations. After lunch they had a fashion show that was interesting. The speaker would tell where the model came from and talk about their dress as the models walked in a large circle.

There was a young Shoshone man who was called up to do a couple of songs. He was raised by his Grandpa and he knew his language and his songs. He had a small drum and did several songs. He was in his early 20s.

Geneva Navarro and Rita Coosewoon from our group got up and talked about how important it is to keep our language, and how the Comanches are working at trying to teach it.

After them, I gave a presentation on the Comanche Code Talkers, which was very well received. We had been contacted prior to the Reunion and asked if someone could give a talk about our code talkers. Even though we all know about them here in Comanche Country, a lot of other people are just now learning about them. I am proud to say that I knew some of them.

Edith Kassanavoid Gordon was recognized as one of the elder Comanches attending, and given a beautiful shawl.

Our group went to the front and sang some Comanche hymns. It surprised us when the entire audience stood up and the men took off their hats as we sang. It made us all feel very good.

Everyone there had a good time visiting and learning about the other tribes, and we look forward to next year.

**see pictures and another article in the November/December issue of the Comanche Nation News.*

SHERIDAN ROAD SCHOOL PTA FALL CARNIVAL

The Sheridan Road School PTA invited the Comanche Language Committee to be a part of their Fall Carnival that featured the diversity of cultures in the Lawton/Fort Sill community. It seems the PTA had learned about us from our web site on the internet. The event was held on October 14th in the school located just inside the Sheridan Gate at Fort Sill Military Reservation.

After having our vehicle searched at the gate, we were allowed to proceed to the school, a short distance away.

We arrived amid children dressed in various costumes depicting children of the world. Tribal member Sandra Toyekoyah graciously made sample size fry bread for us to take. We appreciate her kind offer, which was greatly appreciated by all who stopped by the "sampling" table for foods from various ethnicities.

Because no one else was available that particular night, Kenneth and I put together a short program that included me reading the Grasshopper Story (as taken from our Children's video) and Kenneth showing the drawings Comanche artist Tim Saupitty provided to go with the story on the video. Kenneth then sang a Comanche hymn.

We had an enjoyable evening and received a nice thank you card in the mail a few days later.

ACADEMIC BOWL

The first ever Academic Bowl was held Saturday, November 20th at the Comanche Nation College in Lawton. Susan Johnson, from the Walters Public School system, and

Greg Cable from the Tribe's Youth Program coordinated the event. The CLCPC was asked to participate and we provided a couple of tee-shirts to be given away as prizes at the end of the day. It was a fun day with Indian students from area schools participating in several categories. Our favorite was the "Indian slang" category, with Comanche words from our flash cards a close second! I have to brag and say some of "our" kids from Cache were outstanding in the words category because of their exposure to the language on a daily basis. Way to go, Penny and Keisha!

The day was dreary and wet, and it may have prevented some of the students from attending, but Susan and Greg hope to have a bigger and better turnout for next year.

*(*Winter is the traditional time for Story Telling, and we have several we hope you enjoy.)*

HOW ARMADILLO GOT HIS ARMOR

an original story by Pahdopony & Mithlo

A long time ago, when animals could talk, Armadillo did not have very much respect. He was rather smallish and some considered him simple. He couldn't see too well and he certainly wouldn't hear either! He seemed to bungle his way through life. However, Armadillo was perfectly happy with his gifts. He had an excellent sense of smell which was a plus with his poor eyesight and he lived the way that he chose; swimming in the marshes, eating soft shrimp, tender worms and little water bugs.

Armadillo had no friends; he lived an easy life and he was only interested in finding his next meal. His skin was soft, hairless and pink, which didn't offer much protection from the sun or the bullies of the forest. The cats with eyes like marbles, tricky coyotes and diving birds taunted him day after day. At times, the birds pecked at his tender skin. They didn't understand how an animal like Armadillo managed to

survive each winter without a coat and they teased him mercilessly. However, he never heard their insults.

One night, some rowdy animals pushed poor Armadillo to the limit. They circled him and picked a fight with him. Armadillo was not a fighter and he certainly had no protection against anyone. Although he had sharp claws, he never used them against others; instead he used them only to escape. He dug a hole in the earth and disappeared out of sight in a matter of seconds. He burrowed far into the earth and tunneled all the way to the water's edge. His poor, tender skin was raw and irritated but he escaped with his life. He called out for Alligator, who came out from under some debris in the swampy marshes, and swam across the way toward Armadillo. He listened to Armadillo's pitiful story while he washed his wounds. Alligator listened and understood because none of the animals like him either.

Alligator and Armadillo were shy and both were interested in tending to their own business of gathering food and staying out of trouble. Alligator was never bullied because his heavy armor protected him and although he was not liked, he was rarely bullied.

Alligator and Armadillo gathered the mussel shells alongside the creek bank while they talked and they came up with a plan. They sewed the shells together in strips. After several strips were created, Alligator wrapped them around Armadillo. The strips would not only offer protection but the strips would also be very fashionable. Alligator asked for one request in return...that Armadillo would no longer fish in the creek but would only eat grubs and bugs near the trees and on the forest floor. They are still friends today and Armadillo has kept his promise.

Note: If you look closely at Armadillo, you'll see the raw areas at the edges of his armor and the bands of mussel shells that were sewn together to create his new

outfit—today, he is known in the forest as a little knight in grey armor.

Turtle's Red Eyes and Snake's Bob Tail

(from Comanche Texts, 1958)

A long time ago when animals could talk, a turtle sat in the shade of some little weeds and his mother sat beside him, feeding him flies. There were so many flies that the little turtle was quickly getting his fill. He was very happy.

A big snake crawled up to them and said, "You two are eating my meat!" he said to them. The turtles rolled over on their backs and didn't answer because they were not afraid of the big snake. "You two are not talking to me!" the snake said in a stern voice. "I'll run, dragging you behind me and then I'll take you to your father." The little turtle was angry. He was so angry that the area around his eyes became red and swollen. He glared at the snake with his red eyes.

The snake continued to taunt the turtles, "Lazy turtle, you don't know anything and you move so slowly..." With that, the snake ran toward the turtles and quickly twisted his tail around the little turtle's tail. The snake whipped through the grasses, twisting and turning, this way and that, causing the little turtle to bounce and bob along through the weeds. He rolled and rolled. He bounced so hard against a small boulder that a corner of his shell was chipped into a sharpened edge. This sharp edge nicked the snake's tail. Finally, when the turtle regained his balance, he stood firmly. His eyes were red and swollen. Turtle grabbed some weeds and twisted them around the middle of his shell. The snake tugged and tugged, trying his best to pull the little turtle from the weeds. The snake yanked so hard that he pulled his own tail off! He was so embarrassed that he fled through the weeds. The turtles laughed because it was funny. And to this day, some snakes are bobtailed and some water turtles have red eyes.

THE BUFFALO ARE COMING

told by Mow-wat

translated by Rachel Mow-wat

(June 1940)

A tribe of Indians was camping along a stream. Because the buffalo had migrated from that vicinity, the tribe was suffering from a great famine. The Indians knew, however, that an old couple living near the mountains had a large herd of buffalo penned up in a secret pit. In tribal council one night the men discussed the problem. Fox came along and joined the council.

"Do you know what we can do to save ourselves from starvation?" they asked the fox.

Fox knew of this selfish family who would not share their fortune with others.

"Well," Fox said, "I have a scheme in mind that I believe will work. Cut me bald-headed and trim the hair on my body, get some beads for me to wear, and I'll see what I can do. In the morning break up camp and go to another place."

They did as they were told, broke up the camp, and left Fox with a strand of beads.

When they had gone, Fox wandered around gloomily and acted like a nice pet dog that had been left behind.

The selfish old couple that had the buffalo lived near the edge of the mountains. Their children mistook the fox for a poor starved dog and took him in for a pet. Fox pretended to be frightened and ran under the bed. After they cornered and caught him, they petted him and tried to make him feel at home. The children at times even quarreled over him. He appeared so innocent that they supposed the dog to be the lost treasured pet of some family.

"Let's go out and show him the buffalo in the pen," suggested one of them. When they came near the lot, the dog appeared very much afraid. The children took him out several times in order to accustom him to the animals, coming nearer each time. Of

course, the fox could hardly wait for the opportunity to begin the work he had in mind. Once, when they came very near, he jumped into the pen and started howling at the buffalo and chasing them. The stampede that the fox created caused the buffalo to break through the trick gate and run away. Now the family realized that they had been tricked and that the pet dog was really a fox.

The parents, who had disliked the pet and often had warned the children to let him go, now became very angry. The father, with a club, waited at the gate for the fox to come out; but Fox had already sneaked out through a small opening at the back and was chasing the buffalo towards his comrades whom he had promised to help.

In the camp farther down the stream, some scouts at their look-out post shouted the news to their fellow tribesmen, "The buffalo are coming!"

NETAH'S SACRIFICE

by Randlett Parker

A long time ago, when buffalo and antelope roamed the plains, a small band of Indians camped at the foot of a great mountain. The Great Spirit had been kind; buffalo and deer were plentiful. There was plenty to eat for the little band and enough left over to give to Nun-nu-ye-er-we, the monster who lived in the lake from which they obtained their water. As time passed on, food became scarce; even the little snow shoe rabbits, which usually were plentiful, now were nowhere to be found. The best hunters of the little band made daily trips into the forests, only to come home empty handed. The women and the children had to be fed. There was no water to be had, as Nun-nu-ye-er-we had not been fed for quite some time and was guarding the lake.

The Chief of the tribe walked to the banks of the lake and promptly the water began to roll and churn; large waves rolled upon the sand and banks; the monster was

indeed angry. The Chief summoned the wise man of the tribe and asked his advice.

"Since we have no food to give, what can we do to please the monster?"

The wise old medicine man replied, "To please him, someone must give his most prized possession, something near to his heart, as a gift to Nun-ne-ye-er-we."

Netah, the little daughter to the Chief, heard this and promptly thought of her doll, truly her most prized possession and nearest to her heart. Doll in hand, she walked to the edge of the rolling and churning waters. Taking one last look, she laid it near the water's edge. With tears in her eyes she watched the waters roll over and swallow her doll.

As the Chief and the Medicine Man stood talking, the waters grew calm and still.

"Look," cried the Chief. "Someone has made a great sacrifice by giving his prized possession as a gift to the monster. He is pleased. Now my tribe will have water."

PRODUCTS FOR SALE

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 incl. s&h.

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. Primer explains the Comanche alphabet and sound of each letter. \$15 includes a cassette and s&h.

Comanche Song Book. Collection of 116 songs written in Comanche with an English translation, plus set of 3 CDs of songs. \$30 plus \$5 s&h.

Comanche Flash Cards Set. Three sets of 48 flash cards each with simple Comanche words. \$15 includes cassette and 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; Adult sizes small through XL \$12; Adult sizes 2X and 3X \$15. Specify color and size when ordering & add \$4 per shirt s&h.

Authentic Handmade Comanche Dolls. Beautiful 20" soft bodied dolls, dressed in traditional clothing. Both girl and boy dolls available. \$40 each plus \$5 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 \$4 s&h.

Ball Caps. Royal blue with red bill and Language Logo on front. \$10 plus \$4 s&h.

Lapel Pins. 1 inch Cloisonne pin with colorful C.L.C.P.C. logo and "Nəm̄ Tekwap̄" written in center. \$5 includes s&h.

Note: If you are ordering multiple items, please e-mail us a list of items you will be ordering so we can give you a better price on shipping and handling. Our e-mail address is:

clpc@comanchelanguage.org.

**Please include your e-mail address when ordering in case we need to contact you*



"Jingle Bells"

by **Velma Akoneto**

Waahima, waahima, Na okit̄ n̄n̄.

Taa nar̄mi? a pahip̄ka t̄ na okit̄ n̄n̄.

(sing several times)



"Joy To The World"

by **Deacon Topetchy**

Tsaa n̄sukaa, Taa nar̄mi tsa kima.

Oyet̄ tan̄ ura urarui. Tam̄ u kamak̄na,

U pihik̄ habit̄. Nan̄suw̄ka?it̄,

Nan̄suw̄ka?it̄, Nan̄suw̄ka?iku

u tai kam̄kat̄.



"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

by **Harry Wauahdooah**

Oyet̄ka kima, Tsaat̄ tsa tai w̄hpit̄?i

U nipana?ai tan̄ s̄m̄ oyet̄.

Kim̄tsi u puni, God, ta tua tsa pit̄?i.

Chorus:

U wakatuka kima, U wakatuka kima,

U wakatuka kim̄tsi tai makwitso?ait̄.



"Silent Night"

by **Harry Wauahdooah**

Tsaa ta tukani, Puha tukani.

Tatsinupi muyn̄akw̄.

Tenan̄ u wakatu kima.

Taa nar̄mi? a nan̄sutaik̄.

God ta tua tsa pit̄?i. God ta tua tsa pit̄?i.



TSAA NUUSUKAT̄ WAA HIMARU !!

(Merry Christmas)

We sadly mourn the loss of two friends:

Eva Mae Portillo Riddles

Born May 31, 1926; Died August 27, 2004

William Roy Southard

Born June 13, 1933; Died October 28, 2004

Please keep their families in your prayers.