



NATIVE *oklahoma*

MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2023

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Mark Fulton

President

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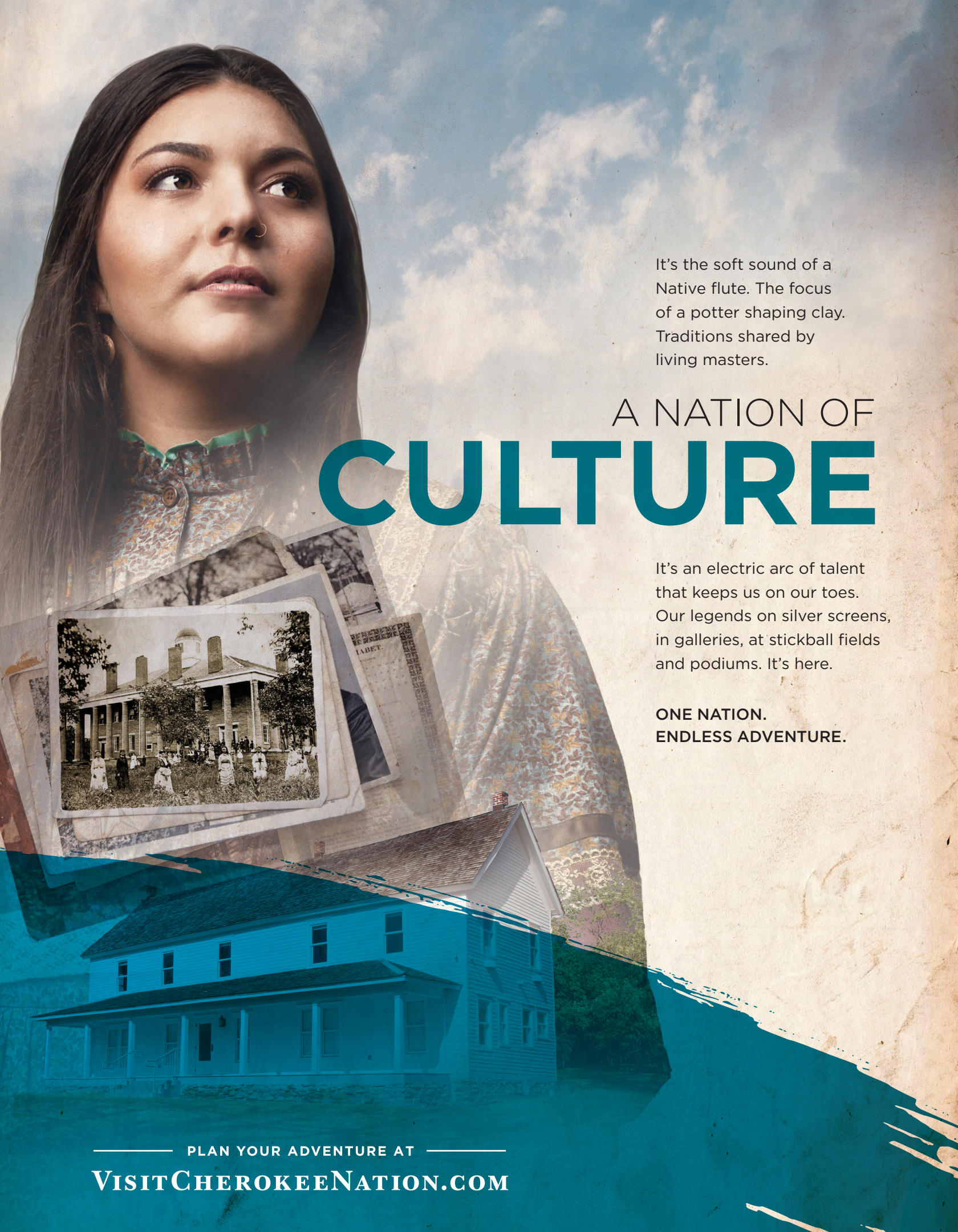


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NATIVE *oklahoma* MAGAZINE

NATIVE OKLAHOMA MAGAZINE | NOVEMBER 2023

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08

NATIVE AMERICAN
HERITAGE MONTH



06

RONNIE PYLE HOSTS JAM NIGHTS
FROM THE GRASSROOTS

20

HAND GAMES BY KIMBERLY BURK

CONTENTS

Native Oklahoma Magazine is a publication not only for the visitor to Oklahoma, but also a resource for our Native community and neighbors. Every month, Native Oklahoma's award-winning writers showcase Native artists, cooks, foods, culture, and crafts, as well as current events and powwows. Our issues include event calendars and lists of Native American attractions across Oklahoma. Native Oklahoma also includes a list of gaming venues, places to stay, and the location of tribal headquarters.



ON THE COVER:

Featured is a photograph of DAPL protesters taken by Arindam Shivaani

06| RONNIE PYLE HOSTS JAM NIGHTS FROM THE GRASSROOTS

Ed's Hurricane Lounge on a Monday night is one of Ronnie Pyle's weekly jam nights in Tulsa, where he and other Tulsa musicians, including other local legends, Kat Irons and David Teegarden, host a night dedicated to opening up the stage for any musician.

08| NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH IS A MONTH DEDICATED TO OUR NATION'S FIRST INHABITANTS

It's a month to remember and educate ourselves on the vast history of American Indian tribes and give regard to their unique and diverse cultures and traditions, and many contributions to the world today.

11| THE BLACK MAGIC OF CREDIT SCORES

Fus Yvhikv breaks down how credit is scored

12| FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES COACH SPOTLIGHT

Honoring Jace Pratt and his contributions as a coach

16| BEARSHAW BEAUTY

Exploring the beginnings of Bearshaw Beauty

20| HAND GAMES

Playing traditional games and learning their history

Ronnie Pyle Hosts Jam Nights from the Grassroots

by Ryann Gordon

Whistles ring from the crowd as the three-piece band jams to old-school blues. A fourth harmonica drifts in from a shadowy corner and adds to the ambiance as band members play off one another, singing along and cheering each other on, taking turns on solos. Ronnie Pyle who sits in front on vocals and guitar points to Shuga Marrow to take off on the harmonica, and he emerges from the shadows for an epic solo, band grooving alongside.

The setting is Ed's Hurricane Lounge on a Monday night. It's one of Ronnie Pyle's weekly jam nights in Tulsa, where he and other Tulsa musicians, including other local legends, Kat Irons and David Teegarden, host a night dedicated to opening up the stage for any musician.

"We do a couple different open mic jam nights throughout the week," says Pyle, who has been hosting open mics for Tulsa musicians since 2016. A known guitarist and singer-songwriter around town, his first jam night started at Double R Saloon and now includes Mondays at Ed's Hurricane and Wednesdays at Detour.

"We just try to provide a platform for musicians to come out," he says. "I've seen karaoke performers come to the jam night and perform with the real band because it's different, and eventually go on to have their own bands playing all over town. It's just a way, if you want to sing or you want to play guitar, get on drums, whatever you play, you're more than welcome to come to our mic night. Play with the band or bring your own band; we provide full backline usually."

Not only do these nights provide an open mic for recreational and/or seasoned musicians to jam out, but they give a stage and set-up opportunity for aspiring artists or anyone with a voice or musical instrument to get on stage and perform whatever music their heart desires.

"On Monday night it's kind of a blues jam, but that doesn't mean we won't get somebody up if they want to come out," says Pyle. "It's just interesting, you know — you never know, one night can be a really bluesy feel and the next it can have a real indie or rock and roll feel to it. Wednesday night, it's kind of an 'anything goes' kind of music. I know a lot of different songs, so we use that night also as a band to work up new material."

A working musician, his week is packed nightly with gigs around town. On weekends he stands as front-man of his five-piece band, Ronnie Pyle and the Drivers, as well as a four-piece band on other days.

"I've done solo, with the trio, Friday and Saturday with my five-piece band, yesterday afternoon with my four-piece," he says. "Whatever they ask for. Some places want a solo act; some places want a duo. I prefer playing with my big band. Sometimes we'll add a sixth player, keys or a harmonica, saxophone. I do everything from clubs to restaurants to festivals to private parties, anything. I just did the state fair."

A Tulsa through-and-through, Ronnie Pyle is a name known by most local musicians. He's played with legends local and non-local alike, and he's established in the open mic jam night scene, having brought together musicians in Tulsa for weekly open jam sessions and good, old-fashioned musical comradery.

At Ed's Hurricane Lounge, the crowd cheers as the Cowboys win the Monday night football game. "Someone should've told me a football game was on," the current man on mic, Rusty Ray Reed, says laughing. "I thought y'all were cheering for us!"

Ronnie Pyle jokes back at the singer-guitarist, "How 'bout them 'Boys!'" The crowd erupts with cheers and laughter, and Reed returns to shredding psychedelic sounds from the guitar. "Ah, hell yeah," says Pyle, "this is the reggae portion!"

"We're jammin' Rusty," says Teegarden on the drums, bantering back and forth with the crowd. "Can anyone name who played guitar on the original?" He jokes on the mic, cheering when answered. "Let's take shots!" He pumps up the crowd. "Who remembers Shotz, the bar? Only clap if you've taken shots at Shotz." Several of the bar guests throw their hands up clapping, sharing a shared memory reel that resonates even with those who'd never been to said bar.

The open mic nights start with the trio, Pyle on guitar and vocals, Teegarden on drums and Irons on bass, then they open up the stage for other musicians to join them or take over for a solo or combination act.

"Usually the format is that the house band will do the first set and play like the first hour, and then will open it up to the musicians that are there to jam," says Pyle. "Usually they bring their own guitars and amplifiers, instruments, etc. Some will have a sign-up list. Our jams, it's usually just come up and talk to us, and we will get you up type of situation."

As guests come up, the veterans welcome them with open arms, helping them set up and discussing what they want to play between sets. Some are regulars, like Cheyenne Grrl, the native, diva singer with a big voice and even bigger sass. Others are new to the gathering and bring in unique acts, a Stevie Nicks-esque singer; a guitar-ukulele, male-female duo; and others.

"Yeah, we get them up, adjust the sound, all that," says Pyle. "The bands I have now are a bunch of seasoned professionals. We know a vast quantity of material. I've been very fortunate, the fact I do everything, from the solo gigs to the bigger band. The versatility helps me stay working fulltime."



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labisowa ' ishtalakchi ' (Garters) were worn below the knee and were an essential part of Chickasaw men's regalia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Beaded designs, most likely created by an artist removed from a Great Lakes tribe, or Potawatomi, due to their shared northern border with the Chickasaw Nation in Indian Territory, were worn by Chickasaws. The design is taken from the garters and placed in an ascending motif, named in tribute to a dear friend of the Potawatomi Tribe.

Native Oklahoma has an intertribal outreach not only in Oklahoma, but also to all American Indian tribes and nations across the country.

Shop intertribal today!





Native American Heritage Month is a Month Dedicated to Our Nation's First Inhabitants

by Ryann Gordon

Native American Heritage Month is a time to celebrate our nation's first inhabitants. The month of November each year is dedicated to honoring all Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and affiliated Island communities. It's a month to remember and educate ourselves on the vast history of American Indian tribes and give regard to their unique and diverse cultures and traditions, and many contributions to the world today.

Native Americans represent some of America's most diverse and distinctive cultural groups, with rich traditions, languages and stories that are passed down within each tribe. Through much historical hardship, Native Americans have persisted in preserving their unique cultures, traditions and practices more than most colonized groups.

Today, there are 14 states with more than 100,000 American Indian or Alaskan Native residents, and 39 tribal nations headquartered in Oklahoma. Despite heedless attempts to demolish their cultures and break up their communities, Native Americans retained much of their heritage and managed to emerge from their hardships with dignity and pride, and re-attain power in the world today.

With a culture celebrated through words, Native American Heritage Month is a particularly special time for Native and non-Natives alike to learn the history and values shared within Native tribes. Oral traditions pass down sacred Indian knowledge, so the best way to recognize Native Heritage Month is by celebrating the traditions, languages and stories that have been passed down by mouth. The practice of storytelling has ensured their rich histories and contributions continue to thrive with each passing generation.

Native Americans have survived so much hardship, yet more than many other cultural groups, they've held their cultures and traditions. Learn the history, back to the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which forcibly relocated Indians to Oklahoma, to the Indian Appropriations Acts, creating the reservation system, where Indians were forced to move to and live on reservations.

Throughout this time period and into the 20th century, Indian boarding schools were founded to eliminate traditional Native American ways of life and replace them with mainstream American culture. Unspeakable crimes were committed upon Indian families, where children were taken by missionaries and put through harsh schooling intended to break them of their Native ways. Learn more about the tragedies surrounding these schools in the documentary *Chilocco: A Native American Boarding School Documentary*. See a viewing of the documentary at the Del City Library at 2 p.m. on Nov. 5.

Despite the hardships faced, it's important to pay homage to the ways in which tribal citizens have worked to overcome these challenges. Indian language played a crucial role in WWII, where the US government recruited hundreds of Natives from more than twenty tribes to

use their Indigenous languages to send secret, coded messages enemies could never break. See Choctaw Code Talkers documentary, among others, to learn more.

In modern times, efforts have been made to reclaim Native rights. The Indian Civil Rights Act 1968 became a federal law that recognized the rights and citizenship of members of Native American groups. Finally, Native American Heritage Month was signed into law in 1990, dedicated to honoring Native American culture throughout November. Since then, American Indians have been part of a renaissance of governmental successes. Throughout the 21st century, Indian nations have taken remarkable actions in rebuilding their communities, from justice to health care, community development, education and most certainly building a repertoire in the arts and pop culture.

Native American cinema and filmmakers have become widely famed in recent years, with the rise of movies like Killers of the Flower Moon and Prey, and TV series like Reservation Dogs. A new string of Native actors and filmmakers like Oklahoma's own Sterlin Harjo have taken to the big screen and brought much acclaim to Native American practices, stories and styles in the modern mainstream.

You can see much Native influence in modern home design and fashion, in prints, beadwork and clothing. Indigenous art, basketry and pottery remains popular in design, though much Native art and clothing holds other significance, meant to perform a service, provide a means of worship, avert evil spirits, honor births, deaths and ancestors, or be used in various rituals.

Dress wear and accessories, though fashionable nonetheless, are highly symbolic for Native peoples. Jingle dresses and other clothing items and accessories are carefully adorned for ceremonies, powwows, dances and other rituals, and vary greatly across tribes. The ceremonies and rituals practiced by each tribe and individual families are sacred and representative of values and community. Aside from powwows and dances, sports represent community rituals of many indigenous tribes as well, like field hockey, target games, lacrosse and more.

Take time to recognize Natives in America this month at one of these and other events spanning throughout November in Oklahoma:

AARP OK Native American Elders Honors Event

at the First Americans Museum in OKC on **Nov. 1** will honor 48 Native American Elders from Oklahoma's 39 tribal nations.

Will Rogers Day in Claremore

Nov. 1-4, is a festival celebrating "The Cherokee Kid" which will feature a parade, film festival, 5K run and more.

Choctaw Nation Annual Powwow

on **Nov. 3-5** in Durant is one of the nation's largest powwows, a three-day event that will draw dancers from all over the country and feature a powwow competition.

SkasdiCon

is in Tahlequah on **Nov. 4** is an annual comic convention featuring special guests, a family-friendly cosplay competition, Native pop-culture panels, screenings and First Americans artists.

AAIA Annual Reparation Conference

is on **Nov. 7-9** in Shawnee.

Native Sound Summit

at First Americans Museum in OKC on **Nov. 11**, where artists, musicians, curators and industry professionals will convene for panels and performances.

Native American Flute Circle

in Norman on **Nov. 12** will offer a free flute workshop.

Native Americans Through Film

on **Nov. 30** is a free program at Belle Isle Library in OKC that will showcase a curated collection of films celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions of First Americans.

Stomp Dance Demonstrations

twice a day, 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., **Tuesdays-Saturdays** at the Chickasaw Cultural Center in Sulphur.

'It's Corn!' art exhibit

at Philbrook Museum running through **Dec. 31** looks at how corn has influenced art, pottery, jewelry, paintings and more.



The Sky-Eagle Collection is more than just a fashion brand, it is a celebration of Native American culture and a testament to the resilience of the human spirit. The brand was founded with Yanti, his wife, muse, premier of the Fashion House, and they named the brand after their daughter. Together, they are building a legacy that honors their heritage and inspires others to follow their dreams.

skyeaglecollection.com

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Sky-Eagle Collection

The Black Magic of Credit Scores

Sour Sofkee #47 By Fus Yvhikv

Do you know your credit score? More importantly, do you know HOW your credit score is calculated?

I can answer that question for you because nobody knows how our credit scores are actually calculated. The only people who know how our credit score is computed are the corporation that is the creator of this Frankensteinian monster. The formula used to calculate your credit score is a secret more closely guarded than Colonel Sanders' secret recipe of 11 herbs and spices.

The great and powerful Oz of credit scoring is a company called FICO. FICO, formerly known as Fair Isaacs Company, is the company responsible for providing the formulas that calculate your credit scores. FICO has never revealed the witches' brew of algorithms that go into calculating your score.

FICO basically licenses its formula to the three major credit reporting agencies: Experian, TransUnion, and Equifax. These three credit bureaus use the information that they have in their database about your past credit history in order to calculate your credit score by plugging these data into the FICO model.

In the past, each of these credit bureaus has had its own proprietary credit scoring system; Equifax marketed a product called BEACON Score, TransUnion a credit score called EMPIRICA, while Experian had its Experian Scores.

More recently these three major credit reporting agencies banded together to develop a joint credit scoring product called VantageScore to try to compete with FICO's highly profitable FICO Score. This is one of the reasons why on any given day you can check your credit and receive up to 5 different scores (which can vary widely).

However, the FICO score is clearly the dominant credit scoring system. It is used by lenders in granting and rationing credit (seemingly to the exclusion of all other credit factors) and it is used by insurance companies in setting rates for your car insurance and home insurance. In addition, FICO Scores are increasingly being used by employers with regard to hiring employees. Given the intrusive and paramount role that FICO scores play in the everyday lives of all Americans and how such scores affect our lives for the good or the bad, one would naturally think that FICO scores would be marked by transparency, disclosure, fairness and openness. That is not the case.

Instead, in Wicked Witch of the West fashion, FICO brews up its life-controlling credit scoring formula in the deep dark lower sanctums of their corporate offices in secrecy, in darkness, in seclusion, and in a very covert manner.

Indeed, it was only in response to tremendous pressure from consumer credit groups that the great and powerful Oz relented and allowed

disclosure of these all-important credit scores to individual consumers. So recalcitrant was FICO to these understandable requests that it took a federal law to compel FICO to make these scores available.

So now we can access our credit scores, but when we will be given the right to know exactly how such scores are calculated? To be sure, there are those who aver that they understand the workings of the mystical formula to the point where they can offer credible advice as to how to improve your all-important credit score. Techniques such as keeping your overall debt to a minimum, not maxing out the credit line of your credit cards, and paying bills on time all act to create upward pressure on your score.

In addition, again seemingly only at gunpoint, FICO has publicized the five major factors that go into calculating credit scores. These are: payment history, the amount borrowed compared to available credit, length of credit history, inquiries and new debt, and type of credit (viz., installment versus revolving or credit card debt). Knowledge of these factors and how they can be manipulated does allow an individual to improve their credit score. At the end of the day, however, this situation is akin to the story of the two blind men and the elephant wherein one man feels the elephant's leg and says it is like a pillar and the other blind man feels the elephant's tail and says it is like a rope. We know that there is a large creature in the room but we know not what it is.

As with KFC, we only know that there are 11 herbs and spices but we don't know the identities of these ingredients nor the actual recipe. There is also increasing evidence that the FICO secret formulas punish good and responsible credit decisions made by responsible and prudent consumers. Also, these FICO scores produce discriminatory behaviors concerning granting credit, housing, and employment, most particularly toward the poor, the unemployed, and those who have lost a job or have suffered a major illness.

Finally, there is this: There is a compelling body of empirical evidence and studies that show a poor correlation between one's credit score and debt repayment. FICO scores may indeed prove to be poor predictors of future behavior. The FICO crystal ball is indeed cloudy!

In summary, given the prevalent and paramount role that FICO scores have come to play in the everyday life of most Americans, isn't it about time that FICO come out of the dark, pull back the curtain behind which they are hiding, and reveal the ingredients to their secret potion otherwise known as the FICO Score? It is time to end the black magic of credit scores.



Fus YVHIKV



Fellowship of Christian Athletes Coach Spotlight

Jace Pratt

Northeastern State University

Graduate Assistant: 2nd Year

Sports Coached: Men's Basketball

Sport Played: Basketball

High School: Sperry High School

Hometown: Sperry, Ok

Q and A with Jace Pratt

Favorite Bible verse: "Hold on to instruction; don't let go. Guard it, for it is your life." —Proverbs 4:13

Tribe Affiliation: Cherokee

Favorite food: Orange Chicken from Panda Express

Favorite walk-up song: Too God by KB

Favorite Coach growing up: My Dad, Mike Pratt and High School Basketball Coach Kight

Favorite part of being a coach: There are a lot of favorite parts about being a coach. I love how I get to still be able to be around basketball. I grew up playing basketball and always been around it even as a player, now as a coach. One of my top favorites are being able to coach my LITTLE brother. This is his first year and being able to be part of his first year in college is awesome.

Who I look up to: My dad (Mike) and my older brother (Peyton). They have been a huge part of my life. My dad served in the Marine corps. So, growing up his motto to me and my brothers was outwork everyone whether it's on the court or in life. Peyton led by example about Dads saying. He is one of the hardest workers I know and growing up I wanted to be like that. As I got older, I still see it till this day.

Favorite part about being a Fellowship of Christian athlete Huddle Coach: Favorite part about being in FCA: The great thing about being in FCA is as a player or coach, God put us in a great platform to be a light to others. Sports are a huge platform for people to watch and I think as a FCA its great to remind why we are here on this earth and it's to spread the gospel.

Favorite part of FCA: My favorite part about FCA is the

opportunities to get to speak with high schools huddles, 5th Quarters or See You At The Pole, but getting the opportunity to speak what you have learned in life to a generation that can make a change is awesome. I get to talk to other athletes about the problems I had in high school or in college so hopefully they don't make the mistakes that I made.

Words from Coach Pratt: I have learned a lot as a coach, but one important thing I have learned is from the quote by Frank Ocean, "Work hard in silence, let your success make the noise". It's a great reminder for myself to remain humble. I want to be the best coach I can be, but I am not going to announce every success I have. I want people to see is that we are going to be the hardest working team we can be.

Fellowship of Christian Athletes: we have a vision and mission and we need to be able to do the same as we live for Jesus! If you want more information about the FCA, please let me know.

FCA Vision.

To see the world transformed by Jesus Christ through the influence of coaches and athletes.

FCA Mission

To lead every coach and athlete into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and His church.

"For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world that He might condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him." —John 3:16-17

John Morris is currently serving with Oklahoma Fellowship of Christian Athletes in Cherokee, Adair and Delaware Counties and is supported financially by faith partners. If you are interested in more information on FCA or being a faith partner go to this link <https://my.fca.org/johnmorris>. John can be contacted through email: johnmorris@fca.org or by cell number (785-760-1627).



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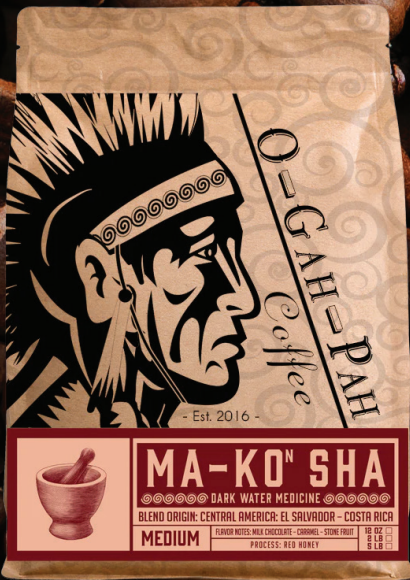
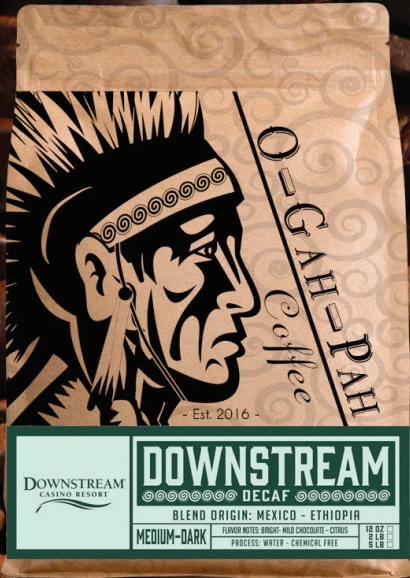
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O-GAH-PAH

Many centuries ago the Quapaw Nation followed the Mississippi River into our traditional homeland in Arkansas. This is the Origin of the name "O-Gah-Pah" which can be translated as the "Downstream People".

For centuries the O-Gah-Pah (Quapaw) people lived in four large villages and many smaller communities along the Mississippi River and across modern-day Eastern Arkansas. The Quapaw people would annually plant and harvest crops and hunt buffalo according to the seasons. The Quapaw traded pottery, painted hides and other goods through an extensive trade route based along the rivers. The Quapaw people were particularly known for pottery, which was often painted; swirls being a distinctive pattern of the Quapaw people.

After removal, the Quapaw Nation came to reside in Northeastern Oklahoma, where we are still located today. The Quapaw Nation continues to take great care and pride in crafting everything we put our name on, including O-Gah-Pah Coffee.





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BEARSHAW BEAUTY HONEY SUCKLE LIP BALM

Bearshaw Beauty Began with One Woman's Search for All-Natural Beauty Products

Ryann Gordon

Finding all-natural beauty products isn't easy, and for Jasmine Bear, owner of Bearshaw Beauty and Snag Dating App, it was a feat worth endeavoring. Based out of Tulsa, OK, Jasmine is a native business owner and entrepreneur (Osage/Mvskoke/Cherokee/Choctaw/Seminole) whose search for natural alternatives for her beauty products led to a thriving business in just over a year. And it all began with her homemaking skincare products for personal use.

"I wanted to use something more natural that my skin would respond well to," says Jasmine, who launched Bearshaw Beauty just over a year ago, on Native American Day 2022 at Dream Keepers Park. In preparing for the debut, she gathered her products and perfected the packaging with all reusable, recyclable materials and chemical-free products.

The origin of Bearshaw Beauty goes back further, though. While looking at product labels for beauty brands, she began scrutinizing unrecognizable ingredients and questioning the extensive ingredient lists. Seeing all the chemicals and unfamiliar ingredients in just about every beauty product she'd come across, she took matters into her own hands and began making her own beauty elixirs.

"I noticed that a lot of beauty products sold in stores are manufactured in Europe, Dubai or Korea, and a lot of the ingredients are unpronounceable," she says. "We don't know what it is and what we're putting on our bodies, so I started making my own and giving it to my sisters or friends and they gave me really good feedback on it, so I decided to mass produce it. Because they are very minimal, high-quality ingredients, and they're also natural."

Rather than using chemicals or unfamiliar ingredients, Jasmine

sought out simple ingredients that people know and enjoy, and quality sources she knew she could trust. Once she had that, she started expanding her products list. She put her lab gear on and start creating new mixtures and sampling them herself.

"I did all the research myself," she says. "The first product I made on my own was the lip balm, then I went to body butter. The lip balm I get a lot of good feedback on, because it is only four ingredients and your lips don't get addicted to it like how they would with Blistex or Carmex, so it feels better and it lasts a very long time."

While some products use essential oils, her lip balms come in three flavors, Honeysuckle, Wild Strawberry and Hickory Nut, which she outsources from a company that's certified organic.

"I did a lot of research and found the most natural flavor oils," she says. "And it makes good gifts, so I'm doing seasonal lip balms. I just made those; there's a Pecan Pie, a Candy Cane and Hot Cocoa."

In doing her research and learning the ins-and-outs of the ingredients, like with most things, Jasmine ran into obstacles that had to be overcome. And she learned a lot along the way.

"I was trying to figure out how to get my micro-powder in my Hair & Body Oil to not just fall to the bottom," she says. "It settles and I wanted it to be throughout the bottle more. I tried using beeswax and I didn't know it wasn't an emulsifier, so it made it to kind of a paste once it cooled. So I had to do research on what an emulsifying wax is and find something else so it settles a lot slower. Now, you just shake it a little bit and it distributes the powder slowly."

"The powder is heavier than the oil, so I had to figure that out. And I didn't want it to be too waxy, because that's something I don't like is when you have a body oil that's feels really waxy. I wanted it to be as natural as possible and just absorb into your skin. Then it was just about finding more balance — if you think it's too thick, you know, finding the right consistency you like."

In expanding her products, she even found new additions to her skincare routine she didn't know she needed.

"My current favorite is the face emollient," she says. "It has a slight cucumber melon scent to it. It's not too much, because I didn't want it to be too overpowering since it goes on your face. It's my favorite because it has Shea butter and vitamin E oil in it; it has Aloe Vera gel that's un-died and alcohol-free. It's a very simple recipe but it does hydrate my skin very quickly. Especially in cold weather, when you get dry around your nose and chin. You put that cream overnight and it's perfectly hydrated in the morning. And you just need a little bit, so it lasts. It's my favorite thing."

What began with one woman's search for natural beauty products led to the creation of Bearshaw Beauty — but that's not the only quest that Jasmine Bear's facilitated. Her latest project, the Snag App.

"The Snag App is a social networking app for indigenous users," she says. "It has a feature in it called Native Network, which is kind of like Facebook but for Indians. Snag, the dating feature, is more like Tinder, but for Native Americans."

Along with these endeavors, Jasmine Bear dances traditionally Osage in District Gray Horse (yes, the district in Killers of the Flower Moon, which she starred as an extra in). An active member of the tribe, she's also a wife and mother, and fosters children for Muscogee Creek Nation.



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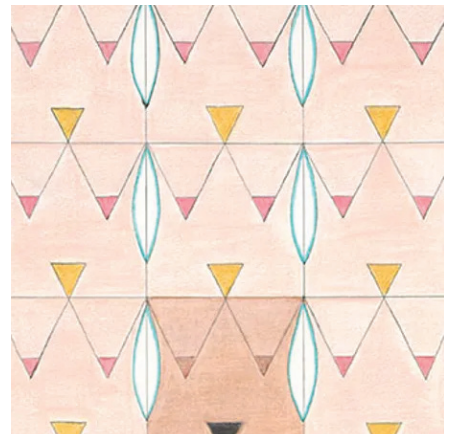


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The Battle of Ackia or Aahíkki'ya' as the Chickasaw call the event, was a battle between the French and Chickasaw. d'Arteguette launched the assault of Chokkilissa' (Ogoula Tchetoka in French), about 4 miles north of the town we call Tupelo, Mississippi today. The French military leader attacked on March 24, 1736. As they entered the area, Chickasaw women began singing loudly, and the French troops became disoriented. The singing women wielding hatchets advanced into the battle of Chickasaw warriors and French soldiers, frightening the French and forcing them to retreat. The singing, warring Chickasaw women became known as Hatchet Women. They are revered in Chickasaw history as part of the unconquered and unconquerable.





Hand Games

By Kimberly Burk

Teams of hand game players from the Crow Reservation in Montana will be in Oklahoma this month for a cultural exchange that is growing in popularity.

As many as 30 team members will make the 1,100-mile drive from south-central Montana for a tournament that starts with preliminaries hosted Nov. 7-10 in the homes of Oklahoma tribal members. The final event is on Nov. 11 at the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes' Emergency Response Center in Clinton, and the public is invited.

Kiowa citizen Joe Poe, a hand games organizer from Oklahoma City, said the tournament held every November is part of a longtime relationship between the Kiowa and the Crow. Players from the Comanche, Apache and Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes also take part.

The Crow received the hand games from the Assinibones, a tribe that is primarily in Canada, according to Dale Old Horn, who works for the Crow Nation as a chairman's adviser on cultural affairs and tribal policy.

"The Crow have been playing hand games for quite some time," Old Horn said.

Also called the feather game, it's a spiritual as well as a social event, Old Horn said.

The Kiowa migrated from western Canada in the 1700s and stopped and spent some time with the Crows, Poe said. The two tribes played hand games during the winter months.

The Kiowa and the Crow became allies, Old Horn said, and those relationships continued throughout removal and beyond. The Crow Nation has 14,500 citizens, and about half live on the mountainous reservation.

Mary Beaver, who is retired from the IHS and lives in Oklahoma City, helped revive the hand games tradition in the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. Oklahoma players travel every May to Montana where the Crow host a tournament, and Beaver has been making that trip for 38 years.

Crow citizen Myron Little Light Jr. grew up traveling with his father to the Oklahoma tournament, and now his 11-year-old son Jacoby has started making the trip from Montana.

"I sing at powwows and hand games tournaments with the Night Hawk Juniors," which is his father's group, Jacoby said. Little Light said his son has been singing and drumming with his group since age 8.

Little Light said the music has been an important component of the tournaments "for as far back as I can remember."

He said it's been a thrill to watch his son grow into

"someone who has the same passion as me" for the music.

"Jacoby will just sit in his bedroom and start drumming and start singing," his father said. And now, he said, his 3-year-old son is showing the same interest.

In addition to the tournament with the Crow, Beaver and Poe help run an Oklahoma Hand Games Tournament, held every spring. The Cheyenne and Arapaho's long winning streak was broken this year by the Kiowa Kickers, Beaver said.

Beaver is captain of the Oklahoma Indians, which was her late father's team. It's a mixed team of men and women, and team members fill such roles as hidlers, guessers, musicians and medicine men. Plastic "bones" are skillfully hidden in the hands of players, and the guesser's job is to find the one that is marked by pointing to the correct fist.

Players differ in their opinions as to whether hand games involve more skill than luck, Old Horn said.

"You will hear people say they would rather be lucky than good," Old Horn said.

On championship day on Nov. 11, lunch will begin at 1 p.m., Beaver said. Team registration is from 1 to 1:45 p.m. and the tournament starts at 2 p.m.

Tribes donate the money for the first-place winner, Poe said, which is typically \$4,000. Entry fees cover the cash prizes for the other winners.

Tournaments are not the only time hand games are played.

"People hold memorial hand games and birthday hand games," Beaver said. "Some play on the day after Thanksgiving. A lot of people just like to play."

Hand games are increasingly played at powwows, where athletic contests in softball, basketball and cornhole are also growing in popularity.

Beaver said she expects anywhere from 10 to 16 teams to advance to the final round on Nov. 11, but many more people will crowd the venue.

"We have a lot of onlookers who like to see other people play," she said.

Photo caption:

Members of a Kiowa team compete in a hand games tournament. (Photo provided by Joe Poe)

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