Antonio Azul honored at 2nd Annual Chief Azul Day

Thomas R. Throssell
Gila River Indian News

For many Community members, the empty dirt lot across from the Matthew B. Juan and Ira H. Hayes Veterans Memorial Park may just be another spot in the Community to meet-up with friends or a place to stop for a quick bite to eat. However, over 100 years ago it was the home of Gila River Indian Community’s last traditional chief, Chief Antonio Azul.

Up to 100 Community members, including tribal leaders, dancers, veterans, and spiritual runners gathered at the site in the early morning hours of Dec. 17, to honor GRIC’s last chief and celebrate the winter solstice for the second annual Chief Azul Day.

As runners jogged their way through the 5K and 2-Mile Walk/ Run to start out the celebration, GRIC Community Manager Pamela Thompson, who founded and helped organize this year’s celebration, explained how Chief Azul’s home, a two-story adobe house, stood at that location many years ago.

Just east of Sacaton Road there is a mural painted on the side of the United States Post Office building depicting a mirror image of what the dirt lot looked like over 100 years ago, with Chief Azul’s two-story home at center, surrounded by several roundhouses.

While honoring Chief Azul was the main theme of the celebration, educating Community members about their last traditional chief was a key element of the day. “When he was chief, …the (U.S.) government was doing a lot of relocation of Indian tribes,” said Thompson. “One of the things that came out during his time as a chief is that (the government) wanted to relocate us to Oklahoma.”

Before accepting the government’s terms to move the tribe to Oklahoma, Chief Azul wanted to see the land with his own two eyes. “He took a party with him…to see where we were going to be relocated to and he went there and he said it was not a good place for us to go, that we would remain where we were and that we were not going to move,” said Thompson.

She said that it was because of Chief Azul and other tribal leaders that the Gila River Indian Community was able to stay.

A procession made its way down Cholla Road from its starting point at the site of Chief Azul’s home to the students that were chosen for the event to get to know the second annual Chief Azul Day.

Sen. McCain visits Mesa Gateway

Sen. John McCain after meeting to discuss airport improvements.

Gila River Indian Community students pose with GRPD Officers and MMA fighters at the Shop with a Cop activity on Dec. 17.

GRPD Officer Duarte coordinated the event with Ortiz to bring holiday joy to the students. Community member and amateur MMA fighter Deran Martinez volunteered his time to help with the event to get to know the students that were chosen for the Shop with a Cop event.

Martinez said it’s about giving back to the Community and paying it forward. The event is about showing the students that hard work and paying it forward.

Gila River Community School Christmas Dinner

Thomas R. Throssell/GRIN

Gila Crossing Community School Christmas Dinner

Christopher Lomahquahu/G R I N

This year the Gila River Police Department School Resource Officers picked three exemplary students from schools across the Community, who were in for a special surprise. World Fighting Federation Founder Tom Ortiz and local Mixed Martial Arts fighters partnered up with GRPD officers to help the students select their gifts on Dec 17 for the annual Shop with a Cop event.

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Members of the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Authority pose with Sen. John McCain after discussing airport improvements.

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Important News for 2017

AmeriCorps Office at HHKMH
Beginning January 17, 2017, AmeriCorps members will be available to assist with the following services:

- DD214’s
- Headstone Requests
- Scheduling with a Service Officer
- Veteran & Military Family Resource Navigation

For more information, please contact:
Leonard Bruce, AmeriCorps Coordinator - Veterans Serving Veterans Gila River Indian Community
Phone: (520) 562-6221

Native Americans Exempt From Tax Penalty

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) promotes health insurance coverage for all. For income tax year 2016 the ACA requires all taxpayers to report their proof of health insurance or pay the penalty. As a Native American with a tribal affiliation, you are entitled to an exemption from this penalty. This exemption waives the payment penalty. To claim this exemption, you have some options.

Exemptions from the Penalty
You may qualify for an exemption from the penalty for not having health insurance coverage for any of the months during the 2016 calendar year. The law states that you must have minimum essential coverage for all months. This rule applies not only to the tax filer but must include any of the dependents that are claimed. One day of coverage in the month counts as coverage for the entire month. Here are some of the reasons the federal government will consider you as exempt:

- You are a member of a federally recognized tribe or eligible for services through an Indian Health Services/tribal facility, such as Gila River Health Care
- The lowest-priced health care coverage available to you would cost more than 8% of your household income
- You are not required to file a tax return
- You are a member of a recognized religious sect with religious objections to insurance
- You are incarcerated (either detained or jailed), and not being held pending disposition of charges
- You are not lawfully present in the U.S.
- You qualify for a hardship exemption

Individuals need to only meet one of the above exemption criteria.

1. Paper Application
The Benefits Coordinators can assist you with completing a paper exemption application form and mailing it with supporting documentation. You will need to submit documentation of membership in a federally recognized tribe. You must provide one of the following:

- Certificate of Indian Blood, or
- Tribal Identification Card or
- Letter from Gila River Health Care stating you are eligible for services.

Upon completion of this process, the Marketplace will send you an Exemption Certification Number (ECN). The ECN will stay with you forever, similar to a social security number. Please note if you applied for and received an ECN number in 2015, this is the same number you will use on your 2016 IRS Federal Income Tax Return Form. This number will tell the federal government you are exempt from the tax penalty. Once you receive this number, you would indicate this on your IRS form. Exemptions from this source need to be obtained at the earliest opportunity.

2. Claiming an Exemption on Federal Income Taxes
Remember, when you file a federal income tax return use the IRS health coverage exemption Form 8965. Codes for exemption (A-E) are listed in the instructions. Mark the specific code for Native Americans.

The important thing to remember is Gila River Health Care has trained staff at their site in Komatke and Hu Hu Kam Memorial Hospital to assist with this process. Also, you Do Not require health insurance to be seen at any of our facilities. This change in the ACA does not impact your eligibility for care as a Native American at our facilities.

For further information, contact the Benefit Coordination Department:
(520) 562-3321 Ext: 1311 or (602) 528-1311.

How to Apply for a Tribal Exemption Members of federally recognized tribes, Alaskan Natives and people who are otherwise eligible for services through an Indian health care provider can apply for an exemption two different ways. Gila River Health Care Benefits Coordination Staff would like to assist you with this process.
Tribal Social Services hosts Christmas party for children at Rawhide

Mikhail Sundust
Gila River Indian News

Christmas time can be difficult for some, but Tribal Social Services made sure that the 570-plus children under its care could celebrate the holidays with a smile.

Rawhide Western Town was like the North Pole — Gila River. Branch on December 19, when TSS held a Christmas party where children could run around, have fun, meet Santa, and receive a Christmas present.

Leanne Wander, director of TSS, said, “Every year we do this for the children that are under Tribal Social Services. We work with these children all year long, we care for them, and I just think it’s our responsibility to make sure that the children are receiving gifts and they see some joy in their lives. So it’s very important that they be able to all come together, have fun, interact with each other, and receive a gift.”

The party provided games, gifts, and a hot meal, and gave the children a chance to feel a sense of community and have fun with relatives or other Gila River children their age.

“It’s a safe event. The kids can have fun playing together,” said Michael Henderson, a foster father of two Gila River children. “Any opportunity they have to connect with other children from Gila River, it’s great.”

Dale Enos, a TSS case manager, has been working for decades in the field of social services. He said, “Unfortunately, some of these children are not going to be able to spend time with their families. Some of them are in foster care, some of them are at RPY (the GRC Residential Programs for Youth group home), but I think Social Services is doing a great job by organizing this. This brings the families togetherness, too, because the families of the children come, too.”

Santa couldn’t have delivered all the gifts he did that day without the help of many elves in Gila River. This year, TSS partnered with the Gila River Fire Department, Gila River Gaming Enterprises, and a number of other GRC departments and entities to hold a Toy Donation Drive through most of November and into December. Rawhide donated time at the Western Town for the party, which was reserved for the children and their families.

Enos said bringing families together is a primary focus for TSS. “Reunification is first and foremost for the agency. The party is an excellent opportunity for the children to reconnect with the families and start that process.”

Volunteers wrap Christmas gifts for GRIC children

Christopher Lomahquahu
Gila River Indian News

Gila River Indian Community employees volunteered their time to wrap Christmas gifts that were collected through a toy drive in the month of November and December, which were collected by the Gila River Fire Department.

The Rawhide Saloon and Steakhouse was transformed into Santa’s Workshop on Dec. 14, to get the presents ready for the Tribal Social Services Department to hand out to the children under their supervision and care outside of the Residential Programs for Youth.

The cheerful group Santa’s elves made up of caseworkers, firefighters and other spirited volunteers were busy hugging and bustling to get the gifts wrapped in time for Christmas.

A total of 830 items were collected through the GRIC Toy Drive to bring joy to over 309 children this past Christmas.

Armed with scotch tape and wrapping paper, no gift was too big or too difficult to be wrapped. The GFRF would like to thank the following entities for donating some of the presents:


The number of flights has prompted the PMGAA to look at ways of improving safety, which addresses the need to either improve or build a new air traffic control tower.

Another major improvement project that was discussed with Sen. McCain was the reconstruction of the north apron that is used by corporate, military and general aviation aircraft that stop to unload passengers and refuel before departing.

Both projects will receive support through a Federal Aviation Administration discretionary grant.

The grant provides financial support for the development of public-use airports across the country, which in the case of the Gateway Airport will benefit from the upgrades to critical infrastructure.
On Tuesday Jan. 3, Gila River Lt. Gov. Monica Antone traveled to Ak-Chin Indian Community to witness the historic Oath of Office ceremony for the incoming Chairman, Vice-Chairman and three Council members. Held at the Ak-Chin Service Center, the oath was administered by Chief Judge Brian Burke.

Alvin Antone, Ann Antone and Delia Carlyle were each individually sworn-in, as were Vice-Chairman Gabriel Lopez and Chairman Robert Miguel.

Under the new Ak-Chin Constitution passed by the members last summer in a special Secretarial Election, voters now have the opportunity to elect their Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Previously, the five Council members voted within the leadership at the second regular meeting each January. November’s election had a field of eight Council candidates and two candidates each for the top two offices.

With the exception of Councilman Antone, who is in his first term of elected office, the entire Council previously served. The swearing-in on Jan. 3 begins the new four-year Chairman and Vice-Chairman terms and initial two-year Council staggered terms.

On Saturday, Jan. 21, an official Ak-Chin Inauguration will be held and the public is invited. The first ever event will be held at Ak-Chin Circle Field next to the UltraStar Multi-tenant Center, 16600 N. Maricopa Highway beginning at 4 p.m. to midnight. The inauguration will feature a ceremonial oath, speakers, dinner and a vail dance.

The Ak-Chin Indian Community inaugurated their leadership on Jan. 3 from left, Delia Carlyle, Ann Antone, Vice-Chairman Gabriel Lopez, GRIC Lt. Gov. Monica Antone, Chairman Robert Miguel, and Alvin Antone.

Photo Courtesy Ak-Chin Runner
Burglary - A resi- dence on Azaa Street was broken into while the homeowner was out of town. The suspect gained entry into the residence by removing the screen and breaking the glass to a window in the back of the residence. The suspect forced his way into the residence, was in the stage, and was spotted. Security ad- ministered the MTO Smoke Security glass to gain ac- cess into the residence. The suspect attempted to break a window in the back of the residence. The suspect then forced his way into the residence, was in the stage, and was spotted. Security administered the MTO Smoke Security glass to gain access into the residence. The suspect attempted to break a window in the back of the residence. The suspect then forced his way into the residence, was in the stage, and was spotted.

District One:

No incidents regard- ing Part 1 crime.

District Two:

No incidents regard- ing Part 1 crime.

District Three:

Aggravated Assault - A domestic disturbance occurred inside of a residence on Wispinal Street. The victim was assaulted and threatened with a handgun by two suspects. The victim refused medical treatment and reported her purse had been taken by the suspects. Both suspects fled on foot prior to police arrival. Status: Under Inves- tigation

Aggravated Assault - A verbal altercation occurred on Nokole Road resulting in a suspect shooting the victim in the leg prior to leaving the scene on foot before police ar- rived. The suspect and weapon were located at a nearby residence. The victim was transported to a nearby hospital for treatment. The suspect was arrested.

Aggravated Assault - A physical altercation between two juvenile intoxicated subjects occurred on Chiaquat Street inside of a residence. A male and female suspect attempted to force entry into a bedroom in the presence of witnesses. The victim- er wrestled a knife away from the suspect causing a laceration to the suspect during their struggle. All involved parties were as- sessed and treated at local area hospitals for non-life threatening injuries. Status: Both suspects were arrested.

Burglary - Suspects used a cigarette butt dis- posal tower as a battering ram against the security roll down screen and se- cureity glass to gain ac- cess into the MTO Smoke Shop. Once inside the suspects stole several car- tons of cigarettes.

Burglary - A resi- dence on Azaa Street was broken into while the homeowner was out of town. The suspect gained entry into the residence by removing the screen and breaking the glass to a window in the back of the residence. The suspect forced his way into the residence and proceeded to assault other- members of the family who were present. During the assault one of the vic- tims received a broken hand.

Theft - The victim re- ported his clothing, Xbox gaming console, Xbox video game and wallet taken from his bedroom while he was away. Other residents of the home did not observe the items be- ing removed.

Theft - A suspect re- moved a fire extinguisher from the Sacaton Middle School gymnasium and discharged it in front of the stage. Security ad- ministered the MTO Smoke Security glass to gain access into the residence. The suspect was arrested.

Auto Theft - A vehi- cle was stolen from the driveway of a residence on West Wispinal Street. The victim advised she had parked her vehicle door open and he left the vehicle running. The suspect fled on foot prior to police arrival and is currently being sought.

Auto Theft - The victim reported his vehicle stolen from the Phoenix Premi- um Outlets parking lot. The vehicle was recovered and the victim was arrested.

Auto Theft - A female student was found to have a pocket knife while at the Sacato- ton Middle School. The knife was confiscated by a teacher and the student was walked to the Deans’ office.

District Four:

Aggravated Assault - During a domestic dis- pute the suspect a- ttempted to break a piece of paper into his cousin’s mouth and bit down on his fingers making a hole. During the ensuing altercation the suspect punched the victim in the face and mouth and was locked out of the residence. The suspect forced his way back into the residence and proceeded to assault other- members of the family who were present. During the assault one of the vic- tims received a broken hand.

Theft - A suspect re- moved a fire extinguisher from the Sacaton Middle School gymnasium and discharged it in front of the stage. Security ad- ministered the MTO Smoke Security glass to gain access into the residence. The suspect was arrested.

Aggravated Assault - A domestic dispute occurred inside of a res- idence on Levee Road. The suspect assaulted and strangled the victim. The suspect fled on foot prior to police arrival and is currently being sought.

Status: Under Inves- tigation

District Five:

Status: Suspects were arrested.

Aggravated Assault - A physical altercation involving a knife on Wild Horse Lane was reported to law enforcement. Both suspect and victim were located on scene. The victim was found to have a non-life threatening laceration to his hand. The suspect was arrested for aggravated assault and booked into jail.

Robbery - While the victim was at the Chester- ton gas station, located on Kyrene Road, she was ap- proached and the suspect pulled a machete on the victim. The suspect held the machete to the vic- tim’s neck and demand- ed her cellular phone and purse. The suspect then fled east on foot where Officers were able to lo- cate the suspect, recovered the victims’ belongings and take him into custody.

Status: Suspect was arrested.

Shoplifting - A female attempted the Coach Outlet store and ap- proached a merchandise rack. The suspect grabbed an item and fled the store. The suspect fled on foot to police arrival.

Status: Under Inves- tigation

Theft - While at the Lone Butte Casino the victim was approached by a female suspect who then took the victims’ belongings and took him into custody.

Status: Suspects were arrested.

Theft - The victim reported a laptop stolen out of his room at the Ve- qua Hotel and Cas- ino. The suspect who was briefly known to the vic- tim entered his hotel room and took the laptop. The surveillance footage was unable to verify that the suspect took the item in question.

Status: Under Inves- tigation

District Seven:

Homicide - A fresh grave with a suspicious metal box was reported to law enforcement by a local concerned citizen. Detectives arrived on scene and after further inspection located a body inside a metal box. It is believed the actual crime occurred off of the Gila River Indian Community.

Status: Under Inves- tigation

Theft - Construction crew reported a gnome stolen from the District Seven Waste Water Treat- ment Lagoons.

Status: Under Inves- tigation

Dec. 25 - 31

District Five - (Komatke):

No incidents regard- ing Part 1 crime.

District Six - (Komatke):

Aggravated Assault - A female juvenile sus- pect was arrested for punching the victim in the back of a vehicle at the Wild Horse Pass Ca- sino.

Status: Under Inves- tigation

Theft - A male sub- ject reported to police that the premises of the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort without paying his bill.

Status: Under Inves- tigation

District Seven - (Lone Butte Area):

Theft - A cell phone was stolen from an event at Rawhide Western Town; cell phone was purchased in a neighboring city.

Status: Under Inves- tigation

Theft - An air comp- ressor was taken from the back of a vehicle at the Wild Horse Pass Ca- sino.

Status: Under Inves- tigation

District Five- (Casa Blanca):

No incidents regard- ing Part 1 crime.

District Six - (Komatke):

Aggravated Assault - A female juvenile sus- pect was arrested for punching the victim in the back of a vehicle at the Wild Horse Pass Ca- sino.

Status: Under Inves- tigation

Theft - The suspect re- ported that the suspect at- tempted to take bikes that were in the front yard but were unsuccessful. A laptop was also noted miss- ing from the residence, no forced entry was ob- served.

Status: Under Inves- tigation

District Seven - (Maricopa):

Aggravated Assault - A GRPD officer was kicked in the leg as the suspect was being de- tained in reference to a suspicious vehicle. The suspect was not cooper- ative and admitted to hav- ing “too much to drink”.

Status: Suspect was taken into custody
GRIC will be celebrating 55th Mul-Chu-Tha March 10-12

Guests can enjoy the 3-day all-Indian rodeo along with carnival rides and other entertainment. Photo from 2015.

Mikhail Sundust
Gila River Indian News

Mark your calendars for March 10-12, when the Gila River Indian Community will be “Celebrating 55 years of Culture, Strength, and Unity” at the 55th Annual Mul-Chu-Tha Fair and Rodeo at the Sacaton Fairgrounds.

The Mul-Chu-Tha has been a staple of the Gila River Indian Community for more than half a century. Every year, hundreds of visitors from around the state and other tribal nations visit Sacaton to attend the celebration. According to a GRIC press release, “The Community takes great pride in hosting the annual event and invites Community members and visitors to participate in one of the most recognized tribal fairs in Indian Country.” The fair includes a parade, a junior, Masters and all-Indian rodeos, carnival rides, a battle of the bands competition, a powWow, chicken scratch music, cultural exchanges, various entertainment venues, and more.

“The Mul-Chu-Tha Fair and Rodeo brings so much joy to our Community members,” said Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis. “We invite everyone to come out and participate in this year’s fair. We are eager to bring another successful Mul-Chu-Tha Fair to the Community and hope our neighbors from the surrounding areas will join in the fun.”

Visit www.mul-chu-tha.com for regular updates about the fair and to learn about its history and significance to the Community.

DEQ workshop focuses on green building in GRIC

The Department of Environmental Quality Education and Outreach staff gave an update on green building to local tribes and the Environmental Protection Agency on Dec. 15. Members of DEQ provided the overview of their progress in promoting green building at a special workshop session that concluded a year of work to research the viability of green building at Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona.

DEQ Education & Outreach Specialist Althea Walker and Intern Jay Johnson said the workshop held at ITCA is for other tribes to reference in case they want to venture into green building.

The Director of the Development Center for Appropriate Technology David Eisenberg, who is based out of Tucson, consulted with the Community to help develop a green building tool-kit.

He said the progress made by GRIC provides a case example for other tribes to follow when considering going the green route.

Eisenberg said climate change presents a significant challenge to home building, because over time the climate conditions may be different from today.

Walker said collaboration with the EPA and Eisenberg could bolster the need for the development of further refined green building policies, which GRIC has demonstrated as a leader in tribal green building.

“The DEQ will continue to champion in supporting green building in the Community and will help the Community progress in any way that we can,” she said.
A’AGA

Something to be told
By Billy Allen

Just a few generations ago our ancestors felt the winter solstice was a key event. Among other things, it began the path back to normal temperatures. When darkness and his navoj or friend cold arrived, it was time to huddle inside a ge’e ki or big house and listen to stories. May this story of a vikol or great-grandfather bring warmth.

On December 14, the father of our country, George Washington died, 217 years ago. He was commander of the Continental Army, president of the Constitutional Convention and a gentleman planter. The roles of warrior, statesman and peace-maker were handled with character and leadership by both individuals. Though he may not have been the father of our jeved or land but Antonio Azul was the “vikol of our jeved.”

When the Maricopa or Piipaash came to our land, in the early 1800’s, Shon tal Keli was headman of Mount Top Village, an abandoned village three miles east of the Vah ki. Antonio served admirably and died of a sickness during the winter of 1854-1855. It took a while for elders to reach consensus in selecting Antonio’s son as the next headman. Best estimates have Antonio Azul born around 1818. He fought alongside the Piipaash against their enemies thus strengthening our communal ties. Like his father, Antonio assisted soldiers and provided food, lodging and escort to emigrants. When General Kearny came through our land via the akimel in 1846, he wrote, “These Indians we found honest, and living comfortably…”

Antonio Azul sensed that his father, Antonio Azul’s son as the next headman had to be chosen but Shon tal Keli had no male heirs and to introduce a new lineage, it took longer for the village headmen to reach a consensus. A man who had served as a “lieutenant” in previous battles was chosen. (An Indian agent described O’otham leadership being passed from father to son somewhat like royal families.) Antonio Azul was selected at the dawn of a new Native world; in addition to tribal affairs, he had to deal with American soldiers and emigrants passing up and down our akimel. Antonio was headman of Mount Top Village, an abandoned village three miles east of the Vah ki. Antonio served admirably and died of a sickness during the winter of 1854-1855. It took a while for elders to reach consensus in selecting Antonio’s son as the next headman. Best estimates have Antonio Azul born around 1818. He fought alongside the Piipaash against their enemies thus strengthening our communal ties. Like his father, Antonio assisted soldiers and provided food, lodging and escort to emigrants. When General Kearny came through our land via the akimel in 1846, he wrote, “These Indians we found honest, and living comfortably…”

Antonio Azul sensed O’otham and Piipaash lives would be affected by forces beyond our land. The United States obtained the land south of our akimel to the present border in 1853. Akimel O’otham, Piipaash and some Tohono O’otham officially became residents of the United States in 1856. In June of that year, Antonio Azul along with Ki:mah, Vu:lo Vu:pu, Vivigitha and Piipaash Sil-kal Mat-hais and Malai traveled to Nogales to find out “if their rights and titles to lands would be respect-ed…” They were assured the United States would guarantee all rights and titles. As our akimel water diminished he considered moving to Oklahoma but when the people did not like the idea, he dropped it. When allotments were being considered, he argued for thirty acres of land for each family and opposed water from pumped wells. Antonio Azul traveled to the other side on October 20 of 1910. His son Antonio took over tribal affairs and soon realized leadership now required one to speak English, understand the law, business and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 1911, a five member “business committee” was created to deal with tribal affairs. Ki:to J. Morago, Lewis D. Nelson, Harvier Cawker, John Johnson and Jackson Thomas took over. These young educated men helped usher the Gila River Indian Community into a new era. When Antonio traveled to the other side in 1923, the practice of appointing a headman ceased. With this new year, we can take comfort in knowing our ancestors faced the unknown with solid leadership. We adjusted and changed by looking backward and forward.

Information was gathered from Peoples of the Middle Gila by John P. Wilson, The Pima Indians by Frank Russell and “Notes on the Pima”, by Elsie C. Parsons, 1928, American Anthropologist, vol. 30, no. 3.
Gila Crossing hosted an early Christmas dinner for families

Mikhail Sundust
Gila River Indian News

Students at Gila Crossing Community School shared an early Christmas dinner with their families in the school cafeteria Dec. 22.

The school has made a tradition of inviting people to share a meal around the holidays.

“We usually do it a couple times a year for Thanksgiving as well as Christmas,” said GCCS Principal Jeremy Copenhaver. “The event is just kind of a way to say thank you to the community. We just want to invite them in, make good relations so they feel welcome here.”

By community he means “parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, even just someone that doesn’t have a student currently going here is still welcome to attend.”

They had a typical American Thanksgiving meal last month, he said, “but we tried to have something more culturally traditional here for our Christmas dinner.”

With music twinkling in the corner, families enjoyed a dinner of chili stew, chenam and squash. Barry Stein, the music teacher, provided live Christmas music with his electric piano.

In the weeks leading up to the dinner, students of all grade levels drafted letters to Santa, who, despite his busy schedule the week before Christmas, takes the time to visit Gila Crossing every year.

“Usually he’ll make the trip because he knows that this is important for the kids,” said Copenhaver.

“We had Santa today deliver all the gifts to our students. We have approximately a little over 500 students, Kinder through eighth grade. All of our students were able to receive gifts.”

Malakai DeLowe, first grade, received a Thor figurine for Christmas. His grandmother Arlene Johnson said she appreciated the school hosting the Christmas dinner. She remembers going to the school when it was called Gila Crossing Day School.

“It’s grown a lot. I think it’s way better than it was back then,” she said. “I think it helps the kids. It’s good.”

Malakai DeLowe, first grade, received a Thor figurine for Christmas.

Have Insurance?
FREE $25 Kowee Coffee or Target Gift Card
As a small token of our appreciation, we’d like to say thank you with a $25 gift card at the conclusion of your first visit.
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New Year, New Smile ...
Catering to the Gila River Community!

“ Impressions Dental truly cares for their patients. From the moment I arrive, I am welcomed with warm smiles. While in the chair, all my needs are met beyond what I could ever expect. They think of everything to truly make a visit comfortable and relaxing and always make sure I am doing great while taking the best care of my teeth. You will be impressed with Impressions Dental.”
Heather M.

Mikhail Sundust
Gila River Indian News

Families packed the school cafeteria for some holiday fun at GCCS.

Left to right: Giovanni Montalbo, Julia Tsosie, and Lilliana Lopez, from Mrs. Rollins 3rd grade class, got in the holiday spirit with festive Santa Claus hats.

Students at Gila Crossing Community School hosted a Christmas dinner with their families on Dec. 22.

“Impressions Dental truly cares for their patients. From the moment I arrive, I am welcomed with warm smiles. While in the chair, all my needs are met beyond what I could ever expect. They think of everything to truly make a visit comfortable and relaxing and always make sure I am doing great while taking the best care of my teeth. You will be impressed with Impressions Dental.”
Heather M.
Urban members tour P-MIP system

Dr. David DeJong, P-MIP Project Director, took urban GRIC members on a tour of P-MIP canals.

Christopher Lomahquahu/GRIN

Within its traditional territory, "We could have been relocated to Oklahoma like a lot of other tribes that were relocated from their homelands," she said.

Army veteran and Haskell Osife-Antone American Legion Post 51 member Darrell Whitman noted that while the U.S. is nearly 242 years old and has established a number of national holidays and traditions, Gila River is just over 77, and as a young nation, the Community is reaching historic milestones that will affect its future.

As the runners returned from their early morning run, a procession of around 100 people formed. Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis, Lt. Gov. Monica Antone, District 5 Council Representative Marlin Dixon, on, basket dancers, Haskell Osife-Antone Post 51, and a contingent of Community members on horseback made the half-mile walk from the intersection of Sacaton and Sacaton-Casa Blanca Roads down to the West Cemetery where Chief Azul’s grave is located, just west of Cholla Avenue across from District 3’s Head Start building.

As the procession entered the cemetery, the group formed a circle north of Chief Azul’s gravesite, where Gov. Lewis said a few words about the tribe’s last chief.

“It’s important that we aren’t losing who we are as O’otham people and this event is making that possible,” he said. “Chief Azul stood in the doorway of our past and our future. He was a warrior, a statesman, an ambassador and a moral authority.”

Chief Azul is not just a historical figure, said Gov. Lewis, he is a spiritual and cultural figure. Shortly after, descendents of Chief Azul, Janice Blackwater and Kurt Rainbolt, thanked the Community for honoring their ancestor.

“I am very grateful and I am very proud of what he stood for, his beliefs and his hard work,” said Rainbolt.

“I want to thank [the Community] for…making this an annual event. It is something that has been needed for quite awhile. They did a great job with it and the ceremony was beautiful,” he said.

Janice Blackwater said, “I think it’s good because...they are finally recognizing this warrior, this leader that...people don’t know about.”

Gov. Lewis and Rainbolt placed wreaths at Chief Azul’s grave while a member of Haskell Osife-Antone Post 51 played Taps in honor of Chief Azul’s U.S. military service as a sergeant in the first U.S. Arizona Volunteer Infantry.

After members of the procession paid their respects at Chief Azul’s gravesite, they made their way across the street to District 3’s Head Start building for a hot lunch of O’otham posho and posole and live musical entertainment. To learn more about Chief Azul, check out Billy Allen’s article on Page 7.
GRIC Leadership attends round table discussion with youth

The two-day round table forum was held in District 5.

Christopher Lomahquahu
Gila River Indian News

Students learned important life skills at a roundtable discussion, which provided real world tools and information, furthering their interest to give back to the Community.

A cadre of Gila River Indian Community Akimel O’odham Pue-Pueh. Youth Council members assembled for a two-day roundtable discussion over topics that may help them be a productive worker as they venture into the next step in their lives.

The youth council members were provided a roadmap of sorts on how to independently think while working together as a group at the District 5 Vah Ki Mul-tipurpose Building on Dec. 28.

Youth Council Coordinator Michael Preston said the roundtable discussion is about getting ideas together to provide future opportunities for the youth.

He said topics like tribal sovereignty and policy are what the youth are getting a chance to learn about and that it is necessary to understand why tribes are impacted by policies administered by the federal government.

Although the discussions seem hypothetical, what the youth council members take away from the roundtable discussion have practical applications.

Some of the topics covered ranged from historical accounts of how American Indians have strived through adversity and hard times and how to effectively communicate with others in the workplace.

Community member Ginger Martin, who provides consultation to groups on cultural sensitivity and communication, informed the youth on how to effectively work with others in the workplace.

She said that there are two types of communication that result from either an emotional or and from those types of communication, build good leadership capabilities.

Youth Council President Autumn Cooper said, “I think it is really important for us to include more youth here to be involved in the discussion.”

She said her initiative is about reaching out to the youth and getting them involved and showing them the variety of opportunities youth council officers.

“Some of the things we are doing more of is being proactive in learning about our [own] language, because we have to [take it back] as the youth of the Community,” said Cooper.

Youth Council member Enrique Holguin said the topics covered are important for today’s youth, especially on critical issues like teen suicide.

Holguin said the topics that he would like to see more awareness on are teen suicide, because there is a lot that others can learn about the issue.

“I just came back from a suicide prevention conference in Wausau, Wisconsin. Basically the abuse and everything that drives a person to think like that and if they were educated on this on how to control their emotions or just how to be cause it does happen predominately in teens,” he said.

District 5 youth council at-large member Joe Davis said there is a lot to be taken from the presentations at the roundtable meeting.

“My favorite part is when we dove into the history of the Community, because there is a lot of information that isn’t covered in the school,” he said.

He spoke on one of the subjects covered about communication and how important it is to use good judgement in expressing opinions or advice to others.

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WHP Motorsports Park to take over own fire and life safety operations

For over three years, the Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park (WHPMP) has been hard at work dotted their I’s and crossing their T’s in order to provide fire services and life safety operations at their own facilities.

In recent years, the park has utilized the Gila River Fire Department (GRFD) for their services, but has done so at a high cost.

On Dec. 29, the WH-PMP net all requirements outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement approved by Gila River Indian

Community’s Council under resolution GR-180-16, meaning they will be able to begin their own Fire and Rescue Services starting January 7.

Bob Stose, WHPMP Director of Safety & Fire Services, said that WHP- MP has been working with the Gila River Indian Community to make sure their equipment, paperwork, training, and crew are up to Community standards.

“We didn’t just want to jump into doing rescue without having everything that we need to be able to do it,” Stose said. “We want to feel confident and we want the Community to feel confident that we are…putting our best foot forward to provide that service…to the racers and spectators,” he said.

Stose, who has 30 years of paramedic experience, 20 years in the fire service, and around 10 years of motorsports rescue under his belt, said all of the guys on his crews will have the proper certification and experience needed to work on their safety trucks and ambulances.

“You have to have your Fire Fighter 1 and 2 [certifications],” said Stose. “You also have to be extraction trained and certified. You also have to go through my class as well which is an SFI [incident response training] class. You need all of this to be able to work in one of the safety trucks,” he said.

GRFD Fire Chief, Thomas Knapp, said one of the benefits of WHPMP taking over its own fire service and rescue services will be that many of WH- PMP’s crew will have a lot of experience dealing with racing events and accidents.

“A lot of the folks that are on this team…have been doing this for years,” said Knapp.

Another benefit to the park will be financial; they will be able to save a bit of money by using their own employees. “They won’t have to pay our hourly rate plus our vehicle charge. And, we do that with off-duty folks. It is not economic for the track to operate that way because they have to pay the overtime. Every time they use it is not free,” he said.

“This is a culmination of three and half years of planning, training, and getting the funds to equip the track to be self-sustain- ing for fire crash rescue,” Knapp said.

The fire department stepped up and was able to provide the service for an interim but it lasted longer than we wanted or needed. Where we are at today is, we believe that they are ready and we will be able to turn over all the racing operations to them so they can schedule more efficiently and operate and provide safety to the racers and the events that take place out here.”

The first event of the New Year will be “Go Fast Entertainment Drift N’ Drags” on Jan. 7 at 5 p.m. For more information about the event visit racewild-horse.net or call 480-363-7583.
Gila River Indian News

January 10, 2017

**TERO's WIOA youth program sends Christmas cheer to Community veterans**

Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis and Lt. Gov. Monica Antone were presented with gifts from WIOA youth.

Interested individuals must fill out GRIC volunteer application and pass background check.

**Job and Volunteer Announcement**

Now accepting applications.

Temporary Jobs for Mul-Chu-Tha Fair and Rodeo

March 10-12, 2017

- *Laborers-$10.00*  
- *Ticket Sellers-$10.00*  
- *Ticket Takers-$9.00*  

Job Descriptions available upon request.

**APPLICANTS MUST PASS A BACKGROUND CHECK**

Jobs also available for Mul-Chu-Tha Sports Tournaments

Umpires for Tee-ball, Little League, and Co-ed Softball  
Basketball Officials, Score keepers, and Time keepers  

All Applicants must pass required background check.

Looking for Volunteers to assist in the following areas:

- MCT Informational booth, Battle of the Bands, Cultural area, Elderly Transportation,  
  Community BBQ, Parade, Clerical assistance, and Sports Tournaments.

Interested individuals must fill out GIC volunteer application and pass background check.

Job and Volunteer Applications can be downloaded at [www.mul-chu-tha.com](http://www.mul-chu-tha.com) or picked up at Communications & Public Affairs Office (CPAO) located inside the Governance Center M-F 8:00am-5:00pm.

Applications MUST be emailed mulchutha@gric.nsn.us or hand delivered to CPAO by deadline date.

**Job Application Deadline: Friday January 27, 2017**

For more information contact Special Events Coordinator at 520-562-9713 or CPAO 520-562-9715.

---

**Tom Rodriguez**

**Gila River Indian News**

Members of the Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act (WIOA) youth program packed up to 90 Christmas gift baskets for Gila River Indian Community veterans and delivered the seasonal bundle of joy with the help of AmeriCorps.

The gift baskets were filled with thank you notes expressing gratitude for their service and positive contribution to the community. A long with thank you notes, the baskets were filled with hot cocoa, coffee, mugs, and a variety of snacks.

The WIOA program is made up of Community youth from the ages of 14 to 24 years old. Members of the program are engaged in monthly activities, one of which was the gift basket project, in order to help engage them to stay in school and learn about different career opportunities.

Four of the program’s members also delivered gift baskets to the Caring House, and Lt. Gov. Monica Antone and Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis.

WIOA Training Coordinator, Elounda Martinez, said that they stopped by the Executive Office to thank the leadership for their support.

“We decided to drop two more gift baskets for Governor and Lt. Governor, to thank them for their services. For everything they do for the community and the youth programs as well,” she said.

When asked about what the program was doing for her, Tianna Sanchez said, “I think it is an opportunity for myself to be out forward with everybody and just making people happy,” she said. “For myself, being happy instead of being somewhere getting in trouble, I can do this and get something out of it,” she added.

Former Jr. Miss Gila River Charisma Quiroz, who participated in putting together the baskets and delivering them, said that her motivation for taking part in giving Christmas gift baskets to Community veterans was because they had made their own sacrifices and really helped the Community over the years.

The WIOA program is recruiting members for their summer youth program starting January 2017 and will prioritize high school juniors, seniors, and out of school youth, ages 18-24.

“They can work for the summer for seven weeks and we try to give them work experience in different career areas that they have interests in. It’s a great program,” said Martinez.

For more information about WIOA’s summer youth program, call the Employment and Training Department at (520) 562-3388.
COMMUNITY COUNCIL ACTION SHEETS

Courtesy of the Community Council Secretary’s Office • December 21, 2016

ACTION SHEET
Community Council; PO Box 2138; Sacaton, Arizona 85147; Phone (520) 562-9720; Fax (520) 562-9729

CALL TO ORDER
The Second Regular Monthly Meeting of the Community Council held Wednesday December 21, 2016, in the Community Council Chambers at the Governance Center in Sacaton, Arizona was called to order by presiding Chairman Governor Stephen R. Lewis at 9:09 a.m.

INVOCATION
Provided by Councilwoman Carol Schurz

ROLL CALL
Sign-In Sheet Circulated
Executive Officers Present:
Governor Stephen R. Lewis
Lt. Governor Monica Antone
Council Members Present:
D1- Joey Whitman, Arzie Hogg; D2-Carol Schurz; D3-Carolyn Williams (9:20), Rodney Jackson; D4-Nadad Celaya, Jennifer Allison (10:08), Barney Enos, Jr. (9:13), Christopher Mendoza; D5-, Brian Davis, Sr., Marlin Dixon, Robert Stone, Franklin Pablo, Sr.; D6-Angie Villareal, Sr., Sandra Nasewytewa, Charles Goldtooth; D7- Devin Redbird (9:40)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
APPROVED AS AMENDED

PRESENTATIONS/INTRODUCTIONS (LIMIT TO 5 MINUTES)

1. North Santa Cruz Wash Project Report and Update
Presenter: Seaver Fields

2. Proposal Tortosa Subdivision Drainage Impact to GRIC
Presenter: Seaver Fields

Presenters: Brian Tacheenie, Pamela Thompson

4. Tribal Social Services FY2016 Annual Report (October 1, 2015-September 30, 2016)
Presenters: Lee Ann Wander, Pamela Thompson

5. FY16 Tobacco Tax Grant Annual Report
Presenters: Ginger Fligger, GRHC Representatives

6. Tribal Social Services FY2016 Annual Report (October 1, 2015-September 30, 2016)
Presenters: Lee Ann Wander, Pamela Thompson

7. FY17 Monthly Financial Activity Report Ending November
Presenters: Treasurer Robert Keller, Suzanne Johns

8. FY16 Gaming Internal Audit 4th Quarter Report (Executive Session)
Presenters: Treasurer Robert Keller, Dena Thomas

9. Gaming Commission General Report To Community Council For October 2016 (Executive Session)
Presenters: Serena Joaquin, Courtney Moyah

RESOLUTIONS
1. A Resolution Approving A Fifty (50) Year Homestead Assignment Agreement For Neil Ranger Located In District Five Of The Gila River Indian Reservation And Designated As Drawing No 30516-0444 (NRSC forwards to Council with recommendation for approval)
Presenter: Pamela Pasqual

ORDINANCES
UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

1. FY 2016 Annual Performance Report (APR) (G&M-SC motioned to forward to Council under New Business)
Presenter: Kelly Gomez

MINUTES
1. November 2, 2016 (Regular)
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPROVE

2. November 16, 2016 (Regular)
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPROVE

3. December 8, 2016 (Special)
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPROVE AS CORRECTED

ANNOUNCEMENTS
HOLIDAY GREETINGS WERE EXPRESSED

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 1:43 P.M.

* Denotes TABLED from previous meeting(s)
The following list contains the names of individuals and other parties who made over payments to the Department of Public Works going back to January 1, 1999. In accordance with Escheat Ordinance GR 10-09 the Community will publish a biannual schedule or as deemed necessary by the Community Treasurer, the Escheat Public Notice. Public notice of unclaimed checks will be published in the Gila River Indian Newspaper and GRIC’s official web site. If the last known owner is known to be a Community member, the department, program, or entity shall also post notice at all District Service Centers. In order to claim the check, the owner must claim it in person within 30 days of publication or posting. In addition, to make claim, the person must provide the department, program, or entity with positive identification, including photo identification showing the person claiming the check is the last known owner. If the check is unclaimed for 60 days after publication, it shall escheat and title thereof shall vest in the Community, or as applicable, the Federal, State, or other agency that provided the funding. If you are the recipient of unclaimed property, please contact Mariana Granillo of the Department of Public Works at (520) 562-3343 for further instructions.

NOTICE OF UNCLAIMED PROPERTY

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EL PASO NATURAL GAS COMPANY
FESTIVAL OF THE WEST GRANT CONSTRUCTION
HAYDON BUILDING CO
HENKELS AND MCCOY
LAYNE CHRISTENSON CO
OKLAND CONSTRUCTION SANTA LLC
RAMONA FARMS
ST PETER CONVENT
ST PETERS MISSION
STONECREEK CONTRACT-ING INC
BRYON MIGUEL
CECIL ANTOINE
CHRISTINA GARZA
ELA ENA WEB
ERVALEEN R HOWARD
FRANCES ANTOINE
GAIL SOKE
GEORGIANNA COLLINS
GEROGINE MOFFETT
HAROLD EVANS SR
HARRY CRYE
JANET DONAHUE
JESSICA TERRY
JOE WALKER IV
JOYCE NISH
LILA CRAWFORD
LOUIS BLACKWATER
MARY JOHNSON
PAMELA/DOMONIC JOHN-SON
RACHEL WARRINGTON
REBECCA MARION
RENEE L MOLINA
ROBERT FLOWERS
RONALD AND ALISSA BLACKWATER
SAMANTHA TASHQUINTH - LAURA EDDIE
SOPHINE MONAHAN
STELLA RUIZ
TONNA AND ORLANDO MERCADO
TRISHA JOHNSON
VIOLET TRAVIS
WILLARD JOHNSON

January 10, 2017
Gila River Indian News
Page 13
CELEBRATING A NEW YEAR

AND LOOKING FORWARD TO 2017!

2017 brings us one year closer to GRTI’s goal of 100% Fiber To The Home throughout Gila River by 2019.

Questions or concerns contact GRTI at 520-796-3333.
## Vehicles Drastically Reduced

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72nd Anniversary
Iwo Jima Flag Raising

Military parade and flyover begin at 8:30AM.
Ceremonies follow at the
Matthew B. Juan, Ira H. Hayes Veterans Memorial Park in Sacaton, AZ.

All public and veterans groups are welcome.

Luncheon hosted by American Legion Auxiliary Unit No. 84 with St. Peter Church and School. Event sponsored by American Legion Ira H. Hayes Post No. 84 and Auxiliary Unit No. 84.

Saturday, Feb. 25, 2017