

COMMUNITY NEWS

New Miss Yavapai-Apache Nation selected

BY DON DECKER,
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Sa-ha-na Jackson was selected as the new 2020-21 Miss Yavapai-Apache Nation before a large crowd at the Tunlli Community Center on Saturday night, February 22.

Ms. Jackson is the daughter of Brian and Bernadette Williams of Clarkdale and grand-

daughter of Larry and Tha-la Jackson of Clarkdale.

Ms. Jackson graduated from Mingus Union High School in 2014 and enrolled at the University of Arizona in Tucson where she majored in Communication and Marketing. After her 3 year stint at the university, Ms. Jackson took a

temporary leave from the university by returning to Yavapai-Apache Nation where she currently is employed with the Johnson O'Malley Program (JOM) of Yavapai-Apache Nation as a school tutor.

Johnson O'Malley is a federal funded program that provides funds to support the education of Native American chil-

dren in public schools. The Yavapai-Apache Nation operates its own JOM program which provides the tutoring program for some of the schools located in Verde Valley.

With her well-rounded education at the university, Ms. Jackson feels that she is working on a more personable basis in the school's tutoring program by way of identifying with the Indian students and assisting them. More important, she feels that there is a racial inequity in the number teachers employed by the school and that with her bi-racial background being part Black- Yavapai-Apache, Ms. Jackson can bridge the communication barriers between the Nation's students and school staff members.

"How are you sup-



Miss Yavapai-Apache Nation-Sa-ha-na Jackson

2020-2021 Newly Crown Yavapai-Apache Nation Royal Court

Miss Yavapai-Apache Nation- Sa-ha-na Jackson is the daughter of Brian & Bernadette Williams.

1st Attendant Miss Yavapai-Apache Nation- Avery Smith is the daughter of Verda Tenakhongva and Darin Smith.

Miss Teen Yavapai-Apache Nation- Alana Lewis is the daughter of Glory Lewis-Garcia and Arturo Garcia.

Yavapai-Apache Nation Princess- Shyani Thompson is the granddaughter of Margie Lowry-Campos and Victor Campos.

1st Attendant Yavapai-Apache Nation Princess- Minnie Hamaley is the daughter of Yolanda & Herbert Trujillo.

Little Missy Yavapai-Apache Nation- Razakel Gates is the grand-

SEE ROYAL PAGE 9

SEE MISS PAGE 6

EXODUS

From page 1

Exodus 2020-Yavapai-Apache Nation

The February 29, 2020 outdoor commemorative event in Camp Verde marked an important timeline at the turn of the century when the Yavapai-Apache were allowed to return to the Verde Valley. The Yavapai-Apache became landless people and organized under the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. A revised version of the Constitution of the Yavapai-Apache Nation was adopted in 1992 that is now used (see the website 'yavapai apache nation.org' historical section for the details on the establishment of the Nation).

This year's Exodus seemed to attract more and more people as over 300 people showed up for the event based on remarks made by people who had attended the previous Exodus events and saw the increase in attendance.

The Saturday morning started with an early morning prayer service in Boynton Canyon next to the private property of The Enchantment Resort 6 miles west of Sedona. This site is considered a holy place and origin of the Yavapai-Apache people. The oral history of the people tells of the regeneration of the civilization of both groups of people.

Approximately 50 people attended the morning prayer service led by an Apache medicine man and his entourage of singers from a neighboring reservation in eastern Arizona. A small camp fire awaited the visitors next to the prayer service area and the resort served hot drinks and breakfast rolls. The songs and drum beat echoed in the canyon and the morn-

ing sun arrived to warm up the visitors.

As the songs were sung in Boynton Canyon, long distance runners, who had gone to 6 miles east of Globe, Arizona and ran 150 miles back in a commemorative run to Verde Valley, had already arrived in Camp Verde on the east side of town that morning and waited for a signal from the event organizers to join the well-wishers in a reunion in front of the Nation's culture center 3 miles further west of Camp Verde.

Simultaneously, Manuel Cooley, a noted spiritual leader from White Mountain and his singers led a commemorative walk down Middle Verde Road from the event site to the culture center as 100 people followed the symbolic walk led by the royalty of the Nation.

Just as the marchers arrived in front of the culture center, the long distance runners ran from east of the culture center after leaving Camp Verde and met the marchers who had just arrived at the culture center awaiting with songs and the drumbeat.

Jon Huey, Chairman of the Yavapai-Apache Nation joined by his wife, Desiree, and one of their children welcomed the runners who stood nearby holding their running staff adorned with eagle feathers.

Chairman Huey climbed on the pedestal which holds the well-known bronze sculptor depicting an elderly man carrying his wife in basket during the 1875 long march and spoke to the crowd.

"It's good to see them (the runners) all up. They're pretty tired—they made the long trek and the run all the way back. They were able to make it back safely and return here. What

they did was about our ancestors did by returning back to the land of the Yavapai-Apache and that's why we honor today with the commemoration. The youth are the future of our tribe—they can see for themselves the battle of hard work; what is says for our ancestors who have now passed on but are still with us in spirit today," Chairman Huey said to the crowd.

Huey was very committed to sharing his feelings about the meaning of the Exodus.

"What was done to the Yavapai-Apaches were wrong. This is our land, this has always been our land. We're here today to honor the runners, to honor the past, the honor the future, the youth, the elders. Without the elders, we would not have our customs, we would not have this way of life. We're all very thankful for them," he concluded.

Culture Day- commemoration/ Veteran's Park

Upon conclusion of the event in front of the culture center that morning, a day of sharing of songs, dances and art was held at the Veteran's Memorial Park below the casino.

Medicine man Manuel Cooley of Whiteriver gave the blessing for the afternoon's activities.

The noon luncheon was replete with an assorted home cooked meals provided by the Nation. Nancy Guzman, tribal council member, stated that the preparation for the community meal began the night before.

With all the trimmings of fry bread, salad, cake desserts, acorn and vegetable stew, hamburger and hominy stew, pasta salad and fruit salads and healthy drinks, the

visitors were treated to a hardy meal. Yavapai-Apache Nation youth and members of the Native American Club of Mingus Union High School helped with the serving of meals to the elders who were seated under the shaded areas surrounding the dance grounds.

The visiting royalties from the various Indian communities including the newly selected YAN royalty welcomed the crowds at the beginning of the afternoon performances and presentations. Sa-ha-na Jackson, the new Miss Yavapai-Apache Nation made her first official appearance representing the Nation that day (see related story about Miss Yavapai-Apache Nation).

YAN council members were introduced by Jon Huey and other tribal officials assembled in the arena and gave their official greetings from their respective communities.

Chairman Huey greeted the tribal representatives, thanking the employees helping with the event, the volunteers and the sponsorship of Cliff Castel Casino for the various donations and preparation of the event site.

A moment of silence was also requested by Huey for a fallen policeman, the late David Kellywood of the White Mountain police force who was to be buried that weekend.

Chairman Huey acknowledged his council for their continued contribution to the administration.

"It's important to acknowledge our (YAN) leaders—these are our people that I work with day in and day out and I couldn't do my work without them. I appreciate the tribal council that I work with and I am very thoughtful for everything they have

taught me," said Huey.

Amanda Honwyteva, YAN council member spoke as well.

"I'm glad our runners returned safely home. Thank you to all the cooks, our beautiful royalty, our elders, our children. It's always an honor to be here and stand before you and always appreciative and grateful for everything. Take a moment to remember why we are here and how our ancestors tread the long walk and they returned home. That's why we are here," she said.

Paul J. Russell, Vice Chairman of the Ft. McDowell spoke and recalled the historical significance of Exodus that touched his family. "It made me think of my dad's grandmother who was one who came back from (old San Carlos) to the Clarkdale area. She said when the soldiers let them go, they gave them a wagon and a head of cattle and were told they were free to go back to their homeland," said Russell.

Bernadine Burnette, President of the Ft. McDowell Yavapai said that indigenous people have been on their land far before the Europeans came. "We've all been here before them. We had to struggle one way or another. It's really important for young people that they carry on and us, as leaders, show them (the youth) and push them—that their history is important, our language, our songs, our dances, whatever your customs are and (your) beliefs are just as important and that we pass it on to the young ones," she said.

YAN member Michael Sine, a guitar player and songwriter who is the son of the late Eathel Lewis and Sidney Sine, stood before the crowd and sang a ballad that he wrote about the long

march to San Carlos of 1875 with the haunting words of "... we walked from our homeland. From the river of our home, our elders, women and our men. We walked not knowing, walk not knowing, walked and walked in the cold. We lost our children and our elders, our women and men to the cold..The song I cry is for our people".

The afternoon events was emceed by council member Ricardo Pacheco.

There were dancers and singers from different parts of the state. The farthest group that traveled to Camp Verde was the Kumeyay Bird dancers and gourd singers from the San Diego area. There are several bands of Kumeyay communities in southern California. The group's 'Live from the Rez Podcast on Facebook has a large following and shows photographs of what happened on the Yavapai-Apache Exodus Day that Saturday.

There were numerous performers during the afternoon from Bird Dance groups and several Apache Mountain Spirit dancers and singing groups. All of the dancing groups was organized by YA council woman Apphia Shirley (see notice about Exodus performers in this issue).

Many artists and crafts people attended including Yavapai-Nation artists silversmith Jerry Whagado and Duke Sine, son of the late David Sine who designed the Nation's logo. Sine resides in northern New Mexico and makes frequent trips to his homeland in Camp Verde. Sine and Whagado are noted artists who travel to regional art shows and exhibits.