Ponca Tribe of Nebraska honored at event celebrating Native American Heritage Month

The Ponca Tribe of Nebraska was recently honored at an event celebrating Native American Heritage Month. Congressman Don Bacon’s office hosted the livestreamed event at Metro Community College in Omaha. Ponca Tribal Chairman Larry Wright, Jr. was presented with a copy of the speech that he gave honoring the Ponca Tribe for their contribution to Nebraska and United States history but recognizing the incredible hardships endured by the Tribe over the course of their history to the present day.

The event was opened with a prayer by Dr. Rudi Mitchell, a previous recipient of this recognition, and included remarks from Steve Tamayo, last year’s recipient, Congressman Bacon, and Chairman Wright, along with video presentations of the Ponca Flag Song and an overview of the progress of the Ponca Tribe since their restoration to federal recognition in 1990.

Attention All AVT/HIED Students Nationwide:

Please remember to submit your official transcripts after EACH term funded in order to be eligible to receive future funding.

Winter 2020 deadline: May 15, 2021  
Spring 2021 deadline: August 15, 2021

The Ponca Educational Trust Fund is available nationwide to students who enroll at one of the University of Nebraska Campuses/Online Courses: Lincoln ~ Omaha ~ Kearney (Must be enrolled in 12 or more credit hours per semester to be eligible)

Attention All K-12 YIP Students Nationwide:

• High School Seniors for the 2020-2021 school year are eligible to receive a $500.00 Graduation Incentive!
• Our department is accepting projects for incentives in the following areas: Art, Essay/Poetry, and Student of the Month. *Winners may receive $100.00 for 1st place, $50.00 for 2nd place, and $25.00 for 3rd place. Grade divisions are as follows: Primary (K-2), Intermediate (3-5), Middle (6-8), and High School (9-12)
• Perfect Attendance $100.00 (0-.49 days of absenteeism), $50.00 (.5-3.49 days absenteeism), and $25.00 (3.5-5.49 days of absenteeism).

Deadline to apply for the 2020-2021 school year is July 31, 2021.

All Education Department Applications and Program Information is available online on our tribal website. If you have any questions for the education department, please feel free to contact Aubrey Knudsen @ office (402)371-8834, work cell (402)844-0957, or aknudsen@poncatribe-ne.org.

*Ponca tribal enrollment is required for ALL education programs*

On the cover: Congressman Don Bacon presents Chairman Larry Wright, Jr. with a copy of the floor speech that he gave honoring the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska in observance of Native American Heritage Month.
Pónka Íye-tʰe! The Ponca Language

Need help saying the words? Hear audio recordings on the PTN website at poncatribe-ne.tv/category/language/ and refer to the pronunciation guide on this page.

This month we will follow up with our discussion of tīuzhi (family) from December’s newsletter.

-Angie Starkel

Pronunciation Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
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<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Like a in father</td>
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<td>b</td>
<td>Like b in big</td>
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<td>Like 2nd ch in church</td>
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<td>Like ea in mean</td>
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<td>Like w in woman</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>Like ch in German Bach</td>
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<td>z</td>
<td>Like z in zebra</td>
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<tr>
<td>zh</td>
<td>Like ge in beige</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The raised letter n (ⁿ) means to nasally say the vowel before the n.

The ‘ above a vowel (like é) means to stress that sound.

There is no “L” sound in Ponca. Some confuse the “TH” as a L sound.
When Thunder met Lightning: The story of how I met my brother Denny, Part 1

This essay from Ponca author Cliff Taylor will run in several parts. Watch future issues of the Ponca newsletter for more installments.

Cliff Taylor

Denny was running on the treadmill in the kitchen, his shoes pounding on the track, occasionally you’d hear him talking Lakota into his phone where he was Wha-tApping a student who wanted something clarified.

Nona, my niece, 14 years old, all glasses and smiles and pure long dark hair that went down past her waist like her dad’s, was over on the futon splitting her attention between her favorite show, Law & Order: Special Victims Unit, and a book she was reading. I was just waking up, a novel by my side, out of the shower, my hair drying. I used to go visit my brother Denny and his family down in Lawrence, Kansas when he taught at Haskell, but now he’d moved home to Standing Rock, and I drove the 10 hours from Nebraska to visit him there. It’s all about renewing the connections. You’ve got to make those long drives; you’ve got to make those trips happen.

When Nona was real young, she really took a shine to me, her dad’s best friend, another book-addict, the brown-haired Indian who was maybe a little softer, more sensitive, stranger, than a lot of the other Natives who came around. It was cool to see how much she drank up all the goofball things I tossed her way; always trying to make her laugh, give her that quality attention that my favorite Uncles gave me growing up, join in the love-showering that her dad always had going on for her and her brother, Pana. But she was on the verge of becoming a teenager now and all sorts of new subtleties were emerging from her person: like she wanted to watch SVU all the time, the endless parade of atrocities in the big city and the justice the lead female investigator pursued and sometimes successfully delivered. Felt like I had to work a little more to be the cool Uncle. Felt like experimenting a little. Felt some other things in the room too.

Folks might not believe it but I’ve had about 400 or so dreams over the years with my brother Denny in them; we’ve kind of been in each other’s lives like that ever since we met, if you know what I mean. I can’t say I’ve had the same number or quality of dreams with anyone else; that’s just been how it is. I used to tell him that he should take all those hundreds of dreams that I’ve sent him, print them out, and collect them into a binder/book to give to Nona and Pana for when they graduate and spirit off into the world of adulthood and college. That way, they’d have one of the coolest completely spirit-world talisman books around, just loads and loads of dreams I’ve had of their dad and me doing things in the Other World, spirits of all kinds giving all sorts of gifts and information, dream poetry pouring out of the most authentic quality, of maximum richness. Exactly the kind of Jedi stuff young Native kids need when they’re setting off on their own. Denny has always laughed when I’ve suggested this. I’ve always laughed too even though I’ve been really serious about it. To this day I do not know if he’s saved all those dreams I’ve sent him over the years. Fingers crossed though, he has.

If there’s one thing that both Denny and I know, it’s that we’re here to spend our lives preparing things for the next generations, that specific and larger-scale things will be in place so when all those ones who come after us and our generation begin to mature into their destinies, they will have optimum conditions for enacting their dreams. We both really live this mission; it’s casual and it’s dead-serious. So, with that in mind, we share a lot of stories around the kids, for them to soak up, absorb, file away, to assimilate into their library for future use. We have fun with it, like an inside joke. We’ve been there so we kind of know how it’s going to go. And it was in that spirit that I looked over to Nona, her dad still running hard, getting his first of two eight mile runs in that he did every day since he was her age, and asked her, “Did your dad ever tell you the story of how we met?”

“No,” she said.

continued on page 3
January 2021

**TAYLOR: Finding connection and community far from home**

**continued from page 2**

I could tell she was interested though. There were levels of her awareness that could read when certain mythological reverberations were present in what Indians were talking about. Like her dad and I, she knew how to ingest stories like the foodstuffs of Eternity too.

It was good to start off like a cornball a lot of times, so I said, “Well, I think it’s about time you learn that origin-story. See the stuff superheroes are made of. See how the spirits make people.”

She shook her head and smiled, like my yarn had a strange smell to it; but it was all a part of the ritual. “My dad might be a superhero but I don’t know about you.”

“Ouch!”

She laughed, getting comfortable on the couch, muting SVU.

“Okay, I’m only going to tell you this once so you better make sure you remember it. It’s one of the most important ones I got…”

I was 24 years old, living in a small apartment a couple of blocks away from the University in Lincoln, Nebraska. I worked overnights stocking shelves with a bunch of self-proclaimed roughnecks and night-folk, was writing mainly short stories back then, and was about two years into learning about and walking the Red Road, with all of the unbelievably powerful and life-changing experiences that entailed. No longer was I lost and without community, ignorant of my direction in life; I was enfolded in our Indian people, dedicated to Tunkasila and the people.

I had my first year of Sundance under my belt and sweat almost weekly but I was still sadly and painstakingly pulling out all the poisonous thorns of trauma and grief that riddled me by the thousands, working on my anger, wishing I wasn’t so lonely, looking for love. I rambled and stumbled around. I danced through whole CDs in my apartment by myself. I read a lot of books, watched a lot of movies, found ways to occupy my time, had my routines. One of those routines was to walk over to the college Union and check out the various bulletin boards, to see if there were any fliers up for cool cultural or art-related events that I’d like to go to, like some Tibetans making a sand mandala or a Native person giving a talk on something. This was before Facebook, my analog way of catching wind of what was happening in our cool college-town. I did it more than I probably needed to but that’s how I was back then: holding my shit together through rituals and routines, really just doing the same things over and over again, trying like hell to shake off my trauma and not succumb to it. I was in survival-mode. I was hanging on by the skin of my teeth and wanted to live-

So one weekday night I wandered over to the Union and guided my silent, lonesome, long-haired self through the warm, cozy halls, seeing so many bright college kids doing their thing, studying, laughing, and I scanned the packed bulletin boards, seeing all sorts of stuff but nothing standing out like the kind of event that I was perpetually hungry for. I made it to the backside of the Union, admired the fountains geysering outside there, and then began heading back to the front doors to make my exit and continue my wandering, my business of keeping myself company. I walked through all the same kids and then, going through the first of two sets of doors that would lead me back outside, standing there looking at the first bulletin board, as surprising to me as a splash of cold coffee in the face, was another Indian. He was dressed well, in slacks and an academic soldier’s slick, black, long coat, two long black braids hanging down past his butt. He was a few inches taller than me and I was six two. My spirit read him: he wasn’t really looking at the bulletin board, he was doing something that was sensible to his environment, a sensitive outsider blending in, but really he was deep inside himself, elsewhere, feeling out his next move from that vastness he handled as his own. I read him very clearly in that second and never stopped walking, so goddamned nervous in my own skin was I when it came to other Indians, who all seemed so much more real than me; pushed open the door, releasing myself back into the night, leaving that other twentysomething Indian peer safely behind me.

**continued on page 6**
MEMBERS NEEDED

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

We are looking for interested members to join the Language and Culture Committee. This Committee is an updated version of the previous Culture Committee with a larger focus on the preservation and revitalization of the Ponca language.

The Committee will consist of 6 representatives; a representative from each site within the Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) and a representative from outside of the SDAs. Committee members will be selected according to their knowledge of Ponca language, culture, and traditional ways. If a representative who meets the above qualification is not available from each site, any qualifying member may be appointed to the committee.

Members will be expected to attend all Committee meetings scheduled monthly and will be paid a stipend of $250 per meeting and claim associated travel at the government rate, not to exceed a total of 410 total miles.

Some of the responsibilities of this committee are:

- To provide guidance to the Culture Department and Language Program with long-term planning, programming, and the use of traditional knowledge.
- To generate culturally-appropriate programming to increase tribal involvement on culture and language activities and create a sustainable culture and language program for tribal members inside and outside the SDAs.
- To act as a resource for Tribal departments to create culturally-based programming by providing guidance, knowledge, wisdom, and expertise on Ponca culture, traditions, history, and beliefs.
- To assist the Ponca Tribal government in the formulation of policies and procedures pertaining to the Ponca Language, culture, and history.
- To review and approve all Ponca culturally related educational material, such as instructional materials and modern communication media productions, to be used to provide instruction to
- To review and reserve approval on all other activities and tasks related to the Ponca language, history, and culture as may be referred the Committee.
- To periodically assess and review the Language Program and provide such assessments to the Tribal Council.

If you desire more information regarding this committee, please contact the Culture Director, Nick Mauro, at nmauro@poncatribe-ne.org or 402-857-3519. Please forward your letter of interest including your qualifications for this Committee to Ponca Tribal Council, Attn: Beth Barger, P.O. Box 288, Niobrara, NE 68760 or via e-mail to bbarger@poncatribe-ne.org. Deadline for Applications is February 1, 2021.
Is an Elder I know experiencing neglect?

Emily Clement
Elders Victim Advocate

One very common form of elder abuse is neglect. Neglect is when a caregiver does not adequately provide for the physical, emotional, social, or financial needs of an elder to whom they are providing care. The caregiver may be a paid professional, family member, friend, neighbor, or other person caring for the elder. Neglect can also come in the form of self-neglect, in which there is no caregiver, but rather the elder fails to meet their own needs, resulting in a threat to their health, safety, and well-being. According to Toni Bonsera, APS/CPS Program Specialist for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, self-neglect is the most common category of substantiated reports made to Adult Protective Services. Here are some common signs that an elder may be suffering from neglect:

- Dehydration or malnourishment, lack of fresh food and water.
- Appearing disheveled and dirty, wearing soiled clothing or clothing inappropriate for the weather.
- Untreated medical conditions or failure to take medications.
- Unpaid bills or rent, not cashing monthly checks.
- Living in unsanitary or hazardous conditions such as hoarding/cluttering, a poorly-maintained residence, inadequate plumbing, heating, or electricity.
- Losing contact with neighbors, friends, family, or refusing visitors.
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness.

If you notice any of these signs and believe that an elder is being neglected by a caregiver or is not able to adequately care for themselves, call Adult Protective Services at 1-800-652-1999.

In addition, the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska has Elders Victim Advocates who can assist elders experiencing abuse or neglect. To reach the advocate nearest you, contact:

Emily Clement – Omaha
531-389-2378
element@poncetribe-ne.org

Jenika Long - Lincoln
402-432-9216
jlong@poncetribe-ne.org

Justine Kube - Niobrara
402-860-8341
jkube@poncatribe-ne.org

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Justine Kube - Niobrara
402-860-8341
jkube@poncetribe-ne.org

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM CASE MANAGERS & ADVOCATES

Mary Robertson
DV Case Manager – Lincoln
402-438-9222
mrobertson@poncatribe-ne.org

Skyelar Beavers
DV Case Manager – Ralston
402-315-2760
C: 402-490-8363
sbeavers@poncatribe-ne.org

Brooke Zelasney
Human Trafficking Case Manager – Ralston
402-315-2760
C: 531-389-2379
bzelasney@poncatribe-ne.org

Jenika Long
Elder’s Victim Advocate – Lincoln
402-438-9222
C: 402-432-9216
jlong@poncetribe-ne.org

Emily Clement
Elder’s Victim Advocate – Ralston
402-315-2760
element@poncatribe-ne.org

Justine Kube
Victim of Crimes Act Coordinator – Niobrara
402-857-3391
C: 402-860-8341
jkube@poncetribe-ne.org

Amber Wendt
Trauma Informed Therapist – Sioux City
712-258-0500
C: 402-943-9997
awendt@poncetribe-ne.org

Emily Driver
Trauma Informed Therapist – Ralston
402-315-2760
C: 402-943-6291
driver@poncetribe-ne.org
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The moment I began walking down the stone steps outside I both started feeling all of these classic uneasy butterflies in my stomach and I felt bad because I’d caved to this fear so many times in my life; in fact, I’d actually fled because of it in another situation almost identical to this one maybe about two years prior, which I suddenly found myself remembering with shame and embarrassment.

Putting the Union behind me, I remembered the time I’d seen this other tall, short-haired, obviously new Native kid literally standing still in the middle of the Union’s main artery, looking achingly lost with the river of other non-Natives coursing in all directions around him. I saw him and remembered how many other Native kids didn’t finish college because of their having no support-system, of their being so far away from home, for so many tough reasons really, dropping out, disappearing, not seeing that experience through that really could’ve been so much help to them and their own in the long run. I also saw him and remembered myself, how isolated and alone I was while going to college on that very campus, how I’d left, never making a single friend in my year and a half there. I knew that I should introduce myself and go say Hey but I was just paralyzed by a legion of fears. I wanted to reach out to this brother and dissolve that aloneness I saw him struggling with but, like I was doing now, I just kept walking, too afraid to go and talk to this other Indian. And then I never saw this young Native around again, meaning he probably did wash out, go home, ditch whatever his college plans were and embark on a different path. This haunted me as I walked away, my failure to give some simple kindness, welcome, warmth to another Native who’d found himself in the city that I secretly kind of loved and had found so much joy and tribal community in. I had dropped the sacred buffalo-hide ball and I was doing it again.

I crossed the street and kept walking, towards Wendy’s and the two-dollar theater, feeling my paralyzing fears, my shame over how I couldn’t talk to that other brother those years previously, feeling those butterflies rioting and herding in my stomach, ratcheting up their signal’s intensity with every step I kept taking away from that Native back at the Union. I walked without any change in my pace, well-practiced at maintaining the consistency of my exterior even as I experienced worlds within, getting almost a block away, and then I heard a voice. The voice said, “If you don’t go back and talk to him you’re going to regret it for the rest of your life.” I heard it clearly and kept walking.

I walked and thought about it. I would ‘regret it for the rest of my life.’ What did it mean to regret something for the rest of your life? I felt my way through it, feeling how at that point in my life I had no regrets of that kind or stature, and then I tried to imagine what it would be like to have such a regret like that I carried with me to my last day, a bleeding, black, crying, iron artifact permanently calling out in the background of my psyche, irresolvable and of my own making. I travelled into what the voice said and then, clear that as of yet I had no lifelong regrets and didn’t want to willingly incur one then, I stopped and turned around, looked at the Union down the street and began walking back.

There had been so many times where the moment to say the thing presented itself in my life, with a girl, my family, others, and this fear had me watching that moment come so close and then passing and vanishing away, leaving me with what I most definitely didn’t want, my heart trembling, like a kid punched, the thing he wanted trailing off away from him, not to be his, not in this lifetime. This fear with so many masks, limbs, walls, tactical moves, I tried to ignore it as I followed the same sidewalk back to the Union, walking through its spongy, cloud-like material, determined to make right on my last mistake, nervous, butterflies now firing out of my head and face, trained on getting back to that bulletin board while not even knowing if the dude was still there.

Cliff Taylor is an enrolled member of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska. His first book, “The Memory of Souls,” is available on Amazon.
January is National Radon Action Month

Allison Gienapp
Air Technician

January is Radon Action Month and marks a time to open the conversation about radon and what it means to you. Radon is a natural occurring colorless, tasteless, and odorless radioactive gas that can be found across the world. Radon is also a byproduct from the uranium decay chain. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S.A. and the leading cause of lung cancer for non-smokers.

Radon causes cancer by the release of an alpha particle as it decays overtime into a polonium atom. Alpha decay is when the atom releases energy and sheds an alpha particle, which is comprised of 2 protons and 2 neutrons. When inhaled, radon and its decay products become trapped in the lungs. The alpha particle that is emitted in radon decay damages the lining of the lungs. As more damage occurs in the lungs over time, the more likely a person is to develop cancer in homes with higher concentrations of radon.

It is recommended that every home get tested for radon levels regardless of where they appear on a radon map. There have been housing in Zone 3 areas (areas that are thought to be naturally low in radon) that have produced high radon concentrations. Once a house is tested for radon it is recommended that homes be re-tested every 3 to 5 years. Retesting is a must as radon concentrations in homes change over time with weather, seasons, and the amount of radon available in the soil. The EPA’s action limit for radon is 4.0 pCi/L. At this level homes must be mitigated to reduce the level for radon, as the risk for lung cancer increases the higher the level is.

The goal of active mitigation is to get the radon concentrations in the home lower than 2.0 pCi/L. The average outside concentration of radon is 0.4 pCi/L, while the average indoor concentration for radon is 1.3 pCi/L.

If you are a Ponca Citizen or an employee of the Tribe living within the Service Deliverable Areas Allison Gienapp, PTN Air Technician, can conduct an assessment for you for free. You can find the form located on the Tribes website, Environmental Department page and email to agienapp@poncatribe-ne.org. Due to the Pandemic we currently are not allowed to conduct them, but hoping to be able to start this service back up in March 2021. Otherwise you can find local certified Radon samplers within your state. If you need assistance please reach out to Allison Gienapp at cell: (402) 370-0362.

Sources:
• https://www.radon.com/maps/
• https://www.epa.gov/radon/find-information-about-local-radon-zones-and-state-contact-information
• https://www.epa.gov/radon/health-risk-radon
• https://www.epa.gov/radiation/radioactive-decay

Ponca Health Services begins #testtribes initiative

Ponca Health Services has recently begun offering FREE COVID-19 testing to all members of federally recognized tribes at mobile clinics throughout our Service Delivery Areas through our #TestTribes initiative.

Fred LeRoy Health and Wellness Center staff traveled to Lincoln on Wednesday, December 16th to conduct the first of these mobile testing clinics. Please watch the tribal website and social media for announcements on future testing sites and dates for this ongoing initiative.
Please join our Female Talking Circle
Every 1st Friday of each month @ 7pm
Cante’ Waste’ Win Tiospaye’ Facebook Page
Online Facebook Messenger Rooms
Any questions contact Marissa Wright (402)841-2474

Healing through tradition, ceremony and prayer...
Thank You!

Our family just wanted to send our thanks for making the IMAP, IPEP, and other fund opportunities available to members. With this help we have been able to continue life as normal as possible. The photo is a picture of our kids being able to participate in karate (due to the IMAP AND IPEP funds) and using the MacBook sent to us so they can do it remotely. Without these things we would have had to give this extracurricular activity up. Thank you for giving my children a chance to have physical fitness and consistency.

-Jennifer Siira

Elder’s Council Meeting

January 4 | 9 am
January 5 | 10 am
February 1 | 9 am
Lifesize & Conference Call

Congratulations!

John and Candy Schott would like to CONGRATULATE their daughter Cami for graduating from UNO with a Bachelor’s of Science in Education. Great job Cami!!! We couldn’t be prouder!!!!!

Member Registration for Website: Last Fall, we moved our websites to a new host to improve functionality. If you were registered for membership-level access to our website prior to Fall of 2019, please note that you will need to register for the site again.
The Ponca Tribe of Nebraska Newsletter is published monthly and printed by Printco Graphics, Omaha, Nebraska.
Deadline for submissions is the 1st of each month. In the event the 1st falls on a weekend, submissions are due the Friday before.
All submissions of a political nature are subject to Tribal Council approval. Send to Jessica Hitchcock, jhitchcock@poncatribe-ne.org.
See or print the newsletter archives in full color on the member’s side (you must log in) of the web site at: www.poncatribe-ne.org