

— WINTER 2016 —

# AQ

AH-TAH-THI-KI  
QUARTERLY



SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA  
AH-TAH-THI-KI  
M U S E U M  
A PLACE TO LEARN. A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

ANNUAL REPORT 2016



# Rekindled

Contemporary Southeastern Beadwork

ON EXHIBIT

Dec. 12, 2016 - Nov. 22, 2017

ROGER ELLIS AMERMAN

KAREN BERRY

MARTHA BERRY

CAROL CYPRESS

JERRY INGRAM

JAY McGIRT

BRIAN ZEPEDA

CREDIT LINE: Ceremonial Sash by MARTHA BERRY  
Moccasins by BRIAN ZEPEDA  
Detailed Beadwork, Bandolier Bag by JAY McGIRT

SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA  
**AH-TAH-THI-KI**  
MUSEUM  
A PLACE TO LEARN. A PLACE TO REMEMBER



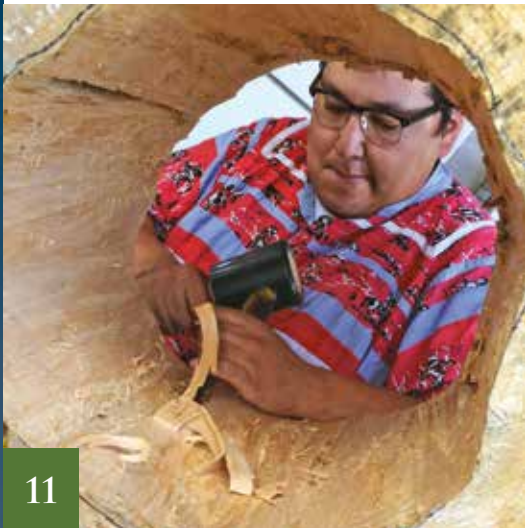
Big Cypress Seminole Reservation  
34725 West Boundary Rd.  
Clewiston, FL 33440  
ahtahthiki.com / (863) 902-1113

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On the cover: Daniel Tommie silently glides through the alligator flags just off the Museum's Boardwalk.



# Director's Note

The upcoming year is looking auspicious! 2017 will mark the 60th anniversary of the federal recognition of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, 200 years since the initiation of the Seminole Wars and the 20th anniversary of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum. These dates are all important and will be recognized in different ways by the Tribe and through our mission at the Museum to tell the Seminole Story. During 2016 planning was well underway for these upcoming milestones. The internal fabric of the Museum itself has long been the cause of much discussion and the impending 20th anniversary allowed us to take a fresh look at the core elements of our visitor experience. A review of the Museum's original master plan dating from the 1990's showed a campus containing several structures, each of which told a different element of the Seminole story. For instance, the plan featured a separate building devoted to the Seminole Wars. When the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki was built, however, funding only allowed for one of the planned structures to be completed--our museum today. Our permanent exhibits only provide visitors part of the overall Seminole story. Major exhibition planning undertaken in 2016 has allowed



us the opportunity to reimagine a fuller story whilst utilizing the space we currently have within our existing structure. The conceptual designs we now have for the reimagined space are a result of intense collaboration with the communities and leadership of the Tribe. The renderings show an exciting and ambitious space within which our visitors can more completely connect with all aspects of the Seminole story and the Tribe's home here in South Florida. As I walk through the beautiful and evocative installation of our newest exhibition 'Rekindled', I am reminded again that Seminole culture is very much alive and well and that the linkages between past and present are all around us. Take some time during the upcoming year to come back to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki and immerse yourself in the culture, history and lives of the unconquered Seminoles.

Paul N. Backhouse, Ph.D.  
Museum Director



Concept drawing of the Museum lobby shows a reimagined space for our visitors. Drawings completed by creative services firm Studio Tectonic.



## A Year in Review

Kate Macuen

Above: Museum and Tribal Historic Preservation office managers present their team's 2016 achievements and 2017 goals at the annual Strategic Planning Meeting in September.

The wonders and beauty of working here on Big Cypress never cease to amaze me. Every day is full of unique experiences that one can only see, hear, and feel at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum. Even now as I write this, I can hear over our radio system a staff member announce that a Florida black bear has been spotted in the village! Every day, each of our staff members commits to our mission: to celebrate, preserve and interpret Seminole culture and history. And it is with each day that we strive to create a Museum devoted to serving our Tribal community and public. 2016 was no exception as we embarked on new terrain, brought ideas to life, safeguarded Seminole history and achieved many notable goals.

From the quiet moments in the Archives of seeing someone connect with a photograph of a cherished family member to the deconstruction of the old amphitheater to make way for something new and exciting, the Museum was a bustle of activity during 2016. Our education team developed programming dedicated to providing our visitors with even more learning opportunities. Struggle for Survival, 1817-1858 challenged our visitors in how they thought about the heartbreaking and distressing times faced by Seminoles

during the Seminole War period. New and exclusive merchandise lined the shelves in our Museum Store contributing to our best sales in over three years. We shared the Seminole story with thousands of visitors, government officials, and school children. We even had the chance to host a group of 42 UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) students, representing 28 countries, as they came to learn about the Seminole Tribe and the Everglades

Amidst the tours, creativity and design work, upkeep of our buildings and grounds, and recording oral histories, business basics were looked after. Budgets were maintained, Tribal Council Resolutions presented, grants submitted, and strategic planning continued throughout the year. In September, managerial staff from the Museum and the Tribal Historic Preservation Office attended a joint strategic planning session held at the Brighton Reservation Field Office. It was an exciting two days as staff shared their team's accomplished goals and brainstormed fresh and innovative ideas for 2017.

### AQ WINTER 2016

EDITOR  
Kate Macuen

### CONTRIBUTORS

Paul Backhouse, Tara Backhouse  
Carrie Dilley, David Higgins  
Kate Macuen, Rebecca Petrie

Find us on



30290 Josie Billie Highway  
PMB 1003, Clewiston, FL 33440  
PH: 863.902.1113  
TOLL-FREE: 877.902.1113  
www.ahtahtiki.com





Take a walk on the Museum's boardwalk to experience Big Cypress' beauty.



The Museum had a front row seat to the 2016 Big Cypress Cattle Drive.

Some of my favorite things to look back on during the year are all of the wonderful collaborations we got to be a part of. Many of the things we accomplish could not be achieved without the devotion and energy of others. 2016 kicked off stronger relationships with our neighboring departments like the Big Cypress Boys and Girls Club, Ahfachkee School, and Environmental Resource Management Department. We worked with Seminole artists including Elgin Jumper and Samuel Tommie on new programs and exhibitions. Staff developed connections with local universities, museums and professional associations. Our annual arts and music festival, AIAC, brought together tribal musicians, artisans, and dancers from all over the country. We were also fortunate to have two WEP (Work Experience Program) staff join our team. Each of these relationships made us stronger and provided us unique outlets to share the Seminole story.

The following pages provide you with a more in-depth look at the past year. Because it isn't possible to feature every achievement of 2016 within these pages, I encourage you to check out our website ([www.ahtahtiki.com](http://www.ahtahtiki.com)) and follow us on Facebook and Twitter to connect with even more exciting and proud moments we've shared. Thank you to each of our readers for your continued support. **AQ**

Kate Macuen is the Assistant Director at the Museum

**BY THE NUMBERS**

- Exhibitions  
8
- K-12 Schools Served  
61
- Volunteers  
8
- Awarded Grants  
1
- Chickees on Campus  
21
- Outreach Presentations  
20
- Objects in the Collection  
180,000
- Social Media Reaches  
13,892
- Information Requests  
374
- Museum Admissions  
17,527

# A Year of M | A | G | I | C !

By Rebecca Petrie



Above: Available in our store, these heat changing mugs reveal a colorful patchwork design. Just add hot liquid and watch the magic happen!



A YEAR OF MAGIC *Cont.*

Facilities Manager David Higgins models for a tribal wide e-mail announcing the arrival of our patchwork socks.

2016 was a magical year in so many ways for the Retail Division. We had merchandise that seemed to disappear off the shelves (the custom Seminole doll ornaments come to mind), some items transformed themselves before our very eyes, bursting into bright colors and some of the magic was in the excitement of a student intern's inquisitive mind.

The Retail Division started the year with ambitious goals for our three person division; our plans included:

- Develop Seminole inspired merchandise that was attractive to both Tribal and visiting customers
- Create a wholesale line of Seminole inspired merchandise
- Use creative ways to reduce overstock
- Finalize the Museum's on-line store
- Hold a contest with the intention of drawing visitors into the Museum Store
- Visit local museum stores looking for ideas to improve our Store
- Add a new translation of the Museum Guide for the Front of House

And at the same time, and most importantly, increase our sales and increase the Museum Store's presence within the Tribal community.

**WINTER**

January started our busy winter season with events throughout the Tribal community and visitors from around the world looking to soak up Florida sunshine and culture. Sales were up and we were busy with trainings, including teaching new Front of House staff how to use our point of sales system

Throughout the winter months our merchandise was sold at several community events like Brighton Field Days and the Big Cypress Cattle Drive. Our merchandise was also used in a raffle at the Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow and the National Women's History Project, a non-profit organization whose 2016 National Women's History Month honorees included Betty Mae Jumper.

In February our sales clerk Iris Garcia was honored for 16 years of service to the Tribe. We also upgraded our point of sales system to meet the EMV standards (EMV stands for Europay, MasterCard, and Visa) which allowed us to take the new "chip" credit cards. Credit card security was a top priority with this upgrade and we worked hard to protect our customers, the Museum and the Tribe through this transition.

Our new custom merchandise included a giclée print of the Buckskin Declaration featured in the exhibit Struggle for Survival, and patchwork-inspired eyeglass cases and socks. The socks have proven to be a winner with over 100 pairs sold throughout 2016 and we were able to offer them at a wholesale price to the Tribal Health Department.

**SPRING**

Although there weren't many April showers in the spring the Retail Division did have a flurry of activity. The annual Museum Store Association's meeting was held in Atlanta, Georgia this year. In addition to the educational sessions there was a vendor expo where companies who deal with the specific needs of museum stores show their wares. Always a source for fresh ideas, several of our new custom products were discovered at this meeting including the artist who designed our Council Oak silk scarf. Our magic continued when we were able to talk with the owner of Popcorn Movie Posters, the designers of our Buckskin Declaration giclée. They had added to their merchandise lines and now included Magic Mugs- mugs whose design is only visible when they contain hot liquids. It was also at this meeting that the idea for color change sunglasses originated. Inexpensive and a hit with young people, even our staff got in on the action.

An added benefit to attending the meeting in Atlanta was the trips to the Atlanta History Center, the Jimmy Carter Museum and Library, the Atlanta Botanical Gardens and the High Museum of Art. In each venue the stores were visited and ideas gleaned which could be put to use in our own Museum Store.

**SUMMER**

Summer brings a slower pace to the Museum. School groups have finished up for the year, northern visitors have headed home and it is a good time to take care of basic business. Inventory was counted,



Staff always enjoy testing out new merchandise, like our color changing sunglasses!

we continued to learn the ins and outs of the upgraded point of sales system, in late summer upgraded the Personal ID Device (PIN pad), and we introduced the use of two iPads installed with the point of sales remote software which enables us to take the Museum Store on the road.

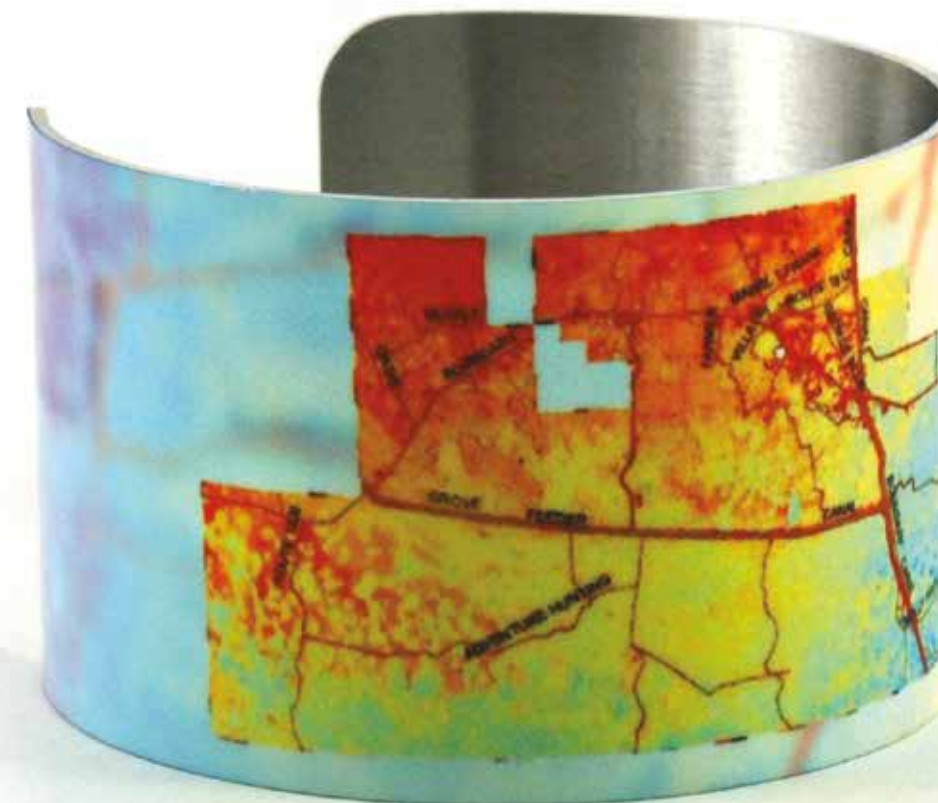
Also during the summer, the Museum Store held a contest to determine the pattern to be used on the 2016 Patchwork ornament and we began taking pre-sale orders for the Seminole doll ornaments. In late August a potential intern from Big Cypress' Ahfachkee School, Nashoba Gonzales visited the Museum trying to determine which, if any, of the Museum areas she might be interested in learning more about. She became intrigued with the idea of product development and decided to focus on Museum Retail for her autumn internship.

Planning for the 2016 American Indian Arts Celebration geared up in earnest as the summer wound down with letters being sent to previous vendors asking them to Save the Date; vendor inquiries started coming in earlier than ever.

Our summer ended with several new products on the shelves including a map of Big Cypress cuff bracelet as well as chickee, Seminole boy doll, and Seminole girl doll worry coins and key chains.

**AUTUMN**

October began the new fiscal year and it started with a bang! Hurricane Matthew threatened south Florida and preparations across the Museum campus were made. All merchandise was moved away from any windows and shelving units were turned to encapsulate the items stored on them. Even though the hurricane



Cuff bracelet with a map of the Big Cypress Reservation.



was a non-event for us, the practice of securing the Museum in a short period of time was well worth the effort.

Soon after the storm, Intern Nashoba arrived like a whirl wind. Immediately she came up with plans for new merchandise. Part of her learning process was discovering that not all good ideas are feasible, but she also learned that you don't know that without research. The fruits of her first effort, a graphic t-shirt, arrived in late November- just in time for the holiday season. Not one to rest on her laurels, Nashoba continues to crank out ideas for merchandise and how to market those items. It has been a thrill to see someone from a younger generation take an interest in Museum retail and that she understands that what we strive to do is for the greater good of the Museum and of the Tribe.

November brought our 19th annual American Indian Arts Celebration. Retail's role in this event historically has been to manage the front gate and to find and register vendors; this year was no exception. The addition of the mobile point of sales system was a huge asset to those staffing the entrance gate. In past years we were unable to accept anything but cash at the gate, obliging our visitors to trek to the Museum to pay the entrance fee. No more! With our mobile system we are now able to accept all forms of payment on site. Our vendor count was up again this year with returning and new vendors. One vendor who was particularly excited about attending for a second year was the Miami based food truck Nuts About Sugar. They were joined this year by Seminole Casino Immokalee's food truck as well as a last minute arrival of Billie Swamp Safari's food van. Popular Seminole favorites were represented by Big Town and Bird Clan caterers. Combined- food, non-profit and crafters, we had a total of 65 vendors!



Intern Nashoba Gonzalez's completed project, a new t-shirt with Seminole inspired graphics.



Our 7th annual patchwork inspired ornament adorns the Museum Lobby Christmas tree.

Sales soared as the year ended with a combination of special events and holiday shopping. The Seminole doll ornament project, in its third year, helped boost our sales. Over the summer we began taking pre-sale orders and by November, almost 70% of the ornaments had been "pre-sold". Our summer contest's winning design sparkled on our 7th annual patchwork inspired ball ornament (Insert FIG 7). Again, we were also able to help other Tribal departments produce custom ornaments for their holiday needs.

**YEAR END**

As our magical year came to a close, we reflected upon our successes. We developed Seminole inspired merchandise that is attractive to both Tribal and visiting customers with the creation of eleven new, exclusive items. We created a wholesale line of Seminole inspired merchandise by working with other Tribal departments to fill their gift needs, finalized our on-line store ([www.seminole-store.com](http://www.seminole-store.com)), mentored our first intern, and developed new translations of our Museum Guide for our visitors. Finally, we ended the year with the strongest sales in three years and the highest average dollar spent by Museum Store customers in five years. All in all, 2016 was quite a year of magic! **AQ**

Rebecca Petrie is the Retail Manager at the Museum.



# Stronger Together

By Carrie Dilley

Over the past few years, the Visitor Services and Development Division has seen many changes. We have ushered in new staff and new ideas, and in 2016 we focused on functioning as a tightly knit unit. We closed out 2016 with stronger relationships—within our own division, within the Museum and THPO, with other departments of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, and perhaps most importantly, with the Tribal community. We reinforced our commitment to providing excellent customer service while helping share and preserve the Seminole story. 2016 was a great year at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki and here are some of our proudest achievements:



STRONGER TOGETHER *Cont.*

## ONLINE PRESENCE

The Museum's website was a topic at strategic planning sessions for years. While we all agreed that the website had many pluses, we also knew there was room for improvement. In many ways, the website appeared outdated and drab, and it displayed poorly on mobile devices. We questioned whether or not the website best reflected the Seminole story and the mission of the Museum. By working with PD/GO Digital Marketing, Kate and I revamped the entire site, making it easier to navigate, and put the Seminole story front and center through vibrant imagery and succinct wording. The refreshed appearance is more in line with the plans we have in place for our permanent exhibit redesign, and we will keep the look for our new brochure and other branding projects in 2017.

As the internet remains the most popular way that our visitors hear about us, we relied even more heavily on our social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Twitter, for promoting the Museum in 2016. We reached a milestone with our Facebook page, obtaining over 5,000 likes. On Twitter, we started the year with a handful of followers and finished out the year with over 3,500. These statistics show us that our level of engagement with our audience has solidified. People know they can rely on our social media for the most up-to-date happenings at the Museum. Our Twitter feed is now linked back to the homepage of our new website, as well.

## ENHANCED VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Throughout 2016, we found numerous ways to improve the visitor experience. As reflected by our TripAdvisor reviews, and our second year winning the Certificate of Excellence, we provide visitors with a warm, educational, and memorable trip to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki. Early in the year we replaced our outdated benches with the sleek Case Study Museum Bench, which give a modern feel to the lobby and the light wood matches perfectly with our admissions desk. We also rearranged our collateral to improve flow through the space. Our tour guides—Marty, Mel, and Wilse—led an incredible number of tours for the year and the extra space in the lobby was always appreciated.

Out on the boardwalk, the Visitor Services and Development Division has two new additions—Daniel, our Museum Management



Trainee, and his hunting camp. Daniel makes a lasting impression on visitors as he shares his culture from his hunting camp positioned near the end of the boardwalk. Even though he only works part-time, Daniel manages to dedicate several days a week to his camp—constructed to reflect the temporary camps created by his ancestors during the hunting season. Daniel is often seen tending to and maintaining this camp, working on wood carvings, or gaining knowledge from his Tribal elders.

Our tour guides worked hard to revitalize our site as a geocache location in 2016 and we have received many positive reviews. Geocache is a worldwide treasure hunting game. It involves either the hiding or the finding of a “cache.” We at the museum chose to make a cache from a large section of repurposed firewood that we call Stumpy, which was hollowed out and houses an ammo container. Stumpy contains elements to be traded and a log book for recording names, dates, and other notes from participants. When a person finds the cache they are allowed to take something from its contents but they have to replace it with something of equal value. The geocache app provides GPS coordinates to help narrow in on your search. Our cache contains small toys representing a variety of Florida animals, a miniature message in a bottle, a log book, and a pencil. Sabal palm fibers to line the bottom to protect Stumpy from damage. Geocache attracts visitors from all over the world!

Attracting a diverse audience remains a priority for the Visitor Services and Development Division. In 2016, we welcomed visitors from 61 different countries. We are constantly trying to stay on top of visitation trends to best serve our audience. Though our indoor signage is written in English, we want to create ways to ensure our visitors get the most out of their experience here. We are delighted to be able to offer our visitors the Museum Guide in a variety of languages, the translations of which have been provided to us by the Retail Division. In 2017 we will be adding 3 additional language translations to the list!

## EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

This year we offered a variety of exciting programs to enhance our existing exhibits. The first set of programming, Seminole Story Days, was made possible through the work of our intern, Eden Jumper. In the spring of 2016, Eden was a senior at Ahfachkee School who expressed a strong interest in marketing and graphic design. By working with Virginia, our Development Assistant, he not only brainstormed the ideas for the programming, but he also created a marketing plan and marketing materials. Eden utilized a variety of computer programs including the Adobe Creative Suite to design a

postcard, flyer, buttons, and bookmarks that highlighted the Struggle for Survival exhibit.

Eden's designs turned out so great that we received his permission to continue to use his theme for our next programming series, Seminole Summer Fun. Our Seminole Summer Fun series consisted of four different Saturdays of programming from July to September, each with a different theme: Everglades Survival, Rodeo Fun, Spanish Day, and Art at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki. Each of these programming days provided visitors with an interactive take on Seminole history and culture.

A weekly feature by our Outreach Specialist, Rey Becerra, on La Poderosa radio show in Miami helped promote the summer programming, our permanent and temporary exhibits, and the American Indian Arts Celebration (AIAC). No year at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki is complete without our annual AIAC. This year, the event took place November 4-5. Highlights of this year's event included a large variety of performers and vendors, our ever-growing patchwork fashion show, a small-scale Seminole war re-enactment, and a closing performance by the Ainu people of Japan. This beautifully moving cultural exchange kept the audience glued to their seats until well after the gates closed.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the year we focused on creating meaningful relationships within the Tribal community, many of which were spearheaded by Alyssa, our Education Coordinator, and her education team. From the above mentioned programs which were open to both Tribal and non-tribal audiences, to Tribal only programs, we offered many other educational experiences and fostered numerous departmental relationships. One of the highlights from the summer was the Lego Program. Piloted in 2015 by the Museum and THPO, the project reconvened this year in conjunction with the Ahfachkee School. We hosted 14 enthusiastic, 4th-6th graders with the 21st Century Program who built their math skills as they constructed a scale model of their Science Building. The end result was shown to the Tribal community and was on display at the Big Cypress back to school bash. The Lego Project is on the strategic plan again for 2017!

Museum Hour began in the spring of 2016 and picked up speed in the fall. During this one hour program, students from the Big Cypress Boys and Girls Club visited the museum every other week for an activity organized by the Education Section. Participants had a chance to learn about various aspects of the Museum and got the chance to complete an oral history activity,

learn about the Struggle for Survival Exhibit, be inspired by Samuel Tommie's artwork, create soap carvings with Daniel, engage in a three-part painting workshop with Elgin Jumper, and learn about archaeology from the Tribal Historic Preservation Office.

Our community engagement did not stop there. We hosted Big Cypress youth throughout the summer for the Recreation Department and Boys and Girls Club summer camps, and staff accompanied the students on several off-reservation field trips. Staff set up interactive booths at the Tribe's Education Expo in Hollywood, and hosted a summer walking program for Tribal members and reservation staff (including Museum and THPO). In addition, Rey reached over 3,000 people in 2016 through his outreach presentations and booths off campus.

One of our highlights of the year was building lasting bonds with the Tribal youth who worked with us and attended our programs. Tucomah began working with the Museum through the Work Experience Program (WEP) in January of 2016. Tucomah split his time between the Compliance Review Section of THPO and the Education Section of the Museum. Although Tucomah left the Museum in December, he made a huge impact on all the staff here.

## LOOKING BACK TO LOOK AHEAD

As 2016 comes to a close, we can't help but to be excited about 2017. After all, it will be a big year for the Museum and for the Tribe as a whole as we celebrate our milestone anniversaries. We will reflect on the past 20 years of the Museum and look to the future as we share the Seminole story. We expect our marketing, programs, events, tours, outreach presentations, and interactions with visitors to all cohesively honor the Seminole Tribe. *AQ*

*Carrie Dilley is the Visitor Services and Development Manager at the Museum and oversees the Education and Outreach Divisions.*





# HAPPENINGS AT THE MUSEUM

Become a member and experience these events for free!

## 2016 DECEMBER

### 13 Exhibition Opening



**Rekindled: Contemporary Southeastern Beadwork**  
**December 12, 2016 – November 22, 2017**  
**Reception: January 14, 2017 from 1pm-3pm**

This exhibit focuses on contemporary Southeastern beadwork by artists from several Southeastern tribes, creating works honoring their ancestors. The artists featured are Roger Ellis Amerman, Martha Berry, Karen Berry, Carol Cypress, Jerry Ingram, Jay McGirt, and Brian Zepeda.

## 2017 JANUARY

### 13 Exhibition Opening



**Ahfachkee School Student Art Exhibit**  
**January 13– April 17**

Inspired by the creative expression of some of Western Art's greatest masters, the students of Ahfachkee School created their own works in these styles. Vivid and brightly colored, these original student works explore the themes of identity, culture, and environment amongst other subjects.

## FEBRUARY

### 18 Seminole Discovery Days: Everglades Exploration

**February 18**

Discover the plants and animals of Big Cypress and the unique Everglades ecosystems they call home.

## MARCH

### 11 Seminole Discovery Days: Archaeology Day

**March 11**

Dig in and experience Tribal archaeology!

## MARCH

### 25 Seminole Discovery Days: Art at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki

**March 25**

Get inspired by our Seminole artists and create something of your own.

## APRIL

### 9 Last Chance!



**Watercolors by Mary Gay Osci Through April 9**

Don't miss the opportunity to view 24 beautiful watercolor paintings in Selections from the Collections Gal

### 17 Exhibition Opening

**Elgin Jumper's Portrait and Landscapes**  
**April 17 -October 8**

### 22 Seminole Discovery Days: Water Warriors

**April 22, 2017**

Celebrate Earth Day! Explore the importance of water the Seminole story and water protection today.

### 24 Exhibition Opening

**Pemayetv Emahakv Traditional Arts Exhibit**  
**April 24 – August 20**

Enjoy student art from Pemayetv Emahakv in our Mo Community Art Gallery.

# A Community Collection

By Tara Backhouse



Staff pose in the archival vault with Work Experience Program participants and an international volunteer who joined us in August 2016. It takes a village to manage a collection! From left to right: Carolin Schiller, Misty Snyder, Tucomah Robbins, Quenton Cypress, Marlene Gray, Wilse Bruisedhead and Jalen Cypress.





Four of our village crafters pose with one of the non-living members of the village, an archer figure that often features in the memorable experiences of visitors at the village. From L to R: Earlene Osceola, Linda Beletso, Jennie Martinez and Jeremiah Hall.

We always try to connect our community to its collection. After all, that's why we do what we do. We hold over 180,000 historic objects, documents, photographs and pieces of artwork for the sole purpose of being able to preserve and share Seminole history. This mission would not be possible without the involvement of the Seminole community. The community informs our interpretation, and our exhibits must strike a chord with those nearest to us. The Museum also can do nothing to preserve Seminole history through its collections without making these collections accessible. Knowledge of the past has to travel through a community in order to thrive. If left safe and sound behind locked doors with no thought to access, history can waste away. We serve the Tribe in a number of ways, and connecting people to our collections was a special focus throughout 2016. To accomplish this, we embarked on many projects. The following highlights cover the range of services we provide. We protect the collection with preservation projects, make the Museum a dynamic experience for our visitors, and connect with the community on a personal and meaningful level.

### THE VILLAGE

Visitors to the Museum have the chance to learn many things and one of the most meaningful experiences they can have is to walk to the village, located halfway around the mile long boardwalk behind the Museum. At the village, skilled Seminole artists work under picturesque chickees and create beautiful work to share. Visitors can learn about the crafts from our artists, and also procure unique souvenirs in this inspiring setting. Those who wander through the beautiful cypress dome and reach the village welcome sign are sometimes surprised at what they find. Having been through the Museum and seen the static displays populated with realistic mannequins, they may expect to find the same thing in the village. But when you come to the clearing you'll smell the hearth fire burning in a central chickee, and historic displays interspersed with Seminole artisans. This is where the magic happens. Meeting the woodworkers, beadworkers and basketmakers that staff the village really lets you into the Seminole world in a whole new way. The village is also a place where special things happen throughout the

year. We host events, welcome filmmakers, and provide educational tours. So come by and meet our artisans, and stay to absorb the rejuvenating ambience of our recreated piece of history.

### THE ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Some of the many types of objects we collect are audio and audiovisual recordings. This year the oral history program collected nearly 30 interviews on a variety of important subjects. The way in which the interviews have been used shows the multi-pronged approach in our division. For example, when we interviewed a prominent member of Tribal government about the elders who were involved in the organization of the Tribe, we made the interview available to our sister department, the Tribal Historic Preservation Office for several research projects. We were also able to use a story from that interview for one of the audio tours available on the boardwalk. When we interviewed a local elder about her childhood camp, we scheduled a public event around it so that members of the public who were interested in hearing her give a live oral history could attend. We also used many oral histories in our exhibits to provide a more enhanced visitor experience. Community members have often said they want to see more of that, so we are continuing to work towards making the exhibits incorporate even more oral histories.

### ACCESSIBILITY

Cataloging forms the basis of collection access, and this year we added over 10,000 objects to our database. The majority of these items were photographs and newspapers, and we've been able to see a direct relationship between cataloging and accessibility. The more photographs we've cataloged, the more we can provide to the community. An important part of cataloging is the identification of people, places and dates. Being able to search for information in our database makes it possible to connect people to their past. Often when people help identify our photographs during the cataloging process, they find pictures of friends, family members, and even themselves. Through this process we were able to give over 1200 photographs to 23 different community members this year. Given that each of these people most likely shared the pictures with friends and family, our reach is even greater. For example we provided 78 photos to a family on the Hollywood reservation to use at an upcoming family reunion event. We also produced reproductions of our postcard collection that could be shared with Seminole residents of the Tamiami Trail. It is a symbiotic process. As the community provides the information, the Museum provides photographic treasures to the community.

The newly accessible newspapers include many copies of the Tribe's own paper, *The Seminole Tribune*. These always prove to be a valuable resource when we fulfill information requests from any sector of society or government. The dedicated *Tribune* reporters have served history well by chronicling the Tribe's activities for nearly 40 years, and we make this record more accessible every day. Also added to our database this year were older local newspapers from the early 20th century. We are able to disseminate the information from newspapers through exhibits, articles and blogs. One notable thread in these papers was the coverage of Seminole athletes and their

stories of becoming more accepted at Okeechobee High School because of their talents, during times when segregation and racism were extremely prevalent. It is history like this that makes the collection come alive.

### PRESERVATION

In September we were notified of an award from the Institute of Museum and Library Services as part of their Museums for America funding program. We applied for this grant in December 2015, and planned for the project all year. This award will allow us to get compacted shelving installed in the archival vault of the Museum, improving the preservation of our photographs, documents, maps, artwork, books, and audiovisual materials. The project began with an inventory of the archival vault, a daunting project in which over 130,000 documents and photographs were counted and packed into boxes. The project continues into the spring and summer of 2017 as we move the collection offsite and prepare the vault for installation. Please wish us luck on this huge project and bear with us while access to this part of the collection is restricted!



Jalen Cypress surveys photographs in the archival vault while counting them as part of the inventory process.

### EXHIBITIONS

We installed three new temporary exhibitions in late 2015 and started 2016 off with hosting a reception for them. The exhibits included: *Struggle for Survival, 1817 – 1858*; *Conversations by Prize-Winning Seminole Tribune Photographers*; and *Telling Our Stories: Recording Seminole Traditions*. This diverse group of exhibits shows how we strive to cover a variety of subjects in our few temporary spaces. From an extremely important historical topic (19th century wartime known to many as the Seminole Wars), to recent photographs by the Tribe's newspaper, (*The Seminole Tribune*), to a chronicle of our oral history program, these exhibits spoke to a cross-section of people and supported an enlightened view of the Seminole Tribe as a multi-faceted cultural group, neither bound to the past nor completely rooted in the present.

Elsewhere in the gallery we installed three new interactive exhibit pieces: a beading interactive, a stickball interactive, and a collections kiosk near the front desk where you can view a specially selected group of collection objects on an iPad. Along the boardwalk, a photo cut-out was also installed in the village. Step behind this cutout, a recreation of a historic postcard and you can become an early 20th century visitor to a Seminole tourist camp. Interactives of different types mean more fun for everyone!

One of the largest projects begun this year was a multi-year endeavor to redesign the Museum gallery space. If you've been to the Museum and liked or loved it, you might ask yourself why? We too



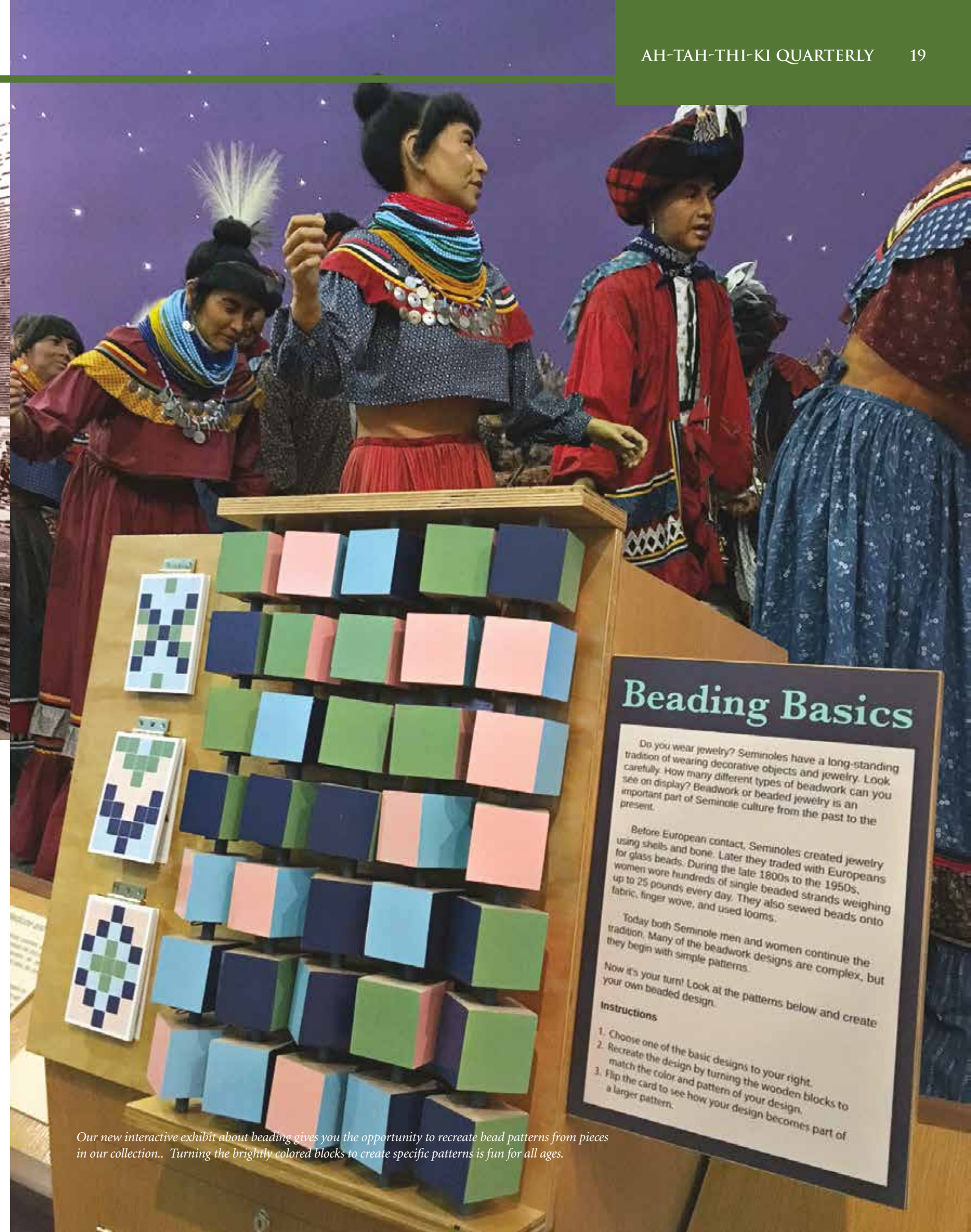


A striking feature of 2016's *Struggle for Survival* was the partial recreation of the *Grey Cloud*, a paddleboat steamer that forcibly removed Seminole people from Egmont Key in Tampa Bay. As visitors walked through the boat they heard a voice in Creek lament about the horrors of war time, an experience many no doubt carried home with them.

love our Museum, however, in order to provide the most enriching experience for our visitors we have to overcome several shortcomings within our gallery spaces. The first is the relative permanence of most of the displays. While we mount exhibits in three temporary gallery spaces, rotate textiles in several cases in the permanent display areas, and add interactive elements throughout the Museum, many of our display elements have not changed in 20 years. Add to that the fact that the permanent exhibits are set in the late 19th century and it means that we must consider major updates. For many visitors, their trip to the Museum is the only time they learn about Seminole history. When they primarily see displays of 19th century camp life, with a few interspersed snippets of other historical periods or modern Seminole artists, they are bound to leave the Museum without a full version of the Tribe's story. This does a disservice to the community. And for the community, the Museum should be a place that balances the present and past, a place that provides a relevant experience to Seminole people of all ages and backgrounds. When exhibit updates are hampered by outdated permanence, we can't fully achieve this goal.

In order to combat these issues, we began a permanent exhibition re-design project. During 2016 preliminary concept designs were completed by Studio Tectonic—an exhibition and interpretive design firm. These designs would provide us a new way to tell the Seminole story. Not only would our re-designed gallery tell a more complete Seminole story to all visitors, it would allow for the staff to update displays and rotate different collection objects into the cases. The Seminole story would not be stuck in the 1890's. It would extend thousands of years into the past and continue into the future. It is our hope that in 2017 we'll move on to phase 2, where more detailed plans will be developed. Stay tuned to see what the future holds, as we find new roads to traverse in our quest to bring collections and community together. **AQ**

*Tara Backhouse is the Collections Manager for the Museum and oversees Collections, Exhibits, and the Village.*



Our new interactive exhibit about beading gives you the opportunity to recreate bead patterns from pieces in our collection.. Turning the brightly colored blocks to create specific patterns is fun for all ages.

## Beading Basics

Do you wear jewelry? Seminoles have a long-standing tradition of wearing decorative objects and jewelry. Look carefully. How many different types of beadwork can you see on display? Beadwork or beaded jewelry is an important part of Seminole culture from the past to the present.

Before European contact, Seminoles created jewelry using shells and bone. Later they traded with Europeans for glass beads. During the late 1800s to the 1950s, women wore hundreds of single beaded strands weighing up to 25 pounds every day. They also sewed beads onto fabric, finger wove, and used looms.

Today both Seminole men and women continue the tradition. Many of the beadwork designs are complex, but they begin with simple patterns.

Now it's your turn! Look at the patterns below and create your own beaded design.

### Instructions

1. Choose one of the basic designs to your right.
2. Recreate the design by turning the wooden blocks to match the color and pattern of your design.
3. Flip the card to see how your design becomes part of a larger pattern.



# Fire is the Heart

BY DAVID HIGGINS

Facilities staff light the fire in front of the Museum each morning, a welcoming smell and sight for our visitors.

**F**ire is the heart of the Seminole Camp just as the Facilities Division is the heart of the Museum. This past year at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum has been very exciting and eventful. I started in late March as the Facilities Manager. Coming from a large 100 year old natural history museum in Santa Barbara, California to a 20 year old tribal museum in South Florida was a new cultural experience for me.

I have already learned a lot in the short time I have been here. Not only about the Museum, which I take pride in taking care of, but the Seminole Tribe itself. I look forward to learning so much more in the years to come. It is a pleasure to work with such a dedicated Facilities and Security team who work hard to make the Museum an enjoyable, memorable, clean, and authentic experience for the Tribe and visitors alike.

During my first month at the Museum I noticed that our recycling program could use improvement. We were making an honest effort, but I knew we could do better. We worked with the Public Works Department in providing us a container for cardboard and several recycling containers. We trained the Museum and Tribal Historic Preservation Office employees on how they could help the Tribe and our environment by putting clean recyclable paper in the recycling cans and by washing out their food product plastic containers and placing them into the recycling bin. We have tremendously cut down on our garbage output and have mastered our recycling habits. Our goal is to leave as small environmental footprint as possible for our future generations, so they too can enjoy our beautiful, natural environment.

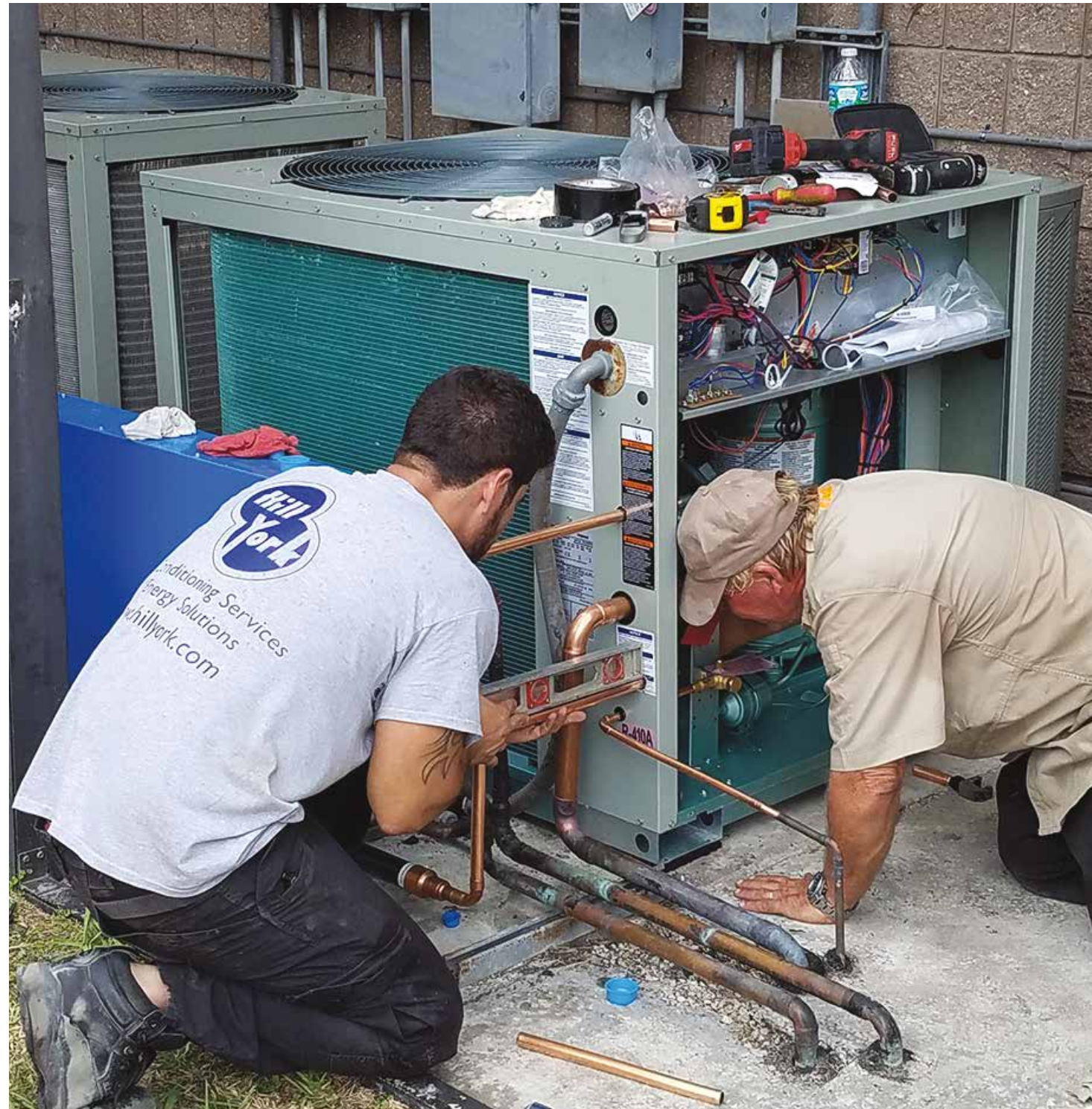
The environment here in South Florida is one of the many draws for visitors to our Museum. However, its unforgiving high humidity and even higher temperatures make for a very harsh environment. That being said, trying to keep an exact environment inside the Museum and collections areas is a very difficult task. Steady temperature and humidity are essential in protecting and preserving the collections. In 2016 we had to replace two HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) units: a 10 ton unit and a 7.5 ton unit. This has helped keep the environment inside the museum stable. We are always working on the upkeep of these units to make sure the building envelope continues to mitigate harmful environmental factors. In the upcoming year we plan to replace several more units and potentially install a clean air unit. This will stabilize the inside air.

Museum life is always exciting and with continuous lists there never seems to be enough hours in the day to get everything done. This past year though we were able to help our fellow divisions on accomplishing a wide variety of projects. Exhibits and Facilities created a new seamless wall for the Mosaic Community Art Gallery.



Facilities Manager David Higgins works on the new wall in the Mosaic Community Art Gallery.





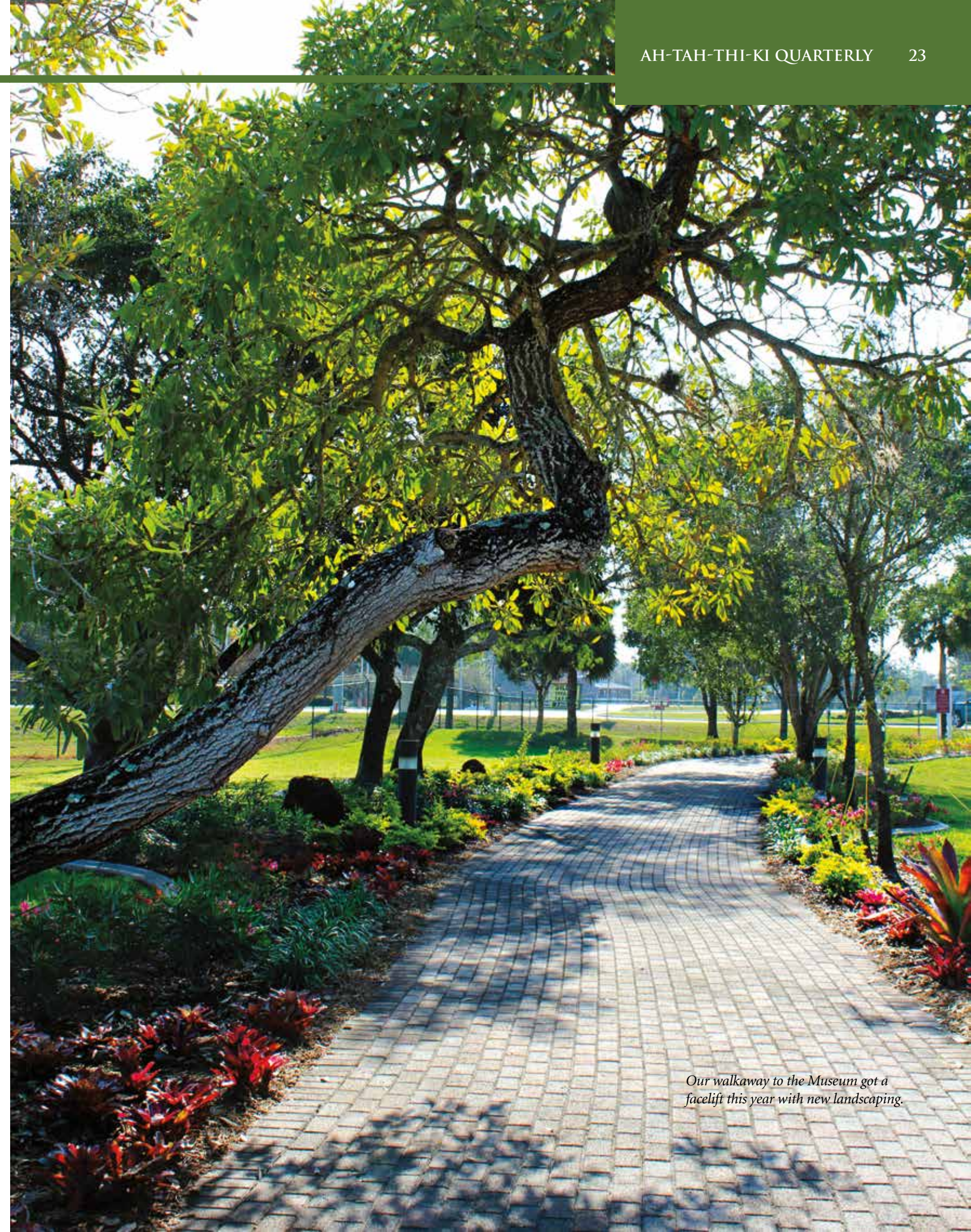
A vendor works to install a 10 ton HVAC unit.

We helped remove and dismantle exhibits and helped install new exhibits. We built a specialized shipping crate for the Tribal Historic Preservation Office's ground penetrating radar equipment for trips across the country.

We collaborated with the Visitor Services and Development Division to remove the old amphitheater so a new Seminole hunting camp could be built in its place. Also to note was the task of placing bronze plaques on the side of Sam Jones Road (County Road 833) for the dedication and road renaming ceremony that the Tribal

Historic Preservation Office hosted.

During the past year we replaced 500 feet of wooden slats on our mile-long boardwalk. We plan to replace more wooden slats in 2017. The boardwalk, which meanders through a cypress canopy dome, also accumulates algae which can cause the board slats to become slippery. Because safety is our top priority we pressure wash the boardwalk every year. This process takes six weeks to finish and isn't complete without a lot of hard work and sweat! Unfortunately Mother Nature waits for no one and once the pressure washing is



*Our walkaway to the Museum got a facelift this year with new landscaping.*





*Baby raccoons fast asleep in the generator.*

complete the process starts all over again.

There were several important repair projects during 2016 to also give mention to. We replaced the water main valve to the Museum which allows us to quickly turn off the water in case of an emergency. We installed pumps to the HVAC units to allow for better drainage and prevent standing water in which prevents mosquito larvae growing. We repaired the Tribal Historic Preservation Office building's roof due to leaks caused by age deterioration and repaired water leaks on the roof of the village rest room.

Florida is well known for its tropical storms and heavy rains and winds. The saying goes if you don't like the weather wait 10 minutes and it will change. This year we had a close call with Hurricane Mathew and unlike some parts of Florida which got hit pretty hard we were spared. With the uncertainty of hurricanes we prepared the Museum and battened down the hatches. We placed hurricane tarps over the entire front and back windows of the Museum, put up shutters, and placed all of the artifacts which were on display inside the Museum into the vaults. We disconnected all of the computers and electronics from the Tribal Historic Preservation Office and

placed them into the vault. After the hurricane passed we assessed the Museum for damage and were thankful that we had no loss to property. It only took us one day to place everything back and reopen for our visitors and Tribal members to enjoy once again.

Sometimes things happen in this wild and harsh environment that make you think, why? This year we had one of those moments that was a costly, "why". When the spring and summer months arrive and the birds and bees are singing, animal mothers look for a place to raise their young. We had a mother raccoon choose one of the museum's generators to raise her young. In the process of building a nest she chewed through most of the armature wiring in the generator. Unfortunately the damage caused by the nesting forced us to replace our generator. Don't worry, the baby raccoons were relocated to our neighbors at Billie Swamp Safari who raised them and then released them once they were able to be out on their own.

We had several large campus improvements this year. A new chickee was built in the back of the Museum to give more shade to school groups and an escape for the afternoon rains. This chickee is 10 feet wide and 80 feet long and has over 5,000 palm fronds



*Come enjoy our new 80 foot chickee behind the Museum!*

covering the roof. It can hold over 100 people under it and it took almost three months for the fronds to turn brown. Come and take advantage of this shady and cool spot on our campus.

Our other large improvement was to revive the Museum's landscaping at the entrance and parking lot. We wanted to bring color into these areas and give it a vibrant look for our visitors and community to enjoy. There were over 1,000 plants planted in these areas. I hope you will agree, when you come to the Museum, our landscaping is a very colorful and welcoming site as you begin your visit to our beautiful museum.

Our Facilities staff is charged with maintaining the public areas of our grounds. However, through our daily movements around campus we are also lucky to experience what our 78 acres of wild and untamed land has to offer. Most of the Museum campus is covered by an untouched cypress dome with wildlife in abundance; from Pileated Woodpeckers in the trees, American alligators in the ponds, anole lizards skittering about, and opossums in the brush. The cherry on top to 2016 was during an early morning visit to the village and getting a quick glimpse at one of Florida's most pristine mammals,



*A Florida Panther is spotted walking through the Village off the boardwalk.*

the king of Florida's jungle: the Florida Panther. **AQ**

*David Higgins is the Facilities Manager at the Museum and oversees both the Maintenance and Security Divisions.*



**Staff Directory 2016**

We sincerely thank all of our staff, interns, and volunteers for their dedication, inspiring and creative achievements, and innovative ideas during 2016.

**STAFF**

Paul Backhouse, Ph.D., Museum Director  
 Tara Backhouse, Collections Manager  
 Ann Barrett, Assistant Retail Manager  
 Ellen Batchelor, Head of Security  
 Reinaldo Becerra, Outreach Specialist  
 Linda Beletso, Village Crafter  
 Patsy Billie, Village Crafter  
 Alyssa Boge, Education Coordinator  
 Kenneth Bowers III, Security Officer  
 Wise Bruisedhead, Tour Guide  
 Fermin Carranza, Maintenance Staff  
 Oscar Carrasquillo Rivera, Maintenance Supervisor  
 Rebecca Crum, Office Manager  
 Robin Croskery Howard, Conservator  
 Natasha Cuervo, Registrar  
 Helena Cypress, Village Crafter  
 Lorraine Cypress, Village Crafter  
 Martina Dawson, Tour Guide  
 Maria De Santiago, Maintenance Staff

Nicolas De Santiago, Maintenance Staff  
 Carrie Dilley, Visitor Services and Development Manager  
 Charles Dunkley, Security Officer  
 Rebecca Fell, Curator of Exhibits  
 Linda Frank, Village Crafter  
 Iris Garcia, Sales Clerk  
 Marlene Gray, Former Conservator  
 Eric Griffiths, Oral History Coordinator  
 Jeremiah Hall, Village Crafter  
 David Higgins, Facilities Manager  
 Tennile Jackson, Former Collections Assistant  
 Melanie Lopez, Tour Guide  
 Kate Macuen, Assistant Director  
 Jennie Martinez, Village Crafter  
 Dennika May, Former Tour Guide  
 Siobhan Millar, Exhibits Coordinator  
 Earlene Osceola, Village Crafter  
 Rebecca Petrie, Retail Manager  
 Nora Pinell-Hernandez, Exhibits Fabricator

Mary Beth Rosebrough, Research Coordinator  
 Misty Snyder, Collections Assistant  
 Daniel Tommie, Management Trainee  
 Virginia Yarce, Development Assistant  
 Pedro Zepeda, Village Crafter

**WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM**

Quenton Cypress  
 Jalen Cypress  
 Tucomah Robbins

**INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS**

Chelsey Alvarado, Intern  
 Heather Billie, Volunteer  
 GraySun Billie, Intern  
 Nashoba Gonzalez, Intern  
 Eden Jumper, Intern  
 Silas Pacheco, Volunteer  
 Carolin Schiller, Intern  
 Benjamin Walter-Range, Volunteer

**Thank you to the following individuals who have joined or renewed their Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki membership. Your support of the Museum is greatly appreciated!**

**NEW**

**BASIC MEMBERSHIPS**

**Family Clan**

Ayala Fishel  
 Guillermo Sabatier  
 Harold Thomas

**Individual**

Ewa Bandura  
 Fleta Collins

**RENEWAL**

**PATRON MEMBERSHIPS**

**Osceola Circle**

Mary Giddens

**Cypress Circle**

I.S.K. Reeves V

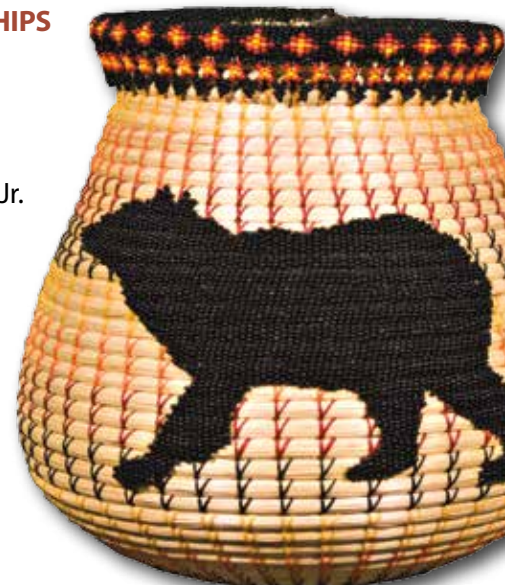
**Business Partner**

Randall Parrish Jr., O.D./Family Eye Care

**BASIC MEMBERSHIPS**

**Individual**

Jesse Malory, Jr.  
 Todd Palgon  
 Richard Tombrink, Jr.



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**Your membership helps preserve vital Seminole history and culture while providing entertainment and learning for the whole family.**

**Interested in becoming a Member?** Want to learn more about our Membership Program? Contact our Visitor Services and Development Manger at 863-902-1113 or e-mail CarrieDilley@semtribe.com

# Coming this spring to the Museum Store!



“A concise, detailed account regarding the enormity of the task THPOs face in successfully navigating the two worlds of federal historic preservation laws and statutes and tribal cultural beliefs, knowledge, and traditions.”

—James Quinn, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut

“An important book. Highlights the complicated, confusing, and often contradictory world navigated by the intrepid personnel of the Seminole Tribe of Florida’s Tribal Historic Preservation Office.”

—Ryan Wheeler, Director, Robert S. Peabody Museum of Archaeology

Pick up a copy during your visit or find it, along with other unique merchandise, in our online store

www.seminole-store.com



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