



# QUECHAN NEWS

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## In This Issue:

New TERO at Ft. Yuma  
Page 2

Pottery Master Returns  
Page 3

Elders Breakfast at Casino  
Page 4

Special Projects Activity  
Page 5

Local Athlete Shines  
Page 6

Gingerbread Homes a Hit  
Page 7

New Bus for Seniors  
Back Cover

Items Of Special Interest  
To Tribe Members



Look For This Symbol

ETSKA NAV AH PAI THE NEWS CARRIER  
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## Cocopah Canal Lift Station Almost Done



A crew from Clear Solutions Enviroengineering has been working to rebuild the existing lift station on Picacho Road, just northeast of the Pipa Market, with Bill Hirt (standing in white hardhat) of the Quechan Special Projects Department on hand to supervise.

QUECHAN NEWS Photo by William Isbell

After almost six years, the Cocopah Canal Lift Station is being re-built, to increase its reliability and complete the much delayed and sometimes controversial, though necessary improvements.

It started in late 2001 as a project to completely replace the failing pumps and deteriorating concrete of the existing lift station with an entirely new facility. That project was quickly halted when the

contractor at the time discovered an ash deposit about 3 feet below the surface at the east edge of their excavation. Concerned tribe members met with the Tribal Council, and the project was halted.

"We still don't know what the ash zone was," says Bill Hirt, Director of Special Projects. "But we didn't want any further work done in that area" due to the chance that it could disturb possible cultural artifacts *in situ*.

So a new plan was formed, to abandon the existing lift station in place, construct a new sewerline from the Community Center to the lift station, then west under Picacho Road to a manhole near the Yuma Main Lift Station.

Unfortunately, the location intersects two separate plots of land, with conflicting rights-of-way for powerlines, canals, ditches, plus the roads involved. None of which meet at right angles.

Since a portion of this sewerline would parallel the Cocopah Canal, a right-of-way would have to be negotiated with land owners whose allotments the sewerline would cross, before even a shovelful of dirt could be turned. For the BIA to determine the value of those rights-of-way, Nicklaus Engineering was brought out to conduct a very complex survey of the entire area, to provide the necessary data for the legal descrip-

tions.

The Yuma office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs was pleased with the survey as conducted, and they sent it on to Phoenix. Phoenix wanted even more detail, which meant another survey.

By this time a year or more had passed, and one of the land owners of the allotments in question decided that she wouldn't grant a right-of-way in any case.

Another plan was formulated, to put the new sewerline right under the southbound lane of Picacho Road, so a Grant was sought for construction. Once approved, the grant source stated they would not pay to re-pave Picacho Road once construction was completed.

The Quechan Tribal Council then voted to provide the funds for that portion of the project, while the Indian Health Service (IHS) began to work on the engineering drawings needed to begin the bidding process. By the time the drawings were completed and approved, and a contractor was selected, the price of petroleum had jumped.

"Since petroleum is a major ingredient in the asphalt that would be used to re-pave the road, that meant the cost of that part of the contract had gone way up," says Hirt. "So the Council decided it would cost too much to try going

*Continued on Page 4*

## New Tribal Employment Rights Officer Loves the Job, Hits the Ground Running

Pearl Cowan has been in government service for quite some time now, travelling a circuitous route to end up as the new Tribal Employment Rights Officer (TERO) for the Quechan Tribe. Her position calls for her to both safeguard all Tribal employees (as Safety Officer, her other hat in the TERO/Safety Office) and ensure that the Quechan people get first chance at contracted jobs on the reservation, in compliance with the Indian Preference Act.

"Right now, my main focus is getting people lined up for work on the (construction of) the Casino Resort," she says. "Getting to know all of the players out there. There are about 25 subcontractors out there, under Roel Construction, and some of those have their own subcontractors. I'm meeting with them all, to be sure everybody hiring out there meets the TERO requirements."

"Of course, I have to be sure they follow the safety rules out there, too", she hastens to add.

Pearl came on board to run the TERO/Safety Office on the 26th of November, picking up the full time duties last filled by James Montague, who has been serving on the Tribal Council since June.

"I see his name on a lot of the paperwork around here, going back years," Pearl says with a laugh. "He checks on me a couple of times a week to see if I have any questions and make sure I'm up to speed on everything, giving me contact information. He's made it a lot easier to 'hit the ground running' here."

Her background has long been in Safety and Environmental Compliance, mixed with some experience in Human Resources, due to

the number of employees she had been supervising. "I was doing that with the Federal Government, and left that to come back here (to Yuma) and be with my family", she explains.

A native Hawaiian, born and raised in the Aloha State, she was the Regional Disaster Preparedness Officer at Pearl Harbor, and served on the team investigating the collision of the USS Greenville, when it surfaced unexpectedly at high speed, right under a Japanese fishing boat, killing nine fishermen.

"I was with that investigation all the way, right up to the end when we took her back out to sea (after repairs)."

As Regional Officer, her area of responsibility stretched from Pearl Harbor all the way out to Midway Island, "So it was quite challenging!" With her safety background in the nuclear Navy, she's glad to say she doesn't glow at night!

During 9/11, she spent the whole time at the Pearl Harbor Command Center, protecting all of the resources available on the island. With that experience, she says, "I've made tremendous contacts with a lot of emergency organizations, FEMA, and I still keep that liason open because I know it will come in handy here," if we ever face an earthquake, flood or similar disaster.

Hoping to advance her career, Pearl relocated to a similar position in Georgia for almost 5 years, which was "different", she says. Although it is in the deep south, the cities have grown so much, and the population is so crowded, she never felt as comfortable there as where she grew up. "But here, the people are a lot more friendly, like they are in Hawaii. Everyone here

is just super nice, and I really enjoy it!"

Her daughter lives here, and both of her children grew up here in Yuma, attending Rolle School, Gila Vista Jr. High, and graduating from Yuma High School.

But that wasn't the only thing that motivated her decision to give Yuma a try: "Now that I have a grandson in Yuma who will be a year old in February, I decided this is where I should be living, to play with that baby and watch him grow up!"

To meet the needs of both Tribe members and the contractors looking for employees here on the reservation, Pearl has made contact with the TERO offices of most of the other local tribes, such as CRIT and Ft. Mojave, and has posted the jobs offered by the contractors in her office, where everyone is welcome to drop in and read them.

"I'm not an employment agency," she points out, "but I am taking all of the applications I can, so that if someone comes in looking for a specific set of skills, if I have that person on file, I can introduce them to each other."

She wants to remind everyone here at Ft. Yuma that it's in their best interests to come in and add any new skills they might have picked up on-the-job or at school to their applications on-file at TERO. She is glad to update the listings, and wants to be sure she's got everyone's trade skills properly listed.

And don't forget to let her know if you've picked up any computer skills on the job!

She says, "My primary function is to be sure that 'my tribe' is taken care of, and that's what I'm here to do, one way or the other!"

## Project Council Election

The Quechan Senior Center will be holding an election for members of their Project Council Committee on Tuesday, January 15th at 1:00 PM.

Seen as the "eyes and ears" for the Quechan Tribal Council at the Senior Center, the members are responsible for oversight of the daily activities of the Center.

Four positions will need to be filled on this important Committee: President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary.

Although it has been a couple of months since this group has

met, due to the recent move to the new building, Emmett Hartt, Sr., Director of the Senior Center anticipates that they will be meeting much more frequently in the new year ahead. He says all four positions are purely volunteer positions, and that those who put their names up for nomination will need to be available to do daily business for the Center, and have use of their own car to run errands and attend meetings with the Tribal President, Vice President and Council. Only seniors aged 55 and over may apply.

## Barton & Brenda Golding: 30th Anniversary

Local Quechan tribe members Barton and Brenda Golding have been married for three(!) decades now, and dropped off this recent photo and New Year wishes at the *Quechan News* office, wanting to share their happiness and success with everyone. They write:

"Happy New Years!"  
 "Thank you, all of you Quechan people, for all your support. And thanks also to my family members: Mom and Dad, brothers, sisters and aunties, for all of your support and words of encouragement through the years."

"Thanks especially to our Tribal leaders, President Mike Jackson, Sr., your wife and family, and our Vice President Mr. Keeny Escalanti, Sr. and wife."

"To our Tribal Elders: we have looked upon you as our role models, and appreciate your help as mentors in our marriage."

"Our marriage is a new day each day, and a life-long learning experience. But most of all, it is a life full of laughs and joy, and it is a priceless treasure. We would like to tell you all that things do get better through the hard times, and that loving and forgiving is



**Barton and Lupe Golding**, as they appear today, were married on December 30th in 1977.

all a part of our journey."

"We both look forward to better loving times ahead, both Lupe and me, and the children."

Barton has worked for the Quechan Tribe Security force for 12 years now, where he guards the Quechan Community Center. He and Lupe have 8 children ranging in age from 28 down to 7, as well as three grandchildren.

Barton and Brenda's children are Joshua, Samuel, Cheyenne, Barton, Jr., Joseph, Brenda Golding II, Priscilla and Saiah.

Cheyenne married Jason José, and their three children are Cynne, Jason, Jr. and Samuel José II.

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## Have a story idea, or an event you want covered?

QUECHAN NEWS is here to cover the special events and everyday lives of Quechan Tribe Members, and the issues that affect you in the world today. This newsletter is here to keep the lines of communication open, to expand opportunities, and uplift the Native Spirit of the San Pasqual Valley. Your ideas and input are welcome!

Just call the QUECHAN NEWS office Monday through Friday at (760) 572-3912, or email your stories and story ideas to [w.isbell@quechantribe.com](mailto:w.isbell@quechantribe.com). I'm looking forward to hearing from you!



# Heritage & Culture

## Popular Instructor Returned In December: Tony Soares Invigorates Pottery Class



**Tony Soares, a specialist in "prehistoric pottery"** from Joshua Tree, California, poses next to two of his recent large reproductions of "Yuman style" storage pots, at left. In the second photo, he is seen setting out works to dry in the shade, created by his students at the Artists Marketplace last month. Next is a close-up as he ties off human hair to a shortened shish-kabob skewer, creating a facsimile of the brushes used by native artists for millenia. Last, Victor Curran of the Artists Marketplace works out his own design while painting his creation during the class. QUECHAN NEWS Photos by William Isbell

Local artists wanting to brush up on their traditional skills had the opportunity of a lifetime in December, as reknown ceramics artist Tony Soares returned to the Quechan Artists Marketplace to teach a course in traditional pottery making. Mr. Soares specializes in creating new works that mirror the techniques and results of the tribes along the lower Colorado River, from the Mojave and the Hualapai to the Quechan.

He last came to the Marketplace in February of 2007, and guided a group of nearly a dozen through the entire process, from locating natural clay here on the reservation, through grinding and preparing the clay, tempering it with sand and mixing it with water to achieve the proper consistency.

That class then used the materials they literally had a hand in creating to form bowls, small pots and figurines, then applying painted iron oxide designs before learning the technique of firing in a shallow sand pit.

This time, the class had only one week of instruction, as opposed to the two week course that was presented last February. So, some things were covered only in passing, to get to the skills needed

for creating actual finished pieces.

Those who wanted to did get a chance to go out with Tony near the railroad tracks by Winterhaven and harvest some local clay from a canal bank on the second day of the class. Now they know where to get more material any time they need it in the future. Some in the class had attended the earlier two-week course, and will be able to pass along all the steps necessary to get the clay in shape, and how to keep it moist once it's ready.

That's how knowledge is passed along in a community, after all, and these classes are giving those involved a little practical application in cultural transmission.



**Tony sharpens a stick** to be used in creating a human hair brush, to be sure the hair lays against it correctly to ensure a fine line. Also shown are two of his finished works (which may sell for over \$350), the metaté used to grind the clay to a fine consistency, and a bottom mold along with an unfinished student project.

One thing the students of this class were able to see was the making of traditional striping brushes. Tony also works as a cosmetologist when things are slow, and he brought along some hair from a client that he uses to create those brushes.

As a shortcut, he had a good selection of wooden dollar store shish-kebob skewers for the handles, which he cut down to about 6 inches. The shortened sticks were then sharpened to a toothpick-like point on one end, by sanding them on a volcanic metaté.

The tips are angled that way to be sure that the hair lays against the handle, coming to a point.

He then takes a small bundle of about 40 to 50 hairs and lays them against the sharpened end, and ties them down using waxed hemp string (sold by crafts houses as a substitute for tendon). Once everything is secure, Tony carefully trims the brush hairs down to tapered tip (about 3 to four inches out from the end) and he is ready to paint.

A universal color used by all tribes is a red ochre tint, and it results from iron oxide leaching out of rocks that are literally rusting away under the weathering of the elements. As a child, Tony experimented by using a bunch of old iron nails which he dropped in a

coffee can of water. After a few days under the sun he had a lot of rusty nails, and the water was poured through an old T-shirt and left to dry to get his red paint.

Nowadays, he's using mineral tints he finds all over the desert, which he grinds down as finely as he possibly can to make his colors. Each tint is mixed with a little ground clay powder to give it the right adhesive properties when used on clay, with a little water stirred in to bring it all to the right consistency, and it's paint!

One thing everyone was looking forward to was the firing process, but on the last day of the class, winds blew in, and that was put off until Mr. Soares planned return in early January to supervise the process. Once that step in the process is completed, another group of local artists will have acquired a new addition to their portfolio of skills.

Victor Curran and Johnny Norton at the Artists Market hope to have Mr. Soares back sometime this year, to lead another group through the process, and allow those who want to return for additional training the chance to build on their knowledge. Call them at 572-4413 for more information.



# Elders Treated to Brunch at Paradise Casinos



Elders enjoyed a hot brunch in the Arizona Bingo Room at the Paradise Casinos on the Thursday before Christmas. Raffle prizes from the Paradise Casinos were drawn by Edith White from a basket held by Denise Gloria. The Senior Choir, led by Barbara Levy told the Christmas story in song during the meal. QUECHAN NEWS Photos by William Isbell

Quechan elders were treated to a year-end brunch with Christmas themed entertainment and raffle prizes for the fifth year in a now annual event at the Paradise Casinos on December 20th.

Charles Montague, Sr., General Manager of the Casinos welcomed his guests with a short address, followed by a brief Christmas message by Quechan Tribe Vice President Keeny Escalanti, Sr. The Manager of the Senior Nutrition Center, Em-

mett Hartt, Sr., also made a short speech, presenting his greetings to all in attendance before surrendering the podium to Trudy Lopez for a blessing of the Christmas Gathering Brunch for 2007.

Held in the large Bingo Hall in the Arizona Casino, the crowd filled the room almost to capacity as every tribal member over 60 who could attend lined up for a sumptuous buffet breakfast.

Breakfast tables were set up in

long rows, leaving a 12 by 20 foot wooden dance floor in front of the stage. As the elders lined up to pass down the buffet line, Barbara Levy, Recreation Coordinator of the Senior Nutrition Program and Barrett DeFay, Marketing Director of the Paradise Casinos prepared everyone for the entertainment to follow, which centered on the Christmas story told through music by the Senior Choir.

Also lined up both on the stage

and on a lavishly decorated table that ran the full length of the front of the stage was a wondrous selection of wrapped gifts from both Senior Nutrition and the Paradise Casinos, which Barbara proceeded to hand out during breaks in the program.

Quechan elder Edith White pulled the raffle tickets from two baskets, held by Juanita Flores, the Administrative Assistant for Senior Nutrition, and Denise Glo-

ria, the Executive Administrative Assistant for the Paradise Casinos. Prizes included Pendleton handbags, purses and wallets, as well as gift cards from local merchants.

Featured entertainers at the brunch included the duo of Anita Rudd and Maxine DeGrande, with Dolly Juan and Norbert Chavez singing solos. The final selection on the musical program was Barbara Levy's a capella rendition of "O! Holy Night."

## Cocopah Canal Lift Station

*Continued from Front Cover*

under the road, and another plan was put together."

That final plan is the one being implemented now. It calls for rebuilding a portion of the existing lift station (the wet well) and putting in a much smaller valve vault about 12 feet south, instead of creating a whole new facility. The new plan means only a very small area had to be excavated (about 15 feet by 30 feet), staying well away from the area where the ash zone was discovered back in 2001.

The way it will work is this: Waste water from the area north of San Pasqual School Road travels at a slight grade down a long underground pipe, from the west end of the Community Center to the Cocopah Canal Lift Station wet well.

The wet well has been patched with fresh concrete and lined with an impermeable elastomer called "Raven". When the discharge from the north fills the well to a pre-set depth, one of two new submersible pumps at the bottom of the

well will automatically pump the water up and into the valve vault just south of the well. When the water gets down to a certain depth, the pump shuts off, and a contact is thrown to bring the other pump on-line for the next time.

The pumps then alternate in the job of emptying the well, so that if one pump ever fails, the other can take its place. A third, identical pump has been ordered, and will be kept in storage in the event of a pump failure, ready to be installed within a day, to keep things "humming along".

In the valve vault, there are also two identical valves, one for each pump. When a pump starts up, its output is "lifted" under pressure to its valve above, from which it flows to a manhole near the Pipa Market and on to the Yuma Main Lift Station, flowing down a grade under the assistance of gravity.

That Lift Station then pumps the water higher, to the Colorado River Lift Station, which empties into a large sewage line that runs just under the bridge and on to the Yuma Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Both valves in the Cocopah Lift Station valve vault are ball oper-

ated check valves, which open only one way, to remain shut until their pumps are lifting water to them. That way, if there is ever a problem "downstream", wastewater can't back-up into the wet well and cause an overflow.

"The beauty of this plan is that we were able to make use of the stainless steel pipe and concrete barrels that we bought for the first plan, back in 2001." Says Bill Hirt. "All of those materials have been in storage over near the softball field at the Community Center since that job was halted, so we just brought them over and used them to replace the top of the wet well and create the vault for the valves." Which, no doubt, saved the Tribe a little money.

The job was scheduled to be completed by the end of the first week in January, but as with all such jobs, a couple of complications popped up to slow things down. A broken line and cold weather for two, as well as a supplier that shipped the wrong pipe, which is supposed to match the pipe stored from the first job.

Still, Bill Hirt expects it all to be finished by early February.



## Winter Assistance Receipts Deadline Approaching

Parents and guardians who have applied for the annual Winter School Clothing Assistance Program (WSCAP) have only until the close of business on Thursday, January 31st to turn in all of their eligible receipts for reimbursement under the program.

The yearly program enables parents and legal guardians of those attending school to receive a check for \$150.00 for each student to offset the expense of winter clothing for those students in their households.

The Quechan Tribe's Revenue Distribution Department wants to remind everyone who has applied for this year to save all their clothing receipts for each student, to provide proof that new items of clothing have been purchased for eligibility. Since you will have to turn in the

original receipts as part of meeting the requirements, it would be best if you also keep photocopies of those receipts for your own records.

Out-of-town students will receive a Target Gift Card worth \$150.00, instead of a check, once the reimbursements are sent out in early February. Those who fail to turn in receipts before the deadline will also receive Target Gift Cards for local students, in lieu of checks.

The Winter School Clothing Assistance Program is open to students from Head Start through college age, so long as those who have made it beyond high school are full-time students. Full-time students at technical schools are also eligible each year they are in attendance, although students enrolled in a G.E.D. program are eligible only once.

## Students Receive Sweats From Strong Hearts For Passing CAHSEE Test on First Try



**Students receiving their sweatshirts include** (L - R, from Row 5) Velma Jackson, Salvador Garcia, Paul Nez, Justin Sherry, Ruben Esperanza, (Row 4) Marty Cole, Nick McDade, Patrick McCoy, Joe Montague, Remington Donason, Seth Collins, (Row 3) Rodney Zeraté, Allysa Jones, Greg Delgado, Jovan Velasco, Andre Polk, (Row 2) Terrence Teton, Aaron Tellez, John Paul Rivas, Annette McElmery, Joni Brown, Virginia Montague, Janyse Collins, Marie Durand and in the front are Jessica Durand, Brittany Rebstock, Serina Salas, Ceci Casarez, Sarah McDade, Sara Duwyenie and Myra Ramos. Some students who passed the CAHSEE were not present.

Forty-four students, evenly divided between the junior and senior classes at San Pasqual Valley High received special sweatshirts at a mid-year ceremony just before school let out for the Christmas break, as a reward for passing the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) on their first try.

When Lynda Schoonover first came on board as the Principal of San Pasqual High in 2004, she joined with other members of the faculty to develop an incentive program for the CAHSEE test. The test is made up of two parts: Language Arts and Mathematics. Those who pass part one receive 2 free movie tickets, and those who pass both parts on their first try receive these sweatshirts, courtesy of the Strong Hearts Native Society, as well as a day long harbor cruise in San Diego later in the year.

The sweatshirts feature the legend "San Pasqual Warriors" in the school's colors of blue and yellow on the front, as well as a large interlocking "SP" with the words "Strong Hearts" below on the back.

The CAHSEE must be successfully completed before a student can graduate high school, with

sophomores getting one shot at the test, juniors two chances during the year, and seniors get three opportunities during their final year of high school.

In the past, students had re-



**Terrence Teton and Jessica Durand** model their new sweatshirts after the assembly on the last day before Christmas break. Photos by William Isbell

ceived windbreakers from the Strong Hearts, but last year those were suddenly discontinued after they were ordered from the vendor. Mr. Owl, the Strong Hearts' adult advisor, tried to get sweatshirts substituted in time, but that proved impossible, also.

So this year, both the junior

class from last year and the juniors this year were called out at the end of an assembly to receive their rewards.

"About 70% per cent of our students taking the test passed it the first time," says Principal Schoonover. "There were 28 students who passed it the first time last year, but some of them aren't here (at San Pasqual) any longer, so only 22 of those students got the sweats this time."

All of those honored at the December 21st assembly passed the CAHSEE in their sophomore year, though they normally don't receive the rewards until midway through their junior year. With so many passing the test early in their high school years, it allows the faculty to devote extra resources to those having difficulties, while those who have mastered the requirements to graduate can concentrate on adding to their academic portfolios through additional studies and extracurricular activities in anticipation of life after high school.

Every teacher at San Pasqual High also gave out Certificates of Achievement to students who they wished to recognize for specific accomplishments or behavior.

## Vacant Home Demolished



**Michael Duwyenie** uses a backhoe to tear down the walls of what remained of a long vacant house on Sapphire Lane. QUECHAN NEWS Photo by William Isbell

Ending a project begun last summer, a 2-man crew from the Quechan Special Projects Department began the demolition of a long vacant home at the north side of Sapphire Lane during the final week of December.

Over a two month period last summer, a larger crew of 4 took down three other abandoned and decaying homes in the vicinity. Bill Hirt, the Director of the Special Projects Department says this will be the last demolition of a

home in the old subdivision for the foreseeable future.

As with the homes torn down over the summer, the salvageable materials from this latest house were carefully removed at the site, and separated for recycling.

With the rising cost of copper, a few dollars can be made on the wiring alone, while the conduit and other materials such as the fuse box and plumbing have value as scrap metal. There are no plans to replace this home at present.



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**Quechan Tribe TERO**

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*Applications will be accepted at the Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) if you fall into one of the following categories:*

- Tribal Members
- Native Americans
- Individuals residing on a reservation, providing support for Native American families.

*If your most recent TERO application is more than 6 months old, please stop in and fill out a new application for open positions, or update your recent application to list these positions, also.*

(760) 572-0213 Ext. 283

These jobs are not offered by the Quechan Indian Tribe. Applicants are referred to other contractors/agencies for employment.

# Santa's Visit Brings Local Athlete Shines in City League



You'd think a major concert was the draw at the Quechan Community Center, as an overflow crowd awaited the arrival of St. Nick on December 22nd!



The Winterhaven Fire Department brought Santa and his crew in to Ft. Yuma, and he was immediately mobbed by adoring fans, both young and old alike.



The Grinch, Shrek and Mrs. Claus joined Santa, an elfen assistant, Rudolf and Frosty the snowman on stage for the big Gift Giveaway for kids up to age 12.

The payoff for the long wait in line was getting some personal face-time with everybody's favorite Winter Visitor, as one-by-one, the little ones climbed in Santa's lap for a quick hello, a hug, and a wrapped present. The crew from Quechan Parks and Recreation were on hand to snap a Poloroid instant photo for each child to take home as a reminder to stay good in the months ahead. On the big guy's lap at right is Leann Talasweima-Puggie.

A special thanks to the Winterhaven Fire Crew for giving Santa a lift when the sled broke down!



QUECHAN NEWS Photos by William Isbell

Mandel Sanchez, Jr., an eighth grader at San Pasqual Middle School, has been involved in basketball since the fifth grade. In that time, he has done well in Grasshopper League play sponsored by Quechan Parks and Recreation, gradually improving his skills with each game.

While playing in the Grasshopper League, Mandell was under the tutelage of Coach Willis Hawkins, playing on the Ft. Yuma Quechans. He travelled to games in Parker and Somerton, Arizona, and Needles, California, as part of a team representing the 8 to 10 year old kids here on the reservation. He's especially proud of the fact that he was on the 8 to 10 year olds team that came out on top in Parker, winning the season ender by beating the Needles Lakers.

But his current coach, a Security Supervisor at the Paradise Casinos, saw promise in his abilities, and encouraged Mandel to broaden his experience by joining the larger league put together by the City of Yuma. With a much larger population base to draw from, he will be tested by much more intense competition.

While the league here on the reservation has enough to put together five or six teams of 6 to 8 players per team, the Yuma City League has 8 teams right now, with an average of 9 players per team, all unfamiliar to Mandel.

"I've known this young man and seen him play against my team for the last six years", says coach Steve Mitchell. "In that time I've seen him make real progress. But there is a smaller group to play against there on the res, so I got Mandell to join the winter league in Yuma, where there are a lot of new kids to go up against."

Coach Mitchell says he doesn't want Mandel to think he knows all the tricks, so by meeting new players on the court, and seeing how they play, he might learn new moves and defenses against players he's never met before from Yuma.

"As a coach, I had a chance to see him grow in just one season," Mitchell continues. "After coaching against him for the last



Mandel Sanchez, Jr. has played in the Grasshopper League at Ft. Yuma for years, under the tutelage of Coach Willis Hawkins.

QUECHAN NEWS Photo by William Isbell

6 years, I saw the potential in him, so once he joined the Yuma City Junior High League, I jumped at the chance to draft him."

Coach Mitchell watched Mandel carefully for the first two games, and saw that the coaching style he had gotten used to wasn't going to work for him in the larger league. But he also noticed that Mandel saw the difference in the way the game is played across the river, also.

He goes on to explain: "I did tell him and the team that since we don't have a big man on our team, Mandel would have to play big. Our 'Duke' team was smaller in height, against a team having at least one or two players between 6 foot and 6 foot 3."

The coach decided that to keep up, the Blue Devils would have to be a team that runs. At first,

Mandel didn't seem to be up to the challenge, but then he began to push himself. He started running and doing push-ups without complaint.

When Coach Mitchell asked for a leader, Mandel stepped into that role on the court, yelling to his teammates to keep their hands up on defense.

"I also counted on him to make the tough free throw shots, when the team needed the extra points. He would get up there and knock them down."

Coach Mitchell says it was a hard season, since the Blue Devils had a lot of first year players who had never played the game, so going over the fundamentals was the key. The other teams were inclined to count them out because of their lack of experience, but they gelled as a team, and began to earn respect.

Coach Mitchell goes on: "We finished our regular season with a record of 8 wins to 5 losses. The defending champions, the Lakers, came out in our first regular season game and beat us 55 to 32. The kids, I think, let the size of the (kids on the) Lakers intimidate them, but the next game, they beat us by only two, 53 to 51. Mandell was a big part of that second game."

Mitchell speaks with confidence as he concludes, "I know with the right coaching and discipline, Mandel will become an even better player. He is truly a complete player, and a fun kid to coach. I wish him all the best in his high school years."



The 2007 "Duke Blue Devils" in this team photo are Asst. Coach John Barczynski, Ricky Cabrales, Raul Perez, Jr., Steven Mitchell, Jr., Mandel Sanchez, Joshua Rube and Coach Steve Mitchell. Those kneeling are John Barczynski, Jr., Will Tucker, Jordan Mitchell and Lorenzo Duran.

Photo Provided by Coach Steve Mitchell

# Gingerbread Houses Are A Hit!



Evonne Estes from Yuma School District One took the time to explain every step to the gathered multitude, as parents and children alike built candy covered houses.

QUECHAN NEWS Photos by William Isbell

Quechan Parks and Recreation hosted what they thought was going to be a little get-together for the kids last month, just before school got out for the Christmas break. With the holidays approaching, and the young ones getting more and more wound-up in anticipation, Louie Robles, Rosie Jack-Sestiaga and rest of

the crew at the Quechan Community Center holds a class on gingerbread house building every December, to give busy little fingers something to do while mom and dad are out shopping or trying to wrap and hide presents where they won't be found.

But this time, they got an incredible turnout that eventually filled all the available space in the

Community Center as an overflow crowd of kids, parents and grandparents showed up to learn the latest and greatest tips on homebuilding for munchkins.

Evonne Estes, the Coordinator of Yuma School District One's "First Teacher Program" came out to lead the class, holding up a tray and building a small house out of graham crackers as Rosie Jack-

Sestiaga of Parks and Recreation gave instructions over the microphone for everyone to hear.

Perhaps a dozen volunteers were kept busy over the 90 minute class cutting out gabled walls and running "kits" of two pre-cut walls and four full crackers to the hundreds of students in the room. Once the kits were laid out, the same volunteers had to run trays

of white frosting to the students, who used it as the mortar for gluing the walls in place, and attaching the marshmallows, gumdrops and candies to their little homes for that custom finish.

The funny thing is, although it was billed as a chance for little kids to learn a new skill, even teens and grandparents got into the act, as everybody pitched in!



At left, Jennifer Black cuts roof gables into graham crackers before distribution to the gathering crowd waiting behind her. In the second photo, you can get some idea of the huge turnout as kids and adults of all ages sat in on the popular class, filling the Quechan Community Center. In the last 2 photos, Eric Meeden offers a suggestion to his little sister, Nicole, who was a study in concentration as she stuck candies to her little house with frosting for the glue.

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Terry Bay is wearing a vinyl sleeve jacket with red stripes on the woven collar, waistline closure and the woven sleeve cuffs. Tina Salinas is shown wearing a jacket with genuine leather sleeves, which has snap button cuffs and an elastic waistband.

**To order, contact Cathie Soliz, Quechan Tribe Property & Supply Manager at 572-0213, Ext. 229**  
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**Happy Holidays!**  
*...May learning the Quechan language be one of your New Year's Resolutions.*

**-From Kwat'san liya 2007-2008**

*Office Hours*  
 Monday - Fridays 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
 Evening & Saturday classes scheduled upon request  
 For more information, call (760) 572-4412  
 Or visit our office @ the old Headstart building, room # 5

## Christmas Lighting Winners



**Anthony Montague** on 6th Ave. (behind the Crescent Center) in Yuma took the \$500 first place award for extraordinary lighting with musical accompaniment which reacts when visitors walk by.



**This beautiful home** on south 24th Avenue, just east of Avenue B in Yuma won Christine Lopez second place and \$300 cash from Quechan Parks and Recreation.



**Third place winner Sharon Cachora** on Miguel Road here on the reservation won \$200 in cash.  
All Photos by William Isbell for QUECHAN NEWS

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Preston Arrowweed, the last Quechan Lightning Singer, tells the story of the Lightning Song, describing the migration of the Quechan people from Avi Kwame, the Spirit Mountain near Laughlin, Nevada, to their present home on the lower Colorado River near Yuma.



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## Quechan Senior Center Takes Delivery of New Transport Bus for Elders

Jason P. Walle and a driver from Arizona Bus Sales have delivered the keys for a brand new 16 passenger bus to the staff at the Quechan Senior Center.

The new bus was approved by the Tribal Council as part of the new equipment for the Center, and will be used for transporting those eligible for the Senior Nutrition Program around the reservation. Right now, scheduling transportation for the elders can be something of a "hit-or-miss" proposition, since the only

people available for that job are also busy transporting meals to homes as well as performing other duties during the day.

With this new bus, the staff at the Senior Center hope to also hire a dedicated full time driver just for transporting people, since it is so large a Commercial Driver's License is required to drive it.

The van is comes with a full-height, two-panel bus door at the front, and a full-width handicapped entry at the rear on

the right side. The rear entry is also equipped with a hydraulic wheelchair lift, and room for two wheelchair passengers behind the fixed seats.

With a wide center aisle and two rows of seats, the airconditioned vehicle also has slip resistant rubber matting to make everyone inside feel safe and comfortable on their travels.

Gene Moore, one of the volunteers at the Senior Center says that the staff is busy working out a schedule for the van, to pro-



vide some kind of predictability for those who would be using it to get around. It may be better to have it make rounds of the area, rather than just serving as a "Dial-A-Ride" Bus.

Whatever the outcome, they hope to have all those details worked out by the week of their Grand Opening in February, and the Quechan News will be sure to print the bus schedule.