

# Tawodi

"Tawodi"  
Pronounced "ta-whoa-dee"  
our symbol the hawk

## Newsletter of Cherokee Community Inland Empire

June 2014

### Osiyo and Ulihelisdi

Osiyo to all our CCIE members and friends!  
Welcome to our June 2014 edition of "Tawodi"

The hawk is our day messenger and will carry our words...  
The owl is our night messenger and will carry our secrets

#### Nation News

The following is an excerpt from a Nation update sent by our At Large Representative Julia Coates on June 4th

In the Rules committee meeting on Wednesday, May 27, the council again took up revisions to the Government Records Act (GRA) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Last month substantial revisions that would have essentially gutted both legislations by taking the Cherokee Nation Businesses and the executive branch "behind the curtain" had raised serious concerns from Cherokee Nation citizens both within the district and outside the boundaries. A workgroup had been formed that was extremely unbalanced in its composition and included only one member of the minority bloc.

On Tuesday afternoon, just under 24 hours before the council would consider the amendments, we received the "new" amendments and were informed that these would be substituted for the proposed amendments presented last month. To my delight, I saw that the "new" amendments had removed all the sweeping changes that had previously been proposed and now contained only a handful of changes to the original act. In essence, the majority on the council had been backed down! This was due to tremendous citizen action, first the onslaught of communications from the At Large citizens that had stopped it from happening last month, and then the growing awareness and protest from in-boundary citizens that had escalated in the days since. This became too politically costly for the chief and his majority bloc, and they backed off of it. (The proposal we considered on Wednesday is attached. The final version will have some additional changes, but still keeps CNB and CN open to public and council scrutiny).

The amendments are minor, in my opinion. We were able during committee to remove a couple of the more objectionable things and to have some of the original language restored. The most significant changes to the GRA are: (1) extending the time allowed to respond to requests from 16 to 20 business days, (2) allowing for an additional 10-day extension beyond that time if needed and with written notification to the requesting party, (3) providing a list of documents available for review by a councilor if the documents are deemed confidential, (4) prohibiting identifying information about CN service clients from being released to councilors even if marked confidential, and (5) stating only that violation of the act is a crime (rather than specifying what kind of crime, as it had previously been classified as a misdemeanor) which gives a little more leeway as to how it would be prosecuted. The penalties were outlined ranging from maximum \$100 fine or maximum 30 day sentence for first offense, to a \$300 fine or maximum 90 day sentence for third and subsequent offenses.

The language does nothing to alter the current situation of the Attorney General requiring us to go to his office to view documents rather than provide documents to us, and so the ongoing court cases will continue.

I voted in favor of the overall act containing these slight amendments. These are not substantial changes and I can live with them, especially since CNB remains open to council scrutiny.

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## Community Gathering - Saturday June 21st – 1pm to 4pm

Sherman Indian High School 9010  
Magnolia Ave Riverside : Bennett Hall

June is election month! Your vote is  
important so please attend to cast yours!

We will be enjoying a meal together and  
playing the Cherokee Basket game too.

Bring a dish or beverage of your choice  
and please come early to help setup!

## Council Meeting - Tuesday June 10th 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm\*

Arlington Church of Christ 3870 Castleman  
St. Riverside - Social Hall  
Near the intersection of Magnolia and Van  
Buren (not the church at the corner)

CCIE members in good standing are  
welcome to attend, participate in the open  
forum and observe the council meeting  
proceedings. The open forum will normally  
be before the beginning of the council  
meeting, however special events might  
cause schedule changes\*

## Upcoming Powwows!

June 28<sup>th</sup>  
4<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebrating All Life Powwow  
Plummer Park – Santa Monica  
10am to 6pm. All dancers & drums welcome  
Free event <http://redcircleproject.org>

July 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>  
19<sup>th</sup> Annual Pechanga Powwow  
Free to public – Free parking  
Contest dancing – All drums welcome  
45000 Pechanga Parkway Temecula

August 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>  
Honoring Traditions Powwow  
All day – Free entry  
10779 Hwy 76 Pala  
[www.palatribe.com](http://www.palatribe.com)



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## *Howa!*

A big CONGRATULATIONS and HOWA goes out to ... Dr. Alicia Cox! That's right! Alicia has officially completed her dissertation and now she can call herself "doctor". Many years of thoughtful study, teaching, and research has paid off for Alicia as she has earned her PhD in English, focusing on American Literature and Native Studies. It's a truly fantastic accomplishment. Alicia is now going off to UC Davis as a Fellow where she will continue with her studies and ultimately begin her teaching career. Our best wishes to you Alicia!

## Online language classes are available! Visit [Cherokee.org](http://www.cherokee.org)

[http://www.cherokee.org/AboutTheNation/Culture/Dikaneisdi\(WordList\).aspx](http://www.cherokee.org/AboutTheNation/Culture/Dikaneisdi(WordList).aspx)

a = as in ah

e = as the a in ate

i = as the e in easy

o = as the o in open

u = as the oo's in oops

v = like saying ugh

dehaluyi

nadv

gei

utana

usdi

squisdi

ilvsgi

svnale

svhi

svhiye

day ha loo yee

nah duh

gay ee

oo tah nah

oo ss dee

ss kwee ss dee

e luh ss gee

suh nah lee

suh hee

suh he yea

June

that one

over there

big

small

many, much

few

morning, tomorrow

yesterday

evening

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The Cherokee, like other native Americans, did not worship spirits and icons, but believed in one Supreme Being. They lived in harmony with their natural environment. It was their myths and sacred formulas, developed over thousands of years and passed orally from generation to generation, which helped them to do this. Myths may or may not have any bases in fact. But they become institutionalized as "truth" and have a great influence in the cultural behavior of individuals, groups and communities.

They are used to teach the young many of the important lessons of life. The Cherokee chose special persons in special lineages to pass on their oral traditions. Great care was taken to maintain the purity of such traditions.

Virtually every aspect of the Cherokee life and the Cherokee environment had a story to explain it. A Water Spider with black downy hair and red stripes on her body brought fire to the Cherokee, after much frustrating effort. The story of the origin of core (Selu) and game (Kana'ti) includes a reference to a tribe of cannibals (Roasters or Anada' duntaski). Kana'ti, the father, was the Lucky Hunter and Selu was his wife. Every disease was created and put on the Cherokee man by the animals. This was a revenge for man killing the animals. However, the plants, which were friendly to man, decided to furnish a remedy to counteract the evil wrought by the vengeful animals.

The hummingbird frequently draws nectar from tobacco blooms. In Cherokee mythology, it brought tobacco to the Cherokee. Unlike our modern age, the Cherokee believed that tobacco had powerful medicinal qualities. The Cherokee gave it credit for easing suffering by smoking it. It was smoked at councils, which democratically debated the beginning of war, as well at the councils which brought an end to war. It was smoked at the welcoming of any distinguished visitor to the tribe; it was used to place on fires to divine the future, according to the direction in which the wind blew the smoke.



The Cherokee believed that the sun was a young woman who lived in the East. The moon was her brother and lived in the west. One story related how the Redbird was the daughter of the sun. Eclipses were believed to be caused by a giant frog that lived in the sky and tried to swallow them. The lightning and the rainbow were the dress of the sons of Thunder, who lived far in the west above the sky vault.

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Several different Cherokee stories exist to explain the stars. One was about a dog that stole corn meal, and once discovered, was whipped. As the dog ran howling to his home in the north, the meal scattered across the sky and made the Milky Way. The Buzzard played an important role in Cherokee mythology. He made the mountains and valleys with his wings. He was also important as a "doctor."

The eagle was the great sacred bird to most Native American tribes, as it was to the Cherokee. It played a prominent role in their ceremonies, especially to those relating to war. The killing of an eagle to obtain the prized feathers could only be done by a designated eagle killer, who like other "professions" within the tribe, was specifically chosen and trained for that purpose. The eagle killer was taught not only how to kill an eagle, but also the "prescribed forms and the prayers to be said afterwards in order to obtain pardon for the necessary sacrilege, and thus ward off vengeance from the tribe." Killing an eagle out of season, late fall or winter, could cause a front to destroy the corn and snakes to become doubly dangerous. Eagle songs were only sung after the snakes had "gone to sleep for the winter." Only great warriors or medicine men could wear the feathers.



Artwork by Charles Frizzell

The Uktena played an important role in Cherokee mythology. Mooney wrote: "Those who know say that the Uktena is a great snake, as large around as a tree trunk, with horns on its head, and a bright, blazing crest like a diamond upon its forehead, and scales glittering like sparks of fire. It has rings or spots of color along its whole length, and cannot be wounded except by shooting in the seventh spot from the head, because under this spot are its heart and its life. The blazing diamond is called Ulunsu'ti, 'Transparent,' and he who can win it may become the greatest wonder worker of the tribe, but it is worth a man's life to attempt it, for whoever is seen by the Uktena is so dazed by the bright light that he runs toward the snake instead of trying to escape."

Another important element in Cherokee mythology was the Nunne'hi, or immortals, who lived throughout the highlands of the Cherokee nation. A race of spirit people, they were invisible except when they wanted to be seen, at which times they appeared to physically resemble the Cherokee. Generally, they were friendly and frequently helped those who were in need. Like the Cherokee, they were extremely fond of music and dancing. Many of their townhouses were said to be on the high mountain balds, although many stories associate them with the ancient mound of Nikwasi, near present day Franklin North Carolina.

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Perhaps no Cherokee legend has been more enduring than the belief in the Yunwi Tsunsi', the Little People.. About knee high to an adult, they were well shaped and handsome, with long hair, which reaches the ground. Considered to be wonder workers, like the Nunne'hi, they spent half their time drumming and dancing. Helpful and kind hearted; they were especially helpful to children, and frequently helped adults, unseen at night, at such things as gathering corn. Usually associated with a certain place or community, if they were offended, they would leave the place, never to be seen again!

The rabbit played a prominent role in the Cherokee myths. It was always a trickster and deceiver, usually malicious and often beaten at his own game, and by those he intended to victimize. Cherokee legends are full of rabbit stories. "The Rabbit goes Duck Hunting," "How the Rabbit Stole the Otter's Coat," "Why the Possum's Tail is Bare," "How the Wildcat Caught the Gobbler," (which includes the Rabbit begging for his life by saying, "I'm so small, I would make only a mouthful for you, but if you let me go I'll show you where you can get a whole drove of Turkeys." This is the same story that was used in the Uncle Remus story of the Rabbit begging not to be thrown into the briar patch. The Cherokee story of "The Rabbit and the Tar Wolf" is the origin of the Uncle Remus story of the Tar Baby. In the Cherokee story of "The Rabbit Dines the Bear," we have the origin of the love-hate relationship between Brer Rabbit and Brer Bear. Cherokee stories were a treasure house for Native Americans, Negro slaves, and eventually for Joel Chandler Harris who wrote the "Uncle Remus" stories. The Cherokee story, "How the Terrapin Beat the Rabbit," taught a very basic lesson of life. That lesson was repeated by the Cherokee Chief, John Ross, in a letter to his son in 1865. Ross wrote that in the long run, it is the slow and steady pull that accomplishes the most in life.

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