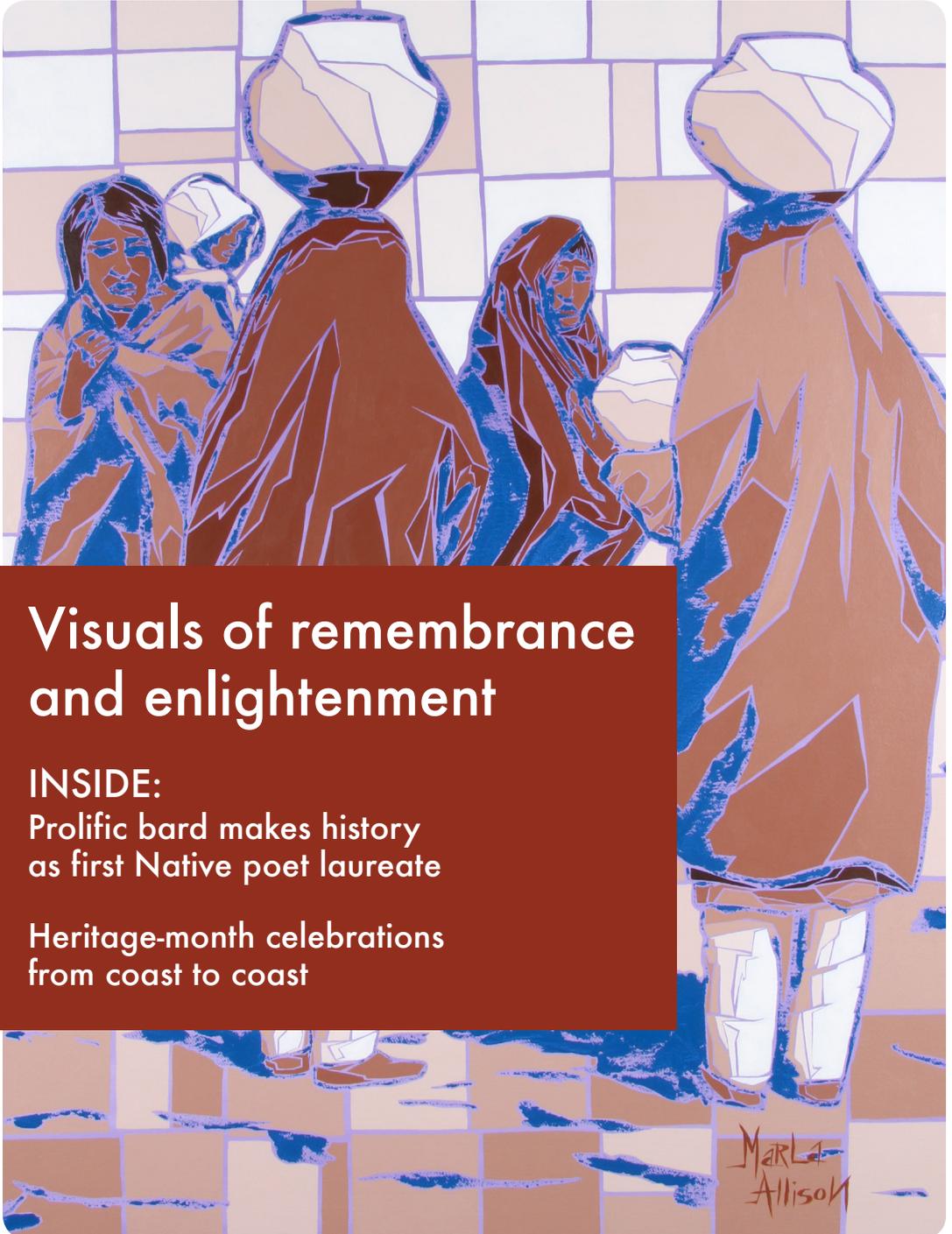


unity



Native American Heritage Issue
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Celebrating Food, Art & Culture



Visuals of remembrance and enlightenment

INSIDE:

Prolific bard makes history
as first Native poet laureate

Heritage-month celebrations
from coast to coast

Marla
Allison

Native bard makes history as poet laureate



Joy Harjo is the first Native person selected as the country's poet laureate. Photos by Shawn Miller, Library of Congress

While growing up on Native land in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Joy Harjo was immersed in tribal culture – thanks in large part to the many stories she heard about her ancestors and the artwork, crafted by her grandmother, that graced Harjo's home.

Those elements of cultural identity are reflected in her books of poetry. And those eight books are a primary factor in Harjo being selected in 2019 as the nation's next poet laureate. A member of the Muscogee Creek Nation, she is the 23rd poet and first Native person to be selected for the role.

Harjo will succeed Tracy K. Smith, who has held the poet-laureate post since 2017. She joins an esteemed and multicultural roster that includes Louise Bogan, Rita Dove, Robert Hayden and Juan Felipe Herrera.

"Joy Harjo has championed the art of poetry – 'soul talk' as she calls it – for over four decades," said Carla Hayden, librarian of Congress. "To her, poems are 'carriers of dreams, knowledge and wisdom,' and through them she tells an American story of tradition

and loss, reckoning and myth-making. Her work powerfully connects us to the earth and the spiritual world with direct, inventive lyricism that helps us reimagine who we are."

In addition to her published poems, Harjo has written a memoir, "Crazy Brave"; a children's book, "The Good Luck Cat"; and a young adult book, "For a Girl Becoming." She's also performed on HBO's "Def Poetry Jam" and other venues.

Harjo's honors include the PEN Open Book Award, the American Indian Distinguished Achievement in the Arts Award, the New Mexico Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts and the Arrell Gibson Lifetime Achievement Award. Her most recent honor was the 2019 Jackson Prize from Poets & Writers. She has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Witter Bynner Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

A former professor at the University of California at Los Angeles, Harjo was also a professor and chair of excellence at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. She returned to her hometown, where she holds a Tulsa Artist Fellowship.

The nation's poet laureate seeks to raise awareness about poetry. The librarian of Congress appoints the poet laureate for a term that lasts from September to May (although the term might be extended). Officially known as "the poet laureate consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress," the individual earns a \$35,000 stipend plus \$5,000 for travel expenses. There are no requirements for the projects the poet laureate undertakes.

See a sampling of Joy Harjo's poems on page 8.



Joy Harjo has performed on HBO's "Def Poetry Jam."

Heritage-month celebrations from coast to coast

Recognition of National Native American Heritage Month takes many forms. During this annual observance, millions of people celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of the 2.7 million people of American Indian and Alaska Native descent. Here's a peek at a few events in 2019.

American Indian Film Festival **Nov. 1-2 • San Francisco, California**

This festival – the world's oldest forum dedicated to Native American cinema – showcases feature films, shorts, documentaries, animation, music videos and public service works of Native American/American Indians by filmmakers worldwide. Award categories range from best film to best public service. <https://filmfreeway.com/AIFF>

Native American Festival and Powwow **Nov. 7-10 • Stone Mountain, Georgia**

The Peach State's largest Native American gathering includes intertribal drum and dance competitions and an artists marketplace. Festivalgoers can also learn about primitive skills such as flint-knapping, bow making, fire starting, open-fire cooking and pottery. Parents and children participate in interactive experiences such as an encampment showing the lifestyle of local and regional Native American cultures. <https://www.stonemountainpark.com/Events/Native-American-Festival-and-Pow-Wow>

Native Sounds Downtown Featuring Pamyua **Nov. 9 • American Indian Museum • Washington, D.C.**

Traditional Yup'ik, Cup'ik, Inuit and Greenlandic chants, interpreted through modern styles, are performed. Entertainers include Stephen and Phillip Blanchett, two brothers of Yup'ik and African American descent; and Ossie Kairaiuak, a Yup'ik traditional dancer from Chefornak, Alaska. <https://americanindian.si.edu/calendar/#/?i=2>

American Indian Arts Marketplace **Nov. 9-10 • Autry Museum • Los Angeles, California**

The largest Native American arts fair in Southern California features 200 Native American artists from more than 40 nations. Baskets, beadwork, jewelry, paintings, photography, pottery, sculpture, textiles and wooden carvings will be sold. The weekend also includes food, performances, children's activities, artist demonstrations and the annual Short Play Festival from Native Voices, the Autry Museum's



award-winning resident theater company. <https://theautry.org/events/signature-programs/american-indian-arts-marketplace>

LA Skins Fest **Nov. 19-24 • Hollywood, California**

Each year, the festival premieres Native-made movies that feature Q&As with Native American filmmakers, panel discussions with industry professionals, professional mixers featuring new Native American musicians and an awards ceremony. <http://laskinsfest.com/2019-la-skins-fest/>

Pocahontas Reframed: Storytellers Film Festival **Nov. 21-24 • Richmond, Virginia**

Artists, authors, filmmakers and actors gather at this event to share, teach and explain their creativity and history. The festival includes Native American-affiliated classic and recently released films that have been official selections of festivals including Sundance.

American Indian Heritage Celebration **Nov. 23 • Raleigh, North Carolina**

More than 100 musicians, dancers, artists, storytellers and authors from North Carolina's eight state-recognized tribes gather for this free celebration highlighting the culture of the state's Native population past and present. Activities include canoe building, educational presentations, games, pottery designs and tribal dancing. <https://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/aihc-2019>

Visuals of remembrance and enlightenment

The works in this issue of *Unity* represent the artists' childhood memories and pride in their heritage.

Jaymus Perry

Jaymus Perry was born in Denver, Colorado, and grew up in Buell Park, a Navajo reservation in Arizona. Perry recalls that he and his sister spent 24 hours a day for nine months at a U.S. boarding school for Navajo children when they were young. As a



"4 Centers" by Jaymus Perry

result of being separated from his parents, he drew stick figures and cut out paper figures of his family. He also gathered wood chips to build stick homes and developed stories for his sister of how they and their parents lived together in those stick houses. Perry says those activities birthed his artistic creativity.

Perry's connection to the peridot-and-chrome pyrope dates back to his childhood. During the summer and "between certain constellation times," he and his family scoured parts of the Navajo reservation for the gems. His piece, "4 Centers," a sterling silver necklace with four peridots, "represents the four seasons of our environment," he says. "The world and the seasons are all connected, related and tied in together."



"In Person" by Jaymus Perry

Picture That

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For more information on our cultural fine art services, visit www.picturethatart.com.



"ArtBonnet 2" by Jaymus Perry

"In Person" is a 3D representation of Perry's face within what he calls an "ArtBonnet," a modern symbol of the American Indian war bonnet.

"ArtBonnet 2" is gold leaf on aluminum, also representing a modern-day version of the war bonnet.

"The green peridot stone captures bad thoughts," says Perry "and the red ones, called chrome pyrope, are used in protection and healing ceremonies." For Perry, it is important to share some of those Navajo cultural beliefs through his artwork.

David Kanietakeron Fadden

David Kanietakeron Fadden was born in Lake Placid, New York, and raised in a hamlet called Onchiota in the Adirondack Mountains. It was there that his grandfather established the Six Nations Indian Museum. Fadden says his



"Smoke Dance" by David Fadden

grandfather was a respected historian and traditional storyteller, and he taught Fadden a tremendous amount about his culture. "Naturally, my heritage became the focus of my art from hearing those stories growing up," says Fadden.

Fadden says Native imagery tends to portray Native people as stoic, often lacking emotion. He says his portraits provide a more accurate picture. "We smile and laugh, too," he says, jokingly.



"He Peers Through the Trees" by David Fadden

His "Smoke Dance" is a portrayal of a fast-paced Haudenosaunee social dance. Warm colors represent the heat from the movement and energy one feels during the song associated with the dance.

Fadden's "He Peers Through the Trees" is a tribute to his grandfather, whose Mohawk name, Tehanetorens, in English means the same as the titled piece. Fadden says his grandfather's English name was apropos because he was an excellent hiker and tracker. Fadden used a pallet knife for most of this painting to capture a textured and layered feel similar to one peering through foliage in the woods.

"Scream of the Silenced" serves as Fadden's frustration over the missing aboriginal women from numerous Native communities over the years. "I chose a mosaic style with each 'tile' having a design and image primarily from the Haudenosaunee culture. I wanted to create an image where the viewer can 'hear' the fear, anger and horror in the woman's voice," he explains.



"Scream of the Silenced" by David Fadden

Fadden realizes the part his art plays in enlightening the world about important Native American issues. It is his hope that his art brings awareness – and effective change – to these issues.

Marla Allison

Marla Allison was born and raised on a reservation surrounded by high desert and red mesas in Laguna Pueblo, New Mexico. She recalls being quiet and shy as a youngster, but she found her voice through sketching and painting. She attended the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she earned her associate's degree in three-dimensional art. After a series of miscellaneous jobs, she was finally able to become a full-time artist.

Allison attended the School for Advanced Research in Santa Fe, where she learned about the designs of Laguna and Hopi Pueblo pottery. The images of women in her cover piece, "Shawls and Pottery (Going to See Charles)" are from the 1900s Laguna Pueblo potters in their traditional dress. The piece debuted at a gallery owned by Charles King. Allison added his name to this piece to say thanks for supporting potters/artisans of the Southwest.



"Blue Mesas and Clouds" by Marla Allison



"Three Deer in Green" by Marla Allison

Because Allison is on her Laguna Pueblo side, she incorporates primarily water symbols in her paintings. Her piece, "Blue Mesas and Clouds," uses a monochromatic palette of blue with pottery designs of water symbols. The palette and objects, she notes, evoke the dryness of the desert and the hope that painting water symbols will make water plentiful.

"Three Deer in Green" has pottery designs in the foreground and background. This work represents Allison's adoration of the peace that deer in the Laguna Pueblo hills give to her.

"Ferris Wheel in Laguna" is taken from a photograph that portrays fiesta celebrations of food, dance, culture and the enjoyment of the Ferris wheel in the Laguna Pueblo that takes place every year.

Allison intends to connect her contemporary art with the art of her cultural past. "I am connecting the pottery designs onto my canvases with the hope that it will enlighten my audiences when shown in galleries, museums and/or magazines," she says.



"Ferris Wheel in Laguna" by Marla Allison

Artisanal chocolatier honors its heritage



Photo by Jill McDonald

Bedré means “better” in Norwegian, but Bedré Fine Chocolate does not come from Norway. The company is owned and operated by the Chickasaw Nation. Though the name’s origin is not Native American, the meaning certainly fits the chocolate products that come out of the Oklahoma chocolate factory. (Chocolate, by the way, was initially a drink that can be traced back about 3,500 years to the indigenous people of the Americas.)

The chocolate factory is situated at the intersection of Interstate 35 and Oklahoma Highway 7 in Davis, Oklahoma, a gateway to commerce in the region. The factory is part of the Chickasaw Nation’s business interests in the area. A welcome center is also on the property. So, visitors can come learn more about chocolate, more about Bedré and more about the Chickasaw Nation all in one place.



Bedré’s home in Davis is a 35,000-square-foot space where it makes and packages its fine chocolates. Children and adults alike enter the chocolate factory tours with eyes aglow and broad smiles. While the machines are operated by real people rather than



Photo by Jeremy Charles

Willy Wonka’s Oompa Loompas, visitors get to watch the chocolate-production process from start to finish and understand why Bedré chocolate is so amazing.

When the Chickasaw Nation bought Bedré (www.bedrechocolates.com) in 2000, its goals included adding to the diversification of the nation’s business base.

Over the years, Bedré has grown steadily. Though it’s a regional company with a physical reach of a 300-mile radius, it distributes products nationally and internationally. Chocolate lovers in the U.S. can find the chocolate treats in 52 retail stores and two casinos in Oklahoma. The chocolate, of course, is sold on the Bedré website.

Not only does Bedré deliver some of the most delicious chocolate around, it also provides consumers with other items, such as the Bedré diet chocolate soda, chocolate coffee and espresso beans. And its chocolate-covered potato crisps remain a customer favorite.



Photo by Jill McDonald

Evolution of a culinary oracle



"I love what I do," says Chef Freddie Bitsoie. Photos courtesy of fjbits concepts

Utah. In his formative years, he was captivated by people – not food. Or so it seemed.

"I grew up and lived and experienced every town west of Albuquerque all the way to California. So I experienced different cultures. Cultures along Interstate 40 have such different people."

Bitsoie entered the University of New Mexico without knowing which career he would pursue. That changed when he enrolled in an anthropology class.

"I thought it was great," he recalls. "I caught on to the lectures. I understood the theories of anthropology. I really enjoyed every moment of it."

Bitsoie's instructor pointed out that all the papers he submitted "had to do with food," and encouraged him to pursue culinary arts. Later, "with a semester left of my college life," says Bitsoie, "I jumped ship and went to Scottsdale Culinary Institute."

Now the Utah native couldn't be happier.

"I'm a chef who's blessed to travel," Bitsoie says, and "I love what I do."



As executive chef at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., and a popular speaker, Chef Freddie Bitsoie is doing his part to raise the profile of Native cuisine.

Bitsoie, a member of the Navajo tribe, was born in Monticello,



FREDDIE BITSOIE'S SOUTHWESTERN CORN CHOWDER

- 2 bacon strips, diced
- 1 small onion, small diced
- 1 red bell pepper, small diced
- 1 hatch green chili, small diced
- 5 fresh ears of corn or 1/2 pound frozen corn, kernels removed
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 32 ounces chicken stock or vegetable stock
- 3 russet potatoes, small diced
- Fresh thyme
- Bay leaf
- 4 ounces heavy cream
- Pepper
- Salt

Place the bacon in a pot and render the fat. Sweat the onion, red pepper and green chili in the bacon for 30 minutes slowly; do not burn.

Add the corn and garlic to the pot and sweat for about 10 minutes.

Add the stock and bring to a boil. Add the potatoes; they should cook in 10 to 15 minutes. Stir in the thyme and bay leaf.

Remove the thyme and bay leaf, then take 1/3 of the stock and place it in a blender (try to get as much potato but not all). Puree until smooth and the starch of the potatoes thicken the puree. Combine this back into the soup.

Add cream only to smooth out the color of the soup. Season, to taste, with salt and pepper.

America's first extreme sport? Some say it's Indian relay racing

Passed down from generation to generation, Indian relay racing has deep roots in the cultures of the Great Plains. The tradition dates back at least to the 1900s, maybe earlier. Some of today's racers are among the fourth generation of riders in their families.

Indian relay racing encapsulates the horse culture of many Native American tribes. Up to five teams, each comprising a rider, a "mugger," two "holders" and three horses, compete to finish first over a series of three-lap heats. At the end of each lap, the rider — who's riding bareback — dismounts his spent horse, which the mugger wrangles off the track. The rider mounts a fresh horse, held ready for him by the holders, to start the next lap. In the sport of Indian relay, the rider is both the commander and the baton.

The Fort Hall Reservation in Idaho is home to the Shoshones and Bannocks tribes. Their Fort Hall Indian



Riders compete during the Indian Relay Races at the Fort Hall Reservation in Idaho.

Relay Association is one of several that sponsors the competitive, and storied, events. In 2019, the Fort Hall Indian Relay Association's season started in May. Competitions took place at venues throughout Idaho. The Horse Nations Indian Relay Council's 2019 "Tour of Champions Indian Relay Races," which also began in May, featured competitions in Montana, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah and Washington.

Poems by Joy Harjo

Praise the Rain

Praise the rain; the seagull dive
The curl of plant, the raven talk –
Praise the hurt, the house slack
The stand of trees, the dignity –
Praise the dark, the moon cradle
The sky fall, the bear sleep –
Praise the mist, the warrior name
The earth eclipse, the fired leap –
Praise the backwards, upward sky
The baby cry, the spirit food –
Praise canoe, the fish rush
The hole for frog, the upside-down –
Praise the day, the cloud cup
The mind flat, forget it all –

Praise crazy. Praise sad.
Praise the path on which we're led.
Praise the roads on earth and water.
Praise the eater and the eaten.
Praise beginnings; praise the end.
Praise the song and praise the singer.

Praise the rain; it brings more rain.
Praise the rain; it brings more rain.
From "Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings"

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Eagle Poem

To pray you open your whole self
To sky, to earth, to sun, to moon
To one whole voice that is you.
And know there is more
That you can't see, can't hear;
Can't know except in moments
Steadily growing, and in languages
That aren't always sound but other
Circles of motion.
Like eagle that Sunday morning
Over Salt River. Circled in blue sky
In wind, swept our hearts clean
With sacred wings.
We see you, see ourselves and know
That we must take the utmost care
And kindness in all things.
Breathe in, knowing we are made of
All this, and breathe, knowing
We are truly blessed because we
Were born, and die soon within a
True circle of motion,
Like eagle rounding out the morning
Inside us.
We pray that it will be done
In beauty.
In beauty.
From "In Mad Love and War"