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In winter contests, ice wins

Who could ever forget his first time below zero?

I was visiting a friend who was going to school at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, and it got so cold one night that one of my tennis shoes broke in half.

The shoes had been left on a balcony in minus-five-degree conditions.

A thin coating of ice encased the tennis shoes, and, in trying to knock them clean against some railing, the toe of the shoe flew off.

Another time, I met a cowboy who house-sat a dude ranch over the Wyoming winter.

The dude ranch was at the far end of the Gros Ventre River, Big Nose, to the tourists.

It was like "The Shining" without the company, imagined or otherwise.

His job was to keep the ranch out from under an avalanche.

One of his cowboy boots started to freeze onto his foot.

Set adrift: Who could ever forget his or her first blizzard?

Mine occurred in Nebraska when my uncle went to try to find the garage, and then after 10 minutes, I was sent to try to find my uncle.

A blizzard happens when snow blows and reduces visibility.

Blowing snow tends to stack upon itself, causing gigantic drifts.

My uncle found the garage, as it was downwind, but he couldn't see through the gale flakes to locate the gate leading back to the house.

I found him stuck on a wire fence.

The force of the storm was such that you couldn't have left a trail of loaves of bread to follow back to the house.

I actually tied a rope to the back door for help.

Survival tactics: Who could ever forget the ice storm of the century?

The ice storm that attacked here three winters ago knocked out all power in the area except, somehow, to my ex-wife's block, four streets over.

Rescue vehicles were headquartered nearby and sped around us in all directions.

"Hey, come back!" we kept calling out.

Trees fell like movie props.

Conditions at my igloo became so awful that my two dogs and I spent a weekend at my ex-wife's bright and heated home, her dog and numerous cats pressed up against one side of the glass wall, my animals trying to get at them from the other side.

Hold the ice, please.

Ex-cop's assault case tossed

▪ The misdemeanor case was dismissed because a key witness failed to appear in court to testify.

BY OMER GILLHAM
World Staff Writer

A judge dismissed a misdemeanor assault and battery charge against a former police officer Monday because a key witness in his case failed to appear in court, records show.

Eric J. Hill, 32, was charged Sept. 14 in Tulsa County District Court with one misdemeanor count of domestic assault and battery, records show.

Hill also is expected to be a federal witness in a police corruption

probe.

The assault charge was filed by the Rogers County District Attorney's Office after the Tulsa County District Attorney's Office recused itself from the case.

The victim, Lindsay Johnson, is a former victims advocate for the Tulsa County District Attorney's Office's Victim-Witness Center.

Tulsa County Special District Judge Dawn Moody dismissed Hill's case Friday, citing the failure of a witness to appear, records show.

Hill's attorney, Patrick Adams,



EX-OFFICER
Eric J. Hill: The 32-year-old was charged with one misdemeanor count of domestic assault and battery Sept. 14.

said Johnson was not interested in being a witness.

"From my understanding, the witness wanted no part of the prosecution of Eric Hill," Adams said. "Mr. Hill has maintained his innocence from the start, and he was ready for trial. He is working and moving on with his life."

tulsaworld.com

Read stories related to the police corruption investigation and view documents.

tulsaworld.com/grandjury

The charge against Hill states that on July 18, he allegedly struck Johnson, whom he had been dating, pulled her into a car by her hair, slammed her head into the dashboard several times and shoved her to the ground.

If convicted, Hill could have faced a year in jail and a \$5,000 fine.

SEE **TOSSED** A12

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA: HELPING HANDS NEED HELP



Sherford Gibbs discusses her budget during a home visit by Matt McGilvray, coordinator of payee services for the Volunteers of America.

JAMES GIBBARD/Tulsa World

Keeping cash flowing

'Our priorities are the necessities of life — housing, food, medicine. We make sure that our clients can afford what they need, and we tell the creditors they will have to wait.'

MATT MCGILVRAY
Payee Services coordinator

Agency helps mentally disabled manage money

BY MICHAEL OVERALL
World Staff Writer

She was working two jobs, bill collectors were harassing her every day, her paychecks were being garnished, and her bank account was frozen.

"I'm going to be put out if I can't come up with the rent," Sherford Gibbs confided in her doctor. "I don't know what to do."

Luckily, the doctor had a sug-

For more
For more information about VoA Payee Services, call (918) 307-1500.

gestion.

Back in 1997, Volunteers of America put together a task force to study the idea of a "payee" program that could take over personal finances for people with various types of mental disabilities.

"Nobody else was really doing it at the time," said Dave Goldman, now the director of Payee Services.

"It was a huge gap in social services for Tulsa."

Into that gap fell people such as Gibbs, who can function well enough to earn money but not well enough to manage it.

Without a trustworthy friend or family member to help them, they slip into debt.

SEE **MONEY** A12

Chief to veto council's action

▪ It voted to remove three members of the Creek judiciary.

BY LENZY KREHBIEL-BURTON
World Correspondent

OKMULGEE — The attempted overhaul of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation's judicial branch will be vetoed, the tribe's chief said

Monday.

Principal Chief A.D. Ellis said he would not sign tribal resolutions passed Saturday by the tribe's National Council that would remove tribal District Court Judge Patrick Moore, Attorney General Marcy Moore and Rod Wiemer, a special prosecutor, from their positions.

Under the tribe's constitution, Ellis has 10 business days to veto the resolutions

or they will be enacted.

Based on the vote counts at Saturday's council meeting, Ellis said he did not expect the National Council to override his vetoes. An override needs support from at least two-thirds of the council, or 18 members. None of the measures passed Saturday received more than 17 votes.

The council passed similar

SEE **CREEK** A12



FIGHTS BACK
Creek Nation Principal Chief A.D. Ellis: "I don't know what's going to come next."

Panel is chosen to search for city auditor successor

BY BRIAN BARBER
World Staff Writer

Mayor Dewey Bartlett named a five-member search committee Monday to help him select a new city auditor.

The members are: Robyn Ewing, Williams Cos.' chief administrative officer; Phil Frohlich of Prescott Group Capital Management; Por-

ter Schultz, chairman of the city's Audit Committee; NORDAM CEO Ken Lackey; and City Council Vice Chairman Jim Mautino.

Former City Auditor Preston Dorerflinger resigned Jan. 25 to join Gov. Mary Fallin's Cabinet as her secretary of finance and the director of the Office of State Finance.

SEE **SEARCH** A12

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Osages seek trust status for casinos

■ The action comes after court rulings that the three sites are not part of a federal reservation.

BY LENZY KREHBIEL-BURTON
World Correspondent

The Osage Nation announced Monday that it had submitted applications to put three casino sites into trust. The applications for the land holding Osage Million Dollar Elm Casinos in Tulsa, Skiatook and Ponca City became necessary when the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver ruled in

March that Osage County is not a federally recognized reservation. The court ruled that the Osage Allotment Act divided the area into 2,229 individual allotments more than a century ago. Unless tribal casinos are on a federally recognized reservation, they must be on land that is placed in trust in order to legally operate in states that outlaw gambling. The applications to put land in trust are submitted to the U.S. Department of the Interior. The court ruling came in a lawsuit filed by the tribe in 2001 against the Oklahoma Tax Commission. The tribe claimed that federal law pro-

hibited the taxation of income of tribal members who live and work in what the law defines as "Indian Country." The tribe appealed the circuit court's ruling but was rebuffed in May. The tribe is waiting to hear whether the U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments concerning its reservation status. Principal Chief John Red Eagle said in a news release, "We continue to receive very good news from the Department of Interior about the progress of our land-into-trust applications. "The department's approval process, in this instance, may be a matter of weeks rather than months, barring

any unforeseen problems. That is unprecedented. The Osage Nation is extremely grateful to Secretary (Ken) Salazar and his staff at all levels for this speedy process." The three casinos have been operating since 2005 under a National Indian Gaming Commission determination that the tribe's reservation still existed. The tribe owns the land and buildings at all three sites. Applications for the Tulsa and Ponca City casinos will be reviewed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Muskogee office before they are sent to Washington. The Skiatook application is already under review in Washington.

MONEY:

Four full-time staff members and one part-time employee handle 385 clients.

FROM A9

"Or, even worse, they become an easy target for fraud or manipulation," Goldman said. "They need somebody they can trust." VoA Payee Services began in the late '90s with one full-time staff member and a few dozen clients. Since then, the client list has doubled many times, but the staff size hasn't kept up. Four full-time staff members and one part-timer are struggling to keep up with 385 clients, spread across the Tulsa metropolitan area. That's an average of 85 clients per staff member, and the program simply can't handle any more, officials said. New clients must sit on a waiting list for months, even as they continue to slide deeper into debt. "People aren't referred to us until they really need us," said Payee Services coordinator Matt McGilvray, who meets with Gibbs regularly to review her budget. "Our priorities are the necessities of life — housing,

food, medicine. We make sure that our clients can afford what they need, and we tell the creditors they will have to wait." To help Gibbs, McGilvray negotiated with creditors to reduce her payments, found charities to help cover overdue utility bills and signed Gibbs, 62, up for Social Security. She gets to keep part of her income for groceries and incidentals, and McGilvray takes care of the rest. "He was a godsend," Gibbs said. "Here I was, working two jobs, and I couldn't even buy food. I'd be homeless right now if it wasn't for him." To keep itself trustworthy, the program must submit to frequent audits by the Social Security Administration, as well as internal audits, McGilvray said. "We have to account for every dollar," he said, "and that means a lot of paperwork." And paperwork, of course, takes a lot of time. With the staff already stretched to capacity, the client list can't grow until the program's budget does, McGilvray said. Funding now comes from the Zarrow Foundation and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. **Michael Overall 581-8383** michael.overall@tulsaworld.com

CREEK:

The father of a tribal member being prosecuted pushed two of the measures.

FROM A9

legislation at its meeting as a National Council resolution, but the constitution says that is only an expression of the opinion of one branch of government. As such, it carries

no legal weight. Two of the resolutions were sponsored or co-sponsored by National Council member Bill Fife of Dustin. Fife's son, Jeff Fife, is one of 11 tribal members being prosecuted by Wiemer on charges of stealing and embezzling tribal funds and trying to hide that activity, records show. Bill Fife said: "My son's actions have nothing to do with my resolutions. He broke the law and would be prosecuted by any independent prosecutor." Ellis also said he would veto

a resolution naming Susan Arkeketa as the tribe's new attorney general. The Sand Springs lawyer is a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Bar Association. "I didn't nominate her. The National Council did, and according to our constitution, they can't do that," he said. "I'll be renominating Marcy Moore, although I know she probably won't get confirmed." Ellis' office filed a lawsuit Friday alleging contempt of court by all 26 National Council members. The first

hearing on the suit is scheduled later this month. The lawsuit charges that the members disregarded the orders of the tribe's supreme court and district court by attempting to override its constitutional authority and overhaul the judicial branch. Ellis' office filed a similar lawsuit last year when the council tried to abolish the district court. "I don't know what's going to come next," Ellis said. "I'm just trying to keep the three branches of government separate."

TOSSED:

Hill is expected to be a federal witness in a Tulsa police corruption investigation.

FROM A9

The Tulsa Police Department fired Hill on Aug. 18 after an internal investigation revealed that he admitted during a federal investigation to engaging in criminal activity while on duty, records show. Hill was placed on paid

leave June 22 after his name surfaced in a federal grand jury investigation into police corruption. Hill, who joined the Police Department in July 2005, has not been charged in the federal investigation. With prosecutorial immunity, Hill is expected to be a federal witness in a police corruption investigation in which six former and current police officers have been charged and as a result of which 31 people have been freed from prison, had felony cases dismissed or charges reduced or granted a new trial. **Omer Gillham 581-8301** omer.gillham@tulsaworld.com

SEARCH:

The mayor says party affiliation will not be the determining factor.

FROM A9

The mayor gets to appoint a successor for Doerflinger — subject to City Council approval — because the auditor's two-year term has less than a year left. The post, which pays \$73,500 a year, will be back up for election this fall. Bartlett said at a news conference that he and the search committee would work quickly, with hope of naming a replacement before

the end of February. The committee will solicit resumes through several sources, including the local chapters of auditing and accounting organizations and the Tulsa Metro Chamber's retired executives group, he said. "This is an extremely important job," Bartlett said. "All companies have CPAs or auditors to make sure the books are taken care of properly, but the city auditor also has the functions of making sure ethical standards are being met and that we are operating efficiently." The appointee must either be a certified public accountant or a certified internal auditor, qualifications that went into effect after the last election.

Although Bartlett's chief of staff, Terry Simonson, had said a Republican likely would be selected because Doerflinger and the mayor are both in the GOP, Bartlett said Monday that would not necessarily be so. "What's important is that we find the most qualified person," he said, adding that it also doesn't have to be someone who wants to run for the office later this year. In the meantime, Chief Internal Auditor Ron Maxwell is overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Auditor's Office. Doerflinger also was leading the city's Management Review Office, which is vetting the 1,100 recommendations contained in the KPMG efficiency study.

Bartlett said Monday that a member of his management team, Chris Benge, was taking the lead in the review. It's possible that the next auditor, once he or she gets up to speed on the KPMG report, may take charge of the review office down the road, he said. "We'll see how that evolves," he said. Ewing, Frohlich and Lackey also have been on the city's KPMG steering committee. Bartlett said he wanted their input on the search committee because the efficiency review is a major focus of the city and the auditor's post. **Brian Barber 581-8322** brian.barber@tulsaworld.com

Fallin taps Cline to lead health, human services

■ He will be the governor's liaison to health and human services agencies.

BY BARBARA HOBEROCK
World Capitol Bureau



EAGER

Terry Cline: "The governor has told me how important it is to her to improve the effectiveness of health and human services in Oklahoma," Cline said. "I am honored she has chosen me to be part of the team, and I'm ready to get to work."

OKLAHOMA CITY — Gov. Mary Fallin on Monday named Terry Cline as her Cabinet secretary of Health and Human Services. Cline will stay on as commissioner of the Oklahoma State Department of Health. He will serve as the governor's liaison to health and human services agencies in Oklahoma, succeeding Howard Hendrick, who is the secretary of Human Services, and Terri White, who is the secretary of Health. Hendrick still will lead the Department of Human Services and White the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. In 2004, he was appoint-

ed Oklahoma's secretary of health by former Gov. Brad Henry. He also is the former director of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Cline previously was an administrator of the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, an agency that works to improve accountability, capacity and effectiveness in the nation's substance abuse and mental health delivery systems. **Barbara Hoberock (405) 528-2465** barbara.hoberock@tulsaworld.com

Senate confirmation is required. "The governor has told me how important it is to her to improve the effectiveness of health and human services in Oklahoma," Cline said. "I am honored she has chosen me to be part of the team, and I'm ready to get to work." Cline was appointed commissioner of health in 2009. He previously was a health attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad in the administrations of both former President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama.

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