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## Sharing Culture at Home and Abroad

Native American Studies professor Dr. Donald Pepion offers a unique opportunity for the NMSU community to gain a deeper understanding of indigenous cultures. A Blackfeet tribal elder, Dr. Pepion joined the NMSU faculty in 2000 after working extensively in his own community to develop programs that promote socio-economic improvement and education.

His work at NMSU focuses heavily on sharing his cultural knowledge: Being here “is about helping people to learn about other cultures,” he said, and the past several years have certainly provided him with the opportunity to promote cross-cultural learning.

In 2011 and 2012, Dr. Pepion was integral in coordinating a three-year federal grant project in which NMSU partnered with other universities in the U.S., Canada and Mexico to promote learning about indigenous cultures through field schools and a study abroad program. Through the program, he traveled to the northwest coast of Canada and Washington state with several students in the Summer 2011 and Spring 2012 (*for more on this program, see page 2*). Students visited a number of First Nation communities, including the Kwakiutl Nation in Alert Bay, and tribal museums. Students also had the opportunity to witness contemporary political issues and processes affecting urban populations.

In September 2010, Dr. Pepion, along with four other Native Americans, participated in the opening ceremonies of the World Equestrian Games in Lexington, Kentucky. Then in April 2011, Dr. Pepion was invited to England to participate in the Royal Horse Show of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Pageant. He was one of 20 Native Americans representing American indigenous cultures at the event and he played a key role in ensuring the performance was culturally appropriate. The event brought together representatives of about 900 indigenous cultures from around the world. He said his favorite part of the event was meeting with the other performers to share traditional songs, dances, and other cultural elements. For example, he said the Maasai from Kenya discussed beadwork with some of the Native Americans and he talked about British colonization with indigenous people from Cook Island.

Dr. Pepion was also awarded the honorable mention for Best Electronic Poster at the 38th Interdisciplinary Symposium sponsored by the Center for Great Plains Studies at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. His poster titled “Ethnography of One Family on a 1938 Montana Indian Reservation Farm Project” explored federal farm projects established at that time as a way to begin water reclamation projects and agricultural land use to Native American groups.

Reflecting on the opportunities he has had to share his own experiences and culture with people from around the world, Dr. Pepion said, “I’m grateful that I learned the traditional ways. For some of us, it’s a journey to get back our language and culture. Most of my research is getting the history of our people back from our point of view ... [t]o help our people learn about our own tribe’s experiences.”



*Dr. Pepion rides in the Royal Horse Show of the Queen of England's Diamond Jubilee Pageant. The show provided an opportunity for indigenous people to express “their sovereignty in the form of cultural performances,” Dr. Pepion said.*

## Undergrad Spotlight



Senior anthropology major Ashley Remy spent the summer of 2012 researching dental wear patterns of human remains at a bioarchaeological field school in northern Peru. Ashley, whose minor is human biology, attended the field school with the Honors College Scholarship for International Research.

She is currently analyzing molds she made at the site of 60 human mandibles and maxillas dating to the 12th to 15th centuries, some of which exhibit evidence of cranial modification. "My main purpose of research was to make a comparison ... of these modified and non-modified, or normal, individuals to see the differences in diet," she said, adding that she believes cranial modification may reflect hierarchical organization of the society, which could be indicated by consumption patterns. She will use the research for her senior honor's thesis.

"It was really fascinating," she said of the field school. "There were a lot of above ground tomb structures that we were working with, as well as underground tombs. Because it was pre- and post-Spanish conquest you really see a difference in mortuary rituals."

After graduating in May 2013, Ashley plans on pursuing a Ph.D. that will allow her to specialize in dentition patterns. "You can tell so much with teeth. Everyone has a certain story they can tell with their bones or dentition, [but teeth are not] investigated as thoroughly, I think," she said.



Drawing on her experience working at the Kent Hall University Museum, senior anthropology major Stephanie Riley spent her summer interning at the Acoma Pueblo's Haak'u Museum.

Stephanie, who is a member of the pueblo, worked on a variety of projects during her internship, including installation of the TT Hagalman Southwest Collection of historic memorabilia and photography and processing gifts to the museum. She also worked on updating the collection inventory after a fire destroyed the original museum in the early 2000s. "The collection is meant for local people to bring in their stuff so that it's preserved, so there were a lot of old [household items], a lot of really old Bibles -- huge Bibles -- and a lot of old farming equipment," she said. The museum also houses an extensive textile and pottery collection.

Stephanie hopes her internship will allow her to continue working at the museum after graduating in December 2012. "Our collection is down in a basement and it's really quiet down there. ... I feel like I kind of make a connection with [the] old things -- you're sitting down there it's just like, 'Wow, this is from 1900 and we're in the same place that it was actually used,'" she said.

At NMSU, Stephanie also works as the University Museum's public programs coordinator and organizes outreach events geared toward children. She also assisted graduate student Christina Mandell last spring in developing an exhibit of Acoma and Laguna pueblo pottery.



Ben Shendo, a senior Anthropology major with a Native Studies minor, and Kandis Quam, a senior Anthropology major with minors in biochemistry and Native Studies, were among the students who traveled to the Northwest Coast of Canada and the U.S. last June as part of a field school to encourage learning about indigenous cultures in the Americas.

Ben (*fourth from the left in the above photo*), from the Jemez Pueblo, also spent the Fall 2011 semester abroad at Vancouver Island University as part of the program. During his study there, Ben was struck by the extent to which ancestral histories, prayers, songs, and stories were integrated into the curriculum. "That was the coolest part," he said. "Some

days you're really relating to that song or story."

During the summer field school, students visited a number of First Nation groups, cultural museums, and urban events. For example, the students sat in on a provincial court case that involved the kidnapping and murder of First Nations women. They also visited a construction site where people were protesting a new building on a native burial site -- a portion of the trip that was particularly moving for Kandis (*second from left*), a member of the Zuni Pueblo, who was inspired by the agency and empowerment exhibited by some of the women there. The students also were interviewed about their experiences on a local radio program.

The field school provided students with an opportunity to reflect upon the similarities and differences in how native groups of both countries maintain their heritage in the face of many challenges. The trip "was a lot of firsts," Kandis said. "It was a totally different experience from what I was used to. ... I'm used to reds and browns, not greens and blues," she said of the landscape. "And the people, they're different, but the same in some respects. ... It was really comforting [to see that]."

After graduating in December 2012, Ben hopes to spend a year biking to Brazil with his capoeira instructor then returning to complete his master's degree focusing on programs for indigenous youth. Kandis plans to attend graduate school and also work with tribal groups. She said that seeing the passion exhibited by the people she met on the trip "lit my fire again. ... There were lots of points I felt that. It renewed my passion [to help my people]. And with the protest, I want to start doing that with my people, too -- just advocating and awareness."



## Graduate Student Spotlight



Archaeology graduate student Briana Bianco traveled to Merida, Yucatan, over the summer to complete her thesis fieldwork on identifying archaeological apiaries.

Her research focused specifically on stingless bees (*Melipona beecheii*), which are native to the Americas and whose honey and wax were used as tribute payments in the Post-classic

and Colonial periods.

Briana is working with Dr. Gary Rayson in the Chemistry Department to analyze honey and wax samples obtained from modern apiaries near Merida to look for biomarkers that will then inform her soil analysis. She hopes her research will allow researchers to identify past evidence of archaeological apiaries through soil sampling and, eventually, provide information about how honey production and trade routes changed over time.

Her research in Merida also focused heavily on ethnographic interviews with modern-day stingless bee keepers. "There's different changes we have to look at, like the introduction of new species of bees. ... Obviously, it's very different than it was in the past, but I think we can use modern bee-keepers as a frame of reference," she said.

Briana plans to graduate in December 2013 after completing the GIS minor. During her time at NMSU, she has worked as a graduate assistant and attended several field schools to gain additional hands-on archaeological experience.



Valerie Amendola, an anthropology graduate student focusing on museum studies, opened her thesis exhibit this semester at the Kent Hall University Museum, titled: "Weaving Solidarity: Textile Traditions from Highland Chiapas."

Through the exhibit, Valerie aimed to demonstrate the "struggles and perseverance" of Mayan women who form

weaving cooperatives as a way to earn money and develop solidarity in the face violence and economic decline in Mexico. The exhibit showcased a number of embroidered huipils -- traditional blouses worn by women that consist of a square piece of cloth that is folded and stitched on the sides -- as well as a back-strap loom on which the garments are made. The exhibit also showed how brocading and embroidery traditions are passed down to new generations and how these traditions have changed to create a niche in the global marketplace.

In addition, the examples on display, mostly from the Tsobol Antzetik (Women United) weaving cooperative, told the story of identity reclamation among Tzotzil weavers, such as how women rediscovered the embroidered "woman" symbol and how women are responding to changing and often violent situations in Mexico.

Upon graduating in May 2013, Valerie hopes to continue working in museums. "Something that I really enjoy [about museum work] is that I'm constantly learning new information," she said, adding that it is also rewarding to provide "that information to the public -- it's not just in a scholarly essay or thesis, but it's for everybody to understand."



Cultural anthropology graduate student Candace Lewis travelled to Ishinomaki, Japan, from July to September 2012 to conduct her thesis research on disaster recovery in the area. In March 2011, a massive earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear plant disaster devastated the country.

Candace, a food studies minor, initially was interested in studying how people were reacting to radiation content in their food, but as she read more about recovery, her focus shifted to grassroots efforts aimed at rebuilding communities affected by the triple disaster.

In Japan, Candace worked and lived with an international group of volunteers for the nonprofit It's Not Just Mud. The organization worked to shovel mud and sea sludge from the floors of local houses (among many other projects) and collaborated with other organizations, including Habitat for Humanity and Playground of Hope. "There's a really great synergy of the volunteers there," she said, adding that It's Not Just Mud projects, specifically, "are sustainable for the population and don't take jobs away."

For example, volunteers work to help local oyster fishermen re-

start their businesses, but after two seasons, the group moves on with the expectation that the fisherman will hire local workers to keep the business going. "But they're having trouble with the displacement in finding people to fill those jobs. There's been a lot of displacement [of local people]," she said.

Her thesis will center on the concept of a Recovery Citizenship and how people affected by disasters can exercise agency against existing power structures to create change. "What I'm looking for is the community created by the volunteers and the residents," she said. For example, she noted, "When you have people from outside of your culture come in to help you with a situation, or work with you in a situation," the outsiders don't necessarily have to "act within the confines of that culture ... to get things accomplished."

With travel assistance from Aggies Go Global, Candace is returning to Japan from December to January 2013 to conduct follow-up research. She is planning to present her thesis, as well as a poster focusing on post-traumatic stress disorder in children, at the Society for Applied Anthropology annual meeting in March 2013.

After graduating in May 2013, Candace -- who has 22 years of combined active and reserved service with the U.S. Coast Guard -- hopes to have an opportunity to travel, conduct ethnographic research, and pursue her love of photography.

## Anthro Dept. Hosts Visiting Professor Dan McDonald



*Visiting Professor Dan McDonald of Vancouver Island University in British Columbia spent the Fall 2012 semester at NMSU. Professor McDonald's research and work centers on ethno-tourism and First Nation studies.*

The NMSU Anthropology Department welcomed visiting professor Dan McDonald of Vancouver Island University, British Columbia, during the Fall 2012 semester. Professor McDonald -- a leader in the Métis Nation in B.C. -- teaches First Nation Studies and Recreation and Tourism Management at VIU and holds a deep interest in ethno-tourism.

His visit to NMSU is the result of a strong working relationship with Dr. Donald Pepion that was developed through a North American mobility grant project several years ago. "What we were really interested in was finding ways that indigenous students could have

experiences in other countries and that we could share expertise and develop relationships amongst indigenous faculty in our institutions," Professor McDonald said.

Although the grant ran out last year, Professor McDonald decided to use his sabbatical to visit NMSU this fall and do some research and writing. Some of his previous research has examined the intersection of indigenous cultures and the parks and wilderness systems of both Canada and the United States.

"A lot of park lines, of course, were created out of our traditional territories. Oftentimes they involve the removal of our peoples to create this sort of uninhabited space. And oftentimes our peoples live on the periphery of parks so they're impacted by the whole park experience," he said. More recently, the Canadian government has been working with various First Nation groups to re-inhabit and re-integrate parks into traditional ways of life, he said, but challenges remain.

His ethno-tourism work is laden with complicated ethical concerns: "It's a pretty interesting area. In some ways the central task for communities becomes how do you package your culture and your past? Tourism is still a consumptive industry so you have to create something to consume -- they're experiences. ... And you have to decide which ones you're going to package," he said. For example, a community must decide whether it will share sacred rituals and spaces with tourists, or whether to offer a modified cultural experience that still preserves certain sacred elements within the community.

But, he notes that ethno-tourism can serve as a vehicle for cultural revitalization. For example, he says, "if you had a whole series of generational loss so that the youth in your community were no longer fully engaged culturally. ... Tourism coming into the communities has created a space where those youth suddenly see a potential to make a living and to stay in their community. ... They see a value in relearning and re-immersing and re-involving themselves in their culture."

While at NMSU, Professor McDonald became an active participant in the three Native American Studies courses offered during the fall. He also travelled throughout the state exploring historical and contemporary tourism in Southwest Native American communities. "There's been some very long engagement with tourism here in the Southwest ... and I'm interested in that and how that has played itself out in the communities," he said.

## Department of Anthropology

### Archaeology

Rani Alexander  
Beth O'Leary  
William Walker  
Fumi Arakawa

### Biological Anthropology

Brenda Benefit  
Monte McCrossin

### Cultural Anthropology

Miriam Chaiken, Dept. Head  
W. Thomas Conelly  
Don Pepion  
Scott Rushforth  
M. Lois Stanford  
Mary Alice Scott

### Emeritus

Christine Eber  
Edward Staski  
Wenda Trevathan

### Affiliated

Weldon Lamb  
Jennifer Robles  
Judy Berryman  
Debra LeBeau  
Larry Loendorf

### Staff

Barbara Burrell



## Where Are They Now?



Susie Jansen completed her master's in Anthropology at NMSU in 2006 with a thesis focusing on the relocation and reanalysis of the Pena Blanca Rock Shelters south of Las Cruces -- an experience that laid the groundwork for her future in cave archaeology.

After graduation, Susie and her husband Craig Williams, a 2005 NMSU M.A. graduate, moved to St. Louis, Mo.

"As we became active in the local archaeological community, we noticed that in a state that contains over 6,000 caves, little to nothing was being done to highlight and protect the cave and shelter sites that house undoubtedly the most fragile archaeological deposits and features. So we set about to do something," she said.

In 2008, Susie and Craig founded the non-profit Cave Archaeology Research & Investigation Network (CAIRN) to help document and protect archaeological sites in caves and rock shelters.

CAIRN research typically involves mapping and surveying caves or shelters for archaeological evidence. The organization has a core group of experts who can lead rappelling trips, record underwater sites, document rock art, and perform cave survey mapping.

Susie also works as an environmental scientist for an engineering firm in St. Louis, participating in both cultural and environmental projects in the Midwest.

However, she and Craig hope to expand "CAIRN into a self-sustaining entity.

"That prospect interests us immensely and gives us peace of mind knowing we will be helping document and protect the most at-risk sites and hopefully help curb the sad (but all too common) practice of looting," she said.

Michael Johnson earned his bachelor's (1983) and master's (1989) degrees at NMSU with a focus on cultural resource management and applied anthropology. For his master's thesis, Michael used "historical and ethnographic information on various southern Apache groups and their hunting and gathering practices as data in optimal foraging models," he said. After completing his degrees, he worked for a couple years as the small projects director for what was then NMSU's Cultural Resources Management Division. From there, he accepted a job as an archaeologist with the National Forest Service, beginning a career working with federal agencies.

In the 1990s, Michael worked as the state archaeologist for the USDA's Soil Conservation Service in New Mexico and Utah. "That was also a time when tribal consultation was taking a larger and larger role in doing compliance work," he said. "It was an opportunity for me to not only do archaeology, but also explore the applied anthro side of the job."

After some agency restructuring, Michael began working with the newly created Natural Resources Conservation Service, where he was stationed as a faculty member at the University of Arizona's School of Renewable Natural Resources. During that time he also developed training programs for NRCS personnel to help them better "incorporate socio-cultural information into their work: ... how to work across differ-



Bryan Hildreth McCuller completed his master's degree in anthropology in 1989 with a thesis concerning cremation practices of the prehistoric Hohokam of southern Arizona. Following graduation, he became a part-time instructor in anthropology for the Department of Sociology/Anthropology at NMSU, teaching undergraduate classes in introductory-level courses.

He also held several positions in contract archaeology including staff archaeologist for Fort Bliss Environmental Management Office in El Paso, TX and Western Cultural Resources Management in Farmington, N.M., in the early 1990s.

In 1993, Bryan decided to take his expertise in anthropology to the New Mexico Public Schools by becoming an educator for gifted students and children with disabilities. He earned his master's degree in special education in 1987 and his Ph.D. in 2011. He was a recipient of the Fulbright Master Teachers Program in Okinawa, Japan, in 2003 and in Kyoto, Japan, in 2005. Dr. "Bryan" is currently completing his 20th year as a gifted and special educator for the Gadsden Independent School District in Anthony, N.M. He is also president of the New Mexico Association for the Gifted, a nonprofit affiliate of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), an organization that advocates for gifted students and parents of gifted children across the state.

He has continued his passion for archaeology by participating in fieldwork in southern New Mexico on weekends and during the summer field season. Bryan says that his training in anthropology has not only been "invaluable to working with culturally and linguistically diverse students in New Mexico but also has allowed me to view students with varying ability levels through a wider lens."

ent cultural lines, how to become more self-aware of your own cultural biases, better ways to consult with federally recognized tribes," he said. The position also afforded him an opportunity to conduct extensive fieldwork in Hawaii, American Samoa, Puerto Rico and with a number of Native American tribes.

The NRCS re-organized again in the early 2000s, and Michael was reassigned to the NRCS East National Technical Center in North Carolina. In 2007, Michael and his wife Sherri, also an NMSU alumnus, returned to the Southwest, where he joined the Bureau of Land Management as the Deputy Preservation Officer in Arizona. Currently, he is in the process of transferring positions once again and will soon be working with BLM in both Arizona and New Mexico, focusing more on socio-cultural issues.

"It's a really interesting time to be in the field of anthropology," he said, adding that CRM in the federal sector has changed dramatically since the 1980s. "There's a whole aspect of the field that has evolved. ... You're required to look at a broader scope of properties that may include things that were unthinkable 20 years ago. ... If you don't have the familiarity and the willingness to work with live people these days, it is increasingly difficult to get ahead in archaeology in the federal sector," he said.

## Spring Break Field Schools Offer Hands-on Experiences

Anthropology Department faculty members Dr. Fumi Arakawa and Dr. Brenda Benefit will lead two Spring Break field schools next semester that will provide students with an opportunity to further explore Southwest archaeology and primate behavior, respectively.

Dr. Arakawa, who has been conducting archaeological research in the Four Corners area for more than 15 years, will lead "Field Studies of Ancestral Pueblos: Archaeology and Pueblo Culture of the American Southwest." Through the course, students will travel to Chaco Canyon, a World Heritage site, as well as the Aztec Ruins, Mesa Verde National Park, and Hovenweep National Monument, among other sites. They will also learn about how contemporary Native Americans live through visits to several still-inhabited pueblo villages.

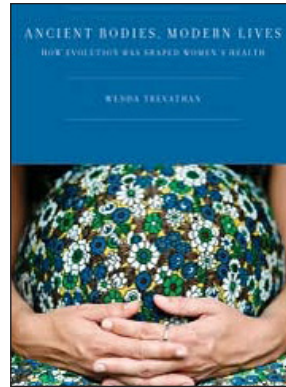
Dr. Arakawa said that he designed the field school to provide students with a "hands-on experience in the American Southwest. ... We're living in such a rich cultural resource area," he said, adding that he hopes the field school will particularly encourage undergraduate students to pursue archaeology degrees.

Dr. Benefit will lead students on a field school to Belize to study primate behavior and ecology. This is the third year she has led the biennial trip. For 10 days over the Spring Break, students will observe endangered black howler troops at a community sanctuary, as well as howlers and spider monkeys at La Milpa Field Station.

"Howler and spider monkeys have very different diets ... and because of that, they have very different activity patterns," she said. The

field school will give students the experience of "actually observ[ing] the primates in their natural habitats," while allowing them to compare different behaviors, Dr. Benefit said.

### Dr. Trevathan Book Voted Best in Bio Anthro by AAA



Emeritus Faculty member Wenda Trevathan's book *Ancient Bodies, Modern Lives* won the 2011 W. W. Howell Award from the Biological Anthropology division of the American Anthropological Association.

This award is given annually for the best book published in the field of biological anthropology.

*Ancient Bodies, Modern Lives* examines a number of women's health issues, focusing specifically on reproduction, and posits that health problems experienced by modern women could

result from the conflicts between evolutionary adaptations and the contemporary environment in which we now live.

In case your perusal of this newsletter has made you inclined to open your wallet and send some green good wishes our way, we want to let you know that there is now a way for you to make tax deductible donations to "Friends of Anthropology" at NMSU, through the Foundation for NMSU. We have our own account (number 102314 in case you need it) and if you donate through the secure web site the funds will come directly to us...not to the football team, not to paving parking lots, not for buying library books...directly to anthropology!

To make a donation select the following web site: <http://fndforms.nmsu.edu/giving.php> and then click on the option to "Find a giving area or fund." If you then type in "Anthropology" you can select the option it will offer for "Friends of Anthropology". Once you have chosen to be our friend you can follow the directions to make a donation. Whether you are inclined to give \$10.00 or \$1,000.00, please know we are very appreciative, and our long-term goal is to use these funds to support future student learning opportunities. We are truly grateful for your support.

### We Want to Hear From You!

What have you done since graduation? Do you have any news or an event you would like to contribute to the Department of Anthropology newsletter? Please fill in the information coupon and attach it to your news story. Send it to: New Mexico State University, Department of Anthropology, MSC 3BV, P.O. Box 30001, Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001 or email your news to [mchaiken@NMSU.edu](mailto:mchaiken@NMSU.edu).

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Degree and Year Graduated \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

My News \_\_\_\_\_