Join the Native American Student Association this summer!

Possible summer activities include -
* warrior games
* powwow road trips
* softball games

To find out more, contact NASA president Connie Goudreau at nasa@nmu.edu.

Anishinaabe News
c/o Native American Student Association
Box 73 University Center
Marquette, Michigan 49855

Spring 2009     Volume 5, Issue 4

By Connie Goudreau (NASA President) —

Native Americans refer to a powwow as a gathering to celebrate life. It is a time to visit old friends and family, feast on delicious food, sing traditional music and dance to honor their culture. It is not really a performance, but more a celebration and expression of heritage.

These gatherings are vital to keeping Indian heritage alive in the modern world. They also present a great opportunity for learning for natives and non-natives alike. Because powwows are great tools for learning, NMU’s Native American Student Association (NASA) spent countless hours coordinating the annual “Learning to Walk Together” traditional powwow. For the past 17 years, the NMU Native student group, currently NASA, has worked to develop the powwow into one of the largest campus events. Because of this organization’s commitment and effort, this powwow has become one of the premier mid-winter powwows in upper Michigan.

Putting on a pow wow is no easy feat, and it takes an extraordinary amount of time and work from NASA and the volunteer faculty from the Center for Native American Studies. We not only prepare the Vandament Arena for the dancing and vending area, but also work with the Culinary Arts Department at the Jacobetti Center in preparing and serving a huge feast. Additionally, we must organize a head staff including an arena director, head veteran, male and female dancers, an emcee (or two) and a fire keeper. Almost 100 volunteers are needed for setup, tear down, kitchen work and security. These volunteers are both students and community members.

To see the photo gallery of this year’s powwow — see page 10. Story continued on page 16.

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Anishinaabe Language Class
NAS 488 Class works with Marquette Title VII Students
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Famous Dave W. Anderson and more!

Indigenous Earth Issues Summit - A Call to Action

By Aimee Cree Dunn—Activists, scholars and community members from around Turtle Island gathered to learn, inspire and be inspired at the second annual Indigenous Earth Issues Summit organized by the Center for Native American Studies on Monday, April 6 at the University Center on the NMU Campus.

Hailing from Manitoba, Alaska and Montana as well as the Northwoods region, presenters offered their perspectives to over 100 people on a variety of issues including the renewable energy potential in Indian Country, possible metallic sulfide mining sites around Lake Superior, and solutions to our environmental problems that are found in Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Others showed films on such topics as Western-style development’s impacts on the Chittagong Hills region of India and on the Indigenous Ladakhi of the Himalayas as well as a film on the Sacred Run events honoring Mother Earth and calling for social and ecological justice around the world. Afternoon keynotes Susan LaFernier (Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Vice-President) and Chuck Brunleve (Keweenaw Bay Indian Community’s Mining Specialist) spoke on the proposed Yellow Dog metallic sulfide mine north of continued on pg. 14
By James Van Eck—NAS 295: Anishinaabe Language: Winter Survival, a brand new class (Special Topics), has proven to be a fun and adventurous course that involves all the enrolled students in an outdoor learning environment. NAS 295 was petitioned by curious and adventurous students of the Native American Language, Cultures and Communities 102 during the last fall semester. Every Saturday the class convenes at the Whitman building on campus at 10 a.m. and enjoys each other’s company for four hours.

“So what do you do then in class?” you may ask. Well for starters, ever since the semester began this class has enjoyed the splendors that Mother Earth can offer. So far the class has enjoyed hiking the hills and trails that Marquette County has to offer, but that’s not all. Most of the time the class gets to enjoy cooking their own meals, “in the bush” as they call it, which has proven to be a fun and adventurous course that involves all the enrolled students in an outdoor learning environment. NAS 295 was petitioned by curious and adventurous students of the Native American Language, Cultures and Communities 102 during the last fall semester. Every Saturday the class convenes at the Whitman building on campus at 10 a.m. and enjoys each other’s company for four hours.

Dave Anderson, founder of Famous Dave’s BBQ restaurant chain, exploded on to the Marquette scene in April. Famous Dave visited the NMU campus and spoke to approximately 30 students. Famous Dave will always remember where he came from. He spoke with affection of his parents (his father, Choctaw and his mother Ojibwe from Lac Courte Oreilles) and told funny stories of getting started in the business world. His energetic style was contagious and students asked several questions about his journey in the business world.

His host, the Economic Club of Marquette, held a dinner in which Famous Dave gave the large audience a rousing speech on goals, aspirations and dreams. NASA members Sam Hill attended the dinner and stated of Famous Dave, “One of the most energetic speakers I have seen in a while, Dave captured the audience with his outbursts of inspiration and jokes. Dave is truly an iconic figure in Indian country for people of all ages.”

Chad Nedeau said, “He was absolutely amazing. He was motivating. What I liked best was his perspective on profit. He was talking about how some within Native communities say that profits are not a part of Native culture.” Nedeau continued, “According to Famous Dave, he believes that profits help him find a way to help a large group of people. It adds to the value of their lives. That’s what I took away. A lot of people see profits as evil. His perspective was cool in that he wants to help out others and he can do so.”

CNAS adjunct instructor Violet Friisvall shared, “I really liked him. He wasn’t what I expected. You read someone’s bio and well, he wasn’t what I expected.” In reference to the sound of his voice and delivery. Violet continued, “My daughter said he sounded like he could’ve been from Zeba.” (It’s true too!).

Famous Dave helped to start other restaurants, too, like the Rainforest Café. Two of his award-winning books are now in the CNAS Resource Room. Check them out to seek out Famous Dave’s success tips or to cook up a tasty batch of his honey touched corn bread or BBQ ribs. Sounds good!

By Terry Sansom—I first met Kenn Pitawanakwet while signing up for winter classes. I’m an older student (mindemoya kinomaam) Kenn told me, “this fun class.” I was always interested in the native language. To me the Native American elders are a source of wisdom, medicine, poetry, and enlightenment. As a young child I used to make up my own language. I would tell people some made up word and push it off as a native word. I never thought it possible to understand the language and to speak it. It seems so surreal to me. I’m not that good at pronouncing some of the words, but I’m getting better. In early April, Kenn brought a friend of his, Brian Shawanda to class. Both men speak fluent Anishinaabe language. To hear both these men speak the almost forgotten language was beautiful and spellbinding. I closed my eyes and relaxed to their talks about whatever. It seemed like the words were flowing to a spiritual chant. It seemed to be out of some kind of phantasmagorical scene. I want to know what it was like living long ago. Way back, when the Native Americans were free to roam. I think this is one of the classes that I need to be in. I want to be able to speak the perfect language.

More photos from the NASEI dreamcatcher workshops.

By Kenn Pitawanakwet—Did you hear about the little girl who dreamt that all of her aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters were talking about the excitement arriving soon? Auntie Mary talked the loudest. She also had the biggest mouth which showed off her missing left front tooth. The other incisor was brown with too many white scabs of coffee, beans, and chewing tobacco. She splattered each spit into her smelly coffee cup. Sometimes she missed. Uncle Jerry was plucking his guitar with his one good arthritic hand. His other hand rested on the neck of “Honey” which he called his guitar perhaps in memory of his teenage girlfriend who left him for his cousin. No one talked much about Honey. At least not in front of Ol’ Jerry. I was careful not to annoy Jerry or Mary. Or anyone else. Timidly I tried to scream. “Kina. Kina waya. Did you all know that I am teaching a summer language Ojibwe course?” I stepped aside just in time to avoid stepping on Pussy’s tail. Which was the name of the cat. By now Pussy was slower, but not slow. Either way stepping on her tail would invite a cat screech I hate. “Yea. Ndakinoomage nangwa nibing.” Asipish (Where) I thought I heard someone say. “Wa-zhi-nishaabemwong” (How to speak Indian) I said to anyone. “Naahaw” (Okay) someone said. “Aahaw” (right on) another echoed. That was my signal to go ahead and do it. So if you want to see and hear about the insane escapades of my uncles and twisted sisters, then come and sign up for Summer Explorations NAS 295-02, number 50748 from May 18-June 27, Mondays/ Wednesdays 5:30-9:50 PM. The course will take advantage of the summer months in an outdoor setting. Pass it on.

Sign up for Anishinaabe Language classes with Kenn this summer! Explore the outdoors while learning Anishinaabe language and culture.

C’mon, U.P. in the summer? Is there a better way to learn?
Métis Survivor Story

Marjorie Wells Finn is of Métis descent from the Turtle Mountain tribe of the Dakotas and Saskatchewan Plains Cree who grew up with the culture and language of her ancestors. My name is Laura Marjorie Finn (née Wells). I am 83 years old and I am a Métis survivor.

I grew up in southern Saskatchewan as did my mother. My father was born in Lewiston, Montana. He came from a large family of fourteen children and they lived on a ranch. They were doing well but somehow my grandfather John Wells was talked into going north to Saskatchewan. At that time the government was giving out parcels of land for free to any man who would farm it for 10 years. So Grandfather moved his whole family and all his horses and animals to Saskatchewan. They had two covered wagons and the older kids rode horseback the whole way. They couldn’t tell when they crossed the border. Back then, my family said, there was no border.

The move north turned out to be a bad move though – most of the horses died along the way (it had something to do with the change in water). My grandpa got a homestead and farmed it with my dad. Grandpa was getting old by then. But the piece of land they got was all sand and nothing would grow on it so they eventually sold it. The homestead was situated in a Métis community called Round Prairie, south of Saskatoon on the Saskatchewan River, and that’s where I was born.

My mother’s mother had been born in Saskatchewan but had spent a good part of her life in Belcourt, North Dakota. She was a midwife and a healer who could speak five languages – Cree, Sioux, Chipewa, French and English. My mother also grew up speaking a few different languages and knowing a lot about Indian medicine. I remember people calling on her to go and see a sick person. She would always go and take her herbs along to treat them.

In our younger years we traveled a lot like nomads, camping here and there while my father found work with farmers. We had an old white canvas tent and usually slept in feather beds.

Although times were tough I don’t remember being hungry. My mother was a good cook and my father would bring home ducks and prairie chickens; they made a delicious soup. She cooked over an open fire and baked good bannock. Sometimes we would pick Saskatchewan berries and choke cherries. My grandmother would grind the choke cherries and dry them in the hot sun for a few days. Then she packed them in flour sacks; they kept well that way. Later she’d put some in a pot, cover them with cold water and let them simmer for awhile. Then she would add sugar and a little flour and water to thicken it and make a tasty dessert for us children.

It wasn’t until my oldest brother was nine years old that we moved into the city of Saskatoon and rented a house so my brothers could go to school. I was around three or four years old at the time. That is when I got a severe eye infection and lost my eye-sight. My mother was in the hospital and my aunt, who was looking after us, treated me with some Indian medicine that she made into a poultice and put on my eyes.

The treatment lasted a while and then one day when she took the bandages off, I could see again – I saw my mother standing there in a white dress. I was always nearsighted after that due to scarring on the cornea, and it made schoolwork hard as I didn’t have glasses.

As I got older we continued to travel across the prairies in the summer, with our wagon and team of horses.

We would put our tent up by the side of the road in the bush. Sometimes we would find a patch of wild straw-berries in the coulees (low spots). We were very poor; this was during the ‘dirty thirties’. We had to make the living the best way we could. My father would find work harvesting and stoking farmers’ fields, and he made a little money doing odd jobs – he was a jack of all trades.

In winter we would be indoors but without running water for washing or cooking. My mother hauled in large chunks of snow and melted it in a big white tub on top of the stove. It took a lot of snow to get a tub of water, but it was beautiful, soft water, and that water was well used, you can be sure. Our washer was hand operated and we used a washboard as well. We heated flat irons on top of the kitchen stove to iron clothes.

My dad and my uncle Gabe would go into the bush and set up a shop and sell it by the wagonload. Sometimes they would go trapping muskrats and weasels and they would sell the fur.

Another job they did was pick bones from a slaughter house and sell them by the wagonload. This was around the beginning of World War II when they needed bones to make glue, I think. Once, their wagon was not quite full and they wanted to get the load in by closing time so they got old Bill Ouellette to climb into the wagon and they buried him in the bones and took the load to be weighed. They got their money for the full load before helping Bill out from under all those bones.

My sister Gladys and I both got jobs at the Intercontinental Packers (meat packing plant) during the war years. There was a shortage of manpower so they hired us at a very young age. We started at 50 cents an hour, which was big money at that time. We surely had our share of adventures there, but that’s another story.

End of the Year NASEI events

The workshops are a part of the Native American Student Empowerment Initiative (NASEI) presented by the Center for Native American Studies and made possible by the Kewewin Bay Indian Community.

NMU student Traci Belair led a trio of 3-D dreamcatcher workshops during the winter semester. Several students were successful in learning how to make these. [See photos] NASEI sponsored it’s final event in late April, a tournament of the card game Apples2Apples. Due to the recent snowfall, NASEI had to cancel the softball game originally scheduled. However, several students and faculty enjoyed their time together over Border Grill while also watching the 2008 Gathering of Nations video.

NMU student Holly Berksstresser works on her dreamcatcher. Right: Traci works with a student to complete her dreamcatcher. BJ Bosco finishes hers (you should see this in color).
Kelly Church (Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa Chipewa) recently held a black ash basket weaving workshop in at the Marquette Commons in Marquette. Several NMU students, faculty, and community members gathered to learn how to make traditional black ash baskets.

Kelly was invited by the Native American Student Empowerment Initiative (NASEI) to hold a workshop as well as to present at the 2nd annual Indigenous Earth Issues Summit.

Kelly brought in black ash strips straight from the tree to show participants what the baskets originally came from. After explaining the process of selecting only the straightest trees, felling them, pounding them, and then stripping them, Kelly began showing participants how to build the foundation of their baskets by laying strips of soft, smooth black ash into a large snowflake shape.

Once the foundation was complete, she moved on to demonstrating how to build the sides by weaving more and more strips of ash between the foundation strips. Everyone was amazed at how easy it was to create something so beautiful. Within two hours, everyone was finished with baskets and happily eating frybread tacos!

Kelly explained to participants that she is a seventh generation black ash weaver, but the tradition goes back much farther in her family. They are unable to determine just how far back the family legacy goes due to lack of records. Kelly has shown baskets in many exhibitions and has won numerous awards for her work all over the United States.

But baskets aren’t the only thing Kelly is good at. She is also a painter, photographer, and sculptor. Kelly outlines one of her goals as “I want to help teach non-natives about today’s Native Americans - the many different tribes and cultures - and to help dispel the ignorance of Native people today.”

To learn more about Kelly Church, visit www.blackash.org.

More photos from this workshop on page 11.
Congratulations May 2009 Graduates!

Jon Anthony
Leonard Beaudoin
Kelly Bedell
Weston Bellefeuille
Betty-Jo Bosco
Barbara Frechette
Garret Geller
Samantha Hill

Kristopher Kerbersky
Cheryne LaPointe-Tolonen
Brigitte LaPointe-Tolonen
Michael Larson
Dan MacNeil
Chelsea McGeshick
Martin Michaelson
Tracy Micheau
Chad Nedea
Kaleb Preiss
Michelle Rozga
Michael Sparks
Teresa Valenti
Mark Wills

Good luck to all of you!

Interview by Sam Hill

NN: Where are you from/what is your tribal affiliation?

NN: What is your major and minor? Why did you pick those, what interests you about them?
NEDEAU: My major is economics and my minor is business administration. I picked economics because it seemed interesting, it’s kind of cool studying what is going on with our economy, it’s pretty diverse.

NN: What is your favorite ice cream flavor and why? Explain.
NEDEAU: I don’t think you can pick just one, so I’m gonna’ pick three in no particular order: Mackinaw Island fudge in support of the local M.I.F. industry, Americone Dream because it’s not only delicious but also endorsed by one of my favorite celebrities Stephen Colbert. And, last but not least Rocky Road — it might be a bumpy road and take longer than the easy avenue, but it doesn’t matter because it’s delicious 100% of the way.

NN: Why did you choose NMU? Two reasons: I wanted to come to a smaller school, and also because I thought it would be cool to come back home and be by family after being gone for 7 years.

NN: How long have you been part of NASA?

NN: What are some of your best memories here at NMU?
NEDEAU: There’ve been some good ones, last year’s pow wow I had a ton of fun and the Wildcat wrestling trip to St. cloud, Minn. are my top two.

NN: If you could drive anything on the road you wanted to, what would it be, and why?
NEDEAU: Bugatti Veyron because it looks awesome and it’s super fast!

NN: Talk about a few of your favorite classes you’ve taken here.
NEDEAU: My econ classes with Dr. Prychitko and strangely enough physics classes you’ve taken here.

NN: Should there be a Native studies major? What kinds of classes do you think should be incorporated?
NEDEAU: Yes there should be a NAS major because it’s important. Language classes, history classes, sociology classes, anthropology classes, you can do just about any class and include Native American studies. It is something unique that NMU has the resources to provide.

NN: What is in your CD player right now, what have you been listening to?
NEDEAU: Niishoo Sullivan rocking out “The Ugly One’s Winning” at Wabeno powwow. Eyabaya’s Soldiers was the last CD that was in my player. I really like listening to Tha Tribe’s Quiet Storm lately.

NN: What would you do if you found pirate treasure washed up on shore?
NEDEAU: I’d grab it quick and hide it. I’d probably bury it and make my own map. I’d keep the map for myself to go on a treasure hunt whenever I was bored.

NN: Why were there only a few members in NASA this year?
NEDEAU: That’s a great question, Samantha, and I’m glad you asked it. I don’t think people realize how much fun and exciting NASA could be if we had more members, and we could really have a student circle of friends all involved.

NN: What is your favorite movie of all time and why?
NEDEAU: It’s a tie between “A River Runs Through It” because it’s a really cool American story, and “The Count of Monte Crisco” because the poor guy gets educated, comes back, and schools everyone in a sweet plot of revenge.

How did you get so good at playing the bongos?
NEDEAU: I am not good at playing the bongos, I just watched the Chapelle show a couple times and do this and that, or whichever one because I can do both.

Who makes the best fry bread?
NEDEAU: My aunt Dee. It’s what I grew up on so I’ve developed a palate for it. Either that or there’s just a little secret ingredient of awesomeness that’s put in there too.

NEDEAU: I don’t think you can pick just one, so I’m gonna’ pick three in no particular order: Mackinaw Island fudge in support of the local M.I.F. industry, Americone Dream because it’s not only delicious but also endorsed by one of my favorite celebrities Stephen Colbert. And, last but not least Rocky Road — it might be a bumpy road and take longer than the easy avenue, but it doesn’t matter because it’s delicious 100% of the way.

Registration for summer courses is now open!

To apply, call the NMU Admissions Office at 906-227-2630.
For more information on summer courses, call the Continuing Education Department at 906-227-2103.

Questions? Contact the Center for Native American Studies at 906-227-1397 or by e-mail at cnas@nmu.edu or visit our Web site at www.nmu.edu/nativeamericans.

Classes run from May 18 - June 27, 2009

NAS 295 - ST: Native American Beadwork Styles
3 credits
$30 - 9:30 p.m. on Tuesdays
Instructor: April Lindala

NAS 295 - ST: Anishinaabe Language Summer Exploration
4 credits
$30 - 9:30 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays
Instructor: Kenn Fitawenawat

NAS 340 - *Kinomaage: Earth Shows Us the Way
4 credits
$30 - 9:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays
Instructor: Aimee Cree Dunn
*Required Field Trips to be arranged outside of scheduled class time

Northern Michigan University is an AA/EO Institution.
“Summit” from page 1 — Marquette. Members of the audience commented on it being a very interesting and highly informative presentation.

Evon Peter, former chief of the Neetsaii Gwich’in and current executive director of Native Movement, spoke as the evening keynote and received a standing ovation. Intertwining stories with personal reflection and historical lessons, Peter spoke on the environmental history coming out of the relationship between Alaskan Natives and the United States. Much of what he spoke of also challenged the audience to find the will to make the changes needed to address our environmental crisis. Peter found the Summit as a whole a great experience. He commented particularly on the involvement of students from the NAS 342 course, “Indigenous Environmental Movements,” in the Summit presentations. It gave him hope, he said, to see students an integral part of such an event as it felt they were gaining valuable experience for making change in the world.

One Summit attendee described the Summit as “Phenomenal!” Others used words like “Awesome!” and “Inspiring.” One audience member wrote, “I was impressed - the Native Studies Department’s hard work and teachings are making a remarkable difference in the world.” Photos, links to articles on the Summit, and links to the digital archives of the presentations in the Michigan Room, including the keynote presentations, can be found on www.nmu.edu/nativeamericans. CNAS would like to acknowledge artist Matt Fleming, who generously donated original artwork for the cards and stories; and OfficeMax for donating a portion of the production costs.

If you are interested in the NAS 488 course, contact the Center for Native American Studies at 906-227-1397.

To see photos of this event, see page 11.
By Grace Challier (Sicangu Lakota)—
Waila! Making the People Happy is a 28 minute documentary about a unique style of Indian dance music and one of the families that play it in the American Southwest. The film is being distributed through Native American Public Telecommunications, Inc. and was aired on WNMU-TV 13 (PBS) in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. It was produced and directed by enrolled Quechan Indian Nation tribal member Daniel Golding who holds a B.A. in film production and a minor in American Indian Studies from San Francisco State University. Waila is Golding’s sixth film, a complex, yet seamless blend of interview, historical photograph, and contemporary musical event footage. The film begins with the unmistakable lilt of accordion music against an orange setting sun background among large, mature cactus that in the United States grow only in the deep southwest. As English subtitles run across the bottom of the screen, a man speaks in his tribal language. “I remember when I was a small boy there was a dance at Covered Wells where I lived. When my mother woke me up to go see the dance, that was the first time I knew I was alive in this world.” This is the first and last use of subtitled and the filmmaker makes his point, stressing the importance of constant use of tribal languages, many of which are in danger of irrevocable loss.

A map places the speaker just east of the Tohono O’odham Indian Reservation as he tells a story in English now about playing music in Tucson, Arizona, for World War II veterans, and a man approaching him afterward to say, “These Indians are not Indians, they’re Polish.” Daniel Joaquín of the Joaquin Brothers Band, dark-skinned and deeply lined in the face with a full shock of glistening black hair, smiles broadly at the memory. The scene cuts to his band, two saxophones, two guitars, and drums being played unmistakably by Indian men in bright-colored satin ribbon shirts. Fans describe the music as “chicken scratch,” a style that always seems to be associated with the origins of the dance, participants snack a partner, hold one another face to face, and literally kick up their heels, as they twist to the infectious, polka-like, yet southwesternly flavored melodies.

A wide highway sign welcoming travelers to the Tohono O’odham Nation flashes by as filming proceeds from a moving vehicle. Another Joaquin brother describes his reservation as 2.8 million acres on the U.S. side with 22,000 enrolled tribal members, as many as 5,000 of them living in Sonora. A map situates the reservation as central Arizona, as many as 2.8 million acres on the U.S. side of the Mexican border, an arid landscape that was formerly part of the Spanish empire. Angelo Joaquin Jr., director of the Waila Festival, relates, “The missionaries wanted music for their services so they taught a few of us how to play these instruments flash across the screen. ‘After they were finished playing for the service, they would go over the music hall and perform social dance music,’ says Angelo.”

Folklorist Jim Griffith states that the O’odham took up this music, enthusiastically embracing it, and he refers to an account of a group playing in Tucson in the late 1880’s.

Over time as the music continued to develop, violin dropped away and for the service, they would go over the music hall and perform social dance music,” says Angelo. "Folklorist Jim Griffith states that the O’odham took up this music, enthusiastically embracing it, and he refers to an account of a group playing in Tucson in the late 1880’s. Overall, I was overwhelmed at the powwow with all the vendors, the drumming, singing, and theNative American style clothing and hats, all of them holding and/or playing these instruments flash across the screen. “After they were finished playing for the service, they would go over the music hall and perform social dance music,” says Angelo. Folklorist Jim Griffith states that the O’odham took up this music, enthusiastically embracing it, and he refers to an account of a group playing in Tucson in the late 1880’s. Overall, I was overwhelmed at the powwow with all the vendors, the drumming, singing, and the

By Allison Cederna—Having never gone to a powwow before, I did not know what to expect as I walked through the hallway towards the VanDament Arena where the powwow was being held. Before even entering, I could hear the deep sound of the drums pounding, the head singers singing and the jingling of the jingle dancers’ dresses. I had a feeling that I was just in time for the grand entry. My heart began to pound. The drumming was exciting. My first reaction was awe. I could not get over the beautiful colors and styles of the dancers’ regalia. The swift movements and intricate steps of the fancy dancers mesmerized me as I made my way through the crowd and into the stands. I was thankful that I showed up early, before my security/runner shift, to watch the powwow.

It was not until I was seated in the front row of the stands that I noticed the smell of something strong and sweet lingering in the air. A faint trickle of smoke tickled my nose and made me sneeze. I had never smelled anything like it before. I leaned over to my friend who knew the fire keeper, another Native American who holds a B.A. in film production and a minor in American Indian Studies from San Francisco State University. Waila is Golding’s sixth film, a complex, yet seamless blend of interview, historical photograph, and contemporary musical event footage. The film begins with the unmistakable lilt of accordion music against an orange setting sun background among large, mature cactus that in the United States grow only in the deep southwest. As English subtitles run across the bottom of the screen, a man speaks in his tribal language. “I remember when I was a small boy there was a dance at Covered Wells where I lived. When my mother woke me up to go see the dance, that was the first time I knew I was alive in this world.” This is the first and last use of subtitled and the filmmaker makes his point, stressing the importance of constant use of tribal languages, many of which are in danger of irrevocable loss.

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A wide highway sign welcoming travelers to the Tohono O’odham Nation flashes by as filming proceeds from a moving vehicle. Another Joaquin brother describes his reservation as 2.8 million acres on the U.S. side with 22,000 enrolled tribal members, as many as 5,000 of them living in Sonora. A map situates the reservation as central Arizona, as many as 2.8 million acres on the U.S. side of the Mexican border, an arid landscape that was formerly part of the Spanish empire. Angelo Joaquin Jr., director of the Waila Festival, relates, “The missionaries wanted music for their services so they taught a few of these instruments flash across the screen. “After they were finished playing for the service, they would go over the music hall and perform social dance music,” says Angelo. Folklorist Jim Griffith states that the O’odham took up this music, enthusiastically embracing it, and he refers to an account of a group playing in Tucson in the late 1880’s.

Over time as the music continued to develop, violin dropped away and for the service, they would go over the music hall and perform social dance music,” says Angelo. "Folklorist Jim Griffith states that the O’odham took up this music, enthusiastically embracing it, and he refers to an account of a group playing in Tucson in the late 1880’s. Overall, I was overwhelmed at the powwow with all the vendors, the drumming, singing, and the

He held the sweet grass up in an offering for me to smell. I leaned in and took a deep breath. Sure enough, that was what I had smelled. After an hour of working as a security/runner, I took a quick break and walked out to the fire pit to enjoy the fresh spring air. I was greeted by the fire keeper, an older Native American with beautiful silvered hair pulled up in a pony tail. He greeted me with a large smile and held his hand out to me. I shook his hand, a little confused as to why he had approached me, until he began to speak. He thanked me for helping out at the powwow, for watching over the event and making sure everything ran smoothly. While I was talking to him, the fire keeper reached into his pocket and pulled out a small parcel of tobacco. Offering it to me, he explained how traditionally a parcel of tobacco was given to an elder in thanks for a favor, but that he was giving it to me as a thank you for my work at the powwow. I felt honored and still have the parcel of tobacco to this day.

In the twenty minutes I talked to the fire keeper, another Native American came over to speak, and he began to tell me about his life and how his parents had discouraged his Native American side, never taking him to powwows or letting him explore his native culture. He proceeded to tell me that he wanted something different for his children, and how important it was for him to bring them to the powwow so they could better understand their culture. I was sad for the man and upset that his parents would not honor their Native American roots.

When submitting a letter, it must be signed with a return address. We will consider requests for anonymity.

When are the powwows this summer?

If you are seeking dates for summer powwows, keep an eye on the CNAH website for listings in this region. www.nmu.edu/nativeamericans. If you know of any powwow dates that we need to post on this Web site, please e-mail us at least two weeks in advance at cnas@nmu.edu - Miligwech!
By Callie Youngman—The Students for Sustainable Living’s culminating project of the year was the Superior Water Festival (SWF). The event that featured world-class Michigan musicians, speeches from water luminaries and connections to campaigns and projects to protect our water locally and address global challenges. The SWF is the first to be held on a college campus and is doubly unique for its entirely student-led organization – typically, water festivals are coordinated by a team of non-profit community organizations. SFSL has been the hub of all-things SWF and we hold strong in our belief that Marquette, and Northern especially, holds the perfect platform for such dialogue and celebration bridging the gap between community and campus and across social, economic, cultural and religious lines. The Superior Water Festival, April 3-5, has been an opportunity to bring experiences and energy to the Northern student body in one weekend of celebration and community. SFSL worked with a multitude of groups on campus (Student Against Sulfide Mining, the Organization for Outdoor Recreation Professionals, the planning committee for the Indigenous Earth Day Summit and the Center for Native American Studies, as well as representatives from other student organizations who make up SFSL’s core collective) and off-campus (Marquette Area Public Schools, the Marquette Universalist Unitarian Congregation, Save the Wild U.P., Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, the Superior Water Preserve and the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve) to create an experience that will be unlimited in both its intellectual and soulful ripples.

These groups reflect the diversity of interests and backgrounds of the NMU student body as the SWF featured a full spectrum of topics: food systems and ethics, health and water issues; understanding Native American fishing rights and practices; the history of mining in the U.P.; gender studies relating to water; getting down to the “Soul of Water” from different cultural, religious and personal perspectives, including that of the Anishinaabe, Judaism, Buddhism and Christianity; and more. Students themselves have developed these topics and continued in the dialogue as active participants – sitting on panels alongside professionals, leading workshops with experts, doing presentations based on their own research, etc. Just as the push for sustainability is not a single-issue cause, the interdisciplinary/intergenerational/intercultural atmosphere was both stimulating and beneficial to Northern students by giving them (the generation on-deck) ways in which they can bring sustainability into any profession.

Music was the thread tying the weekend together. Its integration into the programs was unique to the SWF and is, historically, one of the greatest tools in bringing communities together. NMU students took part in this celebration through other mediums, including a dance concert, which was an open showcase for expression. Throughout the weekend there were many events that fostered this sort of inter-generational musical collaboration. In addition to this connection with traditional American music, the SWF also featured cross-cultural experiences as it tied in the event with the Indigenous Earth Day Summit.

Sunday morning’s opening ceremony was a traditional Native American dance put on by area tribal members. The Center for Native American Studies (CNAS) was SFSL’s greatest ally in planning the SWF. The SFSL very purposefully sought their guidance in the beginning stages of planning and continued nurturing this relationship during the year. There is much to be learned from and celebrated in the indigenous communities in all respects relating to sustainability. As the SFSL wanted a strong Native American voice (too often seen as separate) throughout the weekend, we treated these panelists, performers and advisors as they are: experts in providing a unique perspective that helped bolster a weekend that truly reflected the community of the greater Marquette area. SFSL and CNAS aligned their events in conjunction to create a seamless period of on-campus discussion.

Overall 450 people, students and community members, showed up to be a part of this unique opportunity. Participants enjoyed over 40 facilitators and panelists as well as 22 performers. The SFSL intends to make this a yearly event, and invites authors as they are: experts in providing a unique perspective that helped bolster a weekend that truly reflected the community of the greater Marquette area. SFSL and CNAS aligned their events in conjunction to create a seamless period of on-campus discussion.

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The famous Joaquin Brothers (from left to right): Daniel Joaquin, Fernando Joaquin and Angelo Joaquin Sr. Photo courtesy of Daniel Joaquin

adopted.

“My dad started his band in 1957 and he was in California when he started it. He and his brother and few cousins got together and started their band,” says Daniel Joaquin. The Joaquin’s band became very popular, drawing audiences who traveled from Phoenix and from rural areas all around to hear them play. They often performed late into the night. Historical footage of dancers swaying to their music over the years interscuts interview footage. The dancing footage now portrays more contemporary times and young people are still interspersed with older folks. Angelo explains that many also call the style of music and dance waila which comes from the Spanish word waila that means to ‘dance.’

Daniel tells of following two of his older brothers into St. John’s Indian Boarding School. He stars down and the easy smile slips from his face. “Oh man, I was really homesick. Man. I’d never been out and I spoke only a little English, very little,” he says. Angelo tells of the men learning to play different instruments in boarding school and incorporating them into the music they played, changing and developing it over time. The extended family now makes up several bands that play throughout the local area. Family photos show the men playing indoors and outdoors with different combinations of instruments over the years as Daniel’s finger-ticking accords music fills the background. Daniel explains being scolded by his mother as a boy for spending his money on a harmonica rather than socks and a blanket. He did not talk back to his mother but rather just looked down in shame.

“Little did I know that this would take me to Carnegie Hall,” he says with a broad grin. Seventeen family members traveled to New York for that appearance and the Joaquis felt as though they were very well received. A Carnegie Hall playbook lists each of the names of the members of the Joaquin Brothers Band. Brandeis Joaquin is a fourth generation waila musician who started playing when he was eleven years old. He now plays accordion, among other instruments, with a group called Young Waila Musicians.

Warren Garcia, the general manager of KOHN Radio on the Tohono O’odham Reservation, states that the radio station introduces new, younger bands to the youth in the area who support them. “Waila is really a live culture,” says Garcia. The younger people like cumbias, which are freestyles during which they can dance as they please. Recent footage depicts a dance area in the evening filled with people moving without partners to the cumbia. Women circle the dance area holding babies, young girls circumnavigate beside one another with their heads together talking, a twentysomething woman floats by concentrating on holding a video camera perfectly still, and older couples move to the music side by side barely touching, if at all.

An annual “chicken scratch” battle of the bands awards first place to the Young Waila Musicians who will now be in greater-than-ever demand. Jim Griffith says people have commented to him that waila is not Indian music since it is played on Euro-American musical instruments and the tunes came from non-Indians. Griffith disagrees and argues this assessment. “This is O’odham music. It’s O’odham music. It’s made it theirs. It’s O’odham music.”

Daniel states how many of the waila musicians feel. “The first time I went up and my mother took me to a dance, it was a west, says Garcia. “I put it up and every since, no matter what I do, I would give up this, I would give up this, that waila music – it just kept on going, going, going.” Waila continues to draw crowds who dance to its liltting beat and Tohono O’odham men keep playing and passing the musical style to their sons and nephews who develop and broaden this distinctively contemporary American Indian music.
1. Lots of people!
3. NMU Student Charlene Brissette.
5. Kenn Pitawanakwat with young helper in the kitchen.
7. Beautiful traditional women doing the Round Dance.
8. NMU Native graduates are honored. From left to Right: Jon Anthony, April Lindala, Cheryne LaPointe-Tolonen, Samantha Hill, Brigitte LaPointe-Tolonen and Chad Nedeau.

2. Chuck Brumleve and Susan LaFernier.
5. Chuck Brumleve gives his presentation on metallic sulfide mining to a large crowd.
7. Armee Cree Dunn, coordinator with Summit vendor Linda Cree.
8. Random shot of fry bread — for tacos!
9. Connie with her nearly completed basket.
10. Kelly Church working with Connie Goodnow (NASA President).
11. Tina Mower and her two daughters work on baskets.
14. BJ Bosco finishes her basket.
15. Students start the process of basket making for the first time.