



AMERIND QUARTERLY



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERIND FOUNDATION

WINTER 2006/7 (VOL 4, NO.1)

PRESERVING OUR PERISHABLE PAST

There was an almost audible shudder that went through the museum and archaeological communities when it was learned that the Baghdad Museum had been overrun by looters in the early days of the 2003 Iraq invasion. But the broader story of loss, told by Dr. Norman Yoffee in this issue of the *Amerind Quarterly*, is even more disturbing. In the social chaos and political power vacuum that has reigned in Iraq since the American invasion, archaeological sites throughout the former “Fertile Crescent” have been plundered almost as thoroughly as the Baghdad Museum. As the oldest Neolithic (agricultural) communities in the world, the birthplace of writing, plant and animal domestication, and the world’s first cities—the loss of this unique archaeological record is incalculable. But why should we be concerned about millennia old archaeological sites on the other side of the world, or, for that matter, in our own back yard? Other than keeping archaeologists employed and museum exhibit cases filled, what is their value?

Evidence from paleoanthropology and human genetics informs us that the human lineage diverged from our common ancestor with chimpanzees between five and seven million years ago. For all but the last few thousand years of that long evolutionary history there are no written records describing historical events and processes; no documents that preserve the personal reflections of individuals. The only way we can know about the immense time period that preceded the advent of writing is through the interdisciplinary science of archaeology, and our need to know should be obvious. If we were to collapse all human history into the life span of a single individual, understanding our species’ past from

written documents alone would be like reconstructing an individual’s life history based only on the last few minutes of their life. Such a last minute biography would tell us little about the patient’s birth, childhood, adolescence; the family he was born into or the one he helped create; his adult occupations, passions, successes, failures. In the same way, written records tell us little about how we came to be human: how our most fundamental social organizations

evolved, why humans avoid incest, share food and shelter, live in families and communities, believe in spirits and witches, and why we kill and torture each other with depressing frequency but are willing to risk our lives to rescue people we’ve never met. The study of prehistory is relevant because it is one of the few avenues that can be explored to understand the fundamental nature of human nature.

The study of deep prehistory may also contribute to our quest for strategies that will help ensure our own and our fellow species’ survival. John Maynard Keynes once famously observed that people will never be concerned about the long term because we will all be dead then, but history, archaeology, and anthropology provide an antidote to a vision circumscribed by one’s own experience and mortality. A people who are connected to the past and to other cultures are better prepared to cope with an uncertain future because these connections preserve a cumulative store of human experience that sustains wisdom. As we continue to expend earth’s resources and disrupt its critical balances, the conceits, wisdoms, failures, and successes of our ancestors, as preserved in the archaeological record, are more relevant today than ever before.



Ceramic head from Mesopotamia, 3200 BC

MISSION STATEMENT: Established in 1937, the Amerind Foundation and Museum seeks to foster and promote knowledge and understanding of the Native Peoples of the Americas through research, education, and conservation.

NATIVE VOICES

On a cool, crisp February day with a fire burning in the stone fireplace of the main exhibit room, John Ware welcomed the audience to the “Native Voices” program. Begun at Amerind three years ago, this has become an annual event to hear Native writers read from their works.

Author Laura Tohe, Diné (Navajo), associate professor of English at ASU, served as moderator, introducing poets Kyle Wilson and Hershman John, (both Diné) and novelist and poet Franci Washburn, (Lakota/Anishinaabe/Irish). As they read from their work the room filled with images. A rich collage began to build with each reading, layer upon layer leading us into a deeper sense of place and native culture.

I rode on the words as the collage grew – “Grandmother Moon” in her lunar eclipse blooming, glowing, blossoming, burning, bleeding, beaconing. I remember the phrases and images that stood out vividly: “Tonight the moon is Indian;” a junkyard of rusted discards with a rose growing through the fence; male and female rain; secret fears of lightning shared with a Jewish friend. Stories, both humorous and sad, gave me a glimpse into reservation life: two old native women picking up a young male hitchhiker, wondering if he would be a good sheepherder for them; bored students at the school where no Navajo language was permitted, pretending to be sick to get out of class – one even faking a temperature by rubbing the thermometer so hard the mercury shot out the top!

It was a rich afternoon, much appreciated by the full crowd. It is exciting to know that each of these readers is publishing their work as well as teaching so we can look forward to future generations continuing to treat us to their writings.

By Carolyn Shapiro

Carolyn left her home in Vermont to spend the month of February as an Amerind volunteer. She immediately got involved in all sorts of tasks—from stuffing envelopes to developing a children’s activity guide for the museum to painting a background for one of our exhibits.



Writers Laura Tohe, Franci Washburn, Kyle Wilson, and Hershman John.

PUEBLO WORLD II

On May 20 the Amerind will begin Part Two of its *Pueblo World Tour*. Last year we toured the Western Pueblos of Acoma, Zuni, and Hopi, and important Pueblo and Navajo archaeological and historical sites in between, including Canyon de Chelly, Mesa Verde, and Chaco Canyon. This year we’ll be exploring the Eastern Pueblos of the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico. Highlights of this tour include visits to the modern Pueblos of San Ildefonso (home of famous Tewa potter Maria Martinez), Picuris, Taos, Cochiti, Zia, and Jemez; the Pueblo archaeological sites of Tsankawi (Bandelier National Monument), San Marcos, Horn Mesa, Galisteo Basin, Pecos National Monument, Coronado National Monument (Kuaua), and Guisewa. We will also be making side trips to several important early Hispanic sites, including the Santuario de Chimayo, Las Trampas, and the Martinez Hacienda.

The tour this year will be led once again by Amerind director John Ware and Dr. Joseph Suina. Dr. Suina, a native Eastern Puebloan who is former governor of Cochiti Pueblo and professor emeritus of education at

the University of New Mexico, will provide an inside perspective on Rio Grande Pueblo history, culture, and world views. This year Joe will be joined at intervals by other Eastern Pueblo scholars, including Dr. Rena Swentzell of Santa Clara Pueblo, Chief Judge Verna Teller, former governor of Isleta Pueblo, and Peter Pino, former governor of Zia Pueblo. Archaeological tours will be led by Dr. Ware, and tours to important Spanish and Hispanic sites will be led by Spanish period ethnohistorian, Dr. Adrian Bustamante of Santa Fe.

Last year’s tour of the dispersed Western Pueblos was a 900 mile road trip that circumnavigated the Four Corners (and had us packing and unpacking our bags as we checked into a new motel every day). Our Eastern Pueblo tour will consist of day trips out of our base at Hotel Santa Fe in downtown Santa Fe, New Mexico. If you are an Amerind member and interested in participating in this year’s Pueblo World tour in May, please give Jill Williams a call (520-586-3666, ext. 17) as soon as possible. There are still a few seats left on the bus!



TERROL DEW JOHNSON'S NEW VISIONS IN BASKETRY

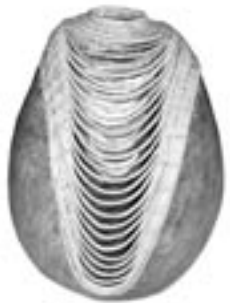
On January 20, 2007, the Fulton-Hayden Memorial Art Gallery opened a new exhibit of Terrol Dew Johnson's recent work in basketry, photography and wall objects. The show is aptly called "Form over Function, New Visions in Basketry." While Terrol has shown his work in group shows in many prestigious museums and galleries, Amerind is honored to be the first gallery to give him a one-person show. He is not only an accomplished artist but gives much of his time and talent to benefit the Tohono O'odham Nation. His humanitarian and teaching activities have earned him many prestigious awards, most notably from the President's Commission on the Arts and Humanities and the Ford Foundation.

In September of 2004 I was at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York where I saw an exhibit of baskets. The most memorable object was

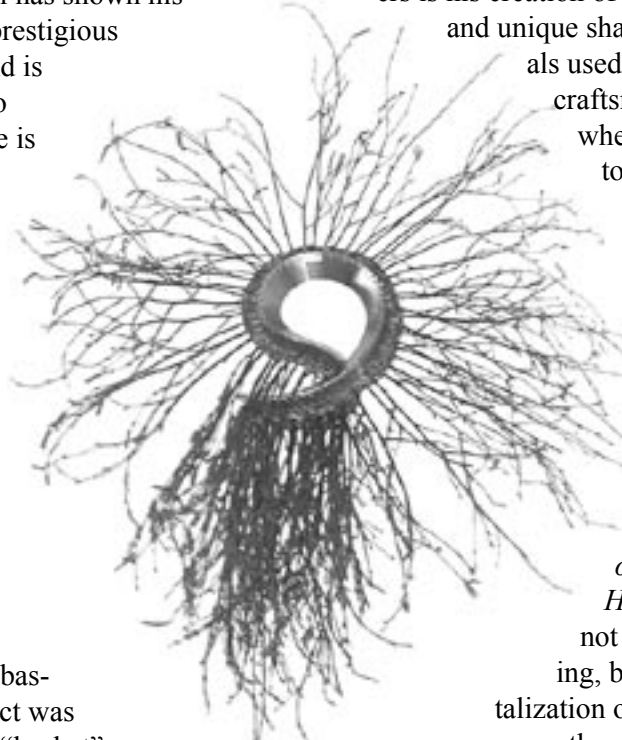
an astonishing "basket"

- a golden bronze, egg-shaped form, opened as if two hands were holding a precious center and interwoven with strands of grass, the top slightly turned into a neck, giving this form the shape of a container. I was so taken by this innovative melding of harsh, shiny metal and the softness of grasses that I was totally stunned to see this very shape appear in Amerind's exhibit

and to learn that Terrol Dew Johnson was also the creator of the piece I had seen in New York. "Bronze Gourd #5" is less flamboyant than the New York piece, since the soft dark patina on the metal gives the piece a more earthy feeling and allows the viewer to contemplate the form as a whole and speculate on the spirit enfolded within. I had an opportunity to talk to Terrol about this and it reaffirmed my estimate of this young man's talent and prominence in the art world.



Bronze Gourd #5
(Beargrass, waxed nylon thread, and bronze)



Knot Basket
(Cedar bark, willow, grapevine on steel)

The use of varied materials to create art objects is not unique. What distinguishes Terrol from other basket makers is his creation of subtle

and unique shapes and his combination of materials used with such apparent ease and superb craftsmanship. It is the mark of a true artist when the finished object is so perfect to one's senses that nothing could be added or subtracted to improve on it.

The opening of the exhibit was well attended and Terrol's work was introduced by Ann Marshall, Director of Collections, Education and Interpretation at the Heard Museum. In 2001 Dr. Marshall had asked Terrol to be the guest curator of basketry for the Heard's publication *Hold Everything: Masterworks of Basketry and Pottery from the Heard Museum*. She selected Terrol not only for his skill and talent in weaving, but also for his work in cultural revitalization of basketry in his own community and across the country.

The presentation by Terrol gave us an insight into how he works and who he is as an artist and as a man. His youth and enthusiasm give him the energy to fulfill his dreams. His sense of balance and oneness with his world gives him permission to create from the heart.

Danny Lopez, an elder of the Tohono O'odham Nation, gave Terrol a special blessing. It was a moving moment not only for Terrol, but also for everyone in the audience. I felt blessed and privileged to be there and feel strongly that the Amerind Foundation was blessed at the same time. The objectives of the foundation have been advanced with this exhibition and our relationship with the Tohono O'odham people has moved into an important new stage in the art of living and understanding.



Form Over Fuction #1
(Lacewood, beargrass, and waxed nylon thread)



by Ursula Huber

Ursula, a ceramic artist in Tucson, is a long-time Amerind volunteer and co-director of our docent program.

Modern Iraq is ancient Mesopotamia, the home of Sumerians and Akkadians, Assyrians and Babylonians. The world's first cities and states and the first writing, invented to represent the Sumerian language, appeared in southern Iraq



©2004, John Russell

tortured and mutilated bodies which have been dumped into the streets overnight. It is estimated that about half of Iraqi professionals have fled their country. Malnourishment, infectious diseases, and infant mortality are at catastrophically high levels.

Those interested in archaeology will remember that in the first flush of success by American troops in Baghdad, the Iraq Museum, a modern facility housing treasured artifacts and clay tablets was looted as troops stood by. Our (then) secretary of defense declared that "stuff happens" as people achieve their freedom. Remarkably, of about 15,000 stolen items, 4000 were returned (including the sculpture on the front page of this newsletter), and about 3000 artifacts have been recovered in Europe.

Perhaps the greatest catastrophe for archaeologists and historians (if one can discount the burning of libraries and archives and the deaths of over 180 university professors and staff) is the looting of dozens, perhaps hundreds, of sites in the Iraqi countryside. In conditions of lawlessness, Iraqis themselves, sometimes using heavy machinery, have been mining ancient *tells*, the dusty mountains that are the remains of ancient cities. The photographs on these pages, made by Professor John Russell of the Massachusetts College of Art in 2004, testify to the extent of the destruction (those are looters' excavations, not bomb craters, that pockmark the archaeological sites in the photographs). Tens of thousands of clay tablets inscribed in the cuneiform script of Mesopotamia, have been shipped, mostly through Jordan, to the hands of antiquities dealers (often in Europe) and then sold to collectors.

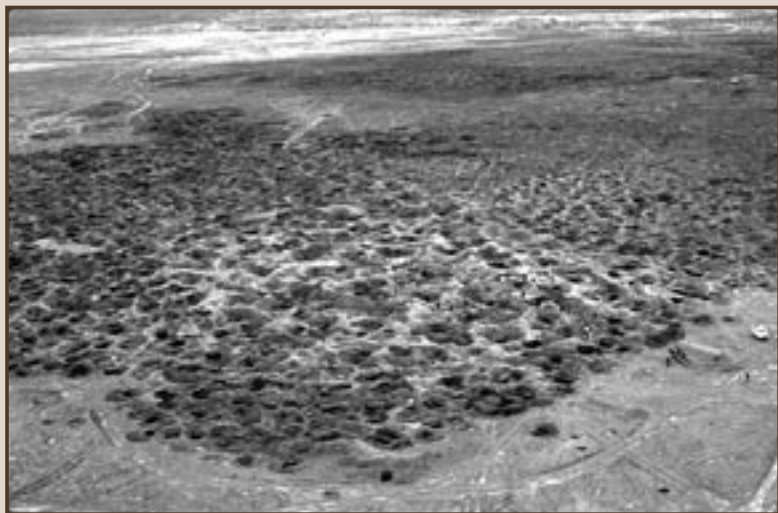
about 3200 BC. Readers of the Bible know the names of the Assyrian kings, Esarhaddon and Sennacherib, who campaigned against ancient Israel. The "ten lost tribes of Israel?" They were conquered and deported by an Assyrian king into the Assyrian empire in 722 BC. Nebuchadnezzar (actually Nebuchadnezzar the Second) defeated Judah and sacked Jerusalem in 586 BC.

All this information is recorded in the tens of thousands of clay tablets from ancient Mesopotamia. Archaeologists have also excavated the ancient cities of Mesopotamia, recovering artifacts, temples, palaces, and neighborhoods. We know more about ancient Mesopotamia than any other ancient civilization. (As a Mesopotamianist myself, I may be biased in this assessment).

Today, as we know all too well, Iraq is a land in utter chaos. Mornings in Baghdad find



Clay tablet with



©2004, John Russell

Dr. Norman Yoffee (Ph.D. Yale) is an internationally recognized authority on Near Eastern archaeology and comparative Eastern Studies and Department of Anthropology. During the 2006-07 academic year Dr. Yoffee is serving as the Yoffee is a senior research associate at the Amerind Foundation and steps down this month after serving two years

A few of these collectors have made tablets available to scholars. Cautious reports by these scholars—cautious because scholars are not pleased to deal with collectors and sellers of antiquities—tell us that sites not otherwise known have now been pillaged. Wholly new kinds of information are recorded in the texts, and Mesopotamian history and culture will have to be rewritten, if these tablets can be properly studied.

However, all archaeological context of the tablets – what the adjoining artifacts were, what sort of building they were deposited in, located in what kind of city – has been irrevocably lost. Without archaeological context scholars can only guess at the identity of the ancient city in which the tablets lay undisturbed for millennia. Also, artifacts stripped from their context can tell us little about how they were used in a once living society.

So why should the Amerind family in particular care about Iraq? Why this column in the *Amerind Quarterly*? Of course, we all care about the disaster in Iraq and devoutly wish for some satisfactory outcome to the national tragedy. But we friends of Amerind are especially affected by the destruction because not only is a significant part of the Iraqi present (and probably its future, too) being destroyed, but so is the past of Iraq – an important part of the heritage of world civilization.

As archaeologists, we study how early cities and states evolved – how people in the past ate, married, worshipped, traded, and so forth – the sorts of things we read in Mesopotamian documents. Also, we ask questions: how were Mesopotamian cities like and/or unlike Mayan cities or Chinese cities? Were stages in the prehistoric development of Mesopotamian states in any way comparable to societies that did not become states, such as those in the American Southwest?

These sorts of questions are explored in Amerind professional seminars to be sure. But anyone interested in how we came to be what we are now, why ancient states rose and fell, and what we can learn from all this, must care deeply about modern Mesopotamia.



©2004, John Russell



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comparative early civilizations. He holds joint professorships at the University of Michigan in the Department of Near Eastern Studies and as Steelcase Research Professor of the Humanities in the Institute for the Humanities, University of Michigan. Dr. Yoffee is also as Chair of the Amerind Foundation's Society for American Archaeology Panel.

... NATURE SIGHTINGS AT THE AMERIND

by Barbara Hanson



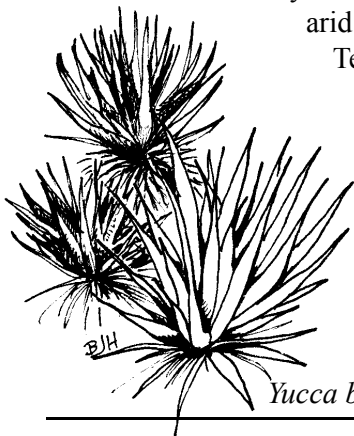
Winter is the season for gathering 'green yucca' or *s-cedagi takwi*. This is the name Tohono O'odham give to the pliable yucca leaves that create green designs in their baskets. These basketweavers call leaves from the same plant 'white yucca' or *s-tuha takwi*, when they harvest in summer and bleach them in the sun to form the pale color of the baskets. I'm always interested in the various ways people name plants. Biologists call this same plant *Yucca elata* – Latin for 'tall yucca' (it can grow up to 20' high). Commonly it is called 'soaptree' or 'palmilla' by the people who live near it, depending on whether they speak English or Spanish. Palmilla comes from its resemblance to a palm tree and soaptree gives a clue to the foamy saponins in its roots, used for centuries by southwestern peoples for soap and shampoo.

I was fortunate this February to go along when Tohono O'odham basket weavers came to gather 'green yucca.' We headed east from the museum, away from the rocky hills to the grasslands – the perfect habitat for *Yucca elata*, which grows at elevations of 1500' – 6000' on desert grasslands and sandy plains from west Texas to southern Arizona and south into Mexico. At our harvesting place the plants formed a yucca forest of tall, shaggy trunks, holding their iconic, candelabra flower stalks aloft. The height of the stalks ensures dispersal of the seeds when the woody capsules split open at maturity.

Soaptree yucca is only one of three different yuccas I've found on the property. The other two species grow in the rockier, hilly places here and are not nearly as numerous at Amerind as *Y. elata*. The 'banana' yucca or *Y. baccata* is named for its fleshy fruits (baccata means 'fleshy berry') which indicate a different method of seed dispersal than soaptree yucca. Banana yucca seeds are spread by mammals attracted to the sugary fruits. Being more widely distributed than soaptree, it grows in arid habitats from California east to

Texas and from southern Utah and Nevada south into Mexico, where it is called *dátil* ("date palm fruit" in Spanish).

Banana yucca has a wide elevational range (2500' – 8000') and can tolerate temperatures as low as -20°.



Yucca baccata

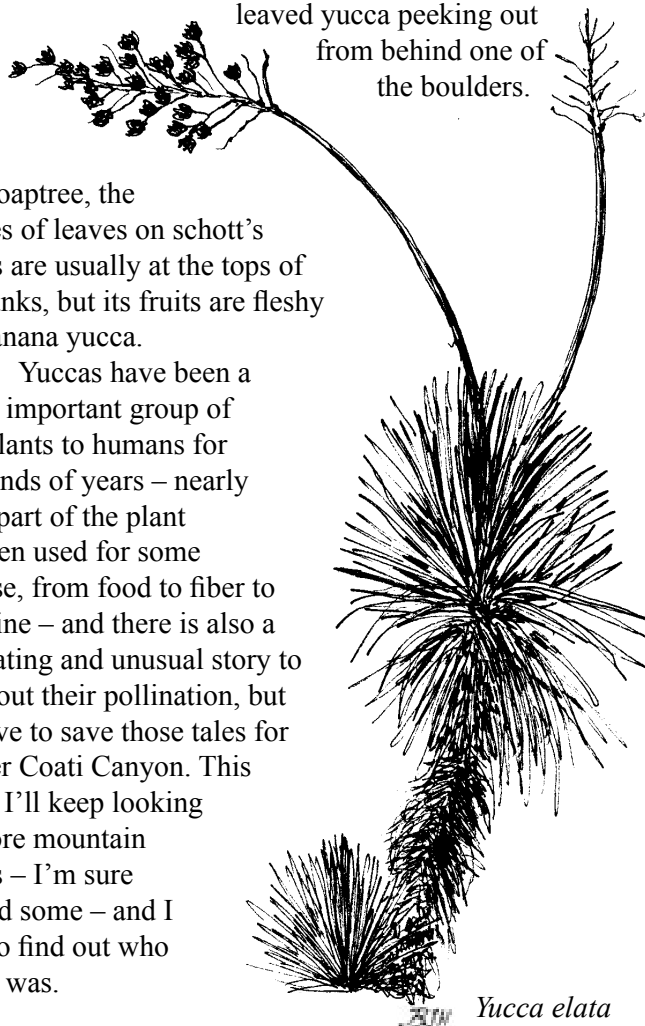
The third yucca, *Y. schottii*, is the hardest to find here. The common name 'mountain yucca' is appropriate because it only grows in the higher elevations of our area (4000' - 8000'), mostly in the oak woodland. (The scientific name probably recognizes the first person to collect it, but that's a story I haven't discovered yet.)

Found only in far southeastern Arizona and adjacent portions of New Mexico and Mexico, it is the common yucca in the Dragoon and Chiricahua mountains. In five years of wandering around the Amerind I had only found one specimen but I knew there just had to be more! So I was delighted this winter while climbing around the rocks to spy a tall, wide-

leaved yucca peeking out from behind one of the boulders.

Like soaptree, the rosettes of leaves on schott's yuccas are usually at the tops of tall trunks, but its fruits are fleshy like banana yucca.

Yuccas have been a highly important group of wild plants to humans for thousands of years – nearly every part of the plant has been used for some purpose, from food to fiber to medicine – and there is also a fascinating and unusual story to tell about their pollination, but I'll have to save those tales for another Coati Canyon. This spring I'll keep looking for more mountain yuccas – I'm sure I'll find some – and I hope to find out who Schott was.



Yucca elata

2006 and 2007 have been years of construction at the Amerind. In January we completed a five month-long installation of new electrical wiring throughout the Fulton Seminar House. The original wiring was 76 years old and did not meet modern safety codes. Installation of a new electrical system was phase one of a three phase upgrade of the seminar house. During phase two we will remove the roof tiles and place sheet insulation between the roof planking and the ceramic tiles to insulate the structure from heat and cooling losses during seasonal temperature extremes. In Phase 3 we will install modern heating, cooking, and ventilation systems throughout the structure. Since the house was originally designed as a seasonal residence, no active cooling systems were built into the structure, and the original hot water heating system rolled over and died thirty years ago. Having the seminar house available for use 12 months out of the year (as opposed to the current six usable months in the fall and spring) will allow us to expand our program offerings and make better use of Amerind's historic buildings.

The Amerind entrance road is currently undergoing a major resurfacing project to remove the patches of old asphalt and create a gradable gravel surface. The project will take several months to complete. The outcome will be a road that will be easier to maintain and more forgiving for visitor vehicles. Dead tree removal is also ongoing at the Amerind this winter and spring. Two large and mostly dead cottonwood trees along Dragoon road were removed as road hazards, and a third large cottonwood that was threatening Amerind powerlines, maintenance shops, and our maintenance crew, was taken down in late March. Drought conditions since 2000 and

lower water tables are probably responsible for most of the tree deaths. It is sad to see old trees come down, but new trees will be planted to replace them.

Another building and renovation project this spring and summer is greatly anticipated by Amerind staff because it is creating space for a new permanent position on the Amerind staff: our long-awaited curator of collections. Funds were approved by the board at its February meeting to hire a curator in 2007, and we are renovating an old ranch house on the property to serve as a residence and converting one of our seminar house rooms to office space. We have sufficient funds to support the position for two years, and the board and staff are committed to raising funds to endow the position before the temporary funding runs out in 2009. It is wonderful to be able to report that Amerind's priceless collections will now have a professional staff member to care for them. If you would like to help make this position permanent, please consider a gift or bequest to Amerind's endowment fund!



If you are not already a member, we invite you to join us!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Yes, I want to become a member!

Please enroll me at the level checked.

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- San Pedro Club \$500-\$999
- Casas Grandes Club \$1,000 or above

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The Amerind Quarterly is produced seasonally by staff and volunteers of the Amerind. John Ware, content; Barbara Hanson, editor and drawings; C. Charney, design and layout; Jonathan Williams, photography (except where noted).

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AT THE AMERIND

- April 21, 2007, 7:00 p.m.**
 Seven Generations Program
 University of Arizona, Tucson
- April 23, 2007, 7:00 p.m.**
 Amerind Lecture Series, Cochise College,
 Benson campus
- April 25, 2007, 11:00 a.m.**
 Last Botany Walk of the season. Meet in front of the museum. Bring a picnic lunch you can carry with you.
- April 25-27, 2007**
 Tour to Casas Grandes and Mata Ortiz
- April 25-29, 2007**
 Society for American Archaeology annual meeting, Austin, TX
- May 5, 2007**
 Amerind Board Meeting
- May 20-26, 2007**
 Pueblo World Tour II

PUEBLO WORLD TOUR II
 THE EASTERN PUEBLOS
 MAY 20-26, 2007
*only a few seats left —
 sign up now!*



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