



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERIND FOUNDATION

WINTER 2007/8 (VOL. 5, NO. 1)

CURATOR CHALLENGE GRANT



As many of you know, Dr. Eric Kaldahl came on board with the Amerind last fall as Chief Curator of Amerind's extensive research collections. What you may not know is that hiring another full time professional staff member stretches Amerind's resources to the limit and we are actively raising funds to endow the curator's salary so that the Amerind Museum is never again without a professional curator to care for its world-renowned collections.

Why is a professional curator so important? The most critical function of museums is to assemble, preserve, research, and interpret collections of objects, and the museum curator stands at the nexus of all of these functions. The curator supervises every aspect of the collection, from new acquisitions to collection care, documentation, and use. Curators work closely with other museum staff to select objects for interpretive exhibition and other programs. They supervise researchers studying the collections and they work with conservators to make sure that environmental conditions in the museum galleries and storage rooms are ideal for the long-term preservation of fragile objects. Curators write grants to improve collections care and housing, and they conduct their own research on the collections that result in exhibits, professional articles, and books (most of the labels you see in museum exhibits were written by an expert curator).

All of these functions are critical to a museum, and yet, due to budget constraints, the Amerind has been without a professional curator for a number of years. Last fall a long-time Amerind member and supporter made a remarkable pledge: a \$250,000 challenge grant to establish an endowment for the curator position. The challenge grant was made so that for every dollar we raise to endow the curator chair, the donor will give us a dollar to match, up to a quarter of a million dollars! What a remarkable incentive to give, knowing that your gift will double in value as soon as it is made! In addition to the challenge pledge, the Amerind Board of Directors set aside funds from the sale of property bequeathed to the Amerind from the Eliza-

beth F. Husband estate for the curator endowment, and individual board members have made their own generous contributions to the curator endowment fund. As a result, less than three months into our fund raising effort, we are already more than half way to our goal of raising one million dollars to ensure that there is always a professional curator to care for Amerind's world class collections.

How can you help? A contribution in cash or property will be matched one to one for the cash or property value until the pledge limit is reached. Contributions should be accompanied by a letter stating that the donation is "restricted to the Amerind curator fund" so that your contribution will go straight into our endowment. All contributions to this important campaign are tax deductible, and you can be assured that your matching contribution will generate critical operating funds for the Amerind Foundation *in perpetuity*!

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.

LIVING ICONS & THE DYNAMICS OF THE POSTINDIAN WARRIOR

BY TRACI L. MORRIS, PHD

In January the Amerind Foundation opened an exhibition of paintings by a Colorado-based Native artist entitled *Living Icons*, portraits of modern day warriors in Indian Country who continue the fight for Indian rights and self-determination. Thirty-two year-old Pawnee/Yakima artist Bunky Echo-Hawk brings a sense of humor and social activism to the formulaic world of American Indian art. Educated at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, Echo-Hawk is an artist, graphic designer, photographer, writer, and nonprofit professional. He is a founding member and executive director of *NVision*, a nonprofit working with Native youth through the arts. Committed to his local community, he has served on the Board of Directors of the Denver Indian Center, one of the largest and most active centers in the country. He is also a traditional singer and dancer and has performed at events such as Gathering of Nations. His work is in collections throughout the United States and abroad and his writing and poetry have been published in both magazines and anthologies.

With his ability to connect young people to the arts combined with a strong sense of commitment, Echo-Hawk's work, while strikingly contemporary at first glance, actually references traditional Pawnee visual culture. This juxtaposition is not surprising. Upon meeting the artist, who is very comfortable in modern youth culture, a short discussion reveals that this Native is very traditional at heart. Thus it is not surprising that Echo-Hawk's *Living Icons* includes former Cherokee Chief Wilma Mankiller, painted in vibrant shades of purple—a color associated with royalty in Western culture. Considering Mankiller's stature as an Indian leader, the color seems fitting, but the

viewer may not know that the choice of color and the particular shades used reference a Pawnee color system—part of their traditional spiritual and value system. Other *Living Icons* include actors Adam Beach (from NBC's popular show *Law and Order: SVU*) and Gary Farmer (*Pow-Wow Highway*, among other credits), Walter

Echo-Hawk (NARF lawyer), writer Leslie Marmon Silko (*Ceremony*), and singer Lucie Idlout, among others.

In the *Living Icons* series, Echo-Hawk presents his subjects on canvas, portrait style, and larger than life. Like a stylized photograph, the artist has each subject posed in a slight upshot, as if to further emphasize his or her importance and stature within Indian Country. There is no background except a field of color and each subject is represented by a different bright color.

For the current Amerind Exhibition, these larger than life portraits are mounted in a small upstairs gallery. Upon ascending the stairs, one is immediately struck by the portraits. Mounted close together and at eye level, the exhibition style serves to further emphasize the importance of the figures. Visitors cannot help but be mesmerized by the color and the intensity of the gaze, as some subjects seem to stare right back at the viewer.

The Echo-Hawk exhibition at the Amerind is not to be missed. This is one of the most dynamic young artists working today in American Indian art and the Amerind is to be commended for putting on such a modern show. *Living Icons* should surely gain national attention for Echo-Hawk and for this small gem of a museum in the Arizona desert. The exhibition will be up until June 29th. On Saturday, April 19th, Echo-Hawk will do a "live painting" at the Amerind, a form of participatory art that he does in his travels throughout the country. This event is not to be missed either, and the public is welcome to participate.

Dr. Traci L. Morris, Chickasaw Nation, is an Associate Faculty member in American Indian Studies at Arizona State University. Her research interests include Native art and the representations of Native people in art, film, literature, and media. She was one of the presenters at Bunky Echo-Hawk's exhibit opening in January 2008.



Wilma Mankiller



Leslie Marmon Silko

NEW LIGHT ON THE THIRTEENTH-CENTURY DEPOPULATION OF THE NORTHERN SOUTHWEST

When asked about the fabled disappearance of the *Anasazi* from the Southwest's Four Corners region, Tewa Indian anthropologist Alfonso Ortiz once famously remarked, "The Anasazi didn't disappear, they're running bingo parlors in the Rio Grande Valley!" (Now, of course, the bingo parlors have morphed into casinos, but Ortiz's point remains the same.) Alas, the mystery of Anasazi disappearance was resolved many years ago by archaeologists whose findings corroborated what contemporary Pueblo people had been saying all along, that the countless pithouse and masonry ruins of the Colorado Plateau were the "footprints" of their ancestors.

But if we know who the people were who built Balcony House, Cliff Palace, and other ancestral Pueblo sites, questions about why they abandoned their ancestral homes on the Plateau and precisely where they went when they left have been debated for years and a consensus has been slow to emerge. Early explanations of Apachean invaders driving the Pueblos from their cliff dwellings were laid to rest long ago, although warfare *among* ancestral Pueblo peoples is now universally recognized and its effects carefully weighed against other factors such as drought and crop failure. If Pueblo ancestors moved from the Plateau to the northern Rio Grande Valley in the early 1300s, we certainly don't see clear evidence of the migration in the architectural forms and material culture of late prehistoric Rio Grande Pueblos. In contrast, unambiguous evidence of Pueblo immigrants from the Kayenta region on the western Plateau is preserved in dozens of archaeological sites from central and southeastern Arizona (two of these sites in the San Pedro Valley, the Reeve Ruin and Davis Ranch Site, were excavated by the Amerind Foundation in the late 1950s). Why should immigrants from the eastern Plateau be virtually invisible?

These and many other questions about the thirteenth century depopulation of the northern Southwest were addressed at a recent advanced seminar at the Amerind Foundation. Organized and chaired by Tim Kohler of Washington State University, Mark Varien of Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, and Aaron Wright of the Center for Desert Archaeology, the symposium brought together

14 scholars whose recent research bears on questions of ancestral Pueblo abandonment, depopulation, migration, paleoclimate, and social and ritual organization. As recently as ten years ago archaeologists were arguing that environmental conditions in the northern Southwest were never so severe that people would have been forced to migrate in order to survive. Research focused instead on

various social factors that might have encouraged people to leave rather than continue to adapt in place. The story told at the Amerind symposium last month painted a more dismal abandonment scenario; one in which food shortages, intense warfare, and social-political collapse may have all figured in the final decision to leave and never return. And why is there so little obvious evidence of Mesa Verde migrants reaching the Rio Grande Valley? Perhaps Mesa Verdean populations gradually declined during the 1200s so there were few people left alive at the end of the century to pack up and move? Paleoclimate scientists at the symposium pointed to incontrovertible evidence of drought and changes in low frequency weather patterns in the 1100-1200s that may have made it impossible for dry farmers to eke out a living in the high, dry Colorado Plateau.

Are we any closer to understanding the processes of depopulation and migration in the northern Southwest? We continue to make progress, of course, but many unanswered questions remain. Perhaps the hardest things to reconstruct in deep prehistory are the social and ideological systems of the people, and without these key pieces of the larger puzzle true understanding will perhaps continue to elude us. With the incomparable tree-ring data and superbly preserved material record from the desert Southwest, archaeologists have become highly skilled at measuring changes in weather patterns, technologies, foodways, demography, settlement strategies, and other aspects of prehistoric behavior that leave indelible marks on the material archaeological record, but the decision to turn one's back on a landscape where all one's cultural myths are preserved and where all one's ancestors are buried has immense social and ideological implications. Ultimate answers to such questions may be easier to grasp by the descendants of migrants than archaeologists searching for clues in the soil.



Cliff Palace, Mesa Verde

WHAT TO ACQUIRE? A MUSEUM'S DECISION MAKING

For those of you who enjoyed Terrol Dew Johnson's exhibit of baskets and photographs, we have an opportunity to acquire some of his art. As he was taking



down his exhibit in January, Terrol offered us the chance to purchase three of his works. He has placed these pieces on loan to the Amerind until we can raise the money to purchase them.

How do museums decide what objects or artworks to acquire? Museums everywhere have to ask some basic questions. Does the object tell a good story? Will the artwork inspire our visitors? Can future generations learn from this object? Does the object fit our collection?

Our museum staff picked three pieces that could add something meaningful to the Amerind's collection. Recently Terrol and I sat down together, and he told me the story behind each of these works.

"Basket Quilt, Touched By Me" *weaving in various materials*

There are only five of Terrol's Basket Quilts in existence. One is in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution. This is not surprising. Terrol's work has been featured at museums and galleries in places like New York, San Francisco, and Paris.

Terrol's Basket Quilts celebrate the weaving arts of many different Native people. The raw materials in the quilt include brown ash from Maine; cedar bark from Washington state; yucca, bear grass, cattail, devil's claw, and willow from Arizona; and even materials from New Zealand.

The different raw materials are just one aspect of the artwork. Quilts inspire Terrol because each quilt panel represents a valued memory. Terrol learned the different styles of weaving featured in this quilt from friends and teachers—Native weavers from many traditions.

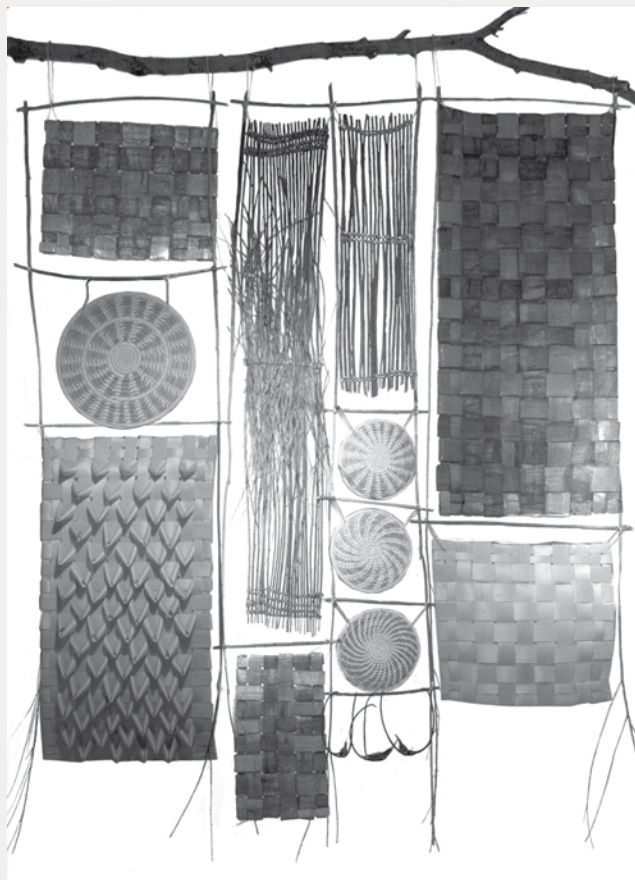
The collaboration among weavers from different tribes is part of a larger trend. For years Native weavers have relied on middle men to buy their work in rural, reservation communities. Middle men then resold these works at a mark up in city shops. In the 1990s, Native weavers began to organize. They put their resources together to sell their works in distant markets and to revitalize local weaving. Weavers now receive a greater portion of each sale, and young people are carrying on this art form.

Terrol was inspired by that greater movement. He learned from the examples set by the California

Indian Basketweavers Association, the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance, and the Northwest Native American Basketweavers Association. Terrol and other O'odham weavers founded the Tohono O'odham Basketweavers Organization (TOBO), which represents hundreds of Tohono O'odham weavers today. TOBO provides classes to a new generation of weavers, gathers materials, and cooperates to receive fair prices for their art.

The Basket Quilt is a beautiful work of art. It is the work of an important contemporary Native artist. It features methods and materials from many different tribes, tribes whose baskets are part of the Amerind's historic collection. Finally,

this piece represents a wider movement of Native artists who are working together to bring their work to the world on their own terms.



"Water is Sacred"

black and white photographic print on paper

Terrol's niece, Isabella Johnson (age 3), helped her uncle for this important public awareness campaign. It is estimated that between 60 and 70 percent of O'odham



suffer from diabetes, including the artist himself. In the U.S., adult-onset diabetes has been on the rise. But among the O'odham, it has reached epidemic proportions. O'odham traditional foods are slower to digest, unlike the refined white flours and sugar products in our supermarkets. Tepary beans, mesquite flour, cactus fruit, and other plants from O'odham lands and gardens are much healthier.

Terrol and others founded a nonprofit organization called Tohono O'odham Community Action (TOCA). The roots of TOCA go back to a community garden that TOCA Co-Director Tristan Reader had established on the Tohono O'odham Nation. One of their goals was to make the community healthier by revitalizing traditional diets.

This particular photograph was part of a joint TOCA/Indian Health Services public awareness campaign on the Tohono O'odham Nation. For generations, O'odham women brought home life-giving water for their families in *haha'a* ("ceramic pots" in English). Terrol's niece represents the younger generation of O'odham, pouring life-destroying soda into the *haha'a*.

This work speaks to a health crisis faced by a twenty-first century Native Arizona community. It also represents community members who are encouraging healthier life choices. Terrol explores this issue further as part of a 4-hour PBS documentary entitled *Unnatural Causes...is inequality making us sick?*, airing in March and April 2008.

"Kissing Saints"

black and white photographic print on paper

The rich spiritual life of the Tohono O'odham includes many traditions. Perhaps one of the most famous is a Catholic tradition—making a pilgrimage to Magdalena de Kino in Sonora, Mexico, to visit the statue of St. Francis. Terrol remembers his relatives, along with hundreds of other O'odham, making this pilgrimage every year on St. Francis Day, October 4th.

In a recent visit to Magdalena's church, Terrol watched his friend Gloria Ramon kiss Saint Francis' statue. Terrol was overcome with memories of the many women in his family who have followed this custom. Camera in hand, he captured that moment in this photograph. He wanted to catch the look of faith found in the eyes of Magdalena's pilgrims.

The Amerind collection is rich in Spanish Colonial religious artwork. This photograph adds a Native artist's insight into the meaning of this Catholic-rooted tradition in the lives of O'odham pilgrims today.



YOU CAN HELP!

Will you join me in helping the Amerind buy Terrol Dew Johnson's 3 artworks? If you are especially drawn to one of the pieces discussed in this article and would like to purchase it for the museum, please call Eric Kaldahl at 520.586.3666, ext.23 or ekaldahl@amerind.org. The Amerind will also be placing a special donation box in our main gallery. Funds in the Johnson Artwork Box will go to the purchase price of the 3 works. Contributions toward their purchase can also be made by check payable to the Amerind Foundation. Please put on the memo line "Johnson Artwork Purchase," and if you are interested in purchasing one of the three pieces, please indicate that as well.

Everyone who contributes will have their name acknowledged as the donors whenever one of these works is displayed.

Basket Quilt, Touched by Me
Purchase Price \$7500

Water is Sacred
Purchase Price \$200

Kissing Saints
Purchase Price \$200

NATURE SIGHTINGS AT THE AMERIND

by Barbara Hanson



Bobcats live here year-round but I seem to spot them more in the winter; sometimes just tracks after a fresh snowfall or, if

I'm lucky, a flash of a short,

black-tipped tail on a shadow by the road. This

January I was lucky enough to get ten long minutes of entertainment from my living room window as three young bobcats sauntered in single file toward my house. Suddenly, the first in line sprang up in a graceful arc and disappeared into the tall grass at the edge of the road, soon followed by its two siblings.

Seconds later they all popped up again and continued this spring-and-pop a few times before the head of the first one showed above the grass with a large brown bundle in its mouth.

From the size of it I assumed their prey was a rat or maybe even a small cottontail. This ended the game and the three walked off with what seemed a proud air over the rocks and away from view, but not before the last in line turned back, giving a long look over its shoulder straight at me. With a thrill I realized how privileged I was to have witnessed the rare sight of a successful kill by a wild predator.

When we think of the word predator, animals like the bobcat or mountain lion, coyote or wolf, are the typical species that first come to mind, but I was reminded the other day of how wide the category of predator is. Standing by one of the Amerind ponds I was telling a group of birders that someone from the Nature Conservancy had contacted us about placing Chiricahua leopard frogs here to increase the breeding populations of this rare amphibian. One of the birders mentioned that a problem with that is that the leopard frog can eat hummingbirds, an image I found incredible to imagine, thinking of frogs as zapping nothing larger than a fly with their sticky tongues. Looking up information about them, I see that their main prey are invertebrates, but like most frogs, they'll take anything they can get.

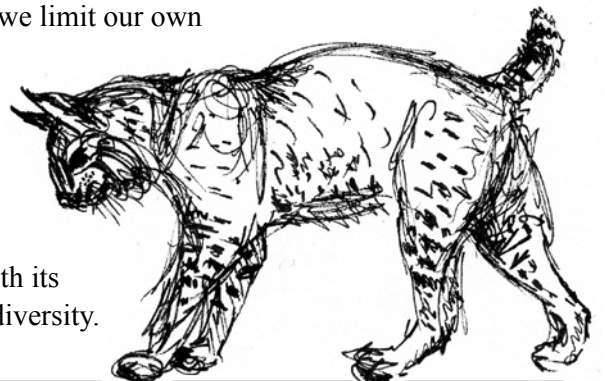
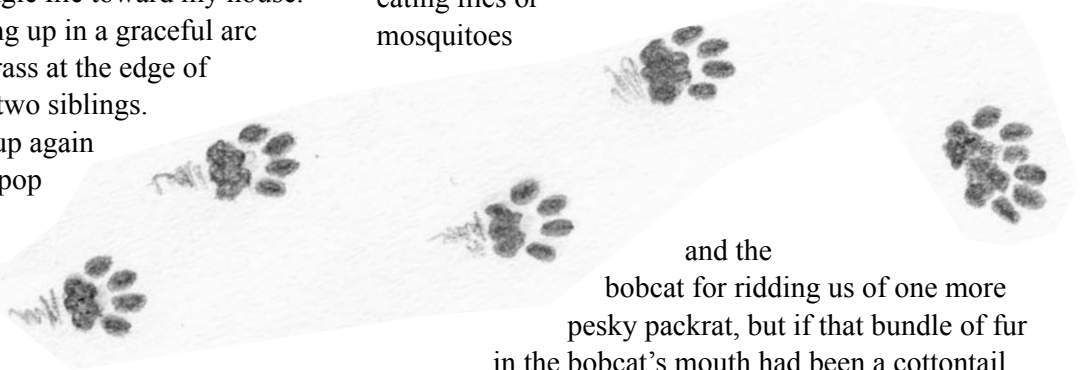
I'll save the details about this local, native species and the program to save it for a future column in the *Quarterly* but I will point out that amphibians are an especially vulnerable group at present – nearly half

of the known species on the planet are threatened or endangered. So it would seem that saving this frog from impending extinction is more important than worrying about non-threatened species of birds being *possibly* eaten. But the discussion that day has certainly given me food for thought (no pun intended) about who eats who and the strong emotional reactions people often have to that topic. We might applaud the frog for eating flies or mosquitoes

and the

bobcat for ridding us of one more pesky packrat, but if that bundle of fur in the bobcat's mouth had been a cottontail, especially a young one, wouldn't we feel sorry for the "poor," "cute" bunny?

In a book on predatory mammals, I found the words "enemies," "bloodthirsty," and "fearsome" used to describe the carnivores, an irony coming from humans who are the most successful predators of all time. It is an additional irony that one theory explaining large brains and complex social behavior in humans was the evolutionary advantage these traits gave to cooperative hunting of prey. And it is this complex brain that has created a moral code by which we judge not only ourselves, but the behavior of other species. But other animals do not share our human filter of ethical judgement. All animals eat to survive and the many millions of species on this earth have developed a seemingly infinite array of strategies for survival. When we view other animals through this restricted moral lens we limit our own ability to appreciate the vast complexity of life that enriches our own with its wondrous diversity.



Fifty years ago this coming May the Amerind Foundation and Mexico's National Institute of Archaeology and History initiated the Joint Casas Grandes Project, one of the largest and most comprehensive archaeological research projects in the history of North American archaeology. After four years of field work and over a decade of laboratory analysis and write-up, Amerind Director Charles Di Peso and his staff published their massive eight-volume analysis and interpretation of Casas Grandes archaeology which stands, to this day, as a landmark of archaeological publishing.

On the 50th anniversary of the launching of the Joint Casas Grandes Project we are planning several commemorative events. At the annual spring meeting of the Society for American Archaeology in Vancouver, British Columbia, there will be a special commemorative symposium on the Casas Grandes Project entitled *The Legacy of Charles C. Di Peso: Fifty Years After the Joint Casas Grandes Project*. The symposium, sponsored by the Board of Directors of the Society for American Archaeology and chaired by Dr. Michael Whalen of the University of Tulsa, will bring together twenty scholars who have conducted field work in northern Chihuahua in the decades since Di Peso's pioneering explorations. Next fall we will bring

the symposium participants to Dragoon for a four-day intensive seminar that will result in a book published by the University of Arizona Press.

In addition to the advanced seminar, we are planning several collaborative projects with the Museo de Las Culturas Norteño in old Casas Grandes. We're taking a special membership tour to Casas Grandes in late April that will include a reception at the museum and special tour of the exhibits. We're planning a joint traveling exhibition with the Museo that will travel throughout the Southwest and Northwest Mexico and will tell the story of the excavation project through artifacts and photographs. To commemorate 50 years of cooperative research, we are negotiating extensive loans of collections between the Casas Grandes and Amerind Museum.

And we will be co-sponsoring a pottery competition for potters from the village of Mata Ortiz that will recognize outstanding artistic expression and, we hope, encourage the continued growth of this remarkable cottage industry.

Anniversaries are excellent times to recall past collaborations and initiate new joint ventures. We are looking forward to many more years of cooperative programs with our sister museum in Chihuahua and we hope Amerind members will join us on future tours to Casas Grandes and its Museum of Northern Cultures.



Charles Di Peso (in dark clothing) and associate overlooking the Casas Grandes excavation, 1958

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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bahti@theriver.com

John H. Davis, Tucson
jdavis@azlitho.com

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Marilyn F. Fulton, San Diego
F3233@aol.com

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meliful@earthlink.net

George J. Gumerman, Santa Fe
gjg@sarsf.org

Michael W. Hard, Tucson
mhardsr@aol.com

Peter Johnson, Tucson
pejohnson@sundt.com

Sandy Maxfield, Tucson
(520) 219-4828 (fax)
rgmaxfield6@comcast.net

J. William Moore, Phoenix
williammoore@qwest.net

Kathryn A. Riser, Tucson
kriser@desertmuseum.org

Lawrence Schiever, Tucson
(Emeritus)

Dan Shilling, Phoenix
danshilling@cox.net

Norman Yoffee, Ann Arbor, MI
nyoffee@umich.edu

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

John A. Ware, Dragoon
jware@amerind.org

Letters to the director and board members can be sent care of the Amerind, Box 400, Dragoon, AZ 85609.

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AT THE AMERIND

April 5, 2008

Painting workshop with Tohono O'odham artist, Mike Chiago

April 19, 2008, 2:00 P.M.

Seven Generations program at the Amerind with artist Bunky Echo-Hawk doing a "live painting" at the Amerind in commemoration of Earth Day.

April 14, 2008, 10:00 A.M.

Botany walk for members with Barbara Hanson—meet at the museum entrance.

April 23 - 25, 2008

Members' tour to Casas Grandes and Mata Ortiz. This tour is full. Another trip is being planned for April 2009.

April 17, 2008, 7:00 P.M. in Tucson

Looking Toward the Seventh Generation, with Oren Lyons, Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy or Six Nations) and Faithkeeper of the Turtle Clan of the Onondaga Nation. Presentation will be hosted by American Indian Studies at the University of Arizona, and will be held in Social Science Room 100. Doors open at 6:30, with Mary Redhouse (Diné) playing flute. Free and open to the public.

May 11-16, 2008

Pueblo World Tour III - ***Mesa Verde to Chaco: Ancestral Pueblo Worlds. A FEW SEATS ARE STILL AVAILABLE.*** Contact Jill Williams at 520.586.3666 ext. 17, or jillwilliams@amerind.org

October 4 - 13, 2008

COPPER CANYON TOUR. Save the date! Details of Amerind's first tour to Copper Canyon will be sent very soon.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL US AT 520-586-3666

OR VISIT US ON THE WEB: WWW.AMERIND.ORG