



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERIND FOUNDATION

SPRING 2009 (VOL. 6, NO. 2)

PUEBLO RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Between AD 1250 and 1450 the human landscape of the Colorado Plateau of the northern Southwest was completely transformed. Commencing in 1276 with the 25-year *Great Drought*, the period saw widespread arroyo cutting, falling alluvial water tables, and erosion of arable land over much of the greater Southwest. Adding to these insults, the annual bimodal (winter-summer) moisture pattern that Pueblo farmers had adapted their planting and harvesting schedules to for nearly two millennia became chaotic in the mid-1200s and did not return to normal until the mid-1400s. As a result, large parts of the Plateau were depopulated in the 1200s as farmers migrated south in search of more reliable water sources. The geographic range of Pueblo settlements continued to contract in the 1300s as populations aggregated into the few remaining arable niches around the Plateau margins. By A.D. 1400 Pueblo settlements had contracted to the regions where sixteenth century Spanish explorers would find them: The Hopi Mesas, the Zuni River Valley, Acoma Pueblo, and the Rio Grande Valley from Taos south to around Socorro.

Pueblo communities that formed during these troubled times were much fewer in number but many times larger than former villages, placing strains on existing social and political institutions to organize and regulate much larger face-to-face populations. It is probably no coincidence that new forms of communal ritual emerged at this time. As anthropologist Roy Rappaport once pointed out, "The virtue of regulation through religious ritual is that activities of large numbers of people may be governed in accordance with sanctified

conventions in the absence of powerful authorities or even of discrete human authorities of any sort."¹ The Pueblos famously lack powerful chiefs and leaders, and so religion has always played a prominent role in Pueblo community organization.

The nature of these new religious practices was the subject of a recent Amerind advanced seminar entitled "Religious Ideologies in the Pueblo Southwest." Organized by Donna Glowacki of the University of Notre Dame and Scott Van Keuren of the University of Vermont, the seminar brought together twelve historical scholars to discuss late prehistoric religious changes in the Pueblo Southwest. Seminar scholars took a fresh approach to these issues by focusing on changing ritual practices of Pueblo villagers during these unsettled times. Papers were presented on how Pueblo plazas evolved as communal ritual spaces, how kiva murals were created and viewed, how rock art imagery changed through time, how people decorated their pottery to communicate information about their belief systems, and how religious practice contributed to the formation of Pueblo ethnic groups. These and other "practice-oriented" studies promise to widen our understanding of late prehistoric changes in ritual and world view that led to the emergence of the modern Pueblos.

Papers from the symposium will be assembled and edited over the summer and a manuscript will be submitted for review to the University of Arizona Press in the fall, for publication in Amerind's *Studies in Archaeology* series in early 2011.

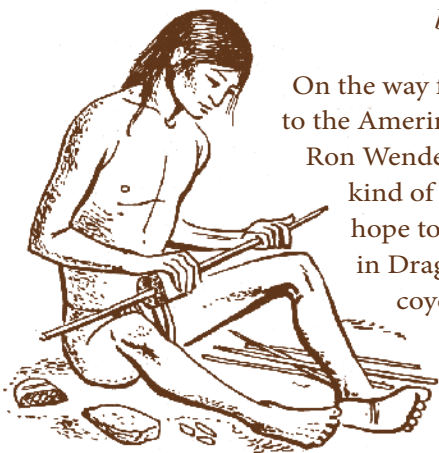


Hemis Katsina
by Peter Shelton, Jr.
(watercolor, modified)

1. "The Sacred in Human Evolution," in the *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*, 1971, Volume 2, pgs. 23-34.

RETHINKING HUNTER-GATHERERS

by Dr. Donald Holly, Jr, Eastern Illinois University



On the way from the Tucson airport to the Amerind Foundation, I asked Ron Wendelin, our driver, what kind of wildlife we might hope to see during our stay in Dagoon. Ron mentioned coyotes, rattlesnakes, and roadrunners, and if we were very lucky, perhaps a mountain lion. Considering

that I was generally unlucky—and perhaps happy to be so in this instance—I set my sights on spotting a roadrunner before the week ended. Raised in the Northeast and having spent many Saturday mornings watching cartoons as a young boy, I'd consider a real live roadrunner a small dream come true.

Another dream was already being realized; I was on my way to the Amerind Foundation to meet up with my co-organizer, Ken Sassaman from the University of Florida, and ten other colleagues to spend the better part of a week talking about hunter-gatherers. All of us are archaeologists, and while we are used to working in teams, thinking is all-too-often a private and isolated endeavor. As such, our time at the Amerind Foundation would offer us a rare and wonderful opportunity to share and develop ideas, and hopefully, take the archaeology of hunters and gatherers in a new direction.

Despite much recent research and discussion, old stereotypes of hunter-gatherers remain popular. Hunter-gatherers are generally characterized as mobile peoples, banded together into small groups, and burdened with the all-consuming quest for food and ultimately, survival. As such, hunter-gatherer history is often imagined as a kind of natural history, fundamentally different from the sort of rich, human-willed histories we typically grant farming societies and ancient civilizations. Yet, each of the archaeologists that we assembled at the Amerind Foundation was involved in research that challenged this prevailing perspective.

For instance, one common stereotype of hunter-gatherers is that they were all necessarily transient, but the research of many of the attendees at the Amerind Seminar suggest that this is not at all the case. T. R. Kidder's research, for example, at the Poverty Point site in Louisiana, focuses on the construction of giant earthen mounds, made by sedentary hunter-gatherer groups over 3000 years ago. The site is impressive by any standard:

it is the second largest Native American archaeological site in North America. And it is not anomalous in the sense that hunter-gatherers elsewhere in North America also constructed large monumental features and lived in sedentary villages. Asa Randall, for instance, discussed how shell mounds were built and maintained by hunter-gatherers in Florida, while Anna Prentiss carefully charted the growth and structure of sedentary villages in the interior of British Columbia.

Of course, some hunter-gatherers were indeed mobile, but for reasons not solely determined by nature. As with other peoples, hunter-gatherers did not merely inhabit a natural landscape, but a social one too. Consider, for instance, the social world of the Shoshone of Western Wyoming in the late 19th century. Theirs was a world turned upside down by settlers, miners, and soldiers. In this context, according to Laura Scheiber and Judson Finley, mobility became not a burden to the Shoshone but an asset—a means of maintaining autonomy. Or consider the mobility of the Innu of the boreal forests of the Eastern Subarctic. As Moira McCaffrey asserted at our seminar, the Innu moved not just to hunt caribou, but to access special and sacred stones used to make tools.

As revealed in prevailing stereotypes of hunter-gatherer mobility, there is a long-standing tendency to see hunter-gatherers as passive peoples—either unduly subject to forces of nature or unable to write their own histories. This matter was addressed by many of our participants. Kent Lightfoot and his colleagues, for instance, demonstrated how California hunter-gatherers were able to “grow” wild foods through intentional burning and maintenance of their environment; Kathleen Hull showed that hunter-gatherers of the Yosemite Valley could control their own population growth; Brian Robinson and Jennifer Ort's research drew attention to the rich cultural dimensions of stone tool manufacture in prehistoric Maine; Lynn Gamble highlighted the enterprising nature of shell-bead production among the Chumash of Southern California; and my own research suggested that the failure of hunter-gatherers—like the collapse of ancient civilizations—is often due to social and cultural factors, not simply the environment. Finally, Ken Sassaman gave a sweeping account of the Eastern North American Archaic (10,000-3000 B.P.), with the aim of illustrating how hunter-gatherer societies coalesced and splintered over time. Such societies, as Ken and other participants noted, did not simply march on through “prehistory” but indeed, set their own course.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES & COLLECTIONS: TEXAS CANYON RABBIT STEW

For me rabbit hunting nets are one of the most interesting tools in the Southwest. John Wesley Powell observed Paiute hunters using rabbit nets during his late-1800s Colorado River expedition. One of the oldest nets came from a site in northern Arizona that dates between 3,000 and 4,000 years ago. A few rabbit nets have also been found in southern Arizona and northern Mexico. While working in the archives, I stumbled across the story of Texas Canyon's hunting net.

The Westfall family homesteaded Texas Canyon before the Amerind was founded. John Westfall patented lands here in 1913. One day the Westfall boys were gathering wood when they discovered two pottery jars. Inside one jar was a woven net, 165-feet long by 3-feet wide, that looked like a long volleyball net. Westfall tried to sell the objects to their new neighbor Mr. Fulton. Fulton declined, but he did accept a small piece of the net in 1935.

Mrs. Anna Emmons visited the Westfalls and was struck by the net. She took a piece to Dr. Arthur Woodward, Curator of History and Archaeology at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. Woodward identified the net as woven yucca fibers. He was not sure if it had been used to net rabbits or birds.

Westfall's daughter took the net to her Tucson home. According to Emmons, the net was damaged by water during that time. Emmons purchased both the pots and the remaining portion of the net. In the intervening years, Emmons gave parts of the net to a local Boy Scout troop, a YMCA, and a friend. Later in life, Emmons downsized to a smaller home. Feeling that the objects belonged in Texas Canyon, she donated the pots and 25 feet of the net to the Amerind in 1967. While preparing the donation, she wrote down the story for our archives.

Only a few such nets have been found in the American Southwest. The nets are woven of different kinds of fibers, including yucca fiber and human hair. Native peoples stretched the nets across the land, and organized hunting groups frightened small game into the net to be trapped. Some Native people held



community rabbit drives before celebrations, providing meat for the festivities.

The age of the Amerind's hunting net is unknown. Potters made plain ware jars like these over many centuries. The jars could date to prehistoric or historic times. Radiocarbon dating the net could give us a better idea of its antiquity. Whatever its age may be, the story of this net began in some ancient Texas Canyon community. The weavers spent months preparing the yucca fibers and countless hours weaving it together for their people's hunts.

It's a good reminder that in a museum objects are certainly important. But ultimately the importance of an object is the story woven into it.

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As one would expect of academics, there was lots of lively theoretical discussion too. In this regard we benefited from the wisdom of Martin Wobst, a discussant brought in to critique and encourage us, the insight of the Amerind's own John Ware, and our collective expertise. It was an intellectually stimulating and rewarding experience. And as we reflected on this in the last hour of our stay at the Amerind ranch, a roadrunner jumped up onto the windowsill of the great room, peered inside, and bid us farewell.



Mohawk elder Jake Swamp, or Tekaronianeken, plants trees of peace around the world for the Tree of Peace Society. Founded by Jake in 1984, the Tree of Peace Society works to build cross-cultural understanding between Native and non-Native people, promoting environmental and social ethics, and working tirelessly to preserve the culture and language of the Haudenosaunee.

A CHANGE

A new tree is growing at the Amerind. It's a young Arizona cypress, only six feet tall now. But in the foothill canyons of southeastern Arizona and northern Mexico it can reach a magnificent size. I stand in front of the tree and imagine it 175 years from now. In the year 2184, if all goes well, this cypress could be seventy or eighty feet tall and provide a glorious spread of shade in front of the museum, *if* the museum is still here. I try to imagine my great, great, great, great, great grandchild standing here underneath it. I wonder if this place will still be the Amerind? It's too hard to know, because it's so far in the future. But that is how far ahead the Iroquois imagine when they make decisions based on the welfare of "the grandchild to the seventh generation." (Defining a generation as roughly twenty-five years, seven generations is 175 years from now.)

The cypress was planted here as part of Amerind's *Seven Generations* program, held every year in April to coincide with Earth Day. In 1970, Gaylord Nelson, US Senator from Wisconsin, founded Earth Day as a "nationwide environmental protest" aimed primarily at getting the attention of US politicians and encouraging them to make better decisions for the environment. The first Earth Day brought out 20 million Americans to demonstrate in their communities for healthier environmental choices and was successful in leading to the passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts. In 1990 the movement went global and led to the creation of the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Brazil. By the year 2000, Earth Day was celebrated in 184 countries worldwide!



Jake Swamp bringing people together

The idea of Earth Day was successful in energizing people around the world to think about the health of our environment and how it affects human communities. It was even successful on the political level, spurring governments to pass laws that protect the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the other species that share our planet. And yet today our world faces environmental challenges even more immense than the problems of thirty-nine years ago. Global climate change, with all its concomitant effects, threatens to alter the face of the Earth as we know it—and in fewer generations than seven.



Jake and Judy Swamp with one of the participants in the tree planting ceremony

Clearly, something is missing in our progress. Amerind's director, John Ware, put words to this thought as he introduced the Native American speakers at a forum held after the tree-planting ceremony. What is needed now is a moral paradigm shift, Ware said, and indigenous peoples may well lead the way because of their respect for the Earth. Science is critical for coming up with solutions to the problems of energy use and climate change, but technology alone will not solve our current dilemmas unless we change the ethical way we relate to the Earth. "To get people to behave differently you can't just present the facts to change people's minds. You have to change their hearts. And indigenous peoples can help lead the way in this direction," said Ware.

OF HEART

Even though the forum panelists represented five different Native tribes, common cultural values were expressed over and over as they spoke: the inter-connectedness of all things on Earth; the importance of making decisions for the common good, not just for individual gain; the value of reverence and respect toward all things, living and non-living.

Speakers at the forum in April expressed concern for the changes they are observing, not only in Earth's climate, but also in their own cultures. Regina Siquieros, of the Tohono O'odham Nation, said elders are worried by the "crazy weather" that has "confused the plants" and they are distressed by the fact that the young people have lost the old ways of caring for the land.



Panel participants and audience, "Native Perspectives on Caring for the Earth: A Forum" at the AmerInd

Vernelda Grant, of the White Mountain Apache, expressed similar concern that her people are "getting off track." "Being natural stewards of the land is what makes us Apache," she explained, "but the people's connection to holy places is not as strong as it used to be." Judy Swamp, Mohawk, said that ancient Mohawk prophecies predict great changes that will come to the Earth, bringing big storms in which "great trees will die." But expressing her faith for future generations, she said how important it is to "not give up, just work harder." All three women stressed the need for education in their communities that combines learning about the environment with cultural traditions; re-teaching the youth not only how to care for the land, but also how to *relate* to it.

Hopi artist and educator, Ramson Lomatewama also spoke about the significance of passing on traditional wisdom to young people and his plan to leave a "journal" to guide future generations on the path before them. Sherwin Bitsui, Diné, described how his connection to the land was forged during his childhood herding sheep, where a deep awareness of the cycles of the land and weather was essential. Navajo youth today, he went on, have lost that personal connection to nature because of the modern world they live in. As a poet and teacher, he believes language is essential to culture and philosophy, and expressed hope in the power of words and metaphor to reconnect his people with the land.

Like the others, Jake Swamp, Mohawk elder, admitted that he was a "worried man," and yet his words gave us hope for these troubled times. He started the day with the story of *The Peacemaker*, passed down for generations among the *Haudenosaunee* (Iroquois) people, which is the origin of the custom of planting "the tree of peace." Beginning by "bringing our minds together to agree that everything has a continuance," he gave thanks for all the many gifts from the Creator; all living beings as well as water and wind, sun and stars, thunder and dew, and led us in paying "respect to Mother Earth who carries us everyday." The story began in a past age of great conflict between peoples. Into this dark time, a child was born who became the "Peacemaker," a great leader of his people. He united the warring factions by instructing them to plant a tree and bury their weapons and even their *thoughts* of war beneath it. Asking them to care for the tree so it would never fall, he taught them the principle of "thinking seven generations into the future as a guide to human thought and action."

Then, as our own tree was planted here, each of us was asked to come forward with any negative thoughts and emotions and bury them with a handful of earth under the new tree. How fitting that among all of us older people, there was one young boy present, reminding us of the promise of the future generations and the crucial obligation we have to leave them a sustainable planet, a living Mother Earth.



with the Thanksgiving Address



Planting the tree of peace at the AmerInd

NATURE SIGHTINGS AT THE AMERIND

by Barbara Hanson



The kestrel has a mate again. Last year was the first spring I noticed a pair building a nest near the museum and I was excited at the prospect of a family of kestrels being raised where I could watch them daily.

The American Kestrel, our smallest raptor, is not a rare bird, being found all over North America, but its elegant coloring and displays of aerial ballet are a true pleasure to behold. Last year's pair were building a nest in the cottonwood near the shop and corral where I watched them every morning and evening when I fed the horses. Then one day in April we found the female dead under the tree, obviously killed by a predator, possibly one of the feral cats that lurks around the museum. The male kestrel remained for the rest of the year and its high, trilling call sounded more plaintive to me as I mourned the loss of its mate and the chance of baby kestrels.

An astonishing number of birds are killed by domestic cats every year in the US, not only the feral cats that result from careless pet owners who neglect to neuter their pets, but also housecats that go outside. Studies from the University of Wisconsin and other university researchers estimate as many as 60 million birds are killed by cats every year; the Audubon Society's senior scientists put the figure closer to 1 billion. Not only birds suffer at the paws of these efficient predators, but many species of lizards and other reptiles as well. Biologists have told me that horned lizards (what we used to call "horny toads") have been extirpated in many areas where people and their cats have moved into their habitats. When I heard about that I had a sinking feeling in my stomach and a memory suddenly made sense: I had always wondered why the numbers of horned lizards my kids used to find around our house in New Mexico had diminished and then disappeared four or five years after we moved in. Now I knew the answer—we had two cats who went in and out of their

cat door at will. I also remember the day my big gray tabby, Willy, was chased around the yard by a screaming mother kestrel before he dropped her chick, thankfully unhurt, out of his mouth.

Then we moved here to southeastern Arizona, a locale so famous for its great biodiversity that birders and biologists come from all over the country to enjoy and study the large number of species. I took what was for me—as a life-long cat owner—a radical step: I decided to keep my cats indoors. It is safer for them to not fall prey to the rattlesnakes, coyotes, and bobcats right outside our door, but my main concern is the damage my two expert "killing machines" might do to the local bird and lizard population. My conscience is clearer now when I put out feeders for all the species of hummingbirds, orioles, finches, and other birds, knowing that I am not attracting them into my yard only to let my cats out into their territory.

More than two decades of data show that American Kestrels are in decline across the US and Canada. So that's another reason I'm eager to have them nesting successfully here. Scientists speculate that there are different causes for this decline in different parts of the country. The most likely hypothesis for the decrease in numbers of kestrels in Arizona is wide-spread, long term drought. The way this would adversely impact the birds is a perfect example of how species are interconnected.

Drought affects the plants; a reduction in plant cover affects the populations of the insects and small mammals that are the main food of kestrels.

Happily, the kestrels are doing well in the cottonwood tree near the barn. We seem to share evening feeding time, these birds and the horses and I. Every evening as I toss hay I hear the sharp, insistent call of the male and look up to see him winging home with a dark, squirming morsel that he passes to the female waiting on her regular perch. And just the last few days I've heard what I had hoped for—the high, soft cries of babies from the hole in the tree—the baby kestrels are hatched and hungry!



male kestrel

The current recession has been hard on everyone, but nonprofits that operate close to the margin even during the best of times have been especially hard hit. The Amerind has had to make some difficult cuts in programs and staffing levels in order to make ends meet, but we will survive to prosper in the years to come thanks to the foresight of our founders, the generosity of our members, and the wisdom of our board.

A wise person once said that you should never allow a crisis to go to waste. With donations down and a reduced staff stretched to the limit, we're taking time this year to step back from the day to day operation of the research center and museum to do some strategic thinking and planning. Our hope is that when conditions improve, the Amerind will be poised to take immediate advantage of the recovery. We completed a draft of a 10-year development plan in April that should be ready to share with our membership this fall. Allow me to share just a few of the highlights:

- In the next ten years Amerind's staffing levels will need to increase about 80 percent to accommodate projected increases in foundation activities.
- One of the most important areas of growth will be in our advanced seminar programs, which will ramp up in the months and years ahead through collaborations with local and regional universities and research centers. New seminar initiatives will focus on Amerind's traditional study area, the Southwest Borderlands, as well as global sustainability and human ecology in deserts.
- Amerind's collections repository renovation is our top capital priority over the next decade. Gallery space that is currently devoted to collection storage will then be opened to the public, resulting in a 30 percent increase in exhibition and public programming space.
- Renovations to the museum and Fulton Seminar House over the next decade will include new roofs, air conditioning, and heating systems, landscaping and outdoor lighting, plumbing and other infrastructure upgrades, and handicapped access ramps in the museum and art gallery.
- As funds are available over the next few years, the residence directly across from the art gallery will be converted to an expanded museum store and museum café.
- By the second half of the decade we hope to complete two new construction projects: a multifunction public auditorium, classroom, and office complex north of the museum parking lot, and a new 3,000 square foot scholar house immediately south of our current scholar residence.

These are ambitious plans for a time of economic decline, but with faith in the long-term health of America's economy, the Amerind will continue to pursue its mission and serve its many diverse communities. In short, our proverbial glass is more than half full!

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

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mbahti@wildblue.net

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pejohnson@sundt.com

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

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kriser@desertmuseum.org

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Dan Shilling, Phoenix
danshilling@cox.net

Norman Yoffee, Santa Fe
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.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS AT THE AMERIND

September 12, 2009, 10:00 A.M.
BOTANY WALK with Barbara Hanson.
Meet at the front museum entrance.

October 8-14, 2009
Sky Island Journeys: People and Nature in SE Arizona. Tour based out of the Amerind Seminar House. Tour is full.

Additional programs, workshops, and tours are percolating. We're in the process of setting dates and ironing out details. You will receive information about the upcoming activities very soon.

It promises to be a great season!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL US AT 520.586.3666 OR VISIT US ON THE WEB: WWW.AMERIND.ORG