AN EVENING WITH DR. LAURA TOHE  
BY SHANNON TOOKE

I walk into a classroom not knowing what to expect for the evening’s event. It would be a night of poetry. I had the honor and pleasure of attending Dr. Laura Tohe’s (pronounced TOE-he) reading. She is the current Poet Laureate of the Navajo Nation. Her credentials are remarkable. Dr. Tohe holds a Ph.D. in Indigenous American Literature and is a professor at Arizona State University, where she teaches Distinction in Indigenous Literature. Dr. Tohe acquired her Ph.D. in 1993. Her writings include No Parole Today, Making Friends with Water Sister Nations Tséyi', Deep in the Rock,

BOOK NOOK  
BY ANTONIO NEZ

The Eagle Catcher: Arapaho Indian Mysteries by Margaret Coel

In the tepee of a murdered tribal chairman, the first to find the body was Father John O’Malley, S.J., a history scholar and recovering alcoholic exiled to an Indian mission on the Great Plains. It was night when the chairman was murdered at the Ethete powwow. There are multiple suspects but the main person of interest is the chairman’s nephew, Anthony Castle. Did he do it? Read the book to find out! Ask the library for it or order your own copy online!

CULTURAL CORNER: NUMBERS IN NAVAJO  
BY CHEYENNE CHEE

1. one t'áála’í
2. two naaki
3. three táá’
4. four dii’
5. five ashdla’
6. six hastááh
7. seven tsosts’id
8. eight tseebíí
9. nine náhást’éí
10. ten neeznáá

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov 3: CAPP, Newcomb Half Time Show
Nov 9: Student Forum @ 12:30
Nov 9: STEM Mentorship Poster Exhibition and CAPP Performance
Nov 14: City Council Meeting @ 7
Nov 16: Student Forum @ 12:30
Nov 17: CAPP, Price Campus
Nov 22-24: NO SCHOOL
Nov 28: City Council Meeting @ 7
Nov 30: Student Forum @ 12:30
Dec 4: Student Forum @ 12:30
**BLUE CORN MUSH**

Serves: 3-4

This is the basic, traditional recipe. Variations: Roast the cornmeal first, add dried apricots and/or dried peaches.

**Ingredients**
- 4 C of water
- 1 TBS juniper ashes
- 1 C blue cornmeal

**Instructions**

1. Burn juniper to get some ashes. It’s best if you burn a lot and have it at hand when needed. I only made a small amount for this recipe. You do have to clean whatever falls into the pan. I used a sifter. I will devote a blog just to making juniper ashes. From the amount I burnt (photo), I produced 3-4 tablespoons.

2. Bring water to a boil in a saucepan. Add the juniper ashes. Whisk in the cornmeal slowly to prevent it from lumping. Lower the heat and stir the cornmeal for 15 minutes or until it tastes done (It will get smooth and firm). The coarser the meal, the longer it will take.

If you want a firmer mush, use less water. A firmer mush can be fried in chunks. You will have to experiment, until you find the consistency that you prefer. Add a pinch of salt, to spice it up.

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**AN EVENING... CONTINUED**

and *Code Talker Stories*. Dr. Tohe is the proud daughter of a Navajo Code Talker. To add to her credentials, she was commissioned to write a libretto for the Phoenix Symphony and is currently collaborating with a French composer on another libretto that will be performed in parts of Europe in 2019.

To get a sense of who Dr. Tohe is, let us go back to the beginning of her life story. Dr. Tohe is born to the Sleepy Rock clan and born for the Bitter Water clan. She is from a small community known as Crystal, NM. As she described it, “There was only a dirt road that ran through town, north and south. There were only two phones there. We didn’t have a TV.” Although it was small, she spoke fondly and was proud of where she came from. It was the foundation to her many accomplishments. She is one of five children raised by her mother and is a mother to two sons. As she spoke of her family, her face illuminated. She stated her family is her biggest influence.

As a child, she loved to read books. She immersed herself in the books she read. As a child, loved to write but stated she didn’t have the confidence. Dr. Tohe stated her first attempt at poetry was an assignment at the university she attended. Her assignment was to write about “prison”. This was something she knew nothing about, as she had never been in prison much less incarcerated. This was a dilemma for her. Later, she realized she hadn’t been in prison but had been institutionalized. She grew up attending a boarding school. This was as close as it got for her. This was the beginning stages of her book: *No Parole Today*. She credits her professor who helped her unlock her creative poem writing. As Dr. Tohe began reading, the room silenced even more. She began to read several of her poems from "No Parole Today". The descriptive writing and the tone of her voice filled my imagination, as if I was there watching her story unfold. I was pulled back into the time of her childhood. The grace in which she spoke and descriptions were vivid. She was able to tap into her poems where listeners could smell, touch, see and feel the emotions in her poems. Her poems could take hours or weeks to write. Dr. Tohe read a poem her mother wrote called, *Killing the Son’s Horses*. It was beautifully written.

Dr. Tohe overcame many obstacles on this journey. It has gotten her where she is today. The influence of her life experiences and stories told is what she writes about most. She stated she grew up never reading any Native American writers. Today, there a numerous writers. Her contributions have given her the acclaim she so rightly deserves. One of her influences is “The House on Mango Street” written by Sandra Cisneros.

As the event ends, I walk out of the Dr. Tohe’s reading with a heartfelt sense of fulfillment. Listening to her readings reminded me when I was a child sitting and listening to a story being read to me; giving me the ability to use my imagination and create the story in my mind. There was no doubt in my mind, it was enjoyable and a real honor.
SCHOLARSHIP NEWS
BY SHANNON TOOKE

HALLOWEEN CARNIVAL
BY SHERRY BEGAY
The week of Halloween started with a bang at the 21st annual Halloween Carnival hosted by Student Council and Leadership students. This helps get everyone ready for Halloween night, a night to dress up in character and trick-or-treat across the community. It’s not just an ordinary night for children, it’s a night to playact who they want to be.

Th Halloween Carnival took place in the Arts and Events Center from 5-8 on October 30, 2017. This event is open to the public and offers a variety of booths to participate in. Children and adults alike were dressed in their costumes and helped to make this event a successful one!

The campus clubs did a terrific job making sure everyone had a great time! The AISES club manned the balloon darts, CAPP and Study Abroad sold food, the Nursing club helped kids golf, the Running club working the fish pond, the LDS institute overseeing the zombie game, and Leadership students working at the many other fun booths available. The cooperation and camaraderie of these clubs coming together helped to make this carnival extremely successful.

Seeing the joy of the children’s faces when they won a prize, enjoyed popcorn or cotton candy made all the effort worth it.

SENSATIONAL STAFF : A SPOTLIGHT
BY ALISHA NAKAI
Russell Keith is a recruiter for USU with an office on the Blanding campus. I got to know Mr. Keith through a presentation he did at Newcomb High School about becoming an Aggie and sharing with potential students what campus was like. Mr. Keith earned his Associate’s and Bachelor’s degree (Recreation Resource Management) at Utah State University, and has a certificate in Native American Studies. He was born in Shiprock, New Mexico, but has lived in Blanding his whole life. He has three boys, two girls and has been happily married for fourteen years (they will celebrate their fifteen year anniversary at the beginning of January).

When asked why he became a recruiter Mr. Keith explained that he was encouraged by watching young, first generation Navajos attend college. Even though this first generation doesn’t have all the answers about college, he enjoys watching these young adults change while attending USU on the Blanding campus. He is encouraged by their resourcefulness in finding funding to attend school as well as the courage it takes to leave home and further their education. “It’s all about the next step and learning from mistakes!” he added.

Mr. Keith is one of many staff members with a goal of assisting students to reach for and achieve their goals. This focus on student success is what makes him look forward to coming to work every day. His definition of success is doing something you love. Success isn’t about the money, it’s about enjoying life and being genuinely happy. Mr. Keith states with conviction, “I’m successful!” This was the first time I had heard someone proudly say this. Most of us are so used to being put down by society but not Mr. Keith!

He continues to strive to help make a difference in people’s lives. He is succeeding one persona at a time. How do I know this? He helped make my decision easier about becoming an Aggie!

MOVIE REVIEW : WIND RIVER (R)
BY ALISHA NAKAI
After a long day, my mother and I settled down to watch a movie. Wind River is about a seasoned tracker who helps investigate the murder of a young Native American woman. The case helps redeem him from a tragedy long ago. This movie includes some scenes of sexual assault and domestic violence. The movie kept our attention and kept us guessing about what was coming next. Fortunately there is no cliffhanger ending and you will get the closure you desperately want from this storyline. When you find out what actually happens it will leave you speechless! I highly recommend this movie.
FUN FACTS

*While Americans typically use the word "Fall", the British use "Autumn" though both terms date around the 16th century. Before these terms, the period was called "Harvest". ~Sherry Begay

*The first Thanksgiving feast lasted for three full days. ~Sara Vermaas

*Autumn begins when the center of the sun crosses Earth's equator. As Earth continues its path around the sun, days become shorter and nights become longer, with the change most noticeable for those at higher latitudes. ~Alisha Nakai

*Fall was called “harvest” because of the “harvest moon” that occurs when the full moon is closest to the autumnal equinox. Before man-made lighting, this moonlight was essential to a prosperous harvest. ~Cheyenne Chee

*The name 'November' is believed to derive from 'novem' which is the Latin for the number 'nine'. In the ancient Roman calendar November was the ninth month after March. As part of the seasonal calendar November is the time of the 'Snow Moon' according to Pagan beliefs and the period described as the 'Moon of the Falling Leaves' by Black Elk." ~Shannon Tooke

*According to superstition, catching leaves in autumn brings good luck. Every leaf means a lucky month next year. ~Antonio Nez

*The pumpkin was first named in Greece. They called it a “pepon,” which means “large melon”. ~Cindy Behunin

SPECTACULAR STUDENTS: A SPOTLIGHT

BY CHEYENNE CHEE

In honor of National Native American Heritage Month, I interviewed Kayla Frank who is a proud Navajo USU student. Her clans are: Bitahni, Ashihi, Kinlichii, and Bilagaana. She is from Aneth, Utah. She is also a San Juan High 2013 graduate who is currently pursuing her bachelor's degree in Social Work. Her ultimate career goal is to become a social worker.

Kayla recently participated in the Miss Northern Navajo pageant held in Shiprock, NM during the first week of October. In the end she secured the position of runner-up. Kayla said her inspiration was her paternal grandfather who passed away 15 years ago. He coordinated and was a member of the Shiprock Fair committee. Kayla felt connected to her Nalí Hastiin as she participated in the pageant. She was recognized with the awards for the Best Traditional Food and Miss Congeniality.

Kayla is a natural leader, as identified by community and school members. Her career goal is to serve her small community of Aneth as a social worker since they are currently lacking one. She wishes to return home to help children and the community as a whole.

I asked Kayla, “What makes you most proud of a being Native American?” She said she cannot answer that fully, but she is proud not only to be Navajo but to be a Navajo woman. In Navajo culture, women are known as “warrior leaders.” It is up to them to represent themselves and their clan in a positive light. It is also up to them to continue the clan flow (the first clan of any Navajo individual comes from their mother*).

Kayla says her favorite Navajo food is chilchin and blue corn mush. She loves to eat frybread with chilchin and tortillas with blue corn mush.

It was an honor to interview Kayla Frank. She is an inspiration not only to me, but to USU and the Navajo Nation.

*Many Native American tribes, including Navajos, have a maternal society. This means that their kinship lineage follows the maternal line instead of the paternal line (like in Anglo tradition). (C.Behunin)

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