Running Club gearing up for Shiprock Marathon

By Jeremy Yazzie
Voice Editor

GALLUP—Nursing major and president of the UNM-G Running Club Lindsey Toddy will be running 26.2 miles in the Shiprock Marathon on May 7 to maintain his sobriety.

“It’s important to me (sobriety) because I grew up with alcohol and I seen how it destroys people and how it destroyed me.

“I still consider myself an alcoholic, but running helps me stay sober,” said Toddy.

Toddy has been sober for five years.

Lindsey Toddy and Terence Willie stretching before practice.

His austere demeanor may come off intimidating or not typical of a marathon athlete, but Toddy has completed four Shiprock marathons and be hosting the annual march and community speak-out to continue to raise awareness about the Uranium Tailing Spill march and press conference at the Red Water Pond Road community, near Church Rock, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye said, “If this disaster occurred near any major city, the Environmental Protection Agency would’ve responded quickly and began cleanup, but because this occurred on the Navajo reservation, we are not a priority.

“Currently, this is not a clean-up.

“It’s a cover up,” said Begaye as he pointed to the disaster site behind him.

On July 16, the Red Water Pond Road Community Association will be hosting the annual march and community speak-out to continue to raise awareness about the Uranium Tailing Spill.

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Editorial

The UNM-Gallup community lost a long-time advocate and educator in March when Dr. Gloria Dyc, the campus’ only Regent’s Professor, died unexpectedly. Colleagues and students are still in shock, but we also take with us all of the caring and laughter and intensity she gave us.

Dr. Dyc, who was a practicing Tibetan Buddhist, always spoke about students as the only reason we are here.

As the Buddha said, “My disciples, the teachings that I have given you are never to be forgotten or abandoned. They are always to be treasured...they are to be practised. If you follow these teachings you will always be happy.”

That last part is indicative of how Gloria lived her life, especially here at UNM-Gallup.

She could be a practical joker, especially on April Fool’s Day. And it wasn’t unusual to see her dressed up as a character such as Louisa May Alcott for a reading, or something different for Halloween.

It also wasn’t unusual to hear singing coming from some of her class-rooms as she tried to help students relax and enjoy classes while exposing them to music and ideas they might not normally be exposed to.

Just as important is the sense of social justice she attempted to instil in her students and her colleagues. Having grown up in Detroit, Gloria knew that social justice wasn’t some abstract idea to be venerated, but something to be practised.

“Thousands of people may live in a community but is not one of them of real fellowship until they know each other and have sympathy for one another,” the Buddha said.

While Gloria Dyc might have changed the word sympathy for empathy, the sentiment is the same: We make our communities stronger by doing good and with learning.

“...a teacher should act rightly before a pupil and set a good example for him; he should correctly pass on to him the teaching he has learned...and he should not forget to protect the pupil from evil in every possible way,” the Buddha said.

Gloria Dyc lived by that philosophy and the many students, colleagues, friends and family will enjoy what she gave them of herself long after the sorrow softens.

-- Robert Galin

UNM-G and Navajo Transit System Working to Improve Commute for Students

By Adrian L. Keyonnie
Voice Staff Writer

GALLUP--In the fall semester of 2015, Mel Sanderson, business major and current president of the American Indian Business Association (AIBA) conducted a survey/questionnaire on the schedules, routes, customer priority, and performance of the Navajo Transit Bus System (NTBS).

The information and data he collected developed a proposal for a collaboration between NTBS and UNM-G that would improve services.

“This could be a satisfactory compromise to alleviate some anxiety,” Sanderson said. As the past president of the UNM-G Student Veterans Association (UNM-GSVA), Sanderson developed this idea after noticing that students were turned away due to the lack of bus seats.

“Over the course of my academic career, I have observed many discrepancies while commuting with other UNM-G students,” Sanderson said.

Sanderson presented his proposal to UNM-G CEO Christopher Dyer, Ph.D.

Acknowledging the problem, Dyer outlined the steps that the process would entail. First, the proposal

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Women’s History Month: ‘You are not alone’

By Kelsey Padilla  
Voice Staff Writer

GALLUP—March was Women’s History Month. Assistant English professor Myrriah Gomez and a handful of students organized a series of events to support the mission of Sing Our Rivers Red (SORR) movement, which aims to bring awareness to the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women and colonial gender based violence in the U.S. and Canada.

Violence against Native American women in the U.S. and Canada is often poorly documented, but the organization Futures Without Violence estimates that one in three Native women will be raped in their lifetime and Native women are 50 percent more likely to be sexually assaulted than Anglo women.

The two day event included a public reading of work from Southern Ute poet Tanaya Winder who said, “The minute we stop telling our stories, we (women) become invisible and we disappear.”

Other events included a traveling exhibition of displayed earrings and each pair represented a missing or murdered woman.

There were over one hundred pairs displayed in Gurley Hall.

A speak-out was scheduled which gave students a platform to read poetry, advocate for legislation to protect women, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people and a few students took the opportunity to publicly talk about their experiences of assault and rape.

Liberal Arts major Tia Howard said she hopes these awareness events will lead people that feel isolated or shamed to “… know that you are not alone and that you are loved.”

A candlelight vigil followed.

Gomez said that the week’s events helped to bring students interested in this cause out of the woodwork and that she hopes to organize similar events in the future.

For more information about SORR, visit the website at singourriversred.wordpress.com.

If you are interested in getting involved or have questions, contact Myrriah Gomez at 505-863-7592.
Professor Kee Goes Hollywood

By Melorie Begay
Voice Staff Writer

GALLUP--UNM-G’s Associate Professor of Navajo Joe Kee was one of the consultants in two mainstream films in the Navajo language.

Kee translated “Star Wars: Episode IV-A New Hope” and “Finding Nemo.”

Kee first auditioned for “Star Wars” in 2013 and was selected along with four other translators.

He enjoyed translating the film so much that he auditioned for “Finding Nemo” and was selected again.

While Kee had fun translating, he said that translating was only part of the work.

He worked as a consultant to ensure the directors of dubbing and adaptation, and the actors, were accurately pronouncing the translation.

“My role as a translator was not just simply to translate and take a script, but many voice actors that auditioned for the parts lacked the skill of reading and writing Navajo,” Kee said.

Dubbing mainstream films is part of an ongoing initiative by the Navajo Nation Museum to get younger generations to speak Navajo.

According to freshman Liberal Arts major, Jonathan Tsinajinnie, it’s working.

“It helped me to want to learn,” he said. “I know a lot, but I want to learn more, to teach the younger ones who can’t understand or speak (Navajo) themselves,” said Tsinajinnie about “Finding Nemo.”

When asked if these films were dubbed to save the language, Kee answered, “It depends on who you ask.”

He added that the Navajo language isn’t dying.

“Our goal really is to help people of all generations to where the goal might be to revitalize, re-energize and to have the Navajo kids become inspired and to ask questions about the language,” he explained.

When asked if Navajo youth who intend on leaving the area should still learn Navajo, Kee responded that the Navajo Nation Museum sought out Disney and that in itself is proof that preserving the language isn’t confined to the reservation.

“Possibilities are endless. They do not end just simply by leaving the reservation and leaving behind a language,” Kee said.

Kee said that it’s possible to use Navajo in just about anything.

Dubbing these movies was a stepping-off point.

The dubbing of “Star Wars” and “Finding Nemo” may also contribute to efforts for better Native American representation in Hollywood.

“The media portrays Native people oftentimes in a way that we would feel is wrong and that we’re misrepresented,” he said.

Misrepresentation on-screen, according to Kee, comes in the form of Hollywood generalizing Native Americans and assuming they are one culture with one language.

Kee said that although all the actors onscreen are not Navajo, the dubbing shows that Navajos have the ability to act and perform to Hollywood’s standards.

He also hopes younger generations will see that Navajo can be modernized and is just a relevant as English.

Navajo dubbed films can be purchased at the Navajo Nation Museum.

The media portrays Native people oftentimes in a way that we would feel is wrong and that we’re misrepresented.
Early Childhood and Family Center a Year Later

By Melolrie Begay
Voice Staff Writer

GALLUP--It’s been a year since the Early Childhood and Family Center re-opened.

Although the center has encountered a few issues, Director Kelly Dineyazhe-Hunter and Program Consultant Judith Lavender said they’re content with where the center’s at now.

“Whenever you start something new you’re never going be on a smooth continuum. ‘What you strive for is to focus on your goals,” Lavender said.

A common misconception about the center is that it’s a daycare.

Parents should know that the center is not a daycare; instead it educates both families and children.

“It’s really important that we as educators, especially early childhood educators, that we help advocate and support our families,” said Hunter.

One of the issues the center has faced is the number of staff they’ve had to let go.

This is in part due the Reggio Emilia teaching method the center uses.

“The philosophy of Reggio that we’re using in our classroom is a very non-traditional approach to education.

“It’s more organic, where children are the natural investigators of their environment and that’s co-facilitated by the adults in the classroom,” Hunter said.

This requires teachers to be aware of interests and use that as a tool for learning.

For example, a teacher gave a lesson on public transportation when she noticed her class enjoyed playing with toy cars.

Despite the staff leaving, the center is fully staffed.

The center is also working to establish itself as a learning center throughout the Gallup community.

The center is also fully enrolled which Lavender takes as a sign of success.

About 50 percent of students come from the Gallup and surrounding communities and the other 50 percent are children with parents who attend UNM-G.

The center operates Monday through Friday from 7:45 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. and the center accepts children ages six months to four years.

For more information or addition, contact Kelly Dineyazhe-Hunter at 505-863-7632.

Running Club

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The Running Club was able to raise $500 to participate in the marathon during the Spring Fling 5K and one-mile fun run on March 19, Toddy said.

Vice President and Criminal Justice major Terence Willie said this is his first Shiprock Marathon and he joined the club in March because he enjoys running, which he said maintains a good balance in mental and physical health.

Willie runs four to five miles a day and to prepare for the marathon, he runs Pyramid Trail at Red Rock State Park.

“If you are interested in keeping your health up and enjoy running, join the running club in the fall,” said Willie.

If students are interested in joining the club for the 2016 fall semester, students must be taking a minimum of six credit hours, pay a $10 fee, which covers one semester, and obtain a medical clearance, said Chavez.

For more information on joining the club, contact Cynthia Chavez at 505-863-7589 or Terence Willie at 505-862-3100.
Transit
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would have to be presented to the New Mexico legislature, next to the Student Council of UNM-G, and finally, the Navajo Nation Council.

“The highest percentage of drop outs that UNM-G notices are from students who must commute long distances,” Dyer said.

“I know some students come from as far away as Chinle to attend school and I would just like to get them to class on a reasonable schedule so that they may graduate on time.”

The NTBS is the largest rural bus system in United States. With 18 bus routes across the Navajo Nation, the Gallup route that stops at UNM-G is the shortest route.

Also, NTBS is regulated and financed by the Federal Government.

The price of an all day pass that is reusable on all routes is affordable for UNM-G students at $2.

The morning bus averages 1,000 miles a week just going to the UNM campus and this bus is clocking in at 300,000 miles, according to NTBS.

So far, the wear and tear on the engine is producing a profound effect due to delays and decreased carrying capacities from the replacement buses, according to the NTBS.

Dyer proposed leasing a charter bus for morning student commuters.

Providing student housing is UNM-G’s first priority.

“We are looking into renting available apartments and/or maybe having a host family take in a student,” Dyer said.

Also being considered is a student scholarship that could go towards housing and/or transportation.

Dyer added that, “The University of New Mexico was expecting from the state gas revenue $280 million but we got $19 million.

“Obviously, that’s a huge difference,” also adding, “It’s just bleak to lose revenue.”

The problem became very apparent to Dyer, when students who traveled great distances for classes conducted a round table discussion with Jayme McMahon of UNM-G Student Affairs during the spring of 2015.

This discussion is documented on film called “Changing Worlds 2020,” produced and directed in collaboration by Joe Elliot Nez and Lloyd Begay.

The film can be seen on the UNM LOBO website or Youtube.com.

The content features some of the unique challenges UNM-G students face and included are their appreciation as scholarship recipients.

NTBS was not available for further questions.

Students at the recent Diversity Conference held in Gurley Hall on Wednesday, April 27. Students from Assistant Professor Shirley Heying’s Anthropology 101 and 204 classes and students from Heying’s Cultural Geography class prepared presentations concerning cultures around the world and in the Zuni community.
Uranium

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Uranium Tailings Spill in their community.

Uranium is a silvery heavy radioactive metallic chemical element used as a source of atomic energy and the U.S. EPA estimated that there are approximately 520 Abandoned Uranium Mines and five uranium mill sites on the Navajo Nation and of those, in McKinley County alone there are 120 AUM, of which are 80 percent are on Navajo lands, according to the Addressing Uranium Contamination on the Navajo Nation Report.

Then on Aug. 5, 2015 the Gold King Mine waste spill near Silverton, C.O. added pressure to the EPA due to the magnitude of the environmental disaster that contaminated water that provided nourishment for livestock and agrarian communities along the Animas River was immeasurable to the legacy of the “Church Rock Tailings Spill” of July 1979.

As a college student, where or how do you begin to make a difference?

According to UNM-G Sociologist Professor Dr. Lora Stone, “Social movements and grassroots movements are the best way to raise awareness.

“A shared identity or cause, plus shared goals unites a movement and sharing resources gets everyone involved.”

Stone urges students to show up, talk to people and participate.

She continued, “This entire region is at risk and there are big companies who will use political and economic resources to get what they want. “Challenge the elite.”

According to the Mortality Among Navajo Uranium Miners report in the American Journal of Public Health, research has found the death rates of Navajo uranium miners was 3.3 times greater than for the U.S. average for lung cancer.

As for non-occupational exposure, people living near a uranium mine or mill site, were exposed by ingesting drinking water obtained from unregulated water sources or eating foods that have been cooked with herbs grown on near a mine or mill; inhaling dust particles while working in mines or living in homes constructed from mine and mill site wastes; dermal exposure by playing or washing in contaminated streams, therefore the EPA has concluded the most common health effects from elevated levels of uranium and other radionuclides are lung cancer, bone cancer, and impaired kidney functions.

As of April 2014, more than 1,300 Navajos had received compensation under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act for illnesses from occupational radiation exposure as uranium miners, millers or ore transporters, according to the EPA’s Federal Actions to Address Impacts of Uranium Contamination in the Navajo Nation: Five Year Summary.