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MAGAZINE



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Naropa University is a private, nonprofit, nonsectarian liberal arts institution dedicated to advancing contemplative education. This approach to learning integrates the best of Eastern and Western educational traditions, helping students know themselves more deeply and engage constructively with others. The university comprises a four-year undergraduate college and graduate programs in the arts, education, environmental leadership, psychology and religious studies.

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COVER ART: *Birches, Mt. Philo, Vermont* ©1983, Robert Spellman, Visual Arts faculty

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# A Reflection on Transitions

As Leigh and I move into our last months at Naropa, there are opportunities to reflect at every turn. We have loved this work: the people, the mission, the opportunities to grow. We have been the beneficiaries of a quality of life at Naropa that I have come to call “an ever-present invitation to ever-greater openness.” What makes Naropa such a gift to the world is the way it weaves together the academic and the contemplative and makes the resulting synthesis available on a daily basis to all who study and work here. As our students go forth as graduates, this quality has prepared them, in the words of our revised mission statement, “to meet the world as it is and to change it for the better.” How fortunate is everyone who has the opportunity to taste this transformative quality!

As I consider how Naropa as an institution has grown over the past six years, I am most gratified by the increased intentionality of our work, crafting a shared vision for our future, even as we need to remain agile in the face of changing circumstances. The starting point for this transformation was the revision of Naropa’s mission statement, led by the board of trustees, which was subsequently developed in a broad-based strategic planning process that involved more than one hundred members of the faculty and staff, students, townspeople and a professional consultant. The resulting ten-year plan—“Deliver Distinction with Excellence”—was resoundingly endorsed by the board last fall, and we have been busily about its implementation ever since.

As important as the substance of this plan, I believe, is the transparency with which it was developed. This, too, reflects an increased institutional maturity, an honesty about who we are and a self-confidence that will serve us well as we embark on the next chapter in Naropa’s rich history. As I have come to know my successor, Dr. Stuart Lord, through the early stages of the presidential transition, I have come to share the trustees’ enthusiastic conviction that he will provide Naropa with inspired

leadership, even as he will be nurtured by the community in his own growth, as Leigh and I have been.

Transitions, of course, are bittersweet occasions, as we wean ourselves from the familiar and step forward into the unknown. As I reflect on transitions at Naropa, in the recent past and on the near horizon, both individual and collective, I am drawn back to the central point in my welcoming talk to new students each fall: research shows that all learning occurs optimally under conditions of moderate discomfort. Too much discomfort and we fear for our safety. Too much comfort and we are not stimulated. All learning and all growth depends on being suspended in this in-between space, on being in some form of transition, wending our way inquisitively and compassionately into whatever lies ahead.

There are, of course, deep contemplative implications here. Emphasis on the present moment, and recognition of mundane impermanence, are woven into the contemplative life everywhere. They bring in their wake both wistfulness and joy. I think this is what the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein had in mind when he wrote: “Death is not an event in life: we do not live to experience death. If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present.”

Thank you, Naropa University, for the privilege of spending this six-year sequence of present moments, each infinitely deep, in your company.

Thomas B. Coburn, President

## Dartmouth College Provost to be New Naropa President

On April 8, the Naropa University Board of Trustees announced the appointment of Dr. Stuart C. Lord, current associate provost at Dartmouth College, as the 5th president of Naropa University. He will take office on July 1.



“I am delighted and honored to have been chosen,” said Lord. “I very much appreciate the encouragement and support that I have received from so many members of this community. I take on this responsibility with great seriousness of purpose, with great enthusiasm and with great joy.”

Lord grew up in New Rochelle, New York, and after graduating from Texas Christian University in 1982, he attended Princeton Theological Seminary,

graduating with a Master of Divinity and a Master of Theology. In 1993, he received the Doctor of Ministry degree with a specialization in multicultural education from Union Theological Seminary. Finding common ground amongst the world’s wisdom traditions, he is also an active member of the Karmê Chöling Shambhala Meditation Center in Vermont.

During his time at Dartmouth College, Lord has served as associate provost (2000–present), interim vice president for institutional diversity (2006–07) and Virginia Rice Kelsey ‘61S Dean of the Tucker Foundation (2000–08). As associate provost, he worked on initiatives for institutional planning within the Provost Division to enhance staff development, retention and recruitment in support of diversity. He was named co-chair of the Provost Diversity Council to foster greater collaboration. He has worked to establish stronger links between a number of programs on campus and the surrounding community, and has provided assistance to the provost on various planning projects. He continues to oversee Project Bangladesh, a student-led initiative with the goal of building an orphanage in Charfassion, Bangladesh, which was established at the Tucker Foundation under his leadership.

While Dr. Lord was dean of the William Jewett Tucker Foundation, it emerged as one of the nation’s leading on-campus civic service and spiritual life centers with student body participation in the foundation’s programs growing from approximately 45 percent to more than 70 percent. To foster and support this growth, Dr. Lord restructured the administrative backbone of the foundation,

defined a new strategic direction, increased annual giving by more than 800 percent and oversaw a near tripling of the endowment.

Appointed as Dartmouth’s vice president for institutional diversity and equity on an interim basis for the 2007–08 academic year, Lord provided campus leadership on issues of equity, diversity and equality. In conjunction with school deans and department heads, he worked to establish diversity plans for each graduate school and department and for the provost’s division. In this position, he also advised the college’s president and Human Resources on diversity-related campus and personnel issues.

“Naropa University is delighted to have selected a new president who is superbly matched and equipped to serve both the university’s current and future needs,” says Board of Trustees Chair Martin Janowitz. “The enthusiasm expressed from all quarters indicates the positive spirit across our university community about the appointment of Dr. Stuart C. Lord.”

## Earth Day Celebration Signals Completion of Naropa Greenhouse

In May of 2007, Jeff Chamberlin and Leigh Burbank, both BA Environmental Studies students, submitted a 41-page proposal for the construction of a greenhouse on the Arapahoe Campus. Now, less than two years later, a 22-foot-wide geodesic dome and accompanying potting shed are tangible additions to Naropa’s west side, where they share an architectural aesthetic with the Tea House.

A testament to student initiative and cooperation between campus offices, the William D. Jones Community Greenhouse will have its grand opening, appropriately, on Earth Day, April 22. Inside, students of permaculture, ikebana and diverse environmental studies will find an eight-hundred-gallon fish tank, gardening tools, planting beds and numerous shelves for growing food, seedlings and landscaping shrubs.



First proposed in 2007, the Naropa greenhouse became a reality this year through the cooperative effort of students, staff and faculty.

Originating in Marco Lam's Applied Horticulture class, the idea was to create a laboratory environment that would double as a model of permaculture principles, where the products of one element serve the needs of another. Fish live in the tank and add fertilizer to the water, which, in turn, nourishes the plants; the plants provide human sustenance, and the leftovers become fish food, etc. Students will experiment with adding to, and perfecting, the living cycles. The Facilities Department will also reserve a corner from which it can draw flowers and shrubs for landscaping.

Energy for a fan, heating system and other electrical needs comes from a combination of the dome's own 1.3-kilowatt-producing solar panels and the solar panels on the adjacent Print Shop that were donated and installed by Namasté Solar Electric. The ADA-accessible greenhouse was purchased as a kit from Growing Spaces, a Pagosa Springs-based business and, thanks to many donations and volunteer hours, it became reality for a total construction cost of \$55,000.

Naropa Green Building instructor and local architect Brian Bowen drafted blueprints, Center Management Group's Michael Johan and John Sajban handled contracting and dome expert Allen Werthan provided construction insights.

"We had a lot of help, including more than fifteen students over the two days it took to assemble the dome," says Landscape Manager Costen Aytes, "and a graduate assistant from Environmental Leadership will oversee it each semester."

Crews comprised of staff, faculty and students broke ground in early November and, with the exception of some external details, completed the project in four months. In the words of Sandy Goldman, vice president for operations, the greenhouse was one of the "most comprehensive, well-researched, student-driven proposals that I have ever witnessed at the university."

## The Fab Four Scores Fall Ceremony

"I wanted to learn to be with myself; I wanted to learn to be with this world without fighting, without pushing away or attempting to control my reality. I wanted to learn to live in the storm of this life with equanimity. I wanted to tell you about this." With these words, BA Contemplative Psychology graduate Alicia Searing Hagge addressed the 2008 ceremony to honor fall graduates.

When combined with the remarks of fellow BA Psychology graduate Quetzo Herejk, student voices were particularly well-represented this year, taking their place beside the faculty address (words of Peace Studies faculty Sudarshan Kapur read by Chair Candace Walworth), trustee address (Brooks Witter) and reflections of President Coburn.

Naropa recognized the accomplishments of fifty-seven students from seventeen degree programs with the traditional playing



Candles, generally accompanied by a faculty or student musical performance, are a longstanding tradition at the fall ceremony.

of bagpipes, lighting of candles and presentation of scrolls from President Coburn, as well as PAC Administrative Coordinator Treneater Horton's musical tribute "Choose to Be."

In addition, students from Robert Sussuma's Naropa Chorus donned shirts displaying such descriptive words as "JOKER" or "HEART" and sang three songs: The Beatles' "Come Together" and "Revolution" in conjunction with the Grassroots Chorus, followed by John Lennon's "Imagine."

Congratulations to Naropa University's fall graduates.

## Dead Man Walking Author Gives Second Annual Peace Lecture

Fourteen years ago, the campaign of Sister Helen Prejean captured the public's imagination when the film adaptation of her Pulitzer Prize-nominated book *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States* was nominated for numerous Academy awards—resulting in a best actress win for Susan Sarandon, who portrayed Prejean.

Today, the Catholic nun from Louisiana continues her quest to end the death penalty. As this year's guest speaker at the annual John and Bayard Cobb Peace Lecture held on April 20, Prejean shared her experiences interacting with death row prisoners and discussed the possibility of their innocence—a theme addressed in her second book, *The Death of Innocents: An Eyewitness Account of Wrongful Executions*.

When his wife, Bayard, gave him a recorded NPR interview with Prejean several years ago, former Naropa University President John Cobb found it particularly applicable to his class on the U.S. Bill of Rights.

"Each year, the discussion of the Eighth Amendment (the prohibition against 'cruel and unusual punishment') was the most difficult and emotional," he says. "While many, if not

most of us, were against capital punishment as a matter of policy, the heinous crimes we read about provoked almost a visceral anger.... It was hard to imagine, both for myself and the students, getting involved—whether in prison work, victim’s rights advocacy, social work or whatever—without being immediately trapped and disabled by one’s own emotions, particularly anger.

“The interview was the portrayal of...an advocate’s heart and mind.... It highlighted the key interplay of advocacy and outcome with one’s capacity for unconditional compassion. Can we confront wrongdoing, violence and even warfare without infusing the situation with our own anger, resentment or the more subtle aggression of a personal righteousness? These are core issues in peacemaking. Because of Sister Helen’s courage in tackling these issues, Bayard and I felt inviting her to give the Second Annual Peace Lecture would be a wonderful contribution to the Peace Studies program and Naropa as a whole.”

Students in the course “Nonviolence in and through History” are reading Prejean’s second book this semester. Issues explored include the capital appeals process, race, poverty and the politics of capital punishment.

Peace Studies Chair Candace Walworth suggests that both Prejean and Naropa students listen deeply, ask challenging questions and act based on their deepest spiritual values. “By studying Sister Helen’s book,” she says, “Naropa students wrestle with constitutional arguments, her theological correspondence with Pope John Paul II and her intimate portraits of condemned men moments before their deaths.”

As founder of the Moratorium Campaign, Prejean brings several anti-death penalty petitions with her to each speaking event. These were made available to attendees of the lecture.

## New Bookstore Thrives on Reciprocity

If an all-business-and-no-play atmosphere were the hearts’ desire of Naropa students, then the new campus bookstore would not fit the bill. Boasting a new paint job, new shelving, new carpet and a lounge chair befitting anyone who enjoys the feel of a Scottish cottage, the space is one pumpkin pie away from ridiculously cozy. Add two golden labs named Melinda and Isabella and the line is officially crossed.

MA Contemplative Psychotherapy alumna (’91) Nancy Young bought the bookstore from Ralph Basch last winter and has been learning the ropes at a hectic pace. “This is everybody’s bookstore,” she says. “We know we will be here for a long time if we support the community and the community supports us in turn. The book business is definitely in transition, and the

campus store will stay competitive by expanding our used book selection and end-of-semester buyback program. This is a great way for students to sell back used books and for new students to get good discounts on the books they need. It is a ‘win-win’ situation for everyone.”

Young, a New York native who studied East Indian religion and literature at Yale, has always loved reading. “It is hard to stare at these covers all day and not get to read everything!” she says. “It is wonderful to see books on Buddhism, Islam, Christianity and Judaism side-by-side on the shelf; peace studies and environmental studies offer important titles for our current economic and political climate; the psychology materials are rigorous and cutting edge; and the writing program selections are phenomenal. Not surprisingly, just in the past few months, I have had to admit to my middle age and purchase reading glasses!”

Emphasizing a commitment to good customer service and accessibility, Young plans to keep the store open during Summer Writing Program readings and book signings, as well as bring required books directly to the Nalanda and Paramita campuses. A new online service beginning in May ([www.naropabookstore.com](http://www.naropabookstore.com)) will allow students to order textbooks directly from the site, and other products such as Naropa-brand clothing will be local, organic and free trade whenever possible.

Young credits many of these changes to direct input from community members gathered through a survey. She knows that, in a modern world of online book wholesalers, staying competitive depends on a solid relationship with your core customers. “In order for the store to remain viable, we need the support of students, faculty and staff,” she says. “We always welcome suggestions and will offer ‘perks’ for shopping with us.” Besides, she adds, “I like knowing what the younger folks are up to. We had about thirty students in the store watching the inauguration on television, and a few of them were crying. It felt like a very important moment.” That’s an experience Amazon.com doesn’t sell.



New bookstore owner Nancy Young poses with her son, Jacob, and unofficial mascots Melinda and Isabella.

## SNAPSHOTS

Assistant Vice  
President for Student  
Administrative Services

# Cheryl Barbour



**n!:** *Where did you grow up, and what brought you to Naropa?*  
I grew up in a small town in upstate NY, in the Finger Lakes region. I was really anxious to move somewhere with more sun...after living most of my life in an area with sixty plus days of sunshine. A friend told me about a job in financial aid at Naropa. I had studied Eastern philosophy and was intrigued by it. I also liked the idea that [Naropa] was a small but growing institution with an opportunity for me to make a difference.

**n!:** *What does an Assistant VP for SAS do?*  
I oversee the areas of registration, financial aid, tuition cashier and institutional research. I spend a lot of time working with federal regulations and reporting requirements, writing congress and national organizations to lobby on behalf of student interests, and awarding and managing approximately \$17 million in financial aid.

**n!:** *What's the oddest federal regulation that you've encountered?*  
Congress added the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program designed to help...pay off the student loan balance, at the end of ten years, for students working in defined public service fields. The catch? In order to qualify, students need to make the minimum payments necessary to pay off the loan within ten years. Think about that one for a minute.

**n!:** *What are the pros and cons of the position?*  
The best stories happen when a student says, "I'd love to attend but I just can't see how I can make it work without another \$2,000." My favorite part is helping them find ways around those obstacles to make their goals possible. There is nothing better than seeing these students graduate. My least favorite part is having to tell a student that, even after

exhausting all possible resources, it may not be the right time to be at Naropa.

**n!:** *What is the role of financial aid in meeting the objectives of the strategic plan?*  
The plan calls for a relatively dramatic increase in enrollment while, at the same time, reducing the percentage of the university's budget spent on financial aid. It makes sense that we would want to spend less on aid while increasing tuition revenue by attracting additional students. However, it is a highly complex issue because financial assistance is directly

related to recruitment and retention of students. Many students and parents are comparing Naropa to less expensive state school options, so affordability and value are extremely important issues. Financial aid also plays a role in meeting the plan's call for increased economic and ethnic diversity in the student body.

**n!:** *How do diversity and access issues come into play?*  
For many students, nationally, finances are an enormous barrier to obtaining a higher education degree. Helping students remove this barrier is highly rewarding. More than 40 percent of Naropa undergraduates qualify for Federal Pell Grants, which means they have fewer financial resources. Many Naropa students are also the first in their family to attend college or come from a background that places little emphasis on obtaining a degree. Helping these students navigate the complex process of applying for aid is critical in helping them see that obtaining a degree is possible.

**n!:** *If you could add one more major, what would it be?*  
Naropa could offer some unique ways of approaching science that would be attractive to students, although I'd also love to see history and philosophy.

**n!:** *Why didn't you become an aerospace engineer?*  
After a year [with that major], I re-evaluated my goals and decided I wasn't particularly comfortable with the likelihood that I'd end up working for the defense industry. I changed majors and focused on sociology and philosophy. While I don't agree with his beliefs on gender issues, my favorite philosopher is Sartre. I relate to his focus on free will. Interestingly, existentialism and Buddhism have a lot in common.



# Charting the Future

## Naropa's New Strategic Plan Sets a Course for Years to Come

Adaptation to environment, the principle by which any organism thrives, applies as well to institutions competing in the realm of higher education as to caribou on the tundra or sea life in the ocean depths. In the case of Naropa University, that means setting concrete goals for the future and committing the necessary resources to make it happen.

After years of ongoing discussion and planning amongst the community, the board of trustees hired Wellspring Consultants in 2007 to both consolidate ideas and suggest new ones. The result was an extensive strategic plan calling for comprehensive changes that will guide Naropa's development for the foreseeable future and leave no department untouched. Last September, the board of trustees and various leadership groups, which included faculty, staff, students and senior administration, voted unanimously to implement "Deliver Distinction with Excellence."

"To use a metaphor," says Naropa University President Thomas B. Coburn, "the strategic plan is an analysis, the calculations that the skipper of a sailboat will use to reach an island on the far horizon." Recognizing that voyages don't always go as planned, Coburn adds that an "auxiliary engine and some gasoline" are on board to solve unanticipated details such as a struggling economy.

In fact, a once-favored decrease in financial aid funds has been overturned in favor of increasing scholarship dollars by \$100,000. This, says Coburn, “is in recognition of the economy and the resulting increased need to help students.”

Funding for such extensive change will come from enrollment growth, new fundraising initiatives and approximately \$2 million garnered from bequests and property sales.

Identifying who we are helps us know who we want to be, and the plan starts by delivering a succinct definition of what makes Naropa unique. Produced by a joint trustee/senior staff/Cauldron team, the official statement stresses “a balance of academic study, contemplative practice and engagement in the world” and:

*a heightened awareness of the interconnectedness and fundamental goodness of all beings.... Such an education transforms ordinary knowledge into wisdom and cultivates compassion and service to others as the hallmark of an educated person. Naropa recognizes that education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century must speak to all dimensions of a human being: intellectual, emotional, aesthetic, ethical, spiritual and somatic.... This gift honors Naropa’s Buddhist inspiration at the same time that it recognizes the rich perspective on the human condition offered by all the world’s wisdom traditions.*

An early success story, according to Vice President for Academic Affairs Stuart J. Sigman, is the near-completion of a 10 percent increase in average class size attained through updated recruiting efforts, increased public relations work and streamlined course offerings. Although poorly attended electives may be eliminated, the undergraduate curriculum as a whole is expected to grow by increasing offerings considered essential to a liberal arts education.

This, says Sigman, includes the likely addition of math, science and more foreign language. Likewise, a clause built into the strategic plan says that “in the event that growth does not look feasible in the future for individual departments, an alternative pathway to achieving similar results could be taken through merging or eliminating departments....” All academic offerings, adds Sigman, are being reviewed as part of the “curricular arc,” in an attempt to “be more intentional and explicit about the integration of contemplative and academic subjects.”

*“Naropa recognizes that education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century must speak to all dimensions of a human being: intellectual, emotional, aesthetic, ethical, spiritual and somatic....”*

The recently downsized School of Extended Studies is also likely to see a resurgence as a more lucrative arm of the university. Preliminary conversations have begun at board meetings, says Coburn, and the energy is extraordinary.

Once an academic plan is developed, a campus master plan will come into effect, likely toward the end of 2010. The campus master plan will involve infrastructure investments such as the addition of new classrooms and a learning center. “A space planner will look at utilization of current space,” says Coburn, “and move forward according to the hypothesis that Naropa would be well-served by consolidating from three campuses to two—especially by expanding Nalanda such that it would be able to absorb Paramita.”

*“Global warming is a defining challenge of our time. Human activities are part of the problem and, likewise, humans have the capacity to solve the problem. That means taking serious action today to stop adding global warming pollution to the atmosphere.”*

Beyond the classroom, student quality of life should increase with improved counseling and mentoring services, as well as the acquisition of additional student housing. Staff and faculty well-being, too, will be a priority. Compensation is expected to increase over the next five years until commensurate with similar positions around the country, and additional funding for professional development will enrich the employee experience. “We have some very skilled staff who are already here,” says Coburn, “so we’re trying to identify the training needs of department members, as well as those who would enjoy training others in their skills. We’re trying to articulate the talent we’ve already got. Where faculty are concerned, training would be around the use of technology in classrooms and things of that nature.”

Continuing its pursuit of environmental sustainability, Naropa will use President Coburn’s signing of the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment as a guideline for future improvement. An extensive investigation into the university’s greenhouse gas emissions has already taken place, and the data, reported last autumn, identifies emissions that can potentially be eliminated, resulting in a climate neutral campus. “Global warming is a defining challenge of our time,” says Coburn. “Human activities are part of the problem and, likewise, humans have the capacity to solve the problem. That means taking serious action today to stop adding global warming pollution to the atmosphere.”

Changes such as these are highlights of an ambitious and intricate plan with many interlocking parts. To read more about it, please visit [www.naropa.edu/strategicplan](http://www.naropa.edu/strategicplan).—O. Johnson

# The Odyssey Within

The hackneyed definition of art as “a journey” often takes for granted the belief that progress is defined by adding things—new techniques, new tools, a new, massive collection of external influences. But the Visual Arts Department at Naropa University is unafraid to flip that notion on its head and ask, “What if we peel layers away? How much artistic brilliance is innate?” In the words of drawing and watercolor instructor Robert Spellman, artistic training can lead to richness “through transformation of what’s already there rather than by acquisition.” That drilling down to the purest artistic identity, juxtaposed with the building up of clay or unthinned oils, is a journey unique to Naropa.

“Robert is a contemplative practitioner,” says six-year Department Chair Sue Hammond West. “He teaches how to see without embellishing, which takes a lot of discipline.”

“I think,” says Spellman, standing in the Nalanda Campus studio where paint-splattered plastic sheets protect the walls, “that our most defining feature is the conscious joining of art with meditation as a mode of inquiry.” Intent on transmitting the basics, Spellman has waited for four weeks before introducing his watercolorists to any colors other than blue and brown. They have been working monochromatically, sharpening their understanding of lightness and darkness. Spellman talks about the physiological dominance of shade-perceiving rods over color-perceiving cones in our eyes. He wants the students to see accurately so that they may reproduce accurately. Today, their palette expands to five hues.

“Working with limitations, or in a limited form, is a time-honored artistic practice,” he says. “In watercolor, the hue can be changed dramatically with just a small addition of paint, so color mixing is a tremendous skill.”

Although, as Hammond West says, the whole department is geared toward knowing who you are as an artist, Spellman also recognizes the value of imitation. “I have students copy from books of other watercolorists,” says Spellman, “and I’m always surprised by how much they enjoy it and learn from it. Copying is so 1890s, but I suspect contemporary students are texted, twittered and tv’d to distraction; so the physicality of copying a watercolor serves as a sensory re-connect, like having homemade bread.”

In instructor Joan Anderson’s Painter’s Laboratory class, a key assignment is the visual autobiography, wherein students gather images important to them from throughout their lives. Most artists, says Anderson, talk of being formed by childhood



In Painter’s Laboratory, Jessica Glahn uses acrylics to experiment with color and technique.

experiences. Avoiding psychoanalytic connections, she calls it simply “awakening to their own experiences.” Students create the autobiography in tandem with ten to fifteen acrylic paintings. Each work is subsequently photographed, combined with those of classmates and converted to a pdf that is emailed to students each week. These modular files bear no small resemblance to the Classics Illustrated comic book panels Anderson grew up admiring.

While Anderson provides feedback and answers questions, other students browse the more than thirty art books stacked on her desk and use putty knives to scrape palettes clean. Inside plastic sleeve protectors pinned to the wall are a dozen essays on art that can be checked out. She calls it the lending library. “There is a mixture of articles with an emphasis on different cultural ways of seeing art,” she says. “One talks of the first principle in Chinese painting, *ch’i yun sheng tung*, which is that a painting

have ‘spirit resonance.’ Federico Garcia Lorca writes on the Spanish concept of ‘duende,’ and the Christopher Alexander selection from *The Timeless Way of Building* uses the language of architecture to try and pinpoint the characteristics of places that are almost universally considered beautiful.”

The way we define beauty, our aesthetic, is also fundamental to her class. The Greek roots of the word, she says, mean “to perceive” and “to feel.” It is important and worthwhile to learn the dominant cultural aesthetic but, she adds, if it comes into conflict with a personal aesthetic, she expects her students to give the personal priority and be true to their own artistic sensibilities.

Hammond West, true to a barely concealed rebelliousness, takes that notion a bit further, extending the definition of art to a near limitless extent. “The art world is huge,” she says. “You can do anything, and we could use some good renegade art in this town. I encourage students to rent container trucks and have random shows.” Complementing that fierce devotion to individuality is a practical business sense that doesn’t like seeing art hidden away. “If you’re going to be exhibiting, you’re a business person,” she says, who will need a polished portfolio, a solid artist’s statement and the ability to negotiate gallery space.

The culminating act of Visual Arts students is the presentation of their work in the Nalanda Gallery. After bringing their pieces together as a coherent whole in Advanced Studio Practice, they take Portfolio and Gallery Presentation where approximately four seniors make a digital portfolio, create wall text and design invitations. The night before graduation, when friends and family are in town, they have opening night. “I try to play



Jessie Stoner (foreground) and Ali Oswalt create a watercolor swatch using shades of green.

curator and think about how to hang materials,” says Hammond West, who adds with a grin, “To the chagrin of Facilities, I once had a student who wrote all over the walls as part of her show, but it all washed off.”

Hammond West also keeps a close eye on the job market, bringing in announcements for teachers, graphic designers, studio technicians, museum workers and more. Of particular interest to graduates, she says, should be residencies, where a person can “go somewhere for weeks and just make art.” Often, these are teaching environments where the school will provide rudimentary room and board in exchange for an increased artistic presence or favorite piece produced on-site.

Boasting a state-of-the-art darkroom and a department chair excited to aid exploration of any medium, the Visual Arts Department offers classes in pottery, black-and-white photography, sculpture, Chinese brush stroke and mixed media in addition to drawing and painting. Students have exhibited everything from copper etching (mezzotint) and spray-painted stencils to marionettes and clothing design. Many students have gone on to graduate work or professional work, such as photographer Kate Levy who, says Hammond West, “has an amazing artist statement on her website”: <http://katelevyphotography.com/bio.html>. And if classroom work isn’t enough to satiate the creative drive, Hammond West keeps the studio open after hours for an idea-inducing, community-building “infusion of art” called ARTtank.

At Naropa, art is about acknowledging the inherent worth of each person’s travels, including the introspective variety. It trusts that the sum of one’s experiences is a never-duplicated code deserving of expression. —*Story and photos by O. Johnson*



Brandilyn Brierley and Melodie Essig glue papier-mâché strips to balloons as part of a Mixed Media class assignment.

# Burggraf Brings “New Tricks” to Undergraduate Education



When Naropa University posted an opening in its undergraduate Contemplative Psychology Department, says Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education Susan Burggraf, three colleagues placed the ad in her faculty box at Mount Holyoke College. So she flew to Boulder to interview, and “it was like the first date with someone you know you’re going to marry.” In other words, she thought it was a good fit.

That was 2005. About fifteen years earlier, the Garden City, New York native tried meditation for the first time—not as a spiritual practice, but as a weight-loss strategy. “And, of course, it is the ultimate non-exercise,” she laughs. “There is nothing aerobic about it. But I loved it and have meditated every day since.” Completely enamored, she read everything she could get her hands on about Tibetan Buddhism, completed the first five levels of Shambhala Training and used college breaks to attend retreats.

Having earned her degrees in psychology and worked at a psychiatric hospital, she spent eleven years teaching as visiting faculty at Bowdoin and Mt. Holyoke Colleges. At first, her professional and contemplative lives were strictly separated. “And then I started thinking about working meditation into my classes,” she says. “We were telling students to look in the library and the laboratory for insight, but I was finding it in a third source and felt guilty for not sharing it. So I added a contemplative lab component to the social psychology class.” The results of that class, co-taught with Kidder Smith, will be published within the next year.

Shelved in Burggraf’s office, somewhere between William James’s *Varieties of Religious Experience* and Richard Louv’s *Last Child in the Woods*, is an anomaly: *Danse Macabre* by Stephen King. For her dissertation, Burggraf wrote on “The Appeal of Horror Movies,” despite holding a personal distaste for them. “I’ve never watched one all the way through,” she says. “My finding—that ‘people enjoy being frightened’ is false—is my favorite. Fear and disgust have a negative correlation to enjoyment, but some people are good at ‘juicing’ arousal out of fear. I consider it a skill. And

there’s something called ‘excitation transfer.’ The physiological arousal generated by watching a scary movie can be transferred to a real-life storyline after the lights come on. It’s a social experience, and people feel bonded after watching a horror movie together.”

At Naropa, Burggraf finds a social experience of similar power in the classroom. “Our students don’t accept conventions readily,” she says proudly. “At other schools, I was asked a question that I’d never heard before maybe once a semester. Here, it happens almost daily. And our students are very embodied. There is a quality of ‘cool’ about them; they can dance. They could run a school for gawky teenagers who feel uncomfortable in their bodies.”

As Burggraf heads into a three-year contract as Naropa’s new associate dean of undergraduate education, her duties have broadened. She is involved in creating an academic plan that will define a coherent, “vertical” journey from orientation to graduation, as well as interviews with more than thirty core faculty members seeking their definitions of contemplative education. “My definition,” she says, “is the precision of academic inquiry joined with ‘vastness.’ A panoramic mind that results in a sense of vast potential includes playfulness, creativity and humor. People come up with great ideas while sitting on the beach all the time. Contemplative practice teaches us that we can achieve that openness of mind anywhere.” Referring to Naropa’s innovative pedagogical approach, she adds, “This is the mother ship.”

The second oldest of seven siblings, Burggraf spent much of her youth taking care of people. Human relationships, she says, “were always the stuff of my preoccupation.” Combining that interest with Buddhism came naturally, and once she discovered Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche’s synthesis, her arrival at the precocious Boulder school was inevitable. Musing on a community she describes as kind and accepting, she says with a smile, “The ‘old dogs’ are the ones who knew Trungpa personally. I call myself a ‘new trick.’” —*Story and photo by O. Johnson*

# Reading with Heart

## The Dynamic Legacy of President Thomas B. Coburn

It is with deep gratitude that the Naropa University community says goodbye to President Thomas B. Coburn. During the six years that Dr. Coburn has served as Naropa's president, he has been a thoughtful leader who keeps his door open, who listens with great care and embodies the ideals of an institution rooted in basic goodness.

As a student-centered leader, Tom Coburn has been committed to expanding the accessibility of education for all students and the creation of an environmentally sustainable campus. He has generously opened his home to welcome parents of new students and to provide opportunities for faculty members to gather. While he bowed with Tibetan monks and introduced revered writer Alice Walker at commencement, he also good-naturedly risked submersion perched atop the dunk tank during Spirit Week. A religious studies professor dedicated to pluralism, Tom Coburn will

be remembered for his generous spirit, and his accomplishments will impact Naropa long after his departure.

Highlights of his tenure include:

- An increased recognition of Naropa University as a leader in contemplative education and as an institution on the leading edge of transforming higher education.
- The creation of a detailed, multi-year strategic plan, "Deliver Distinction with Excellence" that will guide Naropa's path for many years to come.
- A 60 percent increase in institutional funds dedicated to financial aid. Approximately 44 percent of Naropa's students are Pell Grant-eligible, double the national average, making Naropa a national leader in providing opportunity for everyone, regardless of income, to obtain a college education.
- The signing of the American College & University Presidents Climate

Commitment to eliminate the university's greenhouse gas emissions.

- Increased and improved student housing. All first-time, first-year students are guaranteed accommodations.

- The creation of the Elders Council, an advisory board comprised of elected community members who stand particularly close to Naropa's unique heritage and, in a sense, carry the lineage. They are protectors of the "roots" and offer the president insight and guidance in decision making.
- A more efficient use of resources, well-defined academic offerings and focused business practices.
- An introduction to long-term financial planning and budgeting.

In addition, several major centers and programs have come to fruition during Tom Coburn's presidency, including:

- The Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education (CACE), which refines the definition and methods of contemplative education, as well as hosts a contemplative pedagogy seminar for visiting educators every summer.
- The Peace Studies major, which expanded the contribution that Naropa can make to the world through its unique vision of peacemaking. An integral part of the program, the John and Bayard Cobb Peace Lecture is the first endowed lectureship at Naropa, which invites distinguished scholars and activists to speak on peace-oriented philosophies.
- The Frederick P. Lenz Foundation Residential Fellowship Program for Buddhist Studies and American Culture & Values, which brings scholars and artists to campus for a semester to explore Eastern wisdom traditions.

### Leigh Berry: Artful Weaver

Among the first things a person learned when coming to Naropa was that the presidency consisted of a team. As a part-time employee of the Advancement Office, Leigh Berry advised the university on donor, parent and alumni relations; coordinated outreach efforts; and supported President Coburn at countless home-based events.

Informally, she has held many other indispensable roles, such as providing numerous tokens of appreciation to Naropa staff, faculty and friends for their hard work and generosity of spirit. Leigh charmed people she encountered at thrift stores or black tie dinners and invited them into a relationship with Naropa. She has dared to ask insightful, and sometimes personal, questions of existing and would-be donors, trustees and friends to support the university in building relationships.

"My favorite episode," says Vice President for Institutional Advancement Chris Dwyer, "is when Leigh pulled me aside a few weeks after my arrival at Naropa and told me that, as her new boss, I needed to learn how to manage her—to which I instinctively replied, 'Why, that's impossible!'"

An artful weaver, Leigh Berry has played a major role in knitting together what we know as the Naropa community.



The Sakyong, Mipham Rinpoche delivered Naropa's inaugural Cobb Peace Lecture in 2007.

# All Hands on Deck

The Naropa Crew Salutes President Thomas B. Coburn

"In 2005, Tom began to shape a vision of a council of elders. He asked the community who they found trustworthy among them, and from this list he invited ten or so to join him in establishing a council that carried the well-being of the whole Naropa world as its heart mission.

I was honored to be included and, with the support of Suzanne Benally, we began training with Don Cohis in the traditional models of Native American council process and systemic view. Whenever our council of elders gathered, Tom was open-hearted, vulnerable and full of gratitude for the process.

As a council we bumbled around trying to understand who we were and what we could offer. Tom never wavered in his commitment to the unique task we embarked on. He would say over and over, 'No other college president has such a council' and 'Here is where I feel at ease, and I learn so much.' His warmth and curiosity fed our gatherings. The elders continue to offer the Listening Circle process to the community."

—Barbara Dilley, University Professor and Former President of the Naropa Institute

"Under Tom's leadership, Naropa's growth has been marked by an outer coordination of parts and an inner contemplative maturation.... One may still hear apostrophes to the wildness (though not the crises) of our youth, but a body should grow up as it gets older, and 'the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom' if people can parlay their experience into learning....

As president, Tom responded to the bitterness with which the Naropa community was at times embroiled in his first two years not with blame but curiosity about how a place...with a root faith in the basic goodness of human beings could lapse into a battlefield of resentments. His response to the confusion was his 'walking our talk' challenge that identified, and helped correct, a sort of disjointedness. Tom kept his heart and head above the fray as he helped steer us into calmer seas of what 'contemplative' education and administration might mean. Most of us have observed him listen attentively during a discussion and then offer a thoughtful perspective ('Let me try this out...'), using a metaphor (not *always* nautical) that shines a light on the issue, suggesting a first step for possible action. This, I think, accounts for the large strides in coordination and cooperation we have taken together under his presidency."

*Holding the view and attention  
He keeps in touch with his heart  
And speaks when there's something to say—  
The University listens  
And moves*

—Reed Bye

"One of my best memories of Tom comes from the search process that resulted in my coming to Naropa. Tom was calling me to offer me the job, and I was fascinated by his ability to describe Naropa's mission and to put it into historical

and societal context. It was clear to me at the time that Tom was one of the most articulate people I had ever met.

Beyond this, I sensed that his kindness was at that root of every decision he made as president. So, when Tom said 'what do you think of the prospect of our making some mischief together' as colleagues, I felt certain I would be moving to Boulder, and that his leadership would be a driving factor in that decision."

—Chris Dwyer, Vice President for Institutional Advancement

—Reed Bye, Writing & Poetics Faculty



Sheriff Nancy Nowell takes trickster Tom Coburn into custody on Halloween 2008.

“Tom is brilliant, works tirelessly and speaks from his heart. Here is what you may not know: This mild-mannered president who behaves so appropriately most days of the year is, deep down, a mischievous prankster. One April Fools’ Day I arrived in the office, pulled out the keyboard to my computer, and there was a fake cockroach sitting right on the keys. As I was screaming and scrambling, there was chuckling coming out of Tom’s office. Another year produced a rubber mouse in a file folder, and spiders have become a big hit as well.

His other pranks have included putting my windshield wipers in the upright position and adding non-sensible items to my to-do list. More recently, during the presidential search, one of my staff members went to eat her lunch and, lo and behold, there was a rubber mouse next to her chicken salad!

Leigh is full of surprises, too, and has recruited my family members in her schemes. I have found Christmas presents in my refrigerator and thank-you notes under my pillow.

I have come to love these little acts of endearment and, knowing Tom and Leigh, I will continue to be on the lookout in years to come.”

—Nancy Nowell, Executive Assistant to the President

“I wonder if people are aware that:

1. Tom Coburn knows the words to just about every Rock and Roll song ever written in the ‘50s and early ‘60s—even all verses of “Teen Angel.”
2. The best Christmas present I gave him a few years ago was a rented clarinet with three lessons. He hadn’t picked up that instrument since fifth grade! Playing has been a wonderful ‘practice’ outside the job.
3. He is enamored with his ten grandchildren and is the best at putting a worm on a hook—especially with Etta, aged three.
4. He’s a ‘vege-aquarian’ and has been since 1995 when eighteen students he took on a semester program to India helped him understand the value of not eating meat. Fish is okay since he’s a born Yankee...or as he likes to say: ‘I’m a recovering Yankee!’
5. Our chapter here at Naropa has been the best thing in our lives together.”

—Leigh Berry, Advancement Associate and Wife of President Thomas Coburn



Tom practices the clarinet with his granddaughter, Etta.



Each year, Tom and Leigh host a tea party at their home for parents of new students.

“For the past three years, Tom and I have met at least weekly in a one-on-one setting. Our conversations are at once structured and free-ranging, supervisory and collegial—with an opportunity always present to do the university’s ‘work’ and the deeper ‘work’ of being fully palpable and intentional in our dealings. These are not always easy conversations, for the weight of the university’s moral, financial and cultural well-being is always in mind. Still, Tom’s approach to these matters has emanated from a place of enviable calm.

In this regard, Tom has taught me two lessons: When a glass is ‘half empty,’ it can just as easily be thought of as ‘half full.’ If ‘the devil is in the details,’ then so too is an angel. In his six years as president, Tom has offered the university such optimistic leadership. He leaves the university with a well-crafted strategic plan, a management team prepared to meet his successor and a campus on the path to assuming its rightful place in higher education.”

—Stuart J. Sigman, Vice President for Academic Affairs

# Nurturing What Is Already There

## BA Early Childhood Education Graduates Benefit from Practical Experience

When someone speaks of the “impressionability of our youth,” it is often accompanied by images of teenagers smoking or lip synching explicit lyrics. But, according to ongoing studies, the youth we should be concerned with are those more than a decade younger. It is our first few years of life when external influences have the greatest impact, and Naropa’s BA Early Childhood Education (ECE) program specializes in training teachers who appreciate the tremendous responsibility of caring for such malleable minds.

In early childhood development, the terms “nature” and “nurture” are less often viewed as mutually exclusive and more often accepted as a combined given. Genetics, nutrition, natal experiences and external environment are all relevant factors making a holistic approach unavoidable. These are the years when language itself takes shape, when the ability to physically balance on two feet and emotionally endure separation from parental figures takes root. Playing is no idle recreation; it is the honing of motor skills and a testing ground for social interaction. Nothing can be overlooked.

In the course *Holistic and Contemplative Teaching Traditions*, students study the pedagogical theories of Montessori, Waldorf, Reggio Emilia and more. “The similarities are important,” says Instructor Michael Girodo. “They each view the child as a unique and intrinsic learner who, provided with the proper environment and support, will blossom according to his or her nature.”

In other words, the most effective teacher may be one who is best at clearing a path for the child’s instinctual inclinations rather than trying to construct an artificial one. Montessori, says Girodo, viewed children as primarily sensorial beings and emphasized self-directed learning whereas Rudolph Steiner, the founder of Waldorf education, viewed them as spiritual beings who develop as humans through imitation and play.

The principle of individuality extends to students in the ECE program, who are encouraged to explore many pedagogies and incorporate those techniques that best match their teaching styles. “We play,” says Puja Menzies, an intern working twenty-five hours per week at The Elm Tree toddler learning center, “and the transition times are the curriculum. It is about tailoring activities to each individual child.”



Tessa Greene, an ECE alumna and lead teacher at Alaya Preschool, sews together a “leopard tail” to be used in a classroom game.

Menzies has just finished meditating in Darlene Lorrain’s *Energy and Expression in the Classroom* course, and the atmosphere is extremely gentle. In a moment, each student will take a turn using stuffed animals to act out situations they have witnessed as interns—situations involving dominant and subordinate personalities, issues of fair treatment and intense emotions. The feedback and advice from peers will be greatly appreciated.

Initially undecided on a major, Menzies took ECE Chair Deborah Young’s *Poverty Matters* course and was sold. “I thought, ‘If I want political reform, social reform, the most important way to approach that is with children.’ I was inspired by Debbie and saw all the good she was doing as an early childhood teacher. And I shared her passion for developing countries.”

*Poverty Matters* is a class that puts economic and access-to-education issues up front by inviting students to visit the underprivileged Nicaraguan town of Jalapa. While there, students live with host families, interview locals about their needs and assist in constructing a school.

“The main point, I believe,” says student Portia Johnson, “is to live with people for whom poverty is a reality and to build relationships with them. It becomes humanized in a way that I believe is impossible inside the classroom.

“A typical day was waking up to the sound of our homestay mother and sister clapping out tortillas and cooking them on their traditional stove. After a delicious breakfast of fried plantains, rice, beans and canned fruit juice, we would catch the bus to our worksite. After a musical and bumpy forty-five-minute ride, we would work on the school.... It was some of the hardest labor I’ve ever experienced.”

Each spring, students organize the Champagne Brunch and Charity Auction as a fundraiser. Money earned through ticket sales and the auctioning of various items donated by local businesses help fund the trip, school construction and healthcare for the children of Jalapa.

Practical, hands-on experience such as this is a staple of the department, which prides itself on twelve interns actively working at various public or private infant centers and pre-schools in the Boulder-Denver area. “Naropa,” says ECE Chair Deborah Young, “is the only school granting a BA in early childhood education in Colorado and, with the addition of two ‘administrative’ classes, graduating students will be qualified to obtain large center director verification from the state, which means they can open their own childcare center.” Administrative classes teach students how to interact with parents, legislators and certifying bodies, as well as how to access funding and comply with state regulations.

Before commencing internships, students in the Teaching Young Children class visit potential internship sites and observe extensively. One of them is Naropa’s own Alaya Preschool, a one-acre wonderland of colorful classrooms and playground equipment located in north Boulder. Founded in 1977, Alaya serves up to thirty-nine children in three age groups and employs three ECE graduates. At one point or another, says Co-Director Gene Hooley, almost every ECE student spends time there.

The children may experience contemplative practices such as ikebana, calligraphy and yoga in typical Naropa fashion but, says Hooley, those activities arise casually and are not entrenched in the curriculum. Rather, it is the assumption that children are essentially good that defines Alaya, as well as a continuity of care. Once children are placed into a group, they transition together throughout the entire three years.

This, says teacher and ECE alumna Tessa Greene, is what makes the work so enjoyable. “I have had the same group since they were two years old, and now they’re five,” she says. “I have seen them grow, and I have grown with them. Unlike a public elementary school, there is little ‘turnover.’ The adult interaction is also great; there are families that come here whom I’ve known for six years.”

Greene graduated from Naropa in 2004 and went to work for Alaya the same year. She pursued professional development



In her Energy and Expression class, Rachel Hinojosa uses a variety of stuffed animals to reenact scenarios she encounters as an intern. Each student participated in the exercise and received constructive advice from classmates.

by adding an infant/toddler endorsement to her early childhood professional credential, which she holds at a level IV thanks to her bachelor’s degree. She also performs intern supervision duties.

Another departmental offering is the Mary Culkin Lecture Series. Loosely themed around such topics as “anti-biased curriculum” and “social and emotional learning,” the series invites six regional and national leaders in the field to speak each year. A semester-long course is dedicated, every other year, to discussing the issues raised.

The field of early childhood education, says Young, “wasn’t looked at as a skillful science until about forty years ago, but it is the skilled caregiver who can open circles of communication... that will set positive and lasting neural pathways, or foundations, of who the child becomes. This requires education, practice and a willingness to listen and respond using the child’s lead. Naropa has helped raise awareness of ECE as a legitimate profession for more than ten years. We have been leaders in the movement by providing a dynamic (as opposed to prepackaged) program for pre-service teachers utilizing critical pedagogy, responsiveness and reflective practices to support healthy growth and development.”

—Story and photos by O. Johnson

# New Lounge Provides Hub for Student Community

Tiptoeing around unfavorable adjectives, Vice President for Operations Sandy Goldman uses phrases like “functionally questionable” to describe the former Sycamore Student Lounge. “Old” and “messy” aren’t far behind. But those terms are applied with past tense verbs only—for the space currently occupying southeast Sycamore Hall is the result of a summer transformation that left few vestiges of what came before.

Now Goldman calls the lounge “green, spacious and wired for connectivity.” The walls are built from reclaimed telephone-pole wood, and the carpet is woven from recycled fibers. The wireless signal is strong, and multiple electrical sockets recharge laptop batteries. The south wall once belonging to El Centro de La Gente (now relocated to Juniper Cottage) was, literally, demolished, increasing interior space by 30 percent. Rotating student art makes creative expression part of the prevailing style.



A new hub of community interaction, the student lounge was envisioned *for* students *by* students. In spring of ‘08, undergraduates Jarod Urcheck, Shana Foxlee and Elizabeth Bacon teamed with graduate student David Kerr to form a planning committee. Together, they sought input on desired features, met with Naropa instructor/architect Brian Bowen and resolved budget issues whenever the materials got too pricey. It was, according to Goldman, an “out-of-the-classroom opportunity to gain real-world experience dealing with money and reaching a consensus with other people. They worked together very well.” Former Recycling Coordinator Jennifer Bohn designed the recycling area cabinetry, and the student committee decided on all aspects of interior design, from paint colors and light fixtures to couches and chairs. When everyone returned from summer break, the metamorphosis was complete thanks to the Facilities Department, contractor Center Management Group and various subcontractors.

At the center of more debate than any other aspect of the student lounge was an old mainstay: the free box.

Comprising 25 percent of the former space, it endured harsh comparisons to aged gym socks and strained peas. But its defenders argued just as vehemently: “This is an institution, a place to donate and recycle. A place where students on a budget can get good things. It represents our values.” And so a compromise was struck. The free box would remain, but a partition would wall it in, containing overflow, and the SUN work-study overseeing the lounge would include it in routine maintenance.

A flagship effort in Naropa’s five-year strategic plan, the student lounge project grew out of an action committee, gained approval from the stewardship team and became a reality. Consciously designed to satisfy the solitary student searching for a place to read, as well as small groups looking to socialize, the student lounge illustrates Naropa’s commitment to zero waste efforts and community building. —O. Johnson



# Transition Naropa

## Becoming Carbon Neutral Means Getting Back to Basics

Once upon a time, self-reliance was the label par excellence of an American colonist. Abandoning the luxuries of Europe required navigators to cross the ocean, carpenters to build the cabins and gardeners to grow the food. It was the title of Emerson's most famous essay and a defining characteristic of many Native Americans.

It was also a buffer against excess and the caprices of the world. Energy for transportation came from your own two feet or that of a valued horse and wasn't to be wasted. Providing your own clothes and food made a volatile marketplace less threatening to subsistence.

With the Industrial Revolution and factory assembly lines, people became dependent on fossil fuels and limited to one production duty. Speed and specialization allowed for progress, but it made us vulnerable in new ways. Peak oil, climate change and economic instability are now having dramatic impacts on all parts of society.

The Transition Naropa movement means to counter those impacts by "re-skilling" communities in the essential arts of living. By heightening awareness of what we face, encouraging dialogue, emphasizing sustainable practices and teaching practical skills, Transition Naropa aims to diminish our reliance on fossil fuels by increasing our reliance on local community. Fewer loads of food and clothing will need to be transported for thousands of miles by exhaust-spewing planes, trains and automobiles because we will, once again, know how to sew and farm. And when the oil runs out, will all the luxuries be within walking distance? No. But if we relearn the essentials of home construction, etc., the necessities will be. It is a conscious transition to a post-fossil fuel world—a preparation for nature's inevitable imposition of a carbon-neutral existence.

Assisted by the Facilities Department and the MA Environmental Leadership program, Transition Naropa is working toward the formation of subgroups that can master a practical skill and then teach the other groups. This, according to Landscape Manager Costen Aytes, will probably take its cue from Boulder's well-developed Transition programs at the city and county level.

"This movement has a very egalitarian quality," says Aytes. "It begins with a steering group but soon dissolves into a community, and the vision is carried by the collective. Peak oil is the dominant theme, but right now, there is an urgent focus on economics. Development of the initiative is a two- to three-year process, and I think that having a realistic, long-term goal gives it a sense of credibility. It is open to staff and faculty as well as students and, because we're at a university, there is great community building. Events will be geared toward local resiliency. We will build coalitions with related groups, have a movie series and, hopefully by the end of April, establish a community market."

Since its 2006 start in England, the Transition initiative has spread around the world resulting in eighty officially designated transition towns and seven hundred additional communities in formative stages. In 2008, Boulder County became the first Transition initiative in North America. Naropa and the University of Colorado soon followed as two of the nation's first Transition universities.

This past semester, Transition Naropa presented its vision to each campus and screened the documentary *Sustainability 101: Forgotten Fundamentals of the Energy Crisis*. During Earth Week activities, the group will host a re-skilling bazaar and a story-telling event. To learn more and get involved in the movement's development, visit the homepage at [www.naropa.edu/transition](http://www.naropa.edu/transition).

—O. Johnson

# FACULTY NOTES

THE LATEST ON THE PUBLICATIONS, RESEARCH, ART WORK AND PERFORMANCES BY NAROPA UNIVERSITY FACULTY.

The brush art of **Keith Kumasen Abbott**, *Writing & Poetics*, was commissioned by *Shambhala Sun* for a Norman Zoketsu Fischer article "Applied Dharma." Five ink paintings appeared in March 2009: Hotei and Bird, Han Shan Laughs, Urban Han Shan, Han Shan Reads Blank Scroll and Bemused Monk in Wheelchair. *Poetry For Sale*, his renku collaboration with Pat Nolan, was published by Mountain Tree River Press. A renku written with Nolan, Maureen Owen and Michael Sowl, *Bamboo Greetings*, was published by Simply Haiku in Ireland accompanied by the four writers' commentary. On sabbatical this spring, in the UC Berkeley Bancroft library, Abbott is researching Zen Priest and Poet Philip Whalen's Kyoto years for an essay, "Nothing Is Forever."

**Lisa Birman's** (*Summer Writing Program*) book, *for that return passage - A Valentine for the United States of America*, was published last month by Hollowdeck Press. Upcoming work will also appear in *580 Split* and *Trickhouse*.

**David Chernikoff**, *Transpersonal Counseling Psychology*, recently had an article entitled "Attachment to View" published in the quarterly magazine of the Spiritual Life Institute, a contemplative community with retreat centers in Colorado and Ireland. He will also be teaching a workshop on *Aging and Awakening* the weekend of April 10 through April 12, 2009, at the Southern Dharma Center, an interfaith retreat center located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina.

**John Davis, PhD**, *Director of Transpersonal Psychology*, was on sabbatical leave during the spring 2008 semester. In addition to completing professional articles and book chapters on ecopsychology, transpersonal psychology and psychological research methods in humanistic and transpersonal psychology, Davis traveled to South Africa and to the canyons of western Colorado. These travels focused on ecopsychology, wilderness therapy and multicultural issues. He participated in several wilderness therapy and outdoor education trips in South Africa, including a wilderness trip for disenfranchised

youth, most from local townships and many recently from jail, and a backpacking trip into the Umfolozi game preserve with a multi-ethnic group of backpackers. He also worked with several professional groups in South Africa, including a multidisciplinary group at the University of South Africa, which included counseling psychologists and traditional healers and a community center in Mamelodi township outside Pretoria, which trains counseling

psychologists and provides services to township residents. Davis has also accepted an invitation to join the editorial board of a new journal, *Ecopsychology*. Its inaugural issue came out in the spring of 2009.

**Kika Dorsey**, *Writing & Poetics*, has most recently published her poetry in the online journal *The King's English*, and the print journals *The Comstock Review*, *Freshwater* and *SLAB*.



## Wendell Beavers, Performing Arts Dept. Chair

Wendell Beavers's essay, "Re-locating Technique" was recently published by the University of Illinois Press in *The Body Eclectic: Evolving Practices in Dance Training*, edited by Melanie Bales, Ohio State University, and Rebecca Nettle-Fiol, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

The book summarizes the shift to somatic training in performance programs and performance aesthetics in dance with a number of essays by pioneers and innovators in contemporary training.

Under the auspices of the Association of Movement Theater Educators (ATME), Beavers was also invited to teach a workshop, "The Inner Work of the Viewpoints: Mindfulness-Awareness Practice and Elegant Pedestrian Vocabulary," at the annual ATHE (American Theater in Higher Education) Conference in Denver in July. In addition, he gave a presentation on Naropa's MFA Theater: Contemporary Performance program at the conference. With Damaris Webb (MFA Contemporary Performance '08) and Richard Ward (Ilf School of Theology faculty), he also participated in the Religion and Theater preconference panel "Incorporating Spiritual Practice into Theatrical Practice: Pros, Cons, Problems and Opportunities."

Beavers also taught "Experiencing Space and Time through the Viewpoints: An Inquiry into the Relationship between Experiencing, Conceiving, and Creating," for CU-Denver's Summer Graduate Seminar for Architecture and Design students, *Design with The Brain in Mind: Linking Neuroscience to an Understanding of Architectural Experience*. Fourteen CU graduate students traveled from Denver to Naropa's Nalanda Campus for this half-day workshop in late July. The workshop was also included in the 2007 summer program. Workshop photos were featured in CU's *Journal of Architectural Studies*.

**Michael Franklin, Director of Transpersonal Counseling Psychology: Art Therapy**, taught a class on Transpersonal Art Therapy entitled "Holding Multiple Perspectives: A Transpersonal Vision of Art as Therapy" in July 2007 at Seoul Women's University, Seoul, South Korea. He also presented a paper entitled "Art As Contemplative Practice: Ethics and Social Action" at the First Summit of the International Association of Buddhist Universities on Buddhism and Ethics in September 2008, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU), Ayuthaya, Thailand.

**Jessica Giles, PhD, Community Studies Center**, presented a paper at the Hawaii International Conference on Education in January 2009 entitled "Teaching about Developmental Systems through Contemplative Service Learning Projects." In addition, Giles has articles scheduled to be published in the journals *Social Change*, *Social Development* and *Aggressive Behavior*.

**Bhanu Kapil's (Writing & Poetics)** third full-length experimental work, *humanimal*, will be published this spring by Kelsey Street Press. This year, Kapil presented a lecture on the "ethnic avant-garde" at the Small Press Traffic AGGRESSION conference in San Francisco. She was selected to be the judge of The Poetry Center Prize, a national award connected to San Francisco State University. Also in San Francisco, Kapil gave readings and also a talk as part of the Nonsite Collective's Poetics of Disablement curriculum. A chapbook to accompany a show by the visual artist Luke Butler was published by 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Projects. In Tucson, Kapil was invited to give a talk and a reading as part of the "Next Word" conference in contemporary poetry organized by the University of Arizona. Two visits to India allowed her to complete her research for a creative nonfiction project, "schizophrenia," which tracks transgenerational rates of schizophrenia, domestic violence and relational disorders in the Indian diaspora. In Chandigarh, Punjab, she also gave a public reading from her work in the Rose Garden, surrounded by the largest number and variety of roses in Asia.

**Mark Miller, Music**, was featured as a soloist on shakuhachi flute with the Colorado Chamber Orchestra in the regional premier of Karl Jenkins' *Requiem*, a major work for

string orchestra, choir and shakuhachi. He also wrote and recorded the music for his new solo CD titled *Water Music*, set for release in early spring. In December 2008, Miller performed and moderated a panel discussion at the annual conference of the International Society for Improvised Music held at the University of Denver. On sabbatical leave for the academic year, he continues to work on his book about contemplative improvisation and has scheduled a concert tour of the Pacific Northwest for the spring.

**Deb Piranian, PhD, and Kate Mazuy, Transpersonal Counseling Psychology**, made presentations to the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Wilderness Therapy Symposium in September 2008, entitled "Deepening Connection in Wilderness Therapy Groups: Unveiling Differences." Jeanine Canty, PhD; Suzanne Benally, MA, Environmental Leadership; John Davis, PhD; and Deb Piranian, PhD, Transpersonal Counseling Psychology, also collaborated on a presentation entitled "Diversity, Inclusivity and Unity in Wilderness Therapy."

**Elizabeth Robinson, Writing & Poetics**, has just had her book *The Orphan & Its Relations* published by Fence Books. Her poems are also included in the new Norton anthology *American Hybrid*, and she participated in a reading celebrating the publication of this book at the Associated Writing Programs Conference in Chicago in February. Robinson has been invited to teach at the Iowa Writer's Workshop at the University of Iowa for the fall of 2009.

**Meg Spohn, Core Program**, has a chapter in the new volume of *Studies in Symbolic Interaction* (Volume 31). The article is one of the inaugural Blue Ribbon Essays, entitled "Considering Violentization Toward the Societal Scale."

**D. Phillip Stanley, Religious Studies Chair**, is working in conjunction with the University of Virginia, the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, and the British Library in London to complete a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities by May 2009. The project task is to place Professor Stanley's large database catalog of multiple editions of the Tibetan canon onto the web, linked to scans and searchable text files of each text. Stanley together with Professor

Kurtis Schaeffer of the University of Virginia will place a series of articles on the web to contextualize the history and content of these canonical collections. In addition, the *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* is coordinating its next issue with the launch of the website, devoting the issue to articles on the Tibetan canon including an article by Stanley.

In his capacity as the Naropa representation on the Executive Council of the International Association of Buddhist Universities (IABU), Stanley has been asked to head a panel on the electronic initiatives for the different canons of Buddhism in the various canonical languages: Sanskrit, Pāli, Chinese, Tibetan and so forth. The panel is to take place at the second symposium of the IABU to be held during the May 2009 United Nations Vesak Day celebrations in Bangkok, Thailand.

**Sue Wallingford, Transpersonal Counseling Psychology: Art Therapy**, had a one-woman art show at the Lincoln Gallery, January 5, 2009, through March 6, 2009, entitled "Making Sacred...the smallest of things." This body of



The artist, says Sue Wallingford, "knows what it means to surpass preconceived notions of things and to see the true nature...we are ultimately connected to."

work consisting of ordinary objects enclosed in silk teabags was inspired by Wallingford's love for the natural world, her work as a therapist and her continued commitment to see things with honesty and intimacy.

## Planned Gifts Help Launch Naropa's Future Strategic Growth and Sustainability

Planned giving is a vehicle that allows donors to make transformative gifts to Naropa University through estate bequests, gift annuities, retirement funds, trusts, etc., to support the university at a level not necessarily possible through outright



### Fostering Connections

*Chris Dwyer, Vice President for Institutional Advancement*

During times of economic crises, some organizations withdraw from their communities in an attempt to insulate themselves. But at Naropa University, we've taken the opposite view. It's precisely when times are most uncertain that reaching out to the community becomes most important. Hence, with financial support from an anonymous bequest, Naropa has recently invested in three new positions to increase the university's engagement with its many stakeholders and hired Alumni Relations Officer Melissa Holland to expand alumni outreach. In the last few weeks, we've witnessed a flurry of engagement opportunities that fostered connections among faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, grantors and friends, including the Cobb Peace Lecture on April 20 and the Founder's Society and public events on Earth Day, April 22. In May, these occasions continue with a farewell gathering for President Tom Coburn and Leigh Berry on May 7, and graduation at Macky Auditorium on May 9. I encourage you to participate in these events, to engage with the university that embraces community during uncertain times.

gifts. Although amounts vary, these donors, through their foresight and generosity, provide important long-term support for the university.

Over the past three years, Naropa has received a total of \$1.16 million in bequests that will be used to invest in foundational aspects of its new ten-year strategic plan, allowing the university to advance its role as a national leader in contemplative education. Particularly important during these challenging economic times, these generous gifts will help "jump start" new initiatives in admissions, marketing, academic program development and fundraising. Thank you to all who have been so generous by including Naropa in your long-term estate plans. If you would like more information on different ways you can make an enduring impact through a planned gift, please contact Jennifer Olson at 303-546-3537 or [jolson@naropa.edu](mailto:jolson@naropa.edu).

## Founder's Society Event Series

The Founder's Society is a growing group of more than eighty donors who provide leadership and generous support through their contributions of \$1,000 or more each fiscal year. In 2006, the President's Club was renamed The Founder's Society as a means of honoring the legacy of the university's founder, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche.

On February 19, the 2009 Founder's Society Event Series welcomed Spencer Sherman, author and CEO of Abacus Wealth Partners. Highlighting themes addressed in his latest book, *The Cure for Money Madness*, Sherman spoke to the general public in the afternoon and Founder's Society members in the evening.

Focusing on the importance of identifying our *self* worth rather than our *net* worth, Sherman spoke about how people complicate and confuse issues relating to money. From a psychoanalytical perspective, he pointed to early childhood development as the pivotal period when "money initiation" occurs and how those early money experiences can distort an individual's sense of how to engage commerce far into adulthood. He suggested that through the active countering of "money madness" with positive messages of self-worth, creativity, introspection, humor and strong personal relationships, individuals can retain a healthy mental attitude about money and how it fits within their own lives.

Spencer Sherman's lectures were well received and the Founder's Society is proud to have been able to present his views to the Naropa community.

If you would like more information about The Founder's Society and upcoming events, please contact Jarod Drozdowski at 303-245-4847 or [jdrozdowski@naropa.edu](mailto:jdrozdowski@naropa.edu).



## Welcome Melissa Holland, Naropa's New Alumni Relations Officer

Melissa Holland comes to Naropa University from Semester at Sea, a nonprofit educational organization partnered with the University of Virginia, where she worked as the director of alumni engagement. With a broad background in alumni affairs, campus life, career development and study abroad travel, Melissa brings experience in building relationships with nontraditional students and alumni to create a foundation of sustainable benefits and programs. Respected and loved by those who have worked with her, Melissa has forged friendships in all of her work. She hopes to create collaborative and productive partnerships with Naropa's communities and connect alumni to each other, to Naropa and to their own experience of Naropa. As she left Virginia, a friend shared with her a quote (author unknown) that sums up this new path on the journey: "Last year, I went around the world; this year, I'm going someplace else."

## Greenhouse Honors Trustee, Advances Campus Sustainability

What do you get when you combine an inspirational Horticulture teacher, an enthusiastic group of Naropa Environmental Studies students and an assignment to look deeply at sustainability practices? In this case, the answer is a greenhouse.

On Earth Day, April 22, 2009, Naropa University celebrated the grand opening of the William D. Jones Community Greenhouse. Located on the Arapahoe Campus next to the founder's teahouse, the greenhouse serves as a year-round laboratory space for the Environmental Studies program. It will also help the university take modest steps towards campus sustainability, reducing our carbon footprint and providing sustainability models for our community.

The greenhouse has been named in honor of former Naropa trustee William D. Jones, who died a year ago. Among Bill's many passions was organic gardening, so this seems a fitting way to honor his twenty years of generosity and service to the university.

The grand opening celebration featured a presentation by Robert Martin, former national ombudsman for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and chief public advocate of National Environmental Public Advocates, a Boulder-based nonprofit organization. Mr. Martin has nearly twenty years of experience working on environmental protection issues and served the administrations of Presidents George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. Rather than compromise the independence of his office within the EPA, Mr. Martin resigned on Earth Day 2002, following disputes with EPA Administrator Christine Todd

Whitman about the validity of EPA reports on air quality in New York City after the 9/11 attacks.

Many people played a role in making this project come to fruition, and we want to thank all of them. In particular, we want to acknowledge the following individuals and organizations who made gifts of \$1,000 or more to support the William D. Jones Community Greenhouse and the grand opening:

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# ALUMNI NOTES

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE IN THE FALL '09 ALUMNI NOTES?

LET US HEAR FROM YOU! EMAIL: [NUALUMNI@NAROPA.EDU](mailto:NUALUMNI@NAROPA.EDU)

**Laurie Arielle (MA TCP '98)** is happily living in Edmonton, Canada. She is currently studying expressive arts and creativity, working as a psychiatric nurse, and most delightfully grateful to be studying with an enlightened human being, John de Ruiter.

**Nick Boutros (MA CP '06)** moved to Chicago where he worked at Haymarket Center, an agency providing substance abuse treatment for some of Chicago's most in-need individuals. In December 2008, Nick moved to Northampton, Massachusetts, and became a team leader at Windhorse Associates, a contemplative mental health program based on the work of Dr. Ed Podvoll. At Windhorse, Nick is using his experiences in Chicago and his Naropa education to develop a cutting-edge, holistic approach to working with substance abuse and addiction-related issues.

**Seth Braun (BA IA '03)** is working with Boulder Integral in creating content on integral health and nutrition. He lives part-time in Boulder and part-time in Fairfield, Iowa. His first book, *Healthy, Fast and Cheap*, was republished as *The Leaving Home Survival Guide* and is available at Walden and Borders bookstores.

**Paul Burnstein (MA GER '04)** is the executive director of Sinai Family Home Services, a nonprofit in-home care agency based in Portland, Oregon.

**Dana (McDowell) Byrd (MA CP '07)** started a private practice in Denver specializing in nutritional psychology. She works with people who prefer natural supplementation over prescription psychiatric medication and with people transitioning off medications. She also has a contract facilitating process groups for a

sex offender agency. On a personal note, Dana and Eric Byrd eloped on August 8, 2008, and they bought a beautiful home in Lakewood, Colorado, in November.

**Jeff Carmack (MFA W&P '99)** lives in St. Cloud, Minnesota, where he is currently teaching writing and art history at the Minnesota School of Business. Jeff runs monthly poetry readings at the Veranda Lounge of the Pioneer Place Theater in St. Cloud and at Local Blend in St. Joseph. He is a writer and performer with "The Veranda Variety Hour," which performs at the Pioneer Place Theater. "Iowa Jeff" is his on-air name at 88.1 FM KVSC, and his show, "Granite City Rock Café," airs every other Saturday night after 10 p.m.

**Emily Fidelman (BA W&L '03)** received a Master of Library Science and did a stint at the University of Alaska Libraries. She has returned to Boulder as the Engineering Library Branch Supervisor at the University of Colorado.

**Connor Gifford (BA VA '97)** just received her Master of Education from Northern Arizona University and is now certified to teach K-12 visual art. Connor plans to find a full-time K-12 art teaching position in Arizona, and hopes to give all of her students a contemplative perspective in their education.

**Pamela Goldsmith (MA TCP '96)** and her husband, Matthew Shearer, welcomed their son, Tristan James, into their family on November 3, 2008. Big brother Lukas (11) is completely enchanted with his baby brother.

**Melissa Graham-LaMure (BA W&L '98)** is teaching high school English at Sri Atmananda Memorial School in Austin, Texas. She lives

with her husband, Michael, and her son, Lakota, on a few acres outside of Austin where they garden, take walks and build things. She is celebrating ten years of marriage, writing a book, studying the work of Byron Katie and watching her buddha son grow into soft authenticity.

**Catherine Griffin Magner (BA CP '04)** began working as an undergraduate admissions counselor at Naropa in summer of '04. She has been volunteering as a doula for the past two years and is working toward certification. Forever drawn to gateways and transitions of life, she began volunteering with Boulder Hospice in winter of 2009. Catherine was married in July 2008 to Jeffrey Magner.

**Aimee Herman (BA W&L '08)** is a contributing writer for *Spectrum Culture* and *Weird Sisters West*, and erotica editor for *Oysters & Chocolate*. She will be featured in an anthology of erotica due out in May 2009, and works as a writing tutor at Front Range Community College.

**Tim Z. Hernandez (BA W&L '07)** will have his second book, *Breathing. In Dust*, published later this year by the University of Texas Tech Press. Also, his poem "Instructions for the Altar" has recently been nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

**Aaron Hill (BA ENVS '97)** is in his final semester at Dominican University of California, where he is studying for an MBA in sustainable enterprise.

**Nancy Davis Johnson (MA TCP '99)** lives and works in the small and spectacular southeast Alaskan town of Haines. She just completed her third year as a family and child therapist with Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, a group that provides mental

## KEY

**BA CP:** BA Contemplative Psychology  
**BA D/MS:** BA Dance/Movement Studies  
**BA ENVS:** BA Environmental Studies  
**BA IA:** BA InterArts  
**BA INTD:** BA Interdisciplinary Studies  
**BA REL:** BA Religious Studies

**BA VA:** BA Visual Arts  
**BA W&L:** BA Writing & Literature  
**C P:** Certificate in Poetics  
**MFA W&P:** MFA Writing & Poetics  
**MA CP:** MA Contemplative Psychotherapy  
**MA GER:** MA Gerontology  
**MA SCP:** MA Somatic Counseling Psychology

**MA TCP:** MA Transpersonal Counseling Psychology  
**MA TCP: AT:** MA Transpersonal Counseling Psychology: Art Therapy  
**MA TCP: MT:** MA Transpersonal Counseling Psychology: Music Therapy  
**MA TCP: WT:** MA Transpersonal Counseling Psychology: Wilderness Therapy

health care for southeast Alaska natives as well as the community of Haines.

**Christopher Luna (MFA W&P '99)** is an English instructor at Clark College in Vancouver, Washington, and the host of a successful open-mic poetry series. He is a board member of the Washington Poet's Association and his latest chapbook, *Ghost Town, USA*, was published in July 2008. Christopher and fellow Naropa alumnus David Madgalene continue to collaborate on various art and literary projects.

**Michael Mallett (MA TCP '06)** is currently enjoying retirement from FedEx with travel, reading/writing, meditation and active participation in the Shambhala sangha.

**Maria Manna (MA TCP: AT '00)** began working for a program called GROW (Gaining Resiliency through Overall Wellness) a year ago, creating a residential, gender-specific, Dialectical Behavior Therapy program for teenage girls with self harming behaviors. GROW incorporates daily sitting meditation, weekly yoga, tai chi and art therapy into the DBT framework.

**Melina Mejia (BA REL '07)** lives in Chicago with her wonderful fiancé, Michael, whom she plans to marry in May of 2010. Melina is currently working as a labor support doula, and is also a full-time student in the MA Art Therapy program at Adler School of Professional Psychology in Chicago. She frequently attends programs at the Chicago Shambhala Center in order to maintain her connection to meditation practice as well as the energy of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche.

**Kendall Nations (BA CP '05)** married her partner of six years, Chris Nations, on October 11, 2008. The couple held a spiritual ceremony surrounded by fifty friends and family in Isla Mujeres, Mexico. They now reside in Columbia, South Carolina, where Chris is a pilot and Kendall is a corporate employment recruiter.

**Lesléa Newman (C P '80)** has been named the poet laureate of Northampton, Massachusetts. She is a faculty member of the Stonecoast MFA in Creative Writing Program at the University of Southern Maine, and her newest poetry collection, *Nobody's Mother*, has just been published by Orchard House Books. Her website is [www.lesleanewman.com](http://www.lesleanewman.com).



## Naropa Alumna Helps Individuals Find Balance and Health

**Nashalla Gwyn Nyinda (BA INTD '02)** focused on Asian forms of healing and Buddhist psychology while at Naropa. She has studied Tibetan Medicine since 1999 under various teachers in the United States, Nepal and India. Her strong desire to know the Tibetan Medicine system completely led to her move to India, where she studied for two years in Darjeeling. While in India, Nashalla married Tsundu Sengye Nyinda, a doctor from the Chagpori Institute. They have one son. She will complete her Tibetan Medicine Menpa degree from the Shang Shung Institute of Tibetan Medicine in 2009. She integrates Ayurveda, 5 Element Taoist Theory and Jin Shin Tara, and teaches acupressure alongside the treatment methods used in Tibetan Medicine. Currently, Nashalla travels between Colorado, New Mexico and Massachusetts to give lectures, workshops and see patients. She can be contacted through [www.holistic-health.org](http://www.holistic-health.org).

**Tia Panagos (MA SCP '02)** lives in Golden, Colorado, with her partner and two daughters. She has a private practice in body psychotherapy and her website is [knowingbody.com](http://knowingbody.com). She is loving life.

**Marissa Perel (BA W&L '08)** performed in Miguel Gutierrez's Freedom of Information 2008 endurance piece. Performers in thirty-two states participated, including current Naropa student Lily Brown-Johnson. More information is available at <http://freedomofinformation2008.blogspot.com>. A recent Chicagoan, Marissa has just begun her MFA in performance at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her reviews and interviews are published in Tarpaulin Sky Press & Literary Journal, and she self-publishes her writing in Polter Press.

**Darcy Meek Perez (MA TCP: MT '05)** works as a board certified music therapist at a residential school for people with developmental disabilities in Oneonta, New York.

**Andrew Rose (MA TCP: WT '08)** completed an internship at Access Counseling in Boulder, and then set up a private practice on University Hill. He specializes in trauma resolution using EMDR and Brainspotting techniques. Andrew also got some turns in with clients this winter. Ski therapy. See [www.wisdomemotions.com](http://www.wisdomemotions.com).

**Edie Stone (MA TCP '97)** traveled to Wales last summer, where she gave presentations

and workshops on 2012: Merlin's Prophecy, the Mayan Calendar and Peruvian Shamanism. There is a lot of interest in the UK in native traditions from the Americas, and Edie helps them see similar themes and prophecies in their own traditions. Her practice in Boulder includes psychotherapy, soul-centered counseling and guiding shamanic journeys. Her website is [www.EdieStone.com](http://www.EdieStone.com).

**Luis H. Valadez (MFA W&P '04)** is currently a program and education coordinator for Chicago HOPES ([www.chicagohopes.org](http://www.chicagohopes.org)), an organization that provides educational opportunities and support for homeless K–12 students in the city of Chicago. Part of this position entails running an after-school tutoring program at Maria Shelter in the Englewood neighborhood. His first book of poetry, *what i'm on*, was released in March by the University of Arizona Press.

**Rebekah West (BA DIMS '86 and MA INTD '06)** is the director of the ATLAS Center for Arts, Media & Performance at the University of Colorado and a flamenco dancer with PolkaDot ([www.dotpolkadot.com](http://www.dotpolkadot.com)). Her website is [www.rebekahwest.com](http://www.rebekahwest.com).

**Maureen "Mo" White (BA CP '00 and MDIV '03)** was ordained and fellowshiped as a Unitarian Universalist minister. The Reverend White currently serves as a parish minister in Colorado.



# Maturing as an Institution

## Naropa University Prepares for 2010 NCA Accreditation Review

When the Naropa Institute first received accreditation from the North Central Association (NCA) of Colleges and Schools in 1986, it proved that a highly individualistic institution offering an alternative model of education rooted in a continent halfway around the world could gain mainstream recognition. Things were official now, and though it continued to proudly embrace its esoteric side, the university-to-be had initiated its push into the general public consciousness.

In 1990 and 2000, the NCA comprehensive evaluation team returned to inspect progress and grant a renewal of the accreditation. Next year, in March 2010, they will visit again, and Naropa will be ready.

“In practical terms,” says MA Transpersonal Psychology Director John Davis, who is coordinating a campus-wide self-study in preparation for the visit, “non-accreditation is not an option.” Besides reassuring the public about the quality of a university’s programs, accreditation is a prerequisite for receiving certain government benefits such as access to government-sponsored student loans.

In many ways, compliance with the NCA’s Higher Learning Commission consists of “knowing thyself” and meeting self-imposed goals. The five primary criteria are as follows:

1. Articulate a clear mission statement that is appropriate to an institution of higher education.
2. Acquire and provide the resources (human, financial, physical) necessary to fulfill that mission.
3. Teach effectively and have an assessment plan for measuring how well students learn.
4. Promote a life of learning by supporting inquiry, creativity, practice and social responsibility.
5. Have the capacity and commitment to identify the constituencies served and engage them.

By opening itself to outside examination, states the Higher Learning Commission website, an organization is provided with “an opportunity for critical self-analysis leading to improvement in quality....” These sentiments are echoed by Davis, who has ten steering committee members, two per criterion, assigned to gathering data for the self-study. “We value self-inquiry in the spirit of knowing ourselves as an institution,” he says. “And we have been doing that from the beginning, although in the past a lot of it was more qualitative, even intuitive. The current study invites us to make it more evidence-based.”

Delivered to the commission prior to its visit, the self-study will act as a forerunner, announcing major developments such as growth of student housing and the strategic plan formulated with Wellspring Consulting last year. “If the strategic plan is where we want to be,” says Davis, “The self-study is understanding how to get there. There is a website [being developed] where the findings will be available to the community.”

By taking a developmental view and recognizing that Naropa is still a young institution, he adds, we can identify areas where it is “mature” and areas that still have “growing edges.” One area that has received particular scrutiny is the method for creating new departments. Wanting to ensure that Naropa’s limited resources were not spread too thin between too many new projects, an interim commission requested that all new programs be approved by NCA in advance. To date, BA Peace Studies is the sole program to be approved by this new process.

Thanks to the recent implementation of ongoing self-assessments called departmental systemic reviews (DSRs), data for the self-study is easier to come by. Departments are getting more specific about their goals, more detailed about how particular classes will contribute to them and more efficient about teaching key information, all of which should benefit Naropa as contemplative education continues to gain recognition with every NCA stamp of approval.—*O. Johnson*

# *In Memoriam: Priscilla Inkpen*

February 13, 1947–March 21, 2009

Priscilla Grace Inkpen became a Naropa student in 1995 when she entered the MA Environmental Leadership Program. One graduation and seven years later, she joined the staff as associate dean of students and diversity student advocate—positions that allowed her to work tirelessly for the rights of GLBTQI students and all marginalized populations. A champion of student empowerment, she played a major role in developing student government and created Coming Out Day, an annual celebration.

At the same time, she taught Contemplative Christianity in the Religious Studies Department—a class reputed to have re-inspired several students in their faith. As a Christian minister, she brought her pastoral gifts to ceremonies and was a forthright spokesperson for religious diversity on campus.

On March 21, at age 62, Priscilla died in her Boulder, Colorado, home after surviving two years with ovarian cancer. In February, she had announced that she would discontinue chemotherapy, which had become ineffective, and accept transition to her end-of-life stage.

Born in Detroit, Michigan, on February 13, 1947, Priscilla majored in English at Hope College and graduated in 1969. A junior-year abroad in Beirut, Lebanon, fed Priscilla's commitment to a global worldview, an intense engagement with international dimensions of peace and justice, and an openness to other cultures.

In succeeding years, she married Bruce Ronda, gave birth to a daughter, Margaret, received a Master of Divinity degree from Yale Divinity School and received ordination in the United Church of Christ. In 1988, she returned to Hope College and presented its fourth annual A.J. Muste Memorial Peace Lecture.

As Priscilla continued her lifelong inner explorations, she found the need to come out as a lesbian and to end her first marriage. She was honored to serve as a plaintiff in the 1992 lawsuit that overturned Colorado's anti-gay Amendment 2. A landmark case in the history of civil rights, *Romer v. Evans* was upheld by the United States Supreme Court in 1996, and the *New York Times* featured a picture of Priscilla celebrating on page one. Priscilla met Paula Zoller in 1992, and they held a celebration of commitment in 1994.

The Naropa community has been profoundly moved by Priscilla's courage and poise in the last stages of life, and it is those qualities that we hope to honor and memorialize through the establishment of a scholarship in her name. We will miss her presence and are grateful that we can create this opportunity to continue her life's work.

With initial funding from her close friends raised during her memorial, we have a small base on which to build our five-year goal of \$25,000. Contributions should be addressed to Naropa University with "Priscilla Inkpen Gift Fund" in the memo line and sent to Naropa University, Office of Advancement, 2130 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder, CO 80302.



*"I first met Priscilla shortly after my arrival at Naropa in 2003 and soon came to understand why she was so loved in this community. Her combination of deep Christian spirituality with a broad concern for social justice and diversity, particularly GLBTQIA issues, aligned wonderfully with Naropa's own values and enriched our lives in countless ways. She was a magnificent educator-activist who exemplified the intelligence, compassion and bravery that we all aspire to cultivate in our students and cherish in our graduates. She lives on in the hearts of all who were touched by her magnificent life."*

—President Thomas B. Coburn



**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**



*Birches, Mt. Philo, Vermont* • Robert Spellman • 1983 • 11" X 8" • watercolor

## ***Birches, Mt. Philo, Vermont*** **by Robert Spellman**

“This watercolor of a birch forest was done on Mt. Philo in northern Vermont,” says Robert Spellman, faculty in Visual Arts and Religious Studies. “It was done in the field in 1983 and remains with a small collection of favorites that I’ve kept over the years. At that time, I was visiting my sister Kathleen in Burlington. Our father had died just a few months earlier, and we were spending time hiking and painting amidst the unfolding June beauty in the woods and hills around Lake Champlain. This painting still reminds me how the improbable dance of sadness and tender vividness can thaw the mind into fluid clarity.”