Hello, and welcome to The Ledger. With this new publication, we hope to share information about the American Indian Studies program, our students and faculty, our classes, as well as recent and upcoming events.

As its name implies, The Ledger is a place for recording information; in our case, stories of importance to our readers. Of course, ledger books have historical significance as items used by non-Indians to record what was taken from Indians and what was given in exchange. Sheets of ledger paper also were used by late nineteenth century Indians to record drawings of their former lives as well as drawings depicting Native lives altered by change. Ledger art, as this type of art came to be known, represented the ability of Native peoples to assess and adapt to new situations, without forgetting their traditional roots.

That Native people can adjust as needed to move into the future, while keeping alive their tribal ways, is a basic premise of American Indian Studies. We witness this ability in the American Indian students and the Native faculty members at our university. The American Indian Studies community is working to create a future for Native people as learners and teachers who strive to serve their families and communities.

The work we do together is reflected in The Ledger, and I invite you to spend some time enjoying the articles in this issue. Of special note is the article about Professor Caskey Russell’s international travel class that will provide students an academic experience in the Yucatan Peninsula. Professor Ed Muñoz, Director of Chicano Studies, will join Professor Russell in leading the travel portion of this class that promises to be an amazing opportunity to combine learning, excitement, fun, and adventure. Now is the time to register! Yucatan Study, along with the New Zealand travel class also referenced in this issue of The Ledger, form the core of the American Indian Studies international travel program. We expect to broaden our international program to include travel to indigenous communities in other parts of Mexico and Canada. If you have ideas and suggestions, or would like to receive more information about our international travel activities, we would love to hear from you.

Our collaborations with the Wind River Indian Reservation continue, as illustrated by the work of Professor Bill Gribb and his students through their class, Natural Resource Management on Western Reservations. We hope to advance partnerships like this with the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone Nations through projects that serve the tribal communities. One project currently underway is creating teaching materials for Northern Arapaho language instruction. Northern Arapaho elder Wayne C’Hair and a group of University of Wyoming and Arapaho Charter High School students are working to create audio and visual teaching and learning resources that will assist with the important work of language restoration and revitalization. Wayne C’Hair teaches the Northern Arapaho language at the University of Wyoming.

If you would like to learn more about any of our projects our classes, or our faculty, please visit the American Indian Studies Web site (www.uwyo.edu/aist) or call us at (307) 766-6521. Your questions and comments about this issue of The Ledger or about any aspect of the American Indian Studies Program are welcomed. We also welcome financial contributions that help us provide student travel opportunities, the annual Honoring of American Indian Graduates and Scholarship Recipients (this year scheduled for May 9), campus lectures and programs, and student scholarships. Your gifts, like the work we do, are an investment in the future. As always, on behalf of American Indian Studies, I thank you for your friendship and support.

Judith Antell, American Indian Studies Director
As I was cleaning out my room a few weeks back, I stumbled on an old shoe box. When I opened it, a flood of memories hit me. I found old birthday cards, pictures, CDs, and letters. In this stack of random items a light blue paper caught my eye. This paper was my eighth grade graduation program from Wyoming Indian High School in 1998. I smiled when I opened the program, but my smile quickly faded when I started reading the names of my fellow graduates.

When you are 13 years old, anything seems possible. I remember looking at my fellow classmates and thinking they all were going to be something special, something great. Now sadness and guilt overcome me when I see how things did not turn out the way I originally thought. Some finished high school. Some are now in jail. Some are not with us anymore. But most of all, the ones I do see have a look of feeling trapped and not knowing how to get free. I began to wonder if this is what living on the reservation does to you.

When we were younger, we were told leaving the reservation and going to school would help make our people stronger. Education is the key. So what happens if this does not happen? What happens when we do not take the opportunity to leave the reservation? What happens if we are never given an opportunity?

In reality, graduating from eighth grade is the end of the line for most reservation students. High school is something few finish and many quit. College is reserved for the special students—for the diamonds in the rough.

On the night of my graduation, I remember laying on the trampoline outside of my house and looking up at all the stars in the sky. I remember wondering what was next for me. I never in a million years would have thought ten years later I would be on the verge of graduating from the University of Wyoming with my bachelor’s degree in journalism. I never thought I was special or smart enough to make it in college. I knew I was going to do something with my life, but I never believed I would make it this far.

Realizing how close I am to finishing college and how everything in my life in terms of a career in journalism seems to be lining up perfectly makes me feel guilty. I think of all of my classmates who are struggling and can not seem to catch a break. I think of the people who are never given an opportunity to make something of themselves, and here I am with so many in front of me. I wonder what sets me apart from them.

Maybe it is because I am driven. Maybe it is because I grabbed the first opportunity in front of me and never let go. Maybe it is because I realized my worth.

But in the end, I am grateful for what I have and optimistic about what it to come. I also never give up the hope that all my fellow classmates will discover their worth and make their dreams come true. I just hope that they are all happy. I guess that is something about being American Indian. We may all take different paths, some hard, some easy, but when each of our times comes, we all hope they end in the same place—a place where all our ancestors will welcome us home.

Jordan Dresser is a senior in journalism and an enrolled member of the Northern Arapaho Tribe. He has been named a Top 20 Student in the College of Arts & Sciences for 2008.
It is one thing to read about what is happening on the Wind River Indian Reservation and another to experience it. In October 2007, 12 students spent three days in the field on the reservation to observe the management strategies of four major natural resources: water, rangeland, timber and extractive commodities.

The students were part of a geography and AIS class studying natural resource management on reservations in the western United States.

On the first day, students met with members of the Natural Resource Division of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fort Washakie office, to learn about range management, cultural resources, the completion of a new soil inventory, the forestry plan, and extractive industries. Trish Cashland of the BIA took them to two sites to demonstrate different approaches to oil and gas extraction, first to an old site northeast of Lander and then to a new exploratory site southeast of Riverton. Oil and gas extraction is one of the more profitable natural resources for both the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone tribes.

Water is one of the most important natural resources on the Wind River Reservation. The students visited water storage sites and examined the differences in irrigation systems across the reservation and into surrounding areas. They visited one of the newest water projects, the Fort Washakie Dam, and one of the oldest, an irrigation structure that has been in operation for nearly one hundred years. Bill Russell, tribal water engineer, talked about water resources, management strategies, and proposed and ongoing water projects.

The final day of the field trip was spent on the Arapaho Ranch with manager David Spooner. Spooner spent a good portion of the morning describing the cattle operation and the changes in strategy they have made due to the prolonged drought. At Arapaho Ranch, they have reduced the herd by 25% to sustain their natural grazing approach. After a great lunch at the ranch bunkhouse, Spooner led an expedition to a grazing site near the crest of the Owl Creek Mountains. He explained the different pasture areas, conflicts with wolves and bears, grazing and herding approaches, and ongoing adjustments to the cattle market.

The field trip was filled with great discussions, interesting facts and figures, and spectacular views of the northern portion of the Wind River Indian Reservation. For the students, this type of experience reinforces the complexity of natural resource management on reservations and provides an opportunity for them to experience a different facet of the Wind River Indian Reservation, the business side.

Bill Gribb is a geography professor at UW.
“More,” I pleaded with my grandmother when she finished telling us stories. “Tell the one about roasting potatoes in the fire by the lake,” my sister would ask. “Or the winter you found the nest of rattlesnakes.”

Stories have always been important in my life, from the ones my grandmother told us, to the Dr. Seuss books I read to my own children. Imagine my delight when I was able to join UW student Melissa Elk and faculty member Caskey Russell to talk about stories on “NDN Affair,” a new radio program hosted by AIS.

Since the days when all of our literature was oral, stories have been with us. On-air, Caskey, Melissa and I discussed how stories are more than entertainment. Stories show us how to behave (or not to behave), they teach us about our past, and they reinforce our shared values and culture. But talking about stories is not as much fun as the stories themselves. What we needed was a story.

Melissa pulled out Yuse: The Bully and the Bear by John Washakie and read it on the radio. Yuse is based on a traditional Shoshone story. In his introduction to the book, Washakie explains that the tradition of storytelling is almost gone, and that his concern that the stories would be lost prompted him to make use of publishing technology to save them.

Sitting in a radio booth in front of a microphone is not the same as cuddling with a child on a cold winter evening and sharing the stories we heard from our grandparents and aunts, but once we started talking, the time flew, and Yuse took over to tell us to “have the courage to take what you know and use it.”

We are looking forward to sharing more stories on the air. In Laramie, tune in to KOCA 93.5 FM at 7 p.m. every other Monday to hear the latest from AIS.

Lynne Swearingen is a member of the AIS Advisory Board and instructor for AIS. She also manages the WyoOne ID Office.
In October, American Indian Studies hosted a contingent of nine Māori, the indigenous people of New Zealand. Their tour of Wyoming was a return visit of an AIS class that traveled to New Zealand in June 2006, and learned about Māori culture firsthand.

While in Laramie, the visitors gave public presentations on traditional Māori music and on the historical role of Māori women. AIS, music, and anthropology classes were honored to have classroom visits from the Māori guests. The Māori also gave a presentation at the Cathedral Home for Children. The Māori group included three children, who visited their peers at the UW Lab School and shared their culture. The Māori children were an integral part of the visiting group and actively participated in the public programs. This was a living demonstration of how traditions are passed to each new generation in the Māori culture.

Organization of the Māori visit was a partnership between AIS, Wind River Tribal College in Ethete, and the Plains Indian Museum at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody. The Māori visitors toured Wyoming for two weeks. They spent several days on the Wind River Indian Reservation, where they gave a public presentation at Wyoming Indian High School. They spent time with Arapaho and Shoshone people, exchanging knowledge about each others’ culture and history. The Māori also visited Shoshone and Arapaho tribal agencies.

In Cody, the Māori attended the annual Plains Indian Museum seminar, where they gave formal presentations on a variety of topics from music to ancient navigation skills. Seminar participants enjoyed interacting with the Māori during both formal and informal discussions, talking about language preservation, the care of the earth, economic development, and how cultures change over time. Participants discussed the similarities between indigenous peoples worldwide.

The Māori visitors also spent time at the Medicine Wheel and at Devil’s Tower, which are sacred sites for American Indian people.

Language preservation was discussed in depth throughout the tour. The Māori people have been extremely successful in revitalizing their language during the past 30 years. Māori is now an official language of New Zealand, and there are Māori radio and television stations as well as books and periodicals. Māori children and parents attend language immersion preschools together. Native people in North America hope to learn from the Māori’s successes.

American Indian Studies is working to formalize an exchange program with the University of Waikato in New Zealand, so this cultural exchange with the Māori people can continue for years to come.
Colonization and tribal sovereignty, appropriation of indigenous cultures and resources, use and exploitation of indigenous land and labor, and poverty and its relationship to economic exploitation are all themes common to indigenous people throughout the Americas. This summer, Caskey Russell and Ed Muñoz will lead a study abroad course to the Yucatan Peninsula, focusing on the historical, political and socioeconomic forces that have shaped the relationship of indigenous peoples to their environments.

This new course augments the American Indian Studies Program’s growing interest in indigenous people and their commonalities worldwide.

Students traveling to the Yucatan Peninsula will compare and contrast issues facing native people in the United States with those of indigenous people in Mexico. Prior to departure, students will dedicate two weeks to learning about treaty rights, environmental challenges on reservations, and other issues common to Native people in the Western United States, as well as the Chiapas uprising, Mayan culture, class systems, and other issues important to indigenous people in Mexico.

In the Yucatan, students will visit several Mayan ruins as well as contemporary Mayan communities, and they will consider the effect that Spanish colonialism and the Catholic church had on the Maya. During a visit to the Mayan village of Mani, the center of the Spanish Inquisition against the Maya in the sixteenth century, students will learn how a Spanish bishop burned nearly the entire library of Mayan codices, an event now seen as comparable to the burning of the library in Alexandria. They will consider the impact of such a loss of history and culture on the Mayan people today. Students will also visit Izamal and the ruins of the Mayan pyramid Kinich Kak Mo, which was a Mayan holy site dedicated to the Sun God. The Spaniards destroyed Kinich Kak Mo and built a small church on top of the ruins in their desire to rebuild an indigenous culture in their own image. Izamal is still predominately Mayan, and the Mayan language is as common there as Spanish. In 1993, Pope John Paul II performed a mass in Izamal for the indigenous ovulation as a type of symbolic healing ceremony meant to unite Indians and Europeans.

Visits to the town of Merida and to the ruins of Chichen Itza will provide students with Mayan perspectives on art, architecture, history, astronomy, science, and math.

You do not need to be proficient in Spanish to participate in this course. There are numerous scholarship opportunities to help students pay for study abroad courses. Visit UW’s Study Abroad Web site or contact the International Studies Office at (307) 766-3423 for more information. If you are interested in participating in this course, contact Caskey Russell at ccaskey@uwyo.edu or (307) 766-6217.

Professor Caskey Russell joined UW’s Department of English and the American Indian Studies Program in 2004 and is an enrolled member of the Tlingit Tribe.
Northern Arapaho Word Search

Each issue of *The Ledger* will include a word search featuring a Native American language. This issue’s word search, created by Felicia Antelope, highlights Northern Arapaho words for numbers that are appropriately used with inanimate objects. This word search was used in the University of Wyoming Northern Arapaho language class taught by Wayne C’Hair. All completed puzzles sent to AIS by April 30 will be entered in a drawing to win an AIS attaché bag. Please include your name and contact information on the puzzle.

neniiset’i (one)
neniisei’ii (two)
neneesei’ii (three)
yeneini’ii (four)
yoonoo3onei’ii (five)
neniiitootoxei’ii (six)
neniisootoxei’ii (seven)
neneesootoxei’ii (eight)
3io’toxei’ii (nine)
beeteetoxei’ii (ten)