Wood Worker

JAVIER DIAZ-CALVO, ’94, RAISES TEAK—AND HIS COMMUNITY’S STANDARD OF LIVING

Solving the Cancer Puzzle
Professor of biochemistry Edwin A. Lewis is dedicated to finding a cure p. 12

Telling Stories
Famed author Diana Gabaldon, ’73 and ’78, shares the secrets of her unique prose p. 14

ALSO: Winners of our “@Work @Play” photo contest. See the pics that made the cut! p. 16
A Generation Takes Root
By cultivating a reputation as a community-minded and eco-friendly teak forester, Javier Diaz-Calvo, ’94, is building a business as durable as his product.

Cracking the Code
In the battle against cancer, NAU researcher Edwin A. Lewis works tirelessly to unlock secrets of the disease that could pave the way to a cure.

A Writer’s Wisdom
New York Times bestselling author Diana Gabaldon, ’73 and ’78, tells us how she became a writer and what inspires her work.

Thoughts
The poets hail spring as a time of rebirth, and NAU is taking strides toward some truly epic poetry.

Links
Recognizing NAU award winners, making travel plans, the children of the sixties return and ecosystems go wireless.

Journeys
View the winners of our “@Work @Play” online photo contest.

Connections
Find out what’s been happening with your NAU classmates.

Sierra Ancha Wilderness
—Photograph by Kevin Schafer/CORBIS

Cover photo
Javier Diaz-Calvo, ’94 B.S.F., manager and founding shareholder of Proteak, rests on the fruits of his labor: 6-year-old teak from his company’s first thinning. At this stage of growth, the trees are harvested for use in furniture and palm huts.
Recently, the mountain campus has witnessed a multitude of new buildings rising from the Flagstaff soil, perhaps altering the familiar profile, but for the better. Our alums and friends who haven’t visited campus for a while will want to visit www4.nau.edu/cas to see how NAU continues to thrive and grow. Of course, while physical structures are experiencing the most obvious metamorphosis, even more significant advances are happening in classrooms and labs on campus and beyond.

In this issue of PINE, read about the groundbreaking research NAU’s own are conducting in the fight against cancer (Page 12). Meet Javier Diaz-Calvo, ’94, who introduces us to his life in teak (Page 8). And learn more about New York Times bestselling author and alumna Diana Gabaldon, ’73 and ’78, on Page 14. View the winner and runners-up from our online photo contest, “@Work @Play,” and their inspirational shots (Page 16). As always, join us in celebrating your fellow alums’ successes (Page 18) and remember those we’ve lost (Page 22). I leave you with a message from our editor.

In these pages you’ll often read about one of our “benchmark” reunions—for our Blue and Gold Class’ 40th (Page 6) or the much-esteemed 50-Year Golden Grads. But sometimes reunion affinities take on a life of their own. We were recently contacted by members of the 1966-1970 NAU Hiking Club, who organized a wonderfully nostalgic reunion/retreat in the Oregon wilderness (Page 20); more of their story will be included in the spring 2006 PINE online.

We’re also working with a high-energy group of ’70s theatre alums planning their 2007 reunion. But not all get-togethers are extravaganzas. We’re often contacted by smaller groups, such as the former master’s student looking for his fellow grad assistants, or the physical therapy alums eager to celebrate their own 10 years of putting people back together. Remember that naualumni.com now offers affinity-based class-reunions—for our Blue and Gold Class’ 40th (Page 6) or the much-esteemed 50-Year Golden Grads. But sometimes reunion affinities take on a life of their own. We were recently contacted by members of the 1966-1970 NAU Hiking Club, who organized a wonderfully nostalgic reunion/retreat in the Oregon wilderness (Page 20); more of their story will be included in the spring 2006 PINE online.

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To start the ball rolling on your NAU rendezvous, please contact one of our dedicated reunion coordinators today at 888-628-2586 or e-mail alumni@nau.edu.

Until next time,

Managing Editor

Anne Walden
Editor

NAME AND ADDRESS CHANGES
To submit address and name/marital status changes, call the NAU Office of Alumni & Constituent Relations toll-free at 888-628-2586 (888-NAU-ALUM), or e-mail sue.obrzut@nau.edu.

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Send an e-mail request to krista.perkins@nau.edu
The NAU Alumni Association's 2006 Travel Program reveals Earth's resplendent beauty like you’ve never seen it before. Picture a moonlit musing over the Santorini caldera ... a luxurious meandering through pristine Scandinavian landscapes ... a sojourn in Old World graciousness ... Experience the powerful, instinctive call of antiquity.

Greek Isles
Alumni Campus Abroad (in-residence) including Athens, Crete, Rethymnon, Knossos, Chania, Santorini, Akrotiri, Fira, Thirasia and Ia.
May 22 to June 2, 2006

Islands of Antiquity
Istanbul, Rhodes, Crete, Malta, Sicily, Sardinia, Minorca, Corsica and Civitavecchia aboard the classic Minerva II.
June 2 to 17, 2006

Lake Constance
Alumni Campus Abroad (in-residence) including Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Liechtenstein.
July 3 to 11, 2006

Southern Nights Under Northern Lights
Six-star luxury aboard the Crystal Serenity to Sweden, Finland, Russia, Estonia and Denmark.
July 31 to August 8, 2006

Peter the Great Passage
Between St. Petersburg and Moscow aboard the M/S Repin.
September 2 to 14, 2006

Yucatan, Mexico
December 10 to 17, 2006

For more exciting details, or to officially begin your voyage with fellow alumni and friends of NAU, e-mail beth.martin@nau.edu or phone (928) 523-3358.
The Applied Indigenous Studies major (AIS), under the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, is one of the university’s truly unique offerings. AIS combines contemporary tribal management skills with respect for indigenous culture, knowledge, values and beliefs, focusing on the historical development of tribal self-determination and its impact on indigenous peoples. Recent educational programs demonstrate the diversity of AIS initiatives:

- AIS faculty visited with Anita Poleahla, ’92 B.G.S., ’95 M.P.A. and ’98 M.ED. Poleahla is teaching the Hopi language and helping with its revitalization effort. According to a language survey conducted in 1988, less than 10 percent of Hopi youth speak Hopi fluently, compared to nearly 90 percent of adults. “At the current rate, the Hopi language will be completely lost within one to two generations unless young adults and children begin to teach, learn and practice,” Poleahla says.

- Two graduate students, Ferrell Secakuku and Shawn Kelley, were awarded funding from the Hooper Undergraduate Research Award program to cultivate the endangered Hopi Red Lima bean (Palahatiko), create a seed stock and ensure its growth for future generations.

- The department is featuring a new special topics course, AIS 499: Contemporary Developments - Environmental Justice and Indigenous Peoples. The course explores various perspectives on environmental justices and how the concept is more broadly defined when indigenous peoples are involved. The new offering also encourages students to become active agents of change.

To explore AIS online and learn more about curricula, faculty and career directions, visit ais.nau.edu.

The Sixties Make a Comeback

So much can change in 40 years. In 1965 a postage stamp cost 5 cents; the Oscar-winning song was “Chim Chim Cher-ee” from Mary Poppins; and the pop chart-topper was “(I Can’t Get No) Satisfaction” by the Rolling Stones; the National Football League Champions—without benefit of a Super Bowl—were the Green Bay Packers, who beat the Cleveland Browns 23-12. And fewer than 500 students graduated in good standing from a modest enclave of learning in the pines, Arizona State Teachers College (ASTC) at Flagstaff.

But despite the inflated price of the computer-generated, self-adhesive stamps in their modernized wallets, the Blue and Gold Reunion Class of 1965 experienced an uncanny flash-back to earlier days when they returned to the mountain campus for Homecoming Weekend. In the decidedly crisp November air, they reconnected with both town and gown, and were cheered on at the Homecoming game’s halftime ceremony. The university’s favorite children of the ‘60s on hand included Larry Barman, Art Besser, Sara Besser, John Earnshaw, Raymond Gillespie, Cranston Hysong, Sue Hysong, Sonny McDaniel, Kathleen Nolan McWhorter, Nancy Parent, John Perez, Doug Williams, Barbara Winters and several last minute attendees, including Lee Baillie, Bill Beeghley, Brad Brown, Gary Keicher and Doug Knox. We congratulate the final ASTC class, and look forward to celebrating the first “University” grad this fall. To flash forward with this year’s Class of ‘65 hoopla, please contact Beth Martin at (928) 523-3358.
How do multiple species of plants co-exist in a forest when they are competing for the same resources—light, water and nutrients? Paul Flikkema, associate professor of electrical engineering in the College of Engineering and Natural Sciences (CENS) is working to find the answer. Flikkema received a five-year grant from the National Science Foundation to develop wireless sensor technology so we can understand how global climate change affects forest ecosystems.

“The diversity of life on Earth appears to be declining,” Flikkema explained. “If we can understand the dynamic interactions of plants and animals with their environments, we can then hope to find ways to maintain biodiversity.”

Flikkema is developing technology to replace conventional—and cumbersome—means of collecting the data. “You must [currently] either gather data from each of dozens or hundreds of recording sensors, or interconnect the sensors with a tangle of wires. Both techniques disturb the forest environment,” he said.

Wireless sensor network technology enables the sensors to communicate via radio, gathering data in a low-impact fashion. But these networks are different from other wireless networks such as cell phones, because the sensors organize themselves without a controlling tower and work for months or years without recharging.

“This new grant will enable us to construct wireless sensor networks that also automatically adapt their sensing to daily and hourly environmental changes,” he says.

Flikkema is collaborating with a team from Duke University to gather data in areas where the environment has been altered (for example, by a storm that fells trees and creates an opening in the forest canopy). To learn more about CENS programs and curricula, please visit cet.nau.edu/about.

For virtually every coach in the state of Arizona, Jim Coleman is a household name. Known for running the state tournaments in cross country and track and working closely with the State Coaches Association for more than two decades, he is an extraordinary leader and a driving force in state high school track and field. Jim’s volunteer work affects literally thousands of young people and adults each year, but he prefers to remain behind the scenes. He is currently an at-risk counselor and physical education teacher at Centennial High School in Peoria, Ariz., and his friends consider him a modern-day Pied Piper for young people.

With this award, the NAUAA thanks Jim Coleman for his tireless personal commitment to the youth of our communities.

NAUAA Dwight Patterson (1934) Alumnus of the Year Award:
James L. “Jim” Coleman, ’75 B.S.ED.

NAUAA Jeff Ferris (1936) Volunteer of the Year Award:
Timothy P. “Tim” Kearney ’90 B.S.ED, ’95 M.ED.

Bilingual in Spanish and English, Tim Kearney has served as a leader of the Hands Across Borders programs with Mexico and Canada, dedicating his time and experience to helping young people find a successful path in life. A fifth-grade teacher at Palominas Elementary School in Hereford, Ariz., for the past 14 years, Tim’s students routinely rank among the best in the state. This achievement can be credited in part to his teaching style and dedication to excellence, and in part to his personal philosophy.

“Our students learn many lessons through their educational experience, but none is more important than this: People are people,” Tim says. “We tend to separate ourselves by our differences rather than embracing our similarities.” The NAUAA honors Tim Kearney with this award for granting us fresh perspectives through his remarkable humanistic gifts.
BY CULTIVATING A REPUTATION AS A COMMUNITY-MINDED AND ECO-FRIENDLY TEAK FORESTER, JAVIER DIAZ-CALVO, ’94 B.S.F., IS BUILDING A BUSINESS AS DURABLE AS HIS PRODUCT BY ANNE WALDEN
Javier Diaz-Calvo is an expert at waiting. He waits patiently to connect with us for this story through the crisscross of e-mails and the muddle of time zones. He hangs in as our recording equipment fails to cooperate with our speaker-phone. But most of all, he demonstrates a forbearance that few can match: He waits for his teak trees to grow.

As manager and a founding shareholder of Proteak, a teak plantation project in Nayarit, on the west coast of Mexico, Diaz-Calvo oversees a business that relies on a purely natural tempo. His unhurried teak trees will reach maturity in roughly 25 years—a short time for foresters, but an entire generation for the rest of the world.

Founded in 2001, Proteak is extraordinary in its strict adherence to environmentally and socially sustainable business practices. “In a long-term business like growing trees, if you do not have social and ecological responsibility, you will not have a business,” explains Diaz-Calvo, “because you don’t know what’s going to happen in the next generation.”

This nurturing approach applies to both wood and workers. “We know that if we want to make a profit for our investors, we have to be at peace with everyone. Some of our workers are going to grow old in our company, and their children are probably going to be working with us. If we don’t treat their parents right, we’ll have problems hiring new workers in the future,” he says. “If they’ve grown up with the company, like a family, the children will become your business partners as well. But if you don’t treat the community with respect, it’s going to bite you back.”

Wonder Wood

Ask Diaz-Calvo to tell you about his wood of choice, and prepare for a torrent of enthusiasm. He explains that the species of teak he grows (Tectona grandis) outprices all other hardwoods in the market—even mahogany. And for good reason: It’s amazingly durable against the elements, including salt water; it’s termite and teredo (shipworm) resistant; and it’s undeniably beautiful. These properties make it the most desirable wood product for ship-building, and have created an endless market for furniture connoisseurs.

“I think people are getting fed up with artificial stuff like plastics,” Diaz-Calvo says. “Right now in the United States there’s a resurgence of market interest, but in Europe, India and China, demand has never stopped. Teak is one of the fastest growing markets in the world because it’s directly related to population growth, population wealth and the preference of people for natural materials.”

This year Proteak began its first “thinnings,” harvesting teak trees for furniture markets and palm huts (palapa). When the trees are between 10 and 20 years old, they will be suitable for decking and other nautical niches. Environmentalists and enlightened consumers will be pleased to learn that Diaz-Calvo eschews any sort of illegal cutting, and maintains scrupulous...
How Do You Take Your Teak?

As it weathers, teak turns silvery grey. According to Javier Diaz-Calvo, if you want to keep it looking like new—a common preference among affluent boating types—you have to scrape it. “But then you’re [probably] using acids to remove the outer coat. That keeps the market interesting for us,” he laughs. “Because those people need to renew their decking every ten years.” And how does he like his own teak? “Silvery grey. It has a lot of character.”

management practices that will permit official certification as soon as the trees mature.

A Forester Comes of Age

A trained dendrologist can read the development of a hardwood tree by examining its rings, the layer of wood cells produced by the plant in one year. If Diaz-Calvo’s life were a tree ring sample, you’d see several significant and extremely unique segments. Born and raised in Mexico, in the city of Culiacan in Sinaloa, young Javier had an affinity with growing things. “I was a Boy Scout all my life,” he says, “and knew I wanted to study something to do with nature. When I lived in Minneapolis for a year as an exchange student, I learned about opportunities that weren’t available to me before. Even though there were forestry schools in Mexico, at the time their standards of education were not what I expected.”

Diaz-Calvo heard of NAU as a high school student, and visited with several faculty members. Pleased with its relative proximity to Mexico and its excellent reputation among western forestry schools, he enrolled at the mountain campus and graduated with his forestry bachelor’s in 1994. Afterward he assumed he would work in the high mountains, in ponderosa pine forests. But he dreamed of finding a job in the tropics, and in 1996 he got his wish. An Irish company wanted him to manage a plantation of Gmelina trees for pulp, in the state of Campeche in southern Mexico.

“Teak is one of the fastest growing markets in the world because it’s directly related to population growth, population wealth and the preference of people for natural materials.”

Teak Trivia

*Teak (Tectona grandis): a large deciduous tree of the verbena family. Used for ship decking and other constructional work in boat building; structures in contact with water such as bridges, docks, quays, piers and floodgates; indoor and garden furniture.

*Vitals: Deciduous trees of up to 50 meters tall • Bole generally straight and branchless for up to 20 to 25 meters • Diameter of 150 to 250 centimeters • Fluted or with low buttresses at base • Bark soft

*Where to Find It Beyond Your Lawn Chair: The Indian peninsula, Burma, Laos, Thailand—and now Mexico.

*Teak and Sympathy: In traditional medicine a teak powder paste was prescribed against bilious headaches and swellings, and internally against dermatitis or as a vermifuge (wormer).

*Beauty Essentials: The charred wood, soaked in poppy juice and made into a paste, was thought to relieve the swelling of eyelids. The bark has been processed as an astringent and the wood oil as a hair tonic.

Source: PROSEA (Plant Resources of South-East Asia) Handbook
He remembers realizing that teak was probably a best bet for tropical planting: “It has very high volume, I understood how to grow it, and I also understood where to grow it.” And because of his NAU education, Diaz-Calvo was remarkably well-prepared for the management arena. “The School of Forestry, with its team-taught curriculum and multidisciplinary approach, was a huge asset for me as a manager because I could relate to almost any discipline that directly influenced the forest. I could talk to environmentalists and have them work with me, not against; I could speak the same language as pest managers. I’m not an expert in those fields, but because of NAU I could relate very well.”

After a while the price of pulp dropped, and Diaz-Calvo’s employer decided to leave Campeche. It was then that serendipity stepped in. He had two choices: work in Colombia for the same company, or go back to the U.S. And then—“out of nowhere”—came the person who is now his associate, Héctor Bonilla. Bonilla had been in the area asking what to grow, and was told Diaz-Calvo was the only forester with the knowledge. “So he came to me, we talked for a couple of days, and we decided to start a plantation in Nayarit,” says Diaz-Calvo.

**Quest to Invest Leads to Contest**
The partners’ first mandate was to find investors, an ongoing effort that finances the company from year to year. And for some, investing in Proteak has necessitated a paradigm shift. “It’s been a very interesting venture, getting people to invest in forests in a country that only wants a 28-day return on their money. We’re [asking] people to engage in a 25-year investment. They won’t really have to wait 25 years—they’ll start seeing their first returns around year six or eight—but that’s still a long time to wait.”

Still, the financial prospects are definitely worth waiting for: Proteak offers its investors a 10 percent premium. “If their money stays with us for eight years, they receive compounded interest on 10 percent of their investment, before the founding shareholders are paid. Our investors know they come first—and if we don’t make a profit, we don’t get any money.”

It was this ongoing pursuit of investors that led Diaz-Calvo and his colleagues to enter the 2005 New Ventures Mexico competition. Developed by the World Resources Institute and cosponsored by the Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature, New Ventures Mexico focuses on stimulating new companies to have a positive influence on the environment. In 2005, Proteak was nominated along with nine other environmental companies representing renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and recycling. “We never expected to win,” reports Diaz-Calvo delightedly. “But at the end of the day we were awarded first prize for sustainable businesses.”

**When They Grow Up**
Currently, Proteak has 18 full-time employees, with up to 100 during the planting and nursery seasons, on a plantation that is roughly 1,680 acres. The future may hold plantations in other parts of Mexico, and even public trading on NASDAQ. But for now, the company is concentrating on R&D, particularly in the furniture design arena, and on maintaining its status as a globally responsible business that is an integral part of its local community. “We want to make forestry’s environmental and social policies better,” says Diaz-Calvo. “We know, for instance, that people in our communities only finish the sixth grade. We are encouraging our workers to keep studying and keep their children in school until they finish high school or go to technical school—or further.”

And from there, perhaps to NAU ... and on to the patient life of one who watches the trees as they strive to reach the sky.
In a world filled with short attention spans and quick-fix solutions, Edwin A. Lewis isn’t intimidated by the long and winding road. The professor of chemistry and biochemistry at NAU has spent the greater part of the last two decades looking for ways to battle cancer. The work is slow and tedious, but it’s also amazingly fulfilling. “Eventually, scientists will find a way to cure cancer and any significant contribution I can make to speed the process is incredibly satisfying,” he says.

These aren’t hollow words. Lewis and another leading researcher—Laurence Hurley, a chair in pharmaceutical sciences at the University of Arizona—are pursuing a leading-edge approach that could result in new and improved drugs to treat various forms of cancer, including pancreatic, colorectal, breast and prostate cancers.

They’re focusing on drugs that kill cancer cells by inhibiting the expression of a specific set of cancer genes commonly referred to as oncogenes.

If they succeed, Lewis and Hurley will change the way patients receive treatment, the side effects they experience and overall success rates. In a best case scenario, the research could yield new types of chemotherapy drugs that are effective in curing some of the most deadly forms of cancer. “The ultimate goal is to regulate various genes with a limited number of drug compounds,” Lewis explains. “The Holy Grail is to find one compound that turns them all off and has no side effects.”

Getting to the Root of Things
Blazing a trail in cancer research isn’t a task for the faint of heart. Today, new therapies and drugs require teams of researchers, each able to bring specific knowledge to the process. Lewis, who earned a doctorate degree in physical chemistry from the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, in 1972, is an expert in the molecular properties of G-quadruplexes—unique DNA structures that appear to be involved in the biology of cancer cells.

continued on Page 23
Diana Gabaldon knows how to keep the plates spinning, and is usually writing multiple books simultaneously. Gabaldon recently released the sixth book in the famous Outlander series, A Breath of Snow and Ashes. She is also working on the seventh as well as a novel in the Lord John subseries—all while balancing family life and aspiring to read an entire library of other works. NAU was fortunate to catch up with her in the midst of her latest book tour.

What drew you to the world of writing?

I knew from a very early age I was meant to be a writer, and yet I come from a very conservative family background. I went into science and was fairly good at it; I enjoyed teaching and research. Writing was not related at all to the educational side of my life. I have a B.S. in zoology from NAU, a master’s in marine biology from Scripps Institute of Oceanography, and a Ph.D. in quantitative behavioral ecology from NAU. I had two postdoctoral appointments in physiological ecology and in marine biology. I worked as an assistant professor at ASU in the Center for Environmental Studies. I was also hired as a field ecologist and through a series of “accidents” too complicated to explain here, I wound up an expert in scientific computation. But I still wanted to write books. When I turned 35, I realized Mozart was dead by that age and if I wanted to write a book I’d better move fast. So I did, and luckily it turned out right in the end.

Your approach to promoting your books has been very unconventional in that you literally explain the plots to booksellers during your tours. How has telling the stories in this manner helped you gain a foothold in the market?

It’s very difficult for an unknown writer to be distinctive unless the New York Times decides you are the flavor of the month. My books are so unusual that they don’t really fit in a specific genre, so they can’t be easily explained. For a first book, a publisher usually releases a press kit describing the book with glowing quotes from
other authors who write the same sort of thing. This wasn’t possible to do for my books since they are nothing like other books on the market. All they could do was create an ambiguous type of cover with gold foil that indicates serious intent by the publisher; you can tell they care about the book if they use the embossed foil.

So I would go into bookstores and talk to the managers to see if I could sign any of their stock. I figured since bookstore managers order the books, it would be nice if they knew who I was. The only way I found of explaining the book was telling the story, and by the time I got to the second paragraph, they wanted to hear more.

You’ve said that the initial inspiration for the Outlander series came from a re-run of “Dr. Who” on PBS. Is that true?

Yes, but not in the way many may think. I was watching an episode in which Dr. Who picked up a young Scotsman from 1745, a 17- or 18-year-old young man in a kilt, who was kind of fetching. I found myself still thinking about it the next day, but already knew I wanted to write a historical novel. I was looking for a time and place for this novel and thought, why not Scotland, 18th century? So that is where I began, knowing nothing about Scotland or the 18th century!

The only way I found of explaining the book was telling the story, and by the time I got to the second paragraph, they wanted to hear more.

How do you view the series as you write it? Do you already know how it will conclude or do you take it one book at a time?

So far there are six main books in the series. I don’t plan the books out in any detail at all. In fact, I usually don’t know much about the book when I begin to write. Of course I have ideas, as I have been living with these characters for some time, as well as doing intensive research on the 18th century. As I read, I will come across a certain event or a line of thought or even a political philosophy and want to do something with it—for instance, I want to use the Battle of Saratoga. I want to have some character physically present, I won’t know who it is or how it comes about, but I’ll know I want to do it. So that is all floating around in my mind as the new book comes together.

Will this book be the final in the series?

I don’t know. I want to get all the way through the American Revolution. When I finished A Breath of Snow and Ashes, it was early 1777. I need to get through at least 1781.

Do you have a personal favorite book from the series?

No, to me it is all one immense story even though the books are individually engineered so they can stand alone. There is quite a lot of complex structure within the books, so they are carefully built in spite of their organic genesis.

Do you have a designated writing schedule or do you write when you feel inspired?

I don’t know any published writers that write only when inspired. I have a daily routine that is flexible, of course, since I started writing while I was working two jobs and had three kids under the age of 6! I do write everyday; otherwise the inertia builds up. I try to aim for two single-spaced pages, about 1,000 words. If I can get to that, I consider it a successful day. Each book has its own rhythm, and it takes about two to three years to write one of the large Outlander books. And the schedule also changes if I am compelled to leave on book tours, which take a lot of time, or whether I have to do external work and how much prep is involved. Plus I have other books I am working on at the same time, some fiction, some nonfiction.

What do you read for pleasure?

Absolutely everything and lots of it.

Do you have any advice for aspiring writers?

No matter what you write, you can get better at it.
You certainly didn’t make it easy for us. After some lively exchanges and shuffling of alliances worthy of Survivor, we finally agreed on the winner and runners-up of the NAUAA @Work@Play photo contest.

Congratulations to alumnus Rick D’Elia, ’89 B.S. JOUR, winner of the Vialta Digital Picture Frame, for his evocative photos of life among African villagers. Rick’s work assignments took him to northeastern Uganda, where he photographed Karamojong villagers for a story on their life, and to Mbarara in southern Uganda, where he was “adopted” by local children for some serious Double Dutch.

As you can see from our Honorable Mentions, Rick faced some tough competition from fellow alumni, many of whom found clever ways to incorporate the “@Work” and “@Play” tags. Don’t forget to take a look at the entire photo gallery at naualumni.com/@work@playgallery, where you’ll find the pole-vaulter who sketched his caption in the clouds, the traveler who upstages the Sphinx, the surgeon who moonlights as Lovey Howell, and more. Thanks again to everyone who entered. We hope you had as much fun as we did.

Look for more contests, surveys and other ways to get involved at naualumni.com.
Connections

Scott Cancelosi, ’89 B.S., living La Vida Loca.

Royce Moore, ’64 B.S.ED., ’65 M.ED., ’79 E.D.D., and Jeff Moore, ’92 B.S., on an extreme father-son campout.

Charles Cox, ’96 B.B.A., with his posse.

Just another day at the office for Jeffrey Starr, ’91 B.S.

Leandra Schaller, ’72 M.A., celebrating with a Sioux quilt.


Jim Tohtsonie, ’01 M.ED., and his VP.

Lisa Erickson, ’69 B.S.ED., who sells doggy beds, takes a siesta.

Scott Cancelosi, ’89 B.S., living La Vida Loca.
1940s

Dorothy Jean “Dee” Strickland Johnson, ’43 B.S., is an Arizona Historical Foundation Culture Keeper. Her book Arizona Herstory: Tales From Her Storied Past received the Academy of Western Artists’ Will Rogers Medallion Award.

1950s

Bill Montana, attended whom we had a chance to visit with at Homecoming, has been inducted into the Arizona Hispanic Sports Hall of Fame. His award citation commends him as “the foundation for the many Hispanics who followed in your footsteps, both as athletes and community leaders. It is because of your accomplishments and your desire to succeed that the windows of opportunity were opened to many in Arizona.”

1960s

Marshall “Ski” Piecenzkowski, ’62 B.S., was recently inducted into New Mexico Military Institute’s Hall of Fame “for eminence in his field of endeavor and his service as president of the National Auto and Travel Organization, which encompasses all of the motor clubs in the United States.” Ski retired as president of Amoco Motor Club and vice president of Amoco Enterprises in 1996.

1970s

Arthur Stewart, ’72 B.S., ’75 M.S., writes that his new book of essays and poems, Bushido: The Virtues, is available at www.celticcatpublishing.com. Readers familiar with his earlier work will find Bushido similar in use of language and scientific perspective, but “thematically very different, focusing on the moral code that became a formative force in Japan in the 17th and 18th centuries.”

Jim Tilley, ’72 B.S., a veterinarian in Prescott, Ariz., recently retired from full-time practice and works as a relief vet. Jim spends his summers as a fly-fishing guide at an Alaskan wilderness fishing lodge near Bristol Bay. He has enjoyed guiding a number of NAU alumni (as well as retired NAU anatomy professor Ted Goslows) to catch big Alaskan salmon and trout on a fly rod.

Edward Taylor, ’74 B.S., has relocated to Sabie, South Africa, to start a two-year contract with Global Forest Products. He has accepted a position as chief operating officer. Joining him is his wife Cheryl McIntire Taylor, ’74 B.S., and their daughter, Natalie, who will attend a local highschool.

Alan Blackstock, ’78 B.S., served as editor for A Green River Reader, a comprehensive anthology that “brings the magnificent Green River to the reader with an interpretive guide that will inform river novices and veterans…[with writings from] Kit Carson, John C. Fremont, Wallace Stegner, Edward Abbey, and others.” To find out more about this “awesome ditch,” visit www.UofUpress.com.

Dale McGuff, ’78 B.S., recently wrote a memoir about his experience as a combat medic in Vietnam, called So That Others May Live. The book is available online at both Amazon and
Barnes and Noble. He lives with his wife, Debra, in St. Charles, Ill.

Barbara A. Poley, ’78 M.A.E.D., and Loris Ann Vincente-Taylor, ’78 B. S.E.D., ’80 M.E.D., co-workers at the Hopi Foundation in Hotville, Ariz., received the Ford Foundation award for 2005 Leadership for a Changing World. “With a deep belief in the Hopi concept of 1tam naap yani (doing the work ourselves), they merge Hopi ways with community activism to create non-traditional approaches to community needs...the Hopi Foundation’s endowed assets approach $1 million and are complemented by a separate $10 million Hopi Education Endowment Fund.”

Bart Graves, ’79 B.A., was honored last spring at NAU with the Associated Press-Robert R. Eunson Award. At a ceremony during Honors Week, he spoke of experiences in the newsroom and changes he has seen as a reporter over the past several decades.

1980s

David O. Stine, ’81 E.D.D., was recently honored by the California Association of Professors of Educational Administration for the depth and commitment of his service: “David has tackled big things, getting our state organization connected with the national, developing membership and being the driver behind new programs.” David is vice president of the San Bernardino County Board of Education and professor emeritus at Cal State San Bernardino.


Gretchen Bakkenson, ’85 B.S., ’88 M.E.D., is partner and vice president of Prestwood, Bakkenson & Associates, a company providing consultative services and expert testimony in vocational rehabilitation, labor market analysis, earning capacity analysis and future medical cost projection. “My home life is filled with two children, Erich and Dorothy, and their extracurricular activities—Phoenix Girls Choir, drama through the Arizona Jewish Youth Theatre, karate, tennis and piano lessons.”

Maj. T. Scott Gibson, ’88 B.S., received the Bronze Star for operations in Iraq, where he served as an Army public affairs officer from March to September ’05. Gibson is currently the chief of strategic communications for the Center for Army Lessons Learned at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., and is attending the Army Command and General Staff Officer course.

Doug Rose, ’88 B.S., has taught physical education in Phoenix for 16 years, and has been an assistant baseball coach at Mesa Community College for nine years. He recently completed his master’s degree in health and human performance. He has been married for 11 years to a fellow teacher, Stefanie, and they have two children, Keegan and Kaden.

Sylvester Allred, ’89 PH.D., has co-authored a mystery novel with fellow alum Dennis Burns, ’97 E.D.D., The St. Petersburg Addendum. Available online from PublishAmerica, the novel “pits a catcher of king crabs and an Alaskan state representative against the unmitigated greed of corporate interests seeking to strip Alaska’s natural resources.” One critic calls the book “a page-turning blend of sabotage, murder, loss, tragedy and redemption...leavened with humor and insight.”

Robin Morton Killett, ’89 B.S., wishes everyone “Aloha” from Maui, where she has lived for 10 years. She works for the Four Seasons Resort at Wailea, and is married with two children.

1990s

Cheryl Casone, ’92 B.S., left her television station in San Francisco for a job with MSNBC in New York. “The Big Apple is certainly exciting,” she writes. “Quite the change for a girl from Arizona!”

Tony A. Sansone, ’92 B.S.ACCY., reports that after nearly 11 years, he left his last position at CIGNA (accounting director for the Arizona and California markets) and relocated to Flagstaff, where he is the controller for Machine Solutions, Inc. “In 1995 I married Julie Schuster, ’93 B.S.ACCY.—I waited to marry her until she graduated with her master’s in tax from ASU. hahaha. We have two children; daughter Morgan is 5 and son Jacob turned 3 in January.”

David Schuster, ’92 B.S.B.A., and Sarah Morton Schuster, ’91 B.S.B.A., have been married 13 years and have two children. After moving back to Lake Geneva, Wis., into a family farmhouse more than 150 years old, David “dared” Sarah to write a business plan for her own store. In May, Clear Water Outdoor opened for business. “Thanks to our GREAT college educations and work experience, things are going well. David has filled the positions of kayak and gear buyer and accountant; Sarah is general manager, buyer, and all that other stuff in between. Check us out online at www.clearwateroutdoor.com—we’d love to hear from you!”

Bret Gunther, ’93 B.S., has won his second Emmy Award for “Orange Bowl Blitz,” an hour-long special broadcast live from Florida on the eve of the University of Oklahoma’s quest for a national championship. Now producer and statewide projects manager for two CBS stations in Oklahoma, he is “a proud graduate of NAU—I would love [everyone] to know that great things can happen to those who attend the university.”

Mary A. Huttlinger, ’93 B.G.S., has been named as the new Director of Economic Development, Business and Workforce Information for the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber. She previously worked in Washington, D.C., as a federal lobbyist for the Society for Human Resource Management. She and her husband, Patrick McCollim, live in Miami Township, Ohio, with their son Connor.

Daniel Cowperthwait, ’94 B.S.E., lives in Portland, Ore., where he has been “working as a process engineer for a semiconductor company (not Intel) for 6.5 years. I am married now and we are expecting a child in June.”

William O. Hirst, ’95 B.S., sends greetings from Boston, where he works for BlackRock Funds, a mutual fund company. “I have hit my 10-year
mark since leaving Flagstaff,” he muses, “and still miss the mountain-town feel.”

Amy Blakeney, ’96 B.S., a teacher at Shadow Mountain High School in Phoenix, Ariz., has returned from a Fulbright Teacher Exchange that landed her in Acra, Ghana, on the west coast of Africa. “I will miss terribly the humility and hospitality, patience and gentleness of Ghanaian culture. People spend time together with ease and relaxation. And, I feel a responsibility to teach as many people as I can about the realistic West Africa, beyond the media imagery.”

C. Josh Donlan, ’97 B.S., published “Re-wilding North America” in the journal Nature in August. The high-profile piece, which was picked up by national media including National Public Radio and USA Today, raises the idea of introducing African animals—e.g., camels, cheetahs, elephants and lions—to North America to replace “megafauna” lost during the Pleistocene extinction, which is now generally accepted as having been due to human hunting.

Heather Wright, ’97 B.A., works as a senior account executive at Citrix Systems in Southern California.

Adam C. Bisch, ’98 B.S.B.A., has been at FedEx for four years, starting as an account executive and moving into sales training. “I am working toward my MBA at ASU…and my wife and I are expecting our first child.”

Grant Scott Cooper, ’99 B.G.S., and wife Rachel—along with their son “big brother” Garrett Alan Cooper—are proud to announce the arrival of their daughter/little sister, Grace Madison Cooper, born March 21, 2005, in Phoenix.

Trek Convention

Last June, 17 old friends dusted off their hiking boots, donned traditional green shirts, and headed for the hills to celebrate a reunion of the 1966-1970 NAU Hiking Club. Enterprise, Ore., pinch-hit for Flagstaff as the snow-peaked mountain town, where memories came flooding back.


Some folks hadn’t seen each other since the 1960s. They reminisced about trips to the Grand Canyon and Havasupai, the White Mountains, the annual hike to Rainbow Bridge across the Navajo Reservation, Death Valley…One of the wildest recollections was the annual winter nighttime trek up Agassiz Peak, led by Dr. J. Hunt and Dr. Harvey Butchart. In the wind and snow, wearing crampons and hanging on to ropes, they ascended the San Francisco Peaks each year to light magnesium flares in the shape of a huge “A” for Homecoming.

For updates on the next reunion (scheduled for September 2008), check the Hiking Club Alumni Web site: www.simfix.com/HCmessages.html.

Beth Guerra, ’99 B.A., ’05 M.ED., writes enthusiastically, “I currently work as the nursing program advisor for Paradise Valley Community College and have bought my first home!”

Edward Logan, ’99 B.S., has received the 2005 Project Management Institute Community Advancement Through Project Management Award in the individual category. He was selected for his volunteer work at Jubilee Campaign USA, a nonprofit human rights organization in Fairfax, Va., where he serves as a human rights advocate. Logan is also a senior consultant for Robbins-Gioia, LLC, a pioneered program management consulting firm.

James P. O’Nele, ’99 B.S.F., a Navy Seaman, and shipmates completed Maritime Security Operations while assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge.

Scott Thomas, ’99 B.S.E.D., ’04 M.ED., received a grant of more than $25,000 from the UGS PLM Solutions Company of Louisville, Ky., “for the sole support of my Northwest Education Center’s Architectural Design Drafting Program, Deer Valley (Ariz.) Unified School District. This brings the total grant/donation amount since May 2004 to $53,932,490—the largest total grant amount awarded to any secondary school’s single program in Arizona’s history.”

2000s

Wendell L. Tull, ’00 M.ED., is executive director of Collegiate Recruitment Team Inc., a nonprofit organization for former collegiate student-athletes. “Our organization has been featured in the Phoenix Business Journal and SHRM Online…ESPN will be doing a feature on us in the near future.”

Simon Braukus, ’01 B.F.A., writes, “I finally received my M.A. in advertising design from Syracuse University in August…My thesis topic was “Art in Transit,” since I was in the sign business before NAU. I currently work for an architectural firm.”

Adrienne Calhoun Cash, ’01 B.S., graduated from the University of Tulsa College of Law and married Christopher “Joey” Cash in Broken Arrow, Okla. A trial lawyer for Humphreys Wallace
R.C. Gorman


“It seems to me that R.C.’s lifetime of works is a near-constant effort to reconnect with his near yet distant Mother Earth. The Navajo female image is pervasive, ever present, a force in deference to his brush, a complement to his rich taste. But only few could know R.C. the person. Virginia [Dooley, Gorman’s agent] did. And Mother Earth.”

—Professor Ed Groenhout, School of Art, former Interim Dean of the Museum Faculty of Fine Art

Humphreys, PC in Tulsa. she has been part of a $1.75 million verdict (predatory lending practices of the small loan industry) and a $4.9 million verdict (Ameriquest Mortgage, predatory lending, fraud, and credit reporting). She has authored several law articles on human cloning.

Bill Elliott, ’01 B.S.N. a.k.a. W. Tussinger, has published Breeds, which tells the story of a Native American household based on personal oral history. His writings are available online at PublishAmerica and Amazon.

Stephanie Gorman, ’02 B.S., recently joined the St. Louis-based Tarlton Corp. as a project engineer in the firm’s Concrete Group. A dedicated runner, she has received many race honors and was grand prize winner in the Ford Motor Company 2004 “Go the Extra Mile” contest.

Sara Presler-Hoefle, ’02 B.S., and Scott Hoefle, ’01 B.S.B.A., ’02 M.B.A., are back from their stint in East Lansing, Mich. “Scott is enjoying his job at the Gateway Center and I am enjoying the public defender’s office. It’s a lot of fun to practice law in Flagstaff and it’s good to be back!”

Thomas J. Collins, ’03 B.G.S., has been named director of intercollegiate athletics at Ball State University. Tom served for the past 20 years in the athletics department at Arizona State University, overseeing seven nationally ranked Division I-A programs. He and his wife, Kathy, have been married for 25 years and have two children: Eryn, a kindergarten teacher, and Rob, a junior at ASU.

Amy Robinson, ’03 B.MUS., and Jason Gerace, ’00 B.S., were married in Flagstaff December 30 at the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. “We are currently living in Oklahoma City, where Jason is a graduate student pursuing his MFA in directing for theatre at the University of Oklahoma. Amy is teaching and is in charge of the choral program for Chandler High and Junior High of Chandler, Okla.”

Donald “Chris” Burnette, ’04 B.S., is the Boy Scouts of America district executive for Union County, N.C.

David M. Goulet, ’04 M.ED., is adjunct faculty at Grand Canyon University, where he teaches local politics. He currently serves on the Glendale City Council (seven years), and was recently certified by the Arizona Supreme Court as a legal document preparer.
They Will Be Missed

Alumni


Don Rue Hickman, '41 B.S.E.D., September 24, 2005.


Frank G. Cosseboom, '53 B.S., '57 M.S., December 3, 2005. Played basketball at ASC, WWII Navy vet. 30-plus years as a teacher, coach and longtime principal, including Weitzel Elementary School in Flagstaff, from which he retired in 1983. San Francisco Peaks enthusiast and NAU sports booster.

Barbara Newman Beal Green, '54 M.A., September 11, 2005. Pianist and teacher, elected to music honorary societies Delta Phi Alpha and Tau Beta Sigma. A former music supervisor for Flagstaff public schools, she became an established teacher of piano in Longmont, Colo., guiding many students toward musical and personal growth.


Jack W. Steiert, '60 B.S.E.D., October 6, 2005. Longtime educator in Yuma County, who loved to travel and attend theatre.


Marvin L. Kallsen, '63 B.S., ACCY, September 18, 2004. Longtime Albuquerque resident, who also lived in Arizona, California and Alaska. Retired in 1999 after a 35-year career, working both in banking finance and as a CPA. Loved motor home travel as well as sports. He ran in two marathons after a heart attack and triple bypass surgery.

Glen Morgan, '63 B.S., August 18, 2005. Member of 1958 football team and NAU Athletics Hall of Fame.


David E. Meyer, '66 B.S., April 1, 2005.

William T. “Buzz” Weidinger, '68 B.S.E.D., '70 M.Ed., July 10, 2005. Taught math and coached in the Flagstaff schools for 25 years; a member of Delta Chi fraternity. He was a “player’s coach” who always considered the team members to be his family.


Valerie A. Sanderson-Davis, '75 B.S.E.D., 81 M.Ed., January 13, 2006. An enrolled member of the Hopi Tribe with blood ties to the Sun Clan (maternal) and part Gila River Pima and Tohono O’odham (paternal). Originally attended ASC on a badminton scholarship. Worked in a variety of educational roles including teacher and reading specialist. Served more than 42 years with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Indian Education Programs.


Christopher Todd

'82 B.S., '86 B.S.E., September 12, 2005. An amazing NAU advocate, with a wholehearted personal outreach mission that made him indispensable to both his alma mater and his employer, Raytheon in Tucson. Posthumously voted Featured Volunteer by the NAU Alumni Association. (Read more at naualumni.com.)
continued from Page 12

Lewis’ work is an important part of the puzzle and is key to determining how cancer spreads. “It forms a foundation for the design of new drugs that can selectively target active genes responsible for the uncontrolled growth of malignant cells,” says Jonathan B. Chaires, chair in Biophysics at the James Graham Brown Cancer Center, University of Louisville and a joint partner in Energetic Genomics Corp., a biotech startup that hopes to commercialize oncogene research.

Lewis and Hurley are now working to determine if their approach—which takes an unusual tack of targeting low concentrations of cancer-causing agents—is viable. Lewis believes that the initial research could take two or more years, yet it’s far from a shot in the dark. Hurley has already developed one drug based on a similar principle that has progressed to Phase 1 clinical trials, and will likely take another three years to receive approval from the Food and Drug Administration.

Development of the new drug is now a focal point. “What makes this new class of drugs unique,” Hurley explains, “is they aren’t toxic to cells and do not produce the severe side effects associated with chemotherapy.” Instead of inducing nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and other ailments, these drugs strive to cure cancer cells without harming normal cells. “They are kinder and gentler but could provide greater efficacy. They are far different from anything that’s currently available,” Hurley adds.

The pair joined forces about two years ago, when Lewis landed his current position at NAU. The University of Louisville’s Chaires—a mutual friend—introduced them and suggested the collaboration. It didn’t take long for Lewis and Hurley to realize they’d found the perfect match for their talents and interests.

A Healthy Outlook

The research into oncogenes has already spurred a great deal of interest—and attracted grant funding from major organizations. The National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute provided $1,140,000, while the Arizona Biomedical Research Commission has offered two grants totaling more than $967,000. The project also received $255,000 from the state of Arizona.

With solid funding in place, both schools have devoted significant resources to the initiative. Seventeen NAU undergrads and eight University of Arizona grad students have assisted with key elements of the research—often shuttling between the schools.

Understanding Cancer in Native American Communities

Another leading NAU scientist, Diane Stearns, associate professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, is also involved in cancer research. Stearns is a participant in the Native American Cancer Research Partnership, which aims to improve health in Native American communities.

“The majority of uranium mining in the U.S. has occurred on Native American reservations in the Four Corners area of the Southwest,” Stearns says. “As a result of uranium mining coupled with weak health and safety practices, Native Americans—predominantly the Navajo—have been victims of lung cancer, emphysema and a range of other serious ailments.”

NAU is collaborating with the Arizona Cancer Center at the University of Arizona on the project. “We’re hoping to provide Native American researchers and healthcare professionals with the tools to bring sustained improvement to their communities,” Stearns says.

“A Race Against Time

Running has always been part of NAU alumna Kathy Van Ripper’s life. At age 14, she began competing in high school cross-country and track in Sonoma, Calif. Later, Van Ripper (then Dalton) attended NAU on a partial athletic scholarship and earned a B.S.E.D. in 1991. Even after marrying, becoming a teacher and giving birth to two children, she continued running for “sanity and health,” she says.

Today, the 36-year-old is running the race of her life. In 1999, she found a lump in her breast that doctors diagnosed as cancer. “I was uneducated about cancer. In my mind, only people who didn’t take care of themselves wound up with the disease.” Despite the shock, she continued to run while receiving treatment. “It kept me from feeling as though I was sliding and hiding,” she explains.

Two years after her treatment ended, Van Ripper received worse news. A routine checkup revealed that the cancer had spread to her liver and spine. “There is no cure,” she says. “The goal of the treatment is only to prolong life.”

For Van Ripper, a scientific breakthrough of the sort that Lewis and Hurley are studying could allow her to watch her children grow up, and to live long enough for a cure to be possible.

“It’s an opportunity as an undergraduate student to participate in cutting-edge research and prepare for a career in the research field,” says Robert Buscaglia, who studies under Lewis in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. The third-year student, who was recently named to USA Today’s All-USA College Academic Team program, hopes that the knowledge will one day help him play a role in “limiting or curing debilitating diseases.”

For Lewis, the relentless quest for a cure continues. Despite the tedious pace of scientific discovery and the time needed to develop a viable pharmaceutical drug—eight to 10 years isn’t unusual—it’s a meaningful and noble task. “Even if our research doesn’t cure cancer, we’ll provide other researchers and oncologists with additional tools and information that will lead to new treatments and new drugs,” he says.
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