New Mexico Immigrant Law Center Opens Doors for Free and Low-Cost Legal Aid

New Mexico Immigrant Law Center (NMILC) is a legal service organization dedicated to making access to justice for immigrants in New Mexico affordable, filling an urgent, unmet need in our state. NMILC was founded this year by Jennifer Landau and Megan Yoder Martinez, both UNM dual degree graduates in Latin American Studies and Law. NMILC believes that all people, regardless of their financial status, should have equal access to legal information and due process. In line with that mission, NMILC seeks to provide legal services to immigrants regardless of their financial status with an initial focus on immigrants in New Mexico who face deportation and those seeking humanitarian protection and family reunification.

Unlike defendants in the criminal justice system, individuals in the immigration proceedings do not have a right to free legal representation, and because the cost of retaining counsel often presents an insurmountable obstacle, the majority of immigrants facing deportation are forced to present their case without legal counsel. The situation in New Mexico is particularly dire. Although the effect of deportation impacts communities all around the state, until the founding of NMILC, the only legal service provider for deportation defense services was located in El Paso, TX. Additionally, there were no free or affordable options for representation for many immigrants in need of special humanitarian protection or those with complicated family-based immigration cases.

NMILC is collaborating with and housed at Encuentro, a new immigrant community center in Albuquerque’s Barelas neighborhood. Last month NMILC incorporated under the fiscal sponsorship of the New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty while...
MESSAGE FROM THE SOLAS PRESIDENT

Greetings Solistas!

Wow- I can’t believe the semester is already almost over! I hope that it has been a productive, engaging semester for all of you. More importantly, I hope that everyone is surviving final papers, projects, and exams; the end is certainly near.

Since the last edition of Limón was published, SOLAS has stayed busy with Brown Bag lectures, meetings, and social events. We’ve been lucky enough to have many wonderful Brown Bag talks from UNM faculty, graduate students, as well as members of the Albuquerque community. Geographically, the Brown Bags this semester have ranged from Spain all the way to the Southern Cone. Next semester’s Brown Bag schedule promises to be equally intriguing; we’ll kick it off on Tuesday, January 25th at noon with a talk by Dr. Ronald Bruce St John entitled, “Toledo’s Peru: Vision and Reality.” Should you or anyone you know be interested in presenting a Brown Bag lecture next semester we do still have openings in the schedule; contact me if you’re interested.

SOLAS just wouldn’t be SOLAS without social get-togethers, and this semester we’ve gone to a baseball game, the flea market, and had happy hours. I think one of my personal favorites was the happy hour at Monte Vista in Nob Hill; who wouldn’t like warming up next to a fire on an outdoor patio while chatting with friends? Next semester we’ll continue on with social events, most likely kicking the semester off early on with a happy hour. I’ve been hearing some great ideas for other SOLAS social events, such as a sledding or ski trip; sounds great, right? If you have any ideas for social events, please do share them with me.

We are still planning on holding the annual Sin Fronteras Film Festival in April next semester; if you’re interested in learning more about it, or even better yet, would like to help out please contact Sin Fronteras Film Festival Coordinator Nicole Fopeano (fopeano.nicole@gmail.com). Earlier this week we held a bake sale to raise money for SOLAS events next semester, including Sin Fronteras, and I’m happy to report that it was quite a success. Next semester we’ll try to host 1-2 more fundraisers’ bake sales. Currently, we’re still holding our annual Toy Drive for Enlace Comunitario. We’re collecting toys in a box in the main area of the LAII; I peeked the other day, and it looks like we’re getting quite a few. Thanks to all of you that have so graciously donated! If you haven’t donated yet and would like to, the box will remain in the LAII until Friday morning, December 17th.

Keith Lanser has been working hard at coordinating volunteer opportunities for SOLAS members, and I hope that everyone considers participating next semester. Keith has arranged for the volunteer coordinator from Enlace Comunitario to speak at our first meeting of the semester, and then for a follow up ‘day of service’ by Solistas at Enlace. We’re working toward coordinating at least a few of these service days or afternoons for next semester. Stay tuned; this will be a cool opportunity for Solistas to spend some time together while helping out a great Albuquerque organization.

As always, if you have any questions about SOLAS please don’t hesitate to contact me. All the best of luck to everyone during the last stretch of finals! I hope you all enjoy a much-deserved, restful holiday break.

Until next semester....

Kellie

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

As always, I would like to thank all of the contributors to this issue of LIMON. I hope the mix of articles is interesting and relevant, and that it may inspire you to contribute in the future! This issue of LIMON has an article about the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center, as well as an interview with one of its co-founders. The work they’re doing is important for the community, so please don’t hesitate to contact them if you can help them out in any way. I encourage anyone with an interest in Native American or New Mexican culture to read Greg Gonzales’ piece on the genízaro in New Mexico. It was certainly an aspect of New Mexican culture and history of which I was unaware. We also have interviews with a new faculty member, and a new staff member at LAII. Finally, Krista Foutz has reviewed a local restaurant that may be of interest to those of us in the Albuquerque area.

If you have any ideas for events that should be covered in LIMON, or you have a research project or an opinion piece that you would like published, let me know! I am hoping to find someone willing to cover some of the salsa dancing venues around town—if that is you, definitely drop me a line. Otherwise, I hope the semester is ending well for everyone and that they aren’t too buried under finals to enjoy this issue. Have a great vacation!
Upcoming Events

ENLACE COMUNITARIO TOY DRIVE

This year, SOLAS will again hold a holiday toy drive for the non-profit community organization, Enlace Comunitario (http://www.enlacennm.org/). We'll be collecting unwrapped toys that we'll donate to Enlace, who will then distribute the toys to families and children for the holidays. The toy drive will run from November 24th to Friday, December 17th of finals week. There will be a box in the main lobby/sitting area of the Latin American and Iberian Institute where you can drop any toy(s) off at your convenience. Please remember that all toys must be UN-wrapped. Additionally, while toys for both boys and girls of all ages are appropriate, Enlace is in particular need of gifts for adolescents as well (middle and high school age.)

Brown Bag Lecture Series

Title: Toledo’s Peru: Vision and Reality
Speaker: Dr. Ronald Bruce St John (www.ronaldbrucestjohn.com)
Date: January 25, 2011

Dr. Ronald Bruce St John explores the policies of the first Toledo administration to discover why his presidency was such a roller coaster ride. Alejandro Toledo capitalized on his indigenous roots and his identification with the lower and middle classes of Peru to win election to the presidency in 2001, ending the corrupt rule of Alberto Fujimori. During the election campaign, he promised to create at least one million new jobs, jumpstart the economy, end graft and corruption, and restore democracy. Once in office, he found it difficult to make good on these promises; consequently, his approval ratings were often among the lowest of any Latin American president. A firm supporter of market economics, democracy, and human rights, Toledo’s approach to domestic and foreign policy issues often varied considerably from his regional counterparts. From these policy differences, meaningful comparisons can be drawn and important lessons learned.

RMCLAS 2011 Annual Conference

The 58th Annual Conference of the Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies will be held in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Wednesday, April 6 through Saturday, April 9, 2011. The RMCLAS Annual Conference provides an opportunity for scholars and graduate students to share original research on Latin America.

Call for Papers

The RMCLAS Program Committee is now accepting panel and paper proposals on general topics in Latin American Studies. We encourage presentations from all disciplines including, but not limited to, Anthropology, Archaeology, Art History, Cultural Studies, Economics, Environmental Studies, Ethnomusicology, Film Studies, Gender Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature, Political Science, and Sociology.

We suggest that panels consist of three presenters (one of whom may be the chair and/or commentator) and a commentator. Papers can be in English, Spanish, or Portuguese. Please provide us with your name, affiliation, electronic address, the paper title, and a short abstract (not to exceed one page). The deadline for panel and paper proposals is January 15, 2011.

Please send proposals to rmclas@austin.utexas.edu

For an up-to-date listing of events at the LAII please visit: http://laii.unm.edu/node/20
Margaret Jackson is a recent addition to the LAS faculty in the Art and Art History Department. She has graciously agreed to answer a few questions about herself and her work. She can be reached via email at: mars@unm.edu

What started your interest in your current field?

-- I consider myself a specialist in art and visual culture of ancient South America and Mesoamerica. I work on issues of narrative, iconographic interpretation and visual literacy. My interests extend, as well, to other areas and time periods, and across disciplinary boundaries, into anthropology, archaeology, linguistics, Latin American and Communication Studies.

-- I’ve always been interested in the ways that artists translate the visual world into various media. I formed a fascination with Ancient American art (aka. Precolumbian art) when I became aware that indigenous artists were solving problems of representation and communication in ways that were completely unlike any of the Euro-American traditions I had encountered previously.

It looks like a lot of your work includes Peru – What led to you studying that country?

-- Moche visual culture caught my attention while I was traveling in Peru. At one point, we visited an amazing little museum in Lima, called the Museo Larco, whose storeroom contains thousands of Moche fine ware ceramics, stacked on shelves, floor to ceiling, and sorted into recurrent iconographic themes. The imagery represented such a clear vocabulary to me, that I felt sure I could make sense of it, if I only studied it a bit more. Decades later, I’m still working on it.

What projects are you currently working on?

-- I am currently involved in assembling an exhibition of Maya Ceramics, which hopefully will come together by late 2011, or early 2012. I invite any prospective students to contact me on this.

-- Additionally, I am working on various books and articles related to Andean and Mesoamerican visual cultures.

I noticed that one of your articles was on proto-writing in Moche pottery. Could you give us some information on what constituted proto-writing and perhaps what role it served?

-- Not all systems of graphic notation are phonetically tied. And yet, non-phonetic scripts (sometimes called Semasiographies) can, and often do, communicate a range of specific information to those people educated in their workings. In the Americas, mixed picto-graphic systems of writing were the norm. These are the systems of communication that most interest me. Several major visual traditions fit this category, Teotihuacan, Aztec, Mixtec, and of course, Moche, to name a few.

Many students in Latin American Studies end up doing research abroad. Do you have any suggestions for them or stories from your time in Peru?

-- My main advice on this subject is: Go For It! The Peruvians are great, super friendly. Even though the prospects from afar may look daunting, it’s really not as hard or as scary as it may seem. I have enjoyed my field experiences tremendously.

You’ve done some work with representations of the Conquest of Mexico. What did you find that surprised you?

-- Much more culturally complex than I originally thought.

What has been your favorite place in Albuquerque (restaurant or otherwise)?

-- I find the balloons to be absurdly cheerful!

Do you have any hobbies that you like to pursue when you’re not working on Latin America?

-- Not really. It seems that pretty much everything I do, apart from family matters, relates in one way or another to my ongoing study of visual culture.

Interested in practicing your Portuguese?! The Brazil Club holds weekly conversation suites (bate-papo) on the third floor lounge of Ortega, Monday from 3-4.
What are the projects you’re working on right now?

The latest and greatest projects for me involve working with Kathryn Peters, the LAII's graduate assistant for outreach activities, on social media policies. We've spent time discussing how the LAII can make use of Twitter and Facebook to better communicate news, events, etc. It's admittedly a struggle, as "tweeting" is a brand new vocab item for me and I'm still a little loose on the concept.

So does that mean LAII is going to have a facebook and twitter account? Where did this idea come from? And are we going to be like the Twitter celebrities and have someone set-up our tweets and facebook status for us? What kind of things will be on there? Where can we vote on the LAII profile picture?

I wouldn't say Twitter fame is quite the path we're headed down. Our objectives are a bit more basic. No glitz and glam here, just timely updates for LAII-sponsored news and events. And the motivation behind the idea? Take a look at the LAII's newly-unveiled website (shameless plug: http://laii.unm.edu). Our goal with all of these new media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, revised website) is to better convey the breadth and depth of the LAII's efforts. The LAII facilitates and develops an incredible number of resources and events. Now we are considering ways to better share those resources and events with more people.

So Keira you’ve made the change from being a full time student and part time employee to doing the reverse. What were the biggest adjustments you had to make?

Biggest adjustment that came from the transition? Shift in hours. As a full-time student, I usually stayed up later to work on group projects and find quiet time in computer labs. These days it's just the reverse. The biggest bouts of activity all tend to be before the breakfast shifts end. One of the few constants throughout it all is the coffee cup perpetually gracing my desk.

You have a lovely office, and it's rather big. What are your plans for decoration? I notice you've put a fern of some sort in there. Are you working towards the jungle look?

How perceptive. My office is indeed cavernous - and mildly jungle-esque. While I may have originally thought about going for some sort of deciduous, world-map environment, I admit that my thumb is more often brown than green. My jungle is actually looking a mite sad these days. If anyone has suggestions for how to reinvigorate the space, feel free to pop in and let me know.

I hear you have a GA working for you. What’s it like to be on the other side of the situation?

Oh, the other side is great. Except it's not really "the other side." Kathryn is beyond competent and professional, so our work together tends toward equal collaboration. Although I have to admit that when it all comes down to it...she might be the one on the other side of the tweets coming from the LAII. There are certain advantages to my new role.

Working a full-time position while going to school seems like a lot of work. What keeps you sane through everything?

Sanity comes these days from munching on pupusas with my fellow students, watching X-File episodes with my partner, and chillaxin' with the two kittens who recently moved into our apartment.
Any good scholar will tell you that in order to fully understand a research topic you must also understand the history and culture behind it. Of course, cuisine plays a large part in any society and cultural heritage. Keeping this in mind, we hit up Havana Restaurant located near the intersection of Carlisle and Menaul. It is relatively hidden in the corner of the shopping center, but well worth the hunt. Their menu consists of many Cuban classics such as ropa vieja, tons of pork dishes and of course a Cuban sandwich. We had a large array of meat dishes (P.S. the menu may not be so vegetarian friendly) and each dish came with moros y cristianos (rice and beans mixed together). I personally had the ropa vieja and though I’ve never been to Cuba (damn embargo!), it met all expectations. The meat was tender and spiced perfectly. The moros y cristianos mingled well together even though being from the U.S., I’m kind of a fan of French fries. The lemonade we ordered was mixed with crushed ice and proved to be superior. Well worth the effort!

Restaurant Information:
5331 Carlisle NE
505.830.2025

Hours:
Closed Monday
Tuesday-Thursday—10 am-9 pm
Friday-Saturday—10 am-10 pm
Sunday—10 am-6 pm
The Latin American & Iberian Institute
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Application Deadline: Monday, February 14, 2011 by 5 p.m.

Questions? Please contact Alexandra Blodget at laiicomm@unm.edu or 277-7049
Every morning on New Year’s Day, the sound of jingling bells attached to my Comanche dancing outfit pierces the tranquil silence. The steady beat of the drums saturates the air, mimicking the heartbeat of my ancestors—Los Comanches. As the elder men begin singing songs blended with Tiwa, Spanish, and English lyrics, I know it is time to put on my headdress of macaw and eagle feathers. Not only is this my sole memory of celebrating New Years, but it is one of the only ways of preserving and promoting my genízaro culture.

Recently, there has been much discussion on what the term ‘genízaro’ actually means. Personally, I consider the most appropriate definition of a genízaro to be an “Hispanicized Indian” by Dr. Enrique Lamadrid. However, while this definition does a good job in identifying the group’s overall cultural hybridity, one must not lose sight of the diversity of Hispanic and Native American experiences in New Mexico—thus attributing to the complex and often dissimilar histories of genízaro communities throughout New Mexico. However, from colonial New Mexico to today, genízanos (who came from a wide array of Native American backgrounds) commonly experienced acculturation and exercised cultural resistance within New Mexico society.

Within this context, there have been many contemporary accounts of genízaro communities, including Tomé, Abiquiu, and Ranchos de Taos, who have sought to preserve and promote their culture. In Tomé (just south of Albuquerque in the central Rio Grande Valley), one can find community members performing Comanche Nativity plays—highlighting the indigenous interpretation of the traditional Christian Nativity narrative. In Abiquiu (northwest of Espanola), community members still recognize their generalized genízaro heritage through the performances celebrating the various tribes that settled the area. In Ranchos de Taos, the community still recognizes their hybrid Hispano-Comanche heritage through performance and commemoration of traditional Catholic feasts like the Feast of Christ the King or El Día de los Manueles (where the group dances for people in the community named Manuel/a) on January 1st, the Conversion of St. Paul in late-January, regional/national festivals, and academic symposiums. While the symbolism of these commemorations has been well-documented by Dr. Lamadrid, I believe a narrative from an actual member of the Los Comanches de la Serna group in Ranchos de Taos will provide a better insight into these unique cultural traditions in northern New Mexico.

For Los Comanches de la Serna (named after the Spanish land grant which the community was founded upon), one can see the dynamic cultural hybridity that has taken place for the past several hundred years. Unlike other Native American bands and tribes, we are not a federally-recognized indigenous group (nor do we want to be). In fact, it was only several years ago that the New Mexico state Legislature officially recognized the existence of genízaros and their contributions throughout New Mexico’s vibrant history. Our group recognizes the cultures and traditions of both our Hispano and Comanche ancestors who have inhabited the Taos Valley before the
United States became a country. While adopting the Hispano language and identity, many genízaro families often assimilated into northern New Mexico Hispano society. However, others (like my ancestors) operated on the fringes of this cultural acculturation project by preserving and promoting their cultures through the adaptation/adoption of New Mexico Catholicism and the Spanish language. Consequently, regardless of blood quantum or any other quantitative method of judging someone’s claim to cultural legitimacy, we have been able to successfully preserve and promote our traditions in an era when, arguably, these forms of cultural expression—throughout New Mexico genízaro communities—are quickly becoming endangered due to a lack of interest and understanding from the youth.

Within Los Comanches de la Serna, we have been successful in recruiting and retaining many Taoseño youth from genízaro families. In fact, many of the elders hold practice sessions with our younger dancers to teach them the different dances we have. Some of these dances include El Torito (The Bull Dance), El Espantao (The Frightened One), El Águila (The Eagle Dance), and El Cautivo (The Captive). El Torito symbolizes the bull and its prominence within the Plains Indian culture, specifically its importance to the vitality of the Comanches. El Espantao, also known as the Shield Dance, is considered a battle dance as two dancers use shields to scare the other. In particular, it symbolizes the Comanche’s military superiority and effective domination over much of the American Southwest (including New Mexico) during the eighteenth century. El Águila symbolizes the eagle and its importance in many different Native American traditions, including the Comanche. Finally, El Cau-

ativo is a song that holds an intimate meaning within the Taos Valley genízaro community. As many genizaros in this community were brought as captives or slaves, El Cautivo is sung to commemorate their memory as well as those in the community who have either passed away or could not be with us during our celebrations. Personally, this song is a reflection of the past and current struggles that genizaros have faced in New Mexico society—from negotiating the acculturation project by colonial authorities in New Mexico to challenging the current marginalization of genizaro culture and traditions by Hispano and Native American communities.

In a way, continuing these traditions is our form of cultural resistance. While many genízaro communities have occupied the political, social, and cultural borderlands of New Mexico as a “minority within a minority,” many have challenged this marginalization through preserving, promoting, and educating their youth in their cultural practices. In Ranchos, we have done this through observing our sacred feast days, promoting our culture by performing at both academic and non-academic events throughout the state, and recruiting and retaining genizaro youth to participate in our traditions. So, as many Hispanics and Native Americans continue to chastise our cultural traditions as ‘artificial’ or ‘playing Comanche,’ I am reminded of an old cuento Nuevomexicano: Nuevo México querido, no hagas caso al mitote, entre indios y americanos, toditos somos coyotes -verso popular, San Antonio del Embudo, NM
Interview with the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center’s Jennifer Landau and Megan Yoder Martinez

1. How is it advantageous to you to be housed at Encuentro?

The founders of Encuentro envisioned a community center with multiple points of entry for the immigrant community to engage in civic participation, including immigrant legal services. NMILC provides the legal service point of entry for Encuentro. In addition to direct representation, we help organize legal fairs at Encuentro where local attorneys volunteer their time to provide free legal advice and information to immigrants. We are finding that the "one-stop-shop" structure of Encuentro makes for an easy and efficient referral program between Encuentro, El Centro de Igualdad y Derechos (also housed here), and NMILC. Immigrants can not only come here to receive legal advice, but can also then sign up to participate in community organizing initiatives or attend English classes, among other opportunities.

2. What obstacles have you encountered in setting up the law center in terms of funding or support from the community?

Starting a non-profit is always a challenge due to the difficulty involved in securing funding. However, funding is even more of an obstacle when the non-profit seeks to...
serve a population government funding does not typically support, such as undocumented immigrants. We would not have been able to open the doors of NMILC without local support from individual donors and faith communities in addition to foundation support. However, we are completely overwhelmed with immigrants in need of representation. The more local support we can get, the more immigrants we can serve.

3. What type of linkages are you hoping to cultivate with other organizations that provide services or support for immigrants here in Albuquerque?

We already have a number of good relationships established with local organizations, including Encuentro, Enlace Comunitario, El Centro de Igualdad y Derechos, Albuquerque Partnership, Catholic Charities and the Mexican Consulate. We are always looking for more opportunities to link with other immigrant-focused organizations to improve access to justice for our clients.

4. What are you growth plans for the moment? Are you looking to expand into other areas of the state or stay centered in Albuquerque?

Since we are a very new organization, at this moment we are only able to focus on serving immigrants who are able to come to our office for a consultation. We usually refer to other organizations or attorneys for immigrants who are currently detained or in other parts of the state. In the future, however, we hope to have resources that would allow us to represent clients who cannot travel to our office.

5. How many clients are you able to see per week?

We have been doing about 10 new intakes each week. Of those 10, we probably see about 7 who need our representation right away.

6. How could an interested person volunteer for your organization? What are the skills you need right now?

We always are looking for bi-lingual volunteers to do document translations, such as birth certificates, medical records, counseling documents, etc. Interested volunteers should email us or call us so we can include them on our volunteer translator list.

"Weaving Generations Together: Evolving Creativity in the Maya of Chiapas, Mexico"

An exhibition co-curated by Patricia Greenfield (author), Kathryn Klein, Ortiz Center Associate Director, and Amy Grochowski, Curator of Education, with photographs by Lauren Greenfield.

The exhibition includes built-in educational family activities to enhance visitor experience by learning about the process of learning and contemporary Maya family life in Chiapas, Mexico.
The Student Organization for Latin American Studies is an organization that promotes social, political, and cultural issues pertaining to Latin America in scholarship, in activism, on the UNM campus and in the broader community. For further information contact SOLAS president Kellie Baker at solas@unm.edu

SOLAS SNAPSHOTS

Kathryn and Susan examine a loom—or are they making a new friend?

Kathryn and Dr. Tiano take a spin with some Taquileno Gentlemen

The opening of an IAF photo exhibit in the Herzstein Reading Room

Dancers from Taquile, Peru perform their Spring dance at the NHCC

LIMON welcomes IDEAS, News, PICTURES, Article Submissions, Art, POLITICAL OPINIONS, POETRY, and the like regarding Latin America!

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