Dr. August Fons is the first to admit that his early educational experience was based more on simple economics and luck than it was on well-defined personal objectives.

After earning his GED in the military, Fons returned to Alamogordo, New Mexico, and began his law enforcement career with the Alamogordo DPS and attended NMSU for two semesters. He moved to Hobbs in 1976 and went to work for the Hobbs PD with a substantial pay increase to $650 a month! He began attending NMJC, not with a particular goal in mind, but mostly due to the fact that “the VA was paying for me to go,” he laughingly admits. Intuitively, however, he knew that education was going to be his ticket to success, no matter what discipline he might pursue.

In 1978, he completed his AA degree at NMJC and, realizing that his education had only just begun, he enrolled at College of the Southwest, where he earned his BBA in Management. After he retired from Hobbs PD in 1996, “NMJC took a big chance, hired me and afforded me a wonderful life-changing opportunity!” While visiting with his good friend and mentor, then-president Joan Tucker, Fons was encouraged to pursue a master’s degree, which he completed in 1997 while working full-time at NMJC.

Not content to end his educational pursuits, Fons contemplated a doctoral program. He met with NMJC President Steve McCleary, who encouraged Fons to pursue his degree at Texas Tech. In the spring of 2004, Fons’ pursuit of education formally ended with a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership, approximately 25 years after a relatively unfocused young student had taken classes at NMJC “just because they were paid for.”

Today, as Dean of Public Safety & Industry at NMJC, Fons oversees a number of departments and disciplines, including the criminal justice program, automotive technology, paralegal studies, the Southeastern New Mexico Law Enforcement Academy, the Corrections Academy, and the Public Safety Telecommunications Academy. Recent additions to Fons’ oversight were the cosmetology, welding, and ACTA programs.

My time at New Mexico Junior College wasn’t necessarily memorable or remarkable for anything I did while I was here, but for the foundation that was laid by my instructors. I can look back now and see how instrumental they were in my life. I recall good teachers who were understanding about the schedules I worked, good teachers who worked with me a great deal in allowing me to finish because they were compassionate, understanding, and patient. Because I had good learning experiences and good relationships with my instructors at NMJC, it was only natural that I would seek the same type of rewarding experience at the other colleges and universities I would attend. No doubt about it, NMJC set the tone for all my educational endeavors, and I’ve tried to incorporate those attitudes and traits into my own teaching.

Now that I’m on this side of the fence and am a teacher myself, I always try to remember how important some things were for me when I was a student. I remember when I needed a teacher to spend extra time with me, and now I understand that they did that with no reimbursement other than the gratification of knowing they’d helped a student succeed. From my teachers at NMJC – along with so many other good ones I had along the way – I’ve come to realize that good teachers succeed at helping students in spite of burdens – such as politics and bureaucracy – that can sometimes inhibit excellent instruction – because that is just what they do.

I would tell students today that a teacher may have all the commitment in the world, and they may be willing to meet students half way, but a teacher simply can’t do it all for them. Give it your best shot, and you may be surprised to learn that most teachers will go out of their way to help you succeed as long as you’re willing to do your part. Keep in mind that whatever you achieve tomorrow depends on what you do today.

– August Fons

Register for Fall! Get the classes you want. Fall 2012 begins August 20.
NMJC’s Don Whitaker Automotive Technology Center was this year’s site for the Remote GM Training offered by the Dallas GM Training Center on July 17-19. Seventeen GM technicians from dealerships in New Mexico and West Texas, along with NMJC GM instructors Sam Gilmore and Javier Rivera, attended the training. The vehicles used were a 2012 GMC Yukon, 2012 Buick Enclave, and a 2012 Cadillac SRX4, all supplied by the Dallas GM Training Center. Technicians from the following dealerships attended: Seegers-Dickey Chevrolet/Buick, Lubbock, TX; Permian Chevrolet/Buick/GMC/Cadillac, Hobbs, NM; Ronny Boyd Chevrolet, Lamesa, TX; Sowell Chevrolet/Buick/GMC, Andrews, TX; Mitchell Buick/GMC, San Angelo, TX; Carlsbad Chevrolet, Carlsbad, NM; Berg Motor Company, Midland, TX; Hamilton GM Country, Portales, NM; Bravo Chevrolet/Cadillac, Las Cruces, NM; Odena Chevrolet, Floydada, TX; Desert Sun Motors, Roswell, NM; and Westside Chevrolet/Buick/GMC, Marathon, TX.

NMJC Board Chair Gay Keener (L) and NMJC Foundation Accountant / Controller Tina Kunka (R) receive a $5000 check from Ben Jaime, Xcel Energy’s Manager for Community Services, for scholarships to aid deserving students at New Mexico Junior College.

Curator’s Corner
by Erin Anderson, Museum Curator, Western Heritage Museum Complex & Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame

Here in New Mexico, we have an interesting prehistoric history, and during her lifetime Mrs. Velma Linam collected many lithics (chipped stone artifacts) and displayed them in her museum. We now have these objects in our Virgil and Thelma Linam Collection.

To create these lithics, ancient people used a technique called flint knapping, which is the process of making stone tools such as arrowheads, knives, and hand axes. According to msu.edu, flint knapping has been around for millions of years. Only recently has man stopped using flint knapping as part of their daily lives, although some groups, mainly anthropologists and enthusiasts, learn this technique to study ancient cultures. Some people have gotten so good at this skill that it’s hard to tell a modern point from an ancient one or if a flake was chipped purposely or merely stepped on. Flint knapping is a reduction process, meaning flakes of stone are broken off the original piece. The best way to start is by “direct percussion,” which means you directly strike the stone you want made into a point (msu.edu). You would use another tool like a hammer stone to achieve direct percussion and get the stone to the right thickness. This would be followed by “pressure-flaking,” which uses a pointed tool such as an antler to remove small, thin flakes from the stone. This will shape and refine the point. Finishing the point may include something like notching, stemming or fluting. According to wildwoodsurvival.com, the best stones to knap include obsidian, flint, and chert. Thankfully, this art form has not been completely lost. In fact, flint knapping may be making a return. Some archaeologists have suggested using knotted obsidian rather than surgical steel, which makes a cleaner cut and will, therefore, heal faster.

To see some of the lithics that are a part of the Virgil and Thelma Linam Collection, stop by the Western Heritage Museum Complex and Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame.

After 14 years of dedicated service at New Mexico Junior College, Lisa Jo Seed retired on July 19, 2012.

Happy Retirement & Grandparenting, Jo-Jo!!
NMJC Basketball Coach Joins TCU Coaching Staff
by Don Worth, Athletic Director

Chris Tiffit, who has served as the Head Men’s Basketball Coach at New Mexico Junior College since 2009, has been named an Assistant Men’s Basketball Coach at Texas Christian University.

Last season, Tiffit led the NMJC T-Birds to their first Regional Basketball Tournament play in 14 years and finished second in the WJCAA Conference race. In his first season at NMJC, Tiffit led the Thunderbirds to their first national ranking in over a decade when they appeared at #23 in the NJCAA national poll. Tiffit came to NMJC from Lamar Community College (Colo.), where he was the 2009 District IX Coach of the Year.

According to NMJC Athletic Director Don Worth, while Tiffit’s selection to the TCU coaching staff is a huge loss for NMJC athletics, it is also a point of pride. “To be tapped as assistant coach in a Big 12 school like TCU is an outstanding accomplishment and speaks volumes about Chris’s hard work in putting us back on track with the sort of T-Bird basketball that Ron Black played years ago. But it’s also about the overall caliber of NMJC athletics. In 2011-12, NMJC achieved its most successful year collectively in the history of the athletic program, and Chris was a huge part of that. We’re sad to be losing him, but we’re also proud to see a deserving member of our coaching staff get the recognition and opportunity he deserves.”

Pending Board approval on August 9, James Miller, Assistant Men’s Basketball Coach under Tiffit, will step up as Head Men’s Basketball Coach. Miller joined the NMJC coaching staff in the fall of 2009. Prior to that, he served four years as the Assistant Men’s Basketball Coach at Colorado State University-Pueblo.
FALL CLASSES BEGIN
August 20
www.nmjc.edu

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT: MAKING SENSE OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR - Moderator: Professor Dwight Pitaithley of NMSU September 8 @ 1:00 pm • “Imagining War” Contact: Mary Tuyschaevers (575) 492-2873 or mtuyschaevers@nmjc.edu

RODEO
September 20-22 @ ENMU – Portales Contact: Richard Morris (575) 492-2748 or rmorris@nmjc.edu

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT: MAKING SENSE OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR - Moderator: Professor Dwight Pitaithley of NMSU September 22 @ 1:00 pm • “Choosing Sides” Contact: Mary Tuyschaevers (575) 492-2873 or mtuyschaevers@nmjc.edu

RODEO
September 27-29 @ Sul Ross State University – Alpine, Texas Contact: Richard Morris (575) 492-2748 or rmorris@nmjc.edu

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT: MAKING SENSE OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR - Moderator: Professor Dwight Pitaithley of NMSU October 6 @ 1:00 pm • “Making Sense of Shiloh” Contact: Mary Tuyschaevers (575) 492-2873 or mtuyschaevers@nmjc.edu

RODEO
October 11-13 @ Vernon College – Vernon, Texas Contact: Richard Morris (575) 492-2748 or rmorris@nmjc.edu

RODEO
October 18-20 @ Texas Tech University – Lubbock, Texas Contact: Richard Morris (575) 492-2748 or rmorris@nmjc.edu

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT: MAKING SENSE OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR - Moderator: Professor Dwight Pitaithley of NMSU October 20 @ 1:00 pm • “The Shape of War” Contact: Mary Tuyschaevers (575) 492-2873 or mtuyschaevers@nmjc.edu

RODEO
October 25-27 @ Clarendon College – Clarendon, Texas Contact: Richard Morris (575) 492-2748 or rmorris@nmjc.edu

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT: MAKING SENSE OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR - Moderator: Professor Dwight Pitaithley of NMSU November 3 @ 1:00 pm • “War and Freedom” Contact: Mary Tuyschaevers (575) 492-2873 or mtuyschaevers@nmjc.edu

PTK ORIENTATION
November 6 @ 7:00 pm Watson Hall Theatre Contact: Maria Vick (575) 492-2850 or mvick@nmjc.edu

PTK INDUCTION
November 13 @ 7:00 pm Watson Hall Theatre Contact: Maria Vick (575) 492-2850 or mvick@nmjc.edu

Orientation will be held on Saturday, August 18, from 9:00 a.m. to noon on the NMJC campus. All first-time students and those interested in gaining more information about the college are invited to attend. Enrolled students who participate in the required activities will receive credit for PS110, College Orientation. Sessions covering degree plans, transferability of courses, student services, campus life, policies and procedures, distance education, technology, and course information will be offered. Additionally, students will be able to visit individuals representing campus clubs and various community businesses and organizations. Door prizes and giveaways will be provided. “Fall Orientation is a great way for students to get acquainted with the campus and meet faculty and staff in a relaxed atmosphere,” said Brittany Fuentes, a current NMJC student. “I encourage all new students to take advantage of this opportunity to get credit, learn about the college, and have fun.”

NEW MEXICO JUNIOR COLLEGE
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e-news@nmjc.edu • prmarketing@nmjc.edu • (575) 492-2726
Editor: Vicki Vardeman • Photographer: Susan Miller • Graphic Designer: Kathy Mahan
1 Thunderbird Circle • Hobbs, New Mexico 88240
1-800-657-6260 • (575) 392-4510 • www.nmjc.edu