

Kudos

May 29, 2006

Recognition for Dartmouth faculty, staff, and students

Xiahong Feng, department chair and associate professor of [earth sciences](#), was elected to fellowship in the [Geological Society of America](#) (GSA) on April 29. Members of the GSA are elected to fellowship status in recognition of significant contributions to geological sciences. Established in 1888 and with more than 18,000 members in over 85 countries, the GSA is an international professional society that seeks to advance the geosciences, enhance the professional growth of its members, and promote the geosciences in the service of humankind. Feng's research focuses on an interdisciplinary approach to global and local environmental problems.

Ernest Hebert, professor of [English](#), won the 2006 New England Bookseller Award for Fiction. The awards were established in 1990 by the [New England Booksellers Association](#) to promote New England authors and publishers who have produced a body of work that significantly contributes to New England's culture. Hebert was selected from nominations solicited from more than 800 New England bookstores and publishers.

Hebert also received the 2006 Independent Publisher Book Award for the Best Regional Fiction, U.S. Northeast, for *Spoonwood*, his most recent novel. *Spoonwood* is the sixth installment in Hebert's *Darby* series that examines the lives of the residents of Darby, a fictional town in southwestern New Hampshire. As in the earlier *Darby* novels, Hebert explores classic New England themes in *Spoonwood*, such as the relationship between landscape and society. New this year, the regional awards were designed to spotlight the best regional titles from around North America.

Sergei Kan, professor of [anthropology](#) and of [Native American studies](#), received the first Alumni Award for High Professional Distinction given by the [University Professors Program](#) at Boston University on May 13. The award recognizes Kan's outstanding professional achievement and his record of service to the larger academic world and especially to the Dartmouth community. The University Professors Program was founded in 1971. Kan received his B.A. from Boston University and has been teaching at Dartmouth since 1989. He is a former chair of both the Department of Anthropology and the Native American Studies Program. His research and teaching focus on ethnology and ethnohistory, the history of anthropology, and the anthropology of death and dying.

Peter Tse '84, assistant professor of [psychology and brain sciences](#), and his advisees, third-year graduate students in psychology and brain sciences Po-Jang Hsieh and Gideon Caplovitz, were all top-ten finalists at the 2006 [Best Visual Illusion of the Year Contest](#) in May. The international contest is a celebration of the ingenuity and creativity of the world's premier visual illusion research community. The study of visual illusions is of critical importance to the understanding of visual perceptions. Tse won second place for "Infinite Regress Illusions," examining the way in which local and global motion signals integrate together to form a unified motion perception. Caplovitz finished close behind in third place for his "Bar-Cross-Ellipse Illusion," illustrating the way in which the form of an object interacts with the way it is perceived to move. Hsieh presented the "Gradient Offset Induced Motion Illusion," which provides insight into how the brain constructs motion perceptions from the spatio-temporal dynamics of the retinal image. Tse works with Hsieh and Caplovitz to study how neuronal activity in the human brain produces visual perceptions. The three illusions submitted to the contest were discovered in the pursuit of this study.