Spring 2016

LIBERALIS, Spring 2016

Utah State University

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES | UtahStateUniversity SPRING 2016

LIBERALIS

freedom to think, discover and create

THE LONG MARCH FORWARD

DEAN'S COLUMN

Since being appointed dean more than five years ago, I've had the privilege of meeting all 165 full-time faculty members in the college and many members of the student body. I've learned about their passions and why they are here. For most, it comes down to a nagging desire to explore the world and seek answers for questions that may take a lifetime or more to answer.

We are a college that asks the big questions. We are a college of poets, political scientists and structural equation modelers. We are a college where differences — in theory — come together. Unfortunately, we are also a college that lacks the space to put it into practice.

Last semester I ran out of offices for tenure-line faculty. Classroom availability has plagued our college for years. Some of our largest departments have been scattered into several buildings across campus. We have shoe-horned our people into every inch of allotted space in Old Main, but we still lack a place for CHaSS students to assemble and build community.

As a community sociologist, I sincerely believe, and data supports this, that when you are a member of a community your quality of life is higher. When you are part of a community that supports you when you are up and when you are down, you are more likely to take risks and attempt feats you never thought possible. That is why I am excited to unveil our vision to build the CHaSS Teaching and Learning Center and bring all of the disciplines under one roof and into the 21st century.

The idea emerged two years ago when our department heads outlined their case for building a comprehensive learning center designed with teaching pedagogy at its core. At the time I had no interest in pursuing an agenda that involved laying bricks and mortar. My goal as dean was to focus on the people of CHaSS. In 2014-15 we gave $6.6 million in scholarships, tying for third among other colleges. But it turns out proximity matters. This project is about continuing to build a college that matters.

One of the things you may notice from the renderings (pages 4-5) is that the CHaSS Teaching and Learning Center is envisioned to honor both the history and architecture of the past and balance it with the needs of the future. The proposed building will allow our faculty to teach 300 class sections each semester in spaces specifically designed to foster interaction and excellence in learning.

I know this is a really big bite. Our college has never attempted anything like this before. Projects like this often take decades to come to fruition. But I believe it's possible. This is a grassroots effort that came to me when I wasn't expecting it and has gained momentum. We have completed a feasibility study and gained the backing of President Stan Albrecht.

In 2010, when the arts split from the college, we took stock and reevaluated a new path forward. That reflection period is what allowed us to develop a vision that anchors our college, and the liberal arts, on this campus for the next 100 years. The timing is right and I'm optimistic that this project will continue moving us toward excellence together.

I hope you enjoy viewing the renderings on the following pages. Thank you for your support and for accompanying us on this journey.

On a personal note, this is my last column as the Dean of CHaSS. I am retiring July 1 to begin a new phase of my life. The College of Humanities and Social Sciences is a great college. The faculty, students and alumni are some of the best in the nation and it has been a very real privilege for me to sit as dean. I want to thank everyone who has supported me. They include: the faculty, staff, students, alumni and central administration. My goals were simple, I saw myself as a dean of faculty and students. We have added hundreds of student scholarships, hired 45 new faculty members to add to our illustrious faculty sitting in our departments and moved forward with a vision for the college. I know you will continue to be engaged with this great institution and to support the next dean as they bring their skills to support our faculty and students. A national search is currently taking place and I know that the next dean will help lead this college to even greater heights. Thank you for supporting me and the college. May our paths cross again along this journey of life.

– John C. Allen, **CHaSS Dean**

campus NOTES

compiled by journalism student Ashlie Albrecht

CADETS ESCAPE AND EVASION TRAINING

Cadets in the Air Force ROTC attended escape and evasion training Oct. 10. This was a night training event where participants used elusion skills to avoid discovery while accomplishing mission objectives. Cadets from various regional universities participated. "It's by far our most interesting and exciting event on the horizon," U.S. Air Force Capt. Daniel DeVirgilio said shortly before the training.

LACKSTROM LINGUISTICS SYMPOSIUM

The Department of Language, Philosophy and Communication Studies hosted its fifth annual Lackstrom Linguistics Symposium Oct. 14. "This year, we are especially pleased to offer a graduate-student panel presentation on the topic of dual language immersion education, which has become increasingly popular in the state of Utah in recent years." said Karin DeJonge-Kannan, one of the event's founders.

THE MERRILL SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The Merrill Scholars Program for the fall 2015 semester was focused on the upcoming 2016 presidential election. The program offers participating students a scholarship for attending weekly discussions with professors and invited guests. The program's emphasis for the spring 2016 semester is foreign policy.

THE WORLD PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

The World Parliament of Religions was in Salt Lake City from Oct. 15 to 19 — the first time the conference was in the United States since 1993. The Religious Studies program sent 40 students to the event, under the direction of associate professor Bonnie Glass-Coffin, who called on the students to act as ambassadors for USU.

MARK DAMEN AT TEDxUSU

Mark Damen, a professor in the History Department, spoke at the TEDxUSU Conference Oct. 23 in the Caine Performance Hall. His talk focused on how the language and civilization of the Indo-Europeans threaten the endurance of other cultures. "My aim is to reach out to a wide community of students who, as speakers of English, may not be aware of their linguistic and cultural heritage," Damen said.

TANNER TALKS - SHERMAN ALEXIE

Sherman Alexie presented at the Caine Performance Hall Oct. 29. Judson Finley, an assistant professor in the Sociology, Social Work and Anthropology Department, said Alexie captures the realities of what it is like to be Native American through his poems, plays, books and films. "Sherman Alexie is one of the loudest voices in Native America," Finley said.

MEDIA SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The journalism department is beginning a new initiative this semester called the Media Scholars Program, in which students earn points for work they do beyond the journalism degree requirements. If enough points are accumulated, the student is recognized as a Media Scholar. "We are building the Aggie reputation," said Brian Champagne, a faculty member on the Media Scholars Program committee, "making a Utah State University journalism degree something that gets attention and respect in the academic and professional world."

AFTER DECADES OF BEING SCATTERED ACROSS CAMPUS,

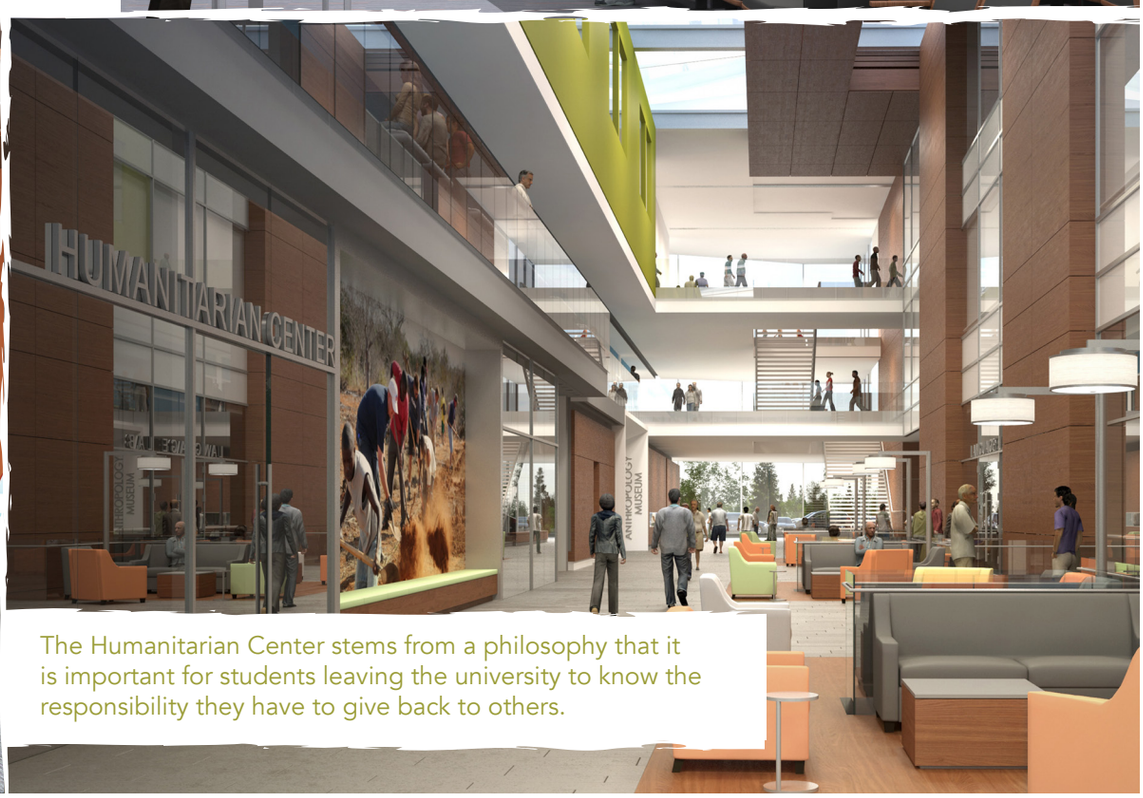
CHaSS HAS A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Special learning areas with smart boards create an activated zone for learning before and after class.

"As former dean and faculty member of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, I well know the college and applaud the faculty, students and staff for their growing exceptionalism. They continue to develop programs of excellence in both research and teaching and I understand and support their vision for the CHaSS Teaching and Learning Center. This would be one more complement to the college's already innovative and creative approach to education – and to making a difference around the world."

– Stan Albrecht, **USU President**

Large lecture halls can be deconstructed into smaller areas for breakout sessions. Aisles are wide so professors can walk between rows, engaging with every student.

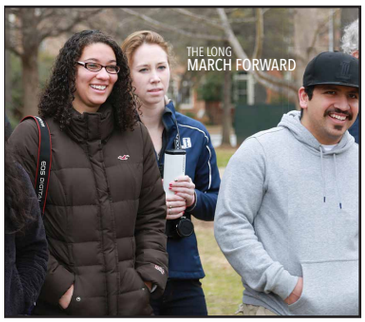


The Humanitarian Center stems from a philosophy that it is important for students leaving the university to know the responsibility they have to give back to others.

contents

"If you are reading and writing poetry it is not something that pays. It's not something you are obligated to do. It's something people do because something just strikes them in the heart … and it's something that is really deep. And, apparently, it's really deep for other people." – Star Coulbrooke

LET POETRY MATTER | PAGE 32



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Jason Gilmore and a handful of students attended the 50th anniversary of the march in Selma. What did it mean to participate?

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Liberalis was derived from the Latin word pertaining to freedom, generosity and honor. These words reflect the values of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. We try to cultivate in ourselves and in our students the freedom to explore new ideas, cultures and problem solving and to affirm the dignity and honor of all human beings.

Liberalis is published two times a year by the Dean's Office of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and distributed to alumni free of charge.

The publication is available online at liberalis.usu.edu

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The drought of 1934 was so severe in Utah that even grasshoppers went hungry. Most crops withered, reservoirs and culinary water supplies ran low and Mormon wards prayed for rain. The situation prompted Gov. Henry H. Blood to call for the development of a state water conservation program. The federal Drought Relief Service purchased and slaughtered livestock across the parched West, including 206,000 sheep and 126,000 heads of cattle in Utah.

AGGREGATING THE PUZZLE

by Kristen Munson

It was a natural disaster made worse because states were still recovering from the economic fallout of the Great Depression. In "Utah's Great Drought of 1934," historian Leonard J. Arrington credits the swift organization of state and federal leadership and the "cooperative spirit of the people" for mitigating the suffering. In short, it could have been worse.

Earlier this year NASA climatologists predicted a mega-drought could occur in the American West within the next 30 years. Climate models already project Utah will experience reduced snowpack in the decades ahead. For one of the driest and fastest growing states in the nation the demand for water will likely only increase. However, sociologists at Utah State University argue that is just part of a larger narrative about the future of water in Utah.

"It's objectively not the case that everyone faces the same water challenges even in a state that has a meta narrative of an over-arching problem," says Douglas Jackson-Smith, a co-principal investigator for the state's largest water sustainability study. "It's not that it's unimportant, or not the main story or the big story, but it's not everyone's story. And it's not the whole story. I think the iUTAH project and our social science research is trying to address that complexity and understand the diversity of our water situation."

The innovative Urban Transitions and Aridregion Hydro-Sustainability (iUTAH) project is a five year, $20 million multi-disciplinary research and training grant awarded to the state in 2012 by the National Science Foundation. It spans three watersheds and involves every university across Utah in an effort to examine water issues affecting the region.

Imagine trying to assemble an enormous puzzle without having a picture of what it's supposed to look like in the end. Some people will focus on assembling the edge pieces. Others might organize pieces into piles of specific textures or color. Over time patterns will emerge and all of the pieces will start to connect. That's what it's like trying to tease out the complexities of the water system. It requires building bridges across disciplines to see how the various elements fit.

"I hope that in 10 years one of the things we are known for is

Douglas Jackson-Smith discusses the Logan Canyon canal diversion.

WATER IS JUST A QUINTESSENTIAL

picking apart the urban environment and identifying some really meaningful dimensions," Jackson-Smith says. "We already do that in the natural environment *ad nauseam*. We tend to be really good at attending to all the really fine-grained nuances of micro climates and soil classifications, but when it comes to the characterizing of urban landscapes — the human and built side of it — we're hardly scratching the surface."

Jackson-Smith is a rural sociologist who explores the people side of complex natural systems. The human aspect of the water system has not historically been as rigorously studied as the hydrology and ecology components. But devising a strategy for managing water requires an understanding of water users — who they are and what they believe — and the external drivers that constrain their behavior such as the housing development where one lives and the social structure that influences one's everyday decisions. He wants to know why people do what they do and what enables them to do things differently.

"That's thinking like a sociologist," he says.

His research involves studying how demographic changes and the various forms of urban development may become important structural drivers in the water system. For instance, two rapidly growing and understudied segments in the Salt Lake County and Wasatch County housing markets include renters and residents of multi-unit buildings. Both groups tend to have less authority over water decisions than homeowners and single-family home dwellers. Without examining how these groups differ in how they perceive water issues and potential solutions, projections about the future of water may be inaccurate.

"I'm just really interested in aggregating the puzzle and getting a clear-eyed vision about how we're changing as a society," Jackson-Smith says. "How is our built environment changing and how is that going to play into how this transition unfolds? I don't hear a lot of decision makers and public discussion around those issues of differentiating urban growth."

The iUTAH project focuses on transitioning urban water systems with the aim of providing water managers and local leaders with data to make informed decisions. Jackson-Smith argues the dialogue needs to extend beyond per capita figures of water use and generic policy prescriptions. Water footprints vary at the parcel level and using average numbers may oversimplify problems and thwart the development of meaningful solutions. He suspects devising such solutions will likely require connecting two disparate conversations about water in the state: water for agriculture and water for urban users.

"It's just the third rail of Utah politics," he says. "I think part of the reason we don't have that conversation here is that we don't want to have a mean, dragged down fight over water with agriculture."

Interestingly, neither do the majority of the population Jackson-Smith has been surveying the past two years. Over 80 percent of urban residents surveyed report that they do not want to take agriculture's water.

"Ag has a very special place in their hearts," Jackson-Smith says. "I don't want to take Ag's water, but I think it's happening and in ways that are not thought through and as effective as they could be. It would help if we could find a safe space where farm irrigators and urban water planners could openly discuss how to co-manage their water systems to handle projected population growth."

He suspects changes in water law and water markets could create a framework that allows farmers to be rewarded for using less. Jackson-Smith himself has a small farm in Richmond. He believes reducing water consumption in the agricultural community "is not a heavy lift," but an impossible one to broach without a mechanism that provides everyone with the cover to come to the table. However, he predicts changes will come in the state over the next two decades whether the conversations occur or not.

"I am much more of a believer and predictor that it's going to be a rugged imperfect transition; how rough the transition is will probably depend on how receptive our decision makers are to information that we might be able to generate," he says. "Maybe the goal of social scientists is just to characterize the system, not change it or fix it, but at least understand it, to find out where the levers are that make a difference."

CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS

To find out what some of those levers are, he and Courtney Flint, an associate professor of sociology at Utah State, have been asking Utahns what they think about water.

"Utah State is a land-grant university. We can help with this," Flint says from her desk in Old Main. "Our mission really is not just to send information out to the public, but to be mindful of what the needs are for the state and the region. How do we know if we don't ask?"

In 2014, she and Jackson-Smith created a household survey administered in 23 neighborhoods across three counties in Utah. Researchers used a format designed to increase participant response rates called the drop-off pick-up method, which involves going door-to-door to deliver and collect surveys. It also requires a lot of manpower so Utah State undergraduates were deployed to help collect data.

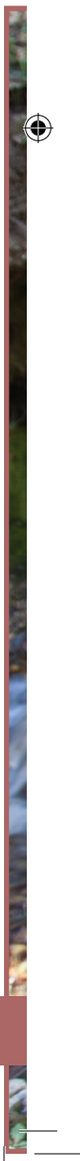
"The students were the vanguard. They were knocking on doors," she says.

She believes getting undergraduates involved in research is critical for optimizing their educational experience and enhancing the creativity of each project. Flint has already hired more than two dozen students to work on iUTAH projects. For instance, a team of students conducted interviews with people in Logan and Salt Lake City about the value of local mountains. Afterward they transcribed and coded the interviews and turned them into a video summary. Much of the conversation revealed how the mountains are valued for recreational purposes, but also as the water tower for local communities.

"The students were just incredible. They brought so much innovation to the research I think we really pushed some new boundaries," Flint says.

Instead of using traditional charts she felt a digital narrative would be a more powerful vehicle to explain the results of the study, but her students figured out how to execute the idea. Flint pulls up a video on her computer screen and clicks play. A young man's voice fills the room. "What brings you up here today," he asks study participants along the Logan River. People spoke of the benefits of water: It's calming. It's essential to life. And we need to conserve it.

"You didn't hear my voice in this," Flint says. "The students made it on the basis of



Courtney Flint stands before a gorgeous waterfall found in Spring Hollow Campground in the canyon.

PART OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

what they were learning and were careful to be representative of all the themes they were hearing."

Flint joined the faculty in 2013 to work on the iUTAH project. She studies how communities value natural resources and perceive threats to them such as drought and fire. However, if people don't feel vulnerable to a particular threat, they will not make behavioral changes that could mediate risks. In other words, knowing about an environmental problem is not enough; people need to feel they have something to lose. But those aren't always easy conversations.

"You can't even get to actions and solutions if you can't find out what we hold in common, what we value," Flint says. "It's kind of like instead of asking 'what is the risk' it is asking 'what is at risk?'"

In recent years she's flipped her line of questioning to start from a more positive place. She thinks more in terms of wellbeing than risk and focuses more on values.

"I am impressed with what a tool that has been in research to open a conversation," Flint says.

She may be new to Utah, but Flint is no stranger to the West. She grew up in Montana and spent her undergraduate years studying in Arizona. Her relationship to water has always been complicated — just like it is for most Westerners.

"Water is just a quintessential part of the lived experience," she says. "It shapes our landscapes. It is highly valued experientially for recreation. It's about spiritual issues. So it's not just about something we use. It's not just a resource. I think in science today, especially water science, we tend to have kind of narrowed the scope and we look at water as a problem. We look at water as a risk, as a threat to our wellbeing as in either having not enough or too much."

She has started using a more exploratory approach to uncover the depths of people's experiences with water. For instance, the household survey she and Jackson-Smith created is a massive data set they're still analyzing over a year later. Over the summer they completed general summary reports and found that people are generally more supportive of a range of policies such as mandatory water restrictions and stricter efficiency standards for new development. Flint has been following up with participants to understand what they meant when they ticked boxes. One can generalize patterns from survey data, but Flint isn't so sure it captures the complexity of people's concerns about water.

"I'm finding with the qualitative work we get richer feelings and a little bit more why people are thinking what they are thinking," she says. "I want to challenge some of the scientific assumptions that people are just gross overusers of water. That they're ignorant. And if we could just tell them what to think they would do the right thing. Well, it's really more complicated than that."

Andrea Armstrong and **Eddy** along a Logan neighborhood canal close to campus.

STRIKING A BALANCE

Andrea Armstrong, '15, has witnessed some of that complexity in the field studying the human side of water management as a doctoral student in sociology at Utah State. Her piece of the puzzle involves exploring how local authorities work together.

"A lot of research on Western water has taken the very large-scale perspective … and those tend to involve state and federal agencies," Armstrong says. "They make big dams, big infrastructure and while those types of policies and programs do set the stage in which local water decisions are made, the day-to-day activities of water management occur in our city and local irrigation organizations."

Her work focuses on how these organizations make decisions and examines their points of connection in the water system. Armstrong's interest in soggy places stems from a childhood spent knee deep in streams in upstate New York. She found herself drawn to studying Utah's riparian zones once she arrived in Cache Valley, which often means the local canal system.

The canals were the first irrigation system in Cache Valley. As municipalities have grown some have connected to the irrigation systems, which can serve as a way to drain storm water. But this adds a new layer of complication, Armstrong says. When cities lay more concrete it can intensify storm runoff and change the water flow in canals as additional discharge is connected to irrigation systems. Managing changes to the irrigation system requires local coordination.

She has spoken with more than 75 water managers around the state to understand local water management operations. One of her primary research findings has been that, despite the reputation of water being a contentious issue out West, that storyline often falls apart in everyday practice.

"If you think about our irrigation systems in Utah, they all hang together on coordination and cooperation," Armstrong says. "We are able to convey water from the top of Providence Canyon to Nibley through a series of agreements and a real sincere effort to work together. While it's a hard topic to approach people about, once you see how people are connected within the water system the conflict fades away quite a bit."

She attributes much of the success to the connections the people in charge of the infrastructure have with one another and willingness to work through challenges that arise. Through her interviews with water managers she has found that uncertainties such as changes in flow due to climate change throw wrenches into their planning efforts. However, they are responding with a desire to increase system efficiencies. This often means changes in infrastructure such as making improvements to pipelines to prevent evaporation or seepage. However, plugging leaks may affect local ecology near canals and wetlands.

Armstrong admits "it doesn't come without difficulty."

This spring she starts a new position as an assistant professor of environmental studies at Lafayette College, but she will remain tied to western water research. She will continue examining how local water management organizations adopt infrastructure changes to meet growing needs. As Armstrong considers the future she finds herself hopeful about the state of water in Utah.

"We have great scientists at the Utah Climate Center who are thinking about what climate change is going to mean for Utah. So we have information," she says. "The other great part about our water system is that we built it. We do have some control over water once it's here and we can design a system to meet our future needs. The complicated part is deciding what those needs are and striking a balance between natural and human uses. If we can come up with a plan and if we can try to foresee some unintended consequences of water changes, then I am confident that things will be okay. Humans have the ability to adapt. We always have." ■

I, WE, AND IMDB

Office Hours

Quick: Who played Fred Astaire's producer friend in Top Hat?

My wife and I do this when we're watching old movies. If we see some actor but can't immediately remember his name, I try to think of it before she can look it up on her smartphone.

This little name game has provoked a conversation in our home that has spilled into my classroom. What's the point of memorizing when students can look things up so fast these days? If Siri can outrace human memory — which she does a lot! — why remember anything at all?

Of course, there are those moments when your phone can't get service, or the connection is slow, or the Internet Movie Database is down, but the same could be said for my brain — and just about as often.

I remember many people of my grandparents' generation who were proud of their ability to recite long stretches of poetry and demonstrated it when anyone doubted it or asked for proof.

So, sure, memory is a marvelous skill. But, then again, so is juggling.

You don't have to remember your appointments these days; your phone will remind you. When you're watching a game on TV, there's no point in recalling a player's stats; they're in "the crawl" at the bottom of the screen. Don't fret over whether you locked the front door this morning; houses these days lock themselves.

This is our world — a place where truth is stored in the cloud of our Borg collective and any drone can call it down at will. So what's the point of cluttering our brains with data — especially since our brains really aren't all that good at it anyway? Not mine at least.

I can't remember, for instance, what year it was when I took my first Latin class and I'm not going to look it up on the Web because it would just depress me. What I do remember is my teacher, Mrs. Hodges. She was strict, to say the least. A syntactic force of nature.

And we memorized. And memorized. And memorized some more.

There was no choice — and not just because Mrs. Hodges offered no other option. There was no other option. In those days we had no phones to answer our fledgling cries for personal endings. We had to look up every answer, find it in some index, then go back to the page we were working on. It took Caesar a whole year to write each book of The Gallic Wars and not much less time for us to read one.

But the world is different now.

So why, then, do we teachers still make students memorize facts, equations, lists and — that most horrible of horribles — dates in history? What's the point of having students take tests with only their brains open — all books, phones, tablets closed?

I suppose it's for the same reason we humans have ever done anything we don't have to do. We don't have to sculpt to survive. We don't have to play sports. We don't have to watch sunsets. And, no, we don't have to learn Latin (though we should).

Instead, we can choose to do those things. And therein lies the glory.

So who was the actor I asked about at the start of this article? That's right: Edward Everett Horton. Did you remember his name, or did you have to look him up on IMDB? Either way, does it matter?

I won this round, but only by the tap of my tap shoes. When I stop winning the game — and I will — who really wins? My wife? The machine? Our collective memory?

Will "we remember" someday replace "I remember"?

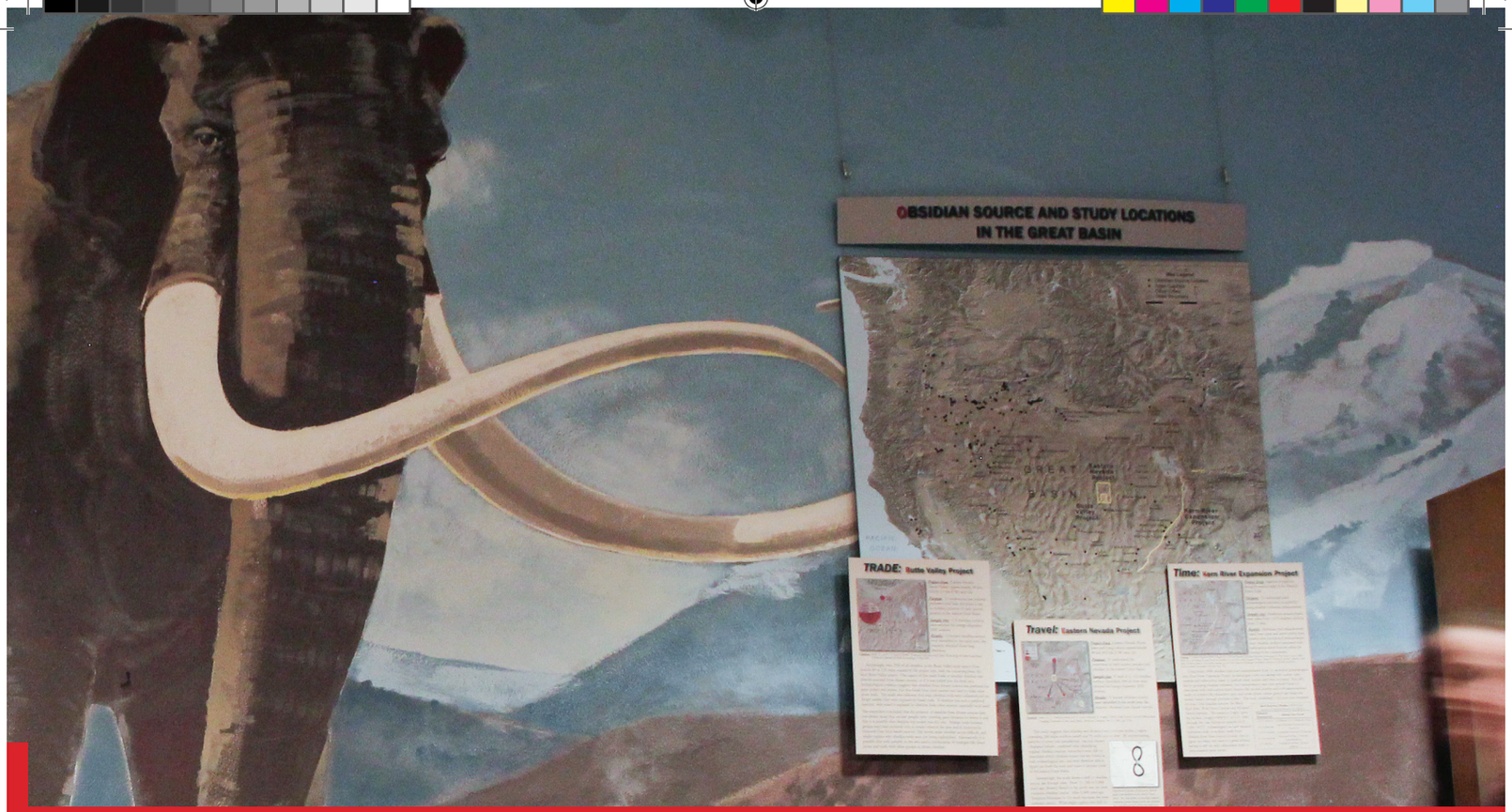
If so, where am I in "we"?

Mark Damen teaches in the Department of History at Utah State University, where he has taught Latin, Greek, ancient civilization, theater and drama. He was the Utah Carnegie Professor of the Year in 1998.


How Do You Measure Up to a Mammoth?

THE SEARCH


Museum of Anthropology
Utah State University
Museum of Anthropology
Utah State University



FOR THE STORY

by Matthew D. LaPlante

At a tiny university museum, students are learning that the process of discovery doesn't end when artifacts are unearthed

On one side of the room is an exhibit on human body modification. Tattoos and henna. Lip plates and neck rings. A replica skull from Peru, where the ancients sometimes practiced cranial binding — the effect of which, in a modern context, is positively alienesque.

Turn 120 degrees counterclockwise and you're in Africa. An animal-skin drum that was made for King Edward Fredrick Muteesa II of Buganda. A wooden circumcision mask from the Bemba people of Zambia. Zulu beads in tans and reds and blacks.

Another quarter spin, another part of the world. Textiles from South America.

Over here, an exhibit on the afterlife in ancient Egypt. Over here, the history of the people of the Great Basin.

If you're looking for rhyme or reason or flow or fusion in this place, it might be helpful to know this: That's not the point of this tiny museum. For this is a place of imagination, creativity and opportunity — where anthropology students come to learn to tell stories.

Some 10,000 people are expected to visit the Utah State University Museum of Anthropology this year, but the point of these exhibits isn't just to be exhibits. In this way, these display cases are like academic theses. What matters is not the bound volumes collecting dust on a shelf. And sometimes, it doesn't even matter so much who cracks the bindings of those tomes.

What matters is the learning, exploration and ideas upon which those volumes were built in the first place.

That's something most people don't see when they visit a museum and rarely think about when they consider, for instance, how a primitive artifact might have made its way from the ancient past to a place behind glass. Archeological unearthing is just the tip of the process of discovery. The brunt of that process happens later.

Sometimes much later.

And that, as it turns out, is what is inspiring the students who work and volunteer in this museum to dedicate their lives to discovery. To take us on trips from Peru to Buganda. From the Zulu Nation to the Great Basin.

It's a school morning in Old Main and students awaiting their 9 a.m. classes are sprawled out in the hallways, textbooks open, smart phones flashing. It's a gauntlet of arms and legs, backpacks and coffee mugs. The hallways buzz.

But in the south turret of this lovely old building, everything is still and quiet. Everything on this morning, that is, but Molly

Boeka Cannon, who is always excited to show off the museum at which she has been the curator for two years.

You could stand in here for hours, soaking in what is offered, but a tour of this one-room museum doesn't take long. And besides, Cannon is eager to provide a peek at the place where these exhibits are born.

Around the corner and through a locked door, in the museum's collections room, Cannon retrieves a box. There, arranged neatly in plastic bags, are coins and ornaments and small clay vials from ancient Greece — part of a collection from Utah State history professor Frances Titchener.

"These are so amazing," Cannon says, "but the trick is to show not just how cool these things are but to also tie them into a theme. There's a story in here and the students have to craft that in a way that is interesting but also informative."

That takes a lot of research, Cannon says. It's unclear at this time, for example, whether all of the items in this box are part of one story, or several.

The coins might be part of an exhibit on the way images on currency are used to convey relative levels of power and prestige and how that changes over time; such an exhibit wouldn't just be about ancient Greece — it could tie into an ongoing debate in the modern United States about substituting presidential images on American currency with images of other individuals, particularly women.

On the other hand, those same coins might be a starting point for an exhibit on what an ancient Greek citizen might need to go about his or her daily business — which might be an interesting thing to contemplate in a modern world in which the must-have contents of our purses and pockets are constantly changing.

Anthropology students get to choose the story they want to tell — while learning how to balance their ambitions with budgets, space and the availability of artifacts.

"It's definitely experiential learning," Cannon says. "They come up with the idea. They do the research. They come up with the design and they put it together."

Because the USU Anthropology Museum is small and has a budget to match its size, the students become quite adept at identifying a diverse array of resources. And to that end, Cannon says, a university campus is a virtual treasure chest.

"I think of us as pirates," she says. "We steal stuff from other departments and use it how we want."

And not just artifacts — but the tools anthropologists need to engage in their work. By way of example, she says, over in the Office of Research and Graduate Studies there is an entire center dedicated to microscopy — where students can learn to use infinitesimal evidence to make monumental discoveries.

"What's nice is that, at our university, if you know where to look there are so many little pockets of resources," Cannon says.

Over time the students who learn to build exhibits at this museum become confident in their ability to do so elsewhere. That's what Reigan Ware has done. The one-time English major — who on a whim took a museum development class "and never went back" — spent four years in the anthropology museum before graduating in the summer of 2015 with a degree in anthropology. Even before she had graduated, she was balancing her studies and work at the museum with jobs and internships in several other places, including the American West Heritage Center in Wellsville and the Daughters of Utah Pioneers museum on Logan's historic Main Street.

The latter place, Ware says, was a bit of a "grandma's attic" when she arrived — and the staff there knew it. There were treasures here, they told her. There were stories to be told.

But first, there were discoveries to be made.

There was, for instance, a wooden bed. It was a pretty piece of woodworking but, alongside several other pioneer-era beds scattered across the museum's three floors, it wasn't remarkable.

But it was, Ware says, the one-time property of Hezekiah Thatcher, one of the founding pioneers of Cache County. And it had been made by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' larger-than-life president and prophet, Brigham Young.

"I thought, 'oh my gosh, this is here?'" Ware recalls. "Most people wouldn't have even known. It's discoveries like that that can help people relate in a different way."

Ware says that's what she learned to do at the Utah State Museum of Anthropology — making discoveries, big and small, "to bring these stories out of the past and put them in people's lives."

Like a lot of people, Emily King had long assumed that the exciting part of anthropology came during the archeological discovery of artifacts. And when she attended a field school course with Utah State archeology professor David Byers, she got to see first-hand how exciting it could be.

But she also learned there was a lot of work to be done before an archeologist can pluck an artifact from the past and put it on display for others to see.

"When I started it was like, 'what? we're not just digging?'" she laughs. "There's so much more to it."

There was mapping and mathematics. There was geography and geometry and geology. King enjoyed all of those things, "but it was definitely good for me to see that there's a lot more to archeology than just finding great finds," she says. "You've got to look around and you've got to know what you're looking for."

That experience helped her appreciate what she found in the Museum of Anthropology's collections room and also got to experience as an intern in the immense collections areas of the sprawling Natural History Museum of Utah in Salt Lake City.

"In the back is where you really get the magic," she says. "And that's the cool part for the people who work in museums. They get to take these artifacts that have been found and continue the process of discovery — because even after that initial discovery, there's still so much more to learn."

There will be for many years to come.

Take, for instance, the shelf of six cardboard boxes that an anthropology undergraduate named Amanda Cook recently began sorting through. The boxes, the result of a lifetime of searching by an amateur archeologist from Logan named Bud Peterson, were donated to the university in 1982 — and museum staff members say it doesn't appear the fascinating collection of arrowheads, hand tools and other artifacts have been much examined since they were taken from the ground in the 1950s and 60s.

"It's like we're unearthing it all over again," Cook says.

At this point, it's not clear where many of the objects were found. Some are labeled with general locations across Utah — tiny white paper slips read "Cook Cave," and "Promontory Mountain"— but many have no labels at all. The museum's staff members say they have a choice, in times like these, to be frustrated or intrigued. They've chosen to be intrigued.

Cook unveils what appears to be an ancient stone-and-bone scraper. "Molly!" she cries out. "What do you think about this?"

Cannon takes the tool in her hands and leans in, so close her nose nearly touches the shiny bone handle. It's almost glistening in the light and that gives the museum curator pause.

Is the tool real? A replica? Did Peterson or someone else, along the way, cover it with something to preserve it? What is the story here?

"It's hard to piece it back together because we just don't know," Cannon says. "When you take it out of the ground, you're taking a big part of the story away."

But if there's one thing at this museum that seems even more enduring than the artifacts, it's hope — and Cannon notes with a smile that her staff has just learned some of Peterson's journals are archived at Utah State's Merrill Cazier Library.

"Who knows what we might find in there," she says.

Behind her, the museum's bilingual program coordinator, Annie Gamez, is preparing a traveling display of Mayan pottery. At the end of a long table, student Jesse Magliari is delicately labeling a collection of stone tools.

Over here, an exhibit on Chinese railroad workers in North America. Over here, a fledgling display of art and artifacts from Papau New Guinea.

And, over here, an empty exhibit case — just waiting for the next discovery. ■

take a moment to meet our NEW FACULTY

compiled with assistance from Kelsey Schwab, USU journalism student

DANIEL DEVIRGILIO

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Daniel DeVirgilio followed his grandfather and father into the armed services. Now the U.S. Air Force captain is hoping to convey his love of country and service to the next generation of military officers.

"A lot of people think the military is just here to follow orders," DeVirgilio said. "What I tell the cadets is we're not looking for order followers. Officers have to think for themselves and they have to be able to do so quickly in a variety of environments."

An avid hiker, kayaker and ultimate frisbee player. DeVirgilio became nationally known a few years back when he received a cable bill for $16,409,107. "Had I known this I would have bought Showtime," said DeVirgilio, who was then an engineer at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. "Five bucks more for Showtime is a bit much, but heck — $16,409,112. Who cares?"

Parents who want to know how to best support their children in the first years at college will likely be interested in Elizabeth Dorrance Hall's work, which includes researching the role of family support in undergraduate student adjustment.

But Dorrance Hall isn't unilaterally focused on one research interest. The new assistant professor of communication, who earned a Ph.D. from Purdue University, said the diversity of the Department of Languages, Philosophy and Communication Studies "is attractive and intellectually rewarding."

"I enjoy talking to my colleagues, studying and teaching subjects so far from my own, yet related in important ways," she said.

ELIZABETH DORRANCE HALL

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FELIPE VALENCIA

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Felipe Valencia's current book project, tentatively titled *The Melancholy Void: Lyric and Poetics in Age of Góngora*, proposes a new interpretation of a period of great crisis and change in Hispanic poetry. Roughly situated between 1580 and 1620, Valencia has written, "this period was marked by daring new poetic languages and heated controversies," and is best exemplified by the work and impact of Luis de Góngora, a Spanish Baroque lyric poet.

Valencia earned a Ph.D. from Brown University in Hispanic studies and is now an assistant professor of Spanish.

"Communication has the power to help us make sense of our lives, create new realities and even improve our health," said Kristina Scharp, a new assistant professor of communication studies. "It's such a benefit to be able to discuss these ideas with others who have a passion for language and a genuine desire to make a difference in student lives."

Scharp, who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa, says the faculty at USU makes being part of the department "a great experience."

KRISTINA SCHARP

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It's no secret that we house elite scholars but do you know about our

ultimate frisbee enthusiasts,

runners,

dreamers,

table tennis champs,

Air Force engineers,

dog walkers,

authors

and **bikers?**

No? Here's your chance.

TIMOTHY SHUCK
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Timothy Shuck is giving back.

The new associate professor of aerospace studies, who holds a master's degree in systems engineering from the Air Force Institute of Technology, is thrilled to be back on the campus where he earned his bachelor's degree before becoming a military officer.

"I have helped build the case for sanctions that was successfully presented at the United Nations, built a next generation anti-active shooter system and outperformed peers with degrees from some of the most well-known universities in the nation," Shuck said. "I came back to teach at USU because I want to give back to a place that gave me the skills to have success I did not dream of having when I showed up as a freshman in Logan."

His message to today's students is a simple five-word question: "How big can you dream?"

JONATHAN BRUNSTEDT
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Jacob Freeman's research interests include the creation and evolution of property rights — a concept that dates back to the days of hunter-gatherers and which humans continue to struggle with in modern times.

Freeman conducts fieldwork in Western North America, including investigations of ancient agricultural sites in Arizona and New Mexico and projects on hunter-gatherer territoriality and social networks in Texas.

He comes to USU from Arizona State University, where he earned a Ph.D. in anthropology in 2014. The new assistant professor of anthropology and archaeology also enjoys hiking, sports, reading and film.

JOSHUA RYAN
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If you're looking for a no-holds-barred opinion on electoral politics, Congress, political agenda formation — or Major League Baseball — Joshua Ryan might be your guy.

Ryan, who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Colorado Boulder, teaches several subjects at Utah State including political science research methods. He still manages to make time for his favorite activities that include fishing, biking, traveling and table tennis. The University of California San Diego alumni tweets about life, politics and his frustrations with the San Diego Padres at @jryan4027.

With interests in photography and traveling, Jonathan Brunstedt has landed exactly where he needs to be.

"Not only are my colleagues in the department highly supportive and the students eager learners," Brunstedt said, "but my office has a spectacular view of the mountains. What more could I ask for?"

Brunstedt received his Ph.D. from the University of Oxford and his areas of research include modern Russian and European history.

JONATHAN BRUNSTEDT
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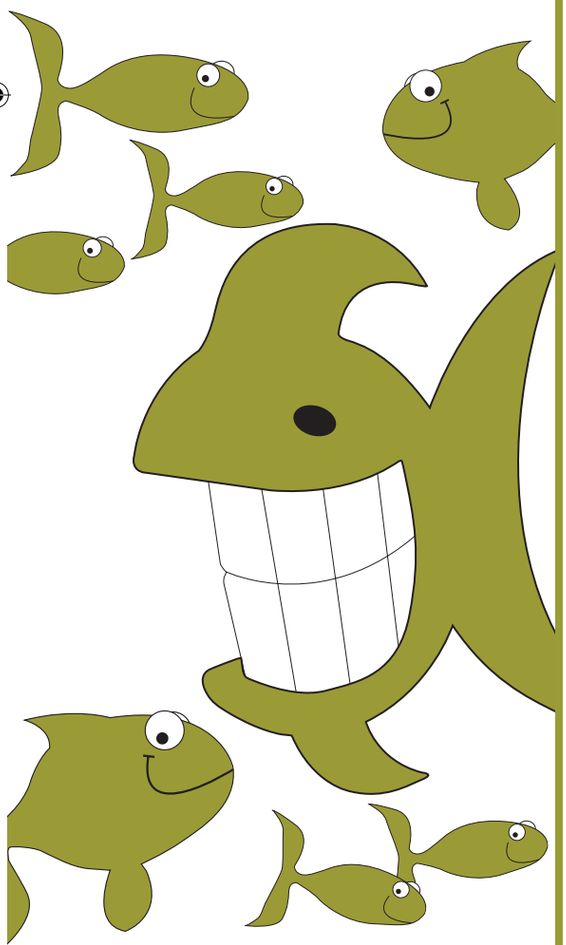
ALUMNI
SPOTLIGHT

a long way from Peoa

by Matthew D. LaPlante

Dr. Todd Jorgenson's educational path was unusual – and that, he says, is why he's seen so much success



Todd Jorgenson has just returned from touring the new dental clinic at the Talking Stick Resort Arena in downtown Phoenix and he's having trouble containing his enthusiasm.

"There's this cool track that runs through the office," he says, almost breathless with excitement. "And the offices are glass, so you can see what all the dentists and surgeons are doing — like we're on display."

The official periodontist for the National Basketball Association's Phoenix Suns franchise is just getting started. "There's an aquarium running through the whole thing — an aquarium! — and the whole roof is glass!"

Jorgenson has opened several restorative dental surgery centers in Arizona since he first arrived in the Valley of the Sun in 2003. He's got another in Texas. But this one — part of a medical center that will serve NBA players, staff, families and downtowners in Arizona's largest city — has got his blood pumping.

This is a long way from Peoa, the tiny mink farming town in Utah's Summit County where Jorgenson grew up on a small farm with five siblings and "who knows how many cows, horses, pigs, deer, elk, bobcats and wolves."

Jorgenson's not shy about talking about his success. The Utah State University graduate is even willing to flaunt it, a bit, when there's a reason. When he returned to Logan in April to give a guest lecture about "getting ahead," for instance, he surprised a few fortunate students with parting gifts they won't soon forget.

"Could you use an iPad Mini?" he asked the first person who answered one of his questions.

"Um...yes?" the student responded.

"Here you go," Jorgenson said, handing the student a new tablet computer — one of about a half dozen he gave out that day.

A bit over the top? Consider this: The people Jorgenson was addressing were mostly students in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. And almost all of them have heard — again and again — that their education, as one state legislator put it a few years back, amounts to "a degree to nowhere," especially when it comes to making money.

Those in the humanities often counter these notions by arguing that they're not as worried about making a difference in their pocketbooks as they are about making a difference in the world. But Jorgenson — a 1996 CHaSS graduate with an undergraduate degree in philosophy — stands as stark proof that it doesn't need to be an either-or proposition.

Foremost, Jorgenson says, the iPads were intended to get the students' attention — "I've been a college student on a Friday afternoon," he says — but he also wanted to instill in them some confidence that the liberal arts education they're getting at Utah State can lead absolutely "anywhere"— and even to money, if that's what they want.

"A career can be extremely fulfilling, fun, mostly enjoyable, expansive and provide for your needs very well — and even help out many other people," he says. Jorgenson has been able to do that, too — among other volunteer work, he provides free dental care and implant surgery to victims of domestic violence as part of the non-profit Give Back a Smile and offers free dental care to those who cannot afford it through a group called Dentistry from the Heart.

"They come around 4 a.m., get in a line and there are about five of us in a clinic and we see patients on a first-come-first-serve basis," Jorgenson says. "We work all day until our hands are ready to fall off."

C.J. Metz, a Mesa dentist who hosts the free dental care events, calls Jorgenson "brilliant."

"He worked on my own mother, my father and my sister," Metz says.

But Jorgenson says his skills as a dental implant specialist aren't what sets him apart.

"I am pretty good at my job — obviously the work has to be good or I wouldn't have lasted long," he says. "But there are a lot of people out there who are every bit as good as I am."

So why does his name keep winding up on all of Arizona's "top dentist" lists? Why all the new offices? And how does someone get put on an NBA team's medical roster?

Jorgenson says it all traces back to his days as an undergraduate at Utah State. Even then he was pretty sure he'd eventually attend some sort of medical school program, but when it came time to choose a major, he says, he fell in love with the college's tight-knit band of philosophers. Professors like Richard Sherlock and Kent Robson, he says, pushed him to consider ethics, politics, religion and the very meaning of life in ways he wouldn't have if he'd focused on biology — the go-to undergraduate degree for many pursuing a future career in medicine.

It was during his time in the department's small discussion-based classes and one-on-one meetings with his professors, Jorgenson says, that he developed the skills that are the real secret to his success.

"It's all about connecting with people," he says. "When you understand that a big part of this business is referrals from other docs, it's clear why that's important."

Jorgenson says he can talk about the latest journal articles with the best of them, "but that's really not what most people want to talk about." Instead, he says, they want to talk about sports, politics, religion, cars — and yes, even philosophy.

"I can sit down and talk about anything with anyone," he says. "I think that's been the real difference maker."

Metz agrees.

"When I watch him work with people, I honestly get a bit envious of his communication skills," Metz says.

It's not unusual for specialists like Jorgenson to approach dentists like Metz to try to build relationships. Most of the time, Metz says, those relationships are based on mutual interest and backgrounds in dentistry.

Those people might be good dentists and great human beings, Metz says, "but going to lunch can be painful." When he and Jorgenson meet up, though, "we have to try to remember to talk about dentistry."

Steve Frost, an east Phoenix endodontist, says Jorgenson truly is a master of communication.

"It really is apparent from the minute you meet Todd that no matter what the subject is and no matter who you are, he can be on your level in a matter of seconds," Frost says. "Just like that, he can turn you into his biggest fan and instantly it feels like he's your biggest fan, too. That's a real talent he has—the ability to relate to people and understand them, not just to do dental implants."

Of course a periodontist can't be a periodontist without a medical education — Jorgenson got his at Oregon Health Sciences University and the Oklahoma University Health Science Center. But Jorgenson says that when he walked into a bank, before even graduating from his periodontics program and asked for a million dollars to build a new dental surgery center in Arizona, it wasn't his medical education that made the deal.

"That was all about confidence," Jorgenson says. "And I've got to say that definitely came from my relationships with my philosophy professors."

Jorgenson says his undergraduate science classes were held in lecture halls with hundreds of other students.

"You didn't get to know your professors; sometimes you didn't even get to meet them, just the TAs," he says. "In philosophy there was this open-door policy where you could walk in and talk to these amazing people, these really brilliant people like Dr. Sherlock and Dr. Robson. These are legitimate, big-time, super smart guys. But I'd walk in, as a 20-year-old kid and be treated with respect. That builds a kid's confidence pretty fast."

Still relatively young among his professional colleagues, Jorgenson says he's not sure where his practice will take him next.

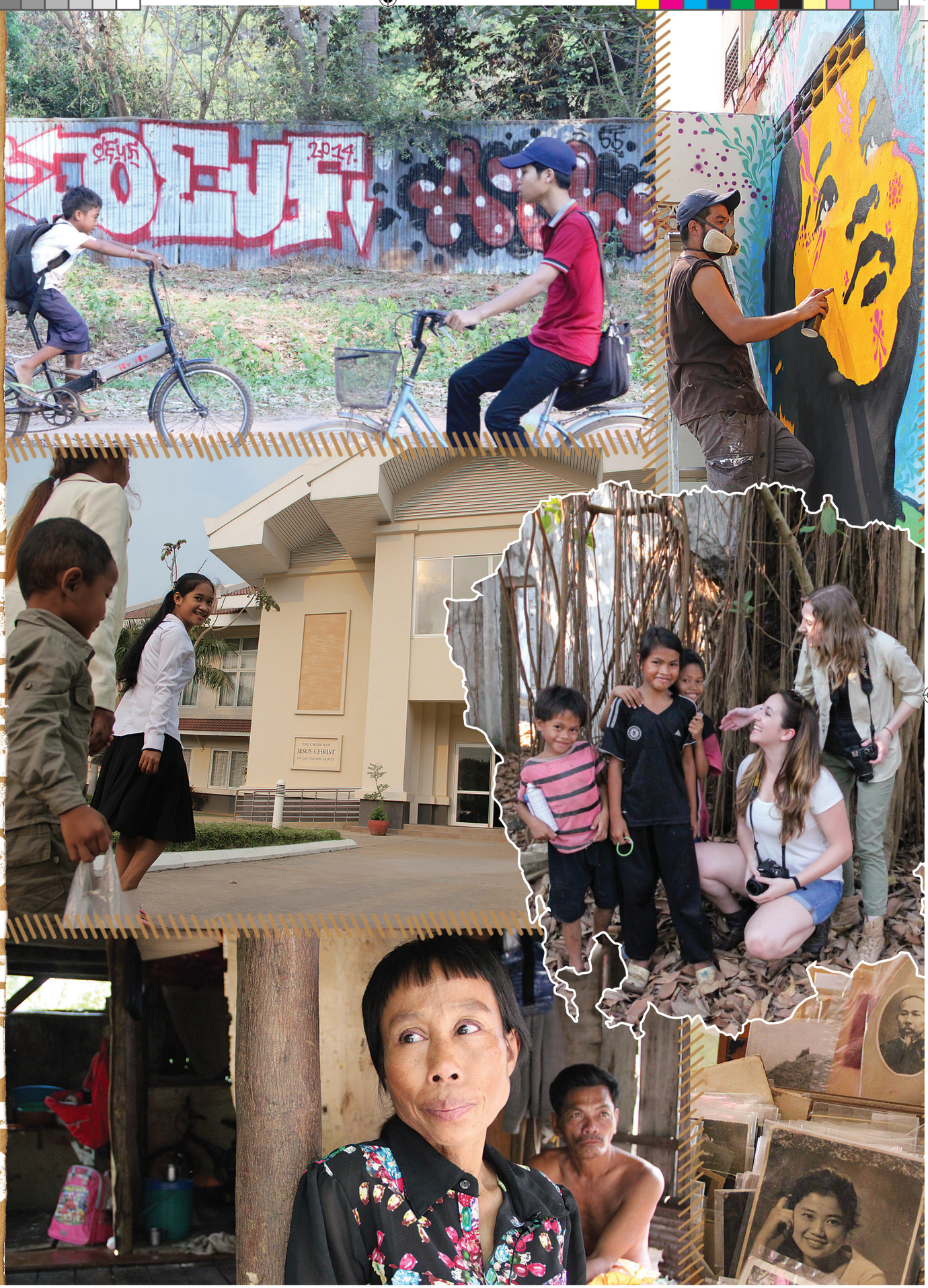
What he does know is that the story of his success so far took an important turn at Utah State University.

"I'm a fan of a broad spectrum education and of course that education needs science, too," he says — and once again it's clear that he's having a hard time suppressing his excitement. "But I can't imagine going through life without the opportunities I had to think about things in a different way. That's huge. It's just huge." ■

Dr. Todd Jorgenson

STORYSEEKERS

in the Khmer kingdom



In a place where the most famous works of art are centuries and even millennia old, we darted across Phnom Penh with street artists who are fighting to change the very notion of personal expression in Cambodia.

In a country grieving one of the worst genocides in history, we came to understand how newly converted Mormons balance religious obligations to engage in family history research with tremendously painful personal pasts.

In a heavily impoverished nation, we came to commune with the poorest of the poor — a community of people whose lives and futures depend on what they can scavenge from the Phnom Penh city dump.

And in a place with one of the lowest literacy rates in all of Asia, we came to understand how it could be that an old-fashioned newspaper war is brewing in not one but several languages.

We didn't spend much time in museums. We didn't go on any tours. Yes, of course, we saw Angkor Wat — who could not? — but that's not what we'll remember most about our trip to Cambodia, last spring.

Rather, we'll remember being with a young street artist as he watched one of his heroes transform the side of a building. We'll remember watching how a man's face lit up when he revealed the connection he was making to his departed father through genealogy.

We'll remember sitting on the steps of a one-room hut on the edge of the city dump as a woman recalled what brought her to live there — and why she knew she'd never leave. We'll remember traveling in a "tuk-tuk" moto-taxi, long past midnight, to a quiet corner of the city to watch the men and women who work, all night long, printing, assembling and delivering one of the city's many daily papers.

We'll remember loading up backpacks, sticking notepads in our back pockets, slinging old cameras over our shoulders and seeking to understand Cambodia in a very different way. For we were not there as tourists, but as witnesses. We traveled not as sightseers, but as storyseekers.

And we learned that, by honing our focus, we saw more than we could have ever imagined possible.

Journalism students Breana Bonner, Jeffrey Dahdah and Sarah Winder traveled with assistant professor Matthew D. LaPlante to Cambodia for an experiential learning seminar on international reporting.

THE LONG MARCH FORWARD

by Kristen Munson

"Selma, Alabama, became a shining moment in the conscience of man. If the worst in American life lurked in its dark streets, the best of American instincts arose passionately from across the nation to overcome it."

- Martin Luther King Jr.

"We all came back changed people."

The foot soldiers of the revolution fought cattle prods and police batons with open palms and prayer. Scores of unarmed men and women had their faces sprayed with tear gas and their bodies broken for what they believed. Their target, Montgomery, Alabama, was a 54-mile walk from Selma, a city carefully selected because the route required marching into some of the darkest corners of the South, where a person could be gunned down in broad daylight for encouraging another to exercise his most basic of freedoms — the right to vote.

The masterminds of the civil rights movement are often remembered as orators of peace. Their stories repeated in classrooms without mention of cracked skulls or bloodstained cement. But do we truly honor the movement if we fail to appreciate the sacrifices that propelled it forward? For Jason Gilmore, assistant professor of communication studies at Utah State, those stories need course correction.

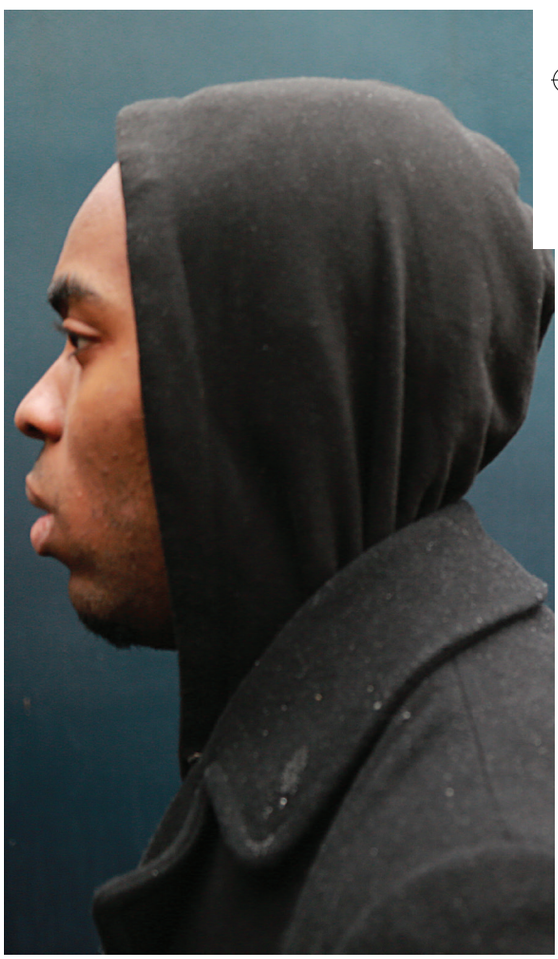
"Students know there were some marches and some speeches given and that one lady was stern enough to stand up for her rights," he says. "What they are not told about is that this came in the face of threat and violence and death. That these people, even though they had crosses burned on their doorstep, even though they were intimidated, had their jobs taken away from them if they registered to vote, these were people who went to all these lengths to fight for their rights. Those are the parts that we miss in the education scenario."

Gilmore knows because he missed that side of history himself. Two summers ago after completing his doctorate at the University of Washington he realized students need an updated syllabus on the civil rights movement. They need one that entails talking with people who were there.

The idea was born out of a road trip with his dissertation adviser and two classmates. Their plan involved meeting with their professor's former advisees and visiting some of the nation's ballparks. They would visit Selma, Alabama, along the way. But everything changed the night they drove into Birmingham.

"This is where [police] turned fire hoses on children marchers," Gilmore says. "This is where they sicced dogs on the children marchers. This is where the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist church was."

At 11 p.m. they visited Kelly Ingram Park, a memorial that aims to capture that savagery. Statues of protesters cowering from fire hoses. Visitors pass through a metal walkway where snarling dogs are



"The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different." - Lyndon B. Johnson

poised to bite. They were standing on sacred ground.

"It just floored us how we were four academics — intelligent, well-rounded, invested in American history — and how little we knew," Gilmore says. "Because the classic [narrative] is Rosa Parks sat down and King stood up and everything was hunky dory. But decades of serious work was done in the face of violence and overt racism that came in the form, not only of people in society, but in the system itself, violently treating these people for wanting their rights."

That late night visit changed the course of the trip. The next morning they traveled into Selma where Martin Luther King Jr. led 25,000 nonviolent demonstrators across the Edmund Pettus Bridge en route to Montgomery to petition Gov. George Wallace for voting rights. The scholars began asking how people remembered the civil rights movement. They devised a new trip itinerary that scrapped baseball games for historic stops.

From Selma, the scholars visited Little Rock to see where the "Little Rock Nine" first integrated the school district under the protection of the 101st Airborne Division. They traveled to Philadelphia, Mississippi, where three civil rights workers were shot and killed in 1964. Everywhere they stopped they made contact with locals.

"The power of this was we were talking with people," Gilmore says. "We weren't just going to monuments. We were going into people's stores and asking, do you have any connection to this?"

And people spoke up. They shared how their fathers sat on the front porch with a shotgun in case the Ku Klux Klan came.

"We all came back changed people," Gilmore says. "You can tell someone about this, but to take them there and to have them engage with the people, is a really powerful thing."

Afterward the group knew this was an experience they needed to take on the road. Under the direction of Professor David Domke — Gilmore's adviser at the University of Washington — the scholars began organizing multi-generational, multi-racial pilgrimages to the South. Some stops included spots where original freedom riders — people who rode together on buses, waiting to be arrested, or worse, for sitting next to a person of different skin color — were met with violence over the very idea.

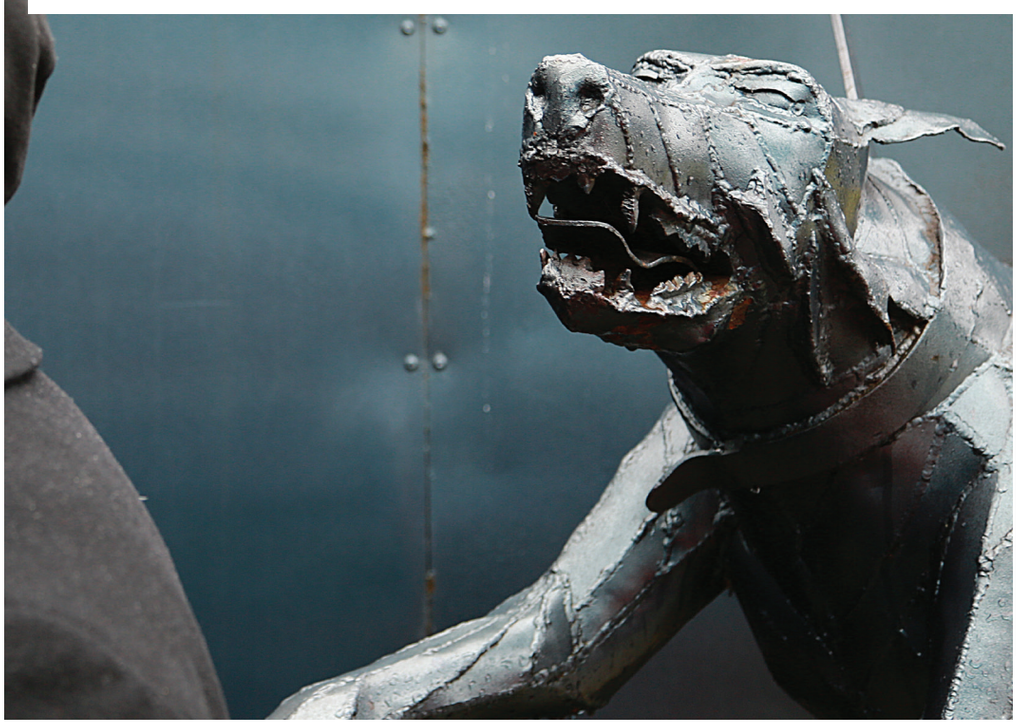
In 2014, when Gilmore was a first-year professor at USU, he was determined to bring students with him to Selma for the 50th anniversary celebration of the historic march. Gilmore studies human difference and national identity discourse and teaches courses in intercultural and global communications. He tries to equip his students with the skills to navigate cultural and racial barriers.

"Issues of human difference are tricky," he says. "Race is a taboo topic because a lot of people don't have the tools to talk intelligently and thoughtfully about it so a lot of people don't talk about it."

Gilmore wants students to be able to talk about difficult things. He wants them to have the cultural sensitivity needed to communicate effectively with people who don't share the same background. So do educators at USU. The College of Humanities and Social Sciences and Department of Languages, Philosophy and Global Communication established a scholarship to help defray the cost for students to attend the pilgrimage that will be funded through 2018.

The first two scholarships were awarded to Miranda Vance,'15, and Adrian Bustamante,'16, who packed their bags in early March for a nine day sojourn to Selma with Gilmore and 49 other travelers from the University of Washington and Bellevue College. The group called themselves "52 Strong," however, the experience began long before anyone stepped foot on the bus.

The 52 Strong engaged in a series of bonding exercises in the months leading up to the trip. For the USU cohort, that meant road tripping to Seattle to build



Jason Gilmore and civil rights activist, **Bob Zellner**, near Edmund Pettus Bridge

Adrian Bustamante

cohesion with the rest of the group. The idea was that to be able to go deep with the material on the trip the 52 Strong had to be comfortable with one another.

"If you're going to be a part of this you have to know that this is intense and you have to visit it with a lot of care and respect for others," Gilmore says. "We prepare people for the intensity of this trip."

Bustamante admits he was skeptical that the emotional intensity was being oversold. Once the pilgrimage began, he struggled to find his place. Some members of the 52 Strong expressed feeling guilty about events that happened in the past. Some cried. Bustamante couldn't quite relate.

"At first I kind of felt like it was more of a black and white issue," he says. "I am Hispanic. My family didn't ever have slaves. I understood why I was there, but I felt like I was on the outside. I sort of wondered where do I fit in all of this?"

In a way, he has always felt like he existed on the periphery. Bustamante grew up in Sugar City, Idaho, a tiny town that is more than 90 percent white and majority Mormon. Bustamante is Mexican-American and Catholic. He has been navigating cultural differences his whole life. However, after enrolling in Gilmore's class he found himself arriving early to find a seat. He felt locked in.

As president of USU's Latino Student Union and a member of the Psi Sigma Phi — the first fraternity chartered to celebrate multiculturalism — a lot of Bustamante's work involves education and outreach. That means reaching out to those who are different from him and trying to include them. It means acknowledging and respecting differences. Bustamante applied for one of the slots on the civil rights pilgrimage to see these principles in action. Everything came together for him in Selma.

"We had the opportunity to march as they did across the bridge. It wasn't just on the sidewalk. They shut the bridge down," Bustamante said. "You would get to the middle of the bridge and look back and see all these people back to Main Street. And then you'd look forward and see all these people in front of you."

The 1965 march from Selma was not a one-day affair. It was part of a mass demonstration organized over the course of two years by groups such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Dallas County Voters League to register black voters in the South. The voter drive was launched in the wake of the infamous 16th Street Baptist Church bombing that killed four choirgirls. Efforts were concentrated in Selma because black registration was low due to discriminatory practices and because confrontations by police were expected. Organizers knew the entire world would be watching.

"The reason the civil rights movement was so successful in the 1960s was the advent of mass communication technologies," Gilmore says. "People had heard about black-and-white-only drinking fountains for years. People knew about lynchings in the South. But when they saw those pictures in their living room, that was when they started to not be able to live with it."

On March 7, unarmed demonstrators planned to march from Selma to Montgomery to protest the killing of Jimmie Lee Jackson, a church deacon shot by state police while protecting his mother from an officer's night stick weeks earlier. As the protesters crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge they were met by state troopers and deputized members of the Ku Klux Klan. Activists including John Lewis and Amelia Boynton were bludgeoned on the bridge. Images of "Bloody Sunday" were published in newspapers around the world. Photos of Boynton's unconscious body brought the civil rights movement into the homes of everyday Americans. Evidence of the violence had gone global.

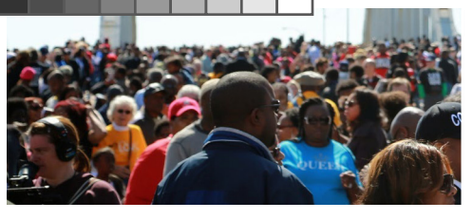
Dr. King issued a call to action by religious leaders asking them to join him in Selma for a "peaceful, nonviolent march for freedom." Hundreds of clergymen of all faiths answered. Two days later Dr. King led the marchers to the scene. Troopers once again met them on the bridge. The standoff ended in a prayer before the demonstrators retreated. A third attempt was planned and President Lyndon Johnson sent federal troops to ensure the safety of demonstrators on their way to Montgomery. Johnson also sent voting rights legislation to Congress for consideration.

On March 21, the marchers departed from Selma and made it safely across the bridge. They walked shoulder to shoulder. Blacks walked. Whites walked. Christians walked. Jews walked. Together they walked carrying American flags and singing various hymns.

> "We had **the opportunity to march** as they did **across the bridge**."

Fifty years later Bustamante stood in Selma as tens of thousands waited to hear President Barack Obama speak. The Edmund Pettus Bridge is named for a former Alabama senator, Confederate general and Grand Dragon of the Alabama KKK. Bustamante says it serves as a reminder of the things we need to reckon

Miranda Vance, Adrian Bustamante and **Jason Gilmore** (left to right)



with in our nation's history.

"You don't have to be proud of everything that has happened in the United States — we just have to own it," he says. "You need to remind yourself of those things so they don't happen again."

One group of activists at the celebration caught Bustamante's attention. Standing amidst the crowd was Dolores Huerta, the famous labor leader who founded the National Farm Workers Association with César Chávez. At 84 she was still making noise. Bustamante met her and purchased a T-shirt and sign to carry that reminded him of rallies he had participated in back in Idaho. That afternoon Bustamante crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge carrying a sign reading: Keep families together. He noticed people giving supportive thumbs up. Bustamante realized he did belong on the bridge.

"I still have that sign," he says.

Throughout the trip the USU cohort contributed dispatches to Utah Public Radio. They interviewed some early civil rights activists including Bob Zellner, who joined SNCC as a college student. He rode on the bus with the 52 Strong and shared his involvement with the movement.

"Several of us went to meet with Dr. King and as a result of that we were asked to leave school and we were threatened with arrest by the police," he told them.

Zellner explained that standing up for what was right meant sometimes feeling as though you were part of the moral minority. And it doesn't come free. He recalled visiting some of the injured freedom riders in the hospital. Some said their freedom ride was over.

"Those freedom riders who were bruised and battered and broken, said, 'Oh no, as soon as we can we'll get back on the bus,'" Zellner said. "We said, 'If they treat you like that in Alabama, when you get to Mississippi they are going to kill you.' And they said 'We know. We've written our wills.' So that was our example. And so what I ask young people today, what are you willing to take a risk for? Is there anything that you are willing to die for? And whatever that is, that's going to be your passion."

When Gilmore was 9, his family moved to Guadalajara, Mexico from the United States. He did not want to go. Gilmore's father tried soothing him with these words: "You do not understand it right now and I am not expecting you to, but over time, you are going to really understand this is a gift I'm giving you."

Over time, Gilmore did. Learning Spanish and having Mexican friends gave him rich life experiences, but also forced him to recognize the relative power he has in the world simply by owning a U.S. passport. As a teenager he realized at any time he could just pack a bag and leave. His friends didn't have the same option.

"I think one of the things that is most powerful for me is that I have a choice to care about this stuff or not," he says. "I'm white. I'm male. I'm heterosexual. I've got everything in place just to ride it on out. But that's the thing. Some people don't. And that's what moves me. Any time I get a pang of fear that's what settles back in and why we're doing this work."

Gilmore doesn't expect his students to become social activists after the pilgrimage. He wants them to return affected by the experience and to move through the world with intention and consideration.

"We are educators, not activists," he says. "We are saying now that you have been steeped in this and you've been exposed to this; what does it mean for you? How does this inform who you are as an individual and where you are moving forward?"

For Miranda Vance, the experience underscored her desire to work in a humanitarian capacity.

"Bettering lives was my end goal," she says from her office in Salt Lake City where she serves as an Americorp volunteer with the city's Office of Community Innovation and Refugee Services Office. She works on two special projects addressing issues of assault and sexual violence in refugee women's populations and another that assists refugees who want to open small businesses.

"It's bringing a lot of culture into Salt Lake City, which helps everybody, but it's also a source of gainful employment and creates jobs for a lot of the refugee population," Vance says.

During her senior year at USU she enrolled in Gilmore's class and learned about the opportunity to go on the civil rights pilgrimage to Selma with him and a few dozen strangers from around the country. Her knowledge of the civil rights movement prior to college was limited to the highlight reel.

"It wasn't just the sidewalk. They shut the bridge down."

"I knew who Martin Luther King Jr. was, I did know some of the bigger moments of his life, his religious background and some of his speeches," Vance says. "As far as other civil rights heroes go, of course I knew of Rosa Parks and names like Emmitt Till rang a bell, but I couldn't have told their stories."

When she applied she knew if selected it would require a different type of commitment. The emotional intensity would require growth. The first stop on the pilgrimage that really affected her was

the high school where the Little Rock Nine first integrated the school system — a full three years after the Supreme Court banned segregation.

"I was 20 during the trip," Vance says. "I felt I could relate to people who were my age, people who were willing to sacrifice so much to get an education. These kids were brilliant. And they had goals they knew they couldn't reach with the education they had. I value education so much."

At USU, Vance studied global communication. It combined her love of history, culture, politics and language. In Selma she witnessed as her interests converged in a historic speech by the nation's first black president as he stood beside some of the original demonstrators who made his candidacy possible.

"Selma was clearly a life-changer," Vance says. "There was no denying that feel of community and shared purpose. We got to march next to Amelia Boynton who just recently passed away. To be two feet away from one of the country's heroes … and to be part of that group of 40,000 people to hear the president speak live. I found his speech incredibly empowering and hopeful."

He spoke of the accumulation of history that converged on the bridge a half-century ago — a "clash of wills" vying to change the course of the country. He

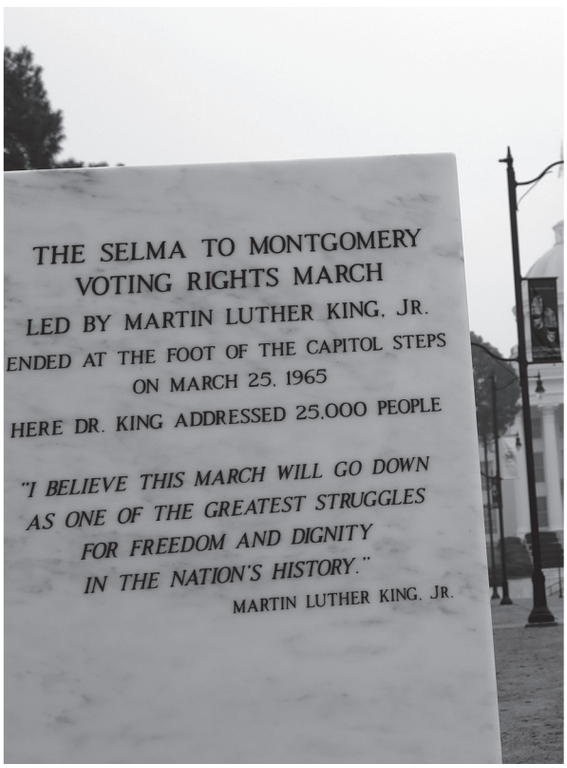
described an America that is a work in progress that requires engagement by its people to continue shaping its future.

"If Selma taught us anything, it's that our work is never done," Obama said. "For everywhere in this country, there are first steps to be taken, there's new ground to cover, there are more bridges to be crossed. And it is you, the young and fearless at heart, the most diverse and educated generation in our history, who the nation is waiting to follow."

Fifty years ago when Dr. King embarked on the 54-mile journey he knew it was never going to be easy. The event marked the country's reckoning with Jim Crow segregation and its racist past. He understood that the movement was never going to end once they reached Montgomery.

"The end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience," he told marchers after they arrived in the state capital. "I know you are asking today, 'How long will it take?' I come to say to you this afternoon however difficult the moment, however frustrating the hour, it will not be long."

Three days before the 50th anniversary of Selma, the U.S. Justice Department issued a report of its investigation into law enforcement practices in Ferguson,



Missouri, after the shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager. The report unveiled discriminatory practices and unconstitutional policing practices that undermined the trust of its citizens.

Three months after the anniversary, a 21-year-old white supremacist sat down with members of the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston for Bible study. That night he killed nine parishioners. The man told police his intent was to incite a race war. The long march to freedom continues.

After the pilgrimage, Vance and Bustamante participated in a public panel and many class visits at USU to discuss the experience. Vance feels she is more knowledgeable about civil rights and feels she can confidently engage in conversation about topics like race relations. It prepared her to work with refugee populations in Salt Lake City where most are people of color struggling to make it as a minority in the United States, she says.

"It just put me in a perfect frame of mind to be more compassionate," Vance says. "If I took one big thing away it is how all these social issues we are grappling with today — gender issues, race, education opportunity, gay rights — are all interrelated. I learned the importance of commonality and working together."

She sees how easy it is to divide our collective capacity by focusing

on our own pet interests even as it undermines the work of others.

"If we take our passions and work hard without taking away from what others are doing, we could get a lot more done," Vance says. "As hokey and cheesy as it might sound, it's important to really remember this idea of humanity. We're all people. We're trying as best we can."

DISPATCHES from the HEADS

by Parker Atkinson

HISTORY DEPARTMENT GETS OUT IN THE FIELD

Students in the History department keep getting more options, both inside the classroom and out.

"We began offering student field trips as a way to engage our history majors and minors with their local heritage," said Tammy Proctor, the department head.

Proctor said that students traveled to the Uintah Basin in the spring and learned about dinosaurs, mountain men and Native American rock art. Visiting such areas is a new experience for many.

"In spring, we are planning a trip to Blanding and Monument Valley. The department hopes that it will enrich their understanding of this region's history," Proctor said.

SSWA DEPT. CREATES EXCITING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

There's never been a better time to be a student in the Sociology, Social Work and Anthropology department at USU.

"We have more research providing more opportunities for students to go out in the field and engage in archaeological field work than we've ever had before," said Leon Anderson, the department head.

Anderson attributed this success to faculty members going out, securing grants and building relationships with groups like the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service.

"All of that just means more opportunities for students to get out and actually do the hands-on work," Anderson said.

JOURNALISM STUDENTS GET MORE OPTIONS

The Journalism and Communication department is offering new opportunities for its students by giving them more choices in the classes they take.

"Beginning this spring, we have raised the cap for majors to allow students in the JCOM program to take more electives as part of their major," said interim-department head Tammy Proctor.

Proctor said the department is excited about the change because students can now experiment with new courses and supplement their major tracks with additional internships, experiential courses and upper-division electives.

LPCS: RENAISSANCE MEN AND WOMEN OF USU

There are eight different majors and 16 minors in the Language, Philosophy and Communication Studies department, which has seen new growth; this semester five new faculty members have been hired.

"We really are quite an eclectic, diverse department," said Bradford Hall, the department head.

Hall said that there are many different projects currently underway. Students are helping local schools with dual-immersion language programs and teaching conflict resolution tactics. Students will tour key civil rights areas in the South. Publishing opportunities exist for students in several languages.

"Each area is doing lots of very interesting things," Hall said.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT WRITING INTO THE FUTURE

The English department recently opened a new writing lab dedicated to helping students with science writing and is currently planning to remodel the writing center in the library to make it more accessible.

"The department is very media-savvy with the tech writers and also the folklore students and faculty that run the digital folklore project where we're tracking digital trends," said Jeannie Thomas, the department head.

Thomas said tech writing is a growing trend and that a new certificate in digital writing is being planned.

"There's lots of current, cutting-edge stuff going on in this department," Thomas said.

POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT SEES SURGE IN NEW STUDENTS

The Political Science department is growing; this semester there are 49 new majors and the department is currently searching for two new faculty members to fill new positions in the field of international relations.

"When you look at the evaluations and the comments students are giving their teachers, there's been a significant change in the way we're teaching classes," said Anthony Peacock, the department head.

Peacock attributed the recent growth to newer, younger faculty as well as $45,000 in Merrill scholarships that have been awarded to newly declared majors in the past year.

AEROSPACE STUDIES SEES BOOST IN RECRUITS

The Aerospace Studies department has 100 percent job placement for all of its graduates — who become commissioned officers in the Air Force upon graduation. This year the department has 100 cadets, up from last year's 74.

"The program has a pretty good reputation; I think the students absolutely enjoy it," said Alex Dubovik, the department head.

Dubovik attributed the recent growth mainly to word of mouth, as well as the close-knit student organization surrounding the department.

"We're growing leaders," Dubovik said. "We're not only training military officers; these are young people who are going to be leaders of our nation."

For Heather Mason, the path to changing the world wasn't always predictable

FIRE STARTER

by Matthew D. LaPlante

Heather Mason knew what she was trying to say, but the words weren't coming out right.

They weren't coming out at all.

She slurred and grunted. She tried to call out for help, but couldn't manage a coherent syllable. Her arms went numb.

At the emergency room, someone finally told her what Mason herself had deduced that day in November of 2014.

"You're having a stroke," the medic said.

She was 41 years old. She was fit and healthy. She was at the top of her career. She was changing the world.

"This can't be happening," she thought. "Not now."

For two years as a student in the journalism department at USU and two more after her graduation in 1996, Mason had an insider's view of the Sundance Film Festival as a press liaison.

But Mason, who aspired to be a movie producer, wasn't content with a view looking in. She didn't want to watch the deals being made — she wanted to make them — so she parlayed her time at Sundance into a gig at the Cannes Film Festival, onward to Fox, where she read and recommended scripts, then back again to Park City where, at the height of the dot com era, she presided over the marriage of Sundance and Silicon Valley in an "interactive lounge" for ShowBizData.com.

That's about the time she realized: she wasn't producing movies, but she was producing.

Far more than just an education in the film business, Mason's time at Sundance, Cannes and Fox — and later, as an event manager for Charles Schwab — had given her experience in bringing together the people, places and logistics necessary to pull-off high-profile, high-stakes events.

"I wasn't producing movies, I was producing events," Mason says, "and those things were similar in a lot of ways — and in all of the ways that mattered to me."

The Idaho Falls native was directing big-money productions. She was the go-to person in high-stress situations and the place where the buck stopped.

In 2005, Mason founded A Caspian Production — the name was an homage to the titular character in the second published book of C.S. Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia series and a nod to the idea of striking out on one's own, as Prince Caspian must do in that novel. Mason committed Caspian to producing events for organizations that were making a positive difference in the world.

Over the past decade, Mason has produced the Skoll World Forum, an annual international event promoting social entrepreneurship; the Futures Without Violence conference, a gathering of practitioners, policy makers and academics dedicated to ending gender violence; and the Not for Sale conference, dedicated to ending human trafficking.

"I was working every night, every weekend, traveling like a maniac. I thought, 'if I'm going to work this hard, I might as well do it for people who are really changing the world,'" she recalls. "I think I've always had a keen sense of my own mortality… you know, I feel like our time is limited and you've got to make it count. It really doesn't matter if you leave with all the toys."

She pauses.

"The shoes, though — maybe that's a different story," she laughs. "The shoes might actually matter."

Mason could have bought a lot of shoes with what she's made at Caspian. Instead, she decided to do something no one had done before.

Every year, about 1,000 of the world's most influential social entrepreneurs gather at the University of Oxford for the Skoll forum, where they debate, discuss and deal-make with an eye toward using business approaches to solve the globe's most pressing problems.

The speakers at the most recent forum included Virgin Group founder Richard Branson and Nobel Peace Prize winners Malala Yousafzai and Desmond Tutu. As always, the former president of eBay, forum founder Jeff Skoll, was there.

Mason says it's hard — maybe impossible — to be surrounded by so many powerful and passionate people without feeling driven to try to change the world.

"Jeff Skoll is all about using what you have and the skills you have to do further good in the world," Mason says. "When I listened to him and others, I started asking 'what can I do in the world?'"

Ever since high school, Mason says, she has been aware that her success in life was in large part a matter of luck. The right mentors came along at the right time. They drew an introverted young girl out of her shell. They told her she was a leader.

Mason did not understand why mentorship needed to be contingent on happenstance.

There are conferences for just about everything in the world. But when Mason looked around, she saw that no one had ever created an event where a girl could turn her head in any direction and find inspiration in the form of women who were doing amazing things.

That's the spark that lit SUREFIRE. The conference, which debuted in 2013 in Santa Monica, California, welcomed 200 girls from more than 45 high schools, along with dozens of speakers and nonprofit organizations, to what Mason describes as "a buffet platter of opportunities" to teach, inspire, mentor, provide life advice and offer openings for service and exploration.

There were sessions on everything from relationships to engineering to how to be "red-carpet ready." Vitally, Mason said, it needed to be a place where a girl could ask any question — and get an honest answer from non-judgemental people.

"Today is a holiday," she told the participants as they arrived. "Today is a holiday from that voice in your head that tells you anything negative about yourself. Today when you hear that voice that tells you to worry about your thighs or your looks or your hair, you're going to take a holiday from listening to it."

In the place of that voice, Mason asked the participants to go out of their way to offer compliments and give them in return.

"It was such a cool thing to walk around all day and hear girls saying to one another, 'you look really pretty,'" she says.

Did that change the world? For Pearl Bham it certainly did.

"I wasn't a very talkative person before," says Bham, who is now 19 and in college. "I wanted to be goofy and fun and confident, but that's not how I was. I was in a shell. At SUREFIRE, everything changed for me. It's not too much to say that Heather changed my life."

Mason had no intention of making money on the conferences, but set up the organization as a for-profit for social good, reflecting what she'd learned from the Skoll conferences about a flexible model that invites investment from others who aren't looking to profit so much as build an organization that can eventually support itself without having to constantly fundraise. Ultimately, Mason believed, the participating organizations and sponsors would see the benefit of hosting — and funding — more conferences like the pilot in Southern California.

Mason nearly cleaned out her savings to put on the first conference, then doubled down on her investment to host the second, which included girls from 65 high schools.

"I kept thinking, 'OK, I just need to prove that this works,' and then people will see that and they'll see the benefit of being involved,'" Mason says. "And the thing is that it did work. It all worked. Everything I'd learned along the way had told me this was going to be huge."

The 2014 conference was barely over when people began to ask when and where the next conference would be held.

And that's when it really struck her: There wouldn't be one.

SUREFIRE hadn't caught fire. Not in the way Mason had expected, at least. The leaders of organizations that participated all said they loved the opportunity to connect with young girls in the way they had in Santa Monica.

Many said they would love to be involved in other cities where their organizations were working, as well. But none of them stood up to offer financial support.

"It was crushing," she says.

Kate Howmann, who worked with Mason on the 2014 conference, said it was hard to watch her friend and mentor deal with the failure to find steady financial backing.

"She was so passionate about it," Howmann said. "She had this unshakable faith… you think that will be enough and it was just so hard to see someone so strong be let down so much."


Heather Mason

It was just a few weeks after the 2014 conference that Mason found herself lying, quiet and afraid, in a hospital room, at the end of the most terrifying day of her life.

"The whole time, I'd been just completely out of my mind frightened," she said. "All I could think about was, 'Is this my new life? Will I not ever again be able to talk?' I'd always thought about mortality, but I'd never thought about *this*."

She tried to calm herself and adjust to her surroundings and noticed that there was a woman sharing her room.

"Without even thinking about it, I just said, 'hello' and then it was like 'oh! Hello! Hello! I can say hello! My mouth is moving and I can say hello!' And my hands — my hands were moving!"

Doctors told Mason that she had suffered a complex migraine — the symptoms of which can include weakness, loss of vision and difficulty speaking, sometimes to the point of mimicking a stroke. They suspected stress had played a role.

She was soon back to work, but with a different perspective on her life and a different outlook on a career that is frequently listed as one of the world's most stressful.

"I'd done the latest SUREFIRE at the tail end of a marathon of events and I was exhausted and worn out," Mason says. "Most of the clients I have are really amazing and we're doing amazing things together, but I've had some difficult ones, too. And my life has a lot less room for that, now. These days, I think to myself, 'am I going to let this put me in the hospital?' and the answer is no."

It's still difficult for her to talk about SUREFIRE. But as time has passed, Mason says, the recollection of the impact she was able to have on the lives of young women like Pearl is overtaking her sense of disappointment that the model she chose didn't work out. And slowly, she says, she's coming to see what happened to SUREFIRE wasn't a failure, but rather an opportunity to re-ignite the concept in a different way.

She is now at work re-launching SUREFIRE as a non-profit organization. That, she knows, will mean endless fundraising. But if what she saw in 2013 and 2014 can be repeated again in the future — if it changes just one more life — it will be worth it.

"I think life is a constant fight between seeing opportunities and managing expectations," she says.

But she still expects a lot. Of life. Of herself. Of the girls still out there who haven't caught the fire.

And she has a lot left to say about all of that. ■

"I hope what surfaces from this is people understand the complexity of life in a much simpler time." - Robert McPherson

LIFE IN A CORNER

TELLING UTAH'S HISTORY THROUGH PERSONAL STORIES

Constructing a community from the ground up isn't easy. From miners to midwives, every settler in the Four Corners area of Utah faced struggles that required hard work, determination and a special type of know-how to overcome.

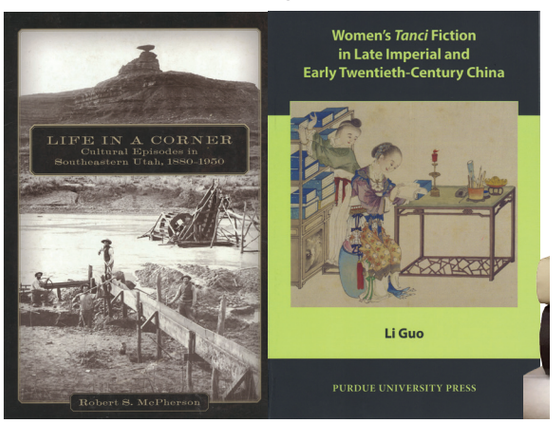
Robert McPherson, a history professor at the Utah State University-Eastern Blanding Campus and the leading historian for the southeastern region of Utah, gathered personal stories illustrating the hardships of that time period from archives and oral history. He presented the stories in his new book, *Life in a Corner: Cultural Episodes in Southeastern Utah, 1880–1950*. Together, the stories create a set of cultural scenes and insights that showcase the individual side of history.

"We often don't have a clear understanding of what life was like back then," McPherson said. "How do you do all the jobs of being a cowboy without a pickup truck? It's that different kind of perspective that's so interesting to me."

In combined efforts with several of his students, McPherson carefully investigated stories such as the erecting of a Latter-day Saints tabernacle with next to no building supplies and a trapper's ingenious efforts of capturing a coyote using a buried alarm clock.

"Working with students and watching the topics and themes surface together from our hard work was really rewarding," he commented about this experience.

Life in a Corner presents an enlightened viewpoint of an important time in Utah's history and showcases a variety of remarkable narratives. - Shelby Ruud



on the BOOKSHELF

compiled by Utah State University journalism student Aubri Liechty

WOMEN'S TANCI FICTION IN LATE IMPERIAL AND EARLY MODERN CHINA

Li Guo — assistant professor of Chinese at Utah State
Purdue University Press, July 2015

Guo wrote her book because she believes the Tanci genre deserves to be well-known. "This tradition should be celebrated," Guo said.

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF MORMONISM

Philip Barlow — Utah State history professor
Oxford University Press, October 2015

Barlow wanted fresh eyes to create essays for his book. "We didn't at first anticipate getting people who were leading scholars in other fields," Barlow said. "We found opportunity to do that."

GOVERNING BY VIRTUE - LORD BURGHLEY AND THE MANAGEMENT OF ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

Norman Jones — history professor at Utah State
Oxford University Press, October 2015

Jones said his book is closely tied to American political values. "Elizabethans were, after all, the first people to settle in English America," Jones said.

FAME & INFAMY

Frances Titchener —
professor of history and classics at Utah State
Oxford University Press, June 2015

Titchener sought to demonstrate the extent of the influence of Christopher Pelling, Oxford's retiring Regius Professor of Greek. Co-edited by Titchener and two others, the book's 24 chapters — all written by Pelling's former pupils, graduate students and close academic associates — reflect the range of his interests and demonstrate the extent of his influence in spearheading the so-called "literary turn" in the study of ancient historiography.

MODERN ARABIC SOCIOLINGUISTICS

Abdulkafi Albirini —
Arabic associate professor at Utah State
Routledge, August 2015

Albirini hopes many students and scholars of different disciplines will be able to make use of his book *Modern Arabic Sociolinguistics*. "This may eventually lead to better cross-cultural communication and understanding," Albirini said.

CRISIS AND COLLECTION: GERMAN VISUAL MEMORY ARCHIVES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Doris McGonagill —
associate professor of German at Utah State
Königshausen & Neumann, January 2015

McGonagill illustrates the impact of memory in her book. "I aim to demonstrate the complex interrelatedness of history, memory and memorialization," McGonagill said.

VOTERS' VERDICTS

Damon Cann — Utah State professor of political science
University of Virginia Press, July 2015

This book answers how voters are influenced to choose their judges. "We were very interested to learn that even states with non-partisan judicial elections showed very clear patterns of partisan voting," Cann said.

PUTTING THE SUPERNATURAL IN ITS PLACE

Jeannie Thomas — Utah State English department head
University of Utah Press, September 2015

Thomas developed a crush on zombies as she wrote. "I was taken with something I hadn't really thought was so useful being in fact terribly useful—if a bit gory," Thomas said.

let POETRY M•A•T•T•E•R

by Kristen Munson

In Downtown Logan, where artists inhabit
bicycle shops and cafes, tattoo parlors and churches,
where paintings and sculptures and photographs adorn
the sporting goods stores and the old hotels,
line the walls along stairways and narrow aisles
among the coat hangers, above the tables,
along the counters near the checkout stand,
there's a bookstore mentality held-over from the days
when poetry was valued as artwork, as an escape
from the mundane workaday life, when people
would read it everywhere they went, memorize
their favorite verses, recite them over dinner.

Let's keep going there, keep going back to poetry,
forward to more poetry. Let's plaster it on the walls
of the City, compose our lines and stamp them
in cement at every new roundabout, every sidewalk.
Let's write poems to each other about our lives
in the City of Poetry where everyone, no matter who
they are, no matter what age or persuasion, what
family, what job, what form of transportation or
what inclination, will have a say, will know they matter.

Let's let poetry matter, let metaphor replace all
diatribes, all misunderstandings. Let's say it in poetry,
straight from the soul, not from media-feeds, not
from Google or TV or mass email, but out of the heart
where our stories reside, where our memories
and hopes don't fight with each other, where art
for art's sake becomes our priority.

Here in the City of Poetry, let's look to the backyards,
where families come out on a Sunday evening
to watch urban owls rise from blue spruce and juniper,
on silent wings, to go beyond the town and return
before Monday's first white dawning, swept with canyon
air from the forest's scent of summer to the paved
wide streets where our cars and buses take us
to work and to school, where we can think all day
of the stories we'll tell when poetry rolls off our tongues
like water over a spillway, fresh and clear and powerful.

~ Star Coulbrooke

We live in an abbreviated time. Speak in 140 characters or less. Shoot a memo off from 35,000 feet. Every minute, 12 million text messages zip between cell phones around the world. Consider then, what is the value of a poem?

You can't buy groceries with haiku. You can't pay rent in sonnets. Words are free. Star Coulbrooke, the City of Logan's first poet laureate, will be the first to admit that poems are a useless form of currency, but they aren't without worth.

"It's a heart thing," Coulbrooke says from her office at Utah State University. "If you are reading and writing poetry it is not something that pays. It's not something you are obligated to do. It's something people do because something just strikes them in the heart … and it's something that is really deep. And apparently, it's really deep for other people."

Since 2012, as small towns and big cities across the United States climbed out of the economic recession, dozens have carved out space in their municipal buildings — and funding — for poets. Earlier this year, the City of Logan, St. Louis, Missouri, and Vallejo, California, inducted their first poet laureates. As of this printing, there is no known city appointed mathematician. Paul Crumbley, a USU English professor and poetry scholar, suspects the renewed reverence for poetry may represent who we want to become as a society.

"From the beginning of recorded history poets were the ones who told stories and they used rhyme and meter to assist memory and to add elegance and power," he says. "But the stories were important because they gave direction to people and showed them how to imagine futures for themselves. Poets can be like physicians who help cultures by diagnosing their illnesses and prescribing artistic and spiritual cures ... We as humans use the language of poetry to save ourselves and at this moment we may be using poetry to save ourselves from ourselves. Maybe it has always been that way."

Coulbrooke wrote her first poem when she was 9. Fifty years later, it came back to her in a letter, folded properly per her instructions, by her oldest brother now in his 70s. Coulbrooke was bewildered. The small slip of paper survived her brother's LDS mission and several moves over the decades after. She reread words she didn't remember putting to the page all those years ago, but which proved prescient of the person she would become. It just took awhile to get there.

Coulbrooke grew up on a farm in Riverdale, Idaho, the penultimate child of nine. When she was 11 her father died and an older sister took her to Montpelier to quell a rising teen rebellion. One afternoon Coulbrooke's teacher read aloud a poem she submitted for an assignment constructed in rhyming quatrains. It was about her father. The bell rang, but the teacher instructed everyone to stay seated — they must hear this poem.

"How could you not be a writer of poems after that?," Coulbrooke asks.

Despite excellent grades, she dropped out of school the day she turned 16. There were too many cliques and Coulbrooke did not want to be put in a box where she had to conform. She got married a year later. Then the words stopped coming. Her husband "eviscerated" her poetry and a 23-year drought followed where Coulbrooke wrote just 12 poems. Her words seemed trapped in a reservoir too deep to tap.

"What a timid soul I was," the professor says.

But Coulbrooke is no fragile thing. Don't let her soft voice fool you. She is more like a rare and wild bird. Her spikey red hair and icy blue eyes command attention, but any severity in her appearance is lost the moment she smiles, which is often. She has a way of sitting, straight-backed, head tilted forward as though she is grounded to the floor, yet ready to take flight at any moment. For Coulbrooke, it seems there is no power in standing still. On the weekends she hikes in the

WRITE AND WRITE AND WRITE

mountains with her sister. When she gets home she writes and pretends she is somewhere else.

"I walked myself right out of my marriage," she says. "I would take my notebook and write and write and write and walk and walk and walk. And that was the way I survived."

In 1986, she earned her GED the same year her oldest son graduated high school. In 1992 she left her husband, an event she refers to as her emancipation day. A year later, she enrolled at Utah State and worked four jobs while trying to earn her bachelor's degree in literary studies. An acquaintance suggested she take a poetry class. Initially she balked at the idea. It seemed like it was too early to take an advanced level course.

"I had not been in a classroom since high school," Coulbrooke says. "It changed my life."

For the first time she was part of a community of writers. She was exposed to poets she had never heard of and whose words made her feel she eventually would have a say in the world. Her thesis was titled "Afraid of the Wrong Things." Nevertheless, she shied away from taking classes with Ken Brewer, a poetry professor who would eventually become the state's Poet Laureate. She finally worked up the nerve to walk into his classroom as a graduate student. The experience was electrifying.

"I just drank it in. Ken's comments were so spare and so encouraging and he promoted my work so much, that it just exploded. I started to get published when I started his class. I started to earnestly feel like I was a poet. I wasn't timid anymore. I had left behind everything that I was afraid of and I just became strong. I had Ken. I had advisers. I had professors who really valued my work. It was astonishing. They make you brave."

Coulbrooke now teaches in the department where she found her voice after decades of silence. She tries to do the same for her students. As director of the university's writing center, she has worked to make it a safe place for people to share their work. The doors are always open. As people's minds are expected to be.

"What you write is coming from a deep source and you don't want to smash that because that would be smashing a person," Coulbrooke says. "Your job as someone who teaches writing is to draw that person out to that person's self."

On top of coordinating Helicon West, a bimonthly poetry series she started with poet and USU creative writing professor Michael Sowder in 2005, she took on the yearlong poet laureate post in May — a position she almost didn't apply for in the first place. She was too busy. But minutes after the announcement came out from the Logan Library three people emailed asking how they could nominate her for the role.

"It's astounding. I never thought that would happen," she says. "When I went to the city council meeting [for] my induction ceremony, the room was just packed. I walked in and people just stood up and clapped. I could hardly go on. It was the most amazing thing."

Coulbrooke read her poem "City of Poetry" which she composed for the occasion. She recalls a bygone era when the words of people's favorite lines were stitched across their chest. Coulbrooke imagines a future in Cache Valley where conflict is settled with metaphors.

"Let's keep going there, keep going back to poetry, forward to more poetry," she says. "Let's plaster it on the walls of the City, compose our lines and stamp them in cement at every new roundabout, every sidewalk. Let's write poems to each other about our lives in the City of Poetry … Let's let poetry matter."

Logan's poet laureate serves as an ambassador of the arts who encourages others to pick up a pen and just write. The idea is to bring poetry to the people through a series of public events and to produce at least one commemorative poem about Logan over the course of the term. Coulbrooke was selected for her "track record of reaching out to those who otherwise wouldn't be included and to get them writing," says councilmember Holly Daines, who served on the selection committee.

She is the next link in a legacy of poetry at Utah State that begins with alumna May Swenson, '34, who casts a long shadow across Old Main. The MacArthur genius has her own poetry trail in Logan — the work of a USU undergraduate. Brewer — Coulbrooke's beloved mentor — was the next to carry the torch. He is among the university's most famous faculty members and taught in the English department from 1968 to 2000. Brewer served as Utah's poet laureate until his death in 2006.

A picture of him reading from a lectern sits atop a shelf in her office. A basket of apples sits outside her door with a sign attached that reads: Have an apple and a poem from your poet laureate. The fruit is from her apple tree. The poem is "*After*

AND WALK AND WALK AND WALK

Apple-picking" by Robert Frost. Coulbrooke takes the job of bringing poetry to people seriously.

"It matters so much to students to be able to have someone who can guide them in writing their deepest thoughts and making them come out in such a way that other people want to read them," she says. "It matters so much to them and it matters so much to me. If I don't have it, I don't feel like my life matters."

Poetry is the most heartfelt writing a person can do, Coulbrooke says. Every word counts. There is no time for artificial voices.

"One of the things that I've tried as poet laureate is let people write from the heart and write in such a way that they are communicating something and not just trying to be smart," Coulbrooke says. "I tried that myself and it didn't work."

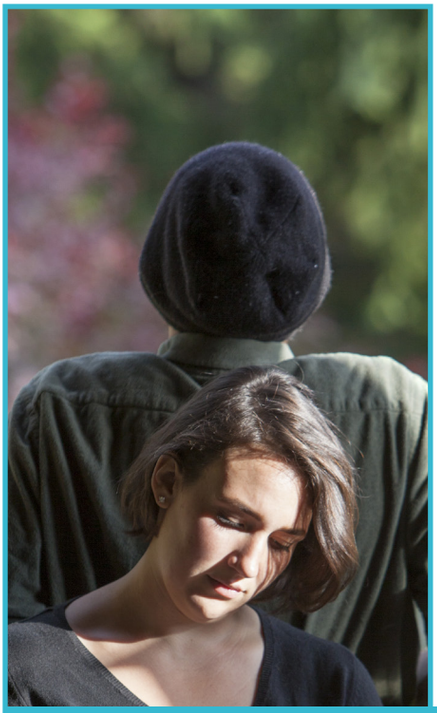
While writing her application for the poet laureate position Coulbrooke considered writing a community collaborative, commemorative poem. It would be created using lines from Logan's residents that she would collect on poetry walkabouts around town.

"I thought, well, the community matters; everybody's voice matters. I will create a poem that is all their voices," says Coulbrooke.

Poetry walkabouts are one way Coulbrooke brings poetry to the public. She leads walking tours around some of her favorite sites in Logan. People share poems they wrote or love. Just four months after being inducted she had already held 16 public events.

While scouting the route for a fall walkabout, a resident told her about a shop owner who loves poetry and asked if she'd call him. She did. A week later she was posting a sign outside Caffe Ibis that listed the stops on the evening's sunset walkabout.

She starts the tour by asking for volunteers to share a poem they brought. One participant opens a book of May Swenson poems and reads. Another recites an original poem he wrote about viewing the urban wildlife of Logan. Chuckles arise



"Poetry cuts to the core of life"

when he describes his bike light sweeping across couples caught kissing on Old Main hill. Afterward the group — a mismatched crowd of high heels and sneakers, skinny jeans and hiking boots — reaches its first stop at Edwards Furniture to hear a guest speaker. The writers lounge on lazyboys and leather couches.

"I've never done this before," owner Kurt Smith says, face flushed announcing that he will be reading a quote from his dear friend Ken Brewer. "He was a true Renaissance man."

Coulbrooke's hand flies up to her chest.

"Deciding to become a writer is dangerous," Smith reads. "It guarantees nothing but the realization of how little one truly knows and how much patience, commitment and acceptance of cosmic irony one needs."

As the crowd filters out to its next stop Smith considers tagging along. He has never written a poem in his life. But he consumes them.

"Poetry cuts to the core of life," he says.

The final stop of the tour is a gazebo in Garff Gardens where summer seems to hand over its reins to fall. The writers seem to pluck poems from the rising wind. After seven minutes of writing Coulbrooke coaxes people to share their words. She listens with eyes closed to savor the odes to weeds and descriptions of the architecture of a thorn. When Coulbrooke opens her eyes, ringed with black liner, she looks as though she has traveled a great distance. As the tour commences Coulbrooke calls out "You are all wonderful" to the dispersing crowd.

Some folks linger at the gazebo as she collects the sign up sheet. Shy onlookers wait off to the side to have a word with the poet.

Americans, in general, are not a touchy people. Scientists have found we need about four feet between us when talking to feel comfortable. One way we can touch one another is through words. And they can be hurtful or they can be beautiful. We can choose. Increasingly it seems the language we use is divisive. Coulbrooke believes we can do better.

"There is so much anger and hatred and misery. The world is afraid right now," Coulbrooke says. "What if you can escape into poetry and write from the heart instead of screaming in a diatribe of anger at each other and write to one another as a person with beautiful language? Poetry is needed now as much as it ever was." ■

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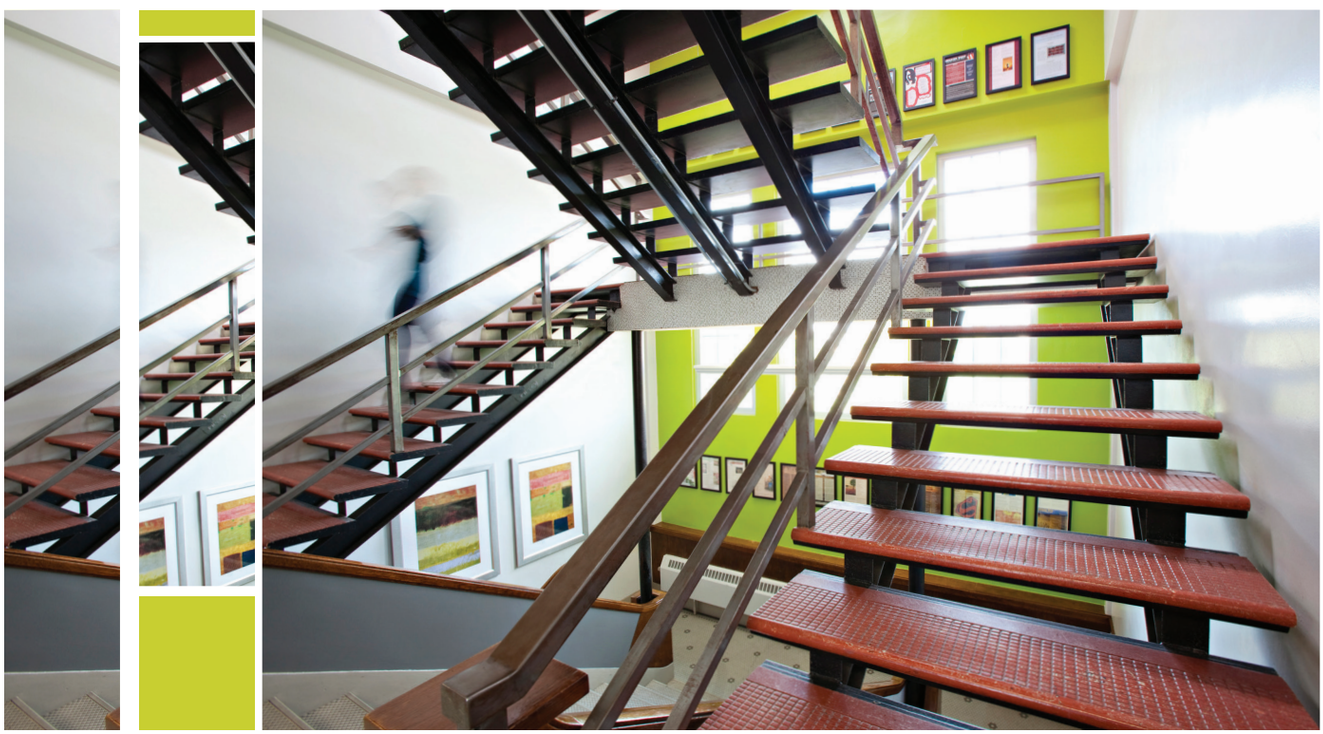

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