voice of the desert



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new arrivals to the valley - photo by luca roy

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cover illustration by lucinda bean

all community photo





top row, from left to right

Nik Cooper, Magalena Christopher, Grisha London, Brian Hill, Don Favareau, Jacob Eigen, Lucas Xie, Tim Gipson, Jeremy Choy, Ada King, John Martindale, Keevan Kearns, Makoto Kikuchi, Brendan Symons, Tahm Lloyd, Jeff Miller, Andy Zink

middle row, from left to right

Nora Biernat, Haley Lee, Nick Boysel, Ellyn Greene, Ruby LaRocca, Lance Bell holding LL Nunn, Grace Goudie, Luca Roy, Hannah Erikson, Sam Hancock, Cleo Miller,

seated, from left to right

Sarah Knight, Harper Yonago, Kel Weaver, Victoria Bakulina, Will Xu, Yasmina Usmanova, Sasha Halperin, Lucinda Bean, Aaron Tugendhaft, Andrew Alexander

photo by andrew alexander

the international

nik cooper



In an institution where rate of turnover is so rapid, the transmission of myth and memory becomes outsourced in large part to physical artifacts. From the spread of class monikers in the dormitory's entryway to the boiler room height-wall, names that would otherwise drift into oblivion are memorialized. Other means of preservation are more oblique—the tool rack in the back of the Farm Truck, signed, in a crude weld, "DS19;" the hand-carved index of surrounding mountain heights, tucked into a nook of the Main Building porch, a signature etched into the rear: Paul Swatek, 1934. The Deep Springs campus is a veritable graveyard, each relic possessing an ever-quieting echo of he or she who went before.

This phenomenal record is sure never to go fully extinct at Deep Springs, a place where not only labor demands direct encounter with the physical world. To put up a motion still requires one to stand and press a pin into the wearied corkboard. Every meal is announced by the ringing of an aged bell. But increasingly, the efficiency of streamlining that so characterizes our modern age creeps into Deep Springs. The gorgeous, ancient Garden Volkswagen has gone from moribund to decommissioned, replaced by an ATV—an all-terrain vehicle. The archives are in the process of digitization. E-Mail is the main vessel for communal announcements. The computer is the ubiquitous tool of essay composition. Though less totalizing than the iPhone's usurpation of the telephone, calculator, flashlight, photobook, letter, etc. ad infinitum, these shifts are reflective of a similar movement.

In the Bonepile behind the Lower Ranch, tucked amidst precarious mountains of T-posts and haphazard tangles of wheel-lines, there sits a humble, squat, and cheerful fellow. For eyes, two bulbous disks, once-lit. The mouth, a wide, grated grin, across which is etched in a rusted cursive: INTERNATIONAL.

Manufactured in 1963, the International Loadstar CO 1800, made distinct by its flat face—a product of the rare Cab-Over-Engine design—is not a vehicle at the forefront of the ranching world. Nor, I would wager,

loadstar



is it straggling at the rear. Set beside the sleek, grill-guarded, suspension-jacked pickup trucks that dominate the West in the twenty-first century, the Loadstar CO 1800 seems more suited to host a tea party than it does cattle—but this fossil, I learned, is not so antiquated as its bonny exterior would suggest it to be.

Until the year 2018, ranch manager Tim Gipson used the truck to haul cattle from the Lower Ranch to the Lake. It wasn't the most reliable of vehicles, he told me, circling the sunken truck. During one particularly lively trip to the lake, with the steer rack crammed to the brim—"There were horns," Tim recalled, "sticking out everywhere."—the wooden siding began to swell. "It was just going whoosh, whoosh," Tim murmured. "I was afraid the whole thing was going to come undone. I was going to lose all those cows. I got back up here, and got Hussain Taymuree [DS16] to cut angle iron on it and weld it up. He did it all by himself. I taught him how to weld. Not too bad, I can say."

A dilapidated coil of string lights winds its way about the back of the truck bed. "Padraic put those up there," Tim recalled. "They were battery-operated Christmas lights. You had it all lit up. You could see it from the distance, maybe from the road. I don't know. It's a shame. It was a good truck. It was in pretty happily decent shape." Padraic MacLeish, former ranch manager and Deep Springs graduate, was a trained mechanic. "You know, Paidric, he loved old stuff," Tim recounted. "And he just liked fixing up old trucks and cars. Things that most people wouldn't do, you know?" With a hearty

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jostle, Tim managed to jimmy open the truck's rusted door. He swung up into the driver's seat. "Well, I'm just thinking," he mulled. "I could probably get it going again, I think. If you had the right mechanic. Somebody that had the ambition and the time. Padraic, he was that kind of guy."

Though there is plenty of ambition at Deep Springs, time is much more scant. As Tim fiddled with the clutch, I sunk into the romance of possibility—of resurrecting the ancient truck six decades after its birth, dusting off and inheriting the work of Hussain, Padraic, and nameless others who have faded into the obscurity of time's relentless motion. The International, it is rumored, once housed the entire SB on a trip to Baja, California. dusting off and inheriting the work of Hussain, Padraic, and nameless others who have faded into the obscurity of time's relentless motion. The International, it is rumored, once housed the entire SB on a trip to Baja, California. When I asked Tim if he could confirm this myth, he laughed. "You'd have to ask somebody else. I have heard rumors—that they used it to go to Eureka Valley." Who, I thought, was there to ask? Having worked here for nine years, Tim is the longest standing community member. What joy it would be, to resuscitate the truck, to spawn new, unverifiable legends.

And yet, with the advent of wrestling through Augustine's *City of God*, relishing the freedom to ride post-horsemanship, fighting to pound T-posts into the rocky silt of our foothills, and sprinting to maintain pace with an ever-multiplying number of essays, the sheen of that possibility faded from hope to wistful notion. As Philip Larkin writes of the specter of death: "Most things may never happen: this one will." The atrophy of that which we pour our energies into in this valley, and in life, falls on the inevitable side of that semi-coloned proverb. But here, at least, the tombstones and their epithets remain.





photos by luca roy


International


ational


CALIFORNIA
84 722 B



Meatless Mondays?

Staff and Students Meet Less Than Half Way on Animal Consumption

photos by lance bell



sarah knight

Since starting in my position here at Deep Springs as the Boardinghouse Manager, the discussion of ethics in food has come up a lot. Mostly from the students and myself. I love an integrated system. I love closing loops. Regenerative Agriculture, Sustainability, Environmentalism, it all has meaning and merit, but aren't applicable to every establishment that serves food, or ranches, farms, etc.

The majority of students that push for less meat consumption seem to be mostly concerned with the moral ethics of eating meat. Perhaps because once starting here, they are newly introduced to the life of caring for animals. It is difficult to physically take care of an animal each day and not grow to emotionally care for it as well. Thus making the guilt of eating said animals greater. I also believe there is a cognizant dissonance that happens around food when students arrive here. Despite the fact that students cook as a labor position, most of the time on campus they do not have to cook for themselves. The further you are from preparing your own food, the less you come to understand it. Meaning if food shows up on a plate for you three times a day, it's easy to believe we live in a utopia where we can go completely meatless and it won't affect anyone.

I've asked about their opinions on the environmental effect and have been met with "everyone knows how bad CAFOS are for the environment". Industrial feed lots are undoubtedly bad for the environment around them, and can emit higher levels of concentrated Methane, a Greenhouse Gas that burns faster than CO2, thus warming the atmosphere faster.

However, the students were not able to verbalize nor explain this. It seems as though "cows = bad" is something that folks, younger or not, have just started to accept as pure fact. The amount of nuance, or further education on the matter are far greater than over-simplified headlines. Greater than what I can explain here, but I will try with a few points.

CAFOs, or Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, typically reserved for cattle feedlots, are facilities that feed cattle for approximately six months on grain, to finish cattle that were raised on land, and generally fed only a grass diet. Once they make market weight (appx 1600 lbs.) they are transported to a packing plant where they are slaughtered and processed generally for retail. CAFOs are environmentally problematic due to manure runoff that can contaminate ground water, air pollution can affect nearby local's respiratory systems, and Methane emissions are more concentrated and problematic at CAFO Operations not only because of the natural methane produced from the cow's digestion process, but the stored manure in the lagoons is anaerobic thus producing more methane.

It's not the Cow, it's the how. Methane produced from Ruminant animals (cows, american bison, elk) is a natural part of their digestive system. Just like trees produce oxygen that we breathe in, then we release CO2 that presumably the trees, along with other plants, breathe in. What has changed significantly in the last six decades is how we raise cattle for food. It is increasingly a more streamlined process that has moved the costs from the product and labor to the environment. A statement I often see repeated to emphasize this point is noting the amount of American bison that roamed free prior to their decimation by western settlers: 30-60 million bison. Currently in the United States we have approximately 27 million cows. However greenhouse and methane gas emissions have risen drastically since the Industrial Revolution. Anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions are the real issue, not the existence of cattle in the United States.

It is true that grass-fed cattle produce more methane emissions than grain-fed cattle due to longer lives (slower to meet slaughter weight) and the natural fermentation process in their digestive systems. Howev-



er, in conventional or CAFO operations, the emissions from growing grain, harvesting, processing, transportation and subsequently the feeding of cattle need to be accounted for as well. Cattle raised on a natural, pasture based diet, if managed well, can offset carbon emissions with sequestration. CAFO raised cattle do not.

Ecosystems matter, and no one should know this more than a Deep Springer. Tim Gipson, our long held (one decade!) Ranch Manager has seen the valley through the seasons. He's familiar with the Black Toads that are endemic to the valley and only here because of the cattle operation. He is familiar with Wyman Creek and its various tree lined run-offs. Trees that are greener than the rest of the valley, all year long. Many birders visit DS due to the 288 documented species of fowl, falcons and raptors our ranch provides a home to. The many desert reptiles, the (American?) Elms that escaped the eastern blight that wiped them out, that now keep our pigs shaded. The predators and prey, the water, minerals, suicide hares and mule deer. All call this valley home.

Having cattle on the land in a rotational manner like Deep Springs does keeps ecosystems thriving. Their manure provides life to living things such as flies and beetles, which in turn feeds the birds. Their management of vegetation across the valley helps to spur new plant growth, thus sequestering more carbon that gets stored in the soil as organic matter, which can also help prevent erosion during storms. It is only once cattle go to feed lots that the process can become a problem. Being at Deep Springs is the ultimate opportunity to participate in your food. The poultry, beef, pork are all raised on property. They see sunshine and roam around. They eat grass, or bugs, and stimulate growth. Eating meat that almost entirely skips the industrial agricultural complex is the best you can do, while eating meat. Don't waste it, take only what you need, and compost what you don't so it goes back into the soil. Into our ecosystem.

I do not have a response for those that don't eat meat due to humane and moral issues. Death is painfully close to some, and considered unnecessary for our needs. I can respect that belief and only hope to broaden the conversation with folks that think differently than me. While I do think that animals being on land is beneficial, I don't have to actually eat meat at every meal, but to feel satiated, I do need it at least once a day. Most of the staffulty seem to prefer a lower carb, lean animal protein and vegetable meal. The students burn carbohydrates like tractors burn diesel, and will riot without it. There is

a slight disconnect between what the older folks prefer for their systems, compared to the needs of the student body.

"It's not the cow, it's the how" resonates with me so much because we have streamlined our food system to the point that it is damaging to people, animals and land. Our food is synthetic, lab cultivated, sprayed with toxins and 'fortified' with the nutrients we've lost along the way.

I believe that instead of investing millions of dollars in new vegan meat companies, or lab grown meat. I think we need to put in efforts to return to land based, local systems. It is daunting and difficult to imagine even a starting point- The USDA is completely understaffed. Local slaughter houses are shut down all over the country. We've disrupted our local food chain for a national, even world wide food chain- while (mistakingly) pinning all the problems on livestock agriculture. See the controversy surrounding the study "Livestock's Long Shadow" that, while has since been redacted and corrected, is still frequently used to substantiate the need for 'the end of meat.' Re-investing in local economies via meat processing, USDA slaughter houses, butcher shops, and direct local farm purchasing is much more within our reach than lab-grown chicken.

I will leave you with this- changing a system can work. If people commit to it. Remember the concern about the depletion of the Ozone Layer that was prevalent in the 90's? Scientists discovered that substances like Chlorofluorocarbons and Ozone Depleteing Substances were thinning the Ozone Layer. The Montreal Protocol (1987) was a global treaty written and signed by nations that agreed to rapidly reduce the use of and production of these substances.. It was universal and it worked. The Ozone Layer is slowly but steadily healing, and is projected to be fully finished by 2026.

It is shocking, I'm sure, as an 18 year old to come here and see a five pound chub of ground beef. I'm sure none of them have seen that much meat at once before. It's even more shocking to learn that the chub of ground beef has meat from approximately 600 cows. That can absolutely feel gross. However, maybe knowing the animals in our freezer (and having cared for them) will help students push for better systems, rather than trying to completely eliminate systems. Meatless Monday won't have to be a thought if as a community of 50 we're only consuming two cows a year. And now that we are producing our own produce year round, maybe, just maybe, Tim will start eating more vegetables.





DSRMT

koll jensen

Looking back, the creation of the Deep Springs Resource Management Team (DSRMT) happened during a particularly contentious time. Ranch Manager Tim Gipson, who has been at Deep Springs since 2017, remembers, "There was a lot going on in the 90s, 'Cattle Free by '93' was one of the slogans the anti-grazing folks were using. Ranchers had to start paying attention!" During the 1990s, many resource management teams sprang up throughout the western United States, and the DSMRT was one of them.

History

The establishment of the DSRMT was led by Geoff Pope, who was the Ranch Manager at that time, and Rob Pearce, now retired District Conservationist of the Natural Resources Conservation Service field office in Bishop. Pope's interest in rangeland management ideas and techniques coupled with Pearce's enthusiasm led to the creation of the DSRMT, which is truly a collaborative effort across agencies and interests.

The DSRMT currently consists of Deep Springs College, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, California Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Forest Service. Current Ranch Manager Gipson comments, "Building and maintaining relationships is what the DSRMT is about; it's very important." Along with Gipson, Deep Springs Trustee Lynn Huntsinger, a rangeland ecologist at UC Berkeley, often participates in the meetings on behalf of the College.

Ziani Paiz, DS'19, began working with the Bishop NRCS office as a rangeland conservationist at the start of 2024. She notes, "In this partnership role, my job is to enhance the pace and scale of rangeland conservation throughout the Eastern Sierra region. Collaborative conservation teams like DSRMT are an excellent tool for land managers and agencies to work together and do just that."

At its core, the DSRMT is a collaborative conservation effort that tries to implement best practices, experiment with new methods, provide research opportunities, and share information. The DSRMT convenes multiple times a year to review, study, and make recommendations for the management of the College's grazing allotments, which span from the Fish Lake Valley into the White Mountains under the jurisdiction of the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. DSRMT generally meets at the College once in the spring, with another meeting during the summer up at Cow Camp, which Gipson describes as, "more of a hosted show of appreciation."

Deep Springs students participate in the meetings, and the Deep Springs cowboys are often tasked with implementing any changes recommended by the DSRMT for the White Mountains summer allotment.

Additionally, student labor is used for infrastructure projects and maintenance throughout the range areas. One current project is to replace a windmill in the South Oasis Pasture that "self-destructed" according to Gipson with a solar-powered pump, while another involves a pipeline to deliver water in the northwest area of the Valley.

The Cattle Operation

Deep Springs runs a cow-calf operation. Cows are bred each year to the College's own bulls and give birth in the early spring. Later in the spring, calves are branded with the "Swinging T" and male calves are castrated. Cows and calves spend the summer months on grazing allotments outside of the Valley. In the fall most of the calves along with certain mature cows are sold, although some heifers are kept each year to become part of the herd. The number of animals sold each year depends on market conditions, weather considerations, herd size and health, and other variables.

Right now, the Deep Springs herd is mostly made up of mixed Hereford and Angus stock. Gipson started buying Angus bulls as they are more profitable than then Beefmaster bulls that were on hand when he arrived, and they make calving easier for heifers. Grazing occurs in Deep Springs Valley for most of the year. Part of the herd heads up into the White Mountains in the summer to the Crooked Creek allotment, which is on U.S. Forest Service land. Two DS Cowboys (students who become staff members upon finishing their two years at the College) manage the herd, living in primitive cabins at 10,000-foot elevation and moving animals throughout the allotment on horseback. Another group of cows uses a BLM allotment in Fish Lake Valley and are managed by another DS Cowboy. Students apply for the cowboy positions in the fall of their second year, with three chosen to be student cowboys. This labor position lasts until the cowboys finish their second year at the College, at which point they become staff members as DS cowboys over the summer. One DS cowboy returns the following summer as senior cowboy. Gipson says that many of the DS Cowboys are like family, "Many of the cowboys are some of my closest friends to this day." At one point during Gipson's tenure the herd swelled to well to close to 350 head. "We kept all the heifers for several years," explained Gipson. Right now, the herd is the smallest it has been during Gipson's time at Deep Springs. Unfavorable weather and high beef prices influenced this decision to downsize. Extremely little rain fell in the Valley in 2024. Gipson laments, "Things dried up, it was a dust bowl. We sold animals we normally would have kept." This past year 2025 the ranch kept about 30 three-year olds and about 30 heifers along with 135 bred cows, keeping the number right around 200.

With beef prices at all-time highs, the cattle sales have boosted the ranch revenue significantly over the past few years. For the past two years the College has sold its cows to Gareth Fisher DS'03 at Vaqueros Livestock, based in Brentwood, CA. "Gareth really likes our calves," says Gipson. Fisher has maintained a close relationship with Deep Springs, traveling to Deep Springs for the DSRMT meetings and participating in branding in the spring. Pregnancy check and branding are both all-day affairs and are mandatory for students, who look forward to both events each year. "It's a lot of work, and a lot of payoff," says Gipson.

Paiz points out that Deep Springs is the sole agricultural operator of the Lower Wyman watershed. "It is extremely rare, particularly in California, that a watershed of that size is not occupied by more than one operation. This means that Deep Springs does not have to worry about water allotments, agreements with neighbors, and actions upstream impacting their water quality or quantity. This unique position also means that Deep Springs has a sole responsibility to steward their land area. Partnering with agencies and other organizations has been especially important for Deep Springs to make sound decisions about management."

Future Opportunities

The College's recently-adopted Strategic Plan states, "As the largest owner of private land in the Valley, Deep Springs is an important steward of the ecosystem. The ranch and garden are part of this stewardship, both in preventing development in the Valley and through practices that are sustainable and adaptable. As a major landowner, the College also has an opportunity to expand its leadership to also influence the management of neighboring land." The DSRMT will continue to play an important role in the coming years both at the College and also by continuing to provide consistent and measurable data to participating agencies. In addition to methods that have already been proven to be sustainable (such as increased use of electric vehicles and smaller sized grazing herds for the summer allotments), the College continues to explore new technologies and methods.

Gipson, along with Huntsinger and Paiz, attended a Society of Range Management conference in Monterey in February. He was impressed with developing technology of virtual fences, similar to those used by pet owners but at a much more massive scale across thousands of acres. The technology allows for grazing management without fences by using base stations, livestock collars, and personal computers. Unfortunately, most current products rely upon cellular technology, which is not currently available in Deep Springs Valley, although Starlink may be a possibility. The idea of being able to

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lance bell

monitor the herd without fencing, with more safety, and using smaller grazing areas intrigues Gipson. "It has great potential in range management," he said.

Paiz points out that Deep Springs is well-situated to try new methods. "This operation also has a unique capacity for taking risk. Most agricultural operations do not have the safety net of a board of trustees or endowment to keep the mortgage paid. For many ranchers, there is motivation to try innovative management techniques, however the capital required to do so is often more than the initial payout. When a family is relying on a baseline level of dependable income each year, it can be much more difficult to take that step and try something new." With the College's educational mission in mind, the DSMRT will continue to explore and implement new conservation-minded projects in the years ahead.



luca roy

course catalog

brendan symons

Introduction to **Logic** is slowly turning into an introduction to Computer Science course. Led by the venerable **Andrew M.H. Alexander** (M.ath H.elp?), the course promises to teach symbolic problems but also discuss the philosophical questions of the Vienna Circle. Students spend their time pondering variations on "Socrates is a Man" and "All Men Die." Pretty dark stuff.

When asked what she was learning in **Spinoza**, one student replied "I am not going to hell." Which seems like a pretty good thing to know. Taught by Humanities Chair **Aaron Tugendhaft**, it seems students are engaging with Baruch Spinoza's philosophy well. Aaron makes class comfortable, with a wide array of snacks. "The human mind does not know the human body itself, nor does it know that it exists, except through ideas of affections by which the body is affected."

Speaking of beverages: everyone in **Adam Smith** is ordering "Hot Water with Lemon." But should we be paying for it with *Deep Springs Cash*? Taught by Humanities Chair **Aaron Tugendhaft**, this class is actually called: "Adam Smith and Friends." Situating Smith within debates about commerce in Mandeville, Montesquieu, Hume, Defoe, Coyer, Raynal, and Rousseau. This class promises to bring an economic revolution to the Deep Springs labor pillar.

I asked for a testimonial from a student in **Wittgenstein and Pierce**, and here's what he said: "What understanding means. If you can truly know the rules to any game that you play. If you can ever explain something beyond the examples which you can produce. If your left hand can lend your right hand money. Um. Sometimes Wittgenstein feels like he's speaking in Japanese koans. Sometimes he'll say something and it's kind of like, what? Now point at the color of the box, now point at the shape of the box…um, I can't do that." **Don Favareau** returns to play another game.

EPISODE IV: **BRIAN HILL** RETURNS A long-forgotten signal has reawakened across the academic galaxy. After years of abstraction and simulation, the ancient arts of wires, and resistors once again stir among the students. In a remote classroom, the veteran instructor BRIAN HILL has emerged to guide a new generation in **ELECTRONICS.** Rejecting sterile theory alone, he offers the daring path of learning by building. Students will forge real Electronic devices with their own hands, confronting the raw forces of voltage and current.
EPISODE V: **BRIAN HILL** IS BACK AGAIN After a mishap with the solar line, Brian was forced to investigate whether a subatomic particle had interfered …or a low flying airplane. The only viable path to solving this problem **QUANTUM MECHANICS** In lieu of a joke about Schrödinger's cat:

Speaking of self-referential. Multidisciplinary Perspectives on '**Mind**' promises to bring our thinking to a whole new level. The great **Don Favareau** has us thinking about thinking once again. "Is "consciousness" a disease? Or the product of materialist economic conditions? Is "free will" an illusion? Are our "minds" the unique interior directors of our actions, or is "mind" just an archaic folk-term for a biologically evolved operating system?" I hope we find out!

Abstract Algebra, taught by renaissance polymath **Ra-**

chel Hastings, has been hailed by many as the course that is "totally changing my life." Students are loving this class so much that they've started a math club in the back of the BH. Whether or not Professor Hasting's linguistics skills are coming in handy is unclear, although sometimes I hear them whispering about the putnam in Proto-Indo-European.

Taught by Dean **Jeff Miller**, Approaches to **Christian Theology** has changed student's minds about Julian of Norwich. When asked what they thought about the course, one student said "ecstatic experience", another said "totally tubular." Christian Theology, in contrast to Spinoza, has been less reassuring regarding the status of our souls. Yet nonetheless these students all want to buy a motorcycle.

Professor **Jacob Eigen** warns that "Novel writing workshops … are almost never attempted because they are a bad idea. Now here we are, attempting one anyway." I asked a student in **Novels** to tell me about the class, and he sort of went on and on about Flaubert and "the beautiful lost ways..." I lost track of what he said, but by the end I was fully convinced that electricity ruined literature and that somewhere a Frenchman in a cravat is still typing the perfect sentence while refusing to acknowledge the existence of laptops.

Taught by **Mina Khanlarzadeh**, In the Zone of Non-Being: Frantz **Fanon**'s Philosophy of Race, Embodiment, and Decolonization, is promising to shed new light on decolonial theory at Deep Springs. Students will read major works including Black Skin, White Masks and The Wretched of the Earth, asking difficult questions such as: What does liberation actually require? What does colonialism do to the mind? And how many times can one underline the phrase "violence is a cleansing force" before crashing out in the dish pit?

When asked what he learned in **Calculus**, one Wasian student said: basic skills for the LSAT. Unlike Fanon, Calculus did not liberate the students from anything… other than remedial test placement exams. Another student, when asked for comment, said: all I want is to make professor **Andrew Alexander** proud.


lance bell

the ghouls of literature

nik cooper

From the Black Mountain Poets to the Bloomsbury Group, writers have long known that close communion with fellow creatives is a fruitful endeavor. The latter—whose modest membership included Virginia Woolf, Lytton Strachey, and E.M. Forster—convened at painter Vannessa Bell's London apartment for drinks and parley on Thursday nights.

Though a view of the Sierra-Nevadas couldn't be farther from those pioneering modernists' outlook upon Gordon Square, a park snug in the heart of a lively bohemian district, at Deep Springs, a new writer's bloc nevertheless congregates hebdomadally—as serendipity would have it—on Thursdays.

This semester's Novel Writing Workshop has emerged as Deep Springs' most vibrant coterie. I would wager, without fear of hyperbole, that Deep Springs is the only college in America with fifty percent enrollment in a creative writing course. Sitting at a robust fourteen members, the Novel Writing Workshop is full to the appearance of distension—with a student body size of twenty-eight, paucity of sizable classroom space thrust the workshop into the living room of Withrow House. But what at first seemed to be a product of mere necessity has proven a blessing—the intimate setting endows the course with a supra-academic texture; the Novels Workshop feels more to be a congregation of bosom friends than it does a credit-based affair. In the absence of alcohol, a demure selection of coffee and tea is the sole whetter of pallets available to the aspiring novelists—but though this may be to the detriment of the atmosphere, the prose is rewarded by the group's temperate sobriety.

Any attempt to account for the resounding spirit of this semester's workshop would be sorely lacking without an ode to the group's noble leader: Jacob Eigen—whose last name aptly bears Germanic connotations of singularity—is the steward and captain of the motley crew. As a poet and Deep Springs graduate, Eigen brings an unique attentiveness both to language and to the peculiar fecundity of the particular conditions from which this bloc's writing emerges.

It is impossible to escape being known at Deep Springs—at the liberal arts college where I studied last year, a student body size of 3500 could at times seem suffocating. But here, the same classmate with whom you have raised hackles at when debating Augustine's conception of time in seminar, you'll see in the quasi-delirium of the BH post-midnight, staggering through the dorms in the scruff of pre-dawn study efforts, inhaling the latest lentil-rice slop at lunch, engaging in a full-body skirmish with a barbed wire fence in the afternoon, filibustering during SB—it stretches the bounds of what one could reasonably call holistic. The Novel Writing Workshop has added yet another dimension to that polyhedron of knowledge. There is Karlie, (all authors' names have been pseudonymized to stave off potential hagiography) whose Hegelian discipleship manifests in an abiding fictitious concern with the sublation of essence. Rich N. Ixon Jr's strict dedication to autofiction has granted fellow students a larger window into the personal life of this staunch defender of the private sphere than months of camaraderie achieved. The portmanteaus and indexical leaps of Frank and Ms. Capable betray infectious membership in a Ulysses reading group. Max Z. Czech is pinched by metaphor and misunderstood.

But what, one begins to wonder, are these students doing, slobbering after the novel in the age of ever-truncating media? A certain atavistic spirit exudes the



There is Karlie (all authors' names have been pseudonymized to stave off potential hagiography) whose Hegelian discipleship manifests in an abiding fictitious concern with the sublation of essence. Rich N. Ixon Jr's strict dedication to autofiction has granted fellow students a larger window into the personal life of this staunch defender of the private sphere than months of camaraderie achieved. The portmanteaus and indexical leaps of Frank and Ms. Capable betray infectious membership in a Ulysses reading group. Max Z. Czech is pinched by metaphor and misunderstood.

workshop, from structure to spirit—Eigen supplied students with the largely extinct gem that is a physical course reader, and delivers hand-written comments in the margins of developing manuscripts. The workshop meets, as opposed to the palatable hour-and-a-half blocks of the typical Deep Springs class, for a steely three hours. "If I were a writer," confesses a character in DeLillio's The Names, "how I would enjoy being told the novel is dead. How liberating to work in the margins, outside a central perception. You are the ghoul of literature. Lovely."

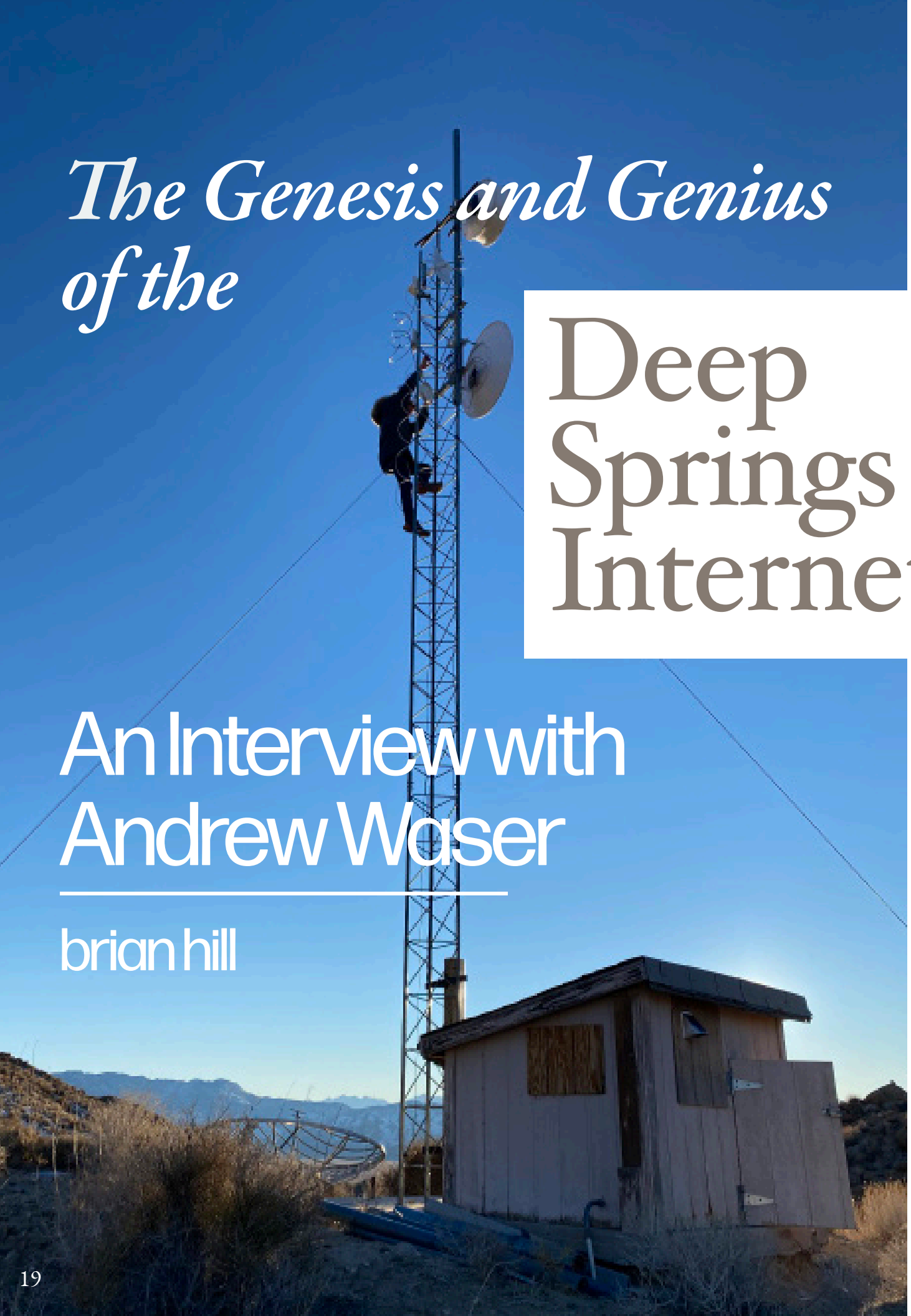
The Novel Writing Workshop feeds on the liberation of marginal composition. We are writing for this valley, and this valley alone. And lovely, it is.



photo by apolline guillerot-malick

Interviews





The Genesis and Genius of the Deep Springs Internet

An Interview with Andrew Waser

brian hill

Andrew Waser and Michele Lanan have lived in Portal, Arizona since they left Deep Springs seven years ago. He is a volunteer firefighter and ambulance driver in Portal. His main business is remote IT consulting. He also repairs planes, is in the midst of restoring a 1950s vintage furniture truck, converts vehicles to run on waste vegetable oil, and maintains properties and off-grid solar. He and Michele Lanan arrived at Deep Springs in 2013 when Michele became the Herbert Reich Chair of Natural Science.

DSN: When you arrived, what were you planning to do while Michele was the science chair?

AW: If there had actually been enough of a market in Bishop, I would have been happy to be an aircraft mechanic. I had also done a custom manufacturing, fabrication, woodworking and design business with Michele for many years. At the time that we moved to Deep Springs, it became too much to actually run from Deep Springs, and the big reason was that the internet was basically unusable. I knew already that there was a need to maintain stuff on the Deep Springs network. I was not, you know, intending to be more than just an occasional volunteer helper for that, but it increasingly became clear that things were kind of dire at Deep Springs in terms of how well the internet worked. The Globalstar satellite connection didn't have much bandwidth and there were just a few of them sitting in very distant orbits, and the whole College had like 5 megabits of bandwidth and latency was like 3/4 of a second which was a problem because people were starting to expect services like Gmail to work. And one or two of the 1st-year students, the year I showed up, were very enthusiastic about expanding their movie collections. And they would eventually be able to download a movie and in the meantime, nobody else could actually get anything done. And nobody knew that was what was going on.

DSN: When did you get the idea for the radio links over the White Mountains?

The Globalstar satellite connection didn't have much bandwidth and there were just a few of them sitting in very distant orbits, and the whole College had like 5 megabits of bandwidth and latency was 3/4 of a second which was a problem because people were starting to expect services like Gmail to work.

AW: The phone system was already going over the White Mountains, using essentially the same path that the current system (which is now the backup system) is using. There was a hardwired line that went up and over the canyon with Wyman Creek in it. It was essentially impossible to deal with all of the different places that lines kept getting downed and stuff like that so they switched to a radio telephone system, and that system was still nominally functional in 2013. I say "nominally" because it really wasn't. I mean maybe it was a year or two before 2013, but actually it had failed. The hardware was still there, but it wasn't working.

I was not the one who initially said, "let's try and run Wi-Fiover the mountains." That was Justin Norcross, an IT guy from Bishop, who David Neidorf had talked into coming out occasionally and helping fix things at the College. People generally didn't get past the second step, which was that there is no line-of-sight.

You know, on paper, there's no way this will work. In fact, there was a huge part of the project where they built all of the fiber optic network on campus and stuff like that. Massive overhaul, maybe in 2006. The whole idea behind that plan was to have some really fancy licensed Motorola radio linked to provide internet service

to the college that would go up and over the mountains. And all of the, you know, specs and quotes and all of those things went forward with that. Those guys somehow didn't realize that there was a mountain peak in the way. So they got well into the project and then just said, "oops, we can't actually do this."

But what Justin said was, technology has advanced. So the stuff to build a network is cheap enough now that technically on paper, this isn't gonna work, but let's just try it. Let's just play around with stuff. So Justin was the one who actually got the initial test connection working, proof of concept, and showed that it was actually possible to manage to bounce a signal off of the peaks somehow or another. On the Bishop side for a while, it was a test setup where it was actually going to his house and just piggybacking off his connection since it was only a test. At that point, the College was still using the satellite connection.

Really what I did was take the time and energy to take that and troubleshoot and figure out how to make it much more robust and successful and actually be something that the College could use as a primary connection.

Justin is also the Bishop schools connection because he knew about the Digital 395 project, which is the fiber optic backbone that goes up and down the Owens valley. It had a drop in Bishop schools.

So fast forward a long ways, the system has gotten very sophisticated. It has two Starlinks. We still have one link over the mountain as backup. We used to always have two links over the mountain. There are backup options at Silver Peak, but there aren't two links the whole way. I mean, the assumption being that, since it's a backup system, people can, within a reasonable amount of time, go and replace things on campus or at Bishop schools. So the link over the mountain doesn't need to have redundancy anymore. Meanwhile, on the campus, the system has grown to have something like 34 access points.

DSN: You visit like three or so times a year as the target, roughly, to do maintenance?

AW: There's not an official target. I mean, on average, sure. Two to three times a year seems to be typical, but there were a lot of major upgrades.

When I upgraded the internet, I knew that the College was inevitably going to become much more tied to the outside world, and lose a lot of the magic of necessarily face-to-face interactions. Nowadays, when I hear that feedback is being done by email, and documents are being edited collaboratively in the cloud, I wonder if I have let an evil genie out of its bottle. In any case, it was inevitable, and having continuous connectivity forces us to reckon with whether we want that.



Left: Jeff Miller, Dean, aligning a radio at Henderson while Andrew Waser directs by phone.



Right: Andrew replacing a weather-damaged cable on Silver Peak.

photos by brian hill



Thank you, Mr. President!

Andy Zink leaves Deep Springs

lance bell

In the Summer of 2023, Deep Springs was in a period of transition. Coeducation had just completed its fifth year. The effects of the COVID Pandemic were still felt by the community. The new Boarding House and Triplex were set for completion. Many staffulty had just left the College. It was in this context that Andy Zink took his place as President of Deep Springs. This week, I've had the pleasure of sitting down with Andy to talk about his time at the College ahead of his departure this summer.

When asked about the biggest challenges he faced upon arriving, Andy cited staffulty turnover as an area of focus. He said "Our BH Manager and our Office Manager resigned two weeks before I arrived. I also knew that we would need to be searching for a Facilities and Grounds Manager. So I was walking into a lot of turnover." The struggle with turnover continued into Andy's first year, with long-term Chairs Anna Feuer and Antón Barba-Kay as well as Dean Ryan Derby-Talbot all leaving to pursue other academic ventures. Add to this the departure of the Garden Manager and Operations Manager. These were challenges that Andy faced decisively and effectively, taking over CFO and operations management roles that he has held to this day. As the College hired two Deans, three Chairs, six Staffulty, and over 40 visiting faculty, Andy made hiring a collaborative process involving the entire community in hiring decisions. By fall 2026, all but one member of the onsite staffulty will have been hired under the supervision of Andy Zink, and anyone on campus can assure you that he has brought in fantastic people across the board.

In conjunction with onboarding new staffulty,

Andy focused on community building and culture. Coming in, he says that he "knew that there was some discontent among the students and a need to rebuild trust among the different constituencies of the college" and that "there was a need to lean into community building and focus on rebuilding of structures." And build he did. For Andy, building community was not just about building relationships, but about modeling the way in which people treat each other. He says "one of the things I'm most proud of is working collaboratively to turn the community toward a culture of compassion, cooperation, and kindness." By all reports, after Andy's first year there was a perceptibly different culture on campus.

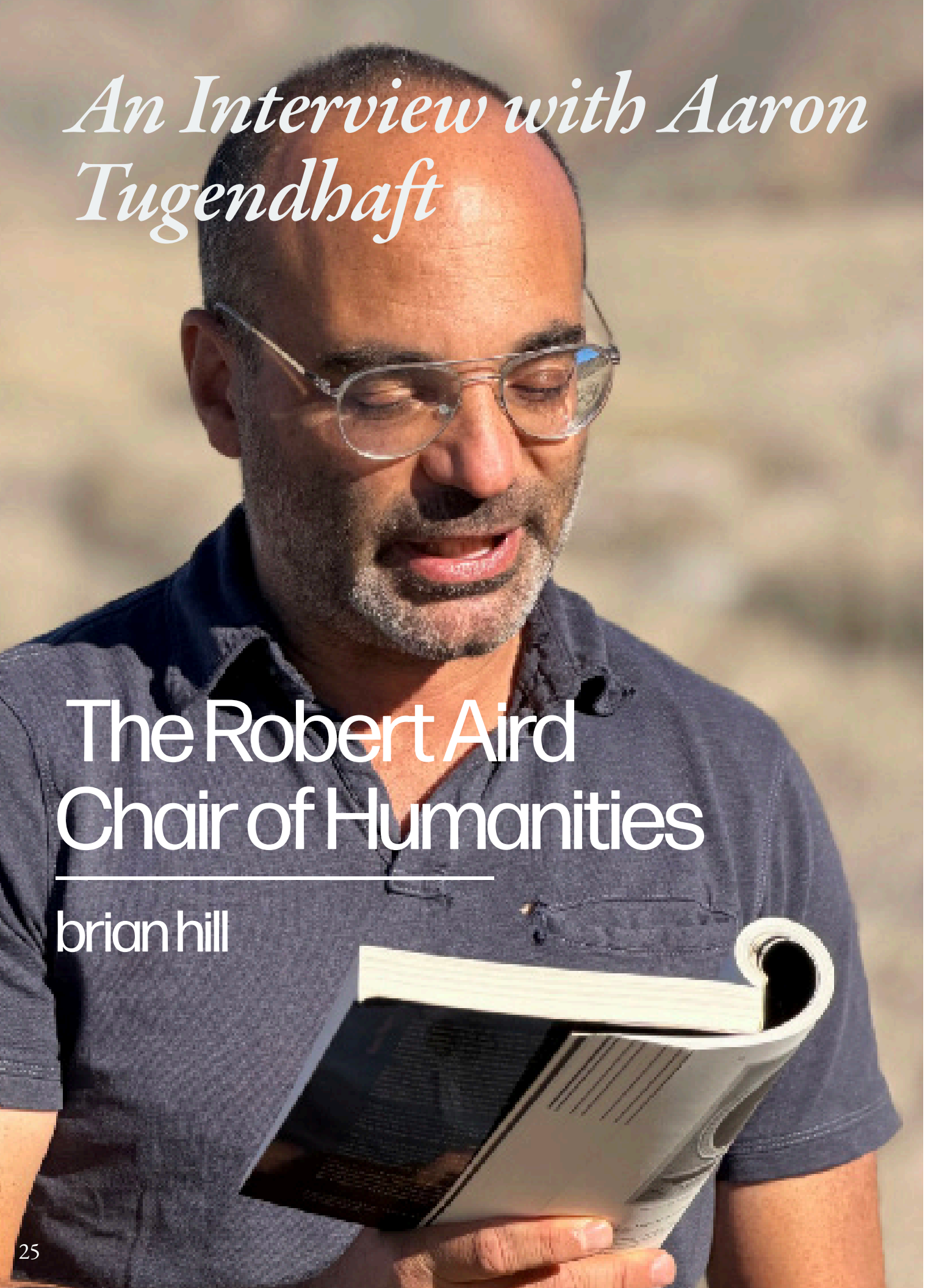
When asked about a surprise he experienced during his time as president, Andy recounted how, in his second summer when DS'24 arrived, "Ryan and I looked at each other, and we were like, is this laughter? The place had totally changed. There's so much laughter and joy." With all of this turnover, Andy is now one of the longest tenured members of the Deep Springs Community. As such he has accrued a great deal of wisdom, and I was curious about his thoughts about Deep Springs' capacity to instill growth. Andy recounted how he has seen "that when young adults take on great responsibility, with unexpected successes and painful failures, untold capacities are revealed that align their innate impulse to serve with a greater understanding of themselves. But the brilliance of the Deep Springs Mission is also that it's not just the student experience. All of us that work here are confronted every day with problems to solve and opportunities to choose to lean into the hard path. And also to try our best to tap into our innate capacity to have compassion and to be kind. There's no shortage of opportunities to be the wheat for the character building mill that Deep Springs is."

If Deep Springs is a character mill, then Andy Zink is the finest of flour. Harper Yonago (DS'24) told me that "When Andy sits down next to you, he will—almost without fail—ask how you are doing. His interest is so sincere that I, a person who almost always says that I am doing "pretty well" have sometimes actually told Andy that I am stressed out." To overuse the metaphor, if Deep Springs is a character mill, I was curious what kind of wheat we should feed onto the grindstone.

I asked Andy what makes a Deep Springer. He said "I think a lot of it comes down to courage. First of all, the courage to come all the way out here and pursue this education, to do hard things, and to be vulnerable. To work hard." He also said Deep Springers have a "creative spirit and an openness to view life as a journey of exploration and discovery. So much of what we do here is, in my opinion, to 'know thyself,' like the Ancient Greek motto. Deep Springers are the types of people who never stop and are always questioning, and in particular, questioning their own place in the world and how they can make an impact. They recognize that our true human nature is to serve, and that Deep Springs is a vehicle, through its community and through its program, for fast-tracking and facilitating their discovery of their own unique path to service and leadership."

Andy says that he never saw himself as a visionary leader. He asserts that his presidency "has been about providing stability." And in many ways he is correct. Andy rarely made passionate speeches. He did not appeal to the moral order of the universe, nor did he deliver reprimanding letters to the Deep Springs Student Body. When considering his legacy, I imagine most will remember him for his reliability and steadiness. However, I don't think it's right to say Andy wasn't a visionary. Rather, Andy was a visionary of the most subtle nature. His quiet compassion rubbed off onto every person he worked with. Visiting alumni often note how each Student Body has become increasingly more, kind, considerate, and collaborative since Andy arrived. It is not that Andy lacked a vision for Deep Springs. Rather, it is that Andy's vision was delivered slowly and softly, communicated through action rather than speech, pushing every Deep Springer to be a more attentive, thoughtful leader. As Rebecca McMillin-Hastings (DS'23) said, Andy embodies "the true spirit of Deep Springs."

An Interview with Aaron Tugendhaft



The Robert Aird Chair of Humanities

brian hill

DSN: Hello, Aaron! Congratulations on having survived your first semester here and being half-way through the second! For the first question of this interview, looking back over the decades of education and various positions, what prepared you—in both ability and desire—to come to Deep Springs?

AT: In a way, I think it's a combination of three previous positions. The most obvious is my four years teaching in the Core at the University of Chicago—their traditions relate closely to Deep Springs' in many ways. Then, my four years at Bard College, Berlin, where I taught some Deep Springs alumni; it's smaller (even more so then), so there was real rapport and extensive faculty-student interaction—similar to here, but not as extreme, especially compared to a big university like Chicago. And perhaps surprisingly, but maybe most of all, my recent experience teaching high school history at Ramaz School in New York. That's where I really realized I love engaging students holistically over long periods, beyond just the-classroom—not necessarily being friends, but friendly and interacting in non-class settings.

DSN: What about this place turned out to be substantially different from the way you had imagined it?

AT: I think my main concern in coming here was that I was going to be isolated and lonely. I originally thought a lot about convincing friends to visit because I felt I'd need that. So one surprise is that—and maybe I could have figured this out just by thinking—it hasn't been lonely at all! There's a built-in community here, unlike a traditional life where, say at the University of Texas at Austin, I'd work and then go home alone. I'm a people person, so this is good.

Also, I wanted to set up the house in a way that I knew would be conducive for students to come over and feel comfortable here. One of the key things was getting John Martindale [Facilities and Grounds Manager] to mount a screen so we could have movie nights here. I'm now holding my classes in my living room too—mainly because by doing that, it forces me to spend a good chunk of the class making them coffee so they can seminar in the way they like without me interrupting.

DSN: Let me ask you about Shabbat dinner. Since it's a Jewish tradition, I assume that most of the Jewish students on campus come. How well do the Gentiles fit in? And how many of each show up?

AT: Very well, and many, are the answers. There are a number of Jewish students on campus of varying levels of identification—about five Jewish students regularly come to Shabbat dinner, and they've been really enthusiastic about it. But equally enthusiastic have been a number of the non-Jewish students who have been coming on a regular basis. You'd have to ask them what the attraction is. I think there's a range: some of them just like religious ritual; some have their best friends who come, so they're attracted to that; some people just like a home-cooked meal.

DSN: Just thinking about it logistically, cooking for twelve-plus in an ordinary home kitchen as opposed to the BH is a bit of a challenge. How do you manage that?

AT: I have loved throwing dinner parties since I was in high school, so I have quite a bit of experience at this point cooking for that size. I think if it went up to 20, it would be a little more of a challenge, but twelve to fifteen is not so difficult for me in a regular-sized kitchen. And MidFac actually has a decent-sized kitchen.

DSN: Turning to movie night, what are those like?

AT: We've had a range. For whatever reason, the first three movies were all by Howard Hawks. Also a range in the number of kids who come, and staff too. I think in the past it's been anywhere from a pretty small group of four up to twelve. It's called Old Movie Night, and we

decided the definition of an old movie is anything from before the year I was born [1977].

DSN: Let's turn to this semester's classes.

AT: I am teaching two classes: one on Spinoza, which is 17th century and arguably one of the founders of what we would call modernity. The other is called "Adam Smith and Friends," and I had to call it that because the students seem to be really averse to any kind of survey course. So rather than "A Survey of Early Modern Political Economy" or some title like that, I had to call it that so they think it's an Adam Smith class, but the whole first term we're doing other thinkers, and then the second term we're going to do *The Wealth of Nations*.

DSN: I have one more course-related question. And it is about the Boyle-Spinoza debate you studied in the Spinoza class. First, just say briefly what the debate was. And then how did the lab that illustrated the debate go?

AT: So basically what we did was to try and pay some attention to a part of Spinoza that is rarely discussed. There are a couple of articles by scholars who happen to be interested in this, which is that Spinoza was engaged in an indirect correspondence with Robert Boyle, the famous early chemist, about an experiment that Boyle had done about the decomposition of potassium nitrate—what they called then niter, or we would commonly call saltpeter.

DSN: Reintegration in order to make the original substance, follows decomposition and off-gassing of nitric oxide, which is very dangerous.

AT: Yes. And which I really wanted to do so the students got a real sense—because the point here was to do a historical reconstruction—not just learn the chemistry, but actually get a real sense of what it meant to be doing science in the early modern era. And if that means putting yourself at risk of exploding your house, then I felt like that should have been part of the experience.

DSN: Or in the case of nitric oxide, of turning your lungs to painful gray goo.

AT: Yes. But others had other (more responsible) ideas, and so instead of driving off nitric oxide, we decomposed a solid known as blue vitriol and drove off ordinary water vapor from it, and then recovered the original substance by adding the same amount (by weight) of liquid water. The steps are analogous to the steps in the saltpeter experiment. I think it was profitable, partly from my own limited understanding. Having Keevan, who has a background in chemistry, there to run the actual experiment and talk more intelligently than I can about what's going on expanded everyone's understanding.

DSN: It is probably a valuable experience just to get the students to think about what it meant for people to be trying to understand things that we now take for granted.

AT: Yes. Especially since without many of the conceptual tools. For example, the word "element" that we have didn't exist for them.

DSN: We're taught the periodic table from before we can even comprehend what that might mean, and so it's so imbued in us that there's no surprise or debate when we get serious about using it.

AT: Exactly. Whereas just to think about what would it mean to be trying to make advances in understanding the relationship between substances if you don't have the conceptual tools of the periodic table and electrons—none of these things were known.

DSN: And that the individual elements are, under all but a few circumstances, immutable. So there are these immutable things that are changing due to their combi-



nation with other immutable things, and that's responsible for all the stuff we see, but the stuff itself isn't actually changing—it remains the elements.

AT: Right. And in the process of trying to figure out the foundation, they're trying to disrupt an old foundation, and it's not easy to always figure out how much of what they're doing is trying to disrupt the Aristotelian foundation, but they don't yet know what to put in its place necessarily. So hopefully the students came away with some appreciation of what it was like for these figures in the 17th century to be venturing into new territory and thinking for themselves based on experiment.

DSN: We've come to the end of my questions. Is there something that we've failed to touch on?

AT: Only what I somewhat purposely avoided here. By training, my dissertation was in ancient Near Eastern history. The truth is that kind of happened by accident, and there was a life that could have been mine in which I would have devoted myself to doing work in that field. I think my dissertation was well-received, and my first book was well-received. The first job that I was a finalist for was the ancient Near Eastern historian at University of Chicago's Oriental Institute. Highly competitive. I came in second. Had I gotten that job, by this point, I probably would have written your requisite five books or whatever it is in the field, and I'm sure I would have been an ancient Near Eastern historian. And all I can say is, thank God I didn't get that job.

the ultimate life of service is single motherhood

yasmina usmanova

There is a leather bag. The leather bag resembles a tote bag. The leather bag is spacious, filled to the brim with pens, notebooks, biscuits, scissors, moisturizer, painkillers, packs of cigarettes and a change of clothes.

There is a girl. The girl resembles an adult. The girl is staring at her bag. The bag is filled to the brim, the components of her bag are falling out. Where is her wallet? Did she lose her key? The girl is seemingly distressed. The bag doesn't budge, it won't close. The girl is as stubborn as her bag. The girl is at war with her possessions. The possessions are at war with a girl.

The train is coming. The girl is rushing. The feet go stomp! stomp! stomp! at every step. The rhythm interrupted. The girl fell. The flor has gotten the hold of the girls' possessions. The train has passed. The bag is distressed like a deflated balloon. The war has been in vain.

The girl stares at her bag, at her possessions. The girl thinks about her mother, she thinks about motherhood. She indeed never wanted kids, the horror of responsibility always frightened her.

The girl conceived of children as fragile human beings like a clean slate of paper. The clean slate of paper of a new journal where the parent is responsible for staining the first few pages. The girl is terrified of clean blank pages. The girl never indeed wanted kids.

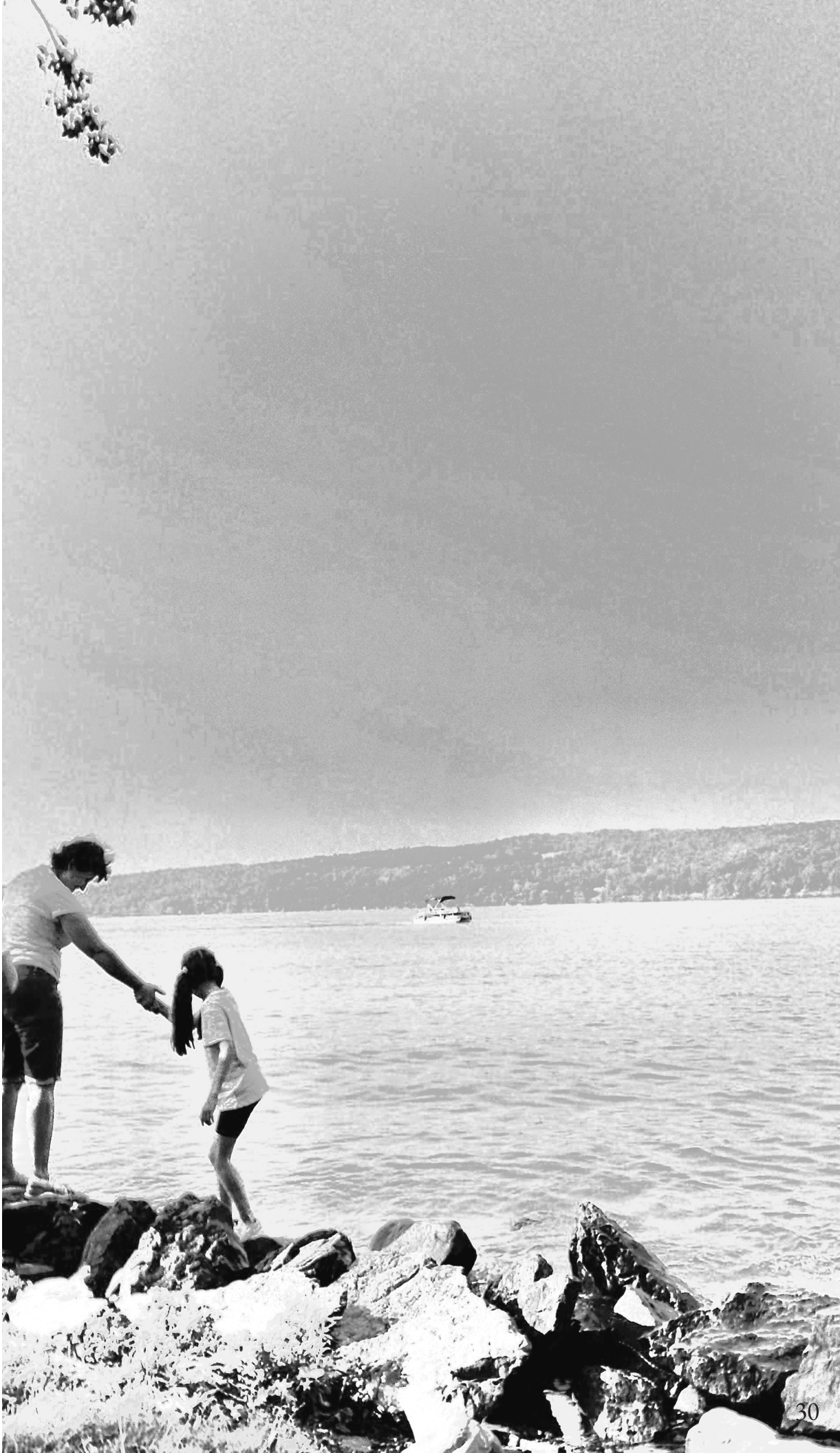
The girl looks at her deflated bag. The girl wants to be a mother. A single mother. She wants messiness, the brims overflowing, the pages of a journal to be written all over in cursive small neurotic handwriting. Only her handwriting. She thinks of her mother's bruised wrists, of arthritis, of sleepless nights with a white–out pen in her hands. The pages are acutely all written over.

The girl thinks about her mother. The mother who brought the bag and the girl together. She thinks about bricks, spasms, brims, shelters, cinches, sickness. She thinks about her life. A girl's life is filled with webs of funky events. A girl's life is filled to the brim. Life is ambivalently leafy.

The girl thinks about leaves, trees, and pages. The pages were trees, the trees are pages. The mother was a child, the child is the mother. The war is in vain. The labour paid off. The world will be left better than when it was first encountered. The pages will be left behind, engraved, apostilled, cherished.

The girl thinks "I want to raise two good ass humans!" The girl gets up. The bag is overflowing to the brim. The girl stares at her bag, the girl is distressed. The time is ticking, the girl wants to be a single mother but when will the girl think about fertility? THE TIME IS TICKING

photo by yasmina usmanova



the deep springs glossary

makoto kikuchi

ontology/epistemology
jastrow's rabbit-duck.

christian guilt
something we got from our parents.

nasty meany / touchy feely
japanese men / everyone else.

ostensively
the word you add when you think your comment is not esoteric or complicated enough.

can you elaborate?
the defining characteristic of americans. now reader asks: "can you elaborate?"

self-conscious pragmatists
wishy-washy liberals

genealogically lucky
feminists

I will get a cup of coffee.
I will get three cups of coffee, reheat it in the microwave add tbsp sugar and stay up all night.

booj
lost cause.

communal noise
the only fun we can have here communally.

welcome to the desert of the real!
you are welcoming the desert of the real. one of many ways to make professors annoyed.

address
wear a dress.

neurotic
someone who is neither pervert nor psychotic.

pervert
someone who is neither neurotic nor psychotic.

psychotic
someone who is neither neurotic nor pervert.

symbolic / indexical / iconic
when there are three things that can be overlapped but have a certain hierarchy you use one of those words.

geoguessr
everyone's hobby.

timeguessr
like geoguessr if you really like old shoes.

self-consciousness
what privileged white buddhists have or what marginalized people have.

hegelian
someone who affirms contingency, in a very absolute sense.

lacanian
those who know the jargon lacan speaks.

sincerity / honesty
something we are always striving to acquire, but it's never possible: the door will not open.

happiness
the state that is essentially by-products'. one option in life you want to pursue if you are a loser.

presuppose
the word that makes you look intellectual if you can use them in seminars.

retroactive
the word that makes you look like you know something esoteric about time.

recursive
maybe: recursive

meta-
the prefix that shows that you are meta-reflexive in margaret archer's account of three types of human reflexives.

dasein
is.



Photo by Lance Bell

the long drive

ruby larocca

I drove the six hours into L.A. today for a mere twenty-four hours in civilization. The last big drive I did was up the side of a mountain pushing eighty cows. This time I get to ride in the back seat and not on the unyielding Western saddle. We were on the mountain just a couple of days ago, but it feels like a different life. I thought my inner thighs would always hurt after that day straddling the girth of a massive horse. I thought my knees would never bend naturally again. But my body has recovered, and I don't have any physical proof it all happened.

We're going all this way to celebrate Rosh Hashanah, to welcome the new year and all it holds.

To get up to the cabin, we had to reconfigure the river bed we were driving across. We moved the heavy, slippery stones by hand around the truck, calculating where we'd need to place them to get the wheels traction. We arrived in the late afternoon. We chopped wood and drank from a limpid stream. (The "living waters" of the Torah, as my Hebrew teacher tells me, the mayim chaim.) We slept on the edge of the horse pasture under a dome of stars unfiltered by human pollution.

The next day saw us saddled up early and trekking over the pass to the cows before the sun had properly crested the mountain. The loose stone trail troubled the horses, and their tense frames needed extra motivation to ford the streams. Their musculature strained going down steep slopes and sweat started to bead from the edges of the saddle. Leaping on and off my horse as needed, I went on foot into dense willow thickets swarming with cows. I went in blindly seeing dark shapes and hearing groans and bellows. A foot deep in mud, I prayed they wouldn't turn on me.

"Vai, vai!" I yelled at the bullish, bolshie cows. A cattle drive is hours of trying to strike a tender balance between pushing too hard and not pushing hard enough, finding that perfect distance between the horse and the cow, going far enough around the cow so as not to scare her or push her in the wrong direction.

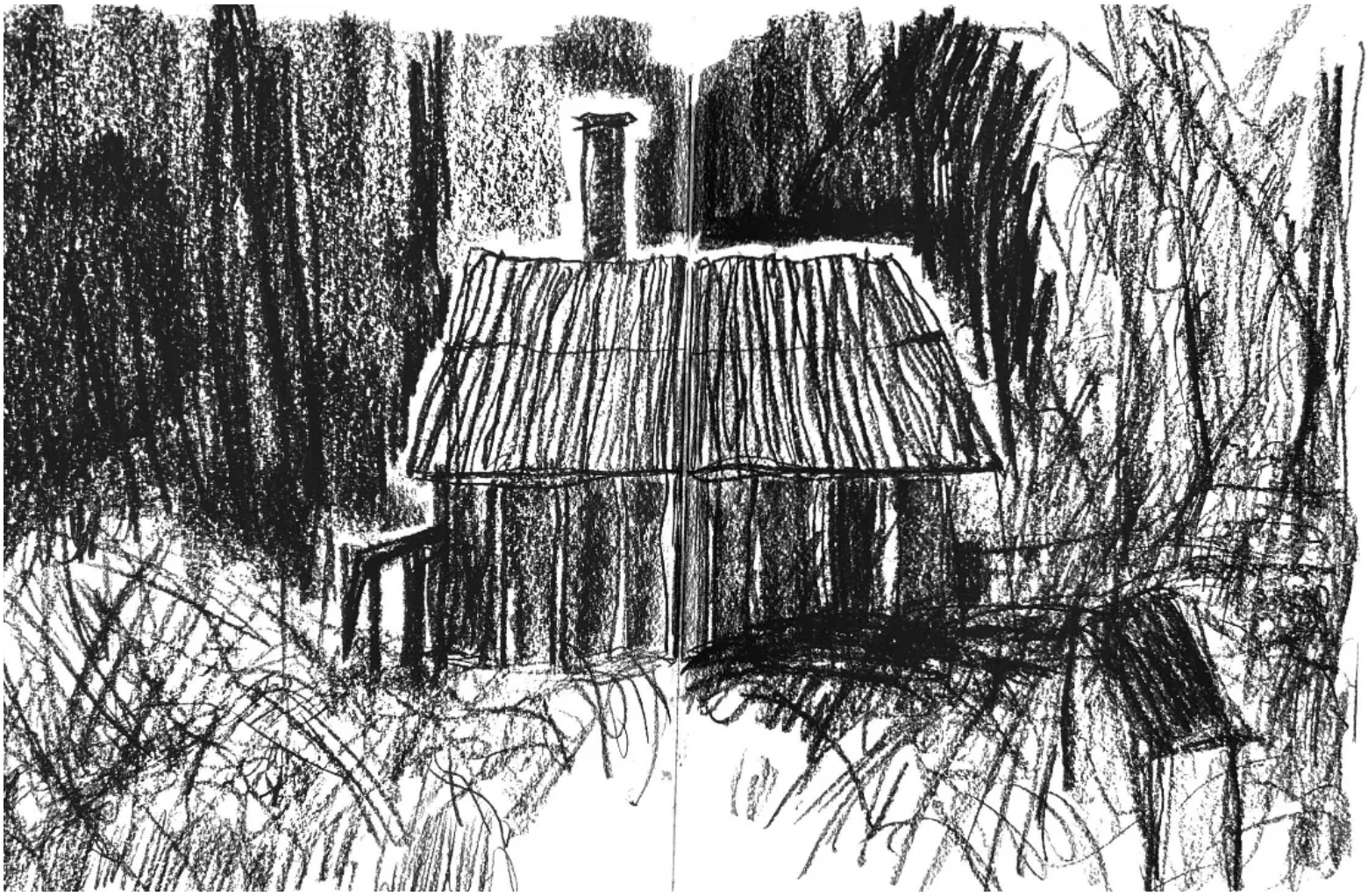
The work is hard, but at this point I've done it often enough to be self-conscious as I do it. And I realized this time: I'm a kid, with a few other kids, with an iota of training, pushing eighty cows from a mountain pasture through a narrow pass, on old and sensitive horses, with one satellite phone, a four-hour horse ride from campus, and hours from the nearest hospital. Bizarre, and thrilling, and irreplicable.

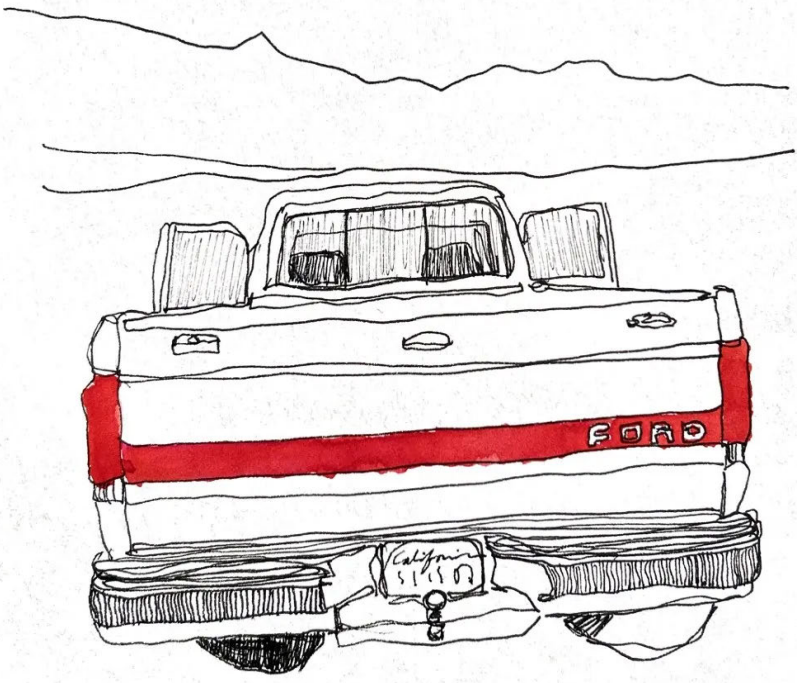
I ended the day squished into the back seat of a cowboy's pickup, drained, temporarily fortified by Gatorade and Midol. I shoveled down my dinner, nonverbal and hardly breathing.

I couldn't be further from that now—on my laptop, on an elegant patio in L.A.'s most Jewish neighborhood, looking forward to attending hours of Rosh Hashanah services tomorrow. I couldn't be further from Dead Horse pass, the possibly-radioactive pasture with mysterious leftovers of government operations, the aching knees and instant coffee.

When we arrived in this corner of L.A. families were streaming into synagogue, and all the shops were closed—even the pizza/falafel/Chinese food place. Seeing L.A. for the first time, I saw the scene in shots. Golden and dirty, it was all the movies and none of them.

It's good to be with a family. It's good to be around Jews. I've eaten really well and nobody's shouting at me to push cows. I think I'll remember both of these lives I'm living now—contemporaneous, comingling, poles apart—forever.

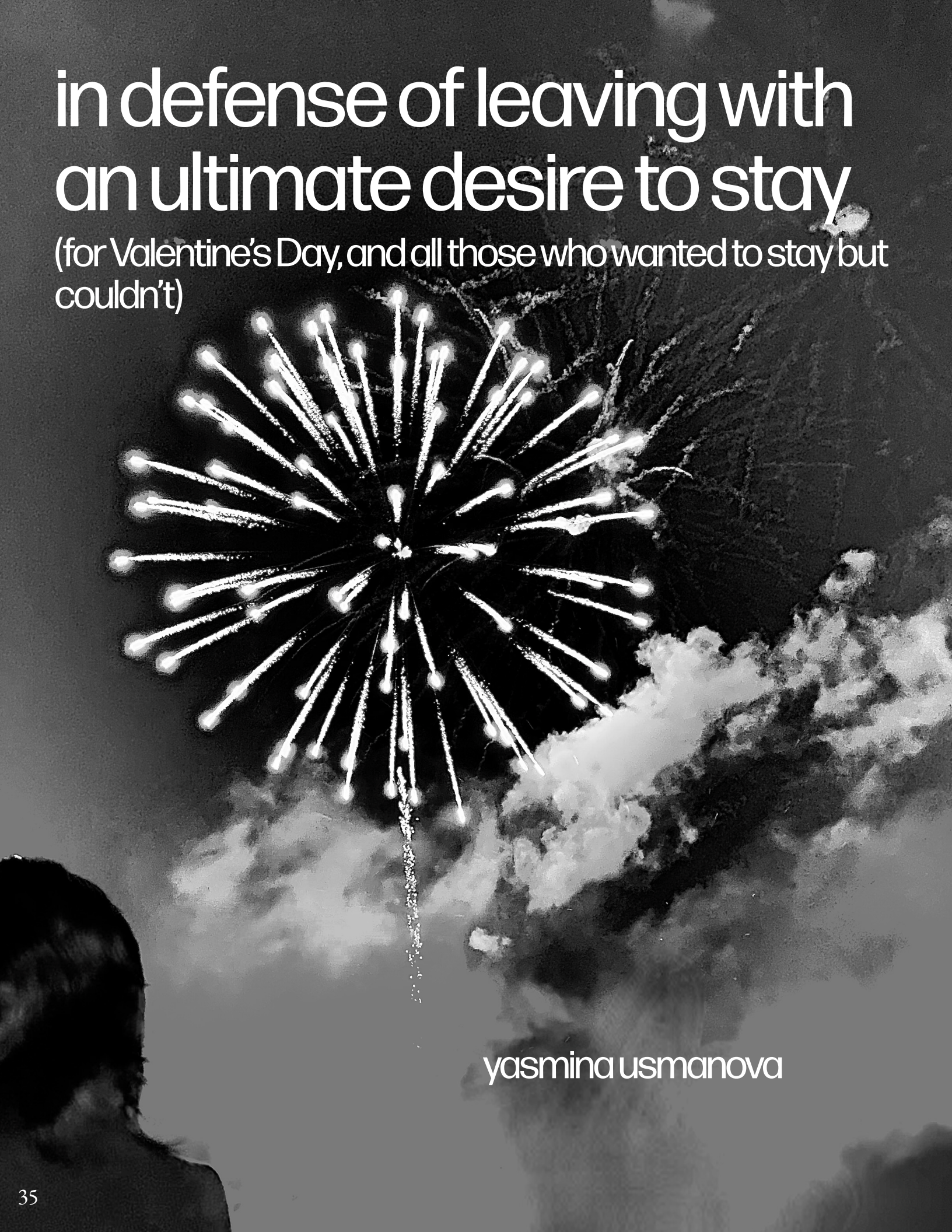



FORD


Westridge Manor
SHOPPING CENTER
MANOR MARKET
WINES & LIQUORS
BUTCHER SHOPPE
FRIED CHICKEN / VIDEO
TROY-BILT DEALER
True Value Hardware

in defense of leaving with an ultimate desire to stay

(for Valentine's Day, and all those who wanted to stay but couldn't)



yasmina usmanova

My whole life I have been making myself believe that I would stay. That staying is a form of self sacrifice and those who love and care, those who want to be good people stay no matter what. So I stayed in relationships where I was miserable and got eaten up for the good of the other person so I could be the outlet for their insecure ego. I thought I was a shelter, unshakeable, secure.

"Come here...I will save you..."

I stayed in touch with my father because I thought I could save him from drowning in the sorrow of his alcoholic habit. That my love and care despite his hissing would miraculously change him.

One day he would awake from this crazy self-punishing nightmare and see that there is a person who is there for him despite his endless attempts at pushing everyone away. Do you see this wall in people? You see them pushing and pushing you away to prove to themselves that at the end of the day everyone leaves.

Well, all I ever wanted was to prove that they are loved, and deserve that love in return.

If love is not earned then is it even worth it?
Are you testing my love? Shall I prove it? Oh you bet I will.

I am decomposing... I will give you more. I will smile. I am okay. Take more. Love becomes like an equation that must be proved. What does the equation imply? That one does not need to be loved. Why? Because one time, a long time ago... loving someone wholeheartedly meant being left.

Ever since then one tries their hardest to protect, to take revenge. The abandonment of the Other becomes an expression of wounded love. Because one unconsciously does everything to prove that they are right. That they deserve the pain of abandonment themselves. Stuck in the intrinsic web of ego stimulation one falls into a trap of believing it is love. But one doesn't recognize the abandonment neurotic inside, the little kid who demands, who yearns for the reparation.

Why do you take up the role of saving someone from themselves? Is it true love, a desire to sacrifice yourself for the other person's good? Pity? Self-destruction? Selfishness? Is true love a mere wishing for the Other what you would wish for yourself? I want to be loved so I will prove my love even if it means complete annihilation while you can keep denying. Who will crack first?

Why can't I leave? The stubbornness of the desire to win over? Or is this true unforgiving love? The charitable destruction of yourself in the name of love becomes a ritualistic exercise. I wonder if one can leave before he has been eaten away? No matter how much I have stayed, I have never succeeded at proving my love. It is not a fault on anyone's part for not loving hard enough.

Sometimes all love is leaving.
People are not your salvation.

So Leave. Leave. Knowing love is not proved, love doesn't have to be deserved, love is not conditioned. And love is definitely not a chemical stimulant for a tiresome bored mind.

photo by yasmina usmanova

eulogies

magdalena christopher and luca roy



In the historic SB mutiny after RCom's fifth request for evals in a single semester, Lance Bell died a valiant death in the name of rigorous self-reflection and peer evaluation. Lance will be remembered for an unparalleled love of L.L. Nunn, Goth Baddie earrings, and earnest piano solos. Lance also leaves behind the legacy of Deep Springs' first DI one-person basketball team. Funeral services will be held under an almond tree in Sacramento, with a JBL Clip on the lowest branch playing "Trap Queen" and Ed Sheeran Bollywood music.



Jeremy Choy died of ontological repression upon laying sight on a film that was both lowbrow and starring Lindsay Lohan. Last words: "Why do we find it necessary to forgo a sense of beauty?.... This is shit." Jeremy will be remembered for listening to incorrigibly indie music while high up in trees (or a middle aged white man's lecture on Lacan that occasionally lapses into blaccent). His love for the Booj and encyclopedic knowledge of Deep Springs drama will be profoundly missed. Funeral services will be held at the communal Mac in the library, with a Spotify tab open playing Faye Wong's rendition of "Dreams" by the Cranberries. Dress will be business casual.



Sasha Halperin's heart gave out after chasing down Banshee 18 too many times in a skirt. Legend has it that her ghost is still tractoring field North. Her dramatically-flared enunciation, impeccable knitting skills, and pork belly to-die-for will be sorely missed. Deep Springs Valley is 170% more likely to catch on fire since her passing. Funeral services will be held by Walker's dad at the Cowboy Shack, where she will be buried with 8 sacrificial Bialettis, a pack of PILOT Precise V7 blue pens, and her boots.



Makoto Kikuchi died normally. Walking along the seashore, a wave finally pulled him into the ocean's interminable embrace. But that's just a metaphor. A resounding "Hmmmm.... I don't know...." seemed to emanate from the horizon as the wave retreated.... Makoto will be remembered for his metaphysical analysis of Prince lyrics, fetal positions, and outfits that can only be described as pimp-meets-leisurewear-meets-cowboy. Towards the end of his life, Makoto wore his earrings with the backs in the front and the cubic zirconia in the back. This, we now understand, was a metaphor for life. Funeral services will be held at the line where the horizon meets the ocean.



Ada King died of asphyxiation while doing a Slavoj Zizek impression in the sauna after a third consecutive hour at the dangerous temperature of 300°F. The Tassajara Bread Book and Ruth Ozeki had nothing on Ada King. The Bonepile had nothing on Ada King, with those memorable CDG-esque outfits that paired everything from a ushanka, kantha quilt, tool belt, and Lucas's hat.... Ada King was so zen that nothingness itself had nothing on her. Funeral services will be held by Slavoj Zizek in a 300°F sauna as Ada's body is rushed to an Idahoan hippie commune in the foothills of the Rockies to fertilize the soil of her homeland.



Eden Knight dropped dead from stress after realizing that she could be unwittingly recruited as a spy for the CCP via Instagram DM. Eden will be remembered for her valiant efforts as she single-handedly fought the entire SB in an attempt to Spread Sleep. She can still be heard, if you listen closely, announcing that she's changed her vote during SB. Or rushing to the Booj as soon as her queued-up Flo Milli song comes on. Funeral services will be held in High Country, Gunne Sax prairie-style dresses only, *please* no shoes or outdoor cats allowed.



Ruby LaRocca died from embarrassment after realizing that she brought the wrong lecture to the Cremona Women's Club (a passionate anti-academic-establishment defense of D.H. Lawrence in lieu of an ode to Shakespeare). While Ruby had many beloved impressions ranging from Vashti Bunyan to a crackin' Yorkshire lass, she will be most fondly remembered for her dulcet readings of Malcolm Lowry's poetry before bed. She passes on several peignoirs, five boxes of Yorkshire Gold tea, a range of Loebs, and assless chaps. Funeral services will be held in Marfa, Texas.



Eli Lerner was struck by lightning on a 40 mile hike. He would have outrun the lightning, of course, but he was too busy trying to read his crumpled, rain-crusted copy of *Anna Karenina* for the fourth time. He will be remembered for speaking to animals like: "Come on pretty girls, I know you're hungry but just keep those legs moving, there'll be food ahead!" He leaves behind 4 tabs of Nuun electrolytes that his Mom sent him last July. Services will be held at his emergency Nalgene bottle at the halfway point to the lake.



Tahm Loyd died in wrap-around sunglasses, Walmart shark slides, and a Mannequin Pussy t-shirt as a star exploded. Last words: "Woaahhhw.... That's so beautifulll.... Wait, it's so chill guyyys.... The star's just being inflammatoryyy...." delivered in a Midwestern vocal fry. Tahm will be remembered for his lifelong pursuit of coffee chats, maximization of Goldman Sachs profits, and ever-present streak of sunscreen across his nose. And for that one term during which he was unemployed and meditated for four hours in the desert every day. Funeral services will be held in Ithaca, New York.



Brendan Symons fell to his death in a cologne production facility. His passing, so inconspicuous to his acquaintances, represented the culmination of his refinement. Clean, yet *dirty*, sedentary, yet peripatetic, Brendan embodied a complete self-contradiction. In other words, he was post-modern. Buffalo chicken and Catholic candle adorned services will be held in the BH. Dashel wrote this.



A preponderance of dried plant material, paint thinner, and the book collection of a polymath (though they would say hobbyist) made Kel Weaver's room too much of a fire hazard. They died fiddling as it burned. Because Kel was ever the person to do good, Sam has not lit a cigarette since. Kel will be remembered for their SB craftiness, their passion for preserving the tradition of Deep Springs cow art, and, according to Jeremy, "looking like the way Studio Ghibli draws white people." Funeral services will be held over yonder....



Lucas Xie died after a bad seminar. He curled up on the carpet of the Main Room and just died. Seminar has been going downhill ever since, with nobody around to keep us in check and all. Lucas leaves behind an absurdly small phone, a sizable collection of francophone books, and a bulk package of instant ramen that he doesn't like. On the bright side, there has been a mass redistribution of bookshelves in the dorms since his passing. Funeral services will be held at his untouched tin of Danish shortbread cookies at the back of the library.



Will Xu passed away peacefully doing what he loved most: smiling too hard while training Grushenka to Get A Job while sassing Harper in an attempt to "affirm his identity" (as what, we do not know). He leaves behind his entire wardrobe, which has long been distributed across the entire student body. There will be no funeral services, only a ceremonial distribution of ashes in every single place on campus where he has slept. Oscar and Jones will be leading the ceremony. Luca hasn't stopped crying.



Harper Yonago died peacefully after a Lacanian variable-length psychoanalysis session with Looksmaxxer Clavicular that took a lifetime. What did she discover deep within the subconscious of the ultimate frame-mogger? We will never know. Harper leaves behind several dead animals in the Rump freezer, a toiletside graffiti poem about the finger, and extra-pulpy orange juice bedecked in threatening sharpie messages. Funeral services will be held in a dusty bookstore in Portland, where all of her friends will gather and release an excess of fluid from their eye sockets.

photos by luca roy, lance bell, and many more





remembering our horses

tim gipson

"Poets tell how Pancho fell and Lefty's living in cheap hotels. The desert's quiet and Cleveland's cold. So the story ends were told," I sadly sang as I operated the levers on the backhoe preparing Lefty's final resting place. It takes a big hole to bury a horse. Not a pleasant job but one I take very seriously. In 2018 I bought Lefty in Arizona. He didn't have a name. A few days later, I bought another horse, when I asked if he had a name, they told me they called him Pancho. Pancho and Lefty, no brainer. Lefty left his mark, carrying cowboys up and down the mountains chasing cows and packing students around the corral in Horsemanship Class. He bucked off more than one person and broke Ziani's hand at cow camp. Shortly after I arrived at Deep Springs in 2016, one of the horses died. I asked Padraic what was done in this case. He said dig a hole in the Dry Lot and put him in it. I didn't know the horse, so I did as Padraic suggested. A few months later my personal horse, Kiddo, died. I bought Kiddo in 1990 at a Billings, Montana horse sale. He was three years old and barely broke. Kiddo and I worked cows in

photos by tim gipson





Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico before I hauled him to Deep Springs. He was not going to be thrown into a hole in the Dry Lot. Instead, I picked a spot along the north fence. There, I could stop by and see him and people could ride by and pay their respects. I buried him and piled rocks on top of his grave. He would not be forgotten. Sometime later, the paint mare, Honey died. I buried her along the same fence and laid rocks to mark her grave. Then my loyal Corgi, Winston passed away and I laid him next to Kiddo. Then came Vera, the dairy cow. No longer would the dairy cows be butchered or thrown into the dead animal pit. These faithful animals would be given the dignity that they deserved. Pancho left us way too soon. Then the magnificent cow horse, Bob. He hung on for five years eating the expensive special diet that I concocted to keep him alive. He could barely walk but he knew when it was time to eat and would nicker at you to make sure you wouldn't forget. Then the dairy cow, Juno, mother of Euclid, was laid to rest. The wild mustang, Tuscarora took his place in glory. And this morning it was Lefty's turn. Now, he and Pancho will find one another in that great green pasture where all good horses go. And we will remember them all and be thankful that our lives were made fuller and that we are better people from having been in their presence.

In 2018 I bought Lefty in Arizona. He didn't have a name. A few days later, I bought another horse, when I asked if he had a name, they told me they called him Pancho. Pancho and Lefty, no brainer.

In Loving Memory: Robert Hale Prather II

Robert Hale Prather II, 84, passed away peacefully at home in Richmond, California, on February 8, 2026. Hale was a man defined by his passion for social justice, the natural world, and his deep appreciation for the quiet, ordinary moments of human life. He truly found wonder in the everyday.

Born in Madera, California, Hale was the son of Robert Hale Prather, a descendant of an Anderson Valley pioneer family, and Barbara Prather (née Smith). Barbara was born in India, where her family's service as Presbyterian missionaries established a five-generation connection to the Indian subcontinent—a legacy Hale deeply valued throughout his life.

Hale's commitment to community and leadership began early. He became an Eagle Scout at the age of 17, a milestone that reflected his lifelong dedication to service. He graduated in the Class of 1959 from Sir Francis Drake High School in San Anselmo, where he served as Student Body President and ran hurdles for the track team. He also spent a formative summer as an AFS exchange student in France - a subject he would frequently reference in conversation throughout his life.

In the fall of 1959, Hale attended Deep Springs College, where all students receive full scholarships. He spent three years in the program, was Student Body President and balanced rigorous academic studies with cattle ranch work in a community dedicated to the service of humanity. He transferred to UC Berkeley in 1962, graduating with a degree in Anthropology.

Music played a large role in his life, from his Aunt Ernestine playing piano at family gatherings, to his father as part of a barbershop quartet. He continued the tradition and joined the Men's Glee Club at UC Berkeley and participated in joint concerts with the Women's Treble Clef where he met his future wife Nancy Horikoshi.

They married in 1963 at Stewart Chapel within the San Francisco Theological Seminary. Hale later earned a Master's of Divinity from the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley and was ordained a deacon in the United Methodist Church.

Following graduation, Hale and Nancy joined the Ecumenical Institute (aka Institute of Cultural Affairs), a non-profit focused on church renewal and community development. Their work began at the Westside of Chicago's "Fifth City" neighborhood, to Manchester, New Hampshire, and eventually to the Human Development Project of Barrio Sudtonggan in the Visayan region of the Philippines.

During their five years in Sudtonggan, Hale served as Director, working to improve community income, schooling, and health services. By expanding and developing local industries—including buri furniture making, abaca crafts, and limestone cutting—he helped revitalize the local economy. A community preschool was launched and a health clinic that significantly reduced infant mortality and disease, was established.

Upon returning to California, the family settled in Marin City. Hale transitioned to a career with the Social Security Administration, where he served with dedication until his retirement in 2006.

Hale had a rare gift for connecting with others. Whether on family fishing trips, crabbing under the



Golden Gate, hiking Mt. Tamalpais, or flying kites with his sons, he would inevitably "chat up" the people he met. While these pauses were often to the initial chagrin of his young sons, they invariably led to pleasant conversations and unexpected insights. In every neighborhood he lived in, Hale was the person everyone knew and greeted by name.

In his later years, Hale became an avid bird watcher and photographer. He volunteered for many years at the Richardson Bay Audubon Center & Sanctuary, interpreting the ecology of the bay for countless children.

Hale is survived by his wife, Nancy Minako Prather; his sons, David (&Cristina) of Berkeley and Thomas (&Abigail) of Richmond; his grandchildren, Truls, Alexandra, and Andrea; and his sisters, Nancy Johnson (&Samuel) and Margaret Krauss (&Kit).

Hale lives on in the hearts of his dear friends and family. Rest in peace.

announcements

Deep Springs Connect

The Deep Springs College alumni directory has a new home! Scan the QR code to join Deep Springs Connect, our new alumni and friends online community and also stay on top of Deep Springs news, events and more!

Deep Springs Labor Day Reunion 2026

Please join us at the college over labor day weekend 2026 from the afternoon of Friday, September 4th through the morning of September 7th for an all classes alumni reuninon! Former staff and faculty and current and former trustees are invited as well!

Please direct any questions you may have to development@deepsprings.edu

If you enjoyed this newsletter, or you have feedback to give, please don't hesitate to email the communications committee at **comcom@deepsprings.edu** Or if you have any announcements or life updates — big or small — you'd like to inform the Deep Springs community of!

Love,

ComCom

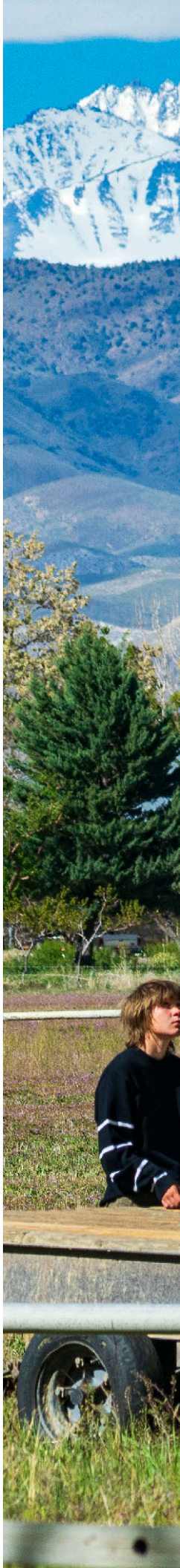


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