

the VOICE OF THE DESERT

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an interview

ELLYN GREENE
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Maimonides and
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All Community Photo:



from left to right:

Photo by Luca Roy

- Standing:
Ada King, Tosca Hegel-Cantarella, Sofia Mikulasek, Jeff Miller, Martha Marvin, Aaron Tugendhaft, Jeremy Choy, Yasmina Usmanova, Andy Zink, Tahm Lloyd, Nik Cooper, Brendan Symons, Haley Lee, John Martindale, Ed Gollin, Sam Hancock, Brian Hill, Harper Yonago, Dashel Myers, Sam Laney
- Seated:
Paul Hough II, Will Xu, Gabe Hough, Eli Hough, Randi Hough, Paul ‘P3’ Hough III, Ellyn Greene, Blair Hough, Sasha Halperin, Kel Weaver, Hannah Erickson, Eden Knight, Keavan Kearns, Grace Goudie, Magdalena Christopher, L.L. Nunn, Victoria Bakulina, Grisha London, Nora Biernat, Makoto Kikuchi, Don Favareau, Mina Khanlarzadeh
- Not Pictured:
Tim Gipson, Lance Bell, Eli Lerner, Lucas Xie, Sarah Knight, Luca Roy, Katie Ippolito, Eric Billings, Ruby LaRocca, Lucinda Bean, Jeremy Bearer-Friend

Time at Deep Springs

BY MAKOTO KIKUCHI

Until around the age of ten, I was often afraid of dying. As a child, when I thought, “I will die someday,” I felt an anxiety no more precisely expressible than the fear that came over me when I imagined the sky falling. By the time I reached my late teens—perhaps because I had grown up in Japan: a safe, sanitary, developed country—I began to understand that human beings do not die so easily. My description of death became, “I will die someday, but probably not soon.” Gradually, I began to feel a certain weariness toward the fact that I must go on living until I die. It was like a movie that isn’t bad enough to leave halfway through, but one you probably wouldn’t watch again if you could go back. That became a metaphor for my life.

I could never quite think that being alive was a wonderful thing. As Schopenhauer says, our lives consist only of suffering and boredom; or as Pascal says, we continue living within the act of hunting rabbits we do not even desire—that is to say, within distraction. Thinking about what it means to live, and finding myself unable not to think about what death means, naturally led me to think about time.

Invent a new way of keeping time was one of my application essays. In it, I wrote—beautifully, if to a banal conclusion—that since time is, for us, a river whose current changes speed, there ought to be a way of measuring time that is not physically constant. If, as modern people generally assume, time appears to everyone as something objective, the same for all, a quantitatively measurable resource, then of course my conclusion might seem counterintuitive.

Yet everyone shares the experience that time passes quickly when we are having fun and slowly during a boring meeting. In Japanese, the word “時間” (jikan, time) is a compound of “溶ける” (toke-ru, to melt) and “間” (aida, interval). Ice melts; wind melts into a room; something changes, and through that change, we recognize that time has passed. What we perceive is not a punctual, specific, objective instant, but rather change—and the gradient of that



change—namely, interval. This reminds me how unfamiliar modern, clock-measured time really is to our lived experience.

Time which feels slow and tedious should be made to run faster on the clock, and time that passes too quickly should count, in measurement, as only a short while. I often dream of such a world. I wish boring SB meetings would pass quickly, and that wonderful seminars would never end.

People who visit Deep Springs, and those who come for an ApVisit, often say, “Time flows slowly here.” Compared to urban time, the time of an isolated community seems to flow slowly. It’s an argument that sounds familiar, but any student who has actually lived here would say that’s nonsense. If anything, I feel more chased by time here than in the city. There are so many things I want to do, and even more that I have to do. Time rushes by quick-

I feel more chased by time here than in the city.

The Cattle Guard

Photo by Luca Roy

ly. For someone who has two classes starting at 9:30 and then labor in the afternoon, the hours from 9:30 to 5 disappear in an instant. Even after dinner at six, there’s PubSpeak, SB, someone giving a talk, or committee work—truly, a day passes in a flash.

In modern society the question becomes how to consume one’s limited time efficiently, and this situation is no different at Deep Springs. Here too, time is often treated as something “to be consumed for a purpose”: “I have to finish this reading in two hours,” or “I have to work for the next four hours,” and so on. The concept of the present as a means toward the future dominates here.

Perhaps because our space is limited, I often mix up timelines. I can’t quite remember whether something happened six months ago or three months ago. I also become sensitive to subtle chang-

.... time seems to thicken and grow viscous, and afterward the sense of having “wasted” time feels pleasant—like the fullness after a delicious meal.

es in my surroundings: “Huh, it’s the end of term, but there’s no SB. ...it’s Sunday, but there’s no reading group. ...it’s unusually bright outside the barn tonight.”

Since being assigned to Dairy, I’ve watched Orion slowly rise from lying down to standing upright—and now, Orion stands completely. Time here possesses a certain cyclical nature, a sense of recurrence.

We often say “that’s good” when someone says they wasted time or did nothing. I sense in this a certain wariness toward the link between means and ends. Yet the “did nothing” in such cases does not mean that you spend time on, say, watching Instagram Reels. Not that kind of symbolic, infinitely repeatable consumption, but rather when one wastes time talking with someone, or wastes time pleasure reading, one receives that kind of comment (praise?). It’s like how popcorn can be eaten endlessly, but you get full after two cannelés.

When talking with someone, time seems to thicken and grow viscous, and afterward the sense of having “wasted” time feels pleasant—like the fullness after a delicious meal.

When I think about time on a larger scale, I often recall Lucas’s metaphor and Oleanna’s from last year. Lucas said that Term 6 felt slow, almost post-mortem, while Term 1 was like communal noise. Oleanna compared her two years at Deep Springs to a human life: born as a baby, wandering and growing, raising children, and then dying. “That,” she said, “is why eulogies are written.” I became more aware of this as a second-year. A second-year runs the same track again; time flows faster, and there are fewer surprises.

Since being assigned to Dairy, people told me, “You’ll see shooting stars every day,” but in reality, what I see every day is, as I mentioned earlier, Orion, who once laid across the mountains, slowly standing up. Earlier I said that this proved time here has a cyclical nature, but perhaps time is closer to a

shooting star than to the standing Orion. When you recall the past, it's always too late. The shooting star has already slipped out of view, and all we can do is regret.

Once, I saw many shooting stars above the Main Building—on my way back from Henderson, after finishing my run. But they turned out to be bats illuminated by the porch light. I felt betrayed by the fake shooting stars. Perhaps all shooting stars are, in a sense, betrayers. They are never within reach. The moment you find a beautiful shooting star, it vanishes, leaving you to wish it would happen again. Shooting stars! How much I am trapped in you! It's similar to when you almost wish for a sudden summer rain, only so that you can take refuge in a café—something that always happens to me during summers in Japan. Shooting stars are always retrospective: you miss them. There are no true shooting stars that you can enjoy while they are shining, while they are ending their own journey.

Whenever I walk at night with someone, it is always the other person who sees the shooting stars first. I always have to keep my eyes sharp on the sky. By the time someone says, "Look, there!" it's already too late. The shooting star is gone. Time moves slowly, and before you know it, it's over.

**But perhaps what I must do is not sink in-
to the melancholic mood of time passing without
warning, but rather to immerse myself in time itself.**

I do not want to desire something because it is the future, to despise it because it is the present, or to cherish it merely because it has become the past. Nothing, I think, is sadder than an instrumentalized present—or than romantic retrospection. So I want, as much as possible, to cherish the present—to waste it lovingly, as one eats a cannelé—and to enjoy my remaining time here.

*There are no true shooting stars that you can enjoy
while they are shining... ending their own journey.*



Grass in the Desert?

BY BRENDAN SYMONS DS'24

The war against entropy is one which we are destined to lose. The cups will be brought back to the main building, dust will blow through opened windows, and the toilets will be clogged. Very little feels permanent when on General Labor.

As Heraclitus (probably) says:

“It is weariness to toil at the same tasks and be always beginning.”

Why then, are we trying to grow grass in the desert? What really is landscaping? The origin of the word is the English ‘landscape’, then the 16th century Middle-Dutch lantscap: literally land-ship. A landscape is the visible area of land set out in front of us. A landscaper is one who sets out to sculpt the land to be more beautiful.

It is fitting that the word finds its home among the marshes of Zeeland and the canals of Leiden. 17% of Dutch territory is reclaimed land. The Dutch have fought their war against water, and by most accounts it seems they have won.

But isn't Heraclitus right to (probably) say: *“Cold warms up, warm cools off, moist parches, dry dampens...”* Surely there will come a day when the clogs click-clack no longer, when ‘hallo’ and ‘tot ze- ins’ are foreign words with no meaning. It is nothing but this, the *unceasing abiding flow* which rules over man.

**If we did not sculpt the land with steady hands
the canals would overtop, the tulips would
wilt, and the sea would wash away the Neth-
erlands.**

The grass grows slowly. There are some days when it doesn't seem to have grown at all. The weeds are ever-present and removing them can become quite a strain if the task of turning off the landscaping is neglected. The Dorm irrigation system will likely be turned off again in the future.



The Dorm Grass

Photo by Luca Roy

At Deep Springs, you'll often find notes scribbled down during a DS'97 SB meeting, tin cans tossed in the desert, and unreturned library copies of Thus Spoke Zarathustra in unexpected places.

We are left with just pieces from a much grander story of the war against entropy. Looking up from the wheelbarrow overflowing with dirt to the mountains in the distance, you are left feeling like your work is pointless. The 'Heraclitian (probably) instinct' is not entirely without cause.

Yet Heraclitus, removed from the polis as he was, still needed to tend to his fire.

Landscaping is a statement of our settled nature. Landscaping is proof of our civilization. Growing grass in the desert is not a hubristic attempt to dominate nature, but rather a statement of that quality which makes us most human. Setting-down roots in one place, and treating our created world with careful and close attention. That means adjusting your sprinklerheads, cleaning your toilets, and bringing your cups back to the BH.

*...unreturned library copies of Thus Spoke
Zarathustra in unexpected places.*

THEY'RE COMING TO LIVE IN MY CAR

BY BRIAN HILL, NATURAL SCIENCE CHAIR
AND RAT-HATING LOVER OF RABBITS

(With Heartfelt Apologies to the Original Artist:
Napoleon XIV)

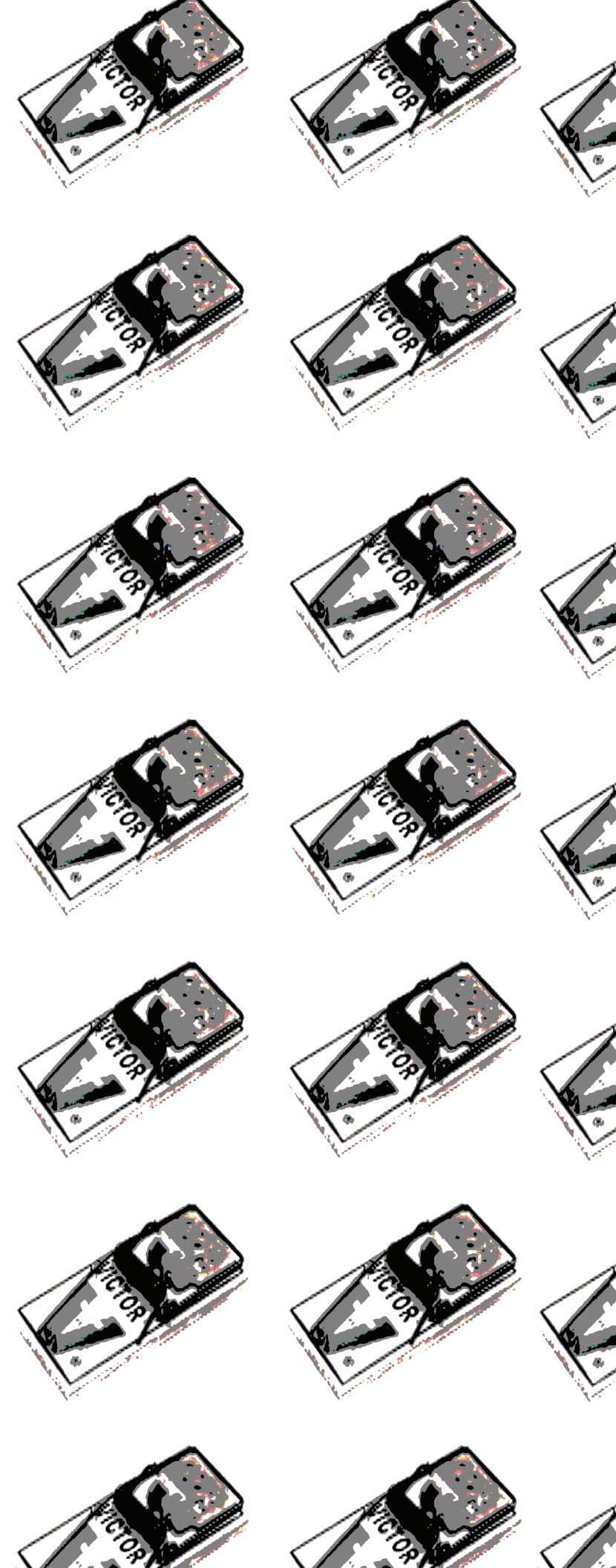
They're coming to live in my car,
HA-HA, they're coming to live in my car,
HO-HO, HEE-HEE, HA-HA,

pelletting on top of the air filter
pissing on top of the battery
building forts in the glovebox
eating the wires with their razor teeth
shredding the insulation and piling it up
and they're coming to live in my car,
HA-HAAAA!

You thought it was a joke,
and so you LAUGHED, YOU LAUGHED!
and you left the problem to me
but now you know I'm delirious
AND...

they're coming to live in my walls,
HA-HAAAA, they're tunneling in my walls,
HO-HO, HEE-HEE, HA-HA

they're scrambling through the attic
they're gathering in the basement
they're gnawing the baseboards and the wiring
they're shredding the insulation
and they're coming to live in my walls,
HA-HAAAAAAAAA . . .



A Guide to the Symbiotic Culture of Bacteria and Yeast

BY MAGDALENA CHRISTOPHER DS'25

Know that when the aesthetes among the SB began to compile this newsletter, themselves called ComCom, an objection arose from the humble student quarters of the BH, itself called KomCom. Now ComCom [Communications Committee] and KomCom [Kombucha Committee] are terms indistinguishable by external meaning, but their internal meaning is as far from the other as the brothel is from the temple, and from this springs great perplexity.

You see, ComCom is composed of aesthetes. Thus they say black white and red is so overdone, and so on. This serif is giving medieval, and so on. They are worse than the vulgar; they turn their attentions to the typeface, then to the kerning, then to the CMYK; and never do they turn to God, may He be exalted, in their endless aesthetic toil.

The most exemplary of students, Hannah Erickson and Lucinda Bean, may their memory be blessed, decided that it is time to do something for the Lord. Thus they formed KomCom, the last bastion of divine science at Deep Springs. You see, these most perfect of students, peace be on them, turned their attention towards the Symbiotic Cultures of Bacteria and Yeast of Amazon, For whoso findeth them findeth life, for they are life unto those that find them. With the divine probiotic life in their hands, Hannah and Lucinda commenced on that most holy of primary batches, Mother Mary. From the ferment of Mother Mary's womb came the next,



Lucinda Bean DS'25 and Hannah Erickson DS'25

KomCom Meeting

Photos by Magdalena Christopher

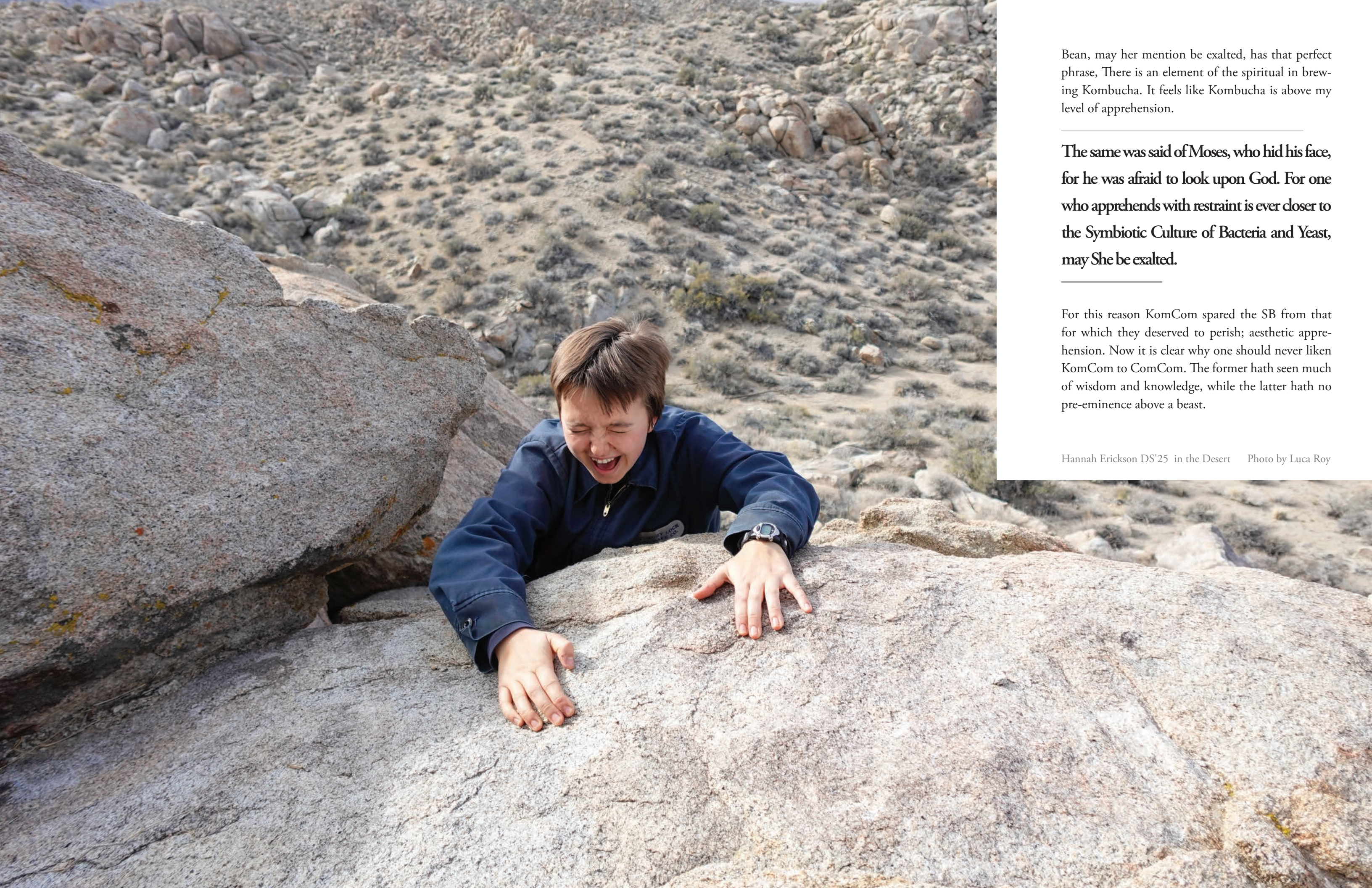
Mother Goose. Through that unceasing motion of fermentation will come many more; Mother Earth, Mamma Cass, Mamma Tried, Mamma Mia! And so on, until the highest shelf of the BH student section overflows with such divine ferment, those golden jars of which it is said: Harken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good. And, having been partaken of, cures The trouble of thy bowels; for, turning our apprehension towards Him, we see that Thy law is within my bowels.

ComCom, by comparison, is nothing more than an idolatrous cult. You see, their imaginations cause them to believe in a great number of false doctrines. They see God in Bodoni, Garamond, Merriweather, and so on. These views need not be expounded. It will suffice to say that such views constitute an absolute denial of faith. This is why of the aesthetes it is said: How much less one that is abominable and impure, man who drinketh iniquity like water! Know this.

Even so, dear reader, that divine ferment, the Kombucha, does overflow into this desert, and makes pure those who drinketh iniquity like water. You see, the Lord, may He be exalted, has ordained this overflow towards the iniquitous. This is why it is said of ComCom: O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment, and Thou, O Rock, hast established them for correction.

KomCom is composed of that class of prophets who receive God's word through the Symbiotic Cultures of Bacteria and Yeast. It is through their Kombucha that pure beneficence, that munificence, that activity causing good to overflow, is made clear. For that reason, at the sight of a pompous aesthete drinking Kombucha, it is said: He giveth to the beast his food, and so on; Thou openest Thy hand, and satisfiest every living thing with favor, and so on.

One of the Deep Springs prophets, Lucinda



Bean, may her mention be exalted, has that perfect phrase, 'There is an element of the spiritual in brewing Kombucha. It feels like Kombucha is above my level of apprehension.'

The same was said of Moses, who hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. For one who apprehends with restraint is ever closer to the Symbiotic Culture of Bacteria and Yeast, may She be exalted.

For this reason KomCom spared the SB from that for which they deserved to perish; aesthetic apprehension. Now it is clear why one should never liken KomCom to ComCom. The former hath seen much of wisdom and knowledge, while the latter hath no pre-eminence above a beast.

Hannah Erickson DS'25 in the Desert Photo by Luca Roy

Public Speaking

BY NIK COOPER DS'25

The age of oration has died. A 2019 study led by generational psychologist and author Jean Twenge concluded that “the vocabulary of the average U.S. adult declined between the mid-1970s and the 2010s...across all levels of educational attainment...with the largest declines among those with a bachelor's or graduate degree;” the preferred mode of presidential communication to the American polity is limited to 500 characters and uses CAPITAL LETTERS to deliver emphasis; each day, we limp closer to Orwell's Newspeak. This is ungood.

Gone, too, are the days of public storytelling—consumption has been ruthlessly atomized. The movie theater is on the brink of extinction, usurped by the lethally private medium of streaming service. In ancient Athens, the state established a fund to cover the ticket cost of citizens' admission to the annual theatrical festival of Dionysus. Today, even the theater of Sesame Street is no longer considered worth supporting—this year, Americans saw NPR and PBS defunded.

Consumption and composition are threatened in tandem—as a generation is raised outsourcing the penmanship of their very emails to artificial intelligence, classicist James Redfield's 1963 claim that “in our society, rhetoric is seldom more than an ornament on the serious business of things; [whereas] in Athens it was at the heart of the operation of society” begins to seem quaint. An ornament is, if useless, still considered a pulchritudinous object, worthy of admiration and attention. Rhetorical oration might be more tactfully referred to as a fossil, of value to a select, dusty and erudite few, a roped off museum exhibit, a Triassic-age skeleton for children to point at on field trips—curious, perhaps, but lifeless.

Every Tuesday night, the Deep Springs community congregates in the college's navel—the main

...each day, we limp closer to Orwell's Newspeak. This is ungood.



Thanksgiving DSPAC.

room. Students, staff, and faculty alike flock to the motley array of threadbare couches, whose well-worn appearance can be in part accounted for by this hebdomadal over-crowding; four to a couch, we sit, to practice and appreciate the art of oration. For an hour, this is where we remain, as seven speakers approach a weathered wooden lectern; for an hour, with breath bated, the hush and rustle of a human crowd often punctuated by bursts of rhapsodic laughter, we listen.

We speak quite often of that which makes Deep Springs unique—the isolation policy, student self-governance, the undergradately unprecedented lack of drugs and alcohol, honest labor, the absence of tuition—but little is said of perhaps the most idiosyncratic facet of the Deep Springs education: Public Speaking, or PubSpeak, the three speeches that every member of the student body is required to deliver per semester.

Alongside the isolation policy, PubSpeak was enshrined by L.L. Nunn in the college's trust.

Photo by Daniel Bell

If Nunn's vision for the requirement was that of formal rhetorical education, he would likely be rather crestfallen to see what form this ghost-pillar has taken, in the turn of a century. We do not read Hugh Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres or Cicero's De Oratore. There is no seminar on the art of rhetoric, no lecture on the powerful vice of preterition. Though we must needs, at times, give formally structured, persuasive speeches, PubSpeak is more often than not a rather eccentric and stem-winding affair. It is an education in oration, in the art of storytelling—in a kind of story-telling that is all but extinct in the modern. Where else does the 21st-century American listen to the spoken word, at length, in the company of others? There is, of course, the theater—but a ticket to last week's Broadway performance of Othello sold for an average of \$338.83. There are renegade counter-culturalists, like the New York-based nonprofit, the Moth, which hosts public storytelling events—but it is trying to describe these efforts as anything but fringe.

At Deep Springs, PubSpeak does not straggle around the periphery; it is an essential conduit of myth and memory. What, really, is the value of a fleshly audience? If we can pirate Othello on YouTube, can access a horizonless sea of podcasts with the clicking of but a few keys, why cram ourselves into an over-stuffed, inevitably over-warm, occasionally over-ripe room for an hour every Tuesday night?

It is all too easy to forget that the practice of silent reading is not intrinsic to the existence of the story. A passage in St. Augustine's Confessions has given classicists good reason to suspect that as late as the fourth century, silent reading was viewed as an oddity; when reading alone, the men of antiquity are thought to have read aloud—“*clare legere*,” as it is known in Latin. “Voice,” Seamus Heaney is thought to have said, “helps to carry words farther and deeper than the eye.”

Poetry predates written language—it is believed that the Iliad and the Odyssey were, at their genesis, oral compositions; the Vedas were transmitted for centuries without ever touching a page.

Mankind has been literate for roughly 5,000 years. Homo Sapiens have existed for over 300,000. In the pre-literate ages, bardic figures were the keepers of a great gift, the vessels of story in an unlettered landscape. If Nunn would be disappointed by the rigour of rhetorical education at Deep Springs, he might have taken solace in the thought that perhaps this is what we are training to do—to become the bards of a post-literate world.

If we can pirate Othello on YouTube, can access a horizonless sea of podcasts with the clicking of but a few keys, why cram ourselves into an over-stuffed, inevitably over-warm, occasionally over-ripe room for an hour every Tuesday night?

An Interview With Don Favareau

BY ADA KING DS'24

Aberrant philosopher, renegade teacher, Donald Favareau (Don!) joins us for his second year in a row educating the students of Deep Springs about Biosemiotics, Bateson, and Ethnomethodology. As a student in Don's biosemiotics class, I can attest to his idiosyncratic teaching style, highly effective metaphors, and generous dispersal of enthusiasm in the seminar classroom. Prevented from instituting the porch light policy—seeing as he does not have a porch light— he's told students to come on over anytime before one in the morning. Tirelessly, Don upholds the academic pillar in the valley, and is a strict adherent to prolix emails before every class. He's had a peripatetic scholarly career, currently teaching at the University Scholars Programme (USP) at the National University of Singapore when he's not in the Valley. The following notes are from a conversation I had with Don about his primary area of expertise, Biosemiotics, and where Deep Springs is going.

VOD: How did you end up in Biosemiotics? It's admittedly a rather obscure field of study.

Don: In some ways, I could trace the whole thing to when I was a very unhappy 12-year-old. I got this book on readings in existentialism because I wanted to read this story by Kafka called *In the Penal Colony*. In the book was a selection from Dostoevsky called *Notes from Underground*, and it's this gigantic rebellion against everything, basically. It was exactly the type of thing you shouldn't give to a 12-year-old who's already feeling pretty alienated, right?

There's all this business of consciousness—it's a disease, you know, a man of action is stupid—and all this stuff that appealed to my 12-year-old alienation. But I guess what stuck from that was a kind of visceral unease that I took away with my own mind. Being conscious per se, having these thoughts torching in your head all the time. What's that all about? I suppose a healthier way would have been to go into psychology or psychiatry, but I didn't, because I was 12



Don, center, with his Biosemiotics Class and Kel years old, and I was in a very scrappy suburb of New York. So I basically stopped going to high school. I kind of figured—there's another ridiculous, romantic idea from Dostoevsky—that I would just submerge myself into the gutter and find out what life was like among the suffering. It was really pretty 12-year-old and teenage and romantic. But, of course, being the person who I am, I took it way too far, and I just stopped going to high school completely by the second or third year, and didn't go back to school until I was 35. In that time, I'd always read, I'd always tried to educate myself. But, you know, the question of mindedness stuck with me. Later, I signed up for community college and the two courses available were "History of Western Thought" and "Symbolic Logic" and I never left since. I went on to get my AA, my BA, you know, MA, PhD, teaching jobs, tenure, the whole thing just went on from there.

VOD: And where did the whole thing go on to?

Don: Well Philosophy of Mind, at least when I was UCLA, was still being taught very much from an analytic philosophical tradition. Conceptually, they were posing questions like: What could a mind be, and if a mind existed on Twin Earth where water was made out of H₃O, what would that mean? It was all this kind of analytic philosophy—Donald Davidson

Nelson Goodman, Jerry Fodor, Daniel Dennett—all this philosophy of mind mixed in with what I think was bad analytic philosophy. I wasn't satisfied with that. So for my Masters degree and PhD, I wanted to enroll in a program that focused on the neurobiology of language. I figured that something about "mind-ness" must have to do with the brain, so I needed to learn how the brain works—basic neurobiology. I also understood that the nature of my internal monologue was in language; it wasn't just classical language, but something internalized.

So I asked: what do I need to know about language, and what do I need to know about the brain before I could get a grasp on this concept of mind?

At that time—the 1990s, the "decade of the brain"—there were all these books coming out from neuroscientists who had spent their lives on neurobiology, now writing about where they thought consciousness might be located in the brain, or how the brain might produce the phenomenon of mind. These were fascinating books with lots of good ideas and serious thought behind them, but the issue was that they weren't really getting at the experience of "mindedness." They were examining the neural substrate of awareness, maybe language use and perception, but there was always what's called the explanatory gap.

We talked about this in class: Understanding how neural transmissions might be necessary for the emergence of something like mindiness, but not sufficient. Just knowing the mechanisms doesn't tell you how the transfer of calcium and potassium ions becomes a memory, a belief, or a thought. Even today, the best we can do is make correlations. You can train brains and machines to correlate signals—say, to move a computer mouse—but the problem of the experience of mindedness remains untouched.

Just knowing the mechanisms doesn't tell you how the transfer of calcium and potassium ions becomes a memory, a belief, or a thought. Even today, the best we can do is make correlations.

VOD: So that's where biosemiotics attempts tactility?

Don: Yeah, there's got to be some point where, especially in biology—especially within the science of knowing systems—where there is true dialogue. When we're talking about mind, we're not just talking about the ability of neurons to strengthen their synaptic connections. That's not yet mind. And when we're talking about phenomenology, we're not just talking about what we can describe in the words of our own immediate experiences. There is something in between these two that actually tries to account for all the constraints that are demanded for explanation on each side; the biological explanation of phenomenology and the biological explanation of

biology at the same time. And those questions are where biosemiotics attempts an answer. How do you get a physical system that is, in every way, explainable in terms of physics and chemistry, to become a knowing system? Because you don't see that anywhere else in the inorganic world—you only see it in living systems.

So Biosemiotics is trying to work within the constraints on explanations that are rightfully demanded on each side, so as to develop a biological explanation of phenomenology, and the phenomenological explanation of biology that might be needed to square this circle.

VOD: What is the biosemiotics scene like on the ground?

Don: Well it started in earnest in 2001 with a very small conference of about forty people, which was fascinating because the participants came from all over the world and didn't know each other. Some were embryologists, some molecular biologists, others animal ethologists, anthropologists, and philosophers. There was no guarantee the conference would continue, but I and several other of the participants decided then that we wanted to help keep it going. Since then, we've held the conference every year.

One thing that attracted me to this group, besides the ideas themselves, was its egalitarian spirit. None of the existing disciplines were answering the questions we cared about, so we decided to just form our own. And unlike typical academic structures, which can be hierarchical and often toxic, this was meant to be different. Traditional academia—especially conferences—can become competitive, superficial arms races of publication metrics and status games. You go to a big neurobiology conference and there are a thousand people, corporate sponsors like Pfizer or Moderna, superstar keynote speakers paid to talk for forty minutes and leave, while struggling

graduate students present to empty rooms.

Our group was the opposite. It was completely egalitarian. It didn't matter if you were a famous forty-year-old philosopher, an interested amateur, or a graduate student. Everyone got the same thirty minutes to present, everyone paid the same rate, and no one was brought in as a celebrity guest. And we've kept that ethos ever since. We wanted to create a new kind of academic society, a new journal, a new book series—something that filled a gap that others weren't addressing. And, just like Deep Springs, one of the reasons we do what we do is simply because no one else is doing it. Not to be novel, but because we recognize a need in the academic community and feel that somebody has to take the initiative to begin working on it.

An Interview with Ellyn Greene

BY BRENDAN SYMONS DS'24

The Deep Springs Garden has undergone a significant revival under the tenure of Deep Springs new garden manager Ellyn Greene. Ellyn has managed to turn a small-scale dust irrigating operation into a agricultural engine. I sat down for an interview with Ellyn over dinner as we ate some of her Kale.

VOD: Tell me about yourself!

Ellyn: I was born in Nuremberg, Germany. My dad served in the army for 30 years so we grew up moving around a lot. I went to highschool and college in Virginia. During college, I became really interested in politics and my ability to impact my immediate community and decided that the way that I felt I could contribute was through kind of small scale agriculture. I was really lucky to know that was what I wanted to do out of college and that's what I started to pursue.

In 2017, my partner Nick and I started managing a larger small scale organic vegetable farm. And



then on the side, we started contracting seeds as well. So we grew seeds for seed companies. A few years into that we started running the operation for around 4 years. But the scale of it all just felt a little bit overwhelming for us because it was a very large facility. I think that I felt a little bit lost about what my impact really was at that point.

think I knew I wanted to go into either education or the nonprofit world, seeking something with a little more direct impact.

When the Dean Springs job popped up, it just seemed like a place that I was really suited for based on my own background and interests. It's great, I get to grow food here and feed my very, very, very immediate community, and seeing that return is so awesome.

VOD: How do you view a life of service to humanity in context with agriculture? How did your views shift over time?

Ellyn: When I was in college I did a lot of activism. And something that I ran into time and time again was ideological infighting. I've spent a lot of time around conservative rural folks, and while that's not what my politics are I have a lot of empathy for people from that background. And so even though I was in this intense leftist space it didn't always sit right with me.

And so at some point, I was trying to decide how to move forward knowing that I wanted to to pursue a career that was of service and I started working in a garden and I loved that. I did archaeological digs in college and I realized I loved physical labor, working in my hands, and being outside.

So there were sort of these personal preferences in combination with my desire to do something impactful and it came down to: what do all people need no matter what? Across the board, ubiquitously, people need food.

VOD: How have you found managing the garden? You're the garden manager, but at Deep Sprims you're also a garden educator. How have you adapted to that role?

Ellyn: It's really great. In some ways it was a natural transition because I have been managing either my own employees or other people's employees for almost a decade. Early on in my management experience, I learned that it's a very different skill set than just farming and being good at growing food. And luckily, I feel that it's a strength of mine. Teaching is so much about understanding what people need, and how the people you're trying to teach understand things. I'm used to starting from the beginning and that diversity of people with different learning needs.

VOD: You're a very disciplined person. You go on these hundreds of mile long runs-

Ellyn: Only 100, to be fair.

So far.

VOD: Still, quite impressive! You make sure that all of your laborers are punctual and focused. What do you think is the importance of discipline?

Ellyn: I'll talk about part of the reason I ask students to be really disciplined, which apparently I've gotten a reputation for.

Especially with things like punctuality and preparedness, honestly, to me, it's a matter of consideration of your peers and their time. All of us have so much on our plate, and in order to minimize the burden on each other if we agree to be at a place at a certain time, I expect that we can all be there at that time.

There's so much joy to be had in the work that I do, and I do find a lot of joy in it, but I also try to be very intentional and conscientious about it most of the time.

VOD: Do you think this ties into your ultramarathon running?

Ellyn: I was expecting you to ask me if it ties into my military upbringing-*I don't think it's because of that*. Honestly I was not very disciplined when I was younger, especially when I was in college. Discipline is how I get out of my own way. It sort of just sets the stage for me to perform well in either, work or my athletics or my interpersonal relationships. It allows me to be present for people and be the version of myself that I like to present to the world.

I think that my way of sort of achieving discipline and having an outlet for that desire for extreme experience has been pursuing extreme physical feats. And running just brings me a lot of joy, honestly.

VOD: Speed Round.

Favorite Scrams Band? — Oh my gosh. It has to be Circle Takes the Square.

Favorite vegetable? — That's a hard one. Depends on the season. Summer it's got to be the tomato. Basic as it may be. And some hot peppers. And cilantro. I get really excited for cilantro. In the winter, maybe like a nice golden beet.

How many tons of tomatoes has the garden produced? — Several. Several tons. And that is not an exaggeration. *Upwards of two?* Yeah. I would say more than two tons. Maybe between two and four.

Least favorite vegetable.

Probably chard or kohlrabi.

And one fun fact that you haven't told me so far.

I only have nine toenails.



An Interview with Jeff Miller

BY BRENDAN SYMONS DS'24

Jeff Miller, the new Dean of Deep Springs College, is an undeniably cool guy. He can be seen driving around campus on his white motorcycle, sporting bespoke Italian loafers, and walking his one-eyed dog, Loki. Miller joined us as Dean after his tenure as a visiting professor in 2024; when he taught Foundations of Liberalism. Aside from his responsibilities as Dean, Jeff also teaches a class on Greek Tragedy and The Political. The class is hosted in his house, where he provides students with artful arrangements of charcuterie and warm ambient lighting.

VOD: Tell me about yourself.

Jeff: Well, that's a pretty open question. I've been on the East Coast for a long time. I went to graduate school at the University of Virginia, and prior to getting a tenured job at SUNY New Paltz, most of my visiting and assistant professorships were on the East Coast. So I've actually lived there for the longest portion of my life, but I still sort of identified as a Southern Californian, but also culturally Mormon. I was raised as a Mormon, but I no longer practice.

I see a lot of my later academic interests, oddly coming out of that Mormon background—interests in questions of community—questions of how we construct the self within our wider community. These are very interesting topics in political theory, but I think they are also things that I'm interested in because of that background.

It's one of the reasons I'm captivated by a place like Deep Springs where you can have that sort of intense feeling of community that is both given to you by the traditions of college, but also a very much alive tradition.

VOD: Why political theory?

Jeff: I was always interested in politics, I thought from when I was in high school that I would go into politics. And at UC Santa Cruz, for whatever reason, in my first year, I took up political theory. Of course, I probably didn't really know what it was at the time—I just signed up for it because everyone was talking about it.

I took a history of political theory class which went from the Greeks all the way up to the present day and it changed my mind about what I was interested in. I was still interested in politics in kind of the usual sense of the term, but I gradually became more and more interested in how we think about politics, fundamental concepts in politics, and how political thought bumps up against philosophy and literature.

I didn't know it at the time, but Santa Cruz was a really weird place where there were four political theorists in the politics department, which is almost unheard of in a small department. So it was not too hard for me to get a politics major and take nearly only political theory as an undergraduate. We also had the History of Consciousness program there, so people like Teresa de L Reyes and Donna Harraraway were there. It was a place where I often heard lectures or discussions that I did not understand—and I really wanted to understand. That made me think about graduate school. But when I graduated, I still thought I was going to go directly into politics, and I did. I worked for a couple of years in Congress.

VOD: Could you tell me a bit about that experience? How did you go from congressional staffer to a professor?

Jeff: My first job was working for a Republican congressman and that cured me of wanting to work in politics. It also kind of cured me of being a Republican as well. It was a great experience in many ways. I learned a lot working both in the district and in Washington, D.C. But watching the sausage be made was unpleasant sometimes, and I thought it was unnecessarily unpleasant, in the way that the Re-



Jeff Miller and Loki

Photo by Brendan Symons

publican caucus did things back then—which by today's standards seems relatively tame. I didn't know if I wanted to be associated with that long term, and thinking about political theory shifted my perspective. When I got an offer to go to University of Virginia for a PhD program I took it and left.

VOD: Tell me about your middle name.

Jeff: I feel like I'm being set up on these questions! In my family the oldest male going back several generations has the middle name Leonidas. If you remember Herodotus, Leonidas is the commander of the Spartan force of Thermopylae: the famous battle where the Spartans are killed resisting the Persian invasion. It's a very heroic battle. They go up there and they know they're going to die, but the Spartans have this ethos that they can't retreat from their own battlefield, especially without orders. If you go to Thermopylae today, there's a statue there of Leonidas, and the statue says: "Go stranger, tell the Spartans that we lie here, obedient to their command." And this was a story that my grandmother and other people in my family read to me over and over again when I was a kid, so it was kind of engrained in my head.

My father understood the importance of his name, but didn't want to saddle me with the entire Spartan legacy, for which I'm grateful. So he shortened it to Lee, Jeffard Lee.

VOD: Your current research engages with Deep Springs ideas of labor and self governance. Does Deep Springs have lessons to teach democracy?

Jeff: One of the things that precipitated my teaching here last fall was a new book that I was starting to work on about the history of physical labor, manual labor, in the Western tradition.

Even if you don't know very much about the Western philosophical tradition, you probably know that physical labor is sort of the neglected and abused stepchild to intellectual labor.

If it's recognized at all, it's usually recognized as disparaging. There's a little bit of bucolic poetry that romanticizes working on a farm, but generally

"Go stranger, tell the Spartans that we lie here, obedient to their command."



speaking, working with your hands, and doing physical labor was something that disqualified you for citizenship.

And this division haunts the Western intellectual tradition: you have to wait for a long time until you get to people like Hegel and Marx, for a re-evaluation of the importance of the objective world around us—and *working* on that world.

So I'm interested in looking at the philosophical tradition through that lens, and seeing ways in which the philosophical tradition inadvertently recognizes its parasitic status on labor.

That's the thing that's interesting to me, to see if there are little hints and cues toward a sort of tacit endorsement which allows us to reformulate and rethink our idea of labor. So I came to Deep Springs, thinking being here and watching you guys do your work would help me think about that.

And indeed, it did.

I was home recently for a break, and one of my friends said to me: “What's the most amazing thing about Deep Springs?”

The most amazing thing is that the students do all this work, labor, intellectual, physical, right? governance. And it's efficacious. It's not always the most efficient way to do things, but it actually works. And so that's the impressive thing, especially after spending so many years at a traditional university where students have no control of things.

There's a tremendous grant of confidence that is given to you here, and from what I can tell, people almost always make good. It's not that they always do everything perfectly. People make mistakes, right? But they're almost never bad mistakes, and that would be a real revelation for most administrators, even most adults.



A Term in Hell

BY NIK COOPER DS'25

It is easy to romanticize Deep Spring’s labor pillar—think cowboy, think saddling up and driving cattle beneath stark, barren swatches of rock and dust. Think tumbleweeds and lassos, chaps and canteens. What doesn’t come bounding to the imagination? Dishwashing. And yet—only three members of each Deep Springs class will be allowed the chance to step into the deified boots of the cowboy labor position. Every Deep Springer will spend a term in the dish pit.

BH—as it is colloquially termed, an abbreviation for “Boarding House”—is the one required labor position in the Valley. It, like death, is the great equalizer.

BH is not sexy labor. There is the fine film of food particles and dirty water that casts over you, head to toe, beading on the downy hairs of your arms as you scrub hardened egg yolk off the plates that the suddenly-faceless mob sends clattering down into the dish bins. There is the mop head that, no matter the degree of Herculean gumption with which you attempt to lock in the mop holder, will invariably come slithering free. There are the gobs of bacon fat that bob across the surface of the pot sink. There is the blind plunge into the murk of the soaking utensils bin, the endless grope through the sludge of opaque, grease-clogged sanitizer to catch a hold of that last wily teaspoon—and you are not alone in this damp, malodorous prison.

As Jean-Paul Sartre infamously concluded his 1944 play, *No Exit*, “L’enfer c’est les autres.” Hell is other people—specifically, three people. *No Exit* depicts an existential twist on the afterlife; eternal damnation is reimagined as three deceased strangers find themselves, after shuffling off of the mortal coil, locked together in a windowless room, particularly situated to drive each other insane, with, as is titularly suggested, no way out.

Sound familiar? The dish pit, like Sartre’s Hell, is windowless. Each term, a new BH triad faces this earthly acclimation to Sartre’s great eternal punishment.



Ruby LaRocca DS24, Keevan Kearns DS'25 BH'ing
Photos by Brendan Symons

Is Hell, in fact, other people? Have BH triads been condemned, or liberated? I sat down with BH survivor Will Xu to probe these scintillating inquiries. When asked to describe his experience in the dish pit, Will squinted at the sun for a pensive eternity. “I was like really confused,” he mused. “We’d all get really humid and dehydrated and I’d be re-

ally sweaty and Gideon would be kind of frustrated and Lance would be confused on who to look to for authority.” Moiling toil, vexation, the absence of divine dominion—the parallels to an eternity of torrid perdition are ample. Still, when asked the pressing question—is Hell other people?—Will released a long “Ummm,” whilst tapping a weathered pocket knife into the soft picnic table wood. “Not if you like them enough.”

One’s BH methodology, it seems, bears great influence on the noisome potential of the position. In the silence of God, many a BHer has opted to fill the sacred void with the kitchen’s cutting-edge sound system.

Will counts his team among the number having opted to eradicate the white noise. “We listened to a lot of cathartic lesbian music,” commented Mr. Xu. “Such as *Girl in Red*. Phoebe Bridgers.”

When asked if this exasperated the No Exit-ness of his experience, Will’s head sagged. “I think it added to the perception of the No Exit BH, in which we were perceived as this angsty group of dudes. And people were like, ‘why is Will always playing lesbian music that I listened to when I was eleven?’ And I was very hurt by it. I thought it was still good music.” An innominate confidant, who wishes to preserve their anonymity, confirmed this impression. “It was like, ‘I’m twelve years old, I just realized I’m gay, and I’m in love with my best friend’.”

Music, it seems, can complicate the delicate construction of the BH trinity, in inviting the judging ears of the external masses. Some BH teams have realized the hazards of melody. Sasha Halperin, veteran of one such triad, recounted the efficacy of her Spartan team’s approach, “We started fifteen minutes after the beginning of a meal. We didn’t listen to music, because it made you aware of the passage of time, which was not helpful. When asked to describe her BH-ship in one word, striding down Right Wing, Harper’s steadfast momentum did not falter, as she pondered and settled upon “Video-game.”

When asked the same, Sasha mulled, and landed up on a strikingly similar note. “Out-of-body,” she said. “You can hyphenate it.”



All of the BH survivors with whom I conferred, despite a surfeit of confessions of the at-times maddening confines of the tropical dishpit, responded to this burning question in the negative. Having just emerged from a term of BH myself, I must make a confession. BH was, in the words of my teammate, Tahm Loyd, “so chill.” My team was a fastidious and efficient one; seemingly incompatible attributes. The coexistence of that degree of productivity and effort was facilitated entirely by our doctrinal approach to labor. As a team, we leaned into the ‘United BH’ model with immense gusto, an approach in which the three daily rotating tasks are not discrete, bounded roles. Instead, one stays in the kitchen until all three are completed with their allotted duty. Nearly every day, we ended up pitching in to another’s task. This left me quite grateful and, to risk sounding mawkish, inspired. It seems, as Sasha and Will so sagely deduced, that the key to a blissful tenure in Hell lies in one’s capacity for harmonious concord with the fellow condemned.

First Year Biographies

BY YASMINA USMANOVA AND LUCA ROY

Keevan Kearns broke out of D.C. It's unclear how? Why does Andy insist on calling her Kee-vahn? Keevan has been found in the murky depths of a long conversation about a Russian Instagram guru teaching "uterus breathing" meditations; she was baffled at first, then just said, "I get it." Or, pretending to be a worm in the sauna. Terminal addiction to life-threatening endeavors, including marriage for a green card—or was it for Russian citizenship? Just kidding. It's obviously for love.

Marin County native **Luca "yeah?" Roy**, sporting those jean shorts, reminding us that Deep Springs is, in fact, in California! Not at all responsible for the Balding of Deep Springs or The Tree PubSpeak that sent half of the SB into hysteria. The unflinching Harper Yonago claims never to have laughed that hard in her life. Seemed to have impeccable drawing skills... LIES, if "impeccable" means taking two whole minutes to sketch an homely, inscrutable formless blob—allegedly, a Miu Miu bag. Luca is never seen without his gargantuan water bottle. Emotional support trough? Resides in the overpopulated Love Loft—make of that what you will.

Pashmina-wearing **Magdalena Christopher** comes from a wide range of military bases. One third of the Spinstress™ triad. Those endless Amazon packages? Contents: a veritable apothecary—vintage perfumes, circa 1700. If you are blessed enough simply to walk past her room, the scents will grace your unworldly nostrils... wafts of a French baroness, having deciphered Voltaire? Try talking to her about Grimes and the archetypes of womanhood... deep stuff, maybe. From time to time you'll hear the soothing Southern drawl of her gentleman caller on the landline. Definitely one of Maimonides' ideal students, if he'd ever had a chance to try chocolate-covered digestives.

Lucinda Bean. Austin, Texas vegetarian. Eviscerated chickens for several hours. Watched postmodern chicken slaughters on YouTube to prepare. Still not sure how she feels about it... the chickens aren't either. Lucinda is one of the three Greek Spinstresses™ along with her two roommates, and their matching pajama sets because of course they do. Her first night in the Valley, she slept on the main circle grass to quote-on-quote "assert her dominance." Over whom? We are not sure. Over what? Probably everything. Either way, the sprinklers won. Boof.



Dashel "I Don't Know Man" Myers hails from the Big Apple, where you can find him dining tri-weekly at Michelin Star restaurants. Equal parts mysterious and sassy, Dashel is mostly found in the basement of the main building in complete darkness, save for the gleaming light of the communal Mac, making extensively spreadsheeted plans for Tahm and Eden's wedding. Nora's date bars are his 4th pillar. Why won't he answer the Proust questionnaire? What is his middle name? So many questions and not enough answers. But, as Dashel would say, *don't you worry about it.*

Grace Goudie is Deep Springs' most enthusiastic pro-Choy Adorno reader. Swam to Deep Springs from Labrador, Canada. Go figure. Resident physics warrior, cheese lord, and infamous author of a five-hundred-page Substack situationship manifesto. Grace is always two steps ahead of Iceland, UWC, and the Bible. She is searching for professional connections with knowledge of methylmercury poisoning and home-grown tobacco. I've got blood on my glasses for you babe!

Haley Lee cannot be found in her room. A rare soul from Seoul, and also North Carolina. Searching for the eggs of her ancestors and unhoused by choice, she inhabits the couches of the main building by night. Her supply of lighters is the furnace of the SmoPo. Her walk announces purpose with a fire "drip" that will surely terrify you. Haley Lee will grace you with her earnest soul and when she speaks—with those very precise, expressive hands—the room definitely goes dead still. Try asking her a question; she will rebuild your soul piece by piece.

Kindness carried **Hannah "Mmmn :)))" Erickson** from Cambridge, Massachusetts. After a brief stint as a pianist with the Bolshoi Ballet, she demurely retired to assume occupance as our resident Alyosha Karamazov. Hannah is too kind for any world—especially this one. You'll find her at SB, typing at 566 words per minute while her eyes drift off past the alfalfa fields and oh a day-dream! Once upon a time she had fiery red hair but upon arrival shaved it all off and became a holy baldie. She definitely could talk God out of it if she really wanted to—but unfortunately she's too busy making brunch and rescuing kangaroo rats.

Floridian **Nora Biernat** is an honorary member of Paul’s family. If our lives could be governed by the meticulous contents of her many notebooks, we would be whole. Oh, wait—they will be. Singlehandedly carrying “Deep Springs Black Tie” attire on her back daily, alongside the classiest haircut and those mysterious tri-layered date bars. “If we turn on the internet, someone’ll be in their room playing Blokus on their iPad.” Nora is an endless enigma; if you hold pertinent information regarding her whereabouts, call the Main Office and you will be compensated.



Sam “Oh booY” Hancock looks metrosexual but only because he’s from Brooklyn. Frank? No relation to Ted Kaczynski. I promise. Guitar, beanie, Elliott Smith impression. His mental health support system? Yanking massive stumps out of the ground in front of the dorms using nothing but his will to power and an overactive death drive. Occupational hazard: unceasing chest infection. His physical support system? Inhaler. Cosplays as Amish, occasionally; semi-permanent resident of the cage he has built for himself on North Porch. Sam’s prized possession (and as Makoto would say, “symbol of his slow descent into bourgeois decay”): the film camera.



Victoria Bakulina brought the wisdom of marriage and an excess of Thumos to Deep Springs on the long flight from Kazakhstan. This former golden youth of Moscow was exiled from her motherland for illicit bi-curious inclinations. She enjoys Celine Dion, drone footage, playing 3v3 games against the Bishopian rock-climbing populus, and Ellyn. You can find her cleaning the amorphous floors of purgatory with pure bleach, pining after her departed Turkish hairdresser, or in a trench coat.



Nik Cooper sails all the way from Chicken, Alaska or Connecticut, depending on which one gives more spice to the performativity aspect. Wields a flip phone, a typewriter and a lot of angst against ChatGPT. Obsessed with words. Can be found either in Love Loft in love with his allegedly polydactyl cat, *Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov* (Grushenka or Mischa, for short), or his assigned seat on the SmoPo. Shaved his head on the first day under the pressures of a Russian existentialist. God speed.



A product of New York City theatre, **Grisha London** is overly-deft with electricity, circuits, and every variety of wire—or all that you shouldn’t touch barefoot, though he so often is. Grisha was the first and last one of us to install a smart-home in his dorm: Avant-Garden is handsomely equipped with an ingenious web of pulleys, strings, wire, and a Goose alarm... yes, a Goose alarm: every morning, he awakes to the dulcet tone of a car alarm, implanted in the innards a goose statue. Is he human? Is he the prophet of light? No one knows. Although the Goose probably does.



Uzbek-who? **Yasmina Usmanova** is a guilty existentialist. She fled men with moustaches and the carhartt-wearing bourgeois at St. John’s for less green grass here at Deep Springs. Proust questionnaire, number 34: How would you like to die? Euthanasia. Share a Chapman cigarette with her; get Russified—don’t question that belief. Anthropological attention ought to be paid to her infatuation with toilet cleaning. In search of a prophet; forward any leads to yasminausmanova@deepsprings.edu.



Poem

BY YASMINA USMANOVA

Oh mother, tell me why no one sees
the margins of my performance —
long before “immigrant” was hanging on your collar,
you wrapped your child in Ikat fabrics
so the vineyard gods would recognize her.
Did it ever cross your mind that the Californian sun
would burn what Uzbekistan once kissed?
The cheeks so red — oh, who would tell her?
Oh, who would notice?

Oh Grandfather, when your hands were blackened
by the wet soils of Jizzak mountains,
the earth lodged under your nails —
did you ever imagine your granddaughter kneeling
in the barren desert soils of eastern California,
staining her hands with the borrowed land?

The purple stones from sunflower births,
she bathes her hands in bleach.
Oh, why doesn’t anyone notice?
The sick — the ochre stain on the middle finger
from all of those deadly rolled indulgences.
Would you look long enough? Do you promise?

Oh Abika, oh grandmother — have you ever been full,
squatting in the fields, white cloves of cotton
full in the pockets, synthetic clothing
draping your scarred body?
Oh father, do you notice?
When your head is full of vicious, violent, vindictive
thoughts,
the desires so deep, the sins too sincere —
you had forsaken your education at the age of twelve.
Oh, would you know that she would be playing with in-
trinsic ideas?
She is toying with intelligence.
Oh, would anyone notice her inheritance
of the fraudulence of your language?
Oh, do you notice yourself?

Would you look long enough? Do you promise?



Above: Miscellaneous Items, Obvious Fire Hazard.
Below: Students Socialize on the Smoking Porch
Photos by Yasmina Usmanova

Found Objects of Deep Springs

BY MAGDALENA CHRISTOPHER

A lukewarm Dr. Pepper in one hand, in the other...

A worn copy of *War and Peace*, borne on the back of its
reader over a Mountain Pass and into Bishop, thrown
wrathfully into a trash can after its last page conclud-
ed with “Abridged By Princess Alexandra Kropotkin”.

Muscat grape vines turning color on a trellis.

Gnomes, out and about and everywhere, only if you
look closely.

Muck boots, clearly traumatized from their journey
through the nine hells, hyperventilating in Luca’s spe-
cial Home Depot bucket.

Scattered books that were left out in the rain, tragic
casualties of our forgetfulness. They lay open like old
French accordions in their full resonance.

A kind postcard sent by someone’s grandma lying next
to a fireplace.

Deep Springs haute couture: A kantha quilt paired
with a shockingly voluminous ushanka.

An escaped dairy cow on field five. A true menace.
Bics. G7s. .37mm Sarasas. UniPoints. Microns. Paper
Mates.
Pens are our greatest extravagance.

Luca’s muck boots, lonely and without a home, ever
since Hannah started using the Home Depot bucket
for her spare socks.

A shipment of Japanese Cola candies, held up in cus-
toms for a month and finally at the end of their jour-
ney in the valley.

Spare socks, out and about and everywhere, only if you
look closely.

Large crusty work boots hanging by their shoelaces
from a tack in a wall, ten feet above the floor. Nobody
knows to whom they belong, or how they got up there.
They dangle like a dreamcatcher over Lucinda’s head as
she sleeps every night.

Deep Springs ready-to-wear, or our collective answer to
no. 10 on the Proust Questionnaire: “Look gay.”

Five lamps that don’t work. Seven lampshades with-
out a lamp. A lamp with two lampshades. A lamp that
works with a broken lampshade.

Dried flowers of mysterious origin.
Oranges brought all the way from China [Vons].

A mauled dairy boy, mauled by that menace of a cow.

Aquaphor, Arnicare, and Anti-acids. Vitamins B, C,
and D. Yinchiao capsules and coagulated Pei Pa Koa.
They all wait in the Soviet Cabinet, curatives passed
down through generations of Deep Springers. Abun-
dance of heart keeps the expiration dates extraneous.

Semi-sweet omelettes usually made for Russian kinder-
garteners.

97 mugs from the BH, out and about and everywhere,
only if you look closely.

Seven eighths of a Virginia Slim resting peacefully on a
three-tiered ashtray, put to rest after the realization that
PubSpeak began two and a half minutes ago, and
a Miu Miu handbag.

Restaurant Night

BY SARAH KNIGHT

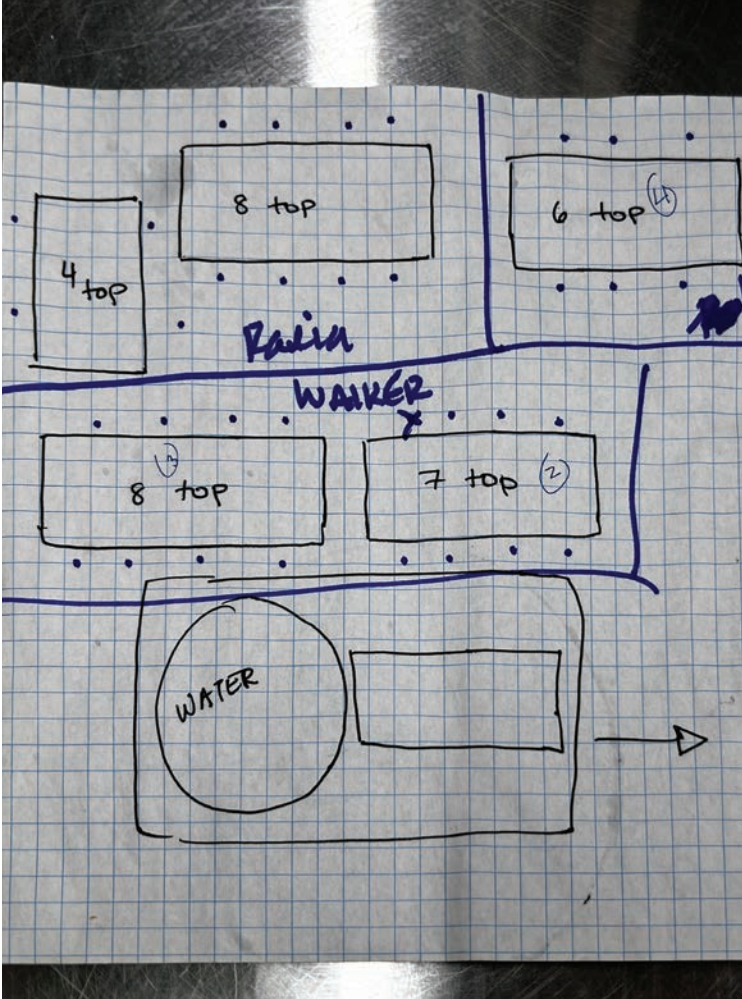
Upon starting at DS I learned that the lore of the end of term dinner ran very deep. But as with all history and memory, things get misconstrued in the movement of time. The kitchen used to be fully staffed. Students didn't cook. There were two bells, the fifteen minute out bell told everyone when to dress for dinner. It was a white tablecloth affair. Linens were eventually replaced by condiment caddies. The first fifteen minute dress bell no longer exists, and everyone comes to the BH in their crusty, work clothes, or athleisure wear.

The end of term dinner is different. It is in fact a celebration of completing the term or semester. The final push to finish papers, hold a DSPAC, clean the entire BH, have a final SB meeting before everyone is let loose. The end of term dinner is the last chance for everyone to gather together before the beginning of a new Deep Springs season. (Speeches, gratitude)

What I don't know from the lore or historical accounts is how long the end of term dinner has held a theme. The student's, usually the cooks, come up with a dress up theme that compliments the dinner menu. And sometimes it has nothing to do with the food.

The first theme I encountered was "Ryan Derby Talbot", and everyone showed up in their black work pants, black vest, white button down and glasses.

The second dinner was "ye old nacho night", with a schmogasborg of cheeze wiz, tortilla chips, pickled onions, guacamole and ground beef. The third was maybe some of Gideon Berrie's (DS 23) finest work- The theme being called "I want to Dance like Umami Thurman", the meal was deconstructed poke bowls and the attire theme- Kill Bill. The buf-



fet table had sparkle lights and seaweed.

We've had a Greek Symposium, with every student dressed in sheet togas, adorned with leaves and vines. We've had homemade beet pasta, and last term we had a wedding. Congratulations Keevan and Yasmina! (DS 25).

But I want to tell you about Restaurant Night. A three woman cook team transformed the kitchen into the highclass restaurant *Nunn Such Steak House*. American 90's steakhouse to be exact. We sought volunteers for servers. We created a seating chart. Took reservations. Had a host to seat folks and hand out menus. The music was soft rock from the 90's- think heavy on the saxophone, light on the guitar. We had sparkling lemon or lime flavored water. Arnold Palmers.

The menu was heavily inspired by my experience eating in steakhouses as a child. Then inevitably working in them later as an adult and realizing while there are more cuts of beef on the menu now, the American Steakhouse is essentially the same as it was twenty years ago. With that in mind, we reached all the way back. Chilled Shrimp with Cocktail Sauce.

Iceberg Wedge Salad. Beef Filet. Herb Butter. \$5 upcharge for a Hollandaise add on. Asparagus. We stepped into the aughts with some deep fried brussels sprouts tossed in bang bang sauce. Truffle fries. And the savory donut hole bread basket.

Rebecca, Hexi and I prepped, we butchered butchered steaks out of the chuck shoulder of a beef slaughtered on site. Rebecca worked on doughnut hole prep and a very Deep Springs style dessert- Sand Dune Ice Cream. We made Sage ice cream, and covered the mound with graham cracker crumble, resembling the sand dunes that surround DS on the Death Valley side of the Inyo range. Hexi prepared veggies and steaks for her grill station, and I prepped about one to eight too many garnishes. Plate wipes. A ticket rail.

I was ready to expedite in the restaurant, and the girls were ready to cook in a restaurant and were learning the menu. At last, we were ready to serve. The doors to Nunn Such Steakhouse were open.

About five minutes into seating, we received no orders for our diners, and on a whim I told Rebecca to just start dropping orders of Brussel Sprouts into the fryer. Seeing the worst about to happen, I wanted her to get ahead of it. I plated savory doughnut holes, served with whipped honey butter. I started to pull pre-made shrimp cocktail, and garnish, so these appetizers too could be picked up quickly. Fifteen minutes into service, our servers Rania, Walker and Kel handed me their table's orders.

All of them. At the same time.

Looking at me kind of clueless I explained that they screwed the kitchen. I send them away with doughnut hole bread baskets, asking them to let their tables know it will be a few minutes for their appetizers.

Rebecca had about six orders of Brussels ready to go. I garnished them with toasted peanuts and mint, called for hands to run the ready plates, while encouraging Rebecca to work quickly and cleanly, as we had about twenty more orders to fry.



Sensing the weeds growing over our heads, I pulled iceberg wedge salads and started plating, checking the tickets, we only had about ten orders of salads, easy peasy. We can send these out while guests wait for their appetizers.

The service team came back, gossiping amongst each other like servers do “did you hear her at table 5 asking what was taking so long?!” I giggled quietly, but asked the servers to focus and handed them their salads. Finally a few more orders of Brussels were ready. As two of the servers left, one was asking where his salads were. It became clear that he did not circle any salads on his tickets, as everyone at his tables ordered salads... So we were about 18 salads behind.

Quickly things sped up- We sold the last of the Brussels appetizers, and finally Rebecca could jump to plating desserts. I called to Hexi to fire five medium rare steaks, five medium steaks, and six orders of asparagus. Brian Hill ordered the upcharge of a Hollandaise topping for his asparagus.

The last of the salads left the kitchen, when a server told me he offered more brussels while his table waited for for their entrees. “Five more Brussels Rebeca!” A ‘yes chef’ was heard from the back of the kitchen where she had been scooping ice cream.

Hexi handed me a sizzle skillet of of steak, and in an unthinking moment I grabbed it with my hand and heard the sizzle of my skin before the pain set in. The skillet had truly sizzled me. I sliced and plated the steak, mourned for my hand for a mere few seconds before calling for more steaks and jumping to ice cream scooping while Rebecca tossed Brussels in Mae Ploy sweet and sour sauce, peanuts and garnished with mint. I snipped Red Sorrel, and garnished plates. I wiped rims. I encouraged the cooks and the servers. They were all actually having a great time and working as a solid team. They gossiped about needy guests. They marked of courses on tickets. They drank soda and danced in the kitchen. Re-



becca slipped on grease and learned the value of salt’s ability to soak up moisture.

A guest walked into the kitchen to see if we needed help and I shoosed them away. Looked at the clock, we were an hour into service, dinner was already lasting longer than most normal meals. But it was the end of term. A time for celebration, a moment to slow down. With the final meal having left the kitchen, I asked Hexi to cook a few more steaks for our server and cook team, then finished the sand dune ice cream. As a team, we all walked out dessert to the tables. I paused service to congratulate the team, have a round of applause and touch tables. I teased the student that complained about the timing of her meal, and she flushed, giggled loudly and thanked me.

For a final touch, instead of handing out bills, we passed out homemade tallow lotions and hand soaps. It was a great night. Bellies were full, the term was behind us. My hand hurt and my heart was full. It was probably the most fun for me.. But being on a team, a team that worked together for one goal, *to serve*, that filled my heart. The pedagogical aspect of kitchens has never been lost on me. But getting students to see beyond their own work, or their own needs in what is often a vest hole of community needs vs personal needs, is challenging.

On restaurant night, not only did they all see the value of serving others they enjoyed it. They got to cook their steak, and eat it too.

Previous Page:
Map of Nunn Such Steak House, Rebecca McMillin
Hastings Ds'23, Hexi Jin DS'23
Menu Cards from Restaurant Night
Photos by Sarah Knight

Pets of Deep Springs

BY SARAH KNIGHT

Jeff Miller and Loki

“Loki is part (so I'm told) border collie, and has more than a few herding instincts. He used to try to herd Clio, my daughter, upstairs to her room at night to bed by nipping at her heels. With a bit of encouragement, he'd also try to move her about the yard with well-timed bluff charges and barks. It's his great misfortune not to have been raised alongside a herd of sheep.

Andy Zink and Piper

“I like to think I'm Piper's favorite, but it's usually Florence that is the favorite amongst our dogs. We got her at the beginning of Covid, so she spent most of her time with me as she grew, we're definitely the most bonded at this point.”

Aaron Tugendhaft and Bernstein

“Bernstein loves bread, specifically Challah. We have to be careful when I host Shabbat Dinners, because Bernstein will jump on the counter and start eating the bread.”

Nik Cooper and Misha

“Misha is perhaps the most socialized cat in America. With absolutely no conception of the nuclear family and twenty-eight parental figures, Grushenka's existence is blissfully free of attachment issues and the Electra Complex. To all of our tremendous surprises, the once half-feral and decidedly sociopathic reform barn cats, Oscar and Jones, have taken to her more than fondly. Their affection for the two-pound kitten has brought them in from the wilds—gone are the days of savage mice-hunting; they too have taken up a semi-permanent residence in Love Loft, where they enjoy their new-found entrance into bourgeois languor, and spend once active hours extending their pouches, or grooming dear Misha's minikin skull.”



Sasha Halperin and Winnie

“Winnie is having the time of his life. Here are some of his favorite activities: Chasing birds, rabbits, and gophers, licking whatever member of the student body he can find. Being generally lazy on either Harper's bed or Sam/Kel's couch. Attempting to get all the other on campus dogs to chase him (with minimal success beyond Lupita who thinks he is a cow). Licking the spilled milk next to the dairy cart. Farm on field two where the grass is so tall he has to hop to see anything.”

Tim Gipson and Lupita

“My favorite memory of Lupita is when she first started to herd cattle and she was chasing some out of North Field and they jumped the gate and she jumped the gate right behind them.”

Ellyn Greene Pickles and Sam

“They are technically 'geriatric' at this point, and are happy any place with a window to look out and a lap to sit on. They are also still surprisingly proficient mousers, which I found out in the first month of living in Henderson as they took care of the impressive rodent population. Their morning routine includes eating breakfast followed by a bask in the sunbeam coming through the slider doors, where they watch the jackrabbits hop through. I think they have it pretty good.”

Sarah Knight Bodhi, Boo, Britney, Chief Keef and King Louis

“I'm super happy to have a family of animals to wake up to, and go home to in the evening. Boo is a strong independent cat, the chickens are dinosaurs, and Bodhi won't leave my side, so here we are forging our own nook at Deep Springs.”

(Not Pictured)

Paul Hough and Pete

“Pete really likes being here at DS, his favorite person other than myself is Ellyn.”

(Not Pictured)

Pictured instead: Jones



Barns and Novels: the Deep Springs Reading List

BY ADA KING

The Sabbath — Abraham Joshua Heschel

"It was Yom Kippur and I couldn't work but wanted to do something related to what I was doing."

All About Love — bell hooks

"Because I was depressed by Freud and wanted to read something that would help me see human relationships wholesomely."

Supernova Era — Cixin Liu

"Because I had a childhood fantasy of children running the world."

Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic — Alison Bechdel

"I knew the musical and figured I should read it."

Phenomenology of Spirit — G.W.F. Hegel

"Because it's the most important thing for me to do in my life."

Two Cheers for Anarchism — James C. Scott

"Childhood fantasy of children running the world."

Letters of E. B. White — E. B. White (ed. Dorothy Lobrano Guth)

"I want to write letters better."

The Elements of Style — William Strunk Jr. & E. B. White

"I don't like my writing style. It is poor."

War and Peace (trans. Richard Pevear & Larissa Volokhonsky) — Leo Tolstoy

"Because I accidentally read the abridged version."

The Question Concerning Technology in China: An Essay in Cosmotechnics — Yuk Hui

"Trying to understand China. Trying to understand white people."

The Magic Mountain — Thomas Mann

"Because an alum said it would be dangerous for Deep Springs Students."

Berl: The Biography of a Socialist Zionist — Anita Shapira

"To increase my factual knowledge of the history of Zionism and the Middle East."

Margery Kempe — Robert Glück

"Because I found it."

No Exit — Jean-Paul Sartre

"I want to read more plays and compare my BH team to the No Exit team."

mini squeegee, herbal cigarettes, mooncakes

Wedding invites

Green card or an American husband

Foreign affairs subscription

World peace

Student Body Wishlist

BY YASMINA USMANOVA

Pickle ball set (with net), lower back massage machine

Dresses + skirts for Shabbat Dinner and Church

Aprons with funny sayings on them. But basically, all aprons

Vintage sweaters

Socks!

pencils/pens

*Old-fashioned butter churner (please please please)
Laundry detergent! and dryer sheets...
hard-boiled wonderland and some soft-boiled eggs*

Incense, Candles, Lighters, sunscreen, vitamin b12

MORE Socks.....!!! medium/large sizes proolly

Vintage dresses, iron supplements

dreamy-country-girl dress (size m), waterproof long ugly boots (8.5), mega tea cup, funny handmade hat or scarf, plaid,

Gustave Dore Tarot Cards

Women's size 0 denim catsuit

Double Red Oolong Tea



In Memoriam:

BOB "DOC" SCOTT DS'43

Bob “Doc” Scott DS’43 passed away March 31, 2025 at the age of 97. Doc, as he was affectionately known to all, was born in Warrensburg New York. He started kindergarten at the age of 4 and graduated from High School in 1944 at the age of 16, after being accepted and attending one year at Deep Springs College in California. He served in both the United States Navy and Army during WW II as a medic, earning the rank of Captain. Doc graduated from Lausanne/Faculty of Medicine in Switzerland in 1954. He also attended the University at UCLA. After his internship in San Diego and residency in Merced, he served as a General Practitioner and Surgeon in Gilroy, and later in Santa Cruz. Doc never retired from his practice. After closing his office in Capitola, he continued to see patients at his residence.

Upon moving to Santa Cruz in 1969, his passion for surfing held no bounds. A philanthropist for the sport he cherished, Doc sponsored surfing contests worldwide. Always accompanied by his loving wife Janice, the couple visited and surfed destinations around the globe. He will be remembered for his generosity and his compassion for helping and healing his fellow man.

Thank you to the Santa Cruz Sentinel.

EARLINE REID

Earline Reid, 1930-2025, wife of a Deep Springer, mother to another and mother-in-law to yet one more, died on October 13th, in Santa Cruz, California, after a brief hospitalization. She had been a United States Foreign Service officer before retiring in 1995 and moving to Idaho. She spent her last few years in California. She and her husband Randall Reid DS49 first came to Deep Springs in 1963. They were part of the community off and on and then permanently when Dr. Reid became the director in 1969. They left in 1976, but the connection continued as Eric Reid DS77 became a student. Their daughter, Katharine Giovanna, married Denis Clark DS69 in 1997. Earline is survived by her son, daughter, son-in-law, and her three granddaughters, Elizabeth and Lauren Reid-Wain coat and Gemma Clark.

GLEN KAUFMAN, DS'65

Glen was not the least likely nor the most likely member of his Deep Springs class to become an agriculturalist and a businessman, but the College, the valley, and its mountain pastures have had a profound effect on many lives. Despite growing up on an island in the middle of the Detroit River, where boats and not horses were readily available, he adapted to life in the desert. In time, Glen came to define the new model of the student cowboy, even undertaking to break his own horse, although he admitted not entirely successfully. Glen was, in fact, the vanguard of four Kaufman brothers who attended Deep Springs: Alan (DS’67) and Ken and Bill (both DS’74). What persuaded his brothers to follow? Alan recalls, “...the stories he told were filled with the names of classmates, teachers, horses, and staff. The anticipation of escaping the Midwest for a distant mecca in the California desert made the boredom of high school nearly bearable.” There was also the enticement of a live scorpion brought home in a glass jar.

Glen arrived in the valley at the end of June of 1965. He could have joined the class of 1964 because he was invited as a high school junior but Glen, unlike half his entering class, deferred a year. In 1965 Deep Springs was in its perennial state of transitory faculty and staff. That summer the new class met the new dean, Barney Childs DS’43. The fall saw the arrival of the new language professor, Joseph Balachowski along with the new professor of history and political science, Jack Newell, DS’56. Returning but still relatively new faculty were Roger Dell (math and physics) and John Mawby, DS’53 (geology and zoology). It would be fair to say that collectively the student body, which included three third-year students, had more recent experience of Deep Springs than its staff or faculty. (Staffulty was not yet a recognized portmanteau.) This created a sense of ownership and authority in the SB, perhaps exaggerated, that instilled a strong commitment to Deep Springs and a deep respect for a job done well.

At Deep Springs Glen was known for his sharp wit, sometimes bordering on asperity, and his intense focus on wide-ranging interests. Elected SB president at the beginning of his second year, he ran taut meetings with little tolerance for irrelevant argument. He could, however, be both diplomatic and subversive as this excerpt from his SB President’s column in the 1966 Alumni Newsletter demonstrates. “The Business Manager and Student Body are working together more easily, and the students are becoming able to assume a larger part of the ranch operation.” More easily than what or when, you might ask. He concluded with a reassuring if anodyne summary. “Describing the general mood here as reasonably optimistic would not be inaccurate or unjustified. Members of the present

concluded with a reassuring if anodyne summary. “Describing the general mood here as reasonably optimistic would not be inaccurate or unjustified. Members of the present Student Body can feel a sense of progress during their stay at Deep Springs and hope to have been responsible for a part of it.”

Glen spent his final summer at Deep Springs mostly at Cow Camp, although he had helped to recruit printmaker Tom Woodward for an arts summer session that included Canadian poet John Newlove, performance artist and would-be-rocker Joe Byrd, and avant garde composer Morton Feldman. On his last day, driving down from Cow Camp, a wheel spun off the Studebaker pickup. The vehicle rolled off the road, flipped over, and landed on its three remaining wheels. Glen and his passenger, Tom Woodward, were shaken but unhurt.

Glen left the next day for UC Berkeley, where he studied ecology and anything else that interested him. A folklore class taught by Alan Dundes allowed him to meet a class assignment by turning in notecards with examples of folk sayings that Glen gleaned from pithy expressions of cowboys, mechanics, and other itinerant visitors at Deep Springs. One example: "Where I come from they say, 'My cat had kittens in the biscuit tin, but that don't make 'em biscuits.'" As both a science and humanities fellow, he developed a fondness for Clarence Glacken's Traces on the Rhodian Shore, a cultural history of Western ecological thought. He also memorized and, unprompted, recited lines from A. E. Housman's Shropshire poetry. No one who shared a room or a house or a camping trip with Glen escaped being awakened by “Up, lad: thews that lie and cumber / Sunlit pallets never thrive.”

A summer spent in Cost Rica for a tropical ecology course may have cemented his interest in agricultural pursuits and marked the start of a peripatetic life. He went from Berkeley to London where he did a master’s degree at University College and found his first job working for a British seed company. While in England he met Chris. They both returned to the States where they married. Their son Tony was born in 1976. Glen collected a master’s degree at Santa Clara on the business side of agriculture. From there the whole family moved to Holland where he worked for Royal Sluis, a Dutch seed company. Wherever he went, his cowboy shirts and boots left a distinct impression on his customers and fellow workers.

Glen and family eventually returned to Salinas, California, where he continued as Royal Sluis's agent for a time, before starting his own "adventures in the seed trade" in the 80s. Moving to Palm City, Florida in 1988, he started two companies. The first was Paramount Seed, which supplied vegetable seed to farmers on the eastern seaboard. Along with his Catalan business partner, Josep Trias, he started Coating Supply, which developed a seed-coating and treat-

which supplied vegetable seed to farmers on the eastern seaboard. Along with his Catalan business partner, Josep Trias, he started Coating Supply, which developed a seed-coating and treatment technology that ensured uniform germination and increased crop yield. They licensed this last bit of science-based know-how to agricultural businesses in North and South America, Europe, Asia and Australia, doing well by doing good.

After suffering a stroke in 2016—from which he recovered—Glen came to grips with retirement. He and Chris moved to an assisted living community in Gainesville, which provided recreation and intellectual stimulus, and after his diagnosis with cancer, compassionate care. Tony and their granddaughter Laurel live not far away in the St. Petersburg area. Despite another stroke that affected his left side—as a left-hander, he began using his previously neglected right hand—Glen kept up active exchanges with his Deep Springs classmates until the end.

It seems appropriate to end this remembrance of Glen with a short poem by A. E. Housman.

With Rue My Heart is Laden

With rue my heart is laden
For golden friends I had,
For many a rose-lipt maiden
And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping
The lightfoot boys are laid;
The rose-lipt-girls are sleeping
In fields where roses fade.

By Eric Swanson, DS65, with help from Alan, Bill, Ken, and Richard Kaufman

In Memoriam:

SHARON SCHUMAN (1946-2025)

A teacher's work is difficult. She must correct students' work and show them how to improve it without making them feel incompetent, while also convincing them that improving is worth the effort. Sharon Schuman was a master. She taught Deep Springers how to live in a community.

Sharon arrived at Deep Springs with her husband, David, as temporary faculty in 1974. Deep Springs was close to bankruptcy in those days. Like many other ranches in the high desert, it was a place where the buildings were old and needed work, with equipment that was antique and patched together. Many students attached coils of baling wire to their pants in that pre-duct tape era, because you never knew when something would need to be wired back together. The Schumans and Deep Springs proved a perfect match. They signed long-term contracts and taught composition, public speaking, literature, philosophy, and political theory until 1981, while also sharing the duties of the academic dean. One by-product of the college's poverty was instability among its staff, and 1975 was a particularly bad year – the college's president was absent, several teachers left in the middle of their terms, and one-third of the student body left with them. Sharon and David found themselves hiring for multiple positions, and they used the crisis as an opportunity.

The Schumans arranged to hire two other working couples, the Paskows and the Polese-Lehmans. All six of the new arrivals were qualified teachers, but it might have been more important that they were also good parents, and that three of them were empowered mothers. Deep Springs was crawling with toddlers in the late 1970s. Sharon's daughter Rebecca was born in 1976, and Jackie Paskow and Carolyn Polese were also raising kids.

"It seems to me that our class of Deep Springers started producing children long before our non-Deep Springs agemates," said Peter Rosenblum '77. "I have always suspected that the contributor was a strangely idyllic confluence of family, community, and intellectual life that permeated Deep Springs in those years. David and Sharon were central to that, modeling an egalitarian, child-raising relationship."

A marriage of equals "was something I hadn't really seen in my conventional suburban upbringing," said Paul Michelsen '74. "When I met my brilliant, accomplished, independent wife I was not intimidated, because I had seen how such a marriage could work." Sharon was a classical violinist who was as comfortable with a Hank

Williams tune as she was with Bach and Brahms. The boardinghouse often rang with her solos on country and folk classics as a pick-up band struggled to keep up. The Schumans were also "eager and animated participants in boardinghouse conversations," said Jim Morefield '79. "They lent the strongest thread and the tightest weave to the fabric of community."

Sharon's lasting contribution to Deep Springs was starting a serious conversation about coeducation. "When we got here in 1974, the faculty and staff were all 150 percent against admitting women," she said in 2022. "Whenever you brought it up, you could hear a palpable sigh." The 1970s board of trustees was dominated by its chairman, Jim Withrow '27, who wrote a personal check at the conclusion of each visit just large enough to keep the college operating until he returned. Withrow was personally opposed to coeducation, and he blocked student efforts to admit women because he knew that several other important donors would withdraw their support if the college moved in that direction. Like it or not, he said, the alumni were not ready.

But the Schumans, Polese-Lehmans, Paskows, and many students were strongly in favor, and by 1977 the board had to take notice. "They directed us to prepare a report on the merits and rationale for the college to adopt coeducation," said Jack Murphy '77. "Sharon was grossly overworked and underpaid with no employee benefits, and she was also nursing her first child. But she gamely shouldered this burden, tolerated the cat-herding process that was research before the internet existed, and drafted a scholarly report helped only by a bunch of teenagers, including me." Sharon also persuaded an open-minded trustee, Paul Todd, to be co-chairman of the report. Todd's support forced the board to take the question seriously.

"We presented our report to the board in 1979," Murphy said. "They were all white men except for one woman who was the chairman's girlfriend. Between bouts of heavy drinking and carousing, which we knew about because we emptied the trash, they rejected it. But the community didn't give up."

"It was a victory because it made the conversation legitimate," Sharon remarked later, "After that, the topic was always in the air."

The Trustees of Deep Springs did vote on the committee's recommendations in 1979 and deadlocked, four to four, on the proposition that Deep Springs should go co-ed by 1990. Opponents of coeducation managed to hold the line for decades, even surviving a far more contentious debate in the mid-1990s. They were aided by the college's chronic poverty, which didn't ease until the conclusion of a successful fundraising campaign and a promise from board chair



go co-ed by 1990. Opponents of coeducation managed to hold the line for decades, even surviving a far more contentious debate in the mid-1990s. They were aided by the college's chronic poverty, which didn't ease until the conclusion of a successful fundraising campaign and a promise from board chair David Hitz to personally cover any costs associated with admitting women.

At the centennial alumni reunion in September 2017, President David Neidorf announced that the last obstacle to coeducation, a lawsuit, had finally been dismissed. Sharon and David were in the audience. "She looked like the cat who caught the canary," Murphy said.

Sharon returned to Deep Springs to teach in 2022, an experience she found deeply satisfying. But her life ended tragically last April when she was killed by an out-of-control driver whose blood alcohol was nearly three times the legal limit. Sharon, 79, was jogging near her home in Eugene, Oregon when the accident occurred.

In the outpouring of messages that followed her death, Deep Springers who knew Sharon remembered her as a transformative presence in their lives. "She exemplified what it takes to keep the moral arc of the universe trending toward justice," Murphy said.

"She was kind and tolerant," said Matt Lykken '76. "She only complained a little when students adopted the habit of chewing on fresh garlic bulbs to ward off colds. She could see you being a dumb kid and not judge you, and she didn't let that interfere with also seeing you as the thinking, responsible adult you were becoming."

David Welle DS'80 remembers that by the time he took Sharon's literature course, "I had developed a certain self-assurance about academics that we have all seen in members of the student body." Welle went to Sharon to protest a low grade she had given to his paper. "I was so angry that I scribbled 'BS!' next to one of her neat and concise notes in the margin of my essay. When Sharon flipped to that page she grinned and chuckled casually, then proceeded to explain to me why her note was not BS at all. She somehow managed to assuage my anger and brush off my insult, all without giving an inch on her critique, and I went away actually relieved. She was straightforward, indefatigable, and fun."

"Listening to Sharon Schuman speak at a reunion, I wondered if I could have possibly appreciated the full extent of her gifts, or the rare privilege of her time and attention, when I had the chance," says Jacob Dickinson DS'76. "Perhaps I could have appreciated

In Memoriam:

her in some Plato’s Cave sense of admiring the shadows she cast, but surely not much more than that. Still, my favorite college course remains Sharon’s English Renaissance Poetry, with its subatomic analysis and kaleidoscopic unfolding of powerful and passionate texts. Sharon remains with us in the many impressions she left, in softer and harder clay than mine. If you carry one, pay it forward.”

Sharon was predeceased by her husband in 2019. She is survived by Rebecca and a granddaughter in Eugene; a son, Ben, who lives with his family in Austin, Texas; and her beloved dog, Billy Budd. Donations in her memory can be made to SquareOne Villages, an affordable housing group (<https://www.squareonevillages.org>), and Chamber Music Amici (<https://chambermusicamici.org>), a group she co-founded and, according to Rebecca, “loved like a third child.”

“She reminded me of a book called Critique Of Cynical Reason,” said Jim Geringer ’80. “She later claimed that she had stopped teaching, but she never stopped teaching by example.”

By Brad Edmondson DS’76

DON O. NOEL, JR.

Don O. Noel, Jr. DS’49 passed away on June 30, 2025 at the age of 93 at his home near Hartford, Connecticut.

Don stunned many of his colleagues with a detailed farewell note on Facebook, where he has more than 1,000 friends. “Why ‘final?’” Noel wrote. “Several have asked. I am in the fifth day of not eating or drinking, to hasten my death. When I was diagnosed with neuropathy decades ago, I was told to expect a long slow loss of mobility, and so it has been. I need human and mechanical help for most basic functions. Ahead are further intrusions into self-sufficiency. I choose not to go there.”

He added, “I have had a wonderful life, joined for 65 years by a wonderful wife. I have, I hope, earned at least some of the journalistic prizes and plaudits given me, and I hope I have been able to contribute something to all of the various communities in which I have lived and worked. I leave a satisfied man.”

Born to Don and Catherine Noel in Elizabeth, New Jersey, Don graduated from West Orange High School. He began his undergraduate education at Deep Springs College, an education and experience he believed to be one of the most formative in preparing him for the rest



of his life. Phil Hanawalt, his DS’49 classmate, remembers, “Don was arguably the acknowledged leader of the student group during my one year at Deep Springs. He was highly respected.”

Don went on to study and earn his BA from Cornell University. During the summer of 1952, he traveled from Deep Springs to Cornell, driving his thoroughly refurbished 1930 Model A Ford across the country – through all 48 contingent states – sending weekly articles about his trip and geology of the states he traveled to the Newark Sunday News. It was while at Cornell, at a meeting of young Quakers, he met the love of his life, Elizabeth “Brad” Foulds. While home on break for the holidays Don secured a family diamond ring from his mother with the intent of proposing upon returning to campus. Waiting too long for the right moment, he failed to propose before a mutual friend sent Brad a note congratulating her on her engagement! They were married in 1953.

During the Korean conflict Don was a conscientious objector who did alternative service in Japan for two years. He and Brad, who had accompanied him, remained in Japan a third year, and they backpacked for nine months through Asia and Europe before their return to the States.

Don began his career in Hartford, Connecticut in 1958, as a reporter for The Hartford Times. His daughter Emily was born the same year, and his son Ken two years later. While working full time, Don

tion skills as he went. In 1963, he wrote “The Negro in Hartford” a 40-page special tabloid section of the paper, which won the paper a Pulitzer Prize special citation.

Increasingly involved in city and civil rights issues, the family moved into the integrated Blue Hills neighborhood of Hartford in 1964, where both children attended public school, and where Don and Brad would live for five decades. An early riser, Don anxiously awaited delivery of the morning newspaper and frequently met the delivery person at the front door; with a stern reprimand if they were tardy – that paperboy ended up being his son-in-law, Tim Sullivan!

In 1965, Don was awarded an Alicia Patterson Fellowship, affording him the opportunity for a year abroad studying economic development along the Mekong river in Cambodia and the Danube river in Romania. After leaving Bucharest, the family went camping in Russia before returning home.

Back at the Times, Don took on several managerial roles before being named Editor in 1974, subsequently resigning due to a policy dispute with the new ultra-conservative publisher. He transitioned to television news, joining local television station, WFSB, as Senior News Correspondent, in 1975; covering politics and state government, delivering on-air editorials – “Noel’s Notebook” – and hosting the weekly interview program, “Face the State.” After a decade on television, Don returned to print, joining The Hartford Courant as their op-ed political columnist, penning tri-weekly columns, remaining there until his retirement in 1997.

Don and Brad enjoyed and supported the arts: theater, opera, symphony and ballet in Hartford. A weekend at Tanglewood concerts was an annual event for three decades; for twenty years they bicycled the 65 miles. Always involved in his community, among many other positions, Don served as the secretary of the Blue Hills Civic Association for over a decade, served on the Board of Directors of the ACLU of Connecticut, and served as President of the Residents Council of Seabury. Brad, who died at age 88 in 2019 from complications of Alzheimer’s Disease, was well known in Hartford as a guidance counselor at Weaver High School and later as a member of the school board for four terms.

Upon his retirement Don poured his creative energy into writing fiction. He wrote and self-published Near a Far Sea, a memoir recounting building and managing a beachfront rental house in an out-of-the-way village on the unspoiled south-west coast of Jamaica. Several years into retirement he went back to school and earned his MFA, at age 86, from Fairfield University. He published dozens of short stories in both print and online literary journals

Former state senator and gubernatorial candidate Bill Curry, whose family lived next door to Noel in Hartford when Curry was 12 years

old, visited his friend recently and remarked, “In case you thought there was no such thing as a Renaissance Man in the 21st century, there he was. Where he found so much energy for family, for work, for community, for physical recreation, for his spiritual life. I don’t know anyone who did all of that so fully and so well.”

After Don’s farewell Facebook post, he received an outpouring of written remarks from his friends. He posted one last time on June 23. “Thanks to all 157 of you,” he wrote. “I am embarrassed, chastened, buoyed up. Someone quoted Campbell: living in memories of those left behind is not to die. I am grateful for that thought.”

Many thanks to Christopher Keating at the Hartford Courant for permission to use his reporting, Carmon Community Funeral Homes, and the ACLU of Connecticut.

GARY GOSSEN

Beloved Deep Springs professor Gary Gossen passed away in February 2025 at his home in El Dorado, New Mexico. Gary enriched so many of us in the valley with his deep empathy, big-hearted generosity as a mentor, and boundless enthusiasm for learning. He cut an unmistakable figure with a profile fit for central casting as Don Quixote and impeccable Spanish to boot.

A preeminent scholar of Mesoamerican culture—particularly Mayan language and mythology—Gary authored Four Creations: An Epic Story of the Chiapas Mayas and Chamulas in the World of the Sun, among other works. But he was also a passionate singer and collector of folk songs. He spoke movingly about his grandparents’ farm in the Ozarks of Kansas, the site of his happiest childhood memories. It was there he first connected to a pre-modern way of life and a rich canon of American music. Throughout his later travels, he also learned a vast array of Spanish and Latin American folk songs, and the year I spent as his student at Deep Springs was filled with many long evenings on his front porch as he taught me his incredible repertoire.

Gary’s love for the Spanish language was contagious, his political convictions were passionate, and his laughter came easily. His belief in the power of music as a bridge to cultural understanding ran through every fiber of his being. He helped instill in me the confidence to pursue a career in the arts, especially in the cross-cultural currents of American and Mexican folk music. He didn’t want his students to think of culture as a frozen museum piece but as the living, breathing, constantly evolving material of life. And he wanted us to feel empowered to participate in it—to be part of the conversation.

Music, he would say, is the ultimate truth. A song could easily bring him to tears. On my final visit with him last year, he started to sing me an acapella version of a Brazilian folk song that he had taught me over 20 years ago. It was Gary at his best: a vessel for another beautiful song to pass through, a teacher sharing his love of a tradition, and a friend reminiscing about a shared passion that caused him to naturally break into song.

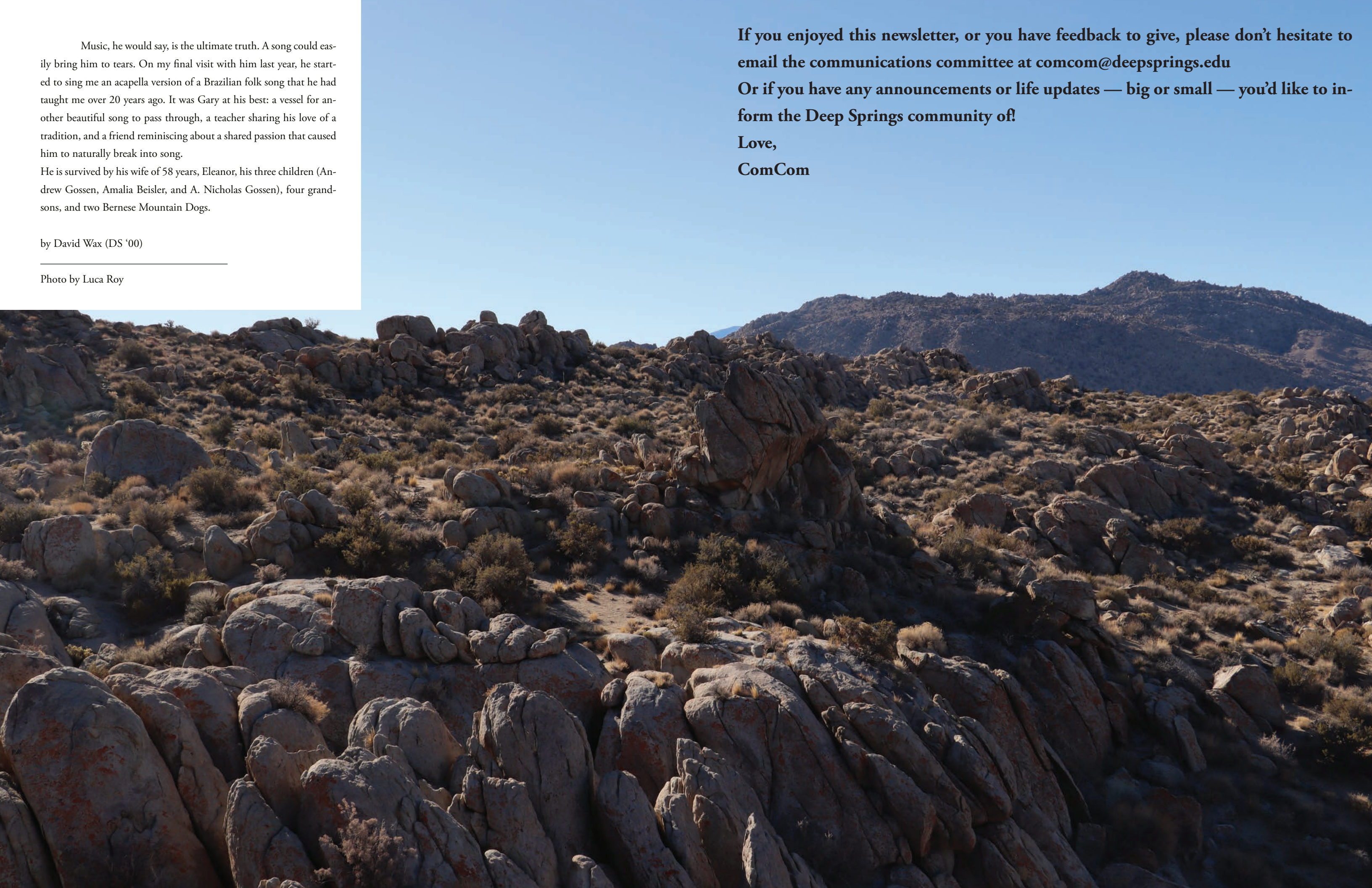
He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Eleanor, his three children (Andrew Gossen, Amalia Beisler, and A. Nicholas Gossen), four grandsons, and two Bernese Mountain Dogs.

by David Wax (DS '00)

Photo by Luca Roy

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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