



ALUMNI NEWSLETTER #95

FALL 2018



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While Deep Springs is in one way isolated geographically, the idea was that you were going to be wed to the campus, ranch, farm, garden, garage or shop and to the intellectual rigor. Thinking and doing were meant to be complementary. Surgery is a craft and isn't that different from fixing a tractor or working as a cowboy. I'm working with my hands in a very real way. I have to know intellectually what the right thing to do is, but, at the end of the day, I have to use my hands to deliver that craft in an exacting way.

- Brendan Visser DS90

DEEP SPRINGS
COLLEGE

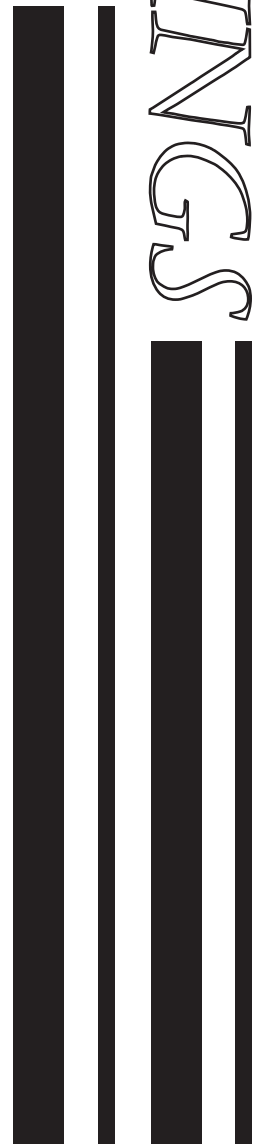


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President's Letter

David Neidorf

Coeducation

These days alumni often ask how coeducation is going. Usually I answer “great,” or “just fine.” Deep Springs is unique—that’s why I’ve worked here for over a decade. But I worked twice as long in coed colleges, so nothing seems unfamiliar. Deep Springs is as unique as ever.

Pressed farther, I reply that it’s the same college, not much different, but in small ways a little better. It’s long been a great school; now it’s a little better. Coeducation adds a salutary challenge that our students are well able to meet. The terms of competitive success among an already competitive group are a little broader—a little less simplistic, a little more maturing. Class discussions are pretty much the same, but perspectives are a little more varied. Verbal arm-wrestling remains a popular form of exercise, but dispute gets lost in re-circulating cycles of such contention a little less. Most of all, the example the college sets for students is far better aligned with L. L. Nunn’s expectation that Deep Springers learn to transcend petty and protective self-concern—demanding, if necessary, a great deal of ourselves in the name of justice.

Beyond that, there’s not much I can or should say. It’s not about the staff—it’s about the students. The story of the transition to coeducation at Deep Springs belongs to them, and over the course of time, I am sure they will tell it. But it will take time—first to experience the as-yet incomplete arc of transition, and then to reflect on and describe it.

In the meantime, we ask for your patience about news. As one alumnus kindly phrased it, we should “let the isolation policy do its thing.” The first cohort of women and men at Deep Springs should experience this passage of their education as it happens, without the pressure of feeling under a microscope. Their focus on the quality of their undertaking should remain as it has always been, without undue distraction by concern with controlling its outside optics. It’s for this reason that we have not welcomed press coverage during the transition period. That, too, will happen in due time.

Presidential Transition in 2020

As many of you know, I plan to leave Deep Springs in the summer of 2020, after the initial coed class graduates. If I make it that far, I will have lived and worked at Deep Springs—with gratitude—for fifteen years.

It’s not usual to announce a departure date almost two years in advance—usually for fear it will lengthen a period during which the exact character of the future feels less certain. But nothing at Deep Springs is usual, and this seems to me the right timing for this college. I am certain there are talented people for whom the presidency of Deep Springs is a great fit, and that the next person, by doing it differently than I have, will help make the college better. But we have to admit that during any given month or two, it may not always be easy to find those people. So I believe the college’s quality and stability are both served best by giving the trustees more time than is usual to conduct their search for the next president.

One reason for my confidence in the future is that the board has asked Sally Carlson to guide the search process, and she has graciously agreed to donate the value of her services. Sally, who is interviewed elsewhere in this newsletter, recently completed her second term as a Trustee of Deep Springs, so she knows the college well. And she is by profession the managing partner of an executive search firm that specializes in non-profit organizations, including many in education. During her years on the board, I was always impressed by Sally’s combination of organizational acuity with an appreciative insight into the idiosyncrasies of Deep Springs. I know the search committee will be reaching out to you over the upcoming winter. As a fan of Deep Springs, I’m looking forward with pleasure to the possibilities ahead for the college.

Deep Springs' Increasing Impact in Higher Education

L.L. Nunn wrote that the methods of education at Deep Springs “should become general.” While this aspiration has so far been little realized, there are encouraging signs of progress. So that early darkness won’t limit afternoon labor—as anyone living at Deep Springs during the winter discovers—the college remains on Daylight Savings Time all year. Others are now beginning to see the moral order of the universe in Nunn’s terms, and to consider adopting our methods. Voters in California this November will vote on Proposition 7, which authorizes the legislature to adjust California’s clocks to match those in Deep Springs Valley year-round.

Of greater significance, perhaps, is the progress being made by three new educational programs with Deep Springs roots, staffed, to varying degrees, by former Deep Springs students or faculty members, and incorporating their own versions of the college’s three pillars of liberal education, labor, and student self-governance: The Arete Project and the Outer Coast program, both of which are running summer programs inspired by the Deep Springs Summer Seminar as a first step towards a two-year college, and Thoreau College, about to begin a nine-month program for young adults.

I welcome these programs, and I hope to see many more. Together, these new college programs will be part of an investigation into the more “general” power of L.L. Nunn’s educational ideas and aims.

If Nunn’s approach to education is to become more general, it’s essential to vary the model, to experiment with different combinations of its components. Outer Coast, for example, plans in part to replace strict isolation and much of the labor pillar with community volunteer work. Arete is experimenting with programs that have a greater emphasis on the environment and (by implication) the challenges of climate change. Some programs modeled on Deep Springs will be less academically selective than Deep Springs, some will emphasize exploration of local cultures or agricultures.

To long-time members of the extended Deep Springs community, these variations all have a familiar ring. All of them have been proposed, at times, either late at night in the boardinghouse, in planning sessions, and in alum meetings. And reasonably so—all of them are interesting ideas.

But Deep Springs is the wrong place to conduct these experiments. Such a small program—and it would lose itself if it didn’t remain small—can’t be everything needful or desirable at once. It can only aim, as Nunn hoped, to be a springboard and a training ground for broader and more varied lives of service to humanity than can fit within this small valley. It’s fair to see these new educational projects as partial fulfillment of that aim and those hopes. What we do here can and should continue to be refined and improved, just as it has been over the course of the college’s history. But we will not continue to inspire educational reform—indeed, we’d have little reason to exist—unless the college maintains its identity and integrity.

The 2011 announcement that Deep Springs planned to become coeducational played a major role in making it plausible for others to draw inspiration from Nunn’s educational model. Since all of these new programs are co-educational, until fifteen months ago Deep Springs was legally barred from supporting them, or any program that educated women. We can now look forward to providing non-financial assistance to these and (we hope) other new and similar efforts.

All of this is made possible by the continuing support of our extended community. All of you share in this progress. Thank you.



David Neidorf

Director of Development's Letter

John Dewis DS94

Deep Springs family,

I have a distinct memory of riding along on horseback circa 1996 somewhere between North Field and Chocolate Mountain and stumbling upon a book whose cut edge was easily three times as thick as the binding, swollen and dried from many rains and more suns. I hopped off Smokey and leafed through my first ever copy of *Moby Dick*. It wasn't practical to strap a book to my saddle. I also felt uneasy dragging things out of the desert that just might supposed to be there, so I tossed it back into the sage, like an arrowhead, for some future Deep Springer.

A year later I was at a full gallop after a fugitive calf who came down Wyman the day after his peers had shipped—the same *Moby Dick* caught my eye, right where I'd left it! Everything in the desert that isn't sage or granite or a cow appears treasure. But when the desert twice offers up the same novel, and that novel is of the sea, it feels more like a message. The voice of the desert, if you listen closely, has a sense of humor. Again, no time to retrieve the book, and so for a second time and for the rest of my young life Melville's magnum opus remained the one that got away.

My father does not read novels: a history of Rublev's icons, Richthofen's mapping of the Silk Road, a book on the Homeric roots of the Gospel of Mark, a thin book on Schopenhauer. These lie open on the dining room table in stages of consultation, but I've never known him to read a novel. Last month my father turned up in South Pasadena reading *Moby Dick* and left us, to my surprise, two second-hand copies of the book. A hardcover for the house, he explained, and a soft cover that might happily live in the car or a yoga bag.

Our ten-week old is typically up between three and five a.m., and in those wee hours he is spellbound by Melville's watery incantation. On page 159 we found a message for Deep Springs. In a chapter called "The Advocate" Ishmael defends the honor of whaling against imaginary detractors. Not only are entire cities lit up by whale oil, he explains, but the whaleship's adventure and bonhomie provide the occasion for genius Ishmael could not have got anywhere else:

"And, as for me, if, by any possibility, there be any as yet undiscovered prime thing in me; if I shall ever deserve any real repute in that small but high hushed world which I might not be unreasonably ambitious of; if hereafter I shall do anything that, upon the whole, a man might rather have done than to have left undone; if, at my death, my executors, or more properly my creditors, find any precious MSS. in my desk, then here I prospectively ascribe all the honour and the glory to whaling; for a whale-ship was my Yale College and my Harvard."

He imagines leaving fortune earned from posthumous manuscripts not to an illustrious alma mater but to a whaleship like the *Pequod*. Whaling does not compromise Ishmael's ambition to make something of himself; but even in the case of ambition fulfilled, the *Pequod* was his true education, and to one's true education much is owed.

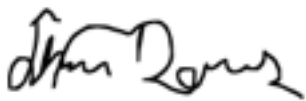
At the Centennial celebration last summer Phil Craven (DS60) gave a talk about his work as a doctor. In discussing his professional efficacy, however, he didn't talk about medical training. He talked about being cowboy's assistant to Fogger Dunagan, working general labor for farmer Gordie Smith, and drinking coffee late-night with other students in the Boarding House. Phil says being a good doctor means being able to listen to what someone is saying even when their words are different from yours, and being able to explain things clearly. And that, he says, he learned at Deep Springs. Phil's insight about how Deep Springs prepared him to serve others was the inspiration for the theme of this Newsletter, and I thank him for it.

My father is a doctor. His father was a mechanic outside Boston who worked on furlough during the depression and taught himself the algebra he skipped when he left high school. It always seemed to me a long way from the

Melrose Tool and Dye Shop to the Bryn Mawr Hospital, but my dad once told me being a doctor was like being a mechanic of living systems.

I hope you enjoy the reflections in this Newsletter. If you discover what in your own life you attribute to your time in the desert—as a student, professor, staff, family, or in any other capacity—please let me know. And if you were a student, when the “high and hushed” ask you where you went to school, do you look them in the eye and tell them... the *Pequod*?

Respectfully yours,



John Dewis

SB President's Letter

Schuyler Curriden DS17

From the point of view of the Student Body President, we've had a wonderful first two terms of coeducation thus far. The Orientation Subcommittee planned and executed several events during the first few weeks to encourage a more thorough introduction to student life at Deep Springs. These events included a BH training program, the traditional Chocolate Mountain Hike, and a day-hike in the Sierras. The traditional trip to the Eureka Valley Dunes was not possible in these two terms due to road washouts. This trip has been postponed to the warmer months. An additional SB trip to the Valley of Fire and Garden Valley in Nevada has been planned for the first three days of 2-3 break. This is intended to make up for the lacuna of the Dunes and to ensure that second years arriving during the second term have similar opportunities for bonding amongst the Student Body as their term one peers.

In terms of Self-Governance, this Student Body has shown interest in a thorough investigation of the structures within which we govern ourselves, such as Robert's Rules and the Student Bylaws. This investigation has led to the development of committees outside of Student Body meetings to deal with more granular issues of Self-Governance, such as renovating the Rumpus Room floor, updating our Vehicle Policy, and updating our Visitor Policy. While this interest in our structures of governance has questioned everything from the jurisdiction of the SB to the role of emotions in our decision-making process, we have maintained a fairly strict adherence to the ground rules. We've passed few isolation breaches, banned the internet during Term One, and have passed no no other motions to breach ground rules. This rigorous upholding has of course been accompanied by questioning the purpose and value of the ground rules, along with the other structures surrounding our self-governance, but the upholding of the ground rules against a background of questioning says much about the tenor of this SB.

We've passed a series of significant motions including a written definition of censure, an optimization of the treasurer position, an affirmation of our press moratorium, and a motion to celebrate a harvest festival in place of Thanksgiving this year. Overall, our first two terms of coeducation have gone quite smoothly and have been, for me at the very least, an incredible experience of growth. We've seen the development of a close community and an active governing body and are looking forward to the terms to come.

Sincerely,
Schuyler Curriden

Farm, Ranch, and Garden Report

Padraic MacLeish DS99

Changes are afoot in the farm and ranch. After a great deal of paperwork and consultation by Ranch Manager Tim Gipson, Farm Manager Gabriel Delgado, and previous farmer Noah Beyeler the College has achieved USDA Organic Certification for both the hay and cattle operations. All hay is now certified organic and all calves born after August 2018 are also eligible for organic status. Relatively few changes had to be made to either the farm or ranch to achieve certification, and both Tim and Gabriel have already started exploring the new marketing opportunities it has created.

Did you know: The Deep Springs Class of 2018 includes students from eight different American states and five other countries.

For many years, the College's range cattle have calved at some point from December through March. There are some advantages to calving at this time of year, but two factors prompted Ranch Manager Tim Gipson to pursue a change. First, calving earlier in the year means that calving will take place when the weather is more mild. Second, calves born earlier in the year will be better able to take advantage of the high-quality forage on our Forest Service allotments.

During Tim's first winter as ranch manager, heavy snows and extremely cold temperatures meant that a number of newborn calves died. He explains that "the biggest thing in the middle of winter was that you had to be out there at night making sure that the newborn calves didn't freeze down," and that concern simply doesn't exist in the fall. First-calf heifers have already started calving in late September, and Tim points out that this has been a smooth and easy process.



Students wipe the sleep out of their eyes as Sarah's Short Fiction class begins.

Farm Manager Gabriel Delgado has kept farm team busy this summer as he leads them in efforts to replant a number of tired fields. Over time, desirable perennial crops such as alfalfa and some grasses age and lose their vigor. Replanting on a regular basis allows the farm to rotate crops with different nutritional needs through fields and increase production by establishing younger, faster-growing plants. In addition to replanting, Gabriel has overseeded a number of crops. Overseeding is the process of planting new seeds into a healthy, established field. Not only does it entail much less soil disturbance than a complete replanting, but it also allows a field to produce both annuals such as barley or oats and perennials like alfalfa.

The student garden crew, working under the supervision of Garden Manager Shelby MacLeish, has been having fun as well. This fall, the College was able to borrow a cider press from a local friend, and the garden crew pressed several gallons' worth of cider from our own apples. Also in the orchard, the College dedicated an ornamental flower garden to Professor Jennifer Smith, whose passing is remembered elsewhere in this newsletter. Shelby hopes that residents and visitors to the Valley will spend time sitting on the shaded bench and enjoying the peace and natural beauty of the space. §

Fall Courses

Euclid: We are working our way through Euclid's *Elements*, hoping to work through non-Euclidean geometry later in the semester. This classical text, however, has asked of the class more than the study of mathematics; it has stimulated discussions on Euclid's lucid logic and deductive reasoning, as well as more far-reaching topics such as abstraction and infinity. Taught by Visiting Professor Linda Wiener.

Field Bio: In Field Biology, students learn the skills and methodology of nature observation, field note-taking, and identification (taxonomy). Each student maintains a notebook to document field work. Later in the course, each student will undertake a personal project, taking influence from the writings of great nature writers, as well as from the shrubs and flowers, insects and birds of the Valley. Taught by Linda Wiener.

Shakespeare: In this course we will be reading a selection of Shakespeare plays wherein the thematics of the family play a significant role. We are currently in the middle of the second part of Henry IV and will read Macbeth, King Lear, and The Tempest throughout the rest of the semester. Taught by Visiting Professor Sarah Stickney.

Contemporary American Short Fiction: In this seminar, students read and discuss both canonical and contemporary short stories from authors William Faulkner, John Cheever, Flannery O'Connor, F. Scott Fitzgerald, James Baldwin, and Jamaica Kincaid. The class culminates in having students write and critique their own short stories. Taught by Sarah Stickney.

Augustine: This course is dedicated to a close reading of Augustine's *Confessions* with supplemental readings drawn from the *Bible*, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, and a selection of Augustine's other works. So far the class has focused on the way Augustine's conception of language informs his notions of faith and sin. Taught by Robert Aird Chair of the Humanities David McNeill.

Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics: This course is primarily devoted to a careful reading of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, a work that—while first appearing as a manual for right living—ultimately reveals itself as a guide to reflection on the problem of living well. Specifically, we will explore the tensions between the competing claims of the life of ethical and political engagement and the life of theoretical inquiry—an exploration very much suited to life here at Deep Springs. Taught by David McNeill.

Did you know: The farm's swather, balewagon, and two tractors have a combined 153 years of experience.

Islands: This course draws on an interdisciplinary selection of readings to approach the topic of evolutionary theory through the study of islands. From Darwin and Humboldt to Hume and Dillard, our course discussions have involved topics ranging from the formation of atolls to the place of human rationality and perception in the scientific process. Taught by Dean of Academics Amity Wilczek.

Painting: This is a studio-art course that focuses on developing the skills and critical eye necessary for the creation of meaningful (a concept which itself we explore) and coherent paintings. Students begin with the course with drawings and formal exercises in shape, tone and color, ultimately working our way up to a series of paintings of a theme of our choosing. Taught by Visiting Professor Justin Kim.

Auto Mechanics: Offered yearly by our Director of Operations, Padraic MacLeish, Auto Mechanics reviews the fundamental components of vehicles, especially focused on the functioning of and variations between different engines.



Independent study or readings: *Bible* study (held by Padraic and Shelby) is working through Joshua at the moment and has had a pretty strong representation from the SB these past three weeks (around twelve to fifteen students showed up for the first two sessions, and eight for the third one). Independent studies this semester: Mo Katz-Christy, **The Meaning of Success in Resistance Movements** (with Sarah Stickney); Austin Smith, **Environmentalism: Ethics and Tactics** (with David Neidorf), and Zhuo Chen, **The Philosophy of Maimonides** (with David McNeill). §

Babies

Despite a depressed birth rate amongst our cattle this year, humans in the valley have seen a glut of babies born in the last twelve months. Pictured below are, going clockwise from the top left: Robert Aird Chair of Humanities David McNeill and Emily Tucker's daughter Oona, born in August; former Farm and Small Animals Manager Noah and Gwen Beyeler's daughter Cora Liesl, born in August; trustee and recidivist professor Katie Peterson and Young Sub's daughter Emily, born last October; and Director of Development John and Courtney Dewis's son John, born in July. §



Did you know: Our Cornish Cross meat chickens grow quickly. If a newborn human baby weighed six pounds and grew at the same rate, it would weigh 500 pounds at two months



A Remembrance of Jenny Smith

On August 5th, Jennifer Smith passed away in Lexington, Kentucky, surrounded by her family and loved ones. As Julian Steward Chair of the Social Sciences, Jenny had taught at Deep Springs since 2014, and waged a quiet and determined battle with cancer for the last three of those years.

Many members of the immediate community were fortunate to be able to bid farewell to Jenny at the dedication of an ornamental garden space in her honor. As the sun set over the White Mountains, we shared our gratitude for her many contributions to the life and mission of the College. Some of these words of thanks are printed below.

You may have noticed— during a walk, a sleepy pilgrimage to dairy, a slow drive-by, a morning run, or just a visit— the modest beauty of the garden behind Jenny’s house. It is true that when I think of Jenny I first think of a remarkable teacher and a friend, but gardener might be just as important a label. Her garden is a well-tended but exuberant plot of land, one that is well-worth an admiring look or smell if you get the chance... [Her hard work there] strikes me now, as it did then, as a vibrant reminder of the poise with which one can carry out what a life of service, perhaps especially a Nunnian life of service, demands— a noble commitment to a noble tedium, slowly eradicating the world’s most incorrigible weeds well beyond the limits of our own backyards... It is a testament to the practical tenacity and commitment to the good that I was fortunate enough to observe and be educated by for two years. The phrase “abundance of heart” comes to mind. Deep Springs loses something great as Jenny moves on, but that loss is not greater than what she has given to the community, and all those privileged enough to move through it. Thank you, Jenny— Our lives are better for people like you doing the work you’ve done.

Jango McCormick DS16



Jenny’s memorial garden.

Your classes still shape how I read and how I write. But more than that, they shape the terms in which I see the world, and my sense of what it means to seek positive change and to live a life of service. I was always impressed by your ability to construct amazing syllabi, and the way you were able to teach excellent courses that covered not only political science but also sociology, philosophy, anthropology, economics, and philosophy. Thank you for all the excellent conversations over meals, in your living room, and at community events. Thank you for always being willing to talk politics, especially as I was struggling to make any sense of what was happening in 2016. Your Parties & Elections course—and especially your own work on unwritten and informal institutions—helped me approach American politics with nuance and rigor at a time where it felt tempting to abandon both. Thank you for your incredible dedication to ApCom over the past few years and your work in preparation for coeducation. Thank you for being a friend and a mentor.

Elliot Setzer DS15



The introduction to intellectual life you provided me with has not only changed the way I read and digest politics on the day to day, but it has also made me come to a new understanding of my role within politics as an intellectual.

You have helped me understand the value of academic engagement - in short, you've inspired me to study. For this, I thank you.

Michael Leger DS16

Thank you for your dedication to this place as a teacher and as a community member. It has always seemed to me that teaching is a fertile source of joy and meaning in your life, and I felt that deeply in your classroom. Your classes melded a demand that we think more carefully with an ambient delight in the act of thinking together. This infectious combination helped us move beyond seeing careful thinking simply as a good to strive for and towards finding it viscerally pleasurable and satisfying. Speaking personally, you were one of my most important mentors and someone I value greatly as a friend. For all of this I am deeply grateful.

Aaron Ziemer DS14

§

In Memoriam, Helen M. Heckman

Jack Newell DS56, former president of the College and trustee

Helen M. Heckman, L.L. Nunn's grand niece (a granddaughter of his sister Miriam Nunn Bird), died shortly before her 99th birthday on June 22, 2018. Lucid to the end, she was probably the last person to hold vivid memories of L.L. Nunn. Helen's family lived close to his home in Los Angeles in the early 1920s, and he played prominently in her early childhood. She revered her "Uncle Lu," who she remembered as being kind and witty with her and her cousins. When she discovered that Jack Newell was writing *The Electric Edge of Academe*, Helen sought him out and opened the Nunn family archive to him and Linda (Helen had developed this repository over many years in a spare bedroom of her Apple Valley home). The correspondence she provided between and among Nunn and his older siblings when he was in Durango and Telluride in his early twenties filled the gap left by the deliberate burning of his personal papers by his brother P.N. and two associates shortly after his death. These crucial letters provided the missing link for understanding Nunn's character, motivations, and life trajectory. Helen visited Deep Springs with the Newells in 2011, exuding delight in seeing the college that had been part of her consciousness since childhood. §



Students prepare for preg check at the corrals.

Class of 2018

Student Bios



Surprisingly for a New Yorker, **Abie Rohrig** always greets you with a great big smile and a warm hug—though don't let that distract you from the Student Body's suspicion that as treasurer, he may try to donate the entire college to charity in pursuit of his utilitarian ideals.



Anousha Peters worries about many things, but there's at least one thing this labor-loving Floridian is one hundred percent sure of: the calluses on her fingers from milking the dairy cows are unmatched by any in the Student Body.



Despite her superficially human appearance, some think that **Elsa Rose Farnam** may actually be a wheel line. This Connecticutian's dedication to farm team is complemented by an abundance of complex handshakes she's

always willing to dish out.

Did you know: Faith Hill's "Breathe" was the top song in 2000, the year that the youngest member of the SB was born.

Swimming in either one of the reservoirs, reading books you've always wanted to read, or generally being an expression of pure L.A. aesthetics, **Ginger Vidal** is always ready to play ping-pong or watch a cult classic with other Student Body film buffs.



You never know where **Izzy Pisarsky** may be lurking with a camera, snapping pictures of you, the desert, or animal bones depending on her mood. It's rumored that she has a picture of an actual simulacrum on her digital camera, but such a legend may be too much for even this post-modern German to fulfill.



Kindly bestowing her superior cultivation on the Student Body by bumping Schubert in the BH, the British **Izzy Wythe** somehow has mastery over both snarky comebacks and the original Latin or Greek of any classic you've ever read.



There are doubts in the SB about whether the Israeli **Jonathan Goodman** is secretly a MAMIL (Middle Aged Man in Lycra), a reincarnation of jazz master Thelonious Monk, or, due to his climbing prowess, even a mountain goat in disguise.





Coming straight from the swamps of D.C., you're equally likely to find the young mathematician **Levi Freedman** solving differential equations as eating Nutella straight from the jar.



Where is he? The basement? The fields? Faded into a purely poetic realm of existence? If you happen to pass by the famed Slovenian Bear **Lukas Debeljak**, make sure that you can supply the tobacco he needs to stay alive.



Though she says she's from Boston, many in the Student Body suspect that **Mo Katz-Christy** may very well be Mother Earth herself, and though she's never afraid to push the SB out of its comfort zone, she's sure to make you feel better with her vast collection of homemade herbal teas.



When **Rory O'Hollaren** is around, you know you're being heard. Always attentive to others, this D.C./Oregonian is sure to draw attention by her liberal use of such interjections as "Woohoo!", "Oh no!", and "Darn!" to express her inner monologue.

If her ability to teach herself languages doesn't impress you, then her ability to somehow convert a whole rambling discussion into a coherent comment surely will—in general, the Student Body tries to stay on **Ryn Delgado's** good side. Otherwise, this Santa Fe native may (if it's even possible) put even more chili in the food as Senior Cook.



When he's not reminding you that he's African, the Moroccan **Sammy Mohamed Bennis** can be found playing guitar, decimating filth in the BH, or recruiting people for the armed revolution.



Whether she's climbing halfway up a mountain and back down again or reminding the SB of the paramount importance of Meryl Streep, the Jerusalemite **Tamar Ze'evi's** thoughts are invariably focused on Abraham, the name she has given her sourdough starter as Baker.



Born to trailblazers in northern California, **Trinity Andrews** is known for her eclectic music taste, her challenges to the Student Body's ideas of gender, and her regular raids of the BH to procure yet more hot sauce.



Interview with Visiting Professor Sarah Stickney

Aadit Narula Gupta DS17

Sarah Stickney is a visiting professor who will be teaching at Deep Springs during the Summer Seminar, and Terms 2-5. Her current course offerings are classes on Shakespeare and on short American fiction. Sarah first taught at Deep Springs during the Summer Seminar of 2017, where she was an assistant professor. When not at Deep Springs, Sarah teaches at St. John's College.

Aadit Narula Gupta: Could you tell us about yourself and your life outside of the valley? Where are you from, and where do you live now?



Sarah Stickney: I grew up in Santa Fe, New Mexico, which is a beautiful town. It's in a desert that's different from Deep Springs', but is similar in that there's a lot of space. There's a giant sky, and a sense of extension—which is one of the reasons I feel very happy here. After I left Santa Fe I kind of lived everywhere else imaginable: Chicago, Michigan—where I went to boarding school. I lived in Annapolis; Baltimore; Dover, New Hampshire; Bologna, Italy; Aix-en-Provence, France; and in the mountains of North Carolina. Now I'm here!

What brought you to all of these places?

Curiosity, mostly. But once I became serious about writing, then writing and translation were the cause of most of my moves; it was a translation project that took me to Bologna, for instance, and a desire to be somewhere quiet, to write, that took me to North Carolina.

What motivated you to learn your second languages, Italian and French?

I think this might be a funny answer but I just have always been amazed at language, period. I think from a really early age, just finding out that there are so many—that people said all the things that they thought in a diversity of words—has not ceased to fascinate me. I think of my language-learning self and my poet-self as living in the same delight and awe for language.

What did your academic trajectory look like? What did you study in school, and how did you decide what you wanted to do?

I studied philosophy in school. In a way, it was the opposite of a decision because both my parents teach at St. John's College, and you can go for free if you're the child of a professor. My mom and dad basically said: Listen, you can do whatever you want, but if you go elsewhere you have to figure out how to fund it. So, for a little while, I just rebelled and said I wasn't even going to go to college. And, in fact, I worked on a farm. After a while I figured out that farm work is hard, so I thought, maybe I should go to college. I sort of bumbled into St. Johns, and luckily it was great for me. It's a great education for a writer. I now love philosophy and read and think about it a fair amount. So it worked out well, but it was an accident.

How did you find out about Deep Springs? Given that you had already done agricultural work, what about your earlier experience continued to inspire you to move back to a farm?

I remember reading the *New Yorker* article that came out a long time ago, which was printed when I was in college, and I remember thinking, wow, that sounds like a really interesting place. That was a little flicker on the screen of

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Interview with Visiting Professor Linda Wiener

Trinity Andrews DS18

Just to start off, where did you study?

Linda Wiener: I did undergraduate at the University of Miami in Florida. I wanted to be a marine biologist but really I just liked scuba diving in the Keys. I did work in the Everglades—of course they were a lot bigger back then. I got my masters in Entomology at the University of Colorado and my PhD in Entomology at the University of Wisconsin. *[Interview is paused for a black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*).]* I was interested in biological classification so I got my post-doctorate in Linguistics at Harvard. It was unpaid though so I worked at the Museum of Zoology at Harvard. I did teaching there and curated as well. After that, I spent three years with the Arthur D Little think tank—this was in 1985 when there weren't very many think tanks. What they do is they have experts on everything so that whenever they have a question from a client they can assemble a team to work on it. This was when they were just starting to do genetic engineering so I worked on those sorts of questions. *[Interview paused for a small warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*).]* So, I had applied for a position at St. Johns and hadn't heard back until right about when I was wanting to leave. They had me do an interview and asked if I could start the next month so I started there. I worked there full-time for a couple years then I started my own little Entomology consulting company. People would suggest me for jobs and I would go someplace in the summer when my sons were out of school.

Did you know: During June of 2018, 708,000 gallons of water per day passed through the Deep Springs hydroelectric plant, generating an average of 158 kilowatt hours per day.

Were you working in specific climates?

No, my work has mostly been from people saying, "Oh, she'd be good for this," and someone looking me up. In Chiapas I was working with the Zapatistas, I was doing organic farming in India, and in Nicaragua I was working with farmers who had been poisoned from pesticide use. I try to give solidarity to the communities I work with. I worked with the farmers to see what they needed so they could be sustainable after I left. I haven't done as much in recent years though. The trips aren't easy! They would be hours on some of the worst roads, then we would strap our stuff to our backpacks and hike into some of these villages.

You didn't need to bring in any equipment?

No, I tried to use what they had there. It wouldn't help any to bring some great big piece of equipment that no one can get any parts for. I didn't want to show up and tell them how I thought things should be done. I asked what they wanted help with and really tried to gain the trust of the community. Then, sometimes, they would take my suggestions.

This is kind-of a silly question, but when you were doing literary work did you get lots of entomology-etymology jokes?

Oh all the time. *[Interview paused to look at a pair of great horned owls (*Bubo virginianus*).]*

Did teaching philosophy at St. Johns change the way you view bugs?

It did. I wanted to study biology because I wanted to know the secret of life but that's not really where science is right now. In science you work with physical materials but you can't do an experiment and say, "Well, now I've proved the existence of God." I'm always impressed that things are alive! Like those birds over there, I think they have free will—not entirely, but who does—they're not robots moving through the universe. Philosophy helped me articulate the problems I had with science that I didn't have the words for. *[Interview concludes with the inspection of a hickory leaf-stem gall aphid (*Phylloxera caryaecaulis*).]* §

Deep Springs in the Medical Field

Following last spring's newsletter—in which we interviewed alums who became writers after their time in the valley—the Communications Committee wanted to use this issue to explore another career prevalent amongst Deep Springers: medicine. What follows are six interviews with Deep Springers in a variety of medical fields and at a variety of different places in their careers, as well as two brief, posthumous biographies of alums who made significant contributions to their chosen medical fields.

Jan Vleck DS69

Sammy Mohamed Bennis DS18

Sammy: Jan, why did you choose to go into medicine? How has Deep Springs informed that choice?

Jan: When I was at Deep Springs, I was planning on a career in vertebrate field biology. I felt at home in the desert, and felt I had a pretty good handle on reptiles and amphibians.. I took what life science classes were offered by Dr. John Mawby, but didn't otherwise have much of an academic plan except to take general liberal arts courses and languages.

Upon transferring to Cornell as a junior I found myself scrambling to catch up with the biology majors who had already done more coursework in the field, so for my whole two years at Cornell I took almost entirely hard science courses—as I recall, general chemistry, biochemistry, and genetics at the same time—but thankfully I had time for a creative writing class and of course Cornell's wine tasting class in my final semester. So at the time, Deep Springs didn't provide a good foundation for rapid completion of a science undergraduate degree. That improved later on.

The summer I left Deep Springs (1972), I worked on an NSF grant to study toads at high altitude in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado. So I was headed to grad school and a future in physiological ecology, that might allow me to roam the deserts and mountains or even the high latitudes of the world under the guise of academic research.

Did you know: A bale of alfalfa hay contains approximately 80,000 calories (the same as 364 Twinkies).

Yet there was some turbulence in the flow. One of the courses I took at Cornell in the vet school was called something like medical physiology, and provided an exposure to *in vivo* lab techniques as well as to students who were always talking about how to get into medical school. So as a back-up plan I also applied to a few medical schools in California, figuring that the first years would be helpful for whatever I ended up doing. Also, the cultural history of the times was still resonating with the 1960s civil rights struggle and the dramatic emergence of establishment awareness of the problems of race and poverty in America. This social movement, combined with the Nunnian idea of service, led me to a recognition that one thing "the people" needed was better access to primary medical care. "The people" had a pretty clear meaning in those days, referring to those who had been disempowered by prevailing unequal and oppressive political and economic structures that are still too familiar to us today. So while applying to med school, I gave my reason as wanting to contribute in primary care, working with people, rather than saying I was heading for a lab research career. I decided that meant going into the field of family practice and working in a small town or a developing country. Of course, that neatly allowed me to reframe my idea of spending time in remoter areas of the world—a family doctor should be able to work productively just about anywhere.



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Akira Kobayashi DS05

Townes Neslon DS17

Would you mind starting by telling me a little about yourself?

I went to medical school at Loma Linda University and recently finished residency in Family Medicine in Seattle at the Swedish First Hill program. In September I started working at the Polyclinic, a multi-specialty physician-owned group in Seattle. I practice general medicine. Most days I am in the clinic seeing outpatients of all ages, but I also practice in the inpatient setting, working with residents to care for hospitalized patients and deliver babies.

How did your time at Deep Springs influence your desire to go into medicine? What other options did you consider?

One of the things I loved about Deep Springs is that you really got to see how improving a skill or perfecting a craft benefited your neighbors in community. Deep Springs deepened my appreciation for cultivating a craft/art/skill/techne for the sake of benefiting oneself and others.

Other career options I considered:

Engineer (ended up dropping out of MIT due to being really depressed there and finding out it was going to be more expensive than I thought).

Teacher (honestly didn't think I was very good at it, also slightly more performative than my introverted character finds comfortable).

I think I was sufficiently ignorant of what career options were available that I hadn't seriously thought about too many.

How did you choose the field of medicine you specialize in?

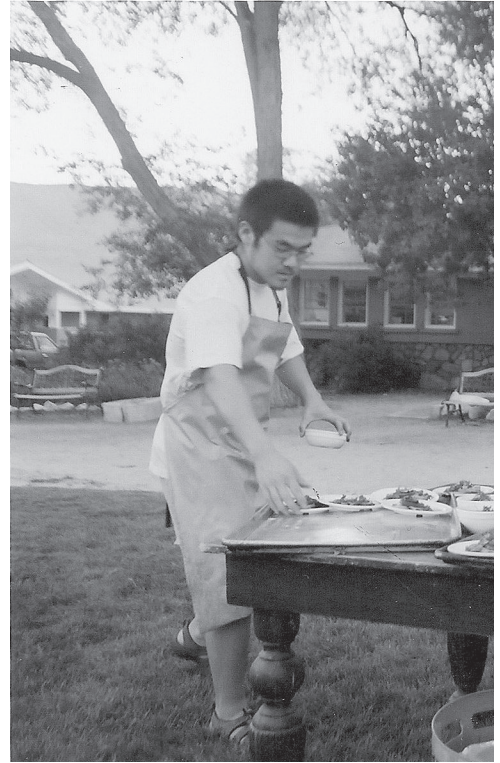
I hemmed and hawed and was very unsure which field to specialize in. I think I changed my mind every few weeks. I ended up applying to both internal medicine and family medicine residencies. Now that I am Family Medicine, I am very happy with my choice. I enjoy being able to see all ages, being a generalist, able to do inpatient and outpatient work, delivering babies, see people in both the emergent and non-emergent setting, being a jack of all trades. I love being able to establish partnerships with people of all walks of life, people of all ages and education levels and personalities and skin colors.

How, through your specific work, do you live a life of service?

When I was an applicant, I asked Mike Zalatel from DS04 how Deep Springs prepared people for a life of service. His answer was something like, "Nobody knows because nobody has figured out what a 'life of service' means." I still haven't figured out what a life of service is. But, with every patient I have a choice, either to become a servant to them out of compassion, or to ignore their humanity and view the care of them as a chore (very easy to do when tired, busy, or stressed). Trying to do a little more of the former and a little less of the latter, is the way that I concretely pursue a life of service in my work.

I have no great ambitions to be a superhero of service to humanity. My ambition is to lead a quiet but generous life,

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Steve Solga DS89

Sammy Mohamed Bennis DS18

Tell me about your medical career.

I'm a gastroenterologist and hepatologist at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and serve as the Program Director for the Transplant Hepatology Fellowship at the Perelman School of Medicine. Previously, I served as Co-Medical Director of Liver Transplantation at the Johns Hopkins Hospital. In between, I was a solo, independent physician in Bethlehem, PA for nearly a decade.

Why medicine?

It's a useful combination of natural science and the humanities.

And gut and liver disease?

Interesting physiology and strong mentoring.

Why did you leave Hopkins to become a self-employed physician?

Because it allowed my wife Lisa and me space to focus on our kids when they were young. Further, we felt the need to explore, and I'm somewhat allergic to big institutions anyway (a tendency which also in part led me to Deep Springs). In Bethlehem, I was able to see patients and practice medicine as I wanted. I could also make time for other non-patient care priorities (e.g. putting the kids on the bus, NSF funded research, FDA advisory committee work) without having to answer to anyone except my wife. It was a great experience. Main street looks very different once you've run your own business.

Did you know: In June of 2018, more than 55% of electricity used at the College was generated on site by the solar array or hydroelectric plant.



But you now work for Penn?

Yes. During this period, in Bethlehem and everywhere, corporate medicine all but vanquished small practices. So it was time to get a job. Plus, as the kids grew, Lisa was returning to her own professional interests (HIV medicine and research), and her needs were not being met locally. So we also had to move. Finally, while being a solo, independent doc was fun, it was isolating, and I wanted to return to the collaborative nature of liver transplant medicine.

Does your Deep Springs education impact your work?

Yes and routinely. At Penn, the liver group exists as a small intentional community within a gigantic organization and includes social work-

ers, psychiatrists, nurses, physicians and surgeons. Solid organ transplantation is different from other kinds of medicine. Best stewardship of donor organs is paramount. Therefore, decisions about whether to list a patient impact not only that individual but also other listed patients and the greater community. At times, personal and professional ethics are not fully harmonized with community ethics and we must consider, for example, trade-offs between

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Peter Reynaud DS75

John Dewis DS94

Why and when Deep Springs College?

I started in 1975. Got the application in the mail in New Orleans and wanted to go because Deep Springs was so different from everything else possible for me. Ten essays was appealing too, that they were asking so much of us, and wanted us to talk so much about what we thought. The ranch in the West and the student governance also appealed to me. Every other place I might have gone—Columbia, Reed, Yale—were more traditional, and this was more unusual.

But I didn't stay very long at Deep Springs. Fact was I wasn't ready to be in college. I wanted to have more adventures, and in New Orleans I was used to going out to bars and restaurants, and so for me the isolated environment was hard, and it was wearing to be in a small group. Also, at that time the academics was mostly liberal arts and I realized I wanted science.

Some of my really close friends today are my classmates from Deep Springs. I enjoyed meeting the ranch personnel and the cooks; I really enjoyed meeting all of these people and to be able to work in the fields and buck bales and herd cattle, and I was very happy to do it. The ranch work was my favorite part of Deep Springs. Being at Deep Springs really taught me that there was no set way for things to be done and opened up a whole world of possibilities.

What was college like after Deep Springs?

I'd go for a while then drop out—Columbia, then Berkeley—then down the line I finished. I thought, I really like Biology and wanted to do something humanitarian and beneficial to people, and lots of conversations with people I knew from Deep Springs encouraged me to go ahead and finish my BA.

In 1982 I finally finished, and it took seven years. After graduating from Berkeley I went to Europe for the summer and stayed for three years. When I started med school I was twenty-eight. I was older than a lot of people just starting, but that was about the mid age for people in my class. It was a great thing for me to have had a lot of experiences. I had already lived and worked, and as a result I was more prepared to do the work of medical school. Living in Europe put me into contact with people who worked for Doctors Without Borders. I had read about it in news but to meet people who did it and seeing that if they could do it, so could I. So instead of going to parties in Europe I went back to medical school and at that point I didn't think I was missing anything anymore.



Peter's work with Doctors Without Borders in Kenya.



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Brendan Visser DS90

Townes Nelson DS17

I want to start by getting some perspective on where you are in your career right now. From what I understand, you're a cancer surgeon, is that right? How'd you get to that career path?

After Deep Springs I was cowboy, then I started at Cornell. I went to Cornell for two years, then took six months working again as a cowboy elsewhere. At Cornell I basically packed pre-med into two years by doubling up my classes. After that I went to UCSF med school. I also did my surgery residency there. I then went to Edinburgh, Scotland, where I did a fellowship in hepatobiliary surgery. What I do is formally called hepatopancreaticobiliary or HPB surgery, which means liver, pancreas, and bile ducts—the right upper quadrant of your abdomen. About 80% of that is cancer surgery and 20% benign disease of the bile ducts, liver, or pancreas (pancreatitis).

I've been at Stanford now since 2006. At Stanford I'm the head of the GI cancer program in the Cancer Center. We have a fellowship in hepatobiliary surgery and I'm the fellowship director. I have a super busy clinical practice as well. On the fringes I get some research done with collaborators.

So, tell me, how did you choose to specialize in hepatobiliary?

Well, it has a lot to do with mentorship. To start in medicine is a big leap of faith. You start medical school and you have to figure out what you want to do in the future to be competitive for a residency-training situation. At the outset of medical school, it was clear that I was a surgeon because that's my personality.

In my time at Deep Springs, there were people in my class that I thought of as the intellectual leaders and there were people like myself who really threw ourselves into the labor mission of Deep Springs. At Deep Springs, part of what appealed to me was that I could both be a student and be involved in meaningful work. Speaking in huge generalizations, internal medicine disciplines involve problem solving with your brain. Surgery obviously involves the brain as well, but in surgery, on a day to day basis, you're using your hands. You have a tumor, I have a set of skills that give me the possibility of taking it out. Almost immediately it was clear in medical school that I was destined to be a surgeon, that was my personality and skill set.

So, I said, "I'm going to be surgeon," but I didn't immediately know what kind of surgery I wanted to do. I was put in touch with some prominent academic surgeons who were both prominent academically. But, they were also really great technical surgeons in hepatobiliary. There are a few fields in surgery that have a reputation for being really technically demanding—cardiac, hepatobiliary, and transplants are probably the most technically demanding. The challenge and risk of the operation and the skill of the surgeon are most closely linked to outcome. That was really appealing to me—these are the highest stakes, highest risk operations, and they're also intellectually quite varied. I treat a huge variety of diseases and I do a lot of different operations.

You've already spoken some about how Deep Springs influenced your career path, but I'm wondering if you could speak a little bit more about that in the context of a life of service.



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Loren Ihle DS76

Aadit Narula Gupta DS17

So, do you want to start by just telling me a little bit about yourself—where are you from, where do you live now, what do you do?

I grew up in Sumner, Washington, a small town between Tacoma and Mount Rainier. After leaving DS in 1978, I worked for a year DS in 1978, I worked for a year in Seattle and then studied history and sciences at the University of Washington. I continued in medical school in Seattle and then had a residency in family medicine at the University of Utah. I answered a recruiting letter from Simon Whitney (son of the former DS dean and brother of a former trustee) to join a small family practice group in Snohomish, Washington. I have continued in practice there since 1989, as we joined with a larger physician group, kept growing and then became owned by a large corporation.

Did you know: Deep Springs currently receives four copies of *The Economist* each week. (Other Deep Springs subscriptions include *Le Monde Diplomatique*, *Maclean's*, and *The Mekong Review*.)

What advice would you give to an aspiring healthcare professional? How should they begin to choose their branch of specialization?

Don't assume you need to specialize too soon. As an undergraduate, follow what intrigues you and spend time with good teachers. I was a history major and that was fine.

I think most people in the course of their training discover what branch of medicine they are most attracted to. If you choose based on what fits your values, the kinds of patients and colleagues you most enjoy working

with, you will be fine. And there will be many more choice points in your career that will take you to unforeseen places.

Do you have any outstanding memories of your time here in the Valley that you can share?

The first view of the valley, riding in the back of the pickup over Westguard with Jacob Dickinson (DS76), Dave De Long (DS76), and Michael Polak (DS76). My first summer seminar, The Idea of Community and Authority with Jack Schaar, Randall Reid, and Sharon and David Schuman. Pulling the milk wagon back from the dairy barn on a crisp morning. Stringing power lines under the guidance of Herb Reich (DS17). The majesty of the valley, to which I return at every opportunity.

Why did you choose to attend Deep Springs?

I was attracted to the idea of an intentional community, the idealism in the Nunnian vision, and the physical setting. The scholarship was important to me too. §



Elsa Rose (DS18) and Tamar (DS18) get out of painting class.

Don Matson DS30: Neurosurgeon of Unlimited Energy, Bronze Star in the Battle of the Bulge, and Premature Death at Peak of Harvard Medical Career

John Dewis DS94



Don Matson (DS30) is noted internationally for his pioneering contributions to the field of pediatric neurosurgery. Don served as the inaugural Franc D. Ingraham Professor of Neurological Surgery at Harvard Medical School and neurosurgeon-in-chief at both the Brigham and Children's in Boston. In 1968 Matson was elected President of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, founded in 1931 as the Harvey Cushing Society, at the same time that he began suffering from symptoms of Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease, from which he would die the next year at 55.

His honors and contributions are too many to list in detail, but he pioneered the use of plastics in shunting, co-authored the paper that created birth control, and performed surgeries that contributed to Nobel prizes in transplants and the polio vaccine. He was famous for his work ethic and unlimited energy, which as a resi-

dent placed him on scrubs that would normally have gone to more senior doctors. He won a swimming race around Balboa Island as a youth, growing up in Pasadena, where he or his parents might have learned of Deep Springs from L.L. Nunn before Nunn's death in 1925.

Don went to Deep Springs and then Telluride at Cornell, finishing at Harvard Medical School. To thank Nunn and Deep Springs for the experience, Don interviewed applicants for Deep Springs and Telluride. Don earned a Bronze Star for his work as a surgeon at the Battle of the Bulge, where he wrote the book on cranial and spinal war injuries and treatment.

Many thanks to Don's daughter Barbara for providing much of this biographical material and for sending along photos of his time in the Valley. The photo of Don with a young patient is printed with generous permission of the archive of Children's Hospital, Boston. §

Robert Aird DS21: Trailblazing Neurologist and Deep Springs Giant

Sammy Mohamed Bennis DS18

Dr. Robert B. Aird (5 November 1903 - 28 January 2000) was president of Deep Springs College and an important doctor and researcher in the area of the blood-brain barrier. His Utahn family's proud Scottish heritage is the root of his middle name, Robert "Burns" Aird, after the famous Scottish poet. After graduating from Deep Springs in 1921, Dr. Aird attended Cornell College. He graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1930. After interning at the University of Rochester, Dr. Aird moved to the Bay Area and lived in the Mill Valley region for fifty-six years. He became a research assistant at UCSF Medical School, and married Ellinor Collins in 1935. In 1949 he became the inaugural chair of UCSF's Neurology department. He continued to found the Western EEG Society, the Northern California chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, and co-founded the San Francisco Neurological Society. He took on the role of President at Deep Springs College in 1959. During his tenure in the Valley, Dr. Aird significantly developed the College's long-term stability and mission. For his contributions, Dr. Aird became the first recipient of the College's highest award, the Deep Springs Award. Dr. Aird authored and co-authored more than two-hundred journal articles on neurology and several textbooks. After his long service to Deep Springs and the Medical Community, he passed away at ninety-six years old on January 18, 2000 in Mill Valley. §

DS16: Where are They Now?

Townes Nelson DS17

After a rousing graduation, with speeches from David Neidorf, Katie Peterson, John Dewis, and our recently resigned Farm and Small Animals Manager Noah Baylor, each member of DS16 (with the exception of **Jonathan Zisk**, next year's returning cowboy) made their final trip around the Main Circle and headed out on Highway 168. The Communications Committee decided to catch up with Deep Springs' newest alums and learn where they are now.

We began with **John McDonald**, who, after spending his summer working as a film intern in New York, is finishing up his degree in his hometown at the University of Texas at Austin (and has been volunteering for Beto O'Rourke's senate campaign). During his time in New York, John met up with born-and-raised New Yorkers **Jeremy Uys**—who has gone on to attend Yale University—and **Akash Mehta**. Akash spent his summer first participating in a seminar on political thought in D.C., then teaching at the Great Books Summer Program in Chicago, where he has stayed, attending the University of Chicago alongside **Josh O'Neil**. While Jeremy and Akash left New York—as did **Robert Gunn**, who has departed for Swarthmore, the third college in his undergraduate career, and **Ari Dubow**, who spent his summer working at Full Belly Farm in California—**Tyler Nadasen-Galstone** stayed in the five boroughs to attend Columbia University. Despite his apparent disdain for the East Coast, **Jango McCormick** has found himself at Brown University. Joining him in the East are ex-desert cowboy **Arman Afifi**, who is studying neuroscience at the University of Pennsylvania, and **Isaac Monroe**, who is taking a gap year in Pittsburgh. Also taking gap years are **Hussain Taymuree**, who spent his summer cowboying in the White Mountains, and **Nkosi Gumede**, who has been traveling around his home country, South Africa, and was recently signed to an independent record label out of Johannesburg. DS16's two other international students—Australia's **Tim Olsen** and Canada's **Michael Leger**—are currently enrolled at Wesleyan University and McGill University, respectively. §

SB Wish List

Work Gloves
Small women's clothing
Tea
40- and 50-pound dumbbells (these specific weights are missing)
Boning hook
Crash pad (for climbing)
Sleeping pads (for sleeping)

Report on Withrow Speaker Kristi Graunke DS95

Anousha Peters DS18



Former trustee Jim Withrow (DS27) endowed a series of visiting positions so that twice each year we hear about specific lives of service from people with careers in government, business, or law. Our Withrow Speaker this past term was Kristi Graunke, who is currently a supervising attorney for the Southern Poverty Law Center and works on employment-related wage and discrimination cases, often involving immigrants. She was also a student at Deep Springs in 1995-96 as a result of two exchanges with the Telluride House at Cornell, where she was studying at the time. In her first speech, she gave an extremely interesting account of her experience as a female student here. She also described how she conceives of a life of service and what that means in the context of Deep Springs and her work afterwards. In her second speech, Graunke discussed specifics surrounding a few cases she is currently working on. Both of these talks sparked discussion and debate both with her and amongst the student body. §

Interview with Sally Carlson

Townes Nelson DS17

How'd you first become involved with Deep Springs?

One of my closest friends is a gentleman named Ken Odell (DS61). He is a former trustee and he grew up here in the Bay Area. He's an only child, and I'm like the sister he never had. We have been friends for almost forty years, but the first twenty-five years of our friendship I spent hearing all these anecdotes about Deep Springs. Then, there was a reunion for the 60's decade at the college. You could attend as a friend of an alum, which I did. It was amazing. I had not been to the valley before that. A little bit of my motivation was to see the place that I had heard so much about over two and a half decades. It was great.

Part of what made it so great were the other alums who were there for the reunion. It was just such an interesting, eclectic, intelligent group of people discussing—in that uniquely Deep Springs way—what it was like to be at Deep Springs during the Vietnam War, and the rise of counterculture, and widespread use of recreational drugs. This whole time there was a revolution going on in American society, and here's this group of twenty-five or twenty-six young men who are experiencing it at Deep Springs.



Linda's Field Bio class takes to the field, binoculars in hand.

I began going to the friends and family events that were held in the Bay Area to help educate and inform others about Deep Springs. I met Dave Hitz (DS80), the chair of the board, there, and he asked me to come out to the valley to a trustees meeting to facilitate the strategic visioning session, which was really just facilitating the trustees' discussion about the five topic areas that were of highest priority from each of the individual points of view.

After I did that, the trustees invited me to join the board, which I did in the beginning of 2010. That's how I got involved with the college. Dave Hitz wanted someone with both business experience and experience serving on a board—I've served on a lot of boards, small neighborhood organizations and national organizations.

Aside from your role as a trustee at Deep Springs, you're also a managing partner at Carlson Beck. Tell me about that work—what do you do day-to-day?

My firm, Carlson Beck, is a retained executive search firm. We're retained by the client who is seeking talent. We work with non-profit organizations and philanthropic entities, meaning foundations that are grant-making, supporting and funding non-profit organizations. We help them find their executive talent—their executive director, CEO, presidents, or CFO, chief operating officer, chief development officer. The client organization pays us a fee. We work with them to develop a position specification to get a sense of the organization in a more intimate way. We talk to a lot of the staff, the board, and other appropriate stakeholders. We create a position specification and then

we take that out to the talent market.

We reach out to our candidates and present them with a professional opportunity that they may be interested in. They might raise their hand and say, “Yeah that’s something I’m interested in.” Or, oftentimes they politely decline and say, “Here’s someone I know who might be well-qualified.” We want every person we’re speaking to either to say that they would like to be a candidate, or say, “No thank you, but let me make a referral of someone else.” We do that anywhere from sixty to three hundred and fifty times. We create a slate of candidates for the client organization to interview and consider and ultimately select someone.

Moving to a Deep Springs context, I know a lot of recruitment—whether students or faculty or administrators—moves through interpersonal networks. Will those networks be the primary method for the president search? Or will you reach out to people who have never heard of Deep Springs?

I think the process by which we are going to service candidates is likely to be more informed and intimate to the College, meaning that it’s quite likely that whoever raises their hand to say they’d like to be a candidate for the president role at Deep Springs is someone who has already had some interaction with the college. They might be an alum, or a former administrator or faculty, or they’re a friend of Deep Springs and are perhaps related to someone who used to be a former faculty member, student, or board member. But, they’ve already had some experience of the College. If the person has never been to Deep Springs and doesn’t know any Deep Springers, they would be an outside candidate, and I’m not sure how serious the trustees would take their candidacy. They certainly would have to pass some high hurdles on our part—being especially well-qualified—given the idiosyncratic nature of Deep Springs and its location.

That unorthodox, idiosyncratic nature of Deep Springs—do you see it being a significant difficulty in this search? Maybe that question is less relevant if you’re primarily recruiting people who are already familiar with Deep Springs. But, I wonder if you think isolation could still turn away some good candidates.

I think it could turn away a lot of good candidates who are actually good candidates for a different college. The reality of Deep Springs—where it’s located, the lifestyle of a Deep Springs administrator—is truly not for everyone. It’s really about finding someone for whom this job is aligned with their personal and professional aspirations and abilities, because I’m sure there are people who would say, “Oh, I aspire to be Deep Springs’ president,” yet their ability to actually do it might not match their enthusiasm. Alternatively, they could just simply say that there’s no way they could live happily on campus in the way that one must in order to successfully execute this role. That is one of the defining assessment criteria.

What are some of those other assessment criteria? What are you looking for in a candidate?

That’s an excellent question now, Townes, because, in all honesty, I don’t know. I say that because I haven’t spoken with the trustees and the staffulty and the SB as to what they’re looking for in the next president. Our role as a search consultant is to really ask and deeply listen to the answers as to, “What are you looking for in your next president?” We need to ask that of people sitting at many different places at the table because you’ll get different perspectives. Those perspectives really build out a three-dimensional view of the profile of the next president. That’s the person that we then go looking for. Until we’ve done that—the process of query and deep listening—it would be erroneous on my part to speculate on what the trustees, staffulty, and students would say.

Of course, though, you’re not entirely separated from the college. Having been a trustee for eight years and a friend of the college for longer, what do you think? What modes of leadership or administration do you think will be most successful here? What kinds of candidates do you think you’d want to look for?

There’s a lot of discussion in the non-profit world and in philanthropy about service leadership. I don’t see it man-

ifest as often as apparently people talk about it. I think a good president for Deep Springs truly is a service leader. You have to be open to the merits and validity and authenticity of student input in a way that is highly unusual, and also be respectful of the ethos of Deep Springs. That also goes for the relationship with staffulty as well. The location of the college really does create and inform a level of autonomy and independence to the college and community that, hopefully, a candidate would embrace and thrive in. One of the things that struck me early on in my trusteeship was how often L.L. Nunn was actually brought up. I wondered if this happens at other colleges, if the founder is ever so present ninety-five years later. That's something a new president will also need to be good at—validation and endorsement of Nun-nian education in a way that is deeply resonant.

Alright, well, anything else to add Sally?

I'm confident that there will be some really interesting candidates who will raise their hands for this position and it will be a super interesting process.

Sounds good. Thank you so much!

Townes, a pleasure, thank you, and my regards to everyone in the valley.

§



The community eagerly waits for Public Speaking to begin.

Sarah Stickney interview continued from page 14

my mind, and then I didn't think about it again until I started getting to know Katie Peterson.

Her love for this place is really deep, so the more I got to know her—the more I respected her as a poet, as a thinker—the more I was intrigued by Deep Springs. I visited her here in 2015, for Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving was really moving, especially for me. To appear and eat this beautiful meal prepared by the students—and just the way that the students carried themselves, with this enormous self-possession and, kind of, clarity—really made an impression on me. So, I think it was then that I began scheming to find a way to be a part of it.

Last summer seminar was your first experience teaching at Deep Springs. How has your impression of the college, its students, and teaching and living here, evolved since then—if at all?

That's an interesting question. It's hard to answer because co-education has happened in the middle, and that's changed things really seriously. I knew co-education was going to be a big shift, but actually just in terms of classroom discussion, it was a bigger shift than I anticipated. It's not that I believe so strongly in gender as a defining factor in people's lives, but it seems to me that in any classroom, the more different kinds of experiences different people in the classroom have, the better that discussion will be. And I think it takes an experience of two different kinds of being or socialization to really make a full picture.

The last question I'm going to ask you may have the most stakes of any I've asked so far. If you had to name one college course, or text, or idea, that you feel every student should explore, what would that be?

I'm going to say Homer's *Odyssey*!

§

Jan Vleck interview continued from page 16

It turned out I did have the opportunity to choose between grad school and med school, and in 1974 I enrolled in the UCLA School of Medicine. Looking back, it's hard to say if that was the best choice because twenty-plus years of practicing family medicine with obstetrics has been very challenging for me, and maybe it would have been more fun to study toads or something in the wild. On the other hand, family medicine did provide me with an interesting life path. It brought me to Olympia, Washington where I've lived ever since, and gave me entry into several other great opportunities to continue to learn new skills like medical administration, teaching in a community hospital-based family medicine residency, and for the final ten years of my professional career, performing ethical review of medical research using human subjects, and best of all, entering the emerging field of biosafety review of medical research using recombinant DNA in humans (popularly, gene therapy and cell therapy).



Ryn (DS18) and Eli peel chilies in the BH.

I hope one thing that comes through in my story is how there are often unrecognized connections in our lives that may be visible only in retrospect.

How do you feel that you've pursued a life of service through your medical career?

Of course helping one person at a time is great, and I treasure the memories of the families I worked with for many years as we all traveled through life's surprises. Wow, sometimes maybe I even saved a life! But I was also drawn to the idea of multiplying the effect I could have.

That's what led me to take a leadership role within the medical staff of my clinic and within Group Health Cooperative of Puget Sound—a consumer owned health care cooperative, now part of Kaiser. It's also what led me to take the residency faculty job, where I could train the next generation of family practitioners, and to the fields of ethical and biosafety oversight of medical research, which are small but important cogs in the enterprise that may lead to vaccines, cancer treatment, and many other advances that could eventually reduce the burden of suffering for "the people" and their descendants, long after I'm gone.

I'm very aware that my life has been one of privilege. As a child of parents who coped with the Great Depression and World War II, I only really became aware of that when I had the privilege of attending Deep Springs from 1969-1972. I knew, and Deep Springs taught, that I had a debt to society, and all along I've tried to repay my debt in whatever small ways I could. I've tried to stay engaged in my community, not just in medicine, but in civic participation. The economic privilege that can come from even the least remunerative field of American medicine now allows me in retirement to pursue my own studies in Buddhism, see the roads and trails from the perspective of an endurance runner, and have the leisure to spend hundreds of hours per year removing invasive plants from a semi-wilderness park in our town.

Thank you for your time, Jan!

Akira Kobayashi interview continued from page 17

minding my business and working with my hands, doing quality work, aiming to do as little harm to others as possible.

Why did you choose to attend Deep Springs?

It was different, it sounded cool. And it was.

What were your most memorable moments from your time here?

1. Driving over the pass, the dually (double-axle truck) I was driving caught fire and went up in a ball of flames. At the end of the day my classmates baked me a cake to console me.
2. Playing Stephano in Louis Fantasia's production of *The Tempest*. Abiola was Caliban, Caden was Trinculo. The stage was the desert.
3. I remember Tofu, my dog, howling like a wolf when they were ringing the BH bell when the graduating class was leaving.
4. I remember getting turned around on the way back from the Druid at night. What was supposed to be a short night hike became a twelve-hour adventure to find my way back to the college. By the time I got back, people were just realizing I was missing.
5. I remember hugging David Neidorf goodbye on my last day in the valley.
6. A classmate shouting an obscenity at me on my way out of an SB meeting.
7. Getting so lonely as a cowboy that I felt like loneliness was crushing my chest.

So many other memories, most of them good memories, I could go on forever.

§

Steve Solga interview continued from page 18

justice and utility. Our weekly listing meetings are often contentious and, as always, productive discussion requires trust that needs to be earned and maintained. Finally, there's lots of opportunity to find out that one's previously stated position or prior action (whether it was about an individual patient, treatment recommendation, or other concern) was simply wrong. Therefore, while the subject matter may be different than what we discussed at Deep Springs, the rest should sound familiar to anyone who has spent time in the valley.

What's the difference between a liberal and a professional education?

Less, I think, than most believe. The former provides a broad framework to approach life with purpose, whereas the latter provides a framework to approach a patient and therefore is more narrowly focused in its intent. But medical knowledge has enormous gaps and doesn't always inform us what is best. Medical literature, like any other, must be assessed critically. Professional society guidelines should be taught but not necessarily trusted. Physicians with at least some exposure to a liberal education are better prepared.

§

Peter Reynaud interview continued from page 19

Did your adventures as a young person also make you a better doctor?

I think it makes me more open to different kinds of patients. My experiences made me more open to people and how things can happen, especially in underserved populations. I have worked a lot in homeless and battered women shelters, with transgender people and immigrants, French-speaking Africans, and Latin Americans. There are important social aspects to the work of medicine, and you have to ask what you can do to help people, to help them along their way.

Now I work at Tulane and I'm an instructor in medicine to young doctors, interns, and residents. One of the most interesting parts for me is what social services we can find for the patients to help with the core issues that created the problem, so our patients are not immediately back in the hospital. I also helped set up a clinic for people seeking political asylum in the US. It's important to me to help those seeking political asylum and victims of gang violence in central America. People who have suffered political persecution.

Do you have a code as a doctor—like the Hippocratic Oath—that forces you to ignore political aspects of helping people?

With Doctors without Borders we have no political affiliation—we treat every patient—but a big part is that we bear witness to what people are going through in addition to supplying health-care without discrimination. We bring back knowledge of forgotten or ignored places and people, conflicts and injustice that might not be known. It's a chance to integrate into the life of a

Did you know: 20% of the Student Body shaved their heads during Term One.

country that you would never have had the opportunity to encounter. This means it's adventure, humanitarian work, and also the great feeling that you are participating in the big problems of the world, such as in the Congo or South Sudan or central Africa. This is a great benefit for me teaching medical students; to be resourceful in poor environments requires good clinical work. Really examining a patient well, for instance, allows us to be more judicious in using the limited technology we might have and allows us to do our best for every patient. There are no "VIP" patients.

Does your work provide you with any solutions to the current healthcare crisis?

I think in teaching students that a lot of the barriers to good health are economic—patients who can't afford the medicine or to follow up on the test—and that we have to take these factors into account to help us circumvent some of the injustices of our system and be more effective as providers of health care. For example, you can't tell a patient to come back in two weeks for the CAT scan if you know they won't ever come back or be able to afford the test; this allows us to think better about how to treat them right now. The biggest resource that this country has is its population. A healthy population benefits the country enormously, and everything we do to help the underserved can contribute to the betterment of society.

What has been your biggest specific challenge or obstacle in working in remote places?

On the frontier of Chad when the Darfur crisis was going on, many had not seen a doctor for years. One child had an infection of the eye, orbital cellulitis. I had read about this presentation but had never seen it in an actual patient. We treated it, and at first it got better and then suddenly much worse. Trying to figure out what was going on, we consulted all the books, and we had to rely on clinical diagnostic skills, examining the patient and pouring through the medical reference books to figure out the etiology. We figured out that the infection had formed an abscess, which had to be treated differently. We had no imaging available; a simple CAT scan would have told us the child had an abscess.

Any other difficult situations?

Some administrators in remote places can act like autocrats. One time the local administrator came to our hospital. One of our guards said to the administrator, "You can't park there because it's for the ambulances," and the administrator threw our guard in jail. Nurses came to tell me about it. So what are you going to do? I talked to the head of our project and said we cannot ignore this, that the guard was doing what he should have done. We had to go to the head administrator and say, "We will not continue our work unless he be freed." And they said, "The administrator needs to be respected above all," and we said, no, that our staff had to be respected to do their work properly. We may have put the entire operation in jeopardy in order to do it, but still took on the risk. And it worked: our guard

was released. Very selfish to think that my conscience was more important to me than all the good we were doing as doctors for the community, but it was, and I couldn't have stayed there with such an injustice. Luckily it all worked out.

Anything else you want current students at Deep Springs to know?

Even though I left Deep Springs early, I'm still very close to many of my classmates from Deep Springs. I remember a lot of moments fondly—the people, the students—and the strong sense of a community uniting to make us survive and thrive.

As far as a life of service, students should know it's all possible for them. One of the problems at Deep Springs for me was I didn't think I was smart enough. You know there can be an intimidating, competitive atmosphere. I think you're given the chance to be in this unusual place so why not just take full advantage? I wish I had taken better advantage of it. §

Brendan Visser interview continued from page 20

Academic surgery, to me, is really aligned, philosophically, with the ethos and culture of Deep Springs. It's academically rigorous and demanding, it's about being a thought leader, being provocative, asking difficult questions, really being at the cutting edge. But, academic surgery is also very much about doing. It's not just an ivory tower. While Deep Springs is in one way isolated geographically, the idea was that you were going to be wed to the campus, ranch, farm, garden, garage or shop and to the intellectual rigor. Thinking and doing were meant to be complementary. Surgery is a craft and isn't that different from fixing a tractor or working as a cowboy. I'm working with my hands in a very real way. I have to know intellectually what the right thing to do is, but, at the end of the day, I have to use my hands to deliver that craft in an exacting way.

Additionally, fundamentally, academic surgery is so rewarding because it's in the service of humanity in an incredibly direct, real way. It's an amazing privilege to be given the skill set that allows me to work every single day in a way that is incredibly meaningful to somebody else, to humanity as a whole, absolutely tangibly. It is somebody's mother, grandmother, daughter on the table in front of me. I'm not shuffling papers, I'm not just making money for money's sake. What is defined as service to humanity in a Nunnian sense is very varied, lots of people have many different takes on it, but medicine is fundamentally service-based.

At Deep Springs, there was a sense of needing to earn the privilege to be at Deep Springs. There's the re-invitation committee and you're constantly being evaluated. Are you contributing intellectually and physically to this project that is Deep Springs, to this campus? Are you earning the privilege of being here and this scholarship and your

membership in the community? In medicine, you have to earn this amazing privilege to contribute back to humanity. You are really evaluated by your contribution, by your service. All those things make, philosophically, the subculture of academic medicine and the subculture of Deep Springs aligned.

Well, I think you just knocked out like three questions I had, so thanks. I have two more questions. Did you see yourself going into medicine—or surgery specifically—before coming to Deep Springs?

I did not.

How do you think that desire developed over your time here?

I hadn't firmly decided even when I left. I knew this was likely,



Brendan Visser operating, on the left.

but there were times when I thought I could do lots of different things. Going to Deep Springs, I had no idea what I was going to do. I was looking for a career that would feel like I was doing something meaningful. There were times at Deep Springs when I honestly thought that a rural lifestyle—working as a cowboy—was super appealing to me, and I flirted with the idea of going farming or ranching, or even veterinary medicine.

While I wasn't sure what the future held, I knew it was a career that was focused on service. There aren't that many jobs that do that. Since I graduated from medical school, in all of residency and my career since, I have never not gone to work because of illness or anything else. I've never gotten up and said "I feel bad today, I'm just going to call in sick." I've obviously been lucky, but even if I feel under the weather, I know that there's somebody who I'm supposed to go look after who's in much worse condition than me.

Doing medicine, I feel like I'm doing something important. Deep Springs creates importance in the life of a nineteen-year-old in a way that, truthfully, is somewhat artificial, but that's what's so important. In high school, when I visited other schools, the students I met felt like they were just one year older than the other high school kids I was around. When I went to Deep Springs, I felt like the students were striving to be adults. This happens because what you do at Deep Springs matters to the people around you. By milking your own dairy cows, you make the community rely on that milk. Waking up every single day at the crack of dawn prevents the cows from getting mastitis and means that there's going to be milk for breakfast—that matters. They could just buy milk, but they don't, because the work is meaningful. If you don't read, the class is going to stall because there are only four of you. Deep Springs makes you accountable to your classmates and the community. Your contribution is meaningful every day. Every day of my life I feel like I'm accountable to my fellow man. Medicine felt like a path that would give me that with some certainty. People find that in a variety of ways, but medicine felt the most obvious.

One last question, and this might be kind of frivolous, but what are some of your most memorable experiences from your time in the valley?

That's hard. I really threw myself into labor, so many of my memories are related to labor and how labor integrated with my academic work. I remember in my first year at Deep Springs, in the winter, I was the feed-man and Koll Jenson (DS89) was the cowboy. Geoff Pope was the ranch manager. It was a tough, cold winter, and all of the pipes on the lower ranch froze, all the pipes to all the corrals. We had to use the backhoe to dig up a lot of the pipes. We were watering the corrals with the firetruck. Cole and I were spending every available moment trying to re-lay all the pipes for all the corrals. I was taking classes by Elizabeth Kiss and Jeff Holzgreffe, super-terrific faculty members. I was taking a class called Adam Smith and the Rise of Capitalism or something, in which, for the first time in my life, I got a really bad grade on a paper. I was trying to catch up on my academic work every night, which was really challenging to wrap my brain around, and every minute of daylight I was working on the ranch. We were also losing a lot of calves that were dying from the cold—there was a question of a selenium deficiency or something. I was pushed really to the edge of what I was physically capable of. Recovering from that, I remember walking into the desert and thinking, "I don't know if I can do this." I can understand why, every once in a while, someone walks out to 168 and thumbs a ride. I remember being pushed as hard, physically and intellectually, as I've ever been. Then, somehow, it worked. To recover, to write my next paper on Adam Smith and get the pipes fixed and get through that winter, it was incredibly meaningful. Being pushed to the limits and then overcoming them was an important moment for me, it was transformational for me as a person.

Then, I have a ton of other memories shooting the sh*t at Cow Camp, or sitting on the Popes' front lawn and throwing a ball to their dog Buck for hours at a time, just philosophizing about the world. There are a lot of those really great memories as well. My first year at Deep Springs, I really thought that this place might break me. Recovering from that has been impactful.

I've definitely had a similar experience, so that makes a lot of sense. Well, thanks so much, Brendan.

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Thank you to all of our interviewees for the time, patience, and many pictures you provided—this newsletter would not be possible without you. Note: Many of the interviews were edited for clarity and length.

ComCom Members: Trinity, Sammy, Aadit, Townes, Padraic, John.