Deep Springs College Community Newsletter Spring 2018

"Deep Springs really helped give me an ethical framework - a loving education in what it meant to be sincere - what it meant to care about and believe in something." - Nathan Deuel DS97

"Deep Springs is a place that values a combination of the intellectual and the practical. That's kind of what appealed to me about journalism. On one hand it gives you an opportunity to grapple with big ideas and big problems, but it's also very grounded in physical reality of actual daily life." - Zach Mider DS96

President's Letter

Deep Springs is not conventional in its methods, and any attempt to introduce conventional methods or any radical change would destroy its usefulness altogether.

So wrote L.L. Nunn sometime after 1917, in an aspirational job description for the next head of the college he called *The Man Required for Deep Springs.*

Now, over one hundred years after its founding, Deep Springs is a few days away from a major change—the admission of its first coeducational class. This passage from Nunn's essay seems to warn against any such change, lest it "destroy [Deep Springs'] usefulness altogether." And yet later in the same essay Nunn anticipated and even enjoined gradual improvement—writing that the ideal director…

…should be a careful student of affairs, conservative and slow to make changes in the present institution…He should not live constantly at Deep Springs but be a visitor of other universities and educational institutions…He should return to Deep Springs and bring the best that he has acquired from the outside.

Nunn was right that things would change over the years at Deep Springs, and novelties like student participation in applications and curriculum, labor supervision through the L.C., and increased student responsibility for food production and preparation have all been made for the sake of making our program better. Deep Springers can argue about almost anything, but I think all can agree that in taking a century to include qualified women students, Deep Springs has more than obeyed Mr. Nunn's injunction to be "slow to make changes in the present institution."

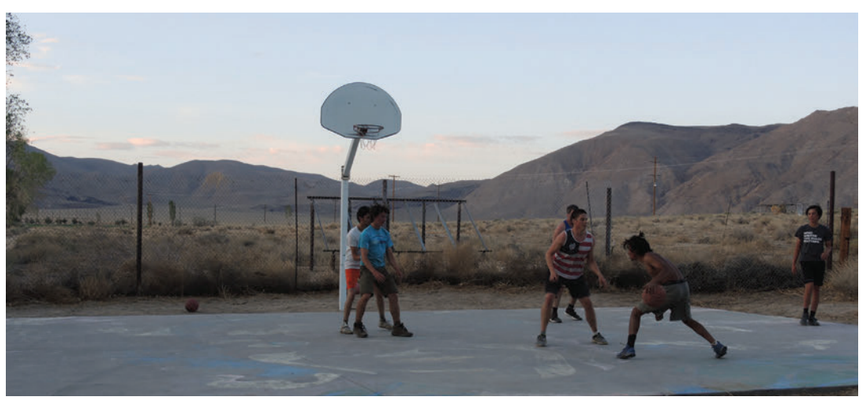
What, then, did Nunn mean when he warned against letting Deep Springs become "conventional"? In a letter of 1922 to the Student Body he described what he meant:

Deep Springs does not conduct a conventional school…It is not endeavoring to prepare its students for commercial pursuits…It teaches and believes that…our educational institutions too often prepare their most brilliant students to be the ill-paid hirelings of the avaricious, or, what is worse, participators in the results of an evil system.

Deep Springs does not disregard…commercialism or the spread of creature comforts, but, recognizing the over loading of the ship on one side, aims to place the small weight of its influence where it will tend to develop men of fixed purpose and character, who will dedicate themselves to the higher cause of service…

Deep Springs attempts to form in its students the habit of extensive reading and thus to establish a close comrade ship between the and those who have struggled and accomplished things worthwhile. Its aim is to prepare the stu dent for his life work; preparation for college being only incidental.

I am confident that Deep Springs enters the coeducational era determined to defy the deadening conventions of a higher education system increasingly subordinated to economic imperatives. With your support, the college is poised to rededicate itself to L. L. Nunn's fundamental principles of unconventional education. It could not happen without your support, and for that, we want to thank you. - David Neidorf, June 2018



Tyler, Robert, Schuyler, Hussain, Humanities Chair David McNeil and Ben Halperin play basketball behind the BH. Tyler admitted - reluctantly -to having played too much b-ball over weeks 6 and 7 of term 5. McNeil and Halperin (Jon and Felicia's son) have become regulars on the court.

Current Courses

Power - Jennifer Smith

What is power? What does it mean to possess power, and to exercise it over or against others? What are the resources and conditions that make people and groups powerful or powerless, and how do power relations condition interactions between persons? How can we study the abstraction "power" as a thing in the world, in order to know its ways? This course undertakes a broad exploration of the theme of power, seeking to answer these and other questions about power's nature, scope, and operation. Readings include analyses of power and related concepts from political and social theorists, and also a diverse collection of studies of power as a thing used/possessed in the world by real individuals and groups. The curriculum features Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, James Scott's *Weapons of the Weak*, Steven Lukes' *Power: A Radical View*, and John Gaventa's *Power and Powerlessness,* as well as Pierre Bourdieu on symbolic power, Robert Dahl on community power, Thomas Hobbes on state power, Sidney Tarrow on "power in movement," Bachrach and Baratz on the "faces" of power, Karl Marx and Max Weber on domination, and Hannah Arendt on violence. In addition to these more theoretical readings, the course also covers a number of "case studies in power," including studies of racial oppression in the United States, the Assad dictatorship in Syria, "soft power" in world politics, peasant self-organization during the civil war in El Salvador, and the Senate career of Lyndon Johnson.

Arendt - David McNeil

Hannah Arendt is one of the most distinctive and influential thinkers of the 20th century. Even before recent political developments brought renewed attention to her 1951 work, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, recognition of the significance of Arendt's political thought underwent a significant resurgence in recent years and is now more prominent in contemporary theoretical debates than it was when she was alive. While it is often said that Arendt's historical, philosophical and political analyses are hard to categorize, that seems in part due to the fact that the term that might seem the most appropriate way to characterize her thinking, as "philosophical anthropology," has largely fallen out of theoretical fashion—in part due to the influence of Arendt's early teacher, Martin Heidegger. But it is nonetheless clear that Arendt's broad area of inquiry was, as stated in the title of her most famous work, the human condition. Even more precisely, Arendt was engaged throughout her career in posing and reposing questions about the relation between philosophy and politics, and the competing claims of a life of intellectual inquiry and a life of political engagement as the most fully realized human life. This course focuses on precisely this question. In addition, it seeks to address the methodological question of whether, or in what sense, a philosophical anthropology— a philosophical inquiry into human nature—is possible. The curriculum is composed of *The Human Condition, The Origins of Totalitarianism, On Revolution,* excerpts from her unfinished final work, *The Life of the Mind*, and a number of shorter essays. Supplementary readings are drawn from Aristotle, Martin Heidegger, Leo Strauss and Carl Schmitt.

John reading for Financial Systems and Felicia, Brandon and Jango meeting in the Reading Room for California Politics

California Politics - Felicia Wong (visiting professor)

This class explores California's development, and its implication for America's, through a variety of lenses: policy, history, economy, sociology, culture. The course begins with early 20th century California progressivism – political leadership, labor organizing and community organizing in the face of monopolies buying land and monopolizing agriculture. It examines how mid-century elected leaders – Pat Brown, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, Jerry Brown – harnessed movement passions, conservative and progressive, popularizing opposing visions and pushing them to the center of national politics. It also considers how the state's class and race identities – white working class, African American, Asian-American, Latino – have developed over the last century, shaping political beliefs, movements, and outcomes. The primary questions driving the course, however, relate to the present day: how, out of this chaotic history, in some ways a catalogue of extremes, did we end up with the kind of California exceptionalism that we have today? Exactly what kind of California exceptionalism do we see today? What lessons can we learn from California not just for the state, but also for the nation's politics: the Republican and Democratic parties, the progressive and conservative movements, and the ways in which the 2020 presidential campaign – which, for good and for ill, will shape both policy priorities and our worldviews – will be fought?

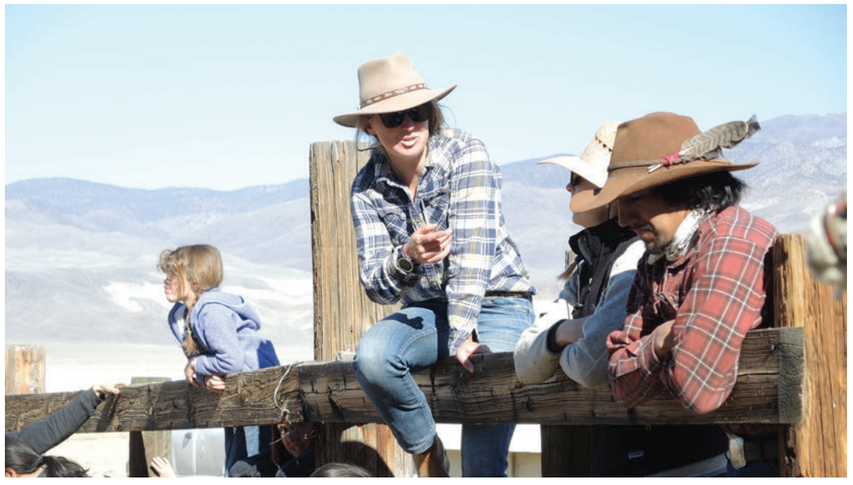
Courses Continued...

Nietzsche - David McNeil

This course is devoted to a close study of Nietzsche's 1886 *Beyond Good and Evil* and his 1887 *On the Genealogy of Morality*. The primary task of the course is to interpret these two works as philosophic and literary wholes. This involves trying to understand the complex of concepts surrounding and informing Nietzsche's conception of the will: his conception of drive and affect; his account of "bad conscience" and of the internalization of instinct as constitutive of human interiority; his account of master and slave moralities, and indeed of morality as such; his accounts of representation, interpretation, and the creation of value. The course begins by looking at Nietzsche's early reflections on the relation between morality and history in his *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, providing a background against which to understand aspects of the account of human temporality, morality and psychology Nietzsche offers in his mature works. Additional readings are drawn from *the Gay Science, Twilight of the Idols, Ecce Homo* and *Nachlass*.

Tectonics and Sedimentation in Deep Springs Valley - Meredith Bush (visiting professor)

This course is an introduction to structural and sedimentary geology, considering the Deep Springs Valley in terms of tectonic setting, subsidence mechanisms, large-scale stratigraphic architecture, paleogeography and basin resources. In addition, the course covers topics related to the historical development of earth sciences and changing concepts of deep time, plate tectonics, and climate change. Students develop a theoretical and practical understanding of how sedimentary basins form, and how they can be studied to determine tectonic, climatic, and eustatic controls on subsidence, surficial processes, and infilling. The course primarily addresses the Deep Springs Valley and other local examples, but also includes case studies from around the world to address other tectonic settings.



Meredith Bush, with Jamie, Gabriel and Ada at branding. Akash doing what is most likely last minute reading before class.

"My research is focused on understanding the uplift of mountains and organization of river systems based on the geological record preserved in sedimentary basins - Deep Springs Valley is a microcosm of the landscapes that I've studied. Since finishing my PhD in 2016 I've worked as a visiting professor of geology at Colorado College, and most recently I spent the fall teaching high school physics in Austin, TX. This summer I'll be moving back to my hometown, Seattle, to teach science in the Renton Public Schools. It will be tough to leave the valley - I'm continuously amazed at the magnificence of the landscape, and the countless facets of Earth history preserved within the boundaries of Deep Springs Valley."

Agrarian Politics - Jennifer Smith

For most of human history, the vast majority of human beings on the planet have devoted much of their daily endeavor to the production of food – which, for most of recorded history, has meant agriculture. The transition from agrarian societies to societies based on modern manufacturing and services has often been wrenching and difficult, not to mention incomplete. Different societies have reacted to the pressures driving this transition in very different ways, conditioned in each case by the particularities of a given society and culture, by the local environment, and by the global conditions of the time (17th or 20th century? Europe or Southeast Asia? etc.). This course attempts both a localized and a synoptic view of these developments, taking as its unifying theme the intrusions of agrarianism into politics (and/or of politics into agrarianism) in a variety of forms. The curriculum covers many different agricultural products; agrarian and transitioning societies; political movements, claims, and conflicts – attempting in the process to highlight what they have in common as well as what drives them apart. The curriculum draws on a range of disciplines, but anthropologists, political scientists, and historians are most heavily represented.

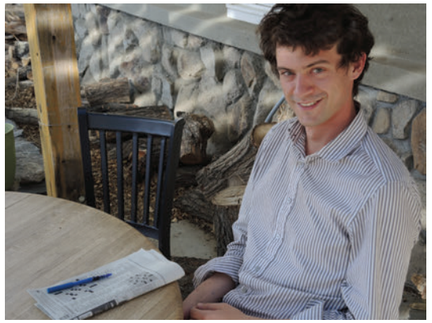
Documentary Film Workshop - Jon Halperin (visiting professor)

This course is a workshop in documentary production – from blank page to finished film, a hands-on course, a primer in craft. The class discusses the basic technical aspects of camera, lighting and editing, but concentrates on the principles of documentary storytelling – how to tell nonfiction stories with moving images and sound. Each student produces a series of projects that teach, through practice, the fundamentals of documentary storytelling. The final project is a 5-minute, festival- quality documentary.

Jon and Ben playing ping pong in front of the main building

American Financial System - Brian Judge (visiting professor)

This course examines the history, theory, and operation of the American Financial System. Key questions include: What is money? What is finance? How did the financial system evolve historically in the American context? What are some of its theoretical valences? How does the financial system operate in practice? To answer these questions, the curriculum first looks to histories and then canonical theorizations before turning to the operation of money and the nuts-and-bolts of American financial markets. Finally, it examines the global financial crisis of 2008 and its aftermath in light of these considerations. The goal of the course is for students to develop a basic understanding of the historical development, theoretical underpinnings, and actual practice of the American financial system.



"I am in the process of finishing a PhD in Political Science at Berkeley. My dissertation examines the causes and consequences of political entities turning to finance to alleviate political pressures in the wake of an external shock of some kind (e.g. oil crisis, financial crisis, etc). Before graduate school I worked in consulting and finance on the east coast. At the risk of pandering, I have really enjoyed being in the classroom with a group of curious, open-minded, and hard-working students who are really eager to learn, take ownership of their own education, and don't filter everything through a pre-exisitng set of dogmas. I have also immensely enjoyed the peace and quiet of being in the Valley without any of the hustle and bustle or distractions of ordinary life. At the end of term I will be headed to Berkeley and eventually to the Central Valley to do fieldwork in Sacramento and Stockton." - Brian Judge DS07

Brian can often be found working on a crosswords puzzle before dinner

Independent Studies and Reading Groups

The intellectual community is alive and well beyond the classroom. Several students have elected to take independent studies, and many others are partaking in reading groups. Akash Mehta DS16 passed a motion stipulating that a student would give a lecture every Saturday night in the main room. In that lecture series we've heard everything from an introduction to Canadian history, to an introduction to jazz, to the history of the french horn, and the basics of relativity.

C.S. Lewis Reading Group

These past few terms Michael Leger DS16 and I have been broaching the realm of theology with David Neidorf in a fairly atypical manner: by reading science fiction. We've been following the physical and spiritual journeys of English gentleman Ransom through space in CS Lewis' books *Out of the Silent Planet* and *Perelandra*, and hope to round out the year by jumping to some denser theology (likely Thomas Aquinas). When discussing my decision to come here with my ex-monk uncle, he questioned why I as a practicing Catholic would want to go to a secular college located almost an hour from the nearest Catholic Church. I bet neither of us would have thought that I'd be studying Christian thought on consciousness, free will, and Providence here, and it's been a pleasure to have a change of pace both in form and content from regular class readings. - T.J. Dulac DS17

The Song and the Poem: A Comparative Study (I.S.)

I've been reading a collection of poetry and lyrics, and practicing my own lyric-writing, with Katie Peterson. We've read everything from Shakespeare sonnets, to the Psalms, to Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell and Bob Dylan. I've come to especially love the poetry of Tom Pickard, Frederico Garcia Lorca and Kevin Young. - Michael Leger DS16

Foucault Lectures Reading Group

We've been reading *The Birth of Biopolitics* and it's fascinating. The title is misleading however as Foucault writes extensively on the idea of neoliberalism as opposed to biopolitics. I've enjoyed reading this text thoroughly as the ideas always bring refreshing perspectives on how to understand our world. - Brandon Aguilar DS17

Descartes Reading Group

In the Descartes Reading group we have read his Discourse on the Method and his Meditations. We have spent some time taking up the arguments he puts forward, specifically his arguments for the existence God, the lack of certainty in what our senses tell us, and the indubitability of the "I" and of thinking that you are perceiving something. We have perhaps spent more time though reading...

... Descartes somewhat indirectly and looking at the weirdness present in his claims and in the method that he took to arrive at said claims. The challenge of reading him has given me a better perspective on how I should go about pursuing the truth --whatever that word means-- in my own life. - Austin Smith DS17

The History of the Labour Movement (I.S.)

We worked through two broad histories of the American labor movement, Labor in America and State of the Union. Focus was given to the 1930s and the rise of organized business interests as well as the 1935 passage of the Wagner Act, which was examined closely as an exercise in political-science thinking about causes and effects of events in history. We discussed the relationship between the Democratic Party and organized labor as well as alternatives to the existing labor movement that have emerged: worker centers, co-operatives, etc. Finally we read about the ongoing and rapidly spreading teachers' strikes and the monopoly technology industry as a trend in the contemporary economy. We wrote papers about the "turn to industry" after the New Left's 1968, the Knights of Labor, organizing Amazon warehouses, and modern corporate campuses. - Isaac Morris DS17 and Griffin Mahon DS17, with Felicia Wong

Who's Running the BH? : Interview with Martha Stewart

Whoever runs the BH makes a difference to the culture at Deep Springs. Martha has been the BH manager for a year now. I wanted to ask her a few questions about her past, because I knew it was fascinating. From river guiding in the Grand Canyon to owning a New Mexican restaurant in Alaska, Martha has led an undeniably exciting life. The BH has become a much more desirable place to hang out in, if not to smell the delicious food then surely to stumble into conversation with Martha. Here are a few Q&As from a conversation we had earlier this term. - Michael Leger DS16

What were you doing before you came to Deep Springs?

I owned a restaurant for ten years in Alaska that had sold about a year before I started here. That was the last job I had. My husband and I went to Alaska about 12 years ago. We wanted to live in wilder country. We wanted to get out of the heat and out of the South West. We wanted to live in a place where there were more bears than people - where there were lots of new, wild rivers to run and country to explore. Also, we wanted to take a break from being river guides, which we had been for most of our lives. We wanted to do something different, and that turned into running a restaurant. I've always been interested in the outdoor chuck wagon, dutch oven, vent out of the middle of nowhere kind of thing. It was a New Mexican restaurant, which is really a different cuisine than classic American Mexican food. I've always loved both red chilli and green chilli, and that's what New Mexican food is based off of. It was called Mosey's Cantina - Mosey was the name of my first german shepherd.

How did you get into river-guiding?

I started out when I was in college. I took a leave of absence for an independent study, which was an Outward Bound course. It was in January and it was a thirty day mountaineering trip. Then I got a job in a kitchen and I'm still on leave. That was what got me interested in river guiding and being an Outward Bound instructor. I started off working in the mountains, in Colorado, then I worked for the Southwest Outward Bound School, which was based in Santa Fe. That's actually where I first met David Neidorf, 40 years ago. And actually, when working in the Sierras, the director of the school, Harry Frishman - Jackson Frishman's father - used to say « One day, we're gonna go check that weird college out! » So anyway, with SW Outward Bound I worked in Zion National Park, the Sierras, Texas, all over New Mexico and even Baja. I also started commercial fishing then in Alaska. I worked for a couple of seasons and I really tried to like it, but I hated it with a passion. At one point, the director of the school asked me if I wanted to do a trip down the Grand Canyon. We were taking a bunch of diplomats on paddle boats. They were going to have this conference - they were this group out of DC, the executive council - and they wanted to take this trip so that they could break down communication barriers. The idea was that by the time they have their conference, they could speak to each other on more than a superficial level. So that was my first trip down the Grand Canyon, and I fell in love with the river. I fell in love with a couple guys. I just fell in love, you know. There are certain things that you do in your life that set you off, and for me the two biggest things were that Outward Bound course when I was 19 and then the Grand Canyon trip. I decided I really needed to spend some time in the Grand Canyon. To be in the Grand Canyon, you've got to work there, so that became my focus.

What about being a guide do you love? What kept you doing it for so long?

It's an amazing job. It's an amazing life. I feel privileged to have gotten to be a river guide for so long. For one, I wasn't interested - and never have been - in day long trips. And I really don't care about serious rock climbing, or the biggest white water. I really loved to go on an adventure with people. I was very influenced by Outward Bound. The whole idea is to put people in challenging situations such that they learn about themselves, each other and the environment. Doing these trips taught me so much about myself and other people. The 14-18 day trips have the potential to transform people. It's really exciting and fun. A lot of people struggle when moving on from being a guide. They felt unprepared for anything else, but I felt just the opposite. I felt versatile. You're thinking about interpersonal relationships, counseling, teaching natural history, getting better skills on the rowing of the river. I felt constantly challenged and I suppose that's what kept me. I never thought I'd find something I loved as much as that, and I'm not sure that I really have. It's just so challenging and beautiful.

It strikes me that there are parallels of guiding a long river trip and being a staff member at DS. We don't call you a guide, but I think everyone believes that staff here are teachers. What do you think?

I definitely think that. There wasn't another cooking job in the world I would've taken. I didn't want to start another restaurant. The reason DS was so appealing to me was because it is so much more than a cooking job. I felt like it was an Outward Bound cooking job. That's still what I tell people. It's a cooking job, but it's more of a teaching job. It's funny, right before I came here, I sold the restaurant and was prepared to go into semi-retirement. I'd go on the occasional river trip and also the occasional catering job, which I've done my whole life. My husband and I bought land up in Idaho. We started building our dream home. I wanted to go hiking, climbing, and run rivers. The day we opened up a bank in Driggs, Idaho, David Neidorf called me back about the job. I had been thinking about the place for a few years and had been so excited about the place, so we put Idaho on hold.

After several weeks of warm weather, we woke up to snow over Gilbert Pass. It only lasted a few hours, but it was beautiful while it did.

What's your favourite part of DS? What's your favourite part of your day here?

That's tough. Probably the first thing in the morning, when I ride up Gilbert pass.

You bike up Gilbert pass every morning?

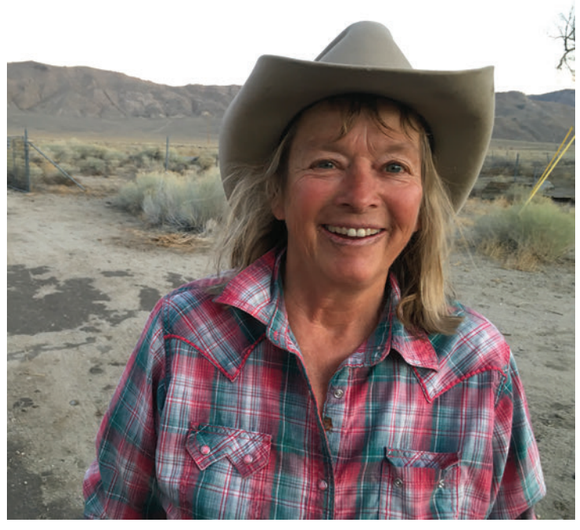
I have been, for about a month now. It took me a while to make it all the way to the top. But anyway, what I like at Deep Springs, besides the landscape and geography - the things I always love - are the students. That's what motivated me to work here. That's the most rewarding thing for me. I feel like there's such a cross-section of people in the whole community. It's also at times the most frustrating. It's just like a river trip. It's great to be in the mountains, it's phenomenal to go on an adventure in the river, but what makes those trips great is the interaction among people. That's what happens here. And, of course, I love to cook, I love to create. I almost don't care what I cook, but I want to make the best thing that I can of what we have. But the best part of it is doing it with other people. And also, this place changes so much depending on who is here, and I think right now we have some really great visiting professors who have added so much to the community. They're who have inspired me to bike up Gilbert.

What's challenging about your job?

It's challenging to start again every term. You know, to start from scratch with new students. And it's fun, too, but it's a lot of work figuring out how to teach and motivate people to take care of things properly or to teach them to be inspired to work beyond what's expected of them. I want to help students to be motivated to want to do a really good job as opposed to just focusing on fulfilling the labor requirement.

What are you looking forward to regarding co-ed?

Obviously, I can see the value of it being an all male school. It certainly didn't stop me from working here. But I am excited about it. I don't think it's really going to change things that much. I think it will be healthier - I think it's more natural to be in a co-ed environment. For some reason, I think it'll make it better. I think women are - it's unfair of me to say - but I like to think that women tend to be better communicators. They're more open. Reading the women's applications, that just said it all to me. I read this one application and it brought tears to my eyes, they were so much more accessible to me.



Katie Peterson on the Coed Transition

Katie is a board member and will be teaching the 2018 Summer Seminar.

I love the feeling of Term 6, the gentle intensity of it, the way the Cottonwoods grow softly refulgent, almost ghostly, and the winter wind transforms into a summer breeze. Students say such interesting things about the College then. They tell the best tales about who they are in the Valley and what they've done. Maybe this is because, as Lane Sell said, they are finding ways to die to themselves as Deep Springers. Maybe Lane said that someone else said that. I can't remember. And that's interesting, too, since so many of the tales that Deep Springers tell belong not just to themselves but to others as well.

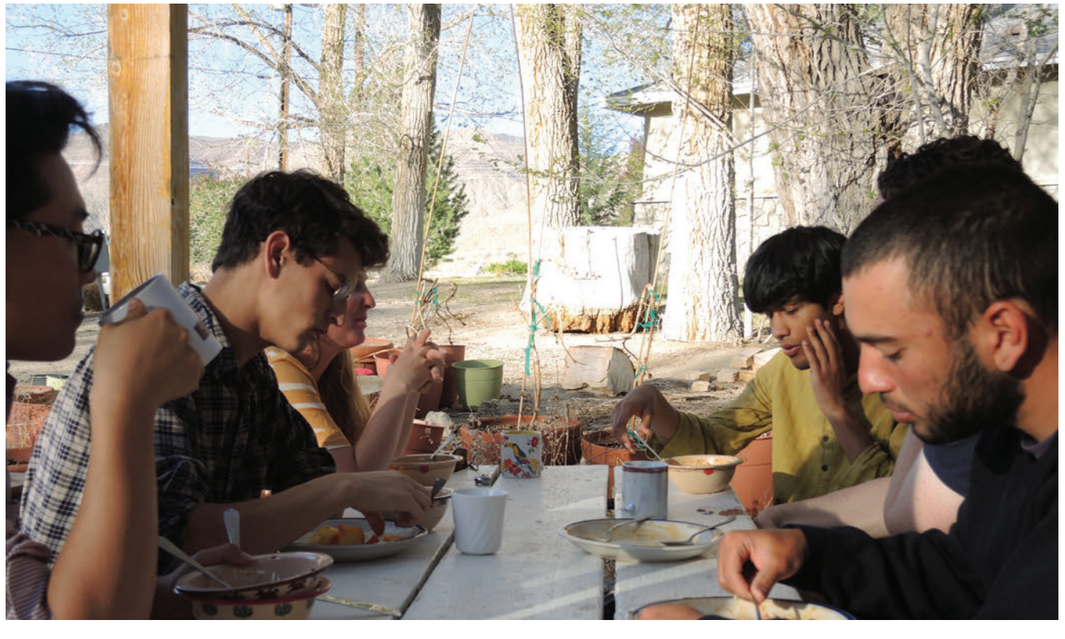
A ghost is a spirit that doesn't wish to depart; maybe Deep Springers leave part of themselves behind on campus as they ghost out. During one Term 6, someone described to me his imaginative vision of a holographic version of campus in which all the students who had ever attended the College were present there at the same time, embarking on the same project on different levels in defiance of our usual time and space coordinates. He said he held it in his head when labor was especially difficult or dull, to remember he wasn't alone.

During another Term 6, someone else described to me his imaginative vision of a holographic version of campus in which all the women who had ever wished to attend Deep Springs College materialized at last, present together and getting the education that they had wished for. He said he held it in his head for several reasons, but among them, to try to do the work in his head of making the school coeducational even if he couldn't do it while he was a student.

These gentlemen were educated by ghosts. The stories they told took note of what had been absent in their experiences as well as what had been present. I wonder if all utopian communities need an imagination of what they exclude. A utopian community in the High Mojave seems particularly equipped to imagine what has been invisible to it: one good way to be alone at Deep Springs is to hide in the desert air.

I think that when women come to Deep Springs, they will want to tell their own stories. But they'll also want to be part of the stories of the past, those Nunnian traditions and adventures from a culture of safe horseplay that travel by legend more than by newsletter. And they'll want, as well, to see what – and whom – those stories have excluded. I wonder if some of them might get interested in the history of women at Deep Springs, the labor they did and the contribution they made. I wonder as well if they might find a way to think about the way women have been educated by Deep Springs even if they haven't officially been students.

The story of any place is a ghost that haunts that place. Selfishly, I confess I am excited that the stories of women will become a more vocal part of the legend of the place as much as I am excited for women to be educated at Deep Springs. Or maybe it's not selfish. People can learn something anywhere. But the place, Deep Springs College – it needs women now so that it can learn how to keep telling its beautiful story.



Felicia Wong is the President & CEO of the Roosevelt Institute, a progressive policy think tank based in New York. The Roosevelt Institute focuses on policies relating to the intersection between economics and democracy. They also run the nation's largest student policy network. Wong taught California Politics while on a teaching sabbatical at Deep Springs. She was also elected to serve on the college's board in April. I had the pleasure of sitting to chat with her about her life, service, and Deep Springs. - Tanner Loper DS17

So, you're here at Deep Springs. How did you become interested in this place? What led you to step away from your very important work in NY to teach here?

I have known about Deep Springs since grad school because I studied political theory at Berkeley and there is connection between people who have taught political theory at both places. I also knew about Deep Springs from Bill vanden Heuvel, a Deep Springs alum and board chair emeritus at the Roosevelt Institute. A couple years ago, I mentioned to Bill that my husband Jon and I, and our kids, were going to take a drive through the Sierra. Bill suggested that we stop by his "alma mater," so I called Niki at the college and she said we could show up. We drove onto the campus, got out of the car, and walked around the lower ranch a bit. Sasha, who was nine at the time, said, "This place is amazing! We should live here forever!" I thought it would be funny if the college hired visiting faculty, so I checked out the website on a whim and happily, they did! So Jon and I applied, I negotiated a sabbatical, and now we're here.

At the heart of it, though, was our desire to spend time together as a family. Jon and I travel a lot. Like many families, we are really busy and we just wanted time to spend with Ben and Sasha in a way that is concentrated. Ben is going to college soon, and Sasha will too before we know it; they're growing up. And finally, coming to Deep Springs reflected my desire to step back from a very busy day-to-day political life. I wanted to be more thoughtful than I'm usually can be when I'm running around to 15 meetings per day.

You spoke about the impression that you got of Deep Springs from alumni and your friends. Now that you're actually here and you have time to step back and look at things from a different perspective, how is your experience of Deep Springs comparing to the vision you had of it beforehand?

Well, the internet was down this morning, and I got to read *The End of Liberalism* by Theodore Lowi. So it felt like that's what Deep Springs is about, being excited and able to concentrate on ideas. That was one of the things I imagined this place to be about -- to be able to talk about those ideas with students who are smart and who really care, and who are engaged. It has met my expectations in that way. Some things that have been surprising and interesting: before coming here, I didn't understand the three pillars and how they relate to each other. I didn't understand how thoughtful many students are about labor. I didn't fully think about self-governance as something in practice. But now I see how seriously students take SB meetings and questions about the ground rules, the internet, and questions about what kinds of lives we collectively want to lead while we're here. It seems obvious, now that I'm here, how all of the pillars are ultimately about service.

Finally, I didn't really realize how seriously the students would take the question of service, not just here at the college, but service for an entire lifetime. What are good examples of such a life? A lot of students have asked me what a life of service looks like outside of the academy. Most students can imagine what a life of an academic families, for example) such a life might be harder to imagine. What does it mean to live a life of service in the economy or in a world that looks like because they have spent a lot of time in school, but unless you come from a very explicitly service-focused family (there are students here from community organizing families or military families, for example) such a life might be harder to imagine. What does it mean to live a life of service in the economy or in a world that is mostly dominated by the private sector? How can one be of service in the private sector? Students here are asking those kinds of questions.

Your movement from living a life of service at the Roosevelt Institute to being in the Deep Springs community is, it seems, the reverse of the the path that many of the Deep Springers you know have traveled. Something that's interesting to me about the contrast between those two environments is that the Roosevelt's thing is 'reimagine the rules' while Deep Springs' thing is 'we've been doing this for 100 years.' I'm curious about how you're experiencing that contrast, if there is one.

Well, yes, there is an inherent conservatism at DS, and I will definitely say that that conservatism seems in many respects to have served the college really well. But I am not sure that what DS is doing, and what Roosevelt is doing, are all that different. We're arguing at Roosevelt that politics and markets are in not out of our control. Our politics and our economy are not like the weather, but really are governed by rules that we ourselves have created. And the rules that we have created in the last 30 years just don't work very well. "Neoliberalism" is something we talk about a lot at Roosevelt and at Deep Springs - basically a very free market-focused economics and politics - and neoliberalism has not delivered what it promised. We see really severe racial and economic inequalities everywhere. So neoliberalism has basically failed on its own terms. And the Roosevelt Institute is saying that there may be lessons - from cutting-edge economics that have emerged since the 2008 financial crisis but also, maybe, from populism and progressivism and labor movements that are 100 years old - that would help move our political system forward so that it would much better serve many more members of society.

So, I wouldn't contrast Roosevelt so much to Deep Springs, although there is some kind of contrast. Deep Springs seems to have established both a set of rules and a process for governance that basically works for it. That said, Deep Springs is very different from an entire political community. Deep Springs selects its community members in a very different way than any nation-state could. One of the questions that I always ask is whether the way a place operates is working for that place. It seems that Deep Springs, in most ways, really is. It will be very interesting, as DS goes co-ed, to see how its rules and rule-making processes work for a student population that, presumably, will be meaningfully different (or who might turn out to be quite similar). Dealing with conflict realistically and productively is essential for politics and for service - so how is that happening now and how will that change as women become part of the SB?

Dave Hitz, the chairman of the board of directors, when he was asked about Deep Springs and its relationship to a life of service, has said that

Interviw with Felicia continued...

... Deep Springs exposes students to 'humanity' in a very concentrated form in a way that works to prepare them for a life of serving the much larger, more complicated and intimidating 'humanity' in the world. How has your experience of Deep Springs affected or how do you think it will affect the way you are thinking about large-scale changes in larger humanity, and what sort of potential do you think this place has as far as affecting students orientation in that way?

I think one effect is actually the reason I came here in the first place and the reason I studied politics and theory in grad school. That is, I believe that thinking hard about the nature of our democracy and the nature of governance, rather than simply discussing policy or political message or campaign tactics, is important. That is a conversation that rarely actually happens even in real-life politics these days. Deep Springs is one of the very few places on the planet where people engage with those questions seriously. The fact that students get this intense intellectual experience, and then they put it into practice - at SB meetings and on the ranch, in the kitchen - seems to me that it will change the way they think about the world for the rest of their lives. And that experience - of living in a place, for a few months, where thinking and labor happen together - been pretty important for me as I think about life and politics. And living within the DS mix of serious thinking and serious labor and serious governance has been important for my whole family, especially Ben and Sasha.

It seemed that the way you were framing Deep Springs was as a place that is very much on the side of idealism, but I'm hearing you now hinting at a great capacity for application in this exercise of idealism. Is that correct?

Well, that's kind of what's amazing about Deep Springs. All morning reading Foucault, wrestling with Nietzsche's politics and talking about Marx or Polanyi or whomever; then going out immediately after to figure out how to burn a bunch of tumbleweed or make sure that the cows don't die. I mean, if students didn't cook, we wouldn't eat. That is really important, and I'm guessing that the unique ability to do all those things in the course of one 24 hr day is really a powerful thing for a student to experience.

In terms of the kinds of conversations that happen here, which you mentioned, it seems in my experience that a lot of interesting work happens when those two modes of action exist together in conversation.

Right, and those things seem to be about service, but they are also about thinking. This morning I walked into the BH to get milk and Akash was clearly super excited about an essay called *On Thinking* by Hannah Arendt, and he came up to me without a good morning and asked me if I've read it and then recommended that I read it so we could talk about it. You kind of have to love a place where people are that enthusiastic about Arendt at quarter of 7 in the morning. I think the fact that students are thinking thing that Deep Springers can bring to service. Service definitely means, for example, making sure that people who are hungry have enough to eat via food banks. That is pretty clear, and satisfying in a lot of ways. But service is also trying trying to bring thoughtful orientation to our day to day lives. For me, that day-to-day is real-life politics; and unless we are thoughtful, politics, especially today, can just seem like a cesspool. I probably have an specific ideological viewpoint, but I also recognize that *thinking*, even in the context of what sharp political division, is really important. Without thinking that division just devolves into what some might dismissively call propaganda. Oskar Eustis, who runs the Public Theater and was our Withrow speaker, talked about this the other day. I have to believe that you can have both: you can fight a good political fight, and you can do this in a way that still recognizes the importance of Arendt and her insights.

Are any aspects of this place that give you pause or that you think actually might not be pushing students toward a life of service.

Yeah, well, one place where the Deep Springs model of service ends up being less applicable is in one of the things that makes this place what it is: basically, this is a community that chooses itself. You choose your successors and your professors for instance. That's super different from having a political community where you have to be with all kinds of people, some of whom are extremely difficult or not that hardworking and/or not that productive or not as serious and earnest or not even well-intentioned. How are you going to deal in a political community where some percentage of the community are terrible people? Here, you get to weed those people out. That's just a question of how you take an ideal service model and translate it to a world that's much more imperfect because some people are just tough to deal with.

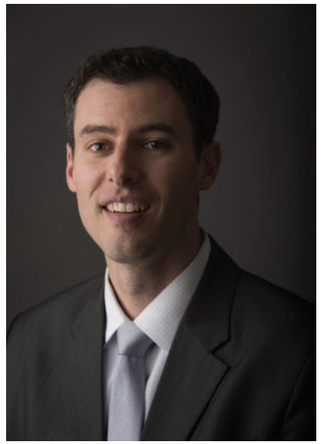
Also, I think the college is in some notable ways not diverse. Obviously that's going to change with respect to gender. But the college is not really diverse with respect to race. There a lot of students here who come from a lot of different places, a lot of international students. But the American racial experience is unique, and uniquely something that people of your generation are grappling with. How would the Deep Springs community change, and how would self-governance change, if the SB truly had representation that looked, with respect to race, like all other Americans who are 19 or 20? Half of the students here would be students of color: black, Latino, Asian - not international students, but students from immigrant families. What would that look and feel like? How would that change the curriculum, maybe, or governance, or the ways in which you implement the isolation policy? Grappling with the fullness of American diversity, especially in the intense community that Deep Springs provides, should, I believe, be essential for a real life of service today. I know how hard it is, and how much students here do grapple with how to make this happen at Deep Springs. I also know that the college hasn't achieved its own goals in this regard, and that it's tough. For me, it's at the core of the American experience. I don't have answers for DS in this regard. But I do think about it a lot.

The last thing I'll say is that I'd encourage all Deep Springers who are about to leave the Valley just to go out there and do things you care about. Do things that seem meaningful - the thing itself, as it were. My guess is that if you are intentional enough about working on what seems like an worthwhile problem that is right in front of you - whether your next job is on a ranch or in a hospital or with a labor union or in a Congressional office (but it really doesn't have to be in a Congressional office) - you will end up figuring out service just fine.

"Men of Letters"

The Communications Committee decided to interview several Deep Springers who have become writers. It was impossible to interview all of our writers, for an obvious reason: there are too many of them. Take this as a sample of how some of our alums have gone on to lead lives of service through the written word. One insight the committee had while interviewing several of them was that, though not all Deep Springers go on to call themselves writers, it seems very true that most aspire to be writers in some way, shape or form. It's the way we most often communicate with a broader audience. It allows us to make lasting contributions to ongoing political, philosophical and artistic conversations.

Zach Mider DS96 won a Pulitzer Prize, in 2015, for his articles in Bloomberg exposing how many U.S. corporations dodge taxes. Nevertheless, he says that he's not really a natural writer.



What interested you first, journalism or issues of money and politics?

Definitely journalism. I was kind of interested in it at DS even though it's not a place where you can do it. It's kind of hard to report on the community because you get everything you need to know in the boarding house. When I went to Harvard I did a bit of work for the *Crimson* -but not a lot. I ended up getting a job at a newspaper in Connecticut. I was a local news reporter and then I moved over to the Providence Journal where I covered a small town in Rhode Island. So I was really more interested in being a journalist, topic-agnostic. It was really only because my wife and I decided to move to New York, and the only place I could get a job was Bloomberg. I really had no background or interest in finance, but I just kind of ended up here because no newspaper would hire me. And so, I ended up having to learn about finance and Wall Street stuff.

Could you speak to how exactly DS prepared you for the kind of writing you're doing? How did your education at Deep Springs orient the way you approach your work?

It's kind of hard to figure out the direction of causality, but I think DS is a place that values a combination of the intellectual and the practical. That's kind of what appealed to me about journalism. On one hand it gives you an opportunity to grapple with big ideas and big problems, but it's also very grounded in physical reality of actual daily life. You actually have to go talk to people and write down what they say. You have to report on facts that are happening as opposed to kicking around ideas in an ivory tower. I don't know if that's what attracted me to DS or whether DS had some affect on me, but to me that's connective tissue between both. It's the opportunity to do things that are intellectually stimulating and require standing on a curb in the middle of the night to watch some house burn down and interview the police or fire chief. It's grounded in physical reality and in the real world. It's what I like about it.

Can you elaborate on how you see journalism as a form of service?

The theory is that you can sort of improve the world without having to impose any kind of ideas on it. The kind of stuff I do is unearthing facts and reporting them. You have to believe that the world is better off with more information rather than less and that facts aren't neutral, that they're positive. The more facts the better. I mean, there are a lot of things that have happened recently that make us all question that, but I haven't completely given up on the idea. That's the theory anyway-- if people have more information on the government and on activity of public events then they'll be able to make better decisions than they otherwise would. I still believe that, but the complexities of that become more apparent every day.

Especially in the last couple years it's become clear to me that most don't really place a high value on the veracity of information they consume. They care more about whether it confirms their pre-existing beliefs and people are very unlikely to change their minds when presented with new information. That really cuts to the core of a journalist's mission. In the past journalists had more power to mediate because specific newspapers had more of a monopoly on any kind of information. They were more like a guild that could have professional standards and it was easier for them to force people to consume true facts rather falsehoods. And now with the internet our monopoly has degraded and it's harder to sell facts when you have to compete with lies.

What advice would you give to a young, aspiring writer?

I don't really have any good advice for people who aspire to be big thinkers. I'm not really a big thinker and I wouldn't really know how to go about doing that. If you want to be a reporter - a fact gatherer - I would say there's probably no good reason that I know of to go to journalism school. Maybe it's because I'm old fashioned, but I would caution against trying to blog about national issues at a very young age without doing a little bit of apprenticeship. The world is changing. Most of my peers who are younger than me didn't work at local newspapers. I think there's something really valuable about it. I think it instills an ethic in you of responsibility to community and your sources, in a way that people who are writing snarkily to try to get national clicks don't feel. I think that can put you at a disadvantage.

Whom do you see yourself as serving?

When I covered politics in West Warwick, Rhode Island I sort of knew all the folks there. I interacted with them on a daily basis and they all read my stories every day. You sort of develop a feeling of what's reasonable and fair. When you opine on various national issues, where you're not spending a lot of time with the subjects that it's about, then you don't feel that same sense of connectedness and obligation. I think it becomes a lot easier to say something provocative and unfair. Whereas, if the town counsel president is going to call you up the next day and yell at you, it's actually a good thing to think about what you can say that's fair. that they like you, but you want them to respect you." And I think that's important. It's important that people who you are talking to respect that you are

trying to accurately convey the reality of the world. That's different from saying you'll always see things the same way they do or that you'll be friendly with them. You want them to feel like you're an honest broker. When you don't have that personal interaction with people you're writing about, it's easy to lose sight of that. A mentor of mine at Providence Journal said, "You don't ever care that they like you, but you want them to respect you." And I think that's important. It's important that people who you are talking to respect that you are trying to accurately convey the reality of the world. That's different from saying you'll always see things the same way they do or that you'll be friendly with them. You want them to feel like you're an honest broker. When you don't have that personal interaction with people you're writing about, it's easy to lose sight of that.

Obviously, you're good at writing about money and politics. Do you plan on continuing to write about that topic, or is there anything else you want to write on?

I don't really have a plan beyond the next couple stories. That's been kind of a constant in my career. A lot of journalists become experts in a couple things and I've never really done that. For a while I wrote about taxes and that's something you can definitely become an expert in, and I tried to avoid that, because I don't want to write about taxes for the rest of my life. It's not that they're not interesting, but there's a limit to how easy it is to get people to pay attention to taxes. They're very abstract. And it's hard to sell. There are things that I love to write about that I haven't found an excuse to. I'd really love to find an excuse to go to some beautiful wild places and write stories, but the money/politics subject doesn't often take you there. If you've got any ideas of money stories up in the white mountains, let me know.

What's the hardest part of your work?

For me, it's writing. I'm just not really a natural writer. I really enjoy reporting and I probably end up doing way more reporting than I need to some of the time. Writing is always a chore that I leave for the end, that I struggle with. I had a teacher at DS - Liz Goodstein, who teaches at Emory now. I still think about these writing exercises we did. She was really great. I can't blame my education for my struggle in writing.

Why did you go to Deep Springs?

It's kind of hard to remember now. I was really interested in the idea of going to a place where, you know, you would actually have something expected of you. Where you'd have some sense of responsibility and not just be a consumer of this luxury four year cruise that college has kind of become. I don't know if I would've articulated it that way then, but I think that's what I had in mind. I was at one point interested in going to the U.S. military for the same reason, but I didn't end up applying there. There's something about the college experience that made me feel like it was not really the best use of my time when I was 18. And I think at DS, I don't know, it just felt like I could learn a lot more there.

Nathan Deuel DS97 recently moved back to the United States after spending several years living and working in the Middle East. His time in the Middle East culminated with the publication of his book *Friday Was the Bomb*. He currently teaches writing at UCLA.

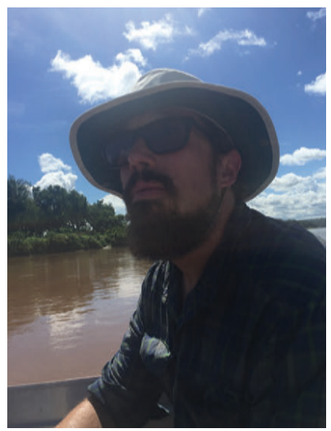
You've written about a lot of different things. Most recently you've spent a lot of time in the Middle East and you've written your book, and now you're in LA. I'm curious what you see as a thread that runs through everything that you write. Is there something you're always trying to get out of the piece?

It's always a sort of search for meaning or a desire to figure out why we're doing what we do. I think that all comes from DS - that challenge and that ethic of service. It's both a blessing and a curse. In some ways I would've had a happier and easier life if I hadn't had LL Nunn haunting my dreams at night. I led a perfectly normal and perfectly satisfying career in NY but I couldn't really claim that I was serving humanity. So, that sort of led me to moving to the Middle East. When we lived there, seeing people living in all sorts of difficult kinds of situations, that was a question I kept trying to answer. Why am I doing what I'm doing? Why are people making the choices they're making? Especially when we had a kid, I was asking myself questions about purpose and loyalty and sacrifice. But then coming to America, the questions become a lot more complicated. Now I live by a beach in Venice and I commute to a safe university job and have an 8 year old who plays soccer games. It's just a less exotic and less urgent time of my life. When it's life and death, bombs and bullets, things feel pretty stark, but when it's like, do you choose a private education or a public education for your child, and why? The questions are harder to answer.

Can you elaborate on how you see a life as a writer as a life of service?

I'm still trying to figure that out. When I pursue different kinds of writing projects, I'm more allergic to any assignment or any pursuit that feels frivolous or doesn't feel like it's hammering away at some essential question. I was basically a full time writer and dad in the Middle East, but since we've moved here I've become an educator as well. The part of my soul that is worried about whether writing is valuable or not is inoculated by the amount of time I spend teaching writing. While sometimes I wonder if that book review really makes the world a better place, I know that when I take a room full of undergrads and help them be less afraid about writing and reading better, that's definitely valuable.

Do you find yourself writing about Middle Eastern politics now? Are you in period of reflection, with a new perspective or are there new things grabbing your attention?



The Middle East was the front row seats to the best and worst things we can do together as government and as societies. That still haunts everything that I'm doing. Am I still writing about the Middle East? No. But it continues to feel like a frame for every decision, every course, every route I take. Broadly speaking I can't recommend going abroad enough. Even for someone who feels deeply tied to a community or a region in the US. It's been incredibly valuable and existential to everything I understand about the world, to have left and to come back. It's such a valuable and challenging experience.

Is there any good or bad way to do it - to go abroad?

I don't travel, I go somewhere and I live there. Obviously travelling is enjoyable and valuable, but whenever I'm counseling undergrads at UCLA, I recommend people find a job and find some kind of purpose - so that you have more skin in the game. So that you're going to whatever country you're trying to understand, you have consequences and a network and an infrastructure. I think that's the way to do it.

What general advice do you give to young, aspiring writers?

Read excessively. Whenever someone comes to me and says "I love writing, I want to be a writer," the first thing I say in response is, "what are the last 5 books you read and what are the next 5 books you're going to read, why were they good and why were they bad?" If someone is a little bit stumped, that makes me really nervous. All the best writers I know are passionate readers. I think there are three important ways of reading: we read the masters, the greats, the immortal people, to see the greatest things we're capable of. But we also read to figure out who our peers are. The people down on the ground who are similar to us. These are the communities that nourish us. So you've got to read the good 'ol dead people, the living people who you depend on and can get help from as well as accomplished writers who are in a position to give back. And then, the third kind of reading is that you've got to read to know where you want to be published. Especially when you're young you should spend your time reading the great, infinite stuff, and tentatively start to figure out who your peers are.

Did you know that you wanted to pursue journalism while at Deep Springs?

When I was in high school I ran a zine (a magazine). It was 35 pages of advertising, it was a total of 128 pages. We printed 5000 copies. I had a kind of thriving magazine before I arrived at Deep Springs - granted, it was kind of a silly, juvenile punk-rock magazine but it was the real deal. So I came in with that being a foregone conclusion.

How do you think Deep Springs affected your career? How did it help you be a writer?

I was very cynical, very lost and very angry. And DS really helped give me an ethical framework. A sort of loving education in what it meant to be sincere - what it meant to care and believe in something. That's what I wanted so desperately, to believe in something. From the history of the place to the philosophy of the place to the human relationships we get when we're there. It just completely changed my heart and my soul. I know it sounds kind of cheesy. It was the greatest thing that ever happened to me. I think I was there during a particularly special time. We were the last students to live in the old building and the first to live in the new building. It was before Michael Pihos died. My classes were extremely close, especially 96 and 97. We were really close and remain close. A lot of us did become writers. I think it was partially a credit to the phenomenal teachers we had and a byproduct of the time in the world it was. The final years of Clinton, peace forever, and end of history, pre - 9/11. We were on the edge of something. It gave us a kind of freedom.

Why Deep Springs?

I think it's changed for me a lot. Right now the way I think about DS is as the father of a girl. Co-ed is very exciting. I was pretty anti-coed while a student and even for many years after. The place was so fragile. I don't think you guys realize how close we came to collapse - so many times. When I was there it was still palpable. This is before the college had any real financial stability. So I was really nervous about something happening that could destroy it. But all these years later, I'm so excited about what's happening next year. Whether or not my daughter has any interest in going, or let alone the actual possibility that she'll get in. It's something we continue talking about. It's one of our north stars. Becoming a parent is one of the most challenging and rewarding things that I've done. And I'm so grateful that DS is there to help me articulate some of the most important and most essential questions. There's my answer.

Pete Rock DS86 is a professor of creative writing at Reed College. Over the past two decades, he has written six novels, two collections of short stories, and, most recently, one "novel-within-photographs." He has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and an Alex Award, among others. Rock is from Salt Lake City, Utah, but currently lives in Portland, Oregon.

Why did you come to Deep Springs? Were your expectations met? Knowing everything that you do now, if you were given the opportunity to attend Deep Springs as an undergraduate again, why would you attend or not?

I came to Deep Springs because it was so beautiful and I also liked the idea of myself making an unconventional decision and everyone left behind thinking, "That is just so like him to do this iconoclastic desperado thing." It seemed like a challenge? My expectations were so out of whack I don't even know what they were. I was scared? And going there changed the way I thought and felt about everything and gave me a sense of purpose, or at least relative calm in the face of everything being broken and not have the skill to fix it.

How has your experience at Deep Springs influenced your writing career?

This is impossible to say. It didn't stop me, and no one discouraged my pretentiousness, that's for sure. I was surrounded by smart and encouraging peers, and took some classes where I was encouraged, so that helped me feel I could do it. But I had a pretty delusional sense of Writer being an identity or calling or destiny, and I don't think that way anymore. Being out there gave me the necessary space to cultivate obliviousness and delusion, so I could get better before I got crushed by the world. Without a doubt the vast space of the desert and the sky and then moving irrigation lines and feeding animals changed everything for me, too. Led me and my writing in different directions.

How does your work as a novelist and professor fit into a life of service?

Good question! Perhaps not at all; perhaps it's self-indulgent. Kathryn Chetkovich, in her essay *Envy* writes, "If you're truly talented, then your work becomes your way of doing good in the world; if you're not, it's a self-indulgence, even an embarrassment." I do not know; I feel embarrassed most of the time. But I also teach full-time, and there, in the hopes of helping people realize how to use language in a way that expresses their unique and peculiar self and relationship to the worl, I do hope I'm performing some service, some more obvious generosity.

You specifically have written a number of works that might be considered magical realism, or at least verge on it. In the vein of the previous question, how do you see these imagined worlds interacting with the world around you? How do they shape your engagement with the real world? Do you act differently when you are immersed in any given project?

It's all the same to me; mostly I think of "reality" as a series of compromises. I have no idea what I'm doing when I'm in a story; it's not that conscious of an activity.

Your most recent book, Spells*, evolved out a variety of multi-media projects all involving stories you wrote to fit photographs—in your words, these stories were "embedded in the photographs." Have you ever considered or attempted to work in other mediums outside of writing, such as photography?*

I used to spend a lot of time in the darkroom in the basement of the main building, trying to make double exposures that would place a giraffe sticking its head out of the back of the feed truck. Back then, photography was hard to do. Now everyone has a phone, but I still think I have an Eye. I wish I could be a photographer or painter or play music but words are really all I have.

Your novel My Abandonment *was recently adapted into a movie called* Leave No Trace *that is currently making the festival circuit. What was it like seeing your novel adapted to a movie? Did you ever expect that it, or any of your other novels, would become a movie?*

It's interesting. I have sold movie rights before and am busy enough that I don't spend a lot of time thinking or fantasizing about it. The goal has always been to write something and then write something else, hopefully different and better. The adaptation of *My Abandonment* was 10+ years in the making, so I can't say it was surprising, but it's nice to see another talented person (Debra Granik, the director) react to something I made by making her own thing. I am interested in that kind of reaction (as in my book *Spells*), as I believe that it is inspiration: we're drawn close to something out of curiosity, something inside us, a nd then something comes out of us that is surprising. What a mystery!

This question is somewhat removed from those above, and is probably more a matter of current personal interest than it is a matter of producing good content for the Alumni Newsletter, but what do you think the relationship is between an artist's intentions behind a work of art and that work of art itself?

I consider this all the time. Intention is crucial to giving oneself confidence to begin--it's a guess, a grapple hook thrown out into the darkness. Once intention gets you out into that darkness, though, you're on your own. And in making a piece of writing, the work is really in taking the material you generate and shaping it, working with it, recognizing what it is trying to be (which is never your intention). So in the end hopefully you forget your intention. No one cares, anyway. I am so uninterested in hearing artists or people who write talk about their intentions. I just want the experience of the art.

A photo of Pete while a student, about to buck bails of hay...

Graeme Wood DS97 has spent a significant amount of time traveling and working abroad. He won the Governor General's Award for English-language non-fiction for his work on ISIS: *The Way of Strangers: Encounters with the Islamic State.*

Do you see a common thread running through everything you write?

At this point I've written about so many things that any unifying theme would have to be truly capacious. What do meteorologists have to do with ISIS, or with a pro wrestler who attacks his opponents with forks? I suppose the stories all share one basic trait, which is that their subjects are all much more interesting and complicated than they seem, and pose moral and social problems graver than are commonly perceived. I wrote about scientists who are trying to change hurricanes' direction and steer them away from big cities. That sounds great -- until you consider that steering a hurricane away from a big city sometimes means steering it toward an innocent small one. (It also means creating a new weapon of mass destruction.) Little ironies like these, that sometimes turn out to be big ones, seem to appear a lot in my writing.

Did you know you wanted to pursue journalism while you were a student at DS?

When I left Deep Springs, I was 19 and had no marketable skills, other than the ability to write grammatically correct sentences. (That may still be true.) So I went straight from Deep Springs to my first journalism job, a summer stint as a reporter at The Cambodia Daily.

How did Deep Springs prepare you for your writing career?

At Deep Springs I was not especially good at most things, and I experienced setbacks -- ranging from serious challenges to outright failure -- in labor, academics, and government. I didn't realize at the time that failure was part of the point of the place. The reporting I do now requires me to immerse myself in strange and unfamiliar scenes and to confront my ignorance and correct it, without being overwhelmed or discouraged. The serial humblings of two years at Deep Springs provided early training for these tasks. Day one on farm team is not so different from day one on a new story. I just hope the stories turn out better at the end of the process than my wheel lines did. The social life of Deep Springs being what it is, the place

also exposed me to certain extremes of human behavior, virtuous and vicious and just plain weird, that I have recognized later in some of the subjects of my reporting. I thank my classmates and fellow weirdos for their assistance in making these people a little less mysterious and in appreciating their eccentricities.

What kind of service do you see yourself providing and to whom?

I serve my readers. If I have not helped them see the world more clearly and accurately, then I'm not much use.

A recurring question on the DS application - at least in the last few years - has been "Why Deep Springs?" Interpret it any way you like.

Deep Springs is still one of the few experiences in higher education that cannot be replaced or replicated. It cannot be compared.

Bill Vollmann DS77 recently published a new book called *No Immediate Danger*. It is the first in a series of two, called *Carbon Ideologies*. He has received numerous awards over the years, including the National Book Award for Fiction for *Europe Central.*

Did you know you wanted to pursue writing when you were a student?

Yes I did. I always wanted to do it. I was lucky enough at DS to be able to start a literary magazine. Other students and I would type our contributions onto ditto masters, and I would put them in everybody's mail box on the post office. It was called "The." We would bring it out every month or two and it sort of lasted off and on, for maybe a year and a half.

How do you think DS helped you become successful as a writer?

For one thing, I found the Valley and the ranch work incredibly interesting. I was born with a very bad case of astigmatism, which was corrected when I was three, but my parents didn't understand that they needed to patch the dominant eye for me to see three dimensions. So, the end result is that I can't see depth. Both of my grandfathers were machinists and my father was very good with his hands. He gave me a workbench when I was a little kid. He was so disappointed in me. He actually didn't understand - probably until I was in my 40s - how handicapped I am. I can't drive a nail straight into a wall, because if you look at a two dimensional picture of a nail into a wall, it's not going to look perpendicular. It'll seem to go in at an angle. I have all these deficits which made me very, very discouraged about being able to do any kind of manual work. And I was anxious before going to DS. I thought I would be a big disappointment to everybody else and myself. To find out there were things that I could do and loved, like being part of the community

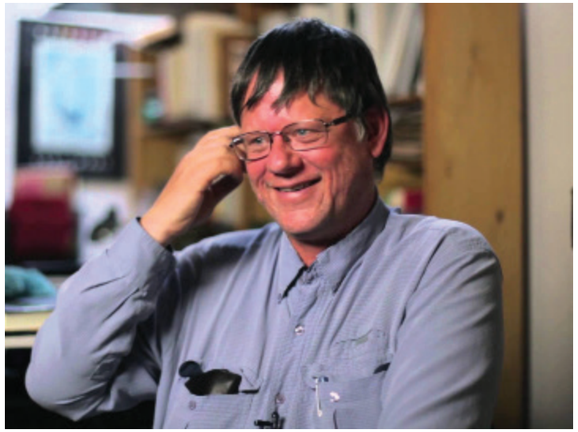
of GL or digging a ditch. I loved being feed man, going out in the early morning and running that '53 chevy truck. And I just found the Valley to be beautiful - of course that's a cliche - but it's so true. The sensory interest of the ranch work, was very compelling to me. I was able to enrich my writing - you know I hadn't had a lot of experience - with some visual descriptions. But what became far more important was two things. One was I got very friendly with some of the ranch staff. I got very interested in how they were, their great accomplishments, which were so different than anything I had ever aspired to, and I became more and more interested in working people, partly as a result of that. That has affected all of what I do. The other thing was that I found that given sufficient time, patience and trust in myself, there was a lot that I could do that I wouldn't have thought that I could do, even with my visual deficits. So, there's a lot that I can't do, but I can buck bales and I can dig a ditch. This book that I just finished *Carbon Ideologies* required me to educate myself about climatology, physics, chemistry, and agriculture - a whole bunch of things. Since I was a Deep Springer, I knew I could do it. I might not do it perfectly, I might get some things wrong, but I was capable of educating myself, however slowly, and coming up with some kind of a big picture. I greatly credit DS for that.

I imagine each project takes you a long time to carry out. What is the most difficult part of that process for you?

It sort of depends on the project. For *Carbon Ideologies*, the most daunting thing was trying to come up with reasonably accurate math, where sometimes let's say the global warming potential of a certain gas might be described as 86 times worse than C02 or 21 times, or there might be different descriptions of how much innate energy is in a pound of uranium. I'd have to look at that and say: "Ok, so how much more efficient is uranium than carbon." This kind of stuff. It would be very easy for me to get something wrong, and sometimes I come up with an answer that should have been trillions instead of sextillions, or something like that. That was kind of anxiety producing. You look at one big number - a classmate of mine gave a speech on that - and it looks a lot like another big number.

Working with a commercial publisher makes it all the more demanding. I basically spent all of last year on unpaid editorial work for *Carbon Ideologies*. Normally, I can edit something in the background while I'm doing work on something else, but this was so difficult I had to get people to check and recheck my math and try to reach out to experts all the time. My colleagues at Viking were killing themselves, too. In fact it would've been nice to have another year to really go through this editorial stuff. So that's one of the things that's most difficult, when the stuff is not in my control.

For all my other books, I have resisted editorial help to the best of my abilities, and that has worked for me. Although, there are errors in my books. Some of them mine and a lot of them produced by the compositer. When I was working on *Rising Up and Rising Down* probably the most difficult part was the physical nature - the possibility of getting killed in a war zone. Or, when I wrote *The Rifles* and I took a solar trip to the magnetic pole, I got severe frostbite and could've died. But, you know that's not such a big deal. Ok, if I screw it up it's on me and I just have to suck it up. It's more stressful when I'm trying to do my best and I wish I could do a better job but I can't. When I was the bookstore man at DS, one time I locked the



safe by mistake and couldn't get it open, and so I couldn't balance the accounts for a long time. That was one of my failures. Of course that's DS; it teaches you how to fail. You do so many things. You have to fail at some of them. And so I did the best that I could under the circumstances with *Carbon Ideologies*. I know that I will have failed. That's ok.

I always liked what Thoreau said. We should never let our knowledge get in the way of what's far more important, which is our ignorance. As long as I remember that I'm ignorant and that my best is not as good as I want it to be, then I have a chance of still being free, of being able to go forward and make my best better and better and not be constrained by my prejudice. But once I think "ok this is pretty good" and I don't think I could do better and I'm satisfied, then, that's probably the beginning of my prison. Anyway. When I'm actually working on this stuff, I take great pleasure in it. It's not as if I'm always saying, "Oh, Bill, you're no good." I'm having a lot of fun when I do it.

How do you see your writing as a life of service?

With *Carbon Ideologies*, I like to think I am serving the future. It may well be too late for the human race, but I would like the next generation, and if there are generations after that - maybe some of those people - to understand what we were thinking, why it was that we wrecked our planet, and whether they would probably be as blameworthy as we are. One of the things I often try to do in my books is to create empathy for others. I think we've done a terrible job of stewardship for our planet, and I have a feeling that even the people that come after us and blame us would not be any better, and they might be worse.

Butterfly Stories is about a journalist who falls in love with a prostitute in Cambodia and gives him AIDS. And it was actually quite touching that as I was traveling for that book, I found out that it meant a lot to men with AIDS. They would come up to me and tell me that that book made them feel seen, and that made me feel happy. So I don't think that literature is as useful as we would like it to be, and maybe it shouldn't be. But I'm very resistant to the so-called stem curriculum that wants to prioritize math and business at the expense of beauty and ethics. To the extent that we can be ethical and appreciate the beauty of our lives, I think we're better off, and if we can see the beauty of someone else's life, then maybe that can make some of our hatreds go away.

What advice would you give to young aspiring writers?

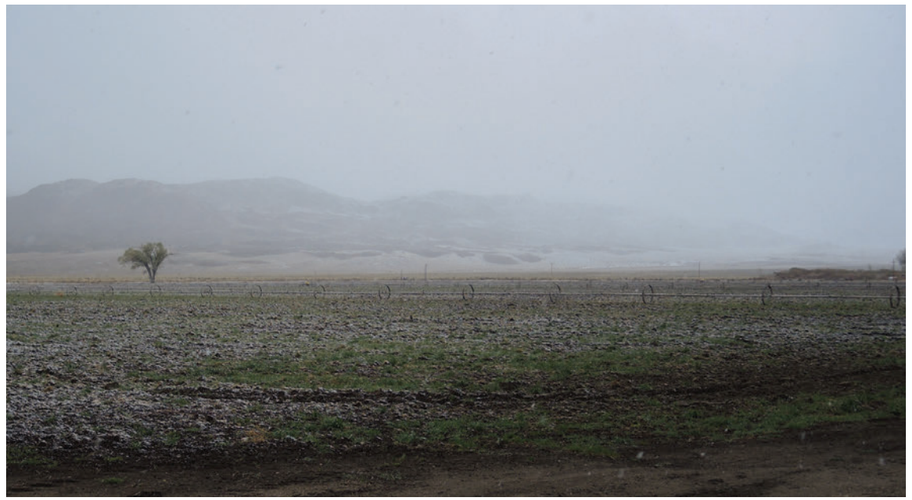
Well, the first thing is that when we're young we have energy without sufficient experience. When we're older we have less energy, and we're still without sufficient experience. So, all our lives it's important to get experience. To go to some writer's workshop, where basically the participants will just be writing about themselves and each other is to go the New Yorker route, where you end up with stories about privileged people with rather trivial and very monotonous problems. The world is such a big place. So much larger than anything you can imagine. The Valley is such a big place. I mean, there is a voice of the desert. Whenever I come to the Valley I like to sleep outside, under the stars or in the birthing cave, and I instantly realize how vast the universe is. It's a wonderful feeling. I never have to be trapped in my own riveted paltriness. I would say, get out into the Valley. Take advantage of the solitude, and really think about who you are, what you want do, what you want to do for others and yourself, what you don't want to do and what you can prevent. Think about everything that you really want to focus on once you get out of the Valley. Right now, there's a good chance that you have a clear mind. Some of the best planning I've done for my life and my books has taken place, for instance, when I'm stuck in a tent in the arctic and it's drizzling rain outside and my sleeping bag is starting to get a little wet and I'm a little worried about hypothermia. There's nothing really to do but think "Gosh, if only I were out of here and if I were back at home, that place that I didn't really appreciate too much when I was there, what would I be really wanting to do?" And I make a list, and then it's really good that I do, because once I get back home, I'm back in my easy, slothful life again, it's tempting to not make lists anymore. Why not make a bunch of lists for yourself?

Why Deep Springs?

I very much agree with most of what LL said in the *Grey Book*. I think that DS gives us a chance to realize that we don't have to go along with the very sick and greedy and stultifying oppressive structures that govern so much of our lives and the larger world. And, if we get a chance to actually take a break from that and just find out who we really are, and determine as a result of interaction with very few other people, who we want to be, who we're not, how we fail, how we succeed, that is so important. The most important thing about DS for me, I would say, has been the isolation. When I see that prospective students sometimes come and stay at DS for a little while, or when I see that relatives sometimes come and stay, it seems to stretch out the isolation policy, and it makes me worry a little bit. I don't know what your current policy on the internet is - I don't use it and I don't use a cell phone, and I thank DS for both of those acts of renunciation. I have more time to think and I think more clearly than a lot of the people I know. It's not because I'm particularly smart, but because I learned from DS how wonderful it is not to be distracted. I used to love getting up at 4 o'clock in the morning and walking down to start that Chevy truck. Even in the winter, when it was pitch black and icy cold.

Can you tell me a little bit more about your new book?

I tried to visit different parts of the world to describe the effect of the experience of fuels. For the nuclear part I went to the nuclear exclusion zone in Japan multiple times, measured the radiation, went into those really creepy abandoned towns and talked to the people who used to live there. And it's really kind of the same thing with all these fuels. The Japanese would say "I know the radiation is supposed to be dangerous, but in fact it is invisible and it doesn't make me sting or itch, and I just kind of have to live with it." That's what people say about natural gas for instance. It's supposed to be the most benign of the fossil fuels, when burned it gives off fewer greenhouse gases, but when leaked, it gives off more than CO2. People say, "Well, you know I'm not sure if it's going to have any effect on global warming and it's so convenient. How can we really manage without it. It's also kind of invisible in its effects." I see a pattern of short term self-interest, but also of human beings behaving like the children that we really are. We see what we see and we think that we understand what we see, but we don't. It's like a little kid looking at the fireplace and thinking it's very pretty, not understanding that it will burn him if he puts his finger in. There was a guy in West Virginia, this very wonderful pastor. He said, "You know Bill, when I get in an airplane and I fly over all these forests, I think, how can man made equipment put off enough smoke to make a difference." And that's common sense, based off of his experience. It's totally plausible, it's just that it's wrong, because our senses alone are not enough to make us understand the magnitude of this problem.



Fields 1 and 2 after a bit of snow

Chris Jennings DS00 is the author of *Paradise Now: the Story of American Utopianism*, published by Random House. He previously worked on the editorial staff of the New Yorker. Raised in New York City, he now lives in Inverness, California.

Looking back on your time at Deep Springs, do you think of it as a utopian community?

No, I never thought of Deep Springs as a utopian community. I don't believe the College has ever presented itself as an attempt to create a new social order that might be replicated elsewhere. Its identity has always been as a school, a place people pass through. That said, the basic philosophy laid out by Nunn and affirmed ever since owes a lot to certain ideas associated with utopianism, notably the belief that the best lever of progress is the development of a new type of citizen within a new type of community. Also, in some very practical ways life at Deep Springs resembles life in a utopian community: extreme intimacy, long meetings, rampant idealism, proliferating committees, huge pots of soup, amateur farm work, the satisfactions of a shared purpose.

How has studying American utopianism impacted your politics? Are there political tasks for which you think a utopian approach, rather than one of pragmatic reform, is needed?

My own politics tend to be rather pragmatic, but I think that considering political questions from a utopian point of view can be illuminating. Utopianism is a surprisingly effective mode of critique. Sketching out an ideal society lets you see what you value in the most vivid possible way. That remains true even if you assume that utopia is unobtainable. There is also a useful creativity built into the utopian outlook. Setting aside the overwhelming task of dealing with the world as it is and keeping a fairly loose grip on what is practical allows for fresh insights into what ends we should pursue. As history constantly demonstrates, things that seem immutable change all the time. For centuries, utopians have been arriving at certain significant insights long before everyone else.

You've written that 19th century utopianism was born in part of discontent with industrial capitalism, which seemed "to lay waste to everything in its path while offering as its sole compensation cheap goods and a few private fortunes." Especially with regards to climate change, there seems to be ample cause for that species of discontent today. What's different about the 21st century that explains why we haven't seen a resurgence of utopian communities?

Good question. Obviously the critique of industrial capitalism that spurred the utopian movements of the nineteenth century still has a lot of force and value, especially with the added menace of climate change. One thing that has changed is that we now have more than a century's worth of practical utopian experimentation (not to mention state-administered collectivism of several varieties) to take into consideration. Reformers in the nineteenth century could reasonably assert that a few big changes to the social and economic order would produce abundance and therefore equality and therefore peace. Our current vantage is less simple. In much of the world, material abundance is no longer an impossible dream, but a fair distribution remains elusive. At the same time, incremental reforms, glacial though they may be, have accomplished much of what the nineteenth century utopians were aiming for. There was a time when the notion that the government ought to provide a free education to all citizens was seen as a utopian socialist pipe dream. Today, only a few hardliners object to the idea that basic education is part of the state's mandate. Another reason for the relative lack of practical experimentation, is that a lot of contemporary utopianism revolves around technology. Personally, I'm not too sanguine about the idea that new tools will solve all our problems.

Students, and cows, preparing for branding

Deep Springs Cows Now Officially Organic!

Garden

The big term 3 project was finishing the gopher fence. We now have fencing along all sections except the area adjacent to the driveway. This has saved a significant amount of labor since we have not had to trap.

The other large winter project was building 4 hügelkultur beds in the open spaces of the orchard. These beds are raised "compost" beds that will eventually compost in place and allow for a nutrient rich bed for the plants.

Our soil test came back with low nitrogen but PH in the normal range for the first time in 5 years!

Farm

We are excited to welcome Gabriel Delgado, the new Farm Manager! Gabriel and his partner Jamie Sullivan arrived in early April. Gabriel has worked at several farms in Arizona and California, most recently at a several-thousand-head sheep operation in Upper Lake, CA.

As of this winter, Deep Springs' hay operation is officially USDA Certified Organic.

We received a grant from the California Department of Food and Agriculture to help cover the cost of organic compost over the next couple years and to re-establish the ageing windbreak on North Field.

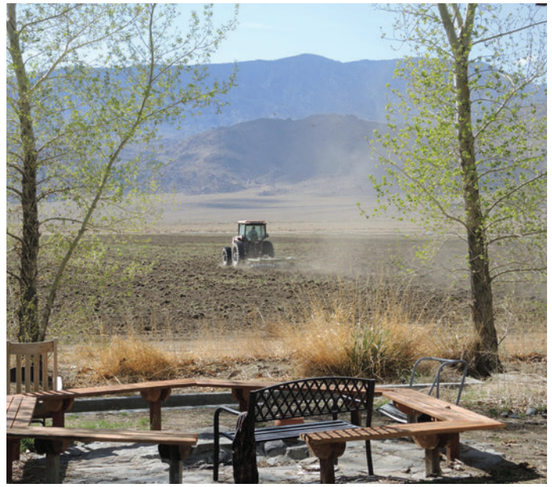
Ranch

We have now received the Organic certification for the herd, and next year's calves will be Organic.

As usual, the Student Cowboys and GL have put in a lot of work on various fencing and building projects around the Ranch.

We had a very good calving season, with a 100%+ calving percentage on the heifers (one set of twins, hence the "+").

The winter weather has been mild with virtually no moisture. Fortunately, we have left-over feed in the desert that will benefit us this year. We hope to get some spring or summer moisture to grow feed for next year.

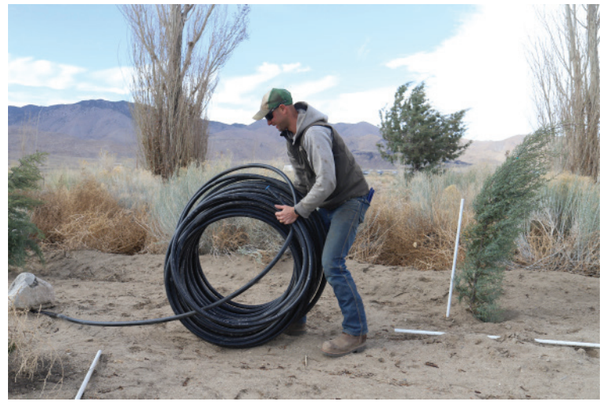


Above, Jango tilling field 2.
Below, Jeremy, Austin, Izzie, Isaac and Tyler working on the hoop house.

Welcoming Gabriel Delgado and Jamie Sullivan!

Prior to coming to Deep Springs, Gabriel was a foreman at a sheep operatation in Lake County, California. Gabriel says that what attracted him here was "the ability to practice sustainable farming and to pass down that knowledge and a sense of basic work ethic to the next generation." Gabriel has already started keeping logs on the fields' output and is carrying out a field survey to get more data with the farm team.

Goodbye Noah Beyeler!

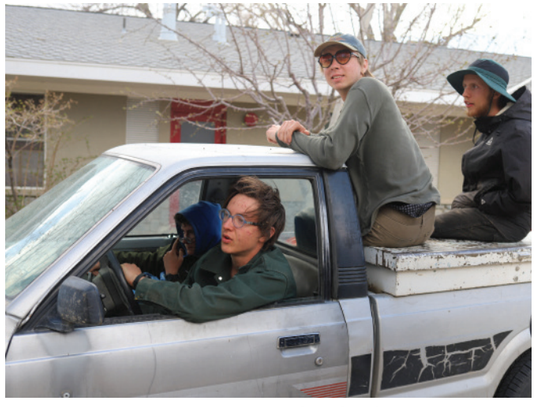


Early in Term One, Noah DS03 pulled a few of us away from our readings several hours after dinner one night to move chickens. With glaring headlamps and a strong sense of duty, we grabbed them three in a hand, crawled under the coops to drag out the most timid (or perhaps the wisest), stuffed them into cages and—after much squawking, dust, and blood—returned to our studies in a flurry of feathers. With faster hands, encouragement, due criticisms, and unceasing focus, Noah worked alongside us. It was his dedication that lent that night, and labor with Noah thereafter, its importance. To work with Noah is to rub shoulders with a true role model. Practical expertise, high standards, an undying commitment, a belief in the value of work: these are the virtues that Noah strives to embody. Truly, his example has been his most potent educational tool.

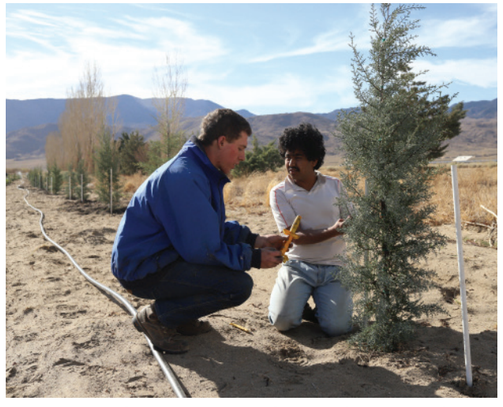
Above, Noah DS03 setting up a new watering line for the new rows of trees on North Field

Noah's contribution to this education extends well beyond what is required of him. Throughout his time here, Noah has been happy to work with students on everything from welding to weight-lifting to soap-making. Despite working both a full-time and a half-time job for the college, serving as a member on the Applications Committee, helping with the transition to coed, occasionally teaching semester-long classes on backpacking and rifle safety, performing incidental maintenance, and, this past fall, getting married to his wife Gwen, Noah has still found time to take on many individual projects with students and even to put on the occasional community-wide trivia night.

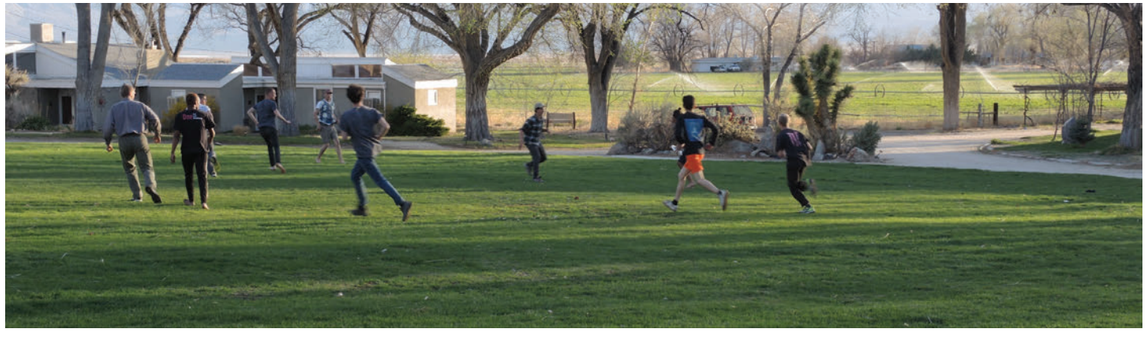
It is not uncommon to run into Noah in the BH, chatting casually, debating an issue, or engaging in a more serious pedagogical discussion. Noah's influence on the college and community is characterised principally by its breadth. We are sure that Noah will bring his far-reaching care and kindness to Nipomo, CA, where he will live with Gwen and, come August, their daughter. Noah has been exactly what this community needed him to be, and he will be dearly missed here. We wish him the best. - Elliott Jones DS17 & Townes Nelson DS17



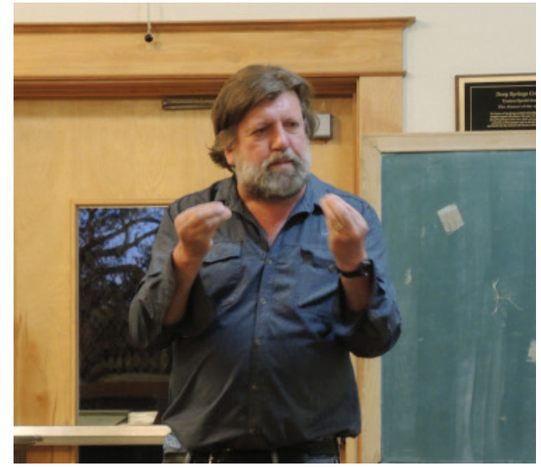
Farm team getting ready to head out



Jango DS16 and Tanuj DS17, working on the new tree line



Withrow Speaker, Oskar Eustis,



Artistic Director of New York's Public Theater, spent three days at Deep Springs as our Withrow Speaker. Oskar has produced or directed many of the last half-century's greatest plays and musicals, including Angels in America, Topdog/Underdog, Fun Home and Hamilton. His theater is also arguably the country's preeminent vehicle for broadening theater's reach beyond wealthy and white audiences, including through its free summer Shakespeare productions in Central Park attended by hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers.

Oskar gave three evening talks, as well as hosting a small reading group on Angels in America. The first talk outlined his theory of the deep conceptual and historical connections between theater and democracy, focusing on ancient Athenian theater and on Aristotle's Poetics. The second discussed Shakespeare, emphasizing how his plays brought together high and low audiences and radically, though subtly, challenged the concept of monarchy. The third discussed this country's history of theater, highlighting the interconnections between American theater and American leftism, and concluded with a discussion on the history and current practice of the Public Theater.

Lucas Tse DS12 was recently awarded a Rhodes Scholarship. Tanner Loper DS17 got in touch with him:

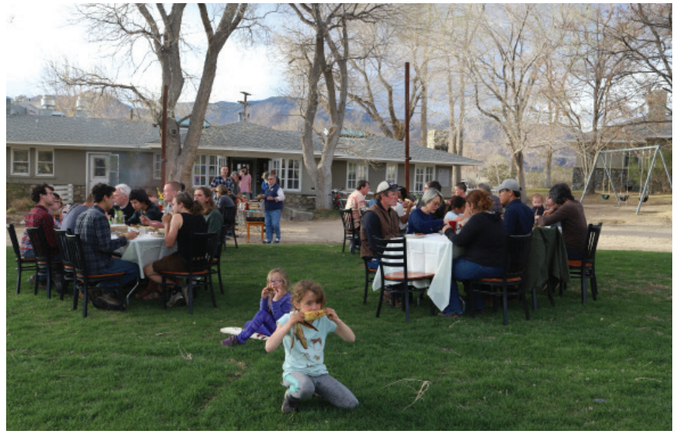
What will you be studying at Oxford under the scholarship?
I will be pursuing an MPhil in Economic and Social History. My plan is to focus on the history of the market economy in modern Britain-- how it emerged, how it was perceived, how it was made an enduring institution.

What excites you most about this opportunity?
I'm excited about a community that sees intellectual inquiry as continuous with real issues that people grapple with, on the ground as citizens. It will be enriching to talk with peers who are dedicated to a particular issue or a part of the world but who are also willing to discuss the general situation of the present. I'm also excited to be in the UK and in Europe at a time of uncertainties and transitions.

Where do you see yourself 10 years, and how has that vision been affected by this opportunity? Deep Springs?
For now the plan is to continue academic training and at the same time keep exploring different fields in public service. Hopefully the next few years will give me a clearer sense of things. Deep Springs came at a very formative time of developing as a person and it still shapes me, including how I approach the coming years. One point is that intellectual work need not be limited to specialised study and can have broader concerns Another is that we shouldn't have to take social life as a given, and we can set ourselves the task to interrogate it and also reconstruct it.

Will Borchard DS17 wrote last fall's introductory student bios. Consequently, we forgot to add a bio for him. Here it is:

William Borchard XIV hails from the noble city of Ventura in the Republic of California. He is well versed in the musical arts, having mastered the piano, horn, saxophone, baritone, clarinet, and the conductor's baton. Lately, he's developed a reputation for broadcasting his announcements to the community via the firetruck's megaphone, while driving around, patrolling student labor. Despite fellow students telling him otherwise, he remains adamant that he is not from L.A.



The weather was nice enough that we could eat dinner outside during the Board meeting in April

Excerpts From the Fall Semester's Essays Class...

Tyler:
At the tender age of four, I knew I was going to Hell, if there was such a place. Of course, I had little reason to believe that there was such a place and I asserted as much to the kids, triplet boys a few months younger than I, who lived next door under the roof of Christian fundamentalists, and, more broadly, under the roof of God. We grew close—close enough to do away with caution and voice our respective thoughts on religion. We became partners in argument, though we had no interest in truth. We argued for the sake of proving the other wrong. It was dogma on both sides. Without a doubt in my mind, I would spit out the ultimate blasphemy: God doesn't exist. I took to muttering "Jesus Christ" when I was frustrated and the three of them would, in unison, shush me angrily for uttering the Lord's Name in Vain. I was young enough to defend, tooth and nail, the existence of Santa Claus while at the same time, unaware of the irony, I took the liberty of scoffing at the idea of a guy living in the sky.

Jeremy:
Before I can remember, my mom stood in a field of tall grass and ripped a baby pine tree out of the ground, shouting "fuck you, Jim May!" There were hundreds of the trees all along the field, inching their way above the horizon. She was surrounded. The innocence of their tiny size was no excuse for what they were: an inevitable barrier to the panoramic view of the bay from all the houses in Ellingwood. By the time I could remember, that view was gone for good. All that remained was a self-satisfied resentment of the Mays that was articulated as over-politeness. I imagine that this was in some ways an ending for an older Ellingwood that I have never known. It had been around for a lot longer than I had been. Long enough for my mother, and the other members of my family, to endow it with the beauty of constancy and the connotation of peace—it had a certain grace to which one could always escape. The pine trees, in contrast, were violent, they marked the reality of property conflict and the end of Ellingwood's purity. Across the tall grass field, they were a scar of disappointment. For me, though, Ellingwood didn't end till much later.

Akash:
The first thing you notice is that it has no windows. It's a colossus of a building, taking up an entire square block in the heart of the Upper East Side, armored in turrets and a uniform dark brick facade. High metal fences surround the sparse outdoor area at its rear, mostly concrete with faded paint halfheartedly demarcating handball courts. Enter, and the metal detectors and bulletproof vested cops seem only the current era's contribution to the enduring ethic of the structure. It's a squat, ugly monstrosity; blink, and it's towering, austere, noble. The students trade origin stories—it had been a smithery, an ammunition factory, a fortress, a penitentiary. This last conjecture tends to be met with a knowing laugh; the school's nickname, used by students, staff and administrators alike, is "the Brick Prison." The moniker is employed more often with pride than as critique: if Hunter College High School is to remain the public school with the highest standardized test scores in the country, it seems to say—the school with the most writing awards, the highest Ivy League admittance rates, if it is to continue producing billionaires and Supreme Court justices—then it will not be a cozy home for jocund children. It will not indulge its students with cheeriness; it will honor them with mercilessness.

Austin:
Every morning, I woke up at 6:30am to run in the cold. Usually no one would have remembered to stoke the dutch oven during the night, and I would watch my first breath hang in the air. At 7:10am, I would walk silently through the forest, with the rest of the school, in a single-file line along a dirt trail to our morning lookout spot. We would sit silently on wet logs, bundled in down jackets and hand-knitted wool hats, and in the distance the sun would peek over the blue mountains. I would eat breakfast at 8:00am, do chores for half an hour, go to class until 5:00pm, enjoy an hour of free time, eat dinner, go to study hall, eat a snack, sing a song under the stars holding hands with the other students, and then go to bed at 10:00pm. Six days a week it was this same schedule, with Sundays to recoup.

On the left, Brandon is eating breakfast while moving the handline. On the right, Tyler is reading Angels of America

Reflections on Nietzsche

Nietzsche is essential reading for Deep Springers, for every single one of us possesses a germ of asceticism, if we're not already afflicted by a full-blown illness. It's widely known that Hussain Taymuree and I, both members of DS'16, suffer from a pretty bad case ourselves. Our preferred legislation is typically ascetic in nature – absolute internet bans, strict adherence to the ground rules, communal exercise motions, and the like. All are, at heart, the principle of self-denial in action. Maybe that's a pessimistic read. I don't disagree but, in Nietzsche's terms, the ascetic impulse generates value where value wouldn't otherwise exist. We turned to a close reading of the third essay of The Genealogy of Morals in the hope of better understanding our own affinities for self-imposed suffering and self-inflicted pain. Nietzsche delivered.

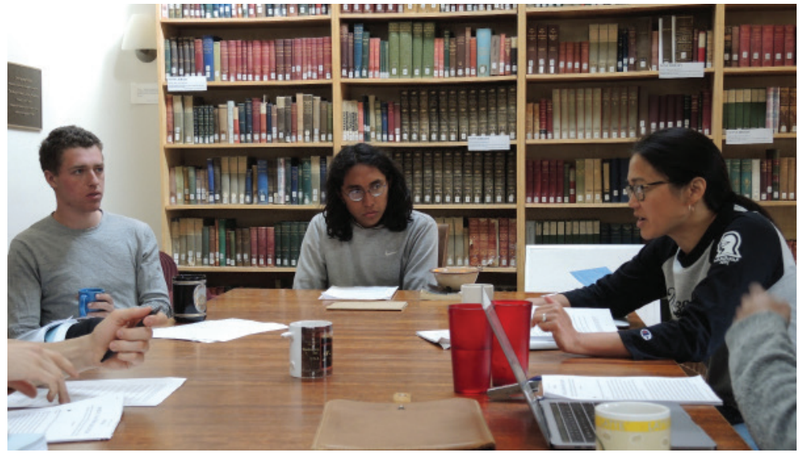
Where previously we could only find the vague concepts of "growth" and "responsibility", Nietzsche gave us the words to articulate the logic behind masochistic tendencies. In the valley, there exists an almost magnetic attraction to the burden of work. But the work here, when Deep Springs is at its best, isn't a burden. Rather, it is a privilege, an opportunity for stewardship, for learning, for living in a place and being able to call it home. And here's where Nietzsche's thought diverges from our own. In his analysis, the freely-made choice to work runs counter to our deepest instincts. Therein lies both the contradiction and the value, for the two are one and the same. It is only an opportunity insofar as it is a chance to subject ourselves to torture, to borrow the melodrama of the text. As tempting as it may be, we cannot look to the fruits of labor to understand its purpose. Work derives its meaning from the exertion of the will.

The historical account presented in the Genealogy is a hypothetical one, but it proves useful in making sense of the present moment we share. The severely abridged version of the story goes as follows: the will, deprived of external entities against which to exert itself, turns inwards. Should we have inherited an abundance of enemies, the will instinctually strives towards domination of another human being. But in the safety and comfort of our prosperous world, however, we must look inside the self for enemies to torture. Hence the self-denial, self-imposed pain and suffering, etc – the birth of the ascetic. The expression of the will always needs an outlet.

Term six begins. We're hoping that Deep Springs continues to serve as an outlet for the collective will of the Student Body. The year may be winding down, but that's no reason to loosen the chains of communal restraint. But even if the collective will stalls, we're prepared to maintain personal commitments to the ascetic ideal. We're a few days into Ramadan. The days are long and longer still when you're hungry and thirsty. If that isn't the icing on the cake, the pinnacle of self-denial, I don't know what is. Actually, I'd rather we didn't talk about cake right now. -Tyler Nadisen-Gladstone DS16

A New Experiment: Communal BH

This last term labor organization looked a little different than it normally does at Deep Springs. We experimented with a new way to organize BH labor through dividing it equally among all of the students. This division of labor was overseen by one student, whose labor position was the BH Master, in charge of weekly projects, making sure BH crews were on top of it, and general cleanliness of the BH. Each labor crew essentially had a day they were assigned to BH: garden crew Wednesdays, GL Thursdays, Farm team Fridays. The goal of the experiment was that in some way if we were to all take care of the same job and space together we might gain a sense of communal stewardship. It seemed less that we took away a greater sense of stewardship than a better understanding of shared responsibility. In a system of shared and diffused responsibility, there is no one to blame when a job is not performed well (except the system itself and the entire SB). It was a learning experience that challenged students understandings of how to do a better job at a task that isn't designated as their primary labor position. Many students just enjoyed doing a day of BH a week. All in all, communal BH held together for the term, but not without significant attention to the communication between students and staff. This is a potentially viable system if administered carefully. - Will Borchard DS17



Felicia, Brandon and Jango in California Politics

Letter from John Dewis

Hello Readers,

I have just finished reading Jack Newell's great book on L.L. Nunn and the founding of Deep Springs ("The Electric Edge of Academe") and am reminded of something I might have known once but forgot. Of the many titles enjoyed by Nunn- pioneer, inventor, educator, entrepreneur, visionary, philanthropist- the one that probably made him most proud is the one most easily forgotten: Deep Springs Student-Body Member.

And proud for good reason. Nunn of course never went through an application process or stood vulnerable before his peers in the Valley. And perhaps he wanted to make sure that if students enjoyed the burden of governance, that he wasn't frozen out. It might have gone like this:

"Dear students: The good news is that the students are beneficial owners of this place. The bad news is I'm making myself a student. (And no, you cannot use the Ford to go to San Francisco on your break.) Yours truly, L.L."

Nunn may also have insisted on being a member of the SB because he wanted the unparalleled perch of a student, where the view toggles from the lofty to the humdrum, but where the voice of the desert is loudest and clearest.

Nunn understood the paradox: students are the most fundamental and yet the most fleeting. In this vertiginous pass through the Valley, what do two years amount to?

Turns out, a lot. In this issue, members of the Communications Committee took up the task of finding out what, if anything, has prompted so many Deep Springs alums to pick up the pen and write- as a passion, a career, and a way of making sense of and changing the world- and if any insight can be gleaned from their reflections on writing.

We leave it to the reader to determine what unifying thread can be teased from the interviews, which do not aim to be comprehensive but to sample some of the "men of letters" to have emerged from the roil of desert winds and sands.

Thank you for your interest in them and their work, and in helping determine whether or not Deep Springs has succeeded in counter-balancing the mainstream impulse for the most talented young people to become "hirelings of the avaricious."

Thank you also to Michael Leger and the rest of the Communications Committee for keeping the Newsletter alive and lively.

And on the topic of Deep Springs "men of letters," let me congratulate Michael in print on his own recent appearance in print. Michael wrote an essay on the importance of a bilingual California (and Canada) in last term's seminar on California Politics taught by Felicia Wong. His essay appeared in the Nation a few weeks back and can be read here:

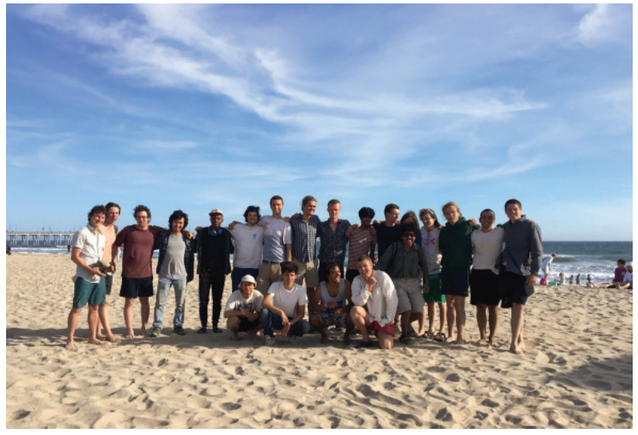
www.thenation.com/article/california-needs-take-bilingualism-seriously/

For my own writing, I am content to help spread the good word and works of Deep Springs among our far-flung constituents, and to help make the case that this is all very much worth it. We hope you agree, and we thank you for your ongoing support.

Sincerely yours,

John Dewis DS94
Development Director

A photo of the SB on a rare trip to Orange County



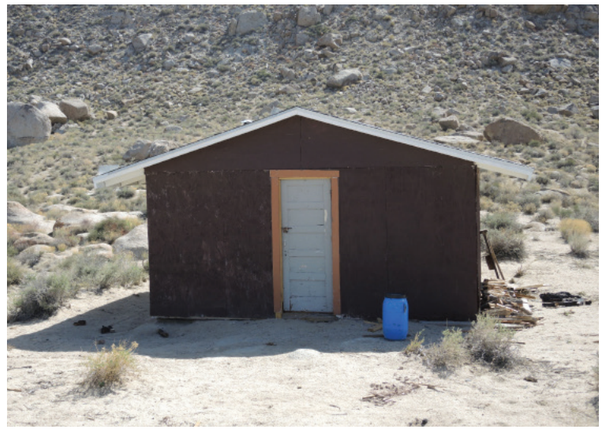
More From the Valley: Term 6 courses and news

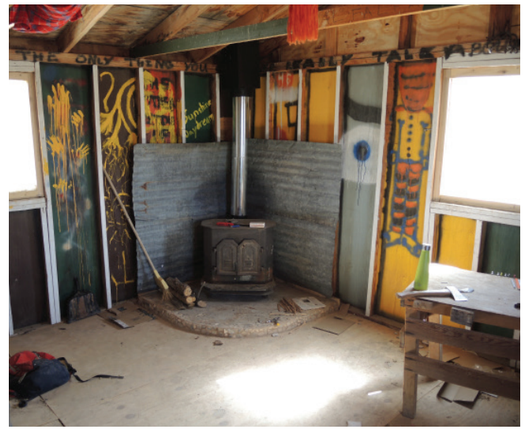
Chaos and Fractals taught by Nick Barton's (DS13) mother, Sarah Tebbens.
The Beat Generation and *Creative Writing* are being taught by returning professor, Tim Hunt. Tim was academic dean for three years from '87 to '90.
Civil Rights Revisited is being taught by returning President and current Board member Ross Peterson.
Finally, *the Roman Roots of Liberal Democracy* is being taught by the current President, David Neidorf.

Visitors to the Valley:
- William Deresiewicz, author of *Excellent Sheep,* is returning to speak in the valley at the end of term 6.
- John Hill, 30-year veteran LA Unified teacher from Patriot High School in Jurupa Valley CA, invited by ComCom to talk with the SB about diversity, recruitment, and inclusion
- LA chef and restauranteur Christian Page (Cassell's Hamburgers @ Hotel Normandie) and celebrated butcher Chris Fuller will take apart a beef, rate the marbling, and look at possibility of sourcing Deep Springs finest Organic Certified

Current highlights from alumni:
- Colin Wambsgans DS96 had a June 1st art opening in Los Angeles entitled A Long Drive for Someone, inspired by his Deep Springs classmates' obsession with the band Modest Mouse.
- Chris Von Nicholson DS95 Founding CEO of Skymind uses deep-learning in Silicon Valley to spot fake news.
- Dave Schisgall DS86 wrote an article speculating about a coed Deep Springs in Amtrak's onboard magazine.
- Bill Vollmann DS77 has a new book out on climate change called No Immediate Danger.
- Darwin Berg DS60 has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences for his many contributions to neurobiology, including our understanding of synapse formation, nicotine signaling, and human identity.

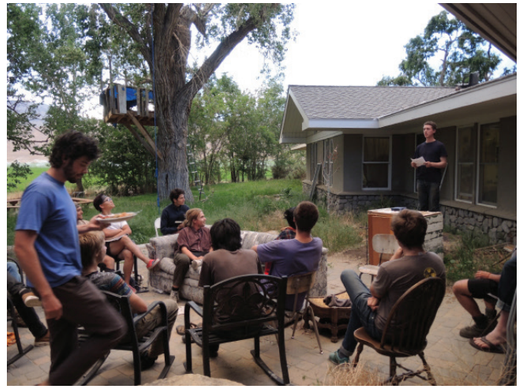
Over a several terms, the General Labor crew revamped Michael Thoms' DS98 cabin, putting in new flooring, new roofing, a new door, painting the outside walls and even installing a wood-stove





Looking to next year...

The Applications Committee received more than 300 applicants this year. The workload and final deliberations were both well-managed by Chair, Tim Olsen. The incoming class has 10 women and 5 men, coming from all across the United States, as well as from Switzerland, Israel, England, Germany, Morocco and Slovenia.



Outer Coast is a new alternative college that is starting up in Sitka, Alaska. Though Deep Springs is a model, they are changing some things up. Townes Nelson DS17 caught up with them in an interview to ask more about their motivation and plan.

Regarding the relationship between academic excellence and recruiting students who are disadvantaged by the current schooling system: How do you strive for excellence in pedagogy while at the same time serving people who have not had access to the best academic resources?

Bryden Sweeney-Taylor DS98: In the process of recruiting students for our first summer seminar this July, we'll grapple with that in much more practical ways than we have to date. The way we thought about the balance between high-level academic achievement and students who may not have the same level of preparation as, say, your typical Deep Springer, is about finding students that have displayed proactiveness and an ability to make the most of the opportunities that they have had--a hunger for intellectual exploration. I don't think we're looking for that in terms of polished essay writing or necessarily high standardized test scores or grades. In the kind of screening we do for our admission process, we want to uncover a curiosity and depth of thinking, even if that thinking isn't as refined as it is for some students.

One way we can do that is by identifying students who have identified a challenge in their local community and have done something about it to address it. That sort of orientation towards action—saying, "How can I be an agent of change within my local community?"—is one of the characteristics we'll be looking for in this first summer seminar and subsequently as we recruit for the college.

In terms of what that means for the academic program of the college, we are really eager to focus on [developing] the building blocks that allow a student to communicate effectively, such as the ability to read closely and to speak and write clearly and concisely. That's our goal, to meet each student where he or she is. Given the small size of Outer Coast, we hope to provide students with one-on-one support to build those tools.

Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins: My only addition is that it can perhaps be difficult to find students who [demonstrate that kind of] initiative or promise or proactivity, especially if those traits don't manifest in test scores or traditional metrics. Maybe they partially do, but they also partially manifest in ways that are more circumstantial and things that one can only really pick up on if you know the person and are familiar with how they are tackling problems or diving into taxing projects.

Those students are out there. It's a question of trying to find them, and often it can be difficult to find them—this is a lot of what Bryden does. One of the approaches [we're taking in preparing for the] summer seminar this summer is a highly relationship-oriented recruitment approach where we develop a network of people across Alaska—in literally every high school with at least a hundred people and in all 54 school districts in Alaska—who know the students in that school and can say that a student is really promising, albeit because of his or her socioeconomic background has not entered academic programs. Those recommendations [allow us to] engage with students who would not otherwise opt into an academic program.

Cecilia Dumouchel: We're also trying to shift what academic excellence means away from something that, in the negative and less meaningful contexts for a student, would be to put up good grades because you feel like you have to, saying something in discussion because you feel like you have to, versus doing so because you really want to engage with your peers, engage with your professor on a particular topic and move the conversation forward. In some places, if you say the right thing and do all your school work on time, you can post up "academic excellence." But, we want our students to learn how to have those conversations but for them to be meaningful for the class and for the students so that they can then move those conversations forward. The high-potential and high-achieving elements of a student are not mutually exclusive. As Bryden said before, it's about understanding the whole context of where a student is coming from and their experience. If we are in pursuit of education of the whole person, then we have to take that into account.

I want to follow up with something you said, Jonathan. Talking about the outreach you've been doing for the summer program, you said you're forming connections with every high school in Alaska?

Jonathan: What we did was we got in touch by networking with alums of most every high school of all sizes and in every school district in Alaska. We found students who were academically oriented. We asked all those students, "Hey, who were the most inspiring, dynamic, most liked teachers at your schools?" We got a hundred recommendations. We then proceeded to get in touch with these educators—we're still in this stage of the work. We've been connected to educators in every high school in Alaska with over one hundred students as well as all 54 school districts in Alaska. These teachers help identify promising high potential students within their schools.

I can personally relate to some of those students. I had really meaningful relationships with a number of teachers in high school but I also bombed a number of my classes. My GPA tanked my last couple of years in high school, even though, I think, I was pretty academically driven and had curiosity, but curiosity that just didn't manifest in traditional scholastic contexts.

How has that process been going? Has recruitment for your next class and summer seminar been successful?

Jonathan: In early terms, the answer is a somewhat qualified yes. We haven't opened the application yet. We're just in the process of interviewing our faculty finalists. That process needs to conclude, we need to figure out who our faculty are, and also what our courses are, and then we'll open applications to students and broadcast that across Alaska. We'll be there soon. There's been a lot of informal early interest and I've personally had conversations with a number of students and we get contacted on our website from a lot of lower-48 students who are interested in applying as soon as the application opens. So that part has been really good.

My next question is about the resources you'll provide to students once they're at Outer Coast or your summer seminar. I know at Deep Springs when we're looking at recruiting students who have been disadvantaged in schools, one of the biggest difficulties is our ability to offer them the

resources they need to succeed in school. What kinds of resources do you provide for students who are disadvantaged and when does it become too much, such that as a small institution you just can't possibly provide what a student might need?

Cecilia: That's something we've been thinking a lot about in order to do this project responsibly. The summer seminar is intentionally less than half the size of the full college so that we can test drive how those resources would work. We will have many people who can serve as direct mentors for the students. Our student body—our target is between 12 and 16 students—will be very small. We will have two residential teaching assistants who are going to be in college or just right out of college who are going to live with the students. They are the go-to people for the students. We'll also have two service coordinators who will be working with the students for the service component. Then we'll have two to three faculty, an enormous ratio of faculty per student, to foster an academic connection as well. Then, on top of that, we'll have access to a guidance counselor, access to a nurse, and an administrative overseer.

In terms of human capacity infrastructure, we've thought through many of the levels of where students might want to turn if something comes up. We've been [telling] our faculty [interviewees], "We will have students coming from varied academic preparedness. How would you approach that in a way that will highlight students' strengths and allow students to work together?"

In the past you've described incorporating fishing, gardening, goat-raising, and work revitalizing the Sheldon Jackson Campus in the labor component of Outer Coast. Are those plans coming to fruition? What will the labor program look like?

Cecilia: This is something we've struggled with a bit. One distinction between the Deep Springs model and the Outer Coast model is that our equivalent of the DS labor pillar will be a service pillar. Our goal is for students to commit themselves to roughly 20 hours of non-contrived service in the community for the four and a half weeks that they will be in Sitka. The service program this themselves to larger groups and to learning about the environment.

Students won't be directly involved in the preparation of food or the maintenance of the campus, [jobs which] I know are really intrinsic to taking responsibility for your surroundings at Deep Springs. That's something we will have for the college, but for the two campuses we'll be working with for the summer seminar, and because of the shorter period of time, that's not possible. In the college, it will be more of a balance between labor within Outer Coast and with the larger community of Sitka.

Do you plan on making Outer Coast free for students?

Cecilia: No. We've had a bunch of conversations about this among the team about the value of having a small student contribution, even if it's $200 or $100 or $50, that contribution says that you are taking ownership of your education in this small—and for some folks, not small—financial way. For now, our aim is to have a robust financial aid program. We're actually not calling it a financial aid program. We're hoping to do something similar to a system called "indexed tuition", where a student and their family sets their own tuition based on their financial situation. From there, instead of a top-down system where you have tuition set at x number [and subtract students' extenuating factors] to get to your financial aid, we're asking students and their families to pay the number they feel comfortable paying. Indexed tuition is pretty cool, a lot of high schools are doing it—well, I say a lot, I've been really eagerly reading about it, but it's not that many high schools.

You said that other high schools have been using indexed tuition. Has it been successful in those situations?

Cecilia: If it's set up properly and within a certain student body size, there's been some successes where, overall, students feel like it's a better system for them. Students who are coming from means will sometimes pay extra for their tuition, which turns into a donation to the school and that can help students who are coming from less means. If you run the numbers, it's a similar situation to financial aid in terms of input and output. For students and their families, the

the psychology of it is quite different, which is really important when it comes to education and the high price of education. It has been working well for some schools and we've been trying to slowly implement some of those ideas into how we're going to structure tuition for Outer Coast College. We're doing a trial run of that model for the summer seminar. We have our total cost of the summer seminar and we figured out that if all of that total cost was covered by tuition—or if everything were free—what it would cost per student, the fully loaded cost, but we're not setting a tuition, we're asking families and students to set their own tuition.

What is Outer Coast's relationship with other colleges in the Alaska?

Cecilia: There's a branch of the University of Alaska Southeast in Sitka. We are in conversation with a bunch of folks there and we want this very much to be a positive feedback loop as opposed to being a competitive situation. The type of education that we will be offering at Outer Coast is very different in its goals and setup from the educational system at the University of Alaska Southeast branch campus in Sitka. We are eager to have a collaborative relationship with them, and those conversations have begun already.

Outer Coast, in many ways, will be less isolated than other Nunnian institutions. How do you see isolation, or lack thereof, interacting with the pillars of self-governance and service/labor?

Cecilia: Isolation is a really interesting idea to me personally. I had the chance to visit Deep Springs and think a lot about the isolation policy and the benefits of it. In this type of education, students are building skill sets and emotional intelligence and developing the wherewithal it takes to be an adult in the world and be responsible for yourself and others. Communicating with and trying out these skills in a community, the real world, at an earlier stage is something we think is important. The community of Sitka is a unique place to do that in terms of the size of the town and also the really positive sense of community here. Obviously, there are problems in every place, and we want students to engage in those as well. The setting of Sitka is a critical piece in the decision to not have an isolation policy. The specifics of whether there are times when students wouldn't welcome visitors on campus is all yet to be determined and will be up to the students. The pedagogical and personal benefits of the isolation policy are certainly not lost on us. This is definitely one of the ways we are straying from the Deep Springs model, but it's for a specific reason.

Bryden: I think that escaping Outer Coast, even within the context of Sitka, will be very hard. Part of what makes Deep Springs what it is is a function of its location, but even more important is the small size of the institution. That is something we've been very deliberate about in our plans for Outer Coast as well. With 20 students per class, the student body will have the opportunity to cultivate a shared sense of the rules by which they abide. You can't really be anonymous or opt out, even with a large community that would be present in Sitka, because of the kind of relationships that will exist between students and among the student body more broadly.

One of the ways this feels very clear to us is around internet policy and what that will look like for students, wanting that decision to be placed in the students' court to determine, not for us to decide ahead of time. That feels like one of those salient questions shaping the way that students interact with each other and the community, one that continues to be important at Deep Springs and will also be at Outer Coast. We envision the same sort of powers to determine the relationships among members of the student body and relationships to the outside world being present at both institutions.

I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about that setting and what additional educational benefits it will bring to Outer Coast.

Cecilia: I've lived here for just over a year and a half, so I have some sense of the community, but I'm not an Alaskan I would say—I'm trying, I am! There's a unique collection of people who live in Sitka who have these skill sets and have a vast variety of ways of looking at things. [People have] been approachable in my experience, and that lends itself well to this type of community learning and community engagement.

Jonathan: Being from Sitka, I've always been impressed with the sense of community and interconnectedness in the town. I think there's a lot of potential for town and gown to be one, so to speak. Some of how that might play out with Outer Coast was piloted with a fellowship program that we've run in Sitka the last four years where we take recent college grads and meaningfully integrate them into the community, into organizations, into all aspects of life in Sitka. I think the potential for doing that with the college is equally present and exciting.

Bryden: The notion of a community that is very tight-knit is appealing to me because I think one of the hallmarks of the Deep Springs experience is how much you learn from living in that kind of community. I think that a similar sense of place and community pervades Sitka. Part of that has to do with the isolation of Sitka in the context of the broader world. Even though Outer Coast will not be isolated in the same way that Deep Springs is, there is that sense of being in a fixed point with a set number of interactions, of outlets, in that way that makes for a balance that I think can be conducive to the kind of environment we're trying to cultivate.

Cecilia: I think the idea that has been most striking to me is the ability to learn things from individuals. Coming from a looser-knit and larger community—or lack thereof—in the last couple of places I've lived, it's been really striking because you learn from people who you might think you wouldn't learn from. It's a very open-minded way to see skill sets and to see the development of a person into a whole person who can fully appreciate and participate in the community.

One function of isolation is that it makes it much easier to adjudicate what students at Deep Springs are able to do—there are no bars to go get a drink at, there are no cafés to go use the internet at. How do you think rules the Outer Coast student body sets for itself will be enforced in this more interconnected setting? Do you imagine any more material enforcement of those rules?

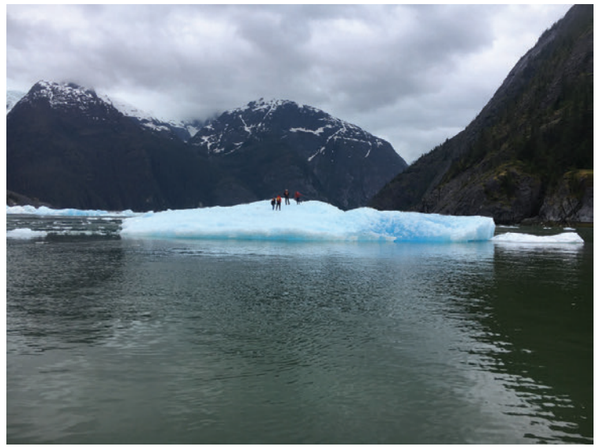
Bryden: I don't imagine some more material enforcement. I think that one of the powerful pieces of self-governance is figuring out how to institute the kinds of standards for the community that actually will be abided by, not because of some sort of external force, but because those standards are subscribed to by the community. I think about the drug and alcohol policy at Deep Springs. Maybe it's somewhat more difficult to acquire drugs and alcohol in Deep Springs than it is for college students elsewhere, but that doesn't seem to be the determining factor in whether students abide by that policy or not. Isolation is a decision made by the student body about how the student body relates to the rest of the world and the student body abides by it because it is a collective decision. In a lot of ways, the same would go for the internet.

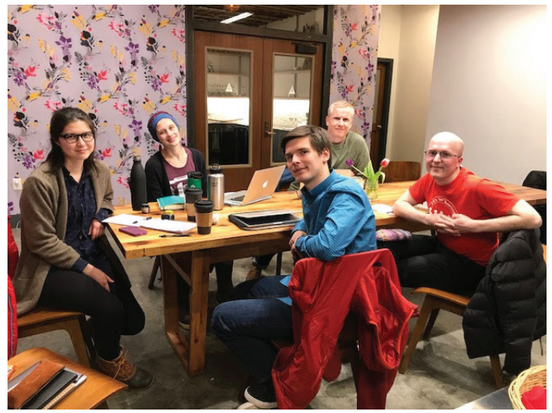
Figuring out how self-governance plays out in those circumstances allows for an environment that is, potentially, more "real" in its construction than experiences in the alley. I would say the Deep Springs experience has huge upsides, based on my own experience and the experiences of my peers and other alumni, but isolation also has the potential to be somewhat of a limitation for the institution. Outer Coast has an opportunity to have that much more of an engaged dialogue with what it means to be in service to humanity, to think about one's place in the larger world in a way that can be more difficult to do in the context of the Valley.

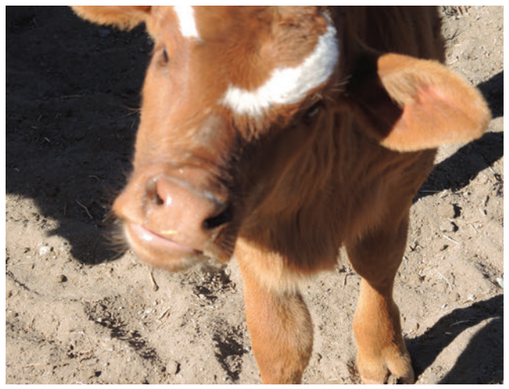
Cecilia: The idea of increased "realness" is important for me within the framework of the community of Sitka. If the students are going to be real contributors to the community and real participants in it, then there shouldn't be any type of staff-imposed enforcement of those rules. Student body engagement with Sitka is going to be determined by what students take with them from their conversations about what they want to be doing and what they don't want to be doing as a community.

In conclusion, I'm wondering if you could just comment broadly about how you see the relationship between Deep Springs and Outer Coast right now and in the future.

Bryden: Deep Springs is clearly one of the main inspirations for Outer Coast and the work that we're doing. It is exciting to have another institution that is aspiring to say, "What are the best elements of a Deep Springs education and how can we bring that to other settings?" while at the same time thinking creatively and innovatively about the limitations of Deep Springs, or different ways of approaching similar problems. For me, it certainly is an amazing opportunity to continue a conversation that I've been having with my Deep Springs classmates and others over the course of the last twenty years. In the spring of my second year, I took a course from Jack Newell, who was then President of the college, on the history of higher education. Our final paper was about creating the institution of higher education of our dreams. I find it incredibly exciting to be able to be part of that process now. Jacob Hundt was a classmate of mine in that course as well and is now engaged in a similar process in Viroqua, Wisconsin [working on founding Thoreau College]. This is a exciting moment for Deep Springs, obviously with the transition to coeducation, but also with three other models in the Arete Project, in Thoreau College, and in Outer Coast, all working to get off the ground. We are thrilled to have the Deep Springs community behind us.







SB Wishlist

- dried fruit
- more women's clothing for the bone pile
- new squat rack
- communal sunscreen
- funky magnets for the dorm fridge
- mugs

In Memoriam:
Bob Gatje, DS'44 November 27, 1927 – April 1, 2018

Bob Gatje passed away this spring at his home in New York City. Bob's life and energy were felt within the Deep Springs Community through his service on too many alumni committees to list, as Trustee (1975-1983), as architectural guiding spirit of the Building Committee that rebuilt the college buildings in the late 90's, and, most of all, as determined gadfly, steadfast supporter, and loyal friend to many alumni. He is already greatly missed in the valley.

Growing up in Flatbush, Bob went to Brooklyn Tech before Deep Springs. After leaving the valley he served two years in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers before returning to study architecture at Cornell. Bob was a Fulbright scholar at London's Architectural Association School and later President of Telluride Association (1953-55). He served as a Trustee of the New York Hall of Science and of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute. He wrote two books, (Marcel Breuer, A Memoir, and Great Public Squares, An Architect's Selection), and contributed a volume called Memories of Deep Springs to his classmates and the college archives. Bob was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, and well-known for his role in the design of two "Monuments of French Modern Architecture" - IBM's La Gaude Reseach Center and the ski town of Flaine, as well as his award-winning Broward County Main Library in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

In recent years, Bob and his friend and companion of 35 years, Sue Witter, were familiar and welcome guests at college reunions and New York alumni events of all sorts. What follows is a version of the remarks delivered by Deep Springs President David Neidorf at Bob's memorial service in New York.

It is an honor to be here on behalf of Deep Springs College, and to recognize and express our gratitude for Bob Gatje's dedication to the college—to his college—over the course of his lifetime.

Bob enrolled at Deep Springs in 1944, was soon selected by his peers to fill the seat reserved for a student on the board of trustees, and after graduation he continued to serve and guide the college with steady devotion. But for Deep Springs, Bob's service in other walks of life—on non-profit boards, professional associations, and to neighbors, family, and friends—is emphatically also service to the aims of the college. Accordingly, in 2011, Bob was awarded the Deep Springs medal, a rarely-given recognition of an alumnus whose life exemplifies the ideals of unselfish service and visionary leadership that the college seeks to support and advance.

But beyond such accolades, it's an honor for me, personally, to be here, since during our association I grew very fond of Bob, and I've felt his loss keenly. And for me, Bob exemplified many of the virtues of character Deep Springs aspires to develop: integrity, determination, and responsibility, to be sure, and a dedication to high standards and the willingness to push others towards them, famously (or infamously). But my sense of Bob includes more prosaic and textured qualities; a gift for friendship, an austere sense of grudging humor about the limitations of ourselves and our fellow humans, a talent for that teamwork that meant sometimes saying the hard thing, sometimes giving a hard fight, and sometimes losing, accepting defeat, and moving on in solidarity. And, most of all, a keen desert sense of the distant horizon, a wry sense of perspective and honesty that can temper, in the end, the adamancy of commitment.

When I visited to teach at Deep Springs during the Nineties, I quickly learned that the first class would be taken up by the students questioning, criticizing, and challenging the course syllabus. "Tell us why you're not a fool," the students seemed to be saying—a great way for us to get to know each other. I discovered that Deep Springs has long been breeding this attitude when I first met Bob, while speaking to an alumni group in New York not long after becoming president. Bob sat in the front row center; when I invited questions, Bob's hand moved calmly straight up. "Tell us about the new students," he said. When I began to say the latest class was a great group of young men, Bob sighed loudly and rolled his eyes. "Every Deep Springs president says that exact same thing," he complained. "How can we tell if it's true?"

I think I smiled happily, because it was a great question. And I hadn't prepared the answer, because, now that he mentioned it, I realized I didn't know the answer. So I admitted I couldn't say why he should believe me, but that I'd think about it, and until then I could only say that overall, I keep finding that I respect and trust the students of Deep Springs, and since I'm not easy to please, that's pretty unusual. He grunted in a way that meant he was letting me off the hook for now. And with an almost imperceptible smile that appeared only around his eyes, for the next ten years Bob asked me that exact same question at every alumni event he attended.

Bob left Brooklyn at sixteen and traveled six days by train and bus to the isolated desert valley of a college he couldn't really imagine, where he knew the challenge would be tough and his family far away. Here is how he described what must have been a very anxious arrival: "The student driver dropped us and our bags…and sped off. We walked into a long corridor with not a soul in sight. Then a door flew open and [a student] loped bare-footed toward us. With a handshake, he said "you must be the new guys," and then wheeled on his heel and returned to his room."

By the time Bob wrote his memories down, he treated this encounter with an arch humor, without saying how the ungiving bluntness of that arrival made him feel at the time. But we can tell, by comparing it to how another student (Greg Votaw, DS'45) recalled his own arrival, one year later: "Arriving in the valley, I was tired and I was scared. I felt like an imposter, about to be discovered. We pulled up at the dormitory and jumped down from the truck. And there was Bob Gatje, welcoming us with his infectious smile. Suddenly, all my fears disappeared."

Life is complicated, of course, not every day is sunny, and it's hard to sum things up, and harder to say goodbye. To close, I want to note the accomplishment of Bob's that I most admire; his rare and difficult fulfillment of a youthful and innocent aspiration, at once heartfelt and naïve. As a sixteen-year-old kid in Flatbush some 74 years ago, having never been "west of Scranton," faced with leaving home and crossing the continent to an unknown college, and with military service and probably the terrors of war in the offing after that, Bob wrote this in his Deep Springs application: "I have a rather friendly personality. I'm never happy unless I'm busy doing something, but strange as it may seem, I'm rather lazy when it comes to actual work. I live in a very friendly home with two very fine parents. I try not to be a "grind" in my studies, and I've succeeded rather well. I enjoy my school-fellows and have many good friends. I've led an extremely happy life up to now and am very thankful for my many blessings. I hope that I can prove worthy of them."

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