



Pasadena Branch Stories and Reflections

By Karl Pops CB12 TA16



Pasadena Branch members on a desert road trip, circa 1950-51. From left to right, clockwise: Don Adams, Harold Fishman, "Mike" C.H. Yarrow, Philip Green, Martin Washburn, Ronald Sukenick, Manfred Kory, Koya Azumi, Jordan Pecile.

One of the hottest debates at the recent Convention in June centered around the proposal to pursue a new Telluride Branch. Though the resolution failed by a slim margin, and the Association is not actively pursuing a new branch, the interest is unlikely to have disappeared. This may be the moment to take a step back, look at the past, and reflect on the story of the somewhat forgotten but very interesting Telluride Branch that existed for a short while in Los Angeles County, California.

Seventy years ago, at the 1946 Convention, the Pasadena Branch of Telluride Association was voted into existence. The first class enrolled in 1947 in Pasadena, and the last one graduated 10 miles southwest in Los Angeles in 1952. While the Branch operated for only five years, "some of Telluride's most illustrious alumni" came from this branch, says a 1992 Spring *Newsletter* article written by Rachel J. Dickinson. What was so special about that place, and who are some of the alumni?

I found four of them in the New York area, eager to share their stories of the time spent at Pasadena or L.A. during the experimental period of the branch. Robert Richter (PB47) is an award-winning film director, nominated for two Academy Awards for

Best Documentary Short, whose work deals with "the human dimensions of the vital issues of our time." Norman Rush (PB50) is a novelist whose first book *Whites* was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and first novel *Mating* won the National Book Award. Philip Green (PB50) is a political theorist and Professor Emeritus of Smith College whose academic work has focused on critiques of nuclear deterrence, inequality and American democracy. And Martin Washburn (PB50) is a painter and former critic for *The Village Voice* who, according to Green, "never compromised his artistic vision." I had a chance to sit down and chat with Richter and Washburn in their respective homes, and received written contributions from Rush and Green.

THEIR OWN PRIMARY BRANCH

One of the main factors that motivated the foundation of a new branch in the first place was that "Telluride Association needed more applicants than Deep Springs was capable of providing," Dickinson writes. The other factor was that a "secondary"—i.e. university-affiliated—branch "was less effective as a Nunnian educational institution" than a "primary" branch with an integrated program of study. The proposal was brought by

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the Telluride Association member and former Deep Springs student Clarence Henry "Mike" Yarrow – the son of traveling missionary parents, a scholar of political science, a peace activist, and later inspiration for Telluride's Adventurous Education Award. He was chosen as director of the new branch, which he founded on the grounds of the Pacific Oaks Friends' School in Pasadena. However, as the Convention was sparing in its allocation, the branch did not start out with its own academic program, making it effectively still "secondary." All Branch members were to enroll at the nearby Occidental College.

"After visiting Deep Springs, I led a rebellion," says Richter animatedly. Brought up in a poor Depression-era family, he graduated from Brooklyn Technical High School and was the first student to get accepted at the Pasadena Branch. Inspired, far from home and full of energy, he wanted more. "I said, we've seen how Deep Springs work. I thought and others thought that we'd be an urban version of Deep Springs." Instead of a small intense intellectual community, there was Occidental College with "enormous lecture classes with hundreds of students hearing a dull lecture from a teacher who'd given the same lecture for the

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Telluriders Reflect on #BlackLivesMatter

By Michael Becker, SP08 TA13

The Black Lives Matter movement has entered its third year with the release of a detailed policy platform, laying out six core planks and extensive proposals for addressing institutional racism. Three Telluride alumni take stock of this major US social movement in a roundtable retrospective.

Ashley Tulloch SS04 SP05 is an attorney from Fort Lauderdale, Florida. She currently focuses on civil law but has experience in the areas of criminal and probate law.



Malcolm Davis SS15 SP16 is a high school student from Berea, Kentucky. He is interested in pursuing an education in Africana Studies and Creative Writing, and currently spends a lot of his time taking classes at Berea College and writing poetry.

Candice Celestin SS04 is a public relations practitioner with



an interest in cultivating relationships with organizations and their local communities. Celestin is a recipient of the Princeton Prize in Race Relations and continues to lead dialogues on pressing issues in the black community. She graduated with a masters in Public Relations from Syracuse University in 2011.

How are you engaged with questions of racial justice? How have you been engaged with the Black Lives Matter movement in particular?

Tulloch: The state of the nation is such that you would have to actively disengage from the national discourse in order to avoid the issues surrounding racial injustice. I became engaged through conversation. Though conversations do not necessarily have to be verbal, mine are. They generally involve lengthy discussions with my darker-complexioned friends, as we tend to share common experiences. However, many of my close, non-black friends, including my boyfriend, immigrated to the U.S. and do not necessarily understand the history of African American relations in this country. They do not identify with the myriad of black experiences born out of slavery, oppression, and segregation. The challenge for me is to introduce them to the narrative and to encourage them to see me as part of it as opposed to an exception.

Davis: I am currently involved with these questions personally, as this subject is very close to my heart, and pertains to my life as well as to the lives of people like me. I have not yet had the opportunity to work on a national scale with the movement, but I definitely would like to in the future. I have been in what little protests have occurred in my hometown, as well as one in Ithaca.

Celestin: Racial justice is the reality of my life and experience as a black woman, both professionally and personally. When it comes to racial justice, my experience does not turn on or off from when I wake up, go to work, run to the mall or simply pump gas—racial justice or injustice is a part of my identity. I am always faced with the possibility of being profiled, mistreated and even dismissed.

The reality becomes even more apparent when I tune into the news and see my brothers and sisters being murdered shamelessly day after day...a new name, a new hashtag.

The #BlackLivesMatter movement is twenty-first century activism at its best. In the face of blindness to issues, I choose to be “woke.” I try to educate my mentees on its importance and serve as a sounding board for their frustration.

What about the current historical moment has created the conditions for a national movement?

Tulloch: Social media has definitely paved the way for the exposure of many social issues, including police brutality and racial privilege. It's one thing to hear about an instance of police brutality once a decade, i.e. Rodney King. It is entirely another to hear about it once every 6 months. I don't think black Americans become immune to these stories. Each one hurts more than the last. Many believe that accountability and justice are meted out by race. Social media has given us a forum to share the reality of being black in America.

Davis: I believe that the most influential historical factor in the progression and development of this movement has been the prominence of social media. The fact that we have activists on the ground in meetings, at crime scenes, and at protests reporting real time through Twitter is spectacular, and has increased tenfold these events' exposure. Twitter was the main place that I learned about the shooting of Michael Brown, and is the birthplace of #BLM.

Celestin: The #BlackLivesMatter movement is an international activist movement. It's reached beyond the borders of the United States because we as a people are everywhere. People recognize the pain and have chosen to stand in solidarity with the movement. I think it reached that point when Trayvon Martin was murdered. When America turned on their televisions and heard the story of an innocent child walking with skittles, they thought of their son, nephew, brother or even neighbor. The local news had reached national and even international news outlets.

Prior to my career in public relations, I was a journalist. At times I struggle with identifying the role the media plays in telling these stories. From the deceased child photos that just so happen to look like a mug shot, all the way to reporters capturing Sybrina Fulton's tears of grief; could these stories be told better? Would that change the outcome of police officers being put on paid leave?

If one thing's for certain, it's that this is not black people's problem. This is our problem, as the human race.

What do you see as the most important demand/call for reform made by the movement?

Tulloch: Recognition. I think that many blacks, myself included, would simply like those with racial privilege to acknowledge that privilege exists. Acknowledge that our society, by and large, privileges white skin.

Just compare the stories of Kalief Browder and Brock Turner. Browder, a black man, was 16 years old in 2010 when he was jailed at Rikers Island for three years after he was accused of stealing a backpack. Nearly two of those years were spent in solitary confinement, purportedly for his own protection. He could not afford bail, and he never went to trial. As a result

of his traumatic experiences in jail, he would later end his own life at the age of 22. Brock Turner, on the other hand, is a 21-year-old white man convicted of three sexual-related felonies. In 2016, he was sentenced to only six months in jail, of which he only had to serve three, because the judge was afraid of the negative impact prison would have on him.

There is no question that there's a problem. The larger problem is the disconnect between those who see it and those who refuse to. Scrolling through my Facebook newsfeed hours shortly after the Alton Sterling and Philando Castille shooting deaths, most of my black friends were expressing their outrage and anguish. Other non-black friends were posting pouty selfies and hashtagging "happy hour." As I said, the issue of racial injustice is so prevalent in the public discourse that you would have to actively disengage to not be part of the conversation. Especially on social media, where it takes little to lend a voice and most freely do on all other issues not concerning race, the refusal to do so often feels like a slap in the face.

Davis: I personally believe that the most crucial demand that needs to be answered is the cry for the police system to be demilitarized, and to begin harsh punishment of police officers who murder unarmed and innocent people, especially Black Americans. Many are blind to the fact that a huge portion of large police forces are just as heavily armed as parts of the U.S. military, and use things such as tear gas. The only way to protect Black people is to remove incentives such as paid leave for murderers, and removing tools of murder from the hands of police.

Celestin: By far the most important demand is for America to recognize the problem. To be an activist or supporter of the movement, you don't have to be black. Being pro-black does not mean you are anti-white. An African American being aware of their history and saying that their lives matter should not pose as a threat.

I urge people to speak up if you witness injustice. If you're silent, you're a part of the problem.

Whatever space you are in daily, whether it be a classroom, board meetings at a major corporation or even PTA meetings for your child—use your position to positively influence those around you.

What's the important point missing from the national conversation sparked by the movement?

Tulloch: The criminal justice system has never had a problem prosecuting the perpetrators of "black-on-black" crimes or crimes committed by blacks, in general. Thus, the lack of emphasis on it by the movement. By and large, blacks do not make excuses for "black crime." Further, most black Americans respect and recognize the need for good police officers. We want a society with police officers. The movement is not about blacks "versus" the police, whites, or American society. No, the goal is inclusion. The vision is to replace the "versus" with "and."

Davis: I think that many people, mainly white middle-lower class folks, believe that Black Lives Matter is a movement for Black people, against white people. They see the call for Black Lives to Matter as an attack on their own lives, as if they cannot survive or be safe while Black people are surviving or being valued. The point that we need to get across to these folks is that BLM is a movement to secure safety and security for Black people; it is not intrinsically related to attacking the rights or livelihood of white Americans at the moment.

Celestin: I would like to see more points made on the importance of mental health for the African American community. Can you imagine waking up and every few days reading or hearing about another black person being killed because of the color of their skin? Can you imagine

Ycas, Pursley, Sabine Leave Generous Bequests to Telluride

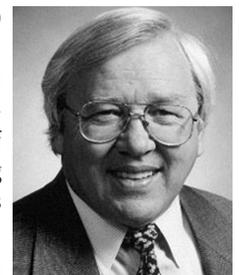
After years of service and support, three Telluride alumni have left very generous gifts to the Association after their passing.



MARTYNAS YCAS SP65 BB66 TA68, who passed away last April, has left a very generous bequest of \$86,788 to Telluride Association, to be used as the Association sees fit. In the space of a nearly 50-year Telluride career, Martynas touched nearly all aspects of Association life and left a deep impression as mentor and friend to generations of Telluriders (*Newsletter*, Fall 2015). Highlights of his career include a 1968

report from Berkeley Branch that is still widely consulted, and service as chair of the Board of Custodians, TA President, and TA Treasurer. In his non-Telluridean life, Martynas and his wife Anne lived for many years in the Washington, DC area, where he spent a career in the Social Security Administration, including service as Director of the Division of Program Studies.

KENNETH PURSLEY SP57 DS57 CB59 TA60 died tragically in October 2015 (*Newsletter*, Spring 2016). Ken left \$25,000 as a general gift to Telluride. Ken, a former Branch president, Custodian, and long-time supporter of Telluride's summer programs, was a leading attorney and civic leader in Idaho, as well as an avid outdoorsman.



Finally, at press time Telluride received word that a major gift from the estate of **GEORGE B. SABINE** DS29 CB30 TA31 was in the process of being settled. Sabine passed away in 2001. More news on this gift and the Sabine family history with Telluride will be published in the Spring issue.

For information on how you can include Telluride in your estate or major gift planning, please contact Alumni Development Officer Matt Trail SP81 CB82 TA84 at matthew.trail@tellurideassociation.org.

"On top of decades of involvement with Telluride Association, Martynas, Ken, and George have said farewell in the most Nunnian way possible, refusing to give TA's current trustees an easily followed formula for the application of their generous gifts, and instead forcing us to engage in growth through self-governance. We look forward to the challenge, and we honor all three for both their generosity and for their final reminder of what Telluride programs are all about."

TA President Ave Leslie, SP00 TA06

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Ivy League Graduate Student Unions: A Critical View

by Thomas Miller DS04 TA07

Thanks to a recent ruling by the National Labor Relations Board, graduate students at private universities like Columbia, Yale, and Cornell will likely soon have, in addition to much else, unions. Many arguments advanced against this are bad ones. It's silly to deny that grad students do work, and the long-standing existence of unions at top public universities, like the University of Michigan, has not wrecked individual educational relationships with professors. Nonetheless, the impulses behind the movement to form unions should give us pause.



Thomas Miller

"What we're fundamentally concerned about isn't really money," Columbia graduate student Paul Katz SP04 TA10 told the *New York Times* after the NLRB decision. "It's a question of power and democracy in a space in the academy that's increasingly corporatized, hierarchical." Although Katz's rhetoric is common among union supporters, it raises the question of why a labor union, understood as an economic interest group representing workers, is the best vehicle for accomplishing their aim. By casting its members as employees of a corporate university, does the movement not tacitly accept and retrench precisely the model of higher education that it claims to combat?

Unions supporters moreover do not, as far as I know, make concrete proposals to democratize the structure of the university. Mostly, they just want more financial support and better benefits. (They do, in other words, seem to be fundamentally concerned about money.) I suspect that union supporters at schools like Columbia publicly emphasize their concern for democratic values in part because a purely economic case would be hard for them to make. I do not mean to deny that in some areas collective bargaining could lead to improvement. But the fact is that graduate students at wealthy private universities, in contrast to those at some large public institutions, are already a relatively privileged group whose conditions of employment are far from exploitative.

Schools like Columbia or Yale have at any rate many worthy causes to which to devote their large but limited resources (undergraduate financial aid, for instance). Why do graduate student unions simply assume that the university's money would be best spent on them? A hypothesis: this attitude reflects the fact that most union members at private schools are themselves recent products of an elite college environment in which students can act like paying customers entitled to demand whatever they want. In this way too, the movement for Ivy League graduate student unions reveals itself as a symptom of (rather than a solution to) an unimaginative neoliberal logic where the only possible relationships to the university are economic ones.

But let's take seriously for a moment the ambition of bringing democracy to the academy. What would a truly democratic university look like? Is democracy really the best regime for a university at all? Graduate student unions do not pose these questions, but anyone familiar with the operations of Telluride (or Deep Springs) is uniquely well-positioned to see that their answers are non-obvious. Our Nunnian institutions

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Grad Students Win Right to Unionize at Private Universities

By Michael Becker, SP08 TA13

On Tuesday, August 23, 2016, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) recognized that student workers at private universities are entitled to collective bargaining rights under the National Labor Relations Act. The NLRB decision came in response to a unionization bid by student teaching and research assistants at Columbia University. In passing this decision, the Board reversed a 2004 decision regarding a graduate student union at Brown University and a much older precedent against collective bargaining rights for research assistants funded by external grants. Indeed, although graduate student workers are most prone to organize under the auspices of the new ruling, the decision is broad enough to also encompass undergraduates working at their colleges and universities.



Michael Becker

For Jay Sosa SP98 MB99 TA04, recent anthropology Ph.D., and his colleagues at the University of Chicago, the last ten years have felt like they were wandering through the desert. Graduate students at Chicago began to organize a union shortly before his arrival on campus, responding initially to inequity in funding—incoming students were offered a markedly improved package, but it was not applied retroactively. Despite the legal barrier to recognition, Sosa and his colleagues managed to leverage their collective power to pressure the administration to raise teaching and TA compensation, increase the lactation stations on campus for nursing parents, and address a number of other pressing grad student issues. "A contract doesn't make



Jacob Denz signing a union agreement at New York University in 2013.

you a union," Sosa insisted. He marveled at the union's staying power and at what he and his colleagues have been able to achieve without recognition. Nonetheless, it will be a relief when they file for their authorization election, he admitted.

At New York University, grad student workers already have their union, the only private university at which this is the case. As Jacob Denz SP05 TA11, German Studies grad student, explains, they were able to pressure the administration to grant them voluntary recognition after an extended campaign. The transformations have already been remarkable, including a marked increase in compensation and improved health and dental care. Still, he finds the ruling cheering: "this ruling gives a

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To the Editor of the TA Newsletter:

We are told that history is written by the victors, and E.P. Thompson famously wrote of the “enormous condescension of posterity.” I fear that some such procedure is taking place with respect to the Chicago Branch of Telluride Association. In all charity, I can only assume that the author of the history of Chicago Branch in the most recent newsletter attempted to contact its former members, but was unsuccessful. I had quite a bit of contact with the Chicago house. How well I remember Mitch Baker and Chuck Pazdernik bravely driving Becky Pinnick, Diane Thompson, and me to Syracuse through a blinding snowstorm so that we could catch the Lake Shore Limited for a spectacularly unsuccessful goodwill visit to Chicago Branch shortly before it imploded! Although I cannot speak for our Chicago brethren, I feel some obligation to add to the historical record on this matter.

I deplored then and still hate the plan of “government by consensus” after the manner of Rousseau rather than by parliamentary procedure – unadulterated and unabridged. Yet another factor besides ground rules and mysterious financial dealings contributed to the demise of Chicago Branch, namely the rivalry and complete culture clash between the two secondary branches. The Chicagoans, as they reminded us at every conceivable opportunity, sought the True, the Good, and the Beautiful through the Great Books. We Cornellians hotly pursued various utopias and ideologies, or sometimes an intellectual brilliance which professedly bore no relation to any objective reality.

We found their intellectual chest-thumping distasteful (and that is saying a great deal in the Telluridean context). They thought us shallow and trivial, and especially disliked our habit of employing what they insisted on calling “servants.” That nearly all TA members at that time were alumni of Cornell Branch contributed to the non-comprehension with which the Chicago experiment was greeted. Yet surely it was an experiment worth making. Their critique of our mores, though often lacking in tact, deserved a more thorough hearing than we gave it. And, truth be told, we did more to stoke the competition than our unwanted siblings.

If Chicago Branch remains a cautionary tale about the dangers of hubris, one which its members’ thorough appreciation of the Greek classics should have prevented, it nevertheless offered a bracing counterpoint to the status quo in Telluride. It saddens me that the potential for dialogue created by the existence of a radically different branch never got off the ground. L.L. Nunn was in his own way a utopian ideologue, so perhaps he would have preferred the Cornell approach; yet in hindsight I have to wonder whether the Chicagoans were really the only branchmembers who “did not appear to have a clue of what the purpose and plan of a branch of TA should be.”

Respectfully submitted,

Scott McDermott SP84 CB85 TA88

Matthew Desmond’s *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*

By Grace Pusey MB16

Matthew Desmond’s *Evicted* is an illuminating departure from previous etudes in American poverty because it spotlights the private rental market. In contrast to studies on public housing, where rent is fixed at 30 percent of a tenant’s monthly income, Desmond trains his lens on the millions of voucherless poor forced to spend up to 80 percent of their earnings on rent.

When a family’s income after rent works out to less than \$2 a day, skipping a month to buy groceries or pay the electric bill can be tempting. Landlords owe nothing to tenants behind on payments, however, and evictions are cheaper than maintenance. Perversely, units teeming with maggots, mice, roaches, and other property code violations often yield the highest returns. Landlords know they can always pocket the security deposit and rent the property “as-is” to the next desperate soul.

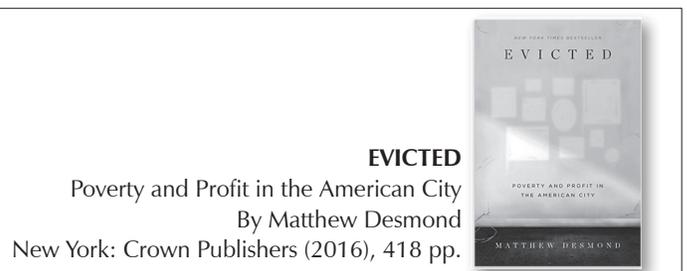
The most apt descriptor for this punishing breed of poverty, “exploitation,” is a word that, Desmond avers, “has been scrubbed out of the poverty debate.” *Evicted* does not shrink from casting into vivid relief the steep power differential between those who own the city and those who live in it.

Few landlords will rent to someone with an eviction record; fewer still will rent to an evictee with children. One of Desmond’s most stunning research findings is that having children almost triples a tenant’s odds of receiving an eviction judgement in court. Another is that poor Black women are nine times more likely to be evicted than poor white

ones. This moves the Harvard sociologist to one of the book’s core revelations: “If incarceration had come to define the lives of men from impoverished black neighborhoods,” Desmond writes, “eviction was shaping the lives of women. Poor black men were locked up. Poor black women were locked out.”

Desmond’s policy recommendations are straightforward. He estimates \$22.5 billion per year could sustain a universal housing voucher program that eradicates homelessness and gives every poor American a stable, dignified home. It is a paltry sum compared to the \$171 billion middle-class and affluent homeowners receive in tax benefits annually.

A compelling blend of storytelling and analysis, *Evicted* has earned its spot on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Desmond calls us to witness the human cost of American inequality, then demands we do something about it.



Pasadena Branch

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previous thirty years and read his frayed index card notes." The solution was clear: "We've got to get our own faculty!" Though Yarrow had envisioned a community of 25 young men, the entering class had only eight. They presented their demands to the 1948 Convention, Richter explains, and TA thought the branch was too small – "double in size, and you can do it." They did.

With the connections of Mike Yarrow, the collective will of the student body, and the backing of the Association, the Pasadena Branch managed to hire a number of admired faculty who proved essential to the success of the whole project. Besides Yarrow himself, who taught political theory, the interviewees fondly remember two Deep Springs faculty — Kurt and Alice Bergel — who came to Pasadena to teach European History and French, respectively. If the students wanted to take a class not offered at the Branch, they were encouraged to find a local college teacher, and Telluride would make the arrangements. For example, Richter recalls the Nobel Chemistry Award winner Linus Pauling visiting Pacific Oaks and inviting students to take his Cal Tech freshman chemistry class. Philip Green, who went to Pasadena three years after Richter, writes in his memoir *Taking Sides* that "for an introductory two years of genuinely liberal arts education there could not have been a better experience than the Pasadena/Los Angeles Branch of Telluride Association."

PACIFISM AND PUNISHMENT

The opposition to the dull lectures at Occidental College was only a mild prelude to what came next. "It all worked beautifully, and we were very happy," Richter describes the almost idyllic intellectual climate he had fought to create at Pasadena, until "America's first peacetime draft started." The Selective Service Act of 1948 required all men between the ages of 18 to 26 to register. Four of the fifteen students at Pasadena refused. "We were hauled away. Three immediately went to jail, got prison terms." Richter was the fourth. "I fought it in court, all the way up to the Supreme Court, and meanwhile continued my college education." He eventually lost and went to prison for a year, and was then pardoned by President Eisenhower.

Yarrow, himself a Quaker and a former Civilian Public Service camp director, argued that the four students had refused the draft on individual moral principle. "As long as I am retained as



Left front to back: Curtis Baker PB49, Manfred Kory PB49, Robert Ely PB49, Robert Wright PB49, "Mike" C.H. Yarrow, William Williams PB48, Right Front to back: Charles Lem PB48 CB50, Allan Lyons PB49, Harold Fishman PB49, CB52, Charles Christenson PB48, CB50, TA51

Director," he wrote to the 1949 Convention, "I will endeavor, with more or less success, to see that both registrants and non-registrants to our multifold and complex but very evil society, test their position thoroughly and seriously." Though Yarrow remained director, and Richter managed to keep studying at Pasadena while his three classmates were in jail, the Branch lost considerable support from the more conservative Association members and alumni.

The loss of support came with added pressure. "Those four, including me, taking that action," Richter explains, "sent a shockwave to the Telluride Association – too much Quakers, pacifistic influence, that was the idea. Staying at Pacific Oaks was a way of making kids take this kind of action." The Association ordered Yarrow to find another place for the Branch, not connected to Pacific Oaks. When asked if TA's assessment of the Quaker influence was accurate, Richter said "It was an influence I appreciated, no doubt."

AWAY FROM THE QUAKERS

On the question of Quaker influence, it is interesting to observe the different positions held by the Association, Mike Yarrow, and the various Branch members. While the Association

was suspicious from the start of the proximity to Pacific Oaks, and eventually demanded relocation, Yarrow insisted that the occurrences of draft refusal were rooted in individual, independently developed values. Richter, who sympathized with their pacifism, said of the Pacific Oaks community that "They were very open and tolerant. This was a very liberal Quaker group." Interestingly, the teachers of the nursery school that was a part of Pacific Oaks lived in another house on the property and joined the Branch members for meals. "So there was some social exchange," Richter says, "and a couple of the nursery school teachers were young enough to flirt with the boys and dated them a few times. And one of them married one of the students."

Attempting to understand the Association's suspicions of "undesirable sectarian influence," I was surprised to hear from Washburn that there were a number of practices that were "unfortunate and could be painful," as he puts it. "And given the intensity and closeness of the Branch, it had a big effect on you." He agreed to give me just one example. "Once a year you would... leave the room, go upstairs, and you would be in your bedroom... and then people would start talking about you, criticizing you... And it would get very loud

and it was very upsetting." Years later Washburn "found similar critiques of Quaker practices in Martin Duberman's account of Black Mountain, another experimental college." Richter does not recall this from his Pasadena years and believes it unrelated to Quakerism. Regardless of the origin, it is somewhat ironic how similar this sounds to a former evaluation mechanism at the Cornell Branch, informally known as "blurbing," that will be familiar to many alumni.

DIFFERENT PLACE, SAME THING

In 1951, the Branch was relocated to a house on S. Harvard Boulevard in the city of Los Angeles, Hollywood division – "a big, rambling ex-mansion" according to Norman Rush. Philip Green, who had spent his first year at the original location in Pasadena, said the new place "qualified more believably for the rubric, 'urban.'" He did not, however, recall "any feeling of any particular kind about the move." And the Quaker aspect, he said, did not change much "since Mike Yarrow stayed on as Director, and in L.A. we had Ed Sanders and Newt Garver, both Quakers, as professors."

Perhaps the clearest indication that things had not changed was that three years later, in October 1951, the situation repeated when Norman Rush sent "a letter to the draft board and the President announcing that I declined to register

for the draft on the grounds of conscience," as he writes in his email. "Conscientious Objectors in those days," Rush explains, "could be recognized only if the basis of their objection was religious. I was not religious." His friends Green and Washburn had already registered for the draft but were nonetheless "impressed by Norman's dedication to the principle of non-violence," writes Green. Rush's refusal letter to the authorities was a "very clear intention of forcing a confrontation rather than trying to avoid one," Green explains. Though the Association was certainly not impressed, Rush managed to stay a student until finally the FBI came. Karl Popper's *The Open Society and its Enemies* was being debated and "the analysis/argument was still underway when I was taken out of class to jail."

STUDENTS OF A DIFFERENT SLANT

Aside from the issues of draft-resistance and Quaker affinity, a factor that may have discouraged the Association from fully supporting the Pasadena/L.A. Branch may have been the unconventional nature of the students. Even Mike Yarrow, who oversaw admissions, was surprised by the types of students who came. He wrote in a 1952 report to Convention that "The program that was originally outlined was altered by the type of students who came. It was keyed to persons of a social and religious slant, persons interested in the welfare of others and in the unities of life. Instead

the students were predominantly theoretical or aesthetic in their approach. They were interested in tossing about ideas, or in expressing themselves in creative forms."

While the painter Washburn agrees with Yarrow's words, the novelist Rush does not think this characterization of the program's intellectual culture was accurate. "It seemed to me that there was plenty of social activist ferment, mixed in with lots of moral skepticism. Many of the students hoped to be writers or artists of some kind, but there was lots of hot social consciousness. A student named Don Rose became the country's leading expert on earthen dams, a subject he took up out of a passion for ecologically sound infrastructure. He was ahead of his time."

Though Richter agrees in general with Yarrow's description of the typical Pasadena student, he adds that they were "not only expressing ourselves in creative forms," illustrating his point with a story of when the civil rights leader Bayard Rustin "invited all students who wanted to join him in what was one of the first modern civil disobedience actions going on then." At a private, white-only swimming pool called Bimini Baths, the students held up the long line behind them to protest denying entry to black swimmers.

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Pasadena Branch Reunion, 1998. Left to Right, Standing: Vicki Neutra, Don Adams, Mike Yarrow Jr., Robert Richter, Erik Pell, Charles Christenson, Matthew Trail, Charles Lem, Harold Fishman. Left to Right, Seated: Tupper Turner, Allan Lyons, Margaret Yarrow, Kurt Bergel, Ann Hedger Pell.



Pasadena Branch

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DOING THINGS, NOT WRITING REPORTS

While Yarrow described the Pasadena Branch members as “tossing about ideas” and “expressing themselves in creative forms,” in some ways they were comparatively practical. In terms of everyday life in the Branch, elements like house meetings and committee work (so characteristic of today’s Telluride branches) earned little mention. Washburn explains that at Pasadena there were “committees that had to do some things,” such as recruit new students and “help people find jobs for the work period.” When he continued on to the Cornell Branch, he found that, in contrast, people “didn’t go out and do things on the campus.” Instead “there was a lot of making of reports,” he says, noting that “it felt like they were training themselves to become vice presidents of corporations.”

The Pasadena Branch members probably did not interpret the writings of L.L. Nunn, or ponder their own significance in the larger scheme of TA things, as the 1948 Pasadena Branch Committee’s largest criticism was that “the students’ knowledge of Telluride Association was markedly deficient.” Existential questions more broadly, however, were taken seriously: “the free will problem for some reason kept coming up,” Norman Rush recalls, and they “had forcibly to restrain a student whose last name was Ruopp from throwing himself out a second story window to prove that he could do something completely arbitrary and opposed to all his inclinations and his interest.”

WORK

Perhaps this practical tendency to “do things,” and not write reports, was a product of the work terms integral to the program. The year was divided into alternating periods of work and study. Instead of farm labor the students would go to various employers in the L.A. metro area. Though it seems that some jobs were partially interesting, none of the alumni consciously praised this part of the program. “I thought that was not the best use of our time, by the way, in the program,” Washburn says of the work terms. “Cause, please, how much time is there for kids to study? They should study.” Still, he found “building the inboard cells of Lockheed Constellations” interesting and “learned a lot.”

If not directly inspiring, the student jobs at least provided a change of environment. “I got a job at the L.A. *Mirror* as a copy runner,” Rush describes. “That job is what it sounds like. You take copy and literally run to another place in the building with it.” Philip Green, who also worked for Lockheed for one term, describes at length how he “straightened out their files, and gave them a rational filing system,” becoming a valued colleague and being invited to join the local union. Robert Richter at one point had a night job as a popsicle stick sticker. “Somebody has to put the sticks in popsicles.” In later work terms he shipped relief supplies to war-devastated Japan, was a nursery school assistant teacher, and learned bookkeeping and architectural lettering.

A TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE

As Telluride aims to offer transformative educational experiences to young adults, it seemed appropriate to ask what role the Pasadena Branch experience played in their respective lives. “It’s hard for me to define,” says Richter, “but I was determined to be a seeker of truth, as a journalist. And I’m sure what I was learning in political science there from Mike Yarrow helped me see the world in a way that I wanted to know more than what I was just reading in the daily newspaper or heard on the radio... I would say it sensitized me to care about people more



A. Lyons, Margaret Yarrow, K. Bergel, Ann Pell, 1998

than just ideas – I dedicated most of my work to look at the human side of issues and problems.”

For Norman Rush, the program provided inspiration for his early work: “L.A. Branch was a utopia of sorts. I’m fascinated by Utopias. (Actually, my first novel, unpublished and unpublishable, *Equals*, was a coming of age story set in a peculiar experimental school much like Telluride.)”

Though Martin Washburn always knew that he was going to be a painter, it seems that the Pasadena Branch helped provide the foundation he was seeking before full immersion in the fine arts. “I wanted some kind of intellectual grounding, because there were all these really complicated theories kind of dominating the art scene and I just had a sense something’s going on and I didn’t trust it.”

After seeing his classmates’ responses, Philip Green wrote that “the Branch provided me with a solid grounding in what I’ll call ‘productive alienation.’ Which apparently was my real self.”

WHAT MADE IT SPECIAL?

The question of what made the Pasadena Branch special comes in part from the detective-historian-like obsession with explanation, but also from the practical interest in defining the ingredients of a stimulating and transformative educational experience. “Impossible to say,” answers Rush. “Serendipitous mix of individuals of particularly intense creative and exploratory, and possibly competitive, natures? Excellent and atypical faculty with a high faculty/student ratio?”

Washburn credits the degree of independence given to students: “Yarrow, in certain ways, left us alone to live the way we wanted to live, behave the way we wanted to behave. Nobody did anything terrible, we were pretty civilized. And we were meeting all these people who would show up and talk to us and show us things.”

The Branch was remarkably independent in its ideas, practice and culture from the outset. Too independent, it turned out, to sustain support from Telluride. As Dickinson writes, the Pasadena Branch, like the later ones at Berkeley and Chicago, suffered from “no clear direction or commitment from the Association and, as a result of this, a lack of funds dedicated to the project.” Surely, it was not internal dissatisfaction that ended the Branch, as the Mike Yarrow Adventurous Education Award, founded by the alumni out of appreciation of their program director, may suggest. While the story of an “experimental” branch is all the more appealing for its short-lived nature, pulling the plug on a highly valued program full of creative energy sounds regrettable.

Seventy-Five Years Ago in the *Newsletter*

The Fall issue of the 1941 *Telluride Newsletter* came out in December, and reflect an America and Association on the eve of war. The cover features a report on the creation of a fund honoring the late George Lincoln Burr, and an essay titled “The Foundations of the Peace,” by Vincent Cochrane CB37 TA38, that grapples with the shape of the coming peace even as war for America loomed on the horizon (and raged in Europe.)

Indeed, the *Newsletter* is full of news of Telluriders departing for service, and an uncertain future. Among others, Charles Ennis CB40 TA41 left Cornell Law School to enlist in the Canadian Army. Christopher Morley Jr. CB34 TA36 sailed for the Near East to do ambulance work. Bruce Netschert CB36 TA38 surrendered his graduate fellowship at Columbia to volunteer with the National Defense Research Committee.

At the same time, branch life at Cornell remained remarkably active. For example, the House’s Public Affairs Committee organized a popular faculty roundtable on “government policies toward labor-management relations” (and hosted a union organizer for the United Shoe Workers), and also participated in launching a campus cooperative for the purchase of supplies. The branch’s touch football team was “unusually successful” in intramural competition, bolstered by “huskies from Deep Springs.”

Meanwhile, Deep Springs reported that students enjoyed the etymology classes and lectures on the modern novel that TA Chancellor Johnny



Cornell Branch, circa 1938

Johnson gave during his recent visit. The college’s Fall cattle drive had also been recently concluded; its cattle herd numbered 687 head.

Within a few short months, Cornell Branch would be closed for the war. By the Fall of 1942, a third of *Telluride*’s members were serving in the armed forces.

TELLURIDE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

This publication is produced twice annually as a collaborative project between TA members, associates and staff.

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Editor, Telluride Association,
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—or—

news@tellurideassociation.org

Editor: Michael Becker

Managing Editor: Matthew Trail

Assistant Editors: Karl Pops, Sofia Hu, Beatrice Jin

Administrative Director: Ellen Baer

Layout & Production: Valerie McMillen, Arnold Printing

Contributors: Rosamond S. King, Scott McDermott, Thomas Miller, Grace Pusey

A Critical View

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maintain their democratic and (nominally) egalitarian structures thanks to their tiny size, exclusive membership, disregard of specialized expertise, and high tolerance for (sometimes extreme) dysfunctionality. Imagining a university with these characteristics is difficult.

In my view, a university should not aspire to be a democracy at all, but rather a humane and thoughtful “aristocracy of the mind”—a community not catering to the whims of students, but governed by experts committed in the long term to the work of education and insulated, to some degree, from economic and political pressures. At present, admittedly, this model is mostly in shambles, with faculty members cowed by administrators, made complacent (rather than bold) by tenure, and trained to value their own research with monomaniacal fanaticism. If graduate student unions can convince faculty to reclaim a responsible primacy in the academic polity, then the NLRB ruling will have been for the best.



1960s

MARTIN PEARLMAN, SP62 CB63 TA67, writes “This has been a good year. My orchestra/chorus Boston Baroque and I finished our 43rd season with *The Magic Flute*, and we got our 4th Grammy nomination for my new version of Monteverdi’s opera *Il ritorno d’Ulisse*. I also finished composing a 3-act «Operoar” on *Finnegans Wake*. This June, I gave up my professorship at Boston University to have more time for conducting and composing. My wife Martha continues as director of design for the Harvard Business School. In case any old friends want still more: www.martinpearlman.com, www.bostonbaroque.org.

BISHOP ALEXANDER (GOLITZIN), BB67, was elected on March 30, 2016 Bishop of Dallas, the South and the Bulgarian Diocese in the Orthodox Church in America.

JUDITH SELIGSON, SP67, writes to announce that she has a solo New York exhibition of her paintings coming up at Galerie Moulrot (16 E. 79th St), November 17-January 9th. Judith’s website is judithseligson.com.

STEPHAN SESTANOVICH, SP67 CB68 TA69, had a *New York Times* op-ed piece on July 29, 2016, titled “What Trump Doesn’t Know About Allies.” In it, Sestanovich cites presidential candidate Donald Trump’s comments about re-evaluating American commitment to defend NATO allies as a “reminder of how easily presidents can blunder their way into big trouble.” Sestanovich is a professor at Columbia University and a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, and was the State Department’s ambassador at large for the former Soviet Union during the Bill Clinton administration.

1970s

At the Annual Meeting of the American Law Institute in Washington, D.C. in May, **CAROL LEE**, SP71, conducted a conversation on stage with retired Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens, for whom she clerked in 1982-83. At age 96, the Justice is fully engaged, alert, and intellectually active. The discussion was lively and wide-ranging. Justice Stevens said a few noteworthy things on Judge Garland’s nomination, the Court’s use of legislative history, and political gerrymandering that were reported in the *National Law Journal*.

IRENE KACANDES, SP75, recently published *Let’s Talk About Death* (Prometheus Books, 2015) and is currently serving as President of the German Studies Association. She still teaches at Dartmouth College.

1980s

SCOTT McDERMOTT, SP84 CB85 TA88, writes that he “was fired from his first academic job at Tusculum College in Tennessee (long story), but landed on his feet with a position as Assistant Professor of History at Darton State College in southwestern Georgia. Darton will soon consolidate with Albany State University in only the second merger between a historically black university and a non-HBCU.”

RACHAEL KEILIN, MD SP85, has been appointed Chief of Trauma at CHRISTUS Trinity Mother Frances Hospital in Tyler, TX.

DEREK JACKSON, SP88, wrote in July that he was now performing economic and public policy research for the McKinsey Global Institute, the think tank for the management consulting firm of McKinsey and Company.

President Barack Obama has approved the promotion of **SHEPARD SMITH**, DS88 CB90 TA91, from captain to rear admiral (lower half), a prerequisite for Smith to become director of NOAA’s Office of Coast Survey, after his selection by Department of Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker. Smith’s appointment to director was effective on August 26, 2016. Smith will oversee NOAA’s charts and hydrographic surveys, ushering in the next generation of navigational products and services for mariners who need integrated delivery of coastal intelligence data.

BRAXTON POPE, SP89 CB90 TA92, has recently produced two films. One is the Nicolas Cage, Elijah Wood, Sky Ferreira, Jerry Lewis thriller *The Trust*, which is a *New York Times* “critics pick.” The other is a Sundance festival selection and *New York Times* critics pick, *City of Gold*, a documentary on Pulitzer Prize winning *Los Angeles Times* food critic Jonathan Gold. He is also producing *The Deleted*—a digital series for fullscreen and direct tv written and directed by Brit Easton Ellis. Shooting was scheduled to commence in July.

1990s

STACEY ABRAMS, SP90, was identified as one of 14 “young Democrats to watch” in an op-ed piece by Frank Bruni for the *New York Times* Sunday Review June 25th, 2016. Abrams, 42, is the Democratic minority leader in the Georgia House of Representatives. She is also the first woman to lead either party in either chamber of Georgia’s legislature, and the first African American to lead either party in the House. Abrams was also a speaker at last summer Democratic National Convention.

Two of **HOLLY LADUE’S** SP98 CB01 TA05 first books that she commissioned for Prestel Publishing were recently featured in the *New York Times*: the photography book *Relationship* by transgender artists Zackary Drucker and Rhys Ernst, and *Eat In My Kitchen* was named a Best Fall Cookbook of 2016.

2000s

JENNY O’KELL, SP01 TA07, started a new permanent job in October in the Ontario Public Service. She is Issues Coordinator in an Assistant Deputy Minister’s Office in the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.

GOVIND PERSAD, SP01 TA13, has joined the faculty of John Hopkins University as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management in the School of Public Health, affiliated with the Berman Institute of Bioethics. His research focuses on applied ethics, political philosophy, and health law and policy. Persad received his Ph.D. in Philosophy in 2015 from Stanford University and his J.D. in 2013 from Stanford Law School.



Govind Persad with Amy Saltzman

Also, on September 10th, 2016, Govind and **AMY SALTZMAN**, SP02 CB03 TA05, were married in Mt. Ayr, Iowa. Fellow Telluriders Elisabeth Becker greeted and ushered guests, ShawnaKim Lowey-Ball delivered a lovely blessing on strength, Linda Louie delivered a blessing on friendship and was an all-around best friend to the bride, and Nathan Nagy gave a rousing toast. A strong contingent of Telluriders joined in the festivities, including Jess Falcone, Andrew Ng, John Wynne, Stephanie Kelly, Michael Barany, Calvin Selth, Jawuan Meeks, Alan Mishler, Josh Smith, and key matchmaker Hammad Ahmed. Highlights of the wedding weekend included a ceremony overlooking the fields, a spread of the best Indian food Iowa has to offer, wedding cake made by the bride, and a reception that ended with a bonfire.



Amy Saltzman with husband Govind Persad

DESIREE BARRON-CALLACI, SP05 CB06 TA07, married Brian Callaci July 31, 2016 in Crowley, Colorado. She writes: "Relevant details include that we scrambled through the flood and successfully managed a beautiful plan B, through the heroic actions of my parents, and partly with the assistance of my maid of honor **ALLISON LAFAVE** (SP05), and Bridesbro **JACOB DENZ** SP05 TA11. Numerous other Telluride alumni were on hand to celebrate with Desiree and Brian at a reception in Massachusetts in late August.



Barron-Callaci reception.



Chisara Ezie-Boncoeur and Dorian Boncoeur

CHISARA EZIE-BONCOEUR, SS03, was married to Dorian Boncoeur July 16th. Sisters **KELECHI** (SS02) and **CHINYERE** (SP01), and brother **CHIEMEKA** (SS09), were all in the wedding party. Fellow TASSers **THEO FOSTER** SS03 SP04 TA09 and **LAURA AUTUMN FLOYD** SS03 also attended.

Chisara and her husband have moved to Dallas, where she is an Associate at the litigation boutique Lynn Pinker Cox Hurst and he has started a Ph.D. program in International Management at the Jindal School of Management at UT Dallas. Dorian's research will look at organizational behavior, especially the interaction of leadership diversity in the modern workplace.



Nate May

Composer **NATE MAY**, MB07, and bass vocalist Andrew Robert Munn combined contemporary opera and a passion for environmental and economic justice in Appalachia in May's *Dust in the Bottomland*. The piece is described on the project's Facebook page as "a musical monodrama." The narrative grapples with issues of prescription drug addiction, mountaintop removal mining, and the changing fabric of rural Appalachian communities in a 45-minute chamber opera written for bass (Munn), piano and electronic soundscapes. May's collaborations also include *Kalahari Waits*, the debut album of indigenous poetry and music trio Khoi Khonnexion, produced during a year in South Africa funded by Telluride's Miller-Sidgwick Scholarship.

SINZIANA PALTINEANU, CB08 TA11, has moved to Berlin, where she is working as a librarian and academic services officer at Bard College Berlin.

ANDREW BIELAK, CB09 TA11, and Katie Taylor were married last summer near Truckee, California. **JAMES GOLDEN** CB10 and **MARTIN ROMO** CB11 were at the wedding. Andrew is working at MidPen Housing, a non-profit affordable housing developer in the Bay Area, and Katie is a first year resident in family medicine at University of California, San Francisco.



Andrew Bielak and his wife Katie

2010s

HU FU, CB10, is assistant professor in the Department of Computer Science at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver (with affiliation with the Department of Economics). Hu got the job in 2015, at the end of two years at Microsoft Research in Cambridge, MA, but chose to defer it for a year to spend time at UC Berkeley and Caltech (where he did another postdoctorate in Computing and Mathematical Sciences.)

UKU LEMBER, CB11 TA12, is a postdoctoral researcher at Uppsala University in Sweden.

LASHONDA BRENSON, MB12, has been named Director of Research for Project Vote. In her position, LaShonda works to develop and supervise new research projects relating to Project Vote's Government Agency Voter Registration Program. Prior to joining Project Vote's staff, Dr. Brenson earned her Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and a B.A. in Mathematics and Political Science from the University of Rochester.

CAROLINE NIESEN, SP15, a freshman at Washington University, stood in as Hillary Clinton so that media crews could test sound and lighting in preparation for the second presidential debate on October 9th.

I N MEMORIAM

TOM HEAD, SP73, 58, of Narragansett and formerly of New York City, died Wednesday, November 12th, 2014. Dr. Head received his Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate degrees from Harvard University, graduating Magna Cum Laude. He was a Professor of Ancient History at Hunter College in Manhattan for many years. He is survived by many cousins.

STEFAN SPERLING, DS92, died on August 10, 2016 after a brief but aggressive illness. He was 45. Stefan had only recently received his law degree from Stanford University in 2013. At the time of his death, he was an attorney with the San Francisco office of Baker & McKenzie, specializing in issues of data protection and security compliance.

Stefan received his B.A. from University of Chicago, an M.A. from Stanford, and ultimately his Ph.D. in medical anthropology at Princeton. He taught at Harvard (where he was a post-doctoral fellow in the STS Program at the Harvard Kennedy School), University of Humboldt in Berlin, and at Deep Springs College in 2009-2010.

—from Deep Springs College

KARL HINOJOSA, SP00, passed away August 1, 2016 in New York City. Hinojosa, 32, was co-founder and Director of Los Ojos, a gallery space in New York dedicated to exhibiting new and experimental work by emerging contemporary artists. Fellow TASP Hannah Nolan Spohn writes that he will be remembered for his radiant smile, welcoming nature, and ability to see beauty in unexpected places.



TASP 2000. Karl Hinojosa is back row, fourth from right. Photo courtesy Hannah Nolan-Spohn, SP00

CAROL KASKE, SPF02, passed away June 15th after a long illness. She was 83. She taught “The Literature of Chivalry” with Michael Twomey.

LESLIE BROWN, SPF06, passed away August 5th after a long battle with cancer. She was Professor of History at Williams College. Brown taught the Washington University-St. Louis seminar “The Ties That Bind: Exploring the Connections and Absorbing the Lessons of the American Civil Rights Movement and the South African Anti-Apartheid Struggle” with Robert Vinson.

ROBERT MITCHELL III, SS13, aged 19, of Orange, N.J., passed away on Aug. 5, 2016. Robert was a student at La Salle University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

As we approached press time for this edition of the Telluride Newsletter, we received the sad news of the passing, at age 83, of **GORDON DAVIDSON** CB51 TA53. An extended appreciation of this distinguished Telluride alumnus will appear in our next edition.

“Breathe. As in” by Rosamond S. King

Breathe. As in to take a breath.
Synonym for breath: respiration.

Can't. As in unable to.

I. As in first person singular.
Homonym for I: eye.

Everyone knows who the I is – who is the we?
How big are your eyes – whose suffocation are you able to see?

*Police and state violence against trans people is (also) spectacular.
As in a spectacle, often resulting in rape, other grievous injury,
or death.*

But the I can't see.

*Police and state violence against women, especially
poor women of color, is so normalized it is
typically invisible to the I.*

can't breathe = lack of respiration

respite ≠ respiration

aspiration: not a loosening of the chokehold/noose

but it's removal:

Body cameras will not change

the over-policing of communities of color.

*The re-training of one-on-one tactics is not a solution
to the militarization of police tools and tactics.*

Aspiration(?)(!):

Revitalization (from *vita*, Latin for *life*) of people of color communities, beginning with schools, job training, and the physical environment, providing an accessible route to legal, living wage jobs.

Dismantling of the economic, political, and legal structures that have supported underdevelopment of particular communities.

Work by white people, among white people, to destroy ideologies that result in the ability to see other human beings as beasts.

I/we/you should not act like the only right we have is the right to remain silent.

Breathe. As in:

Also available at Transition's website: <http://hutchinscenter.fas.harvard.edu/I-Cant-Breathe>

Rosamond S. King SP91 CB92 is a creative and critical writer, performer, and artist. Her poetry has appeared in more than two dozen journals and anthologies, including *Xcp: Cross-Cultural Poetics*, *The Caribbean Writer*, and *Kindergarde: Experimental Writing for Children*, as well as recent issues of *The North American Review* and *The Cortland Review*. Her manuscript *Rock|Salt|Stone* is forthcoming from Nightboat Books.

King has performed in Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and throughout North America. She is an Associate Professor at Brooklyn College and author of the award-winning scholarly book *Island Bodies: Transgressive Sexualities in the Caribbean Imagination*.



photo credit: Iryna Fedorovska

Right to Unionize

continued from page 4

sense that the bottom isn't just going to fall out of this," he notes.

University administrators have, by and large, expressed their opposition to the NLRB ruling. Many private universities filed amicus curiae briefs in support of Columbia and against union advocates, suggesting that grad students should not be able to collectively bargain because their work is a fundamental part of their education. In a recent letter to grad students, University of Chicago President Robert Zimmer stressed, "Unionization by its very nature will mean that a labor union, which may be unfamiliar with what is involved in developing outstanding scholars, will come between students and faculty to make crucial decisions on behalf of students." Yale University President Peter Salovey echoed Zimmer's concern, but also called for robust discussion, writing, "We should embrace the chance to debate this important issue, and we will conduct this campus discussion in a manner that is proper for a university — free from intimidation, restriction, and pressure by anyone to silence any viewpoint."

Paul Katz SP04 TA10, history grad student at Columbia, sees the public responses from elite universities as of a piece, echoing similar talking points and produced by corporate lawyers. He says, "We have clear facts, the other side has weasel words like "would," and "could" and "may," that should raise red flags." The evidence, Katz argues, based on the experience of grad student unions at public universities since 1968, clearly demonstrates that unionization poses no risk to advising relationships or academic freedom.

"I think that we're at an interesting moment where the labor movement has declined as a very, very strong national force in institutional politics compared to what it once was in the history of the United States," Alex Brown CB14, German studies grad student at Cornell, reflects. Universities may offer fertile ground to a movement in search of new energy. Nonetheless, Brown frequently finds himself tasked with explaining what a union is, and how it can help improve working conditions on campus. "That's part of a huge challenge right now, unteaching some of the misconceptions people have," he explains. Nonetheless, Brown and his colleagues have come a long way since 2014, when science grad students concerned about the frequency of lab safety accidents and humanities grad students concerned by summer pay disparities, came together to push for institutional change. They hope to file for a union authorization election by the end of the semester.

Kelly Goodman MB08 TA10, history grad student, and generations of her colleagues at Yale have lengthy experience with these arguments. "The biggest obstacle is Yale resisting a grad student union for 26 years," she says, taking stock of the longest continuous campaign. As befits the longevity of their effort, Yale grad students have built a dense teams of organizers in each department, holding weekly check-ins with their constituents, and full membership meetings each semester. Goodman explains that they've already taken advantage of their newly recognized rights, filing for authorization elections in 10 departments across the



Emma Slager leads Academic Workers for a Democratic Union caucus members in a march calling for the University of Washington to recognize Seattle's \$15 per hour minimum wage law on campus.

humanities and social and physical sciences. She hopes that once several grad student unions are established, administrations will come to accept the changing terrain.

Public universities have had grad student unions for decades, Emma Slager SP05 TA16, geography grad student at the University of Washington, notes. At UW, for example, they've been unionized since 2004. While the direct impact on her campus is limited, she cheers the way this strengthens the nationwide organizing landscape and the energy grad students can bring to labor struggles. She paints a more complicated picture of the road ahead, though. Her current contract is strong, she explains, but grad student engagement is down and her union's analysis of factors beyond class is limited and, in her view, insufficient. Nonetheless, she sees reason to be excited, "we have good contracts, we have the people with the skills to achieve good contracts. Now that we've achieved these goals of collective bargaining, we can do more to pool our resources for broader change."

STAY IN TOUCH

For more information about how to stay in touch with Telluride or to support the Association's work, contact:

Alumni Development Officer Matt Trail SP81 CB82 TA84
at matthew.trail@tellurideassociation.org.

You can also find Telluride at www.tellurideassociation.org or visit our social media sites on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Please use the back page of the Newsletter to tell us your news and update your contact information. Thank you.



Telluriders Ponder the 2016 Elections

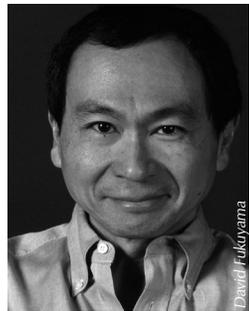
By Matthew Trail, SP81 CB82 TA84

By the time this Newsletter reaches your hands, the 2016 elections will be history. This summer, Telluride asked two prominent political observers for their perspectives on the election to date.

William Galston SP62 CB63 TA64 is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and specializes in issues of American public philosophy and political institutions. Dr. Galston was deputy assistant for domestic policy to U.S. President Bill Clinton (January 1993-May 1995). He has also served in the presidential campaigns of Al Gore (1988, 2000) and Walter Mondale.



William Galston



Francis Fukuyama

Francis Fukuyama SP69 CB70 TA71 is currently the Olivier Nomellini Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies (FSI) at Stanford University. Dr. Fukuyama has written widely on issues relating to questions concerning democratization and international political economy. His book, *The End of History and the Last Man*, was published by Free Press in 1992 and has appeared in over twenty foreign editions.

His most recent book is *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy*.

What has been the most unusual aspect of this year's elections?

Galston: The most noteworthy element of the 2015-2016 election cycle has been the eruption of populist sentiments in both major political parties. Substantial minorities in both have lost confidence in their elected and appointed officials and supported presidential candidates who most credibly and fervently embodied the revolt against them. In a multi-candidate field, Donald Trump was able to parlay his plurality into victory. If there had been another credible Democratic establishment candidate, Bernie Sanders might have done the same.

Fukuyama: I did not think that the American political system would produce a candidate that would challenge basic American democratic values as Trump has. In many respects Trump resembles any number of Latin American populists and like them he is quite happy to bend rules that do not suit his purposes. As a political scientist it would be very interesting to watch him be president, and to see how strong our check-and-balance institutions really were. He has suggested, for example, loosening libel laws in ways that would allow him as president to sue journalists he didn't like. Whether he could get away with this would be an interesting test of our political culture. As a citizen, of course, I find this horrifying.

What does this campaign say about the future of the Republican and Democratic parties (or the American political system in general)? Do you see an emerging space for a third party alternative?

Galston: The emergence of Trump as the Republican nominee represents the end of a nearly 50-year cycle in which white working-class voters have moved from the Democratic base to the Republican base. The threat Sanders posed to Hillary Clinton's nomination prospects forced her to the progressive left on issues ranging from trade and college finance to Social Security and financial regulation. Taken together, these developments have left the business community out in the cold. Its leaders favor free trade, immigration reform, and cuts in entitlement programs along with social liberalism and an internationalist foreign policy. Both political parties now reject a business-friendly economic agenda, and Trump spurns internationalism in foreign policy as well. That said, the basic structure of the American political system leaves little room for large and enduring third-party movements.

Fukuyama: The biggest problem lies in the Republican Party, which will never look the same again. It has been controlled by the business elites who are all pro-globalization and immigration, and has not served the interests of its working class base well. Now that class conflict is in the open; I don't see a way that they can go back to Reaganism anytime soon.

The Democrats have similarly lost touch with their working class trade unionist base. The party has become too associated with identity politics, assembling coalitions of blacks, women, Hispanics, gays, environmentalists, etc. The one identity group they have completely lost touch with is the white working class. But they cannot seriously do anything about inequality if they don't do something for this group.

"The mood of your electorate" is frequently cited in analyses of the current situation. What do you think the role of the politician should be in responding to this mood?

Galston: Politicians should do their best to appeal to our best instincts, not our worst. For example, rather than whipping up fear, they should lean against it, as FDR did in times much darker at home and abroad than our own.

Fukuyama: I think this is an area where institutions rather than individual political choices are important. The Founding Fathers distrusted direct democracy because they worried that the people would not always choose correctly. That's why they created provisions to the Constitution like the Electoral College and the indirect election of Senators. The superdelegates in the Democratic Party are contemporary manifestations of this same impulse, to retain more elite control over political selection. In recent decades we've moved toward greater direct political participation, in the form of popular primaries in both parties. The Tea Party is one direct outcome of this, since it is primarily activists with more extreme views than the regular electorate that turn out to vote.

What will be the biggest challenges/broad themes of governance over the next 4 years?

Galston: The biggest challenge to governance will continue to be the hyper-polarization of our political system. The second-biggest is that neither political party has developed credible policy responses to the negative consequences of globalization, technological change, and mass migration.

The United States is not alone. To one degree or another, every advanced industrial society is wrestling with these problems. Just about everywhere, established center-left and center-right parties are losing market share to populist insurgencies of the left and right. In parliamentary systems, this complicates the task of coalition-building. (After two inconclusive national elections that failed to produce parliamentary

majorities, Spain now faces the prospect of yet a third election.) In the United States, trust in the established parties has declined sharply, and intra-party insurgencies are unlikely to make things better unless the insurgents come up with policies that will work. In this respect, among others, the current electoral cycle has been less than encouraging.

Fukuyama: The biggest problem regardless of who wins will be continuing partisan gridlock. Indeed, given the poisonous and personal nature of the campaign so far, I imagine it will be even more extreme than it's been. Both parties in opposition will likely be following scorched-earth tactics to block the other. The only thing that could mitigate this would be internal party realignments that might create some new alliances.

Any other thoughts?

Fukuyama: Populist anti-immigrant movements have popped up in many other countries, notably Britain (where UKIP and the anti-EU wing of the Tory Party led the drive for Brexit), France, and many other northern European countries. It is important not to overgeneralize here: while there are similarities between the social composition of US and British voters (i.e., less educated and more rural), European welfare states have buffered working class populations better than in the US. For many there, the issue is not a perceived decline in incomes and social status so much as concern that immigrants are undermining their welfare states. In Southern Europe, by contrast (Greece and Spain), economic turmoil has led to the rise of new, rather traditional left-wing parties. Developed Asia (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan), by contrast, have become more nationalistic in certain ways but have not experienced the kind of grass-roots populism seen in the US and Europe.

Do your experiences in Telluride institutions bring anything to bear on your perspectives of this election?

Fukuyama: The most important legacy of my Telluride experience is the friends I made back then, whom I continue to see more than 40 years later. One of those is Bill Galston, with whom I had dinner just last night.

Galston: Ditto!



#BlackLivesMatter

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images and clips of fathers, brothers, and sons being shot to death, with the intention to deliberately kill? Now, imagine if you have less than two minutes to "pull yourself together" and walk into work.

This is painful. It's mentally and physically draining. This must be added to the conversation.

Tulloch: I 100% percent agree that we cannot afford to leave mental health out of the conversation. For many of us, composure and resilience are facades. Deep down, many are hurting, angry, traumatized, and confused.

How are you seeing the impact of the movement in your own life?

Davis: Where I live there is a very small presence of the movement. There have been a small amount of protests that I have participated in that were organized by local college students, but none of them have been very recent. One of the only things that came from these was the removal of the Confederate flag from all merchandise at a local festival. My goal is to improve and raise the profile of the movement in my area, while increasing the awareness of these issues as well.

Celestin: The #BlackLivesMatter movement is bringing reality to the forefront. It's throwing words like "tough" or "awkward" out the window when it comes to conversations on race. Personally, I'm tired of seeing the same story with the same outcome when the murderer is put on trial. The only difference is, the victim's name changes and it's a new family who suffers.

But I refuse to give up on the possibility of change. I rely on prayer and the story of my ancestors to look forward to brighter days for our unborn children. The movement has shown the world that African Americans are powerful beyond measure. I rejoice in seeing that through this movement.

Where would you direct readers interested in learning more?

Tulloch: Read. Read, read, read. The literature is there. I love news articles, so I am constantly reading articles from *USA Today*, the BBC, local newspapers, the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and *Huffington Post*. The comments sections on many online articles are a little disconcerting at times but quite telling of how far we still have to go.

Davis: I would ask people to look at the social media presences of activists, from Deray McKesson to Shaun King to Tim Wise. It's important that we focus on the present and the things that are happening in front of us, and in America today. Shaun King especially has good articles, and provides a good perspective on the current events.

Celestin: If you are interested in learning more about the movement check out the website:

<http://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>; Follow on FB: <https://m.facebook.com/BlackLivesMatter/> or on Twitter: @blkivesmatter.

Interviewers Needed

Summer program interviewing season is just a few short months away! We need several hours of your time to help us interview our growing, and increasingly diverse, pool of engaging, interesting applicants. Please be on the look out for more information in early February, or contact telluride@cornell.edu if you don't hear from us. Thank you!





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