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Open Letter to TA Membership and Staff on Anti-Black Racism

Editor’s Note: Amid a national uprising against racist police brutality, fifteen Black members of the Telluride Association submitted the following letter to the full membership in June.

Dear Members of the Board and Staff,

Many of you are only now coming to terms with the idea that anti-Black racism is alive and well. You now realize that the threat to Black lives is particular, immediate, and acute. We, however, have known this and lived this fact. We have been living through it for the entirety of our lives, despite their precarity. It is no shock that anti-Black racism exists beyond the streets, and also within police forces, corporations, among politicians, and throughout the academy. It is systemic within all facets of the American experience. It exists right here in this organization. We have all experienced anti-Blackness within the Association and through its programs—as its participants, factotum, adjuncts, directors, and staff.

We may not have always spoken up. We feared it was not the time. We choose to conserve our energy to focus on other pressing matters in our lives. Still, we have noted and acknowledged the moments when you have dismissed and ignored us. These are the same moments when you have claimed that our experiences were just misunderstandings, or nodded in sympathy, or failed to respond at all. We have asked for your help in caring for and supporting the students we once were. Each year, this is a more massive load than the few active members can carry. That ask has yet to be met.

It is imperative that you hear us now.

We need you to understand that although this organization has decided to more proactively address oppression as it appears in our programs, that does not exempt this membership from perpetrating the same harms. The reality is, whether you would “agree” that those same moments were anti-Black or intended to harm, they did, in fact, cause harm. In fact, it is precisely because we’ve agreed to be committed to this kind of work that we must succeed where we have repeatedly failed.

As a body, we must either follow-through with the real work needed to address these critical gaps or consciously acknowledge and decide that we do not yet have the capacity to provide safe and supportive learning environments for Black associates. There have been too many instances where the commitments we have made do not measure up to even the

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Telluriders Engage with COVID-19

By Matthew Trail

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected Telluride’s programs and operations in dramatic and unprecedented ways. It has, of course, affected each of us personally as well. Over the last six months and more, we’ve learned how Telluriders are engaging with COVID in a wide variety of ways: journalistically, medically, artistically, on the policy front, and more. Here are just a few examples:

Siddhartha Bajracharya SP03 CB05, is a nephrology fellow in Brooklyn, NY. On April 24th, the gaming blog *Kotaku* featured his article about what it’s been like in his hospital—and how all of this has compared to what he’s seen in a post-pandemic video game. <https://kotaku.com/the-doctor-the-disease-and-the-division-1843046712>

Beatrice Jin CB15 is a graphics reporter for Politico. Her article “How the Pandemic has Changed the Natural World, Illustrated,” was featured on May 19th. <https://www.politico.com/interactives/2020/coronavirus-pandemic-natural-world-illustrated/>

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lowest of standards. We are all volunteers and our capacities wax and wane over the year. However, that does not mean we should put forth incomplete or lackadaisical efforts. Especially, when these efforts can perpetuate harm beyond the Association and into the programs and people it serves. Here are a few examples:

Many of us agree that reading program applications is one of the most important and educational practices our organization offers—and yet, branch-members and directors actively refuse to do it.

Regularly, TADAS has to solicit help from non-members to conduct the alumni weekends. The committee is rarely afforded the budget to support this and students. Yet, the membership remains silent when called upon for assistance—indicating TADAS is not a priority for many.

Factotum interview candidates for TASS this year were met with filthy accommodations and low-level hostility.

Many of you have perpetuated microaggressions by repeatedly mistaking Black members for each other, calling us by each other's names as if we are interchangeable.

A biased preferment process and complicit Branch committees have contributed to low numbers of Black house members, despite a pool of TASS alums to recruit and retain. In the house, Black members are accused of using drugs without evidence, forced to live under hyper-surveillance, and consistently held to double standards. Members who speak up about their experiences encounter misogynoir, stereotyping, vitriol, or outright dismissal.

We all received literature on anti-racism without hosting a discussion on how to implement anti-racist practices throughout the Association.

These are examples of minimal internal support, inhospitable work environments, and performative acts done with little forethought and awareness. It certainly looks like the Association's way of fighting anti-Black racism translates to no accountability and no commitment to equity or inclusion which is, overwhelmingly, insulting.

Recently, the board voted to run the summer programs online despite knowledge of the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black Americans. Now we are at an even lower and ever-decreasing capacity as the pandemic continues amidst uprisings fighting anti-Black oppression around the country. Bearing that decision in mind, now, we all have an obligation to support the students, factotum, and faculty, a vast portion of whom are also Black, who have all agreed to continue in this endeavor. The burden and labor of providing support for TASS and TADAS cannot continue to fall disproportionately on Black TA members, passively or actively.

TA must do better by the Black students we serve, the Black staff we employ, and the Black members we collaborate with. You must challenge your privilege to espouse your opinion that conflicts with anti-racist practices. Dismantle the facade of intellectualism that alienates and erases our humanity. The deeply Telluridean ideals of self-governance, intellectual inquiry, and community building aren't theory for us.

Our lives are at stake.

Resist the impulse to explain or intellectualize away the realities of our experiences and how they inform our work. Step Up. At a bare minimum

work *with* us to do this labor rather than create additional obstacles. Do not resist change and hide behind legal frameworks or schools of thought that restrict the changes we suggest.

We need you to work harder at ensuring that this organization—from Board membership to summer programs—is truly a hospitable environment for us all to work in. Do more than solicit our opinions and dismiss them when they are inconvenient or uncomfortable. We need you to think through what you can do personally to better support your Black peers and our Black students. Every member has the obligation to do this work and act to make the organization better. Telluride is fortunate to have great resources and wealth. While our programs do great work, their existence alone is not enough.

As we prepare to convene online at TACO (Telluride Association Convention Online), we thought it necessary to send this open letter to members and staff to share how we are feeling. We urge each committee to make a commitment to address anti-Blackness and adopt anti-racist practices, acknowledge past failures, and incorporate action into their work plans going forward. Because we would like to ensure that changes are made, see below for a list of action items the body can implement as of this Convention.

ACTION ITEMS

The world is particularly sensitive to anti-Black racism now and in this moment, but we need all of you to remain vigilant. Even in moments when you do not imagine your actions as causing harm or engaging in anti-Black racism, ask some of these questions assuming that your action is racist. With that in mind, we have included structural and intrapersonal steps the Association can take going forward.

The signers proposed the following as steps that the Association and its members could take to reduce institutional anti-Blackness: (i) explicitly commit to doing and re-prioritizing anti-racist work in programming; (ii) amend rules and procedures to center critical Black studies exclusively in TASS; (iii) recruit, hire, and retain more Black staff members; (iv) develop a policy to address anti-Blackness from and faced by staff; (v) require board members to read summer programs and Branch applications; (vi) recruit and retain Black TA members; (vii) re-start the mentorship program among TA members; (viii) donate the money saved from not running in-person programs this year to organizations more directly committed to anti-racist work; (ix) create scholarships for program participants who do not matriculate at the Branches or Ivy League institutions; (x) evaluate whether the Branches are doing the most good for folks in the most need; (xi) self-fund any summer program conducted at historically black colleges or universities; (xii) re-consider how, to what degree, and to what end we pursue TASP expansion; (xiii) call-in alumni who disagree with this direction; (xiv) develop policy/contingency plans for waves of social-distancing/future pandemics; (xv) require all Convention reports to reflect on racial dynamics; (xvi) ensure that the committee selecting TASS participants includes Black voices; (xvii) narrow the Association's focus so it can concentrate the labor it does have and do the best job; (xviii) publish this letter in the 2020 proceedings for posterity.

Here are some things to keep in mind as we continue to collaborate:

The work of being anti-racist and rejecting anti-Blackness is never complete. You will falter, you will fail, but accept those failings when they are addressed and commit to do better. That is, you will never be above it.



Let's begin having a conversation about the difference between anti-racism and anti-Blackness.

Take stock of who is included, being affirmed or validated, in decision-making at critical moments. Are there perspectives you are missing? Are there perspectives you are actively ignoring or overlooking?

Addressing us by the wrong name; Black folk are not interchangeable, nor a monolith, so do not take any one of our perspectives as the perspective.

Be intentional and precise with the language you use; who do you really mean when you say "under-represented," "disadvantaged," "people of color"? Say Black, if you mean Black.

Turn the thought away from "This is legally risky" to "Let me consider how we can achieve this without legal issue." In moments of decision-making, ask yourself, How am I using my skills to remove barriers to entry? How might I be using those skills to silence or negate others suggestions?

How does this action actually serve who I intend it to? How does this action serve me? Am I taking any real risks with this action?

When you see others engaging in anti-Blackness and/or racism, call them in if you think that is more effective than calling them out. Message them, pull them to the side, and remind them of what they may have forgotten.

Editor's Note: The first day of Convention 2020 was spent discussing this letter's contents and ways to address the patterns of anti-Blackness it raised. At Convention, the Association adopted several resolutions in response. Among them are (i) funding twenty \$5,000 educational scholarships for alumni of the Telluride Sophomore Summer Seminar; (ii) extending the eligibility criteria of the Reese Miller Scholarship beyond branchmembers to include first-year college students who completed a Telluride Summer program and were offered preferment to a Branch but not admitted to the affiliated university; and (iii) amending the purpose of the Telluride Summer Program to incorporate the education of participants on issues of social difference, including those pertaining to identity categories such as race, gender, and class, and the historical and contemporary ways these shape access to power and privilege. Following Convention, discussions on combating anti-Blackness in the Association and society writ large continued throughout the summer and remain ongoing. In light of this powerful call to self-examination and to action, the Association has committed itself to reviewing and reorganizing its work throughout this academic year.

Branches Remain Closed

By Matthew Trail

At its June session of Convention, Telluride decided to keep its Cornell and Michigan Branches closed until such time that its Branch Crisis Management Committee determined that conditions were suitable for reopening and that Telluride had developed appropriate protocols to operate safely.



Recognizing that many branchmembers would experience significant financial hardship, Telluride authorized an unprecedented need-based financial assistance program. To date, over \$440,000 in grants has been awarded to 50 branchmembers to assist them with food and housing needs this academic year. A limited bagged meal service is running at Cornell Branch, whose more central location makes this more practical than at MBTA.

As you'll read elsewhere in this issue, the Branches have been forging a largely "virtual" community this fall, with housemeeting, public speaking, committee work, service projects, social events and more carried on remotely. In the meantime, Telluride has been working, with branchmember assistance, to develop protocols and plans to safely reopen as soon as conditions



warrant. As of this writing, and with COVID resurgent throughout the country, when and how reopening will happen remains unclear, although TA is working for a Fall 2021 date. Under discussion are options for a full reopening, a "hybrid Branch" with both nonresident members and a reduced in-person component, and continued "virtual" operations. Detailed plans and protocols, as well as financial projections, are currently being developed for all these scenarios.

The decision to close the Branches was not without controversy, both within the Association and especially on the part of many branchmembers, who complained of not being fully involved in these decisions. The fact that CBTA and MBTA have continued to be essentially the only residence houses not open on the Cornell and Ann Arbor campuses in the Fall has also been frustrating to many branchmembers. At the same time, as the pandemic's "second surge" is upon us, and colleges around the country are re-evaluating their status, it is hard to imagine reopening in the near future.

Whatever the next few months bring us, it's clear that Telluride and the Branches have much work to reimagine themselves and their relationship in these trying times—but the work is well underway.

Election and Post-Election News

ANDY KIM, DS00, won re-election to the House of Representatives, representing the third congressional district of New Jersey. **STACEY ABRAMS**, SP90, was much in the news during and after the November elections for her voting rights and voter turnout efforts in Georgia and beyond. **DIANE THOMPSON**, SP84 CB85 TA88 and **AFUA BRUCE**, SS98 SP99 TA06, have been named by the Biden-Harris transition team to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Department of Justice agency review teams, respectively. Congratulations, all!



Govind Persad SP01 TA13 is assistant professor at the Sturm College of Law at the University of Colorado. His research interests center on the legal and ethical dimensions of health insurance, health care financing (both domestic and international), and markets in health care services, as well as professional ethics and the regulation of medical research. He has written and presented broadly on COVID-19 in light of these issues, for example, in the *Journal of Law and the Biosciences* and the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

<https://academic.oup.com/jlb/article/7/1/1/lsaa044/5862544>
<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/nejmsb2005114>

Alice Sheppard CB91 TA92 is an award-winning dancer and choreographer. Early on in the COVID epidemic, Alice's dance company, Kinetic Light, created #QuarantineShorts, described below:

"We know that many of our disabled beloveds have been severely affected by the crisis, and we are troubled by the ways that disabled people's futures are so at risk. We also know that many of you already have deep knowledge of the practices we are calling "shelter-in-place" and social distancing; we know you already know about lack of access to public space and resources. The Kinetic Light team has always been dispersed by geography, and we are now. We connect via video, continue our work, and yearn to be together in person.

While in-person activities are cancelled, we've been able to create and play a little, remotely, with what we've been calling #QuarantineShorts. We've seen creations in kitchens, in bathrooms, and outside. You have sent responses from New York City, California, the U.K., Vancouver, France, and beyond. We love them all. This project is open to all artists and creatives. Watch #QuarantineShorts contributions via Facebook or Instagram. Respond to a prompt or create your own. Tag your creation #QuarantineShorts #CreateConnectKL #KineticLight and we will share!"

<https://alicesheppard.com/about/>
<https://twitter.com/wheelchairdancer/status/1241450499942961152?lang=en>

Rebecca Carter SP91 CB92 TA00, writes, "In addition to our day jobs, my husband and I have long been active helping people reintegrate following long prison sentences through an organization we founded called Bonafide (bonafidelife.org). When the pandemic hit, prisons and jails all over the country became hotspots. For example, over 75% the San Quentin population tested positive over the summer and 1% of the prison's population died. Well, that meant a lot of changes for us - we considered

stopping all contact with prisons, but instead were able to compromise with the prisons improving their pre-release testing, providing their own transport and quarantine for people who tested positive, enacting strict rules of separation including physical barriers in the cars and use of PPE. We also were able to pay our drivers for the first time which helped out some formerly incarcerated folks who had lost their jobs due to the pandemic. It's been nerve-wracking but no one has gotten sick and our organization has already helped more than 3 times as many people this year compared to last year."

Flojaune Cofer MB05, is a California epidemiologist and a senior director of policy at the statewide nonprofit Public Health Advocates. She was interviewed in the November 29th issue of the *Los Angeles Times* about the challenges of building trust in the Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities around the rolling out of a COVID vaccine. [https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-11-29/coronavirus-vaccine-covid-black-doctors-nurses-racism-healthcare?](https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-11-29/coronavirus-vaccine-covid-black-doctors-nurses-racism-healthcare?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main-vaccine%3Acoronavirus%3Ahealthcare%3Ahomepage%3A-1pm%3A)

We'd love to hear from other associates about your engagement, experience, and response to these challenging times!

Michigan Branch Turns 20

Twenty years ago this fall, Telluride formally opened its doors at 1735 Washtenaw Avenue to the first residents of its new Michigan Branch of Telluride Association (MBTA). The product of over half a decade of debate, financial preparation, and careful planning, MBTA has become a distinctive and valuable Telluride program and the second-longest operating Branch in Telluride history.

Over the years, there have been 268 branchmembers, and over 900 UM TASSers and TASPers. Forty MBTA alums have gone on to become TA members, including 16 current members.

We hope to feature much more of MBTA's history and its people in the Spring issue of the *Newsletter*. If you'd like to share your Michigan Branch experiences, recollections, (and pictures!), please write to news@tellurideassociation.org.



MBTA, 2002



MBTA at the height of summer



MBTA alums catch up via Zoom.

TELLURIDE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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Reflections on a Virtual Branch

By Jessica Allen MB18

After the University of Michigan's classes moved online in March and students were encouraged to leave campus, the density of MBTA was rapidly reduced, until just six residents remained. As of August, the House has been totally empty, save for the office staff and a few contractors. Now most housemembers are elsewhere in Ann Arbor or nearby Michigan cities, with the rest scattered across the US and overseas, as we embark on a year that will test the importance of the House to the social, educational, and financial lives of its members. But surely a program best described as an ongoing experiment which could spontaneously combust at any moment is unusually suited to being revamped at short notice?

Housemembers have experienced different levels of upheaval as a result of the Branch closure. Some have lost access to vital in-person research, career, and social opportunities; others have had plans and programmes cancelled, often having to change track at the last moment. Financial support was offered by TA both to help us vacate the Branch and to replace the food and rent that living in the House would have covered during the 2020/21 academic year. We are grateful for this support, although of course, such initiatives do not always fully meet the needs of all of their recipients. And let us not forget the possibly irreplaceable non-monetary benefits of living in the House, including the elimination of many daily chores from often hectic schedules and the informal, regular social contact, vital to staving off feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Pleasingly, though, branchmembers have navigated multiple time zones, scheduling conflicts, and Zoom fatigue, in order to come together to build a virtual programme which attempts to replicate various aspects of House life. Thanks to the efforts and initiative on the part of housemembers, we kept essential House activities running over the summer. Orientation Committee made impressive efforts to replicate some of the best parts of in-person Orientation: we were all able to order snacks of our choice to be delivered to our current residences and there were fun icebreakers and breakout rooms to break up the trainings and formalities. We held our Winter Preferment remotely, conducting over 20 interviews via various platforms to ensure that we had the usual House size for this academic year, even while it was still unclear whether the House would open in person or not in the Fall. The remainder of the Winter semester and the start of the long summer break was also punctuated by informal social Zoom calls during what had been our PubSpeak slot: different combinations of housemembers would sign in every Thursday evening to share how they were doing under various stay-at-home orders and restrictions.

Thanks to a BIRT passed during the 2018-2019 academic year mandating that all housemembers serve on a committee or undertake a deliverable over the summer, some of the most important aspects of House life including service, self-governance, and communal living were kept alive during the summer. Notably, one housemember opted to complete a summer deliverable focused on organising DEI events for our community. An excellent summary, with each month dedicated to a different topic and community, was posted to our online Slack channel at the beginning of the year; this forum and its virtual events have already received a high level of engagement from other housemembers.

The year ahead looks promising so far, although some housemembers might be concerned that motivation, Zoom fatigue, and other obligations

as a result of the pandemic will keep us from participating in the virtual House as much as we would like. This year represents a learning process like no other. Clearly, we cannot make a virtual programme that replicates House life exactly, therefore we are undergoing a constant process of becoming, in which we experiment with what works and what does not work in this new format.

So far, there have been some notable successes. We have had two efficient housemeetings that have been amongst the shortest in the recent history of MBTA. In the absence of a Fall Preferment, Recruitment Committee has turned its attention to important matters that have arisen repeatedly at meetings and Preferments over the past few years, but to which we have never managed to dedicate enough time. These include enhancing our interview questions, being more intentional with marketing, engaging more with summer programme alumni, and creating a rubric with a focus on DEI. To address our Service Pillar, Project Development Committee has put together a detailed Google Doc about viable in-person and virtual service projects and is in the process of collecting data pertaining to housemembers' recent and prospective service. Entertainment Committee has been brainstorming virtual events, from online karaoke to group craft projects.

The virtual format of this year's House might start to solve some long-running frustrations amongst housemembers, whilst exacerbating others. For example, a common grumble was that some housemembers would receive more praise and recognition than others for what they did, partly because their contributions were more visible. Additionally, a digital format has the potential to cause committees' labour to be more unevenly distributed. When you have to send someone a direct message or email and hope they reply in a timely fashion as opposed to being able to hold them accountable over dinner or after an event, it is even easier for a few individuals to end up shouldering most of the burden.

Our first housemeeting included a discussion about what should be mandatory this year. Whilst it appeared that a consensus had been reached – that monthly housemeetings, committee work, and attending PubSpeaks would be mandatory, whereas giving a PubSpeak would be optional and the format of Service was still to be discussed – time will tell whether we reach the same levels of engagement in formal and informal House events, or whether new housemembers feel as integrated as they might have done had we had an in-person House. Importantly, housemembers who find it harder to have an impact when sharing their views in the in-person housemeetings and life might find more windows of opportunity to have a say in this year's format, with Slack discussions and asynchronous voting taking a more prominent role.

In a digital format reliant on Slack, we have a running record of who has said what, when, and who has initiated events and discussions. However, we also lose most of the chances for spontaneous interactions; video calls are usually scheduled in advance and it is difficult and often draining to send an authentic, chatty message that replicates a casual exchange outside the third-floor bathroom. One housemember has already made the excellent suggestion of monthly one-to-one Zoom conversations to allow pairs of housemembers to get to know each other better, a promising start to bridging the gap between the virtual and our previous reality.

This enforced pause of in-person operations offers an unusual moment for reflection. Many of us are concerned that TA might use this as an opportunity to disband the Branch in the near future; in the absence of a set of students physically on their premises and with MBTA's alumni underrepresented

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Telluride Summer Programs Go Virtual in 2020

Responding to the COVID pandemic and the Spring shutdown of our host university campuses, Telluride debated and ultimately decided to continue our 2020 summer programs in an online format, the Telluride Association Online Seminar (TAOS). Developed as a virtual alternative to Telluride Association's traditional programs, TAOS offered a rich academic program as well as an opportunity for young people from around the world to explore the meaning of education and democracy with a diverse group of peers. This year's seminars were as follows:

TASS

- Cornell I: Black Protest from Slavery to #BlackLivesMatter
- Cornell II: Testify: The Politics of Imagination, Fantasy, and Magic
- UMich I: "Whose Streets?! Our Streets!" The Legacy of Youth Organizing in Black Liberation Movements
- UMich II: AfroAsian Cultures and Media

TASP

- Cornell I: Storytelling Across Genre: Writing for Personal and Political Change
- Cornell II: Humor, Comedy, and the Politics of Identity
- UMD: Education and Citizenship
- UMich: Feminist Philosophies of Space, Time, and Evolution: Untimely Politics

Telluride recognized that online courses often exacerbate inequities in access to education. This was especially salient this year given the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus epidemic on students of color and the emotional and social weight borne by Black students protesting police brutality and anti-Black violence. We also worried that the online format of TAOS would make it harder to foster conversations about race, gender identity, class, and other forms of difference and privilege that distinguish TASS and TASP from many other programs and that are essential to the creation of supportive and inclusive summer program communities. We adapted our logistical planning and training for faculty, factotums, and other staff to address these issues, and worked with students and staff to bring these issues to the fore throughout the summer. We also supplied free Chromebooks and hotspots to those with internet access issues, and continued to offer work subsidy replacements for students whose families were experiencing financial difficulties.

Like at TASS and TASP, the core of TAOS was the seminar, convened by two university faculty members from various colleges and universities. All seminars took place via Zoom; however, recognizing that people's availability and bandwidth may be different than they had expected,



Origami night at TASS

faculty and factotums were empowered to set their own seminar schedule (within a few general parameters). For example, some met for one hour a day, four days a week; others held two-hour sessions, but only two or three days a week. This flexibility proved to be both a strength (i.e., we were empathetic and accommodating) and a challenge (i.e., some students would have preferred more seminar time, and some seminars had more formal meeting time than others).

"I prefer my TASS experience simply because it was held in person, but I liked TASP, especially the learning aspect a lot more, because the workload was much more rigorous and the people around me wanted to push me to become a better writer." 2020 TASPPer, 2019 TASSer.

As in past years, students had reading and/or writing assignments to prepare for each seminar. However, the overall workload for the seminars was reduced to promote the well-being of all involved. Each seminar used a free version of Canvas, a common and easy-to-use learning management system, to set up their course platform. In addition to class time, faculty members were encouraged to host "office hours" for students to discuss ideas from seminar and go over writing assignments and other projects in detail.



In addition to seminar, faculty office hours, and independent study, TAOS students could sign up for office hours with their factotum(s) and participate in a number of group activities. Additionally, each student prepared a PubSpeak (short presentation) on a topic of their choice. Factotums also organized several group activities, including movie nights, community meetings, and guest speakers. However, in the context of the online format as well as the stresses of the pandemic, Telluride did deliberately decide to reduce somewhat the traditional self-governing aspects of the summer program, with less of an emphasis on committee work and housemeetings. TASPers who had experienced these aspects as last year's TASSers did remark on the difference:

I would want there to be more focus placed on committees. I was glad MemCom and EventCom were kept for the online format [...]. I felt that committees are the part of Telluride programs that offer students the best opportunity to practice self-governance and this year I felt that element was, to a degree, sacrificed. [I would advise the Telluride Association to] find more opportunities for students to get together and make decisions that directly affect the way the program operates each summer." 2020 TASPPer (Cornell I), 2019 TASSer.

Many students shared that their TAOS experience built their confidence (e.g., advocacy, writing, public speaking), helped them forge meaningful bonds with others, and inspired them to stay involved with TA.

"I gained a reviewed sense of identity and self-worth. [...] TAOS and all of the people who were a part of it this year truly kept me afloat amidst the discomfort and anger I had been living in since March." 2020 TASPPer, 2019 TASSer.

Common suggestions included an in-person reunion for 2020 program participants; longer and/or more frequent seminar sessions (student schedules permitting); and more unstructured time to hang out with their

peers (e.g., dedicated Zoom account or Slack channel).

"If I could change anything about TAOS, I would make it in person or just make it easier to connect with people online."
2020 TASP (Cornell II), 2019 TASSer.

Faculty also reported positive experiences. All survey respondents said the program exceeded their expectations and urged Telluride to opt for virtual alternatives next summer if we were not able to offer in person programs.



Ed: Telluride has subsequently decided to suspend the 2021 Summer Programs. For more information, please visit www.tellurideassociation.org.

Cornell TASPers Embrace TAOS

By Grayson Scott, DS15, TAOS 2020 Factotum

This year's Telluride Association Online Seminar (TAOS) could have been welcomed with the same words L.L. Nunn chose to welcome the new class of Deep Springs College one hundred years ago: "Superior ability and generous purpose would be expected of you." Our students and staff took up the project with an enthusiasm reflecting their belief in the transformational possibilities of education. This summer's program remained an opportunity for meaningful discussion, reflection, and growth.

Lacking the traditional forums for heady late-night conversation—dining halls, front porches, and ping-pong tables—the Cornell site settled for Slack. Familiar to many as a white-collar workspace, Slack is like a hermetically-sealed social media platform for sending messages and sharing media. We used it for program-wide announcements and logistical and administrative wrangling, but our students turned it to their own ends: They added channels for sharing memes (#basedmemesforTAOS teens), discussing music (#TAOS-music), fighting out the culture war (#recommendations), and outshining Westminster (#showmeyourpet). Our TAOSers sent over 13,000 messages through Slack by the end of July, proving that a virtual environment and thousands of miles couldn't keep them from creating a rich and vigorous community.

Our students couldn't wait to get committee work off the ground. EventsCom outmaneuvered the limitations of our virtual platform by hosting activities and game days, the most popular of which was an event where students dug deep into the psyches of their classmates



by posing oddball questions to each other live on Zoom. Some staffers reported benefits exceeding years of psychoanalysis without ever touching a couch. Memcom lost no time in memorializing their time together with ethically-produced, runway-ready merch. A new committee,

aply entitled EthicalConsumptionUnderCapitalismCom and staffed by volunteers, researched the environmental sustainability and labor practices of merchandise brands and advised MemCom on their purchases while maintaining a commitment to total aesthetic dominance.

Cornell II's seminar, entitled *Humor, Comedy, and the Politics of Identity*, met three times a week on Zoom. Our students resisted the uniquely soporific effects of two-hour classes with aplomb, steering conversations from Instagram meme accounts and Netflix specials to critical theory with an omnivorous passion. Their capstone project required each student to create a "comedic artifact" informed by their critical study of humor throughout the summer, and drew on texts like *But I'm a Cheerleader*, scholarly analyses of norm theory and histories of racialized stereotypes, and Lady Gaga's seminal music videos. The capstones were stand-up comedy performances, impact font memes, TikToks; all stranger and more wonderful specimens than previous generations could have imagined.

Factotums and PAs held regular study halls for students where we discussed writing techniques and critical analytic skills. These meetings were supplemented by poetry workshops from UC Davis' Director of Graduate Studies in Creative Writing and former Deep Springs faculty member Katie Peterson, spun off into a series of biweekly sessions for students to foster their talents in creative writing. This staffer suggests you keep an eye out for familiar names next time you're browsing the shelves of your local bookstore.

Our program cultivated student wellbeing with as much attention as their intellectual curiosity. We enjoyed resources like weekly wellness workshops with Dr. Ashley Zapata and a sex and sexuality presentation from Planned Parenthood's Ithaca office. We also welcomed representatives from the admissions and financial aid offices of partner institutions, where students learned the ropes for applying to and paying for college. They were especially grateful for insights into student life and resources for underrepresented groups on campus.

This year's TAOSers built a vibrant community despite the difficulty of life outside the program. Our students confronted work commitments, family obligations, and the illness and death of loved ones throughout the summer. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and visibility of anti-Black violence made the lack of formal mental health support for students acutely felt, and we should consider options for integrating these services into future online programs. Inequities in healthcare undermine TASP's egalitarian mission, and the commitment to student health that leads Telluride to offer mental health services to students at in-person seminars should be affirmed in our virtual programs.

We would encourage future programs to consider the possibilities of a virtual format alongside its difficulties. We could have brought our programs from Michigan to Maryland together with the click of a button. We neglected opportunities to build even more for social events into the program, especially in its early weeks. Our students missed the unstructured time they would have had during an in-person program, something that could have been a palliative after months of isolation.

Finally, we should recognize the achievement of the staff in making this summer's program possible. Site liaisons, administrators, tech support and staff met adversity with creativity and dedication. The success of TAOS is a testament to their diligent, thoughtful collaboration. Their "superior ability and generous purpose" proved the enduring relevance of the Telluride Association project.

also spends time supporting a non-profit he co-founded, **Precisionag.org**, which provides mobile-phone based agricultural advice to three million smallholder farmers in South Asia and Africa. He's always happy to hear from fellow CBTA'ers at scole@hbs.edu.

2000s

AMY SALTZMAN, SP02 CB03 TA05 and **GOVIND PERSAD**, SP01 TA13 welcomed a son, Duncan Amrit, on Sept. 1, 2020. Big brother Julian, 2, is settling into his new role and enjoys sharing his expertise in trucks, diggers, and construction vehicles with Duncan.



NOAH ROSENBLUM, DS03 TA05, has won the Association of American Law Schools' Section on Professional Responsibility Fred C. Zacharias Award for outstanding work in legal ethics. The award is for Noah's forthcoming article, "Power-Conscious Professional Responsibility: Justice Black's Unpublished Dissent and a Lost Alternative Approach to the Ethics of Cause Lawyering" in the *Georgetown Journal of Legal Ethics*.



Rosenblum in action on Convention floor.

LUCAS IBERICO-LOZADA, SP08, reports that "I'm starting classwork (remotely, alas!) in the Literature & Creative Writing doctoral program at the University of Southern California. I'll be doing research on the literature of travel, exile, and migration."

2010s

ERIC KIM, MB12, has joined the faculty at the University of British Columbia as an Assistant Professor of Psychology. He joins two other Telluride associates (that we know of) there: student **CHLOE FERREIRA**, SP19, and **HU FU**, CB10, who is an Assistant Professor in Computer Science.

SUMEET PATWARDHAN, SP12 TA18, has had an active fall serving as President of the Graduate Employee's Organization, Local 3550, at the University of Michigan, as graduate workers have gone on strike around pandemic and university policing issues. He is a doctoral student in the Department of Philosophy.

CELINA SCOTT-BUECHLER, SP13 CB14 TA16, **ELLIOT SETZER**, DS15 TA17, and **MICHAEL LEGER**, SP15 DS16 TA19, have hoisted Telluride's colors at Cambridge (UK) this fall. Elliot and Michael are enrolled in the same MPhil program, "Political Thought and Intellectual History." Celina is completing her masters at Cornell but online, and juggling work for the US Senate and for a professor at Cambridge.



Cambridge "Branch" residents Setzer, Scott-Buechler, and Leger

EMMA MORGAN-BENNETT, SP15, has been named a Marshall Scholar. She will pursue a masters in anthropology of media and intensive language at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Morgan-Bennett's application for the Marshall stemmed directly from her thesis: the written and visual

ethnography "The Black Maternal Health Crisis and Radical Doulas." Emma also won **Telluride's 2020 Mansfield-Wefald Prize** for this senior thesis and was featured in the Spring 2019 issue of the *Newsletter*.



Morgan-Bennett in 2018.

ANMOL KABRA, CB17, was named a 2020 Merrill Presidential Scholar, who are selected among the top 1% of their graduating class for their academic achievements, leadership and potential to contribute to society, and was invited to honor a professor and a high school teacher who have had landmark influences in their life. Anmol has decided to go to TTI at Chicago, which is a research institute affiliated with the UChicago Computer Science department, next year after deferring an year to do research at a midsize AI-startup that one of his professors works with.

GRACE JACKSON, SS18, has been active in her school district and community of Montgomery, Alabama pushing to address injustice, inequity and racial insensitivity in the institutional culture of her school district. She is the founder of We Matter Montgomery. <https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/local/community/2020/06/17/grace-jackson-black-lives-matter-montgomery-teen-leads-movement-change-community-hero/3155510001/>

Ph.D.s and PRIZES FOR RECENT MBTA GRAD STUDENTS:

SARA RIMER, MB14, was awarded the Proquest Distinguished Dissertation Award for her thesis in Environmental Engineering, "Controlling Hazardous Releases While Protecting Passengers in Civil Infrastructure Systems."

JOSEPH GAMBLE, MB15, was also awarded the Proquest Distinguished Dissertation Award for his dissertation *Sex Before Sex Ed: Sexual Practice, Pedagogy, and Affect in Early Modern England* in English and Women's Studies. He is currently an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Toledo, and working on revising that dissertation into a book entitled *Sex Lives of the Early Moderns*.

NADIYA KOSTYUK, MB15, earned her Ph.D. in Political Science and Public Policy in the summer of 2020 for her dissertation, "Public Cyberinstitutions: Signaling State Cybercapacity." She is an Assistant Professor at the School of Public Policy at Georgia Institute of Technology.

CHANNING MATHEWS, MB15, received her Ph.D. in a Combined Program in Education and Psychology in August 2020 for her thesis, "What Does it Mean to be Black and Aware? A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis of Black Racial Identity and Critical Consciousness." She is currently a postdoctoral fellow in the social development lab at NC State University.

THEMBEKILE SHATO, MB15, received her Ph.D. for "Examining the Utilization of and Preferences for Cervical Cancer Screening in Urban Zimbabwe: Multi-Stakeholder Perspectives." Thembekile is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Implementation Science Center for Cancer Control at Washington University in St. Louis (WU-ISC3).

NATASHA C. JOHNSON, MB16, defended her thesis "You Must Work Twice as Hard for Half as Much: Racial Socialization, Racial Identity, and Racism Awareness in Adolescence" in August. She is currently a National Science Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow working in the School of Public Health and Department of Psychiatry at the University of Michigan. During her postdoctoral fellowship, she will build and test a scale that measures youth cognitive understanding of racism.

PUNEET SINGH, MB16 TA17, successfully defended his dissertation at the University of Michigan in June. His thesis was titled "Aeromechanics of Coaxial Rotor Helicopters

using the Viscous Vortex Particle Method." He started working at Overair, Inc., a California based startup working on electric aircraft for urban air mobility, in July.

MARIANNA COULENTIANOS, MB17 TA20, defended her doctoral thesis in Design Science, "The Use of Prototypes to Engage Stakeholders in Low- and Middle-Income Countries During the Early Phases of Design," at Michigan this summer.



Couletianos in the field, studying women's mobility in rural villages of northern Karnataka, India.

Reflections on a Virtual Branch . . . continued from page 5

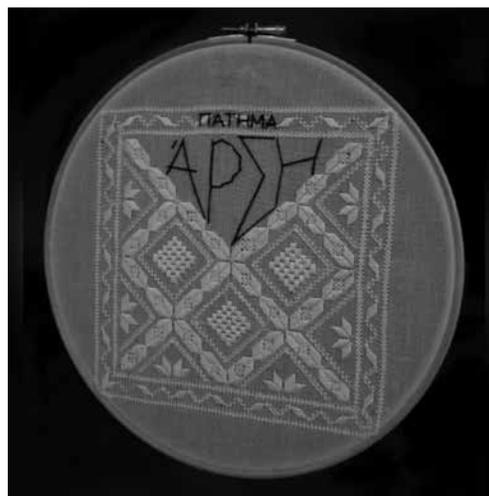
in TA compared to participants in other programmes, we are determined to advocate for our programme's future and to emphasize the value that it has added to multiple people's experiences at Michigan.

Additionally, we should take this opportunity to rebuild and restructure our collective relationship with TA. Whilst some MBTA members and some TA members have engaged in informal mentoring, conversations, and exchanges over the past few years, there remains a lack of collective understanding. It is wonderful that Michigan Branch Committee (MBC) members are willing to spend some of their free time supporting our Branch, a fact that is often not explicitly acknowledged by housemembers. However, years of different expectations as to the level of involvement of MBC in House decision-making and a perceived lack of action on the part of both sides over important issues have caused some housemembers to distrust the committee. Some recent events, such as being excluded from a large portion of the Convention proceedings this summer, have sent an unfortunate message to some branchmembers, even if they may be understandable due to the virtual format and the large number of time-sensitive issues on the agenda. Positive steps have been taken this academic year to start to repair this relationship, including the inclusion of an MBTA member on the Branch Management Committee and group check-ins with MBC members. However, to truly resolve these fractures, an open conversation between MBTA and MBC about expectations going forward will be necessary. Hopefully this dialogue can be integrated into our virtual House.

A New Pattern

By Marianna Couletianos MB17 TA20

In my last year at MBTA, I was gifted my first embroidery kit during our secret holiday gift exchange. I used the kit for the first time while I was socially isolating on a remote Greek island, where I learned the local traditional embroidery patterns as well as some Greek dances, both seeped in traditional gender roles. This piece is a juxtaposition of a traditional embroidery pattern, a skill practiced by women, and the name of the traditional dance step 'reserved' for men 'πάτημα άρσή' ('step, lift').



I N MEMORIAM

EDWIN CRONK, DS36 CB39 TA39, passed away at the age of 102 on September 1, 2020. As part of the rebuilding of Japan after World War 2, Ed became Chief of the Japanese Financial Trade from 1951-1956 and was subsequently recruited into the Foreign Service. His tours of duty in the Foreign Service included Korea, Germany, and Australia, with a final assignment as Ambassador to the Republic of Singapore from 1972-1975. After his retirement from government service, Ed accepted the position of Dean of Deep Springs College, after which he served as a trustee of the college and was chairman of the Board of Trustees for 3 years.



Ed Cronk (right) with Bob Gatje DS44 CB46 TA47 and Barber Conable CB46 TA47 at a 1984 alumni weekend at CBTA

GREG VOTAW, DS45 TA47, an economist who dedicated his life to world economic development, the alleviation of world hunger, and peace activism, died August 28, 2020. Greg worked for the World Bank from 1963 to 1978 as an economist, country director, regional director-Africa, and regional director-East Asia and Pacific. There he managed financing and planning for major infrastructure and industry development projects in India, Bangladesh, Korea, the Philippines, Japan, and Sub-Saharan Africa.



Greg Votaw in 1945

Greg was Telluride's first Telluride Lincoln Exchange Scholar in 1950-52. His brother Albert, DS42 TA48, died in the bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut in 1983.

New Online Directory Nears Launch

By Cory Myers, DS10 TA13

The Information Technology Advisory Committee is finishing construction of a new associates' directory to enable TA's alumx and associates to connect with others who share their occupations and interests—and, in the post-pandemic future, who may even live nearby! In the first quarter of 2021, invitations will go out, on a rolling basis by decade of TA affiliation, to all associates for whom we have an email address on file. An announcement will also be published to our Web site (www.tellurideassociation.org).

Participation in the directory will be opt-in; only your name, TA affiliation, and approximate geographic region (according to our current records) will be displayed by default. Once you've registered, you'll be able to update your contact information and choose to make more information available if you'd like.

JONATHAN BLACK, CB57, passed away on December 5th, 2020. Jonathan served as a professor of Orthopedic Research from 1971-88 at the University of Pennsylvania, and as a professor of Biomaterials from 1988-93 at Clemson University. He was a self-employed consultant in Biomaterials Science and Engineering from 1993-2019, and an adjunct professor of Biomedical Engineering for Cornell University from 2011-2015. Jonathan's survivors include daughter **Christina Zable**, CB83 TA84.

JINGYUAN ZHANG, CB83 C894, passed away from cancer on September 23, 2020. Jingyuan ("Jing" to her housemates) was not only the first graduate student from the People's Republic of China to live at the Cornell Branch, she was one of the first handful of graduate students from the PRC to come to the United States. Jing received her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Cornell and held a tenured position in the Chinese Department and Institute of Comparative Literature at Peking University for 4 years, and later taught at Cornell and UC Berkeley before coming to Georgetown University, where she was Associate Professor. Her main research interests were in modern Chinese literature and culture, particularly in the relationship between psychoanalytic theories and Chinese culture. She was also an accomplished painter, and her art works have been featured in public exhibitions both in the U.S. and in China. She is survived by her husband **Bill Haines**, SP75 CB76 TA81.



Jing in the CBTA kitchen

Social Media Sites

Web: www.tellurideassociation.org

Facebook: Telluride Association

Twitter: @TellurideAssoc

Instagram: tellurideassoc

LinkedIn: Telluride Association (and Telluride Association group)



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