

Spring 2006

UNLV Magazine

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Grad Shows Off Killer Chops | Shaking Up Misconceptions | Feeling Feverish at the T&M

Spring 2006

UNLV

Magazine

wild at heart

UNLV Program a Pioneer in
Cooperative Conservation

Taking Aim at Trash

Experts Weigh in on
Boomtown Issues

Peg Rees of the
UNLV Public Lands Institute



This moment of jubilation brought to you by Annette T., class of '05.

When you donate, volunteer, or mentor a student, you create opportunities for the future. Your involvement leads to their discovery.

Learn more about Invent the Future: The 50th Anniversary Campaign at campaign.unlv.edu.



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Discovery and Exploration of Our Natural Wonders

When I speak with community groups, I often talk about the unique role UNLV — as a university with a city in its name — plays in the Las Vegas Valley. We are positioned as a metropolitan institution to both reflect and serve our community — not only by providing a bright and talented workforce, but also by dedicating resources to address issues unique to our region. We are a community teeming with one-of-a-kind human-made assets such as the Nevada Test Site, Nellis Air Force Base, and of course the world's foremost hospitality laboratory that is the Las Vegas Strip. As you are aware, those assets have inspired opportunities at UNLV for innovative research in areas such as nuclear transmutation and public health, as well as in academic program offerings like entertainment engineering, which examines the blend of science and art at work in today's high-tech attractions and performances.

Our amazing range of natural resources in the Southwest also provides tremendous learning opportunities — in biological and geological studies as well as in the exploration of alternative energy technologies that harness sun, wind, and water. It's no wonder that UNLV is now well positioned as a leader in the field of arid lands research.

Southern Nevada's more than 7 million acres of surrounding public lands provide an unparalleled backdrop — not only for these activities, but also for environmental stewardship, conservation, historic preservation, and recreation. Through the Public Lands Institute and the Southern Nevada Agency Partnership, UNLV is taking a central role in protecting our indigenous resources and in helping our community to discover, explore, and appreciate the natural wonders that surround us.

Having lived in very different environments in New York, California, and Ohio, even now in my 11th year at UNLV, I continue to be struck by the diversity and beauty of the Nevada landscape — from Lake Mead to Red Rock Canyon to Mount Charleston and beyond — as well as its wealth of historical and cultural information for our region. Together with our partner agencies, we are working to ensure that these amazing assets of our community continue to thrive. By creating educational and recreational opportunities for all ages, organizing volunteer programs, and continuing to study our desert ecology, we can instill a sense of ownership and pride for future generations.

We are extremely appreciative of the opportunity to serve as a coordinating hub for these activities and much more as provided by the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act and look forward to expanding the efforts of our young Public Lands Institute well into the future. I hope that you will read about our activities with interest in this issue of *UNLV Magazine*, but will also take them as personal inspiration to get involved in the study, preservation, and — most of all — enjoyment of our wonderful Nevada public lands.

Carol C. Harter



Geri Kodey

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UNLV's Public Lands Institute is cultivating tomorrow's keepers of the land, Page 14

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Photos by Aaron Mayes



UNLV's Center for Energy Research helped design and build a Zero Energy Home in southwest Las Vegas. Engineering students and faculty installed energy monitoring equipment on the home and on an identical, traditionally built home next door so they can evaluate the energy performance of both. **At left**, Bob Boehm, engineering professor and center director (on the right), discusses the project's construction with a visitor.

Energy Researchers Aim for Zero Results

By Joe Cockrell

A suburban Las Vegas housing development is now a real-life laboratory for innovative research in renewable energy and conservation. The UNLV Center for Energy Research has teamed up with a consortium of partners to design and construct a Zero Energy Home in southwest Las Vegas.

A Zero Energy Home, a designation from the U.S. Department of Energy, combines state-of-the-art, energy-efficient construction and appliances with commercially available renewable energy systems such as solar water heating and electricity. The home's renewable energy systems can produce more electricity than is used at certain times — on a mild but sunny day, for example — and the excess energy is fed back into the utility grid. Because the home may produce as much electricity as it consumes, the net result is zero electricity consumption.

What's distinctive about this project is that two nearly identical, 1,610-square-foot

The Zero Energy Home is open to the public and is located in Pinnacle Homes' development, The Vinings near Windmill Avenue and Tenaya Way.

houses have been built side-by-side; one the Zero Energy model and the other built using conventional construction practices. Both homes are equipped with monitoring instruments discreetly imbedded during construction. Over an 18-month period, UNLV engineering students and faculty will monitor the energy performance of the two homes.

"This innovative and unique research project is a significant milestone in the effort to reduce residential energy consumption and make Zero Energy homes the standard in America," says Bob Boehm, director of the UNLV Center for Energy Research and distinguished professor in the College of Engineering.

The project is a partnership between the

Howard R. Hughes College of Engineering, Nevada Southwest Energy Partnership, Pinnacle Homes, and Nevada Power. ConSol and the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) provided technical and design support.

The home's energy efficiency features installed in the Zero Energy Home are: specially manufactured "T-mass" walls, solar water heating, a highly efficient water-cooled air-conditioning condenser, and energy efficient vinyl windows. The house has a roof-integrated photovoltaic (PV) electric system which can generate as much or more electricity than the house needs from solar power. The excess electricity will be fed back to Nevada Power's grid, offsetting the home's energy use (net zero energy).

"This home has been built to be super energy efficient using readily available technologies and products, and the combination will perform fabulously" says Rob Hammon of ConSol, which provided energy-efficiency design support to the project.

BY THE NUMBERS

Enrollment Climbs Again

28,095

the total number of students enrolled in undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs at UNLV for the fall 2005 semester. Enrollment grew by more than 6,000 students, or 27.5 percent, since 2000.

8.3

percent increase in graduate students. Enrollment in UNLV's 117 graduate and professional degree programs has increased to 5,232. In the past five years, UNLV conferred 191 doctoral degrees in 22 disciplines and 580 juris doctorate degrees. This May, the UNLV School of Dental Medicine will graduate its inaugural class.



Aaron Mayes

6,402

number of Millennium Scholars enrolled at UNLV, comprising 29 percent of the student body. The scholarship program is funded by state tobacco settlement money and provides up to \$2,500 a year for four years to Nevada high school graduates with a 3.0 grade-point average or better.

64

number of foreign countries that UNLV students came from. At 374, South Korea sent the most students. In addition, students came from every county in Nevada and every state in the U.S.

Source: 2005 UNLV Fact Book (initial reports), office of institutional analysis and planning website

Tidbit: The UNLV Division of Educational Outreach is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. Each year, the division offers more than 1,200 courses to 50,000 people. Some come to further their careers through programs for paralegals, website developers, computer specialists, and other professionals. Others want to explore interests outside of work. Travel programs this semester include guided discovery trips to national parks and the Utah Shakespearean Festival.

Visit edoutreach.unlv.edu to learn more.

Shaking Up Misconceptions

Researchers Launch Educational Campaign on Earthquake Hazards

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, disaster preparedness issues jumped to the forefront of the nation's consciousness. Although Nevada is relatively safe from the devastating effects of a hurricane, the Silver State ranks high on the list of another type of natural disaster: earthquakes.

"Look around our valley — our big mountains got here somehow, and that had to happen via earthquakes," said geoscience professor Catherine Snelson. "The geography of the region shows us that this area has certainly had its share of seismic activity."

Nevada ranks third in large earthquake activity behind only Alaska and California, and fifth in potential financial loss due to damage sustained during seismic events.

With that in mind, Snelson, along with Wanda Taylor from the geosciences department and Barbara Luke and Ronald Sack from civil and environmental engineering, received a grant from the UNLV Research Foundation last August to study seismic activity and its effects in Southern Nevada.

The grant includes funds for workshops and safety expos, public service announcements, utility bill inserts, and a website.

"We started with middle school and high school science classes, using scientific models and a shake table to demonstrate the devastating effect an earthquake would have on our valley," said Gaye Cote, outreach director for the project. "We had

tremendous success early, and now receive more calls than we solicit to speak to groups in the community."

To Snelson and the other researchers, having an educated public is important to Nevada's future development. "We've been building the infrastructure for providing information for the community at UNLV," said Snelson. "The likelihood that we're

going to have a massive earthquake in Nevada is not very high. But we certainly have the potential, and that's what we need to be prepared for."

One of the challenges encountered during the outreach thus far has been that so few people realize the potential for earthquakes in Nevada. "People move here from California and other areas accustomed to the threat of natural disasters and think there's nothing to worry about in Nevada," said Cote. "If we can get the schoolchildren to talk to their parents, maybe the parents will talk to their friends and coworkers and we'll have a solid foundation of awareness on which to build."

"With Hurricane Katrina, we learned a lot about disaster preparedness, especially what can happen when we're not prepared," said Snelson. "One way we can learn from this horrible disaster is by riding the wave of awareness and getting people to react positively. Even if they just make a disaster kit once, it's a start."

— Tony Allen

More Info: Visit the project's website, earthquakes.unlv.edu for information on outreach events, preparedness tips, and facts about seismic activity in Southern Nevada.

REBEL RESOURCE

The Wesley E. Niles Herbarium

Wondering if that rogue plant shooting up in your backyard is some sort of rare native species worthy of protecting? The folks at UNLV's Wesley E. Niles Herbarium can help you find out.

What's There: More than 65,000 plant specimens that have been dried, pressed, and carefully catalogued. The herbarium, one of 105 in the United States deemed to be a National Resource Collection by the American Society of Plant Taxonomists, is the only one within the Mojave Desert. The specimens come from researchers who painstakingly note the plant's characteristics and location from which it was gathered. "The specimen is only as valuable as the collection data that comes with it. Otherwise it's just a pretty plant mounted on paper," Collections Manager Kathryn Birgy says.

Its Origins: Biological sciences professor Wesley E. Niles, now semiretired, founded the herbarium when he came to UNLV in 1970. "For a relatively young herbarium,

we've done quite well at amassing a mid-sized collection," Niles says. "Early on we decided to create a computer database; it's very, very rare for an herbarium to have its entire collection on computer." He hopes to soon have the database available online.

Outreach: The herbarium's primary mission is to assist researchers, but its staff also fields questions from the general public on the identity of a plant. Many callers want to know if the plant is an invasive or poisonous species. Staff members also frequently make presentations to local hobbyists and schoolchildren.

One of Niles' Favorites: Carefully glued to a sheet of acid-free paper is *Eriogonum corymbosum* var. *nilesii*, a plant from the



Gerri Koday

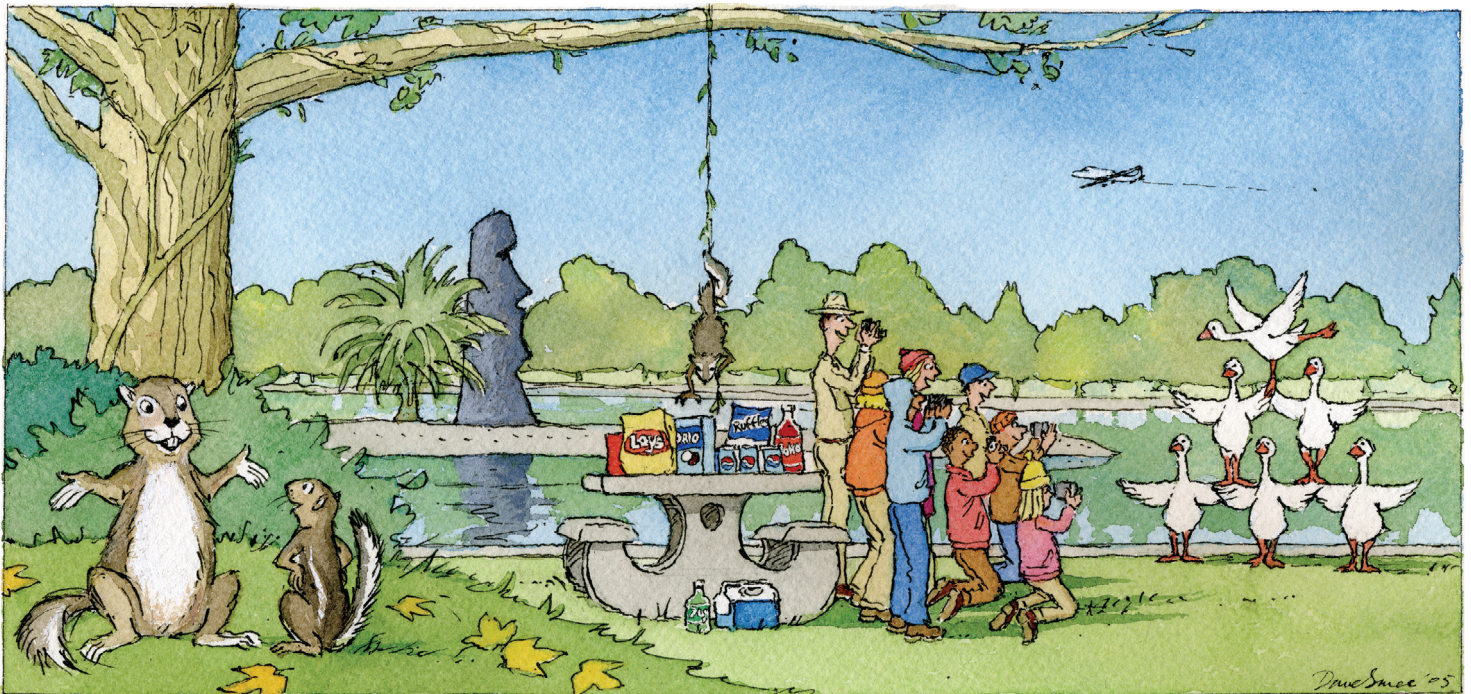
Wesley E. Niles

buckwheat family named for Niles. The rare plant, found near the Corn Creek Wash west of Decatur Boulevard, is a candidate for the state's protected species list.

More Info: The herbarium, located in White Hall, Room 305, is generally open Monday-Thursday mornings. Call ahead to verify, 702-895-3098. Online, visit biology.unlv.edu.

IT DAWNED ON SMEE

— by David Smee



"I made a deal with the geese — they create a diversion while Bernie grabs the Oreos."

David Smee, an archaeological illustrator at UNLV's Harry Reid Center for Environmental Studies, pondered this issue's cover story on the Public Lands Institute's outreach work (page 14) for this drawing.



Fans at the UNLV-UNR game in November cheer the Rebels.

Aaron Mayes

Basketball Fever Hits Thomas & Mack

By Tony Allen

Sports fans all remember the classics: “The SuperBowl Shuffle,” “The Ickey Shuffle,” “Walk Like a Tarkanian,” and the legendary “Runnin’ Rebel Fever.” All these songs created a buzz that elevated fan participation and loyalty. Starting this basketball season, you can add “The Fever’s Back” to that list.

The song is part of this season’s marketing campaign for the Runnin’ Rebels men’s basketball team. Imagine Marketing of Nevada and UNLV’s sports marketing department created the campaign.

“As a lifelong fan of UNLV basketball, I wanted to do something to help bring back the passion associated with the Runnin’ Rebels,” says D.J. Allen, an alumnus and founder of Imagine Marketing.

With the help of his team at Imagine, Allen assembled a marketing campaign, complete with a song, posters, and a revamped logo. “We put in more than 100 hours of work without knowing whether UNLV’s sports marketing department would even go for it,” he says. “When we showed them our work, they realized that we were not only fans, but we had a sound business concept that would work for UNLV basketball.”

The campaign builds on the university’s basketball traditions, says Lon Kruger, head coach. “It’s about having an enthusiasm for what happened here in the past in relation to what will happen as we move forward,” he says.

Feeling Feverish

The idea for the campaign began toward the end of last season when the Rebels were in the middle of a five-game winning streak and Allen saw the seats of the Thomas & Mack Center begin to fill.

“The players seemed to begin to understand and play within Coach Kruger’s system,” says Allen. “And that winning translated into excitement in the fans that I hadn’t seen in years.”

So, during the off-season, while Allen and his team at Imagine tried to come up with a way to embrace the new excitement surrounding Rebel basketball, one of his employees brought in George Dare’s version of “Runnin’ Rebel Fever” from 1984, the song that became the team’s anthem for more than a decade.

Allen contacted Jeff Johnson, a member of the hip-hop duo The Big Beat Battalion. The two had met as youths at a UNLV game. Johnson jumped at the opportunity to produce a song that would blend the history of Rebel basketball with the excitement surrounding this season’s team.

Campaign Creator Imagines Post-College Career

When D.J. Allen walked across the Thomas & Mack stage to accept his diploma, he knew exactly what he wanted to do with his freshly earned degree.

“I wanted to be a play-by-play guy for a professional baseball team,” he says. “Ever since I was 5 years old, listening to Vin Scully on the radio, I knew that that’s what I was going to do with my life.”

And Allen was adequately trained for his chosen career. A Henderson native, he’d worked as a sports reporter throughout college and landed a job as the director of media relations for the Las Vegas Stars and Las Vegas Thunder right out of college.

But then, during Major League Baseball’s winter meetings, Allen had an epiphany. “Here I am sitting on the edge of a bed in a cold hotel room in Boston, and I come to the realization

The song appeals to both the die-hard, old-school Rebel fans and people who are new to the community and are not as familiar with the past successes of the program, Allen says. "By celebrating our past, we are accepting our past. By accepting our past, we're saying that we're comfortable with who we are now and are excited about the future," he says.

The song has been incorporated into game broadcasts, player introductions, and a highlight video.

"As good as the campaign may be, the most important sports marketing tool for a team is winning," says Allen.

Kruger, now in his second year at the helm, and the Rebels are working to improve on last season's 17-14 mark, which landed them in the second round of the NIT.

"This year's team will certainly be one that people will enjoy watching," says Kruger. "But fan support is very important, especially at UNLV where we've had it in the past. People here are definitely hungry to get it back."

The team returns eight players, including talented seniors Louis Amundson and Ricky Morgan, and junior Michael Umeh, the team's leading returning scorer. The Rebels also add six newcomers, led by freshman point guard Jo'Van Adams, who averaged 28 points per game as a senior at Houston's Gulf Shores Academy.

Junior guard Jason Petrimoulx is hoping the fever campaign fires up homegame crowds. "When the fans are hyped up, the players are in turn more motivated," says Petrimoulx, who grew up in Las Vegas and played for Cimarron-Memorial High School. "The fever is the exciting style of play the Rebels executed back in the day, and that's how we want to play."

It may not be 1990 again, but that's not the point, according to Allen. "We don't want people to take it too literally; we're not trying to relive 1990. The fever is about getting excited about today's UNLV basketball, and I think that's happening."

More Info: Find the Runnin' Rebels schedule and listen to "The Fever's Back" online at unlvrebels.collegesports.com.



Allen

on, I learned all aspects of media and business," he says. "I realized that a lot of small and medium-sized businesses needed help with marketing, and that's where I wanted to focus my efforts."

What started in 1999 with a couple of local accounts, has since blossomed into an organization that employs 10 full-time staffers servicing more than 80 accounts in Nevada, Utah, and

that this isn't what I want to do," he says.

Finding out that his childhood aspiration wasn't quite what he hoped didn't prove devastating, though. That same night he dreamed up his next step: Imagine Marketing.

"By working in such a variety of positions so early

California. "I think marketing in the 1990s went too far to the creative side of the pendulum, leaving sound business sense behind it," Allen says. "I wanted to establish something in between."

He turned back to his alma mater for employees: Jeff Jensen, '95 BS Hotel Administration; Ehsan Kaveh, Megan Lane, and Amber Schutz, all '03 BA Communication Studies; and Melissa Rothermel, a current communications major. "We want people at Imagine who understand the market we live in, and where better to get these professionals than UNLV," he says.

Allen also acknowledges the role that UNLV has played in his success. "I think when you graduate, you don't realize the impact you're going to have in your community," he says. "Now, as I get older, I'm beginning to see more and more how important UNLV was to me as a person and as a professional."

"No other community in the nation is exhibiting so much growth, which means we as graduates can enter and help shape where we live, right now."



Aaron Mayes

Katie Carney, pictured at right in a season game against San Diego State, helped the Lady Rebel soccer team cap a school-record 13-win season. She scored the game-winning, overtime goal against New Mexico in the Mountain West Conference Championship game, held Nov. 4 at UNLV. The win was the first MWC championship for the Lady Rebels.

Hot Tickets: The Rebel softball and baseball teams are looking to build on last year's strong seasons when the first pitches of 2006 are thrown out in February. The Rebel Softball team notched 44 wins in 2005, the third most in school history, and finished second the Mountain West Conference to gain its first NCAA berth in six years. Not to be outdone, the Rebel Baseball team captured its third Mountain West Conference championship in as many years, solidifying itself as a regional power.

Call 702-895-3261 for tickets.

MEMBER BENEFITS

Scholarships for Children of Alumni

Sure, being a member of the UNLV Alumni Association is a great way to give back to the university that made you successful. But did you know that alumni association members are entitled to a multitude of benefits, including the Child of Alumni Scholarship?

The Odds:

Each year, the alumni association awards approximately four new Child of Alumni Scholarships. The scholarships are renewed annually if the student is enrolled full time and has earned at least a 3.0 GPA at UNLV.

Who Gets It?

Open to parents who are lifetime association members or have been annual members for the past three consecutive years, the Child of Alumni Scholarship program offers eligible incoming freshmen \$1,000 per year for up to four years. It's a great way to pay for books, parking, and other essentials that will make your child's college journey more manageable.

Application Info:

To apply for the scholarship, the student just needs to complete the annual financial aid application available online through the UNLV student financial services office. Applicants must have a minimum high school GPA of 3.2 or an ACT score of 20.

More Info:

Contact the alumni relations office at 702-895-3621 or visit alumni.unlv.edu. The website also has a full listing of association member benefits, which include event access and discount programs.

Bringing It Back Home

Former Student Leaders Rediscover Goals for Building a Better UNLV

At a homecoming gathering of former student body leaders, graduates from decades ago mingled with the university's most recent alums, and found the value of reconnecting with other like-minded Rebels.

"It really re-energized my feeling of how important UNLV was in my life," says attorney John Hunt, who served in various student leadership roles before graduating in 1979 with a bachelor's degree in

Gaming. "It was interesting to hear from student leaders from the 1950s all the way through to the present. Some of the issues that affected us when I was a student are still around today, so the more things change, the more they stay the same."

Well, almost the same. "With all the new buildings on campus, the idea of running for office as a student and having to cover that much territory is kind of daunting," Polovina added.

As the alumni base grows and graduates become successful in the community, giving back to the university becomes essential, Hunt says.

"I don't think the outside world knows the full magnitude of what's going on here at UNLV. There's a great story to be told, and as graduates we are that story."

— Gina Polovina,
former UNLV Student Senate Leader



accounting. "As corny as it may sound, my experiences were the same as everyone else in the room. Everyone involved when I was in school, as well as all those before and after I graduated, had a dream of making UNLV a better place."

And the idea of improving UNLV continues today. The meeting centered on the plans for the new student union and new recreation center. Student government leaders helped shore up support for the new facilities, which are being built through student fees.

"UNLV has grown considerably since my days as a student, which wasn't too long ago," says Gina Polovina, '91 BA and '94 MA Political Science. "But even now, as large as it is, you don't feel like a number; you're an individual, part of a family."

Polovina, a former Student Senate president, is current director of government and community relations for Boyd

"It's our turn to make it happen," he says. "I think I can speak for most in saying that our success wouldn't be possible if not for UNLV. It's important that we remember to feel good about being Rebels and return to campus to reignite the dream."

Polovina agrees. "I don't think the outside world knows the full magnitude of what's going on here at UNLV," she says. "There's a great story to be told, and as graduates we are that story."

— Tony Allen

Rediscover Your Rebel Spirit:

From speaking to students as a guest lecturer and serving on college advisory boards to attending a young alum mixer or starting your own regional club, there are countless ways to reconnect with campus. Find out how you can be involved at alumni.unlv.edu.



Ralph Piercy, accounting firm founder and a hospitality-industry adviser, was named the 2005 Alumnus of the Year.

Geri Kodey

Alum of the Year Accounts for His Success

By Tony Allen

For Ralph Piercy, '74 BS Accounting, the inspiration to become an accountant came from a rather unlikely source.

"The first day I walked on campus, one of the assistant basketball coaches asked me a few probing questions, looked at my less-than-intimidating physique, and recommended that I major in accounting," says Piercy. "At the time I had no idea what accounting was, but it seems to have turned out pretty well."

In November, the accounting firm he founded, Piercy, Bowler, Taylor & Kern, was ranked 83rd among the nation's top 100 accounting firms by the independent Bowman Accounting Report. And that's not the only honor he received during the month. As part of the university's annual homecoming festivities, Piercy was honored as Alumnus of the Year, the most prestigious award the UNLV Alumni Association bestows.

"It took me a little while to warm up to the significance of the alumni award," Piercy says. "When I saw myself being honored among such a distinguished group of honorees, it was a real humbling experience. It's nice to be able to have the opportunity to thank those at UNLV who have helped me become what I am today."

A donor to athletics and longtime member of the Alumni Association Board of Directors, Piercy was active in the building of the Richard Tam Alumni Center, the Alumni Amphitheater, and the alumni area of Sam Boyd Stadium. He also helped establish the annual alumni scholarships and served as president of UNLV's accounting department advisory council.

"Many of the traditions that survive were started during my various terms on the alumni board," Piercy says. "It's important to stay involved and give back as a way to say 'thank you' to the professors who devote so much time in education but

rarely receive enough credit."

A longtime Nevadan, Piercy has seen the community blossom into an urban center while his business has grown to a staff of more than 70. Though he didn't predict his own success as a student, he's not surprised by UNLV's gaining stature.

"I fully expected UNLV to become a large research university," says Piercy. "The ideas that are now coming to fruition were in plans more than 30 years ago. People like Claudine Williams and other dedicated professionals had a vision of what UNLV could become and stuck with it while it happened."

Rodman, Williams Receive Silver State Award

Community leaders Kitty Rodman and Claudine Williams received the 2005 Silver State Award, the highest honor given to nonalumni by the UNLV Alumni Association, at homecoming in November.

Rodman has been involved with the university since the 1980s when she became a member of the UNLV Foundation Board of Trustees and the President's Inner Circle. She is a founding member of the Jean Nidetch Women's Center on campus and is noted for a contribution that helped establish the physical therapy program.

Williams, currently chairwoman of the board for Harrah's Las Vegas, is a founding member of the Foundation Board of Trustees and recently established a scholarship fund in the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration in memory of her late husband, Shelby. She also has served on numerous campus advisory boards.

Funding Benefits Students, Community

Graduate Student Support Helping to Address Lead Poisoning in Children

By Regina Bacolas

As she works on her master's degree in environmental and occupational health, Elena Cabb is helping address the alarming poisoning hazard found in the imported candy that Nevada's children eat. But she wouldn't be able to accomplish either without the funding she receives as a graduate assistant.

Cabb is one of more than 6,000 graduate and professional students whose education and service to the community are enhanced by the availability of graduate assistantships and fellowships, which are among the funding priorities for the university's Invent the Future campaign.

Supporting Research

Such funding accomplishes several university goals at once, says Paul Ferguson, vice president for research and graduate studies. "To continue building UNLV's reputation as a nationally recognized research university, support of graduate education is vital," he says.

In exchange for a stipend and tuition reduction, graduate assistants spend 20 hours per week helping faculty with instruction and research. Graduate fellowships are similar to merit-based scholarships; they provide financial support for tuition, research costs, and related expenses.

"Graduate assistants play an indispensable role with faculty, serving as research team members and augmenting classroom learning," Ferguson says. "Additionally, the GAs themselves benefit from the experience. Serving in this capacity provides them with valuable professional development and enhances their graduate education."

Environmental science professor Shawn Gerstenberger says that graduate



Aaron Mayes

Graduate assistants Tracy Donnelly and Elena Cabb test for lead candy commonly found in Las Vegas. With the help of private funding, they are able to devote time to a research project that is working to prevent lead poisoning in Nevada's children. Imported candy has been found to pose a poisoning hazard.



students who receive support typically finish their degrees in half the time that their nonfunded peers do. As the graduate coordinator for the Division of Health Sciences' School of Public Health and the chair of the Graduate Faculty and Student Issues Committee, Gerstenberger knows that several students chose UNLV because they were offered financial support and the opportunity to be directly involved in research projects.

"Good students are in demand," he says. "The greatest advantage of private support for graduate scholarships and fellowships is it allows us to recruit and retain the brightest students and provide them a richer learning environment."

The funding certainly played into Cabb's decision to come to UNLV after finishing her undergraduate degree at Georgia Southern University. "I chose UNLV because of the graduate assistantship I

was offered,” she says. “I have had experience working together with faculty and advisers on projects, and they truly treat me as a professional.”

Filling a Community Need

The assistantship also helps Cabb commit greater time to the research she and fellow graduate research assistants Heather Fels and Tracy Donnelly are doing through the Childhood Lead Poisoning and Prevention Center.

They work with Gerstenberger to provide lead screening and intervention for Nevada children. The goal is to reduce exposure to environmental lead and prevent its long-term devastating effects.

Lead poisoning is a leading cause of learning disabilities and behavioral issues and can cause delays in a child’s neurological development, according to Fels, who is also pursuing a master’s degree in environmental and occupational health.

“Lead is the most preventable form of poisoning in children, so there is no excuse for it,” Fels says. “That’s why it is a public health concern.”

Still, a report from the Center for Disease Control revealed that between 1999 and 2000, 434,000 U.S. children tested positive for lead poisoning. Former research has revealed dangerous levels of lead in paint, gasoline, and jewelry. But UNLV’s exploration focuses on a less likely source: candy.

The graduate research assistants use a digital mobile lead analyzer called an XRF to get an instant analysis of lead content in imported candy found at flea markets, street vendor stands, and ethnic specialty stores around the Las Vegas Valley. “We are testing candies from Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, and other countries throughout Latin America and plan to compare them to candy made in the U.S.,” Fels says.

Since the project began last spring, more than 4,000 pieces of candy have been examined. Of the more than 100 different types of candy examined so far, 25 tested positive for lead.

The findings will be used by the Clark County Health District to develop a public awareness campaign aimed at parents and children. UNLV will assist the district by providing researchers and equipment like the XRF to investigate additional sources of lead contamination in the community. Further testing with other high-tech gear evaluates other chemical levels, such as mercury.

Private funding not only helps students pursue projects that could serve as their thesis or dissertation, Gerstenberger says, it allows them to serve their communities. The student-researchers involved in the lead candy project, for example, are vital to helping address the lead poisoning issue in Nevada.

“The lead candy project requires a lot of energy, time, and money. Still, state funding is very limited. The resources just aren’t there to fund every priority.”

More Info: To support graduate assistantships or fellowships, contact the UNLV Foundation at 702-895-3641. For lead prevention project information, contact UNLV’s department of environmental and occupational health at 702-895-5420.

Moot Courtroom Construction Set to Begin

The William S. Boyd School of Law is scheduled to begin construction on the Thomas & Mack Moot Court Complex by early April. Dean Richard Morgan expects the facility — which will support the school’s appellate advocacy programs and provide a venue for judicial proceedings by state and federal courts — to be finished in time for fall classes.

The 6,000-square-foot facility, to be built just east of the law school, was made possible by a \$3 million gift from Joyce Mack and the Parry Thomas family.

“The Thomas and Mack families have enjoyed a close association with UNLV since its inception, and we are especially pleased with the growth and success of the Boyd School of Law,” says family member Tom Thomas. “Its legal clinics are recognized nationally and provide critical services to members of our community. The next step in the maturation of this law school is the construction of a very special facility: a moot court room where students can learn and practice the skills necessary to effectively operate within our legal system.”



Science, Engineering and Technology Building rendering

Science, Engineering and Technology Building Receives Community Support

The College of Engineering is raising support for the new Science, Engineering and Technology Building (SET) within the engineering community in Southern Nevada. This effort is spearheaded by Todd Kenner, president of PBS&J and vice chair of the college’s advisory board. The campaign’s goal is to receive 80 percent participation from the engineering firms contacted.

To date, engineering firms PBS&J; Geotechnical and Environmental Services; Poggemeyer Design Group; Carter & Burgess; Kleinfelder Inc.; and G.C. Wallace Co. have made commitments to support the building.

New Trustees Named to Foundation Board

The Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents approved new officers and members for the UNLV Foundation Board of Trustees at its December meeting. Officers include Dan Van Epp, chairman; Ted Quirk, vice chairman; Jim Bradham, treasurer; and Lucy Klinkhammer, secretary.

Also named to the board were Tony Alamo, Jr., ’86; Tom Gallagher; Danny Greenspun; Scott Menke, ’87; Bill Paulos, ’69; Jeff Shaw; Bill Wortman, ’71; and Mark Yoseloff.

HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

The UNLV Foundation recognizes the following new members of its annual fund gift club programs for their contributions of unrestricted funds, their involvement in UNLV's development, and their advocacy on behalf of UNLV.

President's Inner Circle Gold

(Individual gifts of \$10,000 to \$24,999)

Linda & Larry Seedig

President's Inner Circle

(Individual gifts of \$5,000 to \$9,999)

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Nevada Commerce Bank

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(Member listing updated Dec. 21, 2005)

DID YOU KNOW?

UNLV awarded more than 1,700 privately funded scholarships valued at nearly \$3 million during the 2004-05 academic year. Donors may contribute to a general scholarship fund or establish named annual or endowed scholarship programs. More than half of all students who attend UNLV require financial assistance to pursue their educations.



Geri Koday

Jerry Vallen, founding dean of the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration, continues to be active with alumni and hospitality industry events.

Harrah Hotel College Honors First Dean With a Named Professorship

When Jerry Vallen came to Las Vegas in 1967 to launch what would become the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration, he tapped the resources of the local resort community. Part of his early strategy was to bring in visiting professionals to cross-pollinate the rigorous academic training with industry ideas.

The college hopes to continue that tradition by establishing an endowment for the Jerry Vallen Professorship to help recruit "professors-in-residence" for the college that Vallen served for two decades.

The endowment is a fitting tribute to the founding dean, who guided the program from its infancy to the forefront of hospitality education, says Stuart Mann, current dean of the college.

"The Vallen Professorship is intended to bring both industry executives and academic leaders to campus for short periods of time. While these folks are on campus, they will interact with students and faculty in private conversation as well as seminar settings," explains Mann.

Several alumni, faculty, and members

of Vallen's family have made cornerstone gifts in anticipation of the active fundraising that begins this spring as part of the Invent the Future campaign. At full maturity, the \$250,000 endowment will provide \$10,000 annually so industry professionals can bring their expertise to campus through guest lectures, workshops, and advisement.

Vallen says that the visiting professor concept also helps the college build relationships with prospective employers who recruit from the Harrah Hotel College. As dean, he frequently saw the value of such relationship building.

"Our visitors would return to where they came from and tell about the wonderful experiences at UNLV," Vallen remembers. "They get a charge working with students, and carry that enthusiasm back to their jobs."

— Lori Bachand

More Info: Contact Karin Olsen, director of external relations for the Harrah Hotel College, at 702-895-3148.

Answering the Call

Phonathon Support from Alumni, Friends Boosts Education College Programs

Last spring, thousands of alumni and other friends got the call from Rebel Ring Phonathon students. The students working the phones shared updates about their schools and colleges and asked the graduates on the other end of the line for unrestricted support for their programs — money that could then be spent where the need was greatest.

Alumni responded with fervor, especially in the College of Education, where more than 480 graduates made gifts. Interim Dean Jane McCarthy allocated some of the resources so professor Cari Klecka could attend a conference for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

Klecka, who coordinates the graduate program in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis on teacher leadership, is shaping UNLV's master's curriculum to help local teachers succeed at certification — a hallmark of excellence in the classroom. Her trip to the conference (one she would not have made without the annual fund support) provided the opportunity to learn from other school districts' leaders who have successfully implemented similar programs.

"We've built a partnership with the Clark County School District through our master's program to align coursework with the national standards," she explains.

Studies show that students in the classes led by board-certified teachers academically surpass students in the classrooms of teachers who don't hold the certification. Currently, only 90 teachers of more than 18,000 in the school district are NBPTS certified; Klecka believes that raising that number will lead to increased quality and teacher retention within the school district.

Klecka and doctorate student Cyndi Herron, the CCSD liaison for certification, also lobbied several state representatives for their



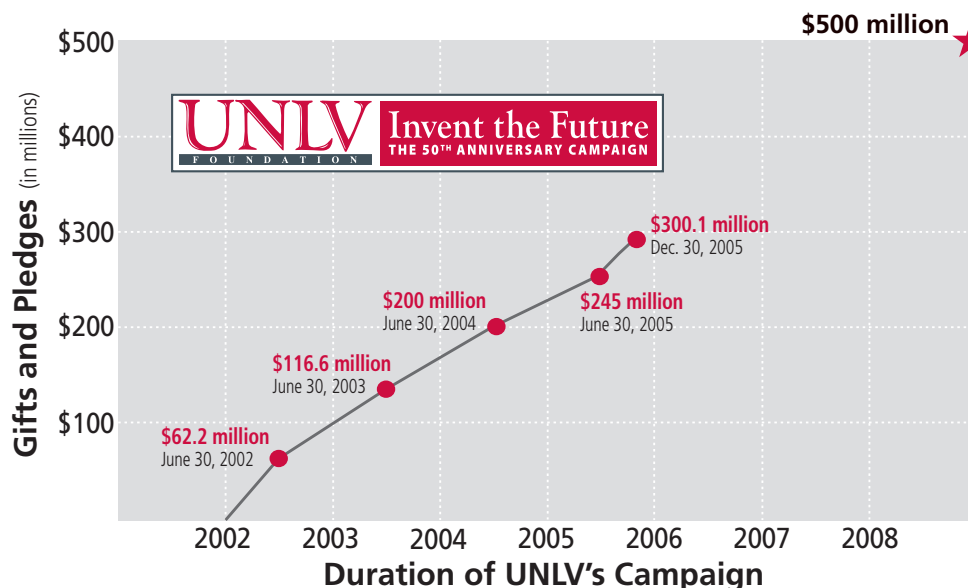
Geri Kody

Education professor Cari Klecka was able to attend an important conference on teacher certification thanks to funds raised through the Rebel Ring Phonathon.

support of resources that will help more Nevada teachers achieve certification.

McCarthy appreciates the commitment from alumni and other friends, and says the support underscores the commitment to education among UNLV graduates. Unrestricted support is one of the college's Invent the Future campaign priorities. "The extra funding allows our faculty to supplement their professional experiences to benefit the college and our community," McCarthy says. "A little support from each of our alumni goes a long way."

Rebel Ring Phonathon students will begin calling in February with information on how you can help your college or school invent the future through annual support.



Invent the Future

Invent the Future is UNLV's first comprehensive effort to secure the promises of tomorrow through a \$500 million fund-raising initiative. With your help, private funding for students, faculty, research, facilities, and programs will map a course for Las Vegas' next decade.

Visit campaign.unlv.edu to learn more.



wild at heart

The Public Lands Institute is cultivating tomorrow's keepers of the land while tapping the ingenuity of UNLV researchers to help pioneer one of the country's largest cooperative conservation programs.

Stories by Jennifer Lawson
Photos by Geri Kodey

The Public Lands Institute is hoping that its outreach programs for children like fifth-grader Brittney Nunn will educate the next generation of decision makers about land management issues.



The noise of airplanes landing at McCarran International Airport competed with the sound of ducks quacking across the street at Sunset Park, but the eight Paradise Elementary fifth-graders enrolled in an environmental science program for urban youth didn't seem to mind. As 11-year-old Brittney Nunn nibbled on Pepperidge Farm cheddar cheese goldfish, she spotted a creature poking its head out of a hole a few feet from their picnic table at the park. "Look, there's a gopher!" she said. The seven other kids around her craned their necks to catch a glimpse of the animal — actually a ground squirrel — that most had never seen.

Brittney would go on to reel in a real fish from the park's lake after participating in a science lesson from Daphne Sewing, who oversees the Discover Mojave-Outdoor World program. Children in the program visit Sunset Park and other local sites to get a taste of the recreational activities — fishing, birdwatching, canoeing — they can enjoy on public lands.

Connecting children to nature so that they may become stewards of public lands as adults is a cornerstone of UNLV's Public Lands Institute (PLI), which collaborates with federal, state, and nonprofit partners to implement conservation, education, and research programs. Through one of its partnerships, the PLI provides the infrastructure to efficiently carry out programs that cut across the purview of Southern Nevada's four federal land management agencies — U.S. Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service, which comprise the Southern Nevada Agency Partnership.

Cooperative Conservation

The roots of the PLI can be traced to the desert trails within Southern Nevada's 7 million acres of public lands, where geoscientist Peg Rees, now associate vice president for research and community outreach, has spent nearly 30 years as both a researcher and outdoors enthusiast.

"The people from the federal agencies hang out there too, and we started talking about their need for a community partner," she says. "UNLV turned out to be the right partner, and now both sides are seeing real benefits."

In 1998, the federal agencies began receiving funding through the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act. The act authorized government land sales in Clark County and required that the proceeds — nearly \$2 billion so far — remain in Nevada for schools, water infrastructure, conservation initiatives, and other programs. The act grew out of the demands that the area's explosive growth and

tourism industry were placing on the valley's natural resources.

But under the act, the federal agencies are prevented from hiring full-time employees to implement the programs, and they didn't have a formal mechanism for working together on the many projects that would overlap their jurisdictions, including programs to rebuild trails, curb illegal dumping, and implement science education programs. The university fills that gap, LaNelda Rolley, spokeswoman for the PLI, says.

In early 2004 Rees and representatives of the federal agencies developed a list of projects and programs that the agencies wanted to accomplish that also matched the university's strategic mission. By May of that year, the initiative was established and a year later it was approved by the regents of the Nevada System of Higher Education as the Public Lands Institute.

Many of the projects are part of a national effort to encourage and implement cooperative conservation, first proposed by the White House nearly four years ago. The goal of the Cooperative Conservation Initiative is to empower federal land managers to form partnerships within local communities to better care for the land and its wildlife, according to Gale Norton, U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

"By promoting these partnerships, we not only leverage federal conservation dollars with private funds but also tap into the ingenuity and local knowledge of the people who live and work on the land," Norton has stated.

Stewardship for Tomorrow

The PLI also hopes that cooperative conservation will build community understanding of land management issues amidst the steady influx of new residents.

"There's a lot of work to be done to educate adults and help them understand the ramifications of their decisions," Rees says. "Those new to the valley don't know the unique challenges we face in terms of natural resources. And even longtime Nevadans don't

realize the luxury they have in being able to take a walk just about anywhere they want."

Programs like Discover Mojave are aimed at educating the next generation of land management decision makers. "Without them, this may be the first generation not to have any connection with the land," Rolley says.

Child advocacy expert Richard Louv, author of *The Last Child in the Woods*, has dubbed the issue the "nature deficit disorder" and argues that in today's technologically advanced world, children are more apt to stay indoors playing video games, surfing the Internet, or watching television.

Other factors, such as urban children's lack of access to natural areas, parents' fear of strangers and illnesses such as Lyme disease, and schools' emphasis on homework and testing all play a role. Yet new research shows that enjoying nature can ease depression, obesity, and attention-deficit disorder, according to Louv. And a team of UNLV professors has shown that, at least in the short term, exposing urban youth to outdoor programs does have positive effects.

Lori Olafson, Gregg Schraw, and Michelle Weibel, members of the educational psychology department and the Center for Evaluation and Assessment, along with PLI educational curriculum coordinator Jeanne Klockow, performed the first part of the study last summer and their findings were accepted for presentation at an international research conference.

Roughly 99 percent of children experienced substantial growth of skills and knowledge related to each activity, according to the study. Children also demonstrated strong positive attitudes about the experiences.

The study is part of a larger project to determine if informal educational programs — such as Discover Mojave and the Forever Earth floating classroom at Lake Mead — improve students' formal classroom learning.

"These outdoor programs geared toward kids who have little connection to outdoor activities are very successful," Schraw says.



Retiree Bill James volunteers as a cultural site steward for the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area.

To Protect and Preserve

Volunteers Keep Watchful Eye on Southern Nevada's Ancient Treasures

For four years, a band of looters pilfered archaeological sites in Southern Nevada and California, stealing ancient corncobs, grinding tools, pottery fragments, and baskets.

Armed with excavation equipment, the thieves managed to slip in and out of these culturally sensitive areas until December 2001, when a park ranger in Death Valley National Park spotted two men loading rocks into a truck.

Considered the most extensive case of archaeological theft ever investigated, it resulted in the conviction of five people for stealing more than 11,000 artifacts and damaging 13 sites, including the White Cliff petroglyph site and Kane Springs Wash.

With millions of acres to cover, Southern Nevada land managers are enlisting the help of volunteers to prevent such crimes through the Cultural Site Stewardship program managed by UNLV's Public Lands Institute on behalf of the Southern Nevada Agency Partnership (SNAP). "Their job is to be the eyes and ears," says the institute's George Phillips. "They're not archaeologists or law enforcement officers, they're just people who have an affinity for the history and pre-history of the area."

The program was launched last year and involves SNAP, which is comprised of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service. The federal agencies don't have the funding for the personnel to care for these sites, which number in the thousands, so the cadre of about 175 volunteers plays an important role, says Bill Dickinson, superintendent of the Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

"A lot of sites are at risk," he says. "By having an expanded core of people who are keeping an eye on those sites, we are going to achieve far more than if we tried to do it alone. We just don't have the resources to do what needs to be done."

In the first nine months of 2005, volunteers helped discover 25 significant acts of damage — bullet holes in petroglyph panels, graffiti, and other types of vandalism. People were caught violating the law: starting an illegal fire inside an ancient shelter

and collecting artifacts from the ground.

"Most people who damage these sites don't realize the culture of the area," Phillips says. But others do, and they loot the sites to sell the artifacts or keep them to display in their homes.

The cultural site stewards undergo classroom and field training and then are assigned a specific site. Early habitation and hunting sites are some of the cultural features of the areas. Some of the sites are pre-Puebloan and others are identified as dating back more than 2,000 years.

Volunteer Bill James is responsible for part of Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area and coordinates about 30 volunteers. They hike through their areas regularly — every week, depending on the location — looking for vandalism, looting, tire marks, or anything unusual that could be a threat. They also take photographs to catalog any changes between visits. If volunteers notice a problem, they photograph it and submit a report. If the problem is egregious, they follow emergency protocol to get federal authorities involved.

James says he signed up for the program because he enjoys outdoor activities and he wants to make a contribution. "These sites are part of our history and heritage, and I'd like to think they'll be around for future generations."

More than 2,000 Local Volunteers

The institute oversees both the stewardship program and the Southern Nevada Interagency Volunteer Program, also known as Get Outdoors Nevada, which recruits volunteers to clean up public lands and work as trail leaders, historians, data-entry clerks, and visitor services assistants. Get Outdoors Nevada acts as a single point of contact for community members searching for volunteer opportunities with the four federal agencies. Last fiscal year, an estimated 2,400 volunteers put in 160,000 hours of work, PLI project manager Donna Grady says. Since launching the program, more than 600 new volunteers have been recruited.

"Volunteers are extremely important, given the growth of Las Vegas and the expected growth over the next 10 to 15 years," she says. "There's no way we could do what we're doing to maintain public lands without them."

"The students gained a substantial amount of knowledge, they had high performance capabilities, and we saw attitude changes."

Sewing, the project manager for Discover Mojave-Outdoor World, says: "We're hoping that the desire to learn about their environment will continue into their adulthood, and they will adopt healthy lifestyles."

"We are a living, breathing example of UNLV getting out there and having a direct impact on the community and on future generations."

— Nancy Flagg,
director of the UNLV Public Lands Institute

The next study phase involves the students' teachers, who were given a checklist to track classroom behavior such as participation and completion of assignments for the students who were involved in the Discover Mojave program, Klockow says.

Research into whether outdoor programs influence classroom learning is thin, so these studies are breaking new ground, Klockow says. "There's little research in this area so there's nothing much to draw from, but at the same time it's great because we can be the pioneer," she says.

Like most of the kids enrolled in the Discover Mojave program, 10-year-old Edwin Harris says he signed up because he likes science, but he's getting much more out of the program. "I'm learning about all sorts of animals and learning about canoeing," he says. "I think some kids didn't sign up because they think it's boring science, but it's learning and fun at the same time."

The most important thing he's learned so far? "Not to trash any place where animals can go," Edwin says. "They can get wrapped in pieces of trash and they could actually die."

Arid Lands Research Unparalleled

In the 1930s, Walking Box Ranch, located off Joshua Tree Highway seven miles west of Searchlight, served as an isolated retreat for Hollywood's biggest stars.

Built by western actor Rex Bell — who later became lieutenant governor — and his actress-wife Clara Bow, the original "It" girl, the 160-acre ranch is not only rich in history,

it's also home to some 200 native plant species and is designated as a desert tortoise habitat.

In cooperation with the BLM, the PLI has secured preservation funding to restore the original ranch house, with the hope of turning it into a museum. The next step is building a field station to serve as a home base for researchers and students from all disciplines

— biologists, geologists, historians, and sociologists.

Other new PLI projects include studying two cultural sites: the Parashant National Monument and the Pueblo Grande de Nevada, also known as the Lost City.

Archaeological evidence indicates that humans have inhabited or used the Parashant site for more than 11,000 years and the geologic history dates back billions of years. Because the site at the northern edge of the Grand Canyon is so remote, an abundance of cultural artifacts still remain. The institute has teamed with UNLV anthropology researchers to study the area.

The Lost City at the northern end of Lake Mead is a complex of villages that was inhabited by early basketmakers sometime after the first century A.D. The area was discovered by explorers in 1826 and later studied by archaeologists in the last century, but the studies are incomplete. The current field investigations, which continue through September 2007, will further map, survey, and test excavations at the site.

"There has been some research done before, most notably by UNLV professor emerita Margaret Lyneis, but this is the opportunity to catalog and track the information and artifacts," says PLI Director Nancy Flagg.

The PLI's educational outreach programs will be boosted by the BLM's Red Rock Desert Leaning Center and Wild Horse and Burro Facility, planned to be sited on the former Oliver Ranch property in Red Rock National Conservation Area. PLI collaborated with a

team of teachers and researchers to develop the curriculum for the science school for local fifth-grade students. It will feature indoor and outdoor classrooms, laboratories, trails, and environmental monitoring stations. The center is scheduled to open in January 2009.

UNLV is particularly well-positioned to advance research in arid lands, Rees says. It is the only major research university located in the Mojave Desert, and it's located in the heart of a rapidly growing urban city.

Researchers here also have unparalleled access to public lands. "As a geologist, I've been spoiled here," she says. "Here in Southern Nevada, we request permits from only four or five agencies depending on where we're going and what we're doing. Even that process has been streamlined at UNLV by the establishment of the PLI's permit office. In other parts of the country, researchers spend most of their time knocking on doors to seek permission to go on land that is owned privately."

PLI A Model for Federal Programs

As executive director of the institute, Rees is responsible for strategic planning and outreach within the state as well as nationally and internationally to guide and develop the institute. She has worked as an oil exploration geologist and conducted research in Antarctica, China, and the western United States.

Growing up on an almond farm in California's central valley, Rees developed a love for the outdoors at a young age, and her first college geology course channeled that into a career. "Science is just my excuse for spending so much time outdoors," she says.

While working as an exploration geologist in Wyoming, Rees says she saw the effect that oil drilling has on open spaces. The conflict between protection and use was a real-life struggle for Rees while conducting scientific research in Antarctica for eight years in the mid-1980s and early 1990s. Environmental groups, including Greenpeace, of which she was a member, were fighting to preserve Antarctica and have oil drilling banned, she says.

As a National Science Foundation-funded scientist, she traveled via snowmobiles and sledges through Antarctica for months at a time. As the result of the scientific investigations and environmental activism around the world, the United States' environmental practices in Antarctica were greatly improved.

Flagg, '79 BA Elementary Education and '92 MA English, was chosen to be director of the institute, overseeing the day-to-day



management of the projects and staff. She brought extensive experience in educational administration. She was deputy to the chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education for four years and previously worked 20 years at UNLV in various positions, including deputy to the president.

No other such partnership between a university and all four federal land agencies exists nationally, Flagg says, adding that Southern Nevada is unique with its vast amount of public lands abutting a growing urbanized area.

The creative challenge of launching the institute, which is tucked into office space on the second floor of the Boyd School of Law, has attracted a highly credentialed, 28-member staff.

Though it has existed for just two years, the PLI has already garnered national recognition. The White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation, which was held in St. Louis in August, highlighted the Southern Nevada Lands Partnership, of which PLI is a member, as one of the best examples of cooperative conservation in the United States.

And in September, Get Outdoors Nevada, which combines the volunteer efforts of the four federal agencies and is administered by the institute, was among the 25 recipients of the 2005 Take Pride in America National Award presented in Washington, D.C.

Despite the national attention it has received, the institute is only starting to introduce itself to the Southern Nevada community. "Historically, the public has seen universities as ivory towers that primarily do research that has no effect on everyday lives," Flagg says. "But we are a living, breathing example of UNLV getting out there and having a direct impact on the community and on future generations."

To help the federal agencies fulfill their initiatives, work teams were established to bring together a representative from each agency and a PLI project manager. This approach allows the team members to draw upon the strengths of each others' agencies while receiving infrastructure, support, and expertise from the project managers.

The task agreements between PLI and the federal agencies are tightly structured to pre-

vent duplication of efforts and ensure that the projects are managed by qualified staff. Bill Dickinson, superintendent for the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, says the PLI has been invaluable in terms of getting projects off the ground, citing early success with the Discover Mojave and Forever Earth programs, expansion of volunteer rolls for litter cleanup events, and the Cultural Site Stewardship Program.

"The university brings increased resources to the partnership, and it has a wealth of knowledge and expertise in different disciplines," says Dickinson. "It's important to note that the Public Lands Institute is serving a broader need. It could be on a national or international level as to what it can bring to public lands management."

The long-term, overall goal in Rees' mind is straightforward. "There's an intrinsic value that we (at the PLI) all hold for public lands, and we want to get more people engaged with caring for our environment." ■

More Info: Visit publiclands.unlv.edu or call 702-895-4678.

Love at First Hike

Alum Finds Escape in Valley's Open Spaces

When Minnesota native Richard Lewnau visited Red Rock Canyon for the first time 27 years ago, it was love at first hike. "I thought, 'Wow, you don't have places like this in Minnesota,'" he says. Lewnau, '93 M.Ed, is doing just that. A member of Friends of Red Rock Canyon and the Sierra Club, he also volunteers for events organized by UNLV's Public Lands Institute to clean up litter, build trails, repair bridges, and remove graffiti.

Stewardship of public land is a key component to the PLI's mission, and Lewnau clearly takes it seriously — he's part of a group of volunteers that call themselves the "canyon keepers."

But his activities aren't limited to Red Rock. One of his favorite getaways is Cedar Breaks National Monument in Southern Utah. "I walk down one side of the road and pick up trash, come back the other side while listening to the sheep. It's just magnificent."

Lewnau teaches English at Desert Rose Adult High School, an alternative school in Las Vegas for adults who want to get their diplomas.

He previously taught at Johnson Middle School and enjoyed bringing students to Red Rock for the first time.

"It always amazes me that there are kids who have lived here all their lives but have never been out of the city," he says. "They really got a kick out of it, scrambling on rocks, boulder hopping, becoming curious as to where the trails go — it's like having a huge jungle gym or sandbox."



Alumnus Richard Lewnau is among the "canyon keepers" at Red Rock Canyon.

In the spring and summer he escapes to Mount Charleston, but once it becomes cool, he heads back to his old familiar spot. His favorite trail is Oak Creek, the last one on the scenic loop, where he enjoys waterfalls and pine trees, depending on the rain conditions. "All things taken together, I'd much rather go to Red Rock (than anywhere else)," he says. "It's difficult to think of a lot of cities where you only have to drive 20 minutes and hike a mile to be in a different world. I want to make sure we preserve the beauty and uniqueness so others can enjoy it too."

— Jennifer Lawson



Old appliances and landscape waste dumped on sites such as this one just minutes from Wheeler's RV on Las Vegas Boulevard attract recreational target shooters. (Photo by Geri Kodey)

Taking Aim

PLI Programs Target Desert Dumping Sites

Whether it's a hiker letting a granola bar wrapper flit away in the breeze or a construction company off-loading tons of drywall in the desert, littering and illegal dumping can have far-reaching effects.

"Littering is one of those things that a person may do and doesn't think it's a big deal, but it has a cumulative effect," says Doug Joslin of UNLV's Public Lands Institute (PLI). "Littering and dumping could block a wash and cause flooding, it creates a place for vectors like mosquitoes, and it could cause fires."

But, perhaps most important, littering damages the outdoor experience and diminishes the value of public lands. Visitors will think nobody cares, which leads to more littering, Joslin says.

Bill Dickinson, superintendent of the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, sees that scenario unfold regularly. Up to 250,000 visitors come to the lake on a busy weekend, leaving behind a significant amount of litter.

"It's a huge challenge to clean up the litter left behind. We're trying to educate people and provide an opportunity to act responsibly," he says.

Fortunately, land managers like Dickinson don't have to tackle the problem alone. With funding from the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act, they launched the first comprehensive, interagency anti-litter strategy to address the larger issue of littering and desert dumping. The Southern Nevada Take Pride in America program began in 2005 and is managed by PLI on

behalf of the National Park Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service.

The program is tapping into UNLV's research capabilities to boost its effectiveness. For example, Allison Wirth, a third-year student at UNLV's William S. Boyd School of Law, is analyzing littering and dumping fines and regulations. The federal agencies all have different processes and regulations, Joslin says, and enforcement could be more efficient if we identify improvements that could be made to the system. Another project will use geographic information system (GIS) techniques to build a database and strategy for cleaning up the public lands.

The efforts, which also include dozens of volunteer cleanup days through the Get Outdoors Nevada Program, will be coupled with a messaging campaign. Joslin hopes the campaign will become ingrained in the public's consciousness, much like Keep America Beautiful's pollution campaign with Iron Eyes Cody and the whimsical Woodsy Owl's "Give a Hoot: Don't Pollute" campaign for the U.S. Forest Service.

"There was a decrease in litter with those messaging campaigns," he says. "I'm hoping we can take what was successful from them and change (the public's) behavior so that next time they have a choice about dropping the litter where they are or walking 20 feet to the trash can, they'll walk the 20 feet."

— Jennifer Lawson

are we reaching our limits?

Boomtown growth, drought, and urban planning amidst increased land privatization are influencing quality of life in Nevada. UNLV experts weigh in on some of the challenges that citizens face.

Stories by Jennifer Lawson

Photos by Aaron Mayes and Geri Kodey





Joshua trees at the Desert National
Wildlife Refuge northwest of Las Vegas

are we reaching our limits?

Nevada has a greater percentage of land held in the public trust than any other state. With 83 percent of our land set aside for the use of citizens — and eight conservation/recreation areas and 19 wilderness areas near Southern Nevada alone — our natural inheritance gives us ample opportunity for recreation, solitude, and unique research opportunities.

But we have some holes growing in these deep pockets. Population growth and water shortages — coupled with a growing chorus of congressional leaders from around the country who want to privatize more land — are raising questions about the future of these lands. More importantly, they are forcing us to make decisions now that will determine the quality of life for future generations.

UNLV professors are exploring public lands issues from many angles. Here, some of them share their insights and opinions on the challenges that lie ahead.

HOW HAS SOUTHERN NEVADA'S GROWTH AFFECTED THE ECOLOGICAL HEALTH OF OUR MORE POPULAR PUBLIC LANDS, INCLUDING RED ROCK CANYON AND MOUNT CHARLESTON?

Brett Riddle Our public planners and private developers seem to have no working concept of how important it is to have a “buffer” between urban and wild lands. High-density urban development abuts directly against popular and even less popular (but perhaps more valuable for biodiversity) public lands. This creates “hard edges” that result in negative impacts.

These planners and developers are also not provided any incentive to recognize well-known concepts in conservation biology. A lot of thinking goes into understanding the importance of landscape connectivity — including core wild lands areas, buffers, and corridors between areas — but I never actually hear these concepts discussed seriously in public arenas, let alone see them implemented as one component of planning for explosive urban development. Instead, we allow “leapfrog” developments to pop up without having open public discussions that include critical input from professional conservation biologists and public lands managers.

Stan Smith Damage to Red Rock Canyon and other popular public lands is a result of two primary factors: wild horses/burros and off-road vehicle use. Damage by off-road vehicles is clear — they damage vegetation, destroy biological soil crusts (which hold soils in place), and help spread exotic species into more remote areas that were formerly roadless and thus free of exotic species.

Wild horses and burros, which are not a direct effect of our

growth, are devastating Red Rock nonetheless. By severely overgrazing desert rangelands, they have opened up the ecosystem to invasion by red brome, an exotic grass. Dense stands of red brome then set up the ecosystem for damaging wildfires, as happened in Red Rock (and in much of Lincoln County) last spring. If this continues, much of the Joshua tree parkland that Las Vegas residents love will be lost, replaced by an exotic grass-dominated system.

SOME PEOPLE STILL CALL THE DESERT A 'WASTELAND.' HOW DO YOU RESPOND?

Robert Futrell This sentiment springs from a worldview that understands climates and landscapes such as ours as being hostile to comfortable human habitation and relatively useless and, therefore, a waste. We look for uses, no doubt. But the uses we then put it to reflect that very cultural construction of desert as wasteland.

For instance, the Mojave Desert is the site of the heaviest nuclear testing and dumping in the nation. A primary rationale for this has been (and still is) that the desert is not useful for anything else. It's perceived to be uninhabited by other humans as well as by flora and fauna. It's seen as just a bunch of rocks and dirt and therefore fine for contamination (and thus is rendered productive). Some have called our surrounds “national sacrifice areas” because of this.

For the indigenous Shoshone or Paiute nations, the land is sacred. In fact, the desert land is a metaphor for no less than life itself, with place names that speak of springs, animals, and valuable plants. The indigenous experience is an example I often use to talk about how others see the desert as much, much more than a wasteland.

meet the experts

Brett Riddle

Biological Sciences Professor

Research Interests: conservation biology, mammology, Western North American biogeography

Favorite Public Lands: top of Mt. Charleston; Bridge Mountain in Red Rock Canyon; Ash Meadows

Stan Smith

Biological Sciences Professor

Research Interests: invasive species, desert plant ecology, global climate change

Favorite Public Lands: Death Valley National Park; Cottonwood Canyon in Red Rock Canyon

Andy Kirk

History Professor

Research Interests: public history, Western history, environmental history

Favorite Public Lands: Red Rock Canyon and Mt. Charleston



John Gurzinski

Overgrazing has opened up the Mojave Desert to red brome, an exotic grass that can lead to wildfires.

Brett Riddle One thing I try to do is get people to think about our “arid lands” rather than “desert” landscapes. The word “desert” itself has negative connotations. I find it quite easy to get people to appreciate our arid landscapes if I simply get them out there and have a captive audience away from the city. We in academia need to do much more outreach of this sort.

I find also that it helps greatly to get people thinking in the context of the entire landscape mosaic in our Basin and Range and Colorado Plateau regions. I point out that one cannot stand anywhere in a desert in southwestern North America without being in close proximity to at least one and sometimes multiple mountain ranges. This full mosaic of deserts and mountains, and the shifts in climates and habitats over thousands and millions of years, has led to the development of the most biodiversity-rich landscape in North America. There are more species of mammals, for example, in the Southwest than anywhere else in the United States and Canada.

Stan Smith The view that deserts are wastelands is not only ignorant, but completely inexcusable. There are many people who feel

that deserts are the most spectacular landscapes on earth, myself included. Why is Death Valley a national park? Because it is an exceptional, surrealistic landscape that people go out of their way to experience. Deserts are also hotspots of biodiversity. For example, Ash Meadows in Nevada has the second highest concentration of endemic biodiversity of any location on the North American continent.

Karen Harry Archaeological studies have shown that people have used and made a living from this landscape for thousands of years. By taking a fine-grained look at the desert and its resources, we begin to see that it actually contains a great deal of diversity, and we find that the prehistoric and early historic people who lived in this region understood that diversity and knew how to make use of it to survive in what might superficially appear to be a very harsh environment.



Tim Farnham

Environmental Studies Professor

Research Interests: environmental law and policy, environmental values

Favorite Public Lands: Zion National Park

Karen Harry

Anthropology Professor

Research Interests: Southwestern and experimental archaeology, prehistoric trade and exchange, organization of craft production

Favorite Public Lands: Corn Creek at the Desert National Wildlife Refuge

Patrick Drohan

Geosciences Professor

Research Interests: soil genesis, classification, and mapping; biogeochemistry; soils and land use change; soil and water degradation

Favorite Public Lands: Lee Canyon on Mt. Charleston

Robert Futrell

Sociology Professor

Research Interests: Environmental sociology, social movements

Favorite Public Lands: Sloan Canyon, Red Rock Canyon, Valley of Fire

are we reaching our limits?



Some researchers are concerned about Southern Nevada's lack of buffer zones between developments and wilderness areas.

Andy Kirk The misunderstanding that deserts were wastelands has led to some ill-fated decision making about Western land use in the past century. Unfortunately, as that opinion changed, a whole new set of challenges arose from overuse of fragile Southwestern environments. Maybe we were better off when people misunderstood the subtle beauty of the desert?

Patrick Drohan I personally have never met someone who has said this. I worked for the federal government in Colorado for two years, for nonprofits off and on for many years, and have been a teacher for 10. I believe the “wasteland perception” statement is more myth than reality.

Tim Farnham I think research that looks at the reasons why people feel this way is not only fascinating but an incredibly important topic. I know that to some people, particularly to those who grew up in areas where there is more rainfall, the desert looks like an area that's been bulldozed and left. But the desert harbors a great number of species that show remarkable strategies of adaptation.

HOW DOES UNLV'S ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS AFFECT YOUR RESEARCH?

Andy Kirk When I moved here from upstate New York, some of my colleagues wondered how I could do public history in Nevada. What they failed to recognize is that public history is greatly facilitated by the land management agencies. With Nevada's huge federal presence, there are remarkable opportunities for public history research in the region. Our students — a new generation of public historians — are playing an active role in helping federal agencies deal with the management of the public lands and in ensuring that cultural resources are carefully researched and preserved in the region.

Stan Smith UNLV is the only research university located within the boundaries of the Mojave Desert, one of the four major deserts of the North American continent. California universities have historically been the leaders of research conducted in the Mojave, but UNLV has emerged as the leader in the past decade or so. Thanks to having much of the land surrounding Las Vegas in public hands, the research opportunities are infinite, not only from an access viewpoint, but also because land management agencies need good information in order to manage their lands properly. They need information on geology, soils, ecology, biodiversity, and archaeology. Having public lands nearby also is a great benefit for our educational programs, as we have many opportunities to take students into the field so that they can experience natural landscapes in person.

Karen Harry Perhaps because of the view that deserts are nothing but empty wastelands, relatively little archaeological research has been conducted in Southern Nevada. At the same time, the archaeological sites on public lands are protected from the destruction that results from

land development. As an archaeologist, I find myself living next to the ideal archaeological laboratory, one where intact archaeological landscapes still exist and significant archaeological questions remain to be investigated.

Robert Futrell I've long been fascinated with the immense speed of growth in the Las Vegas Valley and what this meant for resources such as water and land. It was easy to see, when I arrived in 1999, that the Summerlin development was going to abut the Red Rock area and that proximity would lead to other attempts to put houses, etc., in the midst of pristine, unique areas such as Red Rock and the Calico Basin. We have seen arguments for limiting development such as the “ring around the valley” proposal.

These are classic cases of trying to find a balance between what urban sociologists call the *use value* and the *exchange value* of an area. The use value refers to the aspects such as the aesthetic appeal of a landscape, feelings of identification with a landscape, a clean and secure environment. Exchange value refers to ways that the land can be used for money. So maintaining open land for a park or natural habitat versus using that land for a housing development is an example. These are issues that I often explore with students in my classes.

WHAT ARE THE GREATEST CHALLENGES FACING NEVADA'S PUBLIC LANDS?

Patrick Drohan If you are an advocate for wilderness then urban expansion is an issue. If you are an advocate for mining, it might be the increased regulation of federal lands or urban expansion. There is a lot of open space out there though. Las Vegas' footprint really is not that big if you have driven around the state. But if the city drills wells in the central part of the state, the potential loss of water tables and rare species could be a pretty serious issue.

Modern Day Land Rush

LANDMARK LEGISLATION
CHALLENGED BY ITS OWN SUCCESS



A large map of Nevada hangs on my office wall. The splotches of color on it never cease to amaze students and colleagues who step in to look at it. There's a series of north-south green fingers that look, to the eyes of author John McPhee, like "an army of caterpillars marching south." These are our national forests, encompassing many of Nevada's treed ranges.

A diagonal pink and brown swath in south-central Nevada looks as forbidding on the map as it is on the ground. These lands are used to support our national defense. Purple surrounds the state's highest peak, Mt. Wheeler; lines the shores of Lake Mead and the Colorado River; and forms a triangle along the California border north of Death Valley. These lands are our national treasures, committed by law to protection by the National Park Service.

But two colors in particular startle mapgazers most and best reflect the residue of Nevada's history as an arid, public lands state. The map on my wall is nearly 70 percent yellow and less than 15 percent white. The yellow land falls under the management of the federal Bureau of Land Management. The scant white land is all that is privately owned.

Innovative Policy

The Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) is accomplishing what federal law and policy failed to do — though not for want of trying — for more than 100 years: the privatization of significant amounts of land in Clark County. Since 1999, more than 10,000 acres of federal land in and around Las

Vegas have been auctioned to private developers under the act, creating a pot of nearly \$3 billion dollars. The November 2005 auction brought in more than \$790 million. Within the present disposal boundaries, nearly 46,000 acres remain to be released for auction.

Fully appreciating the policy innovation of SNPLMA requires looking into the past. For more than a century, Congress aimed to privatize Western public lands and spur economic development through such laws as the Homestead Act, the Stockraising Homestead Act, and the Nevada-specific Pittman Act. These laws offered federal land for sale at nominal prices if settlers placed the lands into agricultural production.

Privatization was notoriously ineffective here in Southern Nevada where water is scarce and the sun so fierce. But until 1976, the yellow lands were "open to entry" by settlers and subject to sale. That year, Congress recognized the lasting value of our public lands; it repealed the land disposal laws and declared it to be the policy of the United States to retain ownership over the public lands and to manage them for public purposes.

The century of haphazard land privatization left Nevada with several problems. There was precious little land in private hands, particularly around Las Vegas, challenging the ambitions of a growing state. And the disposal laws created a crazy quilt of ownership, challenging both developers and federal land managers. Before SNPLMA, the crazy quilt's pattern could be re-pieced by exchanging federal land for private land. But studies showed

that the United States got the short end of the bargain and often traded away land at far less than its true value.

New Challenges

SNPLMA sought to solve these problems through a simple policy innovation. To ensure the American people receive fair value for the public land, it allows sale only by auction, and the proceeds of the auctions are statutorily bound to be used for purposes essential to sound federal land management. Importantly, this includes acquiring lands that have high value for conservation but low value for economic development. Under SNPLMA, public land is released for development, the feds get fair value, and there is a pool of money available to help ensure environmental conservation.

Seven years into the policy experiment, some new challenges have arisen. The greater-than-expected purse from the auctions has led to suggestions of using SNPLMA money for other things, including financing the U.S. government's general operations. The onus is on Nevada and its federal land managers to demonstrate that the money will truly enhance conservation efforts. But Congress' judgment in 1976 should not be forgotten: The public lands are assets of lasting value to all of us and should remain so. Any fruits from their privatization should be devoted to enhancing the value of the lands remaining in public ownership.

Bret Birdsong teaches public land and natural resources law at the William S. Boyd School of Law.

are we reaching our limits?

Brett Riddle I think at the core is a profound naivete about our Mojave and Great Basin landscapes and about the major sources of their fragility in the face of disturbance. Because people generally don't understand the basic ecology and evolutionary history of native plants and animals on these lands, it is far too easy for politicians with either explicit or hidden agendas to make their cases for policies or projects that can have irreversible negative impacts on biological integrity. Indeed, we are seeing an accelerating attack on the very existence of public lands — both in the obvious ongoing conversion of public lands into housing developments and strip malls, and in the far more insidious calls for a future conversion of the majority of Nevada's public lands into private holdings.

Stan Smith Invasive species is probably number one because of their effect on increasing fires and thus destroying our natural desert communities. Second is off-road vehicle use and abuse. Third is the push by the public to accelerate transfer of public lands into private ownership, which could dramatically decrease recreational opportunities for the public. And fourth is water procurement (increased pumping and delivery of water to urbanizing areas), which will have negative effects on natural springs and riparian systems, around which much of our biodiversity is congregated.

Andy Kirk Millions of people from around the world are starting to recognize what many Nevadans have known for a long time: Nevada has amazing public spaces for all kinds of recreation that form the cornerstone of our quality of life. Selling off public lands to fuel unchecked development makes no sense and could impact quality of life if not carefully planned.



The Chalcedon checkerspot is one of more than 100 species of butterflies that have been recorded in Clark County, some of which are found nowhere else in the world.

Robert Futrell While urban and rural population centers remain widely distributed despite a doubling of the state's population in the last 15 years, the exuberant pace of urban development in the Las Vegas and Reno-Tahoe areas has raised the awareness of resource issues associated with urban sprawl.

HOW IMPORTANT ARE OUR PUBLIC LANDS TO QUALITY OF LIFE IN SOUTHERN NEVADA?

Stan Smith This is the classic "don't know what you had 'till it's gone" story. Many people do not appreciate public lands, advocating transfer to private hands, even though they use those public lands and take them for granted. Then, when that happens and they no longer have access to the landscape, they complain. People who have access to public lands lead higher quality lives by having a variety of recreational opportunities that are not controlled by the for-profit private sector, and they invariably become more informed citizens because they have a better understanding of deserts, wildlife, riparian zones, etc. Anyone who has ever lived in the Midwest or East knows that public land is an invaluable asset.

Tim Farnham How we treat our public lands is a great reflection on not only the quality of life that we want to have today, but also on the kind that we'd like to pass on to future generations.

Brett Riddle In my opinion, the quality of life in Southern Nevada is completely dependent on our public lands. We need to be much more aggressive and creative about teaching Southern Nevadans — so many being recent transplants from very different sorts of landscapes — about the biological uniqueness, spiritual importance, and especially the extreme fragility of our public arid landscapes. In fact, I wonder what the reactions of most people with long histories in Nevada would be were they to travel to west Texas (another expansive arid landscape) and realize that access to most of the land is restricted because so much of it is private.

Karen Harry As more and more people live increasingly urban lifestyles, public lands are the last refuge for our natural environment and archaeological resources. Protection of these resources is essential for the quality of life of future generations.

Patrick Drohan Some associate their life with that of wildlife or solitude in open spaces. Others do it with a four-wheeler and a .38 special. I am not one to judge what someone should enjoy. That's the beauty of public lands and the constitution.

Robert Futrell The future of our public lands will, in part, determine our social, ecological, and even psychological well-being. We need to better identify quality-of-life concerns with our connection to and respect for the natural environment that surrounds us. This means developing an appreciation for the desert and the myriad forms of life that inhabit it. It's a step toward bringing that appreciation back to our urban life and thinking more ecologically, more holistically, about how we use resources, how we can mesh human living more closely with the requirements of our wider environment. ■



WHAT I THINK, KNOW, AND WONDER ABOUT

by Steve Parker

Liquid Assets

A PRIMER ON SOUTHERN NEVADA'S EFFORTS TO KEEP THE WATER FLOWING

The adequacy of our water supply here in Las Vegas is conditioned by official decisions about what to do with Nevada's public lands. More than 85 percent of our water comes from the Colorado River (Lake Mead), and increased demand for it is directly related to the sale of these lands. This is so because, as they are offered to developers, more and more water must be found for the houses, hotels, and schools those developers construct.

Our allocation from the Colorado is 300,000 acre feet per year. A football field is a little bit less than an acre in size so just imagine a gridiron covered in water to a depth of one foot. We get 300,000 of these per year. That's it for 1.5 million people. We're already pumping all the football fields of water to which we're legally entitled, and growth resulting from the public land sales is further taxing our supplies.

What are state and local decision makers doing to stretch and then increase our existing supplies? Here's a quick look at several options they are pursuing.

Water Banking — This works a lot like the savings you put in your own bank. Through the Southern Nevada Groundwater Bank, we store river water in the ground right here in the Las Vegas Valley. The Arizona Water Bank has agreed to set aside 1.25 million acre feet for us over the next 35 years, at a cost of \$330 million. A third account is a virtual water bank in

California. We earn credits in this bank by allowing our occasional surpluses of water to flow past Hoover Dam for use by the Golden State. They get some of our water today and our account gets credited. This transaction entitles us, at some future date, to an identical amount of their water as it flows past our door (Lake Mead).

New Construction — Planning is well under way for the importation of a quarter million acre feet of water from northern Nevada. If approved, the water will be pumped from deep aquifers in Lincoln and White Pine counties and then sent south through some 400 miles of pipeline. Another project on the table involves the construction of a dam and reservoir near the Mexican border. It would save water at that end and credit a like amount for our use here.

Desalination — Plans are also being considered to have Las Vegas pay for the construction of a seawater desalination plant in Southern California. This would be both a construction project and a crediting operation. The plan: If and when potable water flows from such a plant, we would take a like amount from California's share of Lake Mead. It's thus an approach based on substitution: We take

something that belongs to them (Colorado River water) and provide something else to them in return (desalinated seawater). However, this idea faces considerable opposition.

Conservation and Increased Efficiency

— Fortunately, plans for finding more and more water also include attention to using less and less; that is, to conservation. A few of the things going on here: The county has revamped its building codes to require water-wise construction. The Southern Nevada Water Authority pays property owners to remove water-gulping sod and replace it with xeriscaping. Restrictions on golf courses and man-made lakes have also been put into effect.

Still, no matter how many options there are, we have a long way to go given our unsustainable policy of converting the public lands in our valley from open space to new sources of urban/suburban water demand.

Steve Parker is a political science professor at UNLV.

The water level at Lake Mead has dropped so much in recent years — more than 76 feet from January 2000 to December 2005 — that the marina had to be moved.



Killer Chops: Ronnie Vannucci, drummer for rock band

By Erin O'Donnell

When the backstory of The Killers is told, UNLV almost always gets a mention. Entertainment writers can't seem to resist the idea that one of today's most successful new rock bands used to steal onto the drummer's college campus to rehearse.

That was 2002, when Ronnie Vannucci was still a music major, studying classical percussion and trying to strike sparks with this new band he'd joined. When he sold his house, they lost his garage as a practice space. So Vannucci figured a way for them to slip into Alta Ham Fine Arts building after hours.

He confirms the tale now with a touch of justification. "I was a student," he says. "I was basically practicing."

Clearly, the practice paid off. Since their debut album, *Hot Fuss*, came out in 2004, The Killers have zoomed from obscurity to ubiquity on the strength of hits like "Somebody Told Me" and "Mr. Brightside." Their sound picks up where some of the most enduring bands of the 1980s left off, adding a layer of alternative rock to the synth pop cultivated by The Cure, The Smiths, and Duran Duran.

Music critics and fans alike have showered them with accolades for over a year now, proclaiming The Killers rookies of the year and predicting nothing but great things ahead. It can be hard for a newly christened celebrity to leave that adulation behind when it's time to take up with real life again, but Vannucci, 29, says normal is necessary. "When I get home, the first thing I do is kiss the wife and mow the lawn."

Going Legit

After two dizzying years of conquering the music world, the band's four members returned to Las Vegas last fall to work on their sophomore album. Daily rehearsals and writing sessions — now totally legit, in a local recording studio

— are the routine, and expectations are high.

"A lot has fallen onto our shoulders," Vannucci said. "It isn't like before, when we just had all this time to make the first record. Now we need to put our nose to the grindstone a little more."

He said that pressure — not the *Spin* magazine cover, not the MTV Video Music Award — is what finally convinced him that The Killers had made it. No longer juggling band practice with school and shifts as a photographer at the Little Chapel of the Flowers, he's living as a musician first and foremost, just as he'd always hoped.

Classical Training

Born and raised in Las Vegas, Vannucci said he began turning everything into a percussion instrument about the time he started school. "I was kind of a weird kid, banging on the washer and dryer in the garage and singing to myself," he said. "My parents figured they'd better get me some drums before I ruined all their appliances."

Vannucci started private lessons as a



(Above) Ronnie Vannucci, drummer for The Killers, performs at the Hard Rock in Las Vegas last fall. Off the tour, Vannucci makes time to drop in on practice sessions at Beam Music Hall. (At left) Vannucci practices marimba with Tyler Lozier, a freshman percussion major.



child but took a break from them after a couple of years. In high school, his outlook changed and he took up formal study again while starting to play in local bands. "I decided I wanted to be really, really good," he said.

When it came time for college, he

scored a partial scholarship to Boston's renowned Berklee College of Music, with the chance to earn a full ride through an audition. But his lack of chart-reading skills showed through and held him back.

Vannucci mapped out what seemed like a safer route. He decided to stay in



Geri Kodey

Las Vegas, major in biology at UNLV, and play in a band when he could. His plan was practical — and short-lived. About the same time, he caught a rare concert by Tom Waits with a stage full of marimba players. Vannucci, who was listening to a lot of classical music at the time, was in awe.

"In your early 20s, you start to realize who you are a little bit. And I said I didn't think I would be happy doing anything other than music," he said. With that, it was goodbye biology.

Studying classical percussion did more than teach him technical skills, Vannucci said — it required him to learn a variety of instruments and develop a discerning ear. "It's different from just beating the

drums in a rock band. I think I'm a more musical player because of it."

Dean Gronemeier, music professor and associate dean of the College of Fine Arts, has followed Vannucci's career from the start. "A lot of rock drummers don't have a musical understanding of melodies, harmonies, and form that comes with training," he says. "You can really hear that come out in the band. They have great hooks, catchy tunes — there's a lot on the ball with them."

Vannucci was "inches away" from finishing his degree when The Killers took off. He hasn't given up on getting it done, although he can't say when that may be.

As the band shapes its sophomore effort, Vannucci said he thinks all

members have grown as songwriters. He's pleased that the new songs have a more classic sound, but knows there's a risk in changing too much too soon. "I don't know if we'll be writing another 'Somebody Told Me,'" he said. "It's scary because a lot of the newer fans kind of cling to that a bit."

And even though they've been blessed by MTV and packaged for the young hipster market, Vannucci said he's gratified to see fans of all ages at their shows.

"In Texas, there were some 60-year-old dudes who have seen the history of rock 'n' roll, and they're buying into our crap," he says, astonished but flattered. "If we're striking with those guys, it's probably the highest compliment."

■ 1970s

Obie P. Amacker Jr., '75 BS Business Administration, is director of the National Security Policy and Technology Division of the Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. He is past president of the International Institute of Nuclear Materials Management. He was elected a fellow of the institute in 1999 and received its meritorious service award in 2003. He and his wife, Judy, have been married 26 years and are avid boaters. They live in Richland, Wash.

Mark E. Ferrario, '78 BS Accounting, is a partner in the renamed law firm of Kummer Kaempfer Bonner Renshaw & Ferrario. He serves as chairman of its litigation department. He has handled some of the state's most highly publicized cases. He represented a major subcontractor in the MGM and Hilton hotel fires in the 1980s and was also part of the lead trial team in the \$90 million lawsuit that resulted from the 1988 PEPCON chemical plant explosion in Henderson.

Ted DeCorte, '79 MA History, is regional vice president of marketing and business development for Nevada Pacific Dental, which was recently purchased by Dental Benefit Providers. He is president-elect of the Clark County Association of Health Underwriters and a board member and treasurer of the Nevada Association of Health Underwriters. He also is an officer in the financial planning and insurance firm DeCorte & Associates, which is owned by his wife, Christine.

■ 1980s

David Cooley, '81 BS Hotel Administration, is the proprietor of Abbey Food and Bar in West Hollywood, Calif., which was recently named by Zagat Survey as one of the hottest spots for nightlife in Los Angeles. The Ambassador Council of AIDS Project Los Angeles honored him last year for his longstanding creative support and commitment to the organization and the community. His other charitable endeavors include Toys for Tots, Aid for AIDS, South African Families and People with AIDS, and Gay & Lesbian Elder Housing.

Mark Ayers, '82 BS Business Administration, is a fire division supervisor for the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards & Training. He



earned an MPA from City University and graduated from the executive fire officer program at the National Fire Academy. His hobbies include watching sporting events, taking long walks, and reading. He and his wife of 28 years, Terri, have two children and one grandchild. They live in Salem.

Michael Loewy, '86 BA Sociology, was awarded tenure at the University of North Dakota, where he is an associate professor of counseling and chair of its counseling department. He arrived at UND in 2002 as director of training for the doctoral program in counseling psychology. His primary research emphasis is multicultural competence. His passion is working for social justice and serving the underserved and underrepresented. He previously taught at San Diego State University and the University of Missouri, Columbia. He earned a master's degree and a Ph.D. in counseling psychology from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

■ 1990s

Nickie E. Diersen, '90 MBA, is president and cofounder of Nesco Products Inc., a global internet-product distribution company. The company owns ManagingMoney.com, a leading national personal finance portal. She enjoys traveling, hiking, and following politics. She and her husband, **Michael**, '88 MBA, have two daughters, Samantha, 13, and Tiffany, 11.

Jack Daryanani, '92 BS Electrical Engineering, is president and owner of American Merchant Systems, a payment-processing company that provides credit card and check processing services to businesses. The company sells the equipment and software to process face-to-face and Internet payments. It also works with banks to provide back-end solutions to payment processing.

Martin Dean Dupalo, '92 BA Communication Studies, '93 BA Political Science, teaches political science at UNLV and was recently admitted as a doctoral candidate in public affairs. He is attending school with the help of the G.I. bill. He once received the Harry S. Truman Congressional Scholarship and then attended Carnegie Mellon University where he earned a master's degree in public management and policy. In April, he received the National Points of Light Award for establishing and managing a food-donation program for the Las Vegas Rescue Mission

A Best-Laid Plan: Katie Koll, Entrepreneur

The music was pumping. Famed stylist Laurent D. — hairdresser to celebrity clients Teri Hatcher, Uma Thurman, and Sharon Stone — was clipping locks. Appetizers from the Hard Rock's trendy Simon Kitchen & Bar made their way around the room. And Motley Crue rocker Vince Neil donated wine to supplement the free-flowing champagne.

It wasn't the Los Angeles opening of a star stylist's new salon, but the September launch of The Cutting Room, a new Henderson salon that is the brainchild of 23-year-old Katie Koll, '05 BS Business Administration.

It took Koll and four UNLV classmates less than six weeks to write a proposal for The Cutting Room last spring for her business-plan class. In May, the proposal landed among the finalists in the Donald W. Reynolds Governor's Cup Business Plan Competition, held by the Nevada Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology.

The four partners who helped Koll write the plan for The Cutting Room — Nataly Tatone, Lance Howard, Cory VanAken, and Phil Sander — pursued other post-college plans. But Koll, who worked the front desk at Diva Studio in Henderson while a UNLV student, was smitten with the salon business and wanted to implement plans for The Cutting Room.

"I liked the concept of making people feel better about themselves," Koll says. "I liked the family feeling of working at a salon. This industry doesn't have a corporate feel. Everybody comes together as a team to help someone look and feel better."

Securing the Backing

So Koll made a gutsy move. During a hair-coloring appointment with Michael Boychuk, the popular celebrity stylist who owns Amp Salon at the Palms and manages The Salon at Canyon Ranch Spa inside The Venetian, Koll mentioned the business plan she had helped assemble. Boychuk asked to see the plan; after the two had several meetings, Boychuk forwarded Koll to two of his longtime employees: Kevin Teitler, who is now The Cutting Room's artistic director, and Dawn Oguri, who is its salon director. In addition, Boychuk, good friends with both Laurent D. and Vince Neil, talked the two into their contributions to The Cutting Room's opening.

Koll also found an investor: Her father, Jerry Koll, an environmental engineer who lives in Summerlin, put up the capital to open the salon.

Richard Arend, the professor who advised Koll and her classmates on their Governor's Cup entry, said Koll's "experience and

Homeless Shelter. He also serves on the board of directors of Safe House and on the city of Las Vegas' Community Development Review Board. His hobbies include trying different restaurants and traveling.

Lynette Alcones Gehlhausen, '92 BS Nursing, earned an MPA from California State University, Hayward,

in 1995. She is a full-time mom to sons Michael and Matthais. She and her husband, Jay, adopted the boys from Guatemala. They live in Lawrenceville, Ga.

Michelle Lorenzo, '92 BS Business Administration, is the top-producing sales executive at Panorama Towers, a high-rise condominium project. She

contacts in the industry” and her ability to marshal finances and employees were essential to getting The Cutting Room off the ground. He added that Koll and her group had “a good grasp of the key success factors in the industry and the market they chose.”

Amending the Plan

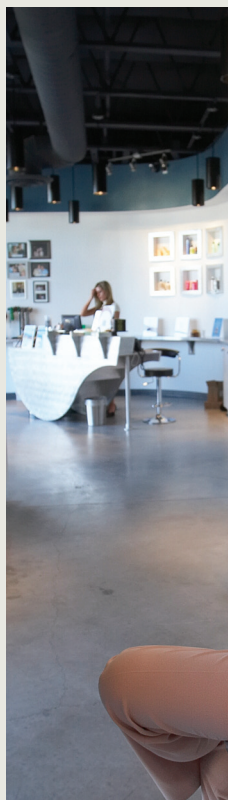
But as with any big idea, plans change along the way. Koll said roughly half of the proposal she and her classmates submitted for the Governor’s Cup competition stayed intact. Out were plans to give every Cutting Room employee 5 percent ownership in the company after a certain period of time with the salon; Governor’s Cup judges warned that vested interests could get complicated if staffers left to take jobs with other salons. Koll also boosted The Cutting Room’s planned number of product lines from two to three to ensure the salon could offer shampoos and conditioners “for everybody’s price range.”

Koll also faced obstacles no business plan could address. Delays in obtaining Henderson business and building permits — due mostly to the difficult time Koll had getting the power and phones turned on — pushed the salon’s opening from early August to mid-September.

And once she set a specific opening date — Sept. 17, her mother’s birthday — “things got stressful,” Koll said. “Usually, salons are open a month and then they have their grand opening. Our grand opening was our first day.” Plumbers and electricians were still working just hours before The Cutting Room opened. “It kind of felt like everyone was against me at one point because nothing was going right,” Koll recalls.

Today, Koll is grateful for those early obstacles. “I know now that there will be issues, and I know how to handle those issues,” she said. “You can’t get angry when things go wrong and you can’t look for people to blame. You just have to think of a solution.”

Koll also credited her professors for their guidance. Daniel McAllister, a management professor, “taught me about life and management, and gave everybody a good idea of what the world would be like when we got out there.” And Stoney Alder, who



Katie Koll launched a Henderson salon on the strength of the business plan she and four fellow students wrote before graduating.

Gerri Koday

taught Koll’s human resource management class, “really interacted well with the students,” she said.

Alder remembers Koll as an eager student. “She had a wonderful attitude and was motivated,” he said. “More important, she related well and got along well with others, including both students and faculty.”

Koll plans to use all she’s learned in school and on the job to significantly expand The Cutting Room. The 2,800-square-foot salon, 10575 S. Eastern Ave., has 16 stylist stations and just six stylists, so there’s “room to grow,” Koll said. She would like to open another salon in Nevada, as well as one in California. She also dreams of an outpost in New York City.

But those plans will have to wait a few years. “I’m going to focus for at least the next five years on this salon. It’s like watching your kid grow up — you want to be there every day. I love being here, working long days, and feeling like I’ve achieved something.”

—Jennifer Robison

moved into the real estate field in 2003 after many years working in the casino industry. She began her first career at the Mirage in a slot marketing position and later moved into jobs as the VIP services manager and a casino marketing executive.

Sam Palmer, ’92 MBA, is senior vice president and the Western operating

group manager for the Nevada, California, Utah, Arizona, Idaho, and New Mexico offices of Terracon, a consulting engineering firm. He also serves on the board of directors of the employee-owned company. A regis-



tered professional engineer, he has more than 22 years of experience in the environmental, geotechnical, and construction materials engineering industry. He is a fellow with the American Society of Civil Engineers and is active in many professional organizations, including the American Concrete Institute and the American Public Works Association.

Robert Whitfield, ’92 BS Biology, is an assistant professor of plastic surgery at the Medical College of Wisconsin and on the medical staff of Froedtert Hospital. His clinical emphasis is on plastic surgery of the face and breast, including





Making a Splash: Vaune Kadlubek, Hall of Famer

To her students, Vaune Kadlubek is a tough, but trusted, adviser. To the rest of the university, she's a dedicated employee who's called the UNLV campus home since 1976. In the world of water polo, however, Kadlubek is known as something else: a legend.

On Jan. 14, Kadlubek was inducted into the U.S. Water Polo Hall of Fame. The honor came after a career that saw her become the first female to play on a high school boys water polo team and to referee an international match. She also spent a 10-year stint as a member of the U.S. national team, which she later went on to coach.

Secret Weapon

Kadlubek's career in the sport began at the YMCA in Santa Barbara, Calif. "I didn't even know what water polo was until I got into high school," she says. "Swimming was always my sport, but once I found out that there was a ball involved in water polo, I knew right away it was for me."

It didn't take Kadlubek long to master the basics, and that ignited her competitive spirit. Since there wasn't a girl's team at Santa Barbara High School, she tried out for the boy's team and earned a starting spot. "I was like a secret weapon at first, because nobody knew how to guard me," she says.

Though she came of age as the feminist movement broke new ground in women's sports, Kadlubek says her little-known sport always provided plenty of opportunities. "For me, I'd always played water polo with guys, so it wasn't that big of a deal. In fact, when I started playing with the club team in Merced (Calif.) after high school, it was the first time I played against other women."

The water polo community just saw her as someone who could play. "I was fortunate to have the skills necessary to compete with the guys," she says. "One of the only things that made me different as a player back then was that they had to open up another locker room for me when the team traveled."

While playing for a California club team after high school, she decided to come to UNLV on an academic scholarship. "My parents loved Las Vegas," she says. "So we piled in our Suburban and made the trip from Santa Barbara. My parents dropped me off on Maryland Parkway, told me to find out what I could about the university, and said they'd be back later to pick me up."

Wes Mock, then head coach of UNLV's swim team, saw her in the university's pool one day swimming for fun and recruited her for the Lady Rebels swim team. She spent her breaks in Southern California practicing as a member of the burgeoning women's national water polo team.

"As pioneers, we were always pushing the sport of women's water polo — in Holland, Australia, Canada, and here in the United States," says Kadlubek. Their goal, as is true in most sports, was the Olympics, a dream that would finally come true in the 2000 Summer Games in Sydney.

"It took a lot of hard work from many dedicated people to get

cosmetic, reconstructive, and revisional procedures. He received his medical degree from the University of Nevada School of Medicine.

Cathy Planchard, '93 BS Business Administration and BA Communication Studies, '97 MBA, has been promoted to vice president of marketing and corporate communications for VIACK, a company concerned with secure online collaboration and business communication tools. A longtime employee, she oversees outbound marketing and communications vehicles, including corporate communications, public relations, lead generation, website, promotions,

and events. Previously, she was a marketing manager for Motorola Computer Group.

Aaron Kubicek, '94 BS Biology, earned a dental degree from Oregon Health Sciences University School of Dentistry and now practices in Las Vegas. He and his wife, Jodie, are parents of an infant daughter.

Armen Nikogosian, '95 BS Biology, graduated from medical school and finished residency training in internal medicine at Maricopa Medical Center in Phoenix in 2003. In 2004, he began practicing in Las Vegas.

Christina M. Aguilera, '96 BA Environmental Studies, is director of environmental services for Jefferson County School District in Colorado. Previously, she served as director of environmental health and safety at the University of Northern Colorado, where she also earned a master of public health degree. She lives in Westminster.

Karen Beza, '96 BA Political Science, is an associate attorney practicing intellectual property litigation and earned her law degree from California Western School of Law. She enjoys surfing and spending time with her longtime boyfriend and her pets. She lives in San Diego.

Denise DeMarco Kuerzi, '96 BA Communication Studies, is a professional dancer, dance instructor, and bartender. She also owns Slumber Parties by Denise, a company focusing on relationship enhancement for women. She married Marcus Kuerzi on July 17. They live in Arizona.

Scott A. Mills, '96 BS Hotel Administration, has worked for Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts for more than nine years. He will be the opening director of food and beverage for the new Four Seasons Hotel Silicon Valley. Previously, he worked at Four Seasons properties in Beverly Hills, Calif., and Dallas. He lives in West Hollywood, Calif.

us there,” she says. “From our first game as a national team against Australia in 1976 to our exhibition match prior to the 1984 games in Los Angeles, we wanted to spark an interest and show that women’s water polo was for real.”

Tough-Love Adviser

When Kadlubek wasn’t busy promoting the sport at the Olympic level, she completed her undergraduate degree and went on to earn her master’s degree from UNLV in 1983. She then joined UNLV as a women’s swimming coach, a position she held prior to being named head coach of the U.S. Women’s National Water Polo Team.

“When I became the national team coach, I realized I couldn’t coach in both places, I needed an 8-to-5 job,” she says.

So Kadlubek interned with UNLV’s athletic academic advising department for a year before landing a job as an academic adviser, a position she’s held for the past 10 years.

“I love athletic academic advising because I get to stay with the students from the recruiting trip, through four or five years of school, and finally get to see them walk at graduation. It’s an amazing experience,” she says.

Known as a tough-love adviser, Kadlubek tries to instill in her students the privilege of being a scholarship athlete at a major NCAA university.

“Sometimes scholarship athletes don’t truly realize and appreciate the educational opportunities given to them,” she says, noting that less than 1 percent of student athletes go on to become professional athletes. “Once they get a little older, however, they begin to understand how lucky they are to have received a degree without having to pay back student loans.

“I’m personally grateful for the opportunities I’ve been provided with at UNLV. I’ve seen programs develop, buildings rise out of the desert, and the student population more than quadruple in size since I arrived.”

When asked if her students knew of her legendary status in water polo, she chuckled. “Word gets around,” she says. “At first, students don’t really know, but as they get older, juniors and seniors, they hear from the coaches, and I’ll get a few comments.”

—Tony Allen

Nancy Torno, ’96 BA Communication Studies, has been an academic adviser at UNLV’s Greenspun College of Urban Affairs for seven years. She recently completed the master’s accreditation in advising through Kansas State University, making her one of only 70 advisers nationwide to receive the accreditation. She is married and has two grown children.

Amy R. Cornelison, ’97 BS Spanish, works for KB Home in its Homebuyers Club. The free service provides information and assistance to prospective home buyers about credit and the home-buying process. She also presents budgeting and credit

workshops. She is a board member and membership chair for the Latin Chamber of Commerce, as well as a member of the Community Housing Resource Board. Her hobbies include traveling, bike riding, running, and visiting art galleries.

Constantine George, ’97 BS Biology, practices at the clinic he opened in southwest Las Vegas, Southern Nevada Internal Medicine/Pediatrics. He earned his medical degree from the University of Nevada School of Medicine in 2001 and completed a combined internal medicine/pediatrics residency at Maricopa Medical Center in Phoenix in 2005.

Mark Knoblauch, ’98 MS Kinesiology, is working on his doctoral degree in kinesiology at the University of Houston. He married Jennifer Parsons in March. They live in Houston.

Todd Lewis, ’98 BS Hotel Administration, managed a restaurant at Universal CityWalk in California for five years and then decided to move into the field of television production. Two years and three shows later, he now is the director of *Trick My Truck*, which is set to air on the Country Music Television station. He said his degree has provided him with the skills necessary to excel in the television industry. His hobbies include golf and ice hockey. He lives in Los Angeles.

William Horne, ’99 BA Criminal Justice, ’01 JD, established a law office in Las Vegas. He concentrates on criminal defense and has a limited civil practice. He also is a Nevada assemblyman.

Tony Zaranti, ’99 BS Hotel Administration, is the clubhouse manager at SouthShore Golf Club at Lake Las Vegas. He previously worked in Atlanta and Scottsdale, Ariz. He married Christina Hart at Spanish Trail Country Club on Nov. 5. They honeymooned in Jamaica and now live in Henderson.

■ 2000s

Christina Brown, ’01 BA Biology, has been named an American Medical Association Foundation minority scholar. She received the award, which is only given to 10 students nationwide and includes a \$10,000 scholarship, in recognition of her excellence as a medical student at the University of North Dakota. She is a student delegate to the American Academy of Family Physicians. She won the Toiyabe Indian Health Service Award for Outstanding Achievement in 2003 and a Minority Graduate Exposition Award for a cell biology poster presentation in 2001. She has been active in the Native American Student Association.

Zachary B. Coughlin, ’01

JD, has joined the Reno office of Hale Lane as an associate practicing primarily in commercial and civil litigation. He has represented clients in the areas of construction defect, real property, commercial disputes, medical malpractice, and intellectual property. While in law school, he was a



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(Class Notes entries must be received by March 15 for the May issue.)

member of the Nevada Law Journal and made the dean’s list from 1999 through 2000. He received the highest grade awarded in contracts, business organizations, and communications law.

Christopher H. Colee, ’02 BA Political Science, graduated from law school in May and passed the bar exam in July. He works as a deputy district attorney for Alabama’s Fifteenth Judicial Circuit. He lives in Montgomery.

Chad T. Orrock, ’02 BS Business Administration, is assistant vice president of U.S. Bank’s commercial banking division. He lives in Anacortes, Wash.

David J. Sesma, ’02 BA Criminal Justice, graduated from the FBI Academy in 2004 and is an FBI special agent based in Sacramento, Calif. Previously, he worked at the U.S. Department of Energy in Las Vegas. He lives in Fairfield.

Jill L. Hineman, ’04 BA Criminal Justice, re-enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve in June and is working in the military police field. She previously spent 12 years in the military and also spent 12 years working in the transportation department of the Clark County School District. She describes receiving her UNLV degree at age 40 as the highlight of her life. Her hobbies include spoiling her three dogs, playing golf, attending Diamondback games in Phoenix, and being the biggest Pittsburgh Steelers fan in Las Vegas.

Books on the Bedside Table

We expect our professors to be well-read in their fields of study, but what do they read for pleasure? UNLV's faculty and administrators have an eclectic mix of books at hand to amuse and enlighten.

■ **Stephen Miller, chair of the department of economics**, prefers audio books and recently finished listening to *My Life* by former President Bill Clinton (42 CDs altogether); and *The Lion's Pride* by Edward J. Renehan, Jr., a 10-CD biography of Theodore Roosevelt and his family in peace and war. He is now listening to *A Different Drummer: My Thirty Years with Ronald Reagan* by Michael K. Deaver (5 CDs). He is also reading *Jesus Among Other Gods: The Absolute Claims of the Christian Message* by Ravi Zacharias.

■ **Ardyth Sohn, the new director of the Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies**, says *Alexander Hamilton* by Ron Chernow is slow reading "because the footnotes are as good as the chapters, and I find myself reading them as enthusiastically as the rest of the book"; she is also reading *Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini; *Broken for You* a "wonderful" first novel by Stephanie Kallos; *Red Water* by Judith Freeman; and *Naked in Baghdad* by Anne Garrels, the National Public Radio reporter stationed in the Iraqi capital.

■ *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi, popular with many UNLV faculty and administrators, is currently on the bedside table of **Joanne Goodwin, director of the Women's Research Institute of Nevada**. Goodwin is also reading *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty* by Annelise Orleck, and *Desert Landscaping: How to Start and Maintain a Healthy Landscape in the Southwest* by George Brookbank.

The Long Italian Goodbye

by Robert Benedetti
Durban House, 2005

The preface to this novel probably best explains theater professor Robert Benedetti's first foray into fiction. Longing for the Chicago neighborhood where he grew up, he "decided to try to write it back into existence."

The novel, a 2005 selection of the Sons of Italy Book Club, tells of 10-year-old Joey, and his discoveries about life, love, death, and social realities in his neighborhood, essentially a transplanted Tuscan village.

Like an archeologist, Benedetti dug into his memory "to unearth my old Chicago neighborhood just off Oakley Avenue in 1948. When enough had been uncovered, it began to live again, and to take on a life of its own. Some things began to happen, things that really hadn't happened but might have."

Similarly, people who might have been there but were not became real as the neighborhood grew with each word Benedetti added to the page. The protagonist of the novel is, in the words of one reviewer, "described so well that it makes me feel this is a real biography."

Take this passage about Joey's Confirmation ceremony:

Now that he was ten, Joey was to go through the ceremony again, this time to be confirmed in the faith. The procession was just as before, except led by a new bishop. Father Louis, now three years older and more bitter than ever, followed with the acolytes and billowing smoke. The younger children in white receiving the First Holy Communion were next,

followed at last by those being confirmed, who were dressed in red robes. Joey found himself enjoying this ceremony much more than the first. He liked the feeling of seniority, as well as the flashy red robe, beneath whose voluminous folds he wore comfortable pants. Most of all, he had enjoyed the chance to choose a confirmation name from a lengthy list of saints, the selection being meant to signify a commitment to follow the saint's example in a particular arena of spiritual endeavor. For Joey, the philosophical implications of this choice were less important than the opportunity to compensate for his lackluster middle name, Lawrence ... There was, alas, no saint Rigoletto, but his eye fell on the name Aloysius. It had quite a ring to it, he thought.

But, Benedetti reminds us, "although it is inspired by real events, places, and people, this is finally a work of fiction."

Author Marilyn Levy (*Run for Your Life*, *The School Story*, and *Bride of the Wind*), describes *The Long Italian Goodbye* as "charming and honest and totally absorbing."

Reviewer and novelist Adriana Trigiani calls the work a "beautiful first novel," and predicts that readers will "laugh and cry, and be very sad to leave the world Mr. Benedetti paints so splendidly."

Benedetti has authored several nonfiction works including *The Actor at Work*, now in its ninth edition. As a producer, he won Emmy awards for two acclaimed HBO movies: *Miss Evers Boys* (1997) and *A Lesson Before Dying* (1999). He has also directed theater productions across the United States and has acted for the stage and screen. His TV acting career included roles on *Hill Street Blues*, *L.A. Law*, and *Cheers*.

Frames of Justice Implications for Social Policy

by Leroy H. Pelton
Transaction Books, 2005

Social work professor Leroy H. Pelton says he has long been interested in issues of justice. His first book, *The Psychology of Nonviolence*, was published in 1974.

"I had become interested in nonviolence through Quakers I had met while participating in the anti-war movement beginning in the mid-1960s," he says. "It was at that point that I began to raise questions in my mind as to what is justice, and

what is moral behavior, since all sides to every conflict seem to think that it is they who act in the name of justice."

Pelton's interest was also shaped by his heritage. "The roots of this influence lie in the Holocaust, and in the focus on the affirmation of life and pursuit of justice found in so many parts of Jewish tradition."

Another experience that helped hone his interest was his involvement in policy advocacy in regard to homelessness. "To me, the frame of justice I call the 'principle of life affirmation' suggests that our social policies should support human life — particularly



Aaron Mayes

Theater professor Robert Benedetti drew upon his childhood for his first novel, *The Long Italian Goodbye*.

in regard to basic human needs — in a non-discriminatory manner, unconditionally, and without exception ... It seems to me that a society's treatment of homelessness is the ultimate test of this form of justice. Our society is failing this test."

Starting with the Bible, Pelton identifies three major frames of justice: group justice, individual desert, and life affirmation. He argues that a sense of justice has existed in the human mind from time immemorial, with the three frames coexisting. These frames cross cultural and religious divides; he finds the same fundamental conceptions in the Koran.

Pelton, who has been at UNLV since 1997, discusses the reliance on the individual desert frame — people get what they deserve and deserve what they get — in contemporary social policies that are "imbued with implicit notions in which rather arbitrarily grouped individuals are less deserving than others, or not deserving at all." This frame, he continues, "actually often prescribes the violation of human life and discrimination."

He concludes that the "best way to uphold the sanctity of human life is to promote greater reliance on the life affirmation frame in the development of social policy."

Book Note:

The Books section is compiled by emeritus communication studies professor Barbara Cloud. She recently received the Sidney Kobre Award, a lifetime achievement award from the American Journalism Historians Association. The author of numerous journalism history books and articles, Cloud is currently working on a biography of Charles P. "Pop" Squires, a long-time Las Vegas newspaper editor.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION EVENTS

Feb. 24 Business-to-Business Networking Group. 7:30-9 a.m. Includes breakfast. Tam Alumni Center.

March 7-11 Mountain West Conference Basketball Tournament. Pre-game and post-game festivities at Brooklyn's Restaurant (across from the Pepsi Center). Watch for information at <http://alumniassociation.unlv.edu/> or email alumni.events@unlv.edu for details.

March 29-30 Senior Send-Off and Graduation Fair. Time TBA. Tam Alumni Center.

March 31 Business-to-Business Networking Group. 7:30-9 a.m. Includes breakfast. Tam Alumni Center.

April 4 UNLV 25 Year Faculty Club Luncheon. Noon. Tam Alumni Center.

April 28 Business-to-Business Networking Group. 7:30-9 a.m. Includes breakfast. Tam Alumni Center.

And don't miss: Young Alum Mixer, an event created specifically for alumni who are 35 and under. Exact date in February and location TBA.

**For event information & reservations, call the
UNLV Alumni Association
at 702-895-3621 or 800-829-2586
or visit alumni.unlv.edu**

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Events are subject to change

February

1-5 Theatre Department: Ten Minute Play Festival. 8pm, Feb 1-4. 2pm, Feb. 5. Paul Harris Theatre/Ham Fine Arts Building.

3-4 Nevada Ballet Theatre: Mozart to Glenn Miller: Classic Crossings III. 8pm, Feb. 3. 2pm, Feb. 4. Ham Concert Hall.

10-19 Nevada Conservatory Theatre: *Inherit the Wind*. 8pm, Feb. 10-11, 16-18. 2pm, Feb. 12, 18-19. Judy Bayley Theatre.

12 Music: UNLV Symphony Orchestra Concert III. 7:30pm. Ham Concert Hall.

14 Charles Vanda Master Series: Russian National Ballet: *Sleeping Beauty*. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall.

16 College of Business and Deloitte: Nevada Business Hall of Fame. 6pm. Bellagio Resort and Casino.

17 Music: African American Music Festival. 7:30pm. Ham Concert Hall.

18 New York Stage and Beyond: Ailey II. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall.

21 MBA Infoession: 5:30pm. Wright Hall.

21 Music: UNLV Jazz Ensemble I and High School Jazz Bands Festival. 6pm. Judy Bayley Theatre.

22 Music: UNLV Jazz Faculty and High School Jazz Bands Festival. 6pm. Judy Bayley Theatre.

23 Music: UNLV Wind Orchestra Concert III. 7:30pm. Ham Concert Hall.

24-26 Nevada Conservatory Theatre's Second Stage: *Intimate Apparel*. 8pm, Feb. 24-25. 2pm, Feb. 26. (Continues March 1-4) Black Box Theatre.

25 Arnold Shaw Popular Music Research Center: Nathan Tanouye and His Orchestra. 8pm. Judy Bayley Theatre.

25 Las Vegas Philharmonic: Las Vegas Philharmonic Concert IV: Happy Birthday Amadeus – The Mozart Experience. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall.

26 Charles Vanda Master Series: Black Watch and the Band of the Royal Welsh Guards. 4pm. Ham Concert Hall.

27 Art: Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition. (Continues through April 15) Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery.

28 Music: UNLV Symphonic Winds and Brass Ensemble Concert. 7:30pm. Ham Concert Hall.

March

1-12 Nevada Conservatory Theatre's Second Stage: *Intimate Apparel*. 8pm, March 1-4, 8-11. 2pm, March 4-5, 11-12. Black Box Theatre.

3-4 Dance: Jump. 8pm, March 3-4. 2pm, March 4. Judy Bayley Theatre.

5 Classical Guitar Series: Pepe Romero. 4pm. Ham Concert Hall.

6 Music: Jazz Ensembles II and III in Concert. 7:30pm. Ham Concert Hall.

10-12 Opera Theatre: *The Magic Flute*. 7:30pm, March 10-11. 2pm, March 12. Judy Bayley Theatre.

11 New York Stage and Beyond: Lincoln Center Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra featuring Arturo O'Farill. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall.

16 Southern Nevada Musical Arts Society: Las Vegas Mormon Youth Symphony and Chorus. 3pm. Ham Concert Hall.

17-19 Nevada Ballet Theatre: *Midsummer Night's Dream*. 8pm, March 17-18. 2pm, March 18. 1pm & 4:30 pm, March 19. Judy Bayley Theatre.

19 Women Against Violence/ Women's Studies Present: *The Vagina Monologues*. 7pm. Ham Concert Hall.

21 Classical Guitar Series: Tribute to Andres Segovia: Carlos Bonell and Christopher McGuire. 8pm. Beam Music Center Recital Hall.

23 MBA Infoession: 5:30pm. Wright Hall.

Screening Scheduled for *Invisible Las Vegas*

In honor of Black History Month, *Invisible Las Vegas* will show at the West Las Vegas Library 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 6. Produced and directed by UNLV instructor Stan Armstrong, *Invisible Las Vegas* recounts the history of west Las Vegas, emphasizing the town's development by thousands of blacks from the Deep South who came seeking a better way of life only to find other forms of racism.



PAC Vamps Up With Bebe Neuwirth

The UNLV Performing Arts Center presents Vamps: An Evening with Bebe Neuwirth at 8 p.m. April 22. Tickets are \$45, \$60, and \$90.

Star of stage and screen Bebe Neuwirth, Tony Award-winner for *Chicago* and Emmy Award-winner for her role as Lilith on *Cheers*, debuts in Las Vegas with a unique program of songs by Kurt Weill (composer of *The Threepenny Opera*) and Kander and Ebb (composer and lyricist of *Cabaret*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, and *Chicago*).

24 Charles Vanda Master Series: Russian National Orchestra conducted by Mikhail Pletnev. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall.

26 Southern Nevada Musical Arts Society: Musical Arts Society Orchestra and Chorus Concert 2. 3pm. Ham Concert Hall.

April

5 Music Department: UNLV Community Concert Band II. 7:30pm. Ham Concert Hall.

6-9 Nevada Conservatory Theatre's Second Stage: *Ragtown*. 8pm, April 6-8. 2pm, April 9. Black Box Theatre.

8 Las Vegas Philharmonic: Las Vegas Philharmonic Concert V: Ludwig van Beethoven - The Hero Strides Forth. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall.

13-16 Nevada Conservatory Theatre's Second Stage: *Pluck the Rose*. 8pm, April 13-15. 2pm, April 16. Black Box Theatre.

20-23 Nevada Conservatory Theatre's Second Stage: *The Loggerheads of Lambhuna Drive*. 8pm, April 20-22. 2pm, April 23. Black Box Theatre.

21 Art: Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition. (Continues through May 6) Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery.

22 New York Stage and Beyond: Vamps: An Evening with Bebe Neuwirth. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall.

25 Music: UNLV Jazz Ensembles in Concert. 7:30pm. Ham Concert Hall.

26 Music: UNLV Symphonic Winds Concert II. 7:30pm. Ham Concert Hall.

27 MBA Infosession: 5:30pm. Wright Hall.

28-30 Dance: Spring Dance Concert. 8pm, April 28-29. 2pm, April 29-30. Black Box Theatre.

28-30 Nevada Conservatory Theatre: *Wait Until Dark*. 8pm, April 28-29. 2pm, April 30. (Continues May 4-7) Judy Bayley Theatre.

29 Music: UNLV Symphony Orchestra. 7:30pm. Ham Concert Hall.

May

2 Music: UNLV Jazz Combos in Concert. 7:30pm. Black Box Theatre.

4-7 Nevada Conservatory Theatre: *Wait Until Dark*. 8pm, May 4-6. 2pm, May 6-7. Judy Bayley Theatre.

6-7 Las Vegas Philharmonic: Las Vegas Philharmonic Concert VI: Resurrection. 8pm, May 6. 2pm, May 7. Ham Concert Hall.

8 Art: Bachelor of Fine Arts 2006 Student Exhibition. (Continues through June 9) Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery.

12 Red Mountain Music Company: Red Mountain Choir in Concert. 6:30pm. Ham Concert Hall.

12-14 Nevada Ballet Theatre: *Scheherazade*. 8pm, May 12-13. 2pm, May 13. 1pm & 4:30 pm, May 14. Judy Bayley Theatre.

13 Spring Commencement: 9am and 2 pm. Thomas & Mack Center

13 Music: UNLV Children's Chorale. 7pm. Ham Concert Hall.

20 Performing Arts Center's Season Finale: Rockapella. 8pm. Ham Concert Hall.

University Forum

Go into the wilds with big animals, hear some folk music, and get your facts straight at University Forum events this spring. The lecture series will bring more than a dozen speakers to campus through April. Highlights include:

- "Acute Injury Care for the Weekend Warrior" Feb. 9
- "An Evening with National Geographic" Feb. 23
- "Intelligent Design: A Unique View of Globalization and Science" March 1
- "Producing and Consuming Sexual Desire: Workers, Customers, and Strip Club Culture" March 9
- "Identity Theft 101" April 20

All events are free. For a complete listing of lectures, visit liberalarts.unlv.edu/forum.htm



Aaron Mayes

Tech Times

Professors like Fred Preston of sociology (pictured above in Hendrix Education Auditorium in 1977) encourage classroom interactions with the aid of computer technology today. "I think students have come to expect that technology will be part of the lectures — though they're sometimes surprised when a gray-beard like me uses computer teaching tools," says Preston, who is now co-director of sociology's graduate programs.

A national survey of more than 60,000 students conducted last year shows a correlation between the use of technology in the classroom and student engagement. Wireless connectivity in the College of Education facilities enables students **(at left)** to use laptops for classroom projects and tests.

More than 70 of UNLV's 160 general-purpose classrooms are "technology enhanced" with a lectern/control station, updated audio equipment, and cameras that display everything from papers with fine print to circuit boards. The office of information technology hopes to upgrade the remaining classrooms — at a cost of \$40,000 per room — over the next four years.



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