

# THE **LEADING EDGE**

liberal arts in action

## GUIDING COMMUNITIES

**Oregon State**  
UNIVERSITY



# THE LEADING EDGE

liberal arts in action

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## FRONT COVER

Tom Bie, who graduated with a journalism degree in 1991, created a close-knit community with his fly-fishing magazine *The Drake*. On the cover, Bie fly fishes in Brazil.

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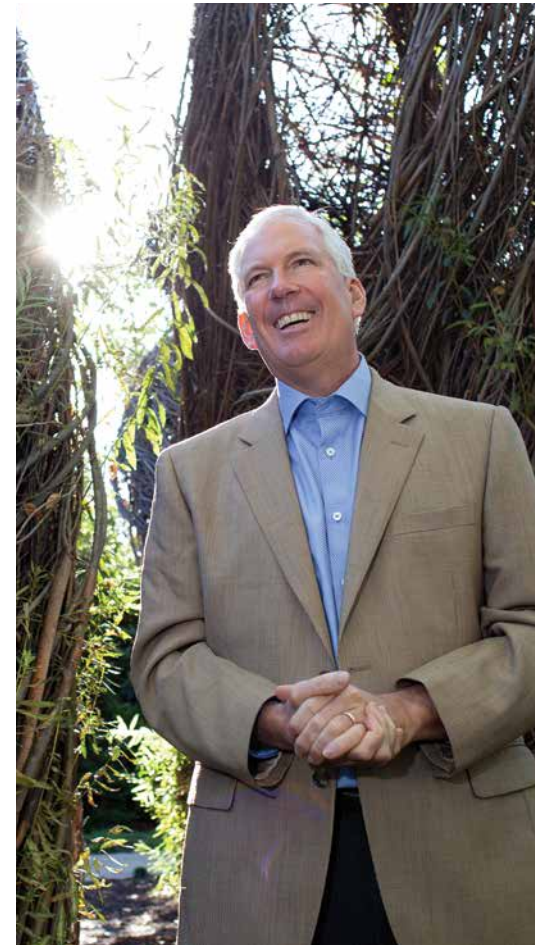
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Tom Bie created *The Drake* magazine in 1998. Not only is the fly-fishing magazine thriving, its online presence draws people from across the country together.



College of Liberal Arts Dean Larry Rodgers. Photo by Jeff Basinger.

As we begin the 2015-16 academic year, I want to take a moment to look back and congratulate our most recent graduating class.

This spring, 1,024 undergraduates received diplomas from the College of Liberal Arts, comprising the largest undergraduate class in Oregon State history.

Among them are Mohamed Shaker and Kate Swenson, who are profiled in this issue. Shaker is a history graduate who has lived in the United Arab Emirates, Palestine and the U.S. Kate Swenson, who graduated with a degree in philosophy, pre-nursing and a certificate in medical humanities, dedicated her undergraduate studies to understanding how where we live affects the way medicine is practiced.

Both Shaker and Swenson were recognized at a June ceremony as outstanding CLA scholars, but their academic success only underscores a much wider commitment to involving themselves in seemingly every corner of OSU life that is typical of our CLA students.

This year, the College of Liberal Arts will introduce its first strategic plan in more than a decade. The qualities Shaker and Swenson possess underscore the ethos of CLA as expressed in the plan: empowering, challenging, edifying and transformational.

In the plan, we set out extraordinary aspirations that will elevate the college: a guarantee that students in CLA majors can graduate in four years; building a state-of-the-art performing arts center; creating more endowed faculty positions and nationally ranked graduate programs; and recruiting more students and faculty from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds.

To us, the plan is a road map forward. Our success will bolster CLA's reputation, and help catapult Oregon State into the top 10 land grant institutions in the country. At the same time, the plan also builds on the successes that the college has achieved in the past six years.

It says something that the plan was created by our faculty, along with input from staff, students and the university community. It is their mission to provide students with the experiences and guidance they need to make an impact in the world. They also know CLA's students already have the curiosity and drive to seek that guidance.

We know that our graduates, too, continue to embody CLA's character. As we measure our progress in the coming years and reach our goals, we look forward to seeing the value of our alumni's degrees increase even more, as well as the contributions they make to the world.

For more information on the College of Liberal Arts and our strategic plan, please visit [liberalarts@oregonstate.edu](mailto:liberalarts@oregonstate.edu).

Larry Rodgers  
Dean, College of Liberal Arts



College of Liberal Arts



# A City's New Life

Story by Claire Sykes

Growing up in Eugene in the early 1970s, Kate Porsche ('08 liberal studies, '12 public policy) learned that you don't just throw newspapers, cans and bottles away. You take them to be recycled. And watching her do-it-yourself mother run a floor sander told her, years later, she could do that, too.

The two mindsets merged for Porsche when she and her husband, Rod ('92 broadcast media communication), bought their first historic house in Portland and gradually four more in Albany, Oregon, where they live today. "I love taking things that are old or worn and making them beautiful again," she says. "Now I get to do that for my whole community."

Since fall 2006, Porsche, as Economic Development and Urban Renewal Director for the city of Albany, has helped to continue revamping the downtown. Run-down building exteriors have been restored, joining new planter strips, benches and sidewalk extensions with bioswales and room for restaurant seating. "What happens is that the tenant mix changes, vacant spaces fill and rents generally increase," says Porsche, who also helped fill the buildings' empty upper floors with residents. "The more people living in the core of the community, the more support for local businesses, contributing to economic vitality."

She also led efforts in a high-crime central neighborhood to turn a vacant lot into a community garden. It's part of the Central Albany Revitalization Area (CARA) urban renewal district she oversees. In addition, low-income townhomes replaced a mobile-home park. Porsche says, "It's been transformational for that neighborhood — eliminating blight and creating a safer community and much-needed affordable housing." Some of the mobile home residents moved into the new townhomes.

In 2008, Porsche and her husband made their own move from Portland. "We wanted to start a family, and Albany's like a diamond in the rough, with great bones, amazing people, two rivers and community assets that were important to us." The 131-year-old house they bought is within walking distance from the downtown farmer's market and their daughters' school. "What matters most to me is the sense of community — over 50,000 people, but it has a small-town feel," says Porsche.

Her instant affinity for Albany soon had her volunteering for the city's Landmarks Advisory Commission, helping to regulate changes to historic buildings. Even with that experience, she never expected to land her current position, not with her diverse job history and still without a bachelor's degree. "But they wanted someone to run the urban renewal district, with experience in finance and strong communication skills out in the community speaking. It was perfect," she says. Now, when Porsche looks back on her life, she sees how everything connects.

"I'm tech-inclined, but also a people person, and I've always looked for the best possible jobs that combined those," says Porsche. She has worked as a real estate agent; a mortgage lender; systems analyst; community representative and communications leader for banks; and a video product specialist for the Oregon Lottery. "I had a varied set of skills, but I never had a specific career goal."

Graduating from high school at 16, Porsche chose Oregon State because it was away from home, and she was drawn to the then-named broadcast media program. Nineteen years later, she finally got her Bachelor of Science in Liberal Studies, two years into her city of Albany job. "It didn't escape me that people in my profession had undergrad and master's degrees," says Porsche, who went on for the latter, in public policy at

Kate Porsche led efforts to replace a mobile-home park with low-income townhomes in downtown Albany. Photo by Tyler Moss.



One of the structures Kate Porsche helped restore in Albany after renovation (top) and before (bottom). Top photo by Tyler Moss. Bottom photo courtesy of Kate Porsche.

Oregon State, while working full-time and raising two young daughters.

While pursuing both degrees, the College of Liberal Arts' Kathleen Dean Moore, now Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, stands out the most for Porsche. Her classes on environmental restoration and ethics really got Porsche thinking about the environment and communities on a broader scale, including how to translate a moral right into action. "This resonates with me in my work now," Porsche says. "I have this idea of what is right for the community and how to translate that into a specific policy question in order to take some kind of action."

Following her values, in 2011 Porsche did take action. Through Oregon State, she participated for a semester in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange, a national program in which university students take for-credit crime and justice seminars with inmates. In her case, the program took her to the Oregon State Penitentiary. "It opened my eyes," she says. "Some of them had committed some pretty heinous crimes, but seeing the genuineness in their remorse underscored for me that any person can change."

So can newspapers, when you recycle them, cities, when you rehabilitate them and Porsche, too. She says, "A couple of projects were criticized by a small, but very vocal group. But my skin has gotten thicker. If someone has criticism, I want to hear it, but I've learned to not let it get in the way of what most of the community thinks is really excellent work."





# Stewards of the Bay

Story by Ivan Kuletz

To commercial fishermen, the ocean is home, workshop, coliseum, hunting ground, town hall, garden and temple. I learned this while I was earning my Bachelor of Science in Biology and Writing at the University of Idaho; for several years afterwards, while I worked with my father as a deckhand on his boat in Bristol Bay, Alaska; and when I researched my master's thesis in public policy at Oregon State, asking Bristol Bay fishermen how they thought of and worked toward a sustainable fishery.

Bristol Bay is a region in western Alaska roughly the size of Ohio. It is home to about 8,000 people, a comparable number of bears and about 26 million sockeye salmon every June and July.

This superabundance of life is the largest sockeye salmon fishery in the world. It is also one of the most sustainable, and that's no accident. The vast tracts of wilderness, the well-understood reproductive cycle of salmon, the conservative and rigorous management and enforcement of the fishery and the rich ecology of the North Pacific Ocean make it so.

The big-picture thinking and expansive calculus of life that governs ecology also drew me to policy. Just as ecology looks at the biotic and abiotic components of an ecosystem as well as the interplay between them, public policy looks at the interplay between the social, political and economic elements of human systems. Once I understood this notion of a larger human system, I had to know how it related to what I loved: wild places, and wild people. Specifically, wild salmon and wild fishermen.

What struck me most about the Bristol Bay fishermen I interviewed was how they saw their role within this system — as stewards. While all of the fishermen I interviewed said that the sustainability of the fishery was key to their future and the future of their descendants, nearly all said that *biological* sustainability was the responsibility of the fishery managers.

Instead, they said their job was to bring positive awareness and a good market to their fishery, which



Ivan Kuletz ('15) wrote his master's thesis on the sustainable fishery of Bristol Bay, Alaska. Photo courtesy of Ivan Kuletz.

in turn would help fund biological management. This belief was strongly influenced by Pebble Mine, a large copper mine that was proposed at the headwaters of their fishery.

The mine, which the fishermen saw as a threat to the health of Bristol Bay and their livelihoods, was pivotal in convincing them to become involved in the sustainability and future of their fishery. Commercial fishermen, as well as native corporations, the public and other groups raised awareness of the issue at the state, regional and national levels. The result was a groundswell of opinion that affected the EPA's decision to halt development of the mine.

The future of fisheries is often seen as being determined by fisheries biology and management, funding, external factors such as climate change and ocean acidification and ocean zoning. What many may not realize is just how important people are in this complex question, with all their beliefs, hopes, efforts and ultimately, their voices.

*Ivan Kuletz is a writer and 2015 graduate of the Master of Public Policy program at Oregon State.*

# Created With Compassion

Story by Jessica Kibler

While a life working in the entertainment industry sounds exciting, after the glitter and shine wear off, the constant momentum, late nights and six-day weeks can start to exhaust a person. Such was the case for Gieselle Blair (speech communication '07), a wig and makeup designer in Los Angeles.

After working in theater for more than five years, Blair needed a change — so she got a job at a boutique wig shop in Orange County.

"The shop sold wigs to cancer patients, and I thought, 'That's an interesting idea,'" Blair says.

But Blair was only there for a year before the shop folded. Soon after, she discovered that the shop's customer service had been lacking. The discovery got her thinking: she was a wig maker, so maybe she could start a similar company and do it better. Teamed up with cosmetologist Victoria Balch, a friend and former employee of the same Orange County shop, she did just that.

Their company, Compassionate Creations, which is located in Newport Beach, California, primarily serves women with cancer and makes wigs using their clients' own hair. Blair and Balch assist their clients individually and through video tutorials on the company's website; their personal attention to their clients and their openness with the wig-making process sets them apart from their competition, Blair says.

The company's friendliness helps, too. "My business partner programs her phone when people have treatments, and then she'll text them with, 'thinking of you today,'" Blair says. "Our clients become like our friends. We want to check in on them. I feel like we really are the compassionate part of our business."

They have been successful — in just two years of business they have provided wigs for more than 40 clients throughout the U.S. and beyond. They were also voted "Best Wig Shop in Orange County" in "The OC Weekly" in 2014.

Blair especially likes the chance to help women in such a tangible way. Though the company has had a few male customers, nearly all the wigs they make are for women. "I really love helping women. I love working with women, I love that I have a female business partner. It feels really good and empowering."

The actual wig-making process is similar to latch hooking or cross-stitching, Blair says, since every hair that makes up a Compassionate Creations wig is individually sewn in. This makes the wigs easy to style. "You can comb it, you can get it wet, you can hot roll it, you can use curling irons because it's real human hair. You don't have to worry about it melting."



Alumna Gieselle Blair uses the skills she learned in the Oregon State theatre to make wigs for women with cancer. Photos courtesy of Gieselle Blair.

Blair's interest in hair, wig and makeup design goes back to her days as a student. She got involved in Oregon State's theater department early on, lending her artistic hand to hair and makeup and designing a couple of Oregon State's productions. When she was set to graduate, she knew she loved the theater and also knew she wanted to learn a tangible skill to make her degree even more useful. Recognizing her talents, she applied for internships in hair and makeup departments.

She took an internship at Seattle Opera and later another at Central City Opera in Central City, Colorado. She then landed a job at South Coast Repertory in Costa Mesa, California, where she worked on shows like *Pride and Prejudice* and *A Christmas Carol*. Since then, she's worked for other theaters in and around Los Angeles. At *A Noise Within*, a classical repertory theatre company in Pasadena, she was the wig and makeup designer for their entire spring 2015 season, working on *The Threepenny Opera*, *Julius Caesar* and *Figaro*.

"I still miss the theater a little bit," she says. "I think I'll always want to do a show here or there, but it's a really demanding schedule, and it's definitely not for the faint of heart. It was really fun working in California and having actors that I'd seen on TV and in movies be in my chair. But I needed to do something else, and being my own boss is the best decision for me."

Though Blair will likely continue designing for theater companies occasionally, her goal is to make Compassionate Creations her full-time gig. Since they ended their first fiscal year in the black, she's confident she can make that happen. "It just feels really cool to make a wig for a real person, you know," she says. "We get to see her picture, I get to talk to her on the phone. It's really rewarding."

*Jessica Kibler graduated from the College of Liberal Arts and University Honors College with a degree in English in 2014. She now writes and lives in Portland, Oregon.*

You can find out more about Compassionate Creations at: [compassionatecreationswigdesign.com](http://compassionatecreationswigdesign.com)



# A Lost Diary, Revealed

Story by Michelle Klampe

During a long and arduous journey through Central Africa, Scottish explorer David Livingstone became ill and was stranded for months. Livingstone, a 19th-century missionary, physician and abolitionist, was also a faithful diarist, keeping careful field notes and sketching images from his travels. When his supplies ran out, he made ink from local clothing dye and began scribbling his notes on old newspapers or other scraps of paper.

Those words, from improvised materials, were not to last.

The makeshift pages from 1870 and 1871 became fragile and the writing all but disappeared, keeping some of Livingstone's thoughts and discoveries hidden for decades.

Until now.

Megan Ward, an assistant professor in the School of Writing, Literature and Film, is one of the leaders of a

worldwide digital humanities project that is using spectral imaging and processing technology to reveal some of Livingstone's long-concealed words, and to make thousands of pages of the explorer's notes and sketches easily available online to students, researchers and the public around the world.

"Livingstone left a complicated legacy. Due to his work to end the slave trade, he has been considered a freedom fighter for Africa, but his exploration also has been viewed as detrimental to Africa and its people," says Ward, who is also the associate director of the Livingstone Online archive project.

In his writing, Livingstone documented the effects of European imperialism and colonialism, African history, the 19th-century slave trade and the diverse cultures and geography of Africa — issues that still resonate today. In some cases, Livingstone's notes and sketches are the only source of information about the continent and the time period, but since his death in 1871, his papers have been scattered all over the world: in Africa, Scotland, England and in private collections.

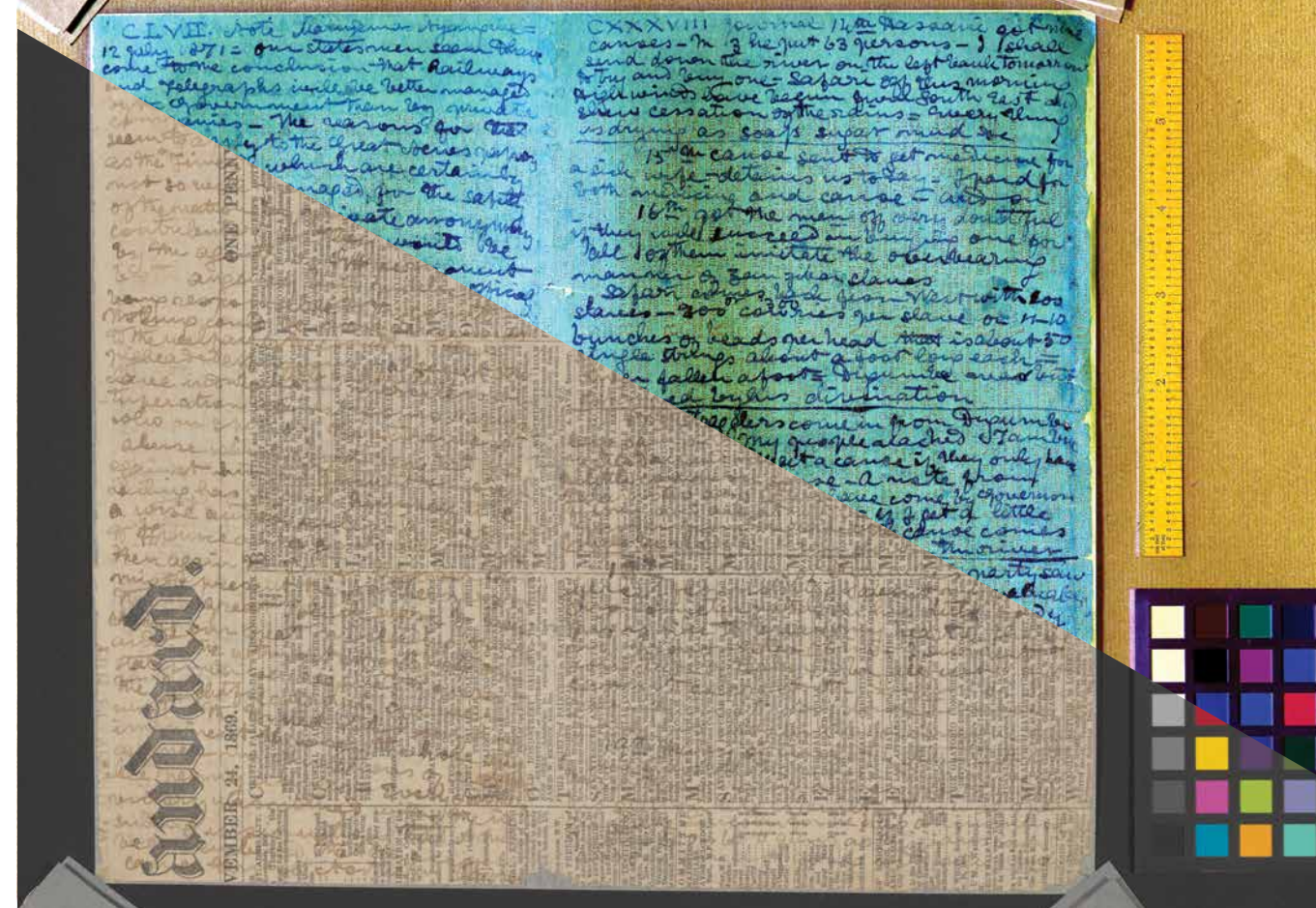
"There's never been a single physical location for these documents. We wanted to come up with a more comprehensive archive," Ward says.

Such was the genesis for Livingstone Online — livingstoneonline.org — an international collaboration of scholars, digital librarians, museum creators and others across the U.S., Scotland, England and South Africa. The online archive was first established in 2005 and was dramatically expanded with the aid of a \$265,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The beta version of the new, expanded site was launched in June.

The archive includes thousands of pages of Livingstone's field notes, sketches and other writing, as well as images of Livingstone's work that was thought to be lost — spectral imaging and processing technology has allowed researchers to see what once was written on the pages.

"The digital images give these historical documents new life and make them available to a wider audience," says Ward, a Victorian-era scholar who joined the Oregon State faculty in 2014. "You can see flies that were smashed in notebooks, funny sketches, even drops of blood."

Megan Ward helps make thousands of pages of David Livingstone's notes easily available online to students, researchers and the public around the world. Photo by Hannah O'Leary.



Pages from Livingstone's 1871 field diary in spectral ratio (top) and color (bottom). A portion of the printed newspaper title The Standard is visible at left. Photo courtesy of Megan Ward.

Ward's interest in Victorian-era technologies such as the phonograph and the difference engine, an automated mechanical calculator, sparked a realization that current technologies might also be a way to think about the past.

Ward began researching Victorian-era digital humanities projects and connected with Adrian Wisnicki, an assistant professor of English at the University of Nebraska and the leader of the Livingstone Online project. Ward was a good fit for the project because of her background in Victorian literature, where themes of empire are common and often inspired by Livingstone and other explorers of the era.

She helped Wisnicki write the initial grant to expand and re-launch the Livingstone archive. They have since received a second, \$168,000 National Endowment for the Humanities grant to use spectral imaging technology on another Livingstone diary, which could provide further understanding of how Livingstone documented conflicts between Arab slave traders and the central African people, Ward says.

In June, Wisnicki and Ward traveled to the United Kingdom to speak at the British Library and the National Library of Scotland as part of the celebration to mark the launch of the new Livingstone Online website. Ward also had an opportunity to see some of Livingstone's original writings and diaries up close.

"When I handled the original Livingstone diaries after working exclusively with the digital images for the past two years, I realized how powerful these idiosyncratic objects from the past become. The diaries are ephemeral objects that were never really meant to be saved. Livingstone made his field diaries with the intention of writing scientific papers and book-length publications from them. But because he died before they were published — and because he was a Victorian hero — they've been preserved," Ward says. "So now we look at these diaries as authoritative accounts of African abolition and imperial exploration, but it's an accident that we have them at all. Livingstone Online continues this preservation but also tries to emphasize the varied history of this legacy."



# Empowering Learning

Story by Claire Sykes

“You got this. Make it flow. It’s just like talking with someone over coffee,” Elba Moise (public health ’11) kept telling herself as she approached the podium. Then, after her introduction, she welcomed Chelsea Clinton to the stage.

“It was a humbling and amazing experience,” says Moise, of the 2014 National Conference for College Women Student Leaders. She attended as a member of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) National Student Advisory Council. There, Moise was the only one chosen to publicly interview Clinton about women’s leadership and advancement.

Moise, herself, is an influential force. Currently she’s an undergrad instructor at the University of Washington, pursuing her Ph.D. in multicultural education with a focus on higher education. But she’s interested in all learning levels — from preschool on — as she champions equitable and inclusive educational environments that embrace all races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations and social classes.

“Every student enters the classroom with valuable histories, experiences, knowledge and different ways of learning and knowing,” says Moise, who has a master’s degree in public health from Oregon State with a concentration in international health and a minor in anthropology. Through teaching and advocacy, she wants “to create a space in which we all are co-educators and co-learners, producing and receiving new knowledge that we all can learn from.”

Moise wishes she’d experienced such an environment as a child in school. Born and raised in Houston, with a Haitian father and El Salvadoran mother, Moise first learned Spanish, the only language spoken in her home. She knew enough English by the first grade to get by. “I struggled, however, unable to speak as well as my peers, who made fun of me trying to do my homework,” she says. “And I didn’t see people who looked like me on TV or in textbooks.”

But she did see them at Oregon State. Leadership in the Office of Diversity & Cultural Engagement, including Earlean Huey, Sandy Tsuneyoshi and Allison Davis-White Eyes, “listened with empathy and supported me professionally, emotionally, socially and academically,” says Moise, who came to Corvallis with medical school in mind.

The three also supported her decision to pursue a future in higher education instead. But it was Jessica



Elba Moise uses what she learned at Oregon State to empower others. Photo by Hannah O’Leary.

White, director of the Graduate Certificate in College and University Teaching, who further inspired her. “In class with her, everybody mattered, and making mistakes was an opportunity to learn about ourselves and each other,” Moise says. After Moise gave antiracism-empowerment workshops in the Dominican Republic one summer, her passion was solidified. “I saw how education has the power to free and heal people, so they can thrive.”

Though unclear about her specific career goals, there’s one thing she’s sure about: “I want to have dialogues as opposed to debates and understand where people are coming from, so we can work together toward a common goal to change things in our communities. There are a lot of things to change, and we can’t do it alone.”

# The Importance of History

Story by Caroline Zilk

Mohamed Shaker (history ’15) always loved history, but he remembers the first time he understood it as a force that shapes people’s past, present and future. It was at a summer program with other kids of Southeast Asian descent he attended in Portland when he was growing up.

The students were learning about the Khmer Rouge and Cambodian genocide. It was the first time Shaker had heard the story. As he looked around the room and saw the children of genocide survivors making drawings and creating performances, a realization came to him.

“I wasn’t learning something new or random. It was the first time I had seen history play out in people’s lives,” he says. “It’s not just knowing where you come from, but having an engaged, critical relationship with history. This is a real thing that happened to these people. They wouldn’t have been there if it hadn’t.”

Shaker, who just graduated from Oregon State with a history degree, plans on helping others come to the same understanding. “Most people have a yearning to understand more about where they come from and the history and the politics of the region they inhabit,” he says. “I feel like there’s a gap between them and what they can learn, and I hope to bridge that gap.”

Shaker was both an international student and an Oregonian when he came to Oregon State, where his brother also attended school. Between being born in Singapore and graduating from high school in the United Arab Emirates, he attended elementary and middle school in Beaverton.

The international experience got him thinking about other cultures as well as issues of social justice. He wrote his senior thesis for the University Honors College

about Iraqi history, a subject close to his heart. His research specifically covered Shia political theology in the mid-twentieth century. Shaker says he wanted to study Iraq and the Middle East because that’s where his father is from.

“I would say I have a better appreciation for the state of Iraq today. I think it’s easy to tend toward a simplistic understanding of how things got the way they are. And that doesn’t do justice to people,” he says.

While he studied his father’s heritage in the classroom, Shaker — whose mother is from Singapore — honored her background by getting involved with the Asian and Pacific Cultural Center (APCC). He started out working in the center’s front office, and from there, became a student leadership liaison.

“I appreciated that the Asian and Pacific Cultural Center has an emphasis on the sort of general diversity and multicultural work that needs to happen on a campus like this and on local, national and global issues of importance,” Shaker says.

Through the APCC, Shaker coordinated events including a multicultural film series and a memorial for the centennial of the Armenian genocide. “I wanted to reach out to people and help them develop the relationship that I have with history,” he says.

Now, Shaker is creating plans for his future, which include graduate school and eventually teaching history. “I have always known I have wanted to be an educator,” he says. “I think it’s important for people to come to an awareness of history and help them understand what they are today — an agent and a product of history.”

Mohamed Shaker became a student leadership liaison at the Asian and Pacific Cultural Center. Photo by Hannah O’Leary.







# DRAWING A FISHING COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Story by Celene Carillo

Tom Bie relaxes with his fishing gear on Christmas Island. Photo courtesy of Tom Bie.

The idea to start a literary fly-fishing magazine came to Tom Bie (journalism, '91) when he was living in Jackson Hole, Wyoming in the 1990s. Bie, like most of his friends there, gravitated to Jackson because of the town's seemingly endless outdoor possibilities. They skied in the winter and climbed, biked and were fishing guides in the summer.

Bie moved there to guide and to write after graduating from Oregon State with a journalism degree. He was a reader, too. He loved how magazines like *Climbing*, as well as *Powder*, which focused on skiing, illustrated the outdoor lifestyle and ethos he identified with. They used stunning photography and quality writing aimed at readers who were already proficient in their sports.

Fly-fishing, he noticed, had no such counterpart.

"I'd been thinking about it for awhile. I loved *Powder* magazine. When it showed up in your mailbox, it was an event. You couldn't wait to see what was inside it," he says. "The fly-fishing magazines at the time didn't represent what we did. They mostly ran instructional

pieces. We were going into the Wind River Range and hiking long distances to fish. What we did wasn't being covered. The culture wasn't being covered."

Bie saw the need, and in 1998 *The Drake* was born.

After nearly 20 years, *The Drake* is considered one of the premier fishing magazines in the country, at a time when it's dicey to bet on the life span of a print publication. It has evolved from a 32-page newspaper publication to a 140-page glossy. The magazine sports a circulation of 30,000 and hosts an online community that is at once passionate, devoted and a little rough on newcomers.

"These guys look at our message board like it's a campfire after fishing," Bie says. "I'm blown away by the friendships and connections they've made. They get together. They organize 'Drake Bakes' all over the country. You can't go out to try and make that. It has to be authentic."

The *Drake's* spirit, too, is true to its roots. It's now based in Denver, Colorado, where according to Bie, nine out of 10 people who fish are fly-fishers. Bie's writers

(and Bie himself), venture into wildernesses around the world to places as far flung as Christmas Island, Iceland and Belize to report on fishing.

Many of Bie's literary heroes, like David James Duncan, Tom McGuane, Ian Frazier and Oregon State emeritus faculty member Ted Leeson have contributed to *The Drake*. And the magazine and website — [drakemag.com](http://drakemag.com) — devote themselves to environmental concerns like wilderness preservation and climate change.

"No one in 30 years has done more to unite anglers than Tom Bie," says John Larison, a writing instructor at Oregon State and an essayist, novelist, editor and contributor to *The Drake*. "His *Drake* magazine has boomed in a time of diminishing magazine sales precisely because of his commitment to building community around fine art, photography and words. His community has practical purpose, too. When fish and rivers are threatened, Bie rallies his readers to join the good fight."

In Cuba, Tom Bie spots a fish in the clear water (top) and catches fish like the Giant Peacock Bass in Brazil (bottom). Photos courtesy of Tom Bie.







# Body of Thought

Story by Rebecca Olson

For Kate Swenson (philosophy '15), the sciences and humanities share the same blood.

"They can be treated as somewhat different things but are totally attached," she says. "Medical ethics, religion, geography, philosophy: they're all very interwoven."

The connection is critical to Swenson (and others who focus on the medical humanities) because where someone is from and how he or she thinks about life affects how the sciences — particularly medicine — are practiced.

For her senior thesis, Swenson explored the role and importance of storytelling and personal narrative to the understanding and practice of medicine. A combination of personal narrative, creative nonfiction and academic scholarly analysis, Swenson proudly refers to her project as "a totally insane interwoven tapestry."

Although she'd always been interested in philosophy and life's big questions, most of Swenson's coursework at Oregon State had been in the sciences. That is, until studying a cadaver in human anatomy class inspired her to look inward in a different way.

"I couldn't escape how these same structures were inside me," she says. "It was a very bizarre reflective process for me to be both studying the objective mechanisms of the body and also studying creativity and love and philosophy and faith — these things that are not really able to be explained."

Studying those disciplines — and writing about them — has been continually inspiring for Swenson.

"It's just so fascinating. The more I learned about writing and philosophy and creativity, the more I was

Kate Swenson's science background informs her knowledge of philosophy and creativity. Photo by Hannah O'Leary.

.....  
seeing the very same types of ideas and concepts and names come up in my science classes. The crossovers were everywhere I looked, and I don't see them as able to be separated."

Swenson has always been interested in philosophical hybrids. Born and raised in the Pacific Northwest to an agnostic family, Swenson says she was rarely exposed to religious thought or traditions in her home. When she took two years off from her time at Oregon State to live and work in New Mexico, she found herself in a totally different cultural landscape — and it blew her mind.

"I've always been really fascinated by how different people answer the big questions in life," she says. "Seeing how big of a role faith and religion play in people's lives there, I felt embarrassingly uninformed about a lot of it."

Learning about the different ways that religion, culture and geography affected the communities in the Southwest influenced Swenson's decision to study philosophy when she returned to college her junior year. It also inspired her to get involved as a student leader in the Religious Studies Club.

Swenson graduated last spring a student of philosophy, pre-nursing and the medical humanities. She plans to continue her studies and hopes to eventually attend graduate school.

"There's a huge stack of books I have on my living room floor that I still haven't had the chance to read yet," she laughs. "I want to keep digging into this, and I'm definitely not done yet!"

Rebecca Olson is a 2011 graduate of the MFA in creative writing program at Oregon State.

## Bridging the Science-Humanities Divide

A conversation with Raymond Malewitz, an assistant professor in the School of Writing, Literature and Film, will take you on an intellectual romp that careens from mad cow disease to Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*.

"I'm a dabbler," he says. "I like to jump nimbly from thing to thing."

More specifically, he likes to leap between the sciences and the humanities. As an undergraduate, while double-majoring in biochemistry and literature, Malewitz figured the only way to connect science and literature professionally was through science fiction. But it was the real practice of science, what he calls "the day-to-day interactions between laboratory people and laboratory objects," that pulled him in. After graduation, he worked for an environmental engineering company in Germany, then, once back in the U.S., he taught high school chemistry and biology. He loved teaching, but as he looked toward graduate school, he remained torn between the sciences and the arts.

Meanwhile, literature and science as a combined field was gaining popularity.

So Malewitz went back to school for a Ph.D. in English literature at the University of Virginia. Summers, he taught a science course at the University of Cambridge. After completing his doctorate, he taught writing as a lecturer at Yale University for several years. But he never abandoned the scientific interest that he'd had since childhood, when he spent summers with his family on a "2 1/2-acre rock pile" island on Lake Michigan.

Those summers, where his only rule was, "Don't die," gave Malewitz room to know Earth on its own

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Ray Malewitz, shown here at Crater Lake, describes his first impression of the Pacific Northwest as "blindingly green." Photo courtesy of Ray Malewitz.

terms, and human domination and domestication of wild places and things has since become a central theme in his scholarship. For a recent Oregon State Humanities Center fellowship, for instance, he explored literary animals' agency, his analysis centering on Cormac McCarthy's *The Crossing*. He's also co-taught a course called *The Art, Science and Literature of Fly-Fishing*.

Zoonotic diseases — ones that pass between animals and humans — are another of Malewitz's current interests. "These zoonotic viruses — Ebola, mad cow, HIV, West Nile — are really dangerous in our popular imagination," he says. "They have an additional horror associated with them because it suggests that we are like the animals, that the divides we set up between human bodies and animal bodies are illusory, right?"

He also delves into "material culture studies," an interdisciplinary field that originated in anthropology but has veered toward contemporary themes such as anti-consumerism, waste reduction, self-sufficiency and DIY (do-it-yourself). These are concepts Malewitz tackles in his first book, *The Practice of Misuse: Rugged Consumerism in Contemporary American Culture* (2014, Stanford University Press).

Malewitz is impatient with what he calls the artificial war between the sciences and the humanities. He does concede, though, that when scholars in the arts, sciences and social sciences toss their divergent ideas together, there's a danger of creating some "monstrous Chimera — you know, like, part human, part lion, part horse.

"Sometimes that looks pretty ugly," he says. "Sometimes, though, it's beautiful."

*This piece was adapted by Jessica Kibler from Lee Sherman's Terra Magazine's article on Malewitz, "The Crossing." [oregonstate.edu/terra/2015/05/the-crossing](http://oregonstate.edu/terra/2015/05/the-crossing)*







## Keeping in Touch

For many years, students have had the opportunity to look through a binder of business cards as they wait for CLA advising appointments. It gives an easy answer to the frequently asked question, “What can I do with this major?” And it inspires some of them to get in touch with our graduates, who work in every industry all over the globe.

I recently asked former advisees via Facebook to send in their current business cards. And many (not surprisingly) work for companies and in professions that don’t issue cards at all, like Intel, Nike, Nordstrom, teaching and marketing. Business cards or not, we still want to tell the varied stories of our amazing alumni to our students. We still want to demonstrate the varied career paths they can expect to thrive in.

Looking for new ways to connect — and to help our alumni connect with each other — we have created a closed CLA LinkedIn account:

**[linkedin.com/groups/Oregon-State-University-College-Liberal-8350190/about](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/Oregon-State-University-College-Liberal-8350190/about)**

We hope you’ll join and make it into a thriving, dynamic network. It will inspire your fellow alumni as well as our prospective and incoming students.

In today’s College of Liberal Arts, we believe heavily in career exploration during the student experience. In the next year, this will translate into a career center and counseling within our central CLA advising office. We’ll still keep the business cards — so please feel free to send yours along. Keep up with us on LinkedIn and watch our website for new happenings in career development for our students.

Louie Bottaro  
Head Advisor, College of Liberal Arts

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