



UAA

ALUMNISPirit

Spring 2016 • ISSUE 05

c r e a t i n g c o m m u n i t y

JIM JOHNSEN Q&A | STALKING THE BOGEYMAN | CAMPUS WITHOUT BORDERS



Hiking through Kachemak Bay State Park, Semester by the Bay students connect through science, nature and shared interest.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS

- 6 PETER WALLACK**
As a New York stuntman, this UAA theatre graduate stands in for Kevin Bacon, among others.
- 8 ELEANOR HADDEN**
One wrong question led to a master's degree in anthropology and a career curating Alaska Native artifacts.
- 9 LEAH BOLTZ**
"Not a lot of people know the career I have exists," says this UAA Leadership Fellows program mentor.

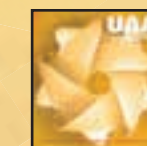
FEATURES

- 12 CAMPUS WITHOUT BORDERS**
Metaphor for UAA? Think welcoming shoreline with a strong tide that links campus and community.
- 18 STAGING THE BOGEYMAN**
The telling of a dark and true story, aimed at community healing.
- 20 Q & A WITH JIM JOHNSEN**
UA president describes his vision and strategy for leading.
- 22 CCEL GRADS**
They carry commitment into their new careers.

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 From an Alumna**
- 5 From the Chancellor**
- 10 Campus Life**
- 24 Alumni News Briefs**
- 25 Don't Miss**
- 26 Class Notes**
- 27 Lens on Campus**

The online magazine can be found here: tinyurl.com/AlumniSpirit.



ON THE COVER

Our cover is inspired by the collaborative artwork that *Stalking the Bogeyman* audiences are invited to create after viewing the play. Fifty similar lanterns will guide audiences to the Jerry Harper Studio Theatre in the UAA Fine Arts Building. Eventually, a much larger version, with written responses from the audience, will be displayed.

Editor

Kathleen McCoy

Writers

Kathleen McCoy

Tracy Kalytiak

Joey Besl

Michelle Saport

Graphic Designer

Brett Rawalt

Staff Photographer

Philip Hall

UAA Alumni Association

Board of Directors

Mark Filipenko, B.B.A. '00

Leverette Hoover, B.S. '97

Andrea Story, B.B.A. '95

Charles Gunther, B.A. '91

Drew Cason, B.A. '13

and B.S. '13

Beth Mader, B.A. '94

Lea Bouton, M.A.T. '10

Kersten Johnson-Struempler,

M.Ed. '03

Amy Hart, B.S.N. '08

Megan Moore, B.A. '08

Rachel Morse, M.B.A. '08,

AVC Alumni Relations

To reach

UAA Alumni Relations:

Main office line

(907) 786-1942

uaa_alumnirelations

@uaa.alaska.edu



Principal Kersten Johnson-Struempler stands above the passing fray of students at South Anchorage High School.

FROM AN ALUMNA

Sometimes, it's absolutely critical to step up.

With two degrees from UAA, once I reached my professional goals, I wanted to support my alma mater by joining the UAA Alumni Association. I feel positive about our contributions, including working this year to support early scholarship notification for prospective freshmen.

But there is something far more urgent right now: funding for public education in Alaska's current economic downturn. As the principal of South Anchorage High School, I understand using money wisely and living within our means. I also know education is a key public good that pays dividends across generations and over decades.

Nearly 50,000 of us name UAA as our alma mater. We are an army that speaks to the success of higher education. If you want the same educational opportunities for your children that you have enjoyed, make your voice heard through your elected representatives. The time is now!

Kersten Johnson-Struempler
M.Ed., Counseling UAA '03
Graduate Certificate, Principal, UAA '05
Ed.D., University of Oregon '05

FROM THE CHANCELLOR

As you receive this issue, we are about two weeks out from one of the very best moments at this university. UAA Commencement is a celebration of endings and new beginnings as students' time on our campus comes to a close and they look toward their futures.

As valued UAA alumni, you have walked this very path toward achievement. Know that we are deeply proud of you.

Working for the success of all of our students is our number-one goal. This is good work, vital work, work that helps individuals become the citizens, professionals, entrepreneurs they wish to be.

I see it every single day—education is truly transformative; it's a gateway to success. As we navigate Alaska's challenges while continuing to focus on opportunity for future Seawolves, we are all partners.

Thank you so very much for supporting UAA. It truly matters.

Tom Case, *Chancellor*



Chancellor Tom Case celebrates the achievement of Commencement at UAA.



THEATRE GRAD LEADS DOUBLE LIFE AS STUNTMAN

Professional stuntman Peter Wallack (B.A. '08 Theatre) flips through photos of his recent work in New York City. "This is where Mick Jagger's kid jumped off a stage and punched me in the face." "This is me on *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon*." "I got paid to throw up on this 8-year-old." He pauses to explain how lunch breaks work when you have a fake beard pasted to your face (surprise, it's difficult).

You may have seen Peter on screen, but it's doubtful you'd recognize him. As a stuntman, he's an invisible element to that movie magic. His laptop, fittingly, is adorned with a Band-Aid.

As a theatre major, Peter worked both on and off the stage at UAA—acting, lighting and, importantly, planning fight scenes. A professor once commented that his fight choreography could convert to professional stuntwork, but he brushed off the comment. "That's really dumb," he remembers thinking. "It's ridiculous."

A bike accident convinced him otherwise. One summer morning, Peter was pedaling to work through Ship Creek when a reversing truck forced him to swerve, clip the curb and sail face first into the concrete. He ran the rest of the way to work, arriving energized and mostly unharmed, with a crumpled bike frame and a single drop of blood streaking his face. Close calls make most people more cautious, but the wreck just made Peter realize he could be a stuntman after all.

So he moved to New York and found work in the theatre scene. He made his first industry connections rigging lights, and soon started as a stand-in on USA Network's *White Collar*, taking actor Matt Bomer's place as the director of photography lined up shots. According to Peter, it was "the top level of the bottom rung," but it got him connected to film sets. After that, the hustle was on.

Peter is fit—he spent six years in the Marine Corps before UAA, he leads Arctic expeditions for his family's tourism business—but, surprisingly, it's his baby face that lands him most roles. At 34 years of age, he regularly doubles for high school kids. While talking, his phone buzzes; a casting director needs to know what he looks like *right now*. Stuntwork is the rare industry where selfies are shamelessly essential, and these immediate images land him more roles than a professional headshot ever could.

Whether he's doubling in fight scenes on Netflix's *Jessica Jones*, jumping off ships on Fox's *The Following* or coordinating stunts on David Bowie's final music video, he always prioritizes safety. "People ask, 'Are you a daredevil?' No," he says flatly. "We're not Superman. We get hurt just like everybody else ... It's as dangerous as it looks, but we take a lot of pride in the safety of it."

Yet it remains a risky business and, in stuntwork, higher risk

literally equals higher reward on payday. On a recent stunt on CBS's *Blue Bloods*, Peter launched into a screeching car's windshield. The car selected had a long, flat hood. Peter paced his steps so he could tip onto the car, aiming his back at the slightly more forgiving windshield. But after a day of rehearsals, he only ran the actual crash once. After all, he's still *hurtling into a moving Chrysler*.

How does one unwind after that kind of workday? Peter slept most of the next 36 hours, waking up for his men's roller derby practice (he's a blocker for the agreeably named New York Shock Exchange). He sat on the sidelines, honestly telling his teammates, "I feel like I got hit by a car."

Peter is regularly in Alaska, guiding Arctic expeditions, and he plans to return full time in the future. "Alaska is my home, and I hope to come back before my body gives out," he noted.



For now, though, he'll keep falling face first down marble steps in New York and linking UAA's theatre grads one step closer to Kevin Bacon.

And as for that car hit, Peter earned some payback. A few days later, while playing a protester, he got to punch a car as it rolled past.

See our website for videos of Peter's fight choreography and a clip of that jarring car hit. Visit tinyurl.com/AlumniSpirit.



CURATING ALASKA NATIVE CULTURE

Does it bother you to have something new happen every day? That question came up in Eleanor Hadden’s (B.A. ’97, M.A. ’08 Anthropology) interview at the Alaska Native Heritage Center, and her answer—“Oh, I love it”—helped land a role as exhibits and collections curator.

But her entire career can be traced to one *wrong* answer. After her husband Ronald, B.B.A. ’75, retired from the military, she enrolled in an anthropology class on Alaska Natives. When her professor asked for a word describing an uncle raising his nephew, Eleanor—with Tlingit/Haida/Tsimshian roots—simply answered ‘Uncle raises nephew,’ a common practice keeping a son in the mother’s clan. The professor marked it in red; the answer was actually *avunculate*.

For the first time, she saw her culture as part of a worldwide framework. So she took another class. And then another. “All from that one question,” she recalled.

She returned for a master’s, writing her thesis on power and subjugation in the Southeast, where generations of children (herself included) had received federal TB vaccines and

occasionally placebos without clear communication or family consent. She defended her unusually personal 150-page thesis in 2008.

She soon returned to the Heritage Center, having previously served on the site’s planning committee in the 1990s. She’s barely ever at her desk, wedged behind cases of artifacts, and instead is out polishing whalebones and cleaning canoes suspended from the ceiling.

Though the Center originally intended to share Alaska Native cultures with the world, Eleanor sees a local benefit. “Every culture that’s here, they are to me as I am to them,” she said. “That has been the most fun thing—learning all the cultures of Alaska, how similar and how different we are. That was a benefit I didn’t know I would get.”

So next time you’re at the Alaska Native Heritage Center, keep an eye out for Eleanor. She may be phoning musk ox tanners, chatting with youth volunteers or maybe out front polishing the statue.

Every day holds something new.

FROM WRITING GUIDEBOOKS TO GUIDING GRADS

“Not a lot of people know the career I have exists,” laughed Leah Boltz (B.A. ’06 Journalism). As marketing director for Bettisworth North, Leah is a professional storyteller behind the firm’s award-winning portfolio. But why does an architecture firm need a storyteller?

Professional service firms—think architects, engineers and contractors—live and die by contracts they secure, so they need a solid marketing mind to lock down bids. They also need someone with a technical understanding of complex projects and Leah, who entertained a chemistry degree, certainly has that, too.

After transferring from Montana State to UAA, Leah landed an assistant editor position at *The Milepost*. That writing experience led her to seek PR jobs and, though she admittedly stumbled into her current gig, she wants today’s students to know it’s an option. “I don’t know anyone who went to school specifically to be a professional services marketer, but we’d like to change that,” she said. “These are

actual good careers that pay well and exist in spades in our community.” Alaska relies on professional services, and Leah helped found initiatives to connect and educate professionals. Now, she’s appealing straight to students.

Last year, Leah joined Leadership Fellows, a mentorship program pairing 22 local leaders—including nine alumni—with UAA students. Leah has mentored student Alexa Wolf since September, first chatting over coffee and later shadowing at the office. Now that Alexa is an alumna, Leah’s finding ways for her to grow a professional portfolio. “Whether she was looking for it or not, she got a crash course in how to market for architecture,” Leah noted.

The program was a worthy addition to Alexa’s final year. “Though we come from different educational backgrounds, I have been able to learn from Leah’s experiences and realize what it takes to achieve one’s desired career position,” she said. “I would encourage every alum to get involved,” Leah noted of the Leadership Fellows program. “The university has so much potential to be both an economic driver and a really great resource for business and talent in our state. “And on an alumni side, it’s just fun and rewarding to be able to give back and to stay involved.”



Alexa Wolf and Leah Boltz

CAMPUS LIFE



"I can't believe I get to go to school here."

As the boat she was riding cruised into a cove of Kachemak Bay, Amelia Johnson saw a large flock of birds bobbing on the surface—a good indication of fish below. Suddenly, seconds after putting the boat in idle, two humpback whales spouted simultaneously fewer than 50 feet from the bow.

"I felt exhilarated and stunned," said Amelia, who had just arrived in Homer last summer to begin studying in the UAA Kachemak Bay Campus' Semester by the Bay program.

"There was so much power behind their movements, such grace," she continued. "I saw their great muscles flex as they

pushed themselves back in the water. Time stood still. I completely lost any thought of everything else. Seeing these whales made me realize just how insignificant I am in the scope of the earth. I felt truly humbled to be so close to these large creatures."

OPENING NEW POSSIBILITIES
The rich world that thrives beneath the sea always enthralled Amelia. "I have always been interested in becoming a marine biologist," she said. "All of our family vacations were to the beach. Ever since childhood, I have sought out research experiences in marine biology."

Amelia started scuba diving at age 12 and volunteered weekends at the Smithsonian National Zoological Park Invertebrate House for years. She enrolled in the University of North Carolina Wilmington because, being near the ocean, she could study the whales and other marine mammals she loved.

Then, an unexpected classroom visitor opened a new world of possibility thousands of miles away, on the southern tip of the Kenai Peninsula. Amelia found out about Semester by the Bay's field research opportunities when Deborah Boege-Tobin, a professor who teaches SBB's marine mammals and

seabirds biology class, visited UNCW during a recruitment trip a year ago.

"She gave a 10-minute presentation in the classroom of my marine mammals and ichthyology lectures," Amelia said. "I had always known I wanted to study abroad, but could not find the type of program I really wanted. Once I heard Debbie's presentation, though, I knew I was sold."

"What I was most interested in about the program was the opportunity to conduct an internship concurrently with classes," Amelia said. *(Continued on next page.)*

One student describes her experiences in UAA's Semester by the Bay

(Continued) Amelia journeyed to Alaska last summer, enrolled in SBB classes and immersed herself in internships with the North Gulf Oceanic Society, Eye of the Whale Research and Alaska Maritime Fish and Wildlife Service.

“Alaska has always been a place I have wanted to go because of its biodiversity, and abundance of marine mammals,” she said. “Whales and sea otters became a daily occurrence for me in Homer.”

Amelia took part in killer and humpback whale photo identification efforts—going on a research expedition to Prince William Sound to photograph whales and getting out on Kachemak Bay to learn how to individually identify them.

“Photo identification is one of the main tools researchers use to track individual whales over time,” she said, “and I was very interested in having a chance to learn how to take and

then analyze photographs of whales. I knew this was a tool I would potentially need to know in my career as a researcher.”

Amelia also worked as a sea otter stranding intern, traveling daily on Kachemak Bay stranding calls. “I collected data and samples, conducted necropsies and filled out corresponding documentation for each stranding,” she said. “There was an increased sea otter die-off this past fall; there were some days we responded [to] up to 10 stranding calls in a day.”

She and other stranding interns visited the Alaska SeaLife Center in Seward to volunteer for four days in that facility’s rehabilitation and animal-training centers. “We were able to assist with sea otter health assessments, food preparation, tank cleaning and octopus feedings,” Amelia said.

While taking Boege-Tobin’s marine mammals and seabirds class, Amelia studied beluga whales in Cook Inlet and Turnagain Arm.

“The best aspect of my classes was the focus on research experience,” Amelia said. “In Debbie’s marine mammals class, we went out on many field trips that all focused on field data collection. I gained experience in recording respiration rates of whales, conducted a biodiversity survey, and made an ethogram in the lab portion of the class.”

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

Amelia also relished her SBB land-based classes, including two taught by celebrated scientific artist Lee Post, who lives in Homer. Post’s scientific illustration and skeletal articulation classes prompted Amelia to think about the foundational structures of marine mammals.

“In scientific illustration, I recorded every minute detail of the bones I was drawing,” she said. “Skeletal articulation

gave me an appreciation of the physiology of beluga whales as we reconstructed the entire skeleton bone by bone. As more and more was added to the finished product, Lee would stop to explain specific functions on certain bones and how that related to their behavior in the wild.”

Amelia says her SBB classes offered tangible benefits she’ll carry with her into graduate school and an upcoming internship with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

“I learned a set of skills that will be useful in the research field after graduation,” she said. “Having a foundation of these skills will make me a stronger candidate in the work force.”

Seeing those Kachemak Bay humpbacks highlighted a sense of purpose for her life, Amelia said. “At that first sighting of those whales, I knew I had chosen the right path,” she said. “I am excited to commit my career to the conservation of these animals.”



(Left to right) Semester by the Bay students in Lee Post’s articulation class lay out the bones of a beluga whale. A humpback whale that breached so often during a Rainbow Tours trip in Kachemak Bay that the group dubbed the whale “Selfie.” SBB students, with Shelly Gill of Eye of the Whale Research and UAA SBB’s Debbie Boege-Tobin, take a selfie with Selfie. Amelia Johnson rides a horse on the Homer farm of her internship mentor. Photos courtesy of Amelia Johnson and Natalie Hunter.

THE CAMPUS AS A BEACH...

The word ‘university’ springs from the Latin—*universitas magistrorum et scholarium*, translating roughly as “a community of teachers and scholars.” That conjures up images of professors and students cloistered in a school somewhere, engaged in rigorous exercise of the mind. Clearly, the Romans didn’t stick around to visit UAA and Anchorage. If we could conjure up a more appropriate metaphor for the U-Med campus and its community extensions, we’d go with something much more porous and fluid.

How about the shoreline of a beautiful beach, where the tide flows in and out,

depositing gifts and travelers from the world beyond, and transporting campus “sailors” to distant ports and adventures. The companion story in this Campus Without Borders section is an apt example. The hands-on, on-the-water Semester by the Bay successfully mingles human and marine life, all for the sake of study. The point here is the vigorous flow—back and forth—between community and campus. The college itself is no longer the classroom. The world is.

Location in a dense population center means UAA rubs shoulders with pros in commerce, medicine, engineering,

transportation and government. Nearby experts carry real-world problems into UAA classrooms, pushing students beyond theories and case studies. UAA faculty share useful research and scholarship with the community. And UAA students experience almost unlimited opportunities for internships, practicums and community engagement in areas of peak interest, from firefighting to nursing, culinary arts to aviation.

UAA has won designation as an “engaged university.” In 2006, its Center for Community Engagement and Learning (CCEL) earned the prestigious Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. What does that mean? CCEL serves as a catalyst, convener and connector between community and campus. We’d need a separate magazine to try and capture the full tide of experience, creativity and future promise flowing between UAA, Anchorage and Alaska. Here are just a few more examples of what it means to study as a Seawolf in the 21st century.

CIVIL DISCOURSE: Seawolf Debate partners with *Alaska Dispatch News* to publicly debate key issues with “Arguing Alaska.” Seawolf debaters also coach local middle and high school debate teams.

SCIENCE: UAA doctoral student Veronica Padula walks a Polaris biology class through the process of emptying seabird stomachs in search of plastic—a component of her research.

LEADERSHIP: CBPP Leadership Fellows mentor UAA business students. Other mentors are guiding Clark Middle School students who choose medicine, coding, leadership or education paths.

ARTS: In response to reductions in K-12 arts education funding, UAA theatre students paired with drama classes at two area high schools and a middle school to enrich programming.

HEALTH: WWAMI alumnus and orthopedic surgeon Dr. Stephen Tower—one of more than 200 local physicians involved in WWAMI education—visits a class to demonstrate

a skillful shoulder exam. Annually, more than 100 nursing students flow into hospitals and clinics, partnering with experienced medical practitioners in clinical settings.

SELKREGG AWARD: 2015 winner Kathryn Ohle, an early childhood education professor, works to provide children’s books to families and teachers in Alaska Native languages.

STATE ECONOMY: ISER economists analyze and explain the state’s fiscal challenges and options.

NONPROFIT SUPPORT: Three UAA computer students design a website with online inventory for Anchorage nonprofit “Kicks for Kids” that connects school kids with shoes, and win a national collegiate award.

ENGINEERING: The Seawolf Engineering Initiative means more than 200 senior civil engineering students design real-world projects for clients like DOT, community councils, state parks and municipal utilities. Mentors from Anchorage’s engineering community

offer insights and often steer students toward positions within Alaska’s network of engineers.

FRAUD VICTIMS: Students, faculty and industry mentors investigate complaints referred by the Anchorage Police Department. “A lot of social good comes out of this program,” said Soren Orley, the CBPP professor who helped launch UAA’s program.

So many close bonds between campus and community mean UAA students emerge from college already committed. As one CCEL grad put it, “I’m more than a student; I’m a citizen, too.”

(From left to right) Students in Fire 295 go right to community firehouses for on-the-job training. Rural, first-gen American, or economically disadvantaged students come from all over the state for an introduction to the medical field with WWAMI’s Della Keats program, named for Inupiaq traditional healer Della Puyuk Keats of Kotzebue. Geology class with professor Kristine Crossen means getting up close and personal with Portage Glacier. UAA doctoral student Veronica Padula shows Polaris biology students how to find plastic in seabird stomachs. Clark Middle School students proudly wear their scrubs for the UAA College of Health Junior Health Professionals Academy.

CAMPUS WITHOUT BORDERS



At age 7, David Holthouse was raped by a high school quarterback while the boys' parents chatted upstairs. Decades later, UAA students are staging his story.

The experience haunted David as he grew up in Anchorage, left for college in California and worked as a journalist in Denver. But the simmering mental pain flooded back when his mother,

unaware of the incident, blithely reported that David's rapist had also landed in Denver, and wasn't that great? Yoked by memory, his only thought was to kill his bogeyman. As Holthouse later wrote in the *Anchorage Press*, "I decided to murder him. I bought a gun, and a silencer, and I made a plan."

David first shared his childhood rape and deadly fixation in Denver's alt-

weekly, *Westword*, in 2004 (the article reprinted in Anchorage later). In 2011, David appeared on NPR's *This American Life* in an episode that caught the ear of a New York City theatre rep. Next came the play—*Stalking the Bogeyman*—which ran off-Broadway in 2014, and will have its West Coast premiere at UAA this April. The play stages the entire experience—from the incident in Anchorage to an

anguished confrontation between the two in Denver—into one relentless, demanding, necessary production. No intermission, no relief.

David's deeply personal story has vast implications in his home state; according to a 2014 federal study, Alaska's rate of child sexual assault is six times the national average.

"It's not normally common conversation around the coffee table," said Dan Anteau, B.A. '96, chair of UAA's theatre department. The play, he hopes, will change that. "It is difficult, but it's a real necessary dialogue."

That's a large reason why UAA earned the script over the state's many theatre companies. UAA departments collaborated on an awareness campaign in the rollout to opening night, and each production has an immediate "talkback" between the cast and audience, joined by a rotation of psychology faculty, abuse advocates and even David himself.

This diverse community involvement has defined the production all semester. Scriptwriter Markus Potter flew from New York to lead workshops, psychology faculty advised throughout rehearsals and David himself met the cast, an incredibly unique experience for the student actors.

The play leans heavily on real life and recorded conversations, but David informed the cast of distinct differences. Devin Frey, who plays David, asked him directly if he'd found the closure evidenced in the script. "There was no ray of sunshine, he *didn't* feel better about [the confrontation]," Devin noted of the break between script and reality. "In the play, David will get closure... but I have to find it."

Chris Evans, who plays the Bogeyman, also has a challenge—imbuing a child rapist with compassion. "If we just treated him as this stock villain, there's not as much impact," he said. By calling the abuser 'the Bogeyman,' the script indicates these hidden demons could be anyone (though not named in the script, David has since identified his rapist in a wrenching 2015 *Anchorage Press* article). "A big part of the show is showing that these are your neighbors, your sons and your brothers that can commit these types of crimes."

It's heavy material for a student production. "It is a hard show to produce. It is going to be an emotional roller coaster sometimes during rehearsals," noted director Brian Cook. "Everything we do in the play is simulated but it's still, for the actor in the moment, real."

Within the close quarters of UAA's blackbox theater, it may feel real for the audience, too. That's why the director included nightly talkbacks, it's why psychology students will

survey audiences to monitor change in impressions and it's why art professor Herminia Din will install a collaborative piece in the lobby for release and expression. UAA's production will harness resources from multiple departments to make sure the conversation continues after the house lights rise.

Abuse is a statewide issue, and the six-student cast will tour their production this summer. With a focused publicity campaign, citywide partnerships and a traveling schedule, this show far exceeds any recent production at UAA.

"This role is a huge deal for me," Devin noted. "I do believe theatre is an instrument for social change and you need projects like this to really push it forward ... That's a challenge I'm excited for."

Stalking the Bogeyman runs Friday-Sunday from April 1-24. It will appear in Seward, Homer, Palmer and Fairbanks this summer, and will conclude at the Last Frontier Theatre Conference in Valdez.

All alumni receive a 10 percent discount on all UAA theatre productions if they buy online at www.UAATix.com and use the code "UAAAlumni."

STAGING THE BOGEYMAN

AS UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

What's a metaphor for the challenges facing the state of Alaska and the University of Alaska in 2016?

I am thinking of the multi-headed Hydra from Greek mythology. You manage to cut one head off—solve one problem—and three more spring out. It's a real challenge to understand all these problems we face, and figure out a course through them so we are stronger at the end of the day than we were at the beginning.

Could you further describe your vision for UAA as the metropolitan university?

UAA is the university for our great big city—providing engineers, producing nurses and health care professionals, accountants, business leaders.

Anchorage has businesses that need development and expertise training for their people and they can get that at UAA. I see applied research in logistics, in health care, in engineering and other areas key to Anchorage, and the state, but particularly Anchorage, which is the economic engine of Alaska. I see a deep and strong connection to Alaska Native corporations, a tremendous opportunity for UAA.

Describe your leadership style. How are you applying it at the University of Alaska?

I am working hard to meet people across the university system: Connect, listen, learn.

That said, I learned from my dad who led from the front as an Army officer.

That's an important way to lead at the University of Alaska. While we are a complicated organization, and we must take time and use evidence to make critical decisions, we must make those decisions and move on. Indecision will kill us. It's so important that we make sound and wise decisions for the long term.

What experience from your work in the business world are you tapping in your role as president of Alaska's public university?

Every organization is about its people, whether it is a Native corporation serving shareholders, a telecommunications company serving customers, or the university serving students and the state.

The second is respect for—and here is a business word—the customer's views, the customer's interests.

At the university, we are about our students, about future employers, about the people who fund research, about the state. It's important we understand it's about their priorities and their interests. We are the University of Alaska, not the University of Jim Johnsen or anybody else.

Getting to a more tactical point, there is the need for reallocation. In business, you are constantly seeking to maximize the value of the investment in your organization. And it is not simply financial value. It's qualitative value. It is the value of education, the value of the research we provide.

Of the top five things employers want, technical skills is number six. Communication, ethics, values, work habits, the ability to assimilate information and communicate it well—that's what employers want.

What message do you have for alumni of the University of Alaska Anchorage?

I want UAA alumni to be proud Seawolves.

I want you to reflect back on your time at UAA and the skills you acquired. Do what you can, with your time and talent, to contribute to this school's future. We want upcoming Alaskans to have the same great success UAA alumni enjoy today.

So be proud. UAA is a great and dynamic university; be part of its strong future.

ON A MORE PERSONAL NOTE

What is the most important lesson you've learned navigating life?

One comes from my negotiating background ... it is to listen, really listen well. From a negotiator's standpoint, how can you reach agreement if you don't know what the other side really needs? You learn it by listening.

What do you consider the single most important lesson you imparted to your own two children?

No matter what it is you pursue, work hard. My daughter works for the big NPR station in Chicago. My son is now in politics in Washington, D.C. They have both followed very different paths,

are bright young people and have done well academically. But the real lesson there is hard work.

How do you recharge your batteries?

We live in the woods up here in Fairbanks, on a trail with some really beautiful hikes. I get outside. I also read. I've had four surgeries in the last two months, so I am a little frustrated that I can't get on a bike or into the swimming pool right now. So I'd say walking in the woods is my single biggest battery recharge.

What are you reading?

A new biography of Caesar. Also my daughter just sent me, and I dipped into it a little over the weekend, a new biography of Shakespeare set in 1599. And every weekend, I read *The Economist*. That's a ritual.

What are you listening to?

Generally I listen to NPR and ESPN. I'm also a real fan of my daughter's podcast, Nerddette (WBEZ Chicago). She interviews famous authors and scientists on their passions. I love listening to my daughter's podcasts.

On ESPN, I like the way they get into disagreements that are better thought through than political disagreements we might hear on other stations.

What about living in Alaska do you love?

No matter where you are from, whether it's Allakaket or Alabama, you have a shot in Alaska at a meaningful and quality life. I love that.

“Indecision will kill us. It's so important that we make sound and wise decisions for the long term.”

UA President Jim Johnsen: the short interview

find the full-length interview at tinyurl.com/AlumniSpirit

EDUCATION STEEPED IN COMMUNITY

ALUMNI USE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SKILLS LONG AFTER GRADUATION

How can students at UAA build an education that also satisfies their ambition to solve community problems they see around them?

UAA's Center for Community Engagement and Learning guides students to a host of volunteer and service-learning opportunities that deepen and enrich their education, providing a socially immersive supplement to classroom-based achievement.

These three alumni are among many who have used CCEL training as a springboard to careers requiring practical, real-world experience spliced into a foundation of academics.

Rachel Wintz was 12 years old when she first began craving a career that would both enrich her life and enable her to help other people help themselves.

"I always wanted to make the world a better place," she said. "As long as I'm improving the world around me, I'm content. I didn't want to be stuck in the library for four years. I wanted to be doing things while I was going to college. That drive led me down this path."

That path led her to CCEL, where she began collaborating with other students who had the same goal: relieving social challenges while working toward a degree.

Wintz learned about the role of churches in Mountain View, communicated with 180 clients in Fairview in a survey about homelessness and researched food insecurity at UAA, among other projects.

Now, she works as program coordinator of Girls on the Run of Greater Alaska, which engages girls in community-service projects and encourages them to commit to a healthy lifestyle.

"The girls learn the importance of being who you are, celebrating your unique gifts, which impacts the rest of their lives," Wintz said. "They learn about causes, groups, things they care about. It's fun being able to pass along those values."

CCEL alumna Marcella Dent now lives thousands of miles from UAA, immersed in completing a natural resources master's degree at the University of Vermont in Burlington.

"I love how transdisciplinary it is," she said. "It is the meeting place of people and nature, Western science and traditional ecological knowledge, public trust and private property rights, development and conservation and myriad ideologies. I want to work at the center of all this convergence."

Skills she learned through CCEL helped Dent better understand her role as a volunteer or community activist.

"What I feel most strongly about is the incredible importance of critical self-reflection, relationship and feedback," she said.

Examining assumptions, privilege, knowledge, blind spots, intentions and goals is key. "I cannot know how to serve others if I do not know myself," she said.

Dent worked as a student mentor and helped found the Heifer International Club at UAA, helping her apply what she learned through CCEL.

"I was a student mentor for several years and each semester was able to learn more about myself as a leader, and become a better mentor," she said.

Now, Dent works as a teaching assistant and service-learning mentor for a senior capstone class at UVM.

"It's great to be able to pull from my UAA experiences and grow even more in this capacity," she said. "I want to encourage collaborative management practices that bring diverse voices to the table."

Michele Craig's commitment to UAA's environmental studies program was so intense, she worked three 14-hour days a week in her job with JetBlue Airways and then flew to Anchorage to complete classwork on the remaining days.



She lives in Anchorage but travels to Boston for her job. "I just made it work," Craig said.

Craig supported professor Doug Causey's research into Pacific Ocean gyres' dispersal of plastics and collected samples for graduate student Veronica Padula in the Pribilof Islands.

"Environmental policy and issues, particularly in the Arctic, appeal to me," she said.

In 2013, she worked in Greenland on a project measuring the effects of climate change on Arctic tundra. She also traveled to Kauai, volunteering on a project involved in removing invasive plants.

Closer to home, Craig worked in the Birds 'n' Bogs citizen science program in the Matanuska Valley with Audubon Alaska's Beth Peluso and professor Audrey Taylor of UAA.

"We go out as a volunteer to be of help and it ends up being a transfer [of knowledge] back and forth," she said. "[Students] become impassioned. It's much more than a box checked for your degree."



Rachel Wintz works as program coordinator of Girls on the Run of Greater Alaska.

Local roots, national attention

Jason Smith, B.S. '10, M.B.A. '15, was featured in a January *The New York Times* story on the plentiful problems providing produce in Alaska. Last year, Smith launched Alaska Natural Organics, an organic hydroponic vertical farm that replaces soil with nutrient-rich water and sunlight with LED lights. The 5,000-square-foot, 20,000-plants-per-month business operates out of Anchorage's former Matanuska Maid building and delivered its first crops to local restaurants this fall.



Traveling Spirit visited the whalebone arch in Barrow. Now you can decide where he'll go next!

Spirit in #SeawolfNation

Take a bit of UAA with you wherever you are in #SeawolfNation. Add Traveling Spirit to your suitcase for your next big trip, or show us the landmarks of your current hometown. Call the Office of Alumni Relations at 907-786-1942 and we'll mail you a Traveling Spirit. Just be sure to share your #UAAmazing photos after!

Building a safe space on campus

One alumna is making an impact on campus. Thanks in part to Amanda Kookesh, B.A. Psychology '09, UAA recently received a \$10,000 grant from Transforming Youth Recovery, a nonprofit focused on youth substance abuse. Amanda is UAA's alcohol, drug and wellness educator, and the funds will help create a supportive environment for UAA students recovering from substance abuse to focus on their goals and graduate. "We want to create a place where students in recovery don't feel ashamed, where they don't need to worry about being triggered, and where they can be comfortable around other students who are in similar situations," Amanda said.

Introducing the Parrish Bridge

UAA's latest landmark finally has a name. The new pedestrian bridge spanning Providence Drive, featured in our Spring 2015 issue, has been named in honor of longtime supporters of the university, Ann and Al Parrish. For nearly three decades, both Ann and Al have been deeply involved with the university from both sides of Providence Drive. Al strengthened ties with the university while CEO of Providence Hospital from 2002-2011. Ann, B.B.A. '79, is a former Regent and Trustee who founded the Celebrity Chef Invitational in 1993. Fittingly, the new Parrish Bridge links UAA's main campus to the Health Sciences Building, adjacent to Providence Hospital.

Another tee-rific 9 in the Spine

Alumni Relations kicked off UAA's Winterfest with the annual Alumni ParTee: 9 in the Spine mini-golf event. Twenty teams of alumni and friends returned to campus to putt their way across campus on a creative course designed by student clubs. The event concluded with a reception at the 19th hole (AKA, The Den, in the Student Union). All proceeds benefited the UAA Alumni Association scholarship fund. Go online for pictures from this year's wild winter tradition at tinyurl.com/9-in-the-spine.

Engineers host alumni night

The College of Engineering alumni chapter hosted its second Engineers Night in February. The annual event connects current students with Alaska companies and professional networking chapters, as well as student clubs and support services. More than 200 people (and one Baja car) attended the event.



Nathaniel Cox, B.S. '15, takes the Society of Automotive Engineers' Baja car out for a spin at Engineering Night.

New Dances 2016

April 14-17, Thursday-Saturday at 8 p.m., Sunday at 3 p.m.
Mainstage Theatre
UAATix.com

Expect a little bit of everything in this popular dance showcase. Running for one weekend only, "New Dances" premieres original choreography by UAA Dance program students, faculty and guest artists. Past performances have run the gamut from mellow to sultry, haunting to bubbly, hip-hop to ballet, and then some. Come see what styles and ideas the dancers will explore this year.

Third Thursday Open Mic

Thursday, April 21, 7-9 p.m.
Student Union Den
Free

Voice and words take center stage at this monthly open mic that's free and open to all. Check out April's edition for an eclectic night of spoken word, poetry, storytelling and singing. If you're interested in sharing, sign up in advance at the Student Union Information Desk to reserve a performance slot.

UAA Planetarium: "Fractals Rock!"

Friday, April 22, 6:30 p.m.
ConocoPhillips Integrated Science Building, Room 220
UAATix.com

UAA mathematicians Larry Foster, Stefanos Folias and Sam Cook present this planetarium favorite. "Fractals Rock!" will take you on a visual tour of the endless fractal patterns of nature and magnify for you the infinite complexity of mathematical art. Come get lost in the beautiful fractals of the natural world in this full-dome experience.

Juried Student Show

April 13-28, Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Friday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Student Union Gallery
Free

This annual show is juried by an Alaska artist and showcases the most outstanding artwork created by UAA students over the past year. Take this opportunity to introduce yourself to the work of promising young artists, as well as explore the vibrant diversity of media and perspectives on display. Juror awards are given for demonstration of superior skill, creativity and technique.

UAA Theatre: "Stalking the Bogeyman"

April 1-24, Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m., Sunday at 3 p.m.
Harper Studio Theatre
UAATix.com

Don't miss the West Coast premiere of this acclaimed play from Anchorage writer David Holthouse. Adapted and directed by Markus Potter, *Stalking the Bogeyman* follows Holthouse as he plots to kill his childhood rapist. Each show will be followed by talkbacks, to open up a conversation between the audience, actors and crew about the difficult social issues at the core of the play. *All alumni receive a 10-percent discount on all UAA theatre productions if they buy online at www.UAATix.com and use the code "UAAAlumni."*

UAA Commencement

Sunday, May 1, 1 p.m.
Alaska Airlines Center

Nothing is as uplifting as a college graduation. Bask in the Green and Gold as UAA's spring Class of 2016 walks across the Alaska Airlines Center stage at 1 p.m. Sunday, May 1. This is a free but ticketed event. If you'd like to volunteer, please call the UAA Office of Alumni Relations at 786-1942.

CLASS NOTES

This page of alumni updates was compiled by Joey Besl of the UAA Office of Alumni Relations. Please share your moments of pride and achievement via the link at the bottom of this page, so we can note your success in an upcoming issue.

1975

Steve Wyatt, B.A. Economics, went on to earn a Ph.D. from University of Texas at Dallas. He recently retired from a long career in higher education, most recently serving as professor and chair of the finance department at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. He writes, "After 42 years as a college professor, I retired and now am living in Kirkland, Wash., on Lake Washington. Please feel free to contact me as I now have time as I never have had it before and I am open to helping all who may know me."

1990

Palmer is on the national map for local food, thanks to Jan Newman, M.A.T. Teaching. As founder of Grow Palmer, she's led the community charge to build a public garden, where all town residents can harvest

edible produce straight from volunteer-built garden boxes. The initiative landed Palmer on the EPA's Local Food, Local Places list for 2016, which provides technical assistance to support a sustainable food system and trail network in the downtown area and foster coordination among organizations working on Palmer's local food economy. Learn more and get involved at facebook.com/growpalmer.



Nonpartisan coalition Our Alaska looks to engage rising Alaskans in the state's future (and have a little fun with the process, too). Several alumni appeared in the group's debut video this January, including Harry Need, M.P.A. '13, Drew Cason, B.A. '13 and B.S. '13, and Katherine Jernstrom, M.P.A. '14. More information is available at ouralaska.us.

1993

The State of Alaska Department of Education & Early Development recently recognized Francie Roberts, B.Ed. Elementary Education, as the Alternate Teacher of the Year for 2016. Francie, who also holds a master's degree from Montana State University, has taught mathematics at Homer High School for 22 years.

2011

Cordelia Qignaaq Kellie, B.A. English, interned this year for Sen. Donny Olson (D-Golovin). She previously served on Shell's external relations team working to limit effects on subsistence communities across Alaska. Originally from Wainwright, she continues to write stories and poetry on indigenous issues. You can find her writing (and contribute your own) on her online forum, nalliq.com.

2013

Ian Kirkpatrick, B.A. Theatre, is currently enrolled at the University of Tampa, where he expects to earn an M.F.A. in creative writing this spring. He is working on his first full-length manuscript and is considering doctoral programs in creative writing for the fall.

2013

John Smart, B.B.A. Management Information Systems '13, writes "I started my own business, using the degree I earned at UAA, and I moved to Florida!" He recently launched a web design and repair company, "Smart's Web Services," out of North Point, Fla.

2013

Ezra Lockhart, A.A.S. Human Services, recently graduated with a Master of Health Science degree from the University of Sydney. He writes, "My aim is to affect disability policy for individuals living with developmental disabilities." Ezra, the 2013 Man of Excellence from UAA's AHAINA multicultural center, is board certified in Alaska as a chemical dependency counselor and internationally as an autism specialist. He plans to pursue doctoral work in the fall.



SUBMIT A CLASS NOTE

Do you have some news to share? Your UAA family wants to know. Submit your news online at this link: tinyurl.com/UAA-ClassNotes.

UPDATE YOUR RECORDS

You can get connected with UAA Alumni! Update your information at tinyurl.com/UAA-Update so we can let you know about upcoming events.



The online magazine can be found here: tinyurl.com/AlumniSpirit.



Who doesn't love a snap with Spirit?



UNIVERSITY of ALASKA
ANCHORAGE

Office of Advancement
University of Alaska Anchorage
3211 Providence Drive, ADM 236 • Anchorage, AK 99508

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage

PAID

Permit No 107
Anchorage AK

*Pearl-Grace Pantaleone
B.A. Journalism & Public Communication '14*

THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR

Help the latest alumni celebrate their big day, and relive your own. Volunteer at Commencement weekend April 30 and May 1. To learn more, just call Alumni Relations at 907-786-1942.