

Profile: Ed Bradley

In this edition we interview Ed Bradley, Associate Professor and long-time member of the AgEcon Department. He is well known for his teaching, is a former AgEcon department head, a former director of UW's International Programs, and a new convert to triathleticism (and bliss). ~*The editor.*

ItM: What brought you to economics?

I grew up on a farm in south eastern Wisconsin, and went to the University of Wisconsin to study engineering. Engineering didn't work out, so I fished around and loved economics after taking micro and macro principles. Then I discovered the discipline of agricultural economics, with agribusiness as its degree program. It was a perfect fit, given my background. The theory had very insightful consequences for business management, and it was a social science studying human behavior and individuals' choices. It struck me as providing powerful insights.

ItM: How did you get to UW AgEcon?

I did my graduate work at Penn State. As I was finishing, the department head, John Malone, who had previously been at the University of Nevada-Reno, thought that Wyoming would be a good fit for someone who had studied natural resource economics. He was right. I started off as a post-doc in 1976. Later I shifted into a position with the Economic Research Service (in Washington DC). In 1980 I hired on as a faculty member at UW. In those early years I worked in research and teaching, but I had free reign to do Extension work in ag policy. I loved it.

ItM: How did your work evolve?

Initially my research was primarily in water and land resource management. The first course I taught was land economics — the area that led to the creation of natural resource economics and environmental economics. A lot came from land economics in the evolution of the discipline. I also worked on policy issues such as the effects of macroeconomic policy on agriculture.

In 1990-91 I spent a year in France. During that time, I began to shift my research towards trade and agricultural development. I'd started an exchange program in Angers, France, so I developed many professional connections there.

It was a great year; I was appointed to an agricultural trade advisory group to President Mitterrand. There were lots of trade issues at the time with the Uruguay Round nearing its completion. Plus there were tensions in France with academics wanting more free trade, but producer groups wanting protection. The producers won some political battles, but did have to give up some of their protection.

I came back to UW and was recommended by Dean Heil to be the

acting director of International Programs. I worked on expanding the number of international students who were sent to UW with foreign government sponsorship. Those numbers increased. I worked primarily as a faculty service provider to encourage UW faculty to involve themselves in international education and development projects. We had some good successes, such as with an Asian Development Bank project on desertification in the Gobi Desert and a World Bank project training Turkish professionals in water management. It really did help globalize the University of Wyoming. And the trend has continued.



ItM: After coming back to the department, what was your focus?

For many years I've been focusing on offering global awareness classes. Three of the 13 classes I've taught have been courses like world food and agriculture, and food, farm and trade policy. I really like helping students expand their experiential bubbles. Freshmen come in and their bubbles are quite small: they have little understanding and experience beyond the Rocky Mountain region. So new students arrive with fears, misinformation and misunderstandings. So I help them open up and explore, which helps them to find their own professional passions. Not everybody comes here knowing what they want to do, nor are they highly committed and motivated. It takes a while for them to decide what they want to do, where they can be outstanding, how they can really develop themselves individually. Many students change a great deal as they broaden their perspectives.

ItM: What advice do you have for incoming students?

There is no reason to be fearful, there are many opportunities at the university. People have a lot more ability than they realize when they arrive. Don't be afraid of change and progress. You are going to be evolving and finding yourself. My goal is to help them all find their passion, pursue their passion, and become responsible independent human beings.

I gained immensely by earning an undergraduate degree. One of the reasons I went into academia was I wanted to be able to pay back that social debt. Wonderful people helped me during my college years, and I wanted to provide that service to others.

ItM: Where are you headed next?

Four or five years ago I listened to the advice of my kids and

Knowledge as a Public Good

By Nicole Ballenger

Think about the simple things you do most every day: fix yourself a bite to eat, maybe scramble an egg, brush your teeth, tie your shoes, zip your jacket, start your car, drive to work, and park. And think about the more complicated things you might do on a weekend: read the instructions for how to assemble a new bookshelf, calculate how much wallpaper you need to redecorate your bedroom, figure out the tip on your date-night restaurant bill, and halve a recipe so that you make just enough fudge for the two of you. All of those things, both simple and not-so-simple, utilize knowledge that's stored in your brain or, if necessary, that you can look up in a book, or on the Internet, or ask of someone else. Suppose you couldn't access that knowledge? That it was all kept hidden away from you. Imagine how impossible your life would be.

Knowledge is an example of a special class of "goods and services" that economists refer to as public goods. Public goods aren't the things we can buy in a store or online, but our consumption of them is every bit as important to our lives. Public goods have two main characteristics: they are nonexclusionary and nonrival. Nonexclusionary means that people can't be excluded from using the good, and nonrival means that one person's consumption of the good can't interfere with another person's consumption. Well-recognized examples, other than knowledge, include fresh air and public defense. I can breathe as much of our cool Wyoming air as I want without affecting anyone else's ability to do the same. And you and I don't compete for the national defense protections afforded by our military service men and women.

Actually, knowledge is probably more accurately thought of as an impure public good because some knowledge is proprietary, at least for a time. The ability to protect trade secrets and file patents does pose some limits to the public good nature of knowledge (and these protections do provide an incentive to individuals and companies to invest in new knowledge). But an enormous amount of knowledge (more than any of us can possibly consume in a million lifetimes) is in the public domain.

University of Wyoming—as one of the nation's land grant universities—is the product of a long-held belief by U.S. leaders as well as economists in the power of knowledge for improving peoples' lives. In 1862 the U.S. Congress passed the Morrill Act, which gave land to every state and territory for the purpose of establishing a college that would teach agricultural and mechanical arts. I believe this is one of the most important pieces of American legislation. It effectively allowed higher education and its societal benefits to move westward with the westward migration of the U.S. population, and to become accessible to the ordinary citizen. It ensured that the newest scientific knowledge and technological advances would be available to farmers and ranchers and rural households to help them be as productive and profitable and healthy as possible. Interestingly, from the very beginning, land grant colleges were asked to also disseminate knowledge of "other scientific and classical studies" to promote both the "liberal and practical education of the industrial classes." Legislators of the day understood way back then how critically our lives depend on all kinds of knowledge, including knowledge of our own human experiences and history, in order to shape our own destinies. ■

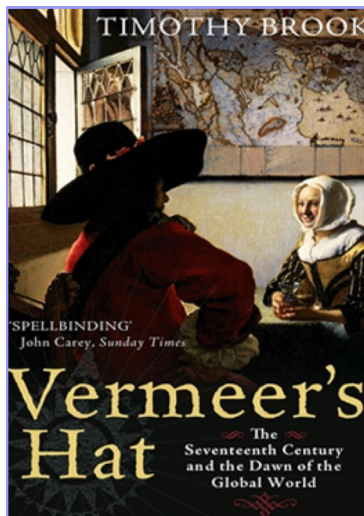
Book Corner

Title: *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World*

Author: Timothy Brook, 2008.

Published by: Bloomsbury Press

In *Vermeer's Hat*, Timothy Brook weaves a story of "second contacts" with the east. The sixteenth century was the century of first contacts—the voyages of discovery—but by the seventeenth century people and goods started moving around. Trade was taking hold and cultures were starting to interact on a more or less regular basis from vast distances. Mr. Brooks uses seven of Vermeer's paintings to find doorways to larger themes of trade and globalization of the times. For example, the eponymous hat in Vermeer's *Officer and Laughing Girl* is used as a portal to



explore the opening of the North American beaver trade (the hat is made of beaver fur). Other paintings are used as segways for the Asian silver trade, porcelain, tobacco and opium. The author's choice of setting, Delft, is also fitting as the Netherlands was home to the world's premier trading company in the seventeenth century, the Dutch East India Company. Which also happens to be the world's first modern joint stock company.

Vermeer's Hat follows on a theme in which I have been following the roots of our globalized world. The author is a historian with a specialization in Chinese history. He takes a decidedly eastern perspective, which from my point of view is refreshing. Our western education is decidedly myopic in not giving us a view of how contact with the east was perceived there. Mr. Brook includes some fascinating anecdotes of shipwrecked missionaries and early development of places like Manila and southern China. At 230 pages, it's an easy read that won't monopolize your entire reading list for a year.

The one criticism that I have is that there were a few places of speculation that I questioned; such as the author's speculating the model in *Officer and Laughing Girl* is actually the painter's wife. It adds to the story but the linkages are somewhat thin. However, the book is well researched and written and a joy to read.

Recommended for your library by Tom Foulke. ■





GSD Tours Dairy

Gamma Sigma Delta, the honor society of agriculture, sponsored a field trip for a group of students, faculty and staff to the Cozy Cow Dairy in Windsor, Colorado in April. The group included both undergraduate and graduate students from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. This included Agricultural & Applied Economics graduate students Kate Harlan, Katie McCullum and Blessing Ugwuanyi.

The trip was organized by **Dannele Peck** (Chapter Secretary and member of the AgEcon department) and Cassie Nelson, Senior in Ag Business, using funding from Gamma Sigma Delta International. Among the participants was Connie Kercher, Professor Emeritus from UW Animal Science and Gamma Sigma Delta Historian. Gamma Sigma Delta is celebrating its 98th year this year. UW has had a chapter since 1961. The trip was meant to increase awareness of Gamma Sigma Delta and provide students with a fun way of increasing their knowledge of agricultural systems. The aim of Gamma Sigma Delta is to encourage excellence in the practice of all agricultural pursuits, and what better way to see agricultural sciences at work than in a new entrepreneurial venture that crosses disciplines.

Cozy Cow Dairy milks 65 head of Jersey cows, which give milk with a higher cream content than Holsteins. The dairy has a creamery attached where they make cheese, butter and ice cream. The group was treated to an in-depth tour of the facility where they were able to ask detailed questions. Milking was underway while the group was there and they saw the process from start to finish. Cheese curd production was also in process, so the group was able to see this in practice and ask questions about the process. Cheese curds are one of the dairy's main products that are being sold to "Irish pubs" along the Front Range and are very popular.

The dairy has recently changed hands and the new owners are keen to make some changes. This made for some interesting discussions among the group as to potential business models that the dairy could pursue.

The store was open while the group was there, and they were able to buy cheese, butter, ice cream and non-homogenized whole milk. ☐

Contributed by Tom Foulke.

Recent MS Thesis Presentations

Anthony Baffoe-Bonnie

Stacking Subsidies in Factor Markets: Evidence from Market Experiments

Anna M. Scofield

The Impact of Residential Development Pattern on Wildland Fire Suppression Expenditures

UW Extension Centennial

In 1914, the US Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act which funded outreach efforts at land-grant universities. Thus the Cooperative Extension Service was born. 100 years later, Extension is the largest non-formal educational system. It has stimulated innovative research and vital educational programs for youth and adults.

The Act has proven a visionary piece of legislation that has changed the lives of Wyomingans and Americans for the better.

Information is at www.uwyo.edu/ces. ☐



In the Margins

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grandkids to become more physically fit. So I've been doing a lot of running, swimming and biking and competing in triathlons. I am finding that it's really good for me. I'm healthier and fitter now than 20 years ago. It's been a blessing.

Are you training for an event at the moment?

I'll do a 10 miler in Denver in the spring and a half marathon at the end of the summer.

ItM: What's on your mind as you look back?

Over my career, I truly benefited from the collegiality of the former and current faculty at UW. They worked as a team. They've helped me develop my interests in globalization. I've loved helping get foreign students into Wyoming classrooms and Wyoming students in foreign classrooms. I love working internationally and cross culturally. I'm planning to work another academic year before retiring, and I want to continue to help with internationalization. It has become a strength at UW.

But one thing I'm sensing in freshmen these days is more apprehension, more fear, self-imposed limitations, and more distrust of science, than students two or three decades ago. I don't see them being appreciative of the strengths of science and having confidence in change and progress. Students arrive with more leeriness and skepticism. Some mistake scientific evidence as just another point of view. I'm not sure why, in the information age, there is such distrust in science, scientific evidence, in authority in government, in important government institutions. It's a weakness of our students these days. I would like to get students introduced to what science is and how it progresses, and how mistakes in science — misinformation — get eliminated. ■

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Recent Department Work

Publications

Attanavich, W., B.S. Rashford, R.M. Adams and Bruce A. McCarl. 2014. "Land Use, Climate Change and Ecosystem Services." Chapter 10 in J.M. Duke and J. Wu eds. *Oxford Handbook of Land Economics*, Oxford University Press.

Nagler, A. M., C. T. Bastian, D. T. Taylor and T. Foulke. "Community Economic Contributions from Recreational Trails Usage on Public Lands: Implications from a Comprehensive Wyoming Case Study," *Western Economics Forum*. 12,2 (2013): 1-11.

Presentations

Rashford, B.S., A.M. Schrag and J. Walker. *Land Conversion in the Plains and Prairie Potholes: Past Lessons and Next Steps*. Webinar hosted by the Plains and Prairie Pothole Landscape Conservation Cooperative, February 6, 2014.

Ehmke, Cole. *Taking the University to the People: 100 Years of the Cooperative Extension Service at the University of Wyoming*. 12 April 2014. Phi Alpha Theta and UW History Club Conference. University of Wyoming, 12 April 2014.

Rashford, B.S., A.M. Schrag and J. Walker. *Climate, Grassland Conversion, and Conservation in the Northern Great Plains*. 2014 Symposium: Drought, Center for Great Plains Studies, Lincoln, NE, April 3, 2014.

Seidl, Andy and Tex Taylor. "Wetlands, Windmills and Wapiti: The Wider Spectrum of Ranching Values". Colorado State University at *Ranching and a West That Works*. 24 April 2014.

Ehmke, Mariah and Chian Jones-Ritten. "Increasing Pollination Revenue and Guaranteeing Unadulterated Honey from Wyoming," *Wyoming Beekeeper's Association*, Invited Presentation, Casper, Wyoming, Dec. 2013.