TABLE OF CONTENTS

2  Graduating Class of 2014
3  Message From Dr. Sandeen
4  Dr. George Lipsitz Visits UW
5  Mary Humstone Leaves the Cooper House
5  Dr. Loffreda Comes Aboard
6  An Alumnus Prespective
8  Our Featured Undergraduate
10  2014 Graduate Theses
12  The Art of the Hunt Comes to Life
13  Food as an “American Study”
Congratulations to the 2014 American Studies graduates! Jacob Yelton, Nate Newman, Mariah West, and Winsome Williams graduated earning a BA in American Studies. The following graduates all completed their coursework and earned a MA in American Studies: Peter Gibbons, Julian Saporiti, Molly Sublett, Erin Anderson, Marie Vrublelova, Danielle Schmidt, and Norma Haskell.
Message From Dr. Sandeen

This summer I will step down after 32 years (more or less) as director of this program. My colleagues, particularly John Dorst and Frieda Knobloch, gave me a fine send-off after graduation (including renaming the Cooper library after me). I am not retiring, at least not yet. In the fall I will be a Fulbright Professor at Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands. I will return in the spring to split my time between the Program and the Wyoming Institute for Humanities Research, which I will continue to direct. It has always been a privilege to be the custodian of the fine American Studies tradition at UW. Some of you will remember our tiny, three-room suite in Hoyt Hall. More will take for granted that we have always been in the Cooper House. Most of you have had the privilege of interacting with my colleagues John Dorst, Frieda Knobloch, and Ulli Adelt, Mary Humstone and Andrea Grahan, and, more recently, Lilia Soto and Beth Loffreda. A very few may remember when American Studies had a faculty of two: John and me. Andrea is going to interview me so that I can set down my version of the history of a program that I have presided over for half its existence. I will also have the opportunity to tell the sorts of tales that animate any community: The Origin Story (which involved a conversation at the Holiday Inn in 1983 between our one graduate student, moon-lighting as the night manager, the sous chef, the bar tender, and his one patron. We got three grad students from that exchange and were off and running) and The Settlement Narrative (the story of how we acquired the Cooper). Stories? I’ve got a million of ‘em and some of them involve YOU (in a nice way). I brag about this Program all the time and hope that you, too, will spread the word. Thanks to all of you this continues to be a great experience.

TOP: Dr. Sandeen celebrates the naming of the American Studies library during the graduation reception at the Cooper House. Photo taken by Peter Gibbons

LEFT: Dr. Sandeen and Mary Humstone celebrate the years spent together shaping the UW American Studies program. Photo taken by Peter Gibbons
Dr. George Lipsitz Calls for Activism

“... The future of American studies requires scholars to know the work we want our work to do; to insist that we infuse our ideas and activism with ethical judgment and wisdom; to clarify the significance of different aspects of our scholarly lives; to acknowledge that our work speaks for us but also for others; and to recognize the dialogic and dialectically related nature of our views of American society. The success of American studies depends not only on what scholars know but also on how we go about knowing.”

Dr. George Lipsitz

The RSO of American Studies students invited Dr. George Lipsitz and his writing companion, Barbara Tomlinson to visit the University of Wyoming American Studies program and to share their expertise with the students and faculty. Dr. Lipsitz is a professor in the Black Studies and Sociology departments at the University of California Santa Barbara. He studies inequality and social movements and is the author of many books including, Midnight at the Barrelhouse and The Possessive Investment in Whiteness. He currently serves as the chairman of the board of directors of the African American Policy Forum and is a member of the board of directors of the National Fair Housing Alliance. Dr. Barbara Tomlinson is a professor in the Feminist Studies and English departments at the University of California Santa Barbara. They are currently co-authoring a book entitled, Writing Truth to Power: Academic Argument and Social Justice.

Dr. Lipsitz and Dr. Tomlinson spent an afternoon with the American Studies graduate students. The graduate students had the opportunity to share their research interests and possible career interests. Dr. Lipsitz and Dr. Tomlinson shared their career paths and gave sage advice to the students.

Later that afternoon, Dr. Lipsitz gave a lecture to the entire UW campus community in which he shared his views of the crumbling American society and our call to action when we see injustice in our communities. He stated during his lecture, “the humanities, if we ever needed them we need them now.” The world is unraveling before our eyes and those that we have entrusted with our power to secure our futures are “blaming and not solving [our] problems.” He shared stories of how the humanities and the arts have been used to heal and empower marginalized people and communities.
Dr. Beth Loffreda Comes Aboard

With the end of the spring semester, we bring to an end the tenure of Mary Humstone at the Cooper House. She came to the University of Wyoming with the goal of bringing historic preservation to the American Studies program. During her time at UW she has organized many of the outreach programs that we have enjoyed in the program, such as internships and many field classes. Over her time at UW, some of her favorite field classes were those involved the study of Sunrise Mine where they were able to persuade the owner to list the property on the National Register of Historic Places.

Even though Mary is leaving UW, she is going to miss the students and the dimensions that students bring to a project. She places high value on the relationships that she has been able to cultivate with colleagues and students, and will miss this aspect of her teaching positions. Mary plans on continuing to work on projects in both Wyoming and Colorado. She also plans to continue her consulting work closer to home where she looks forward to being able to ride her bicycle to work.

Dr. Loffreda comes to the American Studies program through the English Department. She earned a BA in English at the University of Virginia and her PhD in English at Rutgers University. She is moving to the American Studies department after serving as the Director of UW’s MFA in Creative Writing. Much of her previous work combines American Studies and Creative Writing and she is looking forward to having the opportunity to continue studying the relationship between American Studies, English, and non-fiction writing.

Dr. Loffreda wrote the book, Losing Matt Shepard, which sifts through the aftermath of the Matthew Shepard murder in Laramie. Since writing this book, she has published short fiction and nonfiction and is currently working on two book projects. Dr. Loffreda teaches core queer theory courses and serves on the Queer Studies Advisory Board. She also serves on the committees for American Indian Studies and the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources. She will be moving from Hoyt Hall to the Cooper House over the summer and looks forward to becoming an integral part of the American Studies program.
Seven years in AMST taught me this: let the thing be what it is. Dr. Knobloch pointed out the footpaths through Prexy’s Pasture: there are the concrete paths, and then there are the paths that people actually take. She took me through the “alleys” of campus, where the garbage and HVAC is unsuccessfully hidden (here’s a secret: they’re not NOT there). Mary Humstone toured me through various degrees of built environment “preservation” projects— one place that had been “taken back” to an (imagined) 1950s version of what it had (never) been. Dr. Loffreda encouraged me to “say more about that”, urged me to get there – get to the “Thing”. Uncover “It”. Take “It” apart.

When I began to acquaint myself with the Fort Phil Kearny story, I felt increasingly as if I were putting on an ill-fitting jacket. Guided narration of the “traditional” Fort story for visitors often felt... weird. Yes: soldiers. So many soldiers. (And buttons! And guns!) Yes, “Indians”. (And feathers! And tipis!) How about these ladies over here – they’re LADIES. AT A FORT. GOOD GOD IT’S LADIES AT A FORT #CANYOUIMAGINE. Still, it felt like I wasn’t yet talking about the Thing. I trained my staff how to tell the Fort story but, like a lesson on prepositional phrases, it always seemed like we were all talking “around the Thing”, “over the Thing”, “on top of the Thing”.

Eventually, “Fort Phil Kearny” (the fort) began to come apart – in a good way. It started peeling away from Fort Phil Kearny State Historic Site. “Fort Phil Kearny” is a narrative filled with the tropes that we expect from mainstream, “frontier expansion” media – sort of like Prexy’s concrete paths... But after many of our visitors make their ways through the “Military/
Indians” exhibits (see photo), their questions and comments reveal that they’ve made their own route. They say, “So, what happened here?” (Show me the alley, please!) No sampling of rusty harness pieces or replica moccasins is going to “take you back” to Red Cloud’s war against the Bozeman Trail Forts. More importantly, the dichotomous narrative forces the narrator/audience to occupy a “side” thereby narrating almost everything BUT the Thing.

The Fort Phil Kearny Interpretive Center is NOT a museum. It houses a few small displays of some original artifacts uncovered onsite (buckles, cartridge casings) and several replica items that show visitors what an object of that sort might have looked like, etc. Rather, the Interpretive Center is where visitors begin – a little warm up. It gets them to wondering where the Thing is... And then we tell them: Thanks for visiting the Fort Phil Kearny Interpretive Center for your introduction. Now, step outside into the museum.

Because here’s the thing: At Fort Phil Kearny State Historic Site, the landscape is the artifact. It bound soldiers and warriors in war. It shaped victory. It dictated how and when men (and women, but mostly men) lived and died. Fort Phil Kearny State Historic Site is 1000 acres of real deal, in-the-flesh, living, breathing artifact. If we talk about the landscape as the artifact, the narrative ceases to be dichotomous and becomes spatial. After all, we’re all (soldiers, Natives, visitors, and staff) occupying the same space, and the same time, when we tell the Fort story. The spatial narrative frees the narrator from occupying a “side”. For example, in the dichotomous narrative I am a modern white woman telling an 1866 Native story – traps abound. But in the spatial narrative I am a staff person narrating a space that I am sharing with my audience. So let’s let it be what it is. (Hint: It’s not a fort.)

The spatial narrative model doesn’t take care of ALL the sticky spots, but it DOES address of few of the big ones. Relevance and history, of course, are old frenemies. However, as we occupy the living, breathing artifact here at Fort Phil Kearny State Historic Site, relevance is less forced because curation becomes land stewardship and exhibition becomes recreation. Monuments become... well... I’ll leave memorialization for now. That’s a different Thing.

P.S. “Hello” and “Best Wishes” to all my fellow AMSTudiers!

Yours,
Misty Moore Stoll
Superintendent, Fort Phil Kearny State Historic Site

ABOVE: Fetterman Monument 2010
Plaque Reads: “On the field on the 21st day of December, 1866, three commissioned officers and seventy six privates of the 18th U.S. Infantry, and of the 2nd U.S. Cavalry, and four civilians, under the command of Captain Breven Lieutenant Colonel William J. Fetterman were killed by an overwhelming force of Sioux, under the command Red Cloud. There were no survivors.
How did you find American Studies?
After three majors and eventually going undeclared (again), I decided to only take classes that were immediately appealing until I settled on a major. The course description for Dr. Knobloch’s *Cultures of Nature* sounded interesting, though I had not a clue about American Studies as a field. Her class radically altered my perceptions of the world and how I relate to it. I knew within weeks that AMST and the Cooper House were to be my home for the next few years. I like to joke that Frieda’s course launched me into a perpetual existential crisis, and it is true in the most positive sense.

What are your personal interests?
Music has been the most constant and influential passion in my life since junior high school. I am not much of a performer, although I dabble. Beyond that I love talking about music, playing it, experiencing it live, researching it, obsessing about certain bands, traveling to attend concerts, promoting shows, and any other point of access. Some of my closest friends are folks that I’ve met at either shows or festivals. The Snowy Range Music Festival held annually here in Laramie over Labor Day weekend is one of my favorite events of the year. We were lucky to see Colorado’s own Leftover Salmon headline Sunday night of the festival last year. The small crowds and proximity to town allow for a family-friendly environment and intimate shows.

Aside from music, I love outdoor recreation and the many opportunities afforded to us in the West. Two summers ago I did a bicycle tour from Portland to San Francisco, camping and hiking along the way. Last summer I spent several weeks backpacking in Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. This past winter I took advantage of the cross-country trail systems in Vedauwoo, Happy Jack, and the Snowy Range whenever possible.

What are your academic interests?
Over the past two years, the American Studies Program has provided the opportunity to explore my personal interests of popular music and live performance in an academic context. In Dr. Knobloch’s *such-and-such class* I focused on systems theories and the concept of improvisation. In Dr. Adelt’s *Popular Music and Sexualities* course, I was able to explore gendered expression and how it may differ in past acoustic and electric performances by the Grateful Dead, for example.

What was your senior seminar project?
My senior paper is titled “Make Music That ‘Relates to Us’: Louis Armstrong and the Politics of Jazz in the Harlem Renaissance.” I began in Fall 2013 with a personal desire to understand this nebulous thing we’ve called the Harlem Renaissance and searched for a musical framework in
which to apply it. In the final product, I challenge the geographic, temporal, and ideological boundaries that typically confine our understanding of the Renaissance. I happily listened to loads of jazz along the way.

Do you have post-graduation plans?
Three days after graduation I embarked on a five week adventure in Western Europe. The first two weeks are with an Honors Program course titled *Shakespeare in England and Italy*, exploring theatre performance and the many works of Shakespeare. Following that I intend to hike in several mountain ranges in Northern Italy and eventually visit a friend in Northern England. At the conclusion of my trip, I will travel back to London to see my current favorite band play there before returning home. I am quite fortunate for the number of scholarship awards received through both the American Studies and Honors Programs. Without them, this trip would not be possible.

When I get back to Laramie this summer it will be high time to prepare to take the LSAT and GRE exams in early fall. I will explore my law school options as well as other graduate programs that might allow me to continue the academic path I started down in American Studies at UW. I hope to be in a program of some sort by Fall 2015! In the meantime, I plan to see music, enjoy life, and possibly hike part of the Pacific Crest Trail in California/Oregon!

What do you think of England so far?
I’ve only been in Birmingham and Stratford-upon-Avon so far, but there is a degree of charm and beauty here I’ve not experienced before in my life. The workload for the Shakespeare course has been surprisingly heavy, but I suppose only appropriately so for a 3-credit Honors Program senior seminar crammed into three weeks. Two days ago we visited the absolutely gorgeous Holy Trinity Church where Shakespeare was baptized and buried. The oldest section dates to the early 13th century, and it was a keen reminder of why I wanted to visit here.

For what moment/aspect of your undergraduate career are you most proud?
The visit from Dr. Lipsitz and Dr. Tomlinson this past spring semester was special. I worked for the STOP Violence Program on campus over the 2012-2013 academic year, which was wonderful and rewarding. Also rescuing my grade point average after banishing it to the depths of hell in freshmen year, though I am probably most proud of my involvement in the American Studies Program in general. I found the knowledge and social infrastructure at the Cooper House necessary to develop skills related to my personal and academic passions. As such, I invested in the stakes of my educational process and my fellow students/teachers more so than I have for many years.

What is your most important goal now?
In the end, I believe that the legacy we leave behind is how we treat others. With the stress and time commitments of school in the background (temporarily), I want to focus on maximizing my positive impact on the world. I also think that comes in many forms, though, and as one of the graduating Master’s students and I discussed several times, you can make substantial progress in saving the world even in one good night of revelry, song, and dance. My biggest goals are to ride the wave of life, embrace the weird, and make sure people know you love them—especially those who are brave enough to go outside the box and be their honest selves. In the meantime, continue reading and writing whenever possible.
The 2014 Graduate Theses

Danielle Schmidt: This thesis travels the Dimock Oil, a small two-lane road in Hutchinson County, South Dakota, through the religious agricultural communities of German Catholics, German Lutherans, and Hutterite colonists. It offers a real encounter with the place and landscape through my own experiences, the stories collected growing up there and through this research, and the agriculture practiced by the people here in the early decades of the twentieth century. Grounded by religious commitment and faith, people performed their work in such a way that deeply connected them to the land and to each other, even while they made efforts to maintain their individual communities and identities. The thesis provides an agricultural history from a religious perspective in order to capture the lives and experiences of these people that took place here a century ago. Lastly, it considers concepts of time that suggest a more complex understanding of the Dimock Oil today and the record etched on the landscape by its people.

Molly Sublet: This thesis examines perceptions of adolescent girlhood contained in two distinct forms of text: popular sociology texts explaining the supposed crisis of contemporary youth culture, and apocalyptic young adult literature. The pop sociology authors I examine (Mark Bauerlein, Jean Twenge, and Rosalind Wiseman, primarily) tend to describe young women alarmingly. They are entitled, unintelligent, apathetic, emotionally unstable, and cruel; as such, these authors construct girls as troubling figures who are either threatening to culture or threatened by culture. On the other hand, we encounter Suzanne Collins' description of Katniss Everdeen in the phenomenally popular Hunger Games series, who, despite her extraordinary strength, integrity, and self-sacrificing character is still portrayed as being constantly at risk of cultural manipulation and exploitation. I argue that both of these depictions of girlhood are manifestations of nostalgia, a sentiment which, for our purposes, is characterized not simply by a longing for the past, but also by a deep disillusionment with the progressive narrative of history.

Peter Gibbons: This thesis examines the cultural reaction of communities along the Front Range of Colorado to the flooding events that occurred September 8th through 16th of 2013. In the form of two case studies, the varying responses along the Front Range are analyzed to better understand the attributes of the area that led to a generally resilient response. In the first case study, which focuses on the broader Front Range, variation in media response is analyzed, as well as the image of strength and resilience that is projected outward through the media. The second case study focuses on Boulder, Colorado specifically, in an analysis that sheds light on Boulder’s unique response to the disaster, the image of strength and resilience, and the cultural context that makes Boulder worthy of independent analysis. The purpose of this thesis is to understand the cultural response

“You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. You’re on your own. And you know what you know. You are the guy who’ll decide where to go.”

– Dr. Seuss
to disaster, but also to use disastrous events to get a deeper look inside the way the culture along the Front Range understands and interacts with nature. Such an understanding is intended to illuminate the cultural systems at work in disaster response to better understand the role of nature: culture interactions in a population’s collective reaction to environmentally hazardous situations. Within this thesis, I have taken a unique approach to understanding disaster and the way the Front Range of Colorado responded in order to highlight the importance of the cultural component in the way individuals and populations handle environmental stressors.

Julian Saporiti: My thesis is an ethnographic account of busking (street performance) in New York City’s Washington Square Park. For three summers, I hung out in the Square documenting busking performances as well as doing a bit of busking myself. What I found was that busking in the Square was a performance of risk that frequently facilitated participation between musicians, pedestrians, and complete strangers. Examining these performances is valuable in understanding how, outside of the Square, we may be able to push back against an increasingly hegemonic, neo-liberal society which does not value risk or participation.

Erin Anderson: The domestic science movement and the rise of processed foods at the turn of the twentieth century drastically changed the way American food looked, felt, and tasted. In this thesis I explore these changes as clues to the origins and long-standing popularity of molded gelatin salads. I also examine the rise of the Jell-O brand of gelatin in particular as a uniquely American icon by analyzing the body of Jell-O advertisements from the Ladies’ Home Journal and Good Housekeeping from 1920-1945. During these years, the Jell-O brand persona changed dramatically from a high-class food for entertaining to a patriotic food-stretcher. This change mirrored women consumer groups’ overwhelming support for war rationing and price control during WWII. I argue that the Jell-O brand’s unique ability to mold its persona through advertising to fit changing consumer concerns was crucial to its becoming a household name.

Norma Haskell: My thesis consists of a chronological examination of Calamity Jane portrayals in a selection of six film productions through the twentieth century and into the early twenty-first century. The western frontier legendary sobriquet for a real person, Martha Jane Canary, Calamity Jane has demonstrated through cinematic expression issues of image and gender construction in American society. Through the course of a hundred years, her interpretation on screen has reflected concurrent status of the viewing audience’s gender environment. Initially, with the assistance of Wild Bill Hickok, she supported the heterosexual west. Near and into the beginning of the new century she suggests the frontier west contained people who did not fall under precepts of binary gender thinking.

Marie Vrubelova: As Governor Matt Mead considers establishing the first official resettlement agency for refugees in Wyoming, this thesis explores the origins of American refugee policy from the perspective of the international law as well as the American politics leading up to passing the Refugee Act of 1980. This thesis aspires to provide a good understanding of refugees, especially refugee women, for the people in Wyoming. By introducing the complexity of the refugee identity, in comparison to the immigrant community, the objective of this thesis is to explain what refugees must go through in order to be resettled in the United States. In this thesis, the evidence shows that the new resettlement agency for refugees might be a successful project, providing that the host communities in Wyoming are well prepared prior to the arrival of the new refugee population.
The Art of the Hunt Comes to Life

Peter Gibbons, an American Studies graduate student, spent the summer of 2013 traveling around the state of Wyoming photographing the artisans of “the art of the hunt.” The Art of the Hunt is a project that the American Studies department and the Wyoming Arts Council have been working on for the last five years. The project focuses on the craftsmanship of hunting and fishing and the ancillary activities that accompany these activities in Wyoming.

Gibbons became part of the Art of the Hunt project in the spring of 2013 when he was offered an internship to take photographs of the Wyoming landscape and various Wyoming craftsmen that were to be featured in the museum exhibit that opens this summer at the Wyoming State Museum in Cheyenne. His photos garnered the attention of the faculty and were placed on display at Gallery 234 in the Wyoming Union in January of 2014.

Gibbons traveled throughout the state with his camera in hand taking photographs, but he also wanted to experience Wyoming. He spent most of his time outdoors experiencing the great outdoors of Wyoming, which allowed him to really connect with the landscape and people of Wyoming. Gibbons stated that his goal in taking the photos of the artisans was to attempt to depict who the people are through his photos.

"The project was a fantastic opportunity to get multidisciplinary field experience as well as to incorporate my personal interests and skills into a project that directly applied to my personal and academic interests. All the while, I was able to expand my photographic portfolio in ways I never would have without the project."

—Peter Gibbons
Food as an “American Study”

We all have to eat. One does not expect to find an entire academic class whose focus is to study the culture food in America. Dr. John Dorst guided students this semester through an interdisciplinary “study of food as an expression of values, social relations, and cultural patterns in America, past and present.”

During an interview with Dr. Dorst and two of his students, Jordan Norviel and Joey Correnti, I was provided with additional insight into the importance of food as a cultural expression and as an American study. Students are sometimes surprised by the academic focus of some of the American Studies classes because most of them have fun names that do not suggest a serious study of the topic. “Food is another part of being about to discern another part of national identity or personal identity,” said Joey Correnti.

The class is designed to be a balance between the historical developments in food and issues of individual identities and connections as expressed by food. Norviel favorite parts of the class were the food days. “It was really fun to see what people were going to bring and how people were going to explain their relationship to whatever food they brought.” Correnti’s favorite part of the class was studying and writing about other students’ food journals. The assignment allowed me to see commonalities in our rules and how we manage food. Dr. Dorst’s favorite part of the class are the food journals and the writing assignment.

Even though Correnti and Norviel spent the entire semester studying food and American culture with Dr. Dorst, they admit that they are not armed to end the world’s hunger problems. Correnti revealed that the goal of the food system is not clear. There is no right answer. “If the end goal is making as much food as cheaply as possible for the people then we’re pretty much already there,” said Correnti. It is near impossible to have everyone agree on one approach to food and then to support that approach.

From our personal identities to our American identity, we express ourselves through our food. Food is primordial and natural, and necessary to our survival. It has the power to build great leaders and nations. It is an American study.

“There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of BREAD.”
—Mahatma Gandhi

“The way you cut your meat reflects the way you live.”
—Confucius

“You can tell a lot about a person’s CHARACTER by his way of eating jellybeans.”
—Ronald Reagan