[ CONTENTS ]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pg. 1</th>
<th>Message from the Director</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pg. 2</td>
<td>New Graduate Student Bios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pg. 3</td>
<td>Summer Internship Roundup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pg. 4</td>
<td>Art of the Hunt Exhibit Opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pg. 5</td>
<td>Faculty Q&amp;A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pgs. 6 &amp; 7</td>
<td>News Briefs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Message from the Director
Dr. Frieda Knobloch

The American Studies Program is as lively as ever, in ways you will all recognize, and I hope you enjoy highlights of what people are up to in the pages inside. We were fortunate to host two Danish exchange students this fall, and wish them well as they complete their thesis work back home. This past summer marks the highest participation in summer internships for the Program, and the reports they bring back each fall inspire the next year’s interns with plans and projects of their own.

We have welcomed an unusually high number of undergraduate majors this fall whom we meet in our Intro courses as well as the more specialized seminars on offer this spring—look for profiles of our majors in coming newsletters. The spring line-up of courses, which we’ve just begun, represents the exciting range of a busy faculty, and a full building: all the upper division seminars are held in the Cooper, allowing us to share the building (and newly refinished seminar tables), as well as our learning community, with a lot of people each week. Visit us on the web to see our classes!

This fall brought changes, too. Architectural historian Tony Denzer is teaching the course he developed with Mary Humstone, who has left to pursue other projects; Historic Preservation and Sustainability is on offer this spring and is part of UW’s Sustainability minor. We look forward to enriching the historic preservation curriculum with courses like this and other opportunities in the public sector. Long-time Director Eric Sandeen has just returned from an enjoyable Fulbright semester in Nijmegen, Netherlands, as a faculty member. The vibrant Program and learning community he built is as welcoming and variegated as it is because of his long, attentive stewardship. It has been a challenging semester for me to come in as a new director, and a rewarding privilege. The best part is sharing what we do with students, our colleagues at UW, and with you. And as always, we would enjoy hearing from you.

All best wishes for the New Year!

Sincerely,
Dr. Frieda Knobloch
Meet the New Graduate Students

**Hanne Wolsgaard** is from Odense in Denmark. She graduated with a BA in English and American Studies from the University of Southern Denmark in 2013. She is an exchange student doing her 9th semester of university at the University of Wyoming. Her main academic interest is in gender studies, young adult dystopian fiction, disaster studies, and trauma studies. Hanne will be writing her thesis for the American Studies program at the University of Southern Denmark in spring 2015. In her spare time, Hanne enjoys traveling and discovering more areas of the USA.

**Kyle Byron** is originally from Kalamazoo, MI, where he attended Western Michigan University and received a BA in Philosophy and Comparative Religion and an MA in Comparative Religion, focusing on religion in the Americas. Here, his academic interests included new religious movements in the United States (particularly the Church of Scientology), as well as anthropological and sociological theories of religion. Kyle came to the University of Wyoming with his trusty cat Pippin to continue to study religion in America, focusing on developing an understanding of American religion within the larger field of American cultural studies, specifically American folklore.

**Max Vande Vaarst** is a proud first-year graduate student in American Studies. He has traveled 1,766 miles of I-80 roadway to come to Laramie from the greatest state of New Jersey, with interim stops in Indiana and Colorado. He holds a BA in history and English from Purdue University and his primary academic passions include regional ethnography, spatial identity, Americana and the study of communal folk narrative. In addition to these classroom pursuits, Max is a writer of short fiction and the founding editor of the quarterly online arts journal *Buffalo Almanack*. He loves his football, his family and his fiancée, but maybe not in that order.

**Stine Poulsen**, originally from Kolding, Denmark is visiting University of Wyoming on exchange from the University of Southern Denmark for fall 2014. She earned her BA in International Business Communication with English and Media from University of Southern Denmark in Odense in 2013. Once Stine is finished at the University of Wyoming, she will return to the University of Southern Denmark and write her master’s thesis on how nature is anchored in American national identity. In her free time, she enjoys cooking, running, watching NFL and spending time outdoors with her friends.

**Evan Townsend** was born in raised in Chattanooga, Tennessee and earned his BFA concentrating in sculpture from East Tennessee State University in 2011. Since then, he has lived in Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Montana, and now Wyoming! Through his travels, he worked with conservation corps, professional trail crews, and environmental education centers. Because of an interest in art, history, conservation, environmental education and service learning, Evan is pursuing a double MA in American Studies and Environment and Natural Resources. These interests have led him to exploring possibilities with the Wyoming Conservation Corps, environmental history, and investigating the American identity. When he is not reading and writing, Evan is off exploring the mountains, rivers, and canyons.

**Maggie Mullen** is a fourth-generation Wyomingite, coming from a family of educators and craftswomen and men. She earned a BA in English and French from the University of Wyoming, where she also studied abroad at the Université de Caen Basse-Normandie. Since then, Maggie has lived in San Francisco and worked for 826 Valencia as a creative writing tutor in secondary schools in the Bay Area. Her research interests are extensive but all seem to involve different forms of storytelling and the narrative — oral history, person-centered ethnography, folklore, southern foodways, cinema and television studies, in addition to interdisciplinary approaches to education. When not occupied with a book or Vogue, Maggie enjoys writing short fiction and poetry, cooking for friends and family, bicycling, thrifting, traveling by car or plane, and daydreaming about the day she will finally be able to own a puppy dog.

**Chuck Adams** is from Auburn, Oregon. He has BAs in Art & Design and English & Writing from Southern Oregon University. Since graduating in 2006, he has worked for three years as an arts and culture editor at the Eugene Weekly, led youth conservation crews for several seasons in the Pacific Northwest and North Dakota, coached high school cross country and track, taught English at a TV station in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, WWOOF’ed on a farm in New Zealand, and served as a Peace Corps volunteer for two years in Kaffa, “the birthplace of coffee,” in southwest Ethiopia. To date he has visited over 20 countries, poorly comprehends five different languages, and continues to seek international experiences that enrich his “American perspective,” even if that means bouts of amoebic dysentery. He has a strong passion for multimedia projects pertaining to landscape, memory, folklore and place, and hopes to research landscape preservation, narrative coordinates, and the folklore of far-flung Americans.
GLEN CARPENTER
Over the summer of 2014, I interned for UWTV. Among other things, I learned how to set up and dismantle equipment, wire microphones, operate a camera, and edit raw footage into a completed project. I accompanied my supervisor and nine UW faculty members to the Ucross Foundation near Sheridan to assist in the filming of a documentary, slated to premiere on Wyoming Public Television next spring.

SUSAN CLEMENTS
I worked for the Wyoming Outdoor Council (WOC) in Lander, WY this summer. WOC is the state’s oldest independent conservation organization. I was able to attend meetings all over the state and learn new things about Wyoming’s environmental issues. I researched off-highway vehicle (OHV) use in the Shoshone National Forest. I assembled a document with research on the environmental and biological impacts of OHVs and off-trail riding and ideas to deter that form of use.

SARAH GANGE
This summer I interned with the Sagebrush Community Art Center and briefly with the Sheridan County Museum in Sheridan, Wyoming. The main purpose of the internship was to put together a small, publishable brochure or booklet about the Historic Railroad District. The main goal for the brochure is to bring local and state-wide attention to both the importance of Sheridan’s Historic Railroad District for the growth of Sheridan and to help preserve the still-existing architecture that dates back to the heyday of the railroad in Sheridan.

In the district are two railroad depots from the turn of the century; the historic Sheridan Inn, also from the turn of the century; shotgun and pyramidal cottages that still capture the aesthetic of a railroad community; and a number of warehouses that at one time facilitated the flow of goods in and out of the city via the railroad. Several historic structures have been demolished since the National Register of Historic Places added the Historic Railroad District to its list. The hope is to prevent further demolition by generating community investment in the district through the brochure. In addition to researching the history of the district and writing the content of the brochure, I developed the layout, secured rights to historic photographs, photographed many of the structures as they look now, created a map of the district and designed a front and back cover.

The secondary purpose of the internship was to get as much experience as possible working in different art institutions. At the Sheridan County Museum, I assisted with accessioning and organizing their collections, under the supervision of the head curator. I helped accession materials that belonged to the Sheridan Inn and the defunct Sheridan County Historical Society, inventoried the museum’s art collection, and completed and updated their records.

KAYLA SULLIVAN
This past summer, I had the opportunity to work with the Western Center for Historic Preservation at Grand Teton National Park. The Western Center for Historic Preservation (WCHP) has a directive to help train National Park Service staff and interested private companies and individuals to maintain and protect their historic structures. I was brought in to help launch the formal training program that has been initiated by WCHP becoming part of the NPS Vanishing Treasures program. While evaluating programs for future improvements I learned what a rotten sill log sounds like on an old cabin, how to glaze a historic window, and many more skills. In addition, I helped with technical support planning in the form of preparing the organization for a web page launch and social media outreach. I also acted as informal administrative assistant for much of the summer. I feel that my experience was incredibly valuable and will assist me in my future ambitions with the National Park Service.

ROBIN POSNIAK
I worked for the Denver-based historic preservation organization, HistoriCorps. Working on a joint project with the US Forest Service, my work contributed to an ongoing effort to preserve historic buildings under the Forest Service’s stewardship by way of converting them to vacation rental properties.
Opening this last summer, the Art of The Hunt Exhibit at the Wyoming State Museum in Cheyenne has been a great success. Much of this success is owed to the five years of collaborative research completed by the Wyoming Arts Council Folk Arts Program’s Anne Hatch and the UW American Studies Program’s very own Andrea Graham.

The exhibit includes over 70 meticulously handmade objects made by Wyoming artisans related to hunting or fishing. While most of these objects’ functions are for the field, like the intricate hand-tied flies or the double diamond with a chain mule pack, some are meant to mark celebration of the hunt back home, like the collection of recipes that use fish or game meat.

Thanks to the Wyoming Humanities Council, the Art of the Hunt has been able to host two different days of artist demonstrations at the Wyoming State Museum.

The first took place in September and included demonstrations by engraver, Jim Blair, leather tooler Von Ringler, as well as a fly tying workshop by Charles McCall, and a fly-casting workshop by Greg Hallen. And as part of the State Museum’s Family Days in November, Jack Mease demonstrated rawhide braiding, Tom Mulhern demonstrated carved wood fish, Jerry Anderson demonstrated antler carvings, and Sandy Pistono demonstrated quilting, while there were hands-on activities for kids.

As for the upcoming year, Art of the Hunt would like to continue to host skill building workshops and demonstrations, in addition to lectures on subjects like the history of hunting or hunting/fishing objects as art, as well as some panel discussions including fishing guides, outfitters, family traditions, subsistence hunting, and artisan hunters. To stay tuned for such upcoming programming, like Art of the Hunt on Facebook at facebook.com/artofthehuntwyoming.

The exhibit runs through September 7, 2015 and is not to be missed!
Catching Up with AMST Faculty
A Q&A with Select Faculty on Recent Projects and Conferences

What have you been working on recently that you are excited to share with the UW community?

Eric Sandeen: I am enjoying my Fulbright professorship at Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands, very much. During the semester I’ve met up with five American Studies exchange student alumni from the University of Utrecht. I gave a lecture at Utrecht and saw Piet and Francesca there; Jean-Paul, Monique, and Diederik came to Nijmegen for dinner at our house. What do you do with an MA in American Studies in the Netherlands? One is working in the cultural section of the US embassy, another is a communications specialist at an international medical association, a third has an internet startup in Amsterdam, a fourth is applying for Ph.D. work, and a fifth is doing environmental education.

John Dorst: I have continued my collaboration with Bailey Russel in the Art Department on our project, “Capturing Animals at the Intersection of Art and Science,” which is supported by a grant from the Wyoming Institute for the Humanities. We have been doing photographic (Bailey) and ethnographic (me) documentation of two forms of animal “capture” and representation: taxidermy and camera trapping photography. We’ve worked with two other colleagues on campus, both from the Zoology Department. Kevin Monteith, along with being on the faculty, is a part-time professional taxidermist. Jonny Armstrong, a zoology post-doc, is a highly accomplished practitioner of camera trapping photography. This is the process of using pre-set photographic and lighting systems to create studio-like portraits of wild animals as they engage in their natural behavior. Among other things, we are interested in how the material practices of these forms of animal capture can themselves be “captured” through the mediums of art/studio photography and ethnographic documentation. Among other things, we have conducted a thorough documentation of Kevin’s work on a “life-size” (meaning, full body) taxidermy mount of a stalking mountain lion. Serendipitously, Jonny recently “captured” (in over 250 images) a mountain lion feeding on a deer carcass. These will provide a good pairing for the final report on our research, which we’ll be giving sometime in the spring semester.

Ulrich Adelt: I’m still finishing up my book about Krautrock, West German electronic music and rock from the 1970s. I’ve also been teaching the Intro to American Studies class and a class on the Harlem Renaissance.

Andrea Graham: The Art of the Hunt exhibit opened this summer at the Wyoming State Museum in Cheyenne, and this fall we have produced two public programs of artist demonstrations, funded by the Wyoming Humanities Council. Participating artists included a gun engraver, rawhide braider, quilter, antler carver, leather worker, fly tier, fly caster, and woodcarver. We will continue the programs through next June, with panel discussions on such topics as game wardens, taxidermy, and women in hunting, as well as more artist demonstrations.

Fred Chapman: I am the project director and principal investigator for the Northern Cheyenne Ecoregional Ethnographic Assessment, a federally-funded pilot project to identify, describe, and digitize all tribally significant cultural and natural resource locations in Northern Cheyenne aboriginal territory in the Dakotas, Montana, Nebraska, and Wyoming. The project involves deeply collaborative field research and ethnographic interviews with the Northern Cheyenne traditional community, as well as close cooperation with state historic preservation organizations and federal land management authorities.

Have you presented at any conferences/workshops/seminars, or been on any panel discussions, recently?

JD: In early November I attended the American Folklore Society conference in Santa Fe, NM. I participated, along with our American Studies colleague Andrea Graham, in a forum that addressed the dilemmas faced by public sector folklorists, especially with regard to folk art, when they have to decide where to draw the lines between folk/not folk, art/not art, “authentic/inauthentic,” etc. as they choose what to include in an exhibit, a folk festival, a folk art grants program, etc. Academic folklorists like myself have the luxury of just talking about the problems with these sorts of distinctions. Public sector folklorists have to make concrete decisions about such things. The forum yielded a lively discussion, with many personal examples of how these decisions get made.

UA: I was chair and commentator on a panel about musical lives at the American Studies Association meeting in Los Angeles. I always enjoy going to ASA, especially connecting with other international American Studies scholars.

AG: I chaired and presented at a session at the American Folklore Society annual meeting in Santa Fe, NM, on November 8. The session was titled “Boundaries and Decision Making at the Crossroads of Theory and Practice,” and also included John Dorst. The presentations
sparked a lively discussion about the formal definitions of folklore and how they are tested in fieldwork and presentation, when reality bumps up against theory.

What do you look forward to in spring semester 2015?

JD: In the spring, along with wrapping up the collaborative research project referred to above, I am organizing a small symposium as an academic byproduct of the Art of the Hunt exhibit that opened this August. The theme will be hunting, as viewed through the lens of the arts and humanities. The keynote speaker will be Jan Dizard, a distinguished professor of American Culture at Amherst College who has published two excellent books about human/animal relations as enacted in hunting. The full roster of participants is not settled yet, nor is the symposium date (sometime in April). Also, I am taking the opportunity of teaching a section of our intro class to tie in the symposium (and the research project) to pedagogy. The theme for the class will be human/animal relations.

UA: I’m looking forward to attending the first conference on the German group Kraftwerk in Birmingham, England in January. I’m teaching three classes in the Spring, Intro to African American Studies, Popular Music and Sexualities and a graduate class on Black Popular Culture. I’m also up for tenure, so hopefully I will get to stay in Laramie for many years to come!

Rob Collins Visits

This semester the AMST program had the privilege of hosting Dr. Robert Keith Collins, professor of American Indian Studies at San Francisco State University. Dr. Collins, whose research focuses upon African-American and Native American interactions in both early and contemporary American history, delivered a lecture on transculturalization and the dynamics of African cultural change in Native America at the Classroom Building in September. His lecture was particularly noteworthy for the attention it paid to African-Natives, a particularly marginalized segment of the population. Following this presentation, Dr. Collins was kind enough to offer a lesson for all current AMST graduate students on the topic of person-centered ethnography, a valuable fieldwork methodology that places its emphasis on the cumulative life experiences of those being interviewed. Dr. Collins’s approach has become an invaluable asset for those students engaging in interview heavy fieldwork outside of the university setting, particularly those studying folklore and folklife. The program would like to thank faculty member Ulrich Adelt for his role in organizing and arranging Dr. Collins’s visit.

Beth Loffreda and the Racial Imaginary

AMST faculty member Beth Loffreda recently co-edited an anthology of writing and art to be published in early 2015. The Racial Imaginary: Writers on Race in the Life of the Mind, co-edited by Loffreda, poet Claudia Rankine, and artist Max King Cap, collects letters from writers who examine the social, material, and psychological landscapes in which they create literature. The anthology expands on an “Open Letter” project previously hosted at Rankine’s website. The letters evolved into meditations on the creative process within societal machinations. In fall 2014, Loffreda and Rankine established a writing and research blog, poeticsofhere.com, as a way to continue the dialogue between each other as well as the broader community of writers and artists. One of the most popular posts to date collects writing exercises from Williams College poetry students, where Loffreda and Rankine co-led workshops in October. The exercise had the students complete the sentence, “Because white men can’t police their imaginations…” among other self-directed prompts. The Racial Imaginary and the blog provide a contextual balance to media reports of police brutality on Black communities in Staten Island, Brooklyn, Ferguson, and Cleveland, as well as the massive #BlackLivesMatter rallies all across the country. The Racial Imaginary is currently due out on March 24 from Fence Books.
Cultural Landscapes Field Trips

AMST 4500: Landscapes & Identity, instructed by Fred Chapman, embarked on several field trips in fall 2014. Top left: Foote Creek Mesa wind farm; top right, Sunrise Mine engine room and hoist house; bottom left: C&H Refinery in Lusk, Wyoming; bottom right: Sunrise Mine in Guernsey, Wyoming, with AMST secretary Sophia Beck as guide to her childhood stomping ground. Photos by Chuck Adams.

Porchlight Staff: Sophia Beck, Chuck Adams, Max Vande Vaarst
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